

# Art goes electronic for overseas buyers

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A painting by PR Narvekar

**B**USINESS in Indian art overseas through the online route is visibly rising. A healthy mix of veteran and younger artists is being steadily picked up by foreign clients. The bigger names are, of course, there.

Among the high-end labels are artists like FN Souza, MF Husain, SH Raza, Jogen Chowdhury, Anjolie Ela Menon and Yusuf Arakkal. Senior painters like Thota Vaikuntam and Akkitham Narayanan are also fancied by international buyers who place their orders online.

Online inquiries for acquiring domestic art are pouring in from places like Germany, Italy, Spain, the US, the UK, Southeast Asia, Australia and France. In recent times, demand for this segment of art has also grown in Dubai and China.

"Inquires are swelling because of the burgeoning popularity of Indian art and the increasing numbers of Indian art exhibits abroad. The list of artists online that the foreign

and Indian diaspora abroad is looking at is constantly expanding," a source said.

"From the standpoint of export turnover, revenues churned out by Indian art via the online network could be in the region of Rs 100-odd crore, which includes retail and auction sales," the source added.

There are a slew of younger generation painters attracting overseas buyers in the online slot, too. These include artists like Paresh Maity, TV Santosh, Sudhir Patwardhan, Jagannath Panda, Anjum Singh, Asim Purokayastha, Soumen Das, Sandip Daptari, Mithu Sen, Samindranath Majumdar, Baiju Parthan and PR Narvekar.

In step are artists like Nupur Kundu, Veer Munshi, Apurva Desai and Ravi Kumar Kashi. Radhakrishnan's sculptures are also greatly in demand online among overseas buyers.

"In the online format, Kartick Chandra Pyne is in demand in European countries. Together with Husain and Raza, two other artists universally sought after are FN Souza and KG Subramanyan. Of late, there are strong inquiries for Paritosh Sen coming in from Singapore, while Husain and Ganesh Pyne are experiencing a growing market in Dubai," an art market source told ET.

"The young lot of artists are enjoying maximum popularity in the US. Names like Amitabha Dhar and Partha Pratim Deb are drawing a fair deal of notice in the US. Inquiries are flowing in via the online avenue from both NRIs and mainstream foreigners," the source added.

While mainline foreigners form around 30% of the buyers, NRIs make 70%. The quantum of foreigners has significantly shot up from just 2-5% around a year ago. By a ballpark figure, the number of inquiries maturing into real deals have also risen to about 20%, from a mere 5% some time ago.

"From the point of view of preferences for brands of paintings, a study shows European buyers focus on classical, folksy and ethnic kind of works. In the same breath, US art collectors very often look for contemporary paintings including abstract creations. Southeast Asian customers are usually seen to be more keen on figurative works," the source said.

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