

# West meets East, the art way

Simona Bocchi's exhibition, *The Process of Unknowing*, is the outcome of her heart's pourings

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ARTISTS ARE known to follow their heart. So it isn't so unusual to see Simona Bocchi fly all the way from Monza in Italy to Udaipur, settle down there and pursue her heart's calling - art. 'If I get a message from inside, I follow,' says Simona, simply. So she followed her heart which brought her all the way to Rajasthan.

'I shifted here and thought this is the place for a whole new possibility,' says Simona. Back home in Italy, jute was one of her favourite ingredients for her artworks and when she moved to Rajasthan, though devoid of her tools, Simona found out an entirely different way to get back to her craft. More importantly, she found a different respect for organic things and nature in India.

So she met local artisans and picked up jute once again for her creations. Only this time, they were 'more colourful'. Her exhibition, *The Process of Unknowing*, that is currently going on in the Capital, is divided into three sections. One is about her works on jute, then there are her sculptures in marble and the third is her

work using bronze.

Her works in jute, which consist of varied faces with sometimes messages scrawled on them, are her tribute to women and the deep-seated bias against them in Rajasthan. 'Given that I am freedom loving and come from a freedom loving society, I was deeply touched by the hard lives of Rajput women and the society's mentality towards them,' says Simona. So she translated her thoughts and views on a medium she knows best and created art out of jute, emphasising on her message 'fragile'.

'That is to emphasise that women are fragile and are to be handled with care. The word 'fragile' means something delicate. Jute is used for packing and has the word fragile written on it if the content is delicate,' explains the artist.

Another inspiration on her is the sculptures which she saw in India and found 'amazing'. Earlier, she had spent 10 years in Carrara, famous for its marble, and that is where she had developed an interest in the rock. Little wonder then that when she shifted to Rajasthan, she almost instinctively found her way to Makrana, also well known

for the marble found there (as the legend goes, even the famous love monument, Taj Mahal, was built using Makrana marble).

'I have always been fascinated by marble. Makrana was a new experience for me,' says Simona. And this love for marble took her to artisans who work using the rock and from them she picked up inlay work and gold leaf work which are now reflected in her sculptures on display.

'For me, earth is god. My work is a fusion between contemporary

Western and traditional,' says the artist. Simona also used a lot of bronze, which she says is something one can 'play with'. 'You can move it, push it and give it movement. It is amazing to work with bronze,' says an excited Simona.

If you don't believe her, check out her works.

At: Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 50-E Chandragupta Marg - Chanakyapuri  
ON TILL 30 September TIMINGS: 11 am to 6 pm PHONE: 26871901

