

## Press Clipping

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# TINA GETS TRADITIONAL

From promoting young talent the junior Mrs Ambani roots for undiscovered traditional painters



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**I** LOVE history; it's really fascinating," says Tina Ambani at the opening of The Harmony Show on March 13. Mingling with artists, collectors and celebrity friends like Jaya and Abhishek Bachchan, Ambani, dressed in a peacock blue sari, celebrated tradition over modernity.

This year, The Harmony Show has not only changed its venue from the Nehru Centre to The Coomaraswamy Hall, at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sanghralaya, (CMVS) but the content has changed as well—from Indian Contemporary painters to Indian Miniaturists. Ambani assured BG Deshmukh, the chairman of the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), and Sabyasachi Mukherjee the Director of CMVS, this, switch over from modern to miniature, is not just a passing fancy.

"Tradition must be revisited, which is why I have selected contemporary artists to do these paintings. Since the Museum has one of the best collections of miniatures, I would love to come and spend an hour each weekend studying them," said Ambani creating smiles amongst the two gentlemen who uphold the miniatures. Dr Saryu Doshi, the former honorary director of the NGMA, who has studied the Jain miniatures was also approving of Ambani's new direction. "We hardly see much of contemporary miniaturists," Doshi remarked, as a pleased Mahesh Sharma, one of the painters, proudly stood by his creations.

Some of the visitors were, however, disappointed not to see the usual collection of contemporary artists. "We have come to associate the Harmony Show so much with Modern and Contemporary art that we were a bit surprised to see miniatures instead," says Shalini Samant, an art collector who regularly



visits Harmony with a programme to pick up some art.

There is speculation too among gallery owners that perhaps Ambani has decided to showcase miniatures because of the slowdown in the market. To this, Ambani says, "One must move with the times, it is true that miniatures are an unexplored market. Now, more than ever, we must draw on the strength and spirit of our rich civilisation and socio-political fabric including our traditional arts."

Hard times have also meant that the resi-

dencies held abroad, for budding artists has also been pruned down. This year the Harmony Group did not even give out their usual awards and cash prizes.

While things may look bleak this side of canvas, Ambani is convinced that promoting more traditional art will be the shot in the arm the situation calls for. Give that the venue was crawling with foreign guests with handy-cams at the ready the international appeal for Traditional Indian art may just stoke those dull embers of the economy.