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# World-renowned Painter, Rashid Rana, Speaks At Mosaic Event

THE WEEKLY VOICE AUGUST 18, 2014



*World-renowned Painter, Rashid Rana, Speaks At Mosaic Event*

Mississauga: TD Mosaic 2014, in Collaboration with the Art Gallery of Mississauga and the Aga Khan Museum hosted a presentation by the world renowned contemporary Canadian artist of Pakistani origin, Rashid Rana on Aug.13 at Mississauga City Hall. "My work is often a three-way negotiation between myself, my immediate physical surroundings and what I receive – whether through the Internet,

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books, history or collective knowledge.” Rashid Rana, ArtReview, 2013

Widely considered one of the most prominent and original contemporary artists working in South Asia today, Rashid Rana emerged in the early years of this century as the most energetic and productive representative of an entirely new kind of art from Pakistan. Scorning the doctrinaire reliance on one tradition or another that characterized so many previous schools or movements in Pakistan, he combined the influence of Karachi’s popular culture-inspired art of the 1990’s with the formal and aesthetic concerns he inherited from his acknowledged mentor Zahoor-ul-Akhlq. Now, over a decade after the first large paintings that developed his new language, it is easier to see Rashid Rana as a traditional practitioner in some ways: he works in ‘periods’, dedicates himself to exhausting all formal possibilities within his chosen style, returns again and again to art history itself as a theme or touchstone, and resolutely follows a logic that is internal to his practice as a whole. His high-profile exhibitions around the world have clearly made him the most sought after representative of Pakistan in the increasingly globalised art economy and its major collectors, biennials and fairs.

Rana sees himself as an artist who attempts to engage with the time he lives in, as someone who processes a visual record of ideas, politics and even personal relationships through the filter of his ego. This explains the glossy, deliberately ‘contemporary’ appearance of his work, which often matches, in size and ambition, the kinds of divisive but seemingly innocuous cultural phenomena he draws inspiration from, such as advertising hoardings, film posters and most recently, architecture. There are signs, though, that Rana is ready yet again for a departure from his established style and method of critical engagement. The newer works seem increasingly sober, restrained (while becoming more complex in technical terms) and willing to strive for a formal kind of grandeur; some distance from the earliest digital prints such as ‘I Love Miniature’ with their mocking irony and brash visual jokes.

Apart from his career as an artist he is dedicated to art education through frequently supporting and advocating young Pakistani artists. He has taught art for last many years, first at the NCA and since then at Beaconhouse National University (BNU), where he is a founding faculty member and the head of the Fine Art Department at School of Visual Arts and Design (SVAD).

His continuing ubiquity and visible success are a provocation to Pakistani art in general; the responses and challenges that will inevitably emerge from his contemporaries and younger artists might well be a large part of his legacy.

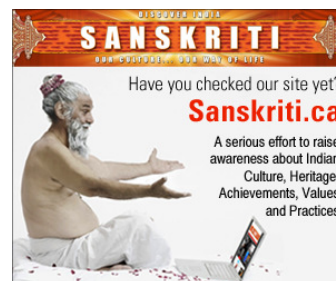
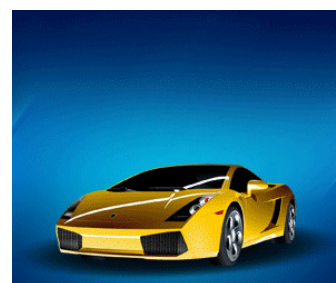
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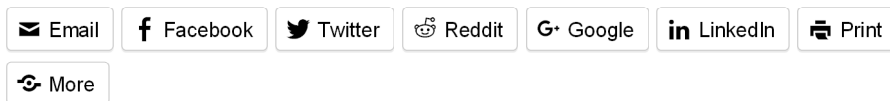
THE WEEK... ➡

Coinciding with the MOSAIC Festival is a phenomenal exhibition presented by the Art Gallery of Mississauga from July 24 – October 19, 2014, The Sahmat Collective: Art and Activism in India since 1989.

The Sahmat Collective: Art and Activism in India since 1989 is presented in Ontario, Canada, by the Art Gallery of Mississauga. The exhibition is organized by The Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, and curated by Jessica Moss and Ram Rahman.

Sahmat has been at the heart of what co-curator Ram Rahman likens to “India’s culture wars.” Animated by the urgent belief that art can propel change and that culture can reach across boundaries, Sahmat has created space for an expansive group of artists and collaborators to present powerful works of art that defend freedom of expression and battle intolerance within India’s often divisive political landscape.

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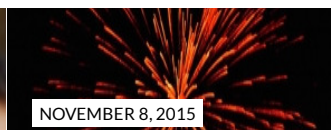
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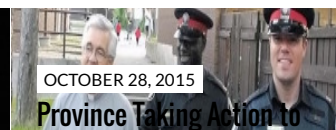
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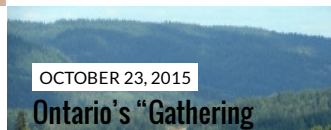
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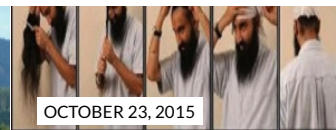
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