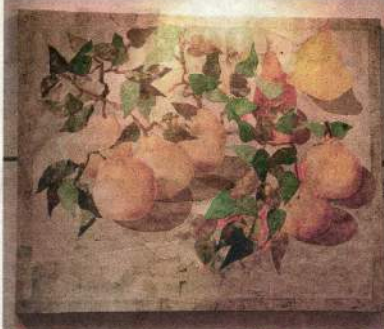


PHOTO: BHAVESH KAVAI



(Top) A Miguel Rasero, mixed media on wood
(Above) A Pablo Picasso, 'Portrait de Famille',
Homme Aux Bras Croises, 1962, Litography



Anil Relia and Umang Hutheesing have an arty talk



Archana Shah of Bandhej and Surendra Patel of Vishalla

Picasso's the Talk of the Town

Art connoisseur Umang Hutheesing's 'gift' to the city, exhibition 'A Collection of European Art', turns into an art affair to remember at L&P Hutheesing Visual Art Centre

The excitement and joy in his voice are palpable when you call up art connoisseur Umang Hutheesing post a fabulous art soiree at L&P Hutheesing Visual Art Centre on Wednesday. "People were asking for autographs," he exclaimed to *Mirror*. And that is just one of the reactions to his exhibition, A Collection of European Masters, which opened at the buzzing gallery which hosted more than 600 guests. The exhibition is a first-of-its-kind at a private gallery in India.

Turning 50 is a landmark and if you are someone like Umang Hutheesing, this is how you celebrate it — with the whole of the city. "Pablo Picasso is to art what William Shakespeare is to English," said Hutheesing, adding, "Fifty is a landmark birthday (November 19) and I wanted to do something landmark through the year. It's unbelievable, the response." The exhibition has 40 works by European greats Joan Miró, Antoni Clavé, Antoni Tàpies, Gaston-Louis Roux and of course, Pablo Picasso.

That made us wonder how difficult was it to put it together? "These works are worth more than a diamond necklace! Of course, it took more than one-and-a-half to two years to conceptualise and put the exhibition together. It was very important to find the right slot when the art is hot, to display these works here," he said.

Hutheesing along with Spanish gallery, Galeria Joan Gaspar, got these photographs here and the works go straight back to Barcelona after Friday.

"This is a very rare and proud

moment for me as it is a unique exhibition which has artworks of the greatest names in the history of art. What is greater than Picasso? It is like Shakespeare coming to a literature event. It is a great honour for the city to host such an exhibition," Hutheesing said earlier in the evening when *Mirror* met him at the show.

The best compliment, we ask... "When aesthetically attuned people like Bimal Patel, Archana Shah, Anil Relia and Sanjay Lalbhai among others congratulate you and your efforts, what else would you want?" said Hutheesing, adding, "An artist from Bhavnagar came all the way for the show, and told me, 'Main net par joyu (about the show)'. What better compliment then that, isn't it?"

Besides young artists, students and art lovers from the city, Vadodara, Surat, Bhavnagar, the crème de la crème made its presence felt at the show. Esther David, Sanjay and Jayshree Lalbhai, Nandu Mistry, Anil Relia, Nabibakhsh Mansoori et al seemed in awe of the works on display.

Also present at the show were the couple who helped get the works here. "This is my first time in Ahmedabad, and I am glad we got the opportunity to showcase such rare paintings here. These will be a great example for budding artists," said Joan Gaspar of Galeria Joan Gaspar, Barcelona.

"It is my gift to the city on my 50th birthday. The exhibition is a global event happening at your doorstep. It is not just for the elite, it is for Amdavadis," signed off Hutheesing.

The exhibition is open till Friday, noon to 8 pm.

—AM



'What great art!' these pretty, arty fans seemed to say at the exhibition on Wednesday



Artist Vrindavan Solanki 'checking out' an artwork



Some lovely music added to the ambience



Jayshree-Sanjay Lalbhai with Joan Gaspar (behind)