

goingNATIVE

# Art of living

**PEOPLE** *From Chinese calligraphy to India's Ganesh, Jose Lorento's journey has led him to find his goddess of wealth in Delhi*

**"T**he artist's world is limitless. It can be found anywhere, far from where he lives or a few feet away. It is always at his doorstep." These words of Paul Strand hold true for Jose Lorento who has been living away from Spain, his native country, for almost two decades now and has finally settled in India.

Jose who maintains Abadi Art Gallery in Delhi's Lado Sarai, pursued his graduation in Chinese calligraphy from Beijing Central Academy of Fine Arts and then moved to London to take up his Master's degree in photography. There he found he missed living in Asia. Jose got an opportunity to come to India when his friend was posted to New Delhi four years ago. The artist and gallerist says the energy here drives him, and he enjoys every bit of living in the city.

His tryst with Indian art began as an associate resident at Khoj International Artist Association. "With a grant from the Spanish

Embassy, a one-year community project in body/text was realised at Khoj. This gave me a first preview of contemporary art practices in India," he recounts.

Delhi has several art galleries so to carve out a niche for yourself is not easy. But this never deterred Jose from realising his passion. "As an artist I had been involved in the art scene since the beginning. I had worked as an independent curator before opening the gallery."

His exposure as a curator for a

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decade at the international level provided the basics to establish a gallery. How to work on the location, promotion and marketing perspectives was something Jose imbibed on his way and this vast hold of experience helped him wade through tough waters.

He seeks his inspiration from daily lives — the people on the streets, his friends or anyone he comes across. From Indian mythology, Shiva, Ganesh and Lakshmi fascinate him most.

As a curator he mostly works with social themes as race, gender class or environment. At the just concluded exhibition "A Trilogy", blue-black, white and red were the main themes.

Commenting on the art space in Spain and how much it differs from India, he says, "Spain has a great variety on the art scene not only in the private sectors but also with lots of independent public art and interactive art projects. Those are usually sponsored by governments,



Jose Lorento

agencies or institutions. This gives more opportunities to artists to work and explore deeply more concepts and ideas." In India, he adds, more effort comes from the private sector rather than cultural agencies and government funded projects.

Besides his art gallery, Jose keeps himself busy learning more Hindi, Urdu and relishes the food here. Visits to Spain are once or twice a year and most of the time Delhi keeps him busy.

Sharing his insight on Delhi art

scene, Jose is quite optimistic. "I feel like the Delhi art scene is growing and there are more and more events every year." He recalls how three years ago when he opened the gallery in Lado Sarai, there were only one or two others in the vicinity but now the place has emerged as the new, vibrant hub for art in the city. To encourage art projects all galleries in the street organise joint art exhibition twice a year. "This scene is very lively and unique for Delhi city."

NISA ASKARI