

THE initial experience of art surpasses its procedural techniques, be it the psychedelic fractals generated on a machine or a testimony in oil on canvas to its creator's dedication to the medium. We are on an eternal quest for anything pleasing and intelligible and with digital art, creativity has found a way to express itself through vessels of progress and advancement.

Tolstoy believed that the most important quality of any work of art is sincerity. When we see a work of art, do we focus on the vision of the artist, the sincerity and simplicity with which his intentions are made visible? Or do we mourn the loss of paint and brush? Must we turn a blind eye to this masterful display of skill because traditional techniques were not used to produce it?

To an artist who is familiar with the digital medium, it offers limitless freedom of expression and exploration. There are no rules to creativity and all that remains is boundless freedom and passion to manifest. Our ancestors painted on caves with pigments and 35,000 years later, we create art with electricity and light. In a time where environmental preservation screams for attention, a medium which uses no paper and leaves virtually no waste has a promising future.

When I exhibited my collection of digital paintings at *Sublime* last year, I wondered how they would be received in a society that is not used to paying for creativity. I wondered if art patrons would be excited about this new medium or resist it and contemplate the treacherous ways with which an artist could produce art with the help of a computer. I was overwhelmed with the appreciation and respect for my chosen medium and to my skeptic mind, this was nothing short of a miracle.

Today, digital art stands where electronic music stood 30 years ago — waiting to claim its rightful place among its much older counterparts. And like with electronic music which found its flag bearer with bands like *Pink Floyd*, digital art too has found its harbinger with artists like Andrew Jones, who has inspired many young artists to pick up their graphic pens and tablets and make a mark in the digital world.

With more artists exploring the digital medium, patrons and buyers are not far behind. For buyers it offers a more economical alternative. Although an oil-on-canvas may command a higher price compared to a digital print, the day is not far when this gap gets smaller.

In my experience, resistance, if any, springs out of ignorance and fortunately this can be overcome with education. Education of how the medium functions and allows an

THE FINAL FRONTIER?

Is the medium as important as the art it holds? Artist **Aamina Shazi** believes the digital space is a limitless canvas to explore and pour her creativity into



artist to create more with less. Besides, the evolution of a new medium by no means signifies the extinction of a traditional one. Some artists are now producing hybrid works using a variety of mediums, and on many occasions a digital print provides the skeleton on which the piece is moulded, but when this mutant piece is finished and placed in a gallery, the word 'digital' is lost in the chaotic mess of a title like 'mixed media'. As for purists like me, who want to see just how much they can milk one medium, the digital space is a platform where one can create, not just without the fear of being cast into a

mould and labelled but also find oneself on the brink of possibilities of creating new genres.

As for the future of digital art, it is brighter today than it was 60 years ago when Ben Laposky first created fractals using an analog machine and called them 'Oscillons'. We are now at the frontier which is dictated by the life-conditions which have summoned this form of art and this redemption. And from where I stand, the possibilities are limitless.

Aamina Shazi is a self-taught digital artist and has held solo exhibitions