



For **Elena Pereira** an inanimate object might say a million more things than a human being. A voracious collector of all sorts of things, the conceptual artist is having her show as part of **Art Bengaluru** where you can discover her fondness for all things immobile...

Priyadarshini Nandy

Elena Pereira's relationship with art cannot be defined; she loves it, she uses it and she experiments with it. It's safer to assume that more than Elena choosing art, it was art that chose her. A conceptual artist from Netherlands, Elena is a bit of German and a bit of Indian. Soft spoken and not your typical artist, Elena doesn't bring in divine references or the wonderfulness of life into a conversation. In a chat with *After Hrs*, Elena talks about her obsession with flowers, why she does what she does and more...

When did you know that you didn't want to do regular art but push the boundaries of creativity?

For me, it wasn't much of a choice, it kind of happened. Some of my work just went in that direction. The thing is, I never stick with one medium. To me it's about the concept I am working on and not about a medium that I am trying to manipulate. I think just before my masters program, I had taken up a design job and I really enjoyed it — that's when I thought conceptual art was something I could do.

To you, what really is art? Is it your

Dead is alive

way of perceiving the world or your way of expressing what you see around you?

I think it would be understanding and handling the world. It's not so much personal; I am more interested in what other people think and see. For me, art is not some kind of therapy.

Most of your work is very deconstructed — by and large, you've broken elements of something down and then reconstructed it by adding other elements. Do you choose these multiple mediums by instinct or do you plan it carefully?



It's kind of like a puzzle of different things — sometimes I plan it and I know exactly what I want to do. And then there are times when I am working on something and then realise it's too perfect. So I try and do something to add imperfections to it. I look at all the material around me, which I collect with a vengeance, and try to understand how I can reinvent that material. For me, it's not about the functionality of the material but how it can be used. But what I like doing most is capturing the vulnerability of these materials.

I noticed a slight obsession with flowers. What about them do you love so much?

I never seem to get enough of them, isn't it? Incidentally, I don't even like flowers. Actually, it's not so much about the flowers but how people use them. Flowers are messages or symbols of many emotions of life — they can represent celebration, sorrow, life or death. That is what I capture.

When did you move to Bangalore? Why?

I have been coming to Bangalore for the past seven years but moved here only last December. I decided to have my



own studio here. I find Bangalore very interesting — it's laid-back and has a keen eye for culture and art. Everything seems to happen in an organic kind of way over here.

Take us through your exhibition that's starting tomorrow...

The exhibition is called Reflectives and I am showing 19 objects/installations. When the gallery asked me to do an exhibition, and while I was collecting materials, I realised that the gallery is

quite an amazing space. It has all this glass around — so I started working with metal and flowers for the show. The idea behind this show is how do we see ourselves in reflective surfaces. But it's not about mirrors *per se* but more about perspective.

Be at Sublime Gallery, 8th Floor, The Collection, UB City, August 16 to 23, 11am to 8pm (closed on Sunday)

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