

Siddharth Shingade's multidimensional art unravels in layers, revealing its many mysteries and nuances. Full of wisdom and spirituality, the works transcend their specific environment to delve into the deeper ideas of connection to the land, the loss of this fragile relationship in our over-urbanised cities and the courage and strength of the men and women of rural India.

Shingade grew up in Tuljapur – an idyllic village set in southern Maharashtra, it has grown into a bustling and crowded town over the years. Now living in the city of Mumbai, he recreates Tuljapur in his art works as he remembers it – through the prism of his subconscious memories, visions and imagination.

His richly layered acrylics on canvas and mixed media works are a nostalgic ode to the soil, sunlight and landscapes of his erstwhile home and a deep reminiscing about the simplicity and warmth of village life. Steeped in mood, emotion and lyricism, the art goes beyond sentimentalism and celebrates the artistic heritage of the region, the rustic, now-forgotten ways of life and the resilience and endurance of the people from this drought-prone landscape.

The unseen, unheard, often marginalised people who inhabit the villages of Marathwada – toy sellers, gypsies, farmers and ordinary village folk that Shingade encountered as a child – are

the protagonists of the earthy yet ethereal paintings. Favourite recurring muses are toy sellers with their baskets of wooden toys who would sit down to rest outside his home after a hot day in the sun, the gypsy women in his village who made colourful embroidered blankets and animals companions such as cows and goats.

Portrayed in a state of oneness with the landscape around them, the characters in Shingade's timeless world seem part-earthly and part-mythical, layered in diaphanous textures and elegant folds of fabric in mesmerising gradations of colour. Wearing an air of brooding, wistful beauty, the dusky, bejewelled figures with kohl-rimmed eyes are firmly rooted in the earth, and are depicted in the dark tones of the soil that pervades this region. Shingade turns their serene faces and bodies into a canvas over which he layers remarkably intricate motifs, folk imagery and spiritual symbols. Despite their mythical appearance, the paintings are grounded in reality – the faces are often depicted without lips to denote a state of alienation and voicelessness