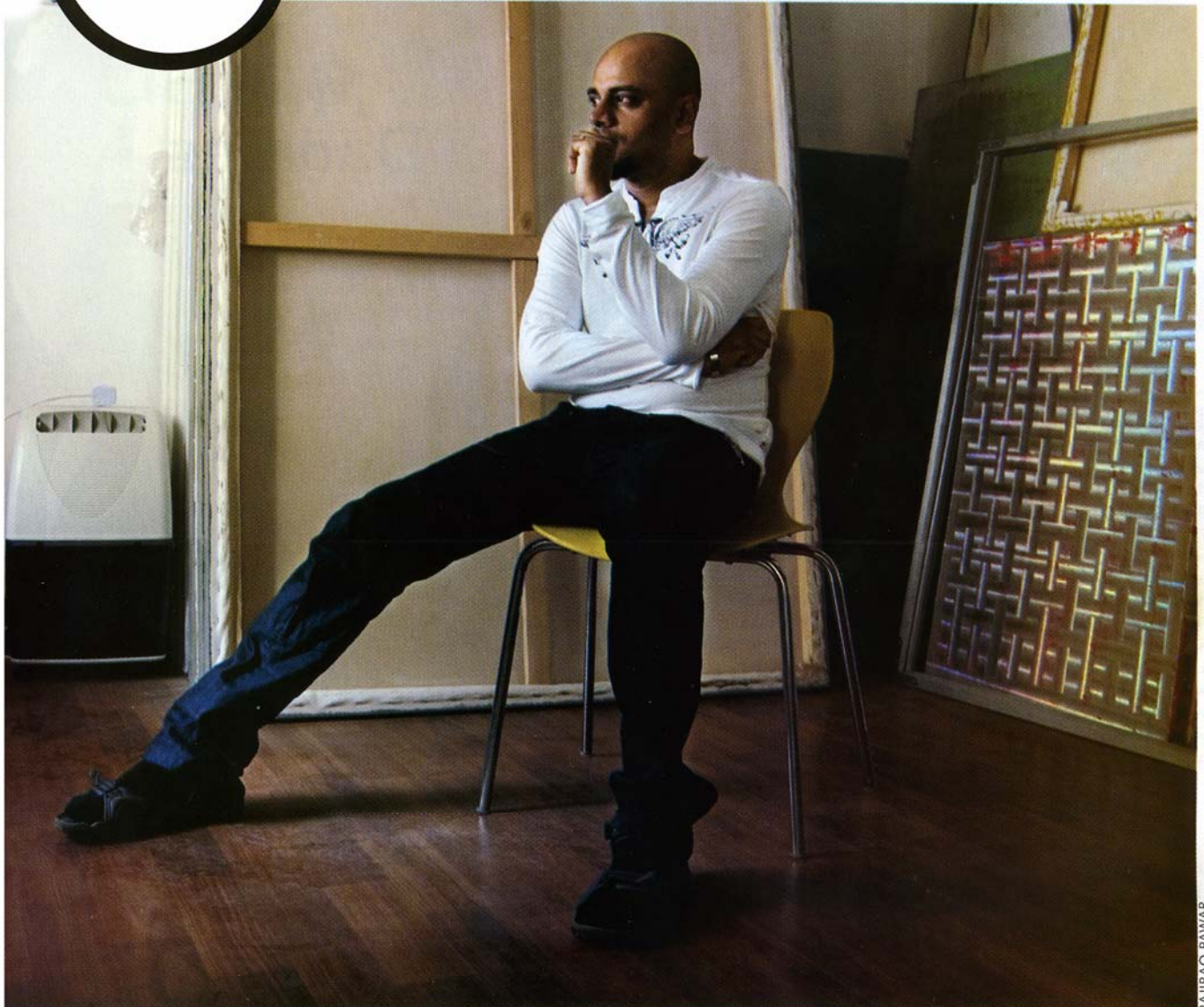




Watch out for Justin Ponmany

WITH TWO BIG SHOWS ON THE ANVIL, HE COULD BE THE NEXT BIG PICK IN ART



79

BAJIRAO PAWAR

Justin Ponmany could well be the next poster boy of the art world. Actually, Justin may not like the tag too much, given the seriousness with which he takes his art and the thought that goes behind what he puts on canvas.

He rarely shows, especially solo, which is why 2007 will be his significant year. Ponmany opens two large shows, the first in February at the Bose Pacia Gallery in New York, and the other at Galeire Mirchandani + Steineruecke in Mumbai, in October. His new works, he says, is

based on a "simple, archaic and classic tryst with portraits. It is a genre that has not been able to keep up with contemporary art. Portraits are about people and people are very important in my scheme of things". He calls the series Expanded Portraits where, "I am looking at a person and his world in the same frame. The idea is to explore how to co-wire a human being's individuality and the world around him within the same frame."

An alumni of Mumbai's Sir JJ School of Art, Ponmany's works

stand out in the clutter of art that seem to be increasingly surrounding us, not just because of what he paints, but also for their form and the way he paints them. Many of his mixed-media works are like photo negatives, with black and silver overtones. He experiments with contemporary mediums and materials like plastic paint, silver hologram foils and rich pigments. They give his works that bright, shiny, almost plastic-like quality, quite like, he says, the plastic culture that surrounds us. "I am a very tactile

person," says Ponmany. "The physicality of the medium is important. It is almost as if I am quoting a material, bringing out its character and texture."

As interesting as his use of materials are his reference points. "The chaotic landscape of suburban Mumbai, where I grew up, finds resonance in whatever I do. However large one thinks, an artist always tries to make small beginnings, and those beginnings happen to be from around your own self."

— DEEPALI NANDWANI