



The Spotlight

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BE THE STAR

ART & IDENTITY
FOR THE SELF & THE WORLD

FROM THE FOUNDER'S DESK

A Letter to the Artist Within Us All

There's a boy. He's about twelve.

It's a summer afternoon, and the fan is spinning above, slowly, like it's too tired to do its job. The boy is lying on the floor, a crayon in hand, and a notebook under his chest—because that's the only way he knows how to feel close to the page. He's not drawing anything fancy. Just lines. Some curves. A shape that probably makes sense only to him.

But to him, it does make sense. In that moment, that notebook is the only place in the world where he feels like he belongs. No teacher. No right answer. No need to explain.

That's what art does.

It gives people a place where nothing needs fixing. Where silence isn't empty. Where questions don't need perfect words. It doesn't ask for stage lights or standing ovations. It just waits for that one quiet moment when someone is ready to say something real.

Art has always been this quiet shelter. For some, it is a way to go back—to the smell of a kitchen where their grandmother sang old songs, or to a memory buried under years of trying to fit in. For others, it's the first time they feel like they are allowed to speak, in a voice that actually sounds like their own.

It's not always beautiful. It's not always understood. But it's always honest.

And that's the thing—art doesn't promise to change the world. **It just holds space for people to be who they are, without needing to wear a mask.**

Somewhere, there's a young girl painting her village's walls in secret because no one in her family thinks art is "useful." Somewhere else, a boy sings quietly in the school bathroom, because it's the only place he feels brave.

They don't think of it as finding their "identity." They're just trying to breathe. And art gives them room to do that.

At IIG Arts Academy, this is what matters most. Not just the perfect technique or polished stage shows. But the rawness. The searching. The student who stays back after class to ask, "Does this sound like me?" The one who starts writing in their mother tongue again after years of feeling ashamed.

This edition is for them.

For the artist who's still figuring it out. For the one who doesn't always finish what they start. For the one who's never shown anyone their work.

Art is not about being loud. It's about being real. And if you're reading this—there's a good chance you already know that.

Let the world call it art. You can call it home.





THE MIRROR EFFECT

How Art Reflects Who We Are

What does it mean to know oneself?

This question has followed people for centuries. Some try to answer it through words, others through silence. Some look to their families, their hometowns, their language. Others look in the opposite direction, to escape, to rebuild, to rename what they were given. Still, the question remains.

And often, without making a grand decision, without planning it too much, people turn to art.

Not because art holds all the answers. But because it gives people a place to ask the question without being interrupted.

What if the lines drawn on a page, the pauses between notes, or the shadows in a photograph are not just part of a technique—but quiet signs of a person trying to understand themselves?

What if art is not an activity outside of the self—but a reflection of it?

There is a kind of honesty that appears in creative spaces, not because someone intended it, but because they stopped trying to hide. A theatre student doesn't know why they cry during a scene that isn't even written as emotional. A young singer adds a rough edge to a soft melody, and when asked why, they say 'it just felt right'. A dancer repeats the same phrase again and again, not out of mistake, but as if their body is remembering something it was never taught.

No one teaches this. But it happens.

It may be that identity, as most people understand it, is too large to hold all at once. It is not one clear shape or story. It shifts depending on time, place, and who's watching. It is made up of childhood memories, cultural roots, names people are proud of and names they've left behind. Sometimes it is visible. Other times, it is only felt.



Art, perhaps more than any other space, allows this shapelessness to be accepted. It does not need things to be clear. It only asks for something to be real. And the truth, when it appears in art, doesn't need to be named. It only needs to be heard.

But art does more than reflect what is already known. Sometimes, it opens a door to what hasn't been seen yet.

A young person takes up classical dance for the first time, and through the tilt of the head, the stillness of a hand, they feel something ancient move through them. A shy student tries theatre and hears their own voice echo across a room—for the first time. These moments are not just about learning a craft. They are about something deeper. They mark the beginning of self-recognition.

Of course, none of this happens in a straight line. There are days when the work feels confusing, when nothing makes sense, when the canvas stays blank. But even in stillness, something is taking shape. Art does not rush this process. It moves at the speed of awareness.

And maybe that's the point. **Maybe art is not a mirror that shows a perfect image, but one that shows small fragments—a glimpse of who someone is, or who they're becoming.**

Maybe identity is not something to be written down or defined, but something to be noticed—in the spaces between what people say and what they make.

In the end, **art** does not claim to explain. It only **offers** a quiet space, where the reflection is not always sharp, but always honest. **A space where people can walk in as strangers to themselves and walk out holding at least one piece of who they are.**

And maybe, just **maybe—that is enough.**





Why Visibility Matters as an Artist

The world rewards presence, not perfection. While you're polishing in private, others are building audiences with imperfect work.

Your best work means nothing if no one sees it. The most brilliant art locked away helps nobody. Even rough drafts shared can spark connections, opportunities, and growth.

Opportunities go to artists who show up. Galleries notice consistent creators. Collectors buy from artists they follow. Collaborations happen between visible peers.

You improve faster in public. Feedback sharpens your edge. Deadlines force completion. Audience expectations push you beyond comfort zone.

Your voice matters in the cultural conversation. Someone out there needs exactly what you create. Your perspective adds to the diversity the world desperately needs.

Community forms around visible work. Like-minded people gravitate toward authentic creators. Supporters can't rally around work they can't see.

Confidence builds through practice, not hiding. Each share makes the next one easier. Public vulnerability becomes strength over time.

The cost of invisibility is real. Years pass without momentum. Others fill spaces you could have claimed. Talent unused eventually withers.

You can't sell to ghosts. Art careers require audiences. Even passion projects need witnesses to validate their impact.

Time doesn't wait for you to feel ready. The scroll keeps moving. The spotlight keeps shifting. Show up now with what you have, not later with what you wish you had.

SHOW...NOT TELL



REAL STORIES REAL IMPACT

*Rishab Rikhiram Sharma — An Artist Who
Carries Their Roots Within*

There's something unforgettable about the first time someone hears Rishab play the sitar. The music is precise but not rigid, emotional but never loud. It moves gently, the way old memories do—slow, warm, honest.

Rishab, a Sitarist & Classical Musician, comes from a legacy. He is the youngest disciple of Pandit Ravi Shankar and belongs to a family of legendary instrument makers. But he has never treated that legacy like a crown. It's more like a thread—something he chooses to hold, shape, and pass on.

What makes Rishab's work stand out is not just his skill, but the way he grounds tradition in today's world.

His social media doesn't try to modernize classical music with gimmicks. Instead, it reflects sincerity. His videos are filmed with care. His captions speak gently about memory, discipline, and meaning. His tone is never trying to prove—it simply invites the listener in.

Visibility through sincerity.

He doesn't shout. But people still stop and listen. That's the power of quiet clarity.

What Does He Remind Us of?

- Cultural grounding doesn't limit an artist—it strengthens their voice.
- Being seen doesn't always mean being loud. Sometimes, it means being clear.
- Art becomes more powerful when it carries memory with it—without apology.

He is not just a “well-branded” artist - he's a well-rooted one.

And that makes all the difference.



RANG-AE-MEHFIL

DANCE COMPETITION



In the **Classical & Semi-Classical** segment, tradition took center stage. Performers expressed grace and depth through choreography rooted in heritage, judged by Rudraprasad Swain and Ananya Parida. The event was graced by guest Sanoj Kumar, adding to its cultural richness.

The **Modern Dance** segment brought bold energy and personal expression, with styles ranging from freestyle to hip-hop.

Judges Rishi and Nandu Master recognized the creativity and intensity of each performance. Together, the competitions celebrated both heritage and experimentation—two sides of identity expressed through dance.

SOLO SINGING COMPETITION

The solo singing competition turned the spotlight on raw vocal talent and emotional expression.

With genres ranging from Indian classical to contemporary hits, the competition featured a wide range of performances that showcased the versatility of the young singers. Judge Anurag Patnaik brought musical depth to the judging panel with his constructive feedback and ear for detail. The atmosphere was further uplifted by the presence of Sanoj Kumar, whose engagement with the performers brought warmth to the event.





UNTIL NEXT TIME...

As this month's chapter closes, what remains is a quiet affirmation of who we are.

Through movement, music, and expression, art has offered us a mirror. Not the kind that simply reflects, but one that reveals—the fragments of identity we carry, shape, and share.

We'll return next month with more voices that challenge and comfort, more colors that blur boundaries, and more moments where identity finds its stage.

Thank you for being part of this unfolding story.

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