

Religare initiative to help promote galleries, artists

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A WELL-KNOWN corporate label is unfurling an arts project that aims to follow a "multi-dimensional" approach for the growth of this sphere.

Religare, a Ranbaxy promoter group company which has positioned itself as an integrated financial services provider, is launching the "arts initiative" which will embrace setting up galleries in metros, promoting a diverse range of artists and artworks and advisory activities.

The move will also cover residency programmes for artists, education and awareness programmes in schools and colleges and documentation and publication pursuits.

"We intend being a cohesive unifier in the realm of art. The role will be to function as a knowledge bank, catalyst and facilitator. By the year-end, the company plans to unveil a gallery in Delhi. This should be followed up by at least 3-4 more galleries in the metros. We are looking at a few locales. The focus is on showcasing and creating exposure for a broader spectrum of artists spanning the blue-chips, mid-rung, upcoming and new names who are still to break into the scene. The intent is to widen the base and not limit ourselves to select names. We are already begun lining up shows with artists of various categories," Mr Mukesh Panika, head of the Religare arts initiative, told ET.

Incidentally, the present project is unfolding under Religare's holding company Reli-

gare Enterprises.

Mr Panika went on to add that the company will not just focus on exhibits in the country, but also abroad. The overseas shows are planned to crystallise in galleries and museums. Some international locales being targeted are US, UK, Germany, France, Australia, New Zealand, Ukraine and the Middle East region.

In step, the art advisory services will revolve around, among others, those wanting to foray into the art business, collectors concentrating on beefing up or churning their stocks and buyers looking at an opportunity to park funds in artworks.

Together, with the corporate team picked by the company to take the arts initiative forward, a panel of experts comprising artists, critics, art connoisseurs, historians and restorers is also being put in place.

The professional group will help in different art-related endeavours, including authenticating and valuing artworks.

"Religare is also viewing an interface with the government and schools and art colleges through educational and awareness programmes to bring about changes in the art curricula to infuse more sensitivity in these academic structures," Mr Panika said.

In addition, residency programmes will be initiated to instil a greater confidence in the younger artists and expose them to latest developments in the art world.

A documentation effort to create a full-scale databank of artists and artworks has also been kicked off.