

ART WITH A HEART

RAHUL IRANI

Real estate scion organises a show for a good cause

By Kritika Banerjee

REAL ESTATE and art have always had a symbiotic relationship that the art world doesn't like to acknowledge publicly — walls need art to look pretty, so the more square footage real estate companies build, the more demand they create for art.

Real estate scion Nayan Raheja, though, combines both a passion for art and a nose for the bricks-and-mortar business. He's a passionate wildlife photographer, but on Sunday evening his pictures were overshadowed by the art exhibition he had put together for a cause at the residence of Rajya Sabha MP and Videocon's group managing director Rajkumar Dhoot.

Titled 'Aks', the Urdu word for reflection, the exhibition showcased 57 works of art that are to be put up on sale to raise money for the Krishna Mahesh Gayatri Sansthan, a Delhi-based NGO working for under-privileged children. Minister for corporate and minority affairs Salman Khurshid, in his short speech, dedicated the evening to the departed Jyoti Basu.

"I was planning to hold an exhibition of this kind for quite some time and the best part is that the money will go for a good cause," said Raheja, who has also contributed a few of his wildlife photographs, shot in Sariska and Bandavgarh, to the exhibition.

So, when was he bitten by the shutter bug? "I have been into wildlife photography since I was a kid, but have never really exhibited my work," he said. But these days, it's not the camera alone that has been keeping him busy; he's also cutting a music album.

On his real estate business, he said there was no escaping it, but his interest in music and photography help him break away from the monotony of life. Warming up the chilly evening, Amaan and Ayaan Ali Khan presented soulful compositions on sarod, and kept the guests regaled. With the air heavy with dew, the musical notes set the mood right.

Starting on a somber note with Raga Desh, the brothers later played a mélange of compositions on Raga Bageshri and ended their performance with the famous Tagore song (and Mahatma Gandhi's favourite), *Akla cholo re*.

When asked on their choice to end the night with an anthemic Bengali song, younger brother



Sarod brothers Amaan and Ayaan Ali Khan regaled the invitees to the Aks opening with Tagore's *Ekla chalo re* at the end of their performance



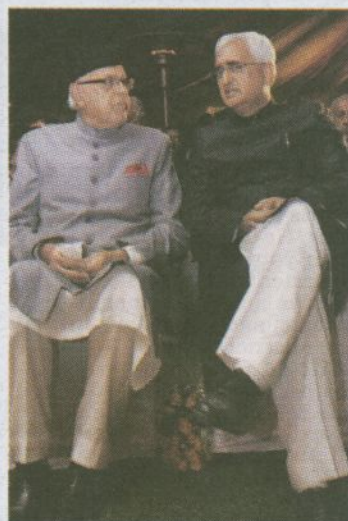
Rajkumar Dhoot, MP, with his daughter, Namrata

Amaan said, "The song has a beautiful message and we thought it would connect well with the cause behind the art exhibition." Well, going by the audience reaction, the music



Nayan Raheja shot his wildlife pictures at tiger reserves

did touch a chord. Kensaku Konishi, president and CEO of Canon, was left mesmerised by the sarod recital. "I have never heard classical Indian music and had



Farooq Abdullah and Salman Khurshid (right) at the show

my doubts about it ... but sitting through the performance I enjoyed every moment of it." He was echoing the thoughts of all those present that evening. kritika.banerjee@mailtoday.in