

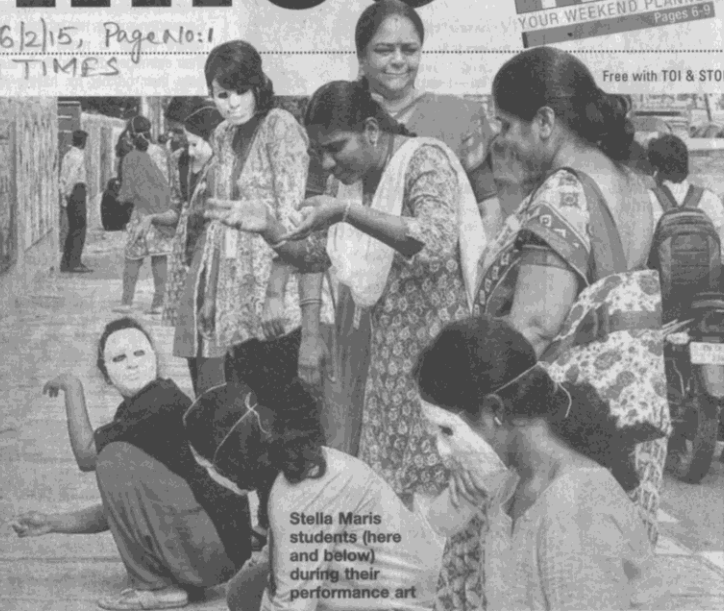
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YOUR WEEKEND PLANNING Pages 6-9

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Chennai college students take art to the streets



Stella Maris students (here and below) during their performance art

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It was just a few days ago that professionals, including artists from India and abroad, showed Chennai what street art is all about by painting the city's walls. And now, it is the city college students who are taking art to the streets. It all started with a competition held last year at the Goethe-Institut in Chennai, where students from the Anna University and Stella Maris College were selected to join the ongoing project, Conquer the Concrete. And now, for the chosen ones, it's time to paint.

PAINTINGS DEPICT CAMPUS BIODIVERSITY

It is an eye-catching view along the Gandhi Mandapam Road, with images painted on each panel of the Anna University compound wall on the eastern side. To ensure that the paintings catch the attention of commuters easily, the students have even implemented a few architectural theories into street art. Explaining the work, Mona Vijay, a first year student of the School of Architecture and Planning (SAP), says, "Basic theories like diagonal concept and contrast are what we have used so that any passerby will get a continuous view of the painting as he/she goes past the wall."

According to the students, the paintings depict the biodiversity within



Above and right: students of Anna University paint the walls

the campus. Devinth M, another student, says, "It's all about how the campus is intertwined with nature and shows the presence of animals like monkeys, deer and snake within the sprawling campus."

HERITAGE THROUGH THE EYES OF ART

"Heritage could be both architectural and cultural and those are the heritage images painted on the wall at the other end, the western side," points out B Balaji, a first-year



architecture student, SAP, adding, "The university building itself is a part of the city's architectural heritage. And the other images include dance, music and sports activities within the campus of Anna University, which also adds up to the city's rich cultural heritage. So, the basic idea is to depict Chennai with Anna University as the background."

ART AND STREET PERFORMANCES

On Wednesday morning, the girls of

the Fine Arts department at Stella Maris College took art to the streets, quite literally, with a procession to the main entrance of the college, which culminated in an installation at the bus stand outside the campus. The traffic came to a standstill for a few minutes as all commuters stopped to see the performance. "It's something called the performance art in the western art world - and is about performing in synchronisation with music," informs Srinidisha Balachandran, a final-year student.

Dr Lakshmi Priya Daniel, associate professor at the Fine Arts department explains further, "The performance art lasted only for 15 minutes and that included a procession, installation art and writing on pavement. There were around 80 to 100 students and they wrote onliners on what Chennai means to them - like the city's famous filter coffee and cinema culture. The performance was planned out well and immediately got a go-ahead from Dr Sr Jasinthra Quadras (principal) and Dr Margaret Thomas (HOD, Fine Arts)."

Another student, Nishya Chordia, says, "Both the performance and the paintings are aimed at focusing attention on street artists and reviving their art. As students of fine arts, we are taught to appreciate every form of art - be it the art on the streets or inside a gallery."