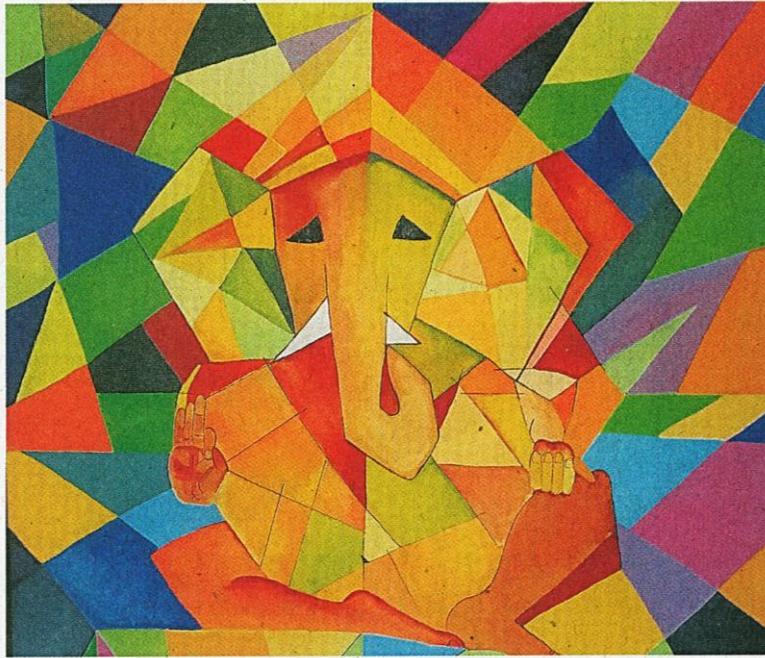


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Canvas for change Art works displayed at the exhibition  
 ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# Dialogues from the heart

Five college friends-turned-artists reunite for a unique art show whose proceeds will go towards a school for autism

•• PREETI ZACHARIAH

It began as an attempt to bring five college mates together. Carmelita Roy, Sakthi Priya, Tania Thomas, Hema Vikram and Anupama Surender George were all once part of Stella Maris College's Fine Arts Department. "We all passed out in 2004," says Thomas. And although their paths diverged post college, they stayed in touch. "The idea behind the exhibition was to get all of us, caught up in our own little worlds to come together," says Surender.

Dialogues – A Journey Through Canvas, held in the city between September 22 and 24, was a visual representation of their state of mind and emotions, say the five women artists behind the show. Take Surrender's own works – a variety of vividly-hued flowers created with anger and fierce brush-strokes. "I take to art when I am upset," she smiles, adding that after she is done she feels at peace. Flowers are a prevailing theme because, "I was very close to my grandmother and much of our relationship revolved around gardening," she says, pointing to her interpretations of hibiscus, sunflowers and heliconia.

Flowers are part of mixed-media artist Hema Vikram's work



too. However, her love for texture sees her using a variety of craft-based techniques to create mixed-media installations. Think tile, jute, dough, tyres and wire carefully put together into a holistic form. "I like working with different mediums," says Vikram, adding that she is often inspired by Indian folk arts.

Indian folk arts inspire independent artist Sakthi Priya as well. Priya, who also manages training and workshops in expressive art therapy at the East West Centre for Counselling, says that her paintings often have patterns, designs and symbols inspired by these art forms. She also uses zentangles and mehendi patterns, she says, adding that there is usually a lot of symbolism in her work. Her artwork,

Rise, for instance, which depicts a woman emerging out of a pond stippled with lotus blooms represents, "blossoming from the muddiness," she says, admitting that it was created at a point when she felt really lonely. "It was to help me feel more positive about life," she smiles.

Colour is a driving factor for Carmelita Roy, who is part of the Artists' Conclave Foundation, a group of national and international artists. "I travel widely and a lot of my work is inspired by that. Also, I love bright colours," says Roy, whose two young sons are her strongest critics: Textile designer and independent artist, Tania Thomas' passion for textiles shows in the way she paints. "My style is abstract," says Thomas, who constantly experiments with different tools and techniques to create her textured, layered paintings that include red tinted cityscapes and kaleidoscopic dreams. "My paintings are not pre-conceived, rather forms, colours and textures evolve intuitively as I confront the canvas," she believes.

Part of the proceeds of the show will go in aid of the Jayam School of Autism. And this is just the start says Vikram, "It was a team effort and we work very well together. There is a lot more to come soon," she smiles