

April 15, 2018

# Busting beauty ideals, spreading body positivity

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Chennai:** Mannequins that were either too voluptuous, too busty or too thin, portraits of women on bubble-wrapped canvasses or paintings of those obsessed with their waistlines — artworks by final year students at Stella Maris College made a bold statement on the idea of beauty and body positivity at the college's annual exhibition, Tessellate.

Taking on the social media craze to look perfect, a few students explored issues around body types, beauty and mental health. "My canvasses are an expression to what I have felt or what my friends go through. My self-portrait, bubble-wrapped and



L R Shankar

**MAKING A STATEMENT:** The exhibition-cum-sale will be held at Lalit Kala Akademi till April 17 and is a platform for the students to explore issues, create awareness and find their entrepreneurial side

with the fragile sticker on the canvas can be seen as a feminist statement as to how women are perceived to be weak

and in need of being protected. Or it could be seen as a woman who comes across as strong but may be still feeling

vulnerable inside," says student Harshita Singhvi.

Another student, explored plastic surgery which can be lifesaving for acid attack survivors or people with burns, but can be destructive for those obsessed with that perfect pout or high cheekbones.

The exhibition-cum-sale, being held at Lalit Kala Akademi till April 17, is a platform for the students to explore issues, create awareness and find their entrepreneurial side as well. So it was natural for Munira Sadiq to explore the idea of books for blind children.

"More than a book in braille, I have tried to make an interactive product. The story is about animals in a forest

and the children can touch, feel and take the animal shapes out of the book, and have a 'jungle' experience in a fun way," says the student, who has worked with a city-based NGO to come up with another such audiobook that can be read and touched.

Teresa Antony Alapatt, another student, has created a similar set of braille books that tell an experiential story. So a story involving the beach and sea includes shells and sand attached inside the book.

"We have been preparing for the exhibition for the past five months and it allowed us to explore our individual creativity," says Sahiti, who has done screen printing on textiles