

Escape of the Spirit

Exhibition of Monoprints travels to Tokyo

In this surreal time in our lives, as we confront the Covid-19 pandemic, we are all experiencing a lot of anxiety wherever we may be. Here is how one woman who helped to raise the spirits of a particularly vulnerable community.

My long-time friend Dolly Narang, owner of The Village Gallery in New Delhi, has been a dedicated advocate for the rehabilitation of the women inmates of Tihar Prison when she would go regularly to Tihar to demonstrate the art of monoprint making in the 1990s.

We were posted in Delhi in the early 90s and had the opportunity to see this exhibition at the India International Center. It was an eye opener to see how those works of art spoke to us, without words. At the same time we could not help wondering what the stories were behind these creations. What came alive is that despite their physical imprisonment they have achieved an unexpected liberation of the spirit. I have great admiration for Dolly, who has never lost her passion for this project.

Some years ago I had the honour of helping to arrange a successful show of their works at Gallery TOM in Tokyo, also known as gallery for "Touch Me Art". The gallery was known for working with the visually disabled with the belief that 'art is to be experienced through the sense of touch.'

I knew Mrs. Murayama of Gallery Tom located in Shibuya Ko. When I proposed this idea she was very interested. The exhibition, which was titled, "Escape of the Spirit" was held for 8 weeks in her gallery. This was the first time that Gallery Tom was presenting an exhibition from India that to of a unique concept of the works of art by women prisoners. There was great interest from the Japanese

I am delighted that the India International Centre (IIC), which is an oasis in the megacity of New Delhi, will be hosting the exhibition. This exhibition will give hope and a chance for a better life to some remarkable artists.

In our current isolation, we cannot help feeling nostalgic, remembering the warm hospitality of the city and its people while my husband and I were working in Delhi so many years ago, in the early 1990s.

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