

THE WEEK

JOURNALISM WITH A HUMAN TOUCH

Exhibition: Between Us



Rebel art

Graffiti in India amounts to little more than scribbling 'Raju <heart> Chanda' on historical monuments. There is very little in India by way of graffiti. A trip to downtown Mumbai's Gallery Maskara will reveal a form of graffiti that most would not connect with traditional graffiti at all. Bubblegum eyes, starry skies, rainbow hues, mushrooms and ladybugs... these are what people graffiti artist Nina Pandolfo's world. "I never had a dark style of painting," she says. "I never ran in the streets with a spray can; it was illegal then and it is illegal now! And I do not think I need to be dark and negative if I need to say something serious."

Her exhibition, titled 'Between Us', is a testimony to the need to return to simpler times and be as sincere as children are. The exhibition disappoints, for lack of quality as well as numbers. Graffiti on one wall is all one will find; the rest of the exhibition consists of four canvases of little girls. Graffiti? We wonder. "Graffiti is evolving all over the world," Nina points out. "One can-

not expect every artist to have the same voice."

Granted. So keep confusion at bay when confronted with her happy and airy images. Nina's career has involved working with several museums, castles and trains like Germany's Dusseldorf, Glasgow's Kelburn Castle and Brazil's Supervia. "Right now I am working on a mural in Sao Paulo," says Nina. "I love painting on exterior walls. I paint to reach out to a wider variety of people."

Graffiti started out by being a political tool for politicians to get their messages across to every cross-section of society.

It was not until the late '60s that the language of graffiti developed. It was not before long that there were different gangs of artists, who call themselves writers, moved the art to subways in the bid for exclusive space and one-upmanship. Today it has found mainstream acceptance. It seems that this quintessentially underground rebel art has found fuller expression.

'Between Us' is on at Gallery Maskara, 3rd Pasta Lane, Colaba, Mumbai, till December 31, 2008.

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