

Open air art

This Sunday, city artists will bridge the gap between art and art lovers as they draw and paint at Sculpture Park

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Art Park's first outing three years ago, led by SG Vasudev was at the Sculpture Park near Town Hall. The venue was little known and the concept, unfamiliar. There was no trick to it. Fascinated onlookers watched the likes of Rekha Rao and Jasu Rawal draw on A4-sized sheets, and sell the works for as little as ₹500. The big idea was to make sales outside of the gallery system, and break down purported barriers between art and the common man. Onlookers interacted with artists, observed their methodologies and got a peek into their thought process.

Even if it were only for a few hours, Art Park, removed the tag of inaccessibility.

But now Art Park is a city staple: over the years, held on the first Sunday of each month, it has remained non-commercial, still held at the Sculpture Park, true to the founding thought, and funded by a small government grant. But a few things have changed since its unassuming start. The works though still done only on A4 sheets, and sold for no more than ₹1,000 apiece, artists may now bring along their other small format works, too, priced nominally and not exceeding ₹3,000.

The event coming up this Sunday is a special edition. It has



an all-female cast featuring 35 women including Bharathi Sagar, Bhavani GS, Shirley Mathew, and Rani Rekha, among others – a list drawn up by artists Bhavani and Rekha K. Kannada poet Prathibha Nandakumar will be reading poetry for visitors, and is expected to draw a crowd. “By adding multi-disciplinary art forms, Art Park will facilitate a lovely environment and that is what I want it to finally evolve into – an all-inclusive arts event,” Vasudev adds. He hopes to put theatre artists and musicians on the bill, in due course.

In past editions, established artists such as Lokesh BH, Sivanand Basavanthappa,

Praveen Kumar, JMS Mani and Chandranath Acharya had come on board to participate at this small-scale event. At a time, Vasudev points out, when artists seem to meet each other mostly at cocktail circuits, this kind of interaction has brought in a refreshing change. “I have known most of the artists for years, seen their works on the walls of galleries but now, I actually get to see them at work,” he quips. He is a permanent fixture at Sculpture Park during the event, and may be seen walking around tables set amid the greenery.

Vasudev talks of his own discoveries at the event. For instance, he mentions artist Chandranath Acharya, whom he thinks a fantastic illustrator. But seeing him at work, he says, was probably a more fascinating experience. He talks of being amazed by artist JMS Mani's methodology. “Have you seen him draw?” Vasudev asks. “He is so quick.”

The inclusive nature of Art Park has prompted several walk-ins to demonstrate their talents, including art hobbyists and children, who are seen drawing with earnestness alongside established senior artists. In a recent edition featuring cartoonists, there was Venkatesh Ellore who is known to draw Lord Ganesha with the English alphabet. This time too, the organisers expect much interest: “All women who paint and draw, whether they have ever been showcased in galleries or not, are welcome to participate,” Bhavani says, stressing on Art Park's participative spirit.

*Art Park, 11am–5pm, February 5, Sculpture Garden, Ravindra Kalakshetra Annexure, JC Road.
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