



Art Exhibition "Art for PETRA", 14 to 18 May 2012 at Intercontinental Muscat

Twenty artists from all walks of life and different cultures got together to exhibit their works of art in a joint Art Exhibition at the Intercontinental Muscat. The participating artists are Aruna Chagarlamudi, Asmara Naveed, Beatrix Abiwu, Diana Samonenko, Flora Kiss, Heena Kothary, Ingunn Heggheim-Bulteau, Marianne Olsgaard, Margarita Lipkov, Olga Hupje, Sunita Rajvanshi, Suzanne Banning, Mary, Nathaniel, Elise and Kirsten Sweigart, Tania Hens, Tarini Agarwal, Valentina Dolgopyatova and Wendy de Plaa. Most of the artists are regularly painting together at the Ras Al Hamra Recreation Centre and some of the other artists are friends.

Part of the proceeds of the exhibition went to P.E.T.R.A. Oman, The Para Equestrian and Therapeutic Riding Activities, hence the name "Art for PETRA", which was the third in a series of three exhibitions this spring.

How it all started? One year ago, during our Creative Arts Workshop at RAHRC, Valentina asked if we could have an art exhibition of our group. Then we started to look for a good location, and it took

another year to find one. This happened in November last year, when Sandra Kapoh, co-founder of P.E.T.R.A., Sunita, also teaching art classes at PDO, and I met with Edouard Feghali, Food and Beverage Director at Intercontinental Muscat. We decided to organise three exhibitions in a row and donate part of the proceeds to P. E.T.R.A. The first Art Exhibition "Land of Impressions" by Sandra and Maya Parfenova was held in March this year, followed by a second exhibition, "Celebration of Colours" by Sunita Rajvanshi and Tania Hens, which was held in April.

The third exhibition "Art for PETRA" was opened by H.H. Dr. Shariffa Khalid Al Said on Monday, 14 May 2012 and lasted for three more days until 18 May. The exhibition counted 100 Art works, consisting of paintings and photographs. This colourful collection showed a wide variety of topics ranging from Omani/Arabian theme and figurative to abstract. The opening was accompanied by live music performed by Leta Slupik, who played an array of different, mostly handmade and Native-American flutes.

What inspired these artists to participate and how did they experience it? Here are some comments from some of them:

Wendy: "Wonderful way of creating a platform for many creative people in Muscat to show their work. Inspiring event for me personally, with a big bonus that we were able to collect so much money for PETRA in doing something we all love. I really enjoyed the experience."

Aruna: "I was inspired by the exhibition "Celebration of Colours" that Tania and Sunita held for PETRA. It was then, that I found out about PETRA helping disabled kids through very interesting therapeutic riding. Art for PETRA has given a sense of social awareness, help raise funds and an opportunity to exhibit art with lots of fun."

Tarini: "An interesting way to showcase growing talent for a cause. It was an eclectic exhibition with different art mediums and levels, all very fresh and interesting."

Diana: "I am a very new artist, started to paint on canvas in 2008. Then I stopped for four years and I joined the Creative Arts Workshop RAHRC in January 2012!!! And I started to paint again with great pleasure! It is such a great idea to have this exhibition and at the same time donate money from sold paintings to PETRA. This was for me the first exhibition to participate in. It was a great experience and I am so thankful for the chance to join. There were many wonderful and interesting paintings and photographs of 20 people and it is amazing how different people are and their view of this world! I loved this exhibition and would work more on my paintings to get chance to participate in the future again!"

Heena: "Exhibitions are very important for artists as it makes people aware of our Art. Participating in exhibitions enables artists to create their best work which can then be appreciated by all. It also gives us a channel to have our work introduced & shown to a large number of people from different walks of life where otherwise it would not be possible. My inspiration is from my belief that what I have been able to achieve is due to the blessings of my elders, support as well

as appreciation from the society & people at large. Therefore it is my duty to give back to them in the best way possible thru my Art."

Leta: "I was thrilled to have the opportunity to offer my flute music as my artistic contribution to the Art for PETRA Exhibition. The sound of the Native American flute echoing in the large, open lobby of the InterContinental Hotel added a magical effect to the opening night of the exhibition that I hope will linger long in the hearts and minds of those that attended."

Suzanne: "It was in many ways a very positive experience for me to have an exhibition together with this enthusiastic group of people. For the first time friends, acquaintances and the general public of Oman could get to know my art work. I met some nice new people and on top of that it was for a good cause!"

Margarita: "Helping to raise money for PETRA was a very personal decision for me. It was important to participate in this show, not only because it was a way to exhibit my work here in Muscat, but also because I have a nephew in Calgary who was born with many disabilities. I know the struggles my sister Rossana went through in order to find places that would provide stimulating activities for her child. My little sister, my only sibling and best friend just passed away. This is a way of honouring her. I did something for a cause that was so dear to her heart and in doing so, she is living again....in my heart. That is why I am so touched and grateful that I got the opportunity to put my paintings in this Exhibition."

