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Free with TOI & STOI



Pics: Praveen Tyagarajan

Environment issues: the painting's on the Stella Maris wall

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Hope for the World — that's the theme around which the students of Stella Maris College are doing murals on the front wall of their campus. After the city witnessed several environmental issues recently, the department of Fine Arts has decided to take up a project to sensitise people with murals and quotations. "Of the 30 panels on the compound wall, 15 are murals and the other 15 are quotations about nature. The murals are in a particular series — starting with the evolution of man and nature, it leads on to how man exploited nature, followed by a few murals on natural calamities and finally, a few of them that depict how man should conserve nature," says Akshaya Vardhini, one of the students involved in the project.

Another student, Bianca Joseph, says that each mural is done by a team of undergraduate students and the first-year post-graduates. "Ours is a four-year undergraduate course and each part of the project has been taken care of by different classes. The basic conceptualisation is by the final-year students, whereas, designing is the responsibility of the third- and second-year students. And the painting of murals involves everyone, including the post-graduates," she informs. Explaining one of the murals, Bianca says, "This particular mural depicts the importance of water. See, there are three women in the mural, each carrying water from a well and using it for different purposes. But where does the water come from? There will be water in your well only when the nearby ponds and lakes are full."

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Pics: Praveen Tyagarajan

Students try to sensitise public on environment with murals

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For that, enough rainfall is needed. And the number of trees play a key role in getting adequate rainfall. Everything is inter-connected. Now, after Vardah, we've lost a large portion of city's green cover. So, what needs immediate attention is replanting of trees."

Students say that the murals have been inspired by the paintings of a Bengali artist. "We've taken inspiration from the paintings of Jamini Roy. And we've predominantly used primary Indian colours — yellow, blue and red," says Pearl Maxy, a Fine Arts student and adds that the murals will be an eye catcher once it is completed fully. "A lot of motorists commute on this road — Cathedral Road. Especially, when they stop at the signal, the murals will definitely catch their attention."

Dr Margaret Thomas, a faculty member and PG Head, sums up saying that the recent environmental issues that Chennai faced — 2015 flood and recent ones like the flood and oil spill — triggered the thought to do this project. "The primary idea is to sensitise people. The last time we did murals on the wall was couple of years ago for another project called Art Chennai. This time, we've collaborated with Gallery Veda and Sanjay Tulsyan of the gallery has agreed to sponsor the project. The entire wall is about 1500sq/ft and 200 students are involved in the project. This apart, the students of the Fine Arts department are involved in painting murals on voluntary basis at different places outside the college as well. They've done interiors of a place that caters to autistic children, at Adyar Cancer Institute, etc."



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