

YOUNG GUNS SET CANVAS AFIRE AT HARMONY Watch out for award winners Ramesh Ghayal and Sunita Gaddam.



17-year old Ramesh Ghayal and 14-year old Sunita Gaddam are artists with some unique strokes. They are among 25 children from the streets of Bandra who will display their works with 158 renowned artists at the Harmony Art Show. The exhibition was inaugurated by Lata Mangeshkar on March 31 and will be open to the public till April 9.

There is more to Ramesh and Sunita than mere participation. The two are winners of the first-ever Vasanti Arun award for excellence in art. The award, only for children, is being given in memory of late artist and writer Vasanti Arun Muzumdar who passed away in 2003.

During her lifetime, Muzumdar received several national and state awards for literature. "I wanted to do something in my mother's memory," said Shruti, her daughter. "I had been speaking to Tina Ambani and she suggested that such an award be instituted. When I saw Ramesh's work, especially his papier-mâché creations, I felt these children should be encouraged.

A Bandra-based NGO, Aseema takes care of the education of these children. Dilbur Parakh, its chairperson, said, "In 2002 we were invited by Tina Ambani to showcase the artwork done by our children. Since then we've been regulars at the Harmony Art Show. The proceeds from the prize of Rs. 20,000 given to the children will be used for their education."

Ramesh said, "Twelve of my creations are on display. My art teacher, Varsha Trivedi, helped me a lot. Right now I am studying in Class 12 at St. Andrews College. I plan to compete my Masters in Arts."

Ramesh's parents are construction workers. Sunita lives in a Bandra pavement community and is a class VII student at St. Joseph's School. "I am happy that my paintings are on display. I want to grow up to be a painter. I like painting and drawing. My parents are going to see my paintings tomorrow."

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ROHIT BHATIA, DNA
1st April 2006