

Paintings for Peace and Paintings for Harmony – UN 15 Oct 2012 Exhibit opening function, GA Delegates Entrance

Nilima Silver introducing Ranjana Ghose.

Ms. Ranjana Ghose, Director of the Jharna Kala Art foundation and curator of Sri Chinmoy's Art, has produced exhibits here at the UN and around the world, including at the Carrousel du Louvre.

You may also recognize her as the leader of the Si Chinmoy Bajan singers, an international vocal and instrumental ensemble that has performed many times here at the UN, around the world, and on television and at Concert venues in many different cities..

The exquisite brochure that Ranjana has produced for the exhibit goes into depth about the paintings on display here including this centrepiece "Peace Feeds the Children"; and "non-Violence" there. Ranjana will now offer her unique insights into the artist and his art. Thank You.

Ranjana Ghose:

We thank you so very much Ambassador for hosting this exhibition. It gives an opportunity to do again what is dearest to our heart, and that is to bring some form of peace to other people and to ourselves. Because it is only by developing and bringing peace with in the self, do you have anything to offer to somebody else.

We feel very happy to have these paintings as a great source of energy and Peace, and a reminder of finer ideals. These paintings are for world harmony, these paintings are for peace, truly. They are by artist Sri Chinmoy. His signature CKG soul birds or peace birds have been artistic endorsement for world peace for decades.

Sri Chinmoy's art embodies the message of world peace, "Harmony", "Brotherhood", "protection of Nature", "Compassion", "Benevolence", "Non-Violence" and an aspiration for a more concerned humanity.

In using the gander to help culture peace in the self and in the world, Sri Chinmoy created paintings with an inspired dedication, surely in hopes of enkindling awareness and strengthening a progress toward that concern in fellow world-citizens. In that sense, what better way for the exhibit to have begun its journey then here at the United Nations itself.

In order for you to possibly better experience the art work, I offer you a few comments on the art. I hope that you will get a chance after the formal part of our presentation to again tour the exhibit and take in each quality.

The art in the "Paintings for World Harmony" exhibition of Sri Chinmoy works are artistically cohesive as a show. The varying intensities of each piece translate into a dynamic non-violence and populations of radiant colours coexist in a glowing tolerance of each other: A microcosm of an ideal humanity. In so many ways and in so many of the works, as in "Heart-Garden", "Nature's Beauty", "Delight" and "Benevolence" we see the use of colours which spontaneously energises us with the more positive qualities of life.

The paintings selected for this show historically (and briefly I shall say that in 2001 Sri Chinmoy had decided to do a Series of 70 Paintings all dedicated to Peace. He chose that year because he would himself be turning 70 and he wanted to rededicate his life works to peace. It happened that the year before in 2000, the Un General Assembly had declared it the International Year for a Culture of Peace. (IYCP)

This year (and subsequent decade for CP) was strongly spearheaded very strongly by the former Bangladesh Ambassador (Anwarul Chowdhury). So it is so appropriate that now , over 10 years later we have the same exhibition of paintings which was originally dedicated to world peace hosted again by the Bangladesh Mission to the UN and we are very grateful for that and feel that it is significant..

As you walk around the exhibit you will see that they are acrylic paintings which was the artist's favourite medium. They are on "Strathmore" paper and they measure about 25 ½ inches by 19 inches tall. You will see the deco edge on two sides of the paper. That is the raw edge when produced – a true Strathmore paper.

There are 70 paintings in the series, each one self-titled. You will notice that the titles – we can sense that the art of Sri Chinmoy reflects the ideals which are deeply rooted within himself. His art paints the picture of a world of peace, a world of harmony.

At the time of the original exhibition, it was opened by Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury who was Under-Secretary-General at the time. We were very grateful to him as he was a great lover of the "Culture of Peace".

Through the paintings of World Harmony exhibition, Sri Chinmoy has offered his art in many different public spaces as possible so that these messages of world brotherhood might be viewed, received and shared by brothers and sisters of humanity from all over the world, from all walks of life.

His paintings of world harmony and peace exhibited in various city halls, in cities such as: San Francisco, Oslo, Tokyo, and Reykjavik. International Airports such as: O'Hara in Chicago, JFK here in NY, LaGuardia, Newark Airport; airports around the world. They also travelled to statehouses such as: Canberra Australia; statehouse in Boston; Jacob Javits Convention Center right here in NY. The Carrousel de Louver (twice over since the year 2001, in 2005 and 2006, - and a very grand exhibition it was and we were very grateful and proud that took place.)

Interestingly, one can see that the paintings for world harmony are an attempt to bring, art out of the Museums and to the public, so that it may affect the public, thus helping to cultivate a climate of peace. We know so well, that due to the harried pace of today's lifestyles, many do not frequent the museums and places of fine culture as often as they might wish. Yet the culturing of our finer selves is something which we value greatly and rightly so...

In the paintings for World Harmony exhibitions we attempt to nurture this need for higher culture in ourselves and in others, by bringing art and the higher values of civilization into varied and diverse venues. You may ask why Peace through art? But what greater and more appropriate role could art play. Art itself, like humanity thrives best in the climate of peace. And art, like humanity and like children of humanity perish as a result of war and intolerance. As art is a child of our heart, that

must be nurtured, nourished and cared for. The child of humanity must also be nurtured and cared for, as a child of our own heart. The world is crying to each one of us for help. And surely when we help the world, we will certainly help ourselves. For are we not the world? We, all united as brothers and sisters of humanity.

May no society be tempted to rewrite history after tragedy, but rather to redress and record faithfully a more rightful today, of a more illumined society. And to this sense I feel that Sri Chinmoy's works benefit society in a very crucial and simple way. A very basic way with titles such as: "Ahimsa", "Non Violence", "Self Transcendence", "the Inner Voice", "the Soul-Birds", "the Tree of Life", "Hope", "Aspiration", "Dedication", "Serve Humanity", "Save Nature", "the River of Life", "Love Mother Earth", "Goodness", "Compassion", "Universal Brotherhood", "When you Give Peace, You Get Peace", "Imagine all human beings as your friend", "Happiness Helps us All", "Peace Preserves Us", "Concern Unites Us".

Each painting, each title is like a lantern along the way. And these lanterns do help us in some way if we let them. If we let their light shed one more step along the way. In a sense, I think that they are quite symbolic like that: Even this painting over here which is entitled "Pilgrimage", as our lives are indeed a pilgrimage, a type of pilgrimage. These paintings are as though an affirmation of faith in our own humanity, and a striving to help humanity as a whole by discovering and educating ourselves and others in whatever humble way be possible. Be it as a mere reminder in the middle of a stressful day or a profound epiphany at twilight.

Harmony with each other, harmony with ourselves; for we are all members of a humanity struggling together to come into that harmony so that we might all progress into that ultimate state of peace here on earth, which we as human beings may rightfully thrive.

Thank you all for coming to this exhibition. We are honoured by your presence and we are proud to be of any humble service to you by presenting these artworks of the noble Sri Chinmoy who truly embodied these very qualities for us, which is why we continue to be inspired by them. We hope that in some way they will bring you inspiration, and you in turn will pass your inspiration on to others. For you are the very people, the arms of the UN body that carry that inspiration and those ideals into the physical world so that the rest of humanity can benefit from that. I thank you.

Nilima Silver: Thank you so much Ranjana. That was beautiful and inspiring and very informative.