

WOW! connects with three enterprising young ladies for a thoughtful exchange on the importance of art and the connections people form with it, creating meaning in ways that words struggle to capture

THE POWER OF ART

In September, **The Art Connect** by Miheeka Bajaj Daggubati in collaboration with A&H Colab by Amrita Kilachand and Hina Oomer Ahmed introduced the first in a series of experiential pop-ups, the **LUME/VYANA**. It showcased works across visual art, performance, design, digital media, etc.

Examining the quiet power of artistic expression, WOW! had an introspective conversation with the three creative minds behind the event.

CAN YOU SHARE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON PEOPLE'S CONNECTION TO ART?

Miheeka: While the artist has the freedom to express themselves in the way they think is apt, everyone looks at an artwork and interprets it differently. This process of creating, experiencing and finding meaning in art for me, is very cathartic and liberating.

Hina: I think the most interesting and expansive thing about art is that there's space for everyone to like and interpret something in a way that is unique to them.

Amrita: I believe art should provoke an emotion, a memory, a reaction. It could be anything that you wish it to be but as

long as it stirs something in you, I think it has achieved its goal.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND CONNECTION IN RELATION TO MENTAL WELLBEING?

Miheeka: Mental wellbeing is about being able to express yourself and words at times, are not the best medium. Sometimes you don't fully understand what you're feeling. Putting that down, whether it's using a paint brush, movement, or an instrument, it allows you to release the emotion you're holding, and the most beautiful kind of art comes out from that.

Hina: I think color therapy and the way it stimulates your senses can be very healing. Secondly, when you look at a piece of art and for a few moments it transports you elsewhere – mentally and emotionally. It's like meditation.

Amrita: Both internationally and in India, there are therapists that use gardening as a form of therapy. Art is also used. Even children, who unfortunately go through trauma, end up expressing their emotions through their drawings. So, I think it (art) is a fantastic medium to use for therapy.

AS THE EXHIBITION IS A REFLECTION ON HOW WE CONNECT, COLLECT, AND LIVE WITH OBJECTS, WHAT ARE SOME OBJECTS YOU HAVE FORMED DEEP CONNECTIONS WITH?

Miheeka: I usually buy pieces that really call to me. I have two 'Last Supper' paintings; (quirky reinterpretations of Da Vinci's famous mural). I have had them for two to three years now, but every time you look at them, you discover something new.

Hina: For me it's pieces I pick up when I travel as they're unique to that region and culture. They also connect you back to those memories.

Amrita: Through the decades, it's been about stories I see and relate to. I recently bought a work by an artist called Kulpreet Singh who advocates for farmers in Punjab, and I am Punjabi, so there's a connect and old history there.

WHAT GETS YOUR CREATIVE JUICES FLOWING?

Miheeka: Most everything that you encounter – nature, emotion, art, or a memory. It could be anything that moves you or touches you in some way.

Hina: For me it's the small things. Nature is one; it could be just clouds in the sky or a floral arrangement. I also love beautifully packaged things – something as small as the label on a wine bottle (laughs).

Amrita: I think I draw a lot from just my experiences. But like Hina, I find nature to also be a huge source of creativity.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO CREATIVE MINDS WHO ARE EITHER HESITANT TO START THEIR JOURNEY, STILL FIGURING OUT THEIR CRAFT, OR CONTEMPLATING GIVING UP?

Miheeka: Stay authentic to yourself. Go back to what the reason you started it was and don't get lost in the process of trying to become famous.

Hina: In a world where attention span is so short and everything is so trends-based, find your own unique voice and trust it. Somewhere that will pay off.

Amrita: Be resilient, be determined. I think if you are lucky enough to be able to put food on the table and follow your passion, and marry both, that's just the most wonderful work-life balance you could have. ■ IPSHITA

