



Print  Close

We want more

July 9, 2010

It's tough packing in those extra things we like to do in our everyday schedule. And, with so many things vying for our limited attention span, it's even tougher! But there are people who stretch themselves and walk that extra mile to do just that.

Needless to say, creative satisfaction marks their identity. "Time is just an excuse; we end up doing what we enjoy the most. And I enjoy everything I do," says 28-year-old Archana Prasad. A painter, poet, and a video artist, she is also the guiding force behind two community art projects in the city.

Her latest, Jaaga (Space), is nearly a year old. What started with the need for a community space has resulted in the first-of-its-kind architecture-cum-art project in the city. It has been created as a space where people could meet, talk, exchange ideas and show each other's work.

"We found unused space in the middle of the city, and Naresh Narasimhan, of architecture firm Venkataramanan Associates, was kind enough to give it to us for three months," says Prasad. When it opened eight months ago, visitors came in out of curiosity. Today, Jaaga is abuzz with people and events. Impressed with its concept and activities, Narasimhan extended the lease to six months, and then, to an infinite period.

Prasad studied animation from NID after a bachelor's degree in painting and a master's in art history. The next three years were spent at Microsoft Research as a design researcher. But it was the need to do more that took her on a trip across Europe, where she even managed to show her work in Berlin.

On her return to Bangalore, she encountered the travails of a new artist looking for a gallery to show their work. "It was impossible to gain entry into a gallery. That's when I, and artist Suresh Kumar of Samuha, decided that the project would have to be artist driven," says Prasad. After Samuha's success as a shared artists' space, Prasad thought about Jaaga.

"We built the space in less than 15 hours. It's makeshift, but that's how we want it to be," she adds. A collaboration with partner, architect Freeman Murray, saw the modular low-cost structure with wooden flooring and paper honey comb walls. It's a unique experiment in creating a do-it-yourself temporary structure in an urban environment.

Besides continuing to paint and create video art, Prasad also travels with her band, Manjunauts. And she's doing all this during her honeymoon period; she's just got married to social entrepreneur Sean Blagsvedt. "It's all happening at the same time and that's the way it should be," she laughs as she supervises the creation of a new roof being put up thanks to recent downpours.

If Prasad is a bundle of energy, jumping between different levels, Namrata Sudhindra, 28, retains her poise from her modelling days. "It was easy to say goodbye to modelling because one outgrows it," says Sudhindra, whose walked the ramp for the biggest names in the country, before giving it all up to go into full-time practice as a qualified dentist for four years.

"I had a tough time calling it quits with dentistry because I had trained for years to be one. But the day I decided it wasn't working I moved on and never looked back," says Sudhindra.

What keeps her going today besides her chic and trendy fashion boutique, Nimboo Closet, is her yoga, which seems to be her calling in life. "Yoga keeps me going. I never get irritated with traffic, people or anything. My solution for every problem is yoga," laughs Sudhindra.

Hatha Yoga, in generous doses, works for her. She takes classes both in the morning and the evening for mixed groups of people that range from chirpy 20-year-olds to wise 60-year-olds.

She and her friend, erstwhile model Kavya Peerbhoy, design their own line of clothes and accessories. Merchandising, handling publicity and yoga might fill her days, but a weekend trip and an annual vacation is something she insists on to recharge herself.

Creative calling scores for Vasu Dixit as well, besides Sudhindra. But while its clothes for one, its music for the former. Dixit, 29, has been making waves for the last two years thanks to the innovative music that has emerged from his young and vibrant band, Swarathma. A full-time musician, he is also a

filmmaker, a graphic designer and a photographer.

Till recently, he was better known as musician Raghupati (Raghu) Dixit's younger brother. For the last two years, Dixit junior has emerged as a force to reckon with. His colourful attire, face framed by a mass of curly hair and a *kutchi godi* (horse as prop) has fans eating out of his hands at live shows.

Dixit's band is probably the first band to make such a big impact over such a short period. Their debut album, called Swarathma, on Virgin Records, has everyone-from children to old uncles-humming the Kannada song *Ee Bhoomi*.

As lyricist and lead singer of the band, Dixit thinks, writes, composes and sings in four languages-English, Hindi, Kannada and even Punjabi. "Kannada is my language, Hindi is thanks to school and the need to reach out to a wider audience," says Dixit.

Swarathma has made a commitment to do a free show for every paid show. This has seen them perform in a blind school in Pune, besides a leprosy centre. "We want to perform not just for the regular audience but also for those who can never make it to a live show. We as artists have social responsibilities too.

We might not be able to help them buy land, but we can entertain them and help them see something other than just the dark side of life," says Dixit, who is influenced by big brother Raghu, besides musicians like Indian Ocean ("all of us at Swarathma look up to them"), U2, Fink Floyd and Freddie Mercury.

Swarathma's forthcoming releases include a music video of their song *Pyaasi*, in which the band has combined forces with music powerhouse Shubha Mudgal. Besides that, there's the second tour of UK, where Swarathma will perform in four music festivals. Back home, there are corporate films to be made ("one has to make a living, you see") and graphic design projects waiting.

Time and space come at a premium for him because of his hectic schedule. Like Dixit sums up, "You have to look for time and space within yourself and not outside." And he's speaking not just for himself but for others like him who aim for the sky.

For the record

Archana Prasad: Was a VJ with the band Lounge Piranha before venturing out with her own music band called Manjunauts C Co-Initiator of Samuha, an artist-owned-and-run space in Bangalore.

Vasu Dixit: Trained in theatre with Mime Ramesh in Mysore C His band, Swarathma, was auditioned and chosen by John Leckie, an acclaimed music producer for the British Council Project, Soundpad.

Namrata Sudhindra: Curates 'O Show', monthly show of music, food and fashion at Opus restaurant. C Rejected offers to be a VJ earlier, but is now planning to give it a shot soon to extend her oeuvre.

[Print](#)  [Close](#)

URL for this article :

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/Story/103598/SUPPLEMENTS/We+want+more.html>

@ Copyright 2010 India Today Group.