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ART A LA CARTE

Shraddha Samarpan

IN one of the most simple and yet touching, humane and sensitive gestures, over 100 senior and eminent artists from all over India and abroad have come together for a common cause.

The cause of the mentally ill.

In absolute altruism, with spontaneity, genuineness and selflessness writ large on their intentions, they have decided to donate some of their creative artistic works towards the cause of the mentally-ill destitute wandering aimlessly on the streets of India.

These artists have joined

In aid of the mentally ill who wander the streets of India

hands with Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation, an organisation inspired by and dedicated to the mentally-afflicted downtrodden meandering in the bylanes of India.

These senior and eminent artists believed that the wandering insane, who have no place to go, no shelter or roof over their head, no doctor or friend to turn to, do have a basic intrinsic right to live life with dignity, and that someone could and should con-

tribute towards this basic intrinsic right of the mentally-insane person.

It all began with the story of one Shri Hemant Thakare, a gold-medallist lecturer of J. J. School of Arts, Bombay, who was tragically afflicted with mental illness and who in the process was knocked off the rolls from the faculty of J. J. School of Arts.

Ending up on streets, he was drifting aimlessly for one whole year until one of his students heard about Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation.

The Foundation picked him up, treated him, met the Secretary of Education and saw to it that he got his job back.

This process of rehabilitation of Hemant from a mentally-ill roadside destitute to a fully functioning lecturer in his original Alma Mater took one whole year and saw some of the senior and eminent artists of Bombay who had had a soft corner for Hemant come close to Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation.

Now Hemant, under the guidance of these social and eminent artists, is the pioneer behind the national art exhibition "Shraddha Samarpan" and has personally gone and met all the



HEMANT THAKARE: giving back to the Shraddha Rehab Foundation

senior and eminent artists from all over India to seek their esteemed and revered paintings/sculptures as donation towards the cause.

Artists like Gieve Patel, Navjot, Akbar Padamsee, Suruchi Chand and Badri Narayan have generously contributed their work. The response has also been emotionally overwhelming.

For these senior and eminent artists unanimously empathised with the cause which Hemant personified and believed that the wandering insane who have no place to go, no shelter or roof over their head, no doctor or friend to turn to, do have a basic intrinsic right to live life with dig-

nity, and that someone could and should contribute towards this basic intrinsic right of the mentally-insane person.

This exhibition is both their commitment towards Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation and an appeal on its behalf.

As Dr. Bharat Vatwani of Shraddha said, "It is a representation of the heart-rending cry for help emanating from the wrecked souls of the thousands of mentally-ill downtrodden existing in searing starkness on the streets of India."

May the echoes of the cry not go unheard. May the efforts of Hemant Thakare not be in vain.



DRS. BHARAT and SMITHA VATWANI with a mentally-ill destitute who was picked up from a Bombay railway station