

WEAVING STORIES INTO ART



Expressions of fairness and colours of social justice find form through Baaraan Ijlal's works. Read on to know what this young artist has to say...



Some of the paintings by Ijlal



NAMRATA TRIPATHI

If you ask them, people will give you varied definitions of what feminism means to them.

For some it is raising their voice for equality for women, for some it is a fight for removal of patriarchy and for some it is resistance to any sort of inequality.

Baaraan Ijlal, a visual artist, sees feminism as a part of people's struggle, for her feminism takes a form of visual expression on her canvas.

Weaving stories of people that affect her and intricately painting them on her canvas is Ijlal's form of expression against all strands of inequality she sees around irrespective of people's sex or sexuality. This

is what she explained to us at a discussion on canvas writing at the Oxford Bookstore.

The discussion was organised in association with Apne Aap Women Worldwide in continuation of their series of *Feminism Beyond Boundaries*.

Art for Ijlal is very personal, she tries to bring out people's pain through her paintings. She says that her pieces are a reaction to the ongoing struggle of people she sees around her.

Describing a painting of hers where a red-haired passenger is sitting on the backseat of a bicycle, she says that the met the owner of that bicycle in a ghetto.

She says that the boy-faced man

with long hair which slightly curled at the end was sitting sipping his tea and staring intently at his bicycle which had a tightly screwed red tin box tied to the rear end.

When Ijlal asked him about his story, he said that the bicycle was given to him by his lover as a parting gift.

The emotions attached to that object and the inner struggle of the cyclist struck her where he symbolically reserved a seat for his lover at the end with the red tin box and she drew out that emotion her canvas and filled in the colours.

Ijlal says her canvas is an instrument to fight for justice. When asked more she explained, 'I try to fight for justice because I have seen fairness. I have seen my parents always stand up for justice no matter what.' And the lessons she has grown up with find expression in the works she creates on canvas.

Ijlal owes the narrative style of her work to the early influences of writers such as Manto, Albert Camus, Garcia Marquez and Faiz Ahmad Faiz.

These and many other early influences have inspired this artist to create a space where she can tell her stories, and stories of others, on canvas, where language is not a barrier, where possibilities are endless and where cultural and social taboos are challenged constantly.