

Inmates of Tihar Jail to display their creativity

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The national capital's Tihar Jail is breeding artists! From August 12, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) will host an exhibition of paintings by inmates of the high-security prison.

Titled 'Expressions at Tihar', it will be a display of about 100 works of art — paintings, photos and sculptures — created by about 20 inmates and their mentors (established artists of Delhi).

The "art therapy" is a brainchild of NGO Ramchander Nath Foundation (RNF), which is working with the inmates for over a year now.

Anubhav Nath, project director, RNF, said, "Helping the prisoners learn art has been an extremely humbling experience. We have worked with about 20 inmates, all aged 18 to 21. These children were either under-trials or convicts and we wanted to help them."

Nath convinced several big names from Delhi's art fraternity to visit

Tihar and teach inmates. "It was a difficult task to begin with, but once these artists visited the prison and interacted with the inmates, they were forthcoming. Later, several more artists joined the venture and we ended up with this idea of exhibiting the works of the inmates," he said.

The exhibition also received support from Jyotindra Jain, member-secretary, IGNCA. An artist and art historian, Jain said he was "only too happy to collaborate". "Teaching art is a humane thing to do. This practice of imparting professional skills was introduced by the British in jails across the country. The exercise was particularly successful in Bikaner Jail. Even today, an old dari woven in Bikaner prisons costs between Rs25,000 and Rs75,000. I am happy the trend is being revived," he said.

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Tihar prisoners from Aug 12
