

ARTIST'S

PLAY

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Mayr's drawings are powerful reminders and prompters that invite a re-look into the world of children...

The lines are so delicate and the colours so subtle that the drawings melt into the background. The images however are so powerful that it takes courage and strength to hang them on your walls or invite their entry into your conscience. That is Austrian artist and sculptor Christina Mayr for you.

Currently in the city to exhibit her works at the Alliance de Francaise of Madras, Mayr is obsessed with children. Children fill her frames without exception. Don't however make the mistake of associating the word 'children' here with chubby cheeks and angelic grins. Mayr's children are people by themselves, and Mayr's obsession has more to do

Colours of Children



with the intellect than with emotions. "We tend to dismiss children's behaviour and words. This is simply not justified. Children mirror adults," Mayr says. That's also the reason behind her obsessive focus on children.

And so Mayr's children have more in common with the 'thinking man' than with romping infants. And they are all naked. "Clothes hide so much of body language," Mayr explains. In fact, expressions and body language are perhaps what makes Mayr's works tick.

Mayr's sculptures are all about huge and hollow clay images. Her sculptures defy conventional positioning. Some of them show children climbing walls; these are sculptures

you can hang on your walls or on your garden tree. Unluckily for us, Mayr has brought along only her colour pencil drawing to India, courtesy transportation constraints. "I carried these drawings as hand luggage and had them framed here," she says candidly.

"Meeting artist Sajitha R Shankar at a show in Vienna is what brought me to the country," she says. Mayr and Sajitha had worked together in Trivandrum for a couple of weeks, prior to this show. The other reason is, Mayr finances the education of an orphan in Himachal Pradesh. "This gives me a chance to see

him," she says.

You would never have thought that colour pencils, childish art material by themselves, could capture so much power. But Mayr has succeeded in doing this. Ironically, these child-like tools and child images convey an ocean of sad and grim realism. "There are people who have brought back my paintings saying that they could simply not palate these paintings and watch them day in and out in their homes," Mayr admits candidly. Mayr's drawings are not pretty pictures. They are powerful reminders and prompters that invite a re-look into the world of children.