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Art for heart's sake

EdelGive's annual art event in Mumbai brought artists and art buyers together for a good cause

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Edelweiss Capital Ltd brought art, pleasure and charitable causes together at its new Alibaug training centre in a unique art event which started on 24 October.

Most Mumbaikars on pleasure trips to Alibaug do not have giving to causes in mind, particularly not those who expect to spend their getaways in the sumptuous, manicured private compounds that are transforming the landscape of this old coastal town. The EdelGive Foundation (an initiative of Edelweiss Capital) turned that on its head on 24 October, with Palette 2010, an annual art event that connected artists and art buyers with charitable causes.

At Palette, held on the grounds of Edelweiss' new residential training centre, Fountainhead, art lovers caught sight of the results of a week-long art camp that brought artists together to create and display works. "As Fountainhead is a leadership centre, we like the vibe that goes with bringing mentors and protégés together," explains Shabnam Panjwani, who heads Fountainhead and was the moving force for Palette 2010.

The art show, in its second year, saw works by Jatin Das, Yusuf Arakkal, Samir Mondal and Jagannath Paul go on sale. Paul, who attended the week-long art camp (18-24 October) that preceded Palette, created a wall mural inspired by a camp visit from children drawn from NGOs supported by EdelGive.

It may seem unorthodox to see artists come together with corporate interests for an event of this sort, but as Panjwani says, the causes make all the difference. "Artists want to contribute to good causes, but questions of transparency and accountability are always a problem. I think what mattered to them at Fountainhead Palette was seeing how transparently and directly they could make a difference."

The NGOs to which proceeds of the art sale go include over 20 aid organizations working to develop education, livelihoods and women's empowerment, the three prongs of EdelGive's programme. Two of their kiosks occupied pride of place along Fountainhead's art walks: Under The Mango Tree, a livelihood development initiative that works on sustaining community bee-keeping in rural Maharashtra, and Nedan, a foundation that promotes sustainable development in North East India.

On the breezy evening, a large clutch of paintings competed for space with happy owners on ferries back to Mumbai. The Palette inventory will remain on

display at the Fountainhead Training Centre in Kihim, Alibaug, for the rest of the year, until Palette 2011.

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