

## **Aruna Apte Artist's Statement**

I am a practicing artist, in addition to being a professor in humanitarian logistics at the Naval Postgraduate School. I attended Pennsylvania Academy of Art in Philadelphia while doing my Ph.D. I have done two solo shows so far.

One at Dallas Visual Art Centre, titled 'Bhavana', emotions depicted through Indian classical dance. A couple of my friends danced for me. The graceful rhythmic movements of Indian classical dance-form and renderings of the same in charcoal was the theme of the first solo show. I have attached photos of that first show.

My second solo show was sponsored by Trammel Crow Collection of Asian Art, also in Dallas. This show was titled 'Heritage'. The stories of the Rajput kings and their martyr queens moved me. The people from the historic past have inspired the desire to paint and tell their story. This is the genesis of 'Heritage'. I have attached the photos from this series as well. 'Jai Bhavani' is about Maratha Warriors. In the eminent fall of the forts, the men folk would leave the fort to defend, preferring death to defeat. Without the soldiers to defend them the women, fearing the captivity from the Moguls and the abuse that would follow, used to sacrifice themselves in a bonfire inside the palace. This story is rendered in the painting titled 'Johar'.

My third series, the one I would like to show, that I finished painting recently is called 'Travels'. These are travels to many different countries and the stories from there that touched my heart. I have enclosed a few photos of the same. 'Windows-to-happiness' is about the children from Arusha, Tanzania. 'Nirvana' is about the female monks of Myanmar and their life. 'Children-of-Danang' shows the suffering of the children from the Vietnam war, and the rising sun representing their rebirth. 'Children-of-Myanmar' depicts the stooas in Myanmar with happy kids, inspite of all the poverty and chaos. 'Halong-bay-at-war' is a landscape of the halong bay with the photographs of the people who suffered through the Vietnam war. 'UXO-Buddha-Laos' describes the unexploded ordnants in Laos but with statues of Buddha, my way of finding the peace in spite of atrocities.