

1. Atelier : « Images & écritures » Atelier en milieu carcéral  
Engager l'Art en milieu carcéral  
Laura Martin 2000-2005

2 . ETE INDIEN - INDIAN SUMMER : projet VVV  
Laura Martin (France) and INDERSALIM (India)

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## **ENGAGER L'ART EN MILIEU CARCÉRAL**

"It is recognized that the access of public the places under hand of Justice to programming and cultural practice allowing not only to limit the déssocialisants effects of their imprisonment but also a taking into account of the person and of sound to be better...."  
(Extracted the Draft-agreement between Direction from the Cultural Affairs and Regional Management from the Penitentiary Services)

### **Pleasure of creating...**

When the object of a negative glance is known and when one in taken the practice; when it was learned that one is a "bad subject", and that one ended up admitting it, which place can remain for the act free, personal, posed like an interior need, beyond the pressure of the others? When one tends to becoming object, a thing one has, where to find the way to exist like subject? To create, act founder, by which the subject appears with itself and is given to the others like object of love. To create for communier with others and to transmit something of the delicate joy where art plunges its serviteur. Créer and free being to become more deeply human, more fraternal. To create to live. Pleasure of creating..... When the object of a negative glance is known and when one in taken the practice; when it was learned that one is a "bad subject", and that one ended up admitting it, which place can remain for the act free, personal, posed like an interior need, beyond the pressure of the others? When one tends to becoming object, a thing one has, where to find the way to exist like subject? To create, act founder, by which the subject appears with itself and is given to the others like object of love. To create for communier with others and to transmit something of the delicate joy where art plunges its serviteur. Créer and free being to become more deeply human, more fraternal. To create to live.

## **WORKSHOP "IMAGES AND WRITINGS"**

**District Women, Prison of Strasbourg (France)**

**Proposed by Laura MARTIN December 2000 - December 2005**

**> this workshop is currently stopped fault of budget**

### **Objective of the Workshop :**

For the fourth year an artistic workshop of expression

To allow a group of woman in detention to express positive emotions through plastic achievements

To find direction individual and collective

To develop self-confidence and with the other participating ones

To share with others a creation

Of the productions regularly shown in direction families.

Partnership with the team of association. With accomodating with the entry the families returning visit with the prisoner (E), the achievements of the workshop were presented. Sets of themes emergent of a group decision and according to proposals' of the participating ones.

I could note for this year 2003/2004 a change on the level of the group of held. The workshop developed in English and German because of the origin of the people. For these two last years the achievements of are unrolled around: Constitution of paper characters realized collectively, that one makes speak, to which made tell a history. Accounts written and drawn related to the country of origin of participating to the workshop known Landscapes (drawings, paintings)

Maintenance of the floral and aromatic garden which we created two years before. India, France, women's right?

To apprehend itself through another Culture.

In parallel having obtained an artistic research grant of the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs via the Embassy of France in India, to develop images for of ONG Indians (magi of prevention denouncing the abuses related to the drifts of the system of the Dowry in India I left for India for two stays (in April and December 2003).

On my returns I sensitized the women coming to my workshop by presentations from the actions carried out in India. From these discussions and presentation the proposal of the project emerged "an Indian Summer" joint opposite over a school time of holidays the workshop having been suspended following budgetary cuts.

« *INDIAN SUMMER* » 2004

*Cultural project in prison, with a group of womens, workshops of project co-animés by Laura Martin (Strasbourg – France) and INDERSALIM (New Delhi – India)*

### **At the Beginning**

Working for 4 years like artistic speaker at the Prison of Strasbourg and developing in parallel for two years an artistic work (purse of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs) with of ONG Indians on questions related to the violence made to the women it has been naturally that I wished to make divide with the women with whom I worked (unfortunately for budgetary reasons my workshop is stopped since May 2004...) Held an experiment rich and sensitive to the Indian culture. It is at the time of this work developed in India that I made the knowledge of Indersalim, known Indian artist for his work started in direction of the women and violences of which they are the object. We have together an exposure envisaged of our work to the Embassy from France in Delhi, during January 2005.

**EMBASSY OF France** : the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in India recently required of us to present this work in the exposure. The procedures of authorizations of right to the image are in hand near the prison authorities and of the Ministry for Justice. The realization made with the women of the prison of Strasbourg. To sensitize held in the condition of the Indian women.

*(This project received the support of the Prefecture of the Low-Rhine, of the CEAAC (Center European of Contemporary Artistic Actions), the Town of Strasbourg, the Embassy of France in India and sociocultural Bracket-Association of the Prison of Strasbourg.)*

### **Sarees**

We concentrated the artistic proposal on the investment, by held white saris which we had brought. Investment in writing or paintings directly on the saris, and by covering their creations. The sari (or saree) is Indian clothing, and is constituted of a long fabric band of 5m50 to tie around oneself of a scientist tying. and still carried today. The fact Zen India of the widowed women and in the history the symbol of the disciples women of Gandhi, a symbol of the disciples of Peace.

The images attached were carried out Friday August 20, 2004. Images were also given to the women who took part. They gave all their agreement closely connected which we can show this work in India. Indeed,

These images would be presented in the form of photographic pullings and of a diaporama at the time of the exposure which we have together in January 2005 with the Embassy of France in India and the French Arts centre of New Delhi.

### **One day in the workshop**

*the meetings begin with the presentation from the ones and others and new the one week arrivals on the other. We began the meeting with a series of accounts and the information given on the condition of the women in India*

*Exposed our experiments in India with of ONG de Lutte for the Women's rights and consecutively we brought Indian mythical accounts putting in scene women. We had to bring many images, Indian popular posters of female representations and many Indian popular objects, masks, incense, powders of time, statuettes, great sculpture of Parvati. This great sculpture is a rare Antiquity which was lent to us, Parvati representative, incarnation of the goddess of femininity and the beauty. This sculpture is made out of an alloy of 12 metals, that confèrerait to him properties of care for those which touch it... We could note how much these*

women were sensitive to the concept of ritual. Brought two levels of accounts: contemporary situation of the women in India and the mythological stories putting in scene women and goddesses. These two approaches made it possible to nourish their creativity. The great variation which exists between the tradition in the mythology of glorifier the woman and reality for the Indian woman made much reflect the group. After speaking times, we set up space to paint.

**NB :** Allocated space was really reduced, we would have had more facility for the realization of paintings on saris if we could have had access to the course walk like we had made the request of it. In their pictorial expression on the sari (one by anybody) some chose to send, to address a message to the Indian women. Others were more on the register of mythologies. The approach of the drawing not being often an obvious thing for them, we have them, Inder Salim and myself accompanied when they wished it. The meetings of workshops proceeded in a very slackened and pleasant environment. Nearly 12 held took part in the project. Held the instructions integrated well and answered with much co-operation and creativity. We could note solidarity between them at the various times of the process of the workshop.

**Objectives of the workshop :**

To make share a significant experiment. To transmit information. To apprehend itself in the difference. To make emerge creativity and it me positive. To create bond between held and of confidence. To develop solidarity.

**With supervising :**

The project received the adhesion of supervising which came, benevolent, to look at and découvrir with much pleasure the achievements of held. Some supervising came to make share of their approach of India, of what they knew about the condition of the Indian women. Discussions between speakers, supervising and held began on these questions.

**Property of the saris ?**

Saris remaining the property of that which painted it. After the exposure, the saris will be brought back in France and given to the clerk's office for their parcelling.

**Concerned public and numbers of the participants :**

Nearly 15 people took part in the project and 9 on all the meetings. Age bracket from 16 to 50 years.

## WE ALL ARE WOMEN'S ISSUES

By Laura Martin and Indersalim.

The nearest one word substitution to '*we all are women's issues*' can be '*Deconstruction*' as popularized by Derrida. Not for nothing was Derrida popular among Feminists and other voiceless of the society. So to grapple with the essence of 'Deconstruction', and to deconstruct the frigidity of the constructed, we need to move on and spread on its borders and in its core without the burden of the very word which inspires us even. Because of a pursuit towards the freedom of human kind

So a collaboration, a participation with the other is a step in the least to mark the need to relationalize 'the aesthetic' which is in flux at this bizarre and crucial juncture of our contemporary history.

So a collaboration between us ( Laura Martin & Indersalim ) began in Bangalore ( India) while engaging a women's organization called Vimochana, in which the horrible dowry death issue was highlighted through posters, stickers, and banners etc. This collaboration continued with a participatory performance/workshop with women inmates of France this summer.

After reading Michel Foucault's ' Dangerous Individuals ' one easily begins to learn to find fault with whatever the structured laws chooses to reveal, which compels us at the same time to enter it on its own terms. No wonder that we have Jean Genet like people within our society who dare to challenge the so called enlightenment of the ensconced in such a way that the deconstruction begins to show positive results. So to enter the prison was an effort to come close to the other, here doubly oppressed because the woman as the oppressed gender. Here the title 'Indian Summer' was the perfect garb to realize the momentous meeting with the women in the prison. We had literally nothing to offer, so the language was as blank as the white Sarees we carried with us to motivate them to paint their minds. The white sarees had a serene reference of the followers of Gandhi who used to wear this during their struggle against Colonial Rule in India. So the painting began happily amidst the ambience of popular Indian posters, some Indian masks, popular tribal motifs and popular folk sculptures. We began with the narration of Ramanaya very briefly. Ramanaya as a story in which the King Rama's wife Sita had to suffer exile because the people of the kingdom suspected her purity after she was rescued from the Kidnapper Ravana, another King.

Luckily, they never attempted to draw something which would have illustrated the narration. They continued to paint for full three days afterwards on the Sarees while listening popular Bollywood songs and some Indian Sufi music. Some women preferred not to complete the Saree, while others found it interesting to complete. In short every moment in the prison was intense which resulted into a handful of sarees depicting their deep emotions and strong convictions. Words like freedom, peace and love was the dominant theme they expressed besides a bold depiction of a woman's face.

Finally the product was a blend between the garment of common Indian woman and the European woman who was not free, but free to enter it and proclaim that woman to woman universal upon this earth. How much Indian woman was present in the painted saree one can easily visualize the word ' Friden ' ( Freedom ) which a woman inmate wrote on the Saree in capital letters and proudly chose to wear and pose herself in front of the little camera we were allowed to carry for the only day.

The memory of applying Henna ( Indian bridal dye for hands ) on their hands and the intimacy which it generated still remains the most interesting product of the workshop.

LM & IS