

Tania Visits An Art Exhibition



By Kanika G

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I want to thank Subhashree Chaudhuri, Deepa Nath and Neha John for allowing me to use their original art work for this book. The individual artists remain copyright holders of their artwork. I have added pictures of their art to this book with their permission.

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On her way home, Tania was looking out of the school bus window. She loved to feel the breeze on her face. As she scanned the familiar shops, bus stops and bill boards, some bright pink posters caught her eye. The posters were about a local art exhibition.



Tania was intrigued. As soon as she got home, she gave Mama a quick hug and said "Mama there is an art exhibition at the Wilmont hotel this week. I saw an advertisement on my way home. Can we please go for the exhibition? You know I love art, Mama. I want to see how the professionals do it. Can we go? Please, please, please."

"Sure, honey. If you really want to. But do you know what kind of art will be on display?" asked Mama.

"The poster said it was paintings and some other stuff by famous Indian women artists. It was called *The Power of Pink*."

Mama said "Okay, I'll find out about it and we can go on Saturday afternoon."

"Thanks Mama." said Tania thrilled and trotted off to see what tasty afternoon snack Mama had made for her. "Yumm!", she exclaimed when she saw that it was walnut garlic dip with red carrot sticks.



The next day Mama made some enquiries. She found out that the art exhibition would include charcoal drawings, ceramic sculptures and paintings on canvas with acrylic.

Tania was already quite good with water colours and crayons. Mama thought this would be an excellent opportunity for her to expand her horizons.

On Saturday after lunch Mama and Tania left for the Wilmont hotel. After paying the entry fee Mama and Tania made their way to one of the smaller conference rooms where the art was displayed. Mama said "Tania, you can look at the exhibits for as long as you like, but you can't touch them."

"Yes Mama." said Tania. "I promise I wont touch them."

First Mama and Tania took a quick walk around the room to get an overview. Then they started looking at some of the pictures in detail. Tania was drawn to a painting with cheerful colours titled "Lake". Mama read the artist's name out: "Subha Chaudhuri"



There was a little note about the artist and her work. Mama read it and told Tania "Subha says she likes to experiment with the Impasto style."

"What is that?" asked Tania intrigued.

Mama said "It is a technique in which a lot of thick paint is used so the brush strokes are clearly visible. Some like Subha, use a palette knife instead of a brush."

Tania looked amazed. "A knife! To paint – how does that work?"

Mama spotted a platform in the middle of the

room where many art tools were displayed. She took Tania there and showed her the palette knife.



Mama said "The flat metal part is used to spread the thick paint." They went back to the painting and Mama pointed to it and said "You see how the paint is raised and seems to be coming out of the paper. That is the idea of the Impasto style. A palette knife can be used to achieve the effect. These paintings have an interesting texture that can be used to emphasise what the artist wants to say."

Tania raised her hand to touch the painting so she could feel the texture, but then she remembered she was not supposed to touch them and withdrew.



The exhibition had several more paintings by Subha Chaudhuri. Tania's favourite was one titled "Lady in Love". Tania liked the lady's eyes and the pretty hibiscus flower in her hair.

Mama and Tania really liked the painting of the woodland caribou too.



As Tania walked around the room another picture fascinated her. This one had no colours but it was lovely. It was a charcoal drawing of a boy playing with a kite. Mama said to Tania, "The expression on his face reminds me of the expression you have when you do a jigsaw puzzle."

Tania read the plaque and said "Mama this one is by an artist named Deepa Nath and it is done using charcoal. What is charcoal?"



Mama said "Charcoal is something you get from heating or burning wood in a particular way. It is black and used in art, but also has many other uses. Kebabs cooked on a charcoal grill have a nice smoky flavour." Mama took Tania over to the art tools display and showed her a charcoal pencil. She said "The pencil is used to make the sharp features. Charcoal powder is also rubbed with cotton to make lighter and darker shades. I think Deepa used an eraser to make that white string for the kite."



As they moved on they came to a section

dedicated to dance. Here too, there was a painting by Subha Chaudhuri called *Lilac Reveries*, that Mama really liked.



Tania's best friend Tanisha went for Bharatnatyam classes. So Tania was curious about the dance themed art. Some ceramic sculptures titled *Hastas of Bharatnatyam* attracted her attention. She remembered Tanisha mentioning *Hastas*. From what Tanisha said, Tania understood *Hastas* to be the vocabulary of dance. *Hasta* is the Indian word for hand gesture. Each Hasta communicates an idea. Tania recognised the ceramic sculpture of the Hasta representing the Hindu god Vishnu. The artist's name was Neha

John.



Next, Mama and Tania came across a picture of a dancer drawn on dark paper with a white glass marker by Deepa Nath. Tania thought this was interesting since she usually did her art on white or cream paper.



Tania decided she would try out the idea using a white crayon on dark coloured paper. Mama showed her the glass marker among the art tools. It was a pencil with a white wax tip.



Tania had a great afternoon learning so much about art. There were so many things to explore beyond water colours, paint brushes and crayons. Palette knives, thick acrylic paints, charcoal pencils, cotton balls spreading charcoal dust, glass markers, all sounded so exciting. Tania couldn't wait to try some of these out her self.

The paintings titled '*Lake*', '*Lilac Reveries*', '*Lady In Love*' and the one of '*The Woodland Caribou*' are all done by Subha Chaudhuri. Please visit her website at <http://www.subhachaudhuri.com/> to see all her wonderful art. She has won several gallery awards.

Deepa Nath enjoys painting, sketching and playing the violin. She did the charcoal drawing of the boy with the kite and the glass marker drawing of the dancer. Her art is posted on her facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/deepa.nath.16>

In addition to being a professional Bharatnatyam and contemporary dancer, Neha John enjoys dabbling in various forms of art including ceramics and painting with water colours. She made the ceramic sculpture of the Bharatnatyam *Hasta* for Vishnu. You can visit her website at <http://www.elandnm.com/>

I want to thank Deepa Nath and Neha John for teaching me things that made their way in to the book. I also want to thank Deepa for the photographs of the charcoal pencil and the glass marker.