

Healing in the Himalayas...

...with art and more. Yogini Sharma, known for her healing strokes, talks to Pooja Bhula about how she's combining art with adventure for therapy and how healing others has transformed her

 [Pooja Bhula @PoojaBhula](#)

“I painted kids playing in the open (a rare sight these days) and I was watching them from a corner,” shares 65-year-old Leena Nair. Just a few hours ago they had gone river rafting. And the previous day, the group had painted out all negative emotions, torn the canvas and surrendered its pieces (along with the emotions) in the river.

To offer travellers a unique experience of an exquisite journey out in the mountains and a deep, positive journey within, the brother-sister duo introduced the retreat on March 27. The four-day camps include sightseeing, adventure sports and healing sessions packed with meditations, chakra cleansing, Shamanism and more.

Trigger and turnaround

Yogini’s art-for-healing journey began in 2002 with a relationship that broke her. “There was no refuge. I just had to look within,” recalls the 39-year-old. Back then, she was a relationship manager with HSBC. “I listed everything I wanted to do – watch plays, visit gardens, travel to Rajasthan... silly stuff the relationship didn’t allow, but made me happy. I also learnt hypnotherapy.”

Back from Rajasthan, she had a strong urge to paint. Once she started, she couldn’t stop. “I was just in another zone. I could suddenly see colours around people, sense what they’re thinking... everything was waiting to come out. I couldn’t focus on work and eventually quit to see where this was leading me.”

Her family was unhappy that she traded a well-paying job for art, but their apprehension was short-lived as orders trickled in. Despite her lack of formal training in art, her very first painting, of Shiva, evoked strong responses. “Seeing it in the hall of the hypnotherapy institute I’d donated it to, many members told me, ‘I’ve been sitting in front of your painting, something’s shifted in me’.” She was encouraged to exhibit paintings at their spiritual fair, where she got her first order from an outsider. “Fascinated by the concept, he asked me to make one to resolve his business woes. Six weeks later, his business turned around,” she recalls.

Sounds like a coincidence? “I don’t know what worked, but I always ask my clients to meditate; there are no shortcuts, I’m offering no miracles. Meditating opens your chakras, which changes the way you think, eventually resulting in improvement,” says Yogini. She first meditates and then paints, “what comes from the divine. My paintings are not the end, but the dawn of their inner journey.” Delightfully lacking déjà vu, whether black and white or full of colour, her paintings are striking. Deities and even insects represent solutions.

Transformation

“I was arrogant, egoistic, judged people and had no patience. But this journey transformed me. I’ve realised that at the core, we’re all the same. Now I accept people, can quickly establish a deep connect with strangers and even people approach me openly.” Yogini does variety healing workshops and will soon start medical retreats.

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