

Swathi and Vijay

Young Achiever of the Year – Social Service

A picture is worth a million words, they say. Graffiti or street art is usually seen as inexpensive commercial messaging, canvassing or at times as mindless writing. Swathi from Khammam and Vijay from Hyderabad, saw art as a higher medium, as students in the JNTU College of Fine Arts, where they did their Bachelor's and Master's courses. Their journey in art brought them together in life, as well. Swathi and Vijay decided to take their art beyond exhibitions and shared a passionate belief that it have an underlying social message. Recognition of their talent came in the form of a scholarship in 2013-14, which helped them spend 9 months at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris, France. It was in Paris that the couple saw how street art could serve as a medium for a powerful social message. This is exactly what Swathi and Vijay do in their collaborative work today. They identify a burning issue as showcased by their path breaking work on farmers' suicides. Similarly, the news of the closure of 2000 government schools inspired in them a desire to transform the look of government schools and arrest the drop-out rate using graffiti. Swathi and Vijay fund their projects themselves and begin their work at night, ending it before daybreak.

The couple were nominated by the Telangana government to represent the state in 2014 at an International Art Exhibition in Japan.

In the category of social service, for spearheading social change through the medium of art, Swathi and Vijay win the Sakshi Excellence Award 2017 Young Achiever Of the Year.