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Theme: Architectural project that changes society

Name: Sonia Dhillon-Marty (Dhillon Marty Foundation)

Profile:

Sonia Dhillon-Marty was born in India. She studied art in India and moved to the United States of America where she earned an MBA. She acquired the American Nationality and has been living in Japan since 2003.

She is the founder of a foundation that holds her name, and with the collaboration of artists and architects carries on activities that are meant to send messages to the society through art, architecture and design.

In India, my country of origin, agriculture is in a real impoverished situation and issues related to the improvement of women's rights and social status are pressing matters. The idea of the foundation started when I thought about ways to change that global reality. One of the objectives of this organization is to achieve plentiful, sustainable and just societies through cultural exchange, art and architectural designs that bring about people's empathy. My role in this endeavor is to create and organize activities such art events and workshops. I have studied art in India and went on to obtain a degree on business in the United States. Thanks to my working experience in the field of finance at big corporations I have the ability to create and carry on projects that link art and business.

For instance, thanks to my links with different architects in Tokyo, last year I gathered architects and students from Japan and the United States and organized an architectural workshop at Stanford University in California (Refer to article about Architect Takato Tamagami, January edition of this magazine). The motto of the workshop was “Attainment of fulfilling lives through social equality”. The design workshop was carried out taking into consideration issues such as development of building materials, energy and water problems among others.

There are many other subjects I would like to work on. Taking into consideration that in India discrimination against women is a deep rooted issue, I am planning a fashion event in Shibuya where models, students and volunteers will walk wearing T-shirts with messages calling out for the end of violence against women.

In October 2013, the Foundation will hold a week-long event with the themes Learn,

Contribute and Reflect. Architects and students from the United States, Mexico and Greece will participate in this project. The event includes a visit to Ise Shrine in this “Shikinen Sengu” year (rebuilding year), an architectural design workshop in Ogatsu Town, Miyagi Prefecture, an area devastated by the earthquake and tsunami in 2011, as well as a symposium at The University of Tokyo to round up the week.

Finally, I empathize with the sensibility and modesty of the Japanese people and I would like to share those values with the rest of the world.