

Mini Kapur is a Berlin based gallerist and graphic designer. She has owned and directed the gallery Under the Mango Tree, for seven years. It is located in the diverse and historic Schöneberg neighborhood in Berlin.

Mini Kapur was born in India and moved to Germany 28 years ago leaving her established business behind. Back then, she moved abroad thinking that professionally all would be better. She wanted “the life to happen,” she remarks. At 27 years old, she was already working as an executive art director and consultant in a publishing company. She was offered to design a national newspaper when she decided to move to Berlin.

Learning the German language was not easy but she became fluent and mainstreamed her professional life into the emerging commercial and artistic city of Berlin, freshly unified after the cold war. The possibilities for creating new art spaces were countless. Many artists moved to the current cosmopolitan city of Berlin. It was an ideal moment. Berlin was becoming the world’s art capital after German re-unification in 1989. Working as a graphic designer for years, she got to know artists and people related to art. Her passion for art and understanding ‘the other’ through visual expression inspired her to open her own gallery.

The poetic name Under the Mango Tree – is her connection to her first home, India. It carries the vision of sharing — sharing ideas, thoughts and expressions. Opening a gallery was a way of building bridges to ‘otherness’ and allowing borders to fall down.

She claims, “The link is only human.....we are all similar.”

Every exhibition is curated by Mini along with the exhibiting artists, whenever they are present. She is passionate and subtle about her process and engages with the artist and their work personally. Visitors to the gallery can feel this energy in the story, the careful selection, and the display.

One can also appreciate the influence of Indian philosophy that values kindness, respect, recognition of ‘the other’ and a wonder about difference. A strong bridge between our ethnic diversity is found in every detail. It is a space for creativity where visitors from all backgrounds can interact.

Today, the gallery is well known in Berlin and currently represents more than ten international artists . One of them is Ranbir Kaleka who was among the top 15 South East Asian artists in 2015. César Meneghetti, an internationally recognized artist from Brazil, showed his work at MAXXI Rome and the Venice Biennale 2015.

The current exhibition of artist Irene Wedell is a wonderful example of recognizing a life dedicated to art. Wedell was born in Berlin and her work is an intimate image of a woman depicting her life experiences since childhood. Her work is about the passionate relationship between life and death. The exhibition is a tribute to an artist with a deep connection to nature and an exhilarating passion for art. “It is something that has to be known and shared because it represents a woman’s life who survived despite all odds that she confronted –alone; strongly and creatively”.

Under The Mango Tree hosts regular art talks, concerts and lectures as part of its programming and there are plans already underway to organize art residencies in the near future. For Mini, Under The Mango Tree, is a space about sharing experiences, fostering a better understanding and acceptance of 'the other' through the language of art.

This article was written in collaboration with Mini Kapur.