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For 2 Weeks, City is their Canvas

By Sonali Shenoy | Published: 24th January 2015 06:00 AM Last Updated: 23rd January 2015 10:59 PM

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A painter works on a piece of art on a wall of the Egmore Railway Station, as a passerby looks on | R SATISH BABU

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CHENNAI: Over the next couple of weeks, Chennai will transform into a canvas for a rather unlikely group of painters. They don't speak the same language. And they certainly don't don similar brush techniques. But six artists from Germany, the US and Spain will join a large bunch of desi painters from across the country with one goal in mind — to take art outside galleries, and on to the streets.

With over 20 walls in the pipeline —ranging from those of Casino Theatre to Egmore Station, the list of spaces is as diverse as the painters. And the project, touted to be the city's first-ever Street Art Festival which began earlier this week on Tuesday, will go on till February 7.

In the making for the last six months, the initiative by the Goethe Institut is in collaboration with everyone — from the Corporation of Chennai, to authorities of the Southern Railway to Chennai City Connect and SPI Cinemas. So, when Helmut Schippert, director of Max Mueller Bhavan, shared that getting approval from the city's varied decision makers had been a big feat in itself, one can't help but equate the project's name 'Conquer the Concrete' as quite fitting.

"We're doing this, simply because everybody can access this sort of art, and its free!" Schippert said at a press conference on Friday.

"This is cultural exchange for artists," added Georg Zulchow, curator of the festival. Zulchow went on, "That's why hoarding painters are one of the pillars of this project, because this has been such a long-

standing tradition here.” As part of the project, there is also a section of non-professional enthusiasts who have been selected after a filtering of numerous applications that were sent in to be a part of the festival.