

**ADDRESS BY THE FIRST LADY OF THE REPUBLIC OF
COLOMBIA, MS. NOHRA PUYANA DE PASTRANA,
DURING THE INAUGURATION OF THE ART EXHIBIT
“MARIPOSAS: MARIPAZ POR LA PAZ” AT THE LALIT
KALA AKADEMY MUSEUM**

New Delhi, March 5th, 2001

Light in India is very special. It is ethereal and hazy, as if it were the beginning of a celestial vision. Light in India is the light of the spirit, the spirit's quest for true perfection and love. Light in India is white and powerful, like a never-ending ray, and, surely that explains why the magnificent colors of the butterflies painted by the great Colombian artist María de la Paz Jaramillo, known to us as Marypaz, seem to shine more and with greater joy.

She has accustomed her fellow countrymen to the magic and vitality of her paintings. Paintings that overwhelm us and question us, because behind her characters, and even behind her landscapes, flowers or butterflies, we frequently find a critical view of society, always tainted by humor and irreverence.

The provocative and voluptuous red lips of the women painted by Marypaz, of the models, nuns, brides, cabaret girls, beauty

queens holding hands with their mates, or standing next to a palm tree, or in the middle of a social event, have become the symbol of the sensuality of Latin women.

Yet Marypaz, in this tour across Asia and Africa that starts here in New Delhi and will then take her and her work to Indonesia and Egypt, has not brought her court of colorful characters. This time she is setting her charming butterflies free, so they may fly the sacred skies of the Orient. Her butterflies come, like herself, from the very heart of Colombia: from the coffee region; they come in dark green, like coffee plantations and in bright red, the color of coffee beans.

Here are the butterflies of Colombia, the symbol of life and joy. These butterflies come from a part of Colombia that two years ago suffered the pain and ravages of an earthquake as serious as the one that shattered India not long ago, a coincidence that bonds us in brotherhood and a pain we know too well.

However, Marypaz's butterflies are not inspired in sadness, but in hope. They are not painted as larva or chrysalides, rather they are painted with the splendor of their open wings, as a

true symbol of the rebirth into a new life full of color and promise.

Dear friends:

Colombia brings a token of friendship, peace, and vitality to the Indian nation through the paintings of our dear Marypaz Jaramillo, and we do so by allowing her butterflies to fly freely through your land: these are not like the yellow butterflies that invaded the Macondo of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, these are multicolor butterflies that fan the mystics and poets of this land with art and beauty.

Seeing so many butterflies around us reminds me that butterflies also inhabit the subtle verses of Rabindranath Tagore, the author of “The Gardener” and who says:

“Fruits crowd my orchard, pushing each other, and they come to life in the anguish of abundance (...) In my orchard, butterflies fly under the sun, leaves tremble, and fruits wail yearning for perfection.”

Thank you very much