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(Right) Laila Khan; and her works (above, below) on display at the Tradition Art Gallery PHOTOS: Asian Age

Celebrating life with calligraphy

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Laila Khan has always put a big part of herself into her art. She says it helps her distill the pain and express all that she feels. "I celebrate the life that I love through my art. Whether I'm feeling rebellious, loneliness, love or despair, I always show it through my work. It has always been very personal for me," says the artist, who is exhibiting her first calligraphic works based on the "Om" symbol, apart from Islamic calligraphy.

"I've always been fascinated by Islamic calligraphy. With Om and Islamic calligraphy side by side, I'm trying to show the unity of people. Islamic calligraphy is the primary means for preserving the Quran and Om is a sound that contains all sounds. Hence I have tried to show the connection between man and



God," says Laila.

Coming from a film family, Laila has broken into the art world very successfully. As an artist, she constantly reinvents her style and chooses not to stick to particulars, much like what she's done all her life. "I always feel the need to evolve. An artist should never be static. Some are known for their style but when you get too involved with that, you tend to become complacent and redundant," says Laila.

True to her word, she has done nudes, human faces, architecture, and has worked with materials like oil and acrylic paints, charcoal and even sand. Soon, she will be going to the Central Saint Martin School of Art in London to learn expressive painting. She also wants to move to abstract art.

For now, her calligraphic works are earning her a lot of praise. On display at the Tradition Art Gallery in Juhu, the writings evoke a sense of calm. "I've tried not to use too many colours. I've used a lot of gold pigments and acrylic because gold is something that draws people and I've always been fascinated with its hues," she says.

The exhibition will be on till August 21.