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'I don't want to be curbed'

Non-conformist artist Laila Khan on experimenting with Islamic calligraphy and Salman Khan's paintings...

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Times News Network

She hails from a *filmi* family, but despite being Feroz Khan's daughter and Fardeen's sister, Laila Khan decided to take the path less travelled; she preferred to be behind the canvas rather than face the camera, and paint instead of sing and dance around trees.

After carving a niche for herself within her Bollywood-centric family and Mumbai's colourful art scene, she's now ready to experiment. On the 29th, Laila will be exhibiting a special work in Dubai, which will be auctioned for the Khushi and Al-Noor charities. Done in collaboration with prominent Dubai businessman Ismail Mohammed, Laila, known to be a non-conformist as far as her artworks are concerned, has experimented with Islamic calligraphy.

"I have painted Allah in the Islamic calligraphy style," she states, further elaborating, "Islamic calligraphy or Arabic calligraphy is an artistic form of writing. Since representation of figures and images is forbidden by the religion, this artistic form of writing was invented. It has fascinated me since childhood and I have employed the Thuluth calligraphic style, one of the many ornamental styles." Thuluth is based on the principle that one-third of each letter slides downward, thus giving it a strong curve-like aspect.

Prathamesh Bandekar



ART ATTACK: Laila Khan

Are there any rules for this self-taught artist? "I don't want to be curbed. An art school can't teach you what to see and feel, it can only brush up what's there," she believes. Which is why she opts to leave her paintings untitled — "Every piece of art contains something special for everyone, it's important to experience the uniqueness of art. Titles limit perceptions."

Another self-taught artist that is attracting attention these days is Salman Khan. Has she seen his works? "Yes, he's been painting for a while now and seems quite passionate about it." But can one's artistic side suddenly come into being? "Anything creative can never be forced, it has to come naturally. There has to be a natural progression. You can't just get up one day, paint for six months and then have a show! I painted for 10 years before making a public statement with my first solo show," says Laila.