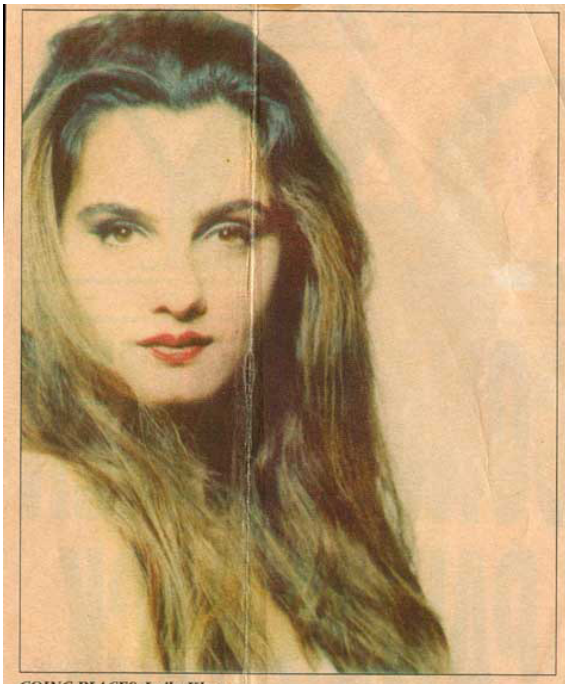
Midday

15 May 1996

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STRAIGHT FROM THE ART



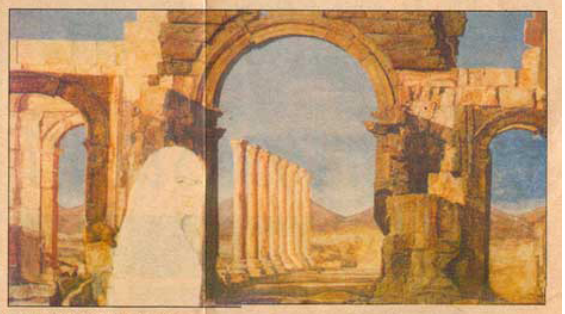
GOING PLACES: Laila Khan

By Kshama Bhat

HERE'S a girl with a difference. She could have chosen to walk in her father's shoes, but chose instead to have a brush with paint.

Laila, daughter of Sundri and Feroz Khan, resisted the lure of the arc lights for a three-month course at the Slade School of Fine Arts, London. She always had an inclination towards capturing beautiful things on canvas. "I had access to all those international artistes and I interacted with them a lot. This resulted in me evolving as a painter and as an artist," she says.

Always wanting to portray beauty differently, Laila chose to use sand on her canvasses. "It is used mainly to give the effect of stone. This is why my paintings look like sculpture."



One of Laila's paintings

An exhibition, 'The Apparition Series', is slated for next year. "I've named the series so because the figures are like ghosts floating through ancient ruins. They portray the timelessness of art and architecture compared to man's temporary nature," Laila explains.

She believes in working on one canvas at a time without too many distractions. "It's easier that way. Besides, I like to work on larger canvasses. It takes 25 days for me to complete one canvas," says Laila.

Though she realised that she had an eye for colour at a very young age, the need to grow as a painter and as a person only came when she was exposed to more of it.

"The experience of being in London was a fruitful one. Besides, abroad there are no restrictions and expression becomes easy and free. Unlike at home, individualistic style is not curbed," says Laila.

The women in her paintings have a certain sadness about them. For instance, the one of three weeping rural women. "One of them is a widow, while the others are young and married. I wanted to convey that rural women still suffer," says Laila.

Laila Khan has resisted the lure of the arc lights to keep the faith with paint

GALLERIA

On the large number of female forms in her paintings, she says: "I am a woman and that's one of the reasons why I've always been impressed with the female anatomy — I have nothing against the male form, but there is a certain mystique associated with the female body. And woman is the embodiment of both masculine and feminine qualities."

Though Laila has never put her paintings on show, she has already sold quite a few of her works both in India and abroad. "It started off with somebody spotting my work, appreciating it and deciding to buy it. I've sold paintings to many industrialists, socialites and celebrities. Success is important for an artist to be able to continue being creative," says Laila.

She was inspired by the Dutch painter Vincent Van Gogh, Picasso and Anjolie Ela Menon. "I also admire the spirit of M F Hussain, though not his work, especially his recent ones," she says.

Laila leaves several of her works untitled. She believes in letting them talk for themselves. "The interpretation is subjective. I'm aiming for my works to interact with the viewer at a glance. The reaction it evokes should be instinctive," she says. For this talented artist that shouldn't be too difficult.