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Khanvas capers



"You're going to be an artist one day," was **SUNDARI KHAN**'s prediction for daughter Laila. But with **FEROZ KHAN** as dad and **SANJAY** as uncle, everybody thought Laila, like brother **FARDEEN**, would be yet another filmstar in the making. Except, art intervened. "Everyone in the family has been creative. My creative expression comes through art," said **LAILA KHAN RAJPAL**, opening her first major showing in Mumbai along with artist **SANJAY KUMAR** at Yantra yesterday.

Laila's artistic inclinations surfaced in school itself, and in college, while studying for a degree in English Literature, she apprenticed with an artist. After a course at London's Slade School, she set off on her own and has been selling her works for the past eight years. With Delhi as her base now, the buzz of Mumbai is missed. "No place like Mumbai. There's nothing to beat the vibe that this city has," she says.

Her family are her biggest critics — and her major source of support. "They are all art lovers, hence they critique my efforts. But they're also very encouraging, especially my mother, who pushed me early on to hone my skills."

As an artist, she says she recognises the growing awareness about art in the country. "Earlier, people bought art as merely decor, but now, increasingly, the audience is aware of the semantics involved. They are looking for meaning in the artworks they buy, and don't see art for its decorative purposes alone." And on the eternal debate about whether those daubs of paint are overpriced... Laila asserts: "Art is priceless. Creating a work of art is an isolated process — the artist puts his or her entire being in a single painting. You cannot put a price on that."

VRUSHALI HALDIPUR