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Khan confidential

Laila Khan takes on calligraphy in her art, but keeps her words minimal

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WHEN you're the daughter of one of India's biggest movie stars, carving out your own niche can be a struggle. But Laila Khan, daughter of the late Feroz Khan and sister of actor Fardeen Khan, always knew she wanted to paint. Khan says her mum Sundari saw her talent when she was young and eventually Khan enrolled herself in London's Slade School of Fine Arts.

Her journey as an artist has been 20 years long; but Khan finds herself in many new places now. For starters, she's abandoned her former stamping ground, Delhi, post her recent estrangement from tennis player Rohit Rajpal, and is now a regular in Mumbai's page-three circuit. She's also dating Farhan Ebrahim Furniturewala, former model Pooja Bedi's ex, but these are cards the 39-year-old keeps close to her chest. "I don't like to talk about the people in my life. I'd much rather focus on my work," she requests.

So let's. Khan is keeping busy with a new exhibition on calligraphic art that will be on display at her aunt Zarine Khan's Juhu gallery, on till August 21.

"Calligraphy is a venerated art in Islam, since it's used to write the Quran. I encountered it first as a child when I was learning Urdu and Arabic, and have been attracted to it ever since," says Khan, seated on the living room of her Juhu home, in jeans and a T-shirt and yet a picture of glamour with toe nails gleaming a ruby red. "I have of course learnt all six scripts, but I like the Kufic, with its square style, the best."

This is also a landmark show for her because this is the first time she's done an interpretation of the Om. "It's a deeply spiritual sound and I feel that it speaks of peace and calm. I've tried to explore that in my art, but I still feel there are so many levels I haven't touched," she adds.

The lady is often seen in the company of Suzanne Roshan, Maheep Kapoor, Farah Khan Ali and Bhawna Pandey. It still seems strange that someone from a film family was not tempted by the lure of arc-lights, but she explains, "My father was always so protective of me, since I'm the only daughter. Besides, I'm a very solitary person. I only ever attend film parties if it's a close friend or family."

Three months since her father passed away, she is the picture of composure with a polite "I'm fine, thank you very much". But that doesn't mean she doesn't throw the occasional fond glance at a picture of him, placed on a coffee table. "I'm definitely going to paint my father," she confesses, before quickly changing the subject.