

The many faces of a woman at Jehangir

■ Sudeshna Chatterjee

PAINTER Dhruvi Acharya is running a show titled *Woman, Mother, Goddess* at the Jehangir Art Gallery till March 31. This is her first solo show in Mumbai. One wonders at the gender-sensitive portrayal. "I have a ten-month-old son, Malhar, my first child. Which means I have just gone through the whole new experience which is akin to a new way of living. The whole paradigm shifts. Like today when

I am with my child and look at the mirror, my focus goes to my baby, not myself. Similarly in women, I see certain goddess-like qualities like generosity. In fact, I have even invented the goddess of soul and birth. I am not a feminist so to say. My husband is most supportive in my endeavours. I am merely putting in certain impressions that I can only feel as a woman and in her myriad manifestations. In the process I am also celebrating female spirits," she explains.



Dhruvi Acharya poses in front of one of her paintings

A Mumbaiite, Dhruvi majored in illustration in the commercial arts program at the Sophia Polytechnic in Mumbai. She began painting her memories of home soon

after reaching the US in 1995 when she got married to filmmaker Manish. "I only had my husband for my company. I guess the loneliness sort of stimulated my creative

energy and I started painting and also went for a Master's study," she says. She has received her MFA in painting from the Maryland Institute, College of Art in Baltimore.

She has been written about in the *New York Times*, *Art India*, *New American Paintings*, the *Baltimore Sun*, *Mid-Day*, *Savvy* and *News India Times*, among others. This 30-year-old has had several solo shows in the US and has exhibited in juried shows with judging panelists from the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington. Her works are held in private and public collections, both in India and America. She currently divides her time between New York and Mumbai, and actively exhibits her work.

Acharya confesses that her works are influenced by memories and experiences of a life divided between New York and Mumbai. Influenced artistically by Mughal miniature paintings and contemporary comic books, the artist uses personal, ancient and pop-culture metaphors and symbolism to create the allegorical, narrative paintings. Her work is a personal diary of the dislocation and disconnection one feels as an immigrant. At the same time, it is also the musings of an independent woman aware of the limitations of liberties and opportunities afforded by her own traditional culture.

Dahling!

You know you are an upper crust South Mumbaiite if

● The number of shoes you have rivals Imelda Marcos' collection