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Aurat tere kayi naam

Shakti, pity, fortitude, tyag:

Inaugurating the All-India Maheshwari Mahila Mahotsav in Akola last week, Director of Aditya Vikram Birla Group, Rajashri Birla, said Indian women are symbols of pity and fortitude, according to a recent newspaper report. **Your Life** ran a quick check among Mumbai's women. After all, it's them she was talking about, and 4,95,738,169* others.

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* Source: Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, Census of India 2001 — Provisional Totals, March 2001.

(Right) A painting from *Sleep* (tryptic)



Twenty-five artists have come together to exhibit a fairytale, even recipe books. Of the eleven women artists in society. The exhibition will be on at Hacienda Galler



Dhruvi Acharya

By Tinz Nooshian
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The conversation is going to be peppered with mumbling, she warns. "Uhh... I'm not very good with words, that's why I paint." And she only paints women? Dhruvi leaves men alone, not because she wants to, but because uhh...

"I have a really understanding husband and father-in-law, and two not so understanding kids. I'm surrounded by men, and have no issue with them. I just don't relate to how they think," says the 34 year-old who grew up in a traditional Indian family where you were free to work if your husband was okay with it. The husband, of course, turned out to be the one who encouraged her to go to grad school. "My life is that of a woman, and my paintings are about life. About the choices you make as a painter, a mother, and the duality that stemmed from dividing time between New York and Mumbai."

Each of Dhruvi's works germinates from unconscious jottings in a drawing diary. And not all her works are sprayed with autobiographical imagery. It can be something she's read, heard or seen. "I'm not a feminist and make no political statements. There is an innate difference between the way men and women think. And I prefer exploring the later."

And so she has done it again. An exhibition titled *In Short*, sees three works inspired by "Sleep", a short story by Haruki Murakami. A woman dreams about a man pouring water on her feet. Bathed in sweat, she awakes never to sleep again. Stricken with sudden insomnia, she finds herself gifted with extra hours to do just as she pleases. Protecting herself by dressing as a man, she gets out on a long, late night drive and encounters two strange men who decide to tip her vehicle over.

The irony of the illness granting her "me time", away from the chores of being a mother and a wife, is what Dhruvi connects with. "I sleep very little and do most of my painting at night when my two and four year-old are asleep," says the painter whose peculiar technique dominated by a dream-like quality lends itself to the story.

The waiting line for her paintings is as much a result of the laborious technique as the thought behind them, hopes Dhruvi, whose show is usually a sell-out on the day it opens. "My professor once said, 'It is more important how you paint than what you paint. Would you rather look at a shabby painting of Napoleon after the war or a beautiful painting of a woman by her desk?' I labour over my work. It's an honest effort."

Dhruvi Acharya

artist

Mother: A social worker and interior designer.

Father: An industrialist.

Her Worth: Her paintings sell for Rs 25,000 to over Rs 2,00,000. She has a solo show every two years, the next one will be in 2006.

Struggle: Rejection and setbacks are stepping stones to achieving success. I learn objective lessons from rejection. I had contacted Shireen Gandhi of Chemould gallery and she rejected my work. Later, when I was showing at Jehangir Art Gallery, she saw my work, booked me for a show, and my work sold out in three days.

5 step success route:

- 1. Working smart and working hard:** They are both indispensable.
- 2. Being in the right place at the right time:** This is often a case of being in as many places as possible, all the time.
- 3. Believe in your dream:** Believe in it, no matter how far-fetched and know you are in it for the long haul.
- 4. Have a genuine love of what you do:** The process is as important as the goal.
- 5. Be informed:** The history of the field is important as instinct and talent.



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YOUR SUCCESS

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