

Curious spaces, linear narratives

Vishwa Shroff's first solo show draws architectural connections from living in cities across the world

SADAF VASGARE

Artist Vishwa Shroff's drawings, currently on display at Tarq, follow a soothing palette of colours. The work, divided into four distinct parts, is part of the artist's first solo exhibition, *Drawn Space*. Curated by London-based Charlie Levine, the show is about the potential of spaces and objects as seen through Shroff's chosen medium: drawing.

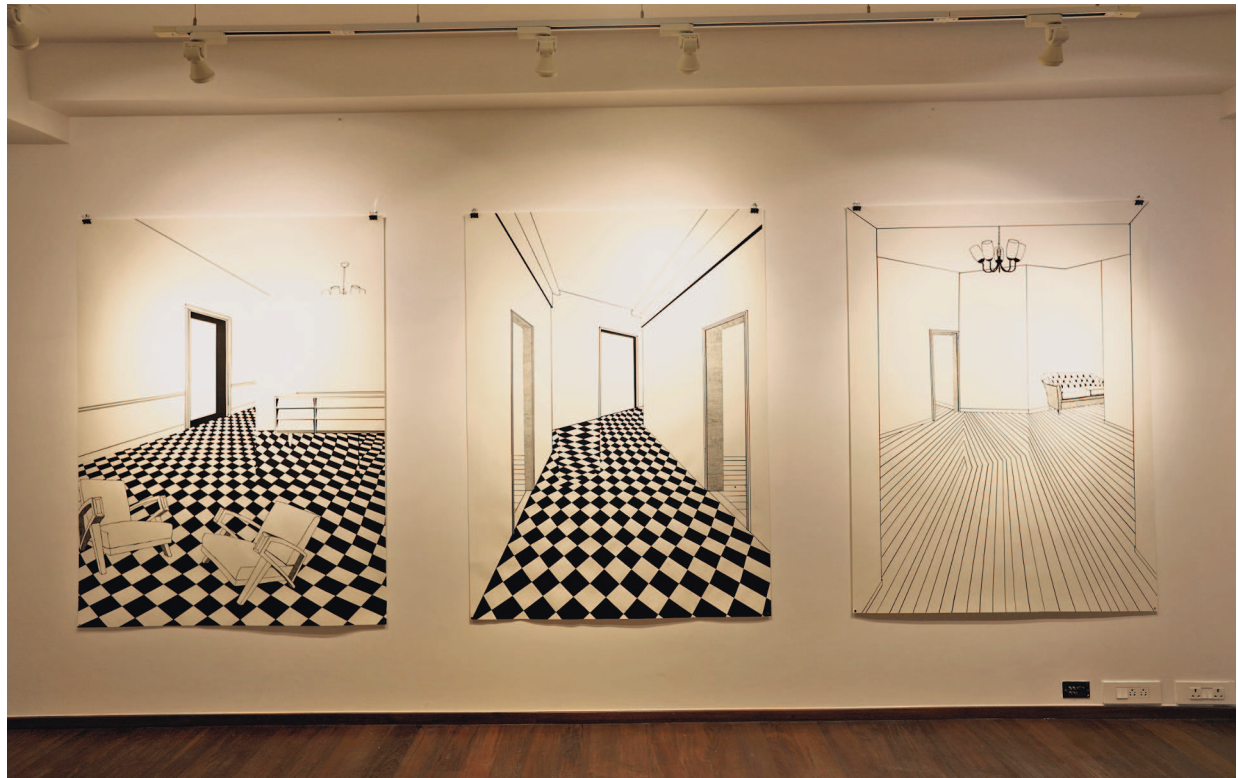
When you first view Shroff's drawings, you might take them to be minimalistic architectural spaces. But upon contemplation, the corridors, walls, windows and floor patterns knit a different story in your mind.

From Vadodara to Tokyo, and a couple of cities in the middle, Shroff has lived in diverse cultures. "As much as people enjoy dipping in and out of cultural idiosyncrasies, I really feel like there is a common thread, and that's what interests me," she says.

Shroff has worked extensively with ink on paper. Her previous projects have been encapsulated in the form of books. When Shroff took to drawing in 2007 after a hiatus of three-four years, she could not categorise the works. Producing a book with sketches and picked-out drawings for an exhibition in Vadodara was where it all began for Shroff. At the same time, she co-authored several book projects with Katsushi Goto. *Room*, her first book in 2011, and her latest, *Postulating Premises* (2015), are works of their collaboration.

Recently, Shroff collaborated with Goto for the academic paper *Duality in Drawing* for the International Symposium of Architectural Interchanges in Asia. She describes working with Goto as fun and conversational; the academic paper is a result of their endless conversations on their interests. For her, a collaboration is more than cut-throat business. "I need to connect with the person at an informal level, have conversations."

It was two years ago that she discovered watercolours. Her choices of colour come from a less-is-more philosophy. "For every work, I now use one or two colours, repeating them in the body of the work." She describes the influence of colour from old



EXPLORING PLACES: Vishwa Shroff's work intentionally lacks a human protagonist, as she wants to highlight how spaces hold the history of an occupant. PHOTOS: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Victorian dollhouses and their prints. She prefers the flatness of old Victorian prints, which the use of watercolours provides her. "I am not yet comfortable with watercolours. I am still learning."

Having worked with books earlier, *Drawn Space* is a completely different experience for Shroff. The exhibition explores the artist's curiosity about spaces through a series of works.

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spaces hold the history of an occupant.

'Corridor', one of the works on display, deals with the idea of what lies behind a corridor. These are life-size drawings of a place you remember, but have never been to. "It is also a bit of continuation from *Postulating Premises*, which dealt with the idea of one behind the other that makes up a space."

Another series of her paintings at the exhibition, 'Transitions', is about the floor work at the Victoria Albert Museum in London.

With museums being built over time and in phases, the floor work of every gallery in it is different. Shroff spent a lot of time looking at the floor transitions from one pattern to the other. "For me, what was interesting was the transitions that had taken place within the element of the building's space, which represent the factor of time, occupancy and usage."

Drawn Space also includes a series of paintings on walls, 'Party Walls'. With the idea of time and collective memories, 'Party Walls' is 'Corridor'

with a role reversal. Here, Shroff highlights the narrative in front of the wall, a space which used to be.

The show being Shroff's first solo exhibition does make her nervous, but she says it is worth the jitters. "It is a trip on its own, something I have never done before," says the artist.

Drawn Spaces: Tarq, Colaba, till January 14. Meet the Master, an ongoing series of workshops by Tarq for children aged 8-12: today, with Vishwa Shroff.