

5 Questions to Soghra Khurasani



April 1, 2019

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The celebrated printmaker discusses her latest work, career and plans to convert her studio space into a thriving artist residency

Where do you work?

I have a print studio in Baroda which I share with my husband, Shaik Azghar Ali, who is also an artist. It is located in the countryside amidst farm fields, birds and nature which I truly enjoy. I miss working out of shared spaces, like I used to in my early years, and plan to make my studio a fully equipped printmaking facility that can host artist residency and exchange programmes.

What inspires you?

For me, inspiration is the power source that pushes an individual to move forward and find new ways of living. When I was younger, I used to feel elated and inspired by sports. I even played state-level cricket till the age of 19, but eventually chose to pursue a career in the visual arts. When it comes to my work, I am influenced by my surroundings, from simple things like home, family as well as issues that affect me on a daily basis. Music is another important resource which I turn to from time to time, especially Sufi tunes and songs by Indian Ocean.

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What was your most recent exhibition?

I did a show called *SKIN* at Gitler & _____ in New York last September. This was after a two-year maternity break when I found myself deeply fascinated with the idea of rupture and healing of human skin. The body of work consisted of large woodcut prints where human flesh, marks, and scars took the form of fictional, dreamy landscapes. I wanted to highlight that we are, after all, the same under our skin – made up of mountains, valleys, land, and soil.



Soghra Khurasani. *Skin I*, 2018. Woodcut print on paper. Courtesy of TARQ

Which artists influence your practice?

While at university, I was heavily influenced by the Impressionists who I had been reading about at the time. Now, I have grown to appreciate many more artists, with Zarina Hashmi, Shilpa Gupta, and Navjot Altaf being my all-time favourites. I also have huge respect for artists who challenge and dedicate their lives to important social causes, such as Guerrilla Girls, Sarah Lucas, and Shirin Neshat.

Where do you go to see art?

Baroda has a really lively art scene. Every year, I wait with the greatest eagerness to catch the display by final year students at the Maharaja Sayajirao University during summer. It is the only time that I get to meet other artists as well as look at works by younger talent as they take a step further into a new world of art. Sometimes, I also travel to New Delhi and Mumbai to check out gallery and museum shows.

Soghra Khurasani was born in in 1983 in Visakhapatnam and currently lives and works in Baroda, India. She is a recipient of several prestigious awards, including the 56th National Academy Award and the Kala Sakshi Memorial Trust Award, and is represented by TARQ Gallery, Mumbai.