

CULTURE

Tarq, Mumbai: This new exhibition tells stories from the soul

The new solo show by artist Boshudhara Mukherjee explores themes of spirit guides, rebirth and mysticism by bringing together art and craft

By Shweta Vepa Vyas

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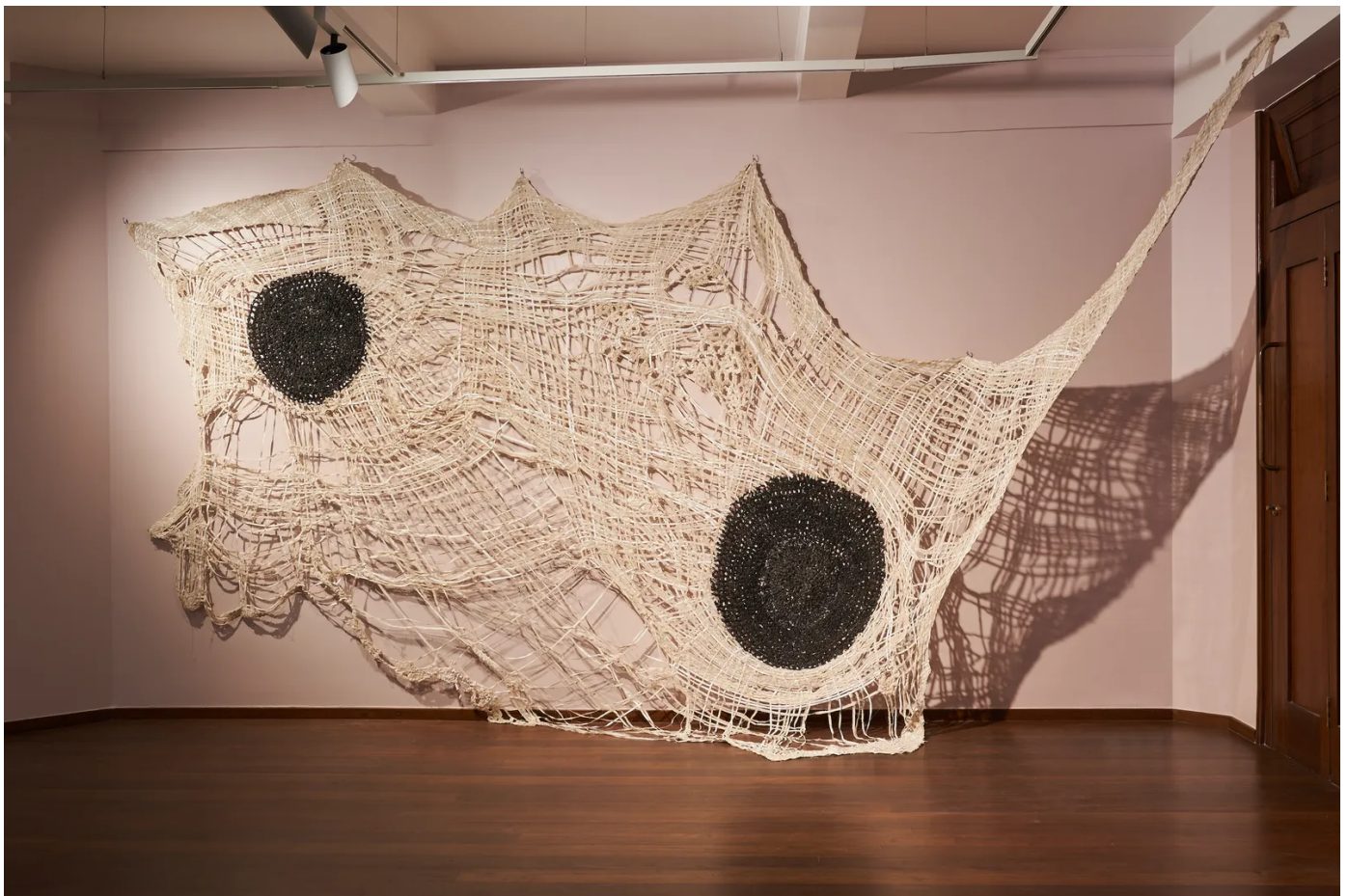
Ubu, Canvas, uncoated canvas, acrylic paint, 15.5 x 8 feet, 2020

Wiccan wisdom speaks of the legend of spirit guides. Guardians, protectors or teachers, they're often believed to take the form of humans or animals. For artist Boshudhara Mukherjee, these guides—or 'familiar'—as she refers to them, have been a source of strength and wisdom. Incidentally, it was a concept she stumbled across quite accidentally, but as serendipity would have it, it just seemed like a

perfect fit for her show: "So much of me and mine get woven into my works that the idea of the spirit guide was something I could relate to especially in this series. More than before, I have channelled those close to me—animal and human—as inspiration for this show titled, *The Familiars*," she shares.

Looking Inward

The show as Mukherjee describes it is "a tactile exploration of ideas of kinship, belonging and rebirth." She refers to her work as an extension of her alter ego—and often the ideas aren't planned but in fact flow organically. "In this way, my work is a part of me but still very much has an identity of its own. Creating is a collaborative process between me and my work. The work in many ways guides me and my hands to create the final piece."



Bibi, Canvas, uncoated canvas, fabric, lace, thread, acrylic paint, 18 x 9 feet, 2019



Pentagrams white, Fabric, denim, Uncoated Canvas, thread, staple pins, 8.5 x 7.5 feet, 2018



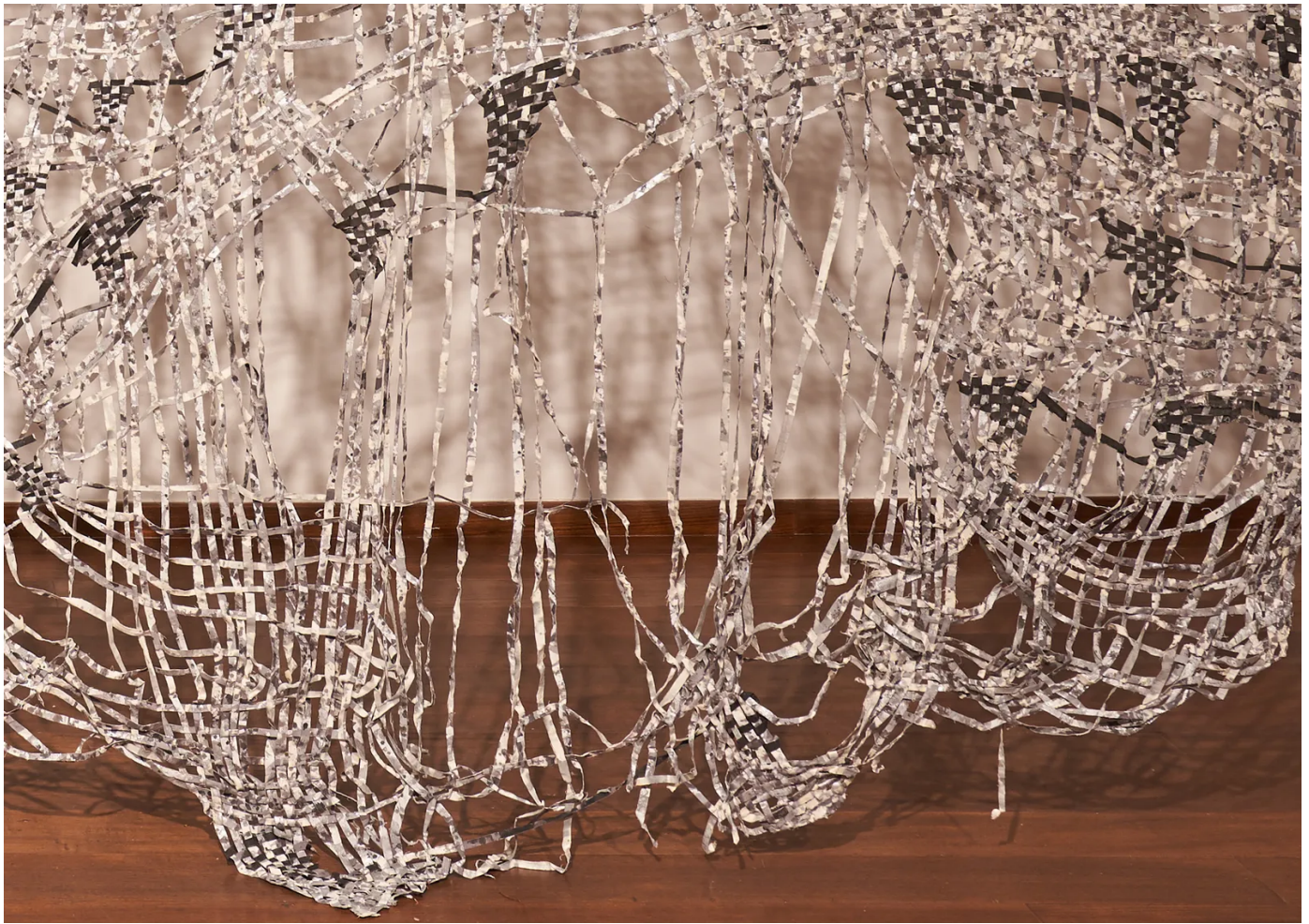
Egg (far left) and Adi (centre)

Egg, Uncoated Canvas, enamel paint, 10.5 x 8 feet, 2018 *Adi, Uncoated canvas, denim, fabric, 13.5 x 10 feet, 2019*

Melding Art with Craft

The show presents eight works in Mukherjee's distinctive style—shredded, painted canvases, hand woven into tapestry-like installations. "I hate wasting or throwing things away especially fabric. My cupboards are full of old materials—anything I believe I can reuse or fix, from my family and friends. Everything to me is recyclable and this idea very naturally extends into my art."

The works have been created by weaving material that's been cut into strips—just like in the past. However, her style has evolved in terms of choice of materials as well as skills that have been mastered over the years. Crafts like stitching, patchwork and crochet have been used to add texture and depth to each piece.



Ubu, Canvas, uncoated canvas, acrylic paint, 15.5 x 8 feet, 2020



Pentagrams white, Fabric, denim, Uncoated Canvas, thread, staple pins, 8.5 x 7.5 feet, 2018

A Passionate Process

For Mukherjee, the ideas could stem from anything—a colour, a piece of fabric or a craft. She describes the creative process as being based on "a love for material, especially fabric and restless hands that like to cut and stitch and, crochet and macramé and weave." Her process is usually spontaneous and the final pieces come together naturally in an organic manner. When quizzed about her favourite work, Mukherjee says it's hard to pick one as she loves and hates each work for different reasons. "I learn something new with each piece, opening up doors for future work. Each work that is part of this show has been an experiment—something new that's made me push boundaries, both technically and ideologically."

Describing her works as personal and instinctive, through this show, Mukherjee hopes to invite people into her world—one that's full of craft, colour and charm.



Exhibition view of *The Familiars* (seen here, *Adi and Bibi*)

*The exhibition will be on view at TARQ, Mumbai till April 24th, through prior appointment as well as virtually via the gallery's website. *

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