

Explore the universe within

Head to Piramal Gallery for an exhibition by Italian photographer Patrizia Maimouna Guerresi. The relationship between women and society will be the prime focus of her upcoming exhibition



(Above) Gatka, (right) Kalindi's Dream



SOMA DAS

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Over a span of two decades, Italian photographer and video installation artist Patrizia Maimouna Guerresi has been using her art to empower women and emphasise on the concept of a shared humanity. After exhibiting in Europe, US and the Middle East, she is set for her first exhibition in India. Organised by Tod's and Tasveer, the exhibition includes photographs and videos that are inspired by personal experiences and cultural contexts, which refer to universal myths, the sacred realm and the female condition.

Speaking about her recent body of work, Guerresi says, "My work is a continuation of my research regarding the mystic body. Much of this series is an extension of my ideas on 'Giant Spirits', where I began working with Muslim African characters. In the new

work, some figures do not have a precise religious identity. I am more interested in the similarities rather than the differences between religions and traditional cultures. What interests me most is to unarm peoples' fears of the unknown, of that which is 'different'. Such things are the main cause of personal and social conflicts."

For making her artworks, she arranges and paints the backdrops at her studio or paints open-air props like peeling walls. "I dress the model in a garment I have made an empty, sculptural form to represent a metaphysical and supernatural body. So, the emptiness or void becomes a metaphor of fear for what is different, unknown and frightening. In these figures, only the face, hands and sometimes the feet are visible, like in ancient icons. I mark these visible parts of the body with a white line, which I interpret as a symbol of purification and light, or bisection marking the border between life and death, the known and the unknown."

For her Indian subjects, she used yellow as a sign of the sun and carmine red representing the colours of India.

Guerresi observes that her journey through life and her conversion to Islam has deeply inspired her work. Islamic buildings figure as a prominent motif in several of her photographs in the Minarets series. She emphasises that they are not meant to be provocative or irreverent: "They are instead a personal attempt to get closer to the symbols of different cultures. I think that the artist's job is to make the viewer reflective, and to amplify their vision of the world."

Guerresi also emphasises that the images in the exhibition are timeless. "They do not depict ancient India or a new India in constant development. They are inner representations of a greater Indian spirituality. I hope my work is interpreted in the ecumenical spirit with which it was produced, as a collection of values, cultures and religions co-existing within the Indian population, and that it evokes reflection beyond aesthetic pleasure," she concludes.

FROM April 17 to 24, 12 pm to 8 pm
AT Piramal Gallery, NCPA, Nariman Point.
CALL 66223737