

Walk the line

American artist Mindy Shapero's dual-personality abstracts stem from the written word. By Palak Malik

Tell us about the theme of your artwork on display.

The drawings and sculpture that are being shown are all made with the accumulation of smaller parts that complete a larger thought or an idea. From a distance, a piece forms a dome-like whole with the interior lines gesturing an explosion or implosion, but as you approach the sculpture, it can potentially fall apart and become something entirely different.

What is the thought process behind your creations?

My work usually starts as an image that is a reaction to a narrative from which I am working. I often use magical realism, science fiction and offbeat literature as my starting point. My work then tends to unfold and unravel, producing a macro/micro affect. This is a result of a labour-intensive process, where mark making repeats itself in order to transcend its material. Each body of work leads me to the next. Through my art, I've learnt how we can perceive ourselves as very small or very big beings in the world.

How difficult/easy is to create an artwork that's abstract in nature?

The difficult part is when the image begins to turn into something less abstract and I have to decide if it makes sense with the concept of the piece. At times I'm not comfortable with the connotations it takes, in which case I need to make changes, other times I think it is very exciting that it could possibly take on yet another meaning and lead me in a direction that is new. So many abstractions are taken from real things in life it is a real challenge to hide their origin.

What does art mean to you?

It is so much a part of who I am and how I identify myself, I can hardly understand life without it. I'd feel ungrounded and lost if I didn't step in my studio for a week. And culturally, it is the most truthful history.

Visions from Beyond: A Foray into Metaphysics Materiality is on at Mumbai's Gallery Isa, from July 5.

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