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EXPRESS

EXHIBITION

A confluence of the real and the surreal

Shukla Chowdhury brings *The Phoenix Turns Ten — From Ashes to Blossoms* to the city

Mumbai-based fine artist Shukla Chowdhury will be exhibiting her latest works in her 10th solo show at the Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath. This is her maiden show in Bangalore, and the theme of the show, *The Phoenix Turns Ten — From Ashes to Blossoms* is in the nature of a retrospective of her past nine shows, in which the Phoenix has been a constant fixture to narrate her tales of fantasy.

Through this show, the artist reminisces of her experiences, and primes herself for another eventful

journey into the future. Although a commemoration of the wonders of the natural creation, the artist also seeks a divine confluence of the soul and the supreme creator of the universe in her quest to realise the truth of life, love and living.

"It has been an enriching and eventful journey the past nine times I forayed into the creative ether with my friend, philosopher, guide and alter ego — the Phoenix. As the Phoenix came to life and began its advent into the world of colour, creativity and imagination, it encountered

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several wondrous facets of the natural world. Most of these aspects escape our attention. Through my artistic endeavours, I try to unearth nature's latencies," says Shukla.

Over her nine artistic ex-

periences, the Phoenix has been a leitmotif for Shukla's expressions. It took flight at the onset of her creative pursuit. Every exhibition was a step further into the undiscovered. The Phoenix experienced numerous stages of 'being' along the way. It sought a way into the unknown, and attempted to realise the true reason for our existence. It celebrated the great energy of the soul, and of the universe. Its reverie brought it closer to the Supreme.

While explaining her style of work, this practitioner of abstract expres-

sionism adds, "My work is an expression of my interpretations of the world around me. I try to weave a rich visual imagery with bright and vivid colours. Employing strong strokes to convey the momentum of my thoughts, I use contrasts as a means to build a confluence between the real and the surreal. Each stroke is planned and then executed, although it may seem impulsive. Motivated by the natural world and its splendour, I prance through my imaginative and dreamy world, accompanied with the Phoenix."

The visual information contained in every pictorial frame is dense, yet simple in form. The narrative is intimate, yet vivid in its description. This exhibition attempts to celebrate the unbound free spirit, unfettered and liberated, and it is coming of age through its various experiences. Through Shukla's works, one is drawn into a world that celebrates life in all its varied nuances. It is about the merging of the human spirit and the 'one'.

The exhibition is on from April 26 to May 2.

— Express Features