

Sheyna Baig Shines With Her Creative Canvas

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She informs you that her father is involved in bringing water technology from Israel to India, and it's much later that she reveals her real identity – that she's the daughter of the former Test cricketer, Abbas Ali Baig. But she took up neither cricket, nor water technology, and became a painter instead.

Meet Sheyna Baig, whose paintings were on display on Monday and Tuesday at the Roosevelt House, thanks to US Ambassador Richard Celeste and his wife, Jacqueline Lundquist. "Maybe my mother has been an influence because she was involved with organising craftspeople," reasons Sheyna, whose name, incidentally, means 'pure'.

In fact, she's a natural-born painter, a quality that enabled her to win a scholarship to study art at Millfield School, En-

On Monday and Tuesday, the US Ambassador's wife, Jacqueline Lundquist, opened Roosevelt House to three talented young artists – (from left) Priya Singh, Sheyna Baig and Manav Gupta

gland, when she was barely 13. From there, she moved on to the Chelsea School of Art and St Martin's/Central. "I'm happy with my long stay in London," Sheyna says. "It exposed me to a wider canvas. At the same time, it enabled me to appreciate India and Indian art."

Sheyna, incidentally, loves to be with children (she conducts art classes for them) and it shows in her work. On one large canvas, she has painted a child shoe-polisher whom she met once. But her most striking work, undoubtedly, is the 'Lotus Girl', which shows a happy child frolicking amid lotuses.

"I love to paint lotuses and footprints because I'm into Buddhism as well," she reveals. She has painted a variety of footprints on glass, which she feels is a happy departure from painting "regular things". But when she wants to take a break from brush and paint, she loves to go swimming, or walking, or playing tennis.

Sheyna's experimental streak is evident in her use of material like dried betel and *peepal* leaves, which she sews together with gold threads. "These leaves never get spoilt," she tells us. She also experiments with mixed media, so her work on display included acrylics, oils and natural material like jute and rice paper, best *peepal* and betel leaves. Not surprisingly, most of her work sold out, just like they did in her last exhibition in New York.



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