Sulekha feels that she has many roles outside her drawing and painting. Says she, "I have role to play when I go out into the society. I have to keep the economical standard in view. When I am in the family, I have a different role there. The blindness of society is an integral part of my work. My work should be able to portray it with feelings and depth." In painting, she says that she has worked in mixed media —at times she has used paper or tissue. Sometimes, in her paintings, she has even used needles. She has also used James-clips. "I have used acrylic, oil-colour, and pastel, which are all used academically. Acrylic is a media that is very comfortable for artists like herself. Thus she uses a lot of that media," she says, and adds that she does installation works too which handle contemporary themes and try to make her work conceptual.



***Balance 9*, oil on canvas.**

Talking of artists who appeal to her, she mentions Kanak Champa Chakma, Naima Haque, Tayyaba Begum Lipi. "Frida Carlo and Tayyab Mehta and Maqbul Fida are artists to my taste," she says. As for the Europeans, she admires Salvador Dali, as he is undoubtedly meaningful – and reflects contemporary society to its full hilt.

Asked if she has ever been disappointed with her own work, Sulekha says the she found it difficult to work alone—she always maintained a group. She says that she does not get the support from her society that she could go and work at midnight, as her male counterparts do without batting an eyelid. At 10 pm at Kamalapur Station one finds many interesting characters like vagabonds who are fascinating to paint and draw, as the men she works with tell her—and she naturally envies them. For women to overcome such issues is not easy though not impossible.

Sulekha says that to work in one media alone can sometimes be boring and dull. She had participated in BRITTO's One Square Mile campaign, arranged by Tayyaba Begum Lipi. She had a big installation called "Mirror". She says that to understand ourselves, we sometimes stand in front of a mirror. If given ample time, she says, one can plan and deliver a satisfying project.

Rafiqun Nabi thinks all of Shulekha's works reflect deep thought and patience. There is a fascination for one subject that is woman. A painter must progress and not be confined to one subject or theme only—if possible. With time, the thinking of the artists changes. All her frames attract visitors, says Nabi who believes her satirical messages and surrealist fantasy will carry her far.

Nisar Hossain thinks Sulekha's paintings are more than pictures. He would like to label her paintings as "pictures drawn" and "pictures of written". Although she uses flat colours, says Nisar Hossain, the pictorial elements remain strong. Each maintains its own anatomy, without hampering the composition of the painting. She draws from common life.She tries to overcome the limitation of the two-dimensional effect by using multiple planes that link up the art viewer with the art work he concludes.

For the last six months – as another passion dear to her heart— she is working with a camera. She has limited herself to the Dhaka city so far. Sometimes she works alone: at times she has her photographer friends, with whom she gangs up.

Sulekha feels that women have no other choice – they have no other way out in society: "If we wish, we do not get something nice and cosy. We must struggle and fight, to be accepted by the overwhelming existence of men around us." ■