

# ROUBLE NAGI

**THE 34-YEAR-OLD MUMBAI-BASED ARTIST WHO WORKS ACROSS 38 MEDIA, FROM MARBLE AND TERRACOTTA TO GLASS AND COLD CERAMIC, HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED THE LARGEST MURAL IN INDIA**

**T**hirty-eight media including ceramic, terracotta, metal, glass and frescoes; 800 murals, including the largest one in India (*The Paradise Garden* in Virar, Mumbai made of 500,000 pieces of mosaic); sculptures in marble that creatively enhance public squares and spaces in major metropolises like Mumbai and Delhi and lastly, large paintings with sweeping colours, shapes and forms.... Rouble Nagi is an artist who surprises with every undertaking.

From cold ceramic murals to installations in a number of the five-star hotels across India, Rouble has many celebrities like Salman Khan as clients. Her vision is multifaceted in its ambition as she constantly strives to push her artistic limits and reinvent her talent in manifold media. We meet the Kashmiri-born artist extraordinaire in her Mumbai studio as she reveals what constitutes her creative paradigm.

**Where were you born and brought up?**

I was born in Kashmir which is known internationally for its beauty and charm but was brought up all over India. My father was an officer in the Indian Armed Forces. As a child I had a keen interest in and empathy for children, animals and nature.

**You mentioned you broke the family mould by becoming an artist.**

My family is full of bureaucrats and people with a background in defense. I happen to be the odd one out. They have always been very supportive although they thought art was a hobby and not a profession.

**Are you formally trained?**

'Artists are born, not made' is a myth. A passion for art has to be there, but other skills are all acquired. No one is born knowing how to draw, paint or sculpt, any more than anyone is born knowing how to play the piano or drive a car. You may have an artists' view, or an imagination that helps, but one must have the skill-set to execute what's there in your mind. I have studied at Slade London but eat, drink and sleep art all the time.

**You are known for being proficient in so many art forms; can you tell us a bit about this?**

Some of the media I work in are metal, bronze, copper, stainless steel, aluminum, glass, ceramic, cold ceramic, terracotta, tile mosaic, glass mosaic, ▶

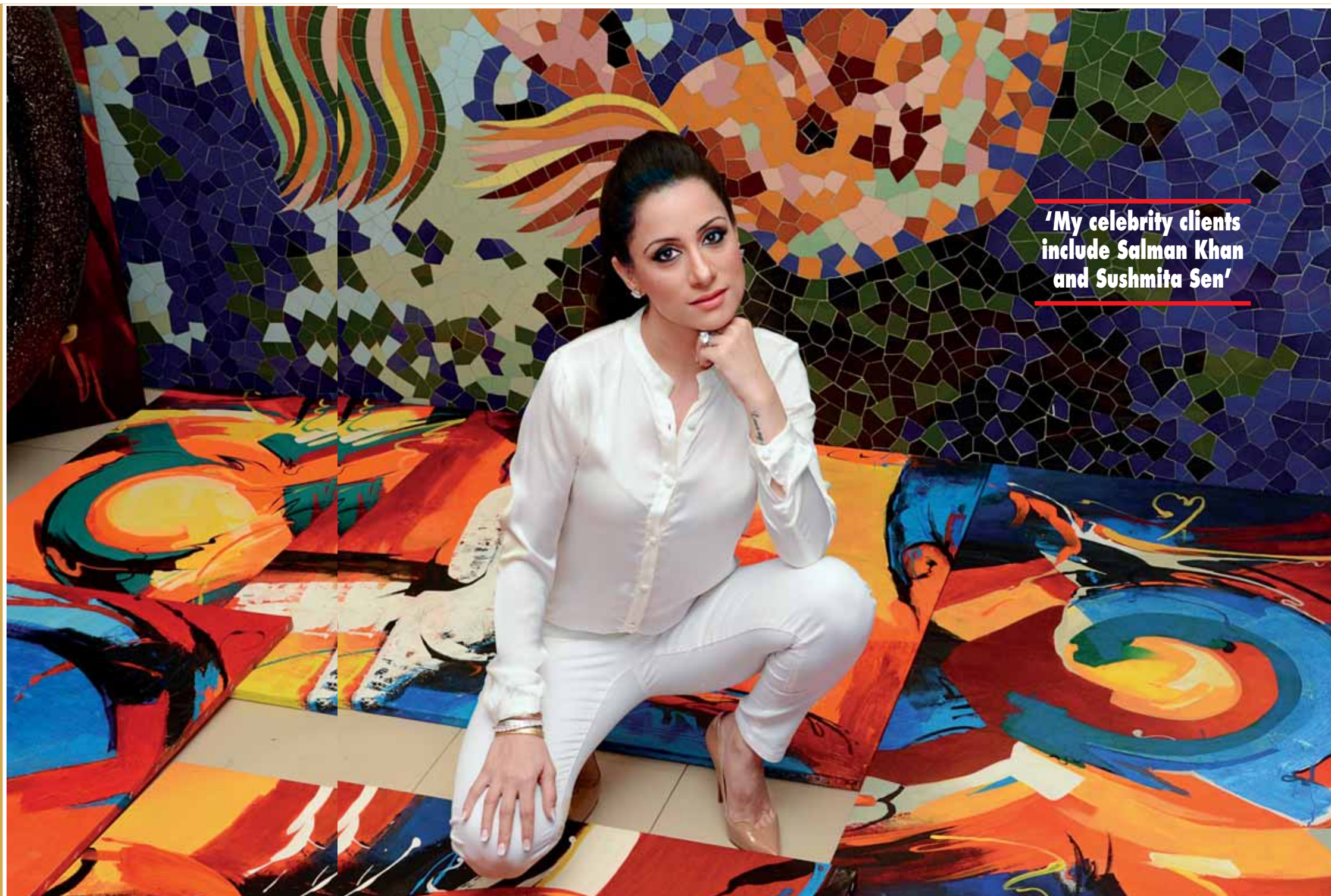
**'Most of the media I work in have been developed by me. I think of my studio as a laboratory and am constantly experimenting'**

Rouble poses in front of her mural *Glory Run*, that represents being knocked down to your knees and then rising back up again





This page: Rouble poses against *Unchained Melody*, a mural that expresses what music sounds and feels like to the artist. Opposite page: Rouble amongst her oil paintings



'My celebrity clients include Salman Khan and Sushmita Sen'

stained glass, frescoes, fibre-reinforced plastic, fibre, marble, graphite, sandstone, siporex, jute fibre, wood and media installations.

**How did you learn to work across such a variety?**

Most of the elements I work with have been developed by me. Art is more about passion than anything else; my studio is more like a laboratory than a regular art studio. I keep experimenting with new things and am most passionate about creating murals and sculptures – three dimensional objects that can be felt; in short, art that can interact.

**Can you tell us about some of the public art work you are doing in Mumbai?**

One of my projects includes a two-kilometer long wall mural and an interactive mural for private and government schools. I hope the municipality sets up a committee to help

facilitate murals in the city; something I have already suggested. This might bring some cohesion, or at least colour, to the smog-smeared architectural façade of Mumbai – a city that I love.

**What are some of your biggest inspirations?**

I get inspired by life and events. Whilst trying to find a place to park at a mall, I noticed the symmetry with which the cars were parked and told my husband that it could be an art installation. When I created a piece based on that imagery, it left him spell-bound. He actually still has it hanging in his office.

**You also have quite an A-list following.**

Some of my celebrity clients include Salman Khan, Subhash Ghai, Sajid Nadiadwala, Alvira Agnihotri, Sanjay Khan, Sushmita Sen, Sohail Khan, Wasim Akram and Ness Wadia, amongst others. **Any major obstacles you have had to overcome whilst finishing a piece?** My most challenging project to date has

been *The Paradise Garden*, which is India's largest mixed-media mosaic mural. It is more than 88 feet in height. Another project which I enjoyed doing is *Lovers* – a six tonne marble sculpture carved out of a single marble piece; it took me three months to finish.

**You're also quite a fashionista. What are some of your favourite designers?**

When it comes to clothes, I like Alexander McQueen, Tom Ford and Louis Vuitton. During the day I wear jeans and a white shirt; at night I prefer dresses and gowns.

**You met your husband and got married when you were quite young. Can you share your story with us?**

I met my husband in the 90s and we have been a couple since we were teenagers. The two of us have practically grown up together. I married my best friend and we still have so much to talk about. He is an architect and I am an artist, so our interests are also very similar. I still love my coffee dates

with him; only now our son comes along!

**How difficult is it to balance motherhood with working full-time?**

It's not easy juggling work and family but there is room for both. I am actually a very organised person. My father was a military officer and led a very regimented life, which I follow to this day!

**What do you do when you're not working?**

I am always working. As someone rightly said, 'Focus on the journey, not the destination. Joy is found not in finishing an activity but in doing it.' I love teaching children which I do for my NGO, Rouble Nagi Art Foundation that I founded to educate and support people less fortunate. Education is the only way we can secure children with a strong foundation. **H**

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