

Time Out

Mumbai

Review

Between Us

Warehouse at 3rd Pasta, Colaba

Take a moment to visit Warehouse at 3rd Pasta. Not because the gallery is perilously close to Nariman House but also because if there was ever a time for happy art, it is now. *Between Us* is Nina Pandolfo's debut in India. There's no mistaking that Pandolfo is a graffiti artist because the usually blank grey outer wall now has a drawing of a cute, bug-eyed girl hanging upside down (demurely, she holds her skirt in place so as to not offend anyone). Inside, one wall is emblazoned with the bright colours of a drawing that Pandolfo made while in Mumbai. The show also has more conventional paintings done on canvas.

Graffiti has a reputation for being anti-establishment and political but Pandolfo is not concerned with reality. Her works are full of childlike glee, even when they're violent. In "The Other Side of the Rainbow", the heroine



The Other Side of the Rainbow, Fruit Salad

of the piece holds a piggy bank shaped like a little girl. The innocent smile and bright colours manage to make the painting look happy, even though the piggy-bank-girl is being decapitated in the painting. "Close your eyes"



shows a girl with a sling shot which seems innocuous enough until you see the kitten clinging to her leg, as though to hold her back. Despite this, the focus is more on the kitten's cuteness than what the girl is aiming at.

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The impact of Japanese manga and artist Yoshitomo Nara are obvious in Pandolfo's work. However, Nara's muted palette and the sullenness of the characters he creates makes his work more compelling than Pandolfo's. With blocks of bright colours and flat expressions on the doll-like faces, a lot of Pandolfo's paintings appear simplistic. Only occasionally does she manage to endow a sense of nuanced depth to the glassy eyes. While the paintings don't lure the viewer into seeing them more than once, the effect of the large wall painting is powerful and it has enough detailing in it to reveal something new upon second and third viewing. Camouflage colours become strands of hair. The two huge eyes balance light and darkness. A tubby pink elephant dangles in one corner. Staring at the sylvan cartoon, it's possible to forget for a moment that there are cracked walls and bullet holes outside.

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