



She is Everything - Every Woman's Journey - Chandrika Marla

at 6 | U

By Genevieve Laucher

Artist Chandrika Marla's work is beautiful, unique, and meaningful - each piece tells a story that so many people will relate to. Chandrika's own background strongly influences her art and her story shines through in her vibrant paintings.

Born in New Delhi, Chandrika grew up with a strong single mother who worked to support the family in a time when not many women in India worked. Her parents were divorced when she was two years old and her father, who was an airline pilot, passed away in a tragic plane hijack when she was just nine years old. While Chandrika found inspiration in India's bright colored clothes and landscapes, she also struggled finding personal space. New Delhi was not, and is still not, a safe place for young girls to grow up in and it was a constant struggle to create a secure existence in a life where women had to constantly be on guard. Now that she has moved countries and to multiple cities, she has experienced making a new space and finding herself, a theme that comes up often in her work.

Chandrika studied literature and fashion design at the National Institute of Fashion Technology in New Delhi, a school set up with the collaboration of FIT (New York), and found a way to express herself through clothing. She loved helping people discover the type of clothing that was right for them. She studied women and how she could help them feel comfortable in their own body and space.

Chandrika moved to the United States in 1998, first settling in Boston while her husband studied at MIT. Because of her visa, she couldn't work for two years, and this was a challenging transition that sometimes felt isolating. They moved to Chicago where Chandrika started working in graphic design, marketing, and branding. She loved working with different shapes and colors. She enrolled in painting classes and had an amazing teacher who encouraged the students to follow their passions. Through painting, Chandrika continued to focus on the shapes and colors that spoke to her.

In her paintings, Chandrika works with colors inspired by her early years in India. The shapes in her work are inspired by the feminine form. Her years in design stayed with her, and she thinks about both the inner and outer self, encouraging viewers to look inside of ourselves. She always paints a boundary line between the inner and outer forms, a soft line that is very important to the meaning of her work.



Her painting *You Can Stay* represents the shoulders of friends that stood by her through a challenging time in her life. It is about female friendship, community, and all of the positive relationships we have in our lives. True friends are a shoulder to lean on through the good and bad in life. Chandrika has lost multiple friends to cancer, and though life is fleeting, it helps to have friends who are there in times of loss and sorrow.

Chandrika's painting *In My Secret Life* is inspired by Leonard Cohen's music. It is about two people communicating and confiding in each other.

Crossed a Line is about how with so many different aspects in our lives, sometimes things spill over. Chandrika's message behind the painting is looking within yourself for answers, but also getting out of your comfort zone.

Expansion pictures the abstract form of a woman's breast that has moved beyond the boundaries of the canvas. It represents a woman stretched beyond capacity, outside of her comfort zone, who is limitless.

Chandrika is very excited to show her work at 6U in Los Gatos. She has been part of group shows before, but this will be her first solo show in the Bay Area. The 14 paintings at 6U span over the course of five years and reflect the theme of the silver linings in life. Even through hard times, there is so much positivity in life, both in our relationships with others and within ourselves.

The team at 6U is equally excited to show Chandrika's art! 6U brings together the old and the new, mixing antique pieces with contemporary art. Whether it's an antique or contemporary piece, what you find in 6U will be one of a kind. Chandrika's paintings are so meaningful and really share a message about women's lives and what brings them together. They are looking forward to sharing her vision with the community.

6U had its soft opening in December and a show with another local artist, Robert Stivers. 6U's doors are open to the community and they encourage anyone to walk in! Their team is so welcoming, and they hope that people will pop in, ask questions, and comment on what they see in the window displays. Chandrika's paintings will be up for the full months of April and May.

On May 9th, Chandrika will be at 6U for a public reception, where she will talk about her work and answer any questions. The reception will take place from 3-6 pm. Learn more about Chandrika and her art at chandrikamarla.com, and more about 6U at 6-university.com.



You Can Stay, 30 x 30", acrylic on canvas



Expansion, 48 x 40", acrylic on canvas



Crossed a Line, 40 x 40", handmade paper and acrylic on canvas



Detail shot of In My Secret Life, acrylic on canvas