

COMMUNITY

Art gets booked

Artist Louise Despont, who draws on ledger books using architectural tools, is exhibiting her work for the first time in India

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ABOUT a decade ago, when artist Louise Despont found a vintage British India-era antique ledger at a bookshop, it sparked off her relationship with this unusual medium.

Despont loved the ruled pages, which encouraged her to follow their symmetry, and

the history embedded between them. But at first, it was the very personal quality of working in a book that attracted her to the medium. "You close the book and your artwork is hidden," elaborates the artist, who uses graphite, ink and gold leaf.

While Despont enjoyed the small scale of her art initially, she soon began tearing the



The artist extensively uses graphite, ink and gold leaf in her works

pages out of the book to create larger drawings. "I'm not limited by the size of a canvas I choose," says the artist, who admits that her paintings

often take on a life of their own —changing course over the months it takes to complete them.

For instance, the largest

drawing in her latest collection 'Long Distance Gardening', currently on display in Mumbai, began as a single page drawing. "I didn't know what it would grow into. I began thinking of ceremonial robes, a couple getting married and my own wedding in Rajasthan. It just grew into an extremely large piece of art," explains Despont, who is constantly erasing and rearranging pages. "The strongest works of art are those that aren't pre-meditated," she claims.

Despont, who is greatly influenced by the symmetry and geometry of Swiss artist and healer Emma Kunz's paintings, was introduced to

architectural tools by her architect father. In 2009, when she first came to India on a Fulbright scholarship, she found inspiration in the wall paintings at Nagaur, Bundi and Kota in Rajasthan, the garden designs ("especially the Mughal gardens within the Red Fort"), labyrinths, ancient Buddhist and Jain caves as well as miniature paintings.

WHEN: Until May 28, 11 am to 6 pm

WHERE: Galerie Isa, 132, Great Western Building, first floor, SBS Road, opposite Lion Gate, Fort

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