

Women larger than life for local artist

BY VICTORIA O'HARA

THE naked female form is the focus of the first solo exhibition by Ulster-based visual artist and writer Deepa Mann-Kler.

'Larger than Life', a striking collection of paintings by the Nottingham-born artist, will be on display in Downpatrick until September.

Mann-Kler, a mother-of-two, who studied fine art painting at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Brussels part time before moving to Northern Ireland from England, said she is "delighted" by her achievement.

Speaking about this collection of paintings Deepa explained: "Over the past two years, I have been inspired to paint the female physical form and, as the years progressed, have experimented with the use of colour and light.

"Although the women appear vulnerable because of their nakedness, this is juxtaposed against the strong use of colours and the fact that the women all fit the canvasses — they are larger than life — and they draw you into their world."

Deepa, who was born in Nottingham and spent her early childhood in India, studied at the London School of Economics and the University of Bath before working for the European Parliament in Belgium.

Her artistic talent was recognised in 1994 when Lord Lichfield presented Deepa with the Daily Mirror/Olympus Young Photographer of the Year Award.

Now living in Killyleagh, Co Down with her husband and children, Deepa works full time in Belfast.

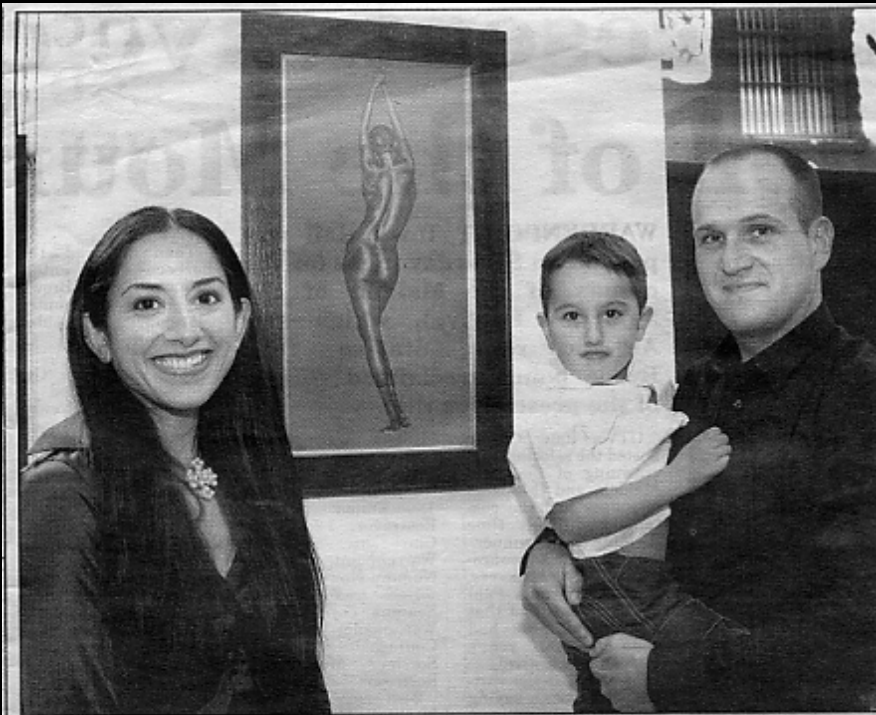
However, she still manages to devote her spare time to painting, producing this exhibition in just two years.

She is also an accomplished writer having published 'Out of the Shadows: An Action Research Report into Families, Racism, and Exclusion in Northern Ireland', in 1997.

The Larger than Life exhibition is being held at the Down Arts Centre, 2-6 Irish Street, Downpatrick and the exhibition runs from August 10, to the September 30.



Deepa Mann-Kler with one of her works



Killyleagh artist Deepa Mann-Kler with her husband Peter and son Fynn at the opening of her exhibition *Larger Than Life*, at the Down Arts Centre on Thursday evening. The exhibition, which features studies on the female nude form in oils, is open until the end of September.