



Member Lobbies

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THE JUMEIRAH BEACH HOTEL • P.O. Box 1140, Dubai, U.A.E. Tel: 971-4348 0000, Fax: 971-4348 2273

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Head Office: 8th Floor, Emirates Towers Office, Sheikh Zayed Road, P.O. Box 12111, Dubai, U.A.E. Tel: 971-4330 0111, Fax: 971-4330 0222.

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Under the patronage of
Colonel Saeed M. Bin Belailah

The Jumeirah Beach Hotel
invites you to a
'Bouquet of Colours'
(Art Exhibition)

on the 31st July 2003 at 8:30 pm

Live painting at 9:15 pm



Tabloid GULF NEWS
SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2003



Abeer Ayash explores femininity in nature in *Sunshine* (left).



Abeer Ayash's latest and as yet untitled work (right), inspired by a visit to a cave in Bulgaria.

"Art is just an expression of what you have inside, and sometimes it's a clear idea that emerges within one day, other times it takes months to put your finger on."

marketing of the contemporary world. "Each of us is an artist, a creative force, in our own right, but God gives some an extra tool to sense things more clearly than others," she says.

"An extra sense to actualise in music, dance, poetry, sculpture or paintings."

THE CONNECTION

For 28-year-old Alissa, growing up in Russia at a time of great upheaval was an emboldening experience, as far as her art was concerned.

It got her more attuned to the interlocking worlds of politics, philosophy and spirituality, she says, and she is still trying to explore those connections.

"The painting you paint now is a culmination of your experiences," says Alissa. "If you ask how long it took me to do this particular piece, technically it could be two days but in reality it took 10 years because that's how long the idea has been percolating inside of me. Art is just an expression of what you have inside, and sometimes it's a clear idea that emerges within one day, other times it takes months to put your finger on."

Her work is more stylistic and more involved with metaphysical ideas — destiny,

harmony, perspective — than Abeer's more everyday concepts, but Alissa believes its true value lies in the connections it makes with viewers.

"The artist is the messenger, like a modern-day prophet, and each artist has a message that's part of a bigger truth," she says. "Every time we encounter a new piece of the truth, it scares us. But accepting the existence of that facet is what it means to grow."

At the end of the day, she says, art is a connection of souls, whether it is street art, art by budding artists or art in museums. And that connection is what she and Abeer are trying to forge with their viewers. "If you look at a piece of art, whether it's ballet, a symphony or sculpture, you feel something," she says.

"You don't have to have a formal appreciation of that art form to feel it, but it connects you to the artist and to others who sense the same thing."

The *Bouquet of Colours* art exhibition featuring the works of Mounir Lakkis, Abeer Ayash, Alissa Evisiukova and Rami Lakkis is on display in the lobby area of the Jumeirah Beach Hotel until the end of August. All of the 60 pieces on display are on sale.



habit — that it chronicles the artist's journey from their cocoons to their first steps as butterflies.

"It's the dream of every artist to be close to a master," acknowledges Abeer.

"Before I met Wajih, I started with the classic techniques like oil paintings, and subjects like still-lives and landscapes. But when I met him, it was as if he painted the fantasies of my mind, and he challenged me to do the same."

After he agreed to tutor them, Abeer says, the two fledgling artists started to imitate the spirit of Wajih's work, standing on the shoulders of a giant to see their own way ahead.

Now, she says, she is starting to discover herself, to think on her own. Her paintings have become more mature, their complexity changing, and they are more a part of her than part of anyone else's vision.

"Under Wajih's guidance, we were very excited to be put our emotions in our paintings," says Alissa, an artist, poet and Feng Shui consultant.

"It turned out to be wonderful eye-opening experiments with colour and more colour. Now we have freed our minds enough to look for the details, the philosophy. Wajih taught us how to have wings, and how to fly."

THE VISION

In *'Rejection'*, one of Abeer's recent works, a woman sits curled up in an embryonic position, head half-buried in her lap, her body turned away from the rest of the frame, ignoring the activity in the background.

This was Abeer's response to the war in Iraq, a weary protest against the state of the world.

"This woman is rejecting what she

she says. "Like so many of us, she doesn't want to be part of what is going on, even though there is nothing she can do about it."

Commenting on such social and cultural issues is part of the artist's responsibility, Abeer says. And she is good at it, highlighting societal and personal challenges with her individual spin.

In another painting, titled *'Uprooting'*, a woman looks and reaches upward to the heavens, her lower body the trunk of a tree with roots deep into the ground.

"All of us have something pulling us to the ground," she says. "And all of us seek to be free, to fly, to touch the limits of our potential. But we have anchors dragging us down, sometimes they are our preconceived ideas and sometimes they are things we have been taught that keep us from fulfilling that potential."

We all have restraints ingrained into us from an early age, she says, whether it is advice like 'Behave properly', 'Children should be seen and not heard' or 'Paint something people will like' or not to question the conventional logic.

"To have an open mind and an open heart, we have to lift ourselves up from these restrictions," continues Abeer.

"We don't have to cut those roots because they are important, they represent our culture and our worldview, but it is important that they not limit us. It is an everyday challenge with every person we meet, every idea or piece of news that confronts us."

The measure of a good artist, she believes, is to strive to be the most transparent and sensitive person in the community, a person capable of seeing things as they are, free of the hype and

By Mildred Fernandes Staff Reporter

The *Bouquet of Colours* art exhibition, which opened Art Surprises week at the Jumeirah Beach Hotel on Thursday, is a show with a difference. It is growing art.

Not the work of the soaring, well-established artist to be oohed and aahed at, but the work of up and coming artists who are just finding their wings and preparing for flight.

Abeer Ayash and Alissa Evisiukova, both talented Dubai-based artists, are the backbone of the show. Although they share billing here with the established Mounir Lakkis and his graphic designer son Rami, the two young women bring colour, ideas and real-

world inspiration to the exhibit. Each brings her own style and outlook to the show: Abeer's work is marked by its use of bright, bold and explosive colours and feminine figures; Alissa uses form and symbolism to convey her message.

What unites them is their training — both are students of celebrated Lebanese artist Wajih Nahle — and their vision of the human condition. Each is finding her wings, discovering her identity, and stepping out.

THE MENTOR

Although some of their work is clearly reminiscent of Nahle's evocative, colour-filled dreamscapes, a discernible break from his style is also evident in other pieces. This is perhaps

EXHIBITION Dignitaries, guests view paintings at Jumeirah Beach Hotel.

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2003

Abdul Rahman G. Al Mutaiwee, Director General of the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with painters Mounir Lakkis and Elisa at the opening of a painting exhibition



From left: Nouda Masri, Hilde Ferling, Roberto, Brian Chivers and Inspacious Iker



Abeer Ayash with her painting at the exhibition



Afol Ayash (left), Jamal Said and his wife