

Lebanese artist's fusion of colour

| By Ginny Chicot | 07-05-2003

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While drinking a cup of coffee in Café Ceramique recently, I noticed the flowing outlines of a figure reflected in the glass topped table. On the wall I saw a painting full of lush colours and flowing lines.

At right angles to it, was hung another. In this there seemed to be a figure, its robes flowing around it, leading a whole crowd of other people, their little faces the most clear thing about them. In the corner of these pictures was the signature, Abeer. I discovered that last year, Abeer Ayash, a Lebanese artist, had held a display of her eye-catching paintings in the café, which I liked her work so much that it bought three of them to enhance its ambience.

For the last few years, Abeer has made the Emirates her home. Painting as long as she can remember, she says, "My first works were classical compositions in oil." She studied art in school, joining the Beirut Academy for Fine Arts in Lebanon. For three years she experimented with various media and topics. "Like all beginners, I was attracted to oils and classical scenery: still life and landscape, especially flowers," she remembers. "This fusion of colour and whimsical transparency reflect the inspiration of my tutor, the renowned Lebanese artist Wajeeh Nahle."

Besides painting, she spends her time researching the arts, meeting other artists, attending exhibitions and travelling during summer to world art capitals. She also likes meditation and contemplation when not painting.

Ayash had graduated as an English Language major from the American University of Beirut. Moving to the UAE in 1998, she worked for a while in administration. Although she enjoyed it, "I felt part of me was slowly withering." It was not enough for her and she decided to become a full time artist.

Now she paints for between three and five hours a day, admitting that if the mood is not there, she struggles and it becomes a challenge to seek inspiration.

For Abeer, inspiration is from both external and internal sources. In the last three years she has been working with water-soluble acrylics allowing her to paint her ideas more quickly.

In the future she hopes to prepare new work for showing in Abu Dhabi. Until then, residents will have to be contact with gazing at her paintings over coffee.