

French artists showing their UAE influence at new exhibition

Inspired by the desert, calligraphy, buildings and dance

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ABU DHABI // For the first time, French artists based in the UAE have joined creative forces to exhibit a series of works inspired by their time in the Middle East.

UAE Through the Eyes of French Artists, which has been organised by the French Embassy and the Abu Dhabi Ministry of Culture, Youth and Community Development, will feature six French artists who live and work in Abu Dhabi or Dubai.

Their work incorporates a variety of influences, including the desert at night and the gleaming skyscrapers that dominate the skylines of both cities, said Bénédicte Gimonnet, a French national who has lived in the capital for 18 months.

The influence of her surroundings has transformed the way she works, the artist added.

"I lived in London for 10 years and the art I produced there is totally different."

Mrs Gimonnet's latest work was created using mainly canvas and linen, with one large piece set on aluminium. The abstract shapes were inspired by the vastness of the desert, while "the curved lines reference Arabic calligraphy and oriental dance".

The abstract artist will be joined by four other painters. The only photographer in the exhibition, Virginie Troit, was born in the French province of Brittany and has been a resident of the UAE for five years. Miss Troit hopes her exhibition will show the spirit and soul of both cities.

"What I am trying to convey in my photos is not what I see, but what I feel," she said. "The photos I have taken have helped me to understand the country better."

The exhibition begins tonight at 7pm and runs until May 24 at the Centre of the Ministry of Culture. It is open from 9am-2pm and 5pm-8pm every day except May 20. Entry is free.

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