

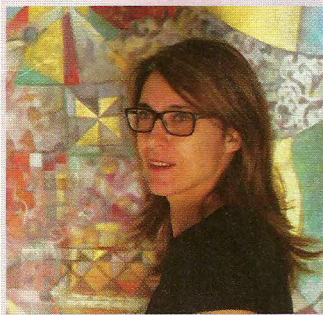
Art without borders

As Abu Dhabi continues to carve out a name for itself as a creative hub, a group of local female artists are displaying their creations at an exhibition entitled 'Watchwomen and Dreamcatchers'. Words *Sara Taher*

March is Francophonie month, which is a time when French people all over the world take time to celebrate their culture and language. Coinciding with this month is International Women's Day, which passed on March 8. The Institute Francais in the UAE decided to join these two events by creating a unique exhibition. Entitled 'Watchwomen and Dreamcatchers', the exhibition

will run until March 23 at the Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche. The event displays the works of Emirati and French artists living here, and is a celebration of female artistic expression and talent. We spoke to three artists showcasing their work about the exhibition. *To learn more about the exhibition, visit www.francophonieintheuae.wordpress.com.*

Artist: Chritch



How do you feel about being a part of this exhibition?

I certainly feel privileged to have been selected to be part of the 'Watchwomen and Dreamcatchers' exhibition and to have the opportunity to contribute, hopefully, to its success with one of my most recent paintings, a diptych titled 'Humane'. This piece of artwork is precisely about humanity and dialogue across cultures.

What do you expect the reception of the Abu Dhabi public to be?

We hope to have visitors from the capital and we are also looking forward to welcoming guests from Al Ain and Dubai. The presence of the artists during the period of

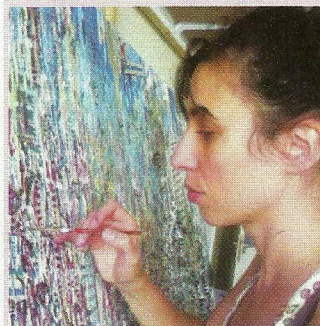
the exhibition to exchange with the public will certainly add a special touch to the event. I have been living and working in Abu Dhabi for quite a few years, and I have seen consistently growing expectations and enthusiasm from the public, as well as really open minded art lovers and collectors. This probably comes from the truly multicultural and tolerant Abu Dhabi environment, as well as from the increasing efforts from public and private institutions to promote art in the capital.

How important do you think art is for communication between different cultures?

I truly believe art plays a central role in bridging the gap between cultures and civilisations, as much as it helps at an individual level, to reconnect people's minds and souls, because art does talk to both at the same time, and ideas, inspiration and emotions have no passport or religion. In addition, the UAE certainly is an ideal place for artists from all around the world to have this unique opportunity for confronting such theory with reality, and gather real-time benefits of such intercultural dialogue.



Artist: Karine Roche



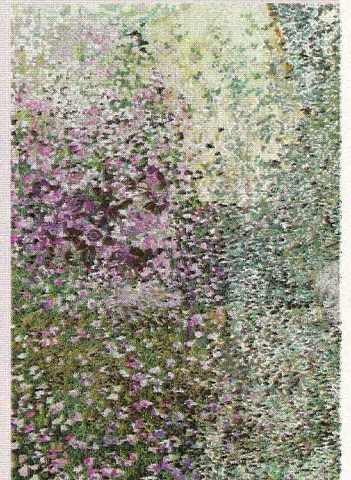
How do you feel about being a part of this exhibition?

I'm very proud and thankful that I can show my work in such a beautiful city. I think the French Institute is gathering interesting artists, each with their unique flavour. In addition, the venue is exceptional and I am thankful to be given the opportunity to work in such a prime location along with other talented artists.

What do you expect the reception of the Abu Dhabi public to be?

I hope there would be interest in our vision, of course, however there are a lot of artists with many nationalities and perspectives on art. Abu Dhabi is becoming

wonderfully multicultural, therefore I feel an exhibition or institution like Institute Francais could help highlight the richness and cultural diversity found all over the world. **How important do you believe art is for effective communication between different cultures?** Personally, I have actually always believed that art is probably the more peaceful way to communicate and understand different cultures and backgrounds.



Artist: Bénédicte Gimonet



What do you think the reception of the Abu Dhabi public will be?

The city of Abu Dhabi has grown accustomed to hosting quality multicultural events and the public is becoming more and more sophisticated. I am confident

that this Francophonie month will attract and inspire a wide international audience.

How important do you think art is for communication between different cultures?

Art, in itself, is an international language: it crosses boundaries and unifies people. It conveys universal messages through individual expression.

How do you find creative outlets in the city?

I arrived in Abu Dhabi three years ago from London and I was struck by the amazing light of this country, its peculiar landscapes, and the buzzing city island of Abu Dhabi at the gates of the desert. My work was immediately influenced by my new environment, the hues, forms and patterns of the Middle Eastern Culture.