



# 40 YEARS ON

A celebration of a very long commitment  
to the Art Community of The Middle East.



# THE TIMELINE

1976

Alison arrives in Dubai

1978

The Collins Family of 3  
move into the Bastakia

1979

The Majlis Gallery  
named

Julian Barrows 1st  
Exhibition

Alison hosted informal  
exhibitions for **Friday  
Painters**, 4 per year  
between 1980 and 1987.  
Artists included:  
Caroline Jackson, Doug  
Sanders, Susie Keeble,  
Sue Casson and Jenny  
Croxford

1988

The Family of 5 move  
to Safa Park

1989

The Majlis Gallery LLC  
opens its doors

1990

Iraq invade Kuwait

## MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

1989

Jenny Croxford  
Majella Taylor

1990

John R Harris

1991

The Norwegian Arts  
Council

1992

Alan Halliday

1993

Antique Maps  
at The Majlis

1994

Design Gap

1995

The Louvre Facsimile

1996

Abdul Qader Al Rais

1997

The New Orientalists

1998

Refurbishment of  
Bastakia

1999

10th Anniversary Joint Show

2000

Sacha Jaffri

2001

The Darehbaghis

2002

The Magic of the Pen  
*A joint show of some of  
The Middle East's best  
known Calligraphers*

2004

Abdul Latif Al Smoudi

2005

100% New Zealand

2006

The Mathaf Gallery  
19th Century Orientalists

2007

Khaled Al Saai

2008

Good Words,  
Worldly Goods

2009

Alexander Creswell

2010

New Orientalists  
*A group show sponsored  
by the British Embassy  
and Abu Dhabi Cultural  
Foundation*

2012

Bronze and Black Cloth

2013

The Art of Sculpture

2014

25 Squared  
*Celebrated 25 years of  
The Majlis Gallery LLC*

2016

School of Paris

2018

Martin Giesen  
Seeking Al Seef

2019

Mona Al Khaja

2020

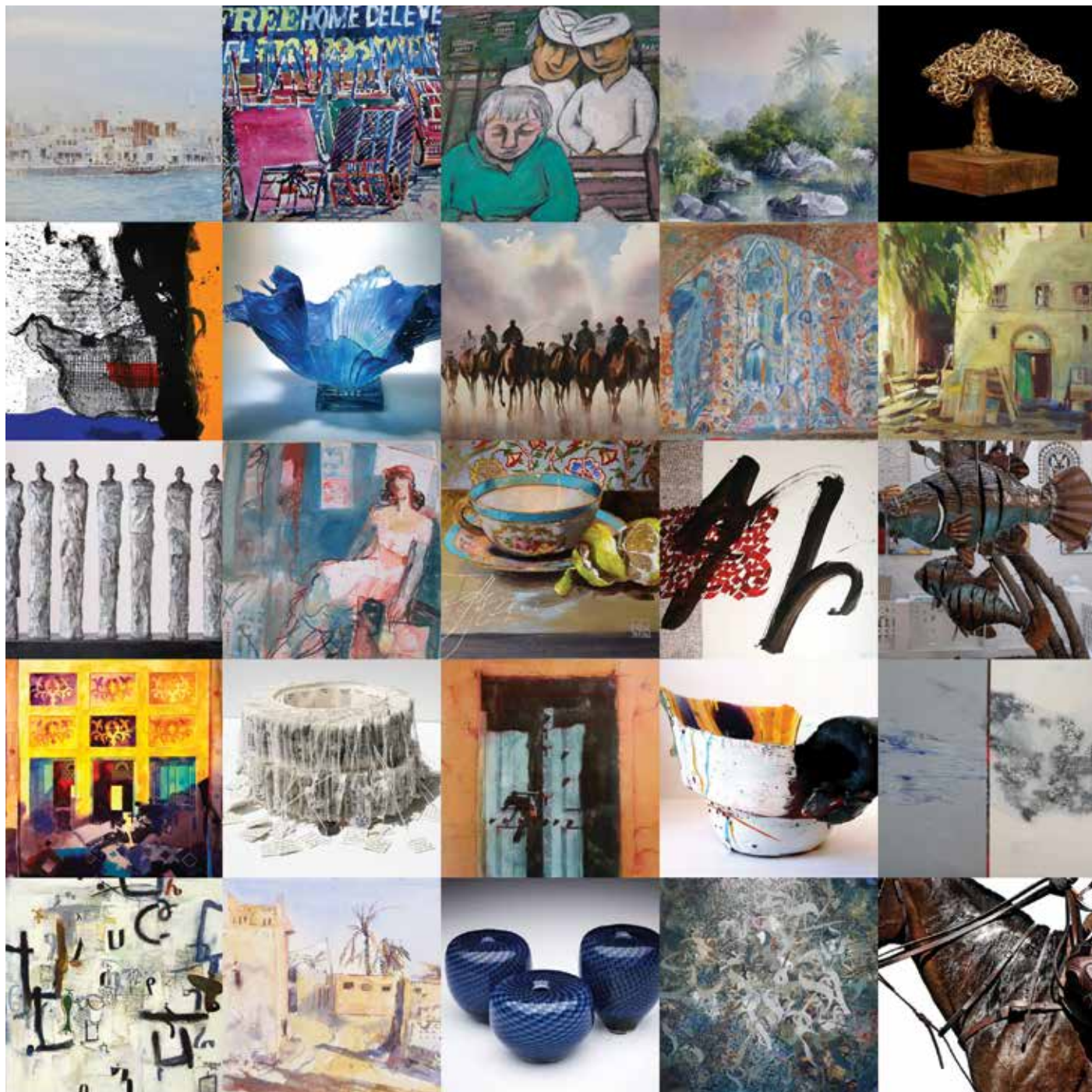
40 Years On

## CONTENTS

<b>THE STORY</b>	6	Khaled Al Saai	27
<b>THE ARTISTS</b>	12	Jennifer Simon	28
Julian Barrow	13	Zarin Salahi	28
Abdul Latif Al Smoudi	14	John R Harris	29
Abdul Qader Al Rais	14	Spencer Tart	29
Alexander Creswell	15	Trevor Waugh	30
Alan Halliday	15	Mike Arnold	30
Peter Bowles & Anne Clifton	16	Karel Zijlstra	31
Anne Hudson	17	Lloyd Le Blanc	31
Peter Collis	17	Louis Jansen Van Vuuren	32
Nick Bashall	18	Kevin Dean	32
June Bartlett	18	Lynette Ten Krooden	33
Anne Farag	19	Jenny Croxford	33
Oytun Camcigil	19	Mustafa Ali	34
Anthony Stern	20	Peter Hayes	34
Jonathon Anderson	20	Mohammed Masri	35
Daniel Wegera	21	Nitin Dadrawalla	35
Sue Wilde	21	Masoumeh Abiri	36
Astrid Harrison	22	Shahla Moghaddam	36
Udaybhanu	22	Morteza Darehbaghi	37
David Paskett	23	Mostafa Darehbaghi	37
Martin Giesen	23	Patricia Millns	38
Faramarz Muktapour	24	Pom Mullan	38
Matt Ryder	24	Sophie Walbeoffe	39
Hakim Ghazali	25	Sylvia Woodcock Clarke	39
Paul Wadsworth	25	Mona Al Khaja	40
Hannes Loots	26	<b>THE SPONSORS</b>	41
Michael Chaikin	26	Dubai Duty Free	
Jamal Abdul Rahim	27	Dubai Culture	







## THE STORY

*This story begins with my arrival in Dubai in March of 1976, to work as a designer with Fitch and Company, the first UK design company to open an office in The UAE. I had joined their London office in 1974 and was already working on several projects for a Dubai family. London at the time was pretty dismal with 3 day working weeks, power cuts and a general feeling of despair. My husband Dick had just qualified as a Veterinary Surgeon and had been offered a job in Saudi, naïvely we thought we could meet at weekends!*

*We were young and prepared for new adventures, we certainly got those. My first was arriving at the then tiny Dubai airport to find there was no one from the company to meet me with the essential visa in hand. Mafi mushkila (no problem) was the first Arabic phrase I learnt from the handsome customs official who proceeded to phone the number I had been given for the Dubai office to inform them that there was a young lady who needed “picking up.”*



*The following morning saw me joining my new boss and some delightfully bouncy friends for a trip on the British Embassy Dhow. I truly could not believe the colour of Dubai Creek and was captivated by the throb of activity as we passed the abra station and the old souk on our way out to sea. Could this really be my new home? I sincerely hoped so.*

Home was to be a very small room in the Fitch office in the Kuwait Shipping building on what was then the outer ring road of Dubai, now known as Khalid bin Waleed or Bank Street. I shared my room with a telex machine as during the day it morphed into the office, I was lucky my male colleagues literally slept on mattresses in the drawing studio. One of my first projects was across the creek from the office, the quickest way to get there was to take the abra. On one of my meanderings through the souk I was invited to "take tea" with the Falaknaz brothers two delightful Iranian gentlemen who imported this elixir, their shop exuded the smell of Tanin and their conversation was full of tales



of the good old days of their youth before the collapse of the Pearl Trade. I professed to a fascination for the wind tower houses of the Iranian quarter and by the following summer they had found one for us to live in, No. 19 Bastakia, Bur Dubai. By then my husband had joined me from Saudi and had set up The Veterinary Hospital. Not only that but in the previous November we had welcomed our daughter Thomasina into our lives, we needed a proper home, so without much deliberation we moved into the villa in June of 1978. Little did we know then what an enormous part this somewhat dilapidated but delightful house was to play in our lives.





*The following year also saw me setting up my own company Alison Collins Design Consultancy and becoming self sponsored. Heady things in a country that had an inaccurate reputation for male dominance. With very low overheads (I worked on the dining room table) and scant competition I quickly established a core of clients and a working relationship with a wonderful small joinery company called Woodcraft in Sharjah, my forté was bespoke furniture.*



*Furniture Design had been my major at Art School, I just loved being back with the smells and techniques of working with wood and associated materials. It was the ideal working situation for a young mother, I had domestic support and could fit in site and client meetings as needed. I revelled in being selfemployed and in fact have never had a “boss” since.*

*Dubai in those days was a small tight knit community, little bigger than a large village. Traditional ways of life were still the norm, open air markets selling fish, fruit and veg, flat bread fresh from a clay oven, ghee in tins and long life milk from a little corner shop. Fresh meat came in once a fortnight to a kiosk in Deira. Caviar was available in abundance but Tarmac was scarce, Subka (compacted sand) connected Bur Dubai across a strip of desert still inhabited by Bédouins to Satwa and Zabil and along the head of Jumeira beach where a couple*



of new compounds were being built. Camels and goats roamed freely and snarling pack dogs prowled the edges of town. Yet there was already the realisation that this corner of the Arab World was going somewhere and us with it if we wanted to join the adventure.

Wikipedia gives a very concise and fascinating account of Dubai's history from as early as 7000 BCE, with its recent history dating from the discovery of oil in 1966, just 10 years before I arrived on its shores. Hardly surprising then that the infrastructure was still in its infancy. Electricity cuts were a regular feature, communication with the outside world erratic, health care and education somewhat basic but camaraderie and enthusiasm were high on the agenda. Even then the multiracial community had a sense of joint purpose with all the various projects inter related. The construction industry was the driving force that led to the building of roads, ports, airports, houses, hotels, hospitals, schools, leisure facilities, telephone services, banks, post offices, prisons and all the other elements that make a society. Fortunately for me there was also a place for Art.

The Majlis Gallery really only came about because of a delayed flight. In mid October of 1979 British traveller painter Julian Barrow had stopped over in Dubai on his way to paint in India. He had done several small oil paintings of Dubai that he was going to take back to London. He had been told about me and that I was interested in art. When his flight was postponed he decided to look me up and see if I might be interested in helping him to sell them in Dubai. A loud knock on our old wooden door revealed a very tall paint smeared gentleman who declared his purpose. I was intrigued and leapt at the challenge.



*He left the canvases with me to be framed by Bamboo who had just set up shop. He returned from India 3 weeks later and we hung the work in our Majlis, hence the name. In the meantime I had sent out hand written and if I remember rightly hand delivered invitations to a Soirée, people came we had a lovely evening and sold the lot. This was to set the pattern for sociable exhibitions with Julian and other artists to be quite a regular feature in the somewhat scant cultural life of the 80's. Years that saw the Family grow along with Dubai itself.*



*It is a recognised fact that developing countries tend initially to undervalue their history. Understandably as more likely than not poverty and hardship were dominant elements in that history. It was in many ways inevitable that this quarter of Dubai known then as the Bastakia was vulnerable and when The Rulers Office on the Creek needed to expand it was at the loss of many of the old windtower houses that had sat between the Creek and Al Fahidi fort for almost a century. We were spared but felt very insecure, sure enough an eviction order was eventually issued to us too. Sadly we moved, in a little way relieved as the roof was no longer water tight and the termites were taking over. The house became a labour camp and seemed doomed. But here the story takes another turn.*



4 months after moving our old landlord phoned to tell us the house wasn't going to be demolished after all. What a dilemma, we couldn't move the family back, but could I turn this beautiful old house into a permanent gallery, I would certainly try. Persistence and optimism paid off and on 2nd of November 1989 The Majlis Gallery LLC opened its doors. The previous months had been spent hectically renovating the building and tenuously putting together a collection of art and artefacts. I had no idea what I was letting myself in for and didn't even know the difference between cash flow and profit but I knew a good painting when I saw one. We had a mission statement before they became de rigueur, that was and still is to this day:

*"To be a meeting place for artists and art lovers in a relaxed and welcoming environment."*

I think we have fulfilled this aim, not least because of the immense support from a wealth of artists and clients since that very first exhibition in 1979.

Alison

January 2020

— THE ARTISTS —





## Julian Barrow

It is entirely possible that The Majlis Gallery would not exist had Julian's flight to India in the early autumn of 1979 taken off on time, so really we have Air India to thank for all that has happened since. Anyone who has a Julian Barrow oil painting from this era has a gem indeed.

Julian in many ways could be called the first of the New Orientalists. He was a true traveler painter in every sense. He was born to paint and travelled throughout Europe, India, the Middle and Far East and the East Coast of America. He was reluctant to discuss his time spent painting with and learning from Pietro Annigoni in Florence but it was the bedrock of his approach to life and to painting. Hardly a day went by when he wasn't working at his portable easel in the chiaroscuro style he so loved, using light and shade to describe whatever caught his eye. He would work on 4-5 canvases a day moving from one venue to the next as the light changed.

During those early years he always stayed with us and would spend the evenings before dinner taking finished paintings off stretchers and preparing new canvases ready for the next day. He had a wonderful sense of humour and was always playing practical jokes on the children. We stayed with him in his wonderful home and studio in Tite Street in London, once home to Whistler and John Singer Sargeant. Small wonder that I fell in love with the world of art and artists.





### —— Abdul Latif Al Smoudi ——

Sadly no longer with us Abdul Latif was a father figure and mentor to many younger artists. He was a founding member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society and exhibited widely across the world including *The Institute Du Monde Arabi* in Paris.

He was a quiet man who listened more than he talked, he had a vast knowledge of ancient history and its varied linguistic forms, forms that often found their way into his work. Images that always felt as though they were talking from a previous age when mankind was at one with nature.



### —— Abdul Qader Al Rais ——

Abdul Qader is a multi award winning largely self taught, Emirati painter. Though now known more for his large abstract works that incorporate calligraphic symbols with geometric forms he also revels in painting the dramatic landscape to be found in the southern gulf. His work is extremely collectible and can be found in Palaces, ministries, corporate buildings and private collections within the UAE and further afield.

An unassuming man, he has time for everyone and a welcoming twinkle to his eye.







## — Alexander Creswell —

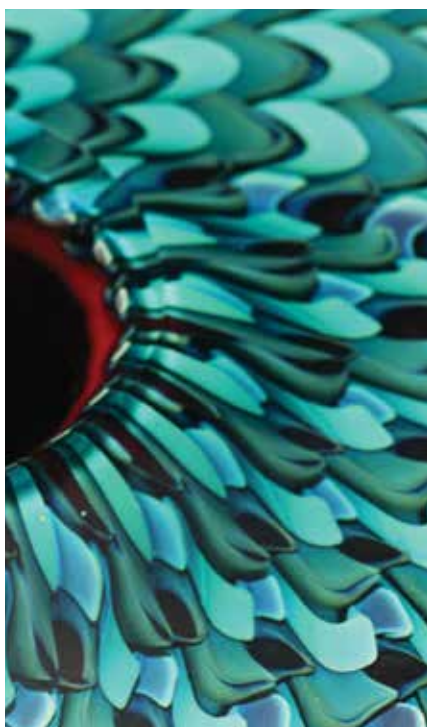
Alexander Creswell is a largely self taught, internationally celebrated artist known for his extraordinary fluency and technical skill in watercolour. His distinctive style combines subtle colouring and skillful draughtsmanship alongside a deep reverence for natural light. A particular skill is working at a very large scale on especially made paper. He particularly delights in painting buildings that are slightly past their prime as was the case in his exhibition with us in 2008 entitled *Looking Through. Paintings of Oman and the UAE* that paid reference to the values of the past. Patrons were in good company as The Queen of England and The Prince of Wales are amongst Alexander's valued clients.



## — Alan Halliday —

Alan Halliday was trained at the Courtauld Institute of Art and also at Oxford where he was awarded a doctorate in the history of art. He has been painting full-time professionally for over 4 decades. Alan first painted and exhibited with the Majlis in the early 1990s, he was captivated by the rhythms of daily life that abounded in those days. Souks with colourful vegetables piled high with protective canvas awnings wafting in the breeze, dhows on the creek making waves in the turquoise water and peaceful slightly tatty corners of the Bastakia were all described in his signature minimalist style. He would love to come back but one wonders what he would find to paint!





## Peter Bowles & Anne Clifton

Combined, Peter Bowles and Anne Clifton work as Glass Manifesto. Based in Tasmania, Australia, **Glass Manifesto** has garnered an international reputation as one of Australia's leading independent contemporary glass studios. Peter and Anne work tirelessly to produce an extraordinary range of unique and exquisitely made work for the discerning collector. We are fortunate that they chose to show with us.

Anne brings an unparalleled enthusiasm and a sense of wonder to her work. Her innate curiosity drives her practice as a glass artist. Her stunning **Wild Flower Series** are a celebration of everything that Anne loves about glass. Painstaking in their making, they include within their layers, gold and silver leaf, coloured glass trails, exquisitely made murrine, and flame worked flowers. Large pieces that take great strength and skill to achieve.

Peter is recognised as one of Australia's finest makers. Renowned for his technical mastery, his inventive approach to his craft and a dedication to a practice that spans object making, contemporary craft and public art. One is left to wonder "how on earth was that made" Peter will willingly tell you but you will still be left in awe. A prolific and fastidious artist, he has exhibited, lectured, researched and made work throughout the UK, Europe, Australia, Canada, the USA and the UAE.







## — Anne Hudson —

Anne, who maintains strong links with the UAE, learnt her craft while living in Dubai in the early 80's going on to teach at the Dubai International Art Centre, further study at Sydney National Art, where she undertook a Masters Degree, confirmed for Anne that ceramics is a mode of expression worthy of a place in the art world. A philosophical theory that she explores, at the same time as enjoying the tacit enjoyment of working with clay and complex glazes. She firmly believes that a good object can sing, speak or give rise to ideas and concepts, that vessels are an integral part of our existence from the womb to breast, cup to coffin and as such need our respect and due reverence.



## — Peter Collis —

Based in New Zealand but collected internationally Peter has worked with clay nearly all of his life. The main focus to his work has been the handling of shape and surface. He creates pure form vessels, sometimes in porcelain, which he then treats in a wide range of methods and finishes "I make round things" - says Peter. That he does very well creating pure, balanced, evenly proportioned almost ethereal objects that add enrichment to our environments. At times the vessels & objects are so large, it is difficult to make even his peers believe they are hand-thrown. In typical modest style Peter shrugs, smiles and says: "sure they are, I make large round things!"





## Nick Bashall

Nick Bashall is no stranger to Dubai, he lived and worked here in the late 80's and early 90's both as a lawyer and a painter. It is as the latter that most people remember him especially for the many charismatic family portraits he completed in both charcoal and oil. He didn't receive a formal art training until post his time in the UAE when he studied at the art school of Joaquim Torrents Llado in Mallorca, Spain for 5 years. Llado was one of Spain's most successful portrait and landscape painters. His school drilled his pupils in the basic skills of draughtsmanship and painting, skills that Nick now passes on to others through very focused but fun workshops and courses that he runs in his London Studio In Chelsea.



## June Bartlett

June Bartlett first arrived in the U.A.E. in 1979. She has regularly exhibited at the Majlis Gallery, known predominantly as a landscape painter she is also highly regarded for her portraiture. In 1980 she was commissioned to paint the portrait of HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. In 2000 an extensive tour of Jordan was arranged by the Diwan, resulting in June painting twelve landscapes for the Royal Court of Amman.

In 2009 Junes paintings of Syria were shown at The Mathaf Gallery in London, paintings that recorded a Syria now tragically lost to the world.





## Anne Farag

Anne comes from an exotic background, her father being Egyptian and her mother Swedish. Many collectors of her work insist that something of these influences show through in her work.

She trained at Birmingham School of Jewellery and Silversmithing, gaining a Credit in City and Guilds in advanced diamond mounting. A stone she has not worked with since! We came across Anne's work whilst researching designer makers for our Design Gap exhibition. Anne's work had a certain freshness and definite Middle Eastern influence. Working in sterling silver and semi precious stones the intricate etched detail of her jewellery is influenced by a smorgasbord of cultures from around the old and new world. She aims and certainly succeeds in making contemporary jewellery that is both creative, functional and incredibly beautiful.



## Oytun Camcigil

Originally from Istanbul, Oytun has been living in the Middle East since 1981. She is a graduate of The Istanbul Technical University with a Master's degree in Architecture.

Since her years as a student, Oytun has had a great interest in collecting beads, coins from different era's and antique silver pieces. Using her collection, she began creating different combinations of unusual necklaces for herself. When she moved to Dubai, Oytun recognised the richness of Bedouin jewellery which inspired her to create many new designs that combined old and new silver pieces. She enjoys spending endless hours in her workshop; something she says gives her great pleasure and relaxation.

She is the author of a definitive book on *Antique Middle Eastern Jewellery*.







## Anthony Stern

Anthony was born in Cambridge, it was while he was at Cambridge University that he first started making films. This highly successful career fuelled his fascination with light and colour and led him to study for an MA at The Royal College of Art. Anthony has an impressive list of glass collectors The Queen, Elton John, The Saudi Royal Family, V&A Museum, to name but a few. We have shown and sold his work for over 15 years, clients continue to marvel at his ability to "paint" 3 dimensional Landscapes in Glass. He adapts his art to an array of both the functional and decorative objects including lighting projects which lend themselves well to his style of glassware. He revels in the challenges afforded by large scale commissions.



## Jonathon Anderson

Jonathan Anderson is a seventh generation British glass maker, he was a major contributor to our collection when we first opened our doors as a proper company in 1989, he has shown with us ever since. He has an unusual way of combining molded glass with copper using a 4000 year old technique. After the glass form cools part of it is covered by a fine layer of silver. This acts as a conductive base allowing copper to be electroplated on top. The copper is allowed to build up to become structural, it can then be patinated and lacquered to ensure it maintains its colour. The larger pieces can take several months before the process is complete. Collectors pieces indeed.

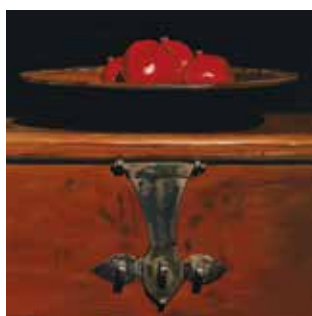






## Daniel Wegera

Like many of our artists Daniel came to painting as a form of relaxation from his day job as an engineer. Life has taken him to North Africa, the Far and the Middle East, where the many different architectural styles and ways of life have provided him with inspiration. He is primarily a figurative painter, with a preference for using a soft palette in various mediums to portray an unashamedly romantic view of his subject matter. He has an eye for detail and an ability to portray realistic scenes inspired from reference he has gathered during walks around the UAE over the last 20 years. He has published a delightful book called *Inspiration Dubai* with sketches of and information on the traditional heritage that can still be found beneath the glossy veneer.



## Sue Wilde

We cannot celebrate our 40th year without including Sue. She was an early working partner in the gallery having first been a contributing artist. Sue has always been involved in the art world in some way, beginning her career in the advertising and editorial fields. It did not take her long when she came to Dubai in the early 90's to carve a niche for herself in the expanding art industry. The elegant simplicity of Sue's work is at the core of its wide appeal. She transforms the seemingly mundane, an old door, a silver bowl filled with cherries, a glass bowl with lemon are transformed into wonderful works of art. Sue combines the immediacy of drawing with the brilliance of painting, to breathe life into even the most static of subjects.





## Astrid Harrison

An award-winning photographer and accomplished horse woman, Astrid is renowned for her ability to capture the essence of the equestrian world. Commissions take Astrid around the globe enabling her to continue to dedicate her life to working with some of the world's finest and rarest horses. In 2012 Astrid collaborated with British author Tamsin Pickeral to produce a coffee table book which was published internationally entitled *The Majesty of the Horse*. She travels regularly to the Middle East, where her attentions were originally drawn by the beauty and history of the world of the Arabian horse. The combination of digital processing methods and unusual printing materials continue to absorb her. Her collection of photogravure etchings of horses from around the world are infinitely collectible.



## Udaybhanu

Who said Fauvism or Impressionism is restricted to paintings and never makes it's presence felt in photography, or photography lasts only for a glimpse, or that good photographs are those that undergo makeovers with the click of graphic software. Udaybhanu, who calls himself an environmental activist, is in a sole resolve to rewrite such preconceived myths about photography. This artist, who has an eye for the extraordinary leaves no stone unturned as he scurries about narrating the heart-wrenching story of life as he perceives it. His work is nothing but spellbinding art, captured with an implacable mind that doesn't compromise on mediocrity.





## David Paskett

David is a past president of The Royal Society of Watercolour Artists. He studied fine art at Hornsey College of Art honing his distinctive watercolour technique and drafting skills during his many visits to China where his work is highly valued. Intrigued by still life groupings seen on streets and waterways, his work is characterised by detail, clear shadows, controlled tone and rhythmic repeated pattern. All attributes that he brought to his show with us. He loved his time here and produced a very refreshing collection of paintings that got to the core of what made the Creek tick. He is an excellent tutor and mentor with a wealth of knowledge to share with his students.



## Martin Giesen

Martin has lived in the UAE since 1997. He was founding dean of the School of Architecture & Design at the American University of Sharjah. For some 35 years, Giesen has produced and exhibited watercolour paintings documenting the impact of development on the environment. His paintings produced in Lebanon during the years of the civil war received critical acclaim. His work has been shown in solo exhibits in Lebanon, Germany, Canada and the UAE. David Tannous, Washington corresponding editor for Art in America, called Giesen a "contemporary orientalist" Martin has the ability to "get under the skin" of a place and a culture. His paintings have spirit telling a story of a specific environment at a specific time, narratives that are more than just visual, illustrative records.







## — Faramarz Mokhtapour —

Faramarz Mokhtapour was born in Iran in 1964 into an artistic and cultural family. He was encouraged to draw and paint from early childhood, drawing with perception and natural talent from what he saw around him. Family circumstances and academic aptitude however led him into the medical profession and it is as a doctor that he mainly earns his living. Fortunately for us a very committed work schedule in medicine does not hold Faramarz back from continuing his passion for art and he uses every opportunity to experience and create paintings, using the process as a form of relaxation and foil to the pressures of being a doctor. His paintings, particularly his large oils of Oman, are glorious depictions of an awesome landscape.



## — Matt Ryder —

Matt is an award winning British fine artist living and working in Dubai UAE. He has painted since childhood, inspired by the natural world, and the beauty of nature and wildlife. Matt is committed to documenting the land, sea and sky and highlighting the changing landscapes around us. He feels quite rightly that it is very important to keep a visual reference of our surroundings. With a true love for the outdoors Matts paintings often start as small onsite studies, painting Plein-Air, in order to capture true light and colour. Many of these studies are then transferred to the studio and used as colour reference for larger work. By working this way his paintings fully connect to the viewer through familiarity and a feeling that they are immersed in the scene.







## Hakim Ghazali

Considered as one of the most talented Arab Contemporary artists, Hakim has shown with us several times over the last 3 decades, originally from and passionate about Morocco where he lives he is equally happy to be in France and in Dubai. His often large scale paintings have an ethereal, spiritual quality that defy analysis they just need to be enjoyed. Working with a very white toned palette his canvases literally glow with seductive light. A second string to his bow is his work as an innovator of contemporary Arabic fonts. He often combines these two aspects of his creativity into his more experimental work. Highly collectible his earlier work often comes up at auction.



## Paul Wadsworth

For Paul painting is just as much concerned with the physical and sensuous properties of the paint itself as it is with expressing a personal response to things felt and seen. Inspired by the coast and landscapes of Cornwall and The Middle East and India, his work is essentially about capturing moments, feelings and emotions rather than meticulously depicting a particular view of place. In order to respond and create in this way, an incredibly likeable character, Paul prefers to complete as much of a painting as possible on site, where he is surrounded by the elements that consistently motivate and energize his work. The finished paintings are quite delicious.





## Hannes Loots

Hannes Loots is a medical doctor and consultant who discovered sculpting as a means of relaxation. He initially attended evening classes in Port Elizabeth South Africa but has gone on to undertake numerous advanced courses. He now lives and works in Stellenbosch but is a regular visitor to the UAE both as an artist and as a Health Care Consultant. He has shown his delightful small scale bronzes with us for many years. An Afghan hound, a Saluki, a donkey, many bulls and many other creatures have found new homes around the world. He works in many different materials but prefers working in wood stone and bronze. Small maquettes will often be enlarged into commissioned life size proportions. The affordability of his work makes it a great starting point for the new collector.



## Michael Chaikin

Also initially a doctor Mike changed his career path in the mid 80's. Taking himself off to live an art students life of creative penury. As a child he had a fascination with the then very popular working toys, from train sets to mobiles. The child lives in him still, his vast kinetic sculptures whirl in response to the wind or as is the case of the ones in our courtyard gently reflect the passage of the sun in almost transcendental never repeated patterns of light. Michaels '*giant copper fish*' have become talking points in homes gardens and restaurants around the world. His workshop in West Cornwall has an air of a mad professor's den as Mike literally blows up fish with compressed air. His You Tube videos are a delight.





## — Jamal Abdul Rahim —

It's impossible to sum up Jamal in a few words. His creativity knows no bounds, he is a master printer, superb draftsman and painter and highly skilled sculptor. His totally untutored journey into the creative world allows him the freedom to experiment, discover and on occasions stretch the boundaries of conventional image making. He is a true Middle Eastern renaissance man, compassionate and deep thinking and an excellent fisherman, an occupation he pursued before allowing his creative talents full reign. Born and still based in Bahrain, his work is exhibited, appreciated and collected worldwide. We are fortunate to count him as a friend and major contributor to the gallery.



## — Khaled Al Saai —

Khaled is a man wise beyond his years. Deeply contemplative and quietly confident he is not only a driving force behind modern Arabic calligraphic practice but also a passionate advocate of a wider understanding of this formidable art. Khaled's fascination with the written word was kindled and nurtured through growing up in Syria, in a family to whom creativity, visual, musical, poetic and edible, was part of daily life. His work is often a reflection on the emotions of freedom and discovery associated with his childhood though recently it has become more reflective on the bigger issues facing the world in general. Khaled travels extensively: Morocco, Europe, The States, South America all regularly host lectures, workshops and exhibitions.







## Jennifer Simon

Jenny has put her mark on the art world with her unique depiction of urban cityscapes, people, and her life experiences. She explores our ever-changing world and draws inspiration from global events that evoke feelings of joy, sorrow, hope and change. Often entering the realm of childhood fantasy crossing it with reality, Jenny celebrates the evolution of the UAE, the embrace of western culture and the great moments that have united its people. With her trademark bold black outlines and splashes of colour, mixed with the use of stencils and spray, she cleverly brings fantasy to life. Colouring the Emirates with corporate and community murals, life size sculptures and installations, she hosts art workshops and works tirelessly with schools and government organisations to raise awareness of life's inequalities.



## Zarin Salahi

It is always exciting to come across the work of new young artists. Zarin is a young painter and video artist. Her first short video, *'Approaching a Rest Area'*, showed in Shenzhen Independent Animation Biennale in 2014 won the Independent Animation Committee Grand Award. Zarin and her art have always been inspired by the humour and pathos of the world around her. A giant world that surrounds tiny people captured in the moment they go about their daily life. She tells the story of people's journeys from their point of view, as passengers who sit in the rear of a car staring out through the window, it is not known when the passengers started their journey or when they will get to their destination. We are sure her own artistic journey will be a long one.







## John R Harris

Chance has played an enormous part in the life of The Majlis Gallery, John was such an important "chance". He had come to Dubai in early 1990 to visit a friend, this friend suggested he visit this new gallery that had just opened. Time was tight for a meeting but over the phone we discovered that we were on the same flight to the UK the next day. The deal was done thousands of feet in the air and John became the first watercolour artist to hang on our walls. He has hung there ever since. His gloriously atmospheric work so eloquently describes the vast vistas and remote corners of Arabia. From small cameos to what he calls his jumbos. His paintings are superbly collectible.



## Spencer Tart

Spencer trained originally as an architect, it was as such that he came to Jeddah in the late 80's. He had always loved sketching and painting buildings, here a hobby became a passion and a new career evolved. It was at an exhibition he held at the Intercontinental Hotel in 1992 that Alison realised this was the "Bill" Tart she had been at college with. The friendship was rekindled and Bill has shown with us ever since. His style is marked by his superbly sensitive handling of watercolour coupled with his keen eye for detail. His paintings are an amazing record of the cultural heritage of the region and as such are highly valued by collectors both public and private.





## Trevor Waugh

Trevor is a prolific painter, writer, illustrator, musician, traveler, tutor and above all a really nice guy. He fell in love with the UAE the moment he stepped off the plane. He held his first exhibition with us in 1996 and has returned at least once a year since. He still finds fascinating things to paint though he might have to travel a little further afield to do so. His book *The Emirates through the Eyes of an Artist* graces many a coffee table. A formal training at The Slade School of Fine Art is evident in his vast portfolio. Working in a very broad spectrum of mediums, Trevor is the epitome of the modern traveler painter and along with our other established artists forms what we call *'the New Orientalists'* movement.



## Mike Arnold

Mike's paintings are inspired through a deep connection to the region's richness its history, its peoples, and its dramatic nature. He uses his canvases as a platform for interpreting the unique light reflected both in every day, as well as spectacular landscapes. Undulating desert landscapes, powerful Arabian stallions, and life portraits of the wizened and weathered adventurer fill his portfolio.

Drawing upon a 40 year long career in architecture coupled with his early and ongoing training in classical art give his work true authenticity. He works from a studio in *Al Fahidi Historical Neighbourhood* where he also teaches art at *Al Mawaheb*.





## Karel Zijlstra

Karel studied at the Academy of Industrial Design in Eindhoven. Since 1989 he has applied himself completely to sculpting. During this period he also discovered Celtic and medieval literature, especially the legends of King Arthur, the Holy Grail, Percival and Irish legends and Mesopotamian myths. All inspire his seemingly weightless bronze figures, figures that walk out of the mists of time. It was our good fortune that Karel came across our website, his work twinned so well with the *Black Cloth* series that Paul Wadsworth was working on. Their joint exhibition lit up the dark days of the recession. There is something truly special about owning a bronze not least the knowledge that it will live long after you have become a legend yourself.



## Lloyd Le Blanc

Lloyd is one of the few sculptors in this world who actually runs his own foundry. Based in Leicestershire in the UK he is a self confessed pyromaniac. Lloyd along with his incredibly talented late wife Judith Holmes Drury have built a worldwide following of patrons and collectors many of whom have become firm friends. Working mainly to commission Lloyd revels in portraying the natural world in natural settings. From delicate weaver birds to galloping horses no subject is too small or too large or no corner of the world too far for it to be shipped to. As you can imagine Lloyd has quite a few followers in the Middle East. He was a major contributor to our *New Orientalists* exhibition in 1997 and visits the UAE regularly.

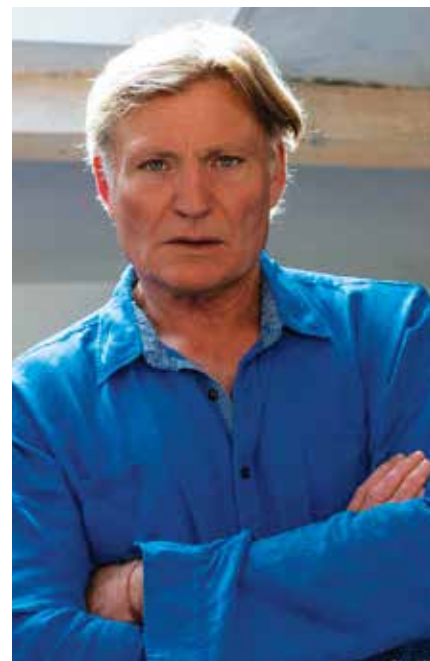






## — Louis Jansen Van Vuuren —

A delightful man who truly understands the phrase “living life to the full” Louis does nothing by halves. In 2001 he and his partner Hardy started to restore Le Creuzette a beautiful chateau in Boussac France which they now run as an “Experience Escape”. Louis’s part of the experience is to welcome guests as students in his studio. Renowned in France and South Africa especially for his flamboyant botanical work Louis is also a superb tutor. We love having his work on our walls, his focus on the more exotic sensual aspects of Persian imagery are appreciated by those who understand the subtleties and hidden messages portrayed by fruits and birds. In his words “I paint because I have no other choice it’s part of being a communicating being”.



## — Kevin Dean —

Have you visited The Sheikh Zayed Mosque in Abu Dhabi? If you have you will have marveled at the vast marble flowers in the main courtyard or Sahan, these were designed by Kevin. In total, 37 shades of marble are used in the floor, originating from many different parts of the world including Brazil and Italy. The design includes irises, lilies, poppies, tulips, roses and jasmines, chosen because they are flowers that are found all over the world. From his early days as a student at The Royal College of Art, Kevin has always focused on the natural environment. A highly accomplished print maker he uses the mono print method to produce individual botanical studies, his **Red Palms** are real collector’s pieces. He also has many books to his name.





## — Lynette Ten Krooden —

South African painter Lynette Ten Krooden has been showing with The Majlis Gallery for over 20 years. She is the quintessential example of a true traveler painter, navigating the globe from Timbuktu to the Solomon Islands taking in Petra, Aires Rock and the Hajar Mountains en route. Her eyes and mind are ever open to the visual stimuli that are there for all to see but few can interpret. Her subject matter varies according to where her internal compass has taken her. Rocks, strata, hieroglyphs, rain shadows, cloud formations, aquatic forms and more find their way into her work which is executed in craftsman like style in a whole variety of mediums. Above all Lynettes work has an immense sense of awe and respect for the world around us.



## — Jenny Croxford —

Jenny first came to Dubai in early 1980. The body of work that she did then, just prior to the demolition of a large chunk of the Bastakia, is of great historic and architectural interest. Anyone who acquired a ***Bastakia Series*** from those very early shows is truly the owner of a unique and beautiful record of a bygone era. These are now available as Giclee prints. Jenny's fascination with Islamic Architecture and decoration was first kindled during her travels in southern Spain and Morocco during the 1970's. Her research into the mathematical intricacies of Islamic tessellations combined with her infinite talent as a printmaker, her knowledge and application of modern technology and her abounding creativity have won her recognition as a master of the art of print making.





## Mustafa Ali

We first met Mustafa as a young energetic student of Abdul Latif Al Smoudi. He is still energetic and in his turn has become a mentor to countless young Syrian artists. We regularly showed his and Abdul Latifs work together, there was a synergy wrought through their joint interest in and knowledge of Mesopotamian mythology. Mustafa is recognized as the Middle East's most prominent sculptor. He works primarily in wood and bronze often combining the two. He still maintains a home and his Foundation in Old Damascus but travels and exhibits extensively throughout Europe. Fluent in Arabic, English, French and Italian he is a true ambassador for cross cultural communication through Art.



## Peter Hayes

Peter bounced into the gallery one March morning on his way from his studio in Bath to a workshop he maintains in Udaipur India. Peter has always travelled and is fascinated with the way clay is worked into varied beautiful forms in remote parts of the world using very limited tools and technology. It is this purity of form following function that Peter strives to achieve in his own practice. He professes to working through the seat of his pants! Constantly experimenting with just how far he can take a material or a technique before it rebels on him brings a tension to his work that is often missing from the work of the more complacent artist. He often deconstructs in order to reconstruct and loves to learn from his failures.







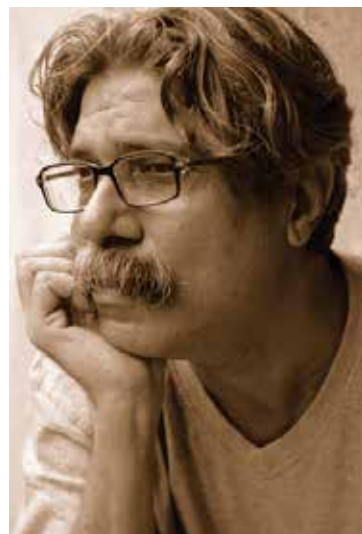
## — Mohammed Masri —

Mohamad's delightful and affordable paintings and drawings explore human relationships in all their various forms. Celebrating the human figure as it goes about its daily business his figures recline, gaze, dance, others discourse, stroll and exchange information. His work is rich with memory and movement. In general terms, it conveys a sense of positivity and faith in the motives of the human race, admirable sentiments from someone personally affected by the tragic events in his homeland of Syria. Emotionally he says "I still see the light and hues of my country as they mutate through the seasons". As a graduate of the University of Fine Arts in Damascus, his formative years were spent exploring different artistic techniques and mediums, though his more recent work has concentrated on painting with traditional oils and watercolours.



## — Nitin Dadrawalla —

Nitin is a philosopher as well as an artist, a man of peace and contemplation, he does not court the market preferring to immerse himself in the process of subconscious observation, a process he likens to "looking into the depths of the sea from the deck of a ship". In this age of race and pace, artists like Nitin help to ground and remind us of the value of simplicity, that human energy need not be solely directed towards commerce and materialism. He is considered one of India's prime artists though his formal education was in literature gaining an MA from Bombay University in 1980. During this time he also studied art history. Here he learnt to trust his innate creative skills and develop his unique style realizing that this was where his true path lay.





## Masoumeh Abiri

Tutored under the often critical eye of her husband Morteza, Masoumeh is a master of the juxtaposition of architectural images to portray an almost medieval vision of this corner of the world. Her intense use of colour and pattern link various elements together in a mosaic form. Wind towers, tents, mashrabiya screens, windows, archways and doors all fit together harmoniously in a grid like pattern. Unashamedly decorative, a dialogue however exists that lifts them to a new descriptive level and for the observer to appreciate the complexity of their composition. Ostensibly simple images that flag up a strong cultural identity, Masoumeh more than holds her own in this family of talented artists.



## Shahla Moghaddam

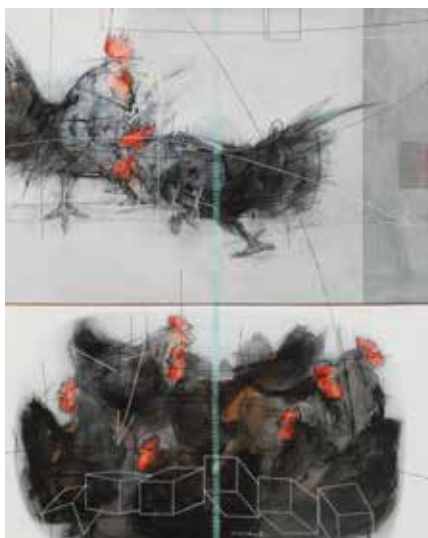
Inner peace and simplicity are seemingly the main characteristics of Shahla's work, which without being sexist, could only be the work of a female artist. Years of experience have enhanced her eye for detail, her use of vibrant colour and dramatic brush strokes give her artwork its unique personal signature. She combines a number of artistic techniques within each painting, using watercolours, acrylics, pencils, pastels and mixed media to great effect. However look deeper into the seemingly tranquil scenes and one can detect an undercurrent of disquiet. This is a deep thinking painter who was restricted in expressing herself verbally, and learnt to communicate visually with great success.





## —— Morteza Darehbaghi ——

Morteza is a pioneer amongst a younger generation of Iranian artists. Aware of the magnificent art of the past but also influenced by social upheavals of war and rebellion this new generation have new tales to tell and new ways to tell them. Morteza says of his work "An interest in tradition is with me all the time, it is so persistent that it permeates even my conceptual works. Religious signs and symbols, seen through a modern eye, all arose from the same religious and traditional notions that I have entertained but are interpreted in a more abstract form. My childhood, along with religious ceremonies, has been responsible for my present creativity, which seeks a way to link the past to the future".



## —— Mostafa Darehbaghi ——

Mostafa Darehbaghi is Morteza's brother, the two shared a studio in Tehran before Mostafa and his wife Shahla moved to Atlanta where they both built a solid following.

There is a great deal of humour in Mostafas work but also a serene beauty in the more cerebral works where he harmoniously blends geometric patterns with figurative subjects that create a unique abstract atmosphere. His style retains a visual complexity of symbolic elements that are entirely influenced by nature, be it urban or rural. He has become an established artist throughout the USA and the Middle East and continues to be part of Dubai's art world.







## Patricia Millns

Patricia's work featured in the opening Exhibition at The Majlis Gallery in November 1989, she is a firm friend and contributory artist to this day. Initially she was inspired by the complexity and repetition of imagery within Islamic art and design which she developed into a study of symbolism within the cultural heritage of the region. Woman's studies and the cultural significance behind the hidden symbolism of dress and adornment led to a series of stitched paper works. Rumi's philosophy and poetry has greatly inspired her installations including her new *Object Series*. She works in whatever medium suits the concept. She is presently advising on various art and design projects within the UAE and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.



## Pom Mullan

Pom is a professional ceramicist who's been teaching in Dubai for many years. She is responsible for nurturing the creativity in many young Emirati Nationals. Her main inspirations are organic aquatic forms. As an experienced scuba diver Pom has no shortage of subject matter. She uses porcelain paper clay in much of her work as it allows her to utilize numerous inventive and experimental techniques. The resultant exquisite and very varied forms are often displayed as multiples in Perspex boxes giving them a museum like quality. Pom also loves making coil formed bowls with subtle, unpredictable layers of glaze and lustre. Handmade tiles are another keen interest with patterns inspired by waves and rock pools.





## — Sophie Walbeoffe —

Sophie Walbeoffe has painting in her veins. Her French great grandparents were both painters living in Antibes during 1920s. Her great uncle established the Courtauld Institute of Art. She was greatly influenced by Cecil Collins at the Central School of Art, who made his class paint using hands, mouth and feet. Sophie adopted this spontaneous form of working as she says "It makes you use your soul - it is more impulsive and creates magic straight away". Sophie arrived in Dubai as a painter in the late 80s and quickly became a regular exhibitor at The Majlis Gallery. She divides her time between her home in Kenya, The Middle East and her family home in Devon UK. Her paints travel with her wherever she goes.



## — Sylvia Woodcock Clarke —

Sylvia is very much part of the Majlis Family. She has been our artist in residence many times loving nothing more than engaging with visitors as she sketches and paints in the courtyard. A very serious painter who strongly believes that art need not always be about serious subjects. She has an incredible capacity for visual recall, with a mind like a sketch book, full of moments witnessed and experienced. Drawings and paintings flow in her bold fluid style, a product of years of working at her craft. She delights in capturing the extraordinary actions of ordinary people. Sylvia is delightful company, her streetwise philosophy is as entertaining as her paintings her company never dull.







## Mona Al Khaja

Emirati Artist Mona Al Khaja studied art from 1976 to 1981 at the College of Fine Arts in Cairo, where she developed her natural talent for oil and acrylic painting. Since then, the mother of 6 and grandmother also of 6 has developed her style from realism to abstract as a way to continue expanding her journey as an artist. Her pieces are studded with Middle-Eastern motifs and Islamic patterns and can be distinguished by her signature use of bold colors and strong brush strokes. Balancing her time as a full-time artist, wife, mother and a grand-mother has been challenging for Mona, but she hopes that her work will be appreciated by art lovers and inspire other Emirati women to pursue their passions and creativity.

"Painting is my world, a place where I swim with my thoughts and exercise my ability to be free to see the world as I want to see it.

I arrange it according to my imagination, returning to thoughts places and themes that can only be expressed after standing there and absorbing them, allowing them their own freedom to come to life. A painting is space and movement, depth and form, shadow and light, coming together to translate feelings and thoughts"





## — THE SPONSORS —



Our sincere thanks go to **Dubai Duty Free** for sponsoring this commemorative catalogue.

Dubai Duty Free, are great patrons of the arts and culture, they are also one of the sponsors of the annual Emirates Airline Festival of Literature since 2009, a presenting sponsor of the Dublin Arabic Film Festival (DAFF) and a lead sponsor of the ChoirFest Middle East.

Currently operating some 40,000sqm of retail space at Dubai International and Al Maktoum International airports, **Dubai Duty Free** has received over 700 awards over the years including the Frontier Award for 'Airport Retailer of the Year in Single Location', which was won by the retailer for a record ninth time in 2018.



Our thanks also go to **The Dubai Culture and Arts Authority** who have been a constant source of support.











The Majlis Gallery • Al Musalla Roundabout • Al Fahidi Neighborhood • Bur Dubai

PO Box 42885 • Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Tel: 971 4 3536233 • Fax: 971 4 3535550

E-mail: [majlisgallery@gmail.com](mailto:majlisgallery@gmail.com)

[www.the-majlisgallery.com](http://www.the-majlisgallery.com)