



Unending journey in search of beauty

German artist Janine Walter leads us through Wabi-sabi concepts

♦ MARY PHILIP MUSCAT

JANINE WALTER, A GERMAN artist, leads us through a 'Journey of Finding Beauty' as seen by herself and through the eyes of many she has come across. It is a definition of beauty as seen through different eyes.

Hailing from Germany, the 'land of poets and thinkers', Janine has come over to Muscat to exhibit her works at Stal Gallery with a perspective on Oman's sense of beauty.

An architect by profession, it is no wonder that Janine has chosen architectural images as basis for her art works. She creates art on photographs of buildings and lends a new dimension to it.

Her interpretations on beauty vary according to each one's perspective.

"Beauty means something different to everyone. For some it is shiny new buildings with formless win-

dows, clean facades, perfectly tidy plazas, clean cut lawns. For others it is the old barn, which through its cracks and blemishes, tells a story which renders it beautiful," she says.

This new series of works originated from two workshops she did separately with artists and architects on the topic of beauty.

Each person defined beauty through their own understanding and personal viewpoint. These interpretations took a new form through her representations, which include 11 paintings, three videos and mappings.

She used the interacting sessions at her workshops to structure her videos.

"My videos visualise a personal understanding of the participants on beauty. One person said beauty is harmony and peace. For another it is geometrical shapes. I took this information and included it with my own interpretation

of beauty," she said.

She created collages of photographs and spray painted on them manually. Her choice was more on architecture, which were either simple or modernistic.

Janine is influenced by the concept of Wabi-sabi, a traditional Japanese aesthetic view centred on the acceptance of transience and imperfection. It is sometimes described a beauty that is 'imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete'.

"This concept has been particularly inspiring for me. Each time, I see new sides to the art and a new quality that I didn't expect. I love these surprises very much," she says.

Her works also include spatial installations, video collages, artistic research and mind maps. Her video on public spaces include's wasteland, architectural view of the city, use of habitats and incorporates footages from all over the world.

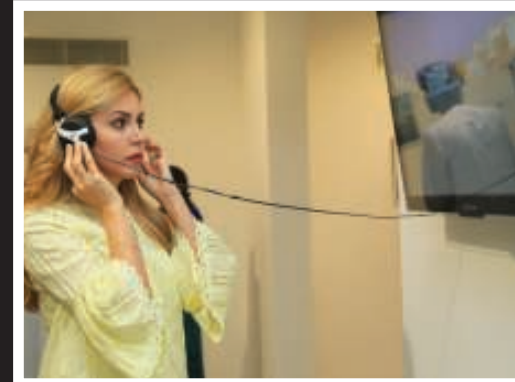
"The art scene in Oman is very in-

spiring. All the artists come together here at the gallery and exchange their experiences. I find their works very contemporary and individualistic," she said.

She is often on global tours for exhibiting her works. Her works have been on display in Berlin, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in China, and Riga in Latvia. This is her first solo exhibition in Oman.

Her mappings and collages are a tribute to Muscat. Through city-space safaris on her bike she has travelled the breadth and lengths of Muscat and explored the architecture.

"I love travelling a lot and knowing different cultures. I like the climate here as it is cold weather in Berlin most time. I feel like home every time I come here. The brown mountains and the architectures really impress me. The buildings here are very simple not skyscrapers that say loudly 'I'm here'," she said.



Art with a difference



RUQAIYA Abdallah, an Omani artist, specialises in experimental modes of art. Her works include digital art, oil and charcoal paintings, abstract paintings, flip books, and installations.

Her portraits, done in digital design and photoshop, are a tribute to a favourite person in her life, her sister-in-law Manal.

"I used to draw from my childhood. But most often people don't understand me. It is difficult for them to comprehend why I behave like this at certain times. Only my sister-in-law understood me. I was able to express to her whatever I wanted and she understood me perfectly well. She changed the way I think and has influenced me a lot. She is a very unique person."

But Ruqaiya says it is difficult for most people to understand the intricacies of digital art. "People here don't understand what is digital art. They say it is just photoshop. This actually requires a lot of work. It takes much time to do these details."

She loves exhibiting at Stal Gallery because different modes of art can be exhibited here. The gallery does not restrict itself to any particular forms.

Working as a graphic designer at present, she has plans for a new project of posters and videographs.

She is part of the Circle of Experimental Art, a movement initiated by artist Hassan Meer. She has been part of three group exhibitions here and one in Saudi Arabia.



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