

# Demi McLeod Exhibition

Demi McLeod is an artist from Zimbabwe. She held an exhibition for her work recently in The Gulf Hotel. CO-EDS was fortunate enough to be there and speak with her.



## When did you start painting?

At the age of six I started boarding school. I had a surreal exchange between the total freedom of life on the farm to getting on an airplane and landing at a strict-disciplined convent school. I remember, while at boarding school, drawing all the animals from the farm and loving it. It might of been my way of dealing with home sickness although I remember being very happy at school.

The art department at school became my favorite place and many personal hours, after lesson times, were spent there. I also explored photography, clay and printing.



## What materials do you use?

I have, luckily, always had access to a wide range of mediums and techniques. This also shows in my work. Oils, of course, are the favorite but when you are working with oils you have to take into consideration the drying time and patience is not my strong point. The chemistry of paint interests me and I make my own glazes, shellacs and inks. Recently I have started tarnishing pure silver and gold leaf which creates a wonderful tempura of its own. Since coming to Bahrain I have also started using metals.

## Where did you grow up?

I was born in Zimbabwe to a 4th generation European Zimbabwean family.

This means that our family is one of the oldest families in Africa. My sons are now the 5th generation. I grew up on a tobacco farm until the unrest there forced us to leave everything behind. From there we moved onto another tobacco farm in Malawi, central Africa. The farm life I led was idyllic and one of total freedom. There was a lot of wild life on the farms and in fact one is now called Carolina Wilderness and is a 75,000 acre game reserve. It was a very happy childhood and my family is a huge part of my life.



## Where do you draw your inspiration from?

I draw my inspiration from many things and I do it constantly. Being an artist changes the way you look at things. Someone who takes a drawing class for the first time will know what I mean. You start to look at the shapes created around things, reflections, and shadows. You then move to color and contrasts, warm and cold, a speck of red in a blue sea, it goes on and on. The art world also has a huge influence. The masters I am so moved by, it is humbling to stand before a piece of their work. Also by visiting local exhibitions can leave you feeling very inspired!

## How do you feel the exhibition went?

Unbelievable! To pack up at the end of my exhibition and only bring home a few unsold paintings leaves me feeling very blessed. To know that some people came, looked at my work and chose a painting of mine to go in their home is profoundly moving. Bahrain has given me such a fantastic opportunity and I will always remember the wonderful people I have been lucky enough to meet over the last two and a half years. Also paintings from the exhibition are being shipped to five different countries.

## Are you planning on exhibiting anywhere else?

Yes! I am very privileged as I have been invited to exhibit at the National Museum of Bahrain. To be given this opportunity is an unexpected honor and will always be the highlight of my career as an artist. An invitation has also come to exhibit in Australia as part of an artist's exchange program. Considering I came here from Australia it is quite ironic. By the end of the year I also hope to have another exhibition in Bahrain.

