

Demi's diverse creations

EXCLUSIVE

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ARTIST Demi McLeod brings her own unique view to subjects as diverse as elephants and cherubs in her first solo exhibition which is launched at the Gulf Hotel's Palace Lounge tomorrow evening.

Although entitled ephemeral space, this former gallery owner and curator's tryst with her canvas seems anything but that.

Born in Zimbabwe, educated in the UK and having lived in Australia, the co-founder of Art Lounge has had the opportunity to deal with an array of artists from across the globe during more than 20 years in the professional world of art.

Inspired and delighted by the work she has handled, Demi took the opportunity of moving to Bahrain to concentrate on producing her own.

Trained at the Royal College in London, her work brings to life aspects of her past and encounters with the present that she said seem to be temporary, moving or fleeting.

As an artist Demi enjoys working big and patiently labours, at times over months, to bring about a desired effect. Her creations betray her emotions, inspirations, views and thoughts.

She has an exciting set of paintings that are set on nature. They feature graceful animals such as gazelles, bucks, flamingos, camels, elephants and fish which bring forth the simplicity and purity of nature – perhaps a key to what she left behind in Africa.

Demi said: "Children, music, animals – those are my passions. I love animals and children. They have such honesty and I don't know if that's what attracts me but they are there and they are in their own world. They do their own thing and are not afraid of being judged.

"In Zimbabwe we had elephants on our farm. We had two young calves, which were orphaned. And I have a thing about elephants. When they are young they are very soft and as they grow older they seem to get very rough and covered in hair. I am very interested in the textures of the elephants.

"The flamingos are from Bahrain. They are so elegant and move so beautifully. It's like they are dancers and can make great silhouette shapes."

At the same time Demi's canvas betrays her sensitive nature with her depiction of complex emotions such as pain, love, loss and separation especially as seen in her Cherub series.

She said: "Children are just so innocent. It's just their purity ... when children are young their skin is plump and has a pretty sheen and their eyes have a dewy look.

"I guess now that I am here and my children have left home and I am getting older ... maybe just as I was drawing I was thinking about them and about youth – it's so precious."

Demi said that her surroundings, people, friends and places she visits all affect the personality of her painting. She said: "The works I have created in Bahrain are full of colour... in comparison to those that I had done when I started my gallery in Australia.

TRYST WITH
ART: Demi
with one of
her works



"You go to the shopping malls here and they are full of colour. I am also using so much gold. I am sure that the surroundings have affected my paintings.

"I like to work in layers as it gives a richness and depth to my work. It takes a lot longer and takes a lot of time to do that. I use gold foil and silver and sometimes they also have writings on them.

"All my work is archival, collectible and acid free. Most of my work is finished off in translucent glazes and translucent paints to get back the richness and depth.

"I usually use only three or four colours. Then when I glaze it, it looks as if there are so many more. I believe if you did a painting that was perfect it would be imperfect as imperfections make things interesting.

"I like chemistry and science and so I enjoy making my own resins and shellac. It is useful when I want to build up layers. I can dilute it and put it on thin and give different effects."

Demi lives in Bahrain with her husband Max and her sons Lyon and Mitch work in Perth, Australia. The exhibition which showcases 28 of Demi's latest works runs until February 7.

