

Mona Trad Dabaji has drawn upon the elements of dreams, escapism, love and passion in her paintings to present the exhibition entitled *Shahrazade Or the 1001 Faces of the Oriental Woman*, at Jadis Gallery
Pictures: Joseph J. Capellan

Painting women's lives

Lebanese artist captures beauty of the Orient at Dubai show

Shahrazade Or the 1001 Faces of the Oriental Woman features a collection of paintings by Lebanese artist Mona Trad Dabaji that capture the beauty of the Orient and pay tribute to the oriental women of the Gulf and the Mediterranean. The show is being held at the Jadis Gallery, in The Courtyard, Dubai.

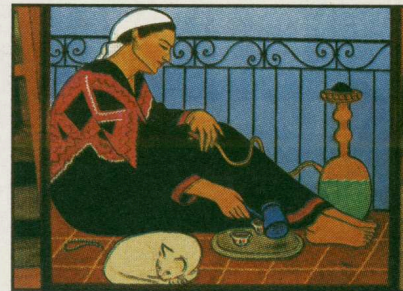
Each painting reveals the multiple facets of the oriental woman's life: at work, reading, singing and dreaming.

Drawing upon the title of the exhibition, the paintings are an interpretation of the legendary tale of Shahrazade, about the embittered king of old Persia, whose wife was unfaithful so he had her beheaded.

Resentful of women, the king takes a wife each night and then beheads them the following day. In a bid to prevent any more executions the beautiful Shahrazade bravely offers herself to the king and each night tells him enchanting tales that offer him to escape into a fantasy world.

As dawn would approach and her imminent death, Shahrazade would stop her story at a crucial point to keep the king eager to hear the conclusion and therefore delay her execution.

Inspired by the Shahrazade tale, Mona has drawn upon the elements of dreams, escapism, love and passion. The paintings portray women immersed within their own lives, unconstrained and



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impervious to temptation – in a world where nobody is watching them.

As Mona explains: "If the 1001 days of Shahrazade had to be narrated they would talk about women alone with their dreams of love and escaping, sipping coffee, tea or reading but all framed within their simplicity. These images would look like isolated moments of peace and happiness."

Mona, who graduated from the American University of Beirut in Fine Arts, has been teaching drawing and painting since 1993. For more than a decade Mona's work has appeared at various exhibitions around the world, including Africa, Beirut, Paris and Jordan.

Commenting on this unique collection, Dona Turk, Consul General of Lebanon



in Dubai, said: "Far from being gender-related, this exhibition is in the spirit of modernity – which doesn't go against tradition, but still ensures the continuous renaissance of traditional ideas."

Mona's new collection of paintings has been described as a "nostalgic slice of life" and reminiscent of famous French artist Henri Matisse.

Through this exhibition Ibtisam Mahjoub, of the Jadis Gallery, wants to pay homage to Lebanon. "Representing Lebanon, a country destroyed and reconstructed, Mona's work forms a link between the past and the present," he said.

Shahrazade Or the 1001 Faces of the Oriental Woman lasts until November 6. Jadis Gallery is open daily (except Friday) from 10.00am to 1.30pm and 4.30pm to 8.30pm.