

Culture

A contemporary interpretation of Jordan in batik, jewellery and mixed media

By Sally Bland



Darleen Karpowicz's 'Salt' on batik

dent they may seem.

In another picture-sculpture entitled "Fertility," eggs inhabit the cubicles of the house, cared for by male and female figures. "I wanted to show the joys of having offspring and future generations," says Susanna. "There is, however, one negative note — the egg impaled on barbed wire. This shows the danger of overprotecting children or the dangers to which they may be exposed by war."

Darleen Karpowicz taught herself how to do batik "for fun," while she was studying art and textile production at the University of Southern California. In 1981, she moved to Yemen where she taught art for five years, meanwhile researching, collecting, painting and photographing Yemeni women's costumes and handicrafts of the region. Her subsequent move to Baluchistan, Pakistan, enriched her first-hand experience with other styles of traditional folk art, such as the gold embroidery done by Pashtoon women. In Quetta, she directed a U.N.-funded, income-generating programme for Afghani refugee women, which also included literacy and health education. Later moving to Poland, she worked for the NGO which assisted artisans around the world in marketing their products.

In each place she has lived, Darlene Karpowicz has produced batiks, paintings and other works of art related to the specific location. Though she has

only lived in Jordan for two years, the batiks on show attest to her ability to observe, capture and recreate the atmosphere of a place.

The muted blues, browns, greens and greys in which she reproduced the homes and skylines of Amman and Salt, approximate the quality of light one actually sees at certain times in the afternoon here. In contrast to Caldwell who has previously painted numerous water-colours of Jordan's natural beauty and rural life, Karpowicz admits to being more attracted to urban landscapes. She is fascinated by city scenes and does not plan to depict Jordan's famous monuments such as Petra.



Wallhanging by Darleen Karpowicz

The exhibition opened on October 28th and can be seen daily from 9:30 until 6:30, except Friday, until November 20th.