



Hilda Hiary's paints circles round her worlds

What is it all about?

It's about the path that I chose to travel in my life, its challenges and rewards.

What do the circles in your paintings represent?

The circle evokes different states of being. It symbolises freedom. It fulfils an earlier promise of abstract art as an avant-garde quest for spiritual direction.

Your new work contains images of newspapers. What's the concept behind this?

During my many travels over the last few years I collected local newspapers, some of which were talking about Middle Eastern affairs. My last exhibition at Foresight Gallery in Amman was titled "News." I wanted to compare the news in the West, where people are generally comfortable in their lives, with that in the East, where people usually listen to upsetting news from dawn until dusk. You know, news about Darfur, Palestine, Lebanon or Iraq. Such depressing news definitely affects our society.

Did you enjoy working on "Tarabish", your installation in London? Did you move away from your usual style?

Yes, it was brilliant. I didn't really move away from my style, I still used the circle in "Tarabish," from the red hats themselves to the circle of the women's mouths. I don't think I will move away from my style. I am working on one philosophy of life called Circles. Of course my techniques differ now and my composition, which I am trying to simplify. But my circles will stay.

Does video installation satisfy your need to express more than painting?

No, not at all. I'm not a video installation artist. But I like to experiment and make big projects, especially in biennales. Video challenges me and gives me a kind of freedom, as the camera gives a different view than paints and brushes. But I will always enjoy my daily life of painting in my studio.

As an artist in Jordan, what do you think of the art scene in Amman?

There are only a few true artists in Jordan that I respect, without mentioning names! We still need time to grow and learn, and artists should understand that art is not just a joy, it is a responsibility.

What was it like being part of "The Breath" exhibition in London?

It was such a great show. "Tarabish" was shipped from Cairo to London. Things were very professional there. There was so much appreciation for my art. And it was perfect because in London there is no show without a curator, and the curator was just a curator and not an artist. The exhibition included work from other artists who came together to show the West a different perspective of the East.