

VIEWS FROM THE WEST

TWO SWISS ARTISTS PREPARE FOR A SHOW IN ABU DHABI. MUHAMMAD YUSUF HAS THE DETAILS

The indefatigable Kurt Blum, General Manager of Swiss Art Gate UAE and an alpine force for bridging the cultures of Switzerland and the Emirates, is currently engaged in hosting the 14th edition of Crossroads, which is a series of art exhibitions at Yas Viceroy, Abu Dhabi.

This time, the show is titled 'Softness versus Dynamism'. It shows artworks by two Swiss artists, namely Daniela Vincenz and Suzanne Ledergerber. It opens on Nov. 10 and runs till Jan. 11.

The exhibition will have recent artworks from the two artists,

who are professionals. Vincenz is also a recognised goldsmith in Switzerland. She has held numerous exhibitions in her home country and moved to Dubai nearly eight years ago. She now concentrates on painting.

Her classic design background as a jeweller has spilled over into her visual art. It is seen in the way in which her expanding painting skills is still obsessed with exploring and creating contemporary variations of colour and shape in soft and sensitive ways. (This is the reason for one part of the title of the show).

Ledergerber's paintings are characterised by dynamic and bold strokes in full colour (the

reason for the other part of the title). The source of her subjects has been the world as she observes it, with its tell-tale striking contrasts and wide horizons. She plays with the fantasy of the observer and invites him to take part in her adventures, experiences and dreams. She offers her world to the viewer and welcomes him to share her love of nature, sun, plants, the animal world, the desert, oceans and cities.

The exhibition, in an impactful way, will show the contrasting styles of the two Swiss ladies, both very strong in technical skills. They use various tools to achieve the final results, but

utilise different colour schemes. Vincenz uses mixed colours in soft shades while Ledergerber brings on strong, bright colours to make her statements.

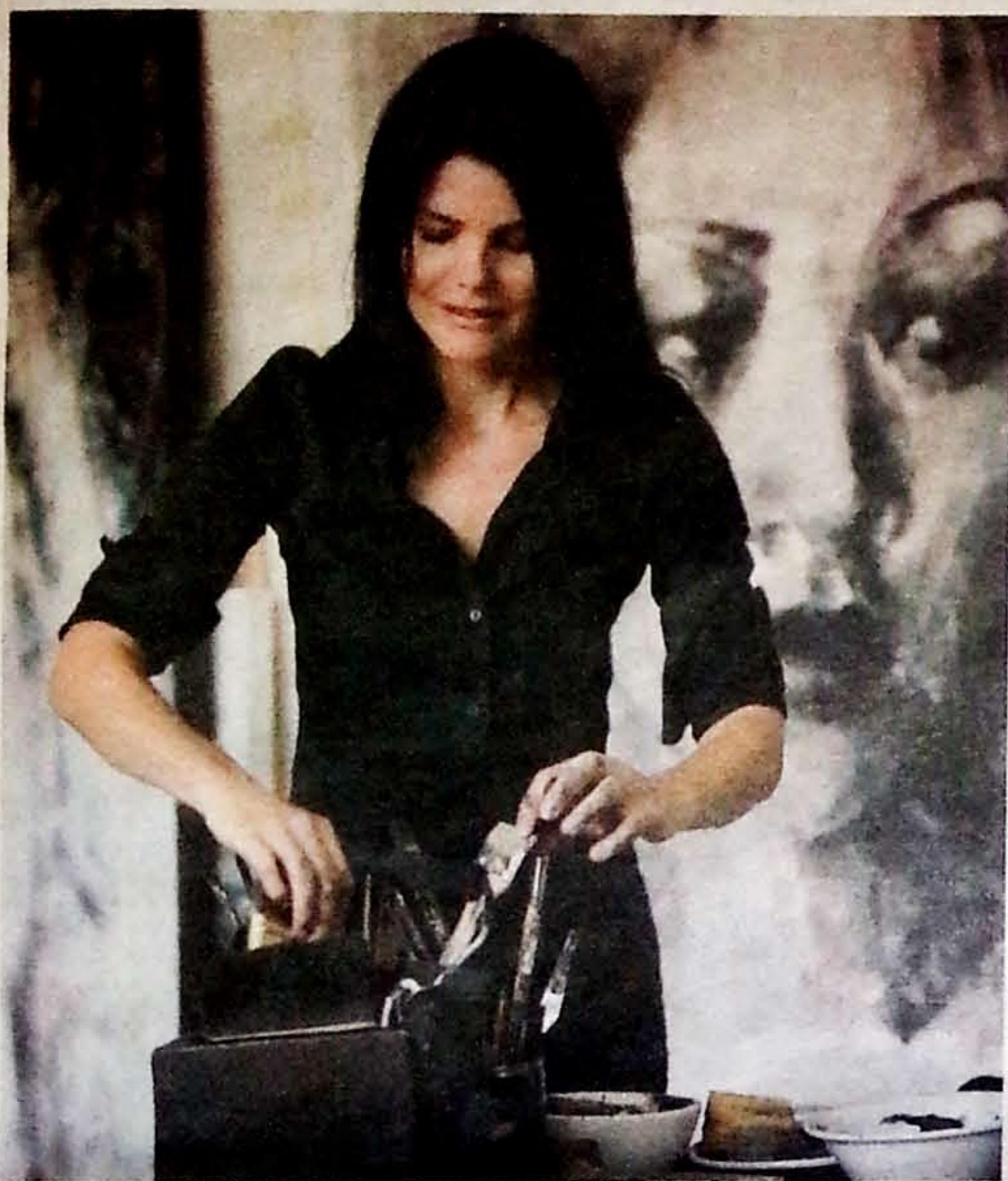
Ledergerber was born in the United States where her parents, twin sister and both brothers live. Fate has bestowed her with a gypsy foot, and her life has been one hectic shuttle between many countries, climes and careers.

California to her offers not only Venice Beach, but also proximity to Mexico, and the desert area on the way to Las Vegas - all contrasts between city, country, congestion and wide open spaces. These factors have influenced her paintings. In her youth,

she was lucky enough to spend time in the USA, Germany and Switzerland.

St Gallen, Switzerland, became home to her family. Ledergerber chose her profession as textile designer. She completed her academic training in the city of St Gallen, which is the hub of the Swiss textile industry. After completion of her studies, she found her way to Africa. Living in the middle of the bush was challenging. The ability for self-organisation and improvisation, including encounters with native animals she would rather not have met, made her realise that life, like art, too had much diversity.

TWO FOR TIME OUT DANIELA VINCENZ AND SUZANNE LEDERGERBER SPEAK ABOUT THEIR LIFE IN ART



Daniela Vincenz

* What sparked your interest in art?

DV: I have had the urge to create all my life. To express myself in sculpting and painting has been a very strong feeling inside me; I have practiced them since I was very young. Everything connected with art was fascinating and inspired me.

* You create large portraits. Can you tell us more about how you select your portraits?

DV: There is nothing more inspiring as living in the UAE! The multi-culture and variety of faces is amazing and has given me the input for my recent work i.e. "global faces". My portraits is like a fraction of a second, a blink of an eye, an anonymous face in the crowd. Catching the expression of the moment and the attempt to fix it on canvas according to my own interpretation gives me satisfaction.

* You work as a goldsmith in Switzerland and as a painter in the UAE. How do you manage both occupations? Which is more close to you?

DV: After living in the UAE since seven-and-a-half years, I have found a way of working in two fantastic locations. The contrast between the two countries gives me a lot of energy. In Switzerland, I like to work in my profession as a goldsmith, combining design with handcrafted three-dimensional jewellery in precious materials. Back in Dubai, I can "go wild" and spread colour on huge canvases. I feel very privileged being able to do both and enjoying art in small and large dimensions!

* Can you compare European Art to the art of the Arabian Peninsula? What are the similarities - if any - and what are the differences? Are there any unbridgeable differences?

DV: Every artist, anywhere in the world, tries to express himself in a unique and individual way and this is certainly influenced by where he comes from. The personal story and political background also play an important role in most of the artists' works.

* Your comments on the UAE art scene.

DV: Compared to eight years ago when I arrived in the UAE, a lot has changed. The UAE art scene is like every other section in this country - the achievement is great and visions turn true. Galleries, exhibitions, art events, theatre You can find everything here now. To describe this in two words - young and growing.



Suzanne Ledergerber

* What sparked your interest in art? What is the reason which makes you express yourself in art?

SL: As a textile designer and a traveller around the world seeing and experiencing the beauty of culture, nature and colours makes me express my impressions on canvas.

* Can you tell us something about how you are preparing for your upcoming exhibition?

SL: The first time I visited the UAE, I noticed all the sand and pale colours. My first thought was to put bright colours into this country, like the ones you find in the ocean around a reef, for example.

* You are a mother and a professional painter. How do you manage to do this?

SL: It's all about organisation!

* What brings out the best in you?

SL: I get my inspiration from all the interesting, special and beautiful subjects in life which cross my eyes. After that, I let my imagination do all the work. It guides the brush and chooses the colours for me.

* If you weren't an artist, what would you be and why?

SL: Probably a pastry cook! Then I could decorate all the different pastries all day long!

* What is the biggest motivating factor in your life today and why?

SL: My kids and my family are my biggest motivating factor, because we share a lot of exciting, funny, sad, happy and lovable moments together. That is what keeps me going.

* Anything else you would like to add?

SL: My motifs are real, they are part of my life. I photographed many of them on trips, and there's a story behind each one. I try to take up this story on the canvas. Abstract and figurative painting come together, they become one. Using the acrylics technique, oil pens, coffee and filler, I start with a sketchy draft. It slowly builds up, changing constantly. The moment of feeling that the work is done, is a double realisation: The end and the beginning of something new.