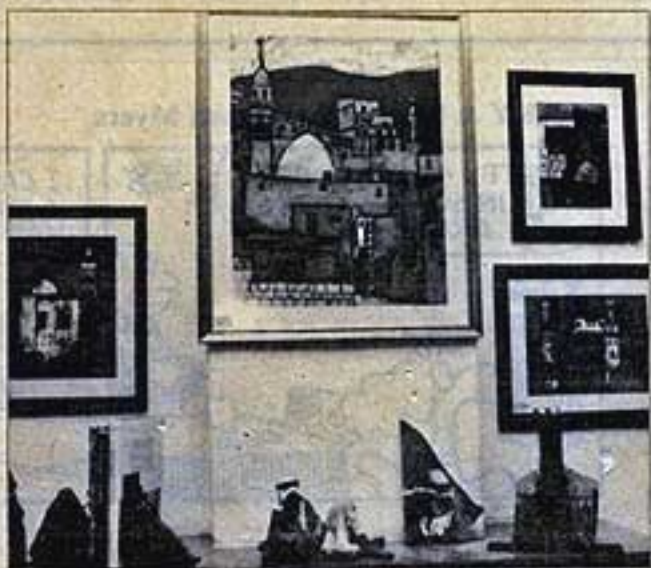


Drawing old Amman in batik



UNDER THE patronage of HRH Princess Wijdan Ali, The Jordan Craft Center, Al Aydi, organized an exhibition titled "Arab Madinas in Batik," by the American artist Darleen Wilkerson. Her exhibition, which is about Arab cities is a very interesting one simply because of the material and substance she uses.

Her exhibition in Amman which was opened in Amman earlier this month is proving very successful with 12 of her 42 paintings on display already sold to local art collectors. Since settling in Jordan, Wilkerson continued to paint avidly on batik, something that was original to Amman's art community.

She examined every nook and cranny of Jordan's past and modern architecture, painting old houses and contrasting them with the old alleways of Amman.

Wilkerson is not new to this part of the world. After leaving California she settled down in Yemen, where she established an art program for a private Yemeni school.

For five years there, she continued to photograph and paint women's costumes which required traditional arts and crafts. While in Yemen, she met and married Dr Jan Karpowicz, a consultant to the Yemen Ministry of Agriculture.

Later on, the couple moved to Poland. There, Wilkerson became a consultant for a non-governmental agency to help artists around the world. Most of her work during that time was in Central Asia and Pakistan.

Batik is a distinct process where the design is produced by painting wax on areas on the cotton cloth. After doing this, the batik is dipped into a colored dye bath.

The artists adds that after each waxing, the cloth is dipped in darker colors. By the time the Batik reaches its last dye bath the cloth is totally covered in wax.

The effect of all this is unusually striking as evidenced by her show that includes paintings, jackets, silk scarfs etc. May Khoury, director of Al Ayadi says that the current works "very much relate to our own history and heritage."

In her paintings, we can see our own city with it's old houses centered by the mosque or church. The exhibition ends today, Thursday, 25 September.

Al Aydi is the oldest Craft Center in Amman having direct dealings with more than one 100 artists. ■