

Some may describe her as bohemian, others eccentric and controversial. Today artist and activist Fatma Lootah lives in Italy but her Emirati heritage that was very much a part of her childhood, remains a central part of her life today. Her desire for art drove her beyond boundaries as she struggled to exist in a society that at the time questioned her career choice. Her love and endurance for art is a story to be told.

She was born and raised in Dubai in the 1960' s and 1970' s, lots of lovely memories. Currently she lives in Verona, Italy. I came to Verona in 1984 and never left. This is where I raised my three daughters.

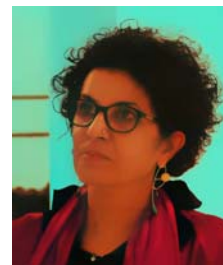
Fatma knew that she wanted to be an artist at the age of 13, she started drawing and painting more seriously. In fact, 'I was just reminded the other day by Abdul Qader Al Rais that we had both exhibited together at the age of 15 at an official art exhibition! That' s how passionate we both were about art. I did my Bachelor of Fine Arts at Baghdad University, and then went onto Washington DC for higher studies in the Arts' says Fatma.

My Emirate Heritage means everything to me – the desert is the land that I was raised on. The palm tree is the most fascinating tree – there is no tree like it. I painted the Emirati series of works a few years ago – life-size canvasses of women in traditional dress. One common theme existed – they were all strong women.

Until the 1980' s performance art was considered an avant garde mystery. Art was not just created by the stroke of a brush, but also involved performance. This was a very popular period that I lived through, especially in Italy where I created many performance art pieces involving women' s rights. During this period, it became more widely known and people started to appreciate its technical brilliance.

Wanting to know How Fatma gets her inspiration? 'I look up to the skies', she says.

I am an avid cook – I love cooking different cuisines to unwind and it' s one of my hobbies. Words you live by...Freedom, freedom, freedom.



*Fatma Lootah*  
*U.A.E.*