

In harmony with nature

French artist **Karine Roche's** new series of paintings depict an ideal

metropolis

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Karine Roche, Oasis Urbaine, acrylic fabrics on canvas.

The growing urban population and expansion of cities around the world has led to human beings losing touch with nature. As we continue to transform what were once green areas into concrete jungles, we are harming not only our environment and our planet, but also our own health and well-

being. But UAE-based French artist **Karine Roche** imagines a different world in her paintings — a world where nature and man-made structures exist in complete harmony. In her latest show, Symbiosis Roche is presenting a new series of oil, acrylic and multi-media paintings that articulate her vision of an ideal metropolis. The artist is also displaying a series of hand finished prints of her paintings.

“I do not like the idea of the conflict of ‘city versus nature’ because a city is also part of the ecosystem and we have to find a way to integrate nature within the city. I believe in the concept of organic architecture that was developed in the early twentieth century and has evolved with our growing knowledge about creating harmony between a human habitat and the natural environment. My paintings are based on this concept and they express a vision of a future when human beings will find the right balance between their lifestyle and the environment,” Roche says.

In her paintings, the artist has meticulously recreated the familiar skylines of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Paris. But the space around the buildings and between them is filled with lush greenery and colourful flowers, which are also accurate representations of the trees, grasses and flowers she has seen in these cities. The geometric lines of the skyscrapers blend beautifully with the organic forms in Roche’s imaginary cityscapes to present a new urban look and rhythm.

The artist has used fabric and resin on her canvasses to create interesting textures and add depth to the artworks. In some paintings she has collaged onto the canvases flowers cut out from plastic sheets, photographs of the cities, pieces of lace and other souvenirs bought from the cities represented in the works. There is a sense of openness, lightness and joy in these cityscapes, which is further enhanced by the many white spaces between the dense vertical lines.

“I have been living in the UAE for eight years and I mostly paint the buildings I see here. But after so many years away from my country, I find that when I go back to Paris I see the city and its architecture with new eyes. In this series I have enjoyed painting Parisian buildings, and the flowers in bloom all around the city. The quiet, empty spaces in my imaginary cityscapes represent pauses in the fast pace of modern urban life that allow us to stop and look carefully at our growing megalopolises and think about how to create and nurture a symbiotic relationship between our cities and our environment,” Roche says.

Symbiosis will run at **Art Sawa**, DIFC, until November 15.