

# OMAN MIRROR

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## Delicious dishes at La Mer

The breathtaking setting at La Mer gives the place an air of chic and sophisticated elegance

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# Lotus fantasies

THIS TIME AROUND, ANTJE MANSER HAS CHOSEN THE LOTUS AS THE RECURRING MOTIF OR THE CENTRAL THEME OF HER STUNNING, MYSTERIOUS AND MYSTICAL ARTWORKS

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### GET GOING WITH GLARES...

Stylish eye-wear elevates your style, gives you a trendy look and enhances your personality

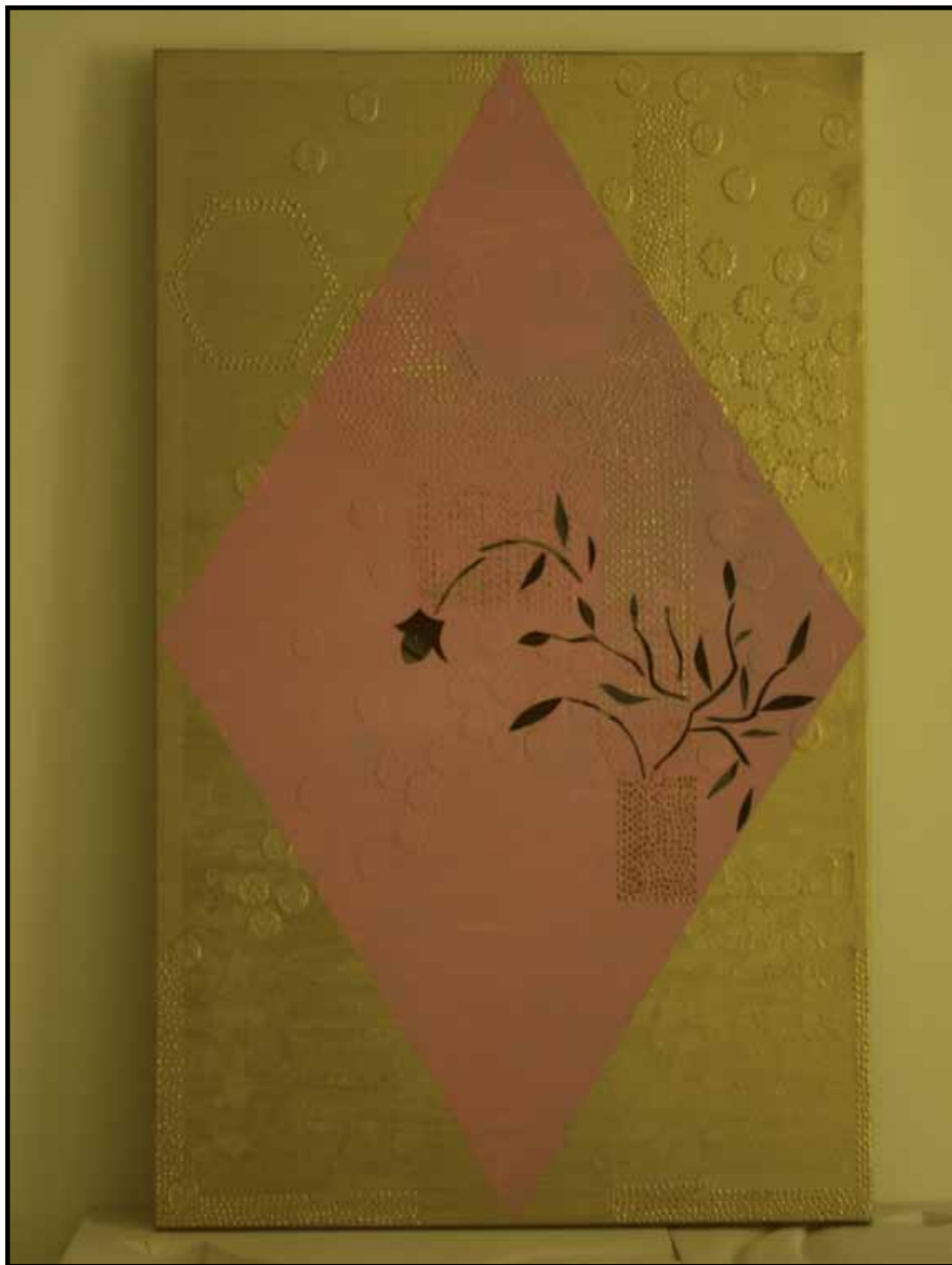
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## MOTORING

# CAYMAN R IS FOR STEERING

PORSCHE LIGHTENS UP OUR BEST-HANDLING CAR,

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A photograph of Antje Manser, an elderly woman with short, wavy, light-colored hair and glasses. She is smiling and sitting on a simple wooden stool. She is wearing a light blue and white vertically striped long-sleeved shirt and light blue trousers. She is holding a small, light-colored piece of paper or card in her hands. The background is a soft, textured pink and white pattern with large, faint, stylized lotus flower shapes in shades of pink and purple.

# *Antje Manser's* **Lotus fantasies**

This time around, Antje has chosen the Lotus as the recurring motif or the central theme of her stunning, mysterious and mystical artworks, writes **David Solomon**





**W**HEN ARTIST Antje Manser creates a work of art it is not just an evocative, beautiful image that stirs your imagination. Look closely and you'll find that it is more than that. It's like a whole world in itself, a mysterious and mystical world that beckons and draws you within itself, so that you're completely immersed in it and become a part of it. And then it is very difficult to detach yourself from Antje's haunting and compelling creations that irrevocably change your perception of the world, of life itself.

Antje has recently created a large set of stunning canvases that you have to see to believe that they are real. And then you realise that only someone like Antje can create something like that. Sometimes even after meeting the artist and seeing all her works you might be more inclined to think that this can't be real and that possibly by some happy accident you have stumbled upon some strange world of dreams and fantasies.

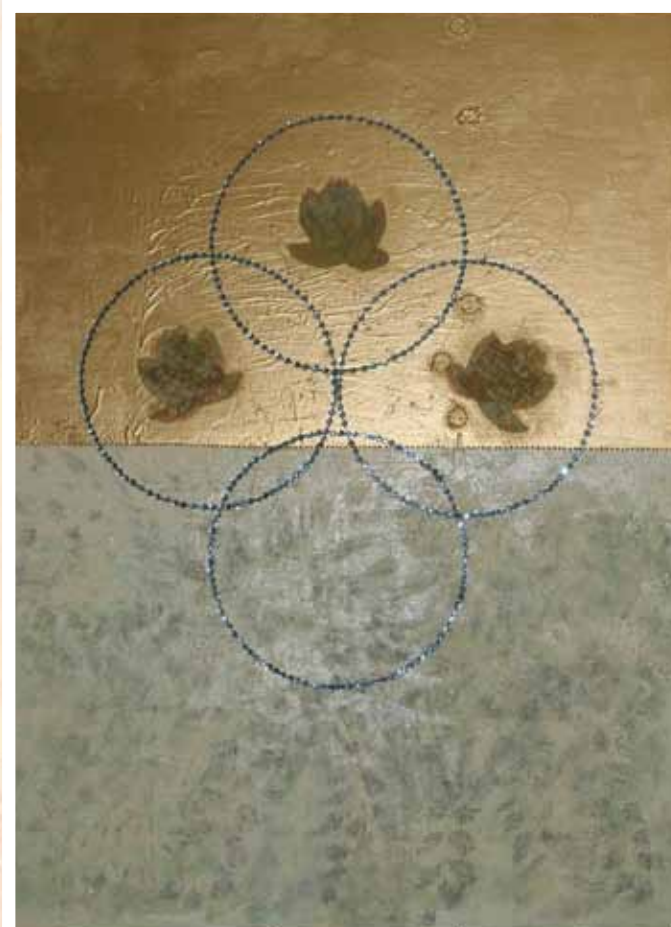
Antje sees through your utter disbelief and amazement and tells you with a twinkle in her eyes and a gentle sort of tinkling laughter: "Sometimes I can't believe it myself". Now what do you say to that. Well nothing off course. And the artist just keeps giving you her beaming smiles all the while.

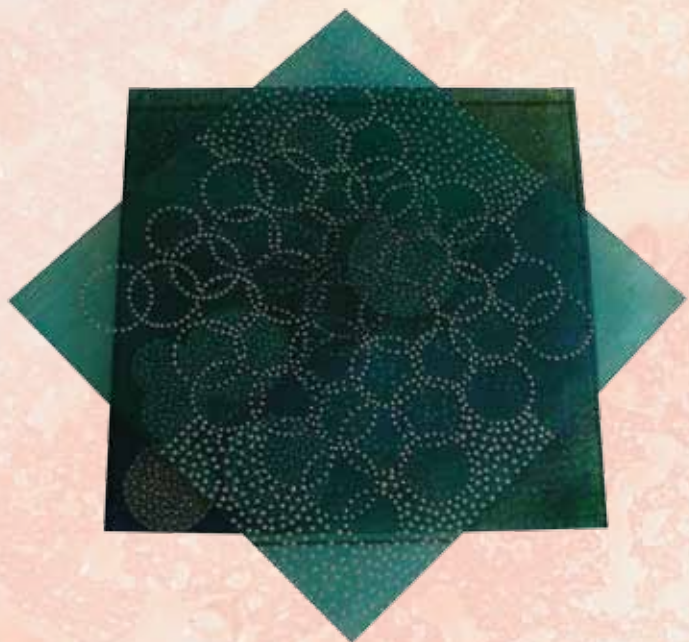
And then Antje tells you something else. "You know, my artworks are almost always very intricate and complicated compositions that require hours and hours of extremely minute and painstaking detailing works. And that is why what is so good about my compositions is that no one can copy my works. Even I can't!"

This time around, Antje has chosen the Lotus as the recurring motif or the central theme of her artworks. She explains: The Lotus is a mystical flower and in several countries of the East and the Far East it is deeply enmeshed in the religious and mystical ethos of these places and with abounding myths and legends that have sprung up around this beautiful flower.

When you ask if there is any particular reason for choosing the Lotus, Antje says: "I have been particularly struck by the fascinating and striking beauty of the Lotus flowers, that are usually to be found in shades of red, white and purple. The fact that it grows in isolation in the middle of a pond or marsh adds to its air of mystery as well as a sense of detachment".

She goes on to add: "Perhaps I'm like the Lotus myself because though I live amongst people and am continually surrounded by all the trappings of a modern society, yet I lead the simple and Spartan life of a recluse more or less. So like the Lotus I remain practically untouched by what





is happening around me and completely immerse myself in my art and in my creations.

Antje likes to call herself a full-time artist. "I'm not one of those hobby artists who like to just do some paintings for fun and to show other people that they've got some kind of talent. I paint for myself. It is an all-consuming passion that drives me on from one day to the next. And I'm so involved in my creation that I don't feel the need to socialise".

Antje says she likes to go for long walks along the beach very early in the morning. "When I'm there, I can communicate with myself, reach deep within my psyche and discover hidden worlds and they become the basis for new thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions. And then when I get back to my apartment and studio, my canvas becomes a kind of a catalyst to empty myself. So everything that pours out from within me becomes my creation, my art.

Antje, who has held several exhibitions in all almost all the renowned and distinguished galleries in Muscat, both as a solo artist or as part of a group, has dabbled in several genres and has come up with a striking and distinctive and inimitable style, one that seamlessly blends and harmonises many styles, techniques and genres into an ethereal entity. On previous occasions her themes have focused on Nature, women, the moon and now in her new collection on the Lotus.

In Eastern philosophy and spiritualism, the Lotus symbolises detachment and purity. This can be understood better if you get to know where and how the Lotus flower blooms. Usually, the Lotus grows in the stagnant waters of a pond, swamp or marsh. In spite of the thick and heavy slush that you find in these places, the Lotus flower remains unsullied. Even the long roots of the plant that reach to the bottom of the pond or swamp remain free of the wet mud. On the surface, a network of fine hair keep the large, flat lotus leaf that looks like a platter, free of even a single droplet of water. If you try throwing water on the lotus leaf, it rolls off the surface without wetting it in the same way that mercury tends to run off from any surface without wetting it.

Because of these qualities, ancient mystics of many centuries ago, particularly in India, Japan, China, Malaysia and Thailand began to revere this beautiful flower as a symbol of beauty, purity, and detachment.

The German-born lady from Hamburg has been playing a prominent role in Muscat's busy and colourful art scenario for the last several years. "This is the ideal place for an artist to be in because the light over here is so perfect.

But Antje find it more comfortable to live here from September-end to April-end. "For the remaining period of the year, I like to go and live in an artists' village in New Mexico. I suppose the lively interaction and the chemistry among a whole community of artists triggers many kinds of emotions and responses and replenishes our creative impulses".

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