

Turning heritage into artwork, livelihood

Beit al-Bawadi takes in local gifted workers to create and promote ceramic pieces offering a wide variety that could easily fit anywhere...Page 2



Amman International Marathon

The Greater Amman Municipality (GAM), in cooperation with the Society for the Care of Neurological Patients, has announced the launch of the first Amman International Marathon...Page 6



Turmoil within the Islamic Movement

The leakage of the Muslim Brotherhood's political report concerning its representation in the Gulf and relations with Hamas suddenly came to add more tension to the disagreements within the Movement...Page 7

also this week ...

OPINION	12
Moment of truth for Obama's peace vision	
FEATURE	18
The comeback of prime oysters	
LIFESTYLE	19
Recession sparks modern-day gold rush	
HEALTH	22
Company aims to make brain scans portable	
SCIENCE	35
Gravity governs the gecko's strong grip	

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By Yasmine Abu Tarboush

HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal launched on Tuesday Beit al-Bawadi's newest "Turath Collection" made of ceramic pieces crafted by local artisans drawing on traditional artistic heritage.

Beit al-Bawadi was launched in 1996 as an initiative of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD). The non-profit organization was set up by the Fund which has provided employment for more than 60 people and has generated funds to aid in development projects at a time when unemployment rate is nearly 13%.

The Princess toured the exhibition accompanied by Farah Daghestani, JOHUD executive director, along with designers, artists and staff members. The event featured several collections ornamented with traditional and unconventional carvings of patterns, verses of Qur'an and Hadeeth, in addition to using vivacious colors.

Beit al-Bawadi takes in local gifted workers to create and promote ceramic pieces offering a wide variety that could easily fit anywhere: Home, office, hotel, etc. Pieces displayed in the exhibit varied as to be both of practical use and eye capturing, including table sets, vases, mirrors, table lamps and more.

With wise foresight, the exhibition director confined the selection to pieces comprehensible to the people who visit the show room.

Beit al-Bawadi director Inass Shaheen noted that this exhibit comes in time for Ramadan with a new collection of Islamic ornaments for

extensive use.

"We design different pieces to please everyone, focusing on high quality and daring colors, in addition to showing our heritage which I personally think of as a treasure," she said.

Beit al-Bawadi uniquely provides training and employment for the less fortunate, so they can develop as artists through financial and professional aid. There are currently eight people with special needs working in the project, trained and set to work productively.

Moreover, Shaheen said that collections on display are varied in color and of reasonable prices so as to reach out to everybody and to generate good income for those in need. She also stressed that enabling such an active part of the society is vital to the social and economic growth of the Kingdom.

"Each piece of art displayed here is part of me, of us as a center, and it wouldn't have been possible if it weren't for such an excellent team of artisans, designers, and people who dare to go above and beyond reaching their limits," she asserted.

Tharwah Shibli, production manager and designer, said that Beit al-Bawadi brings out the best of gifted people, and turns passion into profession.

"Beit al-Bawadi is one of the finest Middle Eastern ceramic centers since it aims to revive Islamic ornaments and folklore using up-to-date advanced technologies," she added.

One of the artists said that it is such an indulging experience, one of making the ordinary extraordinary and unique, simply by

Continue on page 3

