

Paper quilling

Linda Benbow asked Farah Al-Fardh why she likes rolled up pieces of paper



Farah Al-Fardh is an Emirati quilling artist from Umm Al Quwain. She has been interested in arts and crafts since an early age and loves to create art pieces using this medium. Farah has taken her love for this craft to great lengths: she introduced the art on various television channels, newspapers and magazines in the UAE; held workshops in Ras Al Khaimah, Umm Al Quwain, Dubai and Al Ain and launched the first Arabic website on paper quilling. Alongside all this she also holds a full-time job.

What other crafts do you enjoy?

I enjoy embroidery and making greeting cards but I love quilling the most

Why is it the best?

I wanted to try a new craft and quilling ended up being the best choice. I was also looking for something quite challenging. This helps me relax.

Why do you want to revive the craft?

The art of paper quilling is new in our region so I am actually introducing the art more than reviving it. I want to introduce

it because I enjoy it and it is an art for all age groups and you can do so many wonderful things with it.

What made you take the leap from enjoying a craft to talking about it on TV and magazines?

I started quilling in 2004 and the first time I appeared on TV to introduce it



was in February 2008. This art became a passion I wanted everyone to know



about. So when I received the invitation from Sama Dubai TV I said "yes" right away. And till now I get the same reaction from people who see my work, they are amazed and can't believe that I made them out of paper strips.

Also, I have taught this craft to many people (boys and girls) from all age groups and discovered that kids tend to focus and concentrate a lot while practising this, which made their parents thank me for teaching them, something that would keep them quiet. And some parents couldn't believe that their children managed to create beautiful artwork.

Does your sister Amna still do this craftwork – or has she moved on to

something else?

Both of us started round the same time but didn't know that we are doing it, although our rooms are opposite each other. She is still quilling and does many other paper creations. This art is very addictive; once you start you cannot stop.

Was it difficult to launch a website on this topic?

It was really challenging to launch the website. First of all it was unique (first website in the world in Arabic and English about paper quilling). I launched it on January 13, 2009 and I received Tamaiaz Award from Mawarid in May 2009 for coming up with this website. I started working on it round March 2008 and it has come a long way since then (look at www.faroooha.net).

How did the workshop in Ras Al Khaimah go – were there many enthusiastic participants, or did they just come to see what it was all about?

My first workshop was conducted in Ras Al Khaimah - all the attendees were art teachers from different cities and they were really surprised and interested to know to know more about it. So much so that they bought all the materials, books and tools that I had brought with me and took my contact details to order more. I am still in touch with them

Does your craft get in the way of your day job?

Quilling is the relaxation zone for me. I enjoy my work as Assistant Manager-Vendor Relations at Dubai World Trade Centre, and I enjoy quilling. My boss, and the company, always support my artistic activities. When I received Tamaiaz Award they published it in the company newsletter and when I participated at the Doll Exhibition; the company sent an email to all employees announcing my participation. My craft does not come in the way of my work as I keep it for weekends or after working hours

What does your family think of your hobby?

My parents were very supportive and they always admired my creativity and artistic mode. I have relatives in different countries who love to come to my facebook page and give their positive feedback on my latest creations. My sisters are



preparing for this visit in July. My sister Amna and I would like to start a UAE Quilling Guild, and at the moment, are working on getting enough members to form this group.

My biggest plan would be to have the first quilling exhibition in the Middle East and publish a book on quilling in Arabic.

Quilling

Quilling is a lovely old art form which some believe may date back to ancient Egypt. It has been known by many names, including paper-rolling, paper-scrolling, filigree, paper mosaic. It is theorised that early quillers rolled their papers on a feather, or quill, hence the name quilling. The art form involves the use of strips of paper that are rolled, shaped, and glued together to create many designs.

the biggest energy boosters; whenever I have a new idea, they will keep asking if I have finished the project or not!

What are your plans for the future?

I received an invitation from Japan Quilling Guild to visit and attend a workshop as a guest, with my sister, and I am

Farah won the Tamaiaz Award in the category of Entrepreneurship in May 2009

