

"Spirit Animals" – a Contemporary Art Exhibition at COYA Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi has recently launched itself as a main player in the art world, and has embraced the Louvre, and Guggenheim – and so it is not a surprise to see the grassroots contemporary arts scene flourish.

But what is a surprise is Nina Murashkina's choice of venue for her exhibition "Spirit Animals" – a restaurant!



But then, when you enter COYA, you understand...

And you realize that this enchanting and provocative display of paintings could not have happened at a better venue!

COYA itself is a living, breathing mythological restaurant creature, curled up among the modernity of Maryah
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Island, but representing a culture of thousands of years, and from thousands of kilometers away - where "Spirit Animals" were born.

And the restaurant is an eclectic work of art and a cultural destination, all the more appropriate to delight the UAE capital's connoisseurs with a fine-dining viewing experience, totally unique.



COYA's moods shift according to which corner you choose, but overall a brilliantly executed precaution plan for social distancing is in place, and the high ceilings and natural light makes for a most pleasing and safe ambiance.



And the art feels at home - it is meant to be there!



Other tables present other views, depending on how you feel.



And so in a sense you can find yourself, at COYA.



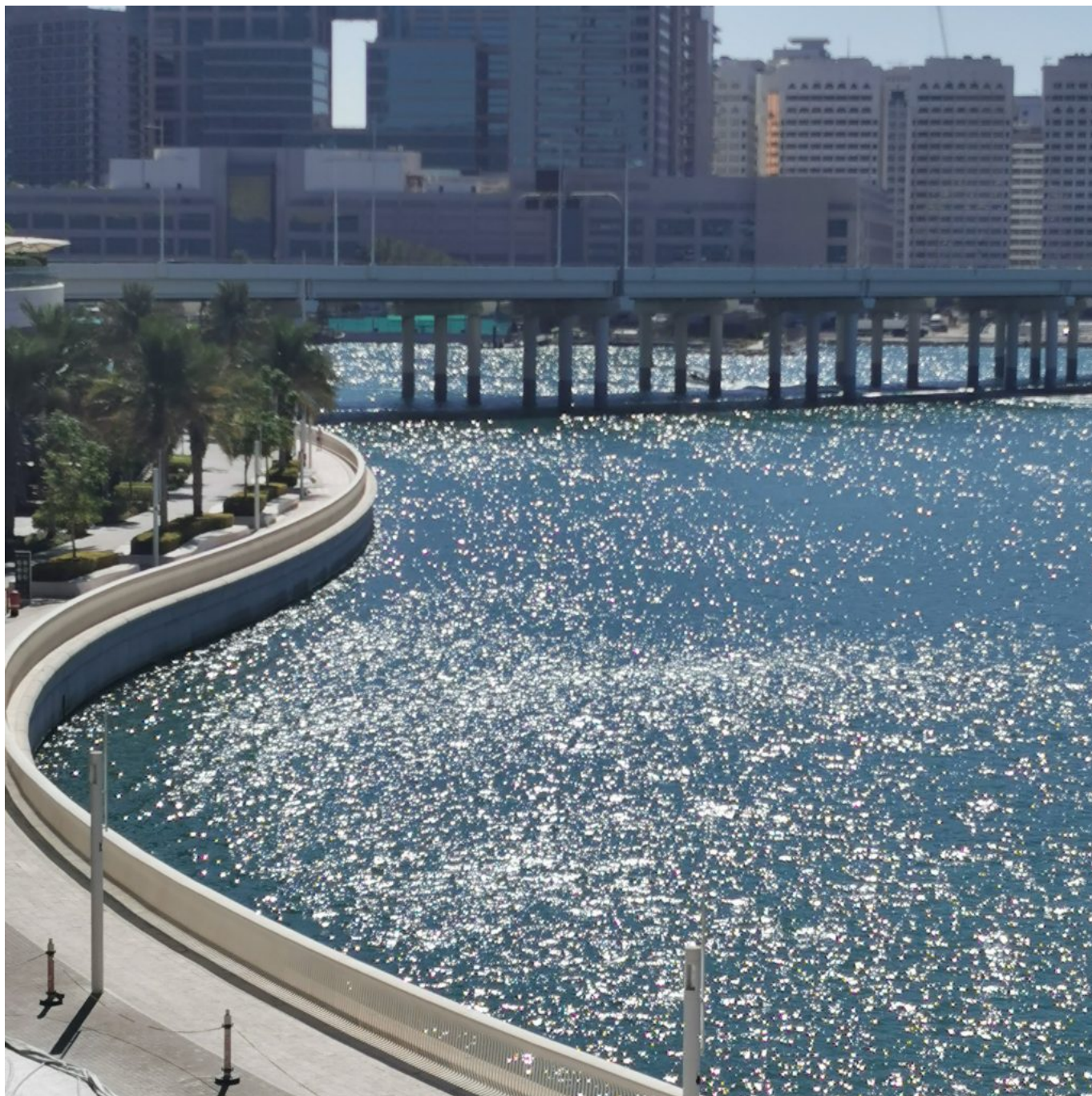
But at every glance you discover something new...



be it a detail of the interior décor, or the powerful brush strokes of the artist



or just glancing out across the bay.



...and even there is beauty in the culinary art that is presented at your table!



The UAE's Peruvian restaurant, COYA delivers a modern and vibrant interpretation of Latin American gastronomical culture, and the selection is enticing:





Above, a delightful Sea Bream ceviche in tiger's milk (*leche de tigre*), and a crispy rendition of calamari with exquisite creamy sauce; below, rolled maki-sushi, with the freshest salmon, and an energetic trio of baby potatoes.





And those were just the starters!

COYA is also fully licensed, and a dedicated bar caters to your preferences, with flair.





Still, your eyes keep discovering fresh details, and the excitement of the combination of very fine exotic flavors from the table and Nina Murashkina’s hypnotic artwork from the walls plays with your imagination.



The mains come in with their sophistication and elegance - but it is the flavors that are outstanding.

When the good Chef at COYA says char-grilled, you shout out YES!



The young chicken was excellent, and the charred bits really brought out the flavors of the live fire – a technique popular in Peruvian and Latin American grilling – and the slow-cooked beef ribs were tender and juicy, and oh so good!



And this intensity is re-played in visual form, where the art sings its song, and each person to stand before it, is captured by a different and personalized story - in other words, Nina Murashkina's fantasy beasts have ever-deeper layers of interpreted meaning the more you observe them, the more you let yourself be sucked into the scene, appreciating the expression, color, and movement. And significance.



And then you re-emerge, and you re-enter the real world - you remind yourself that you are at COYA,

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and that it's time for dessert!



A very delicate and elegant interpretation of the world-famous *churros*, at COYA accompanied by the fragrance of orange and lime peel, and a superb dark chocolate dip!



And as you prepare to leave COYA, fully satisfied both in palate and spirit, you just know that you are already waiting for the next occasion to return to Maryah Island, to COYA; and you wonder... what will the surprise be next time?

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