

Bedouin business

New exhibition shows life in the Sinai desert

Scarlett Coten's lucky. While we all dream of heading off into the unknown under our own steam, rarely do we manage to get ourselves off the beaten track.

Photographer Scarlett managed just that in Egypt though from 2000-2002, and exhibition 'Still Alive' perfectly portrays her 'love affair' with the Bedouin people of the Sinai desert.

It's not everyday you get to enjoy the company of these people. But Scarlett managed just fine despite the language barrier, and was delighted to capture their lives on camera.

She explains: "It was just by chance really, while I was travelling. I didn't really know about them but on a chance meeting I was invited to a village. They adopted me really. It's not easy for them but in the same time they are really happy with this life even though they have nothing, they have a cool life. Some



men spoke a little English, so I could talk a little, but generally I had to talk with my hands to the women. We talked a lot though! It was just like a love story, I fell in love with the people and the place where they were living." Life can be hard in the Sinai region, and Scarlett admits she was extremely fortunate on a number of levels to share the tribe's day to day experience in such an isolated place. "I was lucky to be a woman really, as that meant I could meet the women of the tribe. Men would not have been allowed and the women



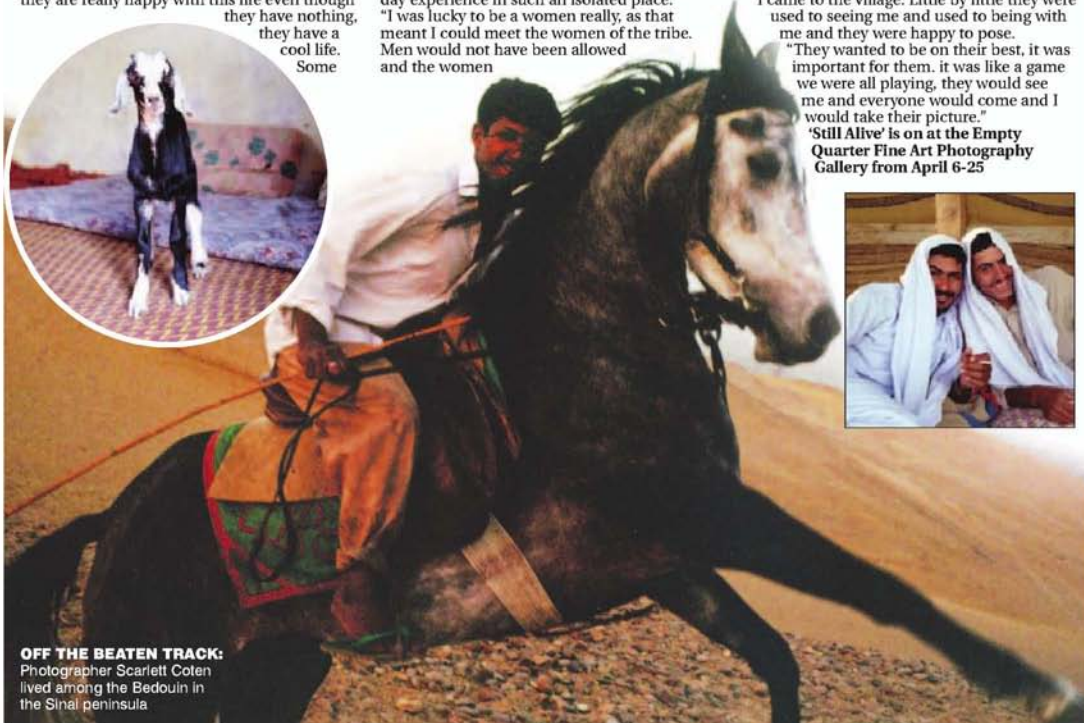
never move from the village so they never see strangers. They were very curious, lovely people with very open mind. They had the same curiosity about me that I had with them. A lot of the people never met a stranger before I came to the village. Little by little they were used to seeing me and used to being with me and they were happy to pose.

"They wanted to be on their best, it was important for them, it was like a game we were all playing, they would see me and everyone would come and I would take their picture."

'Still Alive' is on at the Empty Quarter Fine Art Photography Gallery from April 6-25



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK:
Photographer Scarlett Coten lived among the Bedouin in the Sinai peninsula



Shortcuts



THE Sharjah Art Foundation is offering grants of up to \$100,000 to artists as part of its Production Programme for 2010.

The Production Programme calls for interested artists to submit proposals which are 'imaginative, ambitious and inspirational'. Sounds like a great offer to us, submissions will be accepted until June 1. For more details and information, visit the Sharjah Art Foundation web site, www.sharjahart.org

DUSIT Thani Dubai will host the Thai Arts Exhibition this week as part of their Songkran, or Thai New Year celebrations. Thai glass master



Jirawatt Chavanatit will be showcasing some of his masterpieces while there will also be live demonstrations by a Thai goldsmith as well as displays of Thai handicraft and silk. The exhibition runs from April 11-17, from 7-10.30pm. Contact 04 343 3333 for details



THE good folks at the jamjar art gallery are hosting their latest 'Sketch' event on Thursday 15. The evening runs from 7-10pm and offers the local arts community a place to congregate, talk, create and be seen. Dubai's art lovers couldn't hope for a better chance to see local artists at work and find out what makes them tick. Email info@thejamjardubai.com for further details or call 04 341 7303



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