



Ella Spira MBE

CATALOGUE 2021





## **‘A CULTURE AND IT’S LANDSCAPES ARE ONE AND THE SAME’, Ella Louvaine Spira MBE**

Spira’s art honours the UAE’s 50 years of formation for the world to see, embracing the rich heritage and artistic scapes of the land.

Through commitment to developing art in and of the Arabian peninsula, this catalogue of works is a celebration of a journey that has seen musical collaborations and cultural exploration of each emirate and the amalgamation of the artist’s fine art talents with her classical musical training and last but not least, her passion for creative expression. This collection of 50 paintings is a legacy honouring UAE’s 50 years through an authentic expression.

The work depicts the story of the land, where not only has it been transformed by industry but where inspiration from the natural surroundings has brought us together to embrace a future of collaboration and community. The UAE is a home to all and it opens its arms wide to embrace and welcome the world.

The history, culture and natural beauty of the region, which is perhaps less known, is in Spira’s opinion, what adds the magic and really is the UAE’s backbone, beautifully juxtaposing the modernity achieved for the region. “It’s what has informed the past and present and will continue to inform the future.”

There is a fluidity and harmony flowing through the entire collection. The post impressionist quality of the art pieces is a unique representation of the UAE’s natural beauty with a fearless handling of paint. There is also both an organic and a directional feel to the mark making in her dynamic pieces which seems to refer to growth and brings the viewer closer to both the artist and the land.

Inspired by the Brothers Grimm who together collected and published folklore during the 19th century, the Grimm’s Fairy Tales, which led to the birth of the modern study of folklore, this collection is presented by Sisters Grimm, founded by Spira and former Royal Ballet Ballerina of 13 years Pietra de Mello-Pittman MBE, her business partner since 2009. With foundations set in classical fine arts training and a combined creative industries experience of 35 years, they have collaborated with the world’s best artists and created ground-breaking artistic successes.

Their partnership is one based on creativity and talent but more importantly of breaking barriers within established domains. As two women entrepreneurs their artistic confidence allows them to foray into new spaces uniting different artistic forms by announcing their first digital NFT drop in this region alongside this fine art series.

The first unveiling of the series will be at Dubai Opera on the main stage as a spectacular immersive Sisters Grimm production that will also feature music and ballet dance as their productions are known for, incorporating the Royal Ballet heritage inherent in the company’s make up. This marks the first time paintings will be exhibited in the form of a theatrical dance-musical show.

The majority of the proceeds from the NFT drop and art sale will go into the Pietra & Ella Theatre Production Shows L.L.C UAE company developing a Performing Arts Programme and other arts initiatives for young people in the region. This runs in parallel to their new Arab World musical show that will have a UAE residency, a world tour and a film musical, giving a voice to the culture globally and building bridges between nations. The lasting impact being to create a meaningful ecosystem, offering opportunities and contributing to the overall growth of the creative industry in the region.



## BIOGRAPHY

Ella Louvaine Spira MBE is a London & Dubai based Grammy nominated composer, theatre producer and painter. She has dedicated her life to cross-cultural, multi disciplinary, global collaborations spotlighting and celebrating different cultures through the arts. Her passion and drive for representing other cultures, has seen her work and those cultures be celebrated by millions all over the world.

To write about everything Spira has done and achieved would be a book, but there are Grammy nominations, award winning world touring live cultural theatre productions, millions of You Tube hits, mass participation social Impact initiatives and now a Golden Jubilee Fine Art Series and exclusive NFT drop.

Recognised as an internationalist, Spira believes the impact that the arts can have on society should never be undervalued. It allows people to make sense of their emotions in a space they often don't give themselves. In these dark and difficult times for live experiences we mustn't lose sight of how the arts have the ability to join people together.

Earlier, in 2021, in the New Year's Honours list, Spira was awarded an MBE for Services to International Trade and to the Creative Industry in recognition of achievements in promoting global commerce and ideas exchange.

Spira has worked with companies as diverse as The Royal Ballet, BAFTA, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Ministry of Sound, and on pop chart remixes with Steve Smart & Westfunk. Her music has been used for Prince Harry's Sentebale 2019 Annual film, the Royal Variety Performance, the UNICEF NYE Campaign, and the Hi5 new series theme song 'Hi5 Dance Off'.

Spira is a third generation Holocaust survivor who was born and raised in Gloucester, England and grew up in a diverse lower socioeconomic area that was predominantly Muslim. She comes from a long line of artistic heritage, including her Grandfather, Emile Spira, a Jewish refugee from Poland, who was a pianist and composer. Both her parents are fine artists, her mother a landscape painter whose work has been exhibited in the Royal West of England Academy, and her father an abstract artist and a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at University.

Spira who is the eldest of six children, grew up in a classically trained musical household, everyone playing instruments, her father in a blues band and her mother playing saxophone in a folk band.

Spira attended Beaufort Community school where teachers spotted Spira's early talents in arts and music, her only passions she had obsessive focus for. With ambitions to be the next Disney composer Spira left school at 17 years old, in favour of employment by the BBC, where her professional career within the entertainment industry began.

The trauma of the holocaust in her family history has been ever present for Spira especially with her living with her grandparents upon moving to London to pursue her career. Believing the arts has the power to create social change and that celebrating cultures is more powerful than dwelling on the negative and past events, Spira's drive was fuelled by the need to create collaborative work celebrating cultures and people so that in future maybe atrocities like the Holocaust, Apartheid, persecution and genocide won't happen.



**Chronology of Notable highlights:**

In 2008 she was one of the UK delegates to a European arts project sponsored by the British Council, where she co-wrote the score for an international music theatre production called ‘Roots & Routes’, staged in Cologne. Also in 2008, she was nominated for the Channel 4 Talented Newcomers Award for Production Music.

In December of that same year, she began writing music for dance and working with Mello-Pittman and other members of The Royal Ballet, resulting in ‘Reves Au Chemin’, performed at the Royal Opera House as part of a program entitled ‘Draft Works’.

Subsequently her association with Mello-Pittman continued with the forming of the company Sisters Grimm in 2009, and its completion of the ballet film ‘Rapunzel – The Final Chapter’, a project part funded by the Royal Opera House. This short film, based on the well-known folk story, was created for screening with live ensemble accompaniment. In addition, during 2009, Spira worked as composer on ‘Uncut’, the first British feature to be shot as a single, continuous take.

As BAFTA/Roccliffe New Writers Forum regional composer, she composed for the International Screenwriters’ Festival (2009) and the ScreenLit Festival (2010).

It was in 2010 that she began her continuing association with Steve Smart & West Funk, working on remixes of track including Bruno Mars’ ‘Just The Way You Are’, McFly’s ‘Shine A Light’, Jay Sean’s (ft Nicki Minag) ‘2012’, Alicia Dixon’s (ft Jay Sean) ‘Every Little Part Of Me’ and Nelly’s ‘Just A Dream’. All five of these reached the top 20 in the UK charts.

In 2014 Sisters Grimm’s launched its first major show ‘INALA a Zulu Ballet’, marking 20 years of democracy in South Africa. Spira wrote the score in South Africa with the late Joseph Shabalala and Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and it opened that year’s Edinburgh International Festival, selling out The Edinburgh Playhouse, Europe’s largest theatre.

In 2015 she was nominated for a Women of the Future award for Arts and Culture.

In 2016 she received a Best World Music Album Grammy nomination for the songs from INALA.

In 2016 Spira scored the music for an augmented reality installation piece, ‘Voice of Nature’ by Sisters Grimm, presented at a private event in the London Royal Household, Lancaster House, to represent UK’s GREEN IS GREAT campaign.

In 2017 Sisters Grimm premiered ‘Voices of the Amazon’, narrated by Jeremy Irons, for which Spira wrote the score in collaboration with a number of Brazilian song writers; following performances in Russia, London and Singapore it won the Brazilian International Press Award Best Show.

Since 2018 Spira has worked as a composer alongside international artists and as a business leader in Japan, Bali, China, and the Middle East on Sisters Grimm’s ever-expanding portfolio of cultural shows.

In October 2018 to mark a decade of Sisters Grimm, excerpts of their 5 world shows were presented at Ministry of Sound in London for 300 invited guests, with an introduction by Jeremy Irons, and performances by a cast of 55 including Alfie Boe and Joely Richardson.

In 2019 INALA played in London’s West End, in Singapore at Marina Bay Sands, at Prince Harry’s Sentebale Concert at Hampton Court Palace, where Spira also provided the African soundscape and musical scoring throughout the event, and at the Royal Albert Hall on World Ballet Day and in Black History Month. The songs from INALA were also selected to form the soundtrack to Prince Harry’s Sentebale 2019 Annual film.

In 2019 Sisters Grimm partnered with the Prince’s Trust to provide their Mosaic students enrichment opportunities at INALA’s performances. Whilst promoting diversity on stage is a given, Sisters Grimm is also passionate about seeing ethnic and economic diversity in their audiences too. Consequently, there have been over 7000 beneficiaries to date of the company’s self-funded social impact and outreach programs that provide tickets, workshops and insights into the creative process, introducing new career paths and raising aspirations.

In 2019 Spira and Mello-Pittman were invited to Yale University, by World Fellow Nizam Uddin, to talk about the “Power of Creative Theatre to Humanise”.

In 2020 during the global pandemic. Sisters Grimm established their first international office in the UAE, with a writing, recording and painting studio in Burj Khalifa, in order to complete production of their new Arab World show ‘Daughters of the Wind’. Working in collaboration with Emirati and other regional talent, it showcases the best of the UAE and celebrates Arab culture. Sisters Grimm is committed to helping introduce and elevate regional talent to a wider global audience, promoting equality and celebrating the diversity of cultures.

In the last year Spira co-wrote and released 6 new songs and music videos, and these have now had over 7 million YouTube views, including over 1 million views for a piece produced for World Music Day, ‘Together Let Go’, a pan-global anthem combining talents from the UAE – singer-songwriter DB Gad wrote the Arabic lyrics sung by Madyan Hamza and the Emirati singer, Arqam Al Abri.

Combining their elite artistic training and heritage with a love for UAE nature, Sisters Grimm have developed a set of unique responses across the 7 Emirates via Spira’s music and paintings and Mello-Pittman’s ballet dancing.

Some of their responses to the inspiring natural beauty of the desert environment can be seen in their UAE National Day Single and music video release, ‘UNITED’. Written by Spira and DB Gad, it features the vocals of Dubai based Emirati singer Shamma Hamdan, Don Abdullah and Madyan Hamza, and has already received over 3 million views to date, garnering major international and local press approval.

Aligning with UAE’s ideals and National Agenda to preserve the UAE’s unique culture, heritage and traditions and reinforce social and family cohesion, their inclusive social impact initiative ‘UAE Art in Nature’ created the opportunity for everyone to consciously connect with nature, encourage environmental awareness and provided under 18’s the opportunity to learn outside their usual environment and enjoy the many benefits of nature for physical and mental wellbeing and to inspire artistic, creative expression and family connection. The solely self-funded initiative saw Sisters Grimm receive over 1,000 artistic submissions from over 100 schools across the UAE. Every submission has been displayed on the UAE Art in Nature Gallery [www.uaeartinnature.com](http://www.uaeartinnature.com)





Al Jiyad Stables Oryx Dubai  
12.5 x 17.5 Acrylic on Cartridge Paper



Flag Garden Dubai  
12.5 x 17.5 Acrylic on Cartridge Paper





Ghost Fish at Snoopy Island Fuairah  
12.5 x 17.5 Acrylic on Cartridge Paper



Jebel Jais view Ras Al Khaimah  
12.5 x 17.5 Acrylic on Cartridge Paper





Ras Al Khor Flamingos Dubai  
24.5 x 35.6 Acrylic on Canvas Board



Burj Khalifa Sunset Dubai  
45.7 X 35.6 Acrylic & oil on Canvas Board





Burj Khalifa Clouds at Night Dubai  
42 x 29.7 Acrylic & oil on Canvas Board



Sand Dunes in Abu Dhabi  
40.5 x 30.5 Acrylic & oil on Canvas Board





Dubai Frame in Clouds Dubai  
30.5x 40.5 Acrylic & oil on Canvas Board



Arabian Collared Kingfisher Sharjah  
42 x 30 Acrylic & oil on Canvas Board





Morning Grand Sheikh Zayed Mosque, Fujairah  
42 x 30 Acrylic & oil on Cartridge Paper



Fossil Rock Red Sands Sharjah  
122 x 152.3 Acrylic & oil on stretched canvas





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