

Strong statement of humility and strength



Details, Fatima Killeen, Seeds of resistance, 2024, silk screen, acrylic on wood.

*Art / Never the twain shall meet, Fatima Killeen. At ANCA Gallery, Dickson. Until May 24. Reviewed by **ROB KENNEDY**.*

At the heart of this exhibition’s thematic core is a critique of Western nations’ exploitation and treatment of non-western countries and their environment.

The exhibition’s title, *Never the twain shall meet*, is drawn from Kipling’s famous line in his poem *The Ballad of East and West*, if it works as irony or accurate description, I leave to viewers. Fatima Killeen explores the way Western and non-Western ways of life differ. Through her calligraphic style, in this setting, she blends imagery of the natural and human-made world with patterns in a most powerful way.

There are images of destruction, attacks, bullet holes even, but all done with her unique manner. Even though some of the artist’s subject matter is about brutal and harsh realities, her designs are clean, yet fragile and telling.

There are a variety of mediums, too. Bass-relief plaster casts, print on paper, silk-screening, embossed paper assembled on wood objects, even toy soldiers. The mediums diverse, the subject matter specific.

The quality of the finish is high, as are the ideas included. Her love of pomegranates and their meaning. Keys that represent freedom, hope and memory. Killeen told me that some of these keys, which she has illustrated in several works, are passed onto family members by way of maintaining a connection to what they once owned. Nature is also depicted as a way to explore peace, which is a constant theme.

Amidst the artworks, there's the human destruction, wars, violence and the people who are just trying to live their lives through what for them is a normal daily existence. Which is in the misery experienced by those caught in war zones.

Within all this, the beauty of her works is framed with a style that oozes a high-quality artistic statement and finish. This is something that many punters clearly agree upon by looking at the number of red sales dots on so many artworks.

These works are a reminder of what it is some call their everyday experience, but for Killeen, through her humility and strength, which is seen in every work, this is the strongest statement.