

Gozitan artist at St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity

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Between the 1 October and the 7 November 2004, the Main Hall of the St James Cavalier Centre for Creativity in Valletta was the venue for an exhibition of paintings entitled "Manifesting the Soul". This was the third personal exhibition of paintings put up by young Gozitan artist Mark Sagona (b.1976), and was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Dr Lawrence Gonzi.



The exhibition brought together around forty abstract works produced between 2003 and 2004. In these creations, which mark a new chapter in Sagona's artistic development, there is a further exploration of the possibilities analysed in his earlier paintings. The usual subjects of figures, objects and landscapes have now been substituted with more conceptual themes so that a purer and more forceful artistic expression is achieved. The canvases are the fruit of the artist's thought and meditation on different aspects of life, with its positive and negative aspects, and all those forces which model human existence – such as the search for God and the infinite, death and destiny, fortune, passion, sacrifice and the struggle of life. Therefore, the paintings put a particular emphasis on the spiritual and are conditioned by the artist's personal experiences. The meditative aspect of the collection is also reflected in the technique which exploits the use of mixed media, calculated layers of pigment, rich textures and forceful contrasts.

The lavish full-colour exhibition catalogue, published for this event, contains a foreword by Professor Mario Buhagiar, Head of the Art Programme within the Faculty of Art of the University of Malta, and a short critical note by

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artist and art critic Dr Joseph Paul Cassar. In Buhagiar's words: "...this is an emotionally charged exhibition that reflects the changing moods of a highly sensitive young man in which colour is perceptively manipulated to express the joys and fears that haunt his impressionable mind". Despite the rather dark passages in some works, hope abounds in the use of light, at times distant and at times exploding against the picture surface. As Dr Cassar has rightly commented: "Light is very predominant, manifested in different beams and crevices. These works also speak of Mark Sagona's soul searching as he discovers his spiritual self through his art".

The exhibition may be still viewed online on the artist's website www.marksagona.com.



The Triumph of Death, mixed media on canvas, 70 x 100cm, 2004



Energy, mixed media on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2004