
TIME LAPSE

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TWANNY DARMANIN

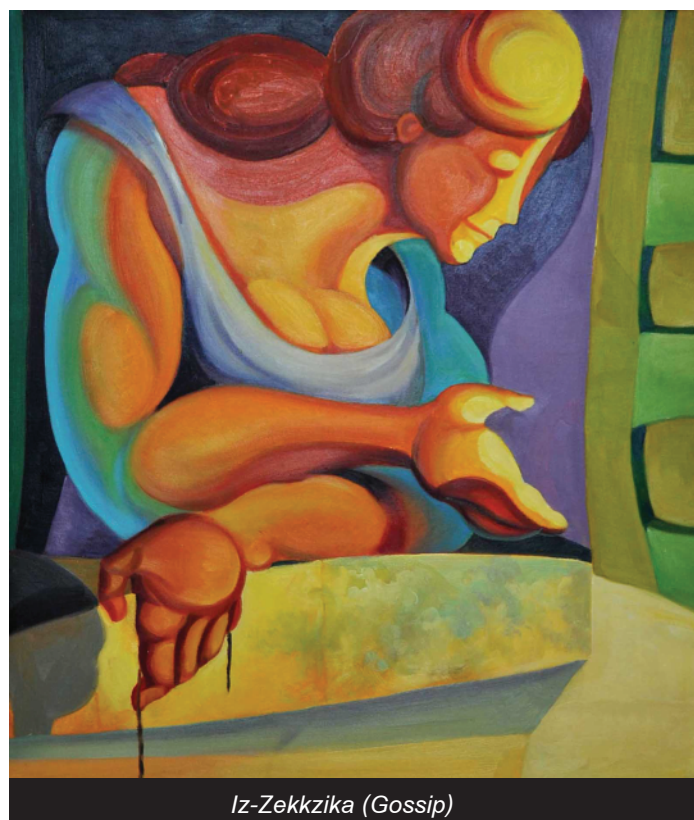
The Time-Space between a painting and another is the concept of this personal art exhibition by Twanny Darmanin who is a well-known name in the Maltese art scene. He is mostly known for his distinctive style of painting and his work is easily identified from that of other artists. Primarily Darmanin is a painter but he also produces sculptures in various media. His paintings also vary in size, in fact he is a muralist and in recent years he created a good number of paintings on large panels. The artist is a keen observer of nature and his works are a reference to many aspects of the life, history, religion, traditions and other elements of humanity.

Since his studies at the School of Art, Darmanin always had a great intuition as a painter and a passion for experimentation, and a love of colour, form and texture. Today he creates figurative paintings with the typical hard edge, cylindrical and spherical forms executed with subtlety and sophistication.

In this collection of works Darmanin is presenting to the public a series of themes be it religious, social or historical. As stated above the sense of movement is felt in most of the artist's works, even for example in just a solitary female figure at the window sill. In *Iz-Zekzkika (Gossip)* the woman expresses motion with her body and limbs while speaking so to enforce emotion, argumentation and sentimentality. This type of gesticulation is also found in other works like in *The art of beauty* which represents a woman with raised arms combing her hair in front of the mirror and being assisted by another person. Thematically this reminds me of other great modernists who addressed this theme many times during their life (*La Coiffure*), namely Degas, Renoir, Sisley, Toulouse-Lautrec, Kirchner, Picasso and others.

Some of the charm of Darmanin's paintings is found in his simplicity and directness. *First Encounter* is another title of a painting which represents a mother, a baby and her daughter. Darmanin chose this subject to prove his devout admiration to the family. Even in his other painting called *Love*, the bondage of the mother with that of the child is emphasised through the

close approximation of full satisfaction inherent in the these two parties in associated 'love'. Typical of Darmanin are his large curves, circles, spirals and whimsical shapes which we find in this work and others that play an important part in his visual compositions.



Iz-Zekzkika (Gossip)

Darmanin is also inspired by the great masters in Art History. His contribution to the re-interpretation of a Caravaggio's work is perhaps one of his best paintings. He chose to reinterpret the work *The Musicians* or *Concert of Youths* (c. 1595). Caravaggio composed the painting of the Musicians from the studies of two figures. The central figure with the lute has been identified as Caravaggio's companion Mario Minniti, and the individual next to him and facing the viewer is possibly a self-portrait of the artist. Darmanin kept the same composition and outline of the figures but uses the bright and bold colours with the typical curves and round shapes.

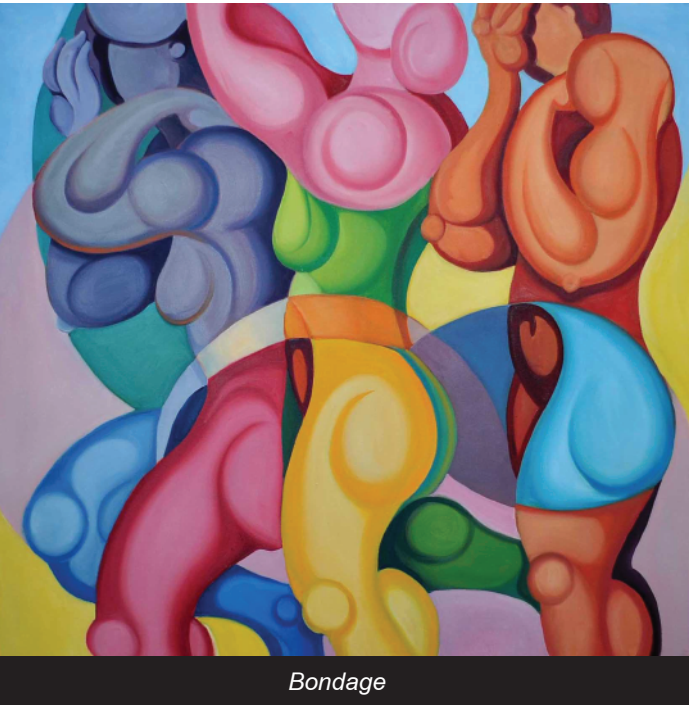
Rene Magritte's *The False Mirror* which represents a painting of a large eye is a haunting piece of Surrealist art that challenges the perceptions of the artist and the viewer. An intriguing painting by Darmanin is entitled *The Eye* which is not exactly like the one presented by Magritte but rather an eye gazing at the viewers and emerging from a female surrounded by other figures expressing a sense of anxiety. It is a terrifying look, an overwhelming appearance of a dream vision which possibly alludes to the anima of the artist. I understand that unconsciously the artist symbolically expresses what the

unconscious dictates during the course of creation of this work of art. This work also reminds me of the great Swiss visionary artist Peter Birkhäuser who makes great emphasis on 'eyes' in his paintings.

In my previous writings about the re-emergence of the Great Mother Goddess, I stressed that some contemporary artists have a primitivistic appeal to nature to explore the primal conditions of humankind. Many want to reclaim the lost ancient ideologies by creating an array of symbols that also represent the archetypal female in its positive and negative powers. Therefore the Goddess emerges with its full force and She manifests herself as symbolizing an earthly and cosmic source to the universe. In this selection of works Darmanin is showing four paintings related to the Goddess and the richness of Malta's Prehistoric past: Sleeping Lady, Mother Goddess, The Enlightenment and Temple of the Soul. In The Enlightenment we see a painting depicting a clothed female figure on the foreground representing the symbol of awaking consciousness. At the background we can see the entrance to the temples which signifies the dividing line between the world of consciousness and that of the unconscious, the world of the spirit.

This personal art show by Twanny Darmanin is another important occasion not just for the artist but also to all those who want to enjoy an aesthetic experience and appreciate the 'imaginative vision' of the creator.

I am sure that Darmanin will continue to explore other issues related to our culture and life and presents to us good art.



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