
ART ATTACK

Louis Lagana looks at this year's major ceramic art show by Maltese and Cypriot artists, and their ongoing collaboration

Paul Haber

Valerio Schenck



The history of Ceramics dates back to about 12,000 years and it is one of the oldest art forms in human history. As we all know, clay was first used for functional purposes but later, because of its durability and versatility, it has been used for decoration and as a means of expression in sculpture.

Today, the biggest challenge for artists, is to create ceramic work and eliminate the common stigma that ceramics is only used as a utilitarian trade or artisan craft. Contemporary ceramic artists are interested to create work for a growing audience of collectors, work that is not bound by concepts of craft or function. In Malta and many other parts of Europe ceramics has become an important and suitable medium for many artists. They have succeeded in translating this medium from a venerable tradition into contemporary language. Some of these artists did not begin as ceramists, but have moved sideways out of a desire to be different.

Five years ago, Sina Farrugia, a well-known, established Maltese ceramist artist, came up with the idea of holding a joint exhibition with Cypriot artists. The collaboration of organising a collective ceramics exhibition alternating each year in the two countries was kept going on with through the initiative of Charles Sammut and Mario Sammut, together with two members of the Cyprus Ceramists and Potters Association; Vassos Demetriou and Efthymios Symeou.

In this fifth edition of the Malta – Cyprus Ceramics Exhibition, about 81 works will be showcased at St. James Cavalier, Centre for the Arts and Creativity, Valletta, from the 12 September till 25 October 2009. The list of participating artists from the Maltese side include, Raymond Abela, Joseph Agius, Julie Apap, Antoine Paul Camilleri, Sina Farrugia Micallef, Neville Ferry, Kenneth Grima, Paul Haber, Sue Mifsud, George Muscat, Charles Sammut, Mario Sammut and Valerio



Schembri. The Cypriot ceramists are: Photos Demetriou, Vassos Demetriou, Christina Constantinou Giusti, Christiana Charalambous, Andri Iona, Anastasia Lambaski Onisiforou, Maria Stylianou Mina, Vera Efthymiou Parlalidou, Orija Petropoulou, Efthymios Symeou, Christiana Thrasyvouldou, Stacie Davidowski Tziortzis, Maria Vassiliou and Skevi Yiagou.

Like in previous exhibitions, this year we will find free-standing ceramic sculptures, wall plaques and vessels. We can say that Ceramic art is being presented in an entirely new and fresh way. Each year artists from both countries show different styles and many ways how to produce outstanding earthenware, stoneware and raku. These artists have successfully embraced the craft-based origins of ceramic art and incorporated traditional techniques and aesthetics into the production of contemporary work.

This exhibition became a calendar fixture for many artists in the two countries. These activities, organised by the two countries, encourage and support artistic creativity, preserve our diverse cultural heritage. In other words, this is a great occasion for the arts education community and the general public to have access to Ceramics and specifically the goal to make images of high quality contemporary ceramic art widely available. ■

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