

INCONTRI

Where Art meets Science

Art exhibition in collaboration with
RIDT - University of Malta Research Trust
in aid of Brain Research

Participating Artists

Emanuele Ventanni

Josette Fenech

Enzo Giummarra

Samuele Ventanni

Incontri

Incontri brings together a group of four artists coming from various disciplines. Emanuele Ventanni and his son Samuele come from Umbertide, a province of Perugia in Italy. They are both visual artists who express themselves in painting and sculpture. Enzo Giummarra, who is a photographer, also from Italy, was born and lives in Comiso (Ragusa) in Sicily. Josette Fenech is a Maltese painter who works and lives in Mellieħa.

This collective exhibition demonstrates the artists' diverse visual, stylistic, iconographic, technical and technological preferences. Part of the concept of this art exhibition is to show and to display a selection of the works by these artists who embrace diverse poetic expressions and interests.

In her recent selection of abstract paintings, Josette Fenech is presenting to us works which suggest great contrasts of ethereal light and dynamic explosions of earthy colours. One can interpret these works to the actual explosion of a volcano or a cosmic explosion of matter or it could be a metaphorical 'explosion' of 'feelings' or 'sensations' the artists felt while working on canvas. In this case it is the repressed anger which surfaces to consciousness and this is what actually the artist wants to bring to our attention, that is, what actually is happening to our psyche. Josette's abstract paintings are a synthesis in which the material world and subjective experience are united. Like the contemporary artist-shaman she strives to combine the spirit and the world of physical reality.

Emanuele Ventanni is exhibiting his typical hyper-realistic portraits executed in monochromatic dark brown colours on large wooden panels. He leaves the surface of the natural colour of the wood which serves as the texture of the person's skin. In these portraits the viewers find real characters, who many times become fascinated because of their anonymity. Emanuele's palette is very limited but striking contrasts are characterised with an emphasis on the vulnerability of his subjects. The artist is inviting us to view these works and consider the relationship between the individual and society. What is private becomes collective. It is a moment in time where the visual matters more than before and when the public is tired by the excess of images. In these works, the artist has developed a new way in which to perceive reality. His portrait and figurative paintings occupy an important place in contemporary art and the position or role of beauty in the art world.

Samuele Ventanni who is the son of Emanuele Ventanni, is an Italian visual artist of the younger generation who later developed an innovative approach in constructing abstract installations in fabric, wood, plastic, leather and other soft material. His embossed designs both geometric and irregular motifs express artfulness and sophistication.

In this collection the artist uses space and surface, as well as fabric manipulation in evermore experimental ways. Colour is an important element in these relief sculptures. Whether bright red, shocking pink or deep blue and vibrant yellow, the effect on the final result of his installations are mesmerising and intriguing.

Enzo Giummarra who is a professional photographer experiments with a wide range of subjects with his unusual technique in digital colour photography. Particularly impressive are his latest series of works which are derived from figurative imagery and transformed into surreal and abstract compositions. His photography is a distinctive process of employing images and subjecting them to a series of manipulations.

In each photograph we find a narrative of a situation which is linked to a world that exists in memory, in dreams, or in the human psyche. The viewers are intrigued and drawn to the idea that something is real, while at the same time knowing it is illusory. They are left free to respond to the visual experience of bewilderment and to hint at atmosphere, thoughts and emotions.

This collaboration among these artists is set to facilitate a network of art-practitioners coming from various countries. The Aula Magna spaces in Valletta can surely become a breeding ground for innovation and creativity. This innovation often occurs when done in collaboration with other artists who can ignite new thoughts and ideas.

Dr Louis Laganà

Emanuele Ventanni



Emanuele Ventanni was born in Umbertide (PG) on the 29th October 1961. His passion for art started during his formative years when he learned the basics of drawing and painting. From 1976 he attended the Institute of art in Sansepolcro, and later at the Institute in Perugia. His tutors were Giancarlo Montuschi and Luigi Frappi.

Emanuele first exhibition dates back to 1981-83, when he held two personal art shows, in the exposition centre of St. Francis' Complex in Montone (PG) and in the Consigliere council hall at Citta di Castello respectively.

In 1985 he received his first important commission, a large panel in ceramic measuring 200x300cm, for the Grand Hall of the Cultural Centre in Umbertide. His technique matured while he gradually passed from drawing to painting with oil, to ceramics then fresco and ultimately sculpture. In 1997 he produced three large works (200x300cm) for the commercial studio's ceiling E.DA.CO in Umbertide. For two consecutive editions, from 1997 he created the Palio consisting of a painting for the Quintana di Foligno.

In 1999 the well-known Italian art historian and critic, Antonio Carlo Ponti curated the exhibition entitled *Il Pensiero dell'Arte*, where Ventanni participated in the spaces at Rocca Paolina in Perugia. Due to his devotion to the figurative art, the artist received various commissions in many sacred buildings. A good example is the 1999 ceramic panel of the Madonna and child for San Ruffino Gate in Piazza del Duomo, Rome. Later in life, the artist started to focus on the theme of the female portrait, which made him nationally and internationally renowned. He received a particular attention from abroad, and in 2001 he was employed as a portrait artist in Abū Dhabī, Arab Emirates, where he received numerous commissions and held various exhibitions, which distinguished him for his pictorial abilities.

In 2002 he met Mária Horváthová, the General Secretary of the National Artists Association in Slovakia. She was instrumental to allocate him a prestigious studio at Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris in 2004. His work was displayed in the hall in 2007. During the same year, on 27 September Ventanni received an award as a recognition and appreciation for the work he carried out for the Slovakian embassy in Rome. The medal was given to the artist during the celebration of the Slovakian Republic.

Antonio Carlo Ponti included Ventanni in the catalogue of artists from Umbria *Terra di Maestri*, which was a series of volumes summarising a century of art of the region. In 2008 Ventanni held an art exhibition entitled *Espressione dell'anima* at Galleria Civica Fonticus in Grisignana, Croatia. He received another international price for painting in Belarus during the Biennial International in Minsk, where his exhibition was held at the national library. The artist was encouraged by his success while on tour in Russia, Minsk, Homel' and Vicebsk.

The artist pursued to receive public sacred commissions. In 2008 he worked for the church of the Dead Christ and the Basilica of Sant'Ubaldo in Gubbio and in 2009, he created a large wooden crucifix to commemorate the thousand-year-old abbey in Montecorona. In 2013 together with his son Samuele, Vebtanni started the project *Noi il sogno nel sogno*, which consisted of a roving art exhibition which started at the spaces of Rocca Paolina in Perugia in 2014 and in the Espace 1900 gallery in Luxembourg in 2015.

During March 2016 the artist held another art exhibition in Belgrade at the Blox Gallery, focusing on the female theme and was entitled *E se poi, la luce d'un tratto*. Emanuele Ventanni lives and works in Umbertide.





Josette Fenech



Josette was born in the tranquil village of Mellieha where she still lives. She started at an early age showing an artistic talent which have since matured her into a very versatile artist. Art has become an essential part of her life and her commitment is very strongly felt in her creations.

Her abstract interpretations relate to a spiritual itinerary that leaves one staring at an abundance of light emerging from an explosive source of emotions. She has also a good sense of the unorthodox, and possibly of female emancipation, as she moves away from the mainstream principles and tendencies of artistic expression into a unique realm of her own.

Josette's imagination hovers over uncharted territory as she both confounds and delights the viewer in countless ways through her outbursts of human intimate feelings. Although she admires and is inspired by masters like Monet and Van Gogh her work is totally singular driven by a relentless drive for the essential. Her strong expressions of emotions are also related to deep sentiments of compassion. She works fast and gets totally absorbed into her own fantasies and paint brushes become extensions of herself, displaying joy and sadness, leaving absolutely no doubts in a range of contrasts.

Josette has participated in several collective art exhibitions both in Malta and abroad and also in two major solo exhibitions *Riflessi* in Malta (2013) and *'Against All Odds'* both in Malta and Gozo (2015). Her works have been also exhibited in Italy where she enjoys a reputation for her expressive renditions. Her altruistic personality also gives her an urge to share her art with philanthropic organizations as she features in many events in aid of worthy causes.







Enzo Giummarra



Enzo Giummarra, is a professional photographer since 1990 and lives and works in Comiso. He is the son of Angelo who was a skilled restorer of antique furniture. His love for art started when he frequented his father's workshop and so he refined his artistic sensibility. He is the founder of the Photographers Iblei Association and organizer of many meetings and workshops for professional photographers.

The years from 2009 to 2015 mark a significant increase in professional collaboration with various artists and gallery owners in Malta, Rome and Berlin. In 2011 he presented a solo exhibition entitled "The Game", a series of images in which the various expressions of game intertwine, with their own consequences in everyday life. In this collective art exhibition, he is exhibiting snapshots of shadows that are deformed in space leaving the observer's fantasy to run wild.

For Enzo Giummarra photography is the perfect picture of natural scenery, a spasmodic research to communicate emotion; that frantic rush to get a suggestive shot. In 2014, in Ragusa, he organised an art exhibition: "ECLECTIC ART IS IN ART". It exposes a series of shots that want to convey the sense of the versatile universe of contemporary photography.

His works are found in several private collections. Some newspapers published his photographs which form part of his personal archive.







Samuele Ventanni



Samuele Ventanni was born in Umbertide on 4 June 1986 and since 2001 he frequents the Art Institute of Gubbio of Architecture and Design.

Numerous of his exhibitions were held in Italy and abroad namely, in 2007 he exhibited in the exhibition "Contemporary Italian Art between Shape and Colour", held at Pálffy Palace of Bratislava. In 2008 he participated in "Contacts: kontakly" in the adquarters Headquarters of Bratislava (Dom Umenia) and in Perugia (Rocca di Umbertide, Center Centre for Contemporary Art); to "Colorfest" in the National Library of Minsk, where he received the Prize of the critics as the best revelation; to "Artsfair" in Parma and Forlì.

On several occasions, Ventanni has given life to "The shapes of light", an event inaugurated in 2008 in the Art restaurant Pomarancio in Umbertide; repeated in 2009 at the Art restaurant RistoArte Corys in Cortona; in 2010 at the Millennium Art Gallery of Lucca; in 2010 at the Salon Gocce in Sansepolcro Arezzo.

In 2009 his works have been submitted to the Gallery Palace of the Republic of Minsk in the exhibition "Object painting" at the Gallery Znad Wilii of Vinius Vilnius with "The Modulor and the Monumentality" (event repeated in 2010, at the Central Bank of Vilnius).

During the Fitness Festival of Rome he has exhibited his works at the magazine stand "Night Time" receiving various recognitions. In 2010 one of his works was donated to the actor, director and screenwriter Terry Gilliam.

In 2010, the artist exhibited his works at a solo exhibition at the Gallery CM Artstudio ArtStudio. In 2010 he was also present in the Gallery Recò di Città di Castello in an exhibition called "Modern Artists", and in the same year he participated in the Arts Fair of Rome "Affordable Art Fair".

In 2013, Samuele, exhibited together with his father at the Rocca di Umbertide at the Center Centre for Contemporary Art. The exhibition was entitled "Ventanni - We are the dream in the dream". In 2014, the exhibition was then repeated at the prestigious halls of CERP- Centro Espositivo Rocca Paolina in Perugia.

In June 2015 he presented another solo exhibition at Feltre in the province of Belluno, while in September he exhibited in a great and important art show in the spaces of Plus Art Plus, with the Gallery Gallaria Art Trader di Viale Mazzoni No. 1 in Rome. In October of the same year the exhibition "We, the dream in the dream" was held again in Luxembourg at the Espace Gallery Gallery Espace. During this period Samuele also participated in numerous Italian art fairs.





Incontri by Italian critic Andrea Baffoni

Volti di donne bellissime emergono dall'oscurità della tavola grazie alla raffinata tecnica del pittore Emanuele Ventanni che agendo come scultore plasma per sottrazione il supporto. Raschiando il fondo scuro lascia emergere la luce, così la bellezza femminile diventa l'anima stessa della donna, senza bisogno di niente, non di ciò che appare, ma ciò che è.

Volti femminili perfetti sono a parlare di una bellezza dove è l'icona a mostrarsi come principio di bellezza implicita che rinunciando agli orpelli si rivolge alla tecnica del bianco e nero su tavola. Erede dei grandi maestri della Pop-Art, con le varie Liz Taylor o Marilyn, scelte da Warhol quale emblema di una bellezza divenuta spettacolo, oggi la donna di Ventanni ha perso il valore di "copertina" riappropriandosi di un principio di bellezza che affascina con l'esteriorità per sottolineare, al contrario, la forza ciò che sta dentro.

Nel lavoro di Samuele Ventanni si ravvisa ugualmente un principio di seduzione dove, tuttavia, la bellezza è ricercata nella dinamica dei tessuti. E ancora una volta c'è un riferimento alla cultura Pop, nei materiali come gommapiuma e jeans, popolari per eccellenza, ma supera i precedenti statunitensi dove il materiale è assunto non tanto per la propria valenza estetica quanto per la funzione sociale. Così i bassorilievi di Samuele attraggono per ciò che sono, per la loro espressività, superficiale e interna al tempo stesso, morbidi, ma dall'aspetto rigido, levigati come il metallo.

Ora la seduzione non ha bisogno di rimandi esterni all'essenza stessa della materia, perché la bellezza è un concetto astratto. Il bello è un principio affidato al canone stabilito, ma dove risiede il bello assoluto lo sa solo ognuno di noi, vivendo autonomamente negli animi e rispondendo al personale gusto.

Sfuggente ed enigmatica è la fotografia di Enzo Giumarra, che operando in senso informale trasforma la fotografia in flusso magmatico. Le figure si perdono nel dinamismo interno creando effetti di raffinata connessione tra immagine e spunto pittorico. I blu accesi si alternano alle luci distorte che assumono la connotazione di scariche luminose. Fulmini che squarciano il velo dell'immagine intercalandosi nella forma, modificando anche il corpo dei personaggi ritratti, ancora riconoscibili come figure umane ma assenti nella loro connotazione di uomini.

Sono ectoplasmi simbolici dove al posto della testa, a volte, s'innesta un flusso energetico, ed ecco che la fotografia di Giumarra non è più metodo rappresentativo, ma possibilità d'indagine interiore per portare allo scoperto l'intima condizione animista del genere umano.

Parimenti a tali flussi energetici la pittura di Josette Fenech si attesta come un'informalità coloristica che punta il dito verso il fascino per le cromie decise e le atmosfere turbolente. C'è un'eco lontana delle tempeste di Turner nella pittura di Josette, che spiazza lo spettatore nella riconoscibilità del momento.

Sono mari burrascosi, esplosioni vulcaniche, cieli in tempesta, e sono certamente flussi di natura, ma una natura che mostra il suo lato più violento, non tanto per spaventare, quanto per ricordare a noi uomini il rispetto dovuto. Josette trova dunque nella pratica dell'espressionismo astratto la soluzione migliore per esprimere questa volontà di richiamare l'energia che pervade il mondo attorno a noi, e sceglie arbitrariamente di passare dal blu al rosso tenendo conto dei colori più intensi che la natura ci offre.

Andrea Baffoni

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