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Joe Xuereb was born in Ghajnsielem in June 1954. He studied art at the Gozo Lyceum but his artistic career can be really said to have developed in the 1970's when he came under the tutorship of the late Marie Claridge, an archaeologist and folklore enthusiast, then operating from the "Gozo 20" studio, situated opposite St. Cecilia Gower, on the outskirts of the same village.



Xuereb found his artistic calling in Neolithic sculpture, a field hardly explored by Maltese artists, and over the years he has made his name synonymous with this type of art. Xuereb's art is, therefore, connected with the prehistoric past of his native island, Gozo, with roots across the ages going back to Neolithic times. His medium is the soft globigerina limestone which he sculpts with traditional tools, inherited from his father, a stone-mason in his younger days.

While identifying his work with the Neolithic sculpture of the Maltese Temple Period, he has produced a highly tactile series of sculptures which aspire to universality in their scope and symbolism. In fact, over the years, Xuereb has created a plethora of shapes in sensuous lines and tactile finish which together with the expressive symbolism of his art are the hallmarks of his distinctive oeuvre. Far from being tyrannised by his

main theme, the artist has moved beyond it to create themes which are highly personal but which inspire multifarious emotions in the beholder, ranging from empathy to sorrow to sensuality.

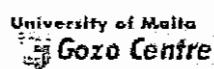


Xuereb, who is probably one of the few sculptors operating full-time in Gozo, has over the past few years 'spread his wings' far from his own island home, organising exhibitions of his work in Groningen, Paris, Heidelberg, Duesseldorf, Essen and Hamburg. Visitors to his atelier are treated to impromptu working sessions demonstrating his technique in a friendly and hospitable atmosphere. Looking through his visitors' book, he has welcomed clients to his gallery from all over the

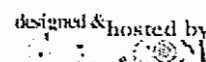
globe, altogether coming from fifty-nine different countries. In July 1999, Xuereb's work featured on CNN programme "Artclub" that dealt with the Maltese art scene. Since then, his work has been on display at "SOL - Sculpture Gallery" in Tuscany, while lately two of his large stone designs were permanently exhibited at the "Chianti Sculpture Park" situated close to Sliema.

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