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The Malta

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+

ELEONORA SALVI

SPOTLIGHT



Parque Inhotim, photo: Mario Gogh

São Paulo Museums

“Jardim District can compete with the districts of Soho and Tribeca in Manhattan for the largest concentration of art galleries, but certainly at more affordable prices.”

Spotlight, Pg. 24

ANN DINGLI

Art in the Time of *Climate Crisis*

On its penultimate day of viewing, I visited Michael Rakowitz's first European survey show at the Whitechapel Gallery in Aldgate East. Having been warned that wall captions were scarce and that reliance on the complimentary booklet was advised, I entered a room barren of introductory information. >> *Pg.41*

Carte, Austin Camilleri, 2019, in situ at Villa di Maser. Photo courtesy of the artist.



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White Cube Bermondsey
Whitechapel Gallery

The main objective in creating this publication has always been to reveal the 'creative' Malta I cherish. I had no idea at the time of editing the first issue that we would discover so much happening on the islands and align with such an enthusiastic audience. There has since been a resurgence of contemporary exhibitions in Malta and Gozo, emerging new talent, and the local art audience is growing. Art funds are also in place to connect Malta with the world and expand on its talent and creative expertise. We can confidently say that the understanding of good quality art and design in Malta is improving – despite the ungracious property boom – and Artpaper will continue to feature what counts.

Inside this issue, our editor Margerita Pulè interviews a reserved yet interesting local

architect, artist and designer – Tom van Malderen – and finds out how he manoeuvres between the practice of all three disciplines; Giulia Privitelli meets with the curious Maltese artist John Paul Azzopardi before his upcoming solo exhibition; Joanna Delia discusses the importance of residency programmes for artists, and speaks to local artists about their own experiences; whilst Gabrielle Spiller discusses the wonder of the architect Le Corbusier and his drawings in Zurich. Meanwhile Erica Giusta explores how artificial intelligence can be creative; architect Konrad Buhagiar reveals his first taste of eroticism with the painting *Venus and Mars* by Botticelli; Kenneth Zammit Tabona deplures the lack of beauty in contemporary art; and Eleonora Salvi visits the colourful culture of Brazil. Architect and artist Richard England eulogises on one of his favourite 17th century art works

- *The Ecstasy of St Teresa* by Gian Lorenzo Bernini; and following his retrospective exhibition in London, we interview the British artist and activist Stuart Semple who wishes the artworld were not 'a rich man's sport'.

We will be back with another issue of Artpaper in December; until then if you would like to get in touch regarding editorial or advertising, contact us by email on info@artpaper.press, or call (+356) 9929 2488. You can follow Artpaper on Instagram and Facebook.

Lily Agius

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Go Figure! Can you guess the 3 artworks that make up this figure?

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Winners from previous issue: (1) **Nina Karniej** has won a year-pass to all Heritage Malta sites and (2) **Sarah Borg** has won a €20 voucher from VeeGeeBee Art Shop



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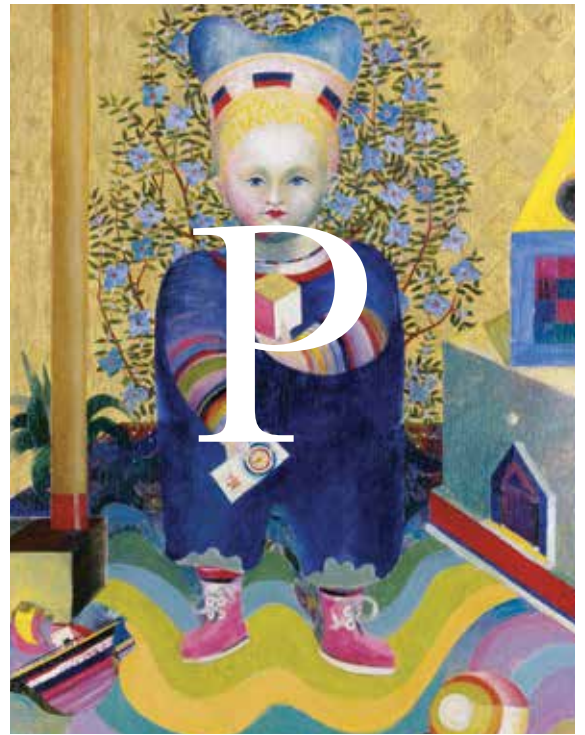
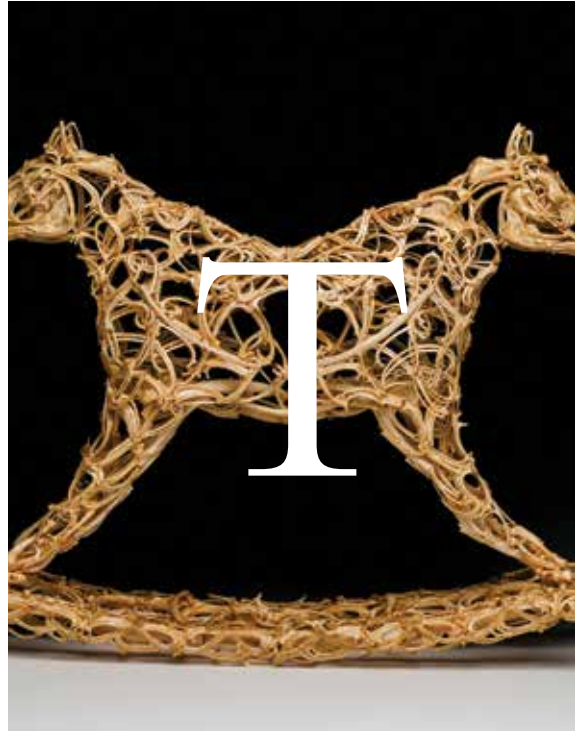
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+ Art News / *On the Scene*
October – December – '19

10^{.19}

+ ON *the* SCENE.

“The light, majestic, falls; so potent, so alive, that it seems to settle on everything like a sort of luminous mist.”
– Ângela in *The Book of Chameleons*, by José Eduardo Agualusa

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ART NEWS
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BOOKS

01

Marina Abramović's *Imponderabilia* to be performed in London

The Royal Academy of Arts will be showing the first UK exhibition spanning Marina Abramović's career, recreating live performances including the infamous *Imponderabilia* in 2020. First performed in 1977 by Marina Abramović herself and her then partner Ulay, the work is essentially a naked man and woman standing in the doorway through which audience-members enter the exhibition space. Curated in close collaboration with Abramović, the exhibition will offer visitors the sort of intense, physical encounter for which she has become known. Abramović will participate in the programme of talks and events surrounding the exhibition. www.royalacademy.org.uk



The Artist is Present, Marina Abramović, performed at MoMA in 2010, photo credit wikimedia

02

Marie Louise Kold bids farewell to Malta

Danish born artist, Marie Louise Kold, will be showing her exquisite metal artworks as she bids farewell to the island, having worked and resided in Malta for the past eight years. Her work is created by combining patination and etching on copper, bronze and brass, resulting in unique metal pieces that are surrealistically captivating, and strong and bold in character. This boldness is in keeping with something that the artist holds dear to her heart; freedom of expression. All proceeds will go towards the investigative news portal, The Shift News.



Words will be on show at Studio 87 in Valletta from 15 to 29 November 2019. www.mlkold.com

Image: © Marie Louise Kold

03

Prix Pictet

Celebrated Maltese architect Richard England has been awarded the prestigious Robert Matthew Award in Kenya. The award is given by the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) to an architect or architectural office making the most outstanding contribution, having particular relevance to the country or region in which they operate.



Parish Church of St Joseph, Manikata, Richard England, photo credit wikimedia

Past winners of the award include IAA Academician Ken Yeang together with TR Hamzah and Yeang from Malaysia; Philip Cox from Australia; Ian Ritchie from the UK; and Arup Associates, also from the UK. Richard England has had a long and influential career in Malta, where he was born. He is a Visiting Professor at the University of Malta, having acted as Dean of the Faculty of Architecture between 1987 and 1989, and is the recipient of a number of Honoris Causa doctorates.

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MALTA

Maltese Creative Europe Project Completed

> AMuSE (Artistic Multi Sensorial Experience), the first Creative Europe project led by a Maltese organisation to be selected for co-funding by the European Commission, has been completed. The Malta Society of Arts led the project over a number of years, with a creative programme including exhibitions and smaller projects, led by artistic director Roderick Camilleri. The end of the project will be marked with a synchronised church bell ringing performance, an interactive concert, and a final collective exhibition. The closing exhibition is currently showing work by the 16 participating artists, from Malta, Italy, the Netherlands and Lithuania. The exhibition runs until 31 October. www.artsmalta.org



Roberta Vrubliauskaite working on her jewellery art concept during the project's third Artists' Residency in Lithuania

ITALY

Austin Camilleri Exhibiting in Italy

Maltese artist Austin Camilleri participated in a large exhibition of site-specific works this summer at Villa di Maser near Treviso. The exhibition – *Armonia del Tempo*, curated by Simonetta Gorreri Casini – was produced by Artlife for the World, an organisation which produces the bi-annual exhibition in prestigious locations near, or in, the Venice Laguna in tandem with the Venice Biennale.

Villa di Maser, designed by Andrea Palladio and frescoed by Paolo Veronese, hosted the 2019 edition, with 20 participating international artists in an exhibition that attempted to interpret the Palladian miracle through contemporary artistic expression. Most of the works were located outdoors, along the waterway created by Palladio within the grounds of the villa.

Camilleri's work, *Carte* is a site-specific sculpture and video installation based on the Palladian line of symmetry. The work contains a duality blur between the randomness of crumbled paper (used as markers in the territory and in the grounds of the villa itself) and the obsessive linear clarity of both the architecture and the water-system supplying the vineyards and villa itself. The video is a performative, single-take, cinematographic walk delineating and focussing on the line of symmetry, thus creating a secular 'cammino' following the seemingly impermanent markers – solid Hansel and Gretel sweets. The physical sculptures were created using 3D scanning and were cast in aluminium.



Carte, Austin Camilleri, 2019, in situ at Villa di Maser. Photo courtesy of the artist.

JOHN PAUL AZZOPARDI

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MALTA

ASinMalta – Enriching Life through the Arts



The Christian Dior Exhibition at the V&A. Photo: ASinMalta

If you have been on the lookout for an organisation in Malta that provides a platform conducive to the discovery and education of the arts in a relaxed environment, look no further than ASinMalta – formerly the Decorative and Fine Arts Society in Malta – and an affiliate of The Arts Society UK.

The Arts Society, with its headquarters in London,

is a leading arts education charity that promotes the study of fine arts, as well as an awareness of international cultural heritage. With a network of over 380 societies globally, it covers decorative and fine arts, architecture, literature and music, and history.

Since 2015, ASinMalta has hosted lectures on various subjects, as well as workshops, study-days, and exhibitions. In line with ASinMalta's objective of promoting and supporting Malta's national heritage, the

society has provided funds for conservation purposes to both the Notarial and the National Archives, as well as the School of Art in Valletta.

Talks in the coming season include *The Beatles and their Artists*, and *Winston Churchill - the Artist*. Other subjects include public art, the fashion of the house of Dior, and the work of Matisse. The series will be concluded with a talk on architecture in May of next year. www.maltadfas.nadfas.net

MALTA



2 naughty dance for you great John Neumeier (detail), Horst Janssen, 1993

An Exhibition of Original Etchings including a retrospective of the printed works of Frank Portelli and Horst Janssen

Grafika: Of Form and Image, the fourth exhibition by Maltese print-making organisation iMprint IV, will take place this November at the Malta Society of Arts in Valletta. The exhibition, curated by Christian Attard, plays on the un-tameability of the print medium, which lies out of control of the print-maker, no matter how experienced they may be.

The exhibition will include work by print-makers Frank Portelli and Horst Janssen, both of whom held very different attitudes towards print-making tech-

niques. Portelli is well known for his Cubist-like images, and the deep-seated melancholy that permeates his work. Janssen was a German graphic artist whose images tackle themes such as portraiture, the erotic and death. In total, the work of 27 diverse artists will be shown in the exhibition, tackling varied subjects and imagery.

Grafika: Of Form and Image will take place at Palazzo de la Salle, Valletta from 7 to 30 November. www.artsmalta.org

MALTA

FRAGMENTA— Malta Retrospective

Operating since 2013, FRAGMENTA Malta, curated by Bettina Hutschek, is known for its experimental site-specific exhibitions and open curatorial philosophy.

A book looking back at 6 years of FRAGMENTA Malta has recently been published and includes an overview of these events, texts about art in public space, and reflections on art's responsibility in society. In the spirit of the FRAGMENTA project, the book also contains absurdities and ironies, stemming from Hutschek's sense of humour and love of art and experimentation.

www.fragmentamalta.com



Valley of 1000 Pleasures, Jagna Samir, 2016, Fragmenta Malta



NEW YORK



Whitney Museum of American Art, photo credit wikimedia

Whitney Board Controversy

The Whitney Biennale was beset with controversy this year, when in the months running up to the biennale, artists and audiences objected to the appointment to the Whitney Museum Board of Warren B Kanders, whose company Safariland, produces 'defence weapons', including tear-gas canisters used against asylum seekers along the U.S.-Mexico border. The controversy came to a head as eight artists withdrew from the biennale in protest. Protests led by the activist group Decolonize This Place kept the issue in the public eye over a period of nine months.

Although curators Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley tackled the controversy head-on by commissioning Forensic Architecture to create a video dealing with the allegations, the controversy did not subside, and Kanders eventually resigned his position as vice chairman of the Whitney Museum Board.

MALTA

Xebgħa Nies 2 - The Human Clay

The Human Clay is the second collective exhibition by a group of well-established artists who share a predisposition to draw, sculpt and paint the human figure.

The artists in this year's collective include Paul Scerri, Debbie Caruana Dingli, Steve Bonello, Francesca Balzan, Marisa Attard and Andrew Diacono. The group is linked by friendship and past collaborations, and remains committed to looking at people as an inspiration for their work.



Private Viewing, Steve Bonello, 2016, pens and coloured ink on paper

Loosely translated from the Maltese as 'a lot people', the phrase *Xebgħa Nies* is both a reference to the artists themselves as well as to the men and women present in their work. Although each artist brings an individual sensibility to their work, common ground is found in the human figure – each artist creates their own narratives by observing idiosyncrasies in the people that surround them. The human body is not only seen as a site of desire and agitation, fragility and compromise but is also capable of transmitting an entertaining critique of modern life.

Xebgħa Nies 2 - The Human Clay, curated by Caroline Miggiani is on at the Malta Society of Arts, Palazzo de la Salle in Valletta, 05 - 19 December.

MALTA

Blitz Valletta Sends Artists to International Art Fairs

For the first time since initiating, Blitz Valletta has participated in two international platforms dedicated to non-profit art spaces, with an exhibition project featuring Maltese artists, curated by Sara Dolfi Agostini, at Contemporary Istanbul and Barley Fair Chicago.

At Contemporary Istanbul this September, Blitz presented a group show with artists Alexandra Pace, Tom Van Malderen and Matthew Attard in a new section dedicated to art initiatives that have an innovative approach to the institution, and that are developing original projects in extraordinary or remote locations.

Also in September, Barley Fair presented 24 selected contemporary art galleries, project spaces, and curatorial projects during the annual Art Week in Chicago. Spaces exhibited works in 1:12 scale booths, built to mimic the design of a standard fair. As one of these 24 spaces, Blitz presented a project by artist Pierre Portelli.

www.thisisblitz.com



The formation of the cavern, Alexandra Pace, courtesy of the artist and Blitz Valletta

COMIC

BRUCE MICALLEF EYNAUD



Britain has her fortune told

MALTA

THE VALLETTA CULTURAL AGENCY:

A Legacy of the European Capital of Culture title beyond 2018

The anniversaries of the past are as important as the foundations that we lay for the future. Bearing this in mind, we launched the Valletta Cultural Agency (VCA) on 29 March 2019, markedly, the day after the anniversary of the laying of the first foundation stone of our capital city. Following the first European Capital of Culture title for Malta, we now find ourselves with an opportunity to lay another type of foundation, one that ensures that Valletta's future continues to hold culture, heritage and the arts at its very core.

As a legacy of Valletta 2018, the VCA has been set up to sustain and strengthen the capital city's vibrant cultural life through the creation of an annual programme of creative events, to uphold standards of excellence in their organisation, and to encourage access and participation by a diverse audience. In carrying out its remit, the VCA will seek to nurture, discover and create synergies between the old and the new, between people and the spaces and time in which we live to produce exciting and thought-provoking artistic works and cultural events. The Agency will therefore work with artists, communities, NGOs, Public Cultural Organisations and other stakeholders to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable cultural sector that involves residents, visitors, the business community, and public entities alike.

Valletta – a UNESCO World Heritage Site that holds within its walls over 300 monuments – is one of the most densely-concentrated historic areas in the world in terms of tangible culture, but it has also enriched itself, generation after generation, with an equally valuable intangible element that the Agency is committed to protecting and promoting. The VCA will strive to strengthen the city's contemporary cultural practices and the living, working and visiting communities that give Valletta the vibrant life it has become synonymous with. Based on studies conducted for



© Darren Agius

the Valletta 2018 initiative, the VCA believes that the city's lifeline is sustained by a thriving and sustainable cultural sector that fundamentally underpins the economic and social fabric of the city, bringing communities together, creating a platform for civic participation, employing hundreds of workers, attracting thousands of tourists, and generating millions in economic activity each year. Sustaining this level of cultural vibrancy and activity while involving the various stakeholders in the city will be another of the Agency's priorities.

The experience gained in implementing a wide-ranging and intense programme for the European Capital of Culture has helped the new agency to identify the following five values that will define its work in the coming years:

ABILITY explores and contributes to the concepts of livability, accessibility and sustainability in Valletta through arts and culture. On a daily basis, people give life and meaning to the intersecting streets and squares of the city, spaces which the Agency seeks to activate for cultural purposes. We aim to empower residents to increase their quality of life and help them create thriving communities that celebrate arts and culture in open, interconnected places.

The cultural, socio-economic fabric of the city is at the heart of the Agency's work, in order to transform and reimagine

the past spirit and future aspirations of the city. *Trans/Form* and *INnovate* focus on recognising and strengthening Valletta as an international contemporary cultural and artistic hub, underlined by the Agency's aim of ensuring equity and access to arts and culture for all. *INnovate*, in fact, promotes initiatives that experiment with new practices, concepts and technologies, whilst *Trans/Form* invites the development of transformative experiences and collaborations which turn audiences into participants.

Active participation is only truly possible through *Dialogue* and debate in a growing hub of activity – which Valletta can be defined as. Through this value, we aim to activate and/or reinstate platforms for collaborations and networking, enable artists, scientists, philosophers, craftspeople, and whoever else can contribute to engendering a better understanding of current realities and a vision for future generations.



© Capture It Media

These debate platforms will seek to open doors to opportunities for several cultural and creative organisations, as well as for professionals, students and visiting practitioners to grow in their respective sectors.

When thinking about where we are and where we want to go, we must also think of where we came from – our inheritance. With *InherIT*, we subscribe to the notion that we owe it to ourselves and to our future to reflect upon the realities of Valletta's communities and to truly embrace – even at UNESCO-level – our intangible cultural heritage. The Agency will support and enable traditional cultural celebrations as important elements of the social fabric of the city.

These values are the foundation for the VCA's Cultural Programme, but also for all those with an affinity towards Valletta. Together, we can cultivate opportunities for further professionalisation, inclusion, access and participation that our capital city deserves, ensuring the city's firm placing as one of Europe's most vibrant cultural hubs.

Valletta Cultural Agency,
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 Valletta, VLT 1117, Malta.
 Email: info@vca.gov.mt
 Tel: (+356) 2124 2018
 Website: vca.gov.mt

“The Agency will support and enable traditional cultural celebrations as important elements of the social fabric of the city.”



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+ Art News / Biennale
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I S T A N B U L

The Seventh Continent



Installation image, Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul Painting and Sculpture Museum. Photo Gizem Ozkol

The 16th Istanbul Biennale is currently showing in Turkey's most populous city. Curated this year by the eminent curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud, the biennale will show works by 57 artists from 26 countries.

The title given to this edition – The Seventh Continent – refers to the mass of plastic waste that now covers 3.4 million square kilometres of ocean surface. The biennale recognises the parallel between that new plastic world and our own, where accepted norms and cultures have also fragmented, almost

down to a cellular level. This year's edition will show 38 new commissions, and will be housed in three locations across Istanbul – the historic Istanbul Shipyards (Tersane Istanbul); the Pera Museum in the heart of the city; and in a series of historic sites in Büyükdada, the largest of the so-called Princes' Islands in the Sea of Marmara. Artists include the Feral Atlas Collective, Eva Kot'átková and Piotr Uklanski.

The 16th Istanbul Biennale is on until 10 November. www.iksv.org

F L O R E N C E

The 12th edition of the Contemporary Art Biennale in Florence



Installation view, Florence Biennale 2017

The twelfth edition of the Contemporary Art Biennale, Florence will take place this October. In acknowledgement of the fifth centenary of Leonardo da Vinci's death, the event will work to the theme of ARS ET INGENIUM – Toward Leonardo da Vinci's Legacy of Similitude and Invention.

The biennale will stage a diverse, multicultural, and multidisciplinary art event that, through contemporary interpretations, intends to stimulate reflection on Leonardo da Vinci's cognitive and creative approach. Curated by Melanie Zefferrino (art) and Gabriele Goretti (design), the biennale will host over 700 artists from around the world.

The twelfth edition of Florence Biennale – Art and Design will take place between 18 and 27 October in the Spadolini Pavilion of the Fortezza da Basso, Florence. www.florencebiennale.org

O N L I N E

The Wrong Biennale



We Have Blood, Redgrits, courtesy of the artist and What Do We Do Now?



Malta will be taking part in the Wrong Biennale for Digital Art for the first time this year. The online platform What Do We Do Now? created by digital artist Letta Shtohryn, will be participating in the third edition of the biennale, along with around 170 other cities, pavilions and embassies worldwide. The Wrong Biennale will see hundreds of online events and offline exhibitions taking place in parallel around the world and in the digital realm.

What Do We Do Now? will create both an online pavilion and an offline embassy in Malta. The exhibition, curated by Shtohryn and resulting from an international open call, will show the work of 27 artists, each responding to the theme of energy exchange and interdependency between the virtual and the material realms. The online pavilion will be hosted on www.whatdowedonow.xyz between 1 November 2019 and 30 March 2020, while the offline embassy will take place from 16 to 30 November 2019 at Splendid in Valletta. Following the exhibition, the individual works will be installed in public spaces around Valletta.

Letta Shtohryn is a media artist based in Malta with a background in philosophy, sociology and digital arts. In her work, Shtohryn uses critical media reflections linking the digital with the tangible, and the historic with the current, projecting subtle feminist undertones. Her practice employs speculative strategies, poetics and metaphysical investigations that respond to aspects of digital development using new media, sculpture, video games, commercial goods and imagery.

www.whatdowedonow.xyz

MALTA

GIULIA PRIVITELLI

In the Beginning there was Silence

“Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world.”

– Arthur Schopenhauer



Untitled no. 6, Bone, 2015, H54 x L80 x W19 cm, image courtesy of the artist

It is easy to get carried away with words, and it is simpler still to get carried away by our own thoughts. But, as Khalil Gibran would put it, in speaking, much of our thought – and also our art – is murdered. Such was the nature of my conversation with Gozo-based artist John Paul Azzopardi, one fine afternoon in some corner of a coffeeshop. Questions bounced between us, eliciting reactions and comments on aesthetics, time, solitude, desire and freedom, wealth, integrity, the sacred and the metaphysical, existence. I wanted to pick at his brain, but my hand could not keep up with

the pace and spontaneity of our exchange. Later on, faced with the daunting whiteness of a blank document, I grappled with the essence of what we had talked about. I slowed down those racing thoughts, selected and meditated on them, and wondered whether this was precisely John Paul's own approach before creating one of his sculptures; to fish in silence, in a flowing stream of consciousness.

The contemporary debate on art, on what constitutes an artwork and even on its practice, has not really shaken off the clutches of the classical considerations on form. Even though John Paul's works (most are familiar with his meticulously constructed bone sculp-

tures) nudge any conversation about them to go in that direction – towards the realm of form, method and technique – he is not particularly keen on discussing such topics. “It's more about going into the space of the form, rather than the form itself that interests me. It's a way of going into silence, of experiencing pure presence”. The basis of his thinking, and also of his method, is greatly indebted to Eastern schools of thought and worldviews, particularly that of Hindu philosophy, which advises on the paths of spiritual realisation. Creativity – creation – also belongs to this path. The experience of pure presence could be likened to that liberating moment while staring at the sea, that moment when nothing else matters;

thoughts are free and detached from you and your own limited concerns on things that were or that have not yet been. “The sea,” John Paul tells me, “is where I want to go with my work”.

But to go to the sea, metaphorically speaking of course, is no mean feat. It takes time and patience; it is a risk. To go out to sea might also mean that the people on the shore will lose sight of you. For them to be misunderstood or misrepresented would not come as a surprise. The works need space, for they were created in space.

When viewed closely, the bone sculptures are seemingly chaotic and dense, but naturally, order emerges from

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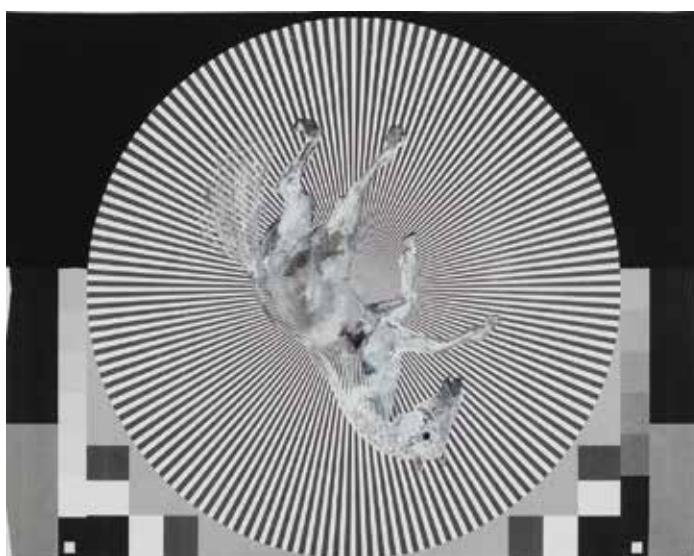
chaos. For the ancient Greeks, 'Kaos' emerged at the dawn of creation from a gaping void – from emptiness and darkness. It is perhaps no mere coincidence that the closely related word *kairos*, also in Greek, refers to that opportune time, that absolute time for something to happen. It is as if to say that creation could only occur at the moment of chaos.

In other words, something positive could emerge from a shadow. "Chaos can trigger things in your mind that can also be cathartic," reflects John Paul; "through shock, one can heal". The bone sculptures are demanding and require, from the artist, a great sense of stillness, of certainty and concentration, but also of vulnerability. It was a means for John Paul to come in touch with his inner turmoil, to soften it – like the bones themselves before being placed within the complex matrix – and to understand the roots of what caused it. The turmoil is there, but so is the stillness, and the fragility of this dichotomy may be quite easily perceived when taking in the sculpture as a whole, irrespective of what it represents. Thus, the sculpture is less about decay or death than it is about that positive experience of space and growth in silence. And if it should be about death, decay or loss, then it is more about the 'death of the ego' than it is about any cultural or material death.

I was keen to understand why John Paul feel his bone sculptures do not work with a contemporary audience (I feel would dispute this, since many find his work fascinating). Death, I thought, is something we all come face-to-face with at some point – we fear it and the uncertainty it brings along, and yet it entralls us. Tragic car accidents are disturbing, yet most of us slow down and slide a quick glance as we pass by. Likewise, ruins are beautiful when their destruction comes about, not senselessly – like the vile terrorist destruction of unique heritage sites and museums – but in the "realisation of a tendency inherent in the deepest layer of existence of the destroyed," as German sociologist Georg Simmel would argue. Ruins, like relics, are attractive because they embody memory, life and death all at once – they embody the past, the present and the future (or the possible) in a harmonious contradiction of sorts. "Only, my sculptures are not about death. They do not work in a society that grapples with the challenge to stay with one object. They do not work in a context where art is consumed". Isn't that enough for an art-



Moon tide (Transience and Resonance), John Paul Azzopardi, 2019, acrylic, pencil, target sheet, image courtesy of the artist



Centripetal Deluge (The Sky is Falling), John Paul Azzopardi, 2018, mixed media, image courtesy of the artist



Svapnall/Sushupti, John Paul Azzopardi, 2019, acrylic, pencil, target sheet, image courtesy of the artist

work to decay? I imagined him saying.

That said, death or rather loss, is central to John Paul's work. Be it the loss of artistic integrity 'sold' in exchange for greater audiences, or the detachment from tradition and historicity, the loss of space, of meaning, of connection, of singularity and silence, all shed light on the artist's dissatisfaction with the general spirit of the contemporary age, disillusioned as it is that

the infinite may indeed be reached the further it moves away from the past. But in loss, what ought to be found or desired becomes all the more clear. A story of hope fills my mind; like the young Telemachus awaiting his father's return – assumed by many to have long been dead – I could also imagine John Paul looking out to sea, waiting patiently, meditating deeply in silence, before finally returning to the studio to begin working on a new piece.

Silver River, the exhibition of works in pencil and acrylic on target paper, opens on the 30th of October at 7.30pm and runs until Saturday 16 November. The exhibition is open 10-1 and 2-7pm Monday to Saturday. For more information contact Lily on (+356) 99292488 or go to lilygiusgallery.com.

KENNETH ZAMMIT TABONA is Artistic Director of the Valletta International Baroque Festival and of Malta's Teatru Manoel. He is also one of Malta's best-known visual artists and illustrators.



MALTA

KENNETH ZAMMIT TABONA

A Tale of Two Beds

I would imagine that anyone in his right mind, being offered to sleep in one of these two beds, would opt for the splendid confection in imperial yellow silk. At least I definitely would.



Silky Egyptian cotton, Chinoiserie style duvet cover hershop.com

As you probably all have guessed the untidy bed is a creation of artist Tracy Emin, while the silk extravaganza was found on an interiors website. I posted it on Instagram saying that it was the latest from Tracy Emin, which I suppose was rather naughty of me, but I simply couldn't resist the comparison to see if I could discover more about the greatest mystery in my life. What is art?

The unmade bed's sordidness is, in my book, off-putting in the extreme. There isn't a single iota of beauty in it. It could be telling a story, but then is it a story I really want to know? Sweaty bodies, farts and crisp crumbs combined with a smell of humanity that we do our best to eradicate.... honestly what story could I conjure up? Is the Emin bed telling us that there are millions of people around the globe who live in sordid conditions? I don't think we need to be shown an unmade bed and junk to know that – because we do! We also know that many millions of people don't have a bed! So, is Emin trying to prick our social conscience?

Then we have the yellow bed, also unmade, covered with embroidered foliage and birds in rich yellow silk. While this might not be telling us any story apart from the fact that people who can afford to sleep in a bed like that are an infinitesimal few, there is in the yellow bed an element that the Emin one lacks completely; Beauty with a capital B!



My Bed, Tracey Emin, 1998

Maybe I'm the fuddy-duddy who believes that all art must also be beautiful. I'm sure I'm not alone. I am completely floored when confronted with anything ugly. It upsets me and annoys me in real life but when it invades the realm of culture then I'm afraid I'll rebel and spit it out. There is enough ugliness in the world. Art for me is an escape from that ugliness and is my refuge; the only hope I have that maybe we will not all perish in a cataclysmic implosion of pollution.

On the other hand, Emin could be underscoring this very message and by presenting us with this painful abomination is reminding us that our days are numbered. But can such a reminder be called art? Can it be compared to Bernini's Apollo and Daphne? Can it be compared to Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger? Can it be compared to a Mahler symphony or a Rachmaninov concerto? Can it be compared to Shakespeare's great plays, or Somerset Maugham's short stories? I don't think so...

I think we need to rethink this 'Contemporary Art' concept, especially as I think that art that has to be explained fundamentally to be understood or appreciated is not art at all. Why do millions gawp in front of the Mona Lisa or Starry Night? It's because there is something in both creations that stirs the senses almost to a primeval level.

So where does that leave Tracy Emin's bed? I wonder.



* Spotlight / *Le Corbusier* / Zurich
October – December – '19

GABRIELE SPILLER is a Swiss-German author and journalist who lives between Berlin and Gozo. She looks forward to playing a part in promoting Malta's emerging art scene.



Le Corbusier with his "collection particulière" in his apartment/studio, Paris, photo: René Burri, 1959, Museum für Gestaltung Zürich, Graphics Collection, © Magnum Photos

The last work of the architect Le Corbusier (1887 – 1965) has reopened to the public in Zurich

An enthusiastic young interior designer, Heidi Weber, meets the world-famous architect, who called himself Le Corbusier (born Charles-Edouard Jeanneret); it must have been an exciting encounter for the 31-year-old single mother and business woman, when she encountered her idol for the first time in August 1958. For sixty years she served as an ambassador of his art. She built a museum in Zurich, in Switzerland – now the Pavillon Le Corbusier – and almost went bankrupt. In the end she lost this total piece of art, Le Corbusier's last project, to the city. It has now been renovated and was reopened in May. Here's how it all began.

Heidi Weber was running a small interior design studio in Zurich when she came across paintings by Le Corbusier at the art museum Kunsthhaus Zurich. Her neighbour, a graphic designer, owned a collage by the master, which she admired. Not being able to acquire such a piece of art in cash, she offered to swap it for her Fiat Topolino – even though she had a little son and the car was much more valuable! Still, happy with the exchange, Weber sought to meet the artist in Nice a year later. The then 71-year-old widower was curious to get to know this woman, who was not interested in his famous architectural work but in his paintings, sculptures and wall

tapestries. Eventually, after having been invited to Le Corbusier's Paris studio, Weber realised the potential of the furniture drawings he had shelved in 1929, and began manufacturing them close to her shop in Zurich.

Iconic Furniture Brought to Life

The four – now iconic – armchair and chaise-longue models were soon in such high demand, that by 1964 Weber needed a partner to extend to industrial serial production. She partnered with the Italian family-run company, Cassina, which specialised in wooden interiors for ships and hotels, and received a sublicense, which is still held today. Meanwhile, Heidi Weber organised exhibitions of Le Corbusier's artistic work while he toured to create modern architectural projects: planning the capital of the Indian state Punjab, designing public housing in Marseille, churches in France, museums in Japan.

Weber also developed ideas for a Le Corbusier museum in Zurich. She found the perfect spot in a park in the prestigious Seefeld district at Lake Zurich. When her French-Swiss friend paid her a visit, she took him to the site and discussed her plans. Like Weber, he was not at ease with the Swiss at that time – after some disappointing construction efforts in his home country he had come to regard them as narrow-minded and did not want to build in Switzerland at all. But Weber's persuasiveness made him change his mind, and back in his workshop he began to draft the plans

for what he called '*Maison d'Homme*' (House of Man). Heidi Weber meanwhile sold all her belongings and moved into a one-and-a-half-room flat with her son in order to finance the project.

Hard Times Saving the Threatened House

In 1967 the Heidi Weber House – Centre Le Corbusier opened its doors. Weber had managed to lease the land from the city for fifty years; not an easy task in a conservative, male-dominated country, where women still did not have the right to vote. The construction was also overshadowed by Le Corbusier's death in a bathing accident in the Mediterranean Sea in 1965 – at the age of 77 he suffered from a heart attack near his holiday home in the south of France.

This valiant woman challenged the Zurich municipality in many ways. However, she never received any financial support for her Le Corbusier museum, not even on the 100th anniversary of Le Corbusier's birth in 1987. On several occasions, she resorted to selling pieces from her private collection in order to save the financially-threatened house. Five years ago, it became apparent that the lease of the land would soon expire, and the grounds were eventually returned to the City of Zurich. What at first looked like a friendly agreement between the two parties turned into a lawsuit. Heidi Weber was forced to sell the landmark building to the municipality for 1.06 million Swiss Francs, a fraction of its true value. Weber, then 93 and

living in Dubai, did not agree on terms for the city to buy her collection inside the house, and thus removed everything from the premises.

Historic and Inspiring Opening Exhibition

The result is an exhibition, *Mon Univers*, that runs until 17 November and mainly draws on loans from the Fondation Le Corbusier in Paris. It strives to present the artist's passion for collecting objects from all over the world. Searching for inspiration, Le Corbusier kept conch shells, ceramics from the Balkans, flotsam and industrial glass. His legendary 1931 installation, *Les arts dits primitif dans la maison d'aujourd'hui* is recreated on the ground floor. Le Corbusier created it in his studio, placing a cast for the attic calf-bearer alongside a painting by Fernand Léger, a Peruvian ceramic piece, a Benin bronze, a brick, a wicker chair and his own painting in a suggestive ensemble. The pavilion itself has undergone intensive renovation and shines in its bright colours again. Visitors – perhaps oblivious to Weber's endeavours – can freely wander around the four-story-building, sit in Le Corbusier armchairs and soak in the atmosphere, including the gorgeous view on the park and the lake from the roof terrace.

Pavillon Le Corbusier, Höschgasse 8, Zurich, Switzerland, is open until 17 November and reopens in March 2020. www.pavillon-le-corbusier.ch



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hülsta ✦ **NAVIS**

KONRAD BUHAGIAR is a founding partner of Architecture Project and has been responsible for numerous restoration and rehabilitation works in historic buildings and urban sites. He has lectured in Malta and several countries abroad, published numerous historical articles and has been the Chairman of both the Heritage Advisory Committee and the Valletta Rehabilitation Committee.



CULTURE

KONRAD BUHAGIAR

Of Myths & Men



Venus and Mars, Sandro Botticelli, c. 1485, tempera & oil on poplar

I owe my love of art to my mother. She loved detail above all, and admired the ability of the Great Masters to imitate reality so closely. She took me on a visit to the National Gallery in London for the first time when I was eleven. I remember her explaining Van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Portrait*, the depiction of a couple that had just been joined in marriage, showing me their fur-lined clothes and wealthy interior, and pointing to the artist's reflection in the mirror on the back wall. Later, we stood in front of Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* and I remember being strangely disturbed by it. In comparison, the *Arnolfini* portrait seemed so serene, but stiff, stuffy and settled. *Venus and Mars*, on the other hand, was my first taste of eroticism as well as my first lesson in love.

"That is Mars, the God of War, the man of action," my mother explained. "He is resting after some very strenuous and life-threatening exploit. And that lady whose all-knowing gaze rests on the sleeping man is Venus, Goddess of Love. That is what love is, watching over someone, and understanding".

Years later, as I began to read more about the Renaissance, and Botticelli's painting in particular, I learned about the more mainstream, academic versions of the symbolism contained in the painting and the message it conveyed. Love will triumph over War. Also, sexual prowess is greater than the physical strength of a warrior.

Botticelli depicted Venus and Mars facing each other, accompanied by playful satyrs, symbols of sex or lust. You can sense these mythological creatures are up to some considerable mischief as they

disturb the tranquillity of the mystical garden of myrtle trees – the evergreen with white flowers sacred to Venus – where the beautiful gods lie. Mars is depicted naked and locked in the deepest sleep. Even the sound of a satyr's bellowing seashell horn cannot wake him. While he is lost to the world, Venus contemplates his unaffected beauty, and the satyrs use his weapons and armour to amuse themselves. One wears Mars' helmet and, with his two companions, attempts to steal away with the warrior's lance, while on the far lower right of the painting another is cheekily crawling through Mars' breast-plate.

In contrast, Venus is clothed. She gazes at the sleeping God of War, satisfied somehow, confident and in control. Her flowing white, gold-trimmed gown is fastened with a pearl-encrusted brooch. Is this scene intended to depict the immediate aftermath of the couple's love-

making? The lance and the seashell are surely objects of sexual symbolism and the painting portrays an aura of carnal sensuality. Looking back on the hold that the painting had on me in those pre-pubescent years, I cannot but feel that its power had something to do with the contrast between Mars' candid ingenuity, that, in spite of his belligerent reputation, is central to the painting, and Venus' compassionate but discerning gaze.

Strangely, the subject of the innocent warrior or sinner re-emerged abundantly in the books I read during my sixth form years. Too many to mention, they included writers from Graham Greene to Francois Mauriac and Heinrich Boll. I suppose no actor incarnated better the role of the sinner-saint than Richard Gere in his rich filmography of the eighties which I devoured. *American Gigolo* is a trendy and unexpectedly >>

“He is not necessarily beautiful in himself but is made beautiful by the projected desire of his admirers.” >>

6 Comment / Fine Art / Love & Vulnerability

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CULTURE

>> Continued



poignant handling of this theme. Julian Kay, the gigolo of the title played by Gere, is vulnerable, and a little too 'good' for his own good. Like Venus watching over Mars in his fragile moment of slumber, the audience cannot but care for Julian. What he does for a living, making love to rich, elderly women, gives him the means to treat himself to the luxuries by which Beverly Hills measures success. He drives a Mercedes, owns an expensive wardrobe and rare collection of antique vases and is a member of exclusive country clubs.

Of course, this is Hollywood, and the protagonist is destined to fall in love with his client. At the same time, however, he is being framed for the murder

of a Palm Springs socialite. The movie wants us to believe in the power of love to redeem both characters: Julian learns to love unselfishly, irrespective of money, and the woman learns to love honestly, clearly not a characteristic of the marriage to her influential politician husband.

This business of redemption works on the backdrop of an engaging story about murder, framing, and police investigations, but the whole movie has a deep sadness about it. Take away the story's sensational aspects, Beverly Hill interiors and Armani suits, and what is left is a study in loneliness. Richard Gere's performance is central to this, and some of his scenes, whether when he reads

the morning paper, rearranges his paintings, exercises or selects his clothes for the day, underline the void that marks his life. American Gigolo leaves you with the curious feeling that even if women were paying this man to sleep with them, they genuinely cared about him and watched over him. They understood his covert shyness, his inability to expose his vulnerability, and they accepted his qualities of a loner that made it easier for him to love when it was just another deal.

Somehow, it strikes me how current this all is on the courtship battlefield today and how timeless is the message contained in Botticelli's painting. Is a man's chief vulnerability his reluctance or in-

ability to show his vulnerability? Is sex a means to hide that weakness? And is the fairer sex, Venus in Botticelli's painting, knowingly pandering to man's artifice of deception?

Last year's show by Marlene Dumas at David Zwirner's gallery in New York entitled *Myths and Mortals*, seems to say so. The huge show, numbering 29 oils and 33 ink wash drawings was inspired by Shakespeare's debut poem of 1593, *Venus and Adonis*, a Baroque exploration of a tale Ovid includes in Book X of his *Metamorphoses*. Dumas focuses on the erotic, specifically female love, and the mysterious coupling of male and female sensual and sexual sensibilities.

In Ovid, Cupid accidentally wounds Venus, his mother, with one of his arrows, and she falls madly in love with the beautiful hunter Adonis. Ovid is clear that Venus is a victim and her love is mad, a pathological condition that makes the immortal goddess love the all-too-mortal hunter. In his interpretation of the tale, Shakespeare endows Venus with an erotic frenzy where she wishes she were a man. Dumas transforms this gender inversion into a tender commentary on new male-female relations. The artist seems to want to conquer the traditional territory of male artists, the nude, in order to express contemporary male-female sensibilities.

Amends is a full-frontal male nude that we view over the shoulders of female spectators. His arms are spread and his palms face the audience as though to say that this is all there is, all that is on offer. He stares at us, empty of emotion and refusing to admit a multitude of other covert, submerged insecurities, fears and reasons to be loved. He is not necessarily beautiful in himself but is made beautiful by the projected desire of his admirers. It is as though Botticelli's Mars, on waking up from his deep slumber, hides his fragility and disorientation behind the armour of his own nakedness and is happy to exist as a function of the reflection that Venus offers him. This was perhaps Richard Gere's greatest contribution, way back in the eighties, to the expression of the emotional state of the contemporary male.

“Is a man's chief vulnerability his reluctance or inability to show his vulnerability? Is sex a means to hide that weakness? And is the fairer sex, Venus in Botticelli's painting, knowingly pandering to man's artifice of deception?”

NIKKI PETRONI is a PhD candidate researching Maltese twentieth-century art. She has written for and edited a number of academic books and is co-curator of the APS Mdina Biennale.



MALTA

NIKKI PETRONI

Realism and Its Many Fictions

The publication of history books on Maltese Modern Art has seen a steady increase over the past three decades. Necessity has stimulated this increase, as a relatively small group of artists produced volumes of work characterised by a diversity of aesthetic choices denoting their positions on art and society. There has been a hindrance, however, to the evolution of historiography, the method of studying

and creating knowledge on the topic, despite the many books in circulation. The epistemology of Maltese modern art has thus reached a qualitative standstill that reflects a seeming intransigence of thought, with the consequence being that the understanding of the subject has had a muzzle constraining its resounding, sometimes cacophonous, even strident, voice from being heard.

With steadfast determination, Giuseppe Schembri Bonaci, Associate Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History at the University of Malta, has embarked on a project to unravel the conventions that are embedded in current scholarship through a series of publications on the history and theory of Modern Art. Schembri Bonaci has long been constructing categories for the study of Maltese Modern Art in order to give rise to a disciplinary language capable of communicating the nature of local art that has always been in dialogue with the international history of Modern Art.

The Unreality of Realism: An insular perspective on the development of modern art, the first in the series, is a journey through various historical and theoretical chapters in the history of art of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The book itself is a repository of arguments, some novel in Schembri Bonaci's writings, others which have been maturing over a number of years. It is at times complex, due to multi-layered positions that require dedicated attention from the reader. Certain stances contend with historical evidence, yet several others are derived from theoretical awareness of Maltese culture and identity, the latter methodology being a strongpoint in his research.

The book in fact begins by asserting

the necessity of such: "We 'see' things according to our concept of the things we 'see'". In other words, historical evidence can be as fragile as memory in spite of its tangibility. "We are entangled in layers of prejudices and preconceptions, a whole complex of heteroglossic flows which are essentially defined by the dominant ideologies of our lives," writes Schembri Bonaci. It is art's task to exit these parameters to present counternarratives, manners of representation that disturb rigid and constraining norms. Naturally, not all art presupposes such intentions.

Memory is inferred as tremulous as it is an objective factor as much as it is a subjective one. Collective memory is subjected to what the author refers to as the condition of oubli, the act of forgetting. This manner of a failure to remember is moulded by what is made visible. What is made most visible and enduring is arbitrated by power.

For this reason, realism, as the supposed representation of reality, is unpacked, dismembered, and furthermore inverted for good measure. Realism in Malta has been innovatively placed within the European context of the Barbizon artists, Romanticism, and the French and Russian schools of Realism. The protagonists of the book are some of the usual suspects: Gustave Courbet, Eugène Delacroix, Ilya Repin, Édouard Manet, Marcel Duchamp, placed side by side with eminent Maltese artists; Antonio Sciortino, Giorgio Preca, Josef Kalleya, George Fenech, Anton Agius, and the brothers Edward and Robert Caruana Dingli.

The latter, the lesser-known sibling, is given due recognition in one of >>



Photograph of L'Abbandono della Casa Materna, Josef Kalleya, 1934, private collection, image courtesy: Josef Kalleya Family Archives



Fête Champêtre, Robert Caruana Dingli, date unknown, oil on board, private collection, image courtesy: Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, Peter Bartolo Parnis, & Gordon & Petra Caruana Dingli



MALTA

the most intriguing arguments presented in Schembri Bonaci's book. In the third chapter, a comparative reading of Manet's art with Robert Caruana Dingli's paintings on the *fête champêtre* theme pronounces how both returned to this topic through the work of Antoine Watteau, albeit with opposing purpose. The argument weaves through a plethora of artistic and political happenings, and is penned with a critical yet lyrical tone, shifting from Caruana Dingli's dream-state to Manet's urban materiality. Materiality is a subject of focus – an unavoidable one when dealing with the kaleidoscopic contentions of realism.

The art of Caruana Dingli and his brother Edward is placed in conflict under the scrutiny of Schembri Bonaci's study. Edward's *Costumbrista* realism perpetuating an idealisation of rural identity, articulated with a differing approach by Gianni Vella, is radically confronted by Preca's 'skaz-narration', as categorised by the author, and the writings of Juann Mamo, of which both manifest an opposing reality to that pictured by Edward Caruana Dingli.

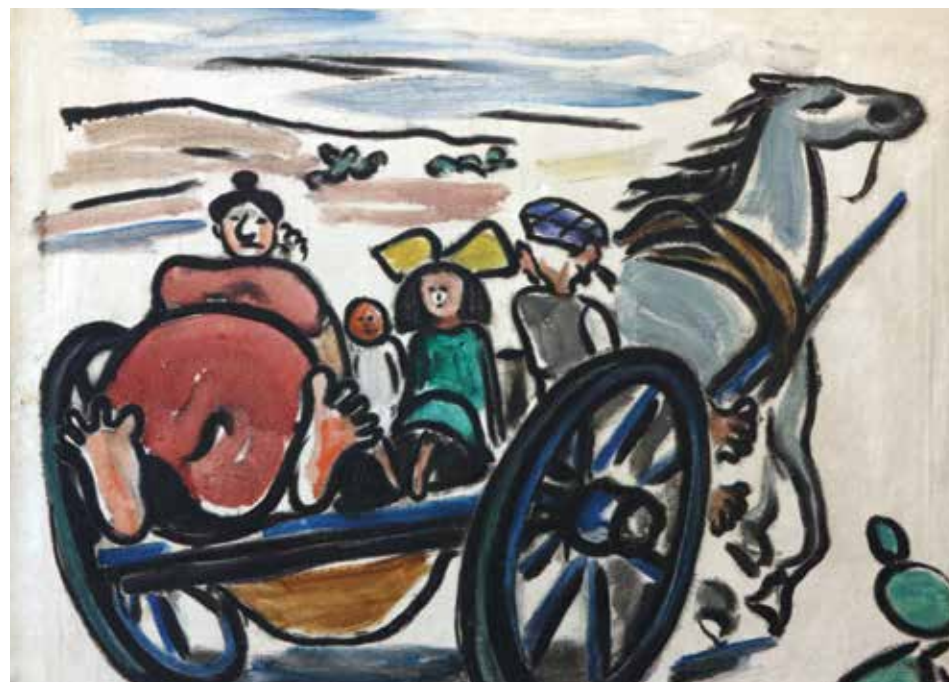
A notable stance is that on Anton Agius' quest for the literal rendering of radical historical events using a figuration proclaimed by the author as inconsistent, sometimes bordering on the mediocre.



Joe the Gardener, George Fenech, 1966, oil on canvas, private collection, image courtesy: Doris Fenech & David Vella

His inconsistency, however, has been contextualised as reflective of his time and is not to be mistaken for a dismissal of Agius' art historical significance. Moreover, Schembri Bonaci entered into George Fenech's Van-Goghian links and dissonances that offer new perspectives on the Maltese artist, and likewise on the Dutch master.

The study concludes with a debate on Sciortino's *Kristu Re* and *Les Gavroches*, Auguste Rodin's *Balzac*, Vasily



Off to Mnarja, Giorgio Preca, 1954, oil on canvas, private collection, image courtesy Obelisk Auctions

Perov's *Troika*, Kalleya's mysticism intertwined with the material concerns of an artist, the latter compared with the diverse approaches of Hans Josephsohn and also Medardo Rosso; all contending with the liberation of materiality, all constrained by the nature of their craft. In Sciortino's case, constrained by his self-limitation to manifest modernity.

It is admittedly challenging to encapsulate the several concepts presented in the *Unreality of Realism*, even in spite

of re-readings. The de-muzzling of history is a decisive tool for the organic formation and dissemination of memory that speaks about all, critically yet democratically.

The Unreality of Realism: An insular perspective on the development of modern art, by Giuseppe Schembri Bonaci is published by Horizons (2019).

“What is made most visible and enduring is arbitrated by power.”

VENICE

Santiago Calatrava Fined

Internationally-renowned architect Santiago Calatrava has been fined €78,000 by Venetian authorities in relation to his *Quarto Ponte sul Canal Grande* (or Constitution Bridge) in Venice. The fine was issued for “gross negligence”, in particular for the fact that the bridge was inaccessible to wheelchair users and for its slippery glass surface. The court in Rome found that Calatrava should have foreseen the problems that arose with his structure, given the large number of tourists in the Italian city.

The bridge, made of metal and glass and measuring almost 100 metres, was inaugurated in 2008, and links the train station to the Piazzale Roma. It has been beset by delays and controversy, not least spiralling costs, as well as reports of accidents due to its slippery surface.



Constitution Bridge, Venice, Santiago Calatrava, photo credit wikimedia

NICOLE BEARMAN is a cultural producer, editor and curator. She is currently Project Manager of the ŻfinMa-lta project Threaded Fine, by British choreographer Rosemary Lee, and was previously Co-Director of Blitz, Valletta.



BOOKS

NICOLE BEARMAN

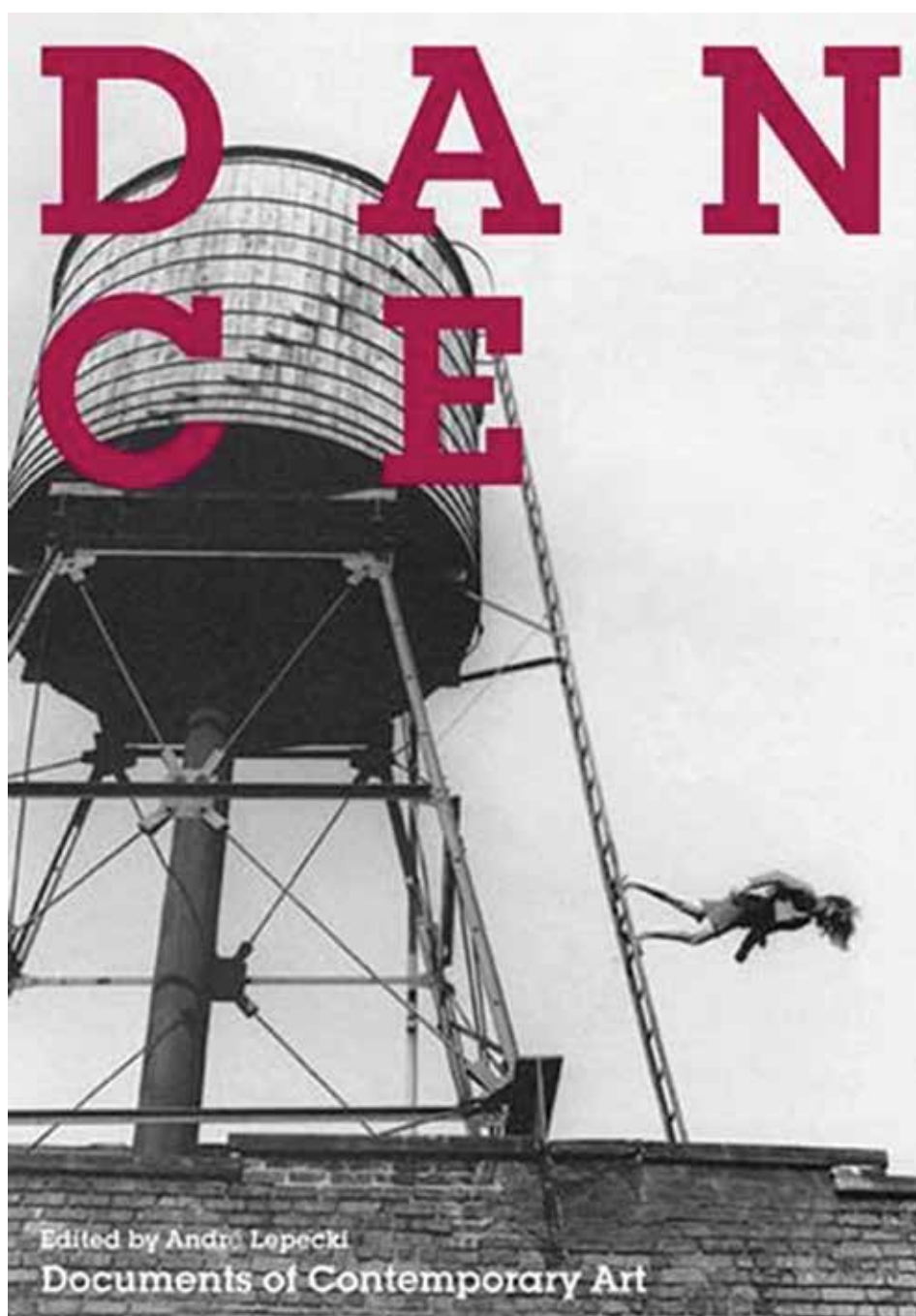
Documents of Contemporary Art

I've always felt privileged to be able to do what I love. With degrees in visual arts and museum studies, and a career working as an editor and producer in small arts organisations and large museums; festivals; biennales; and art, design and architecture journals and magazines, I've felt confident that I ticked the 'dream job' box along the way. But through all of this I have often been heard to say, "I should have been a dancer". Dance really is my first love. As my career now takes on the discipline, I can plunge into a deeper learning of the development of experimental dance and its place in contemporary culture, in particular its relation to contemporary art.

Documents of Contemporary Art is a series of books published in an editorial alliance between the Whitechapel Gallery, London, and MIT Press, Massachusetts. Each volume in the series is a definitive anthology on a particular theme, practice, or concern in contemporary art. *Dance*, also published in collaboration with Sadler's Wells, is edited by the eminent academic, André Lepecki, Associate Professor at the Department of Performance Studies, New York University, author and editor of several books and anthologies on dance and performance, and curator of countless international projects. His approach is philosophical and playful, drawing on the big guns who have been instrumental in dance's choreographic turn in the arts from the 1950s onwards.

The list of artists surveyed reads like royalty – Merce Cunningham, William Forsythe, Trisha Brown, Deborah Hay, Jan Fabre, Joan Jonas, Marina Abramovic, John Cage, Pina Bausch, Samuel Beckett, Lygia Pape, Yvonne Rainer, Tino Sehgal, to name a few; while the list of writers is equally impressive and includes Jean-Luc Nancy, Giles Deleuze, and Barbara Browning.

Lepecki begins his introduction to the book with the statement: "It is a curious and still rather under-theorised



phenomenon that dance, over the past decade, has become a crucial referent for thinking, making and curating visual and performance-based art". And yet, despite its galvanising presence in art, he notes that at the level of critical discourse and the public perception of dance, "there remains a lack of knowledge about dance's own historic and aesthetic developments, its immanent concerns and multiple manifestations".

Dance aims to bridge that discursive gap by introducing and discussing the concepts of embodiment and corpore-

ality, choreopolitics, and the notion of dance in an expanded field, and by privileging the voice of dancers and choreographers themselves, "still misperceived as non-verbal artists creating a supposedly 'visceral' art whose sole purpose is to move gracefully, flawlessly, to the sound of music ...".

Why is it critical for the art world to catch up on dance theory? *Dance* sets out to place dance firmly in a contemporary art context, as its own art form, rather than merely a tool for visual artists to use. Lepecki sums it up best here:

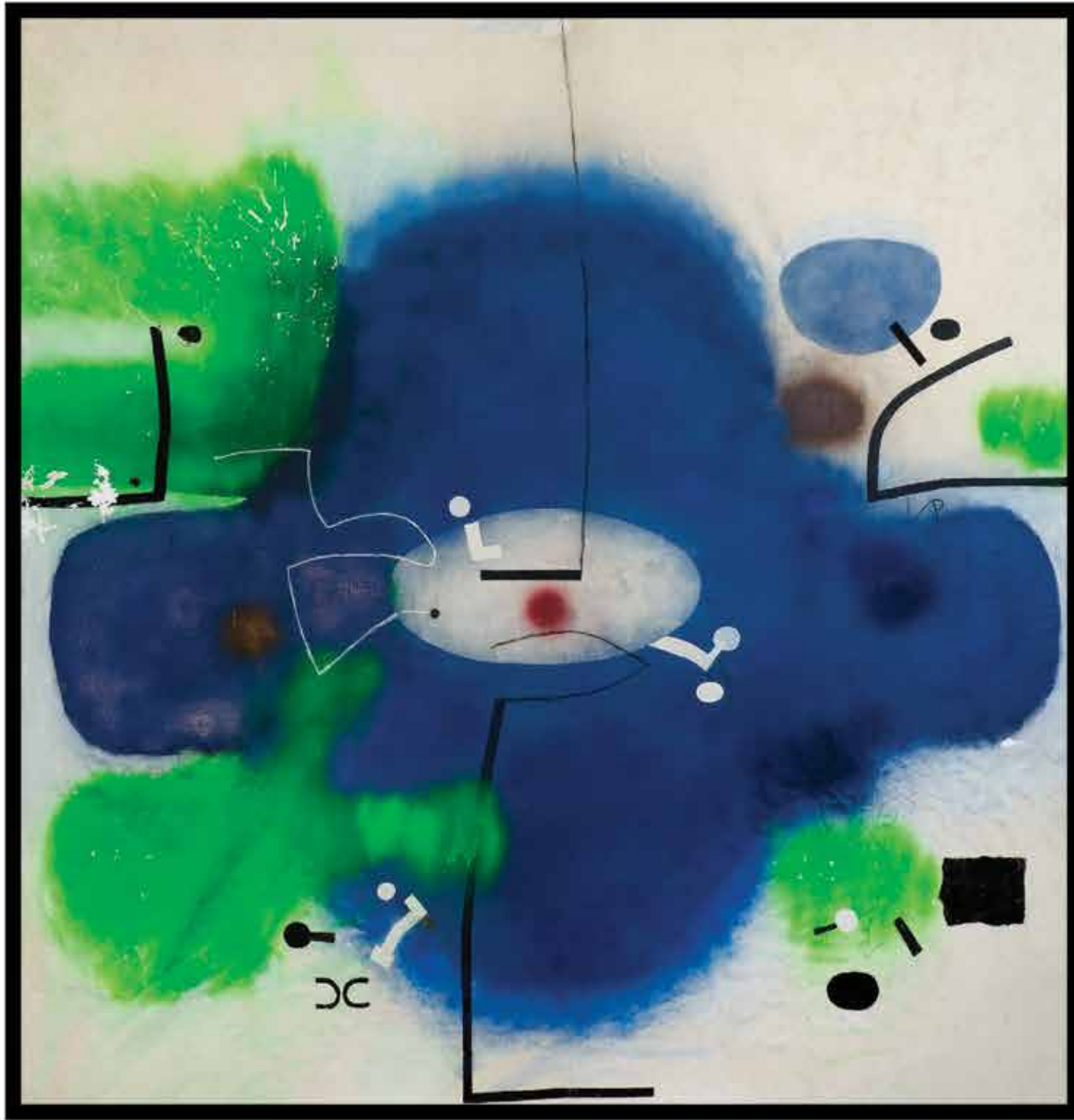
"We could even venture, somewhat ironically (citing the title of a piece by the German-British artist Tino Sehgal, whose relationship to dance and choreography is quite direct), that the inclusion of dance in an artistic project today (whether an object, exhibition or performance) is that necessary gesture which allows it to affirm about itself: This is so contemporary!". The next big challenge facing curators and cultural institutions, is to address the ephemeral and intangible nature of dance, which makes it so difficult to collect and store for the longer term.

Fortunately, *Dance*, the book, is tangible, so as my career path takes a turn, it will be an object I can pore over at any pace and carry with me for many years to come. Its place in my collection of favourites is certain.

Documents of Contemporary Art, Dance is published by Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press.

"It is a curious and still rather under-theorised phenomenon that dance, over the past decade, has become a crucial referent for thinking, making and curating visual and performance-based art."

– André Lepecki



Untitled by Victor Pasmore (1908-1998)

MUŻA - The Malta National Community Art Museum Merchant Street, Valletta

+ Feature / Malta / Cole & Son's
October – December '19

MALTA

Inspired iconic designs on new fabric collections

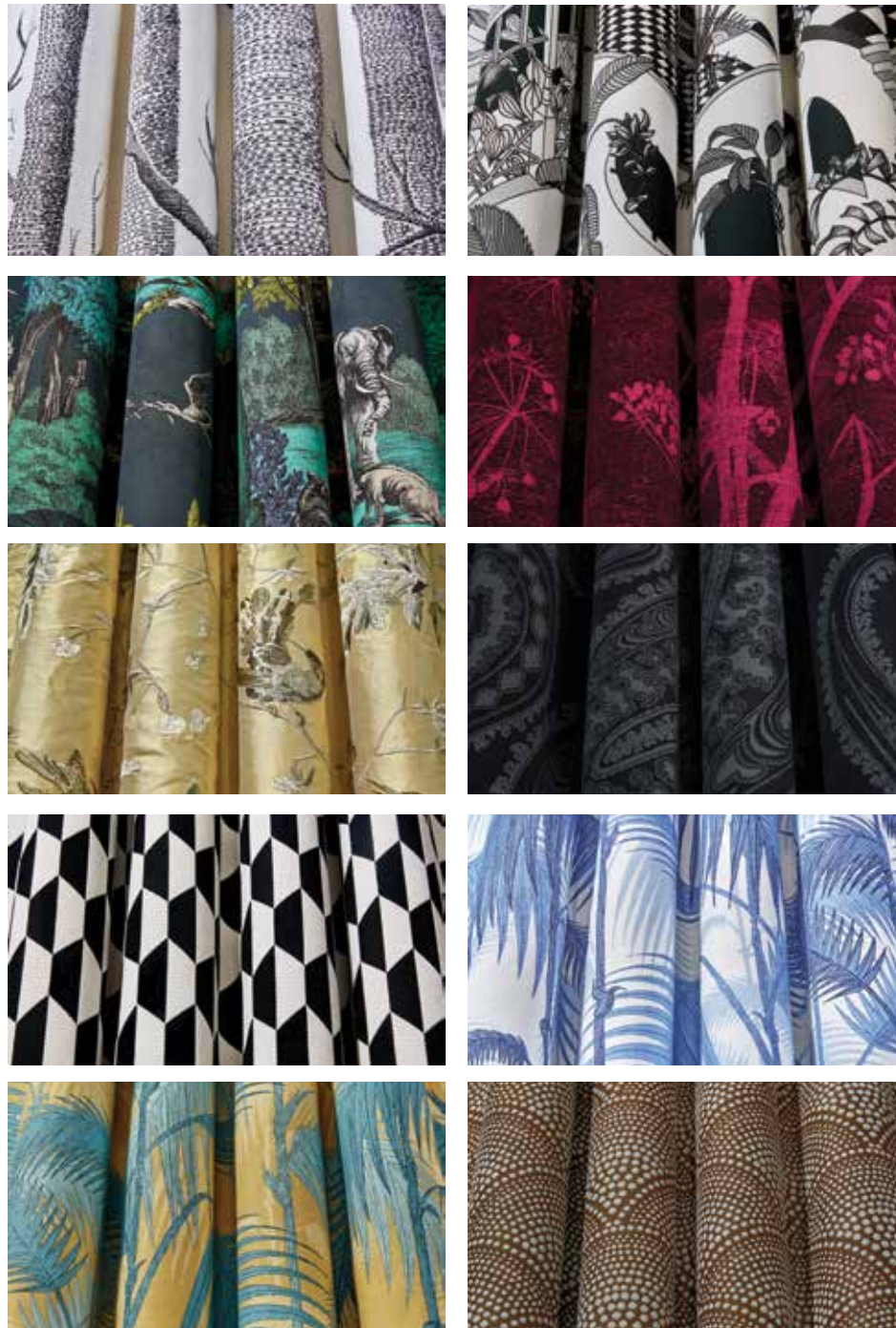
A beautifully curated collection of enduring design icons from Cole & Son's vast portfolio is now available in a range of eye-catching textiles from LOFT.

Modern classics such as the strikingly understated *Woods*; the lusciously leafed *Palm Jungle*; and the *toile de jowly menagerie Versailles Grand* feature on a range of beautiful fabrics. Light and heavyweight linens, crisp cotton and luscious velvet sit alongside silk embroidery and striking jacquards, all suitable for a range of decorating needs.

The Cole & Son archive includes designs that furnished many stately homes, palaces, castles and theatres throughout Britain and overseas, including the wallpaper designs of A W Pugin for the Palace of Westminster. Today Cole & Son supply their wallpapers and fabrics to Buckingham Palace, The Houses of Parliament and many more across the world.

The Cole & Son archive consists of approximately 1,800 block print designs, 350 screen print designs and a huge quantity of original drawings and wallpapers, representing styles from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. Among these are some of the most important historic wallpaper designs in the world.

Cole & Son consistently produce innovative and beautiful designs; their current collections reflect a long and distin-



LOFT stands for Love of Fine Things and with this set of timeless, contemporary fabrics their team hope to inspire imaginations for years to come. al celebrations as important elements of the social fabric of the city.”

gished history, as well as a continuing passion for new and exciting wallpapers and fabrics.

LOFT has been a long-standing supplier of Cole & Son Wallpapers in Malta, and is now adding these special new fabrics to its own portfolio, enhancing the depth and creativity of their interior design offering. LOFT offer a bespoke sewing service for soft furnishings including cushions, curtains and blinds.

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ELEONORA SALVI is the co-founder of Diorama Editions (dioramamag.com) and currently collaborates with publishing houses and online art magazines. She graduated in Art History from IULM University in Milan with a master's thesis on Post-Internet Art.



SAO PAULO

ELEONORA SALVI

Verdant Greens; A tour of São Paulo and Brazil

Parque Inhotim, photo: Mario Gogh



In the historiography of Brazilian architecture, at the beginning of the 80s, the distinction between the Carioca School and the Paulista School was very common. The most reiterated commonplace opposed the grace and lightness of the Cariocas forms with the heavy austerity of the Paulista structures. As opposed to the smoother curvy surfaces of Rio de Janeiro, with its Carioca School typified by Oscar Niemeyer, the Paulista work embraced exposed concrete structures, chunkier massing, and rougher finishes. The primary figure associated with the Paulista School is Paulo Mendes da Rocha, who left to the city of São Paulo one of his last projects before he died: the Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo, a late 19th century building redesigned by Rocha and located in the centre. The building preserves visual art, with an emphasis on Brazilian Colonialist painting and sculpture ranging from the 19th century up to today.

The city of São Paulo is the most authentic expression of both schools – a city that, despite its many social contradictions, provided a carte blanche to these talented architects during its economic boom in the 50s. A prominent example is the Copan Building designed by Oscar Niemeyer. Throughout its history, São Paulo underwent various stages of urban expansion. The city tripled its built area and population density in a very short time. Over time, the proletariat increasingly expanded thanks to the arrival of an ever-growing number of immigrants from Europe. São Paulo is like Rio de Janeiro, a city where strong differences reign among the population.

The city's communities are hard-working, with a well-educated middle-class. The more neglected part of São Paulo's society – the homeless and drug addicts – usually gather in the centre, as well as in other favelas in the city. In Brazil, there are 208 million people and a thousand contradictions, each of which are poured into the country's politics and administration. Everything that's happened in Brazil's recent history is what has always happened, but Jair Bolsonaro's reckless policies are having devastating and irreversible effects on Brazilian cities.

Brazil is a green country, and not just within its rainforests. The cities are also sprinkled with flowering trees at all times of the year. Nature is very abundant and even in the metropolis, the varieties of trees are many – you can walk along tree-lined avenues, between immense ficus trees and colourful orchids that grow everywhere like weeds. The beautiful neighbourhood of Jardim combines modern architecture, and landscape design in perfect union, one in which the best Brazilian contemporary art galleries have found their stronghold. Jardim District can compete with the districts of Soho and Tribeca in Manhattan for the largest concentration of art galleries, but certainly at more affordable prices.

In São Paulo, a gallery is an experience that transcends that of the American or European 'white-cube'. A good example is the Galleria Luciana Brito and Nara Roesler or Mendes Wood DM, where green spaces are integrated in the gal-

lery space – where nature and exhibition merge. These are galleries that led to the presence of a lush Brazilian art market in the most significant international fairs. Even the galleries Galeria Luisa Strina and Galeria Eduardo Fernandes represent an esteemed list of Brazilian and foreign artists, mainly South American, already accomplished or emerging, such as Alfredo Jaar, Cildo Meireles, Marina Abramović or Eduardo Berliner. São Paulo is one of the capitals of contemporary art. It is a city that, despite its various social contrasts, is supported by a significant group of refined Brazilian collectors. Its Biennale, born in 1951 is the oldest in the world after that of Venice. Currently, the city is preparing for its 34th edition within the liveliest and most culturally active neighbourhoods. The much-anticipated event will open on March 2020 and is curated by Jacopo Crivelli Visconti.

São Paulo is huge with countless cultural wealth and social disparities expressed by the mixture between European colonists, natives, and the two great diasporas in Brazil – the Japanese and the African; the latter through the slave trade that brought to Brazil over 8 million Africans, mainly from Ango-



MAAC Museu de Arte Contemporânea

la and Congo. Some traditions have survived unimpaired since the time of slavery, for instance as is the case of particular Angolan dishes having been favoured in Brazilian cuisine, or some cults having mixed, giving birth to Candomblé culture. All this can be discovered in the Afro Brazil Museum, located in the Manoel da Nóbrega Pavilion, designed by Oscar Niemeyer in Ibirapuera Park. Even if its curatorial path is full of lacunae, the museum offers the visitor an excellent collection. It is a good history, artistic and ethnographic museum, dedicated to the research, preservation, and exhibition of objects and works re-

lated to the cultural sphere of the black community in Brazil. If African emigration in Brazil is recognised, the Japanese diaspora is less known, but it properly portrayed in the Museu Histórico da Imigração Japonesa no Brasil, in the Cambuci district.

The Museu de Arte de São Paulo, or MASP, is located on Paulista Avenue, one of the main streets of the city. It is very famous for being one of the greatest representations of Brazilian brutalist architecture. The history of this museum begins in 1949, having been founded by the famous journalist Assis Chateaubriand, the magnate of the Diários Associados group; and the journalist and art critic Pietro Maria Bardi, curator at MASP for 45 years. The Museum of Contemporary Art or MAC, founded by Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho in 1963 – the same tycoon who founded the Biennial of São Paulo – is dedicated to 20th century and Contemporary Art. It belongs to the University of São Paulo, and indeed is located on the main campus, near the Ibirapuera Park. Both museums offer a rich and orderly curatorial path, which runs through large rooms interchanging the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions.



Museu AfroBrasil

Brazil is a huge state where the landscape, culture, and traditions are constantly changing. Although the largest concentration of art is in São Paulo, throughout the rest of the country there are museums and cultural institutions immersed in extraordinary contexts – like the Instituto Terra created by the photographer Sebastiao Salgado; the amazing Parque Inhotim; and the Contemporary Art Museum of Niteroi, which lies across Guanabara Bay facing the city of Rio de Janeiro. They are part of the best experiences that can be had in South America.

6 Comment / Malta / Artists' Residencies

October – December '19

JOANNA DELIA is a medical doctor who specialises in cosmetic medicine. She is also a cultural consumer and art collector who tirelessly supports local contemporary art and culture.



MALTA

JOANNA DELIA

Maltese artists-in-residency and the need for exposure.

I was recently having a conversation about the reasons for the 'uglification' of Malta, and the only reason I could think for it is that our architects are simply not exposed to the built environment around the rest of the world. Say you are a girl who grew up in Qormi, no matter how incredibly genius your architecture faculty is, how on earth can you know, with your daily Qormi to Tal-Qroqq commute, what wonders are possible when you hold the power to be a licensed *perit*? Same goes for artists.

Artists too, have always found the need to expand their views by travelling, interacting and engaging with other cultures in other places. The idea of artists' residencies is certainly not a new thing and unofficial opportunities for artists to travel and temporarily belong to another space has always been around. I believe some exposure should be compulsory. This island is laden with frustration-fuelled inspiration for an artist, but it is frankly too small a zoo from which to be exposed to the diversity that is the art world.

Artists' residency programmes exist so that artists and curators can spend time engaging with their practice, often mobilising entire studios in institutions ranging from artist-run spaces to national museums, outside of their usual geographical area of practice. Residencies can also be seen as sabbaticals of sorts, such that on offer one also finds opportunities to spend time in some pretty weird residencies; such as in a container on a merchant ship, or in an isolated cabin in the woods. In other situations, artists are invited to become part of a wider network and draw inspiration from the work and philosophies of the people they meet.

I reached out to several Maltese and Malta-based artists to understand how valuable they believe their experiences at artists' residencies were for the progression of their practices.

Teresa Sciberras - artist

"During my residency at Peacock's Visual Arts in Aberdeen, I was given



free access to the print shop, including being allowed to use the materials and equipment there, as well as expert advice and training from the master printer. I went to the print-shop every day for the duration of the residency –there was much trial and error involved, especially in the beginning. In the end, I wish I could have stayed longer, because I felt it was time to leave just as I was getting to grips with the process.

I find that inspiration comes through making, and very often artists just don't have the space or time to just make and see what happens. Residencies are a great way to push your practice in different directions by changing the parameters within which you usually work."

Vince Briffa - artist and Associate Professor and Head of Department of Digital Arts, University of Malta

"I approached all three of my residencies with a very open mind. They all provided excellent networking possibilities. The best thing about a residency is that being away from the responsibilities of daily life, you can to concentrate 100% on the work in a way also promotes experimentation and risk-taking. There is also the added bonus of being surrounded by peers, not necessarily from the visual arts, which extends your artistic focus in further discussion. Residencies can be a source of inspiration,

particularly for those at the beginning of their career, but could also be a phase for reflection and experimentation during later phases.

Darren Tanti - artist, Coordinator and Senior lecturer at MCAST Institute of the Creative Arts

"My time at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts in the USA in 2014 was quite good in terms of productivity. It took me a couple of days to adjust to the new setting, but afterwards it was bliss. With food and housekeeping taken care of, it was one of the best moments I've ever had to produce art.

To be honest, I did not 'find inspiration' there - I prepared for it in Malta. I wanted to make the best out of the time alone, so I planned a number of drawings beforehand. Once there, I simply executed the works. The element of inspiration came when I saw the interest that other artists took in my work. Their feedback gave me strong motivation to pursue my practice. Artists must travel and meet other artists and people – especially true for those who live on a minuscule island like ours."

Sarah Maria Scicluna - artist, print-maker, lecturer at MCAST Institute of the Creative Arts

"My productivity during my residency at Youkoku Art Space in Japan was very consistent, especially since I

had tight deadlines for the exhibition at the end. It was very inspirational as it allowed me to make work in a new context, for a completely different audience. I felt that this experience allowed me to grow as an artist in a way that I can't from the comfort of my studio. I met a lot of people from the arts sector – these connections are allowing me to plan future projects as the network is already in place. I highly recommend artist residencies to anyone who is serious about a career in the arts. One gets to produce work in a different context, which allows the artist fresher perspectives."

Aaron Bezzina - artist

"All of the residencies I've been on concluded with an exhibition of the body of work produced during the period. Some exhibitions travel, others are added to the collection of the institution. During a residency, one aims to take as much from the experience as one can, and one must be careful about what type of residency would yield more 'networking' opportunities. For instance, there are residencies that are located in remote areas offering the artist the opportunity to work in complete tranquillity; needless to say, this isn't the residency for you if you want to network."

Wioletta Kulewska - artist, designer/owner at VK Studio

"When I have the opportunity to dedicate full one month for my painting practice, I make the most of it. Artists' residency programmes give artists the opportunity to live and work outside of their usual environments, providing them with time to reflect, research, and produce new body of work. As a painter, it's important for me to be part of a group of creative professionals to share ideas, aesthetics or political views. What I really liked about my residency experience was that – coincidental or not – there were an equal number of male and female artists."

* Spotlight / Stuart Semple / Q+A

October – December – '19

LONDON

MARGERITA PULÈ

Dancing on a Happy Cloud

Following his exhibition DANCING ON MY OWN, at Bermondsey Project Space in London, Margerita Pulè caught up with artist, activist and all-round nice guy Stuart Semple, to ask him about his practice, philosophies and making the world a better place.



MP: You've become known for your activism, public projects and for your shop-selling art products. You've also worked on some curatorial projects. How has this affected your practice in terms of drawing and painting? Do you mind spending time away from the studio? Or do you see these activities as part of one artistic practice?

SS: None of these things feel different from one another. What matters is the intention in making things. For me the very idea of art is some kind of conversation with the viewer, so that conversation hatches in different mediums and different arenas. I don't really see creativity as something that should be limited. Sometimes drawing or painting makes sense and sometimes being in the world and engaging makes sense. The art shop could be seen as a shop, or it could be seen as an artist-designed environment and an installation. It all de-

pends on how you look at the work I suppose. The main thing is that I just follow the creative impulse to where it wants to go.

MP: In an earlier interview, you said that the birth of your son had changed the way you work. Is that still true today? And can you tell us more about it?

SS: Yes it has, and that is more and more relevant as he grows up. Initially it took me out of myself, and if I'm honest there was a selfishness to me before he arrived. Then, as he's growing, I'm asking questions about what sort of world he's going to inherit and how I can be a good dad. Art was my top priority and my big love but that changed because he came along and now my heart is full with him – so art plays second fiddle now.

MP: Your recent show at Bermondsey – how did it feel looking at 20 years of

your work together in one exhibition?

SS: It was weird and I've still not really processed what happened there. The last 20 years have been full of so many hills and valleys and creative dead-ends. It would have been impossible to cram everything in there, but I was grateful to Lee Cavaliere, the curator, because he managed to tease out a few strong strands of my practice, and weirdly through him doing that it helped me make a bit more sense of them. He really honed in on the pain and anxiety in a lot of the work and my personal story, then opened it up to the recent public work. It was tough looking at some of it. Lee made a hospital scene that reminded me of my near death as a teenager and I wasn't expecting to be as shaken up as I was by that room. I couldn't really deal with that.

MP: We can't not ask you about the bat-

tle over colour with Anish Kapoor. Why did this mean so much to you? And do you still feel the same about it a few years on?

SS: Since I was a kid, on the outskirts of the artworld, it's been difficult to navigate because of the class system and the sheer wealth and power that exists there. When it gets to the point where someone can use power and influence to dominate a material like the blackest black, that's deeply problematic to me. I think if anything I feel more passionate about it because it's really opened my eyes to just how exclusive the art world is and just how lovely and engaged the wider art community is. I think they are at odds with each other. We are at a time where to make work you need huge fabrication budgets. I'm seeing degree shows where students are spending tens of thousands on their work. I don't want an artworld that is a rich

*** Spotlight / Stuart Semple / Q+A**
 October – December '19

MARGERITA PULÈ is an artist, writer and curator, with a Master's Degree in Fine Arts, and founder of Unfinished Art Space. Her practice and research are concerned with the contradictions of politics and social realities.



L O N D O N

man's sport! I want an artworld that is open and at the root of that is materials.

MP: Happiness, social cohesion, a better society – these things are obviously important to you. How do you think artists can contribute?

SS: *I don't think artists have to contribute – they should be free to express whatever they like. But, if they do feel inclined, they can simply reflect the society in front of them. I really believe that when artists engage in society, we can be useful. Luckily, at least in my country, we have freedom of speech and I think the public need artists more than ever to use their voices on their behalf.*

MP: On a similar thread, I'm thinking of your 'Happy Cloud' project. There were some lovely reactions to it at the time – 10 years later, do you think it still resonates?

SS: *Yes, it appears to still be relevant now, we did it last year in the USA and we are gearing up to take it to Hong Kong in a couple of months. It's interesting that I'm still asked to perform it. It's been done most years for the last decade. I think there's just something very simple about it that makes some kind of sense, it's one of those chance things that just takes on a bit of a life of its own and resonates for some reason. I don't know why it works.*

MP: The more personal issues that you deal with in your work are quite generational – they are sort of specific to someone born in the 80s in the UK. Do you think your experience is universal, generational or personal? And does it matter?

SS: *Well I think it's all of those. Some pieces are deeply personal and they deal with my life, but I don't think what I've been through is in any way unique. I think we are all wrestling with the impact of technology; how we navigate fear; what the media is serving up; how we relate to one another. Yes, my generation had its set of historic moments that might not resonate with the generation before or after, but I hope that the work is moving with the times and addressing what's happening now. That's my big hope.*

MP: Maybe not an original question, but what's next for you? What are you working on at the moment?

SS: *Well actually I'm having a rest, just finding some time with myself and focusing on my spirituality for a while. I've made a new studio and I'm very slowly starting to paint but I have no clue where that is going, it feels like the start of a new chapter.*

"When it gets to the point where someone can use power and influence to dominate a material like the blackest black, that's deeply problematic to me."

HUBLOT

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Big Bang One Click Calavera Catrina King Gold. 18K King Gold case. Bezel set with 42 colourful sapphires. Black lacquered dial with multicolour printed "Catrina". Self-winding movement. Calf and black rubber strap. Limited edition of 50 pieces.

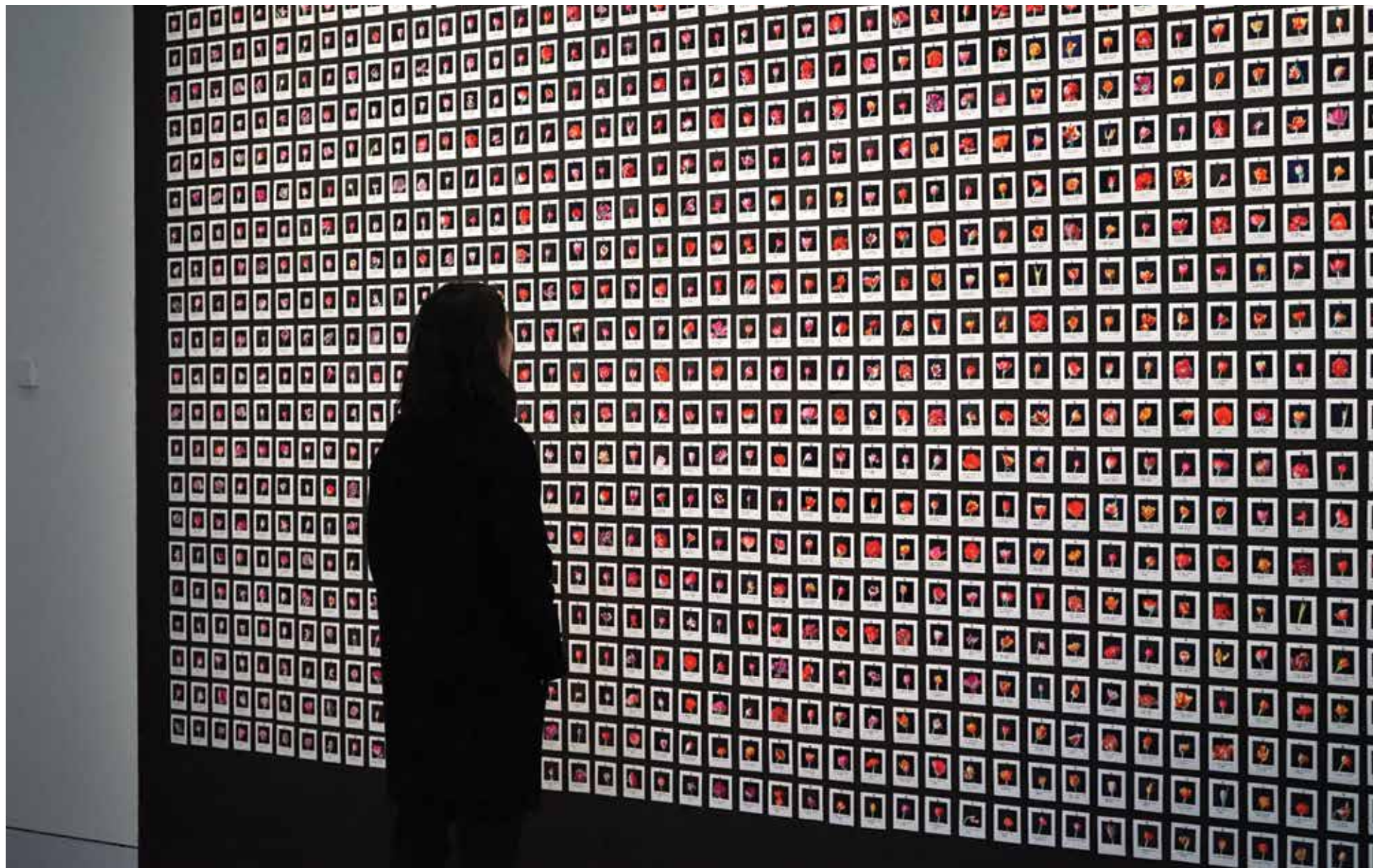
ERICA GIUSTA is Director of Innovation at architecture firm AP Valletta, where she focuses on research and business development. She read for an MA in Architecture, and has a Post-Graduate Master from the Sole24Ore Business School in Milan. She contributes regularly to academic journals and to international architecture magazines such as A10 New European Architecture and Il Giornale dell'Architettura.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ERICA GIUSTA

Against Interpretation – Can AI be Creative?



Myriad (Tulips), installation view, Emily Grundon, 2018

“The artist as a scientist exploring new boundaries of originality doesn’t need any interpretation, any validation.”

The combination of artificial intelligence and creativity is taking centre stage on all platforms, and in many fields. From Sotheby’s auctions to MIT laboratories, artists, researchers and business managers alike are striving to make the most of out the (relatively) new and promising binomial. Erica Giusta investigates its potential consequences on the perception of contemporary art, asking – will AI lead us ‘against interpretation’?

As recently stated by Arthur Miller in The Guardian, “machines are redefining what it is to be living, not merely human, beings”. And they are raising a lot of questions in doing so. When it comes to art and creativity, the most popular hypothesis, surely, is if these intelligent machines can really be cre-

ative – which forces us to question what creativity is in the first place. Cognitive science and evolutionary studies offer a solid and painless answer to what could otherwise degenerate into an endless speculative debate. According to philosopher Daniel Dennett, “creativity is not confined to evolution in nature, but appears to be a pervasive feature of evolutionary processes in general”. In other words, anything and anyone capable of undertaking an evolutionary process is also capable of developing creativity. It comes as no surprise then that today’s AI, equipped with artificial neural networks that work out the ‘rules’ as they go along rather than being taught, display creativity as they find unexpected solutions to complex problems and manage to create something new, original, of potential artistic value.

For the time being, two main forms of AI-driven artistic processes have emerged and sparked people’s interest: those questioning and testing AI’s role at large, taking into account a number of social, economic and political factors; and those exploiting the seemingly inexhaustible power of the machine to startle and amaze, to break a world record or become a ‘first’ in history, from the AI-generated painting sold at Christie’s for more than four hundred thousand dollars, to the first solo exhibition of a robot at Oxford University earlier this summer. What the two have in common is the focus on the production process and what art critics usually identify as form as opposed to content, or rather, the appearance and materiality of the final outcome.

Visual parameters are central in the coding processes of all AI generated works. In *Memory of Passerby I* by Mario Klingemann, for instance, it’s easy to guess what the training set of the GAN (Generative Adversarial Network – an AI system with two neural networks, one correcting the work of the other on the basis of information fed to it by the user, generally referred to as ‘training set’) in use looked like. Klingemann trained the machine on a mixed set of works of art from European masters from the 17th, 18th and 19th century, a very curated choice to assure a consistent aesthetic to the everchanging final outcome. With *Myriad (Tulips)*, Anna Ridler transformed the thousands of photos that she took – catalogued and used as the training set of her work *Mosaic Virus* – into a piece of art in its own right, to >>



+ Art News / International

October – December '19

>> both show the enormous human efforts (still) required by generative systems, as well as to ennoble the production process as something of great artistic potential. These and many other works were discussed at the Barbican in occasion of the exhibition *AI: More than Human*, while the humanoid robot with artificial intelligence named Ai-Da was celebrated in Oxford for managing to produce a series of beautiful drawings, paintings and sculptures which look like art. But were they?

Even though the debate generally tends to revolve around the artistic validity of the processes of production of generative art, the aesthetic qualities of its final outcomes are always central to deciding what should be considered art in the first place. As a result, the process and the form of the work of art suddenly

becomes more interesting than the content, over which critics and intellectuals usually obsess in their mission to validate art with their interpretations. The conflictual relationship between form and content seems to slowly resolve itself in an almost organic way: the artist expresses them both as a whole, at all stages of the process, from choosing the data for a training set to adjusting the algorithm. The artist as a scientist exploring new boundaries of originality doesn't need any interpretation, any validation.

Borrowing Susan Sontag's words about cinema in *Against Interpretation*, these AI pioneers are "making works of art whose surface is so unified, whose momentum is so rapid, whose address is so direct that the work can be...just what it is".

Tribute – Philip Chircop 2009

> Abstract Expressionist Philip Chircop passed away in August. Chircop was a key figure in Maltese Abstract Art, whose work developed throughout his career to intuitively make use of colour, form, and texture. Work by Chircop is held at permanent collections at MUŻA in Valletta, at the UNESCO Building in New York, as well as at many other international collections.

A critical analysis of his work – *Philip Chircop – Abstract Expressions* – was published in 2010 by Prof Joseph Paul Cassar.



Untitled, Philip Chircop, 2009, mixed media on canvas

MUNICH

POSITIONS – *Munich Art Fair*



POSITIONS Berlin Art Fair 2018 © Clara Wenzel-Theiler

The first edition of the new POSITIONS Munich Art Fair will take place from 17 – 20 October 2019 at the Reithalle Munich. After two successful editions of Paper Positions Munich, the fair will now be expanded to POSITIONS Munich Art Fair, presenting international galleries and showing work in all media, with a special section dedicated to the medium of paper.

POSITIONS Munich Art Fair and Paper Positions consciously focus on a salon-like exhibition format, engendering a communicative and interactive event. POSITIONS Munich Art Fair 2019, featuring Paper Positions, is on from 17 to 20 October 2019 at the Reithalle in Munich.

www.paperpositions.com

LONDON

Orbit Tower in Debt

> ArcelorMittal Orbit, the gargantuan metal sculpture and observation tower, built for the 2012 London Olympic Games, and designed by Anish Kapoor and Cecil Balmond, is now reportedly €14.4m in debt.

The 114.5-metre high sculpture, which reopened permanently in 2014 and was repurposed with wraparound slides by Carsten Höller, was expected to recoup losses from visitor fees to the sculpture. However, visitor numbers have fallen, leaving the debts linked to the tower to accumulate.

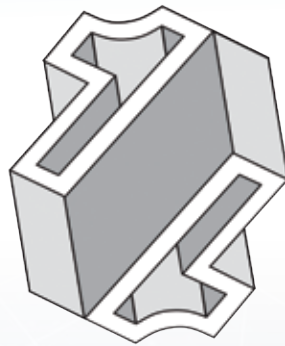
The work was a pet project of then London Mayor Boris Johnson, and was conceived to rival international landmarks like the Statue of Liberty and the Eiffel Tower.



ArcelorMittal Orbit, Anish Kapoor & Cecil Balmond, with slide by Carsten Höller, photo credit wikimedia



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GRAND HOTEL
EUROPA

Italian artist Alex Urso exhibits in Malta for the first time, with the culmination of his 3-stage project, Grand Hotel Europa. Through drawing, collage and installation, this body of work reflects on the political and humanitarian crises that the EU has experienced in recent years. Each series of works included in the project explores the rise of nationalistic feelings from different perspectives and philosophies, with a particular focus on the migrant flows through and around Europe. Urso's visit to Malta will follow the first two chapters of the project, which have already taken place in Belgrade, Serbia and in Ustka on the Baltic Coast.

Where: Studio 87, Valletta
Every day: 10am to 6pm

www.unfinishedartspace.org

Image: Grand Hotel Europa. Alex Urso, Installation view at Baltic Gallery of Contemporary Art, Ustka, 2019



19.10.19

Until 8 November

THE DAWN
OF MALTESE
MODERN ART

This show will introduce Carmelo Mangion – a pioneer of Maltese Modern Art – to the Gozitan public, with works from Mangion's vast artistic corpus being exhibited on the island for the first time. The exhibition selection, though small in number, will serve as a pleasant revelation to many who have never viewed any works from this artist's outstanding output.

Where: art.e Gallery, Gozo
Monday to Saturday:
9.30am to 12.15pm
Sunday 10am – 12 noon

Image: Self portrait (detail), Carmelo Mangion, oil on masonite, undated



19.10.19

Until 17 November

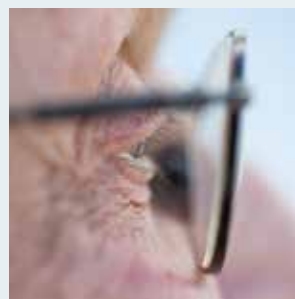
SOPHISTIKÓS

Artists Fox Daniels, SJ Fuerst and Tomas Hed will play with ideas of simplicity and sophistication in this joint exhibition. Themes of artificiality, elegance and pretended naturalness are explored, as is the eternal search for style and eternal youth. A touch of irony and mystery is contained in their work, asking us we want to hide what we consider ugly and natural through a veil of vanity and illusion, or if we simply seek to empower our natural skills. Attractive, magnetic and powerful women will inhabit exhibition walls, each with a touch of irony, mystery and, of course, sophistication.

Where: Arthall: 8, triq Agius de Soldanis, Victoria, Gozo.
Wednesday – Saturday:
10am – 1pm, 5pm – 7pm
Sunday: 10am – 12 noon

www.arthallgozo.com

Image: Smile, SJ Fuerst



24.10.19

Until 7 November

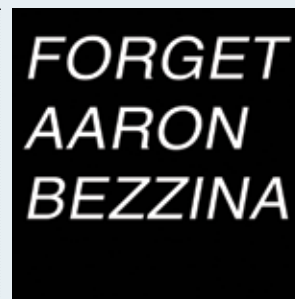
TESSIE

Tessie is a photographic project by Giola Cassar, with written contributions by Glen Calleja, inspired by the life and stories of a 102-year-old woman. Portrait by portrait, the project creates a biographical collage that spans more than a century, with a photographic narrative accompanied by textual fragments. Tessie is both the storyteller and the embodiment of all the places, objects and people she talks about. A book has been created from the project, containing carefully constructed sequences of original and found imagery, as well as delicate portraits in dialogue with composites from old family albums.

Where: National Archives of Malta, Rabat
Monday – Friday: 8am – 2pm
Saturday: - 8.15am – 12.45pm
Thursday & Friday: 3pm – 7.30pm
Sunday: 10am – 1pm

www.giolacassar.com

Image: © Giola Cassar



01.11.19

Until 4 December

FORGET AARON
BEZZINA

This exhibition takes its title from a reverse campaign-like experiment, occurring a year prior to the opening, spreading around the capital of Malta, Valletta, with stickers reading exactly that: FORGET AARON BEZZINA. When an artist decides to exhibit work it inherently is a play on one's ego and identity, irrelevant of how broad both terms could be defined as. Therefore, this show attempts to explore various facades and interests making up the (the past and current) practice of the artist, who has decided to reside on the island in which he was brought up.

Where: Valletta Contemporary, Valletta
Tuesday to Saturday:
11:30am – 7pm
www.vallettacontemporary.com

Image: © Aaron Bezzina



29.11.19

Until 5 January 2020

THE KOLAZ-
KTIRO
COLLECTION
BUILDINGS IN
TIME

Artist Damian Darmanin uses his sharp eye to amalgamate diverse images, combining them into imaginary edifices. He meticulously creates the non-existent from the existent, transferring fragments of reality into virtual entities. Darmanin acts as an alchemist, creating seductive images collated in spatio-temporal equations. This solo exhibition presents a global expression of solidarity, unity, diversity and culture, and shows work which portrays the continual exploration of globalization, religion and creativity.

Where: Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta
Monday: 9am – 5pm
Tuesday – Friday: 9am – 9pm
Saturday – Sunday: 10am – 9pm

www.kreattivita.org

Image: Damien Darmanin, courtesy of the artist




12.10.19 Until 31 January 2020

PIERRE HUYGHE: EXOMIND (DEEP WATER)

The Malta International Contemporary Art Space (MICAS), in collaboration with the Serpentine Galleries, London, proudly presents the exhibition *Exomind (Deep Water)* by ground-breaking artist Pierre Huyghe. Situated within the dynamic ecosystem of Wied il-Luq, Buskett, Exomind (Deep Water), 2017, lies between the continuity and separation of interconnected systems. It comprises the cast of a sculpture of a blinded, crouching, female figure, a living beehive, and a set of exchanges with the flora and fauna that surround it. Monday - Sunday, 9am - 3pm www.micas.art

Image: Exomind, 2017. Concrete cast with wax hive, bee colony, orange tree (Daidai), plum tree (Tobiume descendant), plants, sand, stones, calico cat, ants, spider, butterfly, concrete pond with waterlilies (Giverny descendants), axolotl and insects. Photo credit: Ichikawa and Kei Maeda. Courtesy of the artist; Taro Nasu, Tokyo; The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo; and the Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine.



Few are those who see
with their own eyes and
feel with their own hearts.

Albert Einstein

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*** Spotlight / Events / Global**
October – December – '19

PAINTING +
SCULPTURE

A selection of art events from around the world

10 - 12.19
Events until February 2020



28.06.19
Until 19 January 2020

FREUD PROJECT, LIFE ABOVE EVERYTHING: LUCIAN FREUD AND JACK B. YEATS

Life above Everything is a major exhibition that brings together the work of two acknowledged masters, Lucian Freud and Jack B. Yeats. Exploring the affinities and inter-connections between these two artists, the exhibition draws the work of these two markedly individual painters into dialogue, placing them side by side for the first time in 70 years. A substantial number of oil paintings by both artists (33 by Freud and 24 by Yeats, as well as a range of works on paper) will be exhibited. Unique to the exhibition are seven paintings by Yeats, which Freud recommended for acquisition to a friend.

Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin
www.imma.ie

Image: Jack B. Yeats, The Flapping Meeting, 1926, © Estate of Jack B. Yeats, DACS London / IVARO Dublin, 2019. Private Collection. Photo: Denis Mortell



12.09.19
Until 3 November

REMAINS TO BE SEEN

The first presentation of Mona Hatoum's work in London since her show at Tate Modern in 2016, this exhibition includes new and recent installation, sculpture and works on paper. Hatoum's work reflects on subjects that arise from our current global condition, including systems of confinement, the architecture of surveillance, and themes of mobility and conflict. In this major new installation, titled Remains to be Seen, heavy, industrial building materials are transformed into a light, suspended cube. Created from rows of steel rebar that are punctuated with what looks like chunks of concrete flooring, it hovers just above the ground in vertical and horizontal alignment.

White Cube Bermondsey
www.whitecube.com

Image: Remains (chair), 2017, Wire mesh and wood



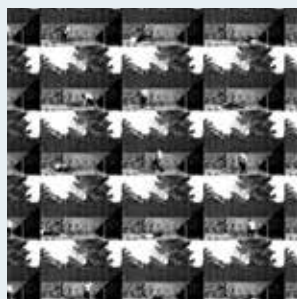
25.09.19
Until 17 November

ALEXIS AKRITHAKIS: TSIKI-TSIKI

This exhibition marks the occasion of the 80th anniversary from the birth, and 25 years from the passing, of the Greek artist Alexis Akrihakis. It is the first systematic presentation of Alexis Akrihakis' work devoted exclusively to one of his most recognisable techniques, the 'tsiki-tsiki', as writer Kostas Tachtsis named it in the mid-60s. The exhibition features a significant part of his 'tsiki-tsiki' works created from the mid-60s to the early 70s, and projects that will be of particular importance for the creation, development and differentiation of his characteristic style from the beginning and throughout his career.

Benaki Museum, Athens
www.benaki.org

Image: The Dream of Pylades, Alexis Akrihakis, 1967, ink on paper © 2019 The Estate of Alexis Akrihakis



27.09.19
Until 6 January 2020

SUBTITLING

Cape Verdean artist Irineu Destourelles works at the intersection between film, text, and – occasionally – drawing and painting. This body of work focuses on issues of representation and language, with the artist exploring the perpetuation of colonial practices and their impact on both cognitive processes and the formation of social and power relations, placing central importance on the experience of discursive violence. The project has also been developed from Destourelles' own condition as part of a diaspora and from his social experiences in the urban spaces of cities such as Lisbon, Mindelo and London.

Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon
www.gulbenkian.pt

Image: Several Ways of Falling Ordered Differently, 2019, video still



16.10.19
Until 10 February 2020

GRECO

A retrospective of El Greco's work, and the first major exhibition dedicated to his work, is showing in France. El Greco – born in Crete – undertook his initial apprenticeship in the Byzantine tradition before refining his training in Venice and Rome. However, it was in Spain, where he was attracted by the promise of the El Escorial site as commission, that his art flourished. He was influenced by Titian's colour, Tintoretto's audacity and Michelangelo's heroic style. El Greco holds unique place in the history of painting, as the last grand master of the Renaissance and the first great painter of the Golden Age.

Grand Palais, Paris
www.grandpalais.fr

Image: Opening of the Fifth Seal (The Vision of Saint John), courtesy of Rmn-Grand Palais



24.10.19
Until 24 February 2020

LEONARDO DA VINCI

To commemorate the 500-year anniversary of the death of Leonardo da Vinci in France, the Musée du Louvre is holding a major retrospective of the painter's career. The exhibition illustrates how Leonardo placed utmost importance on painting, and how his investigation of the world, which he referred to as 'the science of painting', was the instrument of an art through which he sought to bring life to his paintings. Alongside his own collection of five paintings by Leonardo – the largest in the world and 22 of his drawings – the Louvre will display nearly 120 other works, including paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculptures, and objets d'art.

Musée du Louvre, Paris
www.louvre.fr

Image: Portrait of a Young Woman, Leonardo da Vinci, wood, Paris, Musée du Louvre, INV. 778 © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Michel Urtado

Newly Re-opened Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)

The Museum of Modern Art in New York will re-open its doors this October to reveal its expanded and restructured building, unveiling the new space as a culmination of structural works ongoing since 2017.

The re-opening will reveal MoMA's reinstalled collection in newly-opened gallery spaces and will see MoMA hosting multiple inaugural exhibitions. These include Sur moderno: Journeys of Abstraction, showing the museum's collection of Latin American art;

Pope.L, 1978–2001, showing the work of multidisciplinary artist Pope.L; and Betye Saar: The Legends of Black Girls Window, exploring the work of Betye Saar.

New spaces include the Paula and James Crown Platform, which will act as an experimental, creative space to explore ideas, questions, and art processes that arise from MoMA's collection.

www.moma.org

Image: Black Girls Window, Betye Saar, 1969, assemblage



MALTA



A

I meet Tom on a sunny afternoon in Valletta. His cool demeanour masks a frenetic work schedule in the run-up to his next show. Tom van Malderen is an artist, designer and exhibition designer. He came to art through a circuitous route, studying architecture and practicing as an architect with AP Valletta for many years. But the distinction between these disciplines is – as it is for many practitioners – blurred; he tells me that his training in architecture informs his art practice, which in turn informs his design work, and vice versa. The blurring of the lines between art practice, design, and of course, life, has allowed him to segue easily from architecture to art; from a practice that endeavours to make life easier, to one that challenges and disrupts the status quo.

Quiet

MARGERITA PULÈ

Revo-
lution-
ary

+ Interview / Malta / Art + Design
October – December –'19

MARGERITA PULÈ
is an artist, writer and curator,
with a Master's Degree in Fine
Arts, and founder of Unfinished
Art Space. Her practice and
research are concerned with
the contradictions of politics
and social realities.



As we speak, I realise how thoughtful Tom's practice is. His works are deceptively simple in form as well as in colour, but as he talks about his practice, he describes it, foremost, in conceptual terms. He's fascinated by how humans try – but fail – to organise our world, and to bring a sense of order to space. This, he learnt through his work as an architect, but he now uses this knowledge, and his sense of mischief, to create work that plays with this need and shifts an audience's preconceptions. His 2018 show at Malta Contemporary Art (MCA) in Valletta, *Except for Access Only*, is a perfect example of how his aesthetics, design principles and quiet socialism combine. The title speaks volumes, but upon closer investigation, the exhibition revealed a depth of thinking that belies the pieces' simplicity. Tables were presented as a symbol for excess – a space-filler for excessively large villas, and a signifier of wealth in themselves. The tables themselves were altered, none of them rectangular, and many of them stepped, but still retained the trapings status-rich marble table-tops.

Many years as an architect – which Tom says he enjoyed immensely – left him questioning the architect's need to create a frictionless world. If this is an architect's role; to facilitate cohesive living and societies that exist happily together, it is the artist's role to disrupt this comfortable existence. Tom is quiet – he speaks in a measured tone, but behind a façade of Belgian equilibrium, I sense a deep belief in social equality, as well as a tendency and mischievous leaning towards disrupting the status quo.

This coincidence in practice is reflected too in an overlap of materials and aesthetics. As with the *Ta-*

bles for the One Percent, at first glance, Tom's work does not look like 'art' – rather it resembles strange or distorted furniture. He himself admits "I like it when objects are ambiguous".

A development of this aesthetic is evident in Tom's most recent exhibition (in collaboration with artist, Kris Van Dessel) - titled *GOOD CONDITIONS*, it played with the notion and practicalities of holding an exhibition and selling work – creating an art-fair environment, overloaded with a huge number of separate pieces. Here too, wood, plastics, metal and a carpenterly style is evident; as is a sense of irony, and a tongue-in-cheek challenge to a status quo. It seems that Tom enjoys playing with audiences, gently confronting them and disrupting their expectations.

In recent years, Tom has combined his practice to also work on exhibition design, working with Blitz in Valletta (on an exhibition called *Maltese Confabulations*), and also designing the exhibition at Malta's pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2017, as well as *Land of Sea*, the exhibition heading the cultural programme of Malta's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, at Bozar in Brussels. He seems to have relished the separate challenge of each one; from budget constraints (which, he says is extremely satisfying on an intellectual level), to geographic realities, demanding extreme efficiency and logistical skills from him as a designer. He says that he was challenged enormously, but also says it with a smile on his face – he clearly enjoyed the experience.

We talk about lots of things, from the beauty of an architectural feature in a Maltese *gallerija*, to Belgian

philosophers, we touch upon the art scene in Malta, and collaborating with craftsmen. Tom reveals his love of beauty and good design, saying that a beautiful piece of craftsmanship feels to him like poetry – a nod towards aesthetics, but also again, revealing an instinctive rejection of compartmentalising anything, from disciplines, to life, and artistic practice. So even when he makes a piece of furniture, it's as much a piece of art as a functional object, as well as a combination of emotional and rational thought.

Slowly, Tom reveals a broadness of thought, and a quiet revolutionary drive, concealed behind a light manner and a cheerful pragmatism. His ideas encompass political ideologies as well as design principles, and he does not differentiate between thinking and making work. Maybe Tom's practice is a reflection of his personality, or maybe Tom is a personification of his own practice. But either way, his work – like himself – is a pleasure to meet.

“His works are deceptively simple in form as well as in colour, but as he talks about his practice, he describes it, foremost, in conceptual terms.”



GAZEBO, sculpture at EXCEPT FOR ACCESS ONLY, solo show Tom Van Malderen at MALTA CONTEMPORARY ART, Valletta, Malta, 2018 - Picture credits: Dustin Cauchi



ERNST NEUFERT II, sculpture at GOOD CONDITIONS, duo show Tom Van Malderen and Kris Van Dessel at DWM Art Space, Antwerp, Belgium, 2019 - Picture credits: wedocumentart.com



FAKE BRITTLE REALITY, mirror sculpture at GOOD CONDITIONS, duo show Tom Van Malderen and Kris Van Dessel at DWM Art Space, Antwerp, Belgium, 2019 - Picture credits: wedocumentart.com

MELBOURNE

Gallery Dedicated to Women Artists Opens in Melbourne



Happy Pack, Coady. Courtesy of Finkelstein Gallery and the artist.



Divine Assembly, Louise Paramor. Courtesy of Finkelstein Gallery & the artist.



Golden Gibbon Hands, Lisa Roet. Courtesy of Finkelstein Gallery and the artist.

Finkelstein Gallery, Australia's only contemporary art gallery dedicated to women artists has opened in Melbourne with an inaugural group exhibition.

Founded by art consultant and advocate Lisa Fehily, the gallery will present works from some of Australia's most exciting emerging and established female artists including Cigdem Aydemir, Lisa Roet, Louise Paramour, Monika Behrens, Kate Rohde, Kate Baker, Deborah Kelly, Coady, and international artists Kim Lieberman and Sonal Kontaria.

Fehily opened the gallery, inspired by the under-representation of female artists in Australia's institutional collections (state museums show only 34% female artists in their collections) and the National Museum for Women in the Arts in Washington D.C campaign #fivewomenartists. Finkelstein Gallery will focus on nurturing the careers and promoting the works of its eight Australian women artists and two international artists both in Australia and particularly internationally.

The gallery represents artists from a range of disciplines including performance and video artist Cigdem Aydemir, renowned for her socially and politically engaging works; emerging pop artist Coady; and established visual artist Deborah Kelly, who explores lineages of representation, politics and history in public exchange across a range of media. www.finkelsteingallery.com

SÃO PAULO

Contemporary Art in Brazil

The Contemporary Art Biennale Sesc_Videobrasil, mainly focused on showing work by artists from the Geopolitical South, is currently taking place in São Paulo, Brazil. The Biennale, which was established in 1983, has become respected as a platform devoted to spreading, fostering and reflecting on art productions from regions including Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania and a selection of countries in Europe and Asia.

55 artists and collectives have been selected by a curatorial team – led by the biennale's founder Solange Farkas – to take part in this edition, entitled *Imagined Communities*. Artists include Ahmad Ghossein, Gabriela Golder, Maya Shurbaji and Tiécoura N'daou.

Sesc_Videobrasil is on until 2 January at Sec May, São Paulo
www.bienalsescvideobrasil.org.br



RICHARD ENGLAND is an architect, poet, artist and the author of several books on art and architecture. His buildings have earned him numerous International prizes and awards.



MALTA

RICHARD ENGLAND

A Work for All Time

Richard England eulogises on one of his favourite 17th century art works, *The Ecstasy of St Teresa* by Gian Lorenzo Bernini at Santa Maria Della Vittoria, Rome

Gian Lorenzo Bernini was not only one of the most prominent artists of his time, but also a multi-disciplinarian practitioner of all the other visual arts. Apart from his superb sacred and secular buildings, his body of works of sculpture in marble remain among the most impressive of all time and many consider them incomparable. So great was his reputation during his lifetime that he was often referred to as the Michelangelo of his century. Even at an early age, Bernini was already working for powerful and wealthy patrons and was soon even receiving Papal commissions. His sculptural work in marble pioneered a new approach to architecture, with his dynamic exact realism and theatrical composition. His *David*, and *Apollo and Daphne*, are perfect manifestations of his genius engulfing the marble with not only a life-like intensity, tension and torsion, but also with overall ethereal rapturous quality. In contrast to his rival Borromini's brooding character, Bernini appears to have been a cordial, congenial personality conducive to maintaining affable relationships with his many clients and patrons.

My favourite work of this unique artist is his *Ecstasy of St Teresa* in the Cornaro Chapel in the church dedicated to Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome, representing the spiritual rapture of the mystical Spanish Carmelite Nun (1515-1582) at her encounter with an angel. This extravagant Baroque piece may be considered a total choreographic work where painting, sculpture and architecture are one inseparable whole. Rudolf Wittkower uses the term 'Gesamtkunstwerk' totality of the arts. Bernini's treatment of the whole ambiance makes the Chapel more of a theatre than a sacred venue. Here the master alloys in an exuberant, theatrical narrative, a euphoric combination of art, sculpture and theatre. The sculpture itself is ignited



The Ecstasy of St Teresa by Gian Lorenzo Bernini at Santa Maria Della Vittoria, Rome, photo credit wikimedia

and ablaze with incandescent light beams descending from the high-level lunette. Bernini's handling of the Saint's drapery is magical in its delicacy and frailty, with its depictions of folds and creases of her loose garments, as if to make one think that the figure is actually clothed in real vestments. So superbly and meticulously carved is the marble that Teresa appears in her dematerialisation as if she is clothed more in silk than in marble. What is even more astounding is the way Bernini renders the saint's ecstasy. The artist recounts that he was inspired by the Saint's own spiritual account of her visions and modelled the sculpture on her narrative. In an almost erotic language, she

describes the angel as "marvellously beautiful with a face which shone as though he was a seraphim," and then continues that "I saw in his hands a long golden spear... this he thrust several times into my heart and it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew out the spear it left me all on fire with a wondrous love for God". The Saint refers to her experiencing a pain both excruciating yet also sweet.

In Bernini's sculpture, the Saint is depicted in ecstasy swooning in spiritual bliss – or is it sexually charged, erotic exhilaration? While the angel is lithe, delicate and sylphlike, the sculptor's depiction of the Saint's facial expression of divine joy reads almost as if she were experiencing a physical orgasm during her spiritual awakening. Bernini however, was not only concerned with the design of the sculpture, but much more so on its setting. As such, he designed the chapel as a small theatre and as a choreographic show case to focus on the sculpture as the main focus. Theatrically illuminated by shafts of natural light filtering in from concealed top lights and further adorned by the artists golden heavenly rays, the sculpture appears as an emblazoned Divine apparition. The whole is an extravagant Baroque setting in a magnificent combination of all the visual arts.

Laterally, the chapel holds theatre boxes rendered in polychrome marbles with members of the Cornaro family participating in the whole theatrical setting. In Bernini's sculpture, divinity intrudes on humanity; the heavenly meets the earthly and the spiritual encounters the materialistic. Bernini's ambiance and dramatic setting, together with his virtuoso treating of the sculpture itself, makes this whole ensemble perhaps the apogee of this master's work. I do not think that on my numerous trips to Rome I have ever missed visiting the Cornaro chapel to pay homage to what I consider to be one of the greatest artworks of all time.

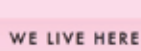
“The sculpture itself is ignited and ablaze with incandescent light beams descending from the high-level lunette.”

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KAREN GRECH

A successful metamorphosis?

The Royal Museum of Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium

Africa Museum, previously known as the Royal Museum of Central Africa, Tervuren, outskirts of Brussels, Belgium

* Review / *Belgium / Colonialism*
October – December – '19

KARIN GRECH is an Austrian-born teacher of English and a part-time sculptor with a passion for art and art history. She lives in Gozo and travels regularly to art shows and exhibitions around Europe.



BELGIUM



New Breath or Burgeoning Congo, Aimé Mpane, placed on a pedestal in the middle of the Rotunda within the Africa Museum

The Royal Museum of Central Africa, known as the Museum of Belgian Congo at its inception in 1910, was, for a time, the last colonial museum of its kind in Europe. Belgium could have just closed it like all the other former colonial powers did with theirs. Instead they decided to confront the ghosts of their past and opted for a five-year, 70 million euro re-modelling exercise. When the museum finally re-opened in December 2018, it was to a mixed reception. Critics implied that the challenge had not been satisfactorily met.

Undoubtedly, the task was an extremely difficult one. As the museum's director, Guido Gryseels, said in an interview, "[e]ntire generations of Belgians came here and got the message that colonialism was a good thing, that we brought civilisation and welfare and culture to Congo". The project of changing what the museum stands for has so far taken ten years. It involved the input of experts from the African diaspora, allowing them a chance to tell their side of the story. There is also an effort to show pre-colonial African history, making the point that Congo had a rich culture and history of its own, way before any colonisation took place.

Gryseels admits that the process of 'decolonisation' is a slow one and is sometimes hampered by the museum building itself. For example, one of the museum's most prominent rooms, the Rotunda, has gilded bronze sculptures embedded in niches that depict Belgium's 'civilising mission' in the Congo. Since the museum is protected by heritage laws these controversial statues cannot be removed. A solution was found by commissioning contemporary Congolese artist Aimé Mpane to produce a work to juxtapose the offending statues. His piece, entitled *New Breath or Burgeoning Congo*, has been placed on a pedestal in the middle of the Rotunda.

Belgium's history of colonisation in the Congo River Basin starts in the latter part of the 19th century when Europe directed its imperialist expansion towards Africa. Representatives from 14 European countries attended the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 to decide how to go about colonising Africa – effectively sharing its resource-rich lands between themselves. King Leopold II of Belgium took this as his cue to claim as his personal fiefdom an area 80 times the size of Belgium. He called it the 'Congo Free State' and, under a philanthropic cover, set about exploiting the country and its people. His reign of terror is reported to have been responsible for the death of up to 10 million Congolese through abuse, starvation, overwork and disease.

Leopold II used the World Fair of 1897, held in Brussels, as a propaganda tool for his Congo project. The colonial exhibition was set up at his country estate in Tervuren, on the outskirts of Brussels, and went so far as to include the deplorable staging of a 'human zoo'.

Still, the exhibition was such a success that Leopold saw the need for a permanent museum, and set about building it with funds derived from his horrific exploits in the Congo. Eventually Leopold's projects ran into debt and the international outcry over abuses committed became so strong that in 1908 he had to transfer authority over his colony to the Belgian government.

The Museum of Belgian Congo opened in 1910, a year after Leopold's death, showcasing mainly the valuable resources – rubber, ivory, wood and minerals – that the colony had to offer. Over the years the collection expanded, adding artefacts, preserved samples of wildlife, and photographic material. Yet the viewpoint for presenting it always remained the white colonisers' perspective. It was only when Gryseels became

director in 2001 that the process of change began. He says that "confronting a colonial legacy in a building constructed to glorify it was an enormous challenge".

In the museum, wall texts have been cleaned of contentious words like 'pioneers' or 'hut', and the new displays highlight the colonisation's many problems. Seeing itself as a "centre for knowledge and resources on Africa", the museum's focus is on education, promotion of sustainability and giving support and help where it is welcomed. Thus, the museum now markets itself as a forum for debate, which condemns colonialism as a system.

The curatorial concept of arranging the collections according to ethnographic themes is aided by the layout of the building, with the exhibition halls grouped around a central courtyard. The display starts with languages and music; covers landscapes and biodiversity; rituals and ceremonies; taking in resources; and, not least of all, history, including colonial history and independence. It genuinely makes for interesting viewing.

Before entering the main exhibition halls, the visitor passes through an introductory space with interactive displays that place the colonisation process in a critical light. Gathered in one dark side room are all the outright racist sculptures that used to be scattered throughout the museum. By putting them there, out of the way, the museum distances itself from its racist and pro-colonial past.

Another display focuses on the manner in which many of the exhibits had been obtained. The legality of acquiring the objects is often questioned – and not just by the museum itself. After the opening of the Africa Museum, the DRof Congo demanded the restitution of the art works that were appropriated by Belgium. >>

6 Review / *Belgium / Colonialism*

October – December –'19



ONLINE



“Gathered in one dark side room are all the outright racist sculptures that used to be scattered throughout the museum. By putting them there, out of the way, the museum distances itself from its racist and pro-colonial past.”

A visit to the Africa Museum throws up many questions. Could the condemnation have been more pronounced? Does it have to be more pronounced? Do we need to look at pictures of atrocities to be able to condemn them? Doesn't the history of the place speak for itself?

On the walls of the tunnel that connects the visitor centre to the main museum, the following quote is written in six languages: “Everything passes – except the past”. Therefore, as we cannot change what has passed, shall we let this museum be what in the German language is so aptly called a *Mahnmal* - best translated as ‘a warning from history’? It is never easy to confront the bitter truth of one's past, once it is known to all. What can make a difference though, is trying to make amends. Despite all the criticism the museum still receives, it can be posited that the Belgian Africa Museum is on the right path to a successful metamorphosis, if it can change the way its visitors perceive this difficult legacy of humanity.

www.africamuseum.be

SWITZERLAND

An exhibition of work by Swiss Bauhaus artist Johannes Itten is on show at the Kunstmuseum Bern.

The exhibition is the first to present Itten's utopian Bauhaus vision of achieving a unification of art and life. It retraces his career's development from Switzerland, through the periods he spent in Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, much of which have not previously received attention. Juxtaposed with leading works of his painted oeuvre, the exhibition illustrates a new angle on Itten's hitherto concealed understanding of the world, and on his intrinsically linked artistic working processes.

Key exhibition pieces are Itten's newly researched diaries and sketchbooks, which were integral to his artistic practice from 1913 onward and have never been shown on such a broad scope before.

www.kunstmuseumbern.ch



Kinderbild, Johannes Itten, 1921/1922, oil on wood, Kunsthau Zürich, 1964 © 2019, ProLitteris, Zürich, photo: Kunsthau Zürich



Self-portrait, Johannes Itten, 1928, oil on canvas, private collection, © 2019, ProLitteris, Zürich

MALTA



Independence Monument, Ġanni Bonnici, 1989

Tribute / Ġanni Bonnici

Sculptor Ġanni Bonnici passed away, aged 86, in August. The Times of Malta described Bonnici as “a pioneer in the use of ceramics in Malta”. Bonnici also created monuments, as well as medals and coins, in bronze. He set up the Malta School of Arts and Crafts at Targa Gap in 1974, leading it until his retirement in 1992.

Bonnici's best-known public work is the Independence Monument in Floriana, inaugurated in 1989 and measuring over eight metres high.

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MALTA

Continued from cover

ANN DINGLI

Art in the Time of Climate Crisis

“Art, it seems, doesn’t merely have to make a theme out of the climate crisis; it has to radically re-invent itself and look to be created within a more sustainable framework.”

Instead, Rakowitz’s installation, *Dull Roar* (2005), described within said booklet as “an inflatable tower block inspired by a 1950s high rise estate in Missouri that aspired to end poverty but ended in demolition,” greeted me forthrightly. I encountered it in flaccid state, halfway between complete collapse and full inflation. The air within it was still whistling out, the smell of its rigid fabric persisting through its downward journey as it decomposed inertly beneath me (a raised timber walkway had been constructed around the installation to, I assumed, induce this exact elevated viewpoint).

After a few minutes of awkward suspension, a ‘dull roar’ indeed took hold of the room. The puddle of grey began to rise up, quite quickly, being inflated steadily by a loud, automated pump. Within seconds the synthetic structure was standing pertly, the simplicity of its form and design echoing in diagrammatic format the Pruitt-Igoe building – St. Louis’ infamous housing project designed by Minoru Yamasaki. Even in its rudimentary articulation, it was easy to recognise the building’s kinship with the modernist principals of Le Corbusier’s ideal residential habitat; a housing ideology that sought to incorporate “three essential joys of urbanism: sun, space and greenery”. Before long (I would guess no longer than 30 seconds), those ideals would depress into practically nothing, signifying the death of a utopian vision of desegregated living. As the structure’s air began to be expelled, I witnessed the installation’s deflation, this time from start to finish – a mournful, fairly silent process that effectively induced feelings of grief and hopelessness at the failure of humanity to realise the dreams and structures of progress that had been built for it. Once the graceful folding of the inflatable block had ended, I was left to contend with two major personal reactions – one, why do we so rarely get things right? And two, how much energy must this installation be using as it inflates and deflates systematically several times a day for the duration of the entire show (approximately two months)?



Dull Roar, Michael Rakowitz, 2005

This is by no means an attempt to call out Rakowitz’s show singularly – it was exceptionally stirring and effective in addressing the issue of holistic sustainability within diverse realms and on unexpected levels. But the strength of climate awareness had successfully invaded my personal gallery-going experience; even here, within the haptic grasp of themes that were deeply profound and important, all I could think of was: carbon footprint.

A few weeks earlier I’d visited Tate Modern’s stimulating showcase of Olafur Eliasson’s work: *In Real Life* – a show that directly addressed the themes of climate change and which highlighted the practice of an artist who has been overtly concerned with the effects of carbon excess on the planet. Like the Whitechapel show, it was satisfyingly potent in delivering messages that appealed to both senses and intellect. But again, I couldn’t easily shake questions on how much energy the large-scale exhibits themselves required to be on display for the length of the show. Was the message of climate awareness more important than the carbon impact of the exhibition itself? In a time where an omnipresent assurance that we are facing one of the greatest ever ecological crises persistently looms, how can any subsequent messages of art remain unobscured?

This specific conundrum speaks to a larger theoretical question, one that has existed as long as morally-driven art has been produced – can a work of art be powerful enough to catalyse or mobilise change? Can art, with its ability to communicate with viewers implicitly, on a level unreachable by political or civic rhetoric, on a level of emotion rather than reason, speak louder than any number of messages conveyed in traditional media? Art has revealed its didactic power in diverse formats over centuries of moral catastrophes. Goya, Picasso, Turner, Haring, Banksy, Ai Weiwei, and countless other artists have made the fight for some segment of social justice at least part of their artistic pursuit. Their bodies of work and theoretical offerings eventually did contribute to change. But is ‘eventually’ good enough and how long does ‘eventually’ take to play out? Is the ‘eventually’ of the Land Artists from the 1960s and 70s finally materialising now? Probably not. At best, it’s reached its teenage years.

But speed is the word of the day when it comes to the climate crisis – or climate ‘emergency’, as Tate referred to it earlier this year when it declared its commitment to “reducing its carbon footprint by at least 10 per cent by 2023 and [...] switching to a green electricity tariff across all four galleries”. The UK institution is not alone. Art Basel’s ‘Conversations’ series tackled ‘The Carbon

Footprint of Contemporary Art’ (despite Kate Brown’s protestations that Everyone at a Place Like Art Basel Is Complicit: *Artists May Be Making Art About Climate Change, But Nobody at the Fair Wants to Talk About It*, as published by artnet News in June. Companies like Rokbox are finding ways to reduce the carbon footprint of biennales and fairs through mitigating the impact of art transportation – in their case, specifically through re-usable and recyclable art crates. At the 58th Venice Art Biennale, the Lithuanian Pavilion, *Sun and Sea (Marina)* – a beach opera about climate change – won the coveted 2019 Golden Lion award for Best National Participation. Things are happening, action is being exercised. But is it enough? Is it fast enough, is it powerful enough – can it compensate for the carbon demands the art world itself is placing on the planet?

When faced with the threat of the insurmountable, with the reality of a crisis that is apparently so far gone that there is little chance that the “sun, space, and greenery” so famously expounded by Le Corbusier could be enjoyed in the same way again by our children and grandchildren – at least not without radical policy change – it’s hard not to feel the air deflating out of our own personal systems. But art cannot be monotheistic, it cannot tackle just one problem at a time. It exists to address nuance; to find the many dark, ignored, malingered woes of humanity and give them a home. It somehow needs to go on doing that whilst adapting to a world that requires less stress placed on its resources and less exploitation of its environment. Art, it seems, doesn’t merely have to make a theme out of the climate crisis; it has to radically re-invent itself and look to be created within a more sustainable framework. If it can manage that, then it can really start to make a change. Then maybe we could start to get things right, for once.



PARIS

Nicolas de Staël

Nicolas de Staël's masterpiece, *Parc des Princes*, will be offered for sale by Christie's in Paris during FIAC week (International Contemporary Art Fair), with an estimated value of €18-25m. The painting has remained in the family of Nicolas de Staël since his passing in 1955 and constitutes a key element in the history of post-war art. Completed in 1952, *Parc des*

Princes measures 2m x 3.5m, and is an abstracted figurative composition of football players, executed with de Staël's palette knife.

The sale takes place on 17 October 2019 at Christie's in Paris. www.christies.com



Nicolas de Staël (1914-1955), *Parc des Princes* - €18,000,000 – 25,000,000

LONDON

20th Century Art & Middle East Sale

Sotheby's 20th Century Art / Middle East sale will include rare and sought-after artists' work from the modern era to the contemporary period. A cohort of masterworks is presented, spanning an array of countries and regions rarely seen, including works by Antoine Malliarakis Mayo, Hassan Hajjaj, Marcos Grigorian, Mahmoud Said, Shirin Neshat, Massoud Arabshahi, and Manoucher Yektai.

The sale takes place at Sotheby's in London on 22 October. www.sothebys.com



Death of a Child, Mahmoud Sabri, sold for €992,000

USA



Nan Goldin, photo credit wikimedia

Nan Goldin Activism Persists

US artist and activist Nan Goldin has continued to protest against big pharma companies and the prescription of addictive drugs, seen as responsible for the current opioid crisis in the US. Her campaigning is largely credited with pushing art institutions to rethink large donations from the Sackler family, owners of Purdue Pharma, the manufacturer of the controversial drug OxyContin.

Following a highly visible and international campaign, the Louvre recently removed the Sackler name from its galleries, while the Tate Museum Group, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art all announced that they will no longer accept donations from the Sackler family.

Goldin was arrested in August, along with fellow protestors in New York, while calling on the State Department to approve the setting up of overdose prevention centres.

MALTA

Tribute: Dame Tempra

Art historian, collector and critic, Dame Françoise Tempra passed away this September. Dame Tempra lived in Malta for almost 30 years. In the late 70s, she founded the Malta International Biennale, presenting Maltese work internationally, and later founded the Tempra Academy.



Image courtesy: Zarco Academy of Art

KAREN ELIZABETH STEED, author of 'Malta: The Beautiful Hour', has lived in Malta for a decade and has a long-time fascination with new science and old science. She is currently at work on a novel about the baroque period.



FRANCE

KAREN ELIZABETH STEED

The Technology of Noticing Oneself



In Provence this summer for the Aix Festival, I decided to drive up to Château LaCoste in Le Puy Sainte Réparate to take in one of the more unusual acts on a crowded schedule of opera: a 15-minute virtual reality opera called *Eight*, which had premiered at the Holland Festival in June. I've been reading books by Jaron Lanier, one of the inventors of virtual reality – he'd given me the idea that I could actually go into a virtual reality installation and come out alive.

Though it's billed as a virtual reality opera, *Eight* is actually a mixed reality environment, using song as the audio. Lanier talks about early experiments with virtual reality sound, and I understand it's still beyond the technology to get an avatar to realistically engage in conversation. Thus: singing, which is more of a flow of sound than speech. Mixed reality has always been the hardest way to present virtual reality; it requires physical presence and the devilishly human sense of haptics – the ability to understand something by touching it. And so, you enter the *Eight* experience by walking between two wafting walls of fabric and there you are greeted by an avatar, and she is singing.

For the next 15 minutes, decked out in a major headset and earphones, I walked along a little path into other worlds. The story is that you are greeted by a woman who invites you on a journey through her earlier life and so we meet her again as a younger woman with limitless power and as a child full of wonder, and fear.

There's a big element of trust in this experience and some of it has got to do with the way you relate to an avatar. Lanier warns that some creators of virtual reality fall into what is known as the 'uncanny valley': 'When an avatar is weird but expressive, the brain is intrigued. When an avatar is just slightly off, then the brain panics.' I noticed the avatars never looked directly at me, they kind of stared off over my right shoulder – weird. I got a bit braver as the experience went on, but never quite stirred up the courage to touch an avatar. If I did it again, I might.

But I did trail along with them, trusting, through a rockfall and the ghostly presence of figures just beyond vision. At one point, I was standing at what seemed to be the edge of the world with a huge, sweeping vista at my feet and there was no way I was going to advance another step despite the avatar's friendly entreaties, because I felt I might fall a very long way down. I did agree to sit on the floor with an avatar child, under a table, while she sang away. *Eight* is so-named because if you write eight as a numeral and put it on its side, it's the symbol for eternity. Eternity in 15 minutes? The composer/director, Michel van der Aa, says that anything shorter than 15 minutes would be 'unsatisfactory', but longer might make people feel sick. Lanier says people used to compare virtual reality to hallucinogenic drugs because they could both make you throw up. For a while Timothy Leary was a big fan.

One message Lanier wants to get across is that virtual reality is not so much an 'escape' from the real world, but instead an intriguing puzzle for our much-underused brains. Instead of being on the outside, for example, thinking of a molecule, get inside and 'think like a molecule: your brain is waiting for the chance'. He says it's a good thing we are living in the age of fake news on social media – essentially mis-stated text, unsubstantiated claims – because what's coming is 'fake reality', a combination of sensory and visual stimulants that will be very hard to detect. We've got to educate our senses to know what is real and what is not. This is not a game anymore: technology firms including Facebook, Apple, Amazon and Microsoft have backed a Partnership on AI to launch a 'deepfake challenge', with leading universities including MIT, Cornell and Oxford. The legitimacy of online information and perhaps the health of democratic institutions are at stake.

There is another element to experiencing virtual reality that Lanier calls 'the technology of noticing oneself'. He says that virtual reality's greatest value is as a 'palate cleanser', which is to say that it takes you so far out of the humdrum of daily life that you can't help but view it with fresh eyes after a virtual reality experience. I was secretly testing this idea as I drove away from Château LaCoste: did the world look different? Unfair question, really, as I've lived in Malta for 10 years and I was driving through French countryside. Were all those

green things, trees? But I did notice things differently when I got home, not all the time, but especially to do with detail and light. I found myself examining shadows for no good reason. I found a grasshopper and gave it to a friend. She seemed surprised.

Eight is a collaborative project with Michel van der Aa and designer Theun Mosk and *The Virtual Dutch Men*, featuring singer-songwriter Kate Miller-Heidke and the Netherlands Kamerkoor.

“Eight is a mixed reality environment, using song as the audio.”

* Spotlight / Norway / Sculpture Park
October – December – '19

NORWAY



Finn Blythe goes to see Bjarke Ingels' *Twist* - the latest addition to Kistefos, one of Scandinavia's largest sculpture parks.

The Twist, image: Laurian Ghinitoiu

FINN BLYTHE

A Twist in Nature

Nestled deep among the pines of Jevnaker, some fifty miles north of Oslo, a shimmering contortion of aluminium and glass spans the winding Randselva river, connecting two forested riverbanks at Kistefos – the largest sculpture park in Scandinavia. This beguiling and inhabitable sculpture is the latest vision from Danish architect Bjarke Ingels, whose design was chosen following an international competition held by Sveaas and is the company's first completed project in Norway.

"The *Twist* is a hybrid spanning across traditional categories," explains Ingels, "it's a museum, it's a bridge, it's an inhabitable sculpture. As a bridge it reconfigures the sculpture park, turning the journey through the park into a loop. As a museum it connects two

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* Spotlight / Norway / Sculpture Park
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NORWAY

“It’s a museum, it’s a bridge, it’s an inhabitable sculpture”

distinct spaces – the vertical gallery shaded from sunlight and the horizontal gallery with panoramic views across the river. A third space is created through the blatant translation between these two galleries: the namesake twist, representing a new challenge for the exhibiting artists and artworks to engage with. The resultant form – complex yet simple – integrates as a newcomer among the sculptures of the park.”

An astonishing feat of mathematics and geometry, the museum’s structural torque bears some resemblance to the group’s soon-to-be unveiled Vancouver House – a 493-foot cantilevered residential tower described by Ingels as a, “contemporary descendant of the Flatiron Building in New York.” The *Twist*, however, will host an international programme of contemporary art exhibitions that will only further enhance the reputation of Kistefos Sculpture Park as one of the most exciting venues to showcase the work of leading artists. Not only does the design provide artists with a stimulating space to respond to, but as an indoor facility, The *Twist* allows Kistefos greater flexibility for artist programming, given the harsh seasonal conditions that currently limit the museum’s opening times. Despite

its fluid profile, the aluminium cladding that gives the appearance of stacked playing cards is formed entirely of straight elements (developed in collaboration with Baume&Mercier) that honour the site’s industrial history. Inside, the museum combines horizontal and vertical spaces, with a central interstitial gallery at the point of its 90-degree twist. Approaching from the south bank of the Randeselva (the museum is accessible from either side), visitors are met by a vast, monolithic entrance, inside of which a windowless, double height cavern reveals itself as an ideal space for housing larger works. Described by Ingels as “introverted”, the vertiginous proportions are juxtaposed by the south end of the structure: a single-storey, “extroverted” space with panoramic, floor-to-ceiling glazing that tapers with the contour of the building to form a skylight that naturally illuminates the gallery.

Walls and ceilings are clad in local Douglas fir slats that reference the surrounding vernacular of country homes and barns, while concrete bearings and structural joints, designed to accommodate the building’s movement, are left exposed. A concrete staircase, leading

down from the northern gallery, reveals one of the building’s most ingenious design elements. This hidden basement, lined with concrete and glass, sits beneath the structure and not only houses art, but also the museum’s bathrooms – providing what must be among the finest of toilet vistas looking out over the park’s sublime natural scenery.

Founded in 1996 by Norwegian businessman and art collector Christen Sveaas on the former site of his family wood pulp business, Kistefos comprises an industrial museum and exhibition galleries as well as an 80-acre sculpture park. Located in an area of extraordinary beauty and unique industrial heritage (the site’s 19th century paper mill is the oldest of its kind left in Norway), its mission is as much about conserving the buildings that had fallen into ruin as celebrating the best of Norwegian and international contemporary art.

The park already features nearly fifty site-specific works by artists including Tony Cragg, Anish Kapoor, Marc Quinn, Jeppe Hein, Philip King, Ilya Kabakov, Lynda Benglis and, as of May this year, a polka-dotted, tentacle-like Kusama sculpture that seemingly grows out of

the water. The new exhibition space, accessed via pathways leading through the surrounding mystical woodland, will represent a natural extension of the existing programme.

To inaugurate this landmark art venue, its opening exhibition pairs the late British painter Howard Hodgkin (1932-2017) with the conceptual artist Martin Creed for the first exhibition of Hodgkin’s work since his death. Curated by Guy Robertson and featuring works from public and private collections (including from Christen Sveaas’ collection), *Inside Out* centres on the dialogue between these two artists and celebrates their shared conviction that art offers a framework for expressing our complex emotional lives. It’s a fitting choice for a building that pays tribute to the contingency between art, landscape and a building that is itself testimony to our compulsive response to the visceral power of natural beauty.

www.kistefosmuseum.com



The Twist, image: Laurian Ghinitoiu



The Twist, image: Laurian Ghinitoiu

* Spotlight / Zimbabwe / Artists Rising
October – December – '19

Z I M B A B W E

CHRISTINE XUEREB SEIDU

Zimbabwean Artists Rising



White Lies, Neville Starling, 2019, installation view at the 58th Venice Biennale, photo courtesy of the artist

While researching Zimbabwean artists, I came to realise the sheer number of established contemporary artists coming from this country. The development of Zimbabwean artists' careers is probably due in part to its consistent participation in the Venice Biennale ever since the 54th edition in 2011, with Raphael Chikukwa being the chief curator each year, and 20 artists having benefitted from this opportunity so far. The 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair, the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art, and art galleries in Zimbabwe – including Gallery Delta's Helen Leiros' pivotal role since 1975 – have also added to much of the success received by Zimbabwean artists.

Despite the large number of artists coming out from the Zimbabwean National Gallery Visual Art Studio and the Harare Polytechnic, installation artist Wallen Mapondera and former curator of Tsoko Gallery, Merilyn Mushakwe realised that many artists didn't know much about self-promotion, and that's when they felt the need to found the Post Studio Arts Collective in 2012. Village Unhu, founded by artists Georgina Maxim, Gareth Nyandoro and Misheck Masamvu, also focuses on art production markets and how the artists need to present themselves, often offering residencies, workshops, internships, exhibitions and meetings. The Njelele Art Station is a meeting place for critical dialogue, where ideas generate into projects that make way for discussion and engage with the general public. Similarly, the Maonero Visual Arts group began in 2016 by a group of artists who work on various projects to improve the lives of visual artists in Zimbabwe whilst showcasing Zimbabwean contemporary art to the world. Black Chalk & Co is a boutique creative agency founded by writer Tinashie Mushakavanhu and artist Nonsikelo Mutiti, operating between Harare and Richmond, Virginia, bringing artists, academics and technologists together to engender a new culture and new forms of creative production. Major art galleries in Zimbabwe include the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, the Catinca Tabaracu (CTG) Harare gallery, Gallery Delta, First Floor Gallery and Tsoko Art Gallery, among others.

Although Zimbabwe is known for its stone sculptures, especially the great Zimbabwean soapstone-carved birds derived from as early as four centuries ago, most contemporary Zimbabwean artists are seen to have explored other artistic mediums besides sculpture. Today, we still find many practising Zimbabwean stone sculptors, and galleries in Zimbabwe specialising in this artform include Stone Dynamics Gallery, Matombo Gallery, Zimsculpt Gallery, Prime Art Gallery and Shona Sculpture Gallery. Many Zimbabwean artists have also ventured into contemporary sculpture. Amongst these artists are the stone sculptors Sylvester Mubayi, Gideon Gomo and Tapfuma Gutsa; sculptors of different mediums and found

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CHRISTINE XUEREB SEIDU
founded Christine X Art Gallery
in 2004 after a university degree
in Art History and Anthropology.
She has returned to Malta after a
year in Ghana where she explored
African art and culture.



Z I M B A B W E



Musha Waparara, Wallen Mapondera, 2018, photo courtesy of the artist and Tyburn Gallery

objects Terrance Musekiwa, Masimba Hwati and Voti Thebe; and welding sculptors Arthur Azevedo and Michele Mathison, whose works usually form installation artworks.

Galleries and collectives in Zimbabwe are ensuring the establishment of Zimbabwean artists internationally. The First Floor Gallery recently hosted the international art event *Emerging Painting Invitational* in Zimbabwe, featuring the two Zimbabwean artists Amanda Mushate and Epheas Maposa. Village Unhu recently hosted a group exhibition with works by Epheas Maposa, Evans Tinashe Mutenga, Nyasha Marovatsanga, Kenny Maruta, Tawanda Takura and Lawrence Duri, and is currently holding a one-man show for stone sculptor Gideon Gomo. Later this year, the Post Studio Arts Collective will be hosting solo shows for the artists-in-residency Takudzwa Guzha and Clive Mukucha. In December, the National

Gallery of Zimbabwe will host the annual exhibition with various Zimbabwean artists. It's through the local galleries that many Zimbabwean artists are getting involved in international shows and fairs.

Currently in Venice, the Zimbabwean national pavilion at the Venice Biennale – which is on until the 24 November 2019 – is featuring the works of well-established contemporary artists Neville Starling, Georgina Maxim, Cosmos Shiridzinomwa and Kudzanai Violet-Hwami. A group show *hybrid* at the Kunsthaus Hamburg – open between the 3rd September and 17th November – will be showcasing the work of Admire Kamudzengerere. The Catinca Tabacaru gallery of Harare, Zimbabwe, participated in this year's 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair in London in early October and will take part in the Artissima Art Fair in Torino in November, representing both Terrance Musekiwa

and Admire Kamudzengerere amongst others. The South African gallery SMAC will also be participating in the 1-54 and the Artissima Art Fair. A collaboration between the Zimbabwean project space Village Unhu and 31 Art Project in Paris formed the exhibition *We Are Here Pamasonga* launching on 20 September in Paris, with artists Misheck Masamvu, Evans Mutenga and Epheas Maposa. A booth at the Also Known As Africa art fair in Paris between in November 2019 will also see a collaboration between Georgina Maxim and 31 Art Project. South Africa is also supportive of Zimbabwean artists, particularly through the FNB Art Joburg Fair and the Latitudes Art Fair, both of which took place recently. The SMAC Gallery exhibited at the FNB Art Joburg Fair representing Masimba Hwati, Wallen Mapondera and Gareth Nyandoro. Also exhibiting were Goodman Gallery, representing Misheck Masamvu, Kudzanai Chiurai and Gerald Machona, and the Stevenson

Gallery representing Portia Zvavahera, amongst others. The Latitudes Art Fair featured the Zimbabwean First Floor Gallery, representing their own Zimbabwean artists, as well as a solo presentation by Wycliffe Mundopa, Black Chalk and Co. participated in the curators' Underline Show in Johannesburg, and again at the New York Art Book Fair this September. The list of established Zimbabwean artists is never-ending but it's also worth looking out for other Zimbabwean artists, many of whom have had their works exhibited at the Zeitz MOCAA in Cape Town, South Africa – among them Anthony Bumhira, Berry Bickle, Calvin Dondo, Charles Bhehe, Chikonzero Chazunguza, Cuthbert Mukononyanga, Dana Whabira, Doris Kamupira, George Masarira, Gresham Tapiwa Nyaude, Janet Siringwane, Lovemore Kambudzi, Moffat Takadiwa, Rashid Jogee, Richard Mudariki, Tawanda Reza and Virginia Chihota. Their determination to succeed is exemplary. The road of opportunities for Zimbabwean artists can only soar higher!



Gundamusaira, Wallen Mapondera, 2019, photo courtesy of the artist and SMAC Gallery

“Galleries and collectives in Zimbabwe are ensuring the establishment of Zimbabwean artists internationally.”



HAPPY HEARTS COLLECTION

Chopard

THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS – SINCE 1860



EDWARDS LOWELL
SINCE 1925

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