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in memory of  
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**ARCHITECTURE**  
more beautiful  
as ruins

The Malta

# artpaper. No:10

€2.00 WHERE SOLD

Wole Lagunju, *Of race, mythology and redefinitions of storytelling*, acrylic on canvas, 2015



+

CHRISTINE XUEREB SEIDU  
**ART MARKET**

## Lagos Art Market Blossoming

“If Lagos doesn’t look to be a destination in the near future, art enthusiasts should definitely check out Nigerian artists at one of the over fifty African art fairs coming up this year globally.”

*Art Market, pg 39*

INTERVIEW / IZABELA PLUTA

## Variable Depth, *Shallow Water*



“The maps on either side of the original paper merge together resulting in new and random distances and depths – simultaneously real and imag(in)ed”

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Museum Barberini, Potsdam  
Museum of Art and Design, Miami  
Dade College, Miami  
National Portrait Gallery, London  
Rijks Museum, Netherlands  
Tate Modern, UK

**T**he global Coronavirus outbreak has gripped the planet, with people across nations united by feelings of trepidation and uncertainty. Its impact on the artworld has been substantial. The annual Venice Architecture Biennale has been postponed by three months and will open at the end of August. Salone del Mobile has also been pushed back, and with Italy's nation-wide lockdown, the hope for its opening during its new June dates is also questionable. Art Basel – one of the art world's most anticipated events – is set to go on as planned, albeit with heightened vigilance, and is scheduled for June 16–21. Art Basel's Hong Kong edition will not, however, take place as planned in March. Many other major art events are yet to release statements. The general status is one of collective limbo.

However, meanwhile, art remains one of our greatest sources of respite. During times of great insecurity, it can bring us back

to moments of contemplation, reflection and relative calm. This issue of *Artpaper* hopefully offers readers a glimpse into some of the exciting events, movements and ideas still prevailing in the art world despite a growing climate of anxiety. Richard England discusses the ruinous beauty of the San Galgano Abbey in Tuscany, while Christine Xuereb Seidu transports us over to Africa to take in the continent's vibrant art scene. Kenneth Zammit Tabona gives us the history of porcelain; Lisa Gwen Andrews pays homage to the work of multi-disciplinary artist, Joseph Chetcuti; and Erica Giusta outlines the predicament of Pinterest, and Ann Dingli positions the work of Sebastian Tanti Burlò as a quiet protest amidst a climate crisis. Finally, Margerita Pulè speaks to Melissa Cowley Wolf, Dr José A Herrera, and Romina Delia about all matters relating to art funding.

We look forward to the global situation becoming calmer and to a feeling of safety being restored amongst all of us. Meanwhile, from my end, I urge everyone to stay safe,

support one another, and enjoy this edition of *Artpaper* as a welcome moment of distraction.

We will be back with another issue of *Artpaper* in June 2020; until then if you would like to get in touch regarding editorial or advertising, contact us by email on [info@artpaper.press](mailto:info@artpaper.press), or call (+356) 9929 2488. You can follow *Artpaper* on Instagram and Facebook.

*Lily Agius*



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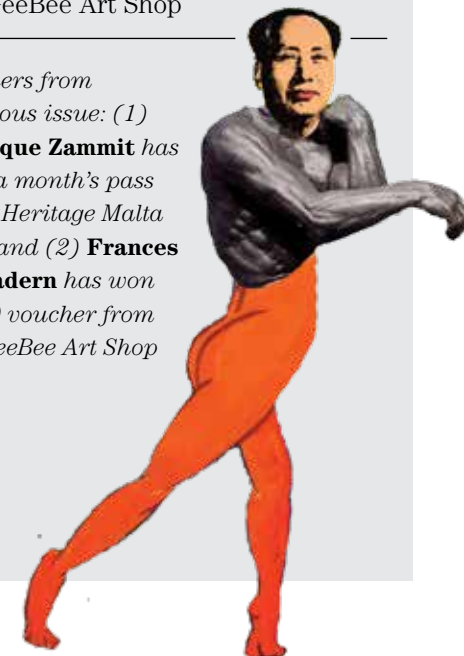
Collage  
by Bruce Eynaud

Go Figure! Can you guess the 3 artworks that make up this figure? Send your answers by email to [info@artpaper.press](mailto:info@artpaper.press) by 31 March 2020, with 'Competition' as the subject, for a chance to win:

**First Prize:** A month-pass to all Heritage Malta sites

**Second Prize:** €20 voucher from VeeGeeBee Art Shop

Winners from previous issue: (1) Monique Zammit has won a month's pass to all Heritage Malta sites and (2) Frances Tresadern has won a €20 voucher from VeeGeeBee Art Shop



# vitra.



## **Eames Shell Chairs, Charles & Ray Eames, 1948**

[www.vitra.com/epc](http://www.vitra.com/epc)

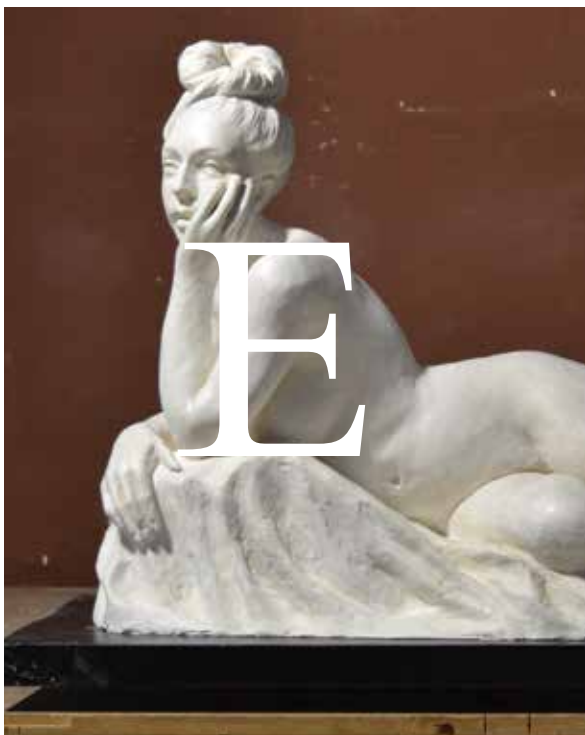
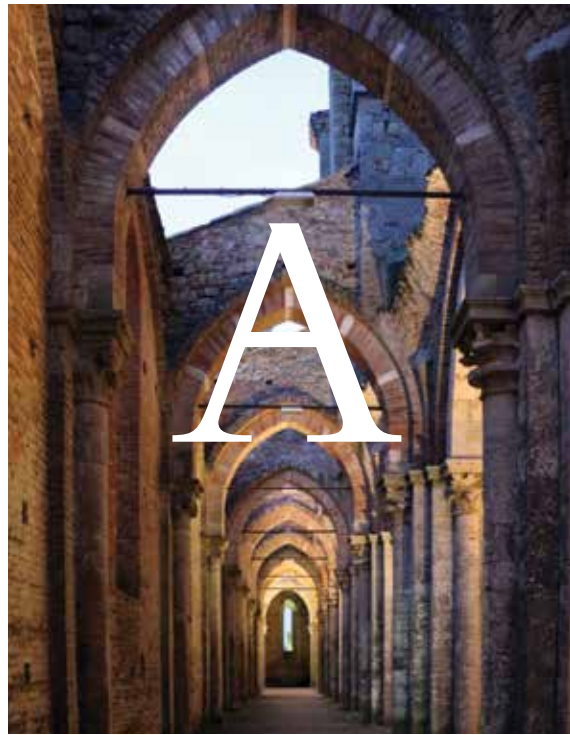
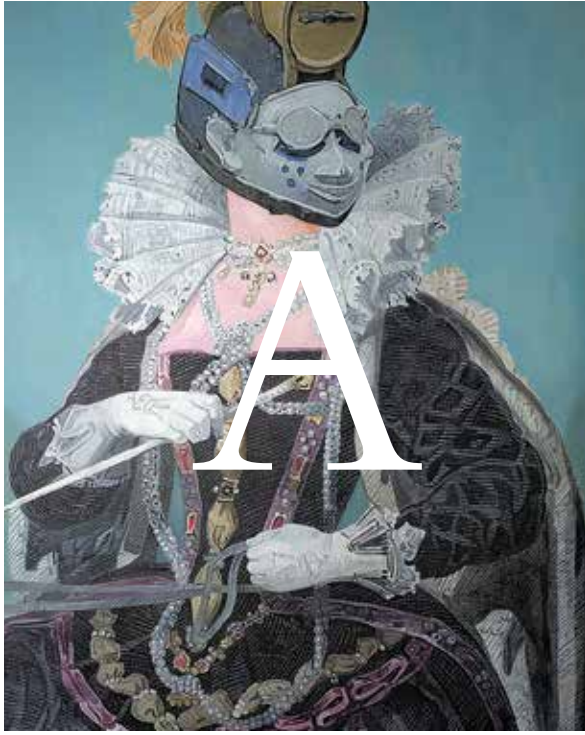
Introduced in 1948 to be eventually marketed as the first mass-produced plastic chair, the Eames Shell Chairs established an entirely new typology in seating. Be it in fibreglass, polypropylene or welded steel wire, the Eames Shell Chairs have been moulded on a human body to offer an increased level of comfort. The multitude of combinations makes it possible to use the chairs in the widest range of settings – from dining rooms, living rooms and home offices to terraces and gardens.

The Eames Shell Chairs by Charles and Ray Eames are now available in a new white powder coating for the metal bases that gives the Eames Shell Chairs an airy, light appearance.

### **Available at your exclusive, local Vitra dealer:**

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**vivendo**



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The Malta  
**artpaper.**



**+** Art News / *On the Scene*  
March - June '20

**03**<sup>.20</sup>  
**+ ON the SCENE.**

*“Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter.”*  
Oscar Wilde

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BOOKS

**01**

Art Features in Documentary Series



Taking its lead from Malta’s rich artistic patrimony, TVM documentary *Sensilhena*, presented by Christine Delicata, covers social and heritage topics from the Maltese Islands. Historian and educator, Hilary Spiteri presents short sequences, covering almost 40 works of art in this series, by many local and international artists. Through meticulous research, Spiteri covers different media, curious facts of the artists’ lives and even the production methods used by the artist.

*Sensilhena* airs weekly on TVM2.

**02**

Blue-chip Investment Technology



KAWS, Companions one of the artworks in the ART CELS platform

An innovative digital platform for blue-chip art investments – ART CELS - has been launched, opening the world of blue-chip art investments to a wider and younger international market. Conceived by Glencore commodities trader, Gijs de Viet and London-based contemporary art gallerist, Elio D’Anna of the House of Fine Art (HOFA), the scheme offers investors equity in the form of digital tokens backed by shares in the artworks as registered assets of a London UK based Limited company. Risk-minimising authentication and secure blockchain expertise have also been built into the technology.

[www.artcels.com](http://www.artcels.com)

**03**

David Hockney the Draughtsman

The first major exhibition devoted to David Hockney’s drawings in over twenty years explores Hockney as a draughtsman by focusing on depictions of himself and a small group of sitters close to him: his muse, Celia Birtwell; his mother, Laura Hockney; the curator, Gregory Evans, and master printer, Maurice Payne.

Featuring around 150 works from public and private collections across the world, as well as from the David Hockney Foundation and the artist, the exhibition includes a series of new portraits; coloured pencil drawings created in Paris in the early 1970s; composite Polaroid portraits from the 1980s; and a selection of drawings from an intense period of self-scrutiny during the 1980s when the artist created a self-portrait every day over a period of two months.



*David Hockney: Drawing from Life is on at the National Portrait Gallery, London until 28 June. [www.nog.org.uk](http://www.nog.org.uk)*



David Hockney, Mother, Braeford, 19 Feb 1979, Sepia ink on paper © David Hockney  
Photo Credit: Richard Schmidt, Collection: The David Hockney Foundation; David Hockney

MALTA

# ASinMalta Art Talks

**T**he ASinMalta lecture series will continue with a new selection of art-related topics and speakers for the season.



Andy McConnell © Steve O'Neill

In April, art historian and National Gallery-trained guide Paul Chapman will speak about the beauty of the work of Matisse, while in May, Professor of Architectural Theory, Colin Davies will give a talk entitled Thinking About Architecture.

Also in April, the ASinMalta will hold a day-long event with Glass expert, Andy McConnell, one of the BBC's Antiques Roadshow team.

For more information, email [asinmalta@gmail.com](mailto:asinmalta@gmail.com).



MALTA



Guy Ferrer, 2017. photo Elisa von Brockdorff, courtesy of APS Mdn Biennale

## Biennale in Old City of Mdina

The third edition of the APS Mdn Cathedral Contemporary Art Biennale, is on show until 18 April. The Biennale is an international collective contemporary art exhibition in which new works are installed in the Baroque setting of the Mdn Cathedral Museum alongside its permanent collection of artworks and *objets d'art*.

This year's theme, *Regaining a Paradise Lost: The Role of the Arts*, centres on the current ongoing environmental

global crisis. The Biennale will question the role that art plays in addressing this issue, its potential to create a space for creative and intellectual exchange, as well as whether it could provide for a better future for all. Participating artists include Darren Tanti and Umberto Buttigieg from Malta, as well as international artists Seishi Irikawa, Astarti Athanasiadou and Irena Paskali.

[www.mdinabiennale.com](http://www.mdinabiennale.com)

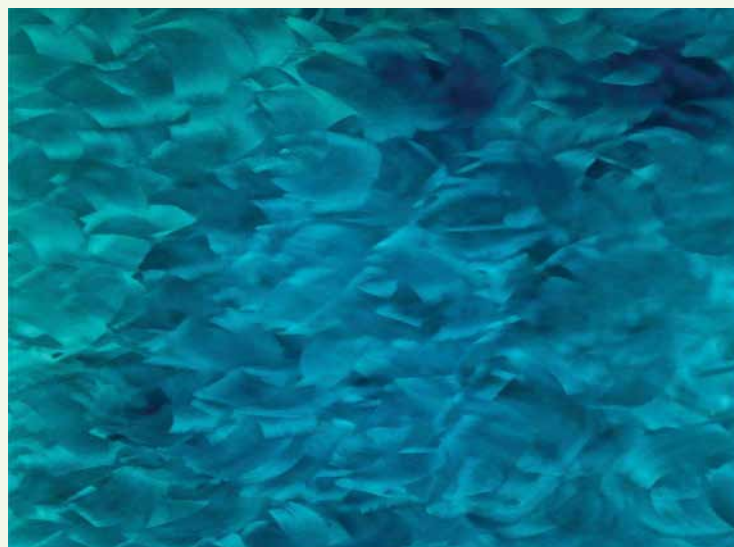
MALTA

## Colour comes to Marsaskala

A new gallery – The Colour Project – will open its doors in Marsaskala this April. Run by Swiss national, Rudy Buhler, the gallery is the first of its kind in the south of Malta, and will exhibit Maltese and international artists in its new premises.

The first exhibition will showcase the work of Anna Galea, best known for her very large watercolour still-lives and abstractions. Dividing her time between Malta and Dubai, Anna has had numerous exhibitions all over the world, from New York to Europe, from the Middle East to Mauritius, and most recently in Paris at the Carrousel du Louvre, and in Valletta.

[www.rudybuhler.art](http://www.rudybuhler.art)



Anna Galea

MALTA

# A Midsummer Night's Dream

What does Shakespeare's romantic comedy from 1595 have in common with the themes of climate change, feminism, and the colonialist, capitalist west? This rendition of Shakespeare's play, commissioned and performed by ŻfinMalta, and created by choreographer Sergiu Matis, adapts its principal themes of obsessive love, nature, and the mystical, to our times. In this Midsummer Night's Dream no one laughs at trivial erotic turbulences anymore. What do we laugh at in the post-apocalypse?

Sergiu Matis is a Romanian choreographer living and working in Berlin. He often uses science-fiction or dystopian scenarios as points of departure for his movement scores. They enable reimagining and reorganising the body towards new intensities

and extremes, making visible an exaggerated version of the bodies of the present. The production also features light design by Malta's Late Interactive and original music by Berlin-based sound artist Antye Greie, otherwise known as AGF.

*Dates & time: 3, 4, 5 April 2020 at 8pm*  
*Location: Orpheum Theatre, Gzira*  
*Bookings: [kultura.mt](http://kultura.mt)*  
*Duration: 90 mins*  
*Age: 10+*

*NOTE: This is an immersive experience in which the audience will move around the space for part of the performance.*



Photo by Kris Micallef

MALTA

# Augmented Reality at Mdina Palace



Palazzo Falson has released an augmented reality game for museum visitors. The fully inclusive bilingual AR game invites visitors to unlock the mysteries surrounding the death of the game's lead protagonist, Lady Caterina.

The app takes its inspiration from a fictional story by game and interaction designer Eleni Papadopoulou, who approached the museum to carry out her research. She wrote a dark love story set in the medieval era which asks the player to follow the game's different characters and solve the mystery on a smart phone or tablet device.


Secrets of Palazzo Falson was designed and developed by local tech company, Mighty Box, with the support of a partnership between the Vodafone Malta Foundation and Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti. The game can be downloaded free upon purchase of a ticket at Palazzo Falson Historic House Museum in Mdina.

[www.palazzofalson.com](http://www.palazzofalson.com)

HAPPY DIAMONDS COLLECTION

*Chopard*

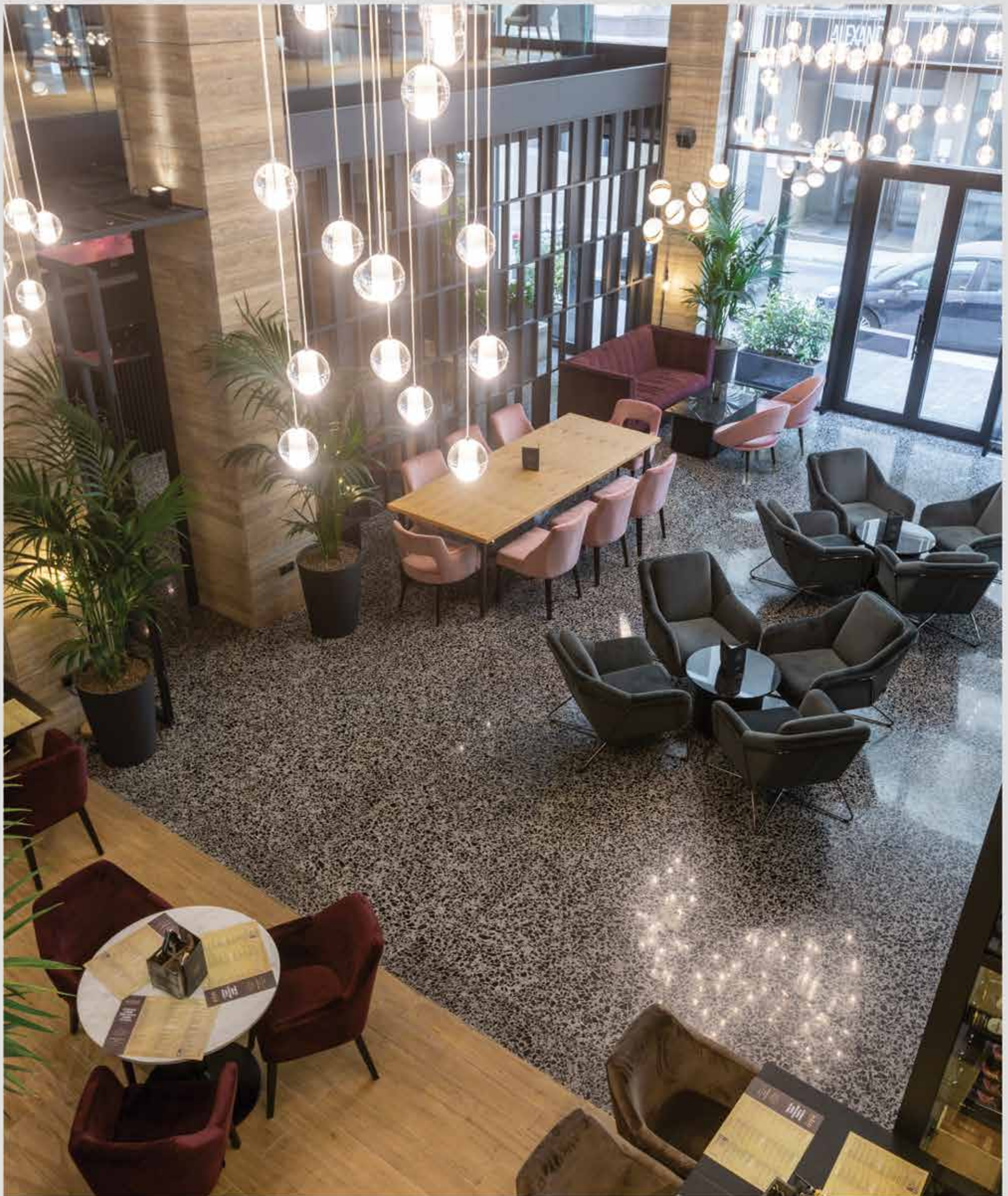
THE ARTISAN OF EMOTIONS - SINCE 1860



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**SENEGAL**

## Dakar 2020 Announced



Laeïla Adjovi, Malaika Dotou Sankofa, © Laeïla Adjovi/Loïc Hoquet

The 14th edition of the Dakar Biennale has been announced with the theme 'I 'Ndaffa / Forging / Out of the Fire'. The Biennale will take place from 28 May to 28 June of this year, under the direction of Senegalese art historian, curator and researcher, Malick Ndiaye. This year's edition will take place at venues across Dakar, and will see over 70 international artists take part. The Dakar Biennale has positioned itself as a champion of contemporary African art; this year's tri-lingual theme reflects its intention to nurture the diversity of African contemporary creativity, while planning new ways for viewers and attendees to relate to and understand the African continent.

[www.biennaledakar.org](http://www.biennaledakar.org)

**NETHERLANDS**

## Dutch Museum and Art Dealer in Hacking Con

While negotiations between Dutch museum Rijksmuseum Twenthe and a London / New York-based Old Masters gallery Dickinson were taking place in 2019, cyber criminals managed to intercept their communications and convince the museum to put €2.85 million into a fraudulent account.

Each party is now claiming in court that the other was hacked, with Rijksmuseum Twenthe currently in possession of the 1824 John Constable painting

*A View of Hampstead Heath: Child's Hill, Harrow in the Distance*, even though Dickinson has not received payment for the work.

Although it is not known exactly how the hackers operated, it seems that they were able to intercept emails and send a number appearing to come from Dickinson, including one with instructions to deposit payment into the Hong Kong account.

[www.artsy.net](http://www.artsy.net)



The Rijksmuseum Twenthe in Enschede. Wikimedia Commons

**ONLINE**

## Art Basel announces Online Viewing Rooms

Art Basel has launched a new digital-only platform for its galleries and collectors. From 20 March, Online Viewing Rooms will give visitors the opportunity to browse thousands of artworks presented by Art Basel participating galleries, many of which will be online exclusives. The exhibiting gallery can then be contacted directly for sales inquiries. The Viewing Rooms will run in parallel to the three shows in Basel, Miami Beach, and Hong Kong, and will be accessible via the website and the Art Basel App.



Leeahn Gallery © Art Basel

The initiative has proved timely in the context of the cancellation of the 2020 Hong Kong fair, with all the galleries which had been accepted for this show being invited to participate at no cost for this first edition. It is also an example of the artworld's shift towards digital technologies, and the linking of galleries and collectors online. [www.artbasel.com](http://www.artbasel.com)

**COMIC**

BRUCE MICALLEF EYNAUD



MALTA

# Agility

## The future of work

How will we work tomorrow? It is a topic on everyone's lips, but hardly anyone asks the question, 'how do we create more and new corporate values?'. A turning point lies ahead: is it time to rethink work methods and forms of organisation and move away from established routines?

Raphael Gielgen, Trendscout at Vitra believes that "the successful companies of tomorrow are driven by curiosity and creativity." They create new values for the company by recognising their employees' untapped skills, redefining work and identifying new possibilities.

Agile working originates from the *Manifest for Agile Software Development*, written in 2001, and is today much more than just a buzzword. Derived from digital technology, this organisational and work philosophy differs radically from the practices of most traditional companies.

Agility is not an end in itself. While many firms have successfully introduced agile processes, others have failed and returned to previous structures. Agile working is no solution if it does not suit the company and brings no improvements. Companies that wish to adopt agile methods must undergo a major cultural and organisational transition, while also adapting their offices to these new work processes.

Since the mid-1960s, Vitra has marketed the Action Office – a system devised by designers Robert Probst and George Nelson. This kindled an interest in developments in the working world. From 1991 to 1993, the designers and thinkers Andrea Branzi, Michele de Lucchi and Ettore Sottsass conceived the Citizen Office project at Vitra's request, which was presented in the form of a highly acclaimed exhibition. The interior designer Sevil Peach created the Network Office in 1999 on the Vitra Campus.



In 2006, Vitra launched the concept Net 'n' Nest for communication and quiet retreat in open-plan environments, and the Office of Options in 2012. Along with these theoretical roots, Vitra's knowledge is founded on the experience it has acquired from countless office projects for clients across the globe. Agile companies wish to act with initiative and be adaptable and inclusive. This should be reflected in the flexibility of their offices and furnishings.

According to Marko Prislin, Managing Partner at Brainbirds, "agile organi-

sations need agile offices." Bringing a flexible, agile way of thinking into a room, will give the room the flexibility to change. "Agility doesn't stop at the door; it encompasses the office space itself. The office is in fact a manifestation of the thought process."

Download the newspaper about work here: [www.register.vitra.com/agility](http://www.register.vitra.com/agility)

Your exclusive, local Vitra dealer: Vivendo, Mdina Road, Qormi, QRM 9011 | [vivendo.mt](http://vivendo.mt)

MALTA

# Lighting a Marouflage Ceiling

Light Design Solutions were approached by the restorers Atelier Del Restauro, to provide a lighting proposal for the newly restored ceiling painting at the chapel dedicated to the conversion of St. Paul in Valley road Birkirkara. The marouflage work recounts chapters from the life of St Paul Apostle in Malta and the ordination of the first Maltese Bishop – Light Design Solutions went on to design and install the pieces lighting system.

For millennia, churches were spaces with very little artificial light. During pre-dawn or night services, worshippers relied on candles or torches to illuminate their church, or used moonlight with which to see. But with the advent of electricity, churches that had once hosted prayers in darkness could now be lit with the glow of electric lights.

Properly illuminating a work of art can make a huge difference to how it is dis-



The newly restored marouflage work at the chapel dedicated to the conversion of St. Paul in Valley road Birkirkara, recounting chapters from the life of St Paul Apostle in Malta and the ordination of the first Maltese Bishop.

played; a well-lit work which moves its audience to tears might not have the same effect if it lies in shadow or is too brightly lit. With proper lighting techniques – whether an elaborate display or simply a soft and subtle highlight – an artwork can be admired safely and optimally for many years.

However, the main concern in choosing suitable lighting for an artwork is determining the conditions that will best preserve it. Aggressive lighting choices can cause heat and light damage, resulting in permanent colour distortion and deterioration.

When Light Design Solutions were approached by Atelier Del Restauro to provide lighting for the newly restored ceiling painting, they first conducted lighting calculations to verify the intensity, distribution and positioning of the potential light fittings, to light the piece while safeguarding its preservation, but also in order to ensure the accurate portrayal of the artwork's colours. They sought out a high CRI (colour rendering index) in the lights to ensure an optimum colour vibrancy.

The installation of the lighting was also important; care was taken not to damage the walls, and no holes were drilled in the stone of the church's cornice. The marouflage ceiling of the newly restored St Paul's Church is now perfectly lit and can be admired by worshippers and art enthusiasts alike.

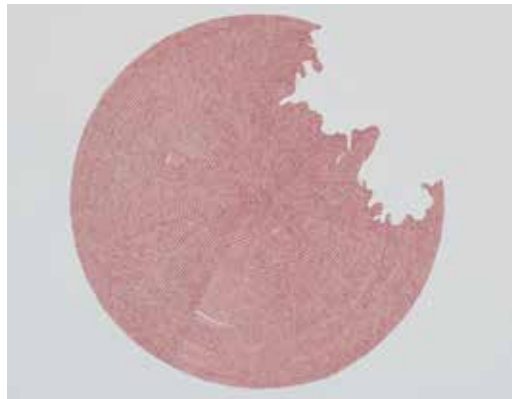
[www.lds.com.mt](http://www.lds.com.mt)

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**FRANCE**

## Loewe Prize Shortlist Announced

The Loewe Foundation has announced the 30 shortlisted artists for the 2020 Loewe Foundation Craft Prize. Each finalist's work will be exhibited at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris from 21 May to 12 July 2020. The finalists, hailing from 18 different countries, range from newly emerging artists to esteemed leaders in their fields. This year's finalists were chosen by a panel of experts from 2,920 total submissions. The Craft Prize 2020 recognises the shortlisted artists as having made fundamentally important contributions to the development of contemporary craft.



Waqas Khan, *The Library Has No Letters II*, one of the shortlisted finalists of this year's Loewe Prize

The Loewe Foundation promotes creativity, and safeguards heritage in the fields of poetry, dance, photography, art and craft. The award comes with a €50,000 prize and will be announced on 19 May 2020.

[www.craftprize.loewe.com](http://www.craftprize.loewe.com)

**ITALY**

## Salone del Mobile Rescheduled to June



Salone del Mobile, photo credit: wikimedia commons

Milan's much-awaited Salone del Mobile furniture week has been postponed due to the outbreak of Coronavirus in Northern Italy. Since the outbreak, schools in Italy have been closed and travel has been restricted in and out of several Italian regions. Other events such as MIDO, the world's biggest eyewear fair have also

been postponed, while several museums have been closed temporarily. Salone del Mobile, the world's largest furniture fair, is now scheduled to take place from 16 to 21 June.

**MALTA**

## Meandering Furniture for a Valletta townhouse



Tom van Malderen, *Liwi*, photo: Julian Vassallo

Sculptor and exhibition designer Tom Van Malderen recently completed the design and creation of a set of sinuous furniture titled *Liwi*, turning an often stern and straight-lined set of furniture into a more playful and relaxed environment.

Instead of the traditional dining table with a formal 'head', Van Malderen designed the family table to be more dynamic in its use, and to make the most of

the townhouse's stunning Valletta and harbour views. The meandering surface allows for more versatile daily use by turning segments into a home studio, a reading area, and an intimate meeting and eating corner. Together with a set of mobile one- and two-seater benches, the stage is set for a flexible environment, where shifting interactions and changing micro social events unfold whether the client is on her own, engaging in an intimate meeting, or entertaining a large crowd.

A forest of thin steel legs and flanges retains the table-top's playfulness and lightness, leaving ample under-table space and providing twelve clear seating pockets for legs and knees. The shelving structure is also broken up to achieve a balance between structural stability, usability and sculptural qualities. As a tiny uniting detail, edged profiles along the seating and shelving provide additional mobility to the benches and extra strength to the shelves. With minimal ingredients, *Liwi* tells multiple stories, reaches out in space, and maximises its users' experiences. [www.tomvanmalderen.com](http://www.tomvanmalderen.com)

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\* Exhibiton / Malta / Sebastian Tanti Burlò  
March - June '20

MALTA



ANN DINGLI

# The Gentle Protest of *Other Places*

In May 2019, the Golden Lion award at the Venice Art Biennale was awarded to the Lithuanian pavilion, *Sun & Sea (Marina)* – a performative piece about climate change that doubled as an opera about a day at the beach. Meanwhile, in the increasingly packed rooms of Tate Modern, Olafur Eliasson presented a series of climate-motivated artworks that audiences couldn't get enough of. Climate awareness in the art world (and beyond) had begun to double as dynamite Instagram fodder, signalling a moment where environmental activism emerged from the territory of eccentric hippies and ignorable scientists, augmenting itself solidly into the pathological mainstream. Between Venice flooding, Australia burning, and summer temperatures in Europe reaching peak scorch – climate change has well and truly arrived on the scene.

When a subject of concern reaches these levels of internet hysteria, it becomes both a good and a very dangerous thing. Popularity breeds carelessness – disinformation is exchanged licentiously, focus misguidedly diverts

to creating heroes and villains, and – worst of all – it all too quickly fades into background noise. As the artist who holds the greatest understanding of humanity's absolute deference to trends once said; "if you look at a thing long enough, it loses all of its meaning". And as each of us mindlessly swipes across yet another image of a burning koala in a bid to land on the next scintillating hashtag, Warhol is recurrently proven right.

When political cartoonist and artist Sebastian Tanti Burlò presented a series of thirteen watercolour vignettes to me as a fairy-tale commentary on man's relationship with nature, it felt as though someone had turned off a noisy machine I hadn't realised was on. *Other Places* brought all of the planetary concerns surrounding this unprecedented moment of crisis back into focus. Yet it did so by resisting Burlò's signature shockery. This series was quiet, magnetic in its subtlety. It worked to subvert the flood of screaming content on climate change that had come to function as a kind of global anaesthesia. In-

\* Exhibiton / Malta / Sebastian Tanti Burlò  
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MALTA

stead, it delved into a world that could only exist in the realm of the imagination.

“When I created these works, in my mind I was writing a short story for each one,” Burlò explained, “[but] people come in with their own interpretation, with their own imagination, with their own back-story. I’m just creating a space for somebody to look in and play – if they want to”.

With *Other Places*, Burlò creates an ambiguous framework for viewers to construct different possibilities for how nature and mankind through architecture can co-exist. By offering them a chance to look at an image of a giant flower emerging from a stone tower, or a thousand daisies cascading in a moat-like fashion around the edge of an urban island, Burlò puts forward a proposition of absurdity. Yet he does so with distinct purpose. By providing an alternative model for how the man-made and natural worlds can endure as companions – by returning to a scenario where nature came first – he forces us to take a hard look at how we have abused it.

“This is a reaction to the way we have treated nature,” Burlò continued. “We have tried to dominate [nature] for the survival of our species in such a way that now we have created these cities where nature is alien. Nature is now fixed in pots. Nature is prescribed to certain areas – to traffic islands. Those are the national pockets that we’re allowing to be green”.

“We seem to have removed ourselves from the natural order, we think we’re separate from it. When in reality, we are part of it – not above or below it. We’re another piece within it. I don’t think there’s any difference between a tree and us. There’s as much responsibility to protect a human life as there is to protect natural life – an animal or a tree”.

Despite humanity’s propensity to overcook, stretch and make unrecognisable its own most dire catastrophes, the world’s problems will always persist past our apathy. The planet will continue to perish even as we swipe past the latest scientific analysis on how, why and how fast. Mankind will continue to enable a consumerist way of life even while digitally crying out for #ClimateJustice. *Other Places* represents a moment when the shouting dies down. It proposes different versions of a natural order, and in doing so renders our current reality redundant. *Other Places* resists the trending diatribe and gives us paint, paper and stories. It compels us to picture a world we haven’t already plundered, encourages us to break beyond the background noise, and reminds us to know our place. 🌱

The exhibition titled *Other Places* by Sebastian Tanti Burlò, set to take place at 48 Melita Street, Valletta, has been postponed following safety precautions recommended for the COVID-19 virus.



JOANNA DELIA

# Re-Drawing perspective

Joanna Delia speaks to artist Matthew Attard about his career and his current artistic practice.

**A**rt is subjective they say. Truth is relative. Perception, perspective, privilege and point of view are things that skew each person's version of reality, each human's idea of what constitutes the truth.

I first met Matthew Attard in 2011 when he had been awarded a one-year art residency at Forte Marghera by Eventi Arte Venezia. It was one of those instances when you enter a room with Italian and French acquaintances and randomly bump into a fellow-Maltese. I was immediately enthralled by his work, research and dedication.

The first time I was fortunate enough to see work by Matthew Attard, he was

playing with the idea of perspective mixed in with his love and fascination for drawing. I knew immediately this was an artist to watch out for. His wire sculptures formed poignant figures, decipherable only when one views them from a single position. From any other viewpoint the sculpture presents what can be thought of as fragmented abstract forms, and therefore although the work is static, it encourages physical engagement by the viewer while they walk around looking for meaning and revelation. 'A visual discovery' as Matthew describes it. The medium worked, and through several exhibitions his subjects were varied, powerful and socially relevant in our time.

In Venice, he began developing his ongoing practice, which predominantly in-



#quackmeup series, 2019 Digital drawing on D-Bond, 60 x 45cm. Courtesy Galleria Michela Rizzo, Venice



Installation shots from Vienna Contemporary, 2019. Courtesy Galleria Michela Rizzo, Venice

volves a lot of research; more recently including adapting devices such as an eye-tracker in an artistic context. He is interested in what we would produce if we could draw with our eyes, using pupil movement as a drawing practice. In a sense, this seems to me to be the reverse of his previous medium, taking visual perspective to a whole new level.

Matthew Attard graduated with a Master of Arts degree from the Department of Digital Arts at the University of Malta in 2018. He has since exhibited in Venice, London, Valletta, Beijing and Los Angeles. In 2018, he was awarded the Under 30 prize at ArteFiera, Bologna. In 2019, he was part of the exhibition *Ten Artists to Watch* at the Los Angeles Centre for Digital Arts.

Last year he participated in two collective shows at Galleria Michela Rizzo; *Soglie e limiti*, curated by Elena Forin and *Dinamogrammi*, curated

by Viana Conti. Attard was also present at the Artissima Art Fair project Telephone, at Vienna Contemporary 2019 and Art Verona 2019. Matthew also produced the solo project room, *Equivocality*, in March, and was named finalist in the Rotary Art Prize for artists under 40 in Italy.

He is a current practice-based PhD student at the Edinburgh College of Arts, supported by the Malta Arts Scholarship scheme.

**JD: What is art for you?**

MA: I see art as a practice which attempts to visually and conceptually interpret the world around us. I like to see it as something which is 're-learnt' or 'un-learnt' by every generation. At the same time, we can (and should) never reach a conclusive definition of art, as otherwise there would be little point in making it anymore.

**+** Interview / Malta / Matthew Attard  
March - June '20

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.



**JD: With your wire drawing series, you produced works related to sex – perhaps you want to depict female pleasure... and then the washed-up dead asylum seekers... powerful. Is that something you wanted to talk about through your art?**

MA: The works related to sex (or our body and its pose/attitude) and the migrants kind of come from the 'same' project, i.e. I was interested in appropriating images of 'us' from the extensive visual culture around us. You might be reading an article about immigration, next to which your Instagram window is open, and from your physical window you can see a lingerie ad, and so on... Our attention and knowledge changes continuously and our perception of the world (which is also loaded with differences from one another) is shaped up through thousands of images we are faced with in our daily routine among many other factors (perhaps also unknowingly).

So, these works were not trying to portray a literal meaning – like female pleasure among other things (or any other similar narrative) – I think that would be risky. This is why they are images distributed in space, linear sculptures. The viewer is able to move around them and activate a personal perception...

They are 'flirting' with the audience's own views rather than exhibiting a statement. It is also important for me that these installations remain in the 'realm of drawing', alluding to something meaningful but inconclusive (and worthy of possibilities, viewpoints and options).

And, yes, the immigrants' images are of course powerful, and I find it even more meaningful when viewers are looking at the bodies and slowly build up to a realisation of what they actually looking at – because of course all of these images are de-contextualized from their environment.

This appropriation of images and perceptive play, or deceit, also led me to superimposed drawings, such as in the Equivocality show, and the images presented in the Dinamogrammi exhibition.

**JD: What about your work with eye tracking? Why did you first decide to start your research in this area?**

MA: The eye-tracking started during the Masters by Research that I read for at the Digital Arts Department in Malta. John Berger describes drawing as 'an autobiographical record of one's discovery of an event - seen, remembered - or imagined'. I agree with this statement, but I also acknowledge that I live in a different world from Berger, and I am interested in seeing how drawing (and its meaning) can be re-evaluated in my contemporary times.

I wanted to explore how we would record this mental imagery if the artist's hand was taken away.

What I am doing in my PhD is to continue from that point. I am looking at the practice with a more in-depth approach, starting from the hand, and will eventually work on the body and participatory works.

**JD: What upcoming exhibitions do you have planned?**

MA: At the moment I am working on some new material as a result of my ongoing PhD, and my next show should take place in July, hosted by Valletta Contemporary.

**JD: Do you feel the Maltese environment is receptive to your art?**

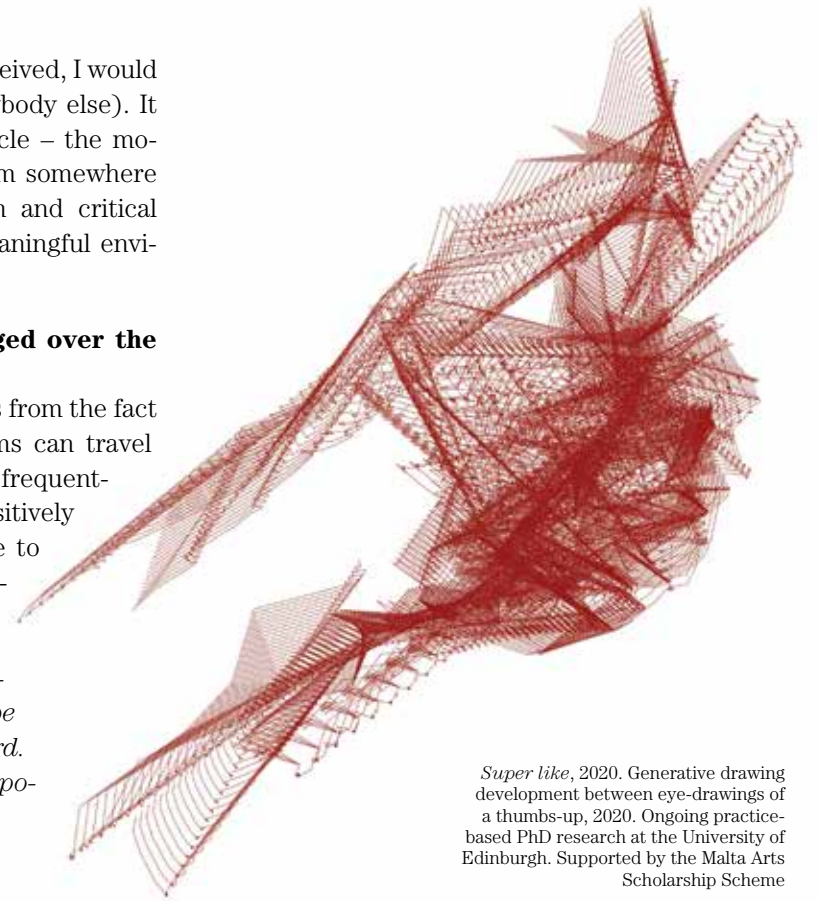
MA: I think so, yes. Although this is a bit difficult for me to understand, because I haven't exhibited much (yet) in Malta. Also, receptive can mean many things, and most of all, irre-

spective of how the work is received, I would still work on it (as should anybody else). It is not just a matter of spectacle – the motivation of working comes from somewhere else. Therefore, confrontation and critical dialogues are crucial for a meaningful environment.

**JD: How have things changed over the years?**

MA: The biggest change comes from the fact that the local artistic platforms can travel for art-related purposes more frequently than in the past. This is positively changing our critical response to both art production and its acknowledgement. 📍

*More information about Matthew Attard's work can be found on [www.matthewattard.com](http://www.matthewattard.com) or [www.vallettacontemporary.com](http://www.vallettacontemporary.com).*



*Super like, 2020. Generative drawing development between eye-drawings of a thumbs-up, 2020. Ongoing practice-based PhD research at the University of Edinburgh. Supported by the Malta Arts Scholarship Scheme*

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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.



MALTA

KONRAD BUHAGIAR

## The Art of War and Remembering

Sometimes, after work, when I leave my office and turn the corner into a street lined with cafes and bars, I get a feeling of dread I cannot easily explain. It is the twilight hour when darkness falls suddenly and the town's pale walls are dipped in the colours of the night – black and purple and gold. I struggle past the crowd of nocturnal creatures that emerge from the shadows in their short, tight dresses and branded suits. They talk loudly and gesticulate, and their twisted faces turn up to the dusty light of a street lamp. The men have darting, predatory eyes and the ladies flirt brazenly above fleshy bosoms that quiver to the rhythm of their lusty laughter. The air is thick with perfume and desire, punctuated by cigarettes and red wine. I can't help but think, as I make my way through the clamorous crowd, of the expressionist paintings that depict the decadent Berlin nightlife of the interwar period, with their heavy, brooding premonition of war rumbling on the horizon.

The explanation for my foreboding is all around me. Several exhibitions on the theme of war and destruction have recently been organized in major museums all around the world, Hannah Arendt's 1951 book about totalitarianism is flying off the shelves and, only last month, on the 4th of February, a masterwork by George Grosz entitled *Hitler in Hell*, that was privately owned by the Grosz family



Erna Schmidt-Carol, *Chansonette*, 1929  
© Estate Erna Schmidt-Carol

and recently acquired by the Deutsche Historisches Museum, was unveiled in Berlin. The exiled painter – a communist, pioneer of the irreverent Dada art movement, and a fierce critic of Hitler's nationalism – described the painting as a representation of the dictator as a 'fascist monster or as an apocalyptic beast' and depicted him presiding over an underworld of mass death and destruction.

Social unrest and political upheaval were rife during the 1920s before Grosz emigrated to the US, particularly in Germany where inflation and mass unemployment were the consequence of the defeat suffered during the Great War. Many New Objectivity (*Neue Sachlichkeit*) artists depicted life in the big city, the social inequality that resulted from economic depression, increased movement provided by new means of transport, growing suburbs where labourers' housing and new factories belching smoke blurred the boundaries of the traditional town.

'Aftermath: Art in the Wake of World War One', an exhibition that showed at the Tate Britain in 2018, tackled the social themes of this period from a political perspective. In Britain and Germany, the women's rights movement began to bear fruit and women were able to vote for the first time. Their increased presence in the workforce gave them greater economic freedom and independence and, as a result, their appearance in urban space, and indeed in the artistic representations of the latter, became widespread. Not only did they populate the streets and squares and gardens of the city but also the public spaces of entertainment, the theatres and bars and clubs, with their masculine clothes and short, bobbed hair, alongside the ubiquitous prostitute in varying state of undress. Urban society is represented as either as a hotbed of decadence, perversity and moral corruption, or as a springboard to new opportunities. The ordinary worker, on the other hand, as well as the wounded soldier, are often presented as heroic figures against a backdrop of the Jazz and dance culture that swept across the cities of London, Paris and Berlin. The city, transformed into a pleasure-seeking hub, offered the facilities necessary for a release from the difficulties and drudgery of daily life.



George Grosz, *Daum marries her pedantic automaton George in May 1920*, *John Heartfield is very glad of it*, 1920, Berlinische Galerie

An exhibition on a similar theme is currently showing at Tate Modern in London. Entitled 'Magic Realism: Art in Weimar Germany 1919-33', the impressive mixture of eros and thanatos, sex and death, depicted in the paintings exhibited is representative of the decadent art and literature of the period. Here, the main protagonist is the Weimar Republic, the budding German democracy established in 1919, that failed to lift the German economy from the post-war doldrums and was consequently overrun by Hitler. It seems to have found its metaphor in the cabaret image, the sensual, decadent art of Weimar's jazz-filled nights, full of freedom and opportunity as well as of perversity and darkness.

'Into the Night: Cabarets and Clubs in Modern Art', another exhibition, recently closed, that showed at the Barbican Art Gallery in London, proves that these venues were not just places of entertainment. They were the city's crucible of artistic and creative endeavour that attracted people from the fringes of society, artists, non-conformists and thrill-seekers in search of liberation and sexual and artistic experimentation. Caricatures of their flamboyant clientele filled the canvases of artists like Max Beckmann and George Grosz, together with the fragmented backdrop of an expanding, dissolving cityscape. Here, the arts flourished. Literature, design, art, music, dance and architecture all found new energy in the depths of these dark and cavernous hangouts, where the air of hedonism fed on the ineffable premonition that this revelry was not going to last.

All these prominent art manifestations seem to say that there is a common and universal anxiety informing the contemporary zeitgeist that feeds on the horrors of the not-so-distant past. Our present political moment, the election of Donald Trump, Brexit and what Arendt meant when she defined totalitarianism as a form of 'organised loneliness', gives us a sense that a crisis is occurring that we do not know how to address. The main subject of the inter-war artists whose work is exhibited here is certainly the isolation of modern life. It had its solution in transient and ephemeral entertainment. But even as the lonely individual found temporary solace and enjoyed the short-lived limelight, war and mass-extinction were silently being conceived back-stage. Arendt's focus, too, was on the isolated individual who has lost a kind of rootedness in the world and is therefore prey to the take-over of ideology. Is this any different from our own contemporary loneliness? Spewed by globalisation and the tyranny of social media, our over-arching connectedness is also at the root of our individual loneliness. It is the ideal basis for the perception of the 'other' as superfluous and dispensable.

At the inauguration at the Deutsche Historisches Museum, the German Minister of State for Culture, Monika Grütters, noted that "George Grosz' apocalyptic vision of terror looks like an appeal, like a warning against forgetting. It is works of art like this that help us learn the right lessons from history." ●

MALTA

LISA GWEN ANDREWS

# EX AERE

In memoriam of Joseph Chetcuti

I never met Joseph Chetcuti. I wish I had.

Stepping into the Luqa foundry, I sense his lingering presence. The wondrous space, with impossibly high ceilings, is a delicious amalgamation of clutter and heavy-weight machinery, which juxtaposes three-dimensional works, portrait busts, plasters and reliefs placed on various surfaces, and hung on the walls. This is what a workshop / artist studio should look (and feel) like. This is the kind of space in which magic happens on a daily basis.

After taking in the cavernous space, I take a closer look and start to notice the details; my eyes rest on the photos affixed to the interconnected spaces. Chetcuti is present in all of them, and in many others, one or more of his sons feature prominently. Christopher, his eldest, who has now taken over his father's business, often captured alongside him.

Upstairs, I am shown around the study, and what seems to be an open plan space that once housed life-drawing classes. Dozens of maquettes, plasters, drawings and paintings once again punctuate the room. The three-dimensional works fight for attention on the industrial shelving, so much so, that many others are lined across the floor. I recognise a few faces of past sitters; others, I can only wish I recognised, or knew, such is their stance and air of sophistication.

I am allowed to sift through hundreds of photos, of an innumerable number of sculptural works produced over the decades. I almost feel like I am trespassing on intimate memories. And yet, I can't help but wonder.... for such a prolific bronzesmith, and a sculptor / artist in



Joseph Chetcuti with Frans Galea, posing with one of his first bronze castings in Pembroke, circa 1994



Joseph Chetcuti with Vincent Apap, admiring the modelling in process for the Nadurin Vittmi tal-Gwerer Memorial, in Pembroke (date unknown)



Joseph Chetcuti working on a commission at the foundry in Luqa (sculptor unknown)

his own right, why was Chetcuti such a low-key character? His reserve might be the reason why his name hardly ever showed up in exhibitions, or why the foundry is mostly known to a tight circle of artists and individuals working directly in the field. In fact, Chetcuti only participated in a handful of exhibitions and collective shows; between 1985-1998 he

was active on the *Lljieli Mediterranji* platform; in 2014, he organised his first and only solo show at the Malta Government School of Art. The last exhibition he participated in was in 2018, titled 'Tactile: 12 Concealed Sculptures', the exhibition, which was held at the Valletta University Campus, played on the senses through a series of works pro-

duced by Malta-based and international visual artists.

Having originally been trained under Vincent Apap in Malta, in his early twenties, Chetcuti was awarded a full-time scholarship by the Italian government to attend the Accademia delle Belle Arti, in Florence, where he furthered his practice-based studies in drawing, modelling and sculptural design. He spent as many as five years in Italy, studying, training and later also following an apprenticeship in the studio of the Italian portraitist and sculptor Pietro Annigoni (1910-1988). During his stint in Florence, he also attended the Scuola Libera del Nudo.

On his return to Malta, Chetcuti first started working in carpentry, specialising in wooden sculpture. It was only in the early 90s that his attention turned to bronze. Having originally set up shop in the basement of his marital home, Chetcuti, with the support of his family, slowly acquired a plot of land in Luqa, which he transformed into the foundry. The sculptor Frans Galea (1945-1994) was a close friend and became one of the first clients, entrusting him with several bronze works. Branded as Funderija Artistika Chetcuti, Chetcuti's is the only remaining active foundry present in the Maltese islands that can produce artistic works.

The foundry was Chetcuti's livelihood; designed and built according to his specifications, it became fully operational in 1993. The space was, and still is, home to countless projects, commissions and collaborations which vary greatly in terms of complexity, assembly and production processes. Having worked alongside his father since 2009, Christopher recounts how there were as many as four full-timers at any one time working on the larger and more

*“Chetcuti’s memory needs to be placed firmly into context, as his creative output provides a strong and meaningful contribution to the evolution of Malta’s artistic history.”*

**+** Feature / Malta / Joseph Chetcuti  
March - June '20

LISA GWEN ANDREWS holds a first degree in History of Art and a Masters in Cultural Heritage Management. She is a freelance curator and writer for art and design events.



**MALTA**



Joseph Chetcuti, *In a Pensive Mood*, sculpted from life at his studio in Luqa (private collection, date unknown)

demanding of commissions, such as the monument dedicated to Grandmaster Jean de Valette, located in the square flanking the Old Opera House, now known as Pjazza Teatru Rjal.

That is only one of many monuments and statues which Chetcuti and his foundry was responsible for creating and casting. Other important projects worth mentioning are: the *Immaculate Conception*, which can be found in Bormla; the statue for Winston Abela in Zejtun; the papier mache sculptures for the Church of Our Lady of the Lily, in Mqabba; the statue dedicated to Mater Dei by Chris Ebejer, at Mater Dei Hospital, which is their largest work, ever cast; *The Three Graces*, in Mgarr, Gozo designed by Andrew Diacono, or even the *mezzafigura* by Vincent Apap of Giuseppe Cali, at the Upper Barracca Gardens in Valletta.

The foundry also produced important replicas: of Alessandro Algardi's *Christ the Saviour* which can be seen above

the main portal of St John's Co Cathedral in Valletta as well as a bronze replica of Antonio Sciortino's poignant sculptural group, *Les Gavroches*, located in the Valletta Gardens, where the original once sat.

There are few of Chetcuti's works extant in private collections, such as a sinuous nude lying on her side titled *In a Pensive Mood*. His wife Nathalie and his family have a grand stallion he made, caught in motion; however other works that the sculptor exchanged, are harder to record, or come by.

Chetcuti's memory – whether as a sculptor, or as a bronzesmith – needs to be placed firmly into context, as his creative output provides a strong and meaningful contribution to the evolution of Malta's artistic history, in more than one instance: through the safeguarding of our artistic heritage, but also through the production of contemporary sculptures and public artworks. ●



Joseph Chetcuti working on *Les Gavroches*



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# Providing a more Dynamic Environment

We speak to the recently appointed Minister responsible for the Arts and Local Government, Dr José A Herrera, about his portfolio and the direction in which he would like to take it



**Artpaper:** You were responsible for Culture back in 2013 – 2015. Is the return a welcome one, and what would you like to focus your attention on now that you are back within the cultural sector? Are there any significant changes you would like to make during your tenure?

Minister Herrera: The return is definitely a welcome one. In 2013/2015, today's hugely expanded Arts Council Malta was known as the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts. It was small in status, structure and with very limited funds and resources. Now, there is a legal structure in place as per Act 15 of 2015 and amended by Legal Notice 75 of 2017, approved by the Maltese Parliament. In the coming period, we aim to strengthen the foundations created by Arts Council's declared strategic commitment in 2015: Strategy2020 which is now coming to a close. It is important to mention that 2020 will see the launch of a fresh five-year National Cultural Policy that will focus on well-being, sustainability of the sector including the continuous development of cultural governance. This policy document will serve ACM as a seminal platform on which we'll be designing our next strategic plan for 2021 through to 2025.

**Artpaper:** The portfolio was previously called 'Culture' and has now been renamed 'the Arts'. What is the symbolism of this name-change, and how does it affect how you approach the sector?

Minister Herrera: To date the term 'Culture' has been used as an overarching

reference to the creative and cultural sectors which include the arts and heritage amongst others. Thus, we should not put a lot of symbolic weight on this name-change since it will not affect our responsibility towards the sectors. In this scenario, one needs to emphasise more the fact that the Arts and National Heritage are for the first time a main element within a Ministry and not added to another wide ranging and demanding portfolio.

**Artpaper:** Arts Council Malta has been working on the new Cultural Strategy, with public consultations and in-depth research. Could you tell us something about what the new Cultural Strategy will contain, and which direction you would like to see the creative sector going in the next five years?

Minister Herrera: Presently, ACM is still implementing Strategy2020 and undergoing preparations for the new strategy 2021 - 2025. While we speak, a call for tenders is open for interested parties to submit their bids towards the evaluation and consultation processes for the development of the upcoming strategy. However, as from now we envisage that strategic focus areas such as community and diversity, education and internationalisation will remain key in the coming years. Other strategic elements will include innovation, audience development, strengthening of cross-sectoral relationships with other Ministries including Education, Foreign Affairs, Tourism and Gozo. ACM's international representations will be given their due importance so as to connect the arts sector with the Maltese diaspora. Also, ACM is expected to continue its work in tandem with the eleven Public Cultural Organisations (PCOs) and initiatives including Festivals Malta, KorMalta, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Mediterranean Conference Centre, MICAS, Spazju Kreattiv, Pjazza Teatru Rjal, Teatru Malta, Teatru Manoel, Valletta Cultural

Agency and ŻfinMalta that fall within its remit.

The Maltese language has now become part of this Ministry's portfolio and immediate action needs to be planned and carried out to safeguard the use of the language. Special focus will be put on the digital presence of our national language, providing a more dynamic environment where it can continue to evolve in terms of its use.

**Artpaper:** What are your priorities in the visual arts sector in particular in the coming months and years? Are there any lacunae in particular which you would like to address?

Minister Herrera: The Malta International Contemporary Art Space (MICAS) is a priority to strengthen Malta's cultural infrastructure by providing a platform for contemporary art and internationalisation. This is scheduled to open in 2022, and will become a showcase for local contemporary artists and also will continue to engage with international institutions to present ground-breaking works by acclaimed artists from all over the world.

All funds managed by Arts Council Malta are open to visual arts projects including the Malta Arts Fund with the Project Support and Research Strands, the Cultural Export Fund, the Creative Communities Fund and other multi-annual investments such as the Creative Industries Platform and the Investment for Cultural Organisations Programme. Once again, ACM together with the Valletta Cultural Agency will also be supporting Valletta-based contemporary art galleries including BLITZ and Valletta Contemporary.

Malta will participate once again in the prestigious international art exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2021 whereby over 600,000 visitors experience the Malta Pavillion and are introduced to

Malta's foremost contemporary artists. For the first time, Malta is planning to participate also in the London Design Biennale in 2022.

**Artpaper:** Internationalisation has been a priority for the cultural sector for some time now. Do you see this as important to the sector's success, and how do you intend to support it?

Minister Herrera: Yes, it is definitely important to the sector. Internationalisation means connecting Malta and the cultural sector to the rest of the world. This is highly important for Maltese artists to develop their international networks and audiences thus becoming more sustainable on various levels. Through ACM, Malta will continue to strengthen its international cultural relations and diplomacy together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maltese Embassies across the globe and international platforms and networks such as IFACCA (International Federation of Arts Councils and Cultural Agencies), EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture), IETM - International network for contemporary performing arts and Salzburg Global Forum.

The Ministry will pursue its support towards bringing internationally acclaimed artists through their respective calendars, programmes and festivals presented by Public Cultural Organisations and various NGOs supported by Arts Council Malta. The Maltese audience has already and will continue to benefit and enjoy the participation of international artists through events and festivals such as the International Spring Orchestra Festival, the Kinematik Short Film Festival, the Malta International Arts Festival, the Malta Jazz Festival, the Mediterranean Literature Festival, the Three Palaces, and the Valletta Baroque Festival. 🎨

*“The Arts and National Heritage are for the first time a main element within a Ministry and not added to another wide-ranging and demanding portfolio.”*

MALTA

# Keeping it Global

Artpaper speaks with Romina Delia about her role as Internationalisation Associate at Arts Council Malta

**Artpaper: Could you tell us a bit about what your job entails?**

Romina Delia: I have been working at Arts Council Malta in the strategy department since the summer of 2015. A few months after I joined, we published our five-year national strategy for the arts based on five strategic focal points, which include internationalisation and business development as well as research, education and training, diversity and communities. Strategy2020 was created following a consultation process with over 300 artists, who discussed with us their vision and dreams for Malta's cultural sector. This process fed directly into our strategy. Since then, along with the other associates and directors at the

Arts Council, we have been implementing this strategy through our several funds and initiatives.

**Artpaper: Tell us more about the Cultural Export Fund and how artists can benefit from it?**

RD: Arts Council Malta implements its strategy through a number of initiatives and funds, one of which is the Cultural Export Fund, which I have been managing for the past five years. Artists can apply for any of three different grants, namely the Travel grant, the Presentation and Touring grant and the Translation grant. These funds do not only provide an opportunity for artists to showcase their work internationally, but

are also a means of meeting and working with other artists from different countries. It's a learning process between cultures, and it's truly wonderful to see these cultural exchanges taking place.

Artists benefit from these grants because not only do they stay connected with the rest of the world, but they also share what they bring back with the rest of the Maltese community. For example, in the field of film, the Cultural Export Fund was awarded several times to programmers of the Valletta Film Festival and to Kinemastik short film festival. We have supported their attendance at the Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin, at the Tribeca International Film Festival in

New York and at other well-known international film festivals. This allowed for the selection of a number of international films for screening at the Valletta Film Festival and at the Kinemastik short film festival.

**Artpaper: Can you tell us about any particularly successful projects that have travelled abroad thanks to the Cultural Export Fund?**

RD: We fund around 80 projects a year with the Cultural Export Fund and every project we send abroad is different. We have funded the mobility of musicians, dancers, actors, visual artists, film makers, performers, and fashion designers. To give some examples, The New Victorians have been recipients of the Cultural Export Fund. This has facilitated their performance of a multidisciplinary theatrical piece *MARA* at The National Theatre of Scotland's Exchange Festival in Inverness, and at the Vault Festival in Waterloo, London. They were the first Maltese artists to secure a place at this prestigious festival, which features over 4,000 artists every year.

Last year, we funded through the Presentation and Touring Grant a project entitled *Nocturnal Artifacts* by fashion designer Luke Azzopardi. Eighteen one-off couture looks inspired by the destroyed Nibbia chapel of bones in Valletta, were exported to international audiences in London at the Institute of Contemporary Art at St James Park during London Fashion week, targeting worldwide press.

Just a few weeks ago, there was also the launch of the Maltese architecture exhibition in Moscow by the Maltese architects NIDUM, funded by the Cultural Export Fund. NIDUM, in collaboration with Transparadiso from Vienna, invited the Maltese public to contribute to a discussion about their sentiments and desires for the Chalet in Sliema. The outcomes of this public discussion are



*Outland* – Vince Briffa exhibited at the Malta Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2019, curated by Herperia Iliadou-Suppjé

**+** Interview / Malta / Arts Council  
March - June '20

ROMINA DELIA studied Archaeology and History of Art at the University of Malta and has a PhD in curatorial studies from the University of Leicester, UK. She has worked on several EU funded projects, and her work has been published by Routledge. She is currently Internationalisation Associate at Arts Council Malta.



REGNVM – Kris Micallef at the BOZAR in Brussels as part of the cultural programme of the 2017 Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union

currently exhibited at the Schusev State Museum of Architecture in Moscow, in an international exhibition hosted by the European Cultural Centre, which is currently on show till 10th May 2020. The international exhibition 'Public Architecture - Future for Europe' aims to present realised, not yet realised and dream projects for the future of public architecture in Europe and shows ideas from architects who are sincerely concerned with city planning and the environment.

**Artpaper: Arts Council Malta has been sending young artists to participate in the Salzburg Global Forum in Austria for the past few years. Can you tell us more about this? Would you recommend it to other artists?**

RD: I totally recommend it to young Maltese artists! The Salzburg Global Forum is a non-profit organisation, founded in 1947 to challenge leaders to shape a better world. Taking place at the magical Leopoldskron castle in Salzburg, where the beloved 1965 *Sound of Music* movie was filmed, we annually invite Maltese artist to apply for the Young Cultural Innovators Forum. What has made the experience special for the Maltese artists who have attended in the past, were the other young cultural innovators selected from all over the world. Their stories, their energy, and how they became so connected by the end of their journey, gave them a new perspective on how to perceive both themselves and the world around them. Participating in the Global Forum means meeting with poets, visual artists, dancers, singers, photographers, musicians, film makers, drivers behind institutions, gallerists and curators from

all over the world. As 'young cultural innovators' they found themselves immersed in passion to continuously work internationally and to find new ways to engage their communities. For the past three years, the Arts Council has been issuing an open call for Maltese artists, and their participation has been generously supported by Arts Council Malta in partnership with the U.S. Embassy in Malta.

**Artpaper: Arts Council Malta is a member of the European networks EUNIC and IETM. Could you tell us more about them and how relevant they are to putting Maltese artists on international platforms?**

RD: In 2015, Arts Council Malta joined the network for EU national cultural institutes (EUNIC). EUNIC's members work in over 150 countries around the world, their numerous institutes allowing for cultural exchange and facilitating the mobility of artists. Since then, Arts Council Malta has been elected full member of the New York cluster of EUNIC, alongside a number of European cultural institutes, such as the British Council, French Institute, Goethe Institute, Instituto Cervantes and the Italian Cultural Institute.

Arts Council Malta in New York seeks to promote and support a broad spectrum of Maltese arts at events both in New York and in Washington DC. Some highlights from the past five years include the participation of Maltese photographers Ritty Tacsum and Darrin Zammit Lupi in the leading Photography Festival, Photoville, in New York. Arts Council Malta was one of the festival's curatorial partners, partnering with or-

ganisations that included Instagram, The New York Times, TIME Magazine, National Geographic, The Pulitzer Center and the Magnum Foundation.

Over the past five years, Arts Council Malta also presented several Maltese authors at book reading events during the European Literature Nights in New York. For example, we sent to New York authors like Immanuel Mifsud, Pierre J. Mejlak and Adrian Grima.

Some other highlights include the presentation of several films from Malta at New York's Panorama Europe Film Festival at the Museum of Moving Image. In May 2019, Arts Council Malta presented the New York premiere screening of the film *Limestone Cowboy* directed by Abigail Mallia. We are now in the process of setting up Arts Council Malta representation in other cities around the world. Currently we have Maltese Embassies in Rome, Vienna, the Netherlands and Warsaw representing Arts Council Malta and we are sending Maltese artists to participate in EUNIC events in these cities.

With regards to IETM, this is an international network of over 450 performing arts organisations and individual members working in the contemporary performing arts worldwide. The network runs several meetings a year in different cities around the world. Arts Council Malta is issuing open calls for Maltese artists to attend these IETM meetings. The next meeting will be held in Tromsø, Norway at the end of April 2020, exploring the theme of activism and the performing arts. Maltese artists can either apply for the open call or apply for the Cultural Export Fund's Travel grant to participate in this or in any of IETM's international events.

**Artpaper: What achievements are you particularly proud of during your time at the Arts Council until now?**

RD: An achievement I am particularly proud of is the brilliant work the Arts Council did during Malta's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2017. Hundreds of Maltese artists were sent around the world, and along with another two Maltese women, I was also selected to form part of the Chairing team of the Cultural Affairs Committee in Brussels. One of the files I am particularly proud of, which was concluded during Malta's Presidency, was the Joint Communication which proposes an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations.

During the past five years, we also saw the return of the Malta Pavilion at the biggest and oldest International Art Exhibition happening in Venice – the well-known Biennale di Venezia. I worked on the 2017 and the 2019 editions, both of which received considerable press acclaim. It was a massive cultural exchange and learning curve for all, but also an extremely beautiful experience. I was in tears when I saw Malta being listed in so many well-known top art magazines and newspapers such as The Guardian. The international press had nothing but praise for the Maltese Pavilion in 2017 and also in 2019.

**Artpaper: What are you looking forward to working on over the next year or so?**

RD: The Arts Council is currently working on its new strategy 2021-2025, which is inspired by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States a few years ago. Among other priorities I hope to work on in our initiatives, are gender equality and the empowerment of all women, climate action, sustainability, and inclusivity. I also look forward to the realisation of international projects focussing mainly on the Mediterranean, where borders are blurred and boundaries crossed through the encouragement of interdisciplinary collaborations. 🇲🇹



Simshar – directed by Rebecca Cremona on tour in Australia, funded by the Cultural Export Fund.



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MARGERITA PULÈ  
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Art Space. Her practice and  
research are concerned with  
the contradictions of politics  
and social realities.



MALTA

MARGERITA PULÈ

# The Holy Grail

With funding becoming ever-more competitive, and more essential to cultural institutions and artists alike, we talk to international arts funding and philanthropy expert, Melissa Cowley Wolf about arts advocacy and revenue streams.

**A**s cultural managers, funding is ever on our minds. From museum directors, to independent creative directors, securing funding for the arts is a constant endeavour. These days most organisations – from large to small – are expected to source diverse income streams; ticket sales and public funding are simply not enough to sustain a museum collection, operate a functioning theatre, or run a contemporary gallery programme. Some organisations choose to capitalise on their prestige and engage in patronage schemes with a select group of donors. Others cast their nets more widely, using crowdfunding schemes to boost specific projects. Many use a combination of ticketing and merchandising revenue, along with sponsors and donors to balance their books, with public funding also playing a part – at least locally. But whatever the organisation, and wherever it's based, there's no doubt that research and information is invaluable in building a successful revenue strategy, and knowing exactly how and when to implement it. And that's where Melissa Cowley Wolf comes in.

Currently based in Malta, Melissa has worked in philanthropy for cultural institutions across the United States for over fifteen years. She's worked with museums, institutes and graduate schools, as well as with wealth managers and family foundations, bringing both sides of the equation together to build a mutually beneficial rapport. She's spent the past year working from South Africa, Morocco, and Europe, so while her experience and focus are mostly in the United States, she's fully aware of the different contexts that exist in the arts internationally.

Melissa sees fundraising as very much a long-term strategy – building a relationship with an audience-member or visitor that may eventually become a support-



Melissa Cowley Wolf speaking at the Arts Funders Forum launch in Miami, in December 2019

er, or a long-term benefactor. Conversely, she sees fundraising not only as an exercise in earning revenue, but also as an audience development tool; building strong relationships with donors will see them donate not only money, but also their time, energy and passion into the institution, often bringing friends and colleagues along with them.

In her eyes, traditional forms of fundraisers – the 'gala dinner' for example – is no longer very interesting to donors; they are far more interested in seeing the institution thrive, and in playing their part in that growth.

Melissa also believes in the cultural sector's role in creating a culture of giving, but concedes that this is time-consuming, long-term work – it will take a generational change in audiences' attitudes towards giving to the arts. She's very aware of how the museum and arts industries in general are perceived by outsiders; art enthusiasts, dressed in black, looking at incomprehensible art, may seem unapproachable and put a po-

tential donor off – it takes an open approach to make everyone feel welcome.

Also important to the sector is the role of younger generations with reasonable funds – not necessarily millionaires – who are interested in supporting a cultural organisation, or perhaps starting their own art collection. Just as the art world may hesitate to reach out to private donors, the donors themselves sometimes lack knowledge, and need guidance and some confidence to take that first investment step.

Melissa is now director of Arts Funders Forum, a platform designed to increase private support for arts and culture in the United States. Until its formal launch in December 2019, she carried out extensive research, looking at funding trends among donors, collectors, cultural leaders, fundraisers, artists, institutions and independent organisations. What she found bore out her suspicions – that the future of private funding is a cause of worry among institutions, and that organisations are

struggling to seem relevant to younger generations. The arts sector does a good job at what it does best – making art – but hasn't paid enough attention to advocating for what it does.

So, what does the future hold? For Melissa, the coming year will see her continuing her work with Arts Funders Forum, building on their research findings to develop new cultural philanthropy models. She'll also continue her own consultancy work, advocating for the arts internationally.

We hope that initiatives like hers, along with research and work carried out by cultural institutions, result in loyal and long-term audiences for the arts everywhere. **4**

*Melissa Cowley Wolf is founder and director of MCW Projects, focusing on expanding the next generation of cultural philanthropists, advocates and audiences.*

[www.mcw-projects.com](http://www.mcw-projects.com)

A U S T R A L I A

Giulia Privitelli interviews  
Australian artist Izabela Pluta,  
who will be exhibiting in  
Valletta this April.

GIULIA PRIVITELLI

Of dives, distortions  
and disorientation:  
*Variable Depth,  
Shallow Water*

Izabela Pluta

**B**y the end of the fifteenth century, Western European artists had already begun to perceive the forceful impact the development and understanding of linear perspective was to have on the future of painting. What this optic notion entailed, however, was not simply an accurate depiction of the 'real' world but, essentially, a distortion imposed by perspective on the real, tactile world. Distortion was necessary to awaken the imagination, to lure and, ultimately, persuade the mind of the viewer. Similarly, bringing an imaginary place into existence – stemming from the rediscovery of literature on mythical lands and civilisations – also came about in the fifteenth century, the quintessential age of exploration; it was a time when such ideas were transformed from a myth to a place to be discovered. Such, too, was it to be for Polish-born, Australia-based artist Izabela Pluta. "For me, the idea of 'looking' or searching for something – under the sea – became critical to this work, and took me diving". Taking a deep breath, I put my pen to paper and, for a short while, dipped into her world.

At the time of Izabela's exploration and research at Iseki Point (known as the Yonaguni Monument) in Japan in early 2018 – a most unnerving, yet certainly defining experience – news of the fallen sea arch at Dwejra reached her ears, inciting quite an instantaneous link between two disparate events. Both events, however, were subjected to the phenomenological effect of time: the contrast between the slow, imperceptible movements of sinking and shifting landmass, and the sudden 'traumatic' collapse and altered nature of that same landmass. Water connects all shores, no matter how distant. Later that year, Izabela found herself plunging into the sea where the Azure Window once stood. Her exploration of the ruins of the sea arch was, ironically, if not amusingly, determined by another collapse of sorts: the drone used to gather footage devastatingly crashed, corrupting the data retrieved from the site. This corrupted 'ruined' data forms part of the three-channel video featuring in the Malta exhibition, and presents a 'collage' of the topographies of ruin: underwater footage of the site, the ruin itself, and the ruined data.

Just as an atlas condenses the world and information about it into frames and pages bound together in a book, so too does an SD card. After capturing images at Dwejra, Izabela recalled how on the same storage card she found video footage recorded during her Marrgu residency programme. In 2018, Izabela was invited to live and work alongside local indigenous artists and leaders of the aboriginal community of Peppimenarti. "Being in that land and vastness has a particular effect on you, on how it makes you feel... a place of deep meaning that makes space for a unique experience of time". Not unlike the sensation of being underwater, I thought. Earlier on in our conversation, I asked Izabela what the experience of time felt like in the 'deep blue'. In a seemingly absurd set of connections, she had even considered for a moment to present some of these residency photographs in the Malta exhibition.

In any case, these strange correlations led to an exchange of views on belonging and non-places. In light of where it all started – the symbol of mythical Atlantis as a non-place – the conversation seemed to be spiralling into something deeper. Coincidentally, or perhaps not, during the time Izabela was exploring underwater ruins, she was also creating contact negatives from a set of out-of-date atlases – a project that was partly displayed in the installation *Figures of Slippage and Oscillation*, at the Artspace Ideas Platform in Sydney, in

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GIULIA PRIVITELLI holds an M.A. in History of Art, and is presently Assistant Editor at Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti. She is also a freelance writer, regularly contributing culture-related articles to various local newspapers, magazines and blogs.



### A U S T R A L I A

2018. “As someone who came to Australia from Poland, I’m interested in how borders continually shift, in geography and the perception of place”. She thus began pulling out pages from several editions of the *Penguin Dictionary of Geography* that would serve as the historical basis of knowledge on which new unknown cartographic variables may emerge.

In the darkroom, using an enlarger and camera-less technique, she passes light through those pages featuring photographic plates to create new images. “Born out of the absence and presence of light and their reaction to the material surface of the oceanic atlas, the imagery will fuse together two mapped depths of the sea – originally printed on both sides of the page – while light passes through the substrate to disrupt the assumptions around how depths are depicted and perceived”. The maps on either side of the original paper merge together resulting in new and random distances and depths – simultaneously real and imag(in)ed. These resulting images, a set of which will feature in the Malta exhibition, bring to mind Aby Warburg’s (1866–1929) picture atlas, *Mnemosyne* (1924), wherein meaning arises in-between seemingly unrelated and random images through a so-called ‘iconology of intervals’ – a network of intervals where the montages of images are produced simultaneously. Izabela’s esteem for Warburg’s method and approach to historical time is certainly not unfounded; it is very much how her own logic works, a constellation of thoughts that, at first, do indeed come across as a ‘crazy set of relations’.

However, the arbitrariness and resulting uniqueness of Izabela’s prints does not end there. “This process of making contact negatives,” she explains, “pro-

duces undulations in the image in places where the original image lifts away from the photographic emulsion during printing... these ripples, or areas in the image that lack focus, could be read as deceptive spaces, provoking a sense of dislocation or disorientation from place and its original form”. Like some kind of *nihilartikel* or, indeed, fictitious entries or phantom settlements, these ‘deceptive spaces’ double up as non-places and, yet, are what give the print its uniqueness and unrepeatable, unmistakable quality. Absence disorients, just like having to swim away from the anchored presence of the cliff, or looking upon the still unfamiliar face of the Dwejra cliffs. It is almost felicitous that the cliffs face away from the East; they are themselves, literally and physically, disoriented.

All of this plays on the idea of misadventure and chance, on coincidence, disorientation, confusion and miscalculation; indeed, much like the refractive experience of trying to observe and determine distances, depths and forms underwater. “The water plays tricks with distance – you cannot see it whole”, Australian writer and poet, Lisa Gorton, reflects in the catalogue text that accompanied *Apparent Distance* (2019), the culmination of Izabela’s photographic interpretation of the Yonaguni Monument. A prerequisite to the project, in a way, was uncertainty, not knowing – an awfully tantalising condition for an observer and researcher like Izabela, being both an artist and academic. Perhaps, it is precisely the reason why she found herself at Dwejra – just like at Iseki Point in Japan – ‘diving into the deep’, diving to confront the uncertain, to observe the site and result of a traumatic experience, to capture a memory of the destroyed, enshrined on the crust of the earth as a new source of life.

In all its uncertainty, this project has very much to do with the experience of death, or at best, of transition from one mode of existence to another: the apprehension of the inevitable, the trauma suffered by the body, darkness, disorientation, and, almost just as suddenly, the ensuing calm and stillness as some kind of encounter takes place. That encounter – the proximity to what was destroyed but, in a way, ‘lived’ – is the point of transformation. It is hardly a coincidence that several cultures, since antiquity, have marked their rite of passage or ‘rebirth’ by some kind of bodily submersion. To cross the sea, or the ocean, to be swallowed and carried by the waves only to make it once again to dry land, is not simply the marked witness of successful travel and human invention but of survival and the victory over death itself. It takes no far stretch of the imagination to think of our infamous megaliths, erected and oriented to the ‘reborn sun’, as a celebration of this survival; after all, the ancient builders had themselves faced uncertainty and, quite certainly, death, when crossing the channel to our Islands, to dry land.

Be it natural or man-made, what seems to result from that proximity to death is creation. Ruins, where the original form is in its most reduced state of existence, thrive on with a heightened sublimity that only the threat of destruction could have imparted to it. All creation that is faced by the imminent state of death or, better still, that has to some extent survived it – even if irreversibly changed by it – enters into the realm of the sublime, the mythical, even the sacred; some dedicate their lives to preserving and protecting it, others to recording, understanding and interpreting it. “I am someone who wants to know things,” Izabela tells me, “but ultimately, I dedicate myself to making things, only to then discover what they are afterwards”. ●

*Variable Depth, Shallow Water* curated by Nicole Bearman & Francesca Mangion is on at Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta, between 10 April–24 May 2020, and will include a panel discussion on 17 April and an art-film screening.



Izabela Pluta at work. Photo: Alexander Cooke





Claude Monet, *The Cliff and the Porte d'Aval*, 1885, oil on canvas, private collection

GABRIELE SPILLER

# In Constant Search

An exceptional show with more than 100 paintings by Claude Monet makes a visit to the Barberini Palace in Potsdam, simply extraordinary.

**M**onet's 'Places' – the simple title of the exhibition at the Museum Barberini, says it all. The presentation moves with Monet's life stations. "Because you have to live in a place for quite a while in order to paint it, [...] but can one ever be satisfied compared to nature itself", Claude Monet (1840 – 1926) said when he was 43. He had just been travelling to the south of France together with his colleague, Renoir. They took advantage of the new railway lines – a cheap and fast means of transport compared to the former horse carriages. On his own, Monet returned to Bordighera on the Mediterranean coast; in the exhibition, viewers can take in several views of the Italian town and the Côte d'Azur.

Twelve sections in the show recount the travels and stays of the French painter, with his own garden in Giverny as the culminating point. It begins in 1858, at the coast of Normandy and in the forest of Fontainebleau near Paris. The fact that Monet painted nature, and did so outside, was innovative and anti-academic. He soon moved on to Paris and captured the new electric lights, urban architecture and fleeting encounters instead of posed portraits and historic scenes, constantly turning away from realistic painting. Having explored the buzzing city, Monet – now with a family – moved to Argenteuil, a popular suburb at the river Seine. He lived there for seven years and studied the ships and the water in summer and win-

ter. This way he continuously developed Impressionism. The picture that gave the movement its name (*Impression, sunrise*, 1872, showing the harbour of Le Havre) is not on display though.

Monet fled the Franco-Prussian-War of 1870 and went to London, an even bigger city with modern iron-cast bridges, reflections on the water of the river Thames and unusual colours in the haze and mist – the London fog. He was interested in the mingling tones and often painted from his hotel window: several pictures at a time, the easels next to each other, because his works were selling so fast. Waterloo Bridge and the Parliament he portrayed at any time of the day, the start of his serial works. On the way back to France he stopped in Zaandam in The Netherlands, famous for its windmills. He enjoyed the "superb place for painting", he told Camille Pissarro in a letter.

In his late thirties, shortly before he became a widower when his first wife Camille died of a failed abortion, Monet drew back to the rural idyll of the village Vétheuil. He began to shape and tend a house garden, the basic concept of what would later be the magnificent garden in Giverny. For 46 years, he lived in this Seine village and created the illustrious waterlily pond. Still, he kept on travelling, to the Riviera as previously mentioned, or to the Atlantic coast. In 1908, he spent a couple of

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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.



**GERMANY**

weeks in Venice, which at first he found overwhelming and later could not stop painting. The light, the water and the colours kept him engaged, even when back in his studio where he finished the pictures. And yes, viewers will find Monet's garden with plenty of waterlilies and the iconic Japanese bridge at the end of the beautiful exhibition. **+**

*Monet. Places continues until 1 June, Rembrandt's Orient is open from 27 June until 11 October, while Impressionism in Russia opens on 7 November 2020.*  
[www.museum-barberini.com](http://www.museum-barberini.com)



Claude Monet, *Haystack in the Sunlight, Snow Effect, 1891*, oil on canvas, private collection

## Barberini Palace in Potsdam, Germany

The original Barberini Palace was a stately mansion of King Frederick the Great of Prussia (1712 – 1786). It stood next to his city palace in Potsdam, Brandenburg, right at the bank of the Havel river. The historic city suffered a heavy air raid by the British Air Force, in April 1945, at the end of World War II. The 'Old Market' fell into ruins and was used as a parking space during the German Democratic Republic (GDR). It was only after German reunification that the area was rebuilt, taking up the ancient style. The German entrepreneur, billionaire and art patron Hasso Plattner, one of the founders of SAP software, donated the building of a new Barberini Palace. It was opened in 2017. Plattner made it a museum for his vast art collection. A focus lies on the art of the GDR and German contemporary positions after 1989. The Museum Barberini is one of the most important exhibition spaces for top-notch presentations in Germany.

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KENNETH ZAMMIT TABONA

# A Love-Affair with Porcelain

I am always fascinated with the origin of words and I feel that the story of why porcelain is called porcelain is a winner. I was once given the British Museum publication entitled *The History of the World in 100 Objects*, and one of these objects was a delicate blue and white Kiangxi bowl. While the Kiangxi dynasty dates back to the 17th century, the first impression of what we call porcelain is found in Marco Polo's *Il Milione*, where he describes Chinese ceramics as having a lustre-like glaze comparable to that of a cowrie shell, which in Italian is called a *porcello*, because cowrie shells, when in the sea, line up like piglets at their mother's teats! Hence the name.

Since Polo, the magical effect of the exquisite Chinese bowls, plates and vases on European collectors carries on unabated to this very day. One of the great attractions was its general unavailability, coupled by its innate exotic beauty.

It was only after Vasco Da Gama found a way to navigate around The Cape of Good Hope, and after the establishment of the Portuguese colony of Macao, that the importation of Chinese porcelain flourished and was found in the houses of the well-to-do of Europe. In fact, no self-respecting palace can call itself a palace without a grandiose piece of Chinese porcelain in display. The sets of vases at our own President's Palace – both Ming and Kiangxi – are a case in point and are said to have been given to Grandmaster Pinto by the Emperor of



Johann Joachim Kaendler and assistants, The Four Continents (Asia), Meissen Porcelain Factory, c. 1760, hard-paste porcelain - Wadsworth Atheneum - Hartford

China. However, while that may or may not have been a myth, Chinese porcelain adds a *je ne sais quoi* to the general 17th and 18th century interior decor that is inimitable. Chinese porcelain was depicted in paintings; not only of still-lives but also as the receptacles of fruit in some biblical or mythological scene. For nigh-on three centuries the importation of what used to be called 'white gold' was probably the most lucrative business carried out by the Portuguese and the Dutch, who also claimed Macao.

This led Europe's royalty and aristocracy to start ordering specialised crockery with their Armorial bearings ensconced in a setting of roses and peonies, birds and insects, and even the occasional dragon! While the Dutch and Portuguese, and later the English, brokers waited in Macao, the Chinese middlemen travelled 1,000 odd miles inland to the city of kilns in Jingdezhen and waited up to two years for the delivery of the most breathtakingly beautiful dinner services. These were to be carried back to Macao on coolie-back, up mountains and down rivers, loaded on their car-racks and transported across the oceans around the Cape to Porto and Rotterdam, only to be distributed to the four corners of the Europe of Bryant's *The Age of Elegance!*

While all this was happening, there were the European manufacturers who, try as they might, could not crack the secret of

“No self-respecting palace can call itself a palace without a grandiose piece of Chinese porcelain in display.”

**+** Feature / *History* / *Porcelain*  
March - June '20

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**

making porcelain and had only managed by the skin of their teeth to get to soft paste porcelain, which lacked the high lustre of the Chinese. That was until the early 18th century, when a relatively minor sovereign in Saxony – Augustus the Strong – discovered kaolin, and the kilns of Meissen and Dresden started tentative production of Chinese imitations. Augustus guarded the secret even more closely than the Chinese, till he married off his princesses into the most powerful royal dynasties in Europe by giving them Saxon artisans as part of their dowries. Hence Maria Amalia, who married the Bourbon king of Naples Charles III, founded the Capodimonte factory and Maria Josefa who married the Dauphin, son of Louis XV, gave the secret to Sevres and Vincennes.

Master porcelain artists like Joachim Kaendler created the breath-taking pieces like the mandarin noddies, the monkey orchestras and the pugs that Meissen still produces today at astronomical cost. This profusion of Chinese inspired porcelain reached its apogee in the late 18th century, becoming ever



Frans Snyders, Still life with monkeys, c. 1630 – 1640

more elaborate as Qianlong dynasty Chinese porcelain vied with pieces coming from the greatest potteries in Europe.

That all came to an abrupt halt when the French Revolution threw Europe, including Malta, into turmoil. The royalty and aristocracy of the day had to concentrate on keeping their heads attached to their necks rather than collecting temple jars, urns and even bordalous!

Meanwhile, in all this 'sturm und drang', in England an enterprising young potter called Thomas Minton produced the first transferware Willow Pattern plate in 1791, which changed the course of how we differentiate porcelain from what we call china, but that's a different story altogether. 🍵



A pair of Chinese export Famille Rose soldier vases and covers



Gripsholm Service plate, China, Qing dynasty, c. 1776 AD, porcelain

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ERICA GIUSTA is Director of Innovation at architecture firm AP Valletta. 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 international architecture magazines such as A10 New European Architecture and Il Giornale dell'Architettura..



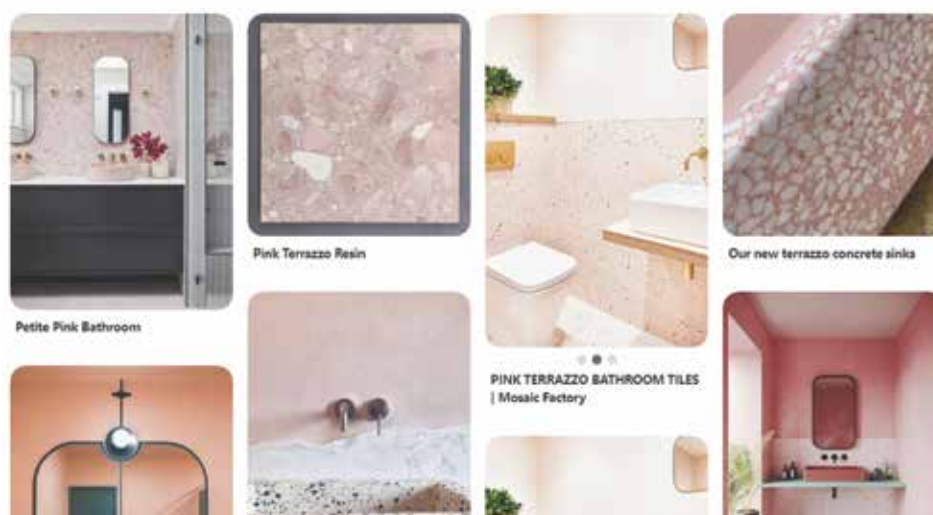
ERICA GIUSTA

# Phenomenology of the Pinterest architect

Pinterest has never attracted as much attention and media scrutiny as the likes of Instagram and Facebook, but that doesn't mean that it's less controversial and influential, especially when it comes to design and architecture.

Pinterest places itself somewhere halfway between social media and search engine. In this fantastic place, architecture is organised in boards, labelled by themes. A theme can be anything, from 'Decadent interiors' to 'Irregularly stacked boxes', everything is accurately categorised and tagged with a number of key words. Key words rule and define. The chosen combination of key words generates the project's visual references on the basis of calculated criteria. When typing 'hotel', for example, some of the options given for more key words that will define it further are 'modern', 'minimalist', and then 'minimalist and luxurious', or 'modern and cosy', and so on.

Suggestions for the most common associations of words populate the screen in what becomes a mix 'n' match of bi-dimensional, formal references. From time to time, images with words appear and more sophisticated matches are made by algorithms. In other cases, unexpected combinations can pop up: when choosing to combine 'architecture' and 'happiness', for instance, one lands on mid-century modern architecture photos and palettes of tilted mirrors. 'Architecture, solitude' instead, leads to beautiful German castles, black and white photos and line drawings. The game can be played in reverse too. It can be puzzlingly easy to guess what words were inserted into the Pinterest search bar when looking at a new café fit-out, or at the image used as illustration for an architectural competition brief. It all depends on the magic words inserted in the search bar, at the top of the screen. Those words lay the foundations of a



sequence of statistically successful associations of colours, shapes and compositions.

When selecting an image, when pinning it, more recommendations of similar contents pop up; by selecting to associate 'architecture, happiness' to 'coloured tilted mirrors', for instance, one is suddenly thrown into a whirlwind of pastel colour bathrooms, pink terrazzo tiles, pale green velvet armchairs, photos of dreamy ethereal interiors that have no name, no date or place – they are just there, fluctuating. These images are there to be copied, reproduced ad infinitum, and they declare it explicitly with their captions – or the lack thereof. What counts is the series of tags, not the authors of a project, and even less so the context of what is shown. Inspiration has never been so standardised. One begins to wonder if they are the actual work of humans or machines.

The more an image is pinned on somebody's board, the more it will be pro-

posed to other people in search of, in this case, the secret to a happy place for themselves or their clients. After this kind of exploration of the platform and a first selection of images, when going back to the homepage, one finds more of the same: 'more like this' says the algorithm, before pouring out another cascade of pretty pictures. There's no break from pink terrazzo tiles in elegant anonymous settings. The suggestions are endless. After a while, the repetition of the same type of images begins to hold a certain fascinating and soothing effect. If it wasn't for the bias of the (still fallible) algorithm, which, on the basis of gender and age, disrupts the pink terrazzo reverie with Pins on 'How to apply eyeliner' and 'Relationship advice', the platform would be almost persuasive enough to convince you to abdicate your responsibilities as architect, and just Pin your projects away.

Thanks to the lack of sensitivity of the machine though, the game ends abruptly and even provokes some embarrass-

ment for having indulged in the frivolity of those simplistic shortcuts to the untangling of the complexity of architecture – let alone of happiness! – at least from the very personal perspective of the aspiring phenomenologist running the experiment. If the way Pinterest is experienced can so greatly vary from architect to architect, what is certainly more objective is the fact that its use is widespread at all stages. Many of us rely heavily on it, for a number of reasons, compulsively collecting insane amounts of random images determined by algorithmic calculations on the basis of what is statistically more successful from a purely formal and commercial point of view. The result is loads of architects currently copying the same image without questioning its qualities, reproducing it like mere 'builders of pretty pictures', contributing to rendering the profession irrelevant. All the automated calculations at the origin of so many mood boards and projects presentations belong to the marketing world, not to the complexity of the discipline, that – as with any form of knowledge – should be developed and implemented through scientifically valid research.

When the process of production of architecture starts as a purely visual, flat and trivially commercial exercise, it can only end up in another version of that thing. It becomes equally meaningless, but much more damaging, as it transcends the confines of the virtual world to leave a negative impact on the built environment. ●

“Many of us rely heavily on it, for a number of reasons, compulsively collecting insane amounts of random images determined by the calculations of an algorithm.”



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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.



## ITALY

RICHARD ENGLAND

# Ruinous Beauty

Richard England explores the mystical, mythical beauty of the thirteenth century San Galgano Abbey in Tuscany.

The ruins of the abbey of San Galgano, a thirteenth-century Cistercian monastery, are located in the province of Siena in Tuscany, Italy. Today the abbey stands roofless – a magnificent skeletal carcass with its vertical walls and open windows focusing on the imposing end-apse wall as a visual climax. The construction of the abbey, which was started in the thirteenth century on the original site of an earlier hermitage, persisted for over six decades. The abbey flourished in its early stages and was then partially destroyed in the fourteenth century, with much of its building material looted for reuse in new structures. Today, the gutted ruins of Tuscany's first church stand proud in the lush plains of the Val de Merse.

Adjacent to the ruins of the abbey lies the hermitage of Mount Siepi, a chapel built shortly after San Galgano's death and where the sword of the saint still stands fused into the rock into which he had embedded it. San Galgano was a licentious bellicose knight who, after a visionary visit by St Michael, was convinced to give up his wanton and belliger-



San Galgano Abbey, Tuscany. Image Wiki Media Commons

*“The poetics of ruins move us deeply, perhaps because they remind us of our own transience.”*

ent lifestyle, repent, and become a hermit. While riding, he was led by his horse to a particular site and – taking this to be a heavenly indication – planted his sword, in lieu of an absent crucifix, in the ground. As the sword fused into the rock, the knight understood that this was the divinely prompted location for the building of a church. The tale is not dissimilar to the Arthurian Excalibur legend of the same period. Today the ruins of the abbey provide a haunting spectral image, which must feature as one of the most mystical sites I have ever visited.

The building – modelled on a Cistercian architectural typology – provides, in its ruined state, a soul-enhancing, atmospheric experience with its gaunt, ashen shell structure creating an overriding sense of spirituality and mystical silence; a shelled armature clothed in ghost-like quiescence. Little wonder that the edifice inspired film maker Andrei Tarovsky to use the ruins for his 1983 masterpiece, *Nostalgia*. It seemed to me, on my visit, that the abbey's haunting eerie open-to-the-sky spectre, with nebulous dancing clouds as its ceiling, was straining to tell its long-lost tales. The poetics of ruins move us deeply, perhaps because they remind us of our own

transience. It is because of our fascination with mortality and death that our reaction to ruins is often crowned with a deep sense of nostalgia and loss. Ruins are read as remnant fragments shored against the consuming passage of time. It is also a truism that each one of us tends to build up and complete ruins according to our own imagination; the remnant real and imaginary blending into a present-day entity. A fragmentary poem found in the Exeter cathedral chapter library extols ruins – ‘wondrous is this wallstead wasted by fate’. Rose Macaulay in her book *The Pleasure of Ruins* refers to our ‘ruin appetite’. Certainly, there is no doubt that the ghosts of buildings, hovering between survival and destruction, will ever continue to haunt us. These shipwrecks of time remind us of our own futility and transience, which is why we find them so poignant. The fatal embrace of decay and destructive time petrifies the surviving carcass of what once might well have been the sturdiest of buildings.

Buildings can in fact appear more beautiful as ruins than in their completed, original, intact state. The abbey of San Galgano is a perfect example of this. 📍



**+** Review / Athens / New Museum

March - June '20

**G R E E C E**



Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation © Christophoros Doulgeris

Walking down Eratosthenous Street in Athens' trendy Pangrati district, past the hustle and bustle of store fronts and traffic jams, one is quickly confronted by a most incongruous building. It consists of a typically grand neoclassical townhouse, of the type still found scattered across the city centre, topped with what seems like a modernist construction airlifted out of another dimension.

Resembling, from certain angles, the bow of some futuristic ocean-liner rising above the drowsy Athenian rooftops; this contemporary construction (work on which began back in 2012, with designs by the local architectural firm I. & A. Vikelas and Partners) as well as the listed mid-war building to which it is attached, houses the Basil and Elise Goulandris Foundation's collection of art across four floors of dedicated gallery spaces. The entire building, which will also host a rotating programme of temporary exhibitions, consists of eleven stories, five of which are below ground.

The Greek modern artist Pavlos (born Pavlos Dionysopoulos in 1930) once said of the stunning art collection amassed by Greek shipowner Basil Goulandris, who died in 1994: "even if someone had this kind of money, they would never come across these works. They are no longer on the market".

Beginning in the 1950s, Basil and his wife and life-long companion Elise amassed a collection relatively unparalleled in recent history, certainly on a local scale – no small feat given the rich heritage of art patronage among Athens' moneyed shipping set. The collection includes autographed masterpieces by such titans of twentieth-century art as Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse, Alberto Giacometti, Auguste Renoir, Joan Miró, Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, among others.

Basil and Elise, who counted many of the artists whose work they would go on to collect among their friends and acquaintances, built up his collection over a long and cosmopolitan life spent mainly among Athens, Paris, Lausanne, Gstaad – where priceless modernist masterpieces hung upon the wooden walls of their chalet – and the bewitchingly beautiful island of Andros in the Aegean Sea, where they opened a museum of modern art in 1979, a relatively unique endeavour in Greece at the time. Always

returning to their beloved Greece, the couple sought inspiration and advice among local artists and actively promoted new and emerging talent, fostering a new generation of experimental practitioners whose first brush with the modern avant-garde came – in a time before instant internet access or even easily available art publications – from their encounter with the original museum and daring programme of exhibitions the collectors devised there, ranging from Van Gogh to Picasso to Balthus.



Vincent van Gogh, Still Life with Coffee Pot, May 1888, oil on canvas, courtesy of Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation

Following the construction of the museum on Andros, the couple wanted to see a second institution host the collection in Athens. While work on the project began in their lifetimes, they sadly did not live to see the finished museum. Their generous nature, inquisitive spirit and, above all, enduring love of art live on for posterity through the foundation that bears their name, and their life-long mission of bringing the very best of modern art to their homeland, and the country that provided so much inspiration through its beauty and history, has come full-circle.

Among the masterpieces held by the foundation is Edgar Degas' beguiling bronze sculpture *Little Dancer of Fourteen Years* (1880-1881). This is one of sixty-nine bronze casts of this

**+** Review / Athens / New Museum  
March - June '20

GEORGE MICALLEF  
EYNAUD studied Fine Art  
at the Camberwell College  
of Arts and is currently  
based in Athens



**G R E E C E**

*“Even if someone had this kind of money, they would never come across these works. They are no longer on the market.”*

iconic master-work of impressionistic sculpture that remain today, after De-gas’ wax original. Paintings from the same period represent watershed moments in the development of art, such as Paul Cezanne’s proto-Cubist canvases, an intense self-portrait and landscape entitled *La Campagne d’ Auvers sur Oise* (1881-1882), as well as an example of Claude Monet’s celebrated series of studies of light upon Rouen Cathedral at various times of day (1894).

Paul Gauguin’s *Nature Morte aux Pam-plemousses* (1901-1902) effortlessly conveys an evocative mood of tropical malaise and a yearning for new horizons, while his tumultuous relationship with Vincent Van Gogh could be better understood through the prism of the



Amedeo Modigliani, Caryatid, c. 1914, pencil and gouache on paper laid down on canvas, courtesy of Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation

Dutch artist’s more intense view of reality as displayed in his 1888 painting *Nature morte à la cafetière*, a milestone in the artist’s use of brilliant, pure colour.

Another grandstanding friendship of modern art is represented courtesy of Pablo Picasso’s *Femme Nue aux Bras Levés* from 1907, a unique and historically-critical work that acts as a precedent to the artists era-defining early masterpiece *Les Femmes d’Avignon*, hanging alongside Georges Braque’s *La Patience* (1942). The key differences between Picasso and Braque, early friends and pioneers of Cubism, can be directly felt through these two works – Picasso’s violent tendency to strip reality back to its core by reconfiguring appearance contrasted with Braque’s somewhat more leisurely meditation on the joys of seeing and playful approach to composition, which is echoed again in Fernand Léger’s *Elements Mecaniques* (1919) and Joan Miró’s *Paysage* (1942), a luminously beautiful work that not only approaches, but surpasses, pure abstraction.

Other highlights include a stunning *Veil of Veronica* from the early 1580s by El Greco (it is only fitting that this historical master, and true precursor to modern expressionism, should return to transfix generations of art lovers on his home turf). Alberto Giacometti’s emaciated figure *Femme de Venise* (1956) and Francis Bacon’s *Three Studies for a Self Portrait* from 1972 strike an existential tone that is offset by Pierre Bonnard’s characteristically sensuous depiction of his wife getting out of her



Paul Gauguin, Still Life with Grapefruits, 1901 or 1902, oil on canvas, courtesy of Basil & Elise Goulandris Foundation

bath, filled with the warm-glow of the Mediterranean light. The collection carries on into a new age of possibility with Jackson Pollock’s *Number 13* (1950), seeming to reconfigure an entire history of looking into something new and unknown, perhaps even dangerous, the logical end of painting.

Basil and Elise Goulandris would not have had it any other way. Never content to rest on their laurels, they continued searching for beauty and meaning through art. Always inquisitive, always taking risks, throughout their lives. This museum will remain a testament to their journey for generations yet to come. **📍**  
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\* Spotlight / Africa / Nigeria  
March - June '20

**NIGERIA**



CHRISTINE XUEREB SEIDU

*It's all  
happening in*

**LAGOS!**

Jelili Atiku, *E Don Tey Wey We Dey*, performance at BOZAR, Palais des Beaux-Arts Centre for Fine Arts; and A Performance Affair (APA), Vanderborcht Building, Brussels, Belgium (Friday September 6 2019).  
Photo by Catherine Goffeau

**W**hilst Africa-focused contemporary art fairs like 1-54 and AKAAs open in Europe and the US, Lagos is hosting its own cultural events as an investment within the city itself. It does so in a bid to reach new collectors within Nigeria, as well as to inspire a new generation of artists. This is what Art X Lagos founder and director, Tokini Peterside, said of her own art fair in her city, which joins homegrown artists with those who have lived or studied abroad and returned home. After all, Nigeria already boasts many Nigerian names who have already reached international acclaim – these include Kehinde Riley (Barack Obama's portrait artist); Njideka Akunyili Crosby; Yinka Shobinare; sound artist, Emeka Ogboh; and performance artist, Jelili Atiku.

The beginning of the twentieth century started out with Ben Enwonwu largely occupying the Nigerian art scene as one of Africa's most influential artists. In the 1970s, artists with ties to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka group, started to interweave the Nigerian Igbo craft of *uli* (linear minimal perspective drawings of the Igbo women) with contemporary media. Among these artists were the Ghanaian El Anatsui, who taught at the university between 1996 and 2011, and Olu Oguibe, who studied there in 1986. Before the late Bisi Silva founded the Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA, Lagos) in 2007 – a non-profit-making visual art organisation to provide a platform for development, presentation and discussion of contemporary visual art and culture – Lagos was full of galleries who worked with artists in non-exclusive arrangements, many being left vulnerable and taken advantage of. That same year, the African Artists' Foundation was set up in order to encourage the highest standards of art, providing assistance to professional and emerging artists, organising the LagosPhoto festival (it's of no surprise that the Nigerian photographic industry is one of the largest there is) and the National Art Competition each year. In 2008, Nigeria's



Wole Lagunju, *Head of State*, 2019, oil on canvas

\* Spotlight / Africa / Nigeria  
March - June '20

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.



**NIGERIA**



Wole Lagunju, *Robe me in Egonuon*, oil on canvas, 2019

first auction house, Arthouse Contemporary, was opened and for the first time, prices were made visible following sales. Since then, many young gallerists began to appear, engaging more with artists' careers and encouraging new audiences. These included: the Rele Gallery, the Omenka Gallery, the Art Twenty One Gallery, the Revolving Art Incubator, Nike Art Gallery, Red Door Gallery, the Boys' Quarters Project Space, the SMO Contemporary and many others.

Besides the loss of the curator Bisi Silva in 2019, Nigeria also saw the loss of another of its own – Okwui Enwezor, a very influential figure in the contemporary art world who put African art on the map upon realising African artists had almost no exposure. In 1994, he co-founded *Nka*, a magazine of contemporary African art. Debates about art and postcolonialism on *Nka* led to Enwezor's invitation to co-curate an exhibition of African photography at the S.R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, where he was able to give many African artists their first American exposure. This led to his involvement in more landmark exhibitions and biennales, including being named artistic director of the 11th edition of Documenta, where he was able to include artists from the developing world. Later, he was also named director of Haus der Kunst in Germany.

Chukwuemeka Bosah's *2010 Celebration of Modern Nigerian Art- 101 Nigerian artists* book delves into a great selection of modern

Nigerian artists, but recent years have seen a surge in the number of Nigerian contemporary artists, especially those reaching international acclaim. Upcoming names include Otobeng Nkanga, Gerald Chukwuma, Modupeola Fadugba, Wole Lagunju, Peju Alatise, Ngozi Omeje, Taiye Idahor, Diana Ejaita, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Ayo Akinwande and others like Peter Uka, Uthman Wahaab, Nnenna Okore, Victoria Udondian, Marcia Kure, Sokari Douglas Camp, Frida Orupabo, Lakin Ogunbanwo, Dennis Osadebe, Obinna Makata, Ola-dele Kuku, Victor Ehikhamenor, Tyna Adebawale, and Etinosa Osayimwen, who specialises in documentary photography.

There's more to look forward to when it comes to contemporary art in Nigeria. This month, the Shyllon Museum of Art on Victoria Island, Lagos, will be opening to the public. It is named after Nigeria's biggest art collector, Yoruba prince Yemisi Shyllon, who is also the Pan Atlantic university museum's main donor. Together with this, Lagos' art events calendar will peak in November: firstly with the Lagos-Photo Festival from 29 October to 14 November 2020; concurrently, the Art X Lagos from 6 to 8 November 2020; all in the run up to the next Lagos Biennale, which will take place in 2021. If Lagos doesn't look to be a destination in the near future, art enthusiasts should definitely check out Nigerian artists at one of the over fifty African art fairs coming up this year globally. Alternatively, local galleries specialising in West African art are always worth a visit. 📍

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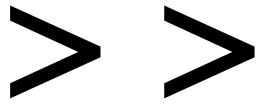
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Picture House offers Profile Collections from Madrid, Bilbao, Naples, Florence, and London, and designs and creates its own collection every year. They offer three grades of conservation glass, museum paper and boards, custom coloured finishes and hand carved wood. Transport and installation service are also available.

*6 Triq Geronimo Abos, L-Iklin*

*T: 2141 6716*

*M: 7985 8054 (Diane) / 9946 2928 (Kevin)*

*E: diane@thepichouse.com /*

*kevin@thepichouse.com*

*W: www.thepichouse.com*

## SISTINA

Sistina Art Supplies offers bespoke framing services as well as high quality art materials for all levels and needs: students, artists, restorers, and gilders.

*8 Amery Street, Sliema*

*T: 2131 4453*

## ART CONSULTANT

## LILY AGIUS GALLERY

With over 15 years of experience, Lily Agius has a keen eye for talented emerging and established artists from Malta and abroad and offers a personalised service for anyone looking for one work of art or wishing to start a collection.

*54 Cathedral Street, Sliema*

*M: 9929 2488*

*E: info@lilyagiusgallery.com*

*W: www.lilyagiusgallery.com*

## BESPOKE DESIGN

## TOM VAN MALDEREN

Whilst exploring the intersections between art, design and architecture, Tom Van Malderen's work ranges from bespoke furniture to objects, installations and exhibition design.

*M: 7961 9391*

*E: tom@tomvanmalderen.com.*

*W: www.tomvanmalderen.com*

## CULTURAL MANAGEMENT

## UNFINISHED ARTSPACE PROJECT

Unfinished Art Space Project is a management and consultancy for visual arts projects and exhibitions, large or small.

*M: 7961 9391*

*W: www.unfinishedartspace.org*

## LIGHTING

## DONEO LIGHTING

Doneo Co Ltd offers specialised services in Lighting Design and Control, from Lighting Plans and 3D lighting renders to intelligent lighting and home automation.

*Doneo, Park Lane Building, Mountbatten Street, Hamrun (by Appointment)*

*T: 2123 0741*

*E: info@doneo.com.mt*

*W: www.doneo.com.mt/lighting*

## LIGHT DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Light Design Solutions offers a specialist lighting design service that enhances space. For LDS, light enriches the character and qualities of the designated area, whether it is a house, a working environment, outdoor space or entertainment area, and in collaboration with their partners around the globe, offer good quality products that are in line with the latest lighting technologies and constantly revolutionising the world of light.

*38/1 Emmanuel Schembri Street,*

*Birkirkara.*

*T: 2149 6843*

*E: info@lds.com.mt*

*W: www.ldsmalta.com*

## INTERIOR DESIGN

## PIPPA TOLEDO

With over 30 years' experience in interior design, Pippa Toledo is one of Malta's best-known names in the field with a large portfolio of successful projects including numerous apartments in Portomaso and Tigne Point, Hotel Juliani, Zest restaurant, Barracuda Restaurant, Club 22 at the Portomaso Tower, EMD Offices at the Valletta Waterfront, The Dragonara Casino, the Grandmasters' Suite, The Drawing Room and the informal dining room at the President's Palace in San Anton, and Cardini Restaurant.

*Garden Terrace Court, Triq il-Baltiku,*

*The Village, St Julians*

*T: 2132 3616 / 2134 1367*

*E: info@pippatoleo.com*

*W: www.pippatoleo.com*

## VERA SANT FOURNIER

VSF strives to deliver a luxury service for individuals who appreciate personalised design, quality materials and workmanship and desire a space made just for them.

*M: 7709 9194.*

*E: vera@verasantfournier.com*

*www.verasantfournier.com*

To be listed here on the Localist email [info@artpaper.press](mailto:info@artpaper.press) or call 9929 2488.

**\* Spotlight / Events / Global**  
March - June '20



PAINTING +  
SCULPTURE

A selection of art events from around the world

**\* 03.20-07.20**



Until 26 April 2020

**PORTRAYING PREGNANCY: FROM HOLBEIN TO SOCIAL MEDIA**

A major exhibition exploring representations of the pregnant female body through portraits will bring together – for the first time – rare examples of these works, providing an exceptional opportunity to situate contemporary issues of women's identity, emotion, empowerment and autonomy over 500 years. The exhibition includes Holbein's portrait of Thomas More's daughter, Cicely Heron, and William Hogarth's *The March of the Guards to Finchley*, which features a heavily pregnant woman at its centre. Also on display is a previously unseen work by Jenny Saville, *Electra*, as well as Marc Quinn's *Alison Lapper (8 Months)*, and *Girl with Roses*, Lucian Freud's portrait of his first wife Kitty.

Foundling Museum, UK  
[www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk](http://www.foundlingmuseum.org.uk)

Image: Lucian Freud, *Girl with Roses*, courtesy Foundling Museum



Until 30 April 2020

**JEFF WALL**

Canadian artist Jeff Wall's first solo exhibition in Greece is a focused survey of his photographs and transparencies. Works from the late 1980s to the 2010s reflect his involvement with historical genres, and are installed in a dramaturgical unfolding over the galleries. Over the course of a nearly fifty-year career, Wall has transformed our understanding of photography. Since first presenting a photograph as a transparency in a lightbox in 1978, he has composed images that reflect and actualise social and historical narratives through a critical synthesis of artistic strategies from popular culture, cinema, literature, and painting.

George Economou Collection, Athens  
[www.thegeorgeeconomoucollection.com](http://www.thegeorgeeconomoucollection.com)

Image: Jeff Wall, *After 'Invisible Man' by Ralph Ellison, the Prologue, 1999-2000* © Jeff Wall



Until 7 June 2020

**CARAVAGGIO-BERNINI. BAROQUE IN ROME**

An exhibition of more than 70 masterpieces – including sculptures and paintings – by Caravaggio, Bernini and their contemporaries. The exhibition's highlights include Caravaggio's mesmerising *Narcissus*, as well as his *Boy Bitten by a Lizard* and *The Crowning with Thorns*; it will also include Bernini sculptures such as the rarely exhibited early work, *Bacchus*, his poignant *Saint Sebastian*, the bust of *Medusa*, the striking marble portraits of Thomas Baker and Cardinal Richelieu, as well as a painting titled *Self-Portrait*. Works by Guido Reni, Giovanni Baglione, the Gentileschi, Nicolas Poussin, and Simon Vouet, will also be included in the exhibition. Sculptures include the black marble *Sonno* by Alessandro Algardi, and Francesco Mochi's never-before-seen bronze horse at full trot.

Rijks Museum, Netherlands  
[www.rijksmuseum.nl](http://www.rijksmuseum.nl)

Image: Caravaggio, *Narcissus*, 1597 - 1599



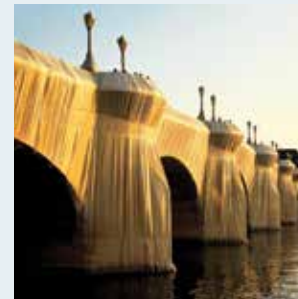
Until 5 July 2020

**DÓRA MAURER**

Tate Modern presents the work of Hungarian artist Dóra Maurer (born 1937) in a year-long free exhibition. The show brings together up to 35 works, revealing the diversity of her output, including graphic pieces, photographs, films and paintings. Movement, displacement, perception and transformation have remained consistent threads in her work. Spanning more than five decades, the exhibition highlights the playful, conceptual approach that she brings to her experiments across all media. Maurer was at the centre of an independent community of artists, poets and musicians that championed their own culture outside of the official Hungarian system during the socialist period, organising exhibitions in apartments and publishing underground journals.

Tate Modern  
[www.tate.org.uk](http://www.tate.org.uk)

Image: Dóra Maurer *Relative Quasi Image 1996* © Dóra Maurer  
Photo: Vintage Galéria / András Bozsó



**18.03.20**  
until 15 June 2020

**CHRISTO ET JEANNE CLAUDE. PARIS!**

This major exhibition devoted to Christo and Jeanne-Claude retraces the story of their wrapping project (1975-1985), and looks back at their Parisian period (1958-1964). As of 1975, Christo and Jeanne-Claude developed the idea of wrapping the Pont-Neuf in Paris in a golden sandstone-coloured polyamide canvas, which would cover the sides and the vaults of the bridge's twelve arches, the parapets, the edges and the footpaths (the public could walk on the canvas). The canvas also covered its 44 lamps and the vertical walls of the central island of the western end of Île de la Cité and the Esplanade du Vert-Galant. The exhibition takes place before the wrapping of the Arc de Triomphe this autumn.

Centre Pompidou, Paris  
[www.centrepompidou.fr](http://www.centrepompidou.fr)

Image: *The wrapped Pont-Neuf*, © Christo and Jeanne Claude



**18.03.20**  
Until 13 July 2020

**PICASSO. BAIGNEUSES ET BAIGNEURS**

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon offers a re-reading of the theme of the bather in Picasso's work, with counterpoints from works by other artists from the past, including Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, Paul Cézanne, and Auguste Renoir – each of whom influenced Picasso in the treatment of this subject. Other contemporary artists or followers of Picasso, such as Henry Moore and Francis Bacon, and their interest in Picassian bathers will also be on display. Designed largely from the collection of the Musée national Picasso-Paris, the exhibition will include nearly 150 works and archive documents from international public and private collections, as well as whole series of photographs of the artist and his relatives.

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon  
[www.mba-lyon.fr](http://www.mba-lyon.fr)

Image: Pablo Picasso, *Femme assise sur la plage*, 1937 © Succession Picasso, 2020. Image © Lyon MBA - Photo Alain Basset

Until 27 September 2020

**FORENSIC ARCHITECTURE: TRUE TO SCALE**

The first major U.S. survey of Forensic Architecture's extraordinary work uncovering evidence of state and corporate violence, *Forensic Architecture: True to Scale* displays the evidence and explains the methodologies behind over a dozen of the group's investigations. While providing an overview of how advanced techniques such as photogrammetry, audio analysis, augmented reality, 3D modelling, machine learning, and crowd sourcing support their findings, the exhibition considers the complex relationship between material facts and their representation in the public realm.

Comprised of architects, software developers, filmmakers, journalists, lawyers, artists, and scientists, Forensic Architecture is a research agency that uses architectural software and an architectural sensibility to investigate human rights violations. The exhibition recently made headlines, with a U.S. entry-visa being denied to Forensic Architecture founder Eyal Weizman, meaning that he was unable to attend the exhibition.

Where: Museum of Art and Design, Miami Dade College, Miami [www.mdcmod.org](http://www.mdcmod.org)

Image: Forensic Architecture, *The Left-to-die Boat* was shown in Malta in 2018



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**\* Spotlight / Events / Malta**  
March - June '20

**VISUAL ART**  
**EXHIBITIONS**

A selection of curated events in Malta + Gozo

**\* 03.20-07.20**



**01.04.20**  
Until 26 April 2020

**BETWEEN ASH AND DUST**

The exhibition *Between Ash and Dust* will showcase work by artist Vince Briffa, focusing on the themes of implausible distances and detached spaces. Briffa's work is as much about the process of drawing-painting as it is about war-imagery of destruction taken from tabloids or television. These metaphoric memorials sway unclearly between human intervention and natural phenomena, embodying an act of restitution through the same material they are made with (charcoal being fire's residue) – a destructive force embalmed through its very remains.

Where: Arthall, Victoria, Gozo  
Wednesday - Saturday:  
10am – 1pm and  
5pm – 7pm  
Sunday: 10am – 12 noon

[arthallgozo.com](http://arthallgozo.com)

Image courtesy of the artist



**02.04.20**  
Until 23 April 2020

**IL-ĦAJJA**

Gozitan sculptor Mario Agius will be launching a personal exhibition of sculptures. Agius studied sculpture and design with the late Maltese artists Anton Agius and Harry Alden, furthering his studies in the UK with sculptor Ian Norbury. His sculptures are in constant dialogue with our surroundings and aim to create connections and parallels between human life and natural materials such as olive trunks, Carrara marble, and Gozo hardstone.

Where: Palazzo de La Salle, Malta Society of Arts, Valletta  
Monday – Friday  
8am – 7pm  
Saturday 9am – 1pm

[www.artsmalta.org](http://www.artsmalta.org)

Image courtesy of the artist



**17.04.20**  
Until 24 May 2020

**FORESHADOWING THE FUTURE**

Caesar Attard has worked on concepts of what we now recognise as digital generation since the 1970s. Attard showcases a selective retrospective with a combination of new works, setting the context for digital art created in Malta since the 1980s, and integrating digital-concepts-technology into works of fine art. The exhibition is also part of an extensive research project conducted by Toni Sant and Vince Briffa towards a historiography of digital art in Malta.

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

[www.kreattivita.org](http://www.kreattivita.org)

Image: courtesy of Spazju Kreattiv



**24.04.20**  
Until 2 May 2020

**PASSIVATION**

British photographer Matt Thompson's first exhibition in Malta; a collection of works portraying the human body in bronze. Having spent his childhood summers in Gozo, British photographer Matt Thompson moved permanently to Malta from London two years ago in search of inspiration and a different perspective. Matt has photographed everyone from famous Hollywood actors to prime ministers, and has featured in some of Britain's leading publications. *Passivation* has been developed and made in Malta.

Where: Studio 87, Valletta  
Monday – Friday  
10am – 6pm

[www.matthompson.co.uk](http://www.matthompson.co.uk)

Image courtesy of the artist



**08.05.20**  
Until 4 July 2020

**THREE WOMEN**

An exhibition that brings together the powerful work of three female artists dealing with questions of female identity in a dramatically changing contemporary world. The show aptly bears the same title as the collection of three stories written by famous Austrian novelist, Robert Musil. The exhibition includes the participation of Nan Goldin, Shirin Neshat and Austrian artist Hanna Putz – all of whose work (photography, video) addresses pertinent and pressing social and political topics.

Where: Valletta Contemporary  
Tuesday – Sunday  
11:30am – 7pm

[www.vallettacontemporary.com](http://www.vallettacontemporary.com)

Image: Shirin Neshat, still from *Illusions & Mirrors*, 2013



**23.05.2020**  
Until 21 June 2020

**FANTASTIC GROUND: DECONSTRUCTING THE LOCAL**

An exhibition of contemporary paintings by artist Vince Caruana highlights the continuing allure of re-ordering the appearance of the landscape. Allowing geometric forms and vibrant colours to compete for dominance with the subject-matter, the artist is interested in minimising local landscapes to their constituent parts in order to rediscover fantastic ground. Eliminating the modern uglification which has dominated our islands over the last decades, these landscapes seek to represent order, simplicity and harmony.

Where: Art e gallery, Victoria, Gozo  
Monday – Saturday:  
9.30am to 12.15pm  
Sunday: 10am - 12 noon

[www.vincecaruana.com](http://www.vincecaruana.com)

Image: Vince Caruana, courtesy of the artist

**28.03.20** Until 14 April 2020

**IN DIALOGUE**

Also in Gozo: Don't miss *In Dialogue* – a display by Gozitan artist Victor Agius, showing contemporary ceramics, mixed media sculpture, earth paintings and installations in sound and video, all in dialogue with the collection displayed at Il-Ħaġar Museum. The works, placed alongside the museum collection, discuss the forming of matter, nature and rituals and their transcendence into ethereal experiences.

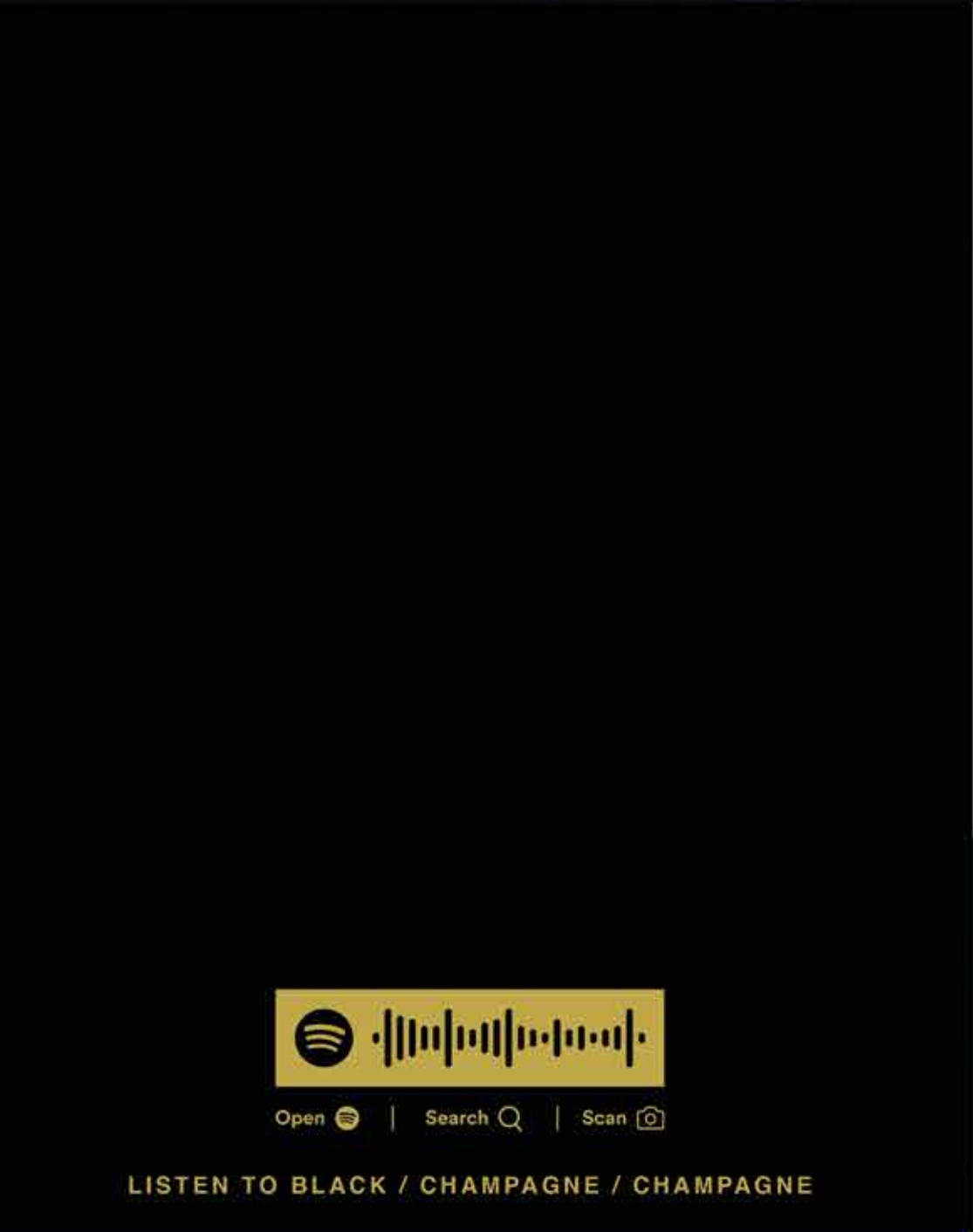
*In Dialogue* is on show from 28 March to 14 April 2020 at Il-Ħaġar Museum, Victoria, Gozo. [www.victoragius.com](http://www.victoragius.com)

Image courtesy of the artist





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