

20
21

3-12

m a r c h

revisited
memories

ART EXHIBITION BY FABIO BORG

Curated by Prof. Louis Laganà Ph.D

DESKO
GALLERY



The Silent City, (2020)

Acrylics on canvas panel
18cm x 24cm



The artist's goal is to incorporate information that will transform or expand existing assumptions and structures by changing the rules. He achieves this goal within a context of evolving artistic knowledge that has its own traditions and does so in some form that is readily observable.

(Rotenberg, 1992:174)



VISIONS OF THE SELF THROUGH OUR HERITAGE AND ITS FUTURE

Prof. Louis Laganà Ph.D (Lough), is an associate professor in psychoanalysis and art, an art historian and practicing artist.

Artists always sought to capture nature in their work and express the perceptions of the socio-political climate of the time. In his recent collection of paintings, Fabio Borg provides a moral and symbolic understanding of the social condition of what surrounds him and depicts the spiritual significance of nature in its context today.

His latest collection signifies the harmony of the topographical landscapes and a sort of apocalyptic and dramatic interpretation of our

local architecture and rural areas in Malta. This is achieved through the use of bold contrasting colours and chiaroscuro. We mainly judge Borg's paintings for their formal aesthetic qualities but there is more than that. The artist proposes landscapes not just for viewing the beauty of our priceless natural and built heritage, but also as a reminder that they are in danger of being lost. In a number of his paintings one can see the traditional Maltese facade with the typical colourful wooden balconies, rustic doors and narrow streets,

which as we know are being replaced with concrete and steel structures.

The artist has two distinctive styles in his work, the hard edge and the atmospheric. Borg is mostly known for his optical realistic style executed with a sense of liberal approach. He uses vertical or horizontal stripes of vibrant colours and bands of light with a chiaroscuro effect. The use of angles contribute to the abstract quality found in each work. Light and darkness appear harsh whether formed by yellowish or reddish tones are an ever present feature of these works. Some good examples of these paintings are Balconies, Mdina Landscape, The Mosta Church, Valetta View and others. In the atmospheric style, which is part of his latest oeuvre, Borg demonstrates his painterly brushwork with subdued and restricted colour palette. The artist unveils new non-urban areas in Malta and explores the effect of the subtly modulated light conditions of the day. In some of these paintings, one cannot trace the geographical location. In others like The Verdala Palace from Buskett and San Pawl tal-Qliegħa Chapel, Mosta, the location is very evident and recognisable.

We all know that light/colour is the medium of emotion and feeling. Colour which is uncontrolled by form shows a primitive effect and surely this can be applied to Fabio Borg's work. During the creative process, the artist explores the affective dimension of light. After all colour is light. The artist's achievement is not about the realism of the imagery but to discover a new set of relationships with light, colour, line and form. He instils an emotional ordeal into each composition, sometimes restricting his vision by violating commonly known painterly values and methods. In these paintings Borg allows colour and light to reveal his aesthetic investigation in a transitional space where objectivity and subjectivity are engaged and reconciled.

Painting during the Covid19 Pandemic

As the Covid19 pandemic persisted in the first quarter of the year 2020, many artists reacted to the threat of the pandemic which has become a reality for many people all over the world. In this collection of works Fabio also responded to what was happening outside in the streets and other places during the lockdown. It is appropriate to say that many artists

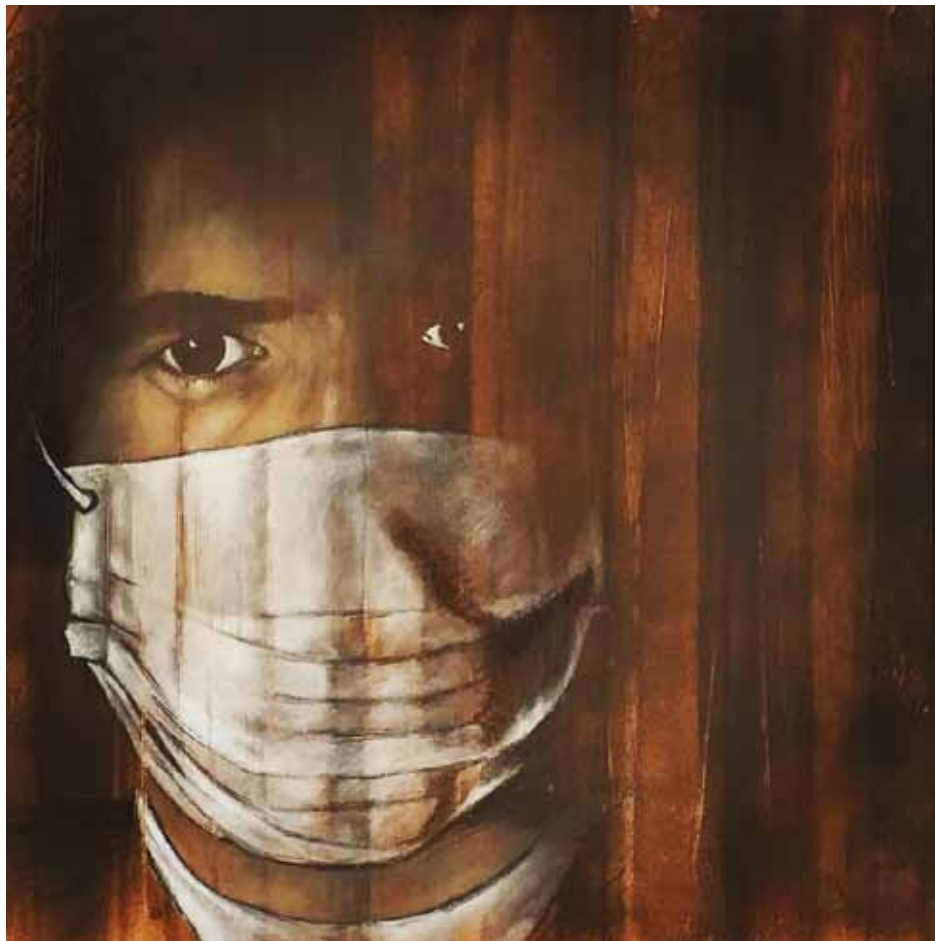
in any country reflected, imagined a lot and had the temptation to express in their works and distinguish between 'insiders', those who needed protection and 'outsiders', strangers who might have been contagious with the disease.

Epidemics is an uncommon subject in art. Its history have shown how outbreaks of diseases have changed society, shaped politics, crushed revolutions and established racial and economic discrimination. Artists always remained neutral and tolerated the effects of the disasters pandemics brought in the lives of many people.

I believe it is the first time in the history of Maltese painting that so many artists ended recluse in their studios without the possibility to go out and enjoy the natural landscape and the built environment. Fabio Borg worked on a number of paintings on this subject. Worth mentioning are a series of empty streets like Looking from my Window during lockdown, Good Friday Procession during Pandemic in Birgu, Mosta Portico - 'Still closed for necessary safety', and We All have to wear Masks - Self Portrait, among others.

In his self portrait entitled We All have to wear Masks, Borg captures his face in an unusual manner. The face mask, mostly made from fabric, which we all have been accustomed to wear, takes prominence in this particular canvas. The artist's features become unrecognisable. Through this painting, the artist is sending a clear message that social norms changed rapidly.

Fabio Borg's inspiration is derived by an array of imagery that are found in his environment and personal experience of life. Such images are filtered through his unconscious like a psychic residue of a fantasised world. In this collection of paintings, the artist's repetitive objects like balconies, trees, rectangular shapes and other textured forms, evoke universal feelings like loneliness and isolation. These works may also elicit a dichotomous feelings of opposites such as 'tense' and 'calm'. The altering of forms of repetition could also indicate internal conflicts or psychic changes which the artist is trying to narrate in a living history. In these latest works, a dream-like quality is also attributed to a desire to create a metaphorical visual language about social consciousness and environmental awareness.



We all have to wear masks, (2020)
(Quarantine self portrait)

Acrylics on Canvas
40cm x 40cm



Looking from my window, (2020)

Acrylics on Canvas
40x40cm



*Good Friday procession
in Birgu, during the
pandemic, (2020)*
(in Hilda Tabone Street)

Acrylics on canvas
80x40cm (diptych)



Buskett, (2020)

Acrylics on canvas
50x50cm



Cheese Plant, (2020)

Acrylics on Canvas
40cm x 40cm



Maltese Balconies in Valletta - no one out!, (2020)

Acrylics on canvas
100cm x 70cm



Maltese Balconies, (2020)

Acrylics on Canvas
50cm x 40cm



Maltese balconies in Valletta, (2019)

Acrylics on Canvas
100cm x 35cm

Il-Logg, (2020)

Acrylics on Canvas
100cm x 30cm



Valletta Skyline, (2019)

Acrylics on Canvas
80cm x 80cm



White clothes hanging on traditional balcony, (2020)

Acrylics on canvas
40cm x 80cm



Balcony decorated for the village feast, (2020)

Acrylics on Canvas
50cm x 40cm



Hanging out clothes outside, (2020)

Acrylics on Canvas
50cm x 40cm



R T O - No Entry, (2020)

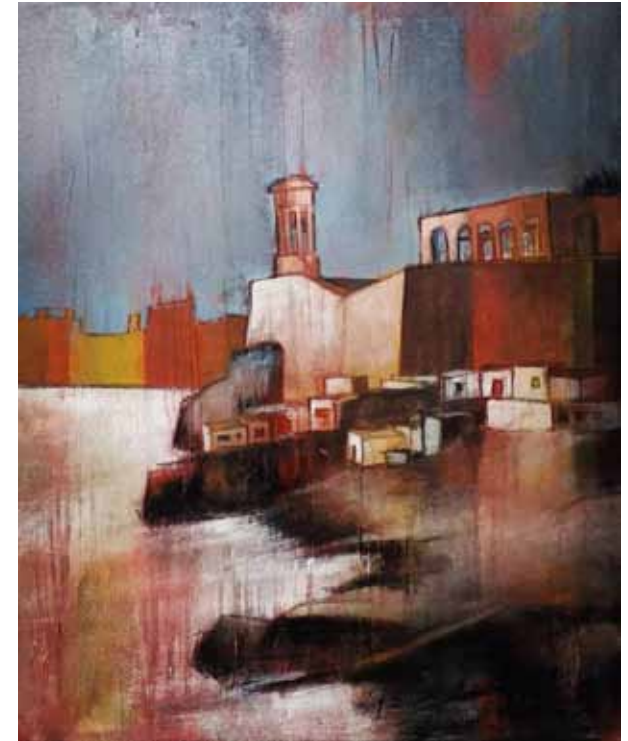
Acrylics on canvas panel
30cm x 40cm



On the way to Buskett, (2020)
Acrylics on canvas
50cm x 50cm



*San Pawl tal-Qliegħa
Chapel, Mosta*, (2019)
Acrylics on canvas
30x42cm



*Siege Bell memorial,
Valletta Grand Harbour*, (2020)
Acrylics on canvas
50x70cm



Winter in Wied il-Fiddien, (2020)

Acrylics on Canvas
70cm x 70cm



*We are destroying our Heritage,
(2020)*

Acrylics on Canvas
40cm x 60cm



*Irregular Constructs,
(2020)*

Acrylics on Canvas
60cm x 30cm



Mosta Church, (2019)

Acrylics on Canvas
100cm x 50cm



Trees, (2019)

Acrylics on Canvas
50cm x 70cm



Valletta City Gate, (2019)

Acrylics on Canvas
27cm x 22cm



Biography

Fabio Borg (b.1974), started to explore the world of art ever since he could hold a pencil. From a very young age he started studying drawing and painting at the School of Art in Valletta, Malta under the tuition of artist Anthony Calleja. He also studied graphic design and worked as an art director with various advertising agencies in Malta. At present Fabio is a teacher within a secondary school.

Fabio had spent some years in Italy where, besides meeting various Italian artists who helped him in developing his ideas and thoughts, he studied theology, philosophy and psychology, in which he obtained a degree. These academic studies show a great influence in his works. This could be seen in his second solo exhibition held at The Museum of Fine Arts in 2004. His paintings are filled with hope and the colours play

an important part in his works. Since 1999, he has exhibited his works extensively in Malta and Gozo.

Fabio says that his work is a mirror of his personality. He believes that we are always in search for perfection, but we can never achieve it in this life. This idea is portrayed within his works by the horizontal and vertical lines. Improvisation and spontaneity do play an important role in his art enhancing the absolute harmony between the artist and his work that Fabio seeks to pursue.

The majority of his new paintings are done with different medium, however the main medium used is acrylic.

Lately his work depicts the beauty of our local architecture. Within these works he combined classical architecture through modern expression.

Other Solo Exhibitions

Without Oars, Restorante Capo Tavola, Marsaskala, Malta 2011

Evolving Moments, Gallery Last Touch, Mosta, Malta 2008

Extracts, Banca Giuratale, Victoria, Gozo, Malta 2005

Emotions and Passion, National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta, Malta 2004

Snapshots, The Mill, Birkirkara, Malta 1999

