

# FOCUS

Newsletter of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce



Palazzo De La Salle, Republic Street, Valletta VLT 03 • Tel: 2124 4339 • Fax: 2124 6074 • [www.artsmalta.org](http://www.artsmalta.org) • [info@artsmalta.org](mailto:info@artsmalta.org)

## Sculptor Anton Agius awarded the 2006 Gold Medal

The Society awarded its Gold Medal 2006 to Anton Agius, the renowned sculptor, in recognition of his achievements and interest in the Arts. Mr Agius, besides being a sculptor in bronze, stone, concrete and wood is also a ceramist, lino painter, stamp designer and watercolourist. His works include the Workers Memorial Monument in Msida, the Freedom Monument in Vittoriosa, the Dun Mikiel Xerri and Compatriots Monument, the Sette Giugno Monument, the Manuel Dimech Monument all in Valletta and the Anton Buttigieg Monument in Hamrun. He has exhibited his works in various exhibitions in Malta and abroad, such as in New York, London, Edinburgh, Ravenna and Lithuania. His works can also be found in collections in Sweden, Switzerland, USA, UK, Italy, Ireland, Germany and Libya.



Anton Agius was awarded first prize in the Human Rights Art Exhibition in Valletta in 1968. He was awarded the Onorificenza Per Meriti by the Associazione Culturale Amici di Pan of Florence in 1979 and also the Targa d'Oro by the Associazione Nazionale Artistica Culturale, Italia in 1982.

At a ceremony held at the Society's premises at Palazzo De La Salle, Valletta, following an opening address by the President of the Society, Mr Paul Ascjak, Mr Peter Paul Ciantar

gave an appreciation on the qualities and work of Mr Agius. The distinguished audience present was then regaled with a piano interlude by Ms Charlene Farrugia, which was very well received and appreciated. H.E. the President of the Republic, Dr Edward Fenech Adami, then conferred the Gold Medal on Mr Agius who was visibly moved by the honour bestowed upon him. Ms Rita Chircop compered the evening's programme.

## Stefan Debattista wins MEDPOT Competition

This ceramic work is by Stefan Debattista, a Maltese student at the Institute of Art and Design who is also a member of the Society. With this work Stefan won a competition which is part of the MedPot Project under the EU Interreg – Malta – Sicily Programme which the Society is working on together with local partners, who are the Secretariat for Small Businesses and Self Employed and the Malta-Italian

Chamber of Commerce, together with the Italian partners, Comune di Sciacca, CNA and Confartigianato. Sicilian and Maltese student artists were invited to participate in a competition whereby the style to be used for the Sciacca-Maltese ceramic works would be chosen. As a result Mr Debattista won a scholarship of one month in a ceramic workshop in Sciacca.



# Editorial

As can be seen from the Society's Newsletter, the Society has seen a resurgence in various areas. The number of students and classes has increased considerably with well over 500 students attending classes and courses every term. The number of participants in the Society's art competitions and exhibitions has also increased considerably, without any diminishing in the quality of works.

The halls of the society for holding art exhibitions have been sought after with increasing frequency over the last few months and apart from the summer months, when refurbishment works should take place, the halls are booked for all the rest of the year.

Refurbishing and restoration of the Palazzo is moving and although much needs still to be done much has already been achieved and the Society's plans in this area are on course.

One area that one feels leaves something to be desired is that of participation by members in the running of the Society. The last Annual General Meeting was very poorly attended and this was disappointing to the few who attended, particularly when one considers the activities that have been generated and results achieved over the last few months. The Council would like more participation and more criticism and suggestions from members. We know that there is always room for improvement and that is what we shall continuously be striving for.

One notices in particular the lack of interest in the running of the Society from the younger members. The Society enjoys a paid up membership base of over 600, most of whom are artists. Therefore it was very disappointing to hold a meeting for artists, as happened last year, and only 7 turn up.

To stimulate interest in young members, the Society is studying the setting up of a Youth Section of the Society, where some responsibility will be given to a sub-committee consisting of members under the age of 35. Before working further on this proposal, the Society would like to have the views of members. It should not be so difficult in these days of easy electronic communication for you to give us your views and suggestions regarding this proposal.

## The Annual General Meeting of the Society - the Council for 2007/2008

The Society held its Annual General Meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2007. The President read out the Administrative Report, which was accompanied by a Powerpoint presentation. The accounts of the Society were also approved. The Society received two nominations for the three vacant posts on the Council. These were Mr Carmelo Galea and Mr Francis Galea. As there remained a vacancy in the Council, the Council co-opted Maestro Lawrence Borg to sit on the Council. The 2007 / 2008 Council is now composed of the following: Mr Paul Ascjak, President, Mr Joseph J. Mifsud, Vice-President, Mr Stephen Sant'Angelo, Honorary Secretary, Mr Carmelo Galea, Verification Officer, Ms Jessica DeBattista, Ms Rita Chircop, Mro Lawrence Borg, Mr Francis Galea, Mr Carmelo Micallef and Mr Saviour Zammit, Members. Dr Paul V. Mifsud represents the Government on the Council.

Unfortunately, as in previous years, the attendance at the Annual General Meeting was very poor. Prior to the Annual General Meeting, an Extraordinary General Meeting was held where various amendments to the statute were proposed by the Council and were approved.

The Society is also pleased to announce that His Grace, Archbishop Paul Cremona has consented to be a patron of the Society, as was his predecessor, His Grace, Archbishop Emeritus, Mons. Mercieca.

### Art Exhibitions held at Palazzo De La Salle during the first months of 2007

The Society's premises was the venue for a number of exhibitions held over the first months of the year. Apart from the exhibition by the students of the Society which is covered under another article in this newsletter, the students of Matthew Cassar held an exhibition 'Bliet u Rhula Maltin' which illustrated a number of Maltese towns and villages. The mayors of the respective localities were invited to the opening of this exhibition.

Another exhibition was 'Faces, Earrings and More' which featured a number of portraits and seascapes by Joseph Spiteri Staines and silver filigree works by Kevin Attard.

Gabriel Nansen, an American artist, held an exhibition of his works in the courtyard of the Palazzo.

Martin Bezzina Wettinger exhibited his works, which consisted of paintings and woodcarvings, under the title 'The Language of Art'.

Four artists, Chris Muscat, Kevin Attard, Sylvie Buret-Cheng and Judith Thomas exhibited a number of paintings, drawings, and ceramic and silver filigree and beads jewellery, under the title 'Black and White' during May.

More exhibitions are scheduled for June (Eman Grima - Works) and September through to December.

### Another Edition of the National Art Competition & Exhibition

At the time of going to press the Society was still receiving applications from members and other artists to participate in the 6<sup>th</sup> National Art Competition and Exhibition. This will be the last Exhibition to be held at the Trade Fair Grounds in Naxxar during the 50th Malta International Trade Fair, between the 27<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup> July and readers are encouraged to make a note of the dates of the Exhibition and visit it during the opening hours of the Fair.

Sponsored by



Bank of Valletta  
[www.bov.com](http://www.bov.com)

# More Courses Introduced by the Society

The Society recently started several new courses. A course on Interior Design and Decoration was launched and demand was overwhelming. The course is run by Anthony Portelli and covers Basic Design Tools, Styles, Colour, Pattern and Texture, Concept Development, The Study of Materials and Inspiration for Design and Design Communication, Theme and Sample Boards, Scale Floor Plan, Perspective Drawing and Model Making.

A new course was aimed at teaching the basics of ceramic sculpture and silver filigree work in order to enable participants to create jewellery using ceramics

## *a record number of Students are attending the April-June Term*

and silver filigree. The response for this course was quite encouraging.

After some years the Society also reintroduced a course on Gilding which drew a large number of students. Another very popular course was introduced. This was on Clay Sculpture. The course runs over ten lessons and covers the following projects: Pinch pots, Coil Jars, Slab Work, Relief with Clay, Drawing on Clay, Modelling a Human Bust, Modelling a Human

Figure, Abstract Sculpture in Clay, Making a Relief Mould with Clay and Plaster.

The Society also organized a series of illustrated talks by the well known lecturer, Vincent Zammit on the history of Malta. These talks are divided into three series. The first series covers the period of the Knights in Malta. The second series, which will start in October, will cover the period between the coming of the French, the uprising and the

first years of British rule. The third series in January 2008 will cover the British in Malta.

Besides the above the Society also offered Life Classes for artists and the response here was also quite good. A series of ten sessions of two and a half hours each session are being held. A new record of 59 classes are being held at the Society during this term which compares well with 27 classes in 2006 with an increase in students from 327 in 2006 to 536 in 2007, an increase of 64%. The response from students this year has been quite extraordinary and augurs well for the Society.

## Invitation to a Summer Concert by the Denner Clarinet Quartet at the Palazzo's Courtyard



The Society is organizing a concert by the Denner Clarinet Quartet on the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. This will be the first in a series that the Society is planning to hold over the summer months, depending on the success of this first concert. The concert will start at 8.00pm and is being offered to all the Society's members and the music loving public and will be free of charge. The Denner Quartet will be playing a selection of light classical music which will include Anitra's Dance by Grieg, Yesterday by Lennon and McCartney and L-Imnarja by Carmelo Pace. Further details will be issued in the press closer to the date.

## THE ANNUAL STUDENTS EXHIBITION OF ART AND CRAFTS

Students attending courses at the Society held an exhibition of their works between the 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007 at the Society's premises at Palazzo De La Salle, Republic Street, Valletta.

The work exhibited included detailed work in Ganuttel, Monastery, Filigree, Embroidery and Embroidery in Gold. The latter included the emblem of the Society painstakingly embroidered by Ms Marie Louise Bajada. Furthermore works in Beading, Cottage Craft, Malta Lace, Glass Painting, and Parchment Craft could be admired. Soft Furnishing work, Needle Handcrafts and Tailoring could also be seen. Bridal Bouquets made by students were on display as also woodcarving works, stone sculptures, papier mache and cribs made by students. Art students also exhibited a number of their works which were painted in various artistic media.



Various arts and crafts by the younger students of the Society were also on display.

Prior to the official opening of the exhibition twenty two students were awarded a three-month scholarship under the Special Projects Programme, for results obtained in subjects such as Art, Embroidery, Filigree, Malta Lace, Guitar, Pianoforte and Violin. The students and the many guests present were impressed with the variety and high quality of work on display in the Exhibition.

Sponsored by



Middlesea Insurance p.l.c.

## Concert and Presentation of LCM Grade 5 Certificates



The Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce held a concert on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007 for students who achieved a distinction in Grade 5 from the London College of Music in 2006. The concert, which was held at Palazzo De La Salle in Valletta was compered by Ms Rita Chircop and was attended by the students' parents. A number of students played a variety of pieces for the audience present. The President of the Society, Mr Paul Asciak then presented the certificates to the students to conclude an enjoyable evening.

## 180 people attend the Annual Fund Raising Dinner

A record number of 180 people attended the Society's Annual Fund Raising Dinner at Villa Arrigo, Naxxar on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2007. A very enjoyable evening was spent with delicious food and many prizes distributed. The event raised Lm522 which will go towards the Special Projects Fund whereby deserving students are given various scholarships for courses at the Society.



## Notes for Your Diary

- **June 1-2 : London College of Music Practical Exams** - Palazzo De La Salle.
- **June 6 - 28: Eman Grima Works** - Art Exhibition by Eman Grima at Palazzo De La Salle.
- **June 16: London College of Music Theory Exam** - St Elmo Examinations Hall.
- **June 27 - July 8: 6<sup>th</sup> National Arts Competition & Exhibition** - Marchese Scicluna Hall during the 50<sup>th</sup> Malta Internation Trade Fair at the Trade Fair Grounds, Naxxar.
- **July 3: Summer Concert at Palazzo's Courtyard** - By the Denner Clarinet Quartet at Palazzo De La Salle, Valletta at 8.00pm.
- **July 4 - 6: ArtSale at Palazzo De La Salle** - By the Member Artists of The Society, at 6.30pm.
- **July 15: Art, Crafts & Music Summer Courses** - A series of 9 lesson courses, once a wek during the morning hours at Palazzo De La Salle between June and September.
- **September 3 -14 : Photographic Exhibition on Portugal** - Palazzo De La Salle, Valletta
- **September 4 - 7: Street Art Classes** - By the Young Art Summer Students of the Society at Republic Street, Valletta
- **September 29 - Collective Art Exhibition** - Palazzo De La Salle, Valletta



## Presentation of an Embroidered Emblem of the Society

Ms Salvina Grech, the embroidery teacher who has been teaching at the Society for many years, donated an embroidered emblem of the Society. The presentation was made on her behalf by Ms Marie Louise Bajada, a student from Gozo who under the guidance of Ms Salvina Grech carried out the work. The embroidered emblem of the Society was presented to the President of the Society, Mr Paul Asciak, at a ceremony held during the Society's Annual Prize Giving at Palazzo De La Salle, Valletta. The emblem, which is embroidered in embroidery threads, including gold, is 45 cm by 45 cm large, took Ms Bajada 300 hours to complete and is a veritable work of art in its own right.

## Another successful Cultural Tour to Gozo



A group of 55 Students, Tutors and Members of the Society visited Gozo on a full-day tour on the 30<sup>th</sup> April. On their arrival in Gozo, the group visited the state of the art Magro Brothers Complex in Xewkija, producers of tomato products. Then the group paid a visit to the Gozo University to view the Annual Lace Exhibition. After lunch at Marsalforn , the group was taken to the restored Esopu Tower, situated in Nadur between San Blass Bay and Dahlet Qorrot. The visit to the tower included the tasting of another local product, the Lumincell. From there the group was taken to Rihan Valley, a valley renowned for the high quality of its citrus fruits. It was a singular opportunity for the group to walk down the valley where tangerine (mandolina) citrus trees used for the production of the Lumincell abound. The valley is also well known for the high quality of its olive trees and the production of olive oil.