

FOCUS

Newsletter of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce



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Antoine Paul Camilleri wins the Silver Palette Competition

98 artists, including 18 sculpturers participated in the VEE GEE BEE ART 9th Silver Palette Competition and Exhibition. The overall winner and winner of the Sculpture and Ceramics category was Antoine Paul Camilleri with his sculpture "Mother and Child". The winner of the Paintings Category was Jean Karl Izzo with his painting "Tramonto sulle Saline". Joseph Navarro was Runner Up in this category with "Boat Yard" whilst Honourable Mentions were earned by Paul Cassar with 'Senglea' and Damian Ebejer with 'The Dawn of Knowledge'. In the Sculpture and Ceramics Category, Valerio Schembri was declared Runner Up with 'Untitled' and Honourable Mentions were earned by Walter Vella with 'Kurcifiss' and Censu Fenech with 'Abstract'. All participating works were exhibited in the exhibition which was open to the public from the 7th to the 14th May. About 200 people attended the presentation of the prizes on the 6th May, which prizes were presented by the Acting President of the Society, Joseph J. Mifsud and Kenneth Gauci Borda, Managing Director of VEE GEE BEE ART, sponsors of this event. The Curator for this Competition and Exhibition was the well known artist Eman Grima who gave a short report on the Competition. Artists and visitors attending the presentation and subsequent exhibition all had a word of praise for the recently refurbished exhibition halls and the modern lighting system which greatly enhanced the many works on show. All participating artists were also presented with certificates.

Top: Guests before the Opening.

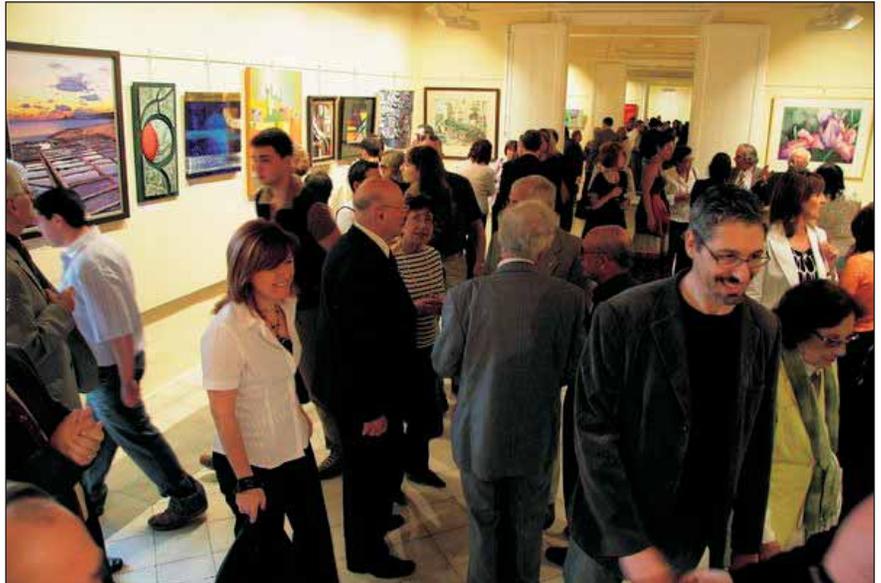
Middle: Jean Karl Izzo near his work.

Far Right: Mr Joseph J. Mifsud, A/President presenting the Trophy to Antoine Paul Camilleri.

Bottom: Joseph Navarro near his work.

Far Right: Mr Kenneth Gauci Borda, of Vee Gee Bee, presenting the prize to Valerio Schembri.

More on the Silver Palette on pages 7 and 8.



Editorial

The Society's Annual General Meeting has come and gone. Unfortunately attendance remained at the low levels seen at previous General Meetings. There was a healthy number of candidates seeking election to the Council that necessitated a close contested election. However, no nominations were received for President which was unprecedented for the Society for its recent past. Until this issue is resolved, the Vice-President will fill the role of Acting President.

This does not mean that until a new President is elected, the Society will stand still. On the contrary, following the inauguration of the Society's refurbished Exhibition Halls and the effect on the Silver Palette Exhibition many of the island's artists realized that the Society is serious about investing in facilities for art. The artists appreciated the thousands of Euros spent in order that their works of art can be superbly displayed and appreciated by the public.

This is only one step by the Society. The next step is to lure back to the Society the many talented artists who were once part and parcel of the Society and who drifted off through time. The aim is for the Society to be once again the focal point for art and that Malta's leading artists would exhibit their works, hold workshops, forums, discussions and every sort of artistic activity at Palazzo De La Salle. The intention of the Society is to revive past achievements.

At the same time the Society will continue to find time and space for the up and coming artists. Part of its objective is to ensure that young and unknown artists are encouraged to exhibit their work and to participate in the various competitions held. The number of participants over the last few years has been encouraging and this shows that this objective is being reached. It is hoped this will remain so.

2008/2009 Society's Council

Following the Annual General Meeting of the Society on 27th March 2008 and subsequent election the Council for 2008/2009 is made up as follows:

Acting President / Vice President: Joseph J. Mifsud

Hon. Secretary: Stephen Sant'Angelo

Verification Officer: Carmel V. Galea

Members: Laurence Borg, Rita Chircop, Jessica DeBattista, Francis Galea, Carmel Micallef, Salvator Mousu'.

As no nominations were received for the post of President, which was vacated by Paul Ascjak, Joseph J. Mifsud, as Vice President was appointed Acting President.

Events at the Society for the coming months

ArTen

Exhibition of paintings and sculpture by 10 Member Artists of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce from 4 to 14 June at Palazzo de La Salle, Valletta. Opening Days/Hours: Monday to Friday between 10am and 7pm, Saturday between 10am and Noon. Entrance Free

London College of Music Theory Examinations

Saturday 21 June at St. Elmo Examinations Centre, Valletta.

International Fair of Malta Art Exhibition

Exhibition of paintings and sculpture by the Members of the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce from 27 June - 7 July at Ta Qali.

Summer Courses

Arts, Crafts and Music Courses at the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, Monday to Saturday between the 14 July and 13 September.

Summer Evenings in the Courtyard

- Animated Readings by Du' in the Courtyard of Palazzo de La Salle on Wednesday 2nd July at 8.00pm. Entrance Free.
- Concert by Marc Galea Guitar Duo in the Courtyard of Palazzo de La Salle on Thursday 3rd July at 8pm. Entrance Free.
- Poezija Plus – Recital of Poetry by the Poezia Plus Group in the Courtyard of Palazzo de La Salle on Friday 4th July at 8 pm. Entrance Free.

Mediterranean

Exhibition of Filigree and Paintings by various artists at the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce from 12 - 28 August at Palazzo de La Salle, Valletta. Opening Days/Hours Monday to Saturday between 10am and 12.30pm. Entrance Free

Matthew's first art lessons were at the Lyceum, between 1961 to 1964 when his art teacher was Esprit Barthet. He attended the Government School of Art between 1963 to 1966 and also St Agatha School of Art in Valletta and Gzira between 1963 and 1975 under Francis Borg and Anthony Mahoney. Between 1993 and 1996 he studied and obtained a Diploma in Fine Arts through the University of Scranton, Pennsylvania, USA. In 1994 he participated in a Summer School of Landscape Painting and Drawing organized by the University of Malta under the supervision of Isabelle Borg. Matthew also studied History of Art under Fr Marius Zerafa from 1997 to 1999. He undertook a course in Decorative Paint techniques at the Euro Institute of Music and Arts in 1998.

Matthew's teaching career started in 1992 and he has been teaching art in schools and privately since then. He runs six art classes at the Malta Society of Arts, four morning classes and two evening classes.

Matthew has been a member of the Society of Arts since 1972. He has exhibited regularly in the Society's exhibitions and has participated in various exhibitions both in Malta and abroad since 1966. In 1992 he obtained a Special Distinction Award after participating in the Malta International Art Biennale in 1999.

He has organized eleven exhibitions for his students over the years.

The following questions were put to Matthew:

How do you look at teaching art?

Teaching art is an experience which gives me satisfaction in being instrumental in the formation and character of my students.

What aspects of art interest you most?

I love most genres of art as these are the fruit of creative process. Each topic is rendered according to the concept of the moment and acted upon an instant impulse.

What gives you most satisfaction when teaching?

The way I share my experience with the others. Art

is meant to be shared and I am always happy to be able to pass on to my students, the knowledge I have acquired through the years. Students help me to expand my mentality and so I learn from them too.

What is your favourite medium?

I love all media and to experiment with mixed media and various textures. My favourite, though, is oil.

Any comments you feel that express your attitude and feeling towards art and towards teaching art?

I always strive to show enthusiasm when teaching art. Also, a good sense of humour helps in keeping students' spirits high. I strive to encourage my students and assure them that by persevering they will certainly succeed. If interest in the subjects is maintained, progress will be guaranteed.

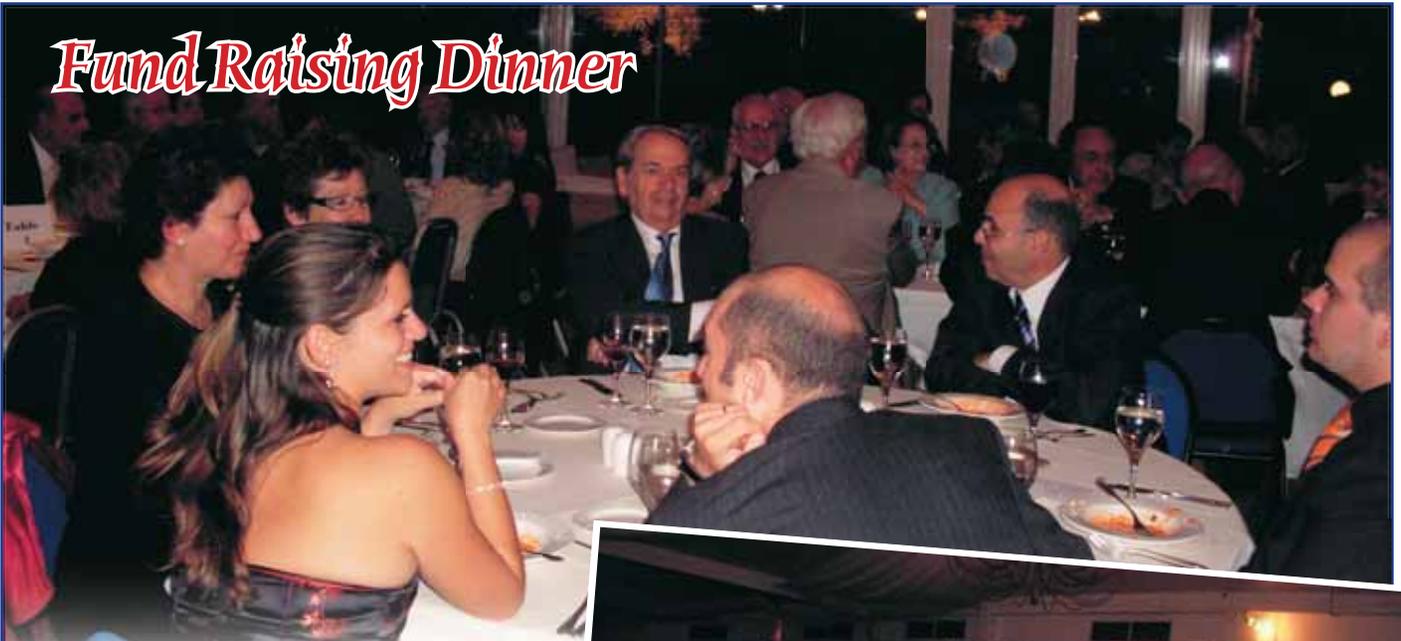


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Fund Raising Dinner



The Society's Fund Raising Dinner, which has now become an annual event in the Society's calendar, was held at Villa Arrigo on the 9th of May. This event was once again a huge success with over 200 guests attending. These were served with sumptuous fare provided by Osborne Caterers. The enjoyable evening ended with the customary raffle with many prizes donated by various sponsors. In all the evening raised €1446 which will go to the Special Projects Programme, by means of which over 20 students will benefit with a three month scholarship.



Cultural Tour in Gozo

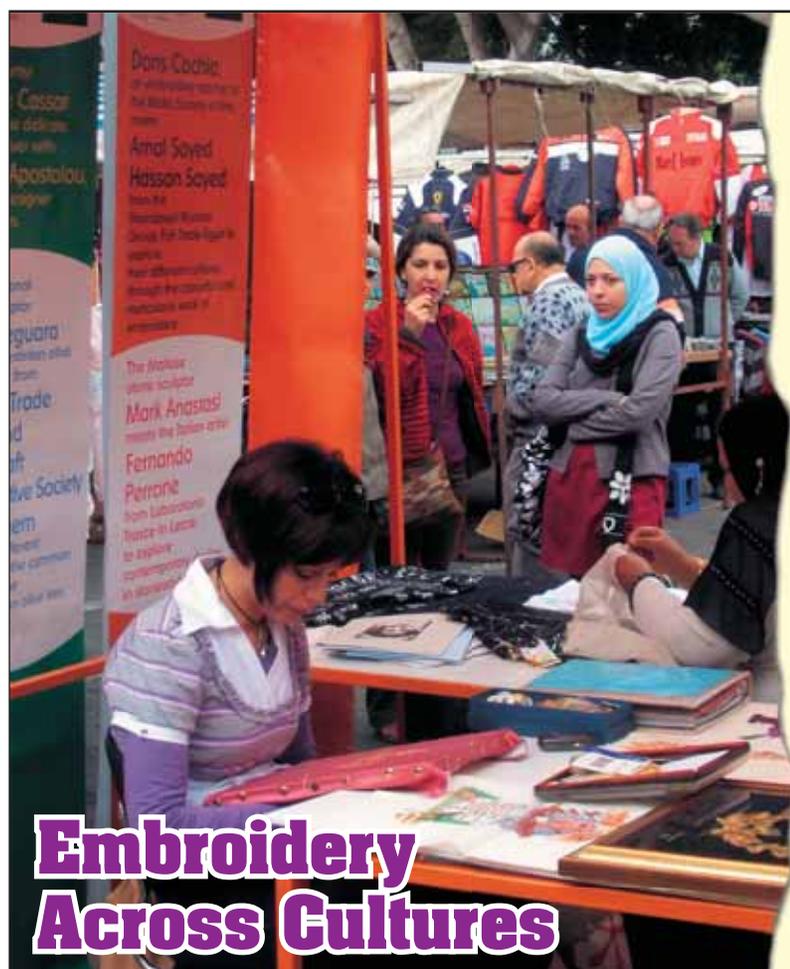


The Society organized another Cultural Tour for its Members and Students in Gozo. The group visited the Magro Brothers Complex in Xewkija and had the opportunity to see the processing of tomato products. Afterwards they were guests of the Koperattiva Gozitano and had time to visit a mushroom farm. They were taken to the Gozo Cottage for a session of wine tasting. After lunch in Victoria the group visited the small town of Gharb and thanks to the help of the Gharb Local Council, walked through the recently rehabilitated Wied Mielah.

Track Lighting System Inaugurated

The Society had long felt the need to upgrade its outdated lighting system in order to offer its members exhibition halls which can be considered as among the best, if not the best, in the island. The Society contracted Electrical Engineer Stephen Buttigieg as its lighting consultant and following a call for quotations the Society purchased from Elektra its equipment which was then installed by Nexos Street Lighting.

The inauguration was carried out by the outgoing President of the Society, Mr Paul Ascik and this was in fact his last public event before the expiration of his term of office. The Society was assisted by the Malta Photographic Society who provided photographs from the 'Dr Edward Sammut Exhibition for Cultural Heritage of the Maltese Islands' for display to bring out the best of the lighting system.



Embroidery Across Cultures

Doris Cachia and Salvina Grech, embroidery teachers at the Society, recently took part in a project called the 'Five Senses'. This project was funded by the EU. An Egyptian worker attended the various sessions which were held in the Valletta market and at the Cospicua market and also an exhibition was held at Saint James Cavalier. A workshop on embroidery was held at the Malta Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce which was attended by the pupils of tutors Doris Cachia and Salvina Grech, another Society teacher, and students from MCAST, apart from artisans from other Mediterranean countries.



Born in 1976 **Colin Buhagiar** grew up in a family of artists. His grandfather was a well known sculptor, who is best known for his great work, the plinth of St Nicholas dedicated at Siggiewi Parish Church and his father was a poet well known for his poems dedicated to St Nicholas including the famous legend “Mibjugha b’Tonn” describing the resurrection of three children who were killed with the intention to be sold as tunny fish. He was also the author of the famous hymn dedicated to St Nicholas Pyrotechnic Society of Siggiewi which was set to music by Mro Carmelo Callus FLCM.

Colin was educated at Stella Maris School, Balzan and later at Savio College, Dingli. He started his musical education at the age of eight at the Malta Society of Arts Manufactures and Commerce under Mro Carmelo Callus FLCM. obtaining an Honours in almost all grades (practical and theory) of the London College of Music. Colin later continued his violin studies with Mro George Spiteri LRSM, former concert master of the Manoel Theatre Orchestra (National Orchestra of Malta) and viva voce, harmony, counterpoint and instrumentation studies with Mro Anthony Spiteri A.Mus. LCM. In 1995 Colin bypassed the ALCM Performer’s Diploma and obtained directly the LLCM Performer’s Diploma under the guidance of Mro George Spiteri LRSM.

For the past twelve years Colin has been teaching violin and theory of Music at the Malta Society of Arts. Many of his students obtained very good results in both theory and practical examinations of the London College of Music. He has been teaching violin for the past eight years at St Monica School of Music at Mosta with the well known piano teacher Sr Beniamina Portelli LRSM, LLCM (cond) OSA. Colin also teaches violin and theory of music privately. He plays regularly in churches including the Nani and Bugeja music cappella during the traditional religious services held during feasts.

His great ambition, which goes back to 1993 (at the age of seventeen), was to join the National Orchestra of Malta on a full time basis and to play under its resident conductor, Mro Michael Laus. The violin is now his sole love and ambition.

The following questions were put to Colin:

What is your favourite instrument and why?

My favourite instrument is the violin because I like it and I like the repertoire concerning the instrument.

Who is your favourite composer?

My favourite composer is Nicolo Paganini who is well known for his violin technique and virtuosity.

What aspect of teaching gives you most satisfaction?

From my personal experience the aspect which gives me most satisfaction is how to teach interpretation. Music is



not just playing in time and in tune, you have to go into the music deeply and understand what the composer wanted and how he wanted to express himself when writing the piece. Music is the same as understanding a piece of sculpture or painting. Interpretation is the first thing I find when hearing music on CD or when I hear someone playing.

What frustrates you most when teaching?

You have to understand the aptitude of each student when teaching and you have to tackle every problem in a calm manner. You do not have to jump to any conclusion as this might determine one’s future. A good teacher has to remember the days when he was a pupil and not express himself as if he knows everything more than any other person.

What would you recommend to anyone who wants to start studying music?

One would recommend that every student studying music takes the matter seriously and should not think that music lessons are a hobby just to take a break from academic subjects. Learning an instrument is a continuous exercise.

What are your views as regards contemporary music?

As I explained before every composer expresses himself when writing music. The fact that a piece of music is atonal (modern) does not mean that it is not pleasant to hear. It is an insult to the composer to pass any judgement on the music written.

Antoine Paul Camilleri

The overall winner of the Silver Palette Competition was Antoine Paul Camilleri with his sculpture "Mother and Child". Antoine is the son of the well-known artist, the late Antoine Camilleri. We asked Antoine where he gets his inspiration from.

"Every artist gets inspirations from different sources. I myself like the work of expressionistic artists, like Durer, Goya and Munich to mention a few. But my greatest inspiration was my father Antoine.

I like line drawing, and as one of the main lessons in art, my father always emphasised that first one has to master drawing before moving to painting. We used to go to draw on the spot, in the countryside, in the streets, and by the sea.

Antoine, to me was a father, teacher and friend. He was a very versatile artist, always experimenting with different media. This was a great asset to me. We had a lot of space at home in Balzan so that it was great fun to see and participate in carnival floats, Christmas activities, masks and floats for particular conventions, lino prints and local stamps. We worked with clay, tin sculpture, papier mache, plaster and resin.

I quote my father saying "art is like a river, if it stops it dies"

I am planning on working sculptures in bronze, and also setting up an etching press.

I like subjects related to children, their movements and mother and child themes.

My childhood was a pleasant one, and I like to model themes related to my past experiences. My children Nicole and Stefania are also a great inspiration.

For example I recently made a sculpture of 'Tal-Hobz', the bread maker, a guy I remember back in my childhood in Balzan. Accompanied by his son, he used to distribute bread, on a wooden cart pulled by a horse.



Antoine Paul near his work "Mother and Child" and the Trophy

In my work I like to emphasise family values, Maltese traditions, subjects like Tal-hobz, tal-pitrolju, and 'sejrin ghax-xoghol'. I also like to bring out the beauty and the craftsmanship of the masonry work in Malta. The old buildings in the cities of Valletta, Imdina and Birgu.

In my opinion an artist's main role in society is to make people aware of the beauty around us. To be sensitive, restore and cherish our heritage and environment."

Lace enthusiasts trip to International Lace Festival

The Society, in collaboration with Sullivan & Sullivan Limited, is organizing a trip to Belgium to visit the International Lace Festival in Marche-en-Famenne. The group will leave Malta on 13th August and will be staying in Brussels in a three star hotel. The group will return to Malta on the 19th August. Apart from a day spent at the International Lace Festival the group will also spend a day sightseeing in Brugge and Ghent and the trip will also include a half day sightseeing tour of Brussels. A visit to the Museum of Costume and Lace in Brussels is also planned. The cost for the trip is €674 (Lm289) which includes direct flights, 6 nights accommodation on B/B basis (twin room), coach transfers to/from airport, half day Brussels tour, full day tours to Brugge and Ghent and to the International Lace Festival. For more information contact the Society or Sullivan & Sullivan, 150 St Lucia Street, Valletta. Telephone: 21230680/681.

Miniature Art

One of our members, who specializes in miniature art would like to set up a group or society of like minded artists. Miniature art is fine art and it is not a novelty art. Miniature art is most often extremely detailed work, exquisite in color with a strength of composition which can more than compete with larger paintings. A compositional guide requires a gentle, no more than 1/6th scale of the actual subject. A miniature usually takes as long or longer to produce as a large piece of art. A fine miniature can be magnified many times and it will still hold together as a fine work of art of much greater size. Those artists interested in this art form are to contact the Society.

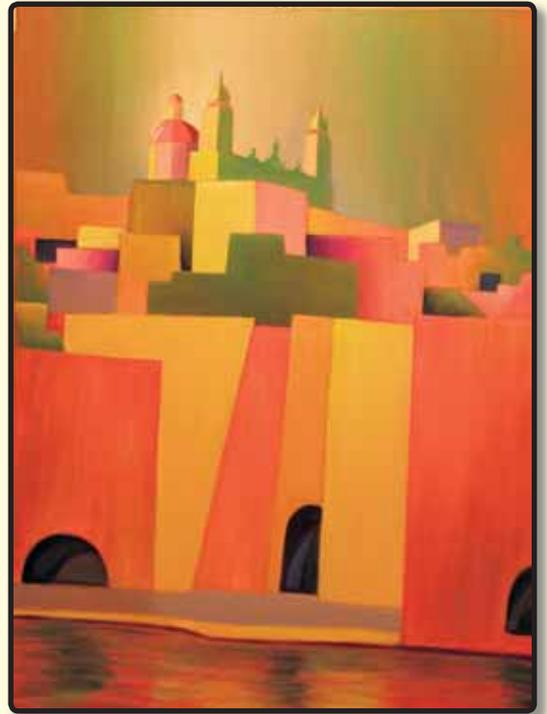
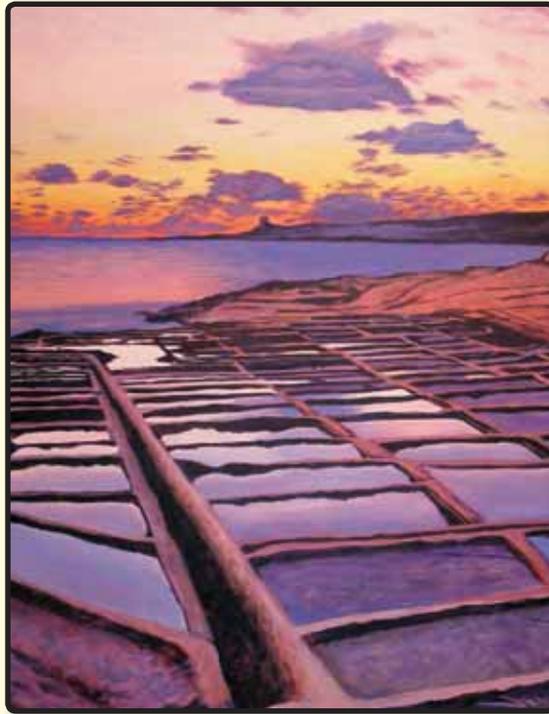
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SILVER PALETTE COMPATITION AWARDS



Top left to right:
Mother and Child
 by Antoine Paul
 Camilleri, **Untitled**
 by Valerio Schembri,
Abstract by Censu
 Fenech and Kurcifiss
 and **The Dawn of Knowledge**
 by Damian Vella

Middle left to right:
Tramonto sulle
Saline by Jean Karl
 Izzo and Senglea by
 Paul Cassar

Bottom left to right:
Boat Yard by Joseph
 Navarro and **The**
Dawn of Knowledge
 by Damian Abejer.

