

ART MAGAZINE

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Tradition Reimagined - Craft, Legacy, and Contemporary Vision

How do we do in the moments when nothing happens? We fill them with plans, news, and everyday routine. In the pause between events, a person engages themselves. The artists in this issue discover that emptiness is not an absence, but a space open to allowing something new to enter.

Dina Bukva captures the spontaneous afternoons of childhood friendship, a time when closeness grows naturally, simply because no one was in a hurry. **Jan Dudek** leaves the canvas unfinished so that the past retains the same uncertainty as memory. **Kseniya Lokteva** allows facial features to dissolve into brushstrokes, preferring the quiet detachment of a half-empty space. In each case, the canvas becomes a sanctuary for what everyday life tends to miss.

Before the artist says anything, the artwork already speaks for itself. A crack in the porcelain, a stain of paint that defies the intended design : the physical nature of the material is not a shell for the idea, but the idea itself. For **NASKA**, materiality is combined with the philosophy of kintsugi : the golden cracks on porcelain apples are not a flaw in the form, but its most honest state. **Jane Birchall** works literally with the hands of several generations, weaving Gozitan lace into ceramics, so that the texture of the clay meets the texture of memory.

Vladimir Semenskiy describes a process in which the artist's personal "self" must disappear before pure creation begins. Wisdom, according to him, is the right to emptiness. He also formulates a paradox the classical academic school, from which he eventually left, turned out to be precisely the foundation that today ensures his autonomy ; mastery, in his words, exists only to be forgotten in the end. Whereas **Kseniya Lokteva** believes the knowledge she gained at the Academy, which she calls freedom from ignorance, allows her not to think about technique at all and to move directly towards the atmosphere and essence.

There are artists whose craft begins with hands instead of canvas, hands that held a brush or a needle long before them. What seems like a personal choice of style, upon closer examination, turns out to be a family legacy adopted, reinterpreted, or rediscovered for the first time. **NASKA** grew up in a family of artists, but emigration and motherhood made her speak in her own voice for the first time ; her series 'Fragile World' is evidence of rebuilding herself anew. She deliberately works in series because, as she admits, the mind works more actively precisely when there are boundaries that cannot be crossed.

Luigi Gatti gets inspired by Commedia dell'arte and Piero della Francesca, but his interiors feel completely modern : focused, meditative, and quietly unsettling. For him, memory is close to these stories : a family cat from childhood, a handful of toys, and the habit of turning any past event into a story that he wants to retell again.

The issue also raises a more difficult question : can art convey experience or must it itself become experience? **Milosh Luczynski's** glowing heart, strung with metal strings, does not illustrate fear ; it dramatizes it. His project Memory of the City invited strangers in Krakow to stand in front of the camera and share any memory that came to mind, without preparation, next to an exhibition that extends across three generations of his own family. Here, the family history becomes a shared experience to exactly the extent that outsiders are willing to share it. **Constance Ann** distorts the human figure to celebrate the "unordinary" in each of us and asks : is beauty really the exact opposite of strangeness? **Uliana Sal** reminds us from the gallery side that recognition is gradual : you first need to notice the work, then remember it, and only then come to love it.

What unites these artists is not a common style, but a belief that the noise of society does not have to dictate the conditions of creativity. They offer many subtle ways to pay attention to tradition, to the body, to the special significance of ordinary moments. We invite you to slow down, to perceive rather than to skim through, and to let these works stay with you long after the page has been turned.



S. Badalova

SABINA BADALOVA, Art Market Journalist

CONSTANCE ANNE
MILOSH LUCZYNSKI
BRITTNEY WEILAND
NURZADA NUSSIPZHAN
NASKA
DINA BUKVA
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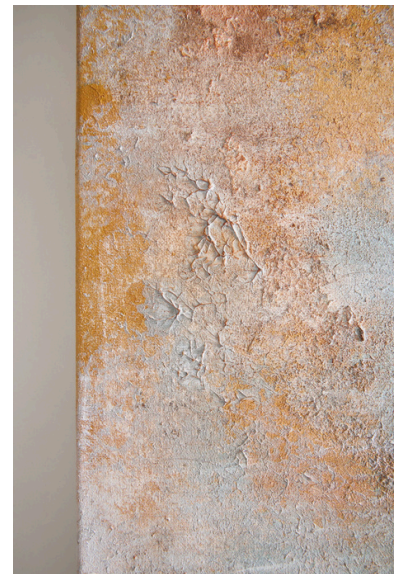
JANE BIRCHALL

What is one fundamental goal you truly hope to achieve with your work?

Having visited [Gozo] many times over, initially viewing the island as a tourist and then living there as a permanent resident, I have seen many changes, not just in the landscape, buildings and infrastructure but also in the attitudes of locals and foreigners alike. I feel it is very important to remind everyone that the beauty of the island, especially its coastline, which is sometimes taken for granted, is a rarity, a fragile gift, and needs to be protected at all costs. Ultimately, I hope that by illustrating the essence of Gozo in sculptural form, some of its beauty will be enjoyed and admired now and also captured for generations to come.

At the moment my work seems to be attracting the attention of locals and foreigners alike, but in very different ways. For example, many of my Maltese clients love the **fusion of contemporary and traditional that is achieved when I use handmade, traditional, slightly old-fashioned-looking Gozitan cotton crochet work to add interest and texture to a vessel.** It brings with it that feeling of keeping village traditions alive without sacrificing a contemporary, modern vibe. Grandmothers' doilies, not under an object of art but actually part of the art.

On the other hand, a lot of visitors and overseas collectors love to collect my works inspired by the sea and the rugged coastline. I suppose it's like taking a little bit of the island with them after their visit, in a non-invasive and sustainable way. Something to remind them of swimming in the warm turquoise waters, climbing the gigantic rugged rocks and walking on the soft sands: a little piece of the island's special beauty for when they return home.



What would be your ideal exhibition space, what type of building is it, which colour? Have you ever considered locations that do not correspond to any current exhibition spaces?

*A small altar in a chapel
A large space in the Cittadella
A modern purpose-built exhibition space
A listed UK building, etc.*

I would most like to have a Mediterranean exhibition, possibly on a Greek island, in a semi-open cave on a sandy beach, with the sound of the sea in the background, the cliffs as a backdrop and torches lighting a trail of works sitting on natural rocks.

Is your practice linked closer to depicting nature on the grand scheme (encapsulating its essence) or is it more of a reflection on how certain organic forms can become tangible?

I would say that my practice is much closer to depicting nature on the grand scheme, and I always hope to capture the essence of the islands rather than reflecting on how specific organic forms become tangible objects. The driving force behind my inspiration is, as always, the very special and beautiful small Mediterranean island of Gozo, which gives me constant inspiration. I first visited Gozo in 1984 and was immediately struck by the beauty of the sea, the rugged coastline, the unique eroded rocks, the traditional fields and the very particular relationship between the natural landscape and the people who have lived and worked on it for generations. Where else do you have farmers who work the village fields alongside, and are usually related to, the farmers who work the coastal salt pans? It is a unique place and certainly has an inspirational quality.



Two exhibitions, one in Paris, France – 1000 Vases and the other in Mani, Malta – The Language of Petals. How does your preparation differ?

I applied to this extremely prestigious exhibition one Sunday morning while I was sitting in Birkirkara, Malta, doing a little admin, and had no expectation of receiving a reply, let alone of being accepted! I initially sent them my bio and a few images of my original Delft vase, with a brief description of its inspiration. It is a piece I created for my solo exhibition in Gozo last May, and at the time it was the only actual "vase" I had at a completed stage.

Imagine my surprise when, five minutes later, they asked for more images and ultimately asked me to participate with a similar vessel, one made in the same spirit, using similar colours, glossiness and form, but smaller and created to specific size parameters. Apparently there are close to 140 artists taking part, some with more than one vase, so it's quite size-specific.

I had known of, and admired, Melanie's work for some time, but I only met her recently at a formal creators' gathering organised as a meet-and-greet with the Prime Minister of Malta. We immediately clicked and had many artistic connections in common, so I was very excited when she invited me to participate in this wonderful exhibition, to be held in the lovely new Mani exhibition space in Malta.

I love to work with the rural inspirations of Gozo's rough farmlands, the rugged textures and deep earthy hues, but I had never worked on flora before, so I found the whole preparation both daunting and exciting. I chose the calla lily because, while it is not originally native to Malta, it is certainly a very popular flower there, and it held significant meaning both for me and, as I later discovered, for Melanie as well. Even though it is one of the most fluid and sculptural blooms you can think of, it was still something of a challenge to achieve the balance I wanted between fragile beauty and the ruggedness of the soil for the root system, as seen in "Beauty Uprooted". But I have found it so rewarding that I may extend the calla lily form into a further, even larger collection.





What is something that you have learned or perhaps captured when you started dedicating more time to creating art, moving from your background in interior design and fashion?

I think it is very true to say that life moves in a circle, and that creativity is something that cannot be learnt: it's either there or it's not, and it will always express itself in some way or other. For me it was initially fashion and then interiors; only later did I have the time and resources to rediscover ceramics and experiment with acrylics, first as a way of enjoying my time and relaxing, then as a form of release, which has since become a passion.



To explain... I went to a huge all-girls state school in south London. Creativity was not exactly on the agenda, and the only lessons I enjoyed were geography and art. In 1974, when I was 14 years old, I won the year's creative award for a large, rather dully glazed, vegetable-inspired ceramic slab pot. In fact, it only survived over the years because my mother found a use for it: umbrellas, and later walking sticks. When she passed away, I rescued it from the shed and brought it home. I kept looking at it, and it really made me consider that perhaps there would be a time when I could return to doing something I really enjoyed.

Fast forward 52 years and here we are! I look at it with different eyes now, and I can't help thinking how difficult it is to believe that at the age of 14 I had not only managed to be creative in such uninspiring surroundings but actually had the technical ability to create something that has lasted half a century... as ever, inspired by nature, even if it was a tomato (or maybe a bell pepper, I can't quite remember). Anyway... it's not quite so dull to me any more.

DINA BUKVA, 'STANDING GIRL'



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and ignite your passion”