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**Artworks by Giorgio Preca loaned to Heritage Malta to be exhibited for the first time**

Several artworks by Maltese artist Giorgio Preca have arrived in Malta from Rome to be exhibited later this year. They were loaned to Heritage Malta by the artist's family and most of them have never been displayed in public, making this their first public appearance.

The artworks consist of 21 paintings, four drawings, and six ceramic objects that Preca used for some of his still lifes. Some of the works were created in Rome, which was Preca's home from 1956 until his demise in 1984.

In the exhibition, these artworks will join another painting by the same artist which Heritage Malta acquired in 2019 and which is Preca's self-portrait. The exhibition is planned to be inaugurated next December and will run for several months.

The paintings brought over from Rome include imaginative themes, abstracts, still lifes and landscapes in the distinctive idiom mastered by Preca, considered by many post-war artists as one of the finest local exponents of modern art, if not the best among them. This was particularly the case in the years following his first important exhibition in 1947.

Giorgio Preca was born in 1909 and studied at the Malta Government School of Art. Despite not having obtained a Government scholarship to study art abroad, Preca continued with his studies in Rome at the Regia Accademia di Belle Arti and the British Academy, which was directed by Antonio Sciortino who even appointed him as his assistant. Throughout the Second World War, the artist was employed as a restorer at the National Museum of Malta.

Many art historians have acknowledged Giorgio Preca's major role as a pioneer of modern art in Malta. He will always be considered as an important and innovative artist, particularly in his treatment of controversial topics such as aliens.

At a press conference announcing the arrival of Preca's artworks in Malta, which was also attended by Massimo Preca, the artist's son, Anthony Scicluna, Heritage Malta's Chairman, said that in spite of the many challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, the past year has seen Heritage Malta reach various artistic milestones, such as the return to Malta of Mattia Preti's 'Boethius and Philosophy' and the current exhibition of 13 loaned masterpieces at MUŻA. These milestones will be further enhanced with the Preca exhibition, through which Heritage Malta will continue on its mission to bring cultural heritage nearer to the people. This mission of accessibility will take on greater meaning with the Preca exhibition, since most of the loaned artworks on display will be making their very first public appearance.

Mario Cutajar, Heritage Malta's Executive Director, said that despite Preca's importance in the history of art in Malta, and despite the respect shown to him by fellow artists, he remained to a certain extent in obscurity among his compatriots. Mr Cutajar commended Heritage Malta for acquiring Preca's artworks on loan so that the public may enjoy them for the first time and Malta may acknowledge appropriately one of its own who, through his art, honoured himself and his native land.

Noel Zammit, Heritage Malta's Chief Executive Officer, spoke of the challenges overcome by the agency in order to make this exhibition possible. The first one was to actually bring the artworks over to Malta. There are also the challenges posed by the exhibition itself, which needs to be presented in such a way as to ensure a holistic experience for visitors and retain their place at the centre of all operations.

Kenneth Cassar, Heritage Malta's Senior Curator for Ethnography and Art, said that the exhibition does justice to Giorgio Preca, considered as one of the pioneers of modern art in Malta, who left his motherland and successfully established himself in Rome. This is a splendid opportunity to study new works of art as well as the artistic development of an important artist who has not been bestowed the honour he deserves. The exhibited works will enable the understanding of Preca's personality, the reasons behind his emigration, as well as his connections – both those that he sustained through several visits to his homeland and those he fostered with artistic currents in Rome.

Anthony Spagnol, Senior Conservator at Heritage Malta, spoke about Preca's technique and the state of conservation of the artworks loaned for the exhibition. He said that in some of the works the paint's thickness caused deformations in the canvas. However, there are also instances where Preca uses paint thinly, applying brush strokes rapidly and spontaneously. This goes to show that Preca did not pay much attention to established formulas dictating how one should use materials to build up a painting. On the contrary, it was his expressive technique that dictated his pictorial process.

**STQARRIJA** **25 ta' Awwissu 2021**

**Xogħlijiet ta' Giorgio Preca mislufin lil Heritage Malta biex jiġu esebiti għall-ewwel darba f'pajjiżna**

Diversi xogħlijiet tal-artist Malti Giorgio Preca waslu Malta minn Ruma, wara li ġew mislufin lil Heritage Malta mingħand il-familja tiegħu biex aktar tard din is-sena jiġu esebiti f'wirja. Fil-parti l-kbira tagħhom, dawn ix-xogħlijiet qatt ma dehru fil-pubbliku u se jkunu qed jintwerew għall-ewwel darba f'pajjiżna.

Ix-xogħlijiet jikkonsistu f'21 pittura, erba' tpinġijiet, u sitt oġġetti taċ-ċeramika li Preca kien juża biex ipitter still lifes. Fosthom hemm xogħlijiet li l-artist ħadem f'Ruma, fejn emigra b'mod permanenti fl-1956 u fejn baqa' attiv sa mewtu fl-1984.

Fil-wirja, dawn se jingħaqdu ma' pittura oħra tal-istess artist li Heritage Malta xtrat f'Mejju tal-2019 u li hija awtoritratt ta' Preca. Hu ppjanat li l-wirja tinfetaħ f'Diċembru li ġej u tibqa' għaddejja għal diversi xhur.

Il-pitturi li nġiebu minn Ruma jinkludu temi immaġinattivi, astratti, still lifes u pajsaġġi fl-idjoma distintiva ta' Preca, li kien meqjus mill-ġenerazzjoni ta' artisti ta' wara t-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija bħala wieħed mill-aqwa esponenti tal-arti moderna f'Malta, jekk mhux l-aqwa wieħed fosthom, kif bosta rrimarkaw. Dan seħħ partikolarment fis-snin wara l-ewwel wirja importanti tiegħu fl-1947.

Giorgio Preca twieled fl-1909 u studja fl-Iskola tal-Arti tal-Gvern. Għalkemm ma kisibx borża ta' studju mill-Gvern biex ikun jista' jistudja barra minn Malta, Preca kompla l-istudji tiegħu f'Ruma, fir-Regia Accademia di Belle Arti, kif ukoll fil-British Academy, immexxija minn Antonio Sciortino li saħansitra laħħaq lil Preca assistent tiegħu. Matul it-Tieni Gwerra Dinjija, l-artist ġie ingaġġat bħala restawratur mill-Mużew Nazzjonali ta' Malta.

L-istoriċi tal-arti minn dejjem għarfu s-sehem ewlieni li kellu Preca bħala pijunier tal-arti moderna f'Malta. Huwa jibqa' meqjus bħala artist importanti u innovattiv, li fost oħrajn tratta s-suġġett kontroversjali tal-aljeni.

F'konferenza tal-aħbarijiet fejn tħabbret il-wasla f'Malta tax-xogħlijiet ta' dan l-artist u fejn kien preżenti wkoll Massimo Preca, iben l-artist, Anthony Scicluna, Chairman ta' Heritage Malta, qal li minkejja l-isfidi kbar li ġabet magħha l-imxija tal-Covid-19, din l-aħħar sena kienet waħda ta' akkwisti artistiċi kbar għal Heritage Malta, fost oħrajn bil-wasla lura Malta tal-pittura ta' Mattia Preti 'Boezju u l-Filosofija' u l-wirja li għaddejja bħalissa f'MUŻA bi tlettax-il kapolavur ta' artisti kbar li ġew mislufa lil Heritage Malta għal perjodu twil. Ma' dawn se tiżdied il-wirja temporanja bix-xogħlijiet ta' Preca, li permezz tagħha Heritage Malta se tkompli taqdi l-missjoni tagħha li tqarreb il-wirt kulturali lejn il-poplu. Din il-missjoni ta' aċċessibbiltà f'din il-wirja se tieħu xejra b'tifsira

ikbar mis-soltu, għax ħafna mix-xogħlijiet ta' Preca li ġew mislufa lill-aġenzija se jkunu qed jagħmlu l-ewwel dehra tagħhom fil-pubbliku.

Mario Cutajar, Direttur Eżekuttiv ta' Heritage Malta, qal li minkejja l-importanza tiegħu fl-istorja tal-arti ta' pajjiżna, u minkejja r-rispett li kien igawdi fost sħabu l-artisti, Preca baqa' mhux magħruf wisq mill-pubbliku Malti. Huwa faħħar il-pass għaqli ta' Heritage Malta li akkwistat b'self dawn ix-xogħlijiet ta' Preca biex il-pubbliku jkun jista' jgawdihom għall-ewwel darba filwaqt li Malta tagħraf kif jixraq lil wieħed minn uliedha li bl-arti li ħoloq għamel unur lilu nnifsu u lil art twelidu.

Noel Zammit, Kap Eżekuttiv ta' Heritage Malta, tkellem dwar l-isfidi li għelbet l-aġenzija biex tagħmel din il-wirja possibbli. L-ewwel sfida kienet li x-xogħlijiet ta' Preca attwalment jinġiebu Malta. Hemm ukoll l-isfidi li toffri l-esibizzjoni nnifisha, li trid tiġi ppreżentata b'mod li jiżgura esperjenza ħolistika għall-viżitatur biex dan iżomm post ċentrali fl-operat kollu tal-aġenzija.

Kenneth Cassar, Kuratur għall-Etnografija u l-Arti fi ħdan Heritage Malta, qal li l-wirja se tagħmel ġustizzja ma' Giorgio Preca, meqjus fost il-pijunieri tal-arti moderna f'Malta, li ħalla lil pajjiżna u rnexxielu jistabbilixxi ruħu f'Ruma. Din se tkun opportunità sabiħa biex jiġu studjati xogħlijiet ġodda flimkien mal-iżvilupp artistiku ta' artist importanti li ftit li xejn ingħatalu l-ġieħ li jistħoqqlu. Fost affarijiet oħra, dawn ix-xogħlijiet se jgħinuna nifhmu l-personalità ta' Preca, ir-raġuni għala ħalla lil Malta, kif ukoll il-konnessjonijiet tiegħu, kemm dawk li żamm ma' Malta f'diversi żjarat li għamel f'art twelidu kif ukoll dawk li stabbilixxa mal-kurrenti artistiċi f'Ruma.

Anthony Spagnol, Konservatur Anzjan ma' Heritage Malta, tkellem dwar it-teknika ta' Preca kif ukoll l-istat ta' konservazzjoni li jinsabu fih il-pitturi mislufin lil Heritage Malta. Huwa qal li fi wħud minn dawn il-pitturi, il-ħxuna taż-żebgħa kkawżat deformazzjonijiet fit-tila iżda hemm ukoll xogħlijiet fejn ftit li xejn hemm saffi ta' żebgħa u fejn id-daqqiet tal-pinzell huma mgħaġġla u spontanji. Dan jindika li Preca ma kienx jagħti kas wisq tal-formoli stabbiliti li jiddettaw kif wieħed għandu juża l-materjal biex jibni pittura. Għall-kuntrarju, kienet it-teknika espressiva tiegħu li tiddetta l-proċess pittoriku tiegħu.