



Pavilion of Malta

at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia



Press Release February 2019

Maleth / Haven / Port - Heterotopias of Evocation

11 May – 24 November 2019

The artists **Klitsa Antoniou**, **Trevor Borg** and **Vince Briffa** will represent Malta at the Biennale Arte 2019 in the exhibition **Maleth/ Haven/ Port- Heterotopias of Evocation**.

The Malta Pavilion, commissioned by Arts Council Malta and curated by historian **Dr Hesperia Iliadou - Suppiej**, is inspired by the *Odyssey*, one of humanity's oldest stories.

The exhibition will verge between reality and fictitious invention, to provide a contemporary and immersive re-interpretation of our timeless need of seeking a *Haven* (Maleth), most strongly experienced in times of crisis.

The Phoenician word *Maleth* evokes the primeval origins of Malta's existence and literally translates to Haven/Port, a quality inspired in all who traversed the waters of the Mediterranean through the ages and that still withstands today.

Bringing together artists from the Mediterranean, the artworks are specially commissioned pieces engaging the audience to complementary semantic enquiries into contemporary conditions of homeness/ (un)homeness spreading beyond predisposed mental notions of assigned tactile borders.

Arts Council Malta executive chair Albert Marshall says: "The exhibition will look at Malta's unique position within central Mediterranean culture from historical, mythical, and contemporaneous viewpoints with newly commissioned works that promise to be a curiosity-driven voyage of discovery and self-reflection. Additionally, a series of artist led educational

workshops are planned. This is a uniquely important gesture by the Malta National Pavilion, one that asserts the importance of public engagement in the arts across all ages.”

ATLANTROPA X, by Klitsa Antoniou (Cyprus), explores a 1920s project by a German architect that proposed the partial draining of the Mediterranean to form a supercontinent. Here the artist hovers between past and contemporary conditions, of surviving displacement and discontinuity amid conflict, migrations within the current context of fluid topographies and challenged expectations. *Atlantropa X* is a multi-media installation that will aim to conceptually and artistically form bridges across the Mediterranean Sea, and is partially informed by her own experiences of growing up in Cyprus as a refugee and the impact of the invasion and occupation of Turkish military troops in 1974. The exhibit will comprise 250 square meters of seaweed, video projections, and a sound backdrop shared across the pavilion.

CAVE OF DARKNESS - PORT OF NO RETURN, by Trevor Borg (Malta) proposes a re-imagined multilayered narrative of ancient creatures and long lost civilizations, exploring entrapment concealed within a Haven. Loosely drawing from animal remains and artifacts excavated in a cave in Malta the work seeks to make (up) histories, to fabricate facts and to blur the boundaries between actuality and imagination, real and semblance. In this site-specific installation meticulously researched by the artist, ambivalent remains of unfamiliar creatures and peculiar artifacts re-emerge to expose new layers of meaning. The artist invites the visitor to a mystical journey of surprise and self inquiry navigating through the pre-historic layers of Malta in the footsteps of its earliest inhabitants and their final end. The work concerns displacement narrated through non-taxonomic collecting approaches and constructed actualities.

OUTLAND, by Vince Briffa (Malta), focuses on the indecisiveness of man as he longs to re-trace his way to the ultimate Haven, caught between the safety of an island and the peril of returning to his homeland. Drawing from the story of Calypso, it traces the symbolic duality of the lover, as saviour and oppressor, exploring the uncertainty and lure of safety, and the longing for freedom. In this multi-media installation, incorporating film, sound, voice and water, Vince Briffa engages with Homer’s *Odyssey* to metaphorically interpret the idea of a ‘port’ as a place of longing and escape. These anxieties are played out in the film itself and within the installation through the use of salt pans as devices to ‘hold the sea’ whilst liberating the salt from its captive water.

Open to diverse readings and drawing on the tri-fold of histories, mythologies and expectations, *Maleth/Haven/Port- Heterotopias of Evocation* aims to create a curatorial theme where the artworks come together, as vessels within a sea, inviting us to participate in an intuitively playful dialogue, traversing the exhibition in a curiosity-driven voyage of self-reflection, in a suggestive fictitious space created within the Arsenale.

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<https://www.artscouncilmalta.org>

www.maleth.mt

<https://www.facebook.com/Maleth-Haven-Port-Heterotopias-of-Evocation-344861769445896/>

<https://www.instagram.com/artscouncilmalta/>

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The architect of the Malta Pavilion is Matthew Casha and the production manager is George Lazoglou.

LOCATION

The Malta Pavilion is located at the Artiglierie in the main Arsenale area.

MALTA PAVILION COMMISSIONER

ARTS COUNCIL MALTA, under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice, Culture and Local Government, has been entrusted to act as the Commissioner and the Contracting Authority of the Pavilion of Malta at the 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. Arts Council Malta is the national agency for development and investment in the cultural and creative sectors. Its central task is that of effectively funding, supporting and promoting the cultural and creative sectors in Malta.



SUPPORTERS

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