

The background of the cover is a vibrant, multi-colored marbled pattern. The colors include shades of red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, creating a complex, organic texture. The pattern consists of swirling, cell-like shapes that vary in size and color intensity, giving it a dynamic and artistic appearance.

UM

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ENNEAD – MFA Exhibition

Media Talks Webinar

IN TRANSIT magazine

Digital Preservation

RETROSPECT – BFA exhibition

Publications

*Exploring Mindfulness* by Master of Fine Arts in Digital Arts student Nicole Zammit; part of the MFA graduate exhibition ENNEAD

## Welcoming a new member of staff



**Francelle Scicluna** joined the University of Malta in September 2007 as a Clerk in what was formerly known as the Department of Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence at the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). She is now the Departmental Secretary for the Department of Media and Communications at the faculty of MAKs.

Following a 2-year course in Administrative and Secretarial Studies at MCAST, Francelle learned the key areas of administration, office equipment, standards and the work environment while gaining a hands-on experience through an apprenticeship position at the Junior College.

During her time at the Department of Artificial Intelligence, Francelle developed a deeper understanding of the University's administration by being responsible for the day-to-day running of the department. Daily administrative duties included the preparation of programmes of studies, examinations and preparations for the external examiner's visit. She has also administered various board meetings related to the Department which included Boards of Studies for undergraduate and Masters courses in Artificial Intelligence, and the Masters in Human Language and Science Technology. Furthermore, Francelle was also involved in the organisation of conferences and exhibitions

organised by both the Department and the Faculty of ICT.

Over the years as a University employee, Francelle availed herself of the opportunity to further her education by reading for the Bachelor in Work and Human Resources (Honours) course at the University of Malta, which she completed in June 2015.

Although Francelle has gained a comprehensive insight into the institution throughout her University career, she still strives to keep abreast of any developments in the University regulations and processes, and aims to provide the best possible administrative support for all members of staff and students.

## Saying farewell to another

**Elton Mamo** joined the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences (MAKS) in December 2011 and he was responsible for carrying out administrative duties in the Faculty's main office. Though he had no experience at the time of how an educational institution works, he took the challenge and did his utmost to learn all that was needed and then went on to also improve how some tasks were carried out.

During his time at MAKs, Elton was responsible for the day-to-day administrative duties of most of the departments in the Faculty, before being appointed as Departmental Secretary for the Department of Media and Communications. He also administered various committees, mainly: The Faculty Research Ethics Committee, the Faculty Research Committee, and the Dissertations Committee.

Apart from these tasks, Elton was also in charge of the Faculty's Social Media Pages, in charge of Website updates, and, for a time, the Personal Assistant to the Dean.

One of Elton Mamo's main improvements to the administration was to move the Faculty's administrative duties to being almost entirely paperless by making full use of the features of the Google Suite. This resulted in more efficient work in the offices, as well as reducing paper waste.

Elton Mamo's last day with the Faculty of MAKs was 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021, and he now occupies the post of secretary to the Department of Artificial Intelligence in the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology.



Department of Media and Communications

# The first *Media Talks* webinar

The Department of Media and Communications contributes to society its graduates and the media expertise they carry with them, as well as its members of staff being present in all levels of society lending their expertise to areas that need them. However, the Department felt there was a need for a vehicle for it to lend its leadership directly in matters of general interest related to media and communications. As a result, *Media Talks* was created to organise events that could do this.



*Media Talks* is a collaboration between the Department and two student organisations, the faculty's own MKSA (*the Media and Knowledge Sciences Association*) and media organisation *The Third Eye*.

Because of the pandemic, the group opted to have its first public incursion in the form of a webinar, and the topic chosen was a very topical one, related to a court case instigated by the web portal *Lovin' Malta* challenging the existence of political television stations on the island. Malta is the only country in Europe that has such stations.

The main panel chosen for the discussion was made up of:

**Christian Peregin**, an award-winning journalist who founded *Lovin' Malta* in 2016, Incidentally, he graduated with a B.Communications (Hons.) in 2009;

**Dr Ramona Attard**, the President of the Labour Party, a lawyer and a former television presenter, as well as a former journalist with ONE;

**Dr Francis Zammit Dimech**, the General Secretary



of the Nationalist party, a lawyer and a former minister and MEP;

**Martina Falzon**, a third-year student following a degree in Communications. She is currently the President of MKSA; and

**Andreas Bugeja**, a second-year Communications student who is also the Events Officer of *The Third Eye*.

The webinar was chaired by the current head of the Department of Media and Communications, **Professor Gorg Mallia**.

The public was given the opportunity to register for the webinar, which was held on Zoom, so those interested could also participate directly in the conversation. It was live streamed on the Facebook pages of *Media Talks*, *Lovin' Malta*, *Newsbook*, as well as on the pages of MKSA, *The Third Eye*, the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences and also the Department's own page.

The webinar was very well attended and the discussion was one that delved deep into the very nature of the existence of the political stations, with both sides of the argument equally touted by the panel and members of the audience. In fact, there was so much interest from the audience that the webinar overshot its self-imposed time limit, lasting two hours and fifteen minutes, in spite of interventions being greatly curtailed.

By the end of the event, the webinar live stream had clocked over three thousand views, which have almost doubled since then.

The students involved in the organisation of the webinar were Communications students Maya Pollacco, Katya Galea, Andreas Bugeja, Davinia Agius and Analise Fenech, as well as BFA student Rebecca Zammit (who was in charge of visual design).

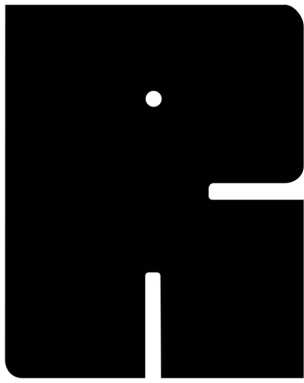
The plan is for *Media Talks* to organise events whenever the need in society arises.



Department of Digital Arts

# Exhibiting *Retrospect*

The BFA Retrospect exhibition was digitally launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May and physically exhibited on the 21<sup>st</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May. The exhibition included a variety of skill sets and styles presented by 30 students. One of the student exhibitors, JELKA ANTUNOVIC, has written this piece about the BFA graduate exhibition.



**RETROSPECT**

A diverse array of media was exhibited. Areas that the students specialised in included: 3D Animation, Analogue and Digital Photography, UI/UX Design, Illustration, 3D Graphics, Automotive Design, Urban Design, Branding, Crochet, Sound, Augmented Reality, 3D Product Design, Typography, Graphic Design, Sequential Art, and Stop Motion.

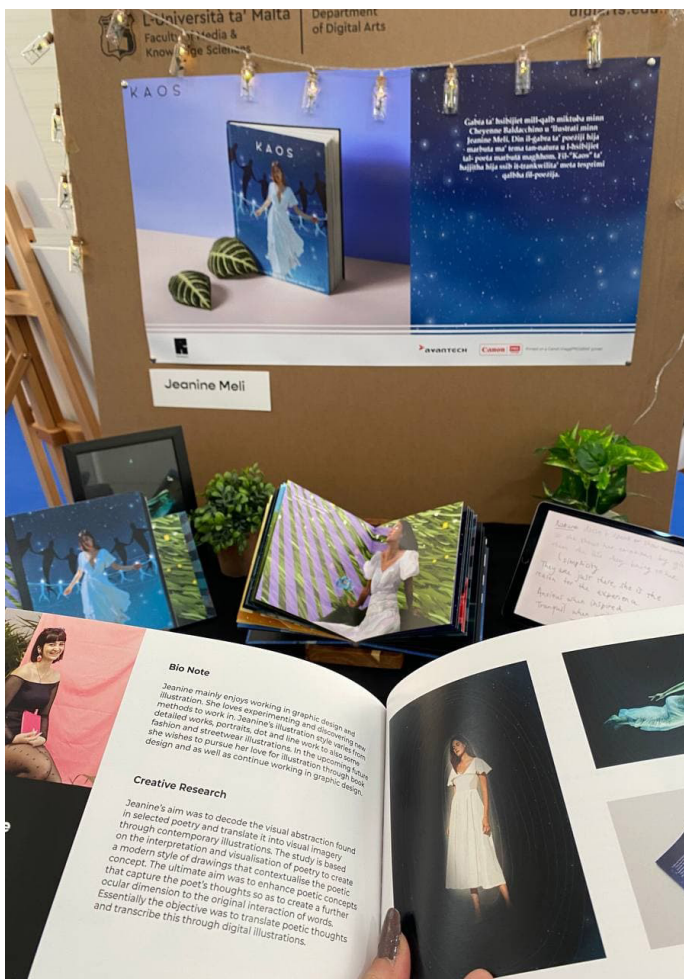
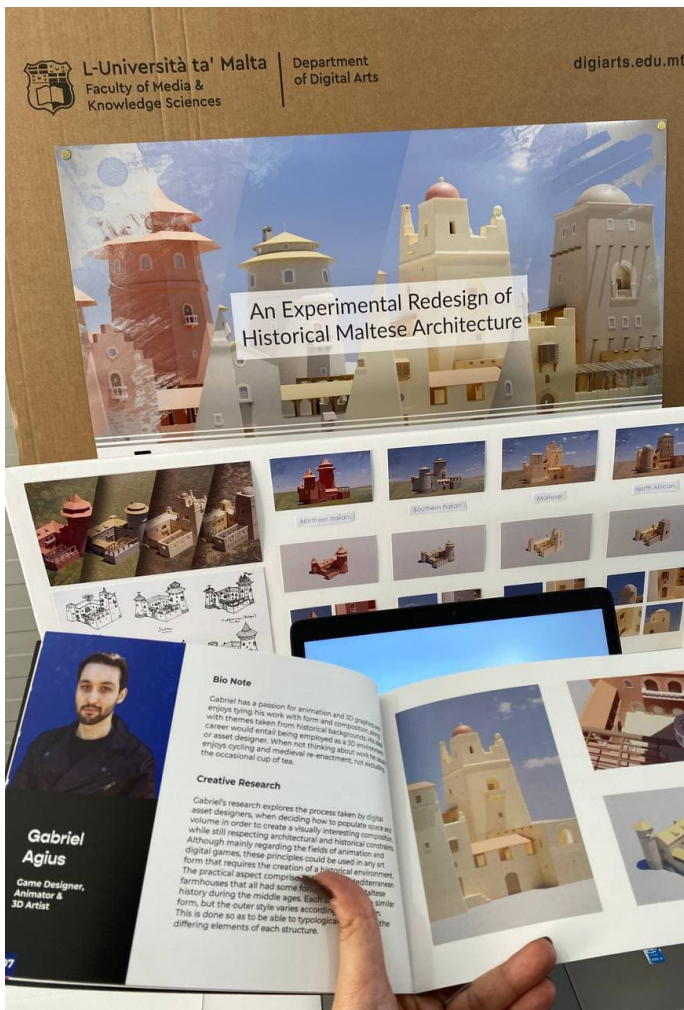
The coordinators of the *Retrospect* Exhibition, Ruth Calleja and Nicholas Vella, divided the students into teams. Thus, each student was given the opportunity to contribute to the exhibition according to their



artistic strengths and their team preference. The teams included: the Website team, that created, designed and developed the website (to be found [HERE](#)); the Graphic design team, that took care of the exhibition's branding, catalogue, banners and stands and everything related to design; the Video and Photography team handled promo videos, photography and any animations needed; the Social Media team took care of *Retrospect's* Social Media platforms and posted 350 posts in under two months; the Marketing and Sponsorship team contacted sponsors and took care of the exhibition's online platforms exposure; and lastly, the Logistics team took care of the exhibition layout to showcase the students' work in the best possible way. They also took care of any needs during the exhibition and the weeks leading up to it, such as equipment needed, emails and receipts.

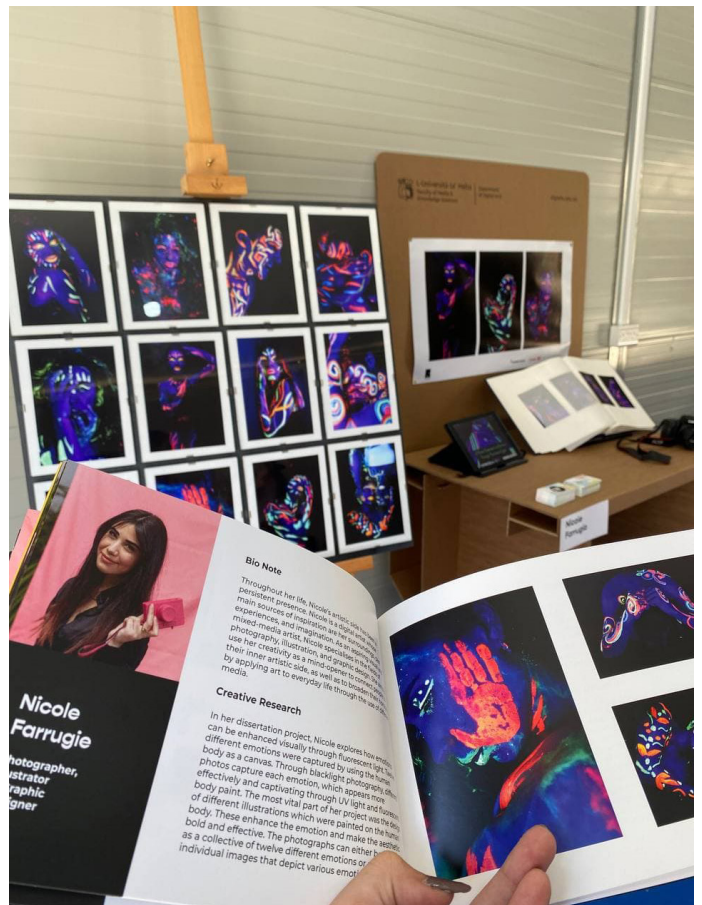
The name "Retrospect" was chosen collectively amongst these students after various discussions on the themes of both diversity and memories. A pattern showed that most students were suggesting names which highlighted the diversity of all the artistic styles, as well as the uniqueness of every individual. Therefore, they opted for the title *Retrospect*, which implies that the students are 'looking back at the work they had created' and how each of them had grown artistically as well as intellectually. Since all the exhibited dissertations were a direct culmination of knowledge learnt throughout the past three years in the Department of Digital Arts, the name was deemed to be fitting.

On this page, visitors to the exhibition being shown round by the third year BFA students.



The brand's aim is to celebrate the students' artistic diversity and styles, while portraying the close bonds shared within the class. *Retrospect's* brand identity subtly conveys this theme by implementing specific curvatures and gaps in the logo, as well as the strategic use of colours. The brand's primary colours are black and white. This was purposely chosen to keep it simple yet bold. Secondary colours consist of yellow, pink, and blue. Tertiary colours also included a red and a green hue.

*Retrospect* hosted three giveaways. The first one consisted of giving away some of the students' work as prizes. This included prints and products that the students had created themselves. The second and third giveaway were a collaboration with both VGB and iCentre. These campaigns helped gain exposure through social media platforms which resulted in having more visitors attending the exhibition. Both of these companies gave two, one hundred euro vouchers to the winners.



The exhibition was hosted in three pandemic tents. This meant there was the appropriate safety space between each of the students' modules, to adhere to the Covid-19 regulations. Visitors were also supplied with hand-sanitizer and gloves. Gloves were to be worn in case any students' work had to be handled or required physical contact to experience it.

*Retrospect* was an exhibition taken care of solely by the third year students of the BFA in Digital Arts. It showcased the work of 30 students with 30 different projects, all in one exhibition.

On this page, examples of the different stands of the *Retrospective* exhibition.

## Department of Library Information &amp; Archive Sciences

# Digital preservation, cataloguing, and education: Malta and the Order of St. John

During a two-year post-doc with the Malta Study Center, DR VALERIA VANESIO was involved in extensive cataloguing activity and digital preservation projects of the historical archives of Malta and the Order of Saint John. This work was carried out in a team with Dr Daniel Gullo, Joseph S. Micallef, Director of the Malta Study Center, and the site director in Malta, Ms Cláudia Garradas. It is part of a broader research currently underway in the field of Maltese historical archives. Dr Vanesio explains the project.

The Malta Study Center is a research institution devoted to the digital preservation and accessibility of the hand-written and early-printed culture of Malta and the Order of Saint John in the world through digitisation, cataloguing, research, and public engagement. As part of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library's mission, the Malta Study Center was founded in 1973 by Chevalier Joseph S. Micallef, the Honorary Consul General of Malta in Saint Paul/Minneapolis and digitises records of different documentary typologies. In addition, it is also committed to modern cataloguing based on international standards of library and archival description to provide full accessibility to these collections online for free on the platform HMML Reading Room (*Click on the names mentioned to access their websites*).

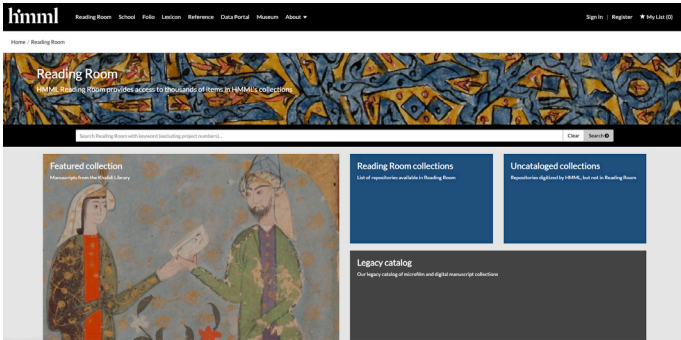
The work done and still ongoing with the Center allowed me to deeply consider what it really means to preserve "endangered manuscripts" and help the local institutions to create access to them in Malta. There are different nuances of the meaning of "endangered". To mention the most important, the particular climate conditions and the storage conditions can increase the natural deterioration of materials. The ecclesiastic, private and public institutions on the island have been ongoing and have made significant efforts to overcome these problems to preserve the archival and library heritage. But the amount of historical records in Malta is unique and spectacular and, at the same time, almost impossible to manage, describe and be preserved only by the local institutions. Besides an impressive number of ecclesiastical archives, religious orders' collections and many confraternity archives, it is not surprising how precious private collections periodically emerge from oblivion, requiring the government holding institutions to appraise the records and, only when possible, acquire them. The 'crisis-management' approach will often deprive the institution of the opportunity of planning adequate conservation and cataloguing strategies. In addition, looking through the lens of Malta's political history up to recent



Dr Vanesio at work at the National Library of Malta before the pandemic

times, the complexity of the Maltese archival and library scenario is also characterised by overlapping jurisdictions, the extensive damage during the Second World War (after which cultural preservation was not a priority), the burden of the postcolonial legacy – which also led to the late formation of the National Archives and a centralised archival infrastructure – and a significant archival dispersion.

Moreover, the history of its archives and of the institutions involved in the creation and preservation of records, especially concerning the Order of Saint John, is still a little-known story. For this reason and for many others, also the records concerning Malta and the Order preserved outside the island are mostly neglected, unidentified, and uncatalogued. Here the question arises: what else could be a forgotten record if it is not an endangered manuscript?



The main webpage of the cataloguing platform mentioned in this article

Over the last few decades, the collaboration between the Malta Study Center, the local Maltese institutions, and foreign stakeholders have given new light to abandoned documents, often partially destroyed, not organised, and in poor conditions or just uncatalogued. These collaborations are also progressively leading to the setting up of a specific descriptive methodology for Malta to be applied within the framework of the standards and that could serve the holding institutions to identify, catalogue and make accessible an important variety of records. I believe that the experience and results achieved from these collaborations would be a unique opportunity for our students to learn how to be active shapers of our profession, engage in multidisciplinary research and create new methodologies.

Our Department played for almost 30 years an essential role in the education of future generations and the new courses from the next academic year will serve to meet the needs of the profession on the island and keep abreast with international developments. The work of the Malta Study Center can be an integral part of it for different reasons. First of all, students can experience both the theoretical and practical aspects of our job that is essential for shaping their abilities. Secondly, we can train them at distance in cataloguing an incredible variety of archival and library collections. This range of records will also serve to teach disciplines like medieval books cataloguing, palaeography, diplomatics, and codicology which include building knowledge on exemplars that are not physically available on the island. We can train them not only to use the archival European standards like ISAAR and ISAD (G), but also to explore and use the American archival standard DACS and RDA, leading standard used to create authority files which bridge archives, libraries and museums internationally. But most of all, students can learn how to face the issues and challenges of being an information professional today.

Cataloguing records implies shaping their representation and how these documents and information are discovered, explored and understood. Building and using online catalogues nowadays require considering not only the local community, or those specific scholars interested in a particular topic, but also an international community of users with different provenance and backgrounds. The Malta Study Center experience can also teach

our students to think about hard decisions to make as information professionals. Digital preservation also means having the responsibility of preserving millions of digital images, facing high financial costs, and using a large number of energy resources. Indeed, digital projects also create this double issue: on one hand, digitising documents to preserve them, but at the same time stressing fragile material; on the other hand, digitisation is only a temporary solution and raises the issue of obsolescence of technology. Moreover, we are operating in a virtual world where rules change rapidly and knowledge is decentralised and democratised: this also implies taking into account the different levels of digital literacy of the users, creating alternative ways of access to the information, and collaborate with other information professionals. Especially today, our disciplines have blurred boundaries and can only provide the general intellectual and practical framework to work within. But this framework needs to be constantly re-discussed following the key points of accessibility, sustainability, respect of the original sources, privacy, ownership, and many other ethical implications.

Our job is not only about knowledge, it is mostly about responsibility.



Dr Vanesio at work at the Naxxar Parish Archive

Valeria Vanesio is a Lecturer at the Department of Library Information & Archive Sciences. Her main field of research is the archival history of the Order of Saint John and the Maltese and Italian archival scenario. She holds a PhD in Archival and Library Science from Sapienza University of Rome and two specialisation degrees from the State Archive in Rome and the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano. She received the Heckman Stipend at HMML (2017) and was post-doc and Archivist of the Malta Study Center (2018-2020). Valeria was also in charge of a 3-year project of the reorganization of the historical Magistral Archives of the Order of Saint John in Rome (2014-2017).

Our Ph.D Students

# Anthony Catania

## *Quixotic intertextualities in Alice-inspired visual representation*

Via practical application, this Ph.D. project-led research explores the possibility of adapting the ‘melancholy farewell’ moment in *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871). It is a search for possibilities in extracting an arts-based methodology from the metaphoric-metonymic trope of metamorphosis applied within the specific text to create a series of multimedia fine art projects.

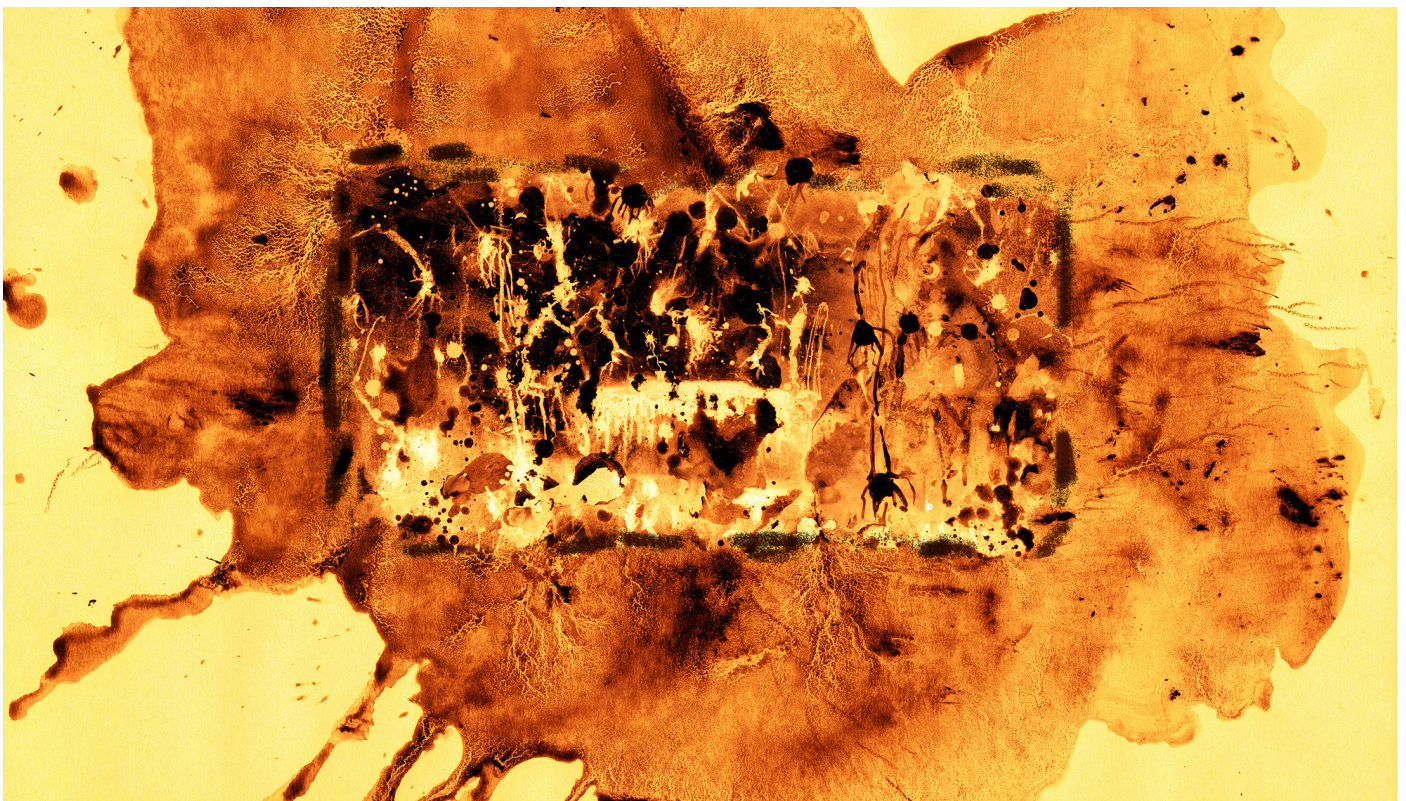
Carroll’s imaginary textual universe is recreated as four practical research projects that are designed to allow for an engagement with the source in a visual analytic reflexivity and intertextual literary dialogue. The purpose of this cross-media study is to unearth the issues inherent in Carroll’s nonsense text and reflect about humanity’s paradoxical biological and psychological states of transit by enquiring into seemingly disparate discourses such as error, nuclear calamity, virtual reality, and interspecific hybridity.

*A Quixotic Transfiguration in Wonderland* conflates the myth of both Cervantes’s and Carroll’s heroic knight with the ‘mad tea party’ in Wonderland, alluding to the numinous ‘Last Supper’ from the canonical gospels. A weird fantasy of (de)mystification is vested in this project via allegorical experimentation with traditional artistic media and digital collages.

Comprising a set of six mural digital prints and an installation, this project attempts to subvert Carrollian text via anachronism and Christology. This grotesque iconography of a moment that transforms presence and contingency into absence and destiny is captured via experimentative approaches ranging from the aleatory to the recycling of an eighteenth-century dilapidated bier.

*Alice’s Atomic Handkerchief* is an ongoing experimentation in the creation of a series of hanging sculptures made from silk fabric, a material with metamorphic properties. This project is a comment and reminder of the dramatic implications of Onkalo, a site in west Finland, that is being dug deep inside its bedrock as a burial ground for nuclear waste. The storage facility together with the biosphere and all living organisms that reside within and surrounds

Detail from *A Quixotic Transfiguration in Wonderland*. [Digital collage on canvas].  
Mđina: Mđina Metropolitan Cathedral, 142 x 253 cm. 2015







Onkalo will need to be protected from its hazardous radioactive content for at least the next hundred thousand years. Alice's *Atomic Handkerchief* is an amalgam of symbols derived from the Alice texts, nuclear semiotics, and sign systems related to washing instructions, all serving to mock the cold enormity of time that haunts this subterranean nuclear waste depository.

*Who are you? Is it Alice or (No)body?* explores perceived transgression in the Alice human/animal boundary via a speleological approach in photography. The creative output of this project involves the creation of a series of photographic works that capture shadows cast from a VR user and projected onto the present topography of the cave of Għar Dalam in Malta. Engaged with the idea of an immersed body seen in its uncanny state, the VR user is not presented as a sculptural object but as a distanced reflection - a present absence of a natural (non)human shadow ephemerally drawn by light on stratifications that date back to the Ice Age. Mirroring the pivotal curious heroine, poised between object-hood and subject-hood, innocence and disenchantment, this work sustains paradigmatic shifts in structure and type, fantasy and critique of digital technology.

freestanding luminescent sculpture that envisages Alice's hypothetical doll's house via the interspecific architectonics of Carroll's text. Making use of 3D printing technology, moiré animated acetate transparencies, and polymeric materials such as polylactide (PLA) and polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) that have transparent, translucent, and reflective properties, this artwork blurs the line between the permanent and the ephemeral. This bizarre perspective is also investigated via the trope of the caged bird metaphor and a hybrid architectural framework designed on the nonsense text's corkscrew symbology. Amalgamating the physical appearance of a Victorian doll's house with those of the twisted-ladder structure of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and a cat's scratching post, this medium-hybrid sculpture probes into a creaturely otherness in the child that holds a potential for rethinking the human.

Steeped in mythic resonance, this research engages, analyses, and discusses various aspects of flux, transformations, and transcendence in an Alice fragment from an art practitioner's perspective. A Quixotic endeavour per se, the path of this cross-media exploration weaves a thread from studio practice to engagements in literature, back to an ekphrasis of the first known visual representations found in cave art.

*Half-Dreaming Phantomwise* is a

*Who are you? Is it Alice or (No)body?* [Digital print]. 72.26 x 30 cm. 2018



*Half-Dreaming Phantomwise* [PLA, PMMA, moiré animated acetate transparencies, PVC pipe, sisal rope, wood, iron wire, silk & paper]. 168 x 33 x 33 cm. 2019-20



*Alice's Atomic Handkerchief, Humpty Handkerchief, or Vistu f'Onkalo.* [Proposed concept. Medium: silk]. 30 x 24 cm. 2019



Observing the kinematics of reaching movement using VR goggles in Għar Dalam, Malta. 2018

## International Participation

# Participation in the reSEArch-EU project

The Department of Library, Information and Archive Sciences is participating in the reSEArch-EU project that is led by the University of Malta. reSEArch-EU is a Horizon2020 project, funded under a SWAFS (Science with and for Society) call. The project kick-started in 2021 and will run for 3 years. Dr Charles J. Farrugia writes about it.

This collaboration falls under the initiatives of the SEA-EU alliance, and the 6 coastal universities are pooling their complementary expertise to develop the reSEArch-EU project which aims to bolster the research and innovation capacity of SEA-EU. The key targets of the project are to:

- build an anti-fragile (beyond resilient and robust) and innovative pan-European Alliance;
- align expertise and resources with the needs of the production system;
- co-design, co-create and co-deliver knowledge with and for stakeholders and citizens;
- establish a common Open Science and Open Research Data Policy;
- craft and develop a common multidisciplinary research agenda that contributes to sustainable development;
- share our critical analyses and best practices for the successful implementation of our research and innovation strategies with other 'European University' Alliances.

In particular the University of Malta is leading Work Package 5: Building an Open Future: Fostering Open Science Across the SEA-EU Community and Beyond. Our Department is participating on the reSEArch-EU UM Open Research Data Working Group as part of this Work Package.

### The European University of the Seas

As this project is part of the wider European University of the Seas umbrella, it is fitting to explain further about this concept. The European University of the Seas is a consortium of six Universities with a shared vision to establish a distinctly international, pluri-ethnic, multilingual and interdisciplinary European University. This vision is rooted in the high quality and excellence in education and research of the alliance with the intent to strengthen the links between teaching, research, innovation and knowledge transfer.

The consortium is made up of the University of Cádiz (Spain) as coordinating institution, the Université de Bretagne Occidentale in Brest (France), the University of Kiel (Germany), the University of Gdańsk (Poland), the University of Split (Croatia) and our University.

One major principle of the initiative is the forging of new operating models not only to cope with constant rapid change but also the convergence of new



media, digitalisation and the need for new training models. Thus, the vision as a consortium is to create the conditions in which a student will be able to move between disciplines, languages and countries freely and confidently. Seamless mobility across borders and academic disciplines will provide a substantial leap in quality, performance, attractiveness and international competitiveness.

As the name indicates, one of the thrusts and central connecting medium of this consortium is the sea. SEA-EU will encourage excellence in research to gain more knowledge and a better understanding and management of the marine environment. It will assist in building the human resources and skills necessary to match the needs of the evolving marine and maritime sectors, now and in the foreseeable future. It will provide and improve tools and techniques to measure and anticipate ocean based and driven impacts. It will build frameworks for more effective ocean governance.

More information and the key deliverables and activities of SEA-EU are available on the official site at: [www.sea-eu.org](http://www.sea-eu.org)

Apart from building bridges with other European Universities bordering the sea, these projects are also fostering new collaborations within the University of Malta itself. Academics from the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Engineering together with our Faculty are teaming up with the University librarian and his department working on Open Science, under the direction of pro-Rectors Zammit and Baldacchino. This collaboration is beneficial as it will make us aware of the richness we have in our different specializations which are often siloed in their respective departments.

**Publications**

**Understanding motivations to use online streaming services**

Professor Mark Anthony Camilleri has recently co-authored an academic contribution that explored the consumer’s perceptions, motivations and intentions to use online streaming technologies in the Spanish *Journal of Marketing – ESIC*.

This contribution sheds light on the factors that are motivating individuals to purchase online streaming services.

It implied that online users were subscribing to these services to entertain themselves by watching new movies and TV series, in an ad-free environment. This study confirmed that consumers perceived the usefulness of online streaming technologies as they provided secure, reliable, low latency streaming infrastructures. Probably, consumers valued the service providers’ recommender systems as they reminded them about new or trending movies and TV series.

Such alerts are usually related to the consumers’ personal preferences and previous consumption behaviours.

The full paper is open access and can be found online [HERE](#).

**Media, Technology and Education in a Post-Truth Society: From Fake News, Datafication and Mass Surveillance to the Death of Trust**

The 334-page book has been edited by Dr Alex Grech and published by Emerald Publishing as part of the *Digital Activism & Society: Politics, Economy And Culture In Network Communication* series. A number of University of Malta academics also contributed to the book.

The post-truth society is associated with a raft of terms that challenge the very notion of what should constitute a democratic and inclusive society: the decline and fall of reason; the disruption of the public square; the spread of misleading information; fake news; culture wars; the rise of subjectivity; the co-opting of language; filters, silos and tribes; attention deficits; trolls, polarisation and hyper-partisanship; the conversion of popularity into legitimacy; manipulation by “populist” leaders, governments, and fringe actors; algorithmic control, targeted messaging and native advertising; surveillance and platform capitalism.

Education, the media and technology are traditionally lauded as forces to democratise knowledge and advance the pursuit of truth. Yet these days they equally appear to contribute to the echo-chambers of siloed groups with varying agendas that coalesce around dogma, power and desperation. The production and consumption of knowledge in a hyper-connected and techno-centric world continues to blur the lines between truth, half-truths, and falsehoods. The perpetrators of (mis)information are governments, media, corporations and individuals: in many respects, we are all participants in the current state of affairs, the so-called downward spiral toward tribalism, populism and extremism.

This new collection of 20 essays from scholars, technologists, policy-makers and activists raises critical questions about the nature and power of knowledge in the 21st century. It challenges readers to question their own role in perpetuating certain narratives and to also understand the lived context of people on all sides of a given debate. The approach is pointedly interdisciplinary, with perspectives that are



diverse by geography, sector, gender and most importantly, world-views. There are also tensions, particularly between those who believe that the way to solve trust issues is to build solutions on decentralised technologies and those who push against technological determinism, and predicate an investment in new models for education.

What the contributions have in common are that they are the product of people with inquisitive minds and an activist bent, questioning the adequacy of the tools of their trade against the ongoing wave of misinformation. The book argues for a return to civic participation and social justice, critical media literacy, journalism for the public good, techno-interventions and personalised, lifelong learning systems that can collectively foster a more engaged global citizenry.

MFA Graduate Exhibition

# Nine artists, nine divergent works – This is ENNEAD

*Ennead*, a group of nine, is a word representative of the nine University of Malta students completing their two year Masters in Fine Arts in Digital Arts (MFADA) course. Each individual artist portrays a penchant for their specialised areas through their work, thus offering a collective exhibition within a rich variety of practices ranging between illustration, hand-drawn animation, abstract, utilitarian, musical, photography and videography. It is clear that a diversity of practices are present, but this is where *Ennead* excels as a collaboration; it enriches the exhibition itself as well as accentuates the versatility which the MFADA course offers, managing to merge nine dissimilar backgrounds into a singular convergence. The artworks, regardless of the different backgrounds, share a similar trait; the marriage of digital and analogue methods. In other words, each exhibit touches both the virtual and physical through either execution and/or their final portrayals.

These are a result of the artists' endeavours through practice-led research, allowing themselves to delve into the 'deep-end' of the practical and creative spectrum in order to produce work of a high academic level representing each of their research areas.

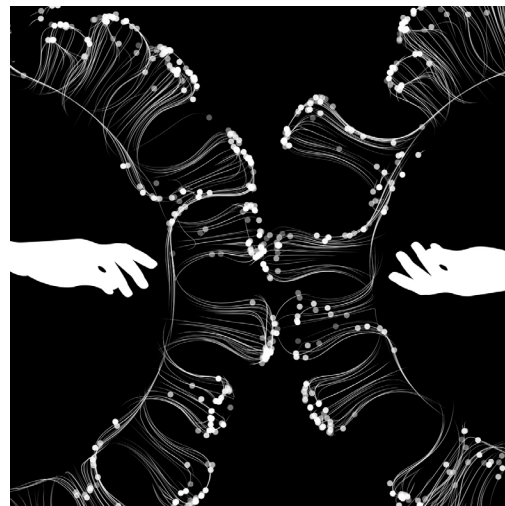


Mickayla Bugeja - Detail of *The Effects of Verbal and Nonverbal Elements using Online Platforms*

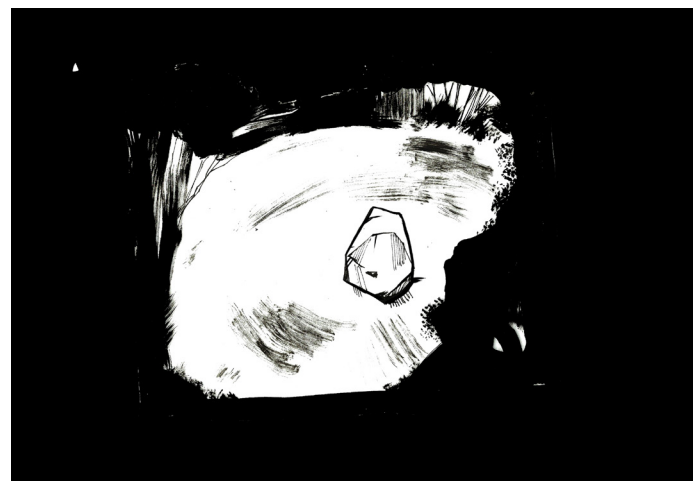
Mickayla Bugeja's *The Effects of Verbal and Nonverbal Elements using Online Platforms* outlines the space between what is "said" and the "unsaid". Mainly focusing on how facial expressions are an effective factor to holistic communication, Mickayla's work emphasises how we convey our messages within a digital age but most particularly resorting to compulsory digital platforms during the Covid-19 pandemic due to lockdown.

In the work *True Colours*, Emma Cini aims to portray two opposing elements emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic; fear and hope. Emma tackles these emotions through her digital illustrations which embody the pandemic that has changed the world's outlook for the past year. Through imagery, *True Colours* represents the two visual cues of the two opposite feelings, aiming for the viewer to connect to and relate with.

*Ode to a Stone* is Peter Magro's entry resulting from



Emma Cini – *True Colours*



Peter Magro - *Frame from Ode to a Stone*

a culmination of multiple visits to a site on Manoel Island - a study of imbalance and juxtapositions between a natural world and human intervention through phenomenological and psychogeographic elements is expressed through animation to understand the true nature of the area. Peter questions humanity's legacy compared to the longevity of a stone found onsite. This stone is the inspiration behind the hand-



Lara Manara - A shot from *CHAOS | ORDER*

drawn animation with visual cues of the stone and the area, the use of similar sounds of the site, and a political statement on unrestrained development creating a fictional narrative embedded in reality.

Lara Manara's *CHAOS | ORDER* is an autobiographical video installation which delves into temporal thoughts and being within a digital world, thus bringing out inner experiences and memories of the artist through a performative visual installation. This installation, a triptych in video, captures slices of moments within the artist's life, portraying the artist at the very centre of a collection of images and video representing personal moments and places from her past and present. Lara's work is a merge between experiences and contexts, which ultimately serves as a self-portrait and a self-narrative in a digital world.

*Not always everywhere but always somewhere* is Nicole Pace's installation which explores the 'unphysicalities' of our world, most particularly the

absent and present, the something and nothing. This abstract concept ties with our being and physicality of the 'now' vis-à-vis the looming knowledge that is temporality of such being. Rather than simply questioning, Nicole portrays a simple yet delicate existentialist interpretation which illustrates moments of presence and lack of. Through alternate use of light and darkness through an interactive experimental installation, Nicole replicates a temporality by utilizing shadows produced by the viewer which not only represent one's temporal presence but also symbolizes the balance between the dark and light moments of our lives, which are ever-present in our existence from beginning to end.



Nicole Pace  
- Testing  
*Not always everywhere but always somewhere*

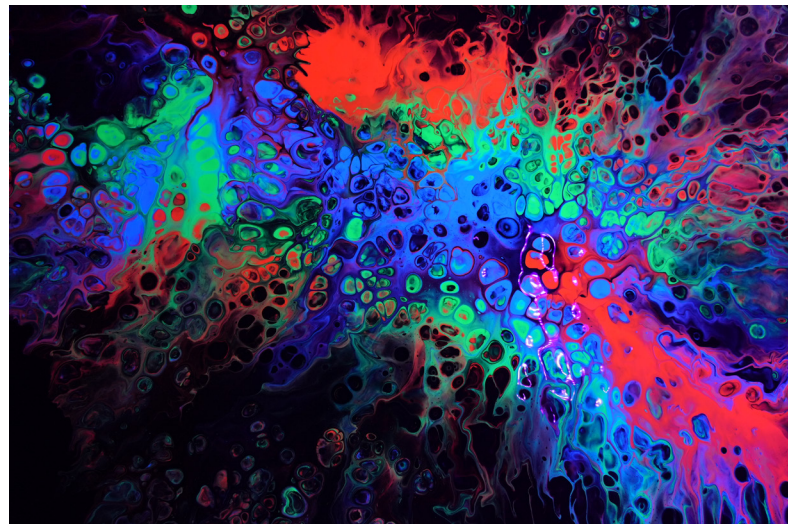


Bernard Polidano - *Confronting the Gaze*

# Ennead



Clayton Saliba - *Digitus* concept art



Nicole Zammit - *Exploring Mindfulness*

Bernard Polidano allows us to understand the 'inner-self' in his photographic interpretation: *Confronting the Gaze*. By understanding the concept of a portrait, Bernard's work intrigues the imagination through photos of individuals, who are not yet aware that they are being photographed. This approach to portraiture allows Bernard, at the other end of the lens to capture a more 'natural' and objective look into a person, perhaps unprepared for the true examination of the self. This idea tackles the notion of the soul and character being exposed through the lens, an honest portrayal of perhaps what is exposed before and after the smile.

Clayton Saliba introduces us to *Digitus* – an online app, developed to improve post-treatment health education for Diabetic children. *Digitus* applies digital illustration and imagery within a medical context to promote a contemporary means of visual

communication which can be integrated within the medical field to provide a sensitive and patient friendly digital brochure.

*Psyche Uninterrupted* is an audio-visual experience by Daphne Sammut. Through the uses of 'brainwaves', Daphne's installation, a sensory machine, aims to produce a new form of musical algorithm which allows anyone without any background in musicality to create sounds and melodies through a connection between the brain and her machine thus creating an unlikely link between computer and human, digital and analogue.

Nicole Zammit's background in painting and psychology is a strong basis for *Exploring Mindfulness*, a meditative practice which creates a thought provoking enclosure, aiming to allow viewers to think inwards and of 'here and now'. Through Nicole's psychedelic approach in painting using bright neon colours and UV lighting, her installation creates a 'walkthrough' of works utilizing both digital and organic aspects in order to induce therapeutic escapades for the viewer to get entranced in.

*Ennead* was launched on the 4<sup>th</sup> of June at *Spazju Kreattiv*, St. James Cavalier, who have provided their services, technical support and space for the exhibition until closing date, 27<sup>th</sup> June.

The exhibition would not have been made possible without the help of sponsors: *Powerhouse*, *Stretta Craft Beer*, *Sign It*, and *Derek Garden Centre*. The *Ennead* team thanks them for their initiative, support and services that made the students' production possible.



Daphne Sammut - *Psyche Uninterrupted*

**MKSA**

# Celebrating 30 years since the founding of the CCT

By means of a council decision, the University of Malta created the **Centre for Communication Technology (CCT)** on 29 May 1991 in response to the growing need for the use of modern media in Maltese society. Between 1991 and 2010, CCT operated a three-pronged mission: (1) formation of personnel capable of understanding the media context and creating media products; (2) undertaking of collaborative research work in the broad area of communications and (3) providing consultancy about, and management of campus instructional resources and spaces.

During these years, the focus on Communication Studies at the University of Malta developed from a few lectures within the Department of Philosophy, to an area of study within the Faculty of Arts (up to 1997) to a dual-subject degree within the CCT. A department of Communication was initially set up within the Faculty of Education (1997-1999) and then moved into the CCT. The first cohort graduating with a B. Communication four-year Honours programme completed their studies in 1994.

This eventually led to the foundation of the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences on 27 January 2011. MAKS was to take over the objectives of the Centre for Communication Technology (CCT), which it replaced, within a wider research agenda.

On 29 May, 2021, the 30th year since the CCT founding, the MKSA celebrated by broadcasting on its facebook page a set of six messages by people closely linked with the faculty. These included the first director of the CCT and eventually the founding Dean of MAKS, Rev. Professor Saviour Chircop;



Screen grabs from the short video messages broadcast by MKSA on the 30th anniversary of the CCT. Left to right, top to bottom, Rev. Professor Saviour Chircop, Professor Ġorġ Mallia, Ms Louise Vassallo, Mr Pierre Cassar, Mr Ayrton Deguara, and Ms Martina Falzon

the present head of the Department of Media and Communications, Professor Ġorġ Mallia; the Administrative Director of the University's Marketing, Communications and Alumni Office, Mr Pierre Cassar, who was also in the first cohort of Honours students in Communications, as was Ms Louise Vassallo, who is now a lecturer in the department; the present manager of the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences, Mr Ayrton Deguara, and the President of MKSA, Ms Martina Falzon.

The short videos were broadcast every half an hour on the evening of the anniversary.

Images left and bottom: The Centre for Communication Technology being built in 1992



# Master of Arts in Media and Communications



A part-time, evening, taught Master of Arts in Media and Communications is offered by the Department of Media and Communications. The course duration is that of six semesters and it contains eleven taught units, a placement, two mentored projects, and a research or project-based dissertation. The first three semesters are dedicated to the taught part, with lectures in the different aspects of Media and Communications, and the fourth to sixth semesters are for specialised, individual study, in which the student determines the area of study to be specialised in.

The part-time nature of the course also means that graduates who have full time work can still enrol for this course.

This Master of Arts provides students with an in-depth knowledge of many aspects of what is an inextricable part of today's society. The course content and student specialisation ascertain preparedness for employment in one or more of the areas that form part of this topical field of study.

The course is intended for graduates who are already in, or would like to make a career in any areas that fall within Media and Communications. The taught component of the course supports an in-depth mastery of the different manifestations of media and communications, while the independent study component provides a platform for specialisation in any of the areas, such as Journalism, Marketing Communications, Design, Film and Video, Internet Communications, etc. This course is also envisaged for media professionals and all those who want an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon that dominates present day society.

All lectures are given from 16.00 onwards and the official page, including the full programme of studies, can be found [HERE](#).

We encourage all recent Bachelor of Communications (Hons) and BA students who had Communications as an area, to enroll for this course.

## *In Transit* launched

*In Transit* the magazine created by the 33 Communications students enrolled in the 'Magazine and Digital Publishing' study unit at the University of Malta, taught by Mr Malcolm Bonello, was digitally launched on May 22, 2021. This was the conclusion of a year of intense work in which groups of students wrote, took photos, populated social media accounts, marketed and produced the magazine.

Aiming to share the importance of connection, the publication explores diversity within relationships. It is built on values of authenticity and the raw beauty of storytelling and strives to offer readers a form of escapism.

It was the students' hope that the 11 stories featured in the publication – which range from friendships and family relationships to hobbies and passions – inspire an appreciation for meaningful connection, created at a time of social distancing.

The launch featured a pre-Eurovision virtual event, celebrating a number of local artists on Europe's biggest night for music.

The evening started with messages by Mr Malcolm Bonello and Professor Ġorġ Mallia.

Then, the virtual music bash featured several great artists, including Karin Duff, Dav.Jr, James Mifsud, Kersten Graham, Gianluca Bezzina, Gianni, and F.A.I.T.H. Debrii closed the event.

The launch can still be viewed on the *In Transit* Facebook page.

The full magazine itself can be read online [HERE](#).

