



# A closer look at the everyday

**Lorella Fava** speaks with **Kevin Casha**, curator of *The Benefits of Art*, a three-year project bringing together five Maltese photographers.

Picasso once said: "The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls". The infamous artist here explains art not as an 'object' to be collected, admired – a source of financial wealth, but rather subjective expressions on beauty, nature, fears, doubts and all emotions that define the human race.

This very concept is the theme behind APS Bank's 2017 photo and book exhibition.

*The Benefits of Art*, part of a three-year project in which photographers are sensitised to lend their technical skills and works to convey annual messages to the public, will aim to convey the attributes of art defined in the everyday events that are often left unnoticed.

"Art today is all around us and an integral part of our everyday

life, it is human nature to have become quite unaware of its real power and impact," curator Kevin Casha maintains.

"We hope this project manages to make people think of the many ways art benefits our lives and to also try to propagate it further. It is not only the general public that we would like to engage but also those people in authority who can, through cultural policy, ensure the propagation of all art forms and practices."

Attempting to convey the importance of art, however, came not without its many challenges. Kevin explains that even though the theme constitutes a broad subject – showing how art benefits and impacts our society – it took a lot of thought, research and group debates in



order to generate engaging work that would be fit for the purpose of the project.

Despite its numerous challenges, however, Kevin explains that the topic is a unique one.

It allows the artists being exhibited to explore the way people are attracted to carry out certain activities or participate in social events without acknowledging that what they are doing is truly creating something new or expressing themselves through a variety of traditions – that is perhaps something worth documenting.

In other words, it allows the public to look at what is often overlooked in the every day.

The exhibition revolves around five promising photographers who were ready to undertake this challenging task and translate such ideas into a series of photographs that explore the connotation of an artistic area to particular individuals or groups.

The five photographers reside in Malta, with the exception of Susanna Diacono, who is from Sweden. The other four Maltese contributors are Dennis Cutajar,



Oriella Formosa Carabez, Stefan Cachia and Tonio Polidano. They explore the themes: Music – reception and response; Catharsis – expressing emotion through art; Photography – a window on the soul; and Art from the start.

Kevin insists that their works are simultaneously a reminder of people's reactions to the world around them and appealing and inviting to the viewers.

In fact, Kevin explains, "the scope of choosing solely photography was due to the fact that most people can easily 'read' and relate to a photograph, and this enables a better level of awareness by the general public".

APS Bank has always believed in making Maltese society aware of Maltese heritage and cultural issues and has been at the forefront



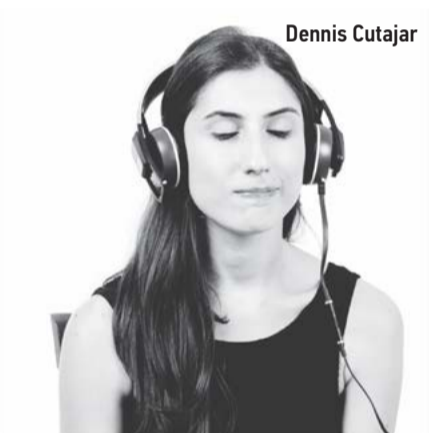
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Susanna Diacono



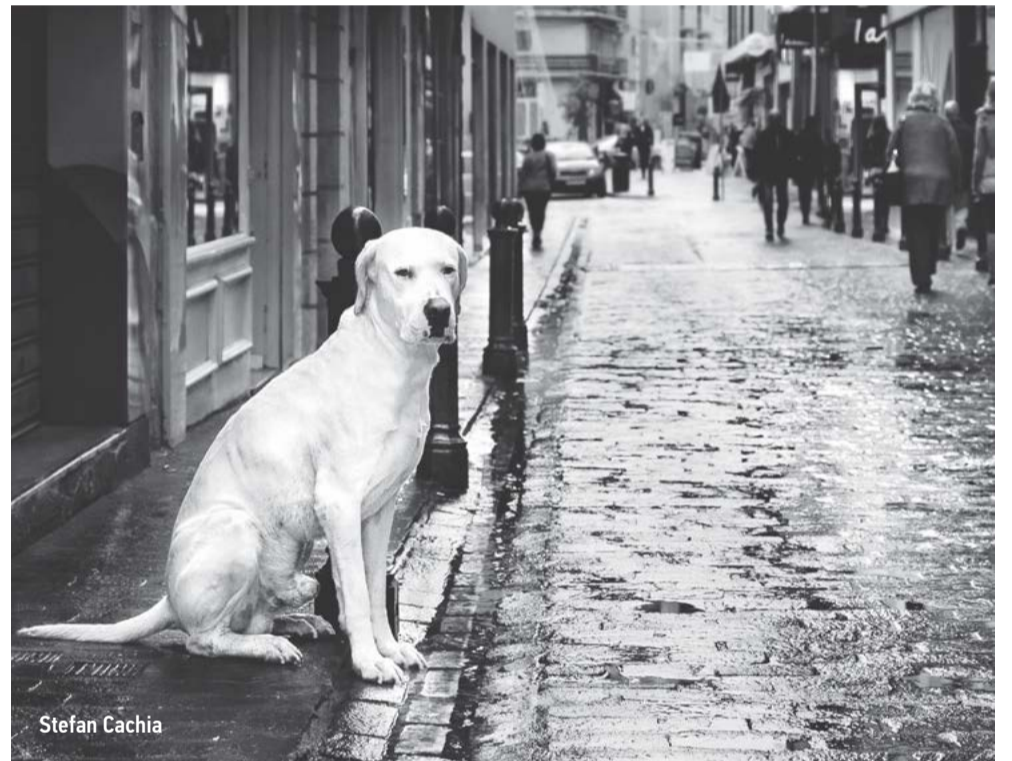
Tonio Polidano



Dennis Cutajar



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Stefan Cachia



Stefan Cachia



in encouraging local artists to flourish. The bank's belief in photographic art is extremely beneficial, not only to local photographers, but also to the public who have a bigger opportunity to appreciate and cherish our inimitable talent.

The project will be displayed both in the exhibition and through the publication of a book and calendar.

"It is my wish that visitors to the exhibition and readers of the book and calendar are encouraged to look at art from a different perspective and to further realise how vital it is to our society and, finally, the importance that it should be given by the island's authorities."

The Benefits of Art exhibition will run until June 31 at the APS Centre in Swatar, during branch opening hours.