

Exhibitions

Photos of traditional trades, village cores, chapels and endemic plants form part of an exhibition aimed at raising awareness on the importance of safeguarding our heritage

Exposing time and place

Stephanie Fsadni

An exhibition focusing on disappearing aspects of Malta aims to not only evoke nostalgia among visitors but, more importantly, elicit a feeling of pride and a will to safeguard and improve our heritage.

Vanishing Malta forms part of a three-year project organised by APS Bank and features the works of five photographers who were commissioned to cover specific themes. The exhibition is complemented by a publication that includes all works on display.

"I am sensitive to certain issues relevant to Malta and through my projects, I am always looking for a way to raise awareness on certain areas of Maltese society," says curator Kevin Casha, who also edited the accompanying book.

Martin Agius takes a look at traditional trades, such as shoemaking, dressmaking and knife grinding, while Mark Pace was asked to take shots of chapels that need urgent maintenance or else risk falling apart.

Tomoko Goto zooms in on buildings and structures which no longer serve their original purpose and have either been abandoned or, worse still, "are used for the wrong purposes". As an example, Casha mentions the Birkirkara-Santa Venera aqueduct where vehicles park underneath the vaults.

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The village core is another theme covered by the project. Anastasia Zhukova conveys the "typical character that is slowly but surely being lost" and her lens captures the shabby state of a good number of town dwellings. Lorraine Abela is instead concerned with nature and was entrusted with bringing out the beauty of endemic plants on the brink of extinction.

St Roque Cemetery chapel, also known as the Cholera chapel, at Fort Ricasoli, in Wied Ghammeq, Kalkara. Photo: Mark Pace



The choice of photographers was based on "their willingness to work hard, their mastery of technique, their enthusiasm, as well as the way they tackled a photographic theme," explains Casha, adding that he purposely chose photographers who had not yet had a solo exhibition.

A well-known photographer himself, Casha decided not to exhibit: "I felt that this time I should dedicate my energies to nurturing these photographers and to ensure that the message is brought out to the public in a strong manner."

All the participants used digital equipment but the images have not been altered "in any

way that could have changed the message", claims Casha.

"Most images are as shot on camera, with just a few basic edits in post-production, such as contrast and colour balance."

Work on the next two exhibitions has already started but Casha would not divulge the themes to be tackled in 2017 and 2018.

Meanwhile, he invites the public to visit the current exhibition, hoping it will indeed lead one to realise the importance of safeguarding our heritage.

"We are a product of our conditioning and if we do not step out of our armchairs and engage with what is happening around us, I am afraid that we

can become quite oblivious to what is happening around us – particularly when it directly affects us and our environment.

"I hope that through this project, and also through the book, a number of persons will sit up and notice what is in danger of being lost – before it is too late."

■ *The Vanishing Malta project was inaugurated yesterday at the APS Bank Centre in Swatar. It opens to the public today and runs until June 30. Opening hours: Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 1pm and on Saturdays from 8.30am to 11.15am. The accompanying book costs €35. For more information, visit www.apsbank.com.mt.*

Wild leek (*kurrat selvaġġ*). Photo: Lorraine Abela



The rare sea spurge (*tenghud tar-ramel*). Photo: Lorraine Abela