

Sheldon Saliba

Biographical Note

Sheldon Saliba (b.2000) is an emerging artist and student reading for a Bachelor of Art (Honours) in History of Art. His themes of research tend to revolve around the changing landscape, both the rural and built environments through works which explore the use of land by experimenting with contemporary interpretations of cabinets of curiosities, sculptural installations, and art activism. Photography is another preferred medium of his and frequently breaks off from traditional photography by using beat up analogue film cameras and manipulating rolls of exposed film.

In 2020, he was part of the ARTIVISTI, a programme by the Arts Council Malta and Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ aimed at promoting art and activism, through which he set up a travelling billboard-like installation, visiting various areas of the island and collecting material during each visit which was embedded in cement tiles. In 2022, Sheldon was invited to participate in the Night of Ideas, a youth forum organised by the French Institute and held at the Collège de France in Paris with the aim of connecting youths from each member state of the European Union to discuss the Environment, International Solidarity and Human Rights.

Artist CV

Education:

Bachelor of Art (Honours) in History of Art 2019-2022

Conferences:

The Night of Ideas 2022

Paris, France

Organised by the French Institute in Paris in collaboration with the Collège de France and arte, The Night of Ideas brought together 50 young Europeans from all member states of the EU to discuss the Environment, International Solidarity and Human Rights under the main theme of (Re)constructing Together. I was selected to be one of the 12 pitchers for the event, during which I proposed a policy proposal regarding the setting up of quotas on Climate Budgets throughout all member states of the EU.

Leading up to this event, The Night of Ideas programme, through a number of lectures and seminars, introduced me to how policy making works, what the roles of the European Union Institutions are, how to design a policy proposal, methods to prepare a successful pitch and training in public speaking.

Let's talk Art and Activism 2021

Valletta, Malta

Invited as one of the speakers of the ACMLab 'Let's talk Art and Activism', organised by the Arts Council Malta. Mainly discussed my experience with Art and Activism during the ARTIVISTI Programme and how art can be brought out of the museum and to the people, to connect with a different demographic.

Group Exhibitions:

2022, *Shifting Context II* curated by Trevor Borg, Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta, Malta

2022, *idejARTI - Skultura*, Malta School of Art, Valletta, Malta

2021, *20x20 Exhibition*, Christine X Art Gallery, Sliema, Malta

2021, *APS Summer Festival*, Msida, Malta

2021, *un/usual occurrence* curated by Elyse Tonna, The Mill – Art, Culture and Crafts Centre, Birkirkara, Malta

2020, *Fotographija Hand Printed*, Splendid, Valletta, Malta

2019, *BEING CALYPSO | BEING ULYSSES*, G. F. Abela Junior College, Msida, Malta, project as part of the outreach programme of the of the Malta Pavilion at the 58th edition of the Venice Biennale.

2019, *Holqa, International Youth Arts Festival*, G. F. Abela Junior College, Msida, Malta

2018, *Visual Arts Expo Young Artists*, G. F. Abela Junior College, Msida, Malta

Selected works

Reconstructed Balustrades

Found limestone balusters, concrete and wood

200 x 200 x 450cm

2022

Reconstructed Balustrades explored the traditional built environment through an iconic architectural element, that of the stone baluster, which can be seen atop the traditional Maltese townhouse. The gradual transition to a simple metal railing in newer developments which replace such buildings renders the baluster as a relic of the past, an artefact in its own right.

This installation presents a set of five found limestone balusters, all of which are eroded and fragmented, each displayed in individual wooden showcases and faced with another set of five showcases which display fragments from reproduced cement balusters. Through the various aspect of the work, ranging from the industrial materials used, the form of the baluster itself and the claustrophobic environment which the installation creates, the work comments on the present state of the changing streetscapes throughout the Maltese towns and villages.

Exhibition history

Shifting Contexts II, 2022, Spazju Kreattiv, Valletta, Malta. Curated by Trevor Borg.







Photos: Elisa von Brockdorff

KONKOS

Concrete and wood

150 x 250 x 400cm

2022

Konkos is an interactive sculptural installation which presents three large scale, topographical maps, that of; Valletta, Sliema and Manoel Island, and invites the viewer/participant to take a concrete block and place it anywhere on the maps. Throughout the exhibition, compositions or 'plots' are selected and documented as individual sculptural units, independent of the larger work. The work will transition from the present state of the skylines of the areas, to what the participants desire, creating a parallel with the present state of development and the disregard for a general masterplan.

Through the use of cement and wood, this work discusses the construction industry and the rapid urbanisation of the island, especially the densification of the northern harbour region, which contrasts greatly with the urban fabric of Valletta. Manoel Island, placed between both of these, presents itself as a blank slate where planning and consideration for the cultural and natural heritage are still possible.

Exhibition history

Transitions, 2022, Malta School of Art, Valletta, Malta.





Souvenirs from The Mill

Found material, glass and wood

80 x 55 x 30cm

2021

Souvenirs from The Mill is a site-specific structure built to fit within the walls of The Mill run by the Gabriel Caruana Foundation, and was placed in front of *Tiles of Occupation* (2020). After exploring areas in distress or to be, in this work I explored a building out of context, once a rural structure now engulfed in the urban sprawl of Birkirkara. During the creation of this piece, dust and debris was collected from around The Mill, focusing on exhaust, limestone and wall infill, all elements of the building's past and present life, showing the accelerated degradation of a building due to the rise of pollution within the vicinity.

Exhibition history

un/usual occurrences, 2021, The Mill - Art, Culture and Crafts Centre, Birkirkara, Malta. Curated by Elyse Tonna as part of the Spring Programme, organized by the Gabriel Caruana Foundation.





Tiles of Occupation

Found material, concrete and wood

250 x 250 x 150cm

2020

Tiles of Occupation reflects on the use of land and how we break it up into built and unbuilt spaces with many 'grey areas' under constant threat of further development. It questions the ongoing urban encroachment of rural spaces in the name of progress, without concern for the value of landscapes or the character of villages.

Set up temporarily and on multiple locations, this project challenges the rampant development of land by momentarily disturbing spaces and vistas with a billboard structure that exhibits a set of concrete tiles. Progressively produced on various sites and embedding found materials and objects, these tiles are relics of spaces that are already under threat, and others that might follow soon.

Exhibition history

Set up at Wied Għomor - San Ġwann, L-Aħrax tal-Mellieħa, Xagħra and Manoel Island during November 2020, as part of the ARTIVISTI programme. Supported by the Arts Council Malta and Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ.

un/usual occurrences, 2021, The Mill - Art, Culture and Crafts Centre, Brikirkara, Malta. Curated by Elyse Tonna as part of the Spring Programme, organized by the Gabriel Caruana Foundation.

APS Summer Festival, 2021, Msida, Malta.







Photos: Sarah Pisani

The Curious Things That We Find

Photography

2020

I saw a post on social media, by a woman who was clearing up a house. I got in touch for a visit to see what I can add to my collection. When I met with her, she showed me around the house, pointing at objects dotted around the place. She pointed at a copper planter and a mirror, and told me how fond of them she was. This was her parents' house; all the items brought back memories from her past. She was relieved that some of these precious objects of hers found their way to a collector. The house was set to be demolished and replaced by an apartment block.

I started to gather my collection including a copper planter and a mirror into the makeshift studio. I photographed each and every item. Objects which have been passed to me by people clearing spaces, for demolition, for modernization or because of the death of family members. Sometimes simply because people knew I am a collector and want to contribute with something of their own; such is the case of my own family. This project is a rediscovery of a collection of curious items, some of which have been locked inside a cabinet for years – an inventory of items and their memories taken out of one context and brought together by myself.

Exhibition history

Still, 2020, Temporary Online Exhibition under the Departement of Art and Art History at the University of Malta. Curated by Lisa Attard.





