

**NO NEED TO SPARKLE;  
EXPERIMENTS IN LOVE AND REVOLUTION**

**ARTS COUNCIL MALTA REVEALS  
FURTHER DETAILS ON THE PAVILION OF MALTA  
AT THE 61ST INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION -  
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA**



*Adrian MM Abela, Charlie Cauchi, Raphael Vella. Photography: Julian Vassallo*

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**EXHIBITORS: ADRIAN MM ABELA, CHARLIE CAUCHI, RAPHAEL VELLA**  
**CURATOR: MARGERITA PULÈ**

*No Need to Sparkle; Experiments in Love and Revolution*

Malta Pavilion, Arsenale, Venice

9 May - 22 November 2026

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**Arts Council Malta** is pleased to announce further details for the **Pavilion of Malta** at the prestigious **61st International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia**. Exhibitors **Adrian MM Abela**, **Charlie Cauchi** and **Raphael Vella** bring the group show, ***No Need to Sparkle; Experiments in Love and Revolution***, curated by **Margerita Pulè**, to the Arsenale, marking Malta's 5th participation in the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (9 May to 22 November 2026).

*No Need to Sparkle*, the title of which is taken from Virginia Woolf's influential essay, *A Room of One's Own*, will feature newly commissioned artwork from each artist, built upon a wide range of historical and conceptual material. *No Need to Sparkle* responds to present-day realities by embracing the concept of 'doubting well' – a reminder that doubt can be an active force, and proposing it not as paralysis, but as a vital act of resistance. Themes explored include protest history, prehistoric mythology, identity, and the film industry, placing myths, stories and contemporary media side by side to explore how we understand reality.

The artists will each present a screen-based and multimedia installation, leading visitors into uncertain terrain, and coalescing into a space of question, reflection, and illusion. Incorporating elements including large-scale sculpture, hand-drawn pieces, live action film and stop-motion animation, the works will transport audiences into layered fictions, shifting narratives and melting storylines, provoking deeper reflection on truth, perception and belief systems – themes that align with the contemporary preoccupations of Maltese society.

Citing Malta's founding narratives and prehistoric myths, **Adrian MM Abela's** *Declaration of Dependance* combines digital technologies, sculptural elements, and hand-drawn pieces, to create an environment that questions our history, our mythos and our own place in the world.

In turn, **Charlie Cauchi's** *Dolce* unpacks themes of authenticity and identity at a universal moment when the blurring of fact and fiction onscreen has taken on a crucial significance. Referencing *La Dolce Vita* and Fellini, the work exposes the illusion-making machinery of cinema and interrogates authenticity, identity, and labour and global image-making. Charlie is also the first female artist to represent Malta at the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

**Raphael Vella's** *Praying For A Revolution That Will Never Come* draws from 20th and 21st century archival footage of struggles for autonomy and self-determination, looking at a century of collective dissent in Malta. These historical images are removed from their original contexts; certainty and righteousness dissipate, leaving only the naked act of resistance itself.

In an era of fractured realities, continuous news streams, rising temperatures and shifting world orders, the search for 'truth' can feel futile, leaving us cynical and unable to act. *No Need to Sparkle* creates a space that allows truth to reposition itself in the world, and introduces 'doubt' as a way of understanding the world with openness and empathy.

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**COMMISSIONER**

The Malta Pavilion in 2026 is commissioned by Arts Council Malta, under the auspices of Malta's Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government. The Pavilion is being project led by the Internationalisation team at Arts Council Malta, headed by Dr Romina Delia.

The 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia shall mark Arts Council Malta's 5th participation with its own National Pavilion since 2017, when Malta re-entered the Biennale Arte with *Homo Melitensis: An incomplete history in 19 chapters* exhibition. Arts Council Malta also commissioned Malta's participation in the Biennale Arte 2019, 2022 and 2024 editions, with *Maleth / Haven / Port - Heterotopias of Evocation*, *Diplomazija Astuta* and *I WILL FOLLOW THE SHIP*, respectively.

Speaking at the local press launch, **Dr Luke Dalli, Executive Chairman at Arts Council Malta**, stated that Malta's participation in the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia reflects a strong commitment by Arts Council Malta to supporting artistic excellence and strengthening Malta's cultural presence on a global scale.

**Owen Bonnici, Minister for Culture, Lands and Local Government** stated that Malta's participation at the prestigious International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia reflects Maltese artists' high standing and their growing presence on the global stage. He reiterated the Malta government commitment to further invest in culture, and the arts, to support local artists internationally. Dr Bonnici said that the government is ensuring that culture, and the arts are closer to the people - a process which he described as the democratization of these sectors.

**Pavilion Curator, Margerita Pulè** said that the Pavilion is proposed as an antidote to our extreme and fragmented times, allowing a space for resistance through reflection, dialogue and strangeness.

-ENDS-

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#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**For international media enquiries, please contact:** Alex Finch and Sophia Hammond at Margaret:  
[alex@margaretlondon.com](mailto:alex@margaretlondon.com) / [sophia@margaretlondon.com](mailto:sophia@margaretlondon.com)

**For Maltese media enquiries please contact:** [venicebiennale@artscouncil.mt](mailto:venicebiennale@artscouncil.mt)

**Commissioner:** Arts Council Malta

**Curator:** Margerita Pulè

**Exhibitors:** Adrian MM Abela, Charlie Cauchi, Raphael Vella

**Architects:** SON Architecture / Mark Sullivan and Julian Vassallo

**Producers:** Unfinished Art Space with R Gallery

**Outreach & Partnerships:** Katrine Maj

**Project Manager:** Tamara Burr

**Visual Identity:** Alexandra Pace

**Social Media:** Alessia Caruana

#### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS:**

**ADRIAN MM ABELA (b.1989, based in LA)**

Adrian MM Abela studied architecture and civil engineering in Malta and Milan and received an MFA in sculpture from UCLA. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Abela's practice meanders between poetry and metaphor, to provide situations in which to share visceral experiences of the here and now with its multiple histories and possible futures. His endeavours stem from curiosities around encountered materials and/or narratives in the waking and/or dreaming states. Using science and inspiration he questions identity, self or the notion of knowledge, while dancing around paradoxes regarding the awareness of being a system harbouring and forming part of a self-similar system.

**CHARLIE CAUCHI (b.1980, based in Malta)**

Charlie Cauchi is an interdisciplinary artist and filmmaker. She holds a BA and an MA in Film Studies from Queen Mary University of London. Her academic contributions focus on small national cinemas, with a particular emphasis on Malta. Her practice is highly personal, taking a biographical approach. A common preoccupation in her work is runway productions, often using films shot on location in Malta to untangle identity and representation. She often uses her work to understand and heal fractured familial relationships and to explore identity themes, including gender identity, cultural heritage, and diasporic narratives. Charlie is currently producing/directing a feature-length documentary, *Stratum*, which revolves around the groundbreaking archaeological discoveries of Prof. Eleanor Scerri and Prof. Nicholas Vella that are reshaping Malta's prehistoric timeline. She is also co-founder of Rosa Kwir, Malta's first dedicated LGBTQI+ gallery and archive, with artist Romeo Roxman Gatt.

**RAPHAEL VELLA (b.1967, based in Malta)**

Raphael Vella is a contemporary artist working in drawing, installation and stop motion. His work has been shown in many venues around the world, including the Robert McDougall Art Gallery in Christchurch, New Zealand; Den Haag Sculptuur in the Netherlands; Modern Art Oxford, UK; Domaine Pommery in Reims, France; Palazzo Bembo, Venice, Italy; the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland; the EU Delegation Building in Washington DC, USA; and the Art Gallery of Burlington in Ontario, Canada. Recent curated solo exhibitions include Vilnius Graphic Art Centre, Lithuania and Altan Klamovka, Prague, Czechia.

As a curator he has been active since 2002, curating in several art centres and public museums in Malta and internationally. In 2014 he conceived the Valletta International Visual Arts festival (VIVA) and directed the first two editions (2014, 2015). He was also co-curator of the Malta Pavilion at the 57th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, in 2017. Raphael Vella is also a full Professor at the University of Malta.

**MARGERITA PULÈ (b. 1976, based in Malta)**

Margerita Pulè is an independent curator and researcher. She is founder-director of Unfinished Art Space, an independent and nomadic space showing contemporary art in Malta, and a founder member of Magna Żmien a grass-roots organisation which digitises 20th century analogue material. She is also a doctoral student with the Department of Digital Art within the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Science at the University of Malta.

In 2024, Margerita was one of four practitioners awarded Arts Council Malta's first Sabbatical for Artistic Research, and through this grant researched curatorial methodologies outside of traditional exhibition contexts.

Her curatorial practice focuses on experimental, site-specific, and research-led curatorial practices, often operating outside traditional exhibition formats and engaging with critical, political, and feminist methodologies.

**Further Bios available upon request**

**Commissioned by Arts Council Malta**

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

**ARTS COUNCIL MALTA**, under the auspices of the Ministry of National Heritage, The Arts and Local Government, has been entrusted to act as the Commissioner and the Contracting Authority of the Pavilion of Malta at the 61st 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.

<https://www.artscouncilmalta.org>

**SUPPORTERS**

Malta Tourism Authority