

THE MURAL

Year 2000



St Thomas More College
Middle & Secondary School, iż-Żejtun

Alfred Portelli (b.1947)
The Mural, 2000
Fibreglass relief – sculpture, 540 X 360 cm
St Thomas More College, Secondary School, Żejtun

Alfred Portelli's (b.1947) *The Mural* is a large-scale, geometric mural relief sculpture specifically made to greet the 21st century with a degree of optimism. This confidence traces its roots both in the artist's deep-seated faith as well as in his innate positive outlook upon life.

The work is made up of fifty-four cast relief panels which together, as if they were tesserae in a Byzantine mosaic, work in unison to bestow an aesthetic, perhaps redemptive, experience upon the onlooker. The relief embraces a number of dualities. It is about the birth of the new millennium as much as it is about the commemoration of the first two thousand years since the birth of Christ.

Compositionally it is rigorously formalist, but it refuses to be considered solely on those terms. Portelli's faith strives to infuse his work with symbol and meaning. It hints at Christ's dual nature as much as it pits the formalist with the symbolist. The square and the circle, the two motifs on which the work is based, hark back to the age-old dialectic between the human and the divine. Indeed, there are as many squares as there are circles, a twenty-seven of each, implying a perfect balance between the human and the divine. The cube root of twenty-seven is three, a number that might carry portentous theological and esoteric meanings, but if considered solely within a strict Christian context, it is the number that clearly alludes to the Trinitarian God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The colours, ranging from sombre to light tonalities, suggest an upward thrust that moves from the darkness in the bottom left to the light in the top right. This movement, which in itself is an important formalist principal of design, here yields itself to a symbol of regeneration and salvation.

The shadows that naturally form on the concave forms, changing throughout the hours of the day, might suggest humanity as the receptor of the Divine and hint at the promise of continuous redemption.

Dr Christian Attard
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Alfred Portelli (b.1947) II – Mural

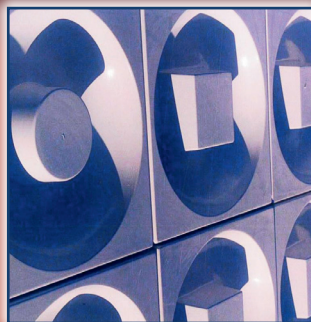
F'dan ix-xogħol ġeometriku hawn ħafna messaġġi moħbija. Huwa maħdum minn 54 maduma mħaffra, li ġo nofs kull waħda hemm ċirku jew kwadru. Waqt li ċ-ċirku nsibuh fin-natura bħax-xemx, il-pjaneti u l-frott, l-għamla kwadra hija ħolqien tal-bniedem. Għalhekk iċ-ċirku huwa simbolu tad-divin waqt li l-kwadru jfakkarna fil-bniedem.

F'din l-iskultura, daqs kemm hemm ċrieki hemm ukoll kwadri. B'hekk naraw bilanċ u għaqda perfetta bejn id-divin u l-uman... simbolu ta' Sidna Ġesù Kristu, li sar bniedem bħalna f'kollox barra mid-dnub. Wieħed josserva li l-kuluri jibdew b'dawk skuri fin-naħa t'isfel li jiċċaraw aktar ma jtilgħu 'l fuq. Hawnhekk ukoll, l-ilwien skuri mhux biss ifakkruna fl-art, fil-ħamrija u fil-blat bħala oġġetti tqal, iżda wkoll fit-tbatija, fil-mard u fid-dnub.

Aktar ma ngħollu ħarsitna 'l fuq, aktar niltaqgħu mal-ilwien ċari tas-smewwiet li jwassluna għall-fidwa. Matul il-jum, fit-tħaffira tonda ta' kull maduma, jissawru dellijiet, li jitharrku minn naħa għal oħra, jinbidlu, jikbru, jiċkien u johlqu bhal moviment f'dan il-mural. Dan nistgħu nxebbħuh ma' l-opra tal-fidwa fejn il-Mulej ma salvax 'il-bniedem u waqaf hemm, iżda jfittex il-ħin kollu li jiġbdu lejH b'imhabbtu. Meta tħarsu lejn dan ix-xogħol artistiku, tiqfux titpaxxew biss bil-ġmiel tal-kuluri u l-forom, imma aħsbu ftit fuq dan kollu li semmejna. Xogħol artistiku jista' wkoll ikun talba mill-isbaħ lill-Mulej.

Din l-iskultura ġiet inawgurata fid-dhul tas-sena 2000 bħala merħba lill-millennju l-ġdid. Issa, wara 23 sena, ġiet restawrata mill-artist innifsu.

Addattament ta' Trevor Zahra



PROGRAMM

Inawgurazzjoni mill-Ġdid tal-Murial tal-Iskola

It-Tlieta, 28 ta' Novembru 2023

Introduzzjoni

Is-Sur Adrian Galea

Kap tal-Iskola

Diskors

Is-Sur Alfred Portelli

L-artist tal-Murial

Diskors

Is-Sur George Psaila

Prinċipal tal-Kulleġġ

Tberik

Fr Bernard Micallef

Direttur Spiritwali tal-Iskola

Bibita

ALFRED PORTELLI

Alfred Portelli (b.1947) is a Maltese artist and an art educator. His works range from drawings to paintings and sculpture. Alfred's love for Art and teaching grew with him. He studied philosophy, theology and pedagogy and specialised in Art Education. He furthered his drawing skills at the Academia di Belle Arti in Perugia in 1977. Since 1988, he taught Art at Secondary Level and at the Malta School of Art. Portelli is esteemed not only for engaging students with art making concepts and skills but also for using Art as a reflective practice and as a tool for personal growth.

