Saturday 17 February – Sunday 7 April 2024

The Way of the Cross - Lent *Pasturi* Exhibition

The public is encouraged to visit Il-Ħaġar Museum at the heart of Victoria, Gozo, to see the local handcrafted figurines (*pasturi*) exhibited in the typical Good Friday procession in celebration of the current religious Lent period. Parishioner Mr Carmel Farrugia from Victoria is the creator of this curious exhibit at Il-Ħaġar portraying scenes from the Via Crucis. One has to appreciate the attention he has devoted to detail especially when considering that he is handling miniature-sized clay statuettes. Something naïve-like, unaffected, and unsophisticated emerges from the end result of his *pasturi*. Mr Farrugia has patiently laid out this three-dimensional representation of the local society where religion still weaves itself around other threads forming the fabric of Gozitan life.

Mr Farrugia, now a pensioner, reveals that this exhibit originated 25 years ago, when he was still working in Għajnsielem. It was first exhibited in a smaller version at St. George's Basilica in Gozo with new statuettes continuously being added as the years went by until very recently. The last additions were the characters with the "forcina" (this is used to hold the saint statue during the religious procession), four new figurines to every statue in this exhibit. The basic form of each figurine is created with the aid of a specific mould and then the arms, head, and other parts are added on. In the same way, he has also worked on other creations like the Christmas Nativity scene and was also commissioned by other people to make personalised versions or copies of the figurines.

This is not the first time that Mr Farrugia has exhibited this work at Il-Ħaġar but he constantly varies the layout and background scenery. As part of the backdrop of this year's exhibit, he has replicated various real-life facades around the streets of Victoria through which the Good Friday procession passes.

The exhibit is worth viewing both by children and adults alike. The art of making *pasturi* is after all another way of keeping alive those traditions which many locals seem to be nostalgic of today. Mr Carmel Farrugia's final result also acts as a photograph of the village people, their lifestyle as well as those traditional buildings, shops, and interesting nooks and crannies around Victoria which are fast being obliterated by modern change.

This exhibition is available at the Museum Level -1 from Saturday 17 February until Sunday 7 April 2024. The Museum is open Monday to Sunday, 9:00-17:00. Entrance is free.

Is-Sibt 17 ta' Frar – Il-Ħadd 7 ta' April 2024

The Way of the Cross – Wirja ta' pasturi fiż-żmien tar-Randan

Kulħadd huwa imħeġġeġ li jżur il-Mużew Il-Ħaġar fil-qalb tal-belt Victoria, Għawdex, sabiex jara wirja ta' pasturi lokali esebiti f'purċissjoni tal-Ġimgħa l-Kbira bħala ċelebrazzjoni ta' dan il-perjodu tar-Randan. Is-sinjur Carmel Farrugia minn Victoria huwa l-moħħ u l-idejn wara din il-wirja kurjuża li turi xeni mill-Via Crucis. Wieħed irid tassew japprezza l-attenzjoni kbira li ngħatat lid-dettalji speċjalment meta wieħed irid jikkunsidra li l-ħidma saret fuq figurini żgħar tat-tafal. Il-pasturi jispiraw devozjoni infantili u innoċenti proprja ta kif għandha tkun il-fidi. B'paċenzja liema bħala, is-sur Farrugia firex din il-purċissjoni bħala rappreżentazzjoni 3D tas-soċjetà lokali fejn ir-reliġjon għadha tiġi minsuġa ma' ħjut oħra li jiffurmaw id-drapp tal-ħajja Għawdxija.

Is-sur Farrugia li llum huwa pensjonat jgħidilna li din il-wirja oriġinat 25 sena ilu meta kien għadu jaħdem Għajnsielem. Il-wirja ġiet esebita għall-ewwel darba f'dimensjoni iżgħar fil-Bażilika ta' San Ġorġ, Għawdex, imbagħad dejjem kompla jżid statwetti ġodda anke sa reċenti. L-aħħar figurini miżjuda huma l-personaġġi bil-forċina, erbgħa figurini ġodda għal kull statwa fil-puċissjoni. L-immudellar tal-pasturi jseħħ bl-għajnuna ta' forma speċifika u mbagħad jiġu miżjuda l-idejn, ir-ras u partijiet oħra tal-ġisem. Is-sur Farrugia ħadem bl-

istess mod fuq il-pasturi tal-presepju tal-Milied u ġie kkummissjonat minn persuni oħra sabiex joħloq verżjonijiet personalizzati jew kopji tal-pasturi li jkun għamel.

Din mhijiex l-ewwel darba li huwa tella' dan ix-xogħol preżenti fil-Mużew Il-Ħaġar imma dejjem ibiddel l-arranġament tal-pasturi kif ukoll l-isfond tal-wirja. Din id-darba l-isfond jirrappreżenta faċċati ta' bosta djar u ħwienet u niċeċ madwar it-toroq tal-belt Victoria minn fejn issoltu tgħaddi il-purċissjoni tal-Ġimgħa l-Kbira.

Din il-wirja tqanqal l-interess kemm tal-kbar kif ukoll taż-żgħar. Fl-aħħar mill-aħħar l-arti tal-pasturi hija mod ieħor kif jinżammu ħajjin it-tradizzjonijiet lokali li spiss in-nies tal-post jiftakru b'nostalġija. Ix-xogħol tas-sur Carmel Farrugia jservi bħala fotografija tan-nies tar-raħal, tal-ħajja tagħhom kif ukoll tal-bini tradizzjonali, tal-ħwienet, tas-sqaqien u ta' dawk il-kantunieri madwar il-belt Victoria li kull ma jmur dejjem qed jiġu meqruda bil-bidla hekk imsejħa modernità.

Il-wirja hija esposta fil-Mużew, Livell -1, mis-Sibt 17 ta' Frar sal-Ħadd 7 ta' April 2024. Il-Ħaġar huwa miftuħ mit-Tnejn sal-Ħadd, bejn id-9:00 a.m. u l-5:00 p.m. Dħul huwa dejjem b'xejn.