

## THE SCULPTOR

Chris Ebejer was born in Malta in 1979. Mainly self-taught as a sculptor, at an early age he showed a deep interest in the baroque heritage surrounding his native island, which captured his fantasy and imagination. Trained as a painter Chris soon discovered that three-dimensional was the true aspiration for his creations. For three years he received his artistic and cultural training in the history of Western European Art, which introduced him to the greatest masters of all time, such as Michelangelo, Bernini, Carpeaux and Rodin.

He has designed several works for cinema, and his most notable work was the horse of Troy for the film *Helen of Troy* (2002). Chris is graduated in film production and direction at the New York Film Academy in Universal Studios in Los Angeles. In 2004 he completed with distinction the diploma in classical and contemporary design from the Sheffield School of Int. Des. of New York.

His bronze work *Mechanical Spring* was installed in the world's largest sculpture park in Changchung, China. Inspired mostly by drama and looking for the theatrical, his art seems to have re-emerged from that long classical tradition which is vigorously apparent in his work.

His work spans from film set design, interiors and fine art. He has completed numerous public commissions and his art is also included in many private collections. His sculptures are acclaimed by many, which has led to a prodigious amount of commissioned work, both monumental and thematic. His work is a continuous tradition that lives on to express the beauty of European culture and civilization.

In 2006 he won the competition for the monument to Youth and Life in Qrendi, Malta and in 2007 he won the prestigious national competition for the monument to Mater Dei at the newly built hospital of Malta. In 2010 he executed the statue of Christ the King in silver, a special gift to Pope Benedict XVI during his visit to Malta. Chris participated in numerous exhibitions in his native country and across Europe. He shares a fascination with creating objects of rare beauty that touches the emotions and explores the dream world of the subconscious and shows his love to satisfy the spectator with a surreal theatre of drama, illusions and fantasy.



THE SCULPTOR  
CHRIS EBEJER



B'qalb tajba, b'mohh miftuh, xghelna l-imsiebah  
ghal kull staġun, u qbadna t-triq flimkien.  
Qassamna d-dawl lil kull min xtaq li jifhem,  
weġibna l-Mistoqsija ta' kull żmien.

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L-EDUKAZZJONI  
TITTRASFORMA  
L-PERSUNA U  
TIFTA# BIBIEN  
GODDA





## THE SCULPTURE

Entitled “*L-edukazzjoni tittrasforma l-persuna u tiftaħ bibien ġodda*”, this work depicts the figure of a girl, seated, reading a book. Behind her is an open door, signifying an open mind through education. All around her are butterflies flying around, signifying wisdom.



### ORIGIN

The MUT has been considering the erection of a commemorative monument for the centenary celebrations for years. Discussions were held between previous union administrations and the respective authorities to identify a suitable location, but none had been identified.

### LOCATION

Quite coincidentally, officials noted a commemorative marble plaque marking an anniversary of the union along the boundary wall of the Examinations Centre at The Mall, Floriana. Upon visiting the site it was noticed that the location was ideal to erect the proposed monument.

The choice of site satisfied requirements since it is very close to the San Ġorġ Preca College Floriana primary school, where the first meeting of the MUT had been held in 1919, and it is also a historical area which houses a considerable number of monuments.



### THE CHOICE

The MUT issued an expression of interest for sculptors who showed interest in the proposed monument. The only restriction on the artists referred to proposing an artwork that respects the harmony of the site in terms of concept and materials used. Furthermore, it had to depict the work of the MUT, with education as the central aspect.

### THE SELECTION

A selection board was appointed by the MUT council in 2018 to process submissions and to advise the council. The board met all sculptors who showed interest in the work. Upon evaluation of all proposals, the board made its recommendation to the council. The council approved the recommendation to commission the work to Mr Chris Ebejer.

### THE PROPOSAL

Mr Chris Ebejer worked on a proposal within a few days. He invited Union officials to his studio in Mqabba to demonstrate and explain his proposal through a *buzzett* in clay. Upon some initial clarifications and minor modifications to the proposed monument design, MUT officials presented the proposal to the council and it was approved.

### THE INITIAL STAGES

Whilst Mr Ebejer was working on the concept and logistics, and communicating with the bronze foundry, Union officials together with the architect Mr Lino Cachia were working on the base design and the permits required from respective authorities, including the Ministry for Education and Employment, the Lands Department, the Arts Council and the Planning Authority. The final permits were issued before summer 2019.

## WORK ON THE SCULPTURE

Mr Chris Ebejer carried out works on the main figure of the sculpture in clay, consisting of a girl seated with an open book in her arms. This work was carried out at Pietrasanta, Italy and was transported to the Fonderia Artistica Versiliese. Mr Ebejer continued his work at the same foundry by preparing a considerable number of butterflies together with the doors to be positioned behind the seated girl. MUT President Mr Marco Bonnici and Mr Chris Ebejer visited the foundry in July to oversee the works.

## THE CASTING

The process to cast the sculpture in bronze was long and involved several stages. Casting was carried out in September and October 2019, which was followed by a process of welding and refinement. Coloured patina was applied to give the material texture and protection. The sculpture was shipped from Genoa, Italy and arrived in Malta early in December 2019.

## BASE AND INSTALLATION

Works on the base were carried out by Paul Calleja, a building contractor, at the end of summer 2019 and included the foundations, the concrete and bricks base and cladding with Crema Laguna hardstone supplied by Rabat Marbles. A stanza penned for the occasion by Prof. Oliver Friggieri was engraved in the hardstone of the base. Works were concluded in November and the installation of the sculpture followed.

## THE UNVEILING CEREMONY

Held under the patronage of the President of the Republic H.E. Dr George Vella, the unveiling ceremony merges music played by Mr Stephen Camilleri, literature by Prof. Oliver Friggieri and 3-D animations by Mr Francantonio D. Cauchi Cuschieri and Mr Paul Camileri. This brings the monument to life in the unique and historical gardens of The Mall in Floriana.

