

[maltabiennale.art](http://maltabiennale.art)

*baħar abjad imsaġar taż-żebbuġ*

Malta, March – May 2024

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Valletta, Malta – Preparations are well underway for Malta to host its first international art biennale next spring, titled *baħar abjad imsaġar taż-żebbuġ*, curated by Artistic Director Sofia Baldi Pighi and chaired by Mario Cutajar, President of [maltabiennale.art](http://maltabiennale.art).

An [open call has been issued for national and international artists](#) to partake in the first edition of maltabiennale.art taking place between March and May 2024. The call invites contemporary artists worldwide to submit thematically relevant work manifesting in any medium. This call is also [open to countries interested in setting up a pavilion](#). Submissions will undergo a curatorial selection process by a dedicated team to create an international exhibition that will shape the core of maltabiennale.art. Artists are invited to submit their projects by Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. Individual artists may also be eligible for up to €13,000 in financial support for their participation in maltabiennale.art.

The first edition of maltabiennale.art –titled 'baħarabjadimsaġartaż-żebbuġ' - asks its participants to address the core and the edges of the geographic and cultural Mediterranean landscape. This great body of water, covering centuries of layered histories, has always divided and connected profoundly different cultures, each of whom developed individually at vastly different rates, with vastly different allegiances, resulting in a characteristically eclectic mixture of populations. As present times make their media-driven stamp and propel populations, physical and virtual realities forward, this collective exhibition will seek to assert tangential and fringe, albeit pressing, narratives often overlooked by popular narratives about this part of the planet – which yet inform a more truthful understanding of our shared realities - and stimulate better-informed conversation.

The principal exhibition unfolds in the heart of Malta's capital, the Grand Master's Palace, an opulent landmark which served as the main stage for so many of the nation's political and historical milestones, from the Knights of St John to the first constitutional parliament in 1921. Today, the state rooms are home to stunning 18<sup>th</sup>-century Baroque paintings, portrait galleries, and one-of-a-kind tapestries. Valletta itself, the capital, is testament to Malta's magnetising allure, which has captivated the imagination of artists from Preti to Piano.

The capital city, Valletta, is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site that, together with its neighbouring harbour cities of il-Birgu, Bormla, and I-Isla shapes a dense array of intact

original palazzos, forts & churches that characterise the archipelago's expansive historic heritage.

"Taking place just as the first springtime blooms begin to emerge, maltabiennale.art will offer nations and individual artists the unique opportunity to exhibit their artistic best in the context of UNESCO World Heritage sites, further framing our biennale's a provocative exploration of history and tradition within contemporary realities," highlighted maltabiennale.art President Mario Cutajar. "My wish for Malta's first biennale is to provide a space within which the public can immerse itself in the world which our curatorial team, together with artists from around the globe, will create."

Sofia Baldi Pighi, maltabiennale.art's Artistic Director, details: Maltabiennale.art seeks to reflect meaningfully on the predominant and overlooked narratives about the Mediterranean cultural landscape inherited from past generations to inform a better insight into the present and catalyse new encounters, enriching ideas about the future using venues of poignant historical relevance locally and internationally."

[maltabiennale.art](http://maltabiennale.art) is proudly presented by Heritage Malta's MUŻA in collaboration with Arts Council Malta, and with the cooperation of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade, VisitMalta and Spazju Kreattiv.

maltabiennale.art is online:

Official website: [www.maltabiennale.art](http://www.maltabiennale.art)

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