

# The Malta Institute of Professional Photography

## *A Brief History*



compiled by **Melvin Bugeja**

The Malta Institute of Professional Photography (MIPP) officially came into being during a meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October 1996. This first meeting, open to all those with an interest in Professional Photography, was held at the Grosvenor Hotel, and was the outcome of a group of individuals who had long been discussing ways to better the standard, respect and recognition of the Maltese Photographer.

The idea to form the MIPP was first discussed by Colin Pilling and Kevin Casha on the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 1996 at the Coach and Horses in Birkirkara. A subsequent meeting (1<sup>st</sup> August) saw Konrad Agius joining the first two. Further meetings were held with several interested persons contributing. These were namely Walter Barbara, Joe P. Borg, Martin Abela, Anthony Portelli, and Charles Calleja.

After these informal meetings, arrangements were made to keep meeting at the Grosvenor Hotel in Attard. In fact, an interim Committee was established and the first official MIPP Minutes started recorded on the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 1996. This Interim Committee consisted of Kevin Casha, Konrad Agius, Colin Pilling, Anthony Portelli, and Charles Calleja. These preparatory meetings under the Interim Committee progressed till the first MIPP General Meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April

1997, again at the Grosvenor Hotel. There, the first official Committee was voted in and was made up of Kevin Casha, Hon. Chairman, Colin Pilling, Hon. PRO; Konrad Agius, Hon. Secretary, Charles Calleja, Hon. Treasurer, Anthony Portelli as members and Joe Farrugia as representative for the student section.

That day in October has now become history and from then on the MIPP has gone from strength, becoming an authoritative voice for the local professional photographic community as well as being the official Government-recognized body where legislation and regulation of the local Photographic Industry is concerned.

The Institute has been run with a view of upgrading and regulating the Industry, getting Photographers to help each other, teaching and formulating guidelines on various important issues that the working Photographer faces. It has also its Code of Ethics as well as yearly revisable Statute, voted in by its members at an Annual General Meeting usually held in February. A President and six Committee Members run it on democratic lines. These all offer their services voluntarily.

The MIPP also has gone beyond the shores of Malta by establishing close ties with the Master Photographer's Association of Great Britain. This has helped the local photographic community to widen its horizons and streamline its operations. In fact, one of the highlights of the MIPP's brief, but important history, is the Photo Seminar held in Rabat in 2001 where no less than five of the top MPA officials came over to help sharpen the skills of the MIPP members. Another first for the MIPP was *Photofest - 2000* held at the Malta International Trade Fair. This was the first purely Photographic Fair that has ever been purposely organized by the MIPP to try and instill further interest and generate more business in Photography on



the island. The huge interest shown by the public really made this a memorable event. One must not forget the first real Seminar put up by the MIPP, with the help of Attard & Co.; way back in March 1997. This had helped to get the photographers together and add to the MIPP ranks. Another event held in 1998, the Photo Training Overseas, further helped to enhance the Institute's standing. This was made possible again by the close ties the MIPP has with UK Photographic Associations.

The MIPP also forms part of the FEP, or Federation of European Photographers, an organization that groups together all the top European Photographic Association in an effort to work more closely and uniformly together.

The Institute has also been instrumental in lobbying the Government to amend the Copyright laws as well as to get more recognition for the local professional Photographer. The MIPP believes that the issuing of an official warrant to work in Photography is an essential step towards better regularizing the Industry and is at present conducting talks with official Authorities to try and get this implemented.

The year 2003 saw the setting up of the MIPP's



own system of *Qualifications* where members can conditionally submit a panel of their works with the possibility of gaining distinctions. These Distinctions are considered as benchmarks to high photographic capabilities. Members can opt to apply for three different categories: The LMIPP, the AMIPP and the FMIPP.

In this short time, the MIPP has come a long way, evolving in the process, but its main objective still remains the *Furtherance of the local Professional Photographic Industry in all its aspects.*

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