

Joseph Sagona - Profile

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The Aged in Gozo	Young People In Gozo	Ix-Xjenza u s-Socjeta	Profile: Joseph Sagona	Front Cover	

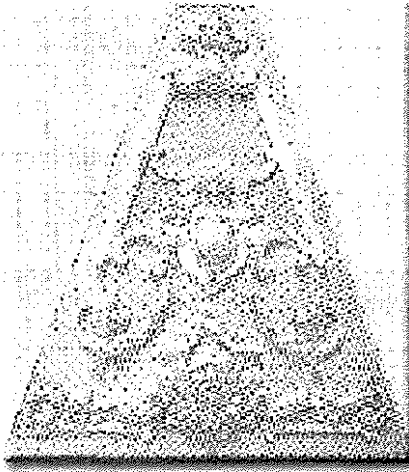


JOSEPH SAGONA - profile -

Painter, sculptor, decorator and designer Joseph Sagona was born in Victoria, Gozo in January 1942. Since childhood he showed considerable artistic talents and at an early age he studied painting under the Italian painter from Rome, Prof. Gian Battista Conti (1878-1971), and ornamentation and decorative technique with sculptor and decorator Giuseppe Galea (1911-1993), with whom he struck a life-long friendship. At the time both artists were executing works of art to embellish the parish church of St. George, a stone's throw from where Joseph Sagona lived. Subsequently, he frequented the studio of renowned Maltese painter Prof. Joseph Briffa (1901-1987).

As early as 1960 Joseph Sagona was working in the field of sculpture and decoration at St. George's Basilica, Victoria and on his twentieth birthday was working on his first important commission: the entire decoration of the ceiling of the church of St James on Independence Square in Victoria, now unfortunately partly demolished and rebuilt. Since then he has been active for ecclesiastical and private patrons, both as a painter and as a decorator.

His contribution to local art is considerable, especially in the ecclesiastical scene, for which he has worked mainly as a decorator and as a designer of church furniture, liturgical *objets d'art*, and external decoration. In Gozo his works can be admired in various churches such as the Gozo Cathedral and St. George's Basilica in Victoria, the parish churches of Xaghra, Nadur, Fontana, San Lawrenz, Kercem and others.



His prolific ornamental designs have been executed in wood, silver and embroidery. Sagona's stuccoes decorate the interiors of many private houses and villas. He has participated in various collective exhibitions and his works are to be found in collections in the Maltese Islands and abroad.

Recently, in April, at the Exhibition Hall of the Gozo Ministry the artist held a retrospective solo exhibition which brought together for the first time a large array of designs, *bozzetti*, models and casts for the various projects and works which he produced since 1962 to this day. The exhibition was indeed a celebration of a forty-year-long career dedicated to art, paying tribute to an artist endowed with a creative energy. This exhibition was

only the second of its type by the artist since his other only one-man show was put up in 1966. Considering the artistic and cultural isolation of the island of Gozo in those times, that was a truly singular event, which paved the way for later exhibitions of works of art by other artists.

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