

REPRESENTING MALTA

Teresa Sciberras will be Malta's representative for the visual arts in this year's Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean. The festival, which will be held in Skopje, Macedonia, in September, is a week long event featuring dancers, actors, musicians and writers.

JO ANN VASSALLO words

'IT FEELS GOOD TO BE representing Malta,' Teresa says to Sky Life. 'It's also a chance to participate in a week-long international festival. I think these events are indispensable for creating cultural links and acting as a stimulus for artists.'

Teresa began her artistic career by taking lessons with the late Olaug Vethal. She then attended a school in Florence before graduating with first class honours from Gray's School of Art, in Aberdeen, Scotland.

The young artist's degree show revolved around the central motif of the walled city. 'This is a double-edged sword of protection and confinement, security and threat, an idea which was and still is relevant to me,' says Teresa. 'Walls fascinate me, not only as a concept, but also as a surface. I've treated many of my recent paintings as walls, so many

of them have multi-layered histories. During my final year I had also done quite a bit of research into the writings of Jacques Derrida and theories of deconstruction, and I'm still drawing on these influences. One aspect of this is my interest in including text within my work, something I'm still playing with. I'm interested in visual translations of thoughts or ideas, the whole idea of image-making, and am constantly drawn to diagrams, maps, architectural plans,

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even medieval religious imagery, and I think that all of these have made their mark on my work. At the moment, I've moved on to focus on the idea of the walled garden. Something that stuck in my head and keeps coming back to me now is that famous line from Voltaire's *Candide*: "il faut cultiver notre jardin". The paintings I did for the Skopje Biennial are based on that.'

Teresa teaches English as a foreign language when she's



Above Top: An Aesthetic State of Categorical Indecision
Above Bottom: Inferno – oil and collage on canvas



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not painting. 'People always ask me why I don't teach art instead, but I find the gap between teaching language and painting refreshing. I get to use the other side of my brain for a while, the analytical side. It helps to keep a balance,' she explains. 'One day, I hope to be able to live from my work, but at the moment, that's just not possible.'

Since exhibiting in Aberdeen in 2006 Teresa has taken part in many collective exhibitions, including the first edition of the Royal Scottish Academy's 'New Contemporaries', which took place in February this year. At the end of the year she has collective exhibitions in Malta and Scotland. 'I intend to have a solo show soon, but I want to plan it properly, find the right venue, and give myself enough time to do a decent job. The beginning of 2010 is my target.'

