

Renaissance of remember

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Beauty, according to the great Renaissance humanist Leon Battista Alberti (1404-72) is "the adjustment of all parts proportionately so that one cannot add or subtract or change without impairing the harmony of the whole". One important aspect to being a good artist is to know "when to stop".

Having quoted Alberti, I cannot help but include this other citation: "We must always take from nature what we paint and always choose the most beautiful things."

An interest in architecture is evident on viewing the works in the beautifully-curated ongoing exhibition 'Little White Lies' by Teresa Sciberras.

A relationship between Sciberras's works and architecture is made clear in the beautifully thought out and produced exhibition catalogue that accompanies this exhibition.

The quotations from Alberti help us understand how Renaissance artists and architects reasoned when it came to the creation of the great art they produced. Alberti is still as valid today as he was to the Renaissance.

And the Renaissance is, in fact, one of Sciberras's influences,

as revealed in the exhibition publication.

What is interesting about Sciberras is the way she absorbs information around her, be it visual or non-visual, and the way she transforms it using her vast imagination to produce her artistic creations.

You will understand what I mean only by visiting the exhibition. Her oil on panel works vary in size, from 30 x 40 cm to works that are over 1.5m in size.

Although given generic titles, a series of 10 works fall under the exhibition title 'Little White Lies' that give the exhibition an element of mischievous charm.

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The panel is used as a support for all of Sciberras's new creations, which are left unprimed, and raw. The revealed panel lends itself well to the works. Moreover, it provides a contrast to the composition it carries; the panel's weight contrasts effectively to the lightness of the floating imaginative compositions it displays. The use of wood rather than canvas also harks back to the

supports used for paintings in the Early Renaissance.

The compositions hover in the centre of the panel and are rather complex. They take your eye on a wandering expedition examining the several parts that make it up.

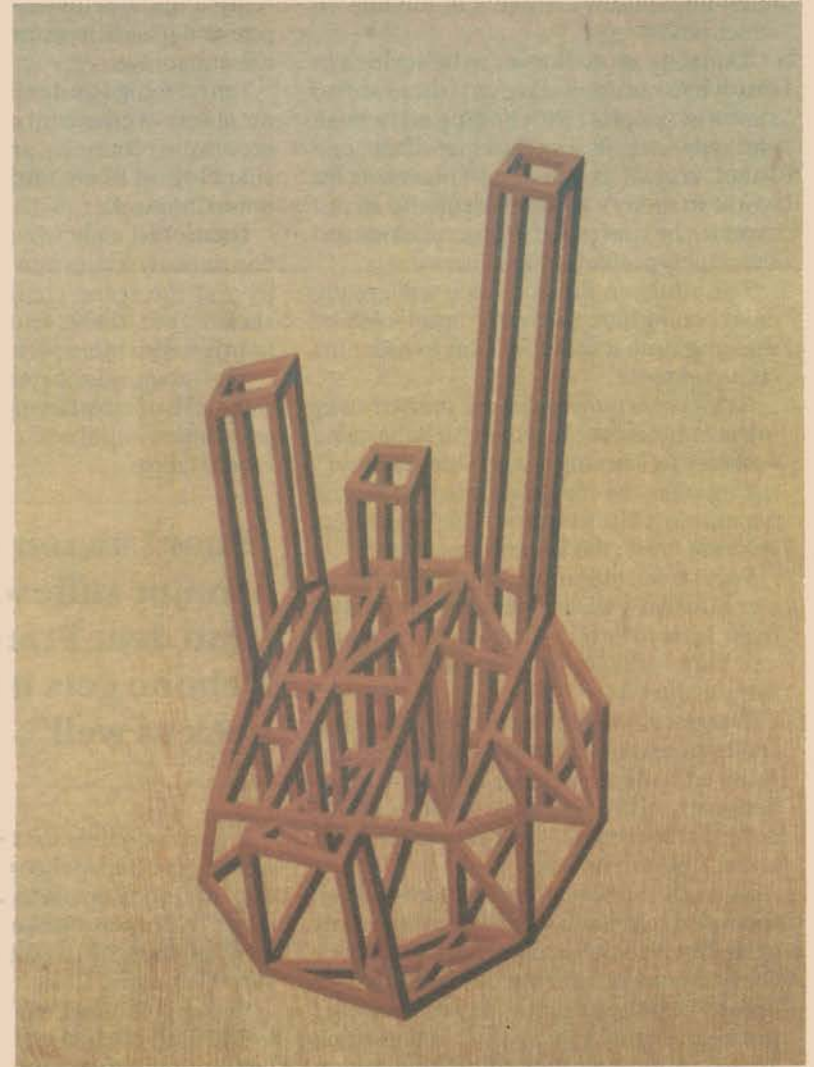
Familiar aspects do feature, albeit often times distorted, but the rest is part of a world we are asked to explore, a world that Sciberras conjures up in her mind and manages to bring it to life.

They are indeed extremely complex, and portrayed with a miniaturist's controlled and sure hand, and an eye for meticulous detail, and utilising good mathematical perspective. They reveal the young artist as a conscientious perfectionist that augurs well for her future career.

There is an element of thought that characterises these compositions, but they are also fun to look at and interesting, to say the least.

Sciberras's ongoing solo exhibition is a feather in her cap, and one I've been looking forward to, for although Sciberras has exhibited locally before, this really launches her career and establishes her as an artist in the local art scene.

Teresa Sciberras's exhibition 'Little White Lies' is open in the Contemporary Room of the National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta until January 21.



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