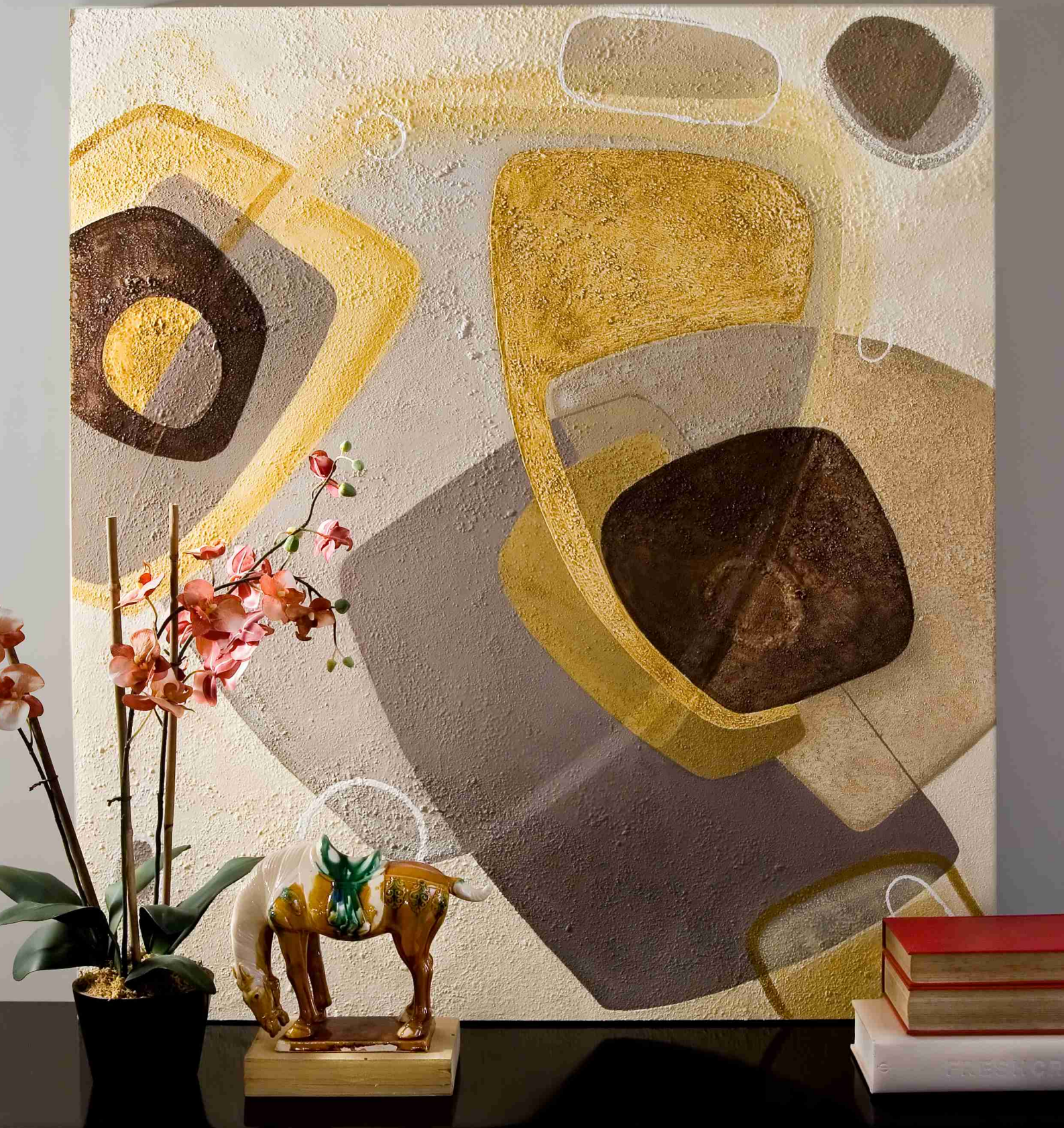


"everything the man thinks about is immediately reproduced in a form,  
For it is the matter of this world the forms of our thoughts consist of,  
It is the medium our mentality manifests itself in..." (The Cosmic Legends of the Orient, 1992)



# art for contemporary living

by Stephen Azzopardi

There is a widespread notion that contemporary art is difficult to understand and best left in the hands of the experts. History shows that all new forms of expressions were initially received with criticism and rejection only to be proved worthy of their status with the passage of time.

Take for example the emergence of the impressionists and their battle with the classical tradition. Their new vision brought about a change in how we perceive reality and the ordinary things around us. Contemporary art is nonetheless complex and sophisticated; however it can still offer meaning to the uninitiated.

Art today challenges us to question this reality and presses us to express our own views of what we see. Artists on the otherhand use materials and techniques that we use or encounter everyday and there is no limit to materials or methodology. Maria Lind curator of several contemporary exhibitions states that:

**“contemporary art is quintessentially cross-disciplinary; it is a huge sponge for everything from philosophy, sociology, science and religion to literature, theatre and music.”**

What has now become more significant is the dialogue between the artist and the public. With the use of all these different forms of expressions and mediums it has now become increasingly important for the

artist to explain the message behind their art, as well as the composition and aesthetic of the artwork. It is no wonder therefore that we now feel more compelled to embrace art in our lives. It is no longer art for the museums to be locked up and stored away. Or art for the few connoisseurs who know the meaning behind the painting. Art is becoming increasingly accessible for everyone and our homes can tell a lot about us, and our aesthetic choices. The more aesthetically conscious we become the more important it becomes to know the artists behind the works. That gives us knowledge and awareness to see things differently and make our lives more meaningful.

The featured artworks give a small glimpse of what contemporary art is all about. These are the special pieces which we are drawn to and which inspire us when we retreat to our sanctuary. Here abstract forms take up organic shapes. This is a cry for the loss of nature which we are experiencing everyday; where organic forms are being replaced by concrete buildings... Where round edges found in nature are taken over by straight lines. These paintings have a tactile quality which like nature draws on our sensory perception. One is compelled to touch the surface and remember that there is more than just plain stark walls. It is therefore a call to rethink our 'progress' and to ask whether we are still in time to do something about it.

It is the very nature of the artist to try and change the world around us, and to offer new possibilities of how to look at contemporary life. And what better way to do all this than by democratising art and getting the public to live in the here and now. All artists have a vision and one way of making contemporary art accessible is to do away with elitism and to create a seamless world with no differences. That is the goal with art today, when we start to realise that to produce something worthwhile it must be happening now. This means to live in contemporaneity and to let go of the past. Contemporary art is to live now and to be free.