

*Sensazioni dell'Anima*  
paul vella critien





## Sensazioni dell' Anima *An Explosive Force*

An explosive force, a dynamic energy, a burst of vivid extravagant colours, powerful and suggestive shapes and forms with a defined outline in evocative space are the basis of Paul Vella Critien's expression.

Paul's work emanates joy and pleasure. He loves life and his explicit hedonism emphasizes his vision of a world of overwhelming beauty. Although there is a hint of tension in his work his dynamics are well balanced and the explosive force is contained in unity. He sublimates conflict and suffering in his concept of fertile and germinating life though the struggle surfaces in his agonal colours, in his balanced dynamics of force and counter-force as in his 'Sensazione Astratta' series.

His recent ceramic sculpture of 'Bimbo' and 'Bimba' reveal this explicit hedonism: the great pleasure and joy the artist perceives in a child – its innocence, joy, pleasure, sense of adventure and blind faith in his parents.





The romantic flair in Paul comes to the fore in such expression full of sentiment and emotion. The pose of these figures is so extravagant, theatrical and baroque that exposes the passionate nature, warmth and forceful nature of this sensitive and sensible artist.

In 'Futura' Paul projects his love of woman, the basis of his inspired vision. It is his ideal of maternal instincts projected into a gilded future. He models the shape of her womb with great tenderness, delicacy, sensitivity and love. He regards such elliptical form and space as a sacred shrine, a tabernacle of love, a depositary for the male, vital seed that with time care and patience yields new life. How extraordinary this miracle is with attendant mystery and magic! It is as great as the analogous oyster and pearl. To protect and prevent its flesh from inflammation from an intrusive grain of sand the oyster secretes a kind of mucus. With time it transforms the grain of sand and the irritating pain into a wonderful magnificent pearl as woman transforms the seed into a split-image.

Paul does not only praise woman's maternal fecundity as he concurrently sings and evokes her mysterious, magical powers: erotic, lustful and seductive. Her potential to seduce, to charm and cast a spell is fabulous and legendary (rf. to 'Nudo' & 'Nudo - Ravenna, 1982). 'Woman' is mother earth and in her womb germinates life that sucks from

breasts nutritious milk that comforts satisfies and quenches thirst.

His formidable series of spheres are organic and belong to Plato's dictum that shapes are not merely relatively beautiful but are absolutely so. 'Sfera rossa sul blu' is superbly beautiful and its rotundity and spatial strength suggests Mars as seen from a powerful telescope not as desert but as a vibrant planet. 'Sfera blu' is about an immanent beauty. Its ultramarine blue echoes the emotion kindled by precious stones, evokes planet Earth as seen from outer space. 'Stravolgente' is the best way to describe it. In 'Colori dell'Anima' there is a burst of colour, emanating a song of joy, pleasure and beauty, a rare vibrant music.

In 'Gente' the artist is inspired by the social realism of Renato Guttuso (1912-27) while in 'Vergine', 'Madre Celeste' and 'Mother and Child' is felt an acute sense of humanism, a human element so strong in Paul's figurative expression. In public monuments such as 'Verso l'alto' and 'Colonna Mediterranea' Paul soars high into the air as if wanting to fly into the void on vertical columns that resemble Egyptian obelisks.

In Paul's childhood his grandfather Gianni Vella (1885-1977) became his mentor and tutor (1973-77). 'Morning Mist' and 'At Marfa' are works that pay homage to Paul's





grandfather as they show the inspiration and influence of his tutor. Paul studied ceramics (1974-77) locally under Gianni Bonnici (1932-) and Gabriel Caruana (1929-) forming part of the third generation of ceramists during the 20th century. In 1978 Paul was awarded a five-year scholarship by the Italian Government.

He attended the 'Gaetano Ballardini, Istituto Statale d'Arte per la Ceramica' (1978-82), Faenza and the 'Accademia di Belle Arti' (1979-82) in Ravenna. He specialized in Fine Art & Ceramics and graduated B.A. Ceramics and M.A. Fine Art. The best ceramists and sculptors at the time: Guido Mariani (1950-), Angelo Biancini (191-88), Mario Tassinari (19142-), Fulvio Ravaioli (1926-83) and C. Zauli (1952-1991) some of them international in status were some of his masters and tutors. Paul also obtained the diploma in Ceramics Restoration.

Paul's studies are based on his apprenticeship years with his grandfather the well known painter Gianni Vella, his local studies with the best ceramists in Malta and his university and post-graduate studies in Italy, in Faenza and Ravenna internationally famous for specialized higher studies in ceramics. This academic background is the basis of works, the result of technique and talent such as his 'Self-portrait' (Faenza 1980), 'Nudo' (Ravenna 1982), 'After Mantegna' (Faenza 1981) and 'Crocifisso' (Faenza 1980).

There is in Paul a persistent creative urge, a constant and insistent attempt to turn matter into pure energy. Ceramics and firing at high temperatures is an excellent choice to achieve this aim. His works are marked by an irresistible dynamic force, an explosive energy, a passionate and emotional nature, a hedonism at once prodigal and extravagant and bold, strong and powerful colours and glazes that melting temperatures in his kiln mould and crystallize into a personal romantic expression so exceptional and unique.

**E. V. Borg**  
*05. 09.2010*



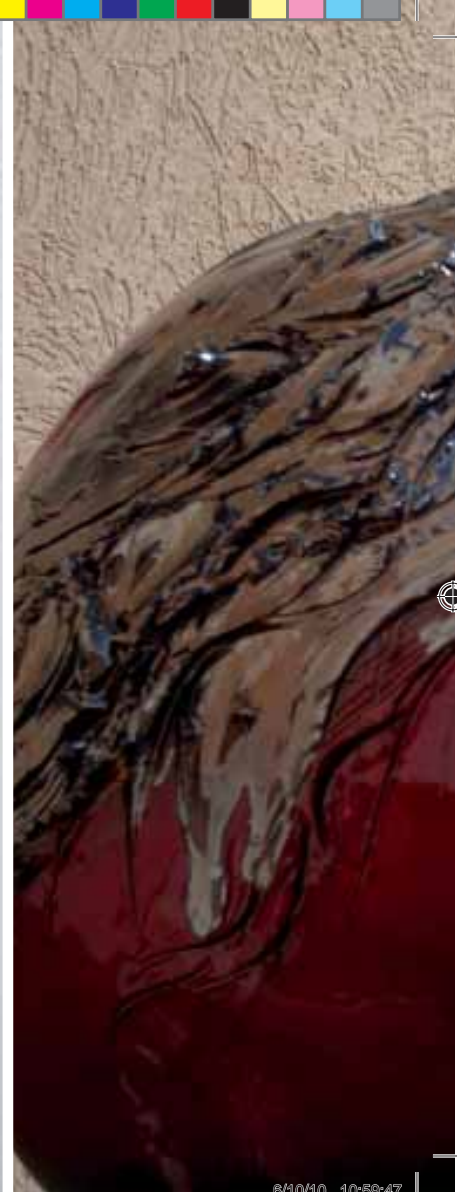
























## Public Monuments:

- 1987  
Centro dell'Universo, 2.5m, Sunshine, Victoria,  
Australia
- 1989  
Curve in Bianco, Dozza, 3.5 x 3.5 m, Bologna,  
Italia
- 1999  
From Generation to Generation, 250cm, Giovanni  
Curmi Higher Secondary School, Naxxar, Malta
- 2000  
Every Day Better, 2.5, St. Monica School, Gżira,  
Malta
- 2002  
Sfera, 60cm diameter, Giovanni Curmi Higher  
Secondary School, Naxxar, Malta
- 2002  
Verso l'Alto, 5m, San Gwann, Malta
- 2006  
Colonna Mediterranea, 3.5m, Luqa, Malta
- 2008  
Maternità, 2m, front garden, Tigne, Sliema, Malta
- 2011  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Monument, 4m, Santa Lucia, Malta  
Council to be inaugurated in 2011





## Personal Exhibitions Abroad:

- 1984 Woy Woy Art Centre, new South Wales, Australia
- 1987 National Gallery, Victoria, Australia
- 1989 Sunshine Arts Council, Victoria, Australia
- 1998 Logetta Del Trentanove, Faenza, Italy
- 2001 Novotel Hotel, Hamburg, Germany
- 2005 Dai Tre Amici, Via della Rotonda, Pantheon, Rome







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**Cover:** (inside front) Sfera Spazziale  
**Cover:** (inside back) Colori dell' Anima  
**Title Page:** Rosso sul Blu



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