

LARGER THAN LIFE I

9 slide projectors, 7m.high motorized pendulum, TV monitor, VHS video, 24 battery torches, candles, light.

Re-Interpreting Preti, Curated by Dominic Cutajar, Adrian Bartolo and Theresa M. Vella.

Organised by the National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta, Malta.

St.James Cavalier, Valletta, Malta, 1999.

LARGER THAN LIFE II

4m.high motorized pendulum, monitor, video projector, 2 VHS players.

Larger than Life II, Curated by Adrian Bartolo.

48th Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy, 1999.



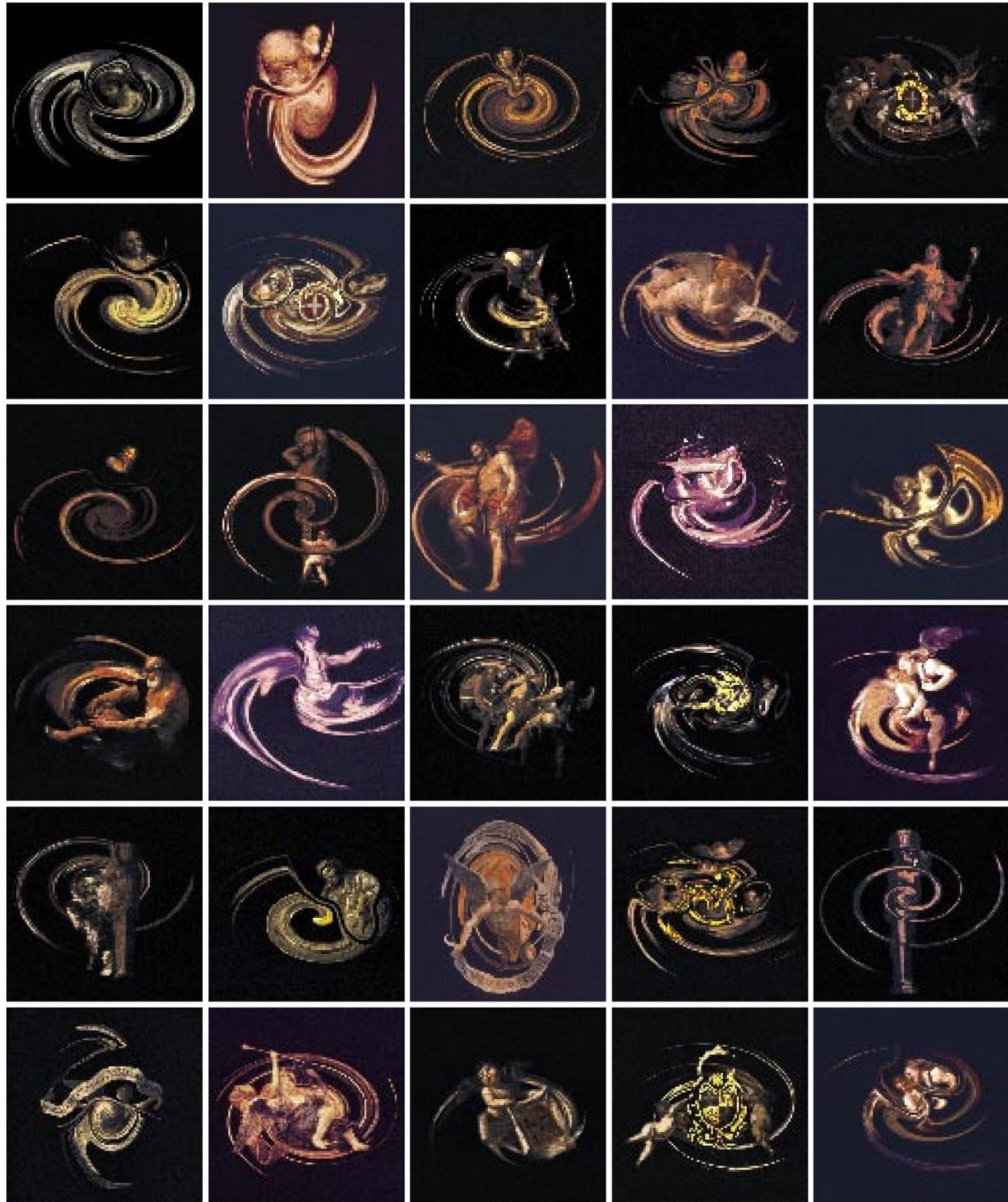


The feeling is of sumptuous baroque elation which embraces the sense of sight and hearing, but which more than anything else taps directly into the inner spirit. Even as one is firmly seated on one of the two chairs provided, anxious to assimilate as much as possible of the images and sound around, the feeling of being swept off one's feet into the visual vortex on the wall attains sublime moments. The entire manifestation eclipses the details in a way that the concept behind the realisation of this astounding feat remains. Whether in the reverential silence of the halls, empty except for the light effects, or in the climax to be experienced in the light and sound celebration in the last room, the sentiments converge towards the vision of the sacred which Attard conceived, and managed to invest, in his reinterpretation of Mattia Preti through the spaces at his disposal.

EMMANUEL FIORENTINO



Video stills of typical Maltese wedding shown on TV monitor.



Selection of slide projected images onto the barrel vaulted ceiling.





Against the austere, arched walls of St. James Cavalier, a sixteenth century military stronghold, the artist projected images from Mattia Preti, an exuberant Baroque painter who spent the last forty years of his life in Malta. Attard's Baroque celebration reflects Malta's aesthetic preference for an elaborate style that connects space and time. Cutting across time frames, the Baroque has left an indelible mark on Malta's society and its imagination. The time-passage motif is accentuated by Attard's creation of 'routes', transforming the severe vaults of the fortress building into ornate expressions responding to Baroque theatricality. At the end of the pathway, the artist installs a pendulum, a metaphor of abstract time that also "contradicts" spatial distance: the Baroque perception in Malta has no time-frames and it survives in the 21st century in religious ceremonial, village feasts, heavily decorated dwellings and band music. Moreover, on the pendulum-pan, Attard screens sequences from a Maltese wedding, an elaborate, flamboyant expression of popular culture that provides a contemporary link to the high Baroque fashion that dominated Malta and its islanders since the seventeenth century.

MARIO AZZOPARDI





LARGER THAN LIFE II

4m.high motorized pendulum, monitor, video projector, 2 VHS players.

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48th Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy, 1999.



Video Larger than Life made from slides. 5 minutes, 23 seconds.

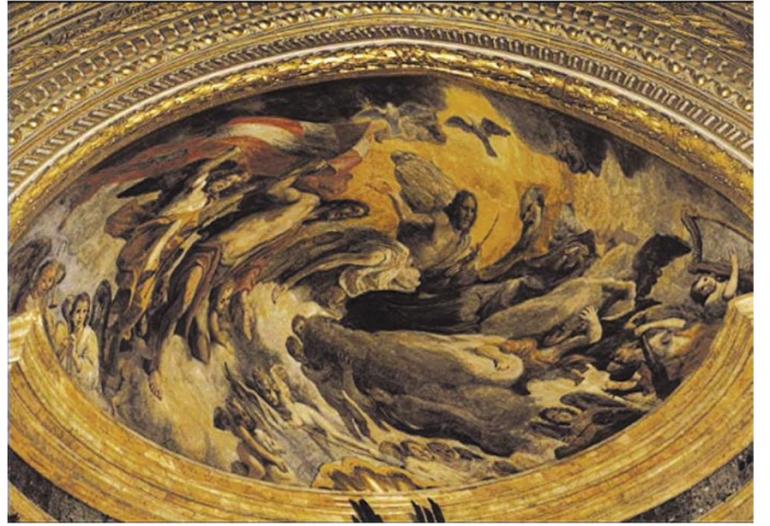
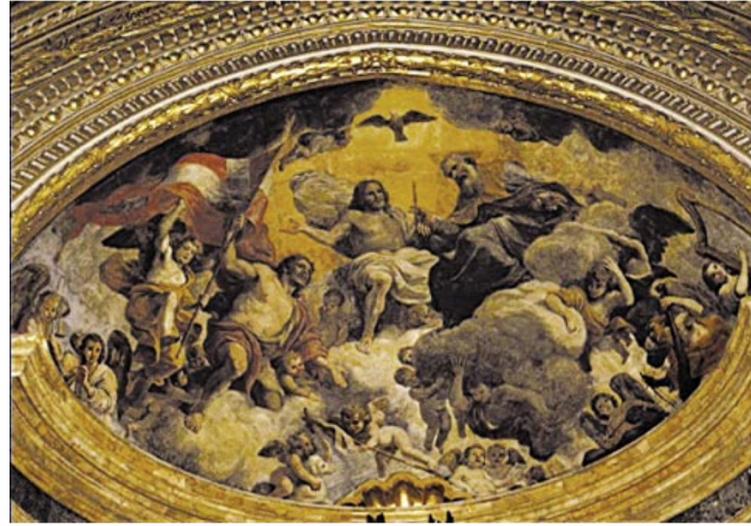
Photography and slides by Jon Wrigley, Zone Five Ltd., San Gwann, Malta.

Motorized 7 metre high pendulum by Atlas Engineering Ltd, Corradino Industrial Estate, Malta

Post production of video by Lightbox Ltd, Gwardamangia, Malta.

Projected as part of installation Larger than Life II

Funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, Malta.



Video Stills of *Larger than Life*



Norbert Attard's installation is engagingly concerned with what the academia refers to as the concept of 'simultaneous times'. On a swinging pendulum sits a monitor which televises a past installation put up by the artist. In itself, the subject-matter of the installation piece being documented was inspired by the works of Mattia Preti (1613-99) a seventeenth-century Neapolitan painter sojourning in Malta for the last forty years of his life, whose tercentenary anniversary of his death is being celebrated this year. That installation drew upon the concept of reinterpreting the past, on giving a new sense and dimension to the baroque artist by transporting him, as if by a magical performance, to our age. The plurality of times represented in the present installation succeeds in making the spectator feel a kind of lack of reality. By its very nature, the pendulum is a symbol of the empirical objectivity of time, but its display in darkness reduces this time to a mere illusion.

ADRIAN BARTOLO

Curator, 48th Venice Biennale catalogue, 1999.



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