
Speech delivered by H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta at the Opening of the Exhibition of Works by Picasso and Miro – “The Flesh and the Spirit”, at the Grandmaster’s Palace in Valletta – 6th April 2018

[Salutations]

Dear friends.

It is my pleasure to officially open this exhibition of artworks by two world renowned artists, Picasso and Miro.

This event would not have been possible without the initiative of the Fundacion MAPFRE, in collaboration with Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, and the tireless efforts of the team at my Office.

This exhibition of artworks by Picasso and Miro is a truly historical occasion for Malta, and a highlight of Valletta’s ongoing term as European Capital of Culture for 2018.

I am reminded of some words from Picasso, which I wish to share with you today. Picasso said;

“I don’t believe in accidents, there are only encounters in history.”

This exhibition has created a historical and inspiring encounter between the works of Miro and Picasso, here in Malta, and also, among all the visitors who shall visit the Grandmaster’s Palace to experience their art.

Picasso and Miro are both Spanish artists whose work is rooted in the distinctive character and the special nature of our Euro-Mediterranean Region.

Their work is a celebration of the spirit and the soul of our region of our Mediterranean diversity and our unique historical and cultural contribution to world heritage.

This celebration of Mediterranean diversity is also reflected in Malta’s place within the region. Malta has always been a bridge between continents and cultures, in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea.

As part of the ongoing “Picasso-Mediterranee” project, which includes the participation of over sixty cultural institutions, this exhibition is also sending a strong message of connection, through the Arts.

Furthermore, it is an example of the cultural diplomacy that underpins our efforts to nurture a united European identity, which transcends our differences and brings us together, to share one international language of beauty, unity, and creativity.

It is for this reason that events such as this exhibition are so important.

They are a powerful reminder, that the underlying importance of culture is to strengthen friendships across borders, and to bring us all together in celebration of our diversity.

When we celebrate our diversity, we will make a sustainable investment in essential strategies for inclusion, for peace, and for solidarity, within our communities, our societies, and across our countries.

On concluding, let me once again congratulate all the participants who have made this exhibition possible. Thanks to the Fundacion MAPFRE, the Fondazzjoni Patrimonju Malti, and the dedicated team at my Office, we will be able to share this experience with the many thousands of visitors, who will visit Valletta during its term as European Capital of Culture.

I believe that our cultures and our identities, which are intrinsically part of who we are, can be powerful catalysts of connection.

I would like to encourage everyone to use this experience of cultural diplomacy to share and promote a message of respect, solidarity, and peace.