

Event: 'Men from Mars' delivered by Dennis Sharp

Internationally Acclaimed UK Architect and Critic to Deliver Talk Entitled 'Men from MARS'

Inter-War England: In 1934 the British writer J.B. Priestly identified in his book 'The English Journey' three different faces of this period, the first, he wrote, was 'the Old England, the country of the cathedrals and ministers and manor houses and inns', the second, he said, was 'the nineteenth-century England, the industrial England of coal, iron, steel, cotton, wool, railways; of thousands of rows of little houses all alike, sham Gothic churches, square-faced chapels, Town Halls...' and the third and most valid in this context he defined as 'the new post-war England, belonging far more to the age itself than to this particular island... the England of arterial and by-pass roads, of filling stations and factories that look like exhibition buildings, of giant cinemas and dance-halls and cafes, bungalows with tiny garages, cocktail bars, Woolworths, motor-coaches, wireless, hiking, factory girls looking like actresses, greyhound racing and dirt tracks, swimming pools, and everything given away for cigarette coupons.'

This inter-war period is precisely the setting in which the new cubic modern architecture was introduced in the UK – the time of New Zealanders Amyas Connell and Basil Ward, and Englishman Colin Lucas – resulting in the production of sensational houses, flats and film studios. In celebration of World Architecture Day which this year falls on the 3rd of October, internationally acclaimed UK architect, writer and critic Dennis Sharp will be in Malta to address the public on the contributions to modern architecture in the UK of these three sensational men, the founders of the MARS (Modern Architectural Research) group, and the relevance of this to us today. World Architecture Day has been celebrated since 1985 and its main aim is to celebrate, through its Member Sections, the quality of architecture and town planning. The lecture to be delivered by Professor Sharp is only one of a series of events being organised by the KTP (Kamra Tal-Periti) and saces (Society of Architecture and Civil Engineering Students) as part of *Time for Architecture*, which runs until the 16th of September and in which the general public is encouraged to participate. Professor Sharp is the founder of a busy international practice in London & Hertford. He is former Vice President of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) and is well known for his practice's work on twentieth century listed buildings and exhibitions. He is author of *Twentieth Century Architecture: A Visual History* (2002).

'Men from MARS', a fully illustrated lecture, will serve to explore the role that Connell, Ward and Lucas had to play in the shaping of present-day UK, and should serve to remind us of Malta's own modern architectural heritage, an innovative topic written about by Dr. Conrad Thake and Dr. Quentin Hughes in '*Malta - War and Peace, an Architectural Chronicle 1800-2000*'. This book, the follow-up of '*Malta, the Baroque Island*' written by the same authors, takes up the story of our more recent architectural heritage, bringing its history up to the millennium in the form of a colourful gazetteer. It would be interesting to parallel the UK's modern period described by Sharp with the architectural happenings in Malta at the time, as documented by Thake and Hughes, given the island's strong and in some respects indissoluble ties with the UK.

Professor Sharp will be delivering this much anticipated lecture entitled '*Men from MARS*' on the 5th of October at Capua Palace.

Other events in *Time for Architecture* during October include a Projects Exhibition at Auberge d'Italie running until the 7th; the launch of '*Malta – War and Peace, An Architectural Chronicle 1800 – 2000*', being held at Mediterranean Conference Centre on the 6th; a three-day conference entitled 'the Founding Myths of Architecture' organised by the local architectural firm AP and the French organisation Rencontres Orient-Occident, being held at the Archeology Museum from the 7th to the 9th; and the annual SACES workshop. These events come at a time when awareness for quality in the built environment is rising, and finally architecture seems to be finding its space in the national agenda. Furthermore, such activities, presented in a manner that will appeal to the general public and people in the architectural sphere alike, are set to instigate in us an appreciation of architecture, and the recognition that it does have an influential bearing on our daily lives.