Dario Fo in Alcatraz

A production of Dario Fo works by Giuseppe Schembri Bonaci.

Dario Fo works reinterpretred through *għana*.

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spiritual identity within the parameters of humankind.

Considering that Fo is an atheist, it might be a little surprising to see that his exhibition will be in relation to the Catholic friar St Francis.

"Dario's works are all spiritual in the sense that spirituality refers to the relationship man has with his own existence and to the way this is manifested in his actions," says Giuseppe.

"The works to be exhibited show biblical scenes and the 'lives' of St Francis. The saint occupies a special place in all of Dario's philosophy." Fo has likened St Francis' way of eulogising to techniques used by members of the aforementioned *jongleurs*.

"Of *jongleurs*," Fo has said, "Francis absolutely knew the technique, the craft and the rules. He didn't hold sermons in the conventional sense. Indeed, he refused to perform the sermon in that way. We also know that he sang his words in his sermons, arousing festive emotions."

He may be a jester and an atheist, yet his ability to communicate and connect with people all over the world finds a similarity in St Francis' methods. Just don't forget his enduring radicalism.

"The overreaching goals of the *biennale*, besides the obvious artistic exchange, is to provide a reply or an alternative to all the commercial and consumer-oriented *biennali* around the world.

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"Thus, Dario's philosophy and participation greatly enriches the artistic character of the event. It also puts the biennale in quite an important and, even, beautiful niche of the European and international art scene.

"We have over 100 artists participating in the event with some of them directly participating in the organisation of it and Dario is enthusiastic about this, apart from being extremely enthusiastic to come to Malta," Giuseppe says.

The modern jester who has lived to see the wars of nations and conducted his own battles with governments and censorship – all while studiously looking to the past for methods of artistic expression, criticism, and humour – will be able to share his ideals with us in our own context. And as he leaps and pirouettes in Mdina, playing the fool do not overlook the message he is hiding in his humour.

The Mdina Cathedral Contemporary Art Biennale *takes place in various locations in Mdina between November 3 and January 7.*