MCAST

25 YEARS SHAPING SUCCESS

25 YEARS OF

SUCCESS STORIES

MCAST LINK



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Editorial

Caroline Balzan

Celebrating 25 Years of MCAST Success Stories

When MCAST opened its doors in 2001, it was founded on the idea that education should prepare people not only for examinations, but for life, work and the industries of tomorrow.

Twenty-five years later, the stories of its graduates tell the measure of that success. As featured in this special edition of the magazine, the individuals come from different generations, industries and walks of life. They are designers, engineers, entrepreneurs, artists, educators, technologists, public servants, creatives and business leaders. Their careers span Malta and the world. Yet despite their varied journeys, the common thread that connects them all is that MCAST provided the foundation upon which they built their futures.

Some arrived at MCAST with a clear vision of where they wanted to go. Others came searching for direction. Many describe themselves as practical learners who found their strengths through hands-on experience, industry placements and vocational education. MCAST became the turning point that gave them confidence and passion.

Students who learned programming in the early days of the internet now lead international technology companies. Apprentices who first entered workshops, salons and laboratories as teenagers have become respected professionals, business owners and educators in their own right.

The impact of MCAST extends far beyond technical knowledge. Again and again, graduates speak about mentorship, friendships and networks that have endured long after graduation. They recall lecturers who challenged them, believed in them and pushed them beyond what they thought possible. They remember opportunities to travel, work abroad, engage with industry and develop the confidence to take risks.

Twenty-five years after its founding, MCAST's greatest achievement is not the number of programmes it offers or the qualifications it awards. It is the people whose lives it has helped shape.

These are their stories. And together, they tell the story of MCAST.





Message from the Principal and CEO

Mr Stephen Vella

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of MCAST, it gives me great pleasure to introduce this special edition of MCASTlink, dedicated to the success stories of our graduates.

Over the past twenty-five years, MCAST has grown into Malta's leading institution for vocational education, equipping thousands of students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to excel in their chosen fields. While buildings, programmes and facilities are important measures of growth, the true success of MCAST is reflected in the achievements of our alumni.

The stories featured in this publication showcase graduates who have gone on to make a meaningful contribution to their professions, communities and industries. They are entrepreneurs, innovators, educators, healthcare professionals, artists, technicians, engineers and leaders.

Our anniversary year has been an important moment of reflection and renewal. During 2026, we launched the MCAST Strategy 2030, which will guide the institution through the next phase of its development, ensuring that we continue to respond to the changing needs of learners, industry and society. We also marked this milestone with a special gathering bringing together staff, former staff, industry partners and friends of the College, celebrating the community that has shaped MCAST since its foundation. The publication of our commemorative coffee-table book has further allowed us to document and preserve the remarkable journey of the College over the past quarter century.

Another significant development this year has been the establishment of the MCAST Alumni Network. This initiative strengthens the lifelong relationship between the College and its graduates, creating new opportunities for engagement, mentoring, collaboration and professional growth. Our alumni are among our greatest ambassadors, and this network will ensure that their knowledge and experiences continue to inspire future generations of MCAST students.

As I read the stories within these pages, I am reminded that success is not measured solely by professional accomplishments. It is also reflected in resilience, creativity, commitment and the determination to make a positive difference. These qualities have long defined the MCAST community and remain at the heart of everything we do.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to our staff, students, alumni and industry partners who have contributed to the success of MCAST over the past twenty-five years.

To the alumni featured in this edition, and to the thousands of graduates who proudly form part of the wider MCAST family, thank you for sharing your journeys with us. Your achievements represent the living legacy of our College and provide inspiration for those who will follow in your footsteps.



MCAST ALUMNI NETWORK

BEHIND EVERY CODE THERE'S A STORY

MCAST

25 YEARS SHAPING SUCCESS

2002

Gabriel Bajada

Founder & Creative — MOOSE DESIGN STUDIO

I have been drawing and making things for as long as I can remember, so studying art and design was never really a question. I enrolled at the MCAST Institute for Art and Design, as it was called back then, and graduated in 2002.

MCAST gave me my skills, but it also gave me my people. I met classmates who cared about design as much as I did, and many of them are still close friends. Over the years we have sent each other work, advice and the odd rescue call at deadline time.

The same goes for the lecturers. Several of them are still in my life, and I still go to them when I need a second opinion. What they taught me about design principles is what I fall back on whenever a project gets difficult.

The school also pushed us to learn by doing. I took an apprenticeship at a publishing company and there I fell for editorial design. After graduating I went straight into print, working on logos, branding, advertising campaigns and editorial layouts.

Then digital arrived and the work changed. I changed with it, and went on to work with some of Malta's top marketing agencies on major accounts. In 2017 I started Moose, my own studio.

Moose is not a traditional agency. It is a small group of designers, marketers and web developers who work as one team. Being small is the point: clients deal directly with the people doing the work, and we can adapt quickly instead of passing things up a chain. Many of those clients have stayed with us for years.

I owe a lot to MCAST. It gave me the technical grounding and the network that my career still rests on.





2003

Keith Demicoli

Broadcaster, Communications Strategist & Professional Moderator

It was a Friday in late 2003 and I had until Monday to make a decision that would change my life. I was 21, a newly qualified computing graduate who had just been offered a well-paid job in IT. Exactly what I had spent the previous two years working towards. There was just one catch though. I would have to give up my part-time work as a sports journalist. To understand why that decision mattered so much, we need to go back to 2001.

MCAST had just opened its doors and Malta was embracing a digital future. Technology was transforming the workplace and a career in IT promised opportunity and financial security. For me, that security mattered. I had lost my father when I was nine and, growing up, money was not something we could take for granted.

So, with plenty of curiosity and probably very little understanding of what computing involved, I enrolled for a BTEC National Diploma in Computing at MCAST.

I still remember the excitement. Everything felt new. Our classrooms were equipped with computers and our lecturers brought a wonderful mix of academic knowledge and industry experience. Their enthusiasm was infectious.

Programming, however, was another story! I soon discovered that being fascinated by technology and writing code were two very different things.

Thankfully, I found my feet, particularly in networking and the practical subjects. The experience taught me to approach problems logically, persevere when things became challenging and remain open to learning.
But some of my fondest memories have little to do with computers.

There were around 40 of us, all excited about what the future might hold. We did not even have a dedicated canteen, so breakfast or lunch often meant a short walk or drive to a little bar nearby. Those simple moments created friendships that have lasted more than twenty-five years.

Some lecturers became friends too. Only recently, while hosting a cybersecurity conference, I bumped into one of them. Within minutes, we were reminiscing about our class. Many former classmates now run businesses or hold senior positions in various organisations.

One of our lecturers, Mr Conrad Vassallo, is now Director of MCAST's Institute of Information and Communication Technology. It is incredible to see how both the people and MCAST itself have grown.

When I graduated in 2003, I genuinely intended to work in IT. Although I had spent five years working as a part-timer in sports journalism, I never imagined broadcasting could become my full-time career.

Then came that Friday. After several interviews, an IT company offered me a full-time contract with an attractive salary. The conditions, however, meant leaving journalism behind. I went to MediaLink Communications to hand in my resignation. Instead, the CEO surprised me. He felt it would be a shame to lose someone who had already invested five years in journalism. Before I knew it, he was offering me a full-time position as a broadcast news journalist. Surprisingly, I had two job offers and two completely different futures. One weekend to decide. And there was something else. I had become a father just weeks earlier.

Suddenly, financial security was not merely about my own future. I had a tiny daughter depending on me. The IT job offered considerably more money. Journalism offered something I had loved for years, but with less financial certainty. By Monday, I had made my choice against the advice of my family and closest friends. I chose journalism.

That decision eventually took me to PBS in 2007 where I later became TVM's main news anchor for the flagship 8pm news for a decade. I also continued my education at the University of Malta completing a Bachelor of Arts in European Studies and a Master of Arts in European Politics, Economics and Law.

Today, my work spans broadcasting, strategic communications, storytelling and conference moderation.

Here is something I have come to appreciate with time. My MCAST education never really left me. The technical knowledge and problem-solving skills I gained proved invaluable in journalism, particularly when explaining complicated technology stories to audiences in simple language.

Even today, when moderating discussions about artificial intelligence, cybersecurity or digital transformation, I draw on that foundation.

Looking back, without MCAST, I might never have received that IT job offer. Without that offer, I might never have gone to resign from journalism. And without that conversation, who knows where my career might have taken me?

Funny how life works, isn't it?

If I could meet my 19-year-old self today, I would not tell him to choose differently. I would encourage him to stay curious, embrace unfamiliar challenges and never stop learning. Truth is that education is not simply about preparing for a particular job. It is about developing the skills, confidence and mindset to whatever life brings.

Sometimes the journey that seems to take us away from our dreams is the very journey that brings us closer to them.

2004

Marlon Grech

Chief Technology and Product Officer

In hindsight, MCAST was genuinely one of the most important turning points in my life. I was never particularly academic in the traditional sense. I could learn, but I was always far more interested in trying things out, building things, understanding how they worked, and learning through doing.

The idea of spending all my time memorising facts or sitting through purely theoretical lessons never really excited me. MCAST appealed to me because it felt different. It was practical, hands on and connected learning to the real world.

It was there that I discovered programming and that discovery changed everything.

At first, coding was simply fascinating. You could take an idea, sit in front of a computer, write something from scratch and make it work. There was an immediate sense of creativity and problem-solving in it. Programming was logical, but it was also imaginative. You were not just learning about technology; you were using it to create something useful.

That feeling quickly became a real passion. I spent more and more time exploring the world of software, websites and technology. The more I learned, the more I realised that this was an industry where curiosity, persistence and the willingness to experiment could take you a very long way.



One of the experiences I remember most vividly from MCAST was having the opportunity to spend a summer working in Dublin. It was an incredible opportunity, especially at that stage of my life. The web was still in its early days, and e-commerce was only beginning to become something businesses took seriously.

I was working on building a website and e-commerce functionality at a time when the idea of buying things online was still new to many people. Looking back now, it is easy to forget how different the world was. Today, digital experiences, online payments, and mobile commerce are part of everyday life. Back then, it felt like we were working at the edge of something that was only just beginning.

That experience showed me that technology was not just an academic subject or a hobby. It was global. It was moving fast. And it could create real opportunities.

My career started in the world of coding, and for a long time that was where I was happiest. I loved building products, solving hard problems and working with talented people to turn ideas into software. Coding has always remained one of my biggest passions, even as my career evolved.

Over time, though, I began moving beyond purely technical roles. I took on leadership responsibilities, worked more closely with customers and commercial teams, and learned how technology, product, people and business all need to come together to build something successful.

That was not always comfortable.

Moving from coding into leadership was a big shift. Moving into commercial conversations and learning how businesses grow was another. There were moments when I felt more comfortable going back to the code, where I knew exactly what I was doing. But each step outside that comfort zone taught me something new and gave me a broader perspective.

Eventually, that journey led me to start my own company. Building a company from the ground up was one of the most challenging and rewarding things I have ever done. It brought together everything I had learned: technology, product, customers, teams, resilience, and the importance of staying focused on solving real problems.

Eight years later, the company was sold to an international brand. Today, I serve as Chief Technology and Product Officer, continuing to work at the intersection of technology, product, innovation and business. It is a journey I could never have predicted when I first walked into MCAST.

But in many ways, the foundation was already there. MCAST gave me a place where practical learning was valued, where I could discover what I was good at, and where I could turn an interest into a passion.

My advice to young people is simple: do not settle when things become comfortable.

Comfort is nice, but growth usually happens when you challenge yourself. Take on the thing that feels slightly beyond you. Learn the skill you do not yet have. Put yourself in rooms where you are not the expert. I moved from coding to leadership to commercial roles, even though coding was always my natural comfort zone. Every move was difficult at first, but every move helped me grow.

Today, AI makes this more relevant than ever. It can amplify your creativity, learning, and impact, but it can also make it easy for you to become passive and let technology do the thinking for you. The choice is yours.

Use the tools. Learn fast. Build things. Stay curious. But stay in control of your own thinking, your own ambition and your own journey.



2005

Robert Cassar

Senior Information Systems Manager

For years, my ambitions were firmly anchored in architecture. Coming from a strong artistic background, designing physical spaces felt like my natural calling.

However, the traditional university curriculum demanded far more advanced mathematics and physics than creative intuition or design knowledge. When my MATSEC A-level results arrived, the disappointment was sharp. I had missed the strict entry thresholds. Suddenly, the structured future I had mapped out dissolved, leaving me at a crossroads where my only apparent options were to pivot completely or enter the job market unqualified.

It was entirely by chance that I discovered MCAST, which was then rolling out a brand new vocational ICT programme. It was an intensive two-year National Diploma admitting only a modest, pioneering cohort. Technology had never registered on my radar as a viable path, making my decision to apply a genuine leap of faith into uncharted territory. Securing an acceptance letter for the inaugural BTEC National Diploma in ICT brought both excitement and apprehension. Lacking any formal computer science background, I assumed I would be hopelessly behind from day one.

The reality on campus immediately shattered that expectation. The vocational model flipped traditional rote learning on its head, prioritizing immersive, project-driven training where solving actual problems took centre stage. This continuous assignment-based framework proved transformative for me. My academic hurdle had never been a lack of preparation, but the acute anxiety brought on by high-stakes examination halls.

Guided by accessible, dedicated lecturers who treated us like junior colleagues rather than passive students, the learning curve became exhilarating rather than intimidating.

The modular curriculum demystified the technology stack quickly. Year one established a solid bedrock of systems architecture, networking logic and programming principles, systematically levelling the playing field.

In our second year, when the time came to specialise between hardware infrastructure and software engineering, the choice was immediate. Software offered an intuitive digital canvas—the creative power to architect complex web platforms and enterprise applications from a blank screen.

Graduating from the National Diploma left no doubt about my next step. When MCAST unveiled its follow-up Higher National Diploma (HND), continuing for another two years was an easy decision. The HND retained the same dynamic structure, elevating foundational engineering concepts in the first year before pushing into deeper software architecture, database management and systems design in the second. Moreover, being part of an intimate, close-knit cohort created an environment of shared ambition, forging professional networks and lifelong friendships that endure to this day.

In retrospect, MCAST's winning formula was never about rigid entry filters, but its modern pedagogical philosophy. Rather than teaching abstract theory in an academic vacuum, the institution engaged industry stakeholders directly to design curricula aligned with real-world technical demands. We did not just graduate with theoretical credentials; we emerged as competent practitioners capable of delivering production-ready value on day one.

For me, that pragmatic bridge turned a sudden academic detour into a thriving, long-term career across international markets and top-tier organizations, laying the groundwork for the leadership and managerial role I hold today.

2005

Jonathan Abela

Co-Founder & Chief Technology Officer — TRISTRATUS

I enrolled at MCAST in 2002, when the College was barely a year old. People sometimes ask why I chose it, and the honest answer is that the electronics part was never in question. That was already what I loved. The deliberate choice was MCAST itself. Nothing else I looked at combined classroom teaching with practical, hands-on experience in quite the same way.

I joined the Electrical and Electronics Institute for a BTEC First Diploma in Electronics and stayed there for three years. Two of those years were spent on apprenticeship at DataStream, which at the time operated a large part of Malta's internet backbone and supplied connectivity to the ISPs that served everyone else. It later became part of GO.

Being the apprentice meant assisting whoever happened to need a pair of hands. I moved between tasks and departments depending on who needed help with a particular project. At the time, I thought of it as being juggled around. I had no idea how valuable that exposure would prove.

By the time I finished my studies, I already had two years of real work experience behind me, and I never had to look for a first job. The apprenticeship simply became one, and I stayed on for another three years.

The pattern that would shape the next two decades started there: learn something, apply it, work out why it does not work, and keep building from there.



In 2008, I moved to Kinetix IT Solutions, starting on the support desk and eventually running technical operations. I spent twelve years there. The work grew, the responsibilities changed, and somewhere along the way I collected a number of certifications, including Microsoft and Cisco, while also completing a Master's degree in IT from the University of Liverpool. I studied in the evenings between 2010 and 2012 while holding down a full-time job.

After that came a year at BMIT Technologies as Enterprise Solutions Manager, and in 2021 I left to co-found TriStratus, where I now serve as Chief Technology Officer.

That is the career on paper. It is not really the story.

The story is an afternoon in the electronics lab, more than twenty years ago, staring at a circuit that should work but does not. You try the clever answer first. It is not the clever answer. Eventually, you stop guessing and start eliminating possibilities one at a time, because that is the only method that respects the problem.

A large part of how I think came from the people who taught me. My tutors were not people who had known only academia. They had spent years in industry and came to MCAST to teach what they had actually done. There is a real difference between learning from a textbook and learning from somebody who has had to make things work in the real world.

Some of those relationships outlasted the course by many years. Later in my career, I found myself working alongside former tutors, this time as colleagues. That was a strange and satisfying full circle.

Then there is the circle I never saw coming. When my son finished his O Levels and came to me with the inevitable question "What should I do next?", I did not have to think very long. I told him to take the same road that had worked for me: learn the theory, but get as close as possible to the real thing while you are learning it. He chose MCAST too.

He graduated with an Advanced Diploma in IT and is now completing his Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Computer Systems and Networks, with graduation taking place this November.

There is something fitting about that happening as MCAST turns twenty-five. I was there when the College was barely getting started, and I could not have known where that decision would take me, or that a generation later I would watch my son make his own way through the same doors.

In the end, a career in technology is a long series of things that should work and sometimes do not. You learn to resist the temptation to guess, return to first principles, and keep eliminating possibilities until you understand what is really happening.

That is what I learned in those electronics labs more than twenty years ago.

The technology has changed beyond recognition since then. The method has not.

2005

Vanessa Debono

CC Site Support Manager

My journey at MCAST began over twenty years ago with a passion for the financial sector and a determination to build a successful career. Enrolling in the Certificate in Banking and Financial Services provided me with a solid foundation in financial management, banking operations, and professional practice. By bridging academic theory with real-world application, the programme equipped me with skills that I continue to rely on today.

When I first started my studies, I had a fairly traditional view of banking. Like many students, I imagined a career spent behind a desk in a local branch, processing transactions and opening accounts. I never envisioned that, two decades later, I would be leading teams across key operational areas of a major bank and helping shape the employee experience.

One of the programme's greatest strengths was its broad curriculum. From lending, securities and accounting to people management and organisational behaviour, the course exposed me to the many facets of the financial industry. This wider perspective helped me understand how different functions work together and highlighted the importance of strong operational standards within a successful organisation.



Armed with this knowledge, I began my career in a fast-paced contact centre environment, supporting customers with a wide range of financial needs. While the bank provided comprehensive on-the-job training, my studies at MCAST gave me a significant advantage. I understood not only what needed to be done, but also why it mattered, allowing me to develop confidence and expertise more quickly.

Over the years, my career progressed through a combination of hard work, continuous learning, and a willingness to embrace new challenges. After gaining experience on the front line, I moved into leadership, managing and mentoring a team of 14 agents. I later transitioned into Customer Due Diligence (CDD), a specialised area focused on regulatory compliance and risk management. Today, I manage teams across both Contact Centre and CDD operations, overseeing recruitment, onboarding, training, quality assurance, workforce planning, and employee engagement.

One particularly memorable moment came when I was representing the bank at a student career fair and met one of my former MCAST lecturers. Reconnecting with someone who had played such an important role in my education was incredibly rewarding. Standing alongside her while speaking to prospective students reminded me how many opportunities the financial sector offers beyond the traditional branch environment.

Looking back, MCAST gave me the foundation to enter the industry and the confidence to pursue opportunities as they arose. A career in finance, like life itself, is rarely a straight path. There will be challenges, setbacks and moments when opportunities do not arrive as quickly as you hope. However, perseverance, continuous development, and a positive mindset can make all the difference.

If I could leave students with one piece of advice, it would be this: never give up, actively seek constructive feedback, and continue striving for growth. The opportunities are there for those willing to learn, adapt and keep moving forward.



2006

Marco Parascandalo

Founder & Creative Director — PARASCANDALO

My journey with MCAST began with a passion for art, design and the need to create something that felt truly my own. Having studied art from a young age, continuing my education at MCAST felt like a natural step. It was there that I was able to develop my creativity further, explore different disciplines and complete my BTEC Diploma in Art and Design.

MCAST gave me more than a qualification. It gave me an environment where I could experiment, make mistakes, develop ideas and begin understanding what my own visual language could be. The combination of creative thinking and practical experience helped prepare me for an industry where having an idea is only the beginning. You also need to understand how to turn that idea into something real.

While still building my path as a designer, I launched PARASCANDALO in 2014. That same year, I presented my first collection, SKANDLU, at Malta Fashion Week. What started as a small independent project gradually developed into the brand it is today. Over the past twelve years, PARASCANDALO has continued to evolve alongside me. The brand has expanded from its early collections into womenswear, menswear, occasion pieces, accessories, handbags and bespoke design.

At its core, however, the philosophy has remained the same: creating pieces with a strong identity and encouraging people to express themselves without being afraid to stand out. Being Maltese has naturally played an important role in my work. I have always been interested in taking elements of our culture, language and everyday life and interpreting them through a contemporary perspective. Sometimes that connection is immediately visible through a Maltese phrase or reference, while at other times it is more subtle.

After twelve years of designing, I believe PARASCANDALO has developed its own visual language, one that continues to change from collection to collection while remaining recognisable. Experimentation is also an important part of my creative process. My recent collection, EKLISSI, explored the idea of an eclipse and what happens when contrasting elements come together to create something new. Fabrics were layered, distressed and hand embellished, transforming their original appearance and allowing the process itself to become part of the design.

Today, PARASCANDALO has its own boutique in Naxxar, an online store, and a growing range of products and collaborations. Through ARTIST X PARASCANDALO, I also work with other artists and creatives, giving their work another platform and transforming their ideas into wearable pieces and products. Supporting collaboration has become an important extension of what the brand represents.

In hindsight, one of the most important lessons I have learned is that a creative career is never a straight line. Building a brand requires creativity, but it also requires resilience, consistency, adaptability and the willingness to keep learning. To current MCAST students, my advice would be to use your time at the College to experiment and discover what makes your work different. Technical skills are important, but your individual point of view is what will eventually distinguish you. MCAST was part of the foundation of my creative journey.

Today, as Founder and Creative Director of PARASCANDALO, I continue to design, experiment and develop the brand while staying true to the same idea that has driven me from the beginning: Dare to Be Different.

2007

Chris Galea

Hairdresser

My journey in hairdressing began in 2003 at what was previously known as the School of Hairdressing which that same year had been incorporated into the newly established MCAST Institute of Community Services. From there I graduated in 2007 with both my City and Guilds and Journeyman qualifications.

At the time, the school was based in Sliema, and it became a place filled with unforgettable memories, lasting friendships and inspiring tutors whom I still hold in great respect today. Whenever I am invited back, it is always a pleasure, as MCAST will forever hold a very special place in both my life and my career.

During my years at the School of Hairdressing, I was introduced to many different aspects of the profession and developed skills that not only helped me succeed as a student but have continued to guide me throughout my career. The professionalism, dedication and support of the tutors gave me great confidence in my abilities and prepared me exceptionally well for the realities of the working world.

Some of my fondest memories from MCAST are the annual hair shows and marathons organised by the school. The marathons were not only rewarding experiences but also wonderful opportunities to work alongside friends, colleagues and industry professionals in support of meaningful causes. The annual shows encouraged every class to collaborate creatively in producing hair presentations, and I truly believe those experiences strengthened our teamwork, fostered new friendships and brought us closer together.



One of the highlights of my time at MCAST was being selected, together with three other students, to travel to Lincoln in the United Kingdom for a three-week placement. During this experience, we attended college classes while also working in a professional hair salon. It was an incredible opportunity that broadened my horizons and allowed me to grow both personally and professionally.

During the holiday periods, I also took the opportunity to further my education by attending specialised short courses at Vidal Sassoon in London and Wella in Germany. These experiences complemented my studies at MCAST and provided valuable exposure to international techniques and trends within the industry.

After graduating, I joined my family's hairdressing business full-time. Applying everything I had learned during my years of study and training, I gradually built a loyal clientele that I am extremely proud of today.

A year after graduating from MCAST, I took part in the local Wella Trend Vision competition, where I was awarded third place. This achievement gave me further confidence and encouraged me to continue developing my skills and creativity.

A few years later, I became actively involved in Malta's fashion industry, styling hair for a variety of fashion shows and professional photo shoots. This exciting chapter of my career led to five nominations at the Malta Fashion Awards, where I had the honour of winning the award on three occasions. I was also actively involved with the board representing hairdressers within the fashion industry, particularly during the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of my greatest passions within hairdressing is working backstage in theatre productions, including musicals, plays, and operas. I specialise in hairstyling and wigs for stage productions, and this aspect of the industry continues to inspire my creativity throughout the year. Collaborating with costume designers, set designers, make-up artists, performers, and production teams on large-scale performances, is something I find both rewarding and fulfilling.

For several years, I also served on the hairdressing examination board at Jobsplus alongside my former tutor, Mrs Spiteri, and Ms Meli, former Head of the School of Hairdressing and first Director of the MCAST Institute of Community Services. It was a privilege to contribute to the profession in this way, and it remains an experience of which I am particularly proud.

Over the years, I have had the privilege of returning to MCAST on various occasions. Whether through industry collaborations, events, or professional engagements, it is always wonderful to reconnect with familiar faces and revisit the place where my journey first began.

As MCAST celebrates its 25th anniversary, I look back with immense gratitude. The College provided me not only with the technical skills and qualifications needed to build a successful career, but also with the confidence, discipline, and opportunities that helped shape the professional I am today. The experiences, friendships, and values I gained during those formative years remain with me, and I will always be proud to have started my journey at MCAST.





2007

Carla Grima

Designer & Director

I graduated from MCAST in 2007, and reflecting on my journey, I realise just how pivotal my years at the College were in shaping the creative path I would eventually take.

I left school knowing that I wanted to continue my journey in a creative field, but I could not have imagined the amount of creative freedom I would experience at MCAST. It truly felt like a playground—a place where we were encouraged to experiment, question, critique and, most importantly, develop our own methods and styles.

Our projects took us far beyond traditional materials and techniques. We experimented with mixed media, collected discarded materials during visits to scrapyards, and created structures using glass, metal, wood and stone. We were constantly challenged to look at materials differently and to think beyond simply creating something recognisable. Instead, we were encouraged to invent, explore and find new ways of creating products with purpose.

MCAST became the foundation for my creative expression.

One of the areas that had a particularly strong impact on me was textiles. I quickly fell in love with the possibilities offered by texture, weaving my own fabrics and juxtaposing different materials to create wearable and functional pieces. It was an introduction that sparked a curiosity which continued to develop throughout my career.

Visiting exhibitions regularly as part of the course also opened my eyes to the importance of looking beyond the classroom. These visits encouraged me to become curious about the wider creative world and the different styles and approaches of artists and designers. I carried that curiosity with me wherever I travelled. Gradually, my focus shifted towards fashion, and I became fascinated by how patterns, shapes and individual components could come together to create a garment.

A large part of my time at MCAST was dedicated to developing sketchbooks, documenting ideas, exploring thought processes and experimenting through sampling. With hindsight, I realise that these exercises taught me something much bigger than how to develop a design. They taught me how to take an idea that existed only in my head and communicate, research and develop it into something tangible.

That way of thinking continued into my further studies in Fashion Innovation and Management, where I focused on design-led approaches and the use of technology in garment pattern cutting. During this time, I also discovered a new passion for textile printing. That interest eventually became the foundation of my own resortwear business, which I continue to operate from Malta today.

When I think about my time at MCAST, I do not simply remember the techniques I learned or the projects I completed. I remember the freedom to explore, the creative environment we shared with other design students, and the way we worked alongside one another. We constantly challenged and critiqued each other, pushing our ideas further and encouraging one another to create the most interesting projects we could.

I also remember being exposed to so many different materials, processes and ways of thinking, as well as the constant encouragement to push ourselves further and think outside the box. It was this combination of individual creativity and collaboration that made the experience so valuable.

MCAST was a pivotal period in my younger years. It gave me the space to allow my creativity to flourish without restriction, while introducing me to values that have stayed with me throughout my career: curiosity, research, experimentation and process.

Those foundations continue to influence the way I design and work today. What began as a period of exploration and experimentation at MCAST ultimately became the foundation for the creative career and business I have built since.



2008

Stiefnu De Battista

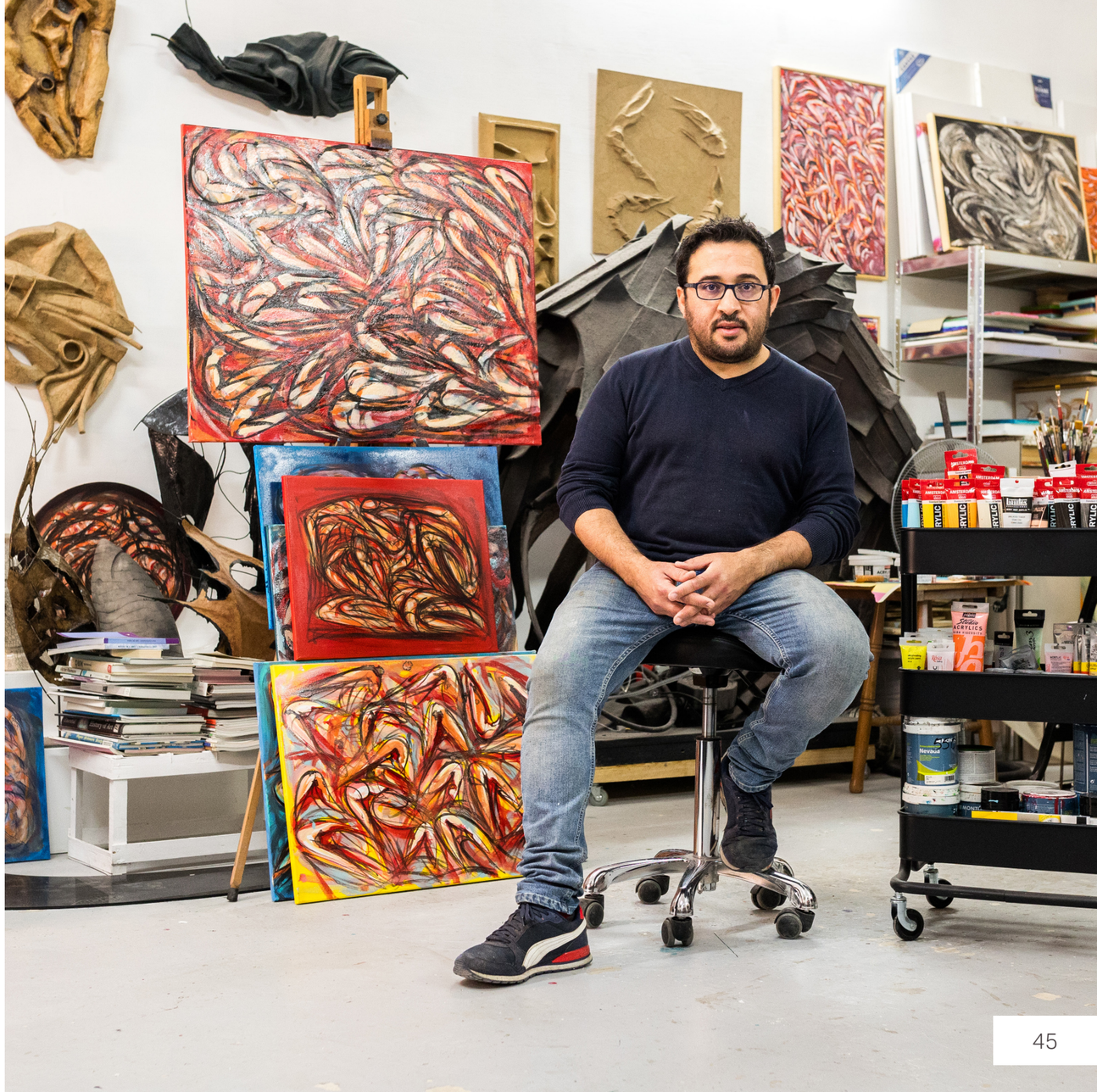
Artist & Designer

I still remember my first day at the new MCAST Institute of Art and Design in Mosta (now the Institute for the Creative Arts). It was the same building I had already spent two years in, back when it was called the Salvatore Dimech School of Arts and Crafts. The walls were the same, but everything else felt new.

New name, new era, new mentality. That morning, the then Director of the Institute of Art and Design, Mr Donald Friggieri, gave us our first talk. He told us that art and design are vital in our daily lives. Then he spoke about the Bauhaus, the influential art and design movement founded in Germany. I did not know it yet, but those words would stay with me for the rest of my life. The Bauhaus idea is still with me today.

Being creative was never new to me. My mum says I was born that way. School was not easy. In my primary years, I was often bullied by nuns because I expressed myself through art, not through writing. But that is the past. At MCAST, the same thing that got me in trouble as a child became my strength.

Those first years were experimental and, honestly, a little shocking. Traditional methods were no longer accepted. We were told to come up with new ideas, to explore contemporary art and design, and to think outside the box. It fitted me perfectly. I jumped into projects in art, product design, graphic design, and almost every creative subject. This was September 2001, and it was not easy for everyone. It was all new. We had no idea how product design worked. But I can tell you this: by my final year in 2008, I knew the important steps to create and launch a product. Our lecturers taught us something I still repeat today: design is not decoration. Design solves problems.



During my National Diploma in Design Crafts, I worked with great artists, including Alfred Camilleri, George Muscat, Twanny Darmanin and Angelo Agius. Alfred Camilleri gave me the advice I value most: Go home, listen to your favourite music, and produce art in large quantity. He was right. When you make a lot, you improve your skills. You understand the process better. And from a big collection, you can choose your best work.

In 2006, a group of students was selected for a project with Sicilian artists in Sciacca, Sicily. Thanks to the quantity and quality of my work, I won a one-month scholarship there. I remember noticing that the Italian students showed little process and produced much less than we did.

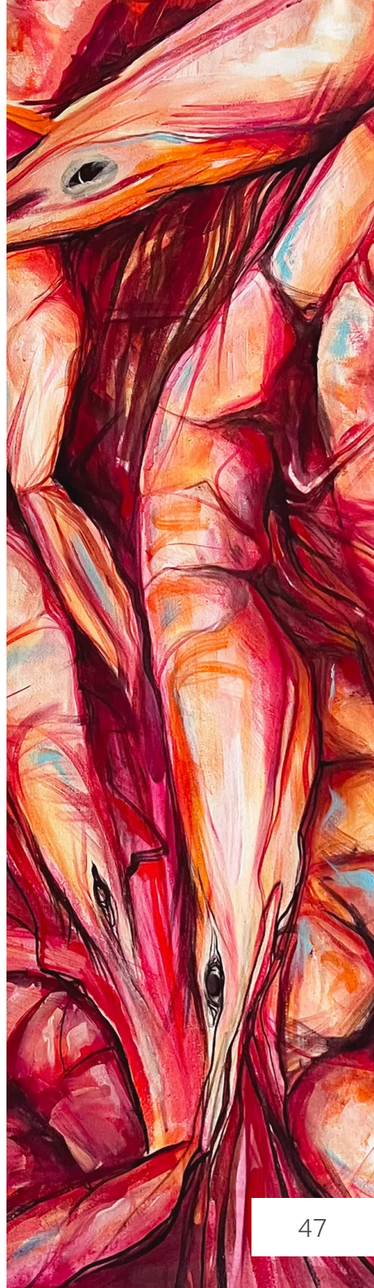
In 2007, I spent that month in Sciacca working alongside artists. It was there that I developed my concept of Abstract Prawns. That idea was born at MCAST in 2006-2007, and it is still growing with me every day. It is visible in my work today.

Since then, I have created hundreds of paintings, sculptures and installations. Today I run my own studio. I also work full time as Head of Design with an international company, and I still practise art almost every day. My work has been shown in many group exhibitions in Malta and abroad, including Germany, Azerbaijan and Italy. Sometimes I have to present my work in front of an audience. MCAST taught me how to present and how to speak in public. It meant stepping out of my comfort zone, and it has helped me a lot.

MCAST is not just a course that ends with a certificate or diploma. It gives you discipline for your whole life and career. I use that discipline in my carnival company too. With my team of volunteers, we build floats made from recycled materials. Some people in my team also studied at MCAST. This shows how many people in Malta are building their careers thanks to this school.

Sometimes you will feel lost. Sometimes you will feel like you are doing the same thing again and again. Keep going. Keep producing. Never quit. The more you create, the more you understand your own talent. And one day, the dots connect. The satisfaction is indescribable. If I could start again from the beginning, I would do it all over again.







2009

Cladonia Scerri

Head of Marketing — DENOMINATION

When, in September 2005, I joined MCAST's Institute of Art and Design (now the Institute for the Creative Arts), the College was just four years old. The prevailing stigma was blunt: if you go to MCAST, you are a failure, and I simply refused to accept that framing.

As President of MCAST's first Student Council, I worked alongside staff, students, government and media to actively challenge that perception, building the kind of institutional pride I believed the College had already earned. That experience taught me more about leadership and advocacy than any formal module could have.

The structure of the Foundation course gave me something I did not fully appreciate until years later: deliberate breadth. Before we were permitted to specialise, we developed skills across seven disciplines. It forced us out of comfortable assumptions about where we belonged and what we were capable of. That philosophy has followed me through every role I have held since. Some of the best professional decisions I have made came from stepping into something unfamiliar first.

That principle was proven early. Through a partnership between MCAST's Institute of Art and Design and TVM, I found myself working in the TVM newsroom as a student, producing graphics for the daily news and for special coverage including local and European Parliament election broadcasts, before moving into part-time employment on other television productions. The skills I developed in that newsroom, working to live deadlines in a high-pressure environment, are skills I still draw on directly in my role today.

During my time at MCAST, the Institute of Art and Design was under the direction of the late Mr Donald Friggieri, a pioneer in the appreciation and study of design in Malta, and a formidable educator. He was disciplined, fair and direct in a way that I can only now fully appreciate. When my grades were not where they needed to be, he called me into his office and told me plainly that I was heading towards failure. There was no softening of it. He expected more, and he said so. That conversation is one of the most important of my professional life. The work ethic I built in response to that moment has stayed with me through every city, every client and every role since.

After graduating with a Higher National Diploma in Graphic Design in 2009, I moved to London to continue my studies, where I spent ten years building a career in London's drinks design industry. The work is demanding and unforgiving of mediocrity. The project I am most proud of from that period is contributing to the global identity refresh for Johnnie Walker, one of the world's most recognised spirits brands. The rigour Mr Friggieri demanded of me carried me through environments where the standard was uncompromising.



An opportunity to move to Australia knocked on my door, and I took it. Eight years later, I hold Australian citizenship and serve as Head of Marketing at Denomination, a drinks design specialist with offices in Sydney, London, San Francisco and New York. My role sits at the intersection of creative strategy and commercial thinking, requiring me to understand both the craft of design and the business logic surrounding it. MCAST gave me the foundation for both.

To the students currently at MCAST, I wish to say that the stigma that surrounded this institution in 2005 has been dismantled, year by year, by graduates who went on to do serious work in competitive fields around the world. You are part of that continuing story. Do not narrow your focus too quickly, and do not be too quick to accept what others say about where you belong. And if someone you respect tells you plainly that you are falling short, listen. It might be the most useful thing anyone ever says to you.

2010

Mark Camilleri Gambin

CEO — TALEXIO, General Secretary — MOMENTUM

If you had told me as a teenager that my hobby of building very basic websites would lead to running a software company, and later co-founding a political party, I probably would not have believed you. There is rarely a straight line in such career paths. Mostly, I just needed an environment that let me figure things out as I went along. For me, that place was MCAST.

I originally applied for the National Diploma in Computing for one simple reason: I wanted to make video games, but I needed actual qualifications to turn my passion into a living. It was only later that I realised I was actually pretty good at software engineering. But getting there was not a given. I remember the day my dad and I went to the MCAST Paola campus to apply. He was not keen on the idea. Mr Mark Anthony Farrugia, a lecturer who ended up having a big positive impact on my studies, happened to be standing there. He must have picked up on my dad's hesitation, because he turned to him and just said: "Let him choose what feels right." My dad later told me that was a lesson for him, and honestly, it was the exact push that kicked off my entire career.



I started my journey at MCAST with a National Diploma, followed by a Higher National Diploma, and then I was lucky enough to join the very first group that went straight into the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Software Engineering. What I remember most about those years is not the coursework itself, it is the vibe on campus. It was relaxed, welcoming, and relentlessly practical. Instead of burying our heads in theoretical textbooks, we were actually building things.

The lecturers understood what was happening in the industry, which changed everything. People like Mr Mark Anthony Farrugia, Mr Conrad Vassallo, Mr Gerard Said, and Mr Ryan Attard made sure we were ready for the real world, not just an exam hall. Because I spent so much time hands on with the code, starting my career felt entirely natural. Plus, MCAST allowed us to learn presentation and communication skills, stuff which I thought was just filler at the time, but eventually ended up saving me when I had to pitch and sell. In fact, I launched my software company with two classmates while still doing our final year. Over the years that company evolved into Talexio. Today, it is one of the main HR and payroll software platforms used across Malta, and we have recently expanded into Cyprus.

Building a business from scratch is tough, and rough. You can write all the business plans you desire, but nothing prepares you for the pains and challenges of growth. We had to figure out complex team dynamics, survive the absolute chaos of COVID-19, and deal with the daily fires of running a company. Through it all, the core problem-solving skills I picked up during my studies were what kept me going.

Eventually, though, I wanted to fix things outside of software. I wanted to have a real impact on society, which is how I ended up, very recently, co-founding a new political party: Momentum. Right now, I am the General Secretary of the party, and also the Deputy Secretary-General of the European Democrats. I ran my first election in 2026, and securing 1,427 votes felt like a pretty good starting point. Oddly, the structural and organisational skills I use in politics are exactly the ones I honed in software engineering and business.

Looking back, MCAST taught me one very simple truth: if you put in real hard work, you will get there.

If I had to give advice to current students or anyone getting into tech right now, it would be to not get too obsessed with today's specific tools. The industry is shifting way too fast, and AI is completely changing how we work. The manual writing of code is no longer part of any job description. But understanding the core mechanics of how technology solves problems is your edge. Learn the foundations deeply so that you can use AI as a superpower rather than letting it replace you. And above all, lean into your human skills. Leadership, empathy, and genuine understanding are not getting automated any time soon. Build a practical, problem-solving mind, but never forget that at the end of the day, a fulfilling career is one that lets you make the human experience a little bit better.



2011

Ryan Falzon

Artist, Author & Art Educator

Graduating from MCAST in 2011 with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Art marked the beginning of a professional journey shaped by experimentation, perseverance and a commitment to artistic development.

The decision to study Fine Arts stemmed from a strong interest in visual expression and a desire to explore it within a structured and challenging environment. The aim was to experiment with different materials and processes while gradually discovering a personal artistic direction. MCAST appealed because of its practical, hands-on approach. Fine art requires direct engagement with materials, experimentation and the process of making, and the College provided an environment in which these could be explored.

The studio sessions and workshops remain among the most memorable aspects of the student experience. Working with different media, materials and techniques provided a broad foundation and encouraged an openness to different approaches. Equally important was the emphasis on each student's individual development. Through experimentation, discussion and critique, students were encouraged to develop their own visual identity rather than simply acquire technical skills.

The course provided a strong technical foundation while also developing independence, discipline, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These qualities have proved essential throughout my professional career. Working as an artist requires more than technical ability; it also involves making decisions, managing time, responding to challenges and continually adapting.

Several lecturers made a lasting impression, including Mr Patrick Galea, Mr Gilbert Calleja, Ms Sinead Rice and Ms Katya Borg. Through their technical guidance, exhibition visits, encouragement and different perspectives

on art, they contributed significantly to the development of an artistic outlook. Their influence continued beyond graduation, shaping the way art is approached and understood.

Since graduating in 2011, I have continued to practise professionally. The journey began with local collective exhibitions and progressed to solo exhibitions and projects involving institutions and galleries such as Spazju Kreattiv, MUŻA, Valletta Contemporary and the Malta Society of Arts. My work was also featured in the National Pavilion of the inaugural edition of the Malta Biennale, while other works have been acquired for the National Collection. International opportunities followed, including a solo exhibition in Berlin and participation in collective exhibitions across Europe.

Today, the artistic practice encompasses painting, printmaking, sculpture and writing, with a particular interest in how these forms intersect and inform one another.

Building a career in the arts, however, has not been without challenges. Like many creative professions, it involves periods of opportunity and recognition alongside uncertainty and rejection. The art world is constantly evolving, and sustaining a professional practice requires more than time spent creating work. An entrepreneurial mindset is equally important, involving the development of networks, the identification of opportunities, effective communication and the initiative to establish independent platforms. Remaining adaptable, persistent and proactive has been central to navigating these challenges.

MCAST provided an important starting point for this journey, offering technical knowledge, practical experience, a valuable network and a critical foundation for professional development. Perhaps, most importantly, it encouraged the confidence to experiment and the understanding that finding an individual artistic voice is a gradual process.

For current students and those considering a career in the arts, the advice is to experiment as much as possible and avoid feeling pressured to have everything figured out from the beginning. Interests and visual identities evolve over time, and the facilities, workshops and people available during one's studies should be used to their full potential. Asking questions, listening to criticism and allowing room for mistakes are all part of the learning process.



A career in the arts takes time, particularly in an increasingly competitive field. Developing an independent approach is essential, as is learning not to rely exclusively on institutions or external platforms to showcase one's work. Finding a niche, creating opportunities and remaining open to learning can make a significant difference. Above all, curiosity and commitment are vital to developing an artistic practice that is genuinely one's own.

2012

Jurgen Borg

Founder & Project Leader — ISPY PROJECTS MALTA

I have always been someone who preferred doing over sitting still. Long before most of my peers had even thought about a career, I was already working.

At just thirteen years old, I began working with Nexos Lighting and Vision, one of Malta's most respected and experienced companies in stage, theatre and event lighting, trusted with some of the most significant events on the island. From major concerts and live shows to exhibitions, television productions, and high-profile national and statal events, I found myself right in the thick of it all from a very young age. I took enormous pride in every single job. For me, it was never just work: it was a statement. Every cable run, every light rigged, every show delivered, had to be perfect, because I understood that we were not just representing Nexos, we were representing Malta.

Those experiences instilled in me a standard of excellence and a sense of professional pride that I carry with me to this day. They also gave me something far beyond technical skills: they instilled in me a sense of leadership, responsibility, and the kind of maturity that only comes from being thrown into real, high-stakes situations at a young age.

When the time came to choose where to continue my education, the decision was not a difficult one. Both my parents and I had been worried about finding a path that truly suited me. I was never the academic type; I was always hands on, always working, always building things. It felt like MCAST was made for people like me. The vocational approach, the practical learning, the real-world focus—this was exactly the environment I needed to thrive. And so, in 2007, I enrolled at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, where I would go on to study Electrical and Electronics Engineering until 2012.



Those five years at MCAST were, without question, among the most defining of my life. The College did not just give me a qualification: it gave me a foundation. But if the College shaped me, then certain people within it truly built me into who I am today. I will never forget the lecturers who invested in me: Mr Reuben Grima, Mr Donald Stevens, Mr Alfred Galea, and Mr William Dimech, amongst others. I give them credit to this day. Their dedication, expertise and genuine belief in their students went far beyond the lecture room, and I carry their influence with me in everything I do professionally.

My time at MCAST was not limited to the classroom, however. I have always believed that if you want to grow as a person, you have to put yourself forward and get involved. During my years at the College, I was an active member of the Student Council, the Council of Institutes and the Board of Studies. These roles gave me something that no textbook ever could: a real understanding of how institutions work, how decisions are made, and how to represent the voice of those around you effectively. Sitting at those tables, engaging with staff and management, debating and contributing to the direction of the College, these experiences sharpened my communication skills, my confidence, and my sense of responsibility in ways that proved invaluable when I later found myself running my own company. In retrospect, I would strongly encourage every MCAST student to seek out these opportunities. They matter far more than you might think at the time.

After completing my studies at MCAST, I continued my academic journey by pursuing an IT Engineering degree in IT and Systems Development, all while gaining hands-on industry experience working for a company operating in the security sector. These years were invaluable; they gave me a clear picture of how the industry worked, what clients truly needed, and crucially, what kind of company I wanted to build. I had seen how businesses could treat people, and I knew I wanted to do things differently. I wanted my own piece of the cake. I wanted to be my own boss. In 2015, ISPY Projects Malta was born and it is, without a doubt, my baby. Well, one of them. I am also the proud father of two wonderful children, Beth and Marcus.

From day one, ISPY was built on a simple but powerful philosophy: deliver exceptional products, treat people well and never compromise on quality. That philosophy was not plucked from thin air. It was deeply inspired by someone I have admired my entire life: Steve Jobs. Jobs is my idol. His vision, his relentless pursuit of perfection, and above all his belief that technology should be simple, beautiful and intuitive, have profoundly influenced the way I run ISPY. As Jobs himself once said, “The only way to do great work is to love what you do.” I love what I do, and I believe that shows in every project we deliver.

Just as Apple became synonymous with elegance and ease of use, I have always insisted that the products ISPY recommends to clients meet the same standard—dependable, intuitive, and built to perform. Whether we are installing CCTV systems, intruder or fire alarms, smart home automation, or access control solutions, the brands we choose and the standards we uphold are non-negotiable. Today, ISPY Projects serves a wide range of clients across Malta - from domestic homes and restaurants to shops and the hospitality sector - and we continue to grow, taking on key projects that we are immensely proud of.

Beyond ISPY, I have always had a passion for entrepreneurship in its broadest sense. Property is another area I have ventured into. I own rental properties, and as with everything I do in life, I do it properly and to a high standard. For me, cutting corners has never been an option. Whether it is a security installation for a client or a property for a tenant, the level of quality I deliver reflects who I am. I am continuously exploring new ventures and opportunities that challenge and inspire me. This entrepreneurial mindset, the constant hunger to build, create and grow, is something that was nurtured during my time at MCAST and has never left me.

None of this journey would have been possible without the unwavering support of my family. My parents and my brother always believed in me, even in the moments when the path ahead was uncertain. I also want to make a special mention of my grandmother, Mary. She was there every single day, watching me work and grow, and what made her truly special was the warmth she radiated to absolutely everyone around her.



Employees, clients, even deliverymen, everyone who walked through the door of ISPY called her Nanna, and that says everything about the kind of person she was. She saw ISPY come to life from the very beginning. Sadly, she is no longer with us, but her photo hangs on the wall at work, a daily reminder of the love and support that helped build everything around it. And my wife Rebekah, an accomplished engineer, lawyer and member of Parliament, is the most hardworking person I know. Her drive inspires me every single day.

To the students reading this, my message is simple: keep striving. As Steve Jobs wisely said, “I’m convinced that about half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs from the non-successful ones is pure perseverance.” Do not give up when things get hard. Find what you love, work at it relentlessly, and never settle. MCAST gave me the tools, the knowledge, and the confidence to go out into the world and build something of my own. It can do the same for you.



2013

Christopher Borg — Software Engineer

Steve Scerri — UX Designer & Developer

Nicole Borg — Manager Operations & Quality Assurance

Co-Founders — VIOSIDE

Our final assignment at MCAST was actually a project for our first client. This was in the year 2009, when we three friends – Chris, Steve, and Nicole – came together to study for the Higher National Diploma in Software Development. This was also in the year when the iPhone 3G was released with an App Store in Malta. This combination, together with the module about entrepreneurship, ignited a spark to start a new venture together.

We stuck together during our Software Development course at MCAST. We had big towers running Windows XP and Vista back then, and we were learning how to build websites and Windows apps with .NET and PHP before the word “app” existed, with some occasional Dreamweaver and Flash websites, designing relational databases, practising presentations, interviews, and public speaking, entrepreneurship lessons, configuring user permissions on a Windows-based enterprise network, and learning the difference between CDs and Blu-ray.

Some of you reading this article might not have even seen any of these, but days were a bit simpler before the iPhone arrived in Malta. In a world surrounded by Microsoft products, the rebellious teens in us wanted to use Linux and build iPhone apps as well, which was easier given the foundation that MCAST had given us.

One thing we are definitely grateful for during our experience at MCAST is the practical and hands on approach. While theory was still given, the focus was always on how the skills being taught could be applied in the industry. Every step was towards practice and preparation for actual work. Of course, we were taught software development, but in a hands-on, practical way that is scalable. We were also taught to perform analysis and plan ahead before we started, and how to prepare for testing and deployment. We designed databases that were performant under stress. We were taught to prepare presentations and think like entrepreneurs when building products, and where profitability and value came from when working. These are the required skills that bring true value to clients and employers.

During our final year at MCAST, we decided to set up an office in our parents' garage and start applying what we learned to the industry while finishing our assignments. That is when we set up Vioside and got our first client. As our final assignment, we built a software platform for a private school which included a front-facing website with a content management system, a booking system for lessons and courses, and an eLearning platform for the students. That is three assignments for three students and one project for one client. We even got paid for it!

Since then, we ventured into the world of building apps that fit in clients' pockets and can be carried around with them, and, fast-forward to fifteen years later, we have built over 70 mobile apps on iPhone and Android for a number of clients, including Shireburn and Transport Malta. Learning in such industries requires consistent hands-on experience, but MCAST has definitely given us the invaluable practical foundation and boost to get us started in our journey as software engineers and entrepreneurs.

2013

Kersten Chircop

CEO & Co-Founder — GMR

While working hard through my Higher National Diploma and subsequently earning my Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Software Development, I was constantly looking for creative ways to apply what I learned in the classroom to the real world. Using the technical knowledge, coding skills, and problem-solving methods taught by my lecturers, I built a gaming news website called gamers.com.mt as my own personal project, which became the very first stepping stone of my professional life.

Soon after, a couple of close friends who shared my vision and passion joined me, and together we turned that student project into a real, functioning business enterprise. After laying those early digital foundations online, we began organising small LAN parties and live video game events for local gaming enthusiasts. Over time, through continuous hard work and unwavering dedication, that initiative expanded and evolved into GMR. Today, GMR stands proudly as Malta's biggest esports and video game events company, completely transforming how competitive gaming, community building, and digital entertainment are experienced across the Maltese islands and beyond, reaching exciting new milestones every single year, and expanding our reach globally.





Today, serving as the CEO and Co-Founder of GMR, I have the absolute privilege of leading alongside my co-founders, those same close friends who came on board to build this with me, and managing a talented, highly motivated, and dedicated team of 10 people. Together, we work tirelessly to organise multiple events throughout the year for a diverse range of both local and international clients. Beyond our client work, we take immense pride in building, owning, and managing our own major proprietary products that continuously shape the national gaming landscape. These include flagship, high-profile projects like the prestigious PLAYCON, which has grown to become Malta's massive annual gaming and pop culture expo.

Looking back, the journey from sitting in an MCAST classroom to running a thriving industry-leading company has been an extraordinary ride. The practical training, technical expertise, and entrepreneurial encouragement I received during my studies gave me the exact foundation needed to turn a student hobby into a successful, growing business.

As MCAST celebrates its remarkable 25th anniversary, it is truly inspiring to look back and see how much both the College and the local tech, gaming, and esports landscape have grown and evolved together over the years, creating incredible opportunities for future generations of students who want to turn their own passions into successful careers, proving that with the right support, anything is possible.





2013

Jennings Falzon

Artist & Founder — ANIMA ART STUDIO

I am a Maltese contemporary artist and sculptor whose multidisciplinary practice is rooted in figurative expression, material exploration and a sustained investigation into the human condition. Born in 1986 and raised in Naxxar, I developed an early affinity with the visual arts, which gradually evolved into a committed and evolving professional practice.

A significant foundation of my artistic development was established through my education at MCAST, where I studied 3D Design, Fine Arts and later completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Art. Through these studies, I developed the technical knowledge, discipline and confidence to pursue art as a professional vocation. MCAST provided me with an environment where experimentation and practical engagement with materials became central to my development. My studies encouraged me to investigate three-dimensional form and sculpture while gradually defining my own artistic language.

I am also the founder of Anima Art Studio, a space dedicated to my artistic practice and creative projects. Through the studio, I continue to produce and develop sculptural works while engaging with a range of artistic processes and commissions.

My practice draws upon a diverse range of references, including classical sculpture, Christian iconography, mythology, literature, nature and contemporary fantasy. I work across materials such as stone, metal, clay, wood, concrete, resin, plaster and recycled materials, exploring the expressive potential of material, form and the human figure. My works frequently engage with universal themes of mortality, suffering, spirituality, transformation, redemption and the complex relationship between the physical and the metaphysical.

My artistic practice extends beyond sculpture into restoration, film, theatre, prop making and set design, reflecting my broad understanding of visual storytelling and craftsmanship. My work has been presented through exhibitions and commissions in Malta and internationally, contributing to a practice that continues to develop across different disciplines and contexts.

Today, my work occupies a space between the traditional and the contemporary, bringing together classical figurative principles with experimental materials, symbolic narratives and imaginative forms. My artistic journey reflects a continuous process of research, experimentation and refinement. The foundations established during my studies at MCAST, together with my ongoing work through Anima Art Studio, remain integral to my professional and creative development.



2014

Larkin Bonnici

Compliance Officer & Human Resources Lecturer

I can still clearly remember my secondary school days, precisely when we had a career information session delivered by an MCAST representative. I knew straight away that MCAST would be my home for the upcoming years.

Over the span of five years (2009-2014), I successfully completed the National Diploma in Business Statistics, the Higher National Diploma in Business Studies and a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Business Enterprise. Contemporary to my full-time studies in Business Management at MCAST, I was working various part-time jobs and attending evening classes courses at MCAST, on topics related to sports, health and well-being. With pride I can say that those five years at MCAST were, yes, very challenging, but also extremely rewarding. They were fruitful not only because they introduced me to new and interesting management modules and concepts, but most importantly they inculcated in me the characteristics of commitment, perseverance, time management and, crucially, a positive "can-do" attitude.

The assignments, group discussions, presentations, work placements/experiences, examinations, research projects and the dissertation were all relevant to real-life business situations. At the completion of my studies, at 21 years of age, MCAST had equipped me with the required skills set to take on the labour market, and so I did.



For the next two years I worked for the Central Procurement and Supplies Unit, the largest procurement department within the Malta Public Service. I formed part of a working team that procured various medicines and medical equipment, very often under tight deadlines, as one would expect in a hospital environment. The pressing deadlines of numerous assignments during my time at MCAST helped prepare me for such situations.

In the following year and a half I served as a Projects Officer within the Ministry of Tourism. My role was to secure funds for EU-funded projects aimed at creating awareness of Maltese secondary destinations and "hidden gems". Study modules related to marketing, project management, strategy, and entrepreneurship definitely played an important role in helping me succeed in this role.

During the last two years I have been working as a Compliance Officer within the Public Service Commission, one of the most esteemed offices within the Public Service. I form part of a team that monitors recruitment and selection processes within the whole Public Service. My days at MCAST helped me improve my Business English, perfect my report writing, acquire an eye for detail and become competent in interpreting laws and regulations.

I am also a freelance Human Resource Management lecturer and a freelance Fitness Trainer at Inspire Fitness Centre. Such opportunities were made possible thanks to the skills and certificates that I obtained at MCAST in both my full-time and part-time studies.

I am now proud to be the President of Fgura United FC, a sporting organisation that employs over 50 employees and hosts over 230 kids and young adults. My job is to face and subsequently defeat all challenges and obstacles that hinder the survival and growth of the club, which to date is a leading football school in the region. I became a volunteer at the club in June 2014, following my dissertation that revolved around the social investment of Maltese football clubs in youth development.

MCAST surely contributed to my personal and professional development by creating for me the opportunity to be exposed to all these experiences despite the fact that I am still 26 years of age. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all the lecturers and administrators that made "my MCAST days" so very memorable. As it is obvious by now, I definitely recommend the services of MCAST!



2015

Jessica Darmanin

Agricultural Officer

I am Jessica Darmanin, a fourth-generation farriery enthusiast. From an early age, I assisted my family with the day-to-day running of our farriery business. This early involvement fostered my passion for horses and inspired my lifelong commitment to animal welfare and equine health and wellbeing.

My educational journey at MCAST provided me with valuable experiential learning opportunities through practical, hands-on activities and outdoor learning experiences. In 2011, I was awarded a BTEC National Diploma in Animal Management, followed by a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Animal Management in 2015. Furthermore, I pursued additional training through MCAST part-time courses, attending Equine Breeds and Grooming in 2009 and the Introduction to Farriery course in 2013. Farriery has always been one of my principal areas of interest, and I have dedicated considerable time and effort to developing my knowledge and understanding of this specialised field.

In 2015, I participated in the Assessment of European Agriculture Water Use and Trade under Climate Change, further broadening my exposure to agricultural and environmental issues.

Following my studies and practical training at MCAST, I embarked on my professional career in animal care, providing services in various local veterinary clinics. I subsequently gained experience delivering animal nursing services at the APH Veterinary Hospital in Ta' Qali and later worked at a local petting farm. These opportunities enabled me to strengthen my practical skills and develop a broader understanding of animal care and welfare in different settings.

I later served as an Animal Welfare Promotional Officer within the Ministry for Agriculture. In this role, I delivered educational talks and lectures on animal welfare and responsible animal care to diverse audiences. I particularly enjoyed engaging with schoolchildren, older adults, and people from different backgrounds, sharing practical knowledge and promoting responsible attitudes towards the protection and wellbeing of animals.

My academic background and professional experience also enabled me to work as a Veterinary Support Officer (VSO), carrying out duties at the National Veterinary Laboratory. I currently serve as an Agricultural Officer, undertaking daily responsibilities within the agricultural sector and continuing to build upon my professional knowledge and experience.

The knowledge and practical expertise I have acquired throughout my career have strengthened my commitment to advancing the farriery profession in Malta. This dedication motivated me to contribute to the establishment of the Malta Farriers Association, the first association of its kind in Malta, where I currently serve as a board member. Through this involvement, I aim to support the development and recognition of the farriery profession and contribute to the promotion of equine health and welfare.
My experience and interest in equine matters have also led to invitations to participate in television programmes, where I have shared my knowledge of horses and farriery with wider audiences.

In November 2025, I attended the Annual General Meeting of the European Federation of Farriers Associations (EFFA), held in Weimar, Germany, and hosted by the EDHV (First German Farrier School). This experience offered a valuable opportunity to engage with the European farriery community and gain further insight into the profession at an international level.

My professional journey reflects a longstanding dedication to animal welfare, equine wellbeing, practical learning, and the advancement of farriery in Malta. By combining my family heritage with my academic background and professional experience, I remain committed to promoting responsible animal care and contributing to the continued development of the equine and agricultural sectors.

2016

Maria Farrugia

Services Manager — FOUNDATION FOR RESPITE CARE SERVICES

My journey at MCAST began in 2010 when, after reviewing the MCAST Prospectus, I decided to enrol in the BTEC First Diploma in Health and Social Care.

Little did I know at the time that this initial step would lead me to pursue and successfully complete a degree in Health and Social Care Management, from which I graduated in 2016. Obtaining this degree marked a significant turning point in my life, as it equipped me not only with the essential knowledge required for the social care sector, but also with a strong foundation in administrative, leadership and managerial practices within the industry.

During my time at MCAST, I was exposed to a wide range of services within the health and social care sector. I had the valuable opportunity to work with the elderly, minors in care, individuals experiencing homelessness, survivors of domestic violence in rehabilitation shelters, individuals in substance rehabilitation centres, and within centres that support families through education and empowerment.

Throughout my studies, I developed a strong passion for the sector and decided to gain further experience by working during the summer and on a part-time basis. I chose to work in the disability sector, which had been frequently discussed during lectures, particularly given the wide availability of such services in Malta and Gozo. Encouraged by what I had learned and heard, I decided to give it a try: an experience that would later prove to be both meaningful and significant in my professional journey.





After completing my studies, an opportunity arose a few months later for me to start working at Aġenzija Sapport within the Residential Service. It was there that my love and passion for the disability sector grew significantly. After several years at Aġenzija Sapport, I moved to the Social Care Standards Authority and during this time, I pursued a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA). This journey eventually led me to my current position as a Services Manager with the Foundation for Respite Care Services, a leading respite service in Malta and Gozo, which I am very grateful and proud to form part of.

Pursuing the MBA helped me strengthen and further develop my management skills, and obtaining the degree played an invaluable role in my professional growth and success. I clearly remember my former tutors emphasising that to excel in this field, one must start from the basics and gradually work their way up. Through this process, one gains a true understanding of every role that their subordinates carry out.

I strive to pass this valuable lesson on to the students I supervise during their work placements. Sharing experiences and guidance with future professionals in the sector is highly beneficial. It also allows them to see that leadership roles within health and social care are achievable and meaningful. By seeing managers and leaders who have progressed through education, they are encouraged to recognise that their degree is valuable, recognised, and can open doors to better opportunities. I also emphasise to students the importance of fully engaging in placements and, eventually, in work within the sector. Throughout my journey, the tutors and professionals I met taught me to genuinely appreciate every service user I encounter. This, together with the dedication, effort, and compassion that staff in the sector bring to their work every day, has shaped my approach and strengthened my commitment to providing quality care.

In hindsight, I am deeply grateful for all the years I spent at MCAST. The course in Health and Social Care shaped me into a committed and ethical professional who consistently strives to give her utmost in this field. It also taught me how to approach life with dedication, resilience, and purpose.

I will always remain fond of MCAST, as it provided me with the confidence, essential skills, and opportunities to build a fulfilling career rooted in dedication to social care. If I decide to pursue further studies in the future, I will never forget where it all began... at the desks of the MCAST Institute of Community Services.



2017

Noelle Muscat

Hairdresser & Master's Student

My journey with MCAST began long before I ever stepped into a classroom myself. It started with my mother.

Before I was born, my mother was already running a family hair salon, one that has now been in operation for almost forty years. Whilst pregnant with me, she attended the School of Hairdressing, an institution that later became part of what we know today as MCAST. Education, hard work and vocational pride were therefore not concepts I learned later in life; they were part of my upbringing from the very beginning.

My mother's dedication to lifelong learning set a powerful example. She taught me that education does not have an expiry date, and that growth comes from continuously refining both skill and knowledge, values that I continue to build on, to this day. Years later, when I enrolled at MCAST to study for a Diploma in Hairdressing (2014–2016), I came to realise how deeply interconnected our journeys were. Lecturers who had taught my mother decades earlier were now teaching me. Today, I am proud to say that some of those same educators are not only colleagues, but mentors I continue to learn from. This sense of continuity reflects perfectly what MCAST represents: growth, legacy, and the evolution of vocational education over time.

When I enrolled at MCAST to pursue the Diploma in Hairdressing between 2014 and 2016, I chose the apprenticeship route, combining studies with hands-on industry experience. At the time, this also meant completing the Journeyman Certificate alongside the diploma, an experience that instilled in me a strong work ethic and a deep appreciation for learning through real practice in the workplace.

After graduating from MCAST, I continued my lifelong learning journey and took on various professional opportunities within hairdressing, becoming self-employed and later specialising in trichology. My passion for the science behind hair and scalp conditions led me to further my studies internationally, expanding both my technical expertise and my perspective on education within the industry.

Seeing how MCAST has since evolved to integrate apprenticeships directly into its diploma programmes and now also offers progression to Level 4 within the institution itself, reflects how vocational education continues to adapt, ensuring today's students and the future of the industry have clearer, more accessible pathways to advance their careers.

While developing my professional practice, I discovered a growing passion for teaching. What initially began as sharing knowledge informally evolved into a clear vocational calling. In 2021, I returned to MCAST, this time on the other side of the classroom, as a part-time Hairdressing lecturer within the Institute of Community Services. Standing in front of students in the same institution that shaped my vocational foundation has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my career.



In 2024, I once again took on the role of student at MCAST. I am currently reading for the Master in Vocational Education Applied Research 4.0. This programme has strengthened my understanding of pedagogy, inclusive learning, curriculum development, assessment, and reflective practice, allowing me to continuously refine my role as an educator. Experiencing MCAST as a learner, educator and industry professional has given me a holistic appreciation of its mission and impact.

MCAST has been central to my personal and professional growth, not only by providing qualifications, but by instilling values that I carry into every aspect of my work: curiosity, responsibility, and commitment to quality. It taught me that vocational education is powerful, progressive, and essential in shaping skilled professionals who are confident and industry-ready.

As MCAST celebrates its 25th anniversary, my story stands as a testament to its lasting impact across generations. From my mother's journey as a student, to my own path as a learner and educator, MCAST has remained a constant presence by adapting, growing, and continuing to shape futures.

Today, contributing to the development of future professionals within the very institution that formed me, feels like a full-circle moment. It is a privilege I do not take lightly, and one that I hope inspires students to embrace vocational education with pride, ambition, and confidence in where it can take them.

2018

Maria Elena Vella

Creative & Founder — MV RESIN & ART COLLECTION

My journey at MCAST began at Level 2, where I took my first formal steps into art education. From there, I steadily worked my way up through the different levels, eventually completing my Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Art (Level 6).

This journey strengthened both my technical skills and my commitment to pursuing art as a career. Like many art students, I was often told that art is "just a hobby" and not a stable career. Despite this, I remained committed to my path, and continued to believe that creativity could be developed into something meaningful and sustainable.

Throughout my studies, I was encouraged to explore, experiment, and push beyond my comfort zone. Over time, I began to refine my artistic direction and develop a clearer sense of identity in my work. There were also moments where my ideas were questioned and times when I felt close to giving up. However, I chose to persevere, as I never wanted external opinions to define my worth or limit my potential. A defining moment in my journey was my thesis project, which became a turning point both creatively and professionally.



One of the most significant outcomes of my studies was the ability to combine technical knowledge with creative exploration. I developed a strong understanding of composition, colour, and material use, while also learning to adapt and problem solve throughout my artistic process.

My thesis project played a crucial role in this development. It allowed me to explore the possibilities of resin as a medium, opening up an entirely new direction in my work. Through continuous experimentation, I learned how to work with this material in a way that balances both control and unpredictability, something that remains central to my practice today.

In addition to technical skills, MCAST helped me build essential professional qualities such as discipline, time management, and the ability to work with briefs. Presenting my work and receiving feedback strengthened my confidence and taught me how to communicate my ideas effectively.

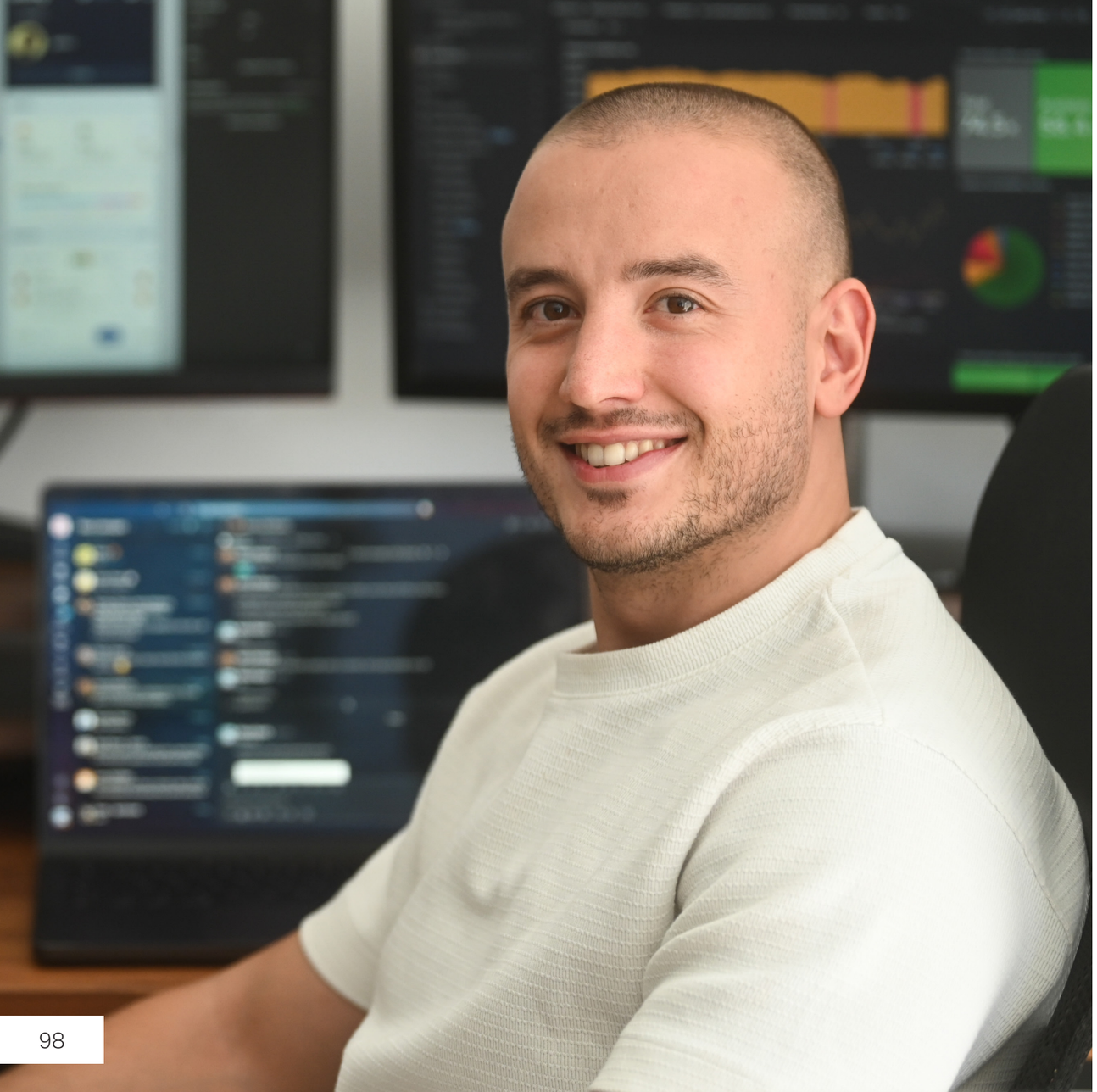
MCAST was instrumental in transforming my passion for art into a professional path. The freedom to experiment, particularly during my thesis, led me to discover and develop my interest in resin work. What began as an academic exploration gradually evolved into something much more significant. This eventually led me to establish my own business, MV Resin & Art Collection, turning my passion into a professional path.

Following my thesis, I continued to experiment with resin, refining my techniques and developing my own style. This ongoing process contributed directly to the growth of my business, which remains closely connected to the ideas, materials, and concepts I initially explored during my studies. The challenges I faced, both from external perceptions about art and moments of self-doubt, helped me build resilience and determination. Today, these qualities allow me to navigate the realities of running a creative business while staying true to my artistic vision.

Overall, my experience at MCAST provided me not only with technical and conceptual knowledge, but also with the confidence to pursue art as a career. It laid the foundation for my growth as an artist and enabled me to build a business rooted in my creative practice.

Throughout this journey, I have come to realise that we are all, in many ways, still emerging artists. No matter the level of experience, there is always room to learn, explore and grow, and this continuous evolution is what makes the artistic journey so meaningful.





2018

Nikola Bajada

Group Project Manager

My journey at MCAST began at 16, when I enrolled in the National Diploma in Software Development at the Gozo Campus in Xagħra. I wanted practical experience and a clear route into technology. Choosing MCAST over sixth form meant leaving behind the friends I had spent five years with in secondary school. It was a difficult decision, but one I am very glad I made.

I progressed to the Higher National Diploma at Paola and then to the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Software Development. Alongside programming, subjects such as systems analysis and design and entrepreneurship helped me connect technology with business. My thesis explored artificial neural networks and the privacy concerns surrounding personalised recommendations. Those concerns have aged pretty well. My strengths were always more in business and management than in programming. Before submitting my thesis, I secured a six-month product management internship at Tipico. At 21, I was entrusted with the backlogs of two senior development teams in Karlsruhe, Germany. My MCAST background gave me the technical foundation and confidence to navigate that environment.

The internship led to a permanent role as a Junior Product Owner, working with a full-stack team in Gdańsk. Over the next five years, I progressed to Product Owner, delivering features used by millions of customers, as well as products introduced across more than 1,000 German retail shops.

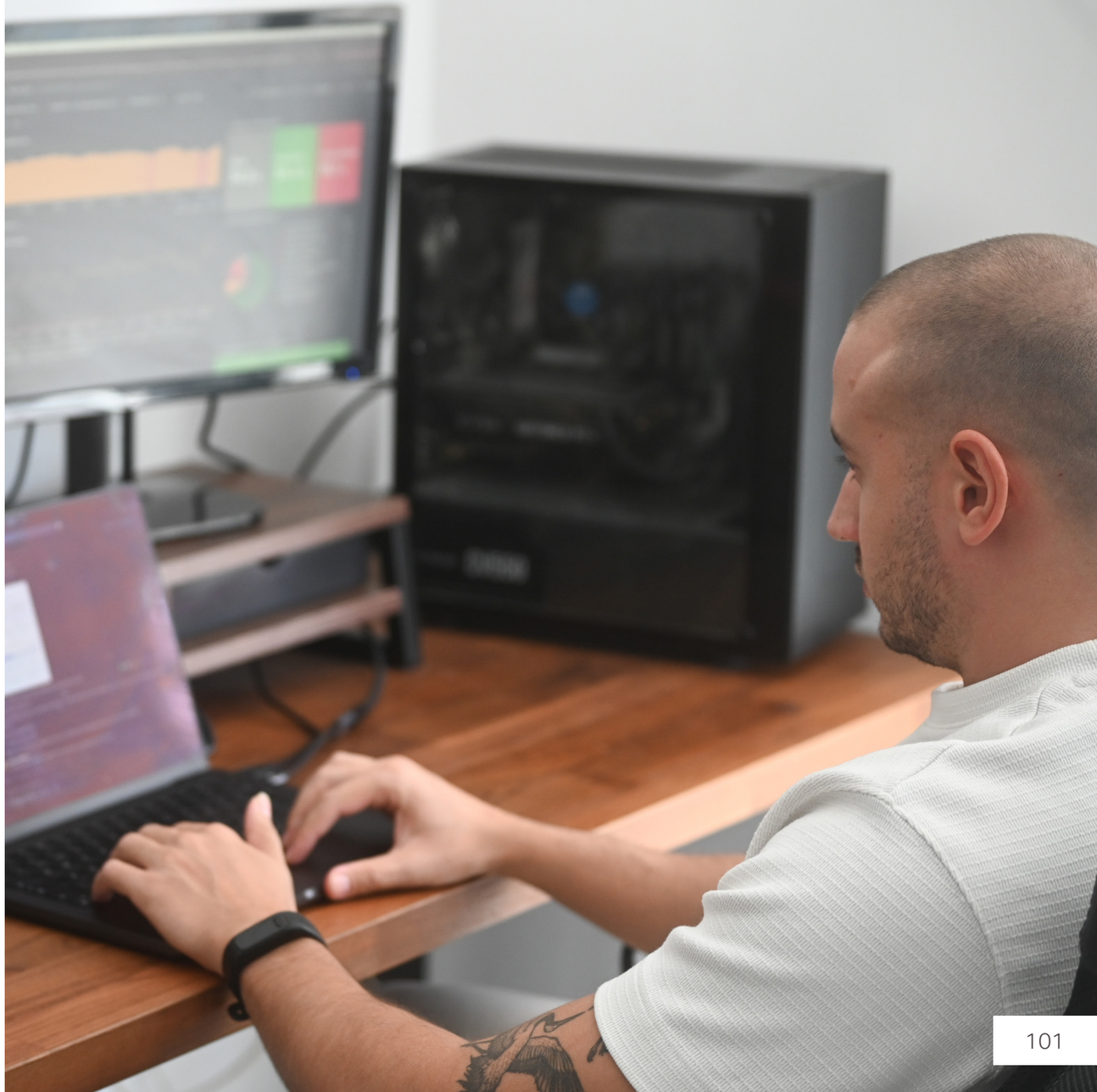
I then joined Kindred Group, where I led Unibet's global iOS and Android app strategy and contributed to its new Sportsbook platform. Nearly two years later, I moved to KingMakers. Two years on, I serve as Group Product Manager for the BetKing sportsbook, leading sports betting and social betting strategy across Nigeria, Zambia and South Africa.

The best part of my job is understanding customers and deciding what to build next. We experiment, sometimes fail, and learn from the experience. When something we build connects with customers, it is extremely rewarding.

Looking ahead, I want to continue growing and eventually build useful products of my own. AI and large language models are giving us even more scope to develop and test ideas quickly.

My advice to students is to get hands-on with AI. Go beyond using it for research, drafting content, proofreading or basic prototyping. Build with it, experiment and keep learning. At the same time, always question the results and think critically about how AI is being used. Keep checking whether your skills, and the decisions being made within your company, are keeping pace with technology. Above all, stay curious and be willing to adapt.

Nearly ten years into my career, I still see the value of my MCAST education. It gave me the foundation to turn an interest in technology into a profession that brings together my technical knowledge and my strengths in business.



2019

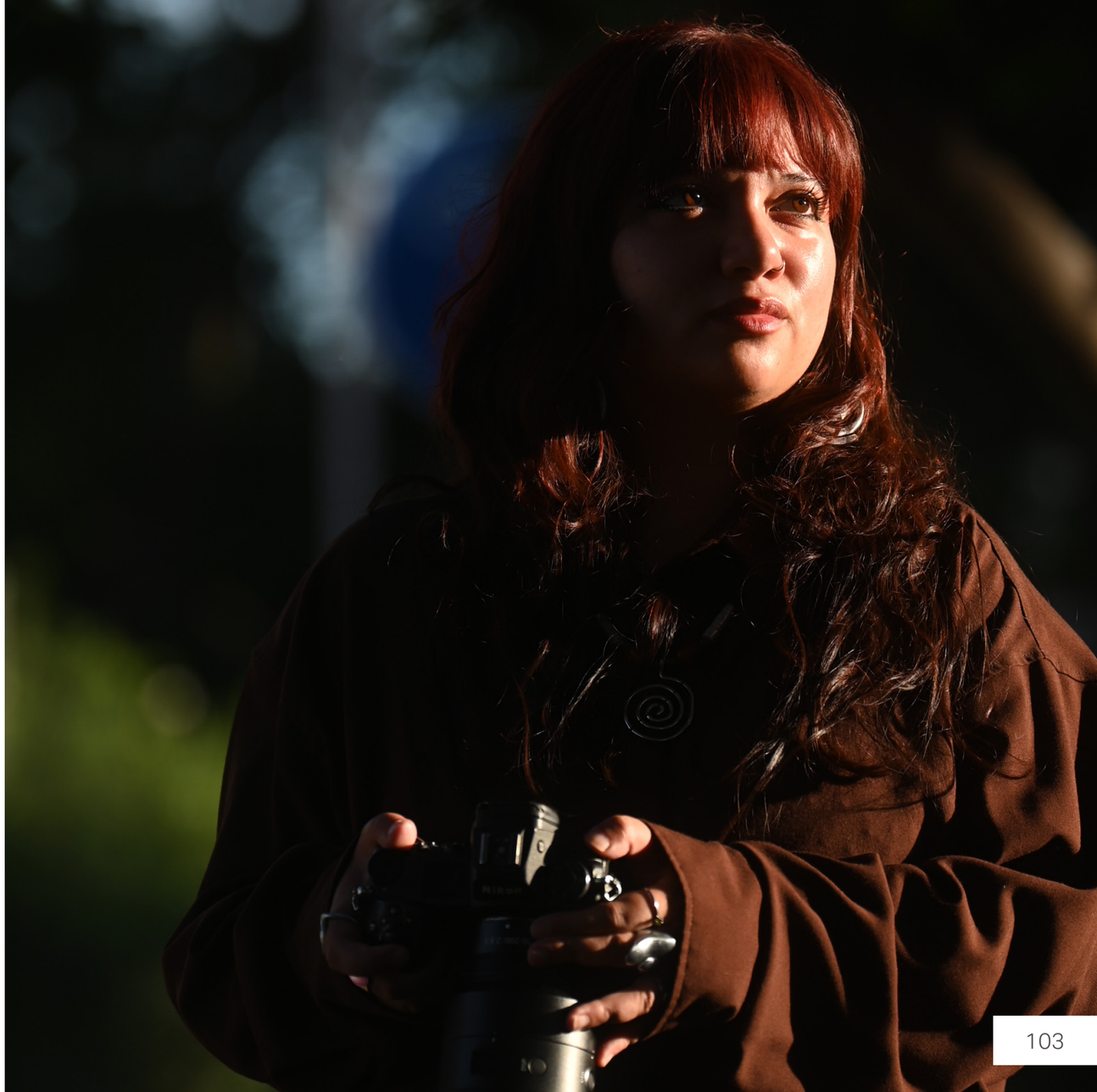
Miguela Xuereb

Photographer

My name is Miguela Xuereb and my journey with MCAST began in 2016 when I studied for a bachelor's degree in Journalism. I have now been a photo and video journalist with Newsbook for over eight years, beginning my career while I was still studying. When I look back at the girl who first walked into MCAST, I can barely recognise her.

In 2016, I was among the first students to join in on MCAST's newly launched Journalism course. We used to be called "the guinea pigs". I believe I was the most naive and lost, with literally no experience and very little knowledge about journalism. But somewhere between lectures, assignments, deadlines and practical work, I began to find myself. Throughout my three-year journey with MCAST, I grew and matured. The naive and careless girl became more focused and determined.

With the help of my lecturers, mentor Ms. Rosemarie Calleja and Mr. Gary Hampton who taught me photography in first year only, but to whose studio and darkroom I made it a point to go whenever I had free time on campus, I managed to find my footing and focus on what I really wanted to be: a photojournalist.





Fast forward to ten years from when I set foot inside MCAST for the first time, I can say that I do not regret studying journalism. Along the way, I had the honour of becoming an award-winning photojournalist and being named runner-up on two occasions. These achievements are milestones I am proud of, because they remind me of how far I have come.

When I think back to that young girl who walked into MCAST with no experience and even less certainty about where she was heading, I have no regrets about taking that path. It eventually became the beginning of a career that has now taken me to telling stories through my lens.

To those studying journalism, do not be afraid. Stay curious, keep asking questions, listen, observe, and most importantly, believe in yourself.



2020

Wendy Sciberras

Kindergarten Educator

My journey at MCAST began in 2017, at a time when I was considering a completely different career path. Although I had already invested considerable time and effort in that other direction, I felt that something was missing. I was not finding the sense of fulfilment I had hoped for, and I began to question what I truly wanted for my future.

Ever since I was young, I had dreamed of becoming a teacher. I loved the idea of working with children, helping them learn new things, and watching them grow and develop. Eventually, I realised that this was the path I was truly passionate about and wanted to pursue.

With that in mind, I enrolled in the Advanced Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development at MCAST. The course provided me with the opportunity to work with children aged 0 to 3 years and gain valuable practical experience in childcare settings. At the time, I had no previous experience working with children, so I was starting from scratch. Looking back, this was one of the best decisions I could have made, as it allowed me to build the necessary knowledge, skills, and confidence from the very beginning.

After successfully completing my first year, I was awarded the Award in Children's Care, Learning and Development. Encouraged by one of my tutors, who recognised that I had the qualifications and potential to progress further, I decided to enrol in the Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in the Early Years. This course provided me with the knowledge, skills, and experience I needed while giving me the sense of satisfaction and purpose I had been searching for in my career.

Throughout my studies, I gained the confidence and professional competence necessary to pursue a career in Early Years education. More importantly, I finally discovered a career that I genuinely enjoyed. For the first time, I could clearly see myself building a future in a profession that brought me both happiness and fulfilment.

One of the most memorable experiences of my time at MCAST was participating in the Erasmus+ programme and completing my practical placement in Finland. I was incredibly excited when I learned that I would have the opportunity to live and study abroad although, naturally, I was nervous as well. It was my first time living away from home, and I was not sure what to expect, particularly when working in a classroom where the children spoke a different language.

Living and working in Finland also exposed me to a different approach to Early Years education. I was particularly inspired by the importance placed on outdoor learning, nature, exploration, and child-led activities. It was wonderful to observe how children were encouraged to become independent, curious, and actively involved in their own learning journey.

This experience helped me grow both personally and professionally. Living abroad taught me resilience, independence, adaptability, and self-confidence. It also provided me with fresh ideas and perspectives that I could bring back to Malta and eventually apply within my own classroom. Thinking back, my practical experiences in both Malta and Finland played a vital role in shaping the educator I am today. They allowed me to put theory into practice and reinforced my belief that I had chosen the right career path.

Another significant part of my MCAST journey was the support I received from my lecturers. One of the reasons I chose MCAST was the opportunity to combine classroom learning with hands-on experience, but I quickly realised that the people I met along the way would be equally important.

I will always be grateful for their patience, encouragement, and constructive feedback. They helped me grow not only as a student and future educator but also as an individual. Many of the lessons they taught me continue to influence my work and professional practice today.



There were challenges, but there were also plenty of laughs, unforgettable memories, and shared achievements. Because we were all working towards similar goals, we understood one another's experiences and challenges. Having that support network made a tremendous difference, and I am grateful that some of those friendships remain an important part of my life today.

I am now entering my third year as a Kindergarten Educator, and I can honestly say that I love what I do. Every day brings new experiences and opportunities to learn. I enjoy collaborating with my colleagues, planning engaging activities, finding creative ways to make learning enjoyable, and, above all, spending time with the children.

MCAST provided me with the qualifications, practical experience, and confidence I needed to become an educator. Along the way, I met inspiring people, experienced life in another country, and learned a great deal about myself. If there is one lesson I have taken from this journey, it is that it is never too late to pursue what you truly love. Sometimes, taking that first step can lead you to opportunities and experiences beyond anything you ever imagined.

Today, I feel proud of how far I have come and excited about what lies ahead. I look forward to continuing to learn, grow, and make a positive difference in the lives of the children I teach, just as MCAST helped make a difference in mine.

2021

Tiziana Agius

Professional Executive in Regulatory Affairs—ENEMALTA PLC

My journey at MCAST began when I was 17 years old and I enrolled in the Diploma in Applied Science. At the time, I had not yet decided on a specific career path, but during the course, my interest in science and the environment grew steadily. This experience sparked a passion that encouraged me to continue my studies in the field and ultimately shaped the direction of my future career.

Building on this foundation, I progressed to the Advanced Diploma in Environmental Sustainability and later pursued a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Engineering. Each stage of my studies strengthened my understanding of environmental issues and helped define both my academic interests and my professional aspirations.

Throughout my time at MCAST, I was fortunate to be supported by dedicated lecturers who played an important role in my development. In particular, I benefitted from the guidance of a highly supportive tutor whose encouragement and mentorship were instrumental throughout my studies. One of the defining milestones of my academic journey came when I was given the opportunity to present my bachelor's thesis at the 43rd CIESM Congress in Palermo. Having my research showcased on an international platform was an unforgettable experience and a significant achievement that reinforced my commitment to the field.



Over the course of my studies, MCAST provided me with a comprehensive understanding of environmental systems, sustainability principles, and regulatory frameworks, while also offering valuable hands-on experience that prepared me for employment in the environmental sector. One of the most significant opportunities was the work placement component of my studies, which ultimately led to my first professional role. Following my placement, I secured a position with the same environmental consultancy, allowing me to transition directly from education into industry.

In this role, I was involved in a wide range of technical projects, including ambient air quality monitoring and assessment, GIS-based spatial analysis and mapping, environmental impact reporting, traffic and transport studies, and the development and auditing of Environmental Management Systems. During this period, I also continued to invest in my professional development by obtaining certifications as an Energy Auditor (MQF Level 6) and an ISO 14001 Internal Auditor.

Today, I work as a Professional Executive in Regulatory Affairs at Enemalta plc, where I coordinate regulatory and environmental compliance obligations related to electricity distribution and the ongoing development of Malta's national electricity distribution network.

My role involves overseeing licensing and regulatory compliance in accordance with Maltese and European Union environmental legislation. Key responsibilities include greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reporting and verification, compliance with Industrial Emissions Directive (IED/IPPC) permit requirements, and supporting the implementation and maintenance of ISO 14001 Environmental Management System standards. I also serve as the primary liaison with national and EU regulatory authorities, coordinating regulatory analysis, environmental monitoring, audits, and compliance activities across the Marsa and Delimara power stations.

I can confidently say that my time at MCAST played a crucial role in shaping both my academic and my professional journey. The knowledge, practical experience, opportunities, and mentorship I received provided me with a strong foundation on which to build my career. The combination of theoretical learning and industry-focused training prepared me for the challenges of the professional world and opened doors that might otherwise have remained out of reach.

My advice to current students is to make the most of every opportunity that comes their way. While the journey is not always easy and requires dedication, commitment, and many hours of hard work, the rewards are well worth the effort. Remain open to new experiences, embrace challenges, and do not be afraid to explore different paths. The skills, knowledge, and experiences gained through MCAST can lead to diverse, fulfilling, and rewarding careers.

Reflecting on where I started, I am grateful for the opportunities and support that helped me grow both personally and professionally. MCAST not only provided me with the qualifications needed to pursue my chosen career but also equipped me with the confidence, experience, and mindset required to succeed. The journey demanded perseverance and commitment, but it has undoubtedly been one of the most valuable investments in my future.



2022

Adielle Abela

Primary School Teacher

My journey at MCAST began when I enrolled in the Level 4 Advanced Diploma in Children's Care, Learning and Development. At the time, I was hesitant about choosing MCAST and was not entirely sure whether it was the right path for me. Like many students at that stage, I was still trying to understand what direction I wanted my education and future career to take.

Choosing MCAST was one of the best decisions I could have made. What initially felt like a first step into an area I was still discovering, gradually became the foundation for a much longer academic and professional journey.

After completing Level 4, I progressed onto the Level 5 Higher Diploma in Advanced Studies in the Early Years. These programmes strengthened my interest in education and helped me realise that working with children was something I genuinely wanted to pursue. I eventually continued my studies at another institution, progressing further in my academic journey. Today, I hold a Master of Education and work full-time as a primary school teacher. When I reflect on the different stages of my education, I recognise how important MCAST was in helping me arrive at where I am today.

It gave me the knowledge, confidence and practical experience that I needed to take the next steps. In many ways, MCAST was the stepping stone that opened the door to the opportunities that followed.

One of the aspects I valued most about my experience at MCAST was its hands-on approach to learning. Education was never simply about sitting in a classroom, listening to a lecturer, and memorising information. We were encouraged to participate actively in our learning through practical workshops, discussions, collaborative tasks, presentations and activities that challenged us to think for ourselves.

This approach made learning much more engaging and meaningful. It allowed us to explore ideas, ask questions and understand concepts rather than simply learn them for an examination. Most importantly, it helped us understand how the theories we were studying could be applied in real situations when working with children.

The practical experiences offered throughout the courses were equally valuable. Work placements and observation sessions gave me the opportunity to enter real educational environments and see what working with children involved on a day-to-day basis. Being able to observe professionals in their working environment and gradually put what I was learning into practice helped bridge the gap between theory and reality.

These experiences also helped me develop personally. They increased my confidence, improved my communication skills and taught me the importance of patience, adaptability and understanding when working with children. They showed me that education is not simply about delivering information. It is about creating an environment in which children feel supported, encouraged and motivated to learn.

However, some of my strongest memories of MCAST are not necessarily connected to particular lessons or assignments, but to the lecturers who accompanied us throughout our journey.

They were not simply there to deliver lectures and assess our work. They guided us, encouraged us and supported us. Whenever things became difficult, they were there to listen, offer advice and provide reassurance. Having lecturers who genuinely cared about their students made a lasting difference to my experience.

As a student, knowing that there were people who believed in me and were willing to support me gave me the confidence to keep progressing, even when I sometimes doubted myself. This is something that has stayed with me and that I now understand even more clearly from the perspective of a teacher.

Today, as a primary school teacher, I can still recognise elements of what I first developed at MCAST in the way I approach education. The emphasis on learning through doing, asking questions, collaborating with others, and connecting theory to practice has remained with me throughout my studies and into my own classroom.

My experience as an MCAST student also taught me that every learner is different. Not everyone learns in the same way, and sometimes students need someone to believe in them before they are able to believe in themselves. This is something I try to remember in my own classroom. I want my pupils to feel that their ideas matter, that they are allowed to ask questions and that making mistakes is part of the learning process.

My journey did not end at MCAST, but in many ways, it began there. MCAST provided the foundation that allowed me to continue progressing academically, eventually reaching Master's level and building the career in education that I have today. When I look back at that first decision to enrol, I realise that it was much more significant than I understood at the time.

For anyone who may be hesitant about choosing MCAST, as I once was, I would say: give yourself the opportunity to experience it. You may not have your entire future figured out when you begin, and that is perfectly fine. Sometimes the first step is simply choosing an opportunity and allowing yourself to discover where it can take you.

Education is not only about listening and remembering information. It is about participating, questioning, discovering, gaining confidence and growing as a person.

MCAST gave me the space to do exactly that. It gave me my first opportunity to discover my potential, develop my passion for education and build the confidence to continue moving forward. Today, as a primary school teacher, I am grateful for that first step. The journey that started at MCAST eventually led me to Master's level and, most importantly, to a career that I find meaningful and rewarding.

2023

Jake Bone

Physical Education Teacher & Lead Coach

My name is Jake Bone, and I am a former MCAST student. I began my journey at the age of 16, when I enrolled at the Institute of Community Services as a sports student, and successfully completed my studies at the age of 21.

Those five years were among the most valuable and rewarding of my life. During my time at MCAST, I built strong connections and developed a deep understanding of the sports industry. The course was extremely enriching, covering a wide range of subjects, including injury management, biomechanics, coaching, performance analysis, and much more. This variety not only broadened my knowledge but also sparked a deeper interest in coaching, ultimately guiding me towards the career path I follow today.

Throughout my studies, I gained comprehensive knowledge of human movement, injury prevention and treatment, nutrition, and the physiological and psychological aspects of both athletes and individuals striving towards a healthier lifestyle. These are skills and areas of knowledge that I continue to apply every day, both professionally and personally.





MCAST places a strong emphasis on practical learning, which was one of the most valuable aspects of my experience. I was given opportunities to deliver sessions, speak confidently in front of audiences, and apply my knowledge in real-life situations, while also being challenged through theoretical work. This balance between practical and academic learning played a crucial role in developing my confidence, communication skills, and professional approach.

Today, I work as a supply Physical Education teacher, own two fitness studios located in Ħal Qormi and Pietà, and serve as the Lead Coach of Physical Training at Pietà Hotspurs Nursery. I remain committed to lifelong learning and intend to continue furthering my studies in order to grow both personally and professionally.

I can confidently say that, without the support, training, and opportunities provided by MCAST, I would not be where I am today. The confidence I have when teaching, coaching, and leading others stems directly from the experiences and opportunities I was given during my time at the College.

MCAST has been a significant part of my personal and professional journey, and I am truly grateful for the strong foundation it has given me. The knowledge, skills, confidence, and relationships I developed during those five years continue to influence the work I do today and will remain an important part of my future.



2024

Jordan Galea Pace

Deputy Mayor of Swieqi | Social Media Manager

I graduated from MCAST in 2024 after studying Business Enterprise. Looking back, that decision influenced my life. I did not expect to end up in politics or media. I wanted a course that suited me and would give me options when I finished.

I have always been a hands-on kind of person, so MCAST appealed to me straight away. I wanted something that balanced theory with practical learning, rather than spending all my time studying from books. The internship mattered too. I wanted to get out there, learn on the job and see what I enjoyed doing.

Some of my best memories are of the people I met. MCAST brought together students from all walks of life. Between lectures, assignments and projects, I was constantly meeting people, exchanging ideas and building connections. Networking while learning was something I valued.

One skill I use every day is time management. At MCAST, work was broken down into different assignments and tasks, which taught me to prioritise and give each responsibility its own attention. Business Enterprise also showed me how different departments work and why communication between them matters. That experience is especially useful now, whether I am dealing with authorities on residents' concerns or coordinating different responsibilities at work.

I also served as a student representative, an experience that had a bigger impact on me than I realised. The Institute's Director and Deputy Director left a lasting impression. They showed me that you can be disciplined and understanding at the same time. Whenever I raised an issue, they listened first, took in what I was saying and then worked with us to find a solution. I still try to approach people in that same way today.

The entrepreneurship project was another highlight. We had to bring together different skills from different courses and work out how to build a business. It was hands-on, sometimes challenging, and probably the closest we could get to understanding how much coordination goes into turning an idea into reality. It helped me later when I started my own freelance social media management business, and even when trying to find solutions with different authorities in Swieqi.

My internship opened a door I never expected: social media management and content creation. I tried it, enjoyed it and kept going. Eventually, I became Deputy Editor of a local news website attracting millions of views a month. I then contested my first local council election in Swieqi and was elected, becoming Deputy Mayor.



Since then, I have also worked as an assistant campaign executive and social media manager for Malta's Leader of the Opposition. More recently, I have started producing a daily television current affairs programme. It is an unusual mix of roles, but I enjoy the challenges.

One of the biggest challenges I have faced is being seen as too young. But what's in an age? If you have been gaining experience and taking on challenges from a young age, you can have just as much to offer as someone older who encountered those same situations later in life. I try to get past that judgement by working harder and proving myself through what I do. Yes, it means extra work, but if that is what it takes to earn a seat at the table, then so be it.

When I think about MCAST's biggest contribution to my life, I keep coming back to representing students. It taught me to listen to people, understand different concerns and speak up on behalf of others. What began at MCAST is now something I do every day as Deputy Mayor.

My advice to current students is to not let stigma or comments from friends put you off your ambitions. And if you are unsure what you want, just try something. What is the worst that can happen? You gain experience, or you discover a path you had never considered.

I would also encourage anyone interested in politics to get involved, whichever party they believe in. Our country needs young people and professionals from every background. Politics is not only for lawyers or people with traditional political careers. It is for everyone.

And here is a fun fact: no one from MCAST has been elected to Malta's Parliament, yet. Be the person who enters the scene and claims that title. That could be you.

2024

James Perry Zammit

Corporate Coach Mentor & Educator

Coming to MCAST as an adult learner meant bringing a rich and varied background. I was born in Australia to Maltese parents, then lived across five countries—Australia, Malta, England, the USA, and Russia. That international exposure shaped in me a global perspective on people, culture, and communication. Alongside this came more than fifteen years of experience as a corporate coach and mentor, working with teams and leaders to strengthen transversal skills that drive performance.

Earlier years were spent working in tourism, hotels and restaurants, including nine years as managing director of a start-up catering company. Having seen first hand how people's skill sets—both strengths and gaps—could directly impact business performance, upskilling and lifelong learning became essential for taking the next step in my career. MCAST offered the chance to formalise practical knowledge and build new competencies that would make a real difference in the workplace.

The course at MCAST was chosen deliberately. What mattered most was finding a programme that connected personal experiences with the realities of the working world. Too often, training feels disconnected from what actually happens on the job. The goal was to address the human side of business—how communication, leadership, emotional intelligence, and other transversal skills can either drive success or hold teams back. MCAST's vocational focus, strong industry links, and practical approach aligned perfectly with those needs.



Enrolling in the Master's in Vocational Education and Applied Research marked the beginning of a transformative period. I graduated in December 2024. From the start, the learning environment felt different: collaborative, applied, and grounded in real scenarios. As an adult student, the teaching style respected existing experience while challenging everyone to think more critically and strategically. Group projects often mirrored actual workplace challenges, allowing management background to contribute meaningfully to discussions and assignments.

My time at MCAST proved transformative. The energy in the classrooms, the openness of lecturers to real-world examples, and the shared sense of growth—not just passing examinations—stood out. The College culture encouraged questioning, reflection, and immediate application of learning. For someone already working and managing responsibilities outside of class, that practical relevance was essential. Skills developed at MCAST became the backbone of professional development. The programme went beyond theory, pushing students to test ideas in realistic settings. Whether analysing operational challenges, designing training interventions, or presenting business solutions, every task connected to problems faced in real careers. This built confidence and provided a clearer framework for understanding how people skills influence organisational performance.

After graduating, my professional career received the boost that was being aimed for. Today, I am a professional academic and corporate educator, focusing on transversal skill sets that improve business performance. Work now centres on adult learning, soft skills, and workplace development, with emphasis on how competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence can drive better outcomes. Completing the Master's in Vocational Education and Applied Research, specialising in seven transversal skill sets that enhance performance, would not have been possible without the foundation built at MCAST.

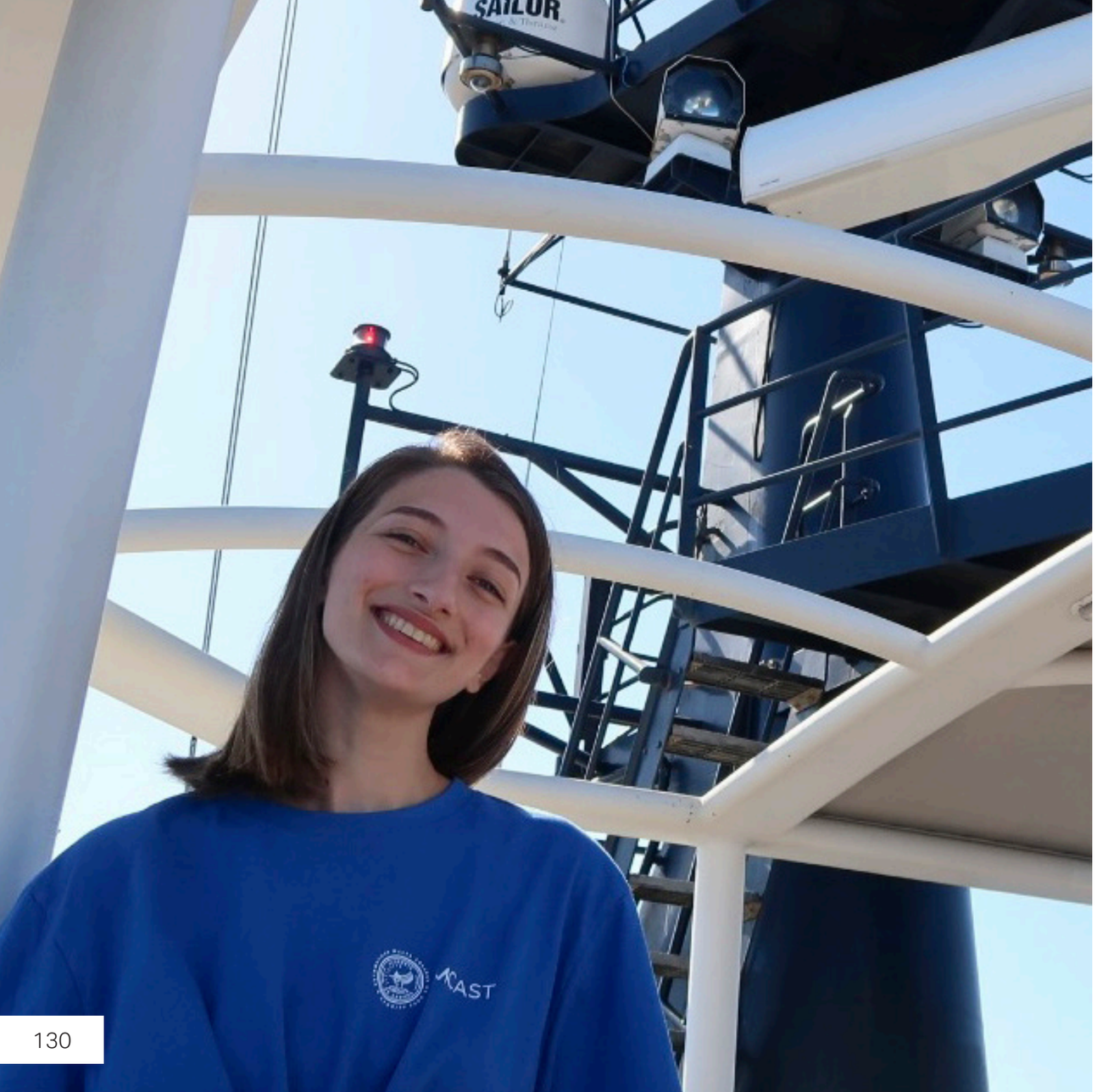
The path was not without challenges. Balancing work, study, and personal commitments required discipline and resilience. There were moments of doubt, especially while managing professional responsibilities. But the problem-solving mindset developed at MCAST helped navigate those pressures, teaching prioritisation, seeking support when needed, and keeping long-term goals in view.

MCAST contributed significantly to both personal and professional growth. On a personal level, it reinforced belief in lifelong learning and gave confidence to pursue further qualifications.

Professionally, it equipped with frameworks and tools still used today in teaching and consulting work. Most importantly, it validated the instinct that people skills are not "soft" in the sense of being optional—they are central to business success.

To current MCAST students, or anyone considering a vocational path later in their career, the advice is simple: embrace the opportunity to connect learning with lived experience. Do not be afraid to bring real-world challenges into the classroom. Ask questions, seek feedback, and look for ways to apply learning immediately. The skills built now—both technical and transversal—will stay for life.

MCAST provided the tools, confidence, and network to build a career to be proud of. Gratitude for that foundation remains strong, and the hope is that this story encourages other adult learners to see the value in upskilling and the opportunities that vocational education can create.



2025

Giulia Cassar

Master's Student

I still remember walking into the Institute of Applied Sciences for the very first time. At the age of 17, I enrolled in the Level 3 Diploma in Applied Science, confident that I wanted to pursue studies within the field of science, although I had not yet decided on a specific career path.

During that first year, I attended several presentations that offered insight into the wide range of opportunities available within the scientific sector. These experiences helped me discover my passion for the environment and ultimately led me to choose the environmental stream. From there, I progressed to the Advanced Diploma in Environmental Sustainability and later pursued a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Environmental Science and Sustainable Technologies, proudly graduating as part of the Class of 2025.

The environmental stream covers a broad range of subjects, including resource and waste management, pollution control, environmental monitoring, and environmental impact assessments. What made the experience at MCAST particularly valuable was that these topics were not confined to the classroom. Through fieldwork, site visits, assignments, conferences, and practical projects, I was able to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings and gain a deeper understanding of environmental challenges and sustainable solutions.

Beyond academics, these courses opened many doors for personal and professional development. They enabled me to build a strong professional network and develop a diverse range of skills through several work placements. During my studies, I had the opportunity to undertake placements with Nature Trust Malta (NTM), the Environment and Resources Authority (ERA), the Energy and Water Agency (EWA), and Aquatic Resources Malta (ARM). Each experience exposed me to different areas of the environmental sector and provided valuable insight into potential career paths.

One of the highlights of my academic journey was collaborating with BirdLife Malta on my dissertation, *The Distribution of Microplastics in Maltese Wetlands.* This research allowed me to investigate an increasingly important environmental issue while contributing to an area that I am deeply passionate about.

MCAST also provided me with the opportunity to participate in an Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) at the Opole University of Technology in Poland, titled *ECO-VISION: Water, Wastewater, Energy. Together for a Sustainable Future.* This international experience broadened my perspective, strengthened my understanding of environmental sustainability, and allowed me to connect with students and professionals from different countries and backgrounds.

Another unforgettable experience was participating in the *OurOBS* oceanographic survey between the Maltese Islands and Sicily aboard the research vessel *Gaia Blu* in September 2025. The project aimed to establish a baseline of physical and biogeochemical data, including marine plastic monitoring and marine plankton biomass assessments as part of research linked to the *JPI Oceans Action Science for Good Environmental Status (S4GES).*

This unique opportunity not only allowed me to conduct marine fieldwork aboard a research vessel but also played a significant role in shaping my future aspirations. It inspired me to take the next step in my academic journey and reinforced my passion for the sea and the natural environment. Today, I am close to completing a Master's degree in Applied Oceanography at the University of Malta, a decision that was greatly influenced by this experience, my love for marine ecosystems, and my desire to continue researching microplastics and their impact on the environment.

When I reflect on my journey, I can confidently say that MCAST was far more than simply a college I attended. It played a defining role in shaping both my academic and personal development and helped me become the person I am today. Through the opportunities it provided, I gained valuable knowledge, practical experience, and the confidence to pursue my ambitions.

Equally important were the people I met along the way. From fellow students and lecturers to industry professionals and researchers, every interaction contributed to my growth and broadened my understanding of the environmental sector. MCAST also guided me in making important decisions about my future studies, ultimately influencing the path I hope to follow within the marine and environmental fields. As I continue my studies and explore new opportunities, my goal remains to build a career within the marine environmental sector. I am also eager to continue expanding my knowledge through further research and specialisation.

Whatever path I choose next, I know that MCAST has provided me with the knowledge, skills, experiences, and confidence needed to achieve my goals. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities it offered and for the role it has played in shaping my future. Looking back at where my journey began, I can confidently say that MCAST gave me everything I needed to get where I want to be.

2025

Maria Concetta Calafiore

Operatic Soprano

I am an operatic soprano, and my voice carries the echoes of Sicily—ancient theatres carved into cliffs, sun-drenched piazzas and landscapes that resonate even in silence. Yet, beyond the familiar shores of my homeland, I felt an enduring pull towards a wider horizon—a place where my music could expand, evolve and encounter new possibilities. And Malta appeared on that horizon - a decisive leap into the unknown, a limestone canvas awaiting my voice.

At MCAST, I immersed myself fully in the world of the Performing Arts, engaging with the delicate interplay between movement, acting, and the intricate, often unseen, mechanisms that sustain operatic production. The programme proved to be a true crucible for alchemy and experimentation, compelling me to explore every dimension of performance, both on and off the stage. My thesis, *Elinette*, emerged as a living vision: a contemporary opera in which the audience could transcend passive observation to become an integral part of the narrative—a theatre of catharsis, where characters arose organically from within, rather than being externally imposed.



In assuming the roles of opera singer, stage manager, and artistic director, I brought together the threads of sound, movement, and dramaturgical vision. MCAST provided not only the technical foundation for this process, but also the intellectual and creative freedom to explore without constraint—an environment where imagination was continually refined through discipline.

Through a series of internships, I extended this learning into professional practice, working behind the scenes as assistant artistic director at KorMalta, assistant administrative director at the National Agency for the Performing Arts, and assistant stage manager at Teatru Manoel. These experiences offered invaluable insight into the operational complexity of performance-making—the precision, coordination, and adaptability required to bring artistic vision to fruition. My subsequent return to Teatru Manoel as a professional assistant stage manager for Verdi's *Falstaff* marked a significant moment of professional recognition, affirming both the skills I had developed and the trust I had earned.

MCAST instilled in me the understanding that artistry extends far beyond innate talent. It is grounded in courage, resilience, and a readiness to engage with uncertainty. I learned to navigate complexity with composure, to orchestrate multifaceted productions, and to cultivate a collaborative environment in which vision and execution coexist harmoniously.

Although I did not initially pursue formal training in finance management, the professional pathways facilitated by MCAST enabled me to develop a broader, more integrated perspective. I came to recognise that numbers are not abstract constructs, but reflections of human endeavour. Each figure embodies time, preparation, and aspiration; each budget line tells a story.

This awareness was further deepened when I performed *The Ecstasy of Gold* by Ennio Morricone with the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra for Rockestra, before an audience of over 10,000 people. That moment represented not only an artistic achievement, but also the culmination of extensive organisational effort, collective dedication, and shared purpose.

In my current role as Senior Administrator in Finance at the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, I operate at the intersection of artistic sensibility and structural precision. Music continues to inform my approach, even within the most analytical dimensions of my work. Just as a musical phrase requires balance, timing, and nuance, so too does effective financial management.

Managing artists and budgets is not merely a matter of control, but of equilibrium. It involves aligning creative ambition with sustainable practice, ensuring that artistic vision is supported rather than constrained. My experience as a performer provides a distinctive perspective, allowing me to approach financial decision-making not as a limiting framework, but as an enabling structure within which creativity can flourish.

When engaging with budgets, I am not simply allocating resources; I am contributing to the realisation of artistic experiences, performances, and opportunities. To understand "the people behind the numbers" is to engage with the human dimension that underpins every decision. It requires attentiveness, empathy, and the ability to perceive beyond data. Each figure represents commitment, energy, and often sacrifice, and must therefore be approached with both analytical rigour and human awareness. Much like an ensemble, where each voice contributes to the integrity of the whole, financial stewardship demands a careful balance of all its elements. In this sense, every budget becomes not merely a set of figures, but a framework of possibilities.

MCAST has been far more than an educational institution—it has been a catalyst for transformation. It has provided me with the tools to navigate complexity, the confidence to embrace risk, and the vision to translate challenges into opportunities for growth. From Sicily to Malta, from stage to administration, my journey reflects an ongoing dialogue between artistry and structure. I have come to understand that opera is not simply performed—it is lived, experienced, and shared. Each note carries meaning, each silence holds depth, and every step forward forms part of an evolving and continuous journey.



2026

Dylan Portanier

Marine Fitter

I have recently completed a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Marine Engineering at MCAST. My interest in the maritime industry developed from a young age through exposure to boats and the marine environment. Being around boats from as long as I remember, sparked my curiosity about how they operate and the engineering behind them. I also spent around six years sailing, which further strengthened my connection with the maritime environment.

At the same time, I always had a strong interest in engineering and in understanding how things work. After completing secondary school, I attended Junior College, where I obtained my A Levels, before deciding to pursue a career in the maritime industry. I first completed the necessary maritime courses and gained my first experience working on board a yacht as a deckhand. This experience confirmed that I wanted to build my future within the maritime sector, but from an engineering perspective. This led me to enrol in the Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Marine Engineering at MCAST.

One of the main reasons I chose MCAST was the contents of the course. Throughout the three years, I was able to develop knowledge in many areas of marine engineering, from naval architecture and marine diesel engines to electrical systems, instrumentation, control systems, maintenance and fault diagnosis. What I particularly valued was the combination of theoretical and practical learning.

Workshop practice was an important part of my studies. I was taught how to operate a lathe and milling machine, carry out bench fitting and use different welding methods. These practical skills later proved extremely valuable when I began developing my final project. At

the same time, through my apprenticeship in the maritime industry, I was able to apply what I was learning at MCAST in a real working environment. I gained exposure to large-scale engines as well as systems such as electrical generation, HVAC and different types of plant. Being able to learn the technical and practical aspects simultaneously helped me understand how the different areas of marine engineering come together in practice.

My lecturers also played an important role throughout my studies. I am grateful to all of them for the knowledge and experience they shared with us, but I have a particular appreciation for Dr Darren Mifsud, who recognised my potential and encouraged me to always give my best. His guidance went beyond simply completing the requirements of an academic project. He encouraged me to look at what I was building as something that could have value beyond my studies, and he continues to guide me as I work towards my ambition of eventually owning a company based around something I have developed myself.

For my second-year project and final dissertation, I decided to take on a more ambitious route by developing one complex project across both years. I have always enjoyed a challenge and wanted to work on something that would require me to keep learning and solving problems throughout the process. The result was a remotely operated magnetic crawler designed for ship hull inspection.

The project brought together many different areas of engineering. I had to work on the mechanical design, manufacturing, electrical systems, controls, programming and testing. Not all of these were areas in which I already had extensive experience, so I had to learn many things through research and experimentation. This became one of the most valuable aspects of the project because I learned that engineering is not about knowing everything beforehand. It is about being able to identify a problem, understand what is causing it and find a way to solve it.

One example was a problem I encountered with the control system. During bench testing, everything worked correctly, but once I connected the system through the long umbilical cable required for the crawler, the controls stopped operating reliably. Rather than simply accepting the problem, I researched the issue and found that the resistance and characteristics of the cable were affecting the signal transmission. I investigated possible solutions and eventually incorporated an extender and additional receiver, which solved the problem completely.

Experiences such as this taught me the importance of testing, troubleshooting and being willing to change an approach when something does not work as expected.

Because the project was a complex, self-funded development, it also required a significant personal investment. This made me want to establish whether the idea was genuinely innovative and worth pursuing beyond an academic project. I therefore decided to investigate the possibility of protecting the idea through a patent. The patent application was subsequently granted, which was a particularly rewarding achievement for me. It gave me confidence that the project was not simply something I had built to complete my degree, but an innovative concept with potential beyond academia.

The project also changed the way I look at engineering. I realised that engineering can go beyond designing something for an academic grade. It can involve identifying a real problem, developing a solution, testing and improving it, and eventually turning that solution into something that could have practical and commercial value. This is something I hope to build on in the future, particularly because I had the opportunity to study Entrepreneurship at MCAST. That subject helped me understand the importance of looking at an engineering idea not only from a technical perspective, but also from the perspective of how it could potentially become a business.

Looking ahead, I intend to continue developing myself within the maritime industry. I am currently looking towards pursuing a Master of Science in the same field while continuing to complete the professional certifications and courses required for my future ambitions. I would also like to continue researching technologies used in subsea engineering, particularly those that could be useful for further development and upgrades to the crawler.

Ultimately, my time at MCAST has given me much more than a degree. It gave me a technical foundation, practical experience and opportunities to work alongside industry, while the challenges I encountered taught me to become more independent and resourceful. Most importantly, I learned to take those opportunities and turn them into my own projects and ambitions. I hope to continue building on what I started at MCAST and, one day, turn something that began as a student project into a company of my own.

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