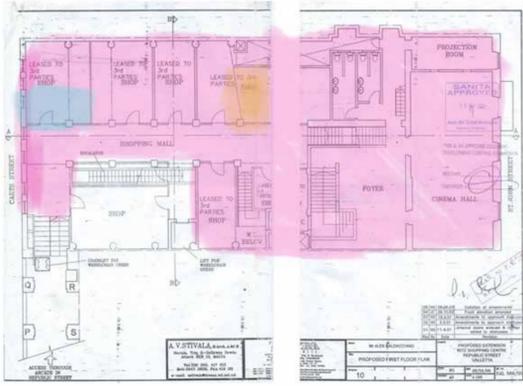


# Citylights Valletta

The project proposes that City Lights hosts a programme of artistic events leading up to, and including 2018, to define and help develop the site as a cultural hub and contemporary arts space. A series of exhibitions is proposed, using the empty shops as gallery space and the cinema for screening and performance in the lead up to 2018. It is proposed that in 2018, a group of international artists will be invited to take up a short residency in the space to develop work in-situ in relation to the City Lights site and the surrounding area. Each artist will have an empty shop space to work with.



Dr. John Schofield is collaborating in the project, to develop a pop-up social museum, where members of the public will be invited to share their memorabilia (photographs, posters, letters, items) that tell the history of the City Lights and Strait Street sites. The University of York and Central Saint Martins (CSM) will work together to share methodologies of social mapping across the disciplines of social archaeology and fine art practices. Other significant critical links and approaches are Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project, critical discourses relating to memory, history, forgetting (Ricoeur), the dérive (Debord), film history, social history, previous research by Emma Talbot with the Freud Museum on intimacy and previous research by Mick Finch on Aby Warburg's technical apparatus. Issues of archival discourses, social archaeology, contemporary fine art practices and site specificity will be addressed through the residency followed by an exhibition of works made on site and a programme of events and talks. The aim is that these events will take place as part of the V18 programme. An Erasmus component to the project is also envisaged.



The former City Lights cinema is a unique site in Malta's capital, Valletta. The site is an historic place of image production and its close proximity, in St. John Street, to Strait Street brings it into a fascinating and significant part of Malta's cultural heritage. The present owner is Anton Baldacchino whose family have occupied the property since May 1976, continuing the family tradition of cinematographers after his grandfather Walter Baldacchino who was the proprietor of a number of Cinemas including ABC ex Comet in 1963, Capitol (the present City lights) Radio City in 1958, the Odeon in 1952 and the Manoel Theatre

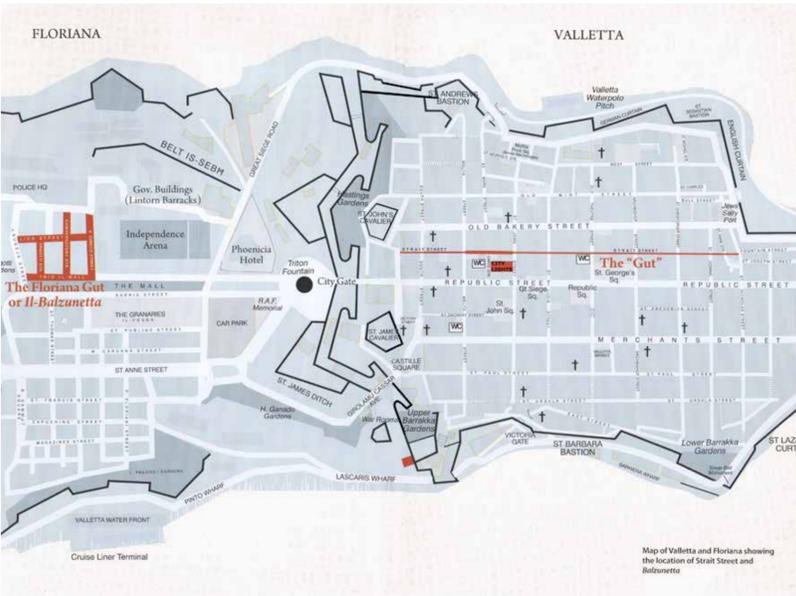


## Proposed Activities

**2016**  
Group Exhibition.  
1 month exhibition in upstairs gallery space and screening in the cinema.  
1 day presentation event artists talks/screenings open to public.  
International artists (CSM).  
Staff from the Arts Programme at CSM.  
Project and exhibition based on image production/selected archival film posters collection/cinema at City Lights.  
Use of archival cinema posters within the exhibition and programme of screenings in the cinema.

for five years starting in 1956. When the house was passed on to the next generation City lights was established in 1977 on the first floor. The garden and lower floors, were developed as a shopping arcade in 1980. The ensemble of the arcade and the cinema became known as City Lights. The cinema, was until 2005, functioning using 1930s Kalee 35mm projectors. It became an adult/erotic cinema and an important site within the larger Strait Street heterotopia. Strait Street is highly significant in Malta's history serving the British and US fleets who were based there, the British since circa 1800. The British military left Malta in 1979 and this marked a beginning of a marked decline in Strait Street's function and fortune. City Lights today has the shopping arcade and the cinema in tact. The arcade has fallen into disuse and is now unoccupied but the shop units have facades that date from different eras. The site

literally brings to mind Walter Benjamin's Arcades project. CSM alumna Selina Scerri is the director of the exhibition space and will coordinate the City Lights aspect of the project in partnership with Anton Baldacchino.



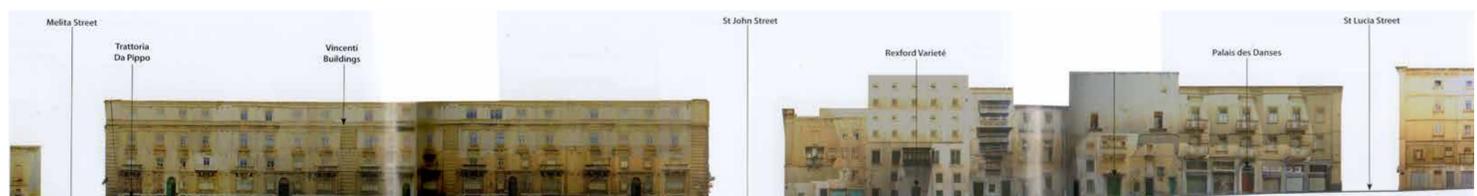
**2017**  
Artist residencies.  
Student Group Exhibition/ Project CSM students  
1 week research and production visit by CSM students.  
1 month exhibition, upstairs Gallery space and screening in the cinema based on the site's history of image production/selected archival film posters collection/cinema at City Lights/psychogeography of site  
1 day event presentations/talks about exhibition in Cinema.



Dr. John Schofield, Head of Department and Director of Studies, Cultural Heritage Management in the department of Archaeology at the University of York, will collaborate with the project. He brings valuable expertise including his study of Strait Street and the notorious 'Gut' into the project (Strait Street: Malta's 'Red Light District' Revealed, Midsea Books, 2013). He will lead specific events at City Lights; an exhibition of archive materials he has assembled through his study of Strait Street and a music event in the cinema including surviving musicians from the clubs and bars in Strait Street's heyday.



The purpose is to engage the community with this history and to gather further material toward establishing a sustainable archive of the area. The aim is to establish and consolidate an archive of the locality, addressing this important phase of Malta's social and cultural history. In this way the project's aims can be described in terms of cultural mapping, reviving and contextualising culture and as a tool for artistic practitioners. The project engages with aspects of site, history and the inter-disciplinary relationship between social archaeology and artistic practice.



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