

Good evening,

It is with profound gratitude that I accept the International Patronage Award from The Callia Foundation.

The Callia Foundation recognises that art does more than decorate our world; it shapes it. It influences how we see one another, how we respond to differences, and ultimately how we act.

By championing artists and cultural leaders, The Callia Foundation elevates not only creativity but conscience. In doing so, it reminds us that patronage is not about prestige – it is about responsibility.

My journey into philanthropy began with something deeply personal. My sister, Sharon, died at the age of twenty-six. Her passing was devastating. Grief has a way of changing how we see the world. And in those moments, life presents us with a choice. I could have allowed the pain to pull me inwards or instead turn it into something that helps others.

For me, the answer became purpose. My sisters passing prompted me to think about giving. Art became one of the most powerful expressions of that purpose.

Art has the capacity to show contradiction: beauty and discomfort, fragility and strength, memory and imagination. It allows us to enter another person's inner world. It asks us not merely to observe, but to feel.

In a fractured world – politically polarised, culturally divided and often fearful of difference – art remains one of the last true bridges between people.

A work of art can dissolve distance in an instant. It can remind us that beyond politics or belief, there is a shared human experience.

This is why patronage matters.

Pablo Picasso once said, "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." This beautiful thought speaks to the essence of art itself – that art gives shape to the invisible parts of our humanity and allows what is most personal within us to become a shared language of meaning, memory and hope.

To support art is not to support luxury. It is to support dialogue. It is to invest in empathy. It is to create spaces where complexity is allowed, where nuance endures and where humanity remains visible.

The Callia Foundation understands this deeply.

I have always believed that collecting art is not about ownership. It is about guardianship. We are temporary custodians of creativity that will outlive us, allowing future viewers to understand and connect with the moment in which it was made. The works we support today will speak to generations we will never meet. In that sense, art is both profoundly hopeful and enduring.

Thank you to The Callia Foundation, for this honour which I accept it with gratitude – and with a continued commitment to my work.