

The Art of Spirituality Уметност духовности  
Η ΤΕΧΝΗ ΤΗΣ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΤΗΤΑΣ Уметност на духовното  
Искусство духовности Мистецтво духовности





Front cover: Ascension (Вознесение)  
Alexei Mezentsev Алексей Мезенцев  
egg tempera, 24K gold leaf

Back cover: Saint Sava (Свети Сава)  
Svetlana Ristic Светлана Ристић  
egg tempera on wood panel, 24K gold leaf  
14" x 19"



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Jelena Cetkovic	Јелена Ћетковић
Georgi Danevski	Георги Даневски
Viktor Gerasimov	Виктор Герасимов
Sandra Jovanovic	Сандра Јовановић
Valeria Kouznetsova	Валерия Кузнецова
Pavlo Lopata	Павло Лопата
Veronika Melnyk	Вероніка Мельник
Alexei Mezentsev	Алексей Мезенцев
Olga Orlova	Ольга Орлова
Domna Papadopoulou	Δομνα Παπαδοπούλου
Procopius	Прокопий
Zoran Rnjak	Зоран Рњак
Svetlana Ristic	Светлана Ристић
Vladimir Stjepanovic Gabelic	Владимир Стјепановић Габелић



## Art Is Spirituality

In its core, art - as a result of inspiration - is spiritual in nature. We could explain art as an exploration of the *source*; a journey of discovery of the nature of things; a search for the universal truth where artist is a mediator between the source and a receiver.

Through the centuries a religion, as an eminently spiritual sphere, made deepest impact on art and vice versa. From the primitive societies to modern times the two have been interwoven with everyday life and inseparable from the most intimate human aspirations, dreams and hopes. One of the art forms that made fundamental influence on modern art is the Byzantine icon art. The Icons are typically "written" with certain - coloristically flat quality. Also, they are known for the inverse perspective. Unlike linear perspective, which creates the illusion of space by having images in the distance become smaller and smaller with all things converging at a single vanishing point, inverted perspective denies the reality of space in the background. Images in the background are often larger than those in the foreground and the vanishing point or points are often in the foreground, close to the viewer. Not only does this contribute to the Byzantine interest in abstraction and flatness, it also keeps one's attention in the foreground, between the viewer and the subject of interest. Another major characteristic of icon art also found in modern art is the frequent absence of facial expression in order to show inner - spiritual - reality.

This is a real abstraction - bringing out, drawing out the essence of things - which was the initial aim of modern abstractionists such as the sculptor Constantine Brancusi or painters Kandinsky, Mondrian and cubists Picasso or Braque. Their work was mostly regarded as departure from reality while it was, in fact, a true abstraction which aspires to make hidden reality manifest in physical form. Henry Matisse was particularly impressed by Byzantine icons. He visited Moscow in 1911 and at that time he stated: "They [icons] are really great art, I am in love with their moving simplicity which, to me, is closer and dearer than Fra Angelico. In these icons the soul of the artist who painted them opens out like a mystical flower. *And from them we ought to learn how to understand art*".

All of these artists who were directly influenced by this ancient art form knew then, and all of modern iconographers and icon devotees know now that there is a spiritual, simple way of understanding nature of things that is deeper than the scientific, empirical knowledge.

As Constantin Brancusi said: "Simplicity is complexity resolved". This is particularly true in Christian Orthodox icon art.

Lilly Otasevic  
July, 2014

Zoran Rnjak  
Зоран Рњак

Zoran completed his studies of Fine art and Art history at the University of Toronto in 1999, and for over 15 years he has been working as a professional artist. Painting has brought great joy to Zoran and he in part tries to pass that to others through his work. Although having grown up into an artistically rich family and studying art at university, the greatest influence to his early career was being able to apprentice under two renowned artists specializing in Byzantine art. The biggest emphasis during those few years was on drawing and the use of pure pigment colour, both characteristics that have proven invaluable throughout Zoran's career.

Zoran's work although ever evolving has found a certain niche style: "My work today is ever more based on an abstract designs, juxtaposition of light and dark and a clever use of color and edges. I paint things that I know and things that I love not the way that they are, but the way they feel to me."

Zoran lives with his family in Toronto, Canada where he also maintains a studio.  
<http://www.zoranrnjak.com>



Vladimir Stjepanovic Gabelic  
Владимир Стјепановић Габелић

Vladimir Stjepanovic Gabelic was born in Bijeljina, Republic of Srpska. He was schooled in Bijeljina, Belgrade, and Toronto. Self-taught iconographer, Vladimir's endeavors resulted in iconographic work for the Serbian Diocese of Canada. His Icons are part of private collections in Canada and Europe. Vladimir's drawings and illustrations have been published in Toronto newspapers and in the book "Kisa Kosova" (Rain of Kosovo). In the Gold Coast, Australia, he painted altar icons. Vladimir participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions across Canada and abroad. He is a member of the Association of Visual Artists of Serbia (ULUS).



Virgin Mary with Christ  
11.5" x 15.5", egg tempera



## Domna Papadopoulou

### Δομνα Παπαδοπούλου

Domna Papadopoulou is a Byzantine Greek iconographer. She was born and grew up in Northern Greece close to the Holy Mount Athos. For 15 years Domna was the main radio-producer and the speaker at the radio TV station with Christian Orthodox and cultural content. Self taught iconographer since 1989, she spent many years in personal study of Orthodox Theology, Byzantine and Holy Mount Athos iconography.

Domna's icons are entirely hand painted with egg-tempera natural pigments and 22-23 3/4 karat gold leaf on canvas prepared with gesso and mounted on wood panel. She participated in numerous group exhibitions, and her work adorns Churches, Monasteries and private collections in Greece, Canada and abroad. She lives and works in Toronto, Canada.

<http://www.domnasicons.com>



St. John "The Forerunner"  
11" x 14", egg tempera, 24K gold leaf

## Svetlana Ristic

### Светлана Ристић



Christ  
10.5" x 15 3/4", egg tempera

Svetlana Ristic was born in Novi Sad, Serbia. She graduated Conservation and Restoration from the College of Pedagogy in Belgrade in 1984, in the class of professors Milisav M. Mladenovic and Dragana Milisavljevic. After graduation, she was part of a conservation-restoration team working on the St. Ahilije Church in Arilje, Serbia and Blagovestenje Monastery, Stragari, Serbia a team lead by Radoman Gasic. Svetlana has been living in Toronto with her family since 1995. She was involved in several art projects during that period such as animated production by Salivan Studio - Animation of Ann of Green Gables, technical and artistic production of "Glasnik", newsletter published by the Serbian Orthodox Church, St. Sava in Toronto, and "Sabornik" newsletter published by All Serbian Saints Church in Mississauga, Ontario. Svetlana has been painting icons since she was a student, and her pieces are part of numerous private collections around the world. She participated in several group exhibitions in Belgrade, Serbia and Toronto, Canada. In 2003, Svetlana was awarded fist prize for her graphic design commemorating Ikea's 30th anniversary in Canada.

## The Perspective of Icons

Icons are the fundamental expression of Orthodox Christianity. Historically they have always been part of the Ecclesial community. From the known Acheiropoieta ("not made by hands") icon and the catacomb frescoes to our contemporary era, icons have played a great role in spreading the word of faith, embracing new nations of people in the Church. Icons were persecuted (6-9 century), just as Christians were in the first centuries, and, yet they prevailed to shine and truly explain the wonders of Christ and his Coming Kingdom.

Icons are **liturgical**.

They explain and complete the Liturgy, as said by a famous Russian icon painter, Leonid Ouspensky: "The liturgical and sacramental life of the Church is inseparable from the image." The image implies the reality of the Liturgy. We venerate the icons, and through them we see God Himself. We observe the Archetype, Christ, through whom all is created.

Icons are **theological**.

They portray theology in colours, as was once said by the blessed memory bishop Danilo (Krstic). Fathers of the Church said that we can portray what was incarnate, meaning that we can portray God through the image of Christ. Christ is the revelation of the Holy Trinity. Thus, we learn about our faith through the beautiful icons that teach us about the revealed God.

Icons are **missiological**.

All images present a certain value, a concept of understanding. They open an entire sphere of new reality. Thus, they gather all people of all variety and teach the beauty of life. Icons, through their written image, teach the literate and illiterate, the intelligent and those less gifted, the rich and poor the importance of humbleness, faith, righteousness, peace, love, and all other virtues important for the existence as humankind. Fathers of our Holy Church used to teach the illiterate through frescoes and icons, explaining the Gospel, the Word of God.

Icons are **cultural**.

Many different cultures are expressed through icons, and icons express different cultures. Throughout nations we can observe slight differences that are intact with canonical iconography. Colour, clothing, language play a great part in how the icon is presented. Thus, implying the importance that Christ is for all nations and cultures on earth, from Europe, through the Americas to Asia. This transition of culture can be viewed in initial iconography, where infusion of Roman, Hebrew, Greek and Egyptian art was used to provide an icon of Christ, the Mother of God and all the saints. This infusion of culture helped the mission of spreading the Word of God throughout different cultures.



Icons are **traditional**.

They follow a certain canonical pattern. Thus, the iconographer is asked to follow the canonical rule that the tradition implicates. Each icon is authentic, original and genuine, even if the iconographer uses patterns of an older icon, it cannot be understood as a copy or duplicate. Each icon is original because it is written with prayer and humility, beauty and faith. Creating an icon the iconographer understands that God and the saint portrayed is present by the will of the Holy Spirit. Throughout history many artistic movements took place, yet the icon remained faithful to her tradition, and this is in great gratitude to the Fathers of the Church who knew the true meaning and place of icons in the Church.

Icons are **priceless**.

They open a different realm, portraying the Heavenly Kingdom, insinuating the Heavenly reality. Saint Maximus the Confessor once said that the Old Testament is a shadow; the New Testament is an icon, while the Kingdom to come is the reality. As Christians we still live in the New Testament, in the icon, until the Coming of Ages, which is the reality. This is how we portray icons, as mirrors of reality, of the Heavenly reality we await. Let us observe, learn and grasp the reality of the Coming Kingdom we anticipate through the icon that has been given as a true gift to all humankind.

The V. Rev. Protosingelos Basil (Vasilije) Gavrilovic  
Rector of Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration of our Lord

## Procopius Прокопий



Icon of Jesus Christ not made by Human Hand, 2009, 9.5" x 12", egg tempera, 24K gold leaf

Born in Alberta, raised in B.C., educated at the University of Victoria, B.C., and The University of Toronto. Procopius enrolled in Japanese Studies, Linguistics and Economics. Because He was loosing his vision, and could not keep up with his readings, he was encouraged to take some Art Classes so he could complete his degree. He discovered Christ at University when he saw his first Icon, The Panagia of the "Sweet Kiss", in an Art History class, and was Baptized at Metamorphosis Greek Orthodox Church on Holy Wednesday 1996.

He graduated from the University of Toronto, with distinction in 1999, with a Bachelors Degree in Fine Art Studio and Fine Art History. Procopius won the Hoeniger Prize from Victoria College for his collection of books on Icons and historical painting materials and techniques. He currently studies Iconography with Mr. Alexei Menzentsev at St. Vladimir Institute and at Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Alexei was born in Ukraine and graduated with Master Degree from the Academy of Arts in Moscow. He also completed his studies at the Ontario College of Art & Design (OCAD), George Brown College, Central Technical School and Sheridan College in Toronto, Canada.

Deeply interested in ancient's techniques he did research in monasteries and schools in Greece and Italy. Initially, when he started his study of iconography, the beauty of colors captured his heart, but then he realized the depth of its spiritual beauty. For more than 30 years Alexei has worked as an illustrator worldwide. For the past 20 years he designed various projects for the churches and the cultural institutions: mosaics, stained glass, murals, icons in Canada and United States. He is teaching courses of Byzantine style iconography in Toronto for more than 14 year. At his studio, Alexei developed the unique method of presentation which combines meditation, art and therapy. He loves to teach students of different age groups and backgrounds. The perfect blend of spatiality, traditions and creativity is his main inspiration. Alexei taught iconography workshop in Art Works Art School in 2000. He is a member of various cultural committees where he is doing the presentations and provides the workshops in Byzantine iconography.

Olga Orlova is from a small city near Moscow. She graduated from Moscow Educational University as an artist and a teacher. She has been working as a graphic designer for many years.

After coming to Canada in 2004, Olga developed her career as an educator and art teacher. She has always admired the art of the iconography and started to study in Icon Studio at Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church in 2008 with Alexei Mezentssev. She created a number of icons and participated in several exhibitions of icons in the churches and cultural institutions.

Icon of Archangel Gabriel  
2009, 9.5" x 12", egg tempera,  
24k gold leaf

## Alexei Mezentssev Алексей Мезенцев



Virgin Mary with Christ  
11" x 14", egg tempera, 24K gold leaf

## Olga Orlova Ольга Орлова





## Pavlo Lopata

### Павло Лопата



St. Mathew the Evangelist, 2006  
9.5" X 12", egg tempera, 24K gold leaf

Pavlo Lopata was born in the village of Kaliniv, Pryashiv region, Slovak Republic in 1945. After his studies at the University of Fine Arts in Bratislava he emigrated to Toronto, Canada in 1969. He obtained his Commercial Arts Diploma from George Brown College in 1972, and in May 1986 obtained a Fine Arts Diploma from the Ontario College of Art, Toronto. Pavlo was curator and executive director of the Ukrainian Canadian Art Foundation for 8 years during which time he organized over 70 exhibits of many artists from Canada, USA and Ukraine. He has mastered the use of pencil, egg tempera, acrylics and oils. Pavlo is also a prolific author, having written over 350 articles related to the arts, culture & history that have been published in periodicals, journals and newspapers. To date, over 900 of his artistic works can be found in private and museum collections in Canada, USA, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and Ukraine. He has held 27 solo exhibits and participated in over 70 group shows. Among many art awards he received Pavlo is also a recipient of the 1997 "Outstanding Contribution to the Arts" awarded by the Masaryk Academy of Arts, Prague, Czech Republic (other recipients include Milos Forman, Luciano Pavarotti, Karel Gott). He presently lives and works in his private studio in a ukrainian community "Poltawa Country Club" in the village of Terra Cotta northwest of Toronto.

## Veronika Melnyk

### Вероніка Мельник



The Lamentation  
18.5" X 16", egg tempera, 24K gold leaf

Veronika is an artist known in Ukraine and Canada. Many of her masterpieces are in private collections worldwide. After getting her art education in Ukraine, Veronika immigrated to Canada in 2001, where she started studying and working on icon-painting under the direction of the iconographer Alexei Mezentsev. She notes that even some professional artists often underestimate the true beauty and peculiarity of ancient icons. Nevertheless, it is the icon's uniqueness that attracted Veronika's attention - it perfectly combines fascinating colours and the ancient history of this art technique. When it comes to the sense of art and its purpose, Veronika suggests that making the world better and brighter should be a large part of it. In her opinion, today we see too much darkness and cruelty in the world. With her art Veronika Melnyk tries to make people's life more interesting, informative and meaningful.

<http://www.veronikamelnyk.com>

## Milos Bojovic

### Милош Бојовић

Artist Milos Bojovic was born in Cacak, Serbia in 1960. Milos's interest in iconography started at his teenage years. He studied fresco painting and mosaics at Art school in Nis, as well as completed a three-year course at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade. He practices different styles of old-masters style of painting and his work varies from portraits, murals, mosaics and Church Icons. His motto during his art work is "I am only a student of Art". He currently resides in Mississauga, Ontario.

<http://www.milosbojovic.com>



St. Georgije Slays the Dragon  
oil on canvas, 20" x 24"

## Jelena Cetkovic

### Јелена Ћетковић



Jelena Cetkovic was born in 1979 in Ivanjica, Serbia where she completed her early and high school education. In 1999 Jelena enrolled in the study program at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade. She received her Bachelor of Art diploma in 2005 at the Textile Design department. She lives and creates in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

White Angel (replica of the detail from the fresco *Myrrhbearers on Christ's Grave*, Mileseva Monastery, Serbia)  
Batik (beeswax and dye) on pure silk



## Georgi Danevski Георги Даневски



Ceiling in St. Dimitrij Church, Markham, Ontario

Georgi Danevski is a world renowned painter, iconographer and muralist. His lifelike iconic figures and vibrant compositions don the walls and ceilings of churches across Europe and North America.

Georgi is also known for his work on canvass. He has created a wide array of expressions in style with a broad and steady demand for his work across Europe and North America by private collectors, museums and galleries. Georgi has a particular passion for painting Arabian horses.

Georgi has had many solo exhibitions and is the recipient of numerous art awards in Europe. Several documentaries of his life have been filmed including "Icons of God's Eyes" filmed in cooperation with the Vatican and the Italian television, in collaboration with the Film Company of San Paolo as well as "Georgi Danevski: Confessions of the Heart" by OMNI, filmed on locations in Toronto and Macedonia in 2010.

<http://www.danevski.com>

## Viktor Gerasimov Виктор Герасимов



Viktor Gerasimov was born in Siberia, Russia. He lived in Kiev, Ukraine and in 2000 Viktor immigrated to Canada. After coming to Toronto, he has studied at the Icon Studio at Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church since 2010.

Virgin Mary with Christ  
egg tempera, 24K gold leaf

Iconographer Sandra Jovanovic was born 1976 in Belgrade, Serbia. She received her early education and then graduated at the Technical Graphic School in Belgrade. All her life Sandra was into drawing, painting and calligraphy. She was a student of professor Aleksandar Dodig a renowned calligrapher, and studied iconography by Jelena Hrnac. Iconography remains her greatest love, and Sandra creates icons since 1999. Before she arrived to Canada she was a member of the Association of Visual Artists of Rakovica (ULUR). She participated in numerous group exhibitions throughout Serbia - Biennale of Miniatures, Gornji Milanovac, Icon Exhibitions, Šabac, Icon Exhibitions in Konak kneginje Ljubice from 2000 to 2009 - to name a few. Church "Sabor Svih Srba Svetitelja" is decorated with her icons of Jesus Christ and Holy Mother of God. Sandra's icons are in many private collections in Serbia, USA and Canada. She lives and works in Toronto, Ontario since 2010.

For more visit:  
[Orthodox Icons by Sandra](#)  
(facebook page)

St. Georgije  
egg tempera on wood, 8" x 12"

## Sandra Jovanovic Сандра Јовановић



## Valeria Kouznetsova Валерия Кузнецова

Valeria Kouznetsova was born in Moscow, Russia. She graduated from Moscow Architectural University with Bachelor Degree in History of Art and Architecture. In 1996 Valeria moved to Canada, where she received her post degree diploma in Animation and Web Design in Toronto.

She works with different media, but mostly with acrylic and her impressive and varied works were displayed in numerous art shows. Valeria studied traditional iconography at the Russian Orthodox church in Toronto, trying to blend her fine artistic skills with the discipline and humble work of iconography. She incorporates various techniques into her work including egg tempera, fresco, gold gilding. Valeria has been teaching art to children and adults for more than 14 years.

Angel  
egg tempera on clay board, 5" x 7"

