

5-25-1999

Images of Mary: Contemporary Variations

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**The Marian and Roesch Libraries host The Mariological Society of America
November through February 26, 1999**

In honor of its fiftieth anniversary in 1999
the Mariological Society of America presents a juried art exhibit.

Images of Mary Contemporary Variations

See introduction below.

**Select your three favorites in order of preference. See below for details.
See exhibit layout at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception – May 25 - July 5, 1999**

Lobby and seventh floor of Roesch Library
University of Dayton
Dayton, Ohio
8:30 to 4:30 M-F
Tel.: 937-229-4214

All works displayed are copyrighted by the artists.

Artists

Joan M.Bohlig
Sandra Bowden
Lu Bro
Kit Cameron
Jerry Ellen Cannizzaro
David R.Coté
Lesia Dovzhenko
Robert Eustace
Nick Faraci
Timothy Farrer
Sharon Gill-Kolasinski
Christine Granger
Tatiana Grant
Christine H. Hayward
Marjorie Hennessy
Alice Hertel
Sr. Durie Kim, FMI
Rosemary A. Luckett
Patricia A. Lyle
Jean Marlow
Lynne Mcilvrde Evans
Janet McKenzie
Melinda Morey
Serafina R. Nankervis
Madeline Panichelli
Aka Pereyma
Christina Pereyma
Joseph Pizzat
Sr. Mary Polutanovich
Bro. Jerome Pryor, SJ
Thomas Quirk
Diane Savino
Elizabeth Schultz
Bro. Don Smith, SM
Jan Solowianiuk
Anne Spillane Moher
Emil Stoenescu
Beverly Stoller
Melanie Twelves
Beverly Wirth
Suzanne M.Young

Mary torn between Art and Spirituality?

Art is a very personal experience, both lover and creator of beauty keep telling us. But how personal can it be? Are there boundaries beyond which artistic creation ceases to be a message of beauty? Art can be, to a point, sophisticated and hermetic where the reader needs to be given a map to the deep recesses of the artist's soul to uncover the cipher of his/her artistic imagination. There exists the other extreme, too, where art wallows in bland meaninglessness only good enough to please those who do not want to be challenged. Somewhere in between these two poles lies authentic artistic communication, as we understand it, bold enough to question the obvious but always careful to allow for dialogue using a grammar of visual expression available and common to artist and art lovers alike.

Most of the art exhibited here fits this purpose, not least because it evokes a traditionally well defined religious figure, Mary. True, almost any mother and child representation or feminine figure could be labeled Mother of God, and some of our artists only barely avoided the temptation of renaming a nondescript old piece instead of creating a genuine "holy picture." The majority, however, was eager to engage in dialogue, an eagerness which is frequently grounded in a deep personal experience of conversion and/or healing. Some of the paintings exhibited hold a social and cultural message. Others attract the viewer with the gentle power of their sometimes subtle, sometimes stark beauty. The serene and seemingly form-perfect magic of icons contrast with the less disciplined but plain language of contemporary Western art a contrast which in no way suggests or decrees the superiority of the icon painter. This exhibit will test the flexibility and breadth of the visitor's attention. The variety of themes, media ... and quality can be unsettling, but it should also be an obvious reminder of the stunning and multifaceted presence of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, at the end of this second millennium.

The popularity of Mary should not be an alibi for lack of artistic quality. However, the artistic quality intended by the organizers of this exhibit was one of variety and representation. Its primary objective was to present viewers with a timely document of contemporary Marian art in this country. The call for art leading to this exhibit was therefore widespread, the selection generous and the exposure will be broad and varied (Waukesha, Dayton, Washington). It was projected that this documentary approach to contemporary Marian art ought not be limited to the art itself but should be extended to the appraisal and reactions of visitors at all three locations where the art will be shown. This extended jury, art critics as well as "ordinary" visitors, will tell us not only what contemporary Marian art is all about but how it affects people both from an artistic and religious point also of view. Visitors are invited to complete a questionnaire made available to them at the site of the exhibit. [See p. 82] It is expected that this dialogue between art, artist, art connoisseur and art lover will raise questions, contrast opinions, trigger new questions, offer old and new answers and possibly leaven everyone eager for better art, *entente cordiale* between representatives of art and religion, and a deeper understanding of the role of religious art for the spiritual life.

As members of the Mariological Society of America we propose the figure and image of Mary to be the theme for this dialogue. This is not only a matter of *noblesse oblige*. For centuries, Mary has played a privileged role in the dialogue between religion and art. She is closer to the human soul than many other religious figures but at the same time holds a role of crucial importance for all those who believe in God's self-

revelation in Jesus Christ. In this sense, our exhibit of contemporary variations of Mary's image would like to be a tribute to her, woman of all seasons, and all those, artists and visitors, who cherish her image and what it conveys.

The above text was prepared by Rev. Johann G. Roten, SM.

Participants' Survey for the MSA Exhibit:

If you would like to vote for your three favorite pieces of the artwork featured in this exhibit, please see our survey and then use our e-mail to submit your opinions. You can link to the survey here and and the bottom of each artist's page.

[Participants' Survey for the Exhibit](#)

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