

1-21-1999

Art Critics, Believers Square Off in National Debate on Religious Art

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls

Recommended Citation

"Art Critics, Believers Square Off in National Debate on Religious Art" (1999). *News Releases*. 8690.
https://ecommons.udayton.edu/news_rls/8690

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Marketing and Communications at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in News Releases by an authorized administrator of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlange1@udayton.edu.

**ART CRITICS, BELIEVERS SQUARE OFF
IN NATIONAL DEBATE ON RELIGIOUS ART**

DAYTON, Ohio — Critics like art that is challenging and new. The faithful prefer pieces that are accessible and familiar.

So who's to say what the right mix of religion and art should be in religious art?

"Should religious art be a reflection of the Bible and the history of holy figures? Or should it force people into thought processes that don't happen with obvious representations of Jesus or Mary?" asks the Rev. Johann G. Roten, S.M., director of the Marian Library-International Marian Research Institute at the University of Dayton.

"This is the crucial point. Religious art is not just for art critics," he says. "It's also for those who use it to pray."

In an exhibit on display through Feb. 26 at the University of Dayton Marian Library, visitors are invited to submit their appraisals of and reactions to 57 pieces of contemporary Marian art. The exhibit is also featured online by following the "Marian Art" link from the Mary Page at <http://www.udayton.edu/mary/>.

Among the pieces in "Images of Mary: Contemporary Variations" are those displaying the sober beauty of traditional Marian icons, the earthy beauty of Raphael-like Madonnas and the interpretive beauty of post-modern Marys. Throughout the exhibit, Mary is represented in scenes from her life (Jesus' crucifixion, the Annunciation) as well as in contemporary and symbolic settings.

Visitors, using suggested guidelines, are asked to recommend three pieces to receive awards. They're asked to evaluate artistic quality, whether or not the piece makes a Marian statement and how effectively it explains Mary for people of today. Experts in art and theology have also been invited to evaluate the exhibit.

Award winners will be announced at the end of the May 24-July 5 exhibit of the collection at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C.. The exhibit celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Mariological Society of America, which will hold its national meeting May 25-28 in Washington.