

Loyola Marymount University  
Ahmanson Auditorium, University Hall 1000  
January 21, 2015

*Channeling Grace through Art*  
*Devotional practices across spiritual traditions*

**Organizer: Prof. Katerina Zacharia**  
**Classics & Archaeology**

The aim of this day-conference is to invite scholars in the disciplines of theological studies and art history, classics and archaeology, anthropology and ethnography, music, dance and the fine arts, as well as spiritual leaders and practitioners of different religious traditions to present and discuss the devotional function of sacred images and objects, texts and contexts, chanting and dancing, as vehicles of transcendence through private prayer and meditation, or commissioned on a larger scale for liturgical instruction and inspiration.

The conference is intended to accompany the concurrent art exhibition *Vessels and Channels* by American contemporary sculptor Simon Toparovsky at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels (11/9/14 - 2/15/15). In 2000, Mr. Toparovsky was commissioned to create the bronze main altar crucifix for the Cathedral, now “a beloved icon, celebrated for its artistry and evocation of compassion” in the devotional practice of over five million Catholics per year. In his new exhibition, striking pieces of the martyrdom of Christ, St. Sebastian, Prometheus, Icarus, or relics, such as Athena’s armor, boxes of bones, or depictions of shrines, churches, temples and glories of nature establish a sense of mystery and rend compassion in compelling *tableaux vivants*. Prof. Zacharia has been sharing her perspectives with Mr. Toparovsky for a number of years deepening his classical vocabulary and providing links to Eastern Orthodoxy.

The conference is comprised of four discussion panels, followed by a conversation session with Mr. Toparovsky. Each panel consists of three speakers representing different disciplines/practices: an art historian, an artist/practitioner, a theologian/priest, chaired by LMU faculty. The topics of the discussion panels are: (i) ritual objects; (ii) ritual words, song, dance; (iii) congregational and solitary prayer; (iv) art-making as devotional practice.

The conference is generously funded by a grant from the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts, Loyola Marymount University, and by an independent grant from an anonymous donor.

*THE CONFERENCE IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC*

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**CONFERENCE PROGRAM**

**9:00-9:30: Prof. Katerina Zacharia, "Simon Toparovsky's Vessels & Channels Exhibition at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Cathedral in Los Angeles"**

**9:30-10:30: Ritual objects** (Chair: **Prof. Kirstin Noreen**, LMU Art History)

- **Fr. William Fulco**, "Ritual Objects from the LMU Archaeological Collection"
- **Dr. Sean Leatherbury** (Getty Research Institute), "Gifts to the Gods" in the Ancient Mediterranean: Votive Offerings from Paganism and Judaism to Christianity"
- **Prof. William Dyrness** (Fuller Seminary), "Channels of Mystery: Approaching Sacred Objects in the Catholic Tradition"

*10:30-11:00 Coffee*

**11:00-12:00: Ritual words, song, dance** (Chair: **Prof. Chris Chapple**, LMU Theology)

- **Dr. David Simonowitz** (Pepperdine, Middle East Studies), "Devotional Practices in Islamic Calligraphy"
- **Dr. Debra Linesch** (LMU, Art Therapy), "Hebrew Calligraphy as a Devotional Practice: Applications for Clinical Art Therapy"
- **Mythili Prakash**, "Bharata Natyan as a Yogic Practice"

**12:00-1:30 Lunch**

**1:30-2:30: Congregational and Solitary Prayer** (Chair: **Dr. Nick Denysenko**, LMU Theology)

- **Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar** (LMU Theology Adjunct), "*Pothi* as an Aesthetic Object: A Comparison of the Reading of the *Gurucaritra* in Public and Private Settings"
- **Dr. Anna Harrison** (LMU, Theology), "'Fiery Rays Go Forth from All Her Limbs': Communal Prayer at the Thirteenth-Century Monastery of Helfta"
- **Fr. John S. Bakas** (Dean, St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral, Los Angeles; LMU Theology/Modern Greek Studies Adjunct), "Melody of Prayer"

*2:30-3:00 Coffee*

**3:00-4:15: Art-making as devotional practice** (Chair: **Prof. Katerina Zacharia**)

- **Dr. Imad Bayoun** (UC Riverside), "Arab Calligraphy"
- **Fr. Michael Courey** (Dean, St. Katherine's Greek Orthodox priest/icon writer), "On Stillness and Silence: Spiritual Exercise and the Practice of Iconography"
- **Mr. Hirokazu Kosaka** (Buddhist monk/Artistic Director of the Japanese-American Cultural Center), "On the 'Verandah': an In-between Space Shared by the Japanese arts of Calligraphy and Archery"

**4:30-5:15: Prof. Bissera Pentcheva** (Stanford U.), "Mirror, Inspiration, and the Making of Art in Byzantium"

**5:30-6:30: CONVERSATION WITH ARTIST SIMON TOPAROVSKY**

Panelists: **Prof. Jane Brucker** (LMU, Studio Arts) and **Prof. Katerina Zacharia**

**6:30-7:30 Reception**

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**ABSTRACTS AND BIONOTES****9:30-10:30: Ritual objects (Chair: Prof. Kirstin Noreen, LMU Art History)**

- **Fr. William Fulco**, "Ritual Objects from the LMU Archaeological Collection"
- **Dr. Sean Leatherbury** (Getty Research Institute), "Gifts to the Gods" in the Ancient Mediterranean: Votive Offerings from Paganism and Judaism to Christianity"
- **Prof. William Dyrness** (Fuller Seminary), "Channels of Mystery: Approaching Sacred Objects in the Catholic Tradition"

## Chair:

Prof. Kirstin Noreen received her Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1999. With a specialization in medieval art, she has publications on the Roman church of Sant'Urbano alla Caffarella, the ritual use of icons, and the revival of Early Christian and medieval art in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her current research integrates her interest in Italian medieval and Baroque art by examining the visualization and replication of sanctity during the period of the Counter-Reformation as expressed in the popular resurgence of medieval cult images. Dr. Noreen has received various grants to support her research, including an American Council of Learned Societies, Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship; a National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer Stipend; and a Fulbright Grant for Graduate Study Abroad. She has presented her work at various venues, such as the International Congress on Medieval Studies (Kalamazoo, MI), the International Medieval Congress (Leeds, England), the Medieval Academy of America, Renaissance Society of America, Sixteenth Century Studies, and the College Art Association.

## Panelists:

Professor William Fulco (LMU, Classics & Archaeology), "Ritual objects from the LMU Archaeological Collection"

Because of constant contact and interaction from the Early Bronze to the Iron Ages, the pantheons and religious practices of the Levantine cultures frequently merged and interacted, and the resulting complexities are manifest in the extant sacred objects from the Near East. Nonetheless, in regard to sexuality and the divine, the perception seems to be the same in virtually all of these cultures: the male embodies a reality somewhat statically, whereas the female puts that reality into action, the "noun" and the "verb". Using artifacts from the LMU Archaeology Center, Professor Fulco will illustrate how these perceptions are embodied in ancient objects of worship.

Professor Fulco is the National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Ancient Mediterranean Studies at LMU, and for the last 45 years has been the director of the Archaeology Museum, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Jerusalem. Before his appointment at LMU, he was the founding director of the PhD Program in Ancient Near Eastern Religions at the University of California, Berkeley, 1970-1985. He initiated the program in Archaeology at the University of Southern California and taught there 1987-1997 before accepting the Chair at LMU in 1997. He has published extensively in the field of northwestern Semitic languages, literatures and archaeology, and has a special interest in the perceptions of male and female in the worldview and worship patterns of ancient Levantine cultures.

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Dr. Sean V. Leatherbury (Getty Research Institute), "Gifts to the Gods" in the Ancient Mediterranean: Votive Offerings from Paganism and Judaism to Christianity

Votive offerings, also known as "gifts to the gods/God," have been and continue to be important features of many different religions across the world. In different Christian traditions, including the Catholic and Greek Orthodox traditions, worshippers dedicate votive objects to thank God, Christ, the Virgin or a particular saint for helping them through a difficult situation, often an illness or a family crisis. In many cases, the forms of these offerings are based on very ancient prototypes. After briefly surveying the votive practices of the Greek and Roman world, this paper examines the forms and meanings of the earliest Christian votives within their pagan Greco-Roman and Jewish context, revealing the close links between religions in the period and uncovering the ancient foundations of contemporary votive dedication.

Sean V. Leatherbury obtained his B.A. in the History of Art from Yale University and his M.Phil. and D.Phil. in History (Late Antique and Byzantine Studies) from the University of Oxford. His research focuses on Roman and late antique art and material culture and considers the relationship between text and image, conceptions of materials and materiality, and the construction of sacred space. His book on the visual role of inscriptions in early Christian churches, titled *Inscribing Faith in Late Antiquity: Between Reading and Seeing*, will be published by Ashgate Press in 2015. Previously, Sean was Visiting Research Fellow at the Bard Graduate Center in New York and Council for British Research in the Levant Visiting Senior Fellow at the Kenyon Institute in Jerusalem. At the Getty Research Institute, he is beginning work on a new book project that examines the transformation of the aesthetics of Roman votive dedications from the first through seventh centuries CE, tracing the impact of religious and cultural changes on the forms and meanings of "gifts to the gods".

Prof. William Dyrness (Fuller Seminary), "Channels of Mystery: Approaching sacred objects in the Catholic Tradition"

This presentation will consider what Catholic believers experience when they approach images like the Toparovsky crucifix at Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Cathedral in Los Angeles. It will highlight especially their embodied and tactile character and the role they play in bringing the sacred mysteries into everyday life. This embodied experience of mystery contrasts with a Protestant focus on generative belief that resists mystery — these proposing alternative entry points to the Christian Gospel.

William Dyrness is Professor of Theology and Culture and a founding member of the Brehm Center for Worship Theology and the Arts at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. His teaching and research interests include modern art and aesthetics, art in worship, global theology, and most recently interfaith aesthetics. His recent work on aesthetics and worship include "Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life" (2011) and "Senses of Devotion: Interfaith Aesthetics in Buddhist and Muslim Communities" (2013).

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**11:00-12:00: Ritual words, song, dance (Chair: Prof. Chris Chapple, LMU Theology)**

- **Dr. David Simonowitz** (Pepperdine, Middle East Studies), “Devotional Practices in Islamic Calligraphy”
- **Dr. Debra Linesch** (LMU, Art Therapy), “Hebrew Calligraphy as a Devotional Practice: Applications for Clinical Art Therapy”
- **Mythili Prakash**, “Bharata Natyan as a Yogic Practice”

## Chair:

Christopher Key Chapple is Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology at Loyola Marymount University, where he also directs the Master of Arts in Yoga Studies. A specialist in the religions of India, he has published more than 15 books, including *Karma and Creativity* (1986), *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions* (1993), *Reconciling Yogas* (2003), *Yoga and the Luminous* (2008) and several edited volumes on religion and ecology. He edits the journal *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* (Brill) and serves on the advisory boards for the Forum on Religion and Ecology (Yale), the Ahimsa Center (Pomona), and the Centre for Jaina Studies (SOAS, London).

## Panelists:

Dr. David Simonowitz (Pepperdine, Middle East Studies), “Devotional Practices in Islamic Calligraphy”

In the last few decades, major studies have been published in western languages on the practice, history, and historiography of Islamic calligraphy, usually understood as the art of transcribing pious compositions in the Arabic alphabet, although it may consist of texts and invocations in Persian, Turkish, Urdu, and other languages of Islamicate societies, as well as Arabic. Nevertheless, numerous misconceptions about the art and its significance for Muslims continue to prevail in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere. This presentation will explore nuances of devotional practices in Islamic calligraphy and focus on two major currents in diachronic and synchronic manner. The purposes for which Muslims practice the art of beautiful writing vary greatly, it will be seen, as do their techniques and compositions; however, authorization to practice and teach the art at the highest level is usually secured through a long-standing pedagogical tradition. As the presentation will illustrate, divergent practices in Islamic calligraphy mirror — in particularly illuminating terms — major currents in the broader practice of Islam itself.

David Simonowitz is Assistant Professor of Middle East Studies at Pepperdine University. He teaches History of Islamic Art & Architecture, Arabic Language, and History of the Middle East. He is a steering committee member of the Space, Place and Religion Group of the American Academy of Religion. His latest publication is “The Mobile Matrix: The Hijaz Railway as Ritual Space and Generator of Space” *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* (2014).

Dr. Debra Linesch (LMU, Art Therapy) — “Hebrew Calligraphy as a Devotional Practice: Applications for Clinical Art Therapy”

This paper explores the process of integrating two apparently disparate practices, clinical art therapy and the rendering of Hebrew calligraphy as religious ritual. A growing body of literature that supports this attempt at integration is briefly reviewed. Following this, an exploration of the potential integration is described, discussed and analyzed. The author’s own images are viewed as an example of an image making process that is based on Hebrew calligraphy. The findings of the exploration suggest that faith-based artistic practices have the potential to support many kinds of traditional mental health interventions.

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Dr. Debra Linesch (PhD, MFT, ATR-BC) is the department chair and program director of the Graduate Department of Marital and Family Therapy at Loyola Marymount University. She is the author of many articles and five books, including *Adolescent Art Therapy*, *Art Therapy with Families in Crisis*, *Celebrating Family Milestones through Art Making*, *Facing Genesis*, and *Midrashic Mirrors: Creating Holiness in Imagery and Intimacy*. She developed the Art Therapy in Mexico collaboration with Universidad Iberoamericana, an intercultural training, research and service endeavor that continues to engage American and Mexican students. She is currently establishing a research institute within the department and is interested in developing non-traditional art therapy inquiry and clinical processes, including faith based traditional rituals. To learn more about Dr. Linesch and her activities, please visit her website.

Mythili Prakash — “Bharata Natyan as a Yogic Practice”

Bharata Natyam has its most traceable origins in ritual worship, originally performed in temples as a part of prayer ritual. The guidelines of the form are derived from a text, the *Natya Shastra*, that describes it as a comprehensive theatre form comprised of dance movement (*nritta*), an emotive component (*abhinaya*), and a theatrical element (*natya*). An integral component of the form is music and poetry. The content of lyric and song that is traditionally danced to is usually (a) addressing or describing various gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, or (b) expressing a human emotion (toward a lover, friend, child, etc.) in a more secular way as a result of the art form later moving from the temples into the patronage of Kings and courts. However, the basic body stances that form the foundation of the form’s movement vocabulary are drawn from yoga, and channel the energy through the body in a way that is consistent with yogic practice. The intention of “performance” as stated in the *Natya Shastra*, is to produce “Rasa” which is a transferred experience from artist to viewer (*rasika*), and is most tangibly described as a heightened aesthetic experience. The experience of practice and performance is thereby intended to be a transformational experience. Bharata Natyam is a dynamic form, at once traditional and contemporary. The vocabulary, both movement and gestural, becomes a language that each practitioner draws upon to create his/her own choreography and interpretations. The form, therefore, becomes a personal expression of each artist. For Mythili, spirituality forms the core of the art form both in content and in practice. In her body of work, most pieces (whether devotional or secular in lyric) become metaphors for the link between the temporal and the spiritual. The practice and performance of the form become a mode of unifying body, mind, and heart through a rigorous training process of discipline and mindfulness.

Young, dynamic Mythili Prakash is making waves in the field of Bharata Natyam. Hailed a child prodigy, Mythili began her career as a Bharata Natyam performer at the age of eight, and now in her early thirties has performed extensively throughout the world. Mythili has been trained by her mother, Bharata Natyam exponent Viji Prakash, and has also had the opportunity to study with several legendary Gurus from India. Born and raised in Los Angeles, Mythili holds Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communications from University of California, Berkeley. She is trained in Carnatic (South Indian Classical) Vocal music, as well as Nattuvangam (the cymbals and dance orchestra conducting). Since 1990, Mythili has performed as a soloist for some of the most respected institutions of dance in India. Her excellence has been acknowledged through her accolades from the premiere institutions of culture in India. She has toured India, the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, performing to sold out audiences at prestigious arts venues such

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as The Kennedy Centre, Washington D.C.; Esplanade, Singapore; The Lowry, Manchester; Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Scotland; and Musee Guimet, Paris. Her performances as a lead dancer of the Shakti Dance Company, Los Angeles, have brought her to venues such as the Lincoln Centre, New York; Wortham Centre, Houston; New Jersey Performing Arts Centre, New Jersey, to name a few. In January 2009, She was featured on NBC's Superstars of Dance, as a Bharata Natyam soloist, introducing her art form to mainstream audiences all over the world. As a choreographer, Mythili's creations include both solo and group choreography, and have been supported by grants and fellowships from the likes of Irvine Dance Foundation and the Center for Cultural Innovation, to name a few. Her most recent collaborations include "Yashodhara" with Chennai-based director Gowri Ramnarayan, "Svatantrya" with sitar artist Anoushka Shankar, and "MARA" with her brother/vocalist Aditya Prakash.

1:30-2:30: **Congregational and Solitary Prayer** (Chair: Dr. Nick Denysenko, LMU Theology)

- Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar (LMU Theology Adjunct), "*Pothī* as an aesthetic object: A comparison of the reading of the *Gurucaritra* in public and private settings"
- Dr. Anna Harrison (LMU, Theology), "Fiery Rays Go Forth from All Her Limbs': Communal Prayer at the Thirteenth-Century Monastery of Helfta"
- Fr. John S. Bakas (Dean, St. Sophia Cathedral, Los Angeles; LMU Theology/Modern Greek Studies Adjunct), "Melody of Prayer"

Chair:

Nicholas Denysenko is assistant professor of Theological Studies and Director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Denysenko has published extensively on Byzantine liturgical history, sacramental theology, contemporary pastoral theology, and religion in Ukraine. He is the author of two books on the liturgy: *The Blessing of Waters and Epiphany* (Ashgate, 2012) and *Chrismation: A Primer for Catholics* (Liturgical Press, 2014). Denysenko is currently completing a study of contemporary Orthodox architecture in America, and a monograph devoted to liturgical reform in the Orthodox Church (forthcoming with Fortress Press). Denysenko was ordained a deacon in the Orthodox Church in America in 2003 and is currently assigned to St. Innocent parish in Tarzana, California.

Panelists:

Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar (LMU Theology Adjunct), "*Pothī* as an aesthetic object: A comparison of the reading of the *Gurucaritra* in public and private settings"

In Maharashtra, western state of India, reading of religious books is generally associated with home shrines. The tradition of the *Gurucaritra* reading is an example of this. Like other religious books, devotees read *Gurucaritra* — the central text of the Dattatreya tradition— in their home shrines every year over a period of seven days. However, with the challenges of urban living in Pune, one finds several individuals going to the community reading centers. During the reading sessions, they read the assigned chapters from the book after taking a bath. In this way, the nature of reading is still individualized despite the change of location. The organization of *Gurucaritra pārāyaṇa* in public space has several implications for the process of reading. First, recruitment of readers is crucial for the survival of centers. This has led to flexibility in considerations of caste. In addition, the concept of purity gets redefined. At some centers, there are not facilities for taking bath before reading. Further, readers have to read their *pothi* — the copy of the text — in silence. The idea of sound

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creating vibrations and the power of mantra through their sounds becomes an obsolete concept. The *pothis* are provided by the centers and stay in reading halls for the entire period of seven days. They are kept in a saffron colored silk cloth. In a traditional setting, the *pothi* acquires a status of an icon during the reading session as it is supposed to be purified by the mantras. In this context, this paper compares the dynamics of reading in the context of public and private settings. I will analyze the reasons for the formation of community reading centers of the *Gurucaritra* and how the ritual process heightens the sense of the *pothi* as an aesthetic object.

Mugdha Yeolekar received her Masters from University of Pune, India and from University of British Columbia in Canada. She received her doctorate in religious studies from Arizona State University in 2014. Currently, she teaches at Loyola Marymount University and at Chapman University. Her dissertation titled, "*Gurucaritra Pārāyaṇ: Social Praxis of Religious Reading*," deals with interplay of the oral and the written and text and performance with respect to religious reading of *Gurucaritra*--a text read by the followers of a Hindu tradition. Mugdha's research interests include issues of agency, gender and religion, materiality and religion, and ritual reading of Hindu scriptures.

Dr. Anna Harrison, "Fiery Rays Go Forth from All Her Limbs': Communal Prayer at the Thirteenth-Century Monastery of Helfta"

Though it is now much contested, there has long been a tendency to see late medieval spirituality as focusing increasingly on individual, inner experience rather than on group practice, even when the context is religious or monastic community. Although a growing body of research *has* demonstrated a flourishing in the lives of medieval women and men of the corporate dimensions of worship, there has been little sustained examination of the spiritual significance *to nuns* of public communitarian worship. Today, I turn to the writings produced at the thirteenth-century Cistercian monastery of Helfta to consider the Helfta nuns' sense of community as it relates to liturgy. My focus is not on the liturgy per se or on liturgy as practice. It is, instead, about liturgy as context, as place and moment where experience occurs.

Anna Harrison is Associate Professor of the Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University. She has written several articles on the nuns of Helfta and on the twelfth-century monk Bernard of Clairvaux, including "Jesus Wept': Mourning as Imitation of Christ in Bernard's Sermon Twenty-Six on the Song of Songs." Prof. Harrison is at work on a book titled *Thousands and Thousands of Lovers: Sense of Community Among the Nuns of Helfta*.

Fr. John S. Bakas (Dean, St. Sophia Cathedral, L.A.) — "Melody of prayer"

Music, Art, and symbolism are means for union with God, which is *theosis*. This presentation will examine the use of Byzantine hymns in the Greek Orthodox tradition.

Fr. John S. Bakas is the Dean of Saint Sophia Cathedral and Greek Orthodox Community of Los Angeles since 1995. Along with the talented leadership of the Cathedral, he spearheaded the drive for the major renovation of the Cathedral grounds and adjacent buildings. This renovation and renewal had spawned the redevelopment of the surrounding area into what is now the Byzantine-Latino Quarter of Los Angeles. He holds a Master's in Theology from Loyola Marymount Univ. and a Master's in Philosophy from Univ. of New Mexico. He teaches Greek Orthodox Theology at LMU as Adjunct faculty. He has recorded six albums of Byzantine Music with the Cappella Romana.

For more information, go to: [http://www.stsophia.org/about/fr\\_john\\_bakas.html](http://www.stsophia.org/about/fr_john_bakas.html)



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**3:00-4:15: Art-making as devotional practice (Chair: Prof. Katerina Zacharia)**

- **Dr. Imad Bayoun** (UC Riverside), “Arab Calligraphy”
- **Fr. Michael Courey** (Dean, St. Katherine’s Greek Orthodox priest/icon writer), “On Stillness and Silence: Spiritual Exercise and the Practice of Iconography”
- **Mr. Hirokazu Kosaka** (Buddhist monk/Artistic Director of the Japanese-American Cultural Center), “On the ‘Verandah’: an In-between Space Shared by the Japanese arts of Calligraphy and Archery”

## Panelists:

Dr. Imad Bayoun (UC Riverside) “Arabic Calligraphy”

Dr. Bayoun will discuss the development of Arabic calligraphy (and Arabic scripts) in connection with the Islamic religion, and will showcase his work in practice.

Dr. Bayoun was born in Beirut, Lebanon. He holds Bachelor’s and Master’s Science degrees from the American University of Beirut, and a PhD in Entomology from the Texas A&M University. He works as the Insectary and Quarantine Officer at the Entomology Department of University of California in Riverside. He is currently pursuing a PhD in Islamic Studies at the Graduate Theological Foundation. He taught Islamic theology and History at the Islamic American University. He has been teaching Arabic Calligraphy at California State University, San Bernardino since 2006, and is currently a lecturer for the Muslim American Society and the Oak Tree Institute. Some of his lectures are available at: <http://imadbayoun.com>

Fr. Michael Courey (Greek Orthodox priest/icon writer), “On Stillness and Silence: Spiritual Exercise and the Practice of Iconography”

In the Greek Orthodox tradition, the icon serves as a visual passage through which the viewer may be moved, directed, or guided to encounter the grace of God. Furthermore, the iconographer, in the process of creating the icon, for either private devotion in the home, or public worship in a church, is called upon to be a practitioner of certain spiritual exercises. These spiritual disciplines are deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian experience of divine grace. The iconographer acts as a vessel or channel through which the Holy Spirit moves the mind, the heart, and finally the hand of the artist, by God’s grace. Thus, the icon is not the sole work of the artist creating from his or her own personal interpretation or inspiration, but rather as a synthesis of the human spirit in prayer *with* the Holy Spirit as the guide. This synthesis, ideally, moves both the iconographer in the process of creating the icon, and the viewer of the icon in the practice of devotional prayer, toward the desired course of purification of the soul, illumination of the mind, and finally union of the spirit with God, the Divine Artist. This presentation will offer my personal insight as an iconographer as to how the practice of silent prayer in stillness provides a channel of divine grace in the creative process of writing an icon.

Michael Courey is a visual artist, iconographer, and Greek Orthodox priest. He holds degrees from The College of Wooster (BA, Studio Art), Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Master of Divinity), and Fuller Theological Seminary (Doctor of Ministry). Fr. Michael has served as the pastor of St. Katherine Greek Orthodox Church in Redondo Beach since 1997. He taught Icon Painting Workshops at The Getty Center (April, 2014); The Getty Villa (June, 2014) and presented Point of View gallery talks for the Getty Villa’s 2014 exhibition *Heaven and Earth: Art of Byzantium from Greek Collections* (April-August 2014), and offered a studio art retreat on icon painting at Mary & Joseph Retreat Center in August, 2014. Presently, he is in the process of completing the iconostasis for St. Basil Greek Orthodox Church in San Juan Capistrano. As a participant in the 2013 Huffington

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Ecumenical Symposium on *Icons and Images* at LMU, Fr. Michael presented a paper entitled *Sources of Inspiration for the Contemporary Iconographer*. Fr. Courey assisted in the decoration of the dome of Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Cambridge, MA with iconographer Nick Fotiou (1983), as well as the dome of the Catholikon of the Convent of the Life Giving Spring of the Theotokos in Dunlap, CA with iconographer Michael Vasilakis (2006). To view a selection of his iconography, drawings, and paintings visit [www.genesisart.com](http://www.genesisart.com)

Mr. Hirokazu Kosaka (Buddhist monk/Artistic Director of the Japanese-American Cultural Center), "On the 'Verandah': an In-between Space Shared by the Japanese arts of Calligraphy and Archery"

The word "Verandah" originates from an old Sanskrit term means to "meet." In Japanese the word is "Engawa" (縁側) which is written with two Chinese characters, en (relation, fate) and gawa (side, edge). The verandah space plays a dual role, which belongs to both exterior and interior, a space in-between. The verandah is a space between spaces where man can encounter nature and Verandah is neither a color of black or white but one of infinite shades of grey. Verandah is not a Yes or a No, but infinite maybes. The verandah is a kinesthetic space in which reciprocal exchange for the sensory polarity perceptions of phenomena and homogeneous, which is neither more nor less. It is often suggested that Verandah space is for one who is prepared to be awakened and confine the self and is capable for gesture of expression, and finally, spiritual experience. This presentation will be sharing Mr. Kosaka's practice tools of calligraphy and art of Japanese archery. Both practices share this in-between the space called the Verandah.

Hirokazu Kosaka was born in Japan, he is an ordained Shingon Buddhist priest, a master of the art of Japanese archery, as well as the Artistic Director of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. After graduating from the Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles in 1970, he continued to study in the fields of Esoteric Buddhist Art. He has been actively advocating Japanese culture and Art at JACCC since 1984.

**4:30-5:15: Prof. Bissera Pentcheva** (Stanford Univ.), "Mirror, Inspiration, and the Making of Art in Byzantium"

Focus is on the phenomenon of the horizontal mirror exemplified by the reflective surface of a lake which gathers sky and earth. The structuring of the Byzantine mystical experience draws on the dynamics of the horizontal mirror and the process of in-spiring. Both phenomena appear in two distinct --and from a modern point of view incompatible contexts -- the Byzantine liturgy and the Late Antique engagement with Anacreontic poetry. What meanings emerge when juxtaposing the call to "forget your earthly worries" of the Cheroubikon sung at the Great Entrance with the invitation to partake in the halcyon revelry in the Anacreontic? In recognizing that the Byzantine concept of creativity is defined as an act of mirroring and vital in-breathing, can we then put it in a productive relationship to the role of the art historian today of breathing-in new life in the shell of antiquity? Here my analysis draws on Aby Warburg's unorthodox but compelling ideas about the role of empathy in the production and perception of animation.

Prof. Bissera Pentcheva is an Associate Professor of Medieval Art at Stanford University in the department of Art and Art History. Her first book, *Icons and Power: The Mother of God in Byzantium* (Penn State Press 2006), explored through an anthropological lens the structure of the cult of the Virgin in Constantinople and its imperial investment in a framework of monasteries, icons, and icon-processions. Her second book *The Sensual Icon: Space Ritual and The Senses in Byzantium* (Penn State Press 2010) and a series of articles

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(Art Bulletin, Dec. 2006, Res. Journal of Anthropology and Aesthetics, 2009) confronted the phenomenon of animation in Byzantine art establishing the mixed-media relief icon as its focus. These objects display complex surfaces that become alive with the glitter and phenomenal shadows produced by the shifting diurnal light, flickering candle lights, drafts of air, and human breath. This polymorphy of the surfaces constitutes the Byzantine concept of *empsychōsis* (in-spiriting) or animation (<http://www.thesensualicon.com>). This medieval liveliness, manifested in changes of appearance, challenges the Renaissance concept of lifelikeness. Rather than a *chiaroscuro* defined as pictorial modeling as is the case with Renaissance painting, Byzantine art through its mixed-media icons invested in temporal glitter and transient shadows to create a sense of movement in the image and endow it with life. Recently her research on animation has shifted to sound studies focusing on the acoustic manifestation of in-spiriting operating in the liturgy and interior of Hagia Sophia (Gesta, August 2011).

As part of her research investment in sound studies, she directs three collaborative projects: "Icons of Sound"; the Onassis Seminar Aural Architecture: Music, Acoustics, and Ritual in Byzantium (<http://auralarchitecture.stanford.edu/>); and the Geballe workshop on The Material Imagination: Sound, Space, and Human Consciousness (<http://soundmaterialimagination.stanford.edu/>).

### **5:30-6:30: CONVERSATION WITH ARTIST SIMON TOPAROVSKY**

Panelists: **Prof. Jane Brucker** and **Prof. Katerina Zacharia**

Simon Toparovsky is an internationally acclaimed contemporary artist. Working in Los Angeles since 1981, Mr. Toparovsky has focused on narrative sculpture. His work has been exhibited and acquired by such important collections as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in New York; Centre Pompidou, Beaubourg and the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris; and the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Frederick R. Weisman Museum of Art in Los Angeles. Among his distinguished awards, Mr. Toparovsky has received seven grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, including two Visual Artist Fellowships. In the year 2000, he was chosen from an extensive worldwide search to design and create the life-sized bronze main altar crucifix for the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in downtown Los Angeles. His exhibition, *La Colonna Infame*, a collaboration with Italian painter Ariel Soulé, which was first shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art in St. Petersburg in 2011, continued to travel to five museums in Russia and then to Vilnius, Lithuania, through 2014. Mr. Toparovsky's latest projects include: A major, solo exhibition of new contemporary works and installations, *Vessels and Channels*, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in downtown Los Angeles, California, through February 2015, and a programmed visual artwork, a mosaic journal entitled *Imagining Christ: Making the Crucifix* presented on a large-scale monitor, marking the first use of digital art in the Cathedral; an invitational presentation of new, innovative works of art on paper, which include photographic components, at Photo LA's International Artist Series, January 15-18, 2015; and *Vasi e Corsi*, an exhibition of unique, site specific works at the Franco Rossi Gallery in Palazzolo sull'Oglio, Italy, from February 7-March 6, 2015. More information at [www.simontoparovsky.com](http://www.simontoparovsky.com)

Los Angeles artist Jane Brucker engages the viewer through contemplation, movement and ritual activity. A hallmark of her work is the simultaneous exploration of the visceral and

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the spiritual through intimate sculptural pieces and public performance. Combining found objects and heirlooms with textiles, glass, and precious cast metals she examines memory, fragility, and death. Her work has been exhibited at venues throughout the United States and internationally, in Nepal, Japan, Scotland, Germany and the Czech Republic. Jane Brucker is a Professor at Loyola Marymount University and holds an MFA degree from The Claremont Graduate University, an MA in Religion and the Arts from Claremont School of Theology and attended Skowhegan School of Sculpture and Painting, where she was awarded a fellowship to study painting with Agnes Martin and traditional *buon' fresco* with Lucienne Bloch. In addition to her studio practice she is certified teacher of the Alexander Technique (AMSAT). More information at <http://www.janebrucker.net>

Katerina Zacharia is a Professor of Classics at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles. She holds a B.A. in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Athens, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Classics from University College London. Her main interests and publications are in Greek literature, especially drama and epic, and its reception; the social and political history of archaic and classical Greece; Greek ethnicity; Greek cinema; classical reception; visual culture; tourism and heritage studies. She is the author of *Converging Truths: Euripides' Ion and the Athenian Quest for Self-Definition* (Leiden: Brill 2003). She is the editor and major contributor for *Hellenisms: Culture, Identity and Ethnicity from Antiquity to Modernity* (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum 2008). She is currently working on a study of the Greek pavilion in the 1939 New York World's Fair. Her most recent publications are "Postcards from Metaxas' Greece: The uses of classical antiquity in tourism photography" (2014), "Nelly's iconography of Greece" (2015), and a forthcoming article for the *Brill Companion to Euripides* (2016). Prof. Zacharia is an experienced dramaturge collaborating on theatrical performances and workshops, artistic events, and the writing of plays, feature films and documentaries. She works as a consultant on matters of Letters and the Arts for the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation in Athens, Greece and for the film industry in Los Angeles. She served in the selection committee for the 2014 Los Angeles Greek Film Festival. For selected works go to: [http://works.bepress.com/katerina\\_zacharia/](http://works.bepress.com/katerina_zacharia/)