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Saturday

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Movies Television Comics

Painted panels, divine visions

Demetrios Dukas paints icons that inspire worshippers

By Leslie Smith Evening Sun Staff

Like on a Sunday afternoon at the Walters Art Gallery, icon painter Demetrios Dukas begins to trace the halo which will complete his image of Christ. He explains to his audience that the halo gains some of its meaning from strategic placement: one wants to center the circle at the inner corner of Christ's gaze.

This lecture-demonstration, held in conjunction with the museum's icon show, provides insight into an artistic form of holiness that has inspired, challenged and comforted Greek Orthodox communities for a thousand years — and continues to do so.

Icons are religious images that encourage special reverence in the Orthodox Church because worshippers believe they possess some of the sanctity of the figures they represent. The Byzantine art treasures shown in the Walters's exhibit "Holy Image, Holy Space: Icons and Frescoes from Greece" remain living articles of faith, as potent as when they were created.

This exhibit of rare works, many never seen before in the United States, runs through Oct. 16 before continuing its tour of American museums.

While the icon show presents stunning historical documentation of icons from the 12th to 16th century, it is also an emotional event in which painted panels seem to float as if they were divine visions.

It is a show where viewers become members of "a religious ensemble," as curator Gary Vikan puts it. And it's a show that the faithful like to teach. Some visitors have become so captivated with religious fervor that museum guards have discovered them teaching and kissing the figure of St. Francis in a painting by El Greco.

"I want people to realize that there are such things as icons and that they're very important art historically. But more than that, I hope that they can create an atmosphere in which people will experience those things for the spiritual things they really are," Vikan says.

The physical reactions the show elicits testify to its spiritual strength and authenticity. Constantine Morouf, dean of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of the Annunciation, Maryland's oldest Greek Orthodox parish, says worshippers are used to teaching the icons that hang in their churches.

"Icons are windows from Earth to Heaven and from Heaven to Earth. You're meant to be very comfortable with them," Morouf says. "With an icon, the perspective is very different than it is in other paintings. Icons are designed to make you see the remaining point so that all the strength of the image pours into you."

"This is an exhibition of sacred art which will function as a sacred art," Vikan says. "The communities from whence these objects come are giving up something more than a precious visual creation, they are leaving part of their own spiritual life."

Demetrios Dukas has been creating that life for Orthodox churches in the United States for 35 years. Originally from Lymn, Greece, he has become one of the nation's preeminent iconographers: about 20 such artists work regularly in the U.S.

Dukas took his first inspiration from the paintings of El Greco, an artist whose early career was devoted to painting icons.

"Then a friend of the family who was a priest suggested I do something like this," Dukas says. "But when I actually saw Byzantine art — I had only seen some pseudo-Byzantine art — I was overwhelmed. It was a revelation which blew my mind. I found an identity with it. At first I said, 'Well at least this is a way to make a living. But I can do my own thing.' But then this became my own thing."

"It's a great art. It's a religious art, but it prefigures modern art. It has elements of Cubism, Expressionism, it has everything... It's an art that transcends nationalities and speaks to everyone."

As he paints the figure of Christ Pantocrator — Christ the Almighty and All-powerful — Dukas is recreating the stunning figure which greets visitors to "Holy Image, Holy Space."

"The impact of the Christ Pantocrator is just overwhelming," says Morouf. "There he is in all his spiritual splendor, conveying His wisdom, His love, His patience, His forgiveness, His blessing on all who enter."

Dukas answers questions about his techniques and his career from visitors from as far away as Connecticut who have come to the Walters to see his paintings — and perhaps to learn something about the iconographer's dedication. After moving to Bowie in 1964, for instance, he devoted the next 20 years to creating the heavenly mosaic that now



'Christ the Windows of God,' from the end of the 14th century

above workshops at Saint Sophia Cathedral in Washington.

Along with executing church and private commissions around the country, Dukas has also taught the art of mosaic and enamel painting. At the system, he is designing furniture and doors for St. Demetrios Church on C&D Hill Road in Carver.

"This work takes the viewers to a higher plane," Dukas explains. "It's a good feeling for me that these paintings are continually serving people, helping them somehow. Where you do this beautiful art, you always wonder if you are worthy of it. It's a great feeling, but it's also humbling."

"This work has instilled in me a kind of fear — the positive, rather than the negative, kind — a fear that doesn't take this thing for granted. I have been careful and respectful of this art since the beginning," he says. "And each time I paint, I still have elements of this feeling, whether you call it fear, or respect, or love."



Icon painter Demetrios Dukas and his work

WEEKEND PICKS: By the Evening Sun Staff

Music/ Scott Duncan

Tonight you can hear the BSO's new principal flutist while aiding a good cause. Emily Constantinou will perform Mozart's Quartet for flute and strings in A major, K. 298, (with an assist by striking BSO members) at 8:15 p.m. at Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, 1 E. Mt. Vernon Place. Also on the program: solo flute works by Auri, Rodegno and Brucoldi. Proceeds of the concert will help a young flute student, Tatiana Arana, who may be forced to return to Costa Rica if she cannot raise enough funds for tuition at Peabody Conservatory. Tickets at the door, \$7.50.

Theater/ Winnie Walsh

"Crimes of the Heart," Beth Henley's dark comedy drama, is the opening production of the Vagabond Players' season. The play centers on the problems of three young Southern sisters who must come to grips with the death of their father and themselves. Under the direction of Tom Kitch, the show is a nice, light community theater entertainment. Laura McFarland and Thomas Lodge (pictured) give fine performances. 806 S. Broadway, 8:30 p.m. \$7, 553-9135.

Movies/ Lou Cedrone

"Crossing Delancey" is being referred to as the Jewish "Moonstruck," and this is not a small praise. Army Irving stars as the thrifty unmarried woman who is taken with an egoistic author. At the same time, there is a young man, the owner of a pickle store, who would prefer that Izzy (Irving) fall in love with him. Joan Micklin Silver directed, and it is obvious that she loves Manhattan and some of the people who call it home. Peter Riegert is the pickle man, and Riezl Bozky is Izzy's grandmother, the matchmaker who wants to bring grandpa Izzy and pickle man together. There are stand-out scenes, but you'll want to discover them for yourself, and look out for Paula Lawrence, the one-time stage name who does an uproarious bit.

Art/ Steve Purchase

"Modern Masters" at the Renaissance Fine Arts Gallery presents works on paper, drawings and prints by a dozen internationally known artists, including Mary Cassatt, Joan Miro, Henry Moore, Willem de Kooning, Frank Stella, Alex Katz, Riel Grooms and Keith Haring. The gallery, at 1430 Reisterstown Road, will be open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. today. At night is a print on handmade paper by Robert Motherwell called "Game of Chance." For more information, call 564-4447 or 464-8000.

SATURDAY

9 a.m. St. John's of Hamilton United Methodist Church, 5315 Hartford Road, holds a flea market. Among the goodies you'll find will be baked wares, refreshments and plenty of sale items. For a fun time, fee with the whole family. Details: 426-8177.

10:30 a.m. A free seminar titled "How to Succeed in a Home-Based Business" is offered at the Parkville-Carmel branch of the Baltimore County Public Library, 9509 Hartford Road. Various speakers will address various aspects of home-business development. Details: 668-1313.

10:30 a.m. Looking for some kicks on a Saturday morning? Don't everybody! Visit the Jazzy Karate and Judo Center at Dwyer Mills High School, 124 Tolgate Road, knows an invitational karate tournament. Admission is \$3 for adults and \$2 for children.

11 a.m. The State Championship Jousting Tour-

24 HOURS

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEKEND

11:30 a.m. Stop in, shop in at the Pickingmill bazaar and flea market at 815 Chestnut Ave. in Towson. Sale items include crafts, jewelry, baked goods, plants and more. Details: 825-7423.

1 p.m. Artist-potter Mary Clark demonstrates to young and old how to shape clay animals, at the Pottery Guild, 201 Homewood Ave. Details: 435-7704.

4 p.m. A crab imperial and ham supper is held at

SUNDAY

11 a.m. The annual "German Expressionist Graphics from 1905 to 1985" continues for one more week at the Baltimore Museum of Art, North Charles Street and Art Museum Drive. Admission is free for museum members and everyone 21 and younger, \$2 for everyone else. Details: 396-6310.

Noon The Pride of Baltimore II is open to the public at the Pride Pier, on the Fingers Pier in the Inner Harbor. Details: 629-5480.

2:30 p.m. Dr. Richard Kopley, a professor of English at Pennsylvania State University's DuBois campus, gives a lecture on "Edgar Allan Poe and the Philadelphia Saturday News" in Wheeler Auditorium at the Enchanted Plant Central Library, 483 Central St. The event is free. Details: 625-3188.

Olympic bad ads

STEVE MCKERROW

Everybody who has watched the Olympic Summer Games knows, and after competition has been taking out of attention in the swimming, track and field and other athletic events, the commercial competition among big bucks advertisers who tailored specialized ads for the captive TV audience.

And it seems only fair that medals be awarded for these efforts. But given the often intrusive nature of their appearance, the commercials should be cited in inverse order of the effectiveness of their message.

■ The Gold Medal for Inexpensive Intrusions — To be fair, for the spot set in a tavern, where beer quaffers slowly are down to watch an American track athlete receiving his gold medal at Seoul, climaxed by impetuous clapping by the tipplers as the National Anthem plays.

■ The Silver Medal for Bally Sports — To the client many will get to see athletes work out, and the activity complexity of odds with the odds of Olympic striving — that is, excellence through intense training.

■ The Bronze Medal for Inexpensive Intrusions — Well, maybe not, gives the drug control-

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