

THE FIRST NEWSLETTER IN 2024

By Michael Galovic

Dear All

My hope is that the beginning of this 2024 has been kind to you. As we all have issues with the changeable weather, the heat and the humidity, we all deal with it differently. I know someone here who hates summers for various reasons. Personally, I enjoy its long days and warmth if it is caressing you, but not the excess heat and above all the humidity. The latter affects painting and especially varnishing...

While working on the body of icons depicting Saint George versus the Dragon, I have time to reflect on complexity of this scene which long ago has transcended even the realm of myth and became a cosmic event.

My solitary labour of love allows me also to think and to remember things I learned from others or was reminded about by them. Father Silouan Justiniano reminds us of importance of differentiating between the **convention** and the **tradition** in the sacred art. John Cleese talks about the difference between the **solemnity and seriousness** (yes, THAT John Cleese, from Monty Python).

Shoya Grigg, a creative soul living in Japan talks about the necessity for an artist to be in solitude, at least while working. He says we often confuse **solitude** with **loneliness**. This last thing came to me via my mobile device sent by my new friend, Google, in a hotel room in Okinawa, last November.

But, the artist said something else, much more important to me. He said he was far too focused on the so-called perfection in his art practice. He came to realise that it was wrong and that all he tries to achieve these days is the feeling of **happiness** during his creative endeavours.

This is by far the most valuable contribution I have got so far from my new friend Google. It has the power to simply change everything. **Perfection** is "overrated" while "**happiness**" never can be...

"If the water is too pure, you can't drink it": a New Zealand artist whose name evades me.

With my next icon exhibition by the end of April, we shall dwell on the western understanding of dragons, trying to travel deeper, much deeper into the mythical encounter between the warrior/knight/hero and the beast/dragon/serpent...

Showcased will be icons depicting the drama so well known in the west at its surface. Most of the icons will be of St George mounted and "slaying" the dragon, with us explaining that it was not about slaying but taming and converting the rudimentary evil. The famed white chargers will be there but also a few examples of black horses, a fact that allows speculations but will always be evading any finite and ultimate decoding.

This body of work will also confirm the issue of the **tradition v convention**. The public will be able to see how the same, conventionally accepted elements of the story can be presented in an infinite number of marvellously creative ways. It will be a chance to see that even halos have hardly ever been painted the same way, contrary to some contemporary schools and iconographers' practice.



St George, an icon 38x30cm by Michael Galovic, 2024

As you are all well aware and I keep reminding people, the exhibitions of icons are in general so very rare. The themed shows such as this one, even more so.

The April/May show will also be informative/educative as we shall try to give as much information as possible and I will be there myself, during those six days at the show, available for chatting about relevant questions.

The flyer is attached.

Please, do pass this on to any of your contacts that may be interested.

The work on my monograph, or the book dealing with last 17 years of my art making, is well under way. It is unfolding nicely and we believe it could be launched by the end of June. You will be receiving regular updates and the final information about its launch.

I salute you all and wish you a smooth sailing.

Michael Galovic

February 2023