

Dominican Institute for the Arts

January 2009 **E-Newsletter** Volume X No. 2

www.DIArts.org

DIA GATHERING 2009



The Contemplative Artist DIA Gathering July 15-18, 2009

Xavier Center, Convent Station, New Jersey

"The Sweet Songs of Living Things: The Contemplative Artist and the Recovery of Paradise"

Keynote Speaker/Day of Reflection:

Kathleen Deignan, CND.

Musician, Composer, Theologian

Come and enjoy the talents and companionship

of fellow artists for

☪ Day of Reflection

☪ Workshops/Studios

☪ Contemplative Sharing

☪ The Arts as Preaching

☪ Marketplace Entertainment

☪ Art Gala/Raffle

☪ Art in the New York Metropolitan Area

*Bring with you an artifact that preaches to you
and/or through you.*

Save the Date

**Watch for Registration details on
www.DIArts.org and via snail mail
in late January.**

Kathleen Deignan, CND DIA Gathering Keynoter 2009



Appropriately, Kathleen's latest CD is entitled simply, *The Gift*. Scanning her Curriculum Vitae, we're tempted to ask: "Which gift?" For over thirty years, Kathleen Deignan has been giving and receiving rich spiritual gifts.

A first degree in English literature gifted her with sensitivity to language. With degrees in both the History of Christian Spirituality and in Historical Theology she was opened to the beauty of the Shaker religion. Studying under Thomas Berry endowed her with an ardor for eco-feminism.

Currently Founding Director of the Iona Institute of Spirituality, Kathleen continues to learn, to celebrate, and to serve with colleagues from the Jewish, Celtic, Greek Orthodox, Mennonite, and Zen traditions. A long-time Merton scholar, she has had the opportunity to teach for the Canadian Merton Society in Prades, France.

All these theological streams feed into her work as a musician, composer, performing artist and author. Simultaneous with an impressive output of publications in

print, Kathleen has managed to release twenty CD's culled from over two hundred original compositions.

During her 2008-9 sabbatical year, Kathleen has earned her latest title: GreenFaith Fellow. As a GreenFaith Fellow, Kathleen is now implementing "The Great Work Project: Resources for Transforming the Ecological Vision and Practice of the Catholic Community," a series of seminars, workshops, lectures, and musical compositions modeling these resources.

Kathleen's description of her artistic process will resonate with all DIA members, regardless of which genre they have dedicated to "preaching through the arts."

"The amazing thing about my gift of music is that it always begins with the word, a sacred or inspiring word from scripture, poetry, or some insight welling up in me. Then I hear that word as a song, a curious phenomenon weaving a resonant pattern of melodies and harmonies. And so the word preaches to me by opening up in another field, more emotional, more resonant and unfolding than the text spoken or read.

When the word begins to sing in me, it remains and seems to imprint its deeper meaning in my heart and awareness."

This prayerful process is evident when you listen to her recordings — available direct from www.scholaministries.org or from Amazon.com.

Glockenspiel Anyone? A Special Invitation

According to the DIA roster, 20% of our current members are practicing musicians and/or composers. Many of you have

contributed regularly to our Gathering liturgies and entertainment. The 2009 event offers a unique opportunity for our musicians to be heard. Keynoter/Composer, Kathleen Deignan, will tune us up during her day of reflection. The Planning Commission has guaranteed two recently-tuned pianos in the assembly room. Now they are inviting DIA members to bring your portable instrument along to the Gathering to enhance our prayer.

So, all ye strings and cymbals, flutes and tympani, harmonicas and tambourines: come to New Jersey and praise the Lord!

Let Barbara Schwarz know the instruments you'll be bringing
artafire@hotmail.com.

A New Name, A New Challenge

OPalette will be the new name for the DIA Newsletter. The Board chose the title from among the suggestions submitted. The judges liked the visual pun on our Dominican identity. Now the Board invites DIA artists to create a new logo for our E-Newsletter using the word, **OPalette**.

A \$50.00 prize for the chosen entry

Guidelines:

- The word **OPalette** should be crisp and readable.
- The single word **OPalette** must be designed to fit within the dimensions of the current masthead.
- The design will be accepted in jpeg format to: jubloch@aol.com or emichael@caldwell.edu
- Deadline February 28, 2009
- *A \$50 prize for the chosen entry*

Board Report

At its December meeting, The DIA Board welcomed Liz Sully to her first experience of Board intensity and Sparkill hospitality. Liz, a stained-glass artist who now ministers in Atlanta, Georgia, will be remembered by attendants at the Columbus Gathering for designing the unique ritual which opened the event "with a bang!" Liz graciously accepted the position of Membership Liaison, thus freeing Carol O'Connor to devote her full attention to the DIA's increasingly popular website. Even before she left Sparkill, Liz demonstrated her aggressively charming recruitment style!

The Board divided meeting time between its Gathering responsibilities and its on-going commitment to the four-year Strategic Plan initiated a year ago. As Board members reviewed the document, they were encouraged to note that of the sixty-nine action items to implement its goals, approximately 30% have been completed or are currently in progress. Among these provisions, the Strategic Plan calls for composing and/or updating policies and guidelines for Newsletter and Webpage Editor, Board Liaisons, Planning Commissions, plus Nomination and Election processes. Jude Bloch presented all these for Board review and approval.

Other items on the agenda:

- Board's fund raising effort at the Annual Gathering to become an Art Raffle
- Annual Gathering scholarship process
- Finalize contract with keynoter 2009
- Fra Angelico Award Nomination form
- Re-negotiate Domlife ad

The Board also began work on producing a Constitutional change regarding Board terms to be presented for a Membership vote at the July 2009 Gathering.

The Board concluded its weekend by having Carol O'Connor create a unique Christmas video greeting to the DIA Membership. 'Hope you saw it and had a good chuckle.

See you in Convent Station, New Jersey!

Mariandale Artists' Retreat Expands June 14-20, 2009



Mariandale Retreat Center in Ossining, New York will host its sixth annual Artists' Contemplative Retreat from June 14-20, 2009.

For a full week, artists in every medium pray together, work alone and inspire each other with consistently astonishing outcomes.

Last year, for the first time, the retreat was opened beyond the Dominican family and attracted enthusiasts from coast to coast.

So register early. Limited to 15. For details contact Lucianne Siers OP at 201-320-8140 or check out

www.mariandale.org/prog_retreats.asp

Arrival time, Sunday June 14, 5:00PM
Depart by 11AM on Saturday, June 20.

Fee: \$410
\$310 Special Fee for all members of the Dominican Order.

What Can We Artists Offer the World?

Joeann Daley OP and Nancyann Turner OP responded to a recently challenging question from Lucianne Siers OP, "What can we as artists offer our world?"

Nancyann Turner OP writes, *This new course I am helping to teach, out of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, is a community outreach of art with low income and homeless families.*

We also have a neighborhood where an artist has created a whole art scene called "Heidelberg" after the street name. The neighborhood sports all kinds of painted objects, art nailed to the sides of abandoned houses and gardens planted in barrels.

Another effort is the role of art at a nearby children's hospital.

If anyone has a good article, resource or a website to suggest on the role of the arts in the community, please contact me.

Nancyann Turner OP
32237 Wisconsin St. Livonia, MI 48150
NATurner@juno.com

Joeann Daley OP, inspired by the film, *Public Enemies*, exhibited original etchings of her own home town, Columbus, Wisconsin.



She partnered with the local coffee house, Julie's Java, and presented a show called THE COLUMBUS SERIES/Etchings and Collages. Joeanne introduced this new etching shown here, "Streets of Yesteryear."

A percentage of the sales benefited persons living in poverty through The Nick Foundation.

Editor's Note: Perhaps you have an experience of integrating art within a building, a city, a rural setting, the world. We'll keep this column going as long as there are contributions to it.

Looking for Future Fra Angelico Award Nominees

The DIA Board is enlisting your assistance once again in nominating a deserving member for the Fra Angelico Award. You will note the criteria is listed on the form found at the end of the newsletter.

You are not expected to know the whole history of the nominee but it would be helpful if you could give the name of a contact person who might be able to furnish information to the Board.

Please return your completed form to Liz Sully as soon as possible.



Membership Reminder

We are providing a form at the end of the newsletter for renewing your 2009 membership.

If you haven't done so yet, please attend to this as soon as possible. The DIA's fiscal year runs from December 31st to January 1st.

Please send your updated membership form and your \$35 membership fee to Liz Sully. Thank you for your prompt response.

FEATURE: THE ARTIST AS PREACHER

TANNER'S ANNUNCIATION

By Mary Fisher OP



This painting, *The Annunciation*, 1898, by Henry Ossawa Tanner, is probably his most admired work; although others, particularly *The Banjo Lesson*, are also very popular, held in wide esteem. Racial prejudices continued strong in the United States, however, and Tanner, a black man, was denied the universal acclaim or even the recognition his art deserved.

In examining the painting, one is struck by the muted tones except for the pillar of light at the left, representing the Angel Gabriel. Radiance from the light leads the eye to the edge of the bed and to the young woman sitting at its head. Mary appears frightened, apprehensive. Her head, tilted to glance at the angel, is protected by her hunched shoulders, which lead to her clasped hands and arms shielding her body. Before she will give her consent to the angel's message, she must be sure, convinced of its Divine origin. Both the tumbled bed linens and the rug in front of the bed testify to her hurried awakening from sleep. If the eye should wander around the rest of the painting for a while, it is quickly redirected toward Mary by a pair of arches at the top – arches which enfold her in a heart-shaped embrace.

The background is undistinguished: ordinary, plain, in darker colors than the important actors in this scene. Of some note is the care taken with the cloth curtain affording a modicum of privacy to the bed and its occupant. The slightly stretched upper left side, the obvious shading of

the clamps and lines holding up the screen; the darker, more pronounced shading of the clamp above Mary's head – all continuously call attention to the central figure. The right edge of the screen abuts a stone aperture in the wall which supports a jug and a dish. Could that be the flicker of a flame near the dish?

The entire work seems bathed in serenity, stillness and peace. Viewers, drawn to the maiden, empathize with her confusion and admire her known response. Without words, the painting preaches about acceptance, service and love. It speaks to me about the YES I need to give each day, sometimes in spite of the timidity and apprehension I may feel. Even the jug, dish and glimmer of a spark speak volumes through their essences. They wait, full of promise, ripe with expectancy, ready for service, available. They, too, symbolize Mary's "Fiat," their being set aside for most sacred use.

God may send one of her angels to me today – to me, surprised, timid, afraid; but sustained by the same Compassionate Creator Who supports me every minute of my life. How will I answer? Will I be ready, too?

"I Wanted Him Walking"

One of our own founding DIA members, Phyllis Mrozinski OP, recently completed a sculpture for the Dominicans of Grand Rapids – just in time for their Gathering Days this past summer.



When asked, "Why Dominic and why now?" Phyllis' response

was simple, "It's time we had an outdoor sculpture of Dominic. We've built our lives around his principles and he was a man on the move." And so it was perfect to hear the words of blessing, "Today we will bless Dominic, just as our lives have been blessed by following in his footsteps."



In his footsteps indeed! When Phyllis considered where she would like to place the 250-pound sculpture she could have chosen a garden or a grotto, but true to Dominic's simplicity, she placed the sculpture at ground level with its

back to the Marywood Healthcare Center and overlooking the rolling front lawns of Marywood. "I wanted him walking, not just standing. He was an itinerant Preacher." With a staff in his left hand and a bible in the other, the sculpture of Dominic is poised to stride down the hill toward the drive that leads in and out of the Dominicans' Marywood campus.

How simple and how appropriate.

Photos of Dominican Sisters w/ sculpture: Copyright 2008 The Grand Rapids Press. All rights reserved. Used with permission.



BOARD MEMBERS

&

CONTACTS

Lucianne Siers OP

LSiers6720@aol.com

Board Chair

Elizabeth Michael Boyle OP

emichael@caldwell.edu

Secretary

Newsletter

Ann Eigenbauer OP

aeigenbauer@sparkill.org

Finance

Lorraine Ferguson OP

lferguson@ophope.org

Finance

Carol O'Connor OPA

coconnor@columbusdominicans.org

Website Editor

Elizabeth Sully OP

Sullyop@aol.com

Membership Liaison

Jude Bloch OP

jubloch@aol.com

Ex-Officio

Newsletter

Jeanne Stickling OP

sjclay@ameritech.net

Archivist



WISE WORDS

FROM THE ARTISTS

Masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, by thinking of the body of the people, so that the experience of the whole is behind the single voice.
Virginia Woolf

*When the soul wishes to experience something,
she throws an image of the experience out there
and enters into it.*

Meister Eckhart

*The future
enters into the artist
long before it happens.*

Rainer Maria Rilke

For the common things of everyday
God gave us speech in the common way.
For the deeper things we think and feel
God gave the poet things to reveal.
But for heights and depths no word could reach
God gave Music, the soul's own speech.

Anonymous

**We receive the light, then we impart it.
Thus we repair the world.**

The Kabbalah