Fra Angelico Award.

The Fra Angelico Award is the highest honor the DIA bestows on its members. This Award is presented every year to a DIA artist who exemplifies Fra Angelico’s dedication to furthering the Holy Preaching through art.

Criteria used for this designation:

* the artist’s work is of the highest quality in his or her

discipline

* it is highly honored in artistic circles
* the artist exemplifies the ideals of the DIA

Over the past twenty-seven years this award has been presented to some amazing artists for their outstanding achievements in Photography, Liturgical space design, Drama, Music composition, Sculpture, Poetry, Fresco, Printmaking, Film making, Weaving, Painting, Music publication, Instrumentalists, Multi-media work, Stained Glass, Calligraphy, Art Therapy, Dance & sacred ritual, and Pottery. As you can tell from this list, the past recipients are from many disciplines.

This year the Fra Angelico award recipient is a devoted member, well versed in Preaching the Word of God through the Arts. This Person exemplifies the criteria cited above, and has been recognized by peers for the quality of work presented, as well as exemplifying the ideals of DIA.

What are these ideals? I have never seen them written, so I present what I hold as the Ideals for the Dominican Institute for the Arts based on my understanding of Being Dominican.

1. FIRST IS AUTHENTICITY: Authenticity means to create art that preaches the Word of God. This could be anything from a small bookmark that is presented to someone and kept as a treasure for its holy message. Maybe a thoughtful card that expresses the meaning of the moment or occasion. I’m sure many of you have kept a cherished card because it’s meaning is deeper than a card. Some of our artists’ work has been internationally recognized for its impact. However, there is nothing elitist about DIA, and if you heard that, it contradicts the reason for DIA’s very existence. Membership in the DIA is for everyone from the professional to the amateur. It’s not what you do, or who you are or the credentials you might hold that counts, but how you do your art and why you create it. St. Therese of Lisieux became a saint and a doctor of the church not for any great achievements she set out to do but for her “little way,”
2. THE SECOND IDEAL IS INCLUSION: We all have families. I am grateful to say that I love being a member of the Dominican Order, my global family. I hold as one of my dearest treasures being a Sparkill Dominican. However, I carry close in my heart the Dominican Institute for the Art where I have found affirmation, inspiration and inclusive association. DIA has helped me find purpose and meaning in using art as a powerful means to preach. Don’t you just love the prayerfulness of this Gathering? Aren’t you enriched by the caring and sharing with others? Don’t you feel blessed by everything, EVERYTHING, that you come here for? The music, the learning, the ideas, the companionship and deeply formed friendships, the inspiration, mentoring, and the best of what each person can give.
3. THE THIRD IDEAL IS TRUTH; The goal of the Dominican Order is to preach truth. Does your art speak to what is in your heart? Sometimes preaching with the megaphone of art doesn’t create just what is pretty, but what is the truth. We find inspiration in what we see, hear, feel, move and sometimes even smell. Have you ever heard a song that haunts you and you can’t get it out of your head, or witnessed the beauty of a dance that moved you to tears? Truth speaks to the emotive side of the artist. Each artist, be it painter, potter, poet, photographer or preparer of food; works to get it just right, just the best way to reveal in the work what is in the heart. Last year Xiomara invited DIA to create art for the Dominican Sisters Conference held in Columbus. The pieces that were sent made a powerful impact on the Dominican Leadership and influenced their truth and decision making in Times Such as These.
4. THE FOURTH IDEAL IS FAITHFULNESS TO THE FOUR DOMINICAN PILLARS: Some DIA Artists have had very extensive training. Others learn from what source they can, but artists learn through doing. Our late Member Pauline Oplinger got her art education from day camps and short-term art experiences. She moved to New York to immerse herself into the art scene and then figured out she needed formal training so moved to a college in Illinois where she could afford the tuition. There she met the Adrian Dominicans and offered her life mission teaching art to others. If a person has a degree, it might open doors, but regardless a person’s educational credentials, an artist learns by doing. It doesn’t matter if you have a PhD or are self-taught. It’s what you put into your art that counts. The artist with many initials after one’s name struggles just as much as someone self-trained. My name is 16 letters, the professional initials I put after my name come to 21. A Diploma might say one is qualified. But that piece of paper does not produce a work of art or Preach the Word of God. Time, thought, effort, practice, hard work and the doing of one’s art leads to the culmination of a work, be it music, dance, stone carving, painting, film making or all the other 62 ways in which our dedicated DIA artists preach the word of God through their art.
5. GENEROSITY IS THE FIFTH IDEAL I HOLD: Generosity is the unselfish abundant giving of oneself, personal open-handedness, big heartedness, or taking the time to be there regardless the inconvenience or pressure it might put on one who has a deadline. The generous person puts all aside and LISTENS. We’ve all had shoulders we’ve used to support us in need. It has been the generosity of our original members, some of whom have entered the pearly gates, and some who are among us, to thank for how DIA has grown into a respected organization by promoting the Preaching of the Word of God through Art. We can also give ourselves a pat on the back for growing DIA.

You may have a different set of ideals. Your list might be much better than this one. These five ideals are ones I hold of what it means to be a Dominican Artist who preaches the word of God through art. I offer these to you because the person receiving the Fra Angelico Award this year embodies the criteria and ideals just outlined. This person has always said yes to working hard to enable DIA to grow and flourish. This person is a phenomenal Preacher of the Word of God through Art. This person is Authentic, very Inclusive, a well spring of Truth, Faithful to the Dominican Pillars and has worked to perfect the art discipline practiced. This person is generous, going the extra mile and always enthusiastic about doing so even though most of this person’s work has been done behind the scenes. We appreciate all the effort poured forth for DIA. You only know what the effort has been when you walk in the same shoes. Ask this person anything about DIA and this person can recollect the event as it happened, be it last year or 25 years ago. DIA has grown from this person’s heroic efforts, reaching out, being professionally committed to art, and exact in the manner of conducting DIA affairs. This person we have all grown to count on and love. This person is our own beloved Pat Daly.