



# imago

autumn 2003 **NEWSLETTER** volume five issue three

**Many of us don't get to the movies** that often, but we all have good reason to believe that film carries a deep and pervasive influence in our culture. If one were to note only the film festivals that now take place in Canada the point would be made. Over the Labour Day weekend Marion and I attended one of those festivals in Montreal, *Festival du Monde*. We saw more films in four days than we would normally see in four months. Five of the films we saw were competitors in the International Competition. More than ever before, I was struck by the communicative power of film. Sound and image work together to draw us into the social and personal circumstances of those on the silver screen. Together they present a narrative that engages both heart and mind. Films entertain but they also provide a perspective on life's issues, provoke thought, and call us to look afresh at our own lives. It is true that at times popular film can simply pander to our personal and political prejudices. But their influence runs deeper than that.

There are many who would argue that film is the most important vehicle within our culture for carrying values. It can act as a mirror to reflect back to us our cultural self-understanding, and open new perspectives on how we see ourselves. Film mirrors to us what we value and may invite us to pursue those values, or to critically assess them. International films open to us very different social contexts and give us a glimpse into an unfamiliar world. Yet somehow the human story in that foreign setting resonates with our own story. The rich diversity of film and the multi-layered texture of the medium



defy any simple account of what film does. Suffice it to say that film is able to speak to a broad and attentive audience on issues of both personal and social significance. It does so with power and at times considerable eloquence.

I read somewhere that film is to popular culture what liturgy is to the church. Film like liturgy offers a story to live by. And in a culture such as ours where questions of identity and meaning loom large – stories are of great importance. In her insightful book *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies*, Margaret Miles observes that popular film gained profile at the



Loch Garry in the Mist by Jeanne Isley

**Like many artists I gaze.** I gaze outwardly at the world around me and also inwardly, into my thoughts and spirit. Gazing is an instinctual response, drawn forth by things sensed, not seen, beyond the veil of the perceived world. Possessing this gaze is part of what makes me an artist. I recall as a young girl gazing at darkened silhouettes of mountains in the moonlight. Asked what I was looking at I replied, 'I can't see, but I know something is there.' I've asked myself and others ask me why I like to paint Scotland and in particular, the Highlands? It's because my gaze became fixed upon it. Driving through Glencoe on a chance trip to the Highlands I was deeply moved by what I saw, awestruck by the infused divine presence I sensed everywhere. Painting "Loch Garry in the Mist" I wanted to allude to the mystery of God's hidden formative power of creation quietly at work beneath multiple layers of fog, blanketing the watery surface of the loch, and again, within the transparent strata of cloud and mist adorning the mountains' face. Here is the veil, perceived yet hidden, seen but unrealized, tangible yet beyond reach. As an artist I continue to try to realise some part of that awesome divinity I have been privileged to experience in the Highlands through my painting and in doing so, to pay homage to the one Lord who created it all.

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## Upcoming Events

### Bruno Capolongo

See a special feature article on visual artist Bruno Capolongo in the magazine *International Artist*, August/September 2003.

### Paul Neufeld's new CD

*Walk Together* is now complete and you're invited to the CD release concert on Thursday, September 25th. The album contains Paul's arrangements of 19th Century African-American Spirituals for jazz group including: Rob Clutton, bass; Paul Brundtland, congas; Nick Hockin, percussion; Paul Neufeld, piano. The release party will be: Thursday, September 25, 8 p.m. at the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, 106 Trinity Street (Parliament and King), Toronto.

### Pilgrim's Progress: the musical

with script, lyrics and music by Suzanne Rutherford is set to be workshopped at the Lighthouse Theatre in Port Dover, September 27, 2003, 7:30 p.m.

(www.lighthouse theatre.com) Anne Allan director (Phantom, Showboat, Ragtime) just finished up her second season directing at the Charlottetown Festival. Lead role is Adam Brazier who was Skye in *Mamma Mia* and also in Sondheim's multi Tony-nominated *Into the Woods* on Broadway. This two act rock/pop musical workshop performance is absolutely free! No tickets, no reservations required.

### Vancouver Screening

Canadian Independent film *See Grace Fly* is at the Vancouver International Film Festival (www.viff.org). Sunday October 5, 7:00 p.m., Ridge Theatre, \$9. Wednesday October 8, 11:30 a.m., Granville 7 Cinema 3, \$7. A mother's funeral brings friends and family together in an engaging exploration of faith and love. This tragic, yet hopeful, character-driven drama follows Gina Chiarelli's passionate portrayal of Grace, a schizophrenic who talks to God, as she hurriedly spreads the word of his Second Coming.

### Maria Gabankova

will be exhibiting new paintings under the title, *Book of Revelation* at Loop Gallery, 1174 Queen St. W., Toronto, 416-516-2581, September 27 to October 19, 2003 (www.revelation.paintinggalleries.net) Also, Maria is also participating in *Art Detour*, an annual group studio show, November 14, 15, 16, 2003 at 1400 Dupont St. (at Lansdowne), 416-535-8063.



### New work on the themes of the Book of Revelation

Plagues, wars, famines, earthquakes, floods, fires, murders - all that sounds like much of our daily news. Yet, these same catastrophic events are also described in many Biblical texts, such as the *Book of Revelation* or the *Apocalypse*. My paintings in this exhibition are the beginning of a series on the themes of the Book of Revelation. More specifically I have focused on some of the Angels - Messengers - who appear throughout John's vision. The layers of events in this book are complex referring to the present and to the future. The figures in my paintings do not represent literally angels of the text but are inspired at times by several angels, symbols or acts at once; for example the sounding of trumpets, the plagues bowls, destroying fire, the chain binding Satan. I think of these paintings as visual meditations on the meaning of the Revelation and spiritual reality as experienced in our present time.

- Maria Gabankova

### The Word Guild presents

the first bilingual *Write! Montreal* - October 8, 8:30 - 4:30. Presbyterian College Montreal in partnership with **Innovation**, the arts division of Christian Direction. For information or to register, contact Laura Cornett 514-256-2483, llcornett@sprint.ca

*Write! Toronto* - November 8, 2003. The Stone Church, Toronto. Includes keynote speaker Larry Willard, founder of Castle Quay Books Canada; Poet Margaret Avison, two time winner of the Governor General's Award, and whose book *Concrete and Wild Carrot* won the Griffin Canadian Poetry Prize 2003; and many other local and national writers. www.thewordguild.com

### Imago Evening

**Thursday October 23, 2003, 7:30 p.m.**, at the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, 106 Trinity Street, Toronto. An evening to showcase some of the artists from the roster of Imago projects: Suzanne Rutherford, composer, lyricist; Terry Black, visual artist, film maker; Glen Soderholm, singer/songwriter; Fergus Marsh, musician; Steve Pinney, writer; Ruth Douglas, Campus Project; and an update from the Executive Director.



### Oratorio Terezin

**World Premiere:**  
Nov. 1st 8:00 p.m.,  
Nov. 2nd 3:00 p.m.

at Toronto Centre for the Arts, George Weston Recital Hall. Tickets are \$35 & \$45. www.oratorioterezin.com

Composed by Ruth Fazal, *Oratorio Terezin* is a full length work scored for orchestra, children's choir, adult choir, and three vocal soloists. Set in the context of the Holocaust, using children's poetry which miraculously survived from the ghetto of Terezin, woven together with passages from the Hebrew scriptures, this piece explores the question so many ask in the face of human suffering: "Can God be found in my place of pain?" Over 15,000 children passed through Terezin, of whom only one hundred survived. The poignant innocence of their poetry, set against the cry of 'How long will the wicked exult?' causes us to come face to face with the testing of faith, in the context of unspeakable human suffering and deprivation. The musical style is both dramatically

intense, and sweetly lyrical. The juxtaposition of the children's and adult's voices, along with those of the Voice of the Prophet, the Voice of God and the Voice of Suffering create the tension found in the midst of feelings of rejection and abandonment alongside the hope deep within the human heart that all will be well.

### Image Conference feature: Leslie Leyland Fields

Leslie Leyland Fields will be featured as a keynote speaker at the upcoming Image Conference, "A Narratable World: The Theological Implication of Story," to be held in Seattle on November 6–9. Leslie Leyland Fields is the author of the nonfiction books *Surviving the Island of Grace*, *Out on the Deep Blue*, and *The Entangling Net: Alaska's Commercial Fishing Women Tell Their Lives*, among others. She teaches at Kodiak College and fishes commercially with her family. Her essays have appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Orion*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. For more, read her essay, "A Voice in the Wilderness" printed in *Image* #38 as part of the "Bringing Home the Work Symposium". To learn more about the *Image* conference or to register online, go to the conference website: [www.imagejournal.org/conference](http://www.imagejournal.org/conference).

### Vancouver ManiFest Arts Festival 2003

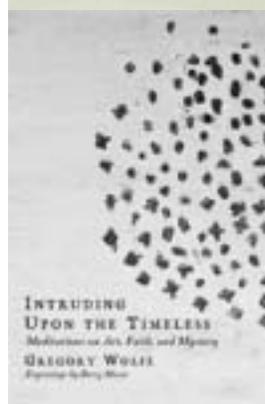
Friday November 7, 7:30–10 p.m.: Opening Night Reception and Art Exhibit at Holy Trinity Anglican Church (12th & Hemlock). Saturday November 8, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.: Performances and Workshops. Fairview Baptist Church (16th & Pine). Saturday Film Screenings: 2–6 p.m.: Grace Vancouver Church (7th & Fir). Saturday evening, 7:30–10 p.m.: Performing Arts Showcase. Fairview Baptist Church (16th & Pine). Sunday November 9, 7:30 p.m.: *Celebration of the Arts in Worship*. Holy Trinity Anglican Church (12th & Hemlock). These locations are in walking distance from one another and should make for an interesting spread. The festival's theme this year is 'Thou Art With Me' and will emphasize the relational aspects of making art in community.

### The Sound of Hope

A weekend with Jeremy Begbie, Ottawa, March 19–22, 2004. Sponsored by Augustine College. [www.SoundHope.ca](http://www.SoundHope.ca)

## Intruding Upon the Timeless: Meditations on Art, Faith, and Mystery By Gregory Wolfe

Originally published as the editorial statements at the beginning of each issue of *Image*, these short, evocative essays constitute a new Christian aesthetic for our time. Each of the meditations is like a polished gem: radiant, gracefully written, beautiful in itself, but also serving as a



stimulus to further reflection. They remind us of the way that both faith and imagination reach beyond the limits of reason to intuit the mystery of redemption. Among the

subjects of these meditations are: the intimate relationship between faith and imagination, the spiritual value of irony, the great divorce between Christian subculture and the larger American mainstream, and post 9/11-America's lack of a tragic sensibility. The book is enhanced with the engravings of Barry Moser, one of America's leading artist/illustrators.

Annie Dillard writes: "Gregory Wolfe's vision is the animating force behind *Image*, one of the best journals on the planet. *Intruding Upon the Timeless*, a collection of his pieces from *Image*, takes its title from a phrase of Flannery O'Connor. That's apt, because not since O'Connor's *Mystery and Manners* has there been such bracing insight on the pile-up where art and faith collide. This book will rev your engines and propel you down the same road."

To order *Intruding Upon the Timeless* at a pre-publication discount of 20% go to the *Image* website: [www.imagejournal.org](http://www.imagejournal.org) 

## Innovation – A Montreal Based Arts Initiative

By Jenna Smith

Innovation is one of the newest ministries in Montreal. Approximately a year ago – fall 2002, some individuals from Christian Direction Inc., a Quebec based urban ministry, were discussing the Quebecois culture and noticing two things: first, the resistance to words and verbal proclamation of the Gospel and second, our rich artistic heritage. We also noticed a disturbing lack of the use the arts in our churches not to mention a huge lack of ministry amongst artists. What was born out of these reflections and discussions was Innovation.

Innovation's goal is to demonstrate the values of the kingdom of Christ through the arts. We attempt to be on the cutting edge of creative and new ideas, developing and supporting Montreal's artistic community, offering opportunities for artists to express themselves and creating a platform for dialogue and reflection into such issues as theology through the arts, spiritual formation, God as artist, and using art to transform life and community.

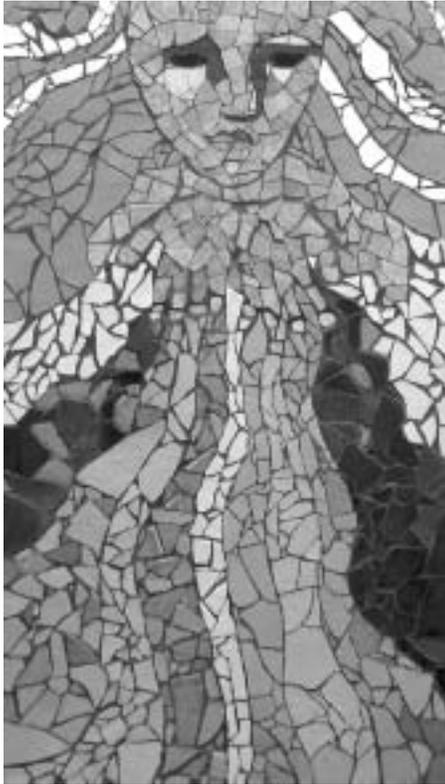
This summer Innovation had a mobile art exposition entitled "Windows of the Soul", in which 16 artists took one-hundred year old windows and transformed them into works of art. The exposition moved through numerous cathedrals in the province of Quebec, and was viewed by thousands. During the last week of August we moved it to its final destination, an art gallery in downtown Montreal situated in the heart of the Film Festival. There were many opportunities to meet people, converse and network. During the week of the Film Festival we also held an event called "Talk Film Talk Faith", in French and English in which groups could attend films and then meet up to discuss them, as well as attend seminars in which we studied the links between church life, theology and cinema.

If you are interested in hearing more about Innovation, please do not hesitate to e-mail us at [Innovation@direction.ca](mailto:Innovation@direction.ca) 

## Sketch: New Location, New Charitable Number

By Phyllis Novak

I suppose we will always try to connect with the poor. It's part of our mandate but I think there is also a natural draw. Homeless



people seem to wear their poverty. Their pain is splayed round about them and moves with them as they move. Something of that attracts us. It resonates with our own emptiness and pain, our own poverty. We want to see it articulated, given voice and meaning. And we want to move through it to the other side. For years I have worked alongside street involved and homeless youth in the metaphoric and searingly beautiful language of the arts. This language has helped us navigate through much in our mutual search for wholeness, for meaning, for health, for future and I think, for God.

Street youth live raw and rugged. In art making they create raw. With a brash lack of pretension they seem to carve their way to relief and hope, even just for the moment. Stoked imaginations tear the veil of limitation and complacency and suddenly other passages present themselves and street life doesn't need to be the end of the story.

Since 1996, Imago has under its wide and supportive umbrella been a part of creating space for street youth to engage in the arts through a community initiative called

Sketch in the city of Toronto. Hundreds of youth have been involved who come from all over the country. They have created visual installations through a variety of media as well as productions, music and films that have been witnessed by hundreds of audience members also from all over the country. Many have gone on to school; to full time work; to participation in the broader community including that of faith; to recovery from drugs, violence; to living in homes; to building healthy relationships, and to discovering their embeddedness in creation.

If you have been a part of Imago over these last 7 years, you have been a part of making this happen. Sketch now has its own charitable number, a beautiful new site on King Street West in Toronto. We've come out from underneath the protective umbrella provided and simply want to express our deep gratitude to all the people of Imago and to the faith community that supports it, past and present. We strongly encourage continued support to Imago as it is exposing beauty and the Beautiful One to many.

Visit our web site at: [www.sketch.ca](http://www.sketch.ca) 

## The movies

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same time that public life slipped out from under church control. She goes on to suggest that "congregations" became "audiences" and now the "...examination of values and moral commitments does not most pointedly occur in churches, synagogues, or mosques, but before the eyes of 'congregations' in movie theatres. It is here that we find responses to our moral quandaries and have our values shaped.

If there is any truth at all in this, it would suggest that those who operate from a faith perspective would want to have contemporary film as a conversation partner. Let me add here that I mean not just mainstream Hollywood films but the great wealth of international films and independent films. These works are often more astute in raising the right questions and more perceptive in their responses. Good film

like all good art is not easily pinned down. Their meanings are sometimes hard to get at and at best are ambiguous. This gives them a generative power to stimulate the imagination, raise questions and open heart and mind to fresh understanding.

For some time I have wanted to see Imago more engaged with film, fostering discussion while encouraging and supporting film-makers. One of the films screened at the Montreal Film Festival was *See Grace Fly*. Imago was prepared to accept this project but funding support came through and Imago services were not needed. This Vancouver production is a work that creatively explores issues of faith, human relationships, and the quest for meaning. The film got rave reviews in both English and French papers in Montreal and is soon to show in the Vancouver Film Festival. (See: Upcoming Events) I hope in the days ahead to discover more creative initiatives in film that will engage an audience in a

way that is arresting, life affirming and perhaps even prophetic.

I continue to be encouraged by the rich diversity of talent I come in contact with, and by the considerable number of inquiries that I receive. Imago is at an important juncture in its 30 year history. It will be looking ahead to determine the shape of its future and working to develop a strategy for establishing a funding base consistent with its growth. We are grateful for the support we receive and hope that many more will join the ranks to enable this organization to carry out its mandate.

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