

In Rhythm, in Colour and through Spiritual Lenses: Approaching Ecological Matters by Studying 12th Century Frescoes

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Abstract

The role of arts as antidote to contemporary degrading society, has been discussed extensively. Arts of the past unroll local visual languages that envelop the values, morality and spirituality of peoples of the past which are geographically and/or timely distant from us, contemporary 21st century citizens living in an era of consumerism and ecological and social degradation. The significance of studying visual arts of the past is important for raising awareness of our selfhood in relation to the “Other” (nature, persons). The pretext for this proposal is the study of the narthex frescos of Panayia Forviotissa chapel, a 900 hundred year old monument listed in UNESCO list of world cultural heritage. The frescos depict the personifications of the Terra-Land and the Sea. Because of their location in relation to the dome, both Terra and Sea as well as humans are regarded through spiritual lenses: as co-existing participants, as the “Other”. What might that imply for the “more- than-human-world” and our "troubled" world? In addition to the above, this presentation proposal describes how a class of 4rth grade students (age 9) explored the murals

and how they read them. This proposal, based on and combining imaginative education, place-based pedagogy, museum and arts education shows how the above were used for the development of a program of activities to explore the aforementioned murals. Based on the technical characteristics of the murals like rhythm and colour this presentation narrates a trip inwards, upwards and -through compassion- outwards to embrace the world.

Keywords

Arts, Ecology, Cultural diversity, Aesthetics.