

11-25-2016

Foreword: Faith and the Arts

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Recommended Citation

Darewych, Olena and Ludolph, Debbie Lou (2016) "Foreword: Faith and the Arts," *Consensus*: Vol. 37 : Iss. 2 , Article 1.
Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol37/iss2/1>

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Foreword

The Intersection of Faith and the Arts

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It is with great excitement that we present to readers the November 2016 issue of *Consensus* entitled "Faith and the Arts." This creative release includes four articles, two sermons, two artistic self-reflective pieces, five poems, one book review, and one hymn compilation review. Collectively and playfully they embrace imagination, life meaning, spirituality, and new ways of knowing and living.

Each article centres on a different medium's potential to stir the imagination and contribute to a transformative experience. Yun, in his article, "Interfaith-Cross-Cultural Improvisation: Inspiration and Meaning across Boundaries of Faith and Culture," describes musical improvisation and how the "deep play" process connects individuals – people from different cultural and faith traditions – in faith-based and university settings. Donaldson's article, "Singing the Story of Advent and Christmas: How Congregational Song Makes Diverse Theologies Incarnate," offers a historical and cross-cultural analysis of Advent and Christmas songs that embody a "prophetic edge," arguing that singing beyond the nostalgic canon creates a "culturally decentring, liminal space for unexpected encounter of the Word made flesh" (p. 13). Through a sensory hermeneutic, McNabb, in her article, "Engaging the Senses to Occasion Thin Space and Transformation: Gleanings from a Congregation's Experience of Playing in Theological Aesthetic," invites an encounter with thin space and the development of a "theological aesthetic that has people intimately experience Living Word as living" (p. 10). Coman, in her article, "The God-camera of Theology and Memory in Terrence Malick's *The Tree of Life*," explores Malick's film and presentation techniques through the lens of the moving camera as a trope for God – the "ultimate artist" who makes all things new.

This issue's reflective pieces and poems are included in the journal's regular section "Studies and Observations." Hildebrandt's poem, "The Birth," with its existential arc, invites readers to reflect upon "Who is your Master?" while Dekker's poem, "Dear Shadow" summons readers to stop for a moment along their life journey to make eye contact and to dialogue with their shadow. Can you hear your shadow whispering deep personal secrets? Darewych, in her poem "The Sacred Path," and Petrovic, in his arty reflection, "Latent Memories of a Sacred Place Emerge in a Sacred Space" recall the sacred places they came across along their memorable travels. Boileau's poem "Montserrat" swirls in hope and natural gems. Jabbour's reflection, "On Inclusivity" encourages readers to learn more about their neighbours' faith, and his "January" echoes our country's vast land and snow-blanketed winter seasons.

Anderson's sermon, "Relationships and Getting to Know One Another in a New Way," reminds us to connect with significant people in our lives and to actively listen to their meaningful stories, while Ludolph's sermon "Singing the Impossible Possibilities," delivered at the installation of a diaconal minister of music, challenges communities to see how

congregational song must witness towards an alternate worldview where all of humanity flourishes.

Finally, two new resources that connect faith and art are reviewed in this issue: Ambrose introduces the compilation of hymn texts found in "Singing in Times of Crisis," a recent resource made available by the North American Hymn Society; and Sennema critically reviews the book by Lisa J. DeBoer "Visual Arts in the Worshiping Church."