

# Chrysanthos Voutounos MADA 2 Interim Report

To view the prototype please click [here](#)

This report shows the progress throughout MADA 2

## Original project proposal

‘My proposal will be conditioned by the contemporary spirit of contemporary art and the formalism of the Byzantine Art will be questioned for study purposes. The bonding of Byzantine and Digital Art will constitute the fulfillment of this project.

My interest lies in Christian Spirituality and specifically in Orthodox Byzantine tradition. Works of art in the Eastern Church are commentaries on the divine word. With my art I wish to mediate between the higher territory and our territory. I believe that with digital technology I can realize my artistic style and develop my visual language’.

## Developed work / Changes / Methodology

The research question has not changed however during MADA 2 few objectives have changed and new outcomes have been added. The main field that may not be represented the way I have planned during MADA 1 is animation. I have been thinking to explore animation in an experimental video. Animation has not been involved in the prototype in the manner that I have not created an animated character yet. I have rigged a model of a man – angel but still this 3d model is not incorporated in a video for testing purposes.

The rendering of a 3d environment is researched for designing the proskinitari – the miniature chapel in my neighborhood park (Fig1). I have decided not to render such an environment or any animated characters for an experimental film. The use of an animated character with subtle movement is the only option that I have to think later on.



Fig1. Rendering of a 3d environment

The core of my project – the construction of the physical proskinitari is almost complete. (Fig2) Two questions might rise. What is the purpose of the creation of such a construction and what is the relation with digital art? The answer is that this construction is a contribution to the liturgical Eastern Orthodox Church values and traditions. The same principle is followed by true representatives of Byzantine art.

Since we live in a digital world, Byzantine art can be presented by technological means and evolve at some extend. It can be presented by digital media and find ways of expression in today's world. The dangers of deformity of an art that was shaped during centuries are real and my attention will focus on avoiding such a result on my own work.

The construction of the Proskinitari will be a creation with liturgical and aesthetic importance for the local society of my area. This is the real purpose of Byzantine art. This construction can be presented by digital means e.g. internet/video so that Byzantine art can be presented in digital world and create a bonding with digital art. The construction will be filmed in every phase of the construction till the completion of the proskinitari (Fig3). The possibility of a short film with real actors has also been investigated.



Fig2. The construction of the Proskinitari



Fig3. The construction of the Proskinitari filmed / YouTube Video

I have decided to use illustrator for creating 8 digital icons (fig4). I think that using illustrator with a palette of light colors resembles the beautiful humbleness of traditional icons. I will create eight digital icons that will be attached on a virtual templo in the SecondLife [1] Chapel that I have built.(fig5) I have practiced Iconography on a wooden icon for first time with not optimal results. It is true that the technique of iconography is mastered after a continuous practicing. Recently I have started lessons to practice the technique under the guidance of a professional iconographer.

My goal is to create eight small size traditional icons. These smaller icons will be located under the bigger size digital icons according to the arrangement of the design in prototype. This arrangement might change on the way but not significantly. A user can step through the virtual templo / gallery, sit and connect to the internet and second life role-play virtual game. The user can enter the virtual chapel and see the same digital icons in the virtual world of SecondLife. Using Virtual Reality Goggles (VRGs) the experience can be enhanced [2]. The online / virtual participation of the user is a key element in my project. The physical engagement with the digital, as well as the physical icons is central to my project.



Fig4. The 1<sup>st</sup> digital icon



Fig5. The virtual chapel

The user will also be able to connect to the digital narrative site <http://www.proskinitari.com/> and place a request for the Saints that the physical and virtual proskinitari are devoted – Saint Raphael, Nikolaos and Irene(Fig6).

Another kind of engagement is also explained in prototype (see above).

MAKING A REQUEST TO SAINT RAPHAEL

A MESSENGER WILL GET THE REQUEST FROM THE PROSKINITARI AND A PRIEST WILL PRAY FOR THE SAINTS MEDIATION

**Name:** XRYSA  
**Request:** AGIOI TOY THEOU MAS RAFAHL IIKOLAE EIRHHPRESBEYETE YPER HMWII ESEIS POY AKSIW8HKATE IIA BLEPETE TOII KYRIO IIA MAS DWSEI DYHAMH PHEYMATOS AGIOY OPWS EDWSE KAI SE ESAS KAI STABHKATE BRAXOI AKLONHTOI THS AGIAS PISTHS STOII IHSOY KRISTO .  
*Date: Thursday 04th of October 2007 ( 11:41:13 AM )*

**Name:** GEORGIOS MI KEFALLONITHS  
**Request:** KYRIE IHSOY KRISTEYIE TOY THEOY ELEHSON ME.H POLH THA MAS SWSEI THN PHYHI MAS.  
*Date: Sunday 30th of September 2007 ( 11:04:02 PM )*

**Name:** elftheria nikolas petros  
**Request:** health  
*Date: Sunday 30th of September 2007 ( 07:23:48 AM )*

**Name:** teopas

**To make a request, please leave the name/s of seeking souls**

**Then click the submit button!**

**Name:**

**Request:**

( 0 / 10 )

Total GuestBook Entries:

[Back to Proskinitari.com](#)

Fig6. The Proskinitari.com narrative – request page

## Context / Media

Throughout MADA1 and MADA2 the research for my project was focused on Byzantine art mainly and representatives like Photios Kontoglou [3]. Other forms of art may affect my project like romanticism but this might not be obvious until the completion of my project. The digital art connection is practiced involving digital video, digital narrative work and digital painting. The work of the famous video artist Bill Viola[4] is also very inspiring and consists a key role amongst the context researched so far. Creating the prototype involved the following hardware and software:

Desktop pc, Digital hdv camera, digital camera, wacom tablet, scanner, Macromedia Flash, Macromedia Dreamweaver, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, Maya 6.5, Vue 6, Audacity

## Conclusion

My research is aimed to investigate ways of the presence of Byzantine art in Digital art without losing its aesthetics or liturgical role. The opposition of digital icons versus traditional icons is to question the formalism of Byzantine art for study reasons and engagement purposes in a virtual world. The opposition is not intended to deform the aesthetics of Byzantine art.

## Bibliography

[1]Various., 2007, SecondLife [online]. Available from:  
<http://secondlife.com/> [Accessed 15 Nov 2007].

[2]Various., 2007, Virtual Goggles [online]. Available from:  
<http://emol.org/media/vr.html> [Accessed 15 Nov 2007].

[3]Various., 2007, Photios Kontoglou[online]. Available from:  
<http://www.traditionaliconography.com/influence.asp> [Accessed 15 Nov 2007].

[4]Various., 2007, Bill Viola[online]. Available from:  
<http://www.billviola.com/> [Accessed 15 Nov 2007].