

ICONS & TALISMANS

CHRISTINE PALAMIDESSI

5 February-1 March, 2020

Opening Reception
Friday, February 7, 6-9 PM

Galatea Fine Art
450 Harrison Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02118
(617) 542-1500
WWW.GALATEAFINEART.COM

GALLERY HOURS: WEDNESDAY THROUGH SUNDAY
12 NOON TO 5PM AND BY APPOINTMENT



Butterscotch Madonna
monotype with text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019



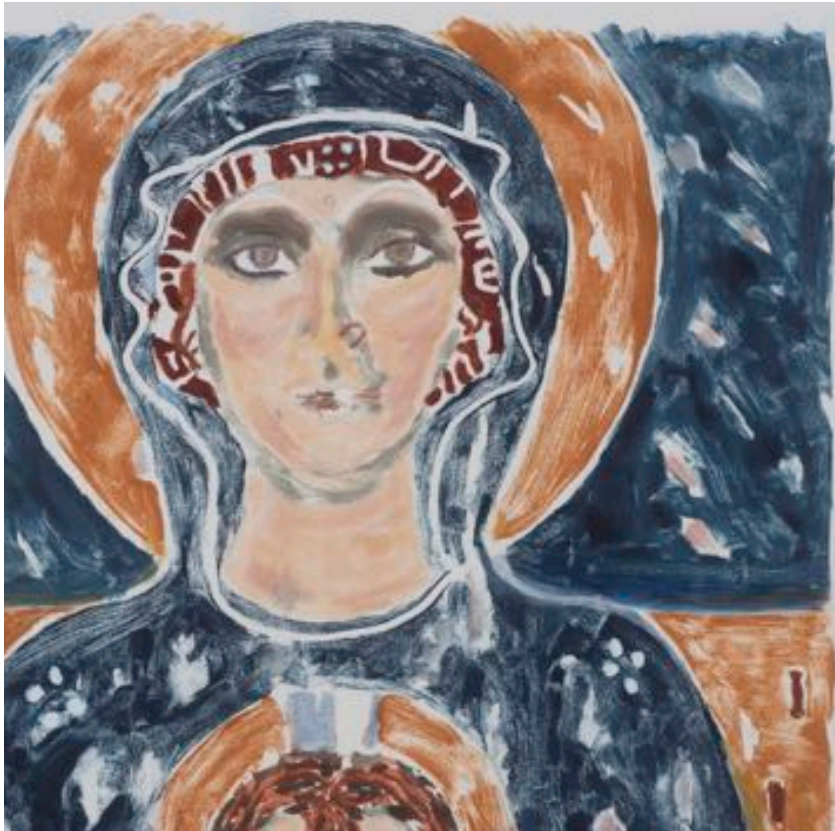
Saint Barbara Blue
monotype with text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019

An upper-class, virgin-martyr born in Phoenicia during the 3rd century, Saint Barbara is invoked during lightening storms and fires and to bless all people who work with explosives and weaponry.



Casaranello's Saint Barbara
monotype with text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019

Saint Barbara wears a sumptuous Byzantine garment and showy earrings; the viewer's attention is caught by her face, soft brush strokes and light sparkles.



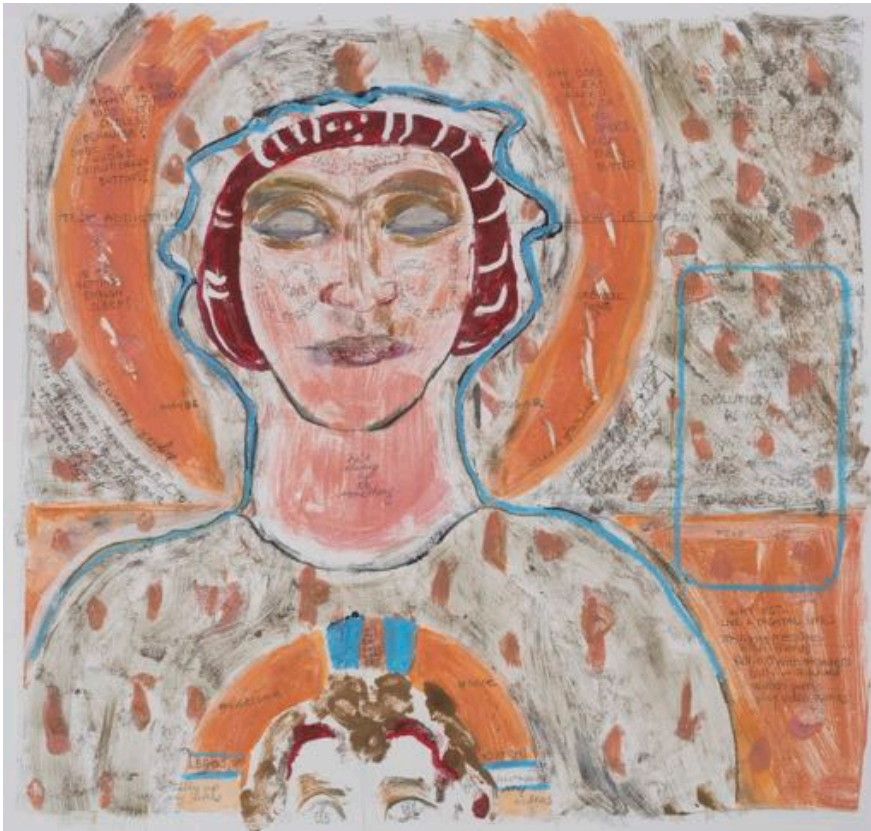
Beauty Knock Knock Knocks on Heaven's Door
monotype with text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019



Most Likely Saint Bernard
monotype with mixed media and text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019

The large monotypes chosen for the exhibition are modeled on frescos in Casaranello, a small paleochristian church; the oldest and most important monument in the primitive Christian age of southeastern Italy.

Byzantine frescos are flat, linear and stable; seen in candlelight, they flicker, move and mesmerize.



Internet Madonna
monotype with mixed media and text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019



She Put a Mother Spell on Me
monotype with mixed media and text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019

An intense Mediterranean cultural exchange with the East is evident. Madonnas wear nose rings and decorate the center of their foreheads with bindi, a colored dot.

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Pranayama Madonna
monotype with mixed media and text, 20 x 21 inches, 2019



Assembly of Blessings and Guardians
mixed media on plaster, 4 x 33 inches, 2019

Madonna images are guardians of motherhood, gentleness, family harmony and unconditional love.



On Process: My art often evolves from plaster (or cartapesta) impressions that I cast on people and objects. For instance, in 2015, I cast the huge, historical stone cannonballs that Ottomans fired from their ships during the siege of Otranto, Italy, in 1483. The casts became containers/templates for an artistic series about violence, about silencing of women, and about the men in my family who were called to war. In 2016, I cast the torso of 108 Yoga teachers. For 21 days in 2018, I used my own body and wrapped it in a Saudi abaya. Each day I went about my daily life wearing a black head-to-toe garment: I went to Market Basket, to dental appointments, to Home Depot to buy a drill and I pumped gas into my car.

Like Christine Palamidessi's earlier works, *ICONS & TALISMANS* polishes the divine spark within each person by presenting pictures and stories that live in us and with us, once upon a time and in the present here and now.



Christine Palamidessi is an artist, sculptor and published novelist. She works in her Somerville studio and in Salento, Italy. Her art explores the imprint of time, story, and spirit on the interplay of material and subject. In 2017 she was Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome and at Mass MoCA. Her work is held in collections in the Dominican Republic, Italy and the United States. She is recipient of a Barbara Demming Award for Women Writers and an Urban Arts Award. Her public art memoir "Grandmothers" is engraved on a granite monolith at Boston's Orange Line Jackson Square station. Her installations and sculptures have been seen in galleries in Boston--particularly Atlantic Works Gallery, Galatea Fine Arts, and the State House--as well as in Chicago's Woman Made Gallery, the Palazzo Bacile di Castiglione, in Spongano, Italy, and the Alfred Gallery in Tel Aviv.

The icons 7 TALISMAN exhibition is a story about eyes that follow us; soft hands that have loved us; about allowing our vulnerability to pass through an image to invite the connection point between human and divine.

To realize the images, I spent time in Salento (southernmost region on the heel that is Italy), following the footsteps of Byzantine artists who painted in the 10th and 11th centuries. I found small chapels, Crusader hideaways, and even an unearthed, underground sanctuary discovered when the property owner remodeled his garage. Each location featured frescos.

Many of the frescos echoed each other in size, expression, color, hand gestures. That's because Byzantine painters were artists who walked from Croatia to Tuscany and beyond carrying the same catalog of images.

Working from their templates, I made monotypes. Monotypes are reverse paintings on glass. Paper is pressed on the glass and then peeled off to reveal a right-side-forward image.

My intent was not only to tell a story about the human spirit and to duplicate the Byzantine practice, but to also transport sensations, time and place to Boston.

Christine Palamidessi, February 2020



*X Bonnie Icon
plaster, 34 x 16 x 1.5 inches, 2019*

Computers and phones screens are provocative icons: revered, idolized, invoked for protection and help. Displayed outside the main gallery, a few gorgeous plaster computer impressions seem as ancient as a Salento fresco, mere whispers and remnants of the