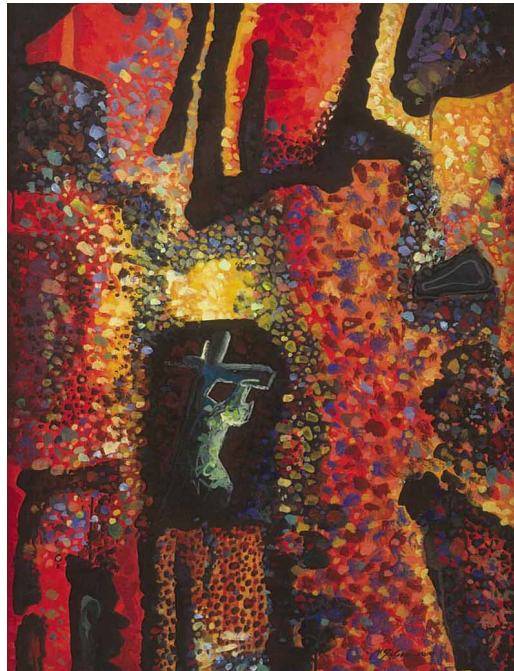


Sailing Back to Byzantium: Art of Michael Galovic, **Yarra and Hunter Arts Press, 2024.**

This lavish, large format publication on the work of iconographer Michael Galovic is a welcome addition to the coverage of the arts and spirituality in Australia. It is a beautiful book, an art work in itself. In around 260 pages it surveys the work of one of Australia's most well known painters of icons, covering traditional themes, innovative new work, and important commissions around the country.

Born in Belgrade, Michael Galovic arrived in Australia in 1990 and set about sharing his cultural knowledge through small exhibitions and workshops. The 2006 publication *Icons and Art* provided a visual overview of the first 15 years of his art production. This new and more generous publication covers the next 17 years providing an overview of this important innovator and translator of the Orthodox tradition.

The book is divided into sections covering such themes as the Annunciation, the Son of Man, Theotokos, Angels, and more innovative themes such as Uluru as icon, and more experimental ideas that explore the nature of spirituality in multi-cultural Australia. These are supported by 24 short writing sections that address issues of technique, history and theological themes. These are provided by the artist as well as a range of authors from art historical or theological perspectives. This enriches the book as a wider resource in understanding the role of the icon as a source of spirituality and the



role that vision has in informing spiritual responses.

What is clear is the immense skill and labour that is needed to follow in this ancient tradition and to make each work come alive through a fresh illumination, rather than appearing as a tired copy. Galovic is a keen student of the past and pays great respect to traditional techniques. He has, however, also allowed himself to experiment with fresh ideas and approaches and has found inspiration in a wide variety of sources including modern art, and the art of indigenous Australians.

The extensive range of commissions have allowed him to enliven the worshipping spaces of a wide variety of churches, chapels, and schools and to renew this tradition as a lively and contemporary form of seeing faith. This book provides rich resources for understanding this tradition and for appreciating this artist and his life's work.

The book will be launched at an event in Sydney on Sunday 28th July, to be held at All Saints Church Ambrose St, Hunters Hill at 4pm. This book is available from the artist through his website. A great addition to a personal library, a beautiful gift, or an important resource in a school or college library.

<https://michaelgalovic.com>

Rod Pattenden, July 202