

# ALDE VALLEY SPRING FESTIVAL EXHIBITION 2020

## *On a Turning Wing : A Celebration of Birds, Flight & Migration*

### ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE : ICONS BY MARCHELA DIMITROVA

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Marchela Dimitrova was the first Artist in Residence to stay at White House Farm. She came in early 2009 with her husband Fr Nedyalko Dimitrov. I had met Nedyalko in Hove, where he was working at the time. He was travelling with an extraordinary icon of St Andrew and St John, painted (or more correctly, written) by Marchela. I had previously been given an icon of St Audrey or St Æthelthryth by the Rev. Alan Hoggetts. This was in exchange for some wood from the farm on which to paint icons. The gift prompted me to look at iconography with greater interest – which in turn led me to invite Marchela and Nedyalko to live at the farm whilst I was working abroad. This grew into a year-long residency and enduring friendship.

From this start, we began to look at the early Church in Suffolk and, in particular, its Anglo-Saxon evangelists : St Felix, St Botolph and St Audrey. Others began to appear as we looked further afield into Essex and Norfolk : St Cedd, St Walstan and many others besides. What became fascinating was a slow realisation that many of the roots of Anglo-Saxon faith seemed to come not so much from Rome, but from Ireland – via outposts such as Lindisfarne and Iona. Some of the early embers in East Anglia were borne in by St Fursey. He was from Kerry in Eire – from land that overlooked Sceilg Mhichíl, a spiritual firestone for early Christianity in the west of Ireland. He travelled from there to evangelise East Anglia with his brothers St Foillan and Ulltan. They founded a monastery near Yarmouth and then moved on to France, to Burgundy and beyond. Nedyalko and Marchela's research followed a trail from the first Suffolk saints to a handful of Irish-Suffolk saints - and then on to an extraordinary array of early Irish saints, many of whom were women. The impression it gave was of a church and faith that was both dispersed and personal – and also fiery. The early Irish Church seems to have been more about discipleship and evangelism through personal conviction than about existing in a hierarchy or being in control. With saints settling themselves like gannets on towering outcrops of rock in the Atlantic; or in beehive cells on cliffs overlooking the endless ocean, their faith looks like it was the opposite of authoritarianism. It looks out of control, or at least out of their control : ethereal, but strongly guided; present and deeply personal.

Over the years, Marchela has explored different themes in her iconography for the Festival Exhibitions : *Suffolk Saints*; *Irish Saints*; *Angels at Easter*; *The Beatitudes*; *Women Saints of England*; *Early English Saints*; and most recently, *The Twelve Apostles of Ireland*. For this year's Festival *On a Turning Wing* – the title borrowed from a book of poems by Paddy Bushe, whose own life and works are rooted in the same Kerry landscape in which Fursey once lived – it seemed appropriate to invite Marchela to explore the theme of angels. These are beyond our immediate understanding - yet many people believe in Angels. Last week I watched a collared dove drop from a young walnut tree on to the ground below to feed on seeds. For the first moment of its descent its wings remained closed. It was falling, not flying. And then it opened its wings and swooped down, alighting gently on the ground. Perhaps faith is akin to that first moment of freefall – when one is falling, but knowing that flight will follow. And if sometimes life requires us to jump off into space, in the full knowledge that we have neither wings nor feathers .. maybe that is where Angels come in !

**All Marchela's icons of Angels are for sale : [enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk)**



1. *Icon of Archangel Michael*

H120mm W90mm

[in leather folder]

£275





2. *Icon of Archangel Gabriel*

H120mm W90mm  
[in leather folder]  
£275





3. *Icon of Three Blessing Angels*

Η130mm W90mm

[in leather folder]

£275





4. *Icon of Archangel Michael*

H295mm W240mm

£595



5. *Icon of Angel with Birds*

H870mm W450mm

£950



6. *Icon of Archangel Gabriel*

H235mm W 170mm

£545



7. *Icon of Synaxis of Archangels*

H130mm w90mm  
[in leather folder]  
£275







8. *Diptych Icon Archangels Michael and Gabriel*

(H82mm W63mm) x 2

£365



9. *Angel of the Heavens*

Horomm Wgomm  
[in leather folder]  
£275



**End of Catalogue**

**For all sales or for more information about any works**

**Please contact :** [enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk)

**Website :** [www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk](http://www.aldevalleyspringfestival.co.uk) **Instagram :** [@aldevalleyfestival](https://www.instagram.com/aldevalleyfestival)