

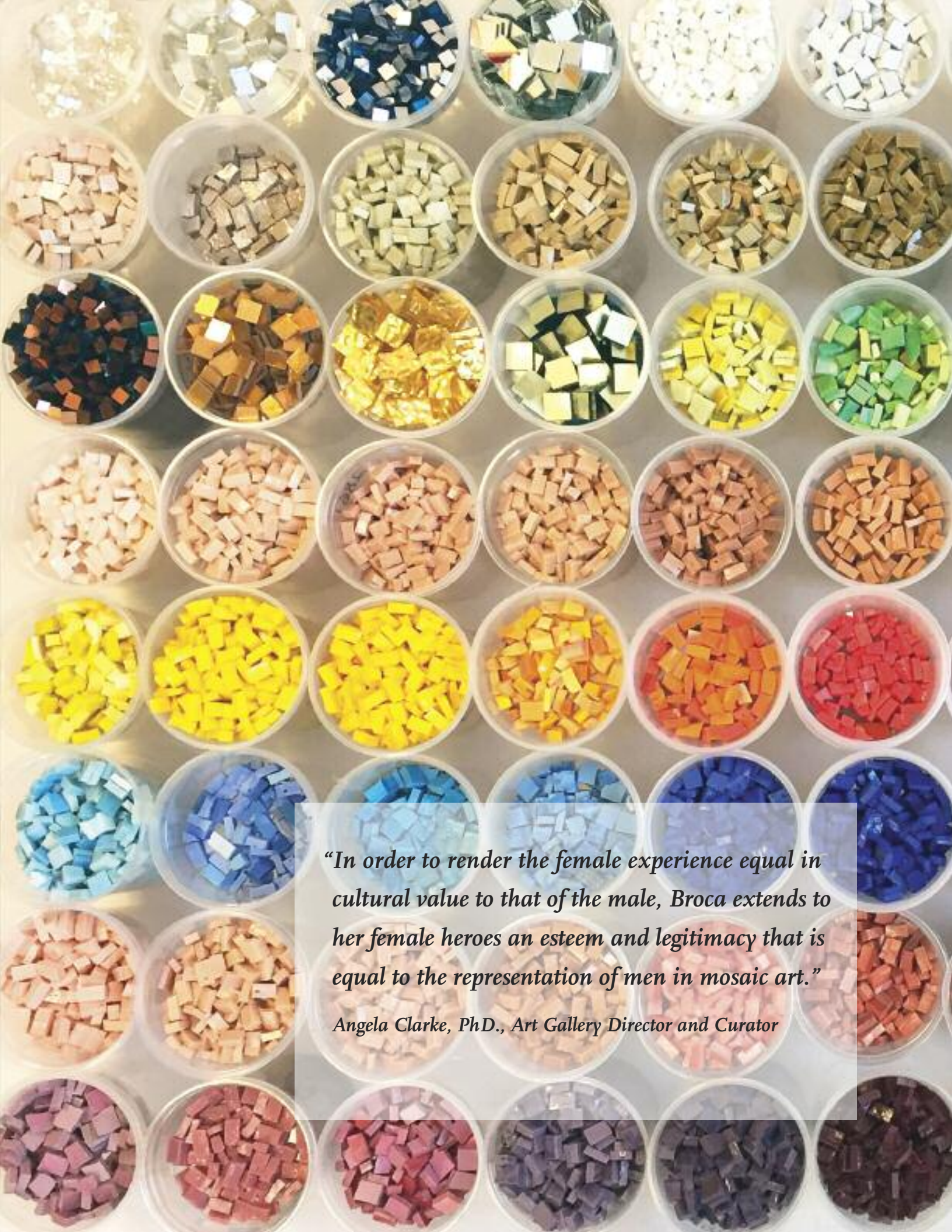


LILIAN BROCA

Mary Magdalene Resurrected

M O S A I C S

Il Museo at The Italian Cultural Centre • JD Carrier Art Gallery Columbus Centre



"In order to render the female experience equal in cultural value to that of the male, Broca extends to her female heroes an esteem and legitimacy that is equal to the representation of men in mosaic art."

Angela Clarke, PhD., Art Gallery Director and Curator



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Lilian Broca:
Mary Magdalene Resurrected

March 31 – August 15, 2022
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Foreword

Romanian born and North American trained, Lilian Broca, who came to Canada in 1962 and is now based in Vancouver, has established herself as one of the most prominent mosaic artists in English-speaking Canada. Best known for her large compositions, she occupies a unique place in the field of mosaic, having produced elaborate works, indeed whole cycles of wall panels, that are not the result of commissions received from institutions or companies, as is often the case with the mosaic medium. Her artworks, of monumental size and requiring years of painstaking work to complete, are, instead, the product of her personal inspiration and remarkable creativity.

Without the limitations of predetermined locations and purposes, or themes imposed externally, she has been inspired to focus on subjects relating to women, more precisely, heroic women from the Bible. Her earlier and very successful series of mosaics treated Queen Esther and Judith from the Old Testament and now she has produced a series of panels devoted to Mary Magdalene from the New Testament. Lilian Broca has chosen to depict these Biblical female figures in the most dramatic moments of their lives, thus creating works that, in addition to achieving admirable historical accuracy, also engage today’s viewers for their universal significance. It is noteworthy that, in an altogether original fashion, each of the mosaic panels narrating the story of Mary Magdalene is represented as the folio of an ancient manuscript to be read and interpreted by the modern viewer.

The figurative style that she adopts also makes Lilian Broca’s artwork quite distinctive. Using tesserae imported mainly from Venice, as is the norm, and applying them in both the reverse and double-indirect method, she has, quite unusually, inserted what appear to be precious stones into many of her works and produced lush scenes that, with their rich colours and extraordinary detail, stand out not only for their realism but also for their luxuriant qualities. To her credit, her mosaics have been analyzed and praised in numerous reviews and also in scholarly commentaries by notable critics such as Dr. Sheila Campbell and Dr. Angela Clarke.



Lilian Broca has herself theorized on art, and on mosaic in particular, in written statements that she has released and in chapters that she has contributed to book-length commentaries devoted to her artwork. As she explains, her main approach is to practise the ancient art of mosaic using a traditional Byzantine style with the express purpose of conveying a contemporary meaning through the symbolism of the figures and scenes depicted. In this connection she has insightfully drawn an analogy between the pixels of modern-day digital images and the small tesserae that she crafts manually in the construction of her mosaic pictures.

Over the past two decades there have been many exhibitions of Lilian Broca’s mosaic works in Canada and internationally. Now her most recent seven-panel series of mosaics on Mary Magdalene is being presented in Vancouver in the early part of 2022 and in Toronto in September. Art enthusiasts in both cities, and especially those who appreciate mosaic, will be richly rewarded when they visit the galleries to experience the breathtaking beauty of the mosaic artworks by this most talented Canadian artist.

Olga Zorzi Pugliese
Professor Emerita, University of Toronto

Introduction

In liturgies stemming from Goddess mythologies in the ancient Near East, the Goddess surrogate anointed her Bridegroom King in a ritual “Sacred Marriage.” He was then arrested at the spring equinox, tortured, executed, and laid in a tomb. On the third day in many rituals, the bereaved Bride returned to the tomb to mourn her loss and was overjoyed to discover her Beloved resurrected in the garden! Where have we encountered this resurrection story before? The majestic mosaic panels of Lilian Broca’s *Mary Magdalene Resurrected*, and the Christian scriptures upon which they rest, clearly reveal the role of Mary Magdalene as “Bride of the Easter Mysteries.” In Christianity, the liturgical “Passion of the Christ” begins with the Sacred King’s anointing by the woman with the alabaster jar, but the true significance of her role has been suppressed.

Faced with an invitation to write an introduction for the “unveiling” of Lilian Broca’s mosaic images, I was both honored and humbled. Realizing that nothing I could write would do justice to Lilian’s artistic creation, I was at first reluctant to accept the invitation. But how could I fail to acclaim Lilian Broca’s inspired work and bear witness to her extraordinary courage in persevering through harrowing personal health challenges and the distortions of the Covid-19 pandemic to birth her extraordinary vision? How could I not affirm and celebrate the unveiling of *Mary Magdalene Resurrected*?

Born in Bucharest to Jewish parents with whom she escaped from Romania in 1958, Lilian spent several years in Israel before emigrating with her family to Canada as a teenager in 1962. She studied at Concordia University and later earned a MFA degree from the Graduate Fine Arts Program at Pratt Institute in New York City. After experimenting with abstract modern painting for some years, she felt a need

The majestic mosaic panels of Lilian Broca’s *Mary Magdalene Resurrected*, and the Christian scriptures upon which they rest, clearly reveal the role of Mary Magdalene as “Bride of the Easter Mysteries.”

to turn her talents to humanism and to feminist themes empowering women, teaching and creating new artworks while raising two sons with her husband David Goodman.

Fortuitously, in 2002, Lilian shifted her energy and artistic focus to the ancient Byzantine medium of mosaics, leading over the next decade to her creation of larger-than-life series of panels depicting the stories of two powerful Jewish heroines: first Queen Esther, whose brave appeal to her husband King Ahasuerus saved her people from annihilation; and then the intrepid Judith, who seduced and then decapitated Holofernes, the enemy warrior threatening her people. These monumental projects took Lilian Broca untold months of intense creative labor, first planning, then sketching her images on paper cartoons and then actually creating the mosaics, working meticulously with tiny shards of opaque glass (Venetian tesserae), each individual shard painstakingly cut and placed with delicate precision. What an arduous labor of love! Both of Lilian Broca’s previous mosaic series have received international acclaim in the world of mosaic art and have encouraged the modern quest for the powerful “Feminine” influence in human history and story.

Lilian’s earlier mosaic works were a foreshadowing of the monumental series now exhibited. In recent years, perhaps not too remarkably given the Zeitgeist of the new “MM” millennium, a third prominent Jewish woman began to attract Lilian’s attention: the Mary whom Christian scriptures call “the Magdalene.” Sensing that this Jewish woman’s true legacy had been suppressed, Lilian was moved to commit several years of intense research to this “other” Mary, the one identified in the Gnostic Gospel of Philip as the “koinon”—the “companion” or “consort”—of Jesus. Intuitively Lilian grasped that this Mary was not the sinful penitent described in two millennia of Christian tradition, but rather a strong and independent woman, the most beloved disciple and companion of the itinerant rabbi Jesus, faithful to him at his cross and tomb and first witness to his resurrection. Armed with her conviction and vision, Lilian set forth to resurrect Mary Magdalene’s significance to our modern world as the fearless and devoted “Beloved Companion” of Jesus.

The magnificent monochromatic black, grey and white “Mary Magdalene Resurrected” panels are accented with pure gold, each designed as a page from an illuminated manuscript with relevant Jewish and Christian symbols along the borders and an inscription in an ancient biblical language at the foot of each page. Focussed on events from the life of Mary Magdalene, the eloquent images lift the veil which has for millennia obscured the true role and significance of the Bride of the Easter Mysteries.

Now we stand in awe before the exquisite artistry and emotional impact of each panel: the tender embrace of the Beloveds; the ritual anointing of the sacred king; Jesus washing the feet of his disciple, the pathos of the Magdalene standing with the mother of Jesus at the foot of the cross; the joy of the reunion in the garden on Easter morning; the rigid opposition demonstrated in the stance of Peter and the other male disciples (mirrored even now, after two millennia) to the message of Mary Magdalene; and the final prophetic promise of the return. This is Her Story!

Near the end of the “Apocalypse,” the final book of the Christian Bible, we find this prophecy: “It is time for the nuptials of the Lamb.” The Greek word Apocalypse means “unveiling,” and the Lamb is a symbolic reference to Jesus. In this passage the “Bride” is the “New Jerusalem”—the Holy City arrayed as a Bride for her union with her Lord, causing streams of living water to flow from the throne of God for the “healing of the nations.” In his *Aion*, psychologist and mystic Carl Jung stated that the “Self” is often imaged as a royal or Divine couple, and in his “Answer to Job,” Jung asserted that it is incongruous to envision a human Jesus embracing a building—a church or city full of people—as his Bride. Jung insists we must be permitted to envision Jesus embracing a woman—his Beloved. This woman is easily identified in the Gospels as the Mary called “the Magdalen.”

It is time!

“The Spirit and the Bride say ‘Come.’” These words inviting the return of the Sacred Bridegroom are found in the Christian Bible in the Apocalypse’s final chapter. We—like the elegant Queen in the final panel of Lilian Broca’s series—await the Sacred Reunion of the Divine Complements once at the very heart of the Christian story.

Margaret Starbird

Author of seven books on Mary Magdalene: The Woman with the Alabaster Jar: Mary Magdalen and the Holy Grail; The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine; Mary Magdalene, Bride in Exile; Magdalene's Lost Legacy: Symbolic Numbers and the Sacred Union in Christianity; The Feminine Face of Christianity; 14 Steps to Awaken the Sacred Feminine: Women in the Circle of Mary Magdalene; The Tarot Trumps and the Holy Grail.



Pope Gregory I, Pedro Berruguete. Barcelona, Spain, 1495.

Three in One: Pope Gregory the Great and the Reductive Mary Magdalene

The figure of Pope Gregory I (540–604 CE) is a polarizing one. Born of Roman nobility and a man of great austerity and learning, he is, in our contemporary age, most known, or notorious, for his faulty characterization of Mary Magdalene from a woman of independent means, and by all accounts a friend and closest companion of Jesus, into the stock figure; an archetype of the repentant prostitute. History has given him the epithet “Great” but in our current epoch he is viewed as an icon of anti-feminism and authoritarianism because he unleashed a nearly unerasable misconception about Mary Magdalene, indelibly branding her as a prostitute, which has been treated as common knowledge for over two millennia. As Carl Jung noted, it is into the realm of the unknown, the elusive and the unknowable, where humanity most profoundly projects its darkest shadows.² He added that Jesus is the most unknowable of all, and therefore, most subject to shadowy projections. I would suggest that while Jesus is considered an

enigma without parallel, there is one other figure who supersedes him in the obscure and murky spheres of cultural history and that is Mary Magdalene.³ One cannot understand who Jesus was without knowing Mary Magdalene and the

role she played in his life. In history’s annals she has so many guises: prostitute seeking his repentance; helpmate for his cause; apostle of his message; and/or funder and patron of his movement; Mary Magdalene has been believed to have embodied all of these personas. Each remains an option, but we have yet to obtain a definitive answer as to her true character. All is speculation and because the stories of these two figures, Jesus and Mary Magdalene, are so inextricably linked, one cannot truly understand the one figure without coming to grips with the identity of the other. Therefore, for those who stand at the precipice, preferring the

We believe that this woman [Mary Magdalene] is Luke’s female sinner, the woman John calls Mary, and that Mary from whom Mark says seven demons were cast out.¹

guise of one Mary Magdalene over the other, the resulting outcome is more of a theological impasse than a definitive doctrinal resolution. In the process of this dogmatic tug of war we learn far more about our own personal belief systems, and sadly, this in no way moves us closer to a definitive understanding of either the historical Jesus nor Mary Magdalene as they existed in the flesh.

In this essay, I seek to understand Pope Gregory I, also known as Gregory the Great and St. Gregory and come to some understanding and context for the reasons he characterized Mary Magdalene as the repentant prostitute. I believe that Pope Gregory projected his shadow side onto the figure of Mary Magdalene and I will examine potential reasons for doing so. Certainly, much evidence for his reasons can be found within the words of his own writing and there is evidence to be found in diverse sources, of course *Homily 33*, which is the fulcrum and basis for his misrepresentation of Mary Magdalene; his work the *Pastoral Care*,⁴ a lengthy tome which details how a cleric must lead his flock and finally, the British historian Bede, *History of the Church and English People*.⁵ While the British Bede is seemingly an unlikely source for understanding Mary Magdalene and Gregory's attitude towards to her, we do obtain valuable information on Gregory's thought process during his tenure as Pope from this text, which, when taken in tandem with the *Pastoral Care*, leads us to perceive Pope Gregory as the theological simplifier, someone who was mindful that theological complications would alienate the laity more than it would endear them.⁶ Certainly, this simplification of numerous biblical Marys into one figure and casting her into the unfortunate and uncomplimentary stock figure of the repentant prostitute could be seen as a mnemonic device aiding the laity to remember both the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene simultaneously. Additionally, each were encoded with monitory messages embedded with proscriptive conduct. However, this seemingly naïve desire to simplify and illustrate appropriate behaviour left an indelible and deeply damaging legacy which monumentally affected the role of women in the institution of the Church and greater society itself for over two millennia. This is an insufferable and long enduring repercussion for something that, seemingly on the surface, was done with an earnest pedagogical intent. However, the implication and scope of Gregory's characterization of Mary as a repentant prostitute is a folly equal in calamity to Eve being blamed for eating the forbidden apple. In the process, both became textual and religious justifications for containing women to the margins of society, which only began to be challenged in the 19TH century. Therefore, in order to understand Gregory's reasons for characterizing Mary Magdalene in this way, this essay will look at who Gregory was and why he was compelled to cast Mary Magdalene in the role of the repentant prostitute without Biblical evidence for it.

Mary in the Canonical and Non-Canonical Gospels (the Gnostic Gospels)

The figure of Mary Magdalene is present 12 times in the Gospels of the Canonical Bible, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. However, in Luke, Mary Magdalene is not present until the crucifixion. She is present there in front of the cross along with a number of other women. This is illustrative that in Luke, like in all of the other Gospels, Mary Magdalene plays somewhat of a different role in each; it indicates that in the first century (between 66–110 AD) when the Gospels were written, she was already a figure of uncertain placement in the religious hierarchy. In John, Mary Magdalene alone appears after the resurrection and Jesus instructs her to tell the disciples of his return (John 20:1–13). In Luke, while she is simply present at the resurrection (Luke 8:2–3) she is said to have been one of the many women who supported his ministry out of her own resources. In Mark, she is placed as a witness to Jesus' burial and she was prominent among the disciples and a close companion to Mary, the mother of Jesus. In Matthew (28:1–10), she is present at the tomb, where she sees an angel dressed in white. It is this angel who rolls the stone away and tells Mary Magdalene that Jesus has risen from the dead.

There are other non-canonical texts that tell the story of Mary Magdalene and these are the Gnostic Gospels. Most important of these is the *Gnostic Gospel of Mary Magdalene*.⁷ This text describes an argument or a verbal stand-off between Mary Magdalene and St. Peter and St. Andrew. Tensions arose between Peter who questions the validity of Mary Magdalene's relationship with Jesus. However, it was of general consent among the other apostles that she, indeed, was the closest to him. Despite the protests of Peter and Andrew, the other apostles ask Mary Magdalene to provide them with any additional messages she may have learned from Jesus while he was alive, messages that he conveyed to her in confidence and intimacy and not to them. There are other Gnostic Gospels which mention Mary Magdalene: the *Dialogue of the Saviour* and the *Gospel of Thomas*. These texts push our collective boundaries and challenge our preconceived notions of who Mary Magdalene was and the nature of her relationship to Jesus. In the *Gospel of Philip*, it was acknowledged that she was the closest companion to Jesus. And there is a missing word where it is indicated that Jesus kissed Mary but the word indicating the location of the kiss on her body is suspiciously absent.⁸ It is generally believed that she was kissed on the mouth, but it is open to debate as to whether it conveys a sexual aspect. Definitely, in the Gnostic Gospels a more potent view of Mary Magdalene is extolled. There is nothing debased about her nor is she seen to be seeking repentance. This is in contrast to the biblical texts

where she is a minor presence and someone in deep need of Jesus’ absolution.

Of course, the Gnostic Gospels have never been canonically endorsed by the Catholic Church, especially in the 6TH century Church of Gregory the Great. In fact, at this time they were condemned to obscurity not to be discovered until 1945 in Nag Hammadi, Egypt. However, on the opposite end Gregory himself increasingly minimized Mary Magdalene’s independence and credibility. Instead of using his theological knowledge and capacity for biblical exegesis to delineate the specifics of her identity, he submerges her into the world of obscurity by making a bold and unfounded pronouncement in *Homily 33* that Mary Magdalene was a woman who was morally compromised and embodied multiple separate identities. He boldly casts her into a composite figure: the woman possessed by seven demons, the unnamed repentant adulterer and Mary of Bethany, sister of Lazarus.

This act, placed within the viewfinder of contemporary scholarship can be perceived as particularly egregious when placed in context of contemporary historiographic research, especially in the genre of prosopography data collecting. Modern ancient and biblical historians have worked collectively to separate the threads of a text to unbind and delineate the singular identities of the different figures which populate an ancient text. Taken from this contemporary perspective the statements of Pope Gregory are in opposition to contemporary research since instead of separating the historical references, he intentionally conflates three women in the Bible, two of them with the name Mary and one unnamed to support his dogmatic narrative of the biblical texts.

The prosopography is a reference work devised by historians studying the ancient period to differentiate the names and identities of all ancient figures found in inscriptions, documents and textual sources. It calculates the number of times each person is mentioned and includes the citations to each figure who is mentioned in a historical document or text. This reference work includes the name of the text mentioned and the citation and passage number located for each figure within the text. More importantly, biographical information and familial lineage is indicated and there is a differentiation between figures bearing the same name. This is particularly important because in the ancient world, in places such as Rome and the Middle East where there were few distinct names, this small collection of names was repeated often over the generations. Therefore, prosopographical research does much to dispel the notion that one name embodies one figure within a text. In essence, a single name can be utilized by many figures sharing a family lineage. The repeated use of a family name over the generations resulted from the limited number of names in use in the

ancient world. There were basically 20 first names for men in ancient Rome. Women, had fewer names, since they were named for their birth order followed by their family name such as: Prima, Secunda, Tertia with the last name of Julia (in the case of the women in the imperial royal family, for example). The name Mary (*Heb.* Miriam) was one of the most popular female names during the age of antiquity.⁹ In fact, there are six or possibly seven Mary’s (Miriam) in the New Testament.¹⁰ Additionally, in the Gnostic *Gospel of Philip* we also learn that Jesus also had a sister with the name of Mary. Fundamentally, there was a broad profusion of the name Mary in the biblical world. Therefore, from the perspective of the Biblical prosopography it is a great stretch and a glaring simplification for Pope Gregory, to conflate Mary Magdalene with the other Mary’s let alone other nameless women. Not only does Gregory fuse Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany, the woman whose brother Lazarus was raised from the dead through Jesus’ intervention, he also merges her identity with two other women, one who is nameless and the other who was possessed by seven demons. Each figure carries with it deep theological significance and by mixing them together as one Mary, Gregory triples the pedagogical facets of this single figure.

Three in One: The Multiple Guises of Mary Magdalene

Mary of Bethany

Mary of Bethany, was the sister of Lazarus and Martha. Lazarus was the figure Jesus brought back from the dead. It was for this reason that he came to the house of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary Magdalene is ascribed to the identity of Mary of Bethany, who along with her sister Martha create a theological dichotomy which isolates the two distinct roles for women in the Christian Medieval tradition. In essence these sisters are foils of each other and their story serves a pedagogical purpose for women: Martha is depicted as a woman who leads the active life; she tends to her family cooking, feeding, cleaning and caring for her brother and family. Mary, on the other hand, is a contemplative woman. A woman who spends her time in prayer and in meditation; devoting herself to the love of God. She is largely a woman of silence and she is unconcerned by the activity which surrounds her in the family household. For this devotion to prayer she is greatly favored by Jesus. This preferential treatment from Jesus is a great frustration to Martha who believes she shows much more dedication to duty and community than her sister. However, for Jesus the

contemplative life is of greater preference than the active life of the material world. This, in the history of the Church became allegory of the binary role or two paths which women must choose between; the active and the contemplative. I suggest this allegorizing is utilized later by Pope Gregory as he makes distinctions between the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. Both named Mary but one the foil of the other. Or as Carl Jung would interpret the shadow of the Virgin: the repentant prostitute and the pristine virgin.¹¹

The Nameless Adulteress: Women, Sexuality and the Seven Demons

Then there is the aspect of Mary who is inseparable from the fallen and morally questionable women. One of her personas was the unnamed adulteress who wipes Jesus’ feet with oil. This is emphasized in Gregory the Great’s *Homily 33* where he notes that while this woman was unnamed, he concluded that this figure must be Mary Magdalene, since the figure of Mary Magdalene was tormented by seven demons and it was Jesus who healed her from this affliction. The Bible does not indicate if these were physical or psychological ailments. While it is not mentioned in the Bible that the adulteress and the tormented Mary Magdalene were one and the same person, Pope Gregory in *Homily 33* makes it unequivocally clear that he believed that Mary Magdalene was tormented by seven demons because she was affected with ailments of immorality and perverse sexual behaviour. This, Pope Gregory concludes, is evidentiary that the unnamed adulteress and Mary Magdalene were one of the same person.

Pope Gregory’s *Homily 33* was delivered in late September of 592. It is here that he states that Mary was both the woman who washed Jesus’ feet as an act of penance for her adultery and the woman tormented by the seven demons. He stated that the demons embody the “universality of all vices... Mary had the seven demons in her because she was full of all vices...”¹² Gregory refers to Mary Magdalene as the sinner and these sins are sexual in nature referring to her as a woman “addicted to forbidden deeds.”

In addition to Pope Gregory’s argument that the unnamed adulteress was Mary Magdalene was her use of oil to clean Jesus’ feet. This Pope Gregory theorizes was a visible and outward manifestation of her former sybarite activities which she now redirects in a non-sexual way in the process of debasing herself and seeking forgiveness from Jesus. For evermore the woman afflicted with the seven demons was endowed with the characterization of a repentant prostitute seeking redemption at the feet of Jesus.

Pope Gregory I: Make Italy Great Again

While Pope Gregory was instrumental in shaping textual interpretation of the Bible, such as initiating missionary work for the Catholic Church, ensuring a smooth transition from Paganism and Celtic Christianity toward Catholicism, and educating the next generations of Catholic Priests and becoming designated as a Saint in the process, there is very little that we really know of his character. In fact, the figure of Pope Gregory I, like Jesus and Mary Magdalene themselves, is often difficult to separate from the hagiographic tradition surrounding his legacy. In other words, he is depicted in Catholic literature as the embodiment of the perfect male saint. In fact, immediately after his death, he was sainted by popular acclimation, circumventing the notoriously laborious process of canonization. Portrayed as a theological and intellectual wunderkind, the story of this saint follows all of the stereotypical archetypes of beatified life.

Born into a noble family—the Anicii—with a long lineage which resided in the aristocratic region of the Caelian Hill in Rome, his family was heavily involved in Roman city government. His father, a Roman politician, Gordianus died in 573 when Gregory was 33.

His mother Sylvia (515–592) however, a deeply holy woman, devoted herself to the celibate life, removing herself from her noble household, converting it into a convent and place for feeding the poor, and instead found a small cell near the tomb of St. Paul in Rome where she spent her days devoted to prayer and good works. This model of the holy celibate mother, becoming a saint herself after her death, embodied the holy maternal figure in the lives of other formative male Christian figures such as Jesus and his mother Mary, the Virgin; Saint Augustine and his mother St. Monica; and finally, the Christian Roman Emperor Constantine and his mother St. Helena. Indeed, such parallels form a clear typology of a saint in the Early Christian period and a formative leader setting the direction of religious doctrine for centuries to come. Other stock hagiographic aspects to Gregory’s story are his natural intellectual gifts which surface at a young, precocious age and how he was forced into active service for the Church, first becoming an envoy to Byzantium early in his career and eventually being elected pope at a young age despite desiring to lead a simple life of contemplation.

All of these archetypal features clearly form the typology of a saint in the making, but in the process, researchers are left without insight regarding the human and



The Anicii family home on the Caelian Hill, Rome, converted into a Monastery by Pope Gregory and his Mother, Sylvia.



St. Sylvia, mural painting in the Sanctuary Maria SS della Vena in Vena Fraz. of Piedimonte Etneo (CT) built in 597, 19TH century.

potentially humane character of the man. What we do understand of Pope Gregory, comes from the doctrinal proclivities and statements he makes in his own exegetical, hagiographic writings and his written correspondence which are recorded in other sources. From these sources it is clear that he believed that Italy was under siege and in danger due to the advance of the Lombards and the unwillingness of the Eastern Orthodox Church to support the Rome Church during this period of instability. This concern for the welfare of the Roman church remained throughout his entire career beginning with his period as papal

ambassador for Pope Pelagius II (579–90) in Byzantium (579–585). It was Gregory's inability to unite the Byzantine with the Catholic and Rome-centre doctrinal traditions during his tenure as papal envoy that increased his urgency to consolidate Catholic control of Italy as well as look to other territories to spread out the scope of influence when he became pope. Also, the Lombards were gaining power in Italy and he was eager to expand Catholic control in their wake. We see these concerns for maintaining and expanding Catholic control throughout his writing. In the *Dialogues*, essentially a hagiography of St. Benedict, Pope Gregory writes about the life of this Catholic saint framed in the context of Italy and its long tradition of saints.¹³ His reasons for writing this text is both Catholic-centred but also nationalistic (if that term could be applied in the 5th century),

since he demonstrates and disseminates to his readership that Catholics residing in this region should look locally for saintly inspiration and not beyond the borders. In fact, the holiest of Saints are Italian and their cult centres reside within national boundaries.

Gregory also had colonial designs for establishing Catholic conversion in England and Ireland which previously had been either pagan or Celtic Christian (having been converted according to legend by Saint Patrick (CE 385–461). His conversion aspirations for Britain and Ireland arose after seeing slave boys being sold in the market square of Rome. He called them the Angels because he felt these blonde youths were angelic looking and in need of being saved. Hence, he placed his attentions to missionary work among the people of the Angels. In essence,



Pope Gregory I Meets the English Slave Boys, *Non Angli, Sed Angeli*, Glass Mosaic, Westminster Abbey, London, 19th Century.

England and Ireland became the location of Catholic colonial expansion after he became Pope in 590 and his correspondence with missionaries such as St. Augustine of Canterbury (d. 604) was recorded by Bede (672–735) in the *History of the Church and English People*. Whereas the Celts were happy to divide their spheres of influence with the Catholic Church, they suggested that they divide their mandates between the forests and rural centres (the Celts) and allowing the Catholic Church to organize religious life in the major urban centres. Gregory however was concerned the sphere of influence of the Catholic Church in England and Ireland be made total and complete. As recorded in Bede, Gregory set about to convert England and Ireland entirely according to the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. He also standardized Catholic Church music with Gregorian Chants and he was consumed with the education of Priests believing that Priestly authority was ordained by God and that, once in place, a cleric's authority should go unchallenged.

Servants, obey ... your masters according to the flesh; and again; whosoever are servants under the yoke, let them count their masters worthy of all honour. (Pastoral Care, Book 3, Chapter 5)¹⁴

In many ways, Gregory can be considered the great theological simplifier as he himself said in *Pastoral Care*, he exhorted priests not to make messages too complicated when educating and engaging the flock:

Now the preacher should realize that he must not overtax the mind of the hearer, lest, so to speak, the string of the soul be strained too much and snap. All deep matters should be veiled from the multitude of hearers, and scarcely disclosed to a few. (Pastoral Care, p. 231)¹⁵

It is here that we see this notion of making theological and exegetical concepts simple for the laity and we see this belief informing his decisions throughout his papacy. For example: during his conversion of the British Pagan and Celtic Christians in England and Ireland under the direction of St. Augustine of Canterbury, it is indicated in Bede, *The History of the Church and English People*, that he instructed his missionaries to simply begin by reconsecrating pagan sites and temples and making these centres of worship for the Christian Church. This would ensure that the formerly pagan community would naturally orient themselves towards prayer and worship at the formerly pagan sites.

...what I have, upon mature deliberation of the affair of the English, determined upon, viz., that the temples of the idols in those nations ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let holy water be made and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed. For if those temples are well built, it is requisite that they be converted from the worship of devils

*to the service of the true God; that the nation, seeing that their temples are not destroyed ...may the more familiarly resort to the places to which they are accustomed.*¹⁶

This notion of making things easy, uncomplicated and familiar in many respects parallels his characterization of Mary Magdalene in *Homily 33*. In this text he states that Mary Magdalene is a repentant sinner and a morally fallen woman. In fact, Pope Gregory clearly states that she is akin to a converted pagan since she was formerly a sexualized and immoral woman and who changed her life, debased herself before Jesus seeking his forgiveness and became his most devoted follower: “You did not give me a kiss; she, on the contrary, since she came in, has not stopped kissing my feet. The kiss is a sign of love. And the unfaithful Jewish people did not give God a kiss, since he did not want to love for charity the one he served for fear. On the contrary, the heathen, called to salvation, never stop kissing the feet of their Redeemer, for they sigh with love for him continually.”

Gregory makes it clear that it is preferable to be female, a converted pagan, and a sinner, socially one of the lowest categories of human behaviour, than it is to be a male and a Jew who is unrepentant. There is a fundamental hierarchy apparent in Gregory’s thought. In essence, it is a study in contrasts. It is better to be a fallen woman who debases herself before Jesus seeking his absolution than it is to be a Jew who does not repent even if one is morally superior and a male.

If a man put away his wife, and she go from him and marry another man, shall he return to her anymore? Shall not that woman be polluted and defiled? But thou hast prostituted thyself to many lovers; nevertheless return to me said the Lord... (*Pastoral Care*, p.194).¹⁷

Mary Light; Mary Dark: Mary Magdalene and the Spectre of the Shadow

As Pope Gregory stated it was important to make the Christian Catholic precepts simple and easily understandable to the laity. Therefore, I believe that he was creating both composite figures with the same name Mary as he was creating dramatic and literary foils to demonstrate ideological polarities. This is seen with the Mary and Martha dichotomy expressed in the Mary of Bethany story. Another such dramatic foil is the contrast of the two Mary figures such as Mary Magdalene and Mary the Virgin, the mother of Jesus. As Carl Jung noted, together the Marys ‘demonstrate the dichotomy of the pristine moral character, and the idealized female, the Virgin and the dark shadow side the prostitute in

need of redemption, Mary Magdalene.’ As Carl Jung articulated, the shadow is the unknown dark side of the personality generally associated with moral deficiency. The shadow is typically the same sex as the projector or dreamer. It is also the shadow of society fed by repressed and neglected values. The shadow persona becomes everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about themselves and is often ashamed of. This shadow conveys the desires the projector negates within themselves such as egotism, laziness, fantasies, schemes, cowardice, love of money and, one would add, moral and sexual immorality: a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde persona. By contrasting the two figures with one name, Mary, the Magdalene serves as a projection or the shadow figure of the Virgin. Within the construct of this literary foil on one half there is the feminine ideal of the Virgin, the paragon of modesty and silence. On the other there is a woman in need of repentance seeking forgiveness. Both are opposing ends of the spectrum.¹⁸

Mary Dark and Mary Light: The Illuminations of Lilian Broca and Her Mosaics

Pope Gregory’s characterization of Mary Magdalene has shaped the manner in which she is rendered in art. As a figure, Mary Magdalene is always on her knees seeking forgiveness or, as she is seen in Donatello’s version, a wilderness figure, a female John the Baptist; a deeply anorexic figure, unconcerned by her appearance, conveying an emotionally haggard state. A woman who in the past relied on her sexuality for profit now wasting away feminine charms, with deep penitential discipline, becoming an androgynous figure in the process.

In other paintings she is shown with her attribute (identifying symbol) of the perfume vial, or sometimes the tower. Both symbols become interchangeable because the tower and the unguent jar (*alberallo* in Renaissance Italy) took on a similar shape.

Finally, the scenes depicting the *Noli Me Tangere*, especially as depicted by Giotto at Assisi demonstrates a rather shocking scene where Mary on her knees is seen to be pleading with Jesus and he is seen to be dramatically rejecting her, like the perfect, morally superior, *puer aeternus*: the eternally



Mary Magdalene and Martha, Caravaggio. Oil and canvas, 38.5 x 52.25" (97.8 x 132.7cm), 1598, Detroit Institute of Art.



Mary Magdalene, Donatello. Poplar wood, polychromed and gilded, 89" (226cm) 1454–1455, Opera di S. Maria del Fiore, Florence.



Mary Magdalene with a Perfume Vial, Andrea Solari. Oil on panel, Walters Art Museum, 1524. Notice the 16th century Alberallo Drug jar to the left.



Noli Me Tangere, Giotto. Fresco, Scrovegni (Arena) Chapel, Padua, Italy, 1304–6.



Noli Me Tangere, Giotto. Fresco, Church of St. Francis at Assisi, 1306.

resurrected youth, who rises above earthly concerns, especially the attachments to committed relationships. In this scene Mary Magdalene is seen to be pleading with Jesus, seeking him and he is rejecting her, casting her away like an earthly shackle or fetter.¹⁹

In Lilian Broca's depiction, gone are the associations of Jesus as the eternal youth who is only comfortable with female relationships where the mother is the embodiment of pristine virginity or the alternative woman on bended knee petitioning his forgiveness for past transgressions. Instead, Broca sees Mary Magdalene's role in history as one akin, or at least parallel with Jesus. In Broca's mosaic *Noli Me Tangere*, she depicts Mary Magdalene as a figure in a state of surprise. Jesus exhorts her not to touch him, not for her lack of purity, but rather he is *in media res* of his transition.

She is the sole witness to his dramatic apotheosis, an exclusive spectator, seeing first hand his divine transitioning from man made flesh into the son of God.

In the previous mosaic scene where the two Mary's embrace at the foot of the Cross, Broca seemingly reintegrates the whole woman.

While the scene is fundamentally one of trauma where the two women are merged together in a common terror, on another level the two Mary's embracing are a depiction, as Carl Jung would describe, of a reintegration of two aspects of one woman: the dark and the light; or pure, clear illumination and the shadow side. However, here Broca cleverly creates a role reversal. Mary Magdalene, the younger woman, wears white, and the Virgin, as an aged mother in mourning, wears black. This is a reverse of the normal order where Mary Magdalene is perceived by Pope Gregory as the shadow figure, or the woman who is in need of redemption. In this regard one could view Mary Magdalene as the shadow of Pope Gregory himself since he casts her into the figure who displays objectionable behaviour. She is the one in need of salvation and historically and artistically he froze her into the eternal role of the debased prostitute seeking redemption. Although not the *puer aeternus*, as Jesus is depicted Mary Magdalene becomes the *mulieris meretrix aeterna*. She is the anima of Gregory the Great. The part of the self which cannot be acknowledged or accepted and therefore, is projected onto the other.



The Repentant Mary Magdalene, Antonio Canova, Marble, 37" (94cm) Museo di Sant'Agostino in Genoa, 1764,



Mary Magdalene, Noli Me Tangere. 28.5 x 17.5" (72.5 x 44.5cm). Graphite, coloured pencils, gold marker and watercolour on parchment, 2018.



Mary Magdalene, Witnesses at the Cross 28.5 x 17.5" (72.5 x 44.5cm), Graphite, coloured pencils, gold marker and watercolour on parchment, 2018.

In essence, Pope Gregory has cast Mary Magdalene into the role of the moral scapegoat. All that is objectionable: femininity, sexuality and being a woman of power, potentially Jesus’ supporter, companion, soul mate and financial funder. In Pope Gregory’s view Mary Magdalene must be seen as someone who required Jesus’ agency and intervention to obtain redemption. In Broca’s view, by contrast, Mary Magdalene was a woman whose presence and authority greatly enhanced Jesus’ power.

Mary Magdalene as Scapegoat

While Broca creates scenes in a seven drawing and seven mosaic series, either directly from biblical passages or from her personal views of Mary Magdalene as a feminist figure, the second to last scene is a clear and obvious departure from the other influences. This scene, *Mary Magdalene, Defiled and Defamed* is culled entirely from the text of the *Gnostic Gospel of Mary Magdalene*. This single inclusion, combined with the final scene *Mary Magdalene, Awaiting Emmanuel* is an intriguing choice. It is here she is depicted sharing a throne with Jesus. While Jesus himself is absent his presence is indicated through a worn seat cushion.

Mary Magdalene also holds a sand clock indicating transformation is imminent and at hand. Carl Jung in his writings

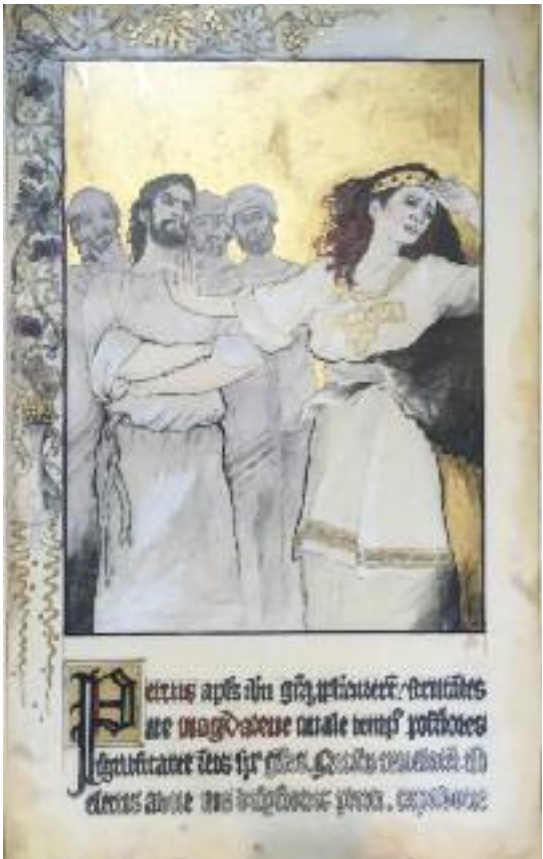
on scapegoating described Jesus as the ultimate scapegoat. Citing the ancient ritual of Yom Kippur, but also the ancient Roman novel of Apuleius the *Golden Ass*, he noted that in the ancient world it was common during annual ritualistic festivals to select one person, from the community, dress them as a king and designate them as a social outcast.²⁰ In essence, one person was offered up as a scapegoat for the community, sustaining punishment and thereby absolving the rest of the community of its sins. However, as René Girard states, through the resurrection and his ascension he becomes a visible manifestation of the sins of the community and a sign of evils of the community to isolate, denigrate and cast out the other. Since Jesus ascended and rose above the failings of humanity, Girard calls his ascension, *Christus Victor Atonement*.

In Lilian Broca’s mosaics Mary Magdalene is also a scapegoat. As Jennifer Garcia Bradshaw notes in the book *Scapegoats: A Gospel Through the Eyes of Victims*, Mary Magdalene is a triple scapegoat. One, she is a woman whom Jesus frees from evil spirits. Two, she is an outsider whom Jesus accepted as part of his inner circle and finally, she is a woman. (p, 277)²¹

This is reaffirmed in Broca’s depiction in the Mary Magdalene mosaic, *Mary Magdalene, Defiled and Defamed*, a scene taken from the *Gnostic Gospel of Mary Magdalene* where the Apostle Peter and Andrew express their disbelief that Jesus would have shared with her important teachings in which they were not included, since she was only a woman. This is a classic scapegoating scene where Mary Magdalene is set apart whilst surrounded by a large threatening masculine crowd who happen to be apostles. It is in this scene, surrounded with supposed sanctity that she is at her most vulnerable. She is being disbelieved, disregarded and accused as a liar based on her gender. It is only when Levi, the only male apostle to come to her defense that she is acknowledged as having something worthy to say.

In the final scene of the Broca series, like *Christus Victor Atonement*, Mary becomes *Maria Magdalena Victoria Atonement*. Here we see that she has her own resurrection and through her ascension, and coronation, she illuminates the failings of humanity. She can be seen to be following Jesus’ path and bringing together the whole woman, thus becoming a complete spiritual being in union with Jesus. In Carl Jung’s estimation this would be the perfect integration of the anima and the animus, both the feminine and masculine and the shadow and the light of humanity finally united in the culminating scene of Broca’s mosaic series.

This investigation into the figure of Pope Gregory has demonstrated he was a great church reformer consolidating the power of the Catholic Church in Italy and insuring the colonialization of the people of the British Isles. In the process of making Catholic doctrine simple and comprehensive for the laity, he created, as Carl Jung would state, a perfect psychological projection and from this, where text does not enable us to penetrate Pope Gregory’s personality profile any deeper, his own writings and exegetical works, especially on Mary Magdalene allow us to learn a great deal about him. By splitting two Mary’s into polar opposites: Mary Light and Mary Dark; Mary the Virgin and Mary the Prostitute, meanwhile combining the latter with numerous other Marys and other unnamed figures of questionable morality, we see in effect that Gregory has converted Mary Magdalene the historic Mary Magdalene, into a scapegoat for female sexuality and power for two millennia. Mary Magdalene was cast into a figure in need of redemption through Jesus, who, through Gregory’s characterization of *puer aeternus*, the



Mary Magdalene, Defiled and Defamed 26 x 16" (66 x 40.5cm), Graphite, coloured pencils, gold marker and watercolour on parchment, 2018.



Mary Magdalene, Awaiting Emmanuel 28.25 x 17.5" (71.5 x 44.5cm), Graphite, coloured pencils, gold marker and watercolour on parchment, 2018.

Once integrated, Mary Magdalene can be the sole witness to Jesus’ death and resurrection.

eternal boy who rises above mundane earthly behaviour and the only figure who can provide her absolution.

The work of Lilian Broca unearths the historic reality that Mary Magdalene has been cast as the scapegoat applying in depth psychology through her mosaics to reintegrate the two Marys, which ironically takes place in the moment of trauma by bearing witness to the torture and death of Jesus. Once integrated, Mary Magdalene can be the sole witness to Jesus’ death and resurrection. While she is challenged, singled out and ultimately scapegoated for using her voice and experience on an equal level to the apostles, (as we see in the Gnostic Gospel), in Broca’s drawings and mosaics, we see her emerging–like Jesus as the *Christus Victor Atonement*–and achieving her own resurrection after 1430 years of misrepresentation and marginalization, at long last, becoming a whole, and even relatable, woman.

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Mary Magdalene in the Canonical Gospels

The most ancient sources written about Mary Magdalene are the Canonical Gospels included in the New Testament, that is: Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. These documents were written and edited in the second half of 1st century AD.

The information about this character is quite succinct. She is only mentioned in twelve sections, and all of these, with the exception of a note in Luke 8:2–3, are directly related to the tales of Passion and Resurrection of Jesus.

We will now explore the New Testament traditions about Mary Magdalene in summary form, with the purpose of recovering—to a possible extent—the historical dimension of this character, without ignoring that these same notes have already been sifted through the filter of tradition.

This last methodological observation is of the utmost importance, as gospel traditions cannot be considered “objective” without a certain level of doubt, but rather be interpreted on their own and understood as the result of theological contemplation among early Christians.

With regards to the subject matter, what solid information do we have about Mary Magdalene’s relationship with Jesus, before the scenes related to his Passion and Resurrection?

As mentioned before, very brief information on this matter is found in the Gospel of Luke:

1. *Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, 2. and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Mag’dalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3. and Joan’na, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means. (Luke 8 [RSV])*

Mary is defined as “(kalouméne) Magdalené,” in other words “(named) Magdalene.” It is not clear what the meaning of the word *Magdalené* might be. The most common explanation consists in interpreting this term as an assumed birth place, Magdala, a village found at the edge of the Sea of Galilee. However, there is no reference to a city with such name in literary sources from the 1st century AD.

In the tradition above, it is assumed that Mary Magdalene, among other women, would have been exorcized by Jesus (this conclusion is confirmed in Mark 16:9). In the history of exegesis (Gregory of Nazianzus [540–604 AD]), the words, “*from whom seven demons had gone out*” (Luke 8:2) were used to declare in Mary Magdalene her condition as a sinner, more specifically, as a prostitute.

This interpretation does not have any historical basis; furthermore, this description would have originated in misogynistic prejudice. As in many other cases in the ancient past, a reference to a person suffering from demonic possession would rather have alluded to some sort of mental or psychic disability, as in epilepsy, and not to a sex-related fault.

As a result of her healing, this woman was beside Jesus together with the apostles and a few other women, joining Him in his journey and “*helping to support them out of their own means*” (Luke 8:3), alluding here that she was in good social standing.

According to Mark, women that accompanied Jesus “*followed Him, and ministered to Him*” (Mark 15:41; Matthew 27:55) implying with these words that they would have been with Him at the level of “disciples.”

After this initial note, we do not hear again about Mary Magdalene until the moment of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Gospels differ in some details regarding the presence of Mary Magdalene at the moment of Crucifixion of the Galilean.

While the synoptic claim that Mary Magdalene and other women were “*looking on from afar*” (Mark 15:40–41; Cf Matthew 27:55–56; Luke 23:49), John was the only evangelist that described her “*standing by the cross,*” with two other women (“*His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas*) and “*the disciple whom he loved*” (John 19:25–26).

Mary Magdalene, together with other women, witnessed Jesus’ burial (Mark 15:47; Matthew 27:60–61; Luke 23:55 [without referring to her by name]. Yet again, we hear about Mary Magdalene at the moment of the Resurrection of Jesus. She was one of the women that found the empty tomb, always mentioned first (Mark 16:1–8; Matthew 28:1–8; Luke 24:1–10; John 20:1–10). As well, she was the first one to

This interpretation does not have any historical basis; furthermore, this description would have originated in misogynistic prejudice.

whom Jesus appeared while she was alone (John 20:14–17; Cf Mark 16:9), or in the company of someone else (Matthew 28:9–10).

However, it is the Gospel of John that left us with a fully developed tradition with regards to this last incident:

11. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb; 12. and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13. They asked her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” 14. Saying this, she turned ‘round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15. Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?, Whom do you seek?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” 16. Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbo’ni!” (which means Teacher). 17. Jesus said to her, “Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” (John 20 [RSV])

This scene is known for the Latin words “*Noli me tangere*” (*no me toques*), and became a very popular theme in Christian art, from ancient times to the present.

Beyond this literary testimony, as was to be expected, we do not have any other proof that can corroborate the certainty of this event as an historic occurrence. But even if this were the case, could this event happen in real history, or was it a fantastic recreation of religious piety?

This evangelic tradition about Mary Magdalene in her condition as the first witness of a resurrected Jesus, stand in opposition to the words of Paul who had claimed that Peter had been the first to see Him in a series of apparitions:

4. that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, 5. and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. (1 Corinthians 15 [RSV])

As Paul’s tradition, in all probability an antique profession of faith, is written from a male perspective that does not gather the presence of women, this would lead to the belief that its origin would have served in a manner such as a parallel tradition or ideological alternative to the ancient note about the apparition to Mary Magdalene.

Considering that Mary Magdalene was the head of an entourage consisting of three female disciples that followed Jesus, same as Peter was heading a group of three



male disciples, it could be concluded, that the evangelical tradition of Mary Magdalene would have a high probability of having originality overtones, precisely because it was breaking with the paradigms relative to an androcentric society.

After this portentous religious experience, according to the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene proceeded to communicate the Good News:

18. Mary Mag'dalene went and said to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that He had said these things to her. (John 20 [RSV])

According to the most ancient tradition, then, it would have fallen to Mary Magdalene the exceptional honour of being not only the first to see Jesus resurrected, but also in charge of announcing His resurrection in three out of four evangelical tales (see also Mark 16:10; Luke 24:9).

As is to be expected in a society controlled by men, where women are generally considered *a priori* as foolish or lacking wisdom, and also unqualified to serve as witnesses in juries (Josephus, *Antiquities* IV, VIII, 15; m *Shavuot* IV, 1), it is not surprising that the apostles had not given any credit to this testimony from the women. As it was written:

9. and returning from the tomb they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10. Now it was Mary Mag'dalene and Joan'na and Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; 11. But these words

seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. (Luke 24 [RSV]; Cf Mark 16:11)

This concludes traditions about Mary Magdalene in synoptic gospels. From these testimonies a few general considerations can be concluded, as follows:

- She is the only woman, with the exception of Jesus’ mother, that is mentioned in all four gospels.
- She is the only woman in the Bible that is not defined through her belonging to a male, be him a son, brother or spouse.
- Her (last) name was not attached to that of her father or spouse, and instead to that of her city, indicates that she was independent, she was not under the control of other people and enjoyed autonomy.
- She is named as the first among women that followed Jesus.
- Her leadership in the heart of the group of women is similar to the preeminent role that Peter plays in the circle of Twelve.

In sum, then, the mention of Mary Magdalene in the synoptic gospels, in spite of its brevity and fragmentation, and maybe precisely for this same reason, reflects traces of an antique tradition, in which one woman in particular, as part of a group of women and men that accompanied Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, would have played a crucial role in the origins of the Christian movement.

According to this tradition, then, Mary Magdalene in her condition as historic personality would have been *disciple, apostle and fundamental leader of the primitive Christian community*, breaking with the androcentric paradigm existing in Jewish society at the time.

Some have believed that Mary Magdalene’s historic role would have been deliberately overshadowed or diminished in canonic literature precisely because of the patriarchal tendencies present during the beginning of the Church. If this were the case, maybe, the preeminence assigned to Mary Magdalene in gnostic literature (*Gospel of Phillip; Gospel of Mary; Pistis Sophia; Dialogue of the Saviour*) could be a far echo of an ancient memory about this exceptional woman.

Beyond this stage in the history of tradition, tales about Mary Magdalene in the patristic period, in the Middle Ages (particularly in the Golden Legend) and furthermore, in the modern era, would be less history and more of a pious legend.

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The magnificent monochromatic black, grey and white “Mary Magdalene Resurrected” panels are accented with pure gold, each designed as a page from an illuminated manuscript with relevant Jewish and Christian symbols along the borders and an inscription in an ancient biblical language at the foot of each page. Focussed on events from the life of Mary Magdalene, the eloquent images lift the veil which has for millennia obscured the true role and significance of the Bride of the Easter Mysteries.

Margaret Starbird



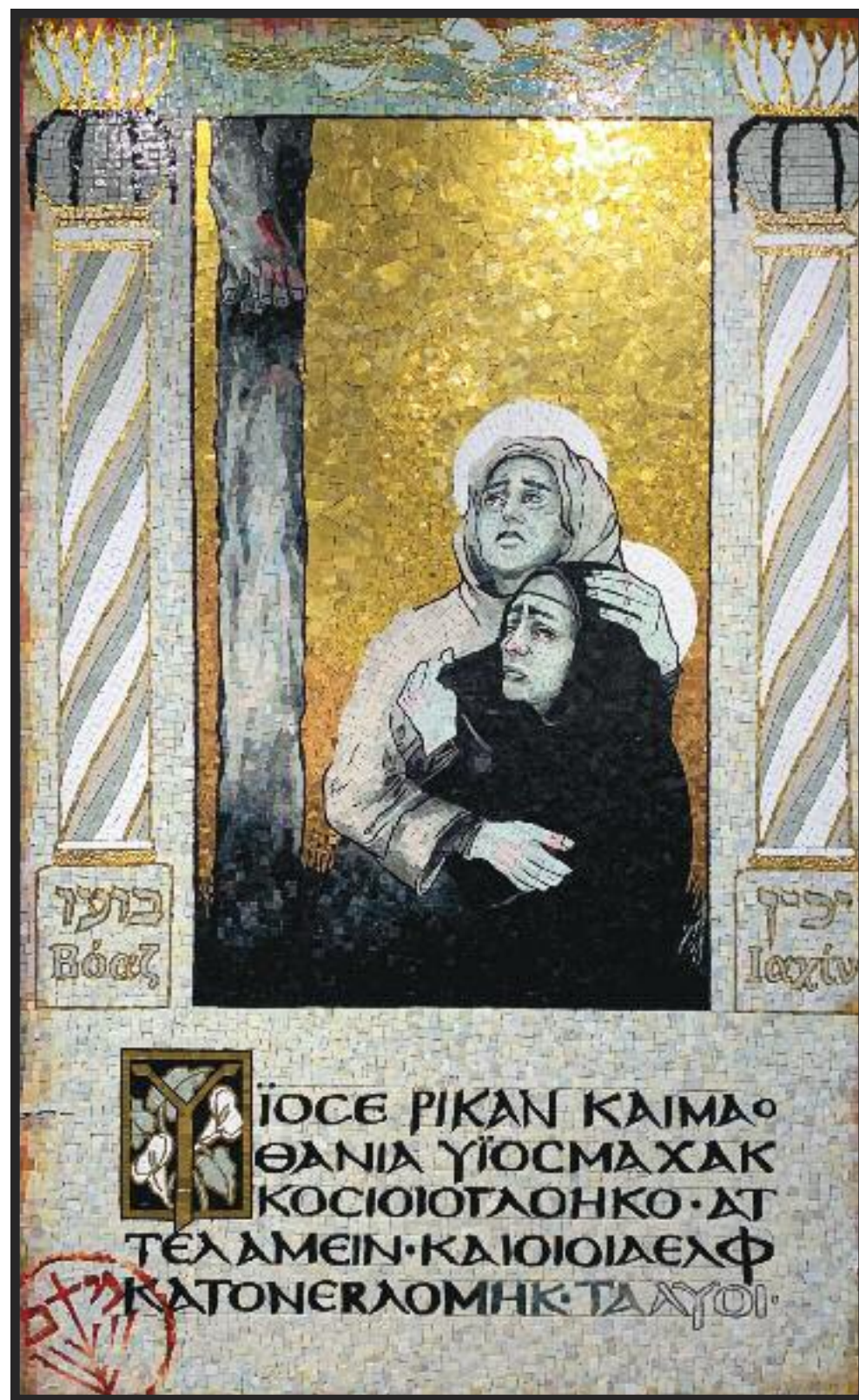
Mary Magdalene, *The Sacred Union*, 78 x 48" (200 x 122cm). Venetian smalti, gold smalti, millefiori, on aluminum honeycomb panel, 2018.



Mary Magdalene, *The Washing of Feet*, 78 x 48" (200 x 122cm). Venetian smalti, gold smalti, on aluminum honeycomb panel, 2022.



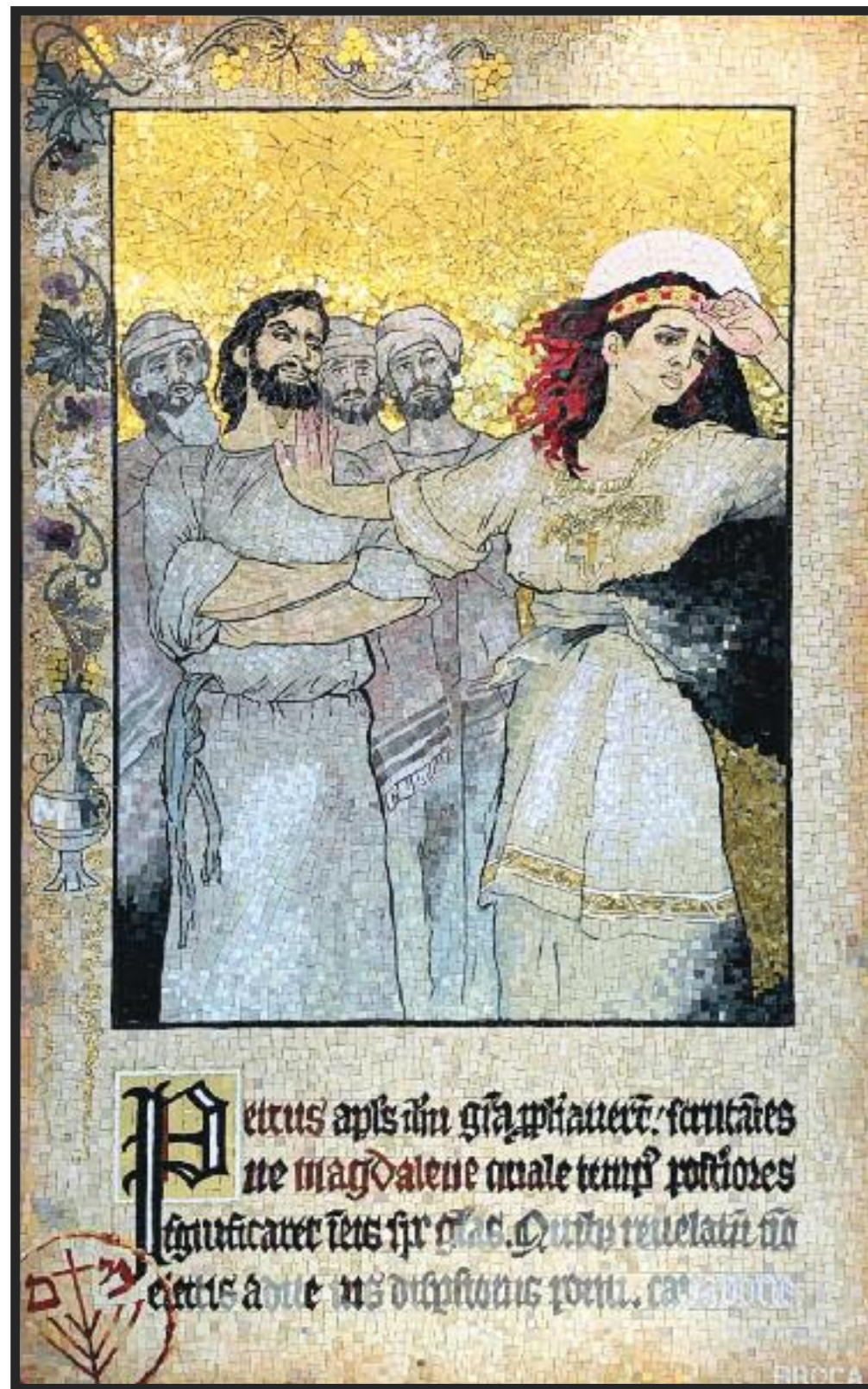
Mary Magdalene, *The Anointing*, 78 x 48" (200 x 122cm). Venetian smalti, gold smalti, millefiori, on aluminum honeycomb panel, 2019.



Mary Magdalene, Witnesses at the Cross, 78.75 x 48" (200 x cm). Venetian smalti, gold smalti, on aluminum honeycomb panel, 2022.



Mary Magdalene, Noli Me Tangere, 78 x 48" (200 x 122cm), Venetian smalti, gold smalti, on aluminum honeycomb panel, 2021.



Mary Magdalene, *Defiled and Defamed*, 78.5 x 48" (200 x 122cm). Venetian smalti, gold smalti, on aluminum honeycomb panel, 2020.



Mary Magdalene, *Awaiting Emmanuel*, 78 x 48" (200 x cm). Venetian smalti, gold smalti, on aluminum honeycomb panel, 2021.

Preparatory Sketches and Painted Cartoons



Lilian in her studio working on the drawing for *Awaiting Emmanuel*.



Mary Magdalene, From the Shadows and into the Light: Lilian Broca

This is my fourth series of art works based on myth and biblical stories that impart models of human behaviour. For many years I had been inspired by mythological stories, as they speak of, in the words of Mircea Eliade, the eminent Romanian scholar of religious studies, the eternal aspects of life such as love, beauty and heroism, all of them giving great value and profound meaning to life.

Over the last two decades, as our society sees rapid technology advancement, a large number of artists have been turning to computers for inspiration creating mostly abstract art. However, after all this time of computer generated artworks

As with the previous series, I did not consider the historicity of the biblical figures I chose to work with in the Mary Magdalene series.

I believe that now there is a need for the return to a more humanist approach to art and the artistic experience. This type of art satisfies our emotional and spiritual needs, a tradition that spans many centuries. Its insightful and invaluable aspects contributed immensely to the advancement of

civilization. Today when we enter museums and view the art work, we imagine and appreciate those long gone artists painting, printing or carving, with diligence and with reverence.

In creating mosaics with a humanist outlook, aside from the emotional and spiritual nourishment gained, I am also able to convey my respect for the preceding centuries of artistic output; moreover, the humanist approach provides another means of viewing narratives in art, another window into the soul without relying on the written word.

A great deal of research was required in order to understand and execute mosaics for the present series highlighting the biblical figure, Mary Magdalene. As with the previous series, I did not consider the historicity of the biblical figures I chose to work with in the Mary Magdalene series. I regard biblical and apocryphal stories

in my research as mythology; consequently, as mythological female figures, my protagonists become essential archetypes for the role models needed in maintaining a balanced and healthy society.

In the last 2,000 years we have been offered almost exclusively masculine achievements immortalized in mosaics and other permanent materials as heroes and hence role models, an aspect totally detrimental to women.

In order to render the female experience equal in cultural and perhaps even in religious value to that of the male, I offer the veneration and acceptability of Mary Magdalene equal to the profuse and extravagant representation of male heroes in mosaic art seen throughout the ages. This was achieved by using monumental sizes for my mosaic panels and costly material for their execution, such as hand-made Venetian glass, gold and semi-precious stones.

Dr. Angela Clarke, the curator of this Mary Magdalene mosaic exhibition, writes in her essay "Breaking Down Barriers: Antiquity and Post Modernity:"

In art history and literature discourse the work of women artists and women's stories are always associated with the intimate and the small, as if they dare not take up valuable space and time. Broca expressly desires that these stories of women should take up space, time and even more room should be made for female achievement in future. By telling these stories of ancient heroic women in monumental media she demands space for diversity of opinion. Most importantly she wants to construct a history which reveals to future generations that the voice and face of history is not entirely a masculine one, even in the militarized world of antiquity.¹

In my previous narrative mosaic series on biblical Queen Esther and apocryphal Judith, I clearly depicted the tactics used by these two wise and courageous, young female heroines. Youth was the only window of opportunity for all women in ancient times if they were to use their feminine beauty to achieve a desired goal. During that strategic but narrow window, beautiful Esther and Judith employed the only weapon they possessed—female sexuality—in their fight for survival for themselves and for their community.

Unlike them in many respects, yet equally courageous, loyal and determined, Mary Magdalene survived not only fierce enemies wishing her harm once Yeshua or Jesus died on the cross, but also the ensuing 2,000 years of denigration, defamation and vilification.





Mary Magdalene, The Anointing. 28,5 x 17,5" (72.5 x 44.5cm). Graphite, coloured pencils, gold marker and watercolour on parchment, unframed, 2018.

I chose Mary Magdalene as the series’ protagonist because she qualifies for the courageous woman who left her sanctuary, her family home, to follow a single man without a fixed address or a permanent job, travelling the country accompanied by 12 other men, teaching God’s words. She joined Jesus and followed Him despite being a single female living in a patriarchal society when women were in general terms treated as lesser mortals with few of the privileges bestowed on men. By leaving behind her family and her comfort zone, Mary Magdalene showed a sense of independence and self-assurance rarely found in women of her time.

At the start of this new Mary Magdalene mosaic series, as usual, extensive research came first. Eight months of reading on the subject even before I began sketching, provided me with one of several versions of this ancient story that I decided to explore.

While the canonical Gospels portray Mary Magdalene as the repentant sinner who abandons her wicked ways to follow Yeshua, or Jesus, several Gnostic writings, usually dated to 2nd and 3rd centuries, paint a drastically different picture of her. These depict Mariam (Mary) as Yeshua’s most beloved disciple, as his rightful successor and even as a potential wife. In addition, it is written that she was endowed with knowledge, vision and insight far exceeding that of the Twelve Disciples.

The Gnostic *Gospel of Philip* names Mary Magdalene as Jesus’ companion; Gnostic writings also describe tensions and jealousy between Peter and Mary Magdalene, as well as between her and the other disciples.

Deciding on which scenes would best portray Mary Magdalene as the protagonist and the job of hiring live models, followed.

At this point another very important aspect of a cohesive series of works had to be decided on, namely, the common motif which appears in every mosaic. This unifying motif acts as a visible continuity in all the panels, a consistency and connection of all parts of the mosaics. In my works it also acts as a separator from my other series, reminding viewers that each heroine struggled with her specific set of circumstances. For example: the Queen Esther mosaic series—completed in 2008, depict iron lattices that form gates or window bars symbolizing confinement, barriers and restrictions. For the Judith mosaics, completed in 2015, through the composition of an artist’s sketchbook page with a perforated top and with the transition from

the black and white pencil sketch to monochromatic 2D and finally to full colour, I portrayed a gradual rejuvenation of an ancient story through its retelling in a way that provides a bridge across the centuries.

For Mary Magdalene, the power dynamics inherent in her story proved to be considerably more complex. After much deliberation I came up with the idea of illuminated manuscript pages as the unifying motif. Ancient text has always been the root and inspiration for my visual journeys; and the beauty of such illustrated scripture with text produced mostly by monks in the Middle Ages who spent a lifetime illuminating them, really appealed to me. As these textual manuscripts were written in a multitude of languages I decided to also introduce a different ancient script for each mosaic. The seven preliminary drawings therefore, display several lines in seven ancient languages, all spoken at the time of Mary Magdalene: Aramaic, Hebrew, Ancient Greek, Armenian, Latin, Amharic and Coptic. Their diversity also symbolizes the numerous versions of Mary’s story and her relationship to Jesus.



The *Gospel of Mary*, Berlin Codex. Ägyptisches Museum.



Hebrew Illuminated page, Kennicott Bible, Bodleian Library.



A Néksei-Biblia Legszebb Lapjai Budapest.



After studying the flat two dimensional illuminations from the Middle Ages, I decided to execute the Mary Magdalene series in a similar style that would be reminiscent of the one monks in monasteries preferred and applied.

In addition, my choice of monochromatic colours was the result of 15 years of using bright colours in previous mosaics and besides, I thought grey/black sketchy line drawings with perhaps one key colour would be visually appealing next to the gold areas so prevalent in Illuminated Manuscripts. By now, I had made all the decisions, photographed some models and I was ready to start drawing.

The seven scenes I chose for the drawings and hence the mosaics, are, in chronological order: *The Sacred Union*, *The Washing of Feet*, *The Anointing*, *Witnesses at the Cross*, *Noli Me Tangere*, *Defiled and Defamed*, and finally *Awaiting Emanuel*. Critically for this last drawing and mosaic my approach to Mary Magdalene is entirely on an imaginary symbolical and mythological plane, where she carries the powerful archetype of the sacred feminine—the lost bride, long denied in Christian mythology.

Some of the scenes may appear controversial such as the one where Jesus washes Mary Magdalene's feet. My understanding is that washing a woman's feet has never even been considered, let alone drawn or painted in the distant past. And yet, the practice appears in most of the hospitality customs in ancient civilizations, as sandals were the chief footwear in those days. A host would normally provide water to wash the guests' feet. I propose here, that if indeed Magdalene was the beloved of Jesus as a loyal, intelligent and spiritual follower, then it is conceivable that he would have included her when he washed the feet of the male disciples.

Another controversial aspect in this series is my depicting the Mother of Jesus as an older woman, not the young perpetual virgin most painters and sculptors envisioned and presented in their art. The Virgin in my estimation must have been around 45 years old at the crucifixion, given the young age people married in the 1st century. Yet 45 was considered old and not just because life conditions were harsh and the climate unforgiving, but also because the life span was considerably shorter than today.

Additionally, my research indicated that the Magdalene was a woman who played a major role during or even after the life of Jesus. Although the historical documentation that refers to her following the crucifixion is interwoven with legend



Mary Magdalene, *The Washing of Feet*. 28.25 x 17.5" (71.5 x 44.5cm). Graphite, coloured pencils, gold marker and watercolour on parchment, 2018.



Mary Magdalene, *The Sacred Union*. 28.5 x 17.5" (72.5 x 44.5cm). Graphite, coloured pencils, gold marker and watercolour on parchment, 2018.



Laodicea broken fountain column, four religious symbols. Second century AD.

and myth, many articles I read say that it's quite possible Mary was married to Jesus. According to the Cathars in Southern France (considered heretical by the Vatican), Mary and Jesus were unmarried lovers. There are records of Mary Magdalene having preached her Christian message on the steps of the Temple dedicated to the Goddess Diana in Marseilles and that she had a strong following in southern France. With so much speculation on this relationship, in one of the seven drawings and mosaics I chose to show them simply as a loving couple.

Symbolism plays an important part in my artworks and this series is no exception. Each drawing includes symbols that are meaningful in both Judaic and Christian traditions. Whether they are flowers, fruit, boats, pottery, or textile patterns, these symbols speak of the distant past, yet most of them are recognizable even to this day. Just like an illuminated manuscript page I sought to illuminate what lies hidden or repressed through the symbols of the borders. Hopefully, through them, new ideas can be brought to life.

At the same time I also decided to introduce a stamp in order to give the Mosaic Illuminated Page more "authenticity." Having seen many original illuminated pages in museums throughout Europe and in the US with most of them stamped by the institution as authentic manuscripts, it seemed to be

logical and suitable to introduce an original and personal stamp. By coincidence, a few weeks earlier I had found a photo of a broken Roman pillar which at one time was part of a 2nd century fountain in Laodicea, present day Turkey. Carved on one side of the pillar was a menorah with the middle candle forming a tall cross. This photo appeared in the *Biblical Archeology Review*, a magazine I have been reading for years. So with the idea that Christianity "rose" from Judaism, and adding two M's in Hebrew to this menorah/cross I had my distinctive stamp, my own authority needed for the interpretation of these biblical events. The stamp appears on every mosaic panel.

The Mosaic Medium

A mosaic is an image made of small pieces of various materials covering a surface and held together by mortar or cement. Coloured opaque glass has been used in wall mosaics for millennia and, although my main art discipline had been painting for several years after graduation, my love and admiration remained for glass tesserae (cubes of glass or stone) used in ancient mosaics. As a painter I tried to bring out

light with pigments, but with glass, the medium itself is light caught in and reflected by the completed mosaic. Through the manipulation of that light in my narrative series, I am able to create works that possess both intellectual content and a dynamic, living quality. As mosaic has traditionally depicted the male-dominated world of the past my role as an artist is to reclaim the feminine in this medium. By including women in this art form I am able to make more balanced and universal statements about the human condition.



Before 2002, mosaics were not at all a part of my artistic output. In my studio, however, I had some glass remnants saved over a few decades from my university years when I had briefly experimented with this art form. But in 2003 it had become necessary to enlarge my palette, so I began importing quality "smalto glass" from the Orsoni Foundry in Venice and from Kolorines factory in Cuernavaca, Mexico. The latter dates to the late 1940s when the Mexican muralist movement was flourishing. During this period the Perdomo family in Mexico teamed with Italian Murano glass masters in order to produce the equivalent high quality glass produced in Italian furnaces. They supplied glass to local Mexican artists and architects and soon after, internationally.

Buying smalti was a significant financial investment which, at the beginning of my mosaic phase, limited my working range of colours. Once immersed in this new medium, I soon realized that the brittle quality of glass imposed considerable restrictions never encountered with other media, such as oil, acrylic, graphite or watercolours. Yet instead of becoming bothersome, the medium offered an exciting challenge. I was obliged to change my way of thinking in order to best present the luminescent quality of glass.²

The method of making mosaics is almost as ancient as my heroines are. It is also a labour-intensive procedure. For my Mary Magdalene series, first of all, I had to assemble a large variety of coloured glass. In the distant past, mosaics were placed high up on churches' walls and domed ceilings; viewers standing some 20 feet or more below were able to see the glass colours well integrated. As a result, those mosaics required fewer shades of the same colour, the crafts person separating the areas within





Adeline Benhammouda, mosaic in progress.

the same colour with dark outlines. Today, we often create mosaic art which is viewed from much closer; these therefore, require an abundance of shades of the same colour.³

Once I completed all the drawings, decided on the colour palette, the size and gathered all other materials such as the nippers, pliers, files and tweezers, thinset and spatulas, I felt ready to start cutting. But was I? Seven mosaic panels each 78 x 48in would have taken me more than eight years to fabricate. Smaller mosaics like those from the Queen Esther series took me seven years working on my own in the studio.

I reached out to Mosaika Studio in Montreal who recommended Adeline Benhammouda who used to work in their studio. Adeline and I shared the work on five out of the seven mosaics. When I got ill and needed hospital-

ization, the last two were fabricated by the same Mosaika Studio. The collaboration came when my solo exhibition was already booked for 2022 and I needed to meet the deadline. Thankfully, it all worked well.

To sum up: just as in my previous mosaic series, my goal continues to be that of removing female accomplishments from the domestic sphere where they had been relegated in the past and instead, bringing their heroic accomplishments into the city forum, the traditional place where stories of masculine achievement were told. By telling these stories of ancient heroic women in monumental mosaics I seek to construct a new history which reveals to future generations that the voice and face of ancient history is not entirely a masculine one, even in the patriarchal world of antiquity.⁴

In the Winter 2022 issue of *The Biblical Archeology Review*, I found three paragraphs on the newly discovered mosaic section belonging to an expansive ancient floor mosaic in the Galilee's Huqoq synagogue dating from early 5th century CE. The narrative mosaics are arranged in three horizontal registers and cover the story of Deborah and Yael (Book of Judges).

Similar to Judith's tale where she hopes and prays to have the enemy delivered and killed "by the hands of a woman," this biblical narrative relates the story of the Judge, Prophetess and Military Heroine Deborah who persuades General

Barak to attack the Canaanites who were persecuting Israelite tribes. She prophesizes that the battle will be won but that victory will not bring glory to him, as the Canaanite General Sisera will fall "by the hand of a woman." That woman was Yael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, a Canaan sympathizer.

Indeed, Sisera flees the battlefield and takes refuge in Yael's tent where she offers him a cup of milk and covers him as he lies exhausted in her bed. Yael takes a tent peg and drives it into the sleeping Sisera's forehead, thus fulfilling Deborah's earlier prophecy.

This archeological discovery by a team from University of North Carolina comes as a huge surprise. The article confirms that, "Although women were occasionally depicted in synagogue mosaics, depiction of biblical stories with female heroes like Debora and Yael are rare." ⁵

In this series I am most interested in restoring the feminine power Mary Magdalene possessed in her life time yet gradually lost after Jesus' death; the understanding of how it happened and the effects it had on what we call "civilization."



Mosaika Studio, Montreal.



The Israelite commander, Barak, depicted in the Galilee’s Huqoq synagogue-mosaic,

My hope is that the Mary Magdalene mosaic series will reveal new ways to perceive the impactful relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, as well as considering what happened to the relationship in the hands of the manipulative male founders of Christianity. In addition, I hope that through my Mary Magdalene mosaics viewers will be profoundly motivated to re-examine this critical episode of human history.

The success of the mosaic medium relies on the manner of laying the tesserae and the intended image functioning interdependently; each individual piece of glass retains its unique identity yet the eye assimilates the pieces into a whole image. The mosaics’ narrative statement resonating with vibrant colours combined with a surface of glass tesserae laid out in a flowing meaningful manner, are the

type of artworks that reflect the current stage in my art.

The curator of Il Museo, Dr. Angela Clarke succinctly summarized it thus: “Through her mosaics, Broca looks to glass shards as a means to remind viewers that the traditional paradigms associated with traditional institutions and power dynamics can be broken through and reconstructed into a world that is more healing.”

Lilian Broca

Endnotes

- 1 MOSAIQUE Magazine, 2020, “Breaking Down Barriers: Antiquity and Post Modernity in Union: The Mosaics of Lilian Broca,” by Dr. Angela Clarke, p32–35.
- 2 The Hidden and The Revealed: The Queen Esther Mosaics of Lilian Broca, 2011, by Sheila Campbell, Yosef Wosk and Lilian Broca, Gefen Publishing House Ltd., New York, USA and Jerusalem, Israel, p22.
- 3 The Hidden and The Revealed: The Queen Esther Mosaics of Lilian Broca, 2011, by Sheila Campbell, Yosef Wosk and Lilian Broca, Gefen Publishing House Ltd., New York, USA and Jerusalem, Israel, p11–12.
- 4 MOSAIQUE Magazine, 2020, “Breaking Down Barriers: Antiquity and Post Modernity in Union: The Mosaics of Lilian Broca,” by Dr. Angela Clarke, p33.
- 5 Biblical Archeology Review, Winter 2022, Vol 48, No 4, “Deborah and Barak at Huqoq,” p14.

Letter to Mary Magdalene

The following Letter to Mary Magdalene was written during the long Covid months. As members of the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Foundation Independent Scholars at Simon Fraser University, we were given a project in the form of a letter to write about our diverse activities during the pandemic. Our letters were later published in the British Columbia Review

<https://thebcreview.ca/2021/02/14/broca-pandemic-magdalene/>

At the onset of the making of Mary Magdalene in Conversation with Lilian Broca documentary, Adelina Suvagau, the director, used this letter as a means to “beckon” Mary Magdalene back to our world, specifically to my studio, in order to become my muse.

Dear Mariam,

Who would have imagined at the time we first met a few years ago that our newly formed relationship would be interrupted for several months due to a pandemic threatening the entire world?

I certainly didn’t and, I suspect, nor did you. After the three Biblical women series I completed on Lilith, Queen Esther and Judith, all of whom I consider heroines, my expectations for us were years of close connection, even friendship, without interruptions.

From the beginning I sensed you beside me as I was sketching in my studio the cartoons which subsequently would become large mosaics. You seemed eager to help me with this project and, who knows? Perhaps you were also instrumental in my choosing the right research material from the vast amount of available literature.

For eight long months I read and reread various portrayals of your life and of your contribution to the expansion and growth of Yeshua ben Yosef’s words, later to become a new religion, Christianity.



Miriam reading the letter from Lilian.

Continuing with my exploration of female Biblical figures who elude established cultural paradigms, you, Mariam, my current heroine, like them, defied the fate your society set out before you.

From the onset I knew that the works will be mosaic panels. The power of mosaic is that as an ancient art form, it is still accessible and shares much in common with the present computer technology which brings us world-wide stories every day. And just like the computer image it is fragmentary, allowing me to construct out of the glass shards or tesserae, as they are called, a personally meaningful picture based on empirical content of historic literature as well as my own interpretation. With the scattered fragments of an ancient mosaic medium I've been striving to reconcile diverse opinions in the varied narratives I read about you, but even more significantly, with these tesserae I am creating new original works.

Mariam, the second aspect of this series that I decided very early on during my research, was the requirement of a monumental size for all seven mosaic panels, 79in x 48in each.

In the past, women artists, their works and their stories were mostly associated with the intimate and the small, as though they dared not take up valuable space

and time. As you know from my past art works, I resent that timid notion. My heroines insist and demand the space and importance that long ago was offered to masculine achievements in the military, politics and commerce.

And finally Mariam, after reading so many diverse accusations, betrayals and the vilification you were subjected to over the centuries, I have decided to express the existence of disparate accounts of your story with text in each mosaic panel, hence the Illuminated Manuscript composition and unifying motif. Each panel displays 3–4 lines in an ancient language spoken during your time on earth.

While drawing these sketches in the studio, I was trying to catch and observe your response, a mysterious and esoteric experience I had with all previous Biblical figures. It was critically important for me to somehow discover your personality. You were not easy to approach directly, but as my pencil was gliding purposefully on the paper you allowed me to understand your dislike of jewellery and surrendered, albeit reluctantly, only during my last sketch where you emerge as a Goddess-in-Waiting.

To me this was a sign of approval on your part; you knew from our earlier “conversations” in the studio—haha! Mostly one way—that my intention is to reestablish the elevated social position you enjoyed during your life with Yeshua (Jesus) who understood that male preferences and domination will cause society to form institutions with power concentrated at the top while the exploited masses remain imprisoned at the bottom. Yeshua understood, as well, that in a society where the feminine is given equal time and respect, children are nurtured, widows are consoled, the arts are encouraged, and... well, in such a society childhood is joyful, work is productive and people live in harmony.

From all the reading I have done, I gather that he chose you as his most intelligent follower, most loyal and most beloved. It is possible that Yeshua meant you to be the inheritor of his church.

With good feelings about the two of us as collaborators I finally finished all the seven sketches I needed before starting the mosaics.

Alas, no sooner did I began the long trek, I was diagnosed with cancer.

Mariam, do you remember I asked for your help so I could finish the series? That's all I wanted, enough time to complete the new cycle.

Time flew by and I would like to believe that with your intervention, I recovered. Two months later I was back in the studio with renewed vigour.

Work was coming along slowly and with an assistant in Montreal I felt reassured we could complete the series before the exhibition in France in 2020.

Alas... another disruption! This time the interruption in our work is global. The COVID 19 Pandemic afflicted millions of people and the only known safety measures required are self-isolation, vigorous washing of hands and wearing masks... especially for the elderly, they say.

Am I “elderly” already? Wow, I sure am according to the age chart.

Well, said I, self-isolation is no big deal for my husband and me. He is retired and my studio is in the garden. Nothing will change that much in our lives. And boy! Was I wrong this time... Aside from the fact that all museums and galleries started to close down all over the world, I found to my dismay that the most important item I have been using for years and now ran out of in my studio, disappeared from every single store and/or on-line companies in Canada and the US; I am referring to the desperately needed M3 N95 mask doctors, nurses and health care employees require as absolutely essential protection against the virus in their daily work to save lives.

Unfortunately for me, it is this exact mask that protects me from silica powder dust when grinding the glass mosaic tesserae in the studio.

I would have traded every single toilet paper roll in the house for such a mask.

So my life changed with a shift in the creative efforts. Fear of imminent food shortages encouraged people to hoard basic staples. We bought many non-perishable foodstuffs. From working long hours in the studio I suddenly switched to baking and cooking for us and for our younger son’s family who welcomed a newly-born baby during this pandemic.

I was living in a state of suspended animation with no end in sight.

Worst of all, you disappeared! How could you leave me?

My search for the coveted mask never stopped during this surreal existence. I went back to reading about you as there were still many published articles on ACADEMIA.com that I never had a chance to read.

Soon it was clear that so much cooking and baking was not advantageous for me; when the scales in the bathroom groaned I joined David in his daily walks through the UBC forest.

And this is where we found each other again, Mariam.

I should have guessed; you were there within the pale yellow sun rays filtering

through the dense green foliage. You spoke to me through the soft whispering of the leaves as they swayed in the gentle breeze. My soul was replenished with hope and joy.

I doubled my efforts in searching for the vitally important mask. You helped. A California ophthalmologist traded a box of ten M3 N95 masks for some art. Hallelujah! Ten days later I was back in the saddle.

The studio is once again inhabited by a muse, a dear friend who watches the work in progress with eagerness and also... with some impatience, would you not agree, Mariam?

Be aware I am doing my utmost during this seemingly never-ending pandemic.

Our hope rests with the new available vaccines, though not easily accessible yet.

We must be patient Mariam, both of us; I know we will get there eventually, and together through this series of art works focusing on your elevated status in society, we will see renewed attention, hopefully leading to universal support for the empowerment of women.

Hang in there sister!

Your loyal friend,

Lilian



Mary Magdalene in Conversation with Lilian Broca: The Documentary

The visual medium of documentary film explores an artist who grapples with the complex story of Mary Magdalene. This biblical figure chosen by Lilian Broca as the protagonist of her new mosaic series becomes an important vantage point from which to understand the placement, or historical lack of placement, of women in traditional hierarchies. Through her exploration of Mary Magdalene, Broca is unable to come to terms with the manner in which an active and assertive woman had become associated with sexual immorality and how she must seek redemption before being legitimized as a nurturer in the established hierarchy.

Mary Magdalene, fraught with so many conflicting stories, emerges in Broca's mind as a perfect and quintessential feminist icon.

regime in Romania in the 1950s, this new documentary explores the obstacles which bar women from participating in religious institutions and how female figures such as Mary Magdalene have been used to legitimize this lack of participation. Broca notes, that although there were precedences for women taking a place in religious institutions, textual traditions increasingly underwent a process of revision to slowly erase the presence of women in an institutional setting.

Mary Magdalene, fraught with so many conflicting stories, emerges in Broca's mind as a perfect and quintessential feminist icon. By exploring the artistic and textual traditions of her figure in art history, Broca brings clarity to the notion that Mary Magdalene and her representations (which change throughout time) are the ultimate litmus test needed to measure social changes and the shifting social attitudes toward powerful women at important junctures in history.

As a follow up to Broca's previous documentary *Return to Byzantium: The Art and Life of Lilian Broca* which highlighted a large scale mosaic series on the biblical figure of Queen Esther and focused on Broca's early life under a communist



Filming in Lilian Broca's art studio.

For two thousand years the story of Mary Magdalene has been told and retold according to the benefit of those who stood to gain by her misfortunes and gain by promoting God's love and forgiveness.

In her mosaic series Broca also explores the current notions which view Mary Magdalene and her story as a source from which to reclaim and even resurrect the "divine feminine" in the Judeo-Christian tradition. And finally, how Mary Magdalene can be viewed as a hopeful figure for women who desire to see a more significant role played by women in the core institutions of politics, spirituality and economics.

This project, directed and coordinated by Adelina Suvagau, reveals Broca's mosaic work in process in her studio and the singularly chimerical dialogue between the artist and Mary. It also includes interviews with scholars who advocate for Mary Magdalene's place in the divine feminine, such as Margaret Starbird, Dr. Mary Ann Beavis and Dr. Ally Kateusz who believe Mary Magdalene resolves the question of the absence of the place of women in the institutional hierarchy.



The documentary captures Broca's artistic journey, which, unlike scholarly investigations, does not bind the artist by text and translation for her interpretation of historical figures; although Broca utilizes both for her interpretation of Mary Magdalene, as an artist, her responsibility does not lie in the words of the text. Like all visual works of art, her mosaics rely on art historians and the public to determine their value for the future. Broca uses her work to remind people that while the past shapes the future, the future can be different. With this in mind, the artist frames social attitudes for the future and in her vision, divinity does not possess only a masculine form, but a feminine one residing alongside it as well.

The director, Adelina Suvagau, shares Broca's concern with the female lived experience, ideally represented in a manner that gives respect and dignity to women's stories. Many social and cultural variables, in flux throughout history, have greatly affected the way women's stories have been received. These values have impacted if and how these stories have been recorded at all. The instability of the perceived value of women's stories depend on the prevailing cultural and social climate, as well as the motivation (currently referred to as the agenda) for telling the story.

With this concept in mind the director employs the imaginary studio conversation between the artist and Mary Magdalene whose response is a confirmation of the unthinkable obstacles she faced and overcame in a patriarchal society where her male brethren competed for Jesus' attention.

The *Mary Magdalene in Conversation with Lilian Broca* documentary under Suvagau's direction examines the relationship an artist develops with her subject. From this perspective Mary Magdalene is seen as both a muse inhabiting Broca's studio and as an intellectual companion. The film takes the form of a revelatory dialogue between the two women connecting over the millennia.

Angela Clarke, PhD
Museum Director and Curator,
Italian Cultural Centre (Il Museo) Gallery



44TH CEMA Awards for Journalistic Excellence, (Documentary) 2022.



Curriculum Vitae

Education

1969 – 1971	Pratt Institute, New York, USA, Master of Fine Arts (Honours)
1964 – 1968	Concordia University, Montreal, QC, Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours)

Teaching Experience

1994, 96, 97	Okanagan Summer School of Arts, Drawing Instructor
1985 – 1996	UBC, Vancouver, BC, occasional guest lecturer
1971 – 1984	Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Vancouver, BC, Painting and Drawing Instructor

Selected Personal Achievements

2022	Feature Film Documentary <i>Mary Magdalene in Conversation with Lilian Broca</i> , Adelina Suvagau director and producer
2021	Awarded 1st Prize for the Best Wall Mosaic at Roots, Canadian Annual Mosaic Exhibition, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
2016	<i>The Juror’s Choice Award</i> , Women’s Museum of California, San Diego, CA
2015	Appointed as a Jack and Doris Shadbolt Community Scholar, a subset of the Shadbolt Fellow in Graduate Liberal Studies at Simon Fraser University
2015	Appointed as advisor for Modern Mosaics in International publication <i>Journal of Mosaic Research</i> , Uludag University, Bursa, Turkey
2013	Documentary <i>Return to Byzantium: The Art and Life of Lilian Broca</i> was acquired by CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) television network and aired July 20, 2013
	Guest artist in prestigious Zeugma Museum in Gaziantep, International Mosaic Exhibition October 27, 2013
2012	Documentary <i>Return to Byzantium: The Art and Life of Lilian Broca</i> premiered in Canada in Ottawa, February 2012. Documentary selected for participation in five International Film Festivals: The Santa Rosa International Film Festival, Santa Rosa, CA. The Carmel Art and Film Festival Carmel, CA. The La Femme International Film Festival LA, CA. The San Pedro International Film Festival in LA, CA. The Vancouver Jewish Film Festival, Vancouver, BC
2011	Book launch: <i>The Hidden and The Revealed: The Queen Esther Mosaics of Lilian Broca</i> , Geffen Publishers, NY, Jerusalem, 2011, by Yosef Wosk, Sheila Campbell and Lilian Broca

Internationally acclaimed artist and author Judy Chicago writes preface to the book *The Hidden and The Revealed: The Queen Esther Mosaics of Lilian Broca*

2010	Featured in: <i>Tiffany Studios’ Techniques Inspiration for Today’s Artists</i> , by Edith Crouch, Schiffer Publishers, USA
	Featured in: <i>Mosaic Fine Art Portraits</i> by Pam Givens and Irit Levy, MFA Books, USA
2006	Received first place award for best mosaic, two-dimensional category, exhibited in <i>A More Perfect Union: Mosaic Aspirations</i> , Chicago, 2006
2004	Received first place award for best mosaic, two-dimensional category, exhibited in the <i>Opus-Veritas: Fragments of Truth</i> exhibition at the Italian-American Museum, San Francisco, 2004
2003	Received the Lorenzo il Magnifico (Medici) gold medal in the 2003 Florence Biennale International Exhibition, Florence, Italy
	Finalist in Imago National Art Competition, juried travelling exhibition in Nov, 2002 and Jan, 2003
	Invited to participate in the 2003 Florence Biennale
2000	Collaborated with distinguished Canadian author/poet Joy Kogawa on a publication based on the legend of Lilith, an ancient Hebrew mythological figure. The book <i>A Song of Lilith</i> was launched in Sep, 2000 by Raincoast Books Publishers.
	Collaborated on the concert/performance <i>A Song of Lilith</i> along with classical music composer Larysa Kuzmenko, writer Joy Kogawa, actor Moira Wylie, and five classical music performers. The premiere of the concert opened in Toronto at the St. Lawrence Centre for The Arts in Sep, 2000; it was performed in various cities across Canada.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2022	<i>Mary Magdalene Resurrected</i> , Il Museo, The Italian Cultural Centre, Vancouver, BC
	<i>Mary Magdalene Resurrected</i> , JD Carrier Art Gallery, Toronto, ON, (catalogue)
2017	<i>Heroine of a Thousand Pieces: The Judith Mosaics of Lilian Broca</i> , Museum of Biblical Art, Dallas, TX
2016	<i>Heroine of a Thousand Pieces: The Judith Mosaics of Lilian Broca</i> , JD Carrier Art Gallery, Toronto, ON, (catalogue)
2015	<i>Heroine of a Thousand Pieces: The Judith Mosaics of Lilian Broca</i> , Il Museo, Vancouver, BC, (catalogue)
2006	<i>Queen Esther Series: The Hidden and The Revealed</i> , JD Carrier Art Gallery, Toronto, ON, (catalogue)

2004	<i>Queen Esther Series: The Hidden and The Revealed</i> , Zack Gallery, Vancouver, BC
2001	<i>Lilian Broca: Mirrors and Reflections</i> , Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA, (catalogue)
1999	<i>Lilith</i> , VAV Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, PQ, (catalogue)

Selected Group Exhibitions

2022	<i>M comme mosaïque</i> , Villa Bagatelle, Québec, QC, Canada
2021	<i>From Canada</i> , La Maison de la Mosaïque, Paray-le-Monial, France, (catalogue)
	<i>Roots, Canadian Annual Mosaic Exhibition</i> , Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
2019	<i>Embodied, Mosaic Arts International Exhibition</i> , Vanderbilt Fine Art Gallery, Nashville, TE
2017	<i>Mosaic Fine Arts International 2017</i> , Janice Charach Gallery, West Bloomfield, MI
2016	<i>Mosaic Arts International 2016</i> , Women’s Museum of California, San Diego, CA
	<i>Characters in a Book</i> , Lexington Public Library Fine Arts Gallery, Lexington, KY
2015	<i>Mosaic Arts International 2015</i> , Painted Arts Bride Center, Philadelphia, PA
	<i>A Mosaic Passover Story</i> , Museum of Biblical Art, Dallas, TX
2013	<i>Gaziantep International Contemporary Mosaic Exhibition</i> , Zeugma Museum, Gaziantep, Turkey
2012	<i>International Contemporary Mosaic Art Convergence – Top Artists from Around the World Exhibit in Clauiano, Italy</i> , Clauiano, Italy
	<i>International Mosaic Exhibition AIMC</i> , B&M Theocharakis Foundation for the Fine Arts, Athens, Greece
2010	<i>MAI 2010</i> , Smith Museum of Stained Glass Windows, Chicago, IL, (catalogue)
2009	<i>Sum of All Parts 2</i> , Bathhouse Cultural Center, Dallas, TX
2008	<i>Sum of All Parts</i> , Hillsboro, OR (catalogue)
	<i>Mosaic Arts International 2008</i> , Miami, Florida, (catalogue)
2007	<i>Desert Andamento</i> , Mesa Contemporary Art Centre, Mesa, AZ, (catalogue)
2006	<i>Beneath the Surface</i> , High Risk Gallery, Chicago, IL, (catalogue)
2005	<i>A More Perfect Union: Mosaic Aspirations</i> , Eleven Eleven Sculpture Space, Washington, DC

Fifty Artists from the Carrier Portfolio, JD Carrier Art Gallery, Toronto, ON

2004	<i>Opus Veritas: Fragments of Truth</i> , American Italian Museum, San Francisco, CA, (catalogue)
2003	<i>2003 Florence Biennale International Exhibition</i> , Florence, Italy, (catalogue)
2002	<i>A New Heaven and A New Earth</i> , Painted City Gallery, Toronto, ON

Selected Publications

2022	<i>Il Marco Polo</i> , April 10, 2022, “Lilian Broca’s Powerful Narration of Mary Magdalene’s Life in the New Art Exhibition at Vancouver’s Italian Centre,” by Anna Foschi Ciampolini
	<i>The Georgia Straight</i> , April 20, 2022, “Vancouver Mosaic Artist Lilian Broca Delivers Dignity to Mary Magdalene,” by Charlie Smith
	<i>La Source</i> , “Marie-Madeleine reprend ses droits,” by Amelie Lebrun vol. 22, no. 18 – 12 au 26 avril 2022
2020	<i>Mosaïque Magazine</i> , “Breaking Down Barriers: Antiquity and Post Modernity in Union: The Mosaics of Lilian Broca,” by Angela Clarke, March 2020
	<i>Journal of Mosaic Research</i> , AIEMA, vol. 13, pp 295 – 313, Uludag University Press, Bursa, Turkey
	“From Virtue to Power: Explorations in Female Heroism, The Mosaics of Lilian Broca,” by Angela Clarke
2021	<i>The British Columbia Review</i> , “Letter to Mary Magdalene, by Lilian Broca,” Vancouver BC
	<i>CRITICALREAD</i> , December 23, 2019, “The Craft That Serves the Art; Seeing the details in Lilian Broca’s mosaics,” by Lynn Domina
2017	<i>Groutline</i> for SAMA, Winter, 2017 vol. 18 no. 1, p22, “Characters in a Book,” by Terri Pulley
2016	<i>Grout: Modern Mosaic Excellence</i> , Spring, 2016, Devon, UK. “Art Remains Art No Matter What the Medium,” by Manya McMahon
	<i>Groutline</i> for SAMA, Winter, 2016. “Heroine of a Thousand Pieces: The Judith Mosaics of Lilian Broca,” by Shawn Newton
	Surface Design Association BC + Yukon, June 3, 2016, “A Heroine of a Thousand Pieces on International Women’s Day,” by Shamina Senaratne
2015	<i>Journal of Mosaic Research</i> , AIEMA, vol. 7, pp77 – 87, Uludag University Press, Bursa, Turkey
	<i>VanCity Buzz</i> , Vancouver, BC, Nov 16, 2015, “Vancouver Artist Lilian Broca Presents Heroine of a Thousand Pieces: The Judith Mosaics,” by Vanessa Tam

Jewish Independent, Oct 30, 2015, “Mosaics Depict Judith Story,” by C. Ramsay

BC Woman Magazine, Nov, 2015, “Lilian Broca Mosaic Art,” editor

The Globe and Mail, March 6, 2015, pp5 – 6, Toronto, “Ripped-off Mosaic Specialist Fights Back with Scarves,” by Marsha Lederman

Italian Adventures, Nov 13, 2015, “The Heroine of a Thousand Pieces: the Judith Mosaics”

2014 *University Hill Connections*, Vancouver, BC, Spring Issue, Mar, 2014, “Lilian Broca — Mosaic Art and Women’s Issues,” by Cathie Gourley

Journal of Mosaic Research at ULUDAG University vol. 7, 2014, “Queen Esther Mosaics: The Hidden and the Revealed,” by Lilian Broca

2013 *Mosaic Art Now*, USA, Nov 22, 2013, “Fashion Victim: Artist Lilian Broca’s Mosaic Imagery Stolen,” by Nancie Mills-Pipgras

beinkandescent; the ezine for entrepreneurs, USA, Oct, 2013, “What Queen Esther Knew: Business Strategies From a Biblical Sage,” by Hope Katz Gibbs

The Canadian Jewish News, Sep 5, 2013, “Film Explores Artist’s Return to Romania,” by Rita Poliakov

2012 *ESRA Magazine*, issue 163, Feb, 2012, Israel, “Hebraic Mosaic,” by Pnina Moed Kass

Hadassah Magazine, Feb/Mar, 2012, vol. 93 no. 4 New York, NY, “Lasting Beauty and Inspiration,” by Zelda Shluker

Mosaico na Rede Magazine, Curitiba, Brazil, “The History in Tesserae,” by Magaly Floriano

Ottawa Jewish Bulletin, Mar 5, 2012, Ottawa, ON, “Art Book Tells the Purim Story in Mosaics and Commentary,” by Diane Crouse

Jewish Renaissance Magazine, Jan, 2012, London, UK, “Esther Reimagined”

Mosaic Art Now, Feb 1, 2012, “Celebrating (S)heroism in Mosaic, Prose and Poetry — A Review of *The Hidden and The Revealed: The Queen Esther Mosaics of Lilian Broca*,” by Nancie Mills Pipgras

2011 *Jewish Quarterly*, Spring 2011, Jewish Literary Trust, London, England — photos for article “Esther’s Version,” by Anita Diamant

Mosaic Art Now, 2011, Edition, Wakefield, MA, “Lilian Broca — Canada”

The Georgia Straight, Dec 1, 2011, “Broca’s Mosaics Hit Printed Page,” by Jessica Werb

The Alcuin Blog, Nov 21, 2011, “The Hidden and The Revealed”

BC BookWorld, winter 2011 – 2012, “Going for Broca, First Lilith then Esther,” vol. 25, no. 4

Jewish Independent, Nov 18, 2011, “Contemporary Ancient Art,” by Cynthia Ramsay

The Canadian Jewish News, Dec 8, 2011, “Book is a Multi-tiered Portable Museum,” by Mordechai Ben-Dat

National Post, Nov 12, 2011, Books and Writers, “A Tale in Tiles”

2010 *The Globe and Mail*, Dec 14, “Resurrecting the Art of the Mosaic,” by Tom Hawthorne

2008 *Makor Rishon Newspaper*, Mar 23, 2008, Israel, by Micah Goodman

2007 *ORAH Magazine*, Feb 2007, Montreal, QC, “The Mosaics of Lilian Broca,” by Teri Cota

2004 *The Vancouver Sun*, Dec 4, 2004, “Life’s Rich Mosaic Can Be a Pale Imitation for eBay Bargain-Hunters,” by Paula Brook

The Vancouver Sun, April 26, 2004, pC3, “Lilian Broca Finds New Subject, New Medium,” by Paula Brook

Groutline, Spring 2004, Tempe, AZ, “A Slightly Bumpy Road to a Rewarding Biennale”

The Bulletin, April 30, 2004, Vancouver, BC, “Mosaics Honour Heroine,” by Cynthia Ramsay

The Westender, April 22, 2004, Vancouver, BC, “A Glimmer of Gold in Queenly Mosaics,” by Mary Frances Hill



Lilian Broca studio with *Mary Magdalene Resurrected* series in progress.



Il Museo at the Italian Cultural Centre, Vancouver, BC, March 31 – August 15, 2022.



Joseph D. Carrier Art Gallery, Toronto, ON, September 15 – October 20, 2022.



March 31 – August 15, 2022
Il Museo at The Italian Cultural Centre
3075 Slocan Street,
Vancouver BC V5M 3E4



September 15 – October 20, 2022
JD Carrier Art Gallery Columbus Centre
901 Lawrence Avenue West,
Toronto ON M6A 1C3

