

## The Lady Who Paints Angels



by Frank Joseph

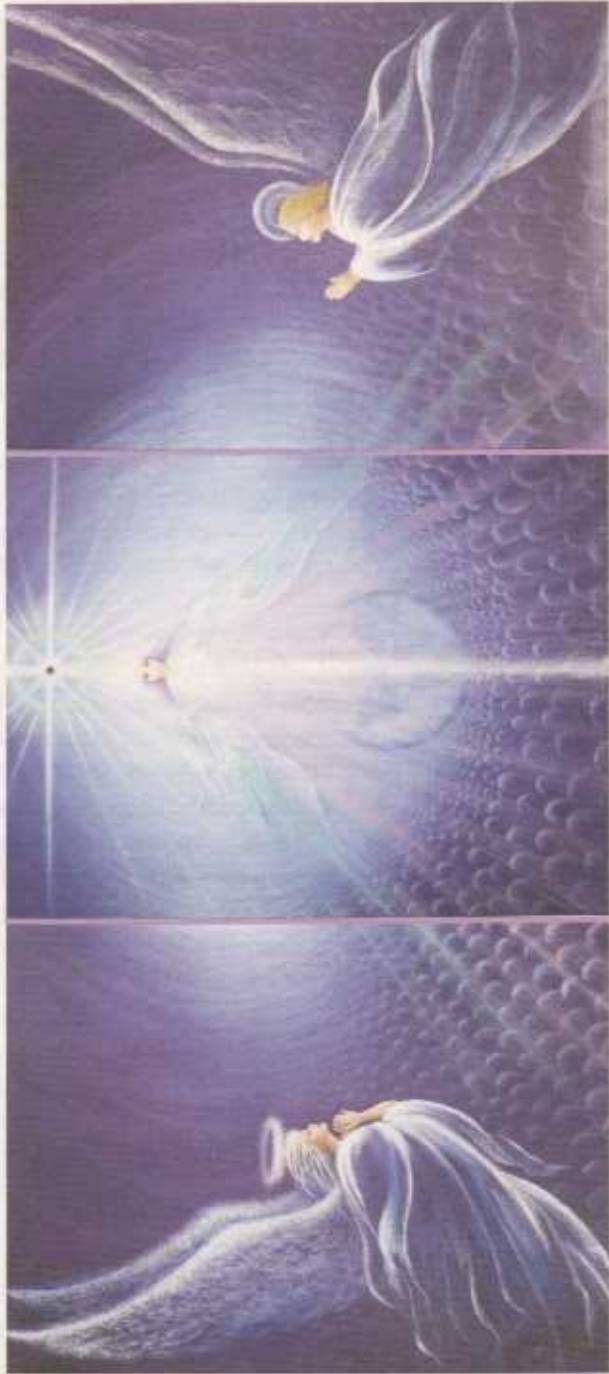
**W**e pulled into the parking area of a sedate apartment complex away from the busy downtown section of Hopkins, a Minneapolis suburb. At the wheel of our car was FATE magazine publisher Phyllis Galde.

"We can't find anywhere to park," she explained into her cell phone. "All the spaces are reserved. Which one is your apartment, anyway?"

A tinny voice advised over the phone, "Just stay where you are. I'll meet you outside in a few moments."

As promised, we did not have long to wait. The phenomenon that floated down the sidewalk toward our car, however, took us both by surprise. We beheld a smiling lady in a long, white gown with feathery wings, a wand in her right hand and sparkling halo floating in her hair. We had come, after all, to interview the "angel lady," but she had already exceeded our expectations.

This was Milli Oden, at 83 years of age, remarkably fit and intellectually sharp, with a friendly, light-hearted manner. She led us past a pleasantly astounded neighbor to



Mary Mother of God triptych.



Star, the "Angel of Inspiration," the divine patron of inner light, vision, and high consciousness.

When Milli completed the center panel, Patti requested the inclusion of two additional angels. But Milli was unable to imagine how such an alteration might be achieved.

With this question on her mind, Milli

stood the painting on her dresser one January evening and went to bed. Early the next morning, she awoke to see two angels, one on either side of Mary.

"I can't paint you there," Milli protested. "There's no room left on the canvas!"



her cozy apartment, outwardly no different from any of the others in the sprawling complex.

While the entrance and small kitchen were average enough, we experienced a very definite shift in atmosphere as we stepped into the living room, as though we had walked through an unseen barrier separating the ordinary world from the realm of visions.

### Mary, Mother of God

The singular milieu was generated by several dozen original paintings, some hung with care but most stacked unceremoniously against the walls. All were the result of Milli Oden's talented hand, but we were unprepared for art so casually displayed in her unique apartment. Each piece was, according to the artist, the portrait of an actual angel. Looking at the ineffably sweet faces shining from her paintings with expressions of joyful compassion, there seemed little room for doubt. "I used to begin by using a real-life person as reference. But after only a few brush strokes, the portrait would always change from the recognizable sitter to that of an angel."

Her collection was dominated by its largest painting, the apparent masterpiece. It was a triptych, with a large center section flanked on either side by panels of lesser dimensions. Altogether, the rectangular panorama spanned some ten feet and stood a little over four feet high. It represents Mary the Mother of God materializing out of a bright light source above the world,

suspended in space before a vast audience of anonymous human spectators, their backs to the observer. Winged angels on each of the two panels watch the Earth-hovering angel with rapture.

The painting's execution is reminiscent of Salvador Dali's indefinable fusion of light and texture in works like "The Last Supper" or "The Discovery of America." But the painting's natural focal point, as in all of Milli Oden's work, is the face of the central angel—beautifully compassionate and somehow more than human. The origins of this ethereal representation were themselves steeped in mystical experience.

### Visionary Composition

As Milli tells it, "The scene appeared at the healing service of the SSF [Spiritual Sciences Foundation] Retreat at Northfield, Minnesota, in August 1989. Ethel Lombardi was the speaker. This vision was seen three stories high and encompassed the entire music center. Mary presented such a radiance of awe and wonder that I was inspired to sketch it quickly on a program sheet." Later, she showed the sketch to a friend, Patti Chapman, who asked Milli to develop a full-fledged painting from it. "Mary the Mother of God came into our presence when I began to paint the face," Milli remembered. "She radiated such overflowing joy and happiness that I simply laughed and laughed, I was so delighted."

Milli "let the paintbrush dance to the tune of her beauty and glory." The result was "Mary's Light, Love and Eternal Joy,"



Angela, the Angel of Creative Imagination.

As she turned away from the vision and lay back down to sleep, Milli heard a sweet voice calling to her. "We could be on two separate canvases," the angel suggested.

*Of course!* And so Milli painted them, just as they appeared to her in person, expanding the work to three panels.

Spectacular as this undoubtedly is, her most consummate production is the piece that appears on the cover of this month's FATE, a representation of the angel called "Light." This luminous work seems to suggest that angels are less supernatural beings than expressions of Nature itself.

Milli's artistic roots go back many years to when she was a little girl growing up in rural Minnesota. Her mother began nur-

turing her natural-born talent from the early age of four, providing Milli with art supplies and encouragement. While still in grammar school, Milli's work won prizes at county and state fairs. In high school she impressed classmates with her pencil sketches of movie stars. In 1949, her portrait of Minnesota governor Luther Youngdahl won her recognition in the local press.

Milli attended art school in her early 20s, but it wasn't long before her instructor took her aside and confessed, "You already know everything I have to teach."

### Cosmic Creations

Milli refers to herself as "a visionary artist" inspired by direct communication with angelic beings. Beginning in the 1970s, she has produced a series of large "cosmic-symbolic creations" that now includes more than 20 paintings.

In the course of this work, Milli received a message channeled from the angels: "We're so happy you're painting our portraits!"

Among the most unusual and striking is the portrait of an Asian man with closed eyes and the suggestion of a smile. In his hands, he holds a single lit candle. His long gown is rendered in bright red tones, and Milli used real gold leaf in decorating the hem with images of interconnected Chinese dragons that express "the celebra-



tion of life." Milli calls this work "Ureyel, the Keeper of All Inspiration." He represents wisdom, she says: "Our 'light' (aura) becomes bright when we meditate or pray, or are inspired...creating...joyful."

"Jesu, the Angel of Christhood," features the ruby of infinite intelligence; the rose, signifying love, beauty of Christ's self; the wafer, symbol of communion with life; and the chalice, the container of spiritual communion.

Mary, the Angel of Motherhood, is also accompanied by mystical symbols in her portrait. Seven stars associated with the central figure represent the seven stages of perfection, high aspirations. Silver stands for material riches, and gold for spiritual riches. Mary's heart-shaped wings means she pours forth love to all the Earth.

Michael is the Keeper of the Heart, who forms a triangle with his two thumbs, thereby suggesting the trinity within us.

The three predominant colors in "Joy, the Angel of Love"—pink, gold, and yellow—symbolize the Heart Chakra, celestial wisdom, and joy, respectively.

The "Angel of Purity" has an emerald, for the color green's traditional association with growth. Her bowl of water embodies the purity here personified. Jophiel is another "Angel of Love and Joy," radiating compassion on the world.

The "Angel of Psychic Development" is Azoreal, who signifies the growth of para-



Ureyel, the Keeper of All Inspiration.

normal powers.

The flowering of new ideas and their transformation into works of beauty are overseen by Angela, the Angel of Creative Imagination. She is closely affiliated with the Angel of Inspiration, Star, the divine patron of inner light, vision, and high consciousness.

Light, a masculine figure, is paired with a feminine angel called "Wisdom." Light is associated with high consciousness, cosmic knowing, and Wisdom with intuition, nurturing, and instinct.

Although angels are generally regarded as serious, Milli has painted a portrait of Ann, the Angel of Flowers and Fun, Wit and Nonsense. Ann makes her presence



Gabriel, Keeper of the Earth, has his famous horn, the Trumpet of Life, upon which he blows the sound of harmony.



Jesu, the Angel of Christhood.



The Angel of Purity. The color green is associated with growth.

cuted the accurate likeness of each one from real-life experience. But why should they have chosen Milli as their portrait artist?

"The angels were painted to remind us of the beauty, joy, and perfection that await us in our highest consciousness," Milli says, "which is attunement with God." The angelic is not confined to heaven's otherworldly spheres, however, but shines forth from ordinary humans in her art.

"If we only knew how beautiful we were," she concludes, "we'd celebrate ourselves all the time."

Images of Milli Oden's paintings, including some not pictured here, may be seen on FATE's website, [www.fatemag.com](http://www.fatemag.com).

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Zadkiel, the Angel of Light.

known by "tickling your nose and tickling your toes," says Milli.

Gloria, Angel of Happiness, is a being of delight and resurrection, who helps those who wish to change their lives. Milli

notes that forgiveness, especially self-forgiveness, is an important part of resurrection.

Milli Oden has met with and spoken to each of these immortals, and has ex-

## Do We Really Know What An Angel Looks Like?



by Rosemary Ellen Guiley

**H**ow do we know what angels look like? In encounters with angels, some people see human-like forms with wings, while others see pillars and balls of light. Do angels shape-shift? Can they take on any form?

Our ideas of the appearances of angels have been expressed in art for about 1,800 years. Angels in art have undergone many

changes during those years. Modern angel images bear little resemblance to the angels drawn at the start of Christianity.

That angels can be depicted at all was the subject of a heated controversy in early Christianity and was a major factor in the church splitting in two. The church fathers inherited a flourishing angel cult based on Jewish and pagan beliefs. Jews prohibited religious images in general, but



pagans—the great masses to be converted—expected them, in keeping with their own traditions of portraying gods and goddesses.

The church fathers were deeply divided on the desirability of any images of the sacred. Opponents of sacred images argued that incorporeal spirits could never be accurately portrayed in art. Any renderings would be misleading, and might encourage idol worship as well. Supporters of sacred images countered that people need and respond to images as a way of connecting to their faith.

In 325 the Church Council of Nicaea made belief in angels a part of dogma, which permitted artists to freely draw and sculpt them. But within the church, an intense controversy raged for more than 600 years. The issue was especially volatile in the Eastern Orthodox, or Byzantine, Church, where opponents of images believed them to be idols that fostered superstition and hindered the conversion of the Jews and Muslims. In Constantinople, Emperor Leo III launched persecutions against icon worship. People were arrested and icons were destroyed.

In Rome, an enraged Pope Gregory III declared that anyone who broke or defiled holy images would be excommunicated. Leo III retaliated by sending a naval fleet to Rome to punish the pope, but it was wrecked by storms.

Leo and his successors continued their campaign against sacred images in the East. In 842, icon worship was at last restored and the opponents were excommunicated.



*Love and Life* by George Watts, 1884.

The rift between East and West was too large, however, and 20 years later the two churches split.

Today, images of the divine, including angels, are now incorporated into both Eastern and Western churches. Artistic styles diverged considerably. Eastern icons have a distinctive style which attempts to portray the tension between reality and abstraction, physicality and incorporeality. The Western angel has become a model of human perfection with wings. Both represent different aspects of the angel. The East-

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This is a frank, well documented book by a person with an impeccable background, who is searching for answers that make sense.—*W. Ritchie Benedict*

### **Mindsweep Advanced Technology, The Alien Agenda and The Afterlife**

by S. Rogers

*Write to Print (Merrimack, N.H.), 2003, paperback, 244 pp., \$16*

S. Rogers' *Mindsweep* is a treatise to impress upon readers with little or no knowledge about shadow governments and conspiracies that a globally elite group intentionally keeps vital knowledge from the public to retain power and control. Rogers believes that by understanding our own innate abilities and becoming aware of the spirit world, other dimensions and alien visitations, we can break free from our controllers. She wants to help readers wake up to the true nature of reality: "I tell you these things so you can begin questioning and searching too."

Rogers attributes much of her understanding to growing up on a small Caribbean island. She describes herself as "a white child fostered by African shamanism, guidance provided from Elders and 'bush' medicine." Much of her knowledge about extraterrestrial visitations, lucid dreams, out-of-body experiences and the

afterlife comes from personal experience. She has also devoted more than 20 years of research into these subjects, as well as alien technologies and earth changes. The book contains a valuable list of her sources.

The most interesting portions of the book are narratives of her own experiences, particularly one in which she sees three levels of the afterlife. The first level is "a place of learning, where those souls that truly desired to learn more and take on more self responsibility and power, came and were taught at there [sic] own pace and in line with their own energetic vibration." In the second level, "Every person or soul who resided here was distrustful, unclear as to his or her present circumstances and, in general, nervous...none of them could accept that they were no longer living, that they were dead." In the third level, "No one moved, spoke, or was even aware that the others were there. The only light that could be seen anywhere...was a very small, bleak light, which came from within each and every person. It was so dismal and hopeless... They believed, all of them, that there was nothing more to life."

In a lucid-dream experience, Rogers practiced teleportation, telekinesis and levitation. What came afterward is characteristic of an alien abduction: "The last thing I remember before everything went black was of entering the hovering silver ship through an opening that appeared of

ern angel is transcendent and mysterious; the Western angel is the idealized human.

### Do Angels Have Wings?

The image of angels as human-like beings with wings did not become fixed in art until the fourth century. The evolution of the angel wing has a long history.

Wings denote spirituality and divine purpose, speed, and the ability to mediate between physical and nonphysical realms. Winged spiritual beings are an ancient idea, but one that developed in the West more so than in the East. Eastern deities, saints, and spiritual beings move about without the benefit of wings, which are not necessary to navigate in the world of illusion. In art, they are shown descending from the sky or hovering in the air, held up by the weightlessness of their own divinity.

The Bible offers little in the way of descriptions of angels. Judaism prohibits sacred images, so no renderings were inherited by the Christians. In Genesis, Abraham is visited by angels who appear as humans. In Tobit, Raphael, in the guise of a man, is a traveling companion for Tobias. The strange creatures seen by Ezekiel in a vision have wings and animal heads. There are also human figures clothed in brilliant light. The New Testament doesn't do much better. Gabriel, in announcing the pending birth of Jesus to Mary, merely "comes in" and "departs." The angel who announces the birth of Jesus to the shepherds appears "suddenly" in the night.

Accordingly, early angel art portrays angels as ennobled, ethereal male humans without wings. The earliest known image dates to the early third century, an image in the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome. It portrays the Annunciation, with Gabriel looking like a tunic-clad man standing on the earth.

The man-like angel evolved into the winged, hovering angel during the fourth century. By the end of the fourth century, Christian artists had turned to the winged deities of pagan religions for inspiration. They borrowed heavily from the Greek idea that divinity has shape, and it is human-like, and from the Roman image of Victory. However, they refrained from frank nakedness and sexuality. Their angels were adult males but without pronounced sexual characteristics—androgynous in appearance—and were fully clothed, with a standard tunic and mantle. Their wings often were not pronounced in size or detail. By the end of the fifth century, the winged, hovering angel had become standard.

The androgynous, hovering winged angel dominated angel art through the sixth century, and made appearances in European art through the 12th century. By the 14th century, theological interest in angels peaked and began to decline. The Inquisition focused attention on fallen angels—the demons who tempted people into sin and witchcraft. Demons were given ugly, bat-like wings by artists. The Reformation of the 16th century further diminished the importance of the heavenly angel.

its own accord."

Rogers learned about the importance of dreams. Some, she says, carry important messages; others are tests in which we make choices and learn from the results.

Not all of her experiences were enlightening and positive. She also went through the traumas of Reptilian rape and the love bite (an uncontrollable, irrational addiction to another person that is orchestrated by unknown forces).

I had no problem accepting the validity of her experiences. Having gone through alien abductions, mind control, and a spiritual awakening myself, I could identify with most of them.

The major problem with the book is that it appears not to have been edited. It contains unnecessary repetition and is filled with errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The author acknowledged this problem during a phone conversation with me and stated that she plans to correct it in the next printing.

The way Rogers alternates between sophisticated and casual language and style is entertaining. One moment she might use hyperboles, metaphors, similes, personifications, or puns, then without warning switch to street language spiced with four-letter words. Her propensity to do this reflects her personality of strong will and fortitude. It screams, "I do this because I can!" Her writing also illustrates her sense of humor and demand for truth and freedom.

The book is best suited for those who

need an introduction to government coverups, encounters with nonhuman entities, lucid dreams, and "love bite" scenarios, but it could also help people who desire a better understanding or confirmation of their own experiences.

Rogers has successfully completed her goal in bringing forth issues the general public should be aware of: "I think it important to disclose that darkness does have a face. There's something tangible in the darkness and once you are aware, that awareness is enough to give you the strength to know it so as to avoid it, and even conquer it!" Rogers has made the disclosure; now it is up to the reader to pay attention.—Leah A. Haley

### The World's Most Haunted Places

by Jeff Belanger

New Page Books (Franklin Lakes, N.J.), 2004, softcover; 255 pgs., \$15.99

What do you suppose happens when you die? Almost all religions claim that when you leave this earth, you eventually pass on to a paradise-like world of heavenly riches. But what about those people whose spirits never find the corridor between this world and the next? What happens to those people who never "pass" when passing on? Jeff Belanger tries to find some of them in *The World's Most Haunted Places*.

One would think, when one ponders stereotypical Hollywood-type hauntings, that old English castles, New England