

COPTIC  
MUSEUM  
OF CANADA



MUSÉE  
COPTE  
DU CANADA

## FATHER MARCOS SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE STUDY OF COPTIC CULTURAL HERITAGE AT A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY 2022-23

### AWARD PRESENTATION / Father Pishoy Atalla

Last year, on December 11, on the one year memorial of Father Marcos Marcos' passing, St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church announced two annual initiatives to remember and honour Fr. Marcos' cultural legacy and pioneering efforts to establish the first Coptic Museum outside of Egypt (1996) and to promote Coptic Studies at the University of Toronto.

#### FIRST INITIATIVE

An annual donation to the University of Toronto's "Father Marcos Memorial Endowment in Coptic Studies."

#### SECOND INITIATIVE

The annual "Father Marcos Scholarship for the Study of Coptic Cultural Heritage at a Canadian University."

### Awarding the First Annual Scholarship

On Sunday, August 20, 2022, at the St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral, in Markham, the first Father Marcos Scholarship Award for the 2022-23 academic year was presented. Symbolically, the date was selected because it was Fr. Marcos' birthday.

Fr. Pishoy Atalla gave a brief background of the selection process: *The mission of this award is to support Coptic Canadian graduate students who are pursuing degrees at a Canadian University and whose research enhances knowledge about Coptic Cultural Heritage, and also to facilitate exceptional intellectual development of Coptic Canadians who are passionate about their cultural heritage.*

### The Eligibility Requirements for Candidates

Identify as a Coptic Canadian citizen or a permanent resident;

- Be enrolled as a graduate student in a Canadian University in fields such as Coptic Studies, anthropology, art history, classics, fine arts, history, museum studies, patristics, musicology, the study of religions, theology; and



Father Pishoy Atalla

- Be writing an MA thesis or PhD dissertation whose research focuses on the Coptic cultural heritage.

### The Application and Review Process

Scholarship announcements were emailed to churches, university professors who teach Coptic Studies in Canadian Universities and not-for-profit Canadian organizations whose mission is to enhance Coptic heritage and Coptic Studies. We also reached out to graduate students we knew were doing research in a Coptic studies field.

Applicants were required to submit the following information:

- Their thesis/dissertation topic;
- A "Personal Statement" (500 words minimum) explaining their suitability for the scholarship, why they selected their thesis/research topic, and how they will use their knowledge and expertise to promote Coptic cultural heritage;
- Two recommendation letters: one from their research advisor and another from a mentor or teacher (cannot be from a family member); and
- Their university undergraduate and graduate transcripts.

The application review process was rigorous and was overseen by the Awards Committee:

- The Awards Committee included four scholars in various fields of Coptic Studies and Fr. Pishoi Atalla as the chairperson.
- The Committee met on May 12, 2022, to adjudicate applications. After a rigorous review of candidates' documents, the unanimous decision was to award the 2022-23 scholarship to CAROL MARKOS, who is pursuing a master's degree at Carleton University, Ottawa, in the Department of Migration Studies. Her thesis focuses on how Coptic youth in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) negotiate their identities.
- The Committee recognized that her study on first- and second-generation Canadian Copts' identities will fill a big gap in Coptic migration and identity studies. The Committee was impressed with the articulation of Markos' argument and, particularly, how she stated that her position is not to advance "any particular understanding of Coptic identity over another," but rather to produce well-grounded ethnographic research that will offer an understanding of the complexity of modern Coptic life as identities are negotiated.

## CAROL MARKOS' ACCEPTANCE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

I would like to begin by thanking the Coptic museum, the Awards Committee, the community of St. Mark's, and the family of Fr. Marcos Marcos. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Anba Mina, Bishop of Mississauga, Vancouver, and Western Canada, for being so gracious with his support when I first spoke to him about my research.



I really believe in the ways that our communities can benefit from the work being done in the social sciences and humanities, and I have been very lucky to enter the field of Coptic Studies at a time when I have many role models to look up to. I have learned from them that if we are going to do this, it must be out of a sincere love for our people. And so, the existence of this award is extremely heartening and, of course for me, is a great source of encouragement at this very early stage of my career.

Now, I have been asked to share a small summary of my work. I am currently working on my master's thesis on Coptic youth in Mississauga, Ontario. The working title is "Children of the Day: Ambivalence and Belonging among Coptic Youth in the GTA."

Specifically, I look at how young people are understanding their identities as Copts, and then how they are coming together into one of the largest Coptic communities outside of Egypt.

This research is about the thing that many of us know so well but cannot name—that constant feeling of not quite fitting in anywhere, of feeling a constant identity crisis.

Over the past few weeks I have been in interviews with youth, asking them questions the following types of questions: "What is your relationship to your parish?" "How do you feel about Egypt?" "Does Coptic iconography mean anything to you?" "Do you think about your race a lot?" "What language do you pray in?"

And then I listen, without judgement, as participants untangle this, often in contradictory ways, but always describing their very rich experience of what it's like and what it means to be a Coptic young person in the diaspora.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork, I have spoken to all kinds of people. Those who fill half a page of my notebook when I ask them which services they are involved with, and those who can't quite remember when they attended their last liturgy. Those who have vivid memories of Egypt, and those for whom Egypt is just a place their parents come from, those who are conservatives or liberals, and those who have just finished their PhD or even just graduated high school.

I am doing this work because I honestly believe that using the social sciences to better understand ourselves can be a valuable part of how we continue to move forward. Having a comprehensive understanding of what youth in our communities are going through is critical to how we manage services and funds, and also how we shape our overall visions for the future. At a time when there is a whole generation of diaspora-raised youth who are beginning to start families of their own, questions about identity and belonging are crucial. I hope that my research can do a small part in furthering the answers to those questions.

Once again, thank you so much to the Awards Committee, and most of all, I would like to say thank you to Father Marcos Marcos, whose life's work is the reason I can do what I do, and whose legacy I hope to do proud.



(left to right): Fr. Ammonius, Greg Marcos, Fr. Pishoy, Mrs. Suzane Marcos, Carol Markos, Dr. Helene Moussa, Fr. Misael, Fr. Kyrillos



# SPRING-SUMMER 2022

## HIGHLIGHTS OF IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES

### ONSITE TOURS AND RESEARCHERS

The reopening of the museum on March 21, 2022 was celebrated with the mounting of the special exhibition entitled Neo-Coptic Iconography – Expressions of Spirituality 1967-2022. The exhibit featured the following iconographers and their works:

**Isaac Fanous** who is known as the father of Neo-Coptic iconography and the renaissance of the expression of “light.”

**Bedour Latif & Youssef Nassif** who are pioneers of Neo-Coptic iconography and the harmony of expression in their joint brush.

**Seham Guirguis** who applies precision in his search to express beauty.

**Victor Fakhoury** who draws on biblical messages in his iconographic imagery as a response to contemporary issues.

**Kirollos Kilada & George Makary** whose works search for a post “Fanous-ian” expression.

### MONTREAL GROUP VISITORS

It has been exciting to once again welcome visitors to the gallery!



Young adult group from St. Peter & St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church, Montreal (June 12, 2022)

Researchers have also been making use of the Cecile Barsoum Reference Library's unique collection and, in particular, the archival information on the life and works of Marguerite Nakhla.

### EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

On June 30, 2022, we offered a virtual lecture on the Museum to the Oshawa Seniors Community Centres, titled “Building Bridges: An Immigrant Community’s Museum.”

On May 17, 2022, twenty-four members of the CREW-Group from St. Maurice and St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church in Markham engaged with the permanent collection and the special exhibition in the Museum’s gallery. This was followed by three in-person events at their Church in July:

**1) Victor Fakhoury Narrative Icons: Writing and Reading Icons.** An interactive workshop on Fakhoury’s series of icons. July 5, 2022.

**2) The Path of the Holy Family in Egypt.** A showing of a video prepared by the Nuns at St. George Convent in Cairo, Egypt, with a discussion. July 19, 2022.

**3) The Journey of the Holy Family in Egypt Visualized by Artists.** A discussion of current research on over 50 genres of art from the twelfth to the twenty-first centuries. July 26, 2022.

Each activity was led by Dr. Helene Moussa, the Museum’s Volunteer Curator.

### VIRTUAL ART WORKSHOPS

This spring and summer the Museum offered three virtual art workshops facilitated by Canadian-Egyptian artists Simon Geres and Lamis Haggag. The Khayamiya workshop was sponsored in partnership with the Neilson Park Creative Center (Etobicoke). Participants joined from across Canada, the US and Egypt. The Museum will be offering one more virtual workshop this year.

#### 2022 Online Zoom Workshops

### PORTRAIT ON PYPYRUS

INSTRUCTOR: SIMONE GERES



THREE-SESSION WORKSHOP  
SATURDAY, MARCH 12  
SATURDAY, MARCH 19  
SATURDAY, MARCH 26

MARCH 12, 2-3pm **CREATE YOUR OWN-BASED PYPYRUS**  
MARCH 19, 2-3pm **FROM THE PORTRAIT OF AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN QUEEN**  
MARCH 26, 2-3pm **FROM FROM QUEEN**

LEVEL: 12 years old and above

**MATERIALS:** Upon registration, participants will be provided with a list of supplies that are being provided from local stores.

**REGISTRATION:** Closes on March 8. **NO REGISTRATION FEE!**  
To register, send an email to [education@copticmuseum.org](mailto:education@copticmuseum.org) with your name.

Simone Geres has had a life long love for the arts. She has a B.A. in Fine Arts from Ryerson University (Toronto), Ontario, Canada. She is the founder of Simons Academy and serves as director of the program. She has been teaching for 18 years and has over 1000 students in over 100 countries and 255 group classes.



#### 2022 Online Zoom Workshop

### KHAYAMIYA-MAKING

INSTRUCTOR: LAMIS HAGGAG



SATURDAY, MAY 7  
SATURDAY, MAY 14  
SATURDAY, MAY 21  
1-4 PM  
Limited spaces

Join Khayamiya-maker Mostafa El-Lahy and Lamis Haggag to learn about this traditional Egyptian handcraft that was first associated with tomb making and later transferred to more ornamental and interior decor wall panels. This is a hands-on workshop where participants will learn about the history and techniques associated with the craft.

Lamis Haggag is an Egyptian multimedia artist and art instructor, living and working in Toronto since 2016.

**Register now! First come, first served. NO REGISTRATION FEE!**

**REGISTRATION:** To register, send an email to [education@copticmuseum.org](mailto:education@copticmuseum.org) with your name and email.

**LEVEL:** 18 years old and above

**MATERIALS:** Participants will be provided with list of supplies that are easily available in local stores.



#### 2022 Online Zoom Workshops

### TULIP PYROGRAPHY & WOODBURNING

INSTRUCTOR: SIMONE GERES



TWO-SESSION WORKSHOP  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 20  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 27

AUGUST 20, 11am-1pm **AN INTRODUCTION TO PYROGRAPHY AND TOOLING IDEAS**  
During the lesson, participants will learn about the history of the craft and how to use the tools.

AUGUST 27, 11am-1pm **Continue working on the tulip - learn how to shade with the tips**

LEVEL: 18 years old and above

**MATERIALS:** Attached supplies list from Michaels to be purchased by participants.

**REGISTRATION:** Closes on August 18. **NO REGISTRATION FEE!**  
Send email to [education@copticmuseum.org](mailto:education@copticmuseum.org). Subject: art workshop.

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