



School: Bath School of Design

Researcher: Tim Vyner

Project Title: Mount Athos

UOA: 32 - Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory

300-Word Statement

In 2013 Vyner received the first Doug Patterson RCA Drawing Bursary to document life in 20 Eastern Orthodox Monasteries on Mount Athos through observational drawing. Autonomous since the 6th century and forbidden to women and children, Mount Athos is a closed, entirely male environment. Using methods of reportage illustration to navigate the restrictions of monastic privacy Vyner asked 3 questions:

1. What value does reportage illustration add to the more traditional 'artist gaze' studies of Mount Athos? 2. What is the potential of drawing as a means of getting closer to this private community? 3. How does the use of digital drawing methods render Mount Athos more accessible to external audiences?

During 3 residential visits to all 20 monasteries Vyner used digital and traditional materials to document the dynamics of daily life. Experimenting with different methods of drawing Vyner discovered it was the digital drawings and animations that engaged the Fathers, witnessing Vyner's narrative in construction - the process linking the analogue past and digital present.

The project resulted in an exhibition of over 80 artworks at The Mount Athos Centre in Thessaloniki in 2014, with an accompanying publication, *An Experience of Life on Mount Athos* including an essay by Art Historian Dr Syrago Tsiara. The exhibition then toured to Belgrade National library in Serbia for the International Conference of Byzantine Studies 2016, and the Tzirtzili Mosque in Northern Greece, 2018.

Vyners Mount Athos works connect this secretive place through the process of 'firsthand' drawing, with those permanently excluded, who only experience it 'second hand'. His reportage illustration methods shed light on the artists point of view, digitally revealing the subjective act of observing, reinforcing a sense of time and place through a portfolio of work that joins the long history of artist's surveys archived in the Mount Athos Centre Museum.