



Open Call

International Artistic Competition on the theme:

The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt: Classical and Contemporary Visual Approaches

General Information about the Competition

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO) is an international political organization composed of official parliamentary delegations from twenty-five countries, as well as groups of parliamentarians from other countries. Through its activities and initiatives, the IAO contributes to the shaping of political, cultural, and social discourse inspired by the centuries-old Christian and Orthodox tradition.

Within this framework, the IAO places particular emphasis on culture and art as fundamental pillars of dialogue, mutual understanding, and peaceful coexistence among peoples. By initiating and supporting international cultural and artistic initiatives, it seeks to highlight the shared spiritual heritage of humanity and, alongside classical artistic creations, to promote contemporary expressions that engage creatively with tradition, without departing from its essential values.

The Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO) hereby announces its **Second International Visual Arts Competition**, entitled: **“The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt: Classical and Contemporary Visual Approaches.”**

The competition aims to bring to light artistic interpretations of the **Sacred Journey**, which – whether situated within or beyond its specific historical and geographical context – approach both the spiritual dimensions and the timeless, profoundly human aspects of this event.

Within the framework of the competition, works may be submitted that either directly depict the event itself or, based on the central theme, highlight the concepts of **family, motherhood, and childhood**, the **need for the protection of children**, as well as issues of **hospitality**, the **protection of strangers**, and **respect for otherness**.

Artistic Fields of the Competition

The artistic fields participating in the Competition are **Painting** and **Graphic Arts (Printmaking)**

The competition is open to the international artistic community, and artists are free to create their works in the manner they deem appropriate, including both classical and contemporary visual approaches that employ imagination, symbolism, and abstraction.

Objectives of the Competition

The objectives of the Competition are:

- the visual expression of Christian values inspired by a significant event in the life of the God-Man,
- the contribution of art to the promotion of fundamental humanitarian values,
- the affirmation of art's creative capacity for diversity and renewal through contemporary, classical, abstract, or conceptual approaches.

General Information on the Theme of the Competition

The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt constitutes a defining event in Christian history and a profound symbol of refuge, faith, and divine protection. Beyond a simple escape from danger, this journey embodies hope, hospitality, and the spiritual bond between the broader region of the Middle East and the Holy Family.

In recognition of its outstanding universal value, **UNESCO** inscribed the celebration of the Route of the Holy Family in Egypt on the **Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** in December 2022.

The Route of the Holy Family in Egypt is considered the oldest and longest pilgrimage route in the world, with a total length of approximately **3,500 km (round trip)**, and includes numerous historic stations, extending from Sinai to Upper Egypt.

The Holy Family in World Art

Throughout history, the Flight into Egypt has been a powerful source of inspiration for artists of different periods, with notable works by:

- **Theodoros Apsydis** (Byzantine art, Cyprus, 1183)

- **Giotto** (Italy, 1304–1306)
- **Domenikos Theotokopoulos (El Greco)** (Spain, 1570)
- **Luca Giordano** (Italy, 1701)
- **Joseph Bayer** (Austria, 1830)

Aims of the Competition

- The presentation of artistic interpretations inspired by *The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt*,
- the encouragement of creative dialogue between tradition and contemporary artistic expression,
- the documentation of the spiritual, cultural, and human dimensions of the Route,
- the creation of a distinguished international collection of artworks dedicated to this Sacred Journey.

Competition Categories

- **Painting and Drawing**
- **Graphic Arts (Printmaking)**

Artwork Dimensions

- Maximum height must not exceed **100 cm**
- Minimum height must not be less than **35 cm**

These dimensions apply to all works, including framed or mounted pieces.

Technical Specifications

Painting and Drawing

Permitted techniques include oil painting, acrylics, tempera, watercolor, ink, charcoal, pastel, mixed media, and other traditional or contemporary painting and drawing media.

Works must be executed on stable surfaces, such as canvas, wood, or exhibition-suitable paper.

Digital prints are **not accepted** in this category.

Graphic Arts (Printmaking)

Permitted techniques include etching, engraving, lithography, woodcut, linocut, silkscreen, and other recognized printmaking techniques.

The use of fragile or perishable materials is not permitted.

Digital graphic works are **not accepted**.

Participation in the Competition and Evaluation of the Works

Phase I of the Competition

Through this competition, the IAO seeks, in addition to recognizing outstanding artists, to create a collection of artworks on the theme *The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt*. This collection will become the property of the IAO and will be exhibited in museums, cultural institutions, and exhibitions around the world.

For this purpose, participation in the first phase of the competition shall proceed as follows:

Each participant may submit electronically **up to three (3) photographs** of original works of art of any medium or technique, for each competition category, in accordance with the technical specifications provided on the official competition website hosted on the IAO website: (<https://contestegypt.eiao.org/index-gr.php>) (1 October- 10 December 2026).

The International Jury will evaluate the submitted photographs and will pre-select a total of **forty (40) artists**, consisting of twenty (20) professional artists and twenty (20) amateur artists. (**till the end of December 2026**).

Phase II of the Competition

The selected artists will be notified by email at the address provided during registration. The IAO further guarantees that payment of the agreed remuneration will be made upon receipt and verification of the photographs of the completed artworks. At the same time, the names of the selected artists will be published on the official IAO website (www.eiao.org) and on the organization's official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/eiao.org>).

The pre-selected artists shall complete and submit their artworks within a reasonable period of time (**January- March 2027**).

Immediately upon completing the artwork, the artist shall photograph it in accordance with the instructions provided by the IAO and submit the digital photographs electronically. Once the IAO has received the photographs and

verified that the artwork complies with the terms and conditions of the competition, it will transfer the amount of **five hundred euros (€500)** to the artist's designated bank account.

Thereafter, in accordance with the instructions provided by the IAO, the artist shall carefully package and send the original artwork by courier to the IAO. The shipment shall be accompanied by a signed Declaration through which the artist transfers to the IAO ownership of the physical artwork together with the corresponding economic copyright and exploitation rights.

Following receipt of the photographs and/or the original artworks, the International Jury shall evaluate the submitted works and select the winners of the competition. **(till the end of the April 2027).**

The names of the competition winners will be announced after Orthodox Easter, on 2 May 2027.

The cost of shipping the artworks shall be borne entirely by the IAO, in accordance with the instructions provided to the participants. The artworks will be collected by a courier company from the address declared by the artist during registration.

Participation Details

- The competition is open to **professional and amateur artists worldwide, aged 18 years and above.**
- Each participant may submit **one artwork per category.**
- All works must be **original**, created exclusively by the artist, and must not have been previously exhibited, published, submitted, or awarded in other competitions.
- All works must strictly comply with the competition theme: *The Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt*. Submissions in Phase I are **digital only.**
- Images must be submitted in **JPG or PNG format**, high resolution (**3–5 MB**).
- Each submission must be accompanied by:
 - a **short artistic description** (up to **100 words**),
 - a **short biographical note** (up to **500 words**).

- Members of the IAO and its Secretariat are **not permitted** to participate in the competition.
- There is **no participation fee**.
- Applications must be submitted between **___1st of October___ and 10 December _ 2027**.
- The IAO reserves the right to extend the competition period, should this be deemed necessary.

Acceptance of the Competition Terms

By participating, each contestant is deemed to have understood and accepted the terms of the competition. Submission of an entry constitutes acceptance of the present regulations. Participation in the competition and eligibility to receive the prizes are possible only upon agreement with these terms. These terms constitute a **binding agreement** between the contestant and the IAO in relation to the competition.

Intellectual Property and Usage Rights

Artists fully retain the **moral rights** to their works.

By participating, they grant the IAO a **non-exclusive right** to reproduce, publish, exhibit, and use the artworks for **non-commercial cultural, educational, and promotional purposes**, with full attribution to the artist's name.

Participants guarantee that their works do not infringe upon the intellectual or moral rights of third parties.

The Jury of the Competition

The Jury is composed of distinguished individuals from various countries, ensuring diversity and plurality of perspectives. The Jury is international and consists of 15 members. The General Coordinator of the competition is the IAO Adviser Dr Kostas Mygdalis (Greece) and the Art Commissioner and Professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts Dr Manal Helal (Egypt), while the Jury is chaired by the renowned iconographer Mr. Georgios Kordis (Greece). Using secure access codes, jurors may review the submitted material but **cannot view the names or personal details** of the contestants. The names of the contestants and all declared personal data will be stored with **absolute security** in a protected database.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria shall include:

- **Originality and creativity**
- **Artistic quality and technical excellence**
- **Conceptual depth and relevance to the theme**

Awards of the Competition

The following awards are announced for the major winners of the Competition (per category):

- **First Prize** – two thousand euros (**EUR 2,000**)
- **Second Prize** – one thousand and five hundred euros (**EUR 1,500**)
- **Third Prize** – one thousand euros (**EUR 1,000**)
- **Two Commendations**, each amounting to **EUR 700 (2 × EUR 700)**

The five winners will receive an official notification by email at the address provided during the submission of their entry and, if necessary, will also be notified by telephone. At the same time, their names will be announced on the official website of the **Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy (IAO)** (www.eiao.org) and on its official Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/eiao.org>).

The five winners will be invited and hosted in the city where the **Annual General Assembly** is to be held in late June 2027. On that occasion, the exhibition—open to the public—will be inaugurated, and the corresponding awards will be formally presented to the winners. In the exhibition, as well as in the forthcoming two-volume publication, the names of **all participating artists** will be duly acknowledged.

The winners who receive monetary awards shall be solely responsible for submitting any required **tax declarations** in their respective countries.

Publication of the Two-Volume Edition and Organization of a Conference

All artworks will be included in a **two-volume publication** to be issued by the IAO. Each artist will be allocated a two-page spread: the right-hand page will feature the artwork, while the left-hand page will include the artist's photograph, biographical details, contact information, and the text submitted by the artist describing their work.

This edition will be **quadrilingual** and **collectable**, published on the occasion of the **35 years of activity of the IAO in 2028**. It will contribute to the documentation and recording of trends in the field of iconography at the beginning of the new century and will include commentary by members of the Evaluation Committee. The publication will be distributed **free of charge** to major museums, libraries, churches, and monasteries worldwide, while all participants will receive **two copies** as a gift.

In **October 2028**, the IAO will organize an **international conférence** entitled: **“The Flight of the Holy Family: A Living Image and a Cultural Bridge between East and West.”**

All participating artists, as well as international personalities, will be invited to take part. During the conference, the artworks will also be exhibited, and the two-volume publication will be officially presented.

Information – Contact

For further information, please contact the Secretariat of the IAO at the following telephone numbers:

+30 210 3733601 (Ms. Maria Bakali),

+30 210 3733532 (Ms. Lily Vardanyan),

or by email at: **info@eiao.org**, eiao@parliament.gr.

For technical support related to the competition, please contact email: **contest@eiao.org** (Mr. Pavlos Alexelis).