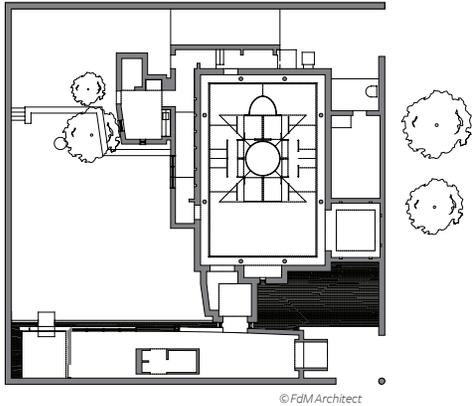


## LET'S EXPLORE THE SPACE

The Byzantine Fresco Chapel is a place where people come to study, meditate, contemplate and find tranquility.



©FdM Architect

### WALK AROUND THE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING. SEE IF YOU CAN LOCATE THESE THINGS:

1. A reflecting pool. Why do you think it is called a reflecting pool?
2. A stele or column with words on it. What does it say?
3. A light monitor. Hint: it looks like a tower.
4. A garden.

Inside the main room of the Chapel you will notice the walls are dark and made of metal. The architect used this material to create the feeling of enclosure as if the frescoes were surrounded by a **RELIQUARY BOX**. A **RELIC** is something associated with a holy person. These objects are kept in special containers or reliquary boxes.



© Paul Warchol Photography



© The Menil Collection

### TREASURE HUNT:

This is a picture of a 6th century Byzantine reliquary box. If you go across the street to the Menil Collection, see if you can find it. Hint: it is in the first gallery on the east side of the Museum entrance.

## THE BYZANTINE FRESCO CHAPEL *A Family Adventure in Looking*



© Hester + Hardaway

Welcome to the Byzantine Fresco Chapel.  
We hope you enjoy this Family Adventure.

A few reminders for your visit:

- touch only with your eyes not your hands.
- share your interesting ideas in a quiet voice.

©Byzantine Fresco Foundation, 2006  
Byzantine Fresco Chapel, 4011 Yupon Street, Houston, TX 77006  
Open Free to the Public Wednesday to Sunday  
11 AM to 6 PM

[www.menil.org/visit/byzantine.php](http://www.menil.org/visit/byzantine.php)

The Byzantine Fresco Chapel is funded in part by grants from the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.



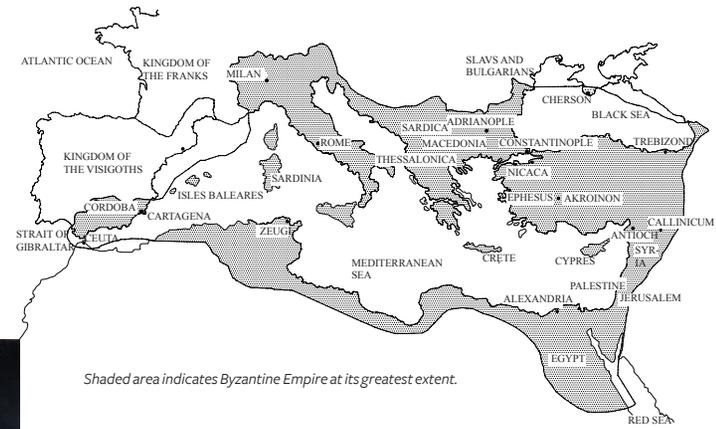
© Paul Warchol Photography

The Byzantine Fresco Chapel was built to display and return to their spiritual function two magnificent 13th century frescoes. These **FRESCOES** are in Houston on a long term loan from the Church of Cyprus.



© Hester + Hardaway

**FRESCO** refers to a painting technique where the artist paints onto wet plaster. Plaster is a building material that is white in color. When you paint, what materials do you use?



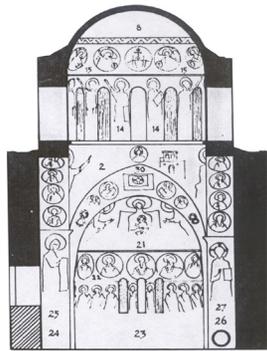
Shaded area indicates Byzantine Empire at its greatest extent.

Look up at the two frescoes- which do you think is the dome and which is the apse?



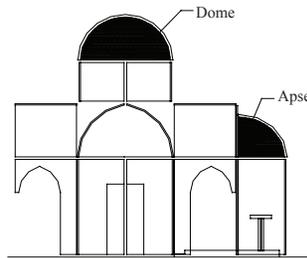
© FdM Architect

The 13th century was a long time ago. What century do we live in? The frescoes you are looking at are examples of Byzantine art. Byzantine refers to both a period in time from about 334 A.D., which was the founding of Constantinople, to 1453 A.D. when the city fell to the Turks. Byzantine also refers to a style of art. Today we do not know the name of the artist who painted these frescoes, but we know that he was a very special and talented painter.



Detail from The Painted Churches of Cyprus, Fig. 100

In the 13th century the entire inside of a chapel would be covered from floor to ceiling with fresco paintings of different scenes.



© FdM Architect



© Paul Warchol Photography

The dome fresco painting represents the heavens with Christ the **PANTOKRATOR** (the All-ruler) in the center. How many angels do you see surrounding the image of the Pantokrator? Typical of Byzantine painting are the strong large eyes depicted on the faces. What do you think all the figures are looking at?



© Hester + Hardaway



© Hester + Hardaway

The apse painting shows the Virgin Mary in the center with archangels Michael and Gabriel adoring her. On Mary's robe is a circle medallion with a portrait of the young Christ as Emmanuel. What do you notice about the way the artist painted her gown?

How many different colors do you see in the dome and apse? The richness of color is characteristic of great Byzantine painting.

The frescoes in this building are a **DOME** (a circular roof or ceiling) and an **APSE** (the eastern end of church building that is often semicircular in shape,) which came originally from a small Orthodox Christian chapel in the town of Lysi in the country of Cyprus. Cyprus is an island in the Mediterranean Sea. People in Cyprus speak mainly Greek and Turkish. Can you find Lysi on this map?

