



EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS

by

ELIZABETH GRAY-KING

SHERWOOD ART WEEK

SHERWOOD URC

21ST - 29TH JUNE

2014

WORD BECOMES FLESH

OIL ON STRETCHED CANVAS WITH DAMASK
2012
127 x 82CM



This began with three persons of the Trinity, the top person Creator, the centre person, Spirit and the one at the edge, the Incarnated One. But as time went on, I recalled the theologian Carl Rahner's note that any one of the Trinity could have become The Christ.

I enjoyed watching the female creator with her blond plait, but began to see that she could easily be Spirit Light and that the Incarnated One could be female. I enjoyed working with Spirit as African Caribbean male with his warmth and energy, yet, as he plays with energy, he could be Creator and the Incarnated One could be African Caribbean. As the Jesus figure holds light with no fear he could be Creator and, as an Arab, he could have been Spirit at any time throughout Old Testament prophecy. What we believe is that Word becomes flesh.

The weighty cloth reminds me of heavy curtains in church alcoves and side chapels. Under this damask bounce Trinity symbols, pushing through the traditional church fabric to remind us again and again that there is no fixed way of knowing God.

THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE

OIL ON CANVAS MOUNTED ON GLASS
2007
63x30CM



Rainbows are huge for me. I love them because I have to find the dark to see them. With my back to the light, pursuing the search in the dark clouds, there they are - all the colours in the universe arching in one (or two) shining bows, reminding the dark that it is only vapour.

I tried so often to paint rainbows, finding twee results. This just catches a moment. The glass mount is just that, glass. See through to whatever, reflecting whatever. The rainbow is the light, the glass almost water. The title is from the gospel of John, my favourite theologian, who has Jesus say, "I came that you may have Life."

EARTH MOTHER

OIL ON CANVAS MOUNTED ON GLASS, FRAMED
IN RAW OAK
1999/2012
48x43CM



This canvas made a long unpainted journey from Milton Keynes to North Oxford to Cowley. As I encountered the canvas' own journey, I thought of the genesis of life itself. In this, Creator is female. Unlike the stereotype of Mother Earth being the globe itself, tempting or nurturing creatures from their other-worldly creator, or the 1960s Earth Mother of flowing skirts and sandals, this Earth Mother cradles the busily spinning created. The dates of completion show that even she was a work in progress, hinting that all of creation is still on a journey.

BOURDEILLES TRIPTYCH

OIL AND BEADS ON CANVAS STRETCHED
THROUGH THREE FRAMES, MOUNTED IN WOOD
2001
49x157cm



This set of canvasses started life in Bourdeilles, the Dordogne in 1996. August 6, 1996 saw our family in Perigeux, buying me Birthday presents of canvas and stretchers, paint and brushes, turpentine and a wonderful white oval plate for a palette. All was new. The first images on these canvasses were of summer sunflowers and French cottages, painted while I listened to our sons play guitar. In the summer of 1999, flowers and cottages gave way to three couples in differing types of relationships. In 2000, the canvasses whispered a deeper message and reminded me of the classic medieval triptych declaration of the Trinity. This is my version. Three parts, three dimensions. Undefined.

THE ARTIST

ELIZABETH GRAY-KING

Growing up as an artist and ballet dancer in the United States, Elizabeth received a fine arts degree from George Washington University in 1975. Moving to England in 1977, she was a professional painter and illustrator before being ordained as a United Reformed Church Minister in 1988, having been trained at Mansfield College, Oxford.

At many individual times, she has designed clothing, from ballet costumes to clothes for women clergy contributing to her use of fabric in her works. A further degree in Education from Westminster College, Oxford, coincided with her setting up a social enterprise with her husband, Pete, within which she project manages research and other projects.

Elizabeth is employed part-time as the Education for Ministry Programme Officer for the United Reformed Church and is also sponsored by the URC Mission Committee to encourage visual theology and evangelism in CreateTalk projects. She has a studio in Braunston on the Grand Union Canal, exhibits widely, creates art works within worship and frequently acts as Artist in Residence at conferences. Her work comes out of this entire context - life, design, faith and proclamation.



ONE

OIL ON STRETCHED CANVAS
2013
96 x 96cm



This painting began as a surface to paint out my brushes and palette at the end of each studio day. The more I painted out my brushes, the more human shapes appeared. One day I noticed that some of the shapes made a single large head and then I realised that this canvas wanted to speak. As it did, I realised that no matter what colour, shape or size we are, somehow, we are all one.

THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY

OIL ON CANVAS WITH GAUZE AND RIBBON
2007
90x40cm



I woke one morning with this picture on my brain. I could see the vaulted ceiling of a huge cathedral and I could see a small person - tiny and apparently ignored by the immensity of the institution of the church. But as I painted, I couldn't manage the person in the bottom right hand corner and realised that s/he shouldn't be there.

Suddenly fabric burst forth with colour and movement and shape. As I watched this grow, it became a statement of my distance from, yet attachment to, the institutional church. The church and its core creeds have told me of love when I wished particular people might have. I have been ordained and upheld by the church, even with my own deep critique of it. I both belong to it and fly out of it.

WISDOM DOVE SPEAKS

OIL ON SEWN CANVAS, TIED AND STRETCHED
ON A WOODEN WINDOW FRAME, FRAMED IN
ROUGH OAK
1992
84x83cm



This is a combination of a shed window frame, raw oak, fine woven cotton and rough canvas, variously tied and stretched. It was painted in 1992 when I was Artist in Residence for the United Reformed Church Forum conference. Themed 'Roots and Branches' the conference was planned to look at the roots of the URC; I couldn't help but go back to the roots of our faith altogether.

To me, the right side is rather like the knowledge of God as shared before Jesus Christ and the left, that knowledge as made human in the world, sharing bread and wine. The top is the creation water, the below, the things of earth. The Spirit (Wisdom Dove) is everywhere, indeed, whispering into the ears of people.



egk@elizabethgrayking.com

www.elizabethgrayking.com