



# Awe + Wonder



**CHAIYA**  
ART AWARDS  
Illuminating Spirituality





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‘In a world of  
turmoil, art matters  
more than ever.

Art can bring about  
political action, even  
social revolution,  
art reminds us of  
the things that really  
matter.

It lifts our eyes to  
eternity and shows  
us the importance of  
the here and now.’

JAMES KA SMITH<sup>1</sup>

# for re wonder

CHAIYA TRUST

Katrina Moss, Founder, Chaiya Art Awards

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**WE ARE PRIVILEGED** to present this collection of Awe+Wonder inspired creativity. Since our last awards, exhibition and book in 2021 (*God /s...*), we continue to deal with the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Add to this the death of Queen Elizabeth II (one of the longest-reigning monarchs in history), our support of Ukraine in its war with Russia, the refugee crisis, and the fuel poverty affecting most of us, it is easy to look at the circumstances in the UK and the world through negative filters.

The work of the short-listed artists displayed mined their expression of Awe+Wonder from many different areas: creation and the natural world; relationships; life's pain and suffering; human ingenuity and faith and spirituality.

Whatever our life experience, my prayer is that the wonderful creativity of these artists, from diverse backgrounds, alongside the illuminating prose, poems and quotes, will uplift, inspire, provoke thought and encourage us as we navigate our life's journey.

May you be blessed as this multifaceted expression of Awe+Wonder reveals the extraordinary breadth of the theme and brings fresh encouragement and hope.





# wonder's kiss

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Let turmoil cease –  
Stand in view-filled  
space –  
Alone.

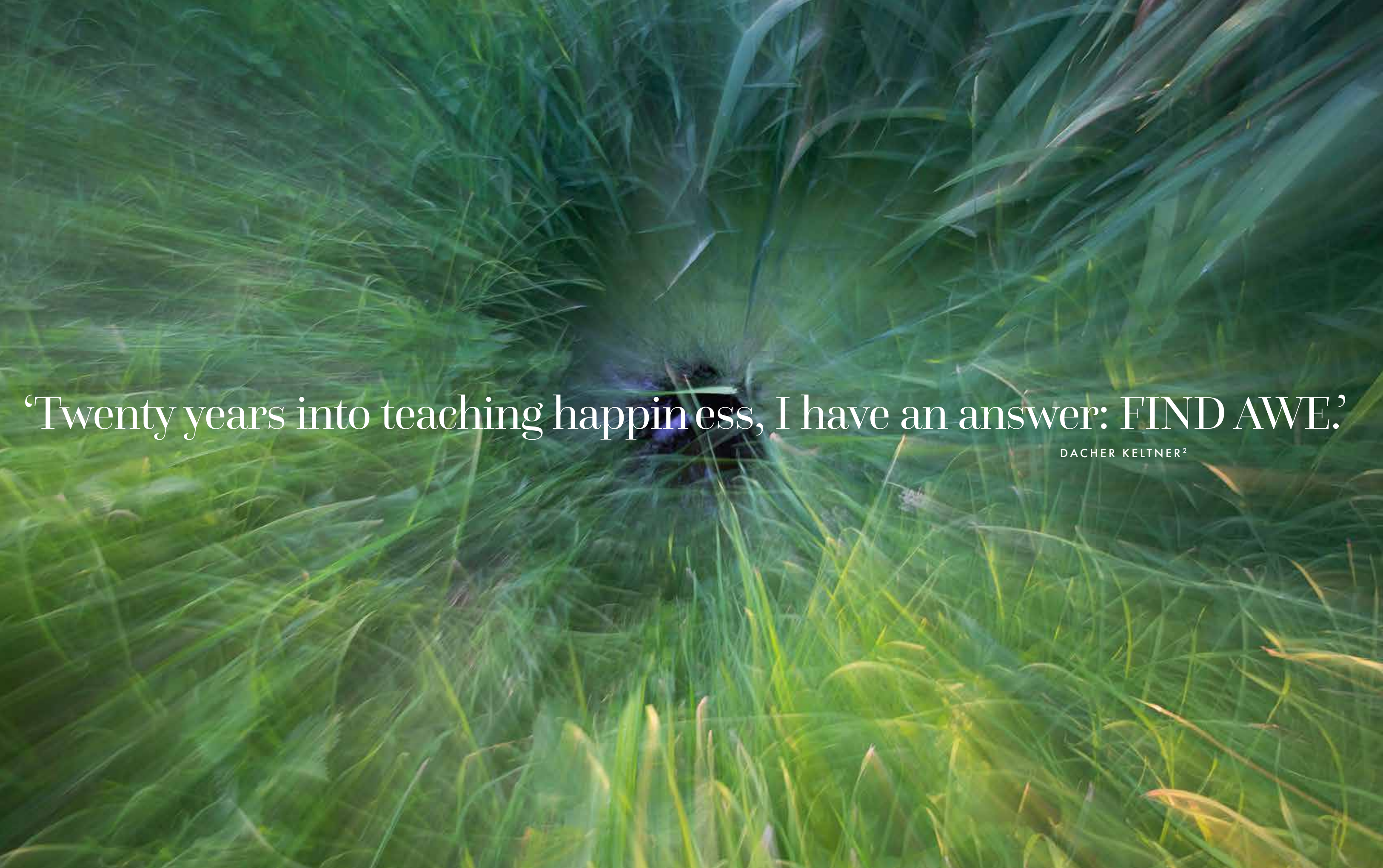
Allow muscles to gentle,  
And breathe.

When the mind  
tumbles  
and grumbles  
with things undone  
Press Stop.

When time  
nips at the ankles –  
brays its passage,  
demands its entrance,  
remember childhood's  
deaf ears.

For wonder waits to  
Kiss your space  
with tenderness.





‘Twenty years into teaching happiness, I have an answer: FIND AWE.’

DACHER KELTNER<sup>2</sup>



An invitation  
to silence to  
create space

Space is  
where  
miracles  
happen

‘Soon silence will  
have passed into  
legend.

Man has turned  
his back on  
silence.

Day after day, he  
invents machines  
and devices that  
increase noise  
and distract  
humanity  
from the essence  
of life,  
contemplation,  
meditation.’

JEAN ARP<sup>3</sup>

in  
the  
con  
dition

**THERE IS NOISE** for every moment of our lives. The more technology, the less silent the world. The TV in the background for company; music in our ear – something to suit our mood, to remove us from a present we don’t want to engage with; the song from a phone never on silent, ready for someone to make contact, to press the ‘like’ button. The instant gratification of the dopamine hit to feel good, to feel of worth, to feel present in this world. There is nothing instant in silence, so we ignore its existence. If we encounter it, we want to break it.

Years ago, visiting a retreat centre with a friend, it shocked us to discover mealtimes were silent. Diners were permitted to bring a book to read, but if we spoke, it meant instant ejection.

She and I sat across from each other in what was, for us, an expression of madness. We could not look at each other because when we did, bubbles of laughter sprang into our mouths. It took all our self-control to contain ourselves. Dutifully, we looked at our books and read not a word. I remember no mouthful of that meal, but I do remember, when released, our swift exit, which turned into a run for our room. Shutting the door, we flung ourselves on our beds, our bodies heaving with uncontrolled hilarity.

The effect of silence.

We couldn’t handle it.

What did we fail to understand?

Do we live in a state of perpetual fight or flight, with raised heart rate and elevated blood pressure terrified by silence? How will our bodies react if we remove the stress of noise, moving from a constant state of alertness to rest?

If we allow silence into our space, we can expect in our enforced relaxation a sense of battle to de-clutter our mind and heart. Working purposefully on stilling the constant

bombardment of outside noise and stimuli beckons the revealing space inhabited by silence, which allows reflection and magical possibility.

Are there decisions to be made? Letting go of the constant churning of our minds allows a thoughtfulness which can bring meaningful revelation. Eschewing the barrage of outside information grants fresh insights of self-awareness. As our minds calm, we can reach for a peaceful quietude and embrace fresh creative thinking. It can turn our existence from living reactively into thought-through response. It allows questions to emerge. Taking time to think before speaking or acting permits assessment of potential outcomes and summons wisdom.

Silence is a place that is pregnant with purpose. It is a place of unreconstructed creativity. The more it is experienced, the vaster it grows. A place of exploration, delight, mystery and spirituality.

What if miracles wait to event in our lives but our ‘silence avoidance’ halts their passage?

There is a sensation called Autonomic Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) which is a pleasurable tingling sensation that starts all the way up on our scalp, creeps down our neck and then through the backbone. As if someone gently traced a finger down our spine inducing a feeling of euphoria and release of anxiety. One thing that can induce it is whispering, another silence.

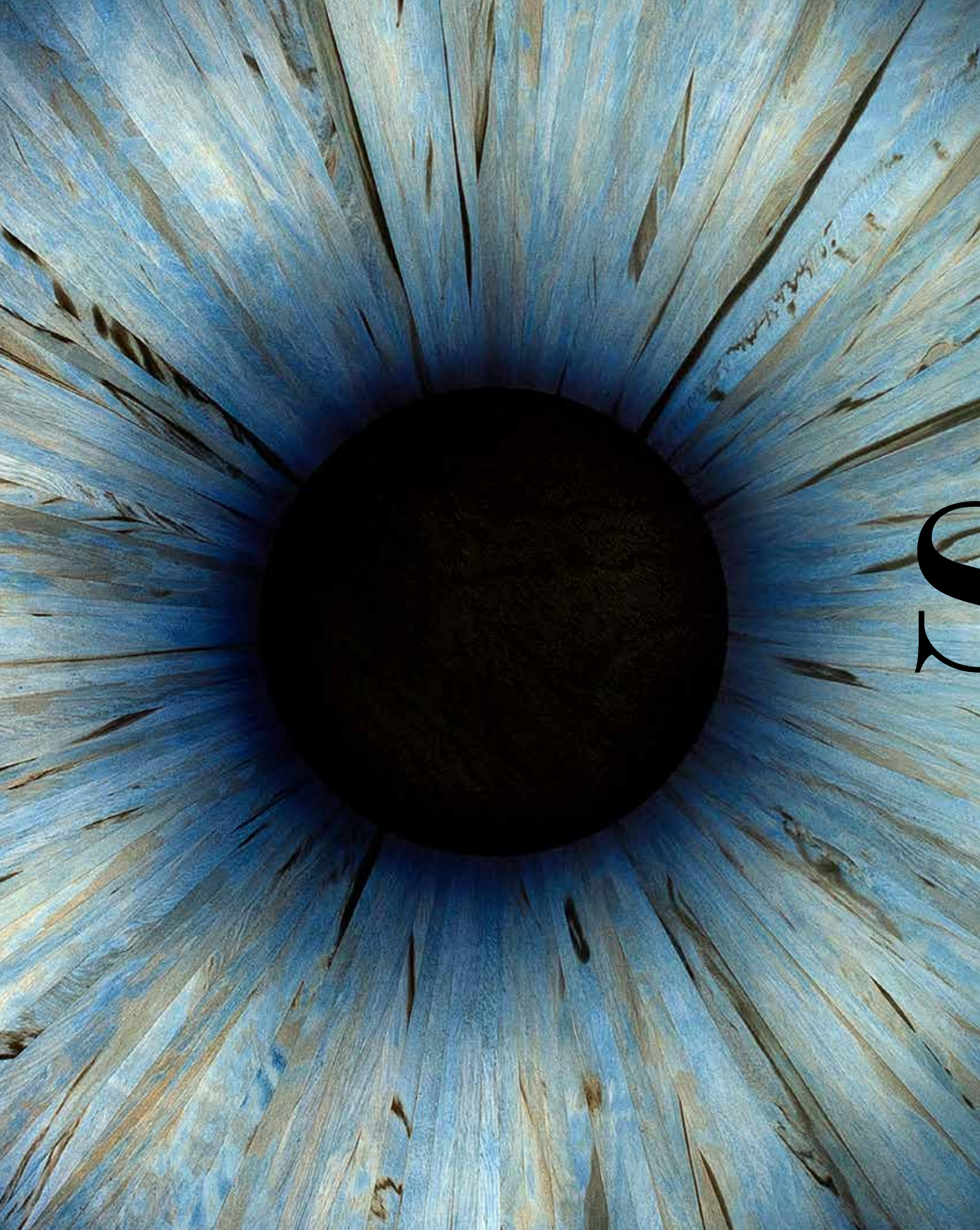
Sit with this book and allow the silence to fall. Journey with the artists, allowing their creativity to enliven and enrich. Some of their works will resonate more than others.

May the ‘still small voice’<sup>4</sup> of God whisper tenderly and distinctly, dear reader, as you enjoy this book, beckon the silence and allow a growing sense of awe to goosebump your body.

‘Silence is  
not the  
absence of  
something,  
but the  
presence  
of  
everything.’

GORDON HEMPTON<sup>5</sup>





# see you

## WATER-WALKERS

For a while a mother  
held her newborn,  
but she left her  
crying so long  
the babe forgot  
she was loved.

For a while her father  
held her  
but, distracted,  
he opened his hands  
and babe fell apart,  
fell through.

Older, still falling,  
she looked at the water –  
out-of-her-depth  
water.

Could she, would she...  
float or  
swim  
or drown?

How long, she thought, before  
I sink,  
unseen  
forever?

The Water-walker beckoned,  
To her?  
Again, He summoned.  
His hand gestured  
for her to step  
to Him.

What if –  
once,  
she water-walked?

She stretched out and  
...stood

luminous peace –  
awash with  
effervescent awe –  
soothed,  
expanded  
and renewed  
her soul.





**JULIA POLONSKI**  
**Observer of Dreams**

Oil on canvas  
H: 152cm W: 122cm  
The painting sits between two worlds. The precarious place of recalling and reframing our fragile dreams from sleep into conscious life. The time we sit with such dreams can sustain and enrich our existence and perhaps enable us to experience, briefly, the mystery of the sublime.



**JESSICA KERRIDGE**  
**The Joy of Simplicity**

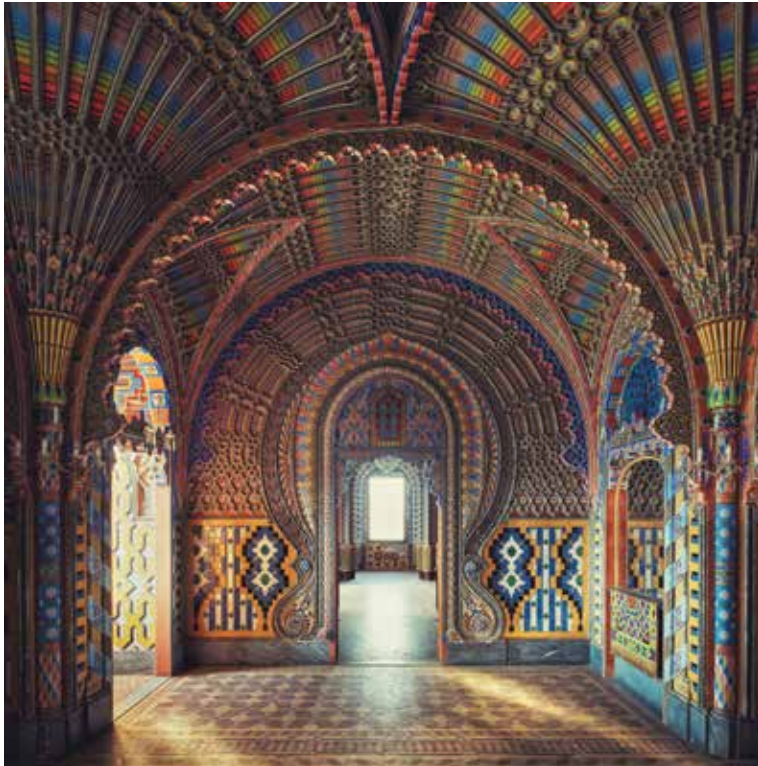
Mixed media – lino print, acrylic, pen and pencil on canvas  
H: 29cm W: 25cm  
I befriended a boy named Highest from Zambia while working with the charity Hands at Work. His face reflected the joy and incredible faith of those living in the most challenging circumstances. I wanted to capture in his face the simple pleasures he enjoyed and the West forgets.

**LUCY CADE**  
**Beyond the Veil**

Oil on canvas  
H: 76cm W: 51cm  
My inspiration was photos of an old film playing on a cathode-ray tube TV. The figure is the 'ghost in the machine'. The 'Veil of Maya' is a Hindu idea that no perfect world exists. Beyond the veil lies the numinous: perfect harmony, balance and peace.







**GINA SODEN**  
**Peacock**

Digital image on Baryta paper, Giclée  
H: 94cm W: 94cm  
An incredible abandoned castle in Italy. I was full of awe and wonder as soon as I walked into this room. The detail of the tiling, plasterwork and the colour just blew me away.

**INGE DU PLESSIS**  
**Blue Bird**

Oil on canvas  
H: 40cm W: 30cm  
Blue bird – a dream awakening me to perceive the Holy Spirit as a small bird, flying into my heart through a metal fence where I was captive, releasing me into a warm, fertile farmland after rains. A celebration of a growing, changing, humbled yet liberated, and increasingly grateful, identity.

**CATHERINE CHAMBERS**  
**Zewday and Mantagoshe**

Oil on canvas  
H: 120cm W: 150cm  
This double portrait of two dear friends represents the curiosity and interest in 'people watching'. Sharing stories, from a book or observation and experience, is a journey of interpretation, explanation, translation and individual perspectives with an enlivening curiosity that diminishes age.



**ROBERT SENIOR**  
**Lowering the Paralytic through the Roof**

Oil on canvas  
H: 105cm W: 135cm  
An intuitive painter, I draw on memory and imagination to encourage unexpected imagery and meaning to emerge. The spiritual appears hidden in everyday life, but occasionally is startlingly exposed. This depicts an incident from St Luke's Gospel where the suspended paralytic, in a state of fear and wonder, is welcomed by Jesus.





**W K LYHNE**  
**Stabat Mater La Pietà**

Oil on canvas  
H: 160cm W: 120cm  
What if the image of the pieta, the Stabat Mater, depicts not a figure of silent, accepting grief, but one that is angry, torn apart with grief? Europe is at war again, the loss to all of every man, woman and animal is relevant. One planet, one collective loss, we are all animals.



**JUDY CLARKSON**  
**But Now I See**

Oil on canvas  
H: 120cm W: 90cm  
A woman drifts in sunlit water, a rapt expression upon her face. She gazes upward. A blue sky? Revelation of deeper knowledge? The biblical title of the painting, spoken by a blind man who regains sight, can, as metaphor, describe the finding of new meaning and spiritual understanding.

**DAVID MILLIDGE**  
**The Last Supper**

Ceramic sculpture. Slip cast earthenware  
H: 50cm W: 200cm  
D: 40cm  
Inspired by the iconic Christian masterpiece of Leonardo Da Vinci, this is not about Judas or betrayal, but rather religious tolerance. Each figure is decorated with the symbols and images of different faiths, thereby depicting a wondrous and optimistic vision of religious and ideological co-existence.



**ANGELA JACKSON**  
**Listen to the Bees and They Will Tell You Who Rules**

Oil and cold wax medium on linen  
H: 95cm W: 65cm  
This self-portrait is an acknowledgement of the power of nature during a time of meditation. It portrays an acknowledgement that ultimately humanity, as part of nature, is under nature's rule. Here it is portrayed an acceptance and wonder of forces beyond us and recognition of the importance of listening.



**SILVIE CRISTOFOLI**  
**The Coming of Spring**

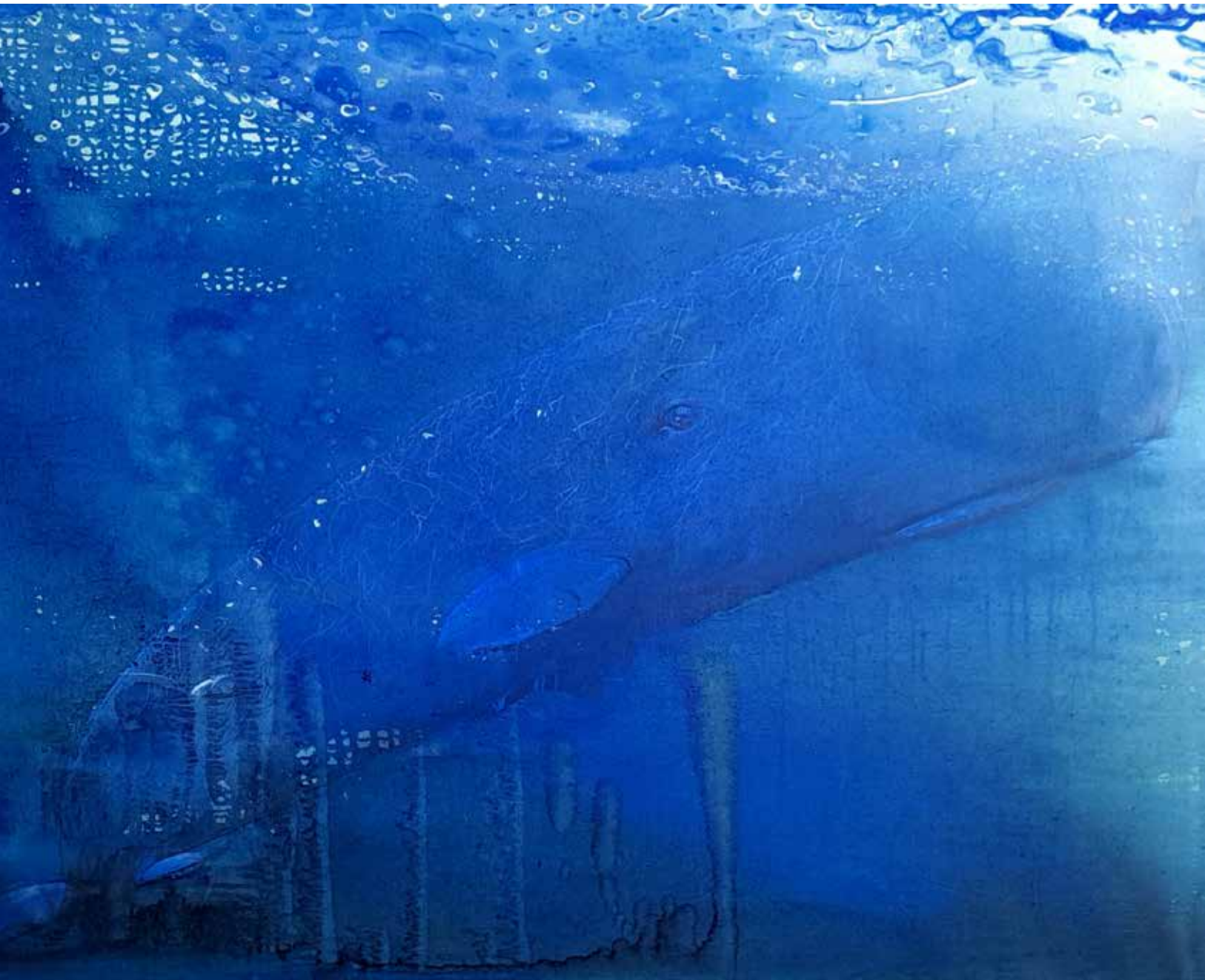
Hand-painted and glazed stoneware  
H: 32cm W: 15cm  
D: 15cm  
Inspired by the feelings of hopefulness and excitement when, after the long months of darkness and bitter cold, there is a new world blooming. Natural rebirth always reminds me of the sensation of spiritual rebirth – invigorating, freshening and spirit-lifting.

**DEBORAH HARRISON**  
**Foetus**

Sculpture in champagne alabaster  
H: 25cm W: 16cm  
D: 19cm  
The intricacy, fragility and detail of the human body is wondrous. Such complexity is perfectly expressed in the vulnerability of the unborn child. I saw veins and tissue-like formations in the stone. As a mother, biologist and artist, this reminds me of the birth of my children. I have no agenda with the piece – it







**KARL NEWMAN**  
**Deep Blue**

Oil on canvas  
H: 92cm W: 122cm  
My inspiration to explore these magnificent and mysterious creatures was *Fathoms: The World in the Whale* by Rebecca Giggs. These majestic yet vulnerable animals captivated me. I allowed the image to emerge at the surface of the canvas, to mimic a whale surfacing for oxygen.

**EMMA HAWORTH**  
**In the morning, long before sunrise**

Oil on canvas  
H: 150cm W: 130cm  
Rising early before sunrise and slipping out of the house before anyone is awake, full of hope for the new day. Starting an adventure or journey walking through the quiet darkness of the woods and noticing all the activity and magic of the nocturnal world.



**SCAPA JOE**  
**Giants**

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas  
H: 80cm W: 80cm  
Hope, wearing the diving helmet, greets a humpback whale and her calf. The beauty of the whales contrasts with the urban decay – a graffiti-covered train; a begging, endangered pangolin. I love our planet. Art can make people think about conserving the world and thereby the future of everyone.

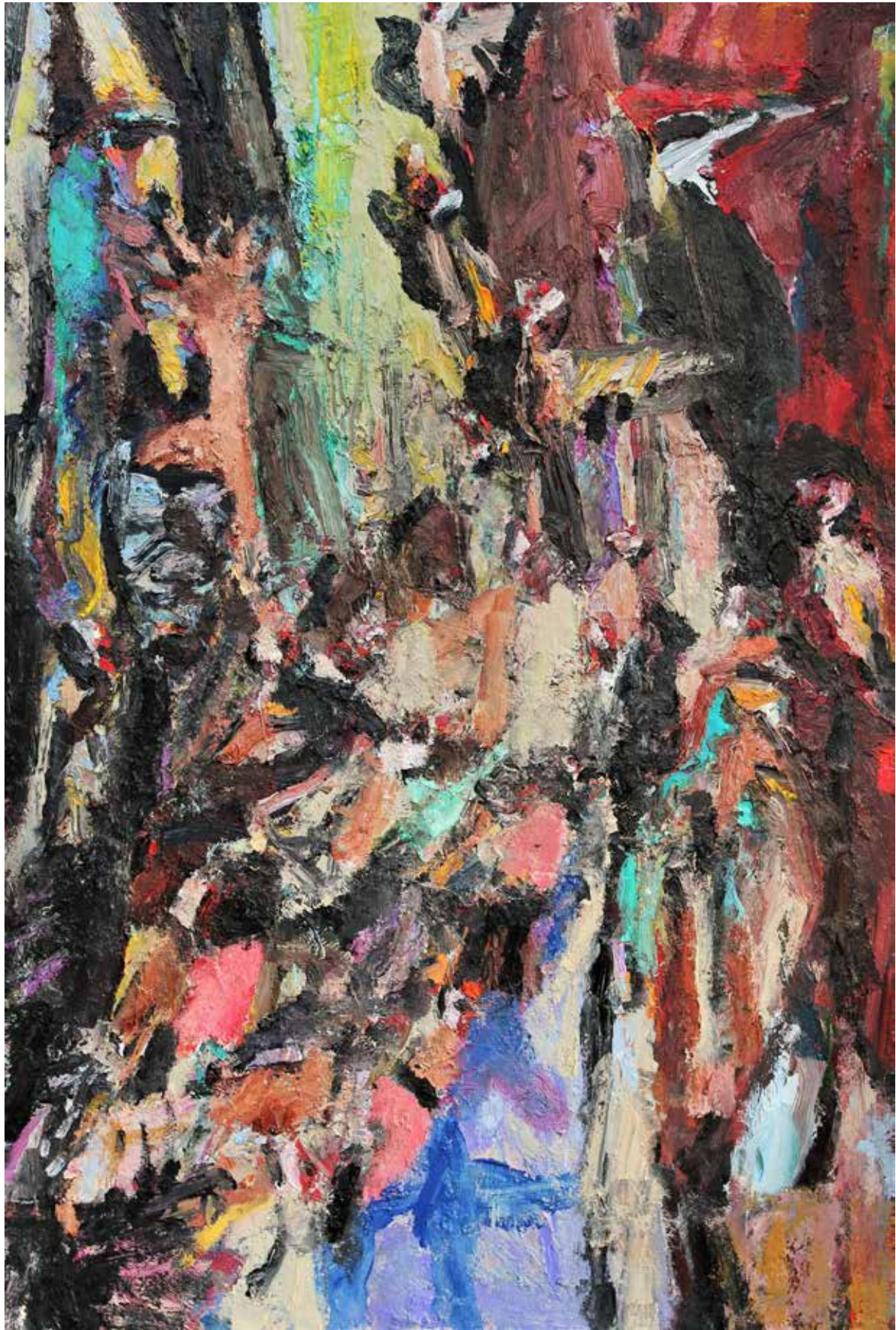


**AMY TIFFANY HEMINGWAY**  
**Yirah & Kemopath**

Oil on canvas  
H: 150cm W: 300cm  
Adam, stunned by something new and beautiful, stares with awe at Eve. She, innocent and oblivious to him but captured, in wonder, by a bird. Here are portrayed Awe (*yirah* – Hebrew) and Wonder (*kemopath* – Hebrew). Adam, in love, holds flowers pondering his next move.







**CRAIG JEFFERSON**  
**Gold Finches and Other Birds**

Oil on panel  
 H: 91cm W: 61cm  
 In the oasis of trees surrounded by three-bed semis, I walk daily, often seeing goldfinches. Taught from childhood to appreciate birds, to me God's fingerprints are unmistakable on these exquisitely painted creatures. They lift one's affections heavenward, their beauty transcending what we see with our eyes.

**GEORGIA ELLIOTT**  
**Unforgiving Elements**

Original acrylic and mixed media  
 H: 150cm W: 200cm  
 Inspired by the feeling the sea engenders on the brink of a storm. The ocean's power and overwhelming force is a reminder of how small we are and our incapacity to control our environment. Alongside the appreciation of the water's awesome depth, mass and force runs a thread of fear.

**AMY POWELL**  
**Simultaneously Sublime**

Oil on canvas, blue card and yellow card  
 H: 120cm W: 160cm  
 By depositing glossy images from online sources and commercial magazines into painting, I reflect the current preoccupation of positing one's identity with continuous input of media images and aesthetics. I aim to disrupt how we assess pictures with new ways of image-making as well as subverting the meaning of the term 'sublime'.

**KOSTYANTIN MALGINOV**

**A Brave New World**

Silk painting combining the author's graphics, using silk, polyester, binding base and high-quality silk thread  
 H: 83cm W: 130cm  
 Love of life in all its manifestations. The properties and structure of silk, the movement of lines, new forms, colour transition, execution, I search for innovative solutions. All devoted to a creative development expressing dreams of fantasy and reality creating space for dialogue outworked in perfect execution.





# We dreamed river

A painting of a goldfish in a glass bowl. The goldfish is orange and yellow, swimming in a clear, slightly rippled liquid. A hand, painted in soft, greenish-yellow tones, reaches from the right side towards the bowl. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and blue, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall style is painterly and evocative.

## SEEING IS BELIEVING

**WONDERS HAPPEN.** Do they? Can they? What are they?

Imagine the young woman, penniless, on her phone to her friend, anxiety pouring out of her. She has no means to travel home. What should she do? A passing stranger hears her and before she realises it, £10 is thrust into her hand with no thought of repayment.

A teenager places her travelcard to the scanner to journey home from school. It fails to work. No money, no ticket and the driver orders her to step off the bus. A woman, behind the girl, waiting to pay, stops her leaving and tells her she'll pay. And she does. The young girl is incredulous. She runs up the steps to the upper floor excitedly to tell her friends.

The middle-aged woman who prays for healing for her back, the pain excruciating. She goes to the osteopath; she exercises lightly, she moves, she lives, but every so often she grunts with deep discomfort. Night and day she prays, then, a week later, waking in the morning, feels the tiniest click and knows she's healed. She gets up sore but restored.

A couple arrive at a UK airport with nothing at the end of their holiday, everything stolen from them. They have no way of returning home. An older woman,

prompted by her husband who had seen the younger woman's distress and tears, watches. The man leaves so she walks across the concourse to ask if she may help. The story pours out. Without hesitation, the older woman opens her purse and gives all she has. They can go home. Fresh tears, but different, as the man returns to enfold her. The older couple, now reunited, receive a heartfelt nod of thanks from the man across the airport void.

Coincidences?

The kindness of strangers?

Paying things forward?

Miracles?

It's possible to be present at the same event and yet interpret what happens or is said quite differently. A miracle is only so to the eye of faith.

Misinterpretation was wonderfully illustrated in *The Life of Brian* by Monty Python. In the film audience members at the back of the vast crowd, misheard Jesus as He delivered His Sermon on the Mount, concluding the intended blessing was for the 'cheesemakers' rather than the 'peacemakers'.<sup>6</sup>

What do we miss?





# hanging

‘When you reach the end of your rope,  
tie a knot in it and hang on.’

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT<sup>7</sup>

**THERE WAS A KING** who had a courtier called Damocles from whom flowed unending flattery. The man obviously relished his status as a courtier to a king, but his eyes, surrounded by the trappings of royalty, grew larger and larger. The king, watching the worm of envy grow into a snake, offered Damocles the opportunity of spending one day as king of all he surveyed. The man accepted eagerly.

The following day Damocles, dressed in the king’s finery, entered the court where spread before him lay a royal banquet, with golden goblets alongside golden plates and utensils. The seating the plushiest, the entertainment unequalled, the servants numerous and, above all else, stood the royal seat. The king gestured for him to take the highest place. With great ceremony he seated himself, his eyes registering everything now under his command.

The king, in attendance, pointed to one other thing he had arranged. High above the royal seat, unnoticed by most, hung a large sword shaped

like a Japanese katana, its blade sharpened with surgical precision, hanging by a single horse’s hair. This represented, said the king, the knife edge of life and death under which a monarch ruled.

This fresh perspective on the vagaries of kingly rule greatly unsettled Damocles, colouring every moment with such foreboding and he failed to last the day as temporary king.

The story of Damocles is a precise representation of the situation under which every human being exists. We live on earth for a span until we die; however, death is not something we talk about in our society. Millions are spent by some, determined to overcome this ‘final frontier’.

We live in a painful world, filled with suffering, much of it undeserved.

There is a biblical story of a man called Job written about 2,500 years ago. It’s a vibrant and superbly written piece that wrestles with the problem of suffering.

# by a thread



# Awe+ Wond der

Allowing yourself an encounter with this book makes space for uninhibited, magical journeying. Immerse yourself in its multi-faceted spirituality. Allow yourself time – to hover, to breathe, and let its contents kiss your space with the unexpected.

Savour this unique collection of more than 100 pieces of art and vibrant poetry and prose. Engage with the artists and author as they respond to the theme. Their work expresses itself in diverse mediums, including painting, sculpture, textiles, photography, ceramics and more.

Space is where miracles happen.  
Be encouraged to embrace what you were born for,  
to expel fear, and to live what you love.

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