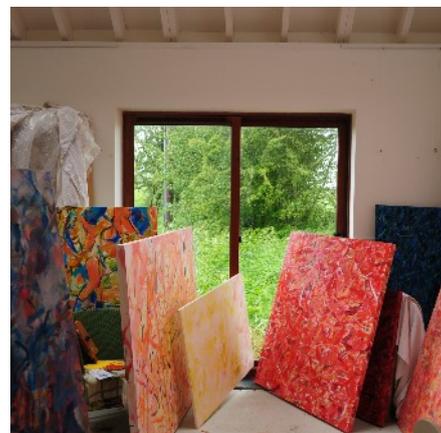


FACE TO FACE

paintings by ALISON THISTLETHWAITE
SEPTEMBER 17TH – OCTOBER 15th

Artist's statement

I would like to welcome you to my exhibition. These paintings were done over a period of time between 2008 up to July this year. They are strongly connected with my Christian faith, reflecting on how things change when we have God's involvement in our lives. They are like inner portraits, entirely abstract, but painted to communicate the feeling of what life with God is like. They are here in an exhibition because I want to show the expressive heart of God for all people, not just myself.



If this type of art is new to you, then I want to suggest some ways of accessing the paintings. You could walk around in the order in which they are hung, reading the labels which give an idea of how each picture developed. Or you could take a glance at the exhibition as a whole, and just try looking at one picture. If you give it time, and you ask God to speak to you through it, it might happen!

Apparently the average time people look at a painting in a gallery is 8 seconds! But if you give yourself time to settle, they will start to unfold. Peterborough Cathedral, over the centuries, has through its art and worship offered many different ways of encountering God. I hope these paintings will contribute their part to the encouragement of faith in the present day, and also be an enjoyable experience for visitors.

Biography

I live in the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire with a busy household and a studio in the garden. I was brought up in St Albans, and loved its cathedral, though neither I, nor my family, took much interest in religion. Nature was what really touched me, especially the tall chestnut trees in our garden, and solitary walks at boarding school. I loved art too, and did a foundation year at St Albans art school, before music took over and I trained as a singer. After many curious jobs in London I then found myself in Cambridge, studying music and singing in music theatre. It was in this sociable environment that I met some real Christians among the students, who spoke to me clearly about Jesus. At that time I was seriously looking at all the faiths. One of my closest friends, a student doctor, had been killed on a dangerous climb in Switzerland, and suddenly I had been precipitated into life's deepest questions. One day in Cambridge things suddenly became clear for me. Out on a walk, in nature, with the clouds opening and light pouring down on some ducks on the river, I knew God was God and gave my life to him.

The most obvious next thing to do was to train as a music therapist, and I was given the immense privilege of training in London's Guildhall with teachers who not only deepened my grasp of both music and people, but also taught improvisation. This sowed the seeds of abstract painting. Meanwhile, intense periods of work in music therapy, in London, Oxford and Cambridge, had to be balanced out with solitude, and I recovered my interest in art, painting landscapes and flowers. Abstract painting began after our children were young, particularly after we built a large studio. I still love music, and build worship into my painting, with a keyboard next to my easel. I paint on my own, but love the contact with people that painting gives. Please feel free to contact me through www.alisonthistlethwaite.com



I have shown paintings at York Minster (left), Bradford Cathedral, Worcester (right) with my installation 'The Red Place', and in Wells Cathedral (far right), alongside landscapes by my husband David.

