

In the Presence: Paintings by Alison Thistlethwaite 2011 Feb 4 - Mar 4

SOUTH SIDE OF NAVE, LEFT TO RIGHT
Numbers refer to the price list (next to No. 1)

Portrait of Alison Thistlethwaite July 2010

Oil on canvas 27 ½ x 20 ins (50 x 35)

Alison, depicted in her studio, against one of her large canvases, by her husband. *David Thistlethwaite*

Alison Thistlethwaite

1. Sheepscombe, Gloucestershire Sept 11th, 2000

Charcoal on paper 21 x 15 ¼ (53.5 x 39)

A day to remember for its peace and beauty.

2. Entering His rest September 11th 2001 (orange-pink)

Acrylic on cotton 48 x 48 ins (122 x 122)

The canvas was prepared and largely completed before the terrible news came of the world-changing tragedy in New York, but while painting there was a strong consciousness of the need to pray for people in danger of death, that they might enter God's rest (Hebrews 4: 3 'For we who have believed, enter that rest').

3. Love in the City 2004 (on loan)

Acrylic on canvas 30 x 40 ins (76 x 102)

God's love is for the whole city, each individual, in every nation.

11. Immersed 2008-9 (blue)

Acrylic on canvas 40 x 30 (102 x 76)

This is about being right in the middle of the 'waterfall' of the presence of God; losing all sense of self-awareness, feeling total safety and freedom to express ourselves in worship and praise.

5. Leaving home 2007 (red)

Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 ins, (91 x 122)

The tragedy of one gifted young man leaving home's security and setting out full of energy and promise, only to die on a mountain, prompted the thoughts behind this picture. Could one re-imagine someone setting out, not just with high energy and expectation, but stepping into the unknown with faith and a sense of purpose?

8. Stiff Upper Lip 2007-9 (blue)

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 24 ins, (91 x 61)

Men do not always show their emotions and sometimes pain seems sealed in, like some dangerous radioactive material well underground. Then God's love comes in and washes like waves over private turmoil, stirring emotions into life.

6. Tipping Point 2007 (red)

Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 60 ins (122 x 152)

This painting explores the inner world of an adolescent where the line between perplexity and despair is very thin. It's a plea for people to watch and see, to listen and understand a young person's cry for help. The reason this painting is also light and happy is the sense of burdens being lifted as they come to know and trust Jesus, who is light.

24. Tenacity 2009 (blue)

Acrylic on canvas 30 x 24 ins (76 x 61)

Maintaining connection with the Lord is often a fight, especially when spiritual attack comes. Keeping ourselves in His peace needs tenacity! And then His presence comes, soft and gentle.

13. Pure Relief 2008 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 ins (76 x 102)

This painting expresses a dance of elation as things that have been a weight and chain have been lifted and broken.

25. Day of the Song 2009 (blue)

Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 ins (76 x 102)

Sometimes a song will come 'on the air', as if from nowhere, and it's as if we are overhearing the praises of heaven. This painting came about from just such a time.

17. The Light is Coming 2008-9 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas, 63 x 79 ins (160 x 200)

The coming return of Jesus Christ, which is nearer every day, presses in on the present and impregnates it with expectation.

28. Song of Songs II, Responding to Love 2009-10 (blue)

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 48 ins (91 x 122 cm)

This expresses the freedom, passion and sense of purpose of the person who has found love.

16. Presence November 2008 (red)

Acrylic on canvas 63 x 83 ins (161 x 210)

This painting was begun at the beginning of the recession when there was much gloomy talk in the air. As the painting proceeded, the presence of God in His over-ruling love became far more strongly the overwhelming reality, not at all far but near.

29. Song of Songs III, Abiding in Love 2009-10 (blue)

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 48 ins (91 x 122 cm)

The Song of Songs, a love poem, has often been read as a portrayal of Christ's love for the church. This painting sees the church filled up with a sense of being loved.

18. The Pledge January - October 2009 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas, 63 x 79 ins, (160 x 200)

A picture with a journey, that began as a painting about love, passion and commitment and then came to describe the breaking up and tearing-apart of love and of the good things people put their hopes into. But in this fracturing of society and relationship, there is a pathway of hope. 'I felt, along with the Forgiveness picture, that Jesus died for just such a mess as society is in right now. This mess is what He came to step down into'.

9. Promised Land 2008 (on loan) (blue)

Acrylic on canvas, 33 x 39 ins (80 x 100)

This painting is about the transformation that happens when we move across into the 'promised land' of freedom, letting go of what we think we are, and finding that the way God created us to be is much better than we'd thought.

23. The Power of Death is Broken 2009 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 12 ins (41 x 30)

Sometimes the darkness seems so great there's scarcely hope, but you feel held onto by the tiniest thread. Then the realization comes that Christ has already overcome it: and we can resist it!

14. It's not as easy as you think 2008 (red)

Acrylic on canvas, 31 x 39 ins (80 x 100)

A meditation on the 'crosses' as we go through life. At each bend in the road there are choices and sacrifices in order to stay steadfast; but the way this journey is bound together gives life its colour, depth and richness. 'We may have strong encouragement, we who have fled to Him for refuge, laying hold of the hope set before us' (Hebrews 6: 18).

27. Song of Songs I, Waking to Love 2009-10 (blue)

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 48 ins (91 x 122 cm)

Many people are loved but do not receive it. This is about a breakthrough in experiencing love.

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12. Yes 2008-10 (red/green)

Acrylic on canvas 30 x 40 ins (102 x 76)

This painting is about our 'yes' to God – which then gets quite difficult, until you discover that God's 'yes' to us in Christ is far stronger than what we say to him: "for all the promises of God in him are 'yes' " (I Corinthians 1: 20)

NORTH WALL OF MINSTER, LEFT TO RIGHT

30. Returning Son, Running Father, 2009-10 (pink)

Acrylic on canvas 48 x 60 ins (122 x 152)

The elation of being accepted by God, and the grace of Him in forgiving us. Based on Jesus' Prodigal Son story in Luke 15.

19. Ribbon Day 2009 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas 16 x 12 ins (41 x 30)

We live in amazing times when the connection between God and His people is growing – our call is just to notice Him. This picture came from a sense of ribbons being thrown up into the air for joy. 'Salvation has come to this house'.

33. Bursting Out 2010 (orange)

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 48 ins (91 x 122)

Jesus 'burst out' of the tomb, and we too can burst out of our boxed-in thinking, to see God's love in Jesus for all the world.

7. Forgiveness 2007-9 (grey)

Acrylic on canvas 33 x 24 ins (84 x 60)

This painting started as 'white wedding': it's obviously not so white now and that is the essence of its story. After the stillness of the white, pain comes to the surface, as it often does in marriage. But in some way it links with Jesus' pain, and he gets involved, and the married couple find they are not alone. The energy in this painting represents the determination to fight through to the place of forgiveness from which love can be renewed and flow.

38. Contemporary Reality 2010-11 (blue/red/yellow)

Acrylic on canvas 83 x 106 ins (210 x 170)

This painting began with a sense of the difficulty in society of connecting with God when we are so entangled and lost, but in the realisation that 'He is not far from each of us' (Acts 17: 28) there was a sense of release and joy.

22. Joy to the World 2009 (red)

Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 12 ins (41 x 30)

This is about the gift of Jesus. We mess things up so easily, but he is able to bring us up again. Every time this happens, there is the elation of freedom.

40. It's Red 2010 (red)

Acrylic on canvas 83 x 106 ins (210 x 170)

This painting is a cry for soft hearts when we look at the Cross of Jesus.

20. Hope 2009 (on loan) (blue)

Acrylic on canvas 16 x 12 ins (41 x 30)

A picture painted as hope came for a particular person to be released from fear of all kinds. There's indignation with what has spoilt this person's life, and a blue of hope overlaying the white of desperation!

39. Impressions of Glory 2010 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas 83 x 106 ins (210 x 170)

We get hints of God's glory when we are caught up in worship and praise, and the boundary between earth and heaven seems to melt.

26. The Winter is Past 2009 -11(blue)

Acrylic on canvas 40 x 30 ins (102 x 76)

The title comes from the Song of Songs. 'Winter' symbolises a season of difficulty which we want to leave behind. Forgiveness turns the year to Spring, bringing a new season of rejoicing.

35. Determined 2010 (red)

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 48 ins (91 x 122)

People who want to get fully free sometimes show a gritty determination to get everything they can from God. This painting is about perseverance and commitment.

37. Safety in the Father's Arms 2010-11 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas 40 x 30 ins (102 x 76)

When the world shakes, the safest place to be is in the arms of the Father.

4. Glory in the city 2004 -7 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas, 19 ½ x 15 ½ ins (50 x 40)

A painting of God's presence invading the financial institutions.

34. He's calling your name 2010-11 (red/blue)

Acrylic on canvas 20 x 16 ins (51 x 41)

God wants us to bring all of ourselves to Him. Some of our hopes have never been expressed, even privately. This is about someone coming out of the shadows and being embraced by God the Father's love.

10. Open Heart Surgery 2008 (red)

Acrylic on Canvas, 48 x 60 (122 x 152)

Sometimes we get nowhere until we face, with God's help, the deep inner pain that we have surrounded with walls of hardness or cynicism, keeping others out. This painting came about through just such a time of facing the raw centre of pain; and suddenly realising that Christ's aloneness and rejection on the Cross also means he can meet us in that place.

21. Fire-Lighters 2009-11 (red)

Acrylic on canvas, 16 x 12 ins (41 x 30)

There is a double theme in this picture; in the first place it is about a person emerging from the shadows to be who they really are called to be, 'discovering' themselves to God. But that person goes on to light the fire in others and see who they are.

36. The truth sets you free 2010 (pink/turquoise)

Acrylic on canvas 36 x 48 ins (91 x 122)

A painting about the reward of having faced up to the pain in life, to let the light in. You come to a place which feels broad and free.

32. Passion 2009-10 (red)

Acrylic on canvas 15½ x 22 ins (49 x 53)

A painting about the presence of God, expressing the power, the passion, the cross, the energy, and the intensity of His love.

31. It's for out there 2009-10 (yellow)

Acrylic on canvas 48 x 60 ins (122 x 152)

The energy in this painting is to do with the church taking all its light and passion outside its own walls.

15. Strong Presence 2008-10 (red)

Acrylic on canvas 30 x 40 (76 x 102)

God is 'round about His people' (Psalm 125: 2). There are times we can look back on and know He was there, and that gives us faith in present troubles. These strong colours express the deep passion of Christ for us. The sense of His presence with us gives us a confidence to live strongly.