

Peace and another journey in digital painting

On 1st November 2021, I wrote the following to the now 8 people who receive an email about each new painting.

“Yesterday morning I was trying to concentrate on getting all the preparations for finishing the enormous triptych I have been working on since September 2020. But the Holy Spirit kept nudging me to look for a particular picture from the two hundred or so public domain photos in my peace folder. Eventually I could resist no longer and so I looked up the picture. It needed a fair amount of preparatory work, There was a river or road in the bottom of the valley and a horse on the foreground grass both of which interrupted the flow of the landscape so I carefully removed them and restored the landscape around them. I turned the thin sliver of sky into a more expansive region, and added some blue to the top right corner. I also felt that the top left was somewhat dull and added light flooding in from above.

When I began trying to paint the image, before adding the dove, two things became clear. One was that the painting, like some previous ones, did not work well in Dynamic Auto Painter which struggled to render the subtle gradients without lines. The second was that the painting just didn't feel misty enough. With this in mind, I added a quite dense misty region across the photomontage in front of the nearest band of trees, with just a little spilling over the ridge above the foreground grass. As soon as I did that immediately the painting began to cohere much more successfully, and I knew that it would work, so I added the dove.

I set one copy of the painting going in Fotosketcher, using my favourite brush set, two, knowing that it would take several hours to paint, as indeed it did. I reconfigured Corel Painter to use a soft variable impressionist brush set which I thought would suit the gentle softness of the photomontage and scenery. This I knew would paint quite quickly, using Effects/Esoterica/Auto Clone, in just a few minutes, as indeed it did. It produced an inherently very pleasing painting with a mellow palette which suits, I realised, the words of Jesus on peace which I had read most recently, the words he spoke three times to the disciples in the locked room in Jerusalem, after his resurrection, 'Peace be with you.' (John 20)

Much later in the night I awoke and, without thinking, made a copy of that original painting and carried out the post-painting transformations that I normally do to paintings made using variable brush sets in Corel Painter. These brush sets always reduce the dynamic range of the painting, overall making it darker and less saturated (less colourful). So I enhanced the saturation using a setting evolved from long experimentation, and similarly brightened the painting right across the value range, but particularly in the mid-range, again using settings resulting from years of experience and experimentation (otherwise known as playing). The painting that resulted was quite different in feel, still with a tremendous depth of peace, but as though set later in the day, in full daylight.

At that point Fotosketcher announced that it had finished painting and I went to look and see what it had produced. As I looked at the lovely golden hour colour palette, redolent of the peace of early dawn, I realised that I had been here before, just a couple of days ago. Once again I had three paintings, each with a deep sense of peace and peacefulness, that seemed to connect with Jesus' words to the disciples 'Peace be with you.' (John 20) Once again I had not really set out to make one painting and yet I had made three.

And so, unexpectedly, I have now painted two sets of three paintings that relate to Jesus' words 'Peace be with you,' I could have rushed to release them this morning, but it was a beautiful morning and so we went to Wimpole Hall and spent some happy hours taking hundreds of photographs. All

the while inside my mind's eye, I could visualize these three paintings that I had made during the night, and the longer I lived with them, the more comfortable I became with them. They are steeped in peace; each is quite distinctive and yet each is immensely peaceful.

Once again I am left in awe, in awe of the wonderful gift that the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon me. An entirely self-taught artist, judged 'useless' at school, once again I have painted three paintings in which I can lose myself for hours, just captivated by the beauty and by the peace intrinsic in each. It is only right, given the role of the Holy Spirit in the genesis of these paintings, that once again, a dove, often thought symbolic of the Holy Spirit, should feature. Once again, making the paintings and living with them for some time, has been a great source of both pleasure and of peace. I hope that they bring you pleasure and peace too.

Love from Rick

[If you have any friends who you feel would benefit from the Peace paintings and their stories, please share the web address for Under The Thinking Tree with them

<https://underthethinkingtree.com/>]

[Of course one major reason for the dove and Holy Spirit symbolism is the description of the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, at Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:9-11, Matthew 3:13-17, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:29-34)]

[They are the second series of paintings with the same name so if you download these little previews from the website you will find that I have included S2 in the filename. They are small only because I am in the process of having a shop built for me, to sell large copies of the paintings, to raise money for the Arthur Rank Hospice Charity, Living Well Services, who look after the whole of my family so well, since all of us are obviously affected by the Motor Neurone Disease which I have]