

The Methodist Art Collection.

A personal view on how art can change and inspire people.

Sunfields Methodist Church hosted the Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art during June 2009, in the new church building. The exhibition was used in services, workshops and lectures.

The exhibition is thought-provoking. I sat and told Jesus what the paintings brought up for me. Sometimes I just gazed, or cried or sang. I sometimes also reached for the Bible, to discover Jesus' question or command to the characters in the scene; to me. Something new struck me each time I visited the exhibition.

Sitting on the floor in front of Jyoti Sahi's "Dalit Madonna", a middle-aged, childless woman cuddling her Shaun the Sheep rucksack, I felt held, secure. The artist's use of curved lines speaks of protection to me: wheat curving around the woman's body; Christ curled, as if in her womb, in her arms. I could almost see a figure curled up in the grinding stone at her feet. Depicting an "outsider woman" as Mary helped me acknowledge before God other ways our lives can bear fruit.

John Reilly's "The healing of the lunatic boy" found me crying, protesting that we weren't "healed instantly" when we came to Christ. We walk on.

Norman Adams painted "Christ's entry into Jerusalem" as a bright, vibrant watercolour, transposing it into a carnival procession with flags, banners and sunflowers. The dark figures seemed to know the agony ahead; children danced. It fascinated me, containing so many details.

Thanks to the people who worked hard to enable Sunfields to host this challenging, prayer-inspiring, life-enhancing, sustaining exhibition. It enabled friends and strangers to hear each other, talking of faith, life and sharing different perspectives on the exhibition. It was a good meet with God and each other.

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