

The Art and Faith of Margaret Hudson-Ware

Margaret was born in Christchurch in 1938. She graduated with a diploma in fine arts with honours (painting) from Canterbury University in 1959 and a teachers' diploma in 1975. She taught practical art and art history at a number of Canterbury secondary schools from the 1970s and has exhibited regularly in New Zealand and abroad since then. In 1996 she won the inaugural CoCA Annual Art Award.

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**I say this
as a wild
and
dangerous
person.**

CS News: Who do you see as the bullies in modern life?

You can't pick them, they're like bad drivers...anybody, anywhere, just in one's walk through life. The ultimate bullies are those in a position to displace millions of people to the distress of the entire world and the enslavement of their children. It just never stopped in the 20th century, in my lifetime.

Is that an important function of art, to expose, comment and make statements?

It depends on the person doing the work. Everyone has a different view and understanding about what art is about. One might be very joyful and glorious but I'm very interested in the human condition - the things that cause huge distress should be brought to light. A lot of people need an advocate. So I suppose I'm a self-appointed advocate.

What first inspired you to paint?

A parent. For 13 months we lived in Ireland after the Second World War and I went to the village school where they taught Erse (Irish Gaelic). I got a set of Children's Encyclopaedias full of the world's greatest paintings. My mother was a musician. She went to art school for a while part-time and took me to things, like the theatre.

What's your motivation to create such large sweeping canvases that would be so daunting to other artists?

Instinct. With the teaching of art history

you learn so much. I love medieval art, it's genre art, folk art, it comes from the gritty earth and people and has no distance. I love that intimacy, the crouching figures, the splendid figures. It has what's called continuous narrative; and its got huge attraction. One has to approach it bit by bit, taking in separate sections. It's not a jumble, you read it as intense drama, a whole little theatrical piece, an orchestra of art. An intense ridge full of discussion of many elements of the same topic.

I start drawing, then I add something and they just grow. It's such fun. I love art but I'm just a good 'grinder.'

You've said elsewhere your canvas is "a plane on which the essences of life are poured and fixed." What role the Christian artist?; what responsibility to pour, to say, to speak out?

The artist has a job. It can be anything, a discussion of the elements of colour, pure abstraction, I love everything that is different, we're watchers, we report, we evaluate. We're sideline people, except

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Refugees
12 paintings
at Te Puna o Waioheta
10 May - 19 October, 2003

Feed My Sheep (detail)
Margaret Hudson-Ware, 2002,
oil on canvas,
190 x 312.5 cm.

"Feed My Sheep."
John 21:17





Kathleen Gallagher and Peb Simmons

From the resource centre

Peace Plays

Kathleen Gallagher, Doygal Press,
New Zealand, 2002, 193 pages, \$20.

It is a sad irony to review this book of three plays, each speaking words of peace, so near the anniversary of 11 September 2001.

We might relate to the event, but don't hear the deafening sound of gunfire, explosions, screams; or feel the appalling heat of fire; or choke on the rising dust. Kathleen Gallagher's *Peace Plays* should wake us out of apathy. Her simple, almost artless style creeps past the reading eye into the brain, so that it is impossible to escape. *Peace Plays* subtly plead for a change of focus by governments and citizens alike, stimulating us to be concerned for those in need; encouraging fairness in the distribution of wealth, and, most urgently, to aid lasting

world-wide peace. Eventually we might understand why so many people are angry with the Western world and why some felt justified in plotting and instigating the Twin Towers slaughter.

Peace Plays should be required reading in all high schools, for the younger generation to understand where society has come from and where it might go. Kathleen Gallagher received the New Zealand Playwrights Award in 1993, and her first book of four plays *Mothertongue* was published in 1999. We are fortunate such a visionary dramatist lives and writes in our midst.

Peb Simmons

[First appeared in *Tui Moti*, October 2002].

The Confined,
Margaret Hudson-Ware,
2002, oil on canvas,
200 x 300 cm.



[Margaret Hudson-Ware continued from page 3.]

...we play a lot. It's all so delicious, but it's like the fruit of the vine, we create the fruit from our particular culture, or we say something about it and that's our job.

What about faith, where does faith fit in for you - an underlying stream or spring or is it just a facet of culture? What role does faith play in your art?

Well, faith saved me from insanity and illness and despair. Faith and those who believe - the community of the faithful - have retrieved me from loneliness, isolation, self disgust and guilt, through reading, listening and interaction. Faith is the blood of my life. It is nothing I can put on. It's not a garment I put on, it's just there. I say

this as a wild and dangerous person - if I didn't have it, I could be quite destructive. It's a discipline, an utter joy. It's everything really. If I'm right with my Maker, everything is possible.

There's an image of Christ in a lot of my work. *The Dispossessed* is about humiliation, so there's Christ in a humiliated state, naked and I cut off his hair because it dehumanises Him, but His face shows He knows what is happening. Juxtaposed with that is the smug businessman who thinks he knows what is happening, and there's a boat of vultures, looking for a bit of meat. Many of my canvases are about human interaction, with the forces of good and evil vying for possession and power.