

## WHY DO I PAINT ICONS? (1)

As a boy growing up in Amsterdam shortly after the Second World War, I used to wander off into a large Roman Catholic church at the end of the street where I lived. I took in the richness of my surroundings, my sight, hearing and smell were profoundly affected by this sacred environment, so different to the everyday world outside. Through my senses God announced the reality of His presence to me.



Now, half a world away and retired after a career as a psychotherapist, I find myself able to participate in this special calling of pointing human senses toward the divine. An icon can become a meeting place between God and us, where we enter and communicate with God, and God with us. I paint icons because I believe God has shown me he wants me to paint about Him, His Kingdom and His creation. By doing so I participate in an ancient practice which I share with nearly two millennia of Christian icon painters.

Icons aim to picture the divine beauty of the Trinity, the saints, biblical events and the created world; both painter and observer perceive the presence of divine message, mystery, devotion and beauty. In the world of icons, virtually every element of the painting has a symbolic meaning which contributes to the whole message. They are intimations of a God - filled world, available for any of us to contemplate and engage with.

Please feel free to ask me about the meaning of anything in these paintings.

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