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Apocalypse Revisited: Constructed Paintings

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Apocalypse Revisited: constructed paintings

by Devi Anne Moore

My exhibition:

I present to the viewer the final acts and judgments of God. It is the effort of an ongoing body of art derived from the Book of Revelation; the ideas for this work have been formulated over the past twenty-eight years.

In the Book of Hebrews, the things of this earth are referred to as copies, shadows or dim reflections of the eternal heavenly dimension. This concept motivated me to visually interpret the vivid word pictures of Revelation. I chose to utilize constructed paintings combining three dimensional objects, photographic images and painted illusions. The results literally break through the two dimensional picture plane.

In keeping with the Hebrew reference, the intention is to suggest that what is of this earth is only a dim glimpse of the true reality of the heavenly realm. Thus, the combination of found objects, with photographs placed next to painted areas which are then placed on different planes, is meant to evoke questions about man's material and earthly reality versus a spiritual and heavenly one.

This combination also communicates a message in the form of visual poetry derived from the prophetic narrative. Through these images, I feel that I have created a sense of urgency conveying the immediate possibility of impending events.

My inclination was to produce visual poetry and to reject any notion that the work must be only literal and realistically rendered. I found that painting the literal symbols hindered me and was actually contrary to my impulse while painting. It was a challenge to integrate the surface of the photographs with the color and texture of the paint. Furthermore, I found that although I wanted to be convincing in integrating the photo-collage with the paint, I also enjoyed the freedom in altering and expanding scale and context with strokes of color.

One of the most challenging and rewarding aspects of reading the Bible is that the text has multiple layers of meaning. In my series, I have attempted to distill from these layers images of relevant pictorial poetry which should first be viewed for its formal visual aesthetic and secondly, for its scriptural relevancy. However, ultimately the real life-blood would derive from the combined aesthetic and spiritual force within the series.

My narrative's purpose is not simply to describe historical circumstances, but through the material elements, I wish to evoke the spiritual truth and dimension which, from my understanding, are the reality of the material. Thus, this series attempts to be more like pictorial poetry which emotionally stimulates the viewer beyond the superficial into the spiritual. My pictorial space attempts to present the old familiar Apocalyptic text through a new and fresh expression.

A significant influence of the old was the art of the Beatus Commentaries on the Apocalypse rendered at the turn of the first millennium. To the Medieval mind, the visual interpretation was equally as important as the scriptural source. Without adding to the text, the artists made it both relevant and pertinent to their circumstances by presenting, in the preferred abstract style, contemporary symbols and images within the pages.

I was in awe of this abstract art form that had such a prophetic presence. Because this style of art impacted me so deeply, I did and still do continue to ask myself how I can use this as a source for my own work.

The motivation behind the Beatus manuscript can only be understood in terms of a deep Messianic faith which had given solace to the indigenous Spanish population at the end of the first millennium. The Spanish Medieval mind anticipated the New Heavenly Jerusalem to alleviate their alien situation among their foes, the Muslims, who ruled over them.

Similarly, the motivation of my work may be understood in terms of the phenomenon at the end of the second millennium. In view of the critical circumstances all around the world with wars and rumors of wars, famine and pestilence, earthquakes and other catastrophes, could it be that these are labor pains for the New Jerusalem?



The Seven Letters to the Seven Churches

This body of work patterns itself after medieval altar pieces and can be set up to be viewed open or closed upon hourly (or whatever) intervals. This format was inspired from the biblical reference from the Book of Revelation as well as from the architectural-like structure it gave to the contemporary idea of "Church".

Whereas the architectural-like box remains the same for each piece, the message, symbols and content change according to the text, and are made relevant to today's events and trends. The inside/outside format was a provocative way to juxtapose many ideas simultaneously.



The Churches of Philadelphia and Smyrna

There are two churches without any shortcomings: Philadelphia and Smyrna. The outside of these two pieces are painted to emulate the Cherubim on the Ark from the days of the Tabernacle. This signifies the ever presence of the Lord over these obedient churches in spite of personal plight and strife.

The Churches of Ephesus, Laodicea, Pergamum, Thyratira, and Sardis

The outside of the other five have the Angel of the Lord fighting with the assigned messenger or angel of each church, which echoes Jacob, the Supplanted, wrestling with the Angel of the Lord in Genesis. This is to suggest that each individual or corporate body needs to self-evaluate in order to purge the flesh of any remaining darkness so that he can receive his promised reward, keep eyes fixed on Jesus, endure to the end. As in Romans 7 - 8 ... each of us has inner struggles which can only be worked out by the Grace of God.

Each letter represents the Lord with particular attributes which correspond to the particular shortcoming peculiar to that body. In my research I found that the name of each city had specific characteristics which helped to explain the concern the Lord was addressing. I have attempted to show all the spiritual contrasts within each church so that they could both pertain to any individual as well as the body at large. These contrasts, derived from concepts found throughout the bible, are meant to provoke and pierce the heart of religiousness so that the sincere will repent and endure to the end.

My hope and prayer is that these pieces could inform non-Believers of the true faith in God and perhaps provoke some to jealousy so that they will join the Kingdom of true Believers. But they were written with the church in mind to remind each to work out a life of faith with fear and trembling--that short of loving the Lord with all one's heart, soul, and strength could end in eternal strife.

I have completed thirty-four pieces and have approximately a dozen left to do in respect to the Book of Revelation. I will make reference but not dwell on the text which artists so prolifically have rendered but rather hope to convey the heart of God concerning the attitude one needs to hold on until the end...

Messianic Huppah

The latest work is from the twelfth chapter which is both well-known and controversial in interpretation. I have paralleled it with the Wedding Banquet parables and see it with a Messianic emphasis although I believe that the art itself can be viewed no matter the interpretation of preference. The text language is obviously symbolic and lends itself to visual interpretation. From the text the element of "when" is not clear as to how this vignette will be interjected into the scheme of prophecy.

Figuratively, the practices of a Jewish wedding describe well the sense of the protection over this woman who represents the culminating fulfillment of man throughout the ages reconciled as one new man (neither being Jew nor Greek). In mind are the first marriage in Genesis all the way to the last word in Revelation of the Bride of Jerusalem and Wedding Feast. The holy sacrament of marriage has been God's heart throughout mankind as the shadow of heavenly things so I refer to the Divine protection offered this woman with child as a "huppah" as a symbol of covering over the bride and groom. Since God is described as light so must His Bride be--so the woman is made of light and awaits the final wedding of the Church including the Jews (in Him there is neither Jew nor Greek) to the Groom when He returns. How profound that today's Pope repents on behalf of the horrors of the Holocaust finally beginning to close this unresolved chasm.

The Great Escape

Another element I used is the grid where I have placed painted plexi panels directly over a simultaneous panel to depict the Seven-Headed Dragon never reaching the Woman in his pursuit against her. The dragon is perpetually on the chase but always frustrated by divine intervention. Whatever he tries to do is fragmented and diluted by the transparent grid and thus is physically thwarted--he can never reach her. Even as the Israelites and Jesus were sent to the desert the woman is chased there to learn how God's love provides for her every need--even eagle's wings to hide and escape quickly from the counterfeit (i.e., of the Holy Spirit's rivers of flowing water) gushes of water the Dragon hurls at her to no avail.

Mercy Seat: War in Heaven

Mosaic also uses this grid format so I use this recently reinstated artform to depict the War in Heaven instrumented by the rage of the Serpent-like Dragon. Ironically it isn't even necessary for the War in Heaven to be fought by God, but rather His Archangel is sent. The serpent or the Devil is hurled to earth for his last destructive finale against this offspring who understand this "New Man" concept. I portray this image using large tiles creating a painted mosaic (i.e., another grid format) directly on the top cover of the Ark of the Covenant known as the Mercy Seat of God.

The Mercy Seat is to remind mankind that God is ultimately loving and full of mercy to those who humble themselves towards Him and that the Ark with its tablets, manna, and staff are still intact figuratively and spiritually for all mankind with the Cherubim interceding for everyone all day and night. The artwork, "the Huppah," bids us to come to the wedding wearing the robes of redemption already provided for any who would believe that the Gospel is the Truth that can set us free from the snares and wiles of Satan. Faith is the *only* thing that pleases God.

About the Artist

Education:

- B.F.A. from Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA, 1977
- M.A. Regent University, School of Theology and Ministry, Virginia Beach, VA, 1988
- M.F.A. from O.D.U/N.S.U Universities Joint Degree, Norfolk, VA, 1991

Permanent Collections:

- Virginia Museum Collection in Legislative Offices, 1980
- Central Fidelity Bank, Charlottesville, VA
- Private Collection of Jack and Nancy Witt, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA
- Private Collection of Dr. Sears, Greenville, NC
- Private Collection of Byrd Saville, Jr., Newport News, VA
- Private Collection of Thomas Benisch, Baltimore, MD
- Leigh Memorable Hospital, Virginia Beach, VA
- Norfolk State University, Norfolk, VA

Solo Exhibitions:

- Woman's Resource Center, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA, 1984
- Danville Museum of Fine Art, Danville, VA, 1985
- Art in Public Places, Several Exhibits thru Fairfax County Council for the Arts, Spring 1986
- Truro Episcopal Church, Fairfax, VA, 1986
- Artist/Designer Show, Greater Reston Art Center (GRACE), Reston, VA, 1988 (video by Channel 8, Wash., DC and Wash., DC Art Critic, David Tannous, critiques Artists/Designers of GRACE)
- Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA, 1989 (published in *Virginia Pilot-Ledger Star* and video made at CBN center)
- Eastern Virginia Medical College, Norfolk, VA, 1989 (published in *Virginia Pilot-Ledger Star*, reviewed by George Tussing)
- Peninsula Fine Arts Center, Newport News, VA, 1990 (published in *Virginia Pilot-Ledger Star*, reviewed by Robert Trotter)
- "SEVEN, SEVEN, SEVEN," University Gallery, O.D.U , 765 Granby St. Norfolk, VA, 1991 (published in *Virginia Pilot-Ledger Star* by Carol Rand and in *Portfolio Magazine*, reviewed by Linda McGreevy)
- "SEVEN, SEVEN, SEVEN," Regent University 1992 (published in *Virginia Pilot-Ledger Star*)
- "SEVEN, SEVEN, SEVEN," Gallery Commons of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Norfolk, VA, 1993
- "SEVEN, SEVEN, SEVEN" Crestar Bank, Norfolk, VA, 1995.
- "SEVEN, SEVEN, SEVEN and the Seven Letters to the Churches," Bayview Baptist Church, Norfolk, VA, 1997

Invitational and Group Exhibitions:

- Five Person Show, Pentagon Gallery, Charlottesville, VA, 1980
- Virginia Artists Show, V.P.I.S. & U., Blacksburg, VA, 1982
- "Virginia Piedmont Landscape Show," Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, VA, 1983
- Three Person Show, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA, 1984
- "Skyscape, Cityscape, Seascape, and Landscape," Peninsula Fine Art Center, Newport News, VA, 1984
- Artist/Designer 1985-1989, Greater Reston Art Center, Reston, VA
- Add Arts Invitational Show, A. Salon, Washington, DC, 1985
- Two Person Show, Sperry Corporation. Reston, VA, 1986
- "Natural Transactions," 15 Washington Area's Landscape Artists, Martin Luther King Library, 1986 (award)
- Three Person Show, C.P.I. Exhibition Program, Reston, VA, 1986 (published in *The Connection Newspaper*)
- "Best-of-Year Group Show," Martin Luther King Library, Washington, DC, 1986
- Four Person Show, Peninsula Fine Arts Center, 1987 (published in *Virginia Pilot-Ledger Star*)
- Twelve Grace Artists at the Foundary Gallery, Wash., DC, 1989, (published in the *Washington Journal*)
- The Hahn Gallery, Philadelphia, VA, 1990

Selected Juried Exhibitions:

- Bi-annual Juried Shows, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, 1979 and 1981
- Eleventh & twelfth Annual Juried Shows, 2nd Street Gallery, Charlottesville, VA, 1983 and 1984 (awards)
- Bath County Annual Show, Bath, VA, 1983 (award)
- "Creation Birth Show," Washington Women's Art Center, Washington, DC, 1985
- Peninsula Fine Arts Annual Juried Exhibition 1987 and 1988, Newport News, VA (award of distinction)
- Irene Leach Memorial Exhibition 1988, Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA
- "Small Portfolio" juried by Julie Boyd Institute of Contemporary Art, Virginia Museum Fine Arts, Richmond, VA, 1989, (award and published in *Virginia Pilot-Ledger Star*)
- "Members Only" Juried Show, Virginia Beach Center For the Arts, 1992
- Greater Reston Art Center Juried Show, Reston, VA, 1992
- "New Waves" Juried Show, Virginia Beach Center for the Arts, 1993
- "Mid-Atlantic National Show" D'Art Center, Norfolk, VA, 1993

Selected Teaching:

- Artist-in-residence New Community School, Richmond, VA, 1979-1980
- Private Landscape Painting Classes, Richmond, VA, 1984
- Pastel Painting, Christian Univ. of the Arts, Newport News, VA, 1989
- Figure Drawing, Norfolk State Univ., Norfolk, VA, 1990
- The Art Room, Studio Classes, Chesapeake, VA, 1991-92
- Private Classes (Figure, Anatomy, Pastel, Painting), current

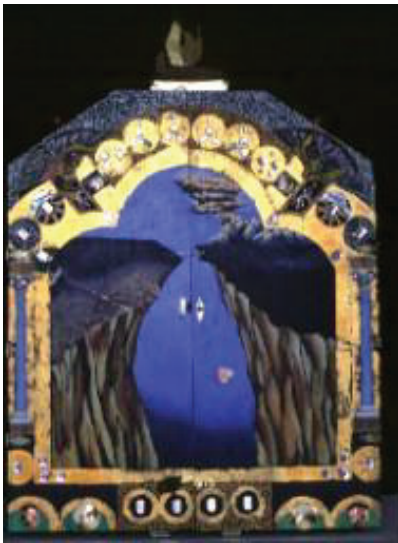
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by Devi Anne Moore
April 6 - June 19, 1998

About the Artist and her Art ...

WORKS ON DISPLAY

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Rev. 2:1-7 -- Letter to the Church of Ephesus, constructed painting, 24"x 28"x 8"

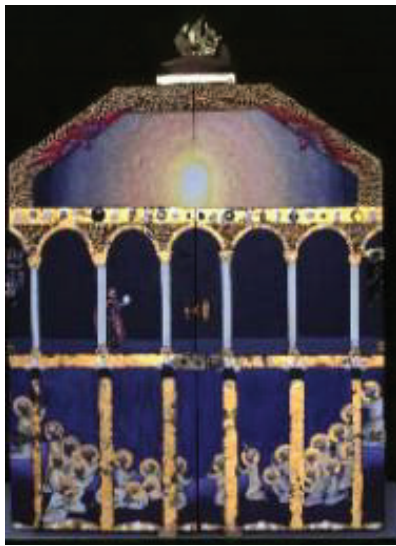


Rev. 2:8-11 -- Letter to the Church of Smyrna, constructed painting, 24"x 28"x 8"



Rev. 2:12-17 -- Letter to the Church of Pergamum, constructed painting, 24"x 28"x 8"

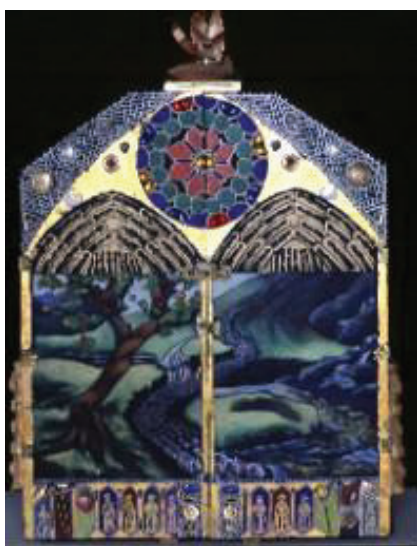




Rev. 2:18-29 -- Letter to the Church of Thyratira, constructed painting, 24"x 28"x 8"



Rev. 3: 1-6 -- Letter to the Church of Sardis, constructed painting, 24"x 28"x 8"



Rev. 3: 7-13 -- Letter to the Church of Philadelphia, constructed painting, 24"x 28"x 8"



Rev. 3: 14-21 -- Letter to the Church of Laodicea, constructed painting, 24"x 28"x 8"



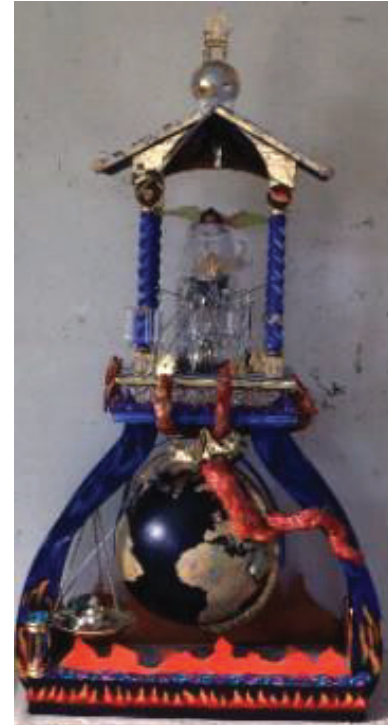


Rev. 12-13: Mercy Seat: War in Heaven
mosaic, stained glass, assemblage, 52"x 35"x 15"

Rev.12: Woman Clothed with the Sun
oil on luan/acrylic on plexiglas panels, 45"x 36"x 2"



Rev. 12: The Great Escape
oil on luan/acrylic on plexiglas panels, 55"x 30"x 2"



Rev. 12-13: Messianic Huppah
assemblage with light, 25"x 50"x 18"

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