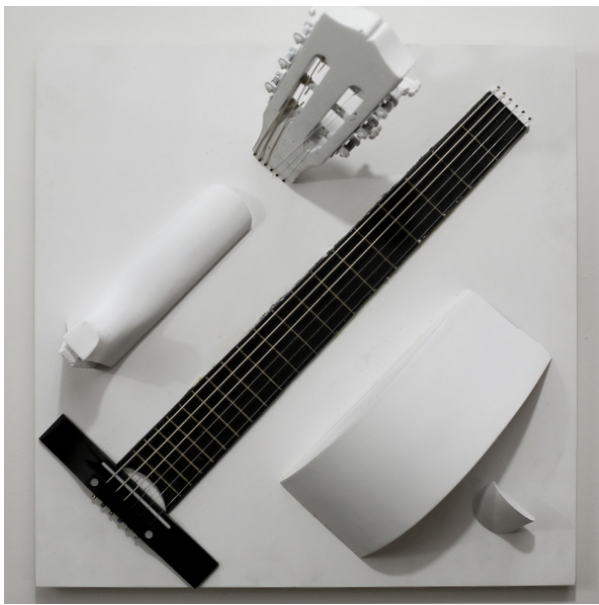


CHRIST IN THE

psalms

the ARTWORK guide

2016



54

Jonathan Combs

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About the art:

The piece is meant to evoke a sense of familiarity. The parts are all there but they've been neatly taken apart and arranged in some kind of dysfunctional collage. David had been betrayed by a group of people he had lent aid to while hiding from Saul. In this Psalm he is bemoaning their betrayal and asking God to help. It's a song written for stringed instruments from a very broken place in David's life.

This idea came to me the second I read David's words and I let the guitar dictate some of the process. It was old and different sections of it were already peeling apart. I used a circular saw to cut the neck and body, a drill for the different sections for the strings, finished off by a white can of spray paint.

About the artist:

I grew up in the dusty hot plains of Texas. With little beauty and adventure in the actual landscape I was quickly drawn to photography and graphic design as an outlet. My wife and I have lived in Denver for over two years creating branding identities and taking photographs for small businesses together.



55

Jeremy Grant

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About the art:

This piece is made from hand-cut magazine imagery encased in resin. When building a collage, I choose my source imagery for both its color and content; what it looks like and what it implies.

The lighter figure, in the foreground is our protagonist. He has been wronged, he is grieved and confused, he wants to escape, but the conflict has pierced him, and holds him in place. Everything about him longs for the remote and quiet places of earth and sky – and thus the imagery there is of ground and sky, birds and open places.

Darker, moodier colors characterize the betrayer figure. I wanted to blur the boundaries between the two figures at their base, since they're brothers, they're identified together, and it's a little unclear where one ends and the other begins. On the betrayer's face I wanted to pull back the layers, the red tones associated with blood and fire - the emotions and intentions made plain. The top-most layer of collage gives an impression of a web, or of broken pottery shards. These sharp pieces pierce and wound the protagonist, but they completely envelop and ensnare the betrayer. The Psalmist says, "Men of blood and treachery will not live out half their days. But I will trust in you."

About the artist:

Jeremy Grant is an emerging artist and award-winning graphic designer. He was born in California in 1985. He studied Graphic Design and Illustration at John Brown University. Grant has exhibited his collage and assemblage work regularly across Colorado since 2008. An active member of local arts communities, Jeremy has been invited to participate in numerous group shows, donated art to charity, and been awarded a PPAC micro-grant. His work explores themes of destruction & creation, death & resurrection, chaos & familiarity. Jeremy Grant currently lives and works in Denver, Colorado.



56

Caitlin Ahlenius

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About the art:

As I studied Psalm 56, I was struck by the relationship between fear and hope. I've always been so deeply moved by David's faith in God, no matter the circumstance. Fear and hope seem to be opposites that can't possibly coexist, but the beauty is this: hope comes into fuller vision when fear is already present. And, the true proof of faith comes when we are able to resist the ease with which fear seems to steal all of our hope.

In this piece, the strings around my body depict the chaos of fear - all of David's oppressors. The strings wrapped around my eyes—the blinding grip of fear. But oh, faith is not of sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). As David says, "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?...You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle." My face turned toward the light; toward God and his word —a posture of praise, trust, and hope.

About the artist:

Caitlin Ahlenius is a lifestyle branding photographer.



57

Jennie Pitts

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About the art:

When I painted this, the weather outside resembled somber, rainy "Seattle" weather and my emotions followed suit. As I laid out the palette, the colors came to me first—dark navy and deep crimson fit for the weightiness of the emotions in the psalm, and light turquoise/blue, gold and white combat the darkness and reflect the heavens above the earth. With colors chosen, I re-read Psalm 57 over and over again, and then picked up a paintbrush. There is a raw truth and heaviness in the somber reality of this Psalm and I felt compelled to use a heavy background depicting the "storms of destruction" that continually try to disturb the sweet quiet of trust and belief. The eagle was a vivid visual upon reading "...in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by."

Meditating on Psalm 57, I was reminded how God often uses the storms in my life to interrupt my own sinful attempts to control. The difficult and seemingly hopeless circumstances that invade my life make me doubt and question God's goodness. My mind is clouded by fear and prone to wander from belief. In the same way a child cries out for their mother when they feel lost, defeated, and in need of saving, we cry out in desperation to believe and hope again—"Be merciful, O God." Just when we begin to feel as though we will soon be devoured by our circumstances, "(our) souls are in the midst of lions," and darkness is upon us—"He will send from heaven, and save me; He will put to shame him who tramples on me." As I painted, I realized it is me whom He will put to shame, I am so often the one who tramples on myself and my sin causes destruction in my own life. Jesus restores deep rest and the peace of belief when our hope is in He who conquers the darkness of our own hearts. When we sing praises to the one who "awakens the dawn" in our hearts, the Light bursts forth and we ride on the wings of dawn, free to trust and proclaim the glory of the One who saves us from ourselves.

About the artist:

Jennie is originally from Austin, Texas. She started her own business, Jennie Lou Art, two and a half years ago and now works as a full-time artist in Denver. She specializes in live wedding/event painting, and personalized commission pieces. Currently, she has a studio in the RiNo Arts District at the Globeville Riverfront Arts Center (G.R.A.Ce.).



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EB Combs

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About the art:

Painting for Psalm 58, I created a linear piece from left to right with acrylic paints. The purpose of the linear quality is that there will in fact be a time in which God's wrath is carried out on the wicked. The harsh terms in which this Psalm references that event lays heavy on my heart. The interaction of the paints, starting on the left and moving towards the right, represent that event. It also represents my struggle with trusting God in His wrath. That violent characteristic is often hard for me to process when considering who God is. In verse 7 of the Psalm, all of the violence moves to a distinctly different mood in which the wicked are withering away—"Let them vanish like water that runs away." In the last third of the piece, the paint and the wickedness is swept away.

About the artist:

I am a Texas-native, now based out of the lovely Denver, CO. My husband Jonathan and I have the pleasure of working alongside our good friend, Rachel Lauren Nichols. The three of us design brand identities via the Whistler & the Well and photograph creation via EB+JC Photography.



59

Leah Michelle Mills

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About the art:

In the midst of David's plea for God to protect and deliver him from his enemies he declares,

"BUT I will sing of your strength;

I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.

For you have been to me a fortress

and a refuge in the day of my distress.

O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love." (Psalm 59:16-17)

This piece represents a banner of praise and promise lifted up to God in trust, no matter what is below.

Piece is oil paint applied by palette knife on hand-stretched, unprimed canvas.

About the artist:

With a BFA in studio art and photography, Leah is a full-time fine art wedding photographer and painter. She is also the creator of SURELYprints.com.



60

Benjamin Rogers

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About the art:

I used my son's toys to illustrate David's petulant anger at God for the calamity that surrounds him. David is represented by the hippo, seemingly screaming at the light source with his home and his men in disarray and out of focus in the background. The light source was placed in a cardboard box to show David's compartmentalization in this moment. However the box is unfolded and under where the hippo is standing and his men in the back are contained in a white box, showing that all things have been set in place by the Lord.

Piece is oil paint on panel.

About the artist:

Benjamin Rogers received his MFA in Painting from Arizona State University in 2011. His work has been exhibited across the country and featured on the covers of New American Paintings, Fresh Paint Magazine and ArtVoices Magazine. He currently teaches Painting, Drawing, Watercolor and Color Theory at Red Rocks Community College.



61

Alexandria Ladue

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About the art:

In the midst of creating this piece, life has been chaotic. I've (we've) had a lot of life changes in the past 6 months and it's just been a bunch of never-ending transitions. I also haven't picked up a paint brush in a few years so I've been fighting my insecurities about my abilities. But through reading Psalm 61, I was carried through to completion. The negative space used reflects the 'negatives' in our lives, while also helping the viewer see past the illusion that the enemy is in control. Through the clouds, may we always look up.

About the artist:

Alex is from the Great State of Texas. She studied Art History and French for her BFA and Business for her MBA. Originally she started as a painting major, but realized she loved being an art critic more so than being a creator of art. She and her husband Travis moved to Denver about 3 years ago and have since opened two businesses.



62

Lane Geurkink

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About the art:

I wanted the piece to be high energy while still feeling peaceful. I used the color palette to create contrast and used quick energized brush strokes to play off of each other.

Birch wood panel with acrylic and charcoal.

About the artist:

Lane is a local artist working in small to large scale abstract paintings.



63

Bethany Siekmeier

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About the art:

With this painting I went a little crazy and used a medium I'm less comfortable with—acrylic (and pastel). I chose Psalm 63 because I love the way David expresses that the love of God is “better than life.” It is oddly comforting to me that, though I look day and night to be filled by other pleasures, it is only God that will satisfy me. It gives me peace to know that all the pains and triumphs in life are nothing compared to his love.

I want this painting to reflect the dry desert in comparison to the power and glory that is God. In the warm reds and yellows is where I am dry and faint, searching for God, but the cool blue is where God restores and satisfies and teaches my lips to praise him.

About the artist:

My name is Bethany. I was born and raised in Colorado. I'm the middle of five siblings. I divide my time between nannying for the world's cutest baby and designing florals for an event-florist in Denver. I also dabble in calligraphy and watercolor illustration.



64

Ruth Harper Johnson

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About the art:

The moment I began to read this Psalm a clear image formed in my head. I saw the creepy storm swirling, the white arrows coming from above, the calm and protection in being one with the Almighty. This is my own story. When I keep my mind's eyes on Him, bigger than any circumstance and fear, then I find myself in that channel of calm and comfort and trust.

The woman is "everyone"—open, facing upwards, relaxed hands, trusting that God will keep her safe and calm. "Hear me, my God, as I voice my complaint; protect my life from the threat of the enemy."

For this watercolor I stretched and dried the paper, then covered the woman and arrows with masking fluid. I washed a few colors wet-in-wet for so texture (green, yellow, red, indigo), drying in-between, and salting for texture. Lastly I dribbled and dragged sepia and black inks on wet paper for the creepy stuff, and let them flow and bleed where they may.

I painted the woman last, attempting to make her as 'generic' as possible to show an unpretentious, dependent, and humble heart before the Lord. "The righteous will rejoice in the Lord and take refuge in him; all the upright in heart will glory in him!"

About the artist:

Ruth E. (Harper) Johnson is a self-taught English artist who heartily knits images and stories together with pencils and paintbrushes and is often snatched up by the breezes and colors of God's incredible creation. She is the illustrator of #1 NY Times best seller *The Kissing Hand*, *Sassafras*, and recently completed *Happy Mamas* (due out fall 2016).



65

Keli Linehan

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About the art:

When reading Psalm 65, I felt overwhelmed by the abundance that God provides us. We are in need of Him, we are fearful of Him, we are satisfied by Him, we are enriched through Him—we are all things, by Him.

This Psalm speaks to God's abundance through multiple references to water, a common representation of Christ in scripture. This inspired me to paint an image of a woman partially submerged in water. The part of her that is under water is clear and unbroken, while the part of her that has emerged from the water appears distorted and confused—representing how we can be made whole while fully soaking in the Lord's presence.

About the artist:

Keli Linehan is originally from Austin, Texas and moved to Denver in 2013. She and her husband just welcomed their baby boy, Harvey, into the world in January. Keli is a Creative Director at Made Movement, an advertising agency in Boulder, CO.