

Golgotha 2022

An Exhibition of Paintings by
Stephen Tromans KC

39 Essex Chambers
81 Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1DD
7-15 November 2023



This Catalogue accompanies an exhibition of selected works from my “Golgotha 2022” exhibition held in the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral from 18 February – 17 March 2023. This smaller exhibition of selected works is the idea of Edwin Glasgow KC who purchased one of the original works. It is hoped that this smaller exhibition will help to broaden awareness of these works, to maintain solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Ukraine, or who have been forced to flee Ukraine, and to raise money to support the ongoing relief of those affected by this brutal war, now approaching its second winter.

Copies of this reprinted catalogue may be purchased in return for a donation to the UNHCR Ukraine Appeal via a JustGiving page created by 39 Essex Chambers. Details of how to do this are on the back cover.

Some of the works are available for purchase as originals: the price is indicated where this is the case. Most are available to purchase as high quality prints on art paper or canvas. Details are given on the inside back cover.

Grateful thanks go to Edwin Glasgow KC for his drive and encouragement in supporting this initiative and for loan of “Golgotha”. Thanks also go to Dr Michael Grant de Longeuil for the loan of “Crucifixion of the Earth”.

Finally thanks are due to the Marketing Department at 39 Essex Chambers for their efficient support, and to 39 Essex Chambers generally for hosting the event.

Stephen Tromans KC

Work for sale

An important aspect of this exhibition is to raise funds for the UNHCR Appeal for victims and refugees of the war in Ukraine, which continues to cause great hardship.

Some works are for sale as originals. These are indicated in the catalogue with the price.

All works are available as prints on high quality art paper or on canvas. Prices are:

Full size paper print: £450 (includes £50 for printing and postage)

Half size paper print: £250 (includes £50 for printing and postage)

Full size print on canvas: £600 (includes £100 for printing and postage)

These prices include printing and postage to your chosen address in the UK. The cost of printing and postage is payable separately to Stephen Tromans, and the balance is payable by making a donation to the JustGiving page at <https://www.justgiving.com/page/stephen-tromans-kc-ukraine>



Please note that Gift Aid cannot be claimed on the donation

If you wish to purchase either an original work or a print,
please contact Stephen Tromans KC at
stephen.tromans@39essex.com



Original exhibition held 18 February – 17 March 2023 in the Lady Chapel, Ely Cathedral, with kind permission of the Dean and Chapter

Further Exhibition of selected works held 7 – 15 November 2023 at 39 Essex Chambers, 81 Chancery Lane, London

**PLEASE MAKE A DONATION FOR THIS CATALOGUE TO THE UNHCR
HUMANITARIAN APPEAL FOR UKRAINE AT
<https://www.justgiving.com/page/stephen-tromans-kc-ukraine>**

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**THE SUGGESTED DONATION IS £20.
GIFT AID CANNOT BE CLAIMED**

Original Preface to Ely Lady Chapel Exhibition Catalogue

On 24 February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine. This profoundly shocking action was to give rise over the ensuing months to untold human misery in loss of life, injury, rapes and other war crimes, the separation of families, mental and physical trauma and loss of homes and possessions. It was the cause of the worst refugee crisis in Europe since World War II.

Almost immediately after the invasion, I began a series of paintings, setting these terrible events against the Easter story, which was unfolding at the same time. In these works on display in the beautiful setting of the Lady Chapel at Ely Cathedral one year later, I try to draw out what the meaning of Christ's Passion was, and what it has to say now in speaking to human suffering and human evil.

Like many people I suspect, my immediate reaction to the news of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022 was one of shock and incredulity. As newspaper and TV news coverage brought each day more accounts of Russian brutality, deaths of civilians through indiscriminate shelling and missile attacks and the plight of those forced to flee their homes, feelings turned to admiration for the bravery of the Ukrainian people, and anger at those responsible for perpetrating a profoundly unjust and evil war.

The project of creating these paintings was bookended by two significant experiences. In the period before Lent 2022 I had been working on a religious triptych, "*Transfiguration, Crucifixion and Resurrection*", which was exhibited in my local parish church, St Andrew's Impington, near Cambridge. Oddly, much of the tone and colour of these works prefigured the images of war from Ukraine. One afternoon, stewing with anger against Vladimir Putin, I went for a walk over to the church. A very clear voice came into my head, saying essentially, "There is enough hatred in the world, there is no need to add to it", and then immediately, "Paint this."

The work came in two main phases: an initial burst of activity over the Spring and early Summer, which resulted in a number of images which I was able to show at my Cambridge Open Studio in early July 2022. Visitors included a number of Ukrainians who had been offered homes by people in our local villages. Their reaction was that I had captured the essence of what was going on in Ukraine. Then there was a second burst of activity in the period after November 2022, by which time I had the opportunity to have read and reflected further on events. Some of this work was challenging, as I was suffering from problematic vision following an eye operation.

The other bookend to the project occurred on Epiphany Sunday, 8th January 2023, which coincided with the Ukrainian Christmas. The penultimate painting had been completed about two days previously. I listened to Sunday Worship on Radio 4, which was titled "*The Indestructibility of Hope*" and was presented by bestselling

Ukrainian writer Nadiya Gerbish. The message of this intensely moving broadcast was that the Christmas message is the indestructibility of hope in times of greatest hopelessness. It included inspiring and humbling testimony from a survivor of the siege of Mariupol, who was able to say, "I saw God at Mariupol". The reason for the indestructible hope of Christmas is of course exactly the same reason as the indestructible hope of Easter, which is the theme of these works: it is that God does not remain an impassive spectator of human suffering, but identifies with that suffering in the most personal way conceivable through the life and death of Jesus Christ. I have had the words from the broadcast very much in mind in preparing the text for this brochure.

You may find echoes in some works of the ways in which great artists of the past, such as Goya, Picasso, Rubens, and Rembrandt have sought to depict both the horrors of war, and the suffering of Christ. I hope that you will find here food for reflection as we again approach Easter, and that you will be prompted to pray for the people of Ukraine, and for peace in that country and in our world.

Stephen Tromans
February 2023



Golgotha 2022

Oil over collage on board. 20 x 24 inches

Not for sale.

Original shown by kind permission of Edwin Glasgow KC.

Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover

This was painted early on in the war, as refugees were beginning to flee and terrible reports were beginning to emerge of civilian deaths. The figures were inspired by Lorenzo Lotto's painting in the Courtauld Gallery, London.



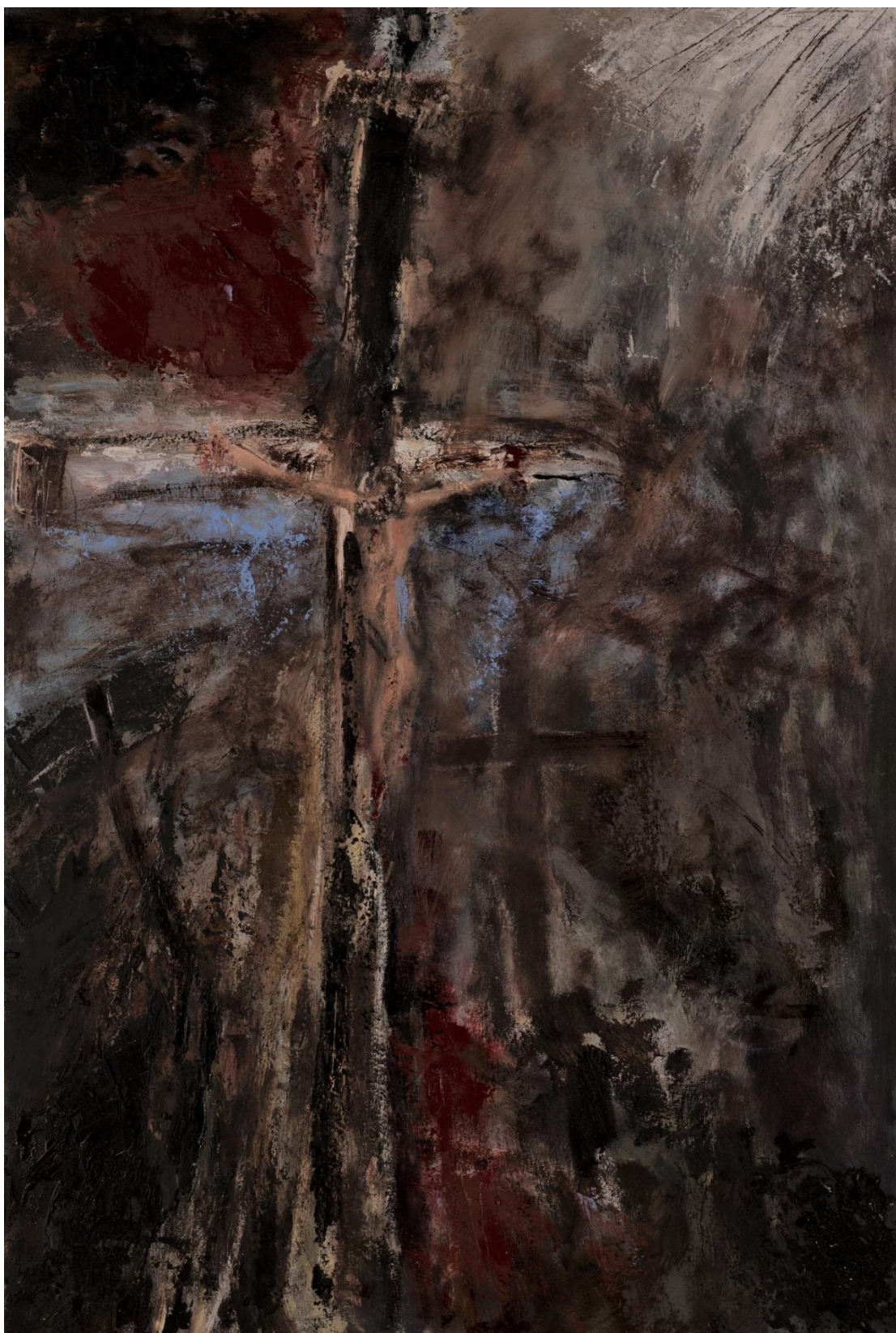
Easter Triptych 2022

For some years I had been thinking about painting a religious triptych, but it was not until January 2022 that I had the inspiration as to how to approach it. *Crucifixion* was the first to be produced. At that time newspapers and TV news were speculating about the possibility of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, with troops and equipment massing on the border in purported exercises. This painting drew heavily on some of the techniques of JMW Turner in his turbulent seascapes, as I sought to depict the drama and cosmic significance of the event of Christ's death. The colours are of darkness and blood, but with the blue of grace evident around the cross.

Crucifixion was followed by *Transfiguration* and *Resurrection*. By the time the paintings were displayed in St Andrew's Church, Impington, Cambridge, the war had begun and some of those viewing the images commented on the aptness of the tones and colours for a war scenario. In both *The Crucifixion* and *Resurrection*, the figures of Christ were not consciously painted. They emerged and evolved seemingly quite spontaneously.



Detail, *Resurrection*



Crucifixion

Oil on board, 30 x 20 inches

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover



Transfiguration

Oil on board, 30 x 20 inches

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover



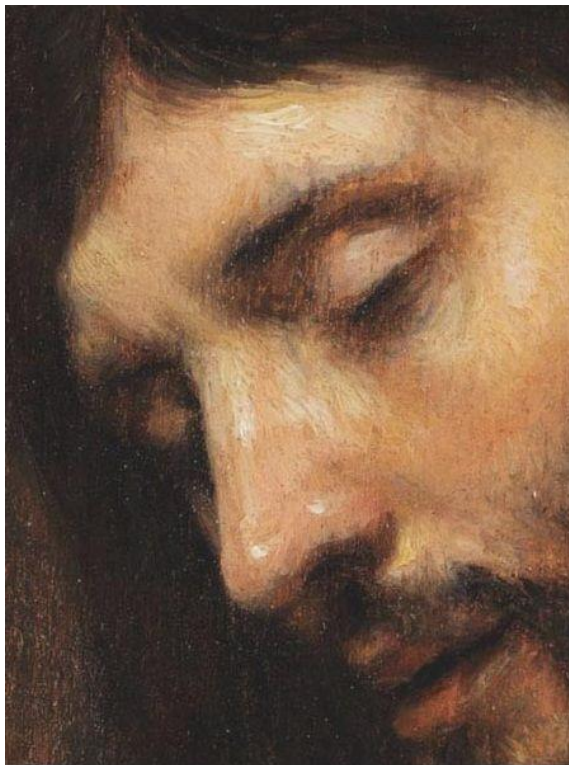
Resurrection

Oil on board, 30 x 20"

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover

Four Faces of Christ

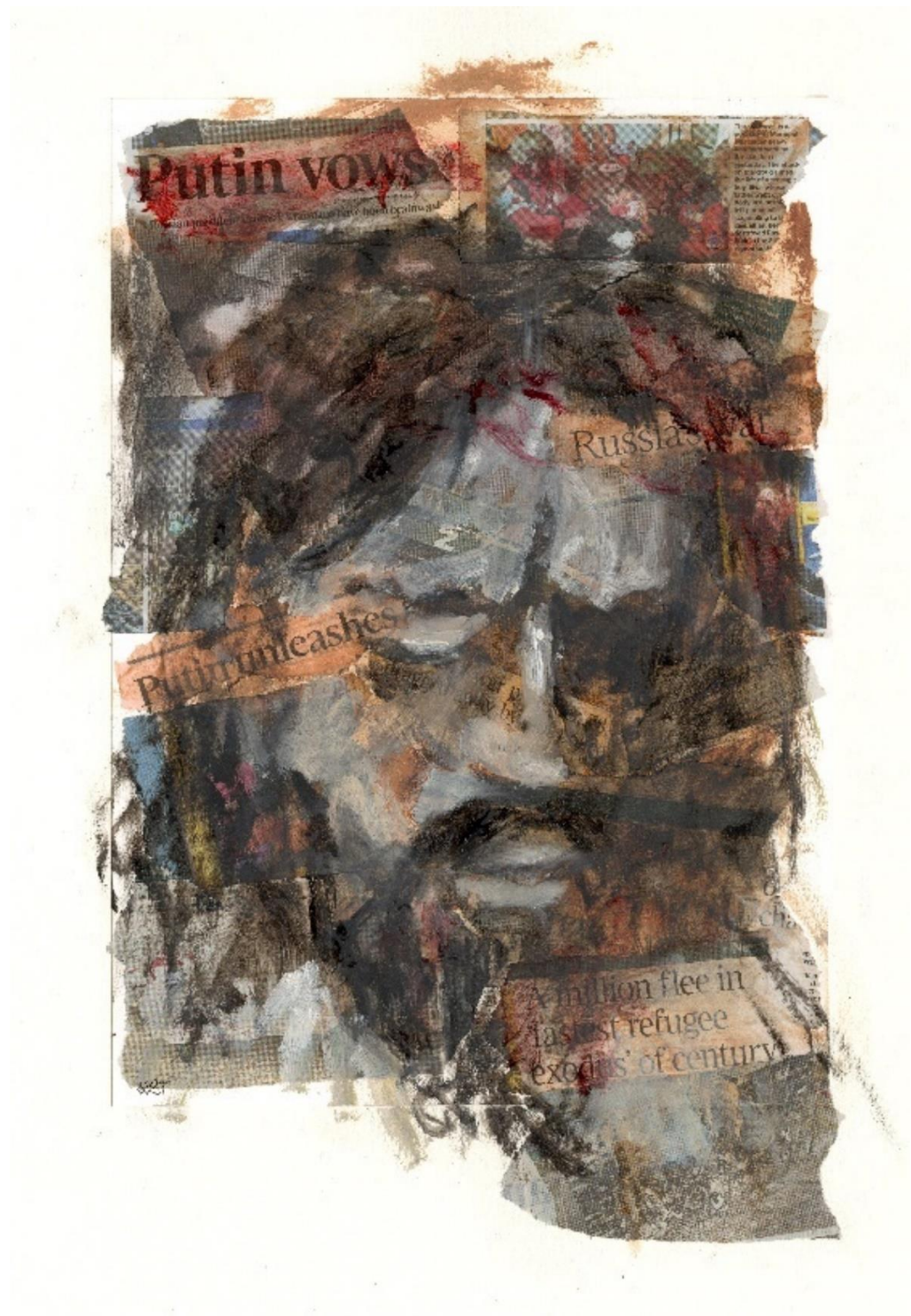
In this series of four images, the suffering and crucified Christ looks on the millions crucified in various ways in the war in Ukraine, and indeed in so many brutal conflicts elsewhere in the world. The portraits are loosely based on the faces of Christ painted by Rembrandt, it is believed using a young Jewish man as a model. Some years ago I was lucky enough to be in Philadelphia when the Art Museum held a major exhibition of Rembrandt's studies and finished works of these images, which collectively made a great impact.



Alien World

Oil over collage on paper, 18 x 12 inches

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover



Putin vows

Oil over collage on paper, 18 x 12 inches

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover



Unimaginable

Oil over collage on paper, 18 x 12 inches

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover



Crown of Thorns

Oil over collage on paper, 18 x 12 inches

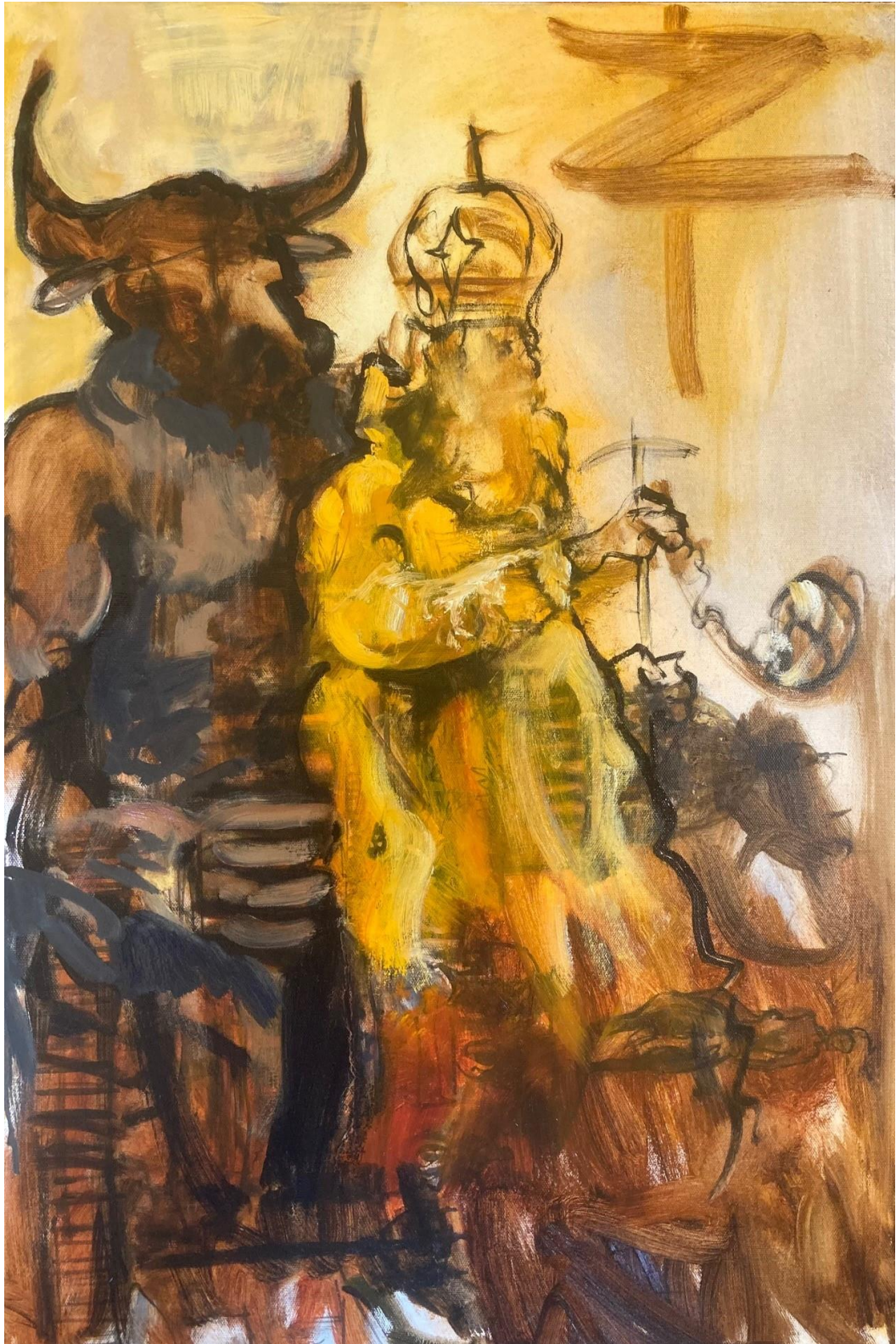
Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover

Complicity of the Russian Orthodox Church

A shocking aspect of the war waged by Russia on the people of Ukraine has been not just the absence of dissent by the Russian Orthodox Church, but the active encouragement offered to Vladimir Putin's regime. Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia, as head of the Church is a key ally of Putin and has called for Russians to support the war. As stated by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Russian Orthodox Church apparently sees no problem in bestowing sacred qualities on a brutal war against a neighbouring Orthodox country. In the early stages of mobilization, Kirill announced that Russian soldiers who died on the battlefield would have "undoubtedly committed an act equivalent to sacrifice" and expressed the belief that "this sacrifice washes away all the sins that a person has committed". One can only speculate on what Jesus might say in response to this appalling theology and perverted view of sacrifice. Patriarch Kirill features in a number of works in the exhibition. *In Patriarch Kirill Celebrates Easter* he is accompanied by a Minotaur, a beast used by Picasso in some of his work to embody the worst and most bestial aspects of humanity. In *Kirill Displays His Icons*, he stands before images of some of the victims of his purportedly sacred war.



Detail, *Kirill Displays His Icons*



Patriarch Kirill Celebrates Easter 2022

Oil on canvas, 24" x 20"

Original for sale, £5,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover



Kirill Displays His Icons

Oil on board, 30" x 20"

Original for sale, £5,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover



Christ Scourged

Oil on canvas, 22 x 19 inches

Original for sale, £5,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

Rubens, *The Flagellation of Christ*, in St Paul's Church, Antwerp



Rape: a conversation with Goya

I suppose we all knew that there would be incidents of rape by Russian troops, but the scale and barbarity of it have been appalling, with all the emotional damage to the victims and their children and families. Goya made a series of images of rapes and associated murders in his series *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (*Disasters of War*) (1808-1815) during the French occupation of Spain in the Peninsular War. This is a difficult subject to depict, but has to be confronted. For children witnessing such violation, the perpetrators must indeed have appeared as monsters. That the war is blessed by the Church in Russia makes it all the more abhorrent.



The Rape

Oil over collage on board, 20 x 24 inches

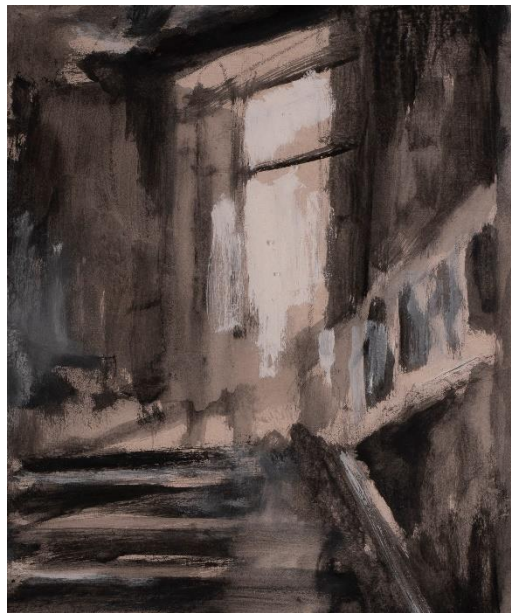
Original for sale, £5,500. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover



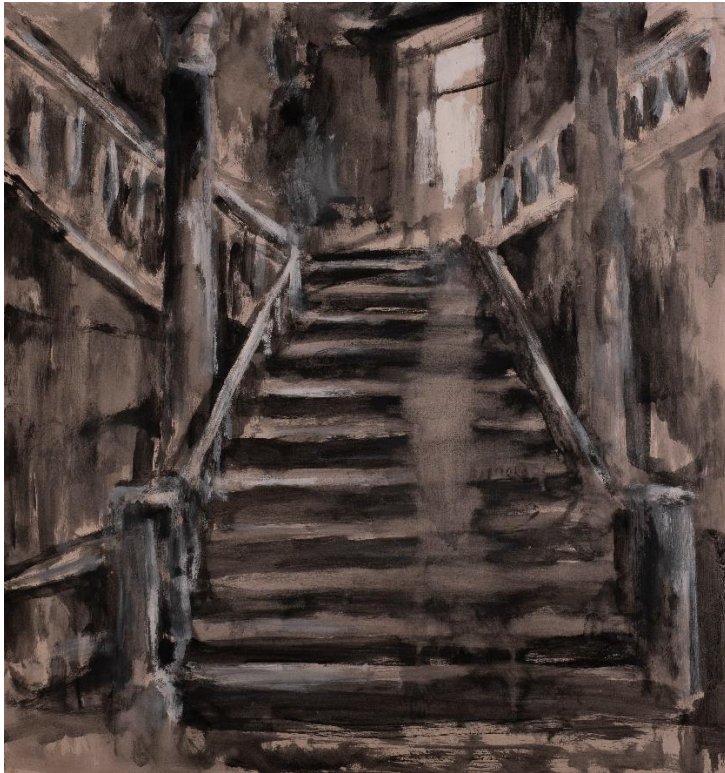
War Crime Sites are Holy Places

Names we were unfamiliar with have become known to us as locations where multiple deaths have taken place in horrific circumstances, where missile strikes have flattened residential apartment blocks, or places where innocent civilians were seeking shelter and safety. On March 16, 2022, Russian forces bombed the Donetsk Academic Regional Drama Theatre in Mariupol which was in use as an air raid shelter by a large number of civilians. The attack was rapidly classified as a war crime. Later, as towns and villages were liberated from Russian occupation, such as Izyum, makeshift mass burial sites were found beneath the forest floor, some with simple wooden crosses, many without even that. War crime investigators exhumed bodies of hundreds of civilians, including children.

In a series of paintings executed in monochrome tempera, these sites have been depicted in their starkness. The images are distorted to indicate the trauma inflicted. We can only believe that these places are made holy by the innocent deaths and sufferings which occurred there.



Detail, *The Theatre I*



The Theatre I

Tempera on board, 26 x 24"

Original for sale, £3,700. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover



The Theatre II

Tempera on board, 24 x 20"

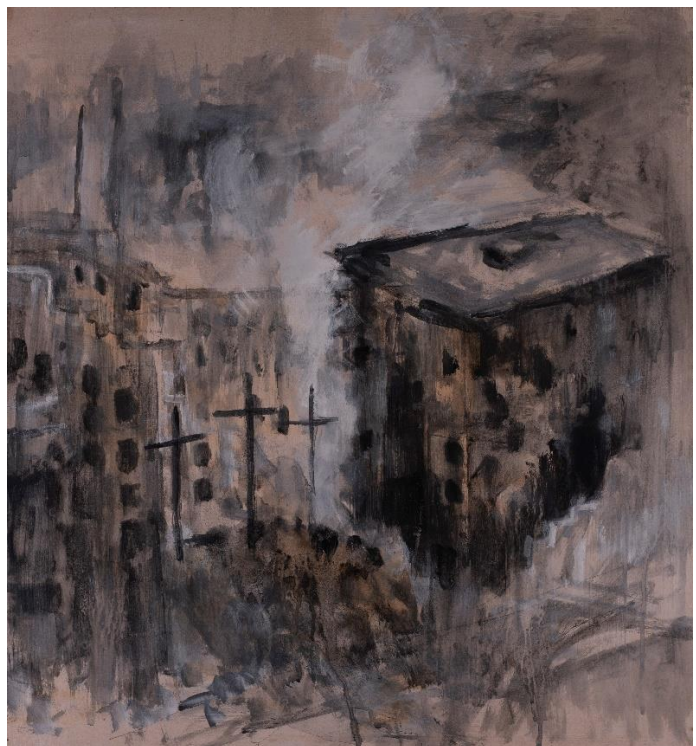
Original for sale, £3,700. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover



In the Forest

Tempera on board, 24 x 20"

Original for sale, £3,700. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover



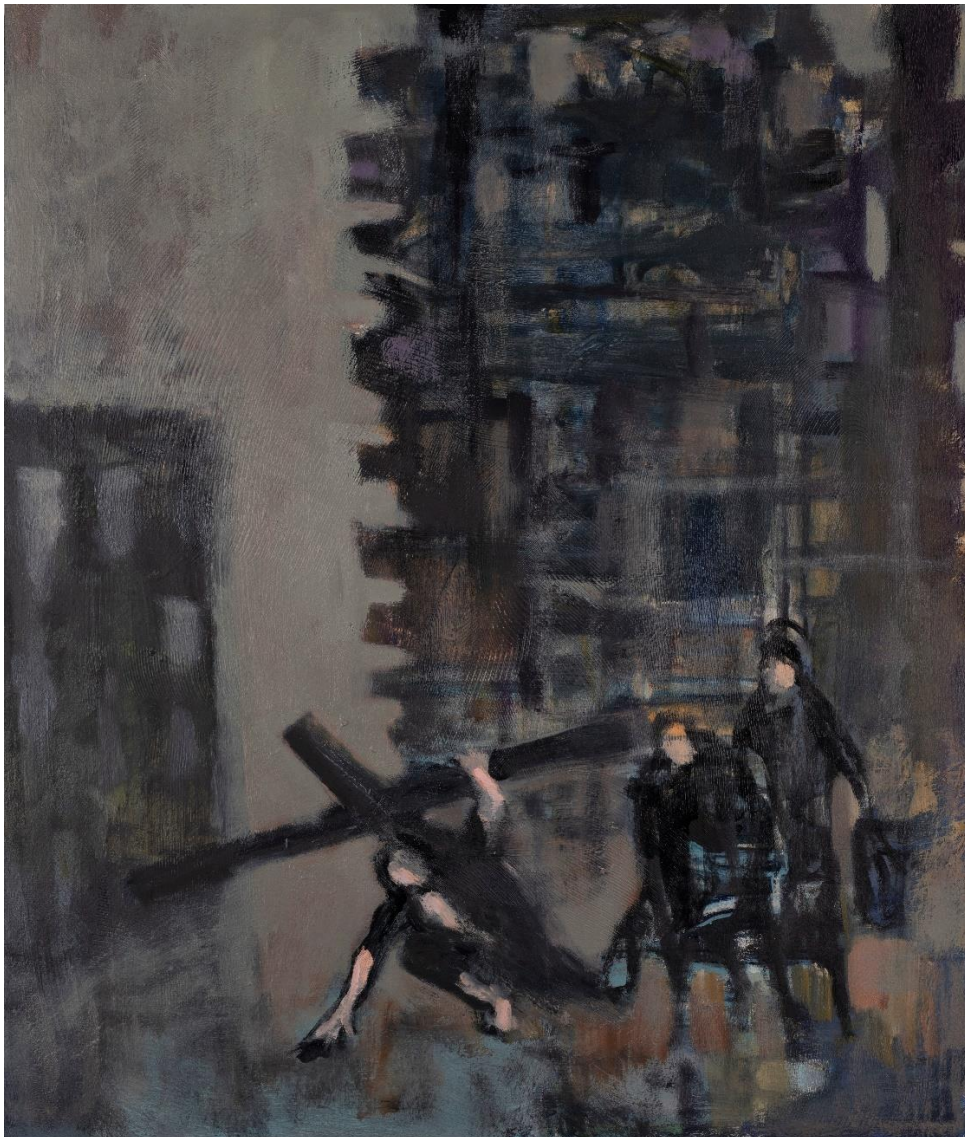
After the Strike

Tempera on board, 24 x 20"

Original for sale, £3,700. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

Via Dolorosa

There have been numerous images of remaining civilians, often elderly and infirm, eking out a miserable and precarious existence in ruined towns and cities, often living in basements. In this image, drawing on these news items, we see that the message of Easter is that Christ is alongside those who suffer, identifying with them fully.



Via Dolorosa

Oil on board, 24 x 20 inches

Original for sale, £4,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

After the Scourging

Christ is mocked and assaulted by soldiers and police. The true scale of Russian brutality had not become fully apparent at the point this picture was painted, but in Russia itself police were swiftly extinguishing any attempts at public protest.



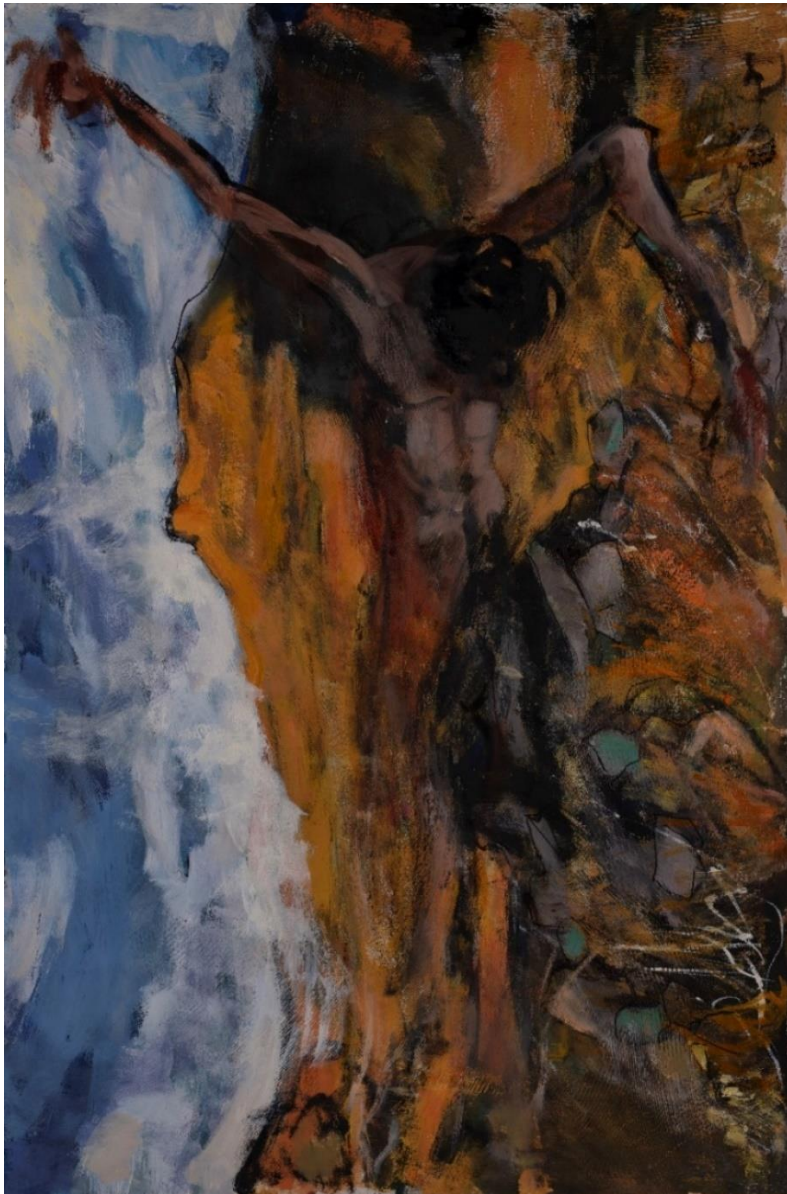
After the Scourging

Oil over collage on board, 20 x 24 inches

Original for sale. £5,500. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

Crucifixion of the Earth

In this image, the crucifixion is depicted over a dislocated landscape. The war has resulted in indiscriminate environmental devastation, not least the risks presented to nuclear power plants. Christians believe that Christ's death was not simply for the benefit of humanity, but to rescue the entirety of the created order.



Crucifixion of the Earth

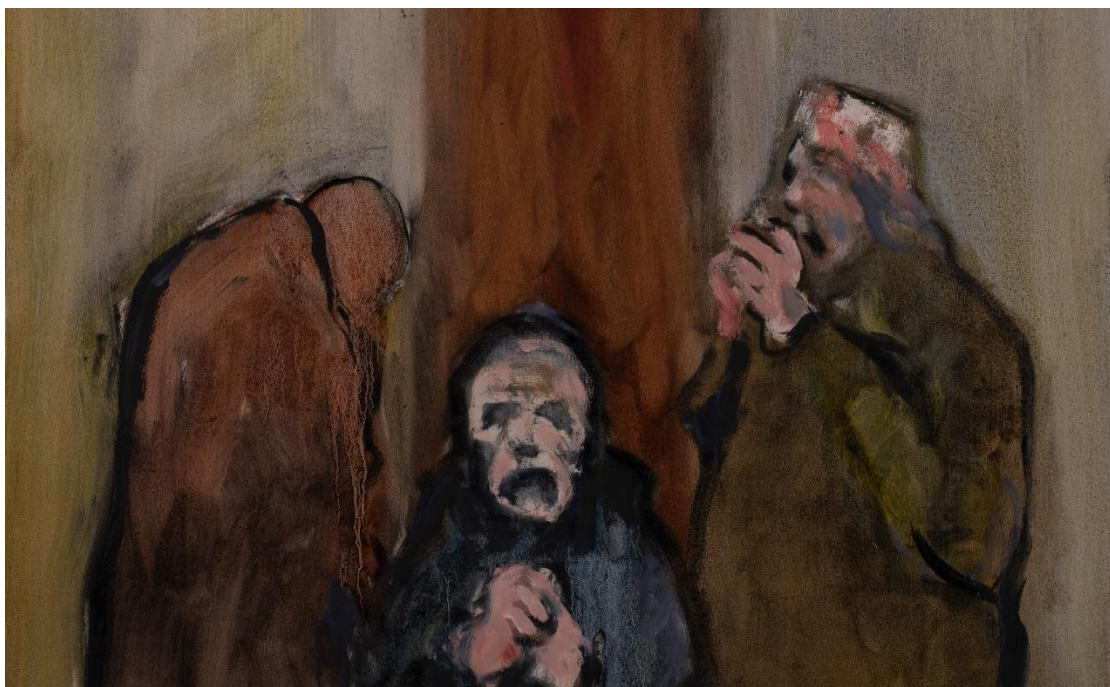
Oil on board, 30 x 20 inches

Shown with kind permission of Dr Michael Grant de Longueil.

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover

Three Women at the Cross

This image draws on news photographs of Ukrainian women in dejection and anguish and places them at the foot of Christ's cross. The tortured feet of Christ echo those portrayed more horrifically by Matthias Grünewald in his Isenheim Altarpiece (1512-1516).





Three Women at the Cross

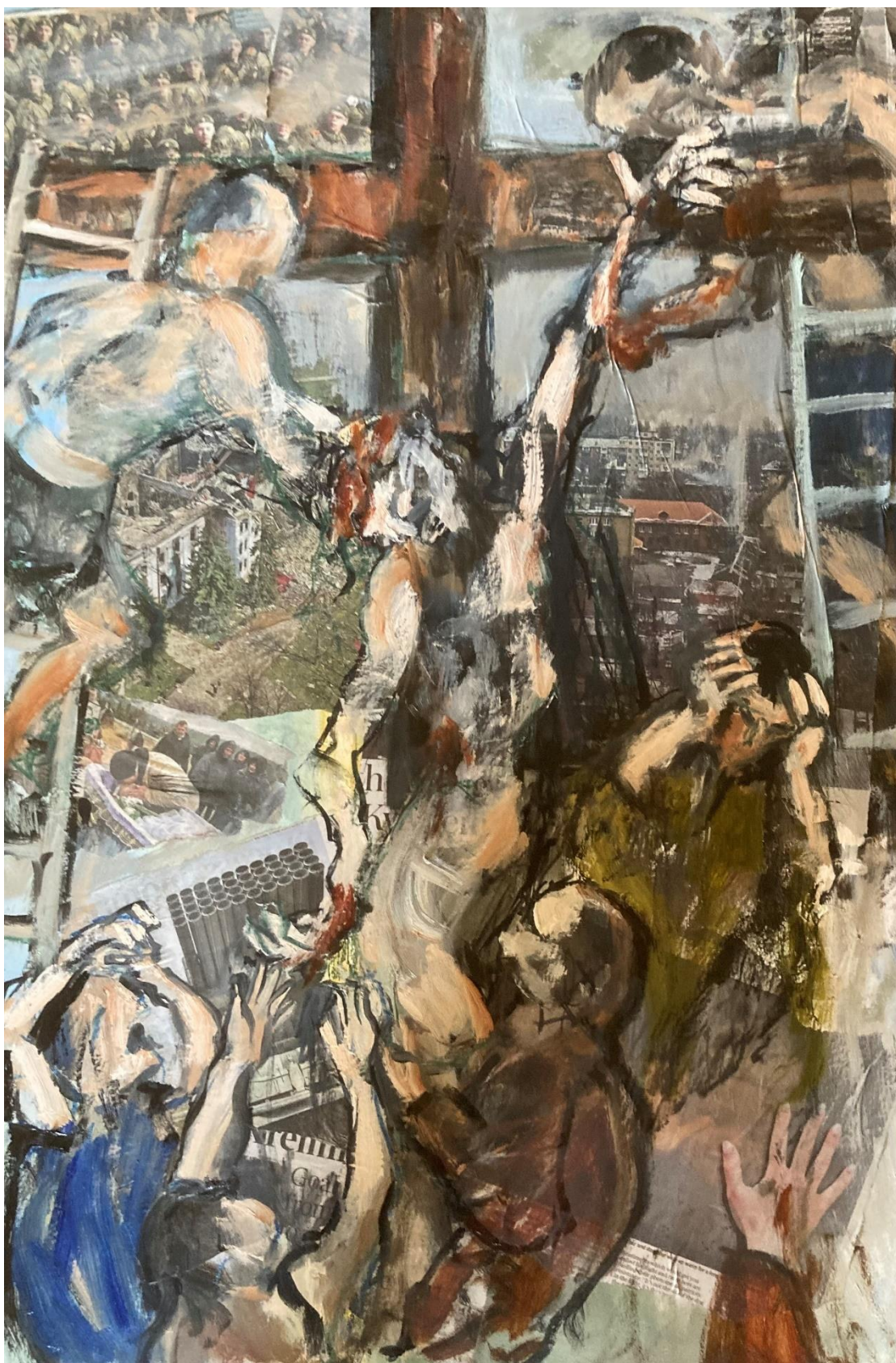
Oil on board, 30 x 20 inches

Original for sale, £5,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

Deposition

So many dead, many bodies still under rubble, irrecoverable, others hastily buried by relatives and friends, or bulldozed by Russians into mass burial pits. Rubens captures the agony in his painting *Descent from the Cross* (1612-1614) in the Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp.





Deposition

Oil on board over collage, 30 x 20 inches

Original for sale, £5,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

Consequences of War: a conversation with Rubens

Consequences of War, also known as *Horror of War*, was painted between 1638-1639 by Peter Paul Rubens and is on display in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence. It is a huge Baroque painting from which I have referenced a single detail of the terrified young girl and child, fleeing.



Consequences of War
Oil over collage on board, 20 x 24 inches
Original for sale, £4,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

Dignity in the Shelter

I was very struck by an image of a young Ukrainian mother cradling her sleeping infant while sheltering from bombardment. This painting seeks to capture the apprehensive yet defiant spirit of the Ukrainian people.



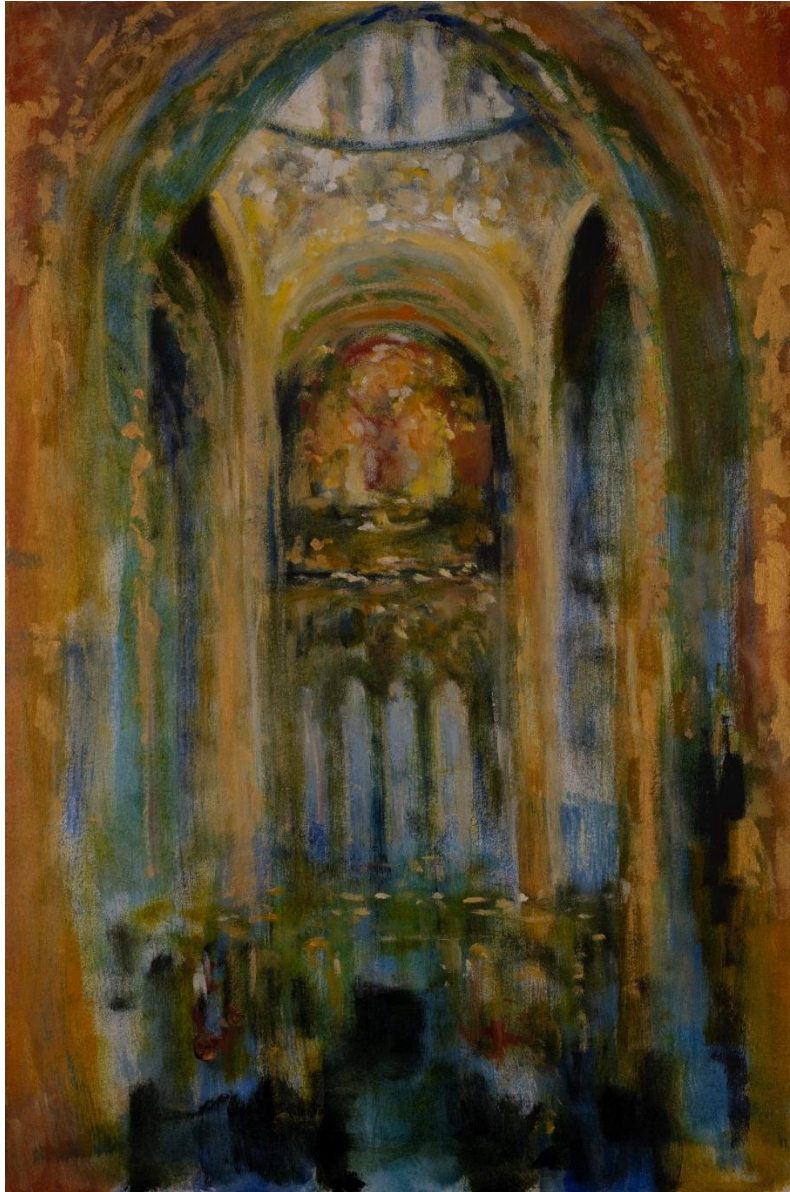
Dignity: In the Shelter

Oil on board, 26 x 24 inches

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover

Slava Ukraine!

The glorious 11th century Byzantine interior of Saint Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv. Hundreds of Ukrainian cultural heritage sites have been damaged or destroyed since the invasion by Russia. The Cathedral has survived numerous invasions over its life. The huge mosaic of Mary is framed by a Greek inscription from Psalm 46: "God is in the midst of Her; She shall not be moved."



Slava Ukraine!

Oil on board 30x 20 inches

Original for sale, £4,800. Prints are also available for sale – see inside back cover

The Little Horse

The broadcast on 8 January 2023 concluded with a reflection on a photograph taken in the aftermath of the Russian missile strike on the railway station at Kramatorsk on 8 April 2022, while is reported to have killed 60 civilians including seven children. The photograph showed a soft toy horse, soaked in blood.



The Little Horse

Oil on board, 11 x 9 inches

Original not for sale. Prints are available for sale – see inside back cover

Narrator Nadiya Gerbish comments that the image tells us what war against humanity looks like, as it affects a little person trying to escape mass slaughter. The only treatment for such horror, she affirms, is that God Himself was, and is, there, the one who took my pain to bear it Himself: “ My Sweet, Broken-Hearted Jesus.”

Another image in the Exhibition shows a small toy rabbit in the debris of a former apartment at Slovyansk in Eastern Ukraine after shelling.

Stephen Tromans is a barrister and King's Counsel who specialises in environmental and energy law. Before being a barrister he taught law at Cambridge University and was a partner at Simmons & Simmons, a leading London law firm. He is married to Caroline, with three daughters and six grandchildren.

In 2013 Stephen decided that he wanted to learn to paint in the correct way with oil paint. He attended a beginners' course at Norfolk Painting School, went on further courses there and ultimately in 2018 completed a Diploma in oil painting under Martin Kinnear. Since then he has exhibited regularly, for example at The Gallery, Holt in two exhibitions in 2022 (*6 Degrees of Separation* and *Best of British 2.0*), and at Cambridge Drawing Society of which he is a member. As well as traditional oil painting, his work has developed into mixed media and collage, some examples of which form part of this exhibition.



Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to the Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral for permission for the first exhibition of these works in Lent 2023 in the calm and beautiful setting of the Lady Chapel, and to Jocelyn Palmer and Caroline Harrison of the Events Team at the Cathedral for facilitating it. I am also grateful to my friend Peter Garside, a guide at the Cathedral, for the initial suggestion of an exhibition there.

I am also extremely grateful to Edwin Glasgow KC, for the idea of this further exhibition and fund-raising initiative, and to my Chambers, 39 Essex, for their generosity and support in facilitating it.

The photography of many of the pictures was undertaken by Stuart Norris of Outdoor Imaging, Impington, and scanning and printing of work by Photo-Art GB of Pampisford, near Cambridge. This brochure was produced by Print-Out, Histon. The expert framing of the works was done by Alistair Martin of Alistair Martin Frames, near Wymondham in Norfolk.

Great thanks are also due to a remarkable artist and teacher of painting, Martin Kinnear of the Norfolk Painting School, who over a period of some years has given me the best possible grounding in oil painting techniques as well as an education in the history and philosophy of art, together with his then studio assistant Bryony Knight. I would also very much like to thank four fellow artists and friends who have been a great source of encouragement to me in my work – they are Michael Grant, John Glover, Alistair Martin and the late Bernard Stewart-Deane (who sadly died after the Ely exhibition).

Finally, and certainly not least, I thank my wife Caroline for putting up with all the clutter, distraction and absent mindedness that seems to go with producing art.