

ENCOUNTERS

BY NICOLA GREEN

Detail shot Encounter, Manganese 2018



‘I would like to commend Nicola Green for her initiatives. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition images play a role in the practice of visualization, helping us to utilize our imagination.

Like her, I, too, believe that today’s leaders of various religious traditions are becoming more aware of the need for peaceful co-existence.

I am confident that with more religious leaders actively involved in promoting religious harmony, we can all help in making this world a better place for everyone.’

H.H The Dalai Lama
Letter, 18 August 2018



Encounters
Professor Aaron Rosen

For the past decade, artist Nicola Green has been a witness to meetings of religious leaders around the world, from the UK to Italy, Israel, Egypt, Qatar, India, and the United States. She has had the privilege to meet with Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Zoroastrian, Sikh, Baha'i, Jain, Confucian, Humanist, Shinto, and indigenous leaders. Along the way, she gained extraordinary access to private meetings and small gatherings by figures including former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Pope Francis, former Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa, Emeritus Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town Desmond Tutu, and the Dalai Lama.

These meetings have gone largely unreported in the media, and there has been limited reflection about the encouraging trend that they represent. Green makes a compelling case through her art and writings that we have entered a new era in interreligious relations. What is remarkable today is the depth of relationships being formed by faith leaders across historically deep divides. Often for the first time in history, these religious leaders have begun to sit down together and consider possibilities for cooperation, dialogue, and friendship. Together, they are leading the way towards a dialogue which respects and honours other religions, without compromising the truth of their own traditions.

At its heart, the *Encounters* project is an exploration of difference. It asks: how can people of different faiths, or none, communicate strongly held convictions, whilst respectfully allowing others to do the same? What can be gained from such encounters, and how can we identify common goals whilst working from different perspectives? And how can deep religious commitments become an asset rather than an impediment to understanding and appreciating diversity? Green invites viewers to think about our relationship to

those we consider wholly other to ourselves, and how this, in turn, shapes our own identity.

These are complicated, searching questions. To think about their implications, Green enlisted the expertise of scholars in theology, cultural studies, art history, sociology, and psychology from around the world. She has collaborated extensively with King's College London, University of Cambridge, and Coexist House to produce *Encounters* in four key formats: an exhibition, lecture series, book, and study materials for young people.

The pieces in the *Encounters* exhibition are presented in two forms, *The Light Series* and *The Encounter Series*. The artist is fascinated by non-verbal communication, and the subtle signals sent by the objects and images which surround her subjects. She invites viewers to look closely at these images, and explore how they signal dynamic ways to find engage with others.

The *Encounters* exhibition launched at Saint Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London in September, 2018.



The Encounter Series

The *Encounter Series* is a collection of portraits of global religious leaders, portraying the meetings which artist Nicola Green has witnessed over the past decade.

The subjects are presented without any hierarchy and represent the world's major religions.

Each image has a unique patterned background particular to the faith of the sitter and the details of each encounter. Great care was taken to consider the significance of each motif, all of which incorporate symbolically rich imagery drawn from the scenes the artist observed. Sources range from religious leaders' gowns, jewellery, and textiles, to ancient manuscripts in the Vatican and Lambeth Palace libraries, to a Torah pointer, a Zoroastrian tile, and architectural details from a Mosque and a Hindu Temple. These elements are transformed into deceptively simple graphic patterns designed by Green. They are embellished by hand with 24k gold, silver and copper leaf and diamond dust.

The subject of each portrait has been painted in muted tones to obscure the face and hands, turning identity into a fluid category and exploring the relationship between the individual and their office.

Green creates portraits that are deliberately open to interpretation. Viewers are encouraged to consider how they define themselves in relation to others.



For more information on the artworks please visit:

www.nicolagreen.com/the-encounter-series

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3. Follow the instructions on screen.





Encounter, Malachite 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied copper and silver leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Violet 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Heliotrope 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Cadmium 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm

'Anyone being photographed or painted knows that they are being probed in more ways than they realise; this project made at least one of its subjects more deeply aware of the strange territory inhabited by figures of religious authority in a secular environment, and of the importance of not becoming hardened to the oddity of it all. One reason among many to be grateful for this ensemble of images.'

Rowan Williams
Foreword



Encounter, Chromium 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied silver leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Vermilion 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Carmine 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Zaffre 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemühle H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Ivory 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied copper and silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemühle H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Coral 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm

‘The body politics revealed in Green’s photograph represents a deliberate moral commitment and stance regarding interreligious meetings in an increasingly globalized world. Green’s image tells the viewer that, as the world becomes smaller, we face the choice of whether or not to become smaller, too. Building an empire of empathy requires the courage to refuse the lure of discredited national myths and to see one’s own actions and beliefs in deep relationship with others.’

William J. Danaher, Jr.

Grace-full Bodies: Interreligious Encounters in the Art of Nicola Green



Encounter, Crimson 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Cerulean 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Saffron 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Veridian 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Rashi 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm

'Green delivers the viewer a message of hope and optimism for the future of interfaith relations, but she also demonstrates, first hand, that unlike in the past these new stories will not - and should not - be created, preserved and told exclusively by men.'

Maryanne Saunders

Women as Witness: Gender and Participation in *Encounters*



Encounter, Lapis Lazuli 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Ruby 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied silver leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Turquoise 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and copper leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Alabaster 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Tekhelet 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied copper leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Amber 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Cobalt 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm

‘Art like Green’s, which not only documents interfaith meetings but also attempts to unify the systems and machineries of different faiths, can be a critical first step in bridging religious divides. It speaks of shared iconographies and shared histories of image-making and breaking, aniconism and iconoclasm.’

Dua Abbas

‘Only Connect’: Drawing Interfaith Parallels through Art



Encounter, Bianco 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Cyan 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and copper leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Magenta 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24K gold and silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Azure 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24K gold and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Indigo 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and copper leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Alizarin 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Naranga 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf and diamond dust, on 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm



Encounter, Manganese 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold and silver leaf and diamond dust, 308gsm Hahnemühle
H52 x W40 cm

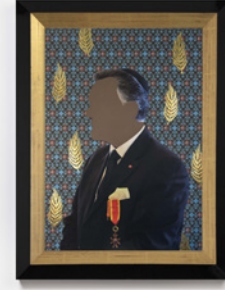
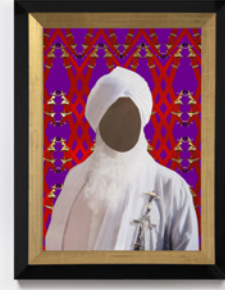
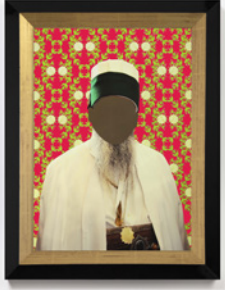
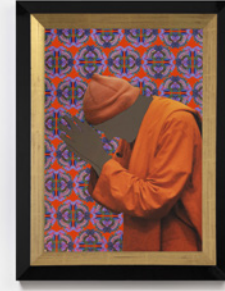
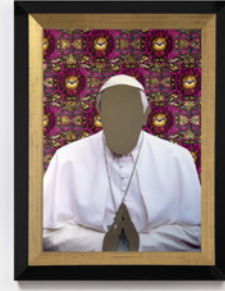
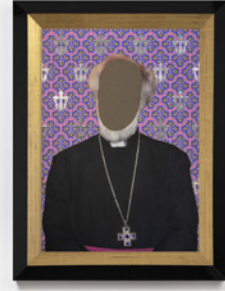
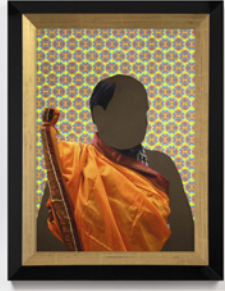
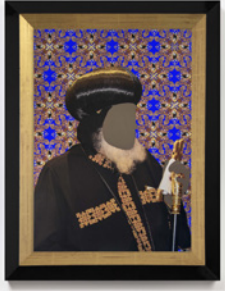
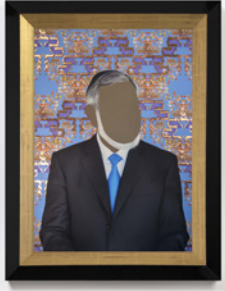
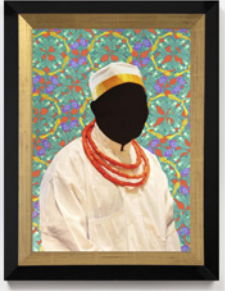
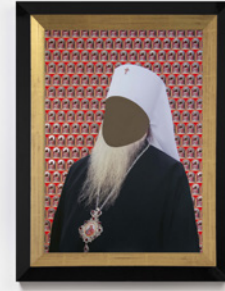
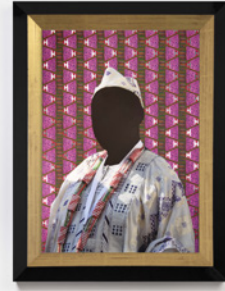
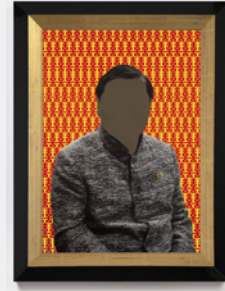
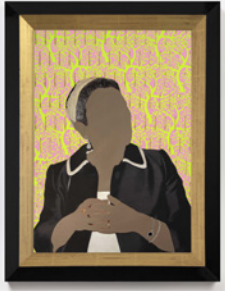
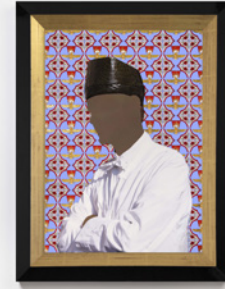
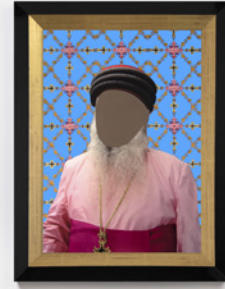
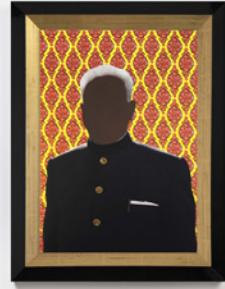
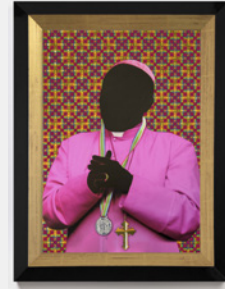
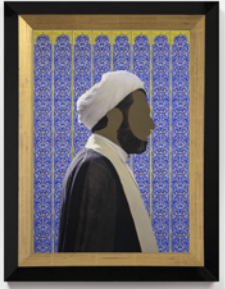
'Rare gatherings such as these, as observed in *Encounters* by Nicola Green, create safe spaces for dangerous conversation, places to unlearn and re-imagine. This approach can result in wider engagement, shift widely held stereotypes, and crumble the foundations of mono-cultural institutional perspectives.'

Skinder Hundal
Encountering the Divine



Encounter, Amaranth 2018

Painting on giclée, with hand applied 24k gold leaf, on 308gsm Hahnemuhle
H52 x W40 cm





The Light Series

The *Light Series* is made up of twelve life-sized figures of religious leaders, who are presented, as in *The Encounter Series*, as equals. Viewers are able to meet them in one space for the first time, standing together.

The artist creates these portraits on sheets of laser-cut Perspex. She uses silkscreen printing techniques for her subjects' faces and then paints their clothing with acrylic, applied in reverse to the back of the Perspex. This precarious and painstaking process recalls reverse glass painting, practiced in many cultures from ancient Byzantium and China to Renaissance Venice.

Each figure is backed with live edge Perspex, radiating light like a prism. No special lighting is required to make the figures glow.

Subjects:

(from left to right)

Former Grand Mufti of Egypt Sheikh Ali Gomaa
Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu
His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso The 14th Dalai Lama
His Holiness Pope Francis
Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh
Emeritus Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

Sayyed Jawad Al-Khoei
His Holiness Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamiji
Former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams
Reverend Yoshinobu Miyake
Dr. Homi Dhalla
His Most Godly Beatitude Theophilus III



For more information on the artworks please visit:

www.nicolagreen.com/the-light-series

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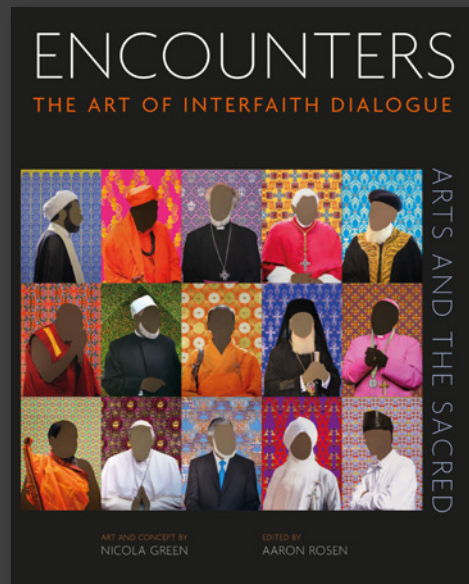


Encounters: The Art of Interfaith Dialogue

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www.nicolagreen.com
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We know we need to listen to each other, but we also need to learn to see each other. This is at the heart of Nicola Green's remarkable and visionary practice, and this inspiring book.

Edmund de Waal OBE
Artist. Author, *The Hare with Amber Eyes*

Nicola Green rightly considers herself a visual social historian. She has created artworks of major historical significance and an invaluable resource for future generations.

Tristram Hunt
Director, The Victoria and Albert Museum

A journey of hope reminding us of that which we share in common.

The Reverend Rose Hudson-Wilkin QHC
Chaplain to The Queen and the House of Commons

Nicola Green is a testament to how artists can bring the best out of humanity. Her work is a wonderful bridge, crossing cultural divides.

Saeb Eigner
Author, *Art of The Middle East*. Patron Art Dubai

The written word imparts knowledge; the spoken word inspires one to action; and the visual image reaches the soul. For those who think religion is the problem, this book tells a different story.

Heather Templeton Dill
President, John Templeton Foundation

Nicola Green's Encounters is a project of tremendous ambition.

Sandy Nairne CBE FSA
Former Director, The National Portrait Gallery, London

Encounters: The Art of Interfaith Dialogue

Art and Concept by Nicola Green

Edited by Aaron Rosen

Published by Brepols, 2018

What makes for productive and long-lasting interfaith dialogue? This book uses Nicola Green's artwork as a lens through which to explore and analyse the state of interreligious dialogue today.

The book features contributions from leading scholars and practitioners in theology, history, cultural studies, and art history, writing in an accessible style that is engaging for both academic and general readers.

Writers pay special attention to the embodied nature of dialogue, commenting on frequently neglected dimensions of such encounters, from the set-up of the physical spaces to gestures and clothing. Not only does this book seek to evaluate the conditions and implications of interreligious dialogue, it encourages readers to take up the challenge of encounters themselves.

Foreword - Dr. Rowan Williams, Former Archbishop of Canterbury

Encounters - Nicola Green, Artist

Introduction - Prof. Ben Quash and Prof. Aaron Rosen, Professor of Christianity and the Arts at King's College London & Professor of Religious Thought at Rocky Mountain College

Beyond Photo Opportunities: A Personal Journey into Interfaith Dialogue - Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, national leader in The Muslim Council of Britain

Through Scripture and through Prayer: Leading Edges in Interfaith Engagement - Prof. David F. Ford OBE, Regius Professor of Divinity Emeritus in the University of Cambridge

Grace-full Bodies: Interreligious Encounters in the Art of Nicola Green - Revd William J. Danaher, Jr. Rector of Christ Church Cranbrook

Women as Witness: Gender and Participation in Encounters - Maryanne Saunders, PhD candidate in Theology and Religious Studies at King's College London

Framing Encounters, Performing Difference - Dr. Lieke Wijnia, Postdoctoral Fellow of the Centre for Religion and Heritage at the University of Groningen

Holy Faces: Reflection and Projection - Dr. Chloe Reddaway, Research Fellow, Arts and the Sacred at King's College London

'Only Connect': Drawing Interfaith Parallels through Art - Dua Abbas - Visual artist and writer based in Lahore, Pakistan

What Does Interreligious Dialogue Have to Say, and to Whom? - Jibrán Khan, Thomas L. Rhodes Journalism Fellow at the National Review Institute

When Empathy Fails: Managing Radical Differences - Gabrielle Rifkind, Founder and Director of the Oxford Process

Encountering the Divine - Skinder Hundal - Director of New Art Exchange (NAE)

About the Artist

Nicola Green is an internationally acclaimed artist and visual social historian based in London. She holds first class honours for her BA and MFA from Edinburgh College of Art.

Green began her career as a portrait artist in the late 1990s, working primarily in oils. Her practice developed to incorporate acrylic painting, reverse glass painting, photography, silk-screen printing, drawing, textile design and gilding; these mediums are interchanged with ease and fluidity in her work.

The artist has a unique approach, which she has developed over several decades. Green doesn't wait until she is commissioned to create much of her work – she chooses her own subjects and backs her own assignments for as long as it takes.

Inspired by her mixed-heritage children and multi-faith family, she seeks out some of the most important human stories around the world, as they are happening, and records them for future generations. Green explores themes of identity, race, faith, power, gender and leadership. She is driven by her belief in the power of the visual image to record these momentous events and is committed to her role as a 'witness' in our turbulent and constantly changing world. Her approach has enabled her to gain access to iconic figures from the worlds of religion, politics, and culture.

In 2008, Green gained unprecedented artistic access to Barack Obama's Presidential campaign. She had a front row seat as he begun his historic journey to the White House. This culminated in her work *In Seven Days...* a series of seven silkscreen prints, described by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as 'an artistic and historic masterpiece'.

In 2016 Green co-founded the *Diaspora Platform* (Diaspora Pavilion/ Beyond the Frame), an initiative designed to deliver mentoring and professional development for emerging artists and curators from racially and culturally diverse backgrounds. This culminated in the critically acclaimed *Diaspora Pavilion* at the 57th Venice Biennale 2017 in which Green also exhibited her *Bate Bola* series exploring the merging of European, South American and African identity through Rio Carnival.

Green is dedicated to providing mentorship, guidance and support for emerging artists. Across the UK she has run art workshops supporting black, Asian, and minority ethnic young people working with art institutions and charities. Green mentored the late Khadija Saye, who tragically passed away in the Grenfell Tower Fire and in 2018 founded the Khadija Saye IntoArts Programme at Into University.



Public Collections:

The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC
The Library of Congress, Washington D.C.
International Slavery Museum, Liverpool
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
The Courtauld Institute of Art, London
Glenhurst Gallery of Brant, Canada
Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh
Sir John Soane's Museum, London
Jewish Museum, London
Paintings in Hospitals, UK
Bruce Castle Museum, London
Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford
Edinburgh College of Art

Recent Solo Exhibitions:

2018 St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London

2017 Candida Stevens Gallery, Chichester, Sussex

2016 Flowers Gallery, London

2015 Jealous Gallery, London

2014 Jewish Museum, London

2013 Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Soane Museum, London; Australia House, London; Flowers Gallery, London

2012 Stadium Suite, Cultural Olympiad, Olympic Park, London

2011 Library of Congress, Washington DC

2010 Harvard University, Boston; Bruce Castle Museum, London

2007 Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

2005 Vinyl Factory, London

Group Exhibitions:

2018 *Grayson Perry's Room of Fun* Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, London; *London Art Fair*, Islington Design Centre, London

2017 *The Diaspora Pavilion* 57th Venice Biennale, Venice; *Good Nature* Candida Stevens Gallery, Sussex

2016 *Icon* Candida Stevens Gallery, Chichester, Sussex

2015 *Small Is Beautiful* Flowers Gallery, London; *Good Figures* Mall Galleries, London; *Good Figures* The Downland Jerwood Gridshell Museum, Sussex

2014 *Small is Beautiful* Flowers Gallery, New York; *The Discerning Eye* Mall Galleries, London; *Local Reflections: Nelson Mandela and the Haringay Anti-Apartheid Movement*, Bruce Castle, London; *London Art Fair*,

Business Design Centre, London

2013 *Art, Election and History* Flowers, London; *Recent Prints* Flowers, London; *Small is Beautiful* Flowers, London; *Multiplied* Christie's, London; *Pulse Contemporary Art Fair* New York; *The London Print Fair* Royal Academy, London; The Loughborough Hotel, London

2012 *BlindArt* Moorfield Hospital, London; *Cultural Olympiad* Haringey, London; Pellafort Press, London

2011 *BlindArt* Banbury Museum, Banbury

2010 *Inspired by Soane* The Soane Museum, London; *Touching Art Touching You* Hove Museum & Art Gallery, Brighton; *East Wing Collection* The Courtauld Institute, London

2009 *Permanent Collection* Royal College for the Blind, Hereford

2008 *BlindArt* Museum of Modern Art, Wales; *BP Portrait Award* exhibited at: National Portrait Gallery, London; Wolverhampton Art Gallery; Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museum; Aberystwyth Arts Centre; *A Sense of Space: The Blind Culture* exhibited at: McIntosh Gallery, Western University, Ontario; Glenhurst Gallery of Brant, Canada; *Touching Art Touching You* Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro; *On Time* The Courtauld Institute, London

2007 *Permanent Collection* Ontario Glenhyrst Gallery of Brant, Canada; *Boundless* Menier Chocolate Gallery and Southward Council, London

2006 *BP Portrait Award* exhibited at: National Portrait Gallery, London; Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museum; Royal West of England Academy, Bristol; *Blind Art USA* exhibited at: National Public Library for the Blind, New York; British Embassy, Washington D.C.; *Shoes - The Agony & Ecstasy* exhibited at: Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead; Norwich Castle Museum; Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford; Tully House Museum, Carlisle

2005 *Portraits 2005* Arndean Gallery, London; *BlindArt* Royal College of Arts, London

2004 *New Sound New York, The Kitchen Venue*, New York; Winchester Festival of Art & the Mind, Winchester; Retrospective 291 Gallery, London

2003 *A Laughing Portrait* exhibited at: Cork Arts Festival, Ireland; Port Eliot Literary Festival Cornwall; Royal Brompton Hospital, London; Your Shout Awards Winchester



Acknowledgements

Over the course of a decade, as with all projects of this magnitude, there have been a great many people who have advised, supported and contributed to my *Encounters* project. I would like to thank and pay tribute to some of the many people who have helped me on this epic journey.

Firstly, I would like to thank the religious leaders and their teams for trusting and allowing me to travel with them and attend their meetings.

In particular I would like to thank: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II; Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby; former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Bishop Rowan Williams and Lady Jane Williams of Oystermouth; former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Bishop George Carey and Lady Eileen Carey of Clifton; Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town Desmond Tutu; Bishop of Egypt Mouneer Anis; Bishop of Bradford Toby Howarth; Jo Hornsby; Tim Livesey; Patriarch Theophilos III of Jerusalem; Pope Francis I; Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI; Cardinal Kurt Koch; Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster; Fr Norbert Hofmann; Francesco Sforza; Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations Ephraim Mirvis; Emeritus Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks; Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner; Rabbi David Rosen; Daniel Sacker; Joanna Benarroch; Ben Ullmann; Zaki Cooper; former Grand Mufti of Egypt Shaykh Ali Gomaa; Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra; Sayyed Jawad Al-Khoei; His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan; His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Bhai Sahib Dr Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia; Dr Homi Dhalla; Sri Chinna Jeeyar Swamijj and Reverend Yoshinobu Miyake.

I would especially like to thank supporters who have believed in this project from the beginning: Lord Brian Griffiths; David and Jammy Hoare; Robert Robertson; Warren Miro; Clare Parsons and Tony Langham; and Lu and Miles Spinney.

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