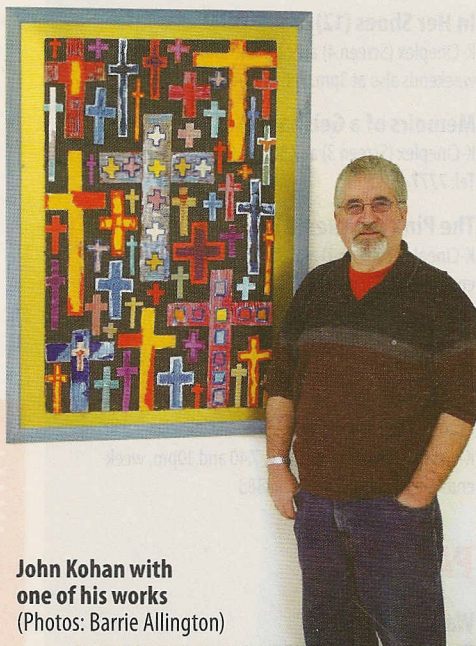
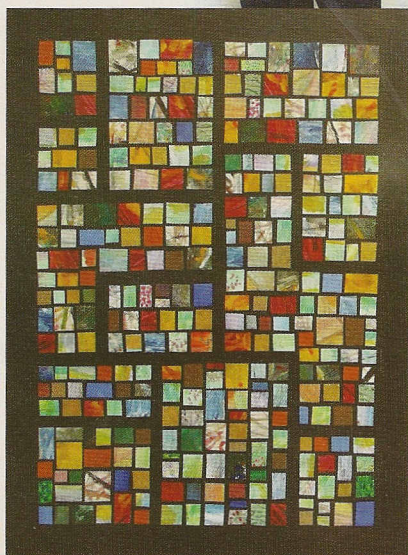


Reflecting on Lent

RELIGIOUS IMAGES THAT IMPLY FAITH IS MORE ABOUT QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS



John Kohan with one of his works
(Photos: Barrie Allington)



Lenten Reflections is a collection of paintings, drawings, and collages inspired by great Christian narratives like the Passion and Resurrection, subjects that have been central motifs of European art for almost two millennia. To be religious is simply our way of expressing what it means to be human; we could no more cease being religious than cease being political or artistic. These products of human thought and imagination cover a myriad of styles and living, as we do, in an age of constant electronic facsimiles we now go to galleries so we can be 'in on' the artist's real presence. In the case of this exhibition those hungry for some sustenance of the spirit will be well served.

John Kohan is the creative force behind this exhibition. Upon entering this small exhibition space there is a feeling of peace, for here one can go about the

the viewer, more from a historical and method bias than the usual out of context lyrical prose associated with a commercial gallery.

I would suggest that people not pick up this written information until they have first viewed all the works, then go round again armed with the basic facts and see how they then re-interpret the images. Artists will normally label each of their pictures in order to help shape perception, and reveal their intention, but this series of powerful images needs no words, they all speak volumes, even to those who have long forgotten their basic religious education. On show are the most important elements of the Christian story with the major players in this religious cast all portrayed at moments of great intensity. Kohan doesn't only mix his visual metaphors, he has also created a quite unique aesthetic buzz. The 29 pieces on show range in style and

‘There are also a few modern, abstract studies on show and Kohan sees no reason why Christian themes cannot be expressed in contemporary styles’

business of appreciating the images displayed in a quiet, contemplative manner.

Appreciating these powerful and yet poignant images is an activity that sits uneasily with words, music or the general external noises of daily living and Kohan has also wisely desisted from any form of titling to be attached to each image, instead you can read a two page 'image' directory which guides

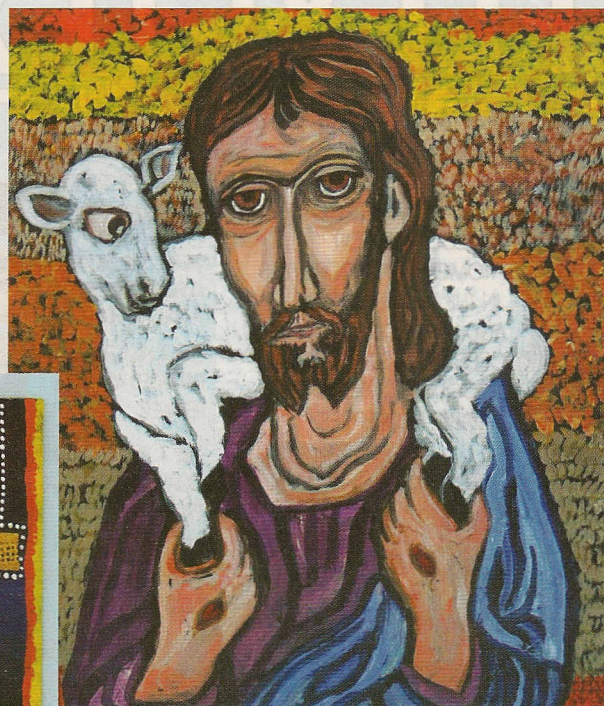
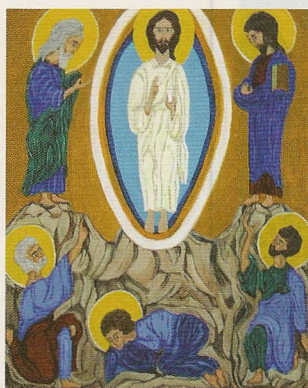
medium, with homage paid to El Greco, and the medieval Russian iconographer Andrei Rublyov; there are strong echoes of Baroque, and influences gleaned from the tiled wall decorations of southern Spain along with exuberant religious art of the developing world. There are also a few modern, abstract studies, on show and Kohan sees no reason why Christian themes cannot be expressed in contemporary styles, for him iconog-



raphy represents one of the purest forms of artistic abstraction.

That said, Kohan is mercifully no Damien Hirst, he wants us to reconnect with our spiritual heritage but not via a form of visual shock treatment. This exhibition, if it does nothing else, will hopefully allow one to seriously consider the premise that having faith has nothing to do with having certainty about life, a belief in God is not a set of closed answers, but rather a series of open questions with which we can then interact.

Creativity is considered as being a gift from God, to be reciprocated via worship, yet it is an act of faith for anyone to become an artist. Kohan has shown with this exhibition that he is indeed blessed. ■



Lenten Exhibition

An Exhibition of Contemporary Christian Art.
John and Friends Art Studio. Rebekka Court,
Tala (between Kamarees and Agios Neofytos).
Until April 15.
Saturdays 11am-2pm. Tel: 99 603128