

## **My subject is War , and the pity of war**

The poetry is in the pity ...

These words by Wilfred Owen were on the program printed for a performance of Benjamin Britten's War Requiem given in Coventry Cathedral in 1987 .

One of my large anti war paintings was very visible placed behind the orchestra .

Owen goes on to say All a poet can do is warn .

My paintings though are not warnings , merely commentaries . ( warnings would be futile )

Throughout my painting life I have been moved to visually express my empathy for situations of extreme injustice by making some kind of art . Sometimes installations, but more often paintings .

These paintings are an immediate response and executed quickly without any formal planning .

June 12 2020. Below , is just one of those paintings , I was galvanised by the now famous newspaper photograph published at the time , and completed it that evening . Half way through it , I was reminded of those large renaissance crowd paintings and thought a gold halo for one of the rescuers was entirely appropriate both artistically and socially .

June 12. 2020





Another of my more recent works is called A child's eye view .  
 Watching the relief workers trying to help traumatised children make sense of their experiences by giving them pencils and paper to draw on , I used their imagined drawings to make this collage with pieces of paper similar to the small pieces given the to children .

### A child's Eye View



At the time of the War Requiem concert about a dozen or so of my other political paintings were exhibited in the Cathedral. An exhibition arranged by the wonderful Paul Oestracher who was the Canon at that time . They were contentious , and he was brave on my behalf in the face of an enormous

amount of flack .

Guilty of being raped was one of these paintings . Sadly , almost as relevant now as it was then .

Guilty of being raped .



Paul arranged a comments book for visitors to the exhibition . A large number of them felt threatened and upset by the work which was contrary to their expectations. They vented their reactions by some pretty critically extreme remarks in the visitors book .

I was in tears at the amount vitriol cramming its pages . Literally hundreds of them .

Pre internet trolls perhaps .

Thankfully there were a few perceptive comments too , which sustained me , and I still think it's illuminating to be aware of the enormous gulf that exists between the art world and a large proportion of people who have not been fortunate enough to feel familiar with the wonderful variety of work there is today .

I'll end with the first entry in the book , which at least is one that can be printed !

' If this is art , I am Napoleon what a waste of paint and materials '  
He could be right of course , but it is these emotional and immediate works  
that are the ones most dear to me .

Janet Lynch      November 2020

My other work can be seen at Cornwall Contemporary Penzance , Livingstone  
st Ives .

Instagram [janetlynch 2138](#) , and my website [janetlynch.com](#)