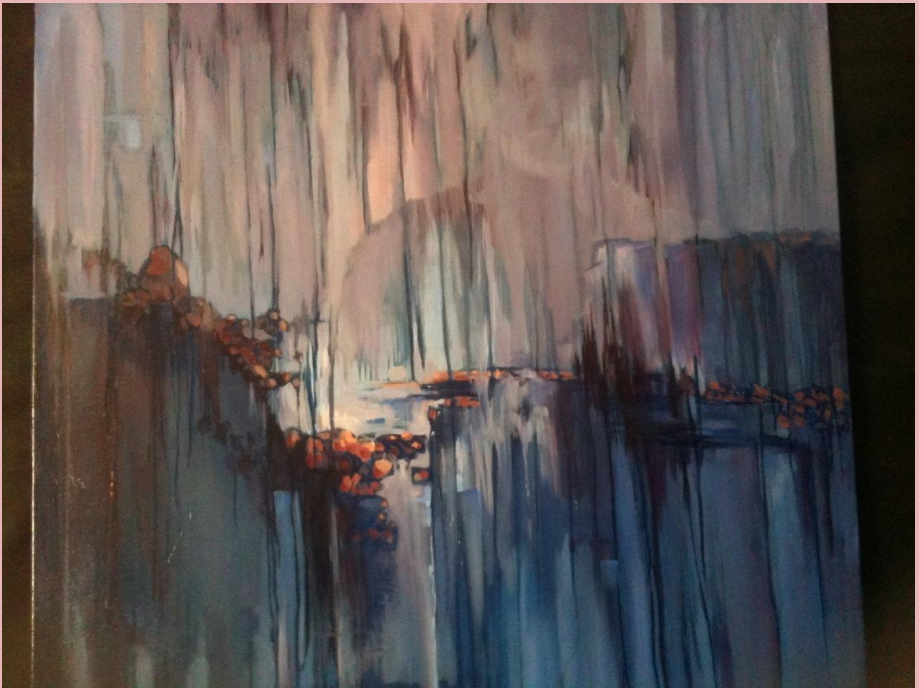


# Prophetic Art

*Art that Reflects the Heart of God*



By Helen Calder  
With Jennifer Koch

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With thanks to Jennifer Koch, founder of Patmos Arts, for the use of her story, interview material and prophetic art images.

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The cover artwork is a prophetic painting by Jennifer Koch called 'Deep Springs.'

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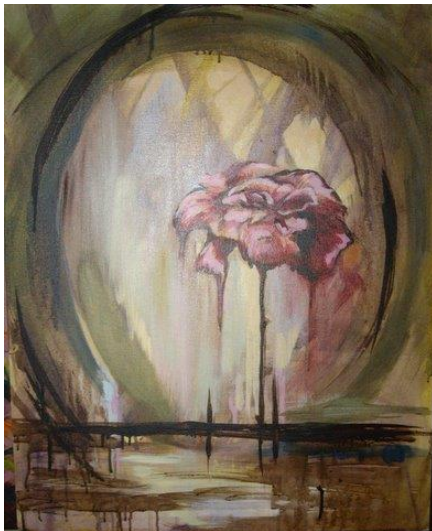
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# 1. Art That Reflects The Heart Of God

I recently interviewed Jennifer Koch, founder of Melbourne-based Patmos Arts, to learn more about this captivating subject.

Art, like music, has a powerful ability to convey a message and to stir the soul.

Surrendered to God, art—in any medium—can be used not only for enjoyment, appreciation, or for other intended purposes; it can also convey a prophetic message from the heart of God the Father.



**Rose of Sharon, by Jennifer Koch**

## The Power of Art to Convey a Prophetic Message

Some years ago during services held at our church on the theme of worship, our band played the song, 'Heart

of Worship' by Matt Redman.

Whilst the worship team played, an unusual sight unfolded on the screen overhead.

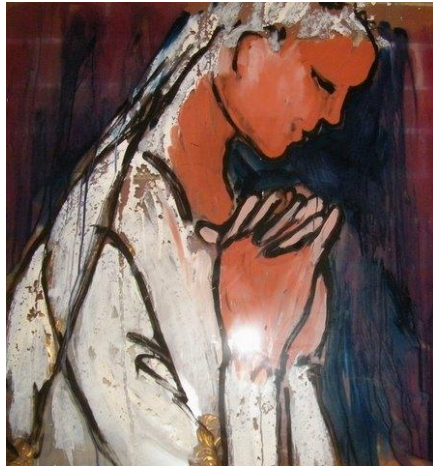
It was a video of Jenny Koch painting onto a large clear sheet of Perspex. The camera was positioned so that the viewer could see both the unfolding painting and Jenny behind the Perspex with her brush at work.

Throughout the song, Jenny painted, until the finished picture was revealed—a bride in an attitude of prayer and worship.

The congregation was transfixed as the words of the song and the meaning of the painting converged.

*'I'm coming back to  
the heart of worship,  
and it's all about You,  
it's all about You,  
Jesus.'*

After one of the services, Jenny encountered a lady



she knew, who was not a regular churchgoer and new to the journey of faith.

The woman appeared to be emotionally shaken, and it was evident that the Holy Spirit had touched her during the service. All she could say was, 'I didn't know it was like this, I just didn't know. And it was the painting that did it.'

To this day, Jenny cannot recall the incident without being moved to tears. At that moment, she cried in her heart, 'Oh God, this is what I live for!'

## God's Love and Gift Of Art

*'In the beginning God created...' (Gen 1:1)*

*"See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts— to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship... Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you. (Ex 31:2-6)*

In creating people in His image, God also gave us the capacity to create. One of the ways in which this creativity can clearly be seen is in the arts.

The value that the Father places on art and craftsmanship can be seen in the furnishings of the tabernacle and later the temple—places where He chose to dwell in His manifest glory, be worshipped, and reveal Himself to His people.

Consider for example:

- The veil of the tabernacle included an artistic design of cherubim ‘by a skilled craftsman’ (Ex 26:1)
- The crafting and symbolic design of the priestly garments (Ex 28)
- Artwork in the temple, including the temple walls, which were carved with cherubim, palm trees and flowers (1 Kings 6:29)
- The magnificent statues of Cherubim (1 Kings 6:23-28)
- Movable stands that featured lions, oxen and cherubim in bronze (1 Kings 7:29)

These artistic designs were not intrinsic to the function of the tabernacle and temple, or to the office of the priest, and yet God chose to place them there for their beauty and for what the designs themselves represented.

The Bible itself has inspired great artists over the centuries to produce masterpieces.

And today, believers continue to be inspired of the Holy Spirit to produce art that brings God glory—and speaks of His love and glory to others.

### Notes:

[1] Jenny's description of the above painting, 'Rose of Sharon' is as follows:

'The raw technique of this painting symbolises human emotion at its most basic form. In my paintings the archway is always a symbol of hope. The Rose of Sharon is the most fragrant of all roses—only, though, once it has been crushed.'



## 2. What Is Prophetic Art?

### Ministered to Through Prophetic Art

A painting by Jennifer Koch displayed in our church foyer depicts large pottery vessels, standing in the pouring rain and filled to overflowing with water.

At times when I was dry and exhausted, the painting served as a reminder that the answer to my need lay in a fresh infilling of Holy Spirit—and that I could be positioned to receive that infilling from God on a continual basis.

### Creativity in Biblical Prophecy

A prophecy is a message from God—given through a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit—that conveys the heart, mind, will and intent of the Father.

A prophecy can be spoken, sung, or written, but a prophecy is not restricted to words.

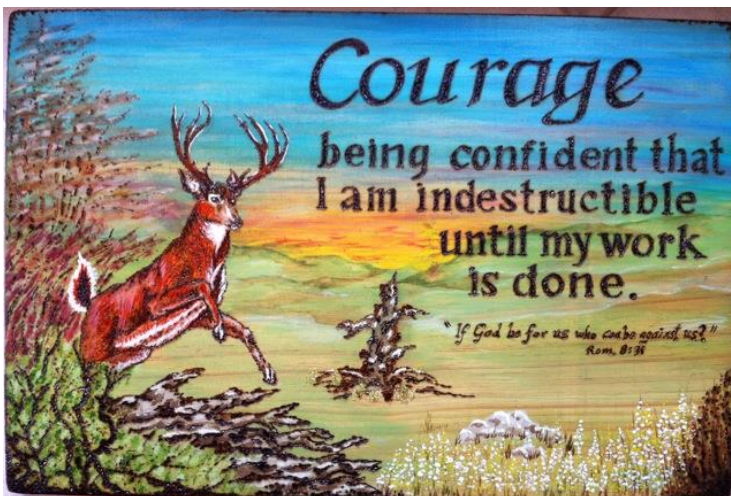
In the Bible, prophecy took many forms. For example, it was given:

- Through verbal announcement

- In writing—much of scripture is recorded prophecy
- By way of songs and poems (many of the Psalms are prophetic in nature)
- It was also enacted, as God used the lives and actions of the prophets to speak to His people (the story of Hosea, for example)

The prophet Ezekiel drew a picture of the city of Jerusalem on a clay tablet and enacted a siege against it. (Ezek 4:1-2) He carried out prophetic drama under the instruction and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Other prophets gave prophetic signs, such as Isaiah's shifting of the sun's shadow. (2 Kings 20:9)



**Courage, by David McCracken**

It seems that there is no limit to the creativity of the Holy Spirit in conveying a message from God to people.

### **What is Christian Prophetic Art?**

Much of prophecy in scripture, such as the books of Ezekiel and Revelation—was given through vision. The prophet Jeremiah saw pictures, like snapshots. (Jer 1:11-14)

Many of us who operate in the gift of prophecy are also familiar with receiving prophetic revelation in the form of pictures or visions.

The word ‘revelation’ comes from a Greek word meaning ‘unveiling.’ In other words, the Holy Spirit has revealed (unveiled) an insight from God that could not be known by natural means.

A prophetic artist reproduces that picture, vision or concept in art form.

It takes more than skill or talent to be a prophetic artist. The prophetic artist is someone who has a spiritual gift of prophecy, and who is also gifted and called by God to minister through art.

As with all prophecy, intimacy with God is of primary importance—as is love for people. (1 Cor 13)

The variety of ways that prophetic art can be created is endless, including sculpting, pottery, drawing, carving, painting, crafts, photography and graphic design.

Prophetic art can be symbolic, or metaphorical, such as Jenny's painting of the pots. This symbolism can be Biblical, but can also be something that is understood culturally. Prophetic art can also be a literal rendering of something. Prophetic may include a word or words, as with the artwork depicted above – 'Courage,' by David McCracken. [1]

A well-known prophetic symbol in the Bible was crafted in bronze.

Instructed by God, Moses crafted the image of a snake on a pole. When God's people, having repented of their sin, looked at the image of the serpent, they were physically healed. (Num 21)

The raised image of the serpent that brought healing was also prophetic—representing Christ's work on the cross. (John 3:14)

## **Interpreting Prophetic Art**

The artist can use words (verbal or written) to explain the message in the art.

However, the message of prophetic art is often conveyed directly by the Holy Spirit—as He anoints and directs the understanding of the person viewing the art.

No verbal or written explanation was necessary, for example, for the Holy Spirit to convey the meaning of the pottery vessels in Jenny's painting to my heart. Inspired by the Spirit, I recognised the Biblical symbolism and applied it to my situation.

Like much prophecy, prophetic art can be confirmation of something that God has already revealed to us.

### **Weighing up Prophetic Art**

*'Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil.'* (1 Thess 5:19-22)

As with all prophecy, prophetic art is subject to Biblical guidelines.

It is vitally important that the prophetic artist is connected into a Christian community (local church). As the Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12-14, New Testament prophecy operates in the context of church life where there is the contribution of other gifts, as well as leadership and accountability.

The revelation (the art itself), as well as the interpretation (the meaning applied to the artwork—whether by the artist or the viewer) should be weighed up. [2]

Prophetic art should not contain any elements that are inappropriate, or could be misconstrued.

All prophecy should be assessed in light of:

1. What the Bible says
2. The nature and character of God
3. The accountability of Christian leadership
4. The inner witness of the Holy Spirit

Notes:

[1] David McCracken has used a combination of painting and wood burning to produce this prophetic artwork. The picture of the stag jumping out from the thicket—risking all to leap from a place of safety into wide-open spaces—speaks volumes more than the words alone.

For more about David McCracken, see:

<http://www.davidmccracken.org/about-us/about-david-mccracken/>

[2] For more information about weighing up prophecy, see the following Enliven Blog post:

<http://enlivenpublishing.com/blog/2009/11/17/how-to-exercise-your-prophetic-gift-pt-3-how-can-you-tell-your-revelation-is-from-god/>

### 3. Journey Of A Prophetic Artist



The violin and the Mantle, by Jennifer Koch

#### Beginnings

Jenny's talent for art was evident at an early age, through drawing and painting. But she stopped at the age of 16 and didn't do any for about 10 years.



Then—some 25 years ago—Jenny decided to pursue her interest and began to take classes in painting.

However, it would be another decade before she would make the connection between her talent and the gift and call of God.

### **‘This is how God has Wired me!’**

Being a lover of worship, Jenny often wished she could express her love for God through music, and play the guitar—after all, isn’t music the primary way that worship to God is expressed?

It had never occurred to her that her gift of art could be used to worship and serve God.

Then one afternoon—Jenny can recall the moment as vividly as if it were yesterday—she was worshipping and listening to a song by Van Morrison called ‘When Will I Ever Learn.’

*‘You brought it to my attention that everything was made in God*

*Down through centuries of great writings and paintings*

*Everything lives in God*

*Seen through architecture of great cathedrals*

*Down through the history of time*

*Is and was in the beginning and evermore shall ever be.*

*When will I ever learn to live in God?  
When will I ever learn?  
He gives me everything I need and more  
When will I ever learn?  
Whatever it takes to fulfill his mission  
That is the way we must go... [2]*

It was like a sudden awakening. Jenny says:

“Through hearing the lyrics I suddenly began to see God’s purpose for visual arts. That my love to paint and to draw was no chance thing—that God had a purpose for it in my life and worship. And, that it is a valid form of worship.

I made the connection that this is how God has wired me up. And that I don’t have to try and be anyone else, it’s the package that He wants me to be.”

## **The Warrior Poets**

Not long after that, Jenny joined with friends Tony and Teresa Fraraccio, who are prophetically gifted musicians and worshippers.

They formed a group called ‘Warrior Poets.’ Jenny would paint whilst the band played and worshipped.

Warrior Poets took their unique blend of worship and

art, not only to churches, but also out in the marketplace.

Being in a prophetic environment with Warrior Poets helped stir up the prophetic gift in Jenny. And being out in the community stirred an enduring passion in her heart to paint messages from the heart of God to those who did not know Him.

### Early Prophetic Painting

The first time that Jenny remembers one of her paintings having prophetic significance was at a church service one evening where the Warrior Poets were ministering.

During that day, she walked out onto her property—that was situated at the top of a valley—and was impacted by the way that the fog hung over the valley. That evening at the church, she painted the valley and the fog. To Jenny's amazement, the painting tied in with the sermon that was shared that night.

Having caught the vision, Jenny's prophetic gift began to be more evident through her painting.

The Warrior Poets also took their prophetic art and worship out into the community. Jenny says, 'The Warrior Poets would worship in the marketplace... people didn't know, and I would be painting and I

would always get lots of comments.'

She recalls a time when Warrior Poets visited the 'Mind Body Spirit Festival'—a New Age festival held in Melbourne, Australia. At that time, the festival had a main stage, as well as booths and stalls. The Warrior Poets were allocated a ½ hour slot on the main stage.

'I did a painting with lots of hands in it. When I finished a lady came over. She was blown away because she had just been to a 'School of the Prophets' and she had some words of knowledge about her hands being instruments of healing.

She had just left her job to start a new venture and when she saw the hand painting she was gob-smacked [astonished] and said to me, 'I want to buy your painting—just name your price!'

## **The Journey Continues**

Since this time Jenny has continued to paint prophetically, although she is no longer with 'Warrior Poets.' She has founded Melbourne-based Patmos Arts, a creative community which uses art classes, excursions, retreats and more to encourage individuals in their artistic gifts.

Patmos Arts is currently working with Michelle Sanders

of Kaleidoscope (a church community based in Pakenham, Melbourne, Australia) developing a course called 'Art and Soul' which is focused on overcoming depression through art.

Jenny has won awards for her painting, including a recent 1st prize at the local Yakkerboo Art Show in the Contemporary Art section.

### **Advice for a Beginner Prophetic Artist**

Here is some advice from Jennifer Koch for anyone who would like to get started with prophetic art:

- Take art classes
- Look at other peoples work
- Get around 'arty' prophetic people
- Engage in a local church community
- Above all else be close to the heart of God yourself
- Learn to hear His voice and recognise the things that are significant to you—because that is most likely the things he wants you to paint.

Do you have any thoughts, questions or experiences to share on the topic of prophetic artists and prophetic art? I would love to hear from you—use the comments box at the bottom of this post. If the comments box is not visible, click on this link and scroll down.

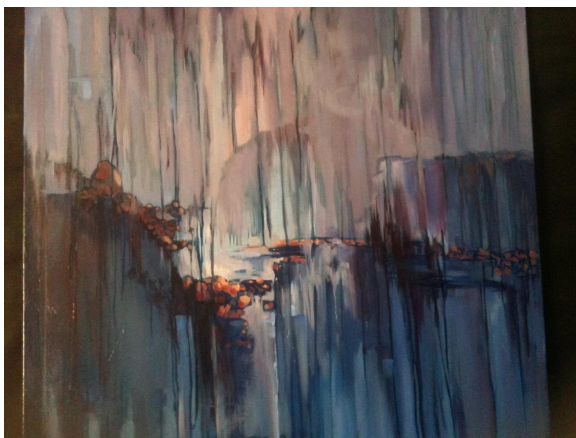
## Notes:

[1] Jenny describes this painting of the violin and the mantle as follows: 'The violin, is to me one of the most expressive instruments. It can be played in a way to express great joy and alternatively great sorrow. It is a metaphor for how we live our lives, we choose how it is played. The violin is resting on the striped coat, which represents Joseph's coat of many colors. It is a symbol of betrayal yet also favour. The rose of Sharon, most fragrant of all roses but only when crushed.'

[2] An excerpt from 'When Will I Ever Learn' by Van Morrison.

## 4. The Practice of Prophetic Art

In this final article on the topic of prophetic art, I share a portion of my actual conversation with Jennifer Koch.



**Deep Springs, by Jennifer Koch**

We are discussing how Jenny has personally experienced the process of prophetic art, the types of prophetic paintings she does, and who she paints for. [1]

This process will be different to each prophetic artist, depending on how you are wired and what God has called you to do.

**Helen:**

Sometimes you don't know yourself how what you are

painting could have significance to a person viewing it.

**Jenny:**

No, no idea!

**Helen:**

Which is so much like how prophecy can be, you get a revelation or picture or whatever and by faith you are bringing this thing. [Rom 12:6] You have got no idea what it means to the person who is on the receiving end.

**Jenny:**

That's happened a lot where I'm thinking of a meaning that it has to me, and then 5 different people come and speak to me later and say that it impacted them in 5 different ways. I love it, because it takes the pressure off me, too!

**Helen:**

Anything of the Holy Spirit should be easy like that, and I love that about Him, that He can just use something and bring revelation to people at their point of need, in several different ways, He's so creative.

**Jenny:**

It should be easy and that's something that I think that as time has gone on, I'm just resting more and more. Sometimes some ideas for paintings come... you just get



a snippet of an idea or you just glance at something and you could so easily have missed it, and then think, 'I'll go with that.' And it ends up being something really significant to somebody.

There was another time that I was involved at an outreach night. And we had to set up, half dark, a banana shaped theatre, with no room whatsoever, and painting and playing [worship] in the half dark.

During one meeting, I was doing a painting about the anointing oil. I couldn't get there to the prayer meeting the night before, and that [picture] was exactly what they had been praying! And a lady who had been praying had this picture. She didn't know what I was painting because she was singing, and she came over and said, 'That is exactly what we had prayed about!'

**Helen:**

In what arenas do you [personally] do prophetic painting?

**Jenny:**

A lot in church, but I prefer the market place.

I use a lot of symbolism and metaphors when painting, which means that sometimes, but not always, it needs interpretation. Water has been a recurrent symbol.

If you do something that is more symbolic, or is a metaphor, then you might get an opportunity to explain it and it might be more relevant to someone than a painting that is religious in nature. That's not the way I work. Some people do lots of paintings, and they directly translate [i.e. are overtly religious or depict a story from scripture].

There have been a few times I have translated something from the Bible, for example I did a painting of Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. Because it was meaningful to me at the time and it was an Easter thing we were doing. That painting has been sold—I could have sold it five times over.

So it's Christians that can relate to it—but what I'm really more about, and where my heart is, is communicating to the unchurched. That's why I like the symbolism.

## Helen:

When I receive a prophecy, I often get a picture of something, and so really, prophecy for me starts in art form. I get a picture and it's a symbolic picture, and what I'm doing verbally is explaining that picture that I see, whereas you're painting the picture, and the Holy Spirit is explaining the picture individually to people.

But you might also then get the opportunity to the meaning that you sense. I can see very much how that is another form of prophecy.

**Helen:**

How do you receive inspiration for your prophetic paintings?

**Jenny:**

- From the word [Bible]
- From life itself
- The Bible is full of stories and symbolism. I love symbols and stories
- Music, lyrics to songs
- Everything around me

I'm like a sponge, taking in the everyday things and things I see, hear, even smell! Sometimes I have just followed on an idea. However, it's not an airy fairy thing; -often it is researching and sometimes ideas flow and other times it is hard work.

**Helen:**

Are there any other things that we haven't discussed that are on your heart?

**Jenny:**

We've been talking about art prophetically, but something that I've been mulling about recently is art as

prayer.

### **Helen:**

Prophecy is God communicating to us; prayer is us communicating to Him... you could go further and include art as worship, too.

### **Jenny:**

It's a little bit hard for me to separate prophetic and worship.

### **Helen:**

That's not surprising, is it? It's as we're in worship that we see Him, and receive a revelation of Him, and there's that intimate connection from which we can receive revelation for others and ourselves.

### **Notes:**

[1] Jenny describes the above painting, called 'Deep Springs' as follows:

It's about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which is poured out from above and also as Jesus said; "will become within him a spring of living water " from the woman at the well story [John 4]. Often people don't see the figure in the background and when they do its a bit of an 'aha' moment.

# **Enliven Blog—Prophetic Teaching by Helen Calder**

*A ministry of David McCracken Ministries.*

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[www.EnlivenBlog.com](http://www.EnlivenBlog.com)

Find out more about Helen Calder, including ministry and training opportunities at:

<http://www.davidmccracken.org/about-us/about-helen-calder/>