



# BEHOLD

*Featuring art by Missy and Asher Wood  
and poetry by Mary Kat Cone*



ALL SAINTS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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GALLERY • ADVENT 2017

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; **behold**, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says,

*'In a favorable time I listened to you,  
and in a day of salvation I have helped you.'*

**Behold**, now is the favorable time; **behold**, now is the day of salvation."

- 2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2

## BEHOLD: ADVENT GALLERY STATEMENT

*by Asher Wood*

While living in Nashville and before our family embarked on a summer long trip to Ethiopia, we attended a Sudanese church on a Sunday during Advent. The pastor pointed out that the coming of Jesus was like a pregnancy that the world was anticipating. And to this largely Sudanese congregation, he reminded them that the biblical concept of pregnancy was similar to that of modern day Sudan, where you don't get to know the gender, nor do you get to know the exact due date. It's a dangerous and exciting adventure, with a new person to **behold** at the end of it.

The season of Advent is one of anticipation, where we're expectantly waiting for the birth of Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer compared Advent to life in a prison cell, where "one waits, hopes, and does this, that, or the other - things that are of no real consequence - the door is shut, and can be opened only from the outside." The exhibition we've put together for Advent attempts to renew this journey of longing for us, and to bring joy into the process. For my wife Missy, and for me, it took going to Africa and meeting women and children in Ethiopia, to access stories of great need, and simultaneously to **behold** a powerful joy.

We had big plans to go help and bless others, and we quickly became students of joy, observing it in the faces of most every Ethiopian we got to know, in spite of their stories. We connected with homeless teenage boys living on the streets, with no clothes but what they were wearing, and many without shoes - and they were exuberant and confident. We spent time with women rescued out of prostitution that had experienced horrible abuse, and they were so grateful for their lives and community. We went to orphanages, meeting children whose parents had put them there because it would be better than dragging them around the streets begging for food - and these kids sang songs and smiled all day. We continue to be overwhelmed with the winsome and resilient qualities of these noble people.

In these portraits, we wanted to not merely convey the financial plight or the physical need there. We wanted our work to be a conduit to feature their royalty of spirit, confidence, and their mirth. The poverty is still there, in torn shirts, dirty fingernails, scars on their faces, and unwashed hair. But, getting to see their stateliness and joyful spirits surpasses any practical assessment of their circumstances.

God is so much bigger than our circumstances, and the ultimate example of this is the Incarnation. God becoming man wasn't just to deliver a prescription of dogma and theology, but to introduce us to a real person. To **behold** and know him was a game changer: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." And it all started with his arrival.

"For outlandish creatures like us, on our way to a heart, a brain, and courage, Bethlehem is not the end of our journey but only the beginning - not home but the place through which we must pass if ever we are to reach home at last."

— Frederick Buechner, *The Magnificent Defeat*

MARY KAT CONE  
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## The Nicer Things Replace What's Old

*'Tis the season for shiny and gold!  
New gift catalogues mailed each week –  
the nicer things replace what's old.*

*Time to unwrap the Christmas mold:  
garland and tree upstairs to seek,  
'tis the season for shiny and gold.*

*Reams of twinkle lights to unfold,  
so much to do just to be meek.  
The nicer things replace what's old.*

*Oh the trumpet blast will be bold.  
Our faces turn to that high peak –  
'tis the season for shiny and gold.*

*The King's return; his hands enfold  
the hungry, weary, and the weak.  
The nicer things replace what's old.*

*Within his Word will all be rolled;  
the bleak stable provides a peek.  
'Tis the season for shiny and gold.  
The nicer things replace what's old.*

## MISSY WOOD

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#woodsquaredart

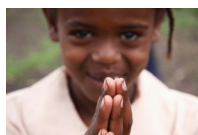
*Missy Wood received her BA in Photography from Meredith College in Raleigh, NC. During her time there, she studied abroad in Paris, under the master printer of one her photography heroes, Henry Cartier-Bresson. Missy spent a decade in Nashville where she was involved in missions in Africa as well as running an Integrated Arts Program at a Montessori school. Over a year ago, Missy and her family moved to Austin where she continues to do her art, as well as being an arts consultant.*

Art is an exploration of vulnerability.

A number of years ago, my black and white paintings came out of a period in my life where the darkness overwhelmed my world, leaving only a hope of light. Distinguishing between two values, black and white, seemed to be an accurate expression of how I pictured not just the shapes of a face, but how I was processing everything. The contrast of good vs evil was a battle so stark that grey areas felt like trifling details, unnecessary compromises that needed to be on one side or the other. Visually, it helped me to simplify.

It wasn't until 2008, when I visited Ethiopia for the first time, that I started feeling some **color** from the Light that was coming into the darkness. **Joy is hope infused with color**. As I spent time with new friends in Ethiopia, listening to their stories and observing their demeanor, I was encouraged. They had come out of such a dark experience, and it wasn't poisoning them – for them their story was/is one of hope and joy to exist in this world. I had gone to serve the people in Ethiopia and quickly realized I needed them more than they needed me. I returned to the Horn of Africa several times and each time saw more and more beauty in the grey.

Perhaps our endurance of suffering is our best opportunity to gain strength and wisdom that is truly transformative, changing us into beacons of Light in to the world, where our own healing can be contagious, creating more healing, hope, and reconciliation. I'm interested to express this kind of transformation in my art today, focusing in on the beautiful details, the grey, the color. The battle is being won.



### **BEHOLD**

Photo on canvas  
20 x 16 in.  
Framed  
2008



### **AFRICA QUILT SQUARE #4**

Acrylic on metal  
15 x 15 in.  
Mounted on wood  
2009



### **AFRICA QUILT SQUARE #6**

Acrylic on metal  
15 x 15 in.  
Mounted on wood  
2009



### **AFRICA QUILT SQUARE #10**

Acrylic on metal  
15 x 15 in.  
Mounted on wood  
2011



### **HANNA'S ORPHAN**

Pencil and charcoal on paper  
20 x 16 in.  
Framed  
2009



### **TEAR**

Pencil and charcoal on paper  
21 x 15 in.  
Framed  
2011

\*All dimensions are unframed sizes

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*Asher Wood grew up in Dallas, and he went to Davidson College in North Carolina, getting a BA degree in Art, with a concentration in painting. Living in Scotland, NYC and Nashville before getting back to Texas a year ago, Asher continues to paint acrylic portraits, as well as abstract expressionistic encaustic work.*





**HONOR**

Acrylic on panel  
12 x 17 in.  
Framed  
2011



**ROYAL**

Acrylic on canvas  
24 x 36 in.  
2011



**TADESSE**

Acrylic on paper  
18 x 24 in.  
Famed  
2011

\*All dimensions are unframed sizes

## PRICE LIST

### **MISSY WOOD**

Behold	\$300
Africa Quilt Square #4	\$450
Africa Quilt Square #6	\$450
Africa Quilt Square #10	\$450

### **ASHER WOOD**

Honor	\$400
Royal	\$600
Tadesse	\$500

*10% of sales go to the All Saints Arts Ministry  
For purchase inquiries please contact [woodsquaredart@gmail.com](mailto:woodsquaredart@gmail.com).*



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