



## Call to Artists

**Exhibition in Norwich 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### Love Is The Meaning

Exploring the dynamic interface between words and pictures in art.

This is a call to explore the pictures of Julian of Norwich and celebrate the 650<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her writings. It comes from a collaboration between the Julian of Norwich Partnership and St. Stephen's Arts.

Julian is unnamed in the historical record but has acquired her name because she lived as an anchoress or hermit at St Julian's church, Norwich, just off King Street. In her time this was the port area of the city and Norwich the second biggest port in England. She was not totally shut away from the world; her window was open at all times to those who wished to talk. And she lived through wars, plague, famine, and the burning of heretics just up the road. In spite of this her most quoted saying is: 'All shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well'.

**We are asking artists and poets to look again at her descriptions of her visions and explore their meaning in our day. Work may be in any media and some artists may choose to work with poets.**

Pictures cannot often be articulated and described in words. Julian herself is interpreting 'pictures' when she writes. Julian, a 'solitary' in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, lived when the acceptance of the world as created by God was not questioned by the public - but significant advances were being made in understanding and exploring the world.

Therefore, 'Love' may be a useful word to replace 'God' for some nowadays in understanding what she means about the intrinsic nature of existence and removing the barriers to understanding caused by the word, 'God'. This has all the connotations and references to the centuries-old, divided Christian church hanging around it, whereas 'Love' retains its meaning.

To help artists engage with this brief, you may wish to start your research at [julianofnorwich.org](http://julianofnorwich.org). The Friends of Julian are funding this project. All sorts of resources can be found in the Bookshop next to St. Julian's Church. We would recommend a modern translation for further exploration of her 'Shewings' as she called the visions given to her in her thirty third year.

We will invite every artist to come for free to three events to explore the words and pictures that Julian uses. This will be an event bookable through the friends of Julian website. There

is no compulsion to take part. Facilities for watching from a distance by Zoom will be in place.

### **FREE Workshops for artists**

1. **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April at 10.30am** at Julian Centre next to Julian's Church, Rouen Road, NR1 1QT. An exploration of the world of Julian of Norwich looking at the events that shaped her life, the worldview of the times and Norwich in Julian's time. This will include
  - talks
  - exploration of the exhibition sites, and
  - a guided walk around Julian's Norwich.

Get your tickets at [julian650workshop1.eventbrite.com](https://julian650workshop1.eventbrite.com). There are **20** in-person tickets on a first-come-first-served basis. There are unlimited Zoom tickets which will have a camera at our end into the workshop room.

2. **Friday, 12th May at 10.30am** at the Julian Centre. *Julian's Shewings and Contemporary Symbolism in Art*. A seminar exploring the use of imagery in medieval churches. This will be followed by an informal discussion of elements of Julian's world and conversation with re-enactors skilled in writing techniques of the fourteenth century. This event will be bookable through the Friends of Julian website.

Get your tickets at [julian650workshop2.eventbrite.com](https://julian650workshop2.eventbrite.com). There are **30** in-person tickets on a first-come-first-served basis. There are unlimited Zoom tickets which will have a camera at our end into the workshop room.

3. **The Annual Julian Lecture on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> May at 12.00 noon** in St. Julian's Church. *Julian's Minds' Eye*. This will be delivered by Professor Barry Windeatt from Cambridge and he writes this about his lecture:  
*"Julian's book stems from what she saw, and what she came to see that she had been shown. Her book has often been entitled 'revelations', and Julian has sometimes been called a visionary. But what and how does Julian see in her mind's eye? This illustrated lecture sets what Julian reports seeing in the context of the arts and visual culture of medieval Norfolk and East Anglia more widely."*



The Julian Lecture is in the Church, there are no limits on attendance in person, but get unlimited Zoom tickets which will have a camera at our end into the Church, get your tickets at [julian650lecturemay.eventbrite.com](https://julian650lecturemay.eventbrite.com).

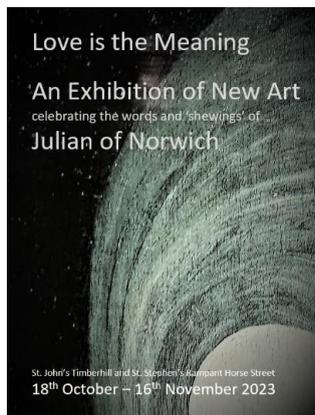
We will invite artists shortlisted for the Julian Exhibition in October 2023 to come for free to a further one-day event to explore the interaction of words and pictures that Julian uses. This event will be by invitation in July, date to be announced.

### **Deadlines**

- Proposals for the exhibition must be in by **31<sup>st</sup> May 2023**.
- A decision on the final composition of the exhibition will be agreed by **16<sup>th</sup> June 2023** and all artists/writers will be informed by then.

### **Money**

- All applications must be accompanied by a £10.00p fee made payable to the Friends of Julian to cover exhibition costs.  
Sort code 60-15-31 Account number 68040253  
with the reference [YourName] Exhibition
- All four artist events are provided free, but an opportunity to donate to the work behind the Julian650 celebrations will be made available.
- A grant of up to £150.00p will be available towards materials etc. for producing the finished work. This will be payable on receipt of invoices.
- Artists take 80% of value of work sold in the exhibition; the Friends of Julian take 20% to assist with the costs of the publicity, catalogue, and venue. Organisations involved in the promotion of Julian650 are looking at the possibility of purchasing some form of art that will provide a lasting legacy of the anniversary.
- Artists are invited to express an interest for leading workshops arising from their engagement with Julian - for schools/schoolteachers (during the summer term) and for the public (during the exhibition). Two special workshops are planned for volunteers and service users at the Magdalene Group and the Sue Lambert Trust, both close neighbours to the Julian Church. Fees for leading all workshops are £175 @ full day /£85 half day sessions.



### **The Exhibition 18<sup>th</sup> October - 16<sup>th</sup> November**

We will hold the exhibition across two venues, the Church of St John's, Timberhill and St Stephen's church, Norwich. These are within easy walking distance and give artists an interesting choice of venues and positions for their installations.

### **Administration**

Application and submission is via email to [contact@julianofnorwich.org](mailto:contact@julianofnorwich.org). If you want assurance that your application has been received, please tick the 'send read receipt' at your end.

## **Artists must produce by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023:**

1. At least three representative images of their work or maquettes/sketches of their intended piece for the exhibition attached as separate attachments in the email.
2. No more than 400-words describing their entry
3. A short C.V statement
4. Their website and/or social media address if possible
5. A statement of preference of venue and reason where appropriate
6. An indication of the facilities they would need for installation (e.g. light, screens, projectors, fixings etc.). We can accept no work that might damage these heritage buildings.
7. An indication of willingness to run workshops and, if so, which audience preferred (public, schools, charitable organisations) and why.

8. A confirmation that they agree to be placed on a database which will allow the Friends of Julian to administer communication with them - on the basis that every email will have an 'unsubscribe' facility for them to use at any time.

The shortlisting panel will include:

- Tess Meadows, mixed media artist, facebook/instagram@tessmeadowsartist
- Jo Arnold, [www.joarnoldceramicsetc.co.uk](http://www.joarnoldceramicsetc.co.uk)
- Shirley Buxton, Friends of Julian
- Lucy Care, Curator: Lucy has worked as an artist and leader of community arts projects in Norfolk for forty years, [www.lucycare.co.uk](http://www.lucycare.co.uk)

Successful, shortlisted applicants will receive further details about the deadlines and the administration to exhibit the final work, including the images and written text for the catalogue.



## Julian's words, why celebrate her writings?

Julian writes her visions came to her when she was close to death when she was thirty-three. She had prayed for sickness because she wanted to know more about God and find special revelations. It is hard to time travel for 650 years for so here are some brief notes.

1. The framework of Julian's Norwich still lies underneath the present city, and we offer opportunities to meet up and explore what remains. St Julian's church was destroyed in World war II but rebuilt by those who wanted the shrine to remain.

If you are curious about her life and writings, then there are lots of samples of material online and at this website.

[julianofnorwich.org](http://julianofnorwich.org)

2. But we don't want an exhibition about her life but a modern response to her 'pictures'. There are sixteen 'pictures', all linked. Some may want to produce work about her voice, her world, the physical act of writing – so different then and, of course, her basic assertion that in spite of all she had witnessed and experienced that the Maker of the world surrounds us, loves us, nurtures us, protects us just as a good Mother does. At the end of her book, after all her questions she just states that "Love was his meaning".
3. There are many modern versions of her writing, all taken from two manuscripts, 'The shorter text' written shortly after she recovered from her sickness and the 'Long text' written over the next twenty years as she felt she needed time to meditate and ask questions about the visions of God.
4. It wasn't unusual for a woman to be an anchoress, there were several others in Norwich at the time. Julian seems to have followed the rule to give structure to her life. She would have had a servant to deal with the outside world, fetch food etc and so it seems likely that she was from a well to do family. Anchoresses were allowed a cat to catch the mice and rats that abounded in medieval life! We don't know if Julian had one or what she felt about it. She never says but she is often shown with a cat.
5. She does describe the process, or what she saw in the visions and what she heard in response to her questions: "All this was shown in three parts. That is to say, by bodily vision and by words formed in my understanding and by spiritual vision. But I may not and cannot show the spiritual visions as clearly as I should like."

6. It is important to remember a few things: that Julian is writing 650 years ago. Norwich was the second greatest city in the kingdom, and she lived near the port. The world was assumed to be flat and very little of it had been explored. Plague was rife, and she had just lived through the Black death, a time when great numbers died, causing social upheaval. We were at war with France for most of her life. All the western Christian church was one church, more important than national boundaries with Rome at the centre and women like Julian could wander all over it in pilgrimage. No need to be rich! (see Margery Kempe).
7. She talked to anyone who wanted her help at the window that looks out onto Julian's alley. Margery Kempe came to see her and writes about it in 'The Book Of Margery Kempe'.

We will talk about all this and look more closely at the 'shewings' as she called them from her book, **Revelations of Divine Love**, on April 10th at the Julian Shrine off Rouen Road and then we will explore Julian's Norwich. In the meantime, this is probably her most famous shewing (picture) and often taken out of context. I have also included one or two other shewings that I like in particular. (I have sometimes written 'Love' in capitals where the text says God as I think it helps understand the meaning to our modern ears.)

*He is our clothing. For he is that love that wraps and enfolds us, embraces and guides us, surrounds us in his love and may never desert us. And I saw that he is everything that is good, as I understand.*

*He showed me something no bigger than a hazelnut, lying in the palm of my hand and I perceived that it was round as any ball. I looked at it and thought what can this be? And I was given this general answer: It is everything which is made. I was amazed that it could last, for I thought it was so little it could suddenly fall into nothing. And I was answered in my understanding: It lasts and always will, because God loves it; and thus everything has being through the love of God. In this little thing I saw three properties: The first is that he made it the next that he loves it and the third that he preserves it. And what is that to me? It is that Love is the Maker, the lover and the protector. And until I am united with him I can never have love or rest or true happiness.*

*The place which the lord sat on was barren and waste, alone in the wilderness. His clothing was wide and ample as befits a lord. The colour of the clothing was azure blue, most beautiful. His manner was merciful his face was a lovely pale brown with a beautiful countenance. His eyes black, revealing his loving pity and within him was a secure place of refuge, long and broad and full of heavenliness. And the loving regard he kept on the servant especially when he fell, it seemed to me it could melt our hearts for love and break them in two for joy.*

*And he answered my questions saying most comfortingly: I may make all things well, and I can make all things well and I will make all things well.*

*And I stood contemplating it generally, darkly and mournfully, saying to our Lord with great fear, 'Ah, good Lord, how could all things be made well, because of the great harm which has come through sin to your creatures? And I wished for some plainer explanation through which I might be at ease about this matter.*



## Venues and Public Workshops

**Exhibition in Norwich 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

### **Love Is The Meaning**

The exhibition will be set in the three church centres most closely connected with Julian of Norwich. It may be unusual to hold an exhibition within churches but the ambience of these spaces is particularly suitable for considering Julian's work. We are particularly looking for art that responds to the spaces as well as her words. All three are open to the public every day.

**1. The Julian Shrine itself in Julian's Alley**

Although we may not find art work suitable to complement the atmosphere of the shrine and St Julian's church, the shrine is of, course, at the centre of the exhibition.

[www.julianofnorwich.org](http://www.julianofnorwich.org)

**2. St John the Baptist, Timberhill**

This is the sister church to St Julian's, at the top of the hill. It is a beautiful intimate space, surrounded by the graveyard and pedestrian precinct.

[www.stjohnstimberhill.org](http://www.stjohnstimberhill.org)

**3. St Stephen's, Rampant Horse Street**

This church was where Richard Caister, priest and poet served 1402 -1422. He was a contemporary of Julian's who also wrote in English. St Stephen's church is a large light space in which exhibitions are often held. It has recently been designated a 'Church for the Arts'. There is space for practical workshops and a meeting room with screen and projector as well as café and main exhibition area.

[www.ststephensnorwich](http://www.ststephensnorwich)

A very useful pilgrim's map of medieval Norwich can be found on the St Stephen's site. While it is not necessary for artists to immerse themselves in medieval history to respond to Julian's words, some may find it helpful. I therefore also mention Margery Kempe who in her book, the first autobiography in English, mentions her visit to Julian when they spent 'many days' together. [www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk) (British Library). Artists may find themselves inspired by the words, the pictures or even the manuscript itself and the act of writing English at that time when English was not the language of scholars but of the people. We are open to all approaches that illumine the work of this remarkable woman for a new audience.

## **Paid leading of workshops for others**

As mentioned in the 'Call to Artists' we have planned a series of workshops for various community groups including schools and school teachers around this exhibition. We look forward to exploring the response of the viewers to the art on offer and trying things out practically with various materials is an excellent way for the public to experience art in a deeper way.

*If you would like to be considered to receive £175 to lead a workshop then please add your proposal for an all-day workshop session (practical) and how you aim to engage the participants with the subject matter or half day workshop to your proposal for artwork in the exhibition.*

Some examples of previous experience might be helpful.

If you have any questions about the art or the workshops or even the venues, please contact me at: [pastongriffin@gmail.com](mailto:pastongriffin@gmail.com)

Thank you,

*Lucy Care*