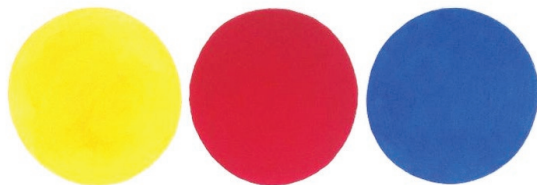


WHAT I LEARNED IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

a series of paintings by Liita Forsyth



This series of paintings utilizes the most basic elements that children learn to identify sometimes before being able to speak. Before stepping foot in Kindergarten most children know shapes, colors, letters and numbers—the building blocks of education. I believe God has revealed his divine order in the simple things, not just the complex. These paintings started as sermon doodles in my journal because I process concepts in pictures not just words. Ideas literally take shape.

If I had been alive when Jesus walked the earth, I would have been most comfortable sitting with children listening to him because I imagine he probably conveyed truth to them with doodles in the dust.

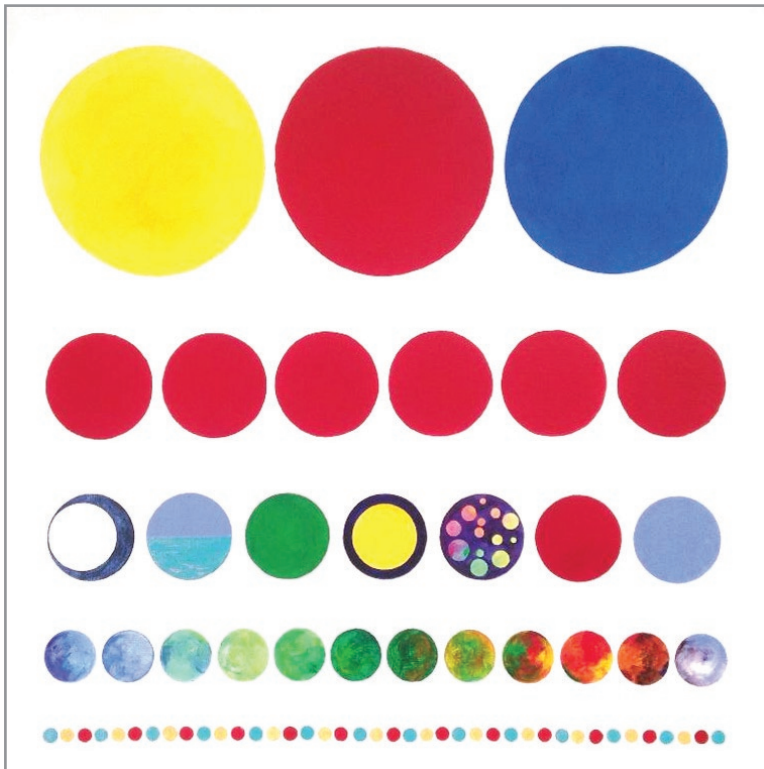


NUMBERS

At first glance, this painting looks like an impossible game of Twister, but that was not the inspiration for it, just an after thought or subliminal influence.

Each row of circles represents a number that is repeated over and over in the Bible and in our framework of time, space and color. I like to think of these numbers as God's fingerprints or his signature on creation, showing that there is one triune Creator. These numbers are like threads woven through the entire tapestry of time. There's probably deeper meaning to them, but I see them simply as surface signatures of the Artist of the Universe right out there in plain sight—elements that unify his work and a display of Divine Order. Here are just a few examples:

- 3** The Trinity, sons of Noah from whom all of humanity was reborn, days that Jonah was in the whale, days that Jesus was in the grave, primary colors
- 6** The number of man who was created on the sixth day, the triplicate number of the Antichrist who will pose as ruler of the world for a limited time (a false trinity)
- 7** Days of Creation with a day of rest, days of our week, countless laws and rituals in the Old Testament, the number of times Elisha told Naaman to dip in the Jordan River to be healed
- 12** Tribes of Israel, disciples, months of the year
- 40** Days of rain in the flood, years that the Israelites wandered in the desert, days that Jesus was tempted in the desert, weeks of human gestation, a time of waiting, the days of lent



CREATION



Theologians don't agree on the length of the seven days of Creation. "For God a day is like a thousand years." Christians typically cringe when there's talk of millions or billions of years associated with creation. But we probably shouldn't try to box God in with time even though we desperately try to understand him within our limited human framework of time. The first verse of Genesis says that "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void," so was it empty and without shape, a blank canvas that God hovered over? Maybe this is when he developed and designed...

Here's the way I have imagined the Seven Days of Creation:

I think of God as an artist, builder, musician, scientist, mathematician, designer, judge and father. Since he's the CREATOR, he must have carefully developed what he created. Creativity is a process. Not being limited in any way by time or space, I imagine that he had been doing rough sketches and prototypes of every bit of creation for an undetermined, unlimited amount of eternity to develop a way for everything to fit together in the box of time and space?

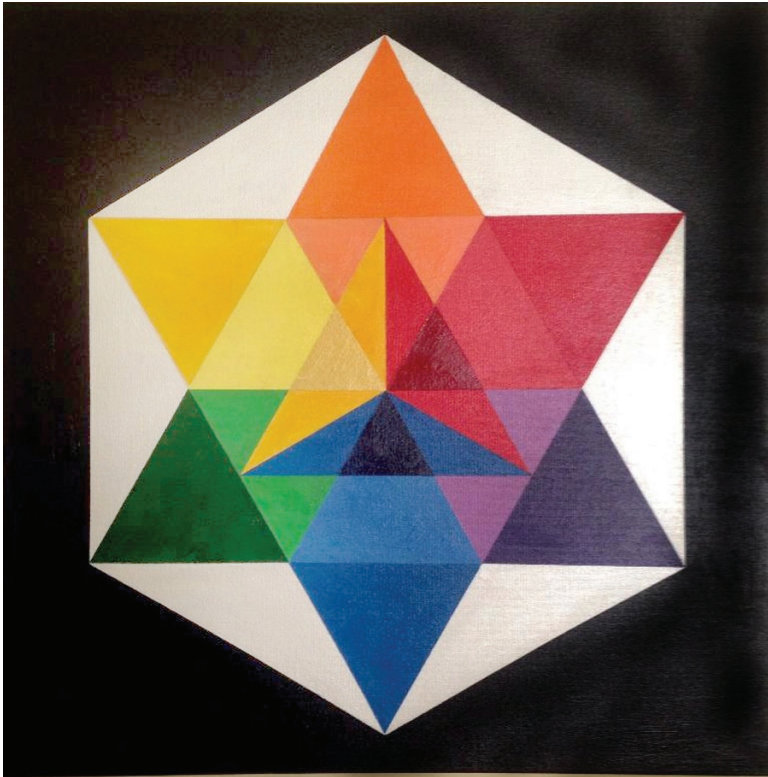
He also had to have three plans: One for the Garden of Eden, one for after The Fall, and one for Eternity.

It makes my head hurt to think about it. But, what if the seven, 24-hour days were like an opening, a big reveal, a debut—the day he pulled away the curtain and breathed life into his big idea?

Time is the open-ended box that we were created in. It's impossible for us to understand anything that is not within that box or the 66-volume library which God has so mercifully given us.

This painting is an oversimplified set of seven boxes representing our limited human understanding of Creation. The box element conveys the framework of time that we have lived in ever since the first second of time. Seven is the perfect number. **The sixth day is red** because that is when humanity and mammals were created. The red in this series of paintings represents humanity and Jesus who became a man with us.

TRINITY STAR OF DAVID



As I was preparing to teach my first art class at The Field School, it dawned on me that in the same way there are three primary colors from which all colors are derived, there are also three persons of the Trinity from whom everything comes...EVERYTHING! In addition to the primary colors, there is the absence of color: WHITE and the absence of light: BLACK. Black and white are commonly used to depict and describe good and evil.

Could it be that God embedded the concept of the Trinity, good and evil in the most basic elements of art to help children (and grownups) understand? Yellow, red and blue cannot be made by combining other colors, they are the colors that make all colors.

So, taking this a little farther, yellow makes me think of God the Father. Red is like Jesus the Son because of his humanity and the blood he shed for sinners. Blue is like The Holy Spirit...peace...the comforter.

It's the simple things that confound the wise.

In doodling this idea in my sketch book, I started playing around with triangles and building them with color making the "Trinitarian Primary Colors" central. By adding secondary colors in triangles to the central triangle, the Star of David emerged and suddenly I realized that 12 equal triangles fit into the star. A little research about the Star of David revealed that many ancient societies used this image, not just the Israelites. But somehow, over time, since Solomon, it has been associated primarily with the Jewish people.

The number 12 is a repeating number throughout biblical history and is our framework for time (months of the year), tribes of Israel, disciples...and more... Repeating numbers are like God's signature on Creation.

HEBREWS



The author of Hebrews looks backward to see forward as he encourages Messianic Jews to grow in their faith, not forgetting their **heritage** but showing them how to see that **it** was the very groundwork that prepared humanity for the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ.

Each section of this painting is a facet of Biblical history from the vantage point of the life of Jesus. His birth divided time (AD/BC), dispensations, families, sacraments and is central to the entire story line of the Bible.

The lower left rectangle is symbolic of the blood line of Jesus from the beginning of time. It's also the ground that the church is rooted in. It's the law, the rituals, the types, the pictures that God's Word draws that point to the Messiah.

The green on the lower right is the Church, the Bride, the Children of God who will inherit the Kingdom.

The two flowing blue and red bands in the center left are the intermingling of blood and water throughout the Old Testament. Blood cleansed, water cleansed, but there was never one without the other. The priests and the Children of Israel always had to wash before they entered into God's presence or performed a ritual. Interestingly the water in the Egyptian rivers turned to blood as a punishment for Pharaoh's refusal to release the Jews from slavery. The waters of the Red Sea were ultimately parted so the Israelites could pass through it to freedom....living, breathing, blood-filled Jews. But when the Egyptian army came after them, the same water that gave life and freedom to God's Children, took the lives and blood of the Egyptians in judgment. In the same way, the Blood of Jesus which gives us life also divides and brings judgment on those who refuse to believe in HIM.

The blue square and red rectangle represent the moments after Jesus breathed his last breath on the cross and a soldier pierced his side causing blood and water to run from his body separately.

The gold square and the ombré rectangle from pink to blue represent the third day when Christ rose up from death a victorious sacrificial lamb, priest and KING.

The moment we come to the cross(road) of faith to put our trust in Christ, we receive salvation from death which is a deposit toward eternal life, a light at the end of the tunnel so to speak. We look forward to what we cannot see from the vantage point of life, living by faith that God is faithful to his promise. The yellow and purple ombré rectangles represent our righteousness and royalty.

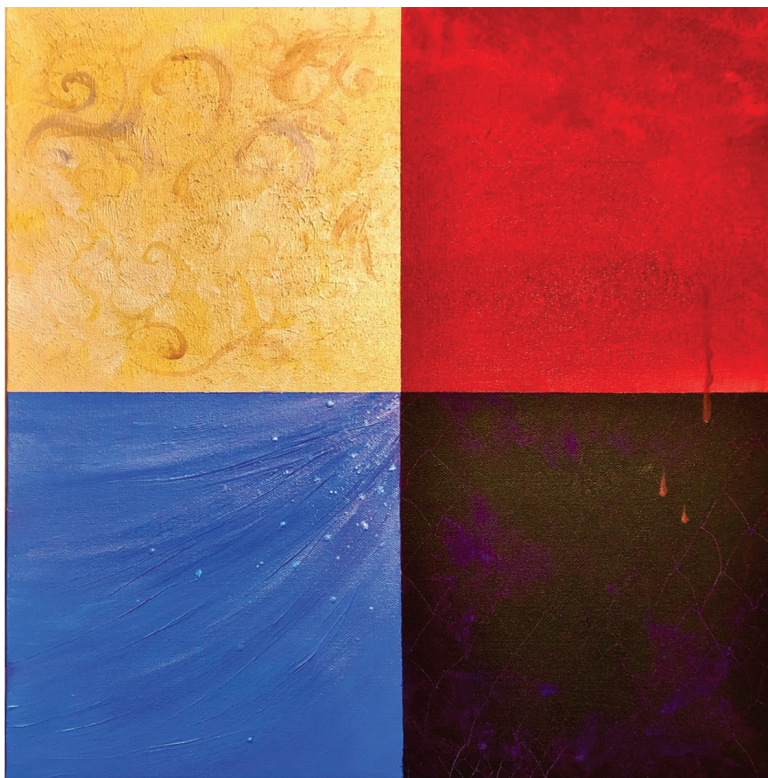
The upper left storm represents Hebrews 11, the Hall of Faith along with all the other Children of Israel who were in their shadows following blindly but faithfully, trusting the promise of a coming Messiah, not fully understanding what He would look like and how he would ultimately reign. Being in a storm or on the earth under clouds, we trust there is a sun on the other side even though for a time we cannot see it.

The blue sky is “....faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen....” Most of the people mentioned in Hebrews 11 did not experience the complete fulfillment of the promise that they were given, but remained faithful because of the promises. This stark division between storm and blue sky is like the moment we pass from death to eternal life to receive the fulfillment of God’s promise, His reward.

The dividing vertical line is the division in time between BC and AD, death and resurrection, ours and Christ’s. It is also the sword:

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ” Matthew 10: 34-39

The cross is central to time, humanity, eternity and the universe. This painting is a visual reminder of this truth.



THE KING, THE PRINCE, THE PRINCESS & THE DRAGON

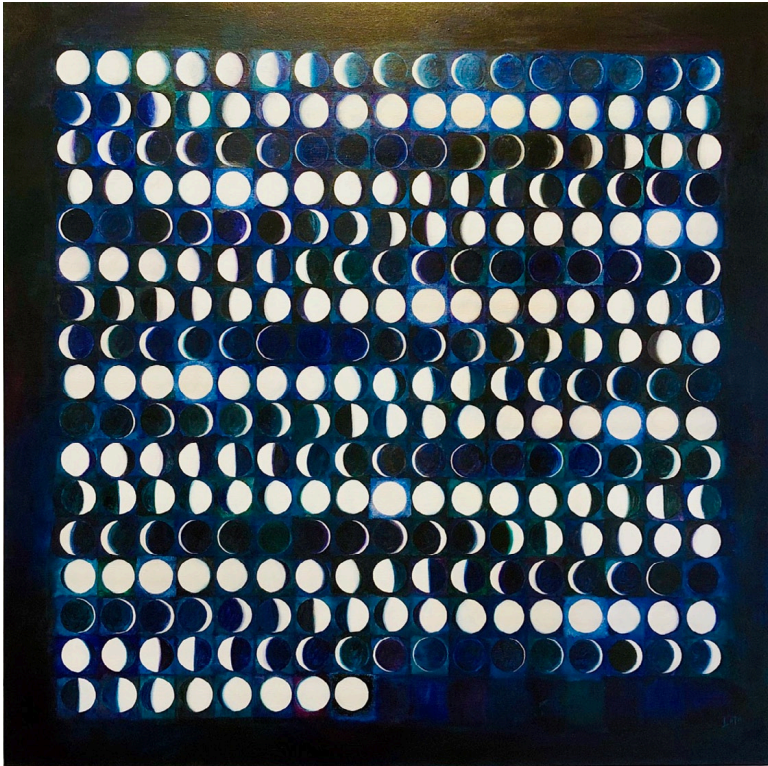
Regardless of culture, there is a story that emerges in every society as if it is buried in the psyche of humanity. It's the story of a King, a Prince, a Maiden or Princess and a Villain or Dragon.

From Genesis to Revelation, there are glimpses of these characters in the human story and in the poetry of scripture that point to Christ the Prince who crushes the Serpent on behalf of the Bride, the Church and the King, our Heavenly Father, is ever present.

In the same way this narrative is embedded in humanity, so is the need for and pursuit of Paradise...the Eden we were created in is what we long for. Each person in their own way desires a perfect and eternal life of peace.

The Prince has laid down His life and in doing so has become the way to Paradise. Of course many will seek their own way, but ultimately the story that seems to be embedded within us points humanity to the only way to find what we desire in our deepest core...a Kingdom, a Paradise, our Eden.

For many, the care of the earth and its creatures has become as a religion because of the enherent inner knowledge that somehow we belong here. Earth is our home. The fact that some people and cultures will not in any way hurt any creature reveals a search for Eden where there was no death, no suffering and the potential for eternal life in peace. This longing is like an inner prophesy of what is to come for those who follow the Prince's path to the King—a path which has been made by crushing the Dragon which ultimately will defeat death forever in the next Eden.



280 MOONS

When I was pregnant with my first child, Miika, all the math of gestation, the moon and repetitive historical times of waiting hit me like a magical equation of humanity.

Moon's cycle: 28 days

A woman's cycle: 28 days

10 full moons = 40 weeks which equals 280 days

Painting this many moons in the rhythm of its own cycle shows the days it takes for a baby to develop from conception to birth. I think it makes for a very interesting image because one day doesn't seem any more important than the next. Obviously many children come early or late, but 40 weeks is the standard time. And a woman's body shows external signs and measurements that reveal what week she is in.

It's as if the moon is humanity's personal clock ticking around us in a perfect rhythm with our bodies, our need for productivity, relaxation and sleep— pulse that was made for us.

The moon has no light of its own. It only reflects the light of the sun in the same way that humans have no life of their own apart from God who has breathed it into us.