

Breaking the Jar: Art's Untapped Potential in the Evangelical Church

Two common ways of valuing a work of art are the aesthetic way (do I like it?) and the commercial way (what would this fetch in an auction?). However, as Christians we need to think more about the spiritual value of art. This is when art works in people's hearts and lives to bring them closer to reality - which ultimately means to God himself. When the woman in Mark 14 broke the jar of expensive perfume to anoint Jesus, the place was filled with fragrance. He affirmed her and said she had done a beautiful thing - which people would always speak about. This talk will look at how we might 'break the jar' and release the potential of art in the evangelical church. It will inspire you to value both art and artists in your church, and discover new ways your mission can be strengthened and supported.

Liviu Mocan is a Romanian artist living in Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania. The rich Christian legacy that he inherited from his parents, from church, and from mature artists and theologians has guided his philosophy of life and formed the essence of his creation. His many and varied works – which can be found exhibited in private collections, indoor and outdoor, on all continents – are a testimony to his commitment to the visual expression of his beliefs. He is currently developing various art projects centered around the major themes of the Bible while experimenting with various materials and new technologies. Actively involved in his artistic community, he strives to be a witness among Romanian artists.

Jonathan Tame is the Director of the Jubilee Centre, a research and policy think tank in Cambridge that provides biblical perspectives on economic, social, and political issues in order to equip Christians to be salt and light in different spheres of society. Having obtained a Master's degree in agricultural economics, Jonathan worked for the UK government's international development agency in Cameroon before joining YWAM's relief and development office in Lausanne, Switzerland. From there, he and his wife Helene spent 11 years in Romania pioneering community development projects, starting a crisis pregnancy counselling centre, engaging with the Orthodox Church, and opening an arts and worldview café. In 2006 they moved back to Switzerland where Jonathan was involved in training, arts and media projects connecting Geneva's spiritual heritage with Christians working in the international community. Jonathan helped bring Liviu Mocan's monumental sculpture invitation/Decalogue to Geneva for the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth. They moved to Cambridge in 2009 for Jonathan to work initially with the Jubilee Centre's founder, Michael Schluter, before being appointed to lead the organisation in 2012.

I. The Art object in itself

A. Aesthetic value

B. Financial value

II. Breaking the jar (from Mark 14:1-9)

A. Spiritual value: the jar was broken but the effect remained

III. Art and artists in the church:

A. Bezalel: Art as worship, creating space for encounter (Ex. 25 + 31)

B. Ezekiel: Art as prophecy (ch. 4-5)

C. Christian artists through the centuries

D. Art after the Reformation: evangelical ambivalence

IV. The recovery of art in the 21st century church

V. A case study: the Archetypes exhibition