

5th August 2025

Gallery

"The form of my painting is the content."

Ellworth Kelly, *as quoted in 'Abstract Art' by Anna Moszynska*

As you know, from time to time, I find myself reflecting on the nature of God. I visited an art gallery recently, an eclectic collection of paintings from different eras and featuring different artists. The exhibition had three sections: one, photographic in style, exact, an accurate depiction of what the artist saw, nothing left to the imagination. It was as if you were there, standing where the artist was, seeing exactly what was there to be seen.

The second had art by impressionist painters, all beautiful, but in *no* sense photographic. They were what the artist felt or imagined. Was the sky *really* as red as that? Did that cottage *actually* lean to one side? Did the land merge with the sky as smoothly as *this*? Impressions, ideas, filtered through the imagination, and emotions, of the artist.

And the third was a collection of "abstract" forms, bits and pieces, shapes, lines, swirls, colours – "all over the place", some might say. And I saw what I saw in these paintings. The people after me would see different things: excited, puzzled, distressed, or scratching their heads.

Three sections, three kinds of art, three ways of seeing. And I mused on the presence of God ... Sometimes God is absolutely clear. No queries or doubts, nothing left out. God in Jesus? Or God in a personal revelation? It matters not. It's just wonderful when God is known without question. But sometimes God is no more than an impression, fleeting, as I suggested recently, and hard to explain, but real and amazing, nonetheless. That impression could be different today from yesterday, but it's the same God. *And* sometimes God is too abstract to understand, or even to depict. God is jumbled, ill-formed, disturbing, challenging, different, an abstract God, beyond explanation or even imagining. Yet, that's a God I know too.

So, as I move from room to room in the gallery of images of God in my life, I admire this image or that: lingering or rushing by; shaking my head here, shedding tears there; remembering one, forgetting another; going back for another look, not having time to linger.

The gallery of the nature of God, with no admission cost, and open all the time. The wonder *is* all in the content. Worth a visit, perhaps?

A prayer for today

Pictures of God? The beauty is in the eye of the beholder, isn't it?

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