



“LAUDATO SI’, mi’ Signore” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”. In the words of this beautiful canticle, Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us.

# LOOK AT THE WORLD

**T**hese words sum up indeed a reverie, which depicts a harmonious abode that serves as a bridge among all living creatures. Yet, the reality is far from St Francis Vision of Creation. Pollution, waste, climate change, wars and the breakdown of societies are significant themes, which Pope Francis discusses in detail in his LAUDATO SI’ encyclical on care for our common home.

This year while reflecting on the above issues, I wondered how many people have read and reflected on LAUDATO SI’? Especially in today’s fast-paced world when readership is lessening more than ever. “How could I help in conveying the message of LAUDATO SI’ in different way?”

Generally, our thoughts and senses are provoked by audible, sensory, and smell elements. However, for many, the visual aspect remains unrivalled. In a way, art can serve as a connecting bridge between the artist and the viewer. This is often to provoke and alert us or perhaps to awaken something within.

My journey was filled with enthusiasm and dedication. Rivers of inspiration emerged; it felt almost like interpreting a cinematic scenario into still yet moving pictures. And so, I have created seventeen works of art that interweave the story of the environmental, cultural, and ethical concerns raised in LAUDATO SI’. This exhibition entitled “Look at the World”, urge us to take a quantum leap in our consciousness from every conceivable angle: love, relationships, generosity, greed, politics, power, the media as well as despair, life, and death.

Discarded materials; such as broken glass, bits of wood, stones, foam, plastic cable ties, fabric and the like were used to weave unique stories that relate to us in one way or another. The main motive behind this was about both rejecting the throwaway culture, and giving a new lease of life to something no longer of use or in need. Another intention was that I wanted to show people that even junk and waste can sometimes become a new, yet interesting landscape; a symbol of resilience and of finding beauty in imperfection.



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Nature, people, and animals were the focal points of each canvas. They were the protagonists that helped in conveying an important message through different styles, which at times, needed to be dramatic. Such techniques were not meant to leave the viewer cold but to provide a deep focus and urgent awareness.

Searching for a New Home takes us on a virtual journey to witness the disturbing phenomenon of climate change and its effects. Since the industrial revolution, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions have raised temperatures, and especially higher in the poles. The results, as we now know are the rapid melting of glaciers. This has brought about the extinction of part of the planet’s biodiversity and its many creatures are gradually being chased out of their natural habitat.

Using foam, fabric, and acrylic paint, I tried to depict a story of a polar bear hopping from one ice plank to the other. Here, we get to witness the impact of the unthoughtful actions of human activities on this faraway land. Not only our Bear friend’s home is in danger, but also his own existence. By distancing ourselves from nature and other creatures, which is becoming the norm in our many fast-paced consumerist cultures. We are not only destroying Mother Earth but also profiting at the expense of its biodiversity.

Co-existing in harmony and peace alongside everyone is proving a challenging task in today’s world. And so, this piece sums up in brief the imbalance between humans and their relationship with their surroundings.

Here, Pope Francis invites us to reflect on the world around us, and to see nature as a book that grants us a glimpse of infinite beauty and goodness. We have a mission and that is to protect and look after our common home, not destroy it. We must open our eyes to see how God is present throughout creation.

“Searching for a new home” can also be a bewildering metaphor for our life journey; an alienating experience of leaving behind the familiar and venturing out into the unknown. Unimaginable rising challenges of noise, pollution and waste are creating such a conflict that is leading inevitably to tragic consequences. Our dear Bear is going through his own destitution, so will other creatures follow suit including us. There comes a moment in life, where destitution is not about losing one’s home but it is rather that unsettled inner feeling of chaos and instability that is brought by today’s world.

At its heart, LAUDATO SI’ is not about an artificial crisis with a happy ending, it is a close look into the current state of our environment. This is as it must be: “Look at the world” is both direct and provoking, and while some themes were obvious to the naked eye, others were open to interpretation, as everyone sees something different through their own lens and perception. I hope I managed to capture an intriguing yet enriching experience for those who came to view this exhibition.

– Chaher Rhomaei