

## Faith



Artist Karen Blampied with The Nativity of Mount Sinai icon  
Pictures: JON GUEGAN (00844544)

# Religion through the art of the icon

By Gill Kay

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A CONTEMPORARY exhibition of over 30 religious icons is currently on display at the Sir John Cheshire Gallery, entitled Glad Tidings.

The icons, by local artist Karen Blampied, are painted according to the orthodox pre-medieval tradition and fall into three main series – the Nativity icons, the Our Lady icons and the Sacramental icons.

Karen says that she decided to put the exhibition together to tie in with Advent, the Christmas season and the Fête de Noué. It is also the culmination of a spiritual and artistic journey which has led to the creation of these works of art.

Karen was an art teacher at Beaulieu Convent in the 70s and early 80s before she went to work for the Jersey Catholic Church in 1983 for the following 17 years.

## Theoretical

She also spent many years studying the traditional techniques of iconography, through several theoretical courses on iconography as well as practical courses such as icon drawing, painting, gilding and design.

'It was really because of my love of art and my religious background that I chose to paint icons,' she explained. 'I was undertaking a masters in religious studies at



The Angel of the Annunciation icon (Moscow 12th century) (00844545)

Leuven University and was living in an orthodox house which contained icons, and I found it very spiritual. The orthodox icon offers a profound way in which to express my Christian faith,' she said.

Karen also believes that this particular branch of art history is just as powerful in today's society.

'I think that icons are still relevant,' Karen continued 'they're something that people can look at and the imagery leads you into the picture.'

## Orthodox

'It's also a way of teaching religious theology. For example each image has a meaning, such as the position of Jesus' fingers which spells out his name. People enjoy being taken on a journey into icons,' she said.

The icons are all in the orthodox medieval tradition but feature seven different styles, including Egyptian, Armenian, Polish and Byzantine.

The artist has also organised a mural display of the iconic images which is being projected onto Pearce Jewellers shop during the Fête de Noué period. The moving slide show projects the Nativity icons on the shop wall, as well as selected sections from them.

Karen was helped by Fortuna and Smart Home Jersey with the equipment and technical support and also thanks Thompson Estates which is host to the projector. The exhibition is in the Sir John Cheshire Gallery from 10 am to 4 pm Tuesday to Friday, 10 am to 5 pm on Saturdays and 4.30 pm to 6 pm on Sundays, until Sunday 20 December.

**La Fête de Noué**  
**Genuine Jersey**  
**Christmas Market**  
**Royal Square**  
**Saturday 12th December**  
**10:00 – 17:00**

Come along to the Royal Square and prepare to stock up for Christmas with 'Genuine Jersey' produce, food and tasty treats.

