

## *The Seven Days of Creation*

### **Tamar Stacey**

I intended to create a major body of work that highlights the wonder of God's creation through the beauty of fauna and flora, linking my passion for wildlife with my strong Christian values. By focusing on nature, I was able to admire the world's intricate features that were intended by God. This work allowed me to be present in the Lord, thus expanding my spiritual faith.

I utilised the Bible to explore various biblical stories relating to my faith. By exploring Beatrix Potter, Julie Vivas, and Walt Disney, I generated the idea of illustrating a children's book of David and Goliath involving animals. Additionally, I studied the floral works of Maria Merian and Pierre-Joseph Redouté, inspiring me to use botanical illustrations to highlight the resurrection of Jesus. However, after discovering Leonard French's enamel artwork, *Seven Days of Creation in Genesis*, I conceptualised the idea of recreating the 'Seven Days of Creation' through animals, utilising design elements to symbolise the crucial ideas that were created in each day. This idea strongly linked to my intention in showcasing God's creation, thus refining this concept into a final piece. Prior to creating my final, I researched biological processes, habitats, and temperaments of various animals to understand their significance to the natural world. My research helped me understand that many animals reflect the values of God, simultaneously serving a complex purpose in functioning the environment. After experimenting with various animals, I ultimately focused on a lion, an eagle, a brown bear, a wolf, a sea turtle, a chimpanzee, and a dove. These animals conveyed literary symbolism, Biblical symbolism, and biological functions that connected them to specific days. Additionally, I experimented with various design elements, such as numbers and florals, to visually signify what was created on each day.

I analysed Wayne Westwood's suite of bird paintings, alongside Richard Symonds' hyperrealistic animal drawings, to understand the techniques required to paint realistic and visually appealing animals. Their works encompassed realistic tonal blends, delicate lines and textures, and striking contrasts between light and dark; I aimed to emulate these elements within my own work. By utilising Aristo Watercolours, I achieved a realistic appearance by gradually layering tones, using thin brushes to create delicate furs and skin lines, and applying excess water to create a realistic gradient between highlights and shadows. These techniques allowed me to capture the animals' intricate and unique details created by God, showcasing the beauty of His natural world. For day one, I painted a lion – a symbol of light alongside the Lord's protective nature – to represent the creation of light. I placed soft light rays behind the subject to support the idea of God's warmth within the light. Additionally, I placed a number one on the left side to signify the first day – the respective numbers were utilised for each day. In the second final, I painted an eagle with a globe of the sky within the background, symbolising the creation of the sky. Eagles are considered kings of the sky for their strength and security, reflecting the attributes of God. For the third day, I painted a brown bear to represent the creation of vegetation as this species promote the growth of plants within their environments. I applied green shrubbery surrounding the subject to demonstrate the bear's connection to vegetation. Within my fourth piece, I painted a wolf – a symbol of night – to show the creation of the moon and stars, further reinforced

with a purple galaxy constellation in the background. Within the fifth piece, I painted a sea turtle to signify the creation of the seas, accompanied by coral and seaweed illustrations to demonstrate the species' nourishment and maintenance of God's oceans. In the sixth, I painted a chimpanzee for the creation of mankind as their DNA and temperament were created similar to humans. Inspired by Hiroki Takeda's artwork, I illustrated florals within the negative space to demonstrate how mankind walks along the Earth. For the seventh day, God rested and called His creation Holy, influencing my decision to paint a mourning dove, a biblical symbol of the Holy Spirit. I incorporated an olive branch in the background due to its representation of peace and new creation within the Bible, strongly linking to my themes.

Overall, my suite of work was successful as it effectively connected to my intended concept of God's creation. The composition between the number, the design elements, and the subject successfully expressed the idea of what was created within each day. Additionally, the techniques I utilised to paint the animals formed a realistic appearance. I ensured that I carefully layered the necessary shadows, highlights, midtones, and shapes that were present within the reference image to successfully capture the beauty of God's creation. However, as I was painting several different subjects, some animals appeared more visually effective in comparison to others. This is discerned through the bear, which lacks dimension within the eyes due to the lack of highlight and colour. I attempted to replicate the bear's dark eyes within the reference image, however, this visual appears too flat in my painting. I learnt that I should refer to a different reference image with clear features that can easily be translated into an artwork. I applied this knowledge into my lion painting, thus forming a visually successful artwork that strongly replicated reality. Additionally, prior to my study, I created artworks that were direct replicas of reference images. However, my concept for this study encouraged me to explore original compositions and unique forms, further developing my creative capabilities. This helped me learn the importance of balance and presentation to create a visually effective piece. Collectively, my subject area assisted my development as an artist as it allowed me to study and understand the proportions and features within each animal, helping me appreciate the world God gave us. By doing so, I discovered the joy of sharing my faith through painting, providing me with confidence in utilising Christian themes in future projects.