

Jacquiline Creswell is a Visual Arts Advisor and Curator who specialises in developing and managing contemporary art exhibitions and installations, particularly in cathedrals and other public spaces.

Her work typically includes:

- Curating exhibitions – selecting artists and artworks, developing themes, and creating exhibitions that engage the public.
- Project management – overseeing the planning, logistics, installation, and delivery of art projects from start to finish.
- Advising institutions – helping organizations such as cathedrals and cultural venues use visual art to connect with diverse audiences.
- Working with artists – collaborating with internationally renowned and emerging artists to commission and present new works.
- Public engagement – designing interactive experiences and using traditional and digital media to encourage visitors to explore art, history, and spirituality.
- Strategic arts programming – developing long-term visual arts programmes that enhance the cultural and educational role of public spaces.

She has been involved in major projects at places such as Salisbury Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral, Ely Cathedral Durham Cathedral, Wells Cathedral Chichester Cathedral among others and include over 90 exhibitions by artists such as Bruce Munro, Sean Henry, Sophie Ryder, Ana Maria Pacheco, and Michael Pendry. These projects aim to use contemporary art to foster dialogue, reflection, and community engagement. In essence, Jacquiline Creswell's role combines the responsibilities of an art curator, project manager, and cultural advisor, helping institutions present meaningful visual art that is accessible to a wide audience.

Jacquiline says:

For more than sixteen years, my curatorial practice has been centred on the encounter between contemporary art and sacred space. Working across churches and cathedrals has led me to understand these places not simply as historic or architectural settings, but as living environments shaped by faith, ritual, memory, community and human experience. My role as curator is to bring contemporary art into this complex environment in a way that respects its sacred purpose while allowing the art to speak with its own voice.

I have found that contemporary art can offer a different way of approaching the questions at the heart of a cathedral's mission. It can make visible what is difficult to express in words: questions of mortality, hope, suffering, beauty, transcendence, belonging and the search for meaning. The artwork does not need to be explicitly religious to have a profound spiritual resonance. Sometimes it is precisely through ambiguity, silence or the unexpected that a work can create the space for contemplation.

What I bring as a curator is an understanding of how the artwork and the sacred environment can work together. I consider the architecture, light, materials, scale, history and atmosphere of a particular cathedral, as well as the rhythms of worship and the experience of its visitors. Placement is therefore never incidental. A sculpture encountered beneath a medieval vault, beside a place of prayer, or within the changing light of a cathedral can be experienced very differently from the same work in a conventional gallery. The space alters our perception of the work, while the work can, in turn, transform our perception of the space.

Over the years, I have witnessed how these encounters can encourage people to pause and look differently. A visitor may enter a cathedral because of the architecture or heritage and unexpectedly find themselves moved by a contemporary artwork. Another may recognise something of their own experience within a work and begin to engage with questions of faith, identity or existence. For me, this is one of the most significant contributions contemporary art can make to the cathedral: it creates points of entry into conversations that are both personal and universal.

My curatorial practice is therefore less about placing contemporary art within a cathedral than about creating a dialogue between the work, the building and the individual. I see the curator as a facilitator of that dialogue—carefully selecting works that can inhabit the space meaningfully and creating the conditions in which an encounter can take place.

In this sense, contemporary art can extend rather than interrupt the mission of the cathedral. It can make the cathedral a place not only of worship and tradition, but also of questioning, imagination, dialogue and discovery. By bringing the voices of contemporary artists into these ancient spaces, I believe we allow the cathedral to continue its historic role as a place where people encounter something beyond themselves—and where the boundaries between the spiritual, the material and the human remain open to exploration.