

## *As Surely As Spark Fly Upwards; Jacket || Couture* Spring/Summer 25

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The Ancient Greek word for beauty is *kallos*, or to *kalon*<sup>1</sup> [τὸ καλόν], and was said to denote something as fine, good, fair (*kal*). Interestingly its roots of origin are from the verb *kaleo* [καλέω], which means ‘to call’<sup>2</sup> (*Ka*, which means “the” and *leo* which means sound or “voice”<sup>3</sup>).

I was struck many years ago by a conversation between Irish philosopher and theologian, John O’Donohue and journalist Krista Tippet, in which they discussed the aesthetic pull. That ‘in the presence of beauty, it’s not a neutral thing, but it’s (...) calling you (...) the notion of being called — being called to be yourself and called to transfigure what has hardened or got wounded within you (...) it’s also (...) the heart of creativity, this calling forth all the time.’<sup>4</sup>

From this juncture, exploration of that calling forth can be defined in various forms as an act, *or art*, of transfiguration<sup>5</sup>. It is an invitation, door or gateway we meet time and again. Indeed, transfiguration is a liminal place that ‘mediate(s) between (...). It is neither on the interior nor on the exterior: it is both; it is on the threshold’.<sup>6</sup>

As I stepped into the shipping container, (a recently acquired studio), I was met with blank space. Often just as terrifying as it is exhilarating, a blank page is exposing, vulnerable and full of unknowns... Stripped back to the bare foundations, the

empty container seemed to reflect just that - as well as creative potential. So, in order to embrace the ambiguity, I set about materialising this invisible space, tracing the entire container with charcoal (ashes) and making visible all the marks, disruptions and multiple holes I found in the walls.

I explored the nature of ‘messy manuscripts’ – of perception and paratext (anything around the main text; images, titles, illustrations), with the use of thick black tape to hold the paper in place, keeping that as much part of the work as the mark-making. Stepping back from the pieces that surrounded me, I photographed the scene. Then I (digitally) printed the images onto fabric and began draping the material, now a malleable form, on a mannequin. Ideas that eventually culminated in a jacket.

Clothing, much like literal walls of buildings or rooms, is the *paratext* to our own bodies, outward skins, containing or concealing our inner worlds, and at the same time, always revealing interior narratives. Indeed, Maximus the Confessor said:

*"About the scriptures we say the words are the clothes of Christ. The words veil: the meaning reveals. It is the same in the world where the forms of visible things are like the clothing, and the ideas according to which they were created are like the*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2010/11/call-of-beauty-excerpts-from-benedict.html> (accessed 16.04.2024)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=33667#~:text=Calling%20\(2821\)%20\(klesis%20%5B,an%20invitation%20to%20a%20banquet.](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=33667#~:text=Calling%20(2821)%20(klesis%20%5B,an%20invitation%20to%20a%20banquet.) (accessed 14.04.2024)

<sup>3</sup> [https://secure.wesleyan.org/kaleo#:~:text=καλέω%20\(kaleō\)%20C%20the%20biblical,Moses%20through%20a%20burning%20ush.](https://secure.wesleyan.org/kaleo#:~:text=καλέω%20(kaleō)%20C%20the%20biblical,Moses%20through%20a%20burning%20ush.) (accessed 12.01.2024)

<sup>4</sup> <https://onbeing.org/programs/john-odonohue-the-inner-landscape-of-beauty/> (accessed 19.02.2024)

<sup>5</sup> O’Donohue, J. (2005a). *Beauty: The invisible embrace*. Perennial. p7

<sup>6</sup> Genette, G. (2001c). *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation*. Cambridge Uni. Press p - xvii

*flesh. The former conceal, the latter reveal. For the universal creator and law-maker, the word, both hides himself in his self-revelation and reveals himself in his hiding of himself.*"<sup>7</sup>

‘As Surely As Sparks Fly Upwards’ (taken from the Ancient Biblical manuscript Job 5:7), is a meditation of sorts, a collection of dark clouds rooted in the mystery of invisible things held, translated and embodied. These are the apophatic impressions and textures – abstract clouds of unknowing; the invisible blank space, made visible.

The full collection of the charcoal artworks can be found on:  
[jennifersturrock.com](http://jennifersturrock.com)

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<sup>7</sup> St Maximus the Confessor, *Ambigua*, PG 91,1129. Alternate Translation in *The Roots of Christian Mysticism*. By Oliver Clement. New City Press, 1995, p.217.