

Images of Jesus

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In my amateur studies of fine art and along the way during developing a number of courses for Christian students, I have had the fortune to come upon some of the most stunning images of Jesus. What makes my findings and responses to such findings most remarkable is that I am not a Christian, per se. I am spiritual, I am kind, I don't commit ethical or legal crimes, and I did my share of time in Catholic and other churches and Bible school as a kid. I also believe in the existence of a Jesus of Nazareth, though I typically believe he was an ordinary man of simple and pure tastes and visions and was sanctified to the extremes he has been and bastardized to the same extremes. Nevertheless, or in addition, then, I find images of Jesus intriguing, profound, and often quite awe-inspiring..whether for aesthetic and artistic purposes or for spiritual reasons

Some images of Jesus are renditions done in the tradition of the culture of the artist. That is, you do find a majority of the images of Jesus are of him with white skin, light hair, and blue eyes. This brings up a whole other issue of the climate, geography, and extreme temperatures of the areas of Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Israel, for starters…as such environs typically house inhabitants with rich levels of melanin in their skin, so Jesus would be dark-skinned, really. But my possibly offensive postulations aside, consider this one absolutely amazing site I found in my studies for the courses I referred to above. The site is called Faith Central.net, a web site operated out of New Zealand and featuring a collection of images of Jesus (on a links page titled “Jesus Christ in Art”) that range from images of Jesus rendered in clay; in pen or pencil; in oils; and in cloth, glass, and other media and materials. The images of Jesus date from the 200s (?) all the way to the year 1996 (at this writing, that is). The images of Jesus feature statuary, stained glass, mosaics, metalwork, weaving, and frescoes, as well. And these images depict Jesus Christ in iconography, as a shepherd, as the infant virgin-child and the dead virgin-child man across the lap of the Madonna (in Michelangelo's Pieta), as a victim, as a redeemer, and as a saint. I won't keep the site (or web page) to myself, so here it is: <http://www.faithcentral.net.nz/inclass/art/jc-art.htm>. Just keep in mind that many, many more sites and artists feature images of Jesus as the portrayer imagines he was and is…in whatever garb and skin color and spiritual stance they believe apt. As it should be.