

Greg Tricker  
**Francis of Assisi**  
***Paintings for our Time***  
ISBN 1 903998 66 2  
Totnes: Green Books, 2005, £25

Francis of Assisi has been pictured thousands of times in art, each portrayal showing him to be a person who speaks directly by his presence as much as by his words. This is a particularly powerful set of images of Francis, painted and carved by an English artist who travelled to Assisi to come closer to the spirit of the saint. In his introduction he talks of the process of 'uncovering' the image of Francis from the medium in which he works, and there is indeed a sense of images that speak directly through the grain of the wood, or the weave of the canvas on which he paints. The artist's style is reminiscent of Chagall, and there is a simplicity, almost naivety about the pictures that well matches the subject.

There are over 60 images here, from stone carvings through tempera and water-colour to wood-block prints, nearly all in colour, and in A4 format. The reproduction is excellent, and accompanying each plate is a short paragraph of text to put the image in context. The introductory historical essay is not quite accurate, but there are plenty of other books available on the life of Saint Francis if that is what you are looking for. Here Francis speaks eloquently and movingly in pictures worthy of extended meditation.

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