

PETER HOWSON

SALVATION

21 CORK STREET
LONDON W1S 3LZ

10 September - 10 October 2026
Private View: Wednesday 9 September, 6-8pm

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Flowers Gallery is pleased to present *Salvation*, a major new exhibition by Glasgow-based Peter Howson, on view at Flowers Gallery, Cork Street, London, from 10th September to 10th October 2026. A new series of interconnected oil paintings on gesso panels, these works chronicle the life of Christ as depicted in the Gospels, through a sequence of intensely personal encounters, marking one of the artist's most sustained examinations of biblical narrative to date.

Born in London in 1958 and raised in Ayrshire, Scotland, Peter Howson is widely regarded as one of Britain's foremost figurative painters. Emerging in the 1980's as a leading member of *The New Glasgow Boys*, his work is distinguished by its psychological intensity and uncompromising engagement with the human condition. An official war artist during the Bosnian War in 1993, Howson's experiences of conflict, and his personal battles with addiction and subsequent recovery, led him to find his faith and profoundly impacted his work, which consistently addresses suffering alongside the prospect of redemption.



Peter Howson, *What is truth*, 2026, Oil on gesso panel

Religious subject matter has occupied a significant place within Howson's practice for more than two decades. Following his conversion to Christianity in 2000, biblical narratives and devotional works became an increasingly important vehicle through which he explored themes of sacrifice, spiritual renewal and belief. Major projects reflecting a prolonged engagement with sacred subjects have included *The Stations of the Cross* (2003), *Christos Aneste* (2005), *Harrowing of Hell* (2008), and his monumental painting of the martyrdom of Saint John Ogilvie for St Andrew's Cathedral in Glasgow, completed in 2011.

Created in 2026, *Salvation* revisits familiar episodes from the Gospels not as grand historical events, but as intimate scenes charged with vulnerability, doubt, courage and compassion. The series begins with Christ's nocturnal conversation with Nicodemus, in which the possibility of spiritual rebirth is first articulated, and unfolds through scenes of teaching, healing and confrontation. Children, outcasts and those pushed to the margins emerge repeatedly throughout the cycle, reflecting Howson's longstanding commitment to depicting the dignity and struggles of ordinary people. In these works, Christ is not presented as a remote divine figure but as a man moving among those around him, confronting hypocrisy, offering consolation and challenging established power.

As the narrative progresses, the emotional intensity deepens. The betrayal by Judas, Christ's interrogation before Pilate and the events of the Crucifixion are rendered with a striking psychological immediacy. Howson focuses not on spectacle but on the experience of abandonment, suffering and sacrifice, emphasising the profound solitude at the heart of the Passion story.

The final panels move beyond death towards resurrection and renewal. Encounters with Mary Magdalene and the triumphant vision of *Alpha and Omega* transform the cycle into a meditation on hope and the promise of eternal life. Howson's expressive figuration and deeply empathetic vision bring renewed urgency to stories that have shaped Western culture for centuries.

Both devotional and profoundly personal, *Salvation* reveals Howson engaging with some of the most enduring narratives in art history while exploring concerns that have remained central to his practice: resilience, faith and the capacity for change.

About Peter Howson (b. 1958)

Peter Howson is one of the UK's leading contemporary figurative painters. Born in London in 1958, at age four he moved with his family to Ayrshire. He studied at Glasgow School of Art from 1975-1977, returning in 1979 to complete a master's degree. He lives and works in Glasgow.

Emerging from Glasgow School of Art in the 1980's, Howson quickly proved his skill of capturing the maverick, the excessive, the non-conformist and his own personal understanding of the struggles of everyday life, with an ability to engage with individuals on the peripheries of society. He was a focal member of the group of young artists to emerge from the Glasgow School of Art during the 1980s dubbed *The New Glasgow Boys*. In 1985, he was made the Artist in Residence at the University of St Andrews whilst working as a part-time tutor at Glasgow School of Art.

In 1992 he was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum, London to record the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Howson was appointed official British war artist for Bosnia in 1993, where he witnessed the harrowing realities of war, culminating in a solo exhibition at the Imperial War Museum in 1994.

Howson is the recipient of numerous awards, including The Henry Moore Foundation Prize in 1998 and the Lord Provost's medal, Glasgow, in 1995. In 1996 he was made Doctor of Letters, *Honoris Causa*, by the University of Strathclyde. He was awarded an OBE in 2009. In 2011 Howson completed a dramatic rendering of the martyrdom of St John Ogilvie for the renovated St Andrew's Cathedral in Glasgow. The two year process of working on the commission was the subject of a BBC documentary.

Howson has exhibited throughout the UK and internationally, and in 2023 had a major retrospective at the Edinburgh City Art Centre, Edinburgh. His works are represented in public collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate, London; the Imperial War Museum, London; the British Museum, London; National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh; City Art Centre, Edinburgh; Glasgow Museums, Glasgow; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and National Gallery of Norway, Oslo.

Exhibition Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday from 11am - 6pm
Monday by appointment

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