

PRESS RELEASE - JAN 2014



Eleanor Moreton: Tales of Love and Darkness

14 March – 12 April 2014
Preview 13 March 6.30-8.30pm

If one of Bluebeard's eight wives had trusted the old murderer and left the bloody chamber well alone, would the couple have lived into comfortable old age? If Psyche had not doubted the love of Cupid, shining light on him as he slept, would the potential of their love have remained unrealised? Both stories address the issues of love, trust and darkness with very different consequences.

The narrator of the 'One Thousand and One Nights' tells her stories at night in order to delay her execution. The story of Scheherazade, so similar to that of Bluebeard, exemplifies the power of narrative (and all art) to suspend time, and ultimately defy death.

In her third solo show at the gallery, Eleanor Moreton has departed from her practice of working from a single image and has made a series of composite paintings, taking elements from 19th century British narrative paintings and representing them within an alternative narrative space.

In *Mary-Anne Waiting*, (2013), Millais' solitary heroine has completely lost her propriety and is undergoing a personal sexual revolution. A young medieval-style page, transported from a Pre-Raphaelite painting, presents a dish of excrement in *The Gift of Shit* (2013). The painting puts a cheerful, self-help spin on the moralising of the Pre-Raphaelites.

Moreton will also exhibit painted drawings on wood, portraits of women she admires, many of them story-tellers, who have also come out of the dark. Grouped together under the title *Absent Friends*, they include the English writers Rebecca West and Elizabeth Jane Howard (who died at the beginning of this year), the American crime writer Patricia Highsmith, and American singer/songwriters Karen Dalton and Aretha Franklin. They form a positive modern counterpoint to the voiceless victims in Bluebeard's Castle.

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