

THE ENCHANTED INTERIOR



FOREWORD

The idea of the *enchanted interior* permeates the very fabric of the Laing Art Gallery. For years, I have been aware of unique elements that have been begging to be explored in an exhibition of this scale and discernment: first, the beautiful Edwardian building, whose Baroque-revival style and Art Nouveau detailing imbues the space itself with an enchanted atmosphere; second, a Pre-Raphaelite masterpiece that embodies the theme of the sensual, melancholy woman; and third, an unparalleled example of a British Orientalist harem scene, which presents the opulent interior as a site where women are confined.

Inspired by these aspects of the gallery's building and collection, *The Enchanted Interior* set out to explore the theme of female subjects enclosed in an ornate interior, such that they become its 'chief ornament'. Often referred to as the 'gilded cage', this subject was especially popular in nineteenth-century paintings, especially those by the British Orientalists and the Pre-Raphaelites. As a gallery with a collection of remarkably fine examples from both movements, it felt vital and prescient that we take the opportunity to explore this theme, and tackle the issues it raises in an in-depth and thoughtful way.

Finding a way to acknowledge the compelling attraction of such works whilst bringing a critical eye to their sinister overtones – allusions to entrapment, subordination, and exploitation abound – is an aim dear to myself and my team. Indeed, as I write, it seems to have become all the more urgent, at a moment in time when women's freedoms are yet again being thrown into question. It is with the wide-ranging implications of such issues always vividly in mind that the curator of the exhibition, Madeleine Kennedy, has sought to critically reassess these beautiful but problematic works. Resisting the tendency for museums to speak for others, the key strategy she has applied in curating this exhibition is to provide platforms for others to speak: whether it be feminist artists' work providing the counterpoint to the objectifying effects of historic works, or artists from diaspora backgrounds confronting the harmfully Western-centric way of seeing that characterises Orientalism.

EXHIBITING ENCLOSURE

MADELEINE KENNEDY

The exhibition's curator Madeleine Kennedy reveals the concepts, questions and convictions that shaped *The Enchanted Interior's* development. After exploring the sinister dimension of enchantment, she examines the motif of the 'gilded cage' in relation to historical and contemporary factors that have contributed to the idealisation of women's subordinate position in society. Touching on the ethical considerations of exhibiting artworks so deeply entangled with prejudices about race and gender, the text conveys the principles behind confronting these with works by female artists that speak from a different perspective. Specifically, it considers how such dialogues might help destabilise representations of women as victims, captives, and objects, and argues for the importance of attuning the eye to how such tropes are glamorised and perpetuated in our everyday lives.

In Oscar Wilde's 1890 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, we encounter the disturbing idea that the extent of something's superficial or material beauty can entirely conceal the extent of its evil.¹ The protagonist of the story, Dorian Gray, is granted eternal youth in exchange for his soul, so that his physical beauty remains untainted by his wrong-doing, whilst a portrait of him hidden in the attic becomes more grotesque with each immoral act. As readers, we are exposed to the possibility that the beautiful and the sinister are symbiotic; that moral corruption can wear a beguiling face whilst seducing us into its control.

This is not unlike the story behind *The Enchanted Interior*.



The project began as a way to showcase two stunning works in the Laing collection: *Laus Veneris* [figure 1] by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Edward Burne-Jones, and *Hhareem Life, Constantinople* [figure 2] by the British Orientalist John Frederick Lewis. Both paintings are of national significance: the first as one of Burne-Jones' greatest masterpieces, and the second as one of the best-preserved examples of Lewis' harem scenes, many of which have faded considerably over time. Each painting – the first in oil and the other in



Penny Slinger
Hermetic Vessel, from An Exorcism, 1970-7
 Photocollage
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 Image courtesy Riflemaker Contemporary Art, London.
 Photo: Peter Whitehead

'It's been an issue throughout the history of art – the feminine form has had predominance as the muse for the artist, but generally it has been the feminine as seen by the masculine. That's why I took this particular bull by the horns and said: "I want to be my own muse and, if I'm going to be an object, I'm going to be my own object. I'm going to see myself as a work of art and be in both places at once." In this way, I'm not being used by anyone. I'm showing myself and the multifaceted aspects of the self. That was one of my criteria that stayed with me all my life; not being an object, other than the object you want to create yourself. It's a different thing, really, when you're standing in both places at once. I learned what it was like being both behind and in front of the camera.'

– Penny Slinger

LIST OF WORKS

THE FOLLOWING WORKS REFLECTS THE CORE LIST OF WORKS SHOWN IN THE EXHIBITION, WITH SOME VARIATIONS AT THE TOURING VENUE.

Anna Alma-Tadema
(1867-1943)

The Drawing Room,
Townshend House, 10th
September 1885
Watercolour over pencil and
pen and ink on card
Royal Academy of Arts,
London

Afruz Amighi (b.1974)
Hanging '1001 Pages', 2008
Woven polythene and
plexiglass
Victoria and Albert Museum

Maisie Broadhead (b.1980)

Shackled, from series *Pearls*,
2016
Digital c-type, frame and
pearls
Courtesy the artist

Hero, from series *ReFrame*,
2018
Photograph and frame
Courtesy the artist

Gerald Leslie Brockhurst
(1890-1978)
The Fan, 1915
Oil on canvas
Dundee City Council (Dundee
Art Galleries and Museums)

Henriette Browne (1829-1901)
*A Moorish Girl with a
Parakeet*, 1875
Oil on canvas
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery &
Museum, Bournemouth

Elizabeth Burden
(1841-unknown) and Edward
Burne-Jones (1833-1898)
Cupid Going Away, from
Volume of trial pages for 'Love
Is Enough' and 'Cupid and
Psyche', c. 1868
Wood engraving
William Morris Gallery,
London

Edward Burne-Jones
(1833-1898)

Laus Veneris, 1873-5
Oil on canvas
Laing Art Gallery. Purchased
with grant aid from the MGC/
Victoria & Albert Museum
Purchase Grant Fund,
National Art Collections Fund,
Pilgrim Trust, and the Friends
of the Laing Art Gallery, 1972

English piano, c.1860
American oak case, painted
with shellac varnish
Manufactured by Frederick
Priestley, painted by Edward
Burne-Jones
Victoria and Albert Museum.
Given by Mrs J. W. Mackail,
daughter of the artist.

Walter Crane (1845-1915)

At Home: A Portrait, 1872
Gouache on paper laid on
wood
Leeds Museums and Galleries.
Bought with the Harding fund,
1932

Portion of wallpaper frieze
Alcestis, 1876
Colour woodblock print, on
paper (produced by Jeffrey &
Co. England)
Victoria and Albert Museum.
Given by Wallpaper
Manufacturers Ltd.

Portion of wallpaper *Sleeping
Beauty*, 1879
Colour machine print on
paper (produced by Jeffrey &
Co. England)
Victoria and Albert Museum.
Given by Mr Emslie John
Horniman

Evelyn De Morgan (1855-1919)

The Gilded Cage, 1900-19
Oil on canvas
De Morgan Collection,
courtesy of the De Morgan
Foundation

The Love Potion, 1903
Oil on canvas
De Morgan Collection,
courtesy of the De Morgan
Foundation

The Hour Glass, 1905
Oil on canvas
De Morgan Collection,
courtesy of the De Morgan
Foundation

Medea, 1889
Oil on canvas
Williamson Art Gallery &
Museum, Birkenhead; Wirral
Museums Service

Frank Dillon (1823-1909)
*A Room in the House of Shayk
Sadat, Cairo*, c.1875
Bodycolour, on paper
stretched around panel
Victoria and Albert Museum.
Purchased with the assistance
of the National Heritage
Memorial Fund, Art Fund,
Shell International and the
Friends of the V&A

John Duncan (1866-1945)
The Sleeping Princess
Tempera on canvas
Courtesy of Perth Museum &
Art Gallery, Perth & Kinross
Council, Scotland

Henry Treffry Dunn
(1838-1899), and Dante
Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)
The Loving Cup, 1867
Watercolour on paper
William Morris Gallery,
London

William Maw Egley
(1826-1916)
The Lady of Shalott, 1858
Oil on canvas
Museums Sheffield

Max Ernst (1891-1976)

From series of plates entitled
'*Une Semaine de Bonté, ou
Les Sept Elements Capitaux*',
(*A Week of Kindness, or the
Seven Capital Elements*), 1934
Recto-verso heliogravure
Victoria and Albert Museum.
Acquired from Marlborough
Rare Books, London in 1967.

From series of plates entitled
'*Une Semaine de Bonté, ou
Les Sept Elements Capitaux*',
(*A Week of Kindness, or the
Seven Capital Elements*), 1934
Recto-verso heliogravure
Victoria and Albert Museum.
Acquired from Marlborough
Rare Books, London in 1967.

Sir George Frampton RA
(1860-1928)
Lamia, 1899-1900
Ivory, bronze, opals, glass
Royal Academy of Arts,
London

Anya Gallaccio (b.1963)
*can love remember the
question and the answer*,
2003
Mahogany, glass and flowers
Arts Council Collection,
Southbank Centre, London

Shadi Ghadirian (b.1974)
Untitled from the *Qajar* series,
1998
Silver bromide print
Courtesy of the artist and
Rose Issa Projects, London

Paul-Albert Girard (1839-1920)
Moorish Courtyard
Oil on canvas
Towneley Hall Art Gallery &
Museum

Vilhelm Hammershøi
(1864-1916)
Interior, Sunlight on the Floor,
1906
Oil on canvas
Tate: Purchased 1930

Mona Hatoum (b.1952)
Home, 1999
Wooden table, 15 steel
kitchen utensils, electric wire,
3 light bulbs, software and
audio
Tate: Purchased 2002

Clementina Hawarden
(1822-1865)

*5 Princes Gardens, Isabella
Grace, or Clementina at
Window*, c.1861
Stereoscopic photograph
Victoria and Albert Museum

Princes Gardens, c.1862-3
Photograph
Victoria and Albert Museum

William Holman Hunt
(1827-1910)

The Lady of Shalott, 1857
Wood engraving on paper
(engraved by J. Thompson)
Tate: Presented by Harold
Hartley 1925

Past and Present, 1868
Oil on canvas
Aberdeen City Council
(Art Gallery & Museums
Collections). Bequeathed in
1941 by Mrs Taylor.

Isabella and the Pot of Basil,
1867
Oil on canvas
Laing Art Gallery

Clementina Margaret Hull
(1844-1910)
*The Thief – 'Then it chanced
in a nobleman's palace, That a
necklace of pearls was lost'*
Watercolour on paper
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery
and Museum, Bournemouth
BORG 00969

Sarah Jones (b.1959)
The Dining Room (Francis
Place) I, 1997
Photograph, colour, on paper
on aluminium
Tate: Purchased 1999

Hayv Kahraman (b.1981)
Hussein Pasha, 2013
Oil on modular panel
Courtesy of the artist, the
Defares Collection, and Jack
Shainman Gallery, New York

Carl Kauba (1865-1922)
Metamorphosis, c.1905
Bronze
Anderson Collection of Art
Nouveau, Sainsbury Centre
for Visual Arts, University of
East Anglia

Charles Landelle (1821-1908)
Judith, 1887
Oil on canvas
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery
and Museum, Bournemouth
BORG 01244

Frederic Leighton (1830-1896)
The Music Lesson, 1877
Oil on canvas
Guildhall Art Gallery, City of
London

John Frederick Lewis
(1804-1876)

The Hhareem, Cairo, c.1850
Watercolour and body colour
Victoria and Albert Museum

*Hhareem Life,
Constantinople*, 1857
Watercolour
Laing Art Gallery

Life in the Hareem, Cairo,
1858
Watercolour and body colour
Victoria and Albert Museum

Edwin Long (1829-1891)

Then to her listening ear responsive chords came familiar, sweet and low, 1881
Oil on canvas

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth
BORG M 01343

Chosen Five

Engraving on paper by J. Cother Web 1890
Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth
BORG M:1998.7

Shana Lutker (b.1978)

Louise, 2011
Bronze
Courtesy the artist and Barbara Seiler Gallery

Augustine, 2011
Bronze
Courtesy the artist and Barbara Seiler Gallery

Geneviève, 2011
Bronze
Courtesy the artist and Barbara Seiler Gallery

Ursula Mayer (b.1970)
The Crystal Gaze, 2007
7.20 min, super 16 mm transfer on HD
Courtesy the artist

Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik (founded in 1853)
Ink stand, c.1900
Electroplated metal
Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia

Albert Joseph Moore (1841-1893)
Pomegranates, 1866
Oil on canvas
Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

Ernest Normand (1857-1923)
Pygmalion and Galatea, 1881
Oil on canvas
The Atkinson, Sefton MBC, Southport, UK

Cornelia Parker RA (b.1956)
Alter Ego (Boat with Reflection), 2010
Silver plated
Royal Academy of Arts, London

William Bruce Ellis Ranken (1881-1941)
The Gasperini Room, Royal Palace, Madrid, Spain, 1926
Oil on board
Reading Museum, Reading Borough Council

Herman Jean Joseph Richir (1866-1942)
Jeunesse, c.1920
Oil on canvas
Dundee City Council (Dundee Art Galleries and Museums)

Martha Rosler (b.1943)
First Lady (Pat Nixon), from series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, 1967-1972
Photomontage
Courtesy the artist, and Galerie Nagel Draxler Berlin/ Cologne

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)
Marigolds (The Bower Maiden, Fleur-de-Marie), 1874
Oil on wood
Nottingham City Museums and Galleries

Ethel Sands (1873-1962)
Interior with Mirror and Fireplace
Oil on canvas
Guildhall Art Gallery, City of London

The Chintz Couch, c.1910-1
Oil paint on board
Tate: Presented by the Contemporary Art Society 1924

Emma Sandys (1843-1877)
Viola, c.1865-77
Oil on canvas
National Museums Liverpool, Walker Art Gallery. Bequeathed by Mrs Constance Emily Warr on behalf of her husband, the late Professor George Warr, 1908

Georg Sauter (1866-1937)

The Dispute, 1911
Oil on canvas
Leeds Museums and Galleries, Bequeathed by Sam Wilson, 1925

Memories of Love, 1911
Oil on canvas
Leeds Museums and Galleries, Bequeathed by Sam Wilson, 1925

Zineb Sedira (b.1963)
Une Génération des Femmes, 1997
Screenprint
Victoria and Albert Museum

W. B. Simpson & Sons (founded in 1833)
Firescreen, c. 1880
Mahogany and hand-painted tiles
William Morris Gallery, London

Lucy Skaer (b.1975)
Leonora (The Tyrant), 2006
Oak table with inlaid mother of pearl
Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London

Valeska Soares (b.1957)
Fainting Couch (Prototype), 2002
Fibreboard, Perspex, fabric, polyfibre and flowers
Tate: Purchased with funds provided by the Latin American Acquisitions Committee 2005

Linder Sterling (b.1954)
Untitled, 1979
Photomontage
Hatton Gallery

Fiona Tan (b.1966)
Nele/Nellie, 2013
Digital video
Laing Art Gallery. Courtesy
the artist and Frith Street
Gallery, London

Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012)
Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, 1943
Oil paint on canvas
Tate: Purchased with
assistance from the Art Fund
and the American Fund for the
Tate Gallery 1997

Albert Toft (1862-1949)
The Spirit of Contemplation,
1901
Bronze
Laing Art Gallery

John William Waterhouse
(1849-1917)

Destiny, 1900
Oil on canvas
Towneley Hall Art Gallery &
Museum

Study for The Lady of Shalott
(from the poem by Tennyson)
Oil on canvas
Falmouth Art Gallery
Collection

James Abbott McNeill
Whistler (1834-1903)
Three Figures: Pink and Grey,
1868-78
Oil paint on canvas
Tate: Purchased with the
aid of contributions from
the International Society
of Sculptors, Painters and
Gravers as a Memorial to
Whistler, and from Francis
Howard 1950

William Clarke Wontner
(1857-1930)
*Jade Necklace for an Eastern
Princess*, 1908
Oil on canvas
Towneley Hall Art Gallery &
Museum

Francesca Woodman
(1958-1981)

*Untitled, Providence, Rhode
Island*, 1975-6
Gelatin silver estate print
Courtesy Charles Woodman,
and Victoria Miro, London/
Venice

*Untitled, Providence, Rhode
Island*, 1975-8
Gelatin silver estate print
Courtesy Charles Woodman,
and Victoria Miro, London/
Venice

*House #3, Providence, Rhode
Island*, 1976
Gelatin silver estate print
Courtesy Charles Woodman,
and Victoria Miro, London/
Venice

*Untitled, Providence, Rhode
Island*, 1975-8
Gelatin silver estate print
Courtesy Charles Woodman,
and Victoria Miro, London/
Venice

*My House, Providence, Rhode
Island*, 1976
Gelatin silver estate print
Courtesy Charles Woodman,
and Victoria Miro, London/
Venice

*From Angel Series, Rome,
Italy*, 1977
Gelatin silver estate print
Courtesy Charles Woodman,
and Victoria Miro, London/
Venice

Richard Caton Woodville
(1856-1927)
The Pet of the Harem
Oil on panel
Aberdeen City Council
(Art Gallery & Museums
Collections). Purchased in
1931.

Albert Joseph Woolmer
(1805-1892)
Woman in White, 1872
Oil on canvas
Herbert Art Gallery &
Museum, Coventry

Unknown makers

Birdcage, 1640-1660
Oak and brass wire, with
decoration in ebonised and
gilded wood, walnut and bone
Victoria and Albert Museum.
Given by Lady Frampton

Seal Handle, c.1900
Copper, brass
Anderson Collection of Art
Nouveau, Sainsbury Centre
for Visual Arts, University of
East Anglia

Brooch, c.1900
Silver, enamel
Anderson Collection of Art
Nouveau, Sainsbury Centre
for Visual Arts, University of
East Anglia

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The Enchanted Interior

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Tate
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Victoria and Albert Museum
William Morris Gallery, London
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Museums Service

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Cover image: Edward Burne-Jones, *Laus Veneris*, detail,
1873-5, Oil on canvas, Laing Art Gallery

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