

Forbidden Garden

by Baroque Anarchist

HSoA
PUBLISHING



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Introduction by Isabel H Langtry

I am delighted to be exhibiting the paintings of Baroque Anarchist. The vitality and culture inherent in the artist are palpable. This series of works demonstrate a prolific and irrepressible presence, presenting us with luscious paintings of gigantic flowers, skulls, sticks and stones, and the flotsam and jetsam of nature in luxuriously painted compositions. A highly personal baroque style, intriguingly peppered with these elements of self-reference hidden amongst the magnetic beauty.

The classic definition of the Baroque comes to us from the Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölfflin, whose "Principles of Art History" (1915) distinguished it from the earlier High Renaissance through a series of visual contrasts,

"Renaissance pictures are "linear," each figure outlined and balanced within the picture plane; Baroque pictures are "painterly." Baroque Anarchist's work resonates with this description. A number of these artworks have that same dynamism with a particular and heightened visual contrast, sometimes a composition of undulating velvety reds and luscious blacks, they are as much a temperament as a style, theatrically colliding the visual with the emotional. Scaled up into a wonderful, dreamy forest, connecting extremes of

light and shadow in one painting. Playing with visual illusions, creating rhythms that disrupt our expectations of logic, a botanic architecture which flows. Brilliant.

These grand painted works are both decorative and somehow structural. Brilliantly described, going beyond the obvious, using references to the classical approach in a refreshingly personal way which brings back the century's old tradition of Baroque art and so with this reinvention able to reflect and depict elements of our contrary times.

Intriguing titles such as 'Thyroid Nest' and references to the botanical intimacies of Georgia O'Keeffe, thematic yet somehow free, making other references beyond the formal echoes of light and shadow across classical themes of mythology reinvented with elements of graffiti within compositions that underpin this very personal pondering.

This is exciting work and a much-needed tonic with its breathtaking realism, symbolic elements, and universal beauty.

Isabel H Langtry
Principal Hampstead School of Art
www.hsoa.co.uk



Artist statement

Art is my refuge from external conditions and the medium through which I explore my emotions. I have a personal score to settle with Death, which has taken some of my loved ones. I see art as a weapon to fight mortality, just like science, and I use art to explore vulnerable life, the body, and scientific efforts to achieve immortality.

In this time of social, political and ecological upheaval, I find comfort in the Baroque masters' materials and layered technique of painting, which has endured the test of time. Following their strict method for each work, I make a compositional sketch, followed by a drawing, and then I make a grisaille in a brown-white tone. Only then do I apply a layer of colour, if necessary. It is a slow, labour-intensive method, but it achieves that fleshy materiality of Baroque painting allows me to enlarge biological fragments to make large paintings.

This method has also given me an appreciation for the way paint can be layered to mask and expose different elements. Before I start I sometimes write words and feelings on the blank canvas, and then after I have carefully executed all the layers of paint, I might incorporate other media or destroy the perfection of detail with graffiti.

For over a decade, I made costumes and sets at a theatre. In

that vast, womb-like building, the primary creative tools and materials are ephemeral – space, time and contrast lighting. I bring that theatrical element of immersive, worldmaking and enchantment to my painting by integrating objects and costumes, and conducting experiments with space, light and performance. Theatrical themes drive my work too and I find that ancient and Biblical mythology resonates strongly with contemporary stories of progress and decay, mortality and renewal. Romeo Castellucci's theatrical avant-garde has deeply inspired my process, as well as vivid installation art by Katja Novitskova, an organic installation by Anya Gallaccio, and the earth-body performances by Ana Mendieta and painting by Mamma Anderson.

We are now learning about the extensive assistance that some of the old masters received from talented and innovative women, like Artemisia Gentileschi. This discovery challenges the myth of individual genius and invites us to appreciate the power of collaboration – something we need now more than ever. Having worked in theatre design for over ten years, I appreciate the joy and power of teamwork and I am honoured to have collaborated with some incredible artists, designers, scientists and performers.

Insta: [@baroque_anarchist](#)

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Forbidden Garden series

Baroque and Renaissance artists could comment on the issues of their day through their depictions of stories from the Bible and antiquity. According to the Bible, humanity became mortal when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. Today, the development of biotechnology, like cloning organs, makes it possible to become immortal again. I imagine scientists conducting biological cloning experiments in mysterious laboratories where artificial human organs are grown like flowers and fruit in the garden.

For centuries, artists made memento mori works of art, typically featuring a skull or hourglass, to remind the viewer of death. The Forbidden Garden series is about Genesis, the feminine and mortality. In these paintings, representations of human anatomy and femininity are combined with fragments copied from artworks by Baroque artists, Maria Van Oosterwijck, Rachel Ruysch and Artemisia Gentileschi. Their flower paintings from the Dutch Golden Age-inspired this series of paintings.

RENAISSANCE

Oil on canvas

90 X 120cm

2019



THYROID NEST

Oil/canvas

60 x 60 cm

2021



GENESIS
Oil / canvas
150 x 100 cm
2021



VISION
Oil / canvas
150 x 100 cm
2021



HEARTBEAT
Oil / canvas
160 x 100 cm
2022



BLOOD FLOW, 150 X 200cm, Oil on canvas diptych, 2021

Post-Pandemic Society series



The first stage of painting with the words exposed.



In the final stage, the words are hidden.

I lost a dear friend to Covid-19 right at the beginning of the pandemic. The news came as a terrible shock and the canvas became a space for my grief. I started writing my feelings into the layers of my paintings: words like "fear", "pain" and "The world will never be the same" - a deeply private feeling that echoed round me in the guise of the pandemic. Layers of paint allowed me to hide and speak at

the same time. Inscribing the words "post-pandemic society" into my painting gave me comfort and relief. 'Post-Pandemic Society' is a series of works that started in response to that grief amidst a global pandemic when circumstances forced me to confront the big issues of mortality and life's precarity, resilience and potential for renewal.



URBAN GARDEN NEAR RIVER MERCY

Oil / canvas

100 x 150 cm

2022



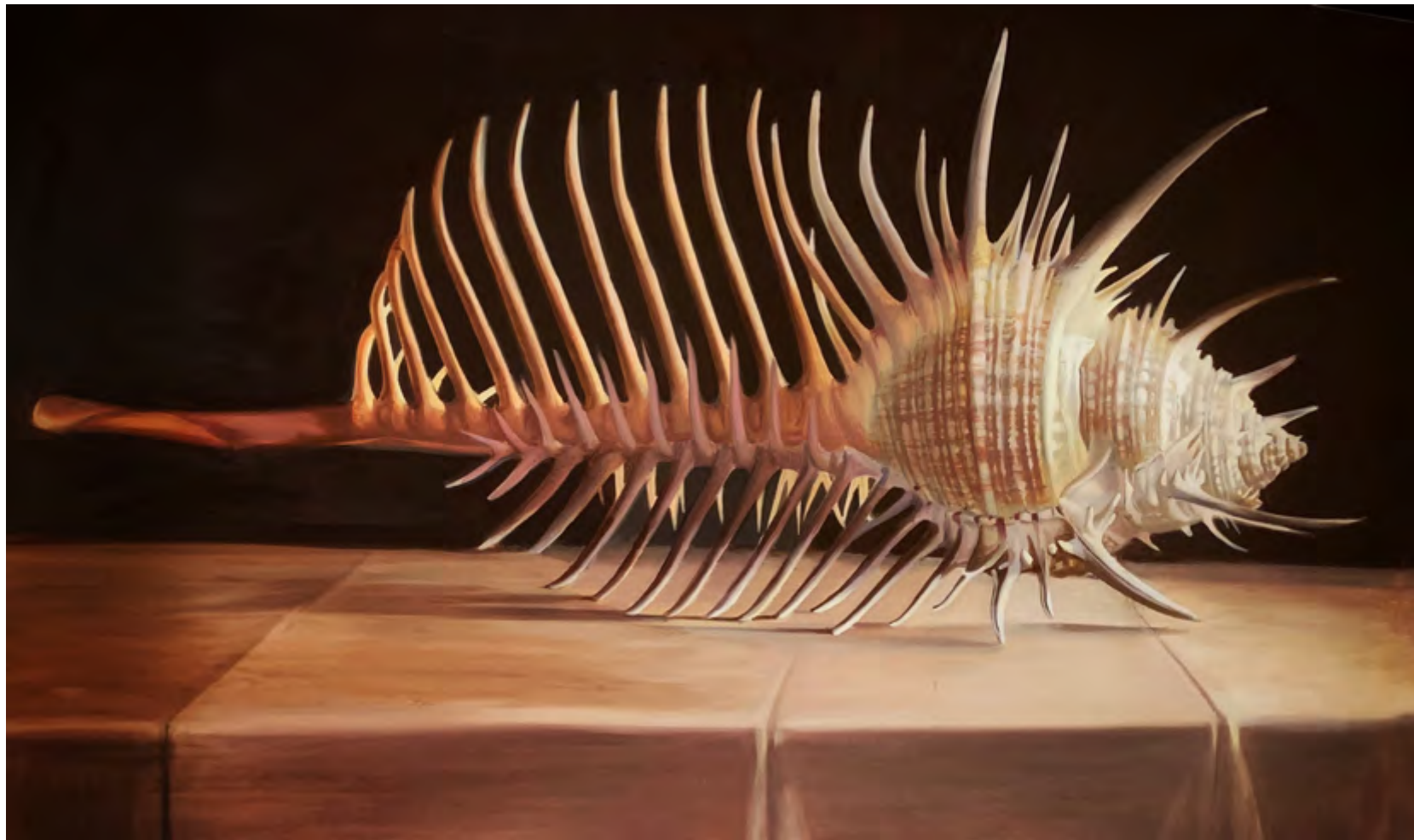
STIGMA
Oil / canvas
100 x 150 cm
2021



Painting of Shell from
an exhibition at an
abandoned fortress
in Kronstadt 2020.

Macroworld series

The series "Macroworld" includes several art works with a main flexible idea of playing around with the scale of every day objects. Thanks to enlargement the normal objects acquire back their sacred and mystical meaning.



SHELL
Oil / canvas
130 x 180 cm
2019



ASHES FROM ASHES, Oil / canvas, 130 x 180 cm, 2019



EMBRYO, Oil / canvas, 130 x 180 cm, 2019



Painting of extinct species of pelican from an exhibition at an abandoned fortress in Kronstadt 2020.

Blindness series

My project "Blindness" is devoted to the problem of the extinction of rare species in recent years. I created paintings depicting the skulls of these animals. In addition, I also made sketches of the same animals on transparent sheets of polyethylene. When viewed at a certain angle with one eye closed, the images of the living animals and their skull align

according to the rules of perspective. Closing one eye is a symbol of the effort we must make to conserve biodiversity. We need to escape our comfort zone and sacrifice something of ourselves for nature. In addition, this act of viewing is a symbol of our blindness, when, unfortunately, people often do not want to see the problems of the world.



QUAGGA. WENT EXTINCT 1973, Oil on canvas, polyethylene, 160 x 100 cm, 2019



QUAGGA. WENT EXTINCT 1973, Oil on canvas, 160 x 100 cm, 2019



WHITE RHINO.
WENT EXTINCT
2018
Oil on canvas
100 x 100 cm
2019



JAVAN TIGER. WENT
EXTINCT 2008
Oil on canvas,
polyethylene
100 x 100 cm
2019

New Baroque series

"The beast, which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come."

(Revelation 17: 8)

This text comes from the final book of the Bible, Revelation – sometimes called the Apocalypse of John. In November 2020, I had the rare opportunity to see the first Gutenberg Bible in Moscow State Library. Reading the text now it is impossible not to think about the climate and ecological crisis and how our culture of excess and boundless consumerism will destroy us.



WIFE of
BABYLON
mixed media,
paper triptych
150 x 270 cm
2021



HORSE OF APOCALYPSE
Mixed media and paper triptych
150 x 240 cm, 2021



Mixed media and
paper triptych
150 x 240 cm
2021

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HSoA was founded in 1946 by a group of local artists, including Henry Moore, Bernard Gay and Jeannette Jackson, who believed that art should not be the exclusive domain of the avant garde. Today the school is an independent centre of artistic excellence, providing first class, affordable tuition in traditional observational and experimental creative skills. Our branding includes the line 'Unleashing the artist in everyone', a direct reference to our founders' original mission.

Hampstead School of Art is a registered charity, governed by a board of trustees who have ambitious plans for the school's future. Central to this has been the move to a state-of-the-art new building, designed by Allies and Morrison.

Reg Boorer
Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

HSoA Publishing is a division of Hampstead School of Art

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