

Press Release

## LAST NIGHT I DREAMT OF MANDERLEY

CURATED BY DANIEL MALARKEY

24 January – 8 March 2025

Private View: Friday 24 January, 6-8pm

**Theodora Allen, Santi Alleruzzo, Jean-Marie Appriou, Sophie Barber, Ernie Barnes, Polina Barskaya, Jerzy Bereś, Lewis Brander, Roger Brown, Cornel Brudaşcu, Anna Calleja, Tancredi di Carcaci, Leonora Carrington, Diana Cepleanu, Leonardo Devito, Maeve Gilmore, Ian Godfrey, Krzysztof Grzybacz, Maggi Hambling, Sheila Hicks, Goro Kakei, Nicola L., Eleanor Lakelin, Graham Little, Patrizio di Massimo, Quentin James McCaffrey, Chidinma Nnoli, Gordon Parks, Mervyn Peake, Tom Schneider, Monica Sjö, Richard Slee, Dorothea Tanning, Lenore Tawney, Mariana Varela, Aleksandra Waliszewska.**

*The road to Manderley lay ahead. There was no moon. The sky above our heads was inky black. But the sky on the horizon was not dark at all. It was shot with crimson, like a splash of blood. And the ashes blew towards us with the salt wind from the sea.*

Daphne du Maurier, *Rebecca*, 1938

Alison Jacques presents 'Last Night I Dreamt of Manderley', a group exhibition curated by Daniel Malarkey. The title of the exhibition comes from the opening line of *Rebecca*, the 1938 Gothic novel by Daphne du Maurier, whose screen adaptation by Alfred Hitchcock won an Academy Award in 1940. *Rebecca* tells the story of a fictional country house and estate, Manderley, owned by du Maurier's male protagonist Maxim de Winter. The female narrator, who remains unnamed throughout, marries de Winter and becomes the mistress of the seemingly idyllic Manderley, but soon senses an atmosphere of doom as she suspects the house is haunted by Rebecca, de Winter's first wife.

An integral part of each of us, fairytales adapt and change with each generation, helping to shape our understanding of the world both as children growing up and as adults questioning our choices and judgements. They reveal the underbelly of human consciousness, while leaving us with a curiosity of what lies ahead. 'The show is extremely personal because it is the result of over 18 months of conversations, studio visits and archival study', Daniel Malarkey states. 'It was not until naming the exhibition that I realised my subconscious had been curating an exhibition about my favourite book from adolescence, *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier.'

Bringing together the works of over 30 artists and estates from different generations and geographies, the exhibition seeks to retell the story of *Rebecca*, taking the viewer on a path which explores notions of memory, darkness and transformation. Malarkey comments: 'I want the visitor to journey through the conscious and unconscious, draw connections between the past, present and future, and experience the potential of storytelling to transform our lives and thought.'

# ALISON JACQUES

Exhibiting artists, among them Patrizio di Massimo, Chidinma Nnoli, Quentin James McCaffrey, Sophie Barber and Graham Little hang alongside older artists and estates, such as Sheila Hicks, Leonora Carrington, Maggi Hambling, Maeve Gilmore and Dorothea Tanning.

All the works in the show challenge conventional notions of fairytales as children's stories and idealised narratives. While often adopting the visual language of magical landscapes, imaginary beings, and extraordinary human powers, the exhibition also explores darker and complex readings of this age-old genre. Themes such as deception, defiance, betrayal, the complexities of love, and the battle between good and evil wind their way throughout the narrative created by Malarkey.

In the same way that a novel invites us to read between the lines, this exhibition unfolds, allowing us to discover carefully constructed dialogues between the artists. Malarkey has intentionally created a stage set environment to add atmosphere and heighten the other-worldly experience.

The first work which the viewer encounters upon entering the gallery is *The Snail* by Nicola L., whose first UK retrospective was staged at Camden Art Centre, London in October 2024. Prominent in the gallery's front window, this snail-shell sculpture, lit up with twenty-three candles, sets the tone and premise of the show, enticing the viewer into the gallery to embark on uncanny journey.

Malarkey's curation includes transforming the gallery spaces with Pre-Raphaelite inspired wallpaper, architectural interventions, and painted interiors. The first room examines the interaction between the body and everyday objects, allowing the viewer to re-engage with childlike curiosity, often lost in adulthood. Malarkey likens the second gallery to a dreamlike 'Cave of Wonders' complete with a viewing platform staircase over two metres in height, to ensure the visitor can hone in on individual artworks.

Finally, the viewer is led downstairs through an arch into the 'Underworld', where Maggi Hambling's portrait of Sebastian Horsley presides over the space, introducing themes such as the conflict between morality and religion, resistance to authority, and a questioning of established traditions. Isolated in the intimate space downstairs, the final work in the exhibition is a painting by Aleksandra Waliszewska, the great-granddaughter of the fairytale writer, Kazimiera Dębska. The work is installed close to three vessels by Eleanor Lakelin, carved from ancient wood dating back thousands of years – as with fairytales, 'Last Night I Dreamt of Manderley' spans many centuries.

Written by Bella Kesoyan

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