

Güler Ates *Present and Absent*

17th November – 17th December 2011 (Private View: Thursday, 17th November, 6.30-8.30pm) at Great Fosters Hotel, Stroude Road, Egham, Surrey TW20 9UR, Tel: 01784 433 822 or 07971 580 572



Marcelle Joseph Projects proudly presents *Present and Absent*, a solo exhibition featuring a new series of photographs by Turkish artist Güler Ates taken in the historic rooms of Great Fosters, a former royal hunting lodge in Surrey dating back to 1550.

The title of the show references the former residents of Great Fosters over its more than four centuries of history, from Henry VIII in the 16th century and Judge Doderidge, Solicitor General to King James I, in the 17th century to Sir Charles Orby in the 18th century and Baroness Halkett, Queen Alexandra's lady in waiting, in the early 20th century. While working in Great Fosters, Ates imagined these characters that once lived in the house. Ates says, 'They were absent; however, through the objects in the rooms, the interiors and the exterior of the building, I wanted to trace the "present" of some of the previous occupiers.' This new body of work confronts the intense dialogue between the past and present in this grand historic house.

Güler's photographs were taken in the majestic settings of the Italian Room, Panel II Room and the Tapestry Room at Great Fosters, complete with 17th century Flemish tapestries and a carved wooden Jacobean chimneypiece. The Italian Room is finished with carved Quattrocento doors and damask covered walls.

The darkness in the rooms, a consequence of the Tudor architecture, plays a significant role in the work of Ates, whose ambiguously veiled female figures illuminate against the dramatic backdrop of rich, heavy drapery. The extreme contrast is one element employed by the artist in order to create the fluid, floating apparitions that have become synonymous with Ates' work. Ates herself is inspired by Dutch Old Master paintings and the darkness and intensity of the works on display are reminiscent of these masters of painting. Her body of work comments on the Western notion of Orientalism and the effects of the cross pollination of cultures on female identity and architecture. Güler says, 'Manifestations of my work are realised through performance and site-responsive activities that merge Eastern and Western sensibilities.' Ates questions the relationship between the veil and the West, and by setting the female veiled figure within a lush European interior, she subtly refers to the West's mistaken 'far-right' interpretation of the veiled woman and refers back to the European traditions of veiled women as found in the work of Old Masters such as Vermeer. Important to her artistic process, Ates sources the fabric and makes all of the luscious silk costumes worn by the model she photographs in her work after scrupulous research into the history of the building and the time when it was built.

Born in 1977 in Eastern Turkey, **Güler Ates** has been living and working in London for the past 13 years. She graduated in 2008 from the Royal College of Art with an MA in Printmaking. That same year, her work was featured in the *New Contemporaries* show. Currently, she is Digital Print Tutor at the Royal Academy Schools. Her work can be found in the Victoria & Albert Museum's print collection and was recently shown in the 2011 Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy. She was the first artist-in-residence at the Leighton House Museum after its refurbishment in 2010 where she exhibited her body of work from that residency.

Great Fosters has been the splendid home to many an English nobleman with regal connections, and was once a hunting lodge for Henry VIII, and his daughter Elizabeth, whose royal crest can still be found above the main porch, dated 1598. The majestic property continued to change hands throughout history, before becoming a hotel in 1930. For more information, see www.greatfosters.com.

Note to Editors

Founded in 2011, Marcelle Joseph Projects is a roving contemporary art projects company devoted to promoting contemporary art in different venues or found spaces across the United Kingdom. The core activity of this commercial venture is to showcase contemporary work of emerging to mid-career international artists who work in a variety of media. Including this exhibition, Marcelle Joseph Projects will have mounted five exhibitions in 2011. For more information, go to www.marcellejoseph.com.

Visitor Information

Opening hours: 10am – 6pm daily.

Directions

By Car:

Travelling south (anti-clockwise) on the M25: Exit the M25 at junction 13. Go straight over the roundabout, as if re-joining the M25. Keep in the left hand lane, signposted A30 Egham.

Travelling north (clockwise) on the M25: Exit the M25 at junction 13. Turn right at the roundabout, as if re-joining the M25 to go south. Keep in the left hand lane, signposted A30 Egham and continue towards Egham town centre. At the end of the slip road under the motorway bridge, turn first left at the large roundabout into The Avenue. Turn left at the mini roundabout (police station on the left) into

Vicarage Road. Continue over the railway lines to the roundabout at the end. Turn right at the roundabout into New Wickham Lane and continue over the M25 motorway. Turn left at the next roundabout into Stroude Road and Great Fosters is approx 500 yards on the left handside.

Directions from the A30: From Bagshot to Staines on the A30, turn right at the traffic lights by the Wheatsheaf Pub and Laithwaites into Christchurch Road. Continue over the roundabout and past 2 parades of shops on the right. Turn left at the traffic lights into Stroude Road. Great Fosters is approximately three quarters of a mile on the right hand side.

By Rail:

Any rail service to Egham Station. Although the hotel is only 15 minutes walk from the station, we advise you take a taxi. Egham Taxis 01784 433 933; Gemini Cars 01784 471 111; Runnymede Taxi 01784 53 53 53.

Image: Güler Ates, *Blue and White*, 2011, archival digital print.

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