

Offer Waterman & Co

Diarmuid Kelley

Recent Work

24th January - 28th February 2014

11 Langton Street London SW10 0JL



Indian Red, oil on canvas, 42 x 48 inches (2013)

Leading Modern British and Contemporary art gallery, Offer Waterman, has announced it will host a major solo exhibition of new works by Diarmuid Kelley in January 2014.

From an early age, Kelley has stood apart from his peers. As a student, despite enjoying the prevailing mode of painterly abstraction, Kelley was more preoccupied by still life and portraiture. He has pursued these traditional disciplines with a keen awareness of contemporary art practice, creating paintings which are timeless in their appeal.

Kelley's obsession with the use of light in European painting - in which he looks to Caravaggio's theatrical drama and Vermeer's ethereal interiors - defines his oeuvre. His studio has been carefully adapted so that he can precisely control the quality of light. Recreating the methods used by Joseph Wright of Derby and countless Dutch painters of candlelit scenes, the artist has constructed a small enclosed room which has a window frame on one side exposed to strong daylight, while the other sides are curtained. By covering the window to different degrees, he achieves a dramatically darkened interior within which to create his compositions.

The work of Diarmuid Kelley features in a variety of esteemed collections and institutions, notably the National Portrait Gallery, London; Chatsworth House; the private collection of Steven Spielberg; and the private collection of Lord Allen of Kensington and Michael Fisher. Awards include 1st prize at the Nat West Prize For Art in 1995, which made him the youngest ever winner, and runner up for the BP Portrait Award in the same year. Each year, Kelley also undertakes a limited number of portrait commissions, often painted on location, which are produced in parallel to his studio work. In 2010 he was commissioned to paint Dame Anne Owers, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, for the National Portrait Gallery's permanent collection.

Throughout his career, Kelley has used the largely conservative genre of portraiture as a vehicle for a sophisticated kind of narrative painting. Those friends he uses as models form a cast of faces that reappear in paintings alongside a range of antique props and ageing studio furniture. Actress Olivia Williams, who has been cast in roles ranging from Regency beauty to contemporary femme fatale, has been a muse for many years.

Notable new works on display at Offer Waterman & Co will include *Indian Red* (above) and *The Thirty Years War* (below). In *Indian Red*, Kelley presents elements of a domestic interior which call to mind the world of Victorian writer Edith Nesbitt's stories for children — painted with a palette of colour and opulent detail that deliberately echoes the rich textures of masters such as Van Dyck and Ingres; the melancholy tone of the composition overall, however, carries a psychological weight that is starkly contemporary.

Notes to Editors:

Diarmuid Kelley

Born in Stirling in 1972, Diarmuid Kelley grew up in the north of England and studied Fine Art at Newcastle University, graduating in 1995. He then went on to study for a Masters degree at Chelsea College of Art and Design.

Kelley has a long standing association with Offer Waterman & Co, having had five solo-exhibitions at the gallery. He has also recently participated in a number of other group exhibitions including *The Figure*, Browse & Darby, London, *Hinterland*, Thomas Williams, London and *Illuminate*, Jasmine Studios, Hammersmith, London.

Offer Waterman & Co

Offer Waterman & Co was established in 1996 as a specialist dealer in 20th Century British art. They handle the finest paintings, drawings and sculpture dating from 1900 onwards and work with private, institutional and corporate collectors worldwide. The gallery has grown to become one of the best-known and leading galleries of Modern British art in London. In addition to sourcing works within the field of Modern British art, they also use their expertise and experience of the art market as a whole to assist with acquisitions of American and European, Impressionist, Modern and Contemporary art.

Their close and highly experienced team of staff is headed by the gallery owner Offer Waterman and together they place great importance on building relationships with their clients, whether they be first-time collectors or seasoned art buyers. In the long term they aim to help clients develop well advised art collections which have long term value.

Exhibition hours: Monday to Friday 10am to 6pm, Saturday 11am to 4pm

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The Thirty Years War, oil on canvas, 14 x 11 inches (2013)