

Preface

By Rathje, G.

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Superstition, folk tales and myths and the influences such narrations have on our conception of reality are the main themes in the exhibition 'Apotropaic' opening this spring at the Museum of Religious Art, Denmark. In her work the British artist Sharon Thomas shows the stories and myths that we are part of and that are moulding our philosophy of life and our identity. Sharon Thomas' charcoal drawings, paintings, and shadow installations unfold a world inhabited by characters that partly belong to the existing world in the English parishes such as Northwich, the town where Sharon was born and grew up.

Sharon Thomas' characters are rooted in the superstition of the English countryside and the British romantic tradition within painting and poetry, glorifying the England of the past and the ideas of this nation. These characters are also lifelike portraits of ordinary people with their flaws and the reality of everyday life imprinted on their faces and manners.

The artistic tools of Thomas' art are related to the medieval culture of the carnival and the style associated with this culture of grotesque realism. A mode of style that must also have influenced the English 18th Century tradition of caricature drawing that we know so well from Hogarth amongst others.

During the carnival in the medieval and early Renaissance the social order and hierarchies were turned upside down, for a short while matter and body ranked above the soul and intellect. This language of grotesque realism is the language of the jester. By means of his humour and uneven position at court he could point to grotesque installations in the established social structure and hierarchy: the narrative we call reality.

The exhibition title 'Apotropaic', refers to the effects and rituals that could keep evil away in ancient Greece. In an elegant manner this title becomes a reminder that good and evil can take many shapes that myths and tales can both lead to creation and destruction. The Museum of Religious Art is very pleased to welcome the artist Sharon Thomas to her first solo exhibition in Denmark.

Kind Regards,

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Director

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