



**University of
Sunderland**

Bodman, Virginia (2013) COSTUME DRAMA. [Show/Exhibition]

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COSTUME DRAMA, 2010-13, body of work comprising 20 works on paper, (watercolour, gouache, acrylic), 5 etchings, 15 large and 30 small oil paintings: <http://www.virginiabodman.com/costume%20drama.html>

Research and making was funded by *PaintingSunderland*.

The work considers and investigates the human need to escape, albeit on a temporary basis from paramount reality, see *Escape Attempts*, Cohen, S & Taylor, L, (1976). A troupe of female figures, (first encountered in *PALCE*), escape from the vicissitudes of daily life, adopting personas borrowed from C17, 18 & 19th Spanish, Persian and French paintings and inhabit new or different pictorial spaces in which responses to living in a contemporary patriarchal society can be safely acted out. Playfully employing a range of making strategies and using a mix of representational and abstract forms, referencing a wide range of sources from the histories of painting from Abstract Expressionism to devotional imagery, the resulting works are silent, obscure and mysterious. The *COSTUME DRAMA* webpage includes a number of studio shots showing some of the paintings installed as part of a large-scale drawing installation: *REVISIT, REVIEW, REPRISE*.

Two paintings from the *COSTUME DRAMA* group were shown in *MALERIE*, a touring group exhibition, (11 artists), jointly curated by 3 exhibitors, Natalie Gale, Sarah Bowker-Jones and Sarah Kate Wilson. *MALERIE* disseminated current approaches to 'painting as object' through the artists' engagements with process, substance and materiality. The exhibition began at NewBridge Project Space, Newcastle, (20.4.2012- 24.5.2012), and then toured to Transition Gallery, London (9.6.2012- 1.7.2012), and will conclude at Project Space Leeds in 2013, (Leeds venue and date TBC). This exhibition extended the remit of *Unbound: Possibilities in Painting*, Hayward Gallery, 1994 and *Painting to Object*, Tate Gallery, 2009 and also provided new perspectives – insiders' accounts of the current concerns of a group of cross-generational artists including Alexis Harding, Phyllida Barlow and Paul Merrick.