





# Sydney Road

Stephanie Kingston

An Acme Studios publication

Published on the occasion of Stephanie Kingston's exhibition of paintings,  
*Sydney Road*, at the Acme Project Space, London in October 2010

Painting *Original features* photographed in situ





October 2010

Dear Mark and Marigold,

Will I try to explain to you why I am making these paintings? I would love you to share in my thoughts about Sydney Road. To tell you how much I loved visiting you there as a child. How exciting it was your huge house full to the brim of strange and beautiful things; the birthday cards and schoolbooks you kept from your childhood, the programmes and posters from your theatre appearances. Your house was always an exciting place where the outside world barely seemed to exist.

If I try to explain will I upset you, confuse you? You both said you could never leave the house but now you have do you even remember it? If you see the paintings will it take you back there for a moment or will you think it is some place you are seeing for the first time? All that seemed so important, so impossible to leave is now unknown. What matters and what was so strongly felt went with you. It was not the place or the things or even the memories because you have little of those left now but you both somehow have stayed the same. Marigold's eccentric stories, so far fetched that when you slipped into dementia we hardly noticed. Mark your funny ways; worry and sometimes fury over whether God exists or if the cracks in the wall were getting bigger meant we did not notice the Alzheimer's coming.

In the end I may not show you this letter. As if I do will you forget it the moment the page is turned?

All my love my darlings,

Stephanie

*Delft lounge*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 173 x 200 cm









*Love birds*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 160 x 120 cm









*Memory tray*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 30 x 40 cm





*Original features*, 2010,  
Oil on canvas, 80 x 54 cm



*Place setting*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm



*Wall*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 30 x 24 cm









*Cold light of day*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 168 x 137 cm



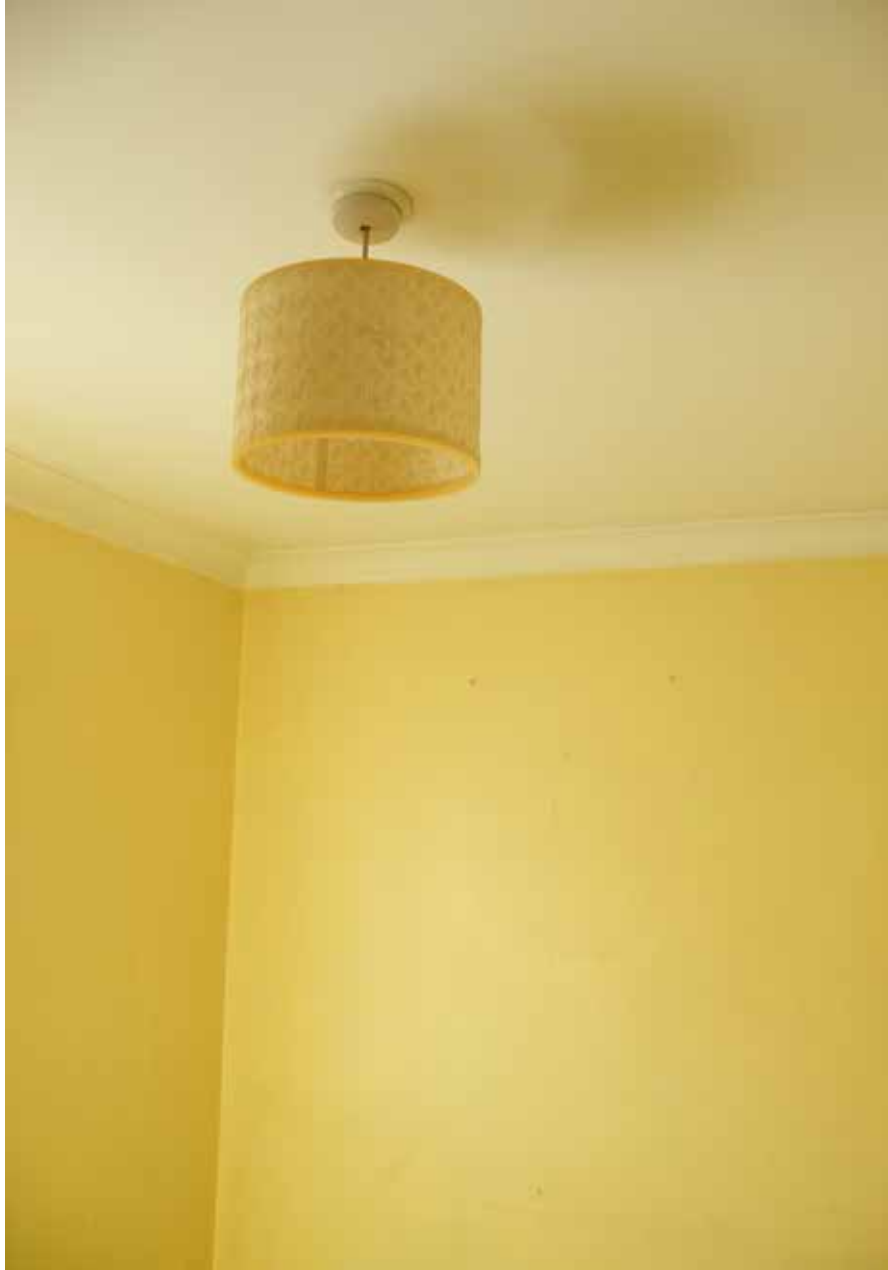
*Bathroom*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm



*Mr & Mrs Kingston*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 152 x 122 cm



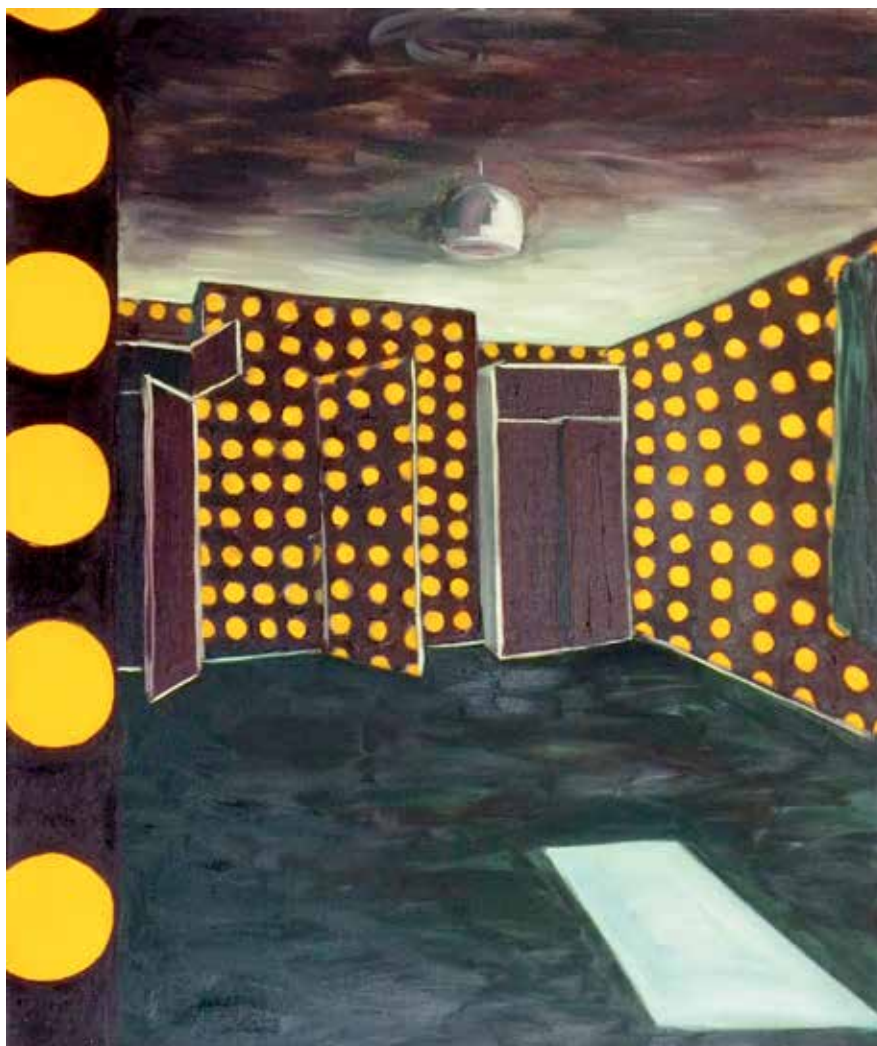


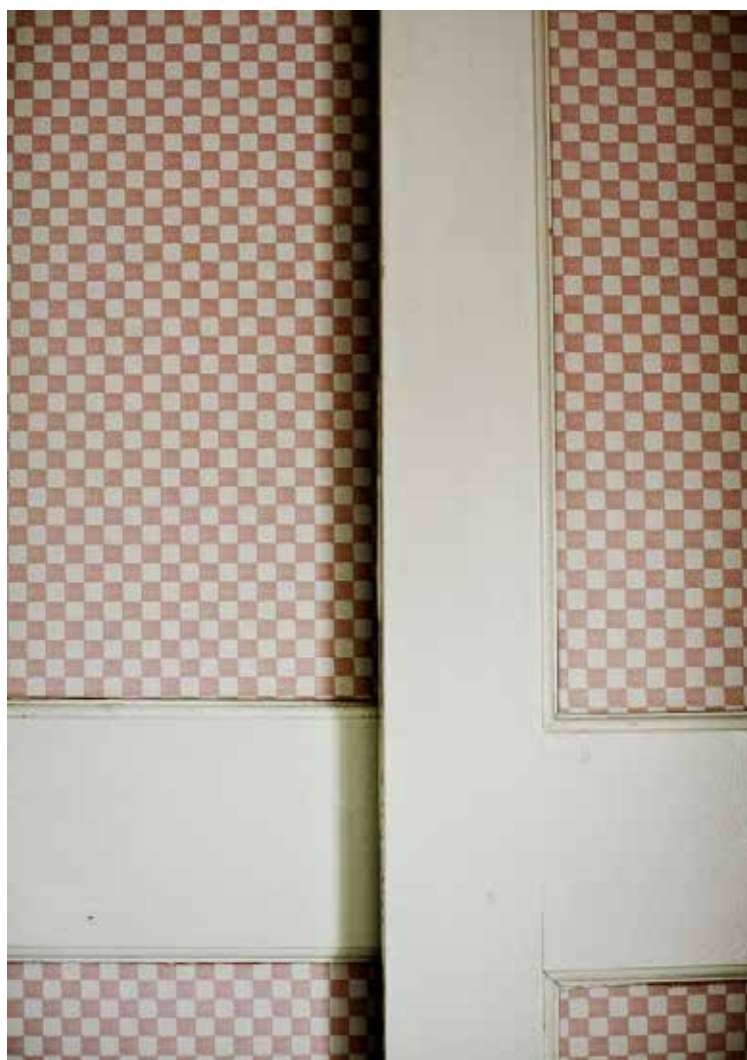






*Dressing room*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 126 x 105 cm







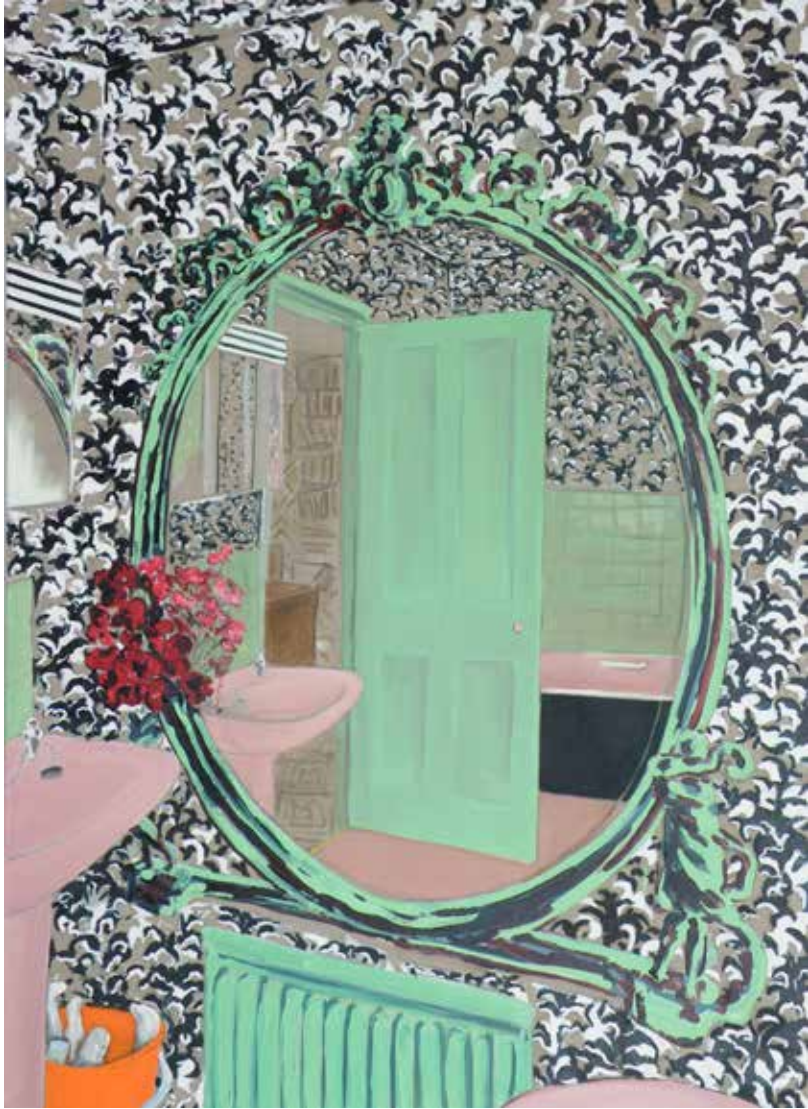


*Guest room*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 105 x 120 cm

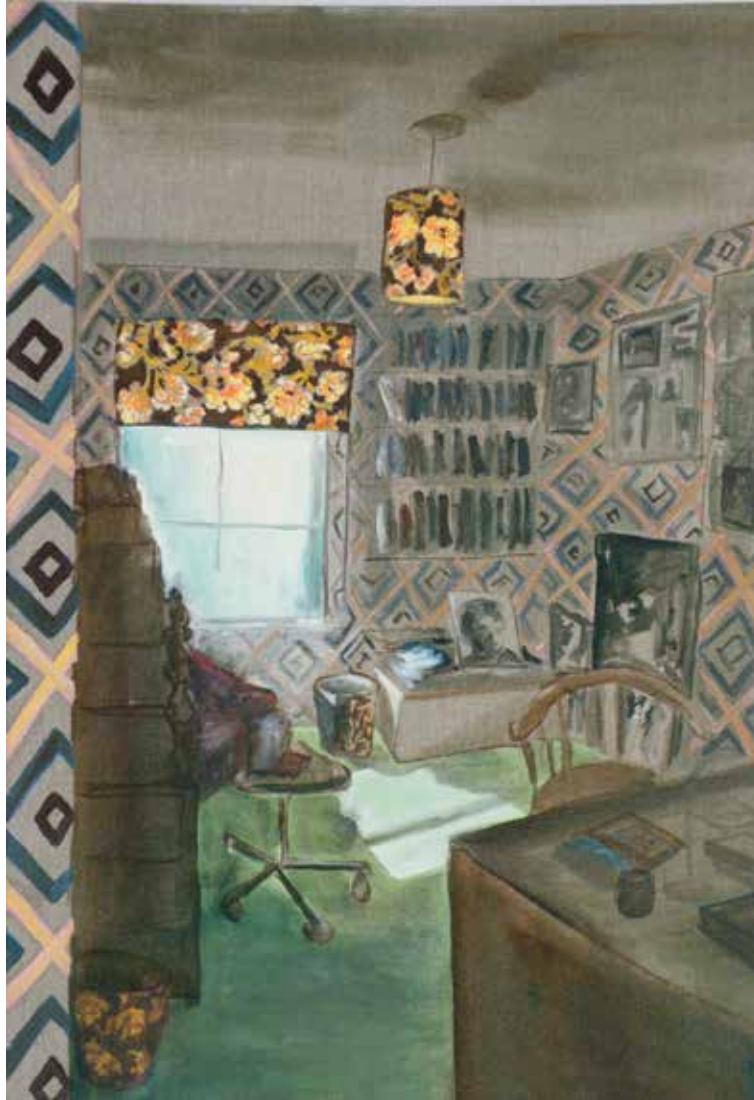


*Beyond reflection*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 152 x 122 cm





*The study*, 2010  
Oil on canvas, 90 x 60 cm





## TC

Mark and I became friends when we both played in Alan Ayckbourn's famous trilogy 'The Norman Conquests' in the early '70s. Mark's acting had great warmth and humanity. 'He's like a stove' a Finnish friend of mine once said, 'You can warm your hands on him'. We had so much in common – our working class roots (his Southern, mine Northern), our love of theatre and our passion for sport. For more than 30 years we were both members of the Stage Golfing Society, playing with more laughter than competitiveness. We had a favourite saying before arranging to meet for a game 'Let's play it by ear' - no point in going out in bad weather. From that time onwards Mark seemed always to be busy, either on Stage or television. His last job was at Chichester Festival Theatre in 2000.

I never saw Marigold acting but I always loved her stories of her Theatrical career. She had started in Butlins and then moved to weekly Rep, where she had relished the scramble of playing different parts every week with little preparation. She and Mark had married in 1961 in Australia whilst they were on a World Tour with The Old Vic Company, and Marigold had become very friendly with the leading lady Vivian Leigh who she was also understudying. Then there was the story of why she suddenly gave up acting. Performing on stage one night she had the vision of her deceased father staring at her as he walked through the stalls wearing a top hat and frock coat. Understandably alarmed by this she finished the play but took the apparition to mean that she should give up acting, which she did very soon after.

## IC

But Marigold continued to dramatise her daily life. She had a quick and ferocious wit and could act out an aching funny story from minor incidents. One friend from her days in Rep who went on to have a successful career on TV always maintained that she was by far the best actor of either sex he had ever worked with. She frequently went as a volunteer to the Star and Garter Home to sing and talk to the recuperating servicemen, and she recorded audio books for the RNIB – having finished the book and finding there was still space left on the tape she would often improvise her own stories to use up every bit of recording time, to the evident delight of her listeners. Through Mark's busy career they maintained their shared interest in the theatre, and their colourful and quirky home was constantly filled with friends and colleagues. When they took up travel in later years and travelled to China, Namibia, India among other places, they would come back with piles of photos and new treasures, but more importantly, stories of the people they had met along the way.

## TC

Mark was a great friend of Alec Guinness with whom he often worked. I was astonished when Marigold told me she had made a suggestion to Alec, who I also knew well, about one of his performances (something actors call 'giving a note'). Alec didn't seem unduly upset, but I can't think of anyone else who would have had the temerity to do such a thing. Mark was very proud of his relationship with Alec, both professional and personal, and exceptionally proud of Marigold, and I think it pleased him that the great man took notice of her. I lived with them for several months. They are both passionate vegetarians. I don't regret the passing of Marigold's carrot curry, but I miss the laughter we shared and the warmth and generosity of their friendship.

# Sydney Road

My Uncle and Aunt, **Mark Kingston**, born Harold James Kingston 1934, and **Marigold Kingston** (formally Sharman) born 1933, lived at Sydney Road, Richmond from 1970 until 2008.

I visited Sydney Road almost from birth, so I do not remember my first getting to know it. I spent many Christmases there and remember how intriguing everything was. Even in the early days it was full of exciting things. It was magical for me to roam the huge house's colourful, patterned rooms filled with strange and beautiful objects. What would later affect me would be the books and the paintings. I think my experience of Sydney Road would in part lead me to realise that I could possibly become an artist.

**Stephanie Kingston**









# Stephanie Kingston

1968 Born, London

## Education

1998 Institute of Education (PGCE Art and Design)  
1994 Chelsea College of Art & Design (MA Fine Art - Painting)  
1991 Slade School of Fine Art (BA Fine Art)  
1987 Camberwell College of Arts and Crafts (Foundation)

## Awards and Scholarships

2009 Jessica Wilkes Award, Acme Studios  
1994 British winner the Swiss Bank Corporation, European painting competition  
1991 Duveen Travel Award  
1991 Boise Travel Scholarship  
1987 Rodney Burns Prize for Painting

## Selected Exhibitions

2010 Sydney Road, one-person show, Acme Project Space, London  
2010 Family Viewing at Trajector Art Fair, Brussels  
2008 John Moores 25, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool  
2003 Hunting Art Prize, Royal College of Art, London  
2003 Miniatures group show, Kyubidou Gallery, Tokyo  
2002 Miniatures, Raid Projects, Los Angeles  
2002 Pattern Crazy, group show, Crafts Council, London  
2000 The Poster Show, Cabinet Gallery, London  
2000 Esquartelle, group show, Foyles Gallery, London  
1999 Open exhibition, Sun & Doves Gallery, London  
1997 One-person show, Limelight Gallery, London  
1996 One-person show, Alternative Arts, London  
1996 Making a Mark, Mall Galleries, London  
1994 European Painting Exhibition, Swiss Bank House, London  
1993 Origins, open exhibition, South London Gallery, London  
1993 One-person show, Alternative Arts, London  
1992 Flesh Wounds, group show, Tom Allen Gallery, London  
1992 Art for Sale, Guardian open exhibition, London  
1991 Young artists exhibition, Lauderdale House, London.  
1987 Mixed student exhibition, Dulwich Picture Gallery.

## Recent Publications and Selected Reviews

2008 The Guardian, John Moores review July 2008, John Moores 25 catalogue, Liverpool Biennial Catalogue  
2003 Miniatures catalogue, Time Out, Craft publication, The Independent, Evening Standard, Metro, Art Review, The Sunday Telegraph Magazine

This book was published on the occasion of Stephanie Kingston's exhibition of paintings, *Sydney Road*, at the Acme Project Space, London from 7 to 31 October 2010.

In 2009 Stephanie Kingston was awarded the Jessica Wilkes Award and this support enabled her to develop this new series of paintings. The award, the result of a legacy from the artist Jessica Wilkes, who died in 2005 at the age of 56, was established by Acme Studios, Jessica's family and friends to celebrate her life. The annual award provides an artist with a free studio to enable them to devote more of their time to their studio practice. Worth £10,000, the award is made to an artist selected from applications from current Acme studio holders.

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