

# acme PROJECT SPACE

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## *Lily of Blythenhale* Andro Semeiko



A new exhibition at the Acme Project Space nods to medieval Bethnal Green when the area was little more than forest and swamp known as Blythenhale. Jessica Wilkes Award holder **Andro Semeiko's** *Lily of Blythenhale* tells a story about little princess Lily who finds a dragon's tooth in the forest...; introduces noble knight Simon de Montfort, forefather of parliamentary democracy, who inherits the forest and creates a secret society called Lily of Blythenhale...; uncovers the history of a brush factory, that stood on the very spot where the current gallery is located, producing combs for an unusual ritual...

*Lily of Blythenhale* provides viewers with a humorous way of exploring the past as a means of analysing the present. It creates a space in which to explore our attitudes towards knowledge and power and in doing so, satirises our straightforward beliefs in achieving progress.

The exhibition is constructed as a multilayered visual story told through painting, drawing, sculpture and archival material working as props for a *mise-en-scène*. Each object in the show balances on the edge of being an illustration from the story, and an unconnected entity in its own right. The exhibition creates a space where the view shifts between harmonious construct and random assemblage.

As Andro explains, 'In small theatre productions props are often reused for the next show, where they take on a new function and meaning yet still maintain elements of their previous purpose. These layers of meaning create their sense of mystery. Works in this show are constructed as reused props finding their 'layers of dust' from the history, legends and architecture of the gallery building and the local area.'

Marine paintings with Turner-esque treatment of light refer to old sketches and maps of the East coast and the Thames. Portraits borrow poses and gestures from van Dyke's work, while large-scale architectural paintings and drawings on the wall refer to Inigo Jones' Paladian buildings in the capital and his decorative French railings of twisted lilies.

During the exhibition, on 3 December, an artist book will be launched and a talk will take place. The book adds another dimension to the project and is created in collaboration with **Daniel Harbour** cognitive scientist specialising in language, **Norman Hogg** artist, writer and curator, **Neil Mulholland** art historian and art critic, **Dushko Petrovich** artist and writer, **Arron Sands** artist, writer and curator, and **Shelley von Strunckel** astrologer and writer. At the book launch, a talk on chivalry/raindoba in Georgian culture and history will be given by **Donald Rayfield** Professor of Russian and Georgian at Queen Mary University. A Russian samovar will be laid out and Georgian tea and cakes will be served.

Andro Semeiko is the third recipient of the Jessica Wilkes Award; a major professional development opportunity established by Acme Studios and Jessica's family and friends to celebrate the life of former Acme tenant Jessica Wilkes who died in 2006. The year-long award provides an artist with a free studio and grant to enable them to devote more of their time to their studio practice. The award, worth £10,000, is made to an artist selected from applications from current Acme studio tenants.

*Lily of Blythenhale*

Andro Semeiko

11 November - 11 December 2011

Opening hours: 13.00 - 18.00 Thursday - Sunday

Private view: Thursday 10 November 18.30 - 21.00

Artist Book Launch and Talk: Saturday 3 December 15.00 - 17.00



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