

VICTORIA MORTON
curiosity action crowd24 March – 24 April 2004
private view: 24 March, 6-8pm

'Heterotopias enmesh actually existing sites with the impossible fantastic positions, for a while on the other hand they are real for the person as long as he or she inhabits this site, they are on the other hand totally virtual because constructed by virtue of an individual's hallucinatory phantasmic refiguration of experienced space'¹

In her new paintings for her second show at HQ Victoria Morton continues to develop a language of explicit abstract realism relating to the idea of Heterotopias. For this exhibition she has made a group of paneled free standing paintings designed to slightly alter the shape of the gallery. These recent works introduce a sculptural element, further extending Morton's spatial investigations and her concerns with recognising the viewer as the centre of perception. Her vivid canvases marry a bold flamboyance with a delicate luminosity, as she combines diverse art historical influences with photography and personal expression. The title *Curiosity Action Crowd* could relate to the loosely conveyed personalities who populate the paintings, including the possible gallery audience.

One large diptych, *Psyche - Waiting* is a contemporary interpretation of Claude's *Landscape with Psyche outside the Palace of Cupid*.² Morton considers this piece 'a progressive portrait...but it is not supposed to portray an external self. I wanted to draw attention to another figurative realism in the painting rather than the landscape element as this is visually apparent. The realism in the painting is a psychological one. The fragmentation in the painting follows a kind of mental movement.' Morton's reworking shows a messy sensuous flux in contract to the balanced calm of the original. This fragmentation, visually reminiscent of cubism and futurism, is a more accurate approximation of the artists, and indeed our, mental processes, which allows for and mirrors distractions and negotiations as thoughts develop.

Curiosity Action Crowd, parts 1 and 2, the pieces that title the show, have been influenced by medieval pilgrim painting, photo journalism and the Dada tendency of Picabia. A visual outpouring of physical and mental experiences, borrowed images and displaced searching indicating an interest in the folklore of the painted image.

As with the paintings, Morton's titles appear to be a kind of dislocated yet precise stream of consciousness - perhaps prompted by memories, they then trigger their own new series of connections for the viewer. They offer, at tangents, alternative entrance points as she attempts to situate the viewer within the paintings.

Victoria Morton lives and works in Glasgow. She has had solos shows in Britain, Europe and the United States. In 2002 she was commissioned by the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh to create new paintings and in 2003 she was part of *Painting Not Painting* with Jim Lambie, Julie Roberts and Richard Slee at Tate St. Ives. Her work will be included this year in a group show at the Whitechapel Gallery, London.

¹ Elisabeth Bronfen, *The Powers of Insomnia*, The Insomnia Drawings, published by Daros Zuric

² 1664, National Gallery, London