

PRESS RELEASE

JEFFREY DENNIS

Her Midnight Pillow
New Paintings from Rome

4 November – 16 December 2022

Exhibition Catalogue with essay by
Jeremy Tambling will be available on-line.*Galvanic*, 2021, oil & charcoal on linen, 102 x 153 cm

An [Abbey Fellowship](#) at the British School at Rome and an encounter with the Keats-Shelley House there has illuminated Jeffrey's work since the summer of 2021. The House, briefly occupied by Keats, has been transformed into a museum honouring his legacy and his contemporaries, Byron, Percy and Mary Shelley and their circle.

Early paintings from the series were exhibited at the House during the residency and featured expanded elements of the House's elaborate furniture and fittings, themselves echoing decorative details of Roman architecture. This process of magnification and transformation of small details, a leap from furniture to architecture to landscape, offered a key to the structure of paintings.

Mary Shelley's portable writing desk is one of a number of resonant objects, with a direct, talismanic connection back to the Romantic poets of the early nineteenth century, kept in the Keats-Shelley House in Rome; itself a cabinet-like museum.

When I spent time there last summer — collecting material for a series of paintings related to Shelley's contemporary, John Keats — it struck me that the portable bureau was itself like a miniature museum, with its secretive drawers and compartments; one of which, so the bureau's subsequent owners had been told as children, contained Percy Bysshe Shelley's heart, retrieved from his funeral pyre.

I hope those structures may, like the floating, dream-like vistas depicted in ancient Roman wall paintings that frame miniature encounters of travelers and citizens, provide a precarious lodging for other imagery: a layering of paint-buttressed depiction that parallels the messy accumulation of a city like Rome.

Jeffrey Dennis will be returning to Rome this summer to continue the project. For an artist whose paintings are the embodiment of apparently incongruous juxtapositions and ideas, the fusion of imagery from the Eternal City and British Romantic poets is providing the largesse to create paintings of great invention and beauty.



Her Midnight Pillow, 2022
oil & charcoal on linen, 102 x 143 cm

[Jeffrey Dennis](#) was born in Colchester (1958) and has exhibited regularly in the UK and internationally since 1979. This will be his 5th solo exhibition at Art Space Gallery. He has had solo exhibitions at Whitechapel Art Gallery (1986), Orchard Gallery, Derry (1993) Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (2015) and regularly in New York and Milan. His work is held in permanent collections worldwide including Arts Council England, Tate, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Foundation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, Paris and private collections in Europe, America and the UK.

The exhibition will be accompanied with a fully illustrated 38 page catalogue with an essay by [Jeremy Tambling](#) .

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11 am – 6 pm
