



THE DE MORGAN FOUNDATION

EVELYN DE MORGAN 1855 – 1919 | FEMINIST – SPIRITUALIST – PACIFIST – RADICAL

CENTENARY SYMPOSIUM | 4 MAY 2019 | GUILDHALL ART GALLERY, LONDON

1. Itinerary
 2. Abstracts
 3. Profiles
 4. Artworks on display
 5. The Clink Events
 6. Join
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ITINERARY

10.15 Tea, coffee and registration

10.45 Jean McMeakin, Chair of the Board of Trustees, De Morgan Foundation
Chair's Welcome

Introducing Evelyn De Morgan

11.00 Sarah Hardy, De Morgan Foundation Curator and Manager
Collecting Evelyn De Morgan

11.30 Dr Jan Marsh, Curator of the forthcoming 'Pre-Raphaelite Sisters' exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery
'What Power! That is the way women should assert their rights'

12.00 Lunch will be provided by The Clink Events

13.00 Tour of the Guildhall Art Gallery Collection, Katty Pearce, Curator, Guildhall Art Gallery

Short talk on Evelyn De Morgan's artwork on display with Sarah Hardy, De Morgan Foundation Curator and Manager

Themes and Insights: A Closer Look at Evelyn De Morgan

14.00 Emma Merklung, PhD candidate, The Courtauld Institute of Art
Formal Logic and the Real in Evelyn De Morgan's Art and Spirit Writings

14.30 Dr Richenda Roberts, Lecturer in Art History at the University of Warwick
Between an Ideal World and a Depressingly Real One: Proactive Pacifism and the Representation of Modernity in the War Art of Evelyn De Morgan

15.00 Dr Lucy Ella Rose, Lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Surrey
Evelyn De Morgan: Suffragist Artist and 'New Woman'

15.30 Dr Nic Peeters, Independent Art Historian
Family and Friends: The Re-Emergence of a Double-Portrait by Evelyn De Morgan prepared by (Dr Nic Peeters and Judy Oberhausen)

16.00 Panel discussions, questions from the Chair and the floor



ABSTRACTS

Sarah Hardy, De Morgan Foundation Curator and Manager

Collecting Evelyn De Morgan

The De Morgan Foundation owns 56 oils paintings by Evelyn De Morgan, making it the largest, most comprehensive collection of the artist's work in the world. Sarah will discuss the incredible story behind the formation of the collection and assess whether retaining all of the pictures in one singular collection has been to the benefit or detriment of Evelyn De Morgan's reputation, 100 years after her death.

Dr Jan Marsh, Curator of the forthcoming 'Pre-Raphaelite Sisters' exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery

'What Power! That is the way women should assert their rights'

Using George Eliot's response to Rosa Bonheur, this paper discusses Evelyn de Morgan's artistic decisions in the context of her precursors and peers.

Emma Merklung, PhD candidate, The Courtauld Institute of Art

Formal Logic and the Real in Evelyn De Morgan's Art and Spirit Writings

This paper offers a new reading of Evelyn De Morgan's unique visual style, arguing that to understand her modes of representation we also need to understand her spiritual beliefs and the particular understanding of truth and reality that those beliefs encompass.

In 1909, De Morgan and her husband anonymously published *The Result of an Experiment*, a book of spirit messages received through automatic writing. It argues that what is real is the spiritual, not the material, and that this spiritual reality can never fully be grasped by humans on Earth. We can strive for enlightenment, but in earthly life, perfect knowledge of the Real will always remain elusive. The messages corroborate what is evident in De Morgan's paintings like *Realities* (ca.1910-14): her interest in issues of ultimate reality and invisible forces; the limits of absolute knowledge; and the crucial role of art in approaching the real. They also align her understanding of these issues with that of scientist William Stanley Jevons (1835–1882), with whose logical treatise *The Principles of Science* (1874) De Morgan was familiar.

This paper explores the role of formal logic and probability, as outlined by Jevons, in De Morgan's understanding and representation of ultimate reality. To what extent might Jevons's book have provided De Morgan with the tools for finding visual expression for an invisible and unobservable reality? The representational potential of logical notation, a language of signs and symbols that Jevons believed to be absolutely essential for expressing 'those general truths which are the very soul of science,' is also explored.

Dr Richenda Roberts, Lecturer in Art History at the University of Warwick

Between an Ideal World and a Depressingly Real One: Proactive Pacifism and the Representation of Modernity in the War Art of Evelyn De Morgan

In 1901 Evelyn De Morgan began to produce art on the subject of war. By her death in 1919 she had created at least seventeen paintings and a number of drawings that allude critically to the effects of the second Anglo-Boer War and The First World War. De Morgan's war works, their mode of representation and the artist's motivations, are this paper's focus. In their book *Bad Modernism*, Douglas Mao and Rebecca Walkowitz demonstrated that understanding modernism extends well beyond the trope of judging a work of art as a self-sufficient entity valued only for criteria intrinsic to itself without external reference. Moreover, the modernist canon also extends way beyond the work of white men to encompass the positions of those on the margins of western society, including women, immigrants and dissidents. Part of that margin and concerned with the fate of others similarly disadvantaged, De Morgan challenged traditional social conventions in her work. Her art does not directly reference war using conventional iconography. Instead war is represented by a mixture of archaic and modern cultural signification collapsed together to suggest political and spiritual meanings.



Playing on the cultural knowledge of her audiences, De Morgan's art explores the epistemic trauma caused by the collision of tradition and modernity, which many people like herself felt had contributed greatly to the horrors of the First World War. Consequently, De Morgan's art makes evident the collective cataclysm of war revealing her pacifism. Exploring the artist's engagement with modern war, this paper will argue that rather than being understood as an anachronism of Pre-Raphaelitism, De Morgan's way of collapsing together the traditional and modern to promote pacifism, laying bare the inhuman absurdity of war, can be understood as an early example of proactive artistic engagement with conflict, which extends via Dada to Peter Kennard.

Dr Lucy Ella Rose, Lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Surrey
Evelyn De Morgan: Suffragist Artist and 'New Woman'

This paper examines Evelyn De Morgan's relation to the women's suffrage movement, reclaiming her as a pioneering – if neglected – early feminist. She witnessed the rise of the women's movement over the later nineteenth century, and lived just long enough to see the franchise extended to certain women by the Representation of the People Act in 1918 (marked by last year's suffrage centenary). Evelyn supported women's emancipation in word and image, paint and petition. She joined other famous women writers, artists and philanthropists in the call for votes for women, and married into a progressive family whose members shared her strong suffragist views. In her artwork, the female body is used to symbolise socio-political as well as spiritual transformation from captivity to liberty. Her paintings offer insight into an evolving Victorian–Edwardian world and a revolutionary period of socio-political change for British women. Evelyn's lesser-known writings further reveal her deep preoccupation with the place of women – a concern that was both personal and political. An analysis of her own untranscribed diary, and her sister's biographical writing, shows how Evelyn exemplified the late nineteenth-century 'New Woman': free-spirited and educated, she rejected feminine conventions and excelled in a male-dominated artworld. She embodied a subversive disruption of traditional gendered binaries. This interdisciplinary paper, analysing life writing alongside paintings, views Evelyn as part of a growing late-Victorian feminist network. It shows how she challenged the patriarchal ideologies of her day and redefined herself in relation to masculinity, femininity and society.

Dr Nic Peeters, Independent Art Historian

Family and Friends: The Re-Emergence of a Double-Portrait by Evelyn De Morgan prepared by (Dr Nic Peeters and Judy Oberhausen)

With the re-emergence of Evelyn Pickering De Morgan's stunning double portrait of *Alice Mildred and Winifred Julia Spencer Stanhope* at auction in 2018 there is reason for new evaluation of a neglected aspect of the artist's oeuvre. This painting was one of a series of female portraits done by the young artist and exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery between 1880 and 1887. These paintings of family and friends provide a contrast with other works of the period which are either subject paintings taken from literary sources or spiritualist allegories. The portraits are sensitive, carefully rendered images of young women with whom the artist was acquainted. While they have the same grace as her classical works, they also demonstrate the powers of observation she developed during her rigorous study at the Slade School of Art between 1875–1877. In this talk we will discuss how this recently rediscovered double portrait is indebted to her studies at the Slade.



PROFILES

CHAIR

JEAN MCMEAKIN

Jean has many years' experience at board level in a number of large and small organisations in the commercial and not-for-profit sectors. Before her last role as a senior manager on a divisional board in the BBC, she worked in many areas of the BBC, including Global News and Television Production. As well as general management, she has specialisms in people and talent management and development, organisation design and performance management, and has delivered large scale business restructuring programmes with productivity and efficiency improvements and significant cost savings. Previously she has worked for a children's charity, in the film industry and in the insurance, petrochemical and manufacturing sectors. She is a former School Governor for the City of Westminster. Jean is a Trustee of the Friends of Putney School of Art & Design, and a Member of the British Museum Friends Advisory Council.

SPEAKERS

SARAH HARDY

Sarah studied Art History at Durham University before obtaining her masters degree in the subject at the University of Manchester. Sarah is a Victorian Arts & Crafts specialist, having researched and written widely on the subject, including William Morris's revival of embroidery, William Blake's influence on the Pre-Raphaelites, Bookbinding and the Kelmscott Press and, most recently, William De Morgan's use of mathematics in his ceramic designs, for the De Morgan Foundation's successful touring exhibition, *Sublime Symmetry*. Sarah began her museum career in the education department at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, before working on interpretation at Helmsore Mills Textile Museum, Lady Lever Art Gallery, and Two Temple Place. Sarah then worked extensively on loans and exhibitions at the National Gallery and the British Library, where she completed the Institute of Art and Law Diploma on Law and Collections Management, before joining the De Morgan Foundation in 2018. Sarah is Curator- Manager of the De Morgan Foundation.

DR JAN MARSH

With Pamela Gerrish Nunn, Jan Marsh was co-curator of the pioneering exhibition and book *Pre-Raphaelite Women Artists* and is currently preparing *Pre-Raphaelite Sisters* for the National Portrait Gallery, which includes de Morgan's work.

KATTY PEARCE

Katty Pearce is Curator at Guildhall Art Gallery. She works on the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, specialising in Victorian art and social history.

EMMA MERKLING

Is a second-year PhD candidate in History of Art at The Courtauld Institute of Art, where she is supervised by Professor Caroline Arscott. Her research interests include late Victorian and Aesthetic Movement art, British modernism, history of nineteenth-century science, and feminist theory. She received her BA in Art History and Archaeology from Columbia University in 2015, and her MA in History of Art from The Courtauld in 2017, with a dissertation on Albert Moore and Victorian physiological psychology. Her PhD research focuses on Victorian physics, spiritualism, and representations of the real in Evelyn De Morgan's art.



THE DE MORGAN FOUNDATION

DR RICHENDA ROBERTS

Richenda Roberts has worked with the De Morgan Foundation on a number of projects, including the exhibitions *Evelyn De Morgan: Artist of Peace* and *Sublime Symmetry*. Having over ten years' experience of teaching and supervising research-led art history, she is currently based at the University of Warwick. Her interdisciplinary research specialism and interests lie in British art, design and architecture produced during the period 1840-1940. Dr Roberts' previous research and writing has examined the representation in visual culture of identity and belief systems, such as concepts of gender and pacifism, in relation to the impact of the First World War. Extending this theme, in preparation for a monograph, her current research is concerned with how British artists active during the inter-war period (1919-39) alluded to the irrational, magic and occultism in their work in order to represent and shape pacifist views in a time of increasing social and political turmoil.

DR LUCY ELLA ROSE

Lucy Ella Rose is Lecturer in Victorian Literature at the University of Surrey. Her collaborative doctoral award from the University of Surrey and Watts Gallery supported her research on neglected women in nineteenth-century creative partnerships, including Christina Rossetti, Mary Watts, and Evelyn De Morgan. Rose has worked extensively on the Watts and De Morgan archives, exploring and transcribing unpublished materials. Her book *Suffragist Artists in Partnership: Gender, Word and Image* (Edinburgh University Press, 2018) explores the interconnected creative partnerships of the Wattses and the De Morgans – as artists, writers and suffragists. It demonstrates how they supported greater gender equality and female liberation in the nineteenth century, tracing their relationship to early and more recent feminism. Rose presents and publishes on Victorian literature, art, culture and feminism, and is currently working on sisters in creative partnerships.

DR NIC PEETERS

Is an independent art historian, lecturer and writer specialising in nineteenth-century art particularly that of women artists. His doctoral thesis for Brussels University (VUB) was on the work of Evelyn De Morgan focusing on a combination of spiritualism and feminism. He has given lectures about Evelyn De Morgan's Italian influences and her WWI paintings. Together with Judy Oberhausen he has published about the painters Evelyn De Morgan and Emily Susan Ford and the photographer Eveleen Myers. He is Northern Europe correspondent for the *British Art Journal* and a regular book reviewer for the *PRS Review*. He lives in Antwerp but travels regularly to the UK to study its art treasures.

JUDY OBERHAUSEN

Is an independent art historian from the San Francisco Bay Area who has been researching the life and work of Evelyn De Morgan since the early 1990s. She did primary research to trace the provenance of the artist's paintings and her lifetime exhibition history for the catalogue *Evelyn De Morgan: Oil Paintings* (1996). Her research has been primarily focussed on the nexus in Evelyn's work between spiritualism and other progressive Victorian social issues such as women's rights, socialism, and pacifism. Most recently she has been researching the photographic work of Eveleen Myers at London's National Portrait Gallery.



ARTWORKS ON DISPLAY



Object: Evening Star over the Sea

Museum Number: P_EDM_0048

Dimensions: H 428 mm, W 500 mm

Dates: 1900 - 1919

Description:

The evening star is the planet Venus, generally seen in the west at sunset. Venus is also the planet of love and is frequently depicted, as here, as a beautiful woman. She is draped in blue, and surrounded by the light of her star, hovering over the darkening land and sea.



Object: Compositional study for Evelyn De Morgan's oil painting "S.O.S" (female figure)

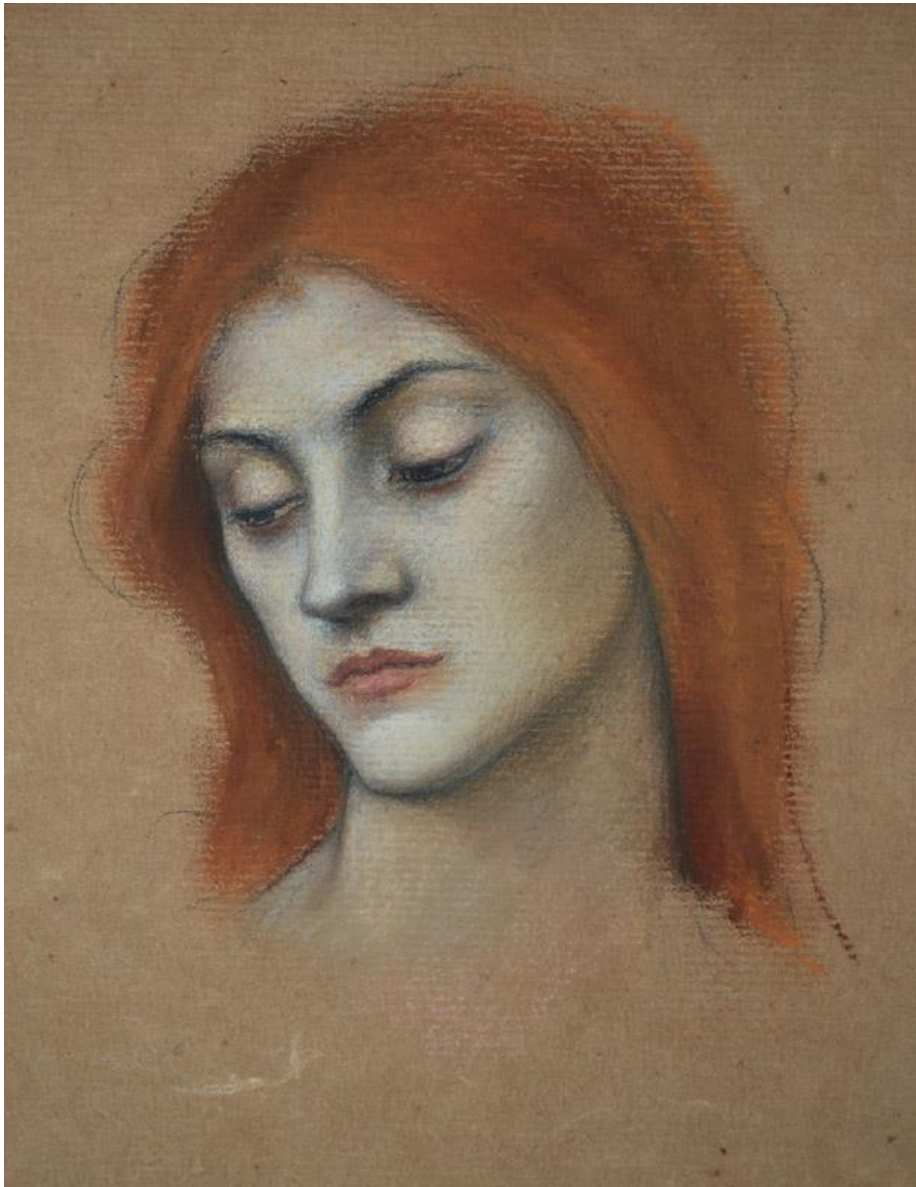
Museum Number: D_EDM_0413

Dimensions: 913mm Height, 640mm Width

Dates: 1916

Description:

Evelyn created compositional studies for all her paintings and these can be considered works of art in their own right. They show her technical virtuosity extended not just to oil paints, but to other mediums too.



Object: Compositional Study for 'St Christina Giving her Father's Jewels to the Poor'

Museum Number: D_EDM_D0127

Dimensions: H 62.5 x W 83.5 cm

Dates: 1904

Description:

Compositional Study by Evelyn De Morgan for her oil painting 'St Christina Giving her Father's Jewels to the Poor' (painting lost in fire while in storage, October 1991).



Object: Black and Gold compositional Study for 'Gloria in Excelsis'

Museum Number: D_EDM_D0126

Dimensions: H 82.8 x W 69.3 cm

Dates: 1872 - 1921

Description:

Compositional study by Evelyn De Morgan in preparation for her oil painting 'Gloria in Excelsis' (now in a private collection). Black and gold pastel on grey paper.



THE CLINK EVENTS

We have teamed up with the fantastic charity 'The Clink Events' for the Evelyn De Morgan Centenary Symposium. They are a wonderful charity who provide bespoke catering by working with serving prisoners training towards gaining their Level 1 and 2 NVQs in Professional Cookery in the central production training kitchen at HMP Downview, to serve amazing food beyond the walls of the prison and provide prisoners with the invaluable opportunity to gain experience in event catering.

Sophia De Morgan was an active campaigner for prison reforms and her son and daughter-in-law, William and Evelyn De Morgan, followed in her footsteps. We think that Evelyn would be delighted we had chosen this wonderful charity to cater for her centenary symposium.

MENU

Breakfast
Selection of cookies
Mixed fruit basket

Lunch

Sandwiches and wraps:
Coronation chicken with baby gem on white
Cucumber ribbons, cream cheese on white bread
Egg mayonnaise on a brioche roll
Sun blushed tomato and basil pesto on white

Finger items and skewers:

Broccoli and stilton tart
Honey and mustard glazed cocktail sausages
Welsh Rarebit soufflé tart

Cakes:

Individual lemon drizzle cake
Mini Victoria sponge fingers

Both breaks are served with fruit juices, HMP Aylesbury Redemption Roaster fair trade filter coffee, English breakfast and herbal tea infusions and Belu ethically bottled still and sparkling water.

JOIN

We hope that you have enjoyed the De Morgan Foundation's Symposium today. You can support us by purchasing one of the books for sale and signing up to our newsletter.

Evelyn De Morgan Oil Paintings Catalogue: £40

Essential Guide to William and Evelyn De Morgan: £10

Sublime Symmetry Catalogue: £5

If you forget to do so on the day, you can contact Sarah Hardy, De Morgan Curator on:
curator@demorgan.org.uk

Our shop is always open at: www.demorgan.org.uk/shop