



Alice Instone

She Should Have Known Better

CURATED BY **FRANCESCA ROWAN-PLOWDEN**

LAMB HOUSE, RYE

This book is dedicated to Hugh Billett

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www.aliceinstone.com

ALICE INSTONE AT LAMB HOUSE

She Should Have Known Better is a body of work by the artist Alice Instone in response to the home of the writer Henry James - Lamb House in Rye - and curated by Francesca Rowan-Plowden.

Instone's paintings are concerned with gender and power, frequently depicting influential or well known public figures. Her work draws attention to how we consume images of women and the female archetype, from the dangerous seductress to the alluring innocent. Here she has drawn from James' heroines and his themes of freedom, transgression and female virtue to showcase women who broke the rules.

The subjects range from James' heroines Isabel Archer and Daisy Miller, to Adam's wife before Eve (Lilith), Marie Antoinette, Helen of Troy, Hyon Song-wol and Lady Emma Hamilton. The sitters include Emilia Fox, Helen McCrory, Alice Temperley, Emma Freud, Nicole Farhi, and Anita Zabludowicz amongst others.

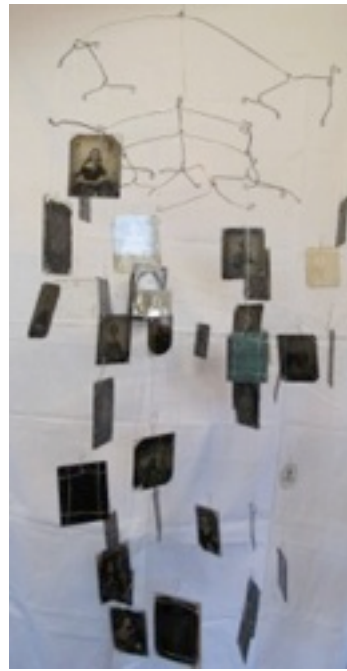
"Alice is evolving.... towards the sublime, ecstatic and transcendent!"

Annie Lennox

CERTAINLY IT WAS DIFFERENT THEN

2013, MOBILE: GLASS, WIRE AND CAT GUT

Early Daguerreotypes of Victorian women



SLAG SPIRAL

HANDMADE SILKSCREEN PRINT ON SATIN, EDITION OF 30, 60cm x 60cm

slag *noun* (WOMAN) /slæg/ UK slang disapproving

a woman who people disapprove of because she has had a lot of sexual partners

there is no equivalent word for a man



LILITH FLEW AWAY INTO THE AIR (HELEN MCCRORY)

2013, OIL, GOLD LEAF & BRONZE POWDER ON CANVAS, 150cm x 150cm

Lilith was Adam's wife before Eve. Medieval Rabbis suggested that Eve and the first woman were two separate individuals to resolve the discrepancy between two distinct accounts of the creation. The first account says God created them male and female, implying simultaneous creation. The second account states that God created Eve from Adam's rib because he was lonely. This rabbinic tradition held that the first woman refused to take the submissive position to Adam in sex, and eventually fled from him, consequently leaving him lonely - she was identified as Lilith.

"After God created Adam, who was alone, He said, 'It is not good for man to be alone.' He then created a woman for Adam, from the earth, as He had created Adam himself, and called her Lilith. Adam and Lilith immediately began to fight. She said, 'I will not lie below,' and he said, 'I will not lie beneath you, but only on top. For you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while I am to be the superior one.' Lilith responded, 'We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the earth.' But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced the Ineffable Name and flew away into the air."

from The Alphabet of Ben Sira



SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER: EXCELLENT HORSE-LIKE LADY

2013, OIL, GOLD LEAF & BRONZE POWDER ON CANVAS, 150cm x 150cm

In Henry James' novel *Daisy Miller*, Daisy visits Mrs Walker's red salon, where she is publicly shunned for breaking the rules of acceptability.

In August 2013 Hyon Song-wol, the ex lover of North Korean leader Kim Jong, was executed by firing squad, along with members of her band, for violating domestic laws on pornography. Members of their families were forced to watch.

One theory is that Kim Jong's wife, who was previously also a member of the band, objected to the continuing high profile of her husband's former girlfriend. Hyon Song-wol's popularity peaked with the song *Excellent Horse-Like Lady*. She left behind a husband and baby.



LILITH (HELEN MCCRORY)

2013, OIL ON CANVAS, 80cm x 100cm

“Sitting for Alice is like daydreaming or being hypnotised.

I dozed on her studio floor surrounded by beautiful countryside.

As soon as she paints, you can see she's doing what comes naturally to her,

and you relax - it was fascinating.”

Helen McCrory



PORTRAIT OF A LADY (FRANCESCA ROWAN-PLOWDEN)

2013, OIL ON CANVAS, 70cm x 90cm

The Portrait Of A Lady is a novel by Henry James. A free-spirited heiress, Isabel Archer, is taken in by two scheming American expatriates in Europe and finds herself trapped in an unhappy marriage due to her inexperience.

The novel was immediately recognised for pushing the analysis of human consciousness and motivation to new levels and has been described as existential, as Isabel decides to live with the consequences of her choices.



Portrait of Francesca Rowan-Plowden

charcoal drawing, 2013



Portrait of Henry James,

charcoal drawing, 1912

John Singer Sargent



SHE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER: CALYPSO (NICKI PHILIPS)

2013, OIL ON CANVAS, 90cm x 120cm

Calypso was a nymph in Greek mythology. She is most remembered for seducing Homer's Odysseus and detaining him on the island of Ogygia for several years. Zeus orders her to set him free, through his messenger Hermes, and Calypso angrily comments on how the Gods have affairs with mortals but don't allow goddesses to do the same. However, she concedes and gives Odysseus provisions and releases him.

“Alice has a talent for exploring sexuality in a very feminine way. She often reveals something about us without us even realising and has a talent for making an emotional connection with her subject.”

Laura Bailey



DAISY MILLER (CHARLI MORGAN)

2013, OIL ON CANVAS, 30cm x 40cm

Daisy Miller is the titular Heroine of Henry James' novella. An uninhibited young American travelling in Europe, Daisy is a clear outsider and fails to follow the strict codes of propriety, causing a scandal. After an imprudent outing with an Italian friend Daisy catches malaria and dies.



THEDA BARA (CLAUDIA WINKLEMAN)

2010, OIL ON CANVAS, 60cm x 92cm

Theda Bara (1885 – 1955) was an American silent film actress. One of the most popular screen actresses of her era, she was one of cinema's earliest sex symbols. Her femme fatale roles earned her the nickname "The Vamp" which soon became a popular slang term for a sexually predatory woman.

One of the first stars to be heavily promoted by a studio she was presented as the Egyptian-born daughter of a French actress and an Italian sculptor, who had spent her early years in the Sahara Desert before moving to France to become a stage actress. In fact, Bara had never even been to Egypt or France and was in reality a Jewish girl from Ohio.

Bara was and still is well known for wearing extremely revealing costumes which were very controversial for their time, but she is most famous for having a higher percentage of lost films than any other actor/actress with a Hollywood star on the Walk of Fame. One of the world's most famous movie stars at the time, she made more than 40 films between 1914 and 1926. Complete prints of only six of these films still exist.

"I loved sitting for Alice.

We drank tea and talked

about Theda Bara and

I wore a fake fur stole.

It was win win."

Claudia Winkleman



MATA HARI (ALICE TEMPERLEY)

2010, OIL ON CANVAS, 60cm x 92cm

Mata Hari (1876-1917) was the stage name of Margaretha MacLeod, a Dutch exotic dancer, courtesan, and accused spy who was executed for espionage for Germany during World War I. She had a privileged early childhood but her parents divorced after her father went bankrupt, and her mother died when she was 15. Aged 18, she answered a newspaper advertisement placed by an army officer looking for a wife. They moved to the Dutch East Indies and had two children, but he was a violent alcoholic twice her age who openly kept both a native wife and a concubine. Her son died aged two, possibly of complications relating to syphilis contracted from his parents. The couple divorced with Margaretha losing custody of her daughter (who later died, also possibly from complications relating to syphilis).

Margaretha moved to Paris and began to win fame as an exotic dancer, adopting the stage name Mata Hari, Indonesian for “sun”. Promiscuous, flirtatious, and openly flaunting her body, she captivated her audiences, posing as a Javanese princess. She was photographed numerous times during this period, nude or nearly so. Although the claims about her origins were fictitious, the act was spectacularly successful because it elevated exotic dance to a more respectable status, and so broke new ground in a style of entertainment for which Paris was later to become world famous.

Margaretha had relationships with numerous powerful men, including the German crown prince, prior to WWI, she was generally viewed as a free spirited bohemian, but as war approached, she began to be seen as a dangerous seductress. In 1917 she was arrested and put on trial accused of spying for Germany. Found guilty she was executed by firing squad at the age of 41. Her body was not claimed, so was used for medical study. Her head was embalmed and kept in the Museum of Anatomy in Paris, but in 2000, archivists discovered it had disappeared, possibly as early as 1954. The official documents were sealed for 100 years, but were opened in 1985, revealing that she was probably innocent.

*“Surrounding oneself with beauty and fantasy
can take you to another place
no matter how short lived it is.”*

Alice Temperley



LUCREZIA BORGIA (LORRAINE CANDY)

OIL ON CANVAS, 60cm x 75cm

Numerous myths exist about Lucrezia Borgia. She was the daughter of Rodrigo Borgia who became Pope Alexander VI and her family came to epitomise the ruthless Machiavellian politics and sexual corruption alleged to be characteristic of the Renaissance Papacy.

By the time she was thirteen, she had been betrothed twice, before marrying Giovanni Sforza. Before long, the Borgia family no longer needed the Sforzas, so her father may have covertly ordered the execution of Giovanni. The generally accepted version is that Lucrezia was informed of this by her brother Cesare, and she warned her husband, who fled Rome. During the prolonged process of the annulment, Lucrezia may have consummated a relationship with someone, probably Alexander's messenger Perotto, so that she was actually pregnant when her marriage was annulled for non-consummation. If so, the child was born in secret. Some believe the child was that of her brother Cesare (a Cardinal of the Holy Church). Lucretia's second marriage was to Alfonso of Aragon, whom Cesare may have had murdered. Lucrezia was broken-hearted upon Alfonso's death. They had only one child, who predeceased his mother at the age of twelve. Lucrezia's father arranged a third marriage to Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, with whom she had a number of children and becoming a respectable and accomplished Renaissance duchess, effectively rising above her questionable past and surviving the fall of the Borgias following her father's death. However, neither partner was faithful: Lucrezia enjoyed a long relationship with her bisexual brother-in-law, as well as a love affair with the poet Pietro Bembo. She died in 1519 from complications after giving birth to her eighth child.

“Lucretia is quite a mysterious figure.

She is also a perfect example of how

history has misrepresented powerful or influential women.

I like to think that the painting retains some of Lucretia's mystery,

with it's areas of transparent light and impenetrable darkness.”

Lorraine Candy



LADY EMMA HAMILTON (EMMA FREUD)

2010, OIL ON CANVAS, 17cm x 8cm

Lady Emma Hamilton is best remembered as the mistress of Lord Nelson and the muse of the painter George Romney. Aged fifteen she became the mistress of Sir Harry Featherstonhaugh, conceiving a child. Sir Harry was furious at the unwanted pregnancy and she became the Hon Charles Greville's mistress. When the child was born, it was removed to be raised elsewhere. Greville sent Emma to sit for George Romney and she became well-known in society circles for her beauty and wit. However, Greville needed a rich wife so persuaded his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, British Envoy to Naples, to take Emma as his mistress. Sir William was smitten and, to Greville's shock, married Emma.

Now Lady Hamilton, Emma became a close friend of the Queen of Naples and as wife of the British Envoy, she welcomed Nelson after his victory at the Battle of the Nile. Nelson's adventures had prematurely aged him: he had lost an arm and most of his teeth, and was afflicted by coughing spells. Emma nursed him and they fell in love. Their affair seems to have been tolerated, and perhaps even encouraged, by the elderly Sir William. In 1801 Emma gave birth to Nelson's daughter Horatia. Nelson, Emma and Sir William lived together in a ménage à trois that fascinated the public, with the papers reporting on their every move. Emma set fashions in dress, home decoration and even dinner party menus.

Sir William died in 1803 and Nelson returned to sea, leaving Emma alone and pregnant with their second child (by Nelson). The child, a girl, died a few weeks after her birth. In spite of his status as a national hero, Nelson's instructions to the government to provide for Emma and Horatia on his death (in 1805) were ignored. Emma quickly exhausted the small pension Sir William had left her, and she and Horatia spent a year in a virtual debtor's prison before moving to France to try to escape her creditors. She died in poverty of amoebic dysentery in Calais, in January 1815. Horatia subsequently married the Rev. Philip Ward and never publicly recognised that she was the daughter of Emma Hamilton.

*“Experiencing Alice at work is an amazing privilege.
She does something so unselfconscious and adorable with her eyes while she paints that
I initially thought she was trying to get fresh. She wasn't
– it's her way of seeing beyond the clothes and skin into what lies beneath.
She is a beauty and angelic,
but she has so much empathy for the fallen women she has painted, that
there is clearly something of them inside her -
which makes her slightly wicked too.”*

Emma Freud



MARIE ANTOINETTE (EMILIA FOX)

2010, OIL ON CANVAS, 70cm x 65cm

Marie Antoinette 1755 –1793 became Dauphine de France at the age of 14 and Queen of France in 1774. Her relationship with her mother was one of awe-inspired fear, and a lack of supervision meant she could barely read or write properly by the time she was twelve. After a smallpox outbreak killed her sisters she was married to Louis by proxy.

She was unpopular at the French court due to the long-standing tensions between Austria and France and was criticized for her inability to “inspire passion” in her husband, who rarely slept with her. She suffered several miscarriages and began to spend more on gambling and clothing, and the image of a licentious, spendthrift, empty-headed foreign queen quickly took root in the French psyche. She was wrongly blamed for France’s lack of money, as in reality there had been too many expensive wars and the too-large royal family’s frivolous expenditure far exceeded hers. In 1781 she finally gave birth to a son.

Laterly she became more involved in politics, firstly to ensure her children’s futures as leaders of France, secondly to improve the dissolute image she had acquired and thirdly due to the King’s acute depression. However her primary concern was the health of the Dauphin who was suffering from tuberculosis. During 1788–1789 riots broke out in Paris, the king almost died from a fall and the seven-year old Dauphin passed away on 4 June. During the Revolution Louis was deposed and the royal family imprisoned. Marie Antoinette was tried, convicted of treason and executed by guillotine nine months after her husband. Her body was thrown into an unmarked grave but later exhumed and buried in the necropolis of French Kings at the Basilica of St Denis.

*“I am in total awe of her work
and the incredible women she has used to inspire her,
both historically and present day.”*

Emilia Fox



MADAME DE POMPADOUR (JO WOOD)

2010, OIL ON CANVAS, 90cm x 120cm

Madame de Pompadour 1721 –1764, was the official mistress of Louis XV. Aged nineteen she married the nephew of her guardian. Beautiful and witty, her young husband was infatuated and they had two children, a boy who died the year after his birth and a girl.

She founded a salon and was friends with Voltaire and her family were delighted (but her husband heartbroken) when the King installed her as his mistress at Versailles, making her a marquise. She suffered two miscarriages and is said to have arranged lesser mistresses for the King's pleasure to replace herself. Although they ceased being lovers after 1750, they remained friends, and Louis XV was devoted to her until her death from tuberculosis in 1764 at the age of forty-two.

Contrary to popular belief, she never had much direct political influence but she did wield considerable power behind the scenes and had many enemies among the courtiers and was publicly blamed for the Seven Years' War at the time of her death.

There were several reasons for her lasting influence, firstly, she established a cordial relationship with the Queen who had been snubbed by the King's previous mistresses. She also brought fun and companionship into the life of the King. Lastly, she continuously reminded Louis of her beauty by commissioning paintings.



HELEN OF TROY (LOLA LENNOX)

2010, OIL ON CANVAS, 34cm x 40cm

Helen of Troy was the most beautiful woman in the world and was the daughter of Zeus and Leda (or Nemesis). Her abduction by Paris brought about the Trojan War. She was described by Dr. Faustus in Christopher Marlowe's eponymous play as having "the face that launched a thousand ships."

Helen was married to Menelaus, but after Aphrodite had promised Paris, a Trojan prince, the most beautiful woman in the world as his wife Paris came to Sparta to claim Helen. Although Helen is sometimes depicted as being unwillingly raped by Paris, Sappho argues that Helen willingly left behind Menelaus and Hermione, her nine-year-old daughter, to be with Paris, thus beginning the Trojan War.

Homer paints a poignant, lonely picture of Helen in Troy. She is filled with self-distaste and regret for what she has caused and as she gradually realises Paris' weakness. Other accounts describe her as treacherous and rejoicing over the carnage.

When Menelaus finally found her, he raised his sword to kill her, as he had demanded that only he should slay his unfaithful wife; but, when he was ready to do so, she dropped her robe from her shoulders, and the sight of her beauty caused him to let the sword drop from his hand. Helen returned to Sparta with Menelaus.

*"I am in a transition period in my life
and this painting illustrates it. Transcending from a girl to a woman,
knowing my desires and ambitions
but not yet achieving them.
As Alice and I talked of these things,
she painted a pensive yet direct expression in my face and
I feel each woman's personality shines through
over their sexuality in the paintings."*

Lola Lennox



LETTICE KNOLLYS MINIATURE (ANITA ZABLUDOWICZ)

OIL ON GLASS (MINIATURE) 7cm x 8cm

Lettice Knollys, Countess of Essex and Countess of Leicester (1543 –1634), was an English noblewoman. Due to her marriage to Elizabeth I's favourite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, she incurred the Queen's undying hatred. At 17 she married Walter Devereux, who became Earl of Essex. After her husband went to Ireland she possibly became involved with Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. After Essex died of dysentery in Ireland Lettice married Robert Dudley in private. The Queen whom she had been close to since childhood banished her from court. To the terrible grief of his parents the couple's son died at the age of three. Their union was nevertheless a happy one, as was her third marriage to the much younger Sir Christopher Blount only six months after the Earl's death. She lost her eldest son and her third husband to the executioner in 1601. In reasonably good health until the end, she died aged 91 on Christmas Day.



"I am totally fascinated by Tudor women.

*They lived in a man's world
and had to use every resource that was available to them,
physically and mentally, to survive."*

Anita Zabłudowicz

LIVIA AUGUSTA MINIATURE (SARAH ATKINSON)

OIL ON GLASS (MINIATURE) 7cm x 8cm

Livia Augusta, Empress of Rome, was one of the most fascinating, perplexing and powerful figures of the ancient world. Wife and advisor to the Emperor Augustus, she was also the mother of the Emperor Tiberius, great-grandmother to both the Emperor Caligula and the Emperor Nero, and grandmother of the Emperor Claudius. She was deified by Claudius (Augustus) who acknowledged her title of Augusta.

As second wife to Augustus and the mother of his successor Tiberius, Livia has been vilified by posterity (most notably by Tacitus and Robert Graves) as the quintessence of the scheming Roman matriarch, poisoning her relatives one by one to smooth her son's path to the imperial throne. New research reveals that far from being the crudely drawn caricature of the popular imagination, she was a complex, courageous and richly gifted woman whose true crime was not murder but the exercise of power, and who, in a male-dominated society, had the energy to create for herself both a prominent public profile and a significant sphere of political influence.



MEDEA MINIATURE (NICOLE FARHI)

OIL ON GLASS (MINIATURE) 7cm x 8cm

In Greek mythology, Medea was the daughter of King Aeëtes of Colchis, niece of Circe, granddaughter of the sun god Helios, and later wife to the hero Jason, with whom she had two children: Mermeros and Pheres. She was an enchantress and is often depicted as a priestess of the goddess Hecate.

In Euripides's play *Medea*, Jason leaves Medea when Creon, King of Corinth, offers him his daughter, Glauce. The play tells of how Medea gets her revenge on her husband for this betrayal.



MADAME DE POMPADOUR (JO WOOD)

OIL ON GLASS (MINIATURE) 11cm x 8 cm

Madame de Pompadour commissioned numerous paintings to remind Louis XV of her attractions. Mostly by Boucher they highlighted her exquisite features and hid her imperfections. However, they make her look more like a cultured wife than a mistress. Conversely Boucher gained lasting notoriety creating licentious portraits of the 'Odalisques' for wealthy collectors. Alas no such portraits of Madame de Pompadour exist.



SLEEPING BEAUTY

2012, LINOPRINT WITH EMBEDDED GLITTER, edition of 15, 52cm x 52cm



*In “Sleeping Beauty”, Alice captures the bleak mystical grace of the forest of thorns
as viewed from the captive’s window.*

*Thorns are intriguing in this print as in our wider culture -
capable of representing both a healthy irritant ‘in the side’ of unchecked power and the
darker more painful side of love and beauty.*

Shami Chakrabarti



Colours: Ruby Red, Gold, Black, Bronze, Silver, (shown) also Platinum, Copper, Clear, Electric Blue

GICLEE PRINTS

Giclee print with hand applied glitter on Somerset 100% cotton rag, 16cm x 16cm



Above Left: Lilith Flew Away Into The Air, 2013

Above Right: She Should Have Known Better: Excellent Horse-Like Lady, 2013

Opposite Top Left: The House Of Fallen Women, 2010

Opposite Top Right: Pax, 2012

Opposite Bottom Left: Pope Joan, 2011

Opposite Bottom Right: Sleeping Beauty, 2011



LAMB HOUSE

Lamb House is an 18th-century house situated in Rye, East Sussex, England, and in the ownership of the National Trust. The house was the home of Henry James from 1898 to 1916, and later of E.F. Benson and Rumer Godden. Some of James's personal possessions can be seen and there is a walled garden.



James spent most of the last 18 years of his life in Lamb House and wrote some of his most highly regarded works here, including *The Awkward Age*, *The Wings of a Dove*, *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*. He also entertained many eminent figures of the day at Lamb House, among them H.G. Wells, A.C. and E.F. Benson, Max Beerbohm, Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, Joseph Conrad, Stephen Crane, Ford Maddox Ford, Edmund Gosse, Rudyard Kipling, Hugh Walpole and Edith Wharton.

HENRY JAMES

James is one of the major figures of trans-Atlantic literature. His works frequently juxtapose characters from the Old World (Europe) and the New World (United States). The Old World is a beautiful, alluring and often corrupt feudal civilization, while the New World embodies freedom, and its characters are open and assertive with a more highly evolved moral character, if somewhat brash. James explores this clash of personalities and cultures in stories of personal relationships in which power is exercised well or badly. His protagonists were often young American women facing oppression or abuse.

ALICE INSTONE

Alice Instone's work is held in various public collections and her solo exhibitions include the House of Commons, the Royal Society of Arts, Northampton Museum, Chanel Head Office, More London Place, The Cob Gallery and The House of St Barnabas in Soho. She has worked with numerous high profile women from Annie Lennox to Cherie Blair.

She frequently appropriates historical stories and images, creating sexually charged paintings, which express the conviction that painting and making marks on a surface can achieve an intensity of experience like no other medium, and a totally immersive art that contains a sense of the past and the present. Instone was selected as a Woman of Achievement by Woman of the Year and regularly features in the press, radio and television. She lives in the Isle of Oxney with her husband and two children.

FRANCESCA ROWAN-PLOWDEN

Francesca Rowan-Plowden became the custodian of Lamb House in Rye in 2008 moving down from London. Having trained as actress at LAMDA and working in theatre, television and film she founded the theatre company The Lamb Players in 2009, a 'guerrilla' theatre company made up of faces from RSC, National Theatre, BBC and West End. As well as being a producer and actress, Francesca works as a designer, curator and writer and is a wife and mother of three small boys.

Sharing Alice's passion for literary and historical women of strength Francesca is delighted to be curating '*She Should Have Known Better*' as she has often been known to break the rules herself.

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“We work in the dark
we do what we can
we give what we have.”
Henry James

Alice Instone
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