

When someone who has not yet seen my work asks me what I paint, my usual reply is that I mainly paint the female nude and still lifes. But perhaps it would be more to the point to say that what I paint – what really excites and engages me – is *light*; the way light falls, the ways in which it describes contours and textures; how it discloses, and by contrast, how shadow conceals; how local colour is transformed by light and shadow. On another level, the symbolic values of light and dark intrigue me, be it the light from a window, or motifs of light and darkness, such as in *Memento Mori*, with its human skull on a white cloth. Of the works in the exhibition, which were mostly produced over the past two years, this picture was one of the earliest to be commenced. It marked a resurgence of energy and passion in my work after a fallow period following the death of my father in July 1999. Working on the picture was somehow cathartic; a way of distinguishing the source of a pain and a sense of loss, and putting it in the past.

Together with the theme of light, my works explore the physical and psychological subject of the 'interior'; in the sense of rooms and confined spaces, such as boxes and niches; in the interior life of the studio as a closed, self-contained, 'unreal' world; and in the interiors of mind and alternative reality as represented by the recurring themes of mirrors, books, and sleep.

Another question I am sometimes asked is of the influences behind my work. My father had a passion for art, which he in turn inherited from his mother, the artist Edith Granger-Taylor, to whom I owe a great debt. Her pictures covered the walls of the house where I grew up; those works that made the most impression on me were the quiet interior scenes with solitary women in repose, immersed in reverie and self-reflection. No less impressive were her intense, troubled portraits. Alongside the works of Edie were hung those of her sister-in-law, Olive Deakes: surreal, unpopulated interiors and landscapes, pregnant with suggestion. Later, I became interested in other modern artists who explored the use of light in interior scenes, such as Gwen John, Victor Pasmore, Edward Hopper; and most significantly, Balthus. Of earlier artists, I was particularly inspired by the works of Cranach, Schalken and Friedrich, and by the timeless, hieratic figures of ancient Egyptian art.

I would like to thank the following people who have contributed in many ways to my life in working towards this exhibition: all at Offer Waterman & Co, for their patience and goodwill; Louise Liddell and all at Riccardo Giaccherini Ltd for their beautiful frames; the models Amy Murphy, Christina Crevillén, Claudia Barton, Serena Love, Elizabeth Bull, and especially Ruth Morgan, for their selfless and committed work; family and friends for their encouragement and support, especially my mother Jacqueline, my brother Peter, Nick and Gail Barton, Jane Alexander, Ray Russell, Juliet Morel and my son Louis Morel.

This exhibition is dedicated to the memory of Jerry Granger-Taylor and Riccardo Giaccherini.

Nicolas Granger-Taylor – London, October 2003