

This work was made during my fellowship at the British School at Rome, and arises in part from my study of the artefacts and environment of Keats-Shelley House. The paintings include details based on the intricate carving of the tables and bookcases, but they are also improvised from the fantasy architecture and ornamentation depicted in the ancient Roman wall paintings on view in the Palazzo Massimo in Rome.

The views through the windows of this house, which gave John Keats his last glimpses of the outside world as he became progressively more ill during his stay here in 1820-21, also form an important part of the paintings: today they frame an endless parade of visitors, as they arrange themselves for the essential souvenir photograph on the Spanish Steps.

I wanted the paintings to be a frothing 'mindscape', including aspects of Roman architecture and painting, features of Keats-Shelley House, and some the legacies of the visionaries of the 'Romantic Period'. I tried to allow myself the same improvising freedom that those writers demonstrated, when they reinterpreted classical mythology and imagery to fuel the imaginative life of their own time.

I am very grateful for the hospitality and assistance of everyone at Keats-Shelley House and the British School at Rome and the support of Abbey Awards in enabling me to make these paintings.

Jeffrey Dennis is represented by Art Space Gallery, London

