**Indecorous.**

**“Indecorous”** evokes images of stuffy Edwardian[[1]](#footnote-1) dining rooms inhabited by overstuffed gentlemen busy becoming social pariahs by cheating at whist. A stately dining room, plush red walls and a long rectangular polished oak table set for a dinner party of about twenty two people. A silver runcible spoon has been placed in exact centre of the gravy boat. Porcelain decorated with designs of fauns and nymphs, they circumnavigate in green and white the circumferences of both bowls and plates. All set in equidistance upon the linen table cloth.

A young couple, engaged to be married, sit side by side. However the mood is somewhat sour, as the young gentleman was seen touching hands with the young lady in question and is suffering from a surfeit of scowls. For the groom-to-be has been guilty of a breach of etiquette, the sin of “**the slightest approach to indecorous familiarity must be avoided”**, as George Routledge put it in his 1860 “Manual of Etiquette”. Whether George Routledge would have approved of them playing footsies amidst the cabriole legs we will never know.

To be “indecorous” is a term that evokes images of subtle social sins that cause disharmony and discomfort. It is also a term that has dropped out of common usage; you are more likely to hear of someone now being declared un-cool or unfashionable. Indecorous is one of those words that I find fascinating, a bad neighbour that relies upon a close proximity or being next door to what it prefixes, decorous in this case, to be effective. It is a shade “off” but implies a journey in relation to the original that may run parallel or embroider to a point of originality in its own right rather than simply being in opposition.

“Indecorous” is largely an exhibition of recent work, which broadly falls under the heading of what I call the historesque. The historesque is a neighbouring term, invented to describe the proximity to the look of history as a point of departure in contemporary art. The effect of neighbouring terms relies implicity upon being next too, like a solitary male on a sitting on a park bench who then finds a member of the opposite sex sitting right next to him who then commences eating a rather obnoxious fish paste sandwiches, it is the immediate proximity that has an effect. The works in this exhibition have been inspired by an element such as an old photo, rococo ornamentation as a point of a familiarity and departure. The effect of our vision travelling in a trajectory away from the familiar is to introduce an uncanny presence. Imagine we have returned to the Edwardian dining room, lining the heritage red walls are portraits of the venerated but the eyes in the painted portraits been removed and real eyes[[2]](#footnote-2) are watching you, as if some long dead ancestor is assessing your behaviour.

1. Think *Downton Abbey* with fewer attractive people, less social mobility and more smell. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Possibly George Routledge’s [↑](#footnote-ref-2)