

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

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For Immediate Release

VERA ILIATOVA

Closer Than They Appear

February 19 – EXTENDED THROUGH April 25, 2009

Opening reception: Thursday, February 19, 6-8 PM

It's After, and we're all teenage girls now. We primp, pout, treat each other like shit. We have, as they used to say, *Gone Wild*. Survival of the fittest, social Darwinism: the most sought-after demographic is the one that remains. Jack Donaghy once said girls aged 12-24 would buy anything, though that was back when there was still stuff left to buy. The grownups have since made themselves scarce, irrelevant. Most are probably dead, but not, you know, in a bad way. More in a *Lord of the Flies* way, a John Hughes way, *A Brick* way, if you caught that one. Absent, left on the cutting room floor. If you really need an explanation, you can check with the Continuity people. Maybe we left the parents back in the City when we spread out here to the edges of things, out by the parkways and the cemeteries and the public works facilities. (Go to the last Metro stop, walk past the weird-smelling marsh, left at the huge gravel pile, wait at the stump just inside the woods, don't worry if it's dark and I'm late.)

So we are all Girls now, and Mean. Schadenfreude, law of the land. We perpetrate endless acts of psychological abuse, sins of omission. The corners of our lips curl up on witnessing the petty embarrassment, the skinned knee, torn cashmere cardigan, overdose, blunt force trauma. And we delight in gossiping about them. We reliably fail to intervene. We become accessories after the fact.

There's a family resemblance here. We're Brian DePalma's separated Siamese *Sisters* got up in hairdye, boas and lipstick to create the illusion of variety. A paper doll army of one. The trailer over in Wardrobe is the old tale about the second floor of Century 21 come to life. Overstocked, understaffed, no dressing rooms. Get in as early as your Pernod-and-Nembutal hangover will allow. Hemlines are down with the markets. Times are tough; nostalgia is the order of the day. Anything European from the 40s-60s will do fine. Stay the hell out of any kind of pants.

The people in Scenic work overtime. Seasons have to meld, time isn't going to lapse on its own. The palettes they poach from Cezanne or Morandi or Fairfield Porter have to knit one greater metro area into another seamlessly. But here's a trick: watch the trees, you can spot the artifice. The flora edits: a grove of dissolve, sometimes a tall fast wipe from left to right; scrim caught in anemic shrubbery, a water-damaged title card in the tall grass at the edge of the canal reads: 'Time Passes'. Another: 'Meanwhile...'

Discourse takes the form of arch Industry small talk: Have you seen the shoestring verite Transnistrian remake of *The OC*? Heard about the thousands of hours of lost Carter Lang footage of Maria Wyeth just being Maria Wyeth (this was before Cedars, if you saw last week's *Reporter*)? Lukas Moodysson's rumored-to-be-unwatchable *Persona II*? The Catherine Breillat biopic on the final hours of Lauren Conrad?

The dialect mixes Hammett with Douglas Sirk and a smattering of way slowed-down, distant Valley Girl. We say 'awesome' a lot, but we say it flat: 'Awesome.' And any quiet singing-to-oneself that needs to get done (and it's been known to happen) gets done in English with a heavy, tough-to-place accent. Think along the lines of 'Memories are Made of This' in *Veronika Voss*, like that. The Subtitles people love that, it gets them home early.

That there aren't any men anymore is an open secret. Well, there are a handful of technocrats left, long-since-made-redundant agents of post-MPAA regulatory bodies tasked with the wholly unnecessary mission of ensuring the minimum quotient for the appeal to male desire is met. Nobody has the heart to tell them their services will no longer be needed; we've got it well under control. Occasionally they'll linger in the middle distance, posing as saps from Craft Services or whatever, but mostly they hibernate in their trailers, riveted to CGI snuff. We have an arrangement: if they come out they dress appropriately and don't bother anyone; we pretend we're only pretending not to notice them. But even they know this isn't for them anymore. Everybody knows that the script is a vestigial reflex, an internalization of a male gaze that's become even way more deeply engrained since the last of the boys up and withered away. Same as like how everything's just gotten so much more, you know, *filmic* since the last Bolex was confiscated and destroyed. cont. over...

Trade secret: maybe we're no longer exactly quite 12-24. Maybe we're just acting at playing dress-up (it can get tough to keep track). And look at those hemlines, no way are we real live American Girls. French, maybe, or no: Russian, but Russian like we moved here at 16. Whatever, adolescence is a permanent state nowadays anyhow. The 12-240 demographic. There's a star that belongs to you and only you. You're the center of your everything. Bring your own projection apparatus, your own transference mechanisms, parataxic distortion devices, a current headshot.

Our mouths are shaped in ways that encourage tortured metaphors. We are moody, passive-aggressive, melodramatic, smart-playing-dumb, prone to sulking, did I mention long-limbed, easy on the eye? Exactly as we were supposed to be, except we know it and we might have something to say on the subject. We pout, titter, chew our hair, but in accordance with the Chandler Doctrine you'll never see our eyes smile. Slap us and a single silent large tear will roll (no glycerine drops; we have our pride). Mascara runs, lips get split, eyes are blackened. We end badly. We come to bad ends. That was how the boys liked it, when they were still around to watch. They had to tell themselves there was a moral in it somewhere, something about original sin, but of course now baby we know so much better than that.

- Kevin Zucker, 2009

This is **Vera Iliatova's** second solo exhibition of paintings at the gallery. She received a MFA in Painting/Printmaking from *Yale University*, Connecticut and a BA from *Brandeis University*, Massachusetts. Iliatova has also undergone studies at *Sorbonne University*, Paris, France and completed a residency at *Skowhegan School of Art*, Maine. Her work is currently on view in "Figuratively Seeing" at *Massachusetts College of Art and Design*, Boston, MA. Iliatova moved to the U.S. in 1991 at the age of 16 from St. Petersburg, Russia. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11 - 6 PM

For more information or images please contact the gallery at 212 255 5065 or info@monyarowegallery.com

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