

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

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For Immediate Release

POLINA BARSKAYA

Intimism

September 7 – October 21, 2023

Opening reception: Thursday, September 7, 6-8 PM

Monya Rowe Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new paintings by **Polina Barskaya** titled *Intimism*. The opening reception for the artist will be held on Thursday, September 7, 6-8 PM.

The title of the exhibition, *Intimism*, is a nod to an artistic movement in the late 19th- to early 20th-centuries that involved the depiction of banal, yet personal and familiar scenes from everyday life. Key members of the movement, among others, were Edouard Vuillard (1868-1940) and Pierre Bonnard (1867-1947), with Felix Vallotton (1865-1925) and Edgar Degas (1834-1917) also being associated.

Motivated by this school of thought, Barskaya's paintings continue to merge autobiographical narratives with psychological intrigue. For the past 8 years Barskaya's practice has solely focused on self-portraits that may also include her husband, and now, her small child. The locations are mostly comprised of restaurants, cafes, Air B and B's, hotels, and countryside landscapes. Travel is an important part of Barskaya's practice as it allows her to create works absorbed in her own subjective experiences. The artist often chooses destinations based upon her desire to recreate them. A striking wallpaper, eye-catching tchotchkes, an element of nostalgia, or simply colors that seem fitting for a painting, are all possible criteria for a cameo in Barskaya's paintings. Working from photographs, but allowing for artistic license, Barskaya draws upon her lived experiences. Although Barskaya's work is intimate, and incredibly personal, universal elements beg the viewer to connect. The works depict the seemingly unimportant moments throughout the day that make up life: getting ready for bed, brushing your teeth, having a bath, or sharing a coffee at a café. Her quiet domestic scenes are a welcome respite from an overstimulated world.

Barskaya's unique vision is firmly ensconced in recording and understanding the passage of time. The past is fixed and the future is undetermined. "Life has changed so the work changes with it not the other way around.", Barskaya says. "One thing that I am becoming more aware of is how I am changing, getting older, looking different than I did in previous years and paintings."

The work evokes art-historical precedents such as Alice Neel (1900-1984), with an earth tone color palette reminiscent of Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964). The mood and sense of isolation are heavily influenced by Edward Hopper (1882-1967) and Vilhelm Hammershøi (1864-1916). Within these enclosed spaces Barskaya often uses windows and light to create a sense of disconnect and isolation. Through a combination of vulnerability and power, Barskaya attempts to unravel the complexity of life by embracing a fleeting moment, as if forcing time still, and inviting the viewer into moments usually private and hidden.

Polina Barskaya (b. 1984, Cherkassy, USSR) received a MFA from *Pratt Institute*, Brooklyn, NY and a BA from *Hunter College*, NY. Barskaya received an Artist Fellowship in Painting from *New York Foundation of the Arts (NYFA)* in 2021, and an *Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant* in 2023, 2022 and 2020. Recent exhibitions include *Taymour Grahne Projects*, London; *Althuis Hofland Fine Arts*, Amsterdam; *DC Moore Gallery*, NY; *Marianne Boesky Gallery*, NY; and *Monya Rowe Gallery*, NY. Her work has been featured in *Artforum*, *Artnet*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *New York Magazine* ("The Best New York Art Shows of 2021") and *Hyperallergic*, among others. The artist lives and works in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, NY and Citta Della Pieve, Italy. Barskaya is represented by *Monya Rowe Gallery*, NY.

Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 12–6 PM

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