

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

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For Immediate Release

ANASTASIYA TARASENKO

Let Me Tell You a Story

March 23 – April 29, 2023

Opening reception: Thursday, March 23, 6-8 PM

Monya Rowe Gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new paintings by **Anastasiya Tarasenko** titled *Let Me Tell You a Story*. The opening reception for the artist will be held on Thursday, March 23, 6-8 PM. An **ONLINE VIEWING ROOM** of works on paper will accompany the exhibition.

For her third solo exhibition at the gallery, Tarasenko has created a mythological world comprised of dragons, castles, sea serpents, pegasuses and witches, along with echoes of the fairytales *Hansel and Gretel* and *Rapunzel*: “I am exploring our contemporary culture as it intersects with ancient tropes of folk tales, mythology and heroic legends. In all essentials, we are the same as our ancestors, plagued by the same problems and inhabiting the same failing bodies. I lay our desires and vulnerabilities bare.”

In *Baba Yaga Confronting Her Fears* (2022-2023), a witch, on the steps of a log cabin in the forest, theatrically opens her cape to expose her naked body. Onlookers include two young girls dressed as twins and a menagerie of observant animals. The children have the same eerily presence as the twins in Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980). *Baba Yaga* is a direct reference to the fairytale witch ubiquitous in Slavic folklore. Unlike the witch of *Hansel and Gretel* who lures children to eat them, *Baba Yaga* may help or hinder those who cross her path. She is thought of as “a many-faceted figure, capable of inspiring researchers to see her as a Cloud, Moon, Death, Winter, Snake, Bird, Pelican or Earth Goddess, totemic matriarchal ancestress, female initiator, phallic mother or archetypal image” (Wikipedia).

Through the use of mythological metaphors, Tarasenko confronts assigned feminine gender roles, historical objectification of women and hierarchical power. A dragon being attacked by a large group of men is a metaphorical reflection of our current time and the powers that be. In *The Birth of Venus* (2022-23), a woman’s body is ravaged by a swarm of swans in the middle of an ocean, drawing a connection to contemporary concerns such as, abortion rights, ageism, patriarchal complacency, and even smaller discomforts, such as street harassment (known as *cat-calling*). This work is inspired by *Leda and the Swan* from Greek mythology, as well as the 1875 painting by Alexandre Cabanel, also titled *The Birth of Venus*. *Leda* is an omnipresent motif in art history that has illustrated the objectification of women for centuries. Another work in the exhibition depicts a bare-breasted dragon and sea serpent battling to the death with an army of ant-like men. All the paintings have a relationship with each other, hinting and alluding toward each other. They are all part of one larger world, just as we are.

Anastasiya Tarasenko (b. 1989, Kiev, Ukraine) received a MFA from the *New York Academy of Art*, NY and a BFA from the *Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT)*. In 2019 she completed the *PLOP Artist Residency*, London, U.K. Her work was recently exhibited at *Steven Zevitas Gallery*, Boston; *Kravets Wehby*, NY; and *Monya Rowe Gallery*, NY. The artist lives and works in Queens, NY and 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