



Dasha SHISHKIN

cats and potatoes

Opening: Tuesday, February 27th, from 7pm to 9pm
From February 28th to March 29th
From Tuesday to Saturday, 11am – 7 pm

Gió Marconi is very pleased to announce the third solo exhibition with the gallery by Russian-born and New York-based artist Dasha Shishkin.

The exhibition at Gió Marconi is a whimsical and unpredictable leap into a world between drawing and painting where the follies and failings of human nature are performed in vivid colour and with a wild imagination. Shishkin creates a fantastical world populated by an odd set of characters. They are engaged in intertwined narratives and deliberate activities that offer the viewer a glimpse into a strange yet purposeful reality.

Shishkin's works are very diverse in nature. Her techniques vary: she alternately uses acrylics, pastels, inks and graphites and likes to employ unconventional materials, such as ripped canvas or painters tape. In the exhibition both works on mylar, canvas, paper and wood are on display.

Shishkin executes her complex compositions by using her characteristic economy of line, coupled with her use of bright blocks of colour and elaborate patterning: her bold palette and use of polka dots, colourful grids and other organic patterns blur the boundaries between individual bodies, the air, and the surrounding objects in her drawings. Although colours at first dominate her compositions, line ultimately informs the space and composition of the artist's work and becomes the driving force. Her colourful works and rather decorative style initially prevent the viewer from seeing that the subject matter is fantastical, erotic, macabre, melancholic and more often than not violent. An unsettling reality lies beneath the imagery.

Shishkin's stories are not easy to decode. She is a big storyteller who depicts scenes of sensory overload in which eroticism and violence but also humor are captured. A tool that Shishkin likes to apply to further encrypt the messages of her works is the use of language in her titles: "Titles are like a cherry on a cake. The cherry does not make a cake a cherry cake, but it is still there to attract or distract an eye."

At Gió Marconi, the entrance wall of the exhibition shows a group of differently sized paintings and drawings. Although each work is an independent work of art, the various images relate to each other stylistically and the long wall seems to narrate a story: demure charcoal drawings of reclining nude female figures and black and white portraits of dogs are being juxtaposed with Shishkin's colourful and richly patterned paintings. In "The Happy House" a small voluptuous nude with bright blue eyes and jet-black hair seems to step out of a seemingly ice-cold greenish background. A long-nosed female face is shown next to a recumbent mother and child. An expectantly looking little black dog is reclining onto a green checked blanket while numerous red and white dotted fly agarics populate the ground in a pale grey forest with thick tree trunks. In "Myth

of Animal Consent” Shishkin pays homage to Diego Velazquez’ famous “Rokeby Venus”. But she ironically endues her nude with a multitude of blue-eyed, red-cheeked and long-nosed smirking faces.

The artist acknowledges, that “in some drawings I continued the idea of “what if every body part was a separate person”, so the knees, breasts, feet have eyes and noses and mouths and, potentially, brains. So the pictures become not a single portrait but a group portrait. I don’t think that these pictures are fantastical, they are more of a “what if this is true now” scenario... I did not want to make an accent on the juxtaposition of something not-cheerful called cheerful but more about the fact that our perception is just that, a perception. Somebody’s gloomy visage can be their resting face and not a sign of some grief.”

A thin blue line at the bottom of the gallery walls runs like a thread throughout the exhibition, thereby connecting the beginning with the end and underlining the idea of the narrative element.

Dasha Shishkin (b. 1977, Moscow, Russia) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. She received her MFA from Columbia University, New York (2006).

Shishkin’s career initiated with the widely known exhibition “*The Compulsive Line: Etching 1900 to Now*” at the MoMA in 2006 in which she was shown among the likes of David Hockney, Marcel Dzama, Jake and Dinos Chapman, David Shrigley etc.

She has been featured in solo and group exhibitions internationally: “*Tram Pam Pam*”, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder (2017); “*Imaginary Portraits of Prince Igor*”, the Gallery Met, The Metropolitan Opera, New York (2014); “*One Torino: Shit and Die*”, Palazzo Cavour, Torino (2014); “*erry icket*”, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara (2013); “*I Surrender, Dear*”, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (2012); “*Gaiety is the most outstanding feature of the Soviet Union: Art from Russia*”, Saatchi Gallery, London (2012); “*Monanism*”, Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania (2011); “*Living with Art: Collecting Contemporary in Metro New York*”, Neuberger Museum of Art in Purchase, New York (2010); “*Embrace*”, Denver Art Museum, Denver (2009); “*World Receiver*”, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg (2007).

She is represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas; Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; and Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

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How to get there:
Underground:
Line 1 Red: stops Porta Venezia - Lima
Line 3 Yellow: stop Centrale
Surface transport:
bus n. 60 – 81 stop B. Marcello