

Vera Iliatova: *The Secret Place*

November 17, 2021 – January 21, 2022

Drawing on mainstream American culture, novels about women, coming-of-age movies and fashion photography, Brooklyn-based artist Vera Iliatova offers us her latest show: *The Secret Place*. The title and inspiration are borrowed from the book of the same name by Tana French, an atmospheric mystery novel set in an all-girls boarding school. Iliatova's paintings depict a cast of young heroines entangled in friendships, rivalries or simply caught in brooding, dream-like reverie.

Expressing a conception of place as experienced and embodied by the young women protagonists; upheavals of adolescence and early adulthood – susceptibility but also an eagerness for change, drama, and growth. Figurative and floral components appear in juxtaposition in the narrative, contrasting the space between the stiff and frozen figures and the fluid wildly disproportionate flowers representing an almost melodramatic quickening of the natural cycle. It is within this interstitial space that one finds echo of the very state of the young women who inhabit the paintings; mystery, moodiness, indecision and... a pause at the crossroads of the present with the future.

The smaller works in the exhibition take place in a country setting, perhaps a park; a city-girls' getaway. Ever interested in the abstract qualities of what makes a painting, the build-up of the surface, the brushstroke, light as felt through the landscape, the colours of the painting as they glow, the artist draws the observer into beautiful yet somehow melancholy scenes.

In preparation for *Diligent Daydream* the artist spent the whole summer carefully observing horses, attending equestrian competitions in order to be able to gain an understanding as to how the animals behave, and it is only through this direct experience that she can evoke the way they move and interact with the flowers.

The Art of Painting takes place in an interior, where a young female artist is hard at work. A book lies open, Anthony Watteau – landscape with flowers, giving an insight into the creative process, a clue to composition. The landscape is clearly visible through the window, and flowers adorn the workspace. A story is told here through paint, an intimate exposé of the artist's creative process. The silvery grey palette in this painting is an homage to iconic images by Deborah Turbeville.

Vera Iliatova grew up in Leningrad, Russia, and emigrated to the United States at the age of 16. She received a BA from Brandeis University and an MFA in Painting/Printmaking from Yale University, with further study at the Skowhegan School of Art.

Iliatova's work has been shown across the US as well in Italy, Germany, Denmark and Great Britain. Iliatova's work was recently included in exhibitions at the Katonah Museum (2018)

• FAHRENHEIT MADRID

JUSTINIANO, 8 / 28004 MADRID, SPAIN
FAHRENHEITMADRID.COM

and at the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco (2017). Her work has been reviewed in Art Forum, Art in America, Art News, The New York Times, The Houston Chronicle, The Boston Globe, Time Out New York, hyperallergic.com and other publications.

FAHRENHEIT MADRID

JUSTINIANO, 8 / 28004 MADRID, SPAIN
FAHRENHEITMADRID.COM