

MONYA ROWE GALLERY

504 West 22nd Street, 2nd Floor

New York, NY 10011

212 255 5065

For Immediate Release

VERA ILIATOVA

Terrain Vague

January 13 – February 19, 2011

Opening reception: Thursday, January 13, 6-8 PM

Judy Blume and Balthus share the assumption that transitioning from the artlessness of childhood to the performance of adulthood necessitates its own rituals—a curious coterie of girlishness susceptible to violation, but with peculiar potency and authority. Vera Iliatova pictures these rituals free from the obligation of Blume’s guidance or Balthus’s desire. Without a prescript to be good girls or bad, these young women are allowed to wonder, gathering together to celebrate or fight or whisper, forming knots of intrepid explorers and bored idlers that leap and stomp and stall.

Our lady wonderers are not totally unfettered, however; they travel within a restricted landscape. In these paintings girls must emerge from space before they parade atop it. The concrete and steel skylines that form their backdrops are based on Post-Soviet Russian mega-cities like Saint Petersburg and Moscow, but are based, too, on where a wash of pink meets a cloud of lilac—as if these were cities in which soot and smog were polluted by color field painting. The city, despite its pleasing pastel smoke, is pictured as that which has been escaped—with the action occurring along grassy banks and clusters of trees in the foreground. Town and country exist in a claustrophobic symbiosis, with the rural retreat a tethered buoy allowed to bobble only so far from its presiding urban overlord. Here we can infer the missing parents, uninvited boys, and responsibilities to come.

These are not the only spaces on view. Intermittently, small canvases appear free of urban detritus and figures both. Among so many images of girl gangs and the cities the girls barely have escaped, these purely pastoral scenes read as complete fantasy. That the landscapes become the objects of desire, rather than the teenage girls, expresses sympathy with the subject. Girls posture for one another, posture, too, for others not present, but *their* gaze fixes to bucolic nowhere spaces that serve as representations of what they are *not* experiencing—representations free of their particularities and ours. We can imagine our way into the circles of girls—guess what makes their gestures languid or ecstatic, their expressions placid or bereft—but like any good clique, they evade us. In the empty landscapes of their imagination, however, we all can meet.

- Colleen Asper, 2010

Terrain Vague is **Vera Iliatova’s** third solo exhibition of paintings at Monya Rowe Gallery. Iliatova received a MFA in Painting/Printmaking from *Yale University*, CT and a BA from *Brandeis University*, MA. She has also undergone studies at *Sorbonne University*, Paris, France and completed a residency at *Skowhegan School of Art*, ME. She recently had a solo exhibition at *La Montagne Gallery*, Boston, MA and her work has recently been included in group exhibitions at *CTRL Gallery*, Houston, TX; *Massachusetts College of Art and Design*, Boston, MA; and *Pace University*, New York, NY. Iliatova was a *Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation* Nominee in 2009 and completed a studio residency at *Marie Walsh Sharpe Space Program* the same year. Her work has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Boston Globe* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, among others. Iliatova moved to the U.S. in 1991 at the age of 16 from St. Petersburg, Russia and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Colleen Asper is an artist and a writer. She is the co-founder, along with Jennifer Dudley, of Ad Hoc Vox (adhocvox.org): a roving series of panel discussions on a wide range of topics in the arts. Ad Hoc Vox has organized events at galleries, non-profits, and museums across New York and Los Angeles.

Image: Vera Iliatova, *First Days*, 2010, oil on canvas, 50 by 40 inches

Upcoming: NADIA AYARI, February 25 - April 16

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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