

Andreana Dobрева

Public Grapes – Anonymous Meat

27th April – 24th May 2024



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An arresting solo exhibition by Bulgarian artist Andreana Dobрева, opens at Fiumano Clase on the 27th April and runs until the 24th May 2024. A series of new paintings exploring the ongoing difficulties facing migrant populations, a contemporary issue that goes back millennia.

The title of the exhibition is inspired by the Dadaist writings of author Eteri Nozadze (born Georgia, 1986), an emigrant herself, now living in Austria. Her Dadaistic book *Giganbishe Trauben* (sic) was written whilst she was still in the process of learning German and can be seen as a work that shifts between art and poetry. The absurdity of the words and grammar is a direct comment on the absurdity of the ongoing difficulties faced by hundreds of thousands of people around the globe. War, climate change, political unrest and social injustices lead individuals to flee their homes, and often their families, in a desperate attempt to lead safer and better lives. The very fact that this occurs in the 21st century is shocking, it is also absurd and contradictory. Too often individuals become mere statistics and numbers. Stories are lost, histories wiped out and hope evaporates.

FIUMANOC CLASE

Dobreva spent eight years in Munich working with refugees of many nationalities. She taught German and assisted with paperwork and finding resources to help the settlement process. Even though each individual had their own unique story often they were treated as merely 'migrants' or 'refugees'. Dobreva seeks to elevate the people she met and the experiences they spoke of. In effect she is creating contemporary history paintings, depicting heroic tales of journeys endured and futures yet to be realised.

Field work II is a large scale oil on canvas of a figure seen from behind embracing an abstracted undefined form. The identity of the protagonist is unclear, facing away from us we can only imagine their story. The fluidity of paint and the movement of flesh and fabric refer to the movement of people. Where is this person from and where are they going? The yellow robes are draped in a similar fashion to classically draped figures from antiquity, nude from the waist up this person could be one of the Three Graces or even a fallen warrior. The spontaneous brushstrokes and gestural freedom give the painting distinctly contemporary quality.

Slightly smaller in scale but equally arresting It Lives on a Lemon is a contemporary still-life painting set against a dystopian city backdrop. Is this a slum or the aftermath of war, or both? An anonymous figure in pink is turned away from us, looking back at what was once perhaps his home. A barge, overflowing with fruit and vegetables, a veritable cornucopia of produce, dominates the foreground. A strange dark sculptural figure seems to be stepping out of the picture plane, moving towards the viewer, its musculature and stance reminiscent of the Belvedere Torso. This trope of elements of the painting seemingly spilling out into the viewers space was popular amongst Flemish still life painters of the 17th century such as Jan Weenix. Once again Dobreva's nod to great art of the past is evident. Work by Weenix and his contemporaries can be found in many prestigious collections with a great number in the UK (the Wallace collection in London has thirteen).

There is an inherent weight to Dobreva's images, and one can also feel the passion and energy of her painting process. Thick impastoed oil paint is transformed into luscious fabric, ripe fruit, undulating flesh. References to classical and historical paintings impart a gravitas to a subject matter that could otherwise be considered lowly. A common thread between many of the individuals she met was the fact that they were living in limbo, waiting for status, waiting for the opportunity to work and fully integrate into their new communities. Some described the greatest difficulty they faced was not the perilous journey to Europe but the feeling of uselessness on arrival, not knowing what was going to happen to them.

Dobreva has waited for almost a decade to honour the people she worked with, she needed the time and distance to allow the individual narratives to settle in her mind. Her passion for paint, in depth scholarly knowledge of the Old Masters and sheer virtuosity and flair result in contemporary History paintings that go beyond heroism and epic tales. The memories she carries and the images that remain with her inspire her to create works full of hope and lust for life.

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Notes:

Location: Fiumano Clase, 40-41 Pall Mall, 1st Floor, London SW1Y 5JG
www.fiumanoclase.com

Exhibition Dates:

27th April – 24th May

Gallery Opening Hours:

Tuesday – Friday 11am – 6pm, Saturday – 12 noon – 4pm.
All other times by appointment

About the Artist

Bulgarian artist Andreana Dobрева (b.1982, Sliven) is a painter whose preferred media is oil on canvas. She studied classical painting in Bulgaria and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich (Akademie der Bildende Künste Munich). She currently lives and works in London.

Solo exhibitions include: "Persephonium", Lachenmann Art, Frankfurt: "Andreana Dobрева", Emanuel von Baeyer Cabinet, London and "Figuren", Lachenmann Art, Konstanz. Her work has been featured at both TEFAF Maastricht and Frieze Masters London.

About Fiumano Clase

Five years after its formation the gallery relocated to Pall Mall in central London.

Now in the seventh year, the central ethos of Fiumano Clase remains firmly committed to working collaboratively with artists, giving them the time, space, and opportunity to develop their artistic practice unhindered by commercial pressures.

The gallery represents a number of artists internationally, embracing a range of different practices from painting and sculpture to photography, installation, video and performance art.

Gallery Directors Francesca Fiumano and Andrés Clase met in the art world a few years before founding Fiumano Clase and forming a family. Together they have over 40 years of experience in the arts. Each has completed a Masters in History of Art and are active supporters of the wider art-world, beyond the gallery itself.