

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Emily Steer, "Ella Kruglyanskaya: Fancy Problems at Thomas Dane Gallery,"
Elephant, 8th September 2015

Latvian-born artist Ella Kruglyanskaya depicts women who are not to be messed with. Their gazes are fierce, their bodies curvaceous, their postures aloof. But, look a little deeper, and there is an unexpected subtlety to each of these characters, who inhabit works that straddle the line between illustration and painting, fashion and art.



Ella Kruglyanskaya, *Puppeteers with a Big Face*, 2015

This line provides an interesting dichotomy, as the works satisfy both a flighty shallowness, and a much more complex view of women and the female body. Have these figures jumped off the pages of a 50s Parisian Vogue, or are they in fact a little too awkward for that? Sidelong glances can be understood as both vicious superiority and insecurity. Similarly, some of the paint marks reveal a truly artistic, painterly sensibility, while others are far too polished and clean, drawing parallels instead with fashion illustration.

Fancy Problems at London's Thomas Dane Gallery displays a selection of large paintings — their life-sized scale creating an engulfing effect — and smaller drawings. The title fits well with these works, these women are undoubtedly upper class. They are educated, perhaps gallery owners, collectors or fashion designers. But of course it also links with the Iggy Azalea and Charlie XCX song of the same name. 'Fancy' in this case being something utterly modern, slightly crass and yet holding its' own form of female power.

The female figure is playfully addressed, sometimes to be empowering, sometimes offering an unwelcome reminder of the public female image. While some characters are allowed to indulge in all their feminine glory, others are embarrassingly compromised. In *Drawing of Nude with Lemons and Fish Trivet*, a close up torso is covered with fish and lemons in each delicate spot. Elsewhere, crotch shots are rendered clumsily, with large, blue-jeaned thighs meeting in unflattering, bulgy triangles.

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Ella Kruglyanskaya: Fancy Problems is showing at Thomas Dane Gallery until 3 October 2015



Ella Kruglyanskaya, Drawing of Nude with Lemons and Fish Trivet, 2014



Ella Kruglyanskaya, White Columns, 2015

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Ella Kruglyanskaya, Pixie on Stripes, 2015



Ella Kruglyanskaya, Painter, Exhausted, 2015

<http://www.elephantmag.com/ella-kruglyanskaya-fancy-problems-at-thomas-dane-gallery/>