

ARTFORUM



Ella Kruglyanskaya, *Sketchy Man*, 2012, oil and oil bar on linen, 82 x 60"

Ella Kruglyanskaya
GAVIN BROWN'S ENTERPRISE | 620 GREENWICH STREET
620 Greenwich Street
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The title of Ella Kruglyanskaya's latest exhibition, "Woman! Painting! Woman!," signals the artist's unexpected affinity with the notorious sexploitation director Russ Meyer and his most recognized film *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965). Meyer is best-known for presenting an amped-up take on the female physique, and Kruglyanskaya does the same, except that her figures' corporeal endowments are distributed more evenly throughout. Beyond that, both present a world where women reign: in Meyer's case, through mental and physical dominance, and in Kruglyanskaya's, through almost total predominance. Nevertheless, her exhibition is not quite an all-girl utopia. Instead, Kruglyanskaya uses clever pictorial devices to summon a view of female experience that seems decidedly more honest and fraught.

In *Sketchy Man*, 2012, an unmistakably male figure appears. He's sketchy in the sense that he appears to be merely a shadow, but also in the questionable behavior he exhibits. The product of a silhouetted outline and a few compact zigzags executed in coarse, yet dexterous strokes of blue and black, he points what could be a gun or his erection at the picture's second figure: a shapely young woman who looks both elated and disgusted. She has a shadow—rendered with "proper" illusionism, in transparent gray—and it falls behind her onto a larger-than-life, *trompe l'oeil* piece of notebook paper, which the man is "drawn" on top of. Her shadow stares down at his piece and grins with excitement. Such raunchy humor, environmental stressors, and equivocal *mise-en-scène* are typical in Kruglyanskaya's paintings—where dresses become leering faces and the full-figured female body is a battleground whereupon psychosocial dramas unfold.