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What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now



Ella Kruglyanskaya's "Untitled (Last Flight)," 2021, in her show "Keep Walking"
Credit Ella Kruglyanskaya and Bortolami Gallery

DOWNTOWN

Ella Kruglyanskaya

Through Dec. 18. Bortolami, 39 Walker Street, Manhattan. 212-727-2050; bortolamigallery.com.

Ella Kruglyanskaya's exhibition of new paintings, "Keep Walking," feels like a studio visit — in a good way. Rather than offering a series of paintings linked by style and subject, she presents several of both and in different combinations. The underlying message? "I've got options, including several ways of painting."

The artist's familiar thick-limbed women in tight clothes are here, exuding an eroticized, sometimes menacing energy that can be at once cartoonish and Futuristic. But there is much else. "Untitled (Last Flight)" gives us a rooster tumbling through space — legs, feathers and brushwork akimbo. It plunges toward a low, seemingly 18th-century horizon; Goya's airborne figures come to mind, as does his paint handling. Nearby, "Good Intentions" contrasts the bright colors and scribbled lines basic to the artist's figurative style. Except they are laid out loosely in separate horizontal bands, each seemingly applied with one of five paintbrushes, which are startlingly rendered along the painting's left edge in the oft-disparaged style of hyperrealism. The two brushes accessorizing the quickly sketched nude in "The Rug and the Blinds" might as well be real.

In two paintings, realism is resolutely disturbed by painterly sweeps and suggestive titles. A rumpled bed in landscape tones of brown is titled "All Is Fair," becoming the battlefield of love. "Beyond Good and Evil" depicts an enormous black hair clip known as a claw clip, intimating an instrument of torture or a black tarantula guarding her young. Kruglyanskaya's expanded skill set is exciting. Stay tuned. ROBERTA SMITH