

Crowded Solitude

paintings, sculptures and
works on paper by

Tara Versey &
Rossen Daskalov

Private View:
Thursday 5th July 2018,
7-10pm

Open Fri - Sun
11am-6pm
or by appointment

Exhibition continues until
15th July



Say No to Dreams - oil on canvas by Rossen Daskalov

Loneliness is an imposition, but solitude is a choice. It is a brave choice, and for an artist a necessary one, providing space for thought, of course, but also the freedom to act unselfconsciously.

Our inner voice is drowned out not only by the crashing, screeching, jabbering cacophony of city life, but the busy thrumming inside our heads; the deadlines and duties, the worries and wishes; the past and future intruding on the present.

Standing in front of a canvas, the artist aims to empty her head of everything but the immediate concerns of the painting; a protective bubble expands around her. Inside it is silent, timeless. And yet, some voices manage to slip through, to osmose through its skin, for these are the voices of ghosts. Every

artist must hear them, and painters perhaps worst of all; they speak for the accumulated tradition of the medium. They are the great exemplars and influences, the past tutors, the contemporary rivals; they keep piping up with suggestions, warnings, condemnations and lofty declarations, and they never agree. They are heeded, but eventually, are pushed out too. The bubble is quiet again and a state of solitude is achieved. It is time to act.

In Tara and Rossen we see two artists navigating between the external and internal worlds, the loud and quiet, the awareness of history and the need to forge their own, deeply personal language. They do not shy away from their surroundings, but embrace reality whilst knowing that they can transform it through painting and drawing into a talisman of humble resistance.



Here - oil on canvas by Tara Versey

What strikes me most in their work overall is a sense of strength. Compositions are forceful, uncompromising and often unconventional. There are strongly etched tonal contrasts, gritty textures and vigorously scratched drypoint lines. Figures are muscular and physically active, and even when depicted sitting still (as in Tara's portraits, or Rossen's tube travellers) there is a sense that each person has currents of potent feeling running just under the surface. There is a reassuring solidity and roundness of form which is more sculptural than realistic and imbues figures with a sense of firm resolve and the quietest kind of heroism.

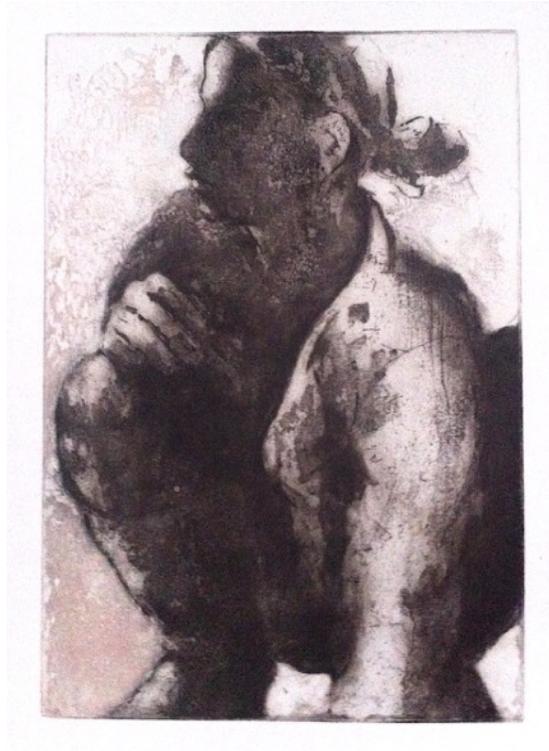
Rossen's paintings often address the viewer; figures gesticulate and express through body language, the positioning of hands, the turn of a head or direction of a glance. Some paintings present everyday scenes in a way that makes them seem new to us all over again. The mundanity of a tube train is made strange, tipped, compressed, intensified, and finally, undermined by odd details (bare feet in public?). A few characters may look out at us, breaking the fourth wall (and with it, any pretensions of mere illusionism) to provoke further questions.



Rigging Echo with Silence - etching and drypoint by Rossen Daskalov

Other pieces strike us allegorical, with a mythic power that seems to derive from a personal history of image making, despite possible allusions to known classical stories. Or perhaps, akin to something like

Pasolini's *Oedipus*, these images reach back to an ancient world which is much more visceral, foreign-seeming in its strange intensity, its dirt and its horror; the classical world stripped of its polite post-renaissance or neo-classical draperies.



No Light without Dark - etching by Tara Versey

Tara's work is more self-effacing; people often seem to be turning away, looking down, or inward. They are often depicted alone, seated in a rather unreal space. They are often shown *contre-jour*, suggesting that there may be light and clarity in the world, but each person contains a darker, deeper and more mysterious space within.

Although there are uncanny likenesses to particular sitters, perhaps these are not really portraits. If they are, they are portraits of people who don't really want to be seen and scrutinised, like herself, we assume. We therefore have an acute sense of Tara empathising with the sitter, drawing out their emotions whilst - in the painting - filling their representation with her own feelings. There is melancholy for sure, and anguish, but again there is that sense of strength, of steadfast, immovable personhood; the rights of an individual to just *be*; to be themselves, to be left alone, to be respected. The figures are often accompanied by objects that - in their simple, mute honesty - reinforce the atmosphere of stillness and quiet dignity.

text by Michael Chance

Tara Versey was born in London where she continues to live and pursue her work. She studied fine art at Camberwell London Metropolitan and the Royal Drawing School. Drawing forms the base of her work, finding it's way into printmaking, painting and sculpture. The need to work is a desire to experience and communicate a transformative visual intensity.

Rossen Daskalov is a figurative artist who was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. He now lives in London where he dedicates his time to painting, sculpture and print making. He studied in a secondary art school in Sofia and later graduated from a Fine Art BA course in Central St. Martin's.

Rossen's interest in figurative art developed further on the Drawing Year Program in the Royal Drawing School. The focus of his attention is the connection between the human beings and the environment they occupy.

For further images and information, please contact us:

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