

Yelena Popova – A World to Gain

Opening: September 5, 2014 at 6.00 pm, the artist will be present

Exhibition: September 6 through November 8, 2014

Prolonged opening hours during DC Open:

Saturday, September 6: 12 am through 8 pm

Sunday, September 7: 12 am through 6 pm

We are proud to present the exhibition *A World to Gain* by the British-Russian artist Yelena Popova – a premiere in Cologne on the occasion of DC Open. A new series of paintings and video work unfold Popova's continuous interest in 'visibility', as well as materiality and the value of art objects. The works in the show interrelate to provide a complex network of associations and references that negotiate the physical, economical and political articulations of painting today.

In the introductory video *Line Painting* Popova addresses the matter of painting as an act of labor. A short video loop presents an anonymous worker applying a thick layer of yellow paint to a road surface in London. At some point a well-dressed woman enters a cab parked at the curb, whilst stepping over the freshly painted lines she ignores the worker completely, as if he is invisible. *Koh-I-Noor* is the title of the second introductory video installed at the gallery entrance, it is also the name of a famous Indian diamond. Since the mid 19th Century the Koh-I-Noor diamond has belonged to the British Crown Jewels, but India is still asking for it to be returned. The eternally spinning, shimmering diamond in the video resembles a rotating advertising sign of a capitalist enterprise seeming to offer the promise of everlasting value and beauty. The video fable *About 5 Minutes Remaining* tells the story of time sweepers, an imaginary group of workers who clean up 'wasted time' to recycle and redistribute it. Here, time itself becomes a commodity and the difference between cognitive and physical labor, production and the circulation of goods between East and West is addressed. Just as the rotating diamond from the last scene of the fable is mirrored in the *Koh-I-Noor* video, the problem of exploitative, economic relations is mirrored by the troubled colonial history of the Indian diamond.

These videos create a wider context for Popova's paintings to be seen in. Dwelling on the difference between creative workers (called by the latest Marxist theoreticians *cognitariat*) and workers that use their hands, Popova examines the production of surplus value and how this can be defined, particularly in a time of digitalization. As the famous conclusion to Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto proclaims: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to gain. Working men of all countries, unite!"

Popova's 'invisible' paintings withdraw a fundamental condition of painting itself: the application of a colorful medium to a surface. This newly proposed disembodied form of painting can be compared to the physical absence of digital images. 'Invisibility' is used as a formal device to capture the attention of an audience exhausted by image overload in contemporary culture. The viewer is required to slow down and make an effort to recognize the abstract curvy forms floating on the surface. A totally different sight to that which a London resident sees when glancing at the minimalist yellow road markings made by an anonymous street worker.

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Yelena Popova, born 1978 in Ozersk, Russia, is a graduate of the Royal College of Art in London. Works by Popova have been collected, amongst others, by the Saatchi and Zabludowicz Collections. Recent solo shows include: *Insoluble Moments*, Knoll Gallery Vienna, part of *Why Painting Now? curated by*, Vienna; *Unnamed*, New Positions, Art Cologne; *Lobachevsky's Dream*, Jalima Collection, Dusseldorf. Recent group shows include: *Abstract Possible* curated by Maria Lind; *The Other Side*, Garage Project Space, Moscow; *Infinite City*, Zabludowicz collection. Popova features in *100 Painters of Tomorrow*, a new Thames & Hudson book that will be published in September 2014.

For more information and /or images please contact the gallery.