

Press Release

Maria Chevska *Free + easy*

19 March – 2 May 2009

Open Tuesday – Saturday 10am-6pm

Private View: 18 March, 6pm – 8pm

Maria Chevska is a painter, though in her work of the last few years the materials have become increasingly untraditional and the activity of painting dispersed across the room, often in the form of objects. The installations – that is to say the combination of elements – often seemed to take precedence over individual painted or made elements. However, these most recent works mark not just a return to the painterly but a synthesis of painter-likeness with the complex understanding of space that those installations evinced.

The combination of elements is now more securely in each painting, vertical rather than horizontal: words appear as though they were the bottom most level of sedimentation; over that may be something that suggests an interior space; over that may be set like a screen an area of sensuously loosened, improvised brushwork.

What are these words? Snippets of overheard conversation? Readymades? Fragments gleaned or purloined from a book on living in the city? [*My Discovery of America*, Vladimir Mayakovski 1926]. If so the context of the book, the chapter, the very sentence itself has been lost. It is as if we are in a crowded room and only catching isolated phrases of a passionate conversation in the crowd.

What are these spaces? We recognise corners, understand them as rooms, but ones that will only be inhabited by our imagination – or memory. They may be based on actual, often public interiors but they are more psychological spaces than physical.

And the screen that seems to block our view? These are ambiguous yet paradoxically direct: a screen that sometimes acts as if it were a space itself over another space. Not it seems beyond or behind that other space but hanging between our eyes and there.

These are complex paintings – and there is still a chair rammed up against the wall, another wrapped to remind us that in human consciousness there is truly no distinction between actual space and psychological space, that we have to understand them as a whole just as we have to understand the highly material, very touched surfaces of the paintings and the various contradictory spaces that the paintings seem to imply or imagine as a whole.

It is not just eye-brain-hand co-ordination as paintings should always be but also memory-reverie-consciousness co-ordination. These are intelligent works but never mere demonstrations, their beauty, their sometimes sumptuousness and humour are also key. They are, one may say, lived.

©Tony Godfrey 2009

Maria Chevska was born in London, U.K. She has held solo exhibitions in numerous private galleries and public institutions. Most recently, she has shown at the Gallery Kalhama & Piippo Contemporary in Helsinki, the Hoffman Collection in Berlin, and Schloss Sacrow in Berlin. Her recent participation in group exhibitions include *Who's on First* (Royal Academy Schools Gallery, London), *Artist Books* (ICA, London), *Altro Mondo* (Galerie Casini, Paris). Maria Chevska is a professor of fine art at the Ruskin School of Drawing & Fine Art, Oxford.

For enquiries, please contact Andrew Mummery at: andrew@mummerschnelle.com or Wolfram Schnelle at: wolfram@mummerschnelle.com