

DASHA SHISHKIN

I surrender, dear

Dasha Shishkin: I surrender, dear presents lush fantasy worlds where other-worldly creatures and mischievous human figures cohabitate. In a vertical diptych, two pieces stacked on top of each other, long-nosed women bathe leisurely in the sun and gaze over the coastline of an ocean inhabited by sharks. In a large work on fabric, a wedding ceremony is conducted between a bright green bride and red groom who hover above rows of guests as a priest offers them their wedding bands on a sausage-like device. Distracting from the wedding scene is a pulsating mass of color that appears to be a humanoid form. Other pieces show gatherings of female figures in strange medical settings, ecstatically celebrating in ballrooms or intimately conversing in front of rows of cake. In many of her works, Shishkin depicts societies occupied solely by women and references themes of ingestion, digestion and symbols of fertility.

She realizes these worlds through a multitude of two dimensional media including drawing, print making and painting on surfaces such as textiles, paper and mylar. These different supports and materials in conjunction with the display of works both framed and unframed create different visceral qualities. Shishkin's process displays a careful attention to line that at times exhibit a childlike quality, while others are as steady as those created by a draftsman. The work skirts the line between narrative and abstraction through hypnotic patterning and mark making.

A new element in Shishkin's work is the representation of interior spaces, landscapes and still lives. There are numerous line drawings of lavishly decorated domestic spaces, a painting of a barren landscape sparsely populated with trees and an arrangement of opulent cakes placed on a table with a wall of paintings in the background. All of these works imply a human presence as they are brimming with the immediate past or anticipation of humans. It is as if the artist is expressing that there is no space not inhabited, touched or influenced by humans. Her spaces do not represent the stage for a particular event, but conjure up an abstract emotional state that allows our own imagination to fill in a narrative.

Born in Russia in 1977, Shishkin received her MFA from Columbia University. She has shown at institutions all around the world including the Kunsthalle in Vienna and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Her work is part of the Dakis Joannou Collection in Athens, Greece.

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