

Eastside Projects  
Second Gallery

Yelena Popova  
'Portrait Gallery Withdrawn'

6 October to 1 December  
2012  
Preview Saturday 6 October,  
6-8pm

Yelena Popova  
(b. 1978, Urals, Russia. Lives  
and works in Nottingham)  
Yelena graduated from MA  
Painting at the Royal College  
of Art in 2011. Recent solo  
shows include 'Invites',  
Zabludowicz Collection,  
London (2012); 'Unnamed',  
Figge von Rosen Gallery, Berlin  
(2012). Recent group  
exhibitions include 'Red  
Mansion Prize' 2012, 'Twofold',  
Outpost Gallery, Norwich  
(2012), 'Bloomberg New  
Contemporaries' 2011, S1  
Space, Sheffield, touring to  
ICA, London; and 'New  
Sensations' 2011, Victoria  
House, London. Forthcoming  
group shows include 'Karina  
Bisch, Yelena Popova, Mary  
Simpson', Hilary Crisp Gallery,  
September 2012 and 'Russian  
Show', Saatchi Gallery,  
November 2012.

Eastside Projects  
86 Heath Mill Lane,  
Birmingham, B9 4AR, UK  
Contact 0121-771-1778  
info@eastsideprojects.org  
www.eastsideprojects.org

Free Entry: Open Wednesday  
to Saturday 12-5pm

Eastside Projects is a not for  
profit company Limited by  
guarantee reg: 6402007,  
an Arts Council England National  
Portfolio Organisation in  
partnership with Birmingham  
City University, supported by  
Paul Hamlyn Foundation  
Breakthrough Fund.

A gallery retires into a pile of objects, a reminiscence of an uneven past or an improbable future. Portraits dilute into non-identity and absence. Oval canvases, lost without their subjects, wait to capture the shadows of an 'ideal' gallery visitor. Buckminster Fuller's dreams for humanity lie undone and broken. Galleries withdrawn, universities withheld – public spaces are shopping malls with empty shops. Invisible and bodyless, we are all online, sealed in an infinite, futureless now. We spin in the last dance like leaves falling from the trees: one by one, quietly, as if in a dream – absentmindedly failing.

Yelena Popova was born in the USSR, in a secret settlement – an unnamed place dedicated to nuclear research. Following her move to the UK ten years ago she learnt to view facts and events from multiple perspectives. For her solo show Popova has developed a new series of paintings, inspired by old masters portraiture and the notion of the Invisible Man (H. G. Wells and Ralph Ellison). Changing the lighting conditions of the installation throughout the duration of the show Popova intends to question the shifting nature of 'truth' and current conditions for human invisibility.

Popova's pale paintings uphold a Constructivist sensibility but reveal curvy feminine gestures from the digital era. Leaning upon each other, architectural elements and found objects, the paintings seemingly evaporate from the surface to expose the naked texture of their linen fabric. A clash between the materiality of the paintings as objects and the ghostly transparency of their images echo her investigation into the materiality of contamination, secrecy and invisibility. Her video 'Unnamed' (2011) tells the dark story of radioactivity from secret Cold War nuclear disasters. 'Particulate Matter' (2012), a video produced after her Red Mansion residency in Beijing, reflects on pollution and the production of coal in China and the UK.