

FRESH PAINT

INSPIRING NEW ARTWORKS, STRAIGHT OFF THE EASEL

IRYNA YERMOLOVA

Ukrainian artist Iryna Yermolova could never be accused of 'painting by numbers', but there was a time in the artist's life when rigid planning and spreadsheets were commonplace. At just 20 years of age, Iryna achieved an impossible feat for a new art college graduate, and started her own advertising firm, offering graphic design services to big-name companies. She even studied Brand Management at the University of Economics and Management in Kharkov, Ukraine to try and keep up with the demands of her expanding business. In 2005, she moved to England for a fresh start, and found herself in front of the canvas once again. Still, her days in graphic design stay with her. "I always make pen or pencil sketches for my future paintings... I used to do the same sketches for my graphic design projects. No matter if it is a design of packing for biscuits or the design of an election flyer for a political party, composition comes first!" she says.

The passionate, kinetic and even decorative nature of Iryna's current work conjures obvious thoughts of Degas' dancers, but has a distinctive style all of its own. She captures female bodies in vivid colours that hit right to the senses. Using a palette knife, the artist applies oils generously, creating anatomically proportioned figures that move through a cloud of expressionist paintstrokes.

Her work *In Rhododendron Shadows* is part of a series of paintings she made after a visit to Forde Abbey Gardens in Dorset. Here, she juxtaposes warm colours against cool, leaves areas almost untouched and brings a rich, unpredictable texture to the surface. Whether by spontaneity or design, all these elements come together to bring a painterly beauty to an otherwise simplistic scene. **Iryna's solo exhibition will run at Bath Contemporary Gallery, Bath from 15-27 August. www.bathcontemporary.com** >

TOP TIP

You might find that a cloth or even your fingers are more useful than your palette knife or brush

RIGHT *In Rhododendron Shadows*, oil on canvas, 73x100cm



