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Gunia Nowik Gallery is pleased to present a solo booth by emerging Ukrainian artist Sana Shahmuradova Tanska (b. 1996, Odesa) in the Art Basel Statements sector. Titled The Rapture, the presentation features a newly created painterly installation, consisting of 10 individual works, that explores the fluidity of identity, the deep bonds between people and the land, and the resilience of the human spirit. Shahmuradova Tanska's gender-fluid figures exist in a state of constant transformation, reaching across time and space to reflect a collective experience shaped by vulnerability and strength. Her immersive, panoramic frieze at Art Basel invites viewers into a world where memory, myth, and lived experience intertwine, offering a poetic meditation on belonging and survival.

Shahmuradova Tanska's distinctive visual language, characterized by flowing organic lines and luminous oil paint, evokes dreamlike, mythical landscapes where figures dissolve into their surroundings. Drawing from personal history and the current realities of Ukraine, her works function as repositories of both personal and collective trauma, offering a nuanced reflection on displacement, endurance, and the role of dreams as a refuge from adversity. Currently based in Kyiv, the artist has exhibited at the Biennale of Sydney (2024), EVA International Biennial in Ireland (2023), and DHAKA Art Summit (2023). Her Art Basel debut marks a pivotal moment, introducing her deeply resonant practice to a global audience.

To paint is to steal days from God – a folk proverb

Prologue

Fate lasts longer than a human life. A long, unbearable silence follows endless loss and pain. A silence born of the inability to comprehend. Consciousness adapts. Silence takes root. The world ruptures when someone is born or passing away. Fate is silent. The past — whispers. I merge with the horizon: it is getting closer as the river shallows. Love is crying. How close is death? The final element: I imagine the silence after the end of collapse. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end."

Truth can no longer be found.













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Thoughts (February 2025 – today)

Initially, I was planning to create one story, yet focus on each piece as a standalone work. While creating, I was maintaining the idea that each piece is just a fragment of the whole. Each had to speak with confidence, on its own — although, paradoxically, the whole truth could only appear if all the pieces stayed together.

The story was yet unknown. But the closer I came to finishing, the harder it became to imagine these works as

separate from one another.

I thought a lot about how many processes lead to birth and death — and how many are set in motion afterward. How close they are to one another. How everything is intertwined. And how war —directly and indirectly —takes so much away.

I ately, I've been thinking a lot about

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about how close love and death are. And about how maybe love is the only true salvation. As I approached the end of the cycle, another colleague was killed, defending our country.

Once the work was completely done and was just visiting the studio to look at them, another colleague unexpectedly passed away — a very wise and kind person who worked on the same floor as me.

These works are nothing more than a reflection of the intensity of everything happening around us.

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When I'm in the countryside, I walk to the river like it's the next room. Often. Simply — to calm myself.

My grandmother recently mentioned that, back when a certain community lived here, they would go to the river in the evenings to pray.

I asked, "Where exactly?" I was curious, because when I paint — no matter what — I feel like I'm holding a point, the way one does in a dance when spinning in pirouettes. The point isn't the goal itself, but it helps to keep balance.

In the same way, one riverbank in particular — and the horizon beyond it — are a kind of point kept in mind when I paint. Abstract, but real. An orientation: to get a sense whether truth or not-truth is being depicted. The story I'm trying to tell is more like a sequence, a vibration born out of terrible and beautiful processes that

have been unfolding since the full invasion — and have become even more intensified in mid-February. Getting back to the river... I come to the Kyiv studio like I go to the river when I'm at home in the countryside in southeast Podillia. I have nowhere else to go. I perform a ritual.

I do not know what exactly I want to depict, when such things are happening all around.

But I do know that in the end, this work would become a kind of salvation. At least for a little while.

Like those constant walks to the river.

Three or four times a day.

And I understand now that I go there so often because, usually, I'm the only human being there. But in that silence, so much can be heard — so many processes happen at once: the rustling of plants, birdsong, the dynamic of

their disappearance and return, the water and everything in and around it. While creating, I thought a lot about how I had nothing to say. The pain was so unbearable, it silenced even thoughts - words, even more so. The interaction with this particular surface material deeply resonated with that state: the pauses were long and carried great significance, as this canvas absorbs paint quickly, and very often I formed images through the use of negative space — as if I were merely revealing what already existed on the canvas, rather than creating something new. So, I started thinking a lot about silence.

About silence as a way to communicate.

Not even silence - stillness.

In memory of Yana Pavlova, Marharyta Polovinko, Ihor Selemeniev, and my grandfather Hryhoriy

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Thoughts (September 2024)

"...the timeless connection between generations and the relationship between humans and the land, transcending binary gender divisions and linear notions of time. My current focus is on the bonds formed among community members, regardless of gender or sex. I find myself reflecting on the new circumstances in Ukraine, where vulnerability has become a shared experience that spans all genders. This is why I depict gender-fluid figures, representing not fixed identities but the state of the spirit and mental conditions in the modern world. These figures express the deep desire of souls to connect across the boundaries of time, despite the reality of mortality. Earlier this morning, I woke to the sound of air raid sirens. As I lay there, I would not think to define myself by gender. I felt like a vulnerable body and soul, with no need for categorization. Instead, I contemplated the land and its people as a collective entity. I imagined myself as a vast universe existing beyond the confines of time and space."

"...and the mystery she holds within her, while always caring for me as no one else. This paradoxical coexistence — of full care and trust with the things she would never, ever speak of with me — is, again, because of trauma. I implicitly compare this impression of her image with the landscape of Podillia, which, just like her keeps so many secrets yet re-

mains silent. Here, I recall the lines from an older series description: The time distance between past traumatic events and the present has suddenly disappeared. It is an intergenerational re-traumatization. It recalls a circle that is not directly controlled by the person throwing the stone or the stone itself. This next circle is an echo of the first movement, taking the form of a generation born after the devastating Sovietization - especially collectivization. They didn't even think of anythina being taken away or destroyed, and if these thoughts emerged, they were nipped in the bud by parents and educators because of the potential danger. So, there is only the landscape that could testify, but despite its efforts to tell something, it remains silent - and I wonder what, exactly, it is silent about."

"What would testify to the mysterious, traumatic, silenced past my grandmother experienced —while trying to save so many people around her with her love and care? I wonder... This landscape I compare her to had served, in a way, as a kind of pocket — consisting of rivers and forests emerging out of nowhere in the middle of the steppes. It hid poets and rebels in the 18th and 19th centuries, and partisans during the Second World War. It is a place where I found shelter myself — even though I had always sought shelter there, even before the full-scale invasion — after the first ex-

plosions I witnessed in Kyiv. At that time, I fully felt what this landscape meant for many people in the more distant past. And while I was on my way there, I told myself I was rescuing my grandmother, although it turned out I was rescuing myself by allowing my grandmother to fully cover me with her care, as I was not even able to sleep or eat. I lied to myself on my way to her, saying that I needed to rescue her, but it happened to be the opposite. So, what is this mystery — of the landscape and of the woman — that they never speak of, yet that seems to be their secret power?"

"Recalling thoughts on one of the series where I compare scars to flowers: Scars came before me. I thought they were flowers – referencing Deleuze and Joe Bousquet's The wound came before me. It is another metaphor for the disappeared time distance between generational traumas, for traumatization, it is another notion of the unspoken unprocessed trauma, as scars are sometimes the only witnesses of the events while one would remain silent about what they signify forever. As a child, I was always so excited by someone's scars. They are all different — wavv, almost ornamental. As a child, I didn't associate them with wounds. They seemed to me almost as if someone had been born with them as if the scars maybe did come before

Elements (symbols)

Water

Trees: roots, branches

Sun

Flowers

Spheres (Globes)

Hearts

Entities (souls, consciences)

Eye

Light

Fear

Past

Future

Birth

Rebirth

Love

Death

Life

Unspeakable



(Melting crying sun, cherubim hiding in the shadow)

2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in

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(Referencing Holy Mother with two hearts, from the icon of Kyiv Pechersk Lavra collection. The globe is slippery, she is trying to hold onto it, as she believes she is still needed, is she?)

verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in



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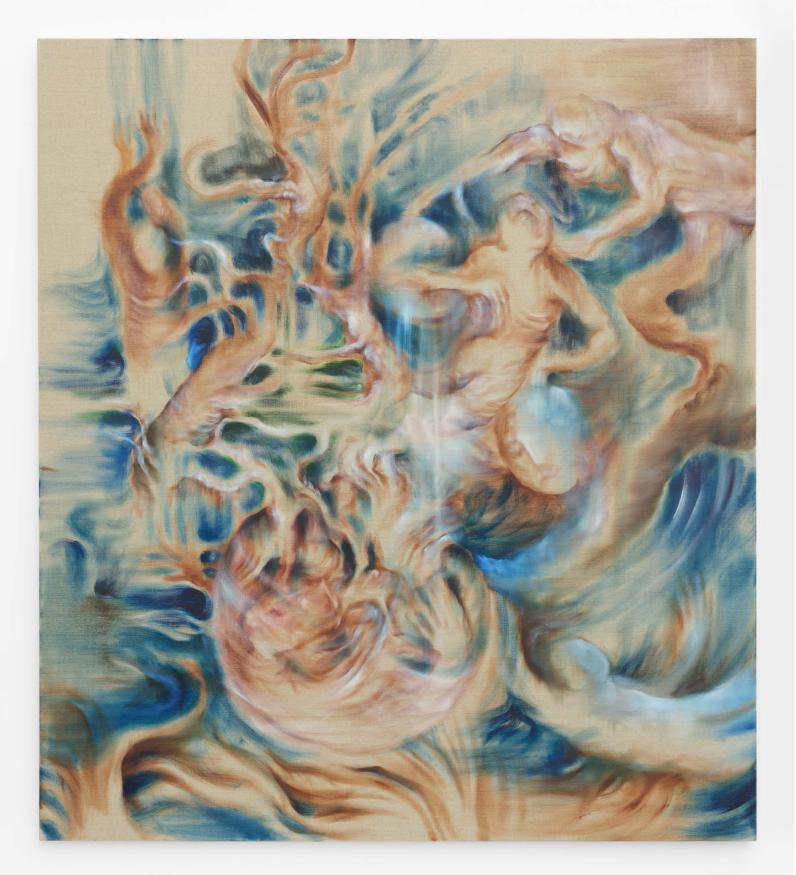
(Do not look back, do not fear the future. You might see a hand coming from the sky, one would think it is a separation coming, or maybe it is about to save us. I remember when I saw the trees growing from the water when I was a child in the Tylihul estuary, I thought it is Heaven.)

2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in



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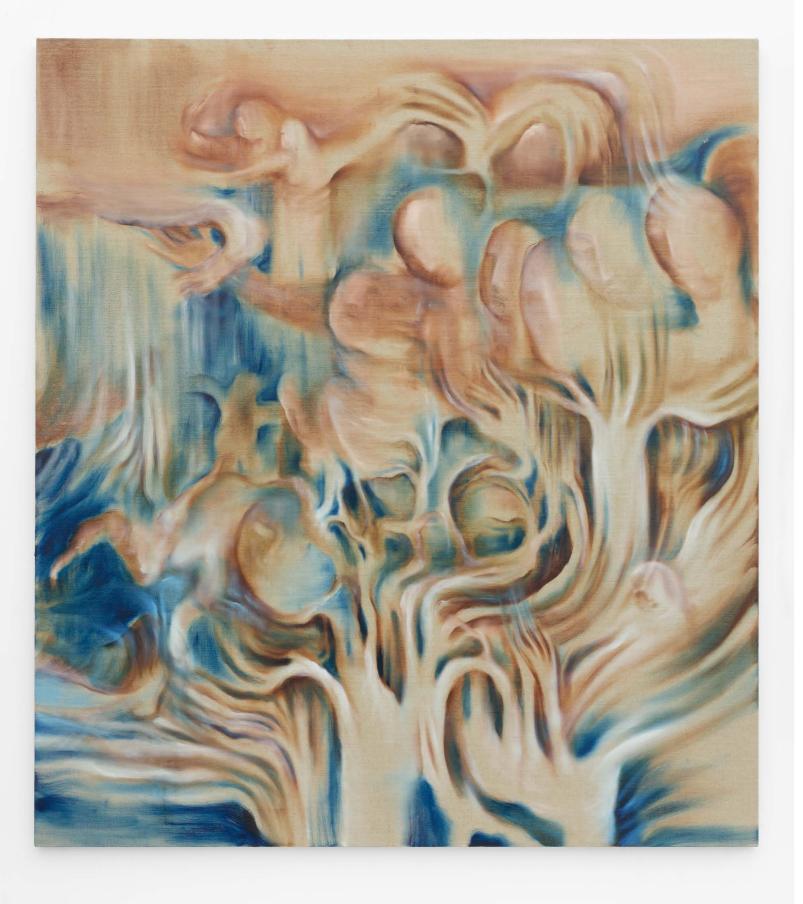


(The world is ripping apart when one is being born or passing away)

2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in

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(Rebirth)

2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in

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(Acknowledgement of the cyclicality)

2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in



(Apocalypse)

2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in

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(Destiny is silent. Past is whispering.)

> 2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in



(Silence)

2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in



("As it was in the beginning, and now, and ever shall be")

> 2025 verso signed oil on canvas

160 × 143 cm 63 × 56 in

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The Rapture Sana Shahmuradova Tanska

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