

Veronika Hapchenko

Sylvia Kouvali, *London*

25 November 2025 – 10 January 2026

Sylvia Kouvali is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition in London by Poland-based Ukrainian artist Veronika Hapchenko, following presentations of her work at KI KANAL–Centre Pompidou, Brussels; the National Gallery of Art, Warsaw; Künstlerhaus Dortmund and the Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw.

Born in Kyiv in 1995 and now living and working in Kraków, Poland, Hapchenko creates airbrushed paintings that examine the entanglements between power, politics, mythology and the occult. Her practice is rooted in the study of the cultural tropes of the former USSR, and the esoteric threads that historically run through its political and military structures. Drawing from philosophical theses, oral histories and legends, Hapchenko examines how collective consciousness is shaped and distorted by the machinery of ideology.

For this new body of work, Hapchenko has mined her own experiences and reflections. The largest work in the exhibition, *Sleep of the apples (auto-portrait)*, 2025, takes its title from Federico García Lorca's 1934 poem 'Ghazal of the Dark Death', which evokes a quiet yearning for a peaceful, non-violent passing. In *He worked diligently and paid meticulous attention to detail*, 2025, Hapchenko has quoted from the obituary of a Ukrainian soldier, news of whose death reached Hapchenko whilst she was working on this painting, writing "it felt, in some way, like a prediction or an omen."

In *Closeness*, 2025, Hapchenko notes, "the wires stand for a body charged with tension, sustained by the fragile pressure of intimacy" and in *In Shadow*, 2025, Hapchenko reveals the moment when darkness becomes visible and tangible, with light itself fading into something undefined and incorporeal. Having studied scenography and puppet theatre, Hapchenko continues to draw upon performative and filmic themes within her painting practice, with works evoking motion and cyclical transformation, overlaying machine elements, human figures, technical diagrams, and rhythmic spatial structures. Her works oscillate between man and machine, intimacy and ideology.

Rich with historical references, Hapchenko's work confronts the lingering psychic architecture of Soviet power. By weaving together myth, machinery, personal memory and collective forgetting, Hapchenko renders visible the tension between human fragility and political enormity.

At the core of Hapchenko's work is the notion of "distorted memory" surrounding the Soviet era. Approaching this period as a totalitarian system that sought to reform humanity, Hapchenko's research is expansive, encompassing the Soviet "megaprojects" of the 1930s—most notably the Northern River Reversal Project, in which parts of Serbian rivers were to be redirected toward the drought-ridden farmlands of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan—to the enduring ecological and psychological legacy of the Chernobyl disaster, a catastrophe that foreshadowed the dissolution of the USSR.

Across her work, Hapchenko also expands her inquiry into the figure of the Soviet engineer, a profession mythologised within the USSR as the embodiment of progress, rationality, and ideological purity. Hapchenko considers how this persona became an archetype through which the state projected fantasies of mastery over both nature and spirit, often merging technical ambition with esoteric belief.

SYLVIA KOUVALI

Veronika Hapchenko (b. 1995 in Kyiv, Ukraine) lives and works in Kraków, Poland.

Hapchenko holds an MFA in Painting, Kraków Academy of Fine Art, Kraków (2015–2021) and studied Puppet Theatre and Stage Design at the National University of Cinema and Television, Kyiv (2013–2015).

Solo exhibitions include: *Veronika Hapchenko*, Sylvia Kouvali, London (2025); *RECONSTRUCTION*, Sylvia Kouvali, Piraeus (2024); *Against the grain*, Mendes Wood DM, New York (2024); *Interloper*, Warsaw Gallery Weekend, Import Export, Warsaw (2023); *The Feminist Ukraine: a New Geopolitical Sisterhood*, commissioned work for the 8th Congress of Women at KI KANAL–Centre Pompidou, Brussels (2022); *False Door*, Import Export, Warsaw (2022); *Cherchez le mage*, Nanazenit, Warsaw (2021); *Cherchez le mage*, i gallery, Kraków (2021); and *everything was beautiful and nothing hurt*, Baszta Gallery, Dworek Białoprądnicki Cultural Center, Kraków (2019).

Group exhibitions include: *Moving Image*, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2025); *Bounding Histories. Whispering Tales*, Art Encounters Foundation, Timișoara (2025); *The Nine Rules Of Tremulation*, No Name, Paris (2024); *Does The Rising Sun Affright*, Zachęta – National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2024); *Invisible Until It's Broken*, Künstlerhaus Dortmund, Dortmund (2024); *Ruined*, CONDO, Sylvia Kouvali London hosting Import Export, London (2024); *Mental Pictures*, Import Export, Warsaw (2023); *The Open World*, Thailand Biennale, Chiang Rai (2023); *Primary Forms*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2023); *Linhas Tortas*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2023); *CORPOREAL*, Galleria Alessandro Albanese, Matera (2023); *My Rhino is not a Myth*, Art Encounters Biennial, Timișoara (2023); *Esfíngico Frontal (Frontal Sphinx)*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo (2023); *Bonna*, Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Dhaka (2023); *When Desire Becomes Home*, Casa Filipka by Her Clique, Mexico City (2023); *Invisible Until It's Broken*, Künstlerhaus Dortmund (2023); *Fidelio*, Pałac Schaffgotschów, Wrocław (2023); *Aurora nostri temporis*, BWA Tarnów, Tarnów (2022); *Is it real? The power of imagination*, Rondo Sztuki, Katowice (2022); *Obywetele Kosmosu*, Anton Vidokle and Veronika Hapchenko, Muzeum Sztuki, Łódź (2022); *The Discomfort of Evening*, Zachęta National Art Gallery, Warsaw (2022); and *Textures of the Contemporary*, Renata Fabbri Arte Contemporanea, Milan (2022).

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