

## MONICA DE CARDENAS

**Project Room:**  
**Polina Barskaya**

Monica De Cardenas is pleased to announce **Polina Barskaya's** first solo exhibition in Milan.

**Opening**

Thursday 9 April 2026  
6 pm

**On view**

from 09.04.2026  
to 12.05.2026

**Hours**

Tuesday – Saturday  
11 am – 7 pm

Born in Cherkasy, Ukraine, raised in Brooklyn, and currently based in Piemonte, Italy, Polina Barskaya's painting practice stems from a personal photographic archive, built up over time as a tool for observation and reflection. The artist uses acrylic on panel with a controlled, layered application, alternating compact backgrounds with more vibrant passages that retain the atmospheric quality of natural light. The surfaces, although smooth, maintain an inner tension created by subtle chromatic variations and a careful orchestration of warm and cool tones.

The works on view present domestic interiors captured in moments of suspension: seated or reclining figures, interrupted gestures, bodies naturally occupying space without theatricality. Her subjects – the artist herself, her husband, her daughter – inhabit everyday interiors composed of unmade beds, curtains crossed by morning light, and collected postures. In these intimate scenes, the ordinary is charged with a subtle and penetrating psychological tension. The construction of the image is calibrated through close-ups and perspective cuts that compress space, heightening the sense of proximity. Seemingly secondary elements – a fold in fabric, the geometry of a headboard – become formal devices that structure the composition and guide the viewer's gaze.

Barskaya's practice engages in dialogue with the European Intimist tradition and with a strand of figurative painting attentive to the introspective dimension of portraiture. Her measured and silent compositions invite the viewer to physically approach the work, establishing a direct relationship with the subjects' gazes: frank, sometimes questioning looks that seek neither approval nor complacency, but presence. The small scale of the works amplifies their emotional intensity, transforming the act of observation into a close and almost confidential experience.

Without resorting to explicit narratives, Barskaya explores relational and identity dynamics within the family unit. The subjects are never idealized: their presence is concrete, autonomous, at times enigmatic. The artist avoids sentimental emphasis, favoring restraint that allows emotional complexity to emerge through minimal details – a tilt of the head, a distance between bodies, a light isolating a face from the rest of the environment.

For the Project Room, the artist brings together a group of recent works that deepen the relationship between painting and photography as a process of translation: from captured image to constructed image, from private memory to public form. The exhibition unfolds as an intimate itinerary in which painting asserts itself as a space of concentration and attention, capable of restoring density and duration to otherwise ephemeral moments.

Barskaya holds a BA from Hunter College and an MFA from Pratt Institute, New York. She has been awarded grants from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation and a painting fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts. Her work has been exhibited, among others, at Harkawik, New York; Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, West Palm Beach, London, and Copenhagen; Monya Rowe Gallery, New York; DC Moore Gallery, New York; Taymour Grahne Projects, London; Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York; and GNYP Gallery, Berlin.