

Katya Tsareva

PORTFOLIO

katyatsareva.com

ABOUT



Artist statement

My practice centres on exploring and visualising the human body as a space of emotional, psychological, and cultural complexity. I examine how identity is formed through the body and how its presence can evoke a range of contradictory responses — intimacy and distance, desire and discomfort. Rather than focusing on personal or biographical narratives, I'm drawn to the act of observation itself: how a fleeting encounter with a stranger or a casual photograph can become the starting point for a process of transformation — through technology, memory, and imagination.

I work across various media, including installation, sculpture, and video, but in recent years I've focused primarily on the human figure in watercolor. This series includes both large-scale and smaller, more intimate works, often based on AI-generated portraits created from verbal descriptions of people I observe in everyday life. These images are then altered through collage and digital manipulation before being translated into layered, emotionally charged watercolors.

Working with watercolor allows me to explore the material's full range — its transparency, softness, and unpredictability — while reimagining the human figure through abstraction, fragmentation, and reconstruction. My approach embraces imperfection, vulnerability, and contradiction. Across different projects, I return to the question of what it means to live in a body — to carry it through daily life, to feel its exposure and its limits, while also acknowledging its quiet strength and persistent presence.

Bio

Katya Tsareva is a UK-based multidisciplinary artist who currently lives and works in London. Born in 1984 in Krasnodar, Russia, she graduated at MA Architecture and Design from Kuban State University, Russia with a degree in Architecture and Design (2006) and Chelsea Open Studio Short Course, Chelsea College of Arts, London, UK (April/May 2024). In 2012, Katya held her inaugural solo exhibition and participated in the Moscow International Biennale of Young Art. Recognized as one of the top 100 young Russian artists by 'In Art' in 2017, she had a solo exhibition at the Udmurt Republican Art Museum in 2018. In 2022, she contributed to a collective exhibition supported by Voices of Culture at the Basel Art Center, Switzerland.

In 2024, participant of numerous solo and group exhibitions, international biennale including two part solo show 'The Fleeting Light on Your Folds', London, UK and in Voskhod Gallery, Basel, Switzerland, duo exhibition 'Dawn on Your Skin ', London, UK, Limburg Biennale at Marres, Maastricht, Netherlands and 1st Ground Biennale, Textile in Contemporary Art, Ground Solyanka, Moscow, Russia. Her works have been featured in various international online and offline publications on contemporary art, are housed in the collection of the Udmurt Republican Museum of Fine Arts, and in private collections in London, New York, Basel, Moscow, and other cities worldwide.

EDUCATION:

2024 (April/May) **Chelsea College of Arts**, Chelsea Open Studio Short Course, *London, UK*
 2001 - 2006 **Kuban State University**, MA Architecture and Design, *Krasnodar, Russia*

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

2024 **The Fleeting Light on Your Folds** (Part 2), *Voskhod Gallery, Basel, Switzerland*
 2024 **The Fleeting Light on Your Folds** (Part1), *The Chapel, Brompton Cemetery, London, UK*
 2024 **Dawn On Your Skin**, duo exhibition with Damaris Athene, *Feelium Gallery & Studios, London, UK*
 2021 **In My White Corner**, *Pro Art's Gallery, Kaluga, Russia*
 2020 **My Rooms**, *Futuro Gallery, Nizhni Novgorod, Russia*
 2018 **Search Me In The Flowers**, *Udmurt Republican Art Museum, Izhevsk, Russia*
Supported by PERMM Museum of Contemporary Art
 2016 **The Story Of a One White House**, *Gridchinhall Gallery & Art-Residence, Moscow, Russia*

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

2025 **Postulation**, *LumiNoir Gallery, London, UK*
 2024 **Limburg Biennale at Marres**, *Maastricht, Netherlands*
 2024 **Happily Ever After**, *The Chapel, St. Margaret's House, London, UK*
 2024 **Summer exhibition**, *Crawley, UK*
 2024 **Open Call curated by Phony**, *Gallery Lock In, Brighton, UK*
 2024 **1st Ground Biennale, Textile in Contemporary Art**, *Ground Solyanka, Moscow, Russia*
 2023 **HEAT**, *RuptureXIBIT(+Studio) Gallery, London, UK*
 2022 **X-NOWNESS**, *Basel Art Center, Presented by Voskhod Gallery, OBDN Gallery, Art Catch Gallery, Basel, Switzerland*
 2021 **RE-ENCHANTED**, *Voskhod Gallery, online group exhibition*
 2021 **Hidden Places**, *Max Art Foundation, Moscow, Russia*
 2020 **Wave of Dreams**, *Triumph Gallery, Moscow, Russia*
 2019 **There Where The Energy Flows To**, *InArt Gallery, WINZAVOD Center For Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia*
 2018 **Vivum**, *Artis Gallery, WINZAVOD Center For Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia*
 2016 **Voice of Izhevsk**, *Special project of Moscow International Biennale for Young Art, CCI Fabrika, Moscow, Russia*

AWARDS:

2025 LGC x Theo Paphitis Art Prize (shortlisted), *London, UK*
 2024 Zima Magazine Artist of the Month (shortlisted), *London, UK*
 2023 Haken Art Award (Painting Category Finalist), *London, UK*
 2020 Buenos Aires International Fashion Film Festival, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

RESIDENCIES:

Since 2016 Gridchinhall Gallery & Art-Residence, *Moscow, Russia*

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

2024 Interview 'What can and should the body be?', March, *London Cult Magazine, Web (London)*
 2024 Art Seen Magazine, the issue 11 - Spring, *Print (London)*
 2024 Purplehaze Fashion & Art Magazine, the issue 009, *Print (Berlin)*
 2020 Most Mag, Aesthetics, body, harmony: interview with Katya Tsareva, *Print (Russia)*
 2020 UNDER THE BRIDGE MAGAZIN Installation - Autumn 2020, *Print (USA)*
 2019 CRIATE! MAGAZIN, issue 18 ART MIAMI EDITION, *Print (USA)*

ART FAIRS:

2025 Contour Art Fair, *Nizhny Novgorod, Russia*
 2022 Marbella Art Fair, *Marbella, Spain*
 2021 Cosmoscow, *Moscow, Russia*
 2021 ART Moscow, *Moscow, Russia*
 2016 Cosmoscow, *Moscow, Russia*

2025/

A PORTRAIT. Watercolor.

A PORTRAIT.

This series of watercolor portraits begins with brief, silent encounters in the metro. I observe a stranger — their face, posture, or expression — and then create a detailed textual description of their appearance. These written impressions serve as prompts for AI-generated portraits. The results vary: some resemble the original surprisingly closely, while others feel like distant echoes.

These AI images are only a step in the process. I alter them digitally, combine fragments through collage, and rework the figures in watercolor. The final portraits are layered interpretations — situated somewhere between memory and invention, observation and imagination.



The Portrait #3.
watercolor on paper, 30x21cm, 2025

2025/

A PORTRAIT. Watercolor.



The Portrait #2.
watercolor on paper, 30x21cm, 2025



The Portrait #1.
watercolor on paper, 30x21cm, 2025

2025/

THE TENDERNESS. *Installation.*



The Tenderness..

"The Tenderness" is an installation of soft, air-filled textile forms in which Katya Tsareva evokes the image of a "second skin", smooth, gleaming, and strangely alien. The work serves as a metaphor for corporeality that is both seductive and unsettling. It explores the duality of sensory experience - merging pleasure and pain, desire and aversion and invites the viewer into a fragile space between intimacy and detachment.



The Tenderness
2025
Installation,
200 × 180 × 150 cm
Fabric with original print,
inflatable balloons.

2025/

Tender. Watercolor.



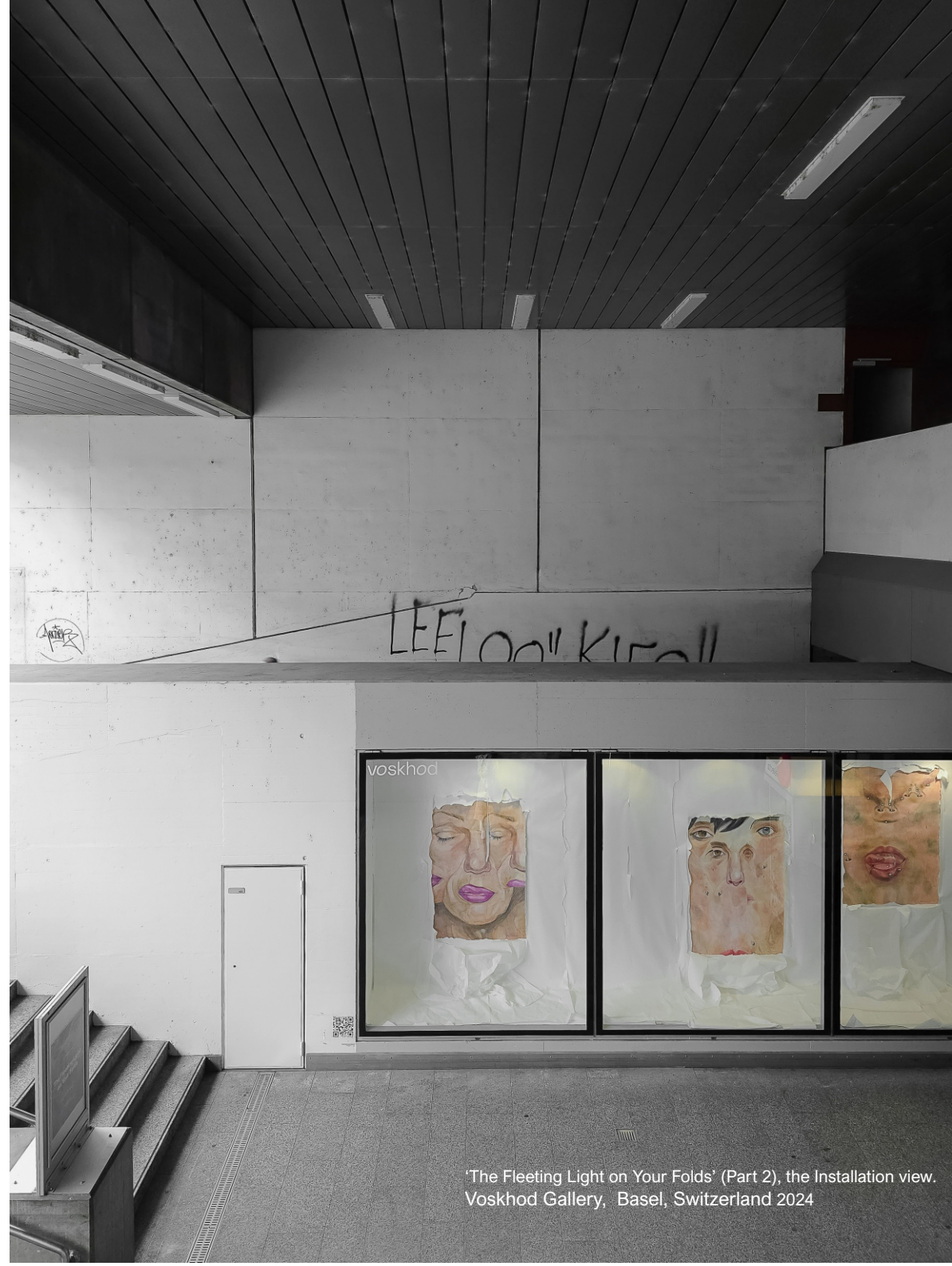
Red Lips and Two Red Lines,
watercolor on paper, 150x100cm,
2024

2024/ Voskhod Gallery, Basel, Switzerland

The Fleeting Light on Your Folds (Part 2). Solo show.

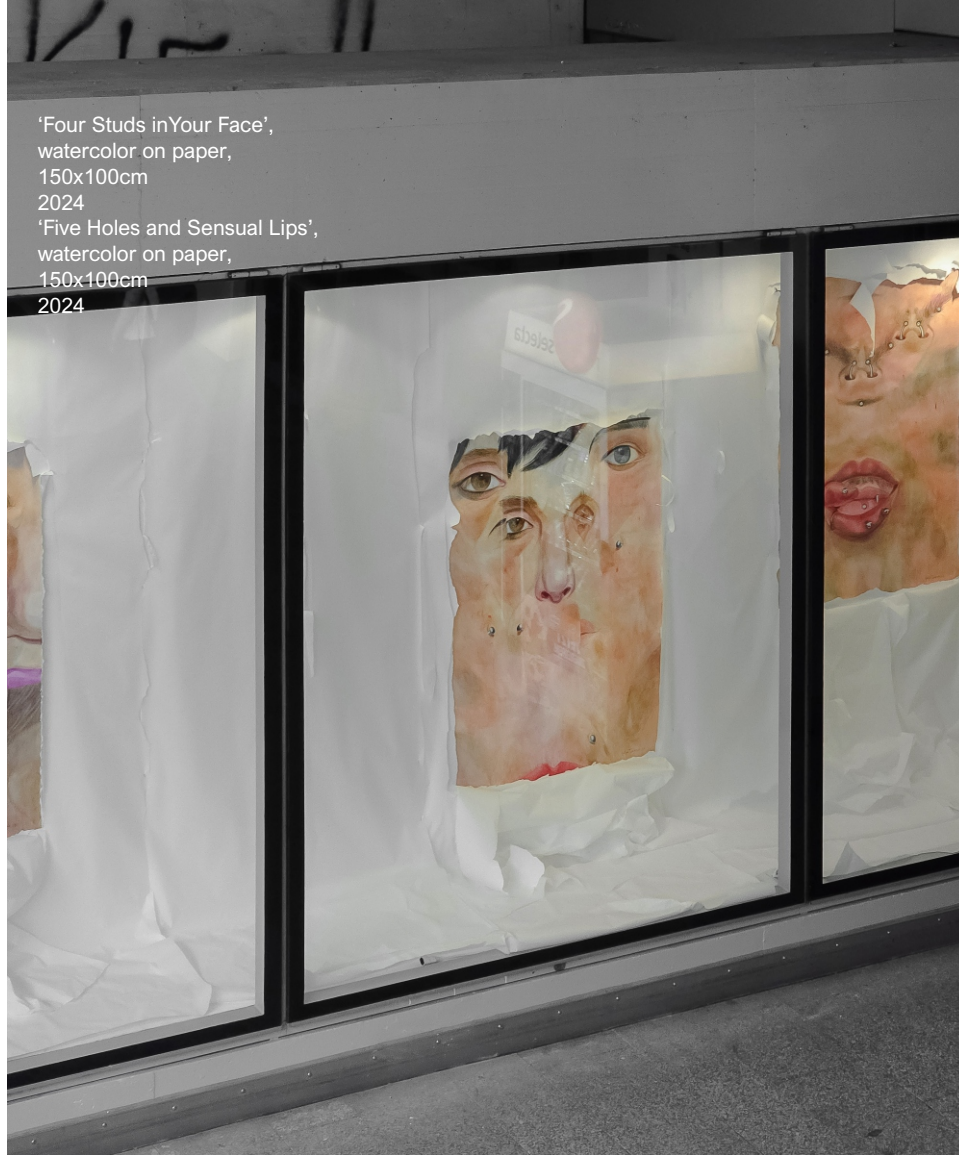
The second part of the exhibition, following the Brompton show, took place at Voskhod Gallery in Basel. Displayed in the window, the exhibition featured large watercolor works alongside white sheets of watercolor paper, deliberately torn in a seemingly spontaneous manner. Bursting through the layers, the watercolors reveal corporeality as a set of surfaces with varying degrees of attraction. They reflect the experience of living in a body — a vessel marked by both vulnerability and exposure.

Excerpt from the curatorial text by Anzhela Popova, written for the exhibition "The Fleeting Light on Your Folds (Part 2)", Voskhod Gallery, Basel, 2024



'The Fleeting Light on Your Folds' (Part 2), the Installation view.
Voskhod Gallery, Basel, Switzerland 2024





'Four Studs inYour Face',
watercolor on paper,
150x100cm
2024

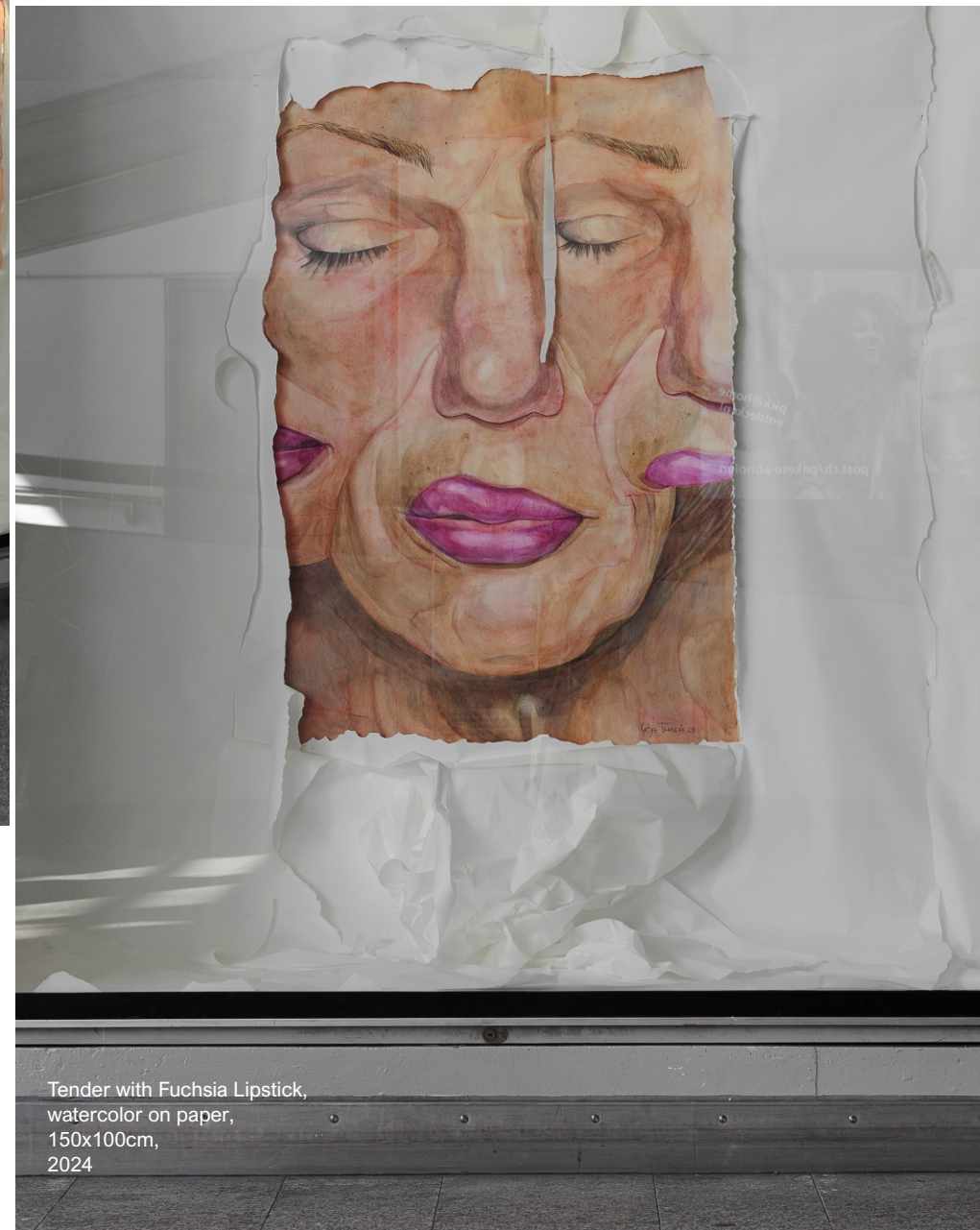
'Five Holes and Sensual Lips',
watercolor on paper,
150x100cm
2024

Katya uses photographs as the basis for her watercolor works; she intentionally modifies figures and fragments of bodies using collage and computer graphics. The large-scale watercolors are obviously the result of delicate, long and painstaking work. Watercolors can evoke a wide range of emotions in the viewer simultaneously, among them pleasure, attraction, even disgust. Nevertheless, these sets of opposing forces are in a certain balance.

Excerpt from the curatorial text by Anzhela Popova, written for the exhibition "The Fleeting Light on Your Folds (Part 2)", Voskhod Gallery, Basel, 2024

10/20 KATYA TSAREVA

'The Fleeting Light on Your Folds' (Part 2), the Installation view.
Voskhod Gallery, Basel, Switzerland 2024



Tender with Fuchsia Lipstick,
watercolor on paper,
150x100cm,
2024

2024/ *The Brompton Chapel, Old Brompton Road, London, UK, 2024*

The Fleeting Light on Your Folds (Part 1). Solo show.

This project explores the depths of physical sensuality and vulnerability. The exhibition investigates our relationship with the body: why it can be so difficult to inhabit, why we may wish to escape or suppress it, and why it remains a raw source of power. The liberated body draws its strength not in spite of, but because of its tenderness.

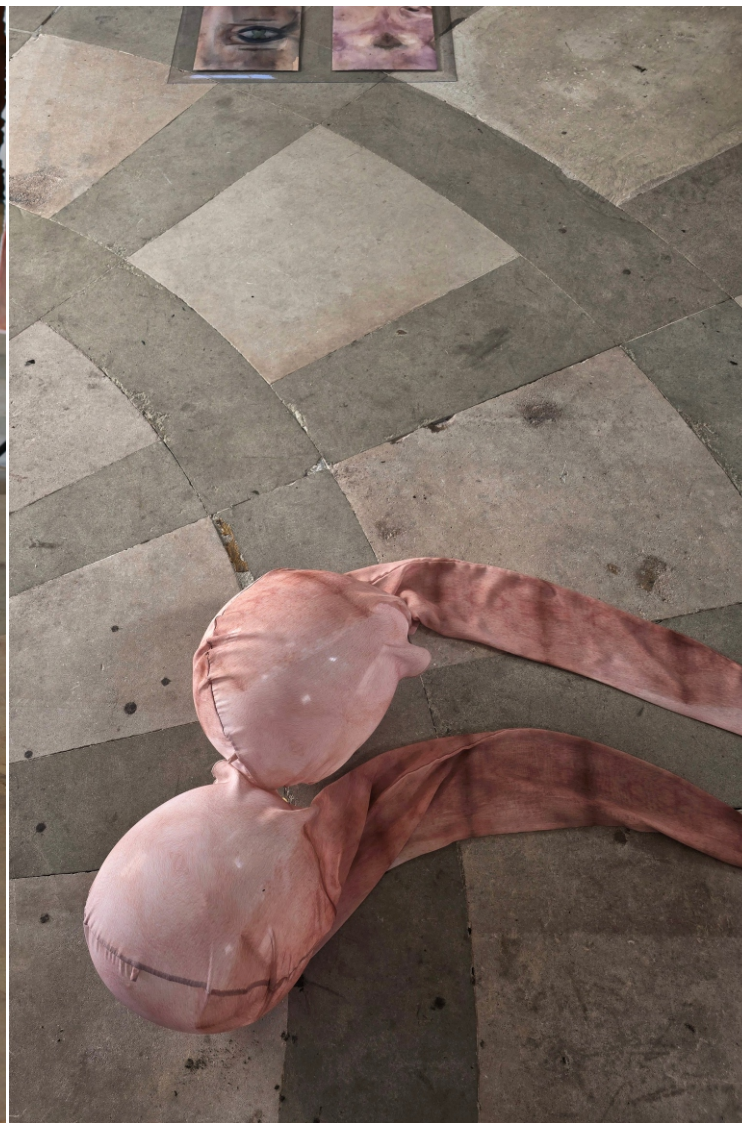
Katya Tsareva examines corporeality by reinterpreting traditional academic painting techniques, reflecting on what can go wrong in the process, and engaging with multiple transformations of the depicted form. Her approach presents the body as a medium for processing the external world — a mutable form that absorbs, alters, discards, and breaks apart.

Excerpt from the curatorial text for "The Fleeting Light on Your Folds (Part 1)", The Chapel, London, 2024:



'Five Holes and Sensual Lips', watercolor on paper, 150x100cm
2024

'The Fleeting Light on Your Folds' (Part 1), the Installation view. The Brompton Chapel, Old Brompton Road, London, UK, 2024



'Tender with Fuchsia Lipstick', watercolor on paper, 150x100cm
2024



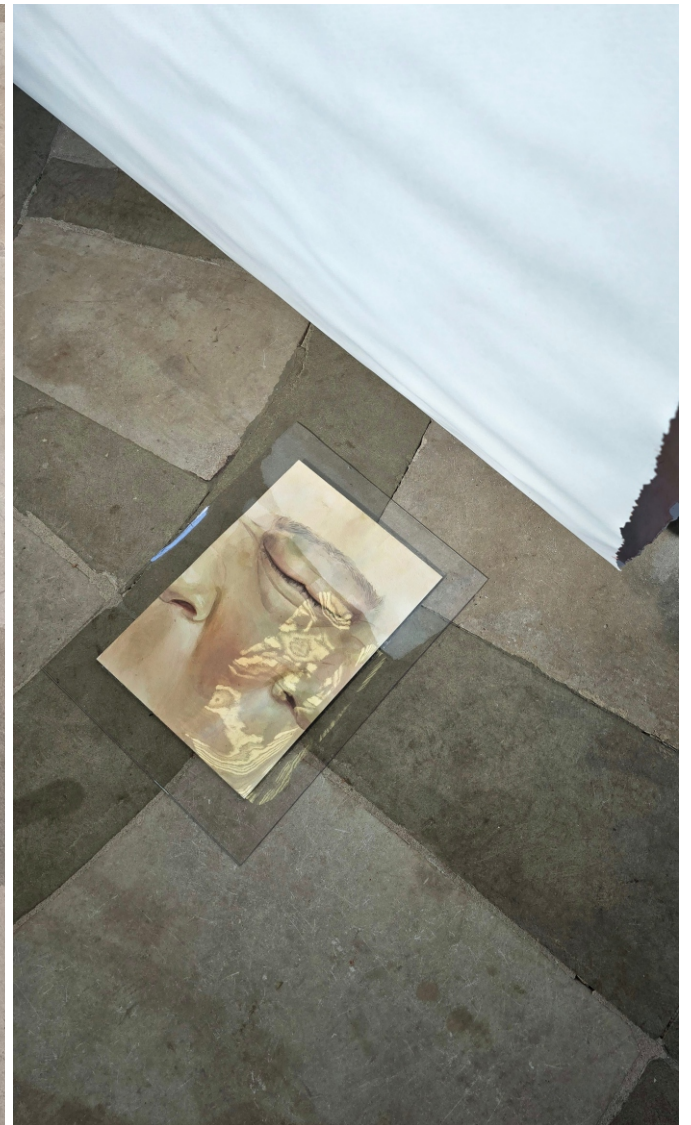
The exposition at the Brompton Chapel in London focuses on viewing the body as an initial element or cell. What does it actually mean to live within it? This site-specific installation features large-scale watercolors and soft textile objects by Katya Tsareva, serving as a metaphor for a second skin, so smooth and gleaming that it feels almost alien. The installation acts as a source of attraction, uniting pleasure and pain, as well as both hatred and desire.



'Tender 7', watercolor on paper, 36x26cm
2024



'Tender 5', 'Tender 1', watercolor on paper, 36x26cm
2024, 2023



'Tender 4', watercolor on paper, 36x26cm
2024

2024/ *Feelium Gallery & Studios, London , UK*

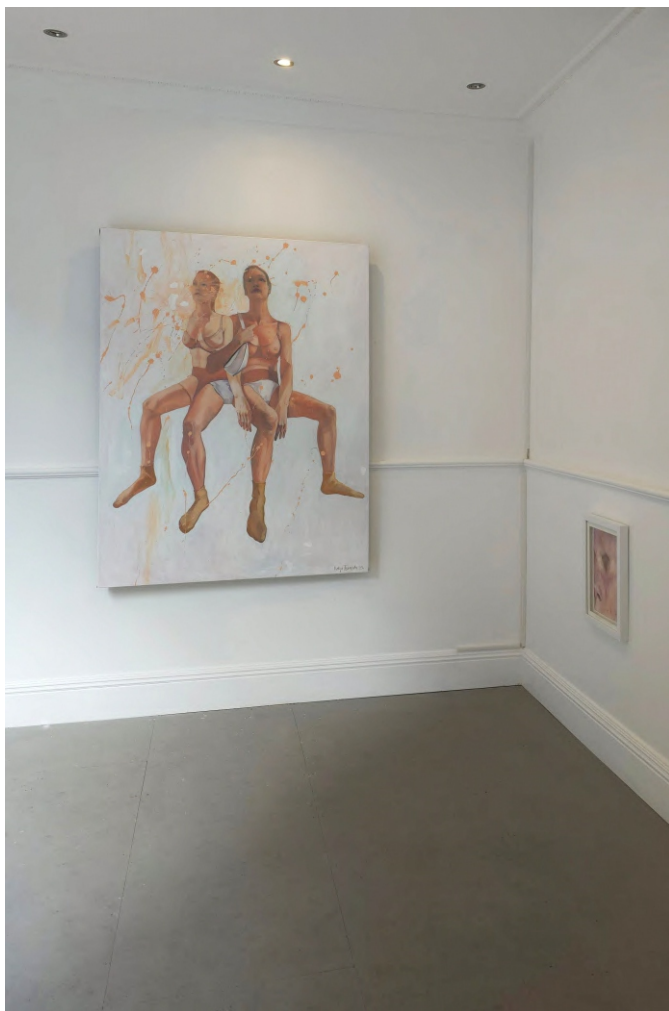


Dawn on Your Skin. Duo show.

The exhibition 'Dawn on your skin' features artists Katya Tsareva and Damaris Athene. It is an invitation to reflect and research the ideas which seem to exercise the greatest powers of seduction, but are basically self-contradictory. One such idea is beauty as a synonym for youthfulness, another is aging. Beauty overrides so many familiar opposites: the natural and the historical, the pristine and the artifice, the individualising and the conformist, the physical and digital – even the beautiful and the ugly.

'Dawn on Your Skin' / the Installation view / Feelium Gallery & Studios, London , UK

15/20 KATYA TSAREVA



'Karina', mixed media on canvas, 160x120 cm
2023



'Kirill', mixed media on canvas, 160x120 cm
2024



'Yuu', mixed media on canvas, 90x60 cm
2024

The new series 'Tender' by Katya Tsareva revolves around beauty as a myth. Nowadays, this myth seems, once more, coed. Standards of beauty are being applied to men as well as women. Katya depicts models from found images or self-taken photographs and transforms them through modification and re refinement. Adopting an academic painterly approach, she meticulously transfers the altered images onto canvas in a realistic manner, thus dissecting to understand the body as a sexual object, as something both frightening and exciting at the same time, attractive and repulsive.

Tendernes. Installation.

The installation *Tenderness* explores the relationship between the body, clothing, and image. At its centre is a dress made from fabric printed with a human skin pattern — a material that is both intimate and unsettling. The notion of the “second skin” is central to Katya’s work, merging what we use to conceal ourselves with what we instinctively seek to protect.

Placed at the heart of the installation, the dress draws attention to how clothing shapes perception — not only in the eyes of others, but also in our own. The work invites reflection on the shifting boundaries between body and image, intimacy and distance, vulnerability and display.



2020/ *Futuro Gallery, Nizhni Novgorod, Russia*

My Rooms. Solo show

«My Rooms» is a new project of Katya Tzareva prepared especially for FUTURO Gallery and dedicated to the ethics and aesthetics of the space. A series of paintings, objects and a large-scale installation in the main gallery hall represent the modern processing of the architecture and design of late modernism transformed from a dominant doctrine into the language of art everyday life.



'My Temporary Room' / the Installation view / Futuro Gallery, Nizhni Novgorod, Russia, 2020



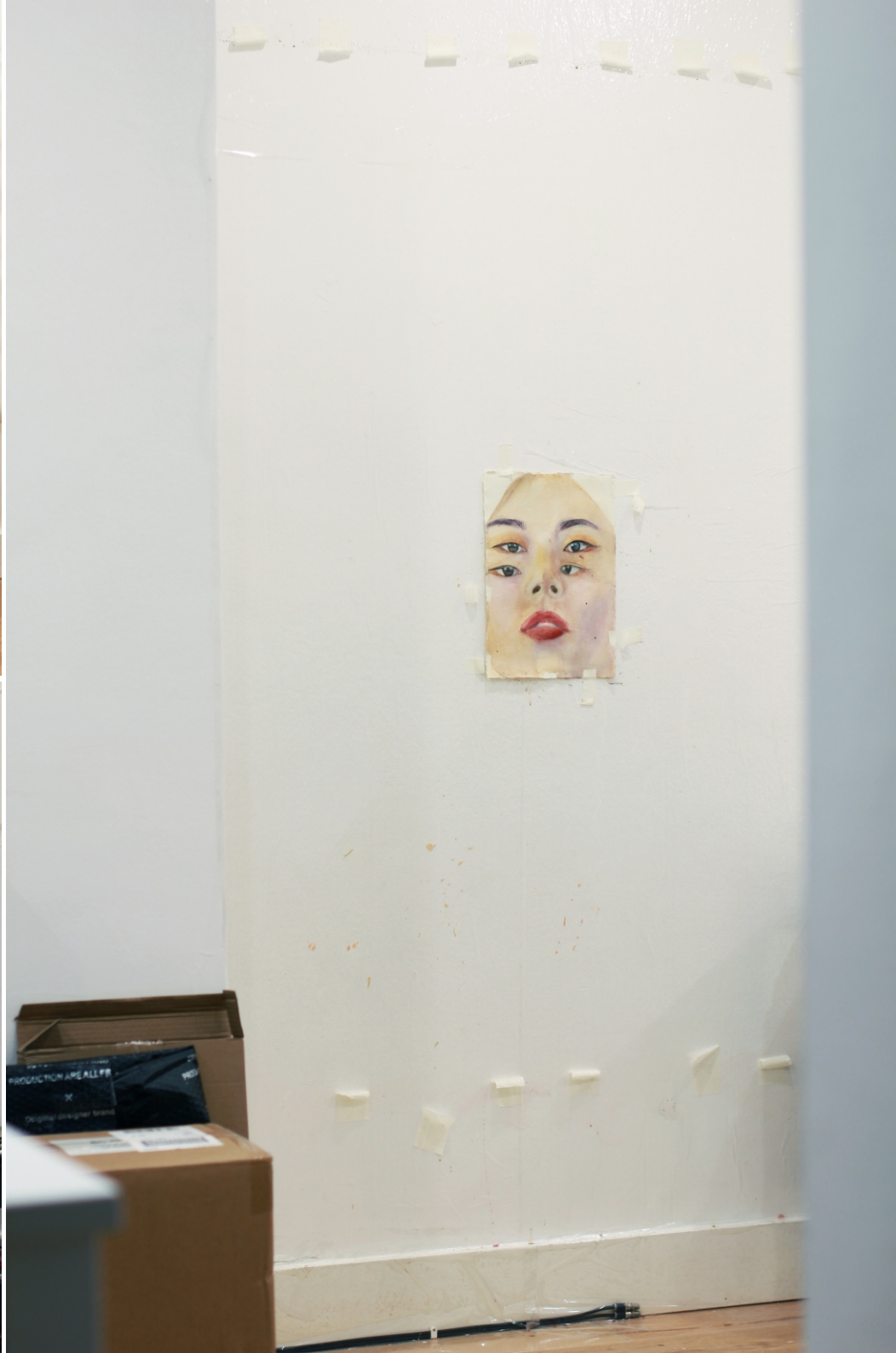


'My Rooms' / the Installation view / Futuro Gallery, Nizhni Novgorod, Russia, 2020

Space is a leitmotif of Katya Tzareva's art: she depicts enclosed rooms with a perspective going deep into the painting, uses exhibition halls and interiors transformed by architectural volumes and light inside video works. The artist turns to the aesthetics of modernism space and exacerbate the internal conflict between pure forms' articulation and their mechanistic essence using picturesque techniques. Strict geometric volumes covered with deliberately random paint drips, surfaces overgrown by sloppy



21/20 KATYA TSAREVA



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Katya Tsareva's
Website

