

Izabella Volovnik:

Hellscape

06.11.25 — 20.12.25

Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

Archetypal female figures – demons, beasts and hybrid creatures – routinely inhabit Izabella Volovnik's paintings. "Over the past year, the more monsters I painted, the more human figures began to surface," she reflects. Her new body of work **Hellscape** emerges as a direct continuation of her 2024 solo exhibition 'Three Scratch Marks and a Love Letter', presented at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art. In the current series, the notion of **hell** is embedded not only in its theological sense – as a place of punishment for the sinners and the damned – but also as a mental state describing a life gone off course; and as a linguistic term evoking an imagined terrain rendered through a dense assembly of paintings. Alongside an ongoing dialogue with artists such as Munch, Goya, Rubens, Redon and Rego, Volovnik draws inspiration from the digital realm and from the circulating discourses of mainstream and fringe media alike. Her paintings arise from imaginative invention as much as from keen observation of the contemporary reality, exploring the ways in which words and images mutate and are appropriated by different social groups – such as the term "Bitch" which she engaged with in earlier works.

Over the last two years, the word 'hell' has become a pervasive term in local discourse: "Get them out of hell," "We'll open the gates of hell on Gaza," "I went through hell." The exhibition's title, **Hellscape**, alludes to the expanded interpretation that her works offer – hell as the Other, as the body, and as a temporal and spatial mode. Through monstrous imagery, Volovnik traces the shifting boundaries that define humanness in society and culture – boundaries that cut through zones of pain, humour, beauty, cruelty and degradation, all central to her relationships with the world and with herself. The figures in her paintings search ceaselessly for solace within a reality that feels like an open wound – one you cannot stop licking, scratching and peeling away.

The scenes she depicts carve a pathway toward an experience that lies outside language and resists incorporation into social order. Between fantasy and the here-and-now, in silent dialogues between humans and non-human beings, a universe unfolds that refuses symbolic interpretation – inviting us instead to gaze upon an extraordinary otherness, and to reach toward that which cannot be fully articulated.*

Izabella Volovnik (b. 1995) holds a B.Ed.F.A with honours from Hamidrasha School of Art, Beit Berl (2018). She is the recipient of various awards and grants, including the Israeli Ministry of Culture Prize for a Young Artist (2025); the Lauren & Mitchell Presser Prize for a Solo Exhibition at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art (2024); Her work was acquired for the Tel Aviv Museum of Art collection following her receipt of the Rappaport Award for Young Artist (Acquisitions Fund, 2021). She is an alumna of the Edmond de Rothschild Center's Professional Development Program (2020). Volovnik has exhibited in solo and group shows in Israel and abroad, including Bitchcraft (solo, Haifa Museum of Art, 2020); Dancing with the Devil (two-person show with Noa Ironic, Adhesivo Contemporary, Mexico City, 2023); Desktop (Haifa Museum of Art, 2025); Days Beyond Time (D10 ArtSpace, Geneva, 2023); and Skein (Tel Aviv Museum of Art, 2021), among others.

*Lacan coined the term 'The Real' to describe experiences that elude representation and articulation, phenomena that lie outside language and unsettle our very existence. The Real signifies desire and the ungraspable fullness of pleasure. For further reading see: Rachel Kowestel, "Borat: The Humor of the Real and Its Manifestation in the Documentary Genre," Gilui Daat 14 (Kibbutzim College, 2018); Lior Granot, How Does Bibliotherapy Heal?: Writing, Childhood, Poem: A Psychoanalytic–Literary Study (Haifa: Pardes Publishing, 2020).

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Mon.	by appointment	ב'
Tue.–Thu.	18:00—12:00	ג'–ה'
Fri.	14:00—11:00	ו'
Sat.	13:00—11:00	שבת