

Ziv Balbirsky

Unfamiliar Self

15.10.26 — 05.12.26

Curator: Maya Frenkel Tene

Painting, for me, is a means of documenting intimate, temporary, fleeting, and almost invisible everyday moments. My painterly language moves between detailed realistic representation and abstract colorful dissolution. This tension exists not only between different works but at times within a single painting, reflecting the fragility and transience of the moments I record.

My working process typically begins with daily documentation, from which I select later scenes I am drawn to within my personal photographic collection. I paint primarily in oil on canvas, though my practice also includes colored pencil drawings and gouache works.

The works present fragmented, everyday moments from the domestic bathroom. In these moments, I suddenly become aware of my physical presence in the space through the blurred reflections of my figure in the shower steam. Within these works, the bathroom becomes a free, intimate realm where I explore the way I see myself - or, more precisely, my inability to see myself. Through painting, I examine the constant gap between the internal experience of self and my physical, concrete manifestation as a body. The alienation I feel facing my reflection in the mirror is heightened by the blur of steam and dripping water, strangely allowing me to feel a deeper closeness to these images than to my "clear" reflection.

The painterly and material blur within the works reflects the complexity and elusiveness inherent in the perception of the self. Water, steam, and traces of running water on glass are transformed into oil paint on stretched canvas, fixing a temporary moment in place. Through painting, I am able to linger within that moment and inhabit it for a little longer.

Ziv Balbirsky (b. 2000) lives and works in Tel Aviv. She holds a B.Ed.F.A. from the Faculty of Arts - Hamidrasha, Beit Berl College (2025). During her studies, she received several scholarships and awards, including the Hamidrasha Excellence Scholarship (2024, 2025) and the Hamidrasha Solo Exhibition Award at the Kfar Saba Municipal Gallery (2025). Exhibited at the Artists' Greenhouse at the Freshpaint Art & Design Fair, 2026.