

PERFORATION
Group Exhibition

11 09–31 10 2025

Opening: September 11, 2025, 6 p.m.

Participating artists: Šarūnas Baltrukonis, Rosana Lukauskaitė, Agata Orlovska, Mantas Valentukonis, Gasparas Zondovas

When I come here, I feel as if I am in a temple.
– Mantas Valentukonis

The digital epoch has granted art new surfaces, while at the same time reviving old questions – about materiality, longevity, and painting’s ability to serve as a portal of experience. In this exhibition, artists investigate painting as a historically charged yet contemporarily reimagined field, where the digital does not so much replace matter as transform it. Painting here is no longer just pigment on canvas; it becomes a reflection on embodiment, material presence, and the relationship between image and gaze in a digitised world.

The works – pulsing with textures, dense pigment, or even the traces of their own disappearance – provoke viewers to reflect on art’s durability, its ephemerality, and the archiving of emotion through form. The exhibition invites the audience into a space reminiscent of a sanctuary: a gallery architecture where, as Terry Smith and Brian O’Doherty note, the artwork becomes an object of contemplation, and the white cube a secular form of religious experience. Painting, once destined for cathedral interiors and the collective gaze, today once again strives to produce an experience rather than merely an image. This is a space where a new model of stillness, transcendence, and even religiosity unfolds – relocated from the sacred to the contemporary art center. Technology here amplifies our already existing myths – about vision, transcendence, and memory.

Digital aesthetics might appear to liberate us from corporeality, but paradoxically they return us to it with even greater force. Screens become iconostases of memory; the fragility of pixels makes us long for the endurance of oil paint. Within the exhibition lies a question of conservation – not only physical but conceptual. As art historian Marjolijn Bol observed in her study “Technique and the Art of Immortality, 1800–1900” (2017), late 19th-century artists, confronted with the fragility of synthetic pigments, turned to the past, seeking the alchemy of longevity in older techniques. A similar tension is felt today – between innovation and nostalgia, between new possibilities and the problems they entail. The digital promises immortality, yet in reality works disappear even faster. Longevity becomes both a technical and philosophical question: how to preserve an experience that is inherently temporary? Or perhaps the contemporary art space is itself a new kind of church, where the viewer seeks not dogma but resonance.

Contemporary art ages more quickly – yet perhaps that is its very essence: not to endure, but to touch. To touch not only the eye, but also historical consciousness, technological tension, spiritual longing. The digital world generates its own myths – about what we saw, what we felt, what we experienced. And art becomes the place where illusion meets transcendence, where the material image transforms into immaterial experience. This exhibition is a reflection on art poised between two epochs – between cathedrals and screens, between oil pigment and the RGB spectrum, between the desire for immortality and the fleeting nature of visual experience. It is an attempt to listen again to painting’s voice in a contemporary world that is noisy, but still thirsting for transcendence.

Text by Rosana Lukauskaitė

DRIFTS

III–V: 12.00–18.00 VI: 12.00–16.00, T. Vrublevskio str. 6, Vilnius



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AGATA ORLOVSKA, *PICTURA LACRIMOSA / WILLIAM-ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU PIETÀ*, 2025

The rendering of the traditional iconographic motif of the *Pietà* by William-Adolphe Bouguereau is considered one of the most renowned examples, owing to its strong emotional charge and masterful execution.

In this work, the *Pietà* transforms into a symbol of the primal fall of media itself. The painting is severed from its original technology and sacred touch. It is created with laser technology in an industrial metal factory – linear burning erases what was once the warm trace of the human hand. The surface of the steel is scorched, as though carving away the layered pigments of the past. Human memory vanishes like a face etched in sand at the edge of the sea.

The piece explores ideas of recycling and transformation, merging different forms of cultural iconographies. It reminds us that vision never opens onto a one-dimensional image, but rather onto a multifaceted continuum without a final, completed form.

Instead of a vertical scale of value, the work proposes a horizontal field, where each segment of the picture exists as an autonomous work, yet remains connected to other fragments through visible traces of transformation. The mark of rupture or incision becomes as significant as the intact surface – both bear witness to perpetual change.

A central equivalent within the work is the repetition of the pictorial motif in several versions: in both positive and negative form. This functions as yet another mediator of the image in the context of cultural reproduction.

In classical photography, the negative is not merely a technical necessity, but an intermediate code that ushers us into the realm of “technical images.” Here, it recalls a constantly accompanying mediating image – a dim recollection of what remains of the authentic primordial idea, refracted through the prism of technological fracture.

This concept is realized through the work’s internal construction, which allows its architecture to be deformed: merging negative with positive, layering, erasing fragments. In this way, the complete narrative of the painting is lost – like words slipping through the fingers of history, like sand.

MANTAS VALENTUKONIS, *AZURE (SKY) I & II*, 2025

Like a sunset, but also like hell – in the form of apocalyptic anxiety. The motif is taken from a 2000s issue of the magazine “Paslaptys” (Secrets), when New Age spirituality, accompanied by promises of ghosts, spirit channels, telepathy, and the technological matrix, seemed to flood into the post-Soviet atheist mentality together with the internet.

The juxtaposition of paradise and hell reminds of the technique of transillumination used in the restoration of paintings, when works illuminated with UV light glow in fluorescent reds, greens, and blues, thereby revealing the dead layers of the image.

This opposition of dichotomies has been used more than once – for example, in Aldous Huxley’s “The Doors of Perception & Heaven and Hell”, which explores zones of consciousness altered by hallucinogens. It builds a bridge of thought toward the manuscript discovered by the Lithuanian Pole W. Voynich, attributed to the Renaissance, with its illustrations of more than two hundred otherworldly plants.

ŠARŪNAS BALTRUKONIS, *MIGHT AND MAGIC*, 2025

The work focuses primarily on the materiality of the chosen motifs. The selected objects come from very contrasting origins. From this arises a dual perception of pictorial space. Rough textures – like fragments of organic matter – suggest an image perhaps observable under a microscope. At the same time, the bluish orbiting field receding into darkness can be likened to the mystical expanses of the universe. This exploration of materiality extends into the technical side of painting. By mixing sand into the ground layer, the texture of the painting is altered, further emphasising the distinctiveness of the motifs down to a tactile level. The depicted motifs speak of a moment of temporality. Light, becoming almost a third motif of the painting, creates the impression of fragile matter and contributes to its gradual disintegration.

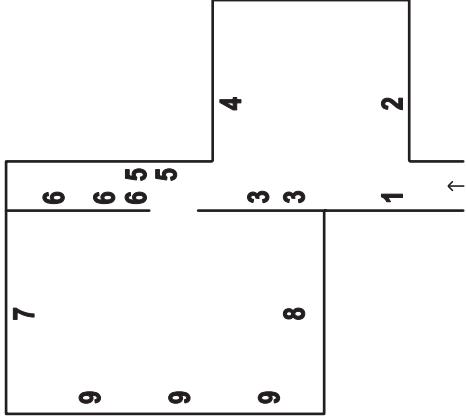
GASPARAS ZONDOVAS, *DUST ARCHIVE III - IV*, 2025, *DUST ARCHIVE IV*, 2025

GASPARAS ZONDOVAS, ŠARŪNAS BALTRUKONIS, *THERMAL MAP I - III*, 2025

We live in an era obsessed with archiving and documentation – from cloud storage to social media, where everyday life is endlessly recorded, even though nothing is truly permanent. Using thermoforming – an industrial technology usually associated with disposable products – Gasparas and Šarūnas encapsulate fragments of their creative process: sketches, traces of paint, pieces of cardboard.

Gasparas’ practice stems from printmaking – a way to halt moments and create space for thought. Motifs are carved into dried clay bricks, which he perceives as drawings rather than sculptures. Thermoforming acts like a contemporary glaze, giving clay an external shell without firing – a pop-cultural solution to an old problem. Inserted into plexiglass capsules, the bricks become time-safes, simultaneously preserving and acknowledging their inevitable decay.

In these artworks, the tension arises between fiction and reality, between drawing, sculpture, and painting. What remains are fragile traces – material relics that pose the question of how, and to whom, we entrust the preservation of what we leave behind. Art becomes both record and relic, often ephemeral despite all efforts. By merging time-tested techniques with thermoforming, the artists establishe it as a new artistic medium – a space where processes, boundaries, and forms are questioned, opening broader scenarios of creativity.



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