

DRIFTS

Agnė Juodvalkytė

Sūkuriai Vortices

2026 04 02 –
2026 05 15

*My work is anti-nature,
The four-story mountain
You will not think form, space,
line, contour
Just a suggestion of nature gives weight
light and heavy
light like a feather
you get light enough and you levitate.*

excerpt from Agnes Martin "The Untroubled Mind," 1972

Drifts is pleased to present *Vortices* by Agnė Juodvalkytė (b. 1987 in Vilnius), the second solo exhibition by the artist with the gallery. The exhibition brings together more than a dozen new paintings that continue Juodvalkytė's artistic inquiry into abstraction, colour, and light.

Juodvalkytė is known for her unique approach to oil painting. While loyal to the classical medium, she equips it with techniques borrowed from watercolour and textile dyeing. She works on a canvas meticulously, yet her gestures are confident enough to sweep color across its entire surface. Her formal vocabulary of strokes and washes, staining and blending is akin to the gestural abstraction. (It is unsurprising that some of the immediate associations that arise are with the works by Helen Frankenthaler.) The artist's gestures result in thin layers of paint that are transparent and almost immaterial, escaping the inherent weight of oil, leaving only a subtle trace of color behind. As one layer after another is applied, a canvas becomes more than a flat expanse: The washes of pigment create shimmering optical depth.

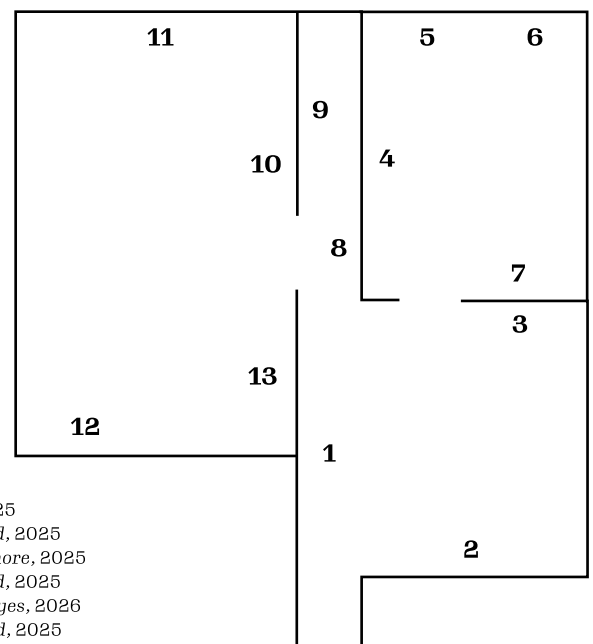
The works *April Shore*, *Gelmén* (To Depths) and *ORE* (IN AIR), included in *Vortices*, present Juodvalkytė's technique in a larger format. Here, the oil colours dissolved in turpentine seem to flow almost freely, imbuing the canvases with their rich hues before evaporating away. The apparent freedom of application is open to question: The palette as a whole indicates that the artist's decisions may have been more calculated than the looseness of oil color solutions implies. The artist claims that it is the smaller works – *Untitled* (2026), *Green Eyes*, also included in the exhibition – that are more difficult to finish, to conclude, to bring to a close. Nevertheless, these miniature canvases are as rich in painterly depth as the larger formats. Each emerges from painterly gestures choreographed in deliberate sequences. (The methodological approach to abstraction might invoke Agnes Martin's oeuvre.) Yet they call for neither deciphering the process nor interpreting the colors.

The visitor's eye is surely drawn to Juodvalkytė's works and their ranges of colour. Cool oceanic blues, fiery reds of scarlet and vermilion, earthy ochres and luminous yellows – the eye and mind alike are drawn to seek meaning in every hue. Each exhibited work is an open field, created by the artist, that invites its observer to linger, to lose oneself, to let time dissolve. Equally important to note is that it is purposeless to search for a definite meaning, to decipher the works, however contradictory the promises of abstraction may be. Yet one power of Juodvalkytė's paintings is that they are *figuratively* boundless, like vortices, where initial intentions may still live, but have drifted far enough never to be found. The semantic tools are too small to chisel a definite meaning; what the works offer instead is an openness that resists conclusion.

This openness is the defining strength of Juodvalkytė's practice. Her seemingly weightless brushstrokes and colours that pour into space free the canvases, lending them autonomy from communication and message, from straightforward depiction or commentary on the real. Such freedom carries its own logic: as with many other things, a critical distance is sometimes necessary. Only then can one look back at the world with renewed interest and awareness, with a differently informed perception and sensation. We are drawn into these multi-layered painted spaces precisely because we live in a very concrete, un-abstract world; and it is that contrast which makes the encounter so quietly necessary.

text by Ignas Petronis

Agnė Juodvalkytė studied painting at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Her practice combines painting with textiles, object making and photography. Artist's solo exhibitions include *Volumes*, Namukas gallery, Vilnius (2026); *Tools for the future*, Enter Art Space, Aarhus, (2023); *Omen*, Drifts Gallery, Vilnius (2023); *Anska. Tools for the Future*, Galerie Bernau, Bernau bei Berlin (2022); *Anska*, Blake&Vargas, Berlin (2021). Selected group exhibitions: *Between Dawns* at the Lithuanian National Gallery of Art in Vilnius (2025); *Everything you are not supposed to do* at Radvila Palace Museum of Art in Vilnius (2025); *From Within* at MO Museum in Vilnius (2025); *FAM.*, Forum Stadtpark, Graz (2024), *Sweet Dreams Foundation*, Nida Art Colony, Nida (2022); *How Heat Slides Across Surfaces*, Hawerkamp 31, Münster (2022); *Audra*, Lithuanian National Museum of Art, Pamario gallery, Juodkrantė (2021), *Terpė*, AV17 gallery, Vilnius (2020). Juodvalkytė's work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Art, Lithuania, MO Museum, and private collections.



- 1 *Ore*, 2025
- 2 *Untitled*, 2025
- 3 *April Shore*, 2025
- 4 *Untitled*, 2025
- 5 *Green eyes*, 2026
- 6 *Untitled*, 2025
- 7 *Element*, 2026
- 8 *Umweg*, 2026
- 9 *Untitled*, 2026
- 10 *Untitled*, 2026
- 11 *Untitled*, 2026
- 12 *Gelmén*, 2025
- 13 *Already There*, 2025

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