

The most apparent common feature in Nino Kapanadze's oeuvre is its format. Coherence is found then in the scale of 195 x 130, though not clearly in the subject matter. The depicted universes vary with a lot of freedom, being disloyal to either visual guidelines or a fixed perspective.

However, while seeking a common thread, one can feel Kapanadze's paintings are full of secrets that their preciousness will be spoiled once translated into words. We need thus to perceive the richness of their layers while standing on a threshold, embracing the hindrance created by the desire to know more. The struggle to accumulate these paintings into concrete conclusions leaves us in doubt, like Saint Thomas in his search for the real. Though here, it is Kapanadze who penetrates our flesh with her surfaces of colors, resembling in some cases human inner and outer tissues.

The human presence is almost absent here, fading with its surroundings, becoming transparent and dazzling like running water on a sunny day. Who are these ghosts then? Do they necessarily come from the past or are they perhaps locked in an eternal present? We are somehow always haunted, as Derrida said in relation to the Specters of Marx. The latter seems to be relevant to Kapanadze, who was born in Georgia a few months before it gained its independence from the Bolshevik regime. As a child, Nino grew up while observing two parallel aesthetic movements: the revival of Georgian Orthodox iconography and the decay of Soviet Modernism.

"A GHOST," Marcel Duchamp once stated, "is a portmanteau of a Guest and a Host." It seems as if, by this assertion, he wanted to remind us of the everlasting tension between the artist and the observer - who tries persistently to decipher the rules of the artist's realm. Confronted with Nino Kapanadze's body of work, the observer should not look in the obvious directions. A tree shall not be evaluated by its height but more likely by the energy it invests underneath the ground.

Tenderness is required here, as well as heightened senses.

Noam Alon, June 2023