



Mākslas galerija MUSEUM LV
un kultūras centrs GRATA JJ

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DENISS EVINS

Curator
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Music
NEMAIER feat. NUANN (EST/FIN)

BETWEEN THE WORLDS
OF PAINTING,
BIO-INDUSTRIAL MUSHROOMS,
AND THE PSYCHE.

AS IF
WE HAD
NOTHING
TO BE
AFRAID OF



Layering
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 50x125cm

In contemporary culture, pain has been driven out of bedrooms and exiled to clinics, handed over to silent specialists, algologists. Physical pain and psychic pain have become objects of marketing and advertising, where packaging and capsules make pain almost toy-like. Dissolve it, swallow it and move on, toward new sales volumes and ever more clients.

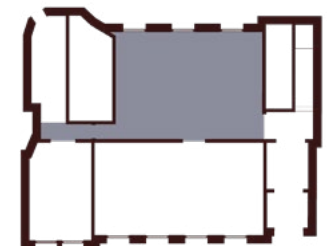
Only one thing remains unchanged in the world of pseudo-success: pain is always individual, and entry into the field of pain is possible only alone. One can feel with another, but the "with" does not open the door for two. There is no admission "for company." On the one hand, pain distances, excludes, casts out. As it spreads

through body and soul, it produces a loneliness of experience that cannot be shared. On the other hand, this isolation carries the sufferer into the depths of their own body and brings them face to face with existential questions, clearly and mercilessly. The solitude of pain is only its dark antechamber. Beyond it lie other rooms: a profound bond with the experience of endured pain, its force, its primacy, its power to silence everything around and to bring onto the stage entirely different figures of the inner action we call life.

In this hall, the artist tells stories of pain in its many forms. Bodily pain, born of illness and violence, of insult and injury, intertwines with

spiritual pain that carries shame and cooled desire, disappointment and the death of love alongside the disintegration of the body's tissues. The body is capable of living many lives and of dying in layers, renouncing what was once essential.

Death frightens us by its secrecy. Yet the sight of souls "discarded" and "disposed of" by lived experience allows us to look into the depths of the well of human indifference, an indifference worse than death, because it does not touch the life of the Other even with the idea of destruction.

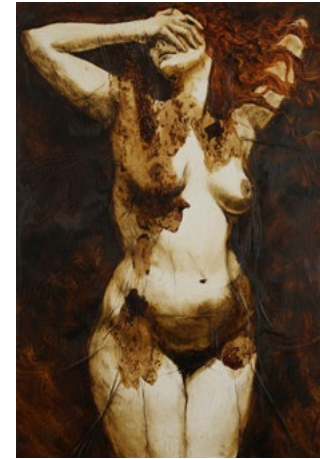




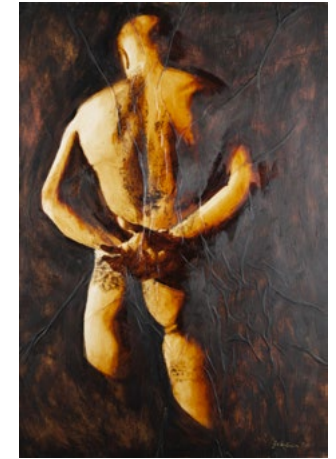
Still here
2025
oil, canvas, 80x100cm



Burden
2025
oil, canvas, 50x50cm



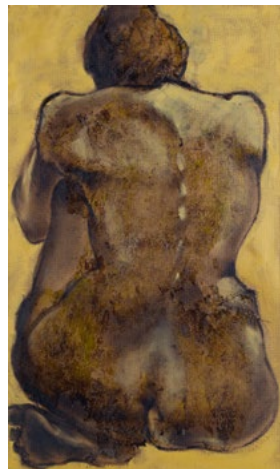
Eve
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 103x71cm



Adam II
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 103x71cm



Medea
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 100x69 cm



Memories
2024
fungi, oil, wood, 79x46cm



Orestes
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 68x68cm



Still Here
2025
oil, canvas, 120x50cm

"Life is beautiful!" — we are accustomed to this slogan from films and everyday expressions. Yet the life of the body is, in many respects, the story of a double agent: the body works for two and in place of two; it writes two diaries at the same time, and everything within it is socially and culturally split.

Body, sex, and gender identity — with the latter used by populists to frighten a short-sighted voter — form a peculiar trinity in public space: the boudoir, the intimate assemblage of juices, tissues, and wood, has long been carried out to the crossroads of lively metropolitan streets. The city has swallowed the body, framed it, becoming a concrete-and-glass

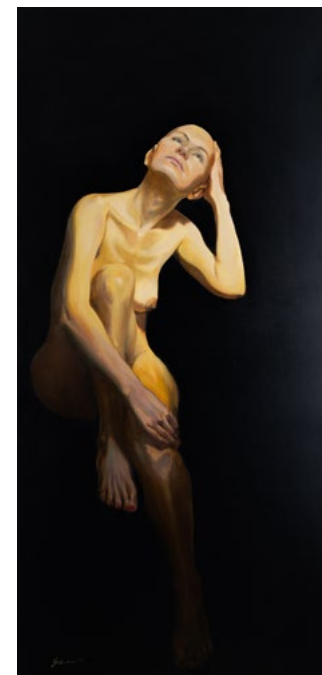
moulding. The body can no longer be removed from the stretcher-frame of gender symbols, yet one can deliberately lose oneself within them — like an experienced mushroom picker who does not wish to gather everything in sight, but follows a narrow path toward the self, into one's own unsettling forest of lanterns, street poles, shop windows, and trolleybus stops.

In such a forest, the artist gives the body back to the human being. On the canvas — in the dynamic stillness of frozen paints and varnishes — a body is present, as equal to itself as possible, released from the necessity of mimesis: from reflecting an Other that dominates through collective performance.

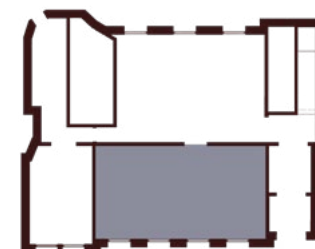


Such a naked body has no need to invent itself. It simply is. It simply exists. Without disturbance or barriers. Without the intrusion of a partner, of institutions, or of tradition. This body does not crave; it remains calm even in motion. Bodily geometry is passive and demands no proof of its right to exist. Being is simply the algorithm of existence — with folds and wrinkles, distortions, heredity, the experience of falling, scent, and color.

In this hall, the epidermis and the organs leave the stage and, in a quiet lament — a commos — pay tribute to natural juices and the renewal of freedom, until the city awakens and another darkness does not swallow the body.



Still Here
2025
oil, canvas,
120x50cm
50x50cm
170x80cm





Do You See Me?
2020

oil, canvas
25x35cm
110x55cm
135x75cm

Do You See Me? series



"We come to know one another in pieces – and perhaps we will never come to know each other fully. The reality of contemporary digital dating and communication allows us to choose angles and lighting, to divide ourselves into parts, presenting our best versions while at the same time longing to be accepted as a whole.

We can even edit and retract thoughts already

sent to someone in a chat – just please, don't reject me, I am who you want me to be. Plastic surgery of the soul. And yet inner pain and unprocessed trauma pull us back again and again into the darkest, most hidden corners of the soul – the very places that, in truth, most need to be seen."



Not for looking
2025
oil, canvas
80x100cm
60x90cm
70x100cm
50x70cm
40x50cm



"I choose myself. In reflections, in the glare of spotlights, in the half-dark of a fading day. Sometimes it is very difficult, almost impossible, but even on those days when I want to pull the covers over my head and hide, I do not need to be chosen by someone else in order to remain myself. I'm not for looking."



"This is my dimension – my core of memory, a cross-section of my world, where the underground and above-ground layers of my earthly nature meet: wide fields of dried grass pinned to the ground by sharp, cold autumn winds, and roots hidden from view, strange, even frightening, yet nourishing my present. My dimension is an indestructible urge to live, to dream, to create, allowing life to break through. In spite of everything."

SelfDimention
2018 mixed media
230x120x100cm

Fifteen minutes of fame expired last century; ten seconds for a heart emoji faded in the last decade. But we — we have never ended. In truth, we have never even begun to exist within this crowd-charged spotlight, a beam that overexposes every nuance of a person caught in its glare. We are suspended in the twilight of our own sublimations, clinging to the darkest, strongest, and most vital secrets upon which our entire world is built. We waver between the desperate urge to reveal our true selves and the paralyzing fear of being annihilated by the “return fire” of judgment. Perhaps not for the first time.

And here, I felt afraid. So, I built a machine. An algorithm capable of withstanding it all: the written word, the lingering gaze, judgment, empathy, tears, shame, disgust, fear — and, ultimately, the light itself.

A light so bright that even with eyes tightly shut, we might sense that no one has turned away, no one has cast us out. That the world has not collapsed, and that it has failed to destroy a single one of us.

To be seen.
Perhaps for one minute.
To close eyes.
And to survive.

If I cannot speak.
If I cannot see.
If I cannot hear.
If I cannot love.
If I cannot dream.
If I cannot accept.

I disappear into hatred.

I dissolve into darkness.
I drown in silence.
I disappear.

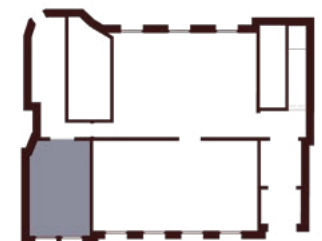
But I am still here.
Can you see me?



Do You See Me? IV
2022
oil, canvas, 55x55cm
Do You See Me? series



Deniss Evins
Spotlight
2026
mixed media





“There was a time in my life when fear proved stronger than the future. I lost what was never meant to become life, and I fought for my own. Now I am healthy. I do not celebrate victory – I simply live. And that is enough.”

“Both of my collarbones are broken. They broke at different times, both healed incorrectly, but overall, everything seemed fine until I realized that I couldn’t, for example, raise my arms upward. Or rather, I could – but not the way I was supposed to. For instance, when doing pull-ups. And I have never been able to do pull-ups – not in physical education class, not during a BDSM session, not in the gym, where I finally decided to figure out what was going on. Because, you know, it is equally awkward in a gym and in a BDSM session – I can give myself fifty times over, but manage a single pull-up? No. Oh, push-ups.

Anyway, I took off my tank top, stood in front of the mirror and started lifting my arms. And it turned out that in order to raise them, I also have to rotate them

"We lived together, but we had not spoken for a long time. I grew used to coping on my own and stopped expecting attention. At some point I realized that I was no longer seen – even when I was right there. After the divorce it became quieter. And unexpectedly – easier to breathe."



along their axis: one by 90 degrees, the other by 60 degrees, otherwise my bones don't settle into their sockets and my arms won't rise above shoulder level. Or else I'm doing pull-ups wrong. And so, since the ages of three and eleven respectively, my body has learned how to be 'normal' and lift my arms – first the left, then the right. So well that I didn't even notice something was working incorrectly. It adapts.

And only recently did I realize that I had loved myself very little. Never. Perhaps I even hated myself. But that is too strong and frightening a word, so I can only write it with 'perhaps'. And there was reason enough. But the soul, like the body, adapts. You live with this hatred without noticing it. Until, for example, you can't do push-ups during a BDSM session. Oh, give yourself. And then you understand that something, somewhere, healed the wrong way. And it hurts. Always. But I will learn to love myself. Because the soul is just like the body. It adapts."



"There was a time in my life when fear proved stronger than the future. I lost what was never meant to become life, and I fought for my own. Now I am healthy. I do not celebrate victory – I simply live. And that is enough."

"To be seen through an artist's gaze is, for me, a matter of thermophysics. I will explain.

There is a process called crystallization, when a center of stress forms within metal, and the entire system has to reckon with it, almost 'serving' it. This affects everything: strength, load-bearing capacity, functionality, even appearance. Under heavy stress, a crack may form precisely at this point. To eliminate this stress center, the entire structure must be changed. In materials science, this is achieved through thermal treatment: heating followed by cooling. As a result, an entirely new structure emerges. It still contains the original crystallization centers, but the stress is now evenly distributed throughout the volume. This makes the system resilient, capable of withstanding enormous loads, and in some cases even becoming stronger through use.

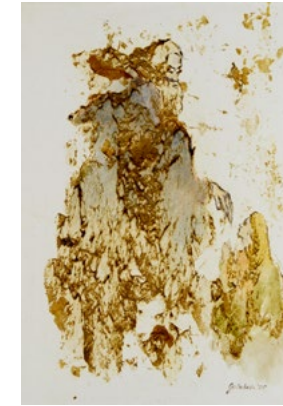
Before an artist, as before any person for whom I exist as a whole – I am this metal. To be seen is precisely such a form of ‘thermal treatment’. My scar tissue softens under the warm gaze of acceptance. And in that moment, I begin to accept myself.”



"Six months after painting this work, I realized that it was my father. On the left, the one I saw when we still lived together; on the right, the one who did not choose me when I needed it most."

Prayer
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood,
51x35cm

Sacred
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood,
51x35cm



Angel
2026
fungi, oil, paper, wood,
35x50cm

Blessing
2026
fungi, oil, paper, wood,
35x50cm

Demon
2026
fungi, oil, paper, wood,
35x50cm

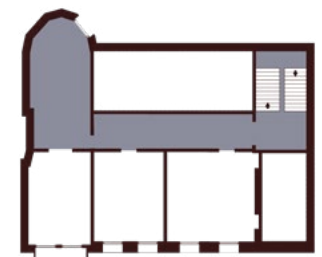
The artist and the art historian are human as well. They grow and take shape in a world of clichés produced by texts—read, and especially unread. In such texts, particularly ancient Greek ones, the idea of the relationship between art and nature was strictly hierarchical. Nature was understood as a manifestation of a world of ideal images—one that would never fully reveal itself to human beings, yet would always remain close, inaccessible in its hierarchy. For thousands of years, striving to approach these ideas was the artist's task. Modernism cancelled nothing; it merely shifted the emphasis and expanded the field of acceptance for the subjective. Nature silently observes its most complex child—the human who creates. And this child

reaches out little hands toward the mother, yet sees only a blurred proto-image of nature as a source of creative energy.

In this hall, everything is reversed, and therefore everything appears very strange and slightly implausible, yet entirely real. Yes, these are images partly created by nature itself. The most unexpected thing about these canvases is that nature chose to refuse the artist as a conduit and took up the brush on its own. More precisely, it functioned as a network of many separate elements bound together: the mycelium. Mushrooms appeared on the canvas as images, while the artist became nature's translator and archaeologist—that is, she embedded cultural codes into the

accidental interaction between linen and the organic structures of forest fungi, codes within which she has grown, with which she has worked, and continues to work.

Thus, the circle has closed, yet within it a completely new experience has emerged—a co-creation in which nature became a co-author in its untranslatability. And where words are insufficient, the image takes over, drawn from memory, individual and collective. In this way, figures from Greco-Roman and Christian mythology, the contours of Christ and the fool, the haughty Marquise de Merteuil and the praying slave, surfaced on the canvases. There is no escaping text for us—and nature cannot escape the human.





Silence
2025
fungi, oil, linen, wood, 130x90cm

"I call my body Iceland. As if a glacier once retreated from it, leaving deep scars behind. I like to trace my hand across my stomach, feeling dried-out stone streams, hollows in the hills, shaded rough unevenness where flowers bloom. I know my Iceland is preparing for spring."



Iceland
2025
fungi, oil, cotton, wood, 59x80cm



Earthbound
2022
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 99x68cm



Forest princess
2025
fungi, oil, paper, linen, wood, 120x65cm



Vicomte de Valmont
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 70x49cm



Marquise de Merteuil
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 51x35cm



Fragile Strength
2026
oil, canvas, 150x80cm

"I suppose I am just one of many who was dealt a difficult hand in life. And yet, every human journey is unique, and only we ourselves truly know the depth of it."

I was left on my own early in life and learned to live in the silence of loneliness. I know the pain of betrayal, and living in constant tension and never-ending stress has left its mark; my body is worn out by illness... and every time I fell, it felt like I would never get up again. But the realization that I am all I have helped me pick up the pieces, time and time again, and rise.

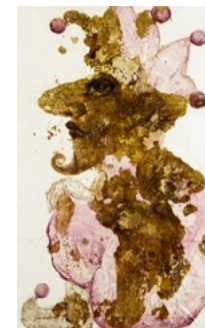
I did not let pain and loneliness define who I am.

I chose to preserve my true self—alive, feeling, and real."



Deniss Evins
Zoja Golubeva
Urban aliens
2025
80x80x30cm
mixed media

Jocker
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 70x44cm



On the Other Side
2026
fungi, oil, cotton, wood, 105x73cm



[Kōcha Kinoko]

The entire history of the “tea mushroom” is a sequence of wrong words; for me, it is also a symbol of injustice and solitude. In truth, the tea mushroom is not a mushroom at all, and the word “kombucha” is merely a linguistic mis-borrowing from Japanese. My project, Kocha Kinoko, was born as an experiment, not necessarily to correct these historical errors, but to use this linguistic accident to create a new, quasi-biological culture.

By calling a symbiotic culture a “mushroom” and then isolating it within a glass jar, we contradict ourselves. We create a dangerous semantic precedent at the intersection of many scientific disciplines. A true mushroom is, by definition, part of a larger living organism: the mycelium. For the tea mushroom to truly become a mushroom, we must develop an artificial mycelium—

implementing the signaling and transport functions that transform each individual culture into part of a greater living collective: Kocha Kinoko.

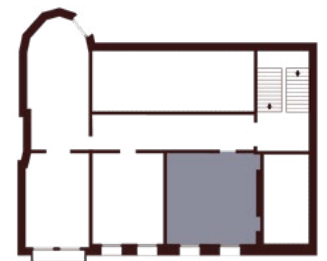
The parallels are inescapable: forty years ago, I was told I am Evin. Twenty years ago, I was told I am a man. And all these years, I have been told what I must do. Can we really assume that by calling a symbiotic culture a “mushroom” for hundreds of years, we do not alter its very nature? Can I change the morphology of a subject by altering its environment to match its assigned semantic properties?

What happens if I no longer “must” be anything for anyone? What if I allow my ideas to sprawl like a brass and cast-iron mycelium? If I give the tea mushroom the chance to transcend the limitations imposed upon it from the outside, can I, too, escape the container

of my own consciousness—a vessel in which I am condemned to loneliness, just like the tea mushroom?

I chose to create an experiment to bridge the gap between the word and the object it signifies. Since it was clear to me that these names—these defining elements of self-identification—must remain, I decided to change the subject itself. In other words, I decided to turn the tea mushroom into a real mushroom.

By standing at the border between the world of ideas and the physical processes of biology, I aim to demonstrate a vital need: we must finally take responsibility for what we have done best for the last several thousand years – naming everything without ever considering how those names transform the subject.





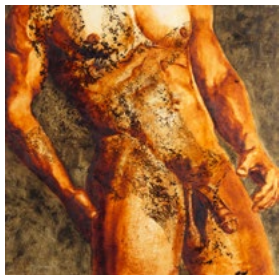
Deniss Evins
Kôcha Kinoko
2025
Mixed media, Kombucha Scobys
200x120x150cm



Chief MycoLaborant Evin
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood
69x49cm

"Artificial mycelium for kombucha is, in part, a response to Zoya's series of works, in which she, as an artist, became a cartographer of mushroom and its spore and mycelium prints blooming across the canvas. It was then that the idea of a meeting between two worlds was born: the natural and the artificial, the organic and the technological. One world is wild and spontaneous—art born from the interpretation of nature's own chaos. The other is precise and engineered—crafted by human hands, yet finding its life force only through that same unpredictable touch of nature.

This inspired the words attributed to the lead engineer of the KoCha Kinoko project:
"By revealing mycelium to the world, we make visible the texture of the weightless essence of ideas. And by exploring its flesh, we come to understand the spirit."



Flesh I
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 68x68cm



Flesh II
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 68x68cm



Flesh III
2025
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 67x67cm



Cartoons
2025
fungi, paper, oil, wood, 67x67cm



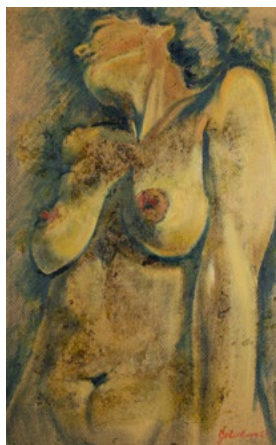
In The Dark
2025
fungi, paper, oil, wood, 67x67cm



Forest Spirit
2017
fungi, paper, pora, wood, 56x135 cm



Flesh IV
2025
fungi, oil, wood, 74x51cm



Flesh V
2025
fungi, oil, wood, 80x50cm

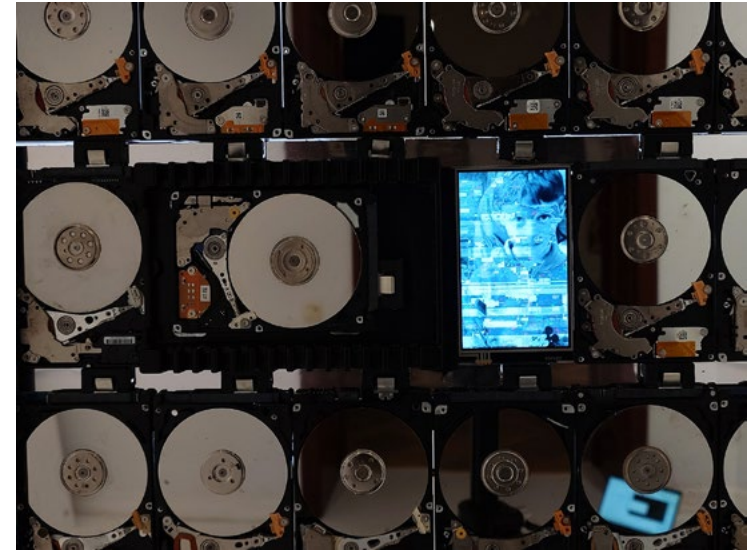


Adam I
2024
fungi, oil, paper, wood, 104x80cm

"Hands folded into infinity.
This is a story of love,
attention, tenderness,
respect, and faith. Faith
and hope that the
darkness we both entered
after hearing one of their
terrifying diagnoses will
dissolve, will disappear. I
was afraid not to make it
in time. Not to manage to
bring both of them, and
what was precious and
symbolic to them, into the
light on canvas. Not to
show the portrait to both
of them before death
separated them – a death
whose approach they
knew about. They both
saw it. I am crying."



Infinity
2025
oil, canvas, 70x100cm



Deniss Evins
The Withheld
2025
mixed media

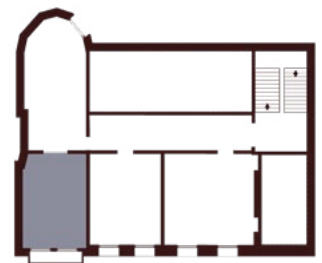
I need to tell my story aloud. And it will devour me again. Which means it must be released into a controlled space, broken down into predictable algorithms, laid out in zeros and ones, combed through wires, and then the lights should be turned off. As if we have nothing to fear.

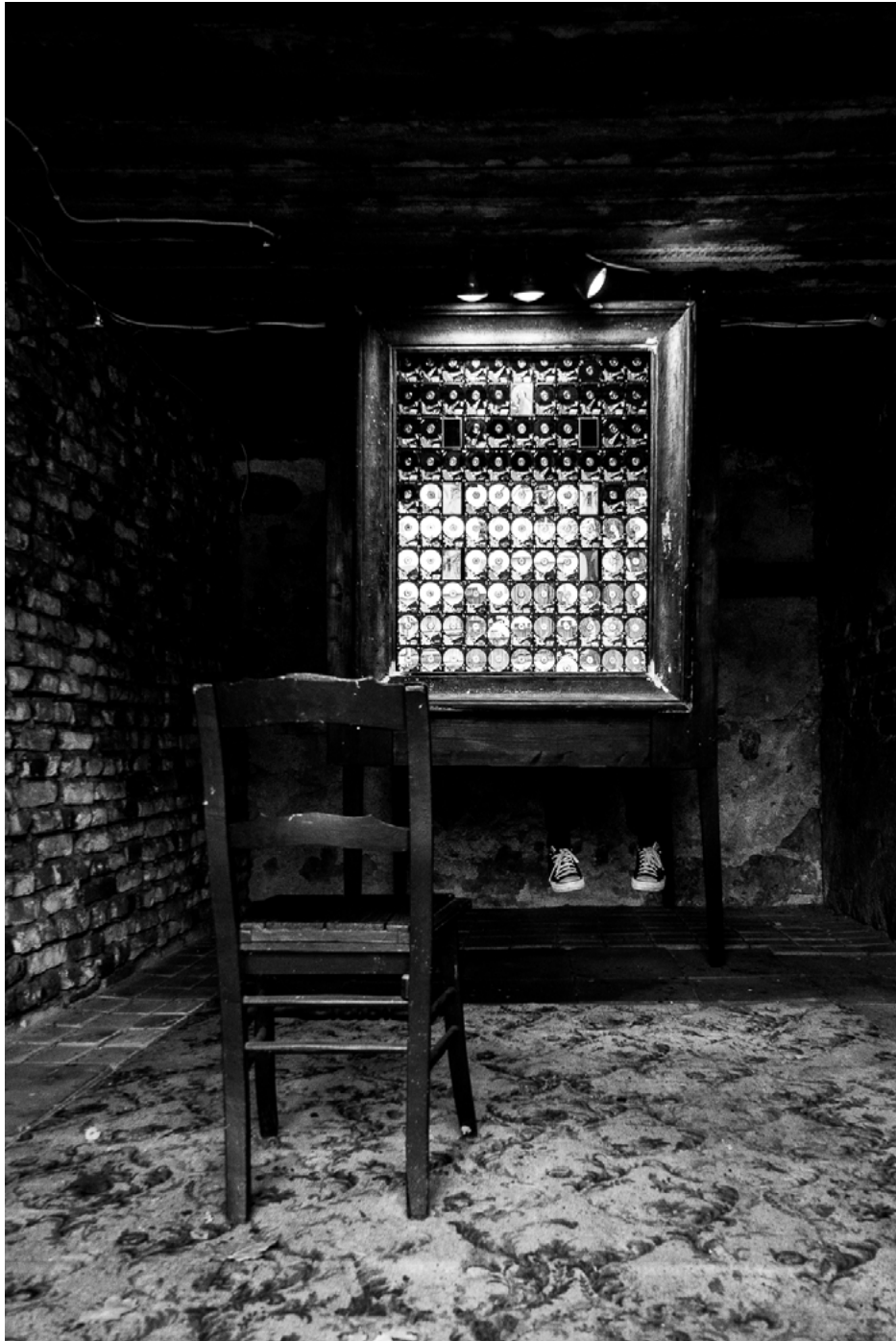
I know that almost 35 years ago I nearly died. And to preserve what was left of the living, I hid it, shackled in a wrought-iron dungeon. And now I am terrified to take others as witnesses — I hide behind texts, in garages,

behind complex metaphors; I filter streams, delete my social media profiles, cross out my desires. But without the testimony of others — those with enough courage and curiosity to look through the stained glass — I will never believe that something alive still remains behind this metal.

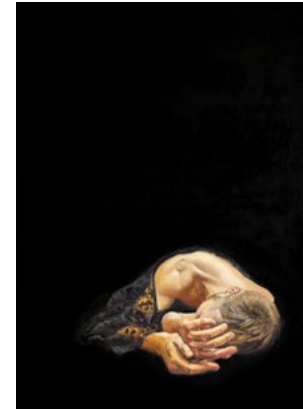
They tell me that I exist — different, strange, serious and not so serious — but deep down, unable to accept that such a thing could have happened to me in this supposedly normal world, I freeze again inside my sarcophagus.

And now there is You. You, who will see in this strange, broken mirror — which slices through all my memory with its knives, dismantling everything present into soulless, and therefore safe, pixels and commands — my bizarre tree that grew on scorched ground, blooming with unseen flowers. And then, if you look closely, You might see your own tree and your own flowers. After all, even if shattered, it is still a mirror.





Deniss Evins
The Withheld
2025
mixed media



Daniela
2024
oil, canvas,
140x100cm,
95x70cm
Do You See Me? series



In this booklet

Texts by:

Deniss Hanovs

Deniss Evins

Zoja Golubeva

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Jelena Medvedska-Glinska

Photos by:

Zoja Golubeva

Deniss Evins

Arturs Dimenshteins

Music created especially for our project by
NEMAIER feat. NUANN (EST/FIN)

Author of the works exhibited: Zoja Golubeva

Works created using forest mushrooms are made in the artist's original technique, Micopainting. The mushrooms have been processed multiple times and are safe for long-term exhibition.

We, Deniss and Zoja, express our sincere gratitude to everyone who supported, inspired, and helped to create these works and organize the exhibition:

Deniss, Jelena, Irene, Darya, Timofey, Mikael, Arthur, Julia, Sergey, Anna, Anton, Aleksey, Konstantin, Tatjana, Evgeny and many more.

Special thanks to all who were brave and open – who posed for the paintings and shared their stories, fears, and hopes.