

# Portfolio **Maria Vasylenko**

## *A Place That Doesn't Exist.*

The Naked Room gallery



We are presenting a solo show by Maria Vasylenko entitled *A Place That Doesn't Exist*. The artist invites us to take a walk in the world she has invented, where conventional time and space do not exist, and to seek what lies behind the curtain of phenomena.

Vasylenko experiences upheavals in her own way: she mythologises them and turns them into symbols. Her world is a projection of consciousness that takes on form and begins a dialogue with its surroundings. Maria studied academic easel painting and sacred art but later chose to abandon the classical set of techniques. Eventually, her current visual language formed at the crossroads of working with colour and the formal aspects of icon painting. Vasylenko uses egg tempera—a timeless, transparent, almost intangible medium.

Her compositional solutions are based on the reverse perspective inherent in iconography, which, following the genre's conventions, places the notional 'point of origin' not in the distance, but in the position of a viewer. Maria also deliberately rejects the standard rectangular shape of a painting as a window onto the world. She creates her works on recycled wood panels to give them form. This, she says, brings the sacred and fantastical elements in her works closer to a viewer.

For *A Place That Doesn't Exist* at The Naked Room, Vasylenko creates a common space of existence for them: she tears some of the works off the walls, making her mythical world tangible and inviting viewers to cohabit it temporarily.

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## ***Interventions into Public Space***

This work combines the upper part of a classical column, a symbol of the old civilization, with prosthetic limbs ending in sneakers. The piece is photographed lying across a pedestrian crossing, evoking a moment of transition. It suggests that the ideals of the past no longer hold, while the future remains undefined. The column –once a bearer of structure– can no longer support anything; instead, it now rests on prosthetics. The prosthesis does not replace what was lost – it merely allows for a different kind of movement. The sneaker, a casual marker of capitalist everyday life, further amplifies the feeling of dissonance between past grandeur and present fragility. This is a body of civilization that is no longer whole, a body trying to move forward without knowing where it's going.



***Civilization** 2025, 200x65 cm, tempera on figured board*

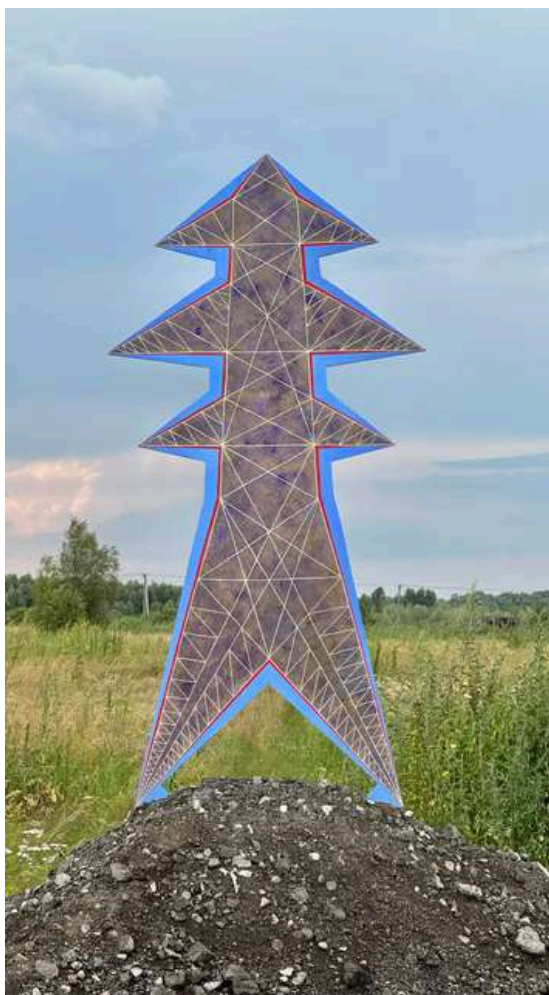
An abstract, human-like figure is hung upside down by its feet, suspended next to industrial infrastructure — wires, metal, and the neglected backsides of buildings. It's not about execution but about stillness, a moment caught between what was and what might come. The figure is not falling, nor rising, just suspended. This work speaks to the state of not knowing. It visualizes a fragile pause: between exhaustion and transformation, between the human and the impersonal, between body and void.



***The suspended one**, 2025, 200x40 cm, tempera on figured board*



The relay station stands where pagan gods once stood.  
Now, in their place, there are new, vital objects.



**Deity**  
2025, 200x95 cm, tempera, emulsion on wood

A contract drawn on toilet paper. I do not protest against  
modern things, but I have no illusions about them.



**Terms and conditions**  
2025, 140x40 cm, tempera on figured board

A pipe from which the pure and the dirty flow out.  
A metaphysical, eco-critical image of life's diverse current.



**The flow of life**  
2025, 200x100 cm, tempera, emulsion on wood

Maybe it's a herald of the apocalypse that was defeated and beheaded. Or maybe it went so mad that it lost its head on its own. It is a mindless force that is hard to restrain.



*The red horse without a head*  
2025, 200x100 cm, tempera, emulsion on wood

I saw this image in a dream, a figure whose presence turned all fear into calm and bliss.



*Stranger*  
2025, 200x100 cm, tempera, emulsion on wood



This work takes the shape of a large plastic bottle containing a collapsed world inside: green water, red sky, strange forms of life or remnants of it. It's a sealed, artificial biosphere. Not a vessel of life, but of mutation. A system that feeds on something else now. Instead of water – toxicity; instead of sky – a crimson canopy. I placed the work inside a construction dumpster, surrounded by rubble and decay. The piece reflects on the aftermath of ecological collapse and the human impulse to enclose, preserve, and distort. It's a gestation of a new order governed by toxic rules – mutated, ambiguous, and closed.



***Ecosystem** 2025, 200x80 cm, tempera on figured board*

Hung where laundry usually dries, the form of a pair of panties, shaped out of wood. Inside them: a vortex, a spiral, a flash of lightning, a civilization fading in the distance. All of it tied together with a decorative little bow – too cute, too ironic. This work addresses the fear of the feminine: not as seduction, but as power – generative, chaotic, bodily. The kind of fear that civilization projects onto the female as something uncontrollable. The panties become a site, not a symbol – a landscape of convergence and undoing. What's feared is not the garment, but what it holds: the spiral of origin and loss, stronger than linear logic.



***Femininity** 2025, 140x95 cm, tempera on figured board*



## ***Interventions into Nature Space***

A veil hangs between two trees in the forest. It looks light, almost like fabric, but in fact, it is wooden, flat, painted. An illusion of materiality without depth. It's unclear whether anything exists behind it, or if it simply covers absence. Or perhaps it is all there is. In Christian iconography, veils often mark the threshold between worlds. Here too, something is being divided, but it's unclear what. Not a statement, but a question suspended in space.



***Civilization** 2025, 100x140 cm, tempera on figured board*

A figure composed of three parts: one-third machine, one-third animal, one-third reptile. This is not a woman's body, but a synthesis — a residue, or a beginning. It doesn't fit any known category. There is something familiar in it, but nothing that can be named. The machine is no longer external, it has become bodily. The animal is not a past form, but a foundation. The reptile — a deep instinctive memory. This is neither a figure of the future nor a relic of the past. It has emerged at the threshold of the post-human and the pre-human, a time when understanding what a human is has already broken down.



***Evolution of Venus** 2025, 200x100 cm, tempera on figured board*



A comet rises — not falling from the sky, but moving upward from the earth. Against a backdrop of stars, it does not crash — it departs. It isn't a message from above, but a force breaking through from below. Not a sign, not an object — just motion, direction, change. Something leaves the ground with quiet intensity, like a question launched into the sky.



***The comet flying upward***  
2025, 140x60 cm, tempera on figured board

Amid grass and overgrowth lies the shape of a battery — a painted board holding its own enclosed world. Inside, a closed system unfolds: strange life, suspended cycles, quiet transformation. This isn't only about ecological crisis it's also about possibility. A rethinking of how life could be contained, reconfigured, released. The battery no longer powers devices, it holds an environment. It becomes a model for a different kind of ecosystem.



***Battery*** 2025, 100x65 cm, tempera on figured board

A mermaid half human, half fish, lies near the riverbank, almost invisible, almost real. She belongs to both worlds: one of language and concepts, the other of symbols and currents. Some passersby saw her and didn't quite know what they were seeing. She was simply there like a sign that doesn't ask to be interpreted. Her presence doesn't explain; it lingers, fluid and unresolved, just below the surface of the known.



***Goddess*** 2025, 200x55 cm, tempera on figured board

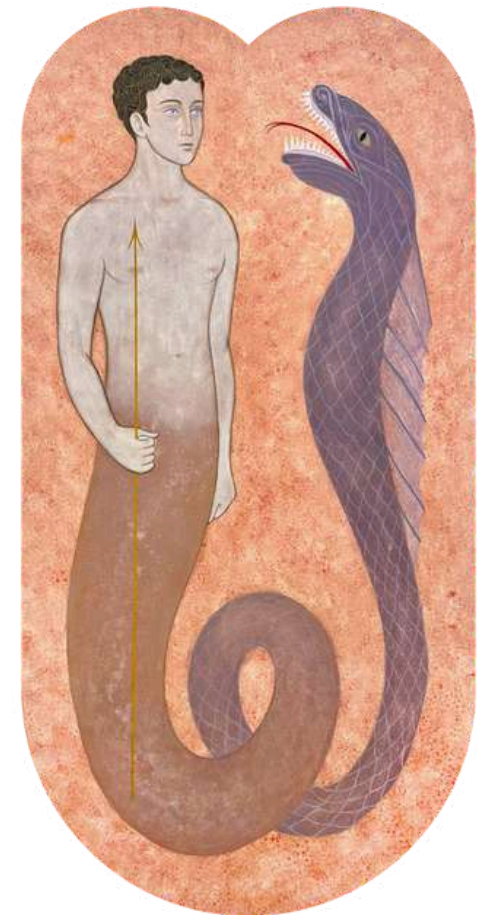


## *The Serpent Was Here*

*The Kuznya is a space within a centuries-old building that was saved from demolition by a community of artists. Maria Vasylenko chose this site as a threshold where the possibility of the future emerges amid the near-ruins of the past, memory, and the living present. For her, it is not only a place of preservation but also of transformation—a fragile yet potent intersection where time folds in on itself and something new begins to take shape.*



They say that once, near the hills and waters of Kyiv, there lived a great Serpent. Legends tell of battles with this creature that exists between light and darkness. Artist Maria Vasylenko feels this chthonic image especially strongly today. It embodies both good and evil. Why are these two opposites so closely intertwined that, when observed for a long time, their boundaries begin to blur? Where does one end and the other begin? Is it possible to escape this duality, or is it the foundation of everything? Maria Vasylenko's exhibition invites us into a space of external and internal struggle, an attempt at balance that is always under threat. Her works pose questions and contain every possible answer—as well as their absence. Maria works at the intersection of painting and object-making, striving to create a space of alternative reality.



*Enemies 2023, 100x200 cm, tempera on figured board*