



## **Modus Operandi**

**Yulia losilzon**

28 March - 11 May

Berntson Bhattacharjee is delighted to present Modus Operandi; Yulia losilzon's ambitious solo exhibition of paintings, ceramics and larger-than-life installations in a vibrant celebration of the humble snail. The exhibition will run from 28 March - 11 May.

In a captivating game of visual pursuit, losilzon's snails of various sizes and hues perch delicately upon a foot, emerge from the corners of canvases, and glide across the limbs of their companions. At the heart of losilzon's artistic approach is a childlike enthusiasm that infuses every aspect of her work, casting a joyous, youthful spirit over her oeuvre. Her practice is a seamless blend of children's illustration, fashion, and theatre, where she weaves intricate fragmentary narratives into her expansive works. Her paintings are always based on a storyline or impression, each work unfolding within its own scene. When viewed collectively as a series, the works harmoniously coalesce to deliver a compelling message, akin to the self-contained meanings found in the realm of fairy tales.

losilzon's painterly signature is defined by her remarkable ability to weave a rich tapestry of vibrant hues onto delicate silk and fabrics. She employs a meticulously refined method, expertly layering paint with seamless, flowing motions onto sheer silk - a technique reminiscent of Helen Frankenthaler's style from the 1950s and 60s. A pivotal element of her artistic style is her guidance by intuitive, singular brush strokes. This unwavering principle underscores her expertise in capturing the depth of emotion and character within her subjects, with just a single stroke, serving as a testament to her exceptional skill.

Elevating her theatrical influences to unprecedented dimensions, losilzon transforms the gallery's basement level with a walk-in scene replicating the interior of a snail's shell. Akin to the film sets of French Illusionist Georges Méliès, losilzon becomes a playful magician of experiential design. losilzon's re-interpretation of the gallery space through installation is a testament to her vivid imagination and commitment to story-telling.

The enduring symbolism of snails in art carries a storied legacy, tracing back through art history to revered masters like Matisse, Dali, and the Dutch Renaissance painters. During this historical period, snails symbolised the Virgin Birth, embodying notions of resurrection, purity, and mortality due to the mystery surrounding their reproduction concealed within a thick calcium carbonate shell. Salvador Dali supposedly associated Sigmund Freud's mind with the shell of a snail - hard on the outside, soft on the inside, and spiralling inward to the secrets at its core.

In the Dutch Golden Age of the 17th century, snails found a place in still life paintings, serving as reminders of the inexorable march of death and decay. Within a contemporary art narrative, we can turn to Urs Fischer, whose snails embody notions of time, process, and transience. In an era saturated with information, the humble snail offers a refreshing escape into mystery, strangeness, and humility, providing a contemplative space to consider weighty topics without the overwhelming existential dread.

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In the midst of global and personal challenges, losilzon's imagination and her fantasy realm consistently serves as a source of solace. What distinguishes her works is their deeply personal origin, a vital element in ensuring they resonate authentically with the viewer. Her works are not mere flights of fancy; they are firmly tethered to the real world through her lived experiences. In an era where the world's current state demands a refuge, she ardently believes that imagination plays a paramount role in shaping our reality, offering a pathway to escape. In her works, the convergence of fantasy and reality blurs, and it is here, at this unspoken crossroads, that her paintings assertively take their place, forging a connection between the tangible and the intangible, and articulating the indescribable.

As losilzon's exhibition unfolds, it becomes a testament to the enduring allure of snails, weaving together centuries of symbolism and artistry in a whimsical dance between the tangible and the symbolic.

Yulia losilzon's solo exhibition will run from 28 March until 11 May, with the Private View 27 March. Berntson Bhattacharjee will complement the show with the release of a limited edition hard-cover book, providing an insightful exploration into losilzon's creative process and the evolution of the exhibition. The exhibition book will launch early April, with more details forthcoming.

#### About the artist

Yulia losilzon (b. 1992, Moscow) is an Israeli artist who lives and works in London. She graduated from Slade School of Fine Art, University College London with a BA in 2017 and completed an MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2019.

losilzon's figurative paintings on stretched transparent fabric are portals into vivid dreamlike worlds with roots in both ancient mythologies and contemporary social concerns. Her works hint at unfolding narratives of human-animal metamorphosis. Her visual references are wide ranging; she draws on imagery from childhood cartoons and representations of paradise, as well as exploring the Jewish iconography of her heritage. This symbolic language also extends into her ceramic practice.

Modus Operandi marks losilzon's second solo exhibition with Berntson Bhattacharjee after showing with the gallery and Sotheby's in Stockholm in 2021. Other notable solo exhibitions include Carvalho Park, New York (2023, 2021, and 2019), Sapling in London, De Brock in Knokke and Foundry in Seoul (all 2022), Art Antwerp with De Brock Gallery (2021) and Huxley-Parlour in London (2021). Significant group exhibitions include Atipografia in Arzignano, Badr El Jundi in Madrid, and Project Pangée in Montreal (all 2023); Untitled Art Fair in Miami and Kiaf in Seoul, both with Carvalho Park; Sapling in London; Tabula Rasa in Beijing (all 2022); Berntson Bhattacharjee Gallery in London (2021); Roman Road in London (2021); Space K in Seoul (2020); Hannah Barry Gallery in London (2020); Leeds Art Gallery, Leeds (2019) and Moscow Museum of Contemporary Art (2019).

losilzon received the Bloomberg New Contemporaries Award in 2019 and the Audrey Wykeham Prize in 2016.

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