

Dawn

Nato Sirbiladze and Sophia Umbra

Curated by Tamo Jugeli

Gallery Artbeat presents the joint exhibition 'Dawn' by Nato Sirbiladze and Sophia Umbra.

'Dawn' is not merely a transitional moment in time; it also functions as a structural paradigm that destabilizes binary oppositions—night/day, light/darkness, art/decorativeness. In this liminal space, sharp boundaries dissolve, and the very foundations of aesthetic systems are called into question.

The exhibition brings together Sophia Umbra and Nato Sirbiladze, whose works articulate contrasting perspectives on the essence of light.

Sophia Umbra's paintings are born in the depths of night: figures intuitively emerging from a black background create a cosmogonic space, where the images themselves become sources of light. These figures exist in a reality that is mythological, psychological, and beyond time.

In Nato Sirbiladze's compositions, the depth of night is gradually replaced by soft, atmospheric light. Her figures nearly dissolve the boundaries between body and environment, while translucent, open spaces and forms rendered in soft contours give the impression that light is now entering from the outside.

This dialogue unfolds within a liminal, transitional space—where night has not yet ended and day has not yet begun. 'Dawn' is not merely a natural phenomenon but a metaphor for a state in which categories, boundaries, and identities blur and momentarily take form.

In this transitional state, several conceptual questions emerge: What does it mean when art refuses to function solely as an object of aesthetic perception? How does the status of artistic form shift when it transcends genre boundaries and enters a liminal zone—where distinctions between painting, kitsch, decoration, and illustration become blurred?

Perception is not a neutral act; it is shaped by historically and culturally defined parameters (Rancière). Thus, the visual experience confronting the viewer is always-already encoded by specific systems of power and aesthetics. In this context, the paintings of Nato Sirbiladze and Sophia Umbra offer a deconstruction of the aesthetic surface. Seemingly innocent decorative forms—flowers, angelic motifs, modular characters, stylized shapes—are transformed into political signs that question the neutrality of aesthetic perception itself.

From this perspective, kitsch, decorativeness, and illustrativeness in Sirbiladze's and Umbra's works—elements often considered devoid of artistic value—acquire new functions. They act as a kind of 'critical camouflage' (Foster), which challenges the aesthetic and discursive hierarchies historically established within the field of art.

Sophia Umbra is a Georgian self-taught artist living and working in New York. With a foundation in drawing since childhood, she began painting actively in 2021. She explores the connection between color, emotion, and the subconscious.

Through expressive faces and body language, Sophia translates internal processes into visual form, offering a glimpse into the unseen. Her creative process is deeply intuitive, allowing each piece to emerge naturally, guided by feeling rather than structure.

In 2025, she participated in a group exhibition at Van Der Plas Gallery in New York.

Nato Sirbiladze (b. in 1955, Tbilisi) after finishing school she continued to study in the Pedagogic Institute to become a teacher. In different periods she worked at the National Library, at the Institute of Management and as a school teacher. Sirbiladze never studied art and started painting at the age of 31. Her artworks are made on paper and several hundreds of them are painted in gouache and aquarelle. Sirbiladze is an artist who has never been part of any artistic schools or groups. She has also rarely been mentioned in the narratives of the local artistic context and has continued her creative path independently. Until recently her representation in public spaces has been limited to a few occasions locally and abroad.

Opening: 27 June, 19:00-20:00

27 June – 31 August, 2025

Address: P. Ingorokva street 14, Tbilisi