

Gili Tal

Soft and Bouncy

30 January
- 14 March 2026

It's like it had materialised out of the empty air. No seasons existed there, or yesterdays and tomorrows. Decoupled now, lighter, its glossy emblems of the actual world, as opposed to the purely emotional ones that otherwise dominate, were free to accumulate a kind of supernatural significance.

Built around grand, illogical, intuitive associations, Symbolist poetry's structures and conceits favoured dreams, visions and the associative powers of the imagination. Believing the purpose was not to represent reality but to access greater truths by the systematic derangement of the senses, it rejected its predecessors' tendencies towards naturalism and realism. As a movement it bore a hostility to plain meanings, preferring instead to clothe the ideal in perceptible form. It proclaimed the validity of pure subjectivity and the expression of an idea over a realistic description of the natural world. Symbols were not allegories, intended to represent, but rather to evoke ineffable intuitions and inner states of mind.

Operating on a series of veiled reflections, strategies included the identification of one sense experience with another. Methods in which new and unexpected substitutions were made were embraced and dense metaphors were lauded as being like alchemy. The medieval practice of transmuting matter was a constant source of fascination. Aiming to yield a superior network of associations over a single message, the physical universe became a kind of language inviting a privileged spectator to decipher it.

The Symbolists' complex ideology included sensual pleasure and hallucinatory inner landscapes and was marked by an idealistic conviction that underlying the materiality of the physical world was another reality whose essence could best be glimpsed through subjective emotional responses contributing to or generated by, the work of art. Akin to encounters with otherworldly presences and not withholding spirituality, it was believed such moments could expand perception.

- G.T.

Galerie Buchholz Berlin is delighted to present a new exhibition by Gili Tal, the fifth exhibition by the artist with Galerie Buchholz. Gili Tal (b. 1983) lives and works in London. She attended Camberwell College of Arts, London (2003-2006) and Goldsmiths, University of London (2008-2010).

Recent institutional exhibitions and group shows include "Fake Barn Country" at Raven Row, London (2025), New York, "Retail Apocalypse" at CCA Montreal (2022), "Stop Painting" curated by Peter Fischli at the Prada Foundation, Venice (2021), "The Cascades" at Kunstverein Braunschweig (2020), "Not Working. Artistic production and matters of class" at Kunstverein München (2020), "Mastering the Nikon D750" at gta Exhibitions, ETH Zürich (2019), "Theft is Vision" at LUMA Westbau, Zürich (2018), and "Readymades Belong to Everyone" at the Swiss Institute, New York (2018).

In September 2026 Gili Tal will have a solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel.