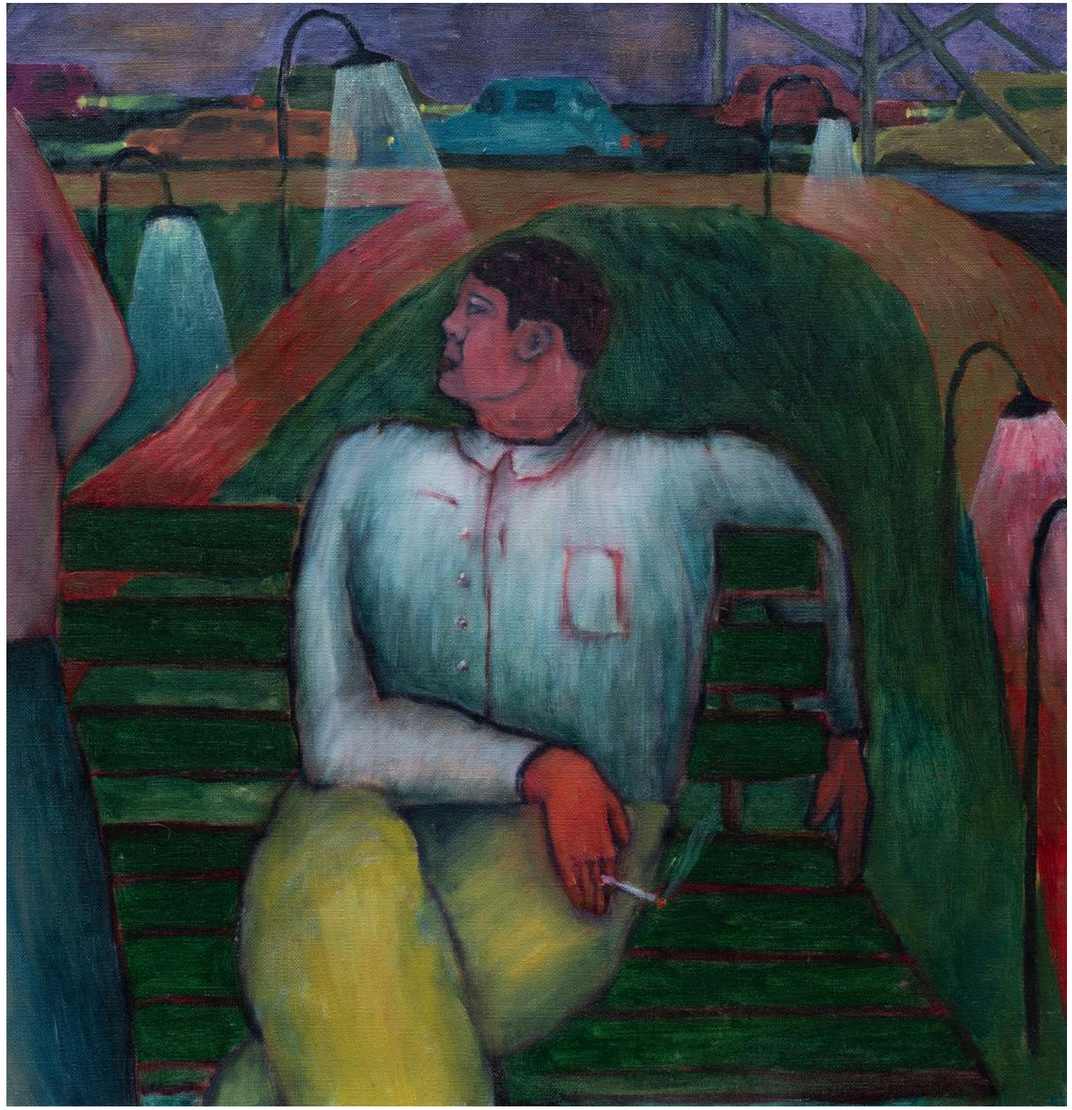


Jacek Obraniak

THE DOOR IS CLOSED, THE VENT WINDOW IS OPEN

Opening: Friday, April 17, 2026, 6–9 pm
On view till: May 16, 2026
Tue-Fri: 4–7 pm, Sat: 12–7 pm

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Jacek Obraniak | *A Timid Attempt*
2025–2026 | oil on canvas | 60 x 90 cm

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We step into the city and move through its streets. At a crosswalk, we are held by a red light. As we wait for it to change, our gaze drifts toward the windows of a nearby apartment building. A scene on the ground floor draws our attention: one person sits, another hangs a painting, a third pours a drink from a jug. The relationships between them remain unknown, as does the purpose of their gathering. Yet the image lingers—activating the imagination, momentarily displacing us from our own concerns. This brief suspension is broken as the light turns green, and we continue on our way.

The protagonists of Jacek Obraniak’s exhibition are the city and its inhabitants—figures encountered in passing, glimpsed from the street or from a tram. The artist peers into windows, beyond fences, drawing energy from the vitality of others.

His gaze is fluid, shifting between proximity and distance: at times the city resembles a scaled model; at others, the viewer is brought into an intimate close-up, such as a couple just seated at the dinner table. Across these scenes, the human figure remains inseparably bound to the city, the street, the home in which they are portrayed. While Obraniak's subjects could, in theory, step beyond the frame—visit family in the countryside or travel to the seaside—they are captured in moments when their bodies, thoughts, and actions belong entirely to this specific city and neighborhood, forming its living circulation.

Obraniak's paintings evoke the atmosphere of "The Man with the White Eyes" by Leopold Tyrmand or "Monolok" by Paweł Sołtys. Although the artist does not anchor his work in a single identifiable location, viewers—particularly those familiar with Warsaw—may find themselves searching these images for traces of the city: both as it existed decades ago, and as it appears today.



Jacek Obraniak | *Today's Programme*
2025 | oil on canvas | 100 x 120 cm

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Jacek Obraniak’s solo exhibition at the Polana Institute is accompanied by a text by Paweł Sołtys (writer, singer, lyricist and composer):

"*Sometimes we’re barely apparitions. As if the words had not yet hatched, the trails of vowels not yet blazed, the leaves of consonants not yet sprung; as if commas and periods had not yet flown in, nor throat-clearings, grimaces, whispers, and the rest of speech and script. Not just yet. We appear; dawns find us, and light bulbs too, and sometimes even eyes find us – more often than human these would be mouse’s, worm’s or reptile’s eyes. What does that say about us, what does it say about the world? Nothing, as words don’t exist yet, let alone – pff – writings.*

Horrors are robust, shadows trail beyond the world, someone has drunk a warm beer. The abyss misses one s, for there are no letters yet and no one will notice; it becomes abys, and this abys drags the rest of the figures and surroundings into the sacred space. A space fit for Gilgamesh, and fit for Isa too, fit for their looking into each other’s eyes – though the eyes can be

random and do not see who's looking through them. The eyes do not know who's looking through them.

And then you exit. And the language returns, or is begotten. And the writing returns, or is begotten. One can write this text. Men and women smoke cigarettes. Something dawns on them. The backs are hunched. The shoulder blades rise, the collarbones sink. A gaze down, into the dust, the gaze of a streetlamp hit by a truck. One may feel like a Mandaean savior, like John the Baptist with his head on a platter. It is the gaze of that head.

The shafts of our boots go up to our knees. The knees yearn for prayers. The prayers are curt, as if barked out. The shafts are charred with dusk, shadows and heavy words. To you. Take a look. As we look for ourselves".

Text: Paweł Sołtys
Translation: Michał Biela



Jacek Obraniak | *Missed Glances*
2025 | oil on canvas | 70 x 100 cm

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Jacek Obraniak (b. 1997) is a graduate of the Faculty of Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź. A painter who sculpts – working at the intersection of painting and sculpture, his practice is characterized by ongoing experimentation with diverse materials and techniques. His works constitute a reflective inquiry into the nature of contemporary reality.

In collaboration with Ignacy Tybor, he co-founded the collective “TYRA.” His most recent solo exhibition, “Something’s brewing,” was presented at the Museum of the Earth in Warsaw (2025). He has also participated in the group exhibition “How the Museum Works” at ms1 in Łódź (2025–2026). His work has previously been exhibited in both solo and group presentations at art institutions in Łódź, Katowice, Dresden, and Yokosuka.

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WORKS

ARTIST PORTRAIT

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