Nino Kapanadze
Meer
October 28, 2026
By Cristiano Raimondi

Inertia

15 Oct — 28 Nov 2026 at Michel Rein in Paris, France

28 October 2026



Nino Kapanadze, Inertia, exhibition view. Courtesy of Michel Rein

For Nino Kapanadze's first solo exhibition at Michel Rein, Paris, the images, forms and questions that have been central to the French-Georgian artist's practice for several years are brought together here along a single trajectory. In these new paintings, abstraction and figuration coexist in such continuities that defy a strictly serial or chronological interpretation, instead revealing an underlying flow of forms and images capable of shifting, transforming and constantly altering the direction of the work. Here, Nino Kapanadze explores the possibilities of painting more deeply, to the point of feeling the need to redefine its language each time. Yet, viewed from distance, these explorations, which once seemed to follow distinct paths, reveal a deeper continuity, as if certain images had never truly disappeared, but had continued to act silently beneath the surface of the painting, only to resurface and transform, carrying with them something of the time that has passed and, at the same time, the possibility of another direction.

It is precisely from this retrospective distance that Kapanadze connects inertia to her own trajectory and to painting: «Looking retrospectively at my life, energy holding things together ? painting itself is Inertia.» In its physical sense, inertia refers to the property of a body to remain at rest or in motion unless acted upon by an external force that alters its trajectory. When transposed into the field of painting, this definition sheds its apparent immobility to describe a form of continuity: that of what persists not because it remains identical to itself, but because it continues its movement through the very forces that shift and alter its course.

This relationship between persistence, transformation, and energy was already evident in the abstract series I Tried to Describe You to Someone, whose title is a subtle variation on that of a text by Richard Brautigan, I Was Trying to Describe You to Someone. The shift from «was trying» to «tried» seems to condense the duration of the act of writing into the immediacy of a single gesture: as if, unlike a sentence that unfolds over time, painting were an attempt that is both immediate and absolute, the trace of which the canvas would retain once the gesture is complete. But what, then, does it bear witness to? Perhaps, first and foremost, the very impossibility of description, an attempt doomed from the outset to encounter something that eludes it.

In Brautigan's work, the description of the beloved is conveyed through an image that could cause accidents and potentially prove fatal, the encounter between water and electricity in rural America. In Kapanadze's work, this encounter takes on a singularly concrete significance. For four years, the artist worked in a department dedicated to hydroelectric power; she is therefore familiar with the technical processes through which water ceases to be merely a material and becomes the force from which other forms of energy can be produced. In her paintings, the encounter is no longer quite an accident: it becomes a power plant, a mechanism of transformation. «I myself am a transformer», she says, as she guides the pigments through successive layers of transparency.

Painting becomes less a place where this energy is fixed and more a place where it flows and transforms. Consequently, continuity is not to be confused with repetition. Each image seems to carry within it the memory of other images while retaining the possibility of moving away from them; certain presences thus pass through the painting, momentarily disappearing from its surface only to resurface in a different way, shifted or transformed. The horse-races, the sea, or even Venus can be viewed less as motifs to which the artist returns than as images that remain active, capable of reappearing in another form, from a different perspective.

«I was pushed out and then back again toward the center,» says Kapanadze of her own journey, marked by discontinuities, displacements, and successive upheavals.

Viewed in retrospect, this trajectory does not form a linear progression, but rather a movement subject to multiple and sometimes contradictory forces, within which painting represents a form of persistence.

Inertia thus appears less as the theme of the exhibition than as a condition through which to understand it: not what immobilizes or restrains movement, but what allows it to continue as its direction changes. The images unfold according to a similar pattern. They may recede, lose their sharpness, shift until they become almost something else, without, however, ceasing to exist entirely. What has been painted thus continues to exert an influence on what is being painted, like a memory that does not need to be reconstructed to remain active in the present.

When, in the late 1960s, the first images of Earth taken from space made it possible to view the world from a distance that had previously been inconceivable, Luigi Ghirri recognized in one of them an image capable of containing virtually all the images of the world. Within that small sphere suspended in the darkness were already contained every landscape, every city, every face, every possible photograph: everything that had been seen as well as everything that remained to be seen. It was, therefore, less a definitive image than an image within which all the others could potentially continue to exist.

It may be this possibility, further than the idea of totality, that resonates in Kapanadze's paintings: the capacity of an image to contain other images, even when those images are no longer immediately visible. A surface can retain what came before it without revealing it; a figure can carry the memory of an abstraction, just as an abstract gesture can maintain the presence of a body, a landscape, or an experience. Images do not simply replace one another; rather, they persist through stratification, displacement, and transformation.

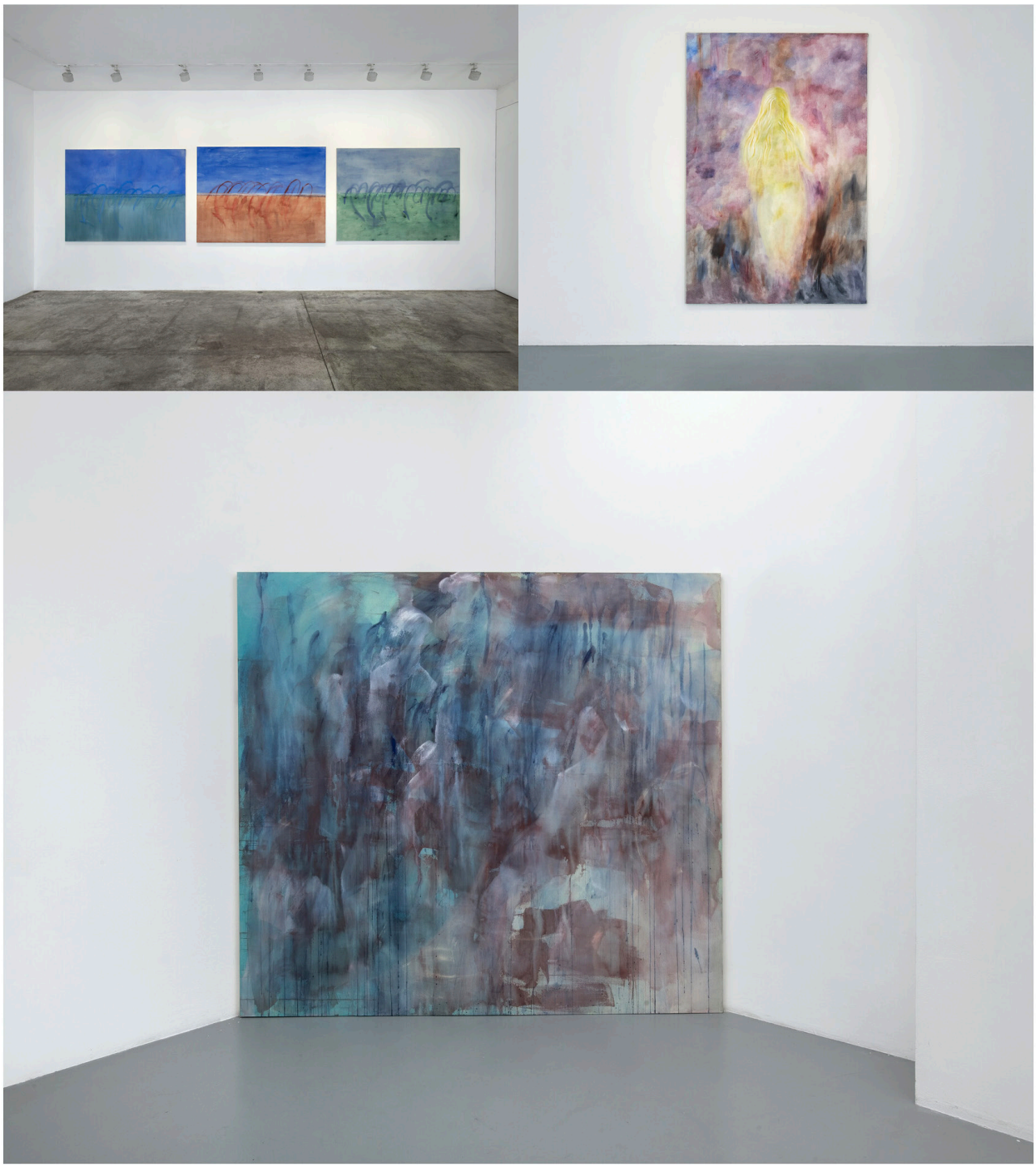
Painting, then, would be like keeping something in motion long enough for it to change, allowing each new force to alter its trajectory without interrupting it. Inertia then ceases to appear as resistance to change and, paradoxically, becomes what makes the constant possible through change itself.

(Text by Cristiano Raimondi. September, 2026)

Michel Rein

Michel Rein is committed to represent artists from different generations, French and international, established and emerging. In 2013, the gallery has opened a second space in Brussels.

Location	Founded in
Paris, France	1992



1. Nino Kapanadze, Inertia, exhibition view. Courtesy of Michel Rein
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