

The gale is raging over the river  
Like a beast

A fondling weeping willow  
Slips away from the levee, with murmur

Cloaks in its lap  
A startled carp  
Tiny fingerlings

As disassembled rafts  
Waves carry forth  
An ensemble of leaves

A cunning jackal mimics  
The screeching of the wind

The jackal and the wind are polyphony-howling till dawn

Weeping-haired and warring willow twigs  
In solitude, protect still  
The tiny fingerlings -  
Forsaken, lone

poem by Elene Chantladze  
translated by Ana Gzishvili  
from Elene Chantladze, Simon Lässig, *Stories for children*, 2023

## Elene Chantladze

Elene Chantladze has spent a lifetime telling stories, keeping diaries, imagining theatrical plays, composing poems and, maybe most importantly, painting. Her exhibitions at kaufmann repetto Milan and New York present a selection of works that encapsulate the variety and versatility of Elene Chantladze's poetic.

Among the roughly mixed acrylic and watercolors, occasional splashes of gasoline, strokes of mulberry fruit and traces of a ballpoint pen, are layered over crumpled paper, unevenly cut pages from an outdated calendar, rocks found on the shores of the Black Sea, disposable plastic plates with leftover cake stains from her grandchildren's birthday party.

The materials Chantladze uses derive from her immediate environment, much like the folkloristic, familiar subjects of her paintings. She usually starts by painting the background densely, and often proceeds to populate the landscape before the pigments finish to dry. Some might compare her practice to the imagination that children have when outlining creatures in the cloudy sky, a sense of wonder and creativity one often loses during adulthood. So a yellow stain on a messy green background becomes a duck with the simple addition of a dark orange dot for its beak, and a constellation of colorful dabs becomes a bouquet of flowers, enormous compared to the pale female figure beside it.

Elene Chantladze's art is ultimately a reflection of her existence, the dreamy atmosphere and fable-like scenarios in her paintings adopt a powerful, relatable language. Her work is not formally defined by her approach to the medium, but depicted through a naive poetic surrealism, an invitation to rediscover the world through the eyes of an outsider, far from the influence of major cities and art centers.

Elene Chantladze was born in Supsa, Georgia, in 1946. She lives and works in Tskaltubo, Georgia. Her works have recently seen a rise in popularity, being displayed in solo exhibitions at M HKA Antwerp and Kunsthalle Zurich (2023).