

Remy Ugarte Vallejos  
Sveta Mordovskaya  
Taleb Lachheb

On the Lens and Refract  
06.03.2025–27.03.2025

Curated by Gaia Del Santo, Nemo Bleuer and  
Oz Oderbolz  
Text by Monica Unser

A sunset is a trigger for all kinds of nostalgic and romantic emotions, but it is an optical illusion. At twilight, the solar disk has already disappeared beyond the horizon. From the vacuum of space, through the Earth's atmosphere, the waves of sunlight are bent by refraction, for our eyes to see a sublimed and unreal appearance of the star around the curvature of our planet. The beauty of golden hour is actually a result of physics and perspective.

The human eye also redirects light through refraction, and everything we see is a result of the same phenomenon; waves are bent as they pass from a medium to another, from the atmosphere to a wet eyeball, with different speeds. Images are created by deviating the trajectory of lines, reshaping angles or redirecting signals, for our bodies to perceive something that may exist as pictured, may appear though unreal, like the precious few-second-long green ray some hope to see just after the sun vanishes.

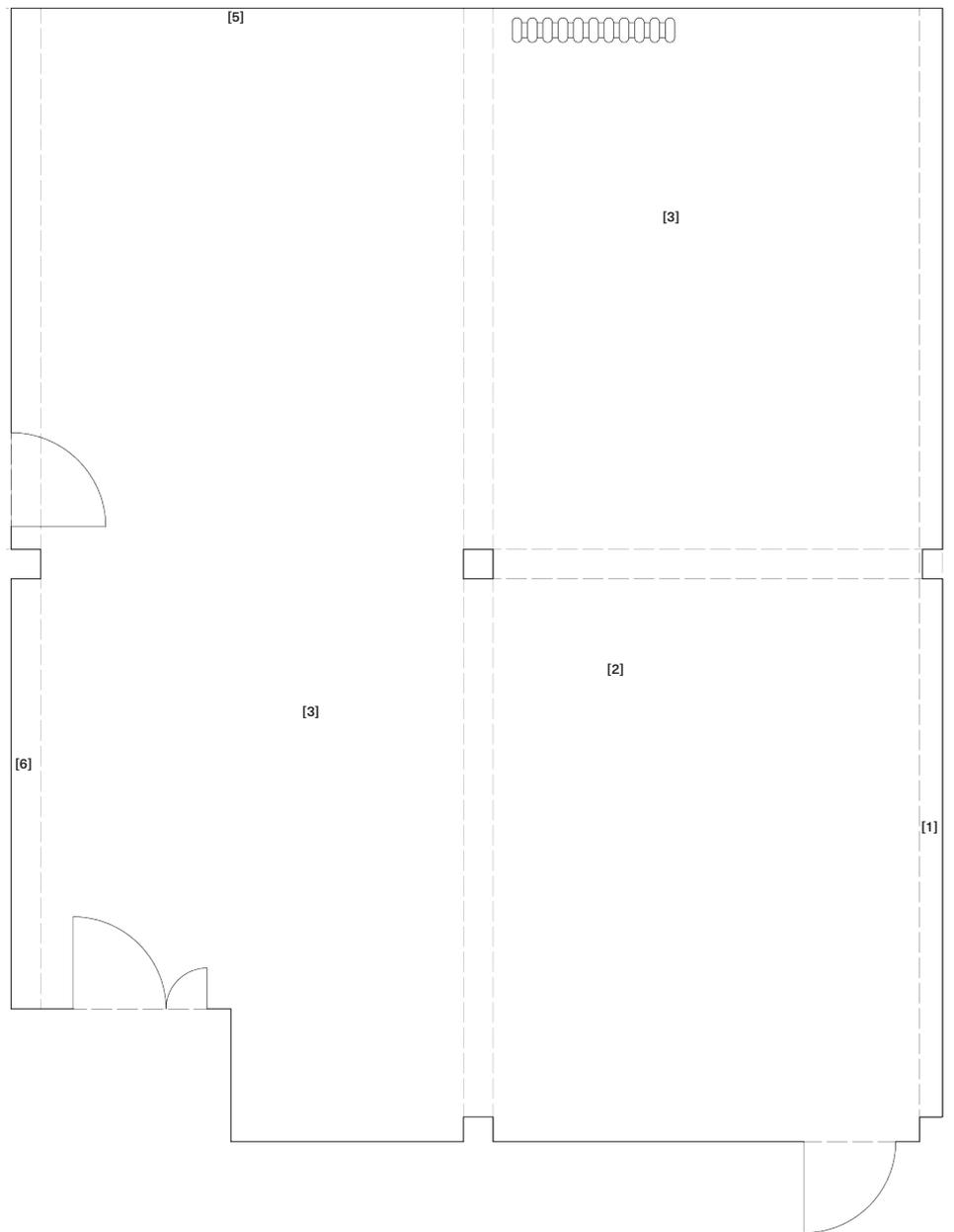
The physics of perception also apply in the mechanisms of display, where the staging of an object affects how it will be read and valued. The wave shifts as it enters a new matter. Through an opening, the white light can be diffracted and scattered in spectral rainbow colors. Do we all see the same colors in a white cube? What would we see outside the frame of perspective, before the refraction occurring in our eyes, in the atmosphere, in the inception and perception of any image? Stories, feelings, or projections are formed by perceptive angles, all following the same drifting wave that allows us to live the last golden seconds of every day.

In the exhibition *On the Lens and Refract*, three bodies of work comment on the prisms of perception. For Sveta Mordovskaya, teenage years become a space of nostalgic projection, which is perhaps always also a place of fiction. Moments of experimentation with the identity of a younger self are captured through unknown eyes as performances and defined by the camera frame and the picture frames, like a low-res window on uncanny personal archives. The author's perspective is absent, leaving the stage to different layers of costume: the frame, the pose, the mimicry; all tools to confront the struggles of self-perception, self-definition and finding the right angle to fit in.

The bending and distortion of images and their signification is a key mechanism in any exhibition display; the choice of placement, order and medium

forces a narrative, albeit an equivocal one. In Taleb Lachheb's work, echoes of an obsession with the eye are found glued to the wall: in a portrait and its mirror, decipherable in transparency beneath the fiberglass, in the image of a "ghost" detached from its museal context, and in a picture showing that the violence read in a work can be manipulated by a more perfidious violence. Here, the image assumes the status of a unique object, questioning its role as an instrument in the invisible orchestra that defines our visual cultures.

There is a certain ideal in seeing without being seen that Remy Ugarte Vallejos' sculptures evoke. The reflecting bodies cancel a unique perspective, eyes meet through and on the looking glass. On the surface of a flawed one-way mirror, reflection and transparency co-exist, unveiling the intimate and revealing the performative; the sculptures confront us with the failure to remain protected voyeurs. They may be awaiting activation by movement, a possibility to shift the angles, to bend the rays; a potential for diverting the blinding lights of the exhibition space, creating or diverting eye contact and triggering or defusing anxious thoughts. Between reflection and refraction, light waves spread through space and return to us, the performers and orchestrators of this gaze choreography.



<sup>[1]</sup> *Symptômes*, 2025  
 Screen print on paper, adhesive foil and fiberglass  
 120 x 360 cm  
 Taleb Lachheb

<sup>[2]</sup> *In Your Room II*, 2025  
 Installation, mirrors on wheels, spotlights  
 Dimensions variable  
 Remy Ugarte Vallejos

<sup>[3]</sup> *Yours N°1 - N°2*, 2025  
 Two-way mirror, chromed steel, wheels  
 200 cm x 100 cm x 75 cm  
 Remy Ugarte Vallejos

<sup>[5]</sup> *Untitled*, 2025  
 Chromogenic print, found object  
 51 x 61 x 5 cm  
 Sveta Mordovskaya

<sup>[6]</sup> *Untitled*, 2025  
 Chromogenic print, found object  
 52 x 107 x 6 cm  
 Sveta Mordovskaya