

Maria Pomiansky

Nothing Personal

Portraits of various professions
05.09.25–24.10.25



Maria Pomiansky portrays not only people, but also professions and activities of urban life. She depicts the individual within the fabric of social structures: the workplace as a social space, the profession as a component of identity. Her starting point is direct encounters – often random moments in public space. The title *Nothing Personal* ironically refers to both distance and proximity.

From Sketchbook to Painting

Using acrylic felt-tip pens, Pomiansky spontaneously captures details on location, a practice she describes as "recording scenes." Selected drawings later become condensed pictorial spaces on canvas that incorporate art historical references and quotations – sometimes poetic, sometimes grotesque.

Focusing on the Unspectacular

Pomiansky makes the extraordinary visible in the everyday. "People are surprised that art emerges from a trivial moment," she said on Swiss television in 2018.

Her practice oscillates between observation and artistic staging, exploring – similar to performance art – the boundaries between life and art. She treats all depicted people and activities with equal attention – in a deliberately democratic manner.

Biography

Born in Moscow in 1973, Pomiansky comes from a family of artists: her parents and grandparents were also artists. She initially studied graphic design, then fine arts at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. Since 2003, she has lived in Zurich, where she earned master's degrees in scenography and fine arts from the Zurich University of the Arts – a versatility that shapes her sensitivity to spatial and social compositions.

The Everyday and the Extraordinary

The exhibited works depict studio and everyday constellations from places like Paris, Zurich, Amsterdam, and Tbilisi, as well as various work environments – from factories to doctor's offices. Work also appears as a social interaction.

Pomiansky documents sometimes vanishing traditions, such as the Swiss textile printing industry, and links individual activities with collective work environments. Written fragments such as *How to Marry a Millionaire* and *Smile* expand her visual language with cultural codes and direct addresses. Her intensely colorful painting style—in the plein air tradition—gives both challenging and harmonious scenes the same visual presence, making all forms of work appear equally valuable.

Reality as a Question

Pomiansky draws on 19th-century realism, such as the Barbizon School or Honoré Daumier, while also drawing on 20th-century references. However, she develops her own contemporary form that doesn't document reality but questions it. Her works combine immediate impressions with art historical references and reflect questions of objectivity and subjectivity—and thus the role of reality in the age of controlled perception.

Text: Jeannette Weiss