

Press release

# Ariana Papademetropoulos *Glass Slipper*

7 March—11 April 2026  
Opening Saturday 7 March 2026, 6pm—8pm

Thaddaeus Ropac  
Paris Marais  
7, rue Debelleye, Paris, France



Ariana Papademetropoulos, *Glass Slipper*, installation view, Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Marais, 2026  
© Ariana Papademetropoulos. Photo: Nicolas Brasseur

Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Marais presents *Glass Slipper*, Ariana Papademetropoulos's first solo exhibition in France. Spanning painting, sculpture and installation, and centred around an aquarium complete with a shoal of fish, the exhibition draws viewers into a world where resplendent, volatile natural landscapes and psychological spaces collide with charged domestic interiors. Sculptural vintage payphones invite visitors to listen in on conversations between the artist and her medium, while the

Los Angeles-based artist's new large-scale paintings are devoid of human presence but pulse with unseen forces, situated somewhere between realism and reverie.

At the beginning of the exhibition, two works installed in the antechamber introduce Papademetropoulos's meticulous yet fantastical approach to hyperrealism. In them, transparent dry cleaning bags are rendered with exquisite attention to their gentle creases and the way light shifts on



Ariana Papademetropoulos, *The Afters*, 2026  
Oil on canvas. 190 × 304 cm (74.8 × 119.69 in)

their surfaces. The dresses suspended inside are unoccupied but seem to cling to imaginary human forms, staging a quiet meditation on presence and absence. On view at the threshold of the space, these works are conceived as transitional, evoking controlled environments of washing, care and renewal that resonate throughout the exhibition. Beyond them, at the heart of the gallery, visitors are invited into an immersive enclosure inside the aquarium which recalls esoteric therapy chambers. The inhabitable installation, titled *Water Based Treatment*, is accompanied by a soundtrack, audible only to the visitor lying inside, composed based on 1970s ambient sound therapy tapes by Nicolas Godin of the French music duo Air.

Displayed surrounding the aquarium, Papademetropoulos's new paintings collapse interior and exterior settings, exploring intimate space as a site of tension and rupture. Homely furniture – dining chairs upholstered in gingham or stripes, Louis XV-style armchairs – emerges from clouds of volcanic gases above pools of bubbling lava, or topples through the eye of a dusky tornado in a scene recalling the opening of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939): a key reference for the artist. Here, the sense of security we associate with the idea of home is overpowered by both dreamscape and the

forces of nature. The scenes are unoccupied, the chairs are vacant: the human figure is present in these works only through its conspicuous absence. The artist describes the paintings as 'portals', hovering 'between solid and liquid states, behaving as membranes or thresholds where one perceptual regime gives way to another.'

The aquarium teems with the movement of the shimmering freshwater species known as 'kissing fish', conditioning the visitor's perception of the surrounding paintings. This effect furthers the works' fluid, liminal aspect and places the act of observation at the centre of the exhibition. Entering and lying down in the enclosure inside this underwater environment, the viewer's anthropocentric vision is destabilised, inviting them into a reflection on *Umwelt* and on the possibility of alternative sensory realities. A fairytale atmosphere runs throughout the exhibition, whose title alludes to Cinderella's glass slipper. The aquarium recalls Snow White's glass casket, positioning the viewer as at once observer and observed, active and dormant.

On the first floor of the gallery, the artist presents three iridescent shell-shaped telephone booths, modelled after those once found in the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

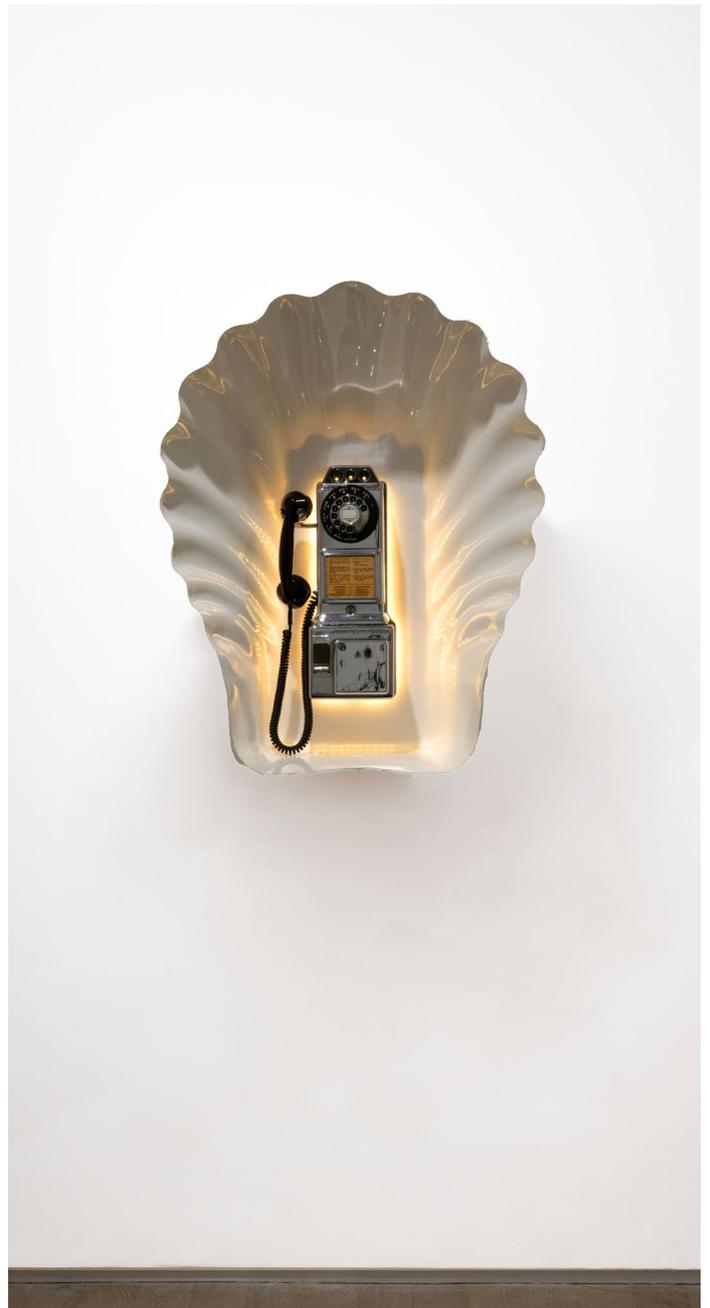


Ariana Papademetropoulos, *The Mistress*, 2026  
Oil on canvas. 139.7 × 71.1 cm (55 × 27.99 in)

When visitors pick up the handsets, they are drawn into intimate exchanges between Papademetropoulos and her medium, extending the exhibition’s engagement with themes of therapy, ritual and transformation. Lit from within these wall sculptures are accompanied by paintings of burning microwave ovens at various stages of eruption. Telephones collapse distance and microwaves heat invisibly: their processes unfold beyond direct sensory access, verging on the magical. The shell form of the telephone booths evokes ancient listening devices – the natural resonance of seashells has long been associated with the murmur of distant oceans – reminding us that the magic and mystery we locate in technology is intrinsic to nature itself. The pressure, heat, swelling and release contained within the everyday vessel of the microwave, meanwhile, mirror the glowing volcanic fissures in the paintings on the ground floor.

In this new body of work, Papademetropoulos draws implicitly from the strange and counterintuitive world of quantum mechanics. Taking Albert Einstein’s disparaging description of quantum theory as ‘spooky action

at a distance’ as a conceptual anchor, the artist locates quantum ideas like entanglement and uncertainty within quotidian objects and occurrences: in forms of connection and interrelatedness across distance, in the invisible forces that operate within everyday appliances, and in the way certain things seem to slip further from comprehension the more closely they are examined. Working in oil on canvas from both found and personal photographs, and often true to scale, Papademetropoulos conceives of these paintings as extensions of lived reality. At once intimate and universal, *Glass Slipper* investigates the latent strangeness of the everyday, revealing to the visitor what she calls the ‘faultlines of the imagination’.



Ariana Papademetropoulos  
*Psychic specific (intellectual property) 1*, 2026  
Fiberglass, resin, telephone. 101.6 × 76.2 × 33 cm



Ariana Papademetropoulos, portrait of the artist  
Photo: Cameron McCool

### About the artist

Ariana Papademetropoulos was born in California in 1990, where she lives and works. She studied at CalArts as well as the Universität der Künste in Berlin. She co-curated *Veils* at The Underground Museum in Los Angeles (2014), and her work has been exhibited in the US and internationally, including at Manifesta 13, Marseille (2020), at Villa Medici, Rome (2024–25), and at Centre Pompidou-Metz in Copistes, an exhibition organised in collaboration with the Musée du Louvre and curated by Donatien Grau and

Chiara Parisi (2025–26). In 2023, Papademetropoulos's film, *Mon Seul Désir*, featured as part of *Regards du Louvre* at the Musée du Louvre, Paris. In 2024, her work was presented by the gallery for the first time in the group exhibition *Re-enchantment* at Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Pantin. Papademetropoulos's work is part of the permanent collections at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami.

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