

YAY GALLERY

SAID SHARIF
IDENTITY DRIFT
SOLO EXHIBITION
Baku, Azerbaijan

FEBRUARY 21 – AUGUST 31, 2025

PRESS RELEASE

YAY Gallery is proud to present Said Sharif's first solo exhibition "Identity Drift", featuring works that continue his deep engagement with identity and self-expression on his own terms. The exhibition brings together a documentary display of photographs spanning six years, alongside site-specific installations and ready-made objects.

The exhibition's layout uses the interior of the gallery to create symmetrical and two-part arrangements of the works. On the second floor of the gallery, central pieces include local-crafted interpretations of the traditional Caucasian hats, produced in collaboration with a local artisan. The Papag series features the exhibited elements in suspended form: hanging from the ceiling semi-ironic and semi-humorous hats are deconstructed by the artist in contemporary interpretation. Shiny vinyl walls form a corner of the gallery, revealing the perverted imagery.

Another focal point is the Windy Windshields photo project, an archival presentation of photographs, publications and custom prints related to Baku's car culture and subculture. Spanning the entire gallery space from the ground floor, this series is extravagantly framed in golden aluminium, reflecting the kitsch and playful aesthetic of the car subculture while tying it to the city's broader identity.

Said's ongoing interest in cultural heritage and subcultural hybridity is evident in his exploration of the "Avtosh" (derived from the English "auto show") subculture. As part of the exposition, a VAZ-21011 "Zhiguli", which belongs to an avtosh, is displayed as a central work. Through this playful showcase, the artist highlights the once-popular practice of young drivers showcasing car tricks, a hobby that emerged



in the 1990s alongside the sociocultural shifts and the growing influence of Western kitsch and pop culture in local media eventually shaping this subculture.

An integral part of the exhibition is the accompanying publication Windy Windshields, presented in a zine format for those looking to immerse themselves further in the project.

Curated by Zahra Mammadova.

About the artist:

Said Sharif (b.1996, Baku) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Baku. He works across such media as photography, illustration, concept art, and graffiti. His creative journey began as a young illustrator, later evolving into graffiti under the pseudonym "Wish". With the discovery of photography, he opened a new chapter in his artistic exploration, embracing diverse mediums and methods. With the help of his close photographer friends Said Sharif founded "ordinary.city" creative collective that focuses on global vision in photography of today.

Said Sharif's work is characterized by an in-depth engagement with both local and global socio-cultural issues, as well as an investigation into the complexities of the modern human experience. His practice harnesses the power of art as a transformative tool to foster beauty, positivity, and dialogue across mediums.

About YAY Gallery:

Established in 2012, YAY Gallery is located in the heart of Baku's Old City which sits amongst designated UNESCO world heritage sites.

The gallery was founded by YARAT Contemporary Art Space, a non-profit organization committed to supporting the art infrastructure in Azerbaijan.

The primary activity of YAY Gallery is to organize exhibition-sales events featuring works by talented and promising young artists from Azerbaijan and other countries, as well as by renowned and experienced artists. The revenue generated from the sale of artworks is shared between the artists and the YARAT Contemporary Art Space organization.

Another priority of YAY Gallery is to serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas and experiences by organizing lectures, seminars, film screenings, and other events conducted by artists and professionals working in the field of art.

Exhibition duration:

February 21 – August 31, 2025

Working hours:

Tuesday - Sunday, 12:00 - 20:00

Address: 5 Kichik Gala St.

Free admission

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