

MIRROR HEAD

Miriam Cahn

Sarah Księżka

David Ostrowski

Katharina Wulff

Irène Zurkinden

Aug 29 - Sep 27, 2026

Miriam Cahn's (*1949 in Basel) paintings and drawings take the body as their central subject – as political terrain, as tool, as the site where private experience and historical violence collide. Working in oil paint, pastel, chalk and charcoal, she renders figures at speed and without revision: portraits, war scenes and erotic images that resist fixed interpretation and refuse aesthetic comfort. Since the late 1970s, when she produced illegal chalk murals in public space, her practice has been inseparable from her political commitments.

Miriam Cahn lives and works in Basel and Stampa. She studied graphic arts at the Schule für Gestaltung Basel from 1968 to 1973. She was included in documenta 7 (1982), from which she withdrew her work in protest. Miriam Cahn held her first major solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel (1983) and represented Switzerland at the Venice Biennale in 1984. Her work is held in the collections of Tate Modern, London, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Solo exhibitions include the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Kunsthalle Basel, and Fundación La Caixa, Madrid.

The practice of **Sarah Księżka** (*1992, Frankfurt am Main) investigates the attractiveness of the uncategorizable. Working primarily with oil on aluminum panels – a material whose pictorial identity has yet to be established – she creates a tension between the inherent subjectivity of the painting process and the constraints of its support. The forms in her works are unsettled views into the origin of meaning, unfolding through the act of painting itself. By combining oil paint with a range of intermediate grounds, Księżka explores the apparent autonomy of the image – its ability to inhabit different material configurations. This invites reflection on the conditions that allow an image to exist in the first place.

Sarah Księżka lives and works in Vienna. She studied at the HFBK Hamburg, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, the Städelschule and was a resident at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Her work has been presented internationally, including solo exhibitions at Ramiken (New York), Fons Welters (Amsterdam) and group exhibitions at Mendes Wood in Retrenchement, Fitzpatrick Gallery in Paris and the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw.

David Ostrowski's (*1981 in Cologne) reductive, gestural works move beyond the traditional conventions of figuration and abstraction in painting. Employing minimal means, such as fast-drying industrial paint, scraps of paper and canvas from his studio, and a deliberately limited palette, the artist seeks to evoke a maximum of tension and emotional resonance. Ostrowski consistently rejects the conventional criteria by which painting has historically been evaluated, including material value, technical virtuosity, and conceptual reference. His works not only resist fixed interpretation but frequently defy categorization altogether. Many of his paintings bear the title F, a single letter that, for Ostrowski, parallels the complex visual language articulated across his canvases.

David Ostrowski lives and works in Cologne and Karlsruhe and is a professor of painting at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe. Selected solo exhibitions include Kunstverein Heilbronn, The Perimeter, London, Aranya Art Center, Beidaihe, Sprüth Magers, Fig., Tokyo, Ramiken, New York, Avant-Garde Institute, Warsaw, Jir Sandel, Copenhagen, Leeahn Gallery, Seoul, Sundogs, Paris, Wschód, Warsaw, Blueproject Foundation, Barcelona, Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren, Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo. Selected group exhibitions include Standard Oslo, Weiss Falk at XYZcollective, Tokyo, Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Fuhrwerkswaage, Cologne, Triest, New York, Pio Pico, Los Angeles, Karst, Plymouth, DuMont Kunsthalle, Cologne, Braunsfelder, Cologne, Aishti Foundation, Beirut, Museum of Modern Art, Gunma, Fondazione Carriero, Milan, M Woods Museum, Beijing, Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz and Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.

Katharina Wulff (* 1968 in Berlin) portrait, landscape and genre paintings depict seemingly everyday or surrealistic settings and are often highly stylized through ornamental forms. Her scenes are populated by apparently aristocratic figures or individuals who are difficult to categorize, thus creating a speculative space that both opens up to and closes off from the viewer.

Katharina Wulff lives and works in Marrakech and Berlin. She studied ballet, worked in film and theater, and later studied painting at the Berlin University of the Arts. She is a professor of painting at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Recent solo exhibitions include Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Galerie Buchholz/Cologne, Greene Naftali/New York, Galerie Neu/Berlin, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Selected group exhibitions include Carlier Gebauer/Berlin; the Bonner Kunstverein, Kölner Kunstverein and Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf and the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.

Irène Zurkinden (* 1909 in Basel, † 1987 *ibid.*) worked across portraiture, figuration and observations in the urban space, drawing from Surrealism and Post-Impressionism without settling into either. Her portraits of friends, lovers and fellow artists combine psychological directness with formal boldness. After studying at the School of Applied Arts Basel and receiving a scholarship to Paris in 1929, she enrolled at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière, where she joined the Montparnasse avant-garde alongside her childhood friend Meret Oppenheim. She lived between Paris and Basel for the following decade and returned permanently to Switzerland at the outbreak of the Second World War. From 1942 she showed with Gruppe 33, an antifascist artist association founded in Basel in 1933.

Solo exhibitions include Kunsthalle Basel (1959), Galerie Beyeler, Basel (1979), and a major retrospective at Kunstmuseum Basel (1985). Recent exhibitions include Meredith Rosen Gallery, New York (2023), Galerie Raphael Durazzo, Paris (2024) and Hauser & Wirth Basel (2026, upcoming). Her works are held in the collection of Kunstmuseum Basel.

The Exhibition is kindly supported by

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