

# The approach

## CONDO 2025

Philipp Zollinger, Zürich  
*Renée Levi + Cassidy Toner*

18 January – 15 February 2025

Preview: Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 January, 12-6pm

For Condo 2025, The Approach has invited Philipp Zollinger, Zürich, presenting **Renée Levi** (b. 1960) and **Cassidy Toner** (b. 1992).

For over thirty years **Renée Levi** has been questioning the medium of painting, she investigates colour, the application of paint, its body and its space on various image carriers as well as installations. Levi was born in 1960, in Istanbul and grew up in Aargau. Today she lives and works in Basel. After studying architecture at the HTL MuttENZ/Baseland, she studied at the Zürich School of Art and Design.

Renée Levi's gestural and colour-block compositions reveal an intuitive painting practice. Using a brush, roller and even cleaning rags as her painting utensils, Levi's assertive marks revel in the materiality of paint. It is a methodology that questions the medium not only through its application but also its absence.

Three large-scale works, each entitled *Maude* reflect both the sensuality of Levi's medium and her acute perception of space. Frenetic marks are offset by expanses of untouched canvas in an attempt to find an essential equilibrium in form, texture and colour. The primer, which reveals the weave of the canvas beneath, becomes as important as the self-mixed paints Levi uses.

Her paintings are not wholly expressive nor are they calculated, forming instead from experimentation. Levi lays her large canvases on a wooden floor, using the resulting indentations and imprints to form an initial compositional structure. Thereafter, these sizeable canvases capture Levi's movement in a single sitting as she daubs and scribbles in vibrant greens, reds and blues, each stroke bearing a rawness in their immediacy.

Levi's second series, *Myra*, 2024 marks a continuation of a recent turn to working on a much smaller scale. These intimate, square-shaped works employ an instinctive colour-blocking technique. The series also continues Levi's custom of naming works after women's first names, in honour of those overlooked by history.

Baltimore-born, Basel-based artist **Cassidy Toner's** playful practice uses humour and self-deprecation as a strategy for negating the pressures and logic of the artworld. Toner's artistic interventions reveal a system in which success and

attention are treated as the currencies of artistic labour. Her work refuses to cooperate with these expectations, instead riffing on notions of failure, shame and unfulfillment.

For Condo 2025, Toner presents two ongoing series of works. *Family-Unfriendly Violence* consists of ceramic sculptures that mimic a cartoon character's motion. The sculptures explore the slippages in the translation process when movement, interpreted in the two-dimensional world of cartoons, becomes three-dimensional once more. The bluster of limbs and eyeballs twist and contort yet appear tragically static in their new form, entombed in airbrushed ceramic and left helplessly hovering. Inspired by the art-world satire comics of Abstract Expressionist, Ad Reinhardt, Toner's ceramics can also be read as a humorous take on Umberto Boccioni's Futurist bronze sculpture, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*, 1913.

*"As a sweet apple turns red on a high branch, high on the highest branch and the apple pickers forgot- well, no they didn't forget- were not able to reach"* takes its title from a poem by the Greek poet Sappho. Toner collects flowers which are on the verge of blooming before arranging them into a bouquet and pressing them into clay to create a mould. She then pours liquid tin into the mould, eternally casting the buds in a state of unfulfilled promise. For Toner, like the apple on the high branch, desire is at its most fervent in the moments before it is satisfied, before enthusiasm and anticipation are dissolved by the finality of success or failure.

**Renée Levi** was born 1960, in Istanbul and grew up in Aargau. Today, she lives and works in Basel. After studying architecture at the HTL MuttENZ/Basel, she studied at the Zurich School of Art and Design. In 1998, she started working together with Marcel Schmid as a studio partner. Recent solo exhibitions include at Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2024); Galerie Mezzanin (Geneva, 2024); PHILIPPZOLLINGER (Zurich, 2023 & 2021); Öktem Aykut (Istanbul, 2022); Villa du Parc (Annemasse, 2021); Musée d'Art, Histoire et Archéologie d'Évreux (2020); Biennale de Lyon (2019); Museum Langmatt (Baden, 2019); Istituto Svizzero Milan (2019) and at Galerie Freymond-Guth (Basel, 2017). In addition, the artist has been included in numerous group exhibitions, such as at Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2023); Centre d'art Pasquart (Biel, 2022); MAMCO (Geneva, 2021); Istituto Svizzero Rome (2019); Vin Vin (Vienna, 2018) or at Kunstverein Munich (2015). Renée Levi has received several awards, including the Prix de la Société des Arts de Genève, Arts Visuel, in 2019, or the Prix Meret Oppenheim in 2002. Moreover, Levi is the winner of the public art competition of the Parliament Building in Bern, Switzerland.

**Cassidy Toner** was born 1992, in Baltimore and lives in Basel. In 2018, Toner graduated from FHNW Institute Kunst. Recent solo and duo exhibitions include at Kunstmuseum Basel (2025); PHILIPPZOLLINGER (Zurich, 2023, 2022 & 2019); All Stars (Lausanne 2023); Castiglioni (Milan, 2022); Sgomento Zurigo (2021); KunstRaumRiehen (2021) and Saint Luke (Zurich, 2019). In addition, she has participated in numerous group shows, such as at Fasan (Basel, 2024); Kunsthalle Zurich (2023); Rinde am Rhein (Dusseldorf, 2023); Sgomento Zurigo (2023); Forde (Geneva, 2022); N/A/S/L (Mexico City, 2022); PHILIPPZOLLINGER (Zurich, 2021); Haus Konstruktiv (Zurich, 2021); Swiss Institute (New York, 2020); Kunsthalle Basel (2019); KunstRaumRiehen (2019); C.Rockefeller (Dresden, 2019); Yverdon Art Center (2019); Kai Matsumiya (New York, 2019); Kunsthalle Freiburg (2018); Wallriss (Freiburg 2018) and Kunsthau Baselland (2018). In 2018, Toner was the recipient of the KunstKredit Award in Basel and in 2021, of the Kiefer Hablitzel Prize. This year, Cassidy Toner has been named the winner of the Manor Art Prize.

### Renée Levi

1. *Maude*, 2023  
Acrylic on cotton  
230 x 230 cm
2. *Maude*, 2023  
Acrylic on cotton  
190 x 380 cm
3. *Myra*, 2024  
Acrylic on cotton  
120 x 120 cm
4. *Myra*, 2024  
Acrylic on linen  
30 x 30 cm
5. *Maude*, 2023  
Acrylic on cotton  
230 x 230 cm

### Cassidy Toner

6. "As a sweet apple turns red on a high branch, high on the highest branch and the apple pickers forgot- well, no they didn't forget- were not able to reach" (#3), 2022  
Tin  
18 x 8 x 2 cm
7. *Family-Unfriendly Violence* (#3), 2023  
Hand painted ceramic  
16 x 16 x 16 cm
8. *Family-Unfriendly Violence* (#2), 2023  
Hand painted ceramic  
15 x 15 x 15 cm
9. *Family-Unfriendly Violence* (#5), 2024  
Airbrushed ceramic  
25 x 25 x 25 cm
10. "As a sweet apple turns red on a high branch, high on the highest branch and the apple pickers forgot- well, no they didn't forget- were not able to reach" (#4), 2024  
Tin  
10 x 5 x 1 cm
11. "As a sweet apple turns red on a high branch, high on the highest branch and the apple pickers forgot- well, no they didn't forget- were not able to reach" (#5), 2024  
Tin  
10 x 5 x 1 cm
12. *Family-Unfriendly Violence* (#6), 2024  
Airbrushed ceramic  
25 x 25 x 25 cm
13. *Family-Unfriendly Violence* (#4), 2024  
Airbrushed Ceramic  
25 x 25 x 25 cm
14. "As a sweet apple turns red on a high branch, high on the highest branch and the apple pickers forgot- well, no they didn't forget- were not able to reach" (#6), 2024  
Tin  
10 x 5 x 1 cm
15. "As a sweet apple turns red on a high branch, high on the highest branch and the apple pickers forgot- well, no they didn't forget- were not able to reach" (#2), 2022  
Tin  
18 x 8 x 2 cm

