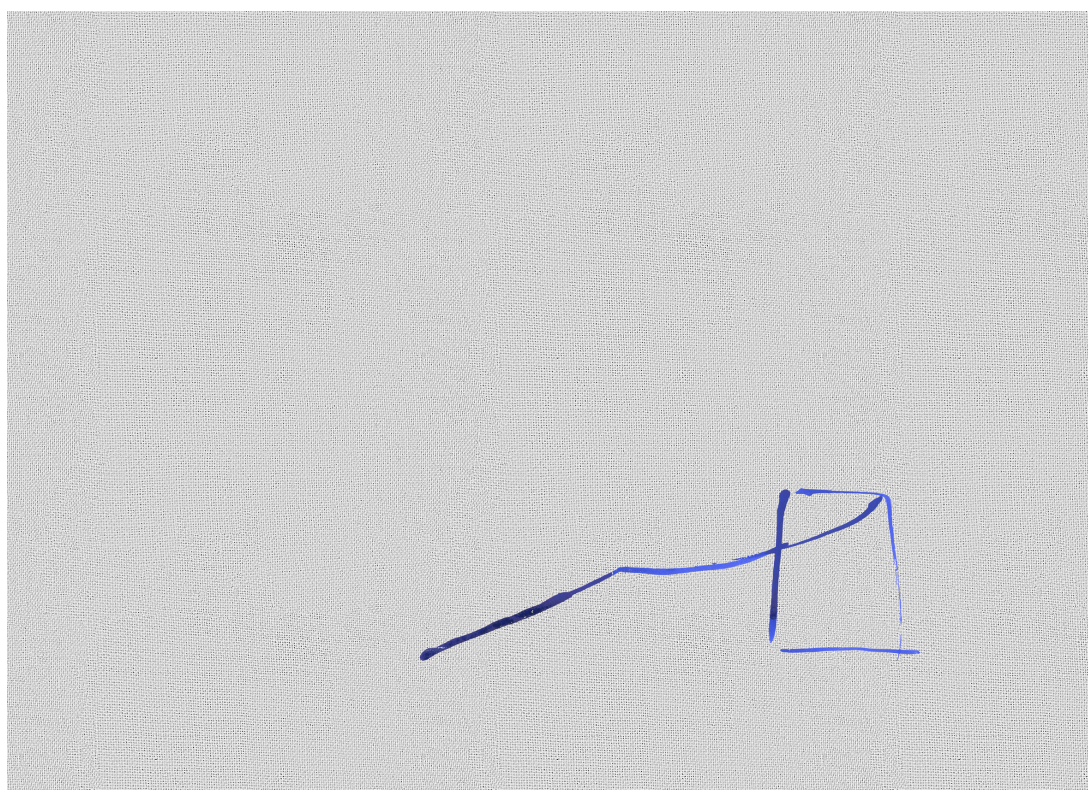


MARIETA CHIRULESCU
FRED SANDBACK

PHASE

GALERIE THOMAS SCHULTE, 28 FEBRUARY 2026 TO 18 APRIL 2026



GALERIE
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Marieta Chirulescu, 2025

Muted and mutable surfaces take shape as thresholds in *Phase* at Galerie Thomas Schulte, a two-person exhibition of works on canvas by Marieta Chirulescu and spatial installations by Fred Sandback. The works share a processual and intuitive approach that engages shifting perceptual properties of light and space. What may at first appear pared down, or emptied out, slowly takes on further dimensions, including that of time—a sense of transience that unsettles what could appear as clear-cut geometries. Between opening as surface and the solidity of transparency, our attention is pulled towards what is actually there but may otherwise elude us: space as subtle material presence.

In canvases that are largely monochrome, and frequently, but not exclusively, in shades of white, Chirulescu's works induce shifting translucencies, depths, and textures. She often combines physical, painterly gestures and marks with photographic and digital ones, drawing on different media and techniques of image-making and reproduction. Compiling layers while reducing visual traces, the resulting works oscillate between the concrete and the spectral. This may be expressed, for instance, in iridescence: an effect of light and motion. As though illuminated from within, real reflections in some works generate an illusion of three dimensionality, while amplifying the actual presence of the image. It is the sliver of space between layers, like a sheet of paper on the glass plate of a scanner, that Chirulescu is interested in activating.

From the use of a scanner to closely develop an image from an object that retains its depth, to colors that evolve over time through composites of material and shades, light gives shape and is drawn out through surprising density. Spanning nearly ten years of Chirulescu's practice, the inkjet prints on canvas here, at times with paint and textile applied, bring certain continuities into form, alongside the expansive possibilities of image making within this frame. Apart from visible superimpositions of scraps and fragments, material specificities occasionally enter around the edges of canvases, offering an abstract point of reference within an otherwise open field. Folds and shadows, as temporary or changing states of a fabric, become fixed through the application of paint and primer, or the use of shadow effects in digital processing programs. In both cases, the impression of gradual unfolding grants a lived-in feel.

As processes that can leave their own marks and traces, scanners or photocopiers interject in streaks, blur, or static. A single, straight, luminous line may stretch – mostly vertically – from edge to edge, appearing like string and lending a sort of material tension that interacts with horizontal waves, bands, and markings. Their appearance is sometimes particularly interrupted by noise – with a fraying consistency and connection made tenuous. Other expanses in varied states of continuity and disturbance at times partially frame or split the canvas, adding a set of relations that underscore their object presence. The thin line of shadow from the unswerving edge of a transparent panel, for instance, begins to dip into a fold below it, disrupting the line while tugging open a small point of entry. Illumination and transparency surface through the addition of layers.

The spaces here are largely defined by vertical motion, extending from Chirulescu's canvases and reverberating in Sandback's installations. The material slightness and weightlessness of Sandback's linear sculptures, which he began producing in the late 1960s, give tautly defined form to expansive volumes and planes that remain unfixed. Multi-part vertical constructions and open-ended forms initiate points of contact between different architectural surfaces in changing constellations. Space transforms into planes, is folded, sliced, and intersects with existing horizontal lines and corners. Even as the works are loosed from their objecthood, they retain a physical nature. The precision and tension of the straight lines is subtly offset by the soft texture of the different colored strands of acrylic yarn, which take on an appearance like translucence: luminous, yet out of focus. The yarn may cast shadows on the walls and floor—like further threads, or line drawings—sometimes a shifting and gentle presence, at other times a stark expression.

Through Sandback's sculptures, distinct and continuous views are offered even as they are effectively split. Here, there are parallel lines and right angles, forming planes, screens or portals. The yarn generates more angles and corners, windows and doorways than a room has, while underscoring its characteristics. It may be the slight gap between a strand of yarn and the wall or floor—especially when seen at a distance that collapses it—that particularly comes to hold great tension and potential for activation. In some instances where the yarn hovers slightly away from the wall, it's not quite a flat form that is outlined, nor is it three-dimensional. Like a plane in front of a plane, it frames while adding another layer: an in-between where only space can take shape.

Sandback's works alter in effect and scale in the different environments they inhabit. Rhythms continuously shift with our own movements, shapes come to the fore but are left partially undefined. Distinctions between inside and outside are never realized—an effect that is enhanced by an installation spanning the gallery's corner space, which is similarly formed of interactions between interior and exterior.

Phase, as an indication of time, may suggest a gradual shift, in light or color, an in-between state, an ongoing process or a cyclical return. The untitled, decidedly non-referential works throughout the exhibition carry both an openness and a tangible extension of the boundaries of their respective media—material conditions set in motion through resonances in space.

Text by Julianne Cordray

Marieta Chirulescu, born in 1974 in Sibiu, Romania, reflects in her work on the aesthetic and conceptual premises of contemporary painting and, more broadly, on the conditions of the image in the present. Marieta Chirulescu studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest, Hungary, and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Nuremberg, Germany, where she graduated in 2004. She is Professor of Painting at the Kunstakademie Münster, Germany. Over the course of her career, she has received numerous scholarships and awards, including the Villa Massimo residency in Rome (2015), the Lingener Kunstpreis (2014), the Villa Aurora residency in Los Angeles (2012), and a DAAD scholarship in Bucharest (2006). Her wide-ranging exhibition activities include solo exhibitions at institutions and internationally recognized venues such as Kunsthalle Basel (2010), Kunsthalle Mainz (2009), Kunsthalle Lingen (2014), and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw (2025). Furthermore, she has participated in numerous institutional group exhibitions, including the 6th Art Encounters Biennial, Timișoara (2025), Vienna Biennale at MAK, Vienna (2015), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2012), Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen (2016), Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2014), KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2013), Museum Folkwang, Essen (2013), Sprengel Museum Hannover (2012), Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn (2014), and Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2016). Chirulescu lives and works in Berlin.

Fred Sandback, born in Bronxville, New York in 1943 and died in New York City in 2003. He was educated at Williston Academy (1957-1961) and Theodor-Heuss-Gymnasium in Heilbronn, West Germany (1961-1962). He studied philosophy at Yale University (1962-1966) and received an MFA from Yale's School of Art and Architecture in 1969. Since the late sixties, his work has been featured in numerous group and individual exhibitions in the United States and Europe. Notable individual exhibitions include Dia Art Foundation, New York (1988), Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2003); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2011); and Glenstone, Potomac, Maryland (2015). In 1981, the Fred Sandback Museum was established in Winchendon, Massachusetts under the sponsorship of Dia Art Foundation. The Fred Sandback Archive was established in 2007, primarily to create and maintain an archival resource on the artist's art. Sandback's work is represented in numerous public collections, including the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.