

Marieta Chirulescu

1–30 May 2026

Opening: Friday, 1 May, 6–9 pm

Gallery Weekend Berlin

Saturday & Sunday, 2–3 May, 11 am – 6 pm

On the surface of it Marieta Chirulescu is a materialist. Although her work incorporates the inkjet printing of scanned images, she never uses it to open windows onto other planes, other places. Nor does she have – or has she ever had – much truck with the digital evangelism of many of her contemporaries. She emerged in the late 2000s when this technique was seen as a state-of-the-art panacea, rendering painting newly relevant for the information age.

Now that its promise has been superseded by that of other, more up-to-date technologies, the extent to which the photographic component of her work is assimilated by painting and fabric collage is less likely to be obscured by the glamour of the printing technique in its own right. We can see more clearly that what is what in the mix has always been difficult to distinguish. Images are arranged as bricolage; the bricolage of printed fabric creates images. Photography is used to produce monochrome painting; monochrome painting to occlude photographic illusionism. A traditional pin-striped shirt fabric, sliced up finely, becomes drawing, liberated from the manual input a pencilled line would imply. When that fabric is scanned and printed onto canvas, there is a humorous relish of the tautology of turning fabric (canvas) into an image of fabric, and having clothing ‘clothe’ a painting.

Such double entendres are cultivated, not as virtuoso tricks, but with an acknowledgement of the perplexity of appearances and a self-deprecation that wishes to avoid having any constituent medium flaunt its contribution for its own sake. Not only is it hard to tell what is there from what is pictured as being there, the distinction resolves, in all instances, into the materiality of a surface. As much as this consists of explicit decisions, it also includes the contingencies and glitches that arise in executing them; all the seemingly absent-minded traces Chirulescu leaves of the unpredictable path that has led her to particular conclusions. Even the odd signs, like nascent letters – Ds or dashes – which recently recur, assume a structural role as lesions cut into fabric, exposing another surface beneath it as part of the same surface.

The application often begins on the back sides of unusually thin cotton supports – translucent as parchment – which have been partially painted to produce an impression of partial transparency on the front. It may take years to get from that backing to the final layer, interspersed with fallow periods of subconscious gestation, of waiting for something to shift and something else to become possible.

But despite the step-by-step accretion of materials, these are not recipe paintings. The alchemical result of their process is that rather than leaving us to parse its constituent elements, and enumerate their components, at the last moment it abstracts itself. The ambiguity between media turns out to be a means to this end, as the canvas’s translucent thinness is also a clue, in that it combines the fulcrum of a support – the definition of a painting’s physical surface – with a hint of its function as a window, but onto nothing but the wall on which the work is hung. Surface is released from its literalness, but without divesting itself of its essential materiality to assume the condition of an image.

Chirulescu could be engaged in an inquiry into how pictures disclose what they do, without letting what is being disclosed distract us from a focus on the act of disclosure itself. The implication is that appearances consist of some unanalysable synthesis of projection and reception, and that this corresponds to the essential ambivalence of painterly ontology. Contemporary painting, on the other hand, tends to veer one way or other: into the self-concealment of illusionism or the bric-a-

brac of formalism, with the sub-category of abstract painting as a series of pedantically specialised practices, each a litany of formal ticks that pride themselves on the niche they establish.

Here we have an alternative, more specific definition of abstraction in painting. To abstract something from something else is literally to remove it into a less material realm, conditional on projections of various sorts. The infinitesimal traces of making, which constitute Chirulescu's works, do not allow us to escape their vehicles, but to intuit the possibility of doing so. They are traps that turn seeing into seeing-into – if never quite into seeing-as – as if laid by an inveterate sceptic, who refuses to let herself believe that even that first step is possible, but never gives up on the hope of taking it.

Mark Prince

Marieta Chirulescu, born 1974 in Sibiu, Romania, lives in Berlin, Germany, studied at the Academy of Fine Arts, Budapest, Hungary, and the Academy of Fine Arts, Nuremberg, Germany, where she graduated in 2004. She is a professor of painting at the Kunstakademie Münster.

She received numerous scholarships and awards, including the German Academy Villa Massimo in Rome (2015), the Lingener Art Prize in Lingen (2014), the Villa Aurora Residency in Los Angeles (2012), and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Bucharest (2006).

Solo exhibitions include: *Phase* (with Fred Sandback), Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin (2026); *Private Life* (with Ana Botezatu), Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw (2025); *They Said So*, Galeria Fonti, Napoli (2023); *Marieta Chirulescu*, Gregor Podnar, Berlin (2021); *Marieta Chirulescu*, Plan B, Berlin (2020); Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw (2019); *Pale Fire*, Kurimanzutto, Mexico City (2016); *CYTWOMBLY CYFONTI*, Galeria Fonti, Napoli (2016); *Marieta Chirulescu*, Kunsthalle Lingen, Lingen (2014); *Ileana*, Micky Schubert, Berlin (2013); *Marieta Chirulescu*, White Cube Bermondsey, London (2011); *Marieta Chirulescu*, Kunstverein Nürnberg (2011); *Werke aus der Sammlung Martin*, Neues Museum, Nürnberg (2011); *Marieta Chirulescu*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2010); *Marieta Chirulescu*, Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz (2009); *Marieta Chirulescu*, Projektraum der Temporären Kunsthalle Berlin, (2009).

Group exhibitions include: *IT'S NO CRIME TO TICKLE TIME. 20 Years of Plan B*, Galeria Plan B, Berlin (2026); *6th Art Encounters Biennial*, Timisoara (2025); *Pictorial Resonance*, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin (2024); *Sediments. The Matter-Image*, Salonul de proiecte, Bucharest (2023); *Volume through Layers*, 'U' Baracks, Timisoara (2023); *todos juntos (all together)*, Kurimanzutto, New York (2022); *Parthenope, Lighea ed altre storie...*, Villa Doria d'Angri, Napoli (2021); *Local talent*, Sprüth Magers, Berlin (2020); *Marieta Chirulescu & Thu van Tran*, Galerie Joseph Tang, Paris (2017); *THE GAP BETWEEN THE FRIDGE AND THE COOKER*, The Modern Institute, Glasgow (2017); *#12 / Folies d'hiver*, Villa Medici, Rome (2017); *Präsentation 2015 Villa Massimo*, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2016); *Image Support*, Bergen Kunsthall (2016); *Mapping Bucharest. Art, Memory, and Revolution (1916 - 2016)*, Vienna Biennale, MAK Vienna (2015); *Attention Economy*, Kunsthalle Wien (2014); *Space, Space*, curated by Dora Maurer, Museum Vasarely, Budapest (2014); *Painting Forever!*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2014); *Nur was möglich ist ist möglich*, Museum Folkwang, Essen (2014); *Les ateliers de Rennes*, Biennale d'art Contemporain, Rennes (2012); *Minimal Myth*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2012); *Made In Germany Zwei*, Sprengel Museum, Hanover (2012); *La preuve concrète*, Centre Européen d'Actions Artistiques Contemporaines, Strasbourg (2009); *Against Interpretation*, Studio Voltaire, London (2009); *Nothing to say and I am saying it*, Kunstverein Freiburg, Freiburg (2009); *kettő/zwei*, Goethe Institut, Budapest (2002).