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ANASTASIA YOVANOVSKA

Six emerging artists— ⁽¹⁾ESTHER MATHIS, ⁽²⁾AMANDA SANDBERG, ⁽³⁾VERONIKA MOSHNIKOVA, ⁽⁴⁾LOUISA GAGLIARDI, ⁽⁵⁾PAULA SANTOMÉ, and ⁽⁶⁾IEVA PAVULANE-REIDZANE—are reshaping Switzerland’s art scene. Working across diverse mediums—from oil painting and performance to aluminum sculpture and site-specific installation—they share a common drive: to investigate, unsettle, and reimagine. Each artist articulates a distinct visual language—drawing on myth, memory, and architectural form. Their practices are deliberate, often intimate, and consistently forward-looking.

Six Voices, One Mission – The Future of Swiss Art is Female



ESTHER MATHIS works with light—how we see it, shape it, and respond to it. With a background in photography and an MFA from Zurich University of the Arts, she combines scientific research with poetic precision. Her installations explore light as both a physical and emotional force. Currently pursuing a doctorate focused on “directing light,” Mathis creates subtle interventions that shift how we look at space and perception. From gallery exhibitions to public commissions, her work quietly changes the atmosphere—inviting viewers to slow down and see differently.

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What themes or subjects consistently appear in your work?

ESTHER MATHIS

The formative role of light and time in my surroundings and in my life. And I love to think about stability being possible through fluidity and fragility.

AY

Can you walk us through your creative process, from concept to finished piece?

EM

I love observing and researching, often spending time where my work will be installed or exhibited. In the studio, I experiment with materials to explore and understand their limits—I see this as another form of observation. I like to collaborate with experts, which often leads to inspiring exchanges. My work is sometimes site-specific, shaped by the location or its people, but recurring themes also guide the creation of objects, installations, and images.



1



AY

What is the most challenging part of creating for you—and the most rewarding?

EM

I don't like stress or working under pressure; it blocks my focus. But I love when unexpected combinations emerge. At my Kunsthalle Arbon exhibition (2017), I used the entire hall as a light-reflecting object with mirror panels. Sunlight created shifting drawings on the wall, unlike the controlled lighting of museums. Birds had nested under the roof, and once the chicks hatched, one would sweep low over the mirrors several times a day, almost touching its reflection. Their flight, the mirrors like water, and the reversed sunlight made the space feel like a scene from a fantasy film. I got goosebumps. Everything felt in sync.

AMANDA SANDBERG's paintings explore identity, presence, and the act of being seen. Working in thin, layered oil on canvas, she creates figures that shift between clarity and blur—part memory, part observation. A graduate of Zurich's ZHdK with a background in fashion from Paris, Sandberg brings a strong sense of posture and gesture to her work. Her subjects often shift between archetype and individual, between societal expectations and personal expression. Rather than aiming for realism, she's interested in how identity is performed—and how the gaze shapes that performance.



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What themes or subjects consistently appear in your work?

AMANDA SANDBERG

I paint the people closest to me and their lives. I want to paint people in a way that allows them to perform both inside and outside of their gender roles. My long-term life partner recently came out as a trans woman, and I've been really inspired to work in a way that challenges our preconceived notions of what a certain body looks like.



AY

Can you walk us through your creative process, from concept to finished piece?

AS

I start off with a thin layer of very diluted oil paint to get a feeling for the outlines of the subject. After that, I almost always continue with the eyes. The eyes play a central role in my paintings and determine the direction the rest of the painting will take. I try to work as much as possible on a new painting in one sitting, without thinking too much. When that session is over, I usually pause the piece and start a new one—or do something else entirely. Then I come back to see if it feels finished or if there are details I can add. When I feel that I can look at a painting and the different parts flow together, then it's finished. Sometimes, parts of the canvas may be left completely unpainted, but that contributes to the overall picture.

AY

What is the most challenging part of creating for you—and the most rewarding?

AS

The most rewarding part for me is when people are touched by how my paintings look at them. The most challenging is not overthinking—and maintaining a sense of distance from my own work.

ANASTASIA YOVANOVSKA

What themes or subjects consistently appear in your work?

VERONIKA MOSHNIKOVA

Time, home, irreversibility, sensitive content, identity, utopia, power.

AY

Can you walk us through your creative process, from concept to finished piece?

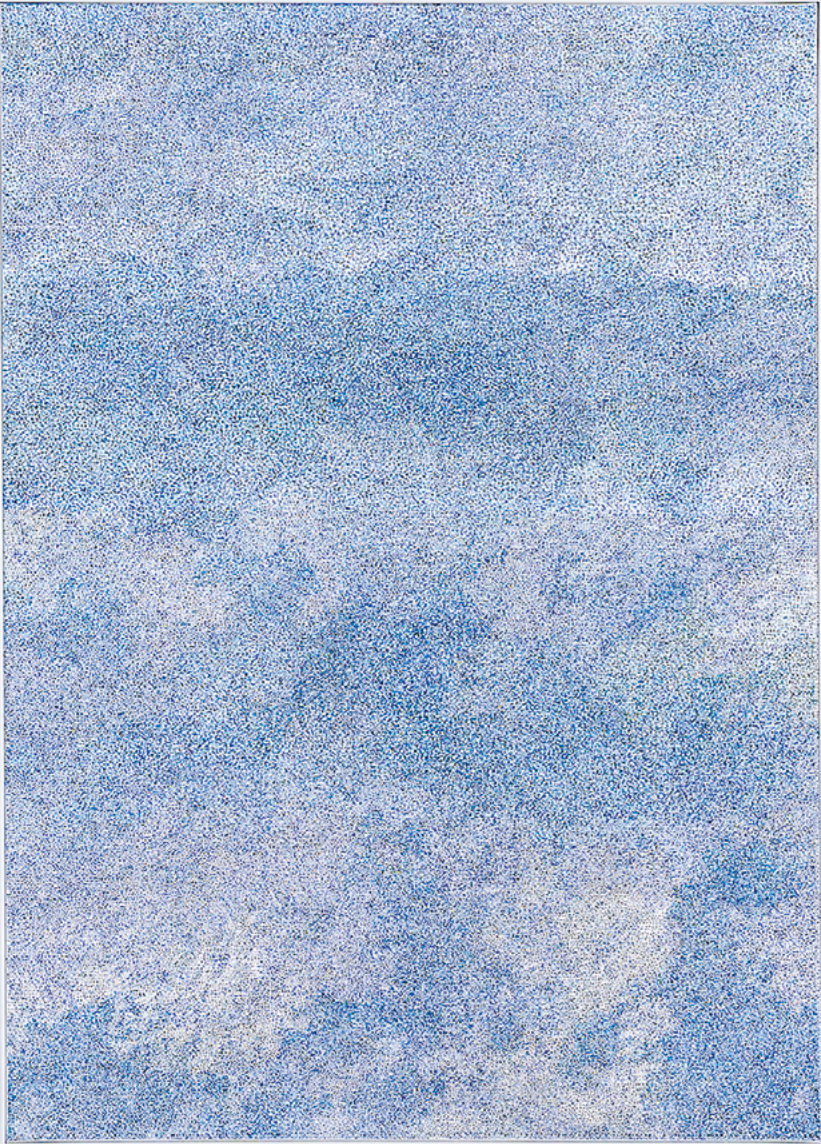
VM

Before an idea, there may be a feeling or an event—something that disturbs me or expands my boundaries. After some time, a concept forms, and then I take action: I experiment, sketch, and gather information. The process itself guides my decisions until I can say it's finished. Once the work is complete, I live with it for a while to allow time for reflection.



VERONIKA MOSHNIKOVA works with painting, drawing, installation, and video to explore themes of time, home, loss, and belonging. Trained first in the classical academies of Simferopol and later in a more experimental setting in Poznan, she has developed a style that combines careful skill with intuitive expression. Having completed a practice-based PhD in painting and drawing, Moshnikova treats each project as a form of research, digging into memories and layered histories. Her work examines the hidden boundaries between past and present, place and displacement, offering an intimate and ongoing search for what it means to find home.

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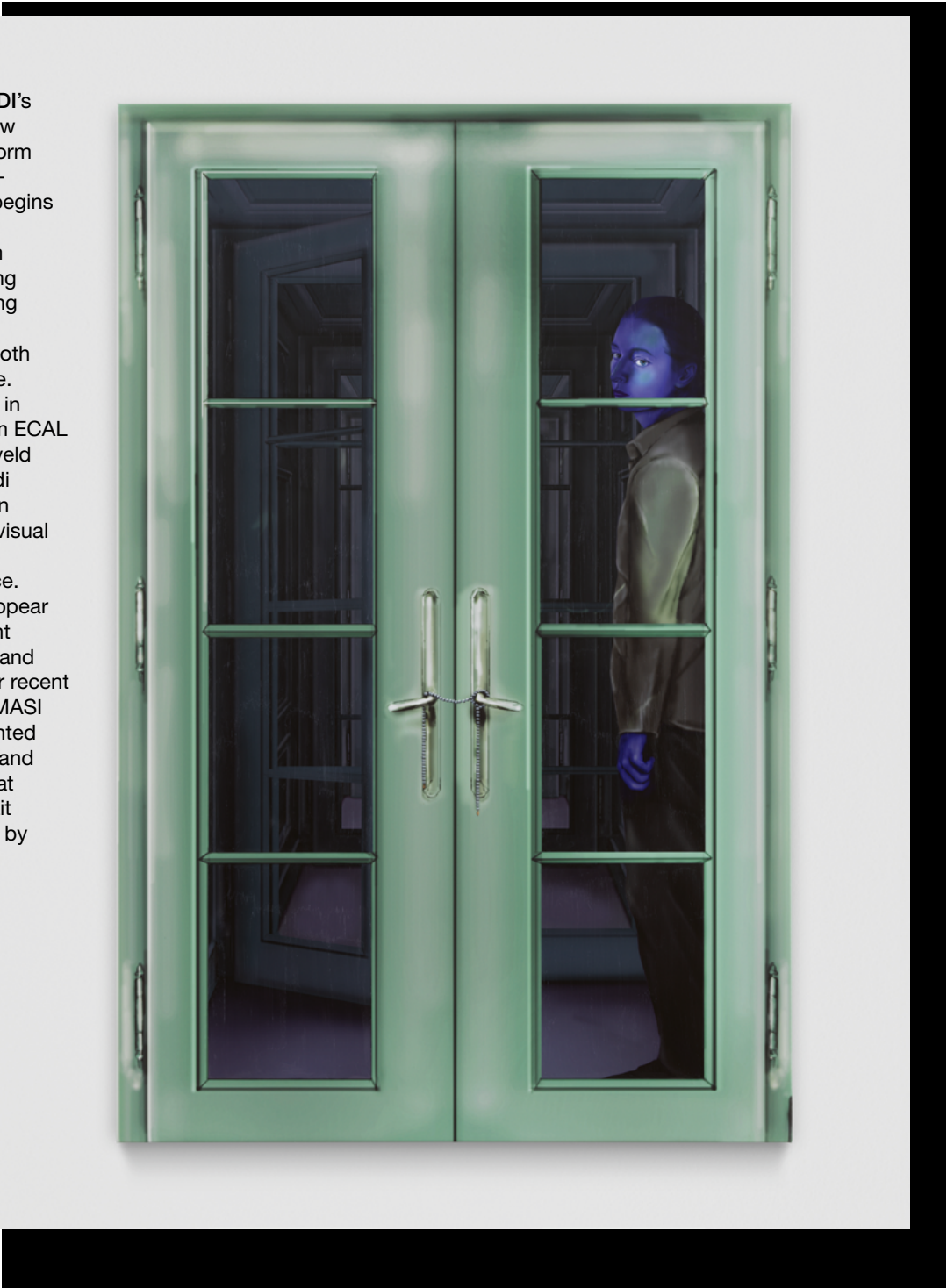
AY

What is the most challenging part of creating for you—and the most rewarding?

VM

Each work or project sets new challenges—nothing is fixed. For example, in Sensitive, I had to endure a tough process for the concept. I was physically exhausted. In Time Record, I realised how much everything depends on the place and space in which I work—over ten years, I've changed studios about six times. In the performance 12 Hours, I experienced an irregular heartbeat from the tenth hour onward; it became difficult to breathe. I find satisfaction, again and again, in the process of creating and thinking—even when satisfaction doesn't seem possible.

LOUISA GAGLIARDI's paintings reflect how we shape and perform identity in a screen-based world. She begins her works digitally, then transfers them onto aluminum using gel medium, creating smooth, reflective surfaces that feel both distant and intimate. With a background in graphic design from ECAL and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Gagliardi turned to painting in 2015 to develop a visual language rooted in emotion and surface. Her figures often appear suspended—caught between presence and performance. In her recent museum debut at MASI Lugano, she presented eighteen paintings and two installations that offer incisive portrait of intimacy shaped by technology.



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What themes or subjects consistently appear in your work?

LOUISA GAGLIARDI

I'm consistently drawn to emotional ambiguity—those moments that exist between connection and detachment, presence and absence. Much of my work explores the psychological textures of everyday life: solitude, vulnerability, desire, disorientation. I often depict figures caught in introspective or transitional states, suspended in environments that feel both familiar and strangely artificial. There's also a recurring interest in surfaces—skin, reflections, screens—as metaphors for both intimacy and distance. These surfaces often act as thresholds, blurring the line between what's visible and what's concealed. In a way, the digital medium mirrors these themes: it's clean, controlled, and yet capable of evoking deep emotional tension. Ultimately, I'm trying to visualize the quiet, in-between moments that feel both deeply personal and universally human—the kind that linger long after they've passed.

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AY

Can you walk us through your creative process, from concept to finished piece?

LG

My process often begins with observation—of people, gestures, and fleeting emotions that are hard to name but easy to feel. I collect these fragments mentally or through quick sketches, and from there, I start building compositions digitally. I love to work on more than one piece at a time. This allows me to layer, blur, erase, and rework elements fluidly—almost like sculpting with light and shadow. Once the image feels resolved, I print it onto PVC and mount it onto aluminum. This translation from screen to physical surface is important—it introduces a new layer of materiality and objecthood that contrasts with the image's digital origins. The vinyl's sheen and texture play with light in interesting ways, adding a tactile quality that feels slightly synthetic yet grounded. In the end, I want the work to hover between familiarity and alienation—where the viewer feels invited in, but never quite settles.

AY

What is the most challenging part of creating for you—and the most rewarding?

LG

The beginning is the most challenging. You'd think it gets easier with time (and some parts do), but the blank page is always terrifying. The most rewarding moment is stretching the work. I still do it myself—even the large pieces, often with the help of my partner, artist Adam Cruces. I love the physicality of it—seeing the works take form.



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PAULA SANTOMÉ creates sculptural and tactile works that explore systems of power and the body’s place within them. With a background in art studies across Vigo, Brussels, Madrid, and Basel, her practice combines research with personal and political urgency. Working across sculpture, drawing, and craft, she builds layered pieces that reflect on oppression, identity, and resistance. Recent recognition from Kunsthalle Basel and the María José Jove Foundation highlights her growing international presence. Her forms often feel fragmented or hybrid—challenging established structures and imagining new possibilities.



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What themes or subjects consistently appear in your work?

PAULA SANTOMÉ

My work reflects on what it means to experience this world as a woman, shaped by history and ongoing power structures. I explore resistance, resilience, and the tensions between freedom and constraint. Using personal and inherited stories, I imagine alternatives—parallel realities where transformation is possible. It comes from a deep dissatisfaction with the present and a desire to revisit and rewrite stories that limit us.



AY

Can you walk us through your creative process, from concept to finished piece?

PS

It usually begins with a personal experience or question. I then dive into research—often historical or theoretical—and from there, I look for the material or technique that can best embody the idea. Many times, that means learning a new, very manual process that requires long hours in the studio.

AY

What is the most challenging part of creating for you—and the most rewarding?

PS

The hardest part is imagining something “new”—not knowing what’s next. That uncertainty can be tough. The most rewarding is when the new project reveals itself as part of a bigger, coherent whole.

IEVA PAVULANE-REIDZANE blurs the line between painting and fashion, bringing a theatrical sensibility to the surface of the canvas. Before turning to painting, she created conceptual fashion and costume-based works that explored narrative through form, movement, and staging. That background continues to shape her visual language—where soft, abstract forms evoke both the body and its absence. Her aesthetic is at once fragile and monumental, marked by a deep sensitivity to composition and atmosphere.

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What themes or subjects consistently appear in your work?

IEVA PAVULANE-REIDZANE

The resolution of existential continuance, which in reality solves nothing—but is fun to play with. With lightness and naivety, I rush through beautifully and intricately decorated rooms of manic depression.

AY

Can you walk us through your creative process, from concept to finished piece?

IP-R

I look at the space I'm currently in. Guided by impulse, I rush into the work so the idea doesn't fade away. Painting is like an explosion I throw out from my guts, leaving it to live forever elsewhere. In fashion, it's the opposite—a planned project down to the last polished detail. I like contrasts, so I play in two directions: chaos and discipline.

AY

What's the most challenging part of creating for you—and the most rewarding?

IP-R

The process is the most enticing, as sometimes you don't know where you'll end up—and the unknowing helps. It's probably like a kind of "gambling episode," where you're teased till the end, and if you're lucky, satisfaction follows.

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photographers **BON PARINYA WONGWANNAWAT, NICK SOLAND** and **DOMINIC WALDEMAR WENGER**
clothes **LOUISA GAGLIARDI** and **PAULA SANTOMÉ** wears **JULIAN ZIGERLI**
ESTHER MATHIS, AMANDA SANDBERG, VERONIKA MOSHNIKOV and **IEVA PAVULANE-REIDZANE** wears **AKRIS**