

HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

HAUSER & WIRTH INVITE(S)

PHILIPP TIMISCHL

With a text by Sabrina Tarasoff

In collaboration with Layr (Vienna)

Hauser & Wirth Paris

11 September – 4 October 2025

A program for hosting fellow artists, galleries and writers in our Paris space, offering wider visibility of their work and ideas and engaging with the city's vibrant creative community



Exhibition text by Sabrina Tarasoff

'There's nothing funnier than unhappiness,' wrote Samuel Beckett, trying to redeem some value in loserdom by inscribing it with comic force. He also once implied, in a particularly bleak monologue on the futility of pretty-much-everything, that being born was certain to be the death of us all, which, by extension, seems pretty true for artworks as well. If the mere fact of being an can be considered a tragicomic cul-de-sac within which we desperately seek to transvalue 'lack' into more-or-less meaningful outcomes, then surely there can be nothing more inherently funny than the things we create?

Where much has been made of the suffering and failure implied by artistic life, Philipp Timischl turns instead to the discontent lives of artworks themselves. In his exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Paris, he sets the stage for works to explore their uncertain origins. His practice brings together

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painting, video, and text, often within single works, seemingly caught between fixed forms, confused in their formal identity. Between the accident of creation and the inevitability of their end, a whole lot of nothing tends to unfold — thinking, sleeping, staring, or simply being stuck, say, between history and the present, the real and the virtual, up against a wall. Trials become errors; the result is what it is — upside down, right-side up — it hardly matters.

‘A really true story’ (2025) centers the exhibition. A painting and an LED wall sit flush together, their surfaces spanned by decorative mouldings. The canvas is coated in concrete-like texture; the video shows a first-person view moving endlessly forward through shifting environments. The work speaks in subtitles, telling a tale of how it once served as a wall, cracked, collapsed and ended up as an artwork. When the monologue falls silent, the image occasionally glitches into pure grey, as if the wall were slipping back into its past position. The piece stages its own instability, a tale played out between the concrete and abstract, the real and the virtual, painting and video.

Large paintings portray muscular men who’ve seemingly given up exertion for stillness. Hands folded, eyes elsewhere, they do not pose, work, or offer themselves up to the gaze. If their bodies suggest strength, the paintings quietly strip away its use. Thought stalls into inertia, image into pure stasis. In I’m a painting yet I have my flaws, the figure states its condition outright, only to remain suspended in that admission. These works dwell in their own impasse: a mute posturing, from which they nevertheless manage to act, to speak, and to perform, even — or especially — through flaws, fuck-ups, faux-pas, and failure.

Hung whichever way, up or down, lost in orientation, plain walls pose as paintings. Or, like the dishevelled portraits of raccoons — the Hard Paintings — they end up immortalized only to feel further deflated. Framed in ornate mouldings and washed in nondescript grey, they adopt the posture of classical portraiture but swap out the labour of painting for something cheaper, easier, more convenient. The images often imitate the texture of drawing or brushwork without quite committing to it. Titles such as Hard Painting (Super Sick), Hard Painting (Sleep), or Hard Painting (Bloody Painting) underline the state of their subjects: raccoons that throw-up, collapse, bleed, or drift into unconsciousness. The scenes speak a private idiolect of injury and illness, but without sentiment. What they offer instead is a performance of exhaustion — painting as surface, as symptom, as something barely holding itself together: a terminal condition. Here, the laissez-faire becomes a kind of ethic — a comic resignation to art’s mute profession.

Tall tales collapse into rubble; nothing to do with the debris but turn it into art. What emerges is not irony but a kind of strategic sincerity. Timischl’s works are alert to the expectations that cling to form, taste, and value — and they probe those expectations by refusing to fulfil them cleanly. Witty remarks and jokes about flaws mask bitter truths, making the whole thing seem more laughable. These works make a heroic effort to bolster the queasy-comic banalities of being as inherently hilarious. Art reaches peak comedy not only in the display of its unhappiness, but in recognizing the nothingness from which it came. To be clear, theirs is not the canonically legit ‘nothingness’ aestheticised in art history as the romantic chasm or conceptual void, but plain emptiness: dead time, passivity, resignation, doing nothing - unending. Again, like the muscle-dudes who, as paintings, aspire to nothing but failure, and nail it. The joke is, however you turn it, it still turns out art.

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About Hauser & Wirth Invite(s)

This initiative reflects Hauser & Wirth's longstanding commitment to building a sense of connection in the places where it works, collaborating with artists (or estates) who may benefit from an additional platform, galleries of different scale and writers addressing new audiences, all in support of a sustainable art ecosystem. By hosting fellow artists, galleries and writers in our Paris and Zurich spaces, we offer wider visibility of their work and ideas to engage with the city's vibrant creative community. Organized with Olivier Renaud-Clement, Hauser & Wirth Invite(s) is hosted on the second floor of our Paris location and complements our ongoing series of exhibitions by gallery artists on the ground and first floors.



About Philipp Timischl

Philipp Timischl (b. 1989, Graz) grew up in the rural countryside of Austria and now lives and works in Paris, France. His practice spans video, sculpture, painting, and photography, often combined with text and culminating in site-specific installations. His work frequently engages with power dynamics—particularly regarding social class, queerness, heritage, and the art world.

After studying at the Städelschule in Frankfurt and graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, he has presented solo exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade (2025), Le Confort Moderne, Poitiers (2024), High Art, Paris (2024), MGK Siegen (2023), Layr, Vienna (2023), Heidelberger Kunstverein (2022), Secession, Vienna (2018), and Halle für Kunst Lüneburg (2016). His work has been shown at the NGV Triennial, Melbourne (2023), the Lyon Biennale (2022), and in group exhibitions at Marta Herford / Kunsthalle Bielefeld (2024), Belvedere 21 (2021, 2019), Kunsthalle Bern (2019), Kunstwerke Berlin (2016), Luma Foundation Zürich, Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Turin, and Serpentine Gallery London, among others. Public collections include mumok, Belvedere, Kunsthau Bregenz, Heidi Horten Collection, and EVN Collection (Austria); Saatchi Collection (London); FRAC Corsica; and the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia.

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About Layr (Vienna)

Founded by Emanuel Layr in Vienna in 2011, Layr focuses on conceptual practices that engage with contemporary social, political, and cultural issues. Based in a city historically positioned between East and West, the gallery fosters dialogue across generations and diverse contexts. Layr represents the estates of Stano Filko and Anna Andreeva, and artists Anna-Sophie Berger, Julien Bismuth, Plamen Dejanoff, Marius Engh, Cécile B. Evans, Gaylen Gerber, Lena Henke, Benjamin Hirte, Lisa Holzer, Tillman Kaiser, Dominique Knowles, Niklas Lichti, Birgit Megerle, Matthias Noggler, Nick Oberthaler, Evelyn Plaschg, Lili Reynaud-Dewar, Josef Strau, Philipp Timischl, and Leah Ke Yi Zheng.

About Sabrina Tarasoff

Sabrina Tarasoff (b. 1991) is a Finnish writer and critic currently based in Cambridge, USA. Her work has been published across publications such as Mousse Magazine, Los Angeles Review of Books, X-TRA Contemporary Art Journal, Sucksess Magazine and Octopusnotes. Tarasoff's writings, revolving literary theory, pop culture, and visual arts, have also recently appeared in catalogues and books by Inventory Press, American Art Catalogues, and Semiotext(e). She is the editor of the first anthology of late poet Bob Flanagan's collected writings, 'Fun To Be Dead: The Poems of Bob Flanagan,' published by Kristina Kite Gallery and Pep Talk. Tarasoff is currently working on a PhD in Comparative Literature at Harvard University on theme park attractions.

Press contact

Alice Haguenauer
Hauser & Wirth
alicehaguenauer@hauserwirth.com
+44 7880 421823

Hauser & Wirth Paris

26 bis rue François 1er
75008 Paris

Opening hours

Tuesday – Saturday
10am – 6pm

www.hauserwirth.com

Caption and courtesy

All images:
Philipp Timischl in the studio, 2025
Courtesy the artist