

Anne Imhof

Citizen

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Sprüth Magers, London

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Across performance, sculpture, painting and film, Anne Imhof's work returns relentlessly to the body: how it moves through space, how it is observed, what it can and cannot occupy – and how fleeting experience might be translated into enduring form. On the occasion of London Gallery Weekend, Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are pleased to present *Citizen*, a solo exhibition that evolves the ideas explored in Imhof's recent projects *DOOM: House of Hope* at Park Avenue Armory's Drill Hall, New York and *Fun ist ein Stahlbad* at Museu de Serralves, Porto (both 2025). The show is anchored by new large-scale wave paintings, joined by a four-channel film, site-specific crowd barrier sculptures, oil pastel drawings on canvas, and her latest bronze reliefs. An impressive diptych depicting a head, enlarged from a previous drawing and rendered through accumulative mark-making, pushes her figurative work into new territory. Among the art-historical currents running through these figures, one reaches back to the *Danse macabre*, the medieval death dance in which figures from all walks of life are led toward their end. In Imhof's hands, this tradition opens onto the question: how to give form to what will not stand still.

Visible through the gallery's shop window, *The Lake of My Mother's Tears* (2025) is a monumental diptych rendered in shades of grey and black, coated in a dark, glossy glaze and depicting a long wave at successive stages of breaking. The hyper-realistic wave is, in fact, constructed: the underlying image originates digitally before being realised, laboriously, in oil paint, layer upon layer applied across two canvases that together span over six meters – a scale that confronts the viewer directly. Imhof scratches into the painted surface, releasing gestural white lines that undulate, preserving the energy of a body in motion and the ephemeral movement of the dark water. While scratching has long been integral to her aluminium works, its application to canvas marks a new development. *You Are Queen so I Will Bow to You* (2026) in the room behind is executed in a midnight blue that recalls the depths of the sea, its breaking crest dissolving into "white horses", the froth tinged pink in places. Here too, Imhof has made incisions on the lower part of the canvas. Frozen mid-break, both waves hold an uncanny stillness that nonetheless emanates an unmistakable sense of force.

Opposing *The Lake of My Mother's Tears*, a row of crowd control barriers lines the window wall, blocking the view outside. One barrier element replaces its black panel with a mirrored surface. On the adjacent wall, a bronze piece transforms Imhof's ongoing drawing practice into a sculptural, patinated bronze relief. *Girl in Leotard* (2025) depicts a figure against a dark, oxidised ground, knees drawn up, hand between legs in a gesture of pleasure, her gaze directed outward. The body emerges from the background in high relief, fully three-dimensional at the legs and face before dissolving back into the plate at its edges. Gold breaks through the dark bronze, highlighting toes and an eye. The relief invokes a tradition running from Roman funerary sculpture through Renaissance plaquettes, but the figure's posture and clothing insist on the present, a body made permanent that belongs stubbornly to the now.

Imhof's new film *Citizen* (2025), the title itself a political proposition, shown on the floor above, similarly spills into public view through the window. Drawn from footage shot on an iPhone by one of the performers during four evenings of *DOOM*, the work captures other cast members both on the main stage and in the locker rooms and corridors behind it. One sequence presents flexn performer Xavier Days across all four channels. At first, the material seems to stage spatial simultaneity, as if we were seeing multiple camera angles at once. Only gradually does it reveal itself as temporal instead: four distinct evenings of the same solo presented side by side. The near-exact replication across nights, held entirely within motor and somatic memory, positions the body as an archive. Pencil drawings complete the installation, one depicting a ballerina en pointe embraced by a personification of death, a variant of the Death and the Maiden motif, which is rooted in the *Danse macabre* tradition and charged, in artists such as Hans Baldung, with an erotic subtext. Elsewhere, a canvas held in white and cream tones returns to the idea; here, death is female, guiding a horse on whose back a lifeless woman lies.

In the lower-level gallery, a second crowd barrier sculpture – a recurring element in Imhof's oeuvre – forms an inaccessible passage through the centre of the room, determining how the viewer moves through the space and blocking direct access to the diptych portraying a head. Navigation becomes conscious and deliberate, shifting what begins as a visual encounter into a physical one. Imhof's urgent linework on the canvas stands in contrast to the obstruction of the sculpture; the mark of a physical gesture set against a structure that refuses entry.

Anne Imhof (*1978, Gießen, Germany) lives and works in Berlin and New York. Selected solo exhibitions include Museu de Serralves, Porto (2026), Park Avenue Armory, New York (2025), Kunsthaus Bregenz (2024), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2022), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2021), Tate Modern, London (2019), Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2016), Kunsthalle Basel (2016), MoMA PS1, New York (2015), Carré d'Art – Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes (2014), and Portikus, Frankfurt (2013). Her work has also been featured in numerous group exhibitions, including at Aichi Triennale, Aichi Prefecture (2022), Kunstmuseum Winterthur (2022), Tai Kwun, Hong Kong (2019), La Biennale di Venezia (2017), where she was awarded the Golden Lion, La Biennale de Montréal (2016), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2015), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015), and Museum MMK für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2014).

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