

Anker Protocol - 1.0

Galerie Urs Meile, Ankerstrasse
June 13 – July 26, 2025
Opening: Friday, June 13th; 6pm – 9pm
(Opening hours: 11am – 9pm)

With *Anker Protocol - 1.0*, Galerie Urs Meile will inaugurate its new headquarters at Ankerstrasse 3 in Zurich in June 2025. In addition to its existing space on Rämistrasse, the gallery is reaffirming its long-term commitment to artistic dialogue and the continued evolution of its vision. The group exhibition also marks the beginning of a new series that will regularly offer insight into the gallery's program and expanded curatorial perspectives. *Anker Protocol - 1.0* brings together works by ten internationally active artists, spanning a wide range of formal approaches, thematic positions, and cultural contexts.

Antonio Ballester Moreno (*1977, Spain) creates a symbolic visual language from simple forms and bold colors, evoking elements of nature such as the sun, water, trees, and mountains. His paintings, ceramics, and sculptures are abstract yet deeply rooted in cultural traditions of pattern art, textiles, design, and ornamentation. His paintings trace the rhythm of cosmic cycles – the eternal alternation of day and night, light and darkness – opening quiet, meditative landscapes.

Cao Yu (*1988, China) has been recognized as one of the most influential emerging artists in Asia, the leading figure of a new generation of female Chinese artists. Her interdisciplinary practice includes video, performance, installation, photography, and painting to question social norms, gender roles, and cultural narratives. Her works are performative, direct, and powerful – often with a subversive take on femininity and corporeality. In *To live, nothing to explain II* (2023), a continuation of her 2017 series, Cao Yu again addresses the body's silent struggles. A twisted chair – its seat warped and unusable – stands isolated in the gallery's elevator, evoking both presence and absence. This is not a place of rest, but of unease. Vulnerability remains central: the impossibility of comfort, stability, and the attempt to explain endurance.

Hu Qingyan (*1982, China) is a conceptually-driven sculptor with a refined sensitivity to material and form. His work *Idiots No.2* (2016) comprises a group of sculptural figures made from welded carbon steel. Composed of variously thick steel tubes, these hollow, ventilated bodies stand like silent, empty shells – upright, but devoid of expression or content. They seem lost, almost awkward. Through radical reduction and formal rigor, Hu Qingyan raises fundamental questions about identity, substance, and what remains when every outer shell and inner meaning is stripped away.

Klodin Erb (*1963, Switzerland) combines painting with performance, film, and installation. Her expressive yet reflective visual language explores the communicative potential of painting amid history, the present, and social change. In *Leda und der Schwan* (2024), she returns to an ambivalent myth and radically deconstructs its traditionally male-dominated iconography. In cool tones, with disturbing physicality and emotional density, she reinterprets themes of power, desire, and vulnerability. Galerie Urs Meile is pleased to welcome Klodin Erb as a new addition to the program and to present her work for the first time at the gallery. Her solo exhibition at the Aargauer Kunsthaut opens in September.

Urs Lüthi (*1947, Switzerland) is a key figure in conceptual and body art. His work consistently explores the relationship between identity, image, and self. Using a subversive, often ironic approach, he confronts societal norms and personal projections. *Anker Protocol - 1.0* features four works from his sculpture group *Ex Voto* (2007), created after a serious health crisis. These small autobiographical figures reflect on vulnerability, healing, and gratitude. The title refers to the religious tradition of ex voto – a symbolic gesture of thanks after a time of hardship. The gallery also presents a work from Lüthi's current series *Selfportrait "LONTANO IL REALE TEMPO UMANO"* (2023–2025), in which squares painted on canvas form a composition that appears abstract up close, but becomes figurative and almost naturalistic from a distance. This tension between abstraction and figuration is a central element of his practice. The presentation includes also a work from the *Sunset* series (*Foggy Sunset*, 2025), which, although it differs from the *Lontano* series in its warm color tones and seemingly landscape-based motifs, is nonetheless part of the same body of work in both content and form. For Lüthi, the sunsets serve as a projection surface for his inner states – they are just as much a part of his ongoing self-portrait as the works from the *Lontano* series.

Miao Miao (*1986, China) draws on everyday fragments and transforms them into colorful, visual compositions with playful ease. Her years of pigment research have shaped her exceptional sensitivity to color. Using materials such as wax, pigment, acrylic, and oil, she creates imaginative pictorial worlds oscillating between sensuality and experiment. On view is *Amid the Crowd* (2025), a large-format painting showing a group of figures seemingly passing by – or turning away. Some appear translucent, almost sketch-like, others more defined, but all remain anonymous. Colors and forms coalesce into a vivid, multi-layered scene – fragmentary, and open to personal interpretation.

Rosalind Nashashibi (*1973, UK) is known for her films and paintings that explore everyday moments, human relationships, and societal structures. Her filmic work moves between observation and imagination, between documentary and poetic condensation. Her images invite intuitive readings – fleeting, ambiguous, and deeply resonant. At Ankerstrasse, a film is on view that exemplifies Nashashibi's precise yet open visual language. At the same time, the gallery is presenting *Tender Horse*, Rosalind Nashashibi's first solo exhibition in Zurich, at its Rämistrasse space, featuring new painterly works.

Shao Fan (*1964, China) merges classical Chinese ink techniques with a contemporary visual language. His finely rendered animal portraits create an immediate encounter between viewer and subject. In *Rabbit Portrait 0625* (2025), the rabbit's calm yet alert gaze evokes a sense of quiet presence, balancing vulnerability and strength. In *Two Cabbages 0325* (2025), Shao Fan captures a common winter vegetable from northern China with meditative precision. The cabbage becomes a poetic symbol of childhood memory and familiarity. Both works reflect the artist's ongoing exploration of perception, identity, and the quiet beauty of the everyday. In addition to painting, Shao Fan also designs sculptures that continue his reflections on form, structure, and void. *Project No. 1 of the Year 2004* (2004), a Ming Dynasty chair combined with transparent acrylic plates, appears to be on the verge of disintegration or explosion. Its dissolved structure reveals the beauty of individual parts – echoing his calligraphic practice, where each stroke carries meaning and elegance on its own.

Rebekka Steiger (*1993, Zurich) understands painting as a state of consciousness – somewhere between memory and imagination, observation and fiction. In her works, landscapes, figures, and shimmering color spaces merge into subversive scenes. The events on the canvas unfold within layered spaces of association, beyond linear narrative. At times floral, at times impetuous or even brutal, her paintings reveal a powerful interplay between motion and stillness. The exhibition presents new paintings in which drawn brushstrokes, painterly gestures, and layered fields of color create a poetically abstract sense of tension. Her recent institutional solo exhibitions at TANK Shanghai and Kunstmuseum Thun highlight the international resonance of her visual language.

Alice Wang (*China/USA) fuses scientific inquiry with sensual experience. With academic backgrounds in computer science and international relations, Wang engages with cosmic forces, the invisible, and the expansion of human perception. Working with materials like fossils, meteorites, salt, and radiation, she creates works that poetically examine the human-universe relationship. *Untitled* (2023), two stainless steel objects – one matte, the other reflective – stand in optical contrast. Inspired by quantum physics, they appear as twin forms that imply and complete each other. Her minimalist formal language meets a profound interest in the poetic, nearly intangible dimensions of reality.

Anker Protocol – 1.0 is not only the beginning of a new spatial and curatorial chapter, but also an invitation to engage with the diversity of contemporary artistic perspectives – between body and cosmos, painting and sculpture, present and vision.