

Introduction

How do spaces preserve time? What do materials collect and store? Marie Matusz (b. 1994) explores these questions in her largest institutional solo exhibition to date at Kunsthalle Basel. The Basel-based artist has created an installation for the historical spaces that functions like a *Reservoir*—it absorbs, stores, and simultaneously transforms.

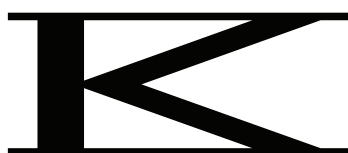
Using industrial materials such as steel, zinc, and acrylic, Matusz transforms the exhibition space into a site of resonance. The installation is consistently rendered in dark tones reminiscent of soil or oil. On the surfaces across the sculptures and wall works, where natural materials meet artificial ones, a subtle interplay of reflections emerges: Mirrored surfaces capture fragments of the space, making visible what is present and what remains putatively unseen.

A site-specific sound installation amplifies this sense of collecting and releasing. Deep bass sounds permeate the rooms, making the architecture resonate. The walls absorb these vibrations and release them again, while the metallic floor preserves the traces of visitors' movements. Between new and reworked pieces, Matusz places historical works from the Basel Kunstverein's collection, situating her investigation within the institution's past and inviting the viewer to consider time not as a linear stream but as a cyclical reservoir—where past and future fold into the present moment.

Marie Matusz

Reservoir

17 Jan.–
27 Apr. 2025



Marie Matusz: *Reservoir*

A reservoir is a place of containment, accumulation, and transformation. It absorbs what flows into it, reshapes it, and releases it again in an altered form. This duality of preservation and change is central to Marie Matusz's installation. Here, *Reservoir* is not merely a physical environment but a metaphorical vessel where history, memory, and meaning converge. Shaped by its surroundings, Matusz's work absorbs the textures, echoes, and stories of the architecture and transforms them into something entirely new. This exhibition also marks a transitional moment linking Matusz's commission, *Canons and Continents*, a series of thirty sculptures installed on the back wall of Kunsthalle Basel last fall and on view until August.

A Space Between Time

Upon entering the exhibition, time seems to stand still. Diffused light bathes the space, creating a timeless glow that obscures any sense of the hour. Gray zinc flooring absorbs the incoming light and reflects the tinted ceiling above, evoking the sense of being contained within a box.

Three large wooden frameworks dominate the space, each storing two paintings within dark enclosures. These structures continue Matusz's long-standing engagement with vitrines, but here they go beyond the conventional museum display case. Their design blends storage and presentation, creating structures that simultaneously protect, frame, and contain. Concomitantly, they evoke library shelves, closets, or bay windows. The series *Towards Vanishing* (2025) is partially covered by layered materials such as glass-like acrylic panels and mirrors, whose reflective surfaces throw back fragmented images of the surroundings. Their enclosures function as actual picture frames and transform into mental production spaces.

The exhibition takes shape through corridor-like arrangements that create an interplay between intimate and public spaces: sheltered areas emerge in cabinet-like spaces, while open zones invite encounters. These seamless transitions resist clear categorization—like a *parloir* poised between private and public spheres. This spatial choreography prompts visitors to engage with their surroundings and reflect on the fragile nature of their own presence in space. By incorporating works from the Basel Kunstverein's collection, Matusz bridges institutional heritage and contemporary practice. Her curatorial choices highlight how art associations serve as catalysts for intercultural dialogue, where inherited memories and current discourse intersect and evolve.

Revealing History's Layers

In the second exhibition space, the work *Still-Life, Still* (2023) displays three segments of cast iron pipes, evoking archaeological artifacts or skeletal remains. Matusz's engagement with industrial relics continues in the wall piece *Two Visions of Unity (and even in unity, two lovers oppose one, be it against the world or the world against them)* (2025), where she creates a new work from an existing one. Both works echo her installation on the institution's back wall, where iron tubes are integrated into vitrine-like structures. The oversized artwork serves as a photographic negative of the back wall presentation, thereby revealing the permeability between institutional interior and exterior space.

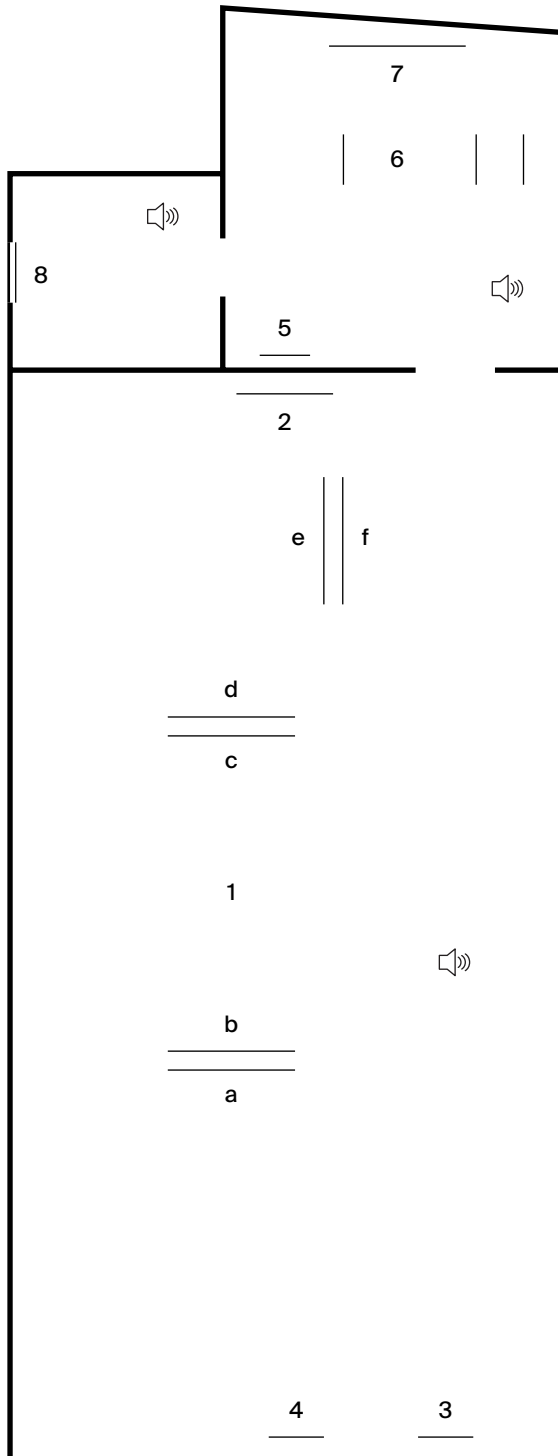
The final room acts as an architectural membrane. The palimpsestic photographic work *Fellow Prisoners* (2025) depicts a statue of a figure reading that merges with the urban daily life visible behind it. Through its layers, it offers multiple interpretations: a reconsideration of established histories, a testament to historical rewriting, or an acknowledgment of temporal coexistence.

Sound as Memory

Distributed across the rooms in various units, the sound piece *Reservoir* (2025) evolves into a bodily experience, never fully contained in one place. Like a sonic reservoir, it gathers and transforms layers of time through an assemblage of existing sounds—mechanical noises, reversed conversations, and older recordings from the artist's previous installations. These elements gradually fade into one another, creating fluid transitions. Deep frequencies resonate the metal flooring, capturing visitors' movements and translating them into visible traces. In this way, the floor becomes a living register, continuously transforming the space. Through sound, materials, and motion, Marie Matusz constructs an environment that understands history not as linear, but as an accumulation of multilayered experiences and meanings.

Room 3

- 8 *Fellow Prisoners*, 2025
UV direct print on PMMA
130 × 200 cm



- ☞ Marie Matusz, Franco Caggese
Reservoir, 2025
Sound piece
44 min 48 sec, looped
Commissioned by Kunsthalle Basel

Room 2

- 5 Burkhard Mangold
Generalversammlung des Kunstvereins, 1920
Oil on cardboard
25 × 33 cm
Courtesy Basler Kunstverein
- 6 *Still-Life, Still*, 2023
Cast iron
Dimensions variable
- 7 *Two Visions of Unity (and even in unity, two lovers oppose one, be it against the world or the world against them)*, 2025
Dibond, PMMA
300 × 300 × 0.5 cm

This work is an extension of:
A distance away (the Sun, the Abyss and the Rest), 2023
Ink and photographic developer on birch
149 × 1.2 cm

Room 1

- 1
- a *Towards Vanishing: Hommage-Letter, Image-Density*, 2025
- b *Towards Vanishing: Baroque Seeker, I Would Like To See The Tip Of Your Shoes*, 2025
- c *Towards Vanishing: Making Ends Meet*, 2025
- d *Towards Vanishing: Doom-Storm*, 2025
- e *Towards Vanishing: Under The Canopee (At The Corner Of The Sidewalk)*, 2025
- f *Towards Vanishing: Things Fade, We Must Admit*, 2025

Natural pigment, varnish, lacquer, graphite and oil paint on phenolic plywood, MDF, PMMA, mahogany
each 260 × 260 × 25 cm

- 2 Unknown artist
Schildkrötenzunft, undated
37 × 145.50 cm
Courtesy Basler Kunstverein
- 3 *Brisk Mutations (Patterns Of Exhaustion series)*, 2025
Acrylic paint and ink on hardboard, varnish, lacquer, dibond, PMMA, mahogany
200 × 150 × 6 cm
- 4 *Singular Objects II (Patterns Of Exhaustion series)*, 2025
Acrylic paint and ink on hardboard, varnish, lacquer, dibond, PMMA, mahogany
190 × 140 × 6 cm

The exhibition is generously supported by the Jubiläumsstiftung der Mobiliar Genossenschaft.

la Mobilière

The mediation projects are realized through the generous support of the Art Mentor Foundation Lucerne, the Thomas and Doris Ammann Foundation, and the Canton of Basel-Stadt.

Thanks to

Samuel Bron, Franco Caggese, Quintina Chokote, Yannis Christ, Paul Créange, Adam Cruces, Dima, Mauricio Estrada Muñoz, Gina Folly, Louisa Gagliardi, Mathias and Viviane Gratry, Adrien Heiniger, Mirco Joao-Pedro, Nikos Katsampanis, Aleksander Kerestes, Lhaga Koondhor, Veronika Kunz, Roman Kurzmeyer, Dragotin Lahota, Sem Lala, Nicolas James Lopez, Dr. Stefan Mäder, Basim Magdy, Leslie R. Majer, Patricia Metzler, Manutcher Milani, Laurent New, Emanuel Rossetti, Charlotte Sarrazin, Manuel Schneider, Lionel Schüpbach, Elia Soricelli, Jürg and Maya Stäuble, Lukas Stäuble, Manja and Pier Stucker, Hanna Syrneva, Tore Wallert, Arnaud Wohlhauser, and Andreas Zelg

Kunsthalle Basel / Basler Kunstverein is generously supported by the Canton of Basel-Stadt.



Public Programs

Talk to Me, Basel Museums Night

17.01.2025, Friday, 6 p.m.–2 a.m.

Find out more about the exhibitions and the different perspectives on them in personal conversations with mediators from various fields of knowledge. The mediators can be recognized by yellow badges.

Mal•Mal, in German and English

19.02.2025, Wednesday, 6–8 p.m.

Draw from a live model in the current exhibition; materials will be provided.

Sundays at Kunsthalle Basel

Espresso Tour, in German

02.02.2025, Sunday, 3 p.m.

The exhibition's key points are presented in twenty minutes.

Public guided tours, in German

02.03.2025, Sunday, 3 p.m.

06.04.2025, Sunday, 3 p.m.

Tandem guided tour, with S AM Swiss Architecture Museum, in German

16.03.2025, Sunday, 3 p.m.

A joint guided tour through their current exhibitions highlighting the intersections between architecture and art.

Thursdays at Kunsthalle Basel

Espresso Tour, in German

23.01.2025, Thursday, 6.30 p.m.

The exhibition's key points are presented in twenty minutes.

Themed guided tour, with Lionne Saluz (Librarian) and Layla Jenny (Archive Research Assistant), in German

20.02.2025, Thursday, 6.30 p.m.

Learn more about the works from the collection on display in *Reservoir* and about the history of the Basler Kunstverein.

Guided tour by Director and Chief Curator Mohamed Almusibli, in English

10.04.2025, Thursday, 6.30 p.m.

Registration at kunstvermittlung@kunsthallebasel.ch

Program for young people

How do I remember? What do I remember?

In workshops for school classes or youth centers, the visual worlds of artist Marie Matusz are the starting point for creative encounters. The workshop can take place either directly in the exhibition space or in your educational institution.

More information at kunstvermittlung@kunsthallebasel.ch

Design by PORTO ROCHA; Studio SMS (Alix Stria & Katharina Shafiei-Nasab)

Copy-edited by Amanda Gomez

The Kunsthalle Basel bookshop stocks publications by and on Marie Matusz alongside its broader selection of art books. You will find a selection of publications related to the artist in the Kunsthalle Basel library.

More information at kunsthallebasel.ch