

Pascal Robert Gallery

Artists

Michel Comte
Aboubakar Fofana
Tahar Ben Jelloun
Judit Kis
Claudio Koporossy
Klára Kuchta
Lina Lapelytė
Josep Maria Martín
Jon Merz
Deimantas Narkevičius
La Ribot
Mary Prescott
Allyson Vieira

Available works by

Paul Cézanne
Edgar Degas
Wassily Kandinsky
Paul Klee
Fernand Léger
Kazimir Malevich
Edvard Munch
Pablo Picasso
Man Ray
Auguste Renoir

Berlin am Meer

Works by Jon Merz

Opening #1
August 25, 5 – 8 pm

Opening #2
September 4, 5 – 9 pm

Exhibition Dates:
August 30 – October 11, 2025

Jon Merz is a Swiss contemporary painter whose immersive canvases evoke a dreamlike interplay between abstraction and figuration. Rooted in an intuitive exploration of memory, sensation, and the subconscious, Merz's work invites viewers into vibrant emotional landscapes – spaces that defy conventional perspectives and instead function as «mental mirrors», reflecting internal states of being.

At the heart of Merz's practice lies a visionary approach to painting. His works are not tied to external reality but reach beyond it – into imagined, felt, and often unspoken realms of human experience. Each painting becomes a kind of portal: a space for projection, introspection, and inner movement. These are not depictions of the world as it is, but visions of how it might be felt, remembered, or dreamt.

Merz draws on a wide array of art historical references, from the ethereal color studies of Impressionism to the raw emotion of Expressionism and the gestural intensity of Abstract Expressionism. Yet his style is distinctly his own: fluid, poetic, and deeply introspective. His paintings often feature dissolving horizons, ephemeral forms, and shifting chromatic fields, all of which contribute to a sense of atmospheric dislocation and expanded perception.

He describes his works as «Mirrors» – not reflections of the outside world, but of the interior one. Each composition emerges through a process of layering and erasure, a method that reflects the way memory and vision operate: fractured, nonlinear, emotionally charged. In this sense, Merz's paintings function not only as records of feeling, but as vessels for imaginative insight.

Beyond their visual allure, Merz's paintings operate as affective environments – spaces of encounter that encourage slowness, contemplation, and resonance. His recent solo presentation at the Château de Gruyères in Switzerland brought his work into dialogue with the historical architecture and surrounding natural landscape, highlighting the timeless and otherworldly quality of his visual language.

Through his work, Merz reclaims painting as a site of poetic and visionary inquiry – a medium through which the unseen, the felt, and the imagined can take form. His evolving practice offers a meditation on how we see, remember, and dream.

Jon Merz
© The Artist, photo by Albrecht Fuchs



Jon Merz and the Imaginary Sea

I first met Jon Merz in the late summer of 2023, just before giving a lecture on Edvard Munch and the sun in the University Aula in Oslo. I spoke about how the monumental motif was completed in 1916 as a tribute to the sun as the source of all life – how Munch loved rising early to witness the glistening sunrises over the archipelago in Kragerø. It was the sensation of being overwhelmed by the intense light – rendered in vivid colours and bold brushstrokes ton-acrid tones of yellow, viridian green, and blue-violet – that he sought to capture on canvas. Munch knew well the light studies of Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh's vibrating suns over fields sunflowers. Yet Munch wasn't portraying the heat of a southern sun, but rather the chromatic impact of sunlight on the barren Norwegian coast.

A few weeks later, I visited Jon Merz in his studio in Berlin, located far from the city center. The former warehouse had large windows overlooking other deserted buildings, with the Spree River quietly flowing just beyond. Along the walls, large canvases were stacked, which he began pulling out and showing me. I noticed a striking connection to Monet's fragmented optical surfaces. At the same time, the works clearly carried traces of contemporary visual impulses. I couldn't help but feel that Merz's paintings appeared both surprisingly anachronistic and refreshingly current—quiet acts of resistance against technologically saturated culture, where the boundaries between the real and the virtual are eroding, and the notion of truth itself is under pressure.

It occurred to me that the artist's physical presence in front of the canvas, equipped with brushes and paint, offers a contemplative resistance to our era's algorithms, AI, and technological image chaos – perhaps helping us to preserve a sense of humanity. Merz spoke of his growing interest in «the human in nature», and how, in recent years, he had acquired both a car and a sailboat in order to escape the city's noise and immerse himself in the natural world. Another kind of escape, he said, is to wander through museums, drawing energy and inspiration from historical art. We visited the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin together, pausing before works by Hieronymus Bosch, Rubens and Vermeer's beautiful Woman with a Pearl Necklace. In Merz's paintings, fragments of past masterpieces—color transitions, shifts of light and shadow, spatial depth—reappear in abstracted and dissolved forms.

Yet it is above all human presence in nature that captivates Merz. At the Alte Nationalgalerie, we studied Caspar David Friedrich's romantic and sublime seascapes, where a solitary figure stands before a vast unknown void. It reminded me of Robert Rosenblum's classic *Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition: Friedrich to Rothko*. Merz continues this northern, romantic, and expressive lineage. In several of his recent works, we encounter blazing suns and wave formations that oscillate between cool blues, greens, and whites, and warm, glowing tones of red and yellow. The paintings are abstract, composed in vigorous, often impasto strokes – frequently applied directly from the tube.

Over a century ago, Munch observed the sun rising over the sea and translated those sensory impressions into monumental canvases. For Merz, the sea is more internal, mental and imaginary. It is an inner landscape shaped by memories and impressions from journeys to the coastline of Germany, Portugal or Norway. Though the ocean is far from Berlin, Merz told me in an email how the city itself is built on sand – once the seabed of a prehistoric ocean that receded after the last Ice Age. A timescale so vast that it is impossible to fully grasp, yet a subtle reminder of how our surroundings is constantly slowly changing.

For Merz, the sea is not a specific place. It is about the light, the color, movement and the intangible. His imaginary sea reminds us that painting still holds power: as a surface of resistance and a space for solace. These are paintings that invite slow looking, and urge us to reflect on what it means to be present – in the world, in nature and in ourselves.



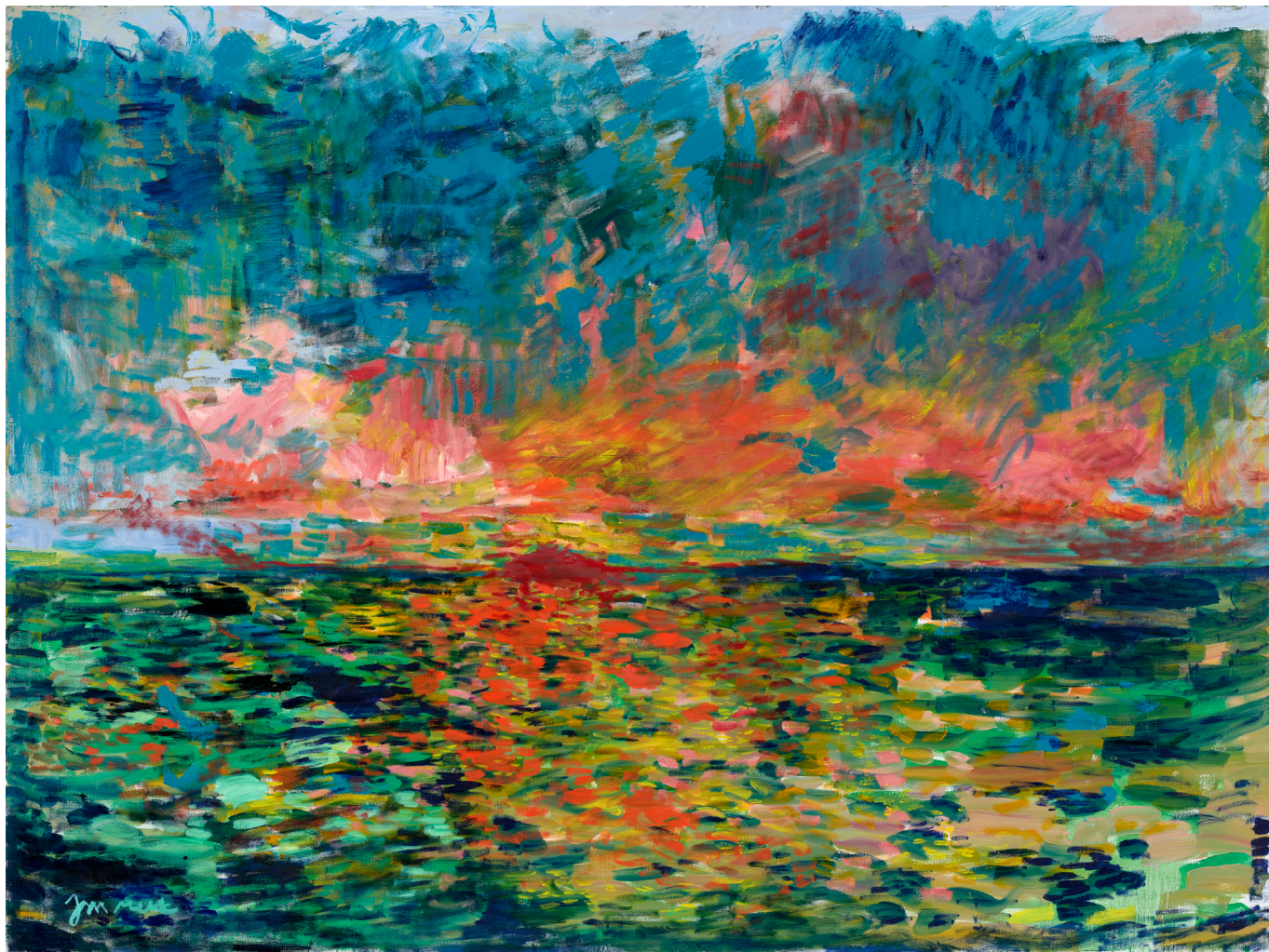
Jon Merz, «Rochers bleu», 2025, signed and dated verso, acrylic and oil Paint on Belgian linen, 200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 inches), (JDM.00018.M) © The Artist



Jon Merz, «The Island», 2023, signed and dated verso, oil on Belgian linen,
50 x 80 x 2.7 cm (19 3/4 x 31 1/2 x 1 inches), (JDM.00025.M) © The Artist



Jon Merz, «Plage rouge après l'orage», 2025, signed and dated recto, acrylic and oil on Belgian linen, 200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 inches), (JDM.00016.M) © The Artist



Jon Merz, «Grande Marine», 2025, signed and dated verso, oil paint on Belgian linen, 120 x 160 cm (47 1/4 x 63 inches), (JDM.00011.M) © The Artist



Jon Merz, «Les vagues», 2025, signed and dated verso, acrylic and oil on Belgian linen, 200 x 150 cm (78 3/4 x 59 inches), (JDM.00017.M) © The Artist

«I work my way inside out. Inputs are reduced to a minimum. Means are accessible. Decisions are ad-hoc. Ultimately, I strive for a piece that is a consistent whole, an entity with its own insight to offer. I don't impose anything; I reveal what is already there. In a process of transformation I model and solidify ideas into form. In this fluid state of possibility I anxiously hold on to what is permanent. I turn to History for adventure, discovery, inspiration, and in this quest I inevitably pick up ideas that transcend time, artistic expression that maintains its rigor through the ages.»

Jon Merz



Pascal Robert Gallery

5 Rämistrasse
8001 Zürich
Switzerland

+41 76 433 10 77
info@pascalrobert.net

Opening hours

Monday, 9 am – 7 pm
Tuesday, 9 am – 7 pm
Wednesday, 9 am – 7 pm
Thursday, 9 am – 8 pm
Friday, 9 am – 7 pm
Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

We are closed on Sunday.

