

Pilar Corrias

SABINE MORITZ

The Sleep of Tomorrow
Abstracts and Figures

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Pilar Corrias Conduit Street
10 October–15 November 2025

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Abstracts and Figures



Park III 2025
Oil on canvas | 180 × 250 cm | 70 7/8 × 98 3/8 in

Foreword

Pilar Corrias



2042 2024

Oil on canvas | 101 × 85 cm | 39 ¾ × 33 ½ in

The way it all started was when I first met Sabine back in 2012, on a winter's evening in Golden Square – it was the opening of her show, *Jena, Dusseldorf* organised by Joe Hage. I walked into the cavernous space, and the work cast a spell on me when I stood in front of it: the paintings of these places, almost devoid of people, were clearly autobiographical and personal to the artist who made them – who was she? Why did she paint these empty interiors, these building estates, the flowers and airplanes? I soon learnt that the work related to a memory of a place, a place where she had previously grown up and had never returned to – it was painted from a distant memory from another time. I was impressed, this artist was not only very skilled, but also has a deep sense of the world around her, speaking a universal visual language. Everything was in the work, one didn't really need to read anything about it to feel all that emotion.

At the time it had been four years since I had opened my gallery. Sabine's work had been shown publicly in galleries for the first time just slightly before this. We were the same age; we both think of ourselves as late bloomers, which is often the case for women from certain generations.

Shortly after this initial meeting, where I had met this reserved, serious and sensationally talented artist, I invited her to do an exhibition at my gallery – this would be the first of six shows to date. It was scheduled for 2014, and the show was called *Home*. It was about the Berlin Wall and the shooting of Peter Fechter from East Berlin attempting to escape to the West. Why was this work called *Home*? These flickering representations and representations on multiple canvases of the same event. Again, these two sets of perspectives, or realities – east and west divided both ideologically and physically, very much referenced Sabine's own experience. She was born and grew up in East Germany and moved to the West in her teens.

For her second solo exhibition, *Harvest* (2015–2016), Sabine produced a body of work about Ukraine following World War II, another period of history which was not being questioned at the time; a portent of what was to come, as the world looked away when Russia began invading Ukraine in 2014. The works were based on the book *A Russian Journal* which followed American author John Steinbeck and photojournalist Robert Capa's travels through the Soviet Union in 1947, soon after the end of WWII. Basing her paintings on Robert Capa's photojournalistic documentations of the communal farms, depicting women and children during harvest time. Again, repeated scenes, gestural brushstrokes obfuscating fine details made one think about the reality of what really happened during this time.

There were two paintings in the show that really struck me: *Village Cemetery (Dorffriedhof)*, a field of crosses and next to this, Sabine's first abstract painting, *Himmel*, which translates to 'heaven' in German. I asked Sabine to tell me about this work, which was placed right next to a painting explicitly depicting death and life. This pairing remains particularly poignant in understanding where Sabine's work comes from – the impossibility to convey immovable truths in capturing history. At the time, Sabine remarked that she was using the remains of colours on this second canvas and whilst she was making these marks, it reminded her of lying down in a field and looking up at the sky, a fleeting childhood moment.

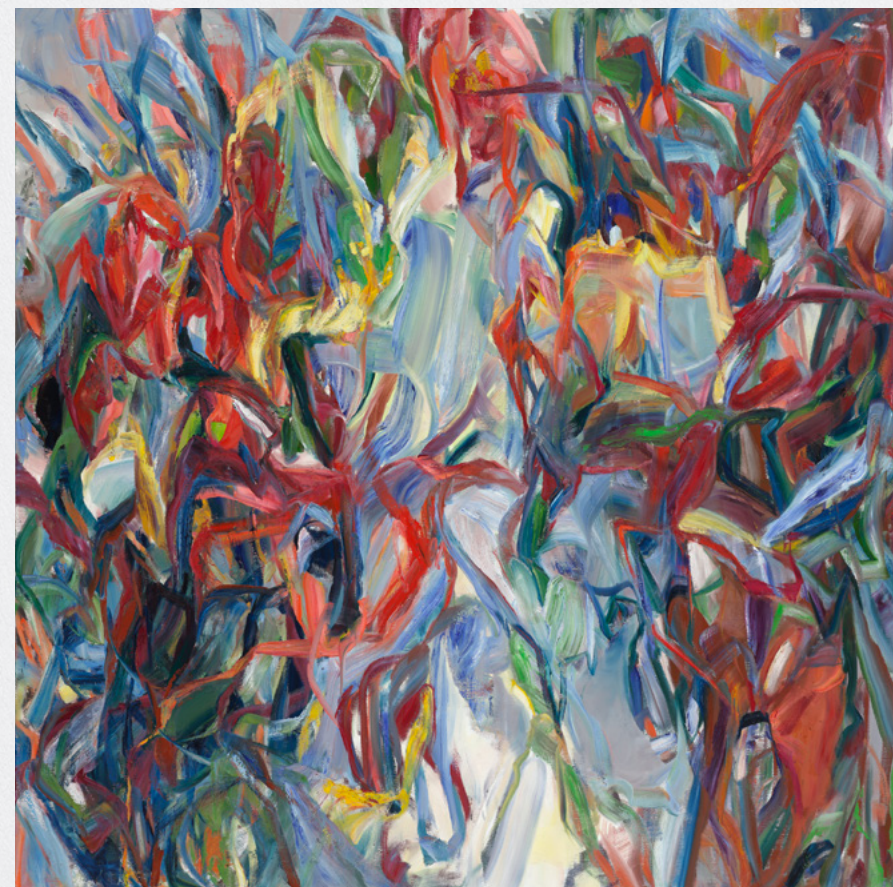
Since this first early abstract painting, Sabine has interrogated this impossibility, a line that flows through the entire practice – how do you depict the past, both collective and personal, when living in the present? The abstract works for me attempt to capture moments that are continually in flux. How you might remember an event one year after it took place, then ten or twenty years later, is always changing. There is a sense of time and memory shifting across all her work. Starting from her first abstract show in 2018, and then her show *Mercy* in 2021, followed by her double show in 2023 *Under the Skin and Heart of Drought*, Sabine has continuously chased the same essence: how can you convey what it feels like to remember? How does one express what it means to be alive in a constantly slipping past? In this eternal search her brushstrokes are sometimes straight, edgy and dry; rounded, fluid and viscous, sometimes full of energy and anger or translucent and delicate.

More recently, a shift into figuration is coming back into Sabine's practice; female figures emerge out of these new paintings referencing classical painting and her own womanhood. It's very difficult to paint both abstraction and figuration at the same time – two paradigms which rarely coexist. Sabine balances these two different ways of thinking. She has a unique talent to shift modes whilst she's painting, switching mindsets between the two contrasting states of being.

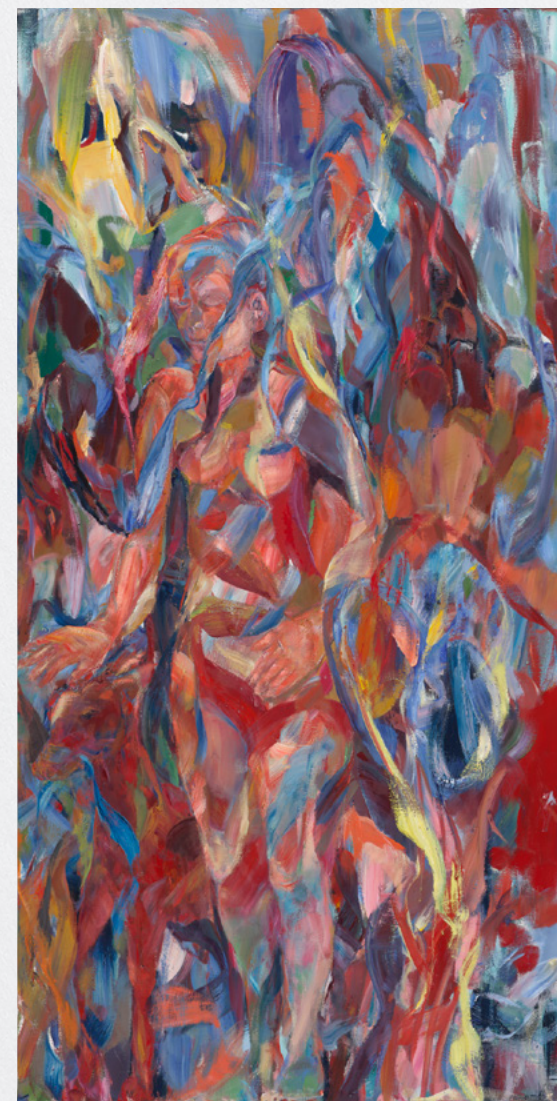
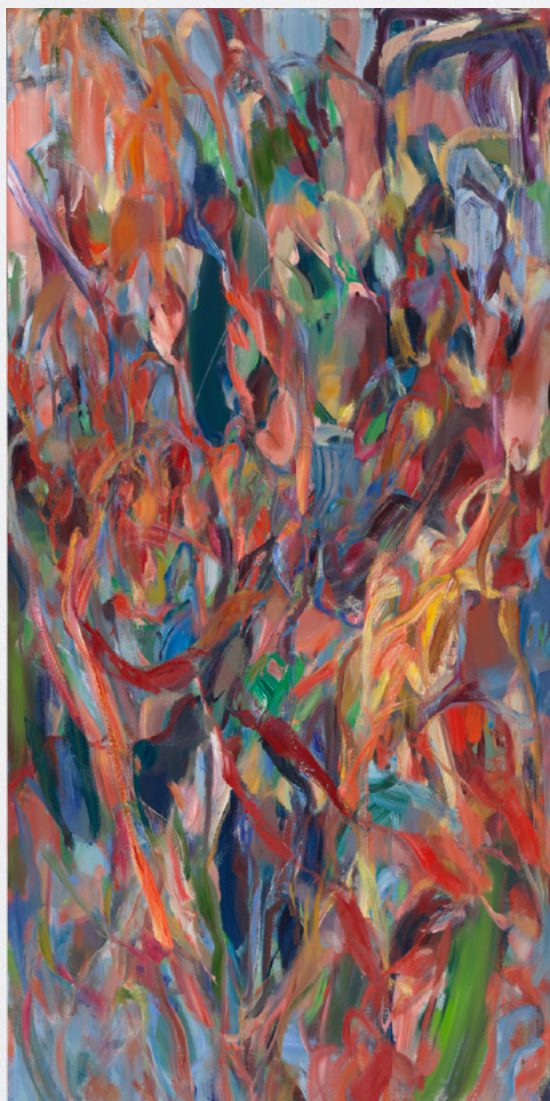
Going back to our first exhibition together, Sabine and I have come a long way – her career has blossomed, my gallery has expanded and our histories have been shared. We have had very different upbringings; however, we connect deeply with each other. We have the common experience of living through political hotbeds and living through very real political upheavals in our youth. We grew up in the 70s, 80s and 90s, through the Cold War and the start of globalisation, before the internet and AI – and through a time when being a woman in the arts had many constraints and restrictive social constructs.

At the beginning, back in 2012, there was a small handful of knowing curators and collectors championing Sabine's work, and with time, over each of the six shows we have done together, the attention and the support grew and grew with collections and institutions internationally. With each exhibition, Sabine and I have made a new step forward, deepened our understanding of each other and shared our life experiences. In her quiet resilience and modesty, as we collaborate, I have slowly discovered the world of Sabine and her surroundings. As a gallerist, in essence, it has just been Sabine and I – it's a very close relationship which is based on the belief in each other, and trust as well as friendship. This is how it started, and how it will continue. It makes me immensely proud to see Sabine shine bright and experience the affirmation that everything she had been doing throughout her career is valid and continues to be validated.

London, August 2025



Columbus 2025
Oil on canvas | 200 × 200 cm | 78 ¾ × 78 ¾ in



Forest (1-3) 2024

Oil on canvas | In three parts, each: 200 × 100 cm | 78 ¾ × 39 ¾ in



Park I 2025
Oil on canvas | 180 × 250 cm | 70 7/8 × 98 3/8 in



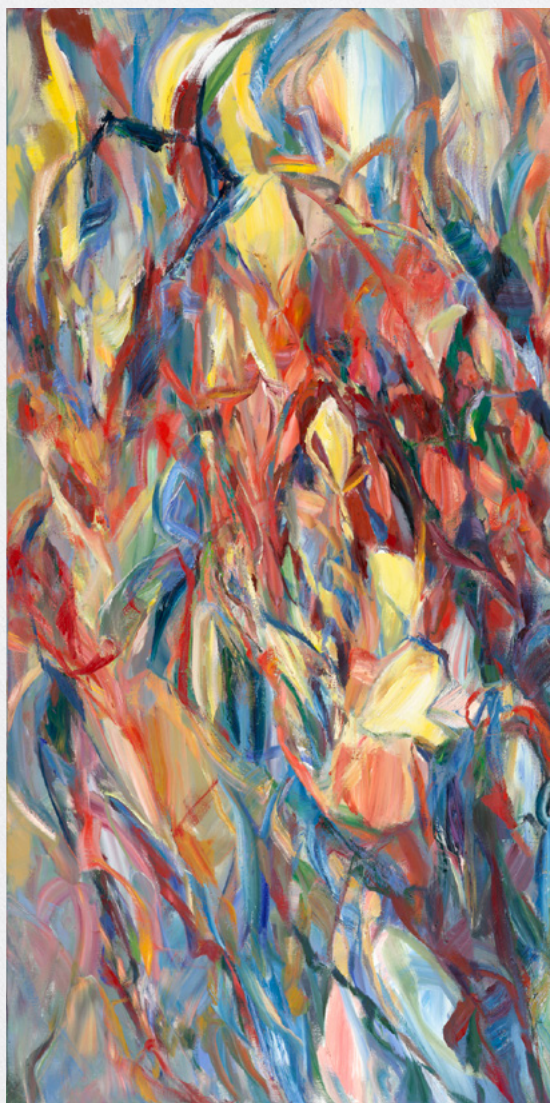
Park II 2024
Oil on canvas | 180 × 250 cm | 70 7/8 × 98 3/8 in



Siren's Sea I 2025
Oil on canvas | 170 × 200 cm | 66 ⅞ × 78 ¾ in



Siren's Sea II 2025
Oil on canvas | 170 × 200 cm | 66 ⅞ × 78 ¾ in



Morning (1-3) 2025

Oil on canvas | In three parts, each: 200 × 100 cm | 78 ¾ × 39 ¾ in

Sabine Moritz: symphony of colour

Lydia Figes

In the work of Sabine Moritz, colour is kinetic. Vermillion red and midnight blue vibrate violently next to soothing earthy greens, coral pinks and butter yellows. Each canvas pulsates with a frenetic rhythm that draws our gaze over smooth washes of pigment against staccato smudges of thick oil. An intricate melody of colour, Moritz's sensuous abstractions transform into feverish landscapes that seduce and beguile. Amid the frenzied swirls of paint, an enigma presents itself. Is that the silhouette of a figure materialising in the foreground? Or is it merely an illusion, a trick of the eye?

In the past decade, and particularly since the pandemic, Moritz has found her voice through the intuitive process of abstract painting. "When I first turned to abstraction, it felt like a new kind of freedom" she admits. In contrast to her former, figurative work, which often ruminated on personal and collective memories of growing up in Communist East Germany, and typically adopted a restrained colour palette, she now experiments with the tension between abstraction and figuration, depth and shallowness, texture and tone. But above all, the possibilities and potentialities of colour. "These works are about processing the present" Moritz says. "My feelings and memories of the day, rather than the past." Indeed, there is undeniably a sense of immediacy, even urgency to these compositions.

Sweeping and vigorous applications of oil reveal a quiet, gestural confidence; each work boldly confounds the viewer through the deceptive coalescence of background and foreground. We rapidly lose ourselves in these dynamic, effervescent canvases, which prompt us to find our bearings once again when the eye lingers over the curve of a cheekbone, or the indent of an elbow. Gradually, the suggestion of a female figure appears amid the swirling, kaleidoscope of colour. Loosely recalling the fragmented compositions of the Cubists, Moritz's canvases – echoing her avant-garde predecessors – present multiperspectives; the collapse of pictorial dimensions in the frenzied fray of restless, colliding, geometric forms in which figures become submerged and camouflaged within their immediate surroundings. The result is a sense of combustible energy and movement, enabled by the raw intensity of each textured, painterly surface.

Before beginning a canvas, Moritz has no notion of how the ensemble of colour will come to fruition. Beyond the gestural strokes of her paintbrush, the works are beholden to serendipity; they unfold organically and sometimes unpredictably as the artist dances and shifts between each canvas, across days, weeks, or even months. It is a process of layering, applying, withdrawing and even mark-making (before beginning that cycle once more). "Abstraction activates a special area of your brain. It's a deeply physical exercise" she reflects. "Whereas figurative painting demands a certain level of intellectual control".

Yet it is the delicate balance of freedom and restraint that charges these works with potency. In her vast Cologne studio, Moritz works simultaneously on several canvases at once, committing herself fully to a unique dialogue with each work, "I'm in a deep conversation with each one" she adds. "Those conversations can leave me exhausted by the end of the day, but in a good way." Like a conductor before an orchestra, she listens carefully to the paintings as they gradually materialise, sometimes focusing on different sections, before standing back to comprehend the piece in its entirety – a symphony of colour that she brings to life. "Painting is like music" she says. "The colours are the tones – and memories are like a colour palette." In her light-filled, high-ceilinged studio, the music of Shostakovich, Cage or Bach often accompanies the laborious painterly process.

Born in Quedlinburg, in former East Germany, Moritz's childhood was spent in the town of Jena in the Saale Valley, before the family resettled to West Germany in 1985. In the early 1990s she trained at the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Offenbach followed by the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, where one of her artistic inspirations, the conceptual artist Joseph Beuys, taught until the early 1970s. Despite the stylistic differences, she credits Beuys for galvanising her young, creative psyche. She recalls feeling the need to see his work at the Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt on a weekly basis. In that early period, Moritz's work – reflecting the monochrome, drabness of life under Communism – was characterised by a palette of muted, grey tones. She often worked in charcoals, pencils, watercolours and even photography. Ironically, her most regularly used colour today, red (with its obvious symbolic connotations in historical memory), was scarcely found in her early work. "For many years I had an aversion to red. Now I appreciate the psychological and emotional intensity it offers, whether I'm using darker, earthy tones or more electric shades of the colour."

According to the German poet and polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (who published his *Theory of Colours* in 1810), the colour red has an extreme and dualistic nature ("the effect of this colour is as peculiar as its nature" he wrote). Associated with fire, passion, and blood, the colour indisputably speaks of a kind of imminent, primitive violence. But red conveys emotion, gravitas and magnitude; it captures the weight of time and history. Daringly, Moritz's palette juxtaposes colours that are diametrically opposed to each other: red and blue collide loudly, electrifying one another into existence. If blue communicates space and negation (as Goethe proposed), red catapults that space back into the heat of the present. And it is this fraught tension of contrasts that engenders palpable vitality in the work of Moritz.

"I'm always engaged with what's happening in the world" Moritz explains. "But my need to create art comes from a deeper, burning question. I'm always thinking and questioning: why do we need art? I create paintings that can be somehow opposite to what is happening in the world. To give hope and beauty. Relief, escape, and respite." A climactic, crescendo of colour, Moritz's paintings serve as psychological and allegorical landscapes, in which loud flurries of paint reverberate and ricochet within the canvas frame. Most resoundingly, her paintings invite us to feel alive in the transience of the present.





Selected works on paper from the exhibition

2 works (Details)

Swimming I + II 2024

Crayon, charcoal, oil crayon, oil, pastel on paper | 27 × 38 cm | 10 5/8 × 15 in

4 works (Details)

Arrival I–IV 2025

Crayon, oil on paper | 38 × 27 cm | 15 × 10 5/8 in

4 works (Detail)

Fall '37 I–IV 2025

Crayon, oil crayon, oil, pastel on paper | 21 × 29.7 cm | 8 1/4 × 11 3/4 in





Sabine Moritz lives and works in Cologne. She started her studies at Hochschule für Gestaltung Offenbach (from 1989 to 1991) and completed her studies at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (graduated 1994). Moritz has been widely exhibited in group and solo exhibitions in Düsseldorf, Brussels, Paris and London. Selected solo exhibitions of Moritz's work include: *Les cieux*, Château d'Aubenas, Aubenas (2025); *Ara*, Olivia Foundation, Mexico City (2025); *Heart of Drought | Under the Skin*, Pilar Corrias, London (2023); *Sabine Moritz - Neue Werke in der Sammlung*, Kunstsammlung NRW - K21, Dusseldorf (2023); *Lobeda oder die Rekonstruktion einer Welt*, Lyonel-Feininger-Galerie, Quedlinburg (2022); *Mercy*, Pilar Corrias, London (2021); *Journal Entries*, HENI Leviathan, London (2020); *Sterne und Granit*, Kunsthalle, Rostock (2019); *Neuland*, Kunstverein Bremerhaven (2017); *Harvest*, Pilar Corrias, London (2015); *Sabine Moritz*, Von der Heydt-Kunsthalle, Wuppertal (2014); *Concrete and Dust*, Foundation de 11 Lijnen, Oudenburg (2013); *Lobeda*, Kunsthau sans titre, Potsdam (2011). Selected group exhibitions include: *Wohnkomplex*, Das MINSK, Potsdam (2025); *Age of Terror: Art Since 9/11*, Imperial War Museum, London (2017); *Faber-Castell International Drawing Award 2012*, Neues Museum – Staatl. Museum für Kunst und Design, Nuremberg (2012); and *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly*, Cultuurcentrum Mechelen, Mechelen (2010). Her work is included in prominent collections including the Centre Pompidou, Paris; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Hirschhorn Museum, Washington D.C.; Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Lenbachhaus, Munich; LACMA, Los Angeles; MOCA, Los Angeles; SFMoMA, San Francisco; Tate, London.

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Artworks: ©Sabine Moritz
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'Sabine Moritz: symphony of colour'
 © Lydia Figes

Coordinated by:
 Marie Krauss, Director, Artist Liaison
 Katrina Millar, Head of Communications
 Charlotte Kraft, Sabine Moritz Studio
 Hilde Gahlen, Galicheva-Gahlen

Designed by Galicheva-Gahlen
 Printed by Druckerei Kettler

Pilar Corrias
 51 Conduit St
 London W1S 2YT

Pilar Corrias
 2 Savile Row
 London W1S 3PA

Tel: + 44 (0)20 7323 7000
info@pilarcorrias.com

Pilar Corrias