

Press Release

“Sensations”

New collection display at the Fondation Beyeler

21 February – 26 April 2026



“I paint as I see, as I feel – and I have very strong sensations.” (Paul Cézanne)

The year’s first collection display invites viewers on a journey along numerous highlights of the museum’s collection – as well as offering a reflection on the notion of sensation. Paul Cézanne, to whom the Fondation Beyeler is concurrently devoting a major exhibition, provides the starting point for the collection display: in his letters, the artist repeatedly writes of “sensations colorantes” (“colour sensations”) as a key foundation of his art. He understood his pictorial practice as a direct translation onto canvas of his own chromatic visual impressions (“sensations”).

In English, the term “sensation” encompasses the notions of perception or sensory impression as well as those of feeling or emotion. The collection display thus centres on works by artists who make their sensations tangible either through special forms of perception or through powerful emotional intensity. For Cézanne and his Impressionist colleagues, the unmediated sensory impression of their surroundings was key. Other forms of perception are at the root of Mark Rothko’s colour field painting or the gestural explosions of colour of Sam Francis’ and Joan Mitchell’s Abstract Expressionism. Finally, sensation as feeling is at the heart of works by Francis Bacon, Louise Bourgeois or Susan Philipsz. Bacon’s paintings aim for an emotionally and physically felt impact on viewers – in his own words:

“I always think that they [my paintings] are images of sensation. After all what is life, but sensation?”

The collection display features works by among others Lucas Arruda, Francis Bacon, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Louise Bourgeois, Wassily Kandinsky, Ellsworth Kelly, Fernand Léger, Claude Monet, Pablo Picasso, Susan Philipsz, Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol and Issy Wood.

The collection display is curated by Amelie Baader, Associate Curator of the Fondation Beyeler Collection.

Press images are available under www.fondationbeyeler.ch/en/media/press-images

Image: Lucas Arruda, *Untitled (from the Series Deserto-Modelo)*, 2019, Oil on wood, 23.3 x 29.9 cm, Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel, © Lucas Arruda; Photo: Robert Bayer

Fondation Beyeler

The Fondation Beyeler in Riehen near Basel is internationally renowned for its high-calibre exhibitions, its significant collection of modern and contemporary art, as well as its ambitious schedule of events. The museum building was designed by Renzo Piano in the idyllic setting of a park with venerable trees and water lily ponds. It boasts a unique location in the heart of a local recreation area, looking out onto fields, pastures and vineyards close to the foothills of the Black Forest. In collaboration with Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, the Fondation Beyeler is constructing a new museum building in the adjoining park, thus further enhancing the harmonious interplay of art, architecture and nature.

Further information:

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Fondation Beyeler opening hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily, Wednesday through 8 p.m.