

# HAUSER & WIRTH

## Press Release

## Interior Motives

Hauser & Wirth London

22 August – 20 September 2025

Opening reception: 6 – 8 pm, Friday 22 August

Featuring Koak, Cece Philips and Ding Shilun



Enter interior worlds imagined by contemporary painters Koak, Cece Philips and Ding Shilun this summer at Hauser & Wirth London. The exhibition explores how these artists engage with the interior both as a physical space and a psychological construct. Through distinct painterly vocabularies, each artist interrogates the architectural and domestic environments we inhabit, revealing how these frameworks shape our sense of self, memory and belonging. 'Interior Motives' is part of an ongoing initiative at Hauser & Wirth that champions emerging and mid-career artists beyond the gallery's roster. Produced in collaboration with Union Pacific and Bernheim Gallery, this exhibition reflects a shared commitment to a sustainable arts ecosystem.

### About the exhibition

Depicting figures in dreamlike domestic interiors, Koak's painting practice questions the societal expectations and roles of women within the home as well as the traditional portrayal of women by male artists. With a graphic aesthetic that borrows from Japanese and European animations, Koak uses familiar iconography of the home—windows, soft furnishings, flowerpots and vases—to build alternate interiors in which her figures are liberated and given agency. Her contemporary take on art historical depictions of domestic scenes is achieved through a vibrant color palette that blurs the distinction between the imagined and real, between inner and outer worlds, her female gaze highlighting both the emotional and physical experience of her figures.

The architectural tropes characteristic of household settings, from windows and doorways to hallways and walls, act as visual framing devices in Cece Philips' paintings. Radiant light is a hallmark of her practice, drawing viewers into the work and leading them through the interiors, yet they are never part of the scene, observing like a flaneur. Like paintings of everyday, domestic life from the Dutch Golden Age and by Félix Vallotton, a narrative is implied—one in which Philips leaves the viewer to fill in the details, encouraged by their imagination and own inner worlds. The use of color adds a layer to the narrative by suggesting a psychological reading, reflecting the figures' mood and internal realities, as well as that of the viewer. This exploration of interiority is at once about the subject and the viewer, observation and introspection.

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Inhabiting imaginary worlds, the characters in Ding Shilun's paintings are often an embodiment of the artist himself, the emotions he feels and the thoughts inside his mind. His worldbuilding relies on everyday objects found in domestic spaces to enable viewers to identify with the characters depicted and emotions evoked. With a style inspired by Japanese manga and traditional Chinese painting, the artist's interiors include fantastical and mythological elements that question viewer's perception of reality. Influenced by both global historical events, current affairs and his own experiences, Ding Shilun's manifestation of his interior realm doubles up as a visual representation of the absurdity of daily life.

### About the artists

#### Koak

Koak (b. 1981 in the US) is known for work that portrays the complex duality of identity and human nature through a mastery of the line which extends across drawing, painting and sculpture. Rendered with exquisite technique, her emotionally charged figures and landscapes are imbued with a profound agency and inner life. Her work challenges historical portrayals of femininity, depicting figures that shift between boldness and vulnerability, resisting fixed definition and embracing emotional depth. Regardless of subject, each piece is approached with the intimacy of portraiture, suggesting a metamorphic state—a dream of becoming something beyond the self: a body becoming a lake, a flower or a landscape. In this way, painting becomes an act of defiance—a feminist gesture that resists enclosure, imagining identity as something fluid.

Recent solo exhibitions include: 'The Window Set,' Charleston in Lewes, UK (2025); 'Lake Marghrete,' Perrotin, Paris, France (2024); 'Letter to Myself (when the world is on fire),' Altman Siegel, San Francisco CA (2023); 'The Driver,' Perrotin, Hong Kong (2022); 'Return to Feeling,' Altman Siegel, San Francisco CA (2020); and 'Holding Breath,' Union Pacific, London, UK (2019). Selected group exhibitions include: 'Infinite Regresse: Mystical Abstraction from the Permanent Collection and Beyond,' Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City MO (2024); 'I've got a feeling,' Musées d'Angers, Angers, France (2023); 'I'm Stepping High, I'm Drifting, and There I Go Leaping,' XIAO Museum, Rizhao, China (2022); 'Familiars,' Et. Al Gallery, San Francisco CA (2022); and 'New Time: Art and Feminisms in the 21st Century,' Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley CA (2021), amongst others.

#### Cece Philips

Cece Philips (b. 1996 in London, UK) is a London-based painter whose luminous compositions explore ideas of spectatorship and voyeurism. Embodying the role and spirit of the flâneur, or flâneuse, her works draw on a multitude of sources, from the archive, film stills, found imagery and memory she weaves together historical and contemporary influences to interrogate ideas of interiority, desire and loneliness. Framing is a recurring device in Philips' paintings, though windows and doorways, barriers and veils are constructed to challenge an easy reading of her female protagonists. Palette, attention to light and space all lend psychological and narrative depth—details that lead us through and beyond the work and activate the viewer's own imagination.

Cece Philips held her debut solo exhibition 'I See in Colour' at HOME in London, UK, in April 2021. Subsequent solo shows include 'Between the Dog and the Wolf' at ADA Contemporary, Accra, Ghana (2022); 'The Night Has a Thousand Eyes,' Peres Projects, Berlin, Germany (2022); 'Walking the In-Between,' Peres Projects, Seoul, South Korea (2023); and 'Conversations Between Two,' Peres Projects, Milan, Italy (2024). Recent group exhibitions include 'The Painted Room,' curated by Caroline Walker at GRIMM, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (2023); 'Digestif,' a two-person show with Hettie Inniss at Palazzo Monti, Brescia, Italy (2024); and 'The Shed' at Berntson and Bhattacharjee, London, UK (2025). Her most recent solo presentation, 'The Wall: Cece Philips,' was held at Almine Rech, Brussels, Belgium (2025). Philips completed her MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art in 2023 and was awarded the Fribourg Philanthropies Prize the same year.

#### Ding Shilun

Ding Shilun (b. 1998 in Guangzhou, China; lives and works between London and Guangzhou) harnesses his heritage, current events and a global history of art to create large and detailed pictorial works depicting the absurdity of daily life. His unique concurrence of the mythological, the historical and the everyday allow the emergence of an imaginary world with a representation of himself within our seemingly homogenous society.

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Rooted in pictorial references such as Gustav Klimt or Kai Althoff intertwined with interpretations of Chinese literature—namely a collection of Chinese legends, translated as ‘In Search of the Supernatural,’ written between 220 – 589 AD—Shilun’s characters inhabit imaginary worlds that serve as allegories for human experience and emotion. The precision of the details is used to contrast the different textures found in the paintings, sometimes resembling watercolor, as well as playing on a combination of co-existing perspectives, which question the distinction between real and surreal.

His recent solo shows include ‘Janus’ at ICA Miami, Miami FL (2024); ‘Invites: Ding Shilun,’ Zabłudowicz Collection, London, UK (2023); ‘Paradiso,’ Bernheim, Zurich, Switzerland (2022); and ‘Mirage,’ Bernheim, London, UK (2024). Shilun’s work is included in the permanent collections of The Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami FL; The Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger Collection of Contemporary Art, Dallas TX; High Museum of Art, Atlanta GA; Rose Art Museum, Waltham MA; Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou, China; Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria; Museu Inima De Paula, Below Horizonte, Brazil; Asymmetry Art Foundation, London, UK; and Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas TX, among others.

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### Gallery hours:

Tuesday to Saturday  
10 am – 6 pm

[www.hauserwirth.com](http://www.hauserwirth.com)

### Caption and courtesy:

Koak. Courtesy the artist and Union Pacific

Cece Philips. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Rory Langdon-Down

Ding Shilun. Courtesy the artist and Bernheim Gallery. Photo: Will Grundy