

An abstract painting featuring thick, expressive brushstrokes. The composition is dominated by a large, dark blue and black diagonal stroke that cuts across the frame. Below this, there are layers of purple, pink, and white, with a prominent, textured, light-colored area on the right side. The bottom of the painting is a solid, pale yellow. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and layered depth.

MAI 36 GALERIE

Markus Saile
False Horizon

September 11 – November 07, 2026

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Markus Saile's second solo exhibition at Mai 36 presents, for the first time, large-scale works that touch upon, and at times almost exceed, the dimensions of the human body and the associated function of the painting as a counterpart to it. The colours of the paintings unfold as a spatial dramaturgy: green and yellow each shape their own rooms, while blue works set distinct accents within the constellations of the exhibition. Through the arrangements and intervals of the architecture-related installation, specific correspondences emerge between the paintings, activating viewers and inviting them to set their gaze in motion and forge connections.

A large-scale painting in a pale, yellow ground (Untitled), like several other works in the exhibition, presents an indeterminate monochrome field. It is traversed by fluid horizontal structures that emerged in the process of applying the paint. Superimposed upon these are sweeping curves that seem to suggest an architectural space. The exhibition title, *False Horizon*, points to the tendency to search for references to reality within the paintings without being able to verify them with certainty. A false horizon is, first and foremost, a perceptual disturbance that occurs when a horizontal line is mistakenly interpreted as the horizon. The coordinates by which we locate ourselves in space are fundamentally shaken. Saile's paintings, however, do not make any claim to a 'correct' horizon. Their abstract pictorial spaces are negotiated and modulated performatively on the surface through the act of painting, thereby also evoking references to the potentially infinite space of digital 3D modeling.

In this process, Saile works with gestures of concealment and revelation whose dynamism and engagement with the picture field evoke cinematic procedures: the gaze is held back, redirected, then partially released and opened up again. Within the exhibition's arrangements, it can leap from one painting to another. What becomes visible in the traces of the painterly and material processes always appears in relation to what eludes the gaze. In the successive and overlapping layers of colour, each brushstroke is at once an event in the making of the painting and a record of what has been covered, shifted or preserved. Tension arises through transposition: between the flatness of the picture support and the suggestion of volume; between the static image and the movement implied by the trace of the brush.

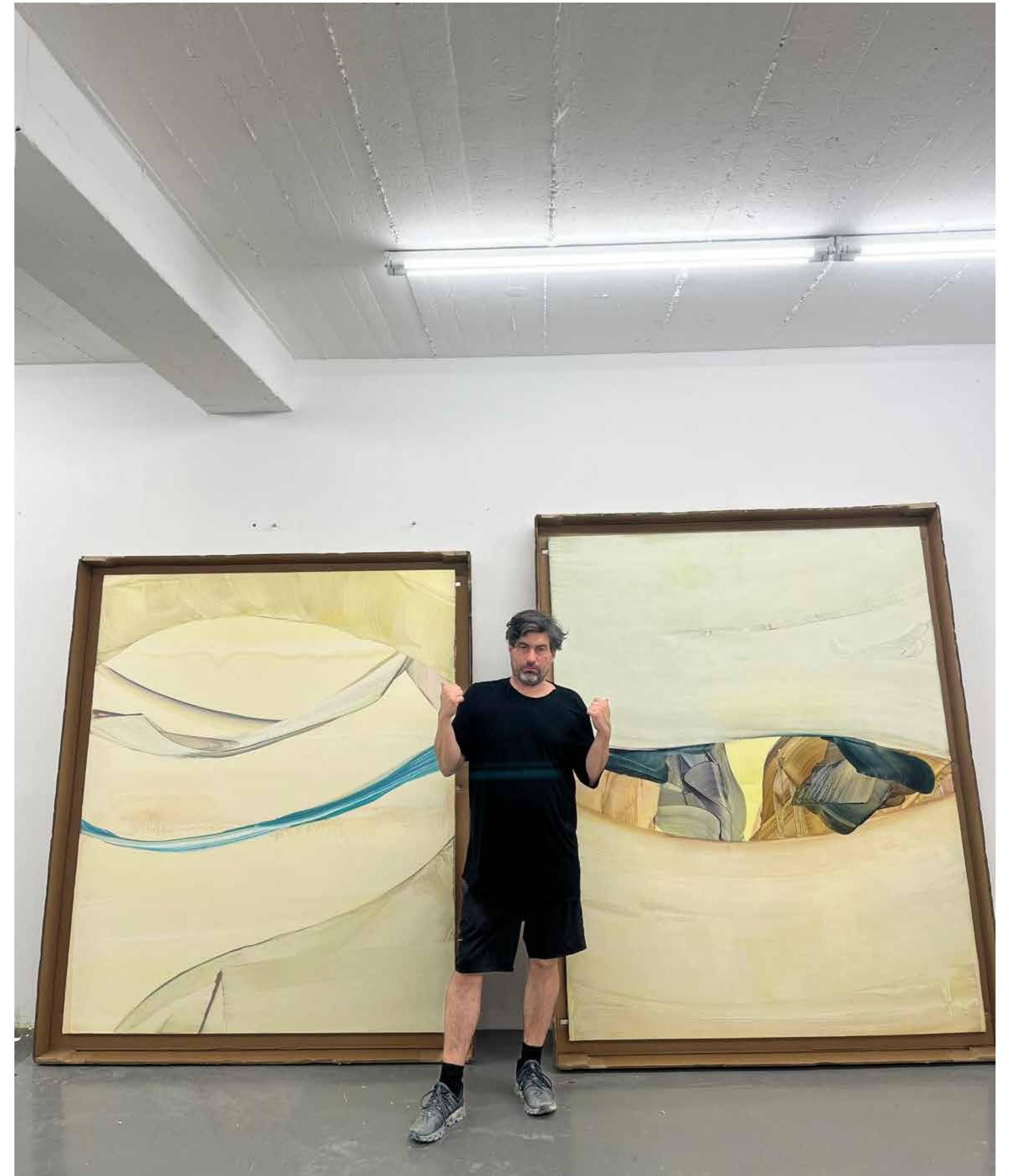
Structure and depth develop through the superimposition of gestures, sweeps and loops. As the process unfolds, colours accumulate at the edges of the picture surface, while traces of successive layers converge into lines of demarcation. At the edges of the wooden panels, the paintings assert their material boundaries. Their structure holds the pictorial field within its outer limits. Yet on the picture surface, spatial relations remain unstable and potentially open out into the surrounding space. Texture becomes light; colour alternately comes forward and recedes. Brushstrokes meet, connect and at the same time retain their independence; they trace a gesture that is both present and already in the process of disappearing, held at the threshold of visibility within an embodied process of continual negotiation. The viewing subject is invited to situate themselves in relation to the painting and the space, and to reflect on the *false horizons* that emerge between them.

Text by Mareike Dittmer

Markus Saile's (b. 1981 in Stuttgart, lives and works in Cologne, Germany) work convenes the space of painting, in a subtle interplay between the space where it is situated, the space it represents and the space it constructs in dialogue with architecture. Beyond the in-situ and the context, it is an investigation into painting in volume, the depth of the surface, and the extension of this practice into a performative field of action. Broken colors, diluted in oil with turpentine, applied in numerous layers on a small-format wooden background – Markus Saile's works are intangible, fleeting, abstract, whereby a painterly gesture may develop figuratively without ever becoming concrete. The gestural structures in the pictures function as agents who, through their interrelated movements, open up interrelationships of space and time.

Markus Saile's recent solo exhibitions include Z2O Project, Rome; Artothek, Cologne; Galerie DREI, Cologne; A+B Gallery, Brescia; NAK Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen; and Galerie Markus Lüttgen, Düsseldorf, among others.

His work was included in the survey exhibition "Jetzt! Painting in Germany Today", presented at Kunstmuseum Bonn, Museum Wiesbaden, Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz – Museum Gunzenhauser, and Deichtorhallen Hamburg. His works have also been featured in exhibitions at Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck; STRABAG Kunstforum, Vienna; Museo Licini, Ascoli Piceno; Pinacoteca Emilio Notte, Ceglie Messapica; Paik Hae Young Gallery, Seoul; Bel Ami, Los Angeles; Temporary Gallery, Cologne; Galerie Crone, Vienna; and RECEPTION, Berlin, among others.



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
205 x 164 cm
(MAS.20825.M)





Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
39.5 x 33 cm
(MAS.20807.M)



Markus Saile

Pipe #51, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
200 x 13 cm

(MAS.20827.M)





Markus Saile

untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
72 x 89 cm

(MAS.20816.M)



Markus Saile

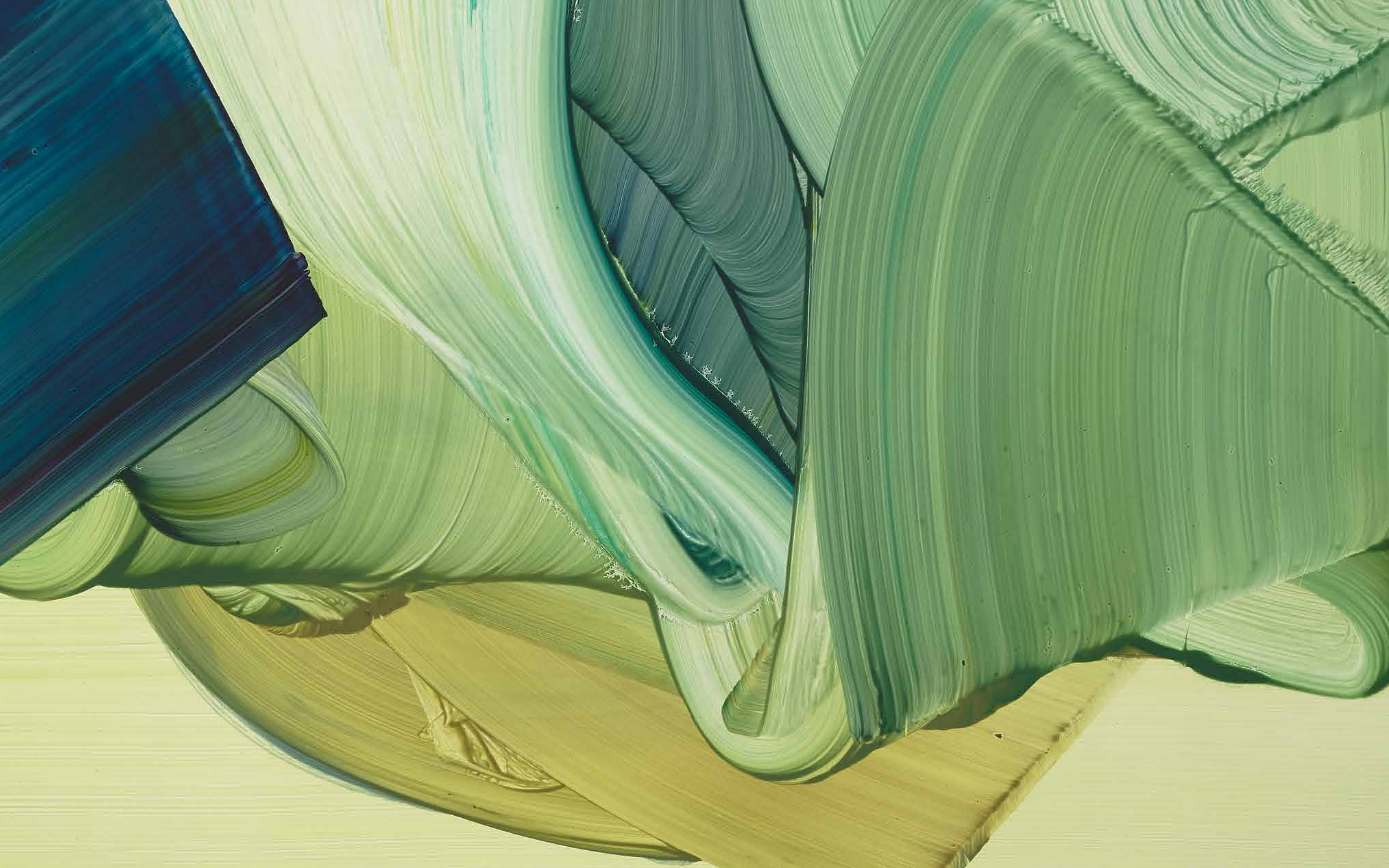
Pipe #52, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
220 x 13 cm

(MAS.20828.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
71 x 59 cm
(MAS.20815.M)

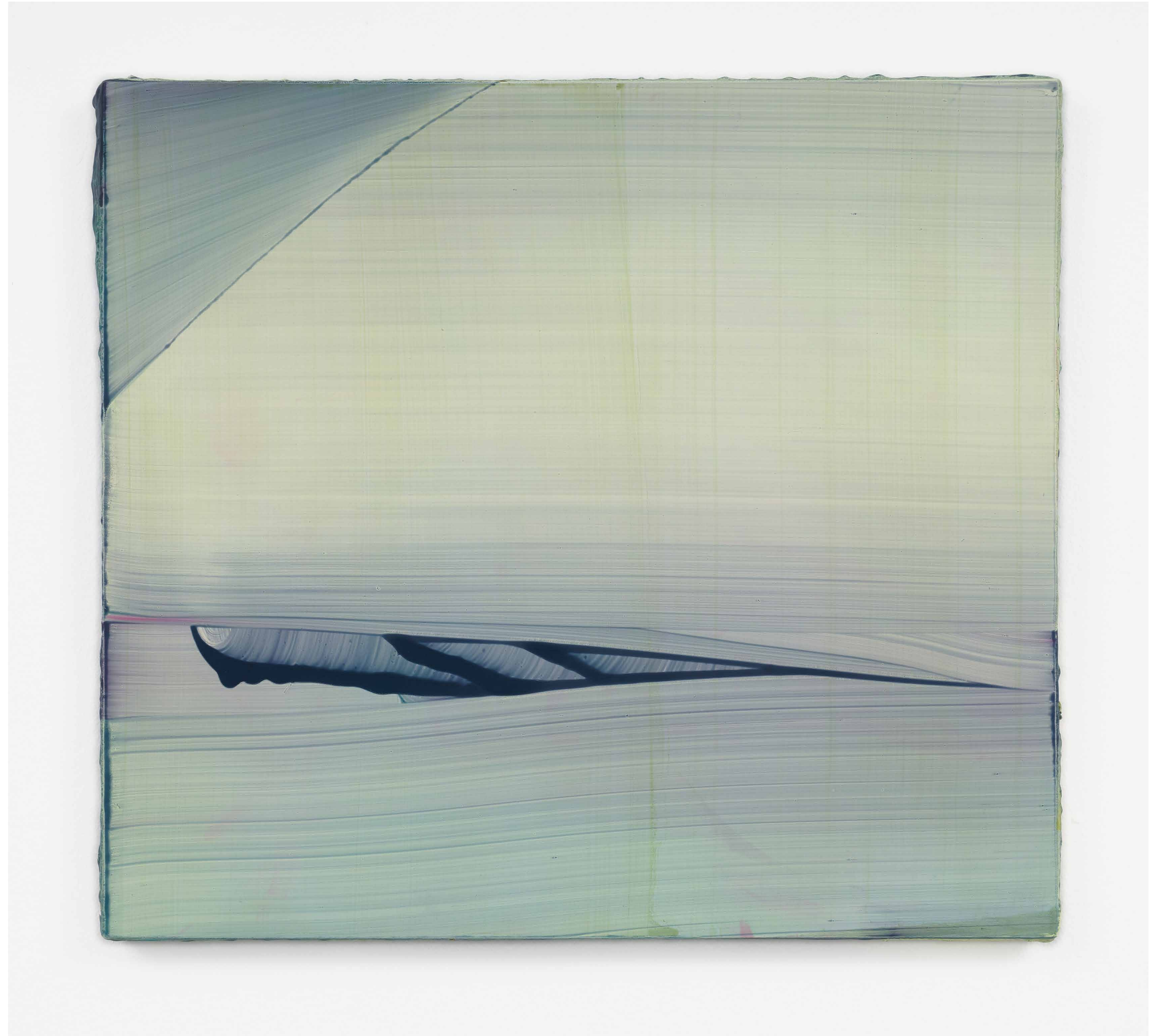




Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
13 x 75 cm
(MAS.20817.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
47 x 52 cm
(MAS.20813.M)

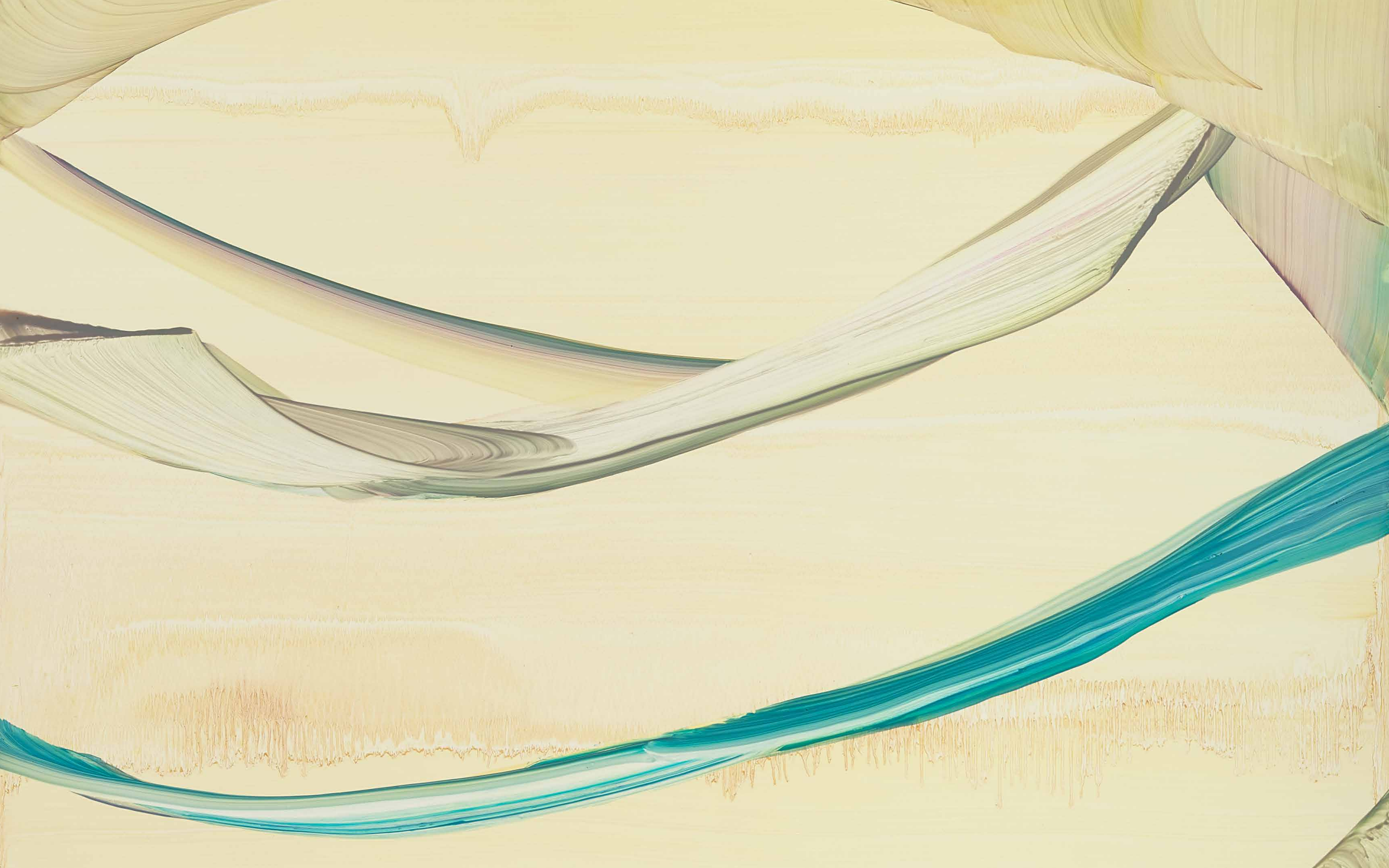


Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
67 x 77 cm
(MAS.20814.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
190 x 160 cm
(MAS.20824.M)





Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
116 x 161 cm
(MAS.20820.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
22 x 28 cm
(MAS.20810.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
121 x 101 cm
(MAS.20821.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
86 x 68 cm
(MAS.20818.M)



Markus Saile

Pipe #50, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
200 x 13 cm

(MAS.20826.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
49 x 44.5 cm
(MAS.20808.M)





Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
71 x 59 cm
(MAS.20809.M)



Markus Saile
untitled, 2026
signed and dated verso
oil on wood
43 x 37 cm
(MAS.20812.M)



@mai36galerie

RÄMISTRASSE 37
8001 ZURICH
TEL: +41 44 261 68 80
TUE - FRI: 11 - 18:30
SAT: 11 - 17

Contact:
collect@mai36.com