

Press Release

Basel, August 21, 2025

Cassidy Toner. Besides the Point
Manor Art Prize 2025

August 22, 2025 to January 11, 2026, Kunstmuseum Basel | Hauptbau

Curator: Alice Wilke

Cassidy Toner's new works take center stage at the Kunstmuseum Basel. Awarded the Manor Art Prize 2025, the US-born, Basel-based artist (b. 1992, Baltimore) presents an entire body of new work in *Cassidy Toner. Besides the Point*. On view are nearly two dozen ceramic sculptures, a sprawling wall drawing, a video piece, and an installation featuring cast objects in synthetic resin and tin—all created especially for the exhibition.

Witty, sly, and full of surprises—In her work, Toner levels an ironic, critical gaze at the art world's dealings, expectations, and systems of value. With a healthy dose of humor and an acute self-awareness, she undermines the supposed logic of the art industry. The title *Besides the Point* combines the English-language phrase “beside the point” (i.e. “irrelevant”) with the word “besides” (meaning “additionally”). Toner deliberately focuses on the supposedly trivial and incidental, making them the overarching subject of her exhibition.

With her ceramic works in the first exhibition gallery, Toner delves into received notions of figurative sculpture. Her works cheekily reference ideals in sculpture, such as when she showcases classical statue supports, an element normally taking on a mere auxiliary role in relation to the sculpture it has been made to reinforce.

The artist's video work *En Garde* (2025), filmed at the Kunstmuseum Basel, focuses on the everyday lives of gallery invigilators. Toner is interested in how they balance protecting artworks with mediating visitor experience. She combines repeated actions and rehearsed roles to create an idiosyncratic homage to museum guards. Her comedic work was inspired by *I, an Actress* (1977) by George Kuchar, an avant-garde film in which an actor keeps restarting a scene during rehearsals.

Toner brings together small-format cast works in the final gallery. This installation examines the idea of the unfinished, following the artistic non finito principle. By

spotlighting failure and incompleteness, Toner again questions what we deem to be “finished” or “valuable” in art.

Besides the Point is Toner’s most extensive institutional solo show to date. An accompanying artist book, *Hands on*, will be published in fall 2025 as part of the exhibition. This volume presents a series of smartphone photographs taken by Toner between 2014 and 2024. In these images, Toner’s hand interacts with the people and objects shown on advertising posters displayed in public space. Her actions subvert the original messaging, playing with the intentions of the advertising world.

Cassidy Toner received her bachelor of fine arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York, in 2014 and her master of fine arts from Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Basel FHNW in Basel in 2018. Her awards include the Werkbeitrag des Kunstkredits Basel-Stadt (2018), Kiefer Hablitzel Preis (2021), and Manor Kunstpreis 2025. Toner has shown in solo, duo, and group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Zürich (2023), Swiss Institute in New York (2020), Kunsthalle Basel (2019), Kunst Raum Riehen (2019), C. Rockefeller Center for the Contemporary Arts in Dresden (2019), and Centre Art Contemporain Yverdon (2019). Since 2017, she has directed the independent Rheum Room curatorial space in Basel.

Manor Art Prize

The Manor Art Prize celebrated its fortieth anniversary in 2022. It is one of Switzerland’s most important prizes for contemporary artists, founded in 1982 by Philippe Nordmann. The prize aims to platform young Swiss artists and is judged by an expert jury. The exhibition is hosted by a different Swiss city each year, alternating between Aarau, Basel, Biel, Chur, Geneva, Lausanne, Lucerne (for Central Switzerland), Lugano, Schaffhausen, Sion, St. Gallen, and Winterthur. The 2025 Manor Art Prize jury comprised artists Onomé Ekeh and Markus Müller as well as curator Eva-Maria Knüsel.

The exhibition is supported by:

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