



This is not a church

MANIFESTA 16 Ruhr

(Cover)

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Innenraum der Kirche St. Josef mit den
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Eröffnung des Gemeinschaftsprojekts von
Pele Collective vor der Markuskirche.

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This is not a church

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Zollverein

this is not
a church

Dr. Frank Dudda

Chair of the Supervisory Board of
Manifesta 16 Ruhr, Mayor of the City
of Herne and President of the RVR
Ruhr Parliament

The Ruhr Area knows change like hardly any other region in Europe. With the end of coal mining in 2018, we lost not only a defining sector of our economy, but also a piece of shared identity. Today, we are once again experiencing profound changes in our industry – in steel, chemicals and increasingly also in our social infrastructure. This is particularly visible in how we deal with churches: places that were spaces of encounter, exchange and social cohesion for generations are now losing their original function in many places.

This is precisely where Manifesta 16 Ruhr comes in. It sees vacant churches not as relics of the past, but as starting points for new forms of community, solidarity and democratic participation. Under the title *This is not a church*, the underlying Urban Vision focuses on how we can develop new social perspectives from existing spaces – together with the people, neighbourhoods and institutions of our region. This makes clear: the transformation of the Ruhr Area is not only an ecological or economic task, but above all a social process.

Long before its official opening, Manifesta 16 has already had a remarkable impact. Not only in the Host Cities of Bochum, Essen, Duisburg and Gelsenkirchen, but also at numerous Manifesta 16+ locations, we are seeing how neighbourhoods, associations, initiatives and cultural actors are developing new energy. People want to help shape things, take on responsibility and bring their spaces back to life. This is precisely where the particular power of this format lies: it activates, brings people back together and creates new spaces for encounter, exchange and cohesion.

These questions have long extended far beyond the Ruhr Area. Many regions throughout Europe face similar challenges, which is why Manifesta 16 can become a model for dealing with social change across Europe. Our heartfelt thanks go to all those involved, our partners, funders and the Manifesta 16 team for two years of intensive collaboration, creative perspectives and great passion for our region. This is Europe at its best.

Prof. Dr. Alexander Rinnooy Kan

Deputy Chair of the Supervisory Board
of Manifesta 16 Ruhr and former Chair of
the Social and Economic Council of the
Netherlands (SER)

Wandering all over Europe, Manifesta has, over the course of more than 25 years, secured a distinguished position in the world of contemporary visual art as the unique nomadic biennial. This did not happen without the occasional struggle: the history of Manifesta is full of unexpected developments and quick changes of direction. But survival is an art form in itself for festivals, and in this regard Manifesta has succeeded wonderfully.

This achievement is due in part to the large community of supporters who have continued to believe in Manifesta through thick and thin, but above all to the efforts of its tireless founder, Hedwig Fijen, who, with this 16th edition, will be taking leave of what can rightly be called a magnificent career at the forefront of European culture.

Over time, it has become increasingly clear how an artistic event like Manifesta can serve as a vehicle for developments in its host locations that extend far beyond a narrow sense of art and culture. The repeated involvement of local communities and artists in the biennial has left lasting local legacies in and beyond the cultural sphere. Over the course of its 16 editions, Manifesta has contributed to successfully identifying urgent local political and social challenges, resulting in artistic expressions that are deeply rooted in local perspectives and leave positive and enduring traces behind.

As Europe finds itself confronted with the increasing urgency of supranational cooperation, it becomes more and more evident how our shared European cultural history functions as its essential foundation. Time and again, Manifesta has demonstrated its ability to add a new layer to that history. The wanderings of Manifesta are far from over, yet on this special occasion in the Ruhr Area, located as it is in the heartland of Europe – where designing a new role for Germany's post-war churches will form the central theme – it is fitting to recognise Manifesta's legacy for what it is: an expression of vital European power and self-confidence.

←← Opening ceremony of Manifesta 16 Ruhr on the site of
the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in Essen.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman
→ Hedwig Fijen, Josep Bohigas and Dr. Frank Dudda in
conversation at a press conference at St. Josef's Church.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Dirk Rose

21.06.-04.10

MANIFESTA
16 Ruhr



This Is Not a Traditional Biennial Anymore

Hedwig Fijen

Founding Director of Manifesta,
Director of Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

Essays

Manifesta 16 has opened its 16th edition on the 21st of June 2026 and the biennial is celebrating its 30th anniversary since its start in Rotterdam at Manifesta 1 in 1996. This Ruhr edition holds a particular significance for me.

Not only because it is the 16th edition of Manifesta, realised after years of preparation, and not only because it marks the 30th anniversary of the European Nomadic Biennial,

but also, because it is my final edition as Founding Director before I hand over Manifesta to a new generation.

For thirty years, Manifesta has travelled across Europe –

from Rotterdam to Ljubljana,

from Palermo to Marseille,

from Prishtina to Barcelona.

Always on the move,

always listening,

always asking what role culture can play in moments of transition.

And perhaps there has never been a moment when that question felt more urgent than it does now.

Because everywhere we look, we see societies under pressure.

We see growing inequality, political polarisation and the erosion of trust in institutions.

We see the consequences of war on the European continent and disinformation shaping public debate.

We see a generation growing up in a world that is more connected digitally than ever before, yet often more disconnected socially.

At the same time, something else is happening.

Across Europe, people are searching for new forms of belonging

– for places to meet, to listen, to disagree without division –

and where collective life can still be imagined.

People are searching for rituals again.

Not necessarily religious rituals, but rituals of gathering, of care, of participation, of community.

And perhaps this is where the story of Manifesta 16 Ruhr begins.

Because when the Ruhr Area invited us to develop this edition, we did not begin with an exhibition theme.

We began with a question.

A simple question: What happens when the places that once brought communities together begin to disappear?

Across Germany, more than 20,000 churches are expected to become vacant or deconsecrated in the coming years.

Many of them stand in neighbourhoods that were built during the great industrial expansion of the 20th century – neighbourhoods that once revolved around work, faith, solidarity and shared public life.

Many of those structures have since changed: the industries, the demographics, the rhythms of everyday life.

And yet the buildings remain, standing at the centre of neighbourhoods, waiting for a new purpose, waiting for a new story.

For Manifesta 16, these churches became more than buildings.

They became a lens through which to examine a larger question.

How can existing infrastructure be transformed to support new forms of collective life?

How can culture contribute to rebuilding social cohesion?

And how can public space once again become a place of encounter rather than separation?

To explore these questions, we began with research.

Not artistic research alone, but urban, social and political research.

Together with our Urban Creative Mediator Josep Bohigas and many local partners, we developed the Urban Vision *This is not a church*.

We visited more than 200 churches across the Ruhr Area.

We listened to citizens, organised consultations and held conversations with local communities, church representatives, young people, neighbourhood organisations and municipal leaders.

And everywhere we heard variations of the same message.

People did not simply want these buildings preserved.

They wanted them activated.

They wanted them reopened.

They wanted them to become places of encounter – places for culture, for learning, for civic life.

Places that belong to everyone.

That insight became the foundation of Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

Because this edition is not simply about churches, and it is certainly not about nostalgia.

It is about the future.

It is about transformation.

It is about how architecture, culture and community can work together to create new possibilities.

Across the edition, visitors encounter twelve different responses to this challenge.

Twelve different experiments.

Twelve different futures.

Former churches transformed into exhibition spaces, gardens, music halls, workshops, schools, community platforms and places of gathering.

Some feel familiar; others come as a surprise.

But all of them ask the same fundamental question: what kinds of spaces do we need in order to live together?

This question also shaped the structure of our artistic team.

For this anniversary edition, I wanted to create a dialogue between generations – between those who experienced the optimism of post-war Europe and those who have inherited a very different reality; between those who helped shape Manifesta's history and those who will shape its future.

That is why we invited three intergenerational tandems from Poland, Germany and the United Kingdom, alongside Josep Bohigas and Gürsoy Doğtaş.

Together they represent different experiences, perspectives and generations.

But they share a common commitment: to think about Europe not as an abstract idea, but as a lived reality – a reality shaped by memory, migration, conflict, solidarity and exchange.

Their projects remind us that culture is not only about representation. It is about participation.

Not only about reflection, but about creating the conditions for new relationships to emerge.

And perhaps that is what makes this edition particularly meaningful.

Because with it, Manifesta celebrates thirty years.

Thirty years since Rotterdam.

Thirty years since Europe emerged from the Cold War with an extraordinary sense of possibility.

Manifesta was born in that moment – born from a belief that culture could create connections where politics had built divisions, that artists could help imagine new forms of European exchange, that Europe could be a project of openness rather than exclusion.

Thirty years on, we find ourselves in a different Europe.

A more uncertain Europe. A more fragmented Europe.

But perhaps also a Europe that needs culture more than ever.

Not because culture offers solutions, but because culture creates spaces where new futures can be imagined – spaces where complexity can be held, where different voices can meet, where trust can begin to be rebuilt.

That, ultimately, is what Manifesta 16 Ruhr hopes to contribute.

Not simply an exhibition.

Not simply a cultural event.

But an invitation – an invitation to think differently about the spaces we inherit, to reconsider how we live together, to imagine new forms of proximity, solidarity and collective life.

Across the edition, visitors encounter artworks, performances, archives, workshops, conversations, gardens, playgrounds and gatherings.

But above all, my hope is that they encounter one another.

Because if there is one ambition at the heart of this edition, it is this: to transform spaces into places, to transform neighbours into communities, and to transform culture into a catalyst for social cohesion.

At a moment when Europe is searching for new ways forward, this feels like a worthwhile ambition for Manifesta's 30th anniversary in 2026.



Eingang

Info Point

Kulturkirche
Liebfrauen

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This is not a church

Michael Kurtz

On behalf of the Manifesta 16
Ruhr Creative Mediators

Essays

We begin with the buildings – bricks and wood, reinforced concrete and stained glass.

Over a thousand churches were erected across the Ruhr Area in the twenty-five years after the Second World War. Some replaced houses of worship destroyed by Allied bombs, while others served new congregations of Germans displaced from the East and migrant workers from southern Europe. As well as catering to changing demographics, church building became an important part of the ideological construction of West Germany after Nazism. Characteristic of the ambitions and mythologies of the period, it was a tangible way for communities to signal rebirth without necessarily reckoning with their complicity or engaging with the victims of the Third Reich.

Even if practice lagged behind aesthetics, mid-century modernist churches represented an attempt to articulate the ideals of post-fascist society. “The time of shiny facades is over,” one journalist wrote in 1950, “we want the church simply to stay true to its word and provide no place for dishonesty.”¹ With this aim in mind, architects favoured practical materials, exposed and unornamented. They rejected monumentalism and sought to dissolve the barrier between altar and congregants, prizing democracy over divine authority. Orthodoxies tumbled, especially as West Germany became more prosperous and liberal in the 1960s, and every clean surface and geometric form spoke of social renewal.

Some post-war churches were less progressive. St. Gertrud in Essen, for example, is a simplified version of the nineteenth-century church that stood on the same site until 1943. And even the most radical buildings are haunted by history. Liebfrauenkirche in Duisburg, with its cliffs of concrete and diaphanous fibreglass sides, contains statues and furnishings from a war-destroyed predecessor. Meanwhile the walls of Gethsemane-Kirche in Bochum, which follows an austere modular design, are made from *Trümmerziegel* or “rubble bricks” salvaged by local people in the 1940s.²

Rubble was the most widely available material in mid-century Germany. Millions of cubic metres were sifted through and cleared in the Ruhr Area alone. This backbreaking labour was carried out partly by the famous volunteer *Trümmerfrauen* or “rubble women” but also by former Nazi Party members as punishment, the unemployed in return for rations and

1 An unnamed *Rheinhesisches Kirchenblatt* reporter commenting on the opening of St Luke's Church in Worms, June 1950, quoted in Paul Betts, ‘Sacred Rubble and Humble Shelters: German Church Building after the Second World War’, *German History* 42:2 (June 2024), p. 262.

2 I am grateful to Felix Hemmers, expert on the Ruhr Area's modernist churches, for telling me about the phrase *Trümmerziegel*. Kai Kappel shows in *Memento 1945?: Kirchenbau aus Kriegsrüinen und Trümmersteinen* (Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2008) that ruins were used in mid-century churches for a range of reasons, including practical necessity, a push for continuity and desire to express remorse.

professional construction workers.³ Bricks and stones that could not be re-used were often crushed into aggregate for concrete, so even the ultimate material of the post-war future was composed from the fabric of Europe's violent past.

After decades of secularisation, churches in the Ruhr Area are now closing on a weekly basis. They are sometimes transformed to serve surrounding communities in new ways but are more frequently purchased by profit-hungry developers or left slowly to decay. It's a familiar scene across northern Europe. These landmarks, once central to neighbourhood life for many, have become symbols of our diminished public realm: of social atomisation and the loss of collective experience. In this respect they join the coal mines and steel factories that once made the region Europe's industrial heartland but by the 1990s had almost all closed.

Manifesta 16 Ruhr takes place in and around a selection of these churches and responds to their precarious situation. It asks: what can we do with these underused buildings? What is their meaning and value? How might they be preserved as social spaces but also adapted for contemporary life? Can these structures, associated with domination and exclusion as well as congregational belonging, now contribute to the formation of a more just and pluralistic society?

The curatorial team's approach to these questions is encapsulated in the image of the rubble bricks: those fragments of an old collapsing world that were used to build a new one. We begin with the buildings, opening every cupboard and listening to every creak. In the resourceful spirit of the *Trümmerfrauen*, artists salvage and reconfigure discarded material – superfluous benches, smashed windows, silent organ pipes – to articulate new forms and ideas. Like the walls of Gethsemane-Kirche in Bochum, our visions for the future of collective experience are built from remnants of the past. Our hopes are grounded in an awareness of immense loss, desires to transform tempered by the need to remember. Our actions are motivated by a duty to acknowledge and repair historic injustices. This dual temporality, looking back and forward at once, structures the biennial as a whole.

On the one hand, the churches are turned into sites for sharing and contesting stories of the past. Artworks, archival collections, documentary films and photographic displays together present a kaleidoscopic history of the Ruhr Area and its people. We wander between topics, from the central role of so-called "guest workers" in post-war Germany's revival to the rituals and dangers of life in the coal mines; from modernist urban design and international avant-garde art to post-industrial decline and the loss of communal space; from the pop music sensations and craft traditions of migrant communities to the recent influx of Ukrainian refugees.

³ Accounts of women rushing to help clear the rubble after the Nazi defeat became part of modern Germany's founding mythology, but their role has been exaggerated, as Leonie Treber demonstrates in *Mythos Trümmerfrauen* (Klartext Verlag, 2014).

On the other hand, participatory projects and architectural interventions redefine the buildings, often engaging with and sometimes challenging the values and aesthetics of Christianity. They include sporting arenas, reading rooms and canteens, fashion shows and theatrical performances, grief support sessions and weaving lessons, workshops for building new outdoor seating areas and for woodcut printing with old church benches, spaces for making and listening to music, a tea garden, a crowd-sourced display of locally produced artefacts, a henge of humming organ pipes and a bell-shaped bouncy castle. Instead of suggesting a single rigid formula, the biennial launches dozens of experiments, some straightforward and functional, others strange and irreverent.

At every turn, historical narratives rub up against contemporary life. Gardens grow near archives, playgrounds buzz alongside memorials. This is the overarching argument of Manifesta 16. Meaningful and equitable social progress is dependent on active engagement with the past: more specifically, on an understanding of how history has shaped the present, of inherited responsibilities and unfinished struggles. And the forces that threaten our public realm – marketisation, institutional decay, digital echo chambers – also untether society from its roots. The creation of new public spaces and the preservation of historical consciousness are therefore two sides of the same coin.

Back in 2023, Manifesta commissioned Barcelona-based architect Josep Bohigas to research the built environment and social conditions of the Ruhr Area, to help tailor the biennial's work to the needs of its host. In his *Urban Vision*, Bohigas identifies the closure of churches as an opportunity to implement "a locally grounded proximity-based model" for regeneration.⁴ Evenly spread across the region, church buildings could be adapted, he argues, in ways that nurture feelings of belonging and agency among residents within small neighbourhood areas. This decentralised strategy counters the sense of physical and social distance that often defines city life.

The curatorial team, which includes Bohigas, has extended this analysis to prioritise temporal as well as spatial proximity: closeness to each other and to a shared and multifaceted past. After all, churches have long been places where the trials and joys of everyday life are connected to grand narratives of struggle and salvation – where community and history intersect, where bricks remember rubble.⁵ Born between 1942 and 1998, the Manifesta 16 Creative Mediators emerged in contexts as diverse as communist Poland, reunified Germany and Brexit Britain. Intergenerational

⁴ Josep Bohigas, *Manifesta 16 Ruhr: Urban Vision. This is not a church* (Manifesta, 2025), especially Chapters 3, "The Revolution of Proximity," and 4, "Churches as Urban Infrastructure."

⁵ In an issue of *Baukultur Nordrhein-Westfalen* about the Ruhr Area's closing churches (September 2022), several articles argue that, despite secularisation, these buildings should be preserved as spaces for commemorating important events and asking fundamental questions: for example, Ursula Kleefisch-Jobst, "Mehr als steinerne Behälter!," pp. 14-15, and Thomas Macho, "Neue Trauerrituale," pp. 30-31.

dialogue, then, between post-war history and the 21st-century present, has been not only a primary thematic concern but also integral to a process driven by mutual curiosity and respect.

Our *Trümmerziegel* approach is expressed by the tongue-in-cheek title, *This is not a church*, which dwells in negativity just as it signals potential for change. If this is not a church, the phrase begs the question, what is it? Loss is entwined with possibility, the unavoidable presence of the past with the prospect of a different future.



Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

Church Buildings: Heritage and Resource

Prof. Dr. Barbara Welzel

Art Historian, TU Dortmund
University

Essays

Church buildings are precious. Simultaneously, they are crystallisation points of different meanings and controversial attitudes. Currently they are, in many places, endangered structures. This heritage is nonetheless a significant resource for how we design our future.

Church buildings are coded spaces, carrying multiple layers of meaning and unfolding their richness and potential across different reference systems. For Christians of different denominations, they are places that reflect humans' history with God. For some, they are spaces of discrimination, and at times also of a violence that denies human dignity. But for all groups – Christians, persons of different faiths, persons who reject religion or the church or are simply indifferent to it – they are shared cultural heritage. This second, strictly secular coding, considers these buildings to be the heritage of all mankind. This is where the right to participation, as articulated in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” comes into play: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.” (Article 27.1)

Cultural participation also means participating in cultural heritage. Church buildings are testaments to European history and culture: For more than a thousand years, they have belonged to all cities, urban districts and villages. Trier Cathedral is considered the oldest surviving church building in Germany, dating back to the era of Emperor Constantine in the 4th century. In Essen, there are two churches that extend back to the early Middle Ages and were once far-reaching centres of power and culture: today's cathedral and the Ludgerus-Kirche in Essen-Werden. The cathedral is the former church of the important *Frauenstift* (women's collegiate foundation) in Essen, whose abbess was a territorial ruler until secularisation. St. Ludgerus is the basilica of the former Benedictine monastery in Werden, founded in 805. Both buildings, along with numerous objects in their treasuries, are outstanding testaments to medieval art. The Ruhr Area belongs to one of the most significant cultural landscapes of medieval Europe – a fact that is often overlooked, having been largely obscured by industrialisation and industrial culture.

Churches, along with their furnishings – which also include organs and bells – are part of Europe's cultural heritage. This also extends to post-war churches, which have been consciously inscribed into European history – in part as a deliberate distancing from the Third Reich. They continue to shape that history or even alter its course. Within the temporal dimensions revealed here, churches are places that open the imagination to planetary time scales – something indispensable if we aim for responsible action in the face of climate change.

Churches have been anchors of urban development and places of gathering for centuries. As soon as they open their doors (or: don't close them), they become “third places,” where different persons can meet within a democratic society and experience themselves as members of a world for which they share responsibility. Church buildings can also be “fourth places” – in



a sense, “third places plus”: places where one can experience a spirituality that is open to different worldviews.

Churches have always been – and this is one of the great potentials of their secular coding – places of art: the buildings themselves, their furnishings, their treasures and libraries, their musical culture. Only seldom are these furnishings of a piece. Rather, these places continue to feature works of art from various periods, diverse artistic concepts and a range of artistic perspectives. Music from different periods is frequently heard in these spaces. In this way, churches provide venues for engaging in dialogue and spaces open for discussions about faith, the world and art.

Given the major transformative processes currently underway, it is therefore more than fitting that Manifesta 16 Ruhr should shed light on the potential of these buildings and spaces through the medium of art. These very buildings serve as resources for developing visions of community living in 21st-century cities and neighbourhoods.

Sources:
www.kirchenmanifest.de
baukultur.nrw/museum/ausstellungen/kirchen-als-vierte-orte-perspektiven-des-wandels/
Hans-Jürgen Lechtreck/Wolfgang Sonne/Barbara Welzel (Ed.): Religion@Stadt_Bauten_Ruhr.
(Schriftenreihe des Baukunstarchivs NRW) Dortmund 2021

← St. Marien in Essen is due to be demolished. As part of Manifesta 16 Ruhr, it is being repurposed as a cultural venue. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Transforming Churches – Strengthening Neighbourhoods: Impulses for Neighbourhood Development

Prof. Dr. Renée Tribble

Dipl.-Ing. Architecture,
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Essays

Manifesta 16 Ruhr takes its place within a series of decade-defining projects in the Ruhr Area – from IBA Emscher Park, through the European Capital of Culture 2010, to the International Garden Exhibition (IGA) 2027. Yet it also sets itself apart from the line of large-scale projects that strategically drive conceptual and qualitative development in response to structural change. Manifesta follows this logic, yet simultaneously breaks it open. It is more concentrated, more local: hyperlocal. It does not move into urban centres or industrial heritage sites, but into neighbourhood church buildings.

Yet this is not a niche strategy. Manifesta 16 Ruhr takes on a central phenomenon: the vacancy, sale and demolition of hundreds of churches, particularly those from the post-war period, a process already under way and set to continue in the years ahead. Post-war church architecture is often characterised by a clear architectural language that translates democratic ideals into geometrically complex buildings with largely non-hierarchical spaces. They are often reduced in terms of materials, yet nonetheless feature elaborately crafted stained-glass windows and decorative details. Such buildings are widely dispersed throughout neighbourhoods as so-called *Pantoffelkirchen* (literally “slipper churches”) – within walking distance, forming part of the everyday landscape. Yet they are often found precisely in places where social isolation is increasing, neighbourhoods are fragmenting, and social and cultural infrastructures are at risk of collapsing or disappearing altogether.

Art and Urban Development

As an art biennial, Manifesta 16 Ruhr operates, on the one hand, in a classic mode: it serves as a catalyst, opening up room for reflection and – with Manifesta 16+ – concrete spaces of possibility; it imagines, reveals, questions and opens the door to new perspectives and experiences. On the other hand, it is urban: it moves into urban space, into people’s concrete everyday spaces and living environments. Given the potential impact of these impulses, it is important to take them seriously and ask: How can artistic processes not only help to imagine and test such places, but also to develop them further? An essential part of this – and for a fundamental understanding of how art and urban development interact – is the following: The experiences triggered by artistic impulses cannot be undone. They become an important fragment of change, a molecule that is small but has specific properties. It can bond with others, enable new structures, trigger reactions.

The central question for urban development remains: How do we pick up on these molecules? How do we connect them with other elements, so that poetic impulses can actually give rise to new dynamics of development? Art makes visible what was previously invisible. It opens up spaces, raises questions, stirs emotions and expands the horizons of thought and action. But these impulses often end when the exhibition ends. Developing something lasting from this requires a deliberately designed process.

From *This is not a church* to "To Gather Together"

In two specific teaching formats, the potential of church buildings in, for and with the neighbourhood is researched, designed and tested in practice. Students examine several churches in Gelsenkirchen, Bochum and Essen, and develop processes for neighbourhood development based on the existing building stock. These situational analyses consider the churches as anchor points within neighbourhoods, recording not only their spatial qualities but also their day-to-day use and their respective strengths as points of connection: places with history, social networks and untapped spatial resources. Complex Geographic Information System (GIS) analyses reveal vulnerabilities such as the dependence on fossil fuels, extensive surface sealing, high noise pollution and a lack of meeting places. From this data, students develop visions that emerge as processes ranging from initial interventions like book-swap shelves, neighbourhood festivals, temporarily usable open spaces, advisory services, co-working and roof activation, through to the transformation of the entire neighbourhood. In these scenarios, the churches become the crux of the whole process – spatial catalysts for neighbourhood development.

The Constructlab workshop with pupils from a primary school at St. Anna Church in Gelsenkirchen demonstrates how this potential can be activated in practice. Children and students build tents together. At three stations, sticks are tied together into load-bearing structures, fabric is printed and painted and then sewn into tent canopies. Spatial formations are built within the church where the children can read and rest, but also hide or let off steam – a simple yet effective experiment in spatial appropriation. For the children, the church is no longer solely a religious institution with impressive architecture, but a place of possibilities, a space for experience. The children have understood: Spaces can be different, spaces can be made by oneself, I can shape things myself.

Both examples combine artistic and academic practice with local realities. They consider specific stakeholders and how they can be involved or take action. They seek out informal structures that can act as a foundation for local engagement. The existing building stock serves as the starting point, becoming the focus of transformation while simultaneously retaining its significance, which can be updated and carried forward by both old and new stakeholders – without negating its past.

Completing Neighbourhoods

What matters in neighbourhoods? The aim is to turn them into places that not only meet everyday needs like shopping, mobility and infrastructure, but that also possess elements of social cohesion: solidarity, encounter and shared experience.

The church can play a key role in this process. Not necessarily as a religious site, but with a strong sense of commitment, they can emerge as spatial and structural resources capable of fulfilling a social role. Churches were places where people met beyond consumption. Even today, they represent spaces removed from the rhythms of everyday life – where time is created for other things. And across the Ruhr Area, they are scattered throughout neighbourhoods.

A molecule can bond with others, arrange itself into crystals, form new substances. An artistic impulse needs other elements in order to take effect like local stakeholders, institutional bodies, spatial anchoring and continuity over time. Above all: people who carry it forward.

The central task lies in translating these impulses into local structures and processes. Artistic impulses do not automatically lead to spatial or social transformation. It is essential to act on them, to take active stakeholders seriously, and to recognise resources – in terms of time, space and funding – supporting and promoting them wherever possible. What is needed are networks, moderation and resource mobilisation and, above all: courage, openness and a willingness to experiment without predetermined outcomes. This is precisely the subject of urban planning, neighbourhood development and process design.

The drivers of neighbourhood development are found not only among experts, but wherever residents themselves are active, where their knowledge and resources are taken seriously. This is the core of participatory urban development. In times of increasingly scarce resources, genuine cooperation and partnerships become ever more important.

Amazing Infrastructures

Manifesta16 Ruhr provides the impetus. The church buildings already exist. In this sense, there is more than just potential: concrete spatial resources, concrete ideas, tested projects, diverse engagement and real people. In order to take up these threads, what is needed are structures capable of building on them, and stakeholders who can pick them up, develop them further and translate them into lasting perspectives. This can succeed through shared responsibility between urban society, politics and institutions. There is a real opportunity to take up diverse molecules and combine them into something new, and to transform churches into places through which neighbourhoods can once again become places of social cohesion – places that are planned and shaped together with the people on the ground.

Thinking Churches Anew, or Community as a Return on Investment

Peter Köddermann

Programme Director,
Baukultur Nordrhein-Westfalen

Essays

That church spaces possess a particular aura is something we are all aware of, in one way or another. This does not necessarily depend on an outstanding architectural language or a monumental sense of space. Churches provide room for community and self-reflection alike. In terms of architectural culture, they can function as both a “fourth place” and a democratically constituted space.

Anyone entering a church encounters the extraordinary with all their senses. When the neighbourhood church – one that has accompanied people throughout their lives or served as a place of refuge – loses its liturgical function, you can feel the emotional power it still radiates. It makes no difference whether the building is a listed monument or was built using a standardised, series-produced design. A church always feels deeply personal, because churches possess something numinous. In other words, they radiate something mysterious and overwhelming, even when they are no longer used for worship – whether as a gallery or art venue, a senior housing initiative or an extracurricular meeting place. Even a simple, open church door invites you into a quiet, cool place in a noisy city, somewhere to catch your breath and turn inward.

Discovering Churches as Cultural Venues

A particular moment of tension arises when participants discover and interpret a space shaped by the sacred, as is happening within the framework of Manifesta 16 Ruhr. On the one hand, they too cannot avoid experiencing the space, sensing its layers of meaning and questioning it. On the other hand, it becomes their personal space – one to be occupied and activated. Should place and art be combined, or set against one another? Does the church become part of the process, or the artistic outcome itself? Does something new emerge, or does art simply move into the church as if into a temporary gallery? At what point does a church turn into a backdrop for art, and what remains afterwards? One thing is certain: the buildings remain where they are, in the hope that artistic intervention will put them in the spotlight, making them more tangible and valuable.

Understanding Churches as Community Spaces

This atmospheric quality alone is enough to justify a careful, conservation-minded approach to churches and to prevent their demolition. Places that are sensitively designed and democratically constituted have become extremely rare in our cities – despite their importance for our social coexistence. Church buildings possess an architectural and cultural value that arises from both material and immaterial qualities. They represent a culture of memory and of building, of neighbourhood and urban development; they are social spaces and, not least, places of faith. Their unifying essence has



grown out of a desire for community. Churches invite self-reflection or serve as spaces for art. Can we, as a society, really afford to do without such a meaningful building typology?

Transforming Churches

Anyone engaging with the reinterpretation of a church building – for example, with the aim of developing a space oriented towards the common good – quickly encounters the complexity of such an undertaking. First, churches are unfortunately often regarded by their owners merely as real estate, and are therefore considered solely in terms of their potential for commercial use. This leads to a church's transformation mutating into a purely economically driven property deal. Ambition, functionality and profitability become economic factors that determine any subsequent use. Operating costs, space requirements and ancillary costs form the basis of a return-oriented assessment. Second, transformation processes for church buildings are not yet well established – whether in voluntary-led parish communities, municipal administrations or among church authorities. Who should be involved in the

transformation, and at what stage? What needs to be coordinated in terms of urban planning? How is a dialogue initiated between stakeholders, administration and the church authority, and what needs to be considered when communicating such a process within the district?

Nevertheless, preserving a church and filling it with new life is worthwhile. Many transformation processes in recent years have shown that churches can become places of education, sports facilities or even commercial sites without losing their essential character. They are also exciting objects for testing new forms of community-based housing or creating a new focal point within a neighbourhood.

Reassessing Churches

Church transformation can result in something genuinely new, particularly when it is a collaborative process founded on cooperation between the church authority, the municipal administration and civic engagement. By now, there is a growing range of support available to transform churches. For example, time-based models for planning and repurposing have been developed, and operating structures have been designed specifically for church uses. It is now up to the relevant authorities to recognise churches as spaces of opportunity, to support initiatives for church transformation and to accompany parishes, initiatives and stakeholders in their commitment to preserving churches. It is also up to municipalities to recognise and value the importance of their churches for social life in the city. They should view churches, beyond their original function, as a natural impetus for urban development. And not least, in the spirit of an architectural-cultural perspective, it is essential to recognise and preserve the many layers of meaning in church architecture – as a logical precondition for a successful culture of conversion.

- ↖ As part of the Manifesta 16 Ruhr Warm-Up programme, St. Josef was used as a basketball court by the Gelsenkirchen-based initiative Social BallerZ. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anton Vichrov
- Panel discussion as part of the Kulturkonferenz Ruhr mittendrin x KUNSTFORUM International x Manifesta 16 Ruhr: *This is not a church* at the Heilig-Geist-Kirche in Gelsenkirchen. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

Panel discussion

Josep Bohigas First Creative Mediator, Manifesta 16 Ruhr

Dr. Ann-Katrin Günzel Editor-in-Chief, KUNSTFORUM International

Peter Köddermann Managing Director, Baukultur NRW

Sven Thorissen Director and Architect, MVRDV

Judith Toebast Program Manager, Future of Religious Heritage, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed, Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed

Prof. Dr. Renée Tribble Professor, Urban Planning and Urban Design Processes, TU Dortmund

Moderation: Hedwig Fijen Director Manifesta 16 Ruhr



Venues

Duisburg

Kulturkirche Liebfrauen

Essen

Markuskirche

St. Gertrud

St. Marien

Gelsenkirchen

St. Josef

Musiktheater im Revier

St. Anna – Hatay Engin Music Hall

St. Bonifatius – Ferdane Satır Tea Garden

Thomaskirche – Hava Güleç Living Room

Bochum

Christ-König

St. Anna

Gethsemane-Kirche

St. Ludgerus

Kulturkirche Liebfrauen





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
← Creative Mediator Michael Kurtz in conversation
with visitors to the Kulturkirche Liebfrauen.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

Kulturkirche Liebfrauen was built in the late 1950s to replace its war-destroyed predecessor and serve a growing population. With its vast scale and modernist form, the church became an icon of Duisburg's post-war boom. Then, in 2011, after decades of dwindling congregations and years lying empty, it was converted into an arts centre. The building's sixty-five-year life – its hopeful origins, quick decline and subsequent transformation – mirrors the city's recent history, from mid-century revival to post-industrial struggle.

Here, five artists directly engage with the built environment, seeking to understand the significance of Kulturkirche Liebfrauen as both a product of its time and a prominent feature of present-day Duisburg. Their films and installations investigate the visual character and ageing fabric of the building and the Ruhr Area beyond. By extension, some of the projects question the values and power structures built into the church's design. While they express admiration for the achievements of earlier generations and commemorate what has been lost over time, they also demand new aesthetic and social forms. Looking at, listening to and touching our surroundings becomes a way of thinking about society in the past and future. What stories might the building tell?

Presented by Creative Mediators: Michael Kurtz & Henry Meyric Hughes

Abbas Zahedi

b. 1984, UK, based in London

Ouranophobia 47051, 2026

Found organ pipes, modular metal stands, bespoke pneumatic air supply system, repurposed communication cabinets

Abbas Zahedi was inspired by the aggressive-looking black organ which sits on a terrace above the nave of Kulturkirche Liebfrauen. Built by Franz Breil in 1964, the instrument has been broken for several years and many of its pipes have been damaged or stolen. According to Zahedi, “its silence is symbolic of the disappearance of communal faith and shared experience in our society.” In response, the artist has created a second organ that “brings the old instrument’s voice down to the floor and resists the vertical hierarchy of the church with a horizontal space of shared resonance.” His installation is formed of orphan pipes from disused organs across Europe, dozens of discarded fragments humming as one. It is conceived as an open system that can accommodate new pipes like votive offerings, regardless of their provenance and condition, on an ongoing basis. The pipes are connected to a bespoke pneumatic air supply machine designed and built by Tom Pain, an engineer who specialises in fabricating custom light and sound rigs for music venues. Zahedi’s practice often combines sound and sculpture to develop new rituals for communal grieving. The interior of his henge-like organ becomes a venue for a series of support groups, in which participants spend time listening together and sharing experiences of loss alongside musical and artistic performances.

→ *Ouranophobia 47051, 2026* © Abbas Zahedi.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Production coordinator: Zaida Violan
Concept design: in collaboration with Yelta Köm
Design and fabrication of stands: in collaboration with Wendelin Kammermeier and Mara Meerwein
Engineering, design and fabrication of air supply system: in collaboration with Tom Pain
Research and development: Yasiin Zahedi

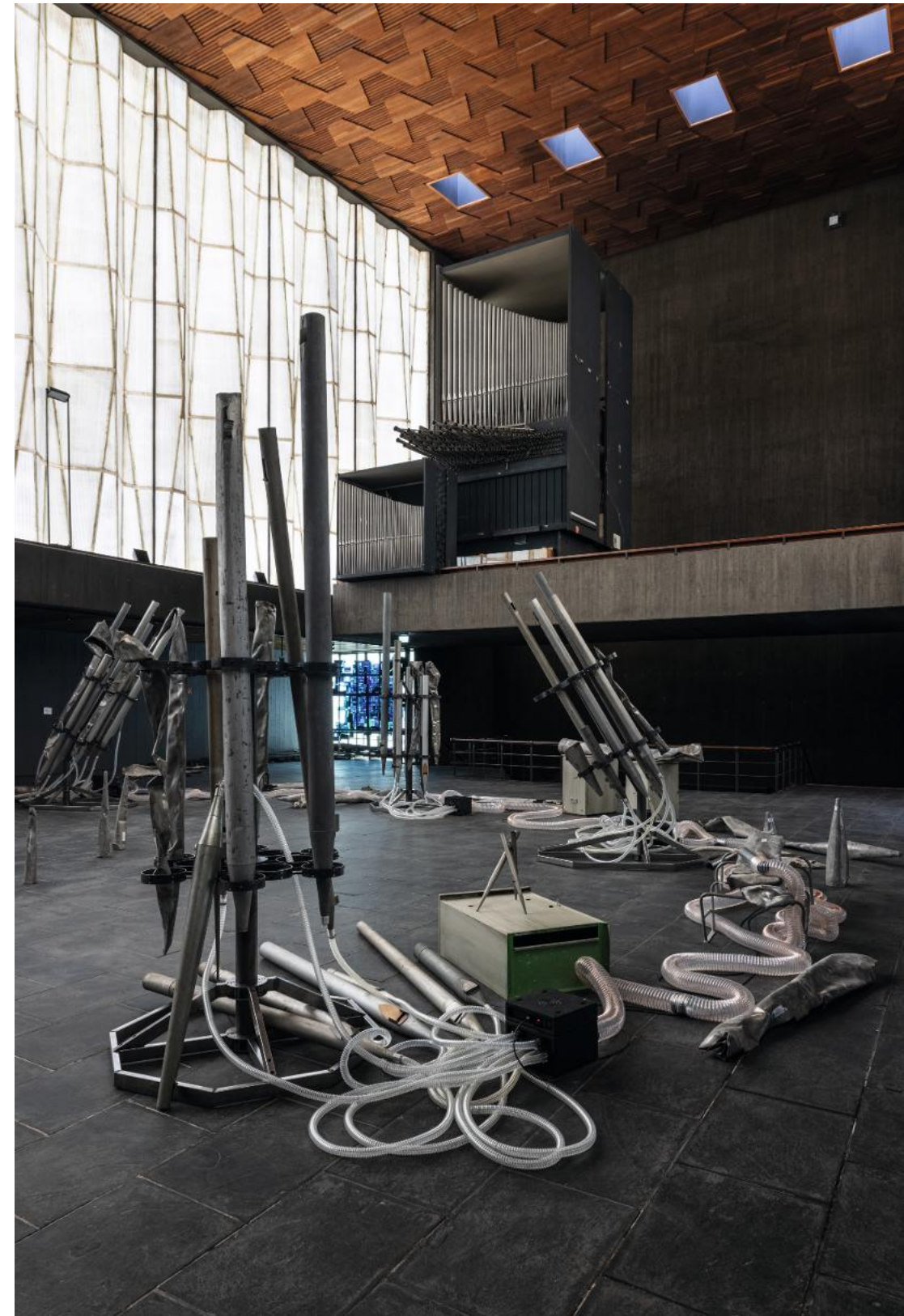
Pipes from the organ of St. Nicholas Church in Kyiv – destroyed by fire in September 2021 – form the founding contribution to Zahedi’s system. Their inclusion here is the result of a collaboration with three Kyiv-based organisations: Baby Prod, the Pavilion of Culture, and the National House of Music, which held concerts in St. Nicholas Church. The public programme includes a satellite event at the Pavilion of Culture in Kyiv.

Courtesy of the artist.

With kind support of AMMODO, the Henry Moore Foundation, Gabriela Galcerán, Gigi Sarel, Nissreen Darawish and Proyectos Ultravioleta. The public programme is co-commissioned by Knotenpunkt.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→→ With his installation, Abbas Zahedi transforms the interior of the Kulturkirche Liebfrauen into a space for community-based processing of experiences of loss. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman





Athina Koumparouli

b. 1983, GR, based in Athens

Dead Natures / Living Evidence, 2026

Copper plated leaves and branches, soil, plants, aerated concrete blocks

The Ruhr Area's long history of fossil fuel extraction and industrial production altered the local landscape in many ways. One consequence of heavy industry in the region is the rise of so-called industriophytes: plants that thrive in nutrient-poor or contaminated soils, such as black spleenwort ferns, mallow and silver birch. This botanical phenomenon is an example of how the natural world and human history are increasingly intertwined. In this context, even plants carry memories of historical activity, like the vast factories and mines around which they grow, while also signalling new forms of life. For her outdoor installation, Athina Koumparouli has copperplated branches of various industriophyte species from the Ruhr Area. She has then arranged these hybrid objects in a previously abandoned space outside Kulturkirche Liebfrauen, among fresh plants, exposed brick and small archaeological excavations.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ *Dead Natures / Living Evidence*, 2026
© Athina Koumparouli.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
→→ *All the views I can't remember*, 2026
© Athina Koumparouli.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

All the views I can't remember, 2026

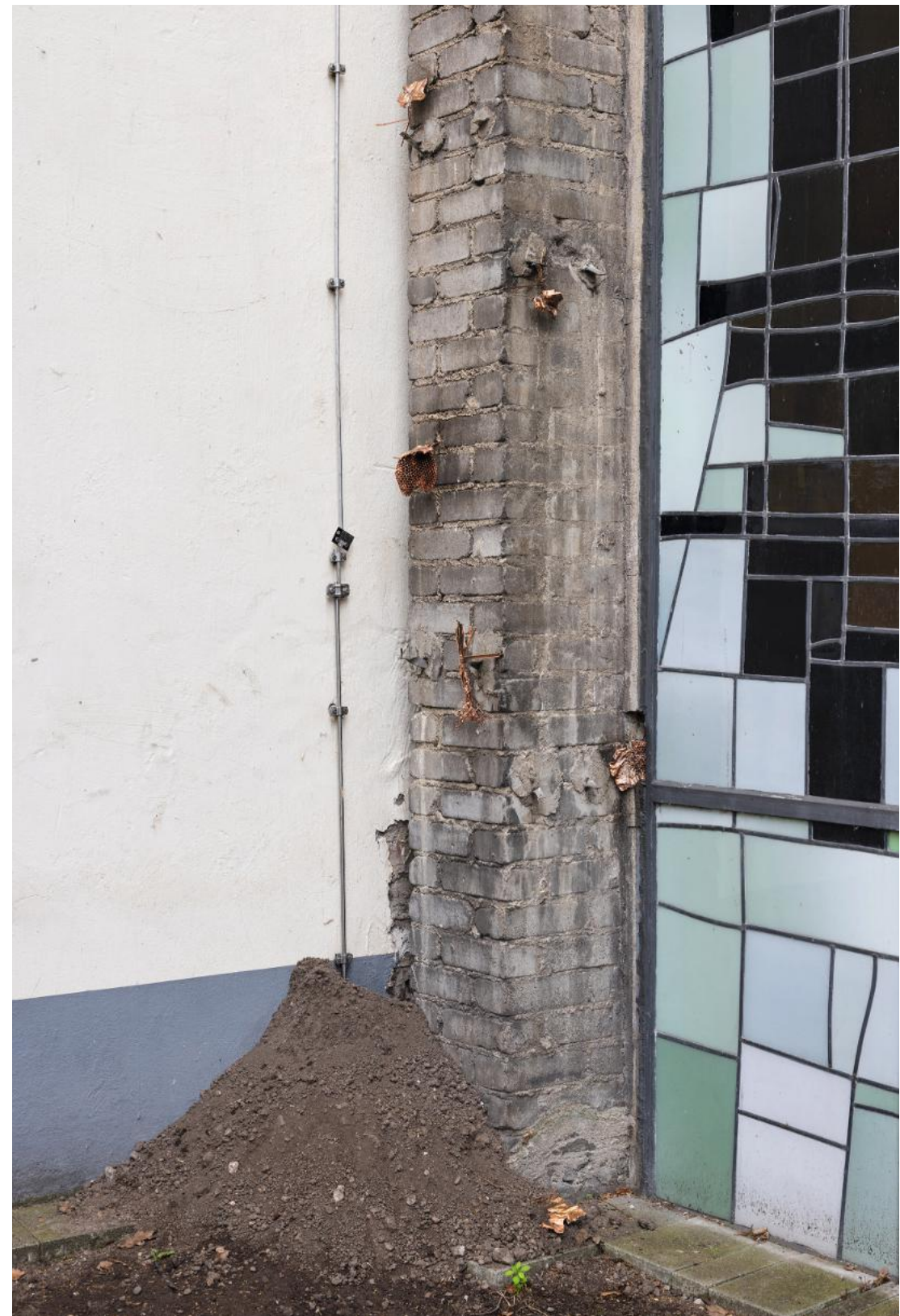
Salvaged glass, lighting, XPS foam board, steel

Athina Koumparouli has salvaged glass fragments from domestic and industrial buildings throughout the Ruhr Area and assembled them in an illuminated display on the ground floor of Kulturkirche Liebfrauen. Each shard becomes a window onto a different history, its details and traces of use provoking a range of questions. Where did the glass come from? Who looked through it? What happened to the buildings? What caused the cracks? Koumparouli considers the installation a "counter-monument." It conceals a wall of stained glass by the renowned German artist Georg Meistermann, confronting the church's monolithic design with the region's material diversity and the institution's official history with the memories of people who have lived alongside it.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO.
Thanks to Günter Pohl, Eva-Lucia Kleesiek, Eva Kellersohn, Helga Sander and Manfred Lerch for helping to source the glass fragments, and to Herman Kuijter for consulting on lighting design.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Elizabeth Price

b. 1966, UK, based in London

→→ *HERE WE ARE*, 2025 © Elizabeth Price.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
↓↘ *WHERE ARE YOU WHERE ARE YOU*, 2026
© Elizabeth Price.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Elizabeth Price has recently begun a series of films that analyse the meaning of modernist church architecture, using her distinctive combination of digital graphic design and archival photography. The first two works in the series are presented in Kulturkirche Liebfrauen. In *HERE WE ARE* (2025), a text dialogue interprets the construction of Catholic churches in 20th-century Britain as an assertion of working-class migrant visibility. *WHERE ARE YOU WHERE ARE YOU* (2026) focuses on similar churches in the Ruhr Area. In Price's words, the film asks, "What is the psychological resonance of these architectures for those who live in their midst?" It looks at Marienkirche in Essen, designed by Hans Schilling

to replace a 19th-century church that stood on the same site until an air raid in 1944. Studying Schilling's almost windowless building, Price suggests that mid-century German churches embody collective memories of wartime violence as well as being part of the nation's reconstruction. They function, in her telling, as "articulations of post-war trauma."



HERE WE ARE, 2025 22', HD video

Executive producer – Benjamin Cook
Photography – Andrew Lee and Elizabeth Price
3D animation – Anne Haaning
Motion graphics – Ollie Dook and Elizabeth Price
Music and sound design – Leah Kardos and Elizabeth Price
Bass guitar – Niko Agourakis
Other instruments – Leah Kardos
Singing – Leah Kardos and Elizabeth Price
Additional research – Grace Whorrall-Campbell

Commissioned by Liverpool Biennial 2025 and supported by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA). Also supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and Kingston University, London. Special thanks to RIBA for permission to use images from the Architectural Press Archive / RIBA Collections. Image details included within video credits.

Courtesy of the artist.



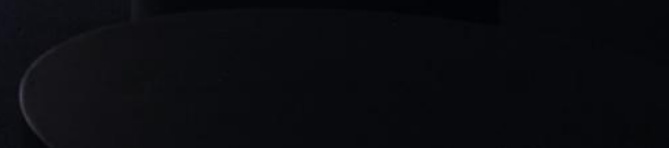
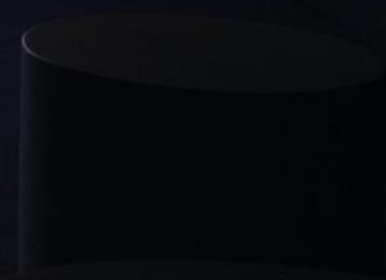
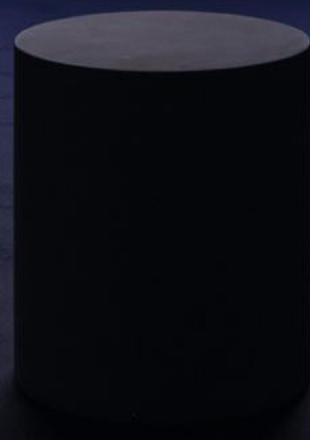
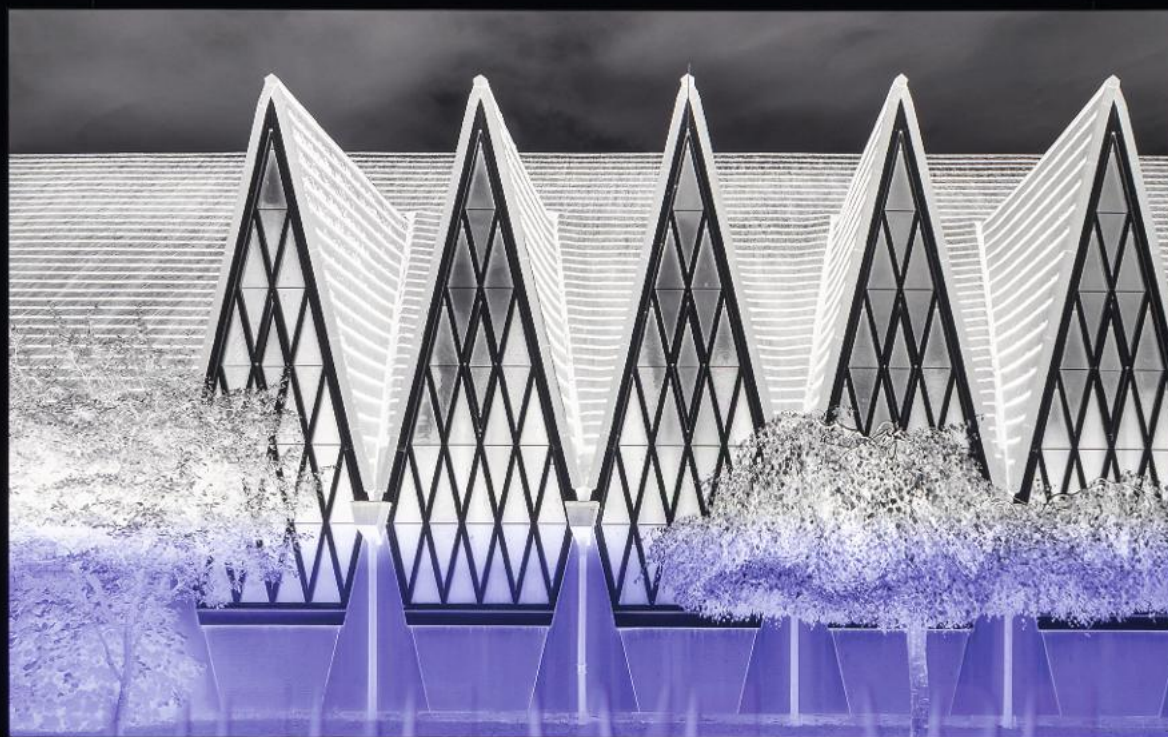
WHERE ARE YOU WHERE ARE YOU, 2026 21', HD video

Executive producer – Benjamin Cook
Videography – Jamie Quantrill
Drone-camera operator – Jamie Quantrill
Illustrations – Ollie Dook
Motion graphics – Elizabeth Price
Music and sound design – Leah Kardos and Elizabeth Price
Singing – Fin Beresford, Lane Fox, Leah Kardos, Artie Sanida, Monica Sergi, Désirée Weber
Bells – recorded by Lukas Suryadi Ishar as part of the project of Llorenç Barber and Montserrat Palacios, commissioned by Josep Bohigas for Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

Also supported by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, The Elephant Trust and Kingston University, London. Special thanks to the Lee Miller Archives and Antony Penrose for permission to use the image: *Blast pays Deserved Tribute to the Gaslight & Coke Company's Blast trademark, Mr Therm, London, England 1940* by Lee Miller [GG0025] © Lee Miller Archives, England 2026. All rights reserved. leemiller.co.uk
Audio-visual installation sponsored by Vidi Square.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Emil Walde

b. 1991, DE, based in Düsseldorf

→ *Passing By*, 2026 © Emil Walde.
→→ Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Passing By, 2026

Found window panels, lighting

This installation is made of old window panels from Duisburg Hauptbahnhof. The train station was built in the 1930s and expanded after the Second World War, but by the 2010s had fallen into disrepair. For some residents, its battered windows, visible from the platforms, became a symbol of the city's neglected public infrastructure. Walde salvaged the panels when the building was renovated in 2024 and has since reconfigured them several times, pursuing his interest in the sculptural potential of discarded industrial and urban material. In Kulturkirche Liebfrauen the chunky steel frames and frosted panes, covered in tape and graffiti, are in dialogue with the building's more delicate but sometimes also dilapidated elements – its fibreglass sides and stained-glass windows. The niches in the wall where Walde's installation stands originally housed confession boxes. In their absence, the work creates intimate corners for rest and reflection, like a platform waiting room or an abandoned confessional.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev





Julian Irlinger

b. 1986, DE, based in Berlin

Chronotopia, 2026

35mm film transferred to digital, stereo sound,
10'10" (loop)

Julian Irlinger's film takes the history of Kulturkirche Liebfrauen as its point of departure. It uses the style of mid-century modern animation to portray architects who seem to have no control over the drawings and environments that change around them. The work highlights a contrast between the church, designed by Toni Hermanns in the mid 1950s, and its locality, including the less magnificent underground car park, district court fence and building site that now surround it. *Chronotopia* loops seamlessly, visualising a never-ending competition between clashing styles and forms from different time periods. Modernist design is sometimes associated with the assertion of grand artistic visions onto society by individual "geniuses." Here, however, architects and planners appear

↓ *Chronotopia*, 2026 © Julian Irlinger.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

powerless against the unpredictable forces of history and the chaos of urban life.

Co-produced by Fluentum, Berlin
Animation: Julian Irlinger
Cel Painting: Jackson Beyda
Original Score & Sound Design: Julián Galay
Color Grading: Maren Henke
Scanning: HQS High Quality Scanning
Film Laboratory: WFDiF, including Jarosław Migala (D.I. Specialist), Paweł Dąbrowa, Bogusław Miller (Laboratory Technicians), Magdalena Rosińska (Film Negative Inspection), Mateusz Leszczyński, Michał Popieliński (Negative Scan)

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Sonne, Mond und Sterne, 2026

Cardboard, transparent paper, cable,
light bulbs

Across large parts of Europe, and especially Germany, children parade through the streets with handmade paper lanterns on St Martin's Day each November. This ritual is a popular part of the Christian calendar, though its origins are pre-Christian, and crafting lanterns is a regular feature of art classes in primary schools. Scattered through Kulturkirche Liebfrauen, Julian Irlinger's sculptures reinvent these familiar decorative objects using sharp modernist geometries. To prepare the series, he investigated the history of the altar in Kulturkirche Liebfrauen, which was initially part of the Vatican's display at the 1958 Brussels World Expo, and then based the lantern shapes on the architecture of national pavilions that featured in the same exhibition. The work reflects on this episode of post-war history, when modernist style was used by nations to present themselves as progressive and democratic. It sets up a contrast between the fragility and spirituality of lanterns and the supposedly rational, solid forms of mid-century modern design.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Galerie Thomas Schulte.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ *Sonne, Mond und Sterne*, 2026 © Julian Irlinger.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Markuskirche





- ←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Lukas Arp
- ← Opening of Pele Collective's community project in front of Markuskirche.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman
- The installation *Pew Tower* was created from old church pews. It offers new perspectives on the interior of Markuskirche.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

Early Christians labelled the central area of a church the *navis*, meaning ship, which is why we now call it the "nave." Inspired by the story of Noah's ark, they imagined the church as a vessel carrying congregants through the dangers of the world towards salvation. Churches also bear a physical resemblance to great boats. The ceiling of Markuskirche, for example, with its symmetrical wooden form surrounded by expanses of blue and purple stained glass, recalls an oak prow gliding through shimmering waters.

Markuskirche is soon to be deconsecrated and its fate is not yet decided. In this situation, the old idea of the church as a vessel might help us think about what we need as a society and imagine what the building could become. If floodwaters were rising and the church was a ship, we would cherish it as a communal resource. What would we gather and preserve from the past? What would we build for the future? If the church could set sail, where would we go?

Participants in Markuskirche engage in this imaginative exercise. Instead of mourning the church's forthcoming closure, they embrace the building that remains, animating its old fabric with a new sense of activity and motion.

Presented by Creative Mediators: Michael Kurtz & Henry Meyric Hughes



Sara Bichão

b. 1986, PT, based in Lisbon

↓ *She has been here before, but when or how I cannot tell*, 2026 © Sara Bichão.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

She has been here before, but when or how I cannot tell, 2026

Mixed media, items found in Markuskirche
500 × 170 × 140 cm

Sara Bichão grew up by the sea in Lisbon and draws on the materiality of the coastline: driftwood and knotted ropes, washes of paint and stretches of fabric. Her sculptures are like vessels imbued with a sense of motion, often resembling boats or planes. To make them, she works intuitively with the things around her, which include household items, pieces of rubbish and gifts from loved ones. Bichão's sculpture in Markuskirche is the result of a month-long residency in the Ruhr Area and is composed of objects scavenged from the church's back rooms. Suspended above benches and below expanses of grey-blue glass, it seems to glide through the air. The

assemblage could be seen as a symbol of the building as a whole: another vessel, loaded with emotional significance, irreversible knots and material baggage, moving forward into an uncertain future.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of the Portuguese Republic – Culture, Youth and Sport / Directorate-General for the Arts.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Pele Collective

established 2007, PT, based in Porto

↓ *Arca*, 2026 © Pele Collective.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

Arca, 2026

Community art project

Pele Collective sees Markuskirche's transition as an opportunity. Regardless of the church's changing significance, it still stands at the centre of a neighbourhood, surrounded by a kindergarten, old people's home and school as well as hundreds of private gardens and houses. With this location, the building could be used to encourage closer interaction in the community, especially between generations. During the Manifesta 16 install and opening period, Pele Collective created an outdoor gathering area in front of the church, inspired by the idea of an ark. The structure functions as a venue for events and also contains an archive of plants from nearby allotments, as if to preserve the area's rich biodiversity. The exact form and use of *Arca* have been decided through

conversation and collaboration with residents. This process – talking, designing, archiving – is a way for people to reflect on the neighbourhood's history and participate in its future.

Courtesy of Pele Collective.

With the kind support of Portuguese Republic – Culture, Youth and Sport / Directorate-General for the Arts.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Lilli Lake

b. 1995, DE, based in Düsseldorf

→ *Rhythm looks for two*, 2026 © Lilli Lake.
→→ Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Juri Löchte

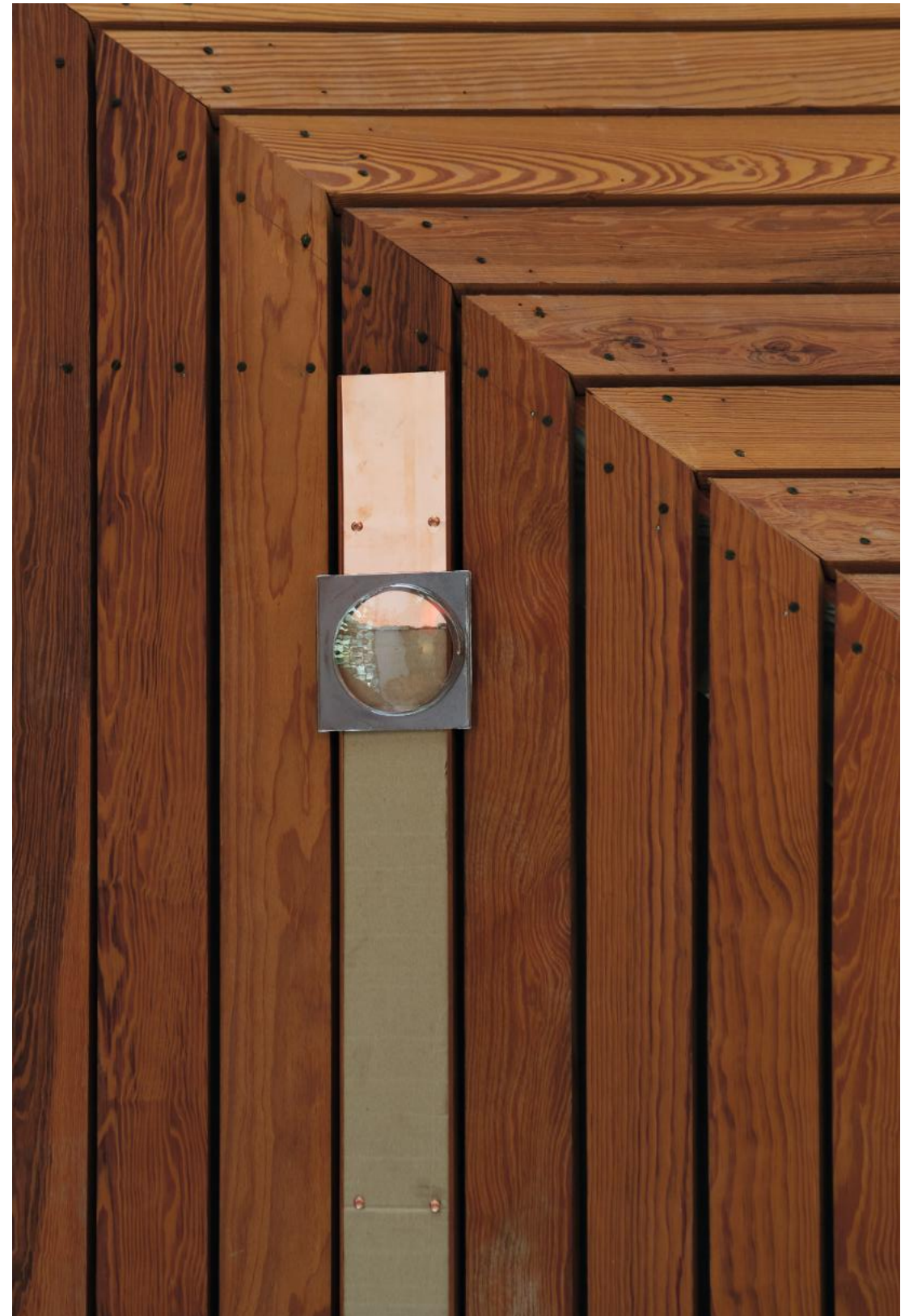
Rhythm looks for two, 2026

Sound installation, secondhand copper sourced from the Ruhr Area, paper, wood, varnish, brass

Markuskirche's ceiling creaks in the changing weather, reminding Lilli Lake of a boat straining under the pressure of a wave. Keen to highlight these evocative noises, she mapped the loudest points and marked them with pieces of copper, in a reference to the sheet metal used to protect hulls. Lake then positioned microphones on the ceiling to amplify the creaking: an unpredictable percussion that comes to signify the church's transitional state. In her words, the building is "an architecture in motion, an unstable body that expands and contracts, remembers and forgets." It "no longer speaks through sermon and ritual but the shifting of its surfaces in contact with the atmosphere beyond." The noises are accompanied by voices describing coincidences Lake has noticed while moving between towns and countries. With these observations, she expands her search for hidden patterns in the ceiling's sounds, connecting Markuskirche to a larger web of strange echoes.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Entwurf:
Hans Hirsch, Eisen &
Aufführung:
Glasmaler R. Götten

Augustas Serapinas

b. 1990, LT, based in Vilnius

Pew Tower, 2026

Reconfigured church benches
480 × 400 × 400 cm

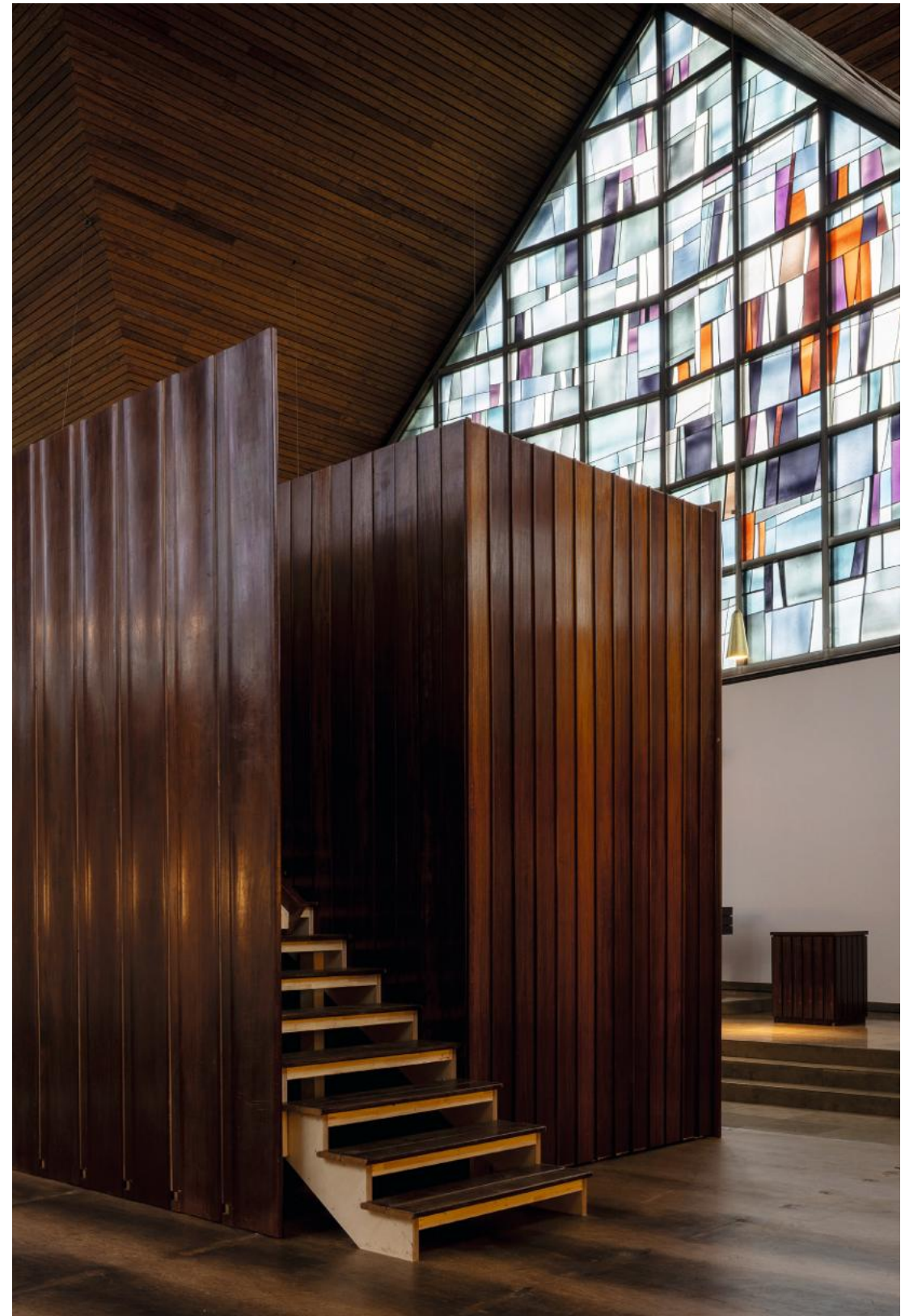
Augustas Serapinas has created a tower out of old benches in the nave of Markuskirche, allowing visitors to get closer to Lilli Lake's ceiling installation and to glimpse into the mysterious inaccessible balcony above the entrance. He has turned furniture associated with passive reception into a structure that elevates its audience and encourages more mobile and inquisitive forms of spectatorship. The raised platform is typical of Serapinas's long-standing interest in revealing hidden spaces and his unsentimental approach to material heritage, reconfiguring historic artefacts to alter their appearance and function. Yet the memory of the past remains: the design is determined by the length and form of the dismantled benches or what he calls "pew logic."

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO, Emalin, Galerie Tschudi, Apalazzo and the Lithuanian Culture Institute.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ *Pew Tower, 2026* © Augustas Serapinas.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann



St. Gertrud





- ←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Daniel Sadrowski
- ← Pravidoliub Ivanov has symbolically transformed one of the stained-glass windows at St. Gertrud into a clinical thermometer.
- Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman
- Visitors looking at *Café Bagdad* by Olaf Metzel.
- Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

Upon entering St. Gertrud, one moves through a space marked by layered histories. Rebuilt after the Second World War, the church combines older foundations with a restrained, modern interior. Its high ceilings, clear lines and filtered light create an atmosphere that is both open and concentrated, where small shifts in material, scale and sound become immediately perceptible. Today, the building is part of a recently founded initiative of the Hochschule der Bildenden Künste (HBK) Essen and has become a place of artistic education and practice – another layer to its ongoing use and interpretation. The works gathered here engage with this sensitivity. Many begin with familiar objects, images or situations, only to alter them through displacement, fragmentation or distortion. Materials appear unstable, meanings remain open, and what seems fixed can shift. Several works draw on political realities, systems of power or collective memory, but indirectly, through gesture, irony or reduction. Sound and voice move through the space. Rather than following a fixed path, one moves freely – pausing, listening, returning – while the architecture shapes how sound travels and bodies gather, making one's position part of the experience. Under the title *Exercises in Respect*, the presentations attend to the church's history, spatial conditions and continued significance. The works operate not through stable narratives but through tension: between presence and absence, visibility and concealment, control and unpredictability. As you spend time here, different elements come into focus gradually, unfolding with your movement and attention. Yet, not everything is inside. A short walk away, at the entrance to the nearby Rheinischer Platz subway station, one work extends the exhibition out into the city – a reminder that it reaches beyond these walls, into the surrounding neighbourhood.

Presented by Creative Mediators: René Block & Leonie Herweg



Halil Altındere

b. 1971, TR, based in Istanbul

→ *Security Tree*, 2021–2026 © Halil Altındere.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Security Tree, 2021–2026

Galvanised iron, 60 iron surveillance cameras
200 × 200 × 450 cm

Halil Altındere's *Security Tree* transforms the familiar form of a tree into a structure made of surveillance cameras. Instead of leaves or branches, dozens of cameras extend outward, creating a dense, watchful canopy. The work reflects on the growing presence of surveillance in everyday life. Cameras, sensors and digital systems continuously collect information, often in ways that are barely visible. From smart-phones and online platforms to public spaces, data about our movements, habits and identities is constantly recorded. By assembling these devices into the shape of a tree, Altındere connects this invisible network to something organic and familiar. The sculpture suggests that systems of observation have become part of our environment, quietly embedded in the spaces we move through. *Security Tree* invites visitors to consider how surveillance shapes contemporary life and how much of ourselves we reveal, knowingly or not, within these systems.

Courtesy of the artist and Pilot Gallery.

With the kind support of SAHA.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Ayşe Erkmen

TR, based in Istanbul and Berlin

↓ *Confessional*, 2026 © Ayşe Erkmen.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham
→ Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

Confessional, 2026

Privacy booth, screen, chat program
c. 220 × 160 × 160 cm

Ayşe Erkmen's *Confessional* reimagines a familiar element of church architecture: the confession booth. Traditionally, this was a protected and trusted place to share thoughts, doubts or regrets in private. In Erkmen's work, this idea is translated into the present. The booth becomes a simple, enclosed structure that contains a digital interface. Instead of speaking to a priest, visitors encounter a system that can respond to questions or concerns, echoing how many forms of communication have shifted towards personal devices and online systems. The work connects past and present ways of seeking answers: one rooted in shared ritual, the other in individual,

technology-based interaction. While both suggest privacy, they differ in how meaning and trust are formed. *Confessional* raises questions about where we look for guidance today, how we share what matters to us and how these exchanges are shaped by the systems we rely on.

Courtesy of the artist and Trautwein Herleth.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Mona Hatoum

b. 1952, LB, based in London

Electrified (St. Gertrud), 2026

Kitchen utensils, furniture, electric wire, light bulb and variable transformer

c. 712 × 353 × 464 cm

This work originates from the early experiments Mona Hatoum conducted as a student in the late 1970s. At the time, she was interested in what she called “invisible forces.” Hatoum often used magnetism or electricity to demonstrate that natural forces can animate even the most inert or solid objects and materials. Several decades later, Hatoum revisited this theme, using familiar everyday objects. Domestic items like kitchen utensils and furniture were electrified, transforming them into threatening objects and disrupting the idea of home as a safe and comfortable place. *Electrified (St. Gertrud)* is a collection of metal kitchen utensils, chairs, scissors and other household items, strung together in a long line suspended from the ceiling. An electric current courses through them, completing a circuit that runs to a light bulb hanging at the end of the line. The current fluctuates, making the light bulb flicker and fade continuously as if it were malfunctioning.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ *Electrified (St. Gertrud)*, 2026

→→ *Measures of Distance*, 1988

© Mona Hatoum.

Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Measures of Distance, 1988

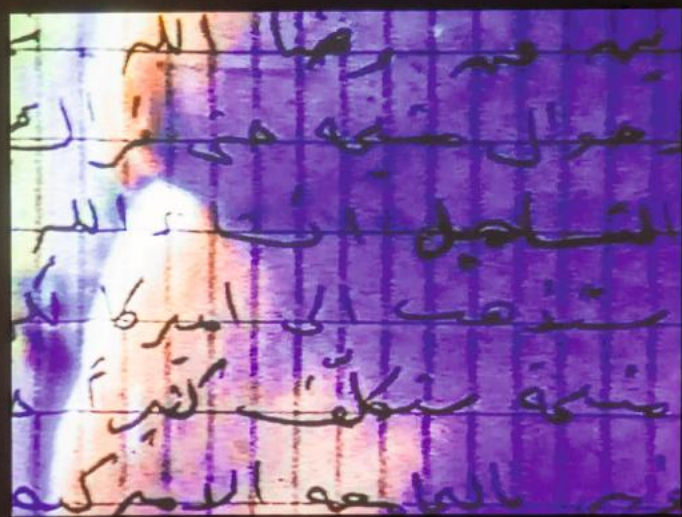
Single channel video, colour, sound, 15'30"

Measures of Distance is constructed from a series of grainy stills shot in extreme close-up of Mona Hatoum's mother in the shower of the family home in Beirut. The images are overlaid with a mesh of Arabic writing, like a curtain or a veil, representing letters the artist's mother sent her in London. On the soundtrack, a lively conversation between the two women can be heard, overlaid with the artist's voice reading a translation of the letters into English. The work reflects on the artist's separation from her Palestinian family and, in particular, her relationship with her mother. The personal and political are deeply connected here, weaving together questions of identity and sexuality with the experience of war, exile and displacement.

Courtesy of the artist.

A Western Front Video production.





Pravdoliub Ivanov

b. 1964, BG, based in Sofia

→ *Fever*, 2025–2026 © Pravdoliub Ivanov.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Fever, 2025–2026

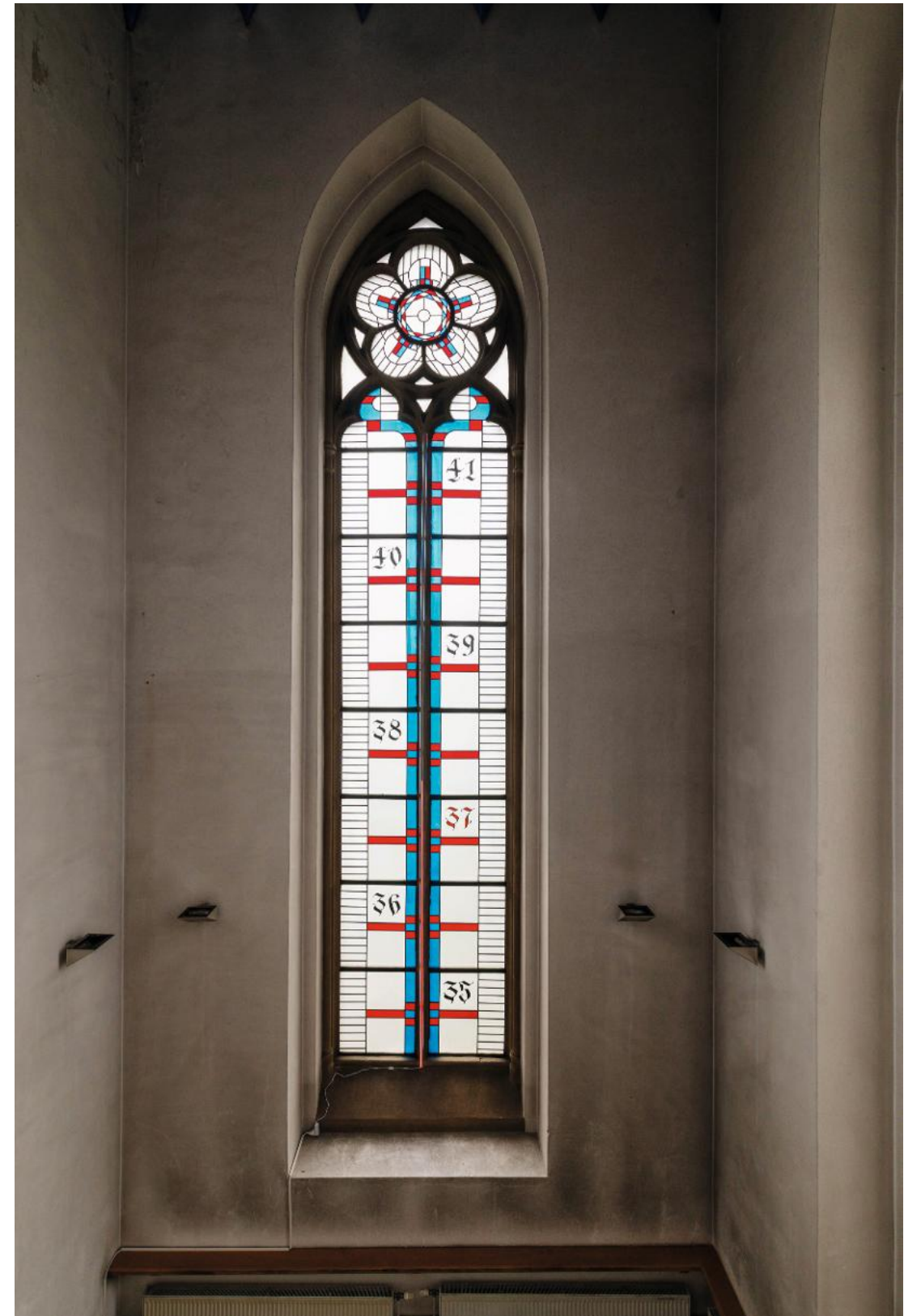
Foil letters, electric lights
580 × 160 cm

Pravdoliub Ivanov's work *Fever* is an installation created for St. Gertrud's blue chapel. Installed on a tall stained-glass window, the existing vertical structure and graphic pattern of the glass suggest a measuring scale, which the artist extends through Gothic-style lettering and thermometer-like markings. A familiar everyday object, the thermometer becomes a tool for reading a state of balance or imbalance: between health and illness, equilibrium and disturbance. A temperature of 37.6 degrees indicates a moderate fever: a condition that can worsen, but also support recovery. Ivanov leaves open what exactly is being measured. The "organism" could be the individual body, a social structure, or a broader environment. In this sense, *Fever* proposes instability not only as a symptom, but as a moment in which change becomes possible.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Deutsche Telekom.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Šejla Kamberić

b. 1976, BA, based in Sarajevo

↓ *Agape*, 2026 © Šejla Kamberić.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Agape, 2026 Light installation

Šejla Kamberić's work begins with a small inscription in St. Gertrud's mosaic: the Greek word "ΑΓΑΠΗ" (*agape*), meaning a form of unconditional, selfless love. Using light, the word reappears enlarged across the mosaic, shifting from a fixed detail in stone to a temporary, immaterial presence. The work reveals and reactivates an existing element, allowing it to be seen anew. What was once almost hidden becomes a quiet revelation. In ancient Greek and early Christian thought, *agape* describes a love that gives without expecting anything in return – a love grounded in care, responsibility and attention to others. Here, Kamberić does not present *agape* as a fixed belief, but as an ethical value that can be reconsidered today. The work invites visitors

to reflect on love not as emotion, but as a shared responsibility and a way of being together. Do we still believe in *agape*, and how can we practice it today?

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Deutsche Telekom.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Jarosław Kozłowski

b. 1945, PL, based in Poznań

↓ *Blue Objects without Specific Function*, 2024–2025
© Jarosław Kozłowski.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

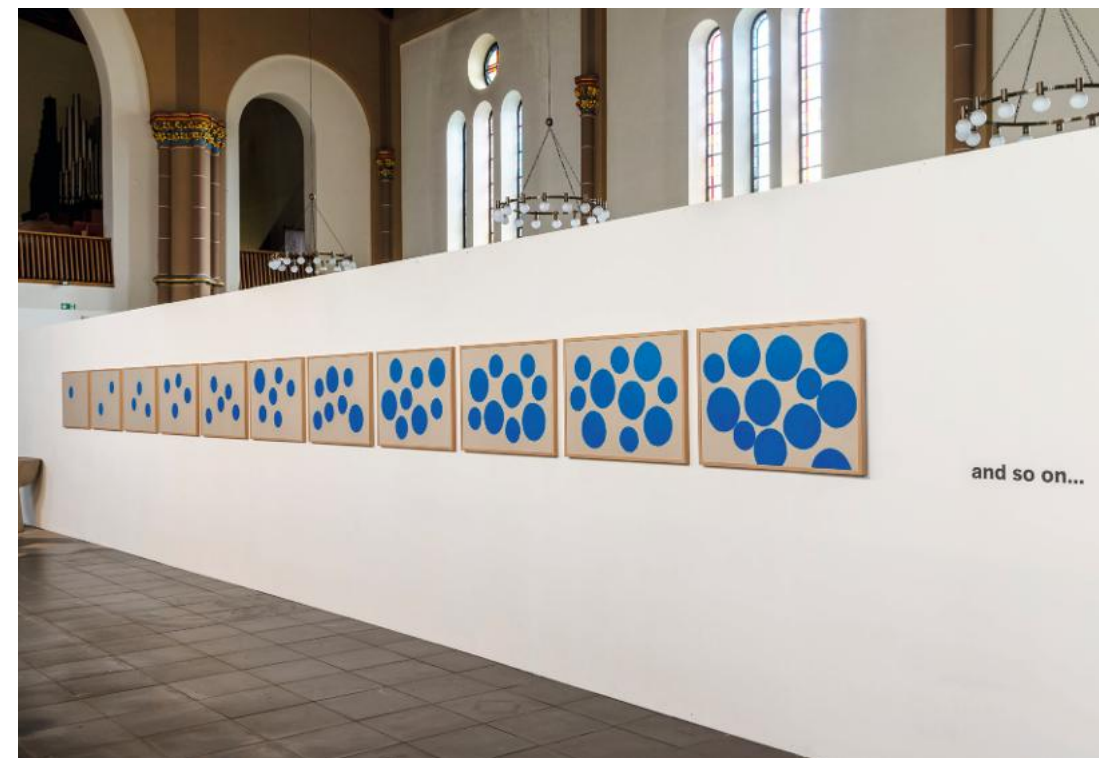
Blue Objects without Specific Function, 2024–2025 Series of 11 drawings, 73 × 103 cm each

This series of eleven drawings unfolds along the central axis of the church, leading from the entrance of the nave towards the altar. Installed in a single line, the works guide the movement of visitors through the space. Each drawing shows simple blue forms arranged on a neutral background. The shapes vary in number and size, creating subtle shifts from one image to the next. There is no narrative or symbolic meaning attached to them. As Kozłowski writes, "they are not metaphors; they do not serve any function that pretends they are something else, nor do they suggest any more or less sophisticated content connected with the present or with art history." At the end of

the sequence, the text "AND SO ON..." appears on the wall. It suggests continuation without defining what follows. The work invites a slow and attentive way of looking, where meaning is not fixed but can emerge through the act of seeing.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute.



Olaf Metzel

b. 1952, DE, based in Munich

↓ *Café Bagdad*, 2026 © Olaf Metzel.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Café Bagdad, 2026

Aluminium, stainless steel, digital print
c. 300 × 450 cm

Café Bagdad begins with a close observation of the city. Olaf Metzel's work is based on photographs taken along the route from Essen's main station via Kettwiger Straße and Viehofer Straße to St. Gertrud, capturing the atmosphere of streets shaped by everyday life and constant change. Shop fronts, signage, posters and architectural details come together in a layered urban image. The photographs are transferred onto aluminium to form a large wall relief that brings elements of the surrounding neighbourhood into the church space. Metzel is interested in what often goes unnoticed: "the incidental, familiar and hidden... the structure of the everyday that is perceived unconsciously." Placed near the entrance, the work creates a connection

between inside and outside. It reflects the rhythms of the surrounding streets and invites visitors to look more closely at the environments they move through every day.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Donja Nasseri

b. 1990, DE, based in Düsseldorf

↓ *Mad Dogs*, 2026 © Donja Nasseri.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann
→ Audience at Donja Nasseri's harp performance in front of the work *Mad Dogs*, 2026 © Donja Nasseri.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

Mad Dogs, 2026

Wooden construction, wooden veneer with prints and engravings, high-gloss metal, blown glass, vibration loudspeakers, carpet
Three half globes diameter between c. 150–180 cm and height of 75–90 cm

Mad Dogs is a sculptural installation composed of three large half-globes. Their surfaces bear images, engravings and fragments of maps, while their interiors function as speakers. The work draws on a historical Disney caricature that presented the Arab body as a dehumanised figure tied to colonial fantasies of exploration, trade and resource extraction. *Mad Dogs* reassembles these narratives. The globes bring together fragments: fictional maps, Silk Road routes extending into the Ruhr region, objects from the Haus Kemnade collection in Bochum and visual elements from popular culture.

White-gloved hands point in different directions without a clear destination. Sound is central to the installation. Historical songs from the 19th century with racist connotations are reworked with musicians into new, resilient forms. *Mad Dogs* connects histories of migration, trade and representation, reflecting on how images and narratives travel and how they can be taken apart and reconfigured.

Courtesy of the artist.

Funded by Kunststiftung NRW.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Navid Nuur

b. 1976, IR, based in The Hague

→ *The Main Remain*, 2026 © Navid Nuur.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

The Main Remain, 2026

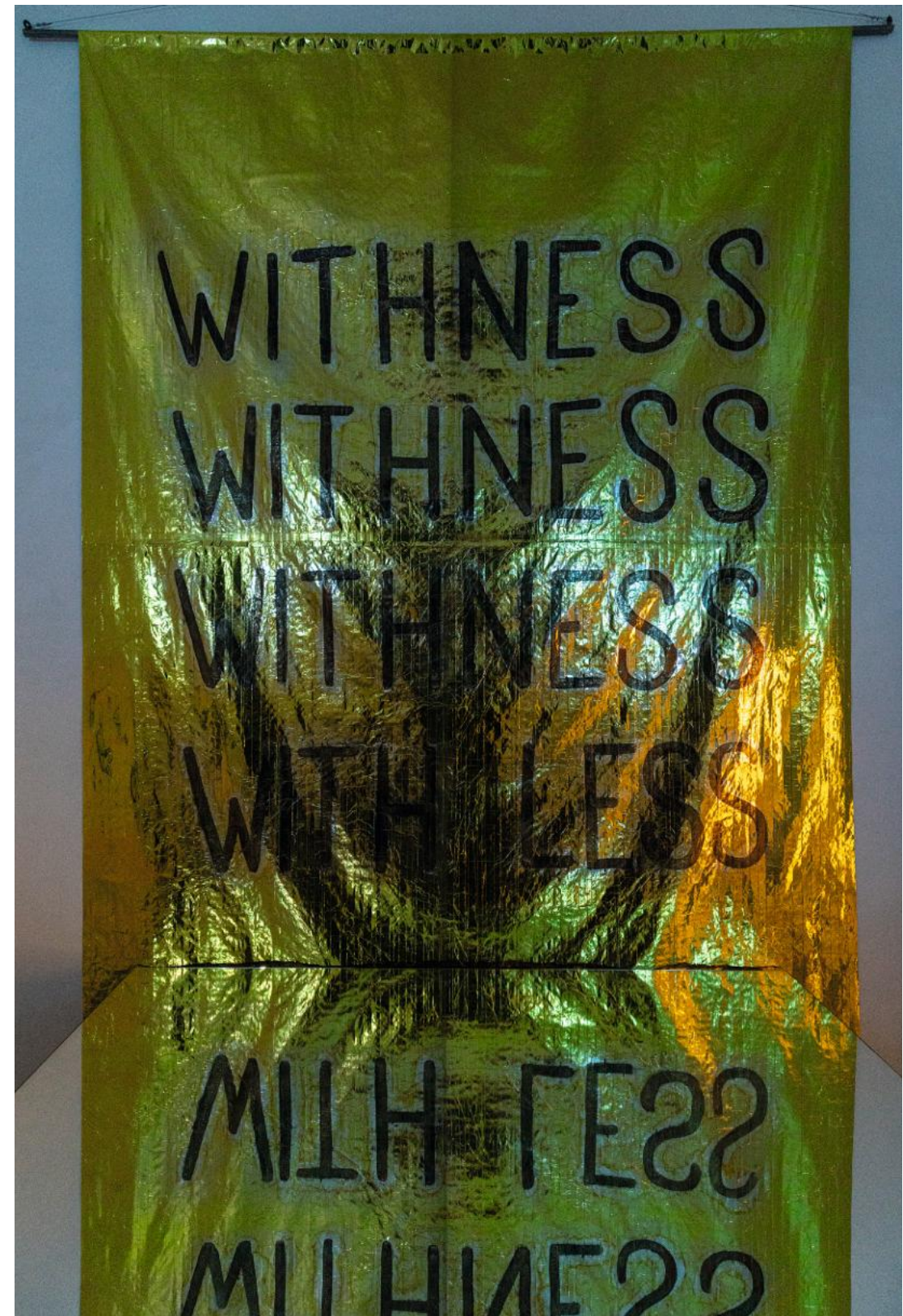
Mixed media; your wall at home

The installation departs from the remains of what was once a chapel, forming a meta-chapel: a space that not only exists as a place, but also reflects on what a chapel is and can be. The original structure and atmosphere remain tangible and are consciously activated to carry a larger, layered narrative – one that both preserves and questions the chapel's inner stillness. Within this context, text and materials like an emergency blanket, reflective paint, broken glass, a ribbon, and hints of a visual path through the space operate in a cryptic way, similar to religious sign systems: they do not explain, but still give guidance. The visitor thus finds themselves not only within the space, but within an experience that mirrors and shifts the idea of that space itself. The installation extends beyond its physical form. Fragments can be taken away, transferring the temporary, local energy of the site from a public setting into a private context. As an echo or trace, they continue to resonate there – just as the chapel is no longer a chapel, yet still persists as one.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Germany.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Coumba Samba

b. 2000, US, based in New York City

Steps, 2026

Hand-painted vinyl film, text-based installation in public space

The installation follows the stepped structure of Rheinischer Platz, whose form recalls an amphitheatre – historically a space for public speech and collective exchange.

Across the steps, pairs of words appear in English and German. They are drawn from everyday language, yet deliberately mistranslated. Familiar terms shift in meaning, becoming unstable or difficult to grasp. The text is set in DIN, a standardised typeface widely used in German public signage. Combined with a colour palette that echoes urban information systems, the work adopts a visual language associated with orientation and clarity. Here, however, the

↓ *Steps, 2026* © Coumba Samba.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

promise of understanding is interrupted by small distortions. The installation reflects on how meaning moves between languages and how translation can both connect and divide, bringing attention to the histories and differences that remain within words.

Courtesy of the artist and Arcadia Missa.

With the kind support of Ruhrbahn.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Nasan Tur

b. 1974, DE, based in Berlin

Elevation, 2026

Former church pews, wood, metal

Nasan Tur's *Elevation* transforms former church pews into a large-scale sculptural installation. Installed vertically in the space, the benches no longer serve as places to sit but stand upright as a collective structure shaped by many voices. Over several weeks, people were invited to share thoughts, memories, worries and hopes. These contributions were carved directly into the wood, turning each bench into a carrier of personal and collective experience. Once objects that guided bodies into a position of quiet reception, the pews now hold many different perspectives. Their new orientation shifts them from instruments of order into an open, shared form. *Elevation* invites visitors to read, move around and

↓ *Elevation, 2026* © Nasan Tur.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

reflect on how individual voices come together to form a space shaped not by a single authority, but by many.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



St. Marien





- ←← *Third Place* by Evita Vasiljeva in front of St. Marien.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
- ← The performance *Karaoke Falsetto* by Mira M. Yang
as part of the Preview Days.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

St. Marien is located in Essen-Karnap, a district shaped by industry, labour and migration. Built in the early 1960s, the church served a community tied to the nearby coal mines and factories. This history remains present in the neighbourhood and in the character of the building itself. The church is scheduled for demolition, placing the presentations within a moment of transition and impending change. Inside, the architecture is defined by clarity and openness. Light enters through tall windows, and the space is structured to accommodate both gathering and circulation. It retains a sense of directness that informs how the works are encountered.

The participants presented here often begin with existing materials, images and situations, such as objects from daily life, industrial production or shared visual culture. These are reworked, translated or recontextualised, allowing new meanings to emerge. Processes of making, repetition and transformation are central: something is taken from one context and set into another. Several works engage with questions of value, labour and exchange. Others explore memory, language or systems that structure perception. Consistent attention is given to how relations are formed between people, objects and environments. Installed across the church, the works unfold in dialogue with its architecture: along axes of movement, in relation to light and within the rhythm of the space. As you move through the building, connections between works emerge gradually. Under the title *Exercises in Respect*, the presentations consider the church as a site embedded in its social and material context. What emerges is a network of references linking the immediate surroundings to wider social, economic and cultural conditions.

Presented by Creative Mediators: René Block & Leonie Herweg

William Engelen

b. 1964, NL, based in Berlin

in collaboration with the artist
Dagmara Genda

Variation on Godspeed in 4/4 Time, 2026

148 metal tubes

1400 × 150 × 400 cm

William Engelen's *Variation on Godspeed in 4/4 Time* is a site-specific installation placed in the area beneath where the church's organ once stood. Consisting of 148 suspended metal tubes made of aluminium, steel, brass and copper, the work forms a large, curtain-like structure.

The installation functions both as an instrument and as a score. Its visual arrangement can be read like musical notation, while the material properties of each tube – its length, thickness and diameter – determine its sound. In this way, image and sound are directly connected. Visitors are invited to activate the

↓ *Variation on Godspeed in 4/4, 2026* © William Engelen. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
→ *Variation on Godspeed in 4/4, 2026* © William Engelen. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman

work. By touching and playing the tubes, they create their own compositions. The sounds are not fixed or predictable, encouraging experimentation and attentive listening, reintroducing music into the space. It recalls the church's sonic past, while opening it up to new forms of collective and spontaneous sound.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of The Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Germany.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Jason Dodge

b. 1969, US, lives on Møn

↓ © Jason Dodge.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

This work entered the space of St. Marien last. It was made in response to what is already there: the architecture, the installed artworks and the atmosphere that has taken shape over time. Rather than arriving as a fixed object, Dodge's work develops in relation to its environment, the surrounding industry, what is made around us and what falls off of us while we are busy living. Using recognisable materials, the artist works with elements that carry their own histories and associations. These materials are not transformed beyond recognition. Instead, they are placed in new relationships, where their presence can be felt differently. Dodge's practice has been described as a form of "tuning": a process

of adjustment and attention, where small shifts can change how something is perceived. The work is not fixed in one place. Looking at it means moving through it – and moving through it means it is changing. Dodge uses the tension between "what" something is and "how" it produces meaning as his guide.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Katharina Fritsch

b. 1956, DE, based in Düsseldorf

↓ *Birkenkreuz, 2026* © Katharina Fritsch.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Birkenkreuz, 2026

Plastic, metal, paint
240 × 163,5 × 22,7 cm

Katharina Fritsch's sculptural work revolves around the precise staging of everyday motifs, which she translates into clear, often striking forms. Since the 1980s, Fritsch has developed figures and objects that move between familiarity and unease – animals, people or things appear isolated, repeated or presented at unexpected scales. In St. Marien, Fritsch presents a birch cross placed in relation to the stained-glass windows. Reduced to a simple and recognisable form, the cross evokes religious imagery while remaining open and ambiguous. Fritsch's works resist fixed narratives. Instead, they draw on shared visual memory, where religious associations and psychological projections intersect. Her sculptures are defined by clarity, precision

and a strong sense of presence, often appearing both familiar and strangely distant. Through this reduction, the work creates a distinct visual focus, inviting viewers to encounter a familiar symbol in a new way.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Annika Kahrs

b. 1984, DE, based in Berlin

Le Chant des Maisons, 2022

4K, colour, sound
24'30"

Annika Kahrs' video installation *Le Chant des Maisons* combines sound, movement and architecture. The work was recorded in a deconsecrated church in Lyon, where musicians and carpenters collaborated in a shared performance. A simple wooden house is gradually built inside the church. As the structure takes shape, the sounds of hammering, drilling and construction become part of a larger composition. Musicians respond to these rhythms, while a choir uses found materials, such as organ and weaving punch cards, as a form of musical notation. The work brings together different forms of making: building, listening and performing. It reflects on how spaces can change over time, and how they can be reactivated through collective presence. The church, once a place of worship, becomes a site of encounter, where different voices and histories come together.

Courtesy of the artist and Produzentengalerie Hamburg.

The project was produced by La Biennale de Lyon on occasion of the 16e Biennale d'Art contemporain 2022, curated by Till Fellrath and Sam Bardaouil.

→ *Le Chant des Maisons*, 2022 © Annika Kahrs.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Jarosław Kozłowski

b. 1945, PL, based in Poznań

→ *Untitled, 2026* © Jarosław Kozłowski.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Untitled, 2026

Installation composed of readymade elements

This group of sculptures is made from everyday furniture and objects that have been joined together into new, compact forms. Tables, chairs, cabinets and other items are bound, stacked or combined, creating structures that are both familiar and unexpected. Many of these elements come directly from St. Marien itself. These objects carry traces of their previous use and of the people who once relied on them. Rather than transforming the materials completely, Kozłowski brings them into relation. As he writes, his works “are not metaphors; they are what they are.” The sculptures do not tell a fixed story. They hold together different functions, times and associations, inviting visitors to look closely at how meaning can emerge from what is already there.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Alicja Kwade

b. 1979, PL, based in Berlin

Principium, 2025

Patinated bronze, Brenna stone

Composed of stacked smartphones cast in bronze, each sculpture in the *Principium* series corresponds to the height of a specific person – beginning with the artist herself, who measures 165 cm. Repeated and compressed, they form dense, twisting structures that recall a double helix, like the structure of DNA. The work connects different systems used to define identity: while DNA has traditionally been understood as the carrier of identity, smartphones continuously record behaviour, movement and communication. In this context, the phone appears as a contemporary form of self-description. The works remain both familiar and unsettling – clear in form, yet shaped by a system that extends beyond the visible body.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO.

→ *Principium*, 2026 © Alicja Kwade.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
→→ *Principium* and *Siège du Monde*, 2026
© Alicja Kwade.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

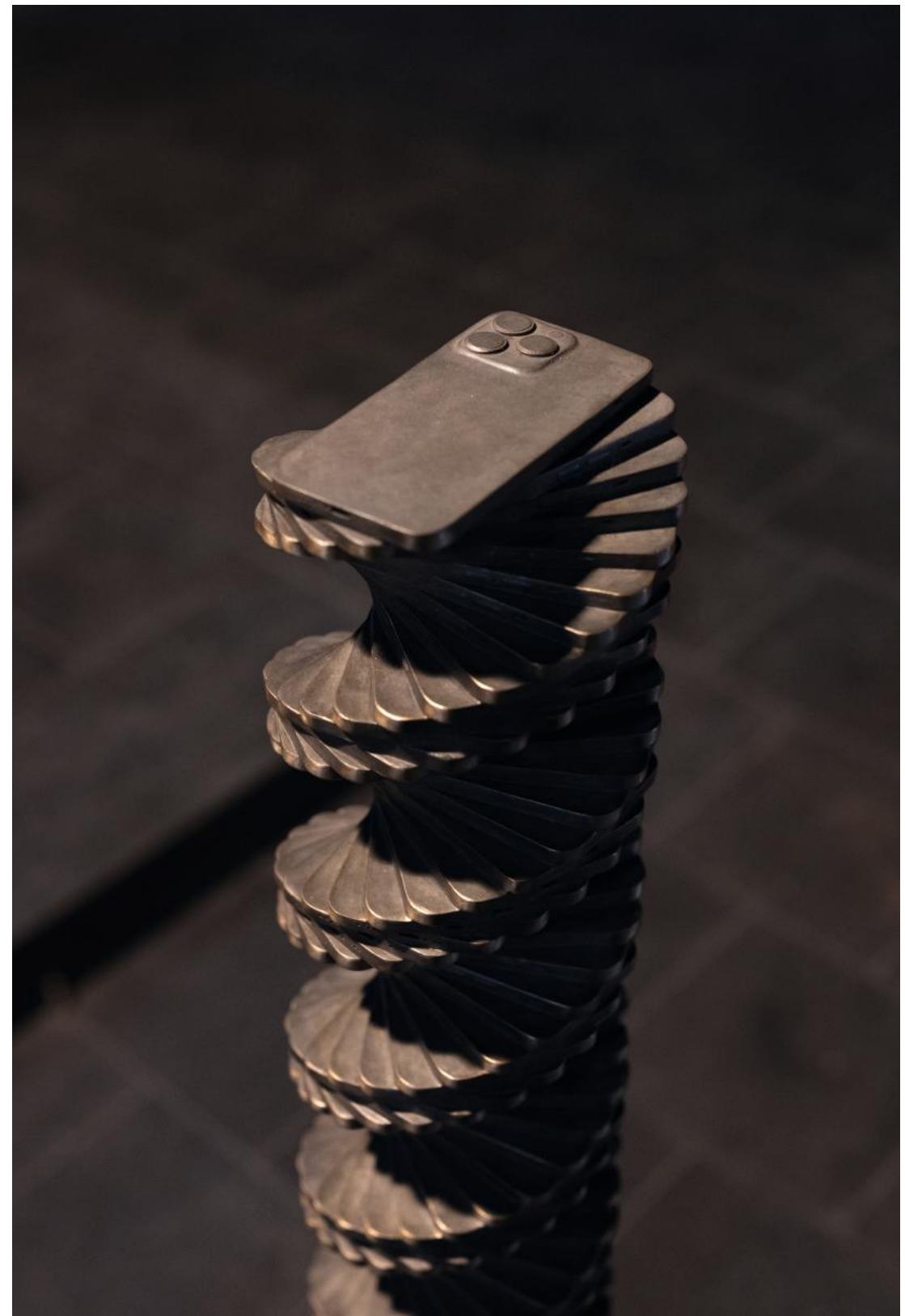
Siège du Monde, 2022

Bronze, Ermine
94.5 × 57 × 55 cm

Siège du Monde continues Alicja Kwade's exploration of time, space, gravity and humanity's place within the universe. The sculpture combines a single chair with a spherical stone, bringing together a familiar, human-scale object and a form that suggests a planetary dimension. The chair, shaped for the body, evokes human presence and everyday use, while the stone is often associated with geological time and cosmic scale. Placed in relation to one another, these elements do not merge into a unified whole but remain in tension. The chair becomes a kind of measure, highlighting the gap between human scale and the vastness it is set against. Through this contrast, Kwade's work questions whether humans truly occupy a central position in the universe or whether this assumption is shaped by our limited perception. The title, *Siège du Monde* (Seat of the World), can be understood both as a place of observation and as a position of authority. At the same time, it echoes Piero Manzoni's *Socle du Monde* (1961), which declared the entire world as an artwork. By recalling this gesture, Kwade extends the reflection, inviting viewers to reconsider systems of order, hierarchy and meaning that shape how reality is understood.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO.





SUPERFLEX

founded in 1993, DK, based in Copenhagen

↓ *Sleeping Jesus*, 2026 © SUPERFLEX.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Sleeping Jesus, 2026

Video, UHD resolution (3840 × 2160), 5.1 sound, 20'

Sleeping Jesus presents an unusual image: Christ asleep. While Christian tradition often focuses on awakening, suffering or revelation, images of Jesus in everyday states like resting or dreaming are rare. The film shows Jesus while sleeping, engaged in one of the most universal human activities. Rather than emphasising the divine or miraculous, it focuses on the ordinary and bodily. In doing so, the work connects spiritual narratives with daily life, suggesting that rest and vulnerability are as meaningful as action or belief. At the same time, the work raises questions about how we think about rest today. Sleep is often measured and controlled, linked to ideas of productivity

and performance. Here, it appears as something private and unknowable. *Sleeping Jesus* does not offer a clear message or critique. Instead, it opens a space for reflection between spirituality and everyday life, between public image and the private, unknowable world of dreams.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Evita Vasiljeva

b. 1985, LV, based in Paris

↓ *Third Place*, 2026 © Evita Vasiljeva.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Third Place, 2026

Steel, wheels, plexiglass, cast concrete, plastic

Evita Vasiljeva's *Third Place* is a series of outdoor sculptures installed around St. Marien in Karnap. Developed in response to its surroundings, the work reflects a changing urban environment shaped by vacancy and shifting uses. The sculptures are based on inverted shopping baskets. Through bending, welding and combining them with materials like concrete and coloured plexiglass, Vasiljeva transforms these everyday objects into open, architectural structures. They appear unfinished – caught between construction and decay. The title refers to sociologist Ray Oldenburg's idea of the *third place*: spaces beyond home and work where social life takes place. Here, these spaces seem fragile and uncertain. Vasiljeva's

approach is informed by her upbringing in Riga during the collapse of the Soviet Union, where unfinished structures and ruins became the foundation of a new country. Her work reflects this tension between past and future, asking what kinds of shared spaces might still emerge.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Mira M. Yang

b. 1993, DE, based in Paris

→ *Karaoke Falsetto*, 2026 © Mira M. Yang.
↘ Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Karaoke Falsetto, 2026

Performance, video and sound,
12" DMM copper vinyl, 22'

Two singers – So Sol-i, soprano and traditional Korean pansori singer, and Choi Seung Ho, a countertenor – interpret and improvise on the song of the nightingale, translating birdsong into human voice. Their voices move between different traditions: pansori, operatic singing and experimental interpretation. The countertenor voice sings in a high register historically associated with spiritual elevation and androgyny, while maintaining a contemporary sound. A 22-minute video, filmed at Freakshow – a grunge, punk and new wave bar in Essen-Steele – shows the performers in costume. The setting connects the work to local subcultural histories and to Klaus Nomi, an artist and countertenor from Essen active in the late 1970s and early 1980s, known for combining operatic singing with new wave and alternative music. Both singers reinterpret German songs, moving between musical traditions, languages and vocal techniques. Their collaboration reflects experiences of migration and points to the church as a space shaped by multilingual communities and diasporic exchange. *Karaoke Falsetto* considers voice as something that shifts across contexts: between music and subculture, between human and non-human sound and between different languages and forms of expression. It is connected to the stained-glass window in the baptistery, which depicts a dove – a symbol of the Holy Spirit and of the Pentecostal idea of speaking in many tongues – extending these questions of voice, listening and transmission across the space.

Courtesy of the artist and DREI.

With Choi Seung Ho, So Sol-i
Camera: Rachel Elizabeth Ashton
Costumes: Changdarc
With the kind support by AMMODO and Kemmler Foundation (Kemmler Kemmler GmbH).

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Amanda Ziemele

b. 1990, LV, based in Riga

Curious one, 2026

Aluminium, acrylics
380 × 220 × 160 cm

Amanda Ziemele's *Curious one* responds directly to its surroundings. Made of painted aluminium, the work moves between painting and sculpture, where colour, form and space are closely connected. The surface is painted with industrial acrylics like those used in nearby car repair workshops. This choice links the work to its local context, bringing materials and techniques from everyday urban environments into the space. Rather than representing something fixed, the work appears as a shifting presence. It seems to enter the space, reacting to light, movement and the viewer's position. Its shapes unfold and bend, suggesting a form in transition – something that is still becoming. At the same time, it adapts to obstacles, evolving its bodily structure like a shield, keeping its fragility safe from the turbulence and confusion orbiting around the clock. Ziemele describes her approach as a dialogue between thinking and making. The work develops through its material and context, allowing relationships to emerge rather than being predetermined.

Courtesy of the artist.

Funded by the Latvian State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF).

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ *Curious one*, 2026 © Amanda Ziemele.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Since the roof has been opened, *Curious one* has entered jointly with empathy.

Responding to the physical aspects of space, dancing through pouring sunbeams perceiving its surroundings.

Situated in transition, Jumping above the ground level, inhabiting thought through form.

Merging in and warping out:
The fragile cut-out has folded forming its attitude towards a potentiality to emerge

Adventurous choice with a long luminous tail.

– Amanda Ziemele



St. Josef





- ←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautman
- ← Launch of the latest issue of the architecture magazine *ARCH+* in the transformed church of St Josef.
- Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman
- Working as part of the Curro Claret workshop in St. Josef.
- Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

St. Josef is a neo-Gothic church saturated with iconography: vaults, columns, stained glass and liturgical furniture build a dense, codified system of symbolic control, designed to shape how people move, behave and think. The project does not erase this condition but suspends it. In collaboration with the Catalan collective Penique Productions, a large inflatable membrane veils the interior, fills the nave and neutralises its symbolic charge. Rather than confronting the church, the intervention displaces it: the space becomes a continuous, immersive environment – neither sacred nor profane, but open – where previous meanings are suspended and new uses can emerge.

This transformation extends to the furniture: in workshops with Catalan designer Curro Claret, residents and students dismantled and reconfigured the pews. Objects designed to impose passive, hierarchical positions become something that encourages new ways of being together: more horizontal, more unstable, less predictable. The church no longer functions as a place of worship, but has not yet become a fixed facility either. Instead, it is a contested space: without stable programme or guaranteed use, exposed to appropriation, conflict and everyday negotiation. Prior to Manifesta 16 Ruhr, Social BallerZ e. V. – a Gelsenkirchen basketball collective for youth, inclusion and community – activated the church as an open court every Thursday night through the biennial's Warm-Up Programme. Their hope to return afterwards and transform the space into a community sports facility is already written into the project's logic.

Presented by Creative Mediator: Josep Bohigas



Curro Claret Martí

b. 1968, SP, based in Barcelona
with Baucircus (Frida Iman Charara & Clemens
Linnenschmidt), DE, Freiburg
and student participants Polina Chernikova,
Daria Khvorova, Jaqueline Lobodda,
Evgenii Savoiskii and Oliver Teuber

This Is Not a Church Pew, 2026 Reused wood church pews

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Institut de Cultura de Barcelona
– Barcelona City Council, Institut Ramon Llull, Acció Cultural
Espanola, AC/E and Gelsenwasser Stiftung.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

↓ *This Is Not a Church Pew, 2026*
© Curro Claret Martí.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Dúo Barber Palacios

Llorenç Barber (b. 1948, SP, based in Valencia)
Montserrat Palacios (MX, based in Valencia)

How Long a Clapper's Shadow Falls, 2026

This project explores bells as instruments of collective memory and agents of spatial transformation. Rooted in local histories, each bell embodies layered narratives while simultaneously generating new acoustic identities. Through a series of twelve site-specific concerts conceived for Manifesta 16 Ruhr, the proposal activates church towers across the Ruhr Area as nodes within a distributed sonic network. Each performance, developed in response to the singular qualities of its bell tower, produces distinct “acoustic traces” that redefine the perception of urban space. Sound becomes a tool for mapping territory, where distance, materiality and atmospheric conditions shape a lived, embodied experience. Performed by local

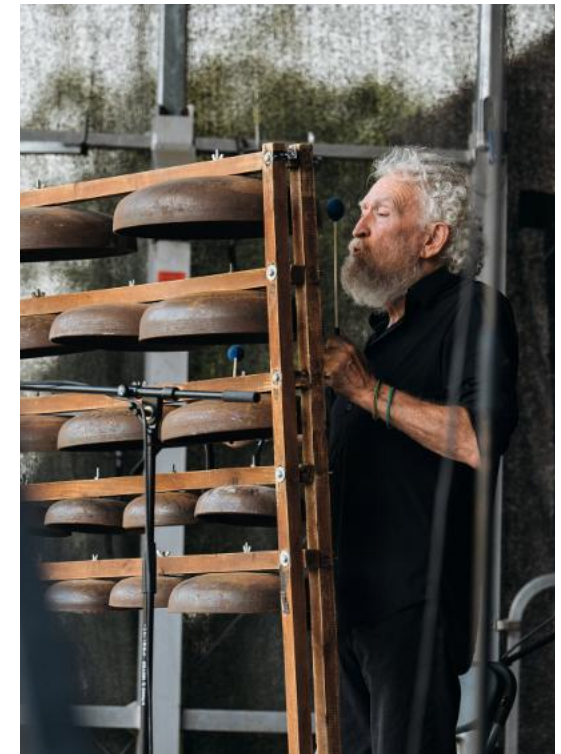
↓ Performance as part of the opening of Manifesta 16 Ruhr at the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex. Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silvliu Guiman

participants, the concerts foster communal bonds and enable new forms of collective identification, extending their impact beyond the event itself. A performance by Llorenç Barber, together with Montserrat Palacios, inaugurated the project, accompanied by audiovisual documentation tracing its social and spatial reverberations.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Institut de Cultura de Barcelona – Barcelona City Council and Institut Ramon Llull.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Penique Productions

Sergi Arbusà (b. 1987, SP/BR)

Möglich Unvorhersehbar, 2026

Plastic and air

50 m × 8.5 m × 15.40 m

Courtesy of Penique Productions.

With the kind support of AMMODO, Institut de Cultura de Barcelona – Barcelona City Council, Institut Ramon Llull and Acció Cultural Española, AC/E.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

↓ → *Möglich Unvorhersehbar*, 2026
© Penique Productions / Sergi Arbusà.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
→ → Launch of the latest issue of the architecture magazine *ARCH+* in the transformed church of St Josef.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman





Special Venue

Musiktheater im Revier





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Charlotte Ernst
← Detail of one of Yves Klein's sponge reliefs in
the Musiktheater im Revier.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

The Musiktheater im Revier, designed by Werner Ruhnau and opened in 1959, is one of the most significant post-war cultural buildings in Germany. It is celebrated for the integration of architecture and art that shaped its design from the outset – most prominently the six vast monochrome paintings and sponge reliefs that Yves Klein created for the building between October 1958 and December 1959, after winning an international competition alongside three other artists. His signature “International Klein Blue” proved unsuitable for the task, so he developed a similar bright tone – a shade that has since inspired the city’s official colour, “Gelsenkirchen Blue.” In dialogue with Ruhnau’s architecture, Klein sought to create the conditions for the audience’s complete immersion in the infinite space suggested by the colour. Almost seven decades on, these unique works are about to undergo a much-needed conservation campaign to reveal the blue’s original intensity.

Presented by Creative Mediators: Michael Kurtz & Henry Meyric Hughes

Robert Fleck
b. 1957, AT, based in Lannion

- The Creation of the Gelsenkirchen Murals,
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann
- ↘ *Moderne Ruhr*, 2026 © Robert Fleck.

Moderne Ruhr, 2026
Map and research project
Map Design: Johanna Unterberg

Accounts of the Ruhr Area often revolve around military and industrial history: factories and coal mines, air raids and territorial disputes, boom times and depressions. But the region has also played a significant role in the history of 20th-century art, home to a range of important artists and an array of world-class museums. The art historian and curator Robert Fleck has created a map of sites connected to the history of modern art in the Ruhr Area. In his words, it is a “declaration of love” for the region, which he came to know during his decades working in nearby Düsseldorf. These sites include public artworks and architectural marvels, some of the oldest collections of modern art and the most ambitious international collaborations of the post-war period. Published in the official Manifesta 16 Ruhr guidebook and on the website, the map offers a personal route through the region's rich artistic heritage.

Courtesy of the artist.

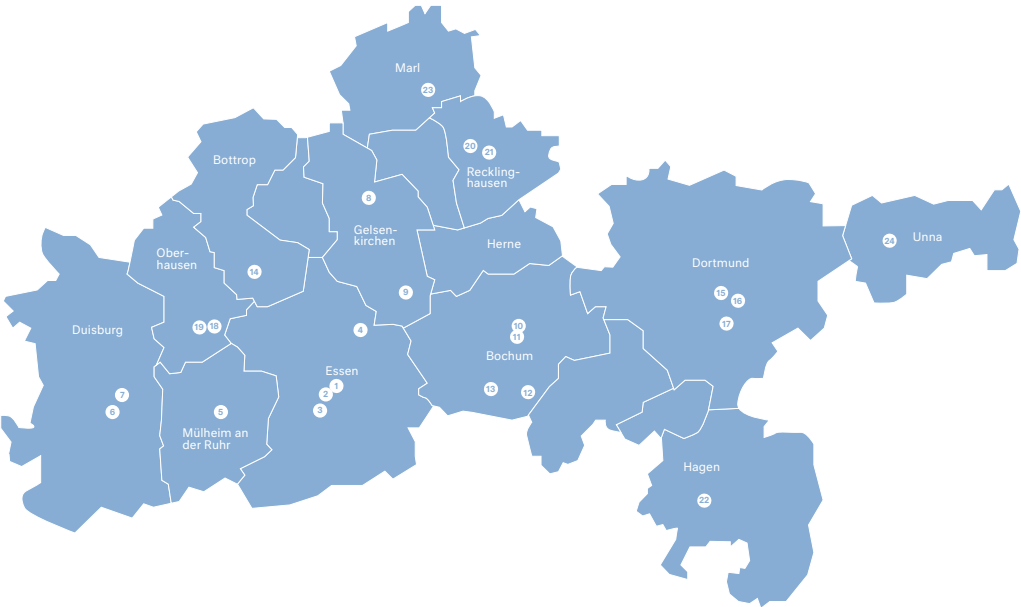
*The Creation of the
Gelsenkirchen Murals*
Three movies

Gelsenkirchen Opera House, 1958
4' 20"
Courtesy of The Estate of Yves Klein c/o ADAGP, Paris

Inauguration of the Gelsenkirchen Opera, 1959
2' 17"
Courtesy of The Estate of Yves Klein c/o ADAGP, Paris

Rotraut Moquay Klein in conversation with Robert Fleck
(3rd June), 2026
Camera: Mason Williams, Robert Fleck
Editing, subtitles, sound: Till Bödeker
A project by Manifesta 16 Ruhr and Fondation Yves Klein

To celebrate Yves Klein's achievements in the Musiktheater im Revier, Robert Fleck presents a loop of three films in the building's foyer during Manifesta 16 Ruhr. The first captures Klein and his collaborators in the half-finished theatre in 1958 as they prepare the textured surfaces of his paintings with sponges and plaster. The second documents the completed building in full colour at its opening the following year. And the third is a newly conducted interview by Fleck with Rotraut, the German-French artist and widow of Yves Klein. In an excerpt from a longer conversation, they discuss Klein's work in Gelsenkirchen.



St. Anna - Hatay Engin Music Hall





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann
← Workshop by Constructlab inside the church.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman
→ Works by the participants and scenographic elements
by Bureau LADA, interacting with the building's
architecture.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Music travels with people long before they feel at home in a new place. It carries voices, languages and memories across distances, without being tied to any single location. A song can offer comfort, convey a sense of belonging, name a loss or forge a connection between people living apart. Music speaks to heritage but also to how people can settle into a new life and build relationships. It allows a way of finding one's place that goes beyond simply fitting in or withdrawing. This was particularly clear among the "guest workers" who began arriving in the Federal Republic from the mid-1950s under formal recruitment agreements between governments: what they sang, played and listened to became a kind of moving archive – it captured what was left behind while simultaneously opening a space for something new to emerge in an unfamiliar place.

The Hatay Engin Music Hall takes individual moments from this comprehensive history as its starting point: visual artists take up and examine the relation between music and how gender and sexuality are expressed across different cultures. As its name suggests, the hall is also a place to listen to music. The music hall is named after the singer Hatay Engin (1948–2020), who was educated at the Istanbul Conservatory and came to Berlin at the beginning of the 1970s. He became one of the defining voices of Turkish art music (*Sanat Müziği*) and developed – far beyond Berlin – into a central figure of the musical diaspora.

Presented by Creative Mediator: Gürsoy Doğtaş
Scenographers: Bureau LADA (Ema Dabrović, Lada Hršak, Katarina Pedišić)



Emre Abut

b. 1985, DE, based in Germany

↓ *Complete Cypher Vol. I*, 2026 © Emre Abut.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Complete Cypher Vol. I, 2026 Multi-channel sound installation, 32'

Complete Cypher Vol. I draws on Abut's biography and explores music as a means of migrant self-empowerment. The work draws on hip-hop, R&B and Turkish music from the 1990s and early 2000s, and emerges from the experiences of this period. In the clubs where this music was played, many young people with migrant backgrounds came together. Dancing together created spaces that facilitated a sense of belonging, which was often missing in everyday life. At the same time, the installation refers to ways of listening to music beyond the club, such as on cassettes and CDs that were passed on, and on self-compiled mixtapes and burnt CDs

that circulated amongst friends. These unique forms of music-based storytelling emerged through them. As with a mixtape, the composition arises from the selection and sequence of the tracks. No song is heard in its entirety. Depending on the memories this music evokes, different approaches open up.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of SAHA.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Cana Bilir-Meier

b. 1986, DE, based in Munich

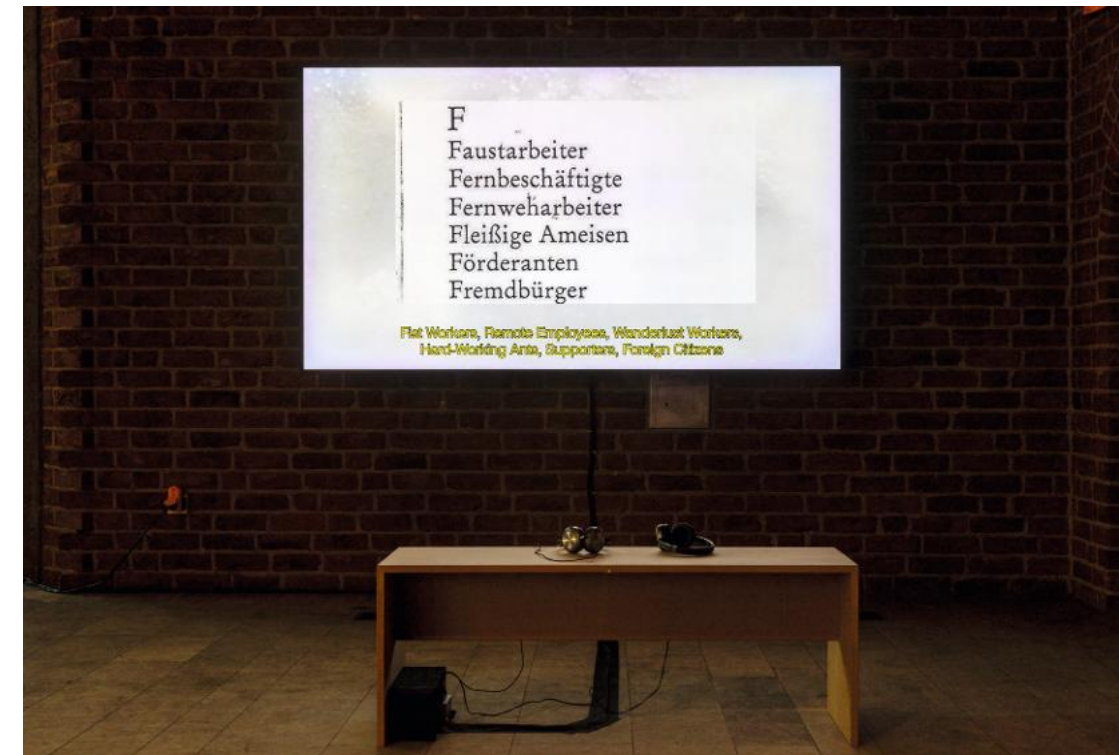
↓ *Ein neues Wort*, 2005
© Cana Bilir-Meier.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Ein neues Wort (A New Word), 2025 Single-channel video, colour, sound, 25'

A New Word develops a poetic and precise reflection on migration, belonging and the power of naming. The starting point is a 1970 West German competition that sought a replacement for the term "Gastarbeiter" ("guest worker"). The proposals brought together in the film range from overtly racist labels and hurtful everyday expressions to nonsensical phrases. Cana Bilir-Meier re-examined the more than 30,000 submitted suggestions together with a Munich choir. The singers, most of them former labour migrants of Turkish origin, not only make these historical names audible but also translate them into a collective

musical form. Language itself becomes the material of the film: as a carrier of memory, as a means of exclusion and as a possibility for self-empowerment. Bilir-Meier's film does not search for a single "correct" new word, but instead invites a different attitude towards language – one that takes terms apart and makes their violence visible while collectively giving them new meaning.

Courtesy of the artist.



Ihsan Ece

b. 1949, TR, based in Miltenberg

↓ *Kemnade Festival No. 1*, 1987
 ↓ *Kemnade Festival No. 2*, 1987
 © Ihsan Ece.
 Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Poster Design: Kemnade International X, 1987

Pencil on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Kunstmuseum Bochum.

Poster Design: Kemnade International X, 1987

Gouache on paper

Courtesy of the artist and Kunstmuseum Bochum.

Ihsan Ece experienced labour migration first-hand. In 1970, like many people from Türkiye, he came to Cologne to work as an industrial labourer at Klöckner-Humboldt-Deutz, a major German mechanical engineering company, driven by economic and social circumstances. Two years later, he began studying at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. The tension

between factory work and artistic practice, between migration and art-making, runs throughout his work. In many works, Ece addresses the historical term “guest worker,” a label that reduces migrant labourers to their economic function while obscuring structural inequality. Manifesta presents two poster designs that Ece created in 1987 for the festival Kemnade International. Initiated by the Kunstmuseum Bochum, the festival had been held since 1974 at Haus Kemnade in the Ruhr Valley near Bochum and sought to challenge the marginalisation of “guest workers” in public and cultural life. Bringing together music, dance, food, discussion and political exchange, it became a space of encounter, self-assertion and visibility. Ece’s poster designs capture a moment of collective joy: people dancing.



Philipp Gufler

b. 1989, DE, based in Amsterdam

↓ *Quilt #46 (Zeki Müren) [with Gürsoy Doğtaş]*, 2021
 © Philipp Gufler.
 Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Quilt #46 (Zeki Müren) [with Gürsoy Doğtaş], 2021

Screenprint on fabric

100 × 179 cm

Philipp Gufler uses quilts as textile archive and fragile counter-memorials. In layered fabric panels, he combines silkscreen prints, quotations and image fragments from queer archives. Meaning emerges through the layering of transparent and semi-transparent materials. In this way, queer histories are not fixed as monumental narratives, but become visible in their fragility, multiplicity and openness. Since 2013, Gufler has developed these works in close connection with his involvement in the Forum Queeres Archiv München. His quilts are dedicated to people, places, media and moments of queer history, establishing an alternative culture of remembrance that resists the erasures of official narratives. Through this approach, Gufler

draws on the tradition of the AIDS Memorial Quilts, where collective mourning, political commemoration and handmade, domestic materials converge. A quilt dedicated to Zeki Müren, one of Turkey’s most celebrated singers, actors and media icons, exemplifies this: Müren became a figure of national fame and cultural representation, while Müren’s flamboyant public persona carried a queer legibility that was widely visible yet long remained socially unnamed.

Courtesy of the artist and
 Johanna & Carlos von Hardenberg



Cihangir Gümüştürkmen

b. 1964, DE, based in Berlin

Mürenka, 2022

Boot, mirror foil, rhinestones, cardboard
82.5 cm × 13 cm × 29 cm

Cihangir Gümüştürkmen works across painting, object-making, photography, video and performance. His practice interweaves memories of origin and childhood with his present life as a gay Turkish-German artist. Through subversive irony, he questions gender norms and social conventions. As a co-founder of the Gayhane party (1998) and the Salon Oriental Variété (1996), Cihangir Gümüştürkmen is deeply rooted in Berlin's queer cultural scene. A formative childhood memory connects him to the Turkish superstar Zeki Müren (1931–1996): as a child, he saw Müren perform live at an open-air concert in Izmir – dressed entirely in silver, standing on extreme platform shoes, a

↓ *Mürenka*, 2022 © Cihangir Gümüştürkmen.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

“Prince from the Universe.” In Turkey, Müren occupied a paradoxical position: widely celebrated as a star, Müren was tolerated as a queer figure within what has often been described as a “glass closet,” his fame offering a certain protection. This contradictory form of visibility continues to shape Gümüştürkmen's reflections today. The work *Mürenka* emerges as a sparkling relic of queer memory.

Courtesy of the artist.



Nejla Gür

b. 1952, TR, based in Braunschweig

Untitled, 1984

Acrylic, charcoal and pencil on primed paper

Nejla Gür came to Germany from Türkiye in 1971 as a “guest worker” and initially worked for eight years on the assembly line at Blaupunkt in Hildesheim before studying at the Braunschweig University of Art. At the centre of her painting and drawing are social postures and gestures, particularly those of women in migration. She draws her imagery from everyday life: from Turkish-language magazines, private photographs and visual impressions gathered during her travels. What interests her is not portraiture in a conventional sense, but a figure's attitude – how a woman sits, works, eats, ties her headscarf or listens to the radio. The face increasingly recedes; what remains decisive is the body language. In Gür's work, the woman

↓ *Untitled*, 1984 © Nejla Gür.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

with a headscarf is not a symbol of religiousness but rather a self-determined figure asserting her own space. With reduced lines and dynamic fields of colour, she condenses everyday life, memory and experience into images of poetic precision and social critique – without reducing her subjects to exotic stereotypes and without distancing herself from them.

Courtesy of the artist.



Gašper Kunšič

b. 1992, SI, based in Frankfurt am Main

↓ *Ornament, 2025* © Gašper Kunšič.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Ornament, 2025

MDF, lacquer, rope
135 × 120 × 1.6 cm

Gašper Kunšič approaches ornament not as mere decoration but as a form of expression in its own right. In contemporary discourses, where questions of visibility, belonging and politics are being renegotiated, ornament appears here as a medium of queer self-empowerment. Against the modernist rejection of the decorative – most famously argued by the architect Adolf Loos – Kunšič turns excess, gloss and gesture into a conscious stance. *Ornament* draws on codes of queer pop culture as well as religious visual languages and folkloric motifs from rural Slovenia, where the artist grew up. The heart, a universal symbol of love and belonging, is recoded here: as the carrier of a queer utopia, both invitation and manifesto. Inscribed within the contour of the heart is the phrase “LET’S BECOME MORE GAY” – a statement that moves

between playful affirmation, political stance and sincere desire. The phrase itself carries a specific genealogy: it echoes a line from Rosa von Praunheim’s 1971 film *It Is Not the Homosexual Who Is Perverse, But the Society in Which He Lives*, where it emerges as a call for collective transformation. While the exhibited work transforms the ornament into a public gesture directed toward a space and its community, a smaller-scale edition extends the work into the social sphere – to be carried forward through new friendships and gestures of connection. This ornament circulates in pocket-sized form: as a gift, a sign of connection and an image that can be carried forward. The edition can be purchased through the artist’s website.

Courtesy of the artist.



Jannis Psychopedis

b. 1945, GR, based in Athens

↓ *Rotes Radio, 1966* © Jannis Psychopedis.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Rotes Radio, 1966

Oil on board
30 × 45 cm

Jannis Psychopedis’ artistic language consciously positions itself against the traditions of painting. *Rotes Radio* (Red Radio) and *Vicks* (on view at St. Bonifatius – Ferdane Satir Tea Garden) belong to a series of anti-still lifes: instead of flowers or fruit, Psychopedis chose everyday objects from his immediate surroundings – a red radio, a packet of medication. The objects retain their real dimensions; nothing is glorified or elevated. What emerges is a cool, precise view of a reality that is anything but romantic. These works were created in Greece in the late 1960s, shortly before and after the military coup of 1967. The radio does not merely appear as an object in space; it becomes a sign of disrupted communication, a symbol of a suppressed public sphere. The medication, in

turn, appears as a metaphor for those bodies scarred by the dictatorship and at the same time for the precarious search for healing. In 1971, Psychopedis left Greece on a DAAD scholarship and moved to Munich, where encounters with Greek “guest workers” – who had left under similar pressures of economic hardship and dictatorship – resonated with his own experience of migration, uprooting and continued attachment to home, all of which shaped his artistic perspective.

Courtesy of the artist



Mesut-Sabuha Salaam

b. 1973, TR, based in Berlin

↓ → *Gayhane – Die Nacht als Zuhause*, 2026
© Mesut-Sabuha Salaam.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

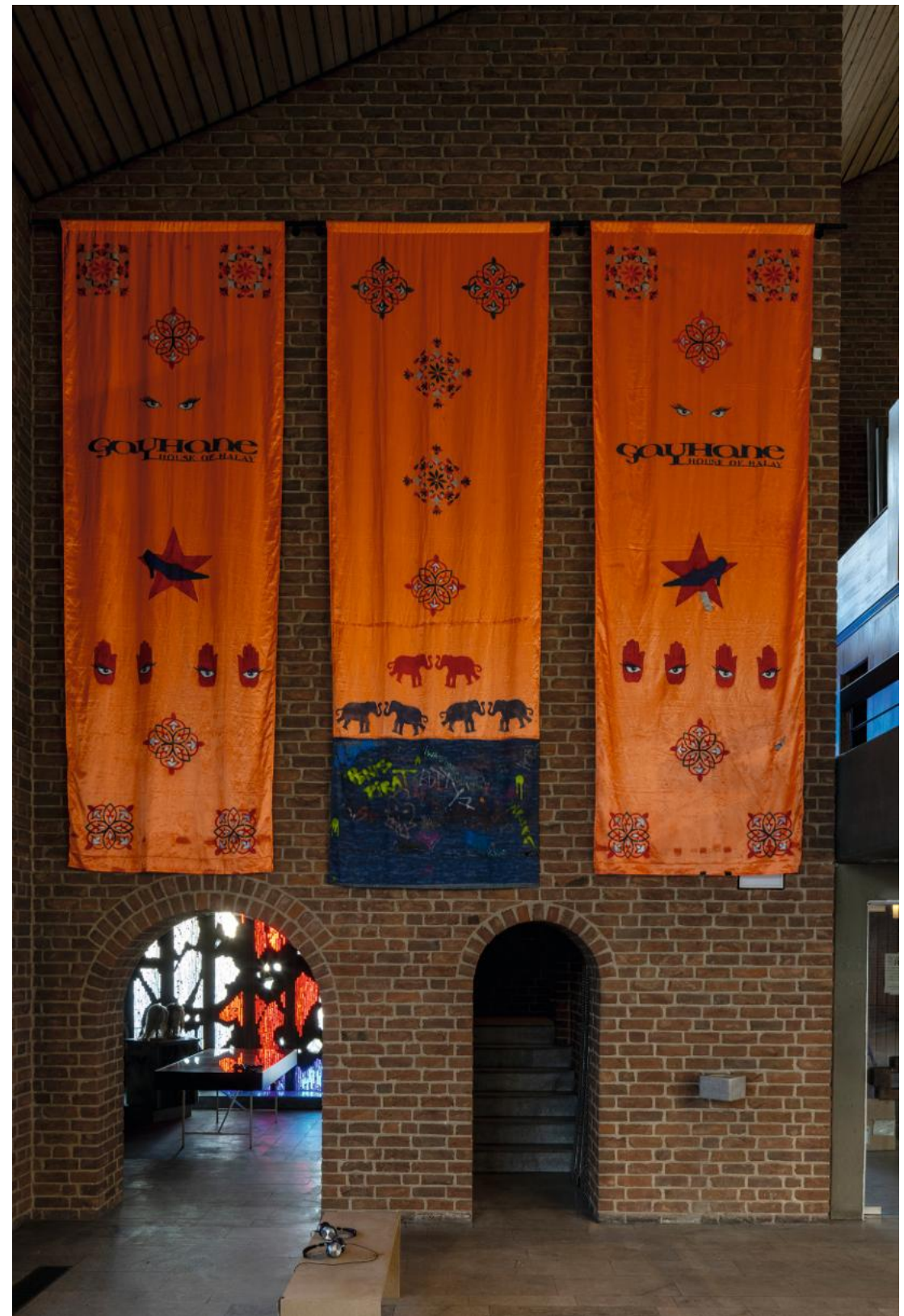
Gayhane – Die Nacht als Zuhause
(*Gayhane – The Night as Home*), 2026
Walk-in installation, archive materials

Mesut-Sabuha Salaam grew up in Bochum. As a performer, community activist and trained hairdresser, Salaam has been a central figure in Berlin's queer migrant scene since the late 1990s. Gayhane emerged as an after-party to Salon Oriental, a queer cabaret that activist Fatma Souad and the artist Cihangir Gümüştürkmen founded in 1996, in which second-generation migrants staged highly political shows. From 1998, Gayhane became an independent monthly party series at SO36 in Kreuzberg – a unique gay and lesbian party explicitly addressing people with Muslim roots. Alongside Gayhane, Salaam co-founded GLADT e.V. in the late 1990s, an organisation initially addressing queer people from Turkey

that later expanded to include other LGBTIQs of Color in Berlin. To this day, Salaam performs as master of ceremonies at Gayhane and is indispensable to its irresistible performances and spirit. For Salaam, Gayhane is understood as a space, not a party – one that has grown over almost thirty years through people, encounters and shared experiences of migration, queerness and the desire for belonging. “The night becomes a temporary home,” Salaam says. “A place where different rules apply. Where protection, visibility and community can emerge.” At Manifesta 16 Ruhr, Salaam presents a walk-through installation drawing on archival materials from Gayhane.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Ming Wong

b. 1971, SG, based in Berlin

→ *Yüz Karası*, 2014
↳ *Biji Dival* (record cover), 2014
© Ming Wong.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Singing soft g, 2014

Video, 29'36"

Courtesy of the artist.

Biji Dival (record cover), 2014

Record covers, digital print on cardboard

Courtesy of the artist.

Yüz Karası, 2014

Cassette covers and boxes, digital prints on paper
Facsimile 1/3
66 × 76 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Ming Wong works with cinema and popular culture to consider how one's identity is constructed, reproduced and circulated. With the persona Bülent Wongsoy, Wong fuses his own name with that of the Turkish film and pop star Bülent Ersoy, taking up Ersoy's star image and transforming it into something new. Bülent Wongsoy appears simultaneously as a glamorous and vulnerable persona, a stage figure and an archival practice. In this way, categories such as gender, trans identity, ethnicity, language and national belonging are set in motion – not through straightforward imitation, but through the deliberate tension between displacement and overlap, appropriation and distance. Bülent Wongsoy does not present themselves as an “authentic” imitation of Ersoy, but makes acts of imitation and identification visible. Original cassette and LP covers by Bülent Ersoy are combined with photographs in which Wong himself appears as Ersoy, creating a visual archive of transformation. In doing so, the work challenges familiar distinctions between original and copy, idol and fan, reference and performance.



Hanefi Yeter

b. 1947, TR, based in Istanbul

→ *Musiker (Musician)*, 1982 © Hanefi Yeter
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Musiker (Musician), 1982

Drawing
32 × 24 cm

Music is a recurring motif in Hanefi Yeter's work. It appears not only as the subject of numerous paintings and drawings, but also runs through his practice more broadly: Yeter's work was used for concert posters and LP covers for Turkish music productions, many of which were produced in German studios. The drawing depicts a group of musicians fully absorbed in their performance. Their bodies lean towards one another, almost merging, as if forming a single sonic body. This impression is reinforced by the interplay of different instruments – recognisable are a darbuka, the piercing sound of the zurna, a keman and a saz. The moment feels intense and nearly ecstatic, as if a note has just been struck that unites them all. Yeter succeeds in translating movement, rhythm and sound into a vibrating graphic form, in which musical practice and collective experience are vividly present.

Courtesy of the artist.



St. Bonifatius – Ferdane Satır Tea Garden





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann
 ← Visitors to the Tea Garden.
 Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

When “guest workers” planted their first gardens, something new took shape: their own piece of land in a foreign place. Soil they could work with their hands, from which tomatoes and beans grew, on which cherry and other fruit trees could be planted. A place for the grill, the backgammon table, for gatherings with family, friends and colleagues. The garden was both a usable space and an expanded living room – somewhere to tend, to rest and to call one’s own, where the confinement of small apartments gave way to something more open. Its value becomes clear against what came before: the agreements that brought workers to West Germany from 1955 housed them in dormitories and barracks; a garden had no place there, because a garden implies putting down roots – and putting down roots was precisely what the “guest workers” were not supposed to do.

The Ferdane Satır Tea Garden honours the first gardens of these labour migrants. With outdoor and indoor displays, the exhibition takes up motifs from their gardens: flora and fauna, growing, eating, being together, home furnishing – and the contrast between working underground and standing on one’s own ground. The tea garden is named after Ferdane Satır (1944–1984), who came to Duisburg-Wanheimerort in 1976 from the Adana province through the family reunification programme. She was known for her care and neighbourliness. On the night of the 26th of August 1984, she and four of her children – Çiğdem (7), Ümit (5), Songül (4) and Zeliha (18) – her son-in-law Rasim Turhan (18) and her 52-day-old grandson Tarık Turhan were killed in a racist arson attack in Duisburg.

Presented by Creative Mediator: Gürsoy Doğtaş
 Scenographers: Bureau LADA (Ema Dabrović, Lada Hršak, Katarina Pedišić)

Begzada Alatović

b. 1962, BA, based in Berlin

Begzada Alatović directs the intercultural Rosenduft garden in Gleisdreieck Park in Berlin. As a trained agricultural technician, she coordinates garden work and promotes social contact between people from different backgrounds. Originally developed for traumatised women from Bosnia and Herzegovina, today the garden is a public space of encounter for neighbours of many nationalities. Here, Alatović preserves old plant knowledge – like the Bosnian Damask Rose, which she brought from her grandmother's garden in 2008. For Manifesta 16 Ruhr, she has designed a tea garden in collaboration with Bureau Baubotanik: raised beds with mint

↓ Flowers planted by Begzada Alatović.
© Begzada Alatović.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

and sage and plantings with St. John's Wort and marigold invite you to harvest and dry the herbs for tea. In workshops on herb salt, herb oil and healing herbs as well as harvest festivals Alatović shares her knowledge with schools, kitas and neighbourhoods. In addition to the garden, she works with self-help groups and social counselling – bringing together her work in horticulture, community and helping people get settled in the city.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Özlem Altın

b. 1977, DE, based in Berlin

↓ *You Are What You Hold*, 2026 © Özlem Altın.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

You Are What You Hold, 2026

UV print on Alu-Dibond, rope, plants

At the outer wall of St. Bonifatius – Ferdane Satır Tea Garden, an installation unfolds that brings traces of labour and memory into view. *You Are What You Hold* draws on the decades-long work of the artist's father in a yarn-finishing factory. The repeated gestures of repairing and knotting elastic cords become lines that extend into relations, weaving together references from industrial and natural worlds. Bean plants grow along the lines, forming a vertical root system. In dialogue with the former sacred space, labour

itself becomes a monument – giving form to lives and bodily experiences that have gone unrecorded.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of SAHA.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Atiye Altül

b. 1946, TR, based in Berlin

- *Konserve Kutusu / Die Dose (The Can)*, 1974–75
- ↓ *Domates / Die Tomate (The Tomato)*, 1976
- ↓ *Soğanlar / Zwiebeln (Onions)*, 1976
- © Atiye Altül.
- Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Gül / Die Rose (The Rose), 1976

Pencil on paper
41 × 31.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Domates / Die Tomate (The Tomato), 1976

Pencil on paper
36.5 × 34.3 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Soğanlar / Zwiebeln (Onions), 1976

Poster paint on paper
77.5 × 57.5 cm

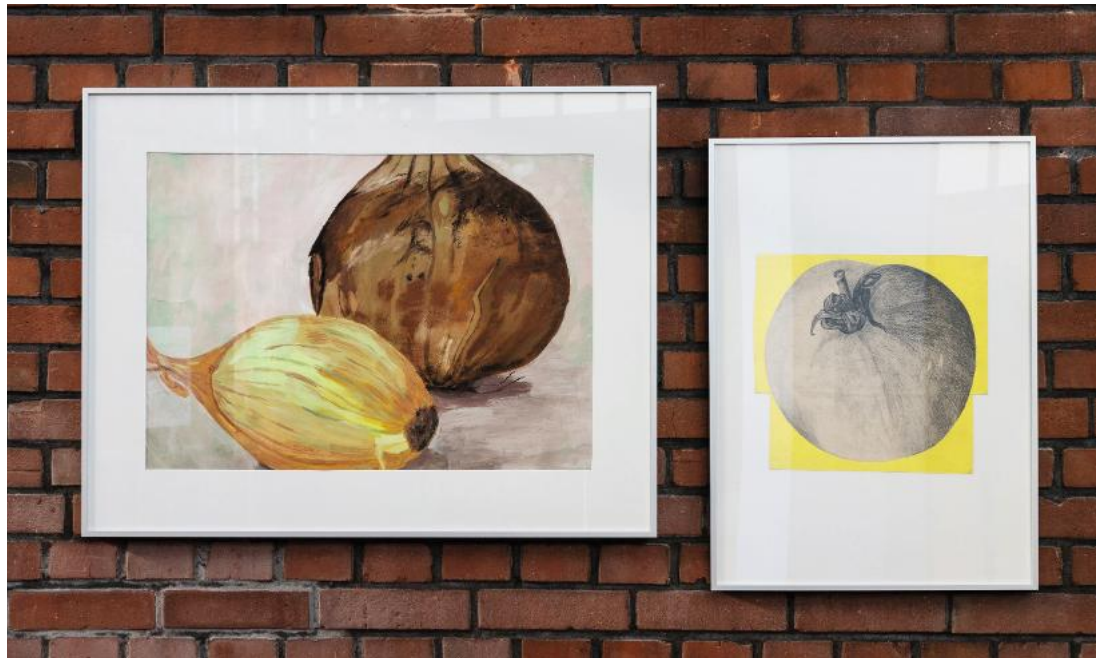
Courtesy of the artist.

Konserve Kutusu / Die Dose (The Can), 1974–75

Poster paint on paper
33.5 × 18.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Atiye Altül moves between the observation of nature and the exploration of inner experience. In acrylic, watercolour and silk, she develops a visual language for what cannot be expressed directly: landscapes, botanical forms, the surface of a river or the weight of a branch become carriers of anxiety, longing and acceptance. For Altül, painting is never mere representation, but a means of giving form to feelings, memories and unresolved relationships. She came to West Berlin in 1970 in the context of labour migration. After initially working in a factory, childcare and social work, she began studying textile design at the Hochschule der Künste in 1973, graduating in 1978. Her professional and political practice have remained closely intertwined throughout her life. Since 1983, Altül has organised silk and fabric painting courses for women of Turkish origin in Germany. Through this work, she has understood art not only as a form of personal expression, but also as a space for encounter, exchange and collective visibility.



Akbar Behkalam

1944–2025, IR, based in Berlin

↓ *Abendmahl (The Lord's Supper)*, 1978
© Akbar Behkalam.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Abendmahl (The Lord's Supper), 3 parts, 1978

Tempera on canvas

115 × 90 cm, 115 × 80 cm, 115 × 90 cm

Akbar Behkalam, born in Tabriz and a member of the Azerbaijani minority in Iran, fled the Shah's regime to West Berlin in 1976. In exile, he brought together Persian pictorial traditions, particularly miniature painting, with European art history. His paintings offer incisive reflections on political violence and the social contradictions of the Federal Republic of Germany. *The Lord's Supper* was created in the final year of the Shah's regime and distils this dual perspective. Behkalam draws on the composition of Leonardo's *Last Supper*, but transforms it into an image of social inequality: in place of the disciples,

grotesquely exaggerated bourgeois figures sit before an opulent banquet, while the central figure appears isolated and estranged. Here, the Christian motif does not serve as a sign of community, but as a stage for power, class divisions and exclusion.

Courtesy of Ludwiggalerie Schloss Oberhausen.



Bureau Baubotanik

est. 2010, DE, based in Stuttgart

↓ *Tea*, 2026 © Bureau Baubotanik.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlaumann

Tea, 2026 (ongoing)

Plants, wood, steel, soil, foil, tools, water, cups
and forklifts

415 m²

Tea is a performative installation that initiates a collective exploration of tea as a cultural practice. Visitors are invited to experiment with different preparation methods, using the provided plants and tools. Movable raised beds on the forecourt are planted with mint, sage, hops, nettle, fennel and willow. Designed to be repositioned by forklift, they become active elements of the performance. A yellow dotted line defines the stage area in which their arrangement can be continuously altered. A drying room allows harvested plants to be hung and preserved while also functioning as an evolving, reflective archive of materials,

intentions and conversations. A round table at the centre of the installation provides tools for preparation, exchange and leisure. A recurring “gardener” is regularly present, maintaining the plants and facilitating conversations around the shared cultural practice of tea-making.

Courtesy of Bureau Baubotanik.

With the kind support of Gelsenwasser Stiftung.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Vlassis Caniaris

1928–2011, GR

Rollschuhmann (The Skater), 1974

Material assembly
185 × 160 × 125 cm

From the early 1960s onward, Vlassis Caniaris developed an artistic practice that made social realities visible through everyday materials and found objects. Rather than relying on illustrative representation, he drew on the inherent force of found things – clothing, tin cans, or toys – which he condensed into politically charged assemblages and environments. Migration appears here not as an abstract theme, but through the material traces of everyday life. Michael Fehr, in conversation with Max Imdahl, has called this strategy “concrete realism,” an approach in which the work neither stands in for reality through pictorial means nor withdraws from it into pure form, but works with and in reality directly. Material and form become indivisible: the discarded garment or fragment of street debris does not denote something beyond itself, but enters the work as a piece of the very conditions it makes visible. *The Skater* is among the works included in his now legendary exhibition *Gastarbeiter–Fremdarbeiter* (Guest Worker–Foreign Worker), which was shown, among other venues, at the Kunstmuseum Bochum from June to July 1975.

Courtesy of Osthaus Museum Hagen.

→→ The participants' works and scenographic elements by Bureau LADA transform the space into a place of remembrance and recognition.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

→ *Rollschuhmann (The Skater)*, 1974
© Vlassis Caniaris.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev





İsmail Çoban

1945–2024, TR

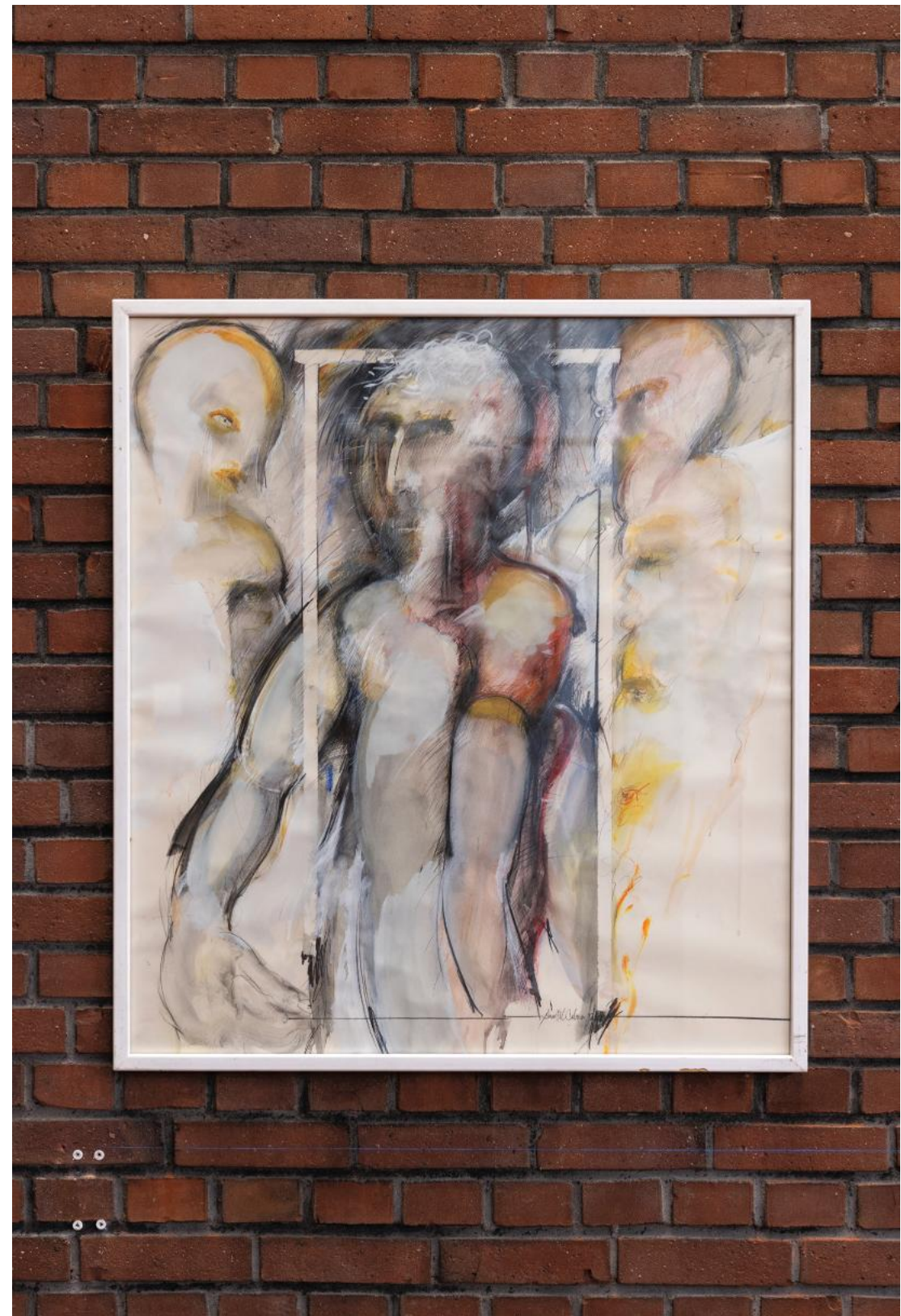
→ *Ecce Homo*, 1992 © İsmail Çoban.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Ecce Homo, 1992

Watercolour and acrylic pen on paper
100 × 89 cm

“Behold the man!” – with these words, Pontius Pilate presents the bound Jesus to the crowd. The Ecce Homo motif is among the oldest subjects in Christian iconography: the suffering, exposed human being before the judgement of the public. Friedrich Nietzsche adopted the title for his autobiography in 1888 and transformed it into a gesture of radical self-assertion: Behold what the human being is capable of. İsmail Çoban’s painting *Ecce Homo* takes up this religious motif and brings it into the present. In an expressive, abstract manner, it depicts a ghostly human figure – exposed, barely graspable, spectral. The painting was made in the year before the racist arson attack on the 29th of May 1993, in Solingen, when right-wing extremists set fire to the home of the Genç family. Five people were murdered: Saime Genç (4), Hülya Genç (9), Hatice Genç (18), Gürsün İnce (27) and Gülüstan Öztürk (12). Fourteen others were injured. İsmail Çoban dedicated the work to the memory of this attack. He knows political violence from personal experience: In 1980, in his hometown of Çorum, he witnessed the pogrom against the Alevi population. His work is shaped by a socially critical stance; through encoded symbols and historical analogies, he makes injustice visible without collapsing into agitational bluntness.

Courtesy of Kunstmuseum Solingen.





Yıldırım Denizli

b. 1946, TR, based in Ratingen

← *Odalarımızın Aydınlığı – Helligkeit unser Zimmer*,
1984 © Yıldırım Denizli.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Odalarımızın Aydınlığı – Helligkeit unser Zimmer (The Brightness of Our Rooms), 1984

Oil on canvas
100 × 140 cm

Yıldırım Denizli works without a fixed programme. What matters more to him than the finished artwork is the vitality of the process itself. *Odalarımızın Aydınlığı – The Brightness of Our Rooms* shows an invented figure: a man in a room whose heavily patterned wallpaper looks like prison bars, like a cage, like a cell. On the wall behind him hang small pictures within pictures: the man's origins, his village, his family. Longing and memory. The man is a "guest worker" who has come to a foreign culture, without language, without familiar food or customs. Under such circumstances one might quickly fall apart. But not this man. He holds himself upright, almost cheerful, self-assured, as if he were singing a song. Denizli, who himself came to Germany in 1971, painted the picture in 1984 without any specific occasion, simply out of his own lived experience and observation. It is not a portrait of any particular person, but an archetypal image of an entire generation: those who hold on to their own values stay whole, and win against the room.

Courtesy of the artist.

Ihsan Ece

b. 1949, TR, based in Miltenberg

Passbilder BRD, Galip Aybet (*Passport Pictures FRG, Galip Aybet*), 1974

Oil on canvas
100 × 80 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Passbilder BRD, Hasan Ece, Mein Vater (*Passport Pictures FRG, Hasan Ece, My Father*), 1974

Oil on canvas
100 × 80 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Passbilder BRD, Kadir Topal (*Passport Pictures FRG, Kadir Topal*), 1974

Oil on canvas
100 × 80 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Passbilder BRD, Lütfü Çağdagül (*Passport Pictures FRG, Lütfü Çağdagül*), 1974

Oil on canvas
100 × 80 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Passbilder BRD, Ramis Çakır, (*Passport Pictures FRG, Ramis Çakır*), 1974

Oil on canvas
100 × 80 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Passbilder BRD, Yusuf Ziya Aktaş (*Passport Pictures FRG, Yusuf Ziya Aktaş*), 1974

Oil on canvas
100 × 80 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

→ *Passbilder BRD, Galip Aybet*, 1974
Passbilder BRD, Hasan Ece, Mein Vater, 1974
Passbilder BRD, Kadir Topal, 1974
Passbilder BRD, Lütfü Çağdagül, 1974
Passbilder BRD, Ramis Çakır, 1974
Passbilder BRD, Yusuf Ziya Aktaş, 1974
© Ihsan Ece.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Ihsan Ece experienced labour migration firsthand, coming to Cologne in 1970 to work as an industrial labourer before studying at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. In the series *Passbilder*, Ece portrays a group of men from his Istanbul milieu. With the exception of Hasan Ece, the artist's father, they are friends and former classmates. As trained engineers, they were recruited in the early 1970s by a German mechanical engineering company to come to Germany as “guest workers.” Produced during his studies in Düsseldorf, the series takes on the visual language of official identification documents: on a dark grey pictorial ground resembling a passport page, a photo-realistically painted portrait appears in the upper right corner, accompanied by a fictitious yet nonetheless authoritative stamp reading “Gastarbeiter” with the federal eagle. Ece translates the vocabulary of state registration into painting, exposing the mechanisms of institutional marking. The work combines a documentary appearance with subtle estrangement, thereby articulating a precise social critique of migration, bureaucracy and belonging.



Fürüzan

1932–2024, TR

↓ *Untitled*, 1976 © Fürüzan.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Untitled, 1976

Two b/w photographs
9 × 13 cm each

During her DAAD fellowship in West Berlin from June 1975 to June 1976, Fürüzan undertook a research trip to the Ruhr Area to document the living and working conditions of Turkish coal miners. She travelled throughout the region, stayed in the workers' hostel in Lohberg and conducted long conversations with miners, which she recorded on cassette. In these interviews, the men speak of hard physical labour, mining accidents, wage injustice, fear and homesickness. The result was a powerful reportage that combines documentary precision with literary observation. The photographs on display show Fürüzan during a visit to the Lohberg colliery in Dinslaken: accompanied by the mining engineer and interpreter Yaşar Yardım, she descended 1,200 metres

underground in the mine cage. One miner told her that she was only the second woman ever to go down there; according to him, the first had been the wife of the German federal president. This immediate physical encounter makes clear how closely she exposed herself to the miners' experiences. This research led to the book *Yeni Konuklar*, which was published in Turkish in Istanbul in 1977. The German edition followed in 1985 under the title *Logis im Land der Reichen* (Lodging in the Land of the Rich), published by Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag.

Courtesy of the artist's estate.



Abuzer Güler

b. 1950, TR, based in Berlin

↓ *Sehnsucht I (Longing I)*, 1983 © Abuzer Güler.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Sehnsucht I (Longing I), 1983

Oil on nettle cloth
140 × 120 cm

Abuzer Güler came to Berlin from eastern Anatolia in 1971, at the age of 21. Although he had wanted to study art from an early age, it was only in Germany that he was able to pursue this ambition. After years of precarious work in Kreuzberg and on building sites, he studied at the Hochschule der Künste from 1974 to 1979. The four works shown here, made between 1979 and 1984, are not documentary images of migration but rather inner images of memory, the body and grief. *In the Field* renders the bodies of working women in a rural setting with a sense of weight and concentration. In *The Women*, landscape and female bodies almost merge into one another. In *Longing I*, a male figure stands between urban constriction and an expanse that evokes Anatolia. As in *Three*

Women, the urban moment here is implied rather than clearly defined. Origin and arrival meet within the pictorial space – migration emerges as an experience that shapes emotions, the body and life itself.

In the Field, *The Women* and *Three Women* are on view in Thomaskirche – Hava Güleç Living Room.

Courtesy of the artist.



Nejla Gür

b. 1952, TR, based in Braunschweig

Altı üstü bir elma yedik (Wir haben doch nur einen Apfel gegessen)[But We Only Ate an Apple], 1986

Acrylic and charcoal on packing board
93 × 130 cm

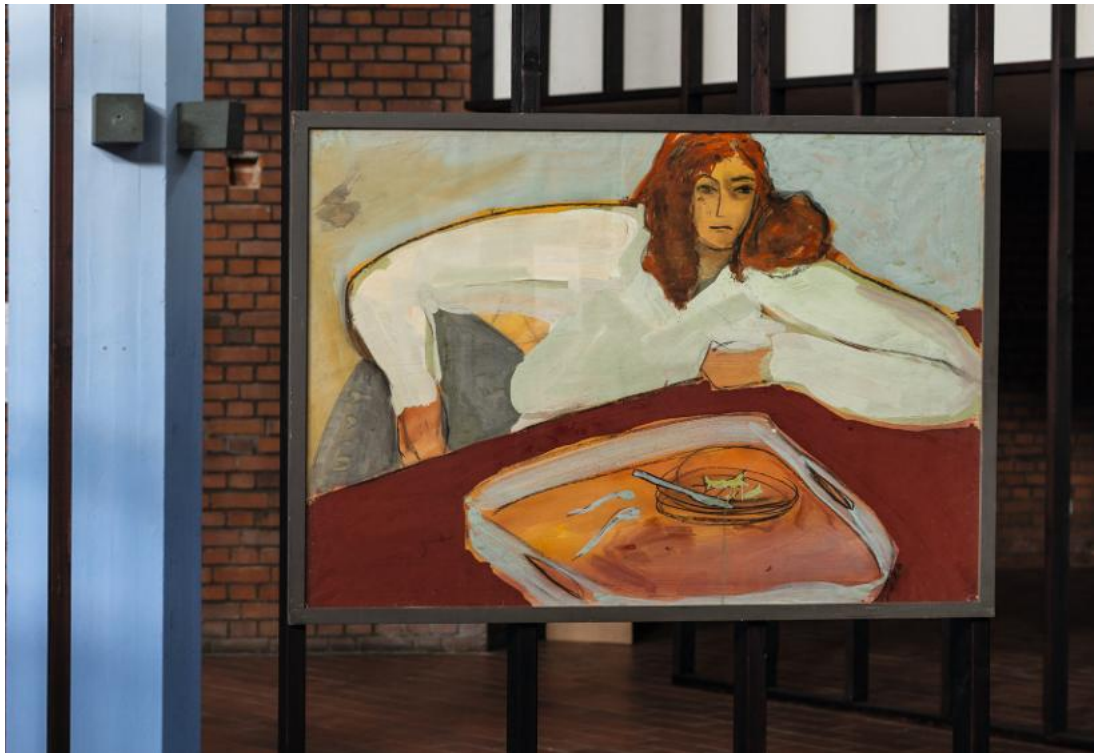
Yalnızlık (Einsamkeit)[Loneliness], 1986
Acrylic and charcoal on packing board
100 × 150 cm

Nejla Gür came to Germany from Türkiye in 1971 as a “guest worker” and initially worked for eight years on the assembly line at Blaupunkt in Hildesheim before studying at the Braunschweig University of Art. At the centre of her painting and drawing are social postures and gestures, particularly those of women in migration. She draws her imagery from everyday life: from Turkish-language magazines, private

↓ *Altı üstü bir elma yedik (But We Only Ate an Apple), 1986* © Nejla Gür.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

photographs and visual impressions gathered during her travels. What interests her is not portraiture in a conventional sense, but a figure’s attitude – how a woman sits, works, eats, ties her headscarf or listens to the radio. The face increasingly recedes; what remains decisive is the body language. In Gür’s work, the woman with a headscarf is not a symbol of religiousness but rather a self-determined figure asserting her own space. With reduced lines and dynamic fields of colour, she condenses everyday life, memory and experience into images of poetic precision and social critique – without reducing her subjects to exotic stereotypes and without distancing herself from them.

Courtesy of the artist and Gudrun Erchinger.



Judith Hopf

b. 1969, DE, based in Berlin

LESS (starting), 2026

Brick, cement
102 × 96 × 40 cm

Judith Hopf works with sculpture, drawing and short film. Her works speak of things that shape us in our everyday lives and react to what could be called a contemporary *conditio humana*. They repeatedly refer to the impact of developments in communications media, the economy and society on our condition. The work *LESS* shows a snail that was cut out of a block of perforated bricks. Thanks to their relative ease of handling during construction, perforated bricks are often used to build “informal” structures like garages, sheds or garden sheds. *LESS* considers the various technical, social and practical functions of this material. As “clay bodies of societies,” the artist claims, they “create spaces, organise relationships

↓ *LESS (starting), 2026* © Judith Hopf.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

and store relational knowledge.” The brick snail represents not only slowness, but it also calls for a new perspective on the animal itself: although snails are often treated as a garden pest, their natural role is actually to counteract all forms of monoculture. In this way, the work makes a quiet yet radical statement – that slowness and diversity might transform the way we think about progress and growth.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Merve Kaplan

b. 1997, DE, based in Freiburg

↓ → *Yoldaş*, 2025 © Merve Kaplan.
→ → Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Yoldaş, 2025

Mixed media, found objects

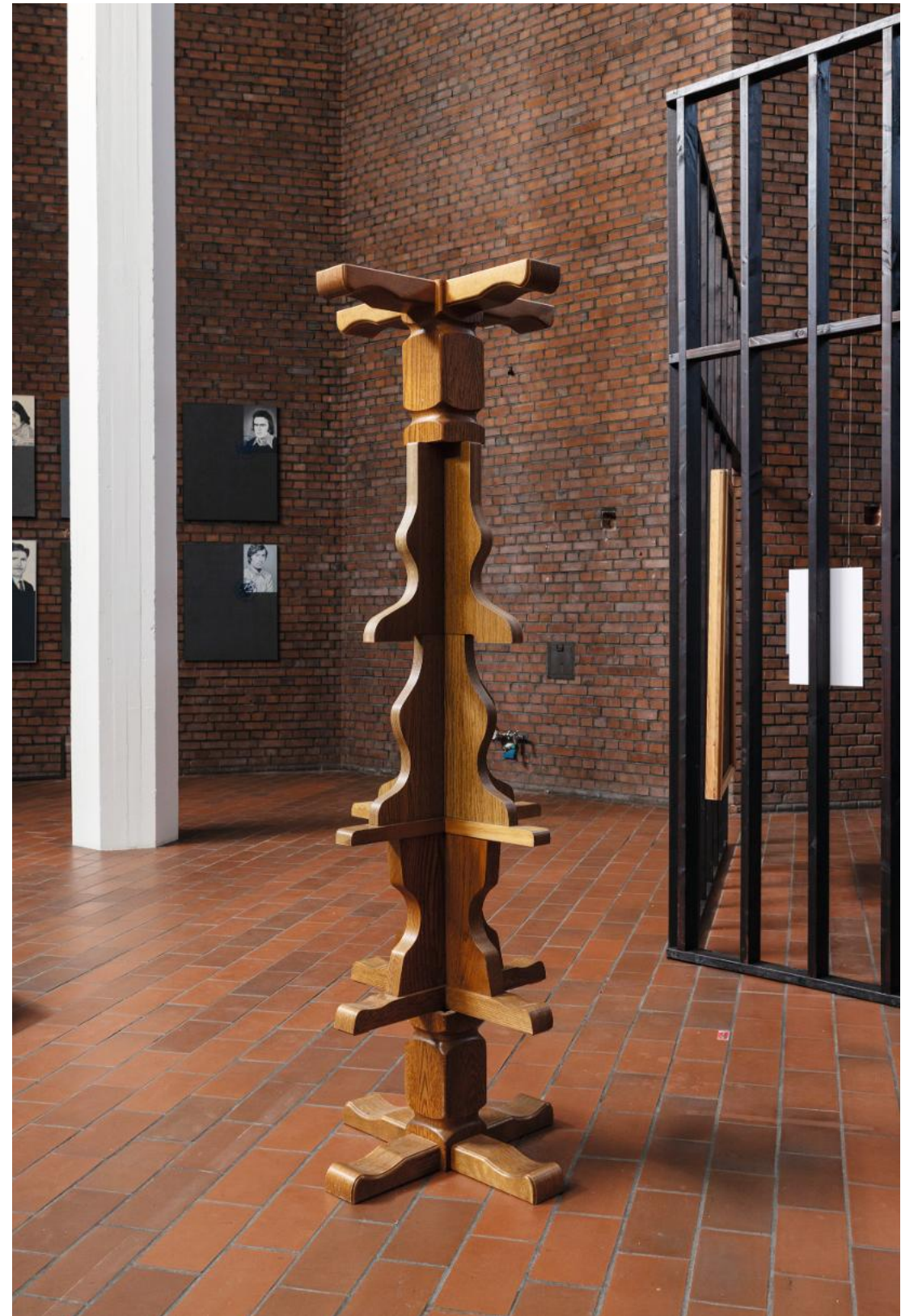
Yoldaş, translated from Turkish as “companion” or “fellow traveller,” explores a sense of in-betweenness shaped by migration, memory and the search for belonging. The installation engages with a liminal state between home, arrival and return, informed by the history of “guest workers.” Migration appears not as a fixed event but as an ongoing condition marked by delay and uncertainty in which time feels suspended. Through its spatial composition, the installation creates a transitional environment in which objects act as carriers of memory. Their surfaces bear traces of use, functioning like a diary of lived moments and shared histories, while remaining open to multiple interpretations. Tiled tables, common in both German and migrant households,

serve as centres of gathering, embodying stability alongside layered cultural meanings. *Yoldaş* gives form to the emotional and spatial dimensions of being in-between, highlighting community and encounter while leaving questions of home and arrival unresolved.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of SAHA.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Julia Logothetis

b. 1945, AT, based in Vienna

Kurdischer (ehemals „Türkischer“) Gastarbeiter in Wien (Kurdish (Formerly “Turkish”) Guest Worker in Vienna), 1977–79

Oil on canvas
90 × 75 cm

At Manifesta 16 Ruhr, two works from a painting cycle created by Julia Logothetis between 1976 and 1979 are on view: *Kurdish (formerly “Turkish”) Guest Worker in Vienna* and *Mother*. The cycle was prompted by her encounter with Turan Akar, a Kurdish worker from eastern Türkiye employed at a cable factory in Vienna near the Philadelphiabrücke. Akar showed the artist images from his photo album: the harvest and a wedding in his place of origin, everyday life in a Viennese apartment and work in the factory. On this basis, Logothetis developed a body of work that is among the few artistic projects in Austria to address the lived reality of “guest workers” from a politically reflective and artistically

↓ *Kurdischer (ehemals “Türkischer”) Gastarbeiter in Wien (Kurdish (Formerly “Turkish”) Guest Worker in Vienna), 1977–79 © Julia Logothetis.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev*

distinct perspective. An important reference for Logothetis was John Berger and Jean Mohr’s book *A Seventh Man*, published in 1975, which examines labour migration in Europe through photographs, essays and testimonies. Logothetis’ paintings share a similar aesthetic and political concern: how to make dignity visible without speaking for those depicted.

Mother is on view in Thomaskirche – Hava Güleç Living Room.

Courtesy of the artist and Belvedere Museum, Vienna.



Justin Lieberman

b. 1977, US, based in Munich

An Engine, 2026

Glazed ceramic
100 × 80 × 120 cm

In Justin Lieberman’s multidisciplinary practice, which encompasses collage, assemblage, ceramics, painting and moving image, the turtle shell has evolved into a form to explore questions of protection, surface and transformation. Clay and glaze lend the shells weight, character and an almost archaeological presence. They appear as reservoirs of time: slow, squat and resistant. The recurrence of the turtle throughout Lieberman’s oeuvre lends this group a quiet consistency. It becomes a way of thinking about a world in which protection always comes at the cost of isolation, and visibility always requires concealment. These ceramic shells are not depictions of nature, but rather objects in which psychic states, cultural projections and material processes overlap. This is precisely why they possess the peculiar precision with which Lieberman transforms the seemingly incidental into a complex fabric of meaning, humour and unease.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ *An Engine, 2026 © Justin Lieberman.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham*



Mihály Moldvay

1938–2024, SRB

Untitled, 1980

Five b/w photographs
9 × 13 cm each

Born in Belgrade and raised in Kikinda in the Vojvodina, Mihály Moldvay (1938–2024) came from a Hungarian minority family in what was then Yugoslavia. In 1962, he moved to the Federal Republic of Germany as a migrant worker. Living under precarious conditions, Moldvay initially worked in workshops and on construction sites before beginning to study mechanical engineering in Hamburg, which he was forced to abandon for financial reasons. He then enrolled in a photography school. From 1969 onward, Moldvay worked for more than three decades with the magazine *stern*. His photographs are particularly significant because they make key experiences of “guest work” in West Germany visible from the perspective of a former migrant worker. Moldvay also documented the protests of Greek

↓ *Untitled*, 1980 © Mihály Moldvay.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

parents in Wuppertal in the early 1980s. When the preparatory classes for the children of migrant workers were to be abolished, many families feared educational disadvantage as well as the loss of their language and cultural continuity. Demonstrations, a march to the town hall and finally a hunger strike in the Greek Orthodox church made this conflict publicly visible. The protest ultimately led to a special educational policy arrangement: in 1981, a Greek primary school and a Greek secondary school were founded, followed by the lyceum in 1984. Moldvay's photographs offer a striking record of this struggle for education, self-assertion and participation.

Courtesy of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.

Jannis Psychopedis

b. 1945, GR, based in Athens

Vicks, 1968

Oil on canvas
20 × 30 cm

Jannis Psychopedis' artistic language consciously positions itself against the traditions of painting. *Rotes Radio* (Red Radio, on view at St. Anna – Hatay Engin Music Hall) and *Vicks* belong to a series of anti-still lifes: instead of flowers or fruit, Psychopedis chose everyday objects from his immediate surroundings – a red radio, a packet of medication. The objects retain their real dimensions; nothing is glorified or elevated. What emerges is a cool, precise view of a reality that is anything but romantic. These works were created in Greece in the late 1960s, shortly before and after the military coup of 1967. The radio does not merely appear as an object in space; it becomes a sign of disrupted communication, a symbol of a suppressed public sphere. The medication, in turn, appears as a metaphor for those bodies scarred by

↓ *Vicks*, 1968 © Jannis Psychopedis.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

the dictatorship and at the same time for the precarious search for healing. In 1971, Psychopedis left Greece on a DAAD scholarship and moved to Munich, where encounters with Greek “guest workers” – who had left under similar pressures of economic hardship and dictatorship – resonated with his own experience of migration, uprooting and continued attachment to home, all of which shaped his artistic perspective.

Courtesy of the artist.



Metin Talayman

1939–1999, TR

Untitled, 1974

Oil on canvas
70 × 90 cm

Courtesy of İreb Talayman Eryüksel.

The Dead Without Graves, 1975

Oil on canvas
100 × 120 cm

Courtesy of İreb Talayman Eryüksel.

Ein Arbeiter (A Worker), 1981

Oil on canvas
80 × 60 cm

Courtesy of İreb Talayman Eryüksel.

Unterirdische Notizen / Sechste Nacht (*Altıncı Gece*) (*Underground Notes /* *Sixth Night*), 1984

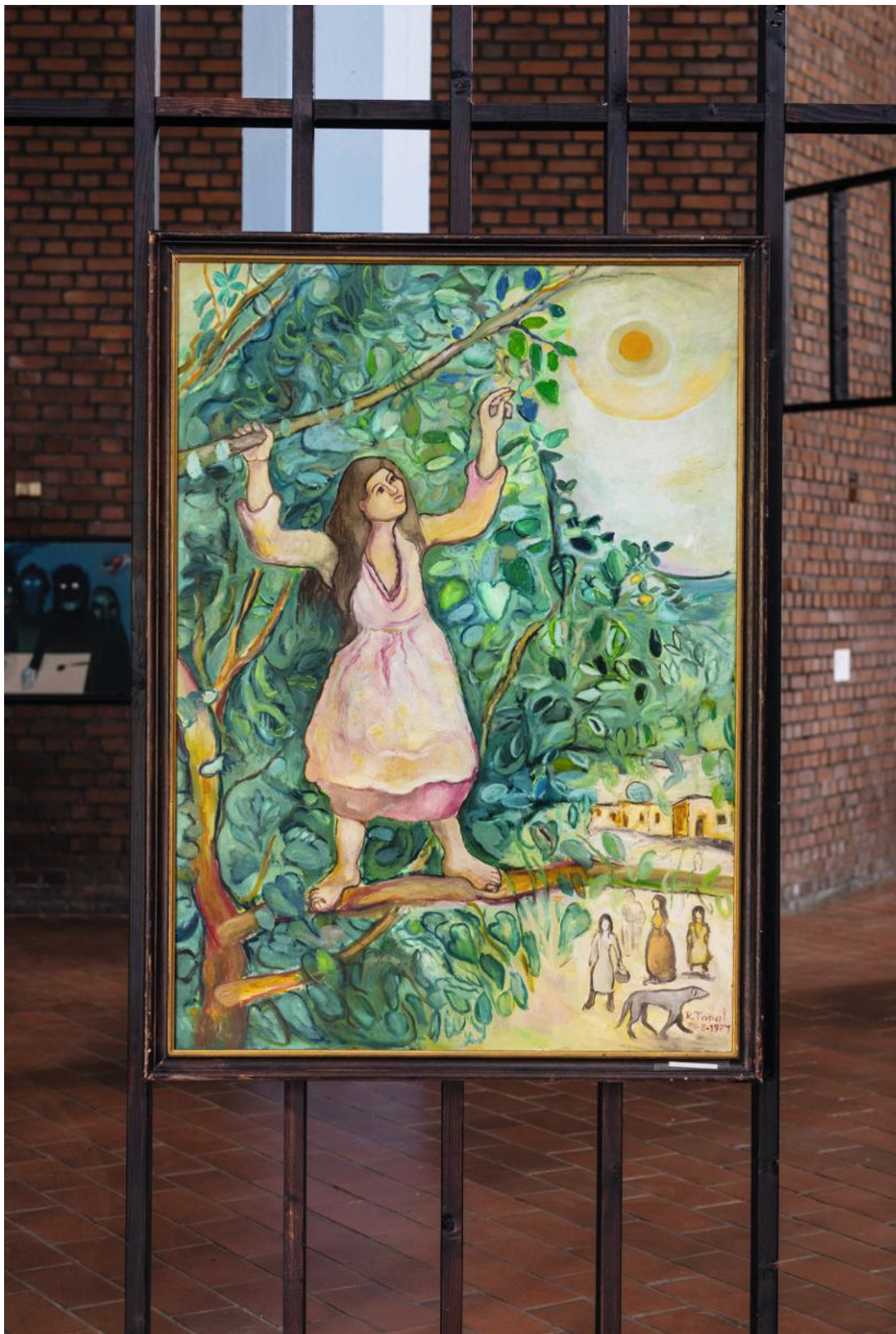
Oil on canvas
70 × 90 cm

Courtesy of Ünal Göğüş.

→ *The Dead Without Graves*, 1975
Untitled, 1974
© Metin Talayman.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Through expressively grotesque forms and psychologically charged colour, Metin Talayman addresses pain, alienation and social indifference – without relinquishing formal discipline. *The Dead Without Graves* and the related painting *Untitled* develop a dark visual vocabulary in which the undead appear not merely as figures of horror, but as political ciphers. The bodies pressing toward a table evoke the negotiating table as a site of participation and the dining table as a space of social belonging. Even the dead seem here to insist on their place, their meal, their voice. The oppressive atmosphere of these works can be read against the backdrop of an era saturated with images of violence: the Vietnam War and its mass-media circulation confronted the public with images of the wounded and the dead to an unprecedented degree. At the same time, the 1973 oil crisis marked a political turning point after which the recruitment stop in West Germany intensified debates on migration, belonging and exclusion. Talayman's work is closely linked to the history of labour migration from Türkiye to Germany. He depicted the experience of estrangement, the absence of language, but also the dignity of everyday life. The series *Underground Notes* is dedicated, among others, to miners from Türkiye in the Ruhr region. Works such as *Sixth Night* appear as part of an episodic cycle – visual chapters of a collective experience.





Rıza Topal

1934–2025, TR

← *Maulbeeresserin (Mulberry Eater)*, 1977
© Rıza Topal.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Maulbeeresserin (Mulberry Eater), 1977

Oil on canvas
140 × 100 cm

Courtesy of the artist's estate.

Mädchen mit Blättern (Girl with Leaves), 1970

Oil on canvas
115 × 80 cm

Courtesy of the artist's estate

A young woman in a light-coloured dress stands barefoot on a branch, holding on to another branch with one hand while reaching for fruit with the other. Surrounded by dense green foliage, she appears radiant. The vividly coloured painting *Mulberry Eater* was created three years after Rıza Topal graduated as an independent artist from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, where he had studied with Rudi Tröger since 1969. Topal had already taken up a similar motif seven years prior in the painting *Girl with Leaves*: a female figure amid foliage, interwoven with nature, memory and harvest. The work reveals how deeply the imagery of his place of origin shaped his work from the outset, gradually developing over the years into a luminous and condensed visual language. Many of Topal's works are inspired by everyday life in the Kurdish regions of Türkiye: in the village of Hülüman, now renamed Doğucak, where he grew up, as well as in the province of Hakkâri, where he voluntarily asked to be assigned as a teacher in 1961. Topal was not only a painter but also a poet, writing poems in Kurmancî. The fact that he did so at a time when Kurdish languages were banned in Türkiye points to the political dimension of his practice. The state's assimilationist policies extended into the context of migration to Germany: many Kurds arrived under conditions in which their language and identity were suppressed or rendered invisible. In Germany, too, they were often confronted with further forms of exclusion – both from the majority society and, in some cases, within migrant communities.

Yıldız Tüzün

1932–2021, TR

Untitled, 1993

Metal, used coffee filters partially dyed with textile paint

46 × 39 × 17 cm

Untitled is exemplary of Yıldız Tüzün's use of seemingly humble everyday materials. The work begins with used coffee filters, which she collects, dries and preserves in a bath of paraffin and stearin. Through this process, an ephemeral disposable object is transformed into a durable sculptural material. The work brings together two symmetrically arranged metal casings densely filled with used filters, some tinted blue-violet. In the tension between polished metal and fragile paper structure, permanence and transience, industrial form and organic trace, order and use enter into a quiet dialogue. At the same time, coffee is a historically and culturally charged material. From East Africa and Yemen, the drink spread through the cities of the Ottoman Empire from the late 15th and 16th centuries onward; with it emerged new forms of sociability, conversation and public culture. Later, coffee became a global commodity closely tied to European trade, colonial expansion and plantation economies; in parts of the Americas, its cultivation depended on enslaved labour. In Tüzün's work, the filters therefore carry not only traces of domestic use, but also memories of migration, exchange, labour and the violent history of a globally circulating everyday commodity.

Courtesy of Kerem Kayi.

→ *Untitled*, 1993 © Yıldız Tüzün.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Nil Yalter

b. 1938, EG, based in Paris

La sexisme dans la cuisine turque ou la volupté culinaire d'un empire (Le Prêtre S'est Évanoui), 1978

Photographs and text
125 × 42 cm (each)

Courtesy of the artist and GALERIST.

La sexisme dans la cuisine turque ou la volupté culinaire d'un empire (Les Cuisses de la Femelle), 1978

Photographs and text
125 × 42 cm (each)

Courtesy of the artist and GALERIST.

Nil Yalter's photographic panels intertwine image and text, each segment drawing its subtitle from the evocative names of traditional Turkish dishes: *Les Cuisses de la Femelle* (Hanım budu köfte / Lady's thighs) and *Le Prêtre S'est Évanoui* (İmam bayıldı / The imam fainted). These culinary names, charged with erotic and gendered connotations, reveal how the female body is encoded in Ottoman culinary language as an object of appetite and fantasy. While *Les Cuisses de la Femelle* incorporates the female body directly into the dish, *Le Prêtre S'est Évanoui* proposes an inverse relation: the feminine is present throughout, but never named – the unnamed cook, the hand that stuffs the aubergine, the excess oil and labour that overwhelm the imam, guardian of orthodoxy, causing him to swoon, poised equivocally between gustatory ecstasy and small death. By placing these phrases alongside photographic imagery, Yalter reveals what everyday language conceals: that cultural memory, domestic labour and desire are embedded in all aspects of daily life; in food, in naming and in preparation. The work reflects her ongoing effort to make visible the structures that shape embodiment, language and social imagination.

→ *La sexisme dans la cuisine turque
ou la volupté culinaire d'un empire
(Le Prêtre S'est Évanoui), 1978*
*La sexisme dans la cuisine turque
ou la volupté culinaire d'un empire
(Les Cuisses de la Femelle), 1978*
© Nil Yalter.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Hanefi Yeter

b. 1947, TR, based in Istanbul

→ *Wenn die Erde brennt (When the Earth Burns)*, 1984
© Hanefi Yeter.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Die betrübt Freiheit (Sorrowful Freedom), 1975

Oil on canvas
92 × 72 cm

Sorrowful Freedom depicts a picnic scene in a public garden in Berlin-Kreuzberg. Several figures sit or recline on an ornamentally patterned blanket. The pictorial space is markedly flattened; depth and central perspective give way to a dense, ornamental composition, reflecting Yeter's affinity for the Turkish-Islamic miniature tradition. Also inscribed into the picnic blanket in Turkish is the first stanza of Nâzım Hikmet's poem "Bir Hazin Hürriyet" (Sorrowful Freedom). Image and text combine to form a layered statement on community, migration and the fragility of freedom.

Courtesy of the artist and Kunstraum Kreuzberg/
Bethanien.

Wenn die Erde brennt (When the Earth Burns), 1984

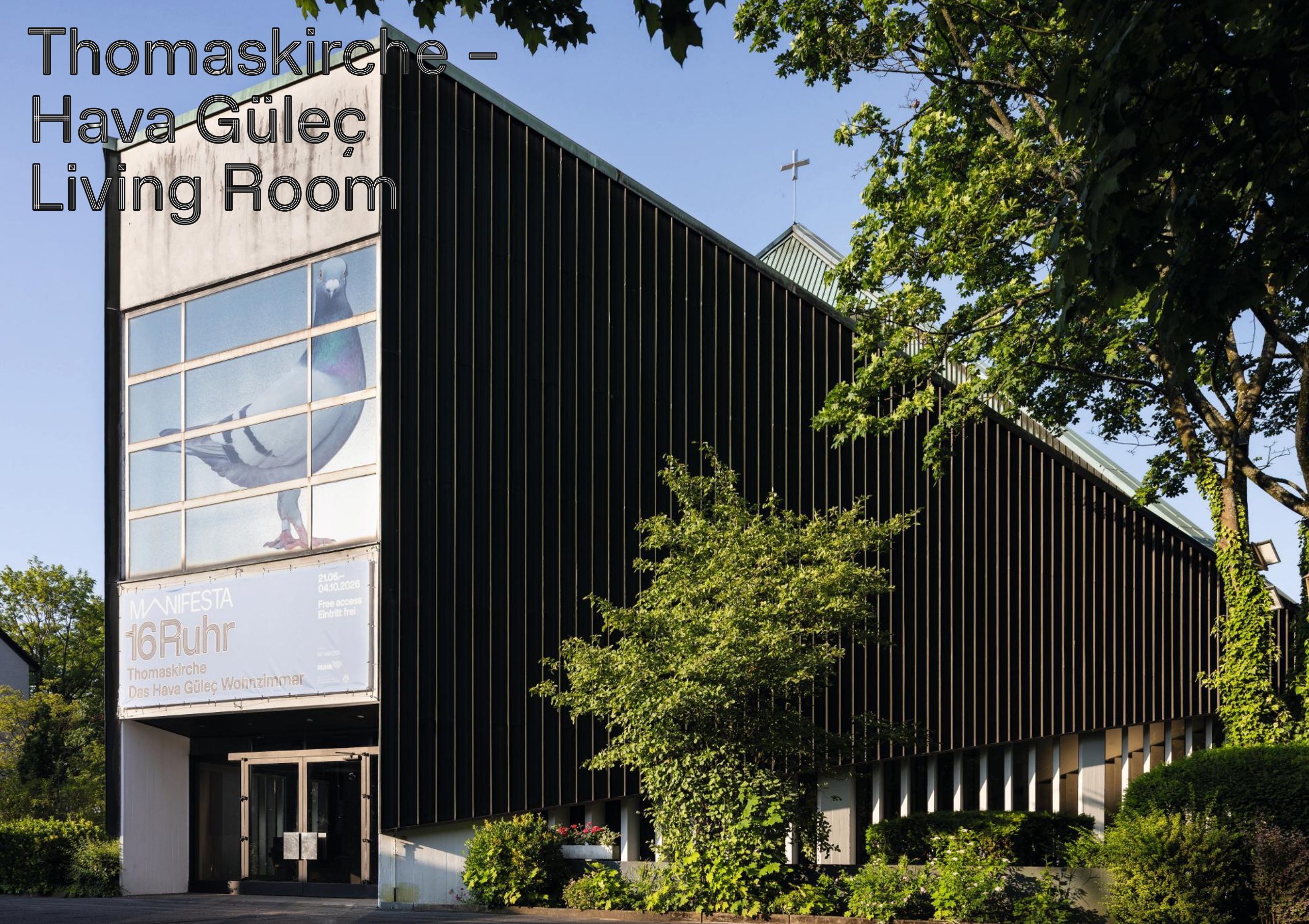
Oil on canvas
160 × 110 cm

In the early 1980s, labour migrants from Türkiye, Yugoslavia, Greece and other recruitment countries in West Germany increasingly began to organise themselves, starting urban environmental initiatives. The environmental movement at the time encompassed not only anti-nuclear protests, but also campaigns against pollution caused by industry and traffic, as well as struggles for a greater say in shaping residential environments. For many migrants, environmental protection primarily meant protecting their own living conditions: better housing, access to healthcare, green spaces, safe courtyards and less polluted streets. In *Wenn die Erde brennt*, Yeter condenses these concerns into a tense pictorial scene shaped by both nature and industrial density, in which protest, threat and ecological destruction collide directly.

Courtesy of the artist.



Thomaskirche - Hava Güleç Living Room





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
← Creative Mediator Gürsoy Doğtaş in
→ conversation with visitors.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

The women who came to the Federal Republic as labour migrants from the late 1950s onwards arrived from many countries – villages and capitals, ethnic and religious communities, social classes and educational backgrounds. They brought their own languages, histories, professions and knowledge. In the Federal Republic, they were met with a single term – “guest worker” – that collapsed this diversity into one economic function. Their precision and dexterity made them sought-after skilled labourers, yet they were consistently placed in the lowest wage groups. These women were also community builders, artists and artisans.

The Hava Güleç Living Room brings their works together with works from other artists, some of whom came to the Federal Republic alongside them and expressed solidarity with the “guest workers.” The focus on textile work opens a field where material, technology, memory and text are woven together, poetically and critically. The exhibition does not consider itself complete. Aware of its gaps, it remains open throughout its run to textile works by “guest workers” that have mostly been preserved in domestic settings. The living room is named after Hava Güleç (1941–2009), a piece-rate worker at Seppelfricke in Gelsenkirchen. Alongside wage labour, she organised everyday life, cared for the family, offered advice and healed in the neighbourhood. Her knowledge was a form of care that sustained the community without drawing attention to itself. Renaming former churches shifts both their function and what they represent: in place of sacred representation, a space of intimacy, care and togetherness – centring the private and the often invisible.

Presented by Creative Mediator: Gürsoy Doğtaş
Scenographers: Bureau LADA (Ema Dabrović, Lada Hršak, Katarina Pedišić)



Mehmet Aksoy

b. 1939, TR, based in Berlin

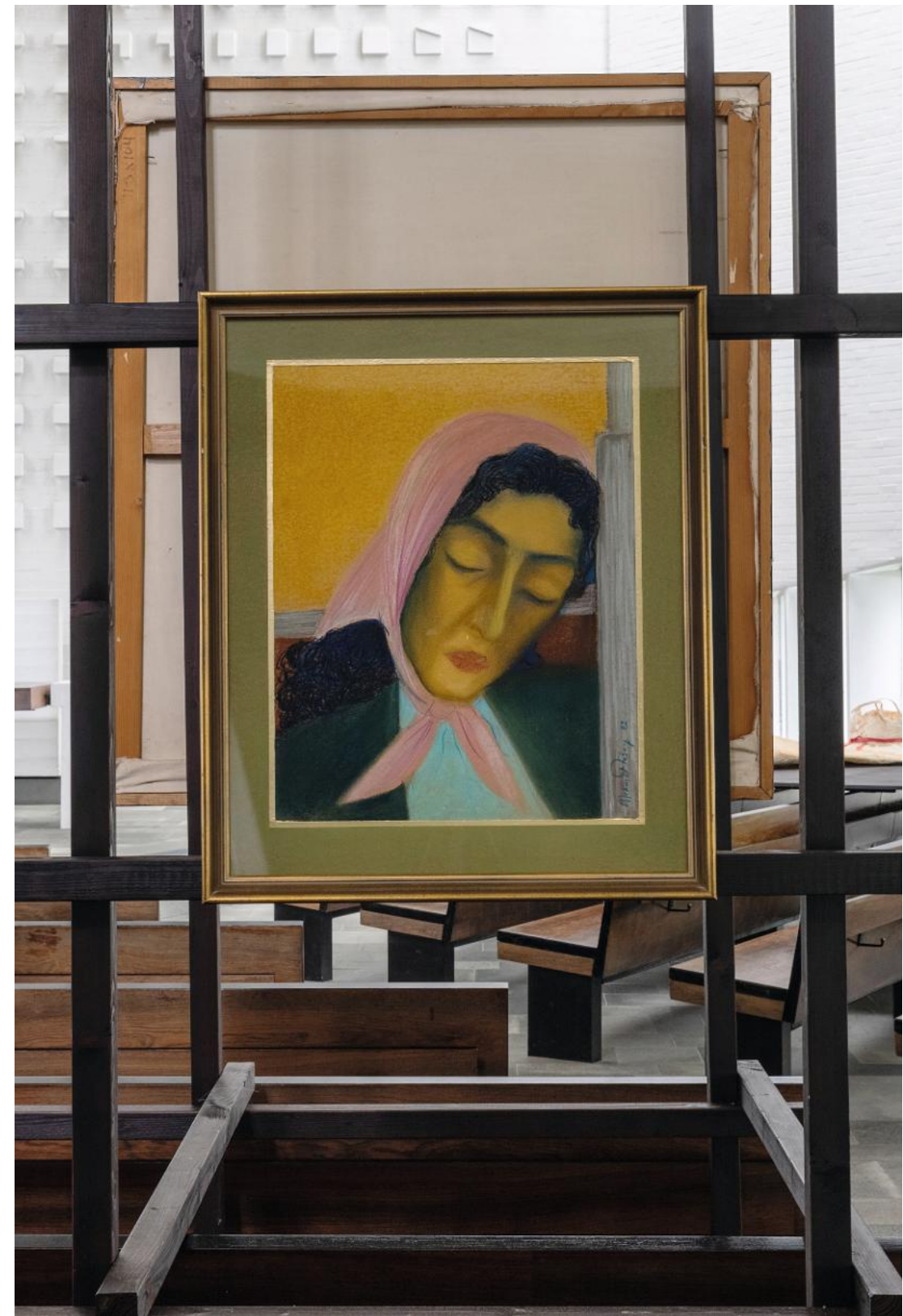
→ *U Bahn'da bir akort işçisi*
(*A Pieceworker in the Subway*), 1983
© Mehmet Aksoy.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

U Bahn'da bir akort işçisi (*A Pieceworker in the Subway*), 1983

Oil crayon on paper
48 × 43.5 cm

Mehmet Aksoy has lived in Berlin since the 1970s, initially on a state scholarship to study abroad and later as an independent artist. In 1972, he co-founded the Turkish Academics' and Artists' Association in Berlin. From 1978 to 1981, he returned to Istanbul to teach stone sculpture at the State Academy of Fine Arts, until the military junta censored and destroyed his works and he narrowly escaped arrest. Mehmet Aksoy understands art as a political practice and consciously positions himself on the side of the working class. In sculptures, reliefs and drawings, he explores their everyday life, their struggles and their desires. The condition of "guest workers" from Türkiye in the Federal Republic was one of his central subjects. A recurring motif in his work from this period, shared with other artists of the time, was quiet encounters on the U-Bahn. Exhausted figures sit on the benches after work, staring into the distance or turning inwards, everyone lost in their own world. In these condensed scenes of transit, a sense of alienation is palpable. The work shown here depicts an exhausted woman who has dozed off during the journey.

Courtesy of the artist and Thura Wallbaum-Aksoy.



Bettina Allamoda

b. 1964, DE/US, based in Berlin

Minaret / Ready-to-Wear, 2007/2026

PVC, metal

Height c. 320 / 340 cm

Bettina Allamoda's practice interprets surfaces as political archives. Her work connects the language of fashion with the grammar of modern architecture and the spatial logic of sculpture. For Allamoda, fashion is not merely decorative; it is a code system that produces belonging, distinction and "exoticism," making colonial fantasies, appropriations and exclusions visible. After the 11th of September 2001, while Western states waged war in Islamic countries and domestic debates about the veil escalated, the "Orient" functioned in Parisian haute couture as a design resource to be freely borrowed from, stripping symbols and forms of dress from their original cultural contexts. This was no mere aesthetic exercise, but an expression of a colonial gaze that treated the cultures of others as resources, with the communities in question having no say in how they were represented. The material of *Minaret / Ready-to-Wear* openly reveals its origins: Truck tarpaulin PVC symbolises freight transport, border crossing and commodity circulation. Allamoda has shaped the sculpture, which stands over three metres high, from this industrial material into a religious architectural symbol, making clear how the exploitation of labour and the appropriation of cultural signs go hand in hand.

Courtesy of the artist.

→ *Minaret / Ready-to-Wear, 2007/2026*
© Bettina Allamoda.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Bettina Allamoda





Atiye Altül

b. 1946, TR, based in Berlin

← *Geometrik Zikzak (Pembe-Beyaz) / Geometrisches Zickzack (Rosa-Weiß) [Geometric Zigzag (Pink-White)], 1977 © Atiye Altül.*
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Kravat / Die Krawatte (The Tie), 2016

Acrylic and watercolour on silk, steam-fixed
135 × 7 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Takunyalar / Holzpantinen (Wooden Clogs), 1974–1975

Pencil on paper, 33 × 22.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Tavuskuşu Deseni / Pfauenmuster (Peacock Pattern), 1977

Felt-tip pen on paper, 50.2 × 38.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Geometrik Dalga Deseni / Geometrisches Wellenmuster (Geometric Wave Pattern), 1977

Poster paint on paper, 30 × 30 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Geometrik Zikzak (Pembe-Beyaz) / Geometrisches Zickzack (Rosa-Weiß) (Geometric Zigzag (Pink-White)), 1977

Textile print on fabric, 126 × 81.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Zikzak (Mavi-Lila) / Zickzack (Blau-Lila) (Zigzag (Blue-Purple)), 1977

Textile print on fabric, 124 × 244 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

El / Die Hand (The Hand), 1981

Pencil on paper, 27 × 24.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Atiye Altül moves between the observation of nature and the exploration of inner experience. In acrylic, watercolour and silk, she develops a visual language for what cannot be expressed directly: landscapes, botanical forms, the surface of a river or the weight of a branch become carriers of anxiety, longing and acceptance. For Altül, painting is never mere representation, but a means of giving form to feelings, memories and unresolved relationships. She came to West Berlin in 1970 in the context of labour migration. After initially working in a factory, childcare and social work, she began studying textile design at the Hochschule der Künste in 1973, graduating in 1978. Her professional and political practice have remained closely intertwined throughout her life. Since 1983, Altül has organised silk and fabric painting courses for women of Turkish origin in Germany. Through this work, she has understood art not only as a form of personal expression, but also as a space for encounter, exchange and collective visibility.

Ayzit Bostan

b. 1968, TR, based in Munich

→ *Nazar Boncuk-Tuch (Nazar Boncuk Scarf)*, 2021
© Ayzit Bostan.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Nazar Boncuk-Tuch (*Nazar Boncuk Scarf*), 2021

Silk scarf
125 cm × 125 cm

Ayzit Bostan's silk scarf features the *Nazar Boncuğu* motif, a symbol whose meaning comes from many overlapping histories. Rather than having a single origin, it brings together millennia-old visual traditions of the protective eye and the still-powerful idea of the "evil eye" – the belief that visibility, envy and vulnerability can exert a real social force. Its form is also significant: The concentric blue and white circles refer to the traditional craft of mouth-blown glass, which was prevalent in western Anatolia before industrialisation. At once a protective sign, an everyday object and a globally circulating design motif, the *Nazar Boncuğu* contains religious, cultural and commercial layers of meaning simultaneously. This multiplicity is reflected in Bostan's working method, which shifts motifs, materials and contexts between fashion, objects and space. Her visual language is precise, minimalist and sensual; familiar symbols are not used illustratively but rather are translated into new combinations. In the silk scarf, the *Nazar Boncuğu* moves from amulet to textile and from protective symbol to image-bearing surface – demonstrating how a familiar motif can take on a new poetic and social resonance through its material, context and design. A smaller-scale edition of the work, printed on silk, is available for purchase on the artist's website.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of BMW Group.





Fatma Ceylan

b. 1963, TR, based in Cologne

← *Untitled, n.d.*, © Fatma Ceylan.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Untitled, n.d.

Ensemble of numerous textile works
Crochet, knitting and embroidery in cotton, wool
and synthetic fibre, some with glass beads

Lace and braid making are particularly wide-spread in Anatolia and have a long history, the origins of which cannot be clearly determined. Oya is one of the most delicate techniques in this exhibition. The term encompasses different varieties of fine lace and edging work – with needle, crochet hook, shuttle or hairpin – which are used to hem headscarves, shawls and tablecloths. The knowledge is passed on hand to hand: Grandmothers and mothers show daughters and granddaughters their first knots and explain which motif suits which occasion. Fatma Ceylan is a master of this technique. She learned as a child and continued when she came to Cologne in 1986. On the 22nd of December 1992 – several weeks after the Mölln arson attack – she and her family were victims of a racist parcel bomb attack in Cologne. Although the package contained a card with a racist message, the investigation focused on their family circle and was dismissed after six weeks. In the years that followed, handicraft was a space that kept her hands moving when everything else stood still. She remained silent for three decades; since 2023, she has been telling her story publicly and calling for accountability through the Herkesin Meydanı initiative.

Courtesy of the artist.

Yıldırım Denizli

b. 1946, TR, based in Ratingen

→ *Untitled*, 2026 © Yıldırım Denizli.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Meine Mutter (My Mother), 1963

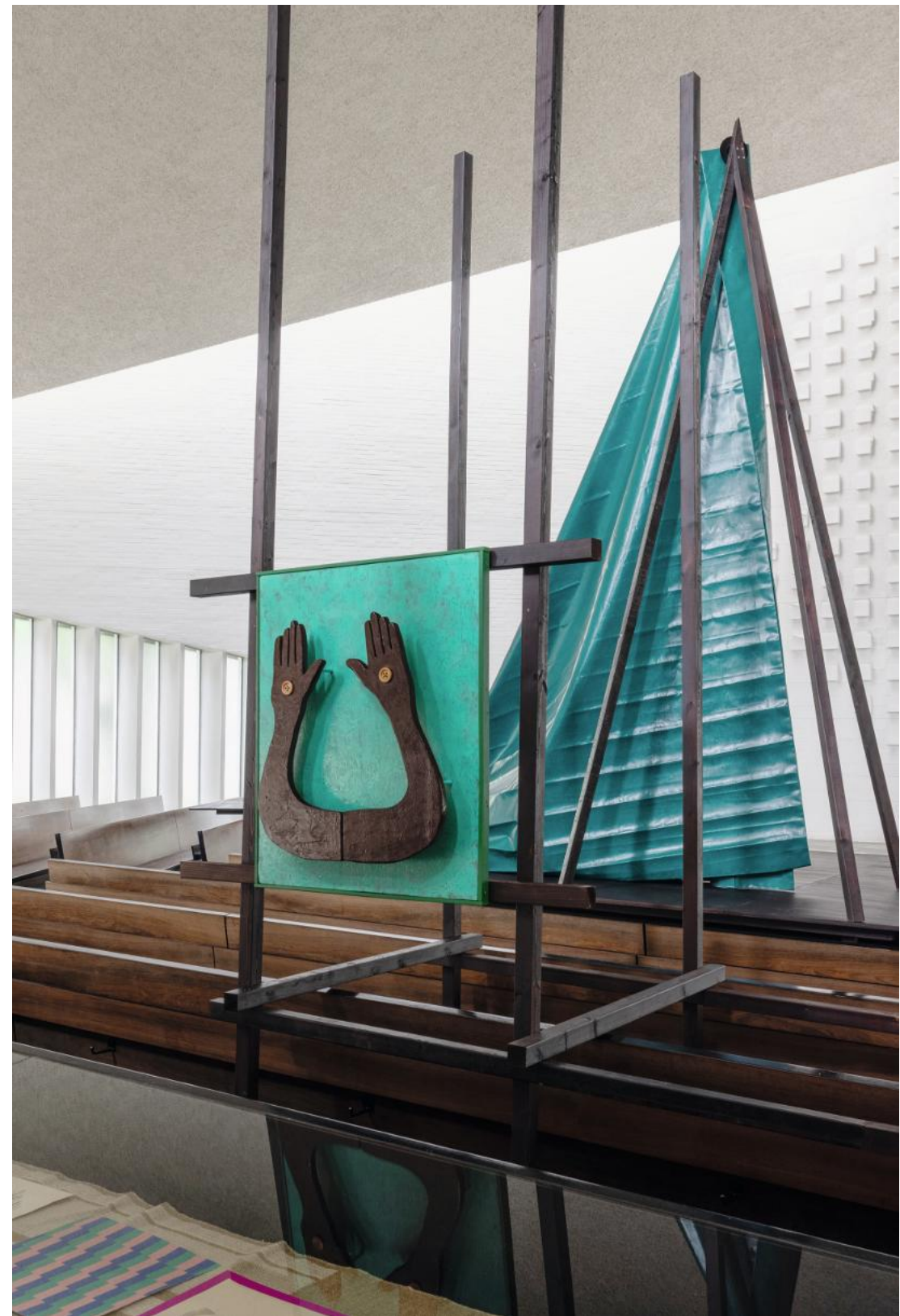
Graphite drawing
23 × 14.5 cm

Untitled, 2026

Wood, paint, knobs, copper wire
75 × 63 cm

Yıldırım Denizli works without a fixed programme. What matters more to him than the finished artwork is the vitality of the process itself. In dialogue with wood, metal, stone, language and music, he resists the expectations of the art world. Works emerge through play, movement and experimentation: Materials are shifted, combined and tested. This is also how *Untitled*, with its hands and buttons, found its form. For Denizli, play is not something secondary, but a form of attentiveness and resistance. It preserves openness to chance, resists fixed definitions and asserts vitality against constraint, routine and the pressures of time. Long before Denizli worked with wood, metal or found objects, he drew constantly: in the street, in cafés, in everyday life. The drawing *My Mother* returns to this beginning. It was not made as a formal portrait, but arose from a quiet moment – as an observation of his sleeping mother. Its intensity lies precisely in this immediacy. The drawing captures not an extraordinary moment, but the tenderness of the ordinary.

Courtesy of the artist.





Hava Güleç

1941–2009, TR

Untitled (dough scraper), early 1960s

Hand-forged metal
21 cm

Untitled (brush), 1960s

fabric and wood
28 cm

A hand-forged dough scraper, a handmade brush – Hava Güleç brought these things with her when she came to Germany. Unassuming tools that carry a different narrative than that of the Wirtschaftswunder (economic miracle): work that goes uncounted, knowledge that goes unspoken. In 1966, Güleç and her two children followed her husband to the Ruhr Area. He had been working underground for years. A third child was born in Gelsenkirchen. Their first home: a barracks settlement near the coal mine. Several years later, she began working at Seppelfricke. Piecework on the assembly line: assembling electric ovens, one by one. Güleç produced the promise of modern life, while she herself cooked on a coal oven – with her husband's coal. Progress was real, but unequally shared. In addition to wage labour, Güleç organised everyday life, cared for the family, offered advice, healed. Her knowledge is a form of care that sustained the community without ever becoming visible. The hand-forged dough scraper tells of this double work – the paid and the invisible – and a story of emancipation: as a woman, a worker, a bearer of knowledge that no system recognises.

Courtesy of Ayşe Güleç.

← *Untitled (dough scraper and brush), 1960s*
© Hava Güleç.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Recipe for *Bazlama*

Ingredients:

4½ cups (540 g) flour
1 tbsp (7 g) dried yeast
1 tsp (5 g) salt
1 tsp (5 g) sugar
¾ cup (200 ml) warm water
1 cup (240 ml) warm milk
2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil

Method:

1. In a bowl, combine the water, a pinch of sugar and a little of the dried yeast. Leave to stand until the yeast mixture is activated (it will foam slightly after about 5–10 minutes).
2. In a large bowl, mix the flour and salt. Make a well in the centre and add the yeast mixture, milk and olive oil.
3. Knead the dough by hand on a floured surface until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes). If the dough is too sticky, add a little more flour.
4. Return the dough to the bowl and cover with a damp cloth. Leave to rest until it has roughly doubled in size (about one hour).
5. Divide the dough into six equal portions and shape each into a ball.
6. Cover the dough balls with a cloth and leave to rest for about 30–40 minutes. After resting, roll out each ball with a rolling pin (about 15–20 cm in diameter), then cover and rest for a further 20–30 minutes.
7. Heat a non-stick pan over medium heat. Cook each flatbread (without oil) on both sides until the breads puff up and develop golden-brown spots.

Abuzer Güler

b. 1950, TR, based in Berlin

- *Drei Frauen (Three Women)*, 1984
 - *Die Frauen (The Women)*, 1984
 - *Auf dem Feld (In the Field)*, 1979
- © Abuzer Güler.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Auf dem Feld (In the Field), 1979

Oil on canvas
100 × 125 cm

Drei Frauen (Three Women), 1984

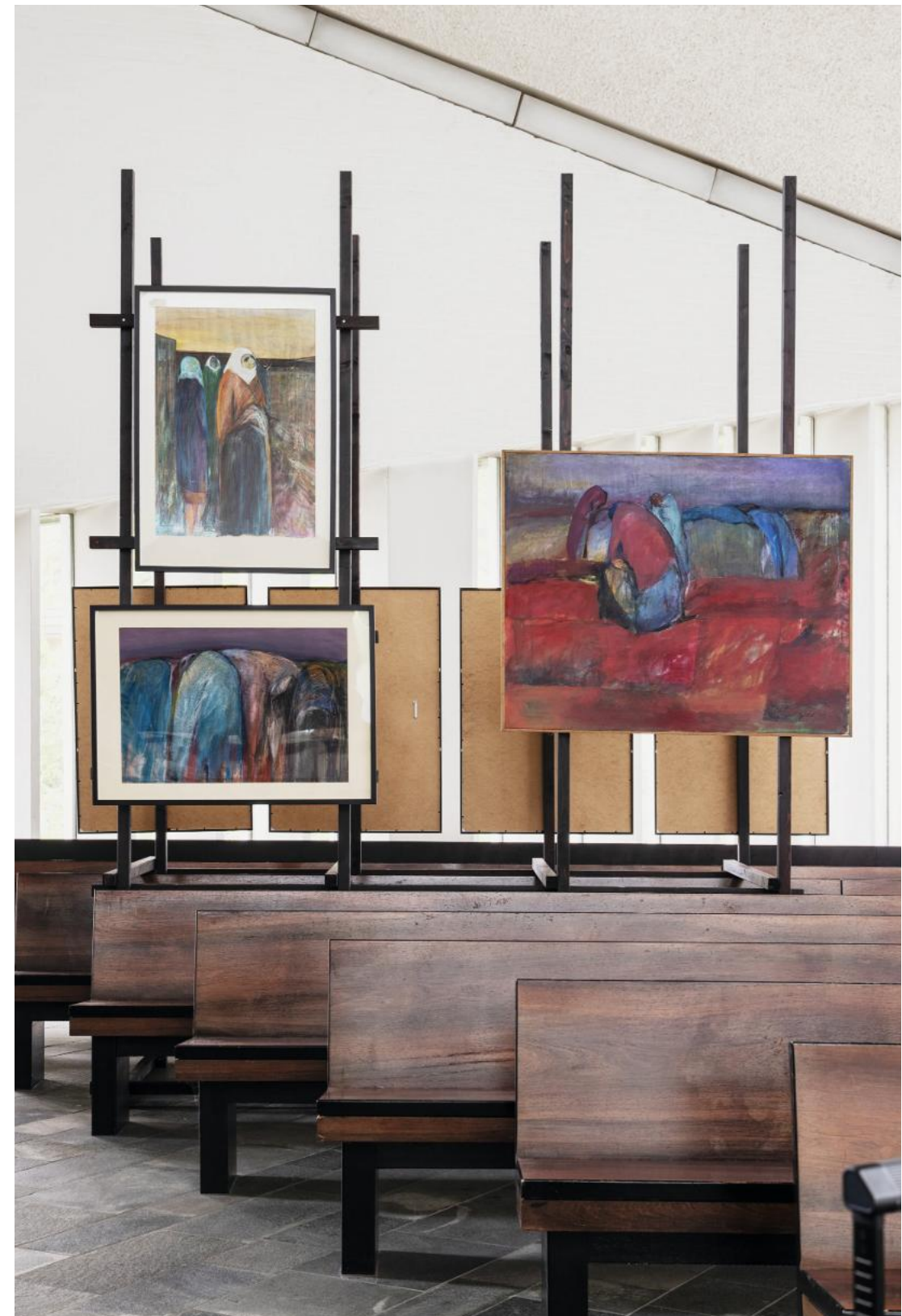
Mixed media on paper
100 × 70 cm

Die Frauen (The Women), 1984

Mixed media on paper
100 × 70 cm

Abuzer Güler came to Berlin from eastern Anatolia in 1971, at the age of 21. Although he had wanted to study art from an early age, it was only in Germany that he was able to pursue this ambition. After years of precarious work in Kreuzberg and on building sites, he studied at the Hochschule der Künste from 1974 to 1979. The four works shown here, made between 1979 and 1984, are not documentary images of migration but rather inner images of memory, the body and grief. *In the Field* renders the bodies of working women in a rural setting with a sense of weight and concentration. In *The Women*, landscape and female bodies almost merge into one another. In *Longing I* (on view in St. Bonifatius – Ferdane Satır Tea Garden), a male figure stands between urban constriction and an expanse that evokes Anatolia. As in *Three Women*, the urban moment here is implied rather than clearly defined. Origin and arrival meet within the pictorial space – migration emerges as an experience that shapes emotions, the body and life itself.

Courtesy of the artist.





Mehmet Güler

b. 1944, TR, based in Kassel

← Selection of woodcuts by Mehmet Güler.
© Mehmet Güler.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Dorn (Thorn), 1970

Woodcut
40 × 29 cm

Spinnerin (The Spinner), 1970

Woodcut
42 × 18 cm

Mutter und Mutter (Mother and Mother), 1974

Woodcut
25 × 25 cm

Müdigkeit (Weariness), 1970

Woodcut
25 × 25 cm

Männer und Frauen auf dem Feld (Men and Women in the Field), 1972

Woodcut
42 × 8 cm

Gespräch in der Sonne (Conversation in the Sun), 1985

Woodcut
60 × 46 cm

Aufregung (Agitation), 1985

Woodcut
73.5 × 49 cm

Hoffnung vom Meer (Hope from the Sea), 1969

Woodcut
46 × 25 cm

Warten auf dich (Waiting for You), 1993

Woodcut
65 × 55 cm

Erste Begegnung (First Encounter), 1993

Woodcut
76 × 59 cm

Es ist heiß (It Is Hot), 1978

Etching
33.5 × 33.5 cm

Der Verbrannte (The Burnt Man), 1980

Etching
34.5 × 24.5 cm

Die sind für uns (These Are for Us), 1980

Etching
34.5 × 24.5 cm

All works: Courtesy of the artist.

Mehmet Güler began working in woodcut in 1969. Lacking access to a printing press, he would rub the prints by hand using a carved wooden block. This physical, improvised method of production lends the works an immediate, almost tactile presence. Güler draws his motifs from lived experience: observations of fishermen, peasant women and shepherds, as well as memories of village life in Eastern Anatolia. Scenes of physical labour are interwoven with moments of exhaustion and pause. Formally, the woodcuts are almost

entirely rendered in stark black and white. This reduction corresponds to the harsh living conditions of the figures depicted. Their intensity arises from the interplay between dense black surfaces and the dynamic movement of the wood grain, which becomes landscape, clothing or skin. Produced over more than fifteen years – first in Türkiye, then from 1985 in Kassel – the works were brought together that same year under the title *Through the Scorching Heat*, a concise evocation of the Anatolian condition that permeates them.

Nejla Gür

b. 1952, TR, based in Braunschweig

Başını Bağlamak, 1986

Acrylic, coal on packaging paper
150 × 102 cm

Nejla Gür came to Germany from Türkiye in 1971 as a “guest worker” and initially worked for eight years on the assembly line at Blaupunkt in Hildesheim before studying at the Braunschweig University of Art. At the centre of her painting and drawing are social postures and gestures, particularly those of women in migration. She draws her imagery from everyday life: from Turkish-language magazines, private photographs and visual impressions gathered during her travels. What interests her is not portraiture in a conventional sense, but a figure’s attitude – how a woman sits, works, eats, ties her headscarf or listens to the radio. The face increasingly recedes; what remains decisive is the body language. In Gür’s work, the woman with a headscarf is not a symbol of religiousness but rather a self-determined figure asserting her own space. With reduced lines and dynamic fields of colour, she condenses everyday life, memory and experience into images of poetic precision and social critique – without reducing her subjects to exotic stereotypes and without distancing herself from them.

Courtesy of the artist and Claudia Roppel.

→ *Başını Bağlamak*, 1986 © Nejla Gür.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Muhlis Kenter

b. 1952, TR, based in Bremen

Näherinnen in Akkordarbeit (Seamstresses Working on a Piece-rate Basis), 1979

Pigment print on Hahnemühle paper,
exhibition copy
20 × 30 cm

Näherinnen in der Berufsbekleidungs- fabrik (Seamstresses at the Workwear Factory), 1979

Pigment print on Hahnemühle paper,
exhibition copy
20 × 30 cm

Nähdetail (Sewing Detail), 1979

Pigment print on Hahnemühle paper,
exhibition copy
20 × 30 cm

Näherin in der Berufsbekleidungsfabrik (Seamstress at the Workwear Factory), 1979

Pigment print on Hahnemühle paper,
exhibition copy
20 × 30 cm

Courtesy of the artist.

→ *Nähdetail (Sewing Detail), 1979*
Näherin in der Berufsbekleidungsfabrik,
(Seamstress at the Workwear Factory) 1979
Näherinnen in Akkordarbeit
(Seamstress Working on a Piece-rate Basis), 1979
Näherinnen in der Berufsbekleidungsfabrik
(Seamstress at the Workwear Factory), 1979
© Muhlis Kenter.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Muhlis Kenter's images document work, everyday life and leisure in West Germany during the 1970s and 1980s. Photographing so-called "guest workers" from Türkiye as well as West German majority society, his work makes visible what is often overlooked: hard physical labour, precarious conditions, social insecurity and life at the margins of society. Miners, seamstresses and factory workers do not appear in his photographs as anonymous figures within the production process, but with presence and dignity. The photographs taken in 1979 at the Mertes & Söhne sewing factory in Alsdorf are among Muhlis Kenter's most striking reportages. They show the working reality of seamstresses under piecework conditions. Even the spatial arrangement of the workstations was designed to make communication among the women more difficult. In the rhythm of the work there was hardly any room for exchange – and yet Kenter captures precisely those rare, brief moments of connection between colleagues. Particularly striking is the image of a seamstress named Seher looking directly and calmly into the camera: It gives a face to a woman who was systematically rendered invisible within the production process. This reportage exemplifies Kenter's photographic approach: making structural working conditions visible without depersonalising the people shaped by them.



Azade Köker

b. 1949, TR, based in Berlin/Istanbul

Child Bride, 2021

Paper, wire, epoxy
78 × 20 × 115 cm

Violence III, 2021

Mixed media on paper
40 × 25 cm

↓ *Child Bride*, 2021 © Azade Köker.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

Since the 1970s, Azade Köker has developed an artistic language in which femininity, vulnerability and resistance appear as constants of human experience. Born in Istanbul in 1949 and living in Berlin since 1972, Köker works between two cities, two cultures and two political orders. This double positioning is never merely biographical background in her work, but a foundational aspect of her practice. Köker's works present the female body as a historical bearer of inscriptions, impositions and losses. It is precisely here that the singular force of her art lies: She shows violence not as a spectacular event, but as a quiet social shaping of the body – as something inscribed in gestures, absences and vulnerable materials.

Courtesy of the artist and Zilberman Gallery.



Julia Logotheitis

b. 1945, AT, based in Vienna

Mutter (Mother), 1979

Oil on canvas
87 × 98 cm

At Manifesta 16 Ruhr, two works from a painting cycle created by Julia Logotheitis between 1976 and 1979 are on view: *Kurdish (formerly "Turkish") Guest Worker in Vienna* and *Mother*. The cycle was prompted by her encounter with Turan Akar, a Kurdish worker from eastern Türkiye employed at a cable factory in Vienna near the Philadelphiabrücke. Akar showed the artist images from his photo album: the harvest and a wedding in his place of origin, everyday life in a Viennese apartment and work in the factory. On this basis, Logotheitis developed a body of work that is among the few artistic projects in Austria to address the lived reality of "guest workers" from a politically reflective and artistically distinct perspective. An important reference for Logotheitis was John Berger and Jean Mohr's book *A Seventh Man*, published in 1975, which examines labour migration in Europe through photographs, essays and testimonies. Logotheitis' paintings share a similar aesthetic and political concern: how to make dignity visible without speaking for those depicted.

Courtesy of the artist.

→ *Mutter (Mother)*, 1979 © Julia Logotheitis.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev





Asimina Paradissa

b. 1945, GR, based in Wuppertal

Untitled, 1965–1975

18 b/w photographs

Asimina Paradissa's photographs narrate migration from her own perspective. This is where their political significance lies: They convey an experience that has long appeared only in reduced form within public images of “guest worker” life. Paradissa and the people around her do not appear as anonymous labourers, but as active subjects who shape their everyday lives, relationships and dignity on their own terms. In 1966, Paradissa left her village in Greece and came to Germany. Her early photographs from the Olympia factory hostel near Wilhelmshaven, where she lived until 1971, show the conditions of arrival. In her photographs, the passage from Greece to Germany becomes less a story of disruption than one of continuity, reinvention and artistic inquiry. Work, friendship, leisure and self-staging, shaping life before migration, persist in the women's dormitory, where Paradissa captures arrival alongside forms of community and solidarity from which new selves emerge. Paradissa then moved to Wuppertal, where she has lived ever since. Her poem “Wuppertal” articulates this tension: The city has “so many beauties,” and yet “home remains home.” It is precisely in this in-between space that the strength of these photographs resides.

Courtesy of the artist.

← *Untitled*, 1965–1975 © Asimina Paradissa.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Judith Raum

b. 1977, DE, based in Berlin

↓ *cotton pieces*, 2012 © Judith Raum.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

cotton pieces, 2012

Ink and acrylic on cotton
450 × 145 cm / 150 × 85 cm

harmless entrepreneurs, 2026

Video 23', colour, sound

In 1888, the Ottoman Empire commissioned Deutsche Bank to build the Anatolian and Baghdad Railways. For German entrepreneurs, this was far more than an infrastructure project: It served as a means of quasi-colonial access to Anatolian markets, raw materials and labour. Judith Raum has gathered material in German and Turkish archives that critically examines the language and visual politics of these ventures. Her video *harmless entrepreneurs* takes up the words of Georg von Siemens, then Chairman of the Board of Deutsche Bank, who described himself and his colleagues as a “club of the harmless.” Raum sets this self-image against

traces of economic exploitation, such as access to Anatolian cotton for the German textile industry. At the same time, Raum refers to poor domestic weavers in the German Empire who produced sashes, thousands of which were exported to the Ottoman Empire. Their work was, by necessity, makeshift, improvised and reduced to the bare essentials. Judith Raum rediscovers this same provisional nature on the construction sites of the Baghdad Railway, where tents and temporary solutions sprang up alongside solid steel structures. This makeshift quality links the two settings: It represents the flip side of a self-serving narrative of progress, the material remnants that official narratives overlook. In cotton pieces, Raum transfers this research onto cotton cloths – the weavers' own material. The painted fabric panels openly reveal their materiality and traces of production: layers of paint, paint marks, creases and a porous, permeable surface.

Courtesy of the artist.



Dennis Siering

b. 1983, DE, based in Offenbach am Main

→ *Antifascist Bird Communication System V02.1, 2026*
© Dennis Siering.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Antifascist Bird Communication System V02.1, 2026

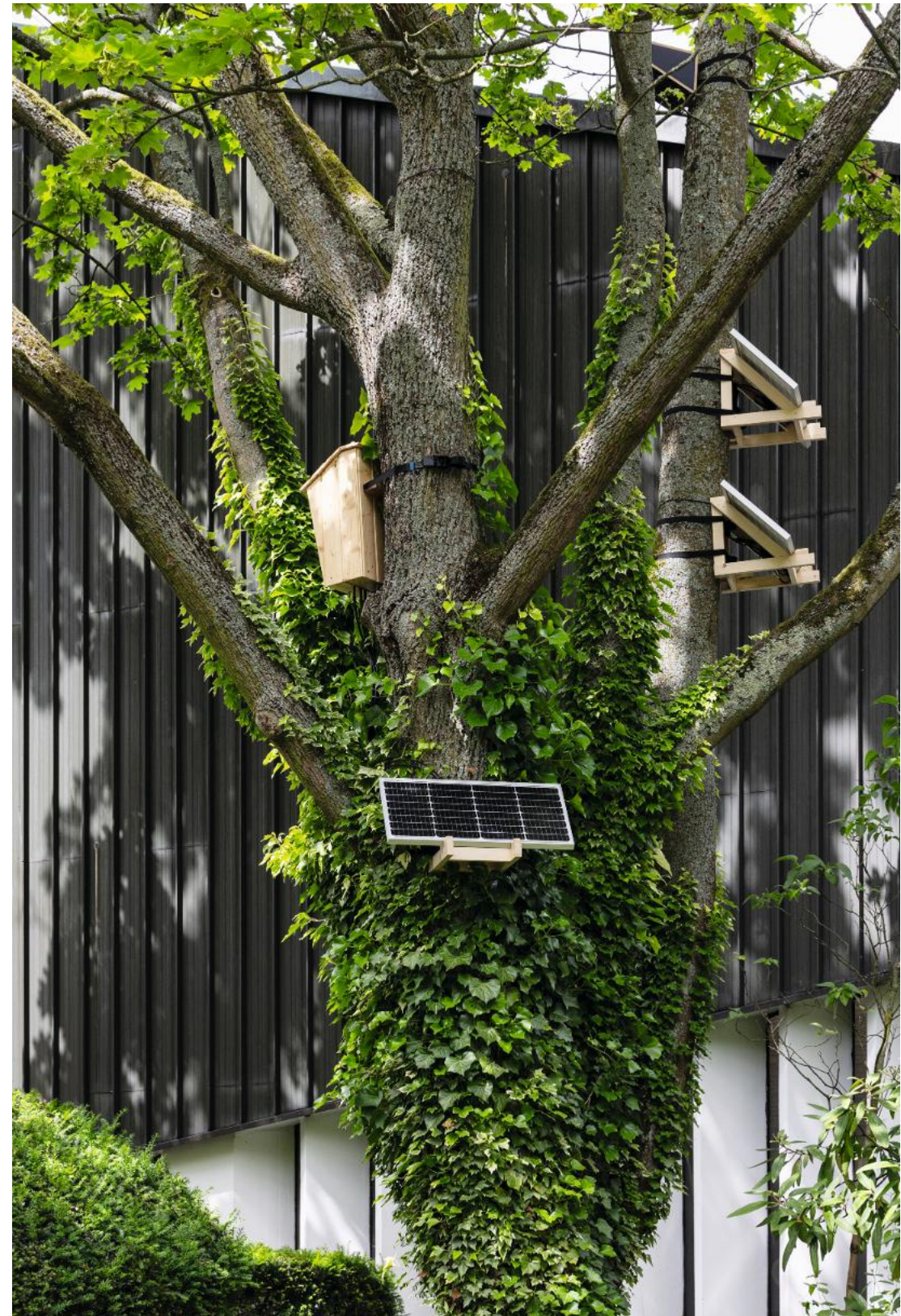
(From the project *Radical Climate Action Bird*)
Site-specific sound installation

Dennis Siering's project *Radical Climate Action Bird* (2025–ongoing) investigates the political potential of communication between humans and birds through native birdsong. Together with researchers in ornithology, sound design and artificial intelligence, the artist develops solar-powered sound installations that translate melodies from antifascist protest songs and the sounds of social movements into artificial birdsong. Unfolding as installations in specific urban locations, the work blends into the natural sounds of the environment at regular intervals, subtly shifting its atmosphere. By playing the synthetic birdsong in public space, the installation also introduces the possibility of inspiring local birds to integrate protest song melodies into their natural singing behaviour. The installation can also be read as a critical response to the resurgence of nationalist and neofascist ideologies – using the language of nature to embed the sounds of protest into the landscape itself. The common blackbird is particularly significant here: Known for its remarkable capacity to learn, it could soon become an ever-present voice of resistance.

Courtesy of the artist.

Composition & Sound Design: Aleksei Maier
Field research in music and bioacoustics: Andre Siering

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Nesrin Tanç

b. 1977, DE, based in Duisburg

↓ *Bergüzar II*, 1990/2025 © Nesrin Tanç.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Bergüzar II, 1990/2025

Handcrafted textile using the Turkish crochet technique (*tığ işi*), fine cotton thread

4 pieces

17 × 15 × 4 cm

Created with the traditional *tığ işi* technique, this handwoven textile preserves quiet traces of memory and care. Each stitch carries a meditative rhythm, reflecting both mourning and resilience. The work recalls a mother-daughter relationship – an intimate tie between personal craft and collective tradition. “With *tığ işi*, I feel connected to her hands as our hands,” the artist notes, evoking the generational transmission of skill and affection through thread. In bringing together domestic practice and artistic reflection, the work transforms private remembrance into a shared contemplation of loss and continuity.

Courtesy of the artist.



Gülbin Ünlü

TR, based in Munich

↓ *Friend*, 2026 © Gülbin Ünlü.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Friend, 2026

Print on vinyl

The work places a common city pigeon at the centre of the church window, confronting both exterior and interior with an inescapable gaze. Within Christian iconography, the dove signifies the Holy Spirit – purity and transcendence – yet in urban life the pigeon is treated as a nuisance. Across painting and song, including Turkish references to the *güvercin*, it carries longing and fragility. This tension exposes a fracture between symbolic reverence and lived reality. The pigeon becomes a figure of the unseen and unwanted – hyper-visible yet structurally ignored. As a domesticated species abandoned by humans, the city pigeon reflects a human-made condition in which misinformation replaces responsibility with rejection. Extending *Streetlife Live* (*Ultrahappy*, Museum Villa Stuck), where pigeons co-inhabited the space,

the work recalls systems of exclusion: shifting propaganda, kilim-coded environments, and hostile architecture such as the spiked *Comfort Zone* bench. Echoing Hrant Dink’s “Like a nervous pigeon” (*Güvercin tedirginliği*), it figures a life that remains present despite vulnerability. In parallel, drawing on Sara Ahmed’s “unhappy subject,” the pigeon marks what disturbs order by making visible what is not meant to be seen. Enlarged, it returns the gaze: I see you – you see me.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Weberei Kai

est. 2019, DE, based in Bonn

The weberei kai school, 2026

Performative weaving, installation

Hand weaving has almost died out as a craft. Hardly anyone can still spin. But then, the shepherd is gone too, along with his sheep. And no one grows flax anymore (for linen) or woad (for blue dye). Quite a lot has disappeared – though that makes it sound as if a cycle has simply come to an end. But things don't just die out; there are decision-makers, investors, people with interests. And then again: The textile industry that pushed hand weaving aside no longer exists in the same way. At Weberei Kai, that's exactly where we begin, every day. We gather ideas and patterns, we work on designs. And we weave: lamps, baby blankets, "monkey seats," book aprons and cable harnesses. Or we take them apart again. Anyone who weaves with us can be bold – things move here: "If you want to weave, I will help you!" (Action Weaver Travis Meinolf).

← *The weberei kai school, 2026* © Weberei Kai.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann
↓ *The weberei kai school (Detail), 2026* © Weberei Kai.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jochem

For visitors to Manifesta 16 Ruhr: "Come and weave!" In the parish hall opposite Thomas-kirche – Hava Güleç Living Room, rigid heddle looms are set up and ready for you. There are quick, clever projects as well as more fiddly, delicate experiments. We'll be talking with you about craft and handwork and why it still matters today. And if all goes well, we'll have cotton, crochet hooks, shuttles or wool fleece at hand – and we'll get something started.

Weberei Kai Collective – Katie Dimpfel (US),
Jonathan Frangenberg (DE), Catrin Lorch (DE),
Karl Menden (UK)

Courtesy of Weberei Kai.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Hanefi Yeter

b. 1947, TR, based in Istanbul

↓ *Annem uyuklarken, 1982* © Hanefi Yeter.
Mama in Berlin, 1982 © Hanefi Yeter.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Annem uyuklarken, 1982

Drawing

32 × 24 cm

Mama in Berlin, 1982

Drawing

32 × 24 cm

Hanefi Yeter is one of the defining artistic voices of the migrant experience in Germany. After beginning his studies in Istanbul, he continued his training in the early 1970s at the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin. In Kreuzberg, he found not only his place to live and work, but also the central subjects of his painting. Yeter depicts a Berlin that long remained largely absent from official narratives: dilapidated facades, people at windows, families in parks, individuals waiting in government offices, farewell scenes and demonstrations. At the centre of these images are migrant workers from Türkiye and their

families – their everyday lives, hopes, worries, homesickness and the struggle to participate in a new culture. Hanefi Yeter is the youngest of nine children. His father died when he was nine years old. From that moment on, his mother supported the entire family. Two years later, she left Bayburt for Izmir with all of her children. This domestic migration in search of work and bread speaks to the extraordinary strength of a woman leading nine people through material hardship, loss and upheaval at a time when education was far from guaranteed for many women in rural Anatolia. Yeter's drawing of his mother therefore recalls not only a central figure in his biography, but also honours her as a source of stability and survival. The small town of Bayburt emerges here not only as a place of origin, but also as the setting of an early experience of deprivation and care that shaped the artist's view of the lives of many of his compatriots.

Courtesy of the artist.



Serpil Yeter

b. 1956, TR, based in Istanbul

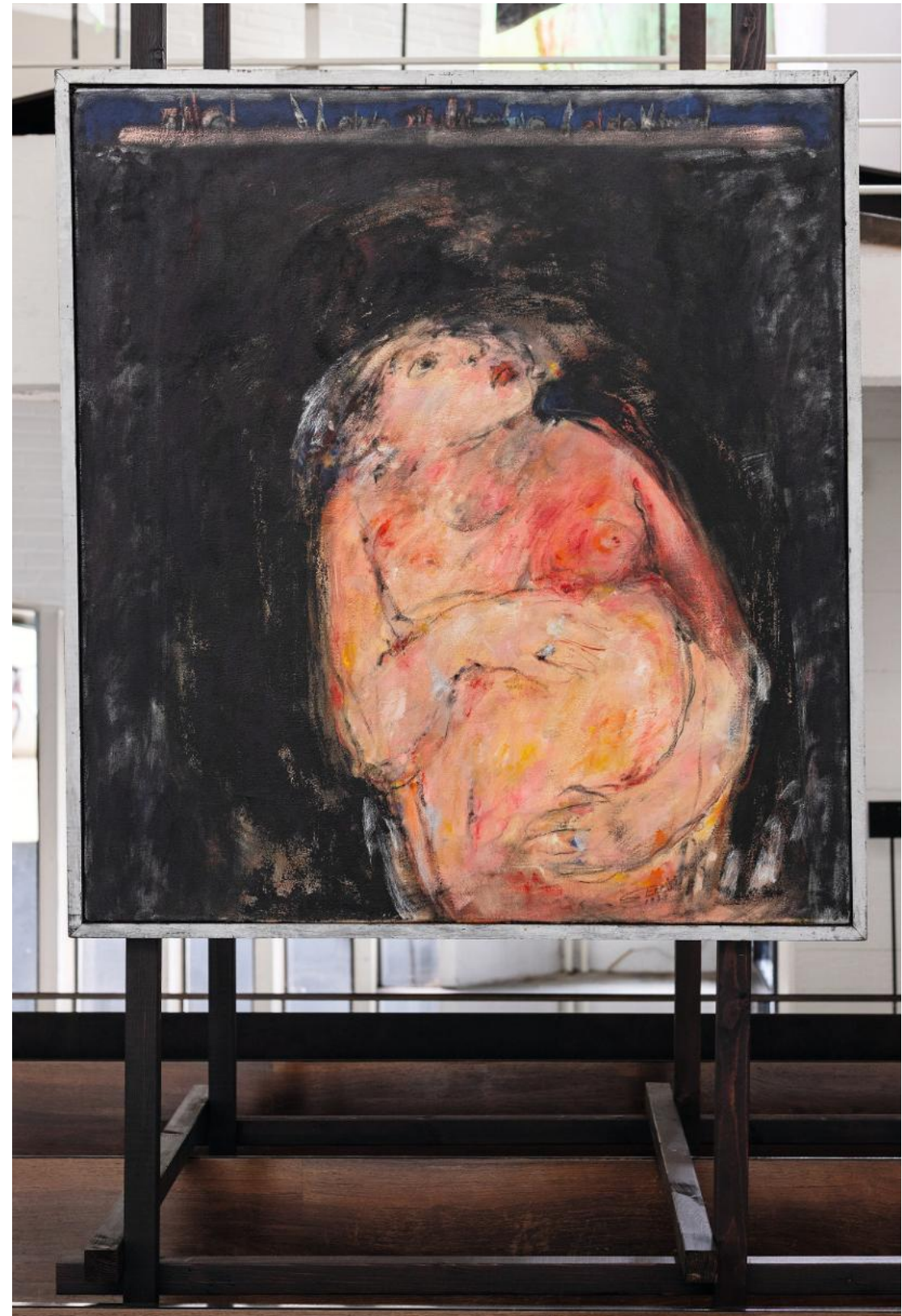
→ *What Kind of Future*, 1988 © Serpil Yeter
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

What Kind of Future, 1988

Mixed media on canvas
118 × 109 cm (framed)

When Serpil Yeter arrived in Berlin in 1980, she described this move as a turning point – not a rupture, but an opening of her gaze toward what lies between people. Yeter paints what she observes in her surroundings and she paints what moves her. Both come together in this work. A pregnant woman, turned inward, enveloped in darkness. Above her, at the upper edge of the canvas, a threatening skyline flickers – barely visible, yet inescapable. The painting was created in awareness of a world endangering itself: the Chernobyl disaster, unending wars, ecological destruction. The pregnant woman carries not only a child – she carries the question of what kind of future awaits that child. Yeter was engaged in intersectional feminist struggles, while her images became visual reference points within these debates. She paints from a perspective that understands the personal as political – and in doing so poses a question that remains urgent to this day: Into what kind of world do we bring life?

Courtesy of the artist.



Christ-König





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
← Attendees at a reading as part of the Spotlights programme, held inside Christ-König Church.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

Designed by Düsseldorf architect Franz Schneider, the church was built in 1932 and almost entirely destroyed by an aerial mine in November 1944. Rebuilt between 1946 and 1957, the church's interior has retained the monumental character of the original design: Its high, imposing forms have drawn comparisons to authoritarian architecture. Christ-König carries this weight visibly in its proportions and atmosphere. The works presented here respond to the histories embedded in the building and its social and historical context. Inspired by the resonance between the church's architecture – with its echoes of Italian fascism – and the region's industrial ties during the National Socialist period, the artists presented here approach questions of memory, complicity and erasure. In recent years, Christ-König's pastor, Father Ludwig, began transforming the church into a cultural space, an ongoing process initiated to keep the building open and give it new purpose within the community. A space in transition, it carries its past visibly – and remains open to what it might yet become.

Presented by Creative Mediators:
Krzysztof Kościuczuk & Anda Rottenberg

Mirosław Baka

b. 1958, PL, based in Otwock and Oliva

Madonna, 2026

Coal, steel

300 × 130 × 130 cm

Mirosław Bałka is known for his rigorous use of elemental, often austere materials that transform space into a site of reflection on mortality, memory and trauma. This monumental sculpture, depicting a seated Madonna without the Child, is constructed from a steel framework filled with coal. Bałka's choice of coal evokes the region's history and the generations of Poles who came there to work – for whom coal functioned as a form of wealth, akin to gold – as well as those sent as forced labourers. For both groups, the Virgin Mary remained a central object of religious devotion. The sculpture's form refers to long-established representations of the Virgin popular in Romanesque art. Its unexpected placement, however, at the entrance to the church – traditionally a space intended for the faithful and visitors alike – may be understood as an acknowledgement of the inevitability of contemporary social transformations. Encountering such a figure in coal rather than traditional materials like marble or wood underscores the defining role the Madonna played in miners' lives – a devotion that endured even as their world was transformed by the closure of the mines.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ *Madonna, 2026* © Mirosław Bałka.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Mehtap Baydu

b. 1972, TR, based in Berlin

Analı Kızlı – With Mothers and Daughters, 2026

Performance

Mehtap Baydu's performance involves eleven women from Bochum who formed a collective in order to cook a meal for a large group of guests. It is a version of the artist's performance staged earlier in Istanbul and Sinop (Türkiye). With this gesture of community building, the artist also reflects critically on her own background. In the Turkish language, there are a number of dishes whose names refer to women or their body parts: among them a soup called *Dul avrat Çorbası* (widow's soup), a dessert called *Dilber Dudağı* (beloved's lip or sweetheart's lips) and a meat dish called *Analı Kızlı* – with mothers and daughters. With this performance, the women give their names not only to food but also to a moment of being together, solidarity and critique.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of SAHA.

Cuma, 2016/2018

Machine-woven carpet
200 × 300 cm

Cuma is a carpet portraying rows of men during the communal prayer on the Friday (*cuma*). They kneel side by side in synchronised devotion; yet we see only their backs, never their faces. The bodies are anonymous, forming an abstract pattern, yet the presence of women is explicitly excluded. Mehtap Baydu took the photograph around one of the oldest mosques in Ankara. On Fridays the congregation would overflow from the small, historic mosque to fill the entire square – the only ones who couldn't find a spot in the square for Friday and Eid prayers were women, who tried to pray behind the remains of the high walls of the Temple of Augustus.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of SAHA.

→ *The Distance Between Me and Everything Else*
[hanging piece]
↘ *Cuma*
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

The Distance Between Me and Everything Else [floor piece], 2017
Polyester

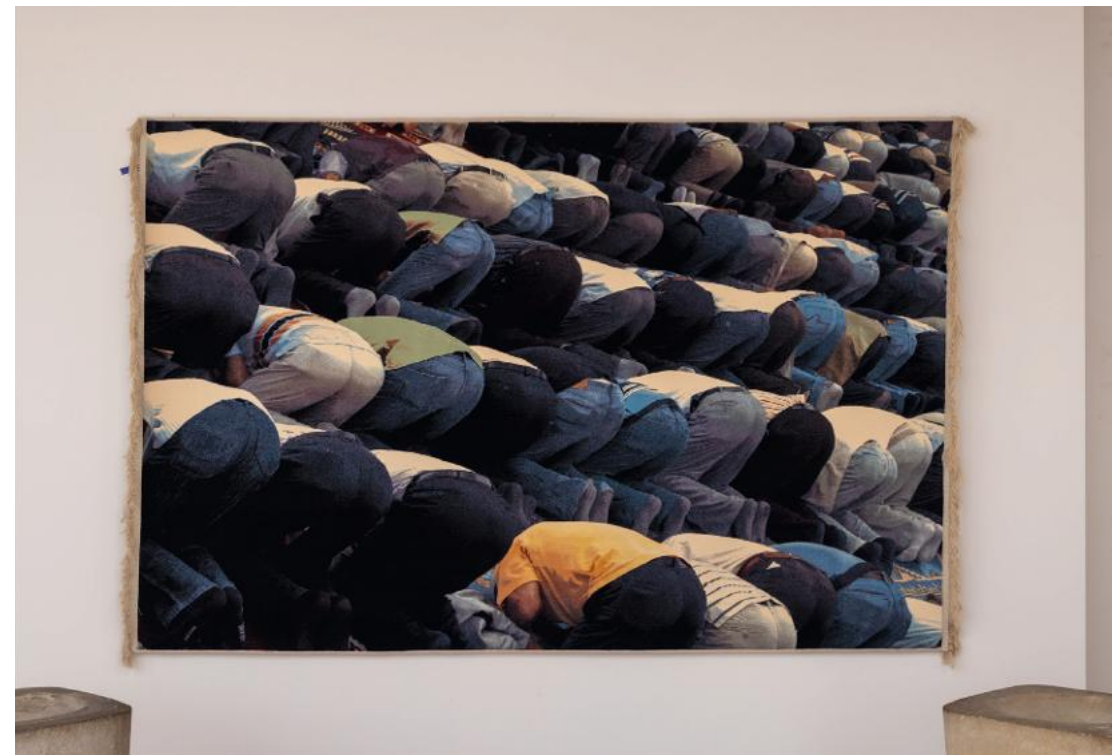
The Distance Between Me and Everything Else [table piece], 2022
Polyester

The Distance Between Me and Everything Else [hanging piece], 2022
Silicone

The appearance of the human body, flattened and almost two-dimensional, triggers an uncanny feeling. We might think of humankind's plundering of nature, hunting trophies, or shells vacated by snakes and crustaceans, or the accounts of flaying found in mythology and the history of art. Mehtap Baydu's works relate to violence perpetrated against women, yet they ultimately address the question of what constitutes a person. What are the components of the self? And what makes us different from one another? Looking for answers to these questions, Baydu said she felt the urge to create what she calls "a distance between myself and everything else, including the very distance between me and my own body."

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of SAHA.



Mabe Bethônico

b. 1966, BR, based in Geneva

↓ *Walking the Dust*, 2026 © Mabe Bethônico.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Walking the Dust, 2026

Mixed media

Mabe Bethônico's practice explores geography, geology, history and ethnography – often in relation to extraction. *Walking the Dust* references Congado: a traditional Afro-Brazilian cultural and religious celebration, in which part of her family participates. It is a walk of celebration, reflection and mourning that critically examines the effects of human actions. Congado is prominent in the artist's native Minas Gerais region in Brazil, where mining began in the 17th century. Bethônico filters this ritual through a reading of the mid-16th century treatise *De Re Metallica* by the German scholar Georgius Agricola, a fragment of which is devoted to the activity of ventilating the mines. The banners and textiles

hung in this corridor employ symbols and patterns that blend these two histories together, united under a common sky that we all share regardless of where we are. In Bethônico's work, dust is the protagonist, linking the past and the present, as the key element in the world of extraction.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO,
Pro Helvetia and the City of Geneva.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Aline Bouvy

b. 1974, LU, based in Brussels and Luxembourg

↓ *The Lore of Us*, 2026 © Aline Bouvy.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

The Lore of Us, 2026

Site-specific installation, mixed media

Aline Bouvy chose the back rooms of Christ-König, used for the preparation of the liturgy, as the setting for her work. These chambers are not visible during the ceremony, but contain its material infrastructure. Bouvy's project emerged from her observation that the room's cupboards remain filled with garments, vessels and ritual objects, despite the church's closure in 1998. Such items are typically not intended for public view and to enter these spaces in an active church is considered a transgressive act. Bouvy's intervention consists of replacing existing wooden doors with transparent plexi-glass panels, while some elements have been

manipulated or altered. The work's title refers to forms of knowledge transmitted through repetition, habit and use.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Kultur | lx.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Cudelice Brazelton IV

b. 1991, US, based in Frankfurt

↓ *Abrade*, 2022 © Cudelice Brazelton IV.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Abrade, 2022

Steel, inkjet print, exciter, amplifier, audio
("CJ's Quest for Metal Factors,"
ConQuest Tony Phillips, MP3, loop 14')
26 × 26 cm

Abrade is a collaged steel object that echoes one of the artist's former workplaces: Columbus Castings in Ohio where he spent his youth. Alongside his studio practice, producing industrial machinery and heavy equipment was part of Brazelton's daily life in the American Midwest. In *Abrade*, a magnetised laser-cut steel plate sticks to the window, resembling a monitor or TV displaying the now decommissioned and demolished steel foundry. An image depicting factory work is inserted like a photographic slide or film. The artist's former coworker and friend, the rapper ConQuest Tony Phillips, produced a 14-minute track sampling sounds from the facility. Merging industrial

labour with Black creative expression, *Abrade* speaks less about the romantic vision of industrial capital and more about the perseverance and preservation of the self within its working conditions.

Courtesy of the artist and Galeria Wschód.



Bérénice Gaça Courtin

b. 1994, FR, based in Paris and Geneva

↓ *Confessional of the Unnamed*, 2026
© Bérénice Gaça Courtin.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Confessional of the Unnamed, 2026

Jacquard weaving tapestry
400 × 500 cm

Working across textile, installation and performance, Bérénice Gaça Courtin treats weaving as a language system. Her point of departure for this work is the Enigma machine, an electro-mechanical cipher device used by the German military during the Second World War to encode messages. A group of Polish cryptologists and resistance fighters – among them Courtin's grandfather Kazimierz Gaca – secretly reproduced the machine in order to decode German communications, and later passed their findings on to Alan Turing and his team. Courtin translates the logic of the Enigma into the logic of the loom. *Confessional of the Unnamed* stages a speculative encounter between the hacker Marta Roots and the textile worker Mary Burns, while imagined voices of women workers from

the Ruhr Area are woven into both the structure of the tapestry and its accompanying sound piece. In this way, weaving and cryptography become parallel systems of transformation – turning thread into pattern, language into code, and history into something that can be carried forward.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Pro Helvetia.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Niklas Goldbach

b. 1973, DE, based in Berlin

→ *For the Ages*, 2026 © Niklas Goldbach.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

For the Ages, 2026

Video installation

13'40" loop, UHD video, colour, 5.1

Niklas Goldbach works with video, photography and installation to probe the intersection of architecture and structures of social control. Revisiting his native region, Goldbach created a video work that blends reality and fiction to explore the fate of the Ruhr Area's post-industrial infrastructure, re-examining the iconography of labour and masculinity through a queer gaze. The work questions both the function of the male body as an idealised instrument of propaganda – historically a crucial element of the mining workers' ethos – and an essential aspect of the Ruhr's industrial legacy: *Ewigkeitslasten*, or "eternal obligations." These financial and environmental burdens, including water drainage and structural monitoring, must be managed in perpetuity as a result of centuries of coal extraction by men labouring beneath the region's towns and cities. It is a past that remains inseparable from the present: a state of perpetual labour, largely invisible from the surface.

Co-produced by Fluentum, Berlin.

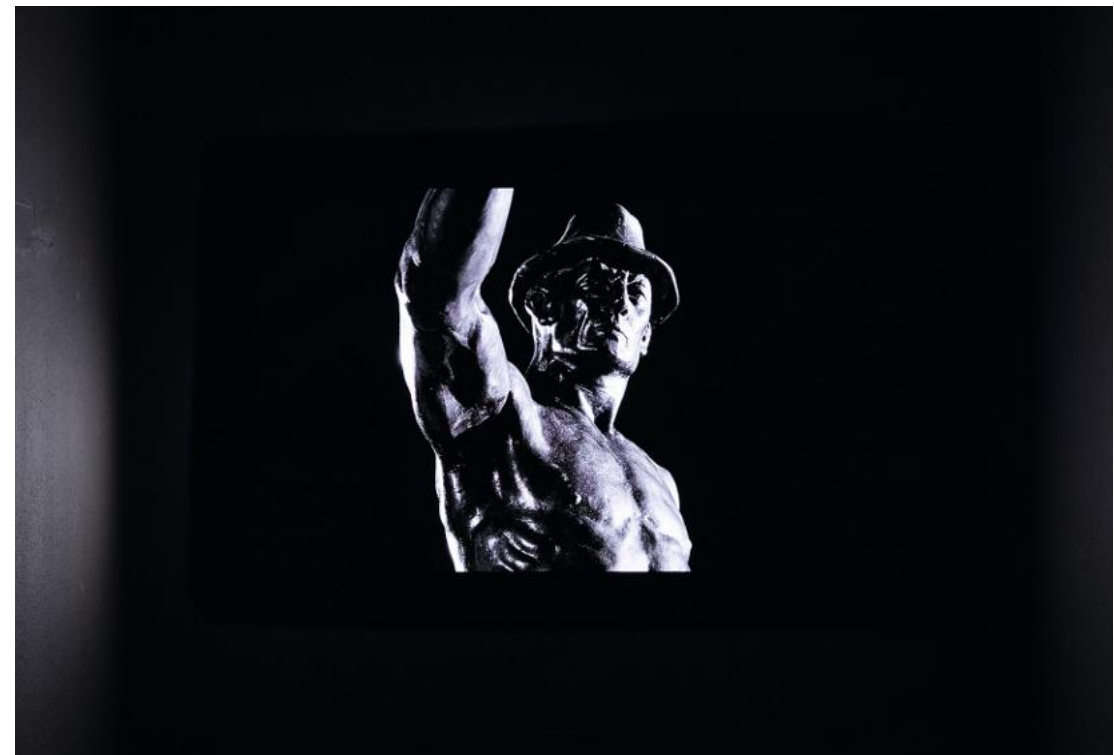
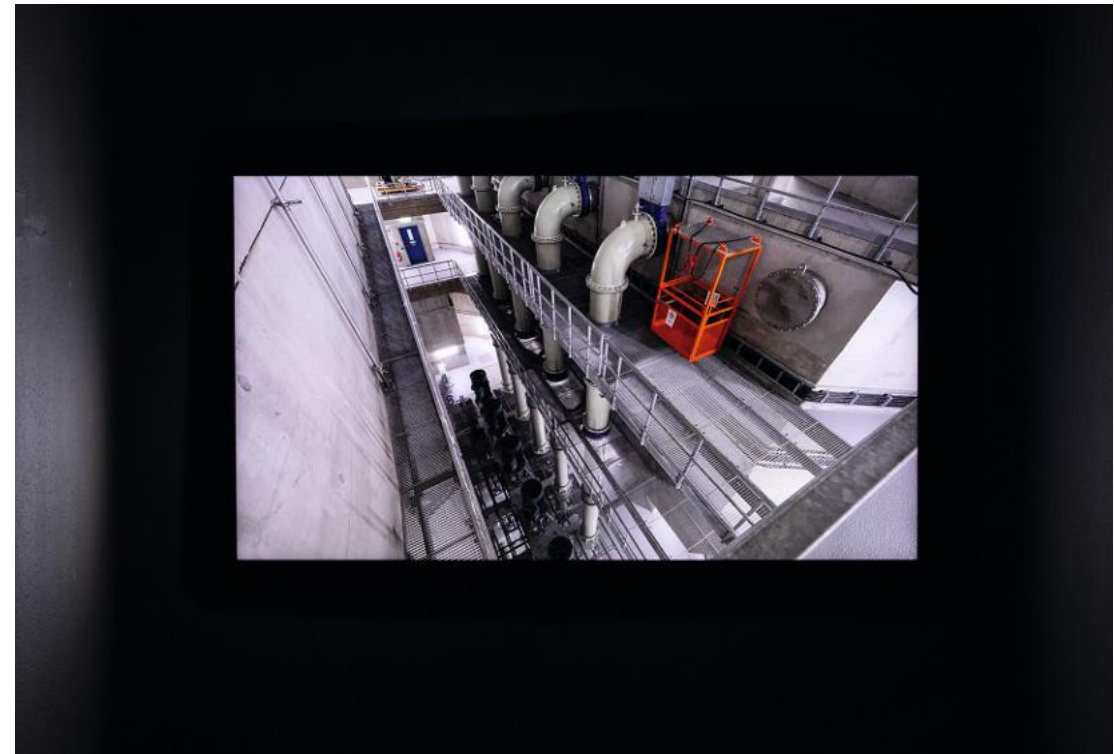
Music courtesy of Herbert Grönemeyer / Grönland Records (Music Mastering – Schneider TM)

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Deutsches Bergbau-Museum Bochum, EmscherGenossenschaft Lippe-Ruhr, Pumpwerk Gelsenkirchen.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

→ Reading with Dinçer Güçyeter as part of the Spotlights programme
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham





They sew
they lie so that
others may pass.
Some live together,
outside the rules

It is not a mistake.
It is a method.

Follow the threads
Between the lines.
Go behind

BETWEEN THE
Go behind

26.06.
17.07.
14.08.2026
Lesungen



Nicolas GrosPierre

b. 1975, CH, based in Warsaw

→ *Untitled*, 2026
↓ *The Black Below*, 2026
© Nicolas GrosPierre.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

The Black Below, 2026

C-prints on aludibond
67 × 86.5 cm each

How can absence be represented? And how far can photography go to capture it? Nicolas GrosPierre says: “These photographs are not meant to explain the Ruhr (Area), but to expose the conditions of its invisibility. Extraction has produced a landscape governed by absence, by what has been removed, displaced, buried. Photography, a medium traditionally associated with evidence and truth, is here pushed into a zone of uncertainty: It records what remains while pointing insistently toward what cannot be shown.”

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of The Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

Untitled, 2026

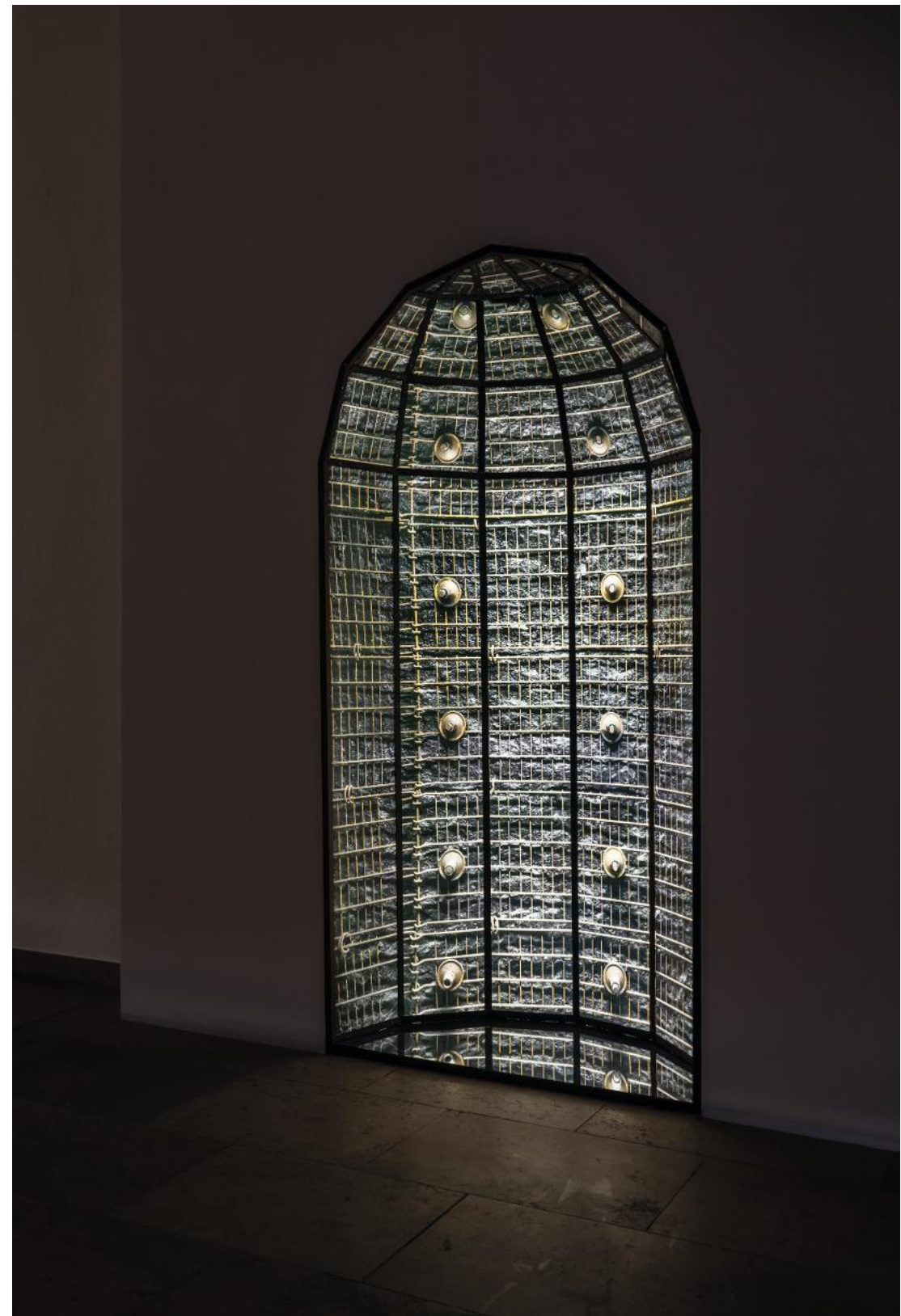
Installation

“In the Ruhr(Area)’s underground world, the mines – sealed, submerged, inaccessible – exist today as absence. Yet their structural language remains: grids, steel load-bearing arches, mechanical ribs, repetitive geometries born from necessity. This work also acknowledges the presence of Muslim migrant communities in the Ruhr (Area), whose arrival is inseparable from the industrial past of the region.”
– Nicolas GrosPierre

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of The Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Albe Hamiti

b. 1988, XK, based in Berlin

↓ *De-Life*, 2026 © Albe Hamiti.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

De-Life, 2026

Video installation

On the 1st of February 2024, the Berlin district of Reinickendorf introduced Germany's first full-time municipal Commissioner for Loneliness. This makes it the first – and so far, only – local authority in the country to establish a permanent position dedicated exclusively to addressing loneliness as a condition. Albe Hamiti's new work explores the attempt to regain one's own feelings, dulled by emotional numbness, through interaction with the immediate environment. It examines both personal and societal alienation, situating experiences of derealisation

and depersonalisation in relation to loneliness, isolation, depression, anxiety and feelings of displacement, loss or dislocation.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Kosovo.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Eva Kořátková

b. 1982, CZ, based in Prague
and children from Bochum and Prague

↓ *When Animals Fall From the Sky*, 2026
© Eva Kořátková (and children from Bochum and Prague). Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
→ Main nave of Christ-König.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

When Animals Fall From the Sky, 2026

Mixed media installation with sound

When birds fall from the sky in large numbers, it signals a “canary in the coal mine” warning. But the warning doesn't indicate how much time is left until a catastrophic event. We do not flee immediately; instead, we shift our habits and resume our activities. The non-humans, however, sense the danger and communicate it in different ways. *When Animals Fall from the Sky* considers the living conditions and status of urban animals, particularly those neither fully free nor captive. The church floor is filled with different animal bodies, transforming the space into a temporary dormitory, emergency ward or rescue station. Some of its non-human clients are in a state of rest: some are asleep, some lie injured on hospital blankets, while others are completely still, saving their energy

for later. Under normal circumstances, none of these animals could enter an institution where human rules of hygiene, safety or liability apply. Yet, here, they offer their stories. You can sit or lie down next to them. You can hug them or comfort them. Or you can join a group of children who visit them regularly. These children take care of them and learn from them. They ask difficult questions, inviting us to focus on different things and to dream of a future in which various species coexist more equally.

Courtesy of the artist, hunt kastner artworks and Meyer Riegger.

With the kind support of Deutsche Telekom.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Katarzyna Kozyra

b. 1963, PL, based in Warsaw

→ *Looking for Jesus: Excerpts from the Archive*,
2012–2022/2026 © Katarzyna Kozyra.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Looking for Jesus: Excerpts from the Archive, 2012–2022/2026

Single-channel video (colour), 16:9, PAL, 1080p, stereo, 88' 56"

First described in the 1930s by psychiatrist Heinz Hermann, the Jerusalem Syndrome is a set of religious mental reactions experienced by a number of visitors to the holy city, mostly tourists and pilgrims. Regardless of their background, they display a deep belief that they are biblical figures and frequently feel compelled to deliver sermons. The footage by the Polish performance and video artist Katarzyna Kozyra derives from a vast library comprising hundreds of hours of recorded interviews with people who identify with Jesus or are somehow involved in deep religious reflection, compiled during the artist's trips to Jerusalem. This selection of videos, made by the artist for Manifesta 16 Ruhr, presents an array of characters driven by a deep sense of faith – or perhaps a universal human need to build community.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.



Małgorzata Mirga-Tas

b. 1978, PL/Roma, based in Czarna Góra

29, 2019/2020

Paraffin wax cast (fragment)

In July 2011, at Cygańskie Góry, or Romani Hills as local residents have called the area near the town of Borzęcin Dolny in the south-east of Poland – Roma sculptor Małgorzata Mirga-Tas erected a wooden monument. It commemorated an event from July 1942 when German military police, together with Polish police officers, detained a group of 29 Roma men and women. Three men, five women and over 20 children were shot by the Germans and Poles. Their bodies were thrown into a pit dug at the site of the execution. Mirga-Tas designed a monument consisting of a vertical slab with an epitaph featuring an excerpt from a poem by the Polish-Romani poet Papusza. Located on both sides of the epitaph plaque were figures of dying Roma men and women. Four years later, in the spring of 2016, unknown perpetrators destroyed the monument. Based on fragments of the vandalised monument, Mirga-Tas created a series of wax sculptures that commemorate both the original murders and the subsequent act of destruction.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO, The Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and Deutsche Telekom.

→ *Ryćhino (Roma Bear)*, three pieces, 2025–2026
Jangaro (Black 1), 2023
Jangaro (Czarny 2), 2023
29, 2019/2020
© Małgorzata Mirga-Tas.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Ryćhino (Roma Bear), 2025–26

Three pieces

Coal, wax, soot, metal

Jangare, 2023

Two pieces

Wax, coal, metal

In the work of Małgorzata Mirga-Tas, historical events, rituals and myths meet, imbued with new meanings. *Jangare* (from jangar – “coal” in Romani) are human-sized figures made of wax and soot. They refer to traditional Romani props used for fortune telling or removing evil spells called *bengoro* (devils). Moulded from warm wax and decorated with hair, fragments of animal bones and beads, *bengoro* have both a mystical and ghoulish character, symbolising misfortune, turning points, illness and even death. The artist transformed these figures by bestowing them with positive connotations. Here, *Jangare* become totemic, protective deities. Their counterparts are life-size figures of *Ryćhino*, or the bear, which occupies a special place in Romani culture. Among some communities, the training of wild animals became a traditional occupation – bears were predominantly trained by Romani in Europe, performing in street shows and at noble courts. Yet for Mirga-Tas, this creature transcends its performing role: It possesses powers connecting the world of humans and nature.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO, The Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and Deutsche Telekom.



Anka Sasnal Wilhelm Sasnal

Anka Sasnal (b. 1973, PL, based in Kraków)
Wilhelm Sasnal (b. 1972, PL, based in Kraków)

Parasite (Huba), 2013

Super 16 mm transferred to 35 mm transferred
to digital, 66'

Parasite (Huba) unfolds as a quiet elegy for three lives bound by frailty and need. An ailing elderly man meets a young mother with a child. Withering away after retiring from a factory, he drifts through days without purpose, unable to eat or sleep. The young mother and her child resemble a single organism, but their relationship is one of dependence and inequality. Clinging to life, the child is ravenous and needy; the woman is rendered a victim. Brought together by chance, as the three attempt to navigate a common world by living together, their lives become intertwined in a web of oppression and anguish.

Courtesy of the artists.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and Sadie Coles HQ.

↓ *Parasite (Huba)*, 2013 © Wilhem and Anka Sasnal
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev



Luc Tuymans

b. 1958, BE, based in Antwerp

→ *KINO*, 2026 © Luc Tuymans.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

KINO, 2026

Digital print on Deco Coatex
c. 320 × 3600 cm

“1932 was a historical flashpoint and the final year of the Weimar Republic. A church from this period stands as a silent witness to how fascist aesthetics hijacked sacred spaces and rituals to create a cult of personality [...] In Leni Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will* everything is framed with quasi-religious incense, suggesting a divine second coming. I came across the film on YouTube in a colourised version in which all the flags were turned blue, which completely changes the impact. I decided to paint some of the film stills, removing every iconic image. What one gets is discolouration as subversion: The blue colour is asserted with calm and neutrality in opposition to the aggressive red. Removing the explicit symbols allows a critique of the aesthetic of authoritarianism itself. The sacralised status of the church and the imagery, stripped of both the holy and ideological power, leaves behind a vacuum. By first having painted the imagery and then having it transferred onto curtain fabric and shown as such, it can be perceived as something domestic, temporary or even theatrical inside a permanent stone structure. With this I wanted to highlight the fragility and critique the false, performative nature of the idea of eternity and the destructive power of fascism.”

– Luc Tuymans

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



St. Anna





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Claudia Dreysse
← *Wielka płyta / Plattenbau*, 2000
© Wilhelm Sasnal.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

The church sits in the heart of Bochum's Goldhamme district, a neighbourhood shaped by generations of steel workers and their families. Built in 1929 and consecrated in 1934, it was designed as more than a place of worship. Like many churches of its kind across the Ruhr Area, it was a neighbourhood anchor, a gathering point for a community whose daily life was defined by industrial labour. St. Anna has been altered many times – damaged in the Second World War, rebuilt, renovated and adapted to changing needs. It remains a consecrated space, but one that has opened up: Today it is shared by many, from Schauspielhaus Bochum and a local amateur theatre group to a recent sound exhibition and, at times, a choir. The work gathered here engages with this open, shared space and with the region's histories of industry, mining and labour. It draws out the often invisible lives of the labour migrants who sustained the Ruhr area, alongside questions of rights, dignity and belonging – and, in dialogue with the building itself, asks what such a space can become as it opens beyond its original purpose.

Presented by Creative Mediators:
Krzysztof Kościuczuk & Anda Rottenberg

Pedro Cabrita Reis

b. 1956, PT, based in Lisbon

↓ *The Thieves*, 2026 © Pedro Cabrita Reis.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

The Thieves, 2026

Aluminium

Dismas: 635 × 20 × 10 cm

Gestas: 650 × 20 × 10 cm

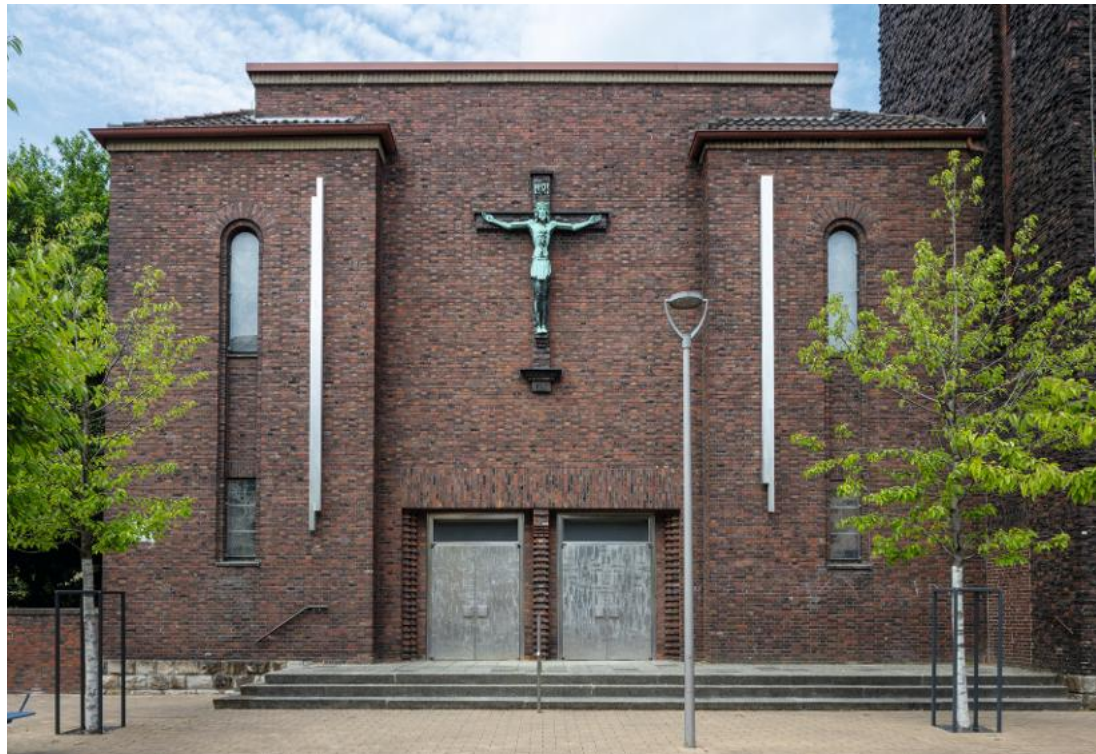
With *The Thieves*, Pedro Cabrita Reis engages with the architecture of St. Anna and its sculpture of the Crucifixion by adding two figures on the sides of the building. They represent two criminals, mentioned in four biblical gospels and often referred to as “two thieves,” who were to be crucified along with Jesus. By physically reinstating their presence – one mocking, the other remorseful – Cabrita Reis invokes a timeless

narrative that addresses universal questions about repentance, defiance and, ultimately, the human potential to change.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Portuguese Republic – Culture, Youth and Sport / Directorate-General for the Arts.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Kateryna Lysovenko

b. 1989, UA, based in Vienna

↓ *Migrating Waves*, 2026
© Kateryna Lysovenko.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Migrating Waves, 2026

Oil on canvas mounted on wall

210 × 800 cm

While in Ukraine, Kateryna Lysovenko studied monumental art, including works for sacral spaces. Following the Russian invasion in 2022, she fled from Kyiv to Vienna, where she began exploring the condition of being a refugee or a migrant artist. Lysovenko says, quoting a friend: “Being a migrant is like being a woman, you are never good enough.” Lysovenko’s work is driven by a concern for those who are marginalised, dehumanised and excluded – in any society. *Migrating Waves* is

a call for universal rights, including the right to become a migrant or refugee, as well as the right to privacy and dignity – despite constant surveillance.

Courtesy of the artist and Karma International.

With the support of the Ukrainian Institute in Germany and the German Federal Foreign Office.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Pinar Öğrenci

b. 1973, TR, based in Berlin

Glück auf in Deutschland (*Good Luck in Germany*), 2024

Film, b/w and colour, sound, 44'

For *Glück auf in Deutschland*, Öğrenci set out to trace the presence of first-generation so-called “guest worker” miners in the Ruhr Area, but the regional archives she consulted yielded very little. Drawing on available materials and oral histories, this 44-minute film brings together photographs, documentary montage and the artist’s off-screen narration to reimagine postwar industrial life in the Ruhr Area from the perspective of those frequently left out of official narratives and repositories of memory. Öğrenci’s use of the phrase “Glück auf” – a common way that miners wish one another a safe return after their dangerous work underground – resonates with the experiences of immigrant communities in present-day Germany faced with right-wing extremism.

Courtesy of the artist.

Based on images from Ruhr Museum Photography Archive.
Commissioned by Kunstmuseum Bochum.
With the kind support of AMMODO and SAHA.

- *A Labor Dictionary (Arbeitsgedächtnis)*, 2026
© Pinar Öğrenci.
- *Glück auf in Deutschland (Good Luck in Germany)*, 2024 © Pinar Öğrenci. Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

A Labor Dictionary (Arbeitsgedächtnis), 2026

Video, b/w and colour, sound, 12'

The Christian symbolism that has historically shaped mining culture in the Ruhr region marginalised the visibility of Muslim and migrant miners. The representational absence of migrant miners deepened further after the closure of the mines in the late 1980s. What Germans refer to as “Strukturwandel” (“structural change”) – one of many German compound terms that the video examines as part of an industrial language in which political and economic violence is condensed into seemingly neutral vocabulary – resulted in a loss of identity and memory for working-class families. The transformation of industrial buildings has left miners’ memories outside. *A Labor Dictionary* is a video work projected in the apse of the St. Anna Church, combining photography, animation, video and sound materials from the research process of the *Glück auf in Deutschland* film. Öğrenci’s video work opens a counter space in which German industrial language, memory and religious symbolic systems intersect and collide. By overlaying the sacred world of the church with the linguistic and visual symbols of mining culture, the work exposes the structures of exploitation embedded in all of them.

Writer, editor, producer: Pinar Öğrenci
Demolition videos: Abbruchschrotti
Color photograph: Muhlis Kenter and Henning Christoph
Soundtrack: Matti Gajek
Motion design: Batuhan Oda
Graphic design: Vahit Tuna
Colour: Kaan Tüfekçiyaşar
Voiceover: Gökşen Güntel

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of AMMODO and SAHA.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Mykola Ridnyi

b. 1985, UA, based in Berlin

Until You Disappear, 2026

Two-channel video, 13'40"

Mykola Ridnyi's new moving image work stems from his own childhood memories and encounters with post-Soviet popular culture in the 1990s. *Until You Disappear* references the convention of war games and the film *Until the First Blood* (1989), which was shot in a pioneer camp in Crimea shortly before the fall of the USSR – in turn evoking memories of its recent annexation by Russia in 2014. In the tradition of Lord of the Flies' canonical depictions of children and violence, Ridnyi's film follows children at a summer camp split into "blues" and "greens" – declared "dead" once their insignia are taken away. Re-enacted by adult refugees from Ukraine, with a soundtrack by Ukrainian post-metal band Machukha (Stepmother), these

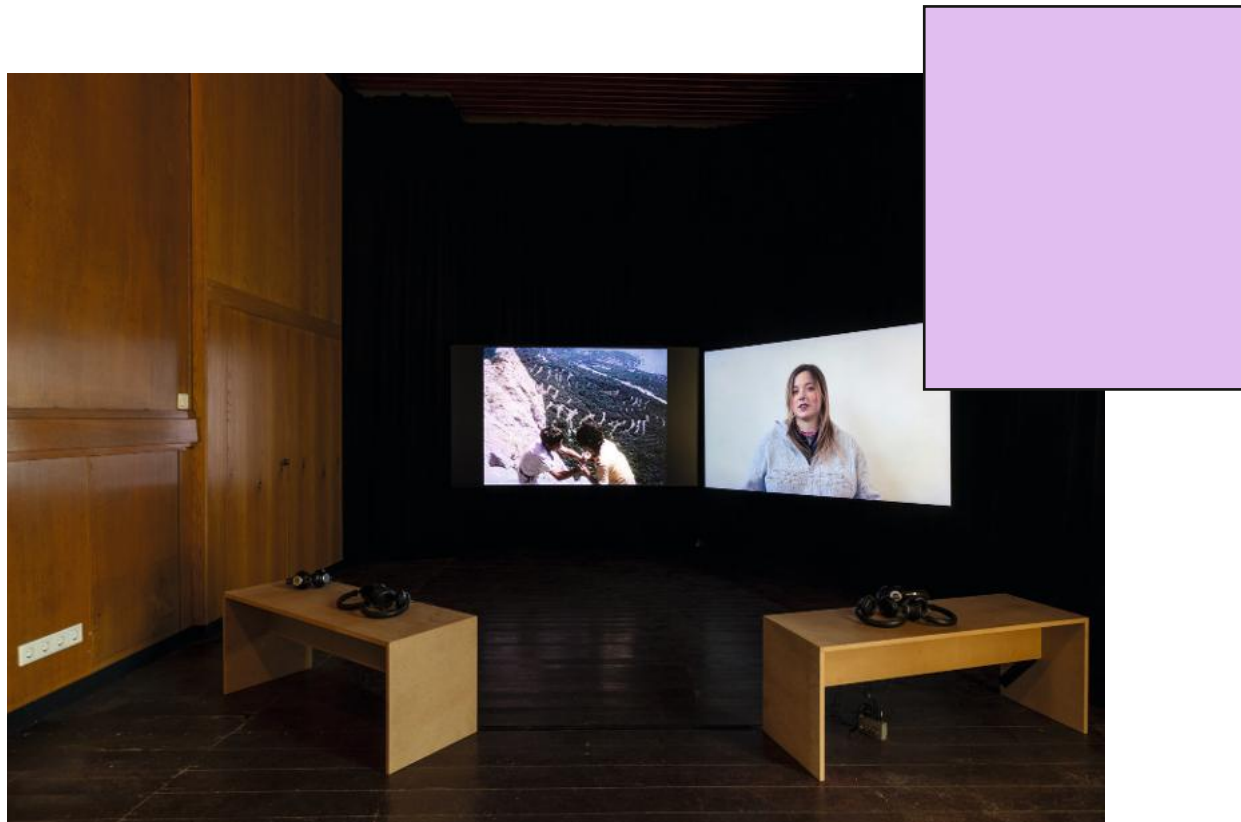
↓ *Until You Disappear, 2026* © Mykola Rydnyi.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

children's "war games" raise questions about the sustainability of plans for the peaceful development of the Ruhr Area in the face of Russian military threat. The title *Until You Disappear* reflects on the current stage of war as a vicious cycle of violence in which both aggressors and victims consider the complete obliteration of the enemy as the only solution.

Courtesy of the artist.
Co-produced with Neuer Berliner Kunstverein and Kontakt Collection.

With the support of AMMODO, the Ukrainian Institute in Germany and the German Federal Foreign Office.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Wilhelm Sasnal

b. 1972, PL, based in Kraków

Centrum, 2004

8'31", 16mm, no sound

Silesia's ties to German culture run deep: The region came under Bohemian rule within the Holy Roman Empire by the mid-14th century. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a wave of migration brought thousands to the Ruhr Area seeking work in coal mining and steel. Following the Second World War, part of Silesia's population left or was forcibly displaced to Germany, while many men were sent to labour camps in Soviet Russia; meanwhile, Poles resettled from territories incorporated into the USSR arrived in their place. Shot on a 16mm camera, the film's unsteady camerawork plunges the viewer into the bowels of one of the region's mines. *Centrum* was filmed in the city of Bytom and is an homage to the region's tangled history and

↓ *Centrum, 2004* © Wilhelm Sasnal.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

its tradition of labour, as well as to the myth of coal as "black gold" – a myth actively promoted by the Communist authorities, though increasingly difficult to sustain in the present day.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Ministry of Culture, National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.





← Selection of paintings by Wilhelm Sasnal.
 → *Wegiel / Coal*, 2024
 © Wilhelm Sasnal.
 Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

Wilhelm Sasnal grew up in Mościce, a district of Tarnów in southeastern Poland, where the country's largest chemical manufacturing complex shaped daily life. This background made him acutely aware of what it meant for workers when Poland shifted from socialism to capitalism – a preoccupation that, alongside influences from popular culture, music and history, runs through his paintings. The works presented here, made between 1999 and 2025, explore fragments of modernity and progress. Among them, the 2009 portrait of Konrad Adenauer occupies a special place. In addition to securing the release of the last 10,000 German prisoners of war held by the USSR in 1955, the German chancellor was also one of the champions of the European Coal and Steel Community, whose establishment after the Second World War helped drive the prosperity of the Ruhr Area.

Coal, 2024
 Oil on canvas
 70 × 100 cm

Konrad Adenauer, 2009
 Oil on canvas
 40 × 50 cm

Untitled, 1999
 Oil on canvas
 100 × 100 cm

Untitled, 2017
 Oil on canvas
 50 × 50 cm

Untitled, 2022
 Oil on canvas
 50 × 40 cm

Untitled, 2025
 Oil on canvas
 40 × 50 cm

Untitled, 2025
 Oil on canvas
 50 × 40 cm

ZKS Unia, 2000–2017
 Oil on canvas
 42 × 42 cm

Huntington Beach, 2025
 Oil on canvas
 55.9 × 76.2 cm

Untitled, 2016
 Oil on canvas
 120 × 160 cm

Asphalt, 2025
 Oil on canvas
 167.6 × 142.2 cm

Wielka płyta / Plattenbau, 2000
 Oil on canvas
 150 × 150 cm

Cross-section of Poland, 2014
 Oil on canvas
 140 × 160 cm

Drunkard, 2022
 Oil on canvas
 40 × 50 cm

All works: Courtesy of the artist.



Marion Stokes

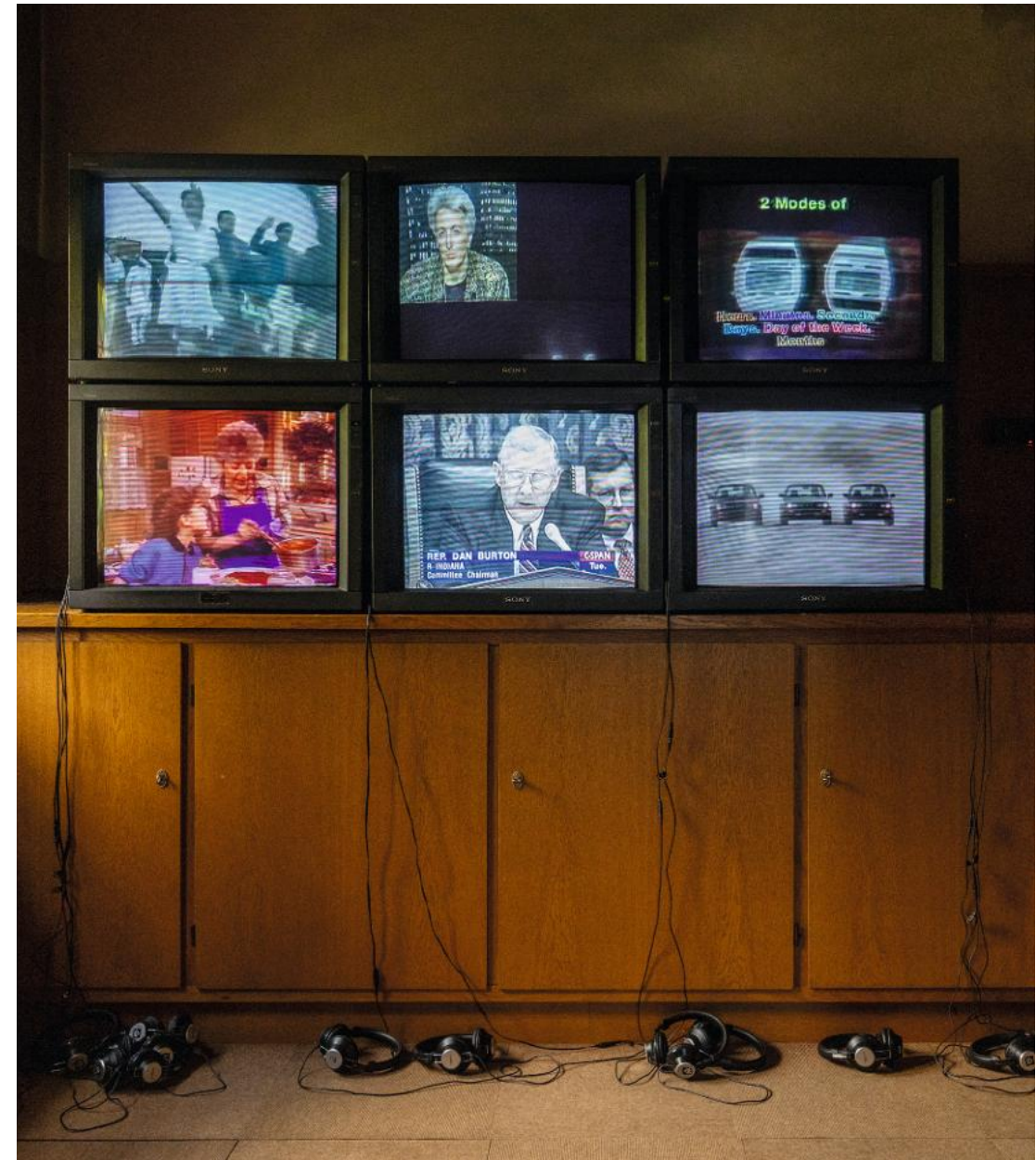
1929–2012, US

→ TV Archive project (Fragments), 1979–2012
© Marion Stokes.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann

TV Archive project (Fragments), 1979–2012

Born Marion Marguerite Butler, Stokes was deeply involved in civil rights activism and leftist politics. She worked as a librarian and later became a local TV producer in Philadelphia. She coproduced and appeared on the public affairs programme *Input* on a local CBS affiliate, where clergy, activists, academics and others debated contemporary social issues. From the late 1970s, Stokes amassed more than ten thousand VHS and Betamax cassettes over the course of roughly thirty years, capturing hundreds of thousands of hours of television broadcasts in the US. Today, they are as much a time capsule as a cautionary message for the future.

Courtesy of the artist and Internet Archive.



Gethsemane- Kirche





- ←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
- ← The inflatable installation *Kein Geläut* by Marina Naprushkina activates the garden in front of Gethsemane-Kirche.
- Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
- Visitors in front of the installation by Mikołaj Sobczak.
- Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham
- The transformed nave.
- Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Gethsemane Church was built in 1949–50 by members of the local Protestant community, on the foundations of a parish hall destroyed in the Second World War. It was never meant to be a grand building. It was one of many *Notkirchen* – emergency churches – designed by architect Otto Bartning as part of a Protestant relief programme after the war: So many churches had been lost and so many refugees had arrived that new places of worship were needed in large numbers. Like many post-war churches across the Ruhr Area, it was built quickly and modestly – from salvaged brick and prefabricated timber – for a developing neighbourhood of industrial workers and their families. In German, these are called *Pantoffelkirchen* – slipper churches – because you could reach them in your slippers. The works here take the church's history seriously: the labour and migration that shaped this region, the meaning of home and belonging, and what endures when the structures that held communities together begin to change. Gethsemane was listed as a historic monument in 1994. But like many of its kind, it now faces the question of what comes next. Declining congregations and rising costs have left dozens of these churches without a clear future. Some have been demolished, others radically reimaged. It remains in use by the local Protestant community while becoming a space for new kinds of gathering. It has not yet decided what it will become – and that openness is itself a kind of invitation.

Presented by Creative Mediators:
Krzysztof Kościuczuk & Anda Rottenberg





Mirosław Bałka

b. 1958, PL, based in Otwock and Oliva

Heimat, 2026

Six-part installation

Neon glass tubes, aluminium

60 × 260 cm each

Mirosław Bałka, an artist whose practice consistently engages with questions of history and memory, presents an installation composed of six yellow neon inscriptions suspended along both sides of the main nave of Gethsemane Church. Each element spells the word “homeland” (*Heimat*) in a different language – German, Polish, Arabic, Albanian, Turkish and Romanian – and is rendered in mirror reflection, further complicating its legibility and meaning. It refers to an installation by the artist prepared for the opening of OP-ENHEIM, a gallery and cultural centre in Wrocław. The installation presented the word ‘homeland’ in four languages, referencing the city’s history.

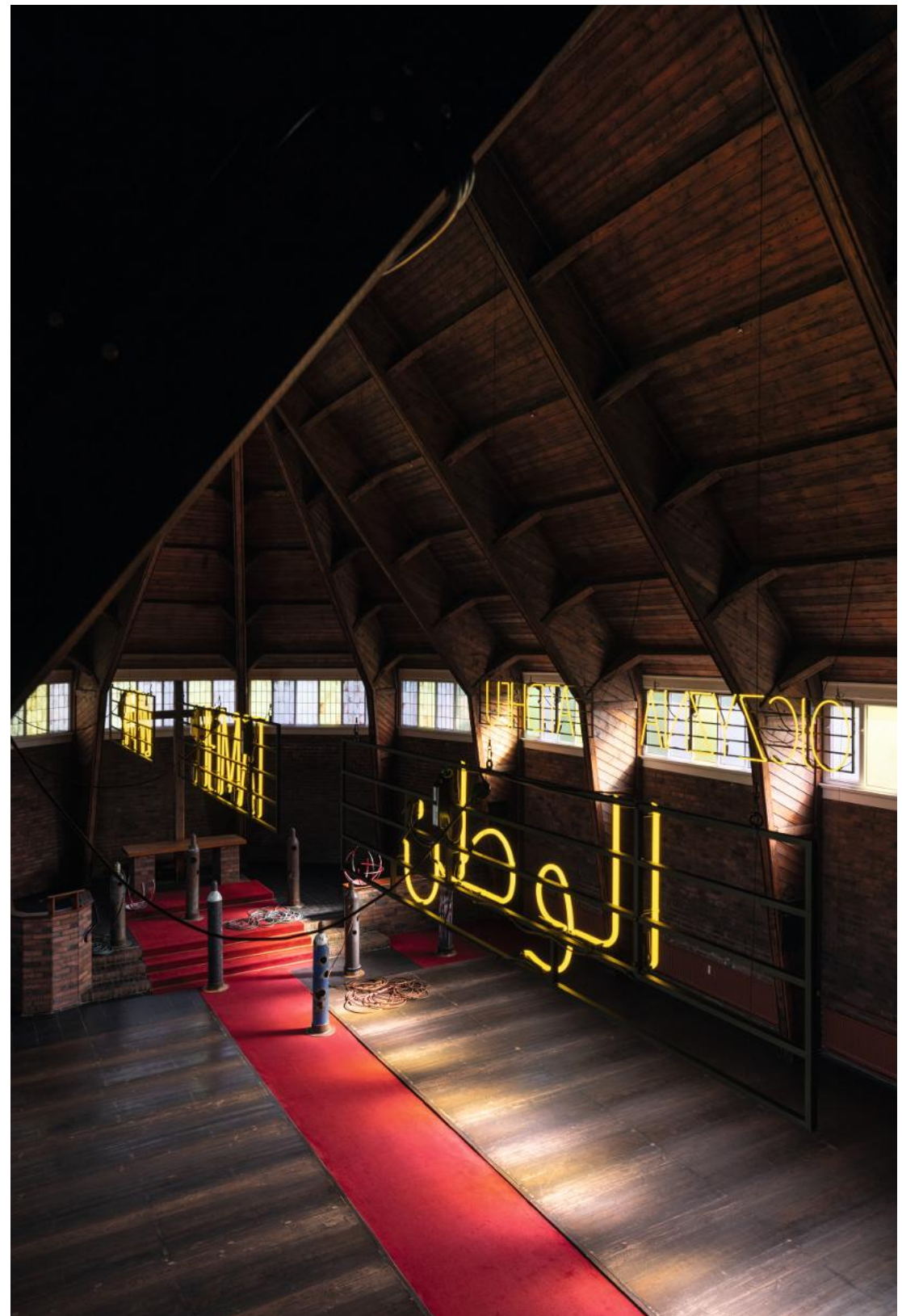
↓→ *Heimat*, 2026 © Mirosław Bałka.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

Through this spatial and linguistic layering, Bałka offers a commentary on the region’s stratified past and its evolving social fabric, shaped by successive waves of merchants, migrants and “guest workers,” each of whom has inscribed their own understanding of “home” onto the site.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland and the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Mehtap Baydu

b. 1972, TR, based in Berlin

Analı Kızlı – With Mothers and Daughters, 2026

Performance

Mehtap Baydu's performance involves eleven women from Bochum who formed a collective in order to cook a meal for a large group of guests. It is a version of the artist's performance staged earlier in Istanbul and Sinop (Türkiye). With this gesture of community building, the artist also reflects critically on her own background. In the Turkish language, there are a number of dishes whose names refer to women or their body parts: among them a soup called *Dul avrat Çorbası* (widow's soup), a dessert called *Dilber Dudağı* (beloved's lips or sweetheart's lips) and a meat dish called *Analı Kızlı* – with mothers and daughters. With this

↓ *Analı Kızlı – With Mothers and Daughters*, 2026
© Mehtap Baydu.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham
← *Analı Kızlı – With Mothers and Daughters*, 2026
© Mehtap Baydu.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

performance, the women give their names not only to food but also to a moment of being together, solidarity and critique.

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of SAHA.



Zuza Golińska

b. 1990, PL, based in Warsaw

Swarm I-IX, 2023–2025

Upcycled technical gas tanks, rubber hoses, powder-coated upcycled steel

Swarm is a series of works originating from Zuza Golińska's explorations of the shipyard in Gdańsk, Poland, a historically significant site where the artist has frequently worked. Sourcing materials from its scrap piles and collaborating with local welders, she crafted a constellation of objects that resemble alien organisms. Within this metallic colony, some forms bring to mind hybrid beings – part insect, part combat drones. Others have an even more menacing aspect: oxygen tanks, both life-giving and perilous, also resemble military weaponry. The swarm Golińska brings to life can be seen both as a collective formation of

↓ *Swarm I-IX*, 2023–25
© Zuza Golińska.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

fantastic life forms and as a military concept: a coordinated strike system governed by algorithmic intelligence. The remnants of the shipyard have mutated beyond repair, forming a new kind of being – one that asks what industrial sites become when their original purpose is gone.

Courtesy of the artist, Piktogram and KIN.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland.



Marina Naprushkina

b. 1981, BY, based in Berlin

Kein Geläut, 2026

Inflatable installation
450 × 450 × 250 cm

Marina Naprushkina's practice engages with the political realities of Belarus and the conditions of displacement in Europe. For the lawn in front of Gethsemane Church, she has developed an interactive sculpture inspired by a historic bell produced by the leading industrial company Bochumer Verein für Bergbau und Gußstahlfabrikation (BVG), which was originally part of the destroyed pre-war church. Naprushkina reconfigures this heavy, symbolic object into a soft, participatory structure: an inflatable bouncy castle bearing the slogan "We'll never go back!" What appears as a playful activity is charged with tension: The repetitive act of bouncing becomes a condition of suspension, a body caught between gravity and release, unable to settle. Placed along the arch of the entrance, the slogan imparts a sense of both empowerment and political urgency. It responds to the current rightward shift and the so-called "Migrationswende" (shift in migration policy). The bouncy castle addresses the suspended condition experienced by neighbours with a migration background, an ongoing, precarious state that often extends across generations.

Courtesy of the artist and PSM.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

- *Kein Geläut*, 2026 © Marina Naprushkina.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham
- *Kein Geläut I-IV*, 2026 © Marina Naprushkina.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

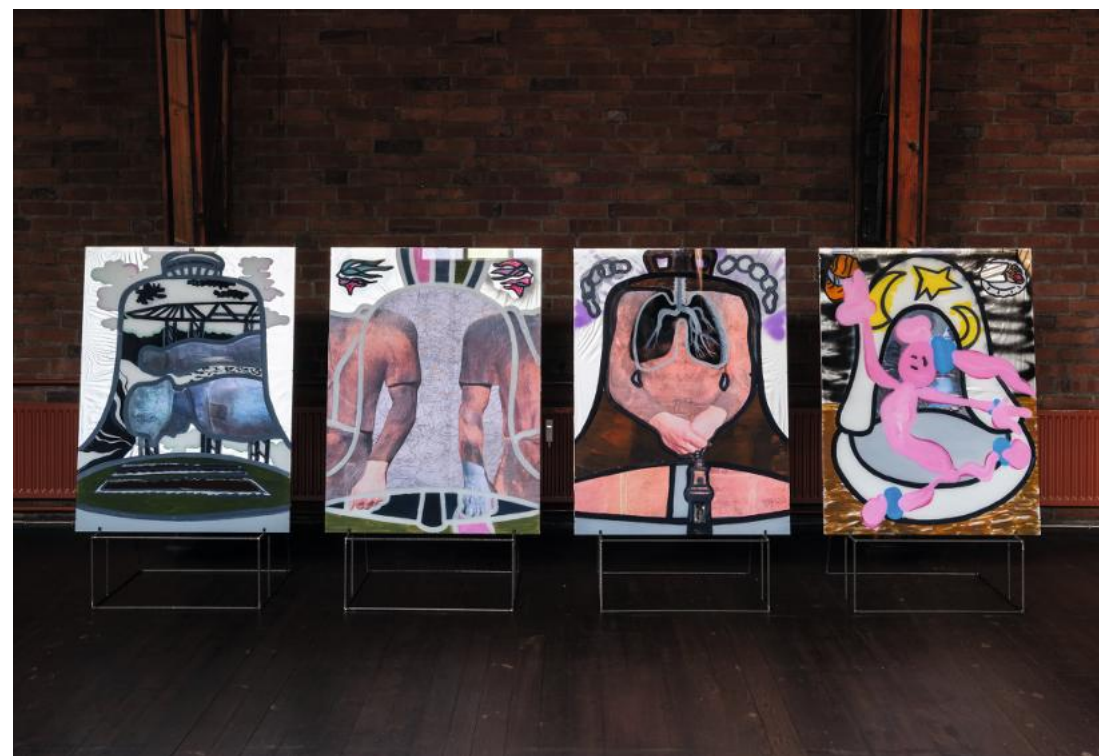
Kein Geläut, I-IV, 2026

Acrylic, foil, paper on glass
Four pieces 120 × 90 cm each

Bochum's history is inextricably linked to the company Bochumer Verein für Bergbau und Gußstahlfabrikation (BVG), which transformed a rural region into one of Germany's largest industrial centres. This growth stands for industrialisation, but also for resource extraction in the service of arms production, for collaboration with the National Socialist regime and for the systematic exploitation of natural and human resources, including forced and prisoner labour during the Second World War. For generations, it was migrant workers, among others, who sustained this industry. Labour struggles for rights, wages and recognition became part of the region's political landscape. Although the end of steel production has long been considered inevitable, today its return is being negotiated anew. Within the context of militarisation and energy crises, the decommissioned industry is once again marked as "systemically relevant." Drawing on the bell as the advertising symbol of the Bochumer Verein, Naprushkina develops a collage of symbols from this history and its monuments. Using acrylic and foil on glass, she draws on the tradition of independent production of sacred images in rural Eastern European regions.

Courtesy of the artist.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.



Mikołaj Sobczak

b. 1989, PL, based in Amsterdam and Düsseldorf

Die Spinne (The Spider), 2026

Installation, painting, video, sound

“If we cannot remember something, we shall imagine it,” Mikołaj Sobczak has said. In 1937, Hans-Heinrich von Portatius, a painter from Silesia, sealed a diary that he had written while imprisoned under Paragraph 175 of the German Penal Code, which criminalised intimate relationships between men. He instructed that the envelope should only be opened by “an artist and a human being with a warm and open heart” one hundred years later. He believed that the world would finally be ready to hear his story in 2037. However, his request was not respected. This became the starting point for Mikołaj Sobczak and historian Joanna Ostrowska to explore the history of people from the borderlands (*Grenzgebiete*) and their fragmented

↓ → *Die Spinne (The Spider)*, 2026 © Mikołaj Sobczak.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

identities. The installation combines paintings and a two-channel video. Together, they reconstruct lives marked by persecution, displacement and longing, and ask whether the future imagined by Portatius has truly arrived.

Courtesy of the artist.

Special thanks to Monika Cassel and Helen Harrison for their trust and support.

With the kind support of Adam Mickiewicz Institute, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland, Polish Institute Düsseldorf and Polana Institute Warsaw.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Cassidy Toner

b. 1992, US, based in Basel

→ *What Do You Get?*, 2026 © Cassidy Toner.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev

What Do You Get?, 2026

Modified flipper machine
75 × 140 × 180 cm

What Can You Do?, 2026

Modified flipper machine
75 × 140 × 180 cm

Cassidy Toner directs an ironic, critical, at times cynical – but always self-aware – gaze at the values that shape much of our existence: expectations, beliefs and rules that are present in the art industry as much as in religion and other areas of life built on shared agreements. Toner modified two flipper machines: one in the community room of Gethsemane Church, the other in one of Bochum's numerous Spielhallen (machine gambling parlours). The machines are free to play, and they don't hold a promise of a life-changing jackpot win. Rather, they offer a bitter-sweet commentary on the ethos of diligent, hard work as well as luck and chance as ways of self-betterment and distinction. Between a promise of wealth looming on the horizon and the opportunity of an immediate gain: What do you go for?

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Pro Helvetia.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

← Performance by Grupa Mauczka as part of the Manifesta 16+ programme.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Lukas Arp



St. Ludgerus





←← Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anton Vichrov
← Children playing in the Cabosanroque installation.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Kim Limpelius

St. Ludgerus embodies the logic of the *Pantoffelkirche*: a church conceived to serve the immediate neighbourhood, embedded in everyday life and understood as a domestic extension of the community. Today, that proximity remains, but its function has collapsed. This project does not attempt to restore its function, but to draw out its tension. In collaboration with the Catalan collective Cabosanroque, the church is transformed into a counterintuitive stadium: a space where the rules of competition are suspended and rewritten.

Here, play replaces ritual. Sports structures – goals, hoops, markings – activate the space as a field of action. There are no spectators. Outcomes become irrelevant. Success is silenced; error is amplified. This transformation incorporates a material and collective dimension. Together with Curro Claret, a stand is constructed from recycled church pews altered through workshops with local residents. Elements originally designed for obedience are reorganised as an infrastructure for gathering, exposure and friction.

Sound structures the experience. Each action activates the organ, turning the building into a collective instrument. What was once a centralised voice is fragmented into a multiplicity of voices. The church ceases to be a place of belief, but it does not stabilise as a new facility. It becomes an open space, where community does not already exist, but is produced – through conflict, uncertainty and continuous negotiation.

Presented by Creative Mediator: Josep Bohigas



Cabosanroque
(Laia Torrents Carulla &
Roger Aixut Sampietro)

ES, Barcelona

with Flexo arquitectura
(Aixa del Rey & Tomeu Ramis)

ES, Barcelona

FAIL LOUDER, 2026

Sound installation

250m²

FAIL LOUDER is a space governed by a universal linguistic code: court lines, balls, baskets, goals. This installation takes that shared language as its starting point in order to undo its syntax, deactivate its competitive logic and return sport to the realm of play. The purpose is no longer to play to win, but to construct the playing field and, with it, new potential rules. This anti-competitive space is activated when the ball does not go in, when no goal is scored, when the objective is not achieved. Here, error is not only allowed but encouraged: Success remains silent, while failure produces sound.

Sound conditions movement, triggers actions and transforms each attempt into sonic matter. The bouncing of balls, kicks, shouts, the friction of sports shoes against the floor and the resonance of the structures form a collective and ever-changing polyphony. Presented at the Church of St. Ludgerus in Bochum, the piece incorporates a new layer of meaning: Each goal activates a note on the church organ. That which had ceased to sound – the organ, the bell, the space's liturgical function of calling people together – reappears displaced, now activated by play, error and the body in motion. The work thus proposes a suspended space, somewhere between playing field and church: a new communal space built through error and listening.

Courtesy of the artists.

Sponsored by Alumilux and Fundació Lluís Coromina.
With the kind support of Institut de Cultura de Barcelona
– Barcelona City Council, Institut Ramon Llull and Acció Cultural Española, AC/E.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr

← *FAIL LOUDER*, 2026 © Cabosanroque.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann
→ *FAIL LOUDER*, 2026 © Cabosanroque.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman





Curro Claret Martí

b. 1968, SP, based in Barcelona
with Baucircus (Frida Iman Charara & Clemens
Linnenschmidt), DE, Freiburg
and student participants Polina Chernikova, Daria
Khvorova, Jaqueline Lobodda, Evgenii Savoiskii,
Oliver Teuber

← *FAIL LOUDER*, 2026 © Cabosanroque.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Rainer Schlautmann
↓ *This Is Not a Church Pew*, 2026 © Curro Claret Martí
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Kim Lempelius

This Is Not a Church Pew, 2026 Reused wood church pews

Courtesy of the artist.

With the kind support of Institut de Cultura de Barcelona
– Barcelona City Council, Institut Ramon Llull, Acción
Cultural Española, AC/E and Gelsenwasser Stiftung.

Commissioned by Manifesta 16 Ruhr.





Manifesta 16+

A biennial that turns to underused churches poses a simple question with far-reaching implications: What becomes of a space when its original purpose comes to an end? The Manifesta 16+ programme takes up this question and expands the circle of those invited to answer it.

Alongside the 12 venues of Manifesta 16 Ruhr, which are developed by the Creative Mediators, the 16+ programme grew out of an open call. Under the title *This is not a church*, more than 200 submissions were received, from which an international jury selected 16 projects proposed by artists, initiatives, associations, parishes and welfare organisations with a strong connection to the region. The programme thus broadens the biennial's authorship: Here, the impulse comes from the places themselves and the neighbourhoods around them.

The programme extends the biennial beyond the four host cities of Duisburg, Essen, Gelsenkirchen and Bochum into six further municipalities – Bottrop, Dortmund, Herne, Marl, Mülheim an der Ruhr and Oberhausen. Spreading across ten cities, the 16 projects trace a picture of the Ruhr Area that resembles a web of neighbourhoods.

What the projects share – with one another and with the biennial as a whole – is their approach to the church building itself. They are treated as social infrastructure: a place expected to do something. Often that something takes the form of practical community intervention. A church becomes a food-bank kitchen (*Go(o)d Kitchen*), a counselling centre (*Sinsen vernetzt – Kirche neu gedacht*), a neighbourhood square (*Ludgeriplatz 2.0*) or a volunteer-run church (*Nebenan: Quartiersgeschichten*). The boundary between an art project and community work is left deliberately porous.

Themes that have shaped the Ruhr Area's history as a region of immigration and transformation recur throughout the Manifesta 16+ programme. The history of labour migration resonates here, as do questions of queer and non-binary identity (*Holy Spit / Święta Ślina*), of solidarity across generations and of ecological adaptation – as when a church becomes a cool refuge in summer (*Shaping Tomorrow*). Other projects work with a digital culture deliberately practised offline (*Baze*), with the region's cultural memory and its workers' songs (*Sing Our Songs!*), with listening as a social practice (*Zuhören*) or with the visibility of Sinti and Roma communities (*Reclaiming the Space of Worship*).

← Performance by Grupa Mauczka as part of the Manifesta 16+ programme.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Lukas Arp

The time horizon is striking. Most of these projects look less to what the churches once were than to what they might become. They function as prototypes for the reuse of a type of building that, with declining membership, increasingly faces vacancy across the region. The biennial becomes a temporary experiment with an open outcome: Some interventions end with Manifesta 16 Ruhr, while others are intended as a beginning. Whether a temporary meeting place becomes a lasting one is decided not during the biennial but afterwards – in the neighbourhoods themselves.

Perhaps this is where the particular contribution of the 16+ programme lies. It leaves the question of these spaces' future to the people who live nearby. *This is not a church* then reads not only as an observation about a change of function, but as an invitation to decide together what might take its place.

The Projects

Bochum

Holy Spits / Święta Ślina – Acts Towards Unbinary States

Grupa Mauczka (Julia Nitschke, Natalie Pielok, Tubi Malcharzik), with artists from Poland, the Ruhr Area and beyond
Gethsemane-Kirche, Bochum
An evening dedicated to the art of *śląsking* brings together drag, queer nightlife and performance art. Through short performances, it explores non-binary identities and what Upper Silesia was, is and could be.

Bottrop

Auf.Atmen

Künstler Kollektiv Bottrop
(Artist Collective Bottrop)
St. Franziskus, Bottrop
A former church becomes a living, breathing cultural space. At its heart is an exhibition that treats the building as a resonating body and brings together a range of artistic interventions.

Dortmund

Baze

SÖZ! e. V., Sam Hopkins,
Daniela Berglehn
*Sozial Ökologisches Zentrum, former
Markus-Kirche, Dortmund-Nordstadt*
A former church is reimagined as a place where young people create and exchange digital content offline. Workshops and swap sessions build a local creative community beyond the algorithm.

This is not a Bar

Wilko Meiborg and Felix Meermann
*Sozial Ökologisches Zentrum, former
 Markus-Kirche, Dortmund-Nordstadt*
 A temporary pub takes shape inside a
 repurposed post-war church, furnished with
 discarded pieces of “Gelsenkirchen Baroque.”
 Visitors rebuild furniture, share drinks and
 exchange memories of changing ideas of living
 and community.

Reclaiming the Space of Worship – An Artistic Manifesto

Save Space e. V., Romano Than e. V.,
 Museum Ostwall
*Heilige-Familie-Kirche,
 Dortmund-Marten*
 An installation combines Christian iconography
 with elements of Sinti and Roma culture. The
 church becomes a meeting place for local resi-
 dents as well as Sinti and Roma communities.

Nebenan: Quartiersgeschichten – Auf dem Weg zur Ehrenamtskirche (Next Door: Neighbourhood Stories – Towards a Volunteer-Run Church)

Dr. Bettina Heine-Hippler, Kirchengemeinde St. Martin
St. Martin-Kirche, Dortmund
 The area around the church becomes a neighbourhood meeting point. A newly created piazzetta hosts exhibitions, workshops and events, sketching a long-term vision for the quarter.

Shaping Tomorrow and Open House, New Communities

Die Urbanisten e. V.
Heilig-Geist-Kirche, Dortmund
 Collaborative interventions test new forms of neighbourhood community. In summer, the church becomes a cool refuge and a space to reflect on identity, community and ecological change.

Ludgeriplatz 2.0

WeLoveLudgeriplatz
Ludgeriplatz, Duisburg-Neudorf
 The square in front of St. Ludgerus Church becomes a lively, inclusive meeting place. City walks, participatory workshops and a digital platform strengthen neighbourhood ties.

Der Stoff, aus dem die Nachbarschaft besteht (The Fabric the Neighbourhood Is Made Of)

Negar Foroughanfar
Melanchthonkirche, Essen-Holsterhausen
 Inspired by the wrapping projects of the artist duo Christo and Jeanne-Claude, neighbourhood groups sew, write, cook and collect fabric together. The result is a collectively made textile artwork for the church facade.

Maktaba Room

Cate Lartey and Donja Nasser
Friseursalon Herr de Vanna, Essen
 An ongoing project that foregrounds stories of global migration through literature and photography. Readings and conversations bring the inclusive cultural space to life.

Sacred Kitchen

Beate Gärtner
Gemeindezentrum Fulerum, Essen
 Three communal cooking sessions bring neighbourhood life and artistic practice together. They serve both as a shared experience and as material for a video installation shown in the church.

Gelsenkirchen

Sing Our Songs!

Katholische Gemeinde Gelsenkirchen,
Musiktheater im Revier, Kunstmuseum
Gelsenkirchen
St. Mariä Himmelfahrt, Gelsenkirchen
The tradition of workers' songs in the Ruhr Area
is revived. Public rehearsals and community
performances turn the deconsecrated church
into a space for collective singing and shared
memory.

Herne

Catch the Light – Build Bridges

Pottporus e. V, with the Pottporus Youth
Ensemble
Christuskirche, Herne-Wanne
The church becomes an intercultural laboratory
in which art acts as a catalyst for dialogue and
democratic participation. At its core is an exper-
imental dance theatre created together with
young people.

Marl

Sinsen vernetzt – Kirche neu gedacht (Connected – New Ideas for Churches)

AWO Unterbezirk Münsterland-Reckling-
hausen, Sinsener Art, Sinsen lebt, Lina
Wenzel, Sinsener Runde, Arvid Weber
Kreuzkirche, Marl-Sinsen
The church becomes an inclusive meeting
place, a counselling centre and a cultural venue.
Participatory methods create a democratic
space for dialogue and shared activity across
generations.

Mülheim an der Ruhr

Zuhören (Listening)

Makroscope e. V and 'Ruhrorter' group at
Theater an der Ruhr
Project coordination: Kara Handgraaf,
Steffen Börgmann
Artistic Team: Max Brands, Elisa
Kühnl, Ole-Kristian Heyer, Franziska
Schneeberger, Wanja van Suntum

St. Engelbert, Mülheim an der Ruhr
A deconsecrated church becomes a school of
listening. Recordings, conversations and guided
walks explore listening, speaking and silence
as social practices and form an evolving sound
archive.

Oberhausen

Go(o)d Kitchen: Building and Cooking Together

Oberhausener Tafel e. V and kitev
Kirche Heilige Familie, Oberhausen
Building, cooking and sharing meals turn the
church into an open space for learning and
encounter. The project draws attention to the
social realities of food banks and rethinks
communal spaces.

Communities & Education

The Communities & Education Programme emerges from collaborative research with different neighbourhoods and jointly explores the needs and aims of local communities. The different projects within this programme collectively address a wide range of topics, such as youth participation, female empowerment, community building and language diversity. Whilst some projects were carried out prior to the opening and present their outcomes during Manifesta 16 Ruhr, others are process-oriented and focus on exchange and shared experiences throughout a series of gatherings and events during the biennial. The Communities & Education programme has been developed closely with artists, schools, museums, associations and other initiatives.



← Workshop led by Julia Nitschke as part of the programme *School, Neighbourhood and Us*.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

Youth Shift

Youth Shift is the youth department of Manifesta 16 Ruhr. Since November 2025, a group of young people aged 13 to 18 has met every two weeks to understand how such a complex project is organised, getting to know the biennial's various departments from the inside. In these meetings, they not only listened but also actively reflected with the team on what was presented, offering their perspectives and considering potential collaborations. Later the group used this information to develop their own project within Manifesta 16 Ruhr.

Mapping Manifesta 16 Ruhr: Youth Shift Edition

Youth Shifters wanted to help younger visitors find their way around Manifesta 16 Ruhr and focus on projects designed specifically for them. As most of the Youth Shift members are based in Gelsenkirchen, the idea of a *Youth Shift Map* focusing on Manifesta 16 Ruhr in Gelsenkirchen came up. This map includes recommendations for young people within the Manifesta 16 Ruhr programme, Manifesta 16+ and what to do in Gelsenkirchen beyond visiting the biennial. The map can be completed by collecting stamps at each venue. To encourage young people to discover what's on in the other host cities, a prize is offered to those who collect stamps from the four Manifesta 16 Ruhr venues in Gelsenkirchen, as well as a fifth stamp obtained at any of the venues in the other three cities. The local graphic designer Yussra Alaswad was invited to design the map in a collaborative process with the group, ensuring that the Youth Shifters could stay in control of the whole process: from the initial idea to the finished printed map.

Youth Shift is a collaboration with the Regionalverband Ruhr, designed as a pilot project to investigate how the perspectives of younger people can be integrated in short-term project structures like biennials or festivals.

The members of Youth Shift are Gizem Acevit, Okan Acevit, Mahdi Alizada, Timur Can, Khadija Hayat Nousheen, Abbass Kataya, Ranim Kataya and Mia Ninković. The project has been coordinated by Johannes Porwoll.



Members of Youth Shift working on their map of Manifesta 16 Ruhr. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

Spotlights

Building on existing institutions, associations and initiatives in the Ruhr Area, the community programme *Spotlights* aims to reflect the perspectives of people whose everyday lives are shaped by experiences of discrimination.

Through participatory formats, *Spotlights* encourages cultural engagement while fostering community, exchange and empowerment through creative expression. The programme's different actions, gatherings, talks and other events have been designed to facilitate connection to art and culture by placing participation at the forefront. Each event seeks to create spaces in which community can emerge and where social discourses can be addressed and critically examined.

The entire programme has been shaped jointly with established organisations and networks across the region, working together as equal partners. Through this approach, the programme aimed to create sustainable opportunities for networking and collaboration.

Spotlights is composed of *Off Script*, *Stadium of Dreams – Female* Spaces* and *Encounters. A Talkshow*.

Off Script

Off Script presents a series of readings and writing workshops highlighting post-migrant perspectives from the Ruhr Area. With a focus on self-publishing and empowerment, the programme was conceived in collaboration with Bahnhof Langendreer e.V. and readymade bookshop.

Through accessible formats that explore writing and literature, this project aims to create a space for (creative) exchange, centring voices and experiences that are often underrepresented within mainstream cultural narratives. *Off Script* encourages participants to experiment with language, storytelling and publishing as tools for visibility, resistance and self-expression.

The authors involved in the programme are Rojin Arslan, Judith Baumgärtner, Sasha Dominique Djoleo, Filiz-Ela Er, Dinçer Güçyeter and Orli Yomi, accompanied by Esra Canpalat, Negar Foughanfar and Sandra Karangwa – all artists, authors and cultural workers based in the Ruhr Area and nearby. The programme is coordinated by Dr. Alexis Rodríguez Suárez, artist, community organiser and curator, and Lukas Hermann, who works at the intersection of literature, music and curatorial practice.

- ← A reading with Dinçer Güçyeter as part of the *Off Script* series at Christ-König.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham
- Writing workshop from the *Off Script* series at Bahnhof Langendreer.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Silviu Guiman





Begrüßungsansagen

- x beidog Pausen machen & trinken
- x in Kin-Sitzen kommunizieren
- x auf wichtige Spots achten
- x Fotos
- x Feedback
- x BIPOLAR



Stadium of Dreams – Female* Spaces

How can girls and young women claim, shape and make spaces visible to the public? Led by Alma Gildenast – actress and psychologist – and in cooperation with Mädchenzentrum e.V. and Schalke Hilft! Foundation, this proposal empowers young women and girls through culture and feminism to create their own space.

Particularly in the cities of the Ruhr Area – and especially in the Schalke district of Gelsenkirchen – issues such as safety, belonging and social participation are central for many girls and young women. The *Stadium of Dreams – Female* Spaces* project creates a space where these issues can be discussed and creatively addressed together.

St. Joseph church in Gelsenkirchen-Schalke is being transformed into a temporary Female* Safer Space, which young women will help to design. Through a process accompanied by artists, designers, musicians and facilitators from the worlds of sport and pedagogy, the group will work together using the space, their body, voice, movement and pop music.

The project is divided into two phases. Eleven young women will participate in June, while the second phase will work with a larger group in August.

*self-identifying as female

Encounters: A Talkshow

At Manifesta, as a nomadic institution, we are deeply aware of the complexities of cultivating community engagement through arts and culture. Despite this, we truly believe in the capacity of art to act as an agent for social change. For this reason, we wanted to convene with agents from the Ruhr Area, where we are operating now, that are already working on the intersection of arts and social change and learn in a mutual exchange with them.

Encounters: A Talkshow focuses on the potential of community-based artistic processes to strengthen social dynamics of solidarity and mutual support, opening up a space for strengthening connections between the agents present there.

The participants include, amongst others, Donja Nasseri, Mädchenzentrum e.V. Gelsenkirchen and flintasy e.V.



← Participants in a workshop organised by *Stadion der Träume – Female Spaces** at the Musiktheater im Revier. Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

Schule, Nachbarschaft und Wir

(School, Neighbourhood and Us)

In the face of growing demands on educational institutions – which extend far beyond the classical understanding of educational work – schools play a crucial role in facilitating social cohesion. As they increasingly reflect broader societal challenges, it is essential to explore how they can actively contribute to social cohesion rather than merely reacting to its tensions.

Schule, Nachbarschaft und Wir (School, Neighbourhood and Us) understands schools as extended communities that can connect with their surrounding neighbourhoods to turn them into spaces of the commons. Within this programme, artists Havin Al-Sindy, Constructlab, Miedya Mahmud and Julia Nitschke have investigated how schools both mirror and influence social cohesion, emphasising diversity as a source of connection rather than an obstacle through a site-specific collaboration with one school each.

They have been working together with students from different schools in the neighbourhoods of Manifesta 16 venues, focusing on topics that connect schools and neighbourhoods to create spaces where linguistic diversity and collaborative learning are valued.

During winter and spring 2026, the artists – along with students, teachers and the communities around the schools – have been working to create different artistic proposals that are presented as part of the Manifesta 16 Ruhr programme.

All following works are newly commissioned as part of *Schule, Nachbarschaft und Wir* (School, Neighbourhood and Us), initiated by the Manifesta 16 Ruhr Education and Mediation team. With the kind support of AGR Gruppe.

→ Children from Gelsenkirchen at the performance
→ → *How to carry a locust* by Havin Al-Sindy,
in front of and inside St. Josef.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham





Havîn Al-Sîndy

b. IR, based in NRW and Başûr

Kulî (Locust), 2026

Video, 16’

How to carry a locust, 2026

Performance, drawings, paper, wood, motors

Text based on a project description by Prof. Dr. Elena Korowin, Art Historian

This work of many intergenerational hands speaks from within Kurdish history – a history of being watched, forced displacement and the struggle for self-determination. At the same time, it opens onto present experiences in which war, dispossession and survival are inscribed. Locusts do not appear out of nowhere. They are nodes: of different narratives, of crises and of shifted responsibilities. What is called a plague is a relieving lie – for behind the swarm stand wars, climate change, the exploitation of land and the struggle against oppression. Swarms and texts shaped by children inscribe themselves into the exhibition space, shifting it and exposing its symbolic order. Thus, the work emerges through organically grown collaborative processes. A portable locust, moved by children, deliberately shifts questions of responsibility and observation.

Courtesy of the artist.

Havîn Al-Sîndy in collaboration with students and teachers

Artistic research: Mizgîn Bilmen, Prof. Dr. Elena Korowin and Dr. Nesrin Tanç
Performers: Selma Duraković, Stsiapan Hurski, Annalisa Palmieri, Mariane Verbecq
Artistic and pedagogical assistance: Ronz Ali, Özlem Avcı, Valerie Bayina, Dilara Cansi, Hanna El Kabbout and Rana El Kabbout
Sound: Ferris Bikic (Ferris), Dilara Boz, Filiz Dengbêj, Eylem Külahçı, Adriana Nikolova (Pe4enkata), Pelda Yıldız
Technical support: Rouba Ali, CF BolzTereick, Nico Rittinghaus
Agricultural engineers: Bêrivan Mihemed, Zana Xelo
Film: Havîn Al-Sîndy, Till Bödeker, Enya Burger, Amjad Kurdo, Leyla Toprak

Mohammed-Salim-Khalaf school (Qamishli)
Pedagogical and artistic director: Rania Ahmed Hussein
Pedagogical and artistic supporter: Diyar Abdulbasit Osso

Students:

Mustafa Abdo
Mir Af Ismail Agha
Nada Ahmad
Alkaz Ridwan Ali
Firashin Ali
Yasmin Ali
Shana Malik Derwish
Idris Hassou
Amara Hussein
Amir Hussein
Cijan Hussein
Hussein Ali Hussein
Lalashin Ali Hussein
Shirin Ali Hussein
Zeylan Khalil Hussein
Zinar Khalil Hussein
Ilaf Mahmoud Ibrahim
Julia Mahmoud Ibrahim
Lina Mahmoud Ibrahim
Mohammed Mahmoud Ibrahim
Sundus Ibrahim
Ayla Masoud Khalil
Bila Masoud Khalil
Mohammad Khalil
Rahaf Khalil
Lejna Masovic
Hivi Mohammad
Biyar Raad Mohammed
Masoud Omar
Youssef Omar
Akram Idris Osman
Haya Idris Osman
Cilia Othman
Dilan Othman
Kesra Riyad
Kifara Ali Salih
Hussein Sattam
Ciwan Hussein Othman Khalil Sheikh
Rimas Sultan

Communities & Education

Ali Shiyar Beko
Haifiya Shiyar Beko
Mohammed Shiyar Beko
Diyar Dalil Abdul Qadir
Fahim Mahmoud
Rojian haj hamo
Maram Obeid
Lund Qasim
Jihad Shabkhi
Nubar Türkiya
Amina Ramadan Yahya

Students & Educators Gesamtschule Erle (Gelsenkirchen)

Felix Boateng Acheampong
Mohamad Alhamadin
Khasan Karim Al-Barsha
Joud Aldaher
Yousef Aldaher
Malak Alkaddour
Mohammad Mura Alkaddour
Ilaf Al-Mohammad
Amar Almohamed
Ammer Alobid
Asmaa Alsaleh
Mohammad Naser Alsaleh
Shatha Alzaid
Laith Alzaid
Kelis Animwaa Asamoah
Ahmed Mitkov Atanasov
Andrea Bährend
Marian Bălteanu
Cătălin Benjamin Iordan
Sara Bojić
Anastasiia Burlaka
Andrei Chernov
Selenia Maya Ciulin
Raisa Alexia Ciulin
Muzafer Daskalski
Varvara Debela
Daniil Demchuk
Mira Mohamad Dibo
Antonia-Raluca Dura
Katerina Dzhus
Sofiiia Dziubenko
Polina Dziubenko
Dzhait Filipov Rangelov
Anaile Camila Ortiz Gale
Amira Goagară
Rebekka Goman
Delyar Habach
Hoda Habbash
Eryk Eugeniusz Markowicz
Ali Asghar Haidari
Hayder Saif Salim Al-Hraishawi
Mousa Saif Salim Al-Hraishawi
Hristo Markov
Huru Imamova
Malak Imamova
Sarah-Amalia Ion
Isaia Iordan
Ilanis Petru Iordan
Anna Fomina

Sergij Sokolov
Oleksandr Sokolov
Oleksandr Smykalov
Wesam Smoqi
Rebeka-Estera Stoica
Ana Stoica
Matvii Shkumatov
Masa Ninkovic
Mia Ninkovic
Sonia Meterez
Oskar Miszczyk
Mustafa Mohammed Ali
Maram Mohammed Ali
Kemal Kaya
Bejna Kaya
Maksym Kepin
Illija Klimenko
Yaroslava Kochetova
Ibrahim Hurdin
Bobi Isztoika
Recep Berat Özdemir
Gülfidan Gülçin Özdemir
Mario Paraipan
Benjamin Paraipan Epaminonda
Diego Antonio Epaminonda
Mercedes Ohemaa Prempeh Palance
Rareş Anton Popa
Mădălin Radu
Narcis Radu
Martin Rhein
Adelina Damarisa Rusen
Amelia Rydelin
Luciarita Santuccio
Salvatore Santuccio
Dia Sava
Majed Seidu
Vesa Selimi
Wesam Smoqi
Konstantin Trubitsyn
Viktor Yakovenko
Viktoriia Yakovenko
Rostyslav Yatsiv
Xeniya Mitelshtein

Students Anne Frank Gesamtschule (Duisburg)

Zaynab Abdulwahid
Fatima AlKhalidi
Hannah Alfert
Ibrahim Mert Akgüre
Tilda Ackermann
Selin Akkurt
Ali Cinar Kocak
Akash Mohamed
Selin Fatma Aydin
Dustin Dylan Jacob Bandmann
Nazly Azad
Karma Barakat
Hamza Hasan Baskir
Emma Miriam Becker
Paul Jonas Becker
Noyan Benning

Mina Sevgi Bezek
Dila Nur Bartu
Ben Luca Bergmann
Louis Biewald
Phil Bramhoff
Paul Bornemann
DeryaMaria Botezatu
DavidLuis Botezatu
Lara-Christin Böttcher
Elissa Nur Cakir
Sirac Alaattin Cakin
Ersin Candan
Ella Chajacki
Luca Csillig
Mia Damski
Felix Dragoi
Dilem Dilekci
Melina Zoe Dimoudas
Lotta Lina Dittmann
Milan Alexander Dötterl Gruscza
Lua Tainah Vicente Eberz
Andreea Beatrice Florea
Emir-Milan Efe
Yalbenny Estrella Penalo
Neron Emerllahu
Tailer Feron
Julia Firganek
Ésaie Daniel Forcados
Abraham Giovanni Forcados
Bella Amelie Freitag
Mirja Jane Fröhlich
Robert Funk
Marius Garske
Carl Eric Geisthoff
Luisa Katharina Gillmann
Mario Göbler
Raysa Daria Gotu
CarrieSue Gnoth
Mathea Gruhl
Mahir Günes
Liya Gürel
Lenia Haase
Davin Haase
Tjara Haase
Talina Marie Hahne
Leon Harder
Ronja Sonja Hauße
Alexa-Lee Haupt
Conner Wilfried Haupt
Johannes Agustin Heimann
David Alexandros Heil
Timo Hipp
Leonie Höhn
LennoxFinn Hüls
Fabian Moritz Hübner
Muhamad Ibrahim
Paela Ibrahim
Michael Isenko
Ruzdhi Mihaylov Iliev
GianEmilio Janssen
Sandrine Kanthak
LeonJoel Kaus
Dua Kaya
Hidaya Aqidah Kaya

Dimitar Zaprinov Kayov
Leonie Kappenberg
Emily Kasick
Lewis Kasick
Varvara Kholodova
Jonas Kipras Kliuba
Sara Knieriem
Ali Koczak
Eva Korchenko
Miron Korchenko
Selim Köse
Lucia Marie Krull
Philip Kubosch
Ryan Kumar
Abby Florentine Lamatz
Damon Daniel Lawrenz
Yuma Lee
John Dean Küttner
Lennart Louis Link
Lia Loesdau
Liam Noah Ludwig
Marius Mader
Isa Mamudowski
Elias Mangelmann
Sara Marodin
Hannah Antonia Marschall
Biser Raychev Marinov
Hamim Müfit Mehan

Xenia Meysar
Paul Meyer
Milan Mettendorf
Damon Trunks Palicki
Raúl Javier Montoya Plaza
Julius Alexander Moritz
Lea Sophie Nehring
Shaima Nemr
Felix Samuel Niznik
MerleFabienne Nowak
Alena Nonnweiler
Vladyslava Ohurtsova
Efosa Daniel Osaze
Tristan Pannen
Angelina Pietzonka
Klara Miriam Plonka
Fabio Pöen
Henrik Petersen
Juma Lotta Preis
Lia Estelle Prokein
Mila Michelle Rech
Zoe Rech
Joyce Emilia Reintsch
Luke Taylor Reintsch
Nesrin Shaban Redzhep
Josefine Repp
Eryk Julian Rolnik
Noah Ruppel

Arafat Saado
Hussein Saado
Rukaiyah Saado
Eren Cebrail Saglam
Ennie May Hildegard Scharfenort
Lias Sven Scharfenort
Elina Amelie Schneider
Konstantin Schwarz
Tom Schymura
Jana Sophie Segebrecht
Philipp Sittnick
Maya Specht
Sam Streicher
Miro Marcel Randolph Stekkel
Arten Tajik
Poyraz Tekcan
Mahi Tirman
Tuğra Han Tütüncü
Can Uyar
Max Leon Voigt
Jan Wagner
Tom Wiesner
Elias Wolsing
Neslihan Kahraman Yusein
Hamza Yüksekdağ
Jayden Zuther
Elisa Marie Zick
Jonahtan Zola



Constructlab

(European based network) –
Ana Brandão, Patrick Hubmann,
Corinne Riepert, Alexander
Römer and Emil Widmer

Hüttenspiel – A Space for Children, 2026
Wood, textiles, found material, modular system

Together with local schoolchildren, Constructlab questions the urban environment surrounding their neighbourhood and school building, an environment that is mostly created by and for adults. Based on the idea of the playful building of huts in the woods, they design and assemble collectively modular structures that invite play, rest and hosting small events. By using found materials and simple techniques the structures are reacting to the needs of children and can be easily assembled and dismantled. This way these structures can appear and disappear in various spaces like churches, schools or parks.

↙ How to carry a locust, 2026
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Till Bödeker
↓ Constructlab's Hüttenspiel event takes place every
→ Wednesday during Manifesta 16 Ruhr in front of
St. Anna – Hatay Engin Music Hall.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham

The process is a hands-on “school of collaboration”: improvisational, imaginative and inclusive, teaching how shared spaces emerge from many hands.

Constructlab in collaboration with the primary school Kurt-Schumacher-Straße and the Faculty of Spatial Planning and Urban Development Processes at TU Dortmund.

Participants: students of the Känguru and Koala class along with teachers Gabi Gärtner and Julia Söbbe. Courtesy of Constructlab.







Miedya Mahmod

b. 1996, DE, based in Bochum

Language, Space, Belonging, 2026
Zine publication, ink on paper

Identity is shaped through language and often reflects the dynamics of multilingualism. Using narrative, poetic and performative methods, a group of young people explored language as both an artistic medium and a social tool, creating a space to exchange personal and collective perspectives on migration, belonging and voice. The result is a collaborative and experimental zine that documents the voices, textures and practices emerging from the group’s encounters.

Courtesy of the artist.

Miedya Mahmod in collaboration with eleven students from Alice-Salomon-Berufskolleg in Bochum.

Students Alice-Salomon-Berufskolleg (Bochum)

- Alan Alosman
- Omar Alsalibi
- Danylo Chotan
- Simaf Ibrahim
- Mohammed Sudais Koli
- Alicja Krezel
- Alika Kurmakaieva
- Yevhenii Los
- Simaf Mohammad
- Waqar Safi
- Aleksy Patryk Szweda



Julia Nitschke

b. 1988, DE, based in Bochum

The School Non-Cyclopaedia – A Living Language Archive of the Classroom, 2026

Patchwork blanket with text

Design: Lea Szramek

Conceptual Consulting: Laura Strack

The School Non-Cyclopaedia – A Living Language Archive of the Classroom reinterprets marginalised languages through a feminist, queer and poetic lens; the project moves beyond dictionary definitions, creating space for subjectivity, contradiction, humor, and creativity. Students become linguistic authors, creating poetic texts from conversations with family members and neighbors that document the multilingual realities of the classroom while recording, transforming and celebrating everyday languages, dialects and sociolects. The result is a living, shared resource that highlights linguistic diversity as artistic material and social practice.

Courtesy of the artist.

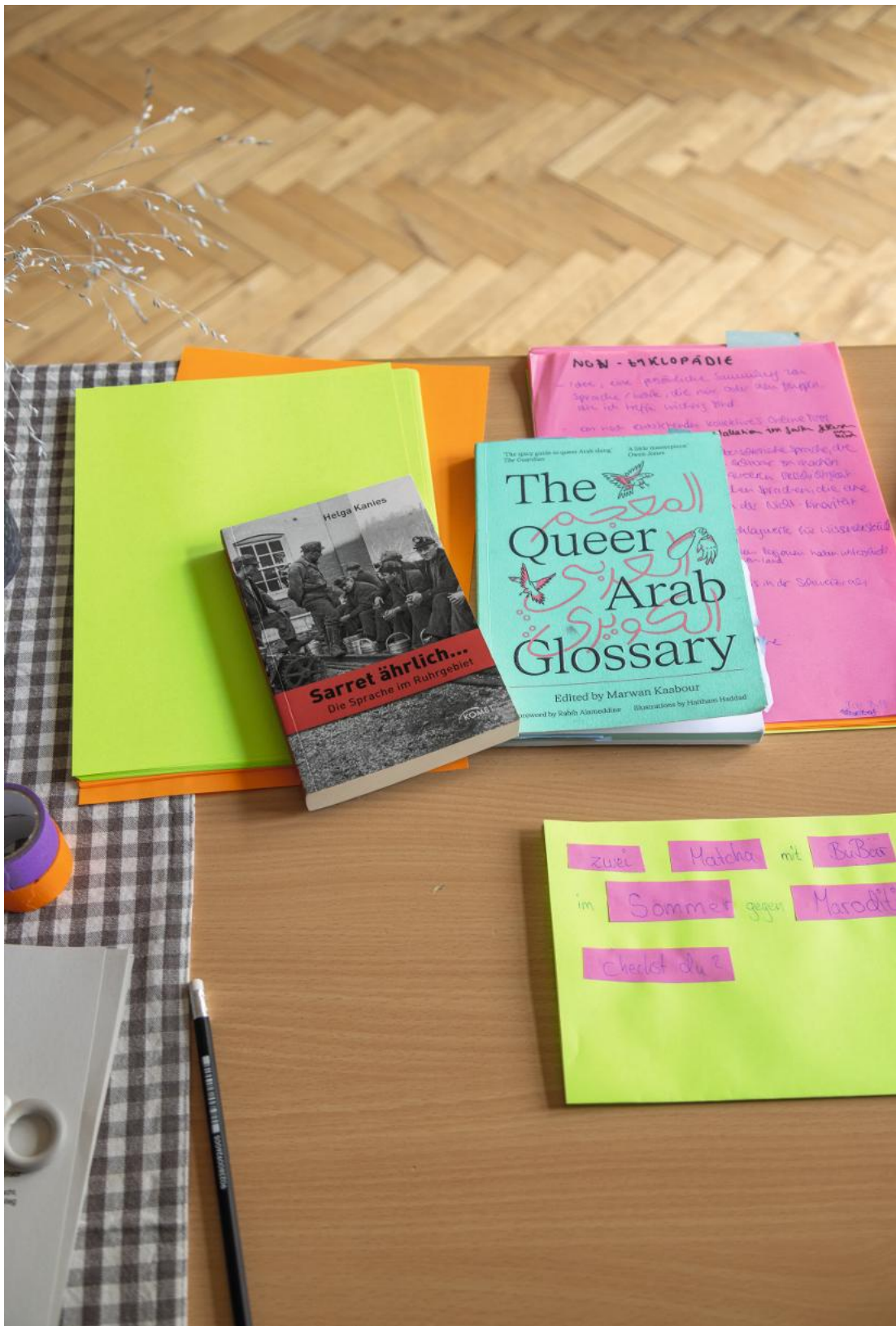
Julia Nitschke in collaboration with students from Alice-Salomon-Berufskolleg in Bochum.

Students Alice-Salomon-Berufskolleg (Bochum)

Nayla Husniye Aksoy
Doruk Avci
Yannick Bozynski
Mirjana Brkljac
Marius Buch
Bahar Bülbül
Hendrik-Paul Dillinger
Mia Estelle Freisenhausen
Zilan Güllü
Katharina Hachmann
Katharina Hachmann
Sinja Mara Heinrich
Dominique Hövekenmeier
Divina Sanchez Jimenez
Celine Juschkat
Oana Kästner
Leandra Knoppik
Jennifer König
Anhelina Lebid
Florentine Luthmer
Emily Nowak
Joel Pohlplatz
Florian Schacht
Lea Seraphina Sielecki
Elisa Smoczyk
Jana Sperling
Martin Stephan
Mia Karin Stolze
Nesren Tabasha
Sarah Thorn
Leonie Weiher
Melanie Weißenfels
David Wojciechowski
Özgül Dilay Yildiz

- *The School Non-Cyclopaedia – A Living Language Archive of the Classroom, 2026*
© Julia Nitschke.
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Ivan Erofeev
- Impressions from the workshop with Julia Nitschke at the Alice-Salomon-Berufskolleg.
Photos © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham





Mediation programme

In the context of Manifesta 16 Ruhr, mediation is seen as a practice that brings people together to exchange ideas about culture and society. Through different walks and activities, mediators invite visitors to express their own thoughts, ask questions and converse with one another. In these exchanges, visitors and mediators collectively engage with different artistic statements, sharing their perspectives and experiences.

The main goal of the Mediation Programme is to make the proposals within Manifesta 16 Ruhr's programme and the neighbourhoods surrounding them visible and accessible through dialogue with visitors on equal terms. Manifesta 16 Ruhr understands mediation as a form of moderation that supports the process of gathering knowledge collectively rather than merely an individual imparting knowledge to a group.

Led by a group of eight mediators based in the area and with diverse yet complementary backgrounds, the Manifesta 16 Ruhr Mediation programme is composed of Open Walks, Group Walks, Activities for Schools and Family Activities. Through this group of mediators, visitors are invited to discover Kulturkirche Liebfrauen, St. Gertrud, Christ-König, St. Josef, St. Bonifatius – Ferdane Satır Tea Garden and Thomaskirche – Hava Güleç Living Room.

→ Open Walk as part of the Mediation programme
Photo © Manifesta 16 Ruhr / Anna Jocham



Initiators & Partners

Initiating Partners

MANIFESTA

REGIONALVERBAND
RUHR

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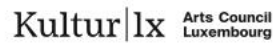
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