

Zauri Matikashvili.

*You may not want to  
be here (EN)*

Kunsthalle Münster

Kunsthalle Münster, Hafenweg 28, 5th floor, 48155 Münster

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 12–6 pm (Free admission)

[www.kunsthalle-muenster.de](http://www.kunsthalle-muenster.de)

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Opening: June 12, 2026, 6 pm

Angela Stähler, *Mayor City of Münster* (Greeting)

Merle Radtke, *Director Kunsthalle Münster* (Introduction)

Events:

→ 14/6/2026, 3 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Conversation in the exhibition with Zauri Matikashvili and Merle Radtke

→ 2/7/2026, 6 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Conversation in the exhibition with Sarah Hübscher and Zauri Matikashvili

→ 12/7/2026, 3 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Guided tour through the exhibition with Heiko Lietz

→ 27/8/2026, 3 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Guided tour through the exhibition with Heiko Lietz

→ 7/9/2026, 7 pm, Schloßtheater Münster

Agnès Varda: *Daguerréotypes*, France 1975, 80 min, French original version with English subtitles

→ 13/9/2026, 3 pm, Kunsthalle Münster

Conversation in the exhibition with Zauri Matikashvili and Silke Schönfeld

→ 14/9/2026, 7 pm, Schloßtheater Münster

Abbas Kiarostami: *Ta'm-e gīlās (Taste of Cherry)*, Iran 1997, 98 min, Farsi original version with English subtitles

You will find information on further events on our website:

[www.kunsthalle-muenster.de/en/](http://www.kunsthalle-muenster.de/en/)

Colophon: Director Kunsthalle Münster: Merle Radtke / Curator: Merle Radtke / Curatorial assistant: Heiko Lietz / Communication: Marie-Féline Malavasi / Secretariat (Cultural Office): Mona Markotić-Renner / Bookkeeping (Cultural Office): Ursula Kubik, Hildegard Thesing / Public relations: Artefakt Kulturkonzepte / Design: JMMP – Julian Mader, Max Prediger / Texts: Heiko Lietz, Marie-Féline Malavasi, Merle Radtke / Editing: Heiko Lietz, Merle Radtke / Translation: Barbara Lang (EN) / Technical execution: Christian Geißler / Media technology: Robin Völkert / Construction: Micael Goncalves Ribeiro, Anne Horz, Jaimun Kim

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You may not want to be here

*Being an artist is not a job, but rather a lifelong calling.*  
(Yousef Murad, in: *In Katernberg*, 2022)

Zauri Matikashvili is an observer. He uses his camera to attest to contemporary stories, to record social, political and historical events, and challenge given societal structures. From a variety of perspectives, he looks at topics such as identity, traditional gender roles, segregation, belonging, disunity, racism and increasing repression. In his works, he examines in which ways people's everyday lives are related to aspects of power and resistance, and how exactly societies function—or not: *You may not want to be here*.

Against the backdrop of a democracy in decline, the growing challenge of authoritarian populism, a widespread shift to the political right, along with a rise in social inequalities, Matikashvili's work takes on a notable sense of urgency. It is about basic humaneness—ours included. He offers us a counterpoint to those loud, polarizing and defamatory positions that tend to disregard, deny or distort the facts.

Zauri Matikashvili's films are dedicated to individuals, groups of people or places. Quite often, his focus is on people who otherwise receive little attention. Matikashvili's films mostly revolve around people's specific life situations based on which he traces socio-cultural and political contexts—usually beyond the major political arenas, though still closely interwoven with them.

When shooting a film, he uses as little technology as possible and takes on many tasks himself, in order to reduce the distance to the people being filmed and thus create an intimate atmosphere. He is a participant-observer who immerses himself in the field and participates in what is going on. By always remaining approachable to those in front of the camera, he fosters a unique sense of closeness, while nonetheless maintaining an appropriate distance. He observes them, follows their actions and tries to spark conversations. Some sequences consist solely of images, while in others the protagonists comment on the situation, talking about themselves, their everyday lives and experiences. It is their stories that occupy centre stage, drawing the viewer deeper into Matikashvili's films

with every passing minute. In an unassuming and quiet manner, the artist attests to what identity or migration may imply, to the intricate workings of societies and also to the extent to which opinions, attitudes and life choices can drift apart. He compiles distinct and diverse voices in his films, which can lead to dissonance and an ambiguity that is not always pleasant yet must be dealt with: *You may not want to be here*. It is precisely here that his films develop their realism and begin to resonate. No predefined answers are provided; statements are suspended in mid-air and not put forward for further discussion. One is confronted with rigid opinions that appear impervious, almost solidified and frozen in place. It is left to us to call them into question.

For a long time, the people Matikashvili featured in his films were strangers who allowed him to share in their lives for a while. It is the unpredictable and surprising moments in his encounters with them—their thoughts, opinions, desires and wishes—that have always fascinated him. Only in his most recent works has he turned his attention toward people from his family and their social environment. This coincides with an investigation of his native country, Georgia, which currently finds itself in a state of profound insecurity, economically, politically and also culturally: *You may not want to be here*. Old certainties appear to be dissolving, even if many people are desperately trying to uphold them. The country's future is contested, poised between European visions of the future and the authoritarian policies of a pro-Russian government. Here, Matikashvili combines autobiographical filmmaking with sociological reflection.

The interplay of closeness and distance that Matikashvili employs in his film work also becomes apparent in his sculptural pieces, albeit in a different form. The series *You may not want to be here* (since 2024) (1–21) comprises objects made of ceramic, porcelain, wax, metal and found objects from nature, some coated with earth, metals or dust. Concretely, the starting point for these objects was his own thyroid gland, that small endocrine gland in the neck which regulates vital bodily processes such as metabolism, heart rate and energy balance. In a broader sense, the series represents an engagement with one's own body, its functioning and malfunctioning, along with questions of existence and transience. From object to object, the form has changed and is now no longer recognizable as such. Even though these mutations and growths evoke a sense

of unease, the forms and materials simultaneously hold a fascination for the viewer. Their immediate physicality creates a sense of closeness and familiarity, whereas the deviations seem to signal caution, causing one to keep one's distance. It is precisely this uncanny feeling, this ambiguity, that may lead to a feeling of being overwhelmed. The act of rendering and presenting these amorphous forms addresses the invisible process of what is often pathological growth, making it tangible—both physically and metaphorically. Nothing happens in obscurity any longer; you can and must respond to what lies before you.

*You may not want to be here:* Zauri Matikashvili keeps us guessing as to who or what would rather not be here, and what reasons there might be for this. Who is suggesting things to whom, or is it merely a voice in one's head that simply refuses to be silenced and instead keeps resurfacing? The only answer his works offer is that one cannot escape the present—*You may not want to be here, but you are.*

*Merle Radtke, translation: Barbara Lang*

## (A) In Katernberg

The district of Katernberg is located in the north-east of Essen and owes much of its development to the Zeche Zollverein colliery. Its closure in 1986 along with the closure of the coking plant in 1993 led to significant job losses. The district is characterized by a diverse population; nearly half of Katernberg's residents in 2023 have an immigrant history.<sup>1</sup> As a part of the recruitment agreements, many guest workers came to Katernberg particularly in the 1960s, with their families following during the subsequent years. The Federal Republic's original plan—whereby workers were expected to return to their home countries after a few years—did not work out. The failure of politicians to adequately prepare for the situation led to a lacking sense of belonging and acceptance that is prevalent among people from immigrant families to this day. Using Katernberg as an example, Zauri Matikashvili shows the experiences of racial discrimination that people with a migrant background are facing in their everyday lives. These experiences manifest themselves at school, when looking for housing, in job hunting and in everyday interactions. Despite these difficulties and obstacles, they manage to make Katernberg their home.

In his film *In Katernberg* (2022), Matikashvili lends a voice to a number of people talking about the realities of life in the north of Essen. The film's characteristic, calm atmosphere allows space for the various individuals and their life stories. The encounters are often chance meetings; Matikashvili approaches strangers on the street and engages them in a conversation, among them descendants of guest workers who came to Germany in the 1960s, Roma from Romania, a family who fled from Syria, people from Lebanon, a car mechanic from Iran, an AfD campaigner and the owner of a snack bar.

Matikashvili succeeds in juxtaposing these differing perspectives with remarkable sensitivity. To begin with, a snack bar owner declares that the immigrant residents fail to show due respect—just seconds earlier, the neon sign reading “Schnitzel mit Z\*\*\*\*\*-Sauce” (Schnitzel with g\*\*\*\*-sauce) was visible at his stall. The lack of respect often shown towards people with a migrant background, which they have to deal with in their everyday lives in Katernberg, is revealed in the following scenes. A young

<sup>1</sup> Cf. City of Essen. Office for Statistics, Urban Research and Elections (ed.), *Handbuch Essener Statistik. Bevölkerung 1987–2023*, 47; [https://media.essen.de/media/www/wessende/aemter/12/handbuch\\_nach\\_kapiteln/Bevoelkerungsstand\\_2023.pdf](https://media.essen.de/media/www/wessende/aemter/12/handbuch_nach_kapiteln/Bevoelkerungsstand_2023.pdf) [19 May 2026].

woman recounts racist remarks made by teachers towards Muslim pupils, as well as the difficulties she faces in finding a flat with a foreign-sounding surname. Another young woman describes the insecurity that goes with having a temporary residence permit that must be renewed every three months, a precarious state many people from immigrant families struggle with. The scene featuring an AfD campaigner demanding that fewer immigrants should move to the north of Essen is followed by a young man recounting his flight from Syria at the age of eight, describing the inhumane conditions and dangers of the journey with a disturbing matter-of-factness. A second boy speaks about a sense of helpfulness and warmth, despite the difficulties and challenges that life in Katernberg brings. He cannot imagine calling any city other than Essen his home.

The film's topicality and relevance become apparent not only in light of the recent election results in Essen,<sup>2</sup> but also in relation to Federal Chancellor Friedrich Merz's remarks on the cityscape. In October 2025, in the context of declining asylum applications and the Federal Minister of the Interior's plan to increase deportations, Merz spoke of what he saw as a "problem in the cityscape".<sup>3</sup> According to sociologist Nina Perkowski, the term "cityscape" is used as a code for all those perceived as non-German or non-white.<sup>4</sup> The prejudices and associated racial discrimination that Matikashvili draws attention to via the example of individual people are once again evident in this political debate.

*Marie-Féline Malavasi; translation: Barbara Lang*

2 The fact that support for the AfD is growing in Essen is evidenced by the results of the 2025 federal election; with a 9.10% increase in Essen and a share of 27.96% of the vote in Katernberg, the AfD was the third-strongest party. See: Results of the federal election on 23 February 2025, City of Essen; [https://webapps-extern.essen.de/wahlergebnisse/BW2025/05113000/presentation/ergebnis.html?wahl\\_id=761&stimmotyp=0&id=ebene\\_3\\_id\\_1](https://webapps-extern.essen.de/wahlergebnisse/BW2025/05113000/presentation/ergebnis.html?wahl_id=761&stimmotyp=0&id=ebene_3_id_1) [19 May 2026].

3 Friedrich Merz: "But of course we still have this problem in our cityscape, which is why the Federal Minister of the Interior is currently working to facilitate and carry out deportations on a very large scale.", quoted from: Belinda Grasnack, trans. here as: "Merz's Problem with the 'Cityscape'", in: Tagesschau.de, 17 Oct. 2025; <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/merz-stadtbild-migration-100.html> [19 May 2026].

4 Cf. Nina Perkowski in: Belinda Grasnack, trans. here as: "Merz's Problem with the 'Cityscape'", Tagesschau.de, 17 Oct. 2025; <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/innenpolitik/merz-stadtbild-migration-100.html> [19 May 2026].

## (B) Made in Europe

For a long time, Zauri Matikashvili's films were mostly dedicated to strangers who allowed him to share in their lives for a while, sometimes even just for a brief moment. In his film *Made in Europe* (2023), by contrast, he turns his attention to someone from his immediate circle and thus also touches upon his own story. By spending a considerable amount of time filming his father, he has created a portrait characterized in equal measure by closeness and distance. Despite the familiarity existing between the two of them, a palpable sense of otherness emerges. Drawing on routes, materials and memories, the film interweaves observations of working conditions with personal stories, conceptions and aspirations.

It's been more than thirty years since the artist's father began travelling from Georgia to Germany or the Netherlands to buy second-hand cars, preferably Mercedes Sprinters. He loads them up with bicycles and furniture such as leather sofas, chairs and tables. He also buys scrap cars, dismantles them and ships the parts to Georgia in containers, often on behalf of Georgian wholesalers. Finally, he drives the fully packed vans thousands of kilometres back to Georgia, where he sells the second-hand goods from Europe. He is thus part of an international trade network operating outside the dealings of large multinational corporations, and with the changing market, things are becoming increasingly difficult. The conditions under which he earns his living are demanding: they involve hard physical labour, health hazards, separation from his family and poor accommodation. At the same time, it becomes clear that his existence is largely defined by work and that this work is not an end in itself—as evidenced by his reluctance towards each new journey.

With this film, Matikashvili not only grants us a glimpse into his father's working life; through the latter's voice-over commentary, we also learn about his life in general, his travels and his relationship with his son. As a result, the filmmaker inevitably becomes part of his own documentary work; the camera is transcended in moments when the father begins to speak about him or even to him. While they are both leading their lives between Georgia and Central Europe, the father's comments reveal a great deal about the divergent life paths and realities. Transpiring here—and indicating differing worldviews—are expectations along with the

associated tensions. These must be acknowledged and coped with, for there will be no further conversations on the matter, no detailed explanations or attempts to convince one another of the merits of one's own chosen path.

*Merle Radtke; translation: Barbara Lang*

*Passing the Glass* marks Zauri Matikashvili's first two-channel video installation. Based on footage of a funeral service for Ilia II, former Catholicos-Patriarch of the Georgian Orthodox Church, on one side, and footage of the filmmaker's family preparing for Easter on the other, the work weaves a dense web of visual and narrative references unfurling through structures of similarity and repetition. As in Matikashvili's other works, the camera primarily functions as an observing entity, a role that is momentarily overcome by conversations between him and the people depicted, thereby anchoring our gaze to the filmmaker's perspective.

Inside a church building, we witness people performing ritualized practices, lighting candles and moving slowly through the space. We see the body of the late patriarch lying in an open coffin and watch bored teenagers in church robes idly passing the time. We observe how rose petals are removed from their stems and stored in large plastic bags. On the other side, we see a group consisting of male family members and friends of different generations who, under the father's guidance, go hunting together. Here, over the course of the film, we watch how feathers are plucked from the quails that have been shot.

Building on visual similarities, both video tracks explore patriarchal and strictly conservative political and religious structures at the individual and societal level. The work places particular emphasis on social practices of perpetuation, especially in relation to notions of masculinity. The work thus describes the performativity of patriarchal structures rooted in repetition and preservation—aspects appearing likewise in the realization of the work along with the featured images, as well as in their associative connection initiated in the viewer's perception through the dual projection.

At another point, on one channel, we find ourselves in front of the church building. We see Georgian flags, armed soldiers and a group of mourners. We see a stand offering framed and foil-wrapped pictures of the former patriarch for sale. On the other channel, we see animals being slaughtered and listen to the filmmaker, his mother and his nephew as they discuss the traditional gender-specific roles in hunting and slaughtering animals. We see a communal meal, during which pictures from a family album protected by plastic sleeves are held up to the camera while the male diners reminisce.

These images within an image stand out as materializations of the structures mentioned earlier. They become catalysts for telling stories and expressing values relating to the family. The father drinks a toast to his grandchildren, and one of the father's friends urges the filmmaker to finally start a family. The articulated conviction that one can achieve whatever one wants, but is worth nothing without a family of one's own, reflects the rigidity of traditional family models while indirectly discrediting alternative ways of life. Similarly, the pictures of the former patriarch offered for sale on the other side highlight the non-negligible relevance of religion in the private sphere. The Georgian flags and the military presence in the ecclesiastical context, in turn, highlight the enduring connection between politics and the church in Georgia. After Schio III had been installed as the new Catholicos-Patriarch in May 2026, the Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze of the pro-Russian Georgian Dream Party congratulated him with the following words: "Mother Church has always been an unwavering pillar upholding Georgian statehood and the spiritual strength of the nation. It is the Orthodox faith that has preserved the eternal values which have sustained our country to the present day."<sup>1</sup>

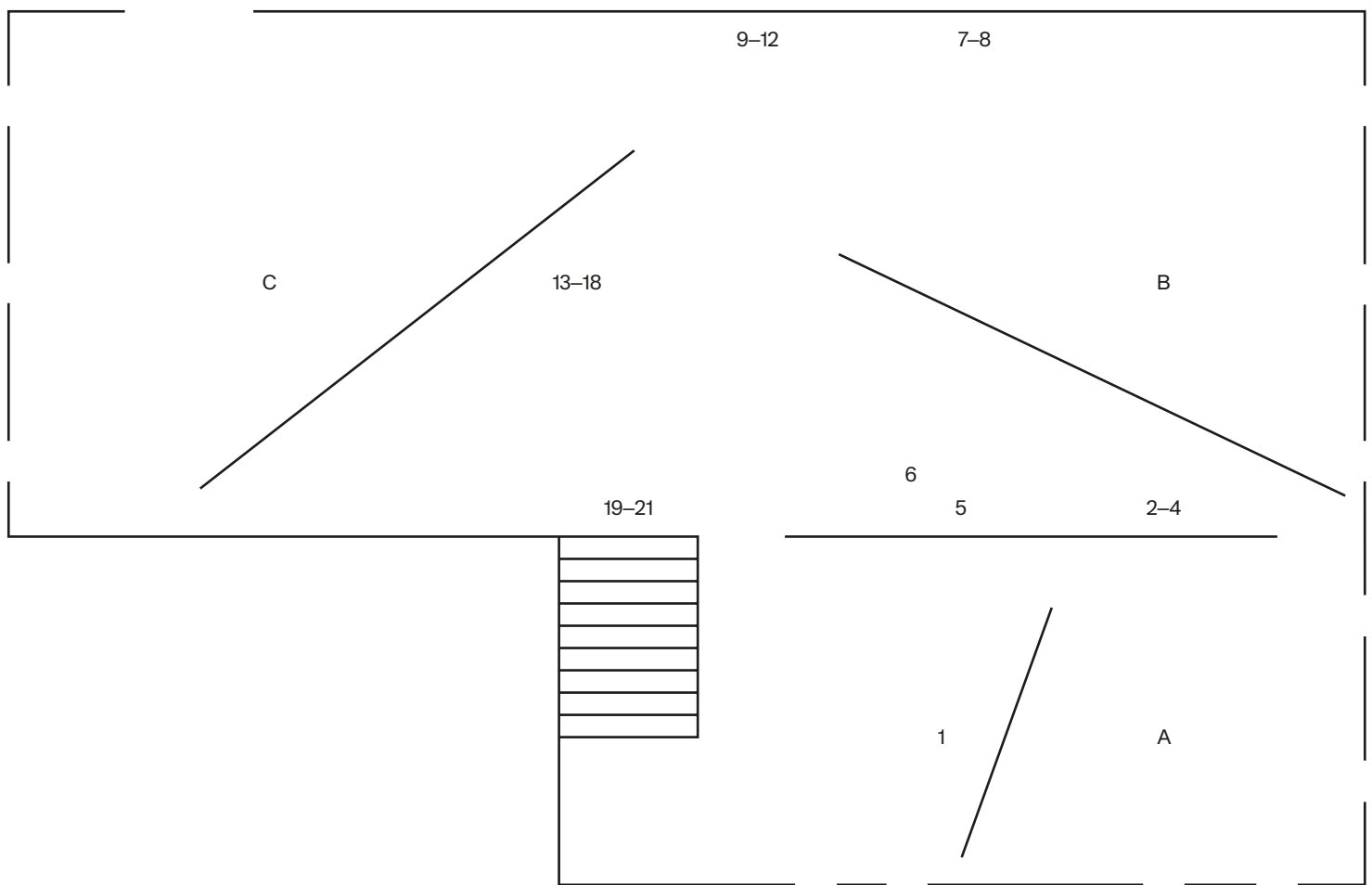
Values and policies are invoked here which have been the subject of intense and widespread protest for years and which manifest themselves, for instance, in controversial elections, repressive legislation and regressive policy decisions.<sup>2</sup> What is at stake are violent processes of preservation and staged processes of constituting meaning. Matikashvili's work aptly exemplifies this, and their power and violence are underscored by the work's loop structure: there is neither a beginning nor an end to proceedings; repeating themselves, they continue in an ever-identical manner, and in doing so simultaneously give rise to the question of how this cycle can be disrupted.

*Heiko Lietz; translation: Barbara Lang*

1 Quoted from Felix Neumann, trans. here as: "Conservative and pro-Russian: Georgia has a new patriarch," 2026, <https://katholisch.de/artikel/68529-konservativ-und-ruslandnah-georgien-hat-einen-neuen-patriarchen>, [26 May 2026].

2 Cf. Tigran Petrosyan, trans. here as: "Against the Georgian Dream of the Russian Way," 2025, <https://www.amnesty.de/informieren/amnesty-journal/georgien-proteste-agentengesetz-parlamentswahl-betrug-zivilgesellschaft-wehrt-sich>, [26 May 2026].

Zauri Matikashvili was born in the Georgian town of Qvareli. After studying Fine Arts in Münster and Düsseldorf, he now lives and works in Münster and Amsterdam. In his films, performances, installations, and sculptures, he questions the socio-cultural and political contexts of different societies and nations that shape the construction of identity in individual realities and families. He is particularly interested in how narratives and images create community. Matikashvili's works have been shown in numerous institutions, for example at BSMNT in Leipzig (2026), at Julia Stoschek Foundation in Düsseldorf (2025), at Kunst in Tunnel (KIT) in Düsseldorf (2025), at the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur in Münster (2025), at Het Documentaire Paviljoen in Amsterdam (2024), at Stadthausgalerie Münster (2023), at Antimatter Media Art in Victoria (2023), at By Art Matters in Hangzhou (2023), at Eye Filmmuseum in Amsterdam (2023), at Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris (2022), at International Short Film Festival in Oberhausen (2022), at Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof in Hamburg (2021), at Filmfestival Münster (2021), at HMKV in Dortmund (2021), at Atelier No. 63 PACT Zollverein in Essen (2020) and at Philara Collection in cooperation with Filmwerkstatt in Düsseldorf (2020). He was artist in residence at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten Amsterdam (2022–2024), at Cité Internationale des Arts Paris (2022) and at PACT Zollverein in Essen (2021). He recently received scholarships from Stiftung Kunstfonds (2025) and Kunststiftung NRW (2026).



Raum 1 / Room 1

- 1 *You may not want to be here (1)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton, Holz / high fired, unglazed ceramic, wood, 137×70×50 cm
- A In Katernberg, 2022, HD-Video, Ton, 23:00 Min. / HD video, sound, 23:00 min.

Raum 2 / Room 2

- 2 *You may not want to be here (4)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton / high fired, unglazed ceramic, 38×40×80 cm
- 3 *You may not want to be here (19)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton / high fired, unglazed ceramic, 10×59×39 cm
- 4 *You may not want to be here (22)*, 2024, Wachs, Metallstaub, Erde / wax, metal dust, soil, 9×8×12 cm
- 5 *You may not want to be here (5)*, 2024, hochgebranntes, glasiertes Porzellan / high fired, glazed porcelain, 30×28×10 cm
- 6 *You may not want to be here (2)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton / high fired, glazed ceramic, 25×30×92 cm
- B *Made in Europe*, 2023, HD-Video, Ton, 25:00 Min. / HD video, sound 25:00 min.
- 7 *You may not want to be here (32)*, 2026, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton / high fired, glazed ceramic, 9×24×13 cm

- 8 *You may not want to be here (9)*, 2024, hochgebranntes, glasiertes Porzellan / high fired, glazed porcelain, 5×9×14 cm
- 9 *You may not want to be here (31)*, 2026, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton, Metallstaub, Erde, Lack / high fired, glazed ceramic, metal dust, soil, varnish, 5×38×15 cm
- 10 *You may not want to be here (6)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton, zweiteilig / high fired, glazed ceramic, two parts, 28×68×56 cm + 20×17×60 cm
- 11 *You may not want to be here (28)*, 2026, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton, Asche, Metallstaub, Erde, Lack / high fired, glazed ceramic, ashes, metal dust, soil, varnish, 29×33×22 cm
- 12 *You may not want to be here (3)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton, Wachs, zweiteilig / high fired, glazed ceramic, wax, two parts, 31×25×92 cm + 17×38×34 cm
- C *Passing the Glass*, 2026, Zwei-Kanal-Videoinstallation, Full HD, Ton, 27:17 Min / two-channel video installation, full HD, sound, 27:17 min.
- 13 *You may not want to be here (25)*, 2026, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton / high fired, unglazed ceramic, 35×48×30 cm
- 14 *You may not want to be here (24)*, 2026, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton / high fired, unglazed ceramic, 73×42×26 cm

- 15 *You may not want to be here (7)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton, Kupferstaub, Patina, Lack / high fired, unglazed ceramic, copper dust, patina, varnish, 15×24×55 cm
- 16 *You may not want to be here (10)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton / high fired, unglazed ceramic, 25×23×33 cm
- 17 *You may not want to be here (18)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton / high fired, glazed ceramic, 15×23×20 cm
- 18 *You may not want to be here (15)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton, Metallstaub, Lack / high fired, glazed ceramic, metal dust, varnish, 30×40×33 cm
- 19 *You may not want to be here (13)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton / high fired, glazed ceramic, 25×48×23 cm
- 20 *You may not want to be here (12)*, 2024, hochgebrannter, glasierter Ton / high fired, glazed ceramic, 20×24×14 cm
- 21 *You may not want to be here (26)*, 2026, hochgebrannter, unglasierter Ton, Metallstaub, Erde, Lack / high fired, unglazed ceramic, metal dust, soil, varnish, 9×16×14 cm

Alle Werke / all works courtesy of the artist.