



ELZARA OISEAU

portfolio
selected

elzaraoiseau@gmail.com

BIOGRAPHY

Elzara Oiseau is an Ukrainian contemporary artist with Crimean Tatar origins. Because of the deportation by Stalin she did not grow up in her homeland, but in the Caucasus region of Russia. In 2000 she moved with her parents to Crimea, where she grew up, graduated school and then studied monumental art in Simferopol (2005–2011). In 2014 when Crimea was annexed by Russia she moved to Kyiv and then to Irpin. In April 2022 when Russia invaded Ukraine Elzara fled alone to Zurich – with a big roll of her paintings from the studio in Kyiv. These paintings were shown in a solo exhibition at La Galerie Philosophique in Grandson, Switzerland, in August 2022.

Since April 2022 Elzara lives and works in a small atelier at Verein Zitrone in Zurich. Since arriving in Zurich, she has realized fourteen exhibitions, including two solo exhibitions and four projects that she developed specifically for open calls and collaborations. Among them:

- a 12-meter painting Fragility for loslassen – loswerden in WASCHRAUM, Werkstatt Zürich-Altstetten / SBB Werkstätte, March 2023. [link](#) / [link](#)

- a collaboration with Nathalie Diserens, Swiss visual artist based in Zurich, for the project le Racinage, shown in April 2023 in GK3. [link](#)

- the wall painting project Mother.Land for Oerlikon Dream House, June 2023

[link](#) / [link](#)

- the collaboration with Zurich based musician Nik Bärtsch .

The Jazz Lines project about the music of Nik Bärtsch was shown with paintings and installations on around 300 m2 in a solo exhibition in November 2023. [link](#) / [link](#)

- project *Conversation* big solo installation(around 20sq meters) about the music of Nik Bärtsch, for collective exhibition Resonanzkörper in WASCHRAUM in historical building, the WASCHRAUM space, SBB Werkstatte, Zurich, June 2024. [link](#)

In her artistic practice, Elzara weaves together abstract calligraphy and the rhythms of music, creating a unique dialogue between text, image, and sound. Her work is a symphony of shapes, colors, and lines, inspired by the intricate structures of progressive metal and experimental jazz. Yet, since December 2021, her focus has shifted dramatically under the shadow of impending conflict, as the threat of invasion loomed large, casting a pall over her life and art. In response to this existential dread, Elzara launched her Anxiety series, utilizing vast canvases emblazoned with text—a visceral scream reaching out to the world. This body of work, initially an exploration of her anxiety, tragically evolved into a reflection on war and the profound psychological scars it leaves behind, encapsulating her struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder. By 2023, Elzara's artistic exploration gradually shifted toward the theme of imaginary roots and the deep connections to land: stolen land, sore land, homeland, safe land. Her work became a poignant investigation of self-identity, delving into her family's history and origins, all while navigating the complexities of exile—an experience she has endured twice. Through her art, Elzara seeks not only to confront her own trauma but also to reclaim her narrative in a world that often seeks to erase it.

Elzara is a member of association of professional artists Visarte Switzerland.

RESUME

EDUCATION:

2005 –2011 –Crimean Engineering –pedagogical University, Faculty of Arts, speciality: Monumental Art. Simferopol, Crimea, Ukraine.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2023** –Jazz Lines, collaboration with Nik Bärtsch, personal exhibition + concert, Zentralwäscherei, Halle. Zurich, Switzerland.
2023 –personal exhibition for charity concert for Ukraine, organized by Nik Bärtsch, Exil club. Zurich, Switzerland.
2022 –Lettres, curated by Jorge Canete, La Galerie Philosophique. Grandson, Switzerland.
2021 –Expressions, Angar. Kyiv, Ukraine.

COLLECTIVE EXHIBITIONS

- 2024-2025** – Grenze /Frontières/Borders, collective exhibition during Regionale25, Kulturamt / Städtische Museen und Galerie, Weil am Rhein, Germany.
2024 – Planting Roots collective exhibition, curated by Bahay Contemporary, private residence, Geneva, Switzerland.
2024 – *Einsichten* collective exhibition by Visarte Zurich in Kupper Modern Gallery. Zurich, Switzerland.
2024 – project Conversation for collective exhibition *Resonanzkörper* in WASCHRAUM space, SBB Wekstatte, Zurich.
2023 - 2024 –Cosmogony of Senses, collective exhibition, The Korsak's Museum of Modern Ukrainian Art. Lutsk, Ukraine.
2023 – Mother.Land, project for Oerlikon Dream House, collective exhibition, curated by Matteo Kramer & Floyd Bolliger. Zurich, Switzerland.
2023 – Le Racinage, project-collaboration with swiss visual artist Nathalie Diserens, GK3 space. Zurich, Switzerland.
2023 – SORE LAND, collective exhibition, Zentralwäscherei.space. Zurich, Switzerland.
2023 – loslassen-loswerden, wall painting project *Fragile* for WASCHRAUM, Werkstadt Zurich Altstetten. Zurich, Switzerland.
2022 -2023 Wenn die Erde bebt, curated by Barbora Gerny, Go Green Art Gallery. Erlenbach, Switzerland.
2022 – KUNST take away, curated by Maria Baenziger, Stadt Baden, Kunstraum Baden. Baden, Switzerland.
2022 – Mirror, international group exhibition, held by Transcarpathian Regional Art Museum named Yosup Bokshay, Uzgorod, Ukraine.
2022 – Yesterday was the day before today, curated by Kebikollectiv. Zurich, Switzerland.
2022 – ARTE UKRAÏNA a Vicenza, collective exhibition. Vicenza, Veneto, Italy.
2022 – CHILDREN for UNICEF, collective auction, Ukraine in XRONOLAB gallery. Zürich, Switzerland.
2022 – Resistance, collective exhibition, Baroque App. Kyiv, Ukraine.
2022 – War time. Reflections, collective exhibition, the gallery of contemporary art Dzyga, Lviv, Ukraine.
2022 – Stand With Ukraine, collective exhibition by UART + NYC Art movement group, ONE ART SPACE GALLERY. New York, USA.
2022 – collective auction in Xanadu Gallery. Warsaw, Poland.
2022 – WAR IS NOT PEACE, collective exhibition, by Ksi Prostir. Bordeaux, France.
2022 – MAKE ART NOT WAR, collective exhibition, CAM Contemporary Art Museum, Naples, Italy.
2022 –Transit zone. Exit gate 2022, collective exhibition, organization by art researching platform MOKONSHU. Mitec Gallery, Kyiv, Ukraine.
2021 - now The Way of the Crimea / Yol Qirim, project at Crimean House., the project is supported by Ukrainian Cultural Fondation, Kyiv, Ukraine.

2021 – Your names, Ukraine, collective exhibition, The Korsak's Museum of Modern Ukrainian Art. Lutsk, Ukraine.

2021 – Online exhibition *Digital Week of Women in Art 2021*, Georgia.

2021 – *Geography of Ukrainian writing*, International festival of literature of Ukraine Book Arsenal, exhibition. Kyiv, Ukraine.

2019 – International festival of literature of Ukraine Book Arsenal, the corner *Letter*. Kyiv, Ukraine.

PUBLICATIONS:

2023 - Religion & Gesellschaft, Kultur, article *Zwischen Sarkasmus und Mitgefühl. Ukrainische Kunst in der Amplitude des Krieges*, by Vita Susak.

RGOW 1-2/2023, 51.Jahrgang, p. 22-27.

2023 – Book *loslassen-loswerden*, by Nadine Jäger, Alicia Olmos Ochoa, Andrea Ramseyer, Pia Simmendinger, Zurich, Switzerland [link](#).

2023 – Book *Cosmogony of Senses*, by Victor Korsak, Lutsk, Ukraine.

2023 – podcast for СНОБИ/SNOBS in Ukrainian. [link](#)

2023 – ArtHouse, Ukrainian Contemporary Artists, issue 24.02.2022. 4:55. WAR, Lviv, Ukraine.

2022 – Culture, article by Olga Smolnytska, СУРМА, №13, 07.09.2022, p. 28–29. USA, Ukraine [article link](#)

2022 – *Wo bist du, mein Kind?*, article by Vita Susak; Ukraine Stimmen, 27.08.2022, Germany [link](#)

2022 – Interview for RTS Radio Television Swiss, A Voix Haute avec Manuela Salvi in French. [link](#)

2022 – Russia-Ukraine, art and culture. *Où es tu, mon enfant?*, article by Vita Susak, Le Temps, 11 August 2022/N°7392, J.A.1209 Geneva/ [link](#)

2022 – ArtHouse, Ukrainian Contemporary Artists, issue N°8, 2022, Lviv, Ukraine.

2021 – Book *How to became the Name*, by Victor Korsak, Lutsk, Ukraine.

2021 – *From the studying to experiments*, Catalogue of Ukrainian modern calligraphy, publishing house Artiya,

2021 – Professional Women Artists Catalogue 2021, Georgia.

2021 – Boomer Magazine, The New Artist first edition 2021, London.



A sculptural wire installation created specially for the exhibition *Planting Roots* by Bahay Contemporary, exploring the wordplay in French between *la mer* (the sea) and *la mère* (the mother), which sound exactly the same and have very similar writing. These words hold deep personal significance, as the sea symbolizes my parents' home, family, and childhood spent in my homeland - Crimea, which I hope to regain, lost due to occupation in 2014 and full-scale invasion in 2022. I have previously explored the theme of *Anam* (mother in Crimean Tatar) in my works on canvas and now I transform this theme into sculptural forms. The installation, made of wire constructions, will mimic waves of words and the movement of sea water. By playing with light and shadow, I aim to create visual imitations of lines and words that reflect the image of the sea in a poignant and expressive way. Through these works I try to keep a non-verbally connection and caressing the hope to feel the scents of the Black sea, to hear its sound some day at my favorite seacoasts in Crimea. To hear the voice of my mother finally since the last few years in real life, not by phone.



Conversation. 2024. Project for Resonanzkörper in [Waschraum](#)



[video](#)

[video](#)

[video](#)

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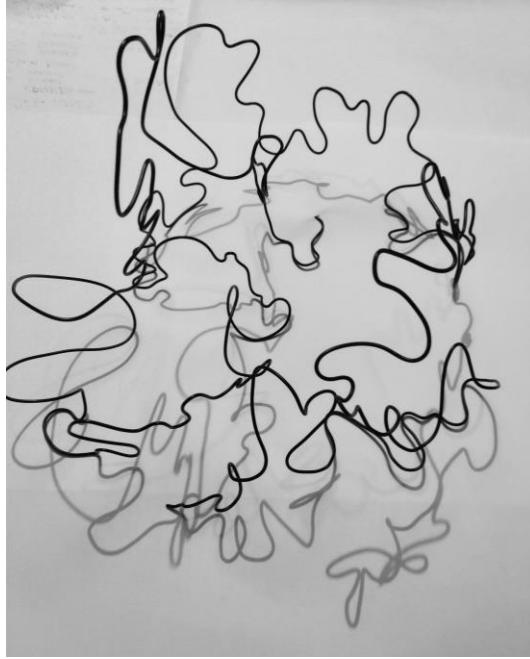
Conversation, 2024

The project was created for the second exhibition "Resonanzkörper Sound und Skulptur im Raum," in June 2024 in a very unique space, Waschraum (the Bathroom), which is located in a building owned by the Swiss railway company SBB but is also protected by the city of Zurich as a historical heritage site. The space consists of a vast hall with bathrooms and shower stalls entirely covered in tiles, giving it a remarkable fragility and intriguing sound resonance.

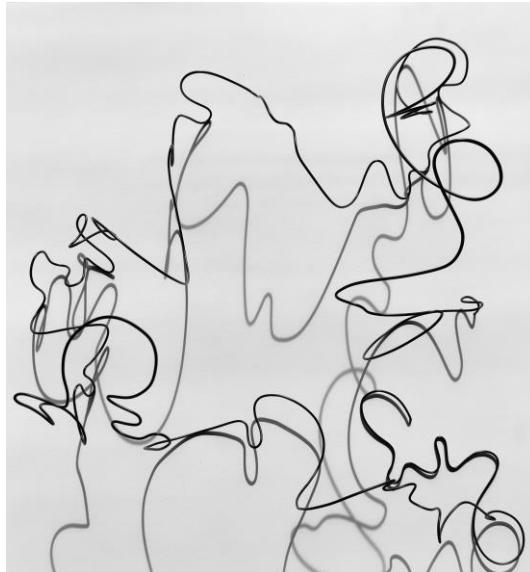
Selected artists were tasked with creating works that would integrate into the space and highlight its specificity, complexity, history, and charm.

"Conversation" is a deep exploration of the synesthesia between music and visual art. Inspired by Nik Bärtsch's intricate rhythms and dynamic energy, I transform sound into visual forms. My unique artistic language shapes these musical elements into captivating visual expressions, inviting the audience to engage in an intimate dialogue between the echoes of sound and the fluidity of lines.

I created a large site-specific, non-transportable installation in a separate darkened room covering 20 square meters. The installation was arranged around the entire perimeter, but especially closer to the ceiling, to create the effect of the lines hanging in the air, conveying the lightness and weightlessness of the melody. Visitors were invited to enter the complete darkness that I established in the room. At the entrance, torches were provided, allowing the visitors to personally discover elements of the installation accompanied by Nik Bärtsch's music, and to set the movement of shadows to their own rhythm.



Jazz Lines. Installations, wire



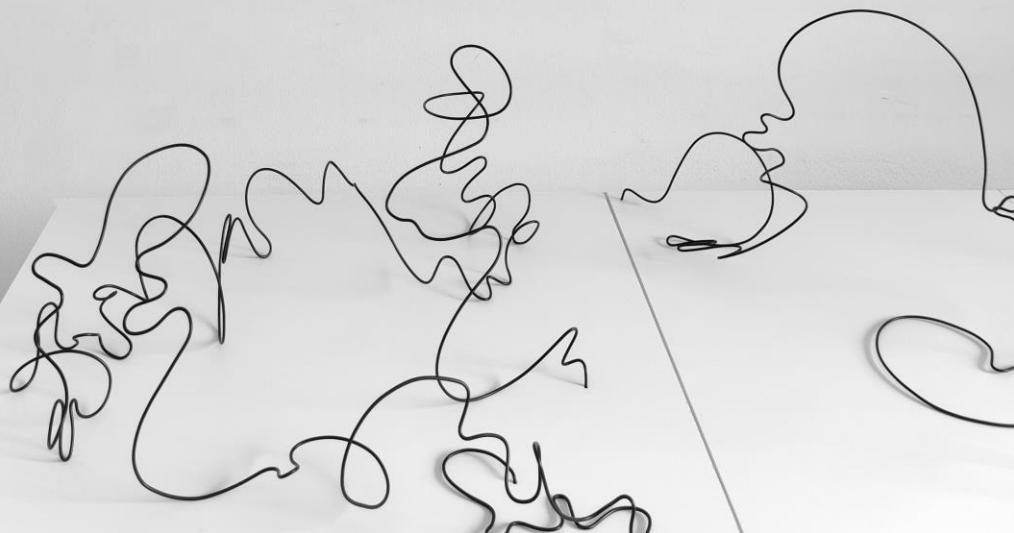
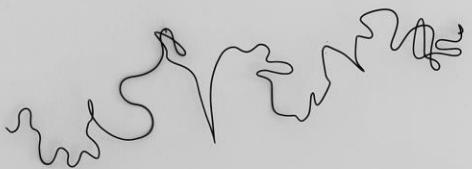
Modul 59 based on Nik Bärtsch's scores, 2023.
acrylic, canvas, 160*200cm

Jazz Lines: musical and visual dialogues of Nik Bärtsch and Elzara Oiseau, 2023

Nik Bärtsch, a visionary composer and pianist, is celebrated for his innovative approach to music. His compositions, often referred to as *Ritual Groove Music* blends elements of jazz, funk, and minimalism, resulting in a hypnotic and meditative sonic experience. Bärtsch's intricate rhythms and repetitive motifs create a sense of fluidity and motion, inviting listeners to embark on a sonic journey that transcends conventional boundaries. Elzara Oiseau, draws inspiration from Bärtsch's compositions to create stunning visual interpretations. Through her unique artistic language, Oiseau captures the essence of Bärtsch's music, translating its intricate rhythms and dynamic energy into captivating visual forms. Her use of monochrome colors, texture, and movement evokes a sense of synesthesia, allowing viewers to experience the music through a visual lens.

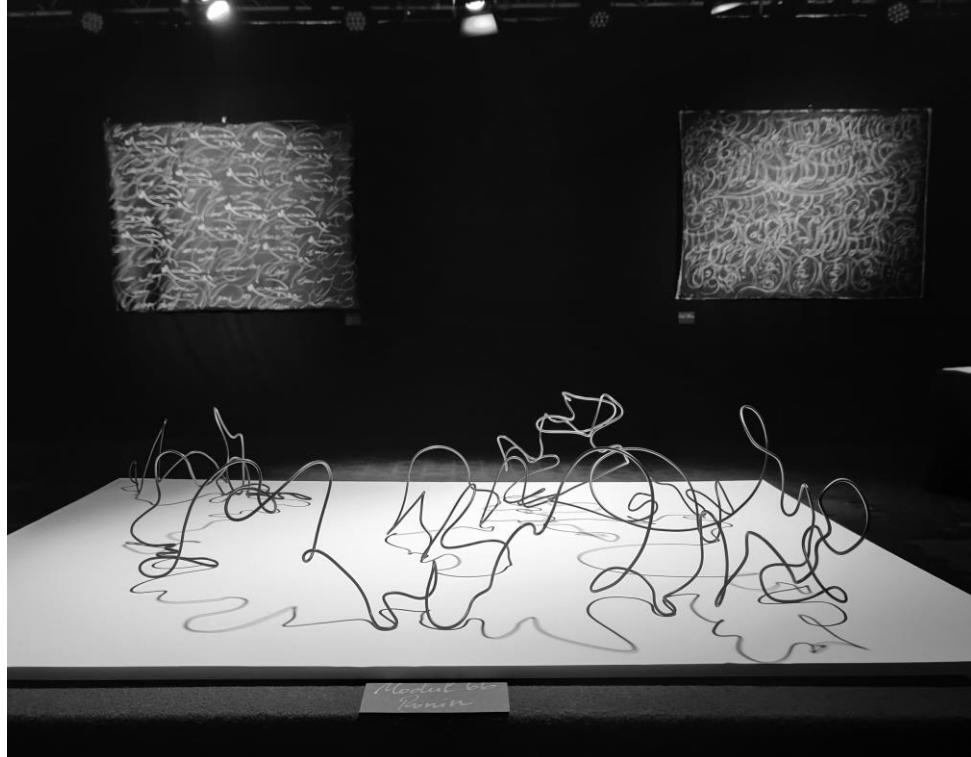
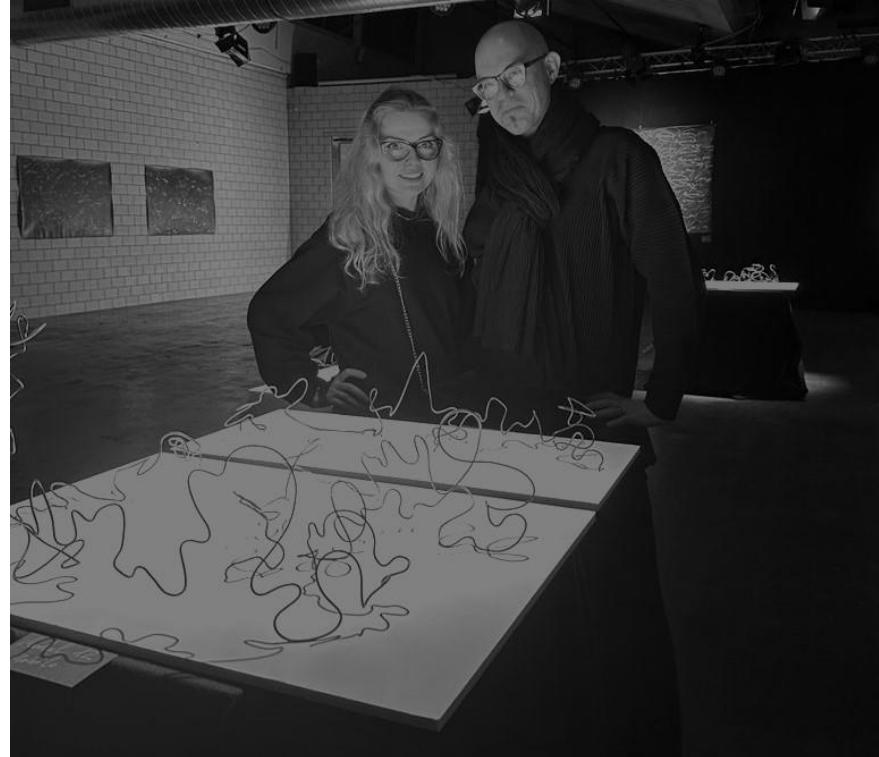


Jazz Lines. Installations, wire





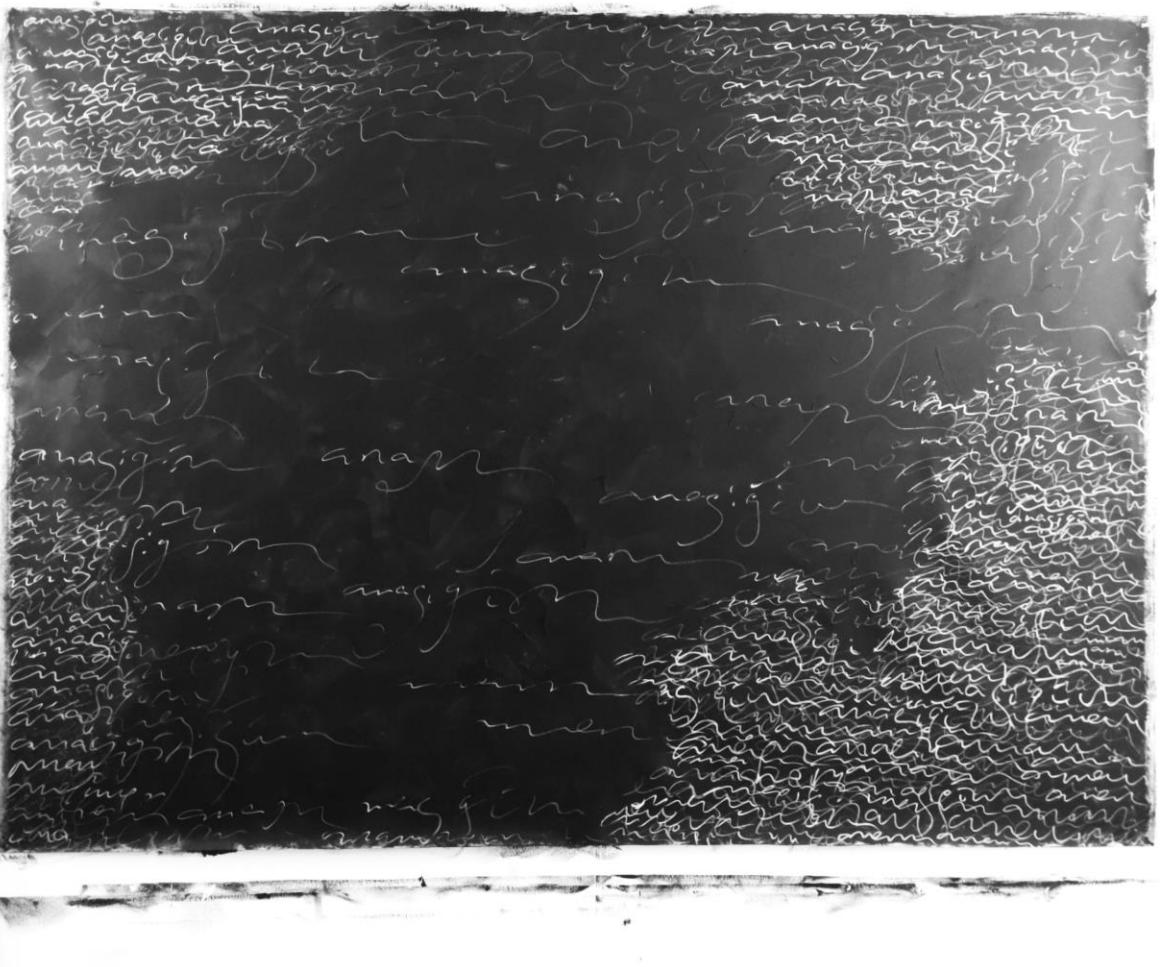
Desert song, based on Nik Bärtsch's song *Modul 61*, 2023. acrylic, canvas, 160*200cm, **Jazz Lines**



Jazz Lines. 30.11-4.12. Paintings & installations by Elzara Oiseau. Zentralwäscheri.space, Zurich [link](#)
curated by Anastasia Yovanovska

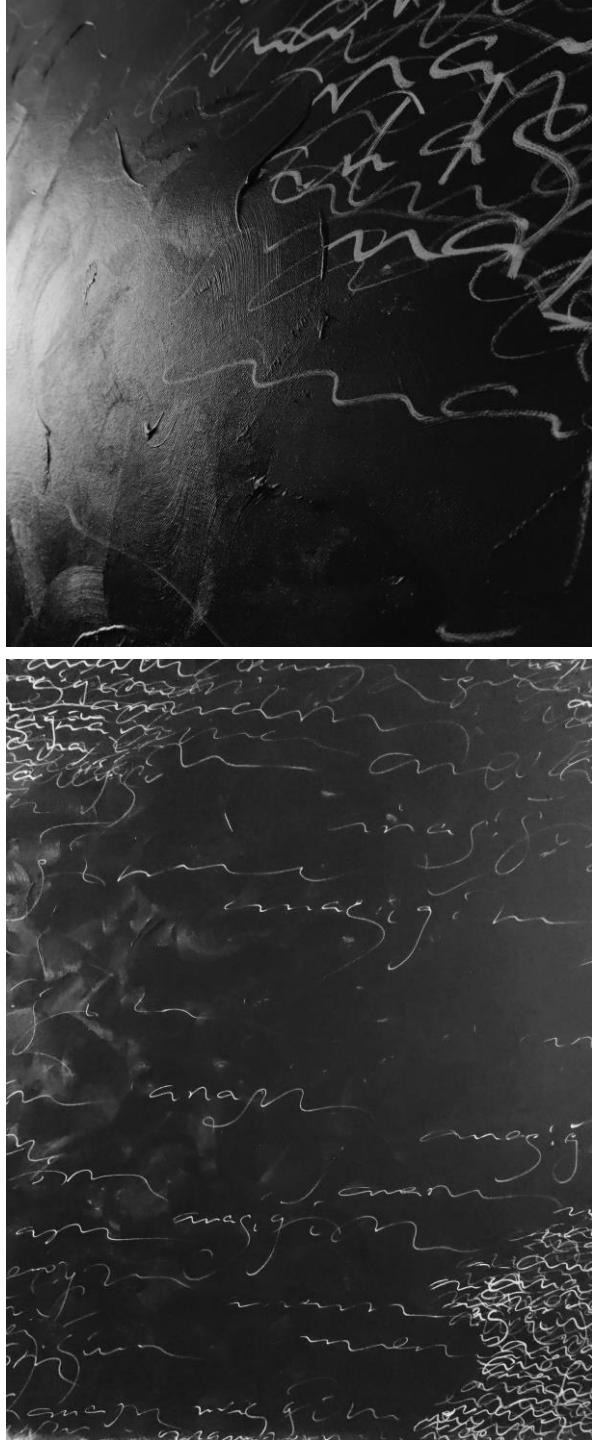


MOTHER.LAND



Anam.Anaçığım 2023. acrylic, canvas, 150*200 cm

'Anaçığım, Anam' from Crimean Tatar language means 'Mother, Mom' work that deals with the personal and geopolitical borders of Crimea and addresses the emotional and physical separation from one's homeland. The using a map of Crimea and my native language, Crimean Tatar, to represent home and memory. The work is an artistic research that reflects on the boundaries between nations, cultures and identities.





Phantom Pain. 2023. Paper, pencil, 48*64cm.

[2402forum](#) invited to make an artistic reflection for the discussion after the movie screening *Pushing boundaries* by Lesia Kordonets about Ukrainian paralympic athletes. The words used in the discussion.



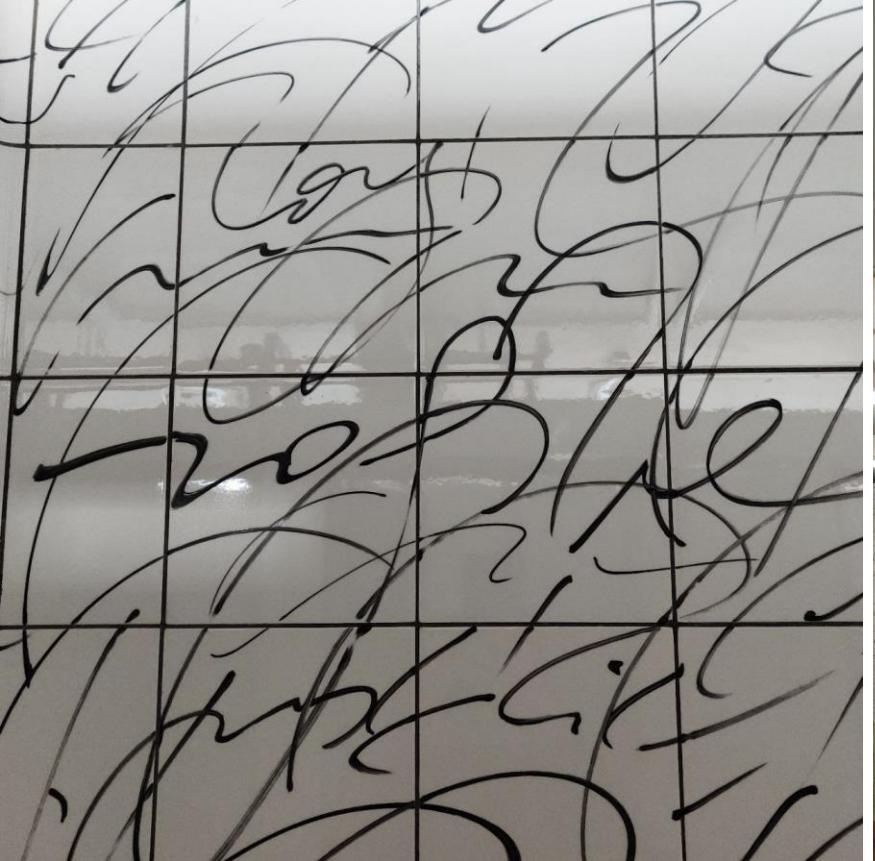
HOME/MOTHER/LAND

This artwork, created for the collective exhibition *Dream House*, speaks of my native land—Crimea—a place woven deeply into my identity, yet marked by loss. Throughout my life, it has been taken from me, not once, but three times. The first time was before I was born, during the tragic deportation of the Crimean Tatars by Stalin on May 18, 1944, which forced me to begin my life far from my homeland. The second was in 2014, when Crimea was annexed, and the third came with the full-scale invasion in 2022. To express the meaning of HOME in my heart, I turn to three vital words in the Crimean Tatar language: ANAM (Mother), QIRIM (Crimea), and VATAN (Homeland). These words carry the weight of my history and my sense of belonging. My language, nearly erased by decades of Russification, still whispers within me, holding the stories of my people. The shape of Crimea—a beautiful peninsula rich in history and embraced by the Black Sea—stands as a symbol of resilience. This artwork is a quiet call to my family, who I have not seen for many years, leaving me uncertain if I will ever hold them close again. It is also a dedication to all those who have been forcibly separated from their loved ones, homes, and lands. In the face of such loss, may this creation resonate with hope, a reminder that the bonds of love and belonging can endure, even against the strongest currents.

MOTHER.LAND

Wall painting for Oerlikon Dream House.





«*loslassen-loswerden*»

FRAGILITY

12 meters wall painting for
WASCHRAUM

[fragility for waschraum](#)

[Watch the video](#)



This project was created in march 2023 for the exhibition "loslassen-loswerden" for a very special space, Waschraum (Bathroom), which is located in a building owned by the Swiss railway company SBB and is also protected by the city of Zurich as a historical heritage site. The space is a large hall with bathrooms and shower cabins, entirely covered in tiles, which gives it an extraordinary fragility and very interesting sound resonance. Selected artists had to create works that would integrate into the space and emphasize its specificity, complexity, history, and charm.

Since I primarily work with words and languages, I decided to choose a word that would describe this space while also resonating with my own state of being in exile under difficult conditions and simultaneously drawing attention to the state of my country, which is currently extremely vulnerable and fragile.

I used the four languages I speak or am beginning to speak: Ukrainian, French, German, and English, pointedly excluding Russian, which I truly wish to forget.

Text from a book publication that came out a few months after the exhibition (translated from German) (Book loslassen-loswerden, by Nadine Jäger, Alicia Olmos Ochoa, Andrea Ramseyer, Pia Simmendinger, Zurich, Switzerland, <https://wasch-raum.ch/buch/>):

"A word can unite, a word can distance. It can be the beginning of a war or the start of a new life. A word has power. We think with words, we can express ourselves simply by using language, words. Everything has its word. Even this room with beautiful fragile tiles has its word: fragility- says Elzara. The installation "Fragility" visualizes Ukrainian artist Elzara Oiseau's strength of the word. The calm rhythm of narrowing symbols and the aesthetic of black symbols on white tiles are expressive and beautiful.

Abstract calligraphy is the central element of Oiseau's artistic expression. She believes that nothing is more expressive than words, but at the same time, she lives in an environment where she does not master the local language. She builds a bridge using abstract calligraphy and emphasizes the immense power of language.

This is noticeable at the exhibition, but also tangible, as the words are written on a 12-meter tiled wall and thus have a significant presence in the room. The tiles have their word: fragility. This word is endlessly repeated in abstract calligraphy, designed for the bathroom.

Oiseau's artistic approach, focused on abstract calligraphy, is a sensory experience. "Fragility" encourages us to think about the power of words and how they affect our relationships, our society, and our personal experiences".

IMAGES & WORDS. auf DEUTSCH. SERIES



NEIN, 2022

acrylic, canvas
100*160 cm each



KEINE SCHMERZEN, 2023



NIE, 2022



Who I am where, 2022
acrylic, canvas
160*100 cm



Who I am? Why I am here? Where are my roots? Stolen. 2022
acrylic, canvas
160*100 cm



Black birds. Rockets, 2022

acrylic, canvas, 160*200 cm

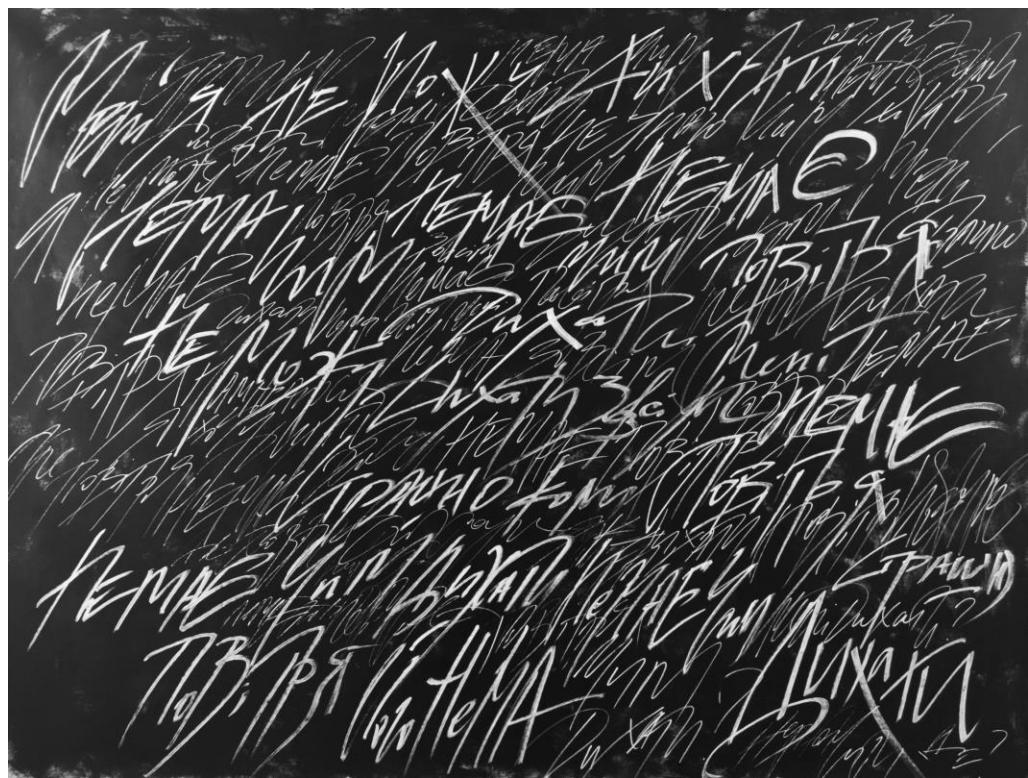
The birds not of peace, but of anxiety, the heralds of bad news
and air raid warnings.

10.10.2022 russia sent hundreds of missiles on my home.



PTSD

The Bombshelter, 2022
acrylic, canvas, 160*300 cm



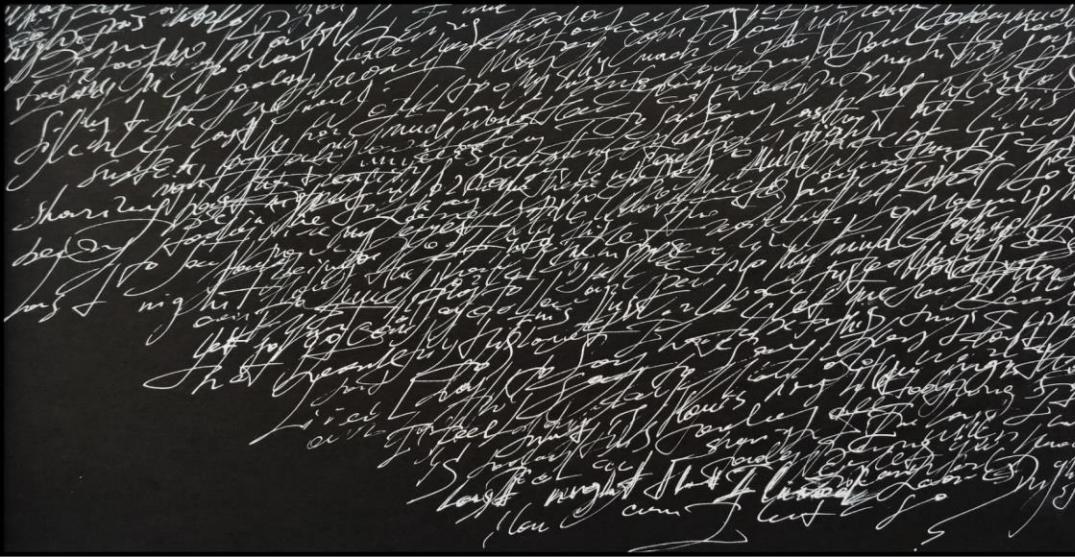
I can't breathe. There have no air, 2022
acrylic, canvas, 160*200 cm

Panic attack, chest pain or chest discomfort, shortness of breath, difficulties during the breathing, intense fear, feeling afraid as a common symptom of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

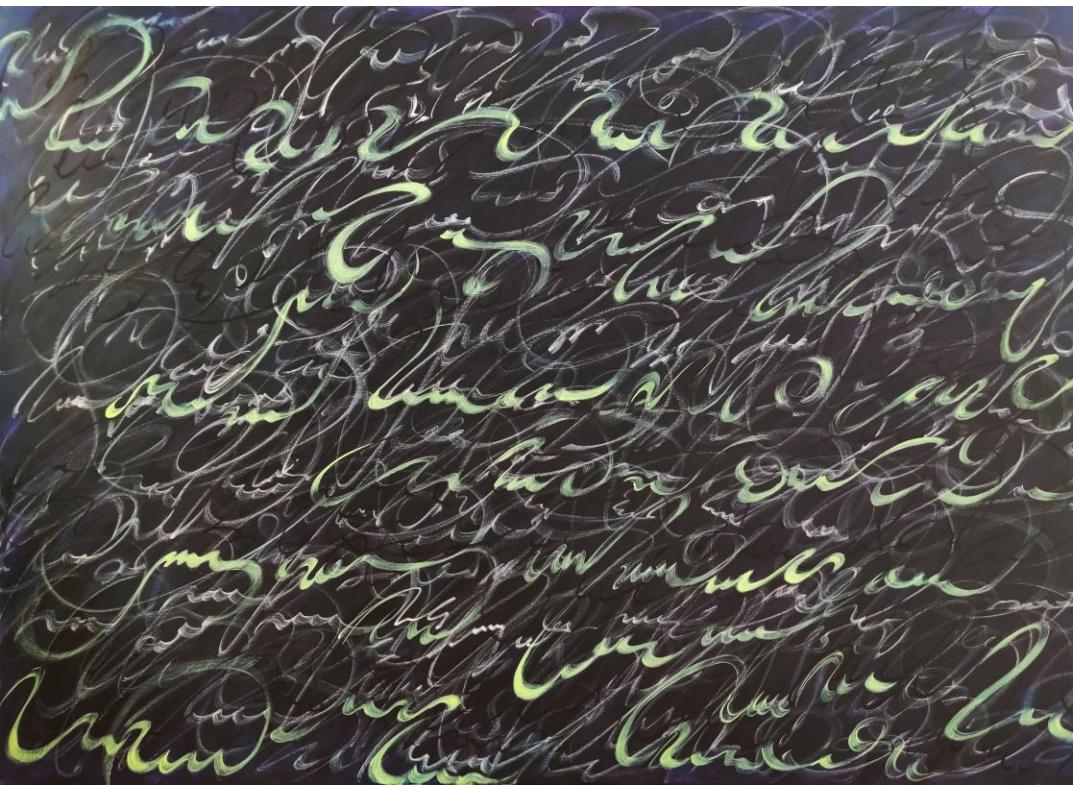


ДЕТИ/ CHILDREN (rus)/ ДЕТИ/ Where are you (ukr) 2022. Acrylic, canvas, 160*200cm

198 children have died, 385 injured. This is the number for 15.04.2022 by official information. But the real number? I multiplied the word **ДЕТИ** in Russian language it means **CHILDREN**. It's written in places where children stay. But this does not stop Russians to shoot directly at cars, send the missiles and throw bombs even at kindergartens. Huge word **ДЕТИ** was written on the ground in front of Mariupol's dramatic theater, where approximately 600 people died.



MUSIC. CALLIGRAPHIC SERIES ABOUT MUSICAL RESEARCHES AND INFLUENCES



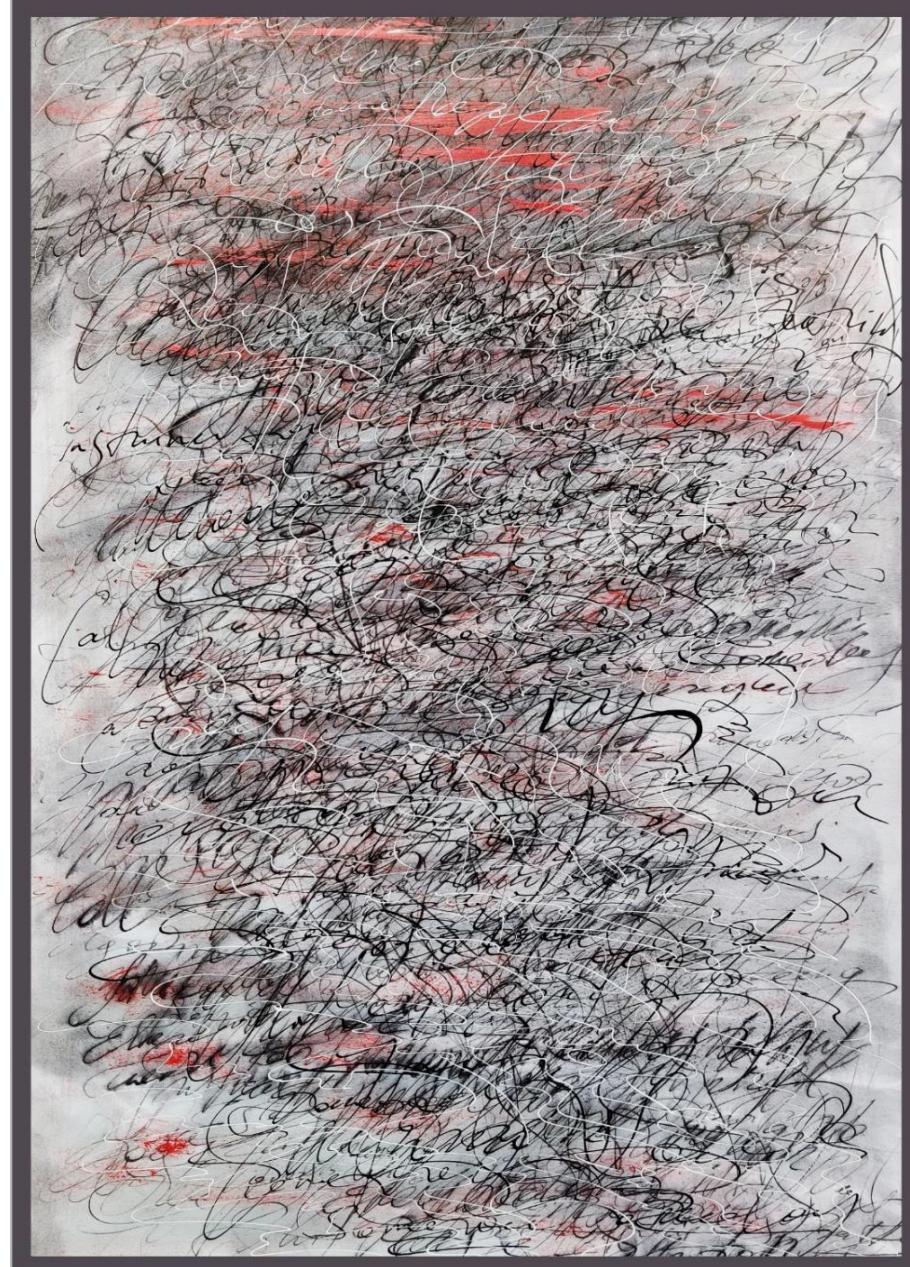
The Last Night That I Lived, 2021 (song by Virgil Donati)
cardboard, ink, 20*40cm

Modul 66, The song by Nik Bärtsch & Ronin, 2022
acrylic, canvas. 100*140 cm. For Nik Bärtsch's collection

MUSIC



Red Air 1, 2021. Paper, ink, acrylic, nib. Instrumental song by Virgil Donati) 50*35 cm .



Red Air 2, 2021. Paper, ink, acrylic, nib Instrumental song by Virgil Donati) 50*35 cm .