



ELZARA OISEAU

CV
portfolio
selected

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BIOGRAPHY

Elzara Oiseau is Ukrainian contemporary artist with Crimean Tatar origins. Because of the deportation of Crimean Tatars – indigenous people of Crimea, by Stalin she did not grow up in her homeland, but in the Caucasus region of Russia. In 2000 she finally moved with her parents to Crimea, where she 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 in Zurich.

Member of Visarte Zurich since 2024.

STATEMENT

The profound intersections between personal history, identity, and the collective traumas of displacement are the main topic of my artistic practice. As a Crimean Tatar born into exile, then becoming double times refugee, my work is a dialogue between the self and a world that is constantly shifting—marked by conflict, loss, and the search for belonging, search for home. What is HOME?

Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, my work has transformed into a visceral response to war, displacement, and the scars left by trauma. An intimate exploration of fear and uncertainty, evolving into a larger reflection on the psychological toll of conflict. Through vast canvases emblazoned with text and abstract forms, I talk about the emotional weight of living in exile and the enduring impact of post-traumatic stress disorder.

The notion of 'home' is at the heart of my practice. Through the series *Mother.Land*, I investigate the deep connection to my Crimean Tatar roots, examining what it means to belong to a land where I even had no chance to be born, that has been stolen and occupied and historically known during the last few centuries by the constant repressions. The use of my native language—Crimean Tatar—and the map of Crimea reflects my voice for a homeland that exists as much in memory as in reality. By confronting my own trauma and the displacement of my people, I seek not only to heal but also to resist erasure. Each piece is a fragment of my story, interwoven with the larger narrative of a people displaced, yet resilient. Through abstract forms and musical dialogue, I strive to create spaces for reflection and connection, inviting viewers to engage with the fragility and strength that coexist within all of us.

I also explore the fluidity of languages and sound through abstract calligraphy, where the rhythm of music and the written word become one. Influenced by experimental music, my visual compositions are translations of auditory experiences—shapes and lines become echoes of melody and rhythm.

EDUCATION:

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

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2025 - *Sea of words*, personal exhibition, Go-Green Art Gallery, Erlenbach, Switzerland.
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 off-space, Kyiv, Ukraine.

COLLECTIVE EXHIBITIONS:

- 2024-2025 – *Grenzen /Frontières/Borders*, collective exhibition during Regionale25, Städtische Galerie Stapflehus , Weil am Rhein, Germany.
2024 – *Neue Wege* collective exhibition by Künstler Vereinigung Zürich, Galerie Art & Business, Zürich, Switzerland.
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, Switzerland.
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 – *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 CHOBИ/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 №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.

ARTIST RESIDENCES:

2024 – *Meeting Point Project* - co-funded by the Creative Europe Program of the European Union, Artspace Fabrica Athens Multiactive Art Group, Athens, Greece.

2025 - residency by Bahay contemporary in Zermatt, Switzerland.



Presentation of *Sürgünlik* project at solo exhibition *Sea of Words* in the Go-Green Art Gallery in Erlenbach. February 2025



Map of Crimea screenshot
from google maps



Dimensions:
from ~ 15*20*5cm to
30*40*7cm each object
Self-drying clay

Sürgünlik (Exile from Crimean Tatar language) is an installation supposed to consist dozens of sculptural objects of geographical shape of Crimean peninsula transformed in a shape of bird which is searching for a freedom and deliberation from the constant repressions.

Dedicated to a 81th anniversary of the Deportation of Crimean Tatars (18.05.1944) from their native land.

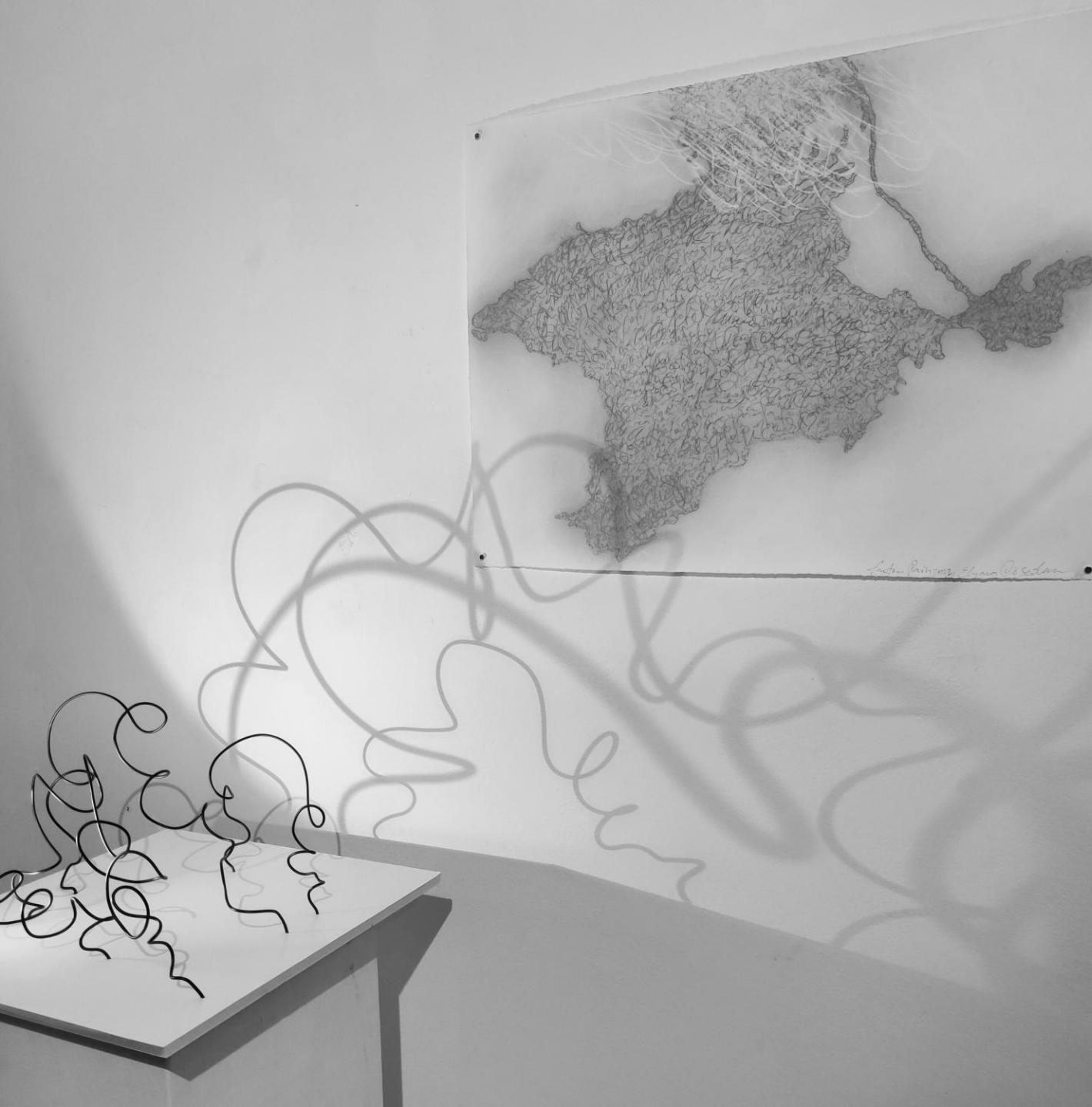
Through this project, my aim is to illuminate the lesser-known facets of Crimea's history, notably my personal story as much as the story of indigenous people of Crimea. To talk about displacement, integration, living in exile, being a refugee who has lost the meaning of the HOME, but still trying to put his roots in the new, foreign environment. To build a new sense of belonging while carrying the weight of inherited memory and trauma.

Sürgünlik is not only a tribute to the past but also a reflection on the present struggles of identity, resilience, and resistance. Each bird-shaped sculpture becomes a metaphor for the Crimean Tatar people's journey — uprooted, yet determined to soar. This installation seeks to foster dialogue about cultural erasure, forced migration, and the enduring hope of return, resonating with displaced communities worldwide.

By embodying both fragility and strength, *Sürgünlik* invites viewers to engage emotionally and intellectually with the complex layers of exile — not as a distant history, but as a lived, ongoing experience.



A sculptural wire installation *La Mer* (2024) 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 the years spent in my homeland - Crimea, which I hope to regain, lost due to occupation in 2014 and full-scale invasion in 2022. Previously explored the theme *Homeland, Mother*, through different mediums and languages, now transformed 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.



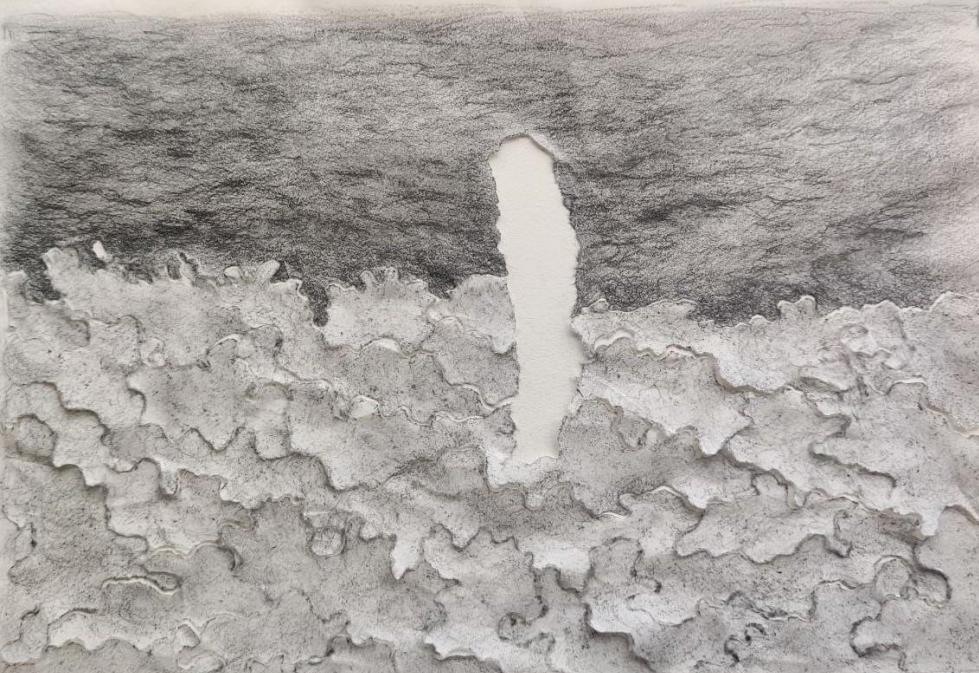
Phantom Pain. 2023. Paper,
pencil, 48*64cm.

Das Meer. 2024
Wire installation, 40*40*30cm.

At Neue Wege collective
exhibition by Künstler
Vereinigung Zürich,
Zürich, Switzerland,
october 2024.



*Lost Landscapes. Crimea.
Sudaq. Genovese Fortress.
Series of applications and
drawings. 2024
Paper, pencil, 18*27cm.*



Series of applications and drawings. 2024 Paper, pencil, ~18*27cm.

A series of Crimean landscapes based on my own photographs, depicting the scenery of my homeland—now without me since 2014. These landscapes are slowly fading from my memory, so I am trying to preserve them.

In the essence of this project lies Crimea – my native land, a land marked by a turbulent history of loss and fortitude. A narrative that deeply resonates with me and explain some aspects of my individuality. Crimea's past is marred by painful chapters through the centuries. In this project, I portray Crimea's beauty and history through its landscapes. The peninsula, with its rich cultural heritage and stunning vistas, Crimea's story is a tapestry woven with threads of diverse influences. From the legacies of Italian craftsmanship and Greek mythology to the echoes of Turkish traditions, each culture has left its mark on Crimea's heritage. These marks were attentively erased from the history during last 3 centuries, and everything that left and even had a chance to be included in UNESCO heritage (like ruins of Greek city Hersonissos for exp), since 2014 is out of control, occupiers build commercial centers, hotels and attractions on these territories.



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



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[video](#)

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Conversation, 2024

The project was created for the exhibition *Resonanzkörper Sound und Skulptur im Raum*, in June 2024 in a very unique space, Waschraum (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. Influenced by Nik Bärtsch's intricate rhythms and dynamic energy, I transform sound into visual forms. My 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.

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.

elzara.studio/conversation



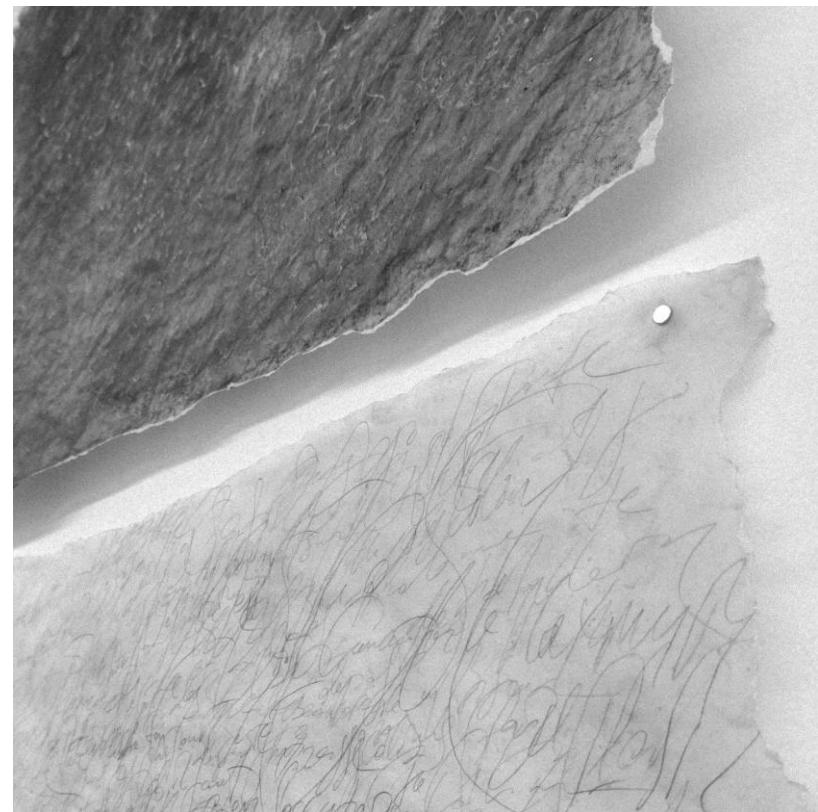
Grenzen /Frontières/Borders collective exhibition during Regionale25, Städtische Galerie Stapflehus, Weil am Rhein, Germany, November 2024-January 2025.

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

Anacığım, 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 the writing in my native language, Crimean Tatar, to represent home and memory.

The word Anam is multiplied by imitating the waves of the Black Sea.





Ineffable. Series 2023-2024
Transparent paper, pencil, ink
45*65cm each.



Ineffable. Series 2023-2024
Transparent paper, pencil, ink
45*65cm each



Ineffable. Series 2023-2024
Transparent paper, pencil, ink
45*65cm each

Jazz Lines. Installations, wire. 2023



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 reflections 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.

Curated by Anastasia Yovanovska.

Full information about the project : <https://elzara.studio/events/jazz-lines>



Desert song, based on Nik Bärtsch's song *Modul 61*,
2023. acrylic, canvas, 100*160cm, *Jazz Lines*

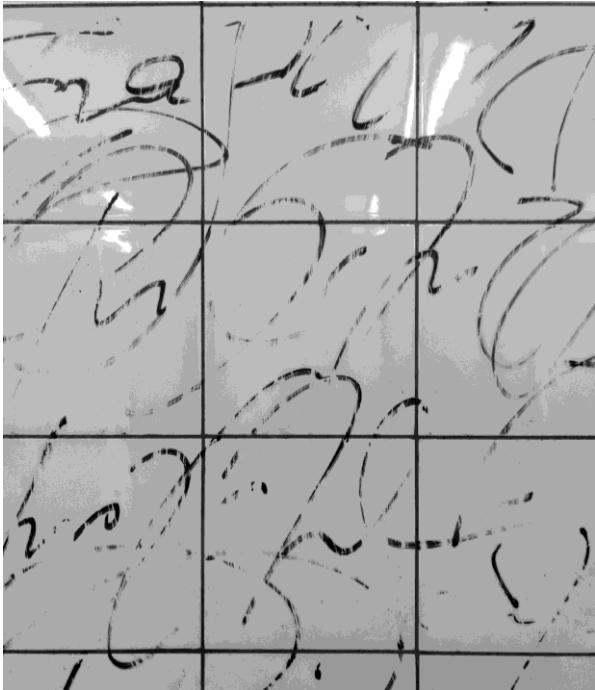
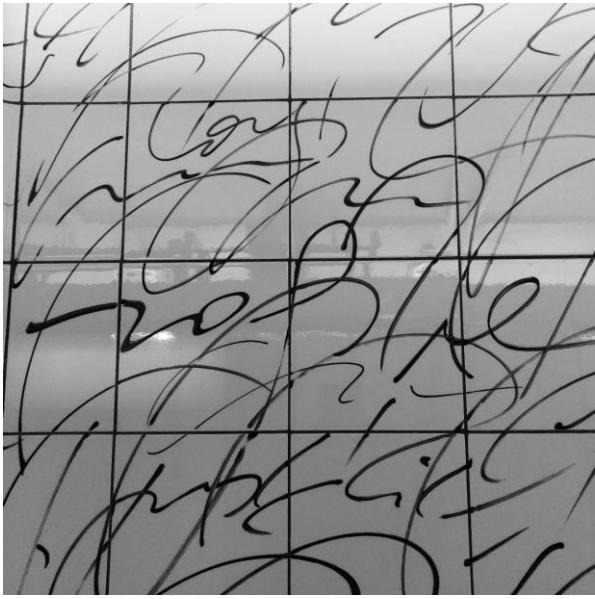
FRAGILITY
12 meters wall painting for
loslassen-loswerden
WASCHRAUM
2023

[fragility for waschraum](#)

[Watch the video](#)

[elzara.studio/fragility](#)





Performative removing of the painting by the end of exhibition, online streaming

This project *Fragility* 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 a chance 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.

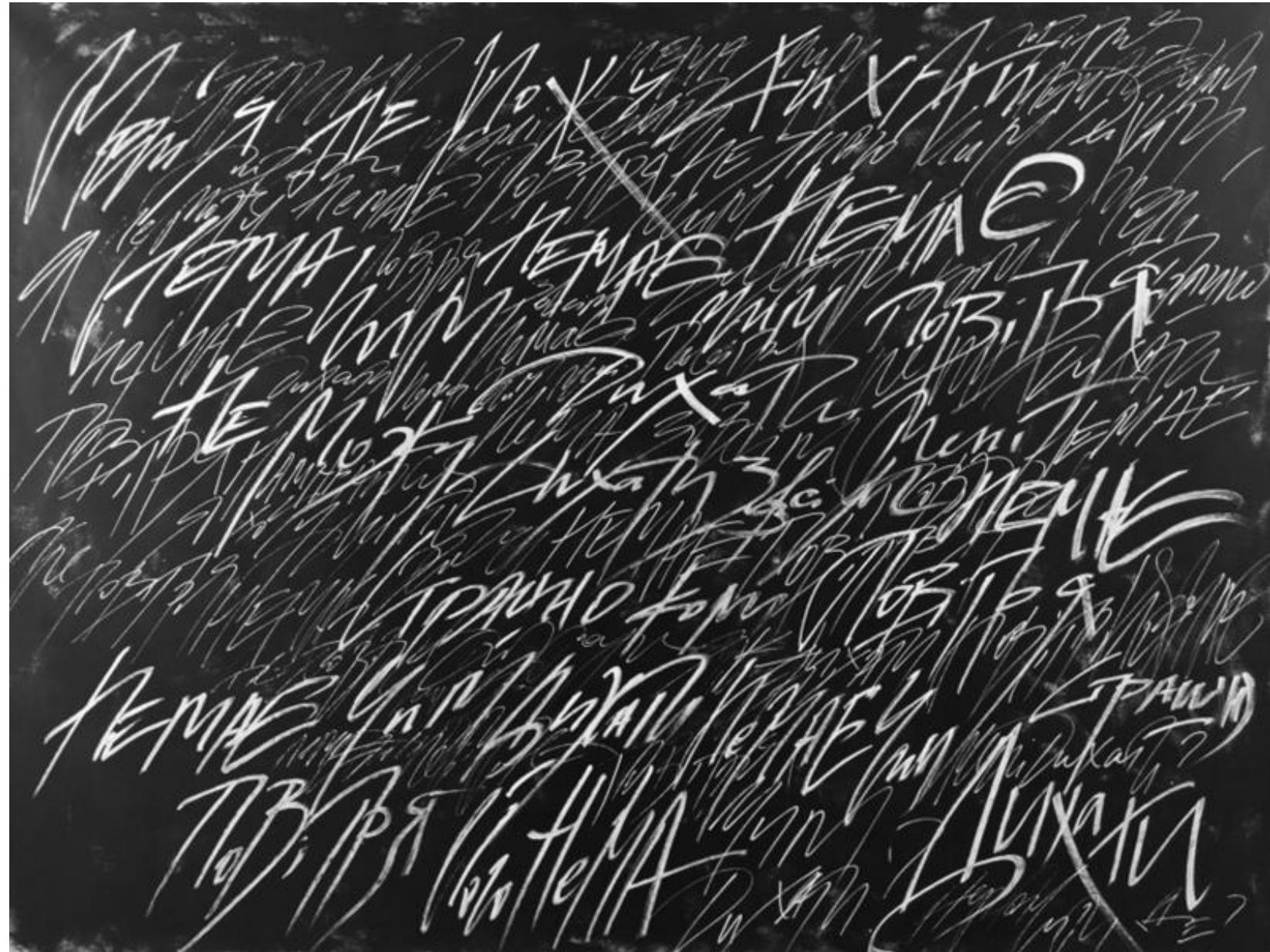
Abstract calligraphy is the central element of Oiseau's artistic expression. She believes that nothing is more expressive than words, but at the same time, she lives in an environment where she does not master the local language. She builds a bridge using abstract calligraphy and emphasizes the immense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



Black birds. 2022
acrylic, canvas, 160*200 cm



Я не можу дихати. Немає повітря. I cant breathe. There have no air, 2022
acrylic, canvas, 160*200 см.