

ART AT EP



ACQUISITIONS FROM

AUSTRIA BULGARIA CROATIA FINLAND



European
Parliament

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This publication was produced in Luxembourg for information purposes on the occasion of the exhibition ACQUISITION 2023 featuring works from the European Parliament's contemporary art collection, with the aim of providing an educational reference about the background and artistic legacy of the artists whose creations are displayed, and of preserving and promoting their contribution to Europe's cultural heritage.

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**CONTEMPORARY
ART COLLECTION
OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT**

ACQUISITIONS FROM

BULGARIA

FINLAND

CROATIA

AUSTRIA

INTRODUCTION

The 2023 programme of acquisitions has enriched the European Parliament's contemporary art collection with works from Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia and Finland. The European Parliament's acquisitions continue to focus on female artists in a bid to balance gender representation within the collection. In keeping with the criteria for the collection, the selected artists work with contemporary media and innovative techniques in photography, video and digital art, installation, sculpture, painting and drawing. The ideas and questions which they explore reflect the present-day interests and concerns of people across the European Union and are the subject of major political and legislative debates in the European Parliament.

Identity, memory, and communication are topics which are explored differently by Tatjana Danneberg, Ivana Tkalčić, Elina Brotherus and Leda Vaneva. **Tatjana Danneberg's** art is highly personal, intimate and multilayered in both conception and execution. Starting with deceptively simple elements, Danneberg builds a complex discourse around contemporary practices of remembering and interacting in our daily lives. The artist captures snapshots of casual moments and exchanges on film. The resulting images undergo a series of transformations,

suggesting an almost alchemical process, through which they are physically and metaphorically deconstructed and mutate into new states, from photography to painting. Through Danneberg's artworks, memories become mementos of joys, worries or pitfalls, and raise questions about meaningfulness, authenticity and our existence in relation to others. As Heidegger reminds us, existence as 'being-in-the-world is a being-with others', implying a sense of community.

The theme of our inherent interconnectedness is also at the heart of **Ivana Tkalčić's** installation of four collages, which explore how family memories are passed down through generations and create a personal universe, populated by the figures and stories of our kin and forebears. In equal parts subjective and intimate, Tkalčić's project uses each panel to represent a dimension of memory: photographs, official and personal documents, and fragments of memoirs written by relatives about other family members. Together, they form a collective, shared heritage, where the good and the bad, the sad and the joyous merge together. Reminiscent of a gene pool, the endlessly retold stories which emerge from this repository nurture each generation consciously or unconsciously and shape their identities.

In a similar vein, **Elina Brotherus's** *Wanderlust* considers identity-making, and personal and collective memory, this time, from the perspective of art history. Based on Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818), a recurrent reference in Brotherus's work, this immersive composition has both personal and universal overtones. The artist engages in a form of appropriation art, replacing Friedrich's male Wanderer with a female figure, who claims her place within the natural and artistic landscape. Her gesture recalls Cindy Sherman's series *History Portraits*, in which she photographed herself as the subject of famous paintings. The natural setting pays homage to the history of Finnish landscape painting and reinterprets the Romantic motifs of longing, solitude and communion with nature for the COVID era when it was created. The Wanderer stood at the centre of Friedrich's composition as a substitute for the viewer's own introspective contemplation of nature. Meanwhile, Brotherus's figure stands to the side, inviting the viewer to join her in a shared experience.

Leda Vaneva uses digital communication practices to examine and call into question the construction of identity and relationships. Working with image-based new media art, she

challenges the boundaries between art and technology and invites a shift in perception, transcending the human perspective. If an AI program were to paint our portrait based on our digital interactions, what would it look like? Vaneva did not use AI, but her abstract composition adopts a dehumanised perspective to make an image of ourselves, which only exists virtually, visible and concrete. Moreover, through her artwork, she asks us to consider how we remember and experience our digital interactions in the physical world. Vaneva thus examines practices of memory and communication, and how we define ourselves through our interactions with others. Acknowledging the influence of digital communication and interactions on daily life, the European Parliament recently adopted a framework for an EU-wide digital identity system and the AI Act, and has continued to develop a Digital Agenda to improve digital access and security for people, businesses and public administrations.

Inka Bell addresses a similar theme to Vaneva as she focuses on human behaviour in relation to technology. Bell combines an innovative approach to paper with traditional tools, software and artistry to construct minimalist paper sculptures. These artworks make use of subtle

groupings of colour and pattern to evoke states of being, moods and feelings. She invites us to look within ourselves and reflect on abstract and concrete experiences by observing our reactions to her work. In the abstract composition 01:14, the relations between mass, planes and colours suggest forms, emotions, tension and a human perspective, stimulating the imagination and giving form to intangible concepts.

From this introspective artwork, we turn to societal contrasts and power relations, as **Eva Grubinger** tackles the topic of imbalance. Her installation *Malady of the Infinite* represents **excess, inequality and conflict** through scale: an almost life-size superyacht is besieged by oversized sea mines. The series of drawings acquired by the European Parliament emphasises the reversed power dynamics, with gigantic confrontational mines dwarfing and threatening the luxury yacht. Grubinger's technique of altering the material and scale of common objects recalls the work of César, the artist who, in the 1960s, used a pantograph – a device for enlarging sculptures – to create monumental reproductions of his thumb in various materials. While César's self-affirming series of sculptures magnified the artist's manual work, Grubinger plays out relationships of disparity through disproportion

as a marker of social crisis. The title of the installation and drawings refers to a pathological state of constant, unfulfilled desire for more, theorised in sociologist Emile Durkheim's study *Suicide* (1897). In Grubinger's work, this experience is associated with the super-rich and contrasted with the growing frustration of the socially and economically disadvantaged and the potential for deviance and conflict.

The fragility of our societies is emphasised in **Borjana Ventzislavova's** video installation, which centres on the values of **democracy** in the context of **migration**. Ventzislavova set up a performance, using a mixture of different backdrops and young people who recite fragments from political manifestos on migration and democracy. By exploring such themes as identity, community and communication, she aims to encourage a better understanding of the role and position of migrants, and of what it means to live in a society where everyone enjoys equal rights. The European Parliament recently adopted a set of rules on the much-debated topic of migration, with the aim of ensuring fairer treatment and conditions for migrants.

Key explorations of **ecology and sustainability** lead us to reflect more deeply about identity, community and democracy. **Judith Fegerl** addresses environmental questions from the perspective of our relationship with energy production and consumption and the consequences of these processes. Interested in the connections between art, architecture, technology, and nature, her works push against distinctions such as human and machine, organic

and inorganic. In '*solar series of electric shocks*', she makes the invisible, yet all-pervasive force powering modern society – electrical energy – visible. To do so, she employs an innovative medium and technique; obsolete solar panels. Energy is a subject, medium and material, which sheds light on the aesthetic potential of outdated and discarded technology. Fegerl's installation invites us to reflect on issues related to recycling photovoltaic panels and solutions for sustainable practices.

Meanwhile, **Maria Nalbantova** explores our relationship with the environment through the lens of ecosystems, in which all life is interdependent, and where a disturbance in one area affects all. Ecological balance is a recurrent theme: Nalbantova, who is inspired by particular environments or settings, constantly experiments with techniques, respectfully sources materials and integrates them into her works to weave a narrative about a given place. In her extraordinary installation, *Drought*, soap cubes incorporating organic and inorganic elements from four drought-stricken sites reveal the impact of human intervention and destruction on the environment and people. The soap blocks, made with and around water, suggest a ritual-like process of purification and manufacture, alluding to the traditionally female craft of soapmaking. A powerful sculptural presence, the installation distils the difficult, murky realities within the objects and communicates a sense of stability, purity and harmony. The artist offers a critical perspective on the present, pointing to the responsibility we bear towards the environment we inhabit.

After the exhibition in the Spinelli building, the new artworks will be on display in the European Parliament premises in Brussels, Strasbourg and Luxembourg. These artworks, which are representative of current artistic creation, experiment with contemporary techniques and express the spirit and interests of our society. Each of the artists selected helps to raise awareness of the need to stand up for the values we believe in: from identity, community, inclusion and freedom of movement to ecology and sustainability, and invites us to participate in the quest for understanding, engaging with, and even finding solutions to the great questions and challenges of our time.

DG COMM

Cultural Outreach Unit

List of Featured artists

INKA BELL

ELINA BROTHERUS

TATJANA DANNEBERG

JUDITH FEGERL

EVA GRUBINGER

MARIA NALBANTOVA

IVANA TKALČIĆ

LEDA VANEVA

BORJANA VENTZISLAVOVA

**THE ARTISTS
AND THEIR ARTWORKS**

Inka BELL

(Finland)

01:14, 2018

Inka Bell is an artist based in Helsinki, where she specialises in printmaking, sculptural paper works and public art. She holds BA degrees from the University of Art and Design Helsinki in Fashion Design (2004) and Graphic Design (2008), and an MFA in Printmaking from the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki. She has received several awards and grants, including, recently, the Greta and William Lehtinen Foundation Grant (2022) and the Project Grant from the Arts Promotion Centre in Finland (2022). Bell has participated in national and international residencies and has exhibited her art at various solo and group exhibitions across the world. Her works can also be found in public and private collections, both in Finland and abroad.

Inka Bell's art practice involves the creation of paper sculptures and the exploration of the relationship between two- and three-dimensional approaches through material, colour, surfaces and repetition. By layering hundreds or thousands of paper surfaces one on top of the other, her creations inspire a sense of order, as if the artist gave form and structure to abstract feelings and experiences and made them visible. Bell uses minimalist combinations of colour and pattern to evoke visual narratives and specific states of mind and emotions. She draws inspiration from science fiction, whether in the form of music, film or art: her themes thus centre around futuristic scenarios, addressing questions about human behaviour in relation to technology. Bell's practice is built around a dialogue with a machine that gives form to her ideas, which she perfects with her hands.



20 × 20 × 6 cm (including frame)
Screen print, paper

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. What impact does this artwork have on you?
What do you notice and what feelings does it trigger for you?
2. What could be the meaning of the title and how does it relate to the artwork?
3. How would you categorise this artwork, taking into account the material, its elements and their composition?
4. What is the significance of the material and how is it used?
5. Think of other artworks in which paper plays an important role.
How do they compare to this one?

CREATE

Ask students to:

- choose different kinds of paper, for example, coloured or recycled paper, newspaper or magazine paper;
- create their own abstract composition using the previously collected paper;
- find a structure that conveys emotions and a strategy for using and applying the paper (e.g. different ways of folding, arranging and assembling);
- prepare an exhibition displaying the results in their school environment.
The aim is to find arrangements that emphasise the emotional impact of the creative works.

Elina BROTHERUS

(Finland)

Wanderlust, 2020

Elina Brotherus is an accomplished artist, specialising in photography and film. She lives and works in Helsinki in Finland and Avallon in France. She holds a master's degree in Photography from the University of Art and Design Helsinki and a master's degree in Chemistry from the University of Helsinki. Over the course of her career, she has received numerous prestigious awards and grants, including the Artist Professorship Grant of the Arts Promotion Centre in Finland (2022-2026), the Carte blanche PMU in France (2017), the Finnish State Prize for Photography (2008) and the Prix Niépce Gens d'images (2005).

Her artworks can be found in over 80 public collections worldwide, including at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Denmark, LACMA in Los Angeles, and Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Brotherus has published 15 monographs, with her most recent publications being *Brotherus Block Beuys, Visitor, Sebaldiana. Memento mori and Seabound. A Logbook*.

Brotherus's art explores autobiographical and art historical themes, particularly the interplay between the human figure and the landscape. Architecture is another prominent theme, as she photographs houses designed by renowned architects, playing the part of imagined characters to humanise these emblematic spaces. Her ongoing project, *Meaningless Work*, draws inspiration from the Fluxus movement of the 1950s-70s, using scores and written instructions for performance-oriented art.

Part of this project, *Wanderlust*, is one of her best-known photographs. It is based on Caspar David Friedrich's painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* and reflects the Finnish scenery with a nod to the golden age of Finnish landscape painting. Brotherus playfully reinterprets Friedrich's painting, placing a woman in a dominant position to challenge traditional perspectives of art. Created during the COVID-19 pandemic, *Wanderlust* transforms the Romantic leitmotifs of longing and solitude, so that they speak to our recent common experience and the importance of wandering, wondering, discovering and togetherness. The motionless figure invites us to join her and contemplate the landscape together.



120 × 160 cm

Edition No. 3/6

Pigment ink print on Museo Silver Rag paper, mounted on 3 mm aluminium composite, framed

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. How does the image relate to its title 'Wanderlust'?
2. Why do you think the artist chose a German word as a title?
What could this imply?
3. What is the effect of the woman only being shown from behind?
4. Compare this photo with the painting by Caspar David Friedrich.
What are the similarities and differences?
5. How do we define our relationship with nature,
by comparison to the Romantics?

CREATE

Ask students to:

- take similar photos of another person in different environments.
This should include both natural and urban landscapes;
- prepare a presentation/gallery or a kind of family album of these photos;
- compare all the photos that were taken and the impact they have on the viewer.
The aim is to reflect on our relationship with the different environments and how we would like to live in the future.

Tatjana DANNEBERG

(Austria)

Sorry for the late reply, 2019 (left)

Nuda, 2020 (right)

Tatjana Danneberg was born in Austria and lives and works in Vienna and Warsaw. She studied Architecture at the Technical University in Vienna (2009–2011) and Fine Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (2011–2017) and the Städelschule – Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Frankfurt am Main (2014–2015). Danneberg experiments with photography and painting in her art, which features close friends and family as they go about their day-to-day activities. Her work has been showcased in national and international exhibitions. Her artistic practice involves performative gestures and mixed media and techniques, which turn casual memories into thought-provoking images. Danneberg's intervention into the reality she captures and her multi-layered experimentation produce different and unpredictable results each time.

Nuda captures a momentary intrusion on an intimate scene, creating a sense of discomfort. Through Danneberg's hybrid process, a fragment of life is stolen from the protagonists but given back as a mysterious and intriguing image, inviting reflection and questioning. Danneberg's art changes a casual scene into a suspended moment of contemplation. Through her artistic transformation, the event acquires materiality, becoming an object.

In *Sorry for the late reply*, the canvas has a crumpled, textured feel and features fragments of messages which merge together, making them difficult to read. The artwork mirrors the overwhelming volume of communication in contemporary life, and its title suggests that we forget old messages as new ones replace them. The artist renders both the messages and her responses visible and gives them physical form through the artwork, creating an object that attracts the gaze while preserving its mystery. The fragments of text remain undecipherable.



135 × 90 cm

Gouache, inkjet print, paint primer, glue on canvas



210 × 140 cm

Inkjet print gesso, glue on canvas

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. How has human communication changed over the past 20 years?
2. How has this development changed our behaviour towards one another?
3. What advantages/disadvantages has this change brought about?
4. Why could it be important to keep mementos of your daily activities?
5. What changes would you like to see in our communication tools in the future?

CREATE

Collect photographs of personal memories and arrange them in a collage. Add further details with mixed media of your choice to make them a visual souvenir of your everyday life in your personal environment. Try to include details that make your image a visual statement of the specific historical period you live in. You can relate your creative work to communication concepts like the artist did. You may also think about other sociopolitical phenomena that characterise the period you live in.

Judith FEGERL

(Austria)

Solar series of electric shocks, 2021

Vienna-based multimedia artist Judith Fegerl explores the connections between humans and machines, space and time, and technology and nature. She creates site-specific projects that engage with the invisible aspects of architecture. Her works also explore the relationship between art, technology and the environment, with a particular focus on energy. Through her art, she aims to make visible the invisible. Fegerl uses energy and the material components involved in the production of electricity as both subjects and resources, challenging conventional modes of thinking and revealing their artistic potential. Her art invites viewers to reassess their relationship with technology.

Fegerl's artwork *solar series of electric shocks* reflects on ecological, cultural, aesthetic, and systemic questions raised by the use of photovoltaics. She takes energy as a subject and medium by repurposing old, degraded solar panels to give new life to discarded materials and structures. The plastic composite which houses the active solar cells yellows and disintegrates in time; contacts corroded by moisture lead to short circuits and the appearance of strange shapes, patterns and textures. These panels tell their story, showing the effects of sunlight, temperature and seasonal weather conditions.

Moreover, Fegerl's art is at the intersection between autonomy and context. The artist allows sunlight to power an electroplating process: copper ions attach themselves to the steel surface of the panel and generate an amorphous (solar) painting. With Fegerl's help, solar electricity paints itself on this surface. This object's highly reflective, polished steel surface holds up a mirror: to the environment (through its interaction with the elements) and to us (through our relationship with it).



100 × 100 cm
Vintage solar panels (1970s), stainless steel panel

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. What is the relationship between human beings and technology according to the artist's approach?
2. What role does energy play in our lives today? What role did it play in the past?
3. What traces does it leave behind and where can we find them in our daily lives or environment?
4. How are the products we create recyclable?
5. What potential do they still have if they are no longer needed?

CREATE

Set a time frame and ask students to:

- research the historical development of energy;
- identify tools and objects for its production and consumption;
- create a collage with images of these tools; or
- create a montage or installation with real objects. The aim is to capture the historical development of energy and raise awareness about sustainability;
- design a utopian drawing or painting depicting how they imagine energy production and consumption will evolve in the future.

Eva GRUBINGER

(Austria)

Studies for “Malady of the Infinite”, 2019

Eva Grubinger was born in Salzburg and currently lives and works in Berlin. She obtained her degree from Hochschule der Künste Berlin in 1995. Her work focuses on the relationship between humans and technology, and the cultural and political processes that shape our perceptions. Working primarily with sculpture and installation, she alters familiar objects and contexts in order to challenge our perception and understanding of them. Grubinger has received numerous grants and participated in international residencies. Her artwork is featured in several public collections and spaces across Europe and the United States.

Eva Grubinger’s sculptural installation, *Malady of the Infinite*, showcased and acquired by Belvedere 21, in Vienna, is represented in two dimensions in a series of drawings. The installation consists of confrontational sea mines sitting halfway visible on the museum floor, so that they appear to threaten a superyacht in a David-and-Goliath scenario. This immersive, large-scale artwork is filled with tension and allusive dynamics. These are further explored in the drawings, which reinforce the asymmetries of power present in the installation between the mines and the yacht. The power imbalance comes out in one drawing depicting the shrunken yacht being pulled into a sea mine. Another drawing shows both mines and multiple cockpits being drawn into a relentless vortex. The artwork seems to play out our era of financial extremity in a symbolic conflict, addressing a system which creates dissatisfaction both for the disenfranchised poor and the insatiable super-rich.



50 ×70 cm each
Series of 8 direct prints on paper, framed, 5+1

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. What is the meaning of the title and how does the artist incorporate this concept into her work?
2. To what extent do you agree/disagree with her approach and its visual realisation?
3. How do the studies compare to the actual installation?
4. What thoughts or ideas come to mind when you see images of boats and/or mines?
5. What would your ideal future 'social utopia' look like? What kind of world would you like to live in?

CREATE

Ask students to:

- identify common, often overlooked, objects in their surroundings;
- choose a few objects and create arrangements that represent a contrast in contemporary social issues;
- think of the impact of social imbalances on people's lives, including their own;
- create their own installation using techniques that visually emphasise the imbalance in the relationship between the different sides of the topic.

Maria NALBANTOVA

(Bulgaria)

Drought, 2021

With a bachelor's degree in Book and Printed Graphics and a master's degree in Illustration from the National Academy of Art, Sofia, Maria Nalbantova constantly experiments with media and techniques, including drawing, collage, found objects, artist books, installations and videos. Her art centres on natural and architectural spaces, and she often includes objects, materials, photographs or archives connected to these in her creations. She explores ideas of community, society and the environment with a critical eye, with touches of humour, irony and sympathy.

Nalbantova's latest work, part of the *Drought* project, is a series of handmade blocks of soap which contain ingredients extracted from four sites affected by drought: a lake, a river, a puddle in a depopulated village and the sea. Each soap cube addresses the specific problems of the particular landscape transformed by drought. The soap cube from the seaside, for instance, contains seawater, sand, algae and concrete. The last ingredient is a reference to the illegal building of a concrete barrier on the beach, one example among many cases of unauthorised construction which destroy the environment. The artist describes her work as a protest which turns into a ritual, and a ritual which turns into a protest. To make each soap block is to narrate the (hi)story of a place, of the social and political decisions and consequences shaping the existence of its people and the environment. Nalbantova draws attention to the ecological crisis and highlights the idea that all living organisms are interconnected and are part of a fragile natural balance.





126 × 30 × 30 cm

Installation of four unique objects

Video: 8:18 min., HD, sound: stereo, (edition 3+1)

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. Why did the artist choose soap as the basic material for her objects?
2. How does the material relate to the title of this series?
3. What impact does the choice of water sources have on her artwork?
4. To what extent do these objects put a critical eye on the environment?
5. Can you identify places in your surroundings that face similar phenomena and explore constructive solutions?

CREATE

Ask students to:

- look for traces of environmental damage in their surroundings;
- find materials that represent the place and its problems;
- take and print out a photo of the place to later contextualise it within their creative production;
- create their own bar of soap using one of the many online tutorials in different languages that explain the method and the ingredients and tools needed;
- add the extracted environmental material to their soap;
- think of scents or colours that evoke the space and that they might want to add to their creation to enhance its sensory appeal;

OPTIONAL

- think of other materials, shapes or decorations that could increase the impact of their creation;
- arrange all the different creations together in a dedicated exhibition in their school so as to show the variety of environmental problems arising or existing in their surroundings.

Ivana TKALČIĆ

(Croatia)

Family mythology – Memories, 2016

Ivana Tkalčić is a multimedia artist and art researcher with master's degrees in Economics and Fine Arts. She has taken part in international residencies and masterclass programmes, received several awards for her work and has regularly exhibited her art at home and abroad since 2016. Her latest exhibition, *Astronaut(s) without a spaceship*, addresses the ethical, political and environmental implications of 'space races' through performance. She also conducted workshop-performances on managing energy sustainably in stressful situations with the local community. Ivana's experiment engaged spectators to discover alternative modes of perception, revealing art as an imaginative, creative, and inclusive discourse and practice.

Ivana believes in connecting different practices and media to exchange knowledge and involve others in the creative process. She considers the medium a fluid tool and the artistic process an opportunity to delve deeper into her interests. In *Family mythology – Memories*, she examines how family stories and patterns influence individuals. Throughout history, transmitted from generation to generation, such stories consciously or unconsciously shaped the lives of descendants.

Four collages make her family's histories and the memory of their forebears visible: one contains photographs, another documents (ID and health cards, army records, etc.), and the other two contain memories of or shared by family members. In the third collage, the texts are legible, while in the fourth, they are not. Ivana replicated these elements a thousand times to signify the repetition and transformation of stories over time. The accumulation of artefacts, merged together so that individual objects are no longer recognisable, suggests that genealogical heritage forms a background, a personal universe with its mythology, from which stories are drawn to shape our present existence.



Total 148 × 352 cm (each 148 × 88 cm)
Recycled documents, photographs, text on paper, transparent acrylic

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. How are family or personal memories presented in these four panels?
2. How important is individual memory for the artist in her artworks?
3. What effect do these panels have on the viewer?
4. What do these artworks express about our perception of and our way of dealing with personal memories?
5. What role should our individual experiences play in our collective societal memories?

CREATE

Ask students to:

- collect family photographs of different generations – either personal ones from home or through online research;
- print out a selection of photos that they think represent the time in which they were taken;
- create a photo collage of the history of the place they live in;
- include other details that relate the personal experience to the contemporary life of the selected historical periods.

Leda VANEVA

(Bulgaria)

Points of Contact, 2021

Leda Vaneva holds a bachelor's degree in Porcelain and Glass (2010) and a master's degree in Photography (2012), both from the National Academy of Art in Sofia, as well as a master's degree in New Media from the Aalto University in Helsinki (2018). Her work focuses on exploring and questioning the limitations of human perception through photography and new media art. Vaneva draws inspiration from science to investigate alternative modes of experiencing and visualising the invisible. Themes in her art include materiality, hybridity, identity, agency and the relationship between nature and technology. Her creations have been exhibited nationally and internationally, and are part of collections in Bulgaria, Austria and Switzerland. Vaneva has won several awards, including the Essl Art Award and the George Papazov Award for contemporary video. She currently resides in Helsinki.

Leda Vaneva's artwork explores the relationship between the whole and its components through image-based installations and hybrid pieces. Her recent project, *Unfolding the Digital Self*, questions the nature of reality and how it can be shaped and experienced in new ways. *Points of Contact* reflects on the way people communicate through digital media, showing what the content generated in one chat over the course of a month would look like if it were to acquire a physical dimension. The experiment reveals an abstract, yet material, representation of our digital selves. Through this, Vaneva challenges the central role of the human gaze in defining reality, suggesting that a broader 'beyond-human', structure can be revealed by stepping back from our limited perspective.



120 × 80 cm
Print on aluminium dibond

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. Who is shown meeting in this artwork? How is their interaction visualised?
2. What information do we get about the interaction and its potential content or the emotions that were exchanged?
3. Chats refer to digital communication. How do they differ from real-life communication?
4. What is the human factor in this image?
5. What is the human factor in our communication today?

CREATE

Ask students to:

- take the opposite approach and humanise communication again;
- create a photostory of a real conversation between friends, classmates or family members;
- invent a story about a topic that matters to them;
- compare the impact of their own story with that of the artist.

Borjana VENTZISLAVOVA

(Bulgaria)

Migration Standards, 2011

Borjana Ventsislavova is a multimedia artist whose work explores social interactions and human connections. She addresses topics such as identity, marginalisation and migration, and uses a mixture of documentary and fiction to approach difficult subjects. Borjana has exhibited her works internationally and received numerous awards and grants for her art. She has participated in artist residencies across the world, including in London, Rome and New York. Her artworks are part of public and private collections, such as the Photography Collection of the Austrian Federal Chancellery (BKA), MUSA and 21er Haus / Belvedere in Vienna; the National Art Gallery in Sofia; and LENTOS Linz, the Essl/Albertina, Esterhazy and Angerlehner collections in Austria.

Borjana works with video, photography, installation, and performative and media art. Her film installation *Migration Standards* pursues her engagement with issues of mobility and the crossing of socio-geographical and cultural borders and deals with the complex process of communication and translation. Through documentary and narrative structures, combining still and moving image, text and sound, she stages situations and stories, which test the line between the personal and the social. This set-up allows her to examine the interaction between individual and collective experiences through the lens of current events and history. She focuses on the demand for recognition of the history and role of migrants in society and promotes social equality. The installation combines video and photography with text excerpts in English and German, which young people of different ages recite out loud. The aim of the installation is to foster a better understanding of the complex situation and status of migrants.



5 min 20 sec
HD video, colour, sound

Teacher's corner

ZOOM IN

1. How is the concept of migration presented in these videos?
2. How do the images and text go together? Do they complement or contradict each other?
3. Why did the artist choose to feature children and teenagers in her videos?
4. What are the key messages that you take away from these videos?
5. How are the topics of mobility, identity and crossing sociocultural borders addressed in these videos? To what extent could the videos contribute to a better understanding of the situation of migrants?

CREATE

Ask students to:

- take a photo of themselves in front of the house they live in or a place in their environment where they feel at home;
- think of a country they would like to live in;
- search for photos of places in these countries and select their favourite one;
- print out this photo in a large format in colour and stick their own photo on top of it – like the artist did in her artworks. Another option is to do the same in digital format and print it out;
- reflect on why they chose this place and what moving to and living in another country means. What are the advantages/disadvantages compared to their current home place?
- adapt their reflections to the situation of refugees;
- *in an advanced artistic activity*: create a photostory or short video about moving to your new place of belonging. This can be done as a group activity.

Inka BELL

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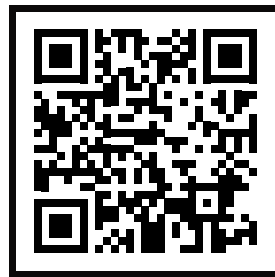
New Acquisition Exhibition 2023/2024

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