

ELZARA OISEAU

https://elzara.studio/
elzaraoiseau@gmail.com
Insta: @elzara_oiseau



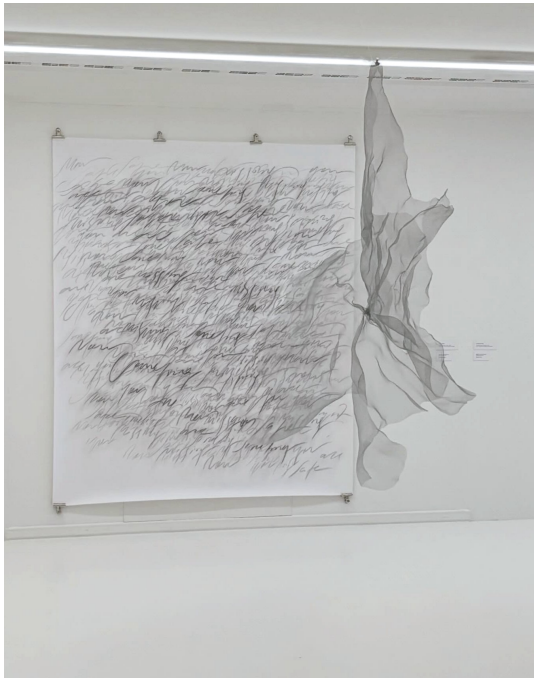
Project *Duality* for *Found in Translation.*

Based on the story of Majed Doghmoh.

The work is based on fragments of a dialogue between two individuals who have experienced forced displacement. Selected phrases are extracted, repeated, and rearranged, allowing meaning to shift depending on their sequence and spatial distribution. Text operates here as both image and structure: words dissolve into visual patterns, losing their fixed readability and becoming unstable. The repetition produces a rhythm similar to a disrupted narrative, where statements begin to question each other.

In the installation, a suspended metal mesh introduces a second layer. Its reflective and permeable surface fragments visibility, creating a tension between presence and disappearance.

The viewer's movement activates shifting perspectives, where the work never resolves into a single, stable reading.



Duality of Words. paper, pastel. 230 × 200 cm.

Duality of Words. Aluminium net, approx. 150 × 100 cm.

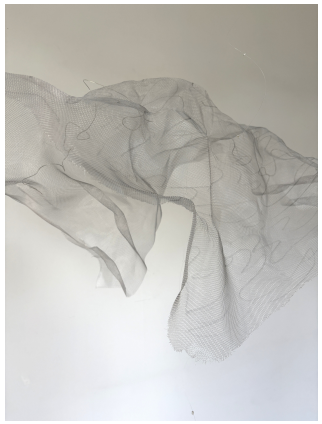
Helmhaus Zurich, 2025–2026.



Groundless – site specific installation.
Wire, mesh, beads. 2026, Cité internationale des arts, Paris.

Groundless emerges from the project *Des traces* alongside a site-specific installation developed through ongoing research into traces of the Crimean Tatar language in Paris.
The project extends a trajectory that unfolds across earlier bodies of work. While *Des traces* extended this investigation toward language - exploring its presence through archival fragments and its gradual erasure, *Groundless* continues this line of inquiry in spatial form.
Fragments of landscape and traces of words appear unsettled, no longer fully anchored. The central installation-suspended, without ground-evokes a condition of living in between: between places, languages, and temporalities. It reflects experiences of displacement marked by instability, disorientation, and the absence of a fixed point of belonging. At the same time, this suspended state carries an ambivalent quality-a certain lightness, even a quiet beauty, of being held momentarily outside of defined structures.
The work resonates with what might be understood as a “grey zone”: a space shaped not by active conflict, but by its lingering effects. Here, presence remains partial, and belonging is continuously renegotiated through distance, memory, and shifting forms of attachment.

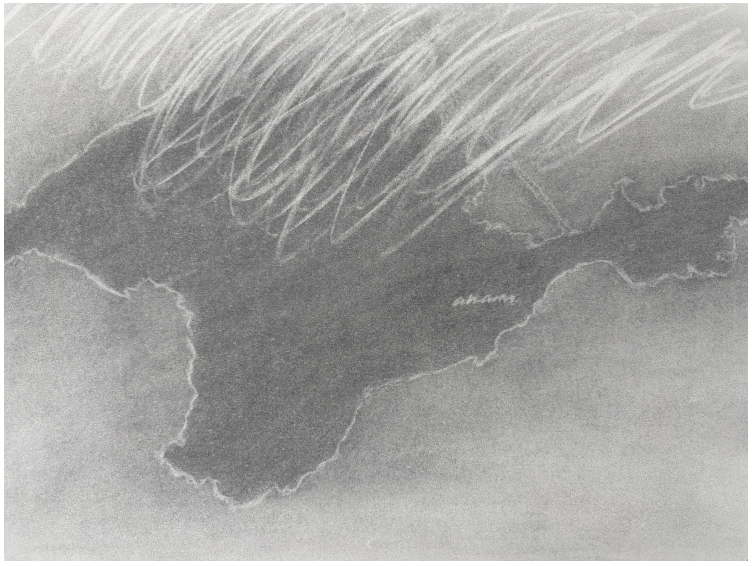


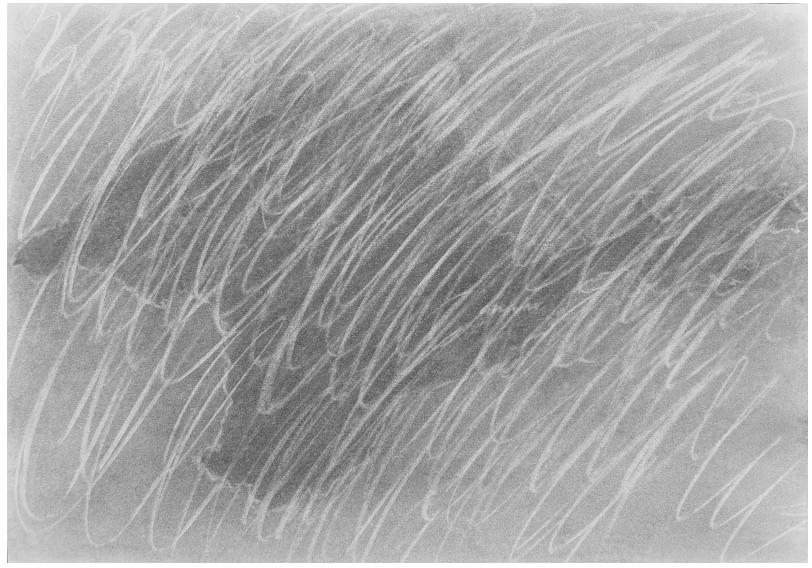






Des traces- a research project developed during the residency at the Citè internationale des arts, exploring the early presence of the Crimean Tatar language in the history of the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations (today-INALCO).Combining archival investigation with drawing, the project reflects on how languages and territories shift between visibility and disappearance. Alongside the research materials, Elzara presents the series of works *Lost Landscapes*, depicting Crimean places remembered from before 2014, based on own photos, as well as a series of works on paper, using the fragile materials as pastel, watercolor, which are easy to remove from the surface,analyzing manuscripts and archival documents. The drawings incorporate gestures reminiscent of Arabic calligraphy, referencing the historical use of the Arabic script in the Crimean Tatar language. Images are stretched, layered and partially erased, shifting between legibility and abstraction. This produces a visual field where language appears unstable, oscillating between visibility and disappearance.





Des traces exhibition within the open studio curated by Sciences Po at Cité internationale des arts, Paris, 2026.

From left to right:collage - paper, pencil; watercolor on paper; pencil on paper.



collages zoomed









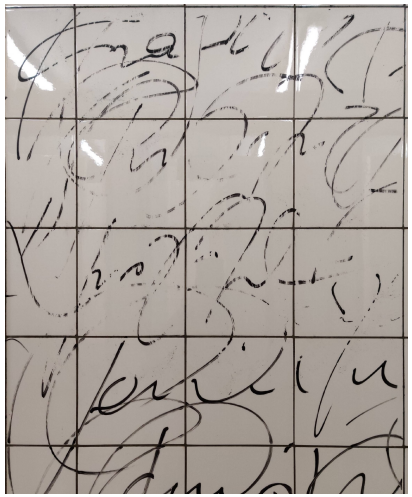
Conversation, 2024, site-specific installation, wire, sound, torches. Waschraum, Zurich, video.
Conversation translates rhythmic and temporal structures into spatial line compositions. The work uses a sound as an underlying system that determines the distribution, density and movement of visual elements. Installed in a darkened space, the drawing unfolds through guided perception. Visitors navigate the work using handheld light sources, revealing fragments of lines that never fully resolve into complete image. Visibility remains partial and dependent on movement. In this context, rhythm functions as an alternative ordering principle, replacing linguistic structure with a temporal one. Meaning emerges through sequences, interruptions and repetition.



Nik Bärtsch observing the *Conversation* – site-specific installation at Waschraum, Zurich 2024.

FRAGILITY
A site-specific 12 meters wall drawing developed for *loslassen-loswerden* at WASCHRAUM 2023 video





Das Wort kann verbinden, das Wort kann trennen. Es kann der Beginn eines Krieges sein oder der Beginn eines neuen Lebens. Das Wort ist mächtig. Wir denken, wir können uns ausdrücken, nur indem wir die Sprache, die Worte benutzen. Alles hat sein eigenes Wort. Selbst dieser Raum mit den schönen zerbrechlichen Fliesen: «Fragility» – Zerbrechlichkeit.

Die abstrakte Kalligrafie ist ein zentrales Element in Elzara Oiseaus künstlerischer Arbeit. Die ukrainische Künstlerin ist der Überzeugung, dass es nichts Ausdrucksstärkeres als Worte gibt, gleichzeitig lebt sie in einem Land, dessen Sprache sie nicht spricht. Mit ihrer Kunst bildet sie eine Brücke und unterstreicht die Kraft, die in der Sprache liegt.

In der Ausstellung wird dies nicht nur sicht-, sondern auch spürbar. Die im ruhigen Rhythmus dahingleitenden und sich nach und nach verjüngenden schwarzen Schriftzeichen sind an eine zwölf Meter lange Fliesenwand geschrieben und entfalten so eine enorme Präsenz im Raum. Scheinbar endlos wiederholt sich das Wort «fragil», das die Künstlerin in mehreren Sprachen in einer zwei Tage dauernden Performance auf die Wand aufgetragen hat.

Das Werk «Fragility» ist eine sinnliche Erfahrung. In ihrer Installation visualisiert Elzara Oiseau die Macht der Worte und wie sie unsere Beziehungen, unsere Gesellschaft und unsere individuellen Erfahrungen prägen.

From book *loslassen-loswerden* (2023), by Verein Waschraum, Zurich, Switzerland.

BIOGRAPHY

Elzara Oiseau (b. 1989) is a Ukrainian artist of Crimean Tatar origin working across painting, drawing, and site-specific installation.

Due to the deportation of the Crimean Tatars - the Indigenous people of Crimea - she was born and grew up in exile in the Caucasus region of Russia.

In 2000, her family moved to Crimea, where she studied monumental art (2005-2011). In 2014, following the annexation of Crimea, she relocated to Kyiv and later to Irpin. After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Elzara fled alone to Zurich, carrying large rolls of paintings from her studio in Kyiv. These works were later presented in a solo exhibition at *La Galerie Philosophique* in Grandson, Switzerland, in August 2022.

Since April 2022, Elzara has been living and working in Zurich. She has participated in numerous group and solo exhibitions and completed artist residencies in Switzerland, Greece, Denmark, and France. Most recently, she developed a research project during a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris (February-May 2026), supported by the Cultural Department of the Canton of Zurich.

Her practice explores unstable states of presence, where words, landscapes, memories, identities and bodies begin to dissolve yet never completely disappear. Through painting, text, and installation, she investigates how language, material, and memory carry traces of what can no longer be fully seen, read, or held.

Her works evolve through processes of layering, erasure, repetition, and material transformation. Images emerge, recede, and reappear, while fragments of language drift between legibility and disappearance. Forms remain in flux, allowing meaning to shift without ever fully settling.

EDUCATION:

2005-2011 - Crimean Engineering-pedagogical University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Master of Monumental Art. Simferopol, Crimea, Ukraine.

RESIDENCIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS:

2026 - Atelier at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, funded by Cultural Department of Canton Zurich.

2025 - Artist in residency, funded by Bahay Contemporary, Zermatt, Switzerland.

2025 - Meeting Point Project - co-funded by the Creative Europe Program of the European Union, Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium Odin Teatret, Holstebro, Denmark.

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

SOLO EXHIBITIONS selected (2022-2026):

2026 - *In Between*, Kabinett Visarte, Zurich, Switzerland.

2026 - *Groundless* within the open studio Cité internationale des arts, Paris, France.

2026 - *Des traces* within the open studio curated by Sciences Po at Cité internationale des arts, Paris, France.

2025 - *Sea of words*, Go-Green Art Gallery, Erlenbach, Switzerland.

2023 - *Jazz Lines*, collaboration with Nik Bärtsch, personal exhibition + concert, Zentralwäscherei, Zurich, Switzerland.

2022 - *Lettres*, curated by Jorge Canete, La Galerie Philosophique, Grandson, Switzerland.

COLLECTIVE EXHIBITIONS selected (2022–2026):

2026 - *Einsichten*, annual collective exhibition by Visarte Zurich, Kupper Modern gallery, Zurich, Switzerland.

2026 - *Inherited Silences,* group exhibition, Attempt Studio, Zurich, Switzerland.

2025 - 2026 - *Room for a View*, a group exhibition curated by Bahay Contemporary, Zermatt, Switzerland.

2025 - *Werkschau 2025*, collective exhibition of Künstlervereinigung Zurich in the Photobastei, Zurich, Switzerland.

2025-2026 - *Nun, da Himmel und Erde, ruhen* site-specific project for collective exhibition within the project Fabric Found in Translation, Helmhaus Zurich, Switzerland.

2025 - *Earthly Things–Ghostly Matters,* collective exhibition curated by Agency for Curating Complexities, Zeughausareal, Uster, Switzerland.

2025 - *Einsichten*, annual collective exhibition by Visarte Zurich, Kupper Modern Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland.

2024-2025 - *Grenzen / Frontières / Border*s, collective exhibition during Regionale25, Städtische Galerie Stapflehus, 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 - site-specific project *Conversation* for collective exhibition *Resonanzkörper* in WASCHRAUM space, SBB Werkstätte, Zurich, Switzerland.

2023-2024 - *Cosmogony of Senses*, collective exhibition, The Korsak's Museum of Modern Ukrainian Art, Lutsk, Ukraine.

2023 - *Mother.Land*, site-specific project for Oerlikon Dream House, collective exhibition, curated by Matteo Kramer & Floyd Bolliger, Zurich, Switzerland.

2023 - *Le Racinage*, site-specific project-collaboration with Swiss visual artist Nathalie Diserens, GK3 space, Zurich, Switzerland.

2023 - *SORE LAND*, collective exhibition, Zentralwäscherei space, Zurich, Switzerland.

2023 - *loslassen-loswerden*, site-specific project Fragile for WASCHRAUM, Werkstatt Zurich Altstetten, Zurich, Switzerland.

2022-2023 - *Wenn die Erde bebt*, curated by Baraba Gerny, Go Green Art Gallery, Erlenbach, Switzerland.

2022 - *Mirror*, international group exhibition, held by Transcarpathian Regional Art Museum named Yosyp Bokshay, Uzhgorod, Ukraine.

2022 - *Yesterday was the day before today*, curated by Bekibollectiv, Zurich, Switzerland.

2022 - *CHILDREN* for UNICEF, collective auction, Ukraine in XRONOLAB (now Lechbinska gallery), Zurich, Switzerland.

2022 - *Transit zone. Exit gate 2022*, collective exhibition, organized by art researching platform MOKONSHU, Mitec Gallery, Kyiv, Ukraine.

PERFORMANCES:

2025 - *40 minutes of Exile* - a tour of 11 performances, Denmark, Poland, Greece. The performance is created and developed in Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium Odin Teatret, Holstebro, Denmark and is part of the EU project Meeting Point, a 2-year residency exchange program co-financed by the EU's Creative Europe Program.

2023 - *Le Racinage*, project-collaboration with the Swiss visual artist Nathalie Diserens, GK3 space, Zurich, Switzerland.

PUBLICATIONS:

2026 - Book *Resonating bodies*, by Nadine Jäger, Alicia Olmos Ochoa, Andrea Ramseyer, Pia Simmendinger, Zurich, Switzerland *link*

2026 - Leben zwischen Erinnerung und Neubeginn interview for Künstlervereinigung Zürich *link*.

2023 - Religion & Gesellschaft, Kultur, article Zwischen Sarkasmus und Mitgefühl. Ukrainische Kunst in der Amplitude des Krieges, by Vita Susak. RGOW 1–2/2023, S.1Jahrgang, 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 *link.*

2022 - *Who bist du, mein Kind?*, article by Vita Susak, Ukraine Stimmen, 27.08.2022, Germany.

2022 - Interview for RTS Radio Television Swiss, *A Voix Haute avec Manuela Salvi* (in French) *link*.

2022 - Art and culture. *Où es tu, mon enfant?*, article by Vita Susak, Le Temps, 11 August 2022/N°7392, J.A.1209 Geneva/*link*.

2021 - Book *How to become the Name*, by Victor Korsak, Lutsk, Ukraine.