



— — — — — WE ALL BELONG. WE ALL MATTER. — — — — —

BELONGING – We Are Part of Everything

A Participatory Art Project on Migration, Identity and Belonging

Project Hosts:

Sofía Andretta Juárez, Sonia Siblik and Marco Grajeda

Participants: People with and without Migration Experience

It is important to clarify that, within the context of this project, we understand migration in a broad and inclusive sense. The term “people with a migration background” includes not only individuals who have personally migrated to another country, but also people whose families have roots in other countries, as well as refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons, and others whose lives and identities have been shaped by migration.

At the same time, the project warmly welcomes people without a migration background. Our intention is not to divide participants into separate groups, but rather to create a space where different experiences, histories, identities, and perspectives can meet on equal terms.

Belonging is not determined solely by where we were born, but also by the places, communities, relationships, and experiences that shape who we are.

Project Location:

Ute Bock Bildungszentrum, Inzersdorfer Str. 64, 1100 Wien

Basement Art by Lichtraum, Währingergürtel 110, 1090 Vienna

Yunus Emre Institute in Vienna, Währinger Str. 6-8, 1090 Vienna

Background and Project Concept

Vienna is an intercultural and diverse city, a place where different cultures, languages, histories, and ways of understanding the world come together and coexist every day. In this context, speaking about interculturality is essential because, despite this cultural richness, many of the cultures that make up the city continue to be insufficiently visible, recognized, valued, or accepted.

At times, we forget that each and every one of us has the right to belong, to be recognized, and to actively participate in society, regardless of our place of birth, nationality, language, or family history.

Many people with migration histories experience situations in which their sense of belonging is questioned or they continue to be perceived as “foreign,” regardless of how long they have lived in Austria or even when Austria is the only home they have ever known.

Terms such as “first,” “second,” or “third generation” reveal the extent to which people continue to be defined by their own origins or those of their families. Yet life stories are diverse: some people have migrated to Austria themselves, while others were born and raised here and still carry with them different cultural, linguistic, and family experiences. Others have been compelled by circumstances to migrate in search of a better life.

The dilemma of belonging does not necessarily disappear with the passing of generations. Even second- or third-generation individuals who were born in Austria or have spent most of their lives here, and for whom this country is home, may continue to face questions such as “Where are you really from?” or the feeling that they are still perceived as foreign.

This reality can create a complex experience: feeling part of a society while, at the same time, sensing that this belonging is being questioned from the outside. For some people, this can also lead to the feeling of existing between different cultures, identities, and ways of understanding home.

These experiences can give rise to fundamental questions:

Where do I belong?

Who am I?

How do others see me?

What does home mean to me?

Do I have to choose between different identities?

What kind of future do I want to create?



Foto: BasementArt by LichTraumt

For this reason, speaking about belonging also means asking ourselves who has the right to feel that they belong to a place, and who gets to determine that belonging.

“BELONGING – We Are Part of Everything” is an artistic and participatory project that seeks to create a safe space for encounter, expression, and reflection for people of different ages and generations with migration histories — women, men, young people, and children.

Through art, participants are invited to explore their identities, personal experiences, memories, roots, dreams, and visions for the future. The project creates a space where each person can tell and represent their story from their own perspective, without having to reduce their identity to a single nationality, culture, or place of origin.

BELONGING is based on the conviction that a person does not have to choose between one identity and another. The different cultures, languages, memories, traditions, relationships, and experiences that form part of our histories can coexist. Identity can be multiple and evolving, shaped by different places and experiences.

In the same way, belonging is not determined solely by place of birth, language, origin, or nationality. It is also built through relationships, memories, shared experiences, creativity, encounters with others, and active participation in society.

At the heart of the project is the “we.”

Each participant contributes their own story, perspective, and experience. Through the artistic process, these individual voices become visible and begin to encounter and connect with one another.

Personal experiences thus become part of a collective creation in which different generations, cultures, memories, migration histories, and lived realities come together.

Diversity is not understood as something that separates us, but as an essential part of the society we build together.

BELONGING seeks to create a space in which people do not have to explain, prove, or justify why they belong. A space where their stories can be heard and where their identities, memories, roots, and dreams for the future can find a place within a collective image.

An artwork that does not seek to erase our differences, but rather to make them visible, connect them, and recognize them as part of the same social fabric.

A collective image that expresses:

We are different.

We come from different places and carry different stories within us.

We can belong to more than one place, more than one culture, and more than one story.

And still, we are part of everything.



Foto: BasementArt by LichTraumt



Foto: BasementArt by LichTraumt

Project Objectives

The project encourages participants to reflect on their personal stories, identities, strengths, memories and future aspirations. It aims to strengthen self-esteem and self-confidence while creating a space in which people of different ages and generations can recognize that their voices, experiences and perspectives are valuable contributions to society.

The main objectives are to:

- strengthen self-esteem and self-confidence;
- encourage reflection on identity, migration and belonging;
- create space for personal and intergenerational stories to be heard and recognized;
- promote mutual respect, intercultural dialogue and social participation;
- make diverse migration histories, cultural backgrounds and lived experiences visible;
- foster creativity, collaboration and a sense of community;
- encourage an inclusive and diverse understanding of home and belonging;
- recognize that identity can be multiple, evolving and connected to more than one place or culture;
- provide participants with an opportunity to present their voices and stories to a wider audience.

Rather than viewing people with migration histories as individuals caught “between two worlds,” the project recognizes them as an integral and enriching part of a diverse and constantly evolving society.

BELONGING also acknowledges that questions of identity and belonging do not necessarily disappear from one generation to the next. People who migrated themselves, as well as those from second or third generations, may experience different but equally meaningful questions about where and how they belong.

The project therefore creates a space in which these different realities can coexist, meet and become visible through art.



Foto: BasementArt by LichTraumt

Artistic Process

The project unfolds through five interconnected stages.

1. Who Are We?

Through conversations, creative exercises and guided reflection, participants explore questions such as:

Who am I?

What is important to me?

What makes me unique?

Where do I feel at home?

What does belonging mean to me?

Which people, places, cultures and memories have shaped my life?

Which languages, traditions or experiences are part of my identity?

How has migration shaped my own story or the story of my family?

Have I ever felt that my belonging was questioned by others?

What are my dreams and aspirations?

What would I like to tell society about who I am?

These reflections create the foundation for each participant's artistic work.

2. Photographic Portraits

Each participant takes part in a photographic portrait session in which they actively decide how they wish to be represented.

The portrait becomes more than a photograph. It serves as the starting point for a personal visual narrative and gives each participant control over how they want to be seen.

The portraits aim to move beyond labels such as nationality, migration status or generation and focus instead on the individuality, personality and humanity of each person.

5. Public Presentation

The project culminates in a public exhibition on 23 September 2026 at the Yunus Emre Institute in Vienna, in cooperation with ICDO, as part of the Long Night of Interculturality 2026 – “Belonging Across Borders: Art as a Bridge for Memory and Reconciliation.”

This exhibition is an essential part of the project. It marks the moment when the participants' experiences, reflections, and creative processes move beyond the protected space of the workshop and enter into dialogue with society.



Foto: Ute Bock Bildungszentrum



Foto: Ute Bock Bildungszentrum

During the exhibition, participants will present their artistic works and, if they wish, share aspects of their personal stories, experiences, and reflections with family members, friends, professionals from the fields of art and culture, and the wider public.

In this way, the exhibition becomes a space for encounter, dialogue, and collective reflection on migration, identity, diversity, memory, and belonging.

By bringing these personal stories into the public sphere, BELONGING invites audiences to consider migration from a deeply human perspective. Beyond statistics, nationalities, administrative categories, or political discourse, the project places people themselves at the center: their faces, their voices, their memories, their experiences, their contradictions, their dreams, and their individual journeys toward creating a sense of home and belonging.

Each artwork thus becomes both a testimony to an individual experience and part of a collective narrative that reflects the diversity of contemporary society.

The exhibition invites the audience to move beyond a question that people with migration histories are often confronted with:

“Where are you from?”

Instead, we want to ask questions that allow us to encounter and understand a person beyond their origin:

Who are you?

What has shaped you?

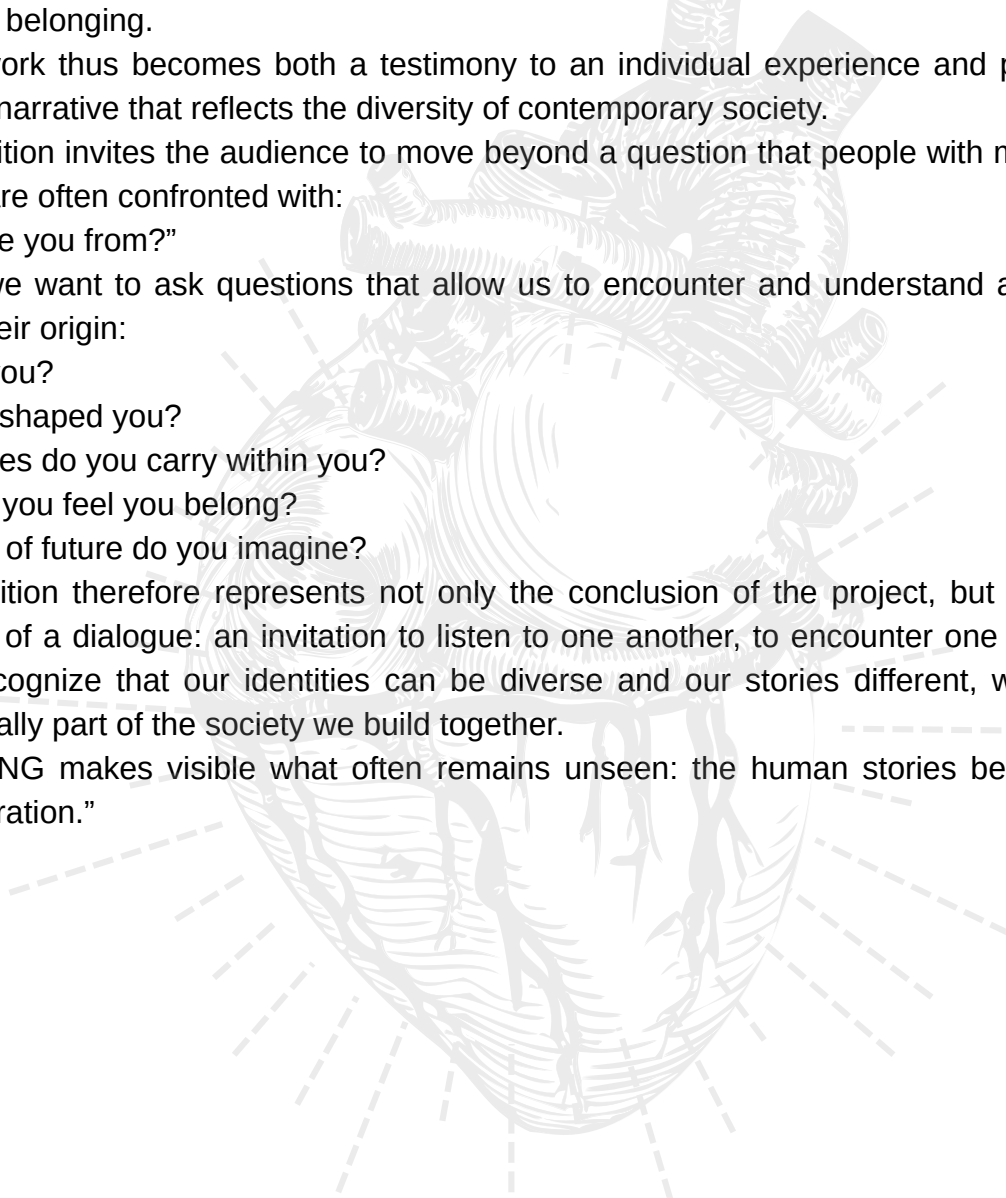
What stories do you carry within you?

Where do you feel you belong?

What kind of future do you imagine?

The exhibition therefore represents not only the conclusion of the project, but also the beginning of a dialogue: an invitation to listen to one another, to encounter one another, and to recognize that our identities can be diverse and our stories different, while still being equally part of the society we build together.

BELONGING makes visible what often remains unseen: the human stories behind the word “migration.”





Expected Outcome

The final outcome is a collaboratively developed art installation composed of individually transformed photographic portraits.

Together, the works portray a diverse group of people of different ages and generations, each carrying their own memories, cultures, experiences, identities, and visions for the future.

Rather than presenting migration as a single or homogeneous experience, the installation reveals its complexity and many different dimensions.

Some participants may have migrated themselves, while others may have been born or raised in Austria and belong to the second or third generation. Some may have left their countries of origin by choice, while others may have been compelled by circumstances to seek safety, new opportunities, or a better life elsewhere.

Their experiences are different, yet they come together within a shared artistic space.

The installation does not ask participants to choose between cultures, identities, or places of belonging. Instead, it acknowledges that identity can be diverse and multifaceted, and that a person can carry within them multiple places, languages, stories, and cultural influences.

Rather than asking where someone comes from, the installation invites the audience to discover who these people are, what they have experienced, what they carry with them, and what kind of society they wish to build together.

In addition to the artistic transformation of the portraits, the project also gathers information through a questionnaire completed by the participants. The responses are evaluated collectively and translated into anonymized data, offering another perspective on the diversity of experiences represented within the project.

The resulting data will form part of the installation and provide insights into aspects such as migration histories, generational backgrounds, languages, cultural affiliations, experiences of belonging, and personal perspectives on identity and life in Austria. Rather than reducing individual stories to statistics, the data serves as an additional layer that makes both shared experiences and differences visible. In this way, personal narratives, artistic interpretation, and collective data enter into dialogue with one another.

“BELONGING – We Are Part of Everything” invites us to rethink belonging — not as something that must be granted, approved, or validated by others, but as something that grows through relationships, shared experiences, participation, memory, and the collective creation of a society in which everyone has the right to have a place.



Hi David
Freiheit

Alvira

I'm autistic too!

LOVE

Outcome

BELONGING – We Are Part of Everything

A Participatory Art Project on Migration, Identity and Belonging

37 people. 18 countries. 37 stories. One shared space.

BELONGING – We Are Part of Everything is a collaboratively developed art installation based on individually transformed photographic portraits and the personal experiences of 37 participants connected to 18 different countries and cultural contexts:

Guatemala, Mexico, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Austria, Germany, Egypt, Afghanistan, India, Chechnya, Turkey, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cuba, Paraguay, Argentina, Brazil, Syria, and the Dominican Republic.

They are people of different ages and generations, with different languages, memories, cultures, experiences, identities, and dreams for the future.

Some migrated themselves. Others were born or raised in Austria and belong to a second or third generation. Some left their countries by choice; others were compelled by political, social, economic, or personal circumstances to search for safety, love, opportunity, or a better life.

Their stories are different.

But here, they share a space.

Beyond the Portrait

The photographic portraits are only one layer of the installation. Each participant also completed a questionnaire exploring migration, language, acceptance, discrimination, support, identity, belonging, and their hopes for life in Austria.

The answers reveal a striking contrast between the desire to belong and the barriers that can make belonging difficult.

Of the 37 participants, only 2 people (5.4%) said they feel completely accepted in Austria. 36 participants (97.3%) said that insufficient knowledge of the German language has made them feel, or continues to make them feel, less accepted.

At the same time, 27 participants (73.0%) believe that more affordable, free, or easily accessible German-language courses would give immigrants greater opportunities to participate fully in society.

For 35 participants (94.6%), migration was connected to the search for love and/or the hope of building a better life.

Yet the responses do not tell only stories of difficulty. They also speak strongly of gratitude and solidarity.

32 participants (86.5%) expressed gratitude for support they received from institutions, individuals, their own communities, schools, or universities.

At the same time, 5 participants (13.5%) reported negative experiences and poor treatment by public institutions, including MA35.

Discrimination also enters deeply personal spaces. 35 participants (94.6%) reported having heard negative or discriminatory remarks directed at them personally.

Among the respondents, 10 women — representing 27.0% of all participants — described experiences of disrespect and/or sexual harassment connected to being perceived as foreign or “exotic.”

These experiences remind us that belonging is not created merely through residence permits, documents, employment, or knowledge of a language. Belonging is also shaped in everyday encounters: in the way we look at one another, speak to one another, listen to one another, and allow one another to exist without prejudice.

Belonging Is Also a Promise

Despite experiences of exclusion, the questionnaires reveal something powerful: the desire not simply to live in Austria, but to participate in its future.

21 participants (56.8%) expressed the wish to build their lives in Austria and to give something back to the country through their work, knowledge, creativity, and engagement.

Among the participants are also 12 children and young people (32.4% of the group) with great dreams for their futures. They imagine becoming doctors, cooks, teachers, football players and other active members of society. Their dreams are not peripheral to the story of Austria. They are already part of its future.

One participant expressed perhaps the essence of integration in a single sentence:

“La forma más rápida de integrar a quien migra es aceptarlo y escucharlo con paciencia, incluso cuando todavía no encuentra las palabras.”

“The fastest way to integrate someone who migrates is to accept them and listen to them patiently, even when they have not yet found the words.”

Another participant offered a more painful reflection:

“Nadie puede ver más allá de una realidad si no quiere entenderla.”

“No one can see beyond a reality they are unwilling to understand.”

Between these two sentences lies much of what BELONGING seeks to make visible: the possibility of encounter — and the consequences of refusing it.

We Are Already Part of One Another

Austria today is a diverse and internationally connected society. But diversity is not something that exists only through migration statistics or in discussions about “others.” It has long been woven into everyday life.

We eat food whose histories began elsewhere. We wear clothes designed, produced, or inspired by cultures across borders. We watch films and series from around the world. We listen and dance to music born in languages we may not even understand. Our cities, universities, workplaces, neighbourhoods, friendships, families, and cultural lives are shaped by encounters that cross national boundaries.

Culture has never remained neatly inside borders.

Neither have people.

And neither has identity.

BELONGING therefore does not ask its participants to choose between cultures, identities, languages, or places of belonging. It recognizes that identity can be plural and multifaceted. A person can carry several places within them. One can inherit one culture, grow within another, speak several languages, love across borders, and create a sense of home in more than one place.

The question is therefore no longer simply:

Where do you come from?

Instead, the installation asks:

Who are you?

What do you carry with you?

What has shaped you?

Where do you feel you belong?

What are you willing to share?

And what kind of society do we want to build together?

The statistical data in this installation is not intended to reduce 37 human lives to percentages. Quite the opposite. The numbers make patterns visible, while the portraits return individuality to those numbers.

Behind every 5.4%, 73%, or 94.6% there is a face.

Behind every answer, there is a story.

Behind every story, there is a person.

Portrait, memory, artistic intervention, testimony, and collective data therefore enter into dialogue with one another. Together they create a space in which difference does not disappear but becomes part of a larger whole.

BELONGING – We Are Part of Everything invites us to rethink belonging — not as something that must be granted, approved, or validated by others, but as something that grows through relationships, participation, empathy, patience, acceptance, memory, and shared responsibility.

We do not need to become the same in order to belong together.

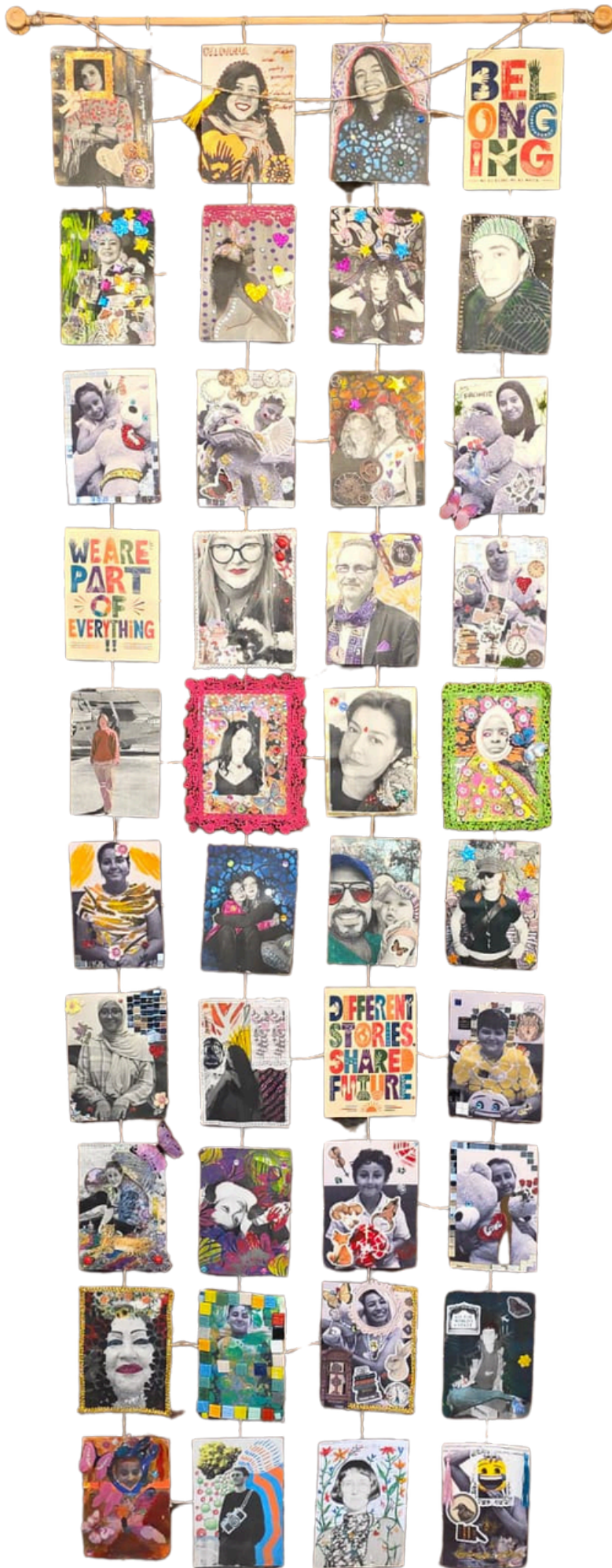
We need to learn to see one another.

Because we live on the same planet, participate in interconnected societies, influence one another and carry fragments of one another's cultures into our everyday lives.

We are not outside one another's stories.

We are already part of them.

WE ARE PART OF EVERYTHING.



Titel: Belonging. We are part of everything

Autorinnen: Sofia Andretta Juárez, Sonia Siblik, Marco Grajeda

Technik: Foto Collage - Mix media

Jahr. 2026

Sofía Cecilia Andretta Juárez

Between Threads, Memory, and Identity

Sofía Cecilia Andretta Juárez is a Guatemalan visual artist, fashion designer, and art educator who lives and works in Vienna. Her artistic language is deeply rooted in her cultural heritage—in the vibrant colors, intricate rhythms, and centuries-old symbolism of Maya textiles that have accompanied her since childhood.

For Sofía, textiles are far more than a material. They are a language, a form of memory, and carriers of identity. Within the woven structures of her heritage, stories, spiritual traditions, and collective knowledge come together. Threads connect past and present, people and generations—and from an early age, they became for her a unique way of perceiving and understanding the world.

This connection between material, design, and cultural memory also shapes her artistic journey. At HBLA Herbststraße in Vienna, she trained in fashion, design, and textiles, learning how to translate ideas into form, structure, and material.



She went on to complete a bachelor's degree in Fashion and Design Education, which introduced another dimension to her work: the sharing of creativity and the conviction that artistic practice can open spaces for personal development, meaningful encounters, and empowerment.

Today, Sofía continues to expand her artistic practice through her studies in Art Education and Fine Arts at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Since 2026, she has also been a member of the Professional Association of Visual Artists Austria, Vienna/Lower Austria/Burgenland regional association.

Her work brings together textile knowledge and a spirit of free artistic experimentation.

Sie untersucht die Beziehungen zwischen Körper und Bild, Material und Emotion, Erinnerung und Identität. Texturen werden zu Landschaften, Bewegung wird zu Bedeutung, und vertraute Formen erhalten durch neue Zusammenhänge eine andere Stimme.

Dabei bewegt sich Sofía bewusst zwischen verschiedenen Welten: zwischen Guatemala und Wien, kulturellem Erbe und Gegenwart, Tradition und Veränderung, weichen Materialien und klaren Strukturen. Sie übernimmt die Vergangenheit nicht als etwas Starres, sondern lässt sie weiterleben, sich verwandeln und mit ihrer eigenen Gegenwart in Dialog treten.

She explores the relationships between body and image, material and emotion, memory and identity. Textures become landscapes, movement takes on meaning, and familiar forms acquire a different voice through new contexts.

In doing so, Sofía consciously moves between different worlds: between Guatemala and Vienna, cultural heritage and the present, tradition and transformation, soft materials and clearly defined structures. She does not approach the past as something fixed or static; instead, she allows it to remain alive, to evolve, and to enter into dialogue with her own present.



Sonia Siblik

Art as a Space for Encounter

Sonia Siblik is a Mexican visual artist, curator, and cultural manager who lives and works in Vienna. Her artistic and curatorial practice is shaped by encounters between different cultures, by questions of memory and identity, and by the conviction that art has the power to connect people and create spaces where dialogue, exchange, and a sense of belonging can emerge.

Her professional journey began in the field of education. After training in education, special education, and therapeutic pedagogy, she worked as a teacher and therapist in Mexico and Austria from 1992 to 2003. This intensive work with people continues to shape her understanding of art today—not merely as a form of aesthetic expression, but as a means of communication, participation, and personal development.

Since 2007, Sonia Siblik has worked as a curator for Lichtraum eins by Paul Siblik in Vienna's first district. Over the years, this role has evolved into an increasingly comprehensive practice encompassing exhibition-making, cultural mediation, and the initiation of international art projects.



In 2023, she founded LichTraum by Sonia Siblik – Association for the Promotion of Contemporary Artists and established BasementArt by LichTraum in Vienna's ninth district, creating an additional space dedicated to exhibitions, workshops, experimental formats, and cultural encounters.

A particular focus of her curatorial practice lies in fostering international and intercultural collaboration. Her projects bring together artists from different generations, countries, cultural backgrounds, and artistic disciplines. She understands curating as much more than the selection and presentation of artworks. For her, it is about creating connections—between people, stories, places, and cultures.

This approach is also reflected in Sonia Siblik's own artistic practice. She works primarily with linocut and printmaking, textiles, cartonería, and diorama. She combines traditional techniques and handcrafted processes with contemporary explorations of memory, belonging, migration, cultural identity, and the relationship between people and their environment.

Her Mexican roots form an important point of resonance within her work. Yet symbols, narratives, and traditional forms of expression are not simply adopted; they are reinterpreted, transformed, and placed within new cultural contexts. In this way, she develops a visual language that moves between Mexico and Austria, personal memory and collective memory, tradition and the present.

Alongside her own artistic practice, Sonia Siblik understands her work above all as an ongoing process of creating connections. In collaboration with artists, museums, cultural institutions, and international partners, she develops exhibitions, workshops, and projects that set art in motion across geographical, cultural, and social boundaries.

For her, art is not an enclosed space. It is a bridge—between people, between cultures, and between the stories we carry with us and those we have yet to write together.



Marco Grajeda

The memory of spaces

Marco Antonio Grajeda Enríquez, born in 1994 in Hermosillo, Sonora, is a Mexican visual artist whose practice encompasses printmaking, painting, drawing, and mural art. From an early age, he found in art a way of observing and understanding the world. Over time, this developed into an artistic path that increasingly led him toward what remains hidden within places: their stories, their traces, and their memories.

He studied at the Faculty of Arts of the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua (UACH), where he graduated with honors in Fine Arts, specializing in graphic arts. His early engagement with traditional printmaking techniques had a lasting influence on his visual language. The significance of line, the construction of the image, the interplay of contrasts, and the discipline inherent in the graphic process remain present throughout his work, even when he turns to other artistic media. Over time, Marco expanded his artistic practice to include painting and, in particular, mural art.



Within the monumental scale of mural art, he discovered a new way of bringing image, space, and viewer into dialogue. His first experiences with mural painting emerged through social and public art projects in different neighborhoods of Chihuahua.

Between 2019 and 2020, he also worked as a production assistant to the renowned muralist Miguel Valverde. This experience allowed him to deepen his understanding of both the technical and conceptual processes involved in the creation of large-scale works.

A defining feature of his artistic language is the encounter between the organic and the mechanical. Structures, gears, natural elements, architecture, and human figures intertwine in compositions in which seemingly opposing worlds enter into dialogue. Over time, this tension has become a distinctive characteristic of his work and an essential part of his search for a unique artistic voice.

Yet behind this formal construction of imagery lies another fundamental concern: memory.

Marco sees spaces as places capable of preserving stories. He is drawn to atmospheres, to the traces left by time, and to the quiet narratives that endure within buildings, streets, objects, and landscapes—even when the people who once inhabited them are no longer present. In this way, his work creates a dialogue between place, identity, history, and cultural memory.

His artistic practice extends beyond traditional exhibition spaces. His work can also be found on publication covers, in interventions in public spaces, on artistically designed public transport stops, and in large-scale murals.

Among his public projects is the mural “Entre la luz de la justicia: el Respeto y la Construcción de los Derechos Humanos” (In the Light of Justice: Respect and the Building of Human Rights), created for the Faculty of Law at the Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua.

Today, Marco Grajeda focuses primarily on large-scale mural projects both in Mexico and internationally, while continuing to pursue painting and printmaking. At the heart of his artistic practice lies memory: for him, places, walls, and landscapes preserve the traces of the people and stories that have shaped them. The past is not something closed or completed, but something that continues to live within the present, constantly evolving and taking on new forms.

For some places are not merely inhabited—they remember.



WE ARE

PART

OF

EVERYTHING

