

Candice
Breitz
Hot Potato



KOW

It's been a long time since an artist was last swallowed whole by a bear in this city – twenty-two years, to be precise. That was, of course, a very different Berlin: one in which glass cages were still relatively transparent, one not yet shrouded in the fog of Staatsräson.

Once upon a time, bears roamed Berlin's commons freely – despite being known, every now and again, to nibble on the hands of those who fed them. Bear traps were few and far between. A bear could bust its moves without fear of being pushed to the city outskirts as a threat to public safety. The sustenance of bears had yet to become contingent on dancing to the tune of their keepers.

+

Hot potatoes have been thick on the ground in Berlin in recent years. Germany's capital features prominently in this solo presentation by Candice Breitz, her first as a German citizen.

The exhibition is a reckoning of sorts, an angry yet passionate love letter to the city that Breitz moved to for the same reasons as so many other artists at the turn of the century, which has – in recent years – seen its cultural capital recklessly squandered by politicians and bureaucrats wielding punitive exclusionary measures, anti-constitutional litmus tests, illiberal codes of conduct and damaging funding cuts. As calls to untether art from politics proliferate in Germany and beyond, Hot Potato traces the historically fraught relationship between artists and the authorities that preside over them – by means of a series of appropriative homages.

The history of art is abundant with artists who have, in one way or another, created space for political and ethical reflection within their creative practice. Breitz pays tribute to some of them in this exhibition – evoking, borrowing, reproducing

and reanimating earlier works and performances by artists and musicians as diverse as Renée Sintenis, Esther Bejarano, John Baldessari, Félix González-Torres, Mark Wallinger and Christoph Schlingensiefel, with varying degrees of reverence.

Berlin's heraldic animal, the bear, looms large in Hot Potato. The show is teeming with them: A bear that once haunted the Neue Nationalgalerie emerges from two decades of hibernation to dance for its keep in the gallery's modest storefront. Wounded bronze bears freshly rescued from the Noack Foundry, find refuge in glass vitrines – having been judged unfit to enter service alongside their more glamorous siblings on the trophies awarded annually at Berlin's International Film Festival. In a work titled Codes of Conduct – which wryly rehearses anticipatory obedience – the artist promises not to “poke the bear.”

In observance of current trends, Breitz has distilled a new shade of brown for use in the exhibition. Staatsräsonbraun – a colour mixed in equal parts from black, red and gold – is a key ingredient both of Implicated Colours and the Anagram paintings.

A series of Appropriated Posters will be available for purchase at accessible prices throughout the exhibition. All income generated from sales will be donated to Medico International's emergency fund for communities facing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank.

Next pages:

Codes Of Conduct, 1971–2026

16 Codes of Conduct

“Do not obey in advance. Anticipatory obedience teaches authorities what is possible and accelerates unfreedom.”

(Timothy Snyder)

I will not stir the pot

I will not not kiss ass

I will not rock the boat

I will not ruffle feathers

I will not poke the bear

I will not shit where I eat

I will not not curry favour

I will not walk on eggshells

I will not not bite my tongue

I will not wake sleeping dogs

I will not swim against the tide

I will not burn any more bridges

I will not shoot myself in the foot

I will not beschmutzen my own nest

I will not bite the hand that feeds me

I will not make any more political art

I will not stir the pot, 2026

Acrylic paint and chalk marker on wooden panel, 70 x 100 x 5cm

Edition of 3 + 1AP



I will not make any more political art, 2026

Acrylic paint and chalk marker on wooden panel, 70 x 100 x 5cm

Edition of 3 + 1AP



I will not swim against the tide, 2026

Acrylic paint and chalk marker on wooden panel, 70 x 100 x 5cm

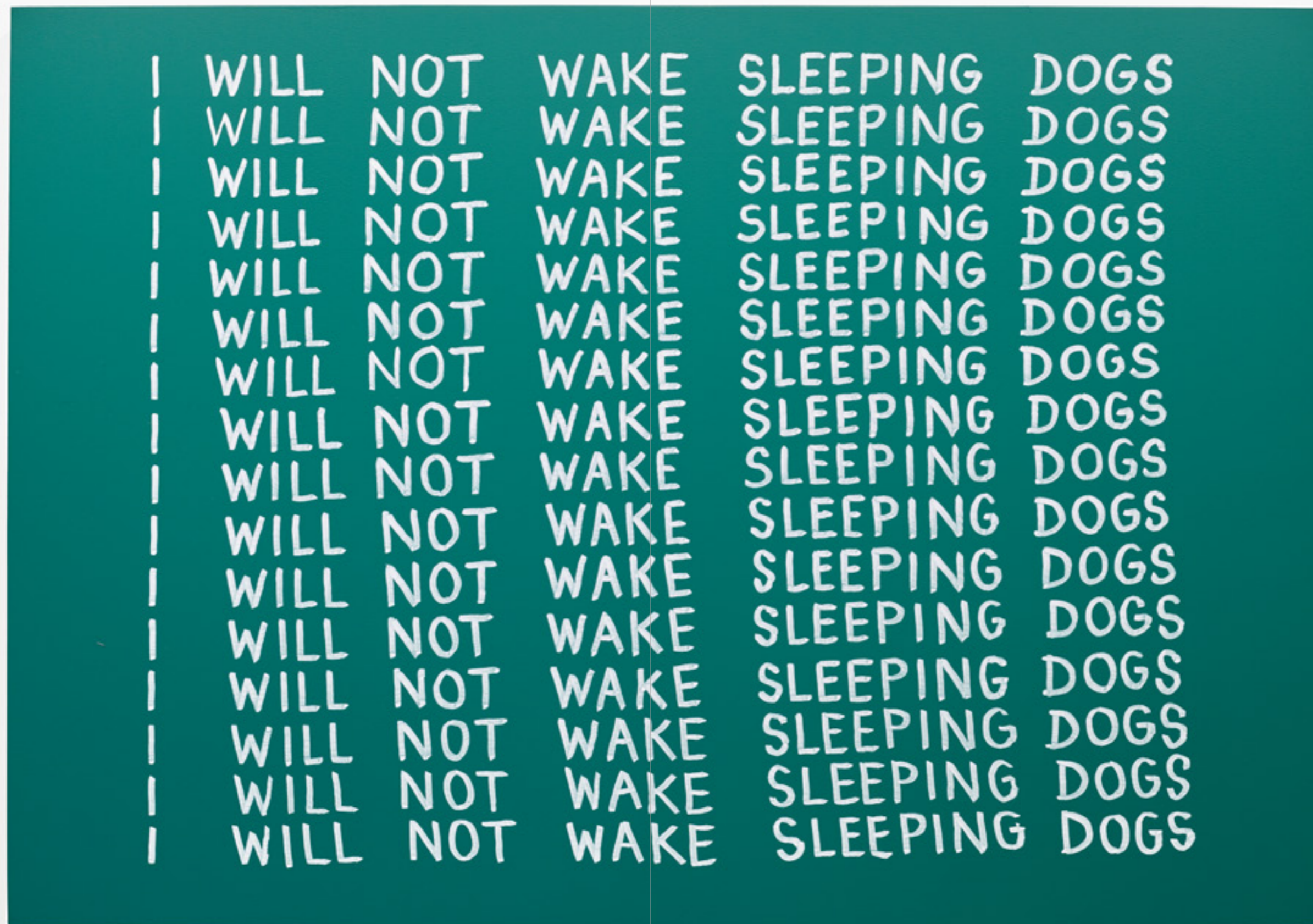
Edition of 3 + 1AP



I will not wake sleeping dogs, 2026

Acrylic paint and chalk marker on wooden panel, 70 x 100 x 5cm

Edition of 3 + 1AP



I will not shit where I eat, 2026

Acrylic paint and chalk marker on wooden panel, 70 x 100 x 5cm

Edition of 3 + 1AP



Appropriated Posters, 1969–2026

59.4 x 84.1cm each

Unlimited Editions

Unframed Poster: EUR 10,-

Set of 5 Posters: EUR 40,-

Posters have long existed at the intersection of creative and political life – as likely to be used by artists as they are by activists, as likely to carry their declarative messages into the public sphere in museums, clubs and theatres, as they are to be held high at protests or plastered onto random lamp posts and construction hoardings. The political potential of the poster format has been embraced by artists as diverse as John Heartfield, Käthe Kollwitz, Emory Douglas, the Guerrilla Girls, Barbara Kruger and Klaus Staeck. This series of appropriated posters encompasses protest sentiments that date back as far as 1969. Each has a particular resonance in the context of Berlin in the year 2026.

All income generated from the sale of posters will be donated to Medico International's campaign "Nothilfe für Palästina," which raises emergency aid in support of communities facing devastation in Gaza and the West Bank. More information is available online.

Next page:

From left to right:

Appropriated Poster
(After John Lennon + Yoko Ono), 1969–
2026

Appropriated Poster
(After an anonymous teenage protestor),
2026

Appropriated Poster
(After Sereina Steinemann), 2026

Appropriated Poster
(After Nick Coccozza), 2026

Appropriated Poster
(After Christoph Schlingensiefel), 1999-2026

**GENOCIDE
IS
OVER!**

IF YOU WANT IT

New Again

MERZ
LECK
EIER



**BERLIN
IS A
TRAP**



BOYCOTT
GERMAN
GOODS
C

Miscast, 1956–2026

Traumatised Readymades

“The Berlinale has never existed in a state of purity, in which politics and society could be separated from art, as Alfred Bauer claimed in his attempts to clear his name.”

(Berlinale Press Statement, 2020)

Since its inception as “a showcase of the free world” in 1951, Germany’s most prestigious film festival – the Berlinale – has awarded trophies embellished with small upright bears to its prize winners. The first bear to assume this role was made by the artist Renée Sintenis in 1932, a couple of years before she was expelled from Berlin’s Akademie der Künste due to her Jewish ancestry – in keeping with Nazi Germany’s Staatsräson.

In 1956, the Berlinale’s founding director – Alfred Bauer – commissioned Sintenis to make a second bear, which she titled Berliner Bär. Like the bear preceding it, its jaunty pose echoes that of the heraldic bear featured on Berlin’s flag and coat of arms. Given its dual role as a mascot for the festival and an unofficial ambassador of Berlin over the last 70 years, Sintenis’ second bear has achieved a degree of public visibility that far eclipses the story of the artist herself.

As she died in 1965, Sintenis could not have known that her little ursine sculpture – in its guise as the Berlinale’s Silver

Bear – would be re-christened the ‘Alfred Bauer Prize’ in 1987, in honour of the man who presided over the festival for 25 years. Nor could she have known that this practice would be abruptly discontinued in 2020, at which point the role that Bauer had played under Joseph Goebbels within the film bureaucracy of Nazi Germany, could no longer be denied.

The traumatised readymades presented in this exhibition, have been rescued from Berlin’s Noack Foundry – where they would otherwise, quite literally, have been destined for meltdown. Due to their physical imperfections, these diminutive miscasts have been deemed unfit to enter service alongside their more glamorous siblings, the Berlinale’s coveted Golden and Silver Bears. They are exhibited here – caged in glass vitrines and replete with the wounds of their making – as the first part of a more extensive homage to Renée Sintenis (1888-1965).

Miscast pays tribute to an artist whose legacy has been swallowed by a bronze bear, an inanimate creature that has itself been subject to considerable indignities over the years.

+

A related work in progress – titled Dear Renée – returns to the Weimar Era to trace Sintenis’ achievements as an artist prior to her stigmatisation under Nazi racial laws. The story of the artist and her bear will be told through the lens

of recent developments at the Berlinale. Since early 2024, the festival has faced political censure and threats of punitive repercussions from Germany's Ministry of Culture, for allowing filmmakers to exercise their right to freedom of expression vis-à-vis Israel's human rights violations. A significant number of festival participants have been opportunistically jawed by politicians and journalists representing the city that identifies as a bear.

What continuities can be traced between past crackdowns on culture – including the Nazi regime's dismantling of the cultural freedoms of the Weimar Era after 1933 – and crackdowns in the current Weimer Era, in which censorship, litmus tests and codes of conduct are fast becoming the order of the day (not only in the context of the Berlinale).



Miscast, 1956–2026

Traumatised Readymade

Bronze on limestone base

18.3 x 13.0 x 80cm



Miscast, 1956–2026

Traumatised Readymade

Bronze on limestone base

18.3 x 13.0 x 80cm



Miscast, 1956–2026

Traumatised Readymade

Bronze on limestone base

18.3 x 13.0 x 80cm



Anagrams, 2026

All anagrams contain the same basic ingredients: BundesSans (the official typeface of the German federal government) and Staatsräsonbraun (a colour mixed in equal parts from black, red and gold).

+

Germany's complicity in Israel's genocidal exploits has triggered a significant erosion of the nation's claims to political and moral credibility. Politicians from across the ideological spectrum have participated in increasingly desperate efforts to control the public narrative, most notably by stigmatising – and at times censoring – legitimate criticism of Israeli policy. Staatsräson – the vaguely defined and highly contentious doctrine that is routinely invoked to delegitimise political dissent – has been zealously weaponised against artists, musicians, philosophers, poets, writers and students. Protestors have faced intimidation and police violence. A significant number of cultural institutions have willingly complied with illiberal clampdowns on public discourse.

Along the way, the language and principles upon which Germany's claims to atonement for the Holocaust have come to rest, have been ominously undermined. Universalist commitments such as "Never Again" – along with constitutionally anchored principles such as freedom of

expression (Kunstfreiheit) and freedom of political opinion (Meinungsfreiheit) – ring increasingly hollow. Explosive public debates over the meaning of certain words and phrases – including who may use them and how – are symptomatic of a democracy in backslide. As the German electorate lurches ever further to the right, neo-fascist contenders for state power stand to benefit most from cultural crackdowns in the evolving climate of repression. One need only try to imagine how a future government led by ethnonationalist ideologues, would wield Staatsräson.

SHIT
RECK
UNFIT

UNER
FREE
SHIT
KIT

NIVE
ANGER

NANE
GRAVE

GLIVE
AN
EAR

NO
STARE
AT ASS

MEAT
ASS
ROAST

A
S

A
O

Anagrams Never Again
[3 variations in Staatsräsonbraun]

Naive Anger, 2026

Inane Grave, 2026

Give Nan Ear, 2026

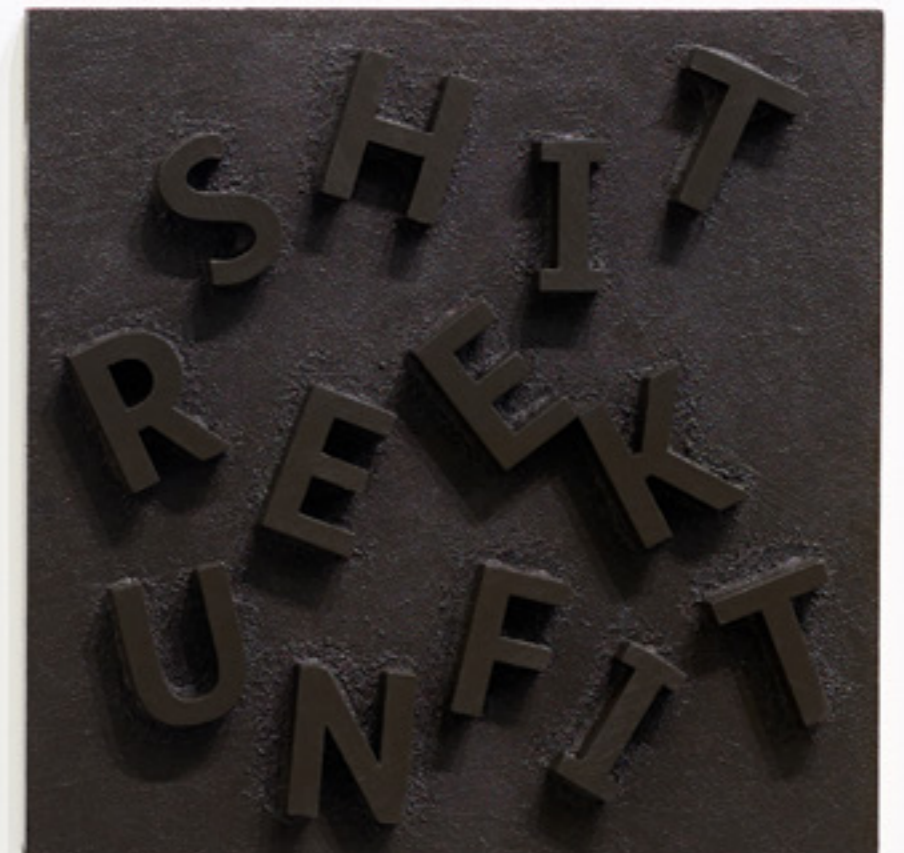
Polylactic filament and acrylic paint on wooden panel

30 x 40 x 4cm each

Edition of 3 + 1AP



Anagrams Kunstfreiheit
[3 variations in Staatsräsonbraun]



U Think Its Free, 2026

Unfree Shit Kit, 2026

Shit Reek Unfit, 2026

Polylactic filament and acrylic paint on wooden panel

40 x 40 x 4cm, Edition of 3 + 1AP

Edition of 3 + 1AP

Next page:

Anagrams Staatsraeson
[6 variations in Staatsräsonbraun]

No Stare At Ass, 2026

Atone Ass Star, 2026

Neat As Ass Rot, 2026

Neat Ass Roast, 2026

Art Eat On Sass, 2026

No Art Seat Ass, 2026

Polylactic filament and acrylic paint on wooden panel

40 x 40 x 4cm each

Edition of 3 + 1AP

NO STARE
AT ASS

AT ONE
ASS
STAR

NEAT
ASS ASS
ROT

WEAT
ASS
ROAST

ART
EAT
ON SASS

NO
ART
SEAT
ASS

Implicated Colours, 2026

To imagine that art can float autonomously above the immediate and broader contexts in which it is embedded – remote from the pedestrian grime of social and political life – is akin to insisting that humanity's darkest moments – Shark Island, Auschwitz, Srebrenica, Darfur, Bucha, Gaza – can be understood independently of the historical events that preceded and have followed them. Even the most primary of colours and elementary of shapes have time and time again been soiled by context – acquiring ineradicable patinas of power, violence, hope or resistance. Seeking to liberate a yellow star, a red triangle, a black square or a pink triangle from the burden of history, is as futile as trying to cut a river or a sea from its surrounding geography – a historical pursuit grounded in either ignorance or folly. The inextricable entanglement of the aesthetic and the political is most nakedly demonstrated by national flags, visual manifestos that anchor state ideology via the proximity of colour and form.

Implicated colours is an appropriative homage. The series takes its cue both from Félix González-Torres' *Forbidden Colors* (a work consisting of four monochrome panels painted in green, red, black and white) and from the artist statement that González-Torres published parallel to exhibiting *Forbidden Colors* in 1988. His full statement can be retrieved online via the website of The Félix González-Torres Foundation.

Forbidden Colours
(after Félix González-Torres), 1988–2026



Acrylic paint on four polyresin Buddy Bears mounted
on marble bases

Monochrome Dancers: Green, Red, Black, White

26 x 13 x 10cm each

Edition of 3 + 1AP

National Colours, 1948–2026

Acrylic paint on five polyresin Buddy Bears mounted
on marble bases

Monochrome Dancers: Schwarz, Rot, Gold, White, Blue

26 x 13 x 10cm each

Edition of 3 + 1AP



Forgotten Colours, 1908–2026

Acrylic paint on five polyresin Buddy Bears mounted
on marble bases

Monochrome Dancers: Blue, Yellow, Red, White, Green

26 x 13 x 10cm each

Edition of 3 + 1AP



True Colours, 1908–2026



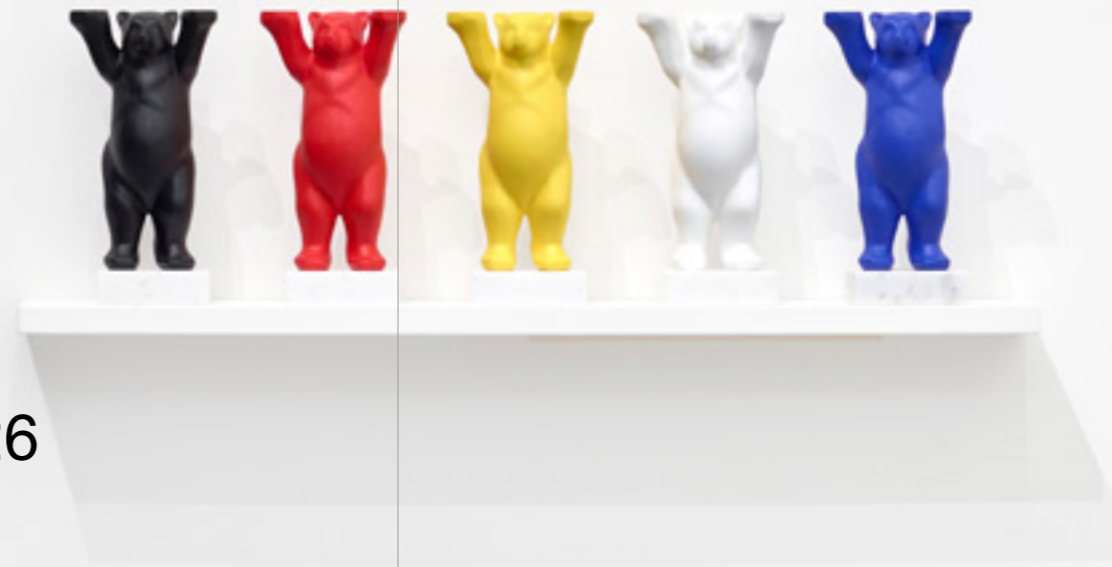
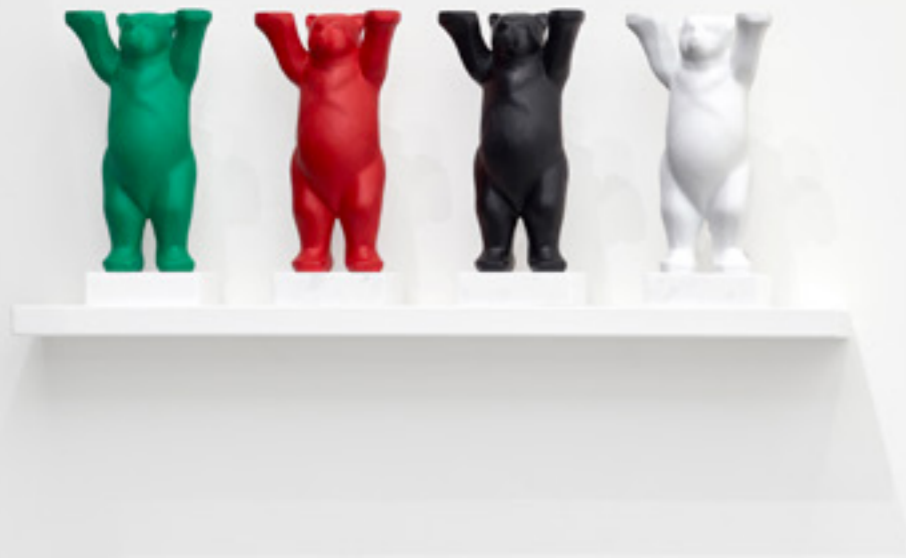
Acrylic paint on three polyresin Buddy Bears mounted
on marble bases

Monochrome Dancers: Staatsräsonbraun (mixed in equal
parts from Schwarz, Rot and Gold)

26 x 13 x 10cm each

Edition of 3 + 1AP

Implicated Colours, 2026



Forbidden Colours
(after Félix González-Torres), 1988–2026

National Colours, 1948–2026

Forgotten Colours, 1908–2026

True Colours, 1908–2026

Acrylic paint on three polyresin Buddy Bears mounted
on marble bases

17 parts, 26 x 13 x 10cm each

Edition of 3 + 1AP

Dear Esther (15 May 2020), 2025

Single-channel video, colour, loop, 35 minutes

Edition of 10



Antifascism is an absolute necessity

Dear Esther (May 1943), 2025

Single-channel video, colour, loop, 10 minutes

Edition of 10





KOW