Kh H Kunsthaus Hamburg

Press kit

Future Continuous
Hamburg Grants for Visual Arts 2026

Table of contents

Press release 2
Accompanying programme and guided tours 4
Information on the exhibits 5
General information 11

Press Release, 20 October 2026

Future Continuous
Hamburg Grants for Visual Arts 2026
21 November 2026 – 10 January 2027

Participating artists: Eda Aslan, Asma Ben Slama, Vedad Divović, Catalina González González, Maik Gräf, Nizan Kasper, Simone Kessler, Kenneth Lin, Lulu MacDonald, Jagrut Raval

Press preview: Friday, 20 November 2026, 11 am
Exhibition opening: Friday, 20 November 2026, 6 pm



Catalina González González, *On Borders and Ghosts*, 2026, film still

Under the title *Future Continuous*, the Kunsthaus Hamburg presents the new works by this year's recipients of the Hamburg Grants for Visual Arts from 21 November 2026 to 10 January 2027.

The annual final exhibition of the Grants for Visual Arts of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg provides insights into the city's artistic production and its recent developments. On display are works created by the ten grant recipients Eda Aslan, Asma Ben Slama, Vedad Divović, Catalina González González, Maik Gräf, Nizan Kasper, Simone Kessler, Kenneth Lin, Lulu MacDonald and Jagrut Raval during their grant period.

They span a range of media, from photography, sculpture and performance to video and multimedia installations. The thematic spectrum is diverse, including critical engagements with established forms of commemorative culture, global cycles of consumption and institutional structures. Moving between archive and fiction, documentation and speculation, the works reveal ruptures and gaps within familiar images and narratives.

To foster the grant recipients' international networks and visibility, ten curators and writers active across Europe were invited this year for the second time to engage in depth with the artists and their practices. This has resulted in ten essays, written by Liberty Adrien (KW Berlin), Adèle Anstett (independent curator and art critic), Dr Gabe Beckhurst Feijoo (61st Biennale Arte, Venice), Linda Franken (KW Berlin), Dr Felix Fuhg (Körber-Stiftung), Klara Hülskamp (Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof), Esra Klein (Fotomuseum Winterthur), Ben Miller (writer and historian), Laura Helena Wurth (writer, art critic and editor) and Ulrich Ziemons (Berlinale Forum).

Since 1981, the Hamburg Ministry of Culture and Media has awarded the Hamburg Grants for Visual Arts annually to ten promising artists based in Hamburg. The scholarship, which amounts to €1,500 per month, is intedned to provide sustainable support for artists in developing their careers and advancing their artistic practices. Throughout the year, the Kunsthaus Hamburg advises the recipients and offers them an international platform.

Curated by Jaana Heine

Supported by the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Ministry of Culture and Media

Hamburg | Ministry of Culture and Media

Accompanying programme

Fri, 20 November 2026, 6 pm
Opening
Speakers: Markus Pitz (Head of the Department of Culture, Ministry of Culture and Media Hamburg), Anna Nowak (Artistic and Managing Director, Kunsthaus Hamburg), Jaana Heine (Curator of the exhibition)
DJ set: Fluid

Sun, 29 November 2026, 3 pm
Workshop by Maik Gräf & Lulu MacDonald

Thu, 10 December 2026, 6 pm
Performance by Kenneth Lin

Sun, 10 January 2027, 2 pm
Finissage
3:30 pm: Performance by Jagrut Raval
5 pm: Performance by Kenneth Lin

Guided tours

Thu, 3 December 2026, 6 pm
Thu, 7 January 2027, 6 pm
Sun, 10 January 2027, 2 pm

Further information on the programme will be available shortly at www.kunsthaushamburg.de.

Eda Aslan
***It Was Their Dust That We Breathed In*, 2026**

Museums and collections often feel like sterile spaces of preservation and stability. In truth, their depots, architectures, and infrastructures are part of a complex network of historical, political, and material relations. With her site-specific installation *It Was Their Dust That We Breathed In*, Eda Aslan (b. 1993 in Istanbul, TR) traces these unseen interdependencies and asks what stories are inscribed in the structures of cultural institutions.

The artwork marks a further chapter in an eponymous long-term artistic research project, or the framework through which Eda Aslan examines the transnational circulation of materials, resources, and memories across geographical and institutional borders. While the previous works in the series saw the unpredictable movement of Saharan dust fracture the notion of hermetically sealed and controllable spaces, the artist now turns her attention to the material and structural conditions of the institution itself.

Eda Aslan's sculpture begins with corroded metal joints used in the decades-long restoration processes that go on in ancient museum collections. The scrapped components are melted down and shaped into new objects, which are then integrated into the Kunsthaus Hamburg's inventory of functional objects. All the elements developed for the exhibition are designed to fulfill a practical function after the exhibition closes, either on site or at other institutions. By returning materials that once supported valuable historical artefacts to the museum in a new form, the artwork shifts the viewers' gaze from the preserved objects to the infrastructures required for their maintenance. The metal remnants no longer appear as refuse, instead presenting material evidence of conservation and appropriation, as well as the coexistence of institutional control and fragility.

Asma Ben Slama
***Inferno or Midway upon the journey of our life,* 2026**

In the *Inferno*, part one of the *Divine Comedy*, Italian poet and philosopher Dante Alighieri recounts his journey through the nine circles of hell. Guided by the ancient Roman poet Virgil, he embarks on an allegorical passage through various forms of human folly, encountering numerous figures from mythology, history, and his own life along the way. At each level of the underworld, the damned are imprisoned in loops of different coercions and punishments.

Asma Ben Slama (b. 1992 in Tunis, TN) takes up the structure of Dante's infernal framework and projects it onto the conditions of contemporary everyday life. The multi-media installation *Inferno or Midway upon the journey of our life* is constructed around a video loop depicting different stages of digital image production continuously dissolving and merging with one another and a safe-like lock box. The motifs fluctuate between drawing and animation, flat surface and three-dimensionality as well as movement and calm, without ever arriving at a definitive state. By populating the massive, immobile safe emblematic of an economic value system with a changeful image vocabulary, the artist creates a parallel between the logics of the contemporary financial system and the technological processes of digital image production.

The lock box and the holographic motifs appear as intertwined components of a techno-capitalist system that structures perception and orientation. They point to the conditions under which wishes and realities are generated, disseminated, and continually renegotiated. *Inferno or Midway upon the journey of our life* presents an inferno not governed by divine judgement, but by economic and medial processes that perpetually organize perception, desire, and action, engendering their own repetitive loops.

Vedad Divović
***The Quiet Order*, 2026**

Sufi religious orders, also known as *tariqas*, are spiritual Islamic communities oriented around mystical experiences and an inner path to the divine. They practice their faith in *tekije* – places for religious gathering where prayer, teaching, and ritual encounters are interwoven. The specific characteristics of these orders vary according to their individual traditions, which frequently connect different dimensions of the spiritual path. Against this backdrop, collective practices take place that include singing, music, dances bordering on the ecstatic, prayer as well as *zikr* – the recitation of names and formulas in order to remember God. The roots of Sufi orders in the religious and cultural landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina go back to the Ottoman Empire, but they have remained largely invisible in public space. At the same time, their reclusiveness has solidified them as stable social spaces where traditions and forms of belonging persist across generations.

In his series of photographs *The Quiet Order*, Vedad Devović (b. 1991 in Sarajevo, BA) approaches the *tekije* in Sarajevo as frameworks for religious and social practice that have evolved over centuries. The project works from biographical experiences, carefully seeking out points of access to a way of life that is better understood through consistent presence than through observations made from a distance. Using photography and sound, Vedad Divović examines the interconnections between religious ritual, spiritual experience, and everyday interaction. He is interested both in how these spaces are physically arranged and in the ineffable states of being that unfold here between concentration, physical exertion, and movement. *Zikr* remains a central point of reference: not as an illustration of a belief system, but as an embodied, rhythmic, and social practice. A sound work makes audible dynamics of repetition, breath, and movement. *The Quiet Order* conveys a form of community constituted by its continuity more than any form of representation, thereby illuminating alternative social structures in contemporary urban life.

Catalina González González
***Un hogar sin perro es solo una casa*, 2026**

Psychopomps are symbolic beings from different mythologies and religions who accompany the souls of the deceased on their way from this world into the next. As mediators between worlds, they provide orientation and stand for phases of transition and transformation. In Catalina González González' (b. 1990 in Bogotá, CO) video installation, dogs repeatedly take on the role of threshold figures. Time and again, the artist has engaged with liminal and transitional experiences in her practice, including migration, displacement and queerness, and now expands this research into the transition between life and death.

The artwork draws on the fate of Catalina González González' grandmother, who has occupied a transition state for years now: she is still alive, but no longer able to speak or move. This in-between provides the artist with a basis for engaging with other liminal states such as grief, loss and intergenerational trauma. Formally, the installation interweaves recordings on film from Colombia and Germany with material from family archives, creating a porous, fragmented visual landscape between presence and absence. Untethered from any linear narrative, the images themselves appear as unstable bodies that emerge, overlap and disappear once more. These moments are aurally expanded through a composition of voices, breath sounds, urban noise, silent moments and musical fragments continuously heard in the background. Both physical and emotional distances can be felt, between countries and bodies as well as within memories and stories. The recurring dogs' nonverbal presence interweaves different places and temporalities. The work's title translates to "A home without a dog is just a house", pointing to animals as emotional anchors who facilitate continuity and vulnerability. In these roles, they structure an open experiential space where the boundaries between worlds become porous.

Maik Gräf
***Murmur,* 2026**

For his large-scale triptych *Murmur*, Maik Gräf (b. 1986 in Sonnenberg, DE) creates a dense composition of images from various artistic processes including cyanotypes, screen printing, needlepoint, analogue black-and-white

photography, and anthotypes. The opulent artwork draws from the dramatic imagery of Italian baroque painting and elevates fragmentation to an aesthetic and conceptual principle. Historic and contemporary visual and material elements coalesce without forming a conclusive narrative. The fragment emerges as a generative form that illuminates ruptures and polyphony.

This hybridity is further embodied by the mythological chimaera. A fluid, composite being, it presents a utopian alternative to binary orders and provides a metaphor for queer existence. It functions as a vehicle for questions of identity and transformation; it is illusion, hallucination, and dream all at once. Concrete references to queer history and political activism expand on these themes, among them the 1969 Stonewall Riots or transgender activist Sylvia Rivera's speech at New York City's 1973 Gay Pride Rally, where she vehemently made herself heard with the now-famous cry of "Y'all better quiet down!" in order to critique the exclusion of trans and queer houseless people within the movement and demand solidarity. The activists' fierce and powerful protest creates a counterweight to the chimaera's seductive tones. While its siren song evokes a utopian world, the other voices angrily call for revolt, mobilizing people to make real political change. The space between these voices is filled with the murmurs referenced in the artwork's title. Although this low expression of thoughts or of resistance is barely audible at first, it can grow louder and become an effective form of collective expression through repetition, layering, and shared resonance. Walking the lines between gentle whisper and radical uproar, *Murmur* unfolds an overarching atmospheric framework that intertwines potentials for utopia with those for resistance.

Nizan Kasper
***for now*, 2026**

Over the course of a single day, Nizan Kasper's (b. 1990 in Hamburg, DE) video installation *for now* traces the perspectives of people struggling with addiction and sometimes home- or houselessness in the area surrounding Hamburg's central railway station, better known as Hamburg Hauptbahnhof. Structured around necessities and strategies for survival, their daily lives become visible between sunrise and sunset. The video's subjects keep their own time in parallel with the rhythm of commuters, waiting areas and consumer flows, an interplay that shapes the railway station as an urban nexus. It is a space where different temporalities as well as social and economic milieus intersect.

Nizan Kasper is less interested in socially charged categorizations than he is in contradictions, trivialities, absences and mundane moments of the everyday. By participating in the creative process, the subjects of *Arbeitstitel* provide an additional level of self-representation and help shape the film's orientation. An experimental visual language layers documentary and subjective perspectives; proximity and distance are continually renegotiated. Instead of pursuing a single biography or a stable narrative, this artwork unfolds a polyphonic mesh of experiences condensed into a single day on loop. The work's strategies of anonymization function not as a refusal of visibility, but rather as its precondition. That which remains hidden is just as meaningful as what is shown. Consisting of video, photography, and spatial elements, the installation also points its camera at viewers themselves, encouraging them to reflect on the complexity of the politics of looking. The relationship between observing and being observed is destabilized and made tangible as a symbiotic, situational process. Rather than a narrative with a conclusion, *for now* is an attempt to open up visibility as a negotiation between public space and protection, as well as between witnessing and solidarity.

Simone Kessler
***Fragile Web of Stories,* 2026**

The term "bycatch" refers to marine life unintentionally caught during fishing operations. Due to their size, protected status, or because they are subject to quotas, these non-target species are often thrown back into the sea. It is not uncommon for this practice to result in injuries, many of them fatal. The consequences run far deeper than individual losses, shaping entire ecosystems. The interplay of fishing technologies, regulatory mechanisms and the economic interests of global corporations has led to a practice of selection that perpetually classifies marine life according to criteria of exploitability, conservation status and utility.

Simone Kessler's (b. 1985 in Regensburg, DE) sculptural work *Fragile Web of Stories* transfers these typically invisible processes to a spatial context: unfired, recycled clay from her previous artworks hangs from the ceiling in a fine-meshed fishing net. The material slowly starts to change shape under its own weight, partially seeping through the net's structure. This working process follows the clay's physical properties and mirrors Simone Kessler's object performances, in which things and materials turn into actors with agency.

The fishing net becomes a structure that gives form to questions of worth, exclusion and belonging. Ecological and economic systems are made tangible, as is their interdependence and how they continuously determine which bodies are protected, which ones are exploited and which ones discarded. The clay's weight gives it a corporeal presence, illustrating at human scale the complex interconnections that take effect in industrial fishing practices. *Fragile Web of Stories* reflects on questions of sustainability and power both on the material and the ecological level. Kessler's reuse of the clay points to cycles of reprocessing and adaptability, while the industrial fishing context also makes visible the logics of extractive systems. The installation's juxtaposition of recycling with indiscriminate resource extraction illuminates the simultaneity of reuse and destruction, protective regulations and exploitation. With these concurrences in mind, we are asked to consider the role of individual responsibility within global systems of production.

Kenneth Lin
***Karaoke Monkey: The Big Circus Journey*, 2026**

Established in 1907, Hamburg's Tierpark Hagenbeck is considered a cornerstone of modern zoo design and culture. Founder Carl Hagenbeck introduced today's wildlife enclosures, replacing classic cage architectures with naturalistic, spacious designs intended to facilitate "direct" encounters with animals. This model spread internationally, accompanied by travelling animal circuses that presented so-called exotic animals as mass spectacles. *Völkerschauen* or "ethnological expositions", as they were referred to at the time, were also closely connected to the development of the Tierpark. These human zoos exhibited people from colonized regions for entertainment and educational purposes – a practice grounded in a visual regime where seeing and power are violently intertwined.

Drawing from this historical constellation, Kenneth Lin's (b. 1994 in Pennsylvania, US) multimedia artwork *Karaoke Monkey: The Big Circus Journey* examines the colonial conditions of looking in early zoology. A transnational narrative, the artwork follows the fictional figure of the karaoke monkey on a circus tour with stops in Germany, Japan, and Taiwan. The cities of Hamburg, Hsinchu, and Fukuoka become important junctions in the journey. In 1933, Tierpark Hagenbeck presented an animal and human zoo in Japan as part of a Women's and Children International Exhibition, permanently influencing public perception of animal circuses. The Fukuoka Zoo opened that same year; its entrance intentionally resembled the *Elefantentor*, or Tierpark Hagenbeck's iconic gate adorned with elephant sculptures. Hsinchu Park was inaugurated in Taiwan as early as 1916. Designed by a Japanese architect in 1922, its entrance can also be traced back formally to the gate in Hamburg. Using readymades, archival materials, texts, performance, and a paper theatre, Lin pursues these fragmented traces and stages seeing itself as a historically coded practice in which animals, people, architecture, and spectacle emerge as circulating elements in a system of cultural transfer – elements that reveal colonial hierarchies while also carrying them forward.

Lulu MacDonald
***As If It Never Were,* 2026**

On the day Lulu MacDonald (b. 1991 in Norwich, UK) turned eighteen, a carpet unexpectedly appeared in front of the house where she was celebrating. It was identical to a carpet her parents had wanted to purchase years earlier, but were unable to afford at the time. The family interpreted its appearance as an act of fate. Today the carpet, whose provenance remains unknown, can still be found on her parents' living room floor. This true story was the initial source of inspiration for the performance installation *As If It Never Were.* The artwork continues MacDonald's ongoing

examination of how stories and objects are collected and circulated, negotiating questions of property, desire, coincidence, and moral ambivalence.

An ensemble of rolled-up carpets makes up the installation's sculptural component. Held upright by vertical metal structures, their presence is surreal, almost anthropomorphic. Their shape also references the image of the rolled-up carpet as a motif of concealment and transportation in visual and cultural history. No longer home furnishings and not quite sculptural objects, these carpets have been stripped of their original function and repurposed as dualistic placeholders: They now illustrate how objects accumulate stories and gain cultural relevance, while also representing the absent performers. As textiles that help furnish a home, carpets carry notions of comfort, value, and belonging, and they stand for processes of circulation and appropriation. This dynamic continues in the accompanying performance: texts in small print about the MacDonald family's found carpet are discreetly deposited among visitors' personal items. These stories circulate unannounced, changing ownership almost completely unnoticed. Like the carpet, the texts appear unexpectedly; they are taken home, taken away and rediscovered elsewhere.

This gesture takes up an artistic and political act first performed by surrealists Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore. When the island of Jersey was under German occupation during the Second World War, the couple hid messages in the bags of German soldiers, hoping to undermine their morale. *As If It Never Were* playfully reinterprets this practice, examining the agency and resistance of small gestures as well as circulating thoughts and objects. Without fail, they set new stories in motion whose origins and conclusions remain uncertain.

Jagrut Raval
***Prinz von Amadabat*, 2026**

In the context of European knowledge production, it becomes particularly apparent that history is not grounded solely in proven facts, but also in omissions, contradictory sources and speculative attributions. Archives are increasingly being understood as selective systems in which visibility and invisibility are closely intertwined. Historic narratives develop through processes of selection, organization and interpretation. They are shaped by the conditions of their transmission and by the actors involved in their construction. What remains and becomes visible is just as significant as that which is lost or obscured.

Jagrut Raval's (b. 1986 in Ahmedabad, IN) multimedia installation *Prinz von Amadabat* (Prince of Amadabat) engages with the questions raised in this line of thinking. The artwork revolves around the historic figure of Soltan Gjin Achmet, an alleged prince and traveller from Amadabat who appears throughout European sources from the 18th century as a frequent presence at universities, courts, and in scholarly circles. His traces can be found in letters, literary mentions and administrative documents – a fragmentation that makes visible how historical truths and authority are constructed.

Cartographic drawings, archival materials, photographs, videos, diagrams and found objects compose a rhizomatic weave that opens up different temporal and spatial realms simultaneously. Through performative and situational narratives, the artist inscribes himself in the artwork and continuously pushes its boundaries. Jagrut Raval's archival work builds on an approach he calls "Filling the Gap". Unlike a simple reconstruction, it engages missing information, unclear identities and contradictions as productive blank spaces that allow for speculative expansions. Within this narrative space, the figure "Narad" takes form – an anachronistic travelling philosopher traversing different times. A transhistorical figure, he connects fragments from disparate eras and undercuts linear historiographies. History, myth and the present day overlap without fusing into a clear-cut story.

General information

Opening hours
Tuesday–Sunday 11 am–6 pm
Closed on Mondays

Admission fees
Regular: 6 €
Reduced: 4 €
Groups: 2 €

Admission to the events at the Kunsthaus Hamburg and participation in guided tours are free of charge.
Admission for refugees is free.

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