

Press Kit: Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger

*K21, Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf
February 22 – August 31, 2025*

Press preview and press conference
Thursday, February 20, 2025, 10 am, K21

With:

- Karen Archey, Head of Curatorial Department
- Kolja Reichert, Curator
- Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Artist

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#K21BrachaLichtenbergEttinger

#BrachaLichtenbergEttinger

#BRACHA

#K21

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's first solo exhibition at a German museum

The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen will present the first German museum survey of the groundbreaking painter, psychoanalyst, philosopher, and peace activist Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger (BRACHA). Born in Tel Aviv in 1948, BRACHA is known for her small-format oil paintings that are driven by unconscious processes and created over the course of up to eight years. BRACHA transforms photographic material, including evidence of violence against women and children during the Shoah, into painterly images of inner states that visibly change over decades. At the heart of the exhibition are twelve recent paintings, some of which are shown outside the artist's studio for the first time. With more than 80 works, including a selection of early work from the 1980s, the Bel Etage of K21 presents a singular concept of art. It combines psychoanalysis and painting, a feminist rethinking of identity and gender relations, radical vulnerability, and the hope for a peaceful way of dealing with conflicts and inherited traumas.

About Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger

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Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger is a self-taught artist. She studied clinical psychology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and moved to London in 1975, where she studied at the London Centre for Psychotherapy, taught and worked with Ronald D. Laing, pioneer of the antipsychiatry movement and the Tavistock Clinic. After moving to Paris, she showed her artistic works there for the first time in 1982. These were soon collected and exhibited by major museums, including the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. BRACHA also participated in actions and exhibitions in Germany at the Berlin Philharmonic in 1983, in Düsseldorf in 1984, and in Cologne in 1987. She has shown in influential group exhibitions worldwide. Numerous renowned theorists have each dedicated several essays to her work, including Griselda Pollock, Jean-François Lyotard, Christine Buci-Glucksmann, and Nicolas Bourriaud. The accompanying exhibition catalog makes excerpts of these exemplary essays available in German for the first time.

Throughout her career, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger continued working as a psychoanalyst. Her book *The Matrixial Gaze* was published in 1995 and develops a synthesis of aesthetics and ethics that has been taken up in a variety of disciplines, including psychology, philosophy, ecology, education, art, film and gender studies. Ettinger has taught at numerous universities and art academies. She is a professor at the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland and the Global Center for Advanced Studies in Dublin, Ireland. She has been involved in human rights organizations such as Physicians for Human Rights, Women Wage Peace, and the Palestinian-Israeli Forum of Bereft Families, where she works for equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians.

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's art

As an artist, Ettinger goes by the name BRACHA. Her practice has developed a unique set of techniques from 1981 onwards: she places materials such as book pages and historical

photographs on a photocopier, opens it during the exposure process, and overpaints the unfixed toner pigment of the incomplete copies with ink, oil, and ash. In 1992, she started painting in oil on canvas. To this day, she continues adding ash to her oil paintings, which resemble weavings. This is the result of her working with tiny lines in countless layers. Over many years, she covers the canvas with dots until unforeseeable patterns emerge. A multitude of figures and faces can be recognized in each painting. The exhibition shows how these figures have become increasingly mobile and colorful over the decades. In the most recent paintings of the Angel of Carriage series, this development culminates in a tension between turmoil and confidence. BRACHA's works and the titles she gives them (such as "Eurydice," "Medusa," "Pieta" or "Rachel") are shaped by her preoccupation with spiritual traditions from Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism, as well as Italian classical painting.

The exhibition juxtaposes BRACHA's paintings and drawings with her notebooks, which are independent artworks in their own right and have been the subject of many museum exhibitions. In them, she records feelings, thoughts, and dreams in notes, drawings, ink paintings, and watercolors. Here you can witness the artist as she reflects—also on the terrible events during the Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and the war that followed. "[M]y heart cries for each dead on all sides," she wrote in her letter of resignation from the selection committee for the artistic direction of documenta in November 2023. "Every life is precious."

Relationship with Germany

The exhibition at K21 offers the sensation of a late discovery. The fact that BRACHA is only now becoming well-known in Germany is due to her deliberate decision not to exhibit in the country for nearly 40 years. The reason for this was precisely her intensive engagement with the country of her ancestors. Her family's German roots go back to the 15th century. The historical images on which BRACHA's works are based almost all engage German history: they include family photographs of her parents walking in the Jewish ghetto of Łódź; media images of the 1936 Olympics in Nuremberg; a photograph of a mass shooting of women and children in Ukraine in 1942; as well as early German aerial photographs of Palestine taken in 1917 during World War I. While unresolved historical tensions between Israel, Palestine, and Germany reverberate through Ettinger's entire practice, her art and writing foster an understanding of vulnerability and "self-fragilization", interdependence and "co-emergence" and the necessity to recognize, "to carry" and care for the other in all their differences.

Art as witness

Most of BRACHA's relatives were murdered during the Shoah. Her parents managed to flee to the British Mandate of Palestine, where Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger was born in Tel Aviv a few weeks before the state of Israel was founded in 1948. As the daughter of Holocaust survivors who were unable to find a language for their traumatic memories, much of BRACHA's art and thought revolves around the possibility of being a witness to witnesses—a role that she also ascribes to art. Art enables what BRACHA calls wit(h)nessing: the experience of the presence of another life, mediated by the artist and the painting itself. This co-emergence, which always remains incomplete and singular, can

contribute to the understanding of shared injuries, the transmission of their traces and their healing.

Her many years of dealing with personal and historical traumas in both her theory and her painting have recently led BRACHA to the conviction that her work is now ready to have an impact in Germany. "I did not want to come with morals and complaints about the past", she says. "I wanted to make sure that I have a gift to make".

Art as healing

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger's work occupies a key position in the study of art, psychoanalysis, and women's knowledge. Through art, practice and theory, Ettinger searches for ways to overcome violence and polarization in order to reclaim spaces for "humanization", compassion, and openness towards a shared future. Her reflections on the spiritual in art offer many connections with works in the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, such as those by Wassily Kandinsky, Agnes Martin, and Paul Klee, about whom she has also written theoretically. In 2016, she gave a lecture at K20 on the art of Agnes Martin, and in 2024 on that of Hilma af Klint. In her essay "Angel of Carriance," which is published in German for the first time in the accompanying exhibition catalog, Ettinger warns against the instrumentalization of art for political agendas, fuelled by the dynamics of social media. Only when art asserts its distinct independence and slowness can it have a healing effect and support the human ability to appreciate differences and approach one another in a caring and supportive way, and even influence, over time, the social field.

Therein lies its political power. BRACHA's unique combination of painting, psychoanalysis, and ethics allows us to see collective wounds and traumas and their healing as both a radically personal and radically communal task.

The first German-language publication on the work of Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger

The exhibition is accompanied by a 144-page catalog published by DISTANZ Verlag with numerous illustrations, new essays by Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger and Kolja Reichert as well as excerpts from canonical essays on BRACHA's work by Nicolas Bourriaud, Christine Buci-Glucksmann, Rosi Huhn, Jean-François Lyotard, Brian Massumi, and Griselda Pollock.

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger: Angel of Carriance

144 pages, 70 illustrations, Softcover

Format 16.5 x 23 cm

Distanz Verlag

29.90 EUR in the exhibition, 36 EUR in bookshops

Talks with BRACHA

Saturday, February 22, 12–6 pm, K21 Salon21

Free admission with exhibition ticket, registration required

With Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Nicolas Bourriaud, Rosi Huhn, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Kolja Reichert, and Andrea Viliani

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger has not only influenced a younger generation of artists: Her theory of the matrixial space has also been widely received in psychoanalysis, the philosophy of art, film studies and other disciplines. On the day after the opening, several of her prominent companions will discuss the influence of BRACHA's art and theory. The focus will be on the role of art as a source of humanity, understanding, and a sense of the future.

On spelling the artist's name

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger has often been abbreviated to Bracha L. Ettinger. The museum and the artist have decided to include her German surname "Lichtenberg." Thus, her name is always either written out completely as Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, or abbreviated to her artist name BRACHA (always in capital letters).

Curator: Kolja Reichert

The exhibition *Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger* at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is supported by Artis; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York; and High Art, Paris.

Media partner for the exhibition:
Kunstforum International

Media partner of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen:
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger

K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf
Feb 22 – Aug 31, 2025

Press preview and press conference: Feb 20, 2025, 10 am at K21

Opening: Friday, Feb 21, 2025, 7 – 10 pm at K21, free admission

Speakers:

- Karen Archey, Head of Curatorial Department
- Kolja Reichert, Curator
- Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, Artist

Supporting Program (Selection)

Guided Tours

_Open House. The KPMG-Kunstabend in March

Wednesday (every 1st of the month)

6 – 10 pm

K20/K21

Free admission, registration on site

Complete program for children, young adults and families as well as educators and teachers: www.kunstsammlung.de

Exhibition Preview

Chagall

March 15 – August 10, 2025

Press conference and preview: March 13, 2025, from 10 am, K20

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Marc Chagall (1887–1985) is one of the most fascinating artists of modernism. The exhibition at the K20 of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, organized in cooperation with the ALBERTINA in Vienna, is a monographic exhibition on the work of the Russian-French painter. Chagall grew up in the small town of Vitebsk (in present-day Belarus) as the eldest child of an Orthodox Jewish family and reflected on his origins throughout his life. His paintings tell of everyday life and customs, but also of exclusion and pogroms. They deal with the trauma of persecution, but also with the dream of a better life. His fantastic and poetic imagery is characterized by bright, intense colors and motifs that remain enigmatic to this day. On the fortieth anniversary of the painter's death, the exhibition brings together some 100 works from all phases of his career. One focus is on the early works created between 1910 and 1923. As a young artist in Paris, Chagall experimented with Fauvism and Cubism, combining the new stylistic tendencies with Jewish motifs and Russian folklore. This was unique in his time and made him the "wunderkind of modernism." The exhibition reveals not only the painterly influences on Chagall's early work. The lesser known dark and socially critical side of the artist, which has not lost its relevance to this day, can also be discovered.

The exhibition is a cooperation between the ALBERTINA, Vienna, and the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

The exhibition is supported by Freunde der Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf, and the Rudolf-August Oetker Foundation.

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Julie Mehretu
May 10 – October 12, 2025

Press preview and press conference: May 8, 2025, from 10 am, K21

The Ethiopian American artist Julie Mehretu (b. 1970, Addis Ababa) is one of the most influential painters working today. This first major solo exhibition in Germany presents the full range of Mehretu's work, from the urban-inspired line drawings of the 1990s to her most recent abstract paintings of spectacular scale. At the same time, the exhibition offers deep insights into the genesis of Mehretu's works. She often begins with media images of political events and historical sites, which she translates into complex abstract compositions through numerous notations, overpaintings, and maskings. In the exhibition at K21, Mehretu's image archive will be shown for the first time alongside her works. This vividly demonstrate how art is created and how it grants consciousness, freedom, and agency in the face of the storm of events conveyed by the media.

The exhibition is being organized in cooperation with the Pinault Collection, which shows "Julie Mehretu. Ensemble" at the Palais Grassi until January 6, 2025.

In partnership with the BMW Group.

K21 **Queer Modernity**
September 27, 2025 – February 15, 2026

Press conference and preview: September 25, 2025, from 10 am, K20

Queer Modernity at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is the first exhibition in Europe to present the previously underestimated but groundbreaking contribution of queer artists to modernism. In their programs, queer artists created alternatives to prevailing lifestyles that placed the influence and perspective of gender and sexuality on styles, movements, and programs at the center of their artistic work. Desire, individual experience, the politics of self-expression, and social history become visible in their work. Many of these artists have so far been marginalized in the dominant historiography or dismissed as "counter-modern." Others are examined for the first time in the exhibition from the perspective of queer aesthetics.

The result of years of research, this exhibition completes our picture of modernism with over forty artists, some of whom have been forgotten and some of whom are very well known. It includes works from Eastern and Western Europe, from North and Latin America. It also tells the story of queer life in a time marked by war, persecution, and resistance.

Media partner of the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen:
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Supported by the Ministry of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

Kunstsammlung
Nordrhein-Westfalen

Annex

Biography

BRACHA (Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger)

Born 1948, Tel Aviv, lives and works in Tel Aviv and Paris.

Education: MA in Clinical Psychology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. DEA in Psychoanalysis, University of Paris VII. PhD in Aesthetics of Visual Arts, University, Paris VIII. Chair and professor of Art and Psychoanalysis, EGS University, Saas-Fee. Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, GCAS University, Dublin. Supervising psychoanalyst, member of GIEP, NLS, WAP, TAICP.

Solo exhibitions (selection): Centre Pompidou, Paris (2024), Radicants, Paris (2022), Castello di Rivoli Museum, Turin (2021-2023), Anderson Gallery, University at Buffalo, New York (2018), Silesian Museum (Muzeum Śląskie), Katowice (2017), Galería Polivalente, Universidad de Guanajuato (2015), Museo Leopoldo Flores, Toluca (2014), Museum of the City of St. Petersburg, Peter and Paul Fortress (2013), Freud's Dream Museum, St. Petersburg (2013), Casco, Utrecht (2012), Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Angers, Angers (2011), Ars Nova Museum, Turku (2011), Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2010). Freud Museum, London (2009), KIASMA, Helsinki (2006), The Drawing Center, New York (2001), BOZAR, Brussels (2000), Museum of Art, Pori (1996), The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1995), Kanaal Art Foundation, Kortrijk (1994), The Russian Museum of Ethnography, Saint Petersburg (1993), Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (1993), IAC—Le Nouveau Musée, Villeurbanne (1992), Goethe Institute, Paris (1990), Musée des Beaux-Arts et de la Dentelle, Calais (1998), Centre Pompidou, Paris (1987), Moltkerei Werkstatt, Köln (1987), Diagonale Espace Critique, Paris (1984), Public Press, Düsseldorf (1984), CNAC—Centre Pompidou Studio Visits project, Paris (1983).

Group exhibitions (selection): *Dans le flou.* Musée de L'Orangerie, Paris (2025). *Material Imagination: Inflamed Nerve,* Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2025). *The Third Generation.* Jewish Museum Vienna (2024). *Phantom Itineraries/Itinéraires fantômes.* CAPC Museum, Bordeaux (2024). *Biennial of Painting,* Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem (2024). *Biennale Donna XX.* Palazzo Bonacossi, Ferrara (2024). *The Shamans.* MART-Musee, Trento e Rovereto, Trento (2023). *Material Imagination: Israeli Art from the Collection.* Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2023). *Artists in a Time of War.* Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2023). *Re-Materialization of Language. 1978-2022.* A. D. Nogare Foundation, Bolzano (2022-2023). *Espressioni—Con-frazioni.* Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2022). *Psychic Wounds.* The Warehouse, Dallas, (2020). *Doing Deculturalization.* Museion, Bolzano (2019). *Heart of Darkness.* Castello di Rivoli at OGR, Turin (2019). *Espressioni—The Proposition.* Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2020-2021). *Psychic Wounds: On Art & Trauma.* The Warehouse, Dallas, (2020). *Doing Deculturalization.* Museion Bozen/Bolzano, Italy (2019). *Kochi-Muziris Biennale,* Kochi (2018-2019). *The Human Condition,* Ekaterina Institute, Moscow (2017-2018). *The Image of War.* Bonnier Konsthall, Stockholm (2017). *Encounters.* MAS/KMSKA Museums, Antwerp (2017). *Colori.* GAM Museum, Turin (2017). *14th Istanbul*

Biennial, Arter, Istanbul (2015). *In the Heart of the Country*. MoMA, Warsaw (2013-2014). *ῥλη—The Nameless Form*. Roger Raveel Museum, Machelen (2013). *ELLES_at_Centrepompidou*. Paris (2010). *Eventually we'll die*. Museum of Contemporary Art, Herzliya (2008). *Gorge(I)*. The Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp (2006). *Aletheia. The Real of Concealment*. Göteborgs Konstmuseum (2003). *Permanent installation*. Freud's Dream Museum, Saint Petersburg, (2000–present). *Interarchive*. Kunstraum der Universität, Lüneburg (1999). *La Ville, le Jardin, la Mémoire*. Villa Medici, Rome (1999). *Voices from Here and There*. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1999). *Women Artists in Israeli Art, 1948–1998*. Haifa Museum of Art (1998). *Inside the Visible*. Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (1997). *Kabinet*. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1997). *Oh Mama*. Museum for Israeli Art, Ramat-Gan (1997). *Permanent show*, Musée départemental d'Épinal (1997). *Body*. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (1997). *Face à l'Histoire*. Centre Pompidou, Paris (1996). *Inside the Visible*. Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Boston; Whitechapel Gallery, London; National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (1996-1997). *Routes of Wandering*. The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (1991). *Israeli Art Now*. Tel Aviv Museum of Art (1991). *Feminine Presence*. Tel Aviv Museum of Art (1990). *Le Biennale Internationale de Jeune Peinture*, Museum of Gerone, Cannes (1989). *Échange culturel franco-danois*. Kvinde Museum, Aarhus (1987). *Kultur 90*. Jagenberg-Gelände, Düsseldorf (1986). *Émergence*. Entrepôt Lainé Museum, Bordeaux (1985). *Neue Kunst in der Philharmonie*. Philharmonie, Berlin (1983). *XXIle Biennale de Paris: Lieux d'artistes*, (1982).

Books by Bracha L. Ettinger: *The Matrixial Borderspace* (University of Minnesota, 2006). *Matrixial Subjectivity, Aesthetics, Ethics, Vol I: 1990-2000* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2020). *Conversation with Christian Boltanski, Matrix et le Voyage à Jerusalem de C.B.* (1991). *"What Would Eurydice Say?"* Conversation with Emmanuel Levinas (reprints 1994, 1997, 2007, 2023 (Dror Lanefesh)). *Conversation with Edmond Jabes* (MoMA, Oxford, 1993). *Matrix. Halal(a) – Lapsus. Notes on Painting, 1985–1992*. (MOMA, Oxford 1993).

Monographs (selection): *Art as Compassion. Bracha L. Ettinger*. Eds C. de Zegher and G. Pollock. Texts by Christine Buci-Glucksmann, Judith Butler, Rosi Huhn, Erin Manning, Catherine de Zegher, Griselda Pollock. (Ghent: MER, 2011). *Kabinet Ω: Bracha L. Ettinger*. Ed. Viktor Mazin. Texts by N. Bourriaud, C. Buci-Glucksmann, J. Butler, Jean-Francois Lyotard, V. Mazin, G. Pollock, Olesya Turkina. (St Petersburg: Kabinet, 2013). *And My Heart Wound-Space*. Texts by A. Benjamin, O. Wolkstein, G. Pollock, T. Kinsella, N. Bourriaud, R. Kara-Kaniel, B. L. Ettinger, (Istanbul Biennial, 2015). *Bracha L. Ettinger: Eurydice—Pieta*. Ed. Anna Chromik. Texts by Alicja Knast, Andrzej Kowalczyk, A. Chromic, Michal Krzykawski, Ewa Macura-Nna (Muzeum Śląskie, Katowich, 2018).

Journals: Ettingerian Matrixial Theory, Education and the Arts, *Artizien* 9:1, 2024. The Psychoanalysis of Bracha L. Ettinger, *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*, n27, 2022. Special Bracha L. Ettinger section, *Theory, Culture and Society*. Vol. 21:1, 2004.

Wall text**Introduction**

Can art heal our wounds? Can it help us understand our traumas so that we can meet openly and without violence? These questions are at the heart of the work of painter, psychoanalyst and peace activist Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger (BRACHA), which is exhibited for the first time in a German museum.

BRACHA works on each painting for up to eight years. She applies layer upon layer of oil paint, ink, and ash with the finest brushes. She doesn't start with a clear design in mind; instead she follows what her subconscious says. Countless faces and figures can be discovered in her abstract paintings. They contain memories from her own life, but also the memories of others. Painful and traumatic memories are often passed down from generation to generation, especially when they can't be expressed in words. BRACHA's works also reveal famous images from art history. Her paintings and drawings create a space for our own feelings and memories to resonate. She calls it "matrixial," from the Latin for "womb". She has developed her own form of abstraction that emphasizes women's knowledge, faith in the maternal unconscious, spirituality, and care.

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BRACHA's art has been collected and exhibited by many major museums for forty years now. However, she has been reluctant to show her paintings in Germany since 1987. This is due to her difficult relationship with this country: her family's German roots go back to the 15th century. But many of her relatives were murdered under National Socialism (1933–1945) during the Shoah because they were Jewish: in the massacres in Ponary Forest, in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Stutthof, and elsewhere. BRACHA's parents managed to flee from Poland to Palestine, which was occupied by Great Britain at the time. She was born in Tel Aviv in 1948, a few weeks before the state of Israel was founded. Today she lives between Tel Aviv and Paris.

The exhibition focuses on new paintings, many of which have only just left the studio. Notebooks with watercolors and drawings testify to how BRACHA has experienced the last three years. Some of her earliest works, created since 1982, are also on view. For over forty years, BRACHA has used drawing, photocopying, and painting to continuously work through the same motifs: racist illustrations from scientific books; German aerial photographs of Palestine; photos of her own family; and, again and again, the photograph of a mass shooting of women, mothers, and children in Ukraine in 1942. In the exhibition, we can see how the same figures continue wandering through BRACHA's images over the decades, and also how they change; how the colors intensify, from black, gray, and purple to ruby red, violet, and orange. BRACHA preserves the dignity of the people depicted by subjecting them to neither figuration nor abstraction. We witness a decades-long process of compassion and healing, one we might also apply to ourselves.

Room 1

“I take the most terrible human experiences and transform them into beauty, light, and trust.”

This room presents paintings and notebooks from the last few years. They offer an overview of BRACHA's themes and techniques. Many have similar titles: “Eurydice”, “Pieta”, “Rachel”, or combinations of those names. BRACHA only chooses the title once the work is finished and she can recognize which motif has taken hold of it. Since more than forty years, the same set of motifs has been wandering throughout her works.

There is a photograph taken in Ukraine in 1942. It shows a woman staring from a crowd of undressed women, mothers, and children, waiting to be shot by an SS death squad. For BRACHA, this image recalls the many massacres that her relatives were subjected to. But it also speaks of the power of the gaze. The gaze can make people witnesses. It can connect them across centuries through painting or photography. But gazes can also do harm: in Greek mythology, the nymph Eurydice loses her lover Orpheus when he breaks the ban of looking back at her.

The name “Pieta” recalls one of the most famous motifs in Christian painting: Mary mourning her son. Rachel, mother to the tribes of Israel, dies while giving birth. BRACHA weaves the suffering of women across different centuries and cultures into meditations on color and light. For the series “Crazy Woman”, she painted over a copy of an eighteenth-century book illustration that shows women being locked away.

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With a slowness akin to the healing of wounds, BRACHA applies line after line, point by point, layer by layer. Her paintings on paper with ink, watercolor, ash, and toner dust take months. The oil paintings on canvas take several years. They are almost sculptural and shift like holograms as you move around them. BRACHA's work takes up centuries-old traditions of mystic reflections on light—in Kabbalah, Buddhism, and the visions of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, but also in the paintings of Fra Angelico, Hilma afKlint, or Mark Rothko.

The glass vitrines feature BRACHA's notebooks. They are artworks in their own right and have been the subject of many exhibitions. The artist sews a unique cover for each one. In these notebooks, BRACHA also processes the horrific events of the terrorist Hamas attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and the subsequent war in Gaza.

Since the Shoah, artists have been asking: are certain things too terrible to be painted? Is it permissible to use photographs showing the Holocaust for art? BRACHA found her own answer to these questions: she doesn't show the motifs themselves, but rather her inner relationship to them, the feelings they evoke in her. Her images open a window onto the realm of the unconscious, intuition, creativity, and spirituality, where people are connected across generations, places, and social differences. She calls this space “matrixial”, after the Latin word for “womb”.

Room 2

“Good painting provides us with the frequencies we need in order to really see.”

In 2015, BRACHA's paintings began to change. The most recent paintings in this room were completed in the fall of 2024. They are now being displayed together for the first time. Their figures are reminiscent of the ones that have wandered through BRACHA's paintings and drawings since 1981. But now they seem to be animated by an inner turmoil or by external winds. They float. The colors change. BRACHA's early works were dominated by blacks, grays, and purples. Over time, purple and white became the main colors. Now violet comes to the foreground, as well as ruby red, and occasionally a bright orange. In the “Eurydice” series, there is a sense of mourning and standing in the face of death. Here, memories of the past give way to a mood of confidence and trust in a possible future. Previously, the focus was on the suffering, death and survival of children and mothers. Now, the theme seems to be the creation of new life and the burdens of carrying and giving birth that it requires. Female figures emerge from entangled backgrounds, pushing through streaks of colors. Children seem to be on the move, accompanied by angels. Some titles are linked to existing series, such as “Medusa”, “Halala”, “Kaddish”, and “Pieta”. But many paintings are called “Angel of Carriance”, marking a completely new cycle of works. “Carriance” is a word created by BRACHA from the English words “care” and “carry.” “Birthing Angel of Carriance” is also the title of an essay by BRACHA featured in the exhibition catalog. In her text, she challenges three famous German philosophers. For Martin Heidegger, the human being is defined by the anticipation of death. For BRACHA, on the other hand, the human being lives in the shared experiences of being born and giving birth. For Hannah Arendt, every newborn is a new beginning. For BRACHA, they are already intertwined before birth with the mother, with future children, and also always with strangers. BRACHA also counters Walter Benjamin's pessimistic view of history with a sense of the future. Benjamin created the famous figure of the “Angel of History”. It is inspired by a drawing by Paul Klee. Benjamin describes history as an accumulation of wreckage. His “Angel of History” stares helplessly at the wreckage piling up before him as he is hurled backwards into the future. BRACHA, by contrast, proposes the figure of a female angel. She simultaneously carries the past, future, and present. This angel supports female care, compassion, and collaborative creativity (“co-poiesis”, in BRACHA's words) in all people. BRACHA's matrixial philosophy opens the view from the past up into the future. In the “Angel of Carriance” series, this future seems possible: as a path from trauma to healing and joy. On the table, there are two touchpads you can use to browse through BRACHA's notebooks.

Room 3

“Artwork is a site of solace and of grace and resistance.”

This room takes us behind the layers of painting we have encountered so far: to the 1980s, when BRACHA was discovering her motifs and developing her techniques.

BRACHA is a self-taught artist. She initially studied clinical psychology and psychoanalysis, and worked as a therapist. In 1981 she moved to Paris, where she exhibited her works for the first time at the age of 34. Alongside large-format paintings, she showed abstract drawings that were so small they almost disappeared into their frames. Eight of them can be found in the vitrines. She soon started developing her own technique: she would place images on the photocopier, open the machine during the exposure, pull out the half-finished copy, and overpaint it with ink, ashes, and the still loose pigment of the toner. BRACHA was thus able to combine the mechanics of the machine with the freedom of her own hand. Her subjects—violence, memory, trauma—could not be represented in a single image, but only across many individual sheets as well as the gaps, cuts, and relationships between them.

BRACHA recombines the unframed sheets each time in a different way. She fixed some combinations in Plexiglas frames. We see the women and children lined up for execution from the “Eurydice” series; the woman bent over from “Crazy Woman”; the Olympic Stadium in Berlin; racist drawings that disparage people for their body shape; and early aerial photographs that military pilots of the German Empire (1871–1918) shot over Palestine in 1917 during the First World War. In between, we see BRACHA’s parents walking the streets of pre-war Łódź before the ghetto was closed; BRACHA’s mother after arriving in Tel Aviv; a child’s doll.

BRACHA juxtaposes traces of personal memory with public documents of violence. Her art is a reminder that to end violence, we must first understand how deeply it is rooted in our culture.

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Sometimes a work can lie unfinished for thirty years before BRACHA resumes working on it. Some motifs fade into the background. Others remain and undergo transformations. The layers multiply. In 1992 BRACHA began painting with oil on canvas. While depth in painting is usually conveyed by the illusion of perspective, BRACHA has developed her own form of spatial depth. It consists of layers of memory and forgetting that she superimposes on paper or canvas—line by line, point by point. Each line, every point testifies to a process of healing.

BRACHA coined the term “self-fragilization”: by making oneself vulnerable, one can recognize the vulnerability of others and create space for shared feeling and action. “Art”, BRACHA says, “is the dimension where the sacred is possible, where our link to the holy can be reshaped without prior guidance.”