

# Being a Vessel

Lisa Meixner

I work with maiolica and slipware ceramics in a way where the act of making becomes a process of research and experimentation and a manifestation of my associative thinking.

In my ongoing project *Being a Vessel* I explore what it means to be influenced and inspired. The project is a dedication to the vase and the vessel as forms that have the ability to contain, hold and embody.

In each of the works I am inspired by a constellation of artists, architects, and designers such as Gae Aulenti, Eva Zeisel and Ray Eames. The works are rooted in my desire to carry their creative lives with me beyond exhibitions or publications. What started as personalized reminders of these figures has become an in-depth, evolving research into ideas about artistic ancestry.

Working with clay can be a performative process between maker and material. Other works of my *Being a Vessel* project such as *Taking a deep breath in* and *Big Embrace* focus on the physicality of the making process. They are hand-built with coils, a technique where you have to constantly circle around the piece and embrace it to reach all the parts – a slow, intense making process between body, material and form. The forms of these ceramics refer to historical vases who are shaped as if they had just taken a deep breath in, to look as full and round as possible, but at the same time this dynamic movement of breathing remains visible.

*Vase for Trisha Brown, 2022 glazed earthenware 22 cm x 12 cm*







**Dragonvase, 2023**  
Glazed earthenware. 57 cm x 25 cm











*Studies of historical ceramics V&A Museum London, 2024*





*Big Embrace, 2024*

Glazed Earthenware. 56 cm x 24 cm





*Videostill of Performance for „Dancing the Ubagu“, 2015*







*Taking a deep breath in, 2023*  
Glazed earthenware. 35,5 cm x 30,5cm





*Coiled Vase Work in Progress 2025*  
Earthenware 44 cm x 21 cm





*Colour Studies, 2023*





*Vase for Eva Zeisel, 2022*

Glazed earthenware, 22 cm x 14 cm









*Vase for Harriet Backer, 2025*

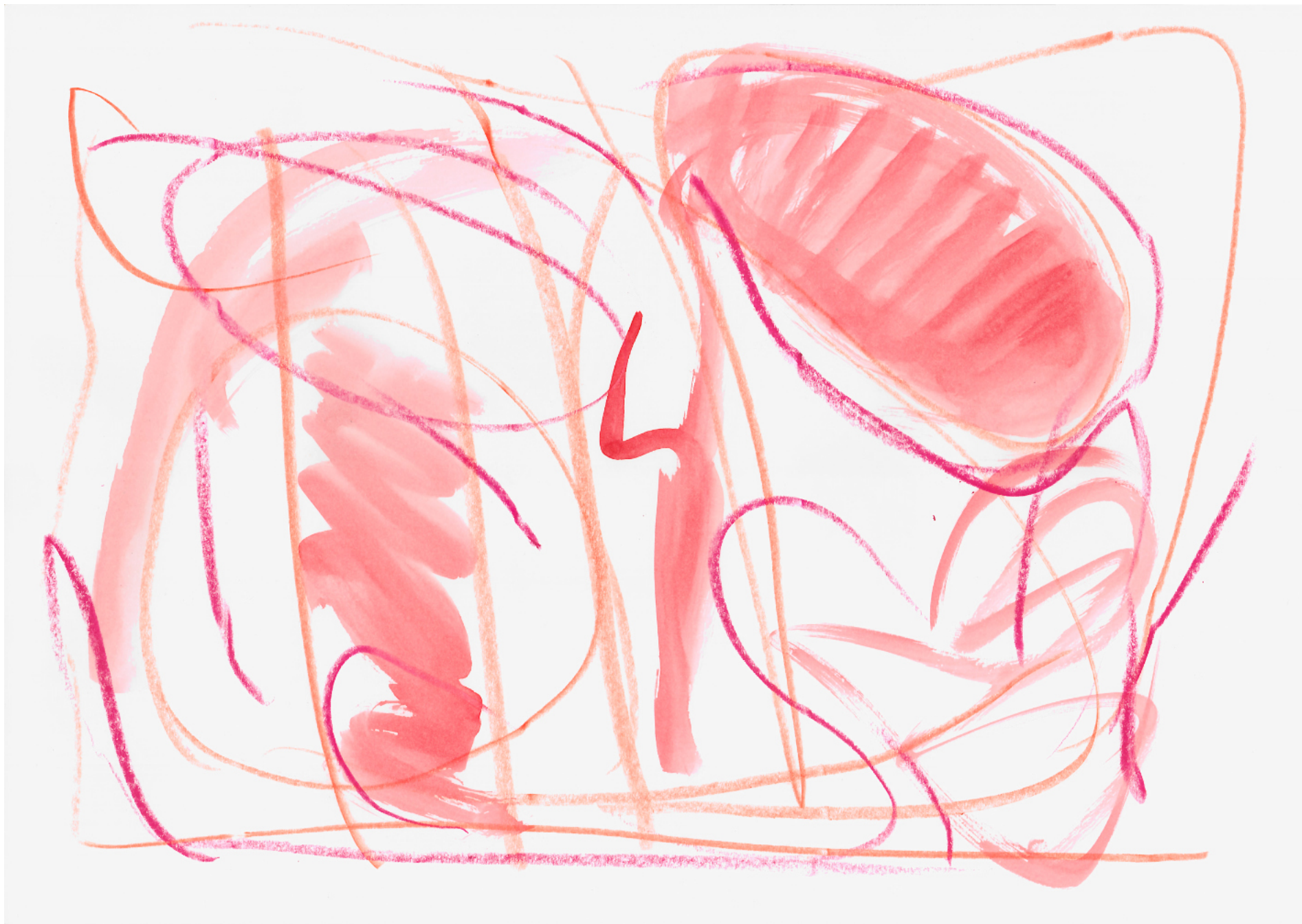
Glazed Earthenware. 33 cm x 33 cm





***Vase for Ray Eames, 2022***  
Glazed earthenware, 26 cm x 25 cm





*Drawing for Ray Eames, 2022, pastels and water colour on paper 29,7 cm x 42 cm*





*Studies for „Female Figure with Child“, 2023*



*Female Figure with Child (After Nanni di  
Bartolo, Enthroned Virgin and Child), 2023*

Glazed Earthenware. 45 cm x 20 cm x 22 cm







*Vase for Miriam Schapiro, 2017*  
Glazed earthenware. 35,5 cm x 30,5cm



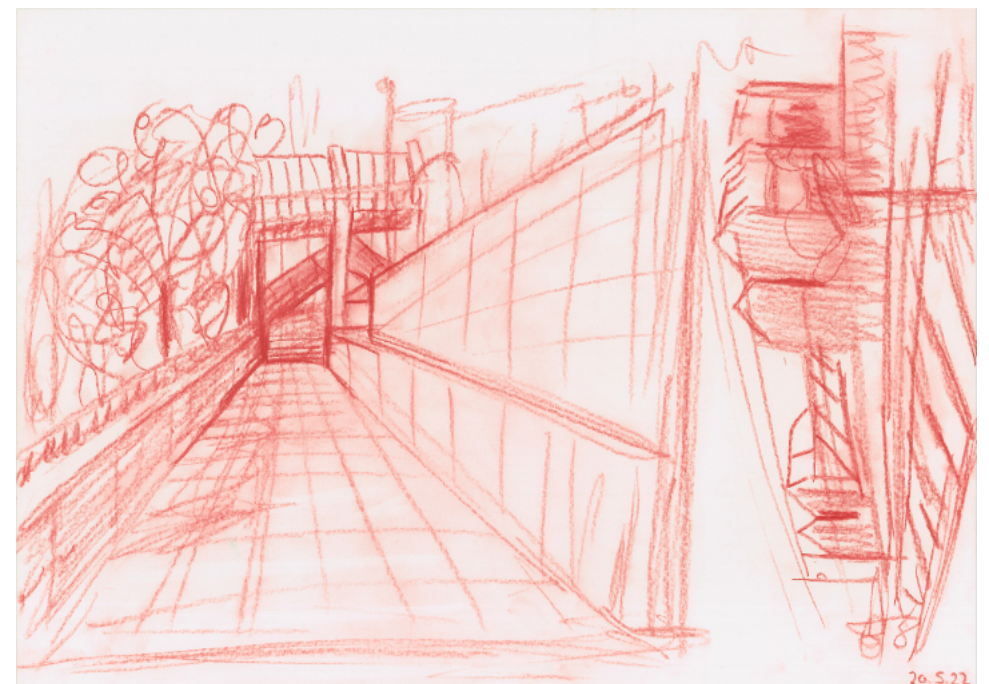
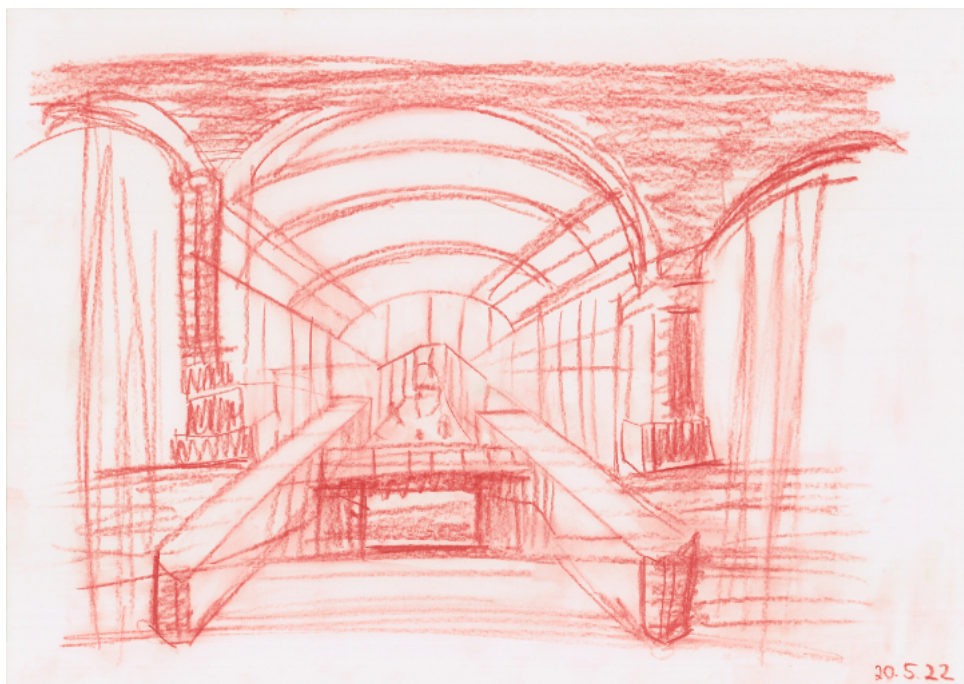
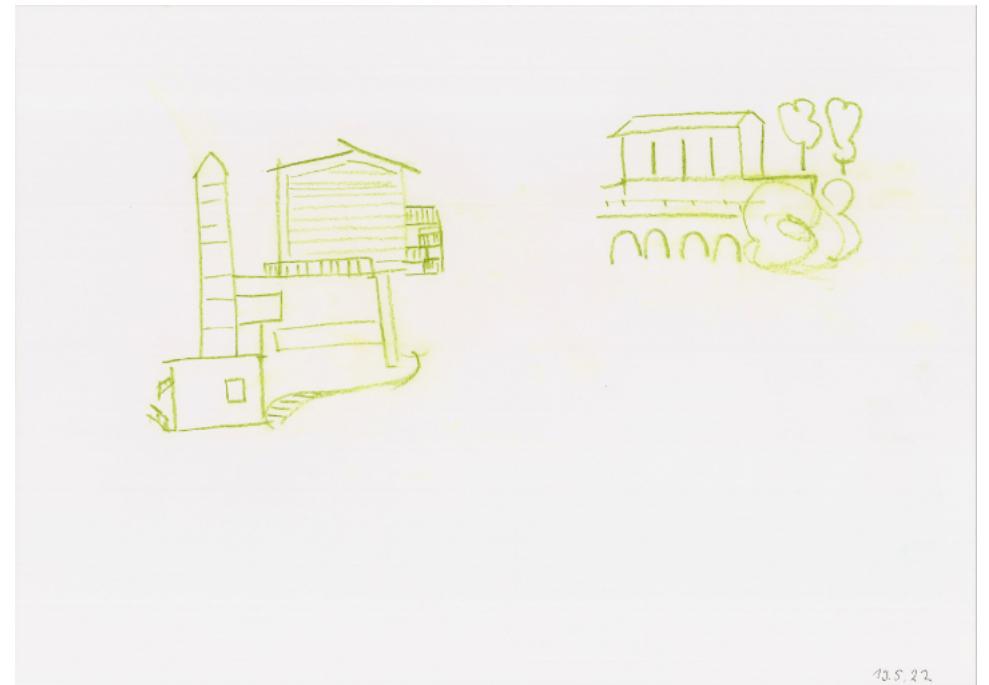
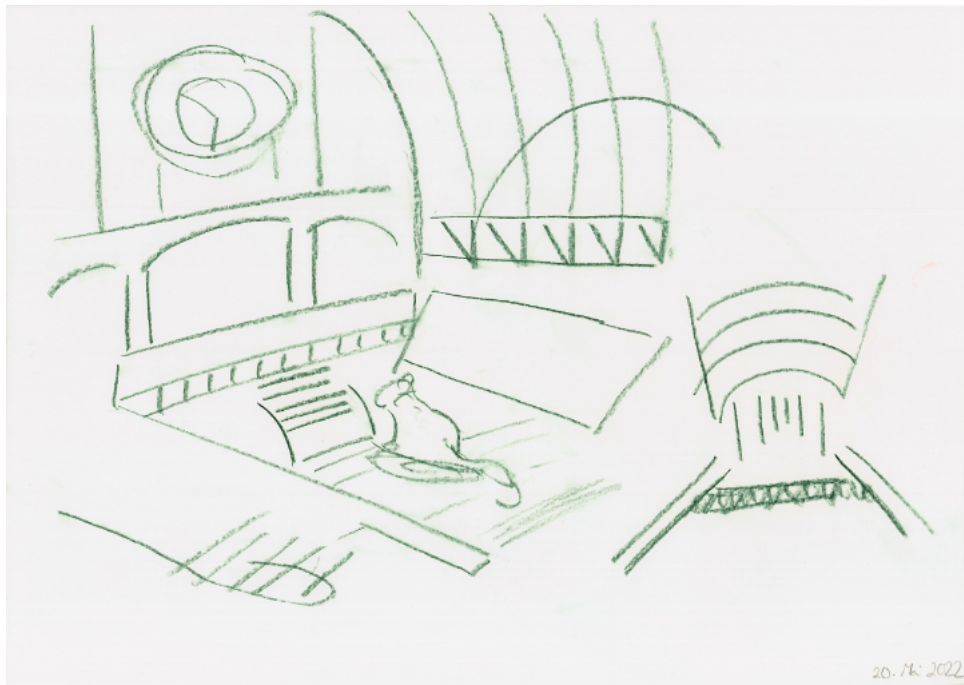
*Study of terracotta sculpture, 2025*  
*(The Virgin Mary Nursing the Christ Child, France 1650) pencil on paper, 21 cm x 29 cm*





**Vase for Gae Aulenti, 2022**  
Glazed earthenware, 33 cm x 24 cm



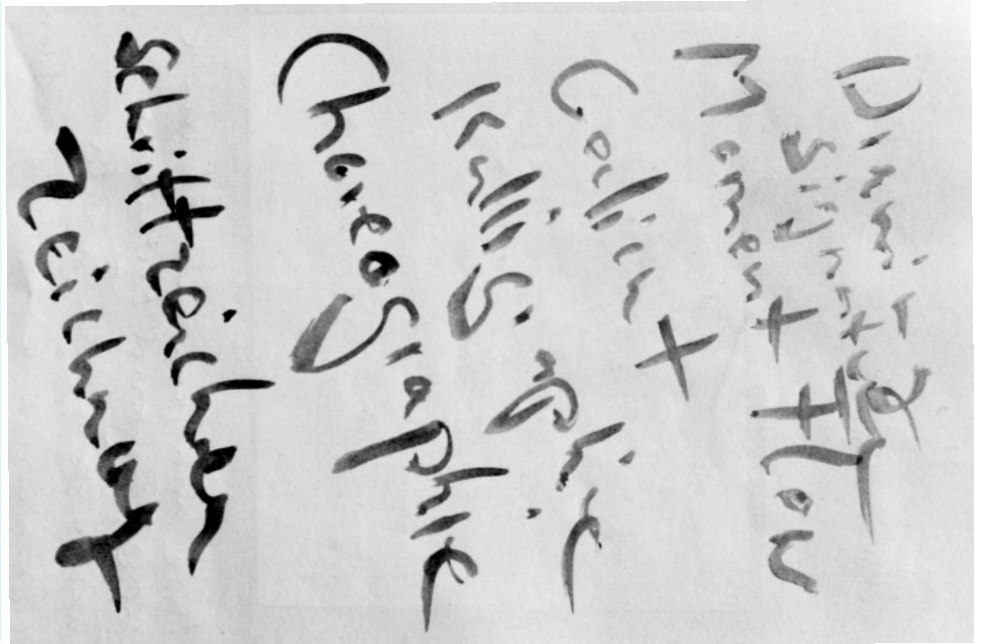






*Vase for Koloman Moser, 2021*  
Glazed earthenware. 24 cm x 22 cm





Collage for Transferprints, 2024





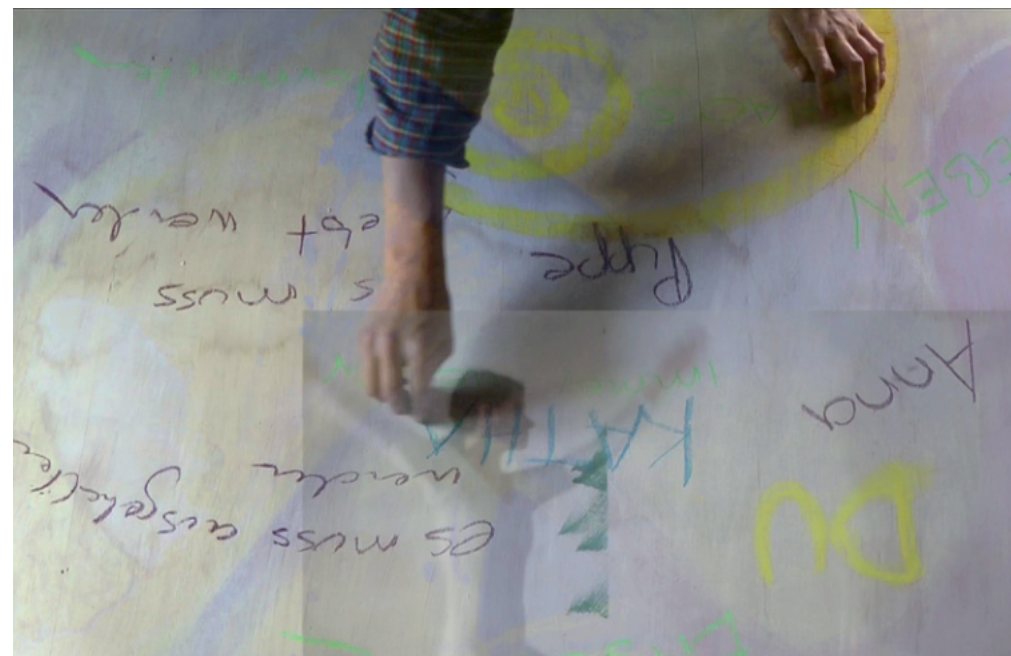
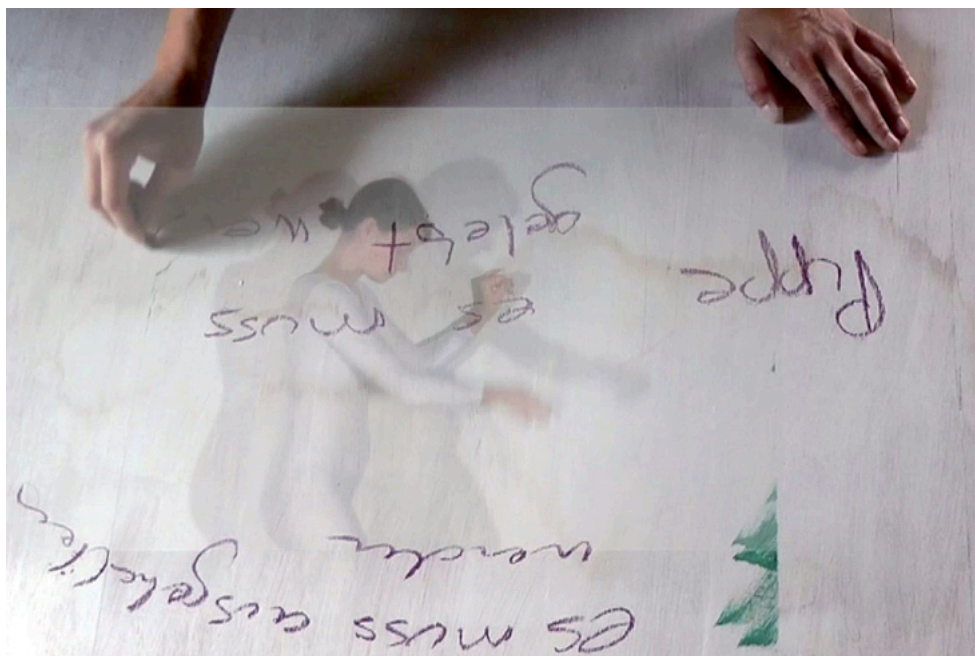
*Studies of historical ceramics V&A Museum London, 2024*



*Vase for Ida Kerkovius, 2020*  
Glazed earthenware. 18 cm x 17 cm







Anna, 2015  
5 mins video

Link to video: <https://vimeo.com/119744995> password: dintubagu



### 1) Vase for Trisha Brown, 2022

Glazed earthenware. 22 cm x 12 cm

*Vase for Trisha Brown* is a tribute to American choreographer and dancer Trisha Brown (1936 – 2017). I encountered her work for the first time in 2007 at the documenta 12 where her dance performances „Floor of the forest“ and „Accumulation“ were presented in the together with her graphic and video work. This was a key moment for me to understand the connection between drawing and dancing: choreography is the notation of body movements and making a drawing can be like a dance on paper.

### 2) Dragonvase, 2023

Glazed earthenware. 57 cm x 25 cm

### 3) Big Embrace, 2024

Glazed Earthenware. 56 cm x 24 cm

I made *Big Embrace* after drawings of large Chinese vases from the ceramic collection at the V&A London. I used coils to hand-build this vase. When you work with this technique on a larger vessel you have to constantly circle around the piece and embrace it to reach all the parts. It is a slow, intense physical making process between body, material and form.

### 4) Taking a deep breath in, 2023

Glazed earthenware. 35,5 cm x 30,5cm

*Taking a deep breath in* is inspired by my studies of historical vases. Some of them are shaped as if they had just taken a deep breath in, to look as full and round as possible, but at the same time this dynamic movement of breathing remains visible.

### 5) Coiled Vase, Work in Progress, 2025

Glazed earthenware. 44 cm x 21 cm

### 6) Vase for Eva Zeisel, 2022

Glazed earthenware. 22 cm x 14 cm

An homage to potter and designer Eva Striker Zeisel (1906 – 2011)

### 7) Vase for Harriet Backer, 2025

Glazed earthenware. 33 cm x 33 cm

I went almost by accident into the exhibition of Harriet Backer at the Musée d'Orsay. Her paintings had such a strong and light filled presence and stood out amongst the other works of the collection. They seemed more modern, more fresh, almost timeless. Harriet Backer had to choose a different perspective than her male contemporaries: more intimate scenes, interiors, women at work, women playing music. Her view of these women is different and calm. They are not just her models. She is sharing the space with them immersing herself into the vivid and light filled rooms.

### 8) Vase for Ray Eames, 2022

Glazed earthenware. 26 cm x 25 cm

### 9) Female figure with child, 2023

Glazed Earthenware. 45 cm × 20 cm x 22 cm

### 10) Vase for Miriam Schapiro, 2017

Glazed earthenware. 22 cm x 16 cm

Vase for Miriam Schapiro is a tribute to artist Miriam Schapiro (1923 - 2015). Starting as a painter she worked in a very experimental way using textiles and collage and she became a leading figure of feminist art in the 1970ties. Always in search for her „legitimate artistic ancestry“ Miriam Schapiro made also many homages or as she called them „collaborations“ with artists from the past.



### **11) Vase for Gae Aulenti, 2022**

Glazed earthenware. 33 cm x 24 cm

*Vase for Gae Aulenti* is a tribute to Italian architect Gae Aulenti (1927 – 2012). When I was researching for this piece I realized that years ago I had already visited some of her buildings – the train station Santa Maria Novella in Florence, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris or the Museo Orientale in Genova – without knowing that they had been built by an female architect. I reference these buildings with a series of drawings, which I have applied as ceramic transfer prints onto the vase.

### **12) Vase for Koloman Moser, 2021**

Glazed earthenware. 24 cm x 22 cm

Vase for Koloman Moser is a tribute to artist and designer Koloman Moser (1868 – 1918). It reflects the importance of craft and practical training for artists and designers through imprinted texts and images. The starting point for this work was an exhibition about Koloman Moser at the Museum of Applied Arts in Vienna, that showed how around 1900 a new focus on practical training for students at the Viennese Arts and Crafts School produced some of the most innovative new works in furniture, textile and ceramic. One of the first workshops that was established at the school after Koloman Moser and Josef Hoffmann became professors was a pottery studio.

### **13) Vase for Ida Kerkovius, 2020**

Glazed earthenware. 18 cm x 17 cm

Ida Kerkovius (1879 - 1970) lived and worked for over half a century in my hometown Stuttgart. Although I was interested in art as a teenager I encountered her work only a couple of years ago, when some of her painting were shown at Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. I was impressed by her gouache and pastel paintings and her colourful tapestries. Her decision to become a professional artist at a time when at many art schools women were not even allowed to enroll inspired me. Many of her works

were destroyed during first and second world war, but she kept working as a artist until she was over 90 years old.

### **14) Anna, 2015**

5 mins video

Anna is an homage to German artist Anna Oppermann (1940 - 1993) combining dance, performance, painting and collage. I saw Anna Oppermann's large scale installations for the first time in 2007 at the Generali Foundation in Vienna. It was her first solo show in Austria, curated by Ute Vorkoeper. I was impressed by her overwhelmingly large and detailed ENSEMBLES of hundreds of notes, drawings, objects and photographs visualizing an endless associative, radial thinking process. Seeing her work at a time when I was a student and just finding my visual language was an important confirmation to follow my own way of thinking and making art. The initial piece of Being a Vessel was the painting Anna – Gelb-Blau. From this painting I developed a coreography translating it into dance movements. The final video is a collage of dance, painting, text and images.