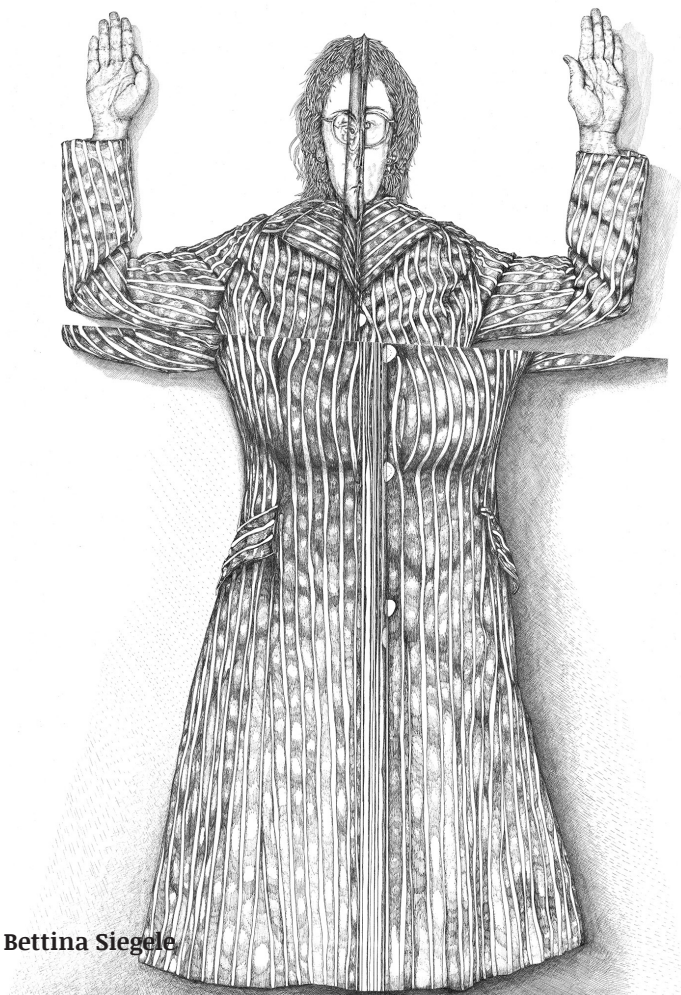


● neue
galerie

WORKING CLASS DAUGHTER
Miriam Bajtala

28.02.–03.05.2025



curatorial support: Bettina Siegle

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• **neue
galerie**

Rennweg 1, Großes Tor, Hofburg, Innsbruck
Tel. +43 512 57 81 54, office@kuveti.at, kuveti.at
Mi–Fr 12.00–17.00 | Sa 11.00–15.00

Working Class Daughter

Miriam Bajtala

Classism and possibilities of representing chronological developments are topics that artist **Miriam Bajtala** has been working on intensely for several years. She has been linking her personal history and collective memory since 2020, addressing the reproduction of inequalities, power relations, and strategies of self-empowerment in a poetic way by using various forms of speech and media.

Visitors Text

The exhibition **WORKING CLASS DAUGHTER** borrows its title from the book *Working Class Daughters* published by artists Karolina Dreit, Kristina Dreit and Selina Lampe in 2024. In this work they address, among other things, the multi-temporality and diverse realities of class, as well as taking a closer look at the concept of class and classism in the context of art and culture: “(...) the neoliberal approach, forcing precarious working and living conditions [is] also an issue in the field of art and cultural production. The neoliberal logic of self-marketing, insecurity, solitude and isolation characterises work in the field of art and culture just as much as work in the service sector or informal and undocumented sectors.”¹ As studies show, the number of students from non-academic households at art universities is disproportionately low.²

¹ Karolina Dreit et al., *Working Class Daughters: Über Klasse sprechen* (Wien Berlin: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2024), p. 19.

² Ruth Sonderegger, „Multiple Klass(e)ifizierungen in der (kunst-) universitären Bildung. Plädoyer für eine Auflockerung“, in *Klassen Sehen: Soziale Konflikte und ihre Szenarien*, ed. by Drehli Robnik (Münster: Unrast, 2021), p. 37.

Visitors Text

In the video installation ***Becoming Outline*** [No. 4], a key role is played by her own body and by spaces. Based on reconstructions of the 18 ground plans of housing in which she has lived [No. 3], Bajtala approaches their spaces and appropriation. The narrative begins with the artist's childhood memories and the story of her escape at the age of 7, as well as the reality of her parents' lives as refugees in Austria. These are memories of expectations and the sense of needing to conform - to be well-behaved, not to stand out, to be a 'good foreigner', to act subordinate - it is about the 'eyes of the others' [No. 2]. By means of this narrative style and locating the film in the present, the boundaries between present and past dissolve in *Becoming Outline*.

Using the drawings of the work cycle ***SCHWERE ARBEIT*** [No. 1 and Nos. 6-10], Bajtala builds another bridge between different realities, past and present. In her drawings, she deals with her mother's hands and thus with the latter's body memory as depicted in the video ***Im Akkord*** [No. 5]. The film shows how her mother, or rather her mother's body, remembers the sequence of movements and gestures of piecework in an optics factory and reproduces them with a specific rhythm. The mother's factory work is set in relation to her daughter's work. The title of the cycle *SCHWERE ARBEIT* thematises artistic work as wage labour.

This aspect is best evident in ***Arbeitszeitprotokoll*** [No. 9], which depicts the hours worked on the drawings created for the exhibition at the Neue Galerie. These drawings refer to texts and pop songs about the subject of class, which are important references in Bajtala's artistic practice.

The title *Die feinen Unterschiede* [No. 6], for example, alludes to Pierre Bourdieu, *If you want my future, forget my past* [No. 8] to the Spice Girls, and *Working Class Daughter (refuse to surrender)* [No. 7] to the title of the exhibition and so to the book mentioned initially, as well as to her own history of origin, whereby the additional phrase “*refuse to surrender*” – highlights the effort behind a “*change in milieu*”³ as “*you can tell climbers are climbing*”⁴.

The drawing *Fragebogen* [No.10] invites us to explore our own class affiliation. It is a questionnaire from the *Practical Handbook of Social Justice and Diversity*, in which one’s own background and experiences relating to class can be compared and scrutinised along with current attitudes and perceptions. This was the starting point for the cycle of *SCHWERE ARBEIT*. At the exhibition, visitors have an opportunity to fill in a questionnaire and help with research for a work in progress by Miriam Bajtala.

In the final room of the Neue Galerie, the three photographs in the series *Familie (I)* [No. 11] illustrate what happens when a person is reduced to their (economic or social) background. In the photographs of the artist’s family members, “*who adopt stereotypical role models in their ‘new homeland’ and fulfil the landscapes of longing for a ‘better West’ in their own homes*”⁵, the identity of those portrayed is concealed behind a white bed sheet.

³ Cf. Daniela Dröscher, *Zeige deine Klasse: Die Geschichte meiner sozialen Herkunft* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2023).

⁴ Ilija Matusko, *Verdunstung in der Randzone* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2023), p.11.

⁵ Bajtala, *Körper meiner Arbeit*, p. 131.

Visitors Text

Consequently, the living rooms and bedrooms depicted in the background only permit us to conjecture about the people and speculate about their origins, identity and assimilation.

Landscapes of longing also comprise part of the video work *Erste Landschaften #Mirka* [No. 12], in which Bajtala explores the potential and diverse possibilities of fictional and documentary narratives. In seven parts, in loose fragments, a narrator explores the essence of memories. While remembering, she sees no images, hears no sounds, feels no textures and smells no odours, even though memories consist of images, textures, odours and sounds. The fact that memory can be both physical and spatial is also visualised in the two other video works in the exhibition. Remembering becomes a method, thus resisting the “*history-less space of neoliberal self-realisation*”⁶.

For a long time, class was considered a thing of the past. It is only since the publication of Didier Eribon’s *Returning to Reims* in 2009 that the question of class, and with it the issue of social participation, again became part of a wider discourse. In her solo exhibition *WORKING CLASS DAUGHTER*, Miriam Bajtala attempts to reconceive the question of class on a number of different levels.

Bettina Siegele

⁶ Karolina Dreit et al., *Working Class Daughters*, p. 13.

Literature Recommendation

Literature Recommendation

Altieri, Riccardo, und Bernd Hüttner, Hrsg. *Klassismus und Wissenschaft: Erfahrungsberichte und Bewältigungsstrategien*. Reihe Hochschule, Band 13. Marburg: BdWi-Verlag, Verlag des Bundes demokratischer Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler (BdWi), 2020.

Bajtala, Miriam. *Körper meiner Arbeit*. Salzburg: Fotohof Edition, 2024.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Die feinen Unterschiede: Kritik der gesellschaftlichen Urteilskraft*. Übersetzt von Bernd Schwibs und Achim Russer. 29. Auflage. Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft 658. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2023.

Czollek, Leah Carola, Gudrun Perko, Corinne Kaszner, und Max Czollek. *Praxishandbuch Social Justice und Diversity: Theorien, Training, Methoden, Übungen*. 2., Vollständig überarbeitete und Erweiterte Auflage. Pädagogisches Training. Weinheim Basel: Beltz Juventa, 2019.

Dreit, Karolina, Kristina Dreit, Selina Lampe, und Ruth Sonderegger. *Working class daughters: Über Klasse sprechen*. Wien Berlin: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2024.

Dröscher, Daniela. *Zeige deine Klasse: Die Geschichte meiner sozialen Herkunft*. 3. Auflage. Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 2023.

Eribon, Didier. *Rückkehr nach Reims*. Übersetzt von Tobias Haberkorn. 3. Auflage. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2023.

Ernaux, Annie. *Die Jahre*. Übersetzt von Sonja Finck und Stephan Kleine. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2017.

—. *Die Scham*. Übersetzt von Sonja Finck. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2021.

—. *Eine Frau*. Übersetzt von Sonja Finck. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2019.

**Literature
Recommendation**

hooks, bell. *Die Bedeutung von Klasse: warum die Verhältnisse nicht auf Rassismus und Sexismus zu reduzieren sind*. Übersetzt von Jessica Agoku. Münster: Unrast, 2020.

Kastner, Jens. „Wohnen Und Gewöhnen. Zur Kulturellen Einrichtung Am Beispiel Zweier Arbeiten von Miriam Bajtala“. In *Körper meiner Arbeit*, von Miriam Bajtala, 134–40. Salzburg: Fotohof Edition, 2024.

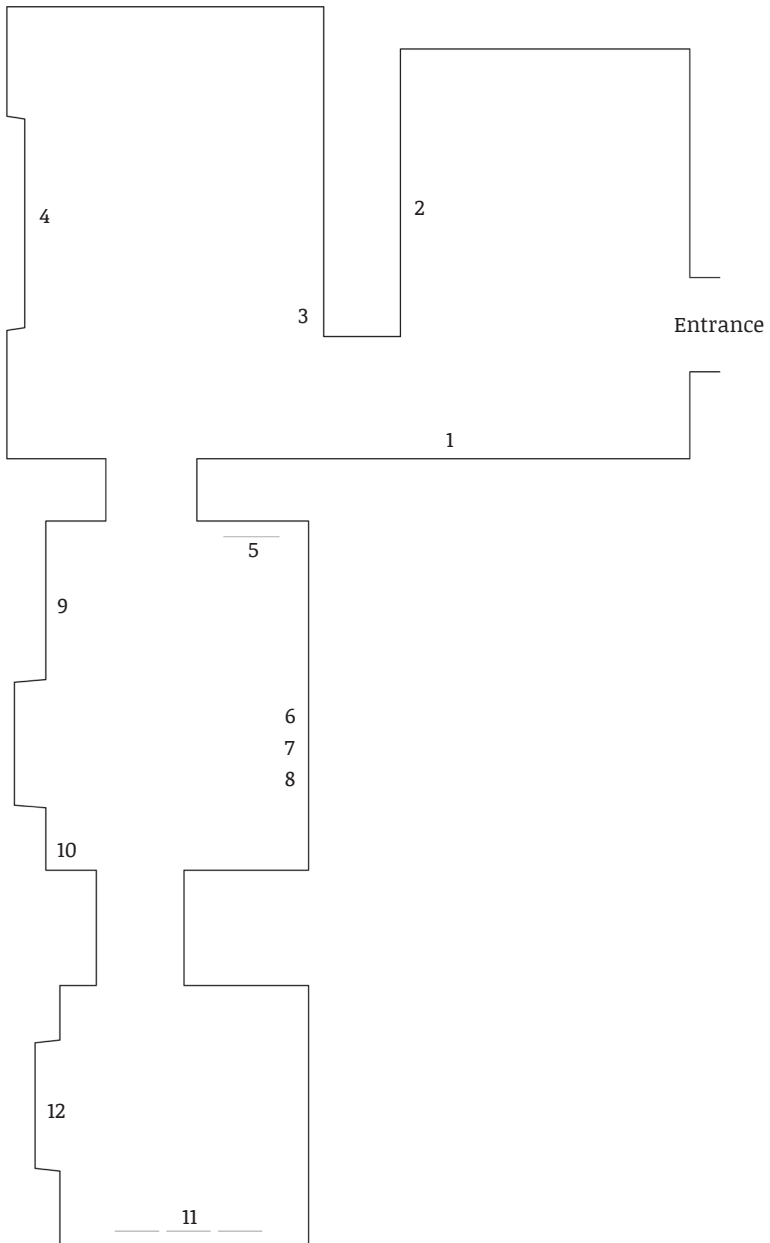
Kindler, Jean-Philippe. *Scheiß auf Selflove, gib mir Klassenkampf: eine neue Kapitalismuskritik*. rororo. Hamburg: Rowolth Verlag, 2023.

Matusko, Ilija. *Verdunstung in der Randzone*. Erste Auflage, Originalausgabe. edition suhrkamp 2810. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2023.

Mixa, Elisabeth, Sarah Miriam Pritz, Markus Tumeltshammer, und Monica Greco, Hrsg. *Un-Wohl-Gefühle: eine Kulturanalyse gegenwärtiger Befindlichkeiten*. Edition Kulturwissenschaft, Band 39. Bielefeld: transcript, 2016.

Robnik, Drehli, Hrsg. *Klassen Sehen: Soziale Konflikte und ihre Szenarien*. 1. Auflage. Münster: Unrast, 2021.

Slanar, Claudia. „Riss-Raum-Haus-Heim: Ein Streifzug Durch Einige Videoarbeiten von Miriam Bajtala“. In *Körper Meiner Arbeit*, von Miriam Bajtala, 134–40. Salzburg: Fotohof Edition, 2024.



List of Works

- List of Works**
- 1 *Bread Face*, drawing, framed, 50 x 70 cm,
from work cycle *SCHWERE ARBEIT*, 2025
 - 2 *The Eyes of the Others*, photography laminated on
aluminum, framed, 120 x 80 cm, 2023
 - 3 *Mother Model*, paper collage, (18 rooms in 1:25), framed,
54 x 43,5 cm, 2020
 - 4 *Becoming Outline*, video installation,
double video projection, 45 min., 2024
 - 5 *Work by the piece*, video, 10 min., 2019
 - 6 *The subtle differences*, drawing, framed, 70 x 100 cm
from work cycle *SCHWERE ARBEIT*, 2025
 - 7 *Working Class Daughter*, drawing, framed, 70 x 100 cm
from work cycle *SCHWERE ARBEIT*, 2025
 - 8 *If you want my future, forget my past*, drawing, framed,
70 x 100 cm, from work cycle *SCHWERE ARBEIT*, 2025
 - 9 *Working time log*, colored pencils on inkjet printing,
84,1 x 118,9 cm, from work cycle *SCHWERE ARBEIT*, 2025
 - 10 *Questionnaire*, drawing, framed, 50 x 70 cm
from work cycle *SCHWERE ARBEIT*, 2025
 - 11 *Family (1)*, 3 photographs laminated on aluminum,
81,5 x 125 cm each, framed, 2010
 - 12 *First Scenery #Mirka*, 2020, 19:12 min

Filmcredits

Becoming Outline

Filmcredits

Direction: Miriam Bajtala

Screenplay: Miriam Bajtala

Camera: Marianne Borowiec

Music: Tumido, Nitro Mahalia, Rashim

Sound: Andreas Hamza

Editing: Miriam Bajtala

Sound Design: David Almeida Ribeiro

Cast: Anna Kohler Frauenlob, Lotta Bösch, Matilda Lurf, Isabella Lurf, Jona Moro, Gwendolin Kovacic, Katrin Kröncke, Anat Stainberg, Thomas Hörl, u.a.

With the support of: Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport, Vienna Culture MA 7, Land Niederösterreich, Otto Mauer Fonds

Composition: Stefan Németh

Biography

Biography

Miriam Bajtala (born in Bratislava) lives, sleeps, and works mostly in Vienna. The themes of her artistic exploration revolve around perception, space, memory, (self-) empowerment, witnessing, representation and the power of poetry. Bajtala's works can be seen in exhibitions and at film festivals.

1998 - 2002: Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna;

2011 - 2018: University assistant and lecturer at the Experimental, Kunstuniversität Linz;

Scholarships and prizes: Gabriele Heidecker Prize (2021), Outstanding Artist Award for Fine Arts (2012), artist-in residencies in Rome, Krumlov, Paris and Los Angeles (Schindler Scholarship).

Solo (S)- and group exhibitions, Screenings (selection):

2024: *18 Räume*, Kunstraum Goethestrasse, Linz (S); **2023:** *In den Körpern*, Bildraum 01, Vienna (S); **2022:** *Oikos: 'the house'*, Wienwoche, Vienna; **2021:** *Kairos, Recall of Earth*, MIET, Thessaloniki, Greece; **2020:** *dichtegeschichte*, Kunstraum Weikendorf (S), Art in public space NÖ; **2019:** *Displacement*, Musrara Festival, Jerusalem (ISR); **2017:** *PERFORM*, Videonale 16, Kunstmuseum Bonn (DE); **2016:** *Welt des Sprechens*, Trans-Positionen-Festival Werkleitz, Halle (DE); 62. Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen (DE); Duisburger Filmwochen No.40 (DE); **2015:** *Das Als-ob-Prinzip*, Magazin 4, Bregenzer Kunstverein, Bregenz; **2013:** *In meinem Namen*, Secession, Vienna (EA); **2011:** *terms of decision*, Austrian Cultural Forum, London (GBR); **2010:** *Nichts als Gespenster*, Forum Stadtpark, Graz (S);

www.miriambajtala.org

Credits

Curatorial Support: Bettina Siegele

Credits

Exhibition Technique: Paul Irmann, Lukas Klestil

Production:: Cornelia Reinisch-Hofmann

Exhibition Booklet: Milena Thurner

Exhibition Booklet Editorial: Bettina Siegele & Cornelia Reinisch-Hofmann

Graphic design Booklet: Marille. Büro für Grafik und Text

WORKING CLASS DAUGHTER is part of the annual programme **Chronopolitical Explorations** curated by Bettina Siegele.

Jury for the programme 2025: Andrea Popelka (curator and researcher, Vienna), Johanna Tinzl (artist and board member of the Künstler*innen Vereinigung Tirol, until autumn 2024, Vienna) and Bettina Siegele (artistic and managing directress of the Künstler*innen Vereinigung Tirol, Kunstpavillon, Neue Galerie & Interessenvertretung).

Dates

Dates

Opening

Thursday 27.02.2025, 19.00

Welcome: Milena Meller (board member Künstler*innen
Vereinigung Tirol)

Introduction: Bettina Siegele

guided tour through the exhibition

12.03.2025 | 17.30

Artist Talk with Miriam Bajtala

16.04.2025 | 19.00

exhibition tour Art & Coffee

03.05.2025 | 11.30

Current information on the events and outreach in the realm
of the exhibition can be found on our website:

www.kuveti.at

Link to the digital version of the **exhibition booklet** and the **curatorial text** as an **audiobook**:

<https://www.kuveti.at/en/exhibition/working-class-daughter/>