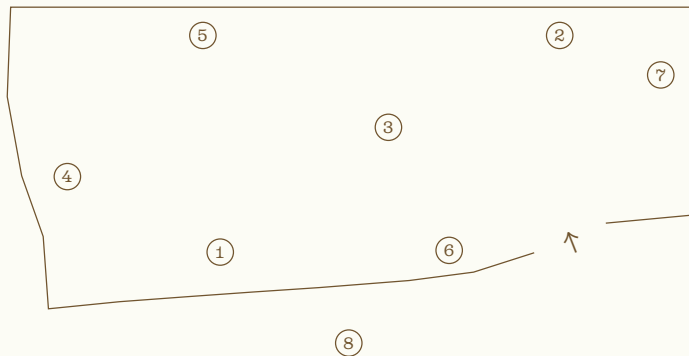


ZUZEUM

COLLECTIVE
MEMORY IS
EVERYTHING
I DON'T
REMEMBER:
MOMENTS WE
SHARE

Ieva Balode, Vika Eksta,
Ieva Kraule-Kūna, Liene Pavlovskā,
Diāna Tamane, Krista Vindberga, Elīna Vītola

english



① Ieva Balode
Remains
2026

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Aerobic Endurance
ongoing

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Collective Memory Is Everything I Don't Remember

The *Collective Memory Is Everything I Don't Remember* project of Diana Kotmel Knēžīnková maps the art practice of Latvian millennial women artists whose work, visual language, and communication strategies are influenced by or directly stem from the phenomenon of collective memory. At the same time, the project also deals with situations when collective and individual memory intertwine, influence, and co-constitute each other.

The project has four phases: a solo exhibition of Elīna Vitola in Ústí nad Labem at the Emil Filla Gallery in September 2025, a collective exhibition of the seven researched artists (Ieva Balode, Vika Eksta, Ieva Kraule-Kūna, Liene Pavlovskā, Diāna Tamane, Krista Vindberga, Elīna Vitola) in Prague at the H40 space in spring 2026 and in Riga at the Zuzeum Art Museum in autumn 2026, and a bilingual monograph, published at the beginning of the Riga exhibition.

Follow the project on collectivememoryis.com or its social media [@collective_memory_is](https://www.instagram.com/collective_memory_is/).



How does collective memory shape our personal recollections? How is it intertwined with our identity? And why is it important to ask what we – as individuals and as a society – choose to remember? This exhibition project presents works by seven Latvian women artists of the millennial generation whose practices engage with collective memory and explore questions of identity and personal remembrance.

The generation to which these artists belong is closely defined by the particular time and place in which they have lived and worked. They were born in Latvia under Soviet occupation and were still of preschool age when the country restored its independence and the Soviet Union ceased to exist. By the time they reached their late teens, Latvia had joined the European Union, bringing profound social, economic and cultural change and accelerating the transition towards a new technological era. During the formative decades of their lives, the artists witnessed fundamental transformations that affected both society and their immediate personal environments.



Through their families and the memories passed down by older generations, the artists remain closely connected to the realities of the twentieth century – a period shaped in Latvia by successive occupations, Soviet totalitarian rule, political repression and the systematic disruption of historical memory and identity. Another defining feature of their generation is the transition from the analogue era to the digital and online age, accompanied by the emergence of globalised forms of communication through which events shaping the world can be witnessed and discussed in real time.

The exhibition features works by Ieva Balode, Vika Eksta, Ieva Kraule-Kūna, Liene Pavlovskā, Diāna Tamane, Krista Vindberga and Elīna Vītola. Their practices offer diverse approaches to collective and personal memory, as well as to questions of identity. Although the exhibition encompasses a wide range of themes, techniques and materials, and each artist's practice is distinctly individual, numerous connections emerge between the works.

Ieva Balode examines structures inherited from the past and places that retain the memory of earlier ideologies. She considers not only their physical presence but also their significance amid changing paradigms and, above all, the passage of time.

Liene Pavlovskā confronts us with the realities of homes affected by addiction. By reckoning with painful situations and bringing to light (arte)facts that may have been intended for oblivion, she exposes wounds within society while also seeking ways to heal them.

Elīna Vītola focuses on belonging, conformity and official systems of record-keeping. She explores how earlier systems shaped entire generations and influenced the course of individual lives. At the same time, she examines the persistence of archival records which, although they place each of us on the map of history and attest to our existence, often remain opaque and difficult to interpret.



The intersection of personal experience and collective memory is also evident in Vika Eksta's ongoing series documenting the daily lives and training of young people who have recently joined Latvia's State Defence Service. Diāna Tamane and Krista Vindberga examine the passage of time through the lens of family relationships. Tamane's series traces the story of an immediate family, exploring relationships between its members and their attachment to the family home—a place where memories have become embedded in the physical structure itself. Vindberga approaches identity and family connections from a personal perspective. By commemorating a grandfather she never met, she also traces her own development over time, allowing past and present to become intertwined. Ieva Kraule-Kūna gives material form to personal experience by transforming childhood memories into objects to be preserved and cared for, drawing attention to their instability and their gradual disappearance.

In terms of technique and material, the exhibition includes works employing analogue photography and film by Ieva Balode and Vika Eksta. Krista Vindberga and Diāna Tamane approach analogue photography from a more conceptual perspective. Liene Pavlovskā and Ieva Kraule-Kūna create object-based installations that give tangible form to experiences and memories encountered collectively within the exhibition space. Drawing and painting – although their presence may not be immediately apparent – are represented in the work of Elīna Vītola.

Personal and collective memory, like identity itself, resists fixed boundaries and rigid categories. Memory assumes many forms: it can be explored, confronted, preserved and shared. This is precisely what makes it so remarkable. An experience that begins as something deeply personal may eventually enter a shared reservoir of recollection, becoming part of what we call collective memory.

Diana Kotmel Kněžínková
curator



Ieva Balode is an artist, curator and film activist working with analogue photochemical film. She presents her work through multimedia installations, often incorporating projection and performance. In her works, she explores the fragility and uncertainty of analogue film, using it as a metaphor for the human psyche and its sensitivity and elusiveness. She is a founding member of the Baltic Analog Lab, an artistic collective providing a space and platform for analogue film production, research and education. Since 2017, she has been the director of the Process Experimental Film Festival in Riga.

Ieva Balode

① *Remains*

2026, 16 mm film loop incorporating archival material

Which places and memories from the past do we choose to remember and preserve? Some objects once held profound significance for the people who lived alongside them, yet today they are being deliberately removed from our shared memory.

The work reflects on the fragility of the ideologies, beliefs and structures of power that once formed part of our identity – ideas in which people placed their trust and for which they were willing to fight. It invites us to consider the symbols and beliefs that shape our lives today, yet may one day be rejected and removed by the generations that follow us.

The work combines found imagery with the artist's own footage documenting the dismantling of Soviet monuments, including the removal of the Soviet Victory Monument in Riga in 2022.

Ieva Balode





Vika Eksta works with autobiographical narratives and existential themes, as well as research into life in the Latvian countryside. In her long-term projects, she combines documentary approaches with fiction and fabrication. The medium she chooses depends on the specific project; her practice spans photography, video, performance for the camera and audio-visual archival research. Vika Eksta is the recipient of the ADC Young Guns Award, the FK Portfolio Award and the *Seeking the Latest in Photography!* Award at the first Riga Photography Biennial.

Vika Eksta

② *Aerobic Endurance*
ongoing, silver gelatin print
on fibre-based paper

Using black-and-white analogue photography, Vika Eksta has recently begun documenting the daily lives and training of young people entering Latvia's National Defence Service. She plans to follow the challenges they face throughout their eleven months of training, spending several days with them each month. The project is intended to culminate in a solo exhibition; the photographs presented here offer an initial glimpse of this ongoing work.

The intersection of personal and collective memory is a recurring theme in Eksta's practice. Her work demonstrates how visual language can bring to light the complex stories unfolding around us in everyday life. The artist often moves between detached observation and personal involvement, using the tension between these positions to place her subjects' everyday experiences within a broader social context. Her choice of medium, film-processing method, and mode of documentation all contribute to the work's final character and meaning.

The photographs in the exhibition were taken during aerobic endurance training – in simpler terms, cross-country running. A malfunction in the camera's film-advance mechanism caused several exposures to overlap, producing unexpected compositions that Eksta discovered only after developing the film. The resulting images evoke a sense of temporal suspension: they could seemingly belong to the 1930s as readily as to the 2020s. This ambiguity serves as a metaphor for the recurrence of major social events and the ways in which history continues to shape each successive generation.

The project is being developed as part of the Professional Doctoral Studies Programme at the Art Academy of Latvia.



Ieva Kraule-Kūna explores narrativity and evolution in her artistic practice. She creates multimedia sculptural objects and site-specific installations, which she accompanies with stories that bind the works together and reflect the themes she is currently examining. Her work draws on childhood memories, crafts and rituals, as well as stereotypes, weaving fictional narratives with personal experience. Her approach often addresses complex and layered themes, presented through familiar images and symbols that carry strong meanings and associations.

Ieva Kraule-Kūna

③ *Sniff It!*

2026, ceramic, plexiglas terrariums,
aquarium gravel

Childhood memories often survive only as glimpses of atmospheres, sensations or fragments of images. We can still feel them, even when we are unable to reconstruct or fully grasp them. Such memories lead lives of their own in our minds and hearts, changing as they encounter the experiences and knowledge we acquire over time. They shift and take on new forms, yet they continue to shape us, becoming part of who we are.

In this series, Kraule-Kūna revisits her childhood memories and brings them to life as “pets” inhabiting terrariums. She stores them, takes care of them, interacts with them and admires them. As they deserve to be treated as little treasures otherwise they might disappear into the darkness of oblivion. They would join other forgotten moments and memories that haven’t been treated with such respect. And that is definitely not wanted. They are in the end what makes her what she is today.

So remember to treasure your memories,
so they don’t fade away.

Ieva Kraule-Kūna

*A rotting carrot holds the smell
of ancient wisdom. Sniff it!
You travel to a place of the past.
You are a sorcerer.*

*Resurrect the flesh and bones of the deceased
for the sweet memories of childhood.
There is always candy
in Grandma’s shelving unit.
A hard candy without a wrapper in the pocket.
Sound of crunching sand between the teeth.
3 slugs in the same pocket.
Sugar and slime sprout a snake
without thought.
As a key found on the beach without a door.
A meaning is found only in retrospect.
Is it hiding under the rocks?
It’s a gamble. There is nothing.
Only dirt under fingernails.
It will grow a personality decades from now.
Only to sniff a carrot to travel to the past.*

Ieva Kraule-Kūna



Liene Pavlovskā is a visual artist whose practice is shaped by an ongoing dialogue with space. Her work is rooted in an interest in socio-economic structures, the collective expectations that arise from them, and the ways in which they shape how people live together. She creates complex, multimedia and immersive installations, frequently placing the viewer in the dual role of spectator and explorer. Liene Pavlovskā is also the author of the architectural and scenographic designs of various exhibition projects and a co-founder of the artist-run Part Time Gallery in Riga, Latvia.

④ *Things He Took Away*

2026, collage made from a photo album
and cardboard sheets dating from the 1980s,
fabric scraps from the 2000s,
watercolour; table

An album is a repository of personal history – an archive of artefacts, experiences, joys and sorrows. Yet to an unfamiliar observer, much of what it contains remains difficult to decipher. Through this album, Pavlovskā evokes the realities of life in the 2000s, still shaped by the remnants of the Soviet era and the turbulence of the 1990s, and revisits situations that were meant – or perhaps expected – to be forgotten.

The artist brings together tangible carriers of memory: a cover made from fabric remnants dating directly from the 2000s and original pages taken from old albums she collected. Within the object, watercolour drawings appear as fragments of memory. Looking into the album through a tear – a “wound” in the paper – resembles opening an envelope containing a letter its recipient never read. The sender’s secret remains undisclosed:

although parts of the text become visible, they reveal only fragments of a story preserved across years of correspondence.

These watercolour memories emerge from the experience of addiction. They offer fleeting images of household appliances that disappeared, leaving only empty spaces behind – a trauma of memory that resurfaces in flashes from the past. The work creates an opportunity to confront painful experiences, both individually and collectively. It urges us not to let memories decay, but to open them and allow them to breathe.

The work developed from a project created for Pavlovskā’s solo exhibition *Smouldering Flashes*, curated by Edd Schouten at TUR Gallery in Riga in 2025. Materials from that exhibition were later reworked into the present album-object, which was shown in the first instalment of the exhibition project *Collective Memory Is Everything I Don’t Remember: Memories That Are Not Our Own* in Prague in 2026. Special thanks to Oskars Pavlovskis.



Diāna Tamane works primarily with photography and video, alongside drawing, text, and installation. She finds inspiration in family albums and love letters, in femininity and changing bodies, in women's stories, and in moments of silence. Tamane explores different notions of home—as a place, a person, a body, and a feeling—and considers how home can be felt, remembered, and imagined. She also examines our relationship with time and alternative temporalities and is more interested in slow processes and movements rather than accelerated and hurried ones. By observing her subjects over long periods of time, she allows life to unfold and creates a poetic space in which acceptance and forgiveness become possible.

Diāna Tamane

⑤ *Yours Sincerely*
2024, inkjet print

'Yours Sincerely' follows S., a Belgian art collector, and his family home.

I arrived at his house for the first time in September 2023. I walked through the rooms. I looked through the family albums.

A year later, I returned with the idea of making a project.

S. told me that if his mother walked in now, she would find the house exactly as she had left it.

His mother died in 2015, aged 94. She raised her children alone after her husband died suddenly, aged 40. She never remarried. Her children remained close to her. Neither married or had children of their own.

I became interested in the idea of a house kept unchanged, the photographs and objects that remained in it, and the stories attached to them.

The project brings together photographs of the house - its surfaces, walls, furniture and details - with photographs from the family albums.



Krista Vindberga combines static and moving images in her artistic practice. She works across multiple media, including painting, drawing, photography and video, selecting each medium with precision to activate its specific qualities and potential. Central themes in her work are memory and time, which is why she frequently engages with photographic archives. Vindberga is also a set and costume designer, a role that complements the multidisciplinary nature and layered narratives of her artistic practice.

Krista Vindberga

⑥ *Vladislavs Golikovs*
2014–2026, video

The series explores the artist's relationship with her grandfather, who died nine years before she was born and whom she therefore never met. Their closeness exists solely through an intimate family bond. The work centres on a passport photograph of Vladislavs taken when he was twenty-nine years old. Each year for the past twelve years, Vindberga commemorates and expands this keepsake by creating twenty-nine self-portraits.

The images are subsequently altered so that, like Vladislavs's photograph, they acquire traces of affectionate handling and the marks of age – much as the human body gradually accumulates wrinkles over time. Krista Vindberga's passport photographs thus become enduring records of her existence and artefacts that preserve her youth “forever”. At the same time, they form part of the series' continuing evolution and the artist's own process of personal transformation. While a photograph can be deliberately altered, the artist's face changes according to a different logic, gradually revealing a truth that only the passage of time can disclose.

Krista Vindberga





Elina's conceptual work features expressive painting, complex objects, and site-specific projects inspired by personal stories. Elina Vitola works with the medium of painting as a performative element, often combining this technique with ready-made objects or already existing everyday backdrops, which she imbues with new meaning by emphasizing their visibility. Within the framework of her themes, she addresses family history and related topics, which she examines in depth. Through her work, she comes to terms with the information she uncovers, further processing and contextualising it.

Elina Vitola

⑦ *Sweet Deal*

2026, sugar icing on cardboard

Made from edible sugar icing traditionally used to decorate cakes and biscuits, the drawing depicts rows of apples. Their arrangement resembles data entered into the cells of a table or organised into a list. Although the resulting pattern appears abstract and difficult to decipher, it suggests the precise information contained in an official document.

Imagine encountering such a document in a government office or an archive. It contains information you are eager to understand or perhaps collect for future use, yet you have no idea how to interpret it. What lies before you appears to be little more than incomprehensible marks on paper. Learning to read these records requires time, patience and, above all, strong nerves.

From birth until death – and sometimes even afterwards – our lives are continuously documented in this way. We all become part of a system designed to collect data and preserve selected information about human lives. At some point, however, these records risk turning into opaque bureaucratic language. This is the system's bittersweet irony: information intended to provide clarity may require an entire course of study simply to be understood.

⑧ *Apple of My Eye*

2024, potted espalier apple tree with protective limewash

Since ancient times, the apple tree has carried many symbolic meanings, and this tree is no exception. Grown by the artist in a pot since the spring of 2024, it represents a rooted tree without land, both physically and metaphorically. It evokes the rootlessness of a person or family who has never owned property and has moved from place to place over the years.

The tree also serves as a familiar symbol of family and belonging: each person occupies a particular place within the structure of a family tree. The forceful act of training an espalier can therefore be understood as a metaphor for the pressure exerted by systems on a family – both on its structure and on each of its members. Like successive generations, the branches are pruned, trained and bent to conform to the demands of a particular period, system and ideology, becoming what the person shaping them wants or needs them to be.

Yet if the tree possesses sufficient inner resilience, some branches may find their own direction, gradually altering their course and perhaps overcoming these external constraints. In time, they may bear new fruit whose seeds can produce another tree – one that, hopefully, can grow without predetermined rules or a prescribed course of life: a truly wild tree, living on its own terms.

Diana Kotmel Kněžínková is a curator and researcher specialising in memory and communication studies. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Visual Communication at the Faculty of Art and Design, Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in Ústí nad Labem (Czech Republic), where she also earned her master's degree in Curatorial Studies. Between 2019 and 2024, she was a member of the curatorial platform *3Kurátorky*, which fostered dialogue between emerging generations of artists and the wider public through exhibitions, public programmes, and podcasts. Alongside her curatorial practice, she works as a cultural entrepreneur, focusing on the adaptive reuse of cultural heritage sites and public spaces in Prague into cultural and societal venues.

Diana Kotmel Kněžínková



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Information about accompanying programs can be found on the website and social media.
www.zuzeum.com, [@zuzeum](https://www.instagram.com/zuzeum)

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JAN EVANGELISTA PURKYNĚ UNIVERSITY IN ÚSTÍ NAD LABEM

