

NEVIN ALADAĞ RAISE THE ROOF

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June 29, 2025 – February 1, 2026
Exhibition Hall

NEVIN ALADAĞ – RAISE THE ROOF

The Institut Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt is pleased to present a solo exhibition by the internationally renowned installation and performance artist Nevin Aladağ (*1972 in Van, Turkey). In her multifaceted works, Aladağ playfully intertwines sculpture, painting, textile, video, and sound. Through the principle of collage, she reveals surprising interrelationships – not only between art and music, but also between geographies and cultures.

The exhibition title *Raise the Roof* refers to a dance performance that was re-staged for the Venice Biennale in 2017. However, its meaning extends far beyond that single work: *Raise the Roof* alludes not only to the literal act of lifting a roof but also metaphorically to the trembling or upheaval of an entire building structure. By engaging with the dimensions of the Exhibition Hall, Aladağ explores the full potential of both her works and the site itself.

Once the center of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony, the Mathildenhöhe has always been a place where art, design, and architecture, as well as music, dance, and theater, have entered into mutual interconnections. In her site-specific installation, Nevin Aladağ translates the concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk into a contemporary discourse. The interplay of art, music, and performance creates resonating spaces that open up a variety of associations with highly relevant themes such as identity, community, and globalization. [SBQ]

This brochure accompanies you through the exhibition *Nevin Aladağ – Raise the Roof*. The following four chapters are color-coded to match the four exhibition halls. An introductory text about the artworks shown in each hall is followed by notes on the individual works. You can identify these using the consecutive numbering found in the exhibition map of each hall in this brochure. Unless otherwise stated, all works belong to the artist.

In her work, Nevin Aladağ experiments with different kinds of sounds, as well as music, and silence. Selected artworks are accompanied by video recordings of performances that offer a deeper visual and auditory experience. These videos make Aladağ's sound sculptures accessible even when they are not being activated within the exhibition space. You are welcome to watch these videos during your visit of the exhibition.

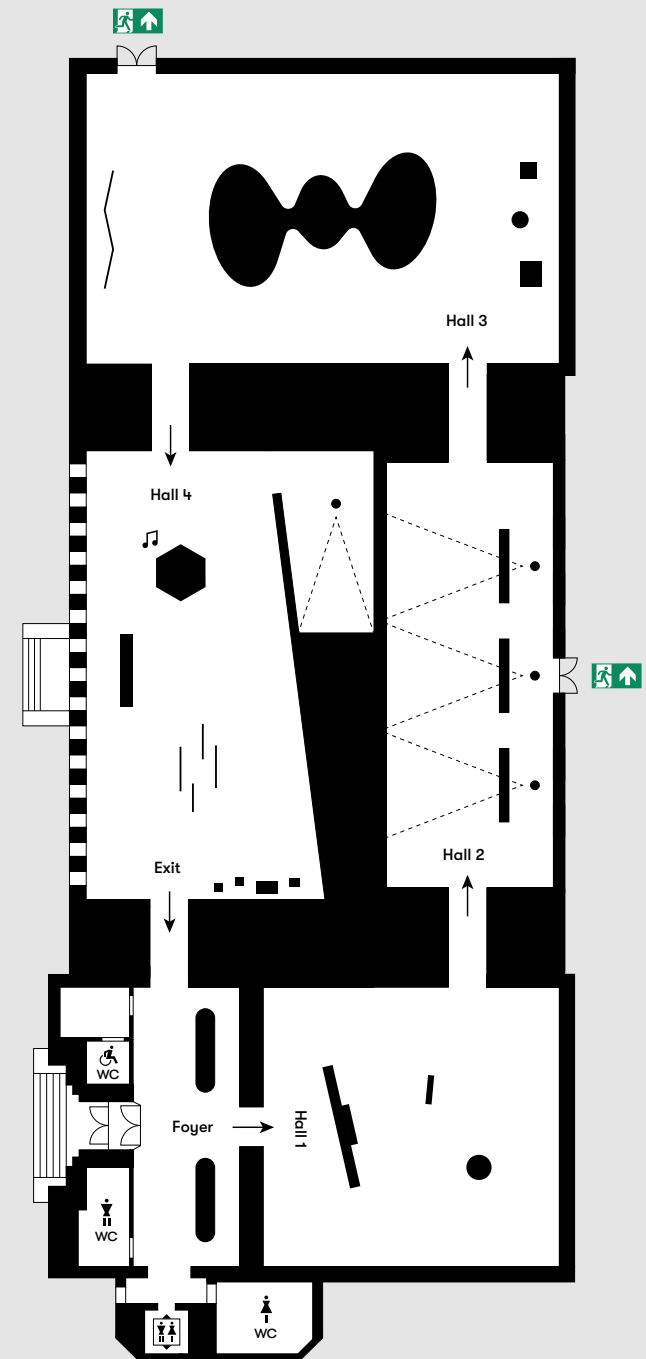
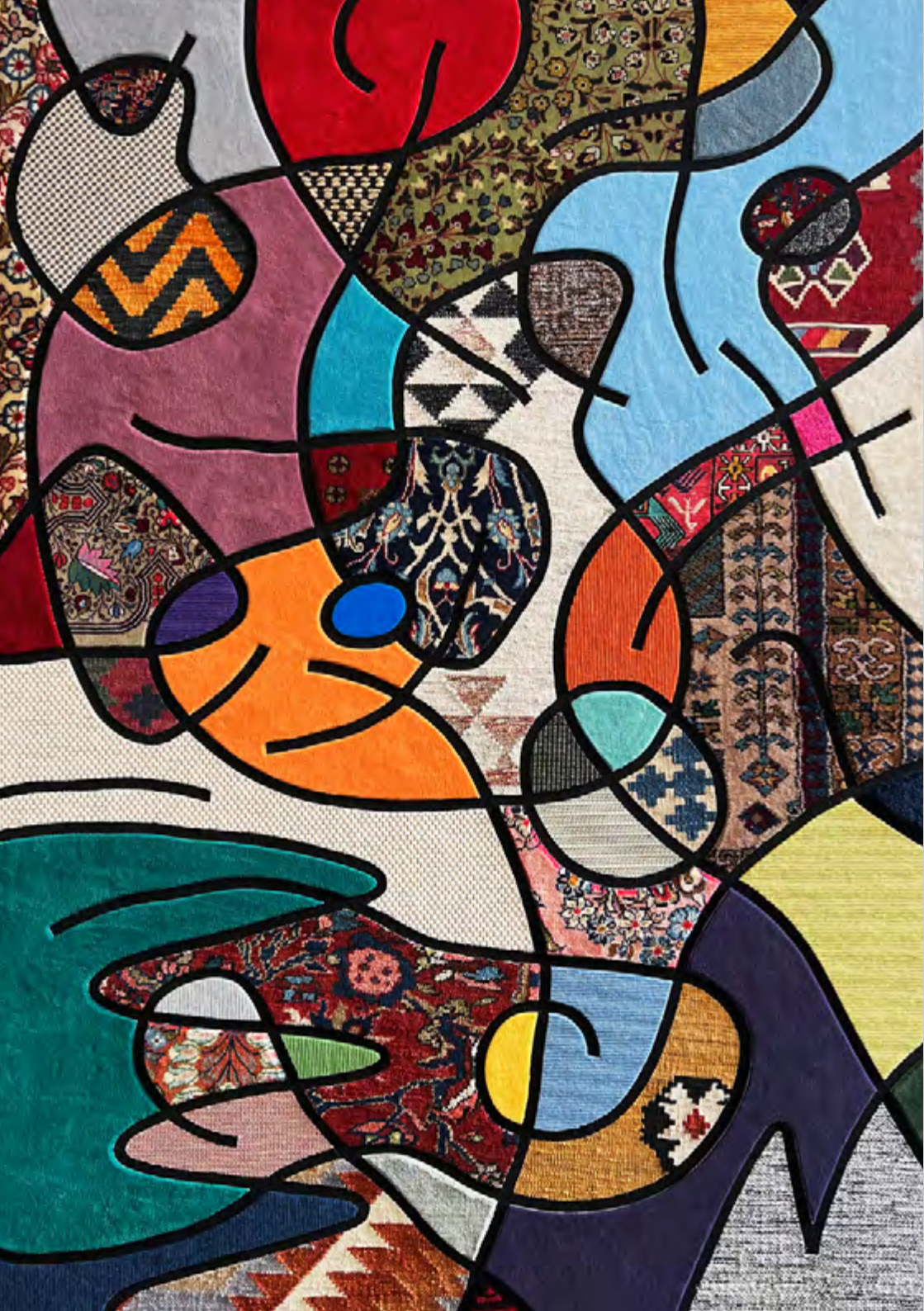


MULTI-MEDIA GUIDE

Please scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit guide.mathildenhoehe.de/en



With the exception of one object, which is pointed out in the exhibition and in the brochure, we would kindly ask you not to touch the artworks. Information about live activations of the sound sculptures by musicians from Darmstadt can be found in the list of related events on p. 41 of this brochure.





Foyer

RESONATING SPACE, HEXAGON DRUM

2021

Leather, wood, metal

RESONATING SPACE, SQUARE DRUM

2021

Leather, wood, metal

RESONATING SPACE, TRIANGLE DRUM

2021

Leather, wood, metal

RESONATING SPACE, ROUND DRUM

2021

Leather, wood, metal

A circle, a triangle, a square, a hexagon – in the foyer of the Exhibition Hall, visitors are welcomed by a wall installation composed of geometric forms. Only upon closer inspection does it become apparent that Nevin Aladağ has created drums made of wood and stretched leather. These drums are part of the ongoing series *Resonating Space*, in which the artist arranges wall-based musical instruments in ever-changing constellations for different exhibition settings. In doing so, Aladağ explores how sounds are perceived in relation to the surrounding space. The exhibition space, which typically serves as a neutral backdrop, is activated as a resonating body.

Detached from these installation contexts, the drums reveal a strong presence precisely through their minimalist reduction. Positioned in the foyer of the Exhibition Hall, the drums enter into a direct dialog with the expansive white wall surface – one of the signature elements of Joseph Maria Olbrich's architecture at the UNESCO World Heritage Site Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt. Within this dynamic interplay of surface and volume, not only do Aladağ's objects become resonant bodies, but the building itself begins to resonate.

As visitors move through the exhibition, they will encounter the percussion instruments in a variety of combinations. This recurring motif highlights the principle of repetition and transformation that lies at the heart of Nevin Aladağ's artistic practice. [SBQ]



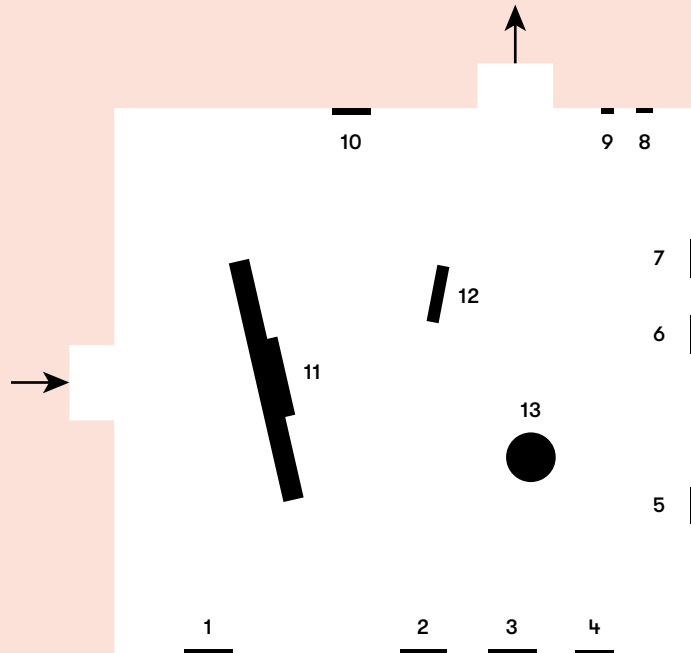
Hall 1

AN ORCHESTRA OF COLOR, FORM AND SOUND

With the *Vibrating Images* series, Nevin Aladağ explores the medium of painting for the first time. Using rectangular wooden bodies, she brings together bold areas of color and various musical instruments. In a silent state, the artworks encourage visual exploration and anticipation of sound. As soon as the wall objects resonate due to the playing of the instruments, the vibration is transmitted from the wall to the space and thus also to the audience.

In the works *Shaking Tambourine* and *Cabasa Tower*, the focus is on the interplay of forms. Instruments, which can also be found in the *Vibrating Images*, enter the space as three-dimensional figures. With these life-size sculptures, the artist not only responds to the dimensions of the Exhibition Hall. Rather, the tambourine and the cabasa take on a physical presence: while the tambourine seems to move through its organic form, the cabasa appears static – like a tower.

These hybrid combinations of painting, sculpture, and music set genre boundaries in motion. In this sense, Nevin Aladağ invites the viewer to perceive her artworks holistically. [MM]



1 VIBRATING IMAGES, BOUNCING STRINGS

2024

Acrylic paint on wood, harp and piano strings
Courtesy the artist and WENTRUP BERLIN

2 VIBRATING IMAGES, DRIBBLING STRING QUARTET

2025

Acrylic paint on wood, harp, cembalo, guitar, and cello strings, drum, cabasa, gong
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Krinzinger

3 VIBRATING IMAGES, POLYRHYTHMIC SEA

2025

Acrylic paint on wood, chimes, drum, tambourine, gong, triangle, cabasa
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Krinzinger

4 VIBRATING IMAGES, IMPROVISING FIELDS

2024

Acrylic paint on wood, cello, violine, and harp strings, bells, cabasa
Courtesy the artist and WENTRUP BERLIN

5 VIBRATING IMAGES, NIGHT TEMPER

2025

Acrylic paint on wood, harp and cembalo strings
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Krinzinger

6 VIBRATING IMAGES, WINDY RHYTHM

2024

Acrylic paint on wood, xylophone, and mouthpieces of different wind instruments
Courtesy the artist and WENTRUP BERLIN

7 VIBRATING IMAGES, PASTEL WAVES

2024

Acrylic paint on wood, guitar strings, drums, triangle, and chimes
Courtesy the artist and WENTRUP BERLIN

8 VIBRATING IMAGES, MOONDANCE

2024

Acrylic paint on wood, guitar and harp strings and mechanism
Kunstsammlung Deutsche Bundesbank

9 VIBRATING IMAGES, VIOLIN WAVES

2024

Acrylic paint on wood, violin strings and mechanism
Kunstsammlung Deutsche Bundesbank

10 VIBRATING IMAGES, ONE TWO THREE FOUR

2025

Acrylic paint on wood, contrabass and guitar strings, thunder drums, pan flute, tambourine
Courtesy the artist and PİLEVNELİ Istanbul

11 VIBRATING IMAGES, ORCHESTRA

2025

Acrylic paint on wood, contrabass, cello, and harp strings with tuning pegs, gong, triangle, pan flute, drum, and mouthpieces of different wind instruments

Ottmann Collection, Munich

With her new series *Vibrating Images*, Nevin Aladağ explores the materialization and perception of sound through painting. Work titles such as *Polyrhythmic Sea* literally demonstrate the permeability of genre boundaries. Shadow gap frames are used to create the impression that the rectangular wall objects are merely static paintings. Built-in musical instruments and sound holes turn the “vibrating images” into resonating bodies.

In combination with organic and geometric shaped areas of color, percussion, wind and string instruments create an artistic experience that goes far beyond mere visual observation. Through the activation of the artworks, the interplay of movement and stillness is enhanced to create an auditory and tactile experience. As soon as musicians play the instruments, not only the objects but also the exhibition space is set into vibration. The sound waves also radiate out into the audience, who become part of the interaction.

In addition to the variation of colors, forms and instruments, Aladağ also experiments with different formats. Due to its size, *Vibrating Images, Orchestra* in particular asserts itself against the dimensions of this exhibition hall. Thus, the orchestra as a dynamic ensemble of different components symbolizes the polyphony and harmony of the *Vibrating Images*.

You can see and hear a musical improvisation of the *Vibrating Images* in this video:



Every last Sunday of the month and on February 1, 2026, the *Vibrating Images* will be activated by professional musicians. [MM]

12 SHAKING TAMBOURINE

2025

Wood, acrylic lacquer, brass, basin

13 CABASA TOWER

2025

Wood, acrylic lacquer, steel, aluminum sheet, galvanized bead chains

In the artworks *Shaking Tambourine* and *Cabasa Tower*, which are being presented here for the first time, Nevin Aladağ thoroughly explores the form of musical instruments. The tambourine and the cabasa are percussion instruments that require a hand to play. By turning the instruments into life-size, abstract sculptures, the artist reduces their function to absurdity.

Traditional tambourines consist of circular frames with built-in metal cymbals, called zills, that emit a bright jingling sound when shaken or struck. The title of the sculpture *Shaking Tambourine*, as well as its organic form, refer to the movement of the instrument, which seems to dance through the air while played. Customary cabasas are made out of cylindrical head parts with close-fitting bead chains and handles. Shaking or turning them produces a metallic rustling sound. In the *Cabasa Tower* sculpture, on the other hand, several cylinders are stacked on top of each other, creating the static shape of a tower.

In these works, Nevin Aladağ not only plays with the forms and proportions of the instruments, but also, with their enhanced size, reacts to the dimensions of the Exhibition Hall. Thereby, tambourine and cabasa become characters in the room that seem to communicate with each other. Even more, they interact with the audience: on the threshold between object and body, they encourage the viewers to imagine their peculiar sound. [MM]

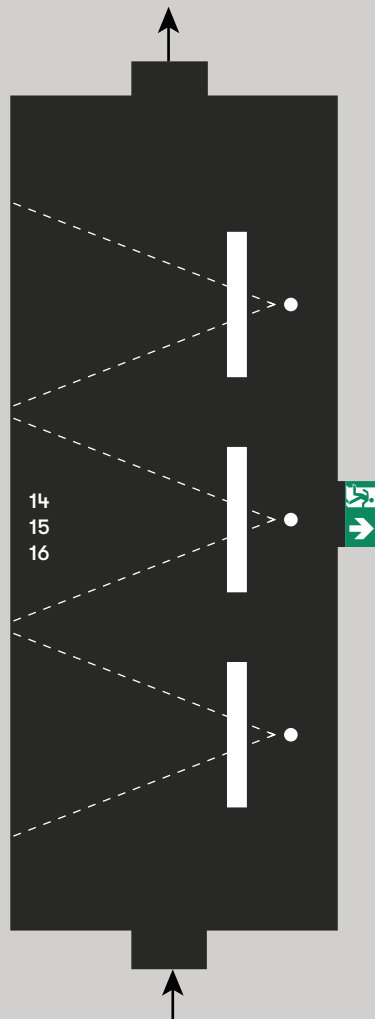


URBAN SOUNDSCAPES OF TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION

The video works *Session*, *Traces*, and *Jamming* span almost the entire length of the narrowest exhibition hall, creating monumental three-channel installations. Here, the video portraits of Sharjah, Stuttgart, and Berlin are presented in a loop. Despite the rigid formal structure of the triptych, the three projection surfaces engage in a vivid dialog.

What is seen – and especially heard – are musical instruments of different cultural and regional origins, being played by the urban and natural environments: for instance, drums rolling down a dune in the desert near Sharjah and being set into vibration by the sand, or a concertina unfolding itself whilst hanging from an oak tree on the banks of the Spree in Berlin.

The channels oscillate between dissonance and consonance as the instruments, each activated off-camera, continuously form new visual and acoustic connections. They become voices of a heterogeneous yet interconnected population. Music is shown to be the most mobile among all art forms: a symbol of change, migration, and global entanglements. [MLG]



14 SESSION

2013

Three-channel video installation,
HD video, each audio channel mono,
each film 6:00 minutes
Concept: Nevin Aladağ
Production: Baris Aladağ
Camera: Philipp Kirsamer
Sound: Magnus Pflüger
Sound mixing: Florian Tippe
Film editing: Benjamin Ikes

Session is Nevin Aladağ's first three-part video portrait, created in 2013 as part of the Sharjah Biennial – one of the most progressive exhibitions in the Arab world. This video work marks the starting point for the development of *Traces* and *Jamming*, which follow a similar conceptual approach. Unlike in these related works, however, in *Session* the artist does not roam a place personally known to her, but instead explores the city of Sharjah and its desert-like surroundings.

What stands out is the dynamic flow of movement from exclusively percussive instruments: a tambourine, for example, is pulled across the water by a boat outside the frame – with the stage-like coastal city in the background – or a foot percussion instrument seems to move on its own through the sandy dunes. Sharjah is portrayed here as a city of continuous development and ongoing expansion.

Aladağ does not ignore the ambivalences of this rapid growth: the land-

scape is “played” not only by Arab instruments but also by those with Pakistani, Iranian, or Iraqi migration histories – referencing migrant communities whose labor significantly contributes to urban transformation. The title *Session* alludes to the improvised interplay of instruments, each carrying its own cultural connotations. Music emerges here as a unifying art form: identity-forming, adaptable, and an expression of coexistence. [MLG]

15 TRACES

2015

Three-channel video installation,
HD video, each audio channel mono,
each film 6:00 minutes
Concept: Nevin Aladağ
Production: Baris Aladağ
Camera: Philipp Kirsamer
Sound: Magnus Pflüger
Sound mixing: Florian Tippe
Film editing: Benjamin Ikes
Ottmann Collection, Munich

Nevin Aladağ grew up in Stuttgart. With *Traces*, she creates an audiovisual portrait of her hometown that strikes a notably playful tone: For instance, an accordion, strung between a spring rocker and a pillar, breathes, as it sways back and forth, sound into the city's main pedestrian zone. On another projection surface, a recorder tied to a balloon rises whistling towards the sky.

Central to the video artwork are public spaces that resonate with the formative experiences of childhood and adolescence. Thus, the traces left by those young protagonists gain visibility and audibility. Meanwhile, the urban landscape meets classical musical instruments – a particularly meaningful combination in Stuttgart, a city shaped by its renowned ballet company. Aladağ manages to elicit entirely new, unheard (of) sounds from the instruments by integrating them into the city's structure – sounds they would not have produced in a conventional orchestra.

Chance plays a crucial role in *Traces*, as does a sense of monotony emphasized by the persistently grey weather. This interplay underscores that the work is not a nostalgic homage. Instead, what unfolds is a coexistence of instruments, some crafted locally, most rooted in folk traditions from diverse cultural backgrounds. These acoustic bodies become representative of Stuttgart's heterogeneous urban society. In *Traces*, dissonances are not resolved but made audible for a greater good. [MLG]

16 JAMMING

2022

Three-channel video installation,
HD video, each audio channel mono,
each film 6:00 minutes
Concept: Nevin Aladağ
Production: Baris Aladağ
Production Assistance:
Ayscha Zarina Omar
Camera: Philipp Kirsamer
Sound, sound mixing: Anton Feist
Film editing: Benjamin Ikes
Sammlung Pohl, Marburg

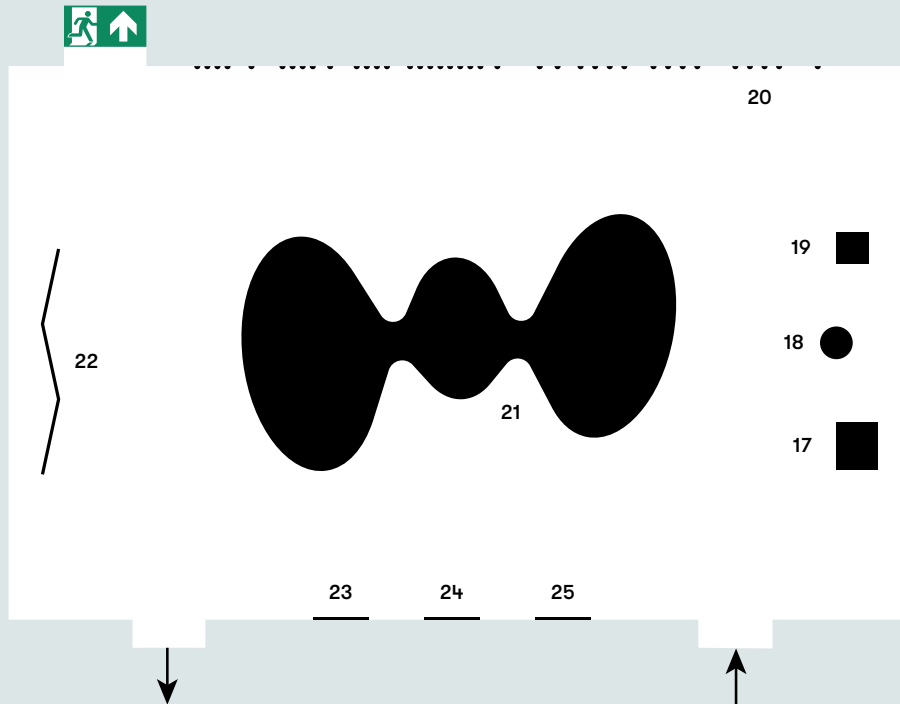
In her video work *Jamming*, Aladağ lends her home of choice Berlin a multitude of overlapping yet complementary voices. The history of the German capital speaks, sings, and plays for itself. Aladağ chooses the Berlin Wall as a backdrop or films a drum clumsily rolling through Gleisdreieck Park – once a hub of Nazi deportations. These highly political sites are juxtaposed with scenes that reflect the city's ongoing transformation: for example, when a sighing flute rides through the city strapped on the roof of a car.

No other major city in Germany embodies such a great diversity as Berlin. This is echoed in Aladağ's selection of instruments, played not by musicians but by the city and its natural surroundings. A tuba leaning casually against a tree is made to sound by a balloon attached to its mouthpiece; a tambourine rattles along cobble-

stones, tied to a bicycle; and a darbuka is played by the steady drip of a fountain. With subtle irony and without imposing hierarchy, Aladağ brings together the serious and the playful, classical and popular, global and local musical traditions.

Through the interplay of chance and intention, tradition and transformation, *Jamming* challenges the boundaries between culture and nature. In doing so, it dissolves conventional divisions. Aladağ presents the world as a constantly evolving fabric – one that ultimately resists our full control. Nowhere is this more apparent, the artist suggests, than in Berlin. [MLG]





CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Nevin Aladağ explores new constellations of cultural interaction in her work, making the community-building potential of art and music tangible. In the series *Social Fabric*, she interweaves carpets from various geographical and ethnic contexts into new expressions of social diversity.

In her series *Resonator* musical instruments from around the world merge into abstract sound sculptures that emphasize music's quality as a universal language. In contrast, the installation *Marsch* reflects the multifaceted cultural entanglement and appropriation of (musical) history: arranged as a musical score of Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca*, casts of cannonballs allude to the wars between the Ottoman Empire and Austria as well as a motif from Ottoman military music.

With *Music Room Darmstadt*, Aladağ references the long tradition of the music room and directly engages with the history of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony. Furniture pieces from around 1900 are transformed through targeted modifications into musical instruments, creating a space for polyphonic encounters. [JH]

17 RESONATOR STRINGS

2019

Plywood, spruce, multiplex, lacquer, zither, bass guitar, guitar, and cello strings and tuning mechanisms, amplification option

18 RESONATOR WIND

2019

Brass, bamboo tube, mouthpieces of different wind instruments, various metals
Lehmbruck Museum, Duisburg

19 RESONATOR PERCUSSION

2019

Stainless steel, plywood, leather, bronze
Private Collection Bonn

In the series *Resonator*, Nevin Aladağ combines fragments of musical instruments from various cultural backgrounds into geometric sound sculptures. Related instruments – from wind, string, and percussion families – are brought together in unexpected constellations, generating new possibilities of acoustic expression. The sound sources originate from different countries, representing music both as an expression of individual cultural identity and as a cross-cultural medium.

A unifying element of the three works shown here is an abstracted resonating body, composed of basic geometric shapes such as circles, squares, and triangles. Particularly striking is the arrangement of the

individual parts, which protrude outward from the center, lending the sculptures a futuristic appearance. From the core, simultaneously playable components extend in all directions. *Resonator Wind* brings together mouthpieces from a wide variety of wind instruments – such as pan flutes, traverse flutes, tubas, and saxophones – on a reflective brass sphere. *Resonator Percussion* is based on a triangular agogô, a West African percussion instrument made of steel, expanded with a cube-like structure featuring leather-covered drums and a cabasa on the top, as well as a ring of small bells. *Resonator Strings*, by contrast, combines zither, cello, acoustic and bass guitars into a kind of global string quartet.

An atmospheric activation of these sound sculptures awaits you via the following QR code:



The sculptures will be activated by professional musicians every last Sunday of the month and on February 1, 2026. [JH]

20 MARSCH (BASEL)

2014

94 hemispherical cast iron cannonballs, musical staff plotted

Stretching across the entire width of the north wall of the Exhibition Hall is an oversized musical staff, first realized on the rear facade of Kunsthalle Basel in 2014. Massive iron note heads rise from fine lines. The casting mold is based on a 19th-century cannonball that Nevin Aladağ discovered in the collection of the Historical Museum in Basel. Titled *Marsch*, the work evokes not only the military command for soldiers to march in step but also invites visitors to physically walk along the length of the installation.

The artwork refers to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca*, the third movement from his Piano Sonata No. 11 in A major from 1783/84. The Allegretto draws on motifs that imitate Turkish percussion instruments, used in Ottoman military music. This so-called Janissary music style spread throughout Europe – particularly in Austria – through the military campaigns of the Ottoman Empire. *Rondo alla Turca* is considered one of the most striking examples of 'Orientalism' in European classical music. It exemplifies a compositional style that for centuries helped to shape Western perceptions of the Ottoman Empire's culture, which was often viewed, in a racist manner,

as 'exotic'. By means of visual reduction – omitting clefs and bar lines – Aladağ not only dissolves the strict musical score, but also opens up a wide range of perspective on the complex entanglements of musical culture and military history. [JH]

21 MUSIC ROOM DARMSTADT

2025

Furniture: various natural woods, partly stained; upholstery partially renewed; everyday objects: ceramics, copper, and silver-plated brass; elements and mechanisms from various musical instruments

Music Room Darmstadt is part of a series of works that Nevin Aladağ has been creating continuously since 2014. These ensembles, one of which Aladağ presented at documenta 14 in Athens in 2017, are based on the exploration of the European tradition of the music salon. Being a place of upper middle-class and upper-class representation and a space where art, music, and everyday life intertwine, the design of a music room was a central task of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony. In keeping with the ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk, furnishings, ornamentation, and color schemes of the ensembles exhibited at the Mathildenhöhe were harmoniously coordinated.

For this site-specific installation, Aladağ draws on furniture and everyday

objects from around 1900. By means of careful interventions, she transforms these objects into musical instruments. For example, a height-adjustable chair is fused with the bellows of a concertina. Following the concept of the readymade, Aladağ subtly and ironically questions not only the original function of the furniture, but also the conventions embedded in upper middle-class and upper-class living culture. The diversity of materials also alludes to the various biographies of the people who once surrounded themselves with these objects. Aladağ's music room becomes a space for encounter that transcends time and place, generating a collective listening experience in the moment of musical improvisation and inviting the audience to reflect on history and community.

An improvisational activation of the music room awaits you via the following QR code:



Music Room Darmstadt will be activated by professional musicians every last Sunday of the month and on February 1, 2026. [JH]

22 PARAVENT, SOCIAL FABRIC #1

2012

Collage made of carpet pieces
Sammlung Pohl, Marburg

23 SOCIAL FABRIC, TURN

2022

Carpet collage on wood, framed
Courtesy the artist and Galerie
Krinzinger

24 SOCIAL FABRIC, JUMP

2022

Carpet collage on wood, framed
Courtesy the artist and Galerie
Krinzinger

25 SOCIAL FABRIC, FLIP

2022

Carpet collage on wood, framed
Courtesy the artist and Galerie
Krinzinger

In her series *Social Fabric*, Nevin Aladağ composes collages made from carpets of diverse cultural origins – for example Persian, Indian, Chinese, or European. The result is a combination of wool and silk rugs, handwoven kilims, and industrially produced treford or sisal carpets.

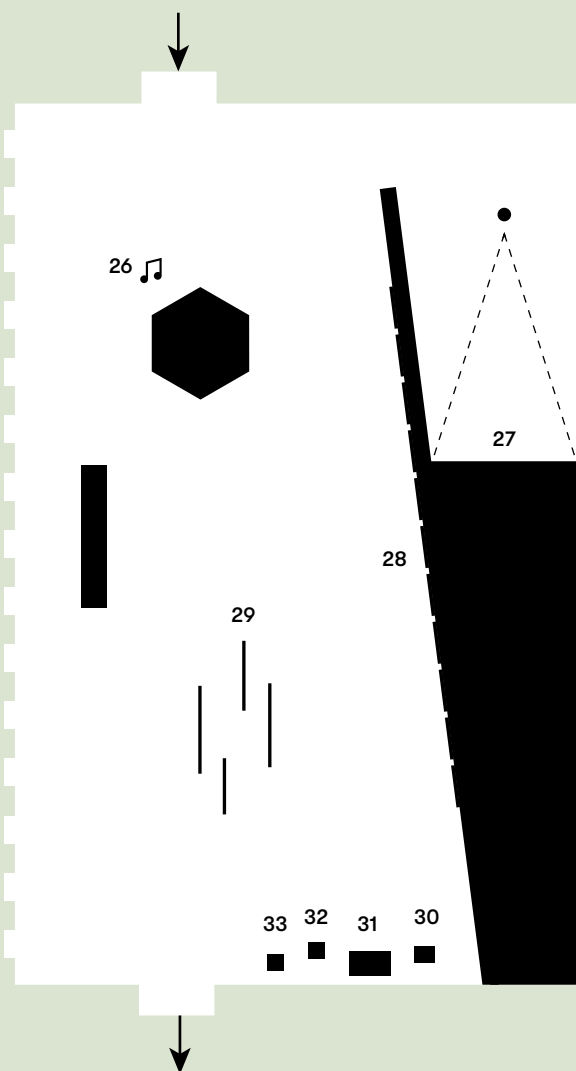
These adjacent, yet equally valued, fragments represent not only a wide range of cultural identities but also social practices associated with carpets – from quiet prayer to communal gatherings. Diverse social structures converge into a dynamic whole,

held together by lines that are more than just a connection: they shape the very pattern itself.

With *Paravent, Social Fabric #1*, the carpet – once confined to a floor or a wall – enters and transforms the space, creating a sculptural and space-defining staging. After all, a paravent can function as a visual barrier, shielding the private from the public.

While the culturally coded fragments in the paravent remain arranged in a strict geometric order, they are set into motion in a figurative sense in the three wall hangings – a shift hinted at by their dance-inspired titles: *turn*, *jump*, and *flip*. The resulting rhythmic patterns evoke abstracted sound waves. Sound and textile, abstract image and (sonic) body merge into a new symphony. [MLG]





BODIES AS RESONATING SPACES

The video work *Raise The Roof* sets the rhythm for a choreography in which Nevin Aladağ's artworks merge with the architecture of this exhibition hall. Traces left by dance shoes on the copper plates of the series *Stiletto* preserve the ephemerality of movement. Through her engagement with the cultural practices of music-making, dancing, and playing, the artist explores individual experiences and sociocultural attributions.

The urban environment becomes the stage for the performance *Body Instruments*. When dance steps activate musical instruments that Aladağ has transformed into garments, the body itself becomes part of the resonating space. The work *Pattern Kinship, Leaves* addresses the ambivalence between public and private space. Resembling an oversized kinetic mobile, the artwork invites viewers to gain new perspectives through movement.

The exhibition concludes with the large-scale sculpture *Public Resonator*. In uniting various instruments into a single entity, Nevin Aladağ creates a dynamic space for collective participation. Visitors are invited to make music! [SBQ]

26 PUBLIC RESONATOR

2023

Podest: galvanized steel; chimes: brass; sphere: sandblasted stainless steel; drums: powder coated stainless steel, anodized aluminum; pan flutes: polished stainless steel; harp and guitar strings

The series *Resonator* was expanded in 2023 with the addition of the *Public Resonator*. Conceived in an oversized format, this sculpture was originally created for the art project *kunst findet stadt* in the spa gardens of Baden-Baden. Its presentation in this exhibition hall is particularly striking, as the space was initially designed by Joseph Maria Olbrich as an open rose courtyard. Today, the connection to the urban environment is achieved through the windows facing the terrace of the building.

While the *Resonator* sculptures shown in the previous hall each combine elements from the same family of instruments, the larger-than-life *Public Resonator* is arranged in a more heterogeneous way in terms of both the way it can be played and its acoustic capabilities. The round resonance body includes several drums, pan flutes, harps, guitars and chimes surrounding its base. The *Public Resonator* serves as a social resonance field within the exhibition, inviting visitors to actively engage and play the sound sculpture themselves. As a resonating body of various musical instruments, the

sculpture not only opens up a multi-sensory art experience, but also provides a stage for a diverse community as a participatory sound object. In the simultaneity of sound and movement, the performing visitors come together to form a temporary ensemble.

♪ You are very welcome to activate the artwork – let the space reverberate through your interaction. [JH]

27 RAISE THE ROOF (VENICE)

2017

HD Video, 8:27 minutes

Concept: Nevin Aladağ

Production: Baris Aladağ

Camera: Raphael Beinder

Sound: Magnus Pflüger

Film editing: Benjamin Ikes

The video work *Raise the Roof (Venice)* traces back to a performance first staged in Berlin in 2007: at that time, women danced on the roof of a building near the former border between East and West Berlin. The performance, which can be seen here as a video work, was re-staged for the 2017 Venice Biennale. Seven women dance to songs that remain inaudible to the audience. Only the lettering on their T-Shirts hints at the respective song they are listening to through their headphones. The stages on which they are dancing are covered with copper plates. Through the powerful movements of the dancers, the stiletto heels of their dance shoes strike the surface

rhythmically, transforming their bodies into instruments.

With each new dancer who enters one of the stages, the rhythm becomes more intense. As the women respond intuitively to different songs – each one dancing to a different beat – the synchrony that characterizes a group choreography is dissolved. Yet the dancers remain connected through the polyphony of the sounds they generate. In interweaving audible and inaudible elements, Nevin Aladağ questions the relationship between control and selfempowerment – between belonging to a group and asserting one's individuality. As the sound of the video work increasingly fills the exhibition space, the rhythm begins to resonate within the visitors' bodies. The boundary between contemplative observation and immediate physical experience becomes permeable. [SBQ]

28 STILETTO

2017

imprint on copper, framed

Stiletto, Woman of the Ghetto,

8:24 min, May 13th, 3 pm

Stiletto, Stiletto Pumps,

3:23 min, May 13th, 3 pm

Stiletto, Wild World,

3:08 min, May 12th, 12 pm

Stiletto, Enjoy The Silence,

6:03 min, May 13th, 3 pm

Stiletto, Yaow,

2:10 min, May 11th, 12 pm

Stiletto, Yaow,

2:10 min, May 12th, 12 pm

Stiletto, Yaow,

2:10 min, May 13th, 3 pm

Stiletto, Woman of the Ghetto,

8:24 min, May 12th, 12 pm

Stiletto, Stiletto Pumps,

3:23 min, May 12th, 12 pm

Stiletto, Drunk In Love,

6:21 min, May 13th, 3 pm

Stiletto, A Better Tomorrow,

4:55 min, May 12th, 12 pm

Stiletto, A Better Tomorrow,

4:55 min, May 13th, 3 pm

Stiletto, Enjoy The Silence,

6:03 min, May 12th, 12 pm

Stiletto, Drunk In Love,

6:21 min, May 12th, 12 pm

Stiletto, Wild World,

3:08 min, May 13th, 3 pm

At the Venice Biennale, Nevin Aladağ's performance *Raise the Roof (Venice)* was presented over several days in May 2017. The fleeting moment of the live performance is preserved not only in the video, it was also the dancers' stiletto heels that left physical traces on the copper plates covering the individual stages. Detached from the music, their dancing bodies produced an autonomous work of art.

The movements are deeply etched into the metal. Presented here as static images, each copper plate is titled according to the song played during the performance and its duration. What is shown are the reverse sides – those on which the indentations create

raised reliefs on otherwise smooth surfaces. These structures bear witness to the different rhythms of the songs as well as the individual temperaments of the dancers. Unified by the square format, the individual copper plates form a visual ensemble.

The title *Stiletto* refers to a project begun in 2005, in which Aladağ experimented with different materials. In 2012, three galvanized metal plates from this series were on display in the comprehensive exhibition *A House Full of Music* at Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt. The 15 plates, now shown in the Exhibition Hall, form a visual archive without claiming to be in chronological order. The gaps left in the installation serve as traces of the temporary performance. These absences invite viewers to fill them with memories, but also with new interpretations. [SBQ]

29 PATTERN KINSHIP, LEAVES

2023
acrylic glass, colored, laser-cut

The artwork *Pattern Kinship, Leaves* consists of four laser-cut acrylic glass layers that float from the ceiling at different heights, spatially separated from each other. The installation, reminiscent of a mobile, creates an expansive sculpture that can be experienced from all sides. Each of the leaf-shaped layer has an individual color and is composed of different patterns.

In this work, Nevin Aladağ combines ornaments from different cultures, times and geographical regions. Not only do the patterns assemble within the individual leaves, but the transparent layers also overlap depending on the viewing angle. The overlapping emphasizes the interplay of the ornaments. Similar to the *Social Fabric* series, the principle of collage is used to reveal the diversity of cultural identities.

Pattern Kinship, Leaves is reminiscent of an element of traditional Arabic architecture: featuring an artistically designed lattice structure, the *mashrabiya* was usually used as a window. Although translucent, its delicate ornamentation prevents a direct view. Through the transparency of the artwork, Aladağ reduces the original function of shielding the private from the public to absurdity. The presentation encourages the viewers to constantly adopt new perspectives and thus reflect on the personal and socio-political themes of kinship, belonging and visibility. [MM]

30 BODY INSTRUMENTS (FOOT BELLS)

2021
Leather, bells (steel plate)

31 BODY INSTRUMENTS (ACCORDION WINGS)

2021
Wood (multiplex birch, veneer walnut), cardboard, cotton, leather, plastic, steel

32 BODY INSTRUMENTS (DRUM HAT)

2021
Wood (multiplex birch, veneer walnut, walnut balls), leather, textile, steel

33 BODY INSTRUMENTS (RAINMAKER HAT)

2021
Wood (multiplex birch, veneer walnut), leather, stainless steel, textile, steel

In *Body Instruments*, Nevin Aladağ explores the interplay of sound and movement as well as the deep-rooted tradition of music-making in urban public spaces. For this performance, the artist has transformed classical and folkloric musical instruments into wearable garments. As extensions of the human body, these instruments produce sound through natural, but also dance-like movements: when walking, the bells attached to the ankle cuffs of *Foot Bells* create a metallic jingling. Moving the head activates the *Rainmaker Hat* – a drum worn on the head, much like the *Drum Hat*. Raising and lowering the arms make the

Accordion Wings – two wing-shaped accordions – sound in melodic tones.

The vibrant urban environment is a crucial element of the activation: the performer responds consciously to local surroundings and unexpected encounters. Each performance thus opens up unique expressions of experimental music, continuously giving rise to new performances. Music becomes a universal medium of communication for a spontaneously gathered, diverse community.

Body Instruments was originally created for the exhibition *Museum Tinguely AHOY!*, which took place aboard a freight ship in 2021 and made stops in major cities such as Paris, Amsterdam, and Duisburg. The performance led from the ship into the respective city. In Darmstadt, the performance will take place on August 23 and October 18, 2025, moving from Friedensplatz, across the Marktplatz, to Mathildenhöhe. A preview of this joyfully rambunctious parade awaits you via the QR code below:



For detailed information about the performance, please visit our website: www.mathildenhoehe.de [SBQ]

5 QUESTIONS FOR NEVIN ALADAĞ

Nevin Aladağ is one of the most internationally renowned artists from Germany. Whilst the works we are showing in our exhibition speak – or rather sound – for themselves, we are giving the artist a voice here. We asked her five quick questions about her artistic practice and the exhibition *Raise the Roof* at Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt.

1. WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU LISTEN TO – ARE THERE GENRES YOU RETURN TO AGAIN AND AGAIN?

My taste in music depends on how I'm feeling: everything from electronic music to hip hop and Latin beats. At the moment, I enjoy listening to the Belgian musician Stromae. When I listen to his songs, I also refresh my French because his lyrics are really good.

2. IN YOUR WORK, SOUND OFTEN GOES BEYOND THE PURELY ACOUSTIC AND TAKES ON A CONCEPTUAL ROLE. HOW DO YOU APPROACH THE IMMATERIAL NATURE OF SOUND – AND HOW DO YOU CONSIDER ITS INTERPLAY WITH THE VISUAL?

With only the image present and the sound merely resonating as an idea, there is room for the viewer to make their own associations. They can imagine the intensity and history of a song or sonata for themselves. Sounds leave traces – they are an expression of a moment of devotion or inspiration and can inscribe themselves into our experience in different ways.

3. YOUR ARTWORKS OFTEN INCLUDE FULLY FUNCTIONAL MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS. WHAT CRITERIA DO YOU USE TO SELECT THE INSTRUMENTS FOR YOUR WORKS?

They are often musical instruments that I'm already familiar with or that simply fascinate me. I also choose

instruments that can be found in different genres. String, wind and percussive instruments are used in classical music as well as in folk music, rock and pop. I'm particularly interested in the acoustic dialog that arises across genres.

The acoustic potential of various resonating bodies always opens up new possibilities for experiencing music. For me, music is a medium of communication – a constantly changing language.

4. IN 2025, WITH *SHAKING TAMBOURINE* AND *CABASA TOWER*, YOU'RE TAKING A NEW DIRECTION. WHAT WAS THE INTENTION BEHIND THESE SCULPTURES?

These two new artworks explore the instrument as a free-standing form in a playful and architectural way.

Cabasa Tower is reminiscent of a column that seems to grow endlessly in height. Varying the size of the cylinders creates an exciting interplay: on the one hand, the sculpture suggests the stability of a tower, while on the other, the potentially rotating momentum of the cylinders makes it appear fragile – almost as if the object could lose its balance.

Shaking Tambourine, however, captures the moment of rhythmic shaking in a wave-like form. Due to this sweeping

movement, the outlines almost seem to dissolve to the human eye. The sculpture captures this moment between ecstasy and frozen dynamism. The size and open form of the artwork also invite the viewer to relate to it physically.

5. HOW DID THE SITE OF MATHILDENHÖHE DARMSTADT, AND ESPECIALLY THE EXHIBITION HALL, INSPIRE YOU?

Given the architecture of the Darmstadt Artists' Colony and the various works of fine art and design, the Mathildenhöhe is a historically rich and inspiring place. This is also evident in the new artwork *Music Room Darmstadt*, which was realized exclusively with Art Nouveau furniture – some of which was found in Darmstadt.

The Exhibition Hall and the many different options for entering into a dialog with the grounds outside led us to rethink artworks, which were originally conceived for the public space, within the exhibition space. Each hall has its own unique character, which has inspired us to stage the different groups of works in a way that creates new interconnections.



BIOGRAPHY

Nevin Aladağ (*1972 in Van, Turkey) lives and works in Berlin. She grew up in Stuttgart and studied Sculpture with Olaf Metzel at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste from 1993 to 2000. Since then, she has been regularly invited to large-scale international art exhibitions, including the 57th Venice Biennale and documenta 14 in Athens/Kassel (both in 2017), as well as the Ruhrtriennale (2016) and the 11th Sharjah Biennial (2013).

Her works have been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions worldwide, including at Kunstmuseum Magdeburg (2024), Max Ernst Museum Brühl (2024), SCAD Museum of Art Savannah (2023), Barakat Contemporary Seoul (2022), Museum Villa Stuck Munich (2021), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2019), Albertinum Dresden (2018), Kunstmuseum Stuttgart (2015), and Arter Istanbul (2012).

She holds a professorship in Sculpture in Motion at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Dresden since 2019.

In 2024, Nevin Aladağ was awarded the Baden-Württemberg State Prize for Fine Arts 2025 as its first recipient, as well as the Kurt Schwitters Prize 2026 from the Niedersächsische Sparkassenstiftung.

**SPECIAL TOUR:
FROM ROOF TO CELLAR
NEVIN ALADAĞ'S
SOUND INSTALLATION
IN THE WATER RESERVOIR**

To accompany the exhibition *Raise the Roof*, Nevin Aladağ also takes visitors on a special tour of the water reservoir. In the depths of this underground cistern, dating back to 1880, the melodic voice of a woman can be heard humming a Turkish folk song. Aladağ originally conceived this sound piece, *Dachgesang*, in 1995 on the occasion of the group exhibition *Nahverkehr*. Curated by Leni Hoffmann and Kathrin Böhm, 16 artists from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich were invited to develop site-specific installations in an abandoned residential building in Nuremberg. Aladağ's contribution was presented in a room beneath the roof of the house on Großweidenmühlstraße, which had been cleared for demolition.

In the water reservoir of the Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, the artist reverses the original presentation of her early work. The underground chamber remains radically empty. A space of sensory experience and imagination is evoked solely by means of sound. Walking through the vault becomes a search for the absent performer. In this direct encounter between historical architecture and contemporary art, one of the central themes of *Raise the Roof* becomes abundantly clear – the dynamic interplay of presence and absence. [SBQ]

We regret that the special tour of the water reservoir is not barrier-free. Please visit our website for further information: www.mathildenhoehe.de

DACHGESANG

1995

Sound, mono, recorded on
endless cassette tape
Concept and sound recording:
Nevin Aladağ

RELATED EVENTS

CURATOR'S TOUR

with Dr. Sandra Bornemann-Quecke
July 22 and September 16, 4 pm

TEACHERS' AFTERNOON

with Dr. Sandra Bornemann-Quecke
August 26, 4 pm

ARTIST TALK

Nevin Aladağ in conversation with
Dr. Sandra Bornemann-Quecke
October 23, 5 pm

DIALOG

INTERWEAVING PATTERNS

with Rhea Dehn Tutosaus
(Technische Universität Darmstadt)
and Maren Meier
November 12, 5 pm

COLLECTING READY-MADES

with Ulrich Lang (graduate
conservator) and Julia Hichi
December 4, 4 pm

All events will be held in German.
As there is a limited capacity
for these events, we kindly ask you
to register in advance by phone
+49 (0) 6151 132808 or email
mathildenhoehe@darmstadt.de.
Tickets might be available on
the day of the event. Please contact
the ticket desk for up-to-date
information.

BODY INSTRUMENTS

Performance in the city
with Darko Radosavljev
August 23 and October 18, 2 pm
meeting point: Friedensplatz
Another performance will take place
in the exhibition at 4 pm.
No reservation required

#LATEARTMATHILDENHÖHE

The after-work event with speed tours,
drinks and music
August 28, September 25 and
October 30, 6 pm to 9 pm
No reservation required

RESONATING SPACE

Activation of the sound sculptures
by musicians in the exhibition
Every last Sunday of the month and
on February 1, 2026 each at 3 pm
No reservation required

GUIDED TOURS

Every Saturday at 3 pm and
every Sunday at noon

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TOURS

On request

ART MEETS SOUND

Interactive guided tour for schools
On request

All other events will be posted on
our website:
www.mathildenhoehe.de



NEVIN ALADAĞ – RAISE THE ROOF

June 29, 2025 – February 1, 2026

EXHIBITION

CURATOR

Dr. Sandra Bornemann-Quecke

RESEARCH AND CURATORIAL ASSOCIATE

Julia Hichi

CURATORIAL ASSISTANTS

Marie Luise Geißler, Maren Meier

EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

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Darmstadt and the authors

OPENING HOURS

Tuesday to Sunday 11 am – 6 pm

ADMISSION

10 €/8 € reduced admission

plus 3 € for guided tours

Exhibition Hall and Artists' Colony

Museum Pass

12 €/10 € reduced admission

Free admission: children and teens

under the age of 18

MATHILDENHÖHE CARD

Free public transportation in the city

of Darmstadt, includes admission

to the Exhibition Hall, Artists' Colony

Museum and Wedding Tower,

tickets and further information online:

www.darmstadt-tourismus.de/

mathildenhoehe or at the Darmstadt

Shop

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