



Press Release - 14 April 2026

This spring, Kunstinstituut Melly presents a new season of exhibitions opening across April and May 2026. On 18 April, two solo exhibitions open as part of the ongoing Call & Response series, featuring *Basel Abbas* and *Ruanne Abou-Rahme*, and *Hajra Waheed*. The Call & Response series reflects Kunstinstituut Melly's commitment to supporting artists whose work engages with geopolitical demands while imagining new possibilities. A group exhibition, *Draw Withdraw Redraw*, will follow on 23 May.

[Learn more](#)



Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme - Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom

Opening 18 April 2026

Basel Abbas and *Ruanne Abou-Rahme* create multimedia installations that engage with the politics and poetics of anti-colonial resistance, tracing struggles against dispossession and oppression in Palestine. Working together since 2007, their practice combines moving image, sound, and text to explore how histories of refusal are carried across time.

Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom draws on a process of study; learning with and from former Palestinian prisoners, poets, revolutionary thinkers, and the many practices of refusal that continue to shape daily life in Palestine. Through this approach, the installation traces connections across generations, approaching resistance as an ongoing practice of study while acknowledging a broader indebtedness to those who have resisted before us.

In this new commission, *Basel* and *Ruanne* ask: what does it mean to resist in impossible conditions, to breathe where one should not breathe, and to emerge from sites of exclusion unbound? Writing, storytelling, and song emerge as life-affirming acts that sustain the capacity to continue resisting, even within conditions designed to confine the body and imagination. Through the sampling and layering of moving image and sound, the pair construct what they describe as "new scripts," forming a poetics of resistance.

Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom is co-commissioned by Kunstinstituut Melly in collaboration with The Bell / Brown Arts Institute, Brown University; MACBA Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; and Nottingham Contemporary.

Still from *Prisoners of Love: Until the Sun of Freedom* (2025). Courtesy of the artists.

[Learn more](#)



Hajra Waheed: There Is a Fountain Even If Pale That Flows Beneath Us All

Opening 18 April 2026

Guest curated by *Hera Chan*

Hajra Waheed is a multidisciplinary artist working across drawing, painting, sound, sculpture, video, and installation. Her practice explores the nature of power, the human impact of displacement and incarceration, and the transformative possibilities of liberation struggles.

There Is a Fountain Even If Pale That Flows Beneath Us All brings together newly commissioned and recent works that approach listening as an embodied, collective, and political practice. The title invokes an undercurrent that persists beneath regimes of repression, where expression defiantly circulates despite attempts to silence it.

At the center is *Hum* (2020), the first volume in *Hajra's* trilogy of multichannel sound installations, which foregrounds political prisoners as leaders of liberation struggles and traces voice under conditions of incarceration. The singers and songwriters featured in the work have all been imprisoned—their work censored, with many forced into exile for mobilizing collective voice. The songs are drawn from a period, as today, marked by state violence and genocide, mass uprisings, and crackdowns. From this shared condition of silencing, the work turns to humming as both a compositional method and a language of resistance.

In parallel to *Hum*, the exhibition presents a series of sound studies, drawings, paintings, handbound artist books, and leporellos—many shown for the first time. Created over the years alongside sound chamber designs for *Hum*, these works extend *Hajra's* sonic practice across mediums, where line, mark, and landscape become shared fields of attunement.

Installation view of *Hum* (2020), Portikus, Frankfurt, 11 July–6 September 2020. Photo: *Diana Pfammatter*. Courtesy of the artist.

[Learn more](#)



Draw Withdraw Redraw

Opening 23 May 2026

Draw Withdraw Redraw is a group exhibition featuring work by *AYO*, *Bani Abidi*, *Cinthia Marcelle*, *Felipe Mujica*, *Misheck Masamvu*, *Nohemi Perez*, and *Thierry Ousseba*.

To draw, drawing from, drawing with, drawn to, to being drawn in, a draw—returning to the drawing board as a space to rethink and make new plans for a desired waywardness.

Drawing to leave a mark on paper, on fabric, on the ground [...] drawing to create movement [...] drawing to extract [...] drawing in the game of chance [...] drawing to neither lose nor win [...] Departing from the extended sense of drawing, *Draw Withdraw Redraw* foregrounds recognition, resistance, and reinvention.

To draw withdraw redraw situates us in a state of ongoingness, returning to the same that is not the same. Movement seeks flight without yearning to land. There is constant negotiation, chance-taking and self-preservation, because we never left drawing... because drawing is where we can always pull from... To draw, drawing from, drawing with, drawn to, to being drawn in, a draw.

[Learn more](#)

Partners

These exhibitions are supported by:

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ABOUT KUNSTINSTITUUT MELLY

Kunststituut Melly is Rotterdam's contemporary art and knowledge-sharing institution. Since its founding in 1990, the institution has been committed to presenting and commissioning thought-provoking exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives. With a focus on emerging and underrepresented practices, Kunststituut Melly provides a vital platform for dialogue and artistic experimentation, rooted in the cultural and social fabric of Rotterdam and connected to international developments.

Press Contacts

For more press information and/or photographic material, please contact the communications department of Kunststituut Melly:

Lola den Dunnen – lola@kunststituutmelly.nl
Roos Oudt – roos.oudt@kunststituutmelly.nl
General press email: press@kunststituutmelly.nl

Please mention the following in case of publication:
+31 (0)10 411 0144
www.kunststituutmelly.nl

Kunststituut Melly

Witte de Withstraat 50 NL- [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)
3012 BR Rotterdam

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