

Modern Art

Ian Waelder
insert

17 July–15 August 2026
Bennet Street

Modern Art is pleased to present *insert*, Ian Waelder's first exhibition in London.

Ian Waelder was born in 1993 in Madrid, Spain. He lives and works between Mallorca and Frankfurt am Main, where he graduated in Fine Arts at the Städelschule as a Meisterschüler under Prof. Haegue Yang. Waelder's practice deals with trace, memory and the latency of images. Conceived as a site-responsive environment, this presentation is centered on three large-scale works first encountered from behind. Together, they form a dividing wall and makeshift corridor bisecting the space, a passage that acts much like an insert in a book, a separate, partial layer interrupting the whole.

This ongoing series of paintings acts as a veil for a constantly expanding archive of cinematic stills collected by the artist. By overlapping two layers of fabric, a play of perception, depth and scale comes to the forefront, the stain blurring into the figures beneath, constantly changing depending on the position of the viewer. Each canvas in this set returns to the recurring appearance and absence of a particular car model, one his grandfather owned in Stuttgart, before being forced to sell it to escape the country in 1939. With each revisitation of this image, Waelder shifts the attention away from the vehicle towards peripheral figures, a gesture that mirrors the way memory can digress and lead to abstraction. In each of the works, a group of children circles a tree with abandon, set against the unspoken tension of the time.

A sculptural work, contrasting in scale, combines air-dried porcelain and cardboard, continuing a family of sculptures by Waelder, where forms such as noses, shoes, and tongues function as autobiographical fragments. Known for his use of shoe lasts, here the cardboard shoe insert (a physical embodiment of human absence) is enveloped by folds of the unstable air-dried material. In his ongoing newspaper series, Waelder first began taking pages from a German daily newspaper when studying at the Städelschule Frankfurt and collaging often perishable elements onto its surface. Here the accumulation of stains attests to how lived experience can impact our perception of history. Above all these works, Waelder brings a sense of acute strangeness by installing a translucent false ceiling that lowers the height of the room, with image fragments partially visible, echoing the layering of fabric present in the row of canvases.

Waelder's practice is founded on an archival impulse, one seeking restitution for the marginal and humble, as well as the personal and the universal. A desire for preservation is held in tension with erosion, drawing attention to the instability of documentation. In doing so, Waelder's practice examines another tension, between certainty and the unknown.

Recent solo exhibitions include Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst–GAK, Bremen (2026); Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2025); LAURENZ, Vienna (2025); carlier | gebauer, Berlin (2025); and Es Baluard Contemporary Art Museum, Palma (2023–24). Recent group exhibitions include Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2026); diez, Amsterdam (2025); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2025); nsdoku, Munich (2025); ifa-Galerie, Berlin (2025); Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2023); and Francis Irv, New York (2023). Waelder has been the recipient of awards and shortlisting including the ars viva shortlist (2026); the Kunststiftung DZ Bank Förderstipendium (2023–24); and Städelschule Portikus e.V. Absolventenpreis (2023). Residencies undertaken by the artist include WIELS, Brussels (2024) and the Stiftung Laurenz-Haus in Basel (2025–2026).

For press enquiries, please contact Sam Talbot (sam@sam-talbot.com).



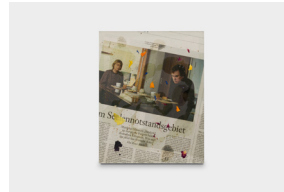
Hält Das / Will that last / Does that hold, 2026
newspaper clippings on fabric
ceiling and patio, dimmed lighting,
uncovered wall marks and traces
from previous installations
site-specific dimensions
(MA-WAELI-00010)



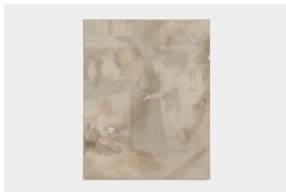
Three Steps, 2026
olive oil, honey, dried cranberries,
raisins, oats, ibuprofen on
newspaper (Die Zeit, November
28th, 2025), Artglass AR 99
Water White, acid-free board, tape
on Dibond, stainless steel
30 x 24 cm
11 3/4 x 9 1/2 in
(MA-WAELI-00007)



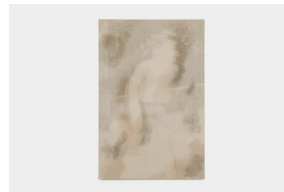
Breather (Insert), 2026
air-dry porcelain, cardboard shoe
inserts, glued tissue paper, pencil
12.5 x 10 x 22 cm
4 7/8 x 4 x 8 5/8 in
(MA-WAELI-00008)



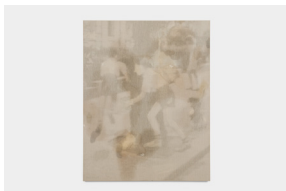
Sterben, 2026
honey, orange tea leaves,
edible flowers on newspaper
(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,
April 21st, 2024), Artglass AR 99
Water White, acid-free board, tape
on Dibond, stainless steel
30 x 24 cm
11 3/4 x 9 1/2 in
(MA-WAELI-00005)



Hand & Back (Lurking), 2026
plotter print on canvas with oil
paint and acrylic paint, marker,
covered with a layer of raw linen
with stains of oil, detergent, glue,
air-dry porcelain, glued inkjet print
245 x 195 cm
96 1/2 x 76 3/4 in
(MA-WAELI-00003)



Running Scene (Kid), 2026
plotter print on canvas with oil
paint and acrylic paint, marker,
covered with a layer of raw linen
with stains of oil, detergent, glue,
marker, diluted ink and pencil
245 x 163 cm
96 1/2 x 64 1/8 in
(MA-WAELI-00004)



Nose (Lurking), 2026
plotter print on canvas with
oil paint, acrylic paint, marker,
covered with a layer of raw linen
with stains of oil, detergent,
glue, marker, pencil, and air-dry
porcelain
245 x 195 cm
96 1/2 x 76 3/4 in
(MA-WAELI-00001)