

Melike Kara

HUSH

25 September - 29 October 2026

Private view: 24 September 2026, 6-8 PM

Melike Kara's third solo exhibition with Arcadia Missa, *HUSH*, is concerned with what might exist before naming - before a label becomes a boundary, before memory turns into narrative, or phenomenologically, before language teaches us where we end and where the world begins. Kara's works draw from personal and collective histories, working with materials that carry form, rhythm, residue, and presence. Her practice has long explored how identity is inherited, remembered, and carried across generations.

Kara's new series of paintings, made from coffee, oil stick, acrylic and ink, move through those questions around heritage and into something less binding. For Kara, they are a survey of our relationship to identity before it is named. Rather than preserving the past intact, her works emphasise continuity, allowing intuition and abstraction to produce new forms which remain connected to lived experiences while opening themselves up to multiple readings. The results trace a state of fluid transformation - where form and emptiness intertwine, and distinctions between self and world fade. She purposefully leaves room for stillness, uncertainty, and ways of becoming that resist fixed definitions.

This departure from immutable meanings does not abandon Kara's earlier concerns; they remain materially embedded, a ground from which the paintings emerge. The metallic silver undercoat carries an almost imperceptible ornamental layer, a trace of an earlier engagement with identity and cultural memory. In the new works, it stays present without asserting itself, held beneath a surface that moves between identification and presence, structure and dissolution. The relationship between the metallic skin and coffee is not linear but instead oscillates on the same plane. Against it, coffee accumulates rather than sinks into the support, becoming its own surface, its behaviour seemingly less controlled and autonomous.

blooming, 2026, hung centrally in the space, echoes Kara's inquiry into boundaries. The surface of the painting resists resolution, moving beyond the depiction of identity and embodiment toward a process of transformation. In *ways of knowing*, 2026, the intense palette of warm oranges and earthy tones moves between what can be read as bodily, geological and microscopic registers, before it slips away and remains fleetingly tangible.

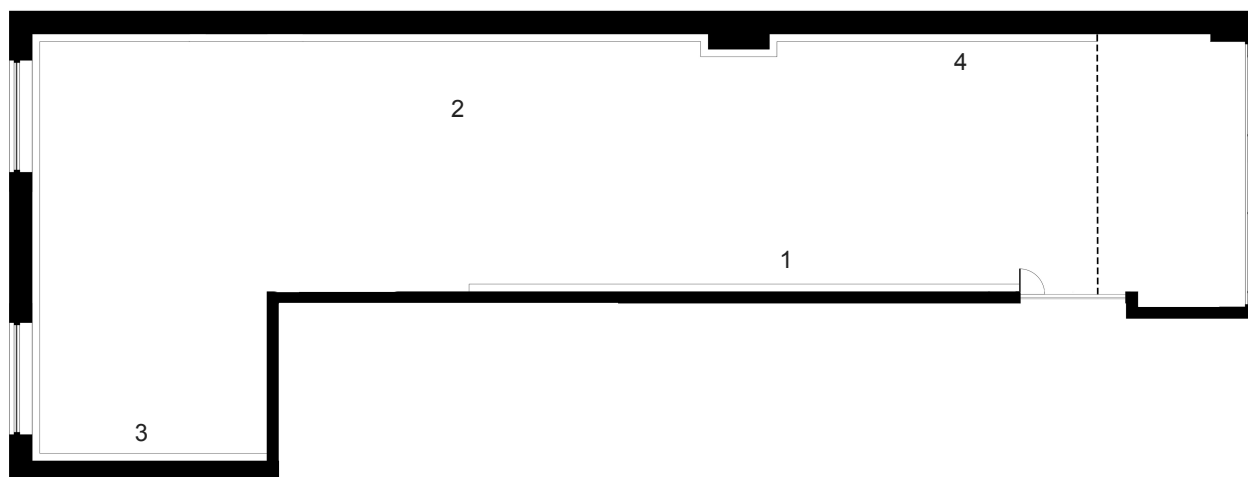
Coffee has long been read this way in Kara's family, as a way to predict the future, but also to practice new ways of seeing. Growing up, Kara watched her grandmother search the dark traces left inside a cup, not for certainty, but for possibility, treating what remained at the bottom as a place where stories could begin. Kara adopts this approach when entering the studio, with an openness that might exist before we learn to answer, allowing another way of being to subtly reveal itself. Rather than beginning with a predetermined image or meaning, she allows the coffee to pool, stain and form traces across the surface, responding to what emerges. *HUSH* is interested in this threshold, a pause before meaning is hardened into language.

Arcadia Missa is

Melike Kara (b. 1985, Bensberg, DE) lives and works in Cologne, DE. Recent solo exhibitions include *Whispers*, Kunsthaus Hamburg, Hamburg, DE (2026); *Vor Ort*, Melike Kara, Peter and Irene Ludwig Foundation, Aachen, DE (2024); *shallow lakes*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, DE (2024); *Emine's Garden*, Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, St. Gallen, CH (2023), among more.

Selected group exhibitions include *DA(ZWISCHEN)SEIN*, Suermondt-Ludwig-Museum, Aachen, DE (2025); *under the weaver's hands*, Kunsthalle Trier, Trier, DE (2025); *Healing the Earth*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, DE (2024); *Being Mediterranean*, MO.CO., Montpellier, FR (2024); *My Oma*, Kunstinstituut Melly, Rotterdam, NL (2023); *Monotypes Edition VFO*, Kunsthalle Zürich, Zürich, CH (2023); *The Reason for Painting*, Mead Gallery, Warwick, UK (2023), among more.

Kara's works are held in major public collections including Centre Pompidou, Paris (FR); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles (US); Yuz Museum, Shanghai (CN); Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM), Miami (US); M WOODS, Beijing (CN); FRAC des Pays de la Loire (FR); and Museum Ludwig, Cologne (DE).



1. **Melike Kara**
hush, softly, 2026
Oil stick, acrylic, coffee, ink on canvas, framed
162 x 122 x 4 cm (63 3/4 x 48 x 1 5/8 inches)
2. **Melike Kara**
blooming, 2026
Oil stick, acrylic, coffee, ink on canvas, framed
222.5 x 162.5 x 4 cm (87 5/8 x 64 x 1 5/8 inches)
3. **Melike Kara**
ways of knowing, 2026
Oil stick, acrylic, coffee, ink on canvas, framed
182 x 162 x 4 cm (71 5/8 x 63 3/4 x 1 5/8 inches)
4. **Melike Kara**
your body remembers, 2026
Oil stick, acrylic, coffee, ink on canvas, framed
162 x 122 x 4 cm (63 3/4 x 48 x 1 5/8 inches)