

Press release

Museum Folkwang

New Work in glass and concrete connects the museum's historic and contemporary buildings

Essen, 10 June 2026 – From 12 June 2026, Museum Folkwang presents *I'm asking*, a new site-specific installation by artist Kate Newby (b. 1979), known for her materially driven practice that engages closely with place and process. Developed especially for Museum Folkwang, the project brings together glass and concrete in a subtle intervention that responds directly to the architecture and conditions of the site. The installation will open on 11 June 2026 in the presence of the artist.

For this commission, Newby selected the transitional area between the museum's original building, opened in 1960, and the extension completed in 2010. Despite their different periods of construction, both buildings share the formal language of modernist architecture, characterised by clean lines, rectangular courtyards, and expansive glass façades.

Glass and concrete, two defining materials of modernism, form the starting point for Newby's work. In her hands, however, they become fragile and responsive materials that bear the traces of their making. On two glass pane doors facing the courtyard, the artist has fused vertical hand-drawn lines and numerous fingerprints into the surface. The three-dimensional texture of the glass work *Good Sound* reacts to light and movement, shifting in appearance throughout the day according to changing conditions and the viewer's perspective. Visitors are invited to touch the glass and experience the traces embedded within the material.

The linear forms of the glass installation continue outdoors in the concrete work *I'm asking*, situated on the lawn of the museum courtyard. Pale, textured concrete lines extend across the space before disappearing behind two small mounds. Here, too, visible traces of touch and pressure remain embedded in the material surface. Embedded fragments of glass collected from the museum's surroundings further connect the two works, creating a dialogue between the interior and exterior spaces of the museum.

Newby's intervention introduces a quieter, more tactile register into the building's precise architectural framework. Raw, and understated, the works unfold gradually, encouraging close attention to subtle shifts in light, material, and surface. Rather than announcing themselves, the works operate through proximity and encounter, drawing attention to details that might otherwise go unnoticed and opening a more attentive reading of the surrounding space. The traces of the artist's hand suggest a physical presence while simultaneously evoking its absence.

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The installation at Museum Folkwang continues an international body of work in which Newby employs linear gestures as spatial markers and traces within public space. Related projects have been realised in Wellington, Munich, Paris, Vienna and Berlin, among other cities. An accompanying fold-out postcard booklet brings these works together and maps the connections between this ongoing body of work.

Kate Newby (Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand) lives and works in Texas, USA. She is among the most internationally recognised artists of her generation and is known for her site-responsive works that engage architecture, materiality and subtle perceptual shifts. Her work has been exhibited at international institutions, including Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Kunsthalle Wien; and Maison Hermès, Le Forum, Tokyo. Recent solo exhibitions include *Hours in wind*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (2025); *anything, anything*, Klostersruine, Berlin (2025); and *She's talking to the wall*, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington (2025). She is the recipient of the New Zealand Arts Laureate Award (2025), the Ettore e Ines Fico Prize (2022), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant (2019), and the Walters Prize (2012).

Information

KATE NEWBY

I'm asking

New Commission

12 June 2026 – 18 April 2027

Opening: 11 June 2026, 7 p.m.

Press image



Kate Newby

Installation view

Good Sound, 2026

Glass, produced at Ateliers Loire (Chartres), 118 x 228,6 cm;
and

I'm asking, 2026

Concrete, oxide, found glass (Essen), 17,85 and 19,77 m;

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