

# ZOHAR FRAIMAN

Travelling without Moving



29.03. —  
26.07.26

**KUNST**  
MUSEUM  
HEIDENHEIM

## Starting Point

In the exhibition **Travelling without Moving**, developed and conceived specifically for the Kunstmuseum Heidenheim, Zohar Fraiman shows new works, which she displays alongside works by Pablo Picasso.

The exhibition aims to present the Berlin-based artist's painterly oeuvre and to create new perspectives on the graphic works from the collection. Fraiman's paintings serve as a contemporary extension and a thematic and technical renewal—or rather, a reinterpretation—of Picasso's works.

## Scenography

Fraiman developed new works specifically for Heidenheim, in which she incorporated references from Picasso's posters and prints, as well as a spatial and colour concept for the Hermann Voith Gallery. The exhibition consists mainly of gallery spaces painted in black. This allows the colour-intensive compositions to gain luminosity and presence in the space. The black also evokes printing ink, thereby establishing a thematic connection to Picasso's works.

The same applies to the narrow sides of the gallery walls, which are painted in the primary colors: yellow, blue, and red. These colours form the basis of all painting, but also of printmaking, in this case a 1956 linocut poster for Vallauris by Picasso.

Additionally, Fraiman positioned silver painted plants next to the paintings, which add an atmosphere that is both natural and artificial, which also is a recurring motif in Fraiman's work.

The dark spaces are arranged around a central light-blue one, whose original four entrances have been reduced to two, creating a clearer visitor route. A new three-dimensional work, "The Fraiman", forms



the centre of the exhibition. Mirrors create an optical enlargement of the space, but also invite the audience to interact with the work. Furthermore, the reflective wall alludes to today's culture of selfies and self-reflection.



### Femininity in Conflict

“Born to Roll” [title of a hip-hop song by Masta Ace] is the starting point for the exhibition and provides a good introduction to understanding how the artist engages with female perspectives in her art. In the centre of the painting the audience may see a convertible, which reminds of Mercedes models from the 1960s. A female figure is lounging on the hood of the car. The rather unnatural pose is reminiscent of the portrayal of female models in the advertising industry.

Especially in the male-dominated world of cars, women are usually relegated to the role of sexy, moving accessories. True to the motto “sex sells,” the message intended for the heterosexual male clientele is that with this car, women will fall for them. Fraiman’s depiction, however, breaks with the conventional body image. Optical distortions, duplications, and the blending with cubist elements make the woman appear fragmented and distorted. In terms of content, this approach can be read as a critique of the display of bodies in advertising and online, i.e. in Social Media. Filters and Photoshop digitally create hyper-bodies, which are no longer natural.

The landscape depicted at the back of the composition underlines the artificial setting. It is merely a backdrop secured with duct tape. A completely different portrayal of women in the media can be found sitting in the car: a transparent image of Cruella de Vil, the famous villainess from Disney’s 101 Dalmatians, appears to be sitting in the convertible. Alongside the faceless model, the villainess is a second, hardly desirable example of how women are portrayed in television. In her book ‘Toxic Femininity’, German writer Sophia Fritz points out that, in the case of male villains, the reasons for their bitterness are often explained as the story unfolds. With their female counterparts, this is generally not the case. They embody pure evil. What is maca-

bre about de Vil is that her aggressive behaviour is rooted in just one thing: her addiction to fashion.

The fact that Fraiman depicts the Disney character in a car is no coincidence, as de Vil owns a classic car called Panther de Ville. This establishes a thematic link to Picasso, whose name adorns a range of cars, as well as to Fraiman, who created her own vehicle for this exhibition.

A lovely detail in the painting is the number plate, which references a motif from a Picasso ceramic piece that is also on display here. For this artist, these small figures symbolise the followers and viewers on social media platforms, from Instagram to OnlyFans. Even though they are small, they are always present, which is why her perspective also influences her own online presence.

### Cubism reinterpreted

This and paintings such as **Twin Peeks** demonstrate, how Fraiman uses Cubist techniques whilst placing them in a new, contemporary context.

In **Twin Peeks** [a play on words referring to the well-known series *Twin Peaks*], Fraiman reworks a painting by Picasso from 1937, which depicts his then partner Dora Maar. In his typical technique, Picasso shows her face simultaneously in full-face and profile views. He breaks it down pictorially into elements of colour and form, as well as strokes.

Zohar Fraiman blends Picasso's painting with the depiction of a woman painted in a distinctly naturalistic style. For instance, Picasso's yellow hand—an anatomically free interpretation—is reproduced by Zohar Fraiman in a different stylistic manner. Although the two figures seem to merge seamlessly into one another, their differing painting styles provoke a sense of disorientation or appear contra-

dictory.

In the case of another female figure in the right-hand half of the picture, the artist renders Picasso's simultaneous presence in a detailed, naturalistic style.

As we are accustomed to seeing reality depicted in this almost photorealistic style, this breaks our seeing habit as can also be



seen in the eight hands depicted.

But why does Fraiman repeatedly and explicitly reference Picasso's works?

There are three interrelated answers to this:

1. The master of Cubism usually did not depict his subjects as 'beautiful'. There are, for example, other well-known portraits of Dora Maar that show her weeping. Today's visual culture, such as that of advertising or social media, on the other hand, is explicitly dedicated to prevailing standards of beauty. If one combines the two, something new emerges.

2. However, Cubism has a second layer of meaning in Fraiman's art, which is characterised by the simultaneity of multiple perspectives. An interest in simultaneity developed in the visual arts and literature at the beginning of the 20th century. Simultaneity was an expression of a world accelerated, amongst other things by mobility. Today, this has taken on an entirely new dimension. Online, we can be everywhere at once. The exhibition title *Travelling without Moving* refers to the internet's constant global presence. Through constant scrolling (so-called doomsscrolling) and swiping, we can travel in our minds. Yet this travelling brings no respite.

3. A third aspect, introduced by the inclusion of a Picasso painting, is the question of who depicts whom and how. Picasso painted his wives and lovers and interpreted them in his own way. The two fragmented women of the present in Fraiman's picture, on the other hand, stage themselves. However, they do so with a mobile phone camera, and for an (anonymous) online audience. That means they are well aware of a spectator's gaze. This poses the question: Is their behaviour independent or driven by the expectations of other people?





### Mash-up

A key technique in Frayman's exhibited paintings is the cultural mash-up: the blending of works from art history with motifs from pop culture, the visual codes of Gen Z, and internet and meme culture.

**Kitty von Krüger** is an example of this approach. Here, too, Picasso's multi-perspective served as inspiration, but Frayman drew upon an reworked two further pieces of art history: one of these is Leonardo da Vinci's **Lady with an Ermine** from 1489/90. Here, it undergoes several updates: the sunglasses, the nail varnish, the fashionable ring and the clothing transport da Vinci's elegant lady into the modern era. In the 15th-century work, fashion was already a central motif through which communication took place. This communication through clothing hasn't lost its relevance, even though the parameters and conditions have shifted dramatically.

Whereas an ermine coat was once a symbol of grandeur and luxury, today it is more likely to be designer clothing and expensive accessories. The background of the painting, with clouds and palm trees, brings to mind influencers in Dubai or other sunny locations.

The second art-historical reference is the cat. The original is by Paula Modersohn-Becker (**Cat in a Child's Arms**, c. 1903).

But why was the ermine replaced by a cat? For one thing, Frayman liked the animal's expression, which reminded her of the famous internet meme 'Grumpy Cat'. On the other hand, cats have become a symbol of the digital attention economy. So-called 'cat content' promises high click-through rates and appears with consistent longevity online.

Frayman's mash-ups can have different appearances, for example when members of the girl group Spice Girls are mixed with Picasso's

Les Demoiselles d'Avignon or when Shego from the animated series Kim Possible sneaks into a selfie.

What all these motifs have in common, however, is that all depicted subjects are female. They often serve as role models, have become iconic, or reference figures created for young girls as they grow up.



### The Overwhelmed Self

The overwhelming demands of the present day – the pressure, particularly on young women, to be constantly online, to present and compare themselves and to mimic the behaviour of online influencers – is symbolically represented in the exhibition by smartphones.

Often the protagonists in Fraiman's works lie exhausted on tabletops or beds, as in the painting **Vacay FOMO** [Vacay, slang for vacation; FOMO: short for Fear of Missing Out].

No fewer than four mobile devices lie in front of the woman. The cables run through the entire composition and do not even stop at two cats.

This painting expresses a sense of powerlessness, overwhelm and the fear of missing out on a current trend, a feeling shared by many young people.

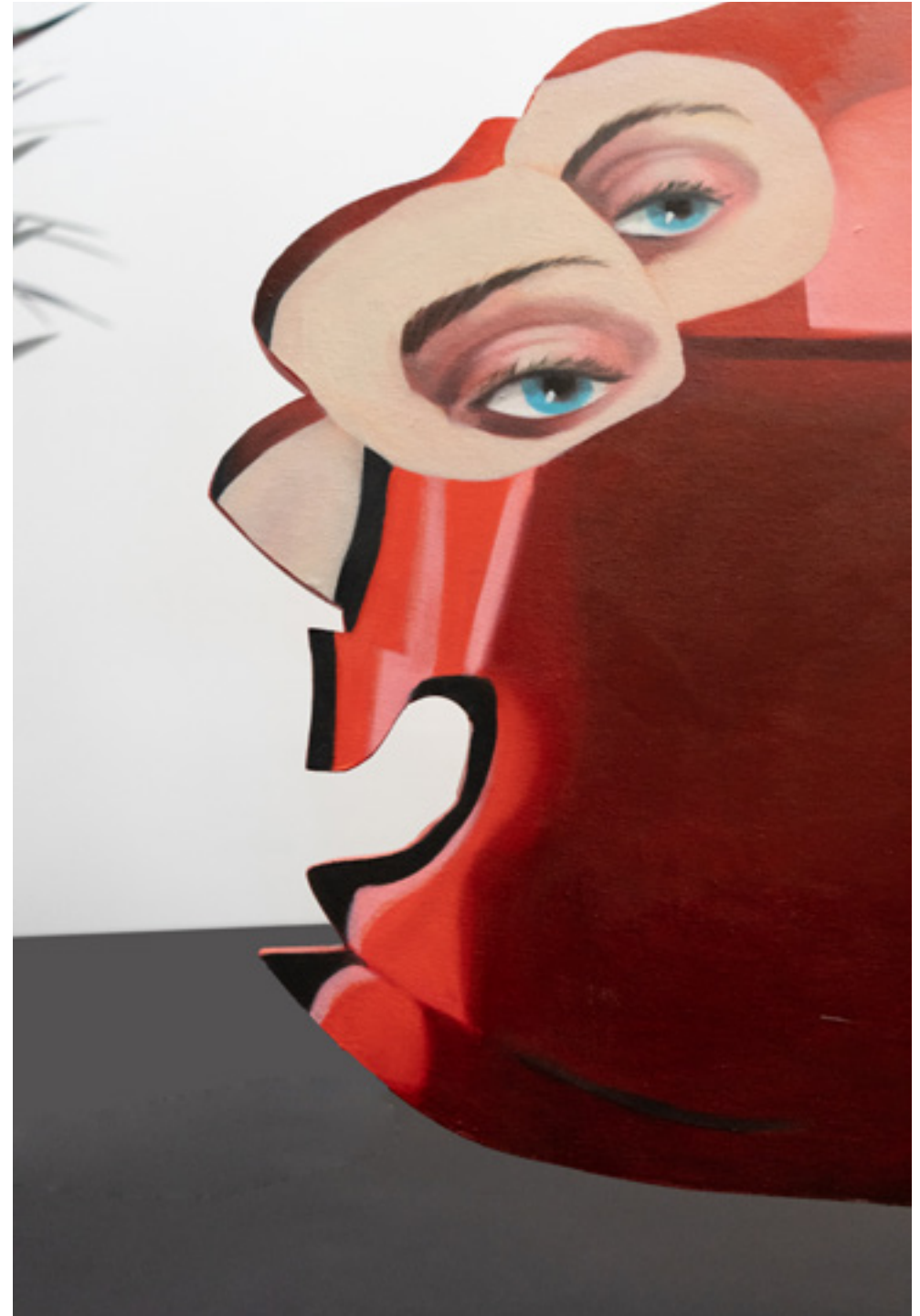
What's interesting is what can be seen on the screens: cocktails, dolphins leaping at sunset, women in bikinis or palm trees. Here, images of an unattainable idyll are displayed; places of longing are staged. As a user, you find yourself dreaming of these places. You travel there virtually, but without moving. On the contrary: the person depicted appears to be lying completely still. **Vacay FOMO** highlights a contradiction of modern times: we are everywhere at once and yet somehow nowhere; we are globally connected and yet alone.

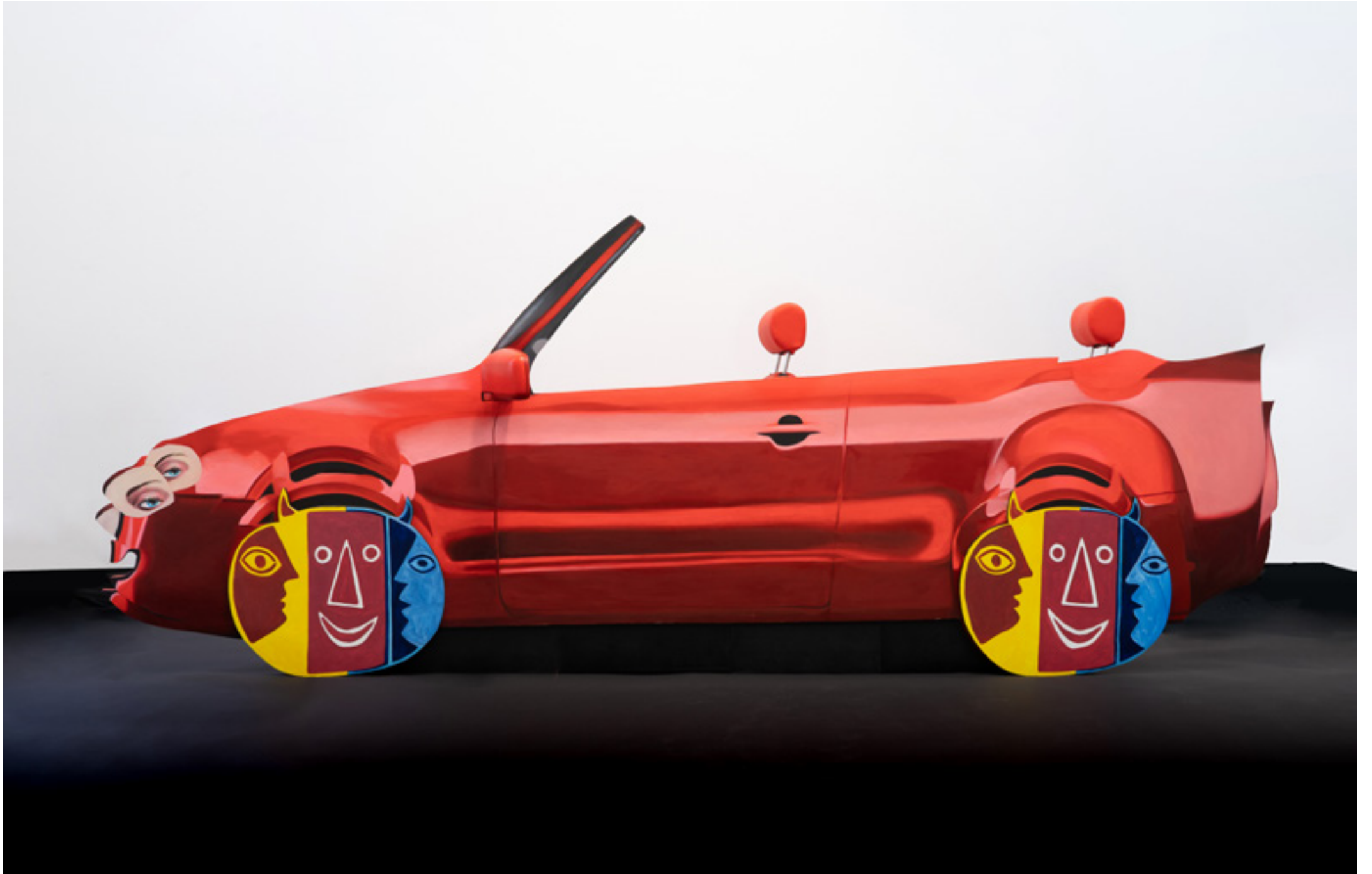
For the artist, this means: Travelling without Moving [title of a song by Jamiroquai and of the show].

### Travelling without Moving: The Fraiman

One of the highlights of the exhibition demonstrates that Fraiman's art is not fatalistic or exclusively negative in its view of the present, but also possesses a great deal of humour, which can be seen in the work The Fraiman.

The artist was fascinated by the fact that some Citroën models are dedicated to a (male) artist and were named "Picasso" and also bear his signature. Without further ado, the artist decided that there should also be a car named after her: The Fraiman. The red sports car has wheels that reference a poster motif by Pablo Picasso, but above all it is an interactive painting brought to life. The public is invited to sit in the car seats, have their photograph taken inside and travel without moving.





## ZOHAR FRAIMAN. Travelling without Moving

29. März - 26. Juli 2026

City of Heidenheim

Text and design: Marco Hompes

### Works depicted

Title /P. 4: Born to Roll, 2025, Oil an Canvas

P. 3: Darse una Torta, 2025, Oil an Canvas

P. 7: Twin Peeks, 2024, Oil an Canvas

P.9: Twin Peeks (Detail), 2024, Oil an Canvas

P. 10: Kitty von Krüger, 2025, Oil an Canvas

P. 12: Vacay FOMO, 2025, Oil an Canvas

P. 14, 15, 16: The Fraiman, 2026, Mixed Media

All works © Zohar Fraiman

Photos: Anna Wasilewski



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