HOYNG - ARTIST PORTFOLIO

WATER CARRIERS

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ARTIST INTRODUCTION & STATEMENT

My work explores the relationship between humanity, nature and our dependence on the elements that sustain life. Water is at the heart of my current artistic practice.

In my Water Carriers series, I portray women carrying water on their heads. The images originate from photographs I have taken in India, a country with which I feel a deep personal connection.
I am fascinated by the strength, dignity and beauty of these women, by their remarkable physical balance and the everyday effort involved in carrying water.

I translate these photographic images into ceramic sculptures, combining photography and clay.
The images are transferred onto ceramic surfaces and incorporated into sculptural forms. By building up different layers, I create depth and a dialogue between image, material and three-dimensional space. The photographs become part of the ceramic object itself, bringing together a moment captured in time and a tangible, lasting form.

Although the women in my work come from a specific cultural context, their stories reach far beyond geography. They represent a universal relationship with water: something we all depend on, yet something we often take for granted. For many women around the world, access to water still means hours of physical labour every day. Their strength and resilience exist alongside a profound inequality in the distribution of one of our most essential resources.

My work is both aesthetic and activist. I use beauty as a way to invite people to look, to pause and to become aware. I want to create a moment of recognition rather than confrontation. When visitors stop to look at my sculptures, conversations often emerge about water, inequality, responsibility and our relationship with nature.

I believe that attention itself has power. When we consciously acknowledge the value of water and our dependence on it, we create space for care, appreciation and change. I believe that this awareness can extend beyond the individual, connecting people through a shared sense of responsibility towards life on Earth.

Through my sculptures, I seek to make the invisible visible: our dependence, our interconnectedness and the preciousness of what sustains us. My work is an invitation to look, to feel and to care.

Understanding the world, but above all, continuing to ask questions
I spent a large part of my life working as a filmmaker for television. I created programmes for and with children, asking questions and inviting them to share their opinions. What has always struck me is their direct, unfiltered way of looking at the world. Children sometimes possess an extraordinary intuitive wisdom — a kind of primal wisdom that adults seem to lose along the way.
I made programmes exploring the differences between women and men, rich and poor, children in the Netherlands and Africa, and children in the Netherlands and India. We explored subjects such as money, prejudices and the way we look at one another.
What is remarkable is that the more we acknowledged our differences, the more clearly our similarities became visible.

WATERCARRIERS





Watercarrier I — Passage

Ceramic, photographic transfer, H60 cm, 2025

WATERCARRIERS





The Carrier II — Elevation

Ceramic, photographic transfer, H60 cm, 2025

WATERCARRIERS





The Carrier III — Stillness

Ceramic, photographic transfer, H40 cm, 2025

WATERCARRIERS





The Carrier IV — Together

Ceramic, photographic transfer, H35 cm, 2025

WATERCARRIERS





The Carrier V — Resting

Ceramic, photographic transfer, H30 cm, 2025

WATERCARRIERS

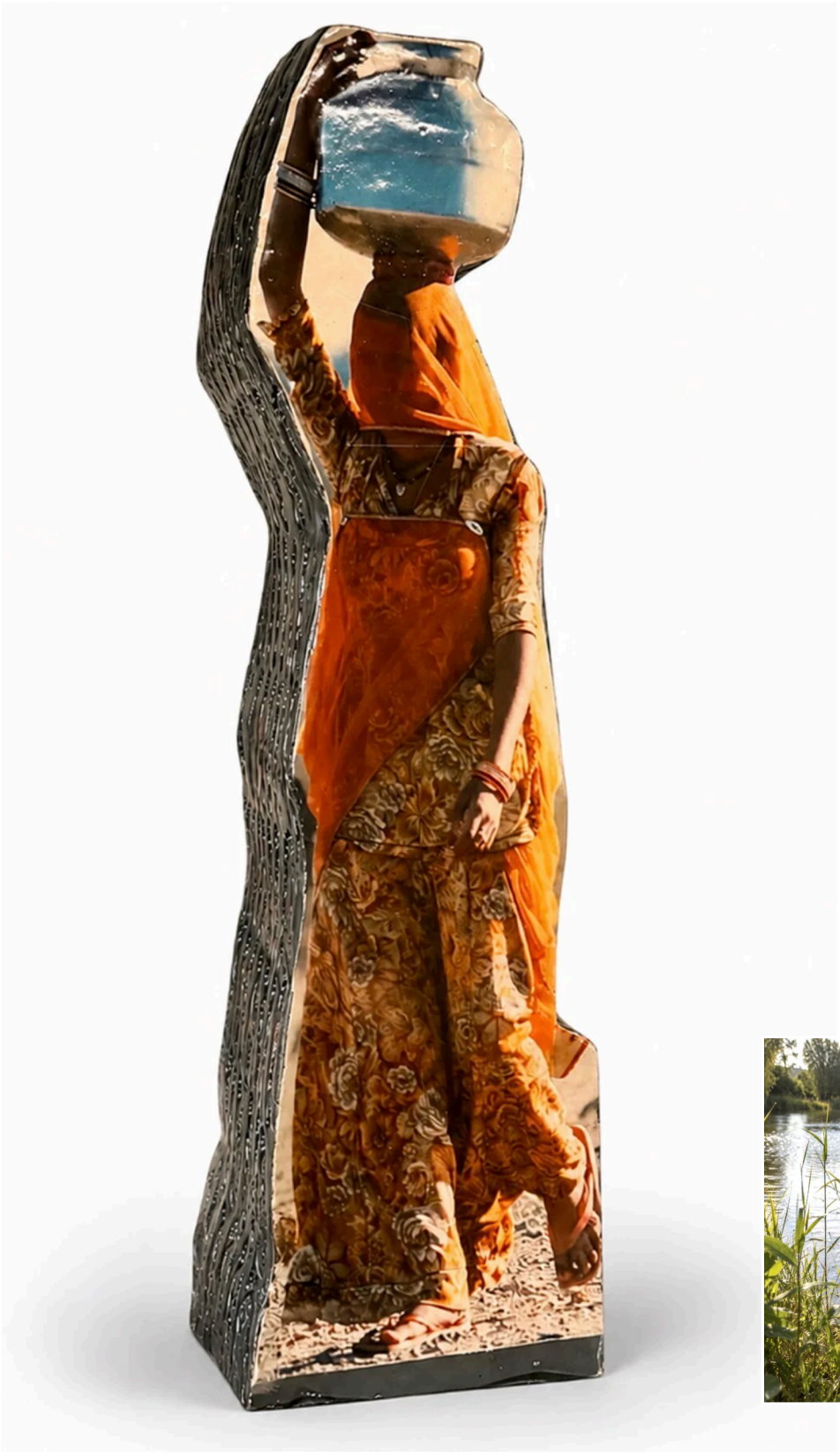




The Carriers VI — Speed

Ceramic, photographic transfer, H35 cm, 2024

WATERCARRIERS





The Carrier VII — Holding

Ceramic, photographic transfer, H60 cm, 2025

ART AS AWARENESS

Art that awakens awareness

I make art because there are things in the world I cannot understand, and cannot simply look away from. The Water Carriers series began with photographs I took in India. I was fascinated by the women: their beauty, colourful clothing and remarkable strength as they carried heavy pots of water on their heads. Gradually, I began to see another reality behind these powerful images: the unequal access to clean water, and the enormous differences in the effort people have to make to obtain something so essential to life.

Water is a basic human need, yet it is not equally available to everyone. For some, it flows effortlessly from a tap. For others, obtaining it means walking long distances and carrying heavy loads every day.

My work explores the relationship between beauty and inequality, abundance and scarcity, privilege and vulnerability. It raises questions about our dependence on water, our relationship with nature and our responsibility towards the world we share.

When I present my work at art fairs and exhibitions, I often hand out flyers and start conversations with visitors. These encounters have become an important part of the project. People share their concerns, their experiences and sometimes their doubts. Some wonder what would happen if our water supply were suddenly interrupted. Others begin to think about how vulnerable our everyday comforts really are. One visitor told me that after our conversation, he was going to start storing water at home.

I find these moments meaningful. Not because I want to frighten people or tell them what to do, but because something happens when we stop and give our attention to a subject. We begin to see what we usually take for granted.

I believe that attention itself has a kind of energy. When we give water our attention, when we feel gratitude for it and become more conscious of our dependence on it, we create an energy of care and appreciation. I believe that this energy can resonate beyond ourselves, reaching other people and perhaps even the universe. Small shifts in awareness can inspire conversations, influence choices and contribute to positive change.

I do not believe art has to provide answers or preach a message. It can create a space in which people look differently, question their assumptions and connect with one another.

My work is socially engaged, with an activist undertone, but it is also an invitation: to become more aware, more connected and more appreciative of the life around us.

I make art because I have questions to which I do not know the answers. And because I believe that giving attention to what matters can be the beginning of change.



WORKING PROCESS

Working with clay and phototransfers

In 2020 Femke started to work with clay. The material offered many surprising possibilities than the materials she was used to work with, such as plywood, paper photos and film/video techniques in which she had become deeply proficient. The spatiality and depth she had always researched was suddenly no l onger a goal, but the starting point.

The photo-transfer technique, which allows firing photos onto clay at high temperatures, brings endless new possibilities and continues her ongoing research into combinations of material and narrative.

The Making Process – From Photograph to Sculpture

My sculptures begin with a photograph of an Indian woman carrying water on her head. I carefully cut out her silhouette and have the image transformed into a ceramic photographic decal, made with glaze-based pigments.

Using an enlarged copy of the image as a template, I shape two clay slabs, one for the front and one for the back. I connect them with strips of clay, creating a hollow, three-dimensional form that follows the woman's original silhouette and posture.

I decorate the sides and back with traditional Indian wooden stamps, adding patterns and textures to the clay. After drying, the sculpture undergoes its first firing (bisque firing), followed by glazing and a second high-temperature firing.

Once cooled, I carefully apply the photographic decal to the glazed front surface. A third, lower-temperature firing fuses the pigments permanently with the ceramic glaze.

The result is a sculptural artwork in which photography, clay and traditional craftsmanship come together. The photograph does not simply decorate the sculpture; it determines its shape and becomes an integral, permanent part of the ceramic object.

SELECTED WORKS

Ceramic Tile Panels – 2026

My ceramic tile panels refer to the historical tradition of decorative wall tableaux, often depicting scenes from distant lands and colonial territories. In the past, these glazed ceramic images were displayed in Dutch kitchens and living spaces, creating a connection with worlds far beyond everyday life. I reinterpret this tradition through photographic transfers, ceramic relief and handmade ornamental borders, created by pressing stamps into the clay.

My background as an animator is reflected in the way I work with images. In the panel depicting a girl lifting a bucket, successive postures create a sense of movement, almost like a sequence from an animation film. By placing the photographic figure on a raised ceramic relief, I bring the image into three dimensions. In this way, I combine a historical art form with my own experience of animation, photography and ceramics.



Voluminous
30x30 cm



Traction
30x40 cm



The Bucket and the Girl
40x40 cm

SELECTED WORKS

Ceramic Sculptures – 2023–2025

These sculptural works explore organic forms, nature, animals and cultural imagery.
Through shape, texture and colour, familiar references are transformed into expressive ceramic objects, balancing figuration and abstraction.



The Hindustan Gods series
H 30 cm



The Octopus Series
H 45 cm



The Plants Series
H 40 cm



The Tree Series
H 30 cm



The Volcano Series
H 40 cm

SELECTED WORKS

Design Winebox - Since 2022

The Winebox is an elegant ceramic casing designed to hold a bag-in-a-box of wine, fruit juice, or olive oil. Femke Hoyng has transformed an existing cardboard design into a charming piece of art that can be used in everyday life.



Winebox beschilderd
15x20x30 cm
tafeltje + 7 cm



Winebox met fototransfers
15x20x30 cm
tafeltje + 7 cm

SELECTED WORKS

Art & Spirit
Theme since 2012

Since 2012, Hoyng has explored the relationship between art, belief, symbolism and spirituality. Religious and prehistoric imagery becomes the starting point for sculptural interpretations that question the meaning and value of objects, rituals and symbols.

Belief gives meaning. In religion, people place their trust in shared stories, values and rituals that connect them to something greater than themselves. This conviction offers direction, comfort and confidence.
For an artist, belief works differently. It is trust in an idea and in the creative process. Through making, reflecting, doubting and beginning again, an artwork gradually proves its own value. Some ideas are abandoned, others grow stronger. An artist's confidence comes partly from this inner conviction, but it is also shaped by the way others respond to the work.



Prehistoric Animals
20X30 cm



The Cross Series
35x25 cm



Religious Buildings
120x120 cm

SELECTED WORKS

Photographic 3D Objects – 1995–2020

In these works, photography moves beyond the flat image. Layered constructions, relief and sculptural frames transform documentary photographs into spatial objects. Patterns and symbols connect each work to the cultural context in which the photograph was taken.

These 'photoboxes' stem from research into how people perceive depth. To explore this, Femke took photos containing as much depth as possible: foreground, background, and preferably as many layers in between as possible. The photos themselves have not been manipulated; the flat surface has merely been stretched into a spatial dimension. Femke places the relief in a (sometimes hinged) frame upon which she paints colourful patterns and symbols that enter into a dialogue with the culture of the country where the photo was taken.



Dry Fish – 2010
100 × 70 cm



Bridesmaids – 2009
80 × 50 cm



Crises– 2012
120 × 80 cm



Train – 2008
40 × 30 cm

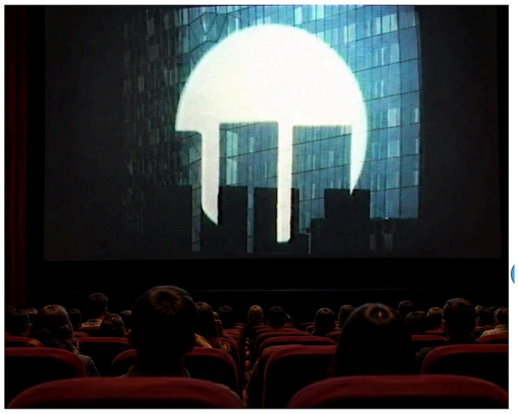
SELECTED WORKS

Animation Films & TV Series – 1990–2015

Between 1990 and 2015, Femke Hoyng created more than 50 films and television productions, combining live-action footage with hand-drawn animation. Her children's series were broadcast on Dutch television, while her experimental animated films were screened at international film festivals. Music, movement and visual experimentation are central to this body of work.



KRAZZ – Charles Mingus in London
Drawn on 16mm-filmlayer
2,5 min



LOS – Urbanisation
3D Animationfilm with video-images
5 min



By the Feel
Videoclip about Eric Vloeimans
6 min



Stuck in Mud
Art Videoclip
5 min

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

My research explores our relationship with water and the women who, every day, walk long distances to collect and transport it. Their daily struggle raises an urgent question: Could this become our future? What if a cyberattack disrupts our water supply? What if an extreme climate crisis leaves us without access to clean drinking water? Would we then begin our own daily search for water, just as millions of women around the world do today?

How aware are we of our dependence on this essential resource? We turn on a tap and water flows. We rarely stop to consider how vulnerable this seemingly effortless access really is.

Through my artistic research, I want to connect their daily reality with our possible future. To make the invisible visible, challenge our sense of security and invite reflection on the value of water before its absence forces us to understand it.

A Possible Future
I envision a landscape of large-scale, life-sized sculptures made from raw, unglazed clay. Their surfaces reveal the earthy colours of dry, cracked soil and wet clay — a landscape shaped by the textures of drought and water.
Across this landscape, a line of women walks, carrying water. Their figures are created using photographic transfers embedded in the clay. But these are no longer the women we associate with distant, unfamiliar countries. They are us. Women from our own society, carrying water because clean drinking water is no longer readily available.

The familiar becomes unfamiliar. The distant becomes dangerously close. There is beauty in the earthy materials, in the rhythm of the walking figures and in the human presence. But there is also something unsettling, even frightening. Suddenly, this reality feels very close to home.

What if these women are not showing us someone else's present, but our own future?



Movement
Each woman is depicted in a different phase of walking, with her body captured in a successive position of the step. When the viewer moves their eyes quickly along the row of sculptures, the figures seem to come alive. A sense of movement emerges, almost like a sequence of animation — a procession of women moving through the landscape, carrying water.

This approach connects my background in animation with sculpture and photography. The individual figures remain still, yet together they create the illusion of movement through time and space.

BIOGRAPHY

Femke Hoyng is a Dutch interdisciplinary artist currently working at the intersection of ceramics and photography. Her practice explores the relationship between material, narrative, and social urgency.

She studied audiovisual design at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and began her career as a filmmaker in the film and television industry. She produced numerous children's series, often using children's perspectives on everyday topics as a starting point. Additionally, she created artistic animated films based on music, which were frequently screened at international film festivals.

At the same time, driven by her interest in photography, she developed a manual technique to transform the flat (photographic) plane into a three-dimensional form: she would literally stack photographs mounted on wooden panels to create a third dimension, resulting in what she calls her "photo boxes" .

Through further experimentation with different materials, she discovered ceramics, incorporating photographic transfers that could be fired onto clay. This led to the development of her independent sculptural practice.

Her work stems from traveling, observing, and documenting, which she then translates into tangible forms. She views the act of making not as an end point, but as a process in which stories gradually unfold.

Central to her work is the concept of "making" as a form of connection. In her recent projects, she incorporates imagery of women in India—water carriers—into ceramic sculptures. These objects carry not only water but also personal and collective narratives concerning climate change, scarcity, and resilience.

Her approach is intuitive and investigative, leaving room for imperfection and the unexpected. Material plays an active role here: clay, sculpture, photography and animation interact with one another, forming a layered whole. Each object bears traces of both the creative process and the context from which it emerged.

Her work can be seen as a plea for attentiveness and slowing down in a world under pressure. By connecting personal narratives with global themes, she creates work that is both intimate and urgent: an invitation to look differently at water, at care, and at the role we ourselves play within these realms.

Hoyng lives and works in both the Netherlands and France.

CONTACT

For exhibitions, gallery representation and general inquiries

For Press requests, curatorial inquiries and private viewings.

Selected works available upon request.

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