

Betül Aydın

PORTFOLIO — SELECTED WORKS

Betül Aydın

VISUAL ARTIST & ARTISTIC RESEARCHER

Turkish-French · Munich, Germany

betulaydin.com · betul@betulaydin.com · [@betulphoto](https://www.instagram.com/betulphoto)

BIO

Betül Aydın is a visual artist born and raised in Turkey, currently based in Germany. Working primarily with photography and extending into film, installation and text, her practice explores how memory, care, and belonging are shaped across generations through inherited narratives and displacement. She works through sustained, long-term engagement with people and places.

Since becoming a mother of two, she has increasingly engaged with the maternal psyche and the politics of care, exploring care as both lived experience and social condition. Her work addresses the tensions between personal realities and normative ideas of family, and the experience of distance and proximity that defines both migration and motherhood.

A recent Goethe-Institut residency extended this inquiry toward migrant motherhood and queer forms of belonging, examining the care networks people construct when legal and social structures offer limited support. This work has been further supported by a Culture Moves Europe mobility grant.

Working at the intersection of conceptual and documentary photography, Aydın creates images that weave intimate personal narratives with broader cultural and political questions.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Photography, for me, is a way of attending to what often remains overlooked: the labor of care, the knowledge held in aging bodies, and the forms of belonging people create when recognition is limited or denied.

My work emerges from lived experience as a woman, a migrant, and a mother. It develops through an ongoing engagement with how social, cultural, and institutional structures shape identity.

I am drawn to lives and spaces that fall outside dominant narratives of productivity, family, and home, and to what they carry across generations. Working with images drawn from domestic environments and family archives, I explore how memory persists through fragments, repetitions, and material traces.

Rather than resolving these tensions, I allow them to remain present—between closeness and distance, belonging and displacement, and between the knowledge the body carries and the roles it is asked to perform.

Through this process, my work brings personal histories into relation with broader social conditions, creating space for different layers of experience to be seen together.

Between Homes (2026 - ongoing)

Between Homes is an ongoing artistic research project that explores belonging, care, and the many ways people create home across experiences of migration and displacement. Beginning with my own experience as a migrant mother, the work has expanded through long-term conversations with individuals and families in Sofia, Bulgaria. It engages with migrant motherhood and queer forms of belonging, focusing on how people create networks of care and a sense of home within shifting social, cultural, and legal conditions.

Working across photography, moving image, text, and installation, I bring together fragments of domestic spaces, personal reflections, and shared stories. The work explores experiences of distance, absence, and connection, including my own position as a mother working away from my children.

The project is being developed as a domestic installation combining photographs, film, text, and archival material, allowing multiple voices and temporalities to coexist. An early chapter of Between Homes was presented in the exhibition Reframing Family: Feminist Perspectives Through the Lens at the Goethe-Institut Sofia (2026), and the project continues to develop through ongoing artistic research, most recently supported by a Culture Moves Europe mobility grant.

Selected publication

Queer Sofia, June 2026

www.queersofia.org/interviews/betul-aydin

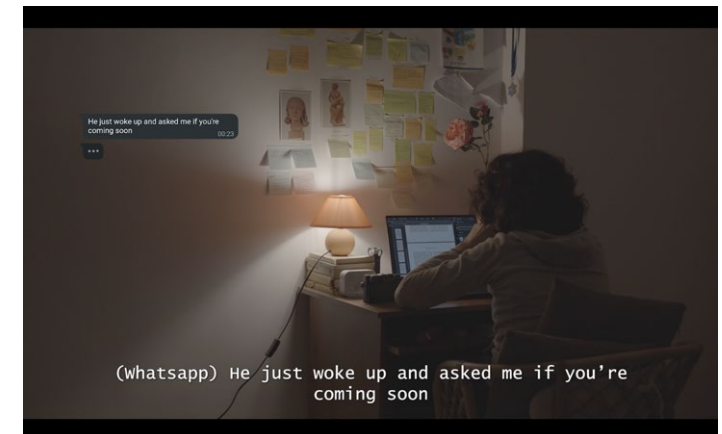




Between Homes – Essay Film

Between Homes also takes the form of a 10-minute essay film that brings together moving image, sound, recorded conversations, and fragments of digital communication to reflect on motherhood, care, distance, and mediated presence. Emerging from my time away from my family during an artist residency, the film explores how family life continues to be lived across physical separation, and how artistic practice remains inseparable from the responsibilities of care. Rather than following a linear narrative, it unfolds through fragments, allowing intimate moments to resonate with broader questions of migration, belonging, and home.

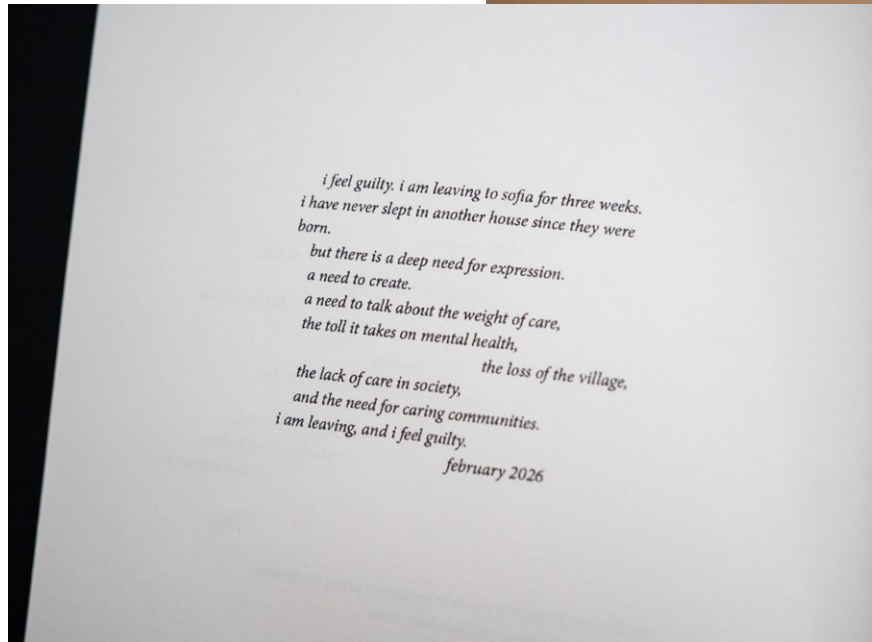
[View Film](#) (Google Drive)



Between Homes – Artist's Book

Built from my diary entries written between 2021 and 2026, the artist's book reflects on motherhood, care, and the search for a self beyond caregiving. It brings my diary into conversation with excerpts from Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born*, placing two women's experiences of motherhood alongside one another across fifty years and revealing the persistence of expectations placed on mothers.

Displayed on a desk within a domestic setting, the book forms part of an installation that explores a woman's attempt to make sense of the roles assigned to her by culture and society.



*i feel guilty. i am leaving to sofia for three weeks.
i have never slept in another house since they were
born.
but there is a deep need for expression.
a need to create.
a need to talk about the weight of care,
the toll it takes on mental health,
the loss of the village,
the lack of care in society,
and the need for caring communities.
i am leaving, and i feel guilty.
february 2026*

Installation view – Reframing Family: Perspectives Through the Lens

Goethe-Institut Gallery, Sofia, Bulgaria

25.06.2026 – 31.08.2026

Group exhibition

Between Homes takes the form of a domestic installation bringing together photographs, moving image, sound, text, and archival material. Through fragmented domestic spaces, recorded conversations, family archives, and material traces, the installation explores how belonging is sustained through care, memory, repetition, and mediated presence. Rather than following a linear narrative, it allows multiple voices and temporalities to coexist, inviting viewers to move through experiences of migration, family, distance, and home.

First presented as part of Reframing Family: Feminist Perspectives Through the Lens at the Goethe-Institut Sofia (2026), the installation continues to evolve alongside the ongoing artistic research project.

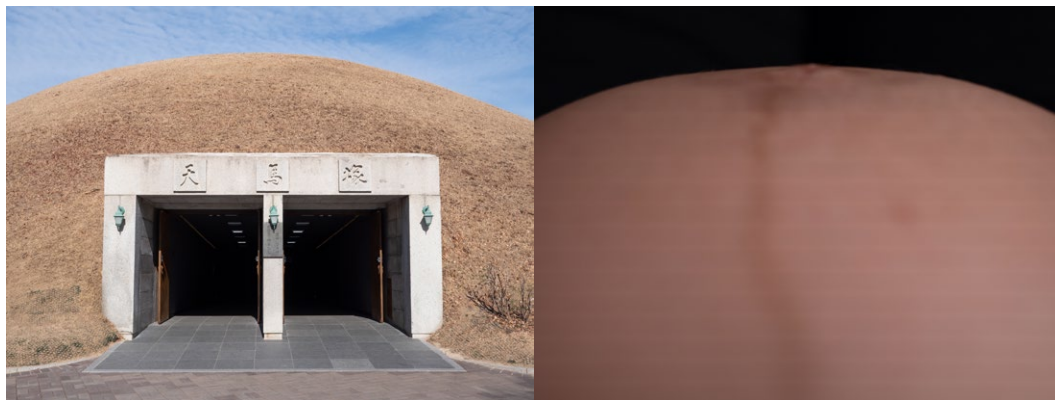


Perfect Mother (2020 - ongoing)

Perfect Mother builds on my earlier explorations of memory, belonging, and identity, turning inward to examine the maternal psyche through the language of landscape. Drawing on my personal experience as a mother of two young children, the series reflects the tensions and contradictions that shape motherhood.

The title references the societal ideal of the "perfect mother" - a tireless, selfless figure of care and devotion - and the friction this myth generates between inner truth and external expectation. Through conceptual pairings of natural and constructed environments, the series maps the psychological terrain of motherhood as a space where instinct, duty, intimacy, and isolation coexist. At the same time, it traces the fragile connections between body, psyche, and environment, revealing instinctive, ancestral knowledge often overlooked by patriarchal, institutional, and cultural expectations.





We were on the same branch (2016 - ongoing)

We Were on the Same Branch is a meditation on memory, time, and belonging. Set in my grandmother's home in rural Anatolia - a space marked by cracks, textures, and traces of past lives - the work explores how memory folds back on itself, how time circles rather than progresses. Using family archives collected from different relatives, I weave together photographs of people, rooms, and objects to reveal the threads that connect generations. The gestures repeat, the fabrics reappear, the rooms hold their laughter - each echoing what has been and what is no longer. These small recurrences hold both presence and absence, weaving a sense of longing, continuity, and belonging that lingers in the spaces we call home.

The project is designed as a mock up photobook (17.5 x 23 cm 82 pages).





Mock up photobook - 17.5 × 23 cm, 82 pages

Installation view – We were on the same branch

Super+Centercourt, Munich

23.06.2023 – 15.07.2023

Solo exhibition

"[...] As much as we know that change is a constant in life, don't we still wish we could hold on to some moments forever? That is perhaps where Aydin's photographs come in, as the eternal guardian of this room and its memories. Interestingly, the way she photographs is not a mere documentation of what she found in the house. It is a photograph that intentionally wants to talk to the past, that is born as nostalgic. Making us wonder if the photos are from recently or from some distant past. Or, as Roland Barthes says "the realists (...) do not take photographs for a copy of reality, but for an emanation of past reality, a magic, not an art."

Extract from the curatorial text





Installation view - BeLonging

PLATFORM, Munich

19.10.2023 – 10.11.2023

Group exhibition

"The exhibition reflects on the concepts of 'belonging' and 'longing', viewing them as a complex and ongoing process that shapes who we are. By making use of languages, geographical references, sounds, and visual memories, the artists elaborate on their experience of displacement and sense of identity while living in an environment that is different from "home". Through their art, they reflect on the ambivalent feelings of trying to belong to a place while longing for another."

Extract from the exhibition description



© Birgit Haubner



© Birgit Haubner



© Birgit Haubner



© Birgit Haubner

Babaanne (2017 - ongoing)

Babaanne - meaning "paternal grandmother" - is an ongoing series of photographs taken during my visits to my grandmother's village. Following her steps, I observe the rhythms of her daily walks and the landscapes that shaped her life. The work reflects on presence, aging, and the quiet persistence of memory embedded in movement and routine. Each gesture, each step, becomes a meditation on time.

Babaanne extends the exploration of family and memory that began in *We Were on the Same Branch*, tracing how identity and a sense of belonging are carried across generations. By observing my grandmother moving through streets, fields, and the cemetery, her presence becomes a living thread connecting past and present, evoking a sense of place and ancestry.







Harran (2017 – 2018)

In the arid plains of southeastern Turkey, 45 km south of Urfa near the Syrian border, Harran is a city shaped by sun, soil, and centuries of human habitation. I photographed domestic spaces and landscapes that frame daily life. The series explores how everyday routines, gestures, and objects carry memory and identity, tracing the quiet rhythms that structure life. The images reflect on the textures of rural existence and the emotional architectures that hold families together. Harran continues my exploration of how people inhabit place, navigate time, and create meaning through presence, movement, and the material traces of life.



