

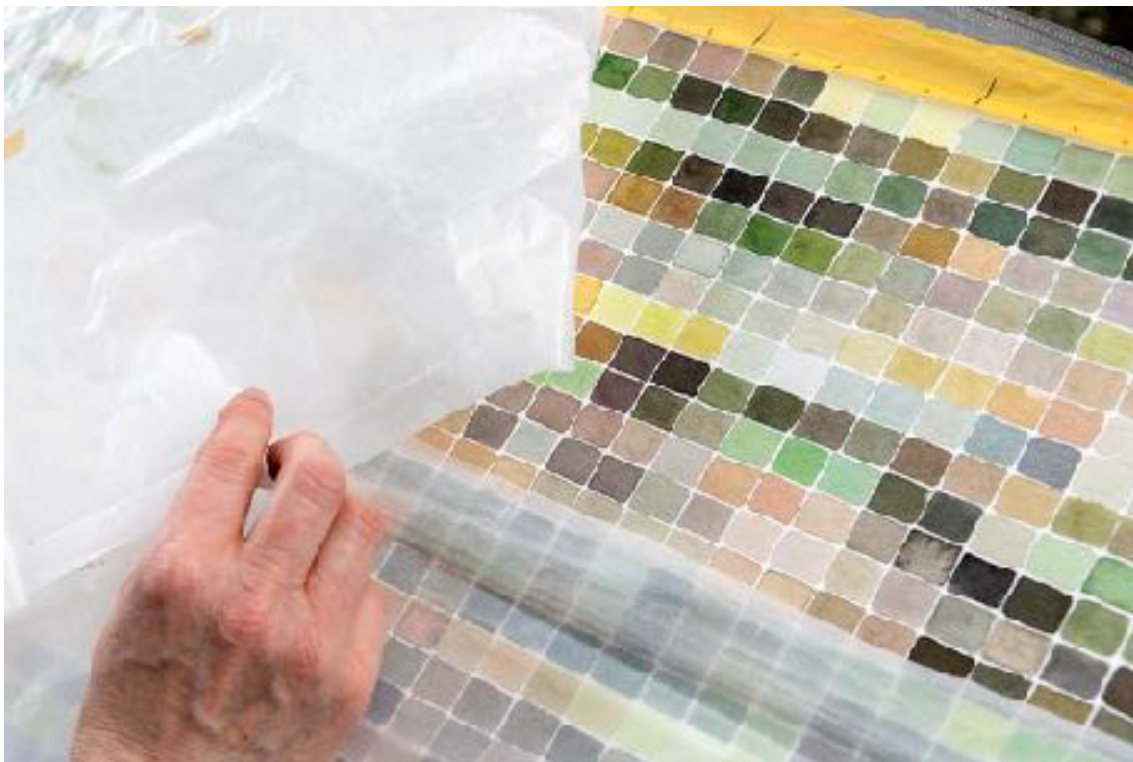
Marina Schulze – Plane Trees aD

The Fall of the Plane Trees on the Dyke – An Artistic Investigation

Marina Schulze seeks to capture the 131 plane trees along the river Kleine Weser in Bremen with colour portraits and dedicates a colour essence to each individual tree, created from a blend of individual colours. To this end, she mixes 81 shades using watercolours that reflect the colours she perceives in each respective plane tree. In a kind of interactive performance, sitting in front of the tree, she attempts to capture the surrounding influences, such as the atmosphere on site, the condition of the trees and the changing light condition. The comments and questions from passers-by who approach her also play a key role in this.

In addition, large-scale colour studies are created, which showcase the rich variety of colors in the row of trees and allow a direct comparison of 20 trees on a single sheet. Marina Schulze began the Plane Tree aD project in May 2025 and has since documented 67 of the 131 trees with color studies. From 10th August, the series will continue to record the remaining 65 plane trees along the city route. Weather permitting, visitors can watch Marina Schulze at work on site.

If work on the dyke along the ‚Stadtstrecke‘ begins in 2027, the trees in the section in front of Becks Brewery (no. 131-78) will be felled first. As she wishes to dedicate a color portrait and essence to each of the 131 plane trees, she is running out of time, for the last shall be first!



A tribute to the more than 130 plane trees on the dyke in Bremen's Neustadt district.

Pictorial impressions, broken down into colour fields, give rise to an analytical tableau that invites reflection on endangered nature, transience and beauty. Discussions and disputes have been ongoing for several years regarding the preservation of this approximately 70-year-old tree-lined scenery, which shapes the cityscape and brings great well-being to local residents. This is because the trees are due to be felled as part of a necessary upgrade to the state flood defence dyke.

As early as 2016, the citizens' initiative (BI) 'Platanen am Deich' was founded to protest against the planned felling of 136 plane trees in Bremen's Neustadt district as part of the 'Stadtstrecke' project. Among other things, this has resulted in an alternative concept for flood protection along the river Kleine Weser, which provides for the preservation of the plane trees to the greatest extent possible. The BI publishes an annual photo calendar, and artists develop installations and projects that engage with the trees. For Marina Schulze, a visual artist from Bremen, the plane trees on the dyke embody a conflict, which she wishes to honour with her project 'Platanen a D'.



In her view, these very large trees are precisely what urban development so urgently needs in the face of climate change: they absorb several tonnes of CO₂ from the air each year, act as a 'green lung' in summer by providing shade and cooling, and yet are, in all likelihood, set to be felled in the coming years and replaced by metre-high concrete

shoring walls. Even though it is understandable that flooding in Bremen's Neustadt district must be prevented at all costs.

Marina Schulze aims to draw attention to this conflict by focusing on each individual tree, capturing its multicolored appearance 'in situ' in her portrait color studies, and to raise public awareness of the issue. Whilst working on the color studies, she captures the surrounding impressions. Marina Schulze also notes down comments and questions from passers-by and associates them with the trees, for example:

"You're an activist!" (plane tree no. 6),
"That's the most beautiful thing here" (no. 8)
"Thank you for giving the trees your attention; they deserve it." (no. 19)
"Is this a kind of mapping?" (no. 25)
"You're changing something in 50 people's minds here every day!" (no. 34)
"Anyone who knows what they're talking about will confirm that no trees are allowed to stand on a dyke." (no. 36)
"What you're doing there also seems out of step with the times," (no. 42)
"As long as they're still standing." (no. 24 and no. 30),
"I'm already thinking of moving so I don't have to watch them being felled!"
(a comment that comes up more frequently)

In 2025, the color studies were created for plane tree no. 1 on the St. Pauli Deich up to no. 44 at Brautstraße. This year, Marina Schulze will continue the project from March 2026, and anyone passing by is welcome to take part and watch.



In front of Plane Tree no. 40, 26th August 2025, 14:50-16pm and 28th August 2025, 13:30-15:15pm
Watercolor on paper, Photos: Jens Weyers © Marina Schulze, VG Bild-Kunst Bonn



Color essences no. 1-41, watercolor essence of no. 41 and
Platane aD Nr. 41, 3rd September 2025, 9:45am-14pm
Watercolor on paper, 15 x 11 cm, photo: Marina Schulze