What if to engage in the act of writing W, the letter banned until recently from use in official documents in Lithuania? How can we write it in such a way as to resist power and control and to celebrate freedom and identity? I attempted to write W in Lithuania with red and white barrier tape, noting the Polish as the largest minority there and Ws frequently appearing in the Polish language and their names. The casual acts formed playful temporary sculptures, which are then further transformed into various media afterwards.



stop-motion video *Sculpture of W (ribbon)*

a series of **Sculpture of *W***
2024-2025
acts / momentary sculptures (barrier tape)
length (barrier tape used for acts): 500 cm
as a part of the project *Control & Solidarity - How do you want stories to be told?* at SODAS 2123, Vilnius, Lithuania

W as a Mark of Minorities

I visited an area called the Lithuanian Appendix, which extends out into Belarusian territory and is almost entirely surrounded by it. There, the national borders have swayed throughout history, the inhabitants speak Polish, Belarusian, Russian, Lithuanian and/or Tutejszy, and address Lithuanians as 'they/them', instead of 'we/us'.

In the churchyard, of which parish divided by the national border with Belarus, I saw a person distinguishing the Polish origin of the deceased, by finding the letter W on his/her gravestone.

I leant that Poles are the largest minority in Lithuania, as a consequence of Lithuania and Poland having been a federated state for centuries, and that the letter W was banned from official use until 2022, while the letter is essential to the Polish language and identity.

Cursive, Red and White

It led to *Dictation of W*, a workshop with a Polish-speaking person in a historical Polish cemetery in Vilnius, which had been abandoned until 2005, to read out the words including the letter W inscribed on gravestones, using 'dictation' as a metaphor for the counteraction to the suppression. The series of works *Sculpture of W* were made as translations of this preceding workshop.

Act of Writing the Forbidden Letter

What if to engage in the act of writing the letter W, which was once forbidden by the authorities? How can we write it in such a way as to resist power and control and celebrate identity and freedom?

I happened to have red & white barrier tape, and I got ideas about how to write a W with it - contrasting with the rigidity of official duties and the heaviness and magnitude of power monuments, referring to the sports the Soviet Union used as a crucial tool to promote communist ideology, and celebrating identity and freedom. The result was a series of temporary sculptures made through casual and playful acts.

Sculpture of W (ribbon) I connected the barrier tape to a stainless steel ruler, to make something like a ribbon stick for rhythmic gymnastics. In the outdoor space, I attempted to write W in cursive using this apparatus, performing the movements that are called 'spiral' and 'snake' to make circles and waves.

Sculpture of W (bar) I wore the barrier tape, twining and hanging it around my hands and neck. I jumped to a high bar in the outdoor space, and after hanging from it for a while, I landed. Like the ending pose in artistic gymnastics, I raised my hands and flung my head back to stretch the barrier tape, forming the shape of a W.

Sculpture of W (table tennis) At SODAS 2123, there is a common space with a ping pong table and twin windows behind. I wove the barrier tape through the ceiling rail for the electric cables, trying to form a *W* hanging, large, loose and "monumental" in its own way.

Further translations of these acts in Lithuania were also made:

Sculpture of W (ribbon, variations 'float' / 'run') Two photographic prints, capturing the moment when the letter W was beautifully formed. Mounted on Plexiglas to gain a sculptural/monumental quality with its volume yet remain light.

Sculpture of W (ribbon) A stop-motion one-minute video, capturing the movement of the artist back and forth awkwardly. Played in loop on a screen.

Sculpture of W (primal correction) A drawing mimicking the movement of a barrier tape. Drawn with a Japanese calligraphy brush and vermillion Sumi ink, which is used by calligraphy masters to instruct or correct pupils, on Kana calligraphy paper, of which smooth surface is meant for delicate cursive brush strokes.





(left page)
A still from *Sculpture of* W *(ribbon)*. An act attempting to write W with a ruler connected to a five meter of barrier tape.

(right page)
A still from *Sculpture of* W *(bar)*. An act attempting to write W with a barrier tape twining around my body:

Installation view of *Sculpture of* W *(table tennis)*, SODAS 2123, Vilnius, Lithuania. The trace of an act attempting to write W with a barrier tape, hunging from the ceiling by a ping-pong table:

Installation view of *Sculpture of* W *(primal correction)*, Konsthall 16 / National Museum of Sports, Stockholm, Sweden. The trace of an act attempting to write W with vermillion ink and calligraphy brush on Japanese calligraphy paper.







Sculpture of W (ribbon), 2024. Act / Momentary sculpture (red and white barrier tape)

The letter W is essential for the names and language of the Poles, Lithuania's largest minority.
In response to Lithuania's ban on using W in official documents, which lasted until 2022,
I wrote the letter in Lithuania, using barrier tape and mimicking the movements of rhythmic gymnastics.

The act is a translation of *Dictation of W,* a workshop with a Polish-speaking person at a Polish cemetery in Vilnius.

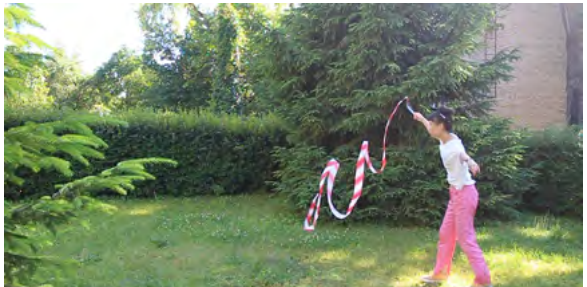
Two photographic works were made from the documentation of the act (Diasec, 50 x 83 cm each).











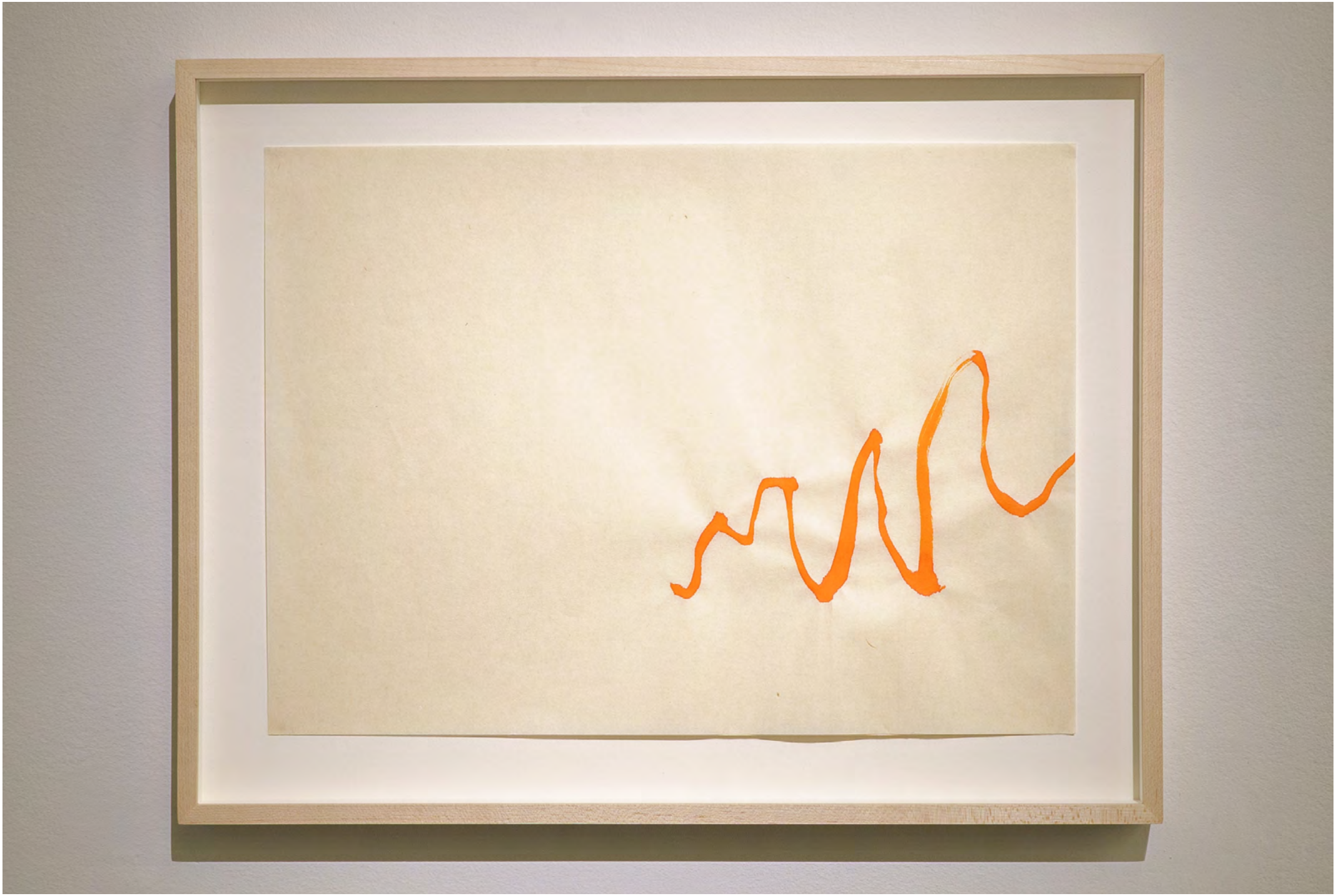
Mako Ishizuka, ***Sculpture of W (ribbon)***, 2025. Video.
A time-lapse video played back in loop presents the act of the artist attempting to write the letter W with barrier tape, using the moves of rhythmic gymastics ('spiral' and 'snake').
Stop-motion technique enables to clarify the W formed by the tape and also embodies the awkwardness in the artist's original movement, going back and forth between right and left.

video on YouTube





Mako Ishizuka, ***Sculpture of W (table tennis)***, 2024. Act / temporary sculpture (a red and white barrier tape).
An architectural intervention with barrier tape, by the opening/entrance of a communal space, with a ping-pong table and twin arched windows by the intersection of floors and a skyway to another building at SODAS 2123, Vilnius, Lithuania.
I wove a long barrier tape through the ceiling rail for electrical cables, trying to form a letter W hanging, large, loose, and 'monumental' in its own way, without preventing people from entering the space.



Mako Ishizuka, ***Sculpture of W (primal correction)***, 2025. Vermillion Sumi ink on Japanese Kana callgraphic paper framed in maple, 24 x 33 cm (30 x 39 cm, including the frame).
A drawing as an alternative calligraphy, mimicking the movement of a barrier tape. Vermillion ink is used by calligraphy masters to instruct/correct pupils. The smooth surface of Kana paper is for delicate cursive brush strokes. This awkward line is the result of the first attempt.