

BRIXEN BRESSANONE
**WATER LIGHT
FESTIVAL**

Nadja Rungger
**THE STARDUST
MEMORY PROJECT**

2026

Julia Marie Gaiser

*feeling the ice, flowing,
shifting her weight
again and again
from one leg
to the other
to her heart
to thin air*

Julia Maria Gaiser had one great passion: figure skating. It was love at first sight, and so she first started training at the winter sports association of Brixen, later at the Young Goose Academy performance centre in Neumarkt; then her talent was recognised in Salzburg, and she became a member of the EisTeam Salzburg. She successfully competed in national and international figure skating competitions, and even after many podium finishes, she always stayed true to herself. She made many friends in the figure skating scene and also enjoyed coaching children and sharing her love for this sport.

A bridge connected the university with the ice skating rink, so Julia could move quickly between studying and sports in her everyday routine. Her days were well-organised, and she pursued her goals with discipline and dedication, her heart and soul in everything she did. She would often begin her day with a sun salutation and then go to the ice skating rink. She would take her ice skates out of the locker, step to the edge of the skating rink, and elegantly glide onto the ice, making a few rounds, warming up with a few sequences of steps, and hearing the familiar sound of the blades of her ice skates leaving their tracks in the ice.

Julia would call her mother on the phone every day, and they would talk about many things. Sometimes Julia would perhaps be in the kitchen, chopping something, while talking about her stu-

dies on the phone, about her friendships, or her work at the gym. Sometimes Julia would get upset about something unfair, and her mother would calm her down, motivate her. At university, Julia studied nutrition, exercise, and health. She enjoyed grocery shopping and cooking together with her boyfriend, she liked to experiment and shared her healthy recipes on social media.

When Julia went from Salzburg to Brixen, her father would come to pick her up in Innsbruck, and the drive home would be filled with nice conversation. Julia would ask after her mother, her brother, her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Her family meant a lot to her. With her brother, Julia would often walk the city and enjoy talking to him about all kinds of things, important and unimportant. She enjoyed being surrounded by her loved ones, and she also liked meeting new people, enjoyed conversation, and empathy came natural to her. People would notice her shining eyes, her honest attention, which would immediately create a special kind of closeness.

Among many other pictures, there is one photograph of Julia smiling into the camera, her blonde hair softly touching her shoulder, on which a budgie is perched, nestling against her cheek, feathers to hair. Perhaps they spread their wings together; perhaps it whispered into her ear once, about the kind of air that carries you. Perhaps it was a warm upwind that day, just a hint of lightness, like a jump on the ice which is hinted at in the entrance phase, even in the first few steps, new every time yet familiar, memorised, an intuitive motion to make you fly. Julia went suddenly, at twenty-three years old, it was an accident. The smile she had for everyone she met went deep, and her open and warm manner touched the soul in places that will always feel this embrace.