

mumok's Annual Program 2026 - A Year of Attention and Wonder

mumok turns its attention to the space between artwork and viewer. Across exhibitions, new commissions, architectural interventions, and the events program, the museum is being reconfigured as a holistic experience that fosters curiosity and wonder. An attention to exhibition making and its dramaturgy will reactivate mumok's collection while foregrounding the museum's role as a civic space of learning and exchange. Inspired by the foundational premise of bringing art into life, the program works to narrow the distance between viewers, the artist's studio, and the institution—rendering these relationships visible, alive, and open to collective engagement.

The program premieres on the 20th of June with *Terminal Piece*, a group exhibition conceived in five acts, alongside a solo exhibition by Tolia Astakhishvili—her first museum presentation. In *Terminal Piece*, each floor unfolds as a distinct scene, exploring different modes of encounter between artwork and viewer: entangled complicity, activation through presence, and the shifting of perspective through the encounter itself. The starting point of this journey is the first artwork to enter mumok's collection under the directorship of Fatima Hellberg: the titular large-scale installation *Terminal Piece* (1972) by pioneering artist, writer, and activist Kate Millett (b. 1934 in Saint Paul, USA, d. 2017 in Paris, France). The artwork fundamentally requires a viewer in order for it to exist and explores the performative potential of that interaction. Millett's installation emphasizes the ethics and responsibility of attention by asking that we attend to structures that have become invisible to us: we begin by closely observing that which is in front of us, then extend our circle of concern from there, to the interpersonal, social, and political—rooted, specific, then traveling.

Another act of the exhibition *Terminal Piece* is an immersive total work by set designer and costume maker Anna Viebrock (b. 1951 in Cologne, Germany), which activates the third space that emerges between artwork and viewer. Her custom scenography reanimates artworks from the collection—many shown for the first time in decades—while drawing attention to the museum's visible and invisible infrastructures, from storage to restoration. Elements from mumok's history are brought into dialogue with forms that bridge the interior and exterior of the museum. As visitors move throughout the space, their own presence and that of others become part of the setting, transforming the exhibition into a shared stage of encounter. The presentation includes key works from the collection by artists such as Lutz Bacher, Jean Fautrier, Francis Picabia, Cora Pongracz, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, and Cy Twombly, alongside rarely exhibited works by Magdalena Abakanowicz, Stefan Bertalan, Emmanuel Sougez, and others.

Tolia Astakhishvili's (b. 1974 in Tbilisi, Georgia) exhibition spans two floors, one of which will function as an open studio and event space throughout the exhibition. Her practice is attuned to the ways space is continuously shaped by those who inhabit it. In line with mumok's long-standing commitment to works at the intersection of art and life, Astakhishvili acknowledges the ability of artworks to adapt and evolve. She goes beyond the aesthetics of decay to highlight the ways the past was unpredictable, just as the future will be. The exhibition starts with an open studio in the period running up to the exhibition opening, a space where the artist works and the audience is invited to participate. This approach to inhabiting space is distinctive

of Astakhishvili's method: by developing work on site and treating the institution itself as material—through the involvement of its team and audiences—the artworks become rooted in a more collective experience of artistic making. A core strand of her presentation at mumok is what Astakhishvili describes as “the figure of the child”: a figure who paradoxically possesses great autonomy of mind and world-making but is also profoundly dependent and forced to navigate pre-existing structures. Astakhishvili's exhibition encompasses an intimate dialogue with the mumok collection, incorporating works by Günter Brus, Hanne Darboven, James Ensor, Louise Lawler, Pablo Picasso, and Dieter Roth, amongst others.

The program continues in autumn with major new commissions by artist **Cameron Rowland** (b. 1988 in Philadelphia, USA) and anthropologist and filmmaker **Verena Paravel** (b. 1971 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland). Rowland's work examines the persistence of colonial advantages and racial injustices—as well as how they shape the institutions of contemporary art. The artist's interventions link the aesthetic space of museum experience to its underlying economic, political, and infrastructural conditions. Paravel attends to sounds in nature that exceed human perception. Her newly realized work *Cosmofonia*, in three chapters, is a powerful reminder that even the most realistic representation of the real requires abstraction. Her practice is guided by a spirit of investigation, curiosity, and attention that invites the viewer's reciprocity, echoing the central premises of mumok's 2026 program.

The emphasis on participation, encounter, and active exchange also entails key alterations to the museum itself. The -3 floor is being reworked by architect Andrea Faraguna (b. 1981 in Venice, Italy) to offer multiple spaces that facilitate creativity and recreation for children and adults alike. Responding to the museum's embeddedness in urban life as well as the characteristic features of Ortner & Ortner's original design, Faraguna introduces his own architectural language, which was recently awarded the Golden Lion at the 2025 Architecture Biennial. Further alterations elsewhere in the museum will bring out existing architectural features, like the currently concealed windows, as part of an overarching narrative of the museum and how it unfolds. Together with a new signage and guidance system as well as collaborations with the graphic designers CTMS and Syndicat on catalogues and other formats, these changes form a cohesive museum experience made up of large gestures and small details, structures and steps.

With its 2026 program, mumok is developing its story from within: as a public institution that more closely links the collection, exhibitions, and the experience itself. The vision entails a space of liveness and attention, understanding the encounter with art as something that takes time and which unfolds in the relationships between the institution, artworks, and viewers.

mumok's Annual Program 2026:

Terminal Piece June 20, 2026 to February 7, 2027

Tolia Astakhishvili June 20, to November 1, 2026

Cameron Rowland November 14, 2026 to April 4, 2027

Verena Paravel: *Cosmofonia* December 5, 2026 to May 30, 2027