

## 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

## Terminal Piece

June 20, 2026 to February 7, 2027

### Press conference

Friday, June 19, 2026, 10 am

### Opening day

Saturday, June 20, 2026

*Terminal Piece* is an inaugural exhibition and a vision for the future, marking the start of a new chapter for the mumok. It also proposes a new way of considering the museum, its collection, and the experience of both in their entirety and complexity. Conceived as an exhibition in several acts, *Terminal Piece* takes a straightforward yet decisive curatorial approach, bringing together works from the collection alongside new productions and external loans. One specific artwork is taken as a starting point to consider the museum as a whole: the first acquisition made under the directorship of Fatima Hellberg. The choice of work entails an engagement with notions of viewership, prompting reflection on which side of the work we occupy and demanding our participation.

The work in question is entitled *Terminal Piece* (thus giving the exhibition its title), made in 1972 by the American artist, activist, and author Kate Millett. The installation could be described as either a stage or a cage. Among folding chairs arranged in two rows behind a series of wooden bars sits a female mannequin facing the viewer. This setup subverts conventional modes of museum viewership by positioning visitors as both spectators and the spectated. Millett had to create this particular artwork, because, in her own words, it “could not be written.” Similarly, the word “terminal” carries a sense of tension, signifying an end or limit. However, as the seated female figure might suggest, it could also denote a place of departure, the beginning of a journey. In the opening exhibition of the new program under Fatima Hellberg’s direction, Millett’s *Terminal Piece* is used as both a method and a lens through which to approach the complexity and heterogeneous nature of mumok and its holdings from within.



**Kate Millett**

*Terminal Piece*, 1972

mumok – Museum moderner Kunst

Stiftung Ludwig Wien

Photo: Chie Nishio / The Kate Millett Trust

The exercise in exhibition-making and viewership extends throughout the museum, with each floor conceived as an act—act one being Kate Millett’s *Terminal Piece*. In act two, Millett’s exploration of systems and the layers of complicity that enable suppression and evil continues. All the works adhere to a personal realist approach and offer radical interpretations of the documentary genre. The first artwork encountered is *Leviathan*, an immersive, experimental film by Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Verena Paravel from 2012. Building on the ideas of perspective and structural violence explored in Millett’s artwork, *Leviathan* uses handheld cameras to capture the microcosm of an industrial fishing trawler in the North Atlantic, both above and below the waterline, revealing its partial monstrosity.

Act three, conceived by German scenographer and costume designer Anna Viebrock, takes the form of a total environment on the entrance level. Here, Viebrock radically reconfigures the space, merging backstage and front-of-house areas and bringing traces of the museum’s concealed processes into contact with public zones. Playing with structures of visibility and viewership, the visible and the invisible, the environment will present well-known works from the collection alongside artworks that are rarely encountered and have long remained out of view. Act four, conceived by British artist Nina Porter, functions as both an ending and a return to the beginning, as well as a proposition for the future in the form of a new series of works. Some of these works both contain and respond to the mumok collection and the Kate Millett archives related to *Terminal Piece*.

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*Terminal Piece* will be accompanied by an extensive event program and a publication co-edited with Camilla Wills of Divided Publishing, which will include an existing text by Kate Millett and new writing by Ariana Reines, and other authors.

Artists include, among others: Lutz Bacher, Bruce Conner, Sara Deraedt, Jean Fautrier, Christine Gironcoli, Louis Goodman, Raymond Haines, Ull Hohn, Marc Kokopeli, Kurt Kren, Zoe Leonard, Kate Millett, Yukio Nakagawa, Bruce Nauman, Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Verena Paravel, Megan Plunkett, Cora Pongracz, Nina Porter, Robert Rauschenberg, Dieter Roth, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, George Segal, Emmanuel Sougez, Elisabeth Subrin, Paul Thek, Octavian Trauttmansdorff, Cy Twombly, Anna Viebrock, Wolf Vostell.

Curated by Fatima Hellberg and Lukas Flygare

## Tolia Astakhishvili

June 20, to November 1, 2026

### Press conference

Friday, June 19, 2026, 10 am

### Opening day

Saturday, June 20, 2026



**Tolia Astakhishvili**  
*to love and devour*, 2025  
 Plastic, permanent marker, plastic tube,  
 sink  
 375 x 367 cm  
 Courtesy the artist, Nicoletta Fiorucci  
 Foundation and LC Queisser, Tbilisi,  
 Cologne  
 Photo: Tolia Astakhishvili Studio

In keeping with a recurring motif in the work of Georgian artist Tolia Astakhishvili, the artist's first solo museum exhibition will proceed from the concept of the "figure of the child." In this context, the child embodies both a high degree of intellectual and creative autonomy and a profound dependence on others. This concept becomes an exercise in imagination, exploring the possibilities and limits of empathy, grounded in the fact that we were all children once. In relation to spatial environments, scale, and precariousness, the child represents a state of being in which invisibility is often experienced with great immediacy and intensity. Accordingly, Astakhishvili focuses on the experience of art itself, extending it to movement and touch and breaking with the conventions of museum presentation. The notion of the "first encounter," as children experience it when initially perceiving a phenomenon, serves here as a key to a new kind of experience.

In her exploration of layers of embeddedness, Tolia Astakhishvili understands the mumok as a distinctive site, incorporating works from the collection into her installations. Furthermore, from the beginning of May 2026, visitors will be able to follow the creation of the exhibition in an "open studio," while the exhibition itself will open on 20 June 2026. This process-based and participatory element animates the museum as a place of artistic production, enabling active dialogue between visitors and artists. The museum will serve as a studio, an exhibition space, and a backdrop for performances, events, and other activations.

Astakhishvili's extensive body of work is characterized by a keen sensitivity to spaces as multi-layered entities shaped by all the people who experience them. The artist works across sculpture, sound, video, architectural elements, painting, and drawing, combining these approaches in large-scale installations. Her engagement with space is charged with a deep awareness of their former uses and functions as well as their transience and permanence. Her personal biography, including experiences of war and displacement, also informs the work. Astakhishvili's installations transform the museum from a static container into a vibrant space that is inhabited, traversed, and experienced.

To accompany the exhibition, Astakhishvili is collaborating with the graphic design studio Syndicat on an artist's book that offers an in-depth exploration of her practice.

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Tolia Astakhishvili (born 1974 in Tbilisi, Georgia) lives and works in Berlin and Tbilisi. Her most recent solo exhibitions include *to love and devour* at the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation in Venice (2025); *between father and mother* at the SculptureCenter, New York (2024); *The First Finger (chapter II)* at Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2023); and *The First Finger* at Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2023). Astakhishvili's works have been featured in numerous group exhibitions, most recently at MoMA PS1, New York (2025); the Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris (2025); and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Roma, Rome (2024).

Astakhishvili's exhibition also extends an intimate dialogue with the mumok collection, incorporating works by Dieter Roth, Pablo Picasso, Louise Lawler, Hanne Darboven, James Ensor and Günter Brus amongst others in her careful weaving of space across installation, sculpture, drawing and painting.

Curated by Fatima Hellberg and Manuela Ammer

## Cameron Rowland

November 14, 2026 to April 4, 2027

**Press conference**

Friday, November 13, 2026, 10 am

**Opening**

Friday, November 13, 2026, 7 pm

In Fall 2026 mumok will present an exhibition of new work by Cameron Rowland.

Rowland has had solo exhibitions at the Dia Art Foundation, Beacon; Museum MMK für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Galerie Buchholz, Cologne, Germany; Établissement d'en face, Brussels; Artists Space, New York; Maxwell Graham Gallery, New York. Rowland's work has been included in group exhibitions at the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; Secession, Vienna; Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel; 33<sup>a</sup> Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Museum of Modern Art, New York. Rowland received a MacArthur Fellowship in 2019.

Curated by Matthias Michalka

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## Verena Paravel: *Cosmofonia*

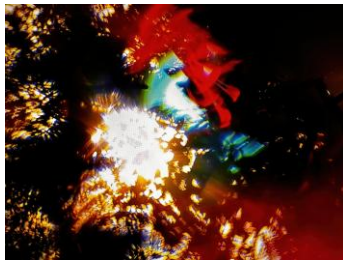
December 5, 2026 to May 30, 2027

### Press conference

Friday, December 4, 2026, 10 am

### Opening

Friday, December 4, 2026, 7 pm



Verena Paravel  
*Cosmofonia*, 2025-2026  
Film still  
Courtesy the artist

*Cosmofonia* is an immersive, sensory film project by French anthropologist, filmmaker, and artist Verena Paravel. With this project, Paravel proposes a new genre of documentary film about animals and plants, filmed from their perspective or that of their immediate surroundings. *Cosmofonia* explores the inaudible sounds and voices of the planet, including infrasonic vibrations, seismic noises, codes between different species, and acoustic traces of ecological collapse and survival. For most visitors, these sounds will be heard for the first time; sounds that are not widespread or commonly known, even within scientific circles. Paravel's investigations, made possible by cutting-edge audio-visual technology and guided by her interest in "seeing with the ears," cultivate a new awareness and perception of the natural world. True to her recurring filmic approach, natural environments or ecosystems are never detached from their observers, whether these are scientists or filmmakers. Similarly, the equipment used to capture phenomena such as ant communication remains inseparable from the nearly sublime experience of hearing these sounds. Species communicate, orient themselves, and sustain their lives through acoustic signals. Human-made noise disrupts these essential exchange processes, while the destruction of habitats silences formerly vibrant soundscapes. The conditions of the anthropocene are emphasised through Paravel's insistence on acknowledging the mediation itself—the act of observation or documentation—which extends to the experience of *Cosmofonia* within the museum. This setting underscores both the clinical control and the occurrence of species and natural life that are both inaudible, imperceptible, and unknown to human visitors.

Shown for the first time in its entirety at mumok, the *Cosmofonia* project marks Verena Paravel's first solo exhibition in a museum and comprises several newly produced chapters set in distinct locations and ecosystems, co-produced by the museum. The first chapter of *Cosmofonia* premiered at the Okayama Art Summit in 2025. Set in Japan, this chapter uses advanced scientific video and audio technology to capture the sounds and movements of insects, gastropods, plants, and other species. Paravel's singular visual style shifts perspective constantly between the species and their observers. The second chapter takes place in Camargue in southern France, exploring both wetlands and nature affected by wildfires. Exhibited together, the chapters of *Cosmofonia* offer encounters with perceptions that are usually beyond our reach. The project serves as a reminder of our limitations as humans in grasping the realities around us.

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Verena Paravel (born 1971 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland) lives and works in Paris. A former visiting professor at Harvard University, she is part of the Sensory Ethnography Lab (SEL). Alongside anthropologist and SEL director Lucien Castaing-Taylor, Paravel has made pioneering films such as *Leviathan* (2012), *somniloquies* (2017), *Caniba* (2017), and *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (2022). Paravel's work has been presented at the *Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2014); *Greater New York*, MoMA PS1, New York (2016); *documenta 14*, Kassel and Athens (2017); and *Breathing Matter(s)*, silent green, Berlin (2025).

Curated by Fatima Hellberg, Lukas Flygare and Naoko Kaltschmidt