

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