

Tolia Astakhishvili

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, Nan Goldin, Yaryna Fedoriv,
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Figure of the Child

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with Vito Acconci, Zurab Astakhishvili, Aurel Ștefan Bertalan, Karl Blossfeldt, Kaucyila Brooke, Veronica Brovall, Günter Brus, Elene Chantladze, James Ensor, Nan Goldin, Yaryna Fedoriv, Irma Gubeladze, Ull Hohn, Joe Jones, Paul Joostens, Louise Lawler, Charlotte Moorman & Nam June Paik, Dylan Peirce, Pablo Picasso, Charlotte Posenenske, Alexandra Ranner, James Richards, Irena Rosc, Medardo Rosso, Dieter Roth, Maka Sanadze, Stefan Wewerka, Heimo Zobernig

Figure of the Child is the first solo museum exhibition of the Tbilisi- and Berlin-based artist Tolia Astakhishvili. For mumok, she developed a large-scale installation that fundamentally transforms the two lower exhibition levels—starting in the foyer of the deepest level with a video installation, which includes footage from the publicly inaccessible cellar and boiler room.

Where rigid lines and cool lighting usually emphasize the boundary between art, architecture, and viewer, Tolia Astakhishvili has created a space that subverts this order. Instead of using the floor and walls as presentation surfaces for artworks, she constructs and designs her own environment. Moments of instability—of rawness and unfinishedness—shape the exhibition. Ramps and mirrors shift lines of sight, while pipes and shafts point to larger circuits—to something behind and beneath that evades the gaze. Astakhishvili is interested in such transitional states: thresholds at which perception is recalibrated and expectations begin to form.



Hidden dreamer, 2019–2022
Canvas, papier-mâché, pen, pencil,
oil, acrylic

Visitors enter the exhibition on Level -4 through a red tunnel. The tunnel first leads toward an opening that reveals the fragment of a room, with pipes extending into the space without connection. With this image of interrupted circulation, the tunnel then redirects the entry into the exhibition level from an outer corner, generating a new perspective, where the eye must first adjust to the dim light. Visitors are still inside the museum and, at the same time, in new, uncharted territory—with the ceiling seemingly supported by makeshift pillars and its layers and interweavings only grasped piece by piece.

This passage from one environment into another recalls a motif that is in focus for Tolia Astakhishvili's exhibition at

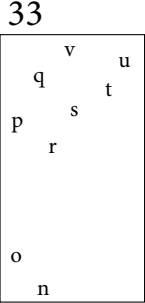
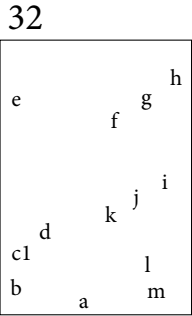
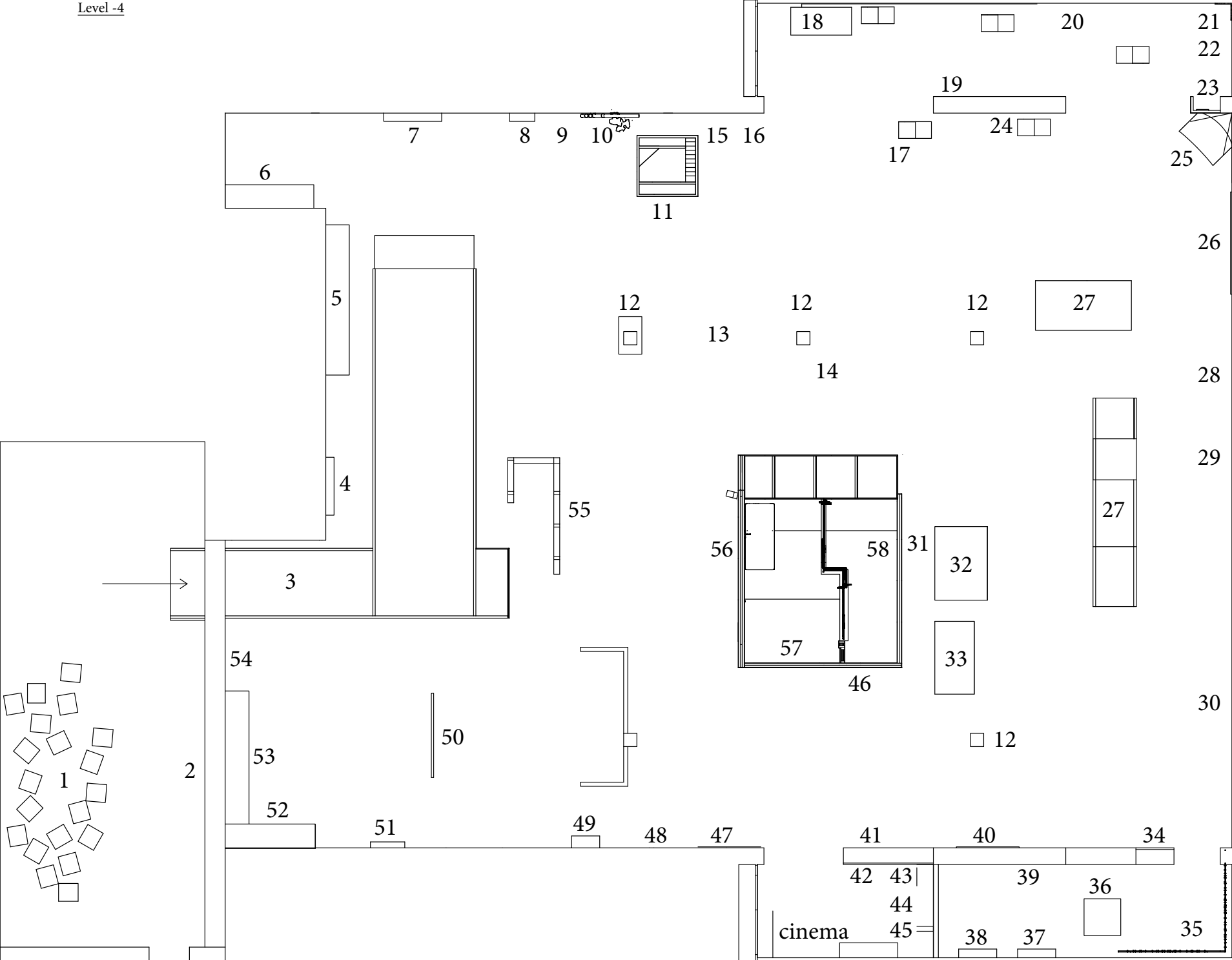
mumok: the “figure of the child,” after which the exhibition is named. The child embodies both a high degree of intellectual and creative autonomy and a profound vulnerability and dependence on others. *Figure of the Child* unfolds from this tension a reflection on the existential condition of being thrown into the world—on ideas of home, shelter, and belonging; on feelings of uncertainty and loss as well as the need for protection; and on navigating social systems and structures that demand adaptation while provoking resistance.

Against this backdrop, Tolia Astakhishvili's exhibition can also be understood as a response to the blank slate character of museum spaces. Her installations seem inhabited. They explore manifestations of decay, wear, and discard. Across layered surfaces, the artist presents drawings that often depict only partially articulated figures. These drawings enter into dialogue with their surroundings, rendering the traces and revisions of the architectural elements legible as further pictorial interventions. In this way, drawing shifts from the page into space. As fragile markers of corporeality, the drawn figures stand out while simultaneously dissolving into the bricolage of their environment.

This constant refocusing corresponds to the experience of the exhibition itself, which does not follow a predetermined route. A cluster of objects prompts us to peer around a corner; a mirror guides us in a new direction; a red glow draws us into a side room. Movement becomes a detour, and the direct path increasingly seems wayward. The distinction between work and context erodes, while transitions and interstices open up new possibilities and connections.

This openness informs Tolia Astakhishvili's way of working, which is profoundly shaped by collaboration. The exhibition includes not only works by longtime companions and members of the artist's family but also works from the mumok Collection, some of which are presented in cases built specifically for this occasion. Astakhishvili's selection extends key motifs of the exhibition: the box as miniature dwelling and site of storage; plans and models of imagined buildings; everyday objects, including furniture and tableware; the newborn as a liminal being; and surfaces as carriers of marks and scribbles. Emerging from various contexts, the collection works become part of a reflection on history as layering and on what we preserve, discard, or leave to decay.

<u>Level -4</u>	15 <i>imagination</i> , 2026 Sterling silver	Canvas, oil, acrylic	mumok, donation from The Artists from Gugging, Leo Navratil Collection	v James Ensor, <i>Le coin de cheminée</i> , 1885 Pencil, charcoal on paper mumok	46 <i>Inspiration is a state of mind</i> , 2026 Sterling silver, metal
If not indicated otherwise, courtesy of Tolia Astakhishvili, LC Queisser and Emalin	16 Heimo Zobernig, <i>Untitled</i> , 1996 Chipboard, steel angles Dieter and Gertraud Bogner Collection at mumok	30 <i>universe</i> , 2025 Washing hanger from demolished bathroom, found objects	k Günter Brus, <i>Starrkrampf</i> , 1965 B/W photograph, facsimile mumok, donation from the artist	34 <i>growing up</i> , 2026 Canvas, ink	47 <i>snoring and the sound of pigeons</i> , 2025–2026 Sections of drywall, cutlery
1 <i>Their own small gardens</i> , 2026 Monitors, 20-channel video, loop	17 <i>common ground</i> , with Dylan Peirce, 2026 5 steel ventilation ducts, 8-channel audio installation, duration: 60 min	31 <i>to love and devour</i> , 2025 Plastic, permanent marker	l Charlotte Posenenske, <i>Vierkantrohre (Serie DW)</i> , 1967 Cardboard models mumok, donation from Burkhard Brunn	35 <i>There is no word that can stand on its own</i> , 2026 Steel, key tags, strings, light	48 <i>I would like to return and say I am back and it's nice on the other side II</i> , 2026 Sterling silver, paper, ink
2 <i>Our Friends in the Audience</i> , with James Richards, 2024 Print, marouflage on canvas	18 <i>Hut 1</i> with works by Yaryna Fedoriv, Irma Gubeladze, Elene Chantladze	32 <i>Hut 2</i>	m Paul Joostens, <i>Amour, delices et orgues</i> , 1920 Aluminum, glass, wood, cardboard, cork, oil paint, paper mumok	36 <i>alone with you</i> , with Dylan Peirce, 2025 Construction material, dismantled cooling system, 4-channel audio	49 <i>Some rooms look better before I enter them</i> , 2026 Door from <i>to love and devour</i>
3 <i>Singing out of doors</i> , 2026 Construction material, woven polypyrène, aluminum foil, found objects, light	19 Vito Acconci, <i>Combination</i> , 1971 Super 8 film transferred to DVD, color, silent, 3 min mumok, with support of Society of Friends of Fine Arts	b Irma Gubeladze, <i>Untitled</i> , undated Mixed media on paper	33 <i>Hut 3</i>	37 Vitrine: drawings, silver sculpture	50 <i>Wild Thing</i> , with James Richards, 2026 Digital video, silent
4 / 7 <i>Everything is so precious, even things that are not real I / II</i> , 2026 Shelf	20 <i>house of mending</i> , 2024–2025 Cardboard, papier-mâché, glasses, stickers On loan from Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation	c1 / c2 Elene Chantladze <i>Abandoned newborn</i> , 2008 Mixed media on paper / <i>Untitled</i> , undated Gouache on hardboard	n Alexandra Ranner, <i>Pool</i> , 2002 Color photograph, facsimile mumok	38 Vitrine	51 Irena Rosc, <i>Door</i> , 1991 Steel sheet, glass, silicone, automatic closing mechanism, door viewer mumok, on loan from Arthothek des Bundes
5 <i>Syllabus (say one think another)</i> , with James Richards, 2026 Vitrine, books	21 <i>seeing you instead of self</i> , 2026, mirror, steel	d Pablo Picasso <i>Fernande</i> , 1906 Bronze cast mumok	o Charlotte Moorman, Nam June Paik, <i>Nam June Paik's Robot K 456</i> , 1964, 1975 B/W photograph by Peter Moore mumok, donation from Egidio Marzona	<i>Possession 2</i> , 2026 Paper, ink	52 Maka Sanadze, <i>Untitled</i> , ongoing Vitrine, treated magazine pages
8 <i>from here to there (sidewalks) II</i> , 2026 Video 8 min, loop, metal box, cables, light box, found objects	22 <i>how a song could change a work</i> , 2026 Canvas, ink, gesso, oil	e Ull Hohn, <i>Untitled (Infant)</i> , 1991 Oil on wooden box mumok, with support of Society of Friends of Fine Arts	p <i>joyful games</i> , 2026 Canvas, ink	<i>growing skin</i> , 2026 Paper, ink	53 <i>all you can eat</i> , 2026 Vitrine, drawings, print on metal, vacuum formed PET plastic, found images
9 Joe Jones, <i>Solar Music Hot House</i> , 1989 Silkscreen on paper mumok, on loan from the Austrian Ludwig Foundation	23 <i>Self related</i> , 2026 Canvas, ink	f Medardo Rosso, <i>Bookmaker</i> , ca. 1960 (1894) Posthumous bronze cast mumok	q Irma Gubeladze, <i>Untitled</i> , undated Mixed media on wood	Karl Blossfeldt, <i>Impatiens glanduligera</i> , 1920–1928 B/W photograph, facsimile mumok	54 <i>I would like to return and say I am back and it's nice on the other side</i> , 2026 Collage with photos of Maka Sanadze, digital print on wood, metal
10 <i>Some need comfort to com- pensate on a large inner trouble</i> , 2026 Pipes, dust	24 <i>precious patches of shade</i> , 2024–2026 Lamp, canvas	g Heimo Zobernig <i>Untitled</i> , 1983 Cardboard, pigment, oil mumok, donation from the artist	r Medardo Rosso, <i>Ecce Puer</i> , 1960 (1906) Posthumous bronze cast mumok	39 Louise Lawler, <i>Bought and Installed By Didier Guichard</i> , 1988 Silver dye bleach print mumok	55 <i>Placeholder II</i> , 2025–2026 Construction material, photos
11 <i>There is no time to be bored</i> , 2026 Wood, mirrors, pigments, found objects	25 <i>Curious</i> , 2026 Styrocore, acrylic, tempera	h Veronica Brovall, <i>Aspects from the Octagon Cave</i> , 2025 Ceramic sculptures, glaze, iron oxide Courtesy of the artist	s Stefan Wewerka, <i>Schnitt: Relief und Becher und Löffel</i> , 1968 Metal, fiberboard mumok, former Hahn Collection, Cologne	40 <i>figure of the child</i> , 2026 Canvas, oil, acrylic	56 <i>my emptiness</i> , 2025–2026 Construction material, excavated pipes, bathtub, shower tray, mirrors, light
12 <i>There are always more things that are true somehow at once I, II, III, IV</i> , 2026 Wood, concrete, light, found objects	26 <i>When I am adult I will stop the wars</i> , 2026 Fabric, ink, canvas, oil	i Ștefan Bertalan, <i>Bean Plant – Germination</i> , 1976 B/W photographs, mumok, on loan from the Austrian Ludwig Foundation	t Günter Brus, <i>Aktionsskizze</i> , 1966 Pencil, pen on paper, facsimile mumok, donation from the artist	41 <i>How time has freed itself from haste and duty</i> , 2026 Canvas, ink	57 Kaucyila Brooke, <i>Showcases in progress – untitled #118</i> , 2002–2005 Color photograph mumok, donation from the artist
13 <i>museum is mother</i> , 2026 Fabric, ink, found objects	27 <i>A sound in the tunnel between the ears / dark days / when the others are within us</i> , 2024–2026 Construction material, found objects	j Aurel (Aurel Iselstöger) <i>Self-portrait in front of tree</i> , undated <i>Self-portrait at the age of about fifteen</i> , 1940 Pencil on paper	u Dieter Roth, <i>Katzendenkmal</i> , 1968 Cheese, sheet metal, wood, oil paint mumok, former Hahn Collection, Cologne	42 Dylan Peirce, <i>Insert</i> , 1999 Mirror	58 <i>Hidden dreamer</i> , 2019–2022 Canvas, papier-mâché, pen, pencil, oil, acrylic
14 <i>resting building</i> , with Zurab Astakhishvili 2026 Cardboard, acrylic glass box	28 <i>Museum takes good care of some children</i> , 2026 Vitrines, found objects, fabric, ink, light, sterling silver			43 <i>invisible shelf</i> , 2026 Construction material, steel, found objects, light	cinema James Richards, <i>How different different kisses are</i> , 2026 3-channel sound
	29 <i>Present</i> , 2025 Canvas, oil, mixed media <i>She II</i> , 2025			44 <i>playing ball with the rabbit in the landscape II</i> , 2026 Sterling silver, stainless steel	
				45 <i>Suddenly the world became loud II</i> , with Zurab Astakhishvili, 2024 Cardboard, acrylic glass box	



Level -2

In preparation for her exhibition, Tolia Astakhishvili spent several months working in the spaces of mumok. During this process, she hosted Tolia Curriculum on Level -2—a format that made the otherwise concealed phases of production and installation accessible to the public. Within a continually evolving architectural environment, an almost daily program of workshops, film screenings, readings, and participatory formats for children and adults unfolded between May 22 and June 18, 2026.

With Tolia Curriculum, the usual temporal constraints of exhibition-making shifted. Visitors experienced moments of creation and transformation—and left their own traces within the space. The museum thus became a site in which artistic production could be experienced as an ongoing process.

Even after the exhibition opening, Level -2 remains a place of hospitality. The architectural elements conceived by Tolia Astakhishvili for this space, marked by traces of prior use, host additional event formats throughout the exhibition's run, animating and activating it. *Figure of the Child* is therefore not only an exhibition but also a spatial-temporal experiment: a changing organism that challenges perception as much as it does the institutional structures that govern it—and in which the museum itself can be experienced as a place of becoming and possibility.

The three publications produced in conjunction with the exhibition reflect this approach through processes of layering and accumulation. The first volume, published on the opening day, explores drawing and materiality at the heart of Tolia Astakhishvili's practice. Using the same printed sheets, two further volumes will emerge, with exhibition views overprinted onto their pages.

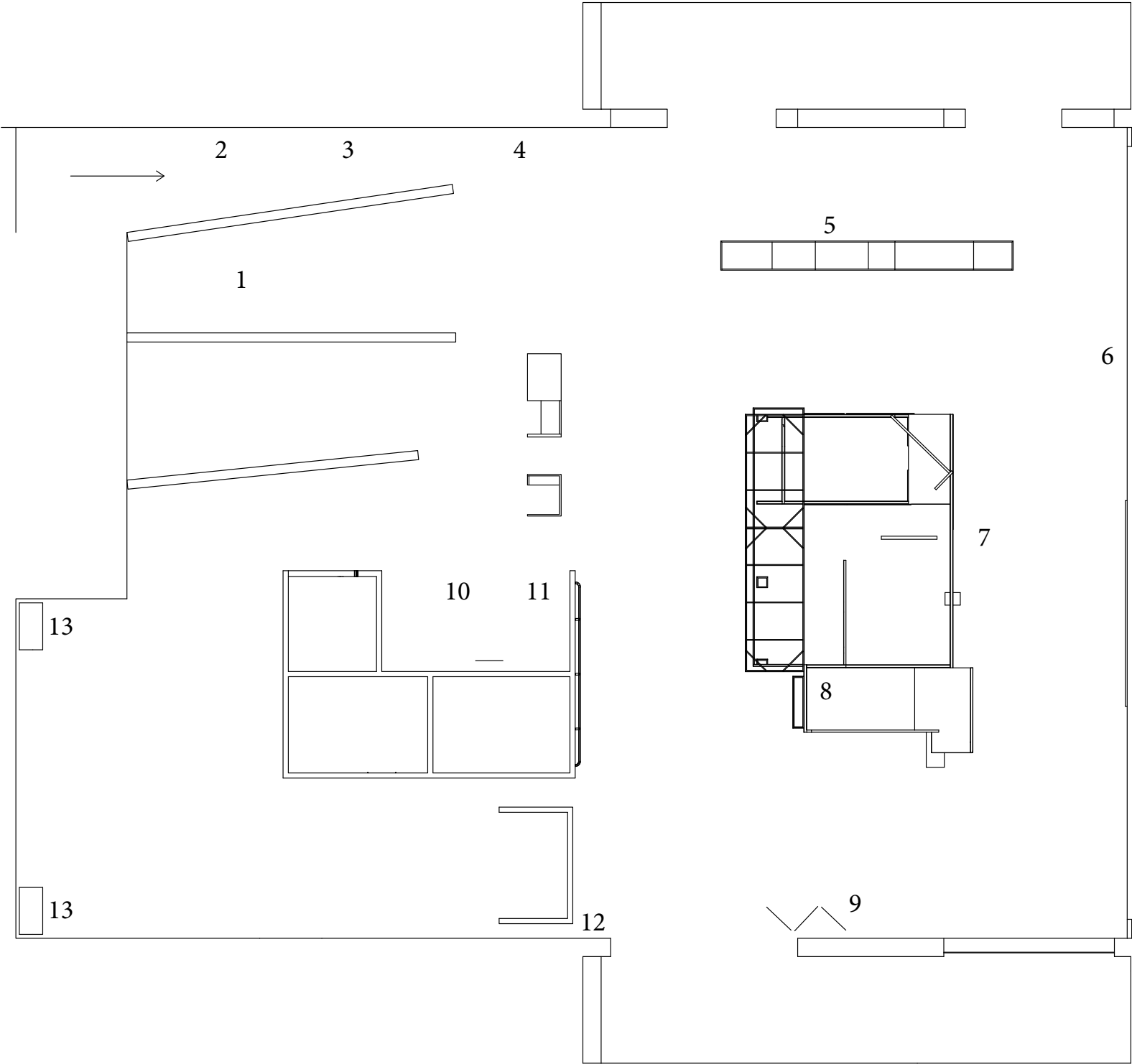
Much as the child experiences everything for the first time at some point, this emphasis on process reflects a commitment to curiosity. In other words, the decision to allow life—and therefore change—to become part of the cycle through which an exhibition comes into being, is experienced, and is ultimately remembered.

May

22	Laurids Ortner, <i>Herzkammer</i>
23	Open Studio
24	Tolia Curriculum for Children: Harun Farocki, <i>Bedtime Stories</i>
26	Vera Pulido & Roman Lemberg, <i>The House is Haunted by the Echo of Your Favorite Song</i>
28	An evening conceived by students of the TransArts class, University of Applied Arts Vienna
29	<i>pass it on</i> , an evening conceived by students of the Art and Time/Photography class, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna
30	Veronica Brovall, <i>Octagon Cave</i>
31	Tolia Curriculum for Children: Veronica Brovall, <i>Octagon Cave</i>

June

2	Jacksun Bein and C. Philip Bein, <i>My life</i>
3	Tolia Astakhishvili, <i>Tai Chi and Qi Gong</i>
4	Tolia Astakhishvili, <i>Tai Chi and Qi Gong</i>
5	Julia Boog-Kaminski, <i>Der Kronos-Komplex: Das Kind und die Zeit</i>
6	Natalia Medebach, Shiatsu and Reiki, <i>Mein Schatz – die Begegnung mit dem inneren Kind</i>
7	Tolia Curriculum for Children: Building Day
9	Dylan Peirce, <i>Strange Places</i>
10	Simon Lässig, <i>Microdrama</i>
11	Livia Polanyi, <i>From Ordinary Language to Verbal Art</i>
12	Jonas Kuck, <i>Sleep Deprivation</i>
13	Liesl Ujvary and Ann Cotten, <i>Sicher & Gut</i>
14	Tolia Curriculum for Children: Plate Painting
15	Kristian Vistrup Madsen, <i>The Heart is a Pump</i>
16	Florian Meisenberg, <i>Das Erste Mal</i>
17	Florian Meisenberg, <i>Future Readings</i>
18	James Richards, <i>We came into this world wanting milk—everything else was made up as we went along</i>



Level -2

1 *giving title to the untitled*, 2026
Construction material

2 Michael Kleine, *Vitrine of
dinner menu for June 19*, 2026
Wood, glass
Courtesy of the artist

3 Michael Kleine, *Hänger*, 2015
Lead, iron, paint
Courtesy of the artist

4 *Heimo Zobernig shelf*, 2026
Chipboard, steel angles
With works by Veronica Brovall,
Jonas Kuck and leftovers from
the ongoing events
Courtesy of the artists

5 *table*, 2026
Steel, wood

6 *lovers*, 2026
Metal, acrylic glass, paper, pencil

7 *the others are inside us*, 2026
Construction material, truck tarp

8 *home alone*, 2026
Drywall, cardboard, print, metal,
acrylic glass

9 *each year, the same season*,
2025–2026
Acrylic glass, acrylic paint, wood,
light

10 *ideas are everywhere and in
everything*, 2026
Construction material, metal rail,
wall paint, found objects

11 *me on me*, 2026
Digital print on metal

12 *for the first time*, 2026
Canvas, oil, acrylic, papier-mâché,
paper, pencil, acrylic glass

13 Michael Kleine, *Benches
from dinner seating for June 19*,
2026
Courtesy of the artist

Hidden dreamer, 2019–2022
Canvas, papier-mâché, pen,
pencil, oil, acrylic



Tolia Astakhishvili (b. 1974, Tbilisi, Georgia) lives and works in Tbilisi and Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include *to love and devour* at the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, Venice (2025); *a wound on my plate* at Emalin, London (2025); *between father and mother* at SculptureCenter, New York (2024); *Result* at LC Queisser, Tbilisi (2024); *The First Finger (chapter II)* at Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2023); and *The First Finger* at Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2023). Her work has been presented in numerous group exhibitions, most recently at MoMA PS1, New York (2025) and at Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Roma, Rome (2024).

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2026

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mumok