

Tolia Astakhishvili *Figure of the Child*

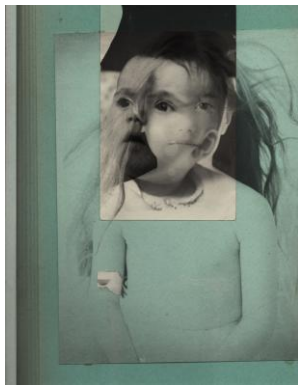
June 20, to November 1, 2026

Press conference

Wednesday, June 17, 2026, 10 am

Opening day

Saturday, June 20, 2026, 2 to 8 pm



Tolia Astakhishvili

I would like to return and say I am back and it's nice on the other side, 2026

Collage with photos of Maka Sanadze, digital print on wood

46,6 x 36,2 cm

© Tolia Astakhishvili

Figure of the Child is Tolia Astakhishvili's first solo museum exhibition. Realized in situ across two floors of mumok, it is also her largest presentation to date. Here, Astakhishvili has been guided by a recurring motif in her work: the titular "figure of the child." For the artist, this figure encompasses the remarkable intellectual and creative autonomy of children, but also their innate dependency. Newborns enter the world fundamentally out of sync with their surroundings, compelled to observe, adapt, and often surrender to structures beyond their control. Throughout the exhibition, this condition emerges through shifting scales, precarious structures, and a sustained sense of uncertainty. Astakhishvili eschews the conventions of museum display to insist on the primacy of artistic experience. Grounded in bodily movement and haptic perception, the exhibition pushes sensation beyond preconceived meanings, striving toward a state of openness and immediacy that the artist describes as akin to a child's "first encounter."

Tolia Astakhishvili's approach to exhibition-making is distinguished by an acute sensitivity to the way spaces are shaped by their former uses and users, as well as the traces and histories inscribed within them. *Figure of the Child* thus unfolds as an intimate constellation of the artist's close collaborators and works from mumok's own collection, which she weaves into a large-scale installation encompassing painting, drawing, sculpture, sound, video, and architecture. Art-historical antecedents interact with traces of past participants, as well as fragments of the artist's own biography. Together with the accompanying program, *Figure of the Child* reimagines the museum itself as a vulnerable and shifting organism—one continually negotiating tensions between inheritance, adaptation, and the possibility of change.

Figure of the Child has been developed in dialogue with numerous collaborators, mumok's collection, and external loans, including works by 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 and Heimo Zobernig.

The exhibition opening is accompanied by the publication of the first of three artist's books on Tolia Astakhishvili's *Figure of the Child*, with texts by Kirsty Bell, Fatima Hellberg and Liesl Ujvary, designed in collaboration with Syndicat.

Curated by Fatima Hellberg and Manuela Ammer

Tolia Astakhishvili (b. 1974 in Tbilisi, Georgia) lives and works in Tbilisi and Berlin. In her interdisciplinary practice, Astakhishvili develops immersive installations that encompass elements of sculpture, drawing, painting, sound, and video. Her work approaches architecture as an open material shaped by the bodies, memories, and stories that inhabit it. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at the Nicoletta Fiorucci Foundation, Venice (2025); SculptureCenter, New York (2024); Haus am Waldsee,

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Berlin (2023); and Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2023). Recent group exhibitions include MoMA PS1, New York (2025); Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris (2025); and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Roma, Rome (2024).

Tolia Curriculum

In the months leading up to the exhibition opening, Astakhishvili developed the project on-site at mumok and shared her process with visitors via **Tolia Curriculum** (May 22 to June 18, 2026), a format that re-envisioned the temporality of exhibition-making. The artist intervened in conventional museum logistics by inviting visitors into production and installation phases that were typically held out of view. Amidst an evolving architectural environment, **Tolia Curriculum** unfolded as a daily program of workshops, screenings, readings, and participatory formats for children and adults.

Further information on the program: www.mumok.at

On Thursday, July 23, at 7 pm, Fatima Hellberg and Hans Ulrich Obrist will be in conversation, discussing Tolia Astakhishvili's artistic practice and her engagement with space.

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