JAMES LEWIS
The Third House

Opening: November 5, 2026, 6–9 pm
November 6–December 23, 2026

Sometimes I think I've built a new house in my memory. When I try to walk through it, the rooms change size and the doors go nowhere. Maybe that's what remembering is? A kind of architecture made of errors. A way of living in what isn't there anymore.
— Extract from *The Third House* (2025)

Galerie Hubert Winter is pleased to present *The Third House*, the third solo exhibition by James Lewis (b. 1986 in London, lives and works in Vienna) at the gallery. The exhibition takes its name from Lewis' video work with the same title, a subtitled conversation with his mother as she attempts to reconstruct the house she grew up in in India, before her family's migration to the United Kingdom in 1963. As her spatial memory unfolds, the house becomes unstable—rooms shift, doors lead nowhere, and the act of remembering is described as "a kind of architecture made of errors". From this phrase Lewis developed *error-architecture*, a conceptual framework and guiding methodology within his artistic practice that treats approximation and forgetting as meaningful traces of *rupture*. Rupture here is not a single event but an ongoing condition left by imperial extraction, in which colonial afterlives[1], environmental change and administrative systems are sedimented. Within this context, the exhibition approaches reconstruction as a speculative and ethically charged process—provisional, revisable and accountable to what rupture leaves unresolved.

In the exhibition, Lewis' enquiry moves toward the standards by which subjects are categorised, ordered and rendered legible or illegible to systems of power and governance. Suspended in the centre of the gallery is a dissected and reimagined version of the ceiling in the artist's childhood home. Through an open hatch, an infrared heat lamp illuminates *Can Science Measure Everything?* (2026), an arrangement of secondhand molds once used to cast fishing weights.

Lewis became increasingly fascinated by Le Grand K, the standard kilogram that was kept in a locked vault at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures near Paris. By definition, this object weighed exactly one kilogram. It could not be wrong because it was *the* kilogram, and everything else in the world was measured against it. When it was adopted in 1879, dozens of near-identical official copies, sister standards, were distributed to countries around the world to serve as national references. Periodically over decades, these copies were brought back to Paris and compared against the original. But over about a century, the original somehow lost mass and therefore its copies drifted apart. For Lewis, this is how inheritance operates: a standard is handed down, and you measure yourself against something that is quietly drifting and losing definition.

[1] See Gargi Bhattacharyya, Rethinking Racial Capitalism. Questions of Reproduction and Survival, London 2018.

No Common Now (2026), a series of wall-mounted, concrete-encrusted archive boxes, moves Lewis' investigation of measurement from mass to the quantification of time. The series reflects that there is no universal present. Time passes at different rates depending on where one stands, and that "now" extends only as far as our immediate surroundings. Inside each box are different labels that name a unit of time, some through the precise language of physics and others through colloquial expressions. Although they appear to describe different things, every label names the same span of time, so their difference doesn't lie in what is measured but in the position, and the system, from which it is measured.

In the adjoining space at Breite Gasse 19, a metal duct runs along the walls and floor and functions like a prosthetic lung—breathing in air, which is then mixed with a specific smell and exhaled into the room. *The Past is a Foreign Country* (2026) is an attempt to reconstruct the scent profile of the Bay of Bombay (now Mumbai) on 22 October 1963, the day the artist's mother migrated from India to the UK. Developed in collaboration with RYOKO Senses Salon / RYOKO Scent and drawing on archival family photographs, weather reports, civic data and his mother's unstable memory, the work treats scent as a form of environmental translation in which spatial meaning is re-authored from a distance.

The Third House opens alongside Lewis' presentation at the 18th Biennale de Lyon, where among other works *The Past is a Foreign Country* (2026) is also on view. The two exhibitions are, in the artist's words, the same house in two different cities. Where the installation in Lyon dwells in spatial memory and its instability, the exhibition at Galerie Hubert Winter asks you to stand beneath something that is slowly, unaccountably redefining a measure. As with *No Common Now* (2026), the two presentations hold the same house from different positions, and what is offered isn't a recovered origin but a house assembled from fragments—a way of living in what is no longer there.

James Lewis is an artist of South Asian diaspora based in Vienna, Austria. Through sculpture, installation, video and sound, he examines how systems of measurement shape perception and experience. His work responds to logics of quantification that reduce complex realities to data, questioning the frameworks that define relationships among humans, animals and objects.

He has exhibited at the 18th Biennale de Lyon and international institutions including: Kunsthalle Wien, Austria (2026); Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Germany (2025); MassArt Art Museum (MAAM), USA (2025); Leopold Museum, Austria (2024); Kunstverein Salzburg, Austria (2022); Fondazione Benetton, Italy (2022); Mostyn, UK (2022); CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, France (2021).