

Tolia Astakhishvili: between father and mother

with Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili, Zurab
Astakhishvili, Kirsty Bell, Katinka Bock,
Dylan Peirce, and James Richards

May 9–Aug 12, 2024

SculptureCenter

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For more than two decades, Tolia Astakhishvili has worked across sculpture, drawing, painting, sound, and video. At scales that both augment and seemingly disappear into gallery spaces, Tolia's environments posit architecture as an unfixed and transforming entity shaped by those who live through it. At the same time, her sculpture attends to disavowed space and the overlapping markers of use, authorship, and social position that produce different settings of decay.

Collage is a process of separation and recombination. Sculpture can be a form of sorting, choosing, and dividing. Tolia's work engages these artistic methods as parallels to other kinds of personal and collective acculturation. From within, Tolia's exhibitions expand upon a collage sensibility, clipping fabricated architectural features together with figurative drawing, photographic imagery, text, borrowed artworks and audio compositions, animation, secondhand items, and *trompe-l'oeil* painting.

Writer Kirsty Bell has described Tolia's installations as a form of "simultaneity—whereby a space exists as a plan, a model, a projected vision, a memory and a real place."¹ *between father and mother* recasts SculptureCenter as a kind of channeling machine attuned to familial dynamics (as the exhibition's title suggests) but rigged up like a factory with an unknown output. In SculptureCenter's largest gallery space, Tolia installs two sculptures of debris chutes that suggest a filtering mechanism: what travels down one will not travel down the other; what emerges is not always equal to what was thrown inside. Some things stay, caught on hooks inside the vertical chute; some things go. Even more than a matter of choice, Tolia's chutes suggest a more unknowable or unnoticed everyday process of sifting that results in routines of action and thought. Straining, catching, and holding passage for some materials while releasing others, the debris lodged within the sculptures acts an analog for how beliefs or traditions are retained and parts deemed extraneous are washed out.

Tolia's work complicates related ideas of autonomy through ongoing collaborations with other artists, often directly incorporating their artworks into installations alongside the miscellany of everyday items pulled into her installations. Upon entering SculptureCenter, visitors encounter works in sculpture and photography by Katinka Bock suspended or hung in their own spaces within a newly-built wall. This wall is a copy (or a relative) of a wall in SculptureCenter's lower level, built as a kind of exhibition room for Bock's bronze-and-ceramic branchlike-sculpture, whose form also evoke a live wire, one part of a nervous system, or an inert electrical cable. Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili contributes *Deathbed Visions* (2024) an 18-foot-long textile printed with a golden yellow photograph made with experimental camera-less

¹ From Kirsty Bell's "I. Plans and Drawings" published in the exhibition guide for *Tolia Astakhishvili: The First Finger*, Bonner Kunstverein, Mar 25–Jul 30, 2023.

analog and digital techniques. Semi-transparent and backlit by the natural light of a tall window, its imagery and title reference visions experienced by the dying. Tolia has described, in almost auratic terms, how the energy of artistic production directed into these discrete works stands in contrast to the cast-off commodities her work seeks out and arranges.

More directly, Tolia and her longtime collaborator Dylan Peirce have made new works in sound that spill and bleed into each other throughout the exhibition, all tuned to each other. One work relays a collection of horn sounds recorded near SculptureCenter echoing from time to time from within a wall, integrating the external environment with the internal spatial experience. Another work seems to whirr like a fan box; a closer listen within reveals domestic sounds, like the patter of eggs boiling gently in a pot, twinning the raspy industrial breath of the work with a sense of nurturing energy.

At the same time, Tolia's ongoing collaboration with James Richards here focuses on relationships between image and space. *I Remember (Depth of Flattened Cruelty)* (2023–ongoing), a video by Tolia and Richards shown here in three instances, heightens this tendency in Tolia's work within the context of the exhibition. While it appears to be a continuous walkthrough of various derelict spaces, in actuality it is animated from photographs of Tolia's and Richards' past installations and collaborative works from 2018 to the present, stitched together with found and photographed imagery—an exhibition seamlessly empties out into a ruined building that the artists visited in Berlin, or into a stranger's beach snapshot. The editing process produced strange doublings and distortions, and confusions between spaces, images, and spaces as images. Installed, the video and its soundtrack appear shifted across three rooms, each also papered with collage, sculpture, and drawings. In the video's stroll and its installation the viewer interfaces with partial recreations of spatial, psychological, and object conditions that might exist both here and elsewhere.

It is easy to frame *between father and mother* through its large-scale interventions, and what is built. Tolia's work unsettles a building's ability to designate and distribute its own space, but because so much happens in small details, under careful observation of recursive and repeating imagery, splittings, and doublings, it is harder to say exactly how Tolia's work overrides what is present. Her work performs architecture but also its opposites—its defacement, its metaphysical or virtual aspects, its crumbling, water-stained edges, its service as a support structure for any number of images and drawings evoking other spaces, the way it catches bits of meaning and isolates them on walls or in rooms. In reductive sum, Tolia's work represents many found, or soon-to-be-found, situations at once, and in its self-effacing yet accumulative ways it wades through a problem familiar to

art and life: how to compare unlike things across the planes that divide them, and how to reconcile fragments of incomparable experience as they play out in the present and return from the past.

In one example at SculptureCenter, *The art of sleeping* (2024) a mass of car engines tightly packed together quietly rumbles with sounds (of clocks, motors, small pumps, and more) revving under a stage-like platform of plywood boards and sheets of cardboard. This work is one of potential energy—a body of sculpture that also appears to be in storage, idling, trying to shake off its cover.

Tolia Astakhishvili: between father and mother is the artist's first exhibition in the United States.

The exhibition includes *The art of sleeping* (2024), a new work co-commissioned by SculptureCenter, New York and Hartwig Art Foundation, Amsterdam, to be acquired by the Collection Hartwig Art Foundation. Promised gift to the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed / Rijkscollectie Netherlands.

Hartwig Art Foundation is dedicated to fostering and facilitating the production, presentation, mediation, preservation, and collection of contemporary art. Selected by an international group of commissioners for the Collection | Production Fund, ambitious artworks are realized and collected. Hartwig Art Foundation actively seeks to enhance the Dutch State Collection, Collectie Nederland, by adding works that fill gaps in art history, particularly from the early 90s onwards, while also actively following current artistic production and collecting works globally. The works in the collection are continuously donated to the "Rijkscollectie" (Dutch State). In addition to its multiple activities in productions with artists and partnerships with a wide range of institutions, Hartwig Art Foundation is currently developing a new museum for contemporary art in Amsterdam.

HARTWIG ART FOUNDATION

Certain kinds of breach are particular to the female anatomy. That collapsing of borders inherent in desire, passion, pregnancy, childbirth. Involutions of inside and out. Motherhood itself entails the constant encroachment of borders. The host body is a storage container; its internal space subdivided for this short-term tenant. Internal circuitry is tapped into and supplies diverted to the guest. And when this other entity does finally separate and leave, it retains a sense of possession and entitlement to the body that was its former home, laying claim to its psychic space.

– Kirsty Bell

Tolia Astakhishvili works and lives in Berlin and Tbilisi.

Astakhishvili's recent solo exhibitions include *The First Finger* (chapter II), Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2023); *The First Finger*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2023); *I Think It's Closed*, Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld (2023). Her work has been included in exhibitions at Emalin, London (2024); Sweetwater, Berlin (2024); Kunsthalle Zürich (2023); Molitor Gallery, Berlin (2023); LC Queisser, Tbilisi (2023); Shahin Zarinbal, Berlin (2022); Felix Gaudlitz, Vienna (2022); LC Queisser, Tbilisi (2022); Art Hub Copenhagen, Copenhagen (2021); Råume für Kunst, Kerpen (2021); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2021); Capitain Petzel Galerie, Berlin (2021); Goethe Institute Bulgaria/ Earth and Man National Museum, Sofia (2019); Malmö Konsthall, Malmö (2019); Cabinet, London (2018).

Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili is a Georgian-American artist living in Berlin. She works with photography, textile, and, recently, film. Recent solo projects include *Making food out of sunlight*, LC Queisser, Tbilisi (2024); *Georgian Ornament* at 300 Aragveli Metro Station, for Tbilisi Public Art Fund (2024); *Les Rencontres de la Photographie*, Arles, France (2021); *Verkleidung*, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2022–23); *Fugues*, Helena Anrather, New York (2023); and *Flush*, Galerie Molitor, Berlin (2022).

Zurab Astakhishvili lives and works in Tbilisi, Georgia. He is an alpinist and retired physician specialized in respiratory diseases. In collaboration with his daughter Tolia Astakhishvili, he developed an artistic practice in his spare time, which has since become his permanent occupation.

Kirsty Bell is a British-American writer and art critic living in Berlin. She has published widely in magazines and journals including *Tate Etc.* and *Art in America*, and was a contributing editor of *Frieze* from 2011–2021. She was awarded a Warhol Foundation Grant for her book *The Artist's House*, and her essays have appeared in over seventy exhibition catalogs for major international museums and institutions such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; and Tate, London.

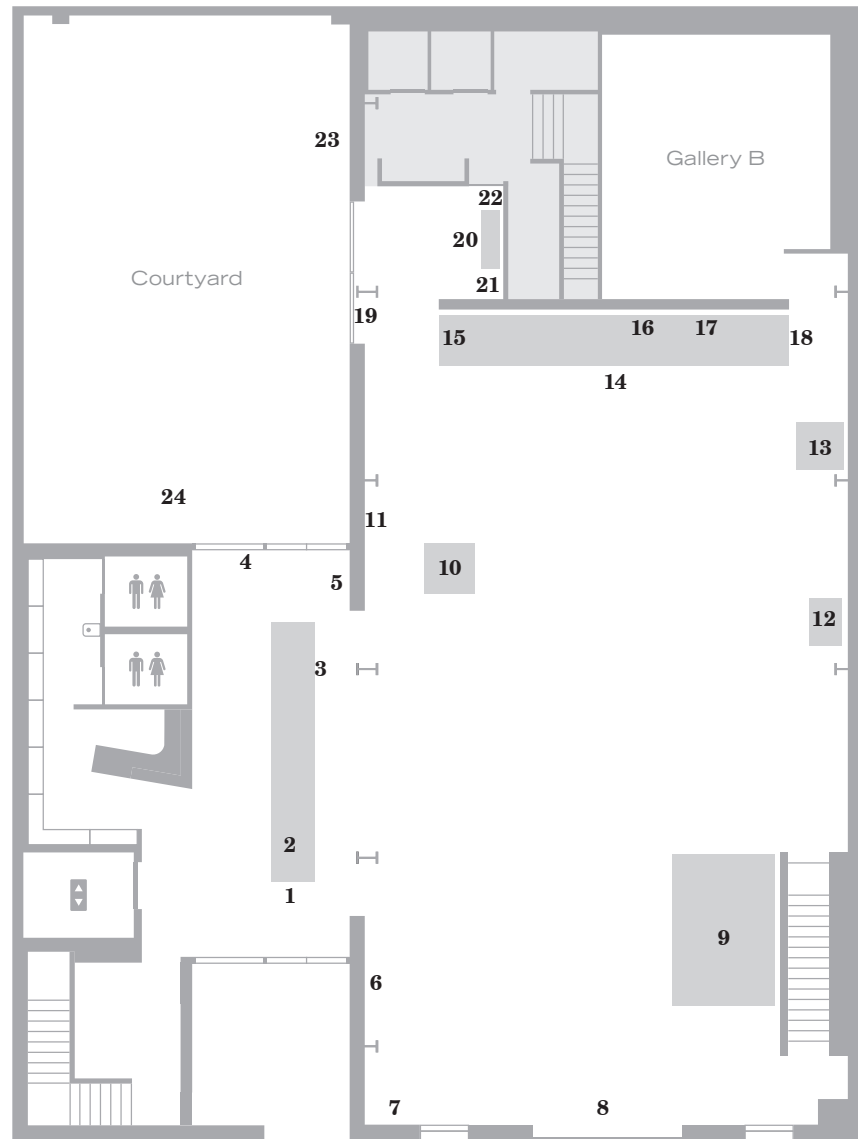
Katinka Bock has presented solo exhibitions at institutions such as Crac Occitanie in Sète (2023); Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris (2023); La Loge, Brussels (2022); Artium Museum in Vitoria-Gasteiz (2021); Kestner Gesellschaft, Hanover (2020); Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2019); Pivo, Sao Paulo (2019); Institut d'Art Contemporain, Villeurbanne (2018); Common Guild, Glasgow (2018); Mudam, Luxembourg (2018); Kunst Museum Winterthur (2018); Mercer Union, Toronto (2017); Kunstmuseum Luzern (2016); Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (2014); and Mamco, Geneva (2013). Her work has been presented by the Public Art Fund in New York, and is on view in the city of Shanghai in the Jing'an

Sculpture Park. Bock was a resident of the Villa Médicis in Rome. In 2012, she won the Prix de la Fondation d'entreprise Ricard and the Dorothea von Stetten Kunstpreis. In 2015, she obtained the Visual Arts Grant of the Fundación Botín. In 2019, she was nominated for the Marcel Duchamp Prize. Since 2013 Katinka Bock has published the series *One of Hundred*, in cooperation with Louis Lüthi. She is represented by 303 Gallery, New York; Jocelyn Wolff, Paris; Meyer Riegger, Berlin; and Greta Meert, Brussels. Bock studied in Berlin and lives and works in Paris.

Dylan Peirce is a multidisciplinary artist who works in the field of sound, experimental photography, sculpture, video and installation. He teaches sound and installation at the UdK Berlin since 2018, and has been one half of the artist duo Astali/Peirce since 2000. Selected exhibitions, performances and interventions include Rennes-Biennial for Contemporary Art (FR), KW, Berlin; Vleeshal, Middelburg, Netherlands; Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn. In 2022, he released his album *Pindrops* on the Berlin label Digital In Berlin.

James Richards has recently held solo exhibitions at Haus Mödrath – Räume für Kunst, Kerpen (2021); Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2020); Malmö Konsthall (2019); Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2018) and Secession, Vienna (2018). His work has also been presented in significant surveys at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2023); Camden Arts Center, London (2020); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2018); Tate Britain, London (2018); Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York (2017); Kestnergesellschaft, Hannover (2016); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2016) and Kunstverein München, Munich (2015). In 2017, he represented Wales at the 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. He lives and works in Berlin.

Works in the Exhibition



Ground Floor Plan

Ground Floor

- 1 Tolia Astakhishvili
The endless House, 2024
Cement board, particle board, plaster, sound
Sound: Dylan Peirce
144 x 232 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 27 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches
(365.8 x 589.5 x 69.2 cm)
- 2 Katinka Bock
La foudre, 2024
Bronze, ceramic
9 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 76 x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches
(24 x 193 x 13 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris
- 3 Katinka Bock
Some and any fleeting, 3, 2022 (printed 2022)
Gelatin silver print on baryta paper
Image: 9-1/2 x 14-3/8 inches
(24.1 x 36.5 cm)
Paper: 10-3/4 x 15-1/2 inches
(27.4 x 39.4 cm)
Edition 4/4, 2 AP
Courtesy the artist and 303 Gallery, New York
- 4 Zurab Astakhishvili
I can't imagine how can I die if I am so alive, 1986–ongoing
Collage
Dimensions variable
- 5 Tolia Astakhishvili
the other person, 2024
Paper, ink, plaster, 3D print, plasterboard, plexiglass
25 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
(65 x 41.2 x 6.5 cm)
- 6 Tolia Astakhishvili
Singing out of doors, 2024
Jewelry, fabric, metal grid
42 x 16 x 16 inches
(106.7 x 40.6 x 40.6 cm)
- 7 Kirsty Bell, 2023–24
Excerpts from texts about *The First Finger* at Bonner Kunstverein and *between father and mother* at SculptureCenter
Ink, foamcore
Dimensions variable
Courtesy Kirsty Bell
- 8 Tolia Astakhishvili and James Richards
Our Friends In The Audience, 2024
Eight digital prints
7 prints at 85 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 46 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (217.8 x 118.1 cm); 1 print at 63 x 45 inches (160 x 114.3 cm)
Courtesy the artists
- 9 Tolia Astakhishvili
The art of sleeping, 2024
Car engines, pallets, plywood, cardboard, found objects, four-channel sound
34 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 152 x 91 inches
(87.6 x 386.1 x 231.1 cm)
Sound: Dylan Peirce
Co-commissioned by SculptureCenter, New York and Hartwig Art Foundation, Amsterdam
Collection Hartwig Art Foundation. Promised gift to the Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed / Rijkscollectie Netherlands
- 10 Tolia Astakhishvili
And how I care for, 2024
Plasterboard, wood, oil, coffee, pigment, cement, found objects, metal grate, ventilation
245 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 48 x 152 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches
(623.9 x 121.9 x 386.2 cm)
Made possible by Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter
- 11 Tolia Astakhishvili
Boy 5, 2024
Oil on canvas
19 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 16 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (50 x 42.5 cm)

- 12** Tolia Astakhishvili
Dream that I extract from my palm, 2024
Plasterboard, wood, bicycle chains, jewelry chain, ink, plaster, cement
62 x 78 ³/₄ x 42 ³/₈ inches
(157.5 x 200 x 107.6 cm)
- 13** Tolia Astakhishvili
When the others are within us, 2024
Plasterboard, wood, oil, coffee, pigment, cement, hooks, found objects, paper, pencil, ink, light
362 ³/₈ x 51 ¹/₈ x 53 ¹/₂ inches
(920.4 x 129.9 x 135.9 cm)
Made possible by Valeria Napoleone XX
SculptureCenter
- 14** Tolia Astakhishvili
Can't stop living, 2024
Cement board, fabric, rockwool, plaster, pipes, paper, ink, plasterboard, plexiglass, photographs, light, particle board
216 x 370 ¹/₂ x 82 ⁷/₈ inches
(548.6 x 941.1 x 210.5 cm)
- 15** Tolia Astakhishvili
Obelisk to the random thoughts, 2024
Water pipes, acrylic, oil, papier-mâché
69 x 20 ¹/₂ x 2 ³/₄ inches (175 x 52 x 7 cm)
- 16** Tolia Astakhishvili
Influence II, 2024
Carved elm wood from the beam of an old house, paper, ink, museum glass
18 ¹/₈ x 14 ¹/₈ inches (46 x 36 cm)
framed
- 17** Tolia Astakhishvili and James Richards
I Remember (Depth of Flattened Cruelty), 2023–ongoing
Three-channel HD video, color, sound
10:16 minutes
Collaged images and found objects
Courtesy the artists
- 18** Tolia Astakhishvili
Morning rituals, 2024
Paper, ink, plaster, plasterboard, plexiglass
25 ¹/₂ x 16 ¹/₄ x 2 ¹/₂ inches
(65 x 41.2 x 6.5 cm)
- 19** Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili
Deathbed Visions, 2024
Inkjet print on organic cotton
224 ¹/₄ x 53 ¹/₄ inches (569.3 x 135 cm)
Courtesy the artist and LC Queisser, Tbilisi
- 20** Tolia Astakhishvili and Dylan Peirce,
I am different when I am alone, 2024
Sound, fan, plasterboard, vent covers
70 ⁷/₈ x 55 ¹/₈ x 15 ³/₄ inches
(180 x 140 x 40 cm)
Courtesy the artists
- 21** Tolia Astakhishvili
Boy 4, 2023
Oil and acrylic on canvas
18 ¹/₈ x 16 ¹/₈ (46 x 41 cm)
- 22** Tolia Astakhishvili
People like us in war, 2024
Ink, board
14 ¹/₂ x 35 ⁷/₈ inches (37 x 91 cm)
- 23** Tolia Astakhishvili
Beautiful neighbour, 2024
Paper, ink, plaster, 3D print, plasterboard, plexiglass
25 ¹/₂ x 16 ¹/₄ x 2 ¹/₂ inches
(65 x 41.2 x 6.5 cm)
- 24** Tolia Astakhishvili
One to one, 2024
Fence post, fence, chain, lock
72 x 144 x 3 inches
(182.9 x 365.8 x 7.6 cm)

All works by Tolia Astakhishvili courtesy the artist and LC Queisser, Tbilisi

Public Programs

Opening Reception
Tue, May 7, 2024, 6–8pm

Tolia Astakhishvili and Kirsty Bell
Sat, May 11, 2024, 2–3:30pm

Tolia Astakhishvili and James Richards
Thu, Jul 18, 2024, 6:30–8pm

On View Concurrently

In Practice: Covey Gong
May 9–Jun 17, 2024

In Practice: Phoebe Collings-James
Jun 27–Aug 12, 2024

Thank you

Christiane Eggers
Annie Hägg
Carl-Oskar Jonsson

Tolia thanks SculptureCenter’s team of
Art Installers and Carpenters for their
work to realize this exhibition.

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The exhibition is curated by Kyle Dancewicz, Deputy Director, with Christopher Aque, Exhibition and Program Manager.

Sponsors

And how I care for and *When the others are within us* (both 2024) are made possible by Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter (VNXXSC).

Valeria Napoleone 

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Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter

Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter (VNXXSC) is an ongoing initiative that funds the production of a major artwork by an artist in a selected exhibition at SculptureCenter. The partnership was launched in September 2015 with the commission of *Project for door (After Gaetano Pesce)* (2015), the centerpiece of the exhibition *Anthea Hamilton: Lichen! Libido! Chastity!*, which was nominated for the 2016 Turner Prize. Now embarking on its sixth partnership, VNXXSC has provided significant support in realizing milestone works by Carissa Rodriguez (2018); Fiona Connor (2019); Rindon Johnson (2021); and Lydia Ourahmane (2022).

Valeria Napoleone XX SculptureCenter

