

Kunsthalle Wien

Press Release

Kunsthalle Wien Preis 2025

Jonida Laçi and Luīze Nežberte

7 November 2025–25 January 2026

Curated by Anna Marckwald and Hannah Marynissen

Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz opens its winter programme with an exhibition by Jonida Laçi (b. 1990, Durrës, Albania) and Luīze Nežberte (b. 1998, Riga, Latvia), who have been awarded the Kunsthalle Wien Preis 2025. Established initially in 2002, it is organised in collaboration with the University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. The prize aims to both recognise and support a new generation of artists with an annual award for outstanding diploma presentations selected from candidates working in different media and with diverse subject matter. Laçi and Nežberte receive a joint exhibition at Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz with an exhibition catalogue published in German and English and a € 3,000 award.

Jonida Laçi studied in the departments Art and Space | Object as well as Art and Time | Media at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Employing a range of media, Laçi creates works that exist between sculpture, video, photography, installation and text-based practices. She explores the production and perception specific to each medium through questions around form, the gaze, translation and the parameters of standardisation. Laçi's diploma presentation *Ajar* (2025) utilised spatial installations to interrogate framing and modes of display in the construction of images and sculptures, enlisting viewers as active participants in the construction of meaning. Often influenced by details from everyday life, much of her work examines how socio-economic inscriptions are embedded in familiar materials, spaces and procedures – shaping affects and knowledge.

Luīze Nežberte studied Sculpture and Space at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Her work considers methods of collecting, quoting and recontextualising material via sculpture, often working with existing architectural forms. Through an engagement with personal memory, vernacular form and historical narratives, she examines how each work reshapes these relations in an exhibition context. Nežberte's diploma presentation *We could listen much longer, but it is late by now* (2025) centred around sculptural reinterpretations of historical architecture, taking the Gaides Meeting House (built in 1739 by Latvian followers of the Moravian Brethren) as a point of departure. Nežberte reinterprets these forms as spatial installations, utilising common building materials such as MDF and drywall, in order to investigate how cultural memory is negotiated through process of reconstruction and material transformation.

The exhibition has been developed to reflect the cohesion between the two distinct and autonomous practices of Laçi and Nežberte, who each present versions of their diploma exhibitions, with site-specific adaptations and new works for its presentation at Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz.

A series of MDF sculptures by Luīze Nežberte take the form of columns, referencing early examples of Latvian architecture. Amongst these, Jonida Laçi installs three video projectors mounted on tripods casting different vantage points of the same, appropriated video footage onto the wall. By positioning each projector at a slightly different angle, Laçi evokes a change of perspective in order to question processes of perception. Elsewhere, another work by Nežberte divides the space with two drywall partitions, disrupting movement through the room. Initially only visible from the back, it is only later that the painted surface on the other side becomes visible. Nežberte cites amateur marble replicas of two fireplaces in the house of the

Kaudzīte brothers, and thus refers to *Mērnīeku laiki* [*The Times of the Land-Surveyors*] (1879), the first novel written in Latvian. Behind it is another work by Jonida Lači: A new series of photographs showing rear views of hollow statues that have been installed on the façade of a prestigious 19th-century shopping arcade. Photographed through the windows of the stairwell to reveal the illusionistic nature of the figures, the work raises questions about the gaze and representation. An additional series of sculptures by Nežberte take the form of deconstructed columns that form a ruinous heap on the floor. The works embody themes of construction and decay while serving as a display for a new edition of her publication *Bulletin* (2025).

Biographies

Jonida Lači (b. 1990, Durrës, Albania) studied Art and Space | Object and Art and Time | Media at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She has held solo exhibitions at marais/moeras, Brussels (2025) and CAN, Vienna (2023). Her work has also been exhibited at Forde, Geneva; Courtney Jaeger, Basel; OxfordBerlin, Düsseldorf (all 2025); etta, Düsseldorf (2024); Fondation Tschüss, Karlsruhe; New Jörg, Vienna; Kunstraum Schwaz, Tyrol; Kunstverein Zink, Vienna and Künstlerhaus, Vienna (all 2023). Lači lives and works in Vienna.

Luīze Nežberte (b. 1998, Riga, Latvia) studied Sculpture and Space at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. Her work has been exhibited at the Latvian National Museum of Art, Riga; Chicago, London (both 2025); Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Riga; Neuer Kunstverein Wien (both 2024); House of Spouse, Vienna; SPOILER, Berlin and 427 Gallery, Riga (all 2023). From 2023 to 2025, she co-curated the exhibition programme at Pech, Vienna together with Bruno Mokross. Nežberte has been selected to participate in the forthcoming De Ateliers programme in Amsterdam where she now lives and works.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a new book published in German and English by Kunsthalle Wien. Edited by the exhibition curators, Anna Marckwald and Hannah Marynissen, it is richly illustrated with images of works by Jonida Lači and Luīze Nežberte and contains specially-commissioned essays by Mirela Baciak, Director of Salzburger Kunstverein and Vienna-based critic, writer and curator, Chris Clarke.

Kunsthalle Wien Preis 2025 Jury

For the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, organised by Christine Rogi:

Michelle Cotton (Artistic Director, Kunsthalle Wien), Sarah Crowe (Assistant Curator, Kunsthalle Wien), Johan F. Hartle (Rector, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna), Judith Huemer (Associate Professor Art and Intervention | Environment, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna), Maximilian Lehner (Press/PR, Kunsthalle Wien), Gina Merz (Assistant Curator, Kunsthalle Wien), Carolina Nöbauer (Programme Curator, Tanzquartier Wien) and Christian Schwarzwald (Professor Art and Image | Graphics, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna)

For the University of Applied Arts Vienna, organised by Jasmin Vogl:

Michelle Cotton (Artistic Director, Kunsthalle Wien), Peter Kozek (Artistic Director Angewandte Performance Lab, Prize Winner Kunsthalle Wien Preis 2002), Maximilian Lehner (Press/PR, Kunsthalle Wien), Gina Merz (Assistant Curator, Kunsthalle Wien), Carolina Nöbauer (Programme Curator, Tanzquartier Wien), Cornelia Offergeld (Artistic Director, KÖR Kunst im Öffentlichen Raum Wien), Astrid Peterle (Head of Curatorial and Programming, Kunsthalle Wien) and Lisa Truttmann (Visual Artist and Filmmaker, Prize Winner Kunsthalle Wien Preis 2009)

Notes to Editors

Kunsthalle Wien Preis 2025: Jonida Laçi and Luīze Nežberte

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Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

Press preview: 5 November 2025, 11 am

Opening: 6 November 2025, 7 pm

Artist talk: 10 December 2025, 6 pm

Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

Jonida Laçi and Luīze Nežberte in conversation with Anna Marckwald and Hannah Marynissen, curators of the Kunsthalle Wien Preis 2025

Press images to download

<https://kunsthallewien.at/en/press/2025/08/05/kunsthalle-wien-preis-2025-jonida-laci-und-luize-nezberte>

About Kunsthalle Wien

Kunsthalle Wien is the City of Vienna's primary institution for contemporary art. At its locations in the Museumsquartier and on Karlsplatz, it presents an annual programme of exhibitions alongside public and educational programming that seeks to engage diverse publics. We provide a platform for artists, commissioning new works and partnering with individuals and institutions, both local and international, to develop exhibitions and publications based on original research. Kunsthalle Wien is committed to providing an inclusive space for exchange and debate and furthering the discourse on contemporary art in all its forms.

Kunsthalle Wien Thanks

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Address and Information

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Opening Hours

Tuesday–Sunday: 10:00–18:00

Thursday: 10:00–20:00

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