

Kunsthalle Wien

Press release

Guglielmo Castelli: Sweet Baby Motel

13 February–12 April 2026

Kunsthalle Wien presents the first institutional solo exhibition outside of Italy by Guglielmo Castelli (b. 1987, Turin). The exhibition at Karlsplatz comprises an entirely new body of work including painting, sculpture and a site-specific mural.

I'm interested in the fact that the pictorial body, even if dismembered, remains a single body. Just like at the theatre or at the cinema, you have a scene before and a scene after, but what happens in that moment has a circumscribed temporality. [...] That's the part which interests me, the fact of having a representation which is really a frame that is a universe unto itself.

Guglielmo Castelli

Trained in theatrical scenography, Castelli has developed a distinctive iconography that draws upon the history of painting, architecture and literature. His compositions are characterised by an earthy, nocturnal palette and a fluid, dreamlike quality that is often difficult to locate in space and time. Collectively, they suggest a fragmentary narrative that he has compared to filmmaking, where each still image contains 'a universe unto itself'.

Sweet Baby Motel presents seven paintings on canvas, each centred on a single figure who often appears weightless or enigmatically suspended in space. Limbs bisect compositions, imitating or morphing into scissors, both a recurrent motif and artistic tool within Castelli's practice. Spotlit and costumed with harlequin prints, tights, puffed sleeves, gloves and ruffs, his subjects resemble the characters of a theatrical production, caught in a moment of reverie or quiet contemplation; smoking, at a crossroads or on a threshold. Others appear to be falling, flying or leaping through the air. In these densely layered compositions, objects, architectural details, textiles and textures provide moments of departure into semi-abstract areas of painting or pattern. Rows of buildings, garlands of flowers, doors, mirrors and curtains form elaborate borders framing a central drama that often consists in elemental bursts of fire, gusts of wind or balletic movement. Glimpses of Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *The Hunters in the Snow* (1565) or a patchwork of façades that recall the architecture of Friedensreich Hundertwasser add a Viennese accent to these compositions which are installed upon a 22-metre-long painted mural especially conceived for this exhibition. Inspired by the German fairytale *Hansel and Gretel*, it unfolds in the style of a story book, while remaining conscious of the movement and gaze and the different perspectives available within the space. At the centre of the mural, where the feet of the two protagonists meet, Castelli depicts an upturned gingerbread house, questioning preconceived narratives around hierarchy and control.

A series of ten figurative sculptures made from cut paper are presented on tables with steel plates and titled with the names of domestic rooms such as Kitchen and Bedroom (both 2025). Their bent, cut-paper subjects appear to straddle and slip off skewed household furniture. Castelli's museological presentation underscores the scrutiny performed upon each object while also calling attention to their fragile materiality and sense of vulnerability.

Finally, the exhibition includes a selection of the artist's notebooks, sketches and other preparatory materials, which inspired these works. Among these are studies for the characters, notes, excerpts of poetry and fabric remnants that provide insight to his artistic process.

Guglielmo Castelli: Sweet Baby Motel is organised in cooperation with Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin and supported by PAC2025 – *Piano per l'Arte Contemporanea*, promoted by the Directorate-General for Contemporary Creativity of the Italian Ministry of Culture, and the Italian Cultural Institute in Vienna.

Biography

Guglielmo Castelli (b. 1987, Turin) has held solo exhibitions at Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin (2025); Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice; Villa Medici, Rome (both 2024); Aspen Museum, Colorado (2023); Fondazione Coppola, Vicenza (2019) and Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (2018). His work has been presented within significant surveys including Triennale Milano, Milan (2023); the 17th Quadriennale di Roma, Rome (2020); and Biennale Internazionale d'Art Contemporain de Melle, Italy (2018). It has also been exhibited at Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo/Museo Nazionale dell'Automobile, Turin; Fondazione Nicola Trussardi/Palazzo Morando, Milan; GAM – Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin; Centre Pompidou Metz in collaboration with Musée du Louvre, Paris (all 2025); MAXXI L'Aquila (2023); Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin (2020); The Parkview Museum, Singapore; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (both 2018); Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Saint-Étienne (2016) and Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Lissone (2016). Castelli lives and works in Turin.

Exhibition Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a new publication featuring texts by Sarah Crowe and Lillian Davies, as well as an interview with the artist by Francesco Manacorda. Published by Lenz, Castello di Rivoli and Kunsthalle Wien, the publication will be available from the end of March.

Guglielmo Castelli: Sweet Baby Motel

Editors: Michelle Cotton, Francesco Manacorda

Texts by: Sarah Crowe, Lillian Davies

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Price: € 38

Notes to Editors

Guglielmo Castelli: Sweet Baby Motel

Curated by Sarah Crowe

13 February–12 April 2026

Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz

Press conference: 12 February 2026, 10 am

Exhibition opening: 12 February 2026, 7 pm

Press images for download and further information:

<https://kunsthallewien.at/en/press/2026/02/02/guglielmo-castelli-sweet-baby-motel>

Public Programme

Fri, 6.3.2026, 5 pm

Curator's tour with Sarah Crowe (EN)

Thu, 26.3.2026, 6 pm

Artist talk and book launch: Guglielmo Castelli in conversation with curator Sarah Crowe, launch of *Guglielmo Castelli: Sweet Baby Motel* (EN)

Thu, 9.4.2026, 6 pm

Guided tour (DE)

Programme for Kids and Families

Thu, 12.3.2026, 11 am

Baby-friendly tour (DE)

All dates for guided tours and the programme are available at:

<https://kunsthallewien.at/en/programme>

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

Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier

Treitlstraße 2, 1040 Vienna

www.kunsthallewien.at

+43-1-52189-0

office@kunsthallewien.at

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Opening Hours

Tuesday–Sunday: 10:00–18:00

Thursday: 10:00–20:00

Press Contact

Iseult Grandjean

+43-1-52189-221

presse@kunsthallewien.at