



Vienna, September 7, 2023

**Belvedere 21**

Arsenalstraße 1  
1030 Vienna

**Opening hours:**

Tuesday to Sunday  
11 am to 6 pm

Late night:

Thursday 11 am to 9 pm  
Open Mondays only on  
public holidays

**Press downloads:**

[belvedere.at/en/press](https://belvedere.at/en/press)

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Robert Gabris, *This Space Is Too Small For Our Bodies*, 2023, photo: Janine Schranz / © Bildrecht, Vienna 2023

## ROBERT GABRIS

# THIS SPACE IS TOO SMALL FOR OUR BODIES

## BELVEDERE ART AWARD

September 8, 2023 to February 18, 2024

The exhibition by Belvedere Art Award winner Robert Gabris focuses on investigations of the body as related to fluid identities, queerness, and marginalization. The artist, who first gained attention at documenta fifteen, uses drawings, large installations, and performance art as his media of choice.

Director General Stella Rollig: *To address the exclusionary practices prevalent in museums and fill institutional gaps, we teamed up with Vendome Projects to launch the Belvedere Art Award in 2022. We congratulate the winner, Robert Gabris! His first solo exhibition in an Austrian museum provides a platform for the queer, trans, and non-binary Romnja community, which faces multiple forms of marginalization. Gabris's work brings attention to important issues that need to be addressed.*

Curator Christiane Erharter: *Space, boundary, body. Robert Gabris's solo exhibition at Belvedere 21 places loaded concepts in a critical, precisely delineated, postcolonial and institution-critical relationship to one another, a relationship whose potential for creating knowledge is apparent on several levels.*

Robert Gabris's visual language ranges from meticulously crafted drawings to prose poetry to layered sculptural objects. Through such media, the artist examines the human body, scrutinizing its condition, boundaries, and forms as they relate to queerness and various aspects of marginalization. His works are

meant to resist racism and exclusion while remaining fluid and open to interpretation. By naming the mechanisms of discrimination prevalent in the art industry, Robert Gabris also addresses voids left by institutional exclusion.

At the Belvedere 21, Robert Gabris will show approximately thirty works created between 2014 and 2023. His early series *The Blue Heart* (2014) is comprised of five engravings that allude to his biological father's tattooed life story(s) and, in a more comprehensive context, to the history of an entire Romnja village in Slovakia. In the series *My Country, My Blood* (2018–20), the artist explores marginalized groups in society, diverse and mutable identities, the queer body and its existence in various physical and mental manifestations – always in relation to a normative society and its boundaries. *Landscape of Excretion 1*, *Landscape of Excretion 2*, and *Landscape of Excretion 3* are anatomical drawings of digestive organs in which Gabris addresses his exclusion from his homeland. For the series *Bodyshop* (2023), he dissected his own body as if performing an autopsy, producing drawings as well as book objects. The series *This Space Is Too Small for Our Bodies* (2023), created especially for this exhibition, experiments with the idea of adding newly developed forms to the body as objects. The outcome is a living entity that determines and shapes its own anatomy, sometimes removing and reassembling parts. With his compositions, Gabris undermines notions of conventional body norms and instead proposes a modular system for fluid bodies that function according to their own principles, ultimately erasing the boundaries between human and non-human.

The room-sized installation *ERROR – ROMA CORPOREALITY AND THEIR NON-BINARY SPACES* (2021) was created with the collaboration of queer individuals in Slovakia. It was first displayed at documenta fifteen in Kassel in 2022 and is being exhibited in Austria for the first time. The installation is enclosed by a tape that bears the message "TAKE A STEP BACK SO THAT WE\* CAN TAKE A STEP FORWARD." This tape serves to exclude visitors and to encourage renunciation of white privilege, allowing that the Romnja queer, trans, and non-binary community not only symbolically exists within the exhibition space but also has the opportunity to occupy discursive space. The message on the tape ("this space [...] too small") also directly addresses institutions, demanding that they create space and recognize that not all struggles for recognition can be captured at the institutional level.

## CATALOGUE

### **Robert Gabris. This Space Is Too Small for Our Bodies**

Editors: Stella Rollig, Christiane Erharter, Vendomeprojects.art

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160 pages, 50 illustrations

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Each book is one of a kind as it features a unique ribbon bookmark handwritten by Robert Gabris and collectively hand-embroidered by Zasivarna.eu

German & English in one volume

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE – ROBERT GABRIS

Born in 1986 in Hnúšťa, Slovakia, Gabris studied costume and stage design at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava (2006–10) and stage design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (2010–14). Selected solo exhibitions include Strabag Kunstform, Vienna, AT (2021); Villa Romana, Florence, IT (2021); Bunker del Castello di Udine, Udine, IT (2017); and Collective by Pure, Shanghai, CN (2015). In group exhibitions, his work has been shown at documenta fifteen in Kassel (as part of the Off Biennale Budapest), DE; at rotor in Graz, AT; Künstlerhaus Vienna, AT; Tent Rotterdam, NL; Württembergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart, DE; the Bergen Assembly, NO; transit in Bratislava, SK; Landesgalerie Eisenstadt, AT; and Wien Museum, AT, among others. He has been an artist-in-residence at MeetFactory, Prague, CZ (2022); at K.A.I.R., Košice, SK (2021); and at Villa Romana, Florence, IT (2020), among others. He was awarded the following prizes: Jindřich Chalupecký Award, Brno, CZ (2021); Recognition Award, Strabag Art Award, Vienna, AT (2021); Belvedere Art Award, Vienna, AT (2022).

More at [robertgabis.com](http://robertgabis.com)

## BELVEDERE ART AWARD

The Belvedere Art Award was launched in 2022 as a collaborative effort between [Vendome Projects](#) and the Belvedere. This biennial art award seeks to reflect forward-looking dynamics in society and contemporary art. Advancing an inclusive, queer-feminist, diversity-oriented approach, the initiative is informed by current discourses and an awareness of the manifold exclusionary practices demonstrated by museums and exhibitions, not least of which is how and to whom awards are allocated. In a two-stage selection process, a nomination and a selection jury with local and international experts determine an artistic position as the prize winner. Five jurors each nominate two emerging artists with a connection to Austria. Age, gender, and nationality explicitly do not play a role in the selection process. The award is endowed with 20,000 euros in prize money. In addition to the prize money, the award winner receives a solo exhibition with an accompanying publication at Belvedere 21.

More at [belvedere.at/belvedere-art-award](https://belvedere.at/belvedere-art-award)

## PROGRAM

### EXHIBITION OPENING

**Robert Gabris. This Space Is Too Small for Our Bodies**

**Belvedere Art Award**

Thursday, September 7 | 7 pm

A performance by [Ernst Lima](#) will accompany the exhibition opening.

### DRAWING WORKSHOP

**Critters, Lichens, Midges**

Friday, September 22 | 3–5 pm

Have you ever wondered what creatures are scurrying along the ground, taking root in the crevices or soaring through the air? Robert Gabris will guide participants to look closely and draw their observations based on "nature." To further explore, we will go to the sculpture garden of the Belvedere 21 and the adjacent Schweizergarten.

The workshop is part of the Community Outreach Program, tailored explicitly to the BIPOC and queer community.

In English/participation is free of charge

Advance registration required

### EXHIBITION WALK-THROUGH

**Artist Tour with Robert Gabris**

Tuesday, December 5 | 4:30 pm

In the Belvedere Art Award exhibition, Robert Gabris is probing the boundaries of identities and the human body as well as various forms of marginalization. This tour will delve deeper into these themes. The tour is available free of charge for those with a valid admission ticket.

Tickets at [belvedere.at/programm](https://belvedere.at/programm)

## GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	<i>Robert Gabris. This Space Is Too Small for Our Bodies Belvedere Art Award</i>
Curator	Christiane Erharter
Duration	September 8, 2023 to February 18, 2024
Location	Belvedere 21 Arsenalstraße 1, 1030 Vienna
Opening hours	Tuesday to Sunday 11 am to 6 pm Late night: Thursday 11 am to 9 pm Open Mondays on holidays
Tickets	Regular   €8.90 online, €10.50 on-site Discounted   €6.90 online, €8 on-site Belvedere Annual Ticket   €39 Children and youth up to the age of 18   free
Web	belvedere.at facebook.com/belvedere21 X.com/belvedere21 instagram.com/belvedere21wien  #RobertGabris  #BelvedereArtAward

This exhibition has been made possible in cooperation with Vendome Projects Art.

**VENDOME**  
VENDOME MANAGEMENT GMBH

For more information on the exhibition and high-resolution press photos, please visit [belvedere.at/en/press](https://belvedere.at/en/press).