

# Kunst Museum Winterthur

Press Release

## Tony Oursler

### Hoisted from the Pit

24 May – 10 August 2025

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Beim Stadthaus

Press briefing on the exhibition

Thursday, 22 May 2025, 11 a.m., or individual guided tours upon request

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Beim Stadthaus, Museumstrasse 52, 8400 Winterthur

**Tony Oursler is considered a pioneer of video art. Since the 1980s, he has been developing experimental installations that uncouple videos from the screen and create immersive environments. At the Kunst Museum Winterthur, he is showing an exhibition entitled *Hoisted from the Pit*, which focuses on fake news, conspiracy theories and manipulation based on the historical figure of the Cardiff Giant, one of North America's most famous scientific forgeries.**

Tony Oursler, born in New York in 1957, has been developing experimental installations since the 1980s that uncouple the medium of video from the two-dimensional surface and create immersive environments. Oursler's work focuses on the relationship between people and technology. He grew up with television in the 1980s. This media influence through pop, advertising and consumer culture became his most important source of inspiration. In his new cycle of works for the Kunst Museum Winterthur, he focuses on the fully networked, digitalised world, which he juxtaposes with historical (narrative) techniques.

Tony Oursler presents an exhibition centred around the historical figure of the Cardiff Giant, one of the most incredible scientific forgeries in North America and its exploitation as a profitable spectacle: the atheist George Hull had a stone figure over three metres tall made and buried on a farm in Cardiff, New York. A year later, he arranged for a well to be built on the same site, during the construction of which the giant was 'discovered' by chance and lifted out of the pit. The supposedly sensational discovery of the prehistoric giant was reported nationwide. Numerous spectators travelled to the site and paid to see the giant. George Hull capitalised on the belief in biblical giants to turn it into a lucrative business. The exhibition title *Hoisted from the Pit* refers to the press reports of the time. The photos of the giant's recovery were always captioned with this. But 'Hoisted from the Pit' can also mean that something from the subconscious is uncovered or something repressed reappears.

Oursler draws on the incredible (success) story of the Cardiff Giant to draw parallels with today's flood of fake news, manipulative communication and associated business practices. He stages a multimedia installation in six rooms. The films, which take up elements of social media and were partly produced with artificial intelligence, take the form of re-enactments and documentaries and, in combination with objects, tell a story about the functioning of half-truths, authenticity, perception of reality and media scepticism. We are now all too familiar with the mixture of scientific facts, targeted hoaxes and the seduction of the masses: fake news and conspiracy theories are omnipresent and the role of (social)

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media is a powerful factor in the success of dubious narratives. The exhibition focuses on the increasing complexity with which information is produced, disseminated and perceived today.

Accompanying the exhibition, Snoeck Verlag is publishing a comprehensive publication on the artist's new work cycle with numerous texts and installation illustrations.

## **Images and information about the exhibition**

[kmw.ch/press](http://kmw.ch/press) or on request

### **Curator**

Lynn Kost  
[lynn.kost@kmw.ch](mailto:lynn.kost@kmw.ch)  
052 267 51 70

### **Press Office**

Melanie Staub / Eva Ruckstuhl  
[kommunikation@kmw.ch](mailto:kommunikation@kmw.ch)  
052 267 51 77