

# Kunst Museum Winterthur

Press Release

## Simon Starling

### The Artist, Wearing a Mask of Adolph Menzel, Holds Plaster Casts of the Ambidextrous German Painter's Left and Right Hands (and Other Interventions)

28 February – 5 July 2026

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten

#### Press briefing on the exhibition

Thursday, 26 February 2026, 11 a.m., or individual guided tours upon request

Kunst Museum Winterthur | Reinhart am Stadtgarten, Stadthausstrasse 6, 8400 Winterthur

**The Kunst Museum Winterthur presents Simon Starling in dialogue with works by Adolph Menzel, Caspar Wolf and other artists from the Oskar Reinhart Foundation. The exhibition shows how Starling transforms historical imagery into contemporary reflections on the city, nature and change.**

Born in Epsom (UK) in 1967, Simon Starling has devoted his artistic work for years to topics such as sustainability, ecology and economics, repeatedly turning his attention to masterpieces of art and cultural history: Fiat and Piaggio as well as Tiepolo and Adolph Menzel.

In 1847/1848 the painter Adolph Menzel lived at *Ritterstrasse 43* in Berlin. He immortalised the view from the window onto the backyard in a small-format oil sketch: *Berlin Tenements in the Snow* (1847/1848). The most important representative of German realism reveals himself here as a master of proto-impressionist painting, capturing the unspectacular view in the moment—its mundaneness captured in its spectacular painterly fashion.

Today, the view of the courtyard at Ritterstrasse 43 is obstructed by an apartment building with box-shaped balconies. Simon Starling used a complex 3D printing process to transform Menzel's small-format painting, including its frame, into a monumental installation and reinserted it into the view as it appears today. The work becomes a dialogue between historical and contemporary image genres, an artistic reflection on the changes in urban space, and something of a memento: While Starling was working on the Menzel project, the pandemic was raging. Public life came to a standstill, exhibitions were postponed, people had to stay at home. Menzel's view from the window took on an unexpected relevance. "The pandemic suddenly brought about this heightened sensitivity to nature. [...] You had the feeling that you could observe spring in a much more contemplative way than you normally do," said the artist, who, with *Ritterstrasse 43*, addresses "how we make images of nature and how that has changed."

With *The Artist, Wearing a Mask of Adolph Menzel, Holds Plaster Casts of the Ambidextrous German Painter's Left and Right Hands*, Simon Starling not only draws on motifs from the German realist's paintings, he also dedicates a sculpture to him. This affectionate 'homage', a double portrait, depicts the younger artist holding two plaster casts of the German painter's hands, made during Menzel's

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lifetime; one holding a paint brush, the other a pencil. The British artist developed this Starling-Menzel figure as part of an ongoing body of work entitled *Project for an Exhibition* (2024 – 2026), in which Starling pays an idiosyncratic tribute to numerous past collaborators; artists, designers, musicians and scientists, who have been key to the development of many of his previous works. Here, these individuals are co-opted as fellow ‘museum guides’ bringing their own specialism and interests to bare on the collection.

Aside from Adolph Menzel's work, Simon Starling's other large-scale installation, *One Ton III* (2024), finds a fitting new home in relation to early depictions of glaciers by Swiss painters such as Felix Meyer and Caspar Wolf. This nomadic work, originally made for the Switzerland-wide exhibition *Watch the Glacier Disappear*, took as its starting point a photographic negative of the Morteratsch glacier made in 1879 by Jules Beck. This image was progressively restored, reprinted and then returned, by way of a purpose-built hybrid transport/display system, to the home of the now much depleted glacier in the Engadin.

In recent years the work of Simon Starling, who now lives in Copenhagen, has been exhibited in museums around the world. The exhibition at the Kunst Museum Winterthur presents selected groups of works by the artist in dialogue with paintings from the Oskar Reinhart Collection—from Menzel to Starling, so to speak.

## Images and information about the exhibition

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

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