

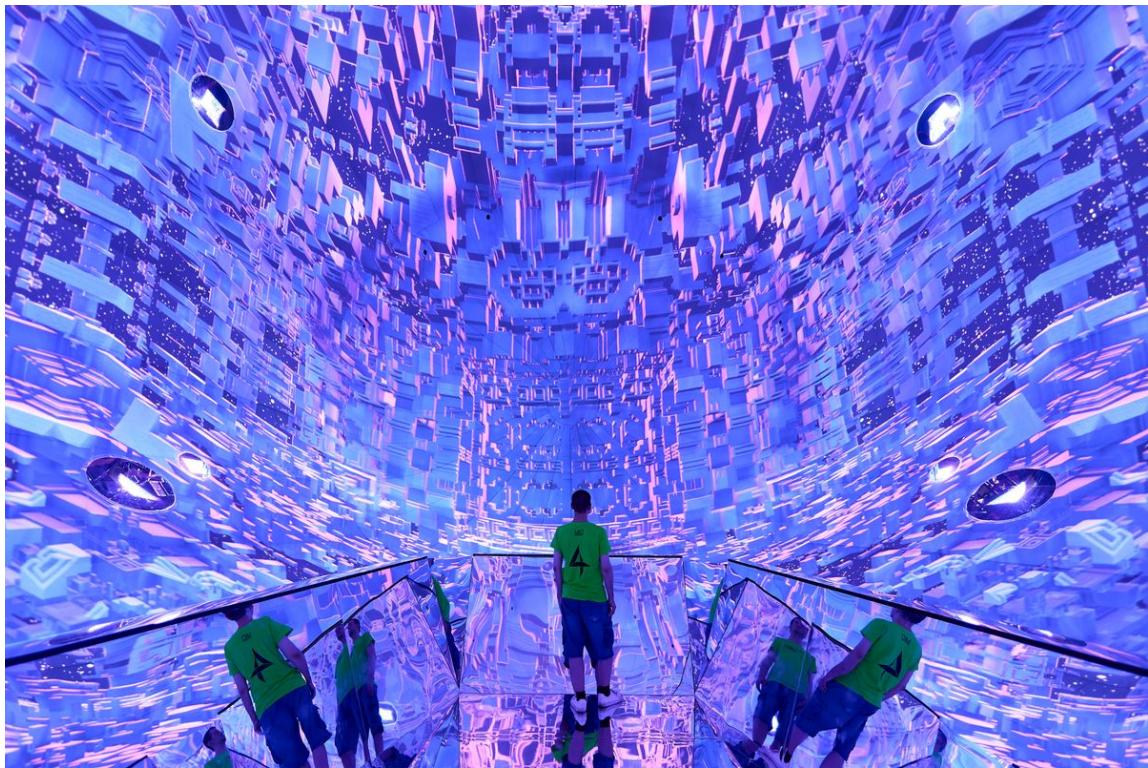
How to Entangle the Universe in a Spider's Web? – Even the Rain Falls Upwards at One of Budapest's Most Thrilling Exhibitions

A nearly reassuring answer to the above question is provided to those who visit the new exhibition of the Light Art Museum (LAM) *More Than Human*, exploring the idea of what may no longer seem such a distant reality: what will or could come after a human-centred world.



Anita Farkas

We are standing in front of a huge, bluish-green sphere of light, whose continuous movement, or rather pulsation, is simultaneously captivating and disconcerting. A colleague and I speculate whether this is a sphere at all, or merely a trick of our brains playing through our eyes. Meanwhile, the space above us seems to be in constant motion and we are softly enveloped by the equally mesmerising dome of the zeppelin, reminiscent of coloured prisms, which – although we do not yet realise it – we will soon find ourselves in the centre of.



Viktor Vicsek & Rodrigo Guzman: *Saeculum*, 2025 (Photo: Dávid Bíró/Light Art Museum Budapest)

Nor do we expect that the extraordinary world created by the LAM on the former site of the Hold Street Market will be capable of overturning two prevailing preconceptions in just a few minutes: that visiting a museum is synonymous with mind-numbing boredom, and that contemporary visual art is all meaningless self-indulgence shrouded in a purple haze. Moreover, it does so through the spectacular installations, projections and immersive works by artists, including Hungarians – works affecting all our senses at once – which simultaneously take us, the visitors, into the past and the future.

This journey, highly thought-provoking and evocative of the enigmatic world of sci-fi novels and films, spans from the beginnings of evolution to the possible post-human forms of existence, from minuscule organisms to interplanetary dimensions, from the laws of biology to the emergence of artificial intelligence.

Of the works, mostly created at the intersection of science and art, it is difficult to highlight and recommend only a few precisely because of their formal and thematic diversity and radical differences. The most astonishing, however, are undoubtedly those that quasi-expand the definition of life and imagine hybrid collaborations between living beings and artificial entities.



A part of Andrea Shin Ling's installation, which debuted at this year's Venice Architecture Biennale with great success. A version of her project can now also be seen in Budapest. (Photo: Facebook)

One such work is Andrea Shin Ling's installation, which made a spectacular debut at the Venice Architecture Biennale this year: it presents collaboration with ancient cyanobacteria, organisms that produced oxygen on Earth roughly 2.5 billion years ago, in constructing structures that actively contribute to combating the greenhouse effect. *Living Studies, Picoplanktonics*, now on display at the LAM and designed specifically for the museum space, is a smaller yet by no means less significant sibling of this grand work. Essentially, it comprises several closed, aquarium-like boxes

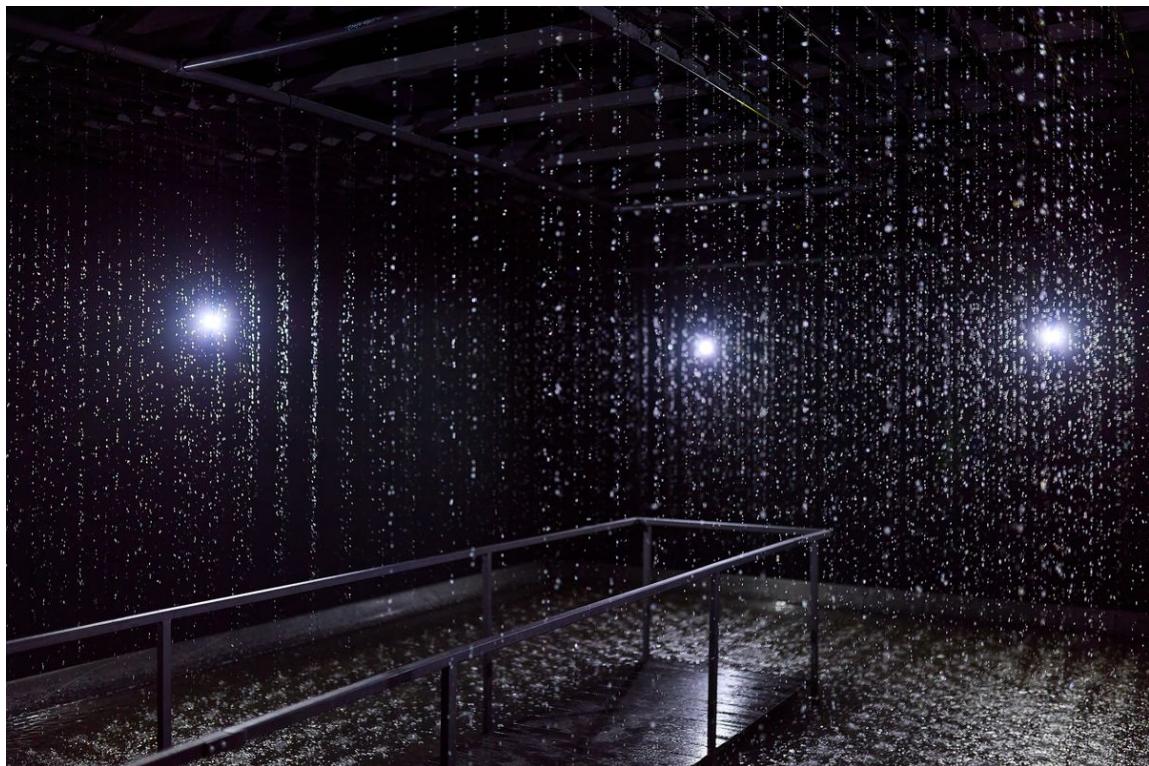
with 3D-printed elements that contain the cyanobacteria mentioned,

which, feeding on atmospheric carbon dioxide, produce oxygen and minerals that preserve and even strengthen structures without drawing on natural resources. "So, what is this really?" you might ask. "A dead artwork, or a living organism? A chilling vision of the future, or the first step on a long path towards a solution?"

Perhaps we lean towards the latter because, despite all its fantastic qualities, *More Than Human* does not intend to frighten us with the image of a dark, ravaged or even human-less planet, nor to provoke eco-anxiety in anyone. The best example is the Japanese artist

Yasuhiro Chida's meditative installation *Space of Moment*, which attempts to stop, or if you will, spatialise the human-made concept of time. Momentum is broken by light beams piercing the endlessly pouring rain, with the drops appearing either to stand still or to move upwards,

and if you stand in the centre, on a small bridge, eternity comes into sight for a fleeting moment.



Yasuhiro Chida: *Space of Moment*, 2002–2025 (Photo: Dávid Bíró/Light Art Museum Budapest)

"I am exceptionally proud that our fourth exhibition is not only extremely fresh and visually spectacular but that in terms of its theme, scale and featured artists, it could hold its own in any leading art institution worldwide," said Vida Szabolcs, the LAM's Head of Programme, at the opening.

Rightly so, since visitors at *More Than Human* encounter works by several truly internationally renowned artists, including the Icelandic-Danish Ólafur Elíasson, who works with coloured glass discs, transforming the very process of perception and revealing how understanding reality changes through motion and sensory experience.

Tomás Saraceno, who draws inspiration from architecture, space exploration, science fiction literature, biology and geometry, scans the hidden architecture of complex spider-web systems with lasers, interpreting these fragile yet resilient structures as models of sustainable coexistence. Key figures in the history of immersive projection are also represented at the exhibition: alongside Anthony McCall's early classic work, you can see Otto Piene's 1966 installation, which dismantled the conventional framework of projection.



Ólafur Elíasson: *Your Welcome Reflected*, 2003 (Photo: Dávid Bíró/Light Art Museum Budapest)

The exhibition, on a floor area of over 2,000 square metres, concludes with an especially instructive sixteen-minute projection. Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla amplify the complaints of endangered Puerto Rican parrots, brought to the brink of extinction by the American SETI programme. Reflecting on the Fermi paradox, among others, they highlight another paradox: in searching for extraterrestrial intelligences, we neglect the protection of life on Earth, which sustains us all under the principle that everything is interconnected.

Bencsik Barnabás, co-curator of *More Than Human*, summarised it all by saying: “*In addition to aesthetic and sensory experiences, the works displayed here offer thought-provoking alternatives to the utilitarian, anthropocentric mindset that has also shaped the development of East European societies since the political transition and which urgently needs to be*

reconsidered today due to climate change, global environmental pollution and the dangerously rapid decline of biodiversity.

The Budapest exhibition can thus become a cultural event of both local and global significance.”

He added that *More Than Human* explores subjects that highlight the importance of expanded and increasingly complex consciousness. It inspires us to move beyond the position of mere observers and let genuine collaboration and empathetic attention determine our relationship to life and the world.



fuse*: *Mimicry*, 2025 (Photo: Dávid Bíró/Light Art Museum Budapest)

More Than Human. Light Art Museum, Budapest (1054 Budapest, Hold utca 13).
Curators: Barnabás Bencsik, Borbála Szalai. Open until summer 2026.

Lead image: Mat Collishaw: *AΩ*, 2016 (Dávid Bíró/Light Art Museum Budapest)