

When Chimpanzee Faces Burn into Our Retinas – the Light Art Museum's Most Recent Exhibition Is Perched on the Boundary between Technology and Life

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What happens if rain falls upwards, bacteria become partners in creativity, and reality is no longer what we perceive in a primary sense but what technology allows us to see? The Light Art Museum's new exhibition, *More Than Human*, not only showcases the art of the future but also introduces a new worldview, in which humans finally step down from the pedestal, making room for other forms of life.



Breathing machines, metallic sea creatures, digital bees and rain that falls upwards – the Light Art Museum's (LAM) new exhibition, *More Than Human*, is at once a captivating, illusory world and a noteworthy intellectual experiment: how we should rethink life when humanity is no longer the focal point of the world. The Budapest museum's fourth show once again leads us into the borderland between art and science, where biology, algorithms and poetry become languages on an equal footing. Alongside the future of art, the exhibition also foresees the future of humanity itself: it presents a world in which the boundary between the natural and the artificial is becoming ever more elusive.

The exhibition, accommodated on a floor area of over two-thousand square metres, presents the work of nearly forty artists. The line-up is impressive in its own right: Ólafur Elíasson, Tomás Saraceno, Anthony McCall, Otto Piene, Tony Oursler, Pamela Rosenkranz, Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla, along with several younger artists, who were born into the digital age. LAM's current selection, installed in the historic market hall building on Hold Street, would easily hold its own in any leading international museum. Encountering an exhibition of such technical calibre and intellectual depth right in the middle of Budapest's city centre provides an unforgettable experience.



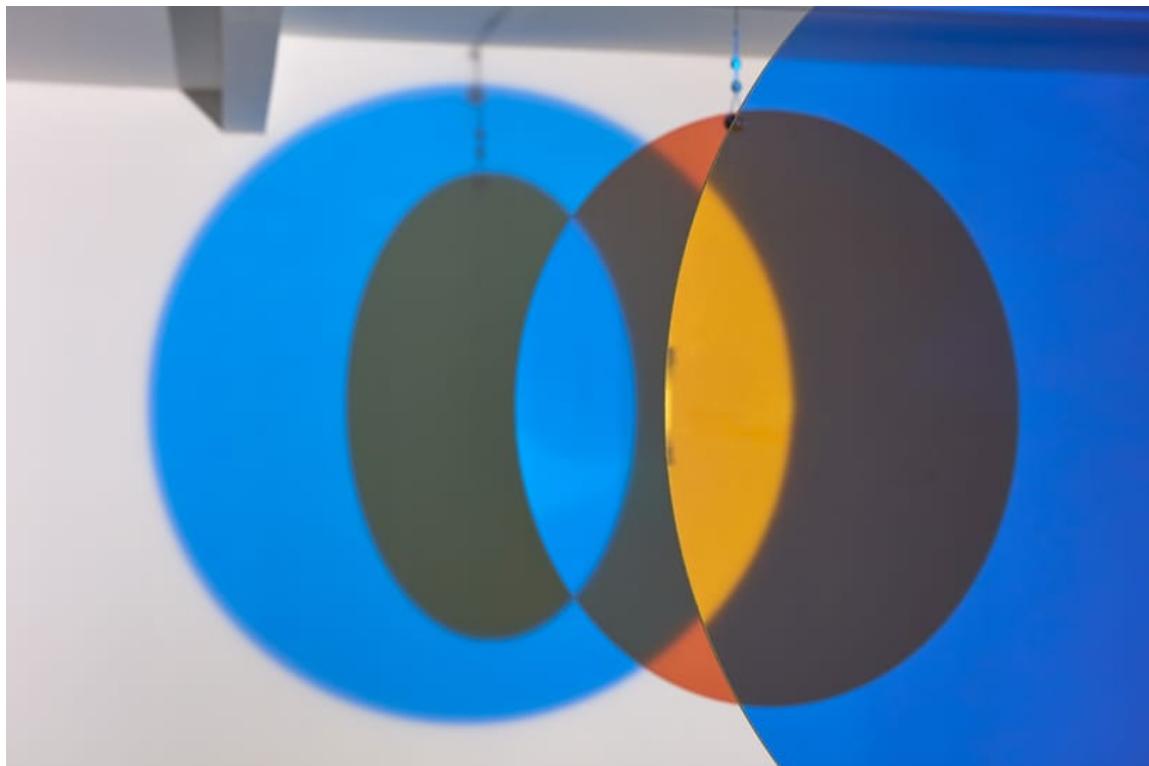
fuse: *Mimicry*, 2025
Dávid Bíró / Light Art Museum Budapest

The curators of the exhibition were once again Borbála Szalai and Barnabás Bencsik, who have created a complex, meditative, sensorial universe from lights, sounds, and moving and self-generated structures. *More Than Human* is not just about the future – it is much more about what life itself means in the 21st century. The works created through the tools of biotechnology, robotics and artificial intelligence question the boundary between nature and technology. Light, sound and kinetics at this exhibition do not merely illustrate but act as autonomous agents in a broader evolutionary narrative.

While contemplating the exhibits, visitors also enter ecological networks. The works engage with life forms that humanity has all but ignored until now – plants, fungi, bacteria and even geological processes. For instance, [Andrea Shin Ling](#)'s installation invites cyanobacteria to co-create with her: these ancient organisms were responsible for the creation of Earth's oxygen supply billions of years ago. Today, they are participants in constructing structures that counter the greenhouse effect.

In their work, [Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla](#) transmit the 'voices' of Puerto Rican parrots, which have been driven to the brink of extinction – all under the shadow of humanity's

search for extra-terrestrial intelligence. While humans send messages into the universe, they forget that there are also silenced intelligences right here on their own planet.

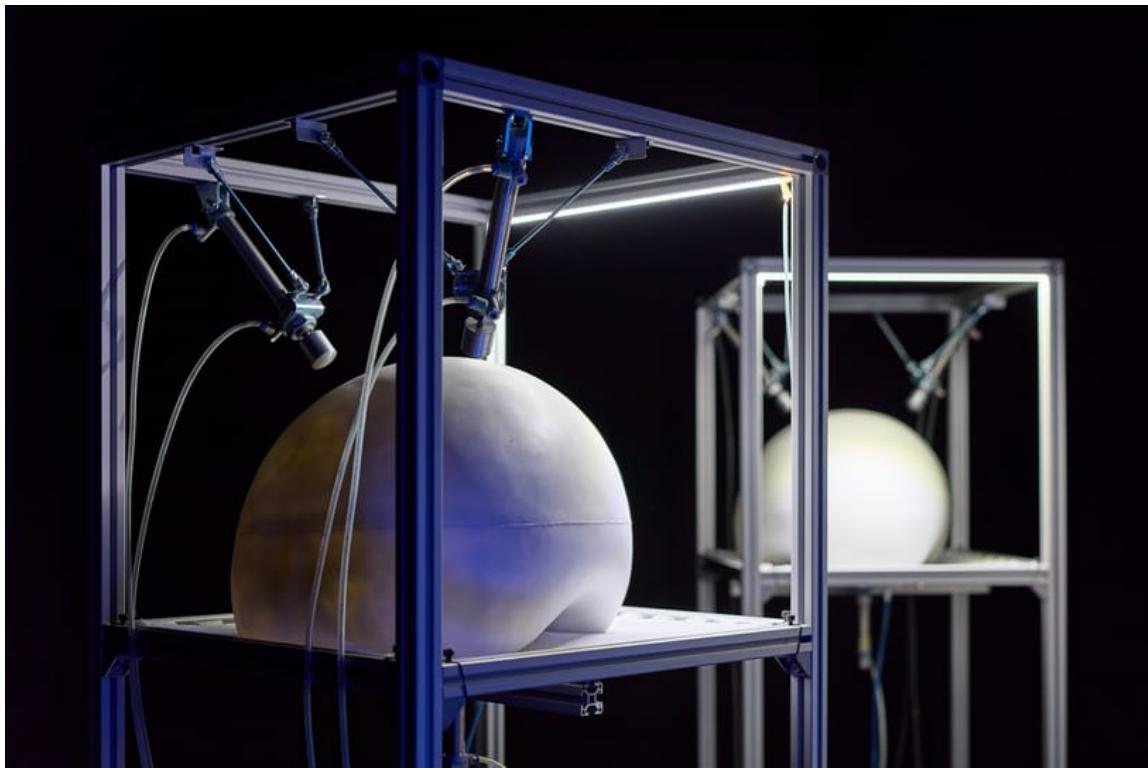


Ólafur Eliasson: *Your welcome reflected*, 2003

Dávid Bíró / Light Art Museum Budapest

[Ólafur Eliasson](#) – another important work by whom visitors could view at LAM [last year](#) – now presents an installation made of colourful glass discs, titled *Your welcome reflected* (2003). It is not about the spectacle but about seeing and vision itself: reality slips away amid fields of light that shift with the viewer's movements. [Tomás Saraceno](#)'s spiderweb architectures are illuminated by laser beams, making visible the fragile yet resilient systems of nature and serving as models for sustainable coexistence.

Classic works based on experimenting with light are also an important part of this year's exhibition: [Anthony McCall](#)'s early light sculpture and [Otto Piene](#)'s installation of 1966 remind us that the dismantling of media boundaries has long been a domain for radical thinking. With *Space of Moment* (2002–2025), [Yasuhiro Chida](#) lures us into an experience of transcendence beyond space and time, through rain droplets that fall, rise and hover in indeterminate directions – an invitation to immerse ourselves in thought and in altered states of consciousness through meditation. The [fuse](#) artist duo's new, spectacular piece, *Mimicry*, explores the transition between the natural and the artificial worlds, [Tony Oursler](#)'s speaking lamp creates new, interactive and provocative entities, while an extraordinary atmosphere is created by the work of musician Mark Pritchard and visual artist [Jonny Niesche](#), much like by the optical illusion of [Mat Collishaw](#)'s *AQ* (2016) with the image burnt into our retinas of curious chimpanzee faces reflected in a spacesuit helmet concealing a human skull.



Harrison Pearce: *Manifold*, 2021
Dávid Bíró / Light Art Museum Budapest

One of the key works in *More Than Human* is [Harrison Pearce](#)'s kinetic installation, *Manifold*. This mechanical organism, powered by a pneumatic system, literally breathes and pulses with its silicone and metal body. The LEDs flicker rhythmically, the silicone skin twitches, and the metal structure tenses, introducing an uncertainty into the viewer about what constitutes 'real' life.

Pearce's hybrid creature serves as a warning that the boundary between biological and artificial forms is increasingly a cultural, rather than a technical question.

As a child of the digital age, [00 Zhang](#) approaches the theme of 'more than human' from a different perspective. Her 3D-printed sculptures, *Prototypes 0033 and 0037*, made of silver-plated resin and stainless steel, resemble metallic sea creatures – avatar shells that embody our virtual identities in physical form. Zhang's video game, *Honey*, uses the civilisation of bees as an allegory: within the complex web of ecological and economic networks, humans become prisoners of their own routines, turning into NPCs (non-player characters), as seen in video games. The question here is not technological but existential: who controls whom in the world of digital connections?



Viktor Vicsek and Rodrigo Guzman: *Saeculum*, 2025

Dávid Bíró / Light Art Museum Budapest

Beyond its striking technical innovations – exemplified most alluringly by *Saeculum*, a projection by [Viktor Vicsek](#) & [Rodrigo Guzman](#) inside the mirror-lined “Zeppelin” (their work from this year) – LAM’s latest exhibition, *More Than Human*, explores a conceptual shift prompted by the ecological crisis and the rise of AI in an era when technology increasingly operates almost as a biological force. Visitors are invited to move beyond the human stance of suspicion and observation, and to learn to collaborate with the consciousness of other forms of life, whether plant, artificial or animal.

In just a few years, the Light Art Museum has become a defining venue on the international new media scene; *More Than Human* marks the latest stage in this process: visually grandiose and conceptually dense, the exhibition demonstrates precisely why light- and technology-based art has become one of the most significant arenas for contemporary thought.

Opening image: Mat Collishaw, AΩ, 2016 / Photo: Dávid Bíró / Light Art Museum Budapest