

Magyar Narancs  
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## In a Different Light

*More Than Human*



The museum's fourth thematic exhibition makes it clear from its title that the primary purpose behind the works on display is to demonstrate that human beings are only one kind of entity among the "many things" surrounding us, and because of this, we ought to rethink our role.

The curatorial concept is built on the idea that excessive anthropocentrism carries a flawed perspective: regarding ourselves as the measure and centre of existence has benefited neither our environment, nor ourselves. Thanks to astronomers, we have long known that neither the Earth, nor even the Sun are the centre of the universe. Today, ecological crises and mass extinctions are completely reshaping our conception of the world. The title of the exhibition refers to those worlds, modes of perception and ways of co-existence in which living organisms and artificial entities (technologies, algorithms and sensor networks) exist in a close and mutually interacting relationship with one another. This is a shift in perspective rather than uncritical green romanticism. Above all, it is a series of reflections and questions about how responsible cohabitation might be possible. The exhibition examines where the role of human beings lies within this system: are we an active part of the 'whole' as rulers, parasites or partners? It deconstructs the anthropocentric perspective through the media of light, time, space, matter and interaction. There are experience-based works that operate on a visceral level, unsettling our balance and calling our perception of reality into question, alongside research-based, scientifically grounded conceptual pieces that vividly present natural phenomena. No artwork features the human figure; the bustling world of the former market hall on Hold Street has been transformed into an abandoned laboratory.

The exhibition material is used to examine the relationship between technology and nature from a new perspective, presenting works that do not depict a coming apocalypse but instead provide potential solutions, highlighting multiple approaches. Some pieces also 'illuminate' how the *More Than Human* approach functions in practice.



The exhibition features the biggest names – Ólafur Elíasson, fuse\*, Yasuhiro Chida, Tony Oursler and Katja Novitskova – alongside some classic, art-historical light art works that have never been seen before in Hungary. One of these is Otto Piene's piece, the other is Anthony McCall's installation, both pioneering examples of immersive and technology-based art. Piene's work from the 1960s reflects the anxiety of living under the threat of nuclear war and evokes the apocalyptic mood that we too have been forced to recognise. He surrounded a space with projectors, using 480 glass panels painted with Christmas decoration paint. The glass panels were digitised just as the paint was about to peel off. Piene was one of the founders of the ZERO group in the early 1960s, which sought to rebuild art from the 'zero point' of the post-war era, using light, movement, air, fire and natural elements. Their aim was to transcend traditional painting on canvas, moving it into space, sensations and the immaterial.

Antony McCall believed that light is not just a medium but a living material that shapes space and generates bodily experiences. In his work, a projected light cone becomes increasingly visible within a space growing ever more saturated with darkness, smoke and mist, to the point when it transforms into a light sculpture that can be entered. Chida's *Space of Moment* works in a similar way: we simultaneously experience a sense of movement and stillness in the artwork's space, while tension and tranquillity arise in us simultaneously. We experience the sensation of 'time standing still' and come to understand that there are worlds where the perception of time is different.

The fuse\* studio is an Italian new media art collective that has become a key player in the fields of digital light installations, audiovisual performances and data-driven art over the past fifteen years. Their new work *Mimikri*, specifically designed for this exhibition, declares that technology is also capable of organic behaviour: artificial systems can integrate into ecological networks and even evolve with them. They have transformed the phenomenon of mimicry into a digital and ecological metaphor, investigating, among other things, whether an algorithm can exhibit biological patterns. In their project, visualisation is a real-time, AI-driven process. In a similar way, Ólafur Elíasson's *Your Welcome Reflected* (2003) encourages the viewer to engage in a transcendental exploration of self-reflection. Subtly moving and reflective surfaces in the exhibition space are continually reconfigured by lights of shifting colour temperature, and as the viewer's reflection merges with the boundaries of the space, their body itself becomes part of the light construction. The work opens up the space before us, while simultaneously reflecting our presence back at us. This relational system is typical of Elíasson; in his works, perception is a shared, interactive process, where the viewer is no longer a passive

observer but instead an active component of the artwork. Elíasson is more than one of the ‘biggest names’ in the exhibition: by placing perception in the realm of reciprocity, his work becomes a key interpretative cornerstone for the entire material on display. His piece subtly raises the question of what reflection truly means. In the mirrors of *Your Welcome Reflected*, the viewer does not merely see themselves but, for a moment, becomes part of a world that is more than human – a world of which humans form a part, but which they do not rule.

**Judit Jankó**

*Light Art Museum, open until summer 2026*