

Fabian Saul: This Is How The Light Remembers 22.10.2025–18.1.2026

Curated by Tasnim
Baghdadi (Co-Director
Museum – Programmes)

One could say that the tangent is a touch that never returns, a movement in which remembering and forgetting are identical. – Fabian Saul

A novel is turned into an immersive installation: in *This Is How The Light Remembers*, the German author and composer Fabian Saul transposes the main themes of his novel 'Die Trauer der Tangente' (The Mourning of the Tangent) into his first solo exhibition – an immersive space of resonance, at the centre of which lie loss, memory and political mourning.

For twelve days, the protagonists move through the empty flat of a friend who has passed away – a space in which texts that have been left behind, music, films and voices from the past echo. Within this experience lies the seed of a quiet hope, a search, perhaps, for a different future. Saul explores how people deal with individual and collective loss. A central question runs through the work: how can grief be shared and processed not only privately, but collectively, too?

The exhibition picks up this search and turns it into a physical experience. The title is a reference to the idea that spaces themselves turn into the medium of memory by transmitting stories and making boundaries in time permeable.

The multimedia work unfolds through images, texts, sounds and objects. A four-channel video installation weaves together moving images, allowing the book to appear in a new form. Voices and music permeate the space and connect with resonating bodies, such as oversized musical strings that divide the space. A wooden mattress manifests itself as a sculpture in the centre of the room. The mattress is a recurring motif in the book and is described as the 'blueprint of a body'. A wall covered with numerous Riso prints shows research as an open process; it will be expanded throughout the exhibition.

Saul describes the overall composition as 'weak architecture', a structure that purposely oscillates between stability and fragility. It creates penetrating depth and at the same time evokes a feeling of uncertainty – symbolising the fleeting nature of memory. The installation calls into question the constructed reality as a reflection of dominant narratives. Private and political grief intertwine: the voices of influential artists, thinkers and political figures echo in the death of loved ones, forming traces that merge the individual with the collective.

The narrative links the jazz of Nina Simone with Frantz Fanon's analyses, weaving together voices such as those of Leonard Cohen, Audre Lorde and Edward Said. It reaches from the final hours of Jean Genet and Walter Benjamin to such places as Coney Island and Berlin's Museum Island, with films ranging from 'News From Home' to 'Call Me By Your Name'.

The exhibition is accompanied by a diverse programme. More information and event dates are continuously updated online on migrosmuseum.ch/agenda

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Like a scaffold that enables movement but provides no firm support, the work invites visitors to become a part of the architecture themselves. Seats placed along horizontal lines emphasise this topographical statement, turning the space into a location of active memory and reflection.

At a time when mourning is often perceived as something individual, rather than the responsibility of society, this exhibition unfolds both its poetical and political dimensions as a form of resistance. Mourning appears in this context not as a private retreat, rather as a polyphonic engagement with the world and the beginning of shared solidarity. Stories from different periods and places open up lines, joints and windows as part of the topography of the space, entering into dialogue with the audience. A wide-ranging programme of performances, talks, screenings and concerts expands on the themes in collaboration with participants from the fields of art, music and literature.

In the novel, Saul writes: 'The secret of the world is that it was made what it is – and that it could also be something else.' *This Is How The Light Remembers* creates a space for all those who ask themselves: How can mourning be transformed into a vision for a more just future?

A hybrid experience emerges at the intersection of music, literature, performance and collective learning, inviting us to join in, feel and question.

Fabian Saul (born 1986) is an author, composer and musician. In projects such as the audio series 'Schlechte Wörter' (Bad Words) and 'Stoff aus Luft' (Material Made from Air) or as editor-in-chief of the magazine 'Flaneur' – each issue of which is dedicated to a street somewhere in the world – he explores the hidden layers of places. His works combine literature, music and art, turning seemingly everyday objects into receptacles of memories that interweave history and the present and critically question them. Saul has, moreover, directed several theatre projects, including 'Zärtlichkeit' (Tenderness, 2022) and 'Die Schwerkraft der Gnade' (The Gravity of Grace, 2024), the latter treating the work of French philosopher Simone Weil, as well as the radio play 'Die Ästhetik des Widerstands – Variationen zu Peter Weiss' (The Aesthetics of Resistance – Variations on Peter Weiss, 2025).

His essay collection 'Boulevard Ring' (2018) interprets Moscow's city ring road as an archive of dissent. With 'Die Trauer der Tangente' (The Mourning of the Tangent, 2024), he created a poetics of collective mourning. Honours he has received include the Alfred Döblin Medal, a scholarship from the Roger Willemsen Foundation and the Harald Gerlach Advancement Award. Saul lives and works in Berlin.

Production:
Voice: Tanasgol Sabbagh
Typography: Ira Ivanova
Scenography: Danica Andjelkovic