

**um,  
I am  
human**



f.l.t.r.: **Stefan Karrer**, *The Prompt Engineer*, 2025, Studies; **Esther Hunziker**, *My Wearable Pets*, 2023/24, AI-generated photo series, inkjet prints on alu-di-bond, each 75x100 cm, courtesy of the artist; **Alfatih**, *A Way Out of Time*, 2024, Pram, real-time video, variable duration, full-time gallery attendant. Centre d'Art Contemporain, Biennial de l'image en mouvement, Geneva, CH, US. Photography: Mathilda Olmi, courtesy of Centre d'Art contemporain Geneva

## **Esther Hunziker, Stefan Karrer, Alfatih.** **Swiss Media Art – Pax Art Awards 2024**

15.02.-27.04.2025

### **Opening Day: Friday, February 14, 2025**

11 am: Guided press tour with the curator and artists  
7 pm: Exhibition opening

The exhibition showcases new and existing works by the winners of the Pax Art Awards 2024 in three parallel solo exhibitions. Basel-based artist **Esther Hunziker** was awarded the main prize. Two additional prizes were given to **Stefan Karrer**, also from Basel and residing in Vienna, and **Alfatih**, residing in Western Switzerland.

The three showcased artists share a fascination with artificial intelligence tools, which they use skillfully and critically in their work. Their newly created pieces explore the poetic and storytelling abilities of AI, testing the boundary between human and machine-made creations. Although their themes differ, their shared use of AI reflects a defining aspect of the current artistic Zeitgeist.

**Curator:** Marlene Wenger

## Esther Hunziker

Under the exhibition title *Turn me on*, Esther Hunziker combines her early video works from the 1990s with recent pieces created using text-to-image prompting in AI models. The unifying element is her experimental approach to new mediums. Hunziker is particularly fascinated by the failures of machines—moments of unpredictability and rawness. In her video works, this manifests as glitches and distortions, while in her AI creations, it appears as strange imagery that emerges from endless optimisation that is ultimately erased through rational refinement.

The exhibition begins with the large-scale video projection *Copy* (1994), a self-portrait that greets visitors. This work was created by drastically slowing down the filmed footage to revealing the otherwise invisible frames of the video. In the photo series *My Wearable Pets* (2023/24), Hunziker used prompts such as «imperfect extraterrestrial soul», «misshaped organism», and «uncanny body parts» to draw out extraordinary and eerie creatures from the AI, steering away from typical images. Through this series, she delves into the infinite variations of AI-generated imagery within the so-called «latent space», a term that describes the limitless possibilities AI offers for creating new visuals. Hunziker further explores the unease surrounding AI in a new series of works featuring talking fabric dolls. Each handmade doll is given an AI-generated face of an influential figure in the AI industry, such as Elon Musk, Sam Altman, or Geoffrey Hinton. When pressed on the stomach, the dolls begin to “speak.” With these works, Hunziker crafts surrogate bodies for AI, creating avatars that tell their own stories.

**Esther Hunziker** (\*1969 in Basel, Switzerland) studied fashion design and video art in the Department of Audio-visual Design at the SFG HGK in Basel. Since 1996, she has worked as an independent media designer and artist in the field of digital media. Her work spans video, photography, animation, installation, and interactive online projects. She is a lecturer at the Institute Art Gender Nature at FHNW. Hunziker has received numerous accolades, including the Basel Media Art Prize (2016, 2024) and grants from the Aargau Cultural Foundation (2018). She has been awarded artist residencies in Berlin, Edinburgh, and Helsinki, and received project funding from Pro Helvetia and Kunst-kredit Basel-Stadt. Her works have been exhibited at institutions such as the Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich), HEK (Basel), FRAC Alsace, and the Shenzhen New Media Art Festival. She is the recipient of the Swiss Award (2004) and Literatur.digital (2003).

**Esther Hunziker is receiving the Pax Art Awards 2024 main prize of 30,000 Swiss francs.**

**Website:** <https://estherhunziker.net/>

**Instagram:** @esther.hunziker

f.l.t.r.: **Esther Hunziker**, *Behind the scenes*, Work in progress. Material for a new interactive work; **Esther Hunziker**, *My Wearable Pets*, 2023/24, AI-generated photo series, inkjet prints on alu-dibond, each 75x100 cm, courtesy of the artist





## Alfatih

As an artist, Alfatih remains an enigma—deliberately revealing little about his biography and appearing in public masked with wigs. This deliberate mystery only deepens the fascination with his multifaceted work, which transforms seemingly ordinary settings and props from trivial life into new and surprising narratives.

In *A Way Out of Time* (2024), visitors literally steer these narratives by pushing a Victorian-era baby carriage. The video playing within the carriage unfolds in real time as the carriage moves through the space. The screen displays a stark, black-and-white AI-generated landscape, accompanied by a partially biographical, partially fictional story narrated by an AI-generated voice.

The baby carriage connects thematically to *A Day in the Life*, a commissioned CGI animation film that portrays a day in the life of an «adult baby». This video work presents a 24-hour narrative written by AI, guided by inputs from the artist and accompanied by a score from musician and theorist Tapiwa Svosve. As the day progresses, the baby performs adult rituals marked by timestamps, seemingly seeking approval from its clocks. Through the fabric of time and language, a quiet melancholy emerges, revealing a lonely, repetitive existence.

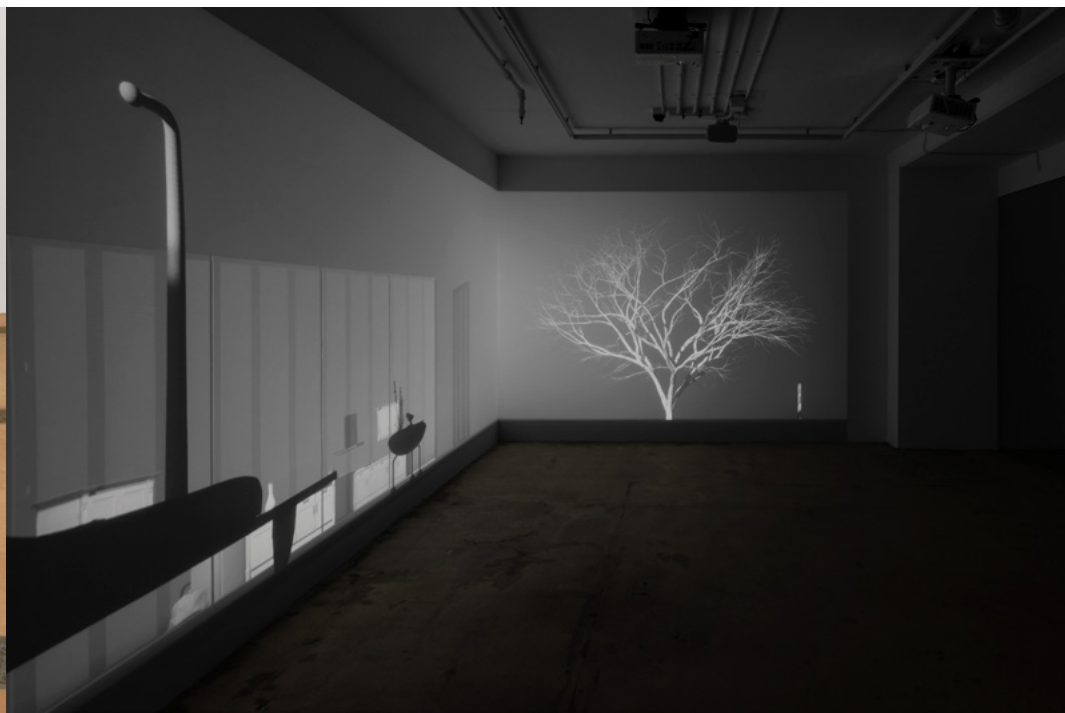
**Alfatih** (\*1994, Switzerland) has presented interactive, installation, and video works at institutions and venues such as the Kora Arts Center, Castrignano (Italy); Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne (Switzerland); Fri Art Kunsthalle, Fribourg (Switzerland); Swiss Institute, New York (USA); House of Electronic Arts, Basel (Switzerland); and Swissnex, San Francisco (USA). He has received numerous accolades, including the Pro Helvetia Work Grant (2023), the Golden Award & Space Award (2019), and the Fondation Casino Barrière de Montreux Prize (2018). Residencies have taken him to places such as the KORA Contemporary Arts Center (2022) and the ABA Residency in Berlin (2021–2022). His works have been exhibited internationally, including at the Centre d'Art Contemporain (Geneva), Swiss Institute (New York), Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts (Lausanne), and HEK (Basel).

**Alfatih is receiving one of the Pax Art Awards 2024 for promising young artists worth 15,000 Swiss francs.**

**Website:** <https://alfatih.world/>

**Instagram:** @alfatiharufa

f.l.t.r.: **Alfatih**, *A Way Out of Time*, 2024, Pram, real-time video, variable duration, full-time gallery attendant. Centre d'Art Contemporain, Biennial de l'image en mouvement, Geneva, CH, US. Photography: Mathilda Olmi, courtesy of Centre d'Art contemporain Geneva; **Alfatih**, *Day in the Life*, 2023, Moving image, two-channel sound, 59:18:40. Swiss Institute, US. Photography: Daniel Pérez courtesy of Swiss Institute



**Art Foundation Pax / Pax Art Awards**

The **Pax Art Awards** have been presented annually since 2018. These groundbreaking prizes for digital art, awarded by the **Art Foundation Pax** in collaboration with HEK, recognize and promote media-specific practices of Swiss artists either using media technology in their works or addressing its impact. Half of the prize money is used to purchase a work for the Art Foundation Pax collection, the other half to support the artists in developing a new work that will be presented in a joint exhibition the following year.

The **Art Foundation Pax** is an independent foundation for the promotion of digital and media-based art in Switzerland and is supported by Pax.

**Website:** <https://www.artfoundationpax.ch/>

**Instagram:** @artfoundationpax

**Information:**

HEK (House of Electronic Arts)  
Freilager-Platz 9, 4142 Münchenstein/Basel

**Opening times:**

Wed & Fri, 12 noon-6 pm

Thurs, 12 noon-8 pm

Sat & Sun, 12 noon-5 pm

Admission: 12 / 8 Swiss francs (reduced),

Happy hour: Wed-Sun, 12 noon-1 pm, free admission to the exhibition

Guided tour through the exhibition: every Sunday at 3 pm

Further information: [www.hek.ch](http://www.hek.ch)

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**About HEK (House of Electronic Arts)**

Located in Basel, HEK is Switzerland's national competence center for all forms of art expressing themselves through, and addressing, new technologies and media. HEK's interdisciplinary approach provides a wide audience with insights into art produced in differing genres that is involved in discourses relating to art, media, and technology. In a diverse program of exhibitions, small festivals, performances, and concerts, HEK's program dedicates itself to current social issues and concerns as well as technological and aesthetic developments. In addition to event and exhibition activities, HEK is also deeply involved in methodologies of collecting and the conservation of digital art.

HEK is supported by the **Christoph Merian Stiftung**, the cantons **Basel Stadt and Basel Landschaft**, as well as the **Swiss Federal Office for Culture**.

The exhibition has been organized in collaboration with:



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