

Hans Rosenström

June 6–29, 2025

Hans Rosenström's third solo exhibition at Helsinki Contemporary, *Gradually, then suddenly*, explores the interplay between human voices, architecture, and technology. The exhibition stands on its own but also forms a companion piece to *Tidal Tears*, Rosenström's installation featured on Vallisaari Island as part of Helsinki Biennial.

Filling the front of the gallery is *Broken Chord*, a sound installation of semi-reflective glass panels and human voices. The glass panels conduct sound waves by means of small transducer speakers attached to their surfaces. Rosenström is intrigued by the way that sound is a physical phenomenon yet possesses the ability to transcend physical boundaries. *Broken Chord* explores how words produced by human vocal cords migrate across surfaces from within one body into another, and how matter and space are shaped by voices around us. The industrial glass used in the installation invokes the many visible and invisible social structures that contain, include or exclude us, while at the same time reflecting back the image of our selves.

Rosenström's steel and glass sculptures occupy the gallery space like urban monuments, their forms and materials evoking the language of minimalist sculpture. They are like cut out fragments of buildings transplanted into the gallery, where they redefine the space around them. The exhibition draws on the artist's long standing interest with various physical, psychological and social façades that separate us and form our social fabric, as well as the history of black mirrors. The *Claude glass*, or *black mirror*, is a small optical device named after the French painter Claude Lorraine (1600-1682) that was used by 18th century landscape painters. When using the tinted mirror, the painter would turn their back on the landscape they were studying. Today we are again observing the world through new black mirrors in the form of the smart devices.

The exhibition takes its title from Ernest Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926). In the book, one of the characters asks another how he went bankrupt, to which the latter replies: "Two ways. Gradually, then suddenly." Rosenström heard the quote on a podcast hosted by the British academic David Runciman, who described the way social phenomena creep up gradually: by the time things reach a point of demanding urgent attention, it is often too late – the change has already occurred. So too Rosenström's installations can be interpreted as silent signals – simple, understated, almost intangible, and yet surprisingly physical and complex in implications.



HELSINKI
CONTEMPORARY

Bulevardi 10

Hans Rosenström

Broken Chord

2025

semi-reflective glass panels, transducer speakers,
sound, duration 12 min.

price upon request

Hans Rosenström

Skin and Teeth

2025

installation in three parts, semi-reflective glass
panels, steel

price upon request

Musical direction and co-composition of Broken Chord by Sophia Brous, performed by Eugène Blove, Sophia Brous, Alice Heyward, Gregor Kompar, Gabriella Liandun, Holden Madagame, Holly Sass and Echo Vocal Ensemble. Sound mixing: Ville MJ Hyvönen. Thank you to Maria Bengtsson, Meriç Algün and Sami Suibkonen.

With thanks to the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland and the Norwegian Cultural Fund for supporting the artist's work. The artist would like to thank Atelier Nord (Oslo), Ultima Festival (Oslo) and the Finnish-Norwegian Cultural Institute for supporting the production of Broken Chord.

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