

ENG

Johannes Heldén
The Lighted Trail
06.06.2026 - 02.08.2026



Johannes Heldén's exhibition *The Lighted Trail* leads visitors into a dimly lit space where light not only brings the artworks out of concealment, but itself becomes a central component of them. Islands of light emerge, clearly separating the viewers' space from that of the works. Much like an early modern cabinet of curiosities, this isolation strips the works of any sense of obvious familiarity, inviting distance and making what seems familiar appear strange.

This invitation becomes more tangible when one immerses oneself in the text of *Second Edition (for Kunsthal Thy)*. It is a glossary in which animate and inanimate things are given definitions. Yet these are not mere descriptions, as the entries contain references to events that remain elusive, as well as to a narrator who also remains foreign. This glossary was already part of Johannes Heldén's book *Astroecology* and has since been continually expanded with new entries. It is based on a speculative exploration of the possibility of ecological systems beyond Earth, as well as connections between humans and other species that do not yet exist. Through the text, a plant slowly grows - adding movement, and thus a process of genesis, that is echoed by the surrounding works.

One of these speculative approaches appears in the work *Manta Ray*: a ray whose body seems to dissolve beneath the projection. What emerges is an exoskeleton made from waste it has absorbed in the sea.

Also on view is the projection of a bird (*Anatomy of a Dream*), whose body slowly seems to materialize somewhere between alien technology and organic matter, while fragments of text appear and disappear. In *Exit Ramp Listener*, the projection of a landscape initially appears natural, yet ultimately provokes doubt as to whether anything can still truly be considered natural.

The invitation for visitors to see their seemingly familiar environment anew does not end when they leave the exhibition. On June 21, Johannes Heldén will lead a Poetry Walk, during which the surroundings of Kunsthal Thy will be explored together.

Bio

Johannes Heldén is a visual artist, writer, and musician. His interdisciplinary practice engages with poetry, ecology, perception, interspecies communication, and narrative structures.

His works have been exhibited, among other places, at the Gwangju Biennale, the Riga Biennial, the Desert X Biennial in Palm Springs, the Moderna Museet, Bonniers Konsthall, and the Jewish Museum in Stockholm, at the Roskilde Festival, as well as at the Statens Museum for Kunst and the Dome of Visions in Copenhagen, Kunsthall Trondheim, Wendy's Subway/ISCP in New York, ISEA in Vancouver, Broken Dimanche in Berlin, the Tampere Art Museum, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Inspace in Edinburgh, and NIMK in Amsterdam.

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