

Press release

in situ

Mark Leckey



November 14, 2025 – April 12, 2026

in situ: Mark Leckey
And the City Stood in its Brightness

- **Dates:** from November 14, 2025 to April 12, 2026
 - **Curator:** Lekha Hileman
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- Leckey imagines the intersections of popular culture, technology, and collective memory, recontextualizing historical imagery to spark a dialogue between past and present
 - inspired by Sassetta's painting *City by the Sea* (1424), one of the earliest cityscapes in Western art where the city itself becomes the subject, Leckey moves from two-dimensional image to sculptural form, inhabiting the threshold between material reality and the immaterial realm—the real and the imaginary
 - The installation envisions how physical space, sound, and light converge with intangible forces—digital systems, artificial intelligence, or transcendental experience—to evoke a shifting sense of transformation and instability

The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao presents *in situ: Mark Leckey. And the City Stood in its Brightness*, 2025, the second chapter of the Museum's *in situ* series, a program that invites artists to create site-specific works in dialogue with the gallery's architecture. Conceived as a platform for ambitious projects by leading contemporary artists, *in situ* highlights practices that expand the possibilities of sculpture, installation, and multimedia. Each presentation engages directly with the Museum's distinctive gallery dedicated to the series, transforming it into environments where architecture and artistic imagination converge.

Mark Leckey (b. 1964, Birkenhead, UK) imagines the intersections of popular culture, technology, and collective memory, recontextualizing historical imagery to spark a dialogue between past and present. His work reflects on nostalgia and class, probing how media and technology shape our sense of identity and belonging.

Growing up near Liverpool during the late 1970s and 1980s, Leckey came of age amid the collapse of Britain's industrial heartlands and the social rifts that followed. Factories closed, communities fractured, and mass culture—broadcast through television and advertising—became a new kind of landscape. This atmosphere of upheaval and mediation shaped his fascination with how images, sounds, and technologies construct shared imagination and belonging.

For this exhibition, Leckey takes inspiration from Sassetta's *City by the Sea* (1424), among the earliest cityscapes in Western art where the city itself becomes the subject. The painting depicts a fortified medieval city on a hillside, rendered in a geometrically complex yet flattened plane. Leckey observes: "The city transcends the laws of physics; it is of the past and of the future." His interpretation moves from two-dimensional image to sculptural form, inhabiting the threshold between material reality and the immaterial realm—the real and the imaginary.



In the installation, the sculpture becomes part of an imagined story whose temporal rhythm is defined by a six-minute loop of sound and light composed by the artist. The ambient soundtrack—built from layered fragments of found audio, music, and occasional voices—unfolds like a drifting current, punctuated by sudden intrusions of speech or melody. Its progression is mirrored in a shifting cycle of light that moves from the break of day until twilight. At the midpoint, an intense strobe coincides with the soundtrack's crescendo, briefly flooding the gallery in an almost blinding glare. Projected directly onto the sculpture, the lighting animates its surfaces and transforms it from a solid object into a flickering apparition. Together, these immaterial elements—sound and light—structure the work's narrative arc and atmosphere, enveloping viewers in a charged, temporal space that oscillates between revelation and erasure.

The installation envisions how physical space, sound, and light converge with intangible forces—digital systems, or transcendental experience—to evoke transformation and instability. By intertwining material and immaterial elements, Leckey creates a space where the visible and the invisible collide, offering an encounter that is at once immediate, uncanny, and transcendent.

BIOGRAPHY

Leckey's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions internationally at institutions such as the Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin (2025, 2020); Lafayette Anticipations, Paris (2025); Gladstone Gallery, New York (2024); the Espace Louis Vuitton, Tokyo (2024); Turner Contemporary, Margate (2023); Sant'Andrea de Scaphis, Rome, Cabinet Gallery, London (both 2022); Tate Britain (2019); the National Gallery of Denmark (SMK), Copenhagen (2017); MoMA PS1 (2016); Secession, Vienna (2015); MADRE Museum, Naples (2015); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2015); The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2013); Serpentine Gallery, London (2011); Abrons Arts Center (presented by The Museum of Modern Art, New York) (2009); Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2009); and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2008).

His work is included in public collections such as the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Milan; Guggenheim, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Marciano Art Collection, Los Angeles; Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum Het Domein, Sittard, the Netherlands; Tate Gallery, London; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

DIDAKTIKA

This space offers a glimpse into the creative process of one of today's most influential artists, Mark Leckey. His work, *And the City Stood in its Brightness* (2025), made specifically for this exhibition, imagines a world where history and contemporary technology converge. Reflecting these concerns, *Didaktika* brings together visual and digital materials that expand on Leckey's practice and emphasize his enduring engagement with music and the sharing of knowledge.

[Opening Talk with Marck Leckey](#) (November 13)

Conversation between the artist and the exhibition curator, Lekha Hileman.

**COVER IMAGE**

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Installation view of *in situ: Mark Leckey. And the City Stood in its Brightness*, at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

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And the City Stood in its Brightness

Guggenheim Museum Bilbao

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