

# GALERIE FORSBLOM

## **Charles Sandison: The Garden of Death**

Galerie Forsblom, 21 February – 23 March 2025

Charles Sandison taught himself to code during a time when computers were not yet part of daily life, and it became an organic aspect of his artistic thinking. His works are immersive, site-specific installations in which the viewer encounters ever-changing and evolving landscapes composed of digital and physical elements. These installations blend cultural memory, linguistic structures, and history in a continuous process that crosses temporal boundaries, where meanings are not predetermined. The past and the present, history and cultural heritage, meet the possibilities of the future.

In the main gallery space, Sandison creates an installation where these themes come to life, drawing parallels with motifs found throughout Western art history. The work is based on Hugo Simberg's *The Garden of Death*, where archetypal themes—such as the skeleton representing death—are brought to the level of human experience: they live, suffer, love, and experience just as we mortals do. The garden is present not only as a theme but also in its concrete realization. The gallery, as a closed space, becomes a growth medium where, instead of organic life forms, digital entities grow. The computers placed in the space interact with each other, processing information—language, symbols, and behaviors—that, like DNA, passes on to the next generation. The work is not a pre-designed, repetitive video installation, but rather a code in which different parts communicate with one another, generating new content in real time.

This contrast between eternal themes and human experience raises questions about the relationship between humans and technology in Sandison's works, alongside the growing concerns about the power of artificial intelligence. Is technology shaping society in ways we do not yet fully understand, and are we humans the caretakers of the digital world, or the other way around? Have the oracles of old been replaced by probability calculations, and is collective memory now stored in digital archives?

Born in Scotland, Sandison (b. 1967) graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 1993, and his installations have been shown in public spaces around the world. His works are held in numerous Finnish and international collections, including the Kiasma Museum, the Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid, the Denver Art Museum, and the Bonn Art Museum. The artist lives and works in Tampere.