

# G A L E R I E F O R S B L O M

## **Charles Sandison: *Tabula Rasa***

Galerie Forsblom, June 6–28, 2025

Charles Sandison's new installation *Tabula Rasa* depicts words spilling out of open, empty books and moving towards each other in a continuous stream. The title refers to philosopher John Locke's theory that humans begin life as a 'blank slate' onto which experiences and meanings are gradually imprinted. In Sandison's *Tabula Rasa*, the blank slate is an ideological battlefield pitting words against each other as they compete to fill the empty pages.

The installation juxtaposes diametric opposites such as good and evil, love and hate. The word streams are controlled by a simple set of algorithms and driven by chance. The outcome of the ideological battle is unpredictable. The words begin to migrate more vigorously as their numbers dwindle, and it can take days for one word to take over all the books. When the process finally reaches its conclusion, the system resets and begins all over again.

Sandison's artistic practice addresses the themes of memory, linguistic structures and history, exploring cultural heritage and possible futures using contemporary digital technology. Employing generative code as his medium, his content comprises the entirety of our common cultural heritage and the ideological, artistic and philosophical ideas that have shaped contemporary society. The installation raises questions about power, freedom, the nature of knowledge and the process through which meaning is constructed – or deconstructed. *Tabula Rasa* is at once a visual spectacle, a philosophical commentary and a social allegory.

Scottish-born Sandison (b. 1969) graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 1993. During a career now spanning over three decades, he has exhibited his work in public spaces around the world. Sandison's work is held in numerous Finnish and international collections, including Helsinki's Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Museo Reina Sofía in Madrid, and art museums in Denver, Montreal, Rome and Bonn. The artist lives and works in Tampere, Finland.