

Media release

Zurich, 27 October 2026

Ralph Lemon and Kevin Beasley set the Müller building in motion. From 20 November 2026 to 3 January 2027, Ralph Lemon and Kevin Beasley's exhibition 'Residuum (Tell it anyway)' turns the Müller building at the Kunsthhaus Zürich into a resonant space for sound and performance. It investigates what remains after a live moment has passed, and how history and memory are written into bodies, voices and sounds.

MÜLLER BUILDING BECOMES AN ARTIST'S HOUSE

'Residuum (Tell it anyway)' invites visitors to listen and rediscover the architecture of part of the Kunsthhaus: the Müller building, an extension named after its architect, Erwin Müller (1925–2017). When it was inaugurated in 1976, the building's openness was considered a radical architectural gesture. As a result, light, movable walls were introduced so that individual presentations could be shaped – much like the flexible layout of a trade fair pavilion. Over the decades, however, some of these temporary features quietly became permanent.

Now, 50 years later, the Kunsthhaus is turning the spotlight on the Müller building once again, as it embarks on a transformation. For 'Residuum (Tell it anyway)', some of the walls will be removed, reconnecting this postmodern gem with its architect's vision of the museum as an open, public square ready to host the art of its time.

The exhibition starts from the question of how the Müller building can be reconsidered through the eyes of contemporary artists. With its open spaces, staircases and multiple sightlines, the building is essentially choreographic: it encourages people to circulate and unveils a constant stream of new perspectives on the space and art displayed there. 'Residuum (Tell it anyway)' takes up these qualities, focusing on the immediate experience of bodies, voices, movements and sounds.

'Residuum (Tell it anyway)' marks the continuation of a long-standing collaboration between choreographer and artist Ralph Lemon (b. 1952 in Cincinnati, US) and visual and sound artist Kevin Beasley (b. 1985 in Lynchburg, US), whose work blends performance, sound and movement. Together, they are creating a multi-channel sound installation that will occupy the whole of the Müller building, accompanied by two live performances in December.

BODY AND SOUND AS ARCHIVES

Ralph Lemon is one of the most influential choreographers of New York's downtown scene. He set up the Ralph Lemon Company in 1985, following a period working with the choreographer Nancy Hauser and Meredith Monk's troupe. Ten years later, he disbanded his successful touring ensemble and gravitated towards

a more expansive artistic practice at the intersection of choreography, writing, drawing, video and installation. At its core is the body as archive, and the ways in which it stores and transmits history, memory, belonging and displacement. Lemon belongs to a generation of artists who, since the early 2000s, have broadened the exhibition format by bringing dance and choreography into the museum. His first major New York survey, 'Ceremonies Out of the Air', was organized at MoMA PS1 in 2024.

Kevin Beasley works with materials marked by use, labour and history. He makes his sculptures using clothing, sneakers, durags and sports equipment that he embeds in resin and foam. The production process remains physically present in the finished objects. For Beasley, sound is likewise a medium that can be experienced physically – a concept that was particularly evident in 'A view of a landscape' at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (2018–2019), which centred on a cotton gin motor dating from the 1940s. Beasley used its vibrations and frequencies to explore the history of cotton production and slavery, as well as the Great Migration and the civil rights movement in the US.

FIFTEEN YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER

Lemon and Beasley have maintained an ongoing artistic dialogue for around 15 years. It began when Lemon invited Beasley, then fresh out of art school, to perform in the atrium of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. From this, there developed a close collaboration founded on a shared conviction that body and sound could be historical material.

Beasley has frequently taken charge of music and sound mixing in Lemon's performance 'Rant' (2019–ongoing). Together, the two artists reworked recordings of these performances into 'Rant redux' (2020–2024), a four-channel video and sound installation that became the centrepiece of Lemon's survey show at MoMA PS1. That enduring conversation is the starting point for 'Residuum (Tell it anyway)', an investigation of what becomes present through choreography and sound – and what lingers afterwards.

FILLING THE MÜLLER BUILDING WITH SOUND

In 'Residuum', the Müller building at first seems almost empty. Temporary walls have been removed to expose the building's open architecture, while traces of earlier interventions remain visible. Out of this apparent void, a new acoustic architecture emerges: sound, song and music spread over three floors, tying the individual levels together.

The multi-channel sound installation revisits Lemon and Beasley's collaboration on 'Rant' and other joint projects. Based on their album 'Tell it anyway' (2026), it approaches sound as a carrier of past artistic work, in which bodies, voices, histories and emotions reverberate. Two film installations by Lemon frame the exhibition on the ground floor and top floor.

On 12 and 13 December 2026, the live moment returns in the Müller building, in the form of a new performance cycle that Lemon and Beasley have developed with four long-time collaborators: Darrell Jones, Lysis (Ley), April Matthis and Okwui Okpokwasili. The performances bring the living, breathing, singing and dancing body back into the space, in a direct encounter with the sound installation and architecture. An artist talk with Kevin Beasley takes place on 19 November. In 'Residuum (Tell it anyway)', the Müller building itself becomes part of the artistic work, its architecture a space in which sound, film and performance resonate. Curated by Hendrik Folkerts, the exhibition explores the immediacy of the live moment, what remains of it, and how it continues to resonate.

GENERAL INFORMATION

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For admission prices, opening hours and events see www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/besuch-planen/ and www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/besuch-planen/programm/.

Tickets can be obtained at the cash desk or in advance at tickets.kunsthhaus.ch.

Zurich Tourism, tourist information office in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, info@zuerich.com, www.zuerich.com.

MEDIA PREVIEW AND CONTACT FOR EDITORS

There will not be a media conference to accompany this exhibition. Instead, we invite interested journalists to view it by prior arrangement before it opens. We will also be happy to arrange interviews with curator Hendrik Folkerts on request: kristin.steiner@kunsthhaus.ch.

Illustrations are available for download at www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich.

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