

Jakob Kudsk Steensen transforms Oulu's underground into a living digital world



Jakob Kudsk Steensen. Photo by Malthe Ivarrson.

- ***Launching in September 2026 in Oulu, Finland – one of the world's northernmost cities just below the Arctic Circle – Jakob Kudsk Steensen presents a new site-specific artwork beneath the city, where past sub-arctic ecosystems merge with future landscapes.***
- ***As Oulu celebrates its year as European Capital of Culture in 2026, Steensen creates a unique living virtual world connected to Finnish ecology and history, exhibited in an underground car park.***

Danish artist **Jakob Kudsk Steensen** will transform the underground architecture of Kivisydän, Oulu's central car park, into a digital installation as part of the Lumo Art & Tech Festival during the city's European Capital of Culture year. This simulated virtual world will draw on vanishing sub-arctic ecosystems, Oulu's historic tar heritage, and the de-extinction floral seed vault at the Oulu Botanical Garden.

Rooted in fieldwork across Northern Finland—from Oulu's historic Tar Route to the Oulu Botanical Gardens and their seed vault—the installation explores the collision between ecological histories and our present. Visitors will encounter a dynamic virtual organism of sound, light, and 3D simulations, evolving and interacting in real time. Each visit to the installation promises to be unique, suspending audiences between the real and the virtual.



Credit: Jakob Kudsk Steensen, Preview still for *Underground Clash* (working title), 2025. Courtesy the Artist.

Jakob Kudsk Steensen (b.1987, Denmark) is internationally recognised for immersive installations that reimagine overlooked natural phenomena. His collaborators include ARCA, BTS, leading museums, and biennales. For Oulu2026, he is crafting one of the first site-specific installations set within a car park. Steensen collaborates with local scientists and artists, and travels to environments to gather recordings, scans and images that become building blocks to make the virtual world.

Further details will be revealed at the Oulu2026 Programme Launch on 4 September 2025 at 9 AM (CET). Follow the live stream in English [here](#).

For further information about *Underground Clash* (working title), click [here](#).

The project is programmed and managed by international producer **Claudia Woolgar**.

Credit line: *Underground Clash* (working title) launches in September 2026 as part of Oulu2026, European Capital of Culture, www oulu2026.eu.

International Press Contacts:

- Jakob Kudsk Steensen Studio; Alexander Boyes – alex@erraticanimist.com
- Oulu2026 Programme Manager Henri Turunen – Henri.Turunen@oulu2026.eu

About Oulu2026

Oulu2026, European Capital of Culture in 2026, invites Europe to find inspiration in the brave hinterlands of northern Finland. The year-long programme will awaken the entire region, including Oulu and its 39 partner municipalities, through cultural events from all over Europe that bring joy and creativity into people's lives every day. From near, far, and everywhere in between, Oulu2026 offers the chance to experience world-class culture like never before.

From unique winter ceremonies and Sámi culture to summer's wild urban culture, local culinary delights, and autumn's dazzling light art, Oulu2026 transforms the region into a stage for international art, technology, northern contrasts, and Arctic flavours. Residents and visitors alike will discover culture thriving everywhere – in nature, on waterways, and in urban life.

In 2026, we are opening up a new connection between people – are you ready to discover it?

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