

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 26 FEBRUARY 2026

BERND NICOLAISEN: RESIDUAL LIGHT

Opening Exhibition of Oulu European Capital of Culture 2026

27 – 1 MARCH 2026
AaltoSiilo, Oulu



Bernd Nicolaisen, *Mjollnir*, 2009 Vatnajökull, Iceland (left) | The AaltoSiilo in Oulu (right)

AaltoSiilo opens its exhibition programme for Oulu European Capital of Culture 2026 with **Bernd Nicolaisen: Residual Light**, a luminous and atmospheric presentation of the Swiss artist's long-term collaboration with Factum Arte and Factum Foundation.

For nearly a decade, Nicolaisen has worked closely with Factum to explore hidden landscapes — from the interior of glaciers to the shadowed strata of Australia's Pilbara and the surfaces of comet 67P. His images are the result of fieldwork, scientific cooperation, and a meticulous digital-to-physical process that reveals intricate structures normally invisible to the human eye.

Residual Light (Restlicht) brings together this ongoing research through a focused selection of large-scale lightboxes (150 × 120 × 15 cm) and medium-format works (65.4 × 55.8 cm), each one suspended between abstraction and geological truth. The exhibition highlights a shared commitment to documenting fragile environments at a moment when they are undergoing rapid transformation.

This marks the first official exhibition at AaltoSiilo and coincides with the inauguration of the venue's Ice Sauna, a new temporary addition to the restored industrial site. Once a sulphite cellulose silo,

AaltoSiilo is being reactivated as a cultural, artistic and scientific hub — and Nicolaisen’s work opens the year with a clear statement of intent: precision, research, beauty, and material awareness.

Residual Light invites visitors to explore the fragile threshold between what remains and what is fading, mirroring AaltoSiilo’s own shift from industrial structure to cultural space.

A collaboration between AaltoSiilo, Factum Foundation and Bernd Nicolaisen. This exhibition is made possible by Charlotte Skene Catling, Adam Lowe, Otto Lowe, Valentino Tignanelli and Oulu European Capital of Culture 2026.

In parallel to Bernd Nicolaisen’s opening, the **Ice Sauna** built by Seppo Mäkinen (Snowhow Oy) and a team of Oulu volunteers is going to be moved to the Frozen People Festival.



EVENT DETAILS

Dates: 27 February – 1 March 2026, 12:00-18:00

Opening night: 26 February 17:30

Location: AaltoSiilo, Alvar Aallon katu, 5, 90520, Oulu, Finland

Social Media: @aaltosiilo | @bernd.nicolaisen | | @factum_foundation | @oulu2026official
#Oulu2026 #berndnicolaisen #restlicht #residuallight #aaltosiilo

Organised by: AaltoSiilo Ry, Factum Foundation, Bernd Nicolaisen

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NOTES FOR THE EDITORS

Bernd Nicolaisen (*1959) is a Swiss artist. He calls his remarkable photographic representations a “viewing of layers”. He explores hidden finds from the history of the earth, which he tracks down in seemingly untouched, magical places. What he investigates in collaboration with scientists such as glaciologists, astrophysicists and geologists and abstracts in his work is the interaction and interplay of light in and on materials such as water, ice, stone and wood.

The deep ice blue in the almost 1000-year-old glacier ice of Iceland is created by the refraction of light in the oxygen-poor ice that has been purified over hundreds of years (*Restlicht*, 2015). The wood of the mountain pines in the Sierra Nevada (USA) was ignited several times by lightning in its more than 4000-year lifespan, is now hard as stone and lives on inside the pines (*Cycle Wood*, 2008). The iron water deep from the earth of the Lower Engadine (CH) together with daylight and oxygen, promotes the formation of invisible microalgae which, through photosynthesis, leave a magical play of colours on stone structures (*Iron Water Engadin*, 2021).

Nicolaisen combines the 3.4 billion old rock dust from the geological investigations in the Pilbara (AUS) in physical and chemical processes with oxides, silver and gold pigments with local earths and powders to form stratagrams. Connections on glass plates, which, in collaboration with Adam Lowe and Factum Arte, merge into playful objects and look like seas of stars from distant galaxies (*Strata of Pilbara*, 2019-2021, Documentary).

Nicolaisen started his projects in 2004 with the 8x10“ large format and a twelve-year work on the series of works „Restlicht“ 2004-2016. In 2012 he produced the documentary of the same name and in 2015 published the catalogue “Restlicht, Photographs-Tableaux-Lightboxes” for Hatje Cantz. In his abstract natural form conceptions, he works with a variety of media.

Using photographs, stratagrams, 3D prints or objects, a dynamic work is created which, through its playfulness and multi-layered interpretations, reveals the change in nature and approaches to our earth- and lifetime.

Bernd Nicolaisen has shown his work in solo and group exhibitions, including: „Restlicht“, Grossmünster, Zurich (2015), „Restlicht“, Museum Gletschergarten, Lucerne (2016-2017); „Restlicht“, Scheublein + Bak, Zurich (2017); „Black Pearl“, Masterpiece London (2018); „Head of 67P“ and „Chury out of Horizon“, Physics Institute - University of Bern (2018); Photo Basel (2019); Musée jurassien des Arts (2024). In 2021 he was nominated for the Prix Pictet, the world’s leading price for photography and sustainability. His works are represented in collections.

AaltoSiilo: <https://www.aalosiilo.com/en/>

Factum Foundation for Digital Technology in Preservation: <https://factumfoundation.org/>