

## Press release—2025 Verbier Art Summit Reflections

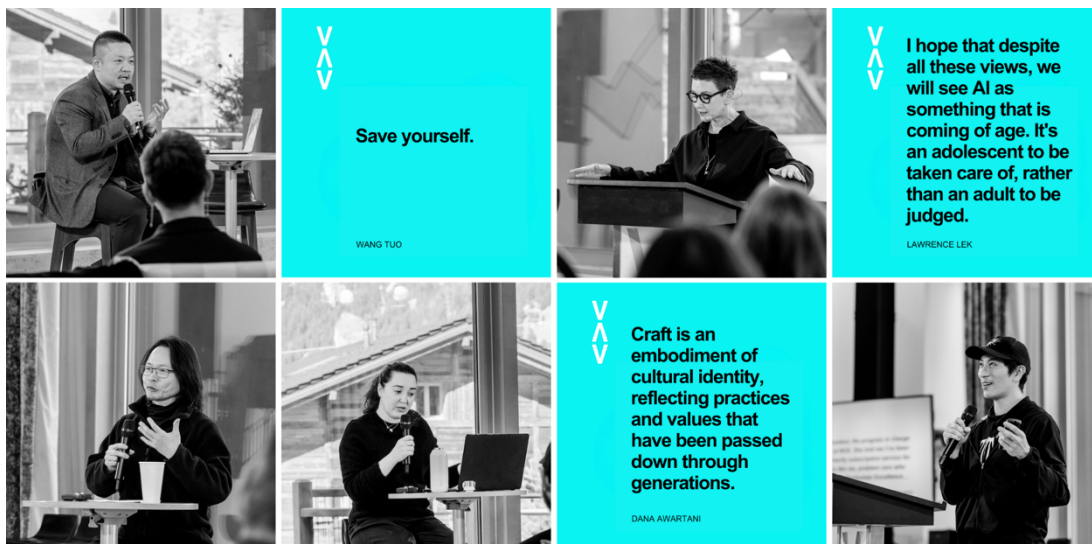
**Verbier, Switzerland, 30 April 2025**—The 2025 Verbier Art Summit took place on 4 & 5 April in Verbier, Switzerland, focusing on the theme **QUARTER LIFE CRISIS. Art in a World on the Brink**. This year’s edition, curated by Philip Tinari, director of the UCCA Center for Contemporary Art in China, explored the geopolitical, digital, human, and institutional dimensions of the art world.

In his introduction, the Summit’s partnering museum director Philip Tinari set the tone for the weekend by reflecting on the “Quarter Life Crisis” which marks the first 25 years of this century—a time of geopolitical upheaval, digital acceleration and saturation, and ever-evolving cultural narratives. Drawing on his experience in China, he posed urgent questions about the role of art in a fractured, post-unipolar world, and how artists can help us navigate this moment of ‘polycrisis’ through new forms of imagination and connection.

Tinari stated, ***“I have always believed that artists see things before most of us—whether it’s how economic transformations affect a society or how new technologies like AI might threaten or enrich our worlds.”***

### Summit Talks

The 2025 Talks series kicked-off with the artist **Wang Tuo**. In a thought-provoking Talk, Wang Tuo explored the complex dynamics of censorship, artistic resistance, and historical trauma in contemporary China. Drawing from personal experiences and historical moments like the May 4 Movement, he provoked participants to reconsider how art can challenge systemic constraints, uncover hidden narratives, and imagine new forms of social transformation. Through a deeply personal and intellectually rigorous lens, Wang Tuo stated how understanding our historical ‘aftershocks’ can help us to navigate and reimagine our future.



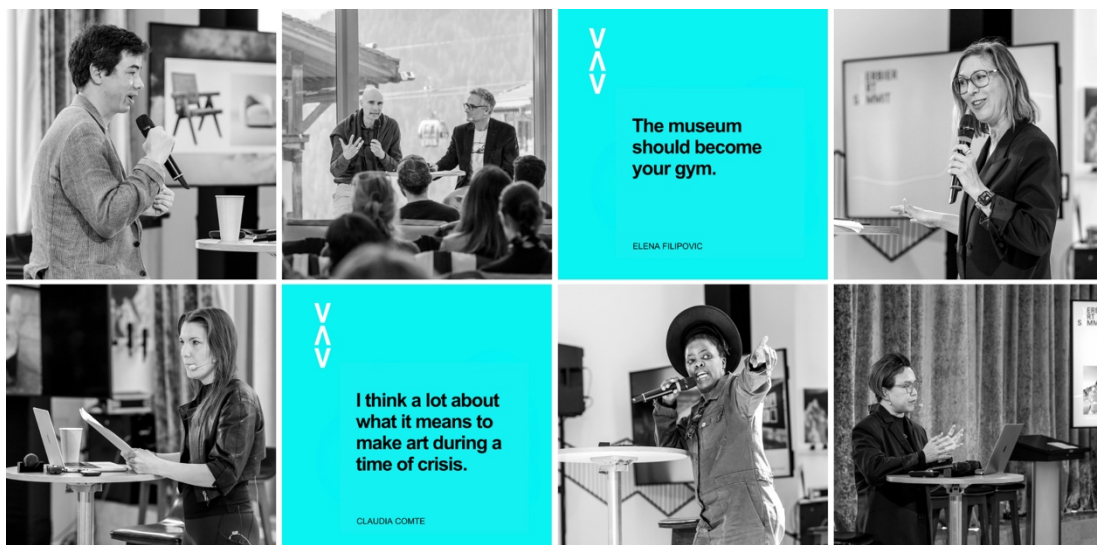
**Yuk Hui** continued the dialogue with a profound philosophical exploration. Hui dissected our technological future, challenging conventional narratives about AI, global efficiency, and modernisation. He proposed a radical reimagining of intelligence and technology through a lens of diversity—introducing a conceptual matrix comprising biodiversity, noodiversity, and technodiversity. This triad forms the foundation of his vision for ‘planetary thinking,’ which seeks to address global crises through a diversified and more nuanced, culturally sensitive approach to knowledge and technological innovation.

The artist **Dana Awartani** invited the audience to explore the critical importance of preserving cultural heritage through traditional crafts in the Middle East. Through compelling examples like her work with Syrian stone masons and a major installation for which she worked with a team to recreate the courtyard of the war-ravaged Aleppo Mosque using handmade mud bricks, she demonstrated how art can be a form of resistance against cultural destruction.

Curator **Clémentine Deliss** reimagined the museum in this provocative Talk, challenging traditional institutional practices and proposing a revolutionary ‘metabolic museum’ that breaks free from colonial legacies and rigid exhibition models. Deliss guided viewers on an intellectual journey through inactive museum collections, advocating for a radical transformation of archival spaces. Her vision encourages visitor exploration and seeks to dismantle institutional barriers.

Artist **Lawrence Lek** captivated the audience with the fascinating world of AI. Through his innovative film projects, Lek challenges our understanding of AI, presenting it not as a cold technological tool, but as a complex, evolving entity. He revealed AI as a potential ‘adolescent’ still in the process of learning, which challenged viewers to reimagine their relationship to technology.

Day two of the Talks programme, featured The New Yorker writer **Kyle Chayka**, who explored how algorithms are transforming our (cultural) landscape. Although Chayka critiqued how digital platforms are homogenising creativity, he also offered hope by inspiring the audience to recognize the value of independent creativity and to support alternative (niche) platforms and (artist) communities that nurture cultural diversity in the digital age.



The artist **Claudia Comte** delivered an inspiring Talk exploring art, nature, and human interconnectedness. Drawing on her personal experiences, Comte described how she reimagines our relationship with the natural world through sculpture, painting, and collaborative ecological restoration—inspiring both ecological awareness and collective action toward a more sustainable future.

Neuroscientist **Olaf Blanke** (Professor at EPFL) and innovator **Nicolas Henchoz** (director EPFL+ECAL Lab) took the audience on a mind-bending journey into human consciousness. Their Summit Talk revealed how cutting-edge technology and artistic collaboration are revolutionising the understanding of the mind.

Visual activist **Zanele Muholi** led a powerful presentation by sharing their groundbreaking work that documents LGBTQIA+ lives in South Africa, creating a visual archive of resilience, identity, and community resistance. Powerful, intimate, and transformative—this Talk revealed the extraordinary power of visual storytelling in confronting social injustice and celebrating human dignity.

Through compelling storytelling and historical examples, **Elena Filipovic**, director of the Kunstmuseum Basel, reimagined museums as dynamic engines of future possibility, not just repositories of the past. Filipovic challenged traditional views of the museum, presenting them as vibrant institutions that don't just preserve history, but actively shape our understanding of the present and the future. Her passionate arguments demonstrate how cultural institutions can bring people together, challenge perspectives, and create spaces of collective imagination.

The renowned artist **Cao Fei** took the audience on a journey through her innovative artistic projects exploring technology, labour, and social transformation in contemporary China. Blending documentary, fiction, and artistic intervention, Cao Fei revealed how art can critically examine our changing relationship with technology, work, and social structures. From documenting factory workers to creating virtual world avatars, Cao Fei's work provides a unique lens into the rapid technological and cultural shifts of the 21st century.

The 2025 Talks are now available to watch on the Verbier Art Summit YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/VerbierArtSummit>.



Dana Awartani, Philip Tinari, Claudia Comte, Anneliek Sijbrandij, Zanele Muholi, Yuk Hui, Wang Tuo, Lawrence Lek, Clémentine Deliss, Cao Fei and Kyle Chayka at the 2025 Verbier Art Summit © Alpimages



## 2025 Summit Reflections

This year's edition of the Summit brought together a dynamic range of voices from various disciplines—art, science and philosophy—to discuss some of the most pressing questions of our time. The gathering highlighted art's ability to foster dialogue, promote change, and inspire collaboration across different sectors in an increasingly complex world.

*Art as a catalyst for change:* Throughout the Talks, speakers reaffirmed the transformative power of art. More than just aesthetics, art can provoke thought, connect individuals, and inspire societal change. It acts as a conduit for truth, ignites collective action, and provides a platform for amplifying diverse voices and perspectives.

*Preserving cultural memory:* A strong emphasis was placed on the role of cultural preservation. By learning from the past and documenting the present, we can preserve stories, traditions, and identities that are vital to our heritage. Art serves as a powerful educational tool, helping to safeguard our memories while providing future generations with the knowledge and context they need to navigate the challenges ahead.

*The need for collaboration:* As global challenges become increasingly multi-polar, the Summit highlighted the importance of collaboration across various disciplines. For example, the partnership between neuroscientists and artists to create immersive experiences can address complex issues like mental health.

*Technology's role:* The Summit also offered reflections on the profound relationship between technology, culture, and human values. Rather than viewing technological advancement as a singular, universal force, speakers emphasised the need to consider diverse cultural approaches to technology, proposing alternative futures that move beyond a purely Western or utilitarian framework. Technology was presented not only as a tool that shapes our reality but also as a space where different ways of thinking, being, and relating to the world can emerge—challenging us to rethink progress itself.

## About the Summit

The Summit is a non-profit platform pushing boundaries to create new visions in a world on the brink of significant change. To inspire people globally, the Summit is open to the public for free and live-streamed via a virtual platform, whilst the key conversations are also documented in a publication designed by Irma Boom, available through Koenig Books.

For more details on the Verbier Art Summit, please visit [verbierartsummit.org](https://verbierartsummit.org) or follow us on [Instagram](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#) using #verbierartsummit.

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