

Fotomuseum Winterthur claims Switzerland is fake

Fotomuseum Winterthur is currently causing quite a stir on social media with an extraordinary video that declares Switzerland, in a humorous and visually stunning presentation, to be fake news. The video reached over 3.8 million views within the first 48 hours. The project came into being as a collaborative undertaking between artist and AI expert Karpi (Patrick Karpiczenko) and Fotomuseum Winterthur as a means to focus attention on the reopening of this important photographic institution on 17 May 2025.

'Switzerland is fake', claims a witty video that is currently going viral on the internet. As Nadine Wietlisbach, director of Fotomuseum Winterthur, and artist Karpi explained in a joint statement today, the initiative is intended as an invitation, calling on us to engage more critically with the images we encounter online. Reopening on 17 May 2025 after nearly two years of renovation work, the museum will once again give visitors the opportunity to do just this, in new, expanded exhibition spaces, with a varied programme catering to visitors – including groups and school classes.

The *Switzerland Is Fake* video's humorous style and satirical references to topical events shed light on a contemporary phenomenon that presents multiple challenges: it has never been quite so easy as it is now to fabricate absurd 'realities', the veracity of which is supposedly confirmed by photographs that purport to be genuine. This means that, in addition to exercising its artistic expertise and carrying out curatorial work, a cultural institution like Fotomuseum Winterthur now has a new role to play with a new remit.

Today, more than ever before, it is important to actively reflect on and critically examine photographs and the mechanisms behind their production, distribution and consumption. Since it was first established, Fotomuseum Winterthur has focused on investigating the role and impact of photography in social, political, economic and cultural terms, with a consistent emphasis on vigorously examining contemporary digital image practices, including in the context of disinformation.

'Fotomuseum Winterthur has always been an inspiring place, somewhere to slow down and get immersed – a place for people to reflect on how our concepts of reality are shaped by pictures produced by photographers and artists or images drawn from everyday life and to think about how these constitute us as communities. The newly reopened Fotomuseum Winterthur offers a panoply of inspiration and invites us to have fun as we turn a critical eye to the images on display.'

Nadine Wietlisbach, director of Fotomuseum Winterthur

'Inspired by satirical conspiracy theories like "Birds aren't real" and the "Bielefeld conspiracy", *Switzerland Is Fake* shows how easily reality can be called into question. This has involved digging deep into the bag of tricks

that are used for disinformation and creating deceptively real images with the help of AI. The aim is to make us all more aware of the age of AI. *Switzerland Is Fake* is a humorous thought experiment for an international audience, but for us Swiss it just seems absurd – after all, we're living in Switzerland and it's obviously real, isn't it?'
Patrick Karpiczenko, producer, AI expert and comedian

A contemporary building catering to different formats

The reopening of Fotomuseum Winterthur is a manifestation of the institution's vision of a museum of the present – not only a venue in which visitors can engage with content but also a place of encounter where ideas can be discussed. The new building offers even more space for discursive formats and innovative exhibition and event concepts with scope too for experimental approaches.

On 17 May Fotomuseum Winterthur will be officially opened by Madeleine Schuppli, president of the Board of Trustees, Michael Künzle, mayor of Winterthur, and Jacqueline Fehr, member of the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich.

Media professionals have the following options for visiting the new Fotomuseum Winterthur and viewing the exhibition *The Lure of the Image*:

- Friday, 16 May 2025, 10:00–11:30: Guided tour of the new Fotomuseum Winterthur with a focus on the exhibition conducted by Nadine Wietlisbach and co-curator Doris Gassert.
- Saturday, 17 May 2025, from 16:00: Official opening event with speeches by Madeleine Schuppli, president of the board of trustees, Michael Künzle, mayor of Winterthur, and Jacqueline Fehr, member of the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich.

The video *Switzerland Is Fake* can be accessed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vmd-QdSaz6U>

The contextual explanations of *Switzerland Is Fake* by director Nadine Wietlisbach and Karpi can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Ub02Si5T9II>

For more information on the reopening, please go to:

<https://www.fotomuseum.ch/en/events-post/grosse-wiedereroeffnung/>

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