

Sam Cottington, *All Day*
at Museum Schafften
9 May – 26 July 2026

Due to the renovation of its historic Waaghaus building, Kunsthalle Winterthur has temporarily relocated to several venues until December 2026. This year's programme begins with an intervention by Sam Cottington at Museum Schafften.

All Day takes Museum Schafften as its point of departure—an institution that frames work as a historically evolved cultural practice and positions the social as central to processes of production. The museum's exhibitions often present Winterthur as an important hub of Switzerland's industrial history, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period that laid the financial and social foundations of the city's cultural identity today. In this context, Museum Schafften explores the reverberations of historical developments in their newest exhibition, *Erinnerungstank Haldengut* (Haldengut Memory Tank), an extensive display on Winterthur's Haldengut Brewery focusing on testimonies from the diverse professions that come together in such a large company. In parallel, Sam Cottington presents an artistic investigation into the museum itself as a product of socially formed economies—economies understood here not only as systems of labour, but as performative structures through which relations are organized and articulated.

Visiting an exhibition is a routine and firmly anchored practice. We enter, buy a ticket, check our bags, step into the exhibition, move towards its end, pause at the café, collect our bags, and exit. The infrastructures, codes, and rhythms in place draw out pathways for encountering, learning, becoming involved, and, ultimately, circumventing the parallel workings of the museum. There is a long history, especially within institutional critique, of artists making these workings visible, a history that has been fully reintegrated and absorbed into museum frameworks. Cottington opens up a site in which the “artwork” becomes the bizarre object, an object with a contingent yet temporary relation to the seemingly stable logic of its (non-art) context. In these works, the idea of rendering labour visible is at odds with institutional critique as a coherent artistic method; the works also insist on a “reality” in which encounters with objects, experiences, and people are fraught with contradictions.

Before visitors enter the exhibition, after they exit, as they diverge, Cottington's works inhabit

the thresholds of the museum in its invisible areas of production—front-of-house routines, forms of mediation and participation, maintenance spaces—introducing into them the intimate, the vital, and the perverse that drives the artist's interest in the “experience of experience”. Approaching the exhibition context through the narrative devices of theatre, the works in *All Day* operate as props and cues, suggesting actions, addressing expectations, and structuring encounters that may or may not take place. Visitors move through a setting in which the roles of audience, participant, and performer are not fully determined. Within this logic, the museum becomes a site of ongoing rehearsal. It is not performance as such, but the possibility of its emergence across the museum's front and back stages that is brought into play.

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The exhibition will be accompanied by a conversation between Sam Cottington and art historian and critic Sabeth Buchmann on 25 June 2026 at Museum Schafften.

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Sam Cottington (*1993, lives in London) is an artist, writer and theatre maker. In 2025, he graduated from Städelschule, Frankfurt, in the class of Monika Baer. Cottington is an associate artist at London Performance Studios, where he will present a new stage work later this year. *Phone Plays*, a collection of Cottington's plays written to be performed over the phone, was published by Montez Press in 2024.