

# Yggdrasil: James Alec Hardy's heavy light installation



James Alec Hardy's monumental installation

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No    Maybe    I'm Attending

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## About this event:

Created by [Trebuchet Magazine](#)

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Takes place on 26/01/2019 from 18:00 to 21:00

Melior Place 2-4, Tower Bridge, [London](#)

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**[26.01.19]** Created specially for Melior Place in Bermondsey (Kristin Hjellegjerde gallery's new [space](#) that will later be rebuilt as their new London home in 2020/2021), British artist James Alec Hardy's monumental installation takes its inspiration from the immense Norse mythical tree Yggdrasil, which

metaphysically connects the dimensions of perception. Using totemic stacks of analogue **video** monitors to build a tree-like structure, the artist repurposes obsolete technological hardware to explore the place of ancient symbolism in contemporary society. The sculptural forms will shift and metamorphose through the duration, giving the work the appearance of being live and growing, with select performance events to be announced. Within this temporary space, the installation functions as an Axis-Mundi; a momentary centre point. Thus, we are invited to engage and meditate at a threshold of potential change and progress.

## “Yggdrasil”

### JAMES ALEC HARDY

The sacred tree symbolises the centre of the **world** where the sky connects to the **earth**, and also a gateway between two plains of existence: the physical and the conceptual. “Myths are made, and remade — we create and collect those that help us identify the formation and patterns of the chaos to give us an ordered structure, I wanted to use Yggdrasil as the central column and foundation, to build it as a construction harnessing the existing architecture,” comments the artist. As such, we might interpret the work as attempt to bring shape to both the disused physical space of the building and the future that’s heralded by the start of the new year.

Whilst Hardy stresses the work is “a positive and mediative symbol of hope and progress for 2019”, we cannot remove the art from the context. Scaffold-like in its construction with video screens and monitors at different plains and levels, the sculpture represents the assemblage of something from times past and something new, of future potential yet unrealised and like many of the artist’s works, the scale is purposefully intimidating. Reaching well beyond human height, the tower confronts the viewer in a way that’s reminiscent of religious towers and shrines, whereby the enormity of a structure equates to a **power** beyond the realm of earth. We might also relate the scale to feelings of being overwhelmed or fearful for the future. The installation, by the nature of the screen, allows viewers to engage with the work, whilst still maintaining a distance or even coldness; we see the content, but we cannot reach it.

The video content itself is a mixture of Hardy’s distinctive hard-edge abstraction, mixed with unseen recent works and archive material spanning the last decade. The content repeats endlessly as in an

ouroboros loop, accompanied by resonating hums that are as hypnotic as they are unnerving. Played across multiple screens, the work invites the viewer to encounter the work from varying angles and to become consumed by the experience, thus referencing the actions and rituals taken by different practises of worship and the search for paths to transcendence. As we become increasingly enraptured and mesmerised by Hardy's psychedelic videos, we might consider our dependence on screens in our everyday lives and the dangers of manipulative technology.

Hardy plays further with the concept of control and visual bombardment by rigging hammocks to the ceiling with monitors facing upwards to the glass. Whilst the viewing is restricted from beneath, the reflection of the content will be visible at certain times depending on the light and time of day. This effect adds to the otherworldly atmosphere

and again, manipulates our perspective of the space. Similarly, the looped video of a downwardly cascading vortex playing on large HD monitors at the base of the tree structure (or trunk), suggests a sense of infinity and adds an intriguing temporal layer to the work. Whilst the technology is reminiscent of a bygone era, it is given new life through art and therefore, comes to symbolise re-birth, continuation, endlessness.

The title of the installation 'Yggdrasil' is a further reshaping of myth. It harnesses power of the re-evaluation and re-determination of ideas that might otherwise disappear. Just as the artist offers new life to this symbol, the viewer is invited to find new meaning through their individual experience.

Melior Place 2-4, Tower Bridge, London

Saturday 26th of January

6-9PM

KHG Gallery



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