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The work of Jonas Englert is made possible by RE-SEARCH. The ZF Fellowship 2026

In 2026, Jonas Englert has been awarded *RE-SEARCH. The ZF Fellowship*, a funding program of the ZF Art Foundation endowed with €30,000. The fellowship enables the artist to develop a new work for the exhibition *Perceived Truths. Zeppelins and National Socialism*. In close dialogue with the archive and collection of the Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen, Englert will create a multi-channel video installation conceived as a collage of heterogeneous image and film materials.

How was the airship transformed as a powerful image during the era of National Socialism and how do these images continue to influence collective memory? Jonas Englert explores these and other questions in his new work. In Englert's view, the Zeppelin is not primarily a piece of historical technology, but rather an image and a reflection of collective ideas, emotions, and suppressed narratives. From generation to generation, concepts of nationalism, technological superiority, manliness, expansion, and hero worship became condensed in the image of the Zeppelin. Thusly charged with symbolism, the motif soon became an effective instrument for political presentation and propaganda – in the German Empire, the Weimar Republic, and especially, under National Socialism. Long before Hitler seized power, National Socialist ideology also became embedded in Zeppelin iconography and continues to inform present-day perceptions.

As it was not his aim to present a detached retrospective that treats fascism as a concluded historical phenomenon, Englert also looked at contemporary perspectives. His investigations into the perpetuation of affective images and internalised concepts of nationalism, masculinity, power, and omnipotence include manifestations in contexts with less overt symbolism. The artist's strategy is to let images take effect, only to disrupt them through re-contextualisation, juxtaposition and superimposition. The resulting open space for thoughts and images allows viewers to recognise the seemingly evident as contrived, and to question "perceived truths" that become politically effective.

Jonas Englert's video work is being developed in close dialogue with the Zeppelin Museum's archive as part of the exhibition *Perceived Truths. Zeppelins and National Socialism*, which for the first time systematically examines the relationship between the Zeppelin and the Nazi state. "Perceived truths"—subjective, emotionalised assumptions—continue to shape the perception of Zeppelins as nostalgic, positively connoted technological achievements. Yet from 1933 onwards, both the Zeppelins and the people who built and operated them were embedded in the Nazi regime and its propagandistic self-representation. Conceived as a contribution to historical education, the exhibition draws parallels to contemporary mass phenomena and to targeted forms of influence exerted through modern media. In this way, the museum seeks to actively address current threats to our liberal democratic order.

The exhibition *Perceived Truths. Zeppelins and National Socialism* will open on 21 May 2026 at 6 pm. It will be on view at the Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen from 22 May 2026 to 4 April 2027.

Pressekontakt

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Press Photos



Song of None (2024), Jonas Englert,
Installation view Harlan Levey Projects © Photo: Adriaan Hauwaert



Declaration of Principles (2022), Jonas Englert,
Installation view © Photo: Galerie Anita Beckers



Circles I (2019), Jonas Englert, Installation view
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