

John K. Raustein

the place where what is true has been made up

Galleri Salhus June 5 – August 30 2026

In the art exhibition, *the place where what is true has been made up*, artist **John K. Raustein** explores how memory, identity, and bodily experiences can be expressed through textiles. This is the second part of a trilogy in which he uses the construction site as a recurring metaphor: a place in flux, where things are built, torn down, and negotiated. Works, themes, and formal approaches are developed further from site to site. Through a site-sensitive process, some works are reformulated in response to new spaces, while others are created specifically for this exhibition. In *Galleri Salhus*, textile constructions are reminiscent of scaffolding, barriers, and pipes. They form passages, thresholds, and boundaries that both open and close, support and restrict.

The title points to how truth is not always stable and certain. It is taken from a radio quote by author Joakim Kjørsvik¹, suggesting that what we experience as true is often something shaped, adapted, and rewritten. For Raustein, this also carries a personal resonance. For a long time, he bore a surname that later turned out not to be his own. The experience of living with an identity partly shaped by others' ideas and expectations has left its mark on his artistic practice. The works revolve around questions of belonging, identity, and how the stories we tell about ourselves are formed.

At the same time, the exhibition points to a contemporary reality in which the boundaries between experience, narrative, and reality are constantly shifting, making it difficult to determine what is true and what is imagined.

Raustein works with simple materials, often cotton canvas in a limited color palette. The fabrics are processed through slow techniques using both hand and machine stitching. Several works are produced for this exhibition, while others further develop elements from earlier projects. In this way, the installations carry traces of time and labor, pointing both backward and forward.

In this exhibition, color plays a particularly important role. The display is built around three shades within a petroleum blue spectrum—from light and cool blue to deep, dark blue-green. The colors create a space that moves between openness and density, surface and depth. The lightest tone may resemble a pale sky, while the darkest evoke the depths of the sea. The colors emerge from memories, moods, and bodily experiences rather than from a single narrative.

¹ The exhibition title was 'stolen' after hearing a radio interview with Joakim Kjørsvik.

Kjørsvik has also written the text 'Working Title: Working Title' for John K. Raustein's monograph *Når alt vi vet blir fremmed* (2025).

A photograph from the artist's childhood has been important for his work: a picture of him and his foster father on a pier, taken by his mother during the last summer they spent together. In this image, sky, sea, clothing, and light meet in various shades of blue. For Raustein, blue becomes a kind of self-portrait—not as a fixed identity, but as a mood.

The installations are both large and intimate. They envelop the body, while small details become apparent up close. The works gradually reveal themselves through movement, light, and shifting perspectives.

The project also touches on experiences of marginalization, queer identity, and questions of belonging. At the same time, the history of the textile industry and environmental concerns form a backdrop—especially here in Salhus, where textile production was once part of everyday life.

Raustein's works are also shown during the summer of 2026 in the exhibition *KUNST.HÅND.VERK.* at KODE in Bergen, at Glasslåven Art Center & Studio in Granavollen, at Deichman Bjørvika in Oslo, and in the exhibition *Mitt Stavanger* at Stavanger Museum.

John K. Raustein graduated from the Bergen Academy of Art and Design in 2000. He explores the diverse expressive possibilities of textile art and is interested in textile traditions both from a material and technical standpoint, as well as from conceptual and sculptural perspectives. His artistic practice is characterized by working with memory and perception related to textile materials, often resulting in large, immersive installations in a limited color palette. The installations build upon one another like layers of references to Raustein's life and upbringing, often containing hints of socially related themes.

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