

Camera Austria

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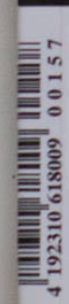
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rules, the tension between playing the game or playing against it.

Rica Cerbarano Your curatorial concept triggers reflection on photography beyond its pure and simple nature: What is it that makes the relationship between photography and play so important today?

Matteo Bittanti An allegedly “playful” element haunts the so-called post-photographic. However, far from being joyful and carefree, this attitude seems to be a by-product of neoliberal phantasies of pseudo-empowerment through consumption and self-branding, on the one hand, and proto-fascist celebration of masculinity and white supremacy, on the other. This tension also



From left to right: Emily Hadrich, *Neue Gefilde – Altes Ich*, 2019–20; Aram Bartholl, *de_dust*, 2004; Joan Pamboukes, *Video game Color Fields*, 2006–ongoing; Cory Arcangel, *Super Landscape 1*, 2005. Installation view at Fotomuseum Winterthur, 2021. Photo: Fotomuseum Winterthur / Conradin Frei.

informs contemporary gaming culture as a whole. And since gaming exerts such a powerful influence on pop culture, it is no surprise that the iconosphere, as a whole, has been “gamified.” The exhibition was meant as a survey of this phenomenon.

WB It is telling that Friedrich Schiller, in his series of letters *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, connected “play” to emancipation and the very essence of humanity. In what is obviously a very simplified sketch of the problem, you can go in different directions from here: arguing, with Johan Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens*, that play is the primary experiment at the roots of any social institution, or, with Guy Debord, taking the stance that play is a most suitable paradigm for subversive behavior in an institutionalized society of the spectacle. Whatever Debord’s debts to Huizinga, his political position is closer to Schiller’s vision. Now, many exhibits in your show imply that our society has become more spectacular than Debord could have imagined in his worst nightmares. How does this relate to your concept of play?

MB In his book *The Utopia of Rules: On Technology, Stupidity, and the Secret Joys of Bureaucracy*, David Graeber reminds us that games require rules, while play doesn’t necessarily imply the existence of rules at all. He says that play can be improvisational, and he concludes that, in its pure form, play can be understood as “a pure expression of creative energy.” It can be open-

ended, disruptive, and subversive. Dangerous, even. We are also reminded that games, according to Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, are nothing more than a continuation of work through other means. Amusement, as described in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, is simply capitalism under a different guise. When I look at video games, all I see are powerful ideological training tools. Video games allow the exploited to feel like exploiters: alpha males colonizing entire worlds. Like apps, video games are highly addictive. They are all based on the slot machine. A whole generation of kids has sunk their childhood into Minecraft and Roblox before graduating to Fortnite. In short, there’s nothing “playful”

malized.” It’s been interesting to follow the development of in-game photography since then and the addition of photo modes in computer games. In a sense, we witnessed game spaces becoming more and more photorealistic and being “photographed.”

RC Photography’s gamification can be considered from two points of view: on the one hand, the mechanisms of video games are replicated in the context of the production and circulation of images; on the other hand, video games are in some way influencing photographic aesthetics, and vice versa. Where is this phenomenon particularly evident in our approach to photography?

MDM The influence is mutual and complex. The camera isn’t usually presented as something to play with. It comes with buttons, levers, and parameters to be learned and mastered. We are taught rules of composition and lighting in art school, so in a way, taking photographs has always been inherently playful and filled with regulations. More recently, game mechanics have been applied to online platforms of image exchange. Basically, we have seen scores and point systems introduced to networked images, creating a new system of values which grounds the success of images based on their circulation. We have also seen the development of machine vision systems and artificial intelligence algorithms which analyze and “read” images, detecting objects and faces, but also giving an aesthetic score.

WB With how you comment on the photographer’s tool, it seems evident that you’re aware of Vilém Flusser’s apparatus theory. I wonder if he is the *éminence grise* in your show: in his writing, he complains about how photography limits our freedom of choice, and that we’re bound to fulfill the machine’s program rather than investing our own creative self when we use the camera without reserve. This being said, Flusser didn’t waste much time commenting on alternatives to what was the mainstream at the time of his writing. What do you think about Flusser in regard to more recent developments of man-machine relations in photography and in related fields?

MB Flusser argued that in order to be playful, images must be dialectic, and he defined dialogues as an exchange in which information is generated. He argued that telematics is “a game strategy with the goal of steering dialogues toward the production of new information.” Based on these statements, we can conclude that a) we can make images dialogically through memes,



Marco Cadioli, *ARENAE* (D-Day, Omaha Beach), 2005. Digital Print on Baryta, 33 × 50 cm. Courtesy: the artist.

for instance, and b) 4chan’s anonymous posters are artists or, better still, “envisioners.”

WB What is the relevance of historical references in your show? Ed Ruscha’s rule-plays made him an obvious candidate, but there’s also Claude Cahun and Florence Henri, amongst other protagonists. With Cindy Sherman also

being shown, visitors will feel invited to draw a line from modernism to post-modernity... but where are they supposed to draw the line from there? We can read all these modern classics as a tongue-in-cheek allusion to what photography was once upon a time—when museum walls seemed like just the right place to contemplate



Dries Depoorter & Max Pinckers, *Trophy Camera v0.9*, 2017. Interactive installation and website (www.trophy.camera), 16 × 10.5 × 8.5 cm. Courtesy: Fotomuseum Antwerpen. Copy-right: the artists.

them. However, you may have had more ambitious historiographical intentions. The implication may be that we can look at the so-called classics in an entirely different way in what I feel tempted to call your show’s rear-view mirror.

MB This is an area in which Marco and I do not necessarily see eye to eye, but far from being paralyzing, I believe this ongoing dialogue is productive. Let’s say that Marco is role-playing Walter Benjamin. His point is that photography has no aura. Post-photography does not even know the meaning of aura, although it is desperately trying to get one through various cons, including NFTs. Okay. Let’s also say that I am role-playing Susan Sontag, who, in her essay “Photographic Evangsels,” argued that museums could confer an aura on photography through their institutional power. So who’s right? Perhaps it doesn’t really matter. Perhaps we just wanted to compare and contrast, juxtaposing different approaches to image-making that are, at once, anachronistic and brand new. We convinced ourselves that these various fictions would create some kind of critical friction. We were, in other words, playing.

RC Gamification includes a strong presence of interaction, which, if framed in the contemporary exhibition context, solicits reflection on the perception of the work of art beyond the mere observation of photographs hanging on museum walls. How is this interactive component translated on the physical level of the exhibition? Is there anything that turns the museum space into the playground that you argue photography helps to create?

MDM There are a couple of playable works in the show, including Dries Depoorter and Max Pinckers’s *Trophy Camera v0.95* from 2021, but also a modified version of *DOOM II* from 2015 by Andrew Stine, where visitors can equip a selfie stick instead of a gun and take selfies instead of shooting down monsters. Akihiko Taniguchi’s *Parallax*, developed in 2021, is also a playable environment, a “game essay” in which the artist has created different scenes to reflect on digital images, screenshotting, and simulation. However, we didn’t endeavor to create a playground. Visitors are encouraged to play with images, but most importantly they are invited to think of images as the result of a play activity, and of a negotiation with a game that we should always be able

to shape, rather than blindly following its rules. If anything, interaction is overrated.

WB In one of the rooms of your show, visitors came across Harun Farocki’s *Parallel I–IV* made *krieg* from 1987 in mind, it is particularly revealing. He had investigated industrialized ways of seeing or photographic machine vision in his earlier film, and analyzes how photography has come to be replaced by simulation in the latter. Farocki may be commenting on game worlds, but we’re also invited to think about how this shift affects our view of the world at large. Do you agree that this is why Farocki is necessary for your show?

MB Mos def. It’s a paradigm shift: simulation replaces representation. Debord is out, Jean Baudrillard is in. Meanwhile, Farocki was taking notes.

RC What are the sociocultural implications behind “playful” photography?

MDM It’s crucial not to forget the political aspect of image play. I mean, it’s all fun and games until somebody loses an eye. Images are part of disinformation campaigns and trolling tactics by bad actors. Consider what happened in 2017 when the official Twitter account of the Russian Ministry of Defence published an image that was later discovered to be a screenshot from a video game as irrefutable proof of the US helping ISIS. Yet image play can become a tactic to challenge truth and fiction, reality and representation. By appropriating and recontextualizing images, artists and photographers question the dominant authorities. They generate counter-narratives that can shape reality.

WB It isn’t easy to conclude what’s in it for photography after recapitulating your visual analysis of the field. Your exhibition title implies that we can win at photography, but some of the exhibits in the show suggest that it may be more appealing to win against photography. What is more, photography has become a hallucination, an afterimage, or a side effect in many works in the show. Is photography a losing game?

MB Well, I find “winning” very boring. Or perhaps “losing” might be the only way to win. I



Akihiko Taniguchi, *Parallax*, 2021. Custom software.

think it would be more fruitful to examine the logic and the aesthetics of failure, which is an entire field in itself—here, I’m specifically thinking about the book *Failure* by Arjun Appadurai and Neta Alexander. What may “losing as winning” look like? Not to engage with the medium itself? For instance, John Berger wrote extensively about photography but refused to become a photographer. He taught us how to read a photograph. Is he a winner? Is he a loser? Ditto for Sontag, who crafted an essential book on photography completely devoid of images and remained at arm’s length from the camera for her entire life. On the other hand, at one point Baudrillard found more joy in photography than in writing. He fully embraced the simulacrum. He

was happy with the blue pill. Full disclosure: the title of the exhibition evokes the “how-to” vernacular genre on YouTube, an expanding universe of tutorial videos which are supposed to explain in ten minutes how to game anything from cryptocurrency to climate change, from make-up to cheating on online exams. How-to videos are the layman’s TED Talk. My all-time favorite is “How to Become a Curator.”

MDM If we go back to Flusser one more time, photography has always been a Kafkaesque game, and photographers have almost always been mere functionaries of the apparatus. So perhaps the only way to win at photography really is not to take any more pictures.

Matteo Bittanti’s research and practice focus on media studies. He lives in San Francisco (US) and Milan (IT).

Wolfgang Brückle, art historian, is a senior lecturer at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (CH). He was the head of two photography-related SNSF research projects from 2018 to 2022.

Rica Cerbarano is an independent curator and producer. She writes about photography for *Vogue* (IT) and other international magazines.

Marco De Mutiis is Digital Curator at Fotomuseum Winterthur (CH) and researcher at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts (CH) and London South Bank University (GB). He is interested in digital and networked images and cultures.

Data Streams: Art, Algorithms and Artificial Intelligence

The Glucksman, University College Cork,
3. 12. 2021 – 13. 3. 2022

by Fiona Hallinan

“All technology reflects the society that produces it,” writes Legacy Russell in her bold book *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*, “including its power structures and prejudices. This is true all the way down to the level of the algorithm.” Through the work of ten artists, the exhibition *Data Streams* explores the ways in which algorithms, data collection, and digital surveillance reproduce existing systemic structures, and how these underlying systems play out in influences on our lives and bodies. The show points to urgent issues that surround the Internet today, of surveillance and its risks, while also exploring how algorithms predict and guide patterns of behavior, and touching on the duty of care for users, makers, and moderators of digital spaces.

In designing the show, the curator Chris Clarke and the media scholar and lecturer in French studies Anaïs Nony wanted to make the visitor aware of the “impact of digital surveillance on actual bodies.” This embodied sense is immediately felt upon entering the exhibition space on foot, as a staircase approach reveals, line by line, *All I Know and Then Some* (2014/2021), a wall work by Addie Wagenknecht, of oversized handwritten text.

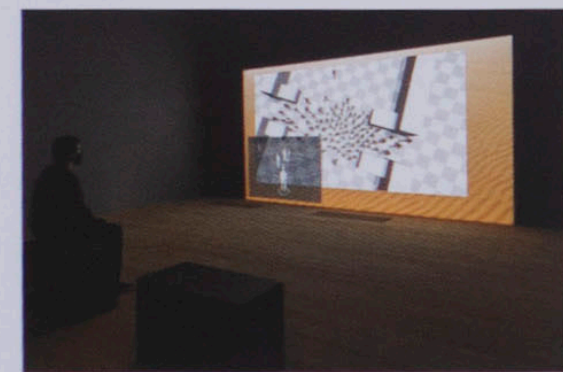
Wagenknecht’s mural suggests a devolution from control as its message dissolves from the virtuous proclamation “I will not download things that get me in trouble,” into the more passive resignation “I will download things.” Handwriting may be a comparatively slow and messy technology today, but as a physical gesture unique to each person, it contributes to a sense

of agency in our actions. In articulating a loss of control through that format, Wagenknecht draws attention to the too-familiar feeling of slippery unseen forces directing our hands while online.

In Ed Fornieles's work *Associations* (2021), a map-like series of images documents an associative journey through the online world as mediated by search engines, further visualizing the ways in which negotiation of the Internet is nudged along by unseen forces. Through an intimate video portrait, Malia Bruker offers insight into a highly subjective mode of negotiating online space. Installed here, cloaked in a pair of sliding doors to suggest discretionary viewing, *VIR/L* (2017) is a portrait of Lena NW, an artist and game developer who self-describes as a "feminist-nihilist." This work collages a staged documentation of Lena NW with excerpts of her self-made online material, viral content, and interviews where she speaks of her process and inner world. This form, with various perspectives occupying each frame, offers the viewer profound insight to the memories, feelings, and subjectivities of Lena NW, exploring the gooey boundaries between inner identity and online exposure.

The first iteration of *Real World Harm* (2018), a series by Kennedy Browne, could also be described as a portrait of an individual. The retrieved Facebook data of the Austrian activist Max Schrems is a stark pile of A4 documents inside a vitrine. According to Wikipedia, Schrems "made a request under the European Right of access to personal data provision for the company's records on him and received a CD containing over 1,200 pages of data." This action was part of a process of Schrems seeking accountability from Facebook for their privacy violations. The scale of record and surveillance for one individual is striking. Also significant to the theme of this exhibition is the notion that this artifact is one piece of evidence in a novel and evolving narrative, drawing attention to the ethical concerns of privacy online.

Real World Harm is part of *The Redaction Trilogy*, a series of artworks by Kennedy Browne looking at early twenty-first century capitalism. The second work in this series, a sound installa-



Clemens von Wedemeyer, *Transformation Scenario*, 2018. Installation view at The Glucksman, Cork, 2021–22. Photo: Jed Niezgoda.

tion presented in a listening room on five standing speakers, consists of interview responses by former content moderators for social media, who speak about their training and work experiences. The impact on their inner lives is one of the many unseen costs of social media; and the culpability of audiences for these platforms is made manifest. They bear the cost of seeing "the ugliest parts of human society" in order to allow an uncluttered social media landscape. While anonymous, the voices betray the very real individuals with emotions, inner lives, and relationships

who must carry the burden of what they are confronted with.

The final work in *Real World Harm* is an extracted image from a 360-degree video on Oculus, a virtual reality platform, capturing the Irish Data Commissioner's office. Unfortunately, the Oculus experience is not made accessible to visitors in this exhibition. Instead, the headpiece itself is exhibited as an object bearing an unwieldy disclaimer message, highlighting surveillance



From left to right: Suzanne Treister, *Post-Surveillance Art*, 2014; Addie Wagenknecht, *All I Know and Then Some*, 2014/2021; Ed Fornieles, *Associations*, 2021. Installation view at The Glucksman, Cork, 2021–22. Photo: Jed Niezgoda.

and the surrender of personal data that so often is a prerequisite to access to online experiences.

The exhibition highlights the issue of surveillance in physical spaces through works by Benjamin Gaulon and Esther Hovers. In Gaulon's *Corrupt Yourself* (2013), a collage of submitted surveillance records is assembled and subject to programmed, random "glitches" or errors in transmission. Esther Hovers's work gestures to sacrifices in personal privacy and the grave risks of surveillance. In her *False Positives* (2015–16), street scenes depict compositions of individuals in public space, where "anomalies" have been detected by surveillance cameras. Such anomalies imply any unpredictable movement or gesture that, according to the intelligent surveillance systems, might indicate criminal intent. Hovers's work *The Right To Be Forgotten* (2021) offers a negative to this type of unasked form of surveillance by multiplying a reproduced image of the first man to successfully scrub his identity from online search engines.

Suzanne Treister's digital prints titled *Post-Surveillance Art* (2014) refer to an aesthetic of the hopeful promises of the early days of Internet idealism. The posters in psychedelic print hang banner-like in the gallery space, yet upon reading the statements the viewer is confronted with the reality of hyper capitalism that allows a monopoly of global businesses to collect and profit from personal data.

The means by which online behavior can be corralled and profited from is vividly depicted in the video work of Clemens von Wedemeyer, *Transformation Scenario* (2018), which draws on visual representations of human behavior in crowds. It examines the practice of crowd prediction training, through narration describing a history of monitoring groups of people as a means of both simulating and managing large crowds. The documentation reveals ways in which the

vast scale of data that creates algorithms sees individuals as units in a collective, behaving according to a set of informed predictions.

While the exhibition deals predominantly with the societal impact of digital surveillance, the sculptural work of Yuri Pattison offers a glimpse at the physical machinations of the digital world. Somehow the transparency of Pattison's work emphasizes the innocence of technology; ultimately, the power and potential for malev-

ole is in how and by whom these tools are used. Pattison's video work *Outsourced Views*, *Visual Economies* (2013–14) is a compilation of video and photo material gathered from "workers"—sourced by the artist through the Amazon Mechanical Turk platform. The hired workers were requested to take a video from the nearest window.

I Was Her and She Was Me and Those We Might Become (2016) by Kitso Lynn Lelliott elaborates on the notion of boundaries and identity in a compelling multiscreen installation. In one element of the installation, a video projected on mesh material allows its imagery to bleed through onto the surrounding environment. Constellations of symbols overlay a performance of a person trying on different outfits. Another video depicts a street scene. According to the exhibition notes, Lelliott here refers to the Ghanaian Adinkra concept of "Sankofa" (loosely meaning that people have to look back on where they came from to see where they are going). The work defies linear notions of time, instead enveloping the viewer in a network of possible spaces and moments. This sense of rupturing time could perhaps be described as a "glitch," such moments as those described by Legacy Russell, where there is a sense of "something gone wrong." Russell writes that while the digital platforms we use manifest underlying systems, boundaries, and inequalities of the offline world—or, as she calls it, the "AFK" (away from keyboard) world—they can also offer the potential for realizations of the self that defy those limiting constructions.

Data Streams evokes an experience of the Internet as a space of potential pitfalls, both for our individual selves and our society, suggesting a need for systems of care, counter-surveillance and possible regulation. While tentatively critical, the show gives space too to the transen-

dent possibilities of the online world, and of what Legacy Russell sees as the potential of glitches, as necessary moments of rupture we must use to utterly "break what needs to be broken."

Fiona Hallinan is an Irish artist and researcher currently undertaking a doctoral project at LUCA School of Arts at KU Leuven (BE) and developing a film.

Vlatka Horvat: By Hand, on Foot

Peer, London, 4. 2. – 2. 4. 2022

by Orit Gat

It starts on January 1, 2021. The framed photo of a view of a park taken atop a low hill. In the background is a large housing block. The light is gray. On this printed photo, the artist has drawn a single, yellow pastel line emerging from a tree and curving toward the sky. Two days later, in the photo from January 3, 2021, colorful drawn lines connect the chimneys of houses like arches. On January 9, a building becomes a boat sailing along the sea of grass in front of it. My favorite is the snowy day on January 24, which meets a collaged surface of shimmering blue, the snow creating a magical ocean in the image. These are all part of a series of 365 photos that were printed and then altered through collage, cutting, or drawing on photographs taken daily over the entirety of the year and titled *To See Stars over Mountains* (2021).

On February 14, I recognize the view from the video work shown in the gallery's back room, *Until the Last of Our Labours Is Done* (2021). Then I realize, all the images in the photo series and the video were taken in the same places, which feels like the edge of a city, a space more empty than wild. But where the photographs are largely void of people, in the video there are five performers moving alone across this terrain, tinkering with a bunch of insignificant objects like the inner tube of a bicycle wheel, a towel (folded in half and carelessly used when lying on the grass), a cloth held to the wind, a piece of string dragged behind. Each moves through this landscape alone: the twenty-four-minute video is like a slow, unplanned, accidental image of absent-mindedness (or is it loneliness?). The performers roll round objects (a tube, a wheel, a small plastic cylinder) across the earth and follow them. It's as if the ob-



Vlatka Horvat, from the 365-part series: *To See Stars over Mountains*, 2021 (24 January). Collage and drawing on inkjet print. Courtesy: the artist.

jects they are rolling, waving, and holding mediate their relationship to this nature. As if they have forgotten how to be in this place.

The front two rooms of the gallery host the series of photographs in one, and in the other is

the sculptural installation *What Is on the Ground and What Is in the Sky* (2022). Made of tape, cardboard, and found objects, it stretches from floor to ceiling like a forest enclosed in the glass-walled gallery and visible from the street, like a makeshift landscape, like a proposal that nature could be found anywhere, or perhaps created. The suggestive, poetic titles of the works, stretch from ground to sky—are echoed in the span of eight weeks. Every Monday, the photographs—displayed framed and in a single continuous line—will be changed around, so that in the run of the show all 365 works will be on view. It's a warm antidote to the feeling that time has stretched, endless and repetitive, over the years of the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdowns designed to curtail its spread.

Horvat's daily excursions would ring familiar to many people from the past two years, when walks around the home became a daily solace. At the time, newspapers were full of advice on how to find meaning in a life so limited by circumstances, and one thing kept coming up: pay attention. Look at the flowers growing (spring!), the leaves changing color in autumn, the days stretching toward summer, contracting in the winter, and note the changes evident in the small details of the world.

The passage of time—a source of grief and twinge of nostalgia and comfort—is a traditional subject of so much art and literature. Only these days we are primed to consider it anew. Horvat's year in *To See Stars over Mountains* is not just playful, sweet, and attentive, it's also a reflection of how we now think more and more, and differently, about our day-to-day. Hers is not just a year of lockdowns and pandemic and chaos; the act of collaging, drawing, and altering, of changing the landscape, is a form of presence. It's a proposal not only to find something in what surrounds us, but also to actively engage with the world. And maybe see it differently.

Orit Gat is a writer living in London (GB) whose writing on art and technology has appeared in a variety of magazines. She is currently working on her first book, an essay about sport and a sense of belonging titled *If Anything Happens*.

James Gregory Atkinson: 6 Friedberg-Chicago

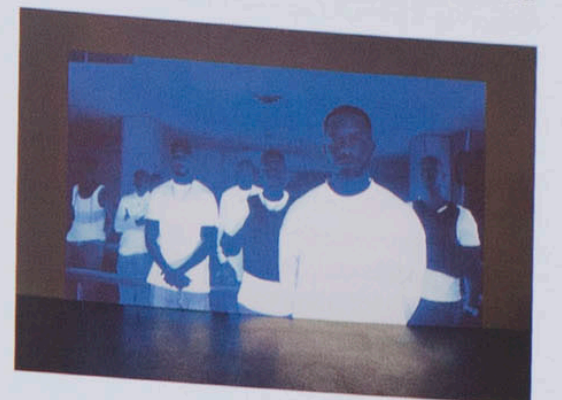
Dortmunder Kunstverein, 11. 12. 2021 – 13. 3. 2022

von Anna Brohm

In der Ästhetik eines Musikvideos folgt der neue Film *6 Friedberg-Chicago* (2021) von James Gregory Atkinson einer Gruppe von 17 jungen Männern, deren Väter als afroamerikanische US-Soldaten in Deutschland stationiert waren. Nach einer minimalistischen Choreografie von Josh Johnson bewegen sie sich auf dem Terrain der verlassenen US-Kaserne Friedberg bei Frankfurt. In einer Szene tragen sie, einer Uniform gleich, weiße T-Shirts und Unterhemden, die durch Blaulicht unnatürlich leuchten und Club-Atmosphäre erzeugen. Dann, in goldenem Licht wild herumspringend, zelebriert sich diese gefundene Brotherhood. Im Geiste von MTV produzierte Atkinson diesen Film mit verschiedensten Untertönen. Musikalisch getragen wird er von einem Cover des Titellieds des deutschen Spielfilms *Toxi* (1952), bei dem es sich um ein mel-

odisches Wiegenlied mit dem traurigen Refrain »Ich möcht' so gern nach Hause gehen, ei, ei, ei...« handelt, das im Original von der dunkelhäutigen Sängerin und Schauspielerin Marie Nejar unter dem Künstlernamen Leila Negra gesungen wurde. *Toxi* erzählt von dem Schicksal eines »brown baby«, wie nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs die Kinder von afroamerikanischen Soldaten und deutschen Frauen bezeichnet wurden. In der neuen Version klingt das Lied in satt produziertem Sound durch den Raum, performat von der Künstlerin und Harfenistin Ahya Simone. In der Ausstellung trifft dieser Sound auf eine in hartem Nachkriegsdeutsch geführte Bundestagsdebatte aus dem Jahr 1952, die die Einschulung einer ersten Generation tausender schwarzer »Besatzungskinder« verhandelt und den Rassismus der deutschen Gesellschaft in den 1950er-Jahren offenlegt.

Atkinson studierte an der Städelschule bei Douglas Gordon und kollaboriert für seine Arbeiten nicht nur mit Choreograf*innen und Mu-



James Gregory Atkinson, *6 Friedberg-Chicago*, 2021, 4K-Video (Farbe, Ton), 6'16". Installationsansicht im Dortmunder Kunstverein, 2021–22. Foto: Jens Franke. Courtesy: der Künstler und Dortmunder Kunstverein.

siker*innen, sondern auch mit Wissenschaftler*innen, Sound-Expert*innen und Filmteams. So entsteht in Zusammenarbeit mit der Kunsthistorikerin Mearg Negusse und dem Soziologen und Politikwissenschaftler Eric Otieno ein Archiv, das sich mit den Biografien Schwarzer Menschen in Deutschland und den historischen Ereignissen, die sie verbinden, auseinandersetzt. In vier Vitrinen sind daraus Briefe, Artikel, Bücher, Bilder und Gegenstände zusammengetragen, die durch vereinzelte Porträtzeichnungen Schwarzer Persönlichkeiten wie der Box-Legende Charly Graf und dem Schauspieler Günther Kaufmann an den Wänden ergänzt werden. Bruchstücke vernachlässigter deutscher Geschichte sind hier zu erkennen: das Buch *Stilisierung der Rheinlandbasterde. Das Schicksal einer farbigen deutschen Minderheit 1918–1937*, zwei Ausgaben der Zeitschrift *Voice of the Lumpen*, die in den 1970er-Jahren von Unterstützern der Black Panther-Bewegung herausgegeben wurde und sich an Schwarze US-Soldaten richtete, eine E-Mail eines Captain der US Army über sein Leben und seinen Alltag in Deutschland. In erster Linie versammelt das Archiv jedoch Materialien zu den Kindern afroamerikanischer US-Soldaten, die ab 1946 bis heute vor allem in Südwestdeutschland geboren wurden.

Die Stärke seiner mit großer Sorgfalt geschaffenen multimedialen Werke rührt nicht zuletzt von Atkinsons eigener Betroffenheit. 1981 als Sohn eines afroamerikanischen US-Soldaten und einer deutschen Mutter in Bad Nauheim geboren, ist seine Biografie Teil des Archivs: durch eine Widmung an ihn in einem Buch, Porträts