

island

Kristian Kragelund
Strm und Drang

09.03-10.24.2026

Kristian Kragelund's first solo exhibition in New York at island gallery centres on a series of thermal markings on milled aluminium and a set of idiosyncratic glass structures. The show employs the computer virus as both a formal and discursive framework, examining the speculative relationship between loneliness, apathy, and architecture.

Over several years, Kragelund has studied thousands of lines of source code from community-generated viruses from online archives and fringe forums, some dating back almost three decades. Many emerged from spheres affiliated with incel and alt-right subcultures. He discovered that authors often embedded confessional diary entries within their code—declarations of love, loss, longing, and despair. The malware was designed to destroy its host, meaning that its intended victims would never read the code. Each work presents natural language extracted from a different virus, preserving the formal qualities of programming syntax and code as a literary form; these messages suggest traces of authorship within a moment where artificial intelligence is increasingly complicating what it means to be human.

Atop the generic dark carpeting Kragelund has installed throughout the space, two glass structures will likewise occupy the gallery floor. Both modular and precarious in their arrangements, and identical in materiality, they suggest the simultaneous potential for retraction and expansion through the cannibalisation of their counterpart. The growth of one entity becomes contingent upon the demise of another. The sequential titling, Disposition1-2, references terminology used in the field of infrastructure theory, where "disposition as transport networks, energy grids, or digital architectures. The term is used to identify underperforming sectors and sites for further optimisation, extraction and, ultimately, exploitation.

The exhibition's title, Strm und Drang, is lifted from a phrase found within one of the viruses examined during Kragelund's research, and references the German proto-Romantic literary and artistic movement of the late eighteenth century, Sturm und Drang ("Storm and Stress"). Popularised by Goethe, the movement rejected the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason, order, and intellectual restraint. Today, Sturm und Drang is commonly used to describe periods of intense emotional, social, or political upheaval.

Kristian Kragelund is a Danish artist currently based in London, UK.