



Vika Kirchenbauer
Violet but more radical
Nov 19–Jan 29, 2022

*Ultraviolet lies just after violet as humans see it,
its waves slightly too short to be visually perceived.
I imagine it like violet, but more radical.
Animals perceptive of it can see
the sky's true violet color.
Birds detect the glow of mouse urine in fields far below,
the pee giving the mouse away.
The mouse sits in the grass erect,
certain of her invisibility to others.
A preying bird will detect the mouse's weakness
in what she herself would never consider remarkable.*

Excerpt from *UNTITLED SEQUENCE OF GAPS*, 2020

Kunstverein Kevin Space is happy to present the first solo exhibition of Vika Kirchenbauer in Austria. Through video, installation, music, and theoretical writing, Kirchenbauer's practice examines violence as it attaches to different forms of visibility and invisibility, and considers the ways in which subjects are implicated in and situated within societal power structures. Often relating personal and collective memory/non-remembrance to the politics of spectatorship, Kirchenbauer's work continuously negotiates the role of affects in the field of contemporary art and questions the ways in which marginalized bodies become experienceable in exhibition spaces.

For *Violet but more radical*, Kirchenbauer presents a selection of moving image works from the past five years as well as a new iteration of her most recent site-specific installation. The exhibition focuses on a contemplative and poetical strand of Kirchenbauer's practice that conceptualizes the intimate as a lens through which to investigate social power relations. Kirchenbauer considers forms of violence and affective states that lie beyond the visible realm, and emphasizes the transformative potential of opacities and ambiguities. Departing from her long-standing research on the Western impulse to transfer the non-graspable into the normative frame of vision, the selected works propose to rethink the relation between representation, gaze, memory, and trauma.

In her seminal essay *INFRARED DREAMS IN TIMES OF TRANSPARENCY* (published in 2014, and available on the artist's website as well as in the exhibition space), Kirchenbauer dissects the entanglements between the technocratic and technological as well as the cognitive and affective dimensions of contemporary drone-operated warfare and its incorporation of infrared imaging technology. Her techno-cultural and spectral investigations have strongly informed the three single channel videos *SHE WHOSE BLOOD IS CLOTTING IN MY UNDERWEAR* (2016), *MOOD MANAGEMENT* (2017), and *SHAME/HUMILIATION* (2018), respectively employing infrared imaging technology towards a distinctly sensual imagery whose visual decoding remains ambiguous. All three works also serve as music videos for Kirchenbauer's solo music project *COOL FOR YOU* (since 2015) for which she predominantly merges choral samples from the Sacred Harp musical tradition to engage with the colonial entanglements of these Christian harmonic structures. At Kevin Space, they are embedded into the visual phenomena evoked by the installation *SPECTRAL SENSITIVITY* (2021) that merges a spectral reduction via translucent film with UV fluorescent tubes emitting electromagnetic radiation, itself invisible to the human eye, yet noticeable in its effects on the visible realm via reflection and refraction.

Repeatedly referring to a potentiality beyond the normative human spectrum, Violet but more radical borrows its title from a script line of *UNTITLED SEQUENCE OF GAPS* (2020), an essayistic reflection upon the translatability of violence and the politics of returning, as well as an invitation to imagine the gap not as absence but as a form of presence. Her latest essayistic video, *THE CAPACITY FOR ADEQUATE ANGER* (2021) subsequently departs from returning to past experiences and visual archives, negotiating the complexities of the personal as a resource, the politics of unease, and the social dynamics of distancing.

Vika Kirchenbauer is an artist, writer and music producer based in Berlin. Recently, the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, has presented a comprehensive solo exhibition of Kirchenbauer's work, titled *FEELINGS THAT MOVE NOWHERE*. Her videos and installations have been exhibited in group shows and screenings at, among others, the Tainan Art Museum, Taiwan; the Whitechapel Gallery, London; Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; the Berlin International Film Festival, the New York Film Festival, and the Toronto International Film Festival.

Curated in collaboration with Viktor Neumann

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