

Clemens von Wedemeyer

Social Geometry

How do we arrange ourselves? How are we arranged? And how can one visualize the answers to these questions? Clemens von Wedemeyer's new films, which KOW presents for the 2024 Gallery Weekend Berlin, delve into the question of the networked dimension of our existence and grapple with how to represent it.

The central work in the exhibition is an abstract animated film. White dots appear on a black ground and take on infinitely varied, increasingly complex and increasingly spectacular forms: interrelations between individuals, networked human worlds, social geometries. The British musician Anne Clark's haunting voice guides our attention to what we will see in the abstraction: A group of friends. A class system. A revolution, erupting. Yet as the constellations grow ever more complex, the limitations of representation by model become evident—machines may be capable of keeping track of what is happening in the social sphere, but humans are not.

Wedemeyer's interest in group dynamics, in human masses and their power in the image has informed his art for twenty-five years. Like earlier works, his new film *Social Geometry* traces a path from the individual subject to the mass, the very, very many, and the (il)legibility of its behavior.

Wedemeyer deftly opens his installation up in widely different directions, effectively making it a fresh network of possible points of connection. The schematic illustration of the social, it turns out, evolved over centuries into a science whose history *Social Geometry* reflects on. Meanwhile, a model of society can easily become a reversible figure that is liable to be misread: as cybernetic fantasy, esoteric vision, pseudo-rational scheme, or more generally, an allegory that simulates representation while actually failing to grasp reality.

Wedemeyer's second film, *Surface Composition*, illustrates another side of the networks, the contemporary platforms on which people arrange themselves and by which they are arranged.

Traveling in California, he recorded sites possessed of real-world network power like the headquarters of Apple, Meta, Amazon, Space X, and the United States Postal Service, as well as infrastructures of commerce, containers, mines, and other motifs, in impersonal documentary images. They show the nondescript building complexes of systemically relevant companies, empty streets, a few transport vehicles. The reality of today's networks is opaque; their phenomenological blankness becomes manifest in the additive editing, sustained by a psychedelic soundtrack supplied by the Hungarian improvisational musician Zsolt Sörös.



Conventional principles of the representation of power (and the mass) have been turned upside down in the networked feudalism of our days. The more influential the actors and structures, the places and processes are, the more invisible they seem to be.

Text: Alexander Koch