

032c Gallery is pleased to present “CONTENT INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX” with works by Allen-Golder Carpenter, Paul Ferens, Azize Ferizi, Shuang Li, David Shamie, Phillip Timischl, and Ryan Trecartin. The exhibition is on view from January 10 – February 12, 2025 at 032c Gallery, Kurfürstendamm 178, Berlin.

The rise of the object as a central figure in cultural discourse has shifted its role from its simple functionality to that of a mediator within systems of signs. No longer confined to its utility, the object becomes a participant in meaning-making, disrupting traditional notions of subjectivity. As Jean Baudrillard observed, objects function as passwords—codes that grant access to symbolic systems that structure relationships, identities, and cultural hierarchies. These passwords are not merely tools of navigation; they also operate as mechanisms of inclusion where the ability to decode a symbol determines one’s access to meaning.

Passwords operate in a dual capacity: they serve as both gateways and barriers. In a world increasingly defined by simulacra, Baudrillard argues that passwords collapse the distinctions between the real and the simulated. The object no longer simply represents—it produces meaning, becoming a critical node in a network of signs that shapes the social fabric.

The exhibition “CONTENT INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX” explores the potential of objects, their meanings shifting as they move through social, cultural, and digital contexts. This interplay recalls the moment a baby encounters its reflection in a mirror for the first time, discovering itself while simultaneously confronting a fragmented, externalized image of identity. The object of the mirror becomes more than a surface—it is a threshold, a site of recognition, alienation, and self-construction. Similarly, the objects in this exhibition shift between individual and collective narratives, shaping not only how identities are constructed but how they are communicated and understood. From the hyper-curated presentation of a refrigerator as a marker of elite aesthetics, inspired by Kris Jenner’s fridge, to the cryptic codes embedded in Black meme culture, the works in “CONTENT INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX” reveal the significance of objects as either tools of survival and resistance or as markers of luxury and aspiration. These meanings are not static but shift depending on the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which the objects are embedded.

Baudrillard’s idea of objects as thresholds resonates throughout the exhibition. Objects function as shifting references, their meanings contingent upon the observer’s cultural and social framework. They complicate our understanding of identity, inviting interpretation: What do they reveal, and what remains obscured? Who holds the keys to decoding their significance?