



Tony Cokes
Selma, Birmingham, and The Morrissey Problem

March 10 — April 15, 2025

For the exhibition at Judy's Death, Cokes' first solo presentation in France, the artist focuses on two works, *The Morrissey Problem* (2019) and *Evil.27: Selma* (2011). The first — *The Morrissey Problem* — addresses the problematics of the titular frontman of The Smiths, Morrissey, adapting in full an essay by Joshua Surtees, published in *The Guardian*, condemning the singer-songwriter's then-recent endorsements of far-right leader Tommy Robinson. Probing a recurring figure in Cokes' oeuvre — songs sung by Morrissey appear in works as early as *Black Celebration* (1988) — the piece juxtaposes Surtees' rundown of Morrissey's flirtations with right-wing nationalism with songs by Marxist pop group McCarthy, producing an effect that continues in the vein of Cokes' study of cultural, political entanglement, and sonic ambivalence. *Evil.27: Selma* combines lyrics from a popular Morrissey song with 'Notes from Selma: On non-visibility', written by Our Literal Speed, an Alabama-based collective. Examining the weight of visible evidence — through text, sound, and color — both works appear adjacent to modern form of media power and strategies, and understood within the dissemination and articulation of images. Our experience, as viewers — and so forth, witnesses — resonate in the veracity of experience within culture, and in relation to moving images in their precarious ability to establish testimonies proper to debate, manipulation, and discourse.

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Tony Cokes lives and works in Providence, Rhode Island, where he serves as Professor in the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University. Cokes was awarded a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2024 and the Rome Prize in 2022–23. He was the subject of a major survey jointly organized by the Haus der Kunst and Kunstverein in Munich in 2022. Other recent solo exhibitions include Dia Bridgehampton, The Dan Flavin Art Institute, Bridgehampton, New York (2023–24); Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York (2024); De Balie, Amsterdam (2022); Greene Naftali, New York (2022, 2018); Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, Rochester (2021); MACRO Contemporary Art Museum, Rome (2021); CIRCA, London (2021); Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Barcelona (2020); ARGOS centre for audiovisual arts, Brussels (2020); Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2020); BAK – basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, Netherlands (2020); Luma Westbau, Zurich (2019); Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, London (2019); The Shed, New York (2019); Kunsthall Bergen, Norway (2018); and REDCAT, Los Angeles (2012).

His work is in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Centre Pompidou, Paris; David Winton Bell Gallery at Brown University, Providence; Dia Art Foundation, New York; FRAC Lorraine, Metz; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; KADIST, San Francisco; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, Columbus; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

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