

bravo

Solomon Garçon

with Paride Maria Calvia, Taylor Thoroski, and Precious Renee Tucker

7.2.–15.3.2026

Opening and performances: Friday, February 6, 2026, 6–10 pm

With *bravo*, the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen presents a project conceived by artist Solomon Garçon at the intersection of performance, music, and installation. Garçon approaches the exhibition space as a site of anticipation and activation; formats unfold across different temporalities, while the focus drifts between bodies, objects, and (moving) images. *bravo* extends beyond the spatial conventions of an exhibition, opening up toward forms of staging more readily associated with entertainment television. It does so by probing what might emerge when familiar modes of display give way to rehearsal and delay, and when expectation and projection begin to take shape. This marks Garçon's first institutional solo presentation outside the UK.

The project draws on US reality television as a cultural and formal reservoir. The title's reference to the American TV network Bravo signals this affinity, though the connection unfolds gradually within the work itself. Garçon is attentive to the particular logics of these formats: the constant slippage between stage and "real" space, and the episodic organization through which time, attention, and drama are choreographed. Questions of visibility, narration, and exposure (of information) recur throughout Garçon's practice; in *bravo*, they appear through a spatial choreography that treats the exhibition space as a set. Cameras, backdrops, sound cues, costumes, and props operate here as structuring elements rather than accessories.

An installative setting forms the project's framework. Garçon has conceived a compressed viewing situation articulated by a suite of precisely placed walls that organize the space and host three markings, each corresponding to a domestic site. Some walls remain deliberately short, just high enough to frustrate easy sightlines – looking over them requires viewers to stretch, stand on tiptoes, or make a small jump. Another wall crops passing bodies into a sequence of moving heads. A narrow corridor holds an array of projectors that cast bright shapes onto its glossy surface. Barricaded at one end, the passage channels the audience into a tight frame of view that subtly scripts their position. Together with the stage lighting that creates pronounced shadows

across the Kunstverein's interior, the installation inevitably renders visitors as both spectators and performers.

This spatial set-up will be additionally activated on the opening night. The evening will take on the atmosphere of a watch party of sorts, gathering visitors into a shared state of waiting, listening, looking, and being looked at. Alongside a performance by Garçon, the opening will feature audio and visual contributions by artist Paride Maria Calvia and experimental pianist Precious Renee Tucker. Calvia's pre-composed mix will score the situation. Tucker's contribution will appear via a specially made musical composition and video recording, mobilizing the short-form performance idiom that propelled her into viral circulation on social media and folding it into the visual and sonic economy of the evening.

Across the five-week run of the installation-cum-exhibition, a performative interlude will take place twice a week. Garçon has cast a member of the Kunstverein's staff for this durational performance, subtly bringing the institution's internal workings onto the stage. For these moments, stylist Taylor Thoroski has conceived a costume drawing on the looks of the women who take center stage across reality television franchises. Other elements taken from entertainment television also feature in the space, among them a "shoe camera," borrowed from a recurring gag on a popular 2000's talk show, which traces visitors' feet as they pass through the corridor, transmitting live footage to a monitor elsewhere in the room.

Garçon's flirtation with entertainment television sharpens at this point. Since its founding in 1980, the US television network Bravo has shifted from a niche, commercial-free channel devoted to opera, ballet, and art-house cinema into a central node of contemporary pop culture, aimed largely at women aged 25 to 54 and LGBTQ audiences. Over the two decades following the emergence of its reality formats in the mid-2000s, it has moved from guilty pleasure to cultural infrastructure, shaping codes of appearance, self-presentation, and social performance well beyond television. Take *The Real Housewives*, for example: when the show premiered in 2006, it introduced a visual economy of intimacy, confession, and confrontation that now circulates across multiple platforms. Such formats organize time episodically, stretch singular moments across episodes, and cultivate modes of self-observation that loop endlessly. Against this backdrop, and in the year of the *Housewives* franchise's twentieth anniversary, Garçon engages these structures as operative logics for thinking through performance and installation beyond habitual ways of looking.

Paul B. Preciado's 2014 study *Pornotopia* offers a resonant theoretical backdrop here. In the book, Preciado looks at *Playboy* as an exemplary media and architectural project in which the domestic interior is reconfigured into a multimedia control board for pleasure and managed image production.¹ The homes of the *Housewives* are organized in much the same way: these spaces no longer function primarily as private homes but as filming environments in which intimacy is repeatedly enacted and operationalized. Preciado's account of continuous recording and replay helps to articulate the temporal structure in question: scenes are revisited, reframed, and reactivated across seasons, reunions, and online commentary. A similar logic also underlies Garçon's *bravo*: gestures return with slight variation, scenes remain unresolved, and anticipation is repeatedly deferred, producing a lingering sense of suspension that extends across both the performance evening and the project's duration as a whole.

Amid all this staging and relay, quieter elements appear. Several glasses filled with water sit on small shelves, caught in the spotlight, their shadows stretching across the wall – a gesture that directly references a work by artist Pope L. A sense of liminality enters the space, resonating with the conditions surrounding *bravo* itself: a work taking place and taking form, not quite as an exhibition in the usual sense. This occurs during a moment of institutional suspension and yet also of reorientation, as the Kunstverein remains in a building it was expected to temporarily vacate, while a change in directorship has already taken place. *bravo* stays within the tension where stage and set, intimacy and exposure, pleasure and unease fold into one another. The project inhabits the formats and media it borrows from, drawing visitors' attention to the fact that looking is never one-directional.

Curated by Gloria Hasnay
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¹ See Paul B. Preciado, *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics*, trans. Burton Pike (New York: Zone Books, 2014).