



Chris Dorland
Chrome Shelter
Museum gegenstandsfreier Kunst
June 28 - Oct 4

The **Museum gegenstandsfreier Kunst** presents *Chrome Shelter*, Chris Dorland's first institutional solo exhibition in Europe. The exhibition brings together key bodies of work from the past ten years alongside a video work developed specifically for the museum, offering a comprehensive view of an artistic practice that weaves together painting, digital image production, and contemporary media culture.

Chris Dorland (b. 1978, Montreal) lives and works in New York. He studied art at Dawson College in Montreal and painting at Purchase College (SUNY, New York). His works are held in major public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Bronx Museum, and the Neuberger Museum of Art. In 2024, he received the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award. Dorland's works draw on digital image fragments, scans, image compression, surveillance technologies, and algorithmic processes. Dorland constructs complex pictorial spaces in which painterly gesture, technical structure, and digital glitch converge. Rather than depicting a digital world, his paintings translate its conditions into material form. Situated between abstraction, fragmentation, and dissolution, they reflect both the promises of technological progress and its ruptures and failures.

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Chrome Shelter

At the heart of the exhibition lies the question: what traces do digital technologies, networks, and storage systems leave on the present — and what remains when their promises of progress, security, and control begin to erode?

The exhibition takes shape through an architectural design created specifically for the museum. Fragments of cut galvanized steel move through the rooms, dividing them into distinct zones. They read as technical components, server structures, shelters, prisons — remnants of an infrastructure whose original purpose is no longer legible.

Reflective surfaces multiply the space and pull visitors into the work. Images, architecture, and bodies overlap until the viewer becomes part of the installation. The supposed refuge of the “Shelter” offers no firm ground. Instead, it points to the fragility of the systems that surround us. Slightly corrugated wall surfaces distort and fragment these reflections further, deepening the instability.

Dorland’s works operate like fragments of a visual operating system — storing residue, glitches, memories, traces. They do not depict technology so much as probe its surfaces and aftereffects. The title holds two concepts in tension. “Chrome” evokes the gleaming promise of technology; “Shelter” suggests protection and retreat. In this exhibition, the two converge — and collapse. What once promised protection now reads as an empty shell. What suggested stability reveals itself as surface. The shelter reflects. But it no longer protects.

Chrome Shelter is conceived as a walk-in archive of that transitional zone.

Screenscapes

With the Screenscapes series, Dorland returns to painting on linen while continuing to work through the digital processes that have long defined his practice. Scanning, collecting, collaging, and digitally manipulating images remain central to his process, but these virtual image worlds are now rendered in thick, physical paint. Dorland explores the visual conditions of the digital age through an interplay of image data, software, algorithms, and painterly gesture. Digital fragments are gathered, layered, distorted, and at times processed with artificial intelligence, producing compositions that move between virtual image-making and material painting.

Architectural structures, digital grids, technical artifacts, and abstract forms accumulate across the canvases. Rather than focusing on individual motifs, the paintings examine how images are produced, circulated, and perceived today.

Characteristic of the series are the white overlays — “whiteouts” — that appear as interruptions within the image. They mark moments when information disappears or becomes unreadable, making visible the fact that even digital systems are subject to error, loss, and uncertainty. The *Screenscapes* do not depict a digital world — they behave like one. Information is stored, condensed, overwritten, and fragmented, reflecting a visual culture in constant flux.

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Room 1

With his early Alumacores, Chris Dorland began to explore digital image production as an artistic process. Starting from his own drawings and collages, he repeatedly scans, edits, layers, and reconstructs images before transferring them as UV prints onto aluminum composite

panels. Through this interplay of analog and digital processes, he develops a new abstract visual language.

The early works reveal an experimental investigation into memory, data processing, and digital image construction. Their lighter backgrounds make the layered process especially legible.

Room 2

Here, the Alumacores are brought into dialogue with reflective wall surfaces that capture light, color, and the works' glossy finishes, multiplying them across the space. Reflections overlap with the images, generating constantly shifting perspectives in which visitors become part of the installation.

These works demonstrate Dorland's increasingly complex visual language. Scanned fragments, digital glitches, and algorithmically generated structures merge into dense compositions whose reflective aluminum surfaces recall screens and displays. Rather than illustrating digital culture, they show how contemporary perception is shaped by it.

Room 3

In this room, the Alumacores are mounted on freestanding aluminum structures rather than directly on the wall, allowing them to function simultaneously as images, objects, and sculptural forms.

Created around the time of the exhibition *Synthetic Skin* (2019), these works explore the convergence of technology, body, and perception. Their metallic supports evoke technical devices and industrial architecture, while the pictorial spaces remain unstable and open-ended. The works occupy the intersection of digital image production and contemporary painting, holding fragments of a digital present already beginning to recede into history.

Between Rooms 4 & 5

Untitled (chrome shelter), the artist's largest video work to date is assembled from screenshots, digital image fragments, and repeatedly edited footage, condensed into a dense, multi-layered collage. Glitches, distortions, data fragments, and overlapping image layers generate a constantly shifting visual field in which image, text, and digital traces intertwine.

The approximately two-meter-high LED screen is integrated into the exhibition architecture as a sculptural object. Rather than functioning as a window onto a digital world, it becomes a material surface on which signals are layered, interrupted, and dissolved. Compression artifacts,

electronic interference, and image glitches lay bare the mechanics of digital transmission, transforming technological error into creative material.

The work serves as a moving counterpart to the Screenscrapes paintings. While the paintings condense digital image processes into static surfaces, the video unfolds as a continuous stream from which those painted moments seem to have been extracted.

The sound composition, developed in collaboration with Montréal-based composer Leon Louder, merges with the moving image to create an immersive environment that captures both the fascination and the fragility of contemporary digital communication.

Video

In his videos, Dorland brings digital communication together with abstract visual language. The starting point is a recording of his own smartphone screen — a kind of digital self-portrait. Fragments from social media platforms and livestreams overlap to form a layered digital collage. Distortions and overlays expose the codes, numbers, and data structures that ordinarily remain hidden within digital communication.

For Dorland, this invisible data constitutes a form of non-representational imagery: intangible, yet deeply influential in shaping contemporary visual culture. The work draws attention to both the seductive pull of social media and the quiet influence of digital algorithms on perception.