Group Material
June 05 – July 26, 2026
*Mr. Nobody*
curated by Emmelines

*Mr. Nobody* comprises multiple presentations of works, documentation, and ephemera by the artist collective Group Material (1979–1996). The exhibition unfolds across Emmelines, Okey Dokey Konrad Fischer, and Turquoise in New York, as well as Kaiserwache in Freiburg. Curated by Will Wiebe, director of Emmelines.

At Kaiserwache, *Mr. Nobody* inaugurates a new exhibition format that activates the building's protected exterior. Although the former public toilet is listed as a historic landmark, its facade protected to the extent that repainting it is prohibited, the building nonetheless bears the traces of constant public use, its surfaces repeatedly covered in graffiti. Positioned at the banks of the Dreisam river, a parking lot, and Kaiser-Joseph-Straße, one of Freiburg's main pedestrian routes into the city center, Kaiserwache is passed by hundreds of people each day, most of them unaware of the exhibitions taking place inside. The large boarded window facing south, the only surface allowing intervention on the facade, therefore becomes an interface between the activity within the space and the movements of the city outside.

For *Mr. Nobody*, a rotating selection of posters is installed on this wooden panel. The posters were originally produced for Group Material's *Demokratische Erhebung* (nGbK, Berlin, 1990) realised immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall and only months before German reunification. The project drew on 120 interviews conducted in Berlin and the United States around concepts such as freedom, nationalism, and xenophobia. Responses were presented on advertising surfaces throughout Berlin's subway stations.

Alongside the posters, Group Material published a pamphlet collecting all 120 interview statements. It was distributed as a newspaper insert in *Der Tagesspiegel* and included a reply card inviting readers to contribute their own responses, extending the project beyond the exhibition into the public sphere. An original copy of this newspaper insert is on view at Kaiserwache throughout the exhibition.

For Kaiserwache, four of these statements have been reproduced and adapted to the dimensions of the window panel. Significantly, the posters are presented without a date. Detached from their original historical moment, the concerns relevant in 1990—nationalism, xenophobia, and the rightward shift of political discourse—resonate with unsettling immediacy today.

Within the context of *Mr. Nobody*, the posters return to the German public sphere, where they once again seek to provoke discussion among passers-by. That one of the posters has already been torn down by an unknown person only underscores that these questions remain unresolved, and that the work continues to operate within the contested space of public discourse.

Kaiserwache Kaiser-Joseph-Straße 286, 79098 Freiburg im Breisgau Visitation by appointment. info@kaiserwache.com www.kaiserwache.com

English translation of Poster 1

Germany is powerful, somehow aggressive, and is the economic leader in the whole world and is geared to wanting more, which is carried out in an aggressive way, if need be, and I figure things will turn out that way. Conservatism is on the rise because people are stupid and they can only see as far as their own nose. They see that a bunch of people propagated Marxism and Leninism and they mix up the teachings with the teachers. But that isn't the case because those people were right-wing themselves, they were fascists. But they don't comprehend that. And that's why people are now thinking that they're "done with all that red communism. Now we want to have a little nationalism and a little conservatism." Pretty stupid.

Welfare recipient, West Berlin

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English translation of Poster 2

Some Latinos may come to the United States because of economic or political reasons, from Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador. I think their economic crisis is related to the political situation... I think the U.S. has a very partial immigration law. It affects me and other people just because of the way we look. Even though some Latinos were born in this country, there's discrimination. They go for a job and the employer automatically assumes that these people are illegal. So it's like you need to be white and blonde so they don't question you. Once they see you have dark hair, brown eyes, dark skin, they say, "Yeah, maybe this person is not an American citizen."

Carpenter, New York

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English translation of Poster 3

I do not like the feeling in the country at the present. And it is totally against my beliefs to see an entire nation turn inwards. Suddenly nothing seems to be of any importance if it has not to do with Germany, the opening of the borders or at least the development in Eastern Europe. I do not believe that it is healthy for a people as well as a person to ignore that there is an outside world that is at least as important as their own limited sphere. Germans, as probably most Europeans, have always been rather egotistic, now they are egocentric as well.

Secretary, Aachen

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English translation of Poster 4

The ego of most West Germans is based on their economic situation and the fact that probably in no other country in the world do simple folk live so well. The idea just occurs to me that the safest way of ensuring that never again a war will be started on German soil is to make sure that the Germans always live a little better than their neighbors, thus they do not seek to assert their own worth in military exploits.

Taxi driver, Kassel

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