

bitforms gallery

Addie Wagenknecht

Alone Together

January 5 – February 17, 2018

Opening reception: Friday January 5, 6 – 8 PM

Gallery hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM & Sunday, 12 – 6 PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to announce *Alone Together*, Addie Wagenknecht's second solo exhibition with the gallery, which features a new series of paintings rendered in International Klein Blue pigment. The works speak to the artist's longtime preoccupation with gendered labor, power structures, and technology. The title of the exhibition, *Alone Together*, refers to the book by technology and society specialist, Sherry Turkle.

Wagenknecht's latest paintings expand upon themes in the artist's prior series *Black Hawk Paint* (2008- current) and *Internet of Things* (2015), exploring dynamic action painting with small-scale drone aircraft and networked functionality using Roomba-based sculptures and wifi hardware that respond or jam networks within the space.

The Roomba is a product line of autonomous robotic vacuum cleaners sold as household consumer devices by a corporation focused on military defense technology called iRobot. Roombas have become cultural emblems of the Internet of Things, a network of physical devices embedded with electronics, software, and sensors which enable these objects to connect and exchange data. They are marketed and anthropomorphized as friendly domestic assistants, masking their nefarious associations with big data and surveillance. Though intended to alleviate the burden of domestic labor, the robots often have an adverse impact by requiring constant cleaning, assistance and maintenance.

To create the works in this exhibition, Wagenknecht modified a Roomba to paint on canvas as it enacts its preprogrammed algorithm intended to clean. As the Roomba maneuvers around the canvas, Wagenknecht reclines nude. The Roomba relentlessly attempts to navigate around her body because it is designed to continue on a trajectory until the entire area has been mapped by its algorithm. The result is a void in the shape of a female form surrounded by the blue strokes of the robot.

The paintings reference Yves Klein's *Anthropométries* in which he directs nude female models, who he referred to as "living paintbrushes," to press their pigment-covered bodies against canvases in front of an audience. In contrast, Wagenknecht abandons the spectacle of the objectified female nude in favor of drawing attention to what is absent. There is no performance or process documentation on display and the female form is only acknowledged in the negative space of the paintings.

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Addie Wagenknecht (b.1981, Portland, OR) is an American artist based in Austria whose work explores the tension between expression and technology. Wagenknecht's work contemplates power, networked consciousness, and the incessant beauty of everyday life despite being surveilled.

Wagenknecht's work has been exhibited internationally, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Phillips, New York; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Haus der elektronischen Künste (HeK), Basel; MU, Eindhoven; the Istanbul Biennial, Turkey; MuseumsQuartier, Vienna; Grey Area Foundation for the Arts, San Francisco; Gaîté Lyrique, Paris; Beit Ha'ir Museum, Tel Aviv. In 2017 she was commissioned by the Whitney Museum of New York for the piece Believe me which examines the status of truth and reality in the current political climate. Her work has been featured in TIME, The Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Art in America, Vanity Fair, and The Economist.

Wagenknecht holds a Masters from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and a BS in Computer Science from the University of Oregon.

Founded in 2001, bitforms gallery represents established, mid-career, and emerging artists critically engaged with new technologies. Spanning the rich history of media art through its current developments, the gallery's program offers an incisive perspective on the fields of digital, internet, time-based, and new media art forms.

For images and more information on the exhibit, please visit www.bitforms.com.

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