

bitforms gallery

Addie Wagenknecht, *every day the same again*
October 16–November 13, 2021

Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11 AM–6 PM

Opening reception: Saturday, October 16, 4–6 PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to present *every day the same again*, Addie Wagenknecht's third solo exhibition. Wagenknecht frequently repurposes systems with an ethos of hacker culture, usurping materials—such as cosmetics, surveillance devices, Roombas, and pharmaceuticals—of their inherent function to encourage the tension between expression and the programmed role of devices. The artist has long examined elements of visibility and identity, and in the continuing tide of Covid-19 she positions this exhibition as an inquiry towards America as both a foreigner and a citizen. The pandemic acts as a lens and guiding structure for Wagenknecht's studies from across the Atlantic.

American Flag 1–3 is a sterile installation of three pedestals mounted with archival paper. Above each plinth, ink slowly drips from IVs. Over time, this performance reveals an abstracted image as red ink pools and cascades into blue puddles. Negative space completes the configuration, an inky rendering of the American flag. Jasper Johns' seminal flag paintings, in particular *Three Flags* (1958), served as great inspiration to Wagenknecht during this period of study. Nested inside one another, Johns' composition highlights the structure of the flag as an object as well as a national emblem. Wagenknecht echoes this approach by favoring process over end result, refiguring America drop by drop.

The exhibition continues online with a series of videos prompted by the artist's 2017 web-based work, *Believe Me*. Inspired by Donald Trump's most spoken words of that year, the interactive piece simulates the fractured viewpoint of browsing images on a shattered smartphone screen. *Believe Me 1.2–1.4* implements the American flag as a source image. Throughout each video sections of stars and stripes flicker, splinter, and rearrange in a procedure that personifies Wagenknecht's current consideration of the United States. *every day the same again* extends the artist's investigation of the flag as a totem of the American Dream and its shattered utopias. She writes:

“Like a cracked screen, we often view the world via and by it for months or years before we ever bother to try to fix it. America is hard to see, and as an artist, I think you need this constant sense of being able to escape and vanish and feel. People always ask me where I consider home. Home, like America, is a complicated word. I have spent the last 5 years looking at America and trying to figure out how to renegotiate it: science is no longer considered fact, feelings have become politicized, colors have become politicized, everything has become a weapon. Even existing online—the private is public and the public is private and everything is political.”

Believe Me 1.2–1.4 are minted with NFTs (non-fungible tokens) to signify the artwork's blockchain certification. Each token's permanence marks an immutable moment, in this case commemorating the artist's ruptured view of the United States. This memorial sharply contrasts the display of ephemeral works on paper, which are given the chance to evolve. As arteries of pigment commingle in *American Flag 1–3*, blended colors dry in poetic figuration. What America may look like at first, disparate tracks of red and blue, assemble into an aggregate landscape.

bitforms gallery

b.1981, Portland, OR

Lives and works in Austria

Addie Wagenknecht is an American artist based in Austria whose work explores the tension between expression and technology. Blending conceptually driven painting, sculpture, and installation with the ethos of hacker culture, Wagenknecht constructs spaces between art object and lived experience. Here, the darker side of systems that constitute lived reality emerge, revealing alternative yet parallel realities. In the context of post-Snowden information culture, Wagenknecht's work contemplates power, networked consciousness, and the incessant beauty of everyday life despite the anxiety of being surveilled.

A member of Free Art & Technology (F.A.T.) Lab, Wagenknecht was the recipient of a 2014 Warhol Foundation Grant, which she used to found Deep Lab, a collaborative group of researchers, artists, writers, engineers, and cultural producers interested in privacy, surveillance, code, art, social hacking, and anonymity. As an active leader in the open source hardware movement, she also co-founded NORTD Labs, an international research and development collaborative with Stefan Hechenberger, which produces open source projects that have been used and built by millions worldwide.

Wagenknecht's work has been exhibited internationally, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Phillips, New York, NY; LEAP, Berlin, Germany; Haus der elektronischen Künste (HeK), Basel, Switzerland; MU, Eindhoven, The Netherlands; the Istanbul Biennial, Turkey; MuseumsQuartier, Vienna, Austria; Grey Area Foundation for the Arts, San Francisco, CA; Gaîté Lyrique, Paris, France; Beit Ha'ir Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel; and many festivals such as GLI.TC/H and the Nooderlicht Photography Festival. Her work has been featured in TIME, The Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, Art in America, Vanity Fair, BUST, Vice, and The Economist. Past residencies have included Eyebeam Art + Technology Center, New York, NY; Culture Lab at Newcastle University, UK; HyperWerk Institute for Postindustrial Design, Basel, Switzerland; and the Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA. Presently chair of the MIT Open Hardware Summit, Wagenknecht holds a Masters from the Interactive Telecommunications Program at New York University and a BS in Computer Science from the University of Oregon.