Ryan Kuo
The Pointer
June 7 – July 22, 2018

Opening reception: Thursday June 7, 6 – 8 PM
Gallery hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM & Sunday, 12 – 6 PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to present *The Pointer*, an exhibition by Ryan Kuo on the construct of whiteness and its involvement in technological aesthetics and productivity.

Kuo has developed three new software works for the bitforms gallery office, which for the first time will host a commissioned artist project. The Pointer is the illogical figure of whiteness, which American philosopher George Yancy describes as a "structural, ideological, embodied, epistemological and phenomenological mode of being." Because its ascendancy is predicated on such notions as universality, neutrality, and purity, whiteness must isolate and obliterate barriers to its ideals while disavowing its own position. This also informs how software interfaces have come to be understood and used.

These interrelated works consider whiteness as an unremitting affective failure that erases bodies, including its own, in its search for a neutral point of origin. Rather than prescribe an answer, Kuo aims to materialize whiteness by redirecting its failure into recursive sequences, systems, and spaces.

File: A Primer is a kiosk animation created using Keynote's built-in tools for automating digital presentations. In an austere looping sequence, boxes unfold from boxes as text annotations sift through the racialized messaging of white surfaces drawn against black. Taking inspiration from instructional manuals and online webinars, *File: A Primer* is a new manifestation of Kuo's online work *File*, which documents processes by which the contemporary artist-worker is defined and redefined by abstract forces such as the user and the market.

OK. is a macOS application inspired by System Preferences and named for the "OK" button, ubiquitous in operating systems, that we click to repeatedly affirm our intent and deny interruptions to our usage. The application revolves around an interactive database of terms that outline a continuum between white innocence and white supremacy. While the user navigates these terms, popup windows materialize a body shifting to align with its thought patterns. On the occasion of its premiere at bitforms, a limited edition of software boxes containing the program and an accompanying cheat sheet will be available through the gallery. The software box and printed insert extrude the theme of ideological thinness into physical space, while the application's egg icon refers to insulation, fragility, and the default Twitter avatar that once hid the collective identity of the world's trolls.

I Don't See It, a site-specific work continuously generated by a video-game engine, is displayed on the presentation monitor in the Director's office. It houses a digital re-creation of the bitforms office in which multiple virtual cameras scan and roam the environment, interrupting and intensifying one another. The computer not only activates this self-surveilling network of eyes, but also includes the physical observer on the couch, whose viewing position is echoed on the television, and on the television in the television, tunneling ever inward and outward. The work's endless seeking of a better view simulates the movements of the Pointer, who resembles a dog chasing its own tail.

These are not acts of resistance so much as renderings of the elaborate contortions needed to assimilate into whiteness. As such, they might be taken as an admission of the artist's complicity.

Ryan Kuo creates work that is process-based and diagrammatic, utilizing techniques from video games, productivity software, web design, motion graphics, and sampling. It tends to invoke a person or people arguing.

His work has been featured in Rhizome, and was recently acquired by the Current Museum of Art. Works and writing have also appeared at Luminor Hôtel de Ville (Paris), Spike Art Quarterly (Berlin), Goldsmiths (London), Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts (Cambridge, MA), and MIT Media Lab (Cambridge, MA). He was a participant at Residency Unlimited (NYC) in 2017 and is currently based in the Queens Museum Studio Program.

Kuo received a Master of Science in Art, Culture and Technology from MIT in 2014.

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.

For publicity requests, please contact info@bitforms.com or call (212) 366-6939.