

Press Release

Poetics of Encryption

17 Feb – 26 May 2024

Berlin, 17 January 2024

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to present its Spring Program 2024 with the extensive group exhibition *Poetics of Encryption*. As part of the *KW Digital Program* the exhibition spans analogue and digital media featuring historic and newly commissioned works over all floors at KW by more than 40 international artists.

The **press preview** will take place on 16 February 2024, 11 am.



Trevor Paglen, *Because Physical Wounds Heal...*, 2023. Courtesy of the artist, Altman Siegel, San Francisco and Pace Gallery © the artist

Though we rely on digital tools for many things, we rarely understand how they work. Moreover, due to the proprietary nature of much corporate tech, even the most curious among us cannot gain deeper insight. Today, we are forced to come to terms with our relative lack of power in the face of inscrutable systems. What symptoms of this personal and political drama register in the cultural field? What moods, symbols, or narrative frames capture the aesthetics and politics of exclusion, occlusion, secrecy, and speculation concerning technology's *inside*? *Poetics of Encryption* builds upon the recent book by Nadim Samman titled *Poetics of Encryption: Art and the Technocene*. It surveys an imaginative landscape marked by *Black Sites*, *Black Boxes*, and *Black Holes*—terms that indicate how technical systems capture users, how they work in stealth, and how they distort cultural space-time. These themes form the basis for three chapters that play out across all gallery floors at KW.

Featuring artists of the exhibition: **Nora Al-Badri**, **Morehshin Allahyari***, **American—Artist***, **Emmanuel Van der Auwera**, **Gillian Brett**, **Émilie Brout & Maxime Marion**, **Juliana Cerqueira Leite**, **Julian Charrière**, **Joshua Citarella**, **Clusterduck**, **Juan Covelli**, **Kate Crawford**, **Sterling Crispin**, **Simon Denny**, **enorê**, **Roger Hiorns**, **Tilman Hornig**, **Rindon Johnson**, **Vladan Joler**, **Daniel Keller**, **Andrea Khôra**, **Jonna Kina**, **Oliver Laric**, **Eva & Franco Mattes**, **Jürgen Mayer H.**, **Most Dismal Swamp**, **NEW MODELS**, **Carsten Nicolai**, **Simone C Niquille**, **Trevor Paglen**, **Matthias Planitzer**, **Jon Rafman**, **Rachel Rossin**, **Sebastian Schmieg**, **Charles Stankievech**, **Troika**, **UBERMORGEN**, **Nico Vascellari**, **Zheng Mahler**, among others. The exhibition architecture has been made in collaboration with **Jürgen Mayer H. / J. MAYER H. and partners, architects**.

Poetics of Encryption is a year-long program in 2023–2024, supported by Volkswagen Group. It is elaborated through the publication, a website featuring three 'web-first' artistic commissions by **Most Dismal Swamp**, **UBERMORGEN** and **Zheng Mahler** and a conference in 2023. The dedicated website-as-catalogue also features rich media, and a bespoke AI chatbot. The project culminates in the group exhibition on-site at KW in spring 2024. See poeticsofencryption.kw-berlin.de

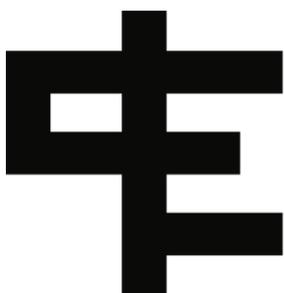
Benita von Maltzahn, Head of Volkswagen Group Cultural Engagement: *"We are proud to support the Digital Program of KW and the exhibition Poetics of Encryption, as we want to give people the opportunity to experience the extensive possibilities of digitalization. How do artists use new technologies, and can we learn from them? Digitalization and AI do not only transform us at Volkswagen, but shape everybody's lives. We are excited to share this journey and exchange with KW and all artists participating in the exhibition."*

Krist Gruijthuijsen, Director of KW: *"KW sits at the intersection of virtual and material domains, and the creative use of emerging technologies. Exploring, criticizing, or reinventing this space through art is a key issue for the KW Digital Program. With Poetics of Encryption KW aims to introduce new perspectives on this digital landscape. Showcasing over 40 artists we seek to further stimulate conversations and reflections and to continue shaping our digitized future together."*

Curator: Nadim Samman

Assistant Curator: Linda Franken

Curatorial Assistant: Lara Scherrieble



POETICS OF
ENCRYPTION

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VOLKSWAGEN GROUP

The exhibition *Poetics of Encryption* is supported by Apalazzo, Blessed Foundation, max goelitz, Harlan Levey Projects, and Sprüth Magers. The exhibition is initiated by KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, and a new iteration will be shown at Kunsthal Charlottenborg in Copenhagen in late 2024.

Media partners



*The artists, whose names are crossed-out, have chosen to strike against German State-funded institutions and therefore withdraw their participation from the exhibition.