

KW

Adam Pendleton

24 February – 14 May 17



Adam Pendleton

shot him in the face

24 February – 14 May 2017

Opening: 23 February, 7 pm

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to present the first German institutional solo show by American artist Adam Pendleton (born 1984, US).

Pendleton's practice interweaves the language of politics, history, and display as a way of confronting the *past* and *present*. Through the use of complex systematic structures his work undercuts the ingrained perception and representation of social history. His work moves fluidly between paintings, wall-based installations, photographic collage, video, performance, and publishing.

Through collage, layering, and repetition, Pendleton recontextualizes his subjects, prompting the viewer to recognize and reconsider familiar cultural references.

The artist's largest project to date is inspired by a poem by the American writer LeRoi Jones (1934–2014, also known as Amiri Baraka) titled *Black Dada Nihilismus*, which was written in 1964. Through the use of provocative language and the merging of high and low cultural references, Baraka critiques linear representations of African-Americans by creating a space for new artistic, personal, and social possibilities.

Begun in 2008, this ongoing project has taken several forms, varying from large, abstract textual silkscreen paintings to Pendleton's forthcoming publication

Black Dada Reader. With roots extending back to the disobedient nature of the Dada avant-garde, the project shares Dadaism's concern with language and aims at breaking it away from its "inherent logic." Through the use of emblematic works such as Sol Le Witt's *Variations of Incomplete Open Cubes* (1974) in his *Black Dada* paintings, Pendleton insists on questioning the cartographies of the Western art discourse and their capacity to effect real political change.

Pendleton's exhibition *shot him in the face* occupies the entire third floor of KW. The presentation uses the poem *Albany* by American poet Ron Silliman (born 1946, US) as its starting point. Written in 1979/80, *Albany* is a long prose paragraph made up of one hundred "new sentences," to use Ron Silliman's own term. The "new sentence" is conceived as an independent unit, neither causally nor temporally related to the sentences that precede and follow it. Like a line in poetry, its length is operative, and its meaning depends on the larger paragraph as an organizing system. Silliman is known for his deconstructed poems in which pun, paradigm, and sound form larger paragraph units that juxtapose autobiographical elements with larger political issues.

Pendleton appropriates the first sentence of Silliman's poem, "If the function of writing is to 'express the world'", which he incorporates into a Wall Work (an immersive floor to ceiling work based on photographic and text-based collages), that spans the entirety of a constructed wall bisecting the space. As in previous installations, layers are built in order to disrupt the readability of the text. The various constellations consisting of one and two-dimensional collages and

silkscreens on Mylar are based on Pendleton's extensive archival material, which he continuously reconsiders and reworks through reuse and cropping.

This installation invokes multiple sources, such as sentences from Silliman's poems ("A woman on the train asks Angela Davis for an autograph" or "Grandfather called them niggers"), images of a Dada dancer from 1916, an installation shot from the first documenta featuring the work by Picasso, a couple dancing during the independence celebration of Congo, and a reference to a speech by Malcolm X.

After Hanne Lippard, Pendleton is the second artist in the season to respond to the work of Ian Wilson (born 1940 in Durban, ZA) by incorporating one of the artist's monochrome paintings into his exhibition. Placed on the back of the wall, Pendleton juxtaposes one of his *Black Dada* paintings with Wilson's *Red Rectangle*, originally dating from 1966. Wilson's early artistic explorations took place entirely in monochrome, at a time when he was absorbed with questions relating to perception and painting. The works of this period are indebted to the innovations of Minimal Art from the late 1950s and early 1960s and its distillation of painting to the point of nonrepresentational self-reflectivity. Three stained canvases by Wilson from 1966 presage the artist's subsequent all-consuming interest in discovering what might be described, quite literally, as "nonobjective" art—an art that is without visible or tangible materiality. The original four paintings were lost or damaged, but they were reconstructed in 2008 by Belgian artist Pieter Vermeersch (born 1973 in Kortrijk, BE) under the auspices of Wilson's gallerist, Jan Mot in Brussels.



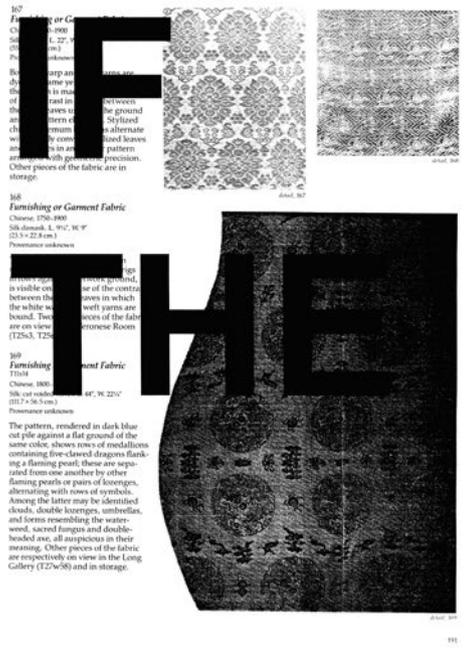
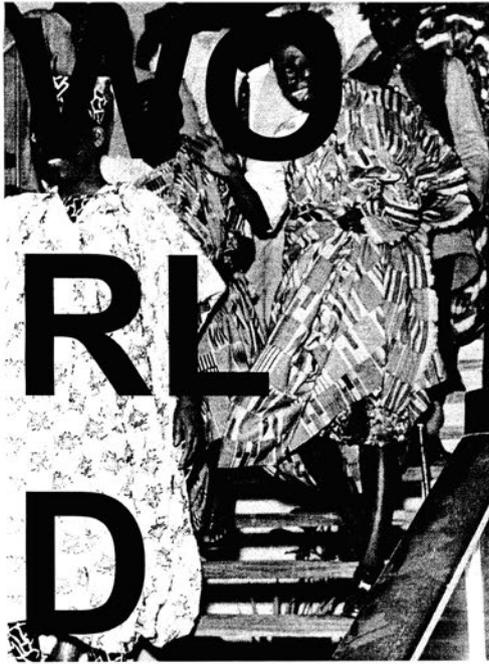
Urnith included plams, bows and dishes (the most common use of the wood and I think which were quite plentiful in the region of Mandelaland at the beginning of this century. Other local items included spears, ladders, mortars and pestles. Wooden mortars and pestles and stone grinding stones were used for pounding and grinding into flour, and peanuts were crushed into butter.

Other common vessels, carved in a similar fashion to the mortar, was the milk pail, which was used by the milk men (in Ndebele culture the milking of cattle was a male occupation) and was therefore found in every homestead. These wooden cylinders were carved with two small lugs on either side, to help the milkier get a firm grip on the pail as he held it between his knees. Wooden stools were also carved and they often were so low that they could double as a bedstead.

With the introduction of the plough and the use of cattle as draught animals at the beginning of the twentieth century came the use of wooden yokes, carts and sleds upon which the Ndebele used their finest woodworking skills and extensive finishing touches. Indeed wood provided ample space for artistic creativity because of its softness: it could be shaped in any manner that appealed to the imagination of the woodworker and could be engraved with patterns, representations and motifs fancied by him. The preferred areas for such artistic decorations were the handles of cooking spoons, stools, milking sticks, bushmen tactics with large knobs on one end which were used as weapons), headrests, and other common household



Adam Pendleton, *IF THE FUNCTION OF WRITING*, detail, 2017
 Courtesy the artist, and Galeria Pedro Cera, Lisbon



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Opening Hours
Wednesday–Monday 11 am–7 pm
Thursday 11 am–9 pm
Closed on Tuesday

Admission
8 €, reduced 6 €
Annual Ticket – KW Lover* 50 €, reduced 35 €
Admission free on Thursday evening from 6–9 pm and every first Sunday of the month

Guided Tours
KW offers free guided tours through the exhibitions during regular opening hours. For further information on tours for large groups (over 10 people), please contact Katja Zeidler, kaz@kw-berlin.de or +49 30 243459-41.

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BALTIC

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