

PRESS RELEASE

Adam Pendleton
Adam Pendleton: Toy Soldier

September 10 – November 26, 2022
Opening on Friday, September 9, 6 – 8 pm
Maag Areal, Zahnradstr. 21, CH-8005 Zurich

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *Adam Pendleton: Toy Soldier*, the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery. Featuring new work, including three paintings, five collages, and a video, the exhibition is on view concurrently with *Adam Pendleton: In Abstraction* at Pace Gallery, Geneva. Together the two exhibitions speak to the range of his practice.

Adam Pendleton: Toy Soldier, installed in three black-box spaces, integrates multiple ongoing flows of writing and reading. In a new set of small collages, Pendleton combines geometric forms—circles and triangles—with metallic sprays, drips, and other shapes, conducting an improvisatory play of shadow and muted light. Opaque black cut-outs dance across the foreground of each work. Spray-painted gestures, here rendered in silver and obscured to near illegibility, create a through line with the spray-painted text of the *Untitled (WE ARE NOT)* paintings, in which a single phrase, "WE ARE NOT", explodes into fields of combinatory language, filtered and modulated by overlapping lines that form ovals, triangles, and quadrilaterals.

Toy Soldier (Notes on Robert E. Lee, Richmond, Virginia/Strobe) (2021–22), the video work at the center of the exhibition, performs both a close reading and a transformation of its subject, a 19th-century equestrian statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee that stood from 1890 to 2021 in Richmond, Virginia, USA. Spotlights move at various speeds across the statue and its graffiti-covered plinth, extracting sections of text—almost in counterpoint with the black shapes that pass over the grounds of the collages. The *Untitled (WE ARE NOT)* paintings reveal and obscure their own text, with overprinted whites and blacks forming unpredictable regions of luminosity and darkness that resonate with the roving circles and flashes of light punctuating *Toy Soldier (Notes on Robert E. Lee, Richmond, Virginia/Strobe)*.

The temporal zone of this video work is stroboscopic, somewhere between motion and stillness. The images rapidly flicker to absolute black and shuttle between enlarged, grainy footage of the general and his horse set against a cloudless sky, the surrounding foliage, and the Richmond night. A score by Hahn Rowe interweaves the stuttering, digitally distorted voice of Amiri Baraka—from a 1980 reading of his poem "Dope"—with moments of orchestrated woodwinds, strings, and percussion. Several distinct sets of movements and perspectives are repeatedly broken down, reconstituted, and reversed. Archival photographs briefly display the monument's scaffolding as well as its 1890 unveiling: horse and rider shrouded in cloth, unrecognizable. Into this tone poem Pendleton also inserts a new figure: an actor standing impassively in front of the structure, silhouetted, ghostly, and often barely visible.

As in the collages and paintings, the operations employed here continuously display new aspects of the material at hand while writing, rewriting, and overwriting it. *Toy Soldier (Notes on Robert E. Lee, Richmond, Virginia/Strobe)* develops as a palimpsest in motion, one that confronts the "default geometries" with other modes of abstraction and representation, with other pasts, futures, and aftermaths.

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER

Adam Pendleton was born in 1984 in Richmond, VA, US, and lives and works in New York, NY, US. Pendleton has been the subject of major solo exhibitions including *These Things We've Done Together*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, CA (2022); *Who Is Queen?*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, US (2021); *Elements of Me*, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA, US (2020); *Adam Pendleton*, Le Consortium, Dijon, FR (2020); *List Projects: Adam Pendleton*, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Boston, MA, US (2018); *shot him in the face*, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, DE (traveled to Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK) (2017); *Front Room: Adam Pendleton*, Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD, US (2017); *Becoming Imperceptible*, Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, LA, US (traveled to Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, CO, US, and MOCA Cleveland, OH, US) (2016–17). Pendleton was included in the Whitney Biennial 2022: *Quiet as It's Kept*, co-curated by David Breslin, DeMartini Family Curator and Director of Curatorial Initiatives, and Adrienne Edwards, Engell Speyer Family Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs.

For further information, please contact Andreas Grimm (a.grimm@presenhuber.com) or Daria Faerber (d.fauber@presenhuber.com).

For press images and information, please contact David Ulrichs PR (press@presenhuber.com, +49 176 5033 0135).