

*What Continues*

Clémentine Adou, Kevin Jerome Everson,  
Hemansingh Lutchmun  
5 Apr–18 May 2025

Terms like disruption, crisis and catastrophe are used to describe the present as a time of upheaval. In the face of deep ruptures, however, we can lose sight of the continuities that shape day-to-day experiences, through which institutions, social structures and power relations are stabilised and reproduced. Because alongside the disruption and rupture, there is all that continues; that which persists despite the change, maintains its efficacy and in many cases still determines a large part of what we call 'everyday life.' Whose everyday? Depending on social position, socio-economic conditions, ascriptions and affiliations, experiences of access or exclusion, privilege or discrimination, what one understands as 'everyday life' will differ fundamentally. It is precisely such relativities of position and perspective that reveal firmly-anchored social structures and inequalities, which, in spite of many upheavals, have proven to be relatively stable.

The exhibition *What Continues* looks at continuities—at routines, workflows, habits and rituals. They are at once embedded in and prerequisites for social orders, that are furthermore reflected in visual relationships: in what ways are supposedly uninvolved observers entangled in violent continuities?

Save for a passageway to one side, the entrance to the exhibition hall is blocked by Clémentine Adou's work *Red dots, red noses, red noses, red dots* (2024). The artist creates absurd sculptures from everyday objects and materials often found in public spaces. The metal spokes turn continuously on their own axis, one at a fast, nervous pace, the others more slowly, as if it were an immense effort on the part of an exhausted mechanism to keep functioning. As the impaled clown's noses slide, they disturb the spinning motion, causing short uncontrolled twitches. Adou's use of red dots, which she also uses as a sculptural element in other spatial installations, is initially rooted in their signalling function, in the way they interrupt the perception of space, draw the eye and demand attention.

By upsetting existing orders, breaking the rules, expressing criticism and channelling dissatisfaction, the figure of the clown fulfils a cathartic function. In proximity to power, the fool enjoys the privilege of being permitted to speak the truth—at the cost of not being taken seriously. In neoliberalism, with the demand for flexibility, creativity and non-conformity, breaking the rules has long since become a basic requirement for the “entrepreneurial self.”<sup>1</sup> While breaking with convention was once the revolutionary aspiration of the artistic avant-gardes, disruption—understood as the interruption, upheaval and destruction of existing markets and technologies—has more recently become a ubiquitous guiding principle of entrepreneurship with the rise of Silicon Valley tech companies. Meanwhile, disruption has developed into a governing technology favoured within right-wing populist authoritarianism, which has the declared goal of restoring a past that never existed,

but which is invoked in the defence of existing privileges. Even if headed for catastrophe, permanent upheaval is necessary so that the machine does not stall, so that everything can remain as it is.<sup>2</sup>

Kevin Jerome Everson's experimental films often focus on the social and economic living conditions of Black Americans, while at the same time reflecting on visual relationships and the cinematic apparatus. In an interview, Everson talks about what prompted him to work in the medium of film. The artist was interested in capturing small routines and gestures to show how repetition changes the body: “Previously, I had been making all these kinds of sculptural objects. But I realized that if I showed these routines and gestures on film, maybe the viewer can imagine them happening over and over again and physically transforming the person.”<sup>3</sup>

Everson's black-and-white film *Sanfield* (2020) is part of a series of his works dedicated to the working lives of African Americans in the US Army. The civil service, as well as the US Army, are important areas of work for Black Americans, who continue to be structurally disadvantaged in the labour market<sup>4</sup> and are disproportionately represented in the US Army.<sup>5</sup> The film shows monotonous routines, exercises and protocols at a US Air Force base and training centre in Columbus, Mississippi. Aeroplanes are inspected, a parachute is checked, an air traffic controller looks through binoculars. It isn't always possible to make sense of the action shown, further defamiliarised by the abstract visual language. The film is structured by the recurring scene of a young pilot taking a vertigo test as part of his flight training. He performs various exercises while his body is rotated, first slowly, then faster, around in circles.

Clémentine Adou's works illuminate mechanisms of consumption, spectacle and control. One source of inspiration for the sculptures shown in the exhibition were videos Adou recorded on her phone over several years,

showing Christmas window displays at the Parisian department stores Galeries Lafayette and Printemps, which she brought together in the video work *Xmas* (2019–24). Every year during the Christmas shopping period, these long-standing emporiums attempt to outdo each other with spectacular window displays, which not only draw in tourists, but also, for example, offer free entertainment for families with children. The scenes, elaborately staged with animated puppets, look like they might allow us to catch a glimpse of capitalism dreaming, as if, here, capitalism's unconscious rises to the surface. In one sequence, the camera pans over the complicated mechanics behind the animation. How do these productions work? What means do they use to capture attention and what do they do to their audience? What are they telling us? Whom and what purpose do they serve?

In addition to the Christmas shop window displays, seeing the use of words like 'manipulate,' 'guide,' 'steer' and 'control' in a textbook on puppetry inspired Adou to construct the sculptures *Daddy long legs' hands* (2023–25). They are abstract structures that merely hint at a sense of corporeality. Following the lead of the charged title,<sup>6</sup> the structures can be seen as hands, i.e. as the limbs from which control emanates in the puppet show, but which here appear puppet-like themselves. The unstable and fragile constructions elude control in the production process and, even when motionless, appear as if they could lose their balance or collapse in on themselves at any moment.

Hemansingh Lutchmun works with sculptural objects and time-based media. In his practice, he examines social realities in relation to labour, exploitation and uprooting. His video *Can you take care of my plants when I'm away.* (2025) was recorded in the gardens of the Chateau de Labourdonnais, a colonial house built in the mid-19th century on a sugar cane plantation in Mauritius. Owned to this day by the same family, the chateau is now a museum and a popular destination for predominantly European tourists. In the video, Lutchmun traces his own family history across

the social and historical coordinates of the location. While the visual sequences mainly show workers tending the extensive gardens, the soundtrack features a conversation between the artist and his mother, who works in a clinic on the estate. Firstly, they talk about Hindu rituals, which have been handed down through the family only as fragments, and then about reincarnation, which can be understood as a cyclical system of repetition and return. Finally, Lutchmun questions his mother about class and race relations, about social access and barriers in her place of work.

The video is complemented by Lutchmun's installation *Arms for Legs (Plantation Chair, 1834–1920)* (2024), which is presented in the entrance area of the encircling balcony on the first floor. In an act of reappropriation, the plantation chair, with its elongated arms to serve as a footrest for colonial masters, becomes a historical testimony to the craftsmanship of those who made the chair and who belonged to the same ethnic group as the artist's ancestors; who were brought to Mauritius from India in the 19th century under British colonial rule as indentured labourers. On a wooden terrace taken from the Kunstverein's roof terrace, which is not open to the public, the chair faces away from viewers and access is cut off by a wire rope.

The exhibition concludes with Kevin Jerome Everson's new short film *The Wood \ and the Bobwhite Quail* (2025), which is presented in one of the Kunstverein's basement rooms. With footage of birdwatchers in Washington, D.C. and Tennessee, Everson continues his series of short films showing people observing birds each assigned to a US state as a 'state bird.' Everson combines the images with takes of the P-Funk Mothership that he recorded at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C. The film is accompanied by a psychedelic funk interpretation of the spiritual *Swing Down Sweet Chariot* by Parliament-Funkadelic. The band collective led by George Clinton created the speculative

P-Funk mythology in the 1970s, making it a foundational current of Afrofuturism. A highlight of the Parliament-Funkadelic concerts was the P-Funk Mothership landing. Fired up by guitarist Gleen Goins, the band and the audience would repeat the mantra-like refrain “Swing down, sweet chariot. Stop, and let me ride,” which intensified with the exclamation “I see the Mothership coming!” and finally culminated in the spaceship landing on stage accompanied by fireworks.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ulrich Bröckling, *Das unternehmerische Selbst* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ulrich Bröckling, “Disruption” in: id. (ed.), *Glossar der Gegenwart 2.0* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2024), 129 et seqq.

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Jerome Everson in: “Recovery. A conversation with Kevin Jerome Everson by Uli Ziemons,” e-flux, 24.04.2023, accessed 31.03.2025

<https://www.e-flux.com/film/525877/recovery/>

<sup>4</sup> Valerie Wilson, William Darity Jr., “Understanding black-white disparities in labor market outcomes requires models that account for persistent discrimination and unequal bargaining power,” Economic Policy Institute, 25.03.2025, accessed 31.03.2025

<https://www.epi.org/unequalpower/publications/understanding-black-white-disparities-in-labor-market-outcomes/>

<sup>5</sup> In 2020, the proportion of Black Americans in the US Army was 16.8%, compared to 12.4% of the US population. Cf. USA Department of Defence (ed.), *2020 Demographics. Profile of the Military Community*, Military One Source, USA Department of Defence, 2020, 7, accessed 31.03.2025 <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Reports/2020-demographics-report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> ‘Daddy longlegs’ is an English term for a long-legged spider or fly, which, however, references the concept of the father and thus also concepts derived from it, such as patriarchy.

Clementine Adou (born 1988) lives in Paris, FR.

Selected solo (s) and group exhibitions (g): *Crumbling The Antiseptic Beauty*, Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris, FR, 2024, (g); *Xmas*, Les Bains-Douches, Alençon, FR, 2024, (s); *Les assistantes du vide*, La Salle de Bains, Lyon, FR, 2023, (g); *Daddy long legs' hands*, Tonus, Paris, 2023, (s); *AUTO* (with Julien Monnerie), Doc, Paris, FR, 2021, (s); *Portable Documents Formatted for Home Use*, Bel Ami, Los Angeles, US, 2020, (g).

Hemansingh Lutchmun (born 1995) lives in Frankfurt (Main), DE, und Goodlands, MU.

Selected solo (s) and group exhibitions (g): *The Call*, Stadelschule Graduation Show, Frankfurt (Main), DE, 2024, (g); *Against Nature*, Neue Alte Brücke, Frankfurt (Main), DE, 2024, (g); *Bottle, cards.cards.cards*, Frankfurt (Main), DE, 2024, (s); *Das Lied der Straße*, Biennale für Freiburg, DELPHI\_space, Freiburg, DE, 2023, (g); *&1 &1//1/1 1+1+1 + 1*, McKinsey & Co., Frankfurt (Main), DE, 2022, (g); *Holy Terrain*, Goethe Institut, Dublin, IE, 2021, (g).

Kevin Jerome Everson (born 1965) lives in Charlottesville, US.

Selected solo (s) and group exhibitions (g): *Mirage*, Kunstverein Braunschweig, Brunswick, DE, 2024, (g); *Same Day*, 15th Baltic Triennial, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, LT, 2024, (g); *MOONSHINE*, Art Windsor-Essex Windsor, Ontario, CA, 2023, (s); *Clocking Out: Time Beyond Management*, Artists Space, New York, USA, 2023 (g); *Recover*, Halle für Kunst Steiermark, Graz, AT, 2021, (s); *Mansfield Deluxe*, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, US, 2021, (s); *More than that*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, US, 2011, (s).

1  
Clementine Adou  
*Red dots, red noses, red noses, red dots*, 2024–25  
Wood, cables, junction box, ball bearings, motors, umbrellas, steel wire, plastic clown noses  
123 × 727 × 35 cm

2  
Kevin Jerome Everson  
*Sanfield*, 2020  
Video, Sound  
20:13 min.  
Courtesy Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York

3  
Clementine Adou  
*Xmas*, 2019–24  
Video  
14:49 min.

4  
Clementine Adou  
a  
*Daddy long legs' hands (small)*, 2023  
Umbrella structure, aluminum, steel, wire  
219 × 135 × 74 cm

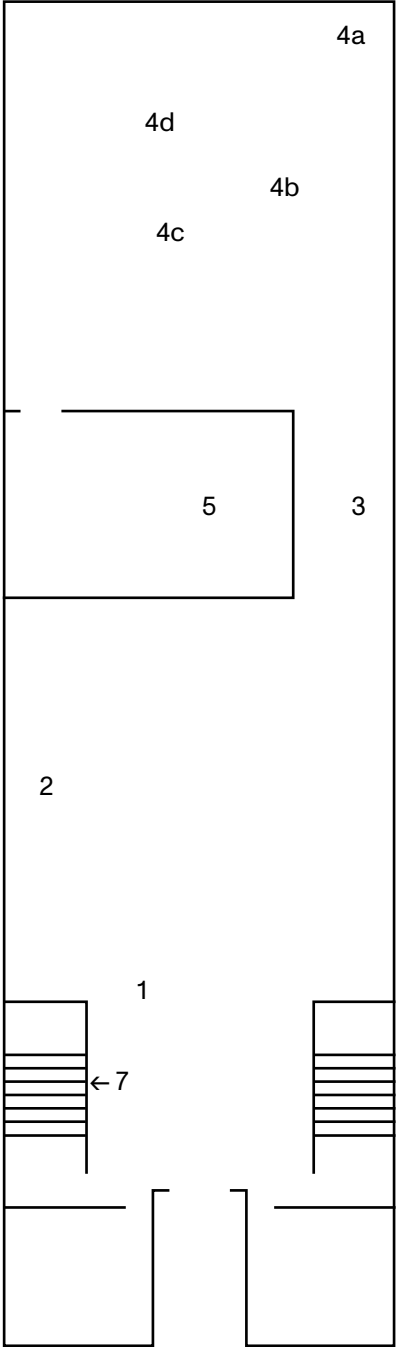
b  
*Daddy long legs' hands (medium)*, 2023  
Umbrella structure, aluminum, steel, wire  
257 × 225 × 119 cm

c  
*Daddy long legs' hands (big)*, 2025  
Umbrella structure, aluminum, steel, wire  
268 × 324 × 174 cm

d  
*Daddy long legs' hands (big)*, 2023  
Umbrella structure, aluminum, steel, wire  
364 × 310 × 281 cm

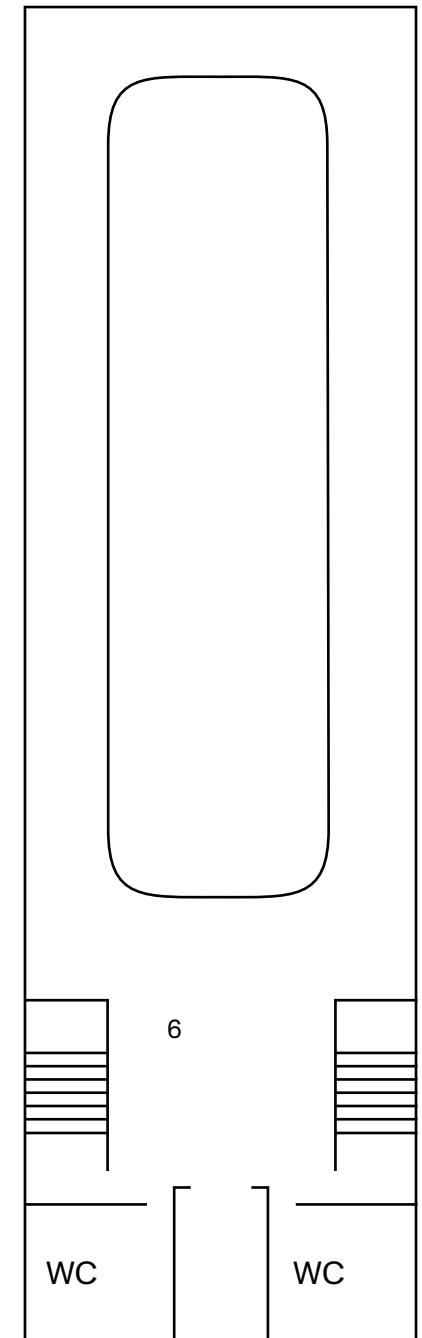
5  
Hemansingh Lutchmun  
*Can you take care of my plants when I'm away.*, 2025  
Video, Sound  
41:41 min.

Hall



6  
Hemansingh Lutchmun  
*Arms for Legs (Plantation Chair,*  
*1834–1920), 2024*  
Wood from the roof terrace of the  
Kunstverein, rosewood, rattan, steel  
200 × 70 × 95 cm

Gallery



7  
Kevin Jerome Everson  
*The Wood \ and the Bobwhite Quail*,  
2025  
Video, Sound  
4:35 min.  
Courtesy Andrew Kreps Gallery,  
New York



## Programme

Fri, 4 Apr 2025, 7 pm

Opening Night with an Introduction  
by Heinrich Dietz

Wed, 9 Apr 2025, 7 pm

Curator's Tour with Heinrich Dietz

Wed, 23 Apr 2025, 7 pm

Table Talk

*Criticising Capitalism*

with Gruppe Gesellschaftskritik

Freiburg

Mon, 28 Apr 2025, 6 pm

Table Talk

*Power Structures*

with Joanne Rodriguez

Mon, 5 May 2025, 6 pm

Table Talk

*Being Human*

with Isabelle Ihring

Sun, 11 May 2025, 2–4 pm

Workshop for Children 6–12 years  
(registration required)

Wed, 14 May 2025, 7 pm

Guided Tour with Marilena  
Raufeisen

Fri, 16 May 2025, 7 pm

Presentation of the De/Coloniality  
Now initiative of the University of  
Freiburg with Ercüment Çelik,  
followed by an Artist Talk with  
Hemansingh Lutchmun

Opening hours

Wed–Fri, 3 pm–7 pm

Sat–Sun, 12 am–6 pm

18–21 Apr, 1 May open

Entrance: 2 € / 1.50 €

Thursdays free

Members free

Kunstverein Freiburg is funded by:

Freiburg   
IM BREISGAU

  
Baden-Württemberg

 Sparkasse