

notes from oblivion

carrick bell

August 8- 29th, 2025

Gregg Araki's 1992 film *The Living End* follows Jon and Luke, two young, HIV positive strangers on a fugitive cross country road trip. Constantly evading the imminent threat of the cops, the two navigate sex, illness, love, and death. During their journey, Jon speaks into his tape recorder: "This whole thing is so unreal, like some waking dream. It's like I've fallen through the Looking Glass . . ." The pair's journey indeed seems to lead them outside of normative time and space, constantly oscillating between states of intimacy and disconnection, euphoria and rage. The exhibition *notes from oblivion* operates in this same state of reverberation and oscillation. Utilizing recursive processes to manipulate light, sound, and image, bell's work explores how political and social structures of containment and oppression are individually lived and felt.

bell's installation *unlit fags (munich)* draws directly on scenes from *The Living End*, capturing the characters within these cursed loops, or what theorist Lauren Berlant calls the time of the *impasse*. Moments of connection between the two men are meticulously rotoscoped and overlaid at various speeds. Set against the sunset, these once distinct bodies become ambiguous, unstable images as the figures merge and separate in an endless repeat. Similarly, sounds from the film are isolated, modulated, and looped, obscuring and abstracting their identification.

In each iteration, the videos are mounted on a fence, specific to the installation's locale. Here, fences ubiquitous to construction sites around Europe stand in haphazard arrangement throughout the gallery. While their placement initially seems arbitrary, it becomes clear that they structure the way the work is viewed. They obscure or hide certain screens entirely; they render the interior space innavigable. Evoking instances of containment, displacement, and state violence, they are at once absurd and unrelenting traps, limiting the possibilities of both sight and mobility.

Signs of Life is comprised of several overlapping light projections, capturing the silhouette of the exhibition and its visitors. The pace of each projection is the same as that of Apple's patented "breathing light": an indicator that appeared on MacBooks mimicking human respiration rates. Much like the silhouettes of Jon and Luke in *unlit fags*, the viewers own body is made unstable, uncertain. Each experience of *Signs of Life* is unique to the specificities of your vantage point: implicating each individual in the process of creating and perpetuating the work.

notes from oblivion dwells in the space of the impasse, proposing the loop as a structure of containment, but also of revelatory potential. How might we attune to these familiar cycles? What might we begin to notice, to anticipate?

works included:

unlit fags (munich)

2025

Temporary fencing, looped stereo audio,
and six single-channel videos

(durations: 40:16, 32:01, 4:03:09, 4:49:30,
1:23:57, 4:08:58)

Signs of Life

2025

Variable-channel looped projection

carrick bell (b. 1981, Anchorage, AK) is a Berlin-based video artist and PhD researcher at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna. Bell received their MFA from SAIC in 2008, and a BA from Hampshire College in 2004. They have taught at Northwestern University and delivered lectures for the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. Residencies include Vermont Studio Center Fellowship Residency (2018); Crosstown Arts, Memphis (2018); NARS Foundation (2017); the Wassaic Project (2016) and Ox-Bow (2009). They have exhibited at KH7artspace (Aarhus), Chelsea College (London), Beverly's New York, Kunsthalle Exnergasse (Vienna) Charim Gallery (Vienna), LW56 (Vienna), .hbc (Berlin), Brooklyn Pavillion of the Shanghai Biennial, and BAM (Brooklyn Academy of Music). They have received stipends for artistic research (Berlin, 2021) and project space programming (Berlin, 2022). They are the co-founder and co-director of Berlin-based artist-run space Horse & Pony, and founder and programmer of Xanadu, a space for artists' moving image work.

Emily Nola (b. 1998, Bridgeport, CT) is a curator, writer, and researcher based in the Hudson Valley of New York. She is an MA candidate at the Center for Curatorial Studies (CCS) at Bard College, and the Artistic Director of Collar Works, a nonprofit arts space in Troy, NY. She has contributed to various exhibitions and publications at the Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College; Collar Works, Troy, NY; The Green Lodge, Chatham, NY; and Baba Yaga, Hudson, NY. Nola holds a BFA in Fibers with a minor in Painting from the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD). Her current research focuses on mediation, technology, language, and psychoanalysis.

Curated by **Emily Nola** for *Service Interruption II* in collaboration with Space n.n. and White Noise.