

Press kit



knotting unruly ties

Exhibition, web series, workshops

June 21 – August 24, 2025

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Press release

Berlin, June 4, 2025

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Exhibition, web series, workshops

June 21 – August 24, 2025

Opening: June 20, 2025, 6 pm

The group exhibition *knotting unruly ties* addresses the affective power of property. Installations, video works and comics by seven artists draw attention to spaces, bodies, and relationships that are intractable to dominant forms of control. During the exhibition, a two-part web series is available online and in the exhibition space. An accompanying series of workshops addresses various aspects of (in-)accessibility.

Property influences both power relations and our capacity for action, permeating how we view ourselves and the world. The modern concept of property emerged in bourgeois Europe as it began its colonial expansion. Since then, it violently differentiates between two modes: the capacity to dispose over land, things, and other people, and the obligation to make one's own body and its labor available. Property continues to carry forward the scars of this violence.

knotting unruly ties addresses property's affective power as it is countered by collective forms of resistance. Through an exhibition, a web series, and workshops, the project draws attention to spaces, bodies, and relationships that are intractable to dominant forms of control. The labor conditions of the art field are questioned, while an artist interrogates her own (in)capacity for action in light of her contractual obligations to the state. Past and present moments of enclosure are recorded as they echo in the land and our relationships. Through reconstructing a neighborhood square, migrant experience is rewritten into space. A photocopier is appropriated in order to redistribute knowledge. Invasive weeds from industrialized and colonized landscapes form alliances with electronic entities. A manifesto hints at how to be in the world by singing with it.

Art institutions are also inextricably linked to questions relating to property. At a societal level, they represent protected spaces that safeguard freedom of expression. However in practice, they are often neither inclusive nor accessible – despite the fact that many are working to change this. At the same time, art institutions can all too easily be defunded and shut down. In recognition of this, the curatorial work group has decided to keep the security gate at the exhibition's main entrance partially closed as an intervention for the duration of the exhibition.

The exhibition seeks (aesthetic) forms that describe unruly, interdependent forms of relating to one other and with the world. These might be based on solidarity, resistance, mutual care, and the refusal of self-ownership: *knotting unruly ties*.

Contributors: AG Art Worker Solidarity, Mel Baggs, Casa Kuà, Nino Bulling, Vika Kirchenbauer, Bär Kittelmann, knowbotiq, İz Öztat, Amanda Priebe, Anikē Joyce Sadiq, Sickness Affinity Group, Steckenpferde Webserie AG

nGbK work group: Jyl Franzbecker, Tyan Fritschy, Sonja Hornung, Mizu Sugai, Ülkü Süngün

About the works and artists

“What if it were possible to speak and be heard without the prerequisite of social ascent?” This question is posed in *The Capacity for Adequate Anger* (2021), which was made when **Vika Kirchenbauer** returned to the village in West Germany where she grew up. A series of still and moving images is accompanied by a first-person voice-over: childhood aspirations, basketball trading cards, an early identification with Freddy Mercury, and schoolyard AIDS panic are coupled with the artist's account of her discomfort within art-institutional contexts. Their unwritten codes assume that viewers are disembodied in space, without physical needs, distanced from the objects on display. This is directly contradicted by the artist's own embodied response of unsettledness and shame, of discomfort around the invisibilized labour that goes into making and maintaining such spaces. An unevenly distributed unease around the perception and performance of queerness and class difference is both observed from a distance, and felt under the skin.

Vika Kirchenbauer works with video, installation, music, and theoretical writing to negotiate the role of affect in contemporary art, questioning how marginalized bodies become experienceable in exhibition spaces.

Anikē Joyce Sadiq's work *The Missing Episode* (2025) similarly involves a return to the area where the artist grew up. The work intervenes in tensions and gaps in the representation of Stuttgart's *Eiernes* quarter. The 1920s public housing development for working-class families represents an exemplary model of the “garden city” – a concept later taken up by National Socialist urban planners. In the 1980s and 1990s, many migrant “guest worker” families moved into the area. During this period, the artist Hüseyin Altın installed a marble sculpture entitled *Kreatur* (1980), surrounded by a seating ensemble that the families' children appropriated as a playground. The *Eiernes* has since been both heritage-listed and slowly privatized, allowing white middle class households to move in: a 2021 *Südwestrundfunk* documentary on the area fails to mention the migrant neighborhood, thereby erasing it from public memory. Addressing this void, Anikē Joyce Sadiq reconstructs the square's inward-facing bench, which traces the partial contour of a house. Visitors can listen to an interview between the artist and Hüseyin Altın and take home a miniature, 3D-printed *Kreatur*, or pass it on to somebody else. *Die fehlende Folge* is an invitation to

collectively reshape the intimate connections between property and ownership, heritage and belonging – or simply to sit, linger, and spend time together.

Anike Joyce Sadiq investigates different dimensions of representation through a performative, poetic, and conceptual lens. She often addresses the politics of looking, as well as the right to withdrawal and intransparency.

As post-feudal capitalist states grant or withhold freedoms in order to protect property, so property shadows everyday life, also ghosting attempts to redistribute wealth and create alternatives in everyday life. ***Common Enclosures*** (2025) is a series of comic strips in which **Nino Bulling** has sensitively recorded a number of such moments from the past and present in Berlin and surrounds. Feudalism drew to an end in this area in an uneven process around 200 years ago. For former serfs, the acquisition of citizenship went hand in hand with the abolition of the commons. Nino Bulling draws on archival material from the historic process of *Gemeinheitsteilung* – that is, the enclosure and annulment of common property and rights of use – in the Brandenburg village where they may inherit a piece of land. This is connected with an inventory of their personal belongings as their finance cooperative, in which members' incomes were pooled and shared for twelve years, comes to a premature end. These two processes of privatization structure a journal that records how property – and the punitive systems built to secure it – shape the everyday: from our relationships, to household objects and keepsakes, to the literal equation of money as time in the criminal justice system.

Nino Bulling works as a comic artist, author, and teacher. His works draw on a practice in comic journalism, weaving personal anecdotes and observations around questions relating to queer representation and lived alternatives in a world in crisis.

As an activist for the rights of people with disabilities, **Mel Baggs** centers neurodivergent perception in their work. ***In My Language*** (2005) follows Mel Baggs as – in their words – they sing along with what is around them. The video, which could be understood to be part-manifesto, part-translation, shows Mel Baggs in intimate interaction with their surroundings, which are interpreted for neurotypical viewers by a disembodied, computer-generated voice-over. *In My Language* opens out towards a multiple of ways to be in the world, exposing the limitations of normative modes of thinking, communicating, and interacting. Yet those who do not comply with such norms are often considered non-persons with no rights. According to this deadly, ableist logic, only those who interact with the world by controlling and owning objects can be recognized as “proper” subjects. The work refuses the division between subject and object that makes the modern concept of property possible, pointing instead towards ways to be in radical and unruly empathy with the world.

Mel Baggs was a non-binary activist well-known for their online videos and blog posts about autism and dis/ability rights.

tumble_needs (2025) challenges the property-based enclosure and human control of land and living beings. The artist-duo **knowbotiq** runs gardening projects in Pico/Azores and Altmark/Central Germany. This work collides the systematic movements of agricultural machines designed for fully automated crop management with the disobedient abundance of plants that are considered invasive, such as the tumbleweed (also known as windwitch), or Khalili ginger. The latter blooms along the narrow corridors of neglected public land between the private estates of the Azores, taking over the property grid established on the group of islands during Portuguese colonization. Channelling this feral abundance, which is alien both to modern systems of knowledge and to an idealized notion of “natural” balance, ***tumble_needs*** consists of dense, intense, and sentient entities – some humanoid, some abstract-mechanic. Microbe, animal, mineral, electronic, plant-based, and techno-imaginary affects and materialities entangle and fuse around syncretic relationships in perpetual motion. They tumble intractably onwards, escaping the frames that contain them and reorganizing space according to their needs.

knowbotiq (Yvonne Wilhelm, Christian Hübler) are an artist duo that have been experimenting with forms and medialities of knowledge and epistemic disobedience for over 30 years.

Amanda Priebe's *Invitation (On Praxis)* (2025) consists of a photocopier, silkscreening equipment, a collection of books, and posters. For the duration of the exhibition, visitors are welcome to take copies of the posters, browse the texts, and make use of the photocopier, which later will be passed on to *Casino for Social Medicine* – a self-organized space in Neukölln. The silkscreening equipment, which is also available for use during the exhibition, will likewise later be reappropriated for community use. Books from the likes of Palestinian scholar and activist Basel al-Araj, Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, and Mississauga Nishnaabeg writer and academic Leanne Betasamosake Simpson are made available by the artist for their tactical and pedagogical usefulness in organising to face prevailing cultural and political crises. *Invitation (On Praxis)* is a call to reorient institutionally entangled artistic practices which, as sharply observed by Meridel LeSueur, are all-too-often funded in order to “perfume the stench of death”. Here, art is instead turned towards a praxis that is determinedly anti-proprietary: both knowledge and infrastructure are freely bootlegged in support of community resistance. Or in the words of the artist: “What can you steal? How much can you carry?”

Amanda Priebe is a printmaker. You can find her work in the cracks between community organising, critical writing, illustration and the ‘art world’ – and hopefully, on the streets near you.

Here and now, and after? (2025) is a puppet play for camera by **İz Öztat** that negotiates artistic agency, accountability, and the self's relation to the Other. The video draws on Kasperle theater – a centuries-old German-language puppetry tradition – as a politically

engaged pedagogical form, while referring to the Faustian pact as a literary motif. Imbued with cultural associations and projections, ideologies and stereotypes, a collection of puppets are brought to life to enact and reflect on present-day tensions around the figure of the artist and their contractual obligations to the state. The play is structured around three contracts: between Faust and the devil, the artist and the state, and the negotiation of erotic power-play. For the artist, the contract may well secure the possibility to create and perhaps to politically intervene, as well as a livelihood and the right to stay, but it comes with a catch: can the perpetrator of violence be named? This contractual entanglement suggests a subject who is *implicated* (Michael Rothberg) in the very structures they attempt to critique. As agreements are reached by some puppets, others defy authority, demanding justice on their own terms.

İz Öztat is a fellow at the Berlin Artistic Research Programme. She challenges imposed official narratives with the possibilities of fiction. Working with the notion of queer desire, she searches for consent-based negotiations of power dynamics.

Events

Saturday, June 21, 12–4 pm
Disability Justice—On Paper and In Practice
with Sickness Affinity Group
In English and German
Further dates will be announced shortly on ngbk.de.

Information for visitors

nGbK

Karl-Liebknecht-Straße 11/13, 10178 Berlin, 1st floor (access via escalator)

Opening hours: Tue–Sun 12–6 pm, Fri 12–8 pm

Free admission

Accessible with wheelchairs and strollers (via elevator)

Detailed information on accessibility is available on ngbk.de.

Information for visitors is available on ngbk.de

Press images

Press images are available [here](#).

Press contact

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