

Adam Fearon - PARADE

May 24 – June 21, 2025

Artist Talk June 11, 7pm

In conversation with Melanie Jame Wolf

Space for the talk is limited, please RSVP to info@kinderhook-caracas.com

Finissage June 21, 2-6pm

PARADE is a large-scale painting installation reflecting on the Tempelhofer Feld's connection to historical and contemporary political crises. The exhibition marks a continuation of Adam Fearon's ongoing body of work which observes the city of Berlin as a palimpsest, the paintings focused on the materiality of the urban landscape—from sites of protest to dark rooms and public parks.

Before Tempelhofer Feld became an airport, it served as a training and parade ground for the Prussian army, and since then has been transformed into, amongst many other things: the site of a concentration camp, an American army base, a place to receive those who fled the DDR, a refugee shelter, and most recently a park which represents a certain type of leisure and freedom unique to Berlin and consistently under threat from private development.

PARADE offers glimpses through to these sites of history through the patterned chain-link fence as well as functioning as a march towards total abstraction. Moments of art history are encountered along the way, mirroring the historical timeline—from 19th century realism to a glimpse of the rigidity of Sagebiel's architecture, the modernist grid, and colour field painting.















PARADE I +II (Feld)
2025
Oil on Canvas
200 x 300 cm



PARADE III (Tor)
2025
Oil on Canvas
200 x 150 cm



PARADE IV (Band)
2025
Oil on Canvas
200 x 150 cm



PARADE III (Gelb)
2025
Oil on Canvas
200 x 150 cm

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INTERVIEW:
Adam Fearon and Lisa Long

LL: Let's begin by talking about the grid. I was just in Carthage walking through the *castrum*, the grid system the Romans used to build their cities, which is divided by perpendicular streets called *cardo* and *decumanus* that create a checkerboard pattern. It was a reminder of how the grid has shaped human-built environments and organized our movements for thousands of years. In modernity, the understanding and use of the grid has shifted, encompassing techniques of projection that map three-dimensional space onto two-dimensional surfaces (as in painting) to fantasies of infinite expansion (think colonialism), and at the same time, the possibility of exactly locating an object or human using coordinates, enabling new forms of authoritative or governmental control. In your *Parade* paintings, I see an imposition of grids that merges their representational, topographical, and speculative character - how do you approach the grid and what does it mean to you? Why did you choose such a strong visual referent?

AF: In this case it is first and foremost a fence, a barrier. Something which separates and contains a very particular site and its histories. Something which impedes movement. But across the works, and in relationship to space and to the history of painting it is of course also a grid: and when I think of grids I think of nets: they are made for capture.

I just the other day made the, quite obvious, connection between these works and a series I made previously around the surface, measurement, facial recognition, mesh etc., thinking of not only biometrics but the intimacy between the body and technology.

LL: And those histories really come through in your series of paintings about Berlin. What is your relationship to the city (specifically Berlin but also in general) and to the spaces you paint?

AF: Yes. It's hard to say what my relationship to this city is at the moment. I guess that's why I started painting it. Which I kind of moved towards organically. First I was painting friends and fellow artists. Then I started painting the cruising grounds in Hasenheide when they were empty. I was interested in these spaces in between action: and places at the edge. And it was when I was in the middle of these series about parks, leisure, public sphere and so on that the police very literally drove on to the scene: often using Tiergarten as an operations base for the brutal suppression of the early protests that took place on Potsdamer Platz.

I think for a while I was testing to see how directly I could look at these things in painting but I began to realise that there was much more to see in the background details. A painting of a policeman filming me wasn't capturing me but someone's name carved into a tree or leftovers of fireworks from new years eve did.

I was working on this series when I got the invite for this show, but felt that the space couldn't fit enough of the works for it to make sense and decided to focus on creating one new work from the series. It's maybe quite funny I created the largest paintings I ever made because the space was too small to show smaller works, but when I thought of its restrictions and enclosure, I kept going back to the image I had, that I used to cycle past often on the way to the studio, which is the view into the Tempelhofer Feld through the chain-link fence, just after the Parade Strasse U-Bahn stop.

The name, the view and the idea somehow coalesced around the site: which has been so many things. A parade ground for the Prussian Army, and just before the airport was built a concentration camp primarily for homosexuals, an American Military Base, a refugee camp, and now a contested site of potential development. No doubt too because I was thinking, like all of us, about how catastrophic the failure of German Memory Culture has been: watching tech bros kitesurf but also thinking about the incredible state violence against those who *parade* in the wrong way. (The Grid is also a net, a fishing net, the pattern on a *keffiyeh*.)

Recently, when I was trying to think about what made some paintings work and others not, I realised that there was something very important about the indexical: that things very specifically reference places, objects, specific materialities: generalisations, or the idea of a place simply didn't work.

It reminded me of something a curator friend I was working with many years ago said about a piece I had made. The work, *Gyricon* was made for Kindle, the ebook reader, which interested me at time because I saw it as hovering between the analog and digital. But this friend said he thought it was important that it was for this particular, scuffed up Kindle I had carried around for a couple of years and I immediately thought of all the photographs I had of greasy fingerprints on laptop and screen devices and another work of mine *PROMPT*, where images are scraped and dragged across a surface: that there was always something about what happens when the Platonic idea of something is forced to live in the world, or about the confrontation between the images and the world.

It made me think too of my school, which was quite old and rather repressive, but there were several places where you could see, through sheer repetition, that we, the students, had worn it down. For example there was a large old wooden staircase with a large square banister with a turn in it: over many years, many thousands of pupils turning the corner of the staircase had worn the inside of the bannister down into a smooth shiny curve. I remember thinking it was so beautiful. Now I suppose I see it as some kind of resistance where we physically wore down the idea of the institution.

LL: Those recollections touch on mark-making—or the traces we leave, whether they are intentional like with painting or more unintentional as in the wear of everyday movements. This brings me to the idea of the palimpsest—all the histories and gestures that are inscribed into the materials and landscapes around us even if they have been erased and are therefore not directly visible.

AF: Yes exactly. The relationship to memory and history here is so complex and twisted, but the materiality of the city tells its own story. Layer upon layer of lives marking the places. Sometimes in a very literal, ongoing way. Last year I made a painting that documented, almost in real time, a conversation on a wall in Neukölln, someone would write something about Palestine, someone else would write something in response and then the Hausmeister would paint over it all. Again and again and again. So I kept and did the same thing to the canvas in my studio, building up layer upon layer of paint.

LL: Could you tell me more about the move toward abstraction in this series and how it relates to the exhibition display we see in PARADE?

AF: Well, first of all I know that I wanted to look at the fence on its own: as an object and as a painting. And then of course it looks like, and opens up references to a lot of things. From Agnes Martin to Yayoi Kusama's early infinity nets.

Seeing them in relationship to the airport, where there was an American army base at the literal frontier of the Cold War, it's hard not to think about what we now know about the CIA's role in promoting American abstract art as an ideological weapon.

I was reading again Rosalind Krauss' 'Grids' essay from 1979 which frames the grid in Modernism, from Mondrian to Sol LeWitt, as being indicative of the self-contained nature of Modernist art, its separateness: its resistance to language even. It reminds me of how we were taught to think about art. I'd almost forgotten there was a time that you could think about it as so separate, 'imminent'.

Abstraction is about totalities I suppose too. The glimpse of the rigid fascist architecture of the airport, says enough about where I think that leads. But chain-link fences are somewhat malleable, they get twisted and torn by people pulling or climbing on them, they are easy to cut: they separate but are certainly not impenetrable.

I thought a lot too about the accuracy of the fence I was painting for weeks on end: the translation of this grid, through my body: the tension between the ideal and its embodiment. I suppose that's what is beautiful in Agnes Martin, the human quiver through the grid.

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Lisa Long is a curator specializing in contemporary and time-based art. She is the founder of the curatorial agency Companion Culture, and served as Artistic Director and Curator of the Julia Stoschek Foundation 2018 to 2025.