

Gregg Bordowitz
There: a Feeling
17 January/23 March

Gregg Bordowitz, *Some Styles of Masculinity*, performance view,
New Museum, New York, 2018. Photo: Chloe Foussianes



Camden Art Centre is delighted to announce the first institutional solo exhibition in the UK by celebrated American artist, writer and activist Gregg Bordowitz (b. 1964, Brooklyn). Spanning the breadth of his practice, including video, installation, performance, poetry, and prints, the exhibition offers multiple entry points to the artist's enduring commitment to writing as an activity of thought, manifesting across various forms and modalities. In Bordowitz's ongoing transdisciplinary project, words are gestures are images are letters.

There: a Feeling is the second chapter of a partner exhibition, *Dort: ein Gefühl*, currently on view at the Bonner Kunstverein until 2 February 2025. Conceived as one single project across the two sites, the iteration at Camden Art Centre extends the artist's study of the solo exhibition as one unified proposition. Each artwork is an incident composed by a set of protocols, applied to the specific conditions of varying media. Taken as a whole the sum of these incidents is a theatrical exposition on the themes of mortality, loss, inheritance, belief, gratitude and grace. The exhibition follows the acclaimed travelling retrospective *I Wanna Be Well* which was presented at MoMA PS1; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery at Reed College between 2018 and 2021.

Central to the exhibition is a new film titled *Before and After (Still In Progress)* (2023), the third installment in a trilogy of autobiographical documentaries which includes *Fast Trip*, *Long Drop* (1993); and *HABIT* (2001). These films reveal the artist's multiple identities, and how they relate and intersect within a constantly reconfiguring self. Bordowitz has been living with HIV for over thirty years and, in this sense, his mutable artist self is existentially determined by infection: compromised by intermittent illness; bereft, as it continually grieves the deaths of lost loves; surviving and vital with meaningful possibilities. In this new film, an autobiographical documentary, the artist is revealed in shifting guises. Across five 'acts' he performs aspects of his identity through distinct spoken-word formats, including deadpan comedic stand-up, lecture, poetry reading, song, and a Yom Kippur sermon in which he addresses the congregation of his New York synagogue, dressed in yarmulka [skullcap] and prayer shawl.

Bordowitz began his artistic life four decades ago as a painter and, in 2021, began working with master printmaker Marina Ancona at 10 Grand Press in Brooklyn on an extensive body of monoprints that has evolved organically out of an active drawing practice. Affinities with concrete poets Gerhard Rühm, Mary Ellen Solt, and bpNichol, as well as a deep influence from the calligraphic work of Ben Shahn, are referenced in the series. Bordowitz describes the prints as concrete poems: "They come out of an abiding interest in contemporary visual poetry and also a centuries-old meditational practice of rearranging the letters in one's mind."

New works realised site-specifically for Camden Art Centre – including *Baroque Clouds*, (2018—ongoing), a sculptural intervention informed by the rendering of clouds in Baroque paintings and architecture; and *Continuous Red Line*, 2002—ongoing,

composed of a line of red splicing tape attached to the walls in a continuous horizontal line at 3-inch height above the floor – will be grounded in the context of older pieces, including *Portraits of People living with HIV*, (1993), a 30-minute compendium of short video-portraits made for the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, NYC, depicting Bordowitz’s friends, lovers or fellow activists going about their daily lives as they cope with HIV at a time when there were few treatments available.

As an artist whose work draws heavily from lived experience, Bordowitz’s exhibition, *There: a Feeling*, is a testament to survival, ordinary survival, if such a thing can be described. The artists’ growing body of work constitutes a vital and intimate historical testimony which, in his words, “combines daily quandaries with improvised compositions, together adding up, but never summing up, bits and pieces of a unified field. The singular proposition of an exhibition can only be experienced as qualities bursting upon qualities through overlapping episodes of attention, sensation, and perception”.

The exhibition has been conceived and developed in collaboration with Fatima Hellberg and Bonner Kunstverein.

A new essay by Camilla Wills is published in the latest edition of Camden Art Centre’s long-running File Note series, produced for every exhibition, it represents an important strand of the organisation’s programme, enabling the commission of a new piece of long-form writing accompanied by a reading/listening/watching list compiled by the artist. They are an accessible resource, available in the galleries for a small charge and online for free.

Public Programme

A programme of live events will activate the exhibition, drawing multiple voices and perspectives into dialogue with its propositions. In a rendition of *Open Book, Letters, Marks, Politics* (2024), Bordowitz will deliver an improvised monologue to the audience. In another event, based loosely on a vaudeville-style format, merging performance with critical discourse, multiple geographies and subjective perspectives of life and movement through London will be explored.

Notes to Editors

For further information, interviews and images please contact:

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Camden Art Centre

Since 1965 Camden Art Centre has been a place for art and the people that make it. Rooted in our local community and internationally acclaimed, we foster a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship to art. We aim to push boundaries and connect people to their own creativity through our exhibitions, residencies, events and learning programmes. Originally built as a public library, the building now combines historic architecture with open, modern spaces and a secluded garden with free entry for all. Camden Art Centre has always led the way supporting artists and audiences to create and engage with the most vital and inspiring contemporary art and culture today.

Supporters

This exhibition is generously supported by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes (German Federal Cultural Foundation) and the Camden Art Centre Artists’ Circle.

Biography

Gregg Bordowitz is a renowned filmmaker, writer, and activist whose work has been exhibited at the Whitney, the New Museum, Artist Space, MoMA (all New York), the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and Tate Modern, among others. A major retrospective of his work, *Gregg Bordowitz: I Wanna Be Well*, was organised by the Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, in 2018 and subsequently presented at MoMA PS1 and the Art Institute of Chicago.

In the 1980s, his creative practice was focused on responding to the AIDS crisis. He organised and documented a number of protests against government inaction and advocated for health education and harm reduction as a member of the groundbreaking AIDS activist group ACT UP. He also served as a founding member of the 1980s video/film collectives Testing the Limits and Diva TV.

Bordowitz is the author of *The AIDS Crisis Is Ridiculous and Other Writings, 1986–2003* (2004), *General Idea: Imagevirus* (2010), *Volition* (2010), and *Glenn Ligon: Untitled (I Am a Man)* (2018).