Genevieve Lipinsky de Orlov, e-flux, April, 2026

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D'Ette Nogle's "Let it R.I.P."

Kunstverein Braunschweig occupies the Villa Salve Hospes, an early nineteenth-century neoclassical villa commissioned by a grain and hops merchant and situated on the edge of the city's historical center. After the villa was sold to the city in 1927, it briefly housed a research institute for pedagogy before the Nazis came to power, then hosted a series of National Socialist–sanctioned institutions: the city's municipal museum, an archive of the German language—founded and led, coincidentally, by David Zwirner's grandfather—and a Kunstverein. In 1946, the Kunstverein was re-founded as the institution that exists today.

The building's history haunts D'Ette Nogle's richly referential meditation on US culture and politics, which is the first solo exhibition to occupy the Kunstverein in its entirety. Across videos and sprawling sculptural installations, the LA–based artist subtly indicts everyday objects as enmeshed in the diffuse violence of US imperialism. In the installations, accumulated baseball bats, empty cans of kombucha, and Playboy calendars symbolize a culture of excess and overconsumption. Enlarged reproductions of material from White House archives, crosses made of scrap metal, a massive shipping crate for a US-sized refrigerator, and a muted clip of Timothée Chalamet as Bob Dylan in *A Complete Unknown* (2024) link that culture to history, religion, scale, and media. The sheer volume and range of material insist that US imperialist violence is inescapable and present in the most banal guises.

A fifty-minute video, *FATHER DAUGHTER MAKER* (2026), helps the viewer navigate this vast web of information. Such contextualizing videos are common in Nogle's practice and reflect her pedagogical methodology—the artist also teaches History at a public school in LA. Here, the central subject is Christianity in its US iterations. Nogle has a personal connection to the religion through her family, her late father in particular, a devout Christian who briefly appears in the video. The video's script, which is read out in Nogle's voice, interweaves mainstream representations of Christianity with references to Andy Warhol, Ye, Slavoj Žižek, Dan Graham, Catherine Liu, and Guy Debord, among many others. The first-person narration proceeds without German subtitles and plays over juxtaposed excerpts from Martin Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988) and Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* (2004).

At one point, Nogle describes a visit to Braunschweig's municipal museum, where she encountered "souvenirs" from the US Revolutionary War including a mummified hand and human scalps. The museum, she notes, acknowledged the controversy surrounding its colonial holdings but left it up to visitors to decide "whether and in what form such collection components should still be presented." With this disturbing anecdote, Nogle effectively connects the historical, constitutive violence of the founding of the United States with the local context,

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View of D'Ette Nogle's "Let it R.I.P." at Kunstverein Braunschweig, 2026. Courtesy of the artist. Photo by Frank Sperling.

and illustrates the broader structural violence persistent in contemporary institutions.

In *Klub Brain* (2026), Nogle similarly if obliquely collapses US violence and local context. Bass-heavy club mixes emanate from a small gallery, painted entirely black and closed off to visitors with planks of wood nailed across the thresholds. The work refers to a nearby club, but as the music reverberated unceasingly through the neighboring galleries, its initial humor wore off and it became only grating, evoking one of the US government's favored torture methods.

These are jarring, unexpected links of the kind research-based conceptual art so often excavates, recontextualizing the familiar to pose critical questions and produce new, unlikely seeming relationships to the world around us. But some moments in "Let it R.I.P." import concerns specific to US Empire without tethering them to local, or at least international, stakes. This effect is not unique to Nogle's exhibition or to Kunstverein Braunschweig; German cultural institutions' partiality to US-based practitioners inevitably reinscribes US hegemony.

While a few works— *Kunstverein library*, *House cricket*, and *Schlossmuseum Braunschweig* (all 2026)—directly engage the Kunstverein's own politics and the city's ducal history, US culture and its violence are the exhibition's focus. Nogle's critique is self-conscious but occasionally betrays an imperial exceptionality that vindicates increasingly anti-US audiences in Germany. The Kunstverein leaves unaddressed the analogous violence that runs uninterrupted through German history. The country, like so many others, is experiencing an alarming resurgence of fascism, also influenced by a thoroughly Christian culture. "Let it R.I.P." offers a welcome and incisive inquiry into the ideological foundations of the United States at a moment when their reassessment is existential. However, Germany emerges relatively unscathed. The terrors of the US are an easy distraction from repression at home, but the ghosts of Germany's past lurk in the Kunstverein.

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