Gracie Hadland, Artforum, July, 2026

ARTFORUM

No More Broth: D'Ette Nogle's R.I.P. for America

An aesthetic of anticipation and regret, caught between past and future.

Kunstverein Braunschweig

By Gracie Hadland

D'Ette Nogle, Volkswagen Greeters, 2026, two Volkswagen Beetles, car covers, audio players, Bluetooth speakers, audio tracks, dimensions variable. Installation view. Photo: Frank Sperling.

D'Ette Nogle's exhibition "Let it R.I.P." is a kind of party for America's 250th birthday. Or maybe the aftermath of a party that has just ended. The grand entrance to the nineteenth-century villa that houses Kunstverein Braunschweig is flanked by two cars covered in silver coverings, like knights in shining armor at rest. Volkswagen Greeters, 2026, gives the impression that the museum might be closed—as if you'd arrived on the wrong day. Nogle already has inserted the viewer into a present filled with anticipation or regret.

In the accompanying exhibition notes, Nogle references a short Kafka text titled "He," a parable about a man simultaneously pressed forward and back. For Hannah Arendt, this story offered a metaphor for history: The human subject always caught between past and future. In this show, accordingly, things are somewhat in between. In the video VW Beetle Monterey Rd., 2025, we see a VW bug (like the two under wraps in front) driving forward,

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View of "D'Ette Nogle: Let it R.I.P.," 2026. Background: Schlossmuseum Braunschweig (Braunschweig Castle Museum), 2026. Foreground: 25 US Style Metal Folding Chairs, 2026. On tables: Werther's Originals, 2026. Photo: Frank Sperling.

then the same footage in reverse, endlessly. 25 US Style Metal Folding Chairs, 2026, consists of two long wooden tables with metal chairs, the kind you might find in a community center in a church basement that hosts AA meetings. The table is scattered with butterscotch hard candies (Werther's Originals, 2026), and a pot of broth and some paper cups in the corner of the room (Bruhe-Party/Broth Party, 2026). On the day I was there a sign read: HEUTE KEINE BRUHE (no broth today). Again, maybe I was too late. But at the front of the room is a throne, Schlossmuseum Braunschweig (Braunschweig Castle Museum), 2026; it seems the community meeting has a leader after all, albeit an absent one. The throne is modeled on one in the local historical museum, but made using only materials from the Kunstverein's back rooms: paper and streamers and cardboard and string. A flimsy recreation of an already flimsy idea of an old empire, it looks silly and makes all the building's stately décor—mirrors, elaborate moldings—look as though they might be made out of cardboard as well.

On the top floor of the Kunstverein is the accumulation of things discarded or a kind of inventory of the Los Angeles–based artist's practice and process. One room contains selections from the institution's library stacked in piles (Kunstverein library, 2026), another displays all of its audiovisual equipment accompanied by the sound of a cricket chirping (House cricket, 2026), and yet another is filled with empty Los Angeles Dodgers–branded kombucha bottles (Health-Ade Kombucha, Dodgers Edition, 2026). In the hallway is Hoopsters, German Edition, 2026, three trash baskets in the shape of basketball hoops filled with crumpled sticky notes with discarded ideas, as the exhibition text tells us.

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While the mind is at work upstairs, the party goes on below. On the ground floor is Klub Brain, 2025, named after a real nightclub in Braunschweig. This one is uninhabited, a small room boarded up with wooden slats; inside a generic dance beat plays while colored lights flash aimlessly around the room. It's a party without guests and there's no getting in. A birthday party? In Crib to Casket, (2025–), Nogle has collected Playboy, Playgirl, Penthouse, and Peanuts calendars from her birth year, 1974, until now and has stamped each day with an American flag. The accumulation of this repetitive act is collected for visitors to witness each day of Nogle's Americanness.

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Nogle uses humor and absurdity to address some of the signature traits that have come to define America to the rest of the world: violence, stupidity, excess, individualism. She zeros in on these themes and the exhausting cyclical nature of history. The end and the beginning are always clashing and there is the artist right between them.