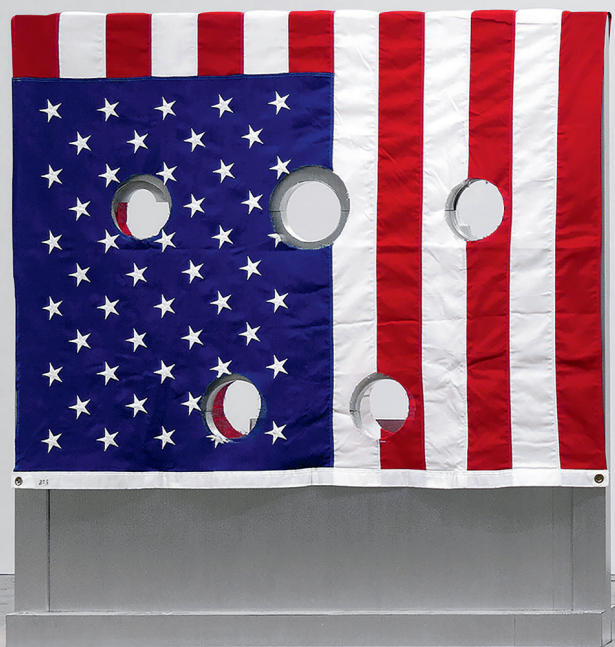


# CADY NOLAND

27.10.18–31.03.19



CADY NOLAND

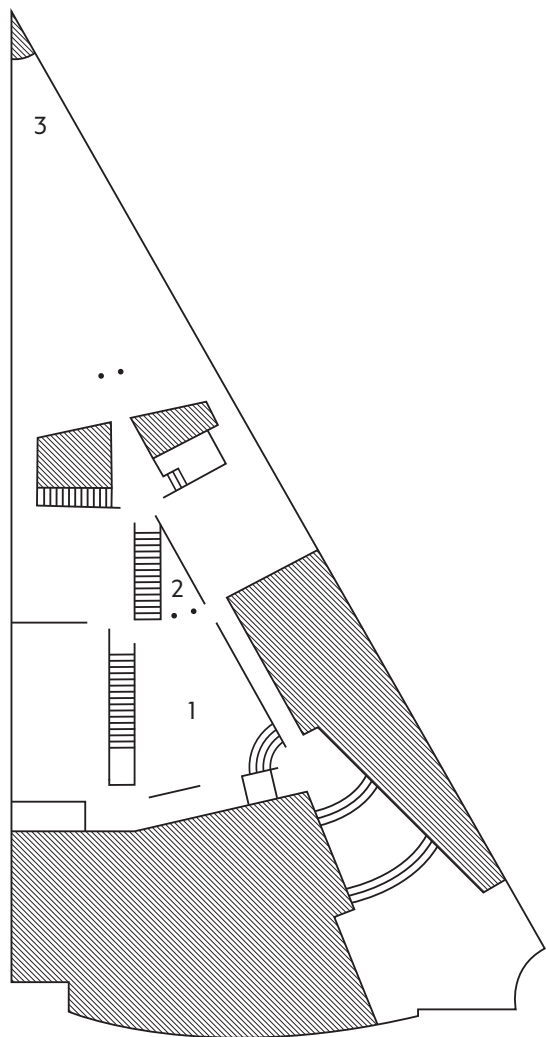


In modernity, violence finds expression not only in social action, but also in omnipresent objects, facilities and urban structures. The severity of the aggression is condensed in both form and material: The geometric austerity suggests functionality; the reflected light of the metallic surfaces creates distance. The shape, shine, and hardness of the resistant materials testify to their strength and power, endowing the objects with immediate brutality.

In her works, Cady Noland (b. 1956) uncovers the violence we encounter every day in scenarios of spatial and ideological demarcation. She thus exposes the alleged neutrality of material and form. The supposedly clear distinction between objects and subjects becomes blurred, the unceasing interaction between them evident.

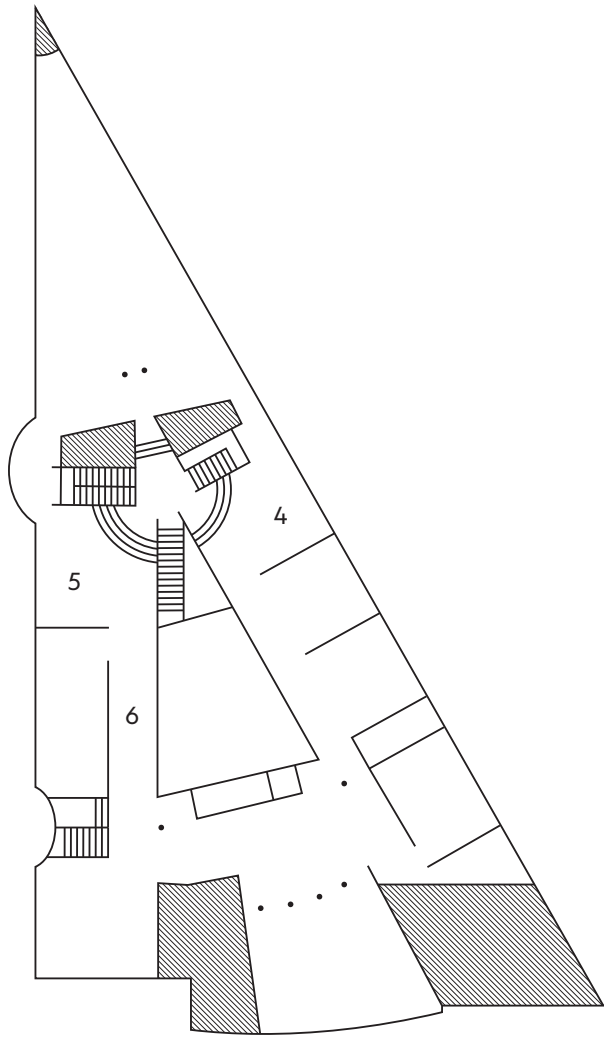
The US American flag, charcoal grills, bridles, cowboy saddles, and weapons are all symbols of American identity. Yet the myth of the American dream, which Noland—with apparent naivety—takes seriously, has become a globalized reality characterized by the glorification of violence, radical individualism, consumption as both stimulus and fulfilment, and conflict in the form of separatism and exclusion. In her work, barriers, gates, and fences are physical and symbolic manifestations that generate publicity and rule out participation. For those unable to comply with the pressure to perform, prostheses such as walkers, picker arms, or canes for the blind are the only means of participating in public life. Celebrities, on the other hand, simply have no choice but to participate. Their involuntary objectification is the prerequisite for the callous treatment they are frequently subjected to. In her 1987 essay *Towards a Metalanguage of Evil*, Noland describes US American society with utter detachment, almost as a psychopath would. It is an analysis that captures global reality today.

Level 1



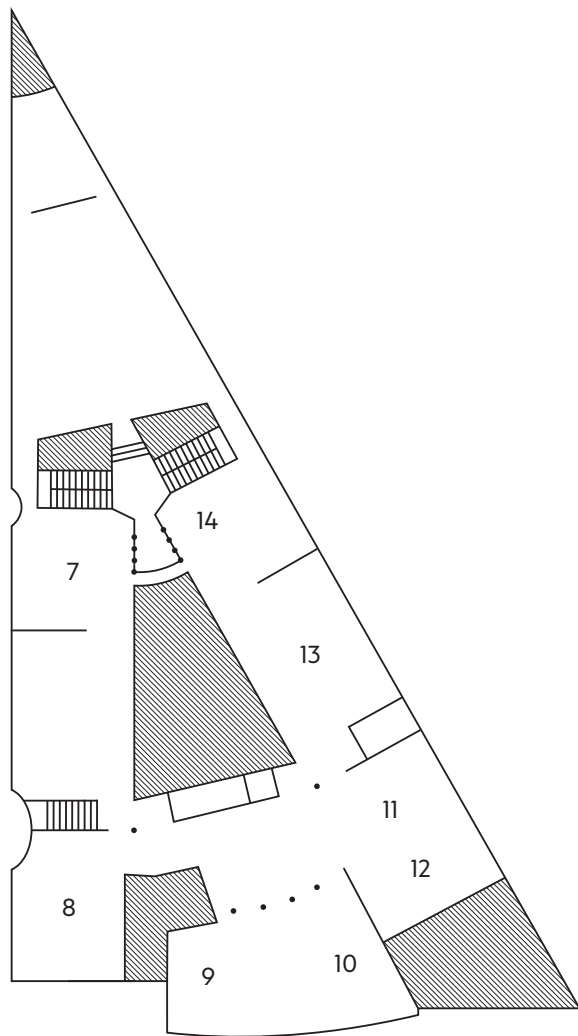
- 1. Publyck Sculpture
- 2. Awning Blanks
- 3. Tower of Terror

Level 2



- 4. Frame Device
- 5. Stockade
- 6. Model With Entropy

### Level 3



- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 7. Tanya as a Bandit     | 11. Untitled (William Randolph Hearst)       |
| 8. Celebrity Trash Spill | 12. Untitled (SLA)                           |
| 9. Industrial Park       | 13. Deep Social Space                        |
| 10. Institutional Field  | 14. Real Teenman Bastard Pavillion—The Annex |

1. *Publyck Sculpture*, 1994
2. *Awning Blanks*, 1990
9. *Industrial Park*, 1991
10. *Institutional Field*, 1991
14. *Real Teenman Bastard Pavillion—The Annex*, 1990

Fences, walls, seesaws or signs: everything we encounter in public space can and must be regarded as public sculpture; for every object is the product of a process of material composition and formal design. All objects influence our perceptions, our movements, our feelings, and our thoughts. Public space is not designed by human beings alone, but is instead shaped by the boundaries between public and private, institutional and commercial.

While a fence, a wall or a barrier offer access to the few, they also serve as clear and definite obstacles that keep the many others out, or in. Regulations reflecting the ideological concepts of the various institutions dictate how we act and move about in the city, in a park, or on a playground.

Public space is occupied and commercialized by the designs of awnings, canopies, or outdoor advertising, which we can ignore only by closing our eyes.

Every individual moves daily through the various forms of structural violence whose constant obtrusiveness blinds us to their violent nature. Cady Noland exposes these abstract forms of violence in her simple representational and abstract sculptures, and in doing so, enables us to sense our own sensitivity and power to resist.

### 3. *Tower of Terror*, 1993

As in other works (*Gibbet*, *Beltway Terror*) by Cady Noland, the reduced, monochrome color of the aluminum cast and the heavy aluminum stands shifts the representational aspect of Cady Noland's *Tower of Terror* into the realm of the abstract. By controlling and abstracting form and material Noland exposes the violent harshness that is inherent in the functional social contexts of these objects. Beneath the lustrous surface, the triple pillory sheds its outdated character. What remains is its purpose of humiliating people and exposing them to ridicule. It may be rendered all the more gruesome in the present, as public exposure for example through viral and uncontrollable distribution in social media, gains new actuality.

### 4. *Frame Device*, 1989

The walking frames in *Frame Device* are dysfunctional, yet placed precisely at the corner posts of the enclosure. They maintain the interior space, even though they are useless. They bear witness to frailty and limitation. They suggest that, although social participation can be excluded, there is no real outside. The resulting exclusion of society, as represented here by the walking frames, is always an element of the interior, which could not exist as such without it. *Frame Device* resembles an "Arena of society" of the kind Noland describes in *Towards a Metalanguage of Evil* (1987). In that work, the competition among the winners, the "heroes," is played out primarily on the backs of the uninitiated losers.

### 5. *Stockade*, 1987/1988

The word "stockade" designates a row of solid fence posts that forms a line of defense or encloses a prison. The formal reduction of color and form goes hand in hand with the substantive concretion and transmission of the enclosure cited in the title. The useless walker frames attached to the posts evoke an equally gruesome association with the physical restriction of access and participation. Interpretable in terms of the same relationship between an abstract entity (the stock market) and its concrete effect (social inequality) is the table published by the Internal Revenue office in New York, which is used to calculate income tax and immediately reveals an individual's status in a society that is oriented towards economic values.

### 6. *Model With Entropy*, 1984

The objects presented in *Model With Entropy* are used, worn, and covered with inscriptions. Hung side by side on a baseball bat, they form a bodiless trophy. The helmet no longer protects the football player's head, the book is no longer being read, no body is being held securely in place by the safety belt, there is no hand in the glove, and the air has leaked out of the basketball. The model, which may have been meant to illustrate a theory, appears exhausted, devoid of energy, worn out. The world of sports, with its ideals, its cult of the body, and its division into winners and losers, has outlived its purpose as a social model of society. Perhaps this is the change from one condition to another that is suggested in the concept of entropy.



## 8. *Celebrity Trash Spill*, 1989

Cigarette packs, sunglasses, newspapers and clothing—symbols of the culture of celebrity and consumption—lie carelessly strewn over demolished camera equipment. In its event character, *Celebrity Trash Spill* assumes the immediacy of a crime scene. The title page of the *New York Post* of April 13, 1989, announces the death of Abbie Hoffman. A co-founder of the Youth International Party (“Yippies”) and a member of the pacifist group known as the Chicago Seven, the activist and anarchist gained attention in the 1960s through prominent protest marches, and was regarded as an icon of the counterculture and the anti-war movement.

Noland calls attention to the perverse sensationalism that has the power to evoke stylized media images of individuals as celebrities or anti-heroes: the omnipresent photo of John F. Kennedy’s assassin Lee Harvey Oswald, the countless front-page stories about the Manson clan or the fate of Betty Ford and her struggle with alcoholism. “[Y]ou consume all of these celebrities each week, then you turn them into trash,” as Noland remarked in an interview with Michèle Cone in 1990. Cady Noland exposes the powerful and violent mechanism employed by tabloid media, which degrades people and turns them into consumable goods. Like carelessly discarded objects, they are disposed of and excluded from the economy of public attention only to survive as forever accessible, photographically reproduced media objects.

## 7. *Tanya as a Bandit*, 1989

### 11. *Untitled (William Randolph Hearst)*, 1990

### 12. *Untitled (SLA)*, c. 1989

By printing her screen prints on aluminum, positioning them like sculptures in space, or leaning them casually against the wall, Cady Noland imbues the images with spatial character and makes their objectivity graspable. As screen-print images on cold metal, the depicted individuals become lifeless objects—the photographs are stripped of their seductive lightness. Noland employs the strategies of the tabloid press, which “creates celebrities and ‘cuts them to size,’ blowing them up and reduces them to photo-objects, only to only to animate the objects again” (from: *Towards a Metalanguage of Evil*, 1987).

*Tanya as a Bandit* shows an enlarged version of the staged photograph with which Patty Hearst publicly announced her affiliation with the SLA. The photo caused a media sensation in 1974, as Hearst, the granddaughter of William Randolph Hearst, despite being kidnapped by the SLA, joined the group as “Tanya” during the course of her captivity. Hearst named herself after Tamara Bunke, an East-German guerilla fighter and comrade of Che Guevara. Hearst, the cobra symbol, and another weapon are cut out, as if the aluminum plate still represented the original newsprint. The news report in which Hearst is described as “NOW A SUSPECT” after having fired her weapon wildly following the failed robbery of a sporting goods store in Los Angeles on May 16, 1974, serves as a kind of base for the image.

*Untitled (William Randolph Hearst)* is a large-scale portrait of the American media tycoon and multimillionaire William Randolph Hearst. As the primary rival of Joseph Pulitzer, Hearst established the form of sensationalist reporting which became known as the “yellow press” towards the end of the nineteenth century. By putting together a chain of nearly thirty newspapers in all regions of the United States, he established the world’s largest newspaper and magazine empire. The sensationalistic journalism that typified his publications became the dominant narrative form in the media industry. Yet Hearst’s attempts to build a political career remained unsuccessful.

Thus his campaign poster stands as a relic of his failure to exert real political influence.

*Untitled (SLA)* presents a shadowy image of a torn newspaper photograph showing members of the radical left-wing revolutionary organization known as the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), which was active in the US from 1973 until 1975. The group was led by the African-American Donald DeFreeze, alias “General Field Marshal Cinque,” who called himself Joseph Cinqué, in memory of the man who led a rebellion of slaves in 1839. The SLA published a manifesto entitled “Symbionese Liberation Army Declaration of Revolutionary War & Symbionese Program,” in which it defined the Symbionese Army as a complex of various bodies and organisms—and as a union of all left-wing, feminist, and anti-capitalist beliefs. Its symbol, the seven-headed cobra, is based on the principles of Kwanzaa, a popular week-long festival celebrated by African Americans in the US. The heads represent unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. The group waged guerilla war and attracted considerable media attention through the kidnapping of Patty Hearst.

### 13. *Deep Social Space*, 1989

The clear arrangement of bars in *Deep Social Space* serves as the framework for a collection of objects that are turned upside-down, suspended, laid on the floor, stacked, or leaned against each other. The household effects have the appearance of a collection of dead objects which, carefully stowed away or thoughtlessly set aside, is presented as an inventory of social life. Formally dominant are the multiple grates, grids, and constructive bar elements. Permeable and separating, grasping and repelling, ordering and limiting, they combine to form a basic structure. The arrangement repeatedly raises the question of possession, of subdivision into garden, house or yard, of the screen’s protective function against intrusive gazes. The objects bear witness to forms of interaction among absent human beings that are orchestrated by the objects themselves: grilling on the barbecue, sharing a meal, national identification, communication, consumption, or advertising. It is neither a random gathering of objects nor a surreal scenario, but rather a materialized image of social life. The stubborn persistence with which the objects never seem to be more than what they are—whether they look pathetic, provocative, potent, violent, or cruel—make it all the more evident in *Deep Social Space* just how powerfully the presence of these objects dictates human behavior, while conveying and performing their social functions.



# List of Works

## Cady Noland

Born 1956, Washington, D.C. (US)  
lives in New York (US)

*Model With Entropy*, 1984. Baseball bat, American football helmet, book mounted on wood, window washer belt, baseball glove, basketball, Private collection (FR)

*Percussion and Cartridge Revolvers*, 1984. Manual for firearms mounted on wooden plate, wooden stick, several snap hooks, handcuffs, whistle, leather buckles, cord, various metal rings, Collection Larry Gagosian (US)

*Pedestal*, 1985. Door mat, belt, seat cussion, Sammlung Ringier (CH)

*Push Papers*, 1986. Wall bracket, various metal rings, baton holder, badge on chain, leather case with pencil, trade magazine for firearms in protective foil, Private collection (US)

*Cart Full of Action*, 1986. Cart, rims, rear-view mirror, exhaust, engine oil, battery charger, various plastics, oil-based car care products, Collection Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (CA); Gift of Vivian and David Campbell, 1999

*Guns*, 1986/1987. Collaged black and white copy, adhesive tape, clamp, Sammlung Goetz, Munich (DE)

*Untitled*, 1986/2018. Bullets, handgrenade, Coca Cola can, beer can, sheriff badge suspended within plexiglass, Loan from the artist and a European collection

*Untitled*, 1986/2018. Metal link chain, marshall badge, security police badge suspended within plexiglass, Loan from the artist and a European collection

*Shuttle*, 1987. Chromed wall bracket, metal workshop trolley, car parts, rim, exhaust pipe, safety belt buckle, plastic casing, Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland (US)

*The Mirror Device*, 1987. Chrome-plated metal, handcuffs, flare gun, vanity mirror, Collection Larry Gagosian (US)

*Untitled*, 1987. Silkscreen ink on aluminum, Collection Bob Nickas (US)

*Stockade*, 1987/1988. Scaffolding poles, stanchions, three walkers, New York state tax table, EXIT sign templates, sales rack for envelopes, various metal rings, Collection Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (CA); Gift of Vivian and David Campbell, 1999

*Bloody Mess*, 1988. Two rubber mats, foot wiper, metal basket with handcuffs, two shock absorbers, eleven beer cans, three headlight lamps, police equipment, police cap, beer tap, beer bottle, reflector, rear-view mirror with holder, metal basket, metal pipe, Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut (US)

*Basket of Action*, 1988. Metal basket, jumper cable, metal link chain, Musée des beaux-arts La Chaux-de-Fonds (CH)

*Untitled (SLA)*, ca. 1989. Silkscreen ink on acetate, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (US); Bequest of John S. Caldwell

*Untitled*, 1989. Metal basket, car spare parts, beer cans, metal link chain, car polish, V-belt, Private collection; Courtesy of Luhring Augustine, New York (US)

*Untitled (Walker)*, 1989. Walker, American flag, clothes rail, metal basket, Private collection (UK)

*Booth—The Big Plunge*, 1989. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, Collection S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst Ghent (BE)

*Celebrity Trash Spill*, 1989. Newspapers, magazines, three cameras with equipment, lenses, camera tripods, microphone, shirt, five sunglasses, doormat, rubber mats, pack of cigarettes, Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz (LI)

*Corral Gates*, 1989. Corral gate, horse-gear, ammunition chain, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin (IT)

*Crate of Beer*, 1989. Metal basket, beer cans, luggage tensioner, Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut (US)

*Dead Space*, 1989. Scaffolding pipes, Collection Peter Fleissig (US)

*Deep Social Space*, 1989. Scaffolding poles, stanchions, chromed poles, American flag, grill with handcuffs, room divider, crutch, trolley with letterbox and potato chips, metal basket with beer cans, bread rolls, orthopedic bandage, horse saddle with blankets, music stand with cow bells, various metal grids and racks, various wood and metal rings, various objects, Collection Udo and Anette Brandhorst, Munich (DE)

*Frame Device*, 1989. Pipes, stanchions, twelve walkers, Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut (US)

*Objectification Process*, 1989. Walker, rolled up American flag in packaging, various grids, metal link chain, two metal eyelets with plastic ring, The Institute of Contemporary Art Boston (US); Promised gift of Barbara Lee, The Barbara Lee collection of Art by Women

*Oozewald*, 1989. Silkscreen ink on aluminum, American flag, Coca Cola drinking cup, metal stand, Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland (US)

*Oswald Shot Cut-Out*, 1989. Collaged original photograph, Sammlung Goetz, Munich (DE)

*Pipes in a Basket*, 1989. Metal basket, American flag, cartridge belt, handcuffs, metal tubes, Collection Peter Fleissig (US)

*Rail*, 1989. Scaffolding pole, handcuffs, parcel tag, Private collection (UK)

*Sideways Grab*, 1989. Wall bracket, metal clip, various metal rings, metal link chain, American flag, grab,

chrome-plated metal frame, Private collection (US)

*Tanya as a Bandit*, 1989. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, bandana cloth, metal stand, Collection Udo and Anette Brandhorst, Munich (DE)

*The Big Shift*, 1989. Scaffold pole, nine American flags, handcuffs, metal grate, grill grate tong, spray pump, leather loop, luggage tensioner, equalizer metal cover, various snap hooks, various metal rings, Collection Jeffrey Deitch (US)

*The Big Shift (drawing)*, 1989. Three Polaroids collaged with adhesive tape on paper, Collection Jeffrey Deitch (US)

*Untitled (Double Texas License Plate)*, 1989. Xerox prints, paper clips in artist frame, Collection of Barbara and Howard Morse (US)

*Mutated Pipe*, 1989. Scaffold pole, window crank, leather buckle with snap hook, paradestick, jockstrap, tax table of the State of New York, metal grate, bridles, American flag, various metal rings, laces, MUSEUM FÜR MODERNE KUNST, Former collection of Rolf Ricke in the MUSEUM FÜR MODERNE KUNST, Frankfurt am Main (DE), Kunstmuseum, St. Gallen (CH), Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, Vaduz (LI)

*The Big Slide*, 1989. Chrome wall bracket, various metal tubes, wall hooks, plastic phone cord boxes, walking cane for the blind, wire dishwasher rack, two American flags, nylon flag, cord, grab, metal mount, wall hook, various metal rings, large paper clip, The Art Institute of Chicago (US); Gift of Donna and Howard Stone in honor of James Rondeau

*Saloon Stairs, Blank with Extra Wood*, 1990. Wood construction, Private collection (DE)

*Untitled (William Randolph Hearst)*, 1990. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, Loan from the artist (US)

*Vet—“Head” with Metal Plate*, 1990. Wood plate, American flag, metal, scarves, Collection Bob Nickas (US)

*Awning Blanks*, 1990. Aluminum frames, Collection S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst Ghent (BE)

*Cowboy Bullethead Moviestar*, 1990. Aluminum plate, metal stand, Private collection (US)

*Enquirer Page with Eyes Cut Out*, 1990. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, luggage tensioner, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (US); Gift of Frances and John Bowes, Collectors Forum, Shirley Ross Davis, and Byron R. Meyer

*Truck Rack Blank*, 1991. Scaffolding poles, connecting elements, Museum Ludwig, Cologne (DE); Donation to the Art Foundation at the Museum Ludwig from Gaby and Wilhelm Schürmann 2009

*Untitled (Patty in Church)*, 1991. Silkscreen ink on paper in artist frame, Sammlung Ringier (CH)

*Untitled*, 1991. Silkscreen ink on paper in artist frame, Collection Larry Gagosian (US)

*Industrial Park*, 1991. Chainlink fence, Collection Eric Decelle (BE)

*Institutional Field*, 1991. Chainlink fence, Collection Eileen and Michael Cohen (US)

*Untitled (Triptych)*, 1991/1992. Metal plates in artist frame, Loan from the artist (US)

*Untitled*, 1992. Silkscreen ink on paper in artist frame, Collection Larry Gagosian (US)

*12’6” Chainlink Fence*, 1992. Chainlink fence, Collection Larry Gagosian (US)

*Untitled (Flag)*, 1992. Silkscreen ink on honeycomb aluminum, Private collection (US)

*Charlie Two Face*, 1992/1993. Collaged black and white copy, Sammlung Goetz, Munich (DE)

*Eye Candy*, 1993. Collaged black and white copy, adhesive tape, Sammlung Goetz, Munich (DE)

*Eye Cut Out Charles Manson*, 1993. Collaged black and white copy on paper, Sammlung Goetz, Munich (DE)

*Martha Mitchell*, 1993. Collaged black and white copy, glue, Sammlung Goetz, Munich (DE)

*Untitled (Manson/Rivera)*, 1993/1994. Collage from photocopies, adhesive tape on foam board, Private collection (US)

*Gibbet*, 1993/1994. Aluminum over metal, American flag, aluminum bench, Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut (US)

*Beltway Terror*, 1993/1994. Aluminum over metal, aluminium bench, Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut (US)

*IMPACT ON THE IMAGE*, 1993/1994. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, The Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles (US)

*My Amusement*, 1993/1994. Aluminum over wood, steel plates, chain, whitewall tire, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (US); Gift of Emily L. Carroll and Thomas W. Weisel, Jean and Jim Douglas, Mimi and Peter Haas, Diane M. Heldfond, and Leanne B. Roberts

*SHAM DEATH*, 1993/1994. Silkscreen ink on honeycomb aluminum, The Broad Art Foundation, Los Angeles (US)

*Surrounded!!!*, 1993/1994. Silkscreen ink on steel plate, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut (US); The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner collection Fund

*Tower of Terror*, 1993. Aluminum over metal, aluminum bench, chain, padlocks, key, Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland (US)

*Trashing Folgers*, 1993/1994. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, Collection FRAC Grand Large-Hauts-de-France, Dunkerque (FR)

*Untitled (Brick Wall)*, 1993/1994. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (CH)

*Walk and Stalk*, 1993/1994. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (US); Gift of Vicki and Kent Logan

*Untitled*, 1994. Silkscreen ink on honeycomb aluminum, Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut (US)

*Joan, is there one law?*, 1994. Silkscreen ink on steel plate, The Art Institute of Chicago (US); Gift of Marilyn and Larry Fields

*Untitled (Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis)*, 1994. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut (US); The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner collection Fund

*Not Yet Titled*, 1994. Chainlink fence, Hamburger Kunsthalle (DE); Gift of the artist on the occasion of the opening of Galerie der Gegenwart, 1997

*Publyck Sculpture*, 1994. Aluminum over wood, steel plates, metal link chains, three whitewall tires, Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland (US)

*The Poster People*, 1994. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut (US); The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner collection Fund

*Untitled (Brick Wall)*, 1994/1995. Silkscreen ink on aluminum plate, Private collection (US)

*(NOT YET TITLED)*, 1996. Cardboard, primed with lacquer and aluminum spray paint, MUSEUM<sup>MMK</sup> FÜR MODERNE KUNST; Acquired with funding from the partners of the MMK

*Untitled*, 1997/1998. Whitewall tire, aluminum pipe, Loan from the artist (US)

*A Piece*, 1998. Plastic saw blocks, acrylic on wood, Sammlung Ringier (CH)

*Untitled*, 1999. Plastic saw blocks, acrylic on wood, Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (CH)

*Untitled*, 1999. Cardboard tube covered with industrially printed black and white paper, Loan from the artist (US)

*Untitled (Small tires)*, 2005. Rubber wheels with rim, threaded rod, Loan from the artist (US)

*Untitled*, 2008. Metal basket, two motorcycle helmets, film reel, three subway straps, metal emblem, Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (US); Gift of the artist and Helen van der Mij-Tcheng, by exchange, 2009

**Diana Balton with Cady Noland** 1958, Detroit (US)–2013, New York (US) Born 1956, Washington, D.C. (US) lives in New York (US)

*Eat Yer Fucking Face Off!!*, 1990. Silkscreen ink on plastic, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (NL)

*Nuts ‘N’ Shit*, 1990. Enamel on steel, mounted on aluminum frame, Courtesy The Brant Foundation, Greenwich, Connecticut (US)

*Real Teenman Bastard Pavillion—The Annex*, 1990. Silkscreen ink on wood, Private collection (DE)

## **Injuring, Wagering, Controlling: Looking Back at a Metalanguage**

Diedrich Diederichsen

### MASS MURDERERS AND MASS CULTURES

Even before he was elected president of the United States, literary scholars dissected the many passages from Bret Easton Ellis's novel *American Psycho*, written in the 1980s and published in 1991, in which the murdering and torturing protagonist of the novel refers in praise and admiration to the present holder of that office, who at the time was just a regular real-estate developer and billionaire in New York. In the 1980s, Patrick Bateman, the most famous of Ellis's protagonists, personified a first version of a new evil subjectivity that his contemporaries explained in terms of its negativity, that is, in terms of what it lacked: an absence of morality, of empathy, of humanity seemed to define the psycho. What distinguishes him from his predecessors in American reality and fiction, all the serial and mass murderers, from Ed Gein to Charles Manson, who so fascinated youth and underground culture in the post-punk years from 1985 onward, was above all a social component: Bateman was no social outcast, no eccentric; on the contrary, his fantasies and strategies were directed at the social world; he hated losers and was interested in winners. The reading of this novel that has been asserted most frequently and even today characterizes many strands of its reception, argues that the total lack of empathy and scruples of the mass murderer had in the late 1980s become identical with the personality of the ultimate beneficiary of capitalism in its most advanced form, namely, finance capitalism. Somewhat earlier, Cady Noland wrote that the new psychopath of the 1980s was not asocial but rather "over-socialized."

Nevertheless, this interpretation of Bateman as a character emptied in a way analogous to the commodity form is not entirely wrong, but it overlooks the fact that the novel published in 1991 was preceded by Cady Noland's study from 1987,<sup>1</sup> which already offered a formal and systematic description of this psychopathology, whose symptoms were often noted but not understood by those interested in Bateman or the cult of mass and serial killers in the 1980s. Rather than describing a mere absence of morality and empathy, or even the absence of connections and integration resonant in the very term "asocial,"

Noland describes what characterizes this psychopath in quite a positive way: the game he plays and above all how this game is played cannot be explained as a deviation from and absence of normality but, on the contrary, as the structure on which this normality is based. That she calls this structure a “game” is, in a sense, even more prophetic than the pathology she outlines. For she describes the integration of these pathologies on the level of culture—and here, too, the artist established a remarkable connection, which not only permits a diagnosis of the present in the late 1980s to be continued into our present, but can also be described as a story of the unfolding of a trend, indeed the development of a trend into a totality.

In three steps, I would like to attempt to reconstruct the diagnosis and the artistic work associated with it. In the first step, I am concerned with the pathology itself and in particular with the relationship of its construction to power and authority in the (finance) capitalism of recent decades; in the second, with the concept of the game in Noland and its relationship to art and aesthetics; and, in the third, with the level of representation in Noland’s work, with questions of the symbolic, the artistic, the linguistic, and the semiotic in the relationship of an economy to real time and to an aesthetic of indexicality and authenticity in today’s mass cultures.

### PSYCHOPATHOLOGICAL REGIMES

The dominant critical analyses of capitalist domination of recent decades generally distinguish between two regimes: authoritarian but also caring, inclusive Fordism, which cooperates to a certain extent with the introduction of social benefits and the state social security systems, is strictly hierarchical in structure, assumes traditional gender roles, and employs culture and entertainment to sedate the working class and keep it from becoming conscious of exploitative conditions. The other regime attributed to postindustrial informational and semiotic capitalism is the internalized command structure of a constantly self-optimizing, overburdened psyche of outsourced, precarious freelancers operating as mini-entrepreneurs. In today’s capitalism in Western metropolises, the second form has increased over the last four or five years, but the first one still exists as well. Both models see a close connection between the economic side and the cultural and psychological side of exploitation and domination. But now Noland describes—very much in

a certain American tradition (Burroughs)—this third form which is not dominated by the rule-like, as these other two models are; rather, its actors are distinguished by individual, manipulative behavior whose very significance is taking security from the other person who is to be ruled; this security consists of the reference and appeal to rules, even when they are unsatisfactory. In the first model, it is the dependence of capital on the productive bodies of the workers; in the second, it is reference to one’s self, to one’s own inventiveness and creativity, which is stressful and causes depression but ultimately protects against complete destabilization. In Noland’s psychopathology of the male entrepreneur, criminal, and businessman, however, the primary goal of his strategy lies in destabilizing the other’s possibility of reference and any resource of truth and security.

The psychopathological goal of controlling, subjugating, and unnerving the other is, at first glance, a destructive one and thus at cross-purposes with the economy, even the capitalist one; what is left in the end are the dead and injured, neither productive bodies nor creative heads. Yet for some time now it has seemed plausible that the fear of the destabilized makes more sense for a regime driven by the profits from the speculation of finance capital, which increasingly works for short-term calculations, than the relative stability that large Fordist industrial companies need. In that sense, post-Fordist capitalism is often about exploiting human abilities that are tied not to learned and learnable skills (and their simpler reproducibility) but rather to personal and ephemeral (i.e., not guaranteed by good employment conditions) properties such as beauty, youth, and charm. It might be said that elements of primitive accumulation are returning in post-Fordism: it is no longer about hiring and employing workers stably and for life but rather about siphoning off qualities from them as long as they are completely fresh and then leaving the possessors of these qualities, the workers, to fend for themselves, like the miners in Potosí.

There is, however, another side to the psychopathic entrepreneur and his logic. The latter is profoundly personal; it is not part of an entrepreneurial culture and its often very humanist-sounding principles. The psychopathological actor appears in various places in the business world; he is never the enterprise but deep inside he is the representative of the free entrepreneur—and

together with his countercultural kin he is against the logic of the system; *that* is his system. He breaks the rules; he is not identical with the seemingly pacified totality of economic rationality and social recompense that corporate communication even today conveys wherever there is a need to suggest the stability of Fordist industrial capitalism. This entrepreneurial culture, which often pretends to be “sustainable” and “attentive,” is the ostensible antagonist of the pioneer and free entrepreneur of the old school; its enemies are assault and transgression. The latter are, however, precisely the center and preferred tools of the psychopathological practice of control and domination. They need not be—and are not always—identical with the authority of the nominal or official boss or his committees; they can appear on all levels of the hierarchy. In each case they represent only the horizon of the possible destruction and shock. They form the embodiment of the potential threat and violence that every company poses to its employees and freelancers, but they also represent an opportunity for identification that is certainly related to the older individual and anarchistic visions of the artistic avant-gardes and subcultures.<sup>2</sup>

As Noland clearly showed as well, violence plays a crucial role in this. Violence is the point of bifurcation of an originally naive anarchic protest of male bodies in pseudorational orders: a bifurcation either to violent overidentification with the structurally disruptive logic of capital or flight from it, indeed, rebellion against it. The factory seems to say tacitly, as does the office, that they want from us reliability, obedience to rules, and stability, and offer us the same in exchange. Experience with anarchy that is contained in the capitalist economy and is increased exponentially in finance capitalism is tied to the experience of a restricted, tied-up body. The two things become indistinguishable: the liberating body could discover its sensory reason by injuring or destroying another body that seems to be as healthy and holistic as rationality itself. The dominant economic logic concedes that violence is right and sensual reason wrong. It becomes violent for rational reason; with individual violence, one can catch up to it, hook up to its drive, destabilize the other who still believes in the promise of stability offered by the entrepreneurial organization: “Business manuals meanwhile advocate the cultivation of a certain degree of mania in order to play the markets, and executives are actually taught how to ride a manic

high to increase sales and productivity. A media image depicts Ted Turner as a furiously determined sea captain, with the warning that he has come off lithium, so his competitors should beware!”<sup>3</sup>

## THE GAME AND IDENTIFICATION

The dominance of narrative formats in all mass cultures points to a specific, traditional reception pattern: identification with certain people within the narration who have qualities that resemble the ideal ego or the ego ideal of the recipient or who establish an emotional connection. The fate of this person connects me to the plot, and I want to triumph or go down tragically with him or her: my pleasure is precisely that nothing can separate us. If such separation is possible, then the film or book in fact bored us. In traditional narratives and sometimes in modern ones, only one person is intended as a candidate for such identification, and if we don’t get anywhere with him or her, we won’t get anywhere with the whole proposal. In postmodern narratives, there are several equally good proposals, so that people of different cultural backgrounds, different political views, different education, and even children and adults can engage with the same artifact but accept different and equally valid proposals. This is particularly true of long-term products such as television series or cycles of novels; the simultaneity of contrary, ideologically, or morally contradictory proposals that are nevertheless both intended as proposals for identification are no longer perceived by the audience as a cognitive dissonance.

That such a juxtaposition is possible has long since been clear to the psychopath, as Cady Noland describes him. She describes him, after all, as “over-socialized,” that is, excessively familiar with the rules of society. He is, in a sense, the author of television formats that offer a wealth of equally valid proposals, and Noland explicitly refers to *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, the prototypes of the new, postmodern television series, as classic environments for her psychopaths: not only do they include psychopaths among the characters but they also offer the simultaneous adoption of different positions that is not possible for a “healthy” person. As we can now recapitulate, if one is bored by the rules and has signed up for the economic dynamic that finds pleasure and productivity in breaking rules, injury, and violence, how does one approach cultural proposals that are no longer suited to tragedy and

purification? One sees them—and here is Noland's term again—as a game. This game should not be confused with the play of Schiller's aesthetics: it is not the antithesis of the seriousness of life. This game serious; perhaps it could be better described as a wager, even if that is not especially satisfying either.

The game is visible in the installations. They are crazy and impossible courses, paths, and obstacles; there appear to be tasks or have been tasks, permitted and prohibited passages. They are components of the regime that become recognizable, in part in the metonymic proximity of the ready-made or ready-made fragments to its real context, in part because the architecture of the installation suggests we play with suggestions and instructions. The regime is already a preliminary stage of today's omnipresent interactivity, which, after all, is actually an organization of active, blindly productive passivity: allowing oneself to be told to go somewhere and then be prevented from doing so, to be led again, to be challenged again, to "like."

In the game, in television formats, but above all in wagers, the figure of identification has been replaced by the avatar. On the one hand, the avatar demands an emotionally much more powerful cathexis than the figure of identification, but that pertains only to his strategic position in the game, not to his other human qualities. In its break with a very specific normative humanism—which naturally plays a role in the reception of identification—this shift has also been understood, not always wrongly, as an act of liberation. One can, however, assume that its across-the-board implementation in cultural artifacts is rather a symptom that stands for the spread of another kind of reception. One invests in a position, not in a character with its long duration. By investing in a position, one manages not to be completely destroyed in a defeat and to go down along with it, but while adopting the position one lives in a feeling of great power, of ambush, and moves strategically through a terrain in which the others are always—as much as possible—the surprised ones who are punished when they were not sufficiently afraid, not sufficiently unnerved.

That is the full meaning of the game on the threshold to the wager: one bets from a reserve of money for investments but does not regard this money as identical with one's own person—it is a weapon, a prothesis, an extension. That is also true for the sensory organs which

are directly fed certain pleasures that are not necessarily connected to an understanding. This enjoyment, also and especially of cultural products, is a game that does not distinguish between the as—if of a classical concept of the game and the seriousness of the intervention—except in moments of global or collective catastrophe, when even the managers are quick to commit suicide. The language in which I can talk about that today, however, already presumes that the pathological manipulator described by Cady Noland, who is playing the game by figuring out, anticipating, and misleading the other person, no longer represents a cultural exception, the scofflaw entrepreneur who proves the rule of closed-off corporate culture with company ethics, but has instead himself become the standard, as Darian Leader described him. His strategies and tactics are not just copied from formats of art and culture. Precisely like his subcultural kin, he is no longer the violent breach of the system that keeps the system alive but rather a well-introduced, long—since accepted articulation—like the repressive doorman in front of a club or the security check at the airport: a repressive fearmonger, a cousin of the terrorist, a security expert—after all, more and more actual terrorists and Mafiosi are working as bodyguards and in the security industry.

## MATERIAL AND SYMBOLS

Not without reason, Cady Noland speaks of a metalanguage, a term she chose not just for her essay but also for the title of an exhibition. This metalanguage could easily be art, which in the wake of the Pictures Generation developed methods to prepare and present pictorial grammars as a whole or at least as larger units, just as a metalanguage can present languages as a whole and as a system. It is, however, important to note that the entire context of the symptoms outlined by Noland is inconceivable without photographic images (including, of course, cinematic images). Violence is available as something else ever since, in its acuteness, it has increasingly been circulating as indexical images (and other technical recordings) of real violence rather than as a sequential diegetic depiction of victims or the boasting of perpetrators. Violence in this sense is one of the central attractions of cultural formats working with indexical media (it goes without saying that sex is the other).

In that sense, it is once again television formats, but also those of so-called social media, that have turned this



status of the social integration of psychopathological infringement and assaults into genre-like formulas: the casting show and other reality formats whose point is that the physical reactions of the people they record are as intense as possible but also as spontaneous, unplanned, and inept as possible, ideally involving tears. And other bodily fluids. Even if this format and its kin could not yet have been anticipated around 1990, Cady Noland's work can be seen as resistance to the false immediacy of the infringement—a false immediacy that has its origin in the capitalist dynamic of valorization as well as in the spontaneous “male protest” against valorization, control, and anticipation.

The obvious choice would be to use the media in which this format of behavior is propagated, developed, and popularized, just as Andy Warhol did when this type was just emerging. Instead, however, Noland develops a format of the visual and of the installation that is completely unique. Using a few objects and materials, she very quickly created something that is less a style than in fact a language. One has the sense that it could be taken up and continued again and again. The background of these signs is metal, that is, the basic design means of the universe of exchange value that stands for sheen, mirroring, hardness, coldness, and invincibility: it shines, it looks good, I am captivated, limited by it, and again and again I see myself—my only encounter. This backdrop of the sign-like paper for writing—is of course also the (non)substance of the coin; other concretizations, such as handcuffs, fences, weapons, result—as is to be expected of a language—on their own.

In addition to the “paper” and the metal objects, there are images and visual fragments, most of which already have a story behind them, such as the recurring image of Lee Harvey Oswald at the moment Jack Ruby's bullet hits him (the objects, too, often appear to be riddled by bullets: the metal “background,” the “paper”). This is not just about reviving the memory of an image that had already been circulating for a quarter century at the time, but also alludes to the efforts of first pop art and later other meta-mass-cultural visual practices (like the Pictures Generation) to offer such images a second boom in the autonomous field of the visual arts, where they can be seen from the observation tower of the special security of the field, so that mass culture can be seen as a culture of others (of the unenlightened). But this is precisely what

makes Noland's installations—while not physically impossible—aesthetic. There are these signs on metal, these icons and iconic signs, all of which were once indexical televisions images, showing people who at the moment the picture was taken did not expect to be photographed or filmed, only at the cost of a distorted, disruptive background of symbols of violence. The fact that these people are, as a rule, perpetrators and victims (of photographers) is part of the game (Charles Manson, Patty Hearst, William Randolph Hearst).

There are neither entire “composed” images nor sculptures with intact, integral volumes. The images are prints of images; they are the indexical trace of the formerly iconic. The mixture of pictorial elements and flat, as it were cut-out figures that recur like a part of the image and yet stand freely in space like a sculpture corresponds to the mixture of types of signs, all of which represent an artistic countermeasure against the false directness and infringing, even assault of indexical images of absorption, sex, and violence. The only thing that is indexical is the long—since printed, circulating image, which gets stuck on the material. So a reference to this regime of the indexical image not only remains possible but is directly demonstrated as the material of which the prisons of infringement, of false transgression, are made: material, cultural, symbolic, physical. That includes readymades or found objects, tools, weapons, but above all the architecture of demarcation, of public enclosure, of guiding, of control—that is, the concretization of fantasies of control as disturbing, shaping interruptions of the gallery space and its proxies—like the in every respect nightmarishly suitable underground garage at documenta IX in Kassel where the author of these lines had his first Cady Noland experience.

1 Cady Noland, *Towards a Metalanguage of Evil*, written in 1987, revised in 1992 (Ostfildern—Ruit: Cantz; Kassel: documenta IX, 1992).

2 In his essay on avant—garde theater in New York in the 1960s, Stefan Brecht describes a type he calls the “free person,” an antagonist of the “authoritarian phony,” who takes what he likes and whose means of choice is infringement. It is astonishing how closely this subcultural, artistic character, who at the time was described largely as a model for liberation, resembles the psychopath described by Noland. See Stefan Brecht, *The Original Theatre of the City of New York*, vol. 2, *Queer Theatre* (London: Methuen Drama, 1986).

3 Darian Leader, *Strictly Bipolar* (London: Penguin, 2013), introduction.



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Cady Noland, *Gibbet*, 1993/1994,  
Photo: Sean Keenan, courtesy  
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INSIDE FRONT COVER

Cady Noland, *Untitled (Flag)*, 1992,  
Private collection, Chicago IL, USA

IMAGE PAGES

Cady Noland, *Real Teenman Bastard*  
*Pavillion—The Annex*, 1990, Private  
collection, Photo: Axel Schneider

Cady Noland, *Tower of Terror*, 1993,  
Glenstone Museum, Potomac,  
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