

Ei Arakawa *Fees & Nerf*
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Forms of performance as well as the potential of collaboration form the core of Ei Arakawa's (born 1977 in Fukushima, lives in Los Angeles) artistic practice. In his new works, which have emerged in recent months from a productive confrontation with the effects of COVID-19, Arakawa addresses questions of value creation and circulation within various forms of artistic work as well as the instability of existing systems.

Out of the situation of not being able to be active as a performer in the last months, he has developed new LED-paintings, which are reactivations of his own performances, that have been realized at the Berlin Biennale, MoMA, New York and the Tate Modern, London. In terms of content and form, these tie in with his *Performance People*: a series of works that embody historical performances by other artists* through animating their natal charts. His new works display coins in the local currencies of the original performances, which, measured by the fees he received for them, show the respective value of the artistic work in one-minute animations. He thus shifts the perspective to the artistic subject Ei Arakawa, who is both the recipient of the royalties and the signifier of the value of his work. This is also evident in the work *Ei (Egg)*, for which Arakawa has laid out his first name in stacks of coins. In the abstraction of the name from the body of its wearer, the instability of the meaning of terms becomes evident in passing through different contexts. And just as terms as containers absorb the context of their respective use, artistic subjectivities become containers of their own history. In this way, the art system resembles currency systems: the value of currencies, like the value of works of art, depends on the trust that people place in the institutions that guarantee this value.

The instability of value and currencies is addressed in two other LED paintings. These show coins that are infused with image disturbances. They also act as performers of two songs that were created in collaboration with Dan Poston and the musician ZALA in direct relation to the exhibition. While *Family Dollar (Social Capital)* deals with the bankruptcy of the Arakawa family business in Fukushima from the fictionalized perspective of a coin, which now finds itself in the Schmela Haus, the second song develops from a series of interviews that Arakawa conducted with Japanese artists* on the subject of money during his voluntary two-week quarantine after coming to Düsseldorf from the USA.

The exhibition is supplemented by room-dividing objects that the artist found in a Düsseldorf restaurant and which used there to comply with the current hygiene regulations. Their performative transfer to the exhibition as structuring elements emphasizes the role of place and time in the experience of artworks, each of which develops its specific meaning anew from the context of its viewing.