

# Something was coming upon us

Emma Adler  
William Engelen  
Friederike Feldmann  
Dagmara Genda  
Emily Hunt  
Rodney LaTourelle & Louise Witthöft  
Thomas Locher  
Joachim Schmid

organized by Dagmara Genda

Prompted by unlucky circumstance, namely an eviction, nine artists have come together to transform a Charlottenburg apartment into an unusual and extraordinary exhibition space. Since August 2018, two artists, William Engelen and I, Dagmara Genda, have lived in the 30-apartment tenement completely alone. Since 2017, one by one, our neighbors packed up and moved away. Many could not take the stress of the near constant stream of foreign temporary workers slowly gutting the very building we were all living in. At the end of January, we will also take our things and leave, so that in February, the last month in which we have access to the suite, the darkened building can shine one final time. Sometime thereafter, the 122-year-old apartment block, will be demolished to make room for a new commercial space.

*Something was coming upon us* opens on the evening of February 9th. Presented are site-specific works, that in turn present the entire building as a work of art. Our interventions will deal with the changing state of the building in ways that are aesthetic, personal as well as political. Four of the exhibiting artists have once lived in the apartment, while the others are connected to the inhabitants as colleagues or friends. We represent two generations. The older one remembers the Berlin of the past, where living and working spaces were abundant. The younger generation has grown up in the current atmosphere of instability. The exhibition will be our final, mournful farewell, as well as an act of remembrance for the histories that are being erased, rewritten and perhaps forgotten.

Feb. 10 - Feb. 24, 2019  
Opening: Feb. 9, 2019, 7pm

Hours: Thurs - Mon: 3 - 9pm  
or by appointment

Englische Straße 29, 4th floor  
(Please call 01573 1834 625  
when at the front door. There is  
no buzzer downstairs.)



The view into a gutted home through a missing deadbolt.

The title, *Something was coming upon us*, is the ominous and prophetic first sentence of a text accompanying a series of photographs by Joachim Schmid. In April 1986, when he still lived in the apartment, Schmid pointed his lens at the heavy Berlin sky. He writes that he was a bit careless developing the photos, which

caused dark, threatening stains to appear in the air over Ernst-Reuter-Haus. The work, also titled *April 1986*, refers to the Chernobyl disaster by everything but name. Therefore it remains a heavy shadow that can also speak to a broader sense of threat. When Schmid took his photos, he didn't know that 33 years later his apartment would steadily be wedged out by Smart Care manufacturers and Mercedes Benz Showrooms. The invisible threat to which he referred had taken on many forms in the course of time.

As soon as one steps through the main entrance, one is confronted with the first work—two large aluminum plates by Thomas Locher, on which an article from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is printed, and through his personal commentary, interpreted. In the stairwell, a sound installation by William Engelen connects the different stories through jumping percussive rhythms.

The apartment itself will contain installations that will be destroyed along with the house. Friederike Feldmann, who herself lived in the apartment for 12 years, will present a wall work in the former office. At first one might think the rough paint strokes are the remnants of an unfinished paint job, but a closer inspection reveals a meticulously worked illusion that brings the spontaneous gesture in tension with the carefully planned stroke. In the bathroom Australian artist Emily Hunt installs a line of colorful hand-made tiles. As a Berlin newcomer, she has lived through her own share of instability. As a result, the letting go of things and histories has become not only a necessity but an artistic strategy.

Yet other approaches use the building as an artistic catalyst to create architectural interventions. In the so-called "Berlin Room," Rodney LaTourelle and Louise Witthöft install an architectural structure, that gives the impression that the modern buildings outside have made their way into the interior of the house. In the living-room hangs a life-size, three-dimensional, cut-out representation of the room itself. This ghostly drawing by Dagmara Genda is like a fading memory, that can be moulded to fit into other spaces and new conditions. In his former studio, Dutch artist William Engelen builds an architectural sound installation, where a composition based on live data from "the weather back home" in Holland can be heard. In the corridor, Emma Adler occupies a large storage room, wherein an alternative reality unfolds.



**Above:** Rodney LaTourelle, *Chromakenón*, 2012–13. Wood, Steel and Car paint. 30 x 30 m **Below:** The view into the courtyard from the kitchen.

Something was coming upon us is something of an ironic return to Berlin's anarchic early days, when apartment projects were an act of independent, punk creativity. Today, it is as much of an artistic opportunity as a historical loss.



Ein Bild aus *April 1986* (1986 / 2016) von Joachim Schmid.