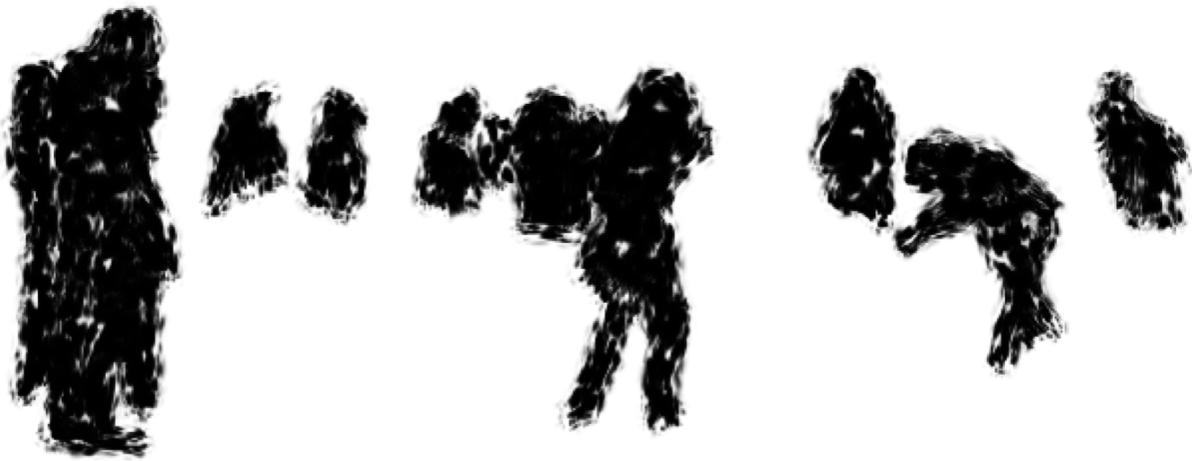


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Dec 15, 2022 – Feb 19, 2023

Nnenna Onuoha

# AFTERLIVES



## SLOT I

*The A-Team, Experiment 001*  
*Rosenfelde*

## FURTHER SLOTS

*Wash Day*  
*Lagos, Lagos*  
*Rosenfelde*

from January 11, 2023  
from February 1, 2023  
daily

'How do I explain that I remember feelings more  
than I'm remembering the facts?'

Mehitabel 'Metty' Markwei in *The A-Team*

Do you know the feeling of coming across a memory you did not even know was there in the first place? Those memories might creep up on you from the back of your head rather randomly. But often they take shape in situations we share with others, particularly when we engage in conversations about our pasts. All of a sudden, we find ourselves in a blurry vision of an unknown situation that turns out to be an actually experienced moment of our lives.

*The A-Team* allows the viewer to eavesdrop on such a process. For this work the artist Nnenna Onuoha asked her former classmates from Ghana to share their memories on a student exchange to Jackson, Mississippi in 2010 over the phone. The screens remain rather dark in the beginning of the conversation, but while the participants trace the contours of their own and each other's memory, an increasing number of blurry fragments, seemingly photography taken at the time, swarms the monitors. The phone call continues and as the group manages to establish their collectively shared past, they begin to reassess what had happened in Jackson in 2010. Looking at different situations, they encounter themselves having been exposed to othering, exoticism and racism. They wonder how they repeatedly had ended up in situations which reproduced images and ideas of colonialism such as the trip to a cotton field where the students from Ghana were encouraged to pick cotton and take it home with them as a souvenir.

The longer the videos run, some sort of astonishment becomes ever more perceptible for the viewer. How could these memories get lost given their severeness? What was it that had changed in the meantime if not the actual events? What to make of this re-appropriation of memory since nothing can be done about what has happened already? One of the conversation participants, 'Metty' understands her and the group's new old memory of the exchange program as a win, as something that needed to be retrieved.

Collectively holding on to a memory enables to create new and revised narratives and histories of the past – a resource we turn to from the point of present in order to envision and create a future. The massive monitors allow the viewer to recognize their own reflection within Onuoha's work and therewith maybe also their own responsibility in revisiting and revising the histories of their past.

Previous to getting in touch with her class mates, Onuoha decided to document what she remembered from the student exchange so as not to get confused with the many shared histories. Just as she was planning to interview her class mates, she recorded herself narrating the first memory from the top of her head as *Experiment 001*. During her first night in Jackson, then student Onuoha had sleep walked and ended up in her hosting family's bedroom closet. While chronologically this allegedly funny anecdote can be read as the prelude to *The A-Team*, it might as well function as an uncanny presentiment come true.

Passing by Galerie im Turm at late hour, one's gaze might get caught by the moving images that are gleaming from behind the gallery's glass doors. Swirling shots of chandeliers, patterned wallpaper and golden mantel clocks draw the eye further into Onuoha's video work until eventually, the viewer's gaze is met by several pairs of eyes that are looking back.

*Rosenfelde* was shot at Friedrichsfelde Castle in Berlin which was built in 1687 on behalf of Benjamin Raule. Resorting to the frequently used online search engines and resources in order to learn more about the building, one quickly finds a chronology of it up until the present. However, the details on how Raule financed the purchase of the surrounding landmark and the construction of the castle in the first place do not become evident. Within the scope of *Rosenfelde*, Onuoha provides more insights: Benjamin Raule founded the Brandenburg African Company in 1682. A year later, the company sent an expedition to the Gold Coast (now Ghana) and established the Groß-Friedrichsburg Fort, from which gold, ivory, acacia gum and human beings were traded. Raule used the profits he made from those trades and invested them into his 'pleasure Palace', called Rosenfelde.

For her work Onuoha documented a ritual held at Friedrichsfelde Castle that particularly aims at creating a presence of those human beings upon whose exploitation, abuse and suffering buildings such as Friedrichsfelde came into place. The dancers represent this presence as their Black bodies move through the castle. They render visible how the previously untold history of Friedrichsfelde's past clashes with its present image. Yet again, Onuoha demonstrates the importance and the impact of revisited and revised history as the predominant one is only one of many narratives of the past. Hence, she sheds light not only on a narrative that was simply not visible before but whose very existence had never even been considered. At the latest when our gaze meets the one of the embodied afterlives in *Rosenfelde* we should ask ourselves as to why that is.

Throughout the exhibition period of A F T E R L I V E S, four of Onuoha's works will be presented at Galerie im Turm. Each work is shown in a particular and individual adapted display. The next slot will start on January 11, 2023 and show Onuoha's work *Wash Day* from 2021. The three big TVs will disappear and give room to another installation and dynamic within the gallery space. The video projection of *Rosenfelde* will run during the entire exhibition period. It is on view every day from 8pm until midnight, visible only from in front of the gallery.

**NNENNA ONUOHA** is a Ghanaian-Nigerian researcher and artist based in Berlin. Her research explores monumental silences surrounding the histories and afterlives of colonialism across West Africa, Europe and the United States. At its core, her work asks: How do we remember, which pasts do we choose to perform, and why? Centering Afrodiasporic voices, her practice revolves around processes of collective re-membering: putting the past together limb by limb. A second strand of her work focuses on archiving Black experience in the present to understand how, amidst all of this, we practice care and repair for each other. Nnenna's work has shown at alpha nova & galerie futura, the Brücke-museum, and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art. She is currently a doctoral researcher in Media Anthropology at Harvard University, and Global History at the University of Potsdam.

## EVENTS

### Opening

DJ-Set: Gayture

2022 12 14 | 6 – 10 pm

### Workshop

in simple language with the F3kollektiv

2023 01 18 | 3 – 5 pm

### Workshop: Black Visual Intonation

with Melody Howse

2023 01 25 | 6 – 8 pm

### Artist Talk

with Nnenna Onuoha & Helen-Sophie Mayr

2023 02 01 | 6 – 8 pm



Nnenna Onuoha: Still from *Rosenfelde*, 2021

## TEAM

Alberto Sardo	INSTALLATION TEAM
Carolina Redondo	HEAD OF PRODUCTION
Daniela Schoepe	GALLERY SUPERVISION
Emóke Samu	INSTALLATION TEAM
Ezequiel Monteros	INSTALLATION TEAM
Ferdinand Gieschke	GALLERY SUPERVISION
Helen-Sophie Mayr	CURATOR
Ignacio Rivas	INSTALLATION TEAM
Mark Stroemich	INSTALLATION TEAM

The curator would like to thank the Team of Galerie im Turm and of Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, who are: Dani Hasrouni, Johanna Janßen, Josef Stöhr, Sofia Pfister, Stéphane Bauer and the team of supervisors.

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**Kommunale  
Galerien  
Berlin**

