

*Images in Contingency*  
*on Fragments of an Unmarked Map*  
by Kathrin Ganser. Text: Sarie Nijboer



I become aware of how my body orients itself within the exhibition space, and is simultaneously positioned. Before me lies a textile print on a slightly raised, polygonal, light-grey floor element. Each of my movements alters what becomes visible, no view fully stabilizes. Space appears here as something that only takes shape through seeing, through moving, through the relation between body and image.

The work *Fragments of an Unmarked Map* by Kathrin Ganser, presented in the group exhibition *Not a Moment, Not a Place* at Villa Heike Kunstverein, situates photography between image, object, and spatial intervention. The print is based on digital image material from the immediate surroundings of the Kunstverein. Yet the depicted place remains visually indeterminate; its geographical specificity is overlaid by processes of abstraction and translation.

In order to engage with the work, I notice

how I reposition my body within the gallery space. Placed on the floor, it disrupts the familiar vertical orientation of photographic viewing and introduces a bodily dimension. As I move around the work, the folds of the fabric produce gaps and blind spots that resist the seamless legibility such image systems often suggest. The folds structure the pictorial space as something three-dimensional and corporeal, like art historical drapery, where volume and movement only become visible in the crease. They compel me to continually reconsider my own position: Where am I standing? What do I see from here? What remains hidden? Perception appears here as a situated process, shaped in part by the technical image.

The image fragments reveal dissolved building structures, patches of blue sky, warped surfaces, and spatial ruptures in which architectural forms at times appear sculptural or almost painterly. These ruptures can also be read as glitches, as errors or disturbanc-

es within image production that reveal how what we see is calculated and assembled. Ganser's intervention is deliberate: by translating a navigable, data-driven representation into a material, tactile object, she reveals spatial perception as something shaped by differing medial conditions. As I view the work from various angles, the object becomes a site of negotiation between the virtual and the real, between the distant perspective of the satellite and the situated position of the viewer.

what becomes visible, and what does not.

In *Fragments of an Unmarked Map*, Ganser isolates screenshots from the immediate geographical context of the exhibition, thereby producing a recursive relation in which the real site encounters its own digital image. I find myself confronted with a representation of the place that surrounds me, yet this representation has been fragmented through layers of abstraction, compression, and material



Ganser's practice is grounded in the appropriation and transformation of technically generated images. Rather than producing photographs within a camera-based practice, she works within already existing digital environments, by taking screenshots from navigable image systems. Her selection often focuses on moments in which algorithmic processes generate inconsistencies, distortions, or ambiguous spatial information. In doing so, she renders the contingency of these images visible and calls into question their claim to objectivity and completeness. Images that might otherwise be dismissed as errors become the starting point and raw material of her work. Within them, a political dimension also emerges: the question of who or what decides

translation. The effect produces a subtle disorientation: while I remain physically located within the gallery space, I simultaneously encounter a digitally mediated landscape that originates from outside it. What I see is not the place itself, but a version of it, filtered through processes of selection, calculation, and representation.

Central to Ganser's practice is the translation of these digital images into material form. The choice of textile as an image carrier plays a decisive role here. Fabric introduces qualities of flexibility, transience, and physical responsiveness that stand in contrast to the rigidity and apparent neutrality of computer-generated images. The folds that emerge through

gravity and installation conditions interrupt the image surface and undermine the authority of the technical image, which often presents itself as objective and complete. They make visible that these images, too, are structured through processes of folding, both in a material and a digital sense.

Ganser's work understands opacity – the folds, blurs, and distortions – as a critical strategy. As Bruno Latour has argued, the mediating processes of technical systems often only become visible in moments of disruption. It is precisely such “breaks” that

form of found material, comparable to digital sketchbooks or accidental drawings generated by technical systems. At the same time, this gives rise to what Ganser herself describes as a kind of “archive of the archive”: a collection of image fragments extracted from already existing, algorithmically generated image repositories. Her interventions within this archive remain deliberately restrained, allowing the origin of the images to remain partially indeterminate.

Authorship, too, remains intentionally ambiguous. It seems to me that Ganser neither



expose the networks of data, algorithms, and infrastructures through which our perception of space is produced in the first place. In this context, Ganser's work makes evident the contingencies inscribed within these image systems: data gaps, algorithmic processes, as well as human and non-human decisions that determine how space is represented.

This approach continues in Ganser's broader practice, in which fragmented architectures, floating textures, and distorted terrains appear as by-products of computer-based image production. She treats these images as a

attempts to fully detach her work from its algorithmic origins nor to foreground her own manipulation entirely. Instead, she operates within a layered form of authorship in which found digital material and artistic intervention coexist. This ambivalence shifts traditional notions of photographic originality, particularly within contemporary image cultures in which images circulate, mutate, and acquire new meanings across different contexts.

The installation also resonates with the curatorial framework of *Not a Moment, Not a Place*. The exhibition sought to trace a shift

within contemporary photography: away from referential certainty and toward a stronger objecthood, in which images occupy space as much as they represent it. Ganser's work exemplifies this transition, while remaining closely tied to the infrastructures that produce and sustain digital images. Even in its most abstract forms, her work remains bound to the spatial and technological systems from which it emerges.

In this sense, I understand Ganser's practice as a form of media archaeology, conceived as the building of archives, the collecting of fragments, and the investigation of the temporal stratifications of the image space itself. By isolating, materializing, and recontextualizing technically generated images, she interrupts their circulation and subjects them to a different temporal logic. The work foregrounds the conditions of its own production: the algorithms that generate images, the materials that give them form, and the bodies that encounter them. In doing so, it invites a critical reconsideration of how contemporary visual systems construct knowledge about space, and how these constructions might be destabilized through artistic intervention.

Images: Installation view of "Fragments of an Unmarked Map" by Kathrin Ganser, from the exhibition "Not a Moment, Not a Place" at Villa Heike Kunstverein, 2025. Photo: Villa Heike Kunstverein