

Choreographies of Retreat

Ryat Yezbick

Duration: March 07 - April 04, 2026.

Location: Reisig and Taylor Contemporary (603 N Western Ave, Los Angeles, 90004).

Type: Solo Exhibition.

***Choreographies of Retreat* . Ryat Yezbick. March 07 - April 04, 2026. Solo. Spring.**

***Opening Reception: Saturday, March 07, 6 - 9pm.**

603 N Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90004.

Reisig and Taylor Contemporary is presenting *Choreographies of Retreat* by Ryat Yezbick. This exhibition continues their ongoing project *The Innocence of Unknowing* (2020–present), which premiered at the 2025 Tribeca Festival Immersive program as an archival documentary, essay film, and live performance in collaboration with Milo Talwani and a specially trained AI humanities scholar named “Aurora.” For this installation of the project evolved (site-specifically) for the gallery at 603 N Western Avenue in Los Angeles, the expanded cinematic work extends through new video and performance pieces, as well as sculpture and photographic media.

Developed through archival analysis of mass shootings in the United States, the social, historical, and geopolitical scope of the project rewinds from the present moment to the mid-1960s—spanning more than 700 news clips over nearly 60 years (starting with the University of Texas at Austin “tower shooting” in 1966). But the work is not primarily engaged with the accumulation of this footage, nor the particular violence or criminal status of the perpetrator of these events. Instead, the problems and questions guiding the project are focused on the optics, medias, technologies, rhetorics, controls, and repeated (bodily) gestures embedded within—and circulating throughout—the sensationalized scenes and selective documentations of mass shootings in the U.S.: “By removing perpetrators entirely, the project shifts attention to the relationship between the state, victims, and spectators, asking how U.S. media culture repeatedly stages innocence, compliance, and authority.”¹ With this shift, the work unwinds the vulnerable place of a body along these discrete but interconnected positions and discourses of collective memory, media coverage (‘news’), mass surveillance, and “*choreographies of retreat*”—or, “the repeated bodily gestures—hands raised, bodies herded, movement arrested—that appear across decades of crisis footage.”²

At the same time, this project necessarily works-through the complex translations between events, spectacles, records (or accounts), and the public distribution of information as visual materials and languages. These problems of translation and transmission pose questions of how we (as spectators, observers, viewers, audiences) see ourselves watching, or watch ourselves looking—questions about the kinds of mirrors we make and shatter through a collective un/consciousness of mass shootings and gun violence. Questions of how we are conditioned and what we are taught through repetitions of mass watching. Questions of why these events are seen and categorized the way they are. (For example, why are ‘mass shootings’ marked as distinct from acts of terrorism?) Here, the role of the mirror is performed by Aurora the AI humanities scholar developed for the project through a training based on a series of humanities texts.³ Usually, or at least at the level of its corporate-industrial complex, AI is a data-sorting tool and a predictive model (and, more and more often, a weapon of mass surveillance⁴). However, Aurora’s humanities-based training sets up the possibility of working with AI as an ethical envoy into our own systems of power, with its education “enabling it to generate frame-level analysis and metadata [of the archival footage] that foreground structural power, racialization, and normativity.”⁵ A mirror for the frame-by-frame mis en abyme of the ‘mass’ populating any individual reality (and its choreographies between others).

Between these tangled systems, subjects, and scenes, the variable mediums of the exhibition make-room for what is usually pushed beyond the gazed boundaries of ‘the picture,’ collapsing the media’s forgetful distance between audiences and victims. Making-room for kinds of collective memory that are not pre-fabricated en masse, making-room for a conscious, desublimated and non-passive processing of the violence of mass shootings—and “the fear, flight, and immense sorrow and pain”⁶—they inflict and portray. Between a lived experience and its doubles.

Ryat Yezbick is a visual artist who uses their training in cultural anthropology to inform the issues they tackle as a maker. Yezbick investigates technology's impact on group identity, morals, and collective memory through public archives and collaborations. Figuring their lived experience in their work, they address a complex set of questions around security, gender, home, family, love, violence, power, and responsibility in the era of digital surveillance and decentralized global conflict. They work in a variety of mediums – notably live performance, experimental documentary, installation and new media – that have garnered support from audiences and curators internationally. They are a published author, multi-time grant recipient, art and technology consultant, and academic in the Narrative and Emerging Media (NEM) Program at Arizona State University (ASU). In 2016, Yezbick began their career in emerging digital media as an assistant curator for the New Frontier exhibition at the Sundance Film Festival. Since then, they have designed and curated future-oriented programming for notable institutions and philanthropic foundations including The Music Center, the Guild of Future Architects, the Doris Duke Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, the Omidyar Network and more. Today, they work as faculty for the NEM program at ASU's downtown Los Angeles campus teaching classes on various topics in art, technology, and ethics. Yezbick's art career includes solo exhibitions in Los Angeles, Melbourne, Glasgow, and Athens, and in notable group exhibitions and performances at the Los Angeles Philharmonic (Los Angeles), REDCAT (Los Angeles), Materials & Applications (Los Angeles), Human Resources (Los Angeles), The Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart), The Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, Glasgow International 2018 (Glasgow), The Banff Center for the Arts and Creativity (Banff), Gertrude Contemporary (Melbourne), Space One (Seoul), the Bangkok Biennial MAHA Pavilion (Bangkok), LAXART (Los Angeles), Craft Contemporary Museum (Los Angeles), the Queer Biennial (Los Angeles), and TRIBECA Immersive 2025 (New York).

¹ Ryat Yezbick, *Artist Statement & Biography*.

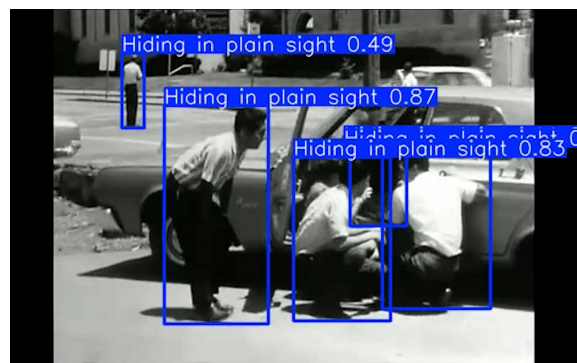
² Ibid.

³ Lama Rod Owens's *Love and Rage*; Susan Sontag's *In Plato's Cave*; Virginia Eubank's *Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor*; Audre Lorde's *Uses of the Erotic*; Cindy Milstein's *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*; Nanna Bonde Thylstrup's *Commentary: The Entanglements, Experiments, and Uncertainties of Algorithmic Regimes*; Karl Marx's *Estranged Labor*; Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*; Achille Mbembe's *Necropolitics*. (Among others.)

⁴ For example: Automatic License Plate Readers, Gunshot Detection, Autonomous Border Surveillance, Biometric Airport Security, and Social Media Monitoring are all examples of both privately-operated and state-authorized forms of surveillance currently in operation throughout the United States. Look into *Flock Safety* and *Palantir* as a peculiar examples of this relationship between private firms and the U.S. government.

⁵ Ibid, Yezbick.

⁶ Ryat Yezbick and Milo Talwani, *Letter from the Artists*.



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