

# Acting in Numbers



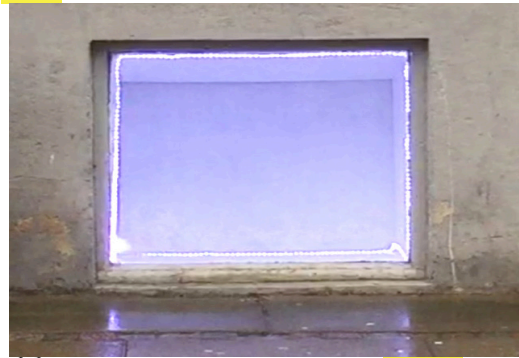
**Mary Coble**

**Galleri Image**

**Aarhus, Denmark 2018**



**Performing Defiance**



**PULSING**



**Timeline of Disruption**



**PULSE**



**One Movement**



**We are here**





## Acting in Numbers

Uniting photography and performance, the works in the exhibition focus on iconic symbols, bodily gestures, chants, and signals used in political protest and as forms of resistance. Photography and performance can offer distinct temporalities that are urgent for capturing, sharing and activating often ephemeral signs of defiance.

The photo series *Performing Defiance* (2015) captures moments from a durational performance involving a pink latex triangle and an abundance of glitter. Here, the artist repeated the act of raising a clenched fist in protest for an exaggerated period of time, which opened for unpredictability, messiness, and even failure.

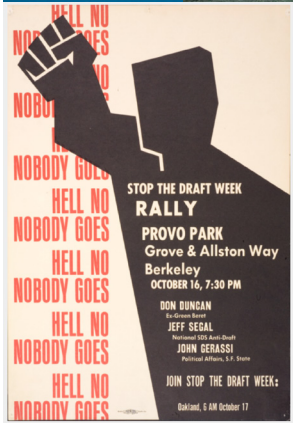
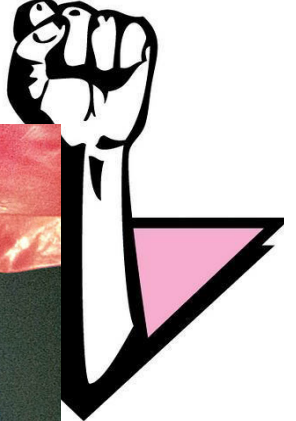
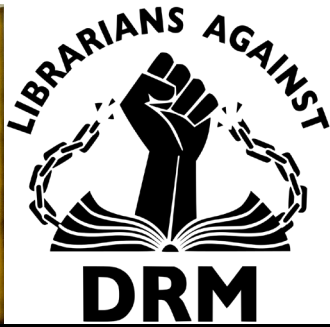
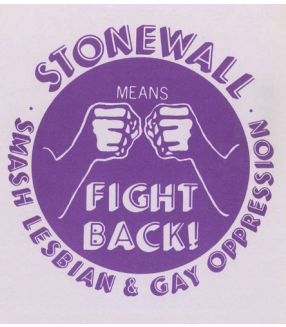
Whereas photography is drawing with light, the artist has also used drawing with blood as a consistent method for over a decade. In *Timeline of Disruption* (2016) Coble had a number of lines drawn on the body as inkless tattoos. The thin line of blood that formed on the skin was transferred onto paper through the physical imprints of the artist positioning their own body to mimic that of gestures used as resistance.

Light is both the source and the main medium in *PULSE* (2016). The photo series documents the ten-day performance, where the artist climbed the Cinesphere at an abandoned amusement park each night to repurpose it as a beacon of protest. A series of Morse Code messages were transmitted to collaborators positioned throughout the park who then relayed the message on using their own light source. The morsed messages were composed of chants used in recent and current protests and fights for civil rights. The work continues in a new form as the light installation *Pulsing* (2018) shown in Galleri Image's project space. At the website <https://pulsinginaarhus.tumblr.com> people can add a civil rights chant, a lyric from a protest song or a verse from a poem of to be morsed by the light out onto the street

The photographic installation *We are here* (2017) and the video work *One Movement* (2017), are based on traces of the marches and protests against Donald Trump's inauguration in Washington, DC January 2017. Both reflect Coble's meticulous, on foot, documentation of the fences surrounding the White House. The individual pieces of *We are here* can be moved around in the gallery, purchased and potentially reactivated in another context. All income from the sales of this work will be donated to *LGBT Asylum*- a Danish NGO working for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the Danish asylum system.

Mary Coble (b. 1978, USA) is a visual artist, activist and educator living in Sweden. Originally educated in photography Coble now mainly works within an expanded field of performance. Coble is a Senior Lecturer at Valand Academy, Gothenburg University.







## *Performing Defiance*

Photographic series, 2015

Courtesy Danish Arts Foundation

Photographs by Clare Britt

Performance duration: 1.5 hours

This photographic work was commissioned by the Danish Arts Foundation for a series of photography based on a performance. These images are created during a live performance *Performing Defiance*, where Mary Coble embodied a protesting figure jumping with their fist raised over an exaggerated period of time.

A pink latex triangle, an iconic and reclaimed symbol for homosexuality, was suspended overhead that held an abundance of glitter. As Coble jumped up towards the triangle traces of glitter began to fall. Assisted by one or two white podiums Coble could jump higher and pound the triangle sending glitter first fluttering and then pouring down from above. Coble then gathered the glitter from the floor and threw it back onto the triangle and the process began again.

This cycle continued on and on, vacillating between excitement and despair. Coble thus combines both the exhilaration and exhaustion of an extended protest that allows for unpredictability, messiness and failure.

Through the combined acts of raising a clenched fist and throwing glitter, the artist activates a number of codes, traditions and strategies from queer history and counter-culture. Glitter bombing is an example of what can be described as 'tactical frivolity' – alternative forms of protest that often involve humor, performativity and peaceful non-compliance. The raised fist has been a symbol throughout the modern history of struggle for workers' and civil rights as well as against fascism, racism and other forms of repression and exploitation.

The performances were conceptualized as part of a larger artistic research project discussing possible forms of resistance from a queer or marginalized position in consideration of power, privilege and normalization. Coble investigates the tactics, props and gestures used in the history of queer activism related political protests and how they can be archived, activated and re-performed.

The live work has been performed at: *MADE Festival*, NorrlandsOperan's, Umeå, Sweden (2015), Defibrillator Gallery, *Rapid Pulse International Performance Festival*, Chicago, Illinois (2015), and at Charlottenborg Kunsthall, Copenhagen, Denmark (2016). The live work includes a sound track consisting of a montage of collected chants, shouts and others noises from demonstrations and protests.





## *Timeline of Disruption*

2016, Blood print on paper and documentary photographs

Live performance at //BUZZCUT// Performance Festival, Glasgow, Scotland

Photographs by Julia Bauer and Louise Wolthers

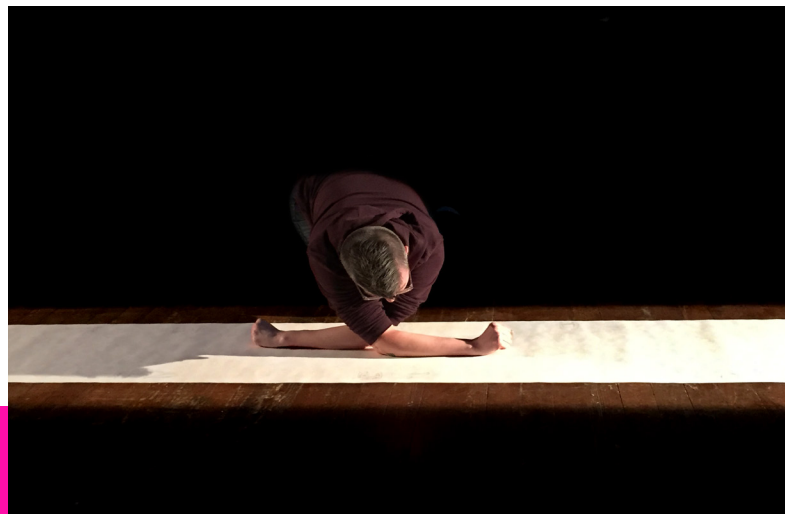
Inkless tattoo by John-Scott Tattoo

Performance duration: 2.5 hours

The *Timeline of Disruption* blood print and documentary photographs are based on a live performance, which is a queer body's re-imagining of the small gestures and positions of defiance experienced in and as protest.

Over a duration of 2.5 hours, Mary Coble had several lines inklessly tattooed onto the body. After each tattoo session Coble moved to a long sheet of paper that was rolled out on the floor in order to get into a position where the fresh blood seeping from the tattoo could be pressed onto it's surface. Coble would assume postures that highlighted a 'gesture of defiance' used in past and contemporary protest such as the iconic raised fist, a sitting protest and arms locked together with others to create a human chain. Through the imprint of the blood from each tattoo and posture, Coble tried to create a line of blood to reference a timeline. The isolated dissenting actions left simple marks that united formed a timeline of histories of deviance and disruption. A timeline that was broken, incomplete, overlapping, misaligned and slanted in reference to what could be called a queer temporality outside of the ideals of linear progression and heteronormative benchmarks.

The paper roll testifies to the failure to adequately position, mark and connect, and thus to the messiness of resistance. But it forms a personalized archive pointing to powerful actions of daring people across time and space.



**DIE-INS by ACT UP and BLACK LIVES MATTER**



— — — — — ● ●

● ● ● — — — — — ● ● — ● — ● ●

## ONE VOICE

Amanda Alvear  
Oscar A Aracena-Montero  
Rodolfo Ayala-Ayala  
Antonio Davon Brown  
Darryl Roman Burt II  
Angel L. Candelario-Padro  
Juan Chavez-Martinez  
Luis Daniel Conde  
Cory James Connell  
Tevin Eugene Crosby  
Deonka Deidra Drayton  
Simon Adrian Carrillo Fernandez  
Leroy Valentin Fernandez  
Mercedez Marisol Flores  
Peter O. Gonzalez-Cruz  
Juan Ramon Guerrero  
Paul Terrell Henry  
Frank Hernandez  
Miguel Angel Honorato  
Javier Jorge-Reyes  
Jason Benjamin Josaphat  
Eddie Jamoldroy Justice  
Anthony Luis Laureanodisla  
Christopher Andrew Leinonen

Brenda Lee Marquez McCool  
Gilberto Ramon Silva Menendez  
Kimberly Morris  
Akyra Monet Murray  
Luis Omar Ocasio-Capo  
Geraldo A. Ortiz-Jimenez  
Eric Ivan Ortiz-Rivera  
Joel Rayon Paniagua  
Jean Carlos Mendez Perez  
Enrique L. Rios, Jr.  
Jean C. Nieves Rodriguez  
Xavier Emmanuel Serrano Rosado  
Christopher Joseph Sanfeliz  
Yilmery Rodriguez Solivan  
Edward Sotomayor Jr.  
Shane Evan Tomlinson  
Martin Benitez Torres  
Jonathan Antonio Camuy Vega  
Juan P. Rivera Velazquez  
Luis S. Vielma  
Franky Jimmy Dejesus Velazquez  
Luis Daniel Wilson-Leon  
Jerald Arthur Wright



## ***PULSE***

**2016**

**Commissioned and presented as part of *MONOMYTHS* which was conceived of and curated by Jess Dobkin and Shannon Cochran, FADO Performance Art Centre**

**Live Performance during *in/future: A Festival of Art & Music***

**Ontario Place Park, Toronto, Canada**

**Photographs by Henry Chan**

**Performance duration: 10 days**

The photographs are from a larger series documenting the performance where Mary Coble climbed the Cinesphere, (a large structure that houses the first permanent IMAX theater in the world) at Ontario Place Park each day in order to repurpose it as a beacon of protest. Once on top the lights of the sphere were turned off and series of Morse Code messages were transmitted by Coble's single light to receiver collaborators on the ground positioned throughout the park who then relayed the message using their own light sources. The transmitted messages were composed of statements and chants used in recent and current protests and fights for civil rights reflecting a connection between past and current struggles. They are now transmitted again through the photographs.

*PULSE* was a part of the *MONOMYTHS* series which invited artists, scholars, and activists to revise Joseph Campbell's conception of the hero's journey. Coble's *PULSE* fits into the *MONOMYTHS* journey at the stage entitled *Ordeals*. During this stage of the journey the hero/ine has come face to face with their personal challenge. In this moment they either confront death or face their greatest fear. Coble's response to illuminating this stage of the journey suggests the necessity of challenging seemingly inaccessible structures and systems (social, political, personal), while insisting on the interdependency of a collective effort by employing the communication of multiple bodies, versus attempting to cross this personal bridge alone. Refraining from a heroic narrative of conquering an iconic structure, Coble's collaborative gesture merges activist and nautical language to amplify a collective call for solidarity and action.

**This work was titled *PULSE* in recognition of the Queer Latinx lives lost and those lives forever changed as a result of the 2016 Pulse Nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida.**

A ● -  
 B - ● ● ●  
 C - ● - ●  
 D - ● ●  
 E ●  
 F ● ● - ●  
 G - - ●  
 H ● ● ● ●  
 I ● ●

J ● - - -  
 K - ● -  
 L ● - ● ●  
 M - -  
 N - ●  
 O - - -  
 P ● - - ●  
 Q - - ● -  
 R ● - ●

S ● ● ●  
 T -  
 U ● ● -  
 V ● ● ● -  
 W ● - -  
 X - ● ● -  
 Y - ● - -  
 Z - - ● ●

Morse	German ++	Norwegian/ Danish	Spanish	Esperanto	Polish 16.3.2014	Greek	Russian	Arabic
···-	Ä	Æ	-	-	Ą	-	Я	ع
----·	Ö	Ø	-	-	Ó	-	Ч	ز
····	Ü	-	-	Ŭ	-	-	Ю	-
----	Ch	-	Ch	Ĥ	-	Χ	Ш	ش

## International Morse Code

1. The length of a dot is one unit.
2. A dash is three units.
3. The space between parts of the same letter is one unit.
4. The space between letters is three units.
5. The space between words is seven units.



## ***PULSING***

**2018**

**LED Light Installation**

**Website: <https://pulsinginaarhus.tumblr.com>**

**Project conceived by Mary Coble; Developed in collaboration with nuclear engineer, energy activist and programmer Nick Touran.**

***PULSING* is a site-specific continuation of *PULSE* developed for Galleri Image's project space. As *PULSE* this installation uses Morse Code: a method of visually transmitting textual messages using a series of patterns – such as light. Using LED lights *PULSING* is an interactive Morse Code signaler that relays messages via the tumblr website where visitors can submit civil rights chants or statements to be morsed out into Vestergade, the street on which the gallery lays.**

**On the website people are invited to write for example a civil rights chant, a lyric from a protest song or a verse from a poem of resistance that they are inspired or empowered by. These verses collected from multiple places and contexts will be translated into a Morse Code light pulsing from the window into the street outside Galleri Image.**

***PULSING* will then also be a visualization of the process of collaborative creation of an archive of utterings of resistance.**

**Examples of protest chants that were sent out by Morse Code light signals include at the earlier *PULSE* performance in Ontario Place Park, Toronto, Canada include:**

**One voice**

**Resistance is justified, when people are occupied**

**Who's streets, our streets**

**The people are rising, no more compromising**

**Black Lives Matter**

**Police brutality-shut it down, mass incarceration-shut it down**

**For those who can't we raise our fists**

**No hate, no fear, refuges are welcome here**

**New additions are welcomed at:  
<https://pulsinginaarhus.tumblr.com>**



# SISTER MARCHES

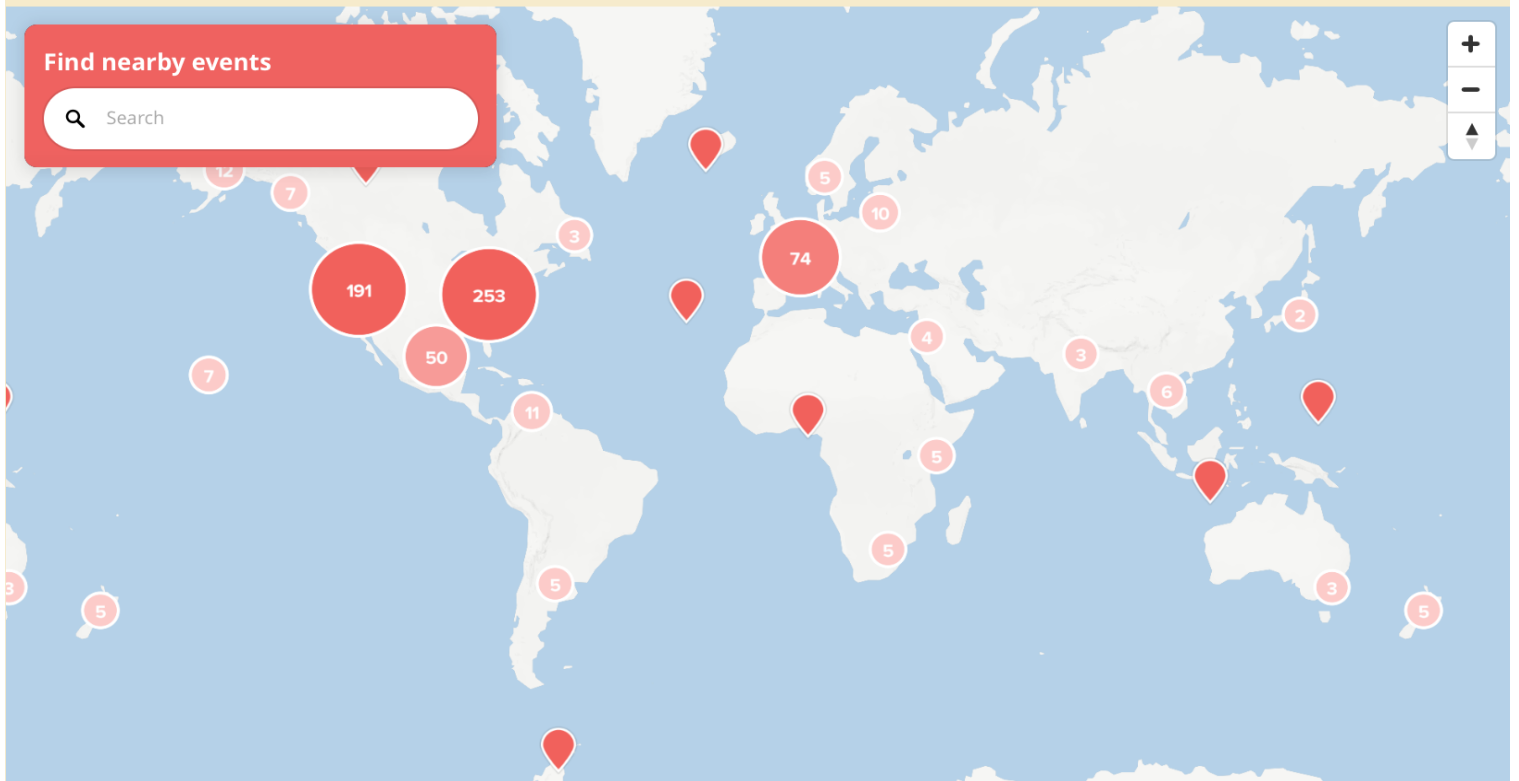
Sister Marches are solidarity events inspired by the Women's March on Washington, and organized by volunteers around the world. If you can't make it to Washington, D.C. on January 21, join or host a Sister March near you.

[CLICK HERE FOR THE SISTER MARCH PRESS ROOM](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR A STREAM OF PHOTOS AND VIDEOS FROM SISTER MARCHES AROUND THE WORLD](#)

NUMBER OF MARCHES: 673

MARCHERS (EST): 4,956,422





## *We Are Here*

2017

### Photographic Series

The occasion of this current exhibition marks approximately the one year anniversary of the massive worldwide Women's March demonstrations in January 2017. This series of photographs was taken during the Women's March on Washington on Saturday Jan. 21, 2017 in Washington, DC.

The march occurred one day after the inauguration of Donald Trump as President of the United States, and it brought hundreds of thousands of protestors to Washington, DC and millions in similar protests across the world. The mission of the marches was to "harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change". Spurred by the general oppression of patriarchy and the specific misogyny of Trump, women and their allies gathered to march for reproductive rights, LGBTQIA rights, worker's rights, civil rights, disability rights, immigrant rights, environmental rights etc.

*We Are Here* represents parts of the vast conglomerate of protest signs that people marched with and then left along the barriers surrounding the backyard of the White House. Coble began photographing a few signs that were propped up along the fence, and continued the documentation as more and more signs were left around the White House in solidarity and protest. What could have been a few snapshots turned into six hours of performative movement around the fences and a systematic, durational documentation of the signs, posters and people.

At Galleri Image the viewers are invited to re-enact the movement along the fence surrounding White House and to explore the variety and creativity of the signs – ranging in tones of seriousness and humor, anger and parody, and referencing everything from historical oppression to popular culture and internet memes. The signs not only establish links to historical struggles but also to protest movements that would grow during 2017 and continues to this day such as the #metoo mobilization. For the exhibition at Galleri Image the *We Are Here* series is mounted on found pieces of wood, which the visitors are invited to move around in the gallery.

The individual pieces can be purchased during the exhibition period for 100 DKK and all the money will be donated to LGBT Asylum- a Danish NGO working for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the Danish asylum system. To find out more about LGBT Asylum or to donate directly go to: [www.lgbtasyllum.dk](http://www.lgbtasyllum.dk)







## *One Movement*

2017-2018

Stop motion video, looped

*One Movement* is a development of *We are Here*. The day after the Women's March on Washington (2017), all the protest signs were removed. This stop motion video is created from a series of photographs of the fence that surrounds most of the White House in Washington, DC taken two days after the march.

The empty lawn and now stripped bare fence can be seen as a reference to the Trump administration's efforts to continuously erase and downplay the public protests against him. Whereas the immense number of protesters and signs are no longer there, they have left traces and imprints around and on the fence, which gave in to the pressure of people gathering and the weight of the posters. Thus, the effects of the people coming together across gender, race, age, religious belief and sexual orientation, are leaving the promising marks of one, intersectional movement.





# Acting in Numbers A Seminar Linking Photography, Performance and Activism

Saturday January 27, 2018 \*13:00-18:00\* Free and open for all



Det Jyske Kunstakademi at Mejlgade 32, Aarhus DK

During the exhibition period of Mary Coble's *Acting in Numbers* at Galleri Image, the complex relations between art, activism, photography and performance will be further explored in this public seminar. Contributions by: Annika Lundgren, Nanna Gro Henningsen, Stense Andrea Lind-Valdan, art historian and critic Rune Gade and participants from the *Performance as Political Assembly* Workshop.

The seminar will include the presentation of a new live work by Mary Coble. The performance will be developed in collaboration with a workshop- *Performance as Political Assembly*- that will occur the week prior at the Jutland Art Academy. Annika Lundgren will be presenting extracts from *Winter is Coming* - an investigation in progress, inquiring into the relationship between spiritualist practices and the new species of right wing populism that has been emerging in the political landscape over the last 15 years. Artist Stense Andrea Lind-Valdan and art historian and critic Rune Gade will participate with a performative dialogue about their current collaborative project *Fountain*. Nanna Gro Henningsen will be presenting abstracts from *A European Afternoon* - a cycle of songs for unequal voices and a video montage presenting a historical and mythical take on the politics and humanitarian crisis of contemporary Europe. The seminar is held in collaboration with the Jutland Art Academy and will be moderated by Rector Judith Schwarzbart. The seminar will be held in English. For more information visit: <http://www.galleriimage.dk>

Supported by: City of Aarhus, BUPL's Solidaritets- og Kulturpulje, Galleri Image, Jutland Art Academy; Valand Academy, Gothenburg University and The Danish Arts Foundation.