Press the rewind button and move forward back in the song or film that is playing. While it is rewinding, the magnetic cassette or video tape is scrambled. The section of the song, played out of sequence, becomes abstracted. In the context of an exhibition dealing with the 1990s, the word “rewind” invites us to revisit and rethink stories and concepts once they are “played” out – in order to open them to new interpretations in the framework of a continuous present.
Rewinding Internationalism is related to a research project conducted by Nick Aikens exploring the construction of internationalism through several artistic scenes in Europe and in the world. Internationalism refers to a form of imagination and of practicing relationships across borders. The exhibition features the production of five new works, as well as loans and archival documents from public and private collections. The project's starting point is the 1990s, a time when internationalism was in full mutation in numerous and various political and cultural contexts. Rather than presenting a history of this decade, the exhibition brings together different ecosystems. The dialogue between Nick Aiken's research and the artworks reveals the implications linking the 90s to our own era, traversed by still deeper and continuous ecological, biological and geopolitical crises – an era when the notion of internationalism is mutating once again. Finally, Rewinding Internationalism can be understood as an experiment in mobilizing history, knowledge and subjectivity through the prism of an exhibition.

Nick Aiken's research for the exhibition was conducted notably between November 2020 and 2021, in the context of a program for advanced research at the IdEx UCA JEDI of the Université Côte d’Azur, following a proposal by Sophie Orlando, professor and researcher in the history and theory of art at the Villa Arson, and in dialogue with Christian Rinaudo, researcher at URMIS (Migration and Society Research Unit), UCA.


Exhibition partner: Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (Netherlands)

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Exhibition curator and researcher at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven (Netherlands) since 2012, doctoral candidate at the University of Göteborg since 2018, author and member of the editorial committee of the museum network L’Internationale, Nick Aikens’ curatorial and scientific activity is recognized internationally, notably for his work on B/black artists in the United Kingdom including co-editing with Dr. Elizabeth Robles The Place is Here. The Work of Black Artists in 1980s Britain (Sternberg Press, 2019).

Texts written by Nick Aikens