



## Exhibition Program

### *A Becoming Resemblance*

The guest exhibition *A Becoming Resemblance* by Heather Dewey-Hagborg and Chelsea Manning investigates emerging technologies of genomic identity construction and their role in our societal moment. The centerpiece of the exhibition, *Probably Chelsea*, is a series of thirty 3D-printed possible portraits of Chelsea Manning, the former US intelligence analyst-turned-whistleblower who in 2013 was sentenced to 35 years of imprisonment. The effigies form a diverse crowd and illustrate a multitude of ways in which a person's DNA can be interpreted—it is a refutation of outmoded notions of biologically inscribed identity and a testament to the commonality of all, a commonality that is clearly present even at the cellular level.

The project started in 2015, when Dewey-Hagborg first began to produce the portraits, using DNA from cheek swabs and hair clippings that Manning mailed out of prison. During her incarceration Chelsea's image had been suppressed; the artistic collaboration with Heather gave her back a form of visibility. Dewey-Hagborg and Manning later teamed up with illustrator Shoili Kanungo to produce *Suppressed Images* (2016), a graphic short story narrating their collaboration and envisioning a future in which Barack Obama commuted Manning's sentence. This forecast came true just several hours after the comic had been published in May 2017.

The exhibition also features Dewey-Hagborg's predictive early work *Spurious Memories* (2007), which is based on an autonomous face-categorizing and -generating program. The project set in motion the artist's examination of how human faces could be created from the sequencing of genetic material and specific parameters.

Together, the works not only address concerns over the accuracy and invasiveness of current technologies, they also show how these can be used to mask gender and racial stereotyping with the scientific authority of genetics. Questions are raised about the politics of image production in an age of surveillance, militarized policing, biometric governance, and high-tech securitization.

*A Becoming Resemblance* is a collaboration between Fridman Gallery with Roddy Schrock and transmediale.