

GAMMA

Gamma is a term used in physics to define invisible high-energy rays arising from radioactive decay or cosmic processes. Jane and Louise Wilson filmed *GAMMA* in 1998 on the grounds of the former USA Air Force base Greenham Common in Berkshire, England, a central location in NATO's nuclear strategy during the Cold War.

This military base is comparable in function and history to the former US-American and NATO base in Neuss, near which the Skulpturenhalle is situated today. Both locations were once missile bases serving a global system of deterrence. And both have been the focus of longstanding protests by the peace movement. In Greenham, women organised a peace camp that lasted for nearly twenty years, and in Hombroich demonstrations and sit-ins also took place in the 1980s. After military operations at the base ceased, Greenham Common remained open to the public according to an international agreement until 2001, on condition that regular inspections were carried out. A Russian inspection team visited the UK base, while an American team monitored an equivalent in Russia in return.

After its decommissioning the artists were among the first civilians to explore the deserted corridors, halls, offices, and storage sections of the disused base. In their video installation, figures in uniform or protective clothing pass through the spaces on their own. However, it gradually becomes clear that there are always two people involved, who can hardly be distinguished from one another, namely the artists themselves. Their purposeful trajectories through the architecture with their camera capture traces of the politics of deterrence and control, while at the same time turning the camera into a third actor in the space, as an instrument of monitoring and making visible. Mirroring effects and permanent shifts prevent the emergence of a clear spatial impression. Instead, a kaleidoscopic environment unfolds, where the rigidity of surveillance architecture intertwines with a diffuse atmosphere of paranoia.

Juliane Duft