

Dean Sameshima,
being alone
26 April–8 June, 2024
6 Minerva Street, London

In each of the twenty-five black and white photographs that comprise Dean Sameshima's recent series *being alone*, the outline of a solitary viewer sits bathed in light emitting from the glowing screen of a Berlin porn theatre. These cinemas offer the kind of encounter that has been described as an "anonymous being-together", a space wherein an individual can project not only his own desire and sexual fantasy onto the screen but disidentify with the confining projections of the external world.

Designed to protect its occupants from judgement and persecution, the artist enshrines these private rooms, continuing his documentation of the architecture and physical characteristics of queer spaces. While Sameshima atypically retains the presence of bodies in these images, with no identifying features revealed, his focus locates more deliberately on the anonymity of these individuals alongside the emptiness that surrounds them.

Much like in *Erdbeermund*, a series of photographs of glory holes; or *Numbers*, an ongoing project of paintings where hypothetically joining a series of dots would form the outlines of explicit scenes, Sameshima concerns himself with depicting that which is hidden or concealed. Comparatively, in *being alone*, Sameshima's highly contrasted photographs totally vacate the cinema screens of imagery, with this emptiness itself implying the liminality that queerness and queer desire can occupy. This interest in negative space — in gaps, openings and cavities — as a tool for concealment, similarly reverberates through this series. Devoid of any pornographic material, Sameshima's images instead accumulate the remnants of presence, of a collective and pervading aloneness.

Exhibited in its entirety for the first time at Soft Opening, *being alone* will also be the subject of a new book published by the gallery, featuring a commissioned text from American critic, writer and poet Bruce Hainley.

Soft Opening,

Main Gallery (L–R)

being alone (No. 16), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 25), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 11), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 17), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 23), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 6), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 7), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 1), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 22), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 21), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 15), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 18), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 24), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 2), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 8), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 5), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 20), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 13), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 4), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 12), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 3), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 14), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 9), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 19), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

being alone (No. 10), 2022
Archival inkjet print
59.5 × 42 cm

Dean Sameshima (b. 1971, Torrance, CA) lives and works in Berlin. This year, Sameshima is participating in the 60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Adriano Pedrosa. Recent and forthcoming exhibitions include *Digital Capture: Southern California and the Origins of the Pixel-Based Image World* at California Museum of Photography, Riverside (2024); *Scratching at the Moon* at ICA, Los Angeles (2024); *Revolt of the Body* at Tina Kim Gallery, New York (2023); *being alone* at Queer Thoughts, New York (2023); *Radical Perverts: Ecstasy and Activism in Queer Public Space* at Museum of Sex, New York (2023); *Politiken der Berührung (Politics of Touch)* at Amtsalon, Berlin (2023); *Kino Roland* at Kino Roland, Zurich (2022) and *Evidence: Selections from the Permanent Collection* at MOCA, Los Angeles (2021). Sameshima is in the permanent collections of the Getty Museum, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the Henry Art Gallery, Seattle, and was the 2022 recipient of The Artist Acquisition Club award.