

# Hauntings

## Secret and Uncanny Presence in Media, Art and Pop

### Hauntings – Ghost Box Media

Exhibition 25.09. – 17.12.2011

Kunstverein Medienturm, Josefigasse 1, 8020 Graz

Opening 24.9.2011, 11 a.m.

Yto Barrada × BIT Bureau of Inverse Technology × Minerva Cuevas × Leif Elggren ×  
Carl Michael Von Hausswolff/Michael Esposito × Harappian Night Recordings ×  
Julian House × Mike Kelley/Scanner × Jakob Kolding × Claudia Larcher ×  
Moon Wiring Club × Baron Mordant × The Otolith Group × Walid Raad ×  
Dr. Konstantin Raudive × Markus Schinwald × Zineb Sedira × Alejandro Vidal ×  
Apichatpong Weerasethakul × Hans Weigand

### Hauntings – Sonic Spectres

Ghosts, Shadows and Revenants in today's Music

Concert Series 6.10. – 8.10.2011

generalmusikdirektion, Grieskai 74a, 8020 Graz

Shuttle Service 7.10. & 8.10., 22.30h Helmut-List-Halle – generalmusikdirektion

6.10., 11 p.m. Harappian Night Recordings, Demdike Stare

7.10., 11 p.m. Leyland Kirby, Dopplereffekt

8.10., 11 p.m. Vindicatrix, Shackleton



### Hauntings – Film Screening

Hölle Hamburg (Ted Gaier/Peter Ott, 2008)

Film Screening, Talk 10.10.2011, 7.30 p.m.

Hotel Mariahilf, Mariahilferstraße 9, 8020 Graz

**Press talk** 23.9.2011, 12 a.m.

(Download <http://medienturm.at/presse/>)

**Curators** Thomas Edlinger, Christian Höller

**Coproduction** steirischer herbst, musikprotokoll and Kunstverein Medienturm

Tue – Sat 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., Wed – Fri 3 – 6 p.m.

Special opening hours 25.9. – 16.10.2011, Wed – Sun 10.30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Long Night of Museums 1.10.2011, 10.30 – 1 a.m.

Shuttle Service Vienna – Graz – Vienna 24.9.2011, departure 8 a.m., Wiener Staatsoper

Registration under [tickets@steirischerherbst.at](mailto:tickets@steirischerherbst.at)



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# Hauntings – Secret and Uncanny Presence in Media, Art and Pop

For as long media have been in existence, people have believed that these media maintain a special connection to the beyond. Writing, photography, the sound recording, the filmic image – each one is the placeholder for an absent presence, for a past- or future elsewhere whose after-effects linger in the here and now. Under the current conditions of open and electronically available archives, these symptoms are growing more radical: there is virtually no mediatic artefact in existence today that is not haunted by – or, even, that does not explicitly invoke – a “spectre” or “ghost” from the past.

What are the characteristic features of this furtive or uncanny presence in contemporary art? How does the facticity of the simulacrum, the “presence of a spectre” (Jacques Derrida) manifest? Which “undead”, be it spectral repercussions or other matters that simply refuse to die, haunt an art whose aspiration to presentness is one of its defining traits? Which political and social codes are inscribed within these approaches that flirt with the appeal of concealed presence or of the notably absent?

Pursuing a cross-section of different media, the exhibition Hauntings – Ghost Box Media is dedicated to various reverberating effects. Awaiting visitors in the entry area of the Kunstverein Medienturm is a reduced combination of image and sound, an “audio-vision” whose fundamental parts are compartmentalised: while a photograph by Yto Barrada shows the faint imprints left on a white wall by a football without being able to trace their creator, a CD by Carl Michael von Hausswolff evokes the presence of unwelcome guests. It is the sound of scurrying rats, which may well be nesting in the old masonry and which concurrently symbolise, as Michel Serres notes, immanent disruption within all communication: “They are, as the saying goes, always already there. Part of the building.”

In the first main exhibition room a mediatic fabric issues forth, as might be characterised by an interior living space infiltrated by the spectral. Leif Elggren’s film of an old sewing machine manipulated by a ghostly hand, again and again clattering away, correlates with Claudia Larcher’s slow camera pan through a deserted one-family home evincing all sorts of familiar elements (and, precisely for this reason, elements that have become uncanny). Adjacent is a work that seems to have abandoned all pictorial references and instead primarily marks a vacancy: Walid Raad’s A History of a Donator shows the empty frame of a picture that a fictitious donor presented to an equally fictitious museum. Finally, Leif Elggren’s Table of the Dead, which appears to be wired to an underwater netherworld, references a mediatic setting that has lost its familiarity in the present-day: bourgeois furnishings that are engaged in service of the otherworldly, the deceased, yes, even of séances and communication with the dead.



Zineb Sedira, *Haunted House*, 2006. Photo,  
Courtesy: kamel mennour, Paris



Alejandro Vidal, *Somewhere in a great country*, 2010.  
C-Print from a series of 20, Courtesy: Alejandro Vidal  
and Galeria Joan Prats, Barcelona

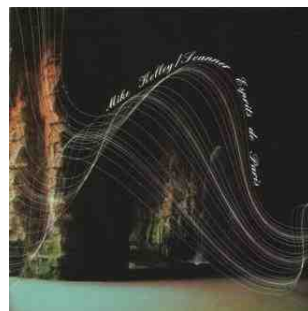
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In the second main exhibition room, this menagerie is complemented by further sculptures. Yet at the same time, the gaze is clearly trained to the outside. This is, for instance, apparent in two of Yto Barrada's photographs. *Container 1* evokes a range of abstract associations, such as a cartograph, a view out from within a cave, or a crack rifting through a surface. Hung adjacently is the photograph of a concrete North African street scene, which nevertheless lacks tangibility: five women standing opposite a man who is holding in his arms a model of a sailing vessel. All protagonists, save one woman, are gazing at something absent within the picture. In two further spatial installations this reference to the past also manifests in a regression to outdated media technology. Markus Schinwald, in his installation, harks back to the allure and the achievements of traditional illusionism – staged in a purposefully “low-tech” and anachronistic way. Adjacently resounding are photographs of Ghanaian voodoo drummers recording a curse against George Bush. They have been commissioned by Minerva Cuevas, whose re-appropriation of the gramophone represents more than just commenting on the conspiratorial mode of U.S. politics against the “axis of evil”. It is moreover reminiscent of its former function as ethnological instrument for recording the mumbling of the “wild ones”. Zineb Sedira's three-part photo series in turn shows a building with a deserted, skeleton-like air in Algiers, where – as the legend goes – torture is said to have been carried out. And the twenty-part photo tableau by Alejandro Vidal plays with the allure of the uncanny and the disastrous. Are these pictures of terrorist attacks, bombings, or rather just banal fireworks?

In an over-painted graphic print by Hans Weigand a tidal wave towers up above a surfing board against a dilapidated background, which could well have once heralded a California dream along the Pacific coast. But the path continues on to a space that is solely dedicated to the phenomenon of so-called “paranormal tape-recorded voices”. Various works – those by Carl Michael von Hausswolff and Michael Esposito, by Mike Kelley and Scanner, as well as by one of the pioneers of the hermeneutics of mediatic noise, the Latvian scientist Konstantin Raudive – facilitate the experience of various technical stages of “electronic voice phenomena”. Viewable in the neighbouring room is the film *Hydra decapita* by The Otolith Group which was inspired by the story of the “black Atlantic” and has been programmed with fixed starting times. Explored here, and further fictionalised, is the myth of the sea-born techno-outfit Drexciya, who haunt us from a distant future as descendants of African slaves who had been tossed overboard. As a bodiless “ghost”, Drexciya begins to speak through the voice of the female narrator, while the textures of water surfaces, of the oceanic and unfathomable depths, are visually conjured.



Apichatpong Weerasethakul, *Phantoms of Nabua*, 2009. Video, 11 min.,  
Courtesy: Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Animate Projects Ltd.



Mike Kelley / Scanner,  
*Esprits De Paris*, 2004.  
Excerpt 7,09 min.,  
Compound Annex Records

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A series of collages by Jakob Kolding, which condense diverse visitations from retro-futurist contexts, leads to two video stations in which the disadvantages of erstwhile promises spawned by technology and progress are carefully examined: to start with, the short film *Suicide Box* by the Bureau of Inverse Technology, in which the attraction of the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge as a magnet for countless suicides is analysed and a specifically developed surveillance mechanism implemented to support this analysis; also, a series of newly staged British public-information films by the musician Baron Mordant that emphasise the dark flip sides of what was once a future-oriented euphoria. This selection is supplemented by a compilation of music-related videos that are to be classified under the genre of "hauntology" – a variety of electronic vintage sounds whose flagship is the scene associated with the British label Ghost Box.

The final room, in closing, encompasses an entire stage for the short film *Phantoms of Nabua* by Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul. The nocturnal setting of the film involves a film projection outside, a fluorescent light tower, as well as youths who are playing with a burning football. While this pursuit does not leave faded imprints on a wall as in Barrada's photograph, it does leave behind gleaming tracks of light on the dark lawn. In the end the screen is consumed by fire, and we gaze head-on into the white light of the projector. White light, white heat.

(Thomas Edlinger / Christian Höller)



## Program preview

**Bernhard Fruehwirth**  
**FESBUK**

28.1. – 24.3.2012  
Catalogue