



THE OR GALLERY PRESENTS

# "NEW GHOST ENTERTAINMENT-ENTITLED" — THE FILM PROGRAM

GHOSTS HAVE HAUNTED NOT ONLY THE THEORETICAL discourse of the past decade, but also the art world. This observation led to the idea of bringing together writers, artists, and filmmakers whose works conjure up ghosts as a point of reference. This exhibition poses the following question: Can an engagement with mediumism, spiritualism and ghost stories provide a contemporary approach to invent — or reinvent — artistic and political forms of expression that might be useful for a much-needed political debate?

This special film program, curated by Berlin-based curator, filmmaker and writer Madeleine Bernstorff, forms a component part of the exhibition "New Ghost Entertainment-Entitled," curated by Katrin Pesch and on view at the Or Gallery in Vancouver, October 14 - November 11, 2006.

The Or Gallery is located at #103 - 480 Smithe Street, Vancouver. Telephone: 604.683.7395 / Website: [www.orgallery.org](http://www.orgallery.org)

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**"Our 'ghost' films address social events and their media representation. Spectres are symptoms of unresolved relationships, of disorder and injustice. They alert us to the fact that something is wrong and needs to be brought back to order. It is victims who most often return as ghosts, embodying the guilty conscience of a society forged by unequal relationships . . . History is a battlefield of representation. Which history, whose history, can or cannot be told? From what perspective? From what current symbolic, economic, political reality?"** — Madeleine Bernstorff

**Madeleine Bernstorff** is a writer, film curator, film historian and Super-8 filmmaker living in Berlin. She has been a programmer for the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival since 2000 and a Visiting Professor at the Berlin University of the Arts since 2004.



A RARE, RESTORED GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST FEATURE

## From Morn to Midnight

(Von morgens bis mitternacht)

GERMANY 1920. DIRECTOR: KARL HEINZ MARTIN

CAST: ERNST DEUTSCH, ROMA BAHN, ERNA MORENA, ELSA WAGNER, FRIEDA RICHARD

An eerie, high-artifice early landmark of German Expressionist cinema, and a contemporary of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, this rarity was unseen in Germany or anywhere else in the West for decades, but enjoyed a vogue in Japan; it was restored in recent years by Enno Patalas at the Munich Film Museum. A bank cashier in a small German town, bored with the monotony of his petty bourgeois life, embezzles a small fortune and sets out to experience the high life in big-city Berlin. The film was directed by stage director Karl Heinz Martin, from a well-known Expressionist play by Georg Kaiser. As in *Caligari*, the eye-popping production and costume design truly astonish. "A film that went much further in Expressionism than *Caligari*, and from which historians have seen only some photos. It was only to be seen in Japan. Will we find it again?" (Henri Langlois, 1956). B&W, 35mm, silent. 65 mins.

preceded by

**Dream Documentary** - "A masterpiece of compilation film" (Berlin Kinematek), this haunting work of dream and nightmare employs found footage (of colonial and other violence), precise editing, and effective sound to surreal, foreboding effect. *Fredrick Marx/USA 1981. B&W, 16mm. 5 mins.*

**Perfect Film** - Discarded found footage of eyewitness accounts of the assassination of Malcolm X in 1965. "Reprinted as found (maybe in a Canal Street bin, I forget) with the exception of boosting volume in the second half. A lot of film is perfect left alone, perfectly revealing in its un- or semi-conscious form" (Ken Jacobs). *Ken Jacobs/USA 1986. B&W, 16mm. 22 mins.*

**Handtinting** - A film assembled of outtakes from a Job Corps documentary that Joyce Wieland and Sylvia Davern shot for Xerox. The company rejected the material as too vulgar. Women from a job training centre are shown in their leisure time; the rhythmic editing makes this silent film a musical experience. Yet amidst all the charming dancing and swimming there is the subliminal presence of the institution. *Joyce Wieland/Canada 1967-8. Colour, 16mm, silent. 5 mins.*

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14 — 7:30 PM

# Ghostly apparitions of all shapes and sizes

## VISUAL ARTS

### NEW GHOST ENTERTAINMENT—ENTITLED

At the Or Gallery until November 11

◊ The awkward title of this international project, *New Ghost Entertainment—Entitled*, is appropriated from an announcement for a 19th-century “phantasmagoria” show. Conceived and organized by Katrin Pesch, a German artist based in Los Angeles, *New Ghost* comprises three parts: film screenings (which occurred October 14), a magazine (available at the Or), and an exhibition of contemporary art (also on view at the Or).

In her own work and in that of others, Pesch suggests that ghosts, hauntings, séances, and other supernatural phenomena may be deployed as political metaphors. Her premise is ambitious and ambiguous, as are some of the works on view. There's a disparate assortment here of both means and media, from crudity to sophistication and from film, video, and sound works to experimental photography and a mobilelike sculpture composed of light and mirrors.

The 17 international artists represented embrace a number of cross-cultural conditions. For instance, the New York-based Chilean artist Cristóbal Leht employs a found image and text—an embossed copper picture of the Chilean folksinger Violeta Parra, who died in 1967, along with the lyrics of her most famous song—as the pivot for ideas about mediumship or spiritual possession. His work, *Drama Projection (Violeta)*, is a corner-mounted diptych consisting of two large-scale photographs, one of the ghostly copper portrait and the other of an automatic drawing he undertook while imagining himself to be an unnamed, fictional someone else. Together, the words and images suggest an enduring connection between the living and the dead. More specifically, they evoke Chile's tragic years of loss—of life and creative expression—following the 1973 military coup that deposed Salvador Allende.

Another engaging work here is “Lumberjack”, a five-minute video in which Los Angeles-based Québécois artist Julie Lequin assumes the role of a 19th-century lumberjack and recounts the tale of a supernatural journey he took after making a deal with the devil. The story is loosely based on a French-Canadian folk tale, “La Chasse-galerie”, and Lequin's version of it is wonderfully droll. The work's political nature emerges in its character's refusal to acknowledge responsibility. He never actually saw Satan, okay?

David Askevold's *Two Hanks* is a video installation that conjures up the ghosts of Hank Williams and Hank Snow so that they can perform together on the same stage. The work emphasizes its own cheesy effects (dry ice, strobe lights, a theremin producing cliché-eerie sounds, a night-vision camera that causes the eyes of the audience to glow in zombielike fashion) and self-conscious elements that include references to its own staging and making. Meant to delineate the differences between these two legendary performers, the piece is ultimately unforthcoming. It's trapped in the murky ether of pixels, sound waves, and unmet intentions.

The marvellous, weird, and supernatural have been with us for millennia, and usually can be interpreted through the tool of social history. Nothing in this show, however, is quite as straightforward as, say, accounts of alien abductions and rectal probes being metaphors for childhood sexual abuse. What we have here is a hit-and-miss group of spectres and apparitions that doesn't really cohere around a theme. But maybe that's the nature of ghosts.

> ROBIN LAURENCE