

## Vilma Gold

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**MARKUS SELG**

**LA VAGUE D'ESPRIT**

**23 NOVEMBER 2013 - 18 JANUARY 2014**

**Private view 22 November 6:30 - 8:30pm**

Vilma Gold are delighted to present a solo show by Markus Selg - his second at the gallery.

Developed around a journey to Benin, a West African country widely regarded as the motherland of the religion of Vodun (or Voodoo), the show comprises a video projection, large-scale sublimation prints on fabric and a series of photographic prints. Selg's work is much based in myth, and his travels mark an imaginative and critical re-enactment of Western individual traveling to so-called archaic lands in a quest for authenticity.

The exhibition takes its name from a new short film. The footage is akin to that of a documentary but edited into an artificial and highly symbolic filmic tableaux dealing with spirituality, nativeness and technology. For example, material shot at traditional Voodoo ceremonies or of pythons crawling is interlaced with digital colour effects. Elsewhere the dream-like appearance of a naked woman in the door of her hut, Gauguin-like, might be set against a shot of the town buzzing with technologies, that against a volcanic eruption and that followed by a group of children noting the camera and playing up to it, - their off the cuff reactions not only looping the footage back from Eden-like native land to the world of contemporary blockbuster film but also bringing the question of documentary and staging into sharper relief.

Combined with images culled from the Internet, stills from the film are used to generate what Selg describes as his computer paintings. Unifying several media - collage, drawing, painting, graphic work and photography- these works become contemporary, otherworldly montages built around timeless themes. We see the waves of a stormy sea - a symbol of the spirit of Vodoun spreading out to the world along with the slave boats. Elsewhere a reclining female nude is pictured. At first appearing to be printed on natural raw linen, a closer inspection of the paintings reveals that this linen, like the images themselves, is also a digital simulation, its weave exaggerated in scale to unreal proportions. Although signifying an idea of something untouched or paradisaic in terms of imagery, nothing about these paintings - them being comprised of highly processed found digital imagery - is neutral.

A number of smaller prints on aluminium show a collection of Vodun objects used during ceremonies as vectors through which to contact spirits. They are based on analog polaroid photography and digital film stills whose subjection to filter effects means that visual differences due to technical makings are equalled out as one medium mimics the other. Vodun is an animist religion and it transpires that for Selg, this idea of treating objects as containers of thought and spirit bears significance for art. Combining themes from world art history with new technologies Selg constantly probes questions of authenticity and artificiality in a digitalized and globalized world. But rather than this stemming from a conservative or naïve position, his egalitarian attitude to what the world has to offer, both past and future, means that the notion of authenticity is made extremely dynamic, opening unto ever new considerations. In a sense the authentic for Selg, as communicated in the visionary aspirations of the film, seems to be the inner experience. It is in this mode that his practice dares the viewer to reconsider the universal or immersive potential of contemporary art.

Markus Selg lives and works in Berlin and he studied at the Akademie Isotrop in Hamburg. Selg has had solo shows at Städtische Galerie Tuttlingen, Tuttlingen, Germany (2013), Galerie Guido W. Baudach (2012, 2009), Storråda, Kunstverein Heppenheim, Heppenheim (2012), SVIT, Prague (2012), Vilma Gold, London (2010), MeetFactory, Prague (2009) and Galerie Christina Mayer (2007). In 2012 Selg created the stage set for the Opera "Auf Kolonos" directed by Laurent Chetouane with music by Wolfgang Rihm for the State Theatre, Karlsruhe and his first feature film "Das Ewige Antlitz", (HD, 100min, Giant Mountains Film) was released. This year the film was screened in Stromboli, Italy, Prague Czech Republic, Tuttlingen, Germany and at Kristiansand Kunsthall, Norway.