Emma Charles And the Earth Screamed, Alive

Private View: 20th October 2016, 6-9pm
Exhibition Dates: 21 October – 12 November 2016
Opening hours: Thurs-Sat, 12-6pm

The bunker’s reemergence in the cloud has made disaster recovery readily available, in part by making disaster constantly imaginable. Tung-Hui Hu

South Kiosk is pleased to present And the Earth Screamed, Alive*, a solo exhibition by Emma Charles, featuring a multi-media installation of her 16mm film White Mountain (2016). This work focuses on the Pionen Data Center in Stockholm. In 2008, this former Cold War-era civil defence bunker was redesigned by architect Alber France-Lanord as a data center to house servers for clients, which at one point included Wikileaks and The Pirate Bay. Playing on the science fiction aesthetic, White Mountain uncovers the varying forms of temporality brought about through an exploration of data space and geology.

Starting by surveying the rough topography of the surrounding Södermalm landscape, Charles gradually pushes beneath the surface, illuminating the ordinarily concealed network infrastructure. As the camera idles on the florescent-lit server stacks, issues of privacy, surveillance and digital sovereignty inevitably emanate. Located 30 meters under the granite rocks of Vita Bergen Park in Stockholm, the hydrogen bomb proof subterranean hub has been constructed with direct references to science fiction films such as Silent Running, and the classic Ken Adams designed Bond-villain lairs.

South Kiosk has invited Emma Charles for And the Earth Screamed, Alive to transform its space and take the viewer on a journey through the concealed and protected architecture of the data center, creating an immersive installation by deconstructing White Mountain, through a combination of projections, tv screens, monitors and print, this solo presentation focuses on the handling of digital information. Also for this exhibition Charles has created a soundscape using a variety of audio recording devices. Gathering vibrations and electromagnetic sounds from the rock face above the data center as well as deep inside the server rooms itself, Charles has created an audio composition both revealing and processing the reverberations of the hidden environment.

Emma Charles is a London-based artist. Working with photography and moving image, her practice stems from an inquiry into temporality. This acts as a tool to explore the photographic medium itself, and also to address wider social and political systems of time. Charles has been particularly concerned with the financial sector and how productivity and labour are altered through technology. Primarily focusing on the abstract elements of industry and corporate environments, Charles’ work often crosses the boundaries between documentary and fiction. More recently, Charles has directed her practice towards exploring the materiality of the Internet, seeking to uncover the hidden, physical infrastructures that support our technologically driven lives.
