

Michael Benevento is pleased to present Ectoplasms, a solo exhibition of artist David Snyder. The drawing, installation, kinetic sculpture, sound, and video works that comprise Snyder's generous Ectoplasms function to channel the chaos that can occur when something formless, like a concept, memory, belief, or fear, is given form via description and representation.

The experiential exhibition consists of an arrangement of interrelated projects, all of which focus on what could be called the "incantatory" qualities of verbal and visual descriptive forms, i.e. the ability of language and objects to conjure and convey imagery, to operate as a surrogate and a vessel. The nature of representation is such that it is based in altered perceptions, often through an unintentional warping or diluting process, and just as often through sinister intent. Snyder's grand yet deadpan works partially conceal themselves, infuse themselves with mystery, and interrupt themselves and viewers, performing a type of self- descriptive visual language about the specious tendencies of representation itself.

The idea of referencing the term "ectoplasm," in this sense, is borrowed from the strange double life of the word itself. In cellular biology, the ectoplasm is the cell's outer wall or membrane – it is both a defensive barrier and one that supports a vital containment; it is the layer that differentiates an individual cell from everything else, the layer that defines the cell as a unique entity. In the context of early twentieth century spiritualism, ectoplasm was an important (albeit ersatz) "phenomenon," often photographed in various manifestations, generally as a gossamer or cheese-like substance emanating from the orifices of an entranced medium. In this sense, ectoplasm was represented as an unknown internal substance that would materialize to drape itself over unseen spirit bodies, literally giving a sort of substance to "spirit."

Forms of description and representation toe a line between the plain and functional containment of ideas and wild embellishment and obfuscation, misconstruction and fabrication. Such embellishment often serves as much to conceal the object of description as to describe it: a loss of information, one that oscillates between absurdity and anxiety, between the laughable and the sinister.

Snyder's two exhibited drawings, Invocation #7 (For a Hole) and Curse #2 (For A-Hole), were both produced through a concealment process in which "ectoplasmic" paint and ink marks obscure beautifully drawn texts sourced from the occult. The results are highly surfaced and nonsensical if somewhat evocative word drawings with ominous overtones of a heavily edited or mysteriously redacted document.

Arranged inside the gallery, Snyder's installation, *Sunset Memories False Levity/ Longevity Sheet Seat Theatre* has been produced as a physical description of a theater, one that is the size of a theater, looks like a theater, but could not be used as such. The theater's "chairs" are not chairs, they are hypothetical, simply chair-like in form. They are made of used bed sheets and as such have implied (one might say "infused") personalities. They imply bodies – they were used for bodies. Now they are in chair form, but can never be sat in, and operate as a type of ghost audience. In the same space is a projected "movie": *Cents and Incantations*. Narratives within the movie are constantly disrupted, the dialogue is distended, image-laden, yet often indeterminate.

The shaking gallery and the interrupting sculpture involve a poltergeist-like disruption of the experience of viewing art. *Bad Vibes Gallery* is a gallery with a shaking, rattling ceiling, triggered by a motion sensor switch built into the architecture of the room itself. *Portrait of Nugose* is a gloppy, giant sculpture with unseen electronic components that make an odd variety of proto-lingual sounds in a fixed pattern while interrupting the lights for the drawing of the same title exhibited in the same space. This work is designed to have a provisional skin – its interior will stay the same but its skin will be replaced with each "incarnation." *Nugose* is the name of the most enigmatic invisible friend of the artist's three-year-old niece. The sculpture is based on the indistinct, often contradictory and weirdly un-tethered descriptions of this entity as described by someone who is using language to both describe and directly influence and invent reality.

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