

Acoustic locators
Germany, 1917

Sergio Frutos
2019

Oil on canvas
120 x 100 x 2 cm

Unique
Signed

SF-P 19-42



About this artwork:

As a military air defense tool, passive acoustic location was used from mid-World War I to the early years of World War II to detect enemy aircraft by picking up the noise of their engines. It was rendered obsolete before and during World War II by the introduction of radar, which was far more effective (but interceptable). Acoustic techniques had the advantage that they could 'see' around corners and over hills, due to sound diffraction. In the picture, 2 german soldiers wearing acoustic locators in 1917.

About the project: Stranger Times

The spectacle is the uninterrupted conversation which the present order maintains about itself, its laudatory monologue.

It is the self portrait of power in the epoch of its totalitarian management of the conditions of existence

Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1970.

Stranger Times develops from research on archival photographs, mainly from II World War and Cold War, about bizarre chemical and biological war developments and examines the human enormous capacity of normalizing and banalizing the barbarism.¹ How much can we pretend that everything is ok when the world falls apart around us? To what extent are we exempt of responsibility?

We are in a theater where the familiar becomes strange, 'verfremdet' as in Brecht.²

It represents that uneasy tendency perhaps most poignantly, as it harasses the sanctity of the family, the society and the

bourgeoisie, suggesting that any nostalgia we might have for their old, solid versions, should be abandoned, as according to two German and one Brooklyn's classics, "all that's solid, melts into air",³ and sentimental attachments are neither helping to stop this process, nor to emancipate.

Stranger Times tells us about the strangeness, the perplexity before the modern era and its absurdities, and the normalization and trivialization of these absurdities and their terrible consequences. Everyday life goes on while the world collapses around us, and we get used, banalize, adapt to the disaster or even gather to watch it as a spectacle. These paintings represent a not too distant past, or a future closer than we might think.

1. Hannah Arendt and 'Amos Elon. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York Toronto London: Penguin Books, 2006. →
2. Francesco Fiorentino. "Ansätze Zu Einer Pädagogik Der Fremdheit Bei Brecht." In *The Brecht Yearbook / Das Brecht-Jahrbuch* 45, 102-15. Boydell and Brewer Limited, 2020. →
3. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *Manifesto of the Communist Party*. *Marx/Engels Selected Works, Vol. One*. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969. →