

# KILL EINSTEIN

## THE – Thomas Eller

### Jan-Peter E. R. Sonntag

DISKURS Berlin  
28.04. – 05.05.2016

Opening: Wednesday, 27th April, 7pm  
Grand Opening & Aftershow-Party

When Albert Einstein first predicted the existence of gravitational waves in 1916, he hardly believed himself that his theory would ever be detected. However, last February it was reported that this lack of proof had finally been confirmed: gravitational waves are reverberations of the Big Bang, originated almost 13.7 billion years ago. In fact, what Einstein discovered then has been scientifically proven and validated today. The process itself evades all kinds of imagination; it seemed to have place only in academic descriptions. Thus, after the notification of their existence announced last February, gravitational waves are now even presented as a cartoon or in Big Bang animations. Yet, the more is proven by science, the less space is left for the mystery of the universe and humankind. With his theories, Einstein has transformed the way we think and attitude to science. We are grateful to him for this, while we are waiting impatiently for further speculations and future actions. "KILL EINSTEIN".

**THE - Thomas Eller** is an artist and was executive director of the German branch of artnet AG, as well as managing director and artistic director of Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin. Thomas Eller's work **THE white male complex** (quis ut deus), 2016 negotiates the background radiation of an old universe that the West has left mostly abandoned. However, the recent conflicts in the Middle East bring the suppressed metaphysical residue of so-called Western culture back into conversation. Thomas Eller has received various prizes, including the Villa-Romana Prize and the Käthe-Kollwitz-Prize from the Akademie der Künste Berlin in 2006. He has been invited to participate in numerous international exhibitions and projects such as Gwangju Biennial; Solitude au Musée; Musée d'Art Moderne, Saint Étienne; Musée Imaginaire and Museum of Installation, London. In Berlin, he also co-curated 'The 8 of Paths: Art in Beijing', at the Uferhallen.

**Jan-Peter E.R. Sonntag** is an artist, composer and researcher. He studied fine arts, art history, music theory, composition, philosophy and cognitive science. He has exhibited in various international exhibitions and received several grants or prizes such as Akademie Schloss Solitude, Berlin- & German Sound Art Prize and the Villa-Aurora-Grant in LA, USA, among others. Since 2012 he is running a media-epistemological research project on Friedrich Kittler's Synthesizer; since 2014, he is one of the publishers of Kittler's collected writings. In 2015 he had a solo show at the WKV in Stuttgart – RAUSCHEN; his chamber opera **SINUS** about Herman von Helmholtz was shown at the TAT in Berlin and his video- & sound-installation **SONNTAG IM PARK** was part of Xenopolis at the Deutsche Bank Kunsthalle in Berlin.

**DISKURS Berlin** was founded in 2014 by curator Jung Me Chai and will open in April 2016 in a new location in Berlin Mitte, along with an adjoined residency program for curators. **DISKURS** aims to pursue and develop experimental approaches while contributing to build new discourses in arts. In addition to its programmatic activity, **DISKURS** develops connections between public and private cultural institutions in Germany and Korea. In June 2016 it will start a cooperation with the municipal cultural foundation Daegu Foundation for Culture, which will intensify the linkage between the two countries.

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Opening hours: Wed - Sun : 1pm – 7pm, Dates possible by arrangement



## Thomas Eller

... und wäre ich nicht, dann wäre auch Gott nicht. Dass Gott Gut ist, dafür bin ich der Ursprung. Und wäre ich nicht, dann wäre Gott nicht Gut?

„Gott warf ich nicht“, hat Einstein gesagt. In seiner Arbeit *THE white man complex (part of dead)*, 2016 sucht Thomas Eller nach der Hintergrundbedeutung eines alten Unirahmens, das man in Wäldern vergeblich aufgefunden hätte. Durch die Kriege im Nahen Osten erblickt er seinen die Frage nach Gottes existenz menschlichen Wesens in westlicher Kultur neu Abzuwägen. „Gott ist tot“, hat Nietzsche gesagt, aber er ist noch nicht begraben. Mit voller Wucht erleben wir den Terror geschildert aus Abmachungsphantasien eines sogenannten Gottesboten. Wie fällt die westliche Antwort darauf aus? – Um restaurativen Entwicklungen auch im Westen zu begreifen, erinnert Thomas Eller an mythische Erfahrungen in westlicher Kulturtradition, die ein positives Wendemaß zur Frage nach Gott erlauben und aus dem sich kein weltlicher Multikulturalismus automatisch ableiten lässt, sondern dem Einzelnen in Weltwahrnehmung helfen kann, dass die Welt nicht von autonomen Zurechnungen selbstbestimmender weltlicher und geistlicher Führer.

In seinem Video liest der Künstler die Predigt „Jesu corpus spiritus, quoniam quorum est regnum caelorum“ von Martin Luther, die die für jede Christenheit zentrale Behauptung aufweist, dass das Selbst der Ursprung Gottes sei. Diese Auslegung setzt auch ein neues Licht auf das Gesamtwerk von Thomas Eller, der sich seit über 25 Jahren mit der Frage nach dem SELBST beschäftigt.

... if I were not, God would not be: that God is God, if that I am the cause. If I were not, God would not be God?

„God doesn't play dead“, Einstein famously said. Thomas Eller's work *THE white man complex (part of dead)*, 2016, negotiates the background meditation of an old engraving that in the West stands largely abandoned. The recent wars in the Middle East however give new again to the suppressed metaphysical question of Western culture: „God is dead“, Nietzsche famously proclaimed, the corpse however remains unbearably. We are currently experiencing the full impact of terror fuelled by the phantasies of a self-proclaimed twofold. What is the West's answer to this? – Countering ultra-conservative movements also in the West, Thomas Eller reminds us of a Jubilee tradition in the West that allows for a positive approach to the question of god. One that does not give itself to become a mundane power of authoritarianism. One who that liberates the individual from the impositions by self-proclaimed worldly and spiritual leaders and instead creates an enlightened approach to the world: it is the mystical experience. In his video, the artist reads aloud „Jesu corpus spiritus, quoniam quorum est regnum caelorum“, a homily by Martin Luther. To the utmost horror for any orthodox, this sermon claims god's origin to be the self. As such, this exhibition also sheds new light on the complete works of Thomas Eller who for the past 25 years has been concerned foremost with the question of the SELF.



April 28 – June 5, 2016  
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## Jan-Peter E.R. Sonntag

Jan-Peter E.R. Sonntag, dessen künstlerische Wurzeln in der Minimal- und Concept-Art sowie der so genannten Neuen und Experimentellen Musik liegen, arbeitet seit Anfang der 1980er Jahre immer wieder mit wissenschaftlichen Laboratorien zusammen und gründete sein eigenes Lab 1989. Im Zentrum seiner künstlerischen Arbeit steht, neben der Auseinandersetzung mit der menschlichen Wahrnehmung, die Frage nach dem Wesen der Moderne – einem unvollständigen Projekt. Mit dem *analog project* – einem Projektzyklus in wechselnden ästhetischen Formaten – machte sich der Künstler von 2003 bis 2007 auf die Suche nach dem Wesen der Elektrizität sowie nach der Dematerialisierbarkeit des Bildes begibt. Das heißt, nach den elektrischen/elektronischen Wurzeln und zugleich Visionen unseres Medienzeitalters. Ausgangspunkt des konzeptuellen, mediale-archaischen Forschungsprojekts *Apparat* Operated ist eine Anatomie des modularen Synthesizers von Friedrich Kittler. Diesen Apparat hat der 2011 verstorbenen Literatur- und Medienwissenschaftler zwischen 1978 und 1980 eigenhändig zusammengebaut und -getestet. Der konzeptionelle Kernpunkt dieses Projekts besteht darin, die Grundzüge von Kittlers techno-historischer Theoriebildung, in der Kultur und ihre Medien als Datenverarbeitungsmaschinen zu verstehen sind und deren Schreib- und Regelverfahren im offenkundigen gilt, aus beiden Umriss zu lesen. Sonntags umfassende Einzelausstellung *Rauschen*, die Mitte des Jahr im Westfälischen Kunstmuseum zu sehen und zu hören war, setzte sich mit den Beziehungen zwischen *Rauschen*, *Rausch* und *Technologie* auseinander. Mit *SIVUS* realisierte er im gleichen Jahr in Kooperation mit dem Zentrum von Heinrich-Jenssen für Kulturtechnik an Tiergartentheater der Humboldt-Universität Berlin eine Kammeroper um seine operative Neuausprägung von Hermann von Helmholtz' „Apparat zur künstlerischen Zusammenfassung von Vokalblenden“ – einem ersten elektroakustischen Synthesizer aus den 1860er Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts.

Since the 1980s, Jan-Peter E.R. Sonntag, whose artistic roots reach back to the minimal- and concept art as well as to the so-called new and experimental music, has repeatedly cooperated with scientific laboratories and founded his own lab in 1989. Alongside the examination of human perception, the question at the centre of his artistic work concerns the vision of modernity – an unfinished project. With *analog project*, a project cycle at alternating aesthetic formats, the artist has been in search of the essence of electricity as well as the possibility of dematerializing anything since 2003: that is, in search of the electro/electronic source and, at the same time, visions of our media age. The point of departure for the conceptual research project *apparatus operated* is an anatomy of the modular synthesizer by Friedrich Kittler. The apparatus was single-handedly assembled and tested by the literature and media theorist, who passed away in 2011, between the years 1978 and 1980. The aim is to read Kittler's technohistorical theory, which understands culture and its media to be data-processing machines whose switching and control devices must be laid bare, by studying and interpreting Kittler's existing work. His solo exhibition *Rauschen (Noise)* last year at the Westfälischer Kunstmuseum both visually and auditorily, explored the relations between technology, noise, and rupture. In German language, there exists a proximity between the terms *Rauschen* and *Rausch* (*Rausch*). With *Reich* in cooperation with the Zentrum von Helmholtz-Centre for Cultural Techniques at the Tiergartentheater of the Humboldt University in Berlin he realised a chamber opera around his operative re-interpretation of Hermann von Helmholtz' „Apparat zur künstlerischen Zusammenfassung von Vokalblenden“ – a first electro-acoustic synthesizer from the 1860s.



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