

Dürst Britt & Mayhew

Exhibition title: Montserrat (a phono-archaeology)

Artist: Raúl Ortega Ayala

Venue: Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague, The Netherlands

Date: 2 September – 28 October 2023

Photography: Gert Jan van Rooij / copyright the artist & Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague

Note: an accompanying essay by Arno van Roosmalen (amongst others former director of TENT in Rotterdam and STROOM in The Hague) can be found [here](#)

List of Captions

1. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
2. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
3. Fieldnote 22-03-21 – WD 13.3mm (x 500 view of recovered vinyl via Electron Microscope), 2021, 53 × 61 cm (image) / 61 × 69 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
4. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
5. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
6. Fieldnote 24-04-17 – 8958 (Plymouth), 2017, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
7. Fieldnote 20-06-19 – 0331 (Silver Cats Bar), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
8. Fieldnote 24-04-17 – 8983 (Pentecostal church, Plymouth), 2017, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
9. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
10. Fieldnote 22-06-19 – 7572 (Air Studios), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
11. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
12. Fieldnote 03-12-18 – 6929 (Soufrière Hills Volcano), 2018, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
13. Fieldnote 23-04-17 – 8692 (Hotel – Richmond Hill), 2017, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
14. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
15. Research material table (detail) for Montserrat (a phono-archaeology)
16. Research material table (detail) for Montserrat (a phono-archaeology)
17. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
18. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague

Dürst Britt & Mayhew

19. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
20. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
21. Fieldnote 22-06-19 – 7572 (Silver Cats Bar), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
22. Fieldnote 21-06-19 – 7568 (Air Studios), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
23. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
24. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
25. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
26. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
27. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
28. Fieldnote 22-03-21 — WD 14.6mm (x 300 view of recovered vinyl via Electron Microscope), 2021, 53 × 61 cm (image) / 61 × 69 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
29. Fieldnote 22-03-21 — WD 20.8mm (x 1000 view of recovered vinyl via Electron Microscope), 2021, 53 × 61 cm (image) / 61 × 69 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
30. Fieldnote 22-03-21 — WD 11.6mm (x 100 view of recovered vinyl via Electron Microscope), 2021, 53 × 61 cm (image) / 61 × 69 (frame), edition 5+2 AP
31. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
32. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
33. DJ Table (detail) table part of Montserrat (a phono-archaeology)
34. DJ Table (detail) table part of Montserrat (a phono-archaeology)
35. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
36. Fieldnote 18-06-19 – 0022 (Church organ, Plymouth), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), ed. 5+2 AP
37. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague
38. Fieldnote 18-06-19 – 0089 (Church), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), ed. 5+2 AP
39. Fieldnote 18-06-19 – 0004 (Church, Plymouth), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), ed. 5+2 AP
40. Fieldnote 18-06-19 – 0033 (Church, Plymouth), 2019, 53 × 79 cm (image) / 61 × 87 (frame), ed. 5+2 AP
41. Raúl Ortega Ayala, Montserrat (a phono-archaeology), 2023, exhibition view, Dürst Britt & Mayhew, The Hague

Dürst Britt & Mayhew

For his second solo exhibition at Dürst Britt & Mayhew Mexican born artist **Raúl Ortega Ayala** presents a series of photographs he took on the Caribbean island of Montserrat. The island has a long colonial history, but in the 20th century turned into a vacation destination mostly for British citizens visiting their overseas territory. In 1989 a hurricane devastated large parts of the island. In 1995 a previously dormant volcano erupted. Its ashes buried numerous sites around the island, including the capital city of Plymouth, creating a large uninhabitable exclusion zone that spans more than half of its territory to the south.

Ortega Ayala visited different sites within the exclusion zone and kept running across objects that contained sounds or that had a connection with its production. He found out that George Martin, who was the producer of the Beatles, had opened an avant-garde recording studio called Air Studios Montserrat, after falling in love with the island during a visit in 1979. For over a decade more than seventy albums were recorded either partly or entirely at Air Studios, by well-known rock and pop musicians like Lou Reed, Paul McCartney, The Police, Elton John, Duran Duran, Eric Clapton, Dire Straits, Black Sabbath, and The Rolling Stones, amongst others. Ortega Ayala also focused on other buildings on the island where music played an important role, such as churches where pipe organs and choral singing sounded until the volcanic eruption.

The exhibition will include a collaboration with a DJ to produce three soundscapes, which will use the music recorded at Air Studios Montserrat and a variety of sounds derived from reels and albums unearthed by **Ortega Ayala** from under the ashes, as well as acoustic experiments conducted in the now derelict studios.

The Hague based DJ / producer The Social Lover will create the first soundscape during the opening of the exhibition, followed by sets on Friday 29 September and Sunday 29 October. After performing these sets, the recorded versions will function as an integral part of the exhibition.

On Wednesday 27 September a video-work that is part of **Ortega Ayala's** Montserrat project will premiere at Filmhuis Den Haag as part of the monthly Glued & Screwed programme, which is curated by wysiwyg.

Raúl Ortega Ayala (1973) is a visual artist whose practice is research-based. Since 2012 his artwork has focused on the ways in which societies and individuals remember, forget or repress their past. The overarching title for these works is 'From the Pit of Et Cetera' and Montserrat (a phono-archaeology) sits within this framework. Recent solo and group exhibitions include 'The Zone, Chernobyl (2013-2020)' at Proyectos Monclova in Mexico City, 'The Zone' at Te Tuhi in Auckland, New Zealand and 'Normal exceptions' at Museo Jumex in Mexico City. His work is held in private and public collections, including the Roberts Institute, the AkzoNobel Art Foundation and the LAM Museum in Lisse.