

Eerie Infrared Kites Track Down the Physical Internet

 [vice.com/en/article/gvwnp7/infrared-kites-record-physical-internet](https://www.vice.com/en/article/gvwnp7/infrared-kites-record-physical-internet)

Last year, Paris-based US artist Evan Roth traveled to the Cornish coast in England carrying ghost-hunting equipment, which he used to document the physical infrastructure of the internet, locating where the transatlantic cables carried the 1 and 0s out to sea. Roth, one of the co-founders of the now-defunct F.A.T. Lab, which applied a hacker ethos to its art projects, saw it as an opportunity to renew his relationship with the internet and experience this virtual realm physically, after he had become jaded by both the technology's commodification and revelations of government surveillance.

Roth has now continued his pilgrimage to new destinations with a new exhibition. Again, Roth journeyed to where the fiber optic cables meet land but this time the locations were in New Zealand, Sweden, and France. Called Kites & Websites, the show, on at Belenius/Nordenhake gallery in Stockholm, consists of exactly that: A series of websites or "networked videos," shot using a modified infrared (IR) camera, with accompanying sounds recorded using a custom built instrumental transcommunication device (the type used in ghost hunting and parapsychology).

"The audio is a mix of the ambient natural surroundings and recordings from a custom device I created that scans through radio frequencies in sync with my heart rate," Roth explains to The Creators Project. "The videos are then stored on servers in the countries where they were shot, so when they are viewed, they are actually being converted into IR light and traveling to the viewer in the fiber optic cables located where they were physically filmed."

The URLs of the sites are also the GPS coordinates of where they were shot, with links to their Google Maps locations embedded in their source codes. The videos (you can check some out [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)) are haunting, strange, sometimes we can see signs of the infrastructure, cables disappearing into the water, sometimes it's just trees swaying in the wind with voices and music drifting through the static. As with the previous exhibition, a sense of wilderness is evoked, reminding us that something very familiar, that's piped into our homes and pockets, where we store vast amounts of personal data, also exists in the impersonal and the hinterlands.

The kites in the exhibition are a reference not only to actual kites that you fly over a park as a kid but also Italian engineer Guglielmo Marconi's first transatlantic radio communications. "After storms destroyed his radio towers, he started experimenting with flying kites with antenna wire, and the first wireless (radio) signal sent from Boston to the UK was using these kites," Roth explains.

For the exhibition, Roth took Marconi's hexagon-shaped kite designs and used them as a canvas for his infrared photography, taken at fiber optic locations in Sweden. The hexagonal kites also reference early patent drawings of the internet which featured nodes

at the six points.

"For me, visiting the internet physically is an attempt to repair a relationship that has changed dramatically as the internet becomes more centralized, monetized and a mechanism for global government spying," Roth says. "Through understanding and experiencing the internet's physicality, one comes to understand the network not as a mythical cloud, but as a human made and controlled system of wires and computers."

Evan Roth's *Kites & Websites* is on now until April 24, 2016 at Belenius/Nordenhake, Stockholm, Sweden.