

EGON VAN HERREWEGHE 'High Fidelity'

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HiFi. High Fidelity. An ancient dream to circumvent our (necessarily) mediated encounter with the world – a medium: that which mediates between us and the world and therefore also squeezes itself in between us and the world - and to be directly, unmediated connected to reality. The three image-objects that Egon Van Herreweghe (°1985) has produced so far share a number of remarkable characteristics. They are all auxiliary devices for producing sound and all pretend to do so as faithfully as possible. Van Herreweghe mainly focuses on those devices that convert the recorded sound into audible music for a listener. So, not the studio space (or stage) where music is made and recorded, not the various instruments used or the musicians who play them, but only the end devices that are used to listen to music. Devices that are the last link between musician and listener.

However, they also have something else in common. The devices to which these three image-objects refer operate (more or less) wirelessly. The first object (a Google Chromecast Audio) ensures that each amplifier can receive wireless signals and convert them into sound. The Marshall Stanmore is a bluetooth speaker (which needs to be connected to the electrical grid and therefore cannot work completely autonomously) while the Bose 700 wireless headphones (with a built-in rechargeable battery) can. The wireless operation of these devices refers not only to the increased ease of use (no wretched wires or complicated connections that could entangle the listener) but also to an ever decreasing resistance between the source of the sound (the immaterial digital file on the computer or telephone) and its eventual conversion into perceptible sound waves (through the speakers or headphones).

And here (again) a potential analogy opens up with the photographic image from which this image-object is derived. A photograph is the product of a device that seems to give a direct and almost unmediated representation of reality. That which the apparatus captures (the reflected light of the object right in front of the lens) remains essentially linked to the object from which it originated: a photographic image 'sticks' to reality. Even though the photographic object makes its own path in the world, it remains inextricably linked to the source from which it once sprouted. Moreover, a photographic device works quickly, automatically and without any noteworthy intervention by the human hand. It makes visible but works itself invisibly. And isn't that the definition of 'high fidelity': an absolute faithfulness of the visible (or audible) end result to the visual (or auditory) source to which it refers without any interfering noise? Put this way, photography is the first 'high fidelity' medium, the medium that brought the dream of a direct, unfiltered, non-mediated involvement in the world one step closer. Soon, however, this absolute fidelity to 'reality' would turn into the alienating hallucination of a world whose existence we did not even suspect. Beware: with a high-fidelity medium you are on the verge to see (or hear) more than you were hoping for!

Steven Humblet

Egon Van Herreweghe (1985) lives and works in Ghent. He studied photography at the KASK in Ghent and has been a laureate of the HISK since 2015. He has had solo exhibitions in FOAM (Amsterdam) and Netwerk (Aalst), but also participated in various (inter) national group exhibitions including: Every Letter is a Love Letter (Tallinn 2016), Friendly Faces (New York 2015) and The Catwalk (Brussels 2015). His work has been included in private and public collections such as FOAM, Martin Asbæk, Pieter and Marieke Sanders and Frédéric de Goldschmidt.