



GHOSTS OF PRESENCE: INTERNATIONAL EMERGING ARTISTS' VIDEO

Darryl Bank

In Mores McWreath's *Westlake*, the non-site of haunting is, confusingly, a real geographic location. *Westlake* is composed of twenty-six mini-commercials that each ironically and humorously sell some aspect of "life" in Westlake, Ohio (just west of Cleveland). The Outback Steakhouse, Abercrombie and Fitch, Burger King, and Kmart are just a few of the subjects, with each commercial soundtracked by alternative rock radio (e.g., Nickelback and Linkin Park). In McWreath's work, Westlake is the non-site – not a concrete, physical location but rather a transitory zone that enables development and consumption. Through his humorous performances in the commercials (e.g., a sequence of animation where he dives into the dipping sauce of a "Bloomin' Onion" from the Outback Steakhouse), McWreath haunts the non-site of Westlake. As an interpretive disclaimer, I don't think McWreath's work should necessarily be read as an all-out assault on suburbia. In his work, there is a significant familiarity and sensitivity to the nuances of the source material, particularly in the way products are paired with music. The work functions less a critique and more as an articulation of what it's like to live in a non-site.

Darryl Bank, 2007