

Meliksetian MB Briggs

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A meditation on green -- the color, not the sustainability shorthand

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Richard Hoeck/Heimo Zobernig, "1997/2013," mixed media installation (Michael Underwood))

If green is a sacred color, which shade is the holiest?

Emerald? Turquoise? Lime?

That's just one peculiar question prompted by "1997/2013," an installation of light and video by Viennese artists Richard Hoeck and Heimo Zobernig. Fluorescent tubes overhead and in simple fixtures

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casually leaning against corners bathe the Meliksetian Briggs Gallery in green light. A 1997 Sony Trinitron on a table and a new flat-screen on a wall play similar abstract video-loops.

A bright screen in monochrome green lasts for 10 or 12 seconds, and then the artists' faces briefly flash on. Their eyes glow crimson, like the red-eye produced by a flash bulb, before the screen goes monochrome again.

The video monochrome shifts steadily through the spectrum, adding colors to the original green and growing progressively darker, each 10- or 12-second chunk interrupted by the staring portraits. An abstraction of mortality -- a fade to black -- it is also redolent of green-screen technology, the special effects method for layering separate video streams into a fictive whole.

Perhaps it holds other connotations. Hoeck and Zobernig originally made the piece for the Istanbul Biennial. Turkey is a Muslim country and green is a sacred hue. (It was the prophet Muhammad's favorite.) The audio consists of an insistent droning sound, reminiscent of a call to prayer.

The result is emphatically secular, but the environment is thoroughly hypnotic. Minimalist repetition creates a strangely spellbinding milieu, one that is soothing in its harmonies and unnerving in the potency of its grip.

Meliksetian Briggs, 313 N. Fairfax Ave., (323) 828-4731, through August 22. Closed Sunday to Wednesday. www.meliksetianbriggs.com

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