

Press release

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Theme and artwork Imagine Fantastic Film Festival 2026 revealed: Ghost in the Feed



A media archaeology of technological anxiety and desire

29 Oct t/m 8 Nov in LAB111, De FilmHallen and Hal West

The theme program of Imagine Fantastic Film Festival 2026 (October 29 to November 8) explores the anxieties and desires that resurface with every new form of media technology. Under the title Ghost in the Feed, the program focuses on five stages of media technology over the past century: the rise of television, the VHS era, the early years of the internet, the world of the constant online feed, and our current immersive times. The festival examines these stages through films, talks, an immersive program, an exhibition, and more. This coming weekend, the audience will already get a warm-up with Club Imagine on June 26, 27, and 28. Get your tickets [here](#).

Ghost in the Feed dives deep into our media technologies, right where our greatest fears and uncanny desires are stored. The program demonstrates that our fear of and fascination with technology is nothing new, but rather recurring—a spiral in which each technological revolution revives old anxieties and sparks new obsessions. The dread of 1960s TV brainwashing can be directly linked to today's panic surrounding algorithms. The transgressive body horror of Cronenberg's 'new flesh'—where television signals literally infected human tissue—reappears today on social media.

We are not only afraid of what technology does, but of how the aesthetics of each medium feel. Ghost in the Feed uses films like a séance, a way to summon the ghosts of dead and dying media and investigate how their specific textures, limitations, and characteristics have been absorbed into our collective subconscious. By pairing Videodrome (1982) with Red Rooms (2023), Imagine creates a decade-spanning dialogue that exposes a universal fear: the loss of our identity, our truth, and our reality to the glowing screens we have willingly brought into our homes.

Furthermore, the festival sparks intergenerational conversations: the Gen X cinephile who remembers the tangible dread of a mysterious, unlabeled VHS tape; the Millennial who watched the internet transform from an utopian playground into a corporate panopticon; the Gen Z'er who discovered horror through deepfakes and vanishing stories. Every generation is convinced they have a unique relationship with technology, yet they are all possessed by the same ghosts—the medium just keeps changing.

The program consists of five '**Frequencies of Fear**', each focusing on the specific characteristics of a particular media technology:

Frequency 1: The Broadcast Possession focuses on the rise of radio and television, centering on the fear of voices and images invading our living rooms unobstructed. The key film is *History of the Occult* (2020).

Frequency 2: The Cursed Cartridge explores the VHS era, where images seem to become tangible, transferable, and even contagious. The iconic key film within this frequency is David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* (1982).

Frequency 3: The Digital Séance dives into the early days of the internet, when chatrooms, forums, and slow connections created a mysterious and sometimes alienating digital world. *We're All Going to the World's Fair* (2021) takes center stage here.

Frequency 4: The Algorithmic Possession investigates the current reality of social media, algorithms, and online identity. The award-winning thriller *Red Rooms* (2023) serves as the starting point for this program line.

Frequency 5: The Embodied Void shifts Imagine's focus to immersive technologies such as virtual, augmented, and mixed reality. Within this frequency, which forms part of *Imagine Expanded*, the central question is what happens when the boundary between the physical and digital worlds becomes increasingly blurred.

Club Imagine 26, 27 and 28 June

Can't wait until October? Make sure you don't miss the Club Imagine weekend this coming weekend! With Club Imagine at LAB111, we treat you to a great mix of new and older Fantastic genre films for three days straight. Martial arts, supernatural horror, sexy slasher, and deadpan sci-fi—you'll never have to miss a thing! Check out the schedule [here](#).

About Imagine Fantastic Film Festival

Imagine is the largest film festival for fantastic cinema in the Netherlands, showcasing the best in fantasy, horror, and science fiction. At Imagine, everything revolves around the imagination. Every year, Imagine challenges the audience to use their imagination to reflect on the future of humanity and society. It harnesses the power of fantastic film, allowing you to discover future worlds, develop an alternative perspective on reality, explore the unknown, and thereby broaden your horizons. Imagine views the fantastic genre as a rich source of thought experiments that often anticipate or reflect on social and technological developments. Through in-depth programming, the festival provides background, history, and context, connecting fantastic film with current developments in society.

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NOTE TO EDITORS

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