

Philippe Parreno and  
Pierre Huyghe in Paris

## A RETROSPECTIVE VIEW

The chance to experience contemporaneous exhibitions by compatriots proved too opportune to miss. Philippe Parreno's exhibition seemed inspired by some combination of Pierre Huyghe's Pompidou check list, Palais de Tokyo's recent excavations plus his designs for 'Dancing Around the Bride: Cage, Cunningham, Johns, Rauschenberg and Duchamp,' which premiered in Philadelphia and traveled to London last spring. In Philadelphia, Parreno contributed the entrance marquee, electronic object labels, a Disklavier piano playing Cage scores and sliding window shades facilitating access to outdoor vistas and street sounds, moves that remain in play. Huyghe's earlier 'Silence Score' (1997) offers filmed music transcribed from Cage's 1952 recording of ambient sounds over a 4'33" interval.

Much has been written about Huyghe's interest in presence, constructed situations and witnesses, as well as Parreno's fascination with technology, imaginary situations and simulation. One privilege being here: the other envisions being there. Both employ exhibitions as stage sets, where artworks become props for spectator-actors, whose public engagements furnish each event's script. In this sense, their projects are primarily experiential, even though we've been primed to read them through the lens of relational aesthetics (art as social interactions), an approach these exhibitions render obsolete. Most impressive, both artists eschew the white cube, whether by splicing walls cobbled from past Pompidou exhibitions or by transforming the ca-

vernous Palais de Tokyo into a black hole punctuated by '56 Flickering Lights'. With a wink to Huyghe's blinking 'Atari Light' (1999), Parreno's lamp tempos track four Disklavier pianos playing Igor Stravinsky's 'Petrushka' (1911), originally composed for a 56-episode ballet about a puppet come to life. Parreno's automaton soundtrack thus slyly cites "This is not a Time for Dreaming" (2004), Huyghe's puppet opera whose many characters include Le Corbusier and himself.

### ECHOES

Intentionally or not, such echoes ricochet. Huyghe's show stars a real snow mound, while Parreno proffers life-size, car-splined, faux drifts plus Liam Gillick's black fake-fakes. Huyghe's 'Singing in the Rain' (1996), a plinth displaying gold shoes and their marks, poses alongside cloudbursts and rainstorms, while a wall magically orbits Parreno's 'How Can We Know the Dancer from the Dance?' (2012), a circular dance floor charged by the recorded footsteps of Merve Cunningham dancers. Parreno's noisish film 'C.H.Z. (Continuously Habitable Zones)' (2011), set in an enigmatic, black landscape, anticipates Huyghe's video 'A Way in Unfilled' (2012), which uses close-ups and intensified sounds to make routine animal activities happening in his repurposed Karlsruhe Park dump seem totally terrifying. For "Thinekeeper" (1999/2013), Huyghe sands a museum wall to access its exhibition history, while Parreno pulls the camera back to disclose the many technicians needed to simulate the ghost of 'Marilyn' (2012).

In 1999, they legally co-purchased the anime character Anilee and invited artists to develop her personality. Not surprisingly, Huyghe's Anilee worries about her short lifespan, while Parreno's Anilee claims to belong to whoever fills her with imaginary material. Neither 'Name Announcer'

(2011) nor the black-clad skater atop a black-ice stage materialized in Huyghe's exhibition. Missing from Parreno's show was Tino Sehgal's piece, for which "real young women" enact 'Anilee' (2011), despite her highly-publicized death during a 2002 Art Basel Miami Beach party.

### ANIMALS

Huyghe's feature-length film 'The Host and the Cloud' (2010) is great, full of suspense, and totally deserving of any feature film's distribution rights. That this film's characters wear LED face masks, also worn here by a gallery attendant, parrots Parreno's anthropomorphic marquees (since 2006). For 'Danny La Rue' (2013), Parreno brilliantly choreographed sixteen theater marquees accompanied by a four-hand version of 'Petrushka'. Artist Joseph Nechvatal considers this title a nod to GRAV's 1966 '*Une Journée Dans la Rue, for which Parisian passersby performed various physical stunts.*'

While I'm excited to see museums taking risks to exhibit live animals (human beings, an incredibly friendly dog titled 'Human' (2011-2013), fifty ants, 10,000 whitening honeybees, a hermit crab, several baby horseshoe crabs, and dozens of arrow crabs), I worry that Huyghe employs animals more to ensure indeterminacy than to reveal how much human beings underestimate non-human animals. Parreno's 17-screen portrait (with Douglas Gordon) of footballer Zinedine Zidane remains among this era's most vivid 'sports films'. In light of such intense experiences, whether witnessed firsthand or remotely, it's no wonder that "feels" finally entered the English lexicon in 2013.

Philippe Parreno, 'Anywhere, Anywhere Out of the World' was on view at Palais de Tokyo from 22 October 2013 until 12 January 2014. [www.palaisdetokyo.com](http://www.palaisdetokyo.com)

Pierre Huyghe was on view at Centre Pompidou from 25 September 2013 until 6 January 2014. [www.centrepompidou.fr](http://www.centrepompidou.fr)