

ARTFORUM

MARCH 2011

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

MARC CAMILLE CHAIM
TODD HAYNES
CHRISTOPH SCHLINGENSIEF
KLARA LIDÉN



\$10.00



0 74820 64601 4

With Adams—as an intended result of his working in two scales—we are often placed in a situation and then given a God’s-eye view of it being presented with a model-size analogue. For example, a counterpart to *Love Birds* was the diminutive *Beetle*, 2002. Taking a model of Volkswagen’s classic bug, Adams applied a clear-coat finish and a glistening metallic shade of purple, punching a highly intricate paisley pattern into its body. In so doing, he wonderfully enacted a dance between private play with toys and the public context of actual vehicles—an effect that was underscored when one stepped back out onto the street to view *Autolamp*, 2008, an actual Dodge Ram perforated by Adams to reveal its psychedelic interior illumination. Adams’s project avoids clichéd notions of participatory art in favor of aesthetic experiences that are heartfelt in their accessibility and playfulness, but serious in their commitment to labor.

—Dan Adler

LONDON

Philippe Parreno

PILAR CORRIAS/SERPENTINE GALLERY

Rirkrit Tiravanija’s exhibition at Pilar Corrias was meant to close on December 1, 2010, but it continued; the artist’s name remained up on the wall next to the door. But now it was written not in red but in white on white, like ghost writing. In fact there were some slight modifications to the show, not by Tiravanija but by Philippe Parreno, achieved without removing anything. Among them was a phantasmagoric addition that was fully revealed only at night: Parreno added a three-handled entrance door equipped with a sensor so it opened automatically every time someone approached. Above the door was a small transparent canopy with a double row of lightbulbs on both sides and a sunburst halo of neon at the center, which lit up every time the door opened. A computer registered the activation of the lights during the evening of the opening, December 7, 2010, and repeated that pattern every evening after the daily closing of the gallery, for the duration of the show—like an oneiric doubling of reality.

Inside the gallery, during normal opening hours, viewers saw Tiravanija’s show again, with additions—discreet, but disturbing once perceived. That same opening date, December 7, was transcribed on a large, framed sheet of paper placed above the reception desk; the handwriting was old style, eighteenth century, because it was executed by an automaton built in 1725: a doll programmed

to write. This insistence on a specific day paralleled Tiravanija’s videos—still being projected where they had been the month before—each of which records a single day in the life of its protagonist. Parreno’s only intervention in the rest of the space was to add small night-lights plugged into electrical outlets along the walls of the two gallery spaces. Their presence accentuated the spectral nature of the intervention.

Miniature lights were also present in Parreno’s solo exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery across town. Here, however, they protruded from small electrical conduits that ran along the gallery walls. They acted as allusive signals, serving to make visible the electrical current that flows all around us. Here too, the view of the works in the show was

programmed automatically; viewers were tacitly guided through the four galleries, their tour punctuated by the closing of windows, the turning off of lights, and the sequential start of the four videos that constituted the bulk of the show. A unifying theme could be intuited in the notion of absence (or, if you like, again in a spectral presence). *Invisibleboy*, 2010, shows the dreams of a young Chinese boy, invisible because he is an illegal immigrant, in New York’s nocturnal Chinatown. Anthropomorphic figures, made by scratching the surface of the film, wander with him through the deserted city like ghosts or comic-book monsters. *June 8, 1968*, 2009, places the viewer precisely in the position of the “protagonist” of the action: It is shot from the perspective of the train that bore Bobby Kennedy’s coffin from New York to Washington—witnessing the witnesses who, in Parreno’s free reconstruction of the event, line the tracks to pay homage as the body passes. The children in the video remind us that there is “no more reality”—the slogan that primary-school pupils chant in Parreno’s thus-titled 1991–2010 video documentary. The final work on view, *The Boy from Mars*, 2003, alludes to an alien who never appears, leaving space for a tautological sequence in which a buffalo activates the electrical generator needed to create the video itself. Parreno has made several versions of this work, and here also changed the sound track, another reminder that a vanished reality can at least be continuously reprojected.

—Giorgio Verzotti

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

Huma Bhabha

STEPHEN FRIEDMAN GALLERY

Among the paradoxes in Huma Bhabha’s extraordinary sculpture is that although it feels fully in sync with our times—politically uncertain, historically self-conscious, formally experimental—the work transmits great timelessness. The three untitled, totemlike figures, 2010, that were in the front room at Stephen Friedman Gallery seem as ancient as anything ever erected on Easter Island. Solid, stony presences with roughly pitted surfaces that suggest hours of laborious masonwork, these partially blackened idols are mostly made of cork, pointing to an unexpected fragility: Were these monoliths to tip over, they would crumble. Bhabha’s art is rife with such paradoxes. She obviously works with extreme care, declaring her sculptures finished only when every detail is resolved with precision, but her attentiveness is at odds with the material instability of the final product. Nothing feels rushed or thoughtless, yet her sculptures—beaten, burned, frail—nonetheless feel doomed.

Bumps in the Road, 2008, which dominated the second gallery, is an unforgettable work. Occupying a raised, rough metal plinth, like a low table, are two contrasting figures—or is it a single bizarre body, violently chopped in two? The left seems all head, the right all legs. The legs are unadorned wooden planks, positioned to mimic a Giacometti-like striding man, sliding on two metal beams like long ice skates—no bumps in the road for this skating, headless figure, then. On more shaly ground is the mesmerizing second character, whose grossly enlarged head is painstakingly worked in brown papier-mâché, though it looks like it’s made from delicately wrought spitballs. The surface is cracking up, exposing pitiful bits of chicken wire that strain to hold it together—like Pangaea slowly breaking up on this odd, potato-like planet. Close inspection reveals that this unearthly head carries beneath it two shapeless arms and grotesquely spindly legs; phallic, pipelike eyes protrude invasively while sagging ears extend about a foot in length. A lot of care has been given to crafting this creature, though certainly not in an attempt to render it beautiful. The impression is of some all-seeing, all-hearing, pensive being, but a glimpse at the back reveals this deformed



View of “Philippe Parreno,” 2010–11. Door: *Your Days, My Nights (Door, Automation No.1)*, 2010. Marquee: *Your Days, My Nights (Marquee)*, 2010. Pilar Corrias.