

Serpentine Gallery

Teachers' Resources

Philippe Parreno

25 November 2010 – 13 February 2011



Philippe Parreno

June 8, 1968 2009

Film still

Courtesy of Pilar Corrias Ltd

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Background information

These notes are designed to support your visit to the Serpentine Gallery, including planning prior to your visit and suggestions for discussion and activities back at school when you return. They are aimed at all key stages, enabling you to develop them to suit your needs and inspire discussion and practical work.

The Serpentine Gallery stages the first solo exhibition of French artist Philippe Parreno's work in a public institution in the UK. The exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery presents a selection of Parreno's recent films, including the première of the new film *Invisibleboy* 2010, as well as installations, sculptures and events that will unfold in the space and Kensington Gardens.

This exhibition has been conceived as a 'scripted space' in which a series of events unfolds. The visitor is guided through the Galleries by a timeline of orchestrated sound and image. Noise from Kensington Gardens is heard inside, as though the outside is leaking into the Gallery. The window blinds moves automatically to reveal sudden change of weather.

The length of the visit of the full exhibition in its pre-determined takes around 30 minutes.

At the core of the exhibition are three portraits set in three landscapes.

June 8, 1968, 2009, is a 7-minute film recreating the train journey that took place on 8 June 1968, carrying the remains of Robert F. Kennedy from New York to Washington D.C. after his assassination on 6 June.

The Boy from Mars, 2003, was conceived and shot in Sanpatong, near Chiang Mai, Thailand, within a self-organised and self-sufficient project by artists Rirkrit Tiravanija and Kamin Lertchapraserit called *Land*. It develops the imagined narrative of a human colony in another solar system. The film portrays François Roche's building *Hybrid Muscle*, a building within the project designed by architect François Roche.

Philippe Parreno's new work, *InvisibleBoy, 2010*, also merges fact and fiction. It is set in Manhattan's Chinatown and narrates the story of an illegal Chinese immigrant boy who imagines creatures and monsters, some of which were scratched directly onto the film stock while others were generated through digital imagery.

The exhibition also includes the film *No More Reality, 1991*. This film depicts a demonstration in which children march around a playground shouting 'No More Reality' and holding up banners. This performance was the end result of a workshop organised by Philippe Parreno in a primary school in Nice.

The exhibition space is delicately lit by another work by Parreno, assemblages of plugs called *AC/DC Snakes*.

The exhibition also includes 'events', sounds and changes in the light which create an itinerary for the viewer, pre-determined in its movements and duration, such as the automatic lowering of blinds and staged changes in weather outdoors. Etched window-panes give the appearance that someone was breathing against the glass.

Philippe Parreno

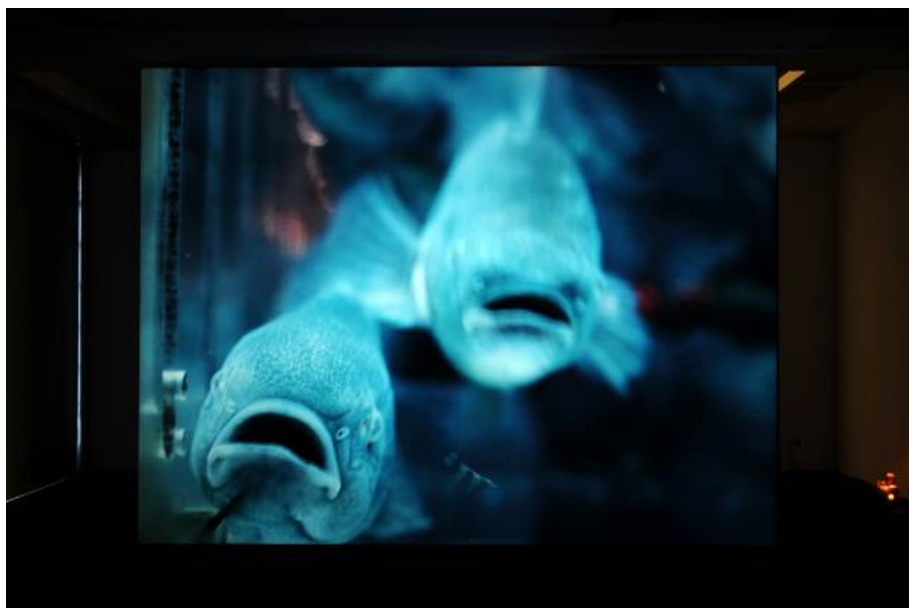
Philippe Parreno was born in 1964 in Oran, Algeria and lives and works in Paris. Other major exhibitions of the artist's work include: Center for Contemporary Art, CCA Kitakyushu, Japan, 2006; Kunsthalle Zürich, 2006; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2003; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 2002, and Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 2001.

Parreno rose to prominence in the 1990s, earning critical acclaim for his work, which employs a diversity of media including film, sculpture, performance and text. Taking the exhibition as a medium, Parreno has sought to redefine the exhibition experience by exploring its possibilities beyond a collection of individual works.

The Serpentine Gallery exhibition follows a series of related but distinct retrospectives of the artist's work presented at Kunsthalle Zürich, 2009; Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2009; the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, 2009-2010; and the Centre for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, 2010.

Themes, ideas and questions to explore

1. Reality and Imaginary



Philippe Parreno
Invisibleboy 2010
Installation view, Serpentine Gallery, London
© 2010 Gautier Deblonde

Discussions and activities

- Which characters in the films do you think are actors and which are passers by?
- In the film *June 8 1968* 2007 Parreno references the photographs taken by Paul Fusco of mourners watching the train carrying Robert Kennedy's coffin. Think of a historical event that you can represent in a new way.
- Look at the piece *No More Reality*, 1991, what do you think the piece is saying?

Would it be different if the people in the film were adults?

- What would you write on a placard? Think about current affairs. Look at how propaganda is used to give particular political messages. Modify newspapers to alter the meanings of the headlines and images.
- *The Boy from Mars* depicts the building *Hybrid Muscle*, which was constructed to be the set for the film, and at the same time it provided the electricity required for the filming. The film has other-worldly qualities and also a very real message. Discuss why Parreno has given it this title. Does it help you to unpick the story?

2. Audience experience: Cinema, theatre and exhibition-space



Philippe Parreno
June 8, 1968 2009
Film still Courtesy of Pilar Corrias Ltd
© 2010 Philippe Parreno

Discussions and activities

- In the exhibition the audience follows the films and can only watch one work at a time. Why do you think Parreno has chosen to show his work in this way?
- Are you more aware of the other visitors because you have to move from room to room as an audience?
- In *Invisibleboy* 2010, what do you think the music adds to the film?
- Try performing live theatre or screening films in unusual places.
- As a group, stage a tableau looking at issues of public space. Use a window as a frame and allocate different roles for the students, such as director, actors, audience and observers. These can be photographed or filmed.
- What questions would you like to ask Parreno? In pairs, role-play an interview with the artist.

Keywords

Popular Culture – Film – Improvisation – Perform – Actor – Direct – Travel – Systems – Politics – Imagination – Trace – Psychology – Changing– Openness – Manipulating- Imagination – Escape – Re-thinking – Re-telling – Space – The physical world – Psychology – Reality – Imaginary – Fact – Fiction – Documentary – Feature – Representation – Relational art – Childhood – Virtual Reality – Special Effects – Video Games – Postmodern Spaces – Audience Experience – Cinema – Theatre – Exhibition – Space – Control – Time – Portraits – Characters – Ghosts – Dialogue – Radical Theatre

3. Portraits, characters, ghosts



Philippe Parreno
Invisibleboy 2010
Film still
Courtesy of Centre National des Arts Plastiques (CNAP)
© 2010 Philippe Parreno

Discussions and activities

- Which films show presence of absence and how?
- Why do you think the characters in the films are generally silent? In *No More Reality* 1991 the children chant together. If it was only one child would it be a different story?
- Parreno has decided to show the films in a chosen sequence, look at the comparisons and contrast between the stories and characters, would these be different if the films were in a different order?
- Parreno often collaborates with other people. In *Invisibleboy* 2010, he worked closely with the young boy in the film to bring his imaginary friends to life. Try to create a film as though it is through someone else's eyes, to tell their story in a new way.
- All the films are quite short in length, what do you think has just happened before and is about to happen after?
- Develop characters and storyboards for films, then present your ideas to the group.

Cross-curricular links

Design technology – Art and Design – Political studies – Sociology – History-
Geography – Creative and media diploma – Drama – Design and Technology –
Political studies – Photography – Music – Media Studies – Film Studies –
Anthropology – English Literature

Further reading and related links

Related links

www.serpentinegallery.org
www.airdeparis.com/parreno.htm
<http://www.petzel.com/artists/philippe-parreno/>
<http://www.centrepompidou.fr/Pompidou/Manifs.nsf/AllExpositions/EF05BFBC759CC4FDC12574EF0038A98F>
http://www.modernart.ie/en/page_197021.htm
http://www.kunsthallezurich.ch/_site_eng/_parreno/_index.htm
<http://www.capefarewell.com/>

Quotes

"I devise my exhibitions like a film. I think about sequences, about the rhythm of the experience of the visitor. Or like music: my exhibitions often unfold like a musical score. They unfold in time." PP

"Do you know the average time someone spends in front of a work of art in the Louvre? Only three seconds! Crazy when you think about it." PP

Philippe Parreno, Interview with Stuart Jefferies, Guardian, 15 November 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/nov/15/philippe-parreno-interview-serpentine>

Artists that explore similar themes or who have collaborated with Philippe Parreno

Rirkrit Tiravanija – Serpentine Gallery Teachers' resources available
Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster
Liam Gillick
Douglas Gordon
Pierre Huyghe
Christian Marclay
Jeff Wall

Books

Parade? – Philippe Parreno and Johan Olander
Where the Wild Things Are – Maurice Sendak

Films

The Truman Show
Wall-E
Anime
Studio Ghibli
Hayao Miyazaki

Planning a Visit to the Serpentine Gallery

Contact Details

Joceline Howe
Education Curator
Serpentine Gallery
Kensington Gardens
London W2 3XA
Tel 020 7298 1516 Email jocelineh@serpentinegallery.org
Tel 020 7402 6075 Fax 0207402 4103 www.serpentinegallery.org

Transport

The nearest tube stations are South Kensington (1.25 km walk), Knightsbridge (1.25 km walk) or Lancaster Gate (1 km walk) Bus routes 9, 10, 52, 452, 94 and 148 stop near the Gallery

Group Visit Guidelines

To make your visit as enjoyable as possible, please read the following:

Before your Visit:

- Adult supervision of students under 16 is required at all times, including in the shop. An adult student ratio of 1:5 for under 5's, 1:10 for 5 - 11 year olds, 1:15 for 11 - 16 year olds and 1:20 for 16 - 18 year olds is required.
- We recommend a preliminary planning visit, as for some exhibitions there may be works that you consider unsuitable for your group.

During your Visit:

- The artworks in the Philippe Parreno exhibition are extremely fragile. Please take extra care to follow the Gallery Guidelines at all times:
 - No running
 - No touching
 - No leaning against walls or plinths
 - No shouting
 - No photography
- Teachers/group leaders and accompanying adults are responsible for their group's behaviour whilst at the Serpentine Gallery.
- Many contemporary artworks are fragile and damage easily. Please make sure that your group understands that this is why they are not allowed to touch the art.
- Lecturing: If your group is larger than 30 please split them into smaller groups in the exhibition space and do not lecture in rooms where talks are already in progress.
- Drawing: If you would like to do some drawing please check with the gallery what materials you will be able to use in the exhibition

Education and Family Events

Education is at the core of the Serpentine Gallery's activities. Through practical, artist led workshops and discussion, talks, events and projects the Education Programme offers a diverse range of innovative ways to engage with modern and contemporary art and architecture for all ages.

Please refer to the Serpentine Gallery Bulletin or www.serpentinegallery.org for information on events and activities taking place as part of the Education Programme during the *Phillipe Parreno* exhibition.

The *Phillipe Parreno* Teachers' Notes are also available to download free at www.serpentinegallery.org along with Teachers' Notes for the previous exhibitions:
Klara Lidén, 7 October 2010 - 7 November 2010
Anish Kapoor, 28 September 2010 - 13 March 2011
Jean Nouvel Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010, 10 July - 17 October

Wolfgang Tillmans 26 June – 19 September
Nairy Baghramian and Phyllida Barlow, 8 May- 13 June
Richard Hamilton: Modern Moral Matters, 3 March 2010 – 25 April 2010
Design Real, 26 November 2009 – 7 February 2010
Gustav Metzger: Decades 1959 – 2009, 29 September – 8 November 2009
Jeff Koons: Popeye Series, 2 July – 13 September 2009
Luke Fowler, 7 May – 14 June 2009
Rebecca Warren, 10 March – 19 April 2009
Indian Highway, 10 December 2008 – 22 February 2009
Gerhard Richter, 23 September – 23 November 2008
Richard Prince, 26 June – 7 September 2008
Maria Lassnig, 25 April – 8 June 2008
Derek Jarman, 23 February – 13 April 2008
Anthony McCall, 30 November 2007 – 3 February 2008
Matthew Barney, 20 September – 11 November 2007
Hreinn Fridfinnsson, 17 July – 2 September 2007
Paul Chan, 15 May – 1 July 2007
Allora & Calzadilla, 17 – 29 April 2007
Karen Kilimnik, 20 February 9 April 2007
In the darkest hour there may be light, works from Damien Hirst's murderme collection, 25 November 2006 – 28 January 2007
Runa Islam, 25 October – 5 November 2006
China Power Station: Part 1, 8 October – 5 November 2006
Uncertain States of America, 9 September – 15 October 2006
Thomas Demand, 6 June – 20 August 2006
Ellsworth Kelly, 18 March – 21 May 2006
Elmgreen & Dragset, 26 January – 26 February 2006
Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, 19 October 2005 – 8 January 2006
Oliver Payne & Nick Relph, 6 September – 2 October 2005
Rirkrit Tiravanija, 5 July – 21 August 2005
Andreas Slominski, 26 April – 12 June 2005
Tomoko Takahashi, 22 February – 10 April 2005
Monika Sosnowska, 5 December 2004 – 16 January 2005
Glenn Brown, 14 September – 7 November 2004
Gabriel Orozco, 1 July - 30 August 2004
Cy Twombly, 17 April – 13 June 2004 State of Play, 3 February – 28 March 2004
Hiroshi Sugimoto, 18 November 2003 – 18 January 2004
John Currin, 9 September – 2 November 2003
Cindy Sherman, 3 June – 25 August 2003
Takahashi Murakami, 12 November 2002 – 26 January 2003
Kutlug Ataman, 11 February – 9 March 2003