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Philippe Parreno's New Megashow Fills the Palais de Tokyo

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Exhibition view of Philippe Parreno's "Anywhere, anywhere, out of the world" at the Palais de Tokyo

(Courtesy Le Palais de Tokyo)

It's one of the most anticipated shows in Paris this fall. With "Anywhere Anywhere Out of the World," which opened on Wednesday and runs through January 12, 2014, French artist **Philippe Parreno** has delicately transformed the **Palais de Tokyo** without overloading the space. The show is a work of art in its own right: as is his habit, Parreno has reinvented the exhibition format, creating something that can be viewed as polyphony, as a living organism, and as a poetic and sensory experience. He sat down with **BLOUIN ARTINFO** to talk about the huge scale of the Palais de Tokyo, his connections with other contemporary artists, and his theories about images and objects.

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Your exhibition fills the entire space of the Palais de Tokyo, which is huge. How did you deal with the obligation to fill the museum?

[Palais de Tokyo president] Jean de Loisy's invitation actually encouraged me to take hold of this space. The size didn't bother me — quite the contrary. My first problem was to try to stage seeing or attention, as I did at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2012 in a show that didn't present my work but that of [John Cage](#), [Merce Cunningham](#), [Jasper Johns](#), and [Robert Rauschenberg](#). That was the first time that I "staged" seeing with a great deal of detachment (because it wasn't my own work). And that's when I got the invitation from Jean de Loisy. It also followed my project for the Serpentine Gallery in London, where I tried to generate a kind of choreography of bodies in space. For me, the size of the Palais de Tokyo is actually an advantage. You have to think on a different scale. It's as if I worked on a landscape (and not in a museum), which allowed me to create perspectives, in the Renaissance sense but also psychological perspectives, that is, something that you hear, that you anticipate, before having seen it. Here, the idea of development interests me more than an accumulation of works that I would show in a space. In any case my work has never really been about that.

Is this show very different from your 2009 exhibition at the Pompidou Center?

At the Pompidou Center I didn't show the same things but the spirit was a bit similar. I also offered a reading of space. For example, I brought sound into the space. The special thing about the Palais de Tokyo is that it's an art center. I grew up with the Magasin in Grenoble — these experimental places, ontologically speaking. In art centers, exhibitions remain an experience. For example, I remember the inaugural exhibition at the Magasin in Grenoble, Daniel Buren's show. He had created a large perspective in space that made a hole in the middle of his frames and stripes. That's kind of how I took Jean de Loisy's invitation — as an attempt at reading the space.

What works are on view at the Palais de Tokyo? Is it a retrospective?

There are some old pieces, like a film that I made when I was still an art student, in 1988. But they are staged. It's mostly recent works, experiments that have been tried here and there. The films that I show are films that I have never shown in France before. "Marilyn," for example, which I showed in Basel and Moscow but not in France. And then also these luminous objects that I've produced for a while now. I'm bringing them all together for the first time in a large

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space that will outline a kind of ghost city, like Las Vegas at night, without architecture and only with lights. I'm also showing "Zidane," with all its different projections. We had this idea for a long time, [Douglas Gordon](#) and me, to take each point of view of the movie camera and transpose them in space, like a sort of holographic portrait.

In this show, I wanted people to enter a robot's lair and feel that something has taken charge of them. When I talk about "creating attention," that's what I'm referring to: something guides us in space in a non-authoritarian way. So I tried to find automation principles. For example, the piano version of Igor Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" puts everything into swing, into operation. This work — sequencing, writing time, ordering events in space — is very long. But once again it was already like that at the Pompidou Center — there was a central computer that steered events. So this idea of writing a script in space, of generating time in space, is not new for me.

Can this show be described as a "total artwork"?

Yes, this idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* is an inspiration. The fact of being immersed. But there is also a Kafkaesque side to this exhibition, a sort of paranoid logic.

You often refer to cinema and talk about scripts or a screenplays.

Beyond the cinema, what interests me is the way that images are produced. An image is a social moment, a moment that is shared. With the film "Marilyn," for example, the idea wasn't to make a movie about the actress but to try to recall her image. Is this image still here, like a ghost? So we reconstructed her, like a robot, a kind of proto-biometric human who can write and talk like her. I used her notes, and we recreated the scene of a place where she spent time. It was like a séance — we made a ghost return. Before the film, there is often this kind of staging and research and afterwards this produces an image.

And what about music?

The first time I worked with musicians was for "Zidane," with the group Mogwai. Afterwards, when I started doing shows based on timeline(s), I worked with Nicolas Becker. When you work in robotics you always wonder who is the master and who is the slave? Someone is tied to another to produce a sound in space. And in my case sound was always the master. And we wanted to push that: what if the master, sound, became music, or how can a timeline result in a musical score?

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There seem to be a lot of similarities between your exhibition and Pierre Huyghe's current show at the Pompidou Center.

I share a lot of things with [Pierre Huyghe](#), and also with [Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster](#). We agree on this obvious fact that there can be no object without exhibition. Exhibition is a ritual that will reinvent the object. [Marcel Duchamp](#) already said it a long time ago: a Monet painting has already changed just a few years after its creation. Objects move! And if artists themselves are the ones reinventing their own creations, this isn't necessarily new either. Conceptual art is also about this. The work is a musical score. There is a history of exhibition, and Pierre, Dominique, Anri [Sala], and I all agree about this.

You also have a show of drawings at Cahiers d'Art in Paris.

Yes, it will be followed with a publication. It's a show organized by Hans-Ulrich Obrist, a selection of drawings. I started drawing again four or five years ago when I was sick and that was just about the only thing I could do! Black and white drawings, very close to writing. In another space I've installed drawings that I thought about when I started drawing — like the mirror of one practice that refers to another, but the second one is spectral.