

DO YOU BELIEVE IN GHOSTS?

answer by
PHILIPPE PARRENO

INFO

This text is an excerpt from *Snow Dancing* by Philippe Parreno. The book tells the story of a strange promotional party. The events described in the book were played out at the Consortium in Dijon, France. The party lasted an hour-and-a-half, which is the approximate amount of time that it takes to read the book. The publication of *Snow Dancing* in 1995 was followed by an exhibition of the same title at the Consortium in the same year. The first edition published by GW Press is out of print.

ARTIST'S BIO

PHILIPPE PARRENO (b. 1964) is a French artist and filmmaker. He was born in Oran, Algeria and is based in Paris, France. Parreno has had shows at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, the Kunstverein München, the Kunsthalle Zürich, the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Irish Museum of Modern Art - IMMA, Dublin.

CURRENT & FORTHCOMING

PHILIPPE PARRENO's forthcoming projects include solo shows at the Serpentine Gallery and Pilar Corrias, London. A retrospective of his work is currently on view at CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, until September 26. A new edition of the *Snow Dancing*, edited by Karen Marta, will be published by Kaleidoscope Press in November 2010. A special event to launch the book will take place in Turin, Italy during the 17th edition of the Artissima art fair, November 5-7.

Cover illustration by Alison McLaughlin from a drawing by Philippe Parreno for the cover of *Snow Dancing* first edition, GW Press, 1995

So many different people have worked in this building, you can feel their presence. This space holds their traces. It could be said that the ghosts of the previous tenants have left tracks there. Left outlines of things that populated the space and of the activities that have taken place there. So that at the same time you are confronted by a series of precise images, you also have to face the blurry traces of the past.

Electrical adaptors that have been used with equipment from many countries have been left behind everywhere. People have come here from all over the world. We are left with a collection of the electrical standards from various countries. You can see different adaptors and transformers linked together like AC/DC snakes. It is therefore quite difficult to plug in any electrical appliances without becoming tangled in a mess of unknown standards. The whole effect is like the process of morphing; the electrical current always has to go through a series of voltage transfers before it can be used.

The building is a place where concerts seem to have taken place, with remnants of blackout cloth and stage marks left on the floor. Every now and then you come across stages that appear to be incomplete. It is as if they have all been separated from some giant stage that was once constructed for a specific event. Each part has been painted in a different, bright color, yet key parts are missing. They have become micro-stages and as such they lend the whole place the feeling of an amusement park.

A close inspection of the site reveals that there is also a degree of recycling going

on. Not just recycling of objects but reprocessing of events and adaptation of things for new temporary uses. Every now and then it is possible to come across some of these objects. Maybe they were adapted out of necessity, maybe as a joke. There is a serious element to this reuse, giving various components new life as doorknobs, handrails, seats and decoration. So if we imagine a children's Christmas party at some point in the past, one of the balls that was used to decorate the tree might now have a new life as a doorknob. These objects act as a constant reminder that this is a building where many parties and events have taken place.

Leaflets lying around on the floor and the torn and faded posters still visible in quiet areas of the building allude to a carnival from 1978. Although it is not clear, it seems as if this carnival was dedicated to the television character, the dolphin called Flipper. Objects — glasses, which bear his smiling aquatic face, plastic flippers for people to wear—strewn about appear to be dedicated to the memory of this 1970s television star. If you read the signs carefully you would realize that a sea-bound mammal had, at some point, been of great importance to the people of this city. In a more general sense, it is also sometimes possible to come across a room full of old fairground equipment, stuff that was probably too bulky to take away or became obsolete during the winter carnival break. Alongside all of this is a great amount of summer stock. As if a large theatrical workshop had left all of its excess behind. Beach-balls, kites, parasols and windsurfers litter the storage spaces. Objects waiting for summer. ♦

