

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.



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.