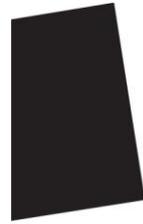


Philippe Decrauzat, Cerith Wyn Evans,
Kris Martin and Philippe Parreno
Essays
15 October – 29 November 2008



Bloomberg
SPACE

Opening times
Mon - Sat, 11:00 - 18:00

Bloomberg SPACE
50 Finsbury Square
London, EC2A 1HD

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Philippe Decrauzat, *Fade In Fade Out*, 2006

Is this an enlarged detail of something or the depiction of a process much larger than we can imagine? In this work something is happening, though its time scale always remains unclear, its physical scale is also confusing, it seems to operate on both the macro and microcosmic levels, with the viewer unable to keep the work still.

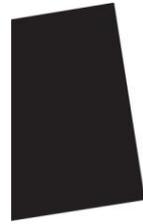
In a way, it seems odd to be saying these things about such an obviously static work, a graphic piece that comes about through careful measurement and placement, its material and application being so direct and considered. Yet this is how it works, not only through its complexity but also through its simplicity.

The work appears active and essentially this is through a feeling of something closing or opening, a movement up or down is implied but the viewer is always placed on the line between the two. A clever positioning takes place here. Just when we think we know what is up and what is down, what is opening or closing, it shifts, like a subtle magic trick, suddenly telling us the opposite, that what was in front is now behind, what was ground is now sky.

Information has become physical here. On a different scale (for example in a newspaper or at a sound edit suite), we might read this information in an entirely different way, interpreting it and applying it to facts and figures. It might represent something absolute in this way. With *Fade In Fade Out* we are inside this information, like being inside a cave with stalactites and stalagmites on either side, aware of the huge dimensions of time before us, a process which we can neither see the end of nor the beginning, faintly aware of some vanishing point somewhere.

'Registration' - the act of 'entering and recording' is what seems to be at the centre of these works by Decrauzat, a series of wall drawings that act like a sliding gate within the space. In this way, they feel a little like a device, part of, or the result of a machine that measures or adjusts according to an unknown circumstance.

Decrauzat gets the viewer to think about where they are located in relation to a visual field, a simple set of circumstances that becomes increasingly complex in its relation to time and space. The sense of sliding that we have in front of these works is particularly strong. The drawing represents a phasing or a crossing over from one condition to another and this is further developed through the duality of positive and negative elements in the work and the presence of symmetry. Installed at Bloomberg SPACE as occupying two walls that face across from each other the work becomes a reflection of itself, opposites are established and a logic appears, but a logic that works to disorientate rather than establish anything solid, like the workings of a trick. The viewer is left carefully watching the movements made to confuse and, as a consequence, loses



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track momentarily. In this way, Decrauzat's work is both tactical and deliberate, seeking a sense of vertigo in the onlooker.

Graham Gussin

Kris Martin, *Mandi III*, 2003, mixed media, information flap-board

On first seeing *Mandi III* there is an instant feeling of recognition. There seems to be something deeply familiar in this piece, it's like having seen something many times before but never having recognised it - there it is all of a sudden, having been there all along. This is closely related to, or just closely followed by, a sense of the absurd, that moment where things are simultaneously hilarious and very dark, the two colliding, delivering nothing, and getting away with it.

'Mandi' is from an Italian colloquialism, a phrase used as a goodbye to travellers which means to 'go well' or to 'travel in God's hand'. This aspect of the work increases one's sense of unease, to be wished well when confronted with what could be seen as a void seems final and unremitting in some respects. The information board is, of course, a sign for everywhere and nowhere at the same time. All destinations and all departure points are registered here. It is a gateway, a portal, deeply symbolic yet somehow very ordinary and it is also placed between the optimistic and the pessimistic, a 'Joker' in fact, staring back at us with a blank face waiting for a response. It's entirely up to us, are we going to laugh or cry?

The work is active, it continuously tells us nothing. It is not a static blank but one which has a temporal dimension, its blankness consisting of some slight texture that we see and feel in what could be described as its restlessness. It's shifting about, undecided, perhaps waiting or maybe withholding, acting as a kind of reminder, a gap in the normal run of things.

Mandi III is also a sound work, the noise of its thin metal tabs rotating acting like a musical composition, one which is to be whispered to its audience. It is the sound of a deck of cards being shuffled, an image that leads us back to the Joker and to a sense of the random. Is there a message to be deciphered here or is it plain and simple, just like the hum produced by overhead wires? Martin leaves us not knowing for sure, or looking and listening but not knowing, implications being of more interest than resolutions.

The musical dimension of the work is extremely seductive. There is point at which the piece can be considered purely as an instrument, a surface or keyboard which is played upon, the sound generated being some kind of subtle percussion, not only related to the shuffling of cards but also to the wind in trees or waves breaking on a beach. It makes us listen in the same way Cage would when stating "*I have nothing to say and I am saying it*".

Part of the humour of this work lies in the way it flips between being symbolic and empty, it just goes on and on, repeating its shuffle and never resolving itself, a kind of delirious circumstance that brings up feelings of anticipation and disappointment. The work can be seen as a circle or a moebius strip, getting the viewer to move around only to return to their beginning point, beginning and ending at the same time, life and death, silence and signal, like a Bergman film in which characters revolve around a central void.

Graham Gussin



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Philippe Parreno, *Speech Bubbles*, 1997, mylar, helium

The floating question mark, white, helium filled *Speech Bubbles* installed together, in a cluster at the ceiling of the gallery, are an incarnation of an ongoing project by Philippe Parreno. The sense of these blank notions is not one of pure language, nor of an academic questioning of language and subsequent understanding. Are they cartoon speech bubbles suddenly brought into focus to further pursue a point? Where does the form - the repetition of a strangely flat outline, like the simplest of clothing, with back sewn to front, without darts or allowance for volume or dimensionality - come from?

First installed in 1997, they still seem to be part of a very real split between the existence and presence of something over time, and the ambiguous role of the art object. By placing the object in relation to a situation till its metaphorical value is very different, Parreno appears to have squared the circle in a basic questioning about the role of art. In his range of involvement with other artists, with the public, with art forms, Parreno, who is a writer and an artist at the same time, moves between the written and visual, physical and notional. The work at Bloomberg SPACE is almost a textbook example of such a movement between different form and media.

The puffed up cartoon quotes encourage the simple idea of animated writing and drawing; ambiguous in terms of their actual presence, they are an idea given form like in an early animation of a letter brought to life through contact with a different world and language.

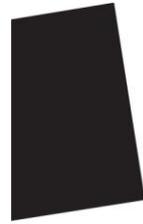
The elements suggest basic thought and language; a rootless, abstract language that, unless bound by apparent natural movement, the logic of any air flow at any one point, could apparently be set free. Parreno's bubbles hint at the possibility of speech and ultimately the possibility of escape, with the vehicle of message oozing out, up and away, for instance, perhaps peeling off, and working its way through the atrium. The run-away letter, the loose balloon, the character, lost note or sound, allows the implication of a graphic device bouncing around in another reality. The 'Speech Bubbles' were, at one point, to have had individual messages written upon them by striking trade unionists, yet the strike, struggle or action, has been brought into the art gallery and the specificity of union, or individual point, has been replaced by a formal blank canvas for speech, a silent open mouth.

Parreno, who makes films, collaborates with others, experiments with the very occasion of art, and, as mentioned before, writes about art, uses a variety of form to show how three dimensions placed always differently, will remain elusive and complex. The relation between the balloons suggests that the message, whatever that might be, cannot exist in linear form.

Sacha Craddock

Cerith Wyn Evans, *'Astrophotography... The Traditional Measure of Photographic Speed in Astronomy...'* by Siegfried Marx (1987), 2006, Chandelier (Luce Italia), flat screen monitor, Morse code unit and computer.

Although Wyn Evans, a subtle poetic artist, has made a number of sculptural pieces with chandeliers, the chandelier that he activates for Bloomberg SPACE is somehow particularly luxuriant, lovely, and generous in its build up of fine finish in rich multi-coloured Venetian glass. Hanging down between the office floors in the modern atrium, Wyn Evans' chandelier literally works at many levels. The wistful generosity of such a bundle of apparent luxury is able to suggest



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immediate notions of desire and absence, with the sense of another time also embedded in such a pulsating souvenir of crafted beauty.

Wyn Evans uses quite evident, clear, elegant vehicles of communication; the sign, a light as interior spectacle. Such objects, by being desirable and fascinating, harness a strong, almost Classical, method for gaining attention. The idea of a twist within this method, however, the worm within the apple that suddenly repulses or surprises, has no real part in this. Instead he is a master at a sense of continuity, a circularity, where the words, note, detail remains obtuse, hidden, but still the same. His use of popular, familiar form; the novel, a song, a series of photographs, means the artist uses a rounded given form for parallel speech to imply there is no answer, as such. A parallel rationale runs along, in this case the electric light within the chandelier which beats out a hidden poetic metre in Morse code. A small screen attached, but not very close, shows the rhythm or sense of text which is sent through the light bulbs till the object, a sort of humming 'found' creation, acts as both permanent presence and mere vehicle. The context is essential as the object is leaking information in one way while demanding attention from another. The relation to function, to the reality of lit interior, albeit from another time, makes the piece both work of art and fabulous furniture. An association to film, early film, reminds of the experience of the cinema as well as the film itself; of the moment of light at the front of the screen, the waiting, the music, all the theatrical promise of a place as well as the object of fascination itself.

Throughout his practice Wyn Evans plays with the relation of scale, time and expectation by suggesting that the pathos of general presence can carry all before it, and within it. Love, loss and beauty, celebrated in letter, song, and newspaper headline even, are reinforced and revealed by the fact that time, presumption and communication can work in a subtle and subliminal way.

Sacha Craddock