



PIERRE HUYGHE

10.02 – 21.05 2017

Copenhagen Contemporary, Papirøen

Copenhagen Contemporary presents an important work by the world-famous French artist Pierre Huyghe: the video installation *Untitled (Human Mask)* (2014). Footage from a Japanese coastal city devastated by a tsunami transports us to an eerie world where fiction and reality, culture and nature mesh and merge.

Pierre Huyghe's video *Untitled (Human Mask)* (2014) opens with footage from the nuclear disaster area of Fukushima following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. The city is utterly ruined, its houses pushed away from their foundations and its streets empty of life.

An unmanned drone camera takes us into a restaurant that initially seems abandoned, but in a dimly lit room we come across a monkey that has been trained to act as a waiter. We look on in wonder as we follow the animal's restless movements inside the empty restaurant, moving back and forth between the filthy kitchen and the dark dining space. Apart from some cockroaches scuttling across the floor and a single cat, the monkey appears to be the sole survivor of the disaster.

Like an automaton, the monkey continues to carry out the routines that its training has instilled in it. Without any patrons to serve, those actions form a pointless pattern of repetition and variation. The animal is trapped inside a re-enactment of human activity – sometimes inoperative, endlessly waiting, subject to boredom, left between instruction and instinct.

With the dystopian setting of *Untitled (Human Mask)* Pierre Huyghe points to the impact that human activity has on nature. Perhaps the work reflects our present-day Anthropocene era; a time when mankind has become a force that changes the planet, affecting its ecosystems. Huyghe's work shows us an apocalyptic world in which humanity has been eradicated, with the monkey's lingering training the only relic of human civilisation.

Untitled (Human Mask) captures a number of significant themes in Pierre Huyghe's body of work: the enigmatic and uncanny situations found in the film suggest a collapse of biological and cultural distinctions.

About Pierre Huyghe

Pierre Huyghe is one of the most important contemporary artists of our age. His works blur the boundaries of established contrasts: the living and the lifeless, the real and the symbolic; animal, man and machine.

Since the early 1990s Huyghe has worked with the exhibition format as a mode of

presentation, challenging its conventional forms and setups. Like a choreographer of art he compiles and conceives his works as a dynamic whole that exists and changes independently of our presence – like an autonomous organism.

Pierre Huyghe was born in Paris in 1962, now lives and works in New York and Chile. He has presented countless solo exhibitions, including at MoMA, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; LACMA, Los Angeles; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; and Ludwig Museum, Cologne.

Official opening Friday 10 February 17.00 – 20.00.

The exhibition will be open to members of the press Friday 10 February from 13.00.

The artist will not be present at the opening.

Press kit and images are available for download from the CC website
<http://cphco.org/presse/>

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