

Chronogram

ARTS.CULTURE.SPIRIT





still from *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*

PHILIPPE PARRENO | DIGITAL VIDEO | 2005

One of the distinguishing marks of French artist Philippe Parreno is his total blindness to established boundaries. His work is the shaded center of the Venn diagram. He blends mediums, reality with fantasy, old with new, philosophy with art, ultimately creating his own narratives. Maria Lind, curator of the upcoming exhibition “Philippe Parreno” at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, suggests that his “obsessive collaborating” with other artists even challenges traditional notions of ownership and authorship.

Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait, by Parreno and Gordon Douglas, falls somewhere between documentary and the idolization of the male figure in Michelangelo’s *David*. The film shadows French soccer star Zinedine Zidane—regarded as one of the greatest players of all time—during the entire Real Madrid versus Villarreal game on April 23, 2005. Seventeen cameras were placed around the stadium, focusing on Zidane (not the movement of the ball), capturing his every expression and muscle twitch. A contemplative, haunting soundtrack by Scottish post-rock band Mogwai plays in the background as the noise of the crowd fades in and out. You can hear Zidane’s yells, utterings, breathing, his cleats on the stadium grass, and the small explosions of sound when he or a nearby player makes contact with the ball or each other. Zidane’s words scroll in white text across the bottom of the screen, offering no real context or information about the current action. For example, “As a child, I had a running commentary in my head when I was playing. It wasn’t really my own voice, it was the voice of Pierre Cangion, a television anchor from the 1970s. Every time I heard his voice, I would run towards the TV, as close as I could get for as long as I could. It wasn’t that his words were so important but the tone, the accent, the atmosphere, was everything.”

In her essay, “The Who and How: Thoughts on Philippe Parreno’s work,” curator Maria Lind writes that Zinedine Zidane “is portrayed not only as an outstanding football player, but as an object of erotic desire. In the film, on the one hand, he is celebrated as the perfect image of an alpha male super ego. A man whose every body movement, every little gesture is deemed not only important but also pleasurable to watch. On the other hand, an abundance of cameras make his facial features become a miniature landscape in transition.”

“Philippe Parreno” at CCS Bard is part of a series of retrospectives taking place from through 2011 at the Kunsthalle Zurich, Pompidou Center in Paris, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, and in London at the Serpentine Gallery. The exhibit at CCS Bard runs through September 26 and examines Parreno’s work with moving images, focusing on *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* and *June 8, 1968*, a montage of vignettes of crowds and individuals watching a passing train, inspired by Paul Fusco’s photos of Robert F. Kennedy’s funeral train. *Zidane* will be screened at CCS Bard in September. (845) 758-7598; www.bard.edu/css.

—Lisa Parisio