

Pinault Exhibition **Collection** Punta della Dogana 17.03—24.11.2024

EN

**Pierre
Huyghe**

liminal

Liminal, an exhibition created by Pierre Huyghe in close collaboration with curator Anne Stenne, presents major new creations alongside works from the last ten years, particularly from the Pinault Collection.

Pierre Huyghe has since long questioned the relation between the human and the non-human, and conceives his works as speculative fictions from which emerge other modalities of world. Fictions, to him, are “vehicles for accessing the possible or the impossible—what could be or could not be.”

With *Liminal*, Pierre Huyghe transforms Punta della Dogana into a dynamic, sensitive milieu perpetually evolving. The exhibition is a transitory state inhabited by human and non-human creatures and becomes the site of formation of subjectivities that are constantly learning, changing, and hybridizing. Their memories are expanding with information captured from events, both perceptible and imperceptible, that permeate the exhibition.

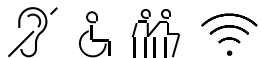
For Pierre Huyghe, the exhibition is an unpredictable ritual, where new possibilities are generated and coexist, without hierarchy or determinism. With *Liminal*, he calls our perception of reality into question, as if we were becoming strangers to ourselves, from a perspective other than human—inhuman.

The exhibition has been produced in partnership with the Leeum Museum in Seoul, which will present it in February 2025.

Any question? Just ask me!

Ask the **cultural mediators** if you have any questions about the current exhibition. The service is free and operates daily from 11 am to 1 pm and from 4 pm to 6 pm.

Ask for the **Accessibility Guide** available from April 20 at the ticket office: you'll find content in Italian Sign Language and International Sign Language, accompanied by simplified texts.



Level 0

ROOM 1
E: Estelarium
L: Liminal
P: Portal

ROOM 2
HM: Human Mask

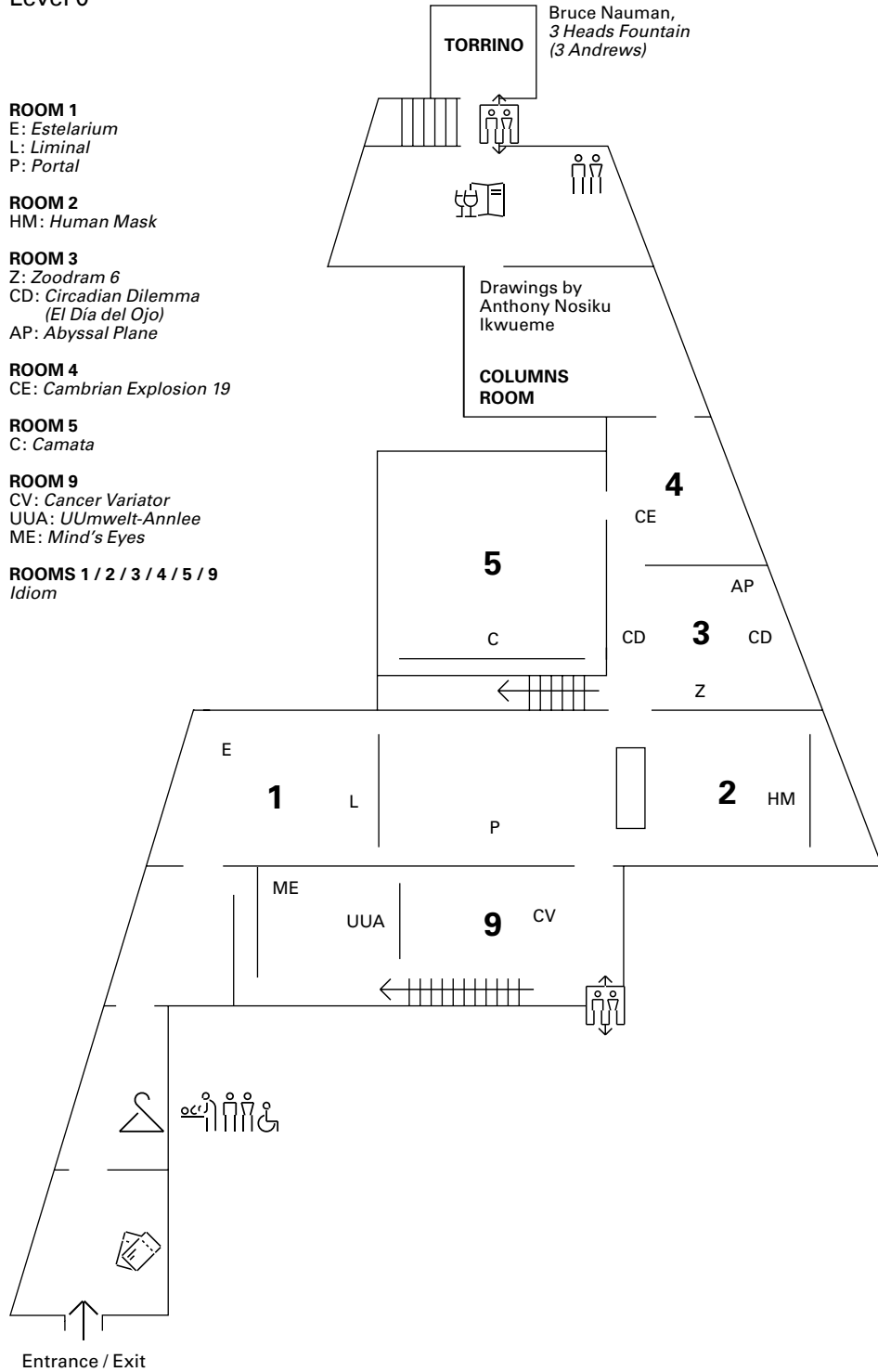
ROOM 3
Z: Zoodram 6
CD: Circadian Dilemma
(El Día del Ojo)
AP: Abyssal Plane

ROOM 4
CE: Cambrian Explosion 19

ROOM 5
C: Camata

ROOM 9
CV: Cancer Variator
UUA: UUmwelt-Annee
ME: Mind's Eyes

ROOMS 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 9
Idiom



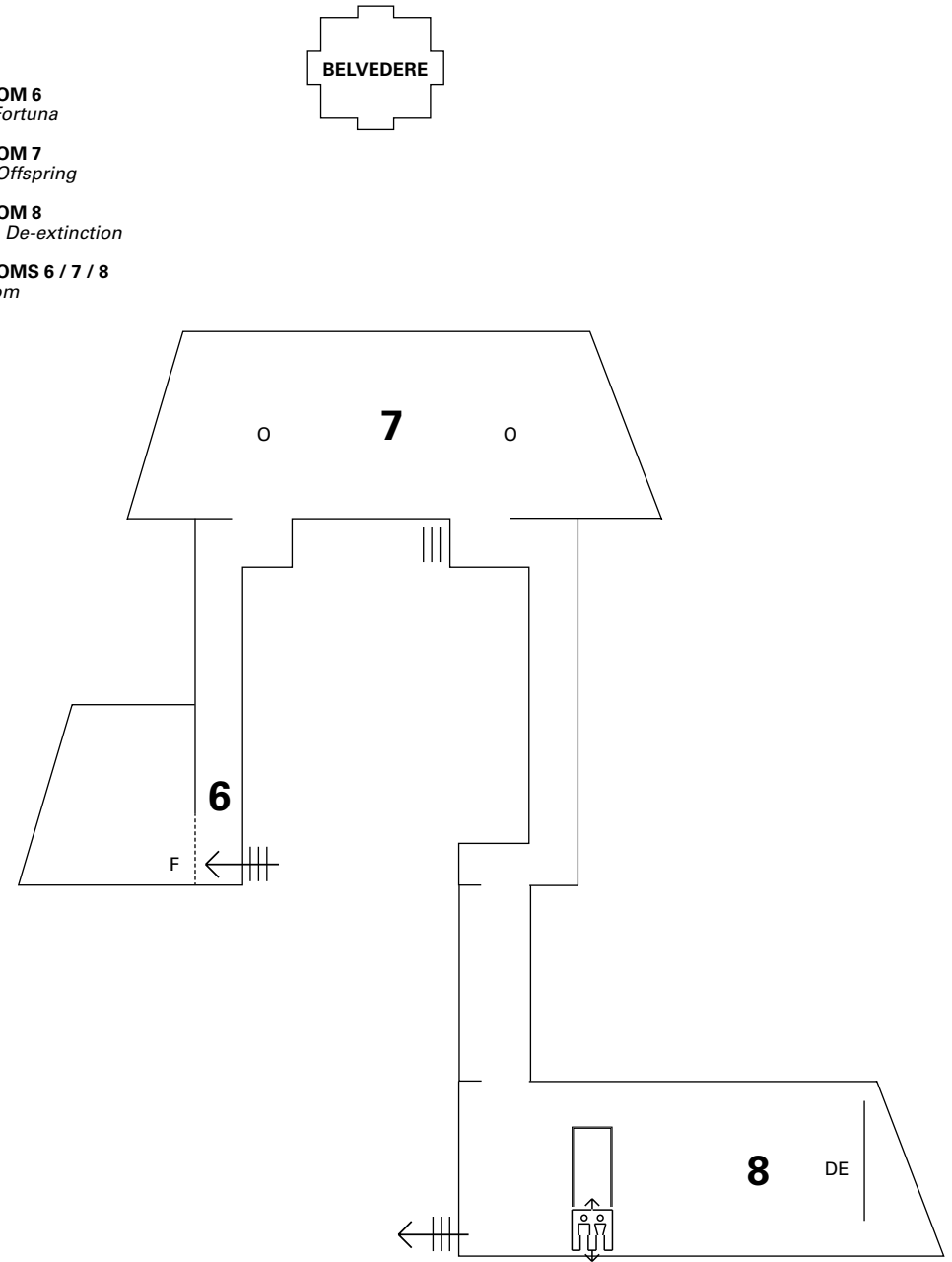
Level 1

ROOM 6
F: Fortuna

ROOM 7
O: Offspring

ROOM 8
DE: De-extinction

ROOMS 6 / 7 / 8
Idiom



ROOM 1

Liminal, 2024. Real time simulation, sound, sensors / *Estelarium, 2024.* Basalt / *Portal, 2024.* Brass pole with environmental sensors, camera, micro, sound, light, solar panel, real time recording and emitting



Liminal, 2024

Liminal, 2024

The liminal milieu exists as a sensitive membrane being both a space and a human form.

The hollow human form, without brain, without face, and without world, moves on an infinite and plane surface, surrounded by the void.

Liminal is a transitional state between our sensible reality and an inhuman entity, both affecting each other through the human form, that becomes a "passeur," an oracular figure.

Liminal is an empty vessel receiving invisible information in real time through sensors present in the physical environment, or stimuli from the outside. The human form makes subtle gestures, a language which is read by the inhuman entity. In reaction to these gestures, the inhuman entity responds by imparting different behaviors to the human form.

The inhuman entity evolves as it searches for stimuli, as it learns. Its memory is thus amplified over time, beyond the exhibition and the human realm.

A brain organoid located in a lab made of few synthetic neural circuits, gives the human form a residual sensory function. As a gate keeper, subject to pain, the human form rejects unwanted information, thus influencing the learning process of the inhuman entity.

Liminal therefore is an experiment, the simulation of a speculative human condition.

Estelarium, 2024

Estelarium is the imprint of the shape of a human pregnant belly just before the child's birth. It is cast in basalt, a lava rock formed from magma exposed to air.

Portal, 2024

Portal is a sensory antenna with receivers and emitters that relay information perceptible and imperceptible by human beings. It is a transmitter, learning from what passes through it.

ROOMS 1 / 2 / 3 / 4 / 5 / 6 / 7 / 8 / 9

Real time voice generated by Artificial Intelligence, golden LED screen masks

Idiom, 2024.



Idiom is an unknown language that self-generates and emerges live.

Specific features, some imperceptible by humans, are detected by sensors in masks that are worn by mute human carriers. The information is converted into particular phonemes and syntax then vocalized.

Over time, a community is formed as a bodyless entity speaks through the masks. The language appears as ineffable, from another reality, outside of us.

ROOM 2

Human Mask, 2014. Film, colour, sound, 19 min.



Set in the no man's land around the city of Fukushima in Japan, the film *Human Mask* opens with footage of a drone navigating the desert city, just after the landslide and the nuclear catastrophe in 2011.

In an empty restaurant, a monkey wearing a mask of a young girl repeats, like an automaton, the gestures for which it has been trained. Sometimes the animal seems idle, endlessly waiting. It shifts between instructions and instinct, between the necessary and the accidental.

In this moment of suspension in the aftermath of a disaster, *Human Mask* presents a residual image of human presence carried by an unconscious actor and sole mediator, questioning the "human" mask we all are wearing.

ROOM 3 / ROOM 4 *Zoodram 6, 2013.* Aquarium, arrow crabs, hermit crab, resin shell after Constantin Brâncuși's *Sleeping Muse* (1910) / *Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo), 2017.* Aquarium, *Astyanax Mexicanus* (eyeless and with eyes), algae, cave scan cast in concrete, black switchable glass, geo-localized program / *Abyssal Plane, 2015.* Aquarium, starfishes, sand, stones and shells from Marmara Sea, concrete cast of a reclining figure / *Cambrian Explosion 19, 2013.* Aquarium, horseshoe, arrow crabs, anemones, sand, floating rock

A set of aquariums appears like a body diffracted in space. Each one of them is a milieu populated by different entities.



Zoodram 6, 2013

Zoodram 6 is an evolving world in itself. The conditions in the aquarium are established, yet what unfolds remains uncertain. The animals were chosen according to the recursivity of their instinctual behavior.

A hermit crab lives inside a replica of Constantin Brâncuși's famous sculpture *Sleeping Muse* (1910). The crab and the muse's heads embody the hybridation of two species, between a non-human being and a human representation.



Abyssal Plane, 2015

The aquarium is named after the initial project, *Abyssal Plane, Geometry of the Immortals* (2015), an underwater stage conceived by Pierre Huyghe with various artifacts populated by marine life at the bottom of the Marmara Sea near Istanbul. It is a site of self-transformation.

Abyssal Plane contains seafloor sediments from the Marmara Sea, on which lies a concrete cast of the lower half of a reclining nude figure, a production left over from a previous work, *Untilled* (2012). The legs are covered with starfish, known for their ability to regenerate their entire body from damaged limbs, evoking the possibility of an endless reconstitution.

Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo), 2017

The landscape of the aquarium, inhabited by various species of tetra fish, is a remodeling of Mexican underwater caves. The tetra fish which entered the dark caves millions of years ago slowly lost the ability to see. For this reason, they are also called blind cave fish.

The title of the work refers to the circadian rhythm, the twenty-four-hour cycle observed in animals, plants, fungi, and bacteria. The cycle of the cave fish underwent a mutation, and the gene linked to vision was switched off, leaving a blind eye behind. The biological clock of the blind cave fish thus changed; its circadian rhythm increased and no longer follows the twenty-four-hour rotation of the earth.

In the aquarium, there are blind tetra fish and tetra fish that can see. Hence, there are two circadian rhythms present, like two parallel realities.

The switchable glass of the tank reacts to its environment. These changes of aspect of the glass, opaque or transparent, are triggered by an algorithm that receives data from the surrounding level of light, visibility, and weather. Depending on the aquarium's positioning and its environment, the glass switches, allowing light to enter the tank or not, affecting the visibility on both sides of the glass. On an evolutionary scale, the sense of sight of the non-blind and the blind fish may thus respectively get lost or recovered.

Cambrian Explosion 19, 2013

In *Cambrian Explosion 19*, a floating rock appears to have gravitational incongruity.

On the black sand live two ancient species, appeared 540 million years ago during the Cambrian explosion, the starting point of most living forms. These species are living fossils whose forms remain unchanged since their primordial state. Their instinctual behaviors last beyond the lifespan of each individual and recur as they continue to reproduce. *Cambrian Explosion 19* is an enduring beginning.

ROOM 5

Camata, 2024. Robotics driven by machine learning, self-directed film, edited in real time by Artificial Intelligence, sound, sensors



A set of machines seems to perform an unknown ritual, on the unburied skeleton of a young man, found in the Atacama Desert in Chile. It is the oldest and driest desert on earth, the testing ground of astronomers to study exoplanets, i.e. planets that exist beyond our solar system.

The ritual performed by the machines appears at once as an endless funeral rite, an operating theater, and the learning process and formation of a specific lifeless subjectivity.

The film is a self-presentation that endlessly edits itself, without linearity, beginning or end. Sensors located in the exhibition space continuously generate changes in its editing.

As the enigmatic ritual unfolds live in front of us, we witness a transactional operation between different realities, a passage between a bodyless entity and a lifeless human body.

ROOM 6

Fortuna, 2024. Ventilator, wind sensor, scent

The weathervane on the roof of the Punta della Dogana building represents the allegory of the Fortune spinning round on her earth globe. This instrument, symbolizing fate and uncertainty, gives rhythm to the breath that moves through the space, starting from the room where all the exhibition program system converges.

ROOM 7

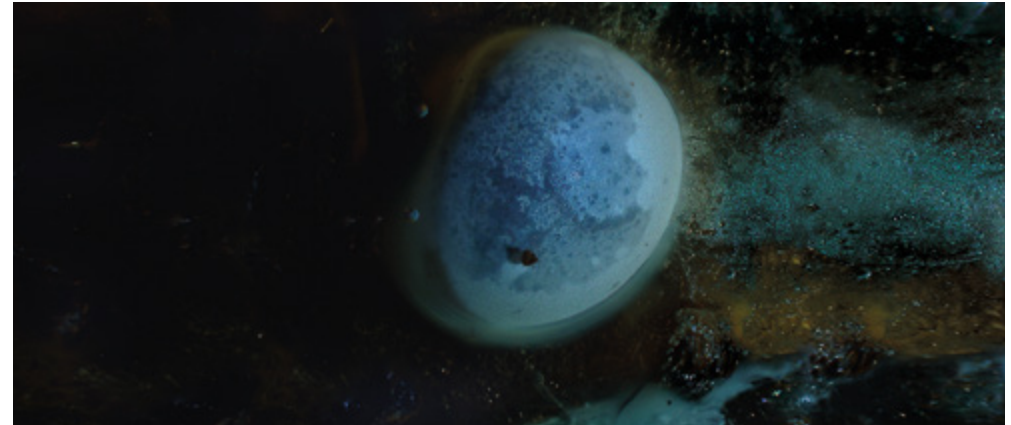
Offspring, 2018. Sensor based, self-generative system for sound and light machine



Offspring is a self-generating instrument continuously learning from external conditions that influence its behaviors. The lights attempt to synchronize with the contingent outcome.

ROOM 8

De-extinction, 2014. Film, colour, sound, 12 min., 38 sec.



A navigation through an amber stone, in a situation frozen in time, until we discover two insects mating, caught a million of years ago. The amber stone thus materializes the space and time between us and these earliest known specimens.

The film is shot with macroscopic and microscopic cameras. The soundtrack consists of the whirring sounds of the motion control camera.

ROOM 9

Umwelt – Annlee, 2018-2024. Deep image reconstruction, generated in real time, face recognition, sensors, brain waves sound / ***Cancer Variator, 2016.*** Incubator, human cells, sensors / ***Mind's Eyes, 2024.*** Materialized deep image reconstruction, synthetic and biological material aggregate



Umwelt – Annlee, 2018-2024

Umwelt – Annlee is a co-production of imagination. Human imagination is reconstructed by an inhuman cognition. It has been externalized without the subject predetermining the outcome, bypassing all known modes of expression such as language or those vehiculated by the senses.

Mental images are produced by a brain-computer interface, that captures the brain activity of a person imagining Annlee, herself an imaginary character. The mental images are reconstructed by a deep neural network, using processes of continuous optimization, learning, and recognition.

Once exhibited, the sequences of mental images are endlessly modified by several parameter linked to the surrounding conditions.

Cancer Variator, 2016

Cancer Variator functions as a clock. Any change occurring in the environment modifies the conditions in which *in vitro* cancer cells accelerate or slow down their division.

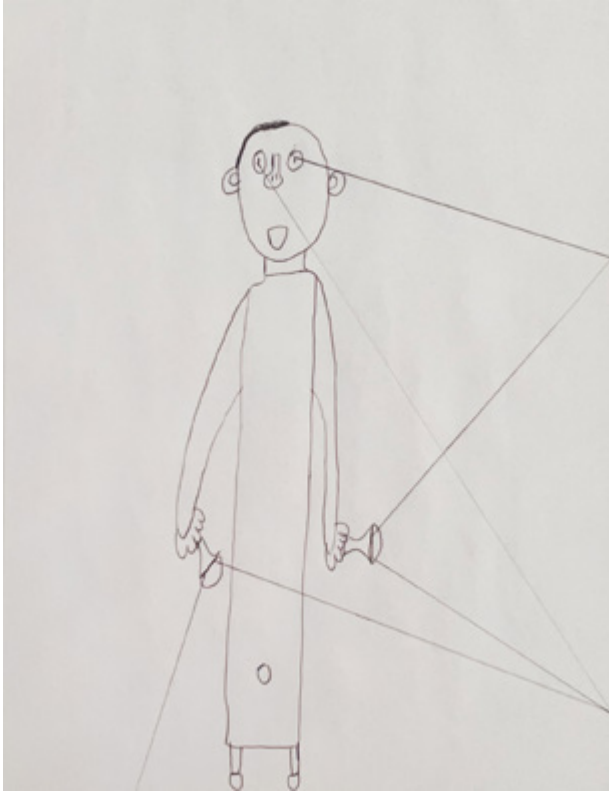
As the rhythm of the cells' division changes, new images appear on a screen: images reproducing themselves like metastases or memes.

Mind's Eyes, 2024

Mind's Eyes is a physical manifestation of a mental image extracted from *Umwelt – Annlee*, an artifact of the imaginary realm. Mental images can indeed circulate from mind to mind or be externalized from the subjects' minds. *Mind's Eyes* is an aggregate of synthetic, biological matter evolving over time.

COLUMNS ROOM

Anthony Nosiku Ikwueme, "Fire from Eyes", 2014 and "Time Length", 2014. Series of drawings, ballpoint pen



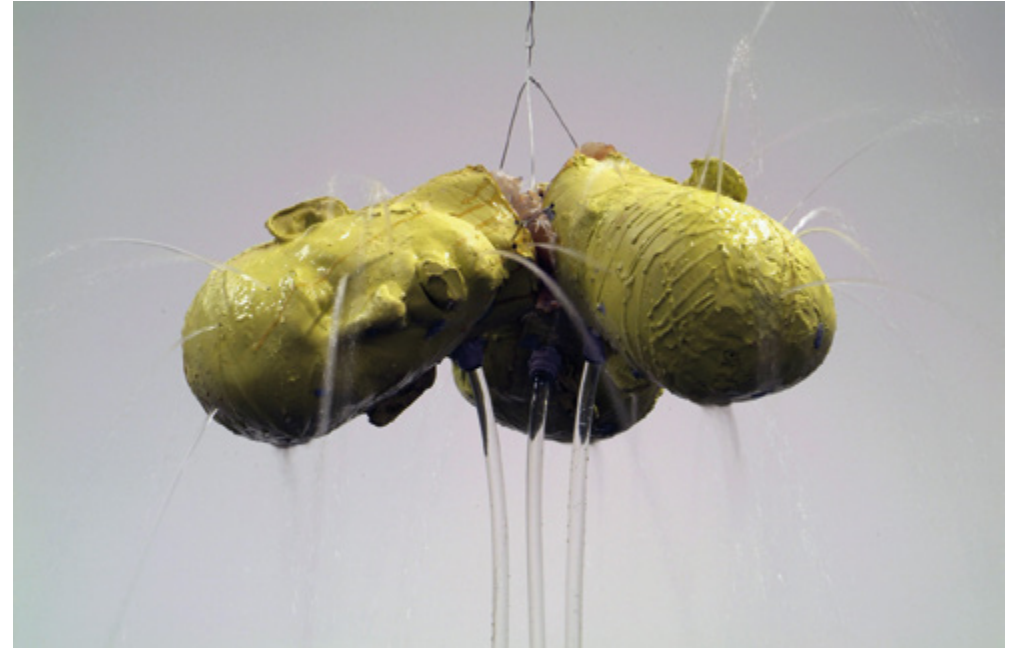
Anthony Nosiku Ikwueme, born in 1997, is a neurodiverse artist.

Numerics, and energy, emanating from the figures, as seen in his drawings, inform his practice and act as windows into his kaleidoscopic world, giving another perspective to the diverse spectrum of human cognition.

In 2014, Anthony Nosiku Ikwueme reached out to Pierre Huyghe to establish a bridge between their differing languages.

TORRINO

Bruce Nauman, *3 Heads Fountain (3 Andrews)*, 2005. Epoxy resin, fiberglass, wire, plastic tubes, water pump, wood basin, rubber pond liner



Pierre Huyghe has chosen to present *3 Heads Fountain (3 Andrews)* by Bruce Nauman as an echo to the exhibition *Liminal* and as a reminiscence of the recent exhibition at Punta della Dogana *Bruce Nauman. Contrapposto Studies*.

Three identical, scar-covered male heads, hung by their necks, are continuously fed by water through a tube and pierced so to leave thin jets of water run out of their wholes.

Bruce Nauman regularly incorporates the human body into his work. Playing with the contradictions of human life (love and hate, life and death, pleasure and suffering), the US American artist, born in 1941, likes to subject his viewer to a physical and psychological test, at the same time raising existential questions.

Screening

The Host and the Cloud, 2009–10. Film, colour, sound, 2 hrs, 1 min., 30 sec.

In an abandoned ethnographic museum located in a zoological garden, a former animal and human zoo, an experiment unfolds over the course of one year. A group of people are exposed to external influences: social, political, scientific, or spiritual rituals, fictions, beliefs, and culture.

Live situations occur in a conditional set-up, no script is given, a self-generating process emerges and unfolds in an unpredictable way.

The experiment, indifferent to the presence of witnesses, was partly filmed and only part of it was edited.

Screening scheduled at the Teatrino di Palazzo Grassi on 23 May 2024.

Biography

Pierre Huyghe (born in 1962, Paris) lives and works in Santiago, Chile. His work is internationally known and presented in various exhibitions around the world. Recent exhibitions include *Chimera*, EMMA, Espoo (2023); *Variants*, Kistefos Museum, Jevnaker (2022); *After UUmwelt*, Luma Foundation, Arles (2021); *UUmwelt*, Serpentine Gallery, London (2018); *After ALife Ahead*, Skulptur Projekte Münster, Münster (2017); *The Roof Garden*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2015). In 2012, his work *Untilled* was one of the most critically acclaimed contributions to dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel.

In 2012–14, a major retrospective of Pierre Huyghe's work traveled from the Centre Pompidou, Paris, to the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, and to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles.

In 2019, he was named Artistic Director of the Okayama Art Summit, *If the Snake*.

The artist's work is represented in the collections of Centre Pompidou, Paris, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, MoMA, New York, Musée d'Art moderne de Paris, Paris, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Nationalgalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, SFMOMA, San Francisco, Tate Modern, London, among others.

Credits

All works by Pierre Huyghe: Courtesy the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Marian Goodman Gallery, Hauser & Wirth, Esther Schipper and TARO NASU. © Pierre Huyghe, by SIAE 2024.

Pierre Huyghe: *Liminal*, 2024. Courtesy the artist; Anna Lena Films, Paris. / *Idiom*, 2024. Courtesy Leeum Museum of Art. / *Human Mask*, 2014. Pinault Collection. Courtesy the artist; Anna Lena Films, Paris. / *Zoodram 6*, 2013. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Nationalgalerie. 2015 purchased by the Freunde der Nationalgalerie. Photo: Guillaume Zicarelli. / *Abysal Plane*, 2015. Collezione La Gaia, Busca – Italia. Photo: Zac Kelley. / *Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo)*, 2017. Private Collection, Germany. / *Circadian Dilemma (El Día del Ojo)*, 2017. Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris, Los Angeles. / *Cambrian Explosion 19*, 2013. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. © Pierre Huyghe. / *Camata*, 2024. Courtesy the artist; Anna Lena Films, Paris. / *Offspring*, 2018. Pinault Collection. / *Offspring*, 2018. Courtesy Leeum Museum of Art. / *De-extinction*, 2014. Pinault Collection. Courtesy the artist; Anna Lena Films, Paris. / *After UUmwelt*, exhibition view, LUMA, Arles, 2021. Photo: Ola Rindal. / *UUmwelt – Annlee*, 2018–2024. © Kamitani Lab / Kyoto University and ATR. / *Cancer Variator*, 2016. Courtesy the artist. / *The Host and the Cloud*, 2009–10. Courtesy the artist; Anna Lena Films, Paris.

Anthony Nosiku Ikwueme: “Fire from Eyes”, 2014 et “Time Length”, 2014. © Anthony Nosiku Ikwueme.

Bruce Nauman. *3 Heads Fountain (3 Andrews)*, 2005. Pinault Collection. Photo: Tom Van Eynde. © Bruce Nauman, by SIAE 2024.

This exhibition has been produced in partnership with the Leeum Museum in Seoul, which will present it in February 2025.

This exhibition is supported by Bottega Veneta. Outfits for the work *Idiom* are designed by Bottega Veneta Creative Director, Matthieu Blazy, in collaboration with Pierre Huyghe.

Maintenance of aquarium works

The exhibition features live animals (starfish, crabs, anemones and fish). Animal welfare in the artworks is very important to Palazzo Grassi – Punta della Dogana – Pinault Collection and to the artist, and precautions to ensure the animals' well-being began from the very start of the exhibition planning. The conditions in the aquariums are constantly monitored, and the more demanding care is provided by aquarium experts from outside the museum. For day-to-day maintenance, the staff of Palazzo Grassi – Punta della Dogana – Pinault Collection has received detailed instructions for each aquarium. Furthermore all the necessary authorizations for animal exhibits have been requested. At the end of the exhibition, the animals will be preserved in a habitat that takes into account the needs of each species.

Exhibition curator

Anne Stenne

Texts of the guide

Anne Stenne

Translation and copy editing of the guide

NTL-II Nuovo Traduttore Letterario, Florence

Graphic design of the guide

Les Graphiquants, Paris



Discover, read, listen

Interviews, videos, a calendar of events dedicated to the exhibition *Pierre Huyghe. Liminal*. Browse all in-depth content at palazzograssi.it

The exhibition catalog *Pierre Huyghe. Liminal* published in Italian edition by Marsilio Arte, in English edition by Marsilio Arte and in French edition by Marsilio Arte/Les Éditions Dilecta with texts by Tristan Garcia, Pierre Huyghe, Patricia Reed, Tobias Rees, Anne Stenne and Chiara Vecchiarelli is available from April 15 at the bookshop and online.

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Keep your Punta della Dogana ticket and visit the exhibition
at Palazzo Grassi *Julie Mehretu. Ensemble.*

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