

# New exhibition by one of the most important contemporary artists of our time: Offspring - Pierre Huyghe

**In Pierre Huyghe's dystopian universe, a wide range of intelligent life forms and machines continuously create new possibilities.**

May 25 opens a solo exhibition at Kunsten in Aalborg by Pierre Huyghe.

Since the early 1990s, Pierre Huyghe has been working in diverse media including films, objects, living environment and the exhibition itself as a form, all are present in this exhibition.

In Huyghe's contingent universe, a wide range of intelligent life forms biotic and abiotic continuously produce changing environments. The works are dynamic and modified over time, often exceeding their condition of emergence and the artist's control, as their developments are indeterminate.

Huyghe does not consider the exhibition ritual as an asymmetrical experience but as an encounter with a sentient milieu, that perceives, generates new possibilities of alliances between events or things that unfold, indifferent to human presence.

The exhibition *Offspring* at Kunsten juxtaposes six key works. Using sensors, which capture sound, light and movement among others, each work perceives and influences others as well as the exhibition rhythm and the way it manifests.

The exhibition gives visitors the opportunity to see Kunsten's newly-acquired work for the very first time: one of Pierre Huyghe's famous living aquariums, The acquisition is totally unique to Kunsten: although they are considered key to his artistic oeuvre, Huyghe has not created very many of his aquariums. The acquisition was made possible by a generous donation from the New Carlsberg Foundation.

A number of works featured in the exhibition have been loaned from two major French collections: the Louis Vuitton Foundation and the Pinault Collection.

Pierre Huyghe was born in Paris, in 1962. He lives and works in Santiago and New York. He has presented numerous solo exhibitions throughout the world such as MoMA (New York), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), LACMA (Los Angeles), the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), Tate Modern (London), the Ludwig Museum (Cologne) among others.

The exhibition is sponsored by Ny Carlsberg Fondet, Det Obelske Familiefond, Augustinus Fonden og Lektor Peer Rander Amundsens Legat.

*For any press request, please contact us at [mkg@kunsten.dk](mailto:mkg@kunsten.dk).*

**Download press photos:** <https://cli.re/XnzXKx>

Below you will find an intro to the art works from Huyghe's studio

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**1. Offspring (2018)**

As Huyghe was initiating a journey to Antarctica (2006), he conceived an instrument that could translate the surrounding landscape into sound synchronized with light and communicate with other species. Offspring is the descendant of that machine. A neural network learns the Gymnopédies 1&3 (1888) by the French composer Erik Satie and plays infinite variations of his piano compositions. While creating its own, unpredictable music, the machine learns from its environment and external conditions, such as temperature, humidity, living movement, and biochemical variations, which influence the sound it generated.

**2. De-Extinction (2014)**

Extinct species of plants and animals discovered in fossils, such as amber, have been preserved from the natural stages of decomposition. Using macroscopic and microscopic motion-control cameras, De-Extinction is a journey through an amber stone, portraying a situation frozen in time and a search of insects caught mating millions of years ago. Slow panning close-up shots confuse the sense of scale as its soundtrack relays the whirring sounds of the camera. By returning to the origins of the world, the work acts as a memory for organisms and challenges the notion of death as disappearance.

**3. Mating (2015)**

Programmed LED masks carried by humans, amber dice with mating insects

Visit [www.kunsten.dk](http://www.kunsten.dk) to see when the work is activated with the humans.

A dice carved from a piece of amber contains two mating insects caught at the moment of their reproduction millions of years ago. A woman and a man wearing LED masks are playing with the dice. The patterns of flashes exchanged between the masks follow instinctive behaviors, sequences of bioluminescence, that insects emit prior to copulation. The rules of their game are left undisclosed to us. Sometimes they are playing, sometimes only the dice and the two masks are presented.

Within the exhibition, the sequence of light patterns emitted by the masks change the switchable glass where the films De-extinction and A Way in Untilled are projected, as well as the light of the aquarium.

**4. *A Way in Untilled* (2012)**

*A Way in Untilled* depicts Huyghe's environment created in the compost of Kassel park, Germany. The once disregarded area of construction debris was transformed by adding other living organisms and inanimate objects. In this situation a fluorescent-painted female dog is seen weaning a puppy, a colony of bees obscures the head of a female nude statue and pollinates medicinal plants, an uprooted tree once planted by the late German artist Joseph Beuys is eaten by ants. What occurred is unpredictable and indifferent to human presence. Over time, elements, species and environments grow, modify, interact or collapse, creating new antagonisms, associations, hospitalities, and hostilities.

The camera captures this milieu at different scale of perception, sometimes beyond human one.

**5. *Zoodram 2* (2010/2021)**

Pierre Huyghe's aquariums have become an iconic part of his artistic practice. His first was created in 2009, with each variation thereafter a unique work. Neither reproductions of naturally-occurring

ecosystems nor stage sets, they are rather worlds of constructed conditions in which uncertainties can unfold. For that purpose, animals are carefully selected for their instinctual behaviors or abilities which repeated and vary over time, composing the dramaturgy of the aquarium's environment. The monochromatic *Zoodram 2*, is home of diverse saltwater invertebrates such as brittle star, spider and horseshoe crab that cohabited with one longhorn cowfish.

This unique acquisition was made possible by a generous donation from Ny Carlsbergfondet.

### **Outside in the Park**

#### **6. *Untilled (Liegender Frauenakt)*, 2012**

The head of a female statue is covered by a living beehive. The work is in constant formation. The beehive embodies a form of self-organization, it has informed concepts of emergent and collective intelligence and inspired such terms as hive mind. Evolving regardless of human presence or witness, the work refers to a self-generating system that points to the porosity and contingency.

Kindly respect the living bees and the health of other visitors by maintaining the required distance from the statue and beehive. Direct contact may cause damage or injury to the bees, their hive, yourself or other visitors.