

September 13, 2002

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SFMOMA PRESENTS *NO GHOST JUST A SHELL*

Annlee Virtually Comes to Life in the Museum Galleries

From December 14, 2002 to March 16, 2003 the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA) will present *No Ghost Just a Shell*. Organized by Benjamin Weil, SFMOMA curator of media arts, the exhibition features digitally animated films by some of France's most innovative contemporary artists, Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno, partnering with Liam Gillick, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Pierre Joseph, Francois Curlet, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Joe Scanlan and Melik Ohanian. The exhibition also includes paintings by Henri Barande and Richard Phillips and a neon sign designed by Huyghe and Parreno.

*No Ghost Just a Shell* was initiated by Huyghe and Parreno in 1999 when they acquired the copyright and original image for a character named Annlee from Kworks, a Japanese company that develops figures (almost actors) for the cartoons, comic strips, advertisements and video games of the booming Manga industry. The title of the exhibition is derived from the classic Manga film, *Ghost in the Shell*, by Masamune Shirow.

Parreno and Huyghe bought Annlee for the modest sum of 46,000 yen. By purchasing the copyright to the character as well as her likeness, the artists "saved" Annlee from an industry that sooner or later would have condemned her to death. As a generic Manga figure without any psychological background, personal history, specific characteristics, attitudes or abilities, Annlee was created to exist in any story, but had no chance of surviving. Her destiny was to fade away quickly or to simply die after a few seconds or a couple of pages. Annlee was a cheap model—the price of a Manga figure relates to the complexity of its character traits and thus its ability to adapt to a story line and last for several episodes.

Huyghe and Parreno used the original Annlee computer file as a starting point for an extended artistic project. They asked several artists to appropriate the character and bring her to life. Huyghe and Parreno suggested that the participating artists: "Work with her, in a real story, translate her capabilities into psychological traits, lend her a character, a text, a denunciation and address to the Court a trial in her defense. Do all that you can so that this character lives different stories and experiences. So that she can act as a sign, as a live logo." These artists, along with Huyghe and Parreno, have filled Annlee's empty "shell" with ideas, manifested in the form of animations, paintings, posters, books, neon works and sculptures.



Philippe Parreno, *Anywhere Out of The World*, 2000; single channel animation (detail)

After SFMOMA's presentation Annlee will be "terminated." Artists will no longer be able to create works with her as a digital model. Huyghe and Parreno have hired a lawyer to develop a contract liberating Annlee from circulation and economic and artistic exploitation. The contract stipulates that the character will no longer be accessible to anyone. The *No Ghost Just a Shell* project will come to an end and Annlee will be "buried" in a special coffin created by artist Joe Scanlan in the SFMOMA galleries.

The life-prolonging measures taken by the *No Ghost Just a Shell* project for a short-lived, virtual and commercial being raise humanitarian questions, while they undermine consumer culture by allowing a product that is otherwise viable only in a commercial context to be used free of charge. The project also addresses issues of copyright as well as questions about how identity and difference can be formulated.

In conjunction with *No Ghost Just a Shell*, the film *Untitled (Even Electric Sheep Can Dream)*, 2002, by Rirkrit Tiravanija will be screened in SFMOMA's Phyllis Wattis Theater on Fridays and Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. throughout the run of the exhibition. The eight-hour film features Annlee reading the entire text of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K. Dick, the book that inspired the movie *Blade Runner*.

*No Ghost Just a Shell* was generously supported by Etant donnés: The French American Fund for Contemporary Art. Hotel Sponsor: The Argent Hotel.

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**Hours:** Open daily (except Wednesdays) 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; open late Thursdays until 9 p.m.; summer hours (Memorial Day to Labor Day) open at 10 a.m.; closed Wednesdays and the following public holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Day.

**Admission prices:** Adults \$10; seniors \$7; students \$6. SFMOMA members and children 12 and under are admitted free. The first Tuesday of each month admission is free. Thursday evenings, 6 to 9 p.m., admission is half price.

SFMOMA is easily accessible by MUNI, BART, Golden Gate Transit, SamTrans and Caltrain. Hourly, daily and monthly parking is available at the SFMOMA Garage at 147 Minna Street. For parking information, call 415/348-0971.

**Visit our Web site at [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org) or call 415/357-4000 for more information.**

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