

Press Release

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PUBLIC ART FUND AND WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
ANNOUNCE A COLLABORATION FOR THE 2006 WHITNEY BIENNIAL

Pierre Huyghe
A Journey That Wasn't

A Central Park musical based on an adventure in Antarctica



EVENT AND FILM SHOOT FOR 2006 BIENNIAL PRESENTATION
AT WOLLMAN RINK ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2005
6:30PM – 9PM

On the evening of October 14th, 2005, one small spot in the heart of Manhattan will be temporarily transformed into a striking glacial landscape, becoming the site of a film shoot by internationally renowned artist Pierre Huyghe. Public Art Fund is pleased to present A Journey That Wasn't, an orchestral musical presentation in Central Park based on the artist's recent journey to Antarctica. The event, organized in collaboration with the Whitney Museum of American Art, will become part of a new film by Pierre Huyghe that will premiere in the 2006 Biennial Exhibition. This collaboration will be the fourth time that the Whitney Museum has invited the Public Art Fund to organize an offsite component for the Biennial. A Journey That Wasn't is curated by Tom Eccles, former director of Public Art Fund, in collaboration with 2006 Biennial Exhibition curators Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne.

A Journey That Wasn't, the working title for this project, will ultimately take place in three moments in time: the artist's actual journey to the Antarctic in February 2005; the Central Park musical based on that journey, which will be presented and filmed at dusk on October 14 in the Wollman Rink; and the film made using footage shot on those two occasions.

The activity on October 14—which is free and open to the public—will encompass the musical itself and the filming of the presentation. Viewers will be invited to sit and watch the show, which will be presented three times in a row. Each time will last under 30 minutes and may include pauses to re-shoot. The filming will record both the show and the audience members who watch it, so that those present witness the spectacle and become extras in the film.

THE STORY

The musical is based on an actual month-long journey to Antarctica that the artist and several others made earlier this year. On February 9th, 2005, Jay Chung, Francesca Grassi, Pierre Huyghe, Q Takeki Maeda, Aleksandra Mir, Xavier Veilhan, Maryse Alberti, and ten crewmembers set sail from the Port of Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, the southeast point of Argentina. The journey centered on a search for an unknown island and an encounter with a unique solitary creature.

The Antarctic ice shelf is receding due to the effects of global warming. The seascape has changed to reveal previously uncharted islands with unusual ecosystems and mutations in the indigenous fauna. Rumors of the singular white animal, said to live in this region, came to the attention of Pierre Huyghe. The account described the creature as elusive, and indicated that it lived on the shores of an unnamed island somewhere at the height of the Polar Antarctic Circle. Taking as its starting point the hypothesis that such a place should geographically exist, this group of people embarked on a collective journey toward this most southern land.

They seized the opportunity to navigate south on a world-renowned polar research vessel. Provisions included experimental equipment meant to facilitate contact with the creature, should they encounter it, and a portable radio transmitter to broadcast their movements from the sea to the continents. After weeks of sailing in this hostile environment, facing a tremendous storm and getting stuck in the ice, they finally encountered the island. Landing on the shore, they built a temporary sound and light station that was specially designed to translate the physical shape of the island into sound. The Morse code-like stream of sound that it produced was not unlike the unique vocal displays that animals use to communicate with one another, and it was a hope that it would be a call for the elusive creature, an albino penguin.

THE SHOW

In the late 19th century, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux designed Central Park as a collection of re-created landscapes that suggested the lost wilderness of Manhattan. With *A Journey That Wasn't*, Huyghe evokes a more distant landscape, transforming the Wollman Rink into an equivalent of an Antarctic locale.

The show is based upon the Antarctic journey, translating the seafarers' experiences and discoveries into a musical presentation with ice, light, and atmospheric effects. The newly discovered island will be in the center of the ice rink. Its physical presence will be echoed in musical form: composer Joshua Cody has written an instrumental score based on the sound data derived from the island's topography.

At the October 14th event, the composition will be performed live by a symphonic orchestra on the ice rink. The duration of the show is determined by the time needed to “hear” the island. In the midst of the performance, the albino penguin might appear. The music connects the journey and the show, becoming the backbone that links the trip, the island, and the encounter with the creature.

ABOUT PIERRE HUYGHE

Born in Paris in 1962, Pierre Huyghe now lives and works in New York and Paris. In 2002 he received the Hugo Boss Prize from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and in 2001 he received a Special Award from the Jury of the Venice Biennale. His typically complex and multidisciplinary projects include *This is not a time for dreaming* (2004), a film and marionette opera telling the story of Le Corbusier’s architectural commission and Huyghe’s own work at Harvard. *Streamside Day*—a public event, a film, and an exhibition that traced the formation of a burgeoning community located in the Hudson Valley and invented a local custom and celebration—was on view at the Dia Center for the Arts in Chelsea in 2003. In 2006 he will have a solo shows at the ARC, Musee d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Tate Modern.

ABOUT THE COLLABORATION

Pierre Huyghe’s *A Journey That Wasn’t* will be the fourth time that the Whitney Museum of American Art has invited the Public Art Fund to organize an offsite or outdoor component for the Biennial Exhibition series, beginning in 2000 with the Public Art Fund’s presentation of Vanessa Beecroft’s *VB42/Intrepid: The Silent Service*. In 2002, the Public Art Fund presented sculpture in Central Park, bringing contemporary art to the park for the first time in more than three decades. Public Art Fund organized a second, larger Central Park presentation in 2004.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Joshua Cody’s compositions have been performed in the United States, Europe, and Africa. He studied at Northwestern University (Chicago) and privately in Paris with Alan Stout, C. P. First, Jay Alan Yim, and private master classes with Pierre Boulez and Louis Andriessen. He currently studies with Alfred Lerdahl and Tristan Murail at Columbia University, where he is a doctoral candidate and Fellow of the Faculty. Mr. Cody co-founded the international periodical and website *Paris Transatlantic* in 1995, and he co-founded the Ensemble Sospeso the same year; the ensemble has been responsible for many US and world premieres of chamber works by American and European composers.

Special thanks to the Trump Organization for generously allowing the use of the Wollman Rink.

Special thanks to Marian Goodman Gallery, New York.

This presentation is made possible through the cooperation of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York and The Honorable Adrian Benepe, Commissioner, New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.

This project is supported in part by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy.

LOCATION, DIRECTIONS, AND INFORMATION

Wollman Rink in Central Park is located mid-park at 62nd Street. Subway: N, R at Fifth Avenue; 4, 5, 6 to 59th Street. A map will be available on line at www.publicartfund.org.

PUBLIC ART FUND is New York's leading organizer of artists' projects, new commissions, installations and exhibitions in public spaces. Public Art Fund is a non-profit arts organization supported by generous contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations, and with public funds from The New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency, and the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs.

ABOUT THE WHITNEY BIENNIAL

The 2006 Biennial is the 73rd in the Whitney's ongoing surveys of contemporary American art, begun in 1932, shortly after the museum was founded. The Biennial exemplifies the prescient, risk-taking presentation of emerging artists and movements that has been at the core of the Whitney's mission since the museum's inception 75 years ago. The Whitney Museum of American Art is the leading advocate of 20th- and 21st-century American art. It includes major works and materials from the estate of Edward Hopper, the largest public collection of works by Alexander Calder, Louise Nevelson, and Lucas Samaras, as well as significant works by Jasper Johns, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Bruce Nauman, Georgia O'Keeffe, Claes Oldenburg, Kiki Smith, and Andy Warhol, among other artists. With its history of exhibiting the most promising and influential American artists and provoking intense critical and public debate, the Whitney's signature show, the Biennial, has become a measure of the state of contemporary art in America today.

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