

## **Zidane, A 21st Century Portrait** **Douglas Gordon & Philippe Parreno** From 28/02/2009 onwards



On 28 February 2009 the Van Abbemuseum opens the installation *Zidane, A 21st Century Portrait* by the artists Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno, episode #48 of Plug In. *Zidane, A 21st Century Portrait*, is a portrait on film of Zinédine Zidane, one of the most famous soccer players in the world. 17 synchronised cameras were focused on Zidane during a match between Spanish football club Real Madrid (for whom Zidane played at the time) and Villarreal F.C. in Madrid on 23 April 2005. Viewers will be plunged into all facets of the universe of an athlete in action and will have the sensation of 'moving alongside' Zidane throughout the entire game. *Zidane, A 21st Century Portrait*, produced by Palomar Pictures and Anna Lena Films, was shown at the Cannes film festival in 2006, which is rather unusual for a work of art.

The music for the film was composed by Mogwai, the international rock band from Glasgow. Over the years, the Van Abbemuseum has followed the work of both Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno and the museum holds works of these artists in the collection.

### **A modern portrait**

For the artists it was in many ways Zidane's personality that made the portrait necessary. The elegance of his game and his charisma made the decision for the two artists slash football fans an obvious one.

The video made by Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno is a unique collaboration of two artists in creating this portrait. Throughout the history of art, artists have painted portraits because it was the most direct way of depicting humanity. A portrait brings to life moments in time. Inspired by the film portraits made by Andy Warhol in the 1960's, the artists chose film as their medium. "Photography and film correspond to the attempts in our time to depict the face of humanity on the scale of time. Our lives take place within a protocol of time. It was for this reason in particular that we chose to create a portrait using cameras instead of canvas or paper. While drawing and painting create two-dimensional works, a portrait on film inexorably becomes a multidimensional work. [...] You see things in this film you never see on TV, like his hands, his gestures. That comes from painting techniques: watching out for gestures, moving fingers. These things offer us

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information about a person." For Zidane, the portrait was a unique opportunity to have a game commemorated for all time. He is very satisfied with the result "I recognise myself, it's really me, and that's exactly what I live every Sunday. With more emotion in some parts and less in others. That's it. All I hope now is that the film captivates the public the way it captivated me."

#### Gordon, Parreno and the Van Abbemuseum

*Zidane, A 21st Century Portrait* has a traditional art theme, the portrait, but is produced in a contemporary way with contemporary means. The artists Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno present a different view on a well-known reality. By showing football in an unusual way, they clarify that how we normally watch a match is just one, subjective, view on reality presented by the media.

The collection of the Van Abbemuseum already holds works of both artists. The museum has followed the work of Douglas Gordon for several years, it organised his first solo exhibition in the Netherlands and published a book (*Kidnapping*, 1998) with an overview of his work. In 2003, Gordon realised a project in the museum tower with several of his text works from the period of 1991 to 2003. Also in the collection of the museum is *No Ghost Just a Shell*, an exhibition of 28 different works by 18 artists based on the virtual character AnnLee, initiated by Philippe Parreno and Pierre Huyghe.

#### Plug In – Re-imagining the collection

Plug In #48 *Zidane, A 21st Century Portrait* is part of an exhibition project in which the museum's collection of modern and contemporary is exhibited in an experimental way of constantly changing presentations. In collaboration with guest curators from the Netherlands and abroad, the museum has until now produced 48 different presentations in over 15 rooms, including the video installation of *Zidane, A 21st Century Portrait*. Each room contains an independent show, with its own theme and exhibition duration, and gives specific insights in the unique collection the museum has accumulated since its foundation in 1936. This results in an ongoing succession of distinct narratives which disclose surprising connections and contrasts.

#### Subsidizers

Plug In has been realised in part by a contribution by the Mondriaan Foundation.



Van Abbemuseum  
Bilderdijklaan 10  
Eindhoven, the Netherlands

**Opening hours**  
Tuesday to Sunday, 11.00 - 17.00 (closed on 24/02/2009)  
Thursday, 11.00 - 21.00

**Admission**  
adults: € 8,50 / groups of 15 or more, 65+: € 6 / students / CJP pass: € 4  
Thursday evening from 17.00 - 21.00: free admission (until 31/10/2009)

See [www.vanabbemuseum.nl](http://www.vanabbemuseum.nl) for further information.

#### To editors

For further information and images see:  
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