The exhibition emphasizes the living dimension of the artist’s propositions, which envision the space as a world evolving according to its own rhythms. Rather than displaying a selection of objects, the exhibition explores the “porosities and intensities” that arise between elements. With time, certain rhythms may begin to emerge; moments of quiet contemplation are punctuated by sparks of acceleration, raising the possibility of an event.

Huyghe has sought to extend the time and space of an exhibition so that it may continue indefinitely or exist in multiple sites at once. Some of the cycles reflected here have been in progress since long before the opening of this retrospective. Many of the gallery walls have been taken from the show’s previous venues—the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris and the Museum Ludwig in Cologne—thus embedding the exhibition’s own history within its current presentation in Los Angeles.

ARTIST’S NOTES ON THE WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

7. L’actualisation des Temps Libérés The Association of Fireworks was founded in 1995 in the occasion of a group exhibition and formalizes the status of this temporary social ritual, extending the exhibition beyond its determined frame of time and place.

8. La Taison d’or The Golden Fleece—a medieval order whose armorial bearings depict animal heads—is the coat of arms of the city of Dijon, France. It is also the name of a shopping mall and a nose-armed cultural centre in Dijon whose character is determined by its surrounds without a story. The event occurs in a park. A group of teenagers wear animal heads over their clothes. They wander around a playground without a script, having taken on the appearance of the symbols of history.

12. The Host and the Cloud is a vacant ethnographic museum, an exhibition about the course of one year: A group of people is put under influences and exposed to live situations. Nothing is staged. They can repeat, imitate, or transform the unplanned situations that appear in front of them. The experiment grows as an auto-generative system. The Host and the Cloud is a ritual of separation, an exorcism of the modes of exhibition. The live events are filmed.

14. Two Minutes out of Time One Million Kingdoms As a collaborative project starting in 1999, Huyghe and artist Philippe Parreno purchased the rights to a Japanese manga character, Animie. Without inventing a fictitious narrative, a number of artists brought the figure to life. In 2002 Huyghe and Parreno relinquished Animie’s rights to her characters, who then commemorated her disappearance with the signing of a contract and a fireworks show.

16–17. This is not a Time for Dreaming A puppet opera drawn a parallel between two situations: Modernist architect Le Corbusier’s difficulties with the Harvard University administration during the design of the Visual Arts Department, and Huyghe’s difficulties when commissioned to make a work in response to Le Corbusier’s building. An allegory on the conditions of production.

22. Extended Holidays On the day students return to school, they are invited to go back on vacation. The situation, a three-day trip, is a visit to the location where the artist spends his holidays, the time and site making up the archaeology of the place.

25. Nymphéas Transplant (14–16) The biotope—water, animals, and plants (including water-fowl)—is extracted from Claude Monet’s pond at Giverney, France, a man-made environment bioengineered by Monet in 1893, and the subject matter of his Impressionist Nymphéas paintings. The light is programmed to render, over one day, the light conditions at Giverny between 1914 and 1916, when Monet was painting the Nymphéas. The glass blinks from clear to opaque, allowing the viewer to see either the “painted” surface or the world under it.

24. Auto Light The ceiling lights of the earliest “white cube” exhibition space—the Secession in Vienna—are programmed into a game. The exchange between the human and machines lights the exhibition space. The program randomly transforms the game into a cellular automata, a Turing machine.

25. Untitled (Human Mask) Wearing the mask of a young woman, a monkey is trained to work as a waitress in a real-life bar in Futakotamagawa, Japan. Waiting alone amid the dystopian setting, she is trapped within her role, forced to enact the human condition.

26. La Saison des Hôtes Plants are positioned in the circle following their date of appearance in the calendar, for example: roses for Valentine’s Day (in February) or pumpkin for Halloween (in October). It is a garden of celebrations, marked by the friction that exists between biological and historical time.

27. Streamside Day A custom is created to celebrate the birth of a village near a forest in the Hudson Valley. The new inhabitants take part in a parade within the development that is under construction. By means of this celebration, the artist introduces a new anniversary into the calendar, a return to this growing village.

31. A Way in Untitled During the Documenta 13 exhibition, Huyghe created Untitled (2012), a secluded site in a former compact of the city’s main park. Inanimate elements, artifacts (including remnants of works by artists like Joseph Beuys and Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster) and living organisms, plants, animals, and bacteria are present, indifferent to the progression of time. As elements evolve, grow, or coalesce, Untitled transforms itself.

32. Crystal Cave Upon discovery of the Naica crystal cave, a dream, a mathematician, a mineralogist, and an animal tamer go underground. These first witnesses of the cave produce artifacts.

35. Forest of Lines The concert hall of the Sydney Opera House is transformed into a dark fog-filled forest for twenty-four hours. Eliminating any division between stage and audience, people navigate a maze of trees with headlamps. A singer wanders the pathways; the lyrics, inspired by Aboriginal songlines, describe an uncertain route out of the opera house and into a jungle north of Australia.


47. L’expédition scientifique, Acte 4 (weather forecast) Climatic variations noted in the logbooks by the main character in Edgar Allan Poe’s novel The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket (1833).