

REVIEWS

PAUL MCCARTHY

WHITNEY MUSEUM - NEW YORK



PAUL MCCARTHY, *Couple*, 1966. 16mm film, 15 mins. Courtesy Hauser and Wirth, Zurich/London.

It seems there are no limits to the artistic polyglot Paul McCarthy. And the boundaries referred to have less do with his encompassing *métier* of sculpture, installation, drawing, photography, video, performance and a mixture of these; or to the refined yet occasional scatological aesthetic that exposes pathology festering behind the veneer of societal conventions. Rather, what this exquisitely curated exhibition revealed is

that McCarthy's often *horror vacui* practice is just as effective when he works with less.

Titled "Paul McCarthy: Central Symmetrical Rotation Movement Three Installations, Two Films," the exhibition consisted of 22 works. Ostensibly, the works were about spatial disjunction underscored in the mesmerizing *Spinning Room* (2008), the vertiginous *Mad House* (2008) and the unnerving *Bang Bang Room* (1992). The former consisted of a spinning interior with cameras in its center that fed live images of the viewer and the enclosure. Sometimes these images were the right way up and other times upside down, creating a palimpsest of architecture, landscape, figuration and portraiture that morphed into a real-time analogue of a spin painting. *Mad House* had an affinity with the aforementioned piece, but presented a structure reminiscent of mountaintop architecture, such as a ski lodge, which spun with dizzying intensity. *Bang Bang Room* was also an interior environment; this architectural sculpture/installation involved moving walls that concomitantly evoked claustrophobia and agoraphobia,

which in turn was punctuated by doors that periodically slammed with alarming amplification. It would be too simplistic to construe the exhibition as a pared down admixture of quintessential Paul McCarthy; instead, the works on view depict a protean artist whose deft brilliance is nothing short of astonishing.

Raul Zamudio

Couple, 1966. 16mm film, 15 mins. Courtesy Hauser and Wirth, Zurich/London.

