

GLADSTONE

Philippe Parreno explores light in *Noor* at Gladstone

Opening in May in New York, the exhibition features a new animation alongside recent works

Gladstone presents *Noor*, an exhibition by Philippe Parreno that pivots to light, a long-standing medium in his practice, as the constitutive element. Parreno's exhibitions are studies in sentience, with individual objects and videos seemingly aware of their own existence. These elements act as separate entities and are in dialogue with one another, as well as with the environment they inhabit. In this, Parreno's shows have been compared to living organisms—mutable, interdependent, and generative. And, like life itself, his presentations are durational, performing according to syncopated rhythms that are often algorithmically determined so that one object responds to another in ever-changing sequences.

In his most recent exhibitions at the Haus der Kunst, Munich, and Leeum Museum of Art, Seoul (2024-25), Parreno used voice—the aural phenomenon of vocal communication—as the connective tissue uniting all elements and activating the dramaturgy among them. Illuminated light is the structural leitmotif of the show, integrating the distinct objects in the presentation and creating its very ambience. Parreno has worked with light as a material for years; it is a potent genetic strand in the DNA of his work. The signature, illuminated marquees—ghostly theatrical signposts—are now synonymous with his practice, as are the videos and animations constructed from light-emitting pixels. And the specially crafted light fixtures manifest across a range of designs, from hanging to floor based, from mobile to stationary, are increasingly present in his exhibitions, functioning as glowing protagonists in the *mise-en-scène* that is his art.

Noor, the title of the exhibition, is an Arabic and Persian word for light and is used here by Parreno to invoke the philosophy of the ancient Persian mystic Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ Yahyā ibn Ḥabash ibn Amīrak al-Suhrawardī (1154-91), who formulated an emanationist cosmology, in which the universe flows from a Supreme Light of Lights. All of creation is thus manifest as light, which gradates according to its place within the strata of cosmic architecture. The nearer it gets to what we term “reality,” light plateaus, becoming a horizontal phenomenon through which thought is formed, a realm in which matter and spirit intersect.

The exhibition will premiere a new animation titled *In the Moontime* (2026), which comprises still and animated drawings used as storyboard elements for his recently completed feature film *River run* (2026). The drawings are set in motion by a cellular automaton, a computer program called “The Game of Life,” formulated by mathematician John Horton Conway in 1970. Premised on the notion that evolution is determined by its initial state, the game allows for endless permutations with no additional input. It is structured by an unlimited grid of “cells” with two potential states: alive or dead. The cells alter their states over time depending on the condition of their neighboring cells. As Parreno has described:

Organized into seven narrative families — insects, water, figures, light, architecture, matter, cosmos — the images are distributed across a page divided into panels, like a comic strip that never repeats itself. At each generation of Conway's “Game of Life,” panels light up or go dark, and every time a cell comes back to life, it draws a new image from its family.

The result is a narrative without beginning or end. No story is told — stories emerge, persist for a few generations, dissolve. Proximity produces meaning by chance. An insect next to a moon. A body of water next to a staircase. Some of the drawings are themselves animated, so that even within a single panel, something is always moving without a fixed origin or terminus, where meaning accumulates through recurrence rather than sequence. Here too, time is lunar rather

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than linear: cyclical, tidal, indifferent to narrative direction. The work extends an earlier piece in which fireflies were the cells. Here the cell is no longer a point of light but an image — a moment, a texture, a living thing. The rule that governs survival remains the same. What changes is what survives.

Noor, with its intermeshed beams of light, cast shadows, and glowing output, is conceived by the artist as a tribute to Barbara Gladstone.

About Philippe Parreno

A key artist of his generation, Philippe Parreno has radically redefined the exhibition experience by taking it as a medium and placing its construction at the heart of his process. Working in a diverse range of media including film, sculpture, drawing, and text, Parreno conceives his exhibitions as a scripted space where a series of events unfold. He seeks to transform the exhibition visit into a singular experience that plays with spatial and temporal boundaries and the sensory experience of the visitor. For the artist, the exhibition is less a total work of art than a necessary interdependence that offers an ongoing series of open possibilities. Based in Paris, France, Philippe Parreno has exhibited and published internationally. He studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Grenoble from 1983 until 1988 and at the Institut des Hautes Etudes en arts plastiques at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris from 1988 until 1989.

Parreno has presented solo exhibitions at Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2024-2025); Leeum Museum of Art, Seoul, South Korea (2023); La Bourse de Commerce, Paris (2021); LUMA, Arles (2021); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2019); Watari-Um, Tokyo (2019); Gropius Bau, Berlin (2018); Jumex, Mexico City (2017); The Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2017); Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto (2017); ACMI, Melbourne (2016/17); HangarBicocca, Milan (2015/2016); Park Avenue Armory, New York (2015); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014/2013); CAC Malaga (2014); Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2013); Fondation Beyeler, Riehen/Basel (2012); Serpentine Gallery, London (2010-2011); Centre for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York (2009-10); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2009-10); Kunsthalle Zürich (2009) and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2009). Parreno's work is represented in numerous major museum collections, including Tate, London; MoMA, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Kanazawa Museum of the 21st Century, Japan; Musée d'Art Modern de la Ville de Paris, Paris; SFMOMA, San Francisco; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. His work was also presented at the Venice Biennale (1993, 1995, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2015, and 2017), Venice Biennale of Architecture (2014), Lyon Biennale (1997, 2003, and 2005), and Istanbul Biennial (2001).

Exhibition Details

Noor

May 13–June 26, 2026

530 West 21st Street

New York, NY 10011

About Gladstone Gallery

Gladstone is known for its commitment to artists whose prescient approaches and experimental practices have defined the contours of contemporary art. The gallery has

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long been an active partner in the cultivation of iconoclastic careers, fostering a roster of artists recognized for their ground-breaking contributions. Headquartered in New York and including outposts in both Brussels and Seoul, Gladstone's impact extends globally, enabling both the presentation of new bodies of work, and an amplification of the international reach of its artists. Alongside its work with contemporary artists, the gallery is steward to the legacies of pivotal historical artists and serves as an advocate for the enduring power of art. Gladstone is led by a team of partners who spearhead its long-term vision and program, building on the values of its founder Barbara Gladstone.

Press Contact

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