

Navid Nuur

02.16.11



Left: **Navid Nuur**, *Untitled*, 2001–2009, Performance view, The Hague, 2009. Right: **Navid Nuur**, *Where You End and I Begin*, 2011, ink on paper, 11 x 15" each.

Navid Nuur is an artist based in the Netherlands whose intricate process-based works question the permanence of the art object and connections between idea and form. Here, he discusses his solo exhibition "Post Parallelism," which is on view at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, Switzerland, until April 17.

MOST OF MY WORKS cannot be classified as installation, photography, or sculpture. I grew tired of people trying to categorize them, so I decided to come up with a new, perhaps more creative name. I use the term "interimodule" because they are temporary modulelike works that feed off each other when they are together. For instance, the light emitted by one work might be absorbed by another.

The title of this exhibition, "Post Parallelism," picks up on a theme that I explored in a previous interimodule. In that work, I stood in front of a bookshop hanging my head and carrying a sandwich board that read AT THIS BOOKSHOP I HAVE BEEN STEALING CONCEPTS FOR MY OWN ART. I AM A THIEF NOT AN ARTIST. I wanted the sandwich board to evoke the ways in which artists borrow ideas from other artists and disciplines. They establish connections or parallels between these borrowings and create artworks from them. Today such parallelism has become a mindset: Artists mix different temporalities, making parallels without caring. They have so much information at their disposal that they are able to make connections between phenomena or concepts that might seem very far apart. As a result, we no longer have *just* parallels, as we did before, but post-parallels. In the exhibition at Sankt Gallen, for instance, a single concept or material is split into multiple components: The fluorescent light system on the ceiling is partly functional—it lets you see where you are going—but it also comprises a number of tubes that have been removed from their fixtures in order to form a composition of light-emitting bodies that is experienced as an artwork. In this case, post-parallelism refers to the oblique, tangential relationship between objects or works that originate from the same material or concept.

Light is only one of the materials I use in the show. Another is vitamin D, which is produced when your skin comes into contact with ultraviolet light from the sun. There is a white monochrome painting made from crushed vitamin D used as a pigment. The pigment makes the invisible visible and connects the exhibition space to the world outside. The large window in the gallery looks onto the outside, while the neon on the ceiling gives light so you can see the vitamin D painting inside. Here, too, there are what I call "counter-works," or elements emanating from the same concept.

Many of my pieces begin with an object or idea that intrigues or irritates me. *Where You End and I Begin*, for example, is a piece about the last full stop in the exhibition handout, the punctuation mark that follows the words "when you end and I begin." In the work, the period has been enlarged and displayed alongside the handout, which was not written by me but is about my art. The dot, an object derived from information about my work, holds the key to my artistic practice, while the text explaining my practice has been turned back into art.

Looking is not enough for me; I also like to taste, touch, and smell. Vitamin D can be taken through the mouth, so you could imagine licking the vitamin painting. There is also the work *Forest with No View*, a pine crate that diffuses pine oil so that you can smell the tree when you walk through the crate. Whereas some artists draw on archival references to navigate our increasingly multidimensional world, I work from the body out.

— As told to Rahma Khazam