PERROTIN

PRESSBOOK

Paul PFEIFFER

ARTFORUM-CRITIC'S PICKS

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Hong Kong

Paul Pfeiffer

GALERIE PERROTIN | HONG KONG
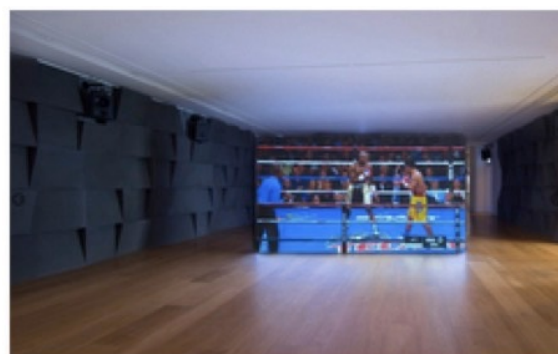**50 Connaught Road, 17th Floor**
November 12–January 9

The main event of Paul Pfeiffer's latest solo exhibition is a large-scale projection of the much-hyped boxing match between Floyd Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, which aired live last May. Billed as "the fight of the century," the contest suffered from endless delays, finally materializing only to disappoint. Pfeiffer's manipulation of the footage for *Three Figures In A Room*, 2015, underscores this pathos, reducing the sound track to the most elemental rumblings of shuffling footwork, grunting, and heavy breathing produced by the dueling bodies.

View of "Paul Pfeiffer: Three Figures in a Room," 2015–16. From left: *Three Figures in a Room*, 2015.

The kicker is that these are not the original sounds, but ones orchestrated by experienced Foley artists, who have used an array of props to sonically restage the fight in a studio. Amplified into surround sound, the effect is both abstract and hyperconcrete, an experience visually enhanced by the fighters as they flutter in and out of the ring, digitally dissolved into a flurry of movement or erased altogether, only to pop back a few seconds later in a loop of perpetual anticipation. Their encounter is both eroticized and stripped of illusions, and what emerges are leaden questions of racialized bodies, social performance, and institutionalized violence—concerns that are mostly marginalized or absent in most recent conversations around technology, networks, and connectivity.

In an adjacent gallery, the second video component of the piece captures the Foley artists at work in a studio in Thailand. They might be the ghostly third players here. Marked by its specificity, their labor is no less demanding, but decidedly less spectacular—a fact Pfeiffer subtly introduces into the fray with finesse and quiet intensity.

— *Franklin Melendez*