

Art Rock

The aural trumps the visual at the Pompidou



April 5, 2007—The line between clever and precious can be a fine one, and a new exhibit at Paris's Centre Pompidou walks it carefully. *Aérolite*, about "weightlessness" and staged by Gallic sculptor Xavier Veilhan, is a 55-minute performance piece featuring several video installations, a cast of stagehands, and a 70-pound meteorite (above) swinging, pendulum-style across the stage. Nothing against the above spectacles, but the real draw is probably the soundtrack, which will be performed live by Nicolas Godin and Jean-Benoît Dunckel of Air. Turns out the electronica duo are friends of the artist's—Veilhan's plastic sculptures of the pair (in front of the meteorite) adorn their latest album, *Pocket Symphony*, and they've returned the favor by penning an original score for *Aérolite*. Veilhan describes it as an aural parallel to his visuals: "The idea behind *Aérolite* is to suspend time, as time is suspended when you listen to music. Specifically with the work of Air—their songs work strangely like isolated moments." The collaboration has even inspired Veilhan to ponder a career change. "I am amazed by music, by how visceral and immediate it is. If I had to choose between sound and visuals, there is no question: I would choose sound." As yet, there are no plans to tour *Aérolite* or release the music, but you can catch the performance live at 2:30 p.m. ET Saturday at www.centrepompidou.fr. Or wait a few hours until it appears on Le YouTube.

Aérolite, tonight through Saturday at the Centre Pompidou, 19 rue Beaubourg, Paris, 011-33-1-4478-1233, www.centrepompidou.fr.

— Jonathan Durbin

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