

DOMINIQUE PETITGAND

GB AGENCY - PARIS

Dominique Petitgand is one of the most prominent French artists working with sound. Recurring concerns include silence and noise, the voice and its emotional qualities and, most notably, the ways in which sound can color, set off and divide up a space. The thread running through his latest solo show at gb agency turns out to be the multifaceted relationship between space and sound: overlaying, interweaving or opposing different types of sounds, the four invisible works he presents successively stake out and reconfigure different areas in the exhibition. The sequence opens with *À la merci* (At the mercy) (1988-2011), in which a self-assured adult voice corrects, word by word, a child's faltering attempts to enunciate a convoluted sentence. The tense, tightly paced dialogue serves to underscore and enhance the claustrophobic feel of the cramped recess in which it is diffused.

Yet although Petitgand's emphasis is on sound, these pieces nonetheless have affinities with visual artworks: they employ similar techniques — mixing or contrasting sounds as a painter might do with colors —

while conjuring up mental images through the careful placement of sound in space. The loudspeakers in *Je m'en vais* (I'm leaving) (2009) take on an anthropomorphic quality as they act out conflicting roles: a solitary speaker plays back the voice of a girl who wants to escape from a party, while four grouped speakers emit fragments of music and laughter. The work explores the push and pull between assimilation and self-exclusion by alternating between the two fields of sound and the vivid imagery they engender. No less vivid are the intersections that bind the works together into a tightly knit whole: when one piece ends and the next begins, you can almost see the sound fall away and rise up again in another part of the space. Petitgand's carefully choreographed exhibition is also a work of art in itself.

Rahma Khazam

DOMINIQUE PETITGAND, *À la merci* (At the mercy), 1988-2011. Extrait transcription. Courtesy gb agency, Paris.

à la	at the
à la	at the
merci	mercy
merci	mercy
de ce	of this
de ce	of this
désé	insta
désé	insta
quillbre	bility
quillbre	bility
agencé	borne
agencé	borne
de cette	from this
de cette	from this
absence	absence
absence	absence
de di	of di
de di	of di
rection	rection
rection	rection
expli	that's expli
expli	that's expli
cite	cit
cite	cit
cite	cit
cite	cit
explicite	that's explici
explicite	that's explici