

Nanopublication – A designed game whose named player cannot dialogue back

by Arnaud Quercy

The line is where 'receiver' stops meaning any engaging organism and starts requiring an interpreter who can be asked why: the framework's game-design vocabulary (P28, P30) fits Raza's method for rats cleanly, but its creation-and-ricochet machinery (P16, P18a) only finds a home once the audience shifts to the humans reading documentation.

WHAT THE SOURCE SAYS [1]

Artist Asad Raza places small sculptures, informed by an animal behaviorist, in rat habitats across the Lower East Side – objects textured and scented for rats' dominant senses (smell, touch), designed to be neither purely functional lures nor architecture, but 'slightly enigmatic' even for rats. He films their nighttime responses; the gallery show consists of documentation. Raza explicitly frames the project through Kant's 'purposiveness without purpose,' aiming for something that feels intended for the rats without having a legible use, and says of their curiosity toward the objects: 'in a weird way, this is the show.'

WHERE THE LENS GRIPS

P28 (Game Principle) and P30 (Pre-Conception, Not Pre-Determination) grip cleanly at the level of design logic: Raza builds the 'board' (sculptures placed in rat terrain per behaviorist advice), releases control, and reads success as engagement – the team's 'high-fiving in the van' when rats show curiosity mirrors 'the game succeeds if they create.' The deliberate refusal to make the pieces mere lures ('I don't want it to just be pieces that rats love, like a water slide') and the insistence on enigma matches P30's 'constraints, structure, gaps, resistance points' without predetermined outcome.

WHERE IT BREAKS

P16/P17's 'creation' and P18a's ricochet require a receiver capable of interpretive activity and dialogue – asking why, holding tension between one's own diffraction and a revealed codex. Rats investigate by smell and touch; nothing in the source suggests they 'create' from the object in the ideamorphist

sense, and no ricochet is or could be requested from them. The interpretive, dialogic reception the framework needs happens one step removed, in the humans who later view documentation and hear Raza explain his Kantian intent – not in the animals the piece is nominally addressed to. This slips IF one reads the rats as the intended 'players' per Raza's own words ('this is the show'), since P28 names the receiver, not a human proxy, as the site of completion; it holds, and the break stands, if one reads the rats instead as material/co-emitters (like Raza's trees or river water) with the actual ideamorphist reception displaced onto the gallery audience.

PROPOSITIONAL GRID [2]

Read this grid. "Not evaluated" does **not** mean the source has nothing to say about that proposition. It means **the reading did not instruct it**. That is not a result, and it counts in no denominator. A silence, by contrast, is a finding: the reading touched the proposition without concluding, or noted its absence itself.

Evaluated

proposition		audit status	relational verdict
P16	Alterity of Reception	not audited	pressure-against
P18a	The Ricochet Effect	not audited	pressure-against
P28	The Game Principle	not audited	evidence-for
P30	Pre-Conception, Not Pre-Determination	not audited	evidence-for

Remarkable silences

1 called for by what the reading found, and absent from the source.

P17 – Multiplication of Creation

The reading establishes that rats lack the interpretive, dialogic capacity needed for 'creation' in the P16 sense, but P17's claim that N receptions yield N distinct creations depends on exactly that same capacity, and the reading never states whether rat-receptions count as creations at all – it stops at naming P17 alongside P16 without following through to a verdict.

Not evaluated (32) – P1, P2, P3, P3a, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14, P14a, P14b, P15, P16a, P18, P19, P19a, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P29, P31

Overall verdict: Bounded – taxonomy of the August 2026 pass, predating the move to relational verdicts. Kept as metadata: the gap between the two forms is data, not residue. This reading's judgement is in the grid above.

Reading of 2026-08-21 · model claude-sonnet-5
· source 16,403 chars · 1 attempt(s)

REFERENCES

- [1] How Asad Raza Makes a Show: By Creating Public Art for New York Rats. ARTnews.com, 2026-08-21. <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/asad-raza-public-art-new-york-rats-times-1234795076/>
- [2] Quercy, A. (2026). The 31 Propositions of Ideamorphism. <https://ideamorphism.org/en/publications/2026/03/the-31-propositions-of-ideamorphism.html>

EPISTEMIC PROFILE

Claim type	boundary reading
Voice	third person analysis
Epistemic status	bounded grip
Methodology	Boundary-finding lens applied to one source, model claude-sonnet-5, 1 attempt(s), traceability check passed.

CHECKSUM (SHA-256)

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