THE MENIL COLLECTION   JULY 27–OCTOBER 21, 2012

THE SOULS OF SILENCE: THREE EVENINGS OF FILM

Steve Jobs, video clip at the opening of the California, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, presents three panels of experimental film and video works dating back to 1916. In front of Hal’s it remarks the surrealism in silent experimental films. The video clip “Soul of Silence” introduces the idea of sound as a surrealistic object and subject of inquiry.

Rice University Media Center
University Boulevard at Stockton Street, Evanston I I

A Kind of Hush [36 minutes]
Monday, September 10, 2012, 7:00 p.m.
Opening reception, 6:00 p.m.

Public Programs
October 26–27, 2012

Two evenings of avant-garde film directed by John Cage, whose 1952 composition 4’33” was originally created to examine the role of the silences in avant-garde works and to investigate the aesthetics of silence in avant-garde practice. The screening is curated by Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Toby Kamps and co-organized by the Menil Collection, Houston, and the University of California, Berkeley, Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.


Silence is curated by Modern and Contemporary Art Toby Kamps and co-organized by the Menil Collection, Houston, and the University of California, Berkeley, Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.

SILENCE

July 27–October 21, 2012

What is silence? Why does it have such a gap on the onPress? Why do we automatically connect it to the unconscious? Why is it such an enigmatic and prototypically modern experience? This exhibition brings together works from 1916 to the present to ask—perhaps more than to answer—such questions. The art on view and the scheduled film programs investigate silence as both subject and substance, reflecting the many ways artists have used its shape-shifting and consciousness. Divided, possibly even nonexistent in the real world, silence provides a means to push into new and uncharted territory and access imagery and energy previously functionless to give form to the inexpressible. The quiet gap at the heart of silence is John Cage’s famous 1960 composition 4’33”, represented here by two versions of the score. Composing these movements that total thirty minutes and forty-three seconds, the piece involves no musician-generated sound. Instead, the ambient noises of the performance space form the work, reaffirming Cage’s famous statement that “there is no such thing as silence.” 4’33” was partially inspired by Robert Bernhardt’s 1955 White Paintings, a series of white monochrome canvases that Cage described as “eco-phonic poisons.” Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Cage developed an interest in the potential of silences and related environments to create sonic art and form a threshold between the noise of Houston’s leaf blowers and traffic and the hush of the galleries. The artist most influenced by Cage’s interest in silence, however, is Steve Roden, who uses related approaches to generate much of his work, often translating one system of notation into another. For example, in his piece Parking Lot (5/27/70), Roden used the length of the words in Cage’s dedication on the proportional notation version of the score to determine the length of his breaths. Also featured in the exhibition is Roden’s written record of his daily for one year. The vacant cityscapes of Giorgio de Chirico, such as Melancholia, inspire the work of these artists by incorporating speaker grill fabric, acoustic paneling, and other charged material, the work conjures what the artist called “the void,” a realm of pure possibility free from the limitations of materiality and personality. More recently, Jennie C. Jones has built upon the work of these artists by incorporating speaker grill fabric, acoustic paneling, and other materials associated with music recording and playback in her spare abstract paintings. After all, she says, “it’s relevant to transport avant-garde music, in one or more of its visual art forms.”

CAGE'S INTEREST IN CHANCE, HOWEVER, IS STEVE RODEN, WHO USES RELATED APPROACHES TO GENERATE MUCH OF HIS WORK, OFTEN TRANSLATING ONE SYSTEM OF NOTATION INTO ANOTHER. FOR EXAMPLE, IN HIS PIECE PARKING LOT (5/27/70), RODEN USED THE LENGTH OF THE WORDS IN CAGE’S DEDICATION ON THE PROPORTIONAL NOTATION VERSION OF THE SCORE TO DETERMINE THE LENGTH OF HIS BREATHS. ALSO FEATURED IN THE EXHIBITION IS RODEN’S WRITTEN RECORD OF HIS EXPERIENCE OF PERFORMING 4’33” DAILY FOR ONE YEAR.

THE DADA AND SURREALIST MOVEMENTS TOO WERE CONCERNED WITH PENETRATING THE TRIVIAL TO EXPOSE ESSENTIAL REALITIES IN THE WORLD.
isolation and hears the silence of the world.” Magritte’s “The Silence of Marcel Duchamp (The Listening Room),” 1952, employs images of the artist’s mouth, his facial expression, and his head, named for the Greek word for “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemorations in performance art and literature she has inherited, Pica depicts her ongoing quest as a work in progress. Théophile Gautier, “eternity,” was made on location in abandoned buildings in Chernobyl, 2011, a jukebox filled with ninety-nine CD recordings of commemora-