

PRESS RELEASE

EXHIBITION

THE INVISIBLE SHOW

October 20th, 2006 – January 21st, 2007 **EXHIBITION HALL ON THE GROUND FLOOR**



Above: Janet Cardiff. *The Forty Part Motet*
MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo, October 2006

WHEN

October 20th, 2006
– January 21st 2007

WHERE

At the exhibition galleries on the ground floor

OPENING TIMES

Tuesday to Saturday
(including holidays), from 11 am to 9 pm
Sunday from 11 am to 3 pm

CO-PRODUCED BY

MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo
Centro José Guerrero,
Granada

CURATOR

Delfim Sardo

ARTISTS: 20

- **Vito Acconci** (New York, USA, 1940; lives and works in New York)
- **Joseph Beuys** (Krefeld, Germany, 1921 – Düsseldorf, Germany, 1986)
- **Louise Bourgeois** (Paris, France, 1911; lives and works in New York, USA)
- **James Lee Byars** (Detroit, USA, 1932 - Cairo, Egypt, 1997)
- **Janet Cardiff** (Brussels, Canada, 1957; lives and works in Berlin, Germany)
- **Martin Creed** (Wakefield, UK, 1968; lives and works in London, UK)
- **Luísa Cunha** (Lisbon, Portugal, 1949; lives and works in Lisbon)
- **Ceal Floyer** (Karachi, Pakistan, 1968; lives and works between London, UK, and Berlin, Germany)
- **Rodney Graham** (Vancouver, Canada, 1949; lives and works in Vancouver)
- **Raoul Hausmann** (Vienna, Austria, 1886 – Limoges, France, 1971)
- **Juan Hidalgo** (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain, 1927; lives and works in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria)
- **Joan Jonas** (New York, USA, 1936; lives and works in New York)
- **On Kawara** (26.963 days; since his date of birth until the opening date)
- **Antoni Muntadas** (Barcelona, 1942; lives and works between New York and Barcelona)
- **Bruce Nauman** (Fort Wayne, USA, 1941; lives and works in Galisteo, USA)
- **Luigi Russolo** (Portogruaro, Italy, 1885 - Cerro di Lavenio, Italy, 1947)
- **Julião Sarmiento** (Lisbon, Portugal, 1948; lives and works in Estoril, Portugal)
- **Kurt Schwitters** (Hannover, Germany, 1887 – Kendal, UK, 1948)
- **Michael Snow** (Toronto, Canada, 1929; lives and works in Toronto)
- **Stephen Vitiello** (Richmond, USA, 1964; lives and works between Richmond and New York)

WORKS EXHIBITED

The exhibition includes a selection of works by 20 contemporary artists that invite us to think about the space from the sound; the sound as voice or vehicle that contributes corporeity, based on non-visible components. Only two of these artists –Stephen Vitiello, whose work is located outside the building, and Luísa Cunha, in the panoptic– usually and almost exclusively work with sound. For most of them the sound is just another means used to accomplish their artistic projects, forming part of the field of visual arts. The exhibition includes historical works such as those by Kurt Schwitters, Raoul Hausmann, Bruce Nauman, Joseph Beuys and Luigi Russolo, or *site specific* works such as Martin Creed's one in the lift that leads to MARCO's exhibition rooms, besides key works by Louise Bourgeois, Antoni Muntadas or Janet Cardiff, among others.

As a part of this exhibition, MARCO has edited 4 CDs of the work *One Million Years*, by Japanese artist On Kawara, presented for the first time in Spain, following the editions made by other museums always in collaboration with the artist. On Friday, October 20th, coinciding with the opening journey, the visitors may attend the live reading of the dates at Gallery 1, where the recorded piece will be exhibited from that day on.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Delfim Sardo (Aveiro, Portugal, 1962), professor at the university, has been developing since 1990 a work as independent curator and essayist of contemporary art. From 2003 through 2005 he was the manager of the Exhibition Centre of the Cultural Centre of Belém, in Lisbon. We was also founder and editor of magazine *Pangloss*, and consultant of Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian from 1997 through 2003. In 1999 he was the Curator of the Portuguese Representation at the 48th Biennial of Venetia. Delfim Sardo is now professor of Aesthetics at the School of Fine Arts of the Lisbon University, where he also teaches at the Master in Curatorship and Painting, and in postgraduate courses of the University Lusófona and the Catholic University of Porto. As regards to his publications, we must highlight *Luxury Bound* (Electa, Milan, 1999), *Jorge Molder* (Caminho, Lisbon, 2005), *Helena Almeida/Pés no Chão, Cabeça no Céu* (Bial, 2004) and *Pintura Redux* (Fundação de Serralves/Público, 2006), besides his usual collaborations for different publications on art and architecture in Portugal and abroad.

CATALOGUE

On the occasion of this exhibition, MARCO of Vigo and Centro José Guerrero of Granada have published a catalogue that includes a series of essays about the nature of sound in the artistic context. The texts by Douglas Kahn, José Iges, Olivier Razac, Guy Rosolato, Christophe Kihm and John Cage, carefully recovered thanks to the generosity of both authors and publishers, allow shaping a small history of the encounter between sound and its physical experience in the artistic environment. A text by the curator explaining the concept of the exhibition is also included. The catalogue includes one **CD with parts of the exhibited works**, many of them available to the public for the first time.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

'PAISAJE SONORO DE VIGO' [Sound Landscape of Vigo] Artists' workshop

Coordination: Chiu Longina

Speakers: Horacio González, Juan-Gil, Berio Molina, Julio Gómez and Chiu Longina

As a complementary activity, MARCO starts the workshop "PAISAJE SONORO DE VIGO" [SOUND LANDSCAPE OF VIGO], included in the tour of the project 'Escoitar.org' along several cities in Galicia with the aim to capture the so-called "sound strolls along Galician cities".

- Dates: November 9th through 15th 2006
 - Place: perimeter room B1 (1st stage)
 - Opening hours: Thursday 9, Friday 10, Monday 13, Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15, from 16.30 to 20.30 (theoretical sessions); Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 from 16.30 to 20.30 (field work)
- Prior [registration](#)

GUIDED TOURS

- Every day at 6 pm
- Guided tours "à la carte" for groups, only by appointment calling 986 113900/11 (extension 307 or 314)
- Guided tours for associations, on Thursday and Friday at 5 pm, only by appointment calling 986 113900/11 (ext. 307 or 314)
- Guided tours by the curator, only for "Friends of MARCO"

FOREWORD

THE INVISIBLE SHOW brings together a group of works that “turn the eye inwards”, proposing the viewer to imagine or conceive a space or a situation through the suggestion of a sound vibration. Sound penetrates our bodies in a way that we cannot prevent or escape. Sound, that is broadcast sound, has also penetrated every area of our culture. Since the 1920s, recorded sound has multiplied the possibility of hearing sounds after they are first produced, enabling them to be edited, assembled, spliced together and broadcast.

In this way, sound, has permeated all other forms of art and representation, as well as all the possible means of presenting, distributing and viewing images, above all moving images, together with other artistic forms and methodologies.

THE INVISIBLE SHOW begins by exploring historical references and then follows post-war developments that led up to the use of sound by contemporary artists. In programmatic terms, the exhibition is based on three key areas of reference in contemporary art: space, narrative and the transversal possibilities of the audio and visual fields.

Sound, which in this exhibition is almost exclusively the sound of the human voice, creates spaces and bodies and refashions them, that is, it turns them into other places, into other bodies, into utopias. It is a process of affection, the occupation of a space that is sometimes black, sometimes touching and poetic.

This museum, therefore, is not empty.

What fills it cannot be seen, but it is there.

SUMMARY OF THE EXHIBITION PROJECT

The fascination of the 20th century art towards the non-visual found a suitable ground for developing itself in the field of sound rather than in the tactile or olfactory fields. The fact that poetry requires voice and the existence of the theatre thanks to the dialogue may be factors that provoke a deviation of the visual –the field of action of the art, objectively speaking– towards the sound. The use of sound or human voice is usual in the 20th century art as a supporting strategy to conceptualize the space. The sound invites us to locate the body in the place where the actions of the public and the artist cross in a performing way.

THE INVISIBLE SHOW means an approach to this idea of space as a physical place, an area where the artists manipulate the sound as if this were a ductile material. The exhibition, co-produced by MARCO of Vigo and Centro José Guerrero of Granada, curated by Delfim Sardo, includes a selection of works by classical contemporary artists that invite us to think about the space from the sound; the sound as voice or vehicle that contributes corporeity, based on non-visible components.

Objects, sounds and people sharing the exhibition space defines, in the artistic experience, a space that we may call sculptural, created by the abstract confluence between sound, space and body. While linking the space dimension and the sensorial experience we obtain the clues to face this exhibition.

The relationship between the *visible* and the invisible, between the acoustic plasticity of a work and material vacuity, is at the core of the curator's discourse, which draws from a careful selection of key 20th century works. The evolution of sound in the field of art, determined to a large extent by the advances in electro-acoustics, runs through the broad period that embraces the art of noise of Luigi Russolo, Kurt Schwitters' marriage of music and the visual arts, the phonetic poetry of Raoul Hausmann, and the subsequent experiments of Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Louise Bourgeois, James Lee Byars, Janet Cardiff, Martin Creed, Luisa Cunha, Rodney Graham, Juan Hidalgo, Ceal Floyer, Joan Jonas, On Kawara, Antoni Muntadas, Bruce Nauman, Julião Sarmiento, Michael Snow and Stephen Vitiello.

Sound, as a medium, acts as a prolongation of space, acquiring an almost physical quality through its ability to evoke images in the listener, whose reception of them is part of the intangible experience that sound provides, by actually creating form and not only blending with it. Rather than addressing the entire scope of sound art, **THE INVISIBLE SHOW** sets out to analyse the evolution of the art *of* sound — as distinct from art *with* sound — and probe the nature of *an art that cannot be seen* but which is played out in the interface of space, sound, and viewer perception.

BY THE CURATOR

“1. The original idea for this exhibition arose out of a need to map the endeavour in the visual arts to address the need that some artists experience to abandon the visual component of their work, which is probably the heart of their work, in order to fill an emotional space, define a physical area or conceptualise the physical nature of the relationship between their work and the viewer by the means of what can be evoked by a sound (a voice, for example). We are not concerned here with the correspondence between image and sound or vice versa. This is not, as will be seen, an exhibition of “Sound Art”. In contemporary art, as well as in audio-visual culture, the ear is almost as inextricably linked to the eye as taste is to the sense of smell — if this analogy can be allowed.

The aim of this exhibition is to bring together a group of works that — using an old Socratic metaphor — turn the eye inwards through the suggestion of a vibration.

2. Sound penetrates our bodies in a way that we cannot prevent or escape (the ear is a hole in the head, strangely close to the brain), Sound, that is broadcast sound, has penetrated every area of our culture. Since the 1920s, recorded sound (first on rolls, then in ceramic form, moving to records, tapes and, finally, to digital sound) has multiplied the possibility of hearing sounds after they are first produced, enabling them to be edited, assembled, spliced together and broadcast.

In this way, sound, has permeated all other forms of art and representation, as well as all the possible means of presenting, distributing and viewing images, above all moving images, together with other artistic forms and methodologies (those that are commonly called “generic” art forms).

In this sense, the question of using sound in the context of contemporary art is inseparable from two other important issues: the possibility of reproduction (and associated questions relating to duplicates, copies and the original, etc.) as well as the question of genre migration (art as a “general” entity free from the cultural constraints of different artistic procedures).

3. The introduction of sound was firstly the latest signal of the move from the field of the visual to another, wider field, and, simultaneously (additionally, it seems), to a field that had no aesthetic rules by which it could be judged. At the beginning of the 20th century, as at the beginning of the 1960s, rejection of the idea of genre led to a rejection of the idea of the canon, which results, in turn, from a need to destroy or undermine the foundations underlying judgements of taste (in this sense, avant-garde artists are viscerally opposed to the possibility of aesthetics, because, on one hand, they are sceptical of the possibility of a model of humanity, and, on the other, because they do not believe in the possibility of upholding the canon as a basis for formulating judgements).

There remains, however, the affirmation of the voice as the first sign of the expressive possibilities of the body, either in a version born out of poetry (in its Greek form as words both spoken and heard) or in a modern form based on a Hertzian idea of the voice as an occupation of space, something that is simultaneously broadcast and intimate.

Thus, when the visual arts make use of the voice, as in Schwitters's *Ursonate* or in the intimacy of Vito Acconci, the voice is being used to instigate or to establish a body, which justifies the existence of the voice. It is also of importance that this voice is heard in its natural register, that is, its *performative* nature is not theatrical. On the contrary, the majority of works using sound created by visual artists do not relate to theatrical methods — that is, to any direct ambition to create scenic space for performance in contrast with a creative space in a common and shared temporality, but, on the contrary, the recorded and reproduced voice shares the same space with the viewer.

4. In the case of the works included in *The Invisible Show*, the exhibited works share this condition (that's why we keep on referring to them as "exhibited" works, not as "heard" works).

The Invisible Show begins by exploring historical references represented by the works of Kurt Schwitters, Raoul Hausmann and Luigi Russolo and then follows post-war developments that led up to the use of sound by contemporary artists such as Luísa Cunha, Antoni Muntadas, Julião Sarmiento, Stephen Vitiello, Ceal Floyer, Rodney Graham and Janet Cardiff. Other features of the exhibition include the narrative pieces by Acconci and Joan Jonas, the trace of memory in Louise Bourgeois, Bruce Nauman's imperativeness, James Lee Byars' enchantment, Martin Creed's irony and Joseph Beuys' performativity, alongside works by Juan Hidalgo, On Kawara and Michael Snow, forerunners in the field.

5. In programmatic terms, the exhibition is based on three key areas of reference in contemporary art: space, narrative and the transversal possibilities of the audio and visual fields.

In simple terms, we could say that the visual arts in the 20th century set the task of finding a way to return constantly to the idea of disturbance, displacement, movement or flight as seen in the works of many artists present in the exhibition who, by using the voice, they take us to other places or situations.

Sound, which in this exhibition is almost exclusively the sound of the human voice, creates spaces and refashions them, that is, it turns them into *other* places, into utopias. This spatial alteration created by sound also gives rise to an aesthetic category that is particularly relevant to the art of the previous century, which we can describe as 'architectonic strangeness'.

PRESS RELEASE



The space represented to us through the experience of sound is, in fact, particularly complex and, in the way that it is disturbing, is closely related to the idea of the inhospitable. We even speak of a negative space in the sense that its existence is totally conditional on an element, which — not being visual — fills the space it occupies up to the moment that the viewer realises that his body is being moulded by sound, both physically and emotionally.

It is a process of affection, the occupation of a space that is sometimes black, sometimes touching and poetic.”

Delfim Sardo
Curator of the exhibition

PRESS RELEASE

REQUEST FOR GRAPHIC MATERIAL

EXHIBITION

"THE INVISIBLE SHOW"

GRAPHIC MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS:

CD including texts and photographs of the exhibition in different formats.

IF YOU WISH YO RECEIVE DOCUMENTATION, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND SEND IT BY E-MAIL, FAX OR MAIL POST TO:

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Rúa Príncipe 54
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