

KÜNSTLERHAUS STUTT GART

Cornelius Cardew and the Freedom of Listening

exhibition and program of events

Künstlerhaus Stuttgart

Exhibition: September 19 - November 29, 2009

Opening: September 18, 2009, 7pm

Curated by Dean Inkster, Jean-Jacques Palix, Lore Gablier and Pierre Bal-Blanc

The exhibition is a co-production with CAC Brétigny, France (www.cacbretigny.com).

Künstlerhaus Stuttgart is pleased to present an exhibition and a program of events dedicated to the artistic career of the English composer Cornelius Cardew. Cardew is considered to be amongst the most important composers of the late 20th century, however in Germany his work is little known. In 1981, he tragically died at the age of 45. The project is co-organized with the CAC Brétigny, where it was initially presented in spring 2009. It includes rarely seen archive materials, photographs, scores, and recordings, as well as a series of concerts and performances, some of which are co-produced with the Staatsoper Stuttgart, to go beyond a museal approach and reflect the vibrancy of Cardew's work and his influence on contemporary artistic and musical practice.

The English composer Cornelius Cardew (1936-1981) is one of the significant composers to have emerged in the second half of the 20th century. He worked with Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage, and inspired a generation of British avant-garde composers and musicians such as Gavin Bryars, Brian Eno, Michael Nyman, and Frederic Rzewski. His radical approach to composition and his political reflection on the status of music making led him, in the late 1960s, to try to forge populist access to avant-garde culture. The Scratch Orchestra, which grew out of classes Cardew taught at Morley College (an adult education college in South London) in 1968, radically questioned the social limitations of art and music as realms of specialized knowledge and experience. Combining both trained musicians and non-musicians, the Scratch Orchestra not only transgressed the traditional boundaries and hierarchy separating the composer, performer, and listener, but also the boundaries dividing the realm of art into separate fields; visual and performance art were equally a part of the collective and creative experience that inspired the members of the Scratch Orchestra throughout its four-year existence. Recently, a renewed interest in Cardew's work as a composer and political figure has developed. An anthology of Cardew's writings (*Cornelius Cardew 1936-1981: A Reader*, Copula 2006) and an exhibition ("Lonely at the Top: Sound Effects #3", 2008) at the MukHA in Antwerp were followed by the publication of the biography *Cornelius Cardew (1936-1981): A Life Unfinished* (Copula 2008), written by pianist and ex-Scratch Orchestra member John Tilbury.

Künstlerhaus Stuttgart presents an exhibition with scores, documentary photographs, films, posters, and other visual material, that traces Cardew's career from the seminal graphic score "Treatise" (1965-67) to the history of the Scratch Orchestra and its dissolution in 1975, when Cardew renounced his work as an avant-garde composer and, until his death in 1981, devoted his energy to politics. The exhibition includes a film and a photo series by Scottish artist Luke Fowler. In conjunction with the

exhibition, Künstlerhaus Stuttgart presents a series of performances reflecting the span of Cardew's career, along with a number of compositions by former members of the Scratch Orchestra. Participating artists and musicians were invited to select and interpret Cardew's compositions. In a historical moment when there may be a tendency to sentimentalize "the good old days of experiment and action," as one recent review of Cardew's writings has suggested, the exhibition not only valorizes the intense work of a lesser-known yet internationally significant avant-garde composer, but instead attempts to locate the potential of musical experimentation within a current aesthetic practice.

The exhibition continues a series of exhibitions at Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, which focus on historical methodologies of participation and their relevance to the present. Previous exhibitions included "1,2,3...Avant-Gardes: Open Form" (2007) on the filmic games of the Polish architect Oskar Hansen, and "Social Diagrams: Planning Reconsidered" (2008) on the history of planning methodologies.

"Cornelius Cardew and the Freedom of Listening" is curated by Dean Inkster and Jean-Jacques Palix in collaboration with Lore Gablier and Pierre Bal-Blanc. The exhibition includes archival material from the collections of Horace Cardew, Keith Rowe, Victor Schonfeld, Stefan Szczelkun and Samon Takahashi as well as films by Hanne Boehnisch, Luke Fowler, Nicolas Tilly, and Lore Gablier. The performance program features events with Keith Rowe, Ekkehard Ehlers, Annie Vigier, Franck Apertet and others. The graphic design for the exhibition is created by Vier5 (www.vier5.de).

The exhibition is co-produced in collaboration with CAC Brétigny, France (www.cacbretigny.com).

cac bretigny

press:

Marlene Laube

ml@kuenstlerhaus.de

Tel: +49 (711) 617652