



PRESS RELEASE
For immediate release

TACITA DEAN exhibition at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
October 10, 2009 to January 3, 2010

Montréal, September 8, 2009. How to choreograph silence. That was the challenge issued by artist Tacita Dean to the great American choreographer Merce Cunningham, who revolutionized modern dance. From October 10, 2009 to January 3, 2010, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents the exhibition *Tacita Dean*.

In 2007, British artist Tacita Dean invited Cunningham to choreograph John Cage's composition *4'33"*. That piece—a 4-minute, 33-second silence “performed” in three movements—was highly influential in twentieth-century music and very emotional for the choreographer: Cage, who died in 1992, was his long-time collaborator and life partner. Cunningham, who was 88 at the time and in a wheelchair, accepted the challenge. On the afternoon of April 28, 2007, in the New York studios of the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Dean filmed a total of six takes. Seated on a chair, before a wall of rehearsal-room mirrors, Cunningham performed silence by remaining immobile, adjusting his pose slightly between each of the movements in response to a signal from Trevor Carlson, the company's director.

The show consists of an installation of six projections on screens arranged around the exhibition space, entitled *Merce Cunningham performs STILLNESS (in three movements) to John Cage's composition 4'33" with Trevor Carlson, New York City, 28 April 2007*. Each projection corresponds to one of the six performances presented by Cunningham and filmed by Dean. With *4'33"*, Cage set out to compose a piece made of unbroken silence. In *Stillness*, Cunningham transposes this silence into immobility and Dean uses a still camera, shooting each performance from a different angle. The screens' dimensions are calibrated so that the choreographer, whether seen in close-up or long shot, is life-size. Here, music, dance and film simultaneously share a common space-time with the visitor.

The artist

Born in 1965, in Canterbury, England, Tacita Dean explores various media, including drawing, photography and sound, but made her name internationally with her films documenting the passage of time. She has taken part in many solo and group exhibitions since 1992, at Dia:Beacon (2008), Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York (2007), Schaulager, Munchenstein/Basel, Switzerland (2006), National Gallery of Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norway (2006), Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (2003) and Tate Britain (2001), among others. Closer to us here, she participated in the 2000 Biennale de Montréal. She has won the Kurt Schwitters Prize (Germany, 2009) and the Hugo Boss Prize (United States, 2006), and was nominated for the Millennium Prize awarded by the National Gallery of Canada in 2001 and for the 1998 Turner Prize. Tacita Dean lives and works in Berlin.

The presentation at the Musée d'art contemporain is the artist's first solo exhibition in Canada.

Tribute to Cunningham 1919-2009

This work examining silence and the passage of time takes on added poignancy with the death of Merce Cunningham this past July.

Curator

The exhibition *Tacita Dean* was curated by Mark Lanctôt, curator at the Musée.

Point[s] of View Series

A guided tour of the exhibition will be offered by curator Mark Lanctôt on Wednesday, October 14, 2009, at 6:30 p.m. in French and at 7:30 p.m. in English.

The Musée d'art contemporain is a provincially owned corporation funded by the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec. It receives additional funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts.

-30-

Source and information

Danielle Legentil, MACM

Public Relations Coordinator

Tel.: 514.847.6232

E-mail: danielle.legentil@macm.org