

PRESS RELEASE
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Anri Sala at the Musée d'art contemporain
February 3 to April 25, 2011
Nahum and Sheila Gelber Gallery, and Liliane and David M. Stewart Gallery

Montréal, January 19, 2011. An exhibition that can be viewed like a single work of art: that is what visitors will experience at the MAC in this presentation of works by Anri Sala—the artist's first solo exhibition in Canada, and his largest in North America. The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents *Anri Sala* from February 3 to April 25, 2011.

A unique opportunity to discover the remarkable art of Anri Sala, the exhibition comprises a dozen recent major works, including videos, photographs, a sculpture and an installation created for the Musée.

Visitors move seamlessly through the show as if it were a single piece, for the artist considers the process of exhibiting his works as important as that of producing them. Sala reconfigures the space in an innovative way to establish new relationships between the pieces. The staggered screening of the films, the quality of the light, the way the images are projected and the sound of the ten snare drums (*Doldrums*, 2008) dispersed throughout the galleries create a magical atmosphere. Just as one film ends, another begins, requiring visitors to reorient themselves according to the rhythm of the projections and the beat of the drums.

The exhibition opens with a new configuration of *Purchase Not by Moonlight* (2008), consisting of *Doldrums* (2008), *Title Suspended (Sky Blue)* (2008), *After Three Minutes* (2007), *Time After Time* (2003) and *Answer Me* (2008), a brilliant work that was recently acquired by the Musée. Shot in a former surveillance tower in Berlin, inside a geodesic dome designed by Buckminster Fuller, *Answer Me* depicts the end of a relationship through a kind of dialogue of the deaf.

The MAC show reflects the growing importance Sala attaches to sound and to recasting its relationship with the image. Rather than using sound to produce a specific effect, as in the movies, he sets out to capture the effect of space on the production of sound. Several of his films have consequently been shot in places that generate very particular sonic experiences, such as the echo in *Answer Me*, while others record live performances that Sala himself has orchestrated. The exhibition concludes with *Long Sorrow* (2005)—featuring jazz musician Jemeel Moondoc improvising on the saxophone while hanging out of a window—alternating with *Le Clash* (2010), which reinterprets *Should I Stay or Should I Go* by the punk rock group The Clash, played here on a barrel organ and a music box. The remarkable installation *Score* (2011) then transposes the musical atmosphere of *Le Clash* into a musical score etched on the museum walls.

The show also includes *Inversion – Creating Space Where There Appears To Be None* (2010), a collaborative piece produced with Edi Rama, artist and mayor of Tirana, which recalls the moving yet unflinching look that Sala's early works took at the major upheavals in Eastern Europe.

Anri Sala

Anri Sala was born in 1974 in Tirana, Albania. He belongs to the last generation of artists that emerged under the country's communist regime, and the first to come into contact with the world of Western and international art. His first videos, from the late 1990s, refer to the ideology imposed on his country and the utopian role played by art in ushering in a new social vision. This period is represented here by *Intervista* (1998) and *Dammi i Colori* (2003), which will be screened in the video room.

After studying at the Albanian Academy of Arts in Tirana (1992–1996), Sala moved to France, where he was enrolled at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris (1996–1998) and the Le Fresnoy studio in Tourcoing (1998–2000). He has been active on the international scene for some fifteen years now. His work has been selected for numerous biennials, including those in Berlin (2001, 2006), Moscow (2007), São Paulo (2002, 2010), Sydney (2006) and Venice (1999, 2001, 2003), and he has had major solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Wien (2003), the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (2004), and the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami and the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati (2008–2009), among others. His works are in the collections of such prestigious institutions as the Art Institute of Chicago, the Pinakothek der Moderne (Munich), MoMA (New York), the Centre Pompidou (Paris) and MUSAC (León). Sala currently lives and works in Berlin, and is represented by the Marian Goodman Gallery in New York, Hauser & Wirth in Zurich and London, and Galerie Chantal Crousel in Paris.

Catalogue

A 128-page catalogue in French, along with texts in English, accompanies the show. It includes an essay by Marie Fraser, Chief Curator at the Musée and curator of the exhibition *Anri Sala*, a series of conversations between Edi Rama and Michael Fried, Philippe Parreno, Marcus Steinweg and Erion Veliaj, an introduction by Anri Sala to the project *Inversion – Creating Space Where There Appears To Be None*, a list of works, a selective biobibliography and numerous colour reproductions of the works. The publication will be available for purchase at \$39.95 at the museum's Boutique or from your local bookseller as of mid-February.

Organization

The exhibition *Anri Sala* was organized by Marie Fraser, Chief Curator at the Musée d'art contemporain. It is the first show presented in this capacity by Marie Fraser, who has previously guest-curated many exhibitions.

Meet the artist

A meeting with the Anri Sala will take place (in French) on Thursday, February 3, at 5 p.m. in the exhibition galleries.