

# LEONARD COHEN



## A CRACK IN EVERYTHING

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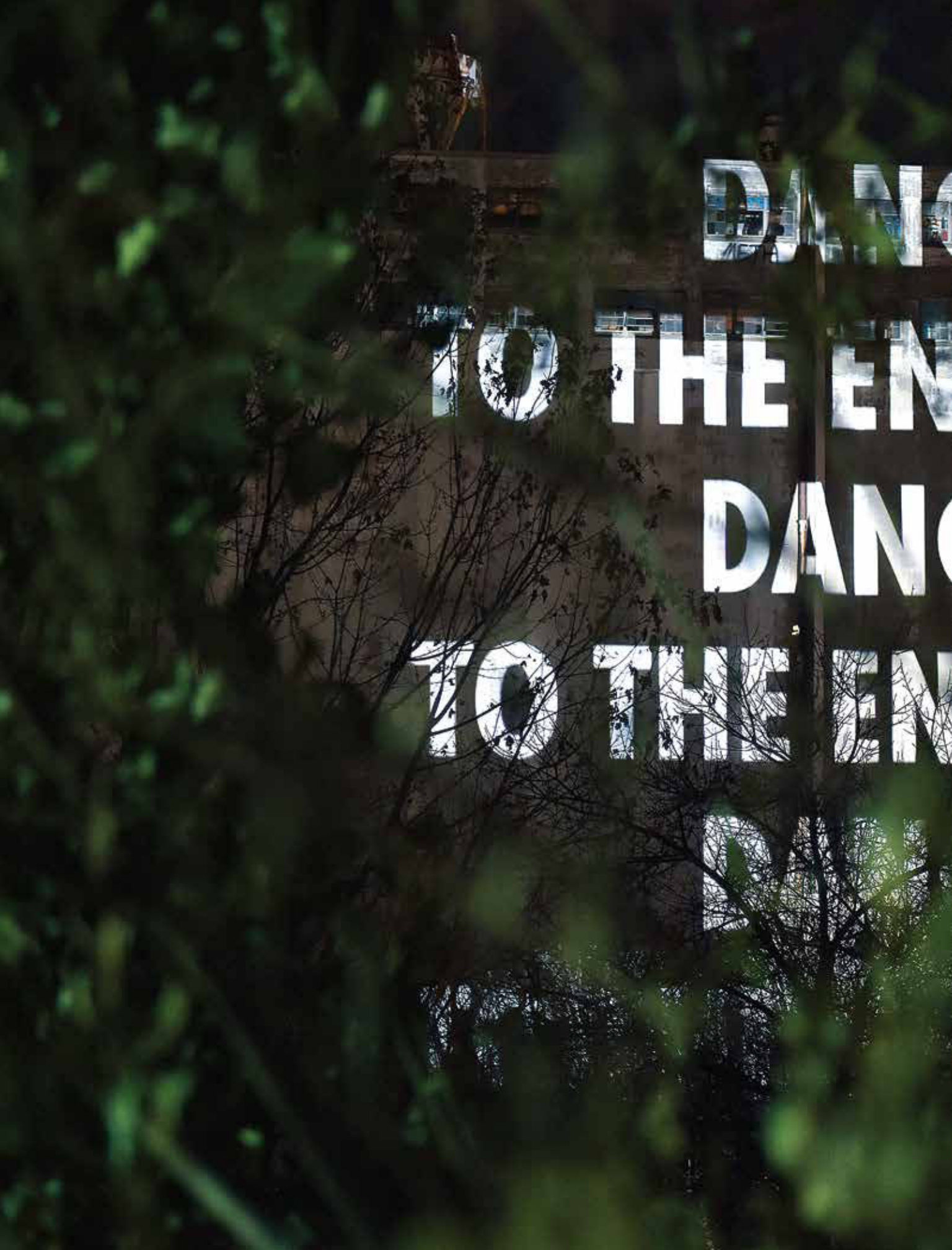














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**Leonard Cohen: A Crack in Everything**

An exhibition organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
and presented from November 9, 2017 to April 9, 2018.

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Courtesy Leonard Cohen Family Trust

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*Leonard Cohen*

Photo: Barry Marsden

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A CRACK IN EVERYTHING

John Zeppetelli and Victor Shiffman

With the collaboration of  
Sylvie Simmons and Chantal Ringuet

November 9, 2017 to April 9, 2018  
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

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13 **A Crack in Everything**  
John Zeppetelli and Victor Shiffman

---

19 **The Comeback**  
Sylvie Simmons

20 **Leonard Cohen: Ten Moments**  
Chantal Ringuet

---

|     |                                                  |     |                                                                                       |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 34  | <b>Ari Folman</b>                                | 128 | <b>Feist</b>                                                                          |
| 40  | <b>George Fok</b>                                | 129 | <b>Half Moon Run</b>                                                                  |
| 47  | <b>Kota Ezawa</b>                                | 130 | <b>Aurora</b>                                                                         |
| 50  | <b>Michael Rakowitz</b>                          | 131 | <b>Douglas Dare</b>                                                                   |
| 54  | <b>Taryn Simon</b>                               | 132 | <b>Mélanie De Biasio</b>                                                              |
| 58  | <b>Thomas Demand</b>                             | 133 | <b>Brad Barr</b>                                                                      |
| 60  | <b>Christophe Chassol</b>                        | 134 | <b>Leif Vollebekk</b>                                                                 |
| 66  | <b>Janet Cardiff<br/>and George Bures Miller</b> | 135 | <b>Dear Criminals</b>                                                                 |
| 70  | <b>Kara Blake</b>                                | 136 | <b>Ariane Moffatt</b> with the<br>Orchestre symphonique de Montréal                   |
| 74  | <b>Candice Breitz</b>                            | 137 | <b>Moby</b>                                                                           |
| 82  | <b>Sharon Robinson</b>                           | 138 | <b>Julia Holter</b>                                                                   |
| 84  | <b>Leonard Cohen</b>                             | 139 | <b>Socalled</b>                                                                       |
| 88  | <b>The Sanchez Brothers</b>                      | 140 | <b>Chilly Gonzales and Jarvis Cocker</b><br>with Kaiser Quartett                      |
| 95  | <b>Jon Rafman</b>                                | 141 | <b>The National</b> with Sufjan Stevens,<br>Ragnar Kjartansson and Richard Reed Parry |
| 100 | <b>Clara Furey</b>                               | 142 | <b>Basia Bulat</b>                                                                    |
| 102 | <b>Mark Quinn</b>                                | 143 | <b>Little Screem</b>                                                                  |
| 107 | <b>Tacita Dean</b>                               | 144 | <b>Li'l Andy and Joe Grass</b>                                                        |
| 108 | <b>Daily tous les jours</b>                      | 145 | <b>Lou Doillon</b>                                                                    |
| 116 | <b>Zach Richter</b>                              |     |                                                                                       |
| 120 | <b>Jenny Holzer</b>                              |     |                                                                                       |

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148 **List of Works**

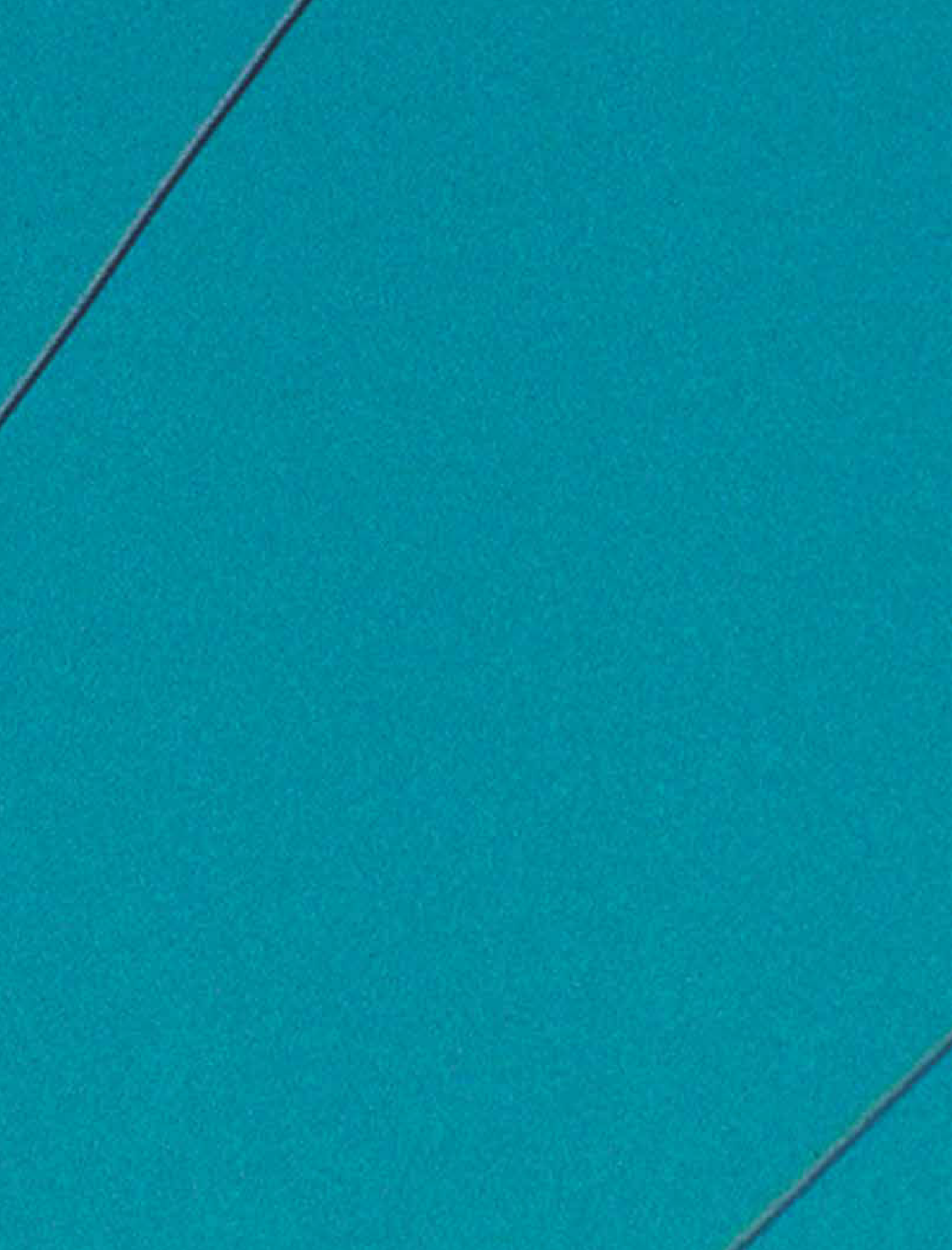
159 **Acknowledgments**













# LEONARD COHEN

John Zeppetelli and Victor Shiffman

## A CRACK IN EVERYTHING

Well aware of his fiercely guarded privacy, we wrote to Leonard Cohen with caution and anxiety: would he object to the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC) devoting a large exhibition to him for an extended period of time? How would he respond to visual artists, filmmakers, performers and other musicians revisiting his words, songs and biography with new inflections and perspectives, drawing from his themes of love and desire, loss and redemption—while breathing alternative and potentially provocative new life to them?

To our great relief, he agreed, with the amusing caveats that a) he would not attend the opening; b) he would not be an obstacle to our work as curators; and c) under no conditions were we to demand of his time or direct participation in the project. When I say we wrote to Leonard, I mean we wrote to his long-time manager and representative Robert Kory, who from our earliest conversations told us that Leonard Cohen was surprised and touched by the attention, but that he was fully immersed in his own creative endeavours. We cannot tell you how pleased, vindicated and confirmed in our unorthodox subject matter we were when, almost two years into our curatorial work on the exhibition, Cohen released at age eighty-two, just days before his death, a magnificent studio album, his fourteenth, produced by his son Adam.

*Leonard Cohen at his typewriter (October 26), 1963*  
Photo: Allan R. Leishman  
Montreal Star / Library and Archives Canada / PA-190166  
© Woodbridge Company Limited

“A million candles burning for the love that never came/You want it darker/We kill the flame,” Cohen intones somberly from the prophetic, moving and widely acclaimed *You Want It Darker*. That title track in particular seemed to announce, with the force of poetic indignation and disgust, the sinister travesty taking over his adopted country—and indeed, Cohen died in Los Angeles the day before the 2016 US election and was secretly buried in Montréal in a simple pine casket a few days later. What began, therefore, as a delirious celebration and loving tribute also evolved into something suffused in elegy. The exhibition is now a commemoration of a vast artistic achievement and inspiring life, as it opened exactly one year after Cohen’s passing. A large-scale public art intervention, *For Leonard Cohen*, by the relentlessly probing Jenny Holzer marked the evening in question, November 7, 2017, with quiet majesty. Holzer imagined a poignant yet optimistic requiem on a massive, iconic, concrete grain silo in Montréal’s Old Port area, where three gigantic projections of Leonard Cohen’s lyrics and poems scrolled slowly and silently while revealing and illuminating his words.

Leonard Cohen’s thinking, writing and music are a thing of beauty and despair. For decades, the novelist, poet and singer/songwriter tenaciously supplied the world with melancholy but urgent observations on the state of the human heart. With equal parts gravitas and grace, he teased out a startlingly inventive and singular language, depicting both a rapturous, or sometimes liturgical, spirituality and an earthly sexuality. Yet, with characteristic humility, he has said he never really aimed for anything more exalted than to simply be able to sing someone a song.

His song was sublime. He set the blunt but brilliant instrument of his famous voice—a “velour foghorn” so deep and cavernous, or more recently, his raspy chant-like whispers—to beautiful melodies and simple arrangements that belied a great musical intelligence. His interweaving of the sacred and the profane, of mystery and accessibility, was such a compelling combination it became seared into individual and collective memory. Our exhibition explores and embodies how this vastly important achievement has affected and inspired artists, how it has entered the cultural conversation, how it has cut deep into the marrow of the body politic.

Celebrating and reflecting upon a much-loved and complex Montrealer who was also a planetary star was a daunting challenge. Cohen himself seemed unclassifiable and unafraid to

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be out of step, making defiantly unfashionable music which people were compelled to catch up to. He was also strategically out of place: a poised, courtly gentleman and an unabashed hedonist, a novelist and poet in the music racket and a pop musician in literary circles, a Buddhist in the synagogue and a Jew on Mount Baldy’s Zen retreat (where, among other things, he learned that “whining was the least appropriate response to suffering”). For all of Cohen’s reputation as a gloomy, depressive figure, he was a supreme ironist, had levity and wry humour, a lightness of touch. With sumptuous, if sometimes harshly exacting language, he charted the darkest byways of emotion, he saw the prayer in the carnal and seemed to acknowledge, at every turn, the inevitability of pain and disappointment: “There is a crack in everything,” he memorably wrote. For Cohen, this was a demonstrable fact supported by widespread evidence, both personal and social—something we need always factor in. But there was also the compensating counter-argument concluding that line: “That’s how the light gets in.”

Our exhibition, which gathers over forty artists, musicians, filmmakers and performers, revisits Cohen’s magnificent work while offering four contextual multimedia installations specially conceived by the MAC. These include an emotional and immersive multi-screen environment by George Fok. Although wistfully titled *Passing Through*, the installation, consisting of three projections on three walls of a large room, is a rollicking archival montage highlighting almost fifty years of Cohen’s concert performances, where a single song is sometimes performed across several decades, with a visibly transformed Cohen appearing in each segment. Another exquisite archival installation, by Kara Blake—this time an ode to Cohen’s intricate inner life—*The Offerings* explores Cohen’s thinking and beautifully captures on five screens the workings and patterns of his mind and voice, while yet another moment, *Listening to Leonard*, gathers newly commissioned covers of Cohen’s musical repertoire, most exclusively available for the exhibition only. In addition, Cohen himself makes a single but important appearance as a visual artist with a projection of hundreds of his obsessive, annotated self-portraits, offering yet more insights on his bittersweet, funny and self-mocking self.

By providing a variety of conceptual responses and other reflections, all the invited artists bring to bear different perspectives on Cohen’s art and life, transforming and interpreting

his work while struggling with the weight of admiration and revision, not to mention Cohen's reputation, profundity and enduring relevance. Despite a few carefully chosen objects, photographs and, purportedly, Cohen's own Olivetti Lettera 22 manual typewriter making an appearance in the show, there was never an interest in showing Cohen's memorabilia or other artifacts from his life, nor engaging in an uncritically sycophantic or hagiographic exercise. Our wish was to see if we could assess and celebrate Cohen's boldly beautiful and singular legacy through the fearless responses of other living artists. A conversation we had always hoped Cohen would be moved by.

Other artist interventions delve into the many unexpected pathways that emanate from Cohen's work, including a major participatory installation by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller called *The Poetry Machine*. Visitors are invited to play on organ keyboards, with individual keys summoning audio files of Cohen's poetry, beautifully recited by Cohen himself, while creating a magical machine capable not only of recomposing his poems but also of sketching a potent new portrait of the artist. Another stunning portrait, by Candice Breitz, centres around Cohen's comeback album *I'm Your Man*, read as a template of late style and masculinity and featuring ardent Cohen fans—all men sixty-five or over—singing the entire album individually in a professional recording studio, but coming together as an improbable eighteen-video-screen chorus. In an antechamber, the Cohen family synagogue choir supports the men with mellifluous backup vocals. A brilliant work where art and anthropology co-mingle, and where the palpable experience of fans enjoying an opportunity to publically display their love and devotion to their idol is raw and touching.

Obliged by financial circumstance but propelled by sheer will, Cohen mounted late in life one of the most euphoric and successful comebacks in music history, delighting fans, old and new, in large arenas well into his seventies. He had, after all, been present (and for some, unavoidable) in the culture for over five decades. Although he never seemed to take himself too seriously, Cohen was nonetheless an oracle, a voice of chilling prophecy and occasional fear, of joy and complication, with murmurings and pronouncements resonating far and wide. At their centre was always an elegantly imperious if disarming poetry of brokenness.

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In one of the quieter, but no less powerful, moments in the exhibition, Taryn Simon signals the epochal shifts and ruptures in the culture by simply displaying a copy of the *New York Times* dated November 11, 2016. At the top of this dispiriting front page is a still shocking image of then President-elect Trump's first visit to the White House with President Obama, a man whose legitimacy Trump relentlessly undermined. "Failing" and "fake news" were frequent insults directed at the venerable newspaper by a man also attempting to dismantle and endlessly manipulate the truth. Cohen's obituary appears at the bottom of that page: "Leonard Cohen, 1934-2016: Writer of 'Hallelujah' Whose Lyrics Captivated Generations." A radiant, smiling Cohen is pictured either raising or lowering his hat, in a gesture that is both a hello and a goodbye.



# THE COMEBACK

Sylvie Simmons

The hut wasn't much bigger than a prison cell. It was one of a scattering of plain wood cabins on Mount Baldy, above the snowline, an abandoned Boy Scouts camp that the hut's long-time resident had helped turn into a monastery. Jikan was his name—given to him by Roshi Sasaki, the head of the monastery, when ordaining him as a Buddhist monk. The name meant “ordinary silence” or “the silence between two thoughts.” You know him as Leonard Cohen. For more than half of the 1990s he lived in this white-walled cabin. “I was always going off the deep end,” said Cohen, smiling. “So it was no radical departure.”

True, when you think about it, the life of Leonard Cohen was a series of radical departures. He was born in Montréal into a well-to-do family of rabbis, scholars, businessmen, who founded synagogues and Canada's first English-language Jewish newspaper. Serious people. Leonard became a serious poet. He was twenty-one when his first collection, *Let Us Compare Mythologies*, was published and he was hailed by Canadian literati as their new golden boy. There was even a documentary made about him, as if he were a rock star: *Ladies and Gentlemen... Mr. Leonard Cohen*. But instead of staying where he was loved, he left for New York where the Beat poets weren't so enamoured of his “rhymed, polished verses, which they associated with the oppressive literary establishment.”

*Leonard Cohen*  
Photo: Chris Buck

## LEONARD COHEN TEN MOMENTS

Chantal Ringuet

Cohen lived in London for a while—Hampstead; lots of writers there—but soon left to live in a house with no electricity or running water on the Greek island of Hydra. In a room with plain white walls, like a monk's cabin, he wrote novels. There's a photograph of that room on the back sleeve of *Songs From a Room*, his lover Marianne Ihlen seated at his desk, naked but for a towel. Then, when prose and poetry failed to pay even his meagre bills, he decided he'd go to Nashville and be a country songwriter. This on the basis of liking Hank Williams, George Jones and Ray Charles's country album, and having once played in a square dance band. He'd been playing guitar since he was fifteen—the same age that he discovered Federico García Lorca. Which was the moment that he decided to be a poet—this was 1949; Cohen had no tradition of rock music behind him. But when he read Lorca, he said he heard the music of the synagogue. He also said that there was music behind every word he wrote.

En route to Nashville he stopped off in New York. A friend suggested he meet with Mary Martin, a fellow Canadian, Albert Grossman's former assistant, who had introduced Bob Dylan to The Hawks who became The Band. Martin introduced Cohen to Judy Collins, who covered his songs and took him onstage, and that led to John Hammond's signing Cohen, as he had done Dylan, to Columbia Records.

Cohen was thirty-three when his debut album *Songs of Leonard Cohen* came out. Another radical departure, this being the youth culture, when you weren't to trust anyone over thirty. Cohen was not a youth; it's quite possible to believe he never was. Like his poems, his lyrics were sophisticated and dense. Although he had consumed copious amounts of acid and speed, his songs showed no evidence of either. His songs were like nothing else being made in the late sixties; he was unique, at the same time ancient and fresh. Hammond had a hard time getting Columbia to sign an "old poet." Cohen had a harder time making that first album. When it was finally done he swore he would never make another—until Bob Johnston, back then a Columbia staff producer, lured him to Nashville after offering him the keys to a plain wooden cabin in the middle of nowhere.

From the outset, Cohen's relationship with the music business had ranged from dismal to conflicted. Take touring: Cohen hated it. "I felt," he said, "that the risks of humiliation were too wide." He had stage fright. He was even more afraid



1. September 21, 1934  
**Birth of Leonard Norman Cohen  
in Westmount**

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Born into a Westmount Jewish family that was part of Montréal's Anglo elite, Leonard Norman Cohen was the second child of Masha Klinitsky-Klein and Nathan Bernard Cohen. Lyon Cohen, his paternal grandfather, a well-known businessman and philanthropist, was an important figure in the Jewish community. He started the Freedman Company, one of the largest clothing manufacturers in Montréal, and co-founded the *Canadian Jewish Times* (1897), the first English-language Jewish newspaper in Canada. Lyon Cohen was also president of several organizations, including the Canadian Jewish Congress and Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. He helped Jewish immigrants from the Russian Empire settle in Canada—among them, from Lithuania, the learned Rabbi Solomon Klinitsky-Klein and his family. Lyon's son, Nathan Cohen, a lieutenant in the Canadian army and First World War veteran, later ran the family business. From his father, the young Leonard inherited a love of suits; from his mother, Masha, who trained as a nurse, he received his charisma and his love of songs.

Cohen was thus born into a well-to-do family that was quite different from the Jewish masses who arrived in Montréal early in the twentieth century. Many of these immigrants spoke Yiddish as their native language and worked in garment factories, including the Freedman Company. Unlike these immigrants, who moved from the port of Montréal northward (to Plateau Mont-Royal), then westward (to Snowdon, Westmount, Côte Saint-Luc) as openings were created by social mobility, Cohen made the journey in the opposite direction: the young McGill University student left Westmount early on for downtown, where he chose to live in hotel rooms and small apartments. In the 1970s, he settled in Plateau Mont-Royal, opposite Parc du Portugal. Despite his extensive travels and his residence in Los Angeles, Cohen always returned to Montréal to “renew his neurotic affiliations,” as he often repeated in interviews.

for his songs. They had come to him from somewhere pure and he'd worked long and hard to make them sincere representations of the moment. He wanted to protect them, not parade them before strangers in an artificial intimacy. He might have seemed like the consummate showman for any of us who saw him back then, but for much of his music career he drank and drugged himself copiously to get through a show.

As time went on, songwriting became increasingly torturous also. Songs had to be “torn” from him. There's the famous story of Cohen and Dylan trading lyrics over coffee in Paris. Dylan played him a new song and Cohen asked how long it had taken to write. “Fifteen minutes,” Dylan said. How long did it take Cohen to write his new song *Hallelujah*, he asked. “A couple of years,” Cohen told him, too embarrassed to tell him it was five years or more. But really the problem was not with writing a song—Cohen could do that relatively easily. It was his perfectionism and a craving for complete authenticity.

Take *Anthem*—ten to fifteen years in the writing. Cohen recorded it for at least three different albums. He rejected it twice because, listening back, he felt that the guy singing the words was “putting us on.” The first of those albums was *Various Positions* (1984), the same album *Hallelujah* was on—and the album that Columbia refused to release in the US because they didn't think it had any songs. “Leonard, we know you're great,” the head of the music division, Walter Yetnikoff, famously said, “We just don't know if you're any good.”

For most of his music career, Cohen's patch had been the UK and Europe, perhaps because darkness wasn't so alienating there, intelligence and poetry not so suspect, and his wry, black humour was understood. “I thought they were making a mistake,” Cohen said. “I thought that there was an audience in the United States and Canada [but] from their point of view the market was so limited that it didn't justify the distribution machinery.”

It seems hardly credible now that the album that introduced *Hallelujah*—the all-purpose hymn for the millennium, the feel-good singalong/treatise on the bleakness of human relations and go-to vocal workout on TV talent contests—was forced to come out in North America on an indie label. There had been some attempts to sell Leonard on this side of the Atlantic, all unsuccessful: for example, his collaboration with Phil Spector,

*Death of a Ladies' Man*—Cohen's lyrics, Spector writing music and producing the album (at gunpoint).

Cohen finally broke through in the late eighties, a time when many of his contemporaries were floundering. *I'm Your Man* (1988) reintroduced him as a suave, smart, self-deprecating lounge lizard-cum-chansonnier. The songs' themes were as dark as ever: *Ain't No Cure For Love*, a singalong about love, sex, God and the AIDS crisis; *First We Take Manhattan*, probably the only Eurodisco song to tackle both the war between the sexes and the Holocaust. But the darkness was mitigated by catchy beats, keyboards in place of gloomy guitar and bright production. His humour was more obvious too: "I was born like this I had no choice," he sang laconically, "I was born with the gift of a golden voice."

This was really Cohen's first comeback. He had stepped into the shadows at the end of the *Recent Songs* tour, staying there for four years, writing a book of poems, psalms really, *Book of Mercy* (1984). What he had learned from his ongoing studies with Roshi, he said, had led him back to the Talmud, Torah, Kabbalah and the Jewish prayer book. Since *Various Positions* didn't much trouble North America, it had been nine years before *I'm Your Man* rebranded Cohen as cool.

"In terms of my so-called career," Cohen said, "*I'm Your Man* was certainly a rebirth. But it was hard to consider it a rebirth on a personal level. It was made under the usual dismal and morbid condition"—including an unravelled romantic life once again, the death of his manager Marty Machat and a deepening of the depression he'd suffered since late adolescence. "Not just the blues," he explained, but "a kind of mental violence that stops you from functioning properly from one moment to the next." Unable to keep the momentum up, it took him another four years for the follow-up.

But *The Future* (1992) sold even better. Its lyrics were dystopian, pessimistic, but almost gleefully so. The title track name-checked Stalin, Charles Manson, the Devil and Christ—and Cohen himself as "the little Jew that wrote the Bible." When the Los Angeles riots broke out, Cohen had watched the fires from his little house in an unglamorous part of the city. He had bought it to be near Roshi, whose first US Zen centre had opened near South Central L.A. Cohen catalogued all the sins of the West on the album. Everything was broken—but for Cohen everything always was. Even Jesus was broken on one

2. January 12, 1944

## Death of Nathan Cohen, Leonard's father

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Nathan Cohen died when Leonard was nine years old. Grief-stricken, the boy wrote a message that he placed secretly in a bow tie that had belonged to his father and then buried it in the garden. Later, he would say that this was his first act as a poet, and went on to add two things: first, that had he been able to climb a mountain at the time, he would have become a mountain climber; and second, that his entire work no doubt was an extension of that original gesture, the burying of the bow tie. His father's death—a decisive event in anyone's life—affected Leonard Cohen's life and work in many ways. It was a huge loss, from which he derived a feeling of solemnity that would become his hallmark. At the same time, it sealed his connection with Judaism. He was now the man of the family, the one responsible for presiding at the Seder during the Jewish festival of Passover. In his second album, *Songs From a Room* (1969), Cohen alludes to Judaism in the song *Story of Isaac*. This was inspired by the biblical story in which God tests Abraham by asking him to offer his son up in sacrifice; then, at the last moment, God sends an angel to stop him. In Cohen's song, the incident is told from the point of view of the son seeing his father enter his room: "The door it opened slowly/My father he came in/I was nine years old/And he stood so tall above me." The reference to the father's name subsequently appears in the collection *Book of Mercy* (1984) and in the song *Lover Lover Lover* (1974): "I asked my father/I said, 'Father change my name'/The one I'm using now it's covered up/With fear and filth and cowardice and shame." In Judaism, the name Cohen indicates that the bearer is a *kohen*, belonging to the *kohanim*, a prestigious lineage that used to serve as priests in the temple in Jerusalem.

### 3. 1956–1964

#### Emergence of the young poet

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At McGill University, Cohen studied poetry with Louis Dudek and prose with Hugh MacLennan. He met the poet Irving Layton, who became his friend and mentor. Layton introduced him to the city's literary circles, and Cohen took part in various poetry readings, accompanied by jazz music, in nightclubs downtown.

In 1954, he published his first poems in the well-regarded, dynamic literary magazine *CIV/n* (1953–1955). After earning his degree in English literature (1955), he published his first poetry collection, *Let Us Compare Mythologies* (1956), in the McGill Poetry Series founded by Dudek. This collection is made up mainly of Cohen's early writings. It contains themes that would recur in his work: love, religion and poetry. In 1956, Cohen began studies at Columbia University in New York, but didn't find them worthwhile and returned to Montréal the following year.

Rebellious and drawn to war, Cohen travelled to Cuba in 1959, during the Revolution. Armed with his guitar and a large penknife, speaking only English, he passed himself off as a gringo spy, then as a Cuban on the lam. He could have gone to prison, but returned safe and sound to Montréal. In December, he settled in London, at 19b Hampstead High Street, in an apartment rented to Jake and Stella Pullman, where his friend Mort Rosengarten had previously stayed. He bought an Olivetti 22 typewriter and began writing his first novel. In the spring of 1960, he arrived on the Greek island of Hydra, where he bought a house a few months later. In the five years that followed, he would spend many months on the island. There he met Marianne Ihlen, his companion who inspired him to write the famous song *So Long*, *Marianne*. His years on Hydra proved to be prolific: while living there he published the poetry collections *The Spice-Box of Earth* (1961) and *Flowers for Hitler* (1964), as well as two novels, *The Favourite Game* (1963) and *Beautiful Losers* (1966).

of his earliest songs, *Suzanne*. The state of being cracked, imperfect, was one of this perfectionist's longest, deepest studies; it might have been his battle cry.

*Anthem*—"There is a crack in everything/That's how the light gets in"—finally made it onto this album, thanks in large part to Rebecca De Mornay, who convinced Cohen, who was still working on it, that it was fine as it was. She and Cohen were engaged to be married. The actress had just made the biggest movie of her career, *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, and Cohen was there when she shot it, sitting in her trailer, writing on a synthesizer. He was her escort at the Oscars ceremony in March 1992. When he went on tour to promote the album, Rebecca would sometimes show up to give moral support.

Along the way, Cohen sang with Elton John on Elton's *Duets* album, and narrated a two-part Canadian TV series, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. He also received the Governor General's Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement—one of two handfuls Canada had bestowed on him recently. At the ceremony, Cohen said, "I feel like a soldier. You may get decorated for a successful campaign [but it's] probably just in the line of duty. You can't let these honours deeply alter the way you fight." Again he was afraid of betraying his art. The *Future* tour had been as much a battle for him as his early tours. He was drinking so heavily that even Roshi, no stranger to alcohol, expressed concern.

In September 1994, back in L.A., he ran into Roscoe Beck, his bass player on the 1979–1980 *Recent Songs* tour. "I've had it with this music racket," Cohen told him. After celebrating his sixtieth birthday, he packed his bag and moved into the hut 6,500 feet up in the San Gabriel Mountains to be the servant and companion of an old Japanese man and live the tough and highly structured life of a Rinzaï Zen monk.

As well as breaking with the music business, he broke off his engagement to De Mornay. Romantic relationships for Cohen were often just as conflicted. There had been long relationships with his muses, including Marianne Ihlen and later Suzanne Elrod, the mother of his two children, but he had never married. Now it was religion, "my favourite hobby," as he called it, that took the forefront. Although he remained a practising Jew, even as a Buddhist monk, he had spent his life studying different spiritual paths including Christianity, Scientology and Vedanta. His poems and songs have often featured religious teachers and invariably associate religious

and sexual devotion and ecstasies. Roshi, Cohen said, told the monks, “You lead hard lives, you rise early, you spend hours on floors, but if you want to try something really hard, try marriage. That is the true monastery.”

One attraction of Rinzai Zen was its almost military discipline. Cohen had wanted to go to military school as a child, but when his father died—Leonard was nine—his mother put paid to that idea. In his twenties, Cohen had gone to Cuba to try and join the revolution and later offered himself to the Israeli army during the Yom Kippur War. He was turned down. The routine at the monastery was very rigorous. “You get up very early, 2:30 or three in the morning, and there are duties assigned the whole day.” Dressed in black robe and sandals, the monk’s uniform, he’d clean toilets, cut bamboo and act as Roshi’s driver, cook and secretary.

It was one of many ways to try to cope with the “deep, paralysing anguish for no reason at all.” He’d tried treating his depression with alcohol and drugs of all kinds. The monastery for him was “a hospital [where I could] learn everything from the beginning again, how to sit, how to walk, how to eat and how to be quiet. ... Once you overcome your natural resistance to being told what to do, if you can overcome that, then you begin to relax into the schedule and the almost voluptuous simplicity of the day. That whole component of improvisation that tyrannizes much of our lives begins to dissolve.” But that didn’t work either. Five and a half years later, in such a deep depression he couldn’t claw back up, he told Roshi he was leaving.

Back in L.A., he once again ran into his old friend Roscoe. Beck reminded him about what he’d said the last time they met. “Ah,” said Cohen, “now I’ve had it with the religious racket. I’m ready to take up music again.” Nine years after *The Future*, Cohen released his first album of the new millennium, *Ten New Songs* (2001).

#### 4. 1963–1966

##### Birth of the novelist

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*The Favourite Game* was published by Secker & Warburg in 1963 (and by McClelland & Stewart in 1970). The book follows the adventures of Lawrence Breavman, a young Jewish poet whose life bears certain similarities to that of the author: after a sheltered childhood marked by the death of the father, he developed a taste for hypnosis and an unconditional love of women. Already we recognize the lover who would produce such works as *Death of a Ladies’ Man* and *Tower of Song*. The same year saw the release of *Take It All*, the English version of Claude Jutra’s film *À tout prendre*, translated by Cohen, who was turning out to be a cultural mediator between Francophone Québec and English-speaking Canada, a role he would adopt on a number of occasions.

In 1965, the National Film Board of Canada released *Ladies and Gentlemen... Mr. Leonard Cohen*, a documentary directed by Donald Brittain and Don Owen that paints a portrait of the thirty-year-old Cohen in his hometown. The following year, his second novel, *Beautiful Losers*, came out. It tells the story of a love triangle made up of an unnamed English-Canadian folklorist, his Indigenous Canadian wife, Edith, who has killed herself, and his best friend, F., a French-Canadian Member of Parliament who leads a separatist movement. Set in Québec, it intertwines the adventures of the protagonists with the story of Kateri Tekakwitha, the Mohawk virgin who became a saint. Mysticism, sexuality, drug use and sensory excesses intermingle. With its fragmented form, it is an “experimental novel” where the three founding peoples of Canada meet: Indigenous Canadians, Québécois and English Canadians.

In Canada, *Beautiful Losers* did not sell well and aroused controversy. Critic Robert Fulford described it as “the most revolting book ever written in Canada” and “undoubtedly the most interesting Canadian work of the year.” It would not be until the following generation that the book gained true recognition in literary circles. Today it is considered the work that signals the entry of the English-Canadian novel into postmodernity.



## 5. 1966–1969

### Arrival of Leonard Cohen, singer/songwriter

After the commercial failure of his second novel, Cohen moved to New York City in 1966. A year later, John Hammond, the man who had discovered Bob Dylan in 1962, signed him to a contract with Columbia Records. John Simon would be the producer. *Songs of Leonard Cohen*, the artist's first album, released in 1967, featured titles that would become his signature: *Suzanne*, *So Long*, *Marianne* and *Sisters of Mercy*. Cohen's music, expressing as it did the art of the troubadours along with an existentialist vision, could be described as "post-folk." However, its ties to the folk revival tradition of the 1960s associated with names such as Bob Dylan, Joan Baez and Phil Ochs related more to the way it incorporated various musical influences than to any spirit of protest. It actually had more in common with the art of inward-looking singer/songwriters like Tim Hardin and Joni Mitchell.

In 1969, Cohen released his second album, *Songs From a Room*, which also garnered great commercial success. It opened with *Bird on the Wire*, another seminal song. His career as singer/songwriter took off immediately with the release of his first albums. From now on, it would become necessary to differentiate between Leonard Cohen the writer and the cultural phenomenon he developed into.

Another major title on the album is *The Partisan*. In its English-language version, *La Complainte du partisan* (1943), written in London by Emmanuel d'Astier de La Vigerie (lyrics) and Anna Marly (music), experienced a resurgence thanks to Cohen. This popular song had originally been broadcast over the BBC and intended for occupied France. It now introduced Leonard Cohen to France, where he quickly became a star and where his works would be translated.

In literature, Cohen won the Governor General's Award for *Selected Poems*, his first anthology, in 1969, when he was already celebrated in Europe. The author refused the award on the grounds that "the songs forbid it absolutely."

October 2004. Cohen was in Montréal when his daughter Lorca called. She'd just had a strange conversation with the boyfriend of someone who worked for Kelly Lynch—Cohen's manager since Marty Machat's death. All he would say was that Cohen needed to look at his bank accounts, and fast. At Lorca's insistence, Cohen flew back to L.A. and went to his bank. Almost all of his money was gone, including his retirement account, as well as publishing rights to some of his most popular songs.

Life since leaving the monastery had become quite serene. He had a new romantic partner, his sometime backing singer Anjani Thomas. Three years after *Ten New Songs* he'd made another album, *Dear Heather* (2004). The lengthy periods he'd been spending in Mumbai now, studying Vedanta with Ramesh Balsekar, had somehow cured his depression. But to spend his old age in what felt like an eternity of legal and financial paperwork was a joke so black as to test even his sense of humour. At the age of seventy, Cohen was forced to remortgage his house in order to pay the lawyers.

"It was an enormous distraction," he said. "Will I ever be able to get back to a life where I get up in the morning, walk over to my keyboard or pick up my guitar or go to the meditation hall? Or will it just be appointments and searching through emails?" Help came in the form of Robert Kory, Anjani's ex-husband, a former music industry lawyer, who offered to defer his fees and plunge into what turned out to be a wildly convoluted business.

Cohen's two albums since leaving the monastery had sold some copies in the UK, Europe and Canada, but very few in the US. He'd had no interest in touring to promote them, wanting to stay as far as he could get away with from the music business and the spotlight. Even on his albums he moved increasingly away from centre stage. Women had always played a part in Cohen's songs—as backing singers, muses and, in Leanne Ungar's case, engineer/producer, but *Ten New Songs* had been as much Sharon Robinson's album as Cohen's—her music, his words. On his next album, *Dear Heather* (2004), he left much of the singing to the women, his own voice just a whisper. By *Blue Alert* (2006), his collaboration with Anjani, he had faded out almost entirely. It was Anjani's idea, her music and vocals, and her face on the sleeve.

Meanwhile, Hal Willner's ensemble project *Came So Far For Beauty*—begun in 2003 as a one-off celebration of Cohen

in a Brooklyn park, funded by the Canadian consulate—had taken on a life of its own. Various shows around the world featured a panoply of artists covering Cohen—among them Laurie Anderson, Linda Thompson, Rufus Wainwright, Lou Reed, Antony Hegarty, Jarvis Cocker and Nick Cave. An Australian filmmaker used these concerts as a basis for the documentary film *I'm Your Man* (2005). Philip Glass composed a series of song cycles based on poems Cohen was writing for his first new volume of poetry in twenty-two years, *Book of Longing* (2006). Everyone, it seemed, was singing Cohen's songs but Cohen.

But the thought of going on tour had started nagging at Cohen. He didn't want to; he wasn't sure he could do it after almost fifteen years; he wasn't convinced that anyone would want to see him. But since neither poetry nor albums were paying the bills, it was the only solution he could think of. Robert Kory called the UK concert promoters AEG in London. It turned out that one of the promoters, Rob Hallett, was a big Cohen fan. He flew to L.A. and made an offer Cohen couldn't under his present circumstances refuse. After the meeting, Cohen drove to Sharon Robinson's house and told her, a worried look on his face, "I think I'm going to have to go on tour again."

Cohen asked Roscoe Beck to be the musical director, and in January 2008 Beck started hiring. Some were musicians Cohen had worked with before—Sharon Robinson; guitarist Bob Metzger, Leanne Ungar's husband—and some were new to him: keyboard player Neil Larsen; Javier Mas, a Spanish laud and bandurria player who had been the musical director of a Leonard Cohen tribute concert in Barcelona; and drummer Rafael Gayol. They hired a violin player, then decided to replace her with a woodwind player and multi-instrumentalist Dino Soldo. Jennifer Warnes was invited but declined. Sharon brought in Charley and Hattie Webb, the Webb Sisters. They rehearsed for four months, with the promoter footing the bill.

"It's hard to separate the feelings at the beginning of the tour," said Leonard. "Reluctance of course. The difficulty of assembling the band, especially when you haven't done it for almost fifteen years, and in those early periods of assembling the band, I guess I felt some reluctance that I had started the whole process, because it didn't look like it was going to pan out very well. There was a great anxiety about whether we had a show. And my voice," he laughed. "Well my voice was the

## 6. 1968–1978

### Conquering the world. Portrait of an inveterate ladies' man

The late 1960s and the 1970s were characterized by Cohen's deepening involvement in the New York artistic milieu and, internationally, by his increasing fame. He frequented the Chelsea Hotel in Manhattan, which was a haunt for numerous artists and writers, including Andy Warhol and the Factory, Allan Ginsberg, Bob Dylan and many others. In 1968, an amorous encounter with Janis Joplin on one of his visits inspired him to write the song *Chelsea Hotel No. 2*, which was released in 1974 on the album *New Skin For the Old Ceremony*. In 1972, a tour took him to several countries in Europe and to Israel. During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, he returned and performed in front of a group of Israel Defense Force soldiers at an outpost in the Sinai. He also composed *Lover Lover Lover*, another song that would appear on *New Skin For the Old Ceremony*. *Leonard Cohen: Live Songs* was released by Columbia Records in 1973; it was followed, in 1975, by the album *The Best of Leonard Cohen*, then by a tour of Europe, the United States and Canada, on which Cohen was accompanied by John Lissauer. During this period, the artist bought a large house in Plateau Mont-Royal, which he would keep for the rest of his life. It was located at 28 Rue Vallières, across from Parc du Portugal. His neighbours included Michel Garneau, who would become his French-language translator for Québec.

With the release of the album *Death of a Ladies Man* (1977), co-produced by Phil Spector, followed by a collection of poems of the same name (1978), the artist experienced a turning point in his thinking. He began to develop the idea that light—and joy—penetrated through the cracks in the soul. This thought was clearly expressed in a line in the song *Anthem* (1992) that would become very famous: "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."



***I'm Your Man. A major musical comeback***

In the early 1980s, Cohen stepped away from the music scene. Aside from the two world tours he undertook in 1980 and 1985, he devoted himself mostly to writing. In 1984, he published a new poetry collection, *Book of Mercy*, which won the Canadian Authors Association Literary Award for Poetry. That same year, the album *Various Positions* was released, featuring *Dance Me to the End of Love* and the hit *Hallelujah*, which became the most famous song in Cohen's repertoire. In the 1990s, it would be popularized by John Cale, a musician in the experimental rock group The Velvet Underground, and then by Jeff Buckley.

The release of *I'm Your Man* (1988) heralded Cohen's highly successful comeback to the music scene. With its mix of geo-political considerations, social concerns and relationship and religious issues intermingled with a touch of humour, this album indicates his shift to a more modern style, thanks to the use of synthesizers in some of the songs and Cohen's improved singing. Several titles went on to become huge successes, including *I'm Your Man*, *Ain't No Cure For Love*, *First We Take Manhattan*, *Tower of Song* (a pivotal song on the album) and *Everybody Knows*. Ultimately, the album was a major commercial hit in a number of countries. Even though it enjoyed more limited success in the United States, CBS Records gave the singer a Crystal Globe Award. A few examples of the album's triumph on the international music scene: *I'm Your Man* went silver in Great Britain and gold in Canada, and held the No. 1 spot in Norway for sixteen weeks. Several of the album's hits posted record sales and it figured prominently on various lists of Top Albums of the 1980s.

Four years later, the album *The Future* (1992) helped introduce the singer to younger generations. Three of its titles were featured on the soundtrack of US director Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers*, and contributed to the film's commercial success.

least of my worries. I've never thought of my voice as a fine or a delicate instrument; I've never thought of myself as a singer." But finally he said he was ready. He asked Kory, now his manager, to set up a "pre-tour tour"—eighteen small, low-key venues in Canada, to give him a chance to fail miserably away from the eyes of the world.

The first show was in Fredericton, New Brunswick, on May 11, 2008 in a 700-seat venue. Standing in the wings in his sharp suit, fedora and shiny shoes, his new uniform, Cohen took off his hat, bowed his head and said a little prayer. Putting it back on, he stepped out onstage for the first time in a decade and a half. The applause was deafening. The whole place was on its feet. No one had played a note but the ovation just kept going. And when the music started and Cohen sang in a voice that was now several fathoms below sea level, you could hear a pin drop, such was the attention and devotion. The official tour started in June in Toronto—3,000 seats, sold out. This time Cohen skipped onstage, literally skipped, welcomed again with a standing ovation. The *Toronto Star* described the concert as "a love-in," a description you could apply to all the concerts. Within weeks they were playing to 100,000 at Glastonbury. Michael Eavis said, "There will never be anything better than Leonard Cohen's performance that night for me."

As the tour continued, new bookings kept coming—an intense schedule that would put a young band to shame. Cohen was playing night after night—hardly a day off except for travel—for three hours or more, plus two-hour sound checks; that perfectionism of his never went away. "Everybody was rehearsed not only in the notes but also in something unspoken," said Cohen. "You could feel it in the dressing room as you moved closer to the concert, the sense of commitment, tangible in the room." The audiences they played to were the biggest and most age-diverse of his career, right around the world, each show a sellout, every show a triumph.

"Once you get the hang of it," Cohen had said of the monastic life, "you go into ninth gear and kind of float through it all." The parameters of this life on the road gave him a kind of freedom. The bowing and the falling to his knees satisfied a sense of rite and service that was rooted deep in him. More than one reviewer likened them to religious gatherings, even a papal visit. It was December 2010 now, the end of one of the most remarkable comeback tours ever, and here he was,

seventy-six, a rat pack rabbi, still sharp at the edges. He'd picked himself up, dusted himself off and by his own hard work refilled his coffers, and more.

Autumn 2011. We're in Cohen's modest house in Los Angeles, sitting at a wooden table in a small room with plain white walls, listening on his computer to his new album. Cohen's eyes have been closed from start to finish as if he were meditating. When I said I'd been watching him, wondering what was going through his mind, he said, "I was thinking of how it sounds. Listening for any false steps. But that wasn't the case." And if it were? "I'd have to take it back in the studio." That authenticity and perfectionism.

The album was *Old Ideas* (2012), his first new album in eight years. Despite the title—a wry reference to his songs having always explored the same themes—it had all new songs; two had been premiered on tour. It was a wonder that such a pitiless judge of his own work should have completed something to his satisfaction in such a short time: an extension of the length and focus of the tour? He pondered the question as if it had never occurred to him. "I don't really know, but it was a very devoted mode." He said he missed the road, the routine, ritual and companionship, the feeling, as he put it, of "full employment." Before being forced back into action, "I had the feeling that I was treading water—kind of between jobs, a bit at loose ends." A big incentive for finishing the album was so that "I could put my band and the crew together. They keep writing me, saying, 'Will we ever go out again?'"

They did. Another globe-spanning victory lap. More new songs made their debut onstage. In December 2013, when the final curtain fell, again he went straight back to work. On his eightieth birthday, just nine months later, he released another new album, *Popular Problems* (2014), which he described as setting "a new tone and speed of hope and despair, grief and joy." It was less soft-focused than *Old Ideas*, an album that many reviewers took as his farewell. They'd forgotten that Cohen was always talking about death and was always drawn to goodbyes.

There was talk of another tour. He had planned to take up smoking again at eighty, he told me, before turning it into one of his stage pieces, and was looking forward to sneaking behind the tour bus for a smoke. Those two tours, there really had been nothing like them: the hushed silence of the audience,

## 8. 1994–1999

### Transformation. The life of a Buddhist monk

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In the early 1970s, Cohen travelled to Mount Baldy and to various affiliated centres to practise Zen in the Japanese Rinzai tradition. In the 1980s, he became more deeply involved, helping to establish a Zen magazine called *Zero* and a Zen centre in a Montréal building that he owned. In 1994, he decided to devote himself full-time to leading the life of a Buddhist monk alongside his teacher, Kyozen Joshu Sasaki. For five years, he left the music scene altogether: he gave up suits and fedoras for monastic dress—long robe, shaved head and austere demeanour. The object of this stay was not so much to have a mystical experience as it was a process to regain a "normal" life, freed from dependency on alcohol, medication and women.

During this time, Columbia continued to promote the artist with the release of his album *Cohen Live: Leonard Cohen in Concert* (1994), followed by *More Best of Leonard Cohen* (1997). In early 2001, the live album *Field Commander Cohen: Tour of 1979* was launched. It paved the way for the release of *Ten New Songs* (2001), co-written and produced by singer Sharon Robinson, which brought the nine-year silence to an end. With its intimate ambience and calm—and music composed with the help of synthesizers and a drum machine—*Ten New Songs* broke stylistically with *The Future*, his previous album. The singer had reached a turning point in his career: he now presented a mature image, different from that of the poet with the folk guitar. Five years later, he would return to writing, releasing the poetry collection *Book of Longing* (2006), accompanied by his own drawings.

**Major return to the stage and world triumph**

After a fifteen-year absence from the stage, Cohen set out on a grand world tour, his second major return to the music scene. Begun after the artist was the victim of huge fraud by his long-time manager, this first tour (2008–2010) turned out to be a total triumph.

Cohen's much-anticipated return to the stage began on May 11, 2008, and ended on December 11, 2010. Acclaimed from the start by critics, it was launched in Canada and went on to Europe. The singer performed at various music festivals, including The Big Chill and the Glastonbury Festival in the UK, and the Festival international de jazz de Montréal. The following year, the tour continued on to New Zealand and Australia, as well as Israel and, once again, Europe. In total, Cohen gave 246 concerts. Among the most famous was his 2009 London concert, which formed the basis of the CD *Live in London*, released on March 21 that same year, and the first official DVD of his career.

After the release of the album *Old Ideas* (2012), Cohen set out on the *Old Ideas World Tour* (2012–2013). This would be the singer's last tour. From August 2012 to December 2013, it took him to Europe, North America, New Zealand and Australia. It included several new songs, as well as older ones, and a rare interpretation of Georges Dor's *La Manic*.

For his eightieth birthday, Cohen launched his thirteenth studio album, *Popular Problems*, on September 19, 2014. It featured mostly new songs and was very warmly received by critics.

that enormous wave of love, the sheer, unwavering quality of the performances. Among the biggest-grossing tours of their time, they resulted in four live albums, *Live in London* (2009), *Live in Dublin* (2014), *Songs From The Road* (2010) and *Can't Forget: A Souvenir of the Grand Tour* (2015).

The demand was there, but his body wouldn't allow it. Compound fractures of the spine. No more dancing on and off stage or falling to his knees. In the words of a man who liked to wear a uniform, he was "confined to barracks." But still working. "Time speeds up the closer it gets to the end of the reel," he told me. "You don't feel like wasting time."

October 21, 2016, a month after his eighty-second birthday, Cohen released *You Want It Darker*. It was his third studio album in five years—astounding given that there had been only eleven in the three and a half decades before the comeback tour. And miraculous given the deterioration of Cohen's health. Since he was unable to use the studio above the garage where he'd recorded since *Ten New Songs*, it was made in the living room, Cohen sitting in an orthopedic chair, fighting through the fatigue. "Sometimes," said Adam Cohen, Leonard's son and the album's producer, "medical marijuana intervened and played a role. At times I was very worried about his health and the only thing that buoyed his spirits was the work itself."

"How do we produce work that touches the heart?" Cohen said, back in the nineties. "We don't want to live a superficial life. We want to be serious with each other, with our friends, with our work. Serious has a kind of voluptuous aspect to it. It is something that we are deeply hungry for." His new album was a perfect example of that voluptuous seriousness. It was one of the richest, deepest albums in a lifetime of rich, deep work. There's no mistaking its urgency, intensity and darkness. Cohen had a long practice of looking darkness in the eye. He faced death the same way, head-on. They'd come to some kind of amicable-enough agreement decades before.

He had come to terms with growing old too. "I think it's one of the most compassionate ways of saying goodbye that the cosmos could devise," he said. And age suited him. The man in the suit and hat looked more at home with himself than the young Cohen ever had. There were headlines in the papers quoting him saying, "I am ready to die"—nothing new from Leonard. But this time he decided to give a press conference in L.A., somehow get up there and smile and say he was going

to live to 102. He said nothing about the cancer. When I was writing Cohen's biography, a close friend from childhood, Mort Rosengarten, had described how, even when suffering acute bouts of depression, Leonard "wasn't a whiney depressive, he didn't complain." In the email I got from Leonard around five weeks before his death, he mentioned that he was "a little under the weather." I'd forgotten what a master of understatement he was.

In his final album, he sang himself back home. *Hineni*, he sang, "I am ready," accompanied by the cantor and choir of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim in Westmount, the synagogue his great-grandfather had founded, and in whose cemetery he would be buried on November 10, in a private ceremony, next to his parents.

In L.A., Cohen was working until the day before he died: a new collection of poems, more than fifty of them done, and songs for a new album. The champion of the cracked and broken, one of the great poets and songwriters of our time, a one-off, irreplaceable, he died with his boots on, and left us so much.

Text originally published in *MOJO*, No. 279 (February 2017).

## 10. November 7, 2016 A Kaddish for Leonard Cohen

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Shortly after the release of *You Want It Darker*, his fourteenth and final album, Cohen passed away at his Los Angeles residence.

He had launched *You Want It Darker* on October 21, 2016. Produced by his son, singer Adam Cohen, the album was recorded at Leonard Cohen's home in Los Angeles, on account of his precarious health. Offering a more acoustic sound, the album features Eastern European musical influences as well as the choir of the Shaar Hashomayim synagogue in Westmount, which he had attended throughout his childhood. From the start, it was universally acclaimed by critics. Nineteen days later, Leonard Cohen died in the night at his home. His death, occurring during the week in which Donald Trump was elected to the US Presidency, left the public heartbroken, so striking was the contrast between the two events.

In retrospect, *You Want It Darker* gives the impression that Cohen was reciting his own Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead. Indeed, the Hebrew word *Hineni*, which he repeatedly utters in the title song, as well as the words "I'm ready, my Lord," evoke a sombre prophecy. Cohen's death was mourned across Canada and around the world. In Montréal, admirers from all over gathered in front of his home on Rue Vallières to commemorate the final departure of this most famous of Montrealers. The Québec flag was flown at half-mast over the National Assembly in Québec City. Rarely had a Montrealer touched so many people of different cultures and generations. With his own, unique way of expressing melancholy and the beauty of the world, his remarkable ability to reinvent himself through poetry, song and prayer, as well as his distinctive voice, Leonard Cohen produced a luminous body of work that has been celebrated worldwide for decades. Today, the man who became one of the greatest singer/songwriters of his time continues to inspire a host of artists for whom his memory lives on.

Gabor Szilasi  
*Leonard Cohen 1966, 2017*  
Gelatin silver print  
27.9 x 35.6 cm  
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal







ARI FOLMAN  
GEORGE FOK  
KOTA EZAWA  
MICHAEL RAKOWITZ  
TARYN SIMON  
THOMAS DEMAND  
CHRISTOPHE CHASSOL  
JANET CARDIFF AND GEORGE BURES MILLER  
KARA BLAKE  
CANDICE BREITZ  
SHARON ROBINSON  
LEONARD COHEN  
THE SANCHEZ BROTHERS  
JON RAFMAN  
CLARA FUREY WITH MARK QUINN  
TACITA DEAN  
DAILY TOUS LES JOURS  
ZACH RICHTER  
JENNY HOLZER

## ARI FOLMAN

HAIFA, ISRAEL, 1962

LIVES AND WORKS IN TEL AVIV, ISRAEL.

### ***Depression Chamber*, 2017**

Interactive computer-animated video installation, live camera, Kinect sensor, black and white, colour, sound, 5 min 10 s, including resting platform

The fragility of the human psyche is a recurring theme in Leonard Cohen's early albums and throughout his body of work. Addressing the debilitating nature of loss, suffering and depression, Israeli filmmaker Ari Folman has created a sensory "depression chamber." Visitors are invited, one at a time, to enter a sarcophagus-like environment and be plunged into an otherworldly experience. The image of the visitor lying on a bed in the space, in total isolation and darkness, is projected onto the ceiling of the box as Cohen's song *Famous Blue Raincoat* plays. The projected lyrics of the song begin to slowly morph, letter by letter, through animation, into icons that symbolize Cohen's multi-faceted thematic universe. These images eventually flood the space, gradually shrouding the visitor's image.

Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) is internationally recognized as a cinematic masterpiece. The animated feature documentary won eighteen awards, including Israel's awards for best film, best director and best screenplay, and the Directors Guild of America award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Documentary, and was honoured with a Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film. The war documentary was also nominated for multiple BAFTA awards, a Cannes Film Festival award and an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Folman's 2013 live action/animated feature film *The Congress* premiered that year at Cannes and won the European Film Academy award for Animated Feature Film.

My first memory of Leonard Cohen, goes back many years to when I was a boy of ten. My eighteen-year-old eldest sister's boyfriend left her without warning, and she plunged into a deep depression. She locked herself in her room for weeks, shut the shutters and windows, and played just one record on her turntable: *Songs of Leonard Cohen*. Cohen's first record. The whole family stood outside her bedroom day after day, for hours, terrified that my sister would harm herself. After a month inside, she came out as skinny as a toothpick and told us she'd decided to study medicine. Forty years on, she's an international specialist in ophthalmology for premature babies.

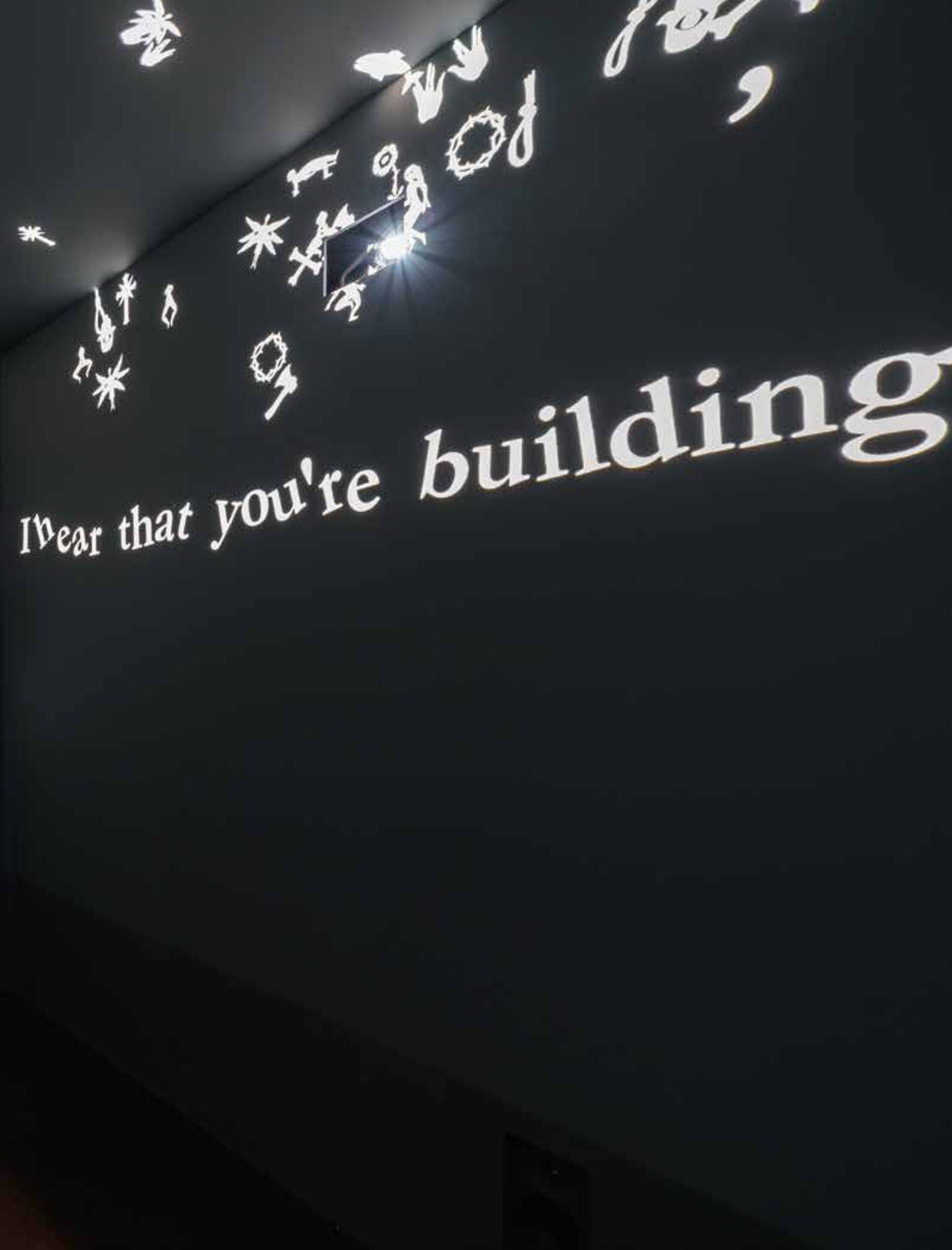
The years passed, but Leonard Cohen remained forever associated in my mind with an all-embracing, protective, sweet melancholy that gives you a feeling of home and of "leave me alone for a while, I need some time to myself." When I received the wonderful offer to take part in the exhibition at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, I intuitively knew that I wanted to address the depressing aspect of Leonard Cohen as it was manifested in his early albums. To try to understand what drives what: Does Cohen's melancholia drive his creative work? Or does his creativity "oblige" the listener—as a built-in condition—to enter a state of melancholia? The general idea is to build a "depression box," a kind of sarcophagus 3 × 2 metres in size and 2 metres tall. A completely black box, a black Limbo, with a pallet on the floor. The visitor lies on the pallet, and hears Cohen's *Famous Blue Raincoat* (according to Cohen's fan site, this song was chosen many times as his most depressing song). The visitor, in total isolation, hears the song; then the visitor's image appears on the black ceiling of the box. Meanwhile, the lyrics of the song are projected on all the walls, while slowly, the letters of the lyrics morph in beautiful animation to icons that symbolize Cohen's world. These beautiful images flood the box and move slowly upward, starting to cover the visitor's image on the ceiling. We can see the notes take over the visitor's brain, innards, intestines, lungs, bloodstream, all in breathtaking animation that underlines the influence of melancholia on the body. By the end of the song, the visitor's image on the ceiling is completely covered and buried by what used to be the lyrics of the song. The total isolation in which the visitor is immersed, the caressing music—the volume of which is emphasized by the acoustic box—will gradually create, over the course of five minutes, a unique listening and viewing experience appropriate to Cohen more than any other artist. A.F.



**Strength**

ev ein<sup>6</sup>



A dark, textured wall is illuminated from above by a bright, circular light source, creating a starburst effect. Scattered across the upper portion of the wall are numerous white silhouettes of people in various poses, some holding hands, and several star-like symbols. The silhouettes appear to be part of a larger, partially visible graphic or mural. The overall atmosphere is dramatic and artistic.

I wear that you're *building*



hope you're keeping

some kind of record



3/4 o' for me

for Jane

## GEORGE FOK

HONG KONG, 1969

LIVES AND WORKS IN MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC.

### ***Passing Through*, 2017**

Multi-channel video installation, black and white and colour, sound, 56 min 15 s, looped

*Passing Through*, an immersive video work, celebrates Leonard Cohen's singular voice, his music, his charismatic persona and his inimitable stage presence. Drawing on a vast archive of audiovisual material, George Fok pays tribute to Leonard Cohen's monumental, five-decade-long career as a singer/songwriter and performer. This composite portrait of the artist recalls and reconstructs various pivotal stages in Cohen's career—from his early years in bohemian, 1960s Montréal to his recognition as a heavyweight global cultural icon later in life. Visitors experience an extraordinary time-travel journey through a collage of collective memories, musical moments and emotions that have enchanted generations of fans around the world.

George Fok received his design education at Hong Kong Polytechnic, which provided him with an eclectic blend of traditional British art education and progressive Eastern philosophy. Upon his arrival in Montréal, he co-founded Epoxy Communications and established himself as a creative director capable of crossing over into various visual communication platforms, from graphic design, photography, film and video to visual effects. He is currently creative director at the Phi Centre, a multidisciplinary cultural institution in Montréal.

*Passing Through* is my personal tribute, a commemorative farewell and also an invitation to loyal fans of Leonard Cohen and a new generation of audiences to celebrate his charismatic persona and monumental stage presence, in an immersive time-travel journey.

With the objective of collective experience rather than personal achievement in mind, the focus of this installation is first and foremost Leonard—larger than life.

My creative process began with an extensive footage search from broadcasters and institutional archives; an analytical database was then compiled from a variety of sources as the bedrock of this work. The contents of this footage were meticulously reviewed and categorized into groups and subgroups, such as tempo, key, framing, duration, camera angle, etc., thus giving an overview of available audiovisual material for montage and composition.

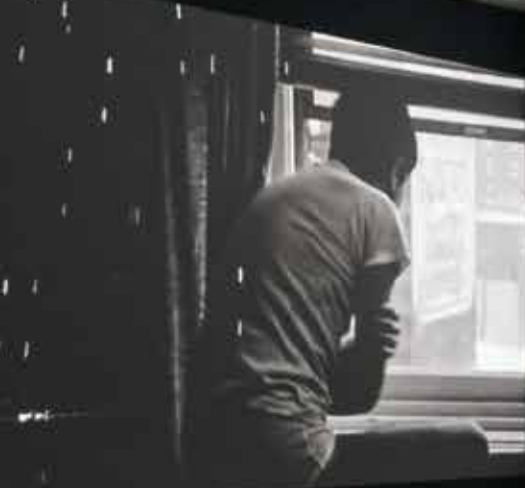
The song *Passing Through*, although not written by Leonard himself, was performed extensively during his early career years. The opening verse unfolds a parable, from a first-person point of view, as a stranger, sojourner or bystander eyewitnesses Jesus' excruciating suffering on the cross. Perplexed by the circumstance, the stranger poses a question about the worthiness of Jesus' sacrifice for a world that is hostile and treacherous. Surprisingly, Jesus encourages the stranger with words of love and compassion rather than hate, speaking of the transient nature of one's life journey on earth. This quasi-Abrahamic, Judeo-Christian notion, which prevails throughout Cohen's body of work, and the liturgical quality of his work (*Hallelujah*), intensified in his last three albums, have become the backbone and source of inspiration of this project.

This is complemented by other prominent themes in Cohen's work, such as romance, longing, desire and remorse—with hits such as *Suzanne* and *Chelsea Hotel No. 2* underlining the ironic link between loneliness and companionship.

The final emotional letter Leonard wrote to Marianne Ihlen before her death has added another swell of emotion to the song as I witnessed it for the first time, the young, midlife and elder Leonard performing the same song in a juxtapositional time frame.

The conflict between his Jewish identity and his Buddhist practice, his social criticism and cynicism, between the sacred and the secular, longing and spirituality, darkness and elegance, humour and wisdom, is well displayed in the middle section with the choice of songs like *Democracy*, *Dance Me to the End of Love*, *Tower of Song* and *Memories*.

Finally, I've been deeply moved by the beauty and knowledge of Leonard Cohen and by his words of wisdom—his dedicated work ethic, brutal honesty toward himself, stoic manner at times of suffering, constant quest for spirituality and much more. I would like to be able to partake in his legacy, through my work in this exhibition, to celebrate, rejoice and share tears of loving memories together with every visitor, in this particular time and space where our paths intersect and we are blessed with his golden voice. G.F.



*mais maintenant ils ont rouillé  
du coude jusqu'au bout des doigts*









*Ils m'ont condamné à vingt ans d'ennui*









## KOTA EZAWA

COLOGNE, GERMANY, 1969

LIVES AND WORKS IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA.

### **Cohen 21, 2017**

16-mm animated film installation, black and white, sound, 2 min 30 s, looped

In his cinematic work *Cohen 21*, Kota Ezawa reanimates the opening two and a half minutes of the National Film Board of Canada's 1965 documentary film, *Ladies and Gentlemen... Mr. Leonard Cohen*. This recreated black-and-white scene portrays Cohen at age thirty on a visit to his hometown of Montréal, where he comes "to renew his neurotic affiliations." Ezawa has created a derivative work, painstakingly animated frame by frame and overlaid with semi-transparent geometric forms inspired by Hans Richter's 1921 silent abstract film *Rhythm 21*.

Kota Ezawa's work explores the appropriation and mediation of current events and images. He translates found film, video and photographic images into drawings and animations that reduce complex imagery to its most essential, two-dimensional elements in order to debate their validity as mediators of actual historical events and personal experiences. Ezawa's work has been shown in solo exhibitions across Canada and the United States, and in group exhibitions at major museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Art Institute of Chicago and Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris.

When the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal approached me about contributing a work for *A Crack in Everything*, I was only vaguely familiar with the music of Leonard Cohen. Growing up in rural Germany in the eighties, my main musical influences were Heavy Metal, Punk and Pop music. North American singer/songwriters almost completely passed me by, perhaps because I thought it was necessary to pay attention to the lyrics (which I didn't always understand).

To my surprise, I got completely sucked into the music of Leonard Cohen while gearing up for this project and have listened to it constantly in my studio ever since. What touches me about Cohen's oeuvre is that it works so well as a sonic experience—and not just as a recitation of his much-lauded lyrics. I'm equally seduced by the guitar arpeggios from his early albums, the synth pop in his eighties recordings, the choir and string arrangements on his last album and by the metamorphosis of his voice over time.

*Cohen 21* is not so much an homage to Leonard Cohen as it is a chemical experiment. What do you get if you combine the first two and a half minutes of a poetry performance by Cohen with the geometric movement in Hans Richter's film *Rhythm 21*? I leave it up to the viewer to analyze the result, but my hope is that Richter's Dadaist shapes function similarly to the instrumental portion of Cohen's music and that they transform Cohen's words into a song. K.E.





## MICHAEL RAKOWITZ

GREAT NECK, NEW YORK, 1973

LIVES AND WORKS IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

### ***I'm Good at Love, I'm Good at Hate, It's in Between I Freeze*, 2015–2017**

Multimedia installation featuring video projection, darkened monitor, archival artifacts and objects

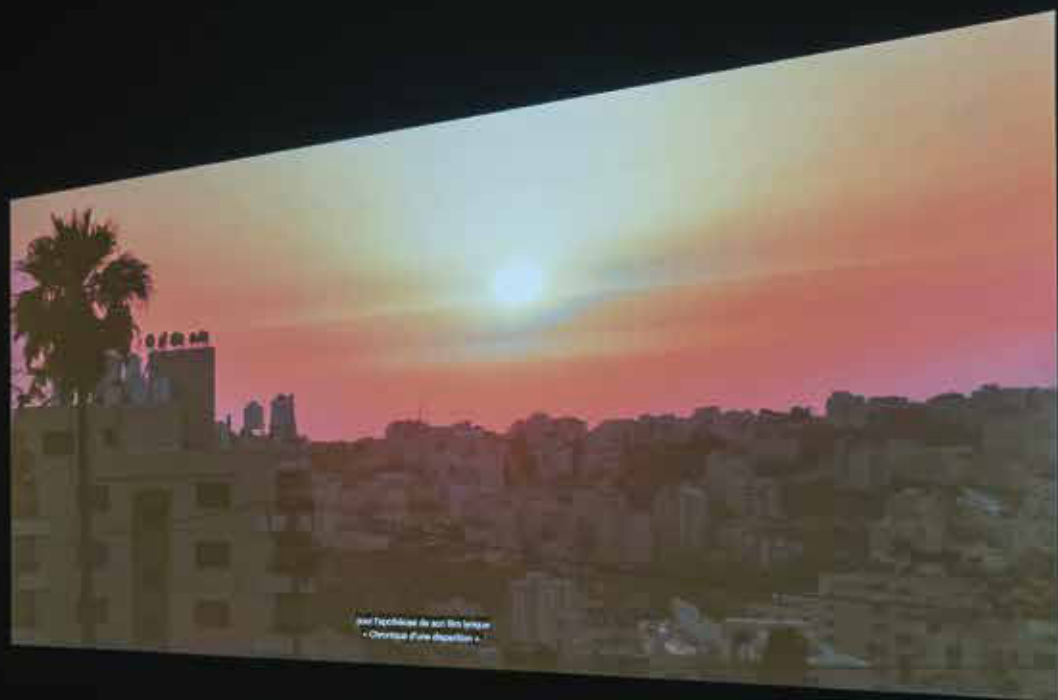
This installation meditates on the iconic figure of Leonard Cohen and the ethical crisis of the post-Holocaust Jew in relation to Israel, Palestine and the greater Middle East. Michael Rakowitz presents various relevant objects and artifacts (such as Cohen poems published in Farsi in Iran), as well as letters and contextualized fragments that weave together a compelling and moving narrative.

The work also includes a video projection, filmed at the Alhambra Palace Hotel in Ramallah, Palestine—which, like the Hotel Chelsea in New York City, hosted many musicians and movie stars passing through Palestine—to reconstruct the period during which Cohen travelled to Israel to perform for troops fighting in the Yom Kippur War. The project's culmination is an event that may or may not happen: the reincarnation of a 2009 Cohen concert in Ramallah, which was cancelled because of the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, to be played by Rakowitz and local musicians at the Ramallah Cultural Palace. This footage will be added to the installation once it has taken place. Until then, the video monitor remains dark.

Michael Rakowitz's multidisciplinary practice engages the senses as a means of sparking discourse around pressing political, social and historical issues. An American artist of Iraqi-Jewish origin, Rakowitz creates conceptual art that is known for establishing unexpected connections. In doing so, he forges entirely new and composite narratives that challenge and engage the audience in a vibrant revival of the past.

He is Professor of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University and has shown his work in venues worldwide. Over the years, he has been honoured with many awards for his work, which also features in major private and public collections around the world. His solo exhibition at MCA Chicago, *Michael Rakowitz: Backstroke of the West*, opened in September 2017. He has been awarded the Fourth Plinth commission for 2018 in London's Trafalgar Square.







August 14, 2015

Dear Leonard,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to you from my rented apartment in Istanbul. In fact, I am writing this letter on your green Olivetti Lettera 22 typewriter, a prize eBay acquisition for which I paid dearly. I have been trying to contact you through your representative, Robert Kory, since November 2012. In his response, he said that you and I should meet and that we have much to talk about as artists. Sadly, I have not heard any further, so I am reaching out once more.

I don't know if you could simply consider me a fan. I am a very great admirer of your work, although I came to it late, in order to romance a girl from your hometown of Montreal. Proselytization finally occurred during your concert at the Chicago Theatre in May 2009. I was taken in by your humility; your poignant utterances renewed my faith in poetry to have world-changing potency. At the end, you coyly recited the traditional Hebrew "Birkat Cohanin" blessing in everyday language, a kind of farewell that was bestowed by you—in the position of Cohanin priest, as your name suggests—upon an audience of mixed backgrounds with a simple warning that we should bundle up because the weather was tricky; that if we should fall, may it be on the side of luck; a wish for us to be surrounded by loved ones, and if this was not our lot in life, that the blessings find us in our solitude. I never felt more Jewish in my entire life.

I have sat through many concerts and 41 Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur sermons. This was the pinnacle of any live collective event I can recall to memory.

Later that same year, I traveled to Jerusalem to make an artwork of my own with a Palestinian organization called Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art. I was elated to find out that you were scheduled

to play in Ramallah in September at the invitation of the Palestinian Prisoners Club. But then the restrictions of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI) forced the gig's cancellation, as you were also scheduled to play Tel Aviv on September 24, just three days after your 75th birthday.

In a press release explaining the cancellation, PACBI stated: "Attempts at 'parity' not only immorally equate the oppressor with the oppressed, taking a neutral position on the oppression...they also are an insult to the Palestinian people, as they assume that we are naive enough to accept such token shows of 'solidarity' that are solely intended to cover up grave acts of collusion in whitewashing Israel's crimes. Those sincerely interested in defending Palestinian rights and taking a moral and courageous stance against the Israeli occupation and apartheid should not play Israel, period. That is the minimum form of solidarity Palestinian civil society has called for."

Leonard, I believe boycotts are problematic. I think politics can obliterate art, but I also think that art can create facts and bring to light truths that are suppressed. Your words have had great impact around the world, and in particular, in the Arab world and West Asia. Palestinian director Elia Suleiman features your recording of "First We Take Manhattan" during the climax of his lyrical film "Chronicle of a Disappearance." Your prose is quoted by poets and artists from Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. Two collections of your poems have been translated into Farsi and published in Iran, where Jewish poets are not well represented. Both editions sold out within hours. Art obliterates politics.

I have never been interested in being perfect, morally or ethically. I am interested in the real, the contradictions and the resultant tensions that are created within the self. I think about you-- the you who was born in 1934, and the 11-year-old boy who in 1945 saw



footage of the inferno that was the Holocaust. A tragic truth, and one that led to overwhelming support for a Jewish homeland, for a Europe in exile.

Your desire to balance your presence in Palestine/Israel is one that I therefore understand. I was raised in suburban New York, and there seemed no logical reason to not support Zionism. Then in college I was introduced to the facts of an indigenous people's dispossession and humiliation, the cost of constructing a Jewish homeland. I saw footage of the atrocities committed at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982. Cognitive dissonance set in.

I am currently working on a project about you, titled "I'm Good At Love, I'm Good At Hate, It's In Between I Freeze". The title is of course taken from your composition "Recitation." This paralysis located in the middle is the moment that captivates me. I feel it too, and I think many Jews around the world who are faced with the ethical crisis of what Israel is and what Israel does feel it as well.

The project may or may not be a film. It may be a film that does not need to be made and maybe it already has been. It centers on your participation in the 1973 Yom Kippur War as a kind of warrior poet. You traveled to Tel Aviv from Hydra, Greece to, as you said, "stop Egypt's bullet." Believing that the future of the Jewish people was at stake, you positioned yourself firmly in the line of fire, performing for the Israeli troops and even sipping cognac with Ariel Sharon in the Sinai. Photos of these performances exist. Some foggy recollections of soldiers and fellow performers also exist. I have pulled some documentation together, but I am too restless and disturbed to allow all this to rest politely as a documentary.

Let me explain. My grandparents fled Baghdad in 1946 for political reasons. I grew up hearing my grandmother recount stories of that city, a remembrance of a lost home.

As Jews living in Baghdad in the 1940s, my grandparents' lives became increasingly difficult as the tide of politics turned and the British Mandate for the partition of Palestine grew closer and closer to becoming a reality. Their land was confiscated, their assets taken and their lives changed forever. In some ways, a good forever. In many ways, a sad forever. My grandparents spoke Arabic and traditional foods were kubba, mashi, and arook. They were Jews but they were also Iraqi, until they were told they could no longer be Iraqi.

Looking through old photographs recently, I came across several of my grandfather wearing a keffiyeh. It reinforced for me that we were actually Arabs. Arab Jews. This term--Arab Jew--existed in the world until 1948. Now it seems like an oxymoron. I am not interested in arguments and accusations about who is responsible for the exodus of Jews from Arab lands and who suffered more at whose hands and when. But the well-documented programs that sought to de-Arabize Arab Jews upon their arrival in Israel was another act of cultural erasure, of disappearance, with which I am intimate.

The existence of the state of Israel could not be possible without a choreography of historical narratives that does not always intersect with truth. "A land without a people for a people without a land", for one. Well, there were people there. Every Jewish institution that I have ever known has displayed the Hebrew inscription "zachor." Remember. And as a Jew, I cannot support a Zionist position because of what it forgets.

I am therefore asking your permission, Leonard, to remember. To illuminate truth. As a Jewish artist who has written many letters declining invitations to exhibit in Israel, as a signatory of the Academic and Cultural Boycott, I ask your permission to perform the concert you planned in Ramallah as a culmination of this project. This is not meant to sound like an attempt at correction. You came from the West and made a choice. I approach from the East and make another. Both are painful, and both yield unacceptable consequences of elimination (in this case, of audiences). But I am heartened, for

it is you who wrote:

I can't run no more  
with that lawless crowd  
while the killers in high places  
say their prayers out loud  
But they've summoned  
a thunder cloud  
And they're going to hear from me.

Perhaps I don't need to ask your permission. Who owns a song? Reflecting on the pilfered rights to "Suzanne," you said "It is probably appropriate that I don't own this song. Just the other day I heard some people singing it on a ship in the Caspian Sea." Indeed. Your songs are now part of public space. They belong to the world.

I don't know why I am writing to you, then. I suppose it is about honor among artists. I see the conflict in you and the conflict in me and think that somehow we can blend and have it both ways. I want you to know that in war sometimes the good guys lose and that maybe you sang for the enemy. I guess I want you to know that the way you feel feels normal to me, but that that is no excuse.

I will go now, and stop Israel's bullet.

Sincerely,

  
Michael Rakowitz

#### PROPOSED SETLIST

Ramallah Cultural Palace, Palestine

Date: TBD

#### First Set

|                             |                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dance Me to the End of Love | Encore                  |
| The Future                  |                         |
| Ain't No Cure for Love      | So Long, Marianne       |
| Bird on the Wire            | First We Take Manhattan |
| Everybody Knows             | Encore 2                |
| In My Secret Life           |                         |
| Who by Fire                 |                         |
| Chelsea Hotel no.2          | Famous Blue Raincoat    |
| Lover Lover Lover           | If It Be Your Will      |
| Avalanche                   | Closing Time            |
| Waiting for the Miracle     |                         |
| Anthem                      | Encore 3                |

#### Second Set

|                  |                                   |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Tower of Song    | I Tried to Leave You              |
| Suzanne          | Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye |
| Sisters of Mercy | Whither Thou Goest                |
| The Gypsy's Wife |                                   |
| The Partisan     |                                   |
| Boogie Street    |                                   |
| Hallelujah       |                                   |
| I'm Your Man     |                                   |
| Take This Waltz  |                                   |

# TARYN SIMON

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, 1975  
LIVES AND WORKS IN NEW YORK.

## ***The New York Times, Friday, November 11, 2016*, 2017**

Mixed-media installation

Back issue of the *New York Times* newspaper (dated November 11, 2016), including a glass display cabinet

Leonard Cohen died on Monday, November 7, 2016, one day before Donald Trump was elected the forty-fifth President of the United States. The *New York Times* published his obituary on the front page of the newspaper on Friday, November 11, 2016, below an article and photograph describing the first face-to-face meeting between Barack Obama and then President-elect Trump. In the picture that accompanies his obituary, Cohen lifts his hat in a gesture of greeting or farewell.

Taryn Simon is a multidisciplinary artist working in photography, text, sculpture and performance. Guided by an interest in systems of categorization and classification, her practice involves extensive research into the power and structure of secrecy and the precarious nature of survival. Simon's works have been the subject of exhibitions at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen (2016-2017), The Albertinum, Dresden (2016), Galerie Rudolfinum, Prague (2016), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2016), Jeu de Paume, Paris (2015), Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing (2013), Museum of Modern Art, New York (2012), Tate Modern, London (2011), Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2011), and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2007). Permanent collections include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tate Modern, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Centre Pompidou and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Her work was included in the 56th Venice Biennale (2015). Simon is a graduate of Brown University and a Guggenheim Fellow.





# The New York Times

## TRUMP AND OBAMA



### 'Never Trump' Becomes 'May'



Trump supporters in Reno, Nev., cheered as it became clear the real estate mogul was going to become the president-elect.

By SHIRLEY GAY STOLBERG

NAZARETH, Pa. — Debbie Biro became a Republican to vote for Donald J. Trump.

A lifelong Democrat, Ms. Biro, 57, is a churchgoing single mother who practices yoga and does not eat meat. She works in the office at the Crayola Crayons factory near here, and she can pinpoint her "turning point" — the moment she became convinced that Mr. Trump was "a strong leader, and he'll get things done."

It came in January, when he skipped a debate in Iowa to host a fund-raiser for veterans — an event that later garnered questions of how much money he had given. Ms. Biro's father served in the Korean War, and she said she admired Mr. Trump's business skills, "and I thought it was nice that he was taking care of the vets."

In well-to-do Naples, Fla., Sue Gauta, 47, a small-business owner

married to a doctor, also embraced Mr. Trump. So did Wanda Lincoln, 67, a retired college administrator still working to make ends meet in a threadbare mill city in Maine. And Kyleigh Ostendorf, 26, who lives in Los Ange-

les and produces graphics for ESPN.

As America dissects the results of Tuesday's election, one trend stands out: Tens of thousands of women — 53 percent of all white

Continued on Election 2016, Page P10



Leonard Cohen in 2012. His musical career spanned 45 years.

## Writer of 'Hall

By LARRY ROHTER

Leonard Cohen, the Canadian poet and novelist who abandoned a promising literary career to become one of the foremost songwriters of the contemporary era, has died, according to an announcement Thursday night on his Facebook page. He was 82.

Mr. Cohen's record label, Sony Music, confirmed the death. No

### ELECTION 2016 P.12

#### A Bonanza for Lobbying Firms

Expecting gridlock to end with a Trump presidency, corporations are seeking help to navigate the change. PAGE 14

#### Jousting With the Republicans

Senator Chuck Schumer will need to summon his combative and combative instincts as minority leader. PAGE 11



### ELECTION 2016

#### Tough Promises to Keep

Donald J. Trump has promised to "drain the swamp" of the sprawling federal bureaucracy. Doing so will likely be vastly more difficult than his supporters had envisioned. PAGE 14

#### Russia and Trump's Allies

Russia's government had contact with members of Donald J. Trump's "transition team" during the 2016 campaign, a Russian diplomat said. PAGE 12

#### The Votes That Really Count

Some call for electoral college after Hillary Clinton wins the popular vote but not the Electoral College. PAGE 14

### NEW YORK A16-20

#### Clogging a Busy

Fifth Avenue and 561 section in front of Trump Donald J. Trump lives into a restricted access



### EDITORIAL, OP-ED

David Brooks





see 'Europe' in Foreign Policy System

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — It was visceral. Women felt gutted, shocked, appalled, afraid. The prospect of celebrating the election of the nation's first female president had been crushed by a man whom many women viewed as sexist.

In this liberal enclave, where Mrs. Clinton won 89.2 percent of the vote over Donald J. Trump, one of her strongest showings anywhere, Molly Hubner, 33, said she was having difficulty explaining the result to her 6-year-old daughter.

"We had told her that he wouldn't be a good president because he's not very kind," Ms. Hubner said, pushing her young son in a stroller as she jogged down a leaf-covered sidewalk. After the election, she said, they told her it is important to be kind to people "and that our country is O.K., it's still a



NEW ANGLES/GETTY IMAGES

Women who had supported Hillary Clinton gathered in Washington Square Park in New York on the day after the election.

safe place to be."

Women across the country who supported Mrs. Clinton are just starting to process their feelings about the long roller coaster ride that in their view ended in disaster.

The shock they feel that a man whom they describe as sexist, misogynistic and boorish was elected has overshadowed some of their grief about Mrs. Clinton's loss. Like so many of the other vi-

Continued in Election 2016, Page P10

## LEONARD COHEN, 1934-2016

## elujah' Whose Lyrics Captivated Generations

details were available on the cause or where he died.

Over a musical career that spanned nearly five decades, Mr. Cohen wrote songs that addressed — in spare language that could be both oblique and telling — themes of love and faith, despair and exaltation, solitude and connection, war and politics. More than 2,000 recordings of his songs have been made, initially by the folk-pop singers who were his first

champions, like Judy Collins and Tim Hardin, and later by performers from across the spectrum of popular music, among them U2, Aretha Franklin, R.E.M., Jeff Buckley, Trisha Yearwood and Elton John.

Mr. Cohen's best-known song may well be "Hallelujah," a majestic, meditative ballad infused with both religiosity and earthiness. It was written for a 1984 album that his record company rejected as in-

sufficiently commercial and popularized a decade later by Jeff Buckley. Since then, some 200 artists, from Bob Dylan to Justin Timberlake, have sung or recorded it. A book has been written about it, and it has been featured on the soundtracks of movies and television shows and sung at the Olympics and other public events. At the 2016 Grammy Awards, Katy Perry sang "Hallelujah" for the an-

Continued on Page B15

## Crossroads

to Street. The interior Tower which has been turned on end. **WALL AND**



## HURSTNESS DAY 01.0

## Sizing Up Trade War vs. China

President-elect Donald J. Trump would have plenty of economic weapons at his disposal if he wanted to punish China over trade, but the Chinese could cause increased damage to theirs. **PAUL M.**

## The Market Rises With Trump

Analysts expected stocks to begin a [down] A. Trump won the election, but traders are in a happy mood for now. [down] M. Mervin's return. [down] M.

### A Test for Deficit Spending

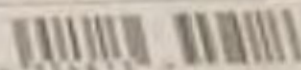
(No higher deficit is used to stimulate growth). A rising provision is more visible in account. The United States is



## WEEKEND ARTISTS 59

### Late-Night Reality Check

Corruption entering their programs in Washington faced the unlikely task of achieving the surprising result: results that it is not.



# THOMAS DEMAND

MUNICH, GERMANY, 1964  
LIVES AND WORKS IN BERLIN, GERMANY  
AND LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

## ***Ampel / Stoplight*, 2016**

Multimedia video installation

Animated video on LED panel, colour, stereo,  
sound (Tyondai Braxton with Leonard Cohen),  
20 min, looped

In Thomas Demand's video piece, an animated sculptural rendition of a stoplight switches from red to green and then back to red. A pedestrian traffic light is amongst the most binary and self-evident directives of any city, an organizer of movement and, at the same time, a symbolic representation of an individual and a hand. These two signs are profoundly basic images that send clear and concise instructions to the pedestrian.

The close-up view of the stoplight is accompanied by a special a cappella recording of Leonard Cohen's song *Everybody Knows*, which Demand considers a piece of musical infrastructure. The song is both wickedly funny and bleakly pessimistic, an endless litany of notable observations and dystopian predictions where the title is repeated dozens of times, echoing the relentless stop and go of the stoplight. Tyondai Braxton composed a soundtrack that embeds Cohen's vocal track with abstract but urban signals and humming tunes. The timed animation follows the song's recurring refrains and stanzas.

After initially concentrating on sculpture, Thomas Demand soon turned to constructing architectural models out of paper and cardboard, which he then photographed or filmed to make astonishing, yet enigmatic, large-scale images and projections. His work has been shown in countless group shows around the world and solo exhibitions at major international institutions.



## CHRISTOPHE CHASSOL

PARIS, FRANCE, 1976

LIVES AND WORKS IN PARIS.

### *Cuba in Cohen*, 2017

Single-screen video installation, black and white, sound, 15 min 19 s, looped, including annotated musical scores

In the video *Cuba in Cohen*, Christophe Chassol remixes, sets to melody and harmonizes an excerpt of Leonard Cohen reciting his poem “The Only Tourist in Havana Turns His Thoughts Homeward” (*Flowers for Hitler*, 1964) from the National Film Board of Canada’s documentary film *Ladies and Gentlemen... Mr. Leonard Cohen* (Donald Brittain and Don Owen, 1965). During his residency at Xavier Veilhan’s “Studio Venezia”—the French pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale—French composer and pianist Christophe Chassol scored the poem and invited several singers to reinterpret this newly melodized work. Chassol created his “ultrascore” by applying speech-harmonizing techniques to the excerpt of Cohen’s poetry reading. Isolating and synchronizing each syllable spoken by the poet, Chassol forms melodic arrangements, which are then harmonized with bass lines and drum beats.

Christophe Chassol is a pianist, film score composer and audiovisual maverick. His compositions combine voice, music, sound and image into new audiovisual objects—“ultrascores”—which he duplicates and re-edits to create a visual motif through the harmonization of sounds. His last “ultrascore,” *Big Sun* (2015), was produced in his family’s birthplace—Martinique—and closes a trilogy begun in New Orleans with *Nola Chérie* (2012) and continued in India with *Indiamore* (2013).

I grew up listening obsessively to classical music, jazz, film music, Indian classical music, West Indian music and a few pop bands.

I was, and still am, crazy about Miles Davis, Stravinsky, Ennio Morricone, Ravi Shankar and The Cure, but I more or less consciously overlooked institutions like the Beatles, Bob Dylan or Pink Floyd. Leonard Cohen was one of those I overlooked.

That’s why, when I was invited to participate in this exhibition, I thought at first that I wasn’t a legitimate participant. Then I understood that it was actually an opportunity to use my musical practice of harmonizing reality to discover and appropriate for myself this “artist/institution” whose song *Suzanne* was all I vaguely knew. My only other connection to Leonard Cohen was his family name, which he shared with my partner and our son.

In delving into the archives placed at my disposal, I was struck by his resemblance to Dustin Hoffman—someone I have felt close to since I was a teenager because of *Little Big Man* and, especially, *Marathon Man*.

More than his music, I wanted to hear his poems, his prose and his diction.

Looking at the documentary *Ladies and Gentlemen... Mr. Leonard Cohen*, the political irony, the quiet calm, the humour and the depth of the young “Dustin Cohen” in his poem “The Only Tourist in Havana Turns His Thoughts Homeward” immediately spoke to me.

The melodic promise of political phrases like “Let us encourage the dark races, so they’ll be lenient when they take over” was more than fulfilled.

Other, more violent and nostalgic lines still resonate in my head:

“My brothers, come, our serious heads are waiting for us somewhere, like Gladstone bags abandoned after a *coup d’état*.”

C.C.



I was in Havana



fighting on both sides

And, I wrote  
this poem



Let us put them on  
very quickly



A black and white photograph of a man in a leather jacket reading a book, projected onto a wall in a dark room. The man is looking down at the book with a focused expression. The background of the projection shows vertical light and dark stripes, possibly from curtains. The text is overlaid on the lower right of the image.

so they'll be lenient  
when they take over



Exposition

One bed in a tent house

A crack in the wall

MAC - Macneil

05/11/2017 - 02/04/2018

## CUBA IN COHEN -

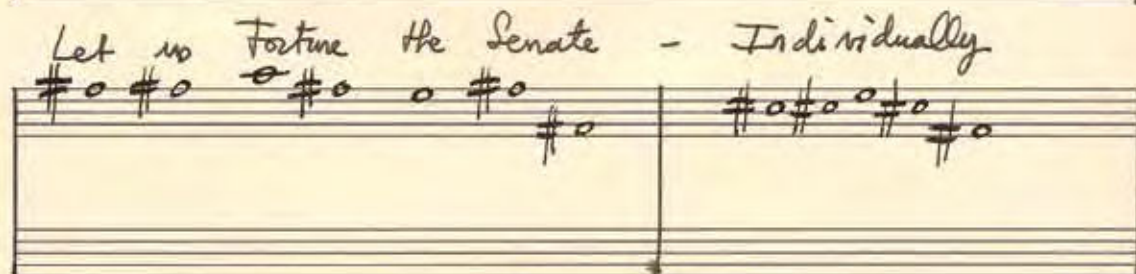
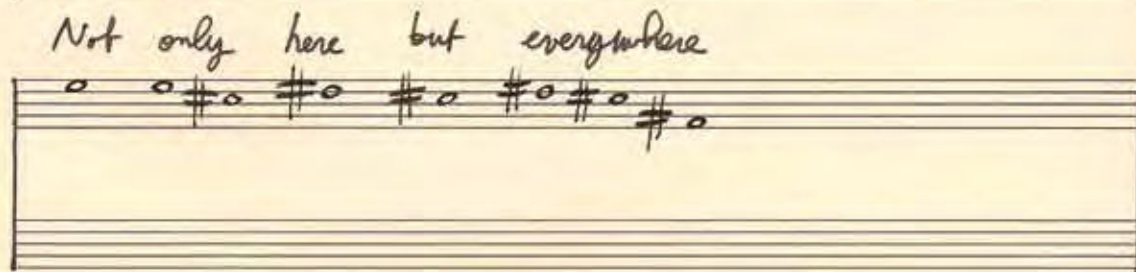
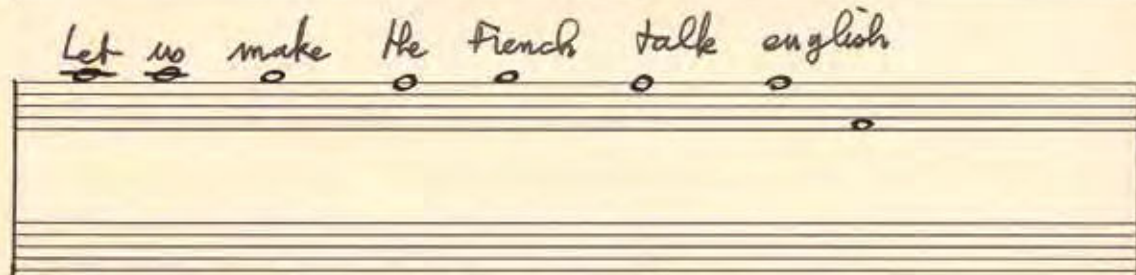
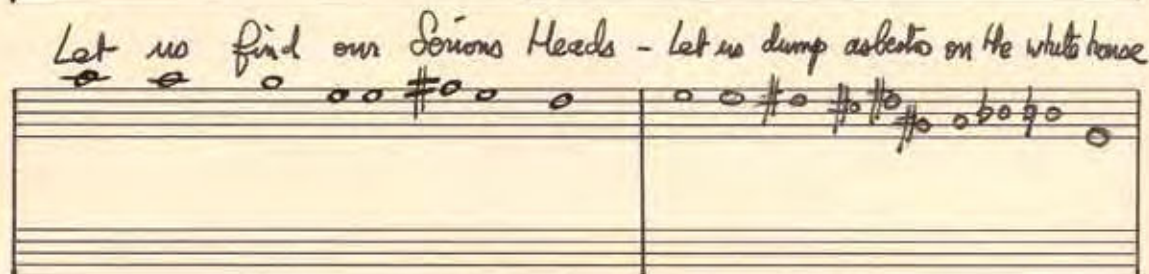
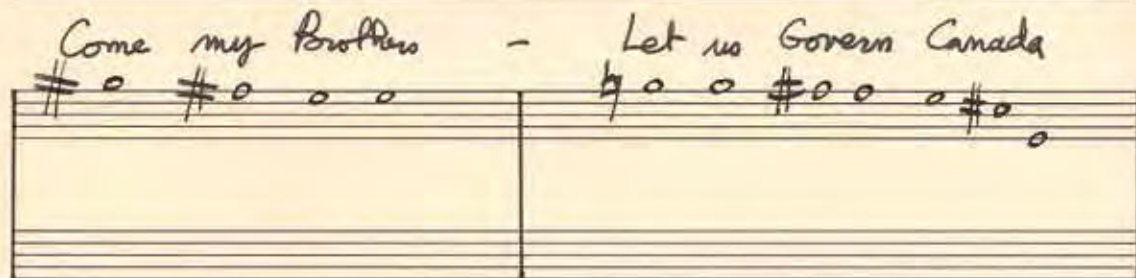
Christophe Chassol

French Parody Reading

Vanice Brémont

Xavier Verbeke

juillet 2017

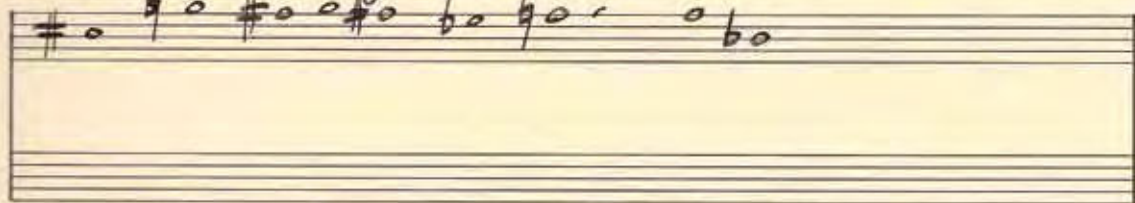


Until they confess

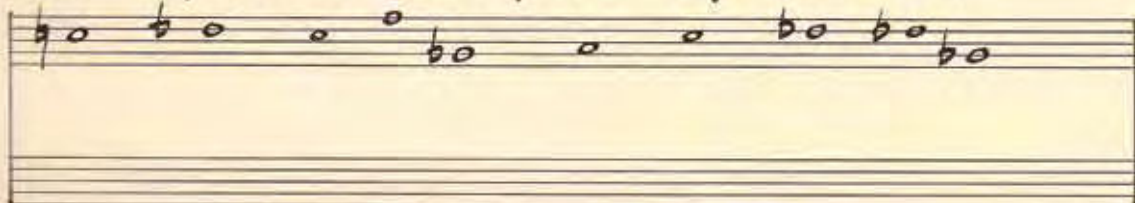
- Let us Purge the New Party



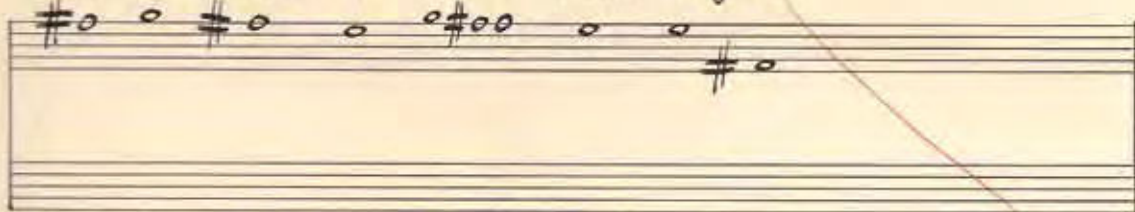
Let us encourage the Dark Races



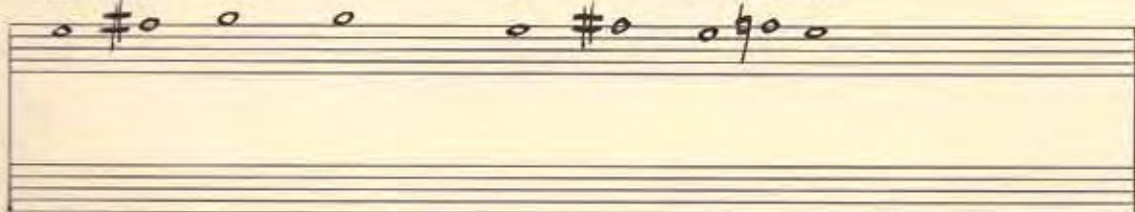
So they'll be lenient, when they take over.



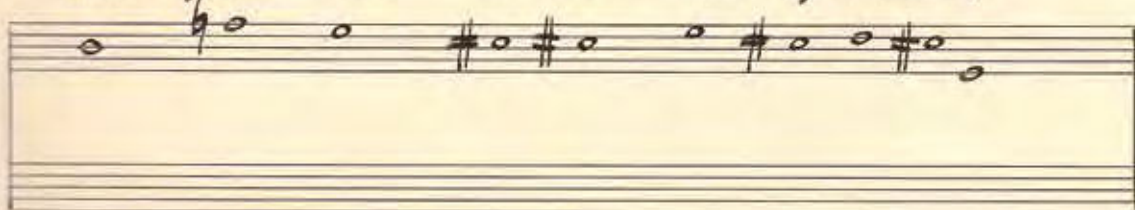
Let us make the CBC talk English



Let us all lean in one direction



and float down to the coast of Florida





## JANET CARDIFF

BRUSSELS, ONTARIO, 1957

LIVES AND WORKS IN GRINDROD, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

## GEORGE BURES MILLER

VEGREVILLE, ALBERTA, 1960

LIVES AND WORKS IN GRINDROD, BRITISH COLUMBIA.

### *The Poetry Machine*, 2017

Interactive audio/mixed-media installation including organ, speakers, carpet, computer and electronics

All poetry written and performed by Leonard Cohen from *Book of Longing*, published 2006 by McClelland & Stewart

Dedicated to Leonard Cohen, 1934-2016

A vintage Wurlitzer organ from the 1950s sits in the middle of the gallery. Sitting on top of it and around the room are various old speakers and a gramophone horn. If a key is pressed on the organ, you hear Leonard Cohen's beautiful, gravelly voice reading a poem from *Book of Longing*. Each key on the organ contains a different poem from the book. The keys can be played one at a time or all at once. If you press one key singly and then another, it is like creating different linkages between Cohen's poems, almost like creating new poems from his words. Uncanny juxtapositions can take place. If you press numerous keys at once, a wonderful cacophony of Cohen's voice surrounds you.

Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller are internationally recognized artists known for their immersive multimedia sound installations and their audio and video walks. Their recent solo exhibitions include: 21st Century Museum, Kanazawa (2017); ARoS Aarhus Art Museum (2015); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2015); and the Menil Collection, Houston (2015). Recent group exhibitions include *Being Modern: MoMA in Paris*, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris (2017); 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014); and dOCUMENTA (13). In 2011, Cardiff and Miller won Germany's prestigious Käthe Kollwitz Prize. They also represented Canada at the 2001 Venice Biennale, for which they received the Biennale's Premio Speciale (Special Prize) and the Benesse Prize.

We have both been fans of Leonard Cohen for a long time. Not only of his music but of his poetry and novels. In high school, I passed English by composing Leonard Cohen-inspired poetry and started playing guitar because of him. I wrote Cohenesque songs and played them alone in my room. I learned to play *Chelsea Hotel* and wore out the grooves on my *Songs of Leonard Cohen* album. My mother was not too fond of him however; I think she found his lyrics too obscene for a teenager in the seventies. She called him "that man" as in "please stop playing that man." Years later, Mum's favourite song was *Hallelujah*, and we played it for her at her hospice bedside.

"I miss my mother. I want to bring her to India."

We were asked if we wanted to participate in a show in which the artists would create works inspired by Leonard Cohen.

We said yes immediately.

For years we had an old broken Wurlitzer organ sitting around the studio. We'd been planning to create some sort of sound artwork out of it. We discussed an idea: each key on the organ would play a poem from Leonard Cohen's early books. If you released the key it would stop mid-poem, and if you pressed the key again it would start from where it had stopped. You would be able to juxtapose different lines from different poems or play multiple poems all at once, creating a spoken-word cacophony. It would be a poetry machine of infinite possibility and connection.

We didn't know if it could be made to work or not. Janet drew it in her notebook. The organ, covered in old speakers and gramophone horns. We started researching software to make it happen (*Plogue Bidule*—uncannily, made in Montréal). We started reading the old books again, books I had lost when I moved away from home: *Let Us Compare Mythologies* (1956); *The Spice-Box of Earth* (1961); *Flowers for Hitler* (1964). I did some test recordings, but something just wasn't right. My voice and performance didn't resonate the way they needed to. We tried to find recordings by Leonard Cohen of these early works, but he had recorded only a few of them. We needed enough poems to fill 122 keys on the Wurlitzer.

We fantasized about asking Mr. Cohen if he would think about recording a large number of his early poems for us, but it seemed an enormous amount to ask of anyone, let alone a busy celebrity. We put that idea on the back burner while looking for other options, and then the unexpected happened: Leonard Cohen died at the age of eighty-two. We (along with millions around the world) mourned his loss. I sat and cried as I listened to his final, hauntingly beautiful album, *You Want it Darker*. So sad to say goodbye to someone I had admired for so long.

Months passed. We collected old speakers. I worked on the piece in *Bidule*, building up a program that would do what we wanted it to do. We played with some of the early recordings made by the CBC and the NFB, and then Robert Kory, Leonard's manager, sent us a copy of the digital files of Cohen's recordings of *Book of Longing*, his poetry collection from 2006.

The first thing we heard from these recordings was Leonard's deep, bass voice reading the title of the book, the copyright and the dedication to Irving Layton. He moved in his chair, a plane went by in the background, he turned the page. We were struck by the intimacy of his voice and the sense of his presence, as if he were sitting right there in front of us. This was the perfect material for the piece: over 170 poems recorded in his home studio in Los Angeles.

The piece has grown. There are more speakers now than in Janet's drawing. I sit at the organ and I play poem after poem, Leonard's voice coming out of the speakers that surround me. Sometimes I collage them together, but mostly I like to hear each poem from start to finish. I've been listening to them for weeks now, doing the editing, looping and bouncing, and I never get tired of them. There is always something surprising that makes me think or makes me laugh. We knew that if we could get the piece to work, it would be a magical sound machine, but what we didn't realize was how it would become such an intimate portrait of Leonard Cohen. When you sit at the keyboard, you have an invisible archive before you of his thoughts, ideas and anecdotes. It's full of his black comedy, irony, self-deprecation, word mastery, wit and humour, and its all available with the touch of a key. G.B.M.











## KARA BLAKE

CAMBRIDGE, ONTARIO, 1974

LIVES AND WORKS IN MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC.

### *The Offerings*, 2017

5-channel video installation, black and white and colour, sound, 35 min, looped

This multi-channel video projection forms an environment in which Leonard Cohen's voice and thoughts envelop and captivate the public. Through a series of shared personal, contemplative and reflective moments, visitors are invited to commune with images of Cohen, sourced from decades of archival material, that construct a composite portrait of the artist as he touches on a variety of subject matter and material. Responding to a series of questions in his own voice, Cohen's engaging thought process is revealed—one that is sensitive, humble and humorous, always considerate and never banal.

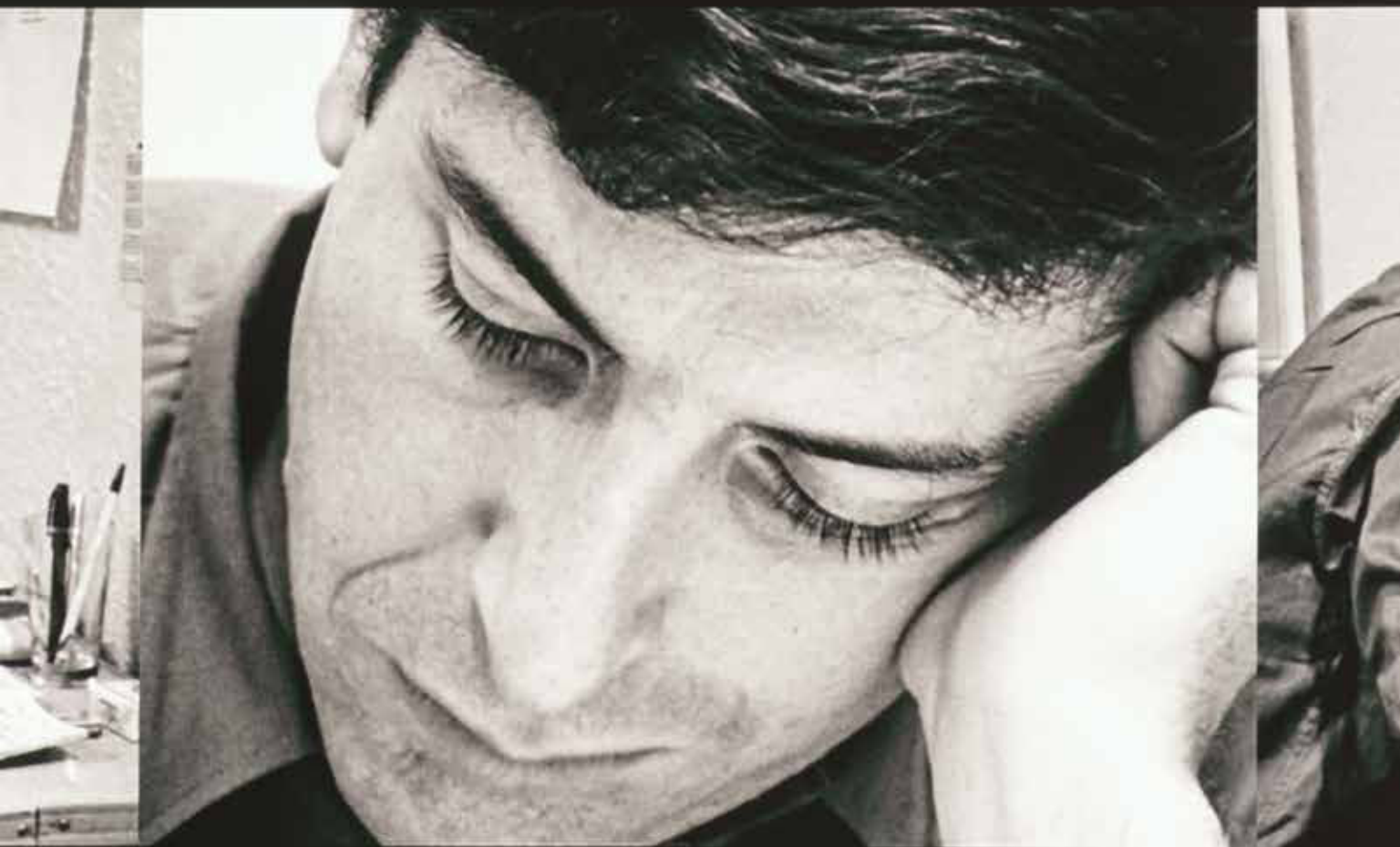
Kara Blake is a Montréal-based filmmaker whose creative projects range from short films and music videos to live performance visuals and installation pieces. Interested in fusing fact with fiction, and past with present, Blake often works with archival materials to construct new narratives that encourage a re-examination of the world around us. Her films have been shown internationally at festivals and venues including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Telluride Film Festival, Colorado, CPH.DOX, Copenhagen, Bravo and the Independent Film Channel.

My work as a filmmaker with an imagined previous life as an archivist mines vestiges of the past for unseen richness and meaning. For *The Offerings*, I immersed myself in a vast collection of Cohen-related archival materials including radio and television interviews, photographs and written documents. With a curator's sensibility, I sought out key moments of sound and image that crystallize the character of this revered creative thinker.

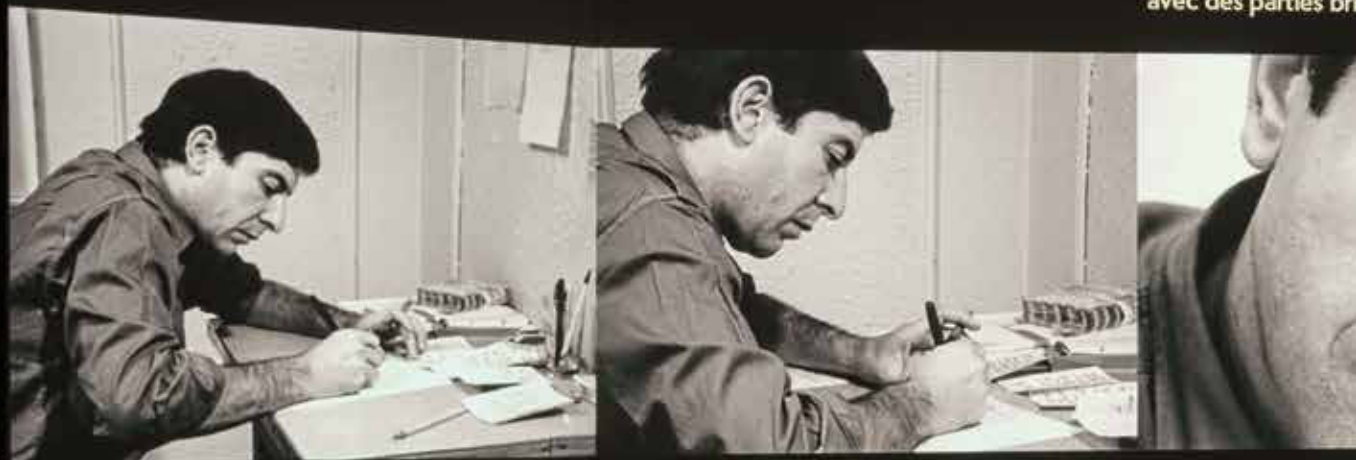
*The Offerings* provides a passage through Cohen's interior landscape, using his singular voice to engage visitors in an intimate conversation. Cohen muses on a variety of subjects, ranging from his personal writing practice to universal themes of love, humility and spirituality. These offerings issue from a life of observation and introspection, presenting Cohen in his own words and inviting guests into his contemplative world.

Inspired by Cohen's propensity to explore ideas from a variety of angles and continually revise his position, I use multiple screens to re-examine and re-contextualize familiar images of the artist throughout his career. In religious numerology, the number five often symbolizes harmony of body and spirit. Here, five screens are used to illuminate Cohen's lifelong investigation of the complex interplay between the mortal and the divine. *The Offerings* brings together some of the poet's most heartfelt, witty and thought-provoking insights; it is a memento of Cohen's perspective on what it means to be human. K.B.

Je viens d'écrire quelque chose de bon.



avec des parties bri





illantes, mais très rarement.





## CANDICE BREITZ

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA, 1972  
LIVES AND WORKS IN BERLIN, GERMANY.

### *I'm Your Man*

(*A Portrait of Leonard Cohen*), 2017

Shot at the Phi Centre, Montréal, May-June 2017  
19-channel video installation, colour,  
sound, 40 min 43 s, looped  
18 suspended monitors and one  
single-screen projection  
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain  
de Montréal

*I'm Your Man (A Portrait of Leonard Cohen)* brings together a community of ardent Leonard Cohen fans—each of whom has cherished Cohen's music for over half a century—to pay posthumous tribute to the late legend. Each of the eighteen individuals featured was offered the opportunity to perform and record his own version of Cohen's magnificent comeback album, *I'm Your Man* (1988), in a professional recording studio in Montréal. At Candice Breitz's invitation, the album's backing vocals have been sumptuously reinterpreted by the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue Choir, an all-male choir representing the Westmount congregation that Cohen belonged to all his life. *I'm Your Man* is a tender farewell to a recently lost poet and musician, as well as a poignant celebration of late masculinity.

The work expands Breitz's ongoing anthropology of the fan. Earlier works in this series have included *Legend (A Portrait of Bob Marley)*, shot in Jamaica in 2005, and *Working Class Hero (A Portrait of John Lennon)*, shot in Newcastle in 2006. Although these multi-channel portraits mimic the flow and duration of the original albums that they take as their templates, they specifically exclude the auratic voices and familiar musical arrangements of the original albums, such that the musical icon ultimately remains present only through the a cappella voices of a devout amateur collective.

Candice Breitz represented South Africa at the 2017 Venice Biennale. In recent years, solo exhibitions of her work have been presented at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, the National Gallery of Canada, Kunsthau Bregenz and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebaek, Denmark.

Well, my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not comin' on  
I'm just payin' my rent everyday in the Tower of Song

I said to Hank Williams "How lonely does it get?"  
Hank Williams hasn't answered yet  
But I hear him coughing all night long  
Oh, a hundred floors above me in the Tower of Song

I was born like this, I had no choice  
I was born with the gift of a golden voice  
And twenty-seven angels from the Great Beyond  
They tied me to this table right here in the Tower of Song

So you can stick your little pins in that voodoo doll  
I'm very sorry, baby, it doesn't look like me at all  
I'm standin' by the window where the light is strong  
Ah, they don't let a woman kill you, not in the Tower of Song

Now, you can say that I've grown bitter but of this you may be sure:  
The rich have got their channels in the bedrooms of the poor  
And there's a mighty Judgement comin' but I may be wrong  
You see, I hear these funny voices in the Tower of Song

I see you standin' on the other side  
I don't... How the river got so wide?  
I loved you, baby, way back when...  
And all the bridges are burnin' that we might've crossed  
But I feel so close to everything that we lost  
We'll never, we'll never have to lose it again

Now, I bid you farewell, I don't know when I'll be back  
They're movin' us tomorrow to the tower down the track  
But you'll be hearin' from me, baby, long after I'm gone  
I'll be speakin' to you sweetly from a window in the Tower of Song

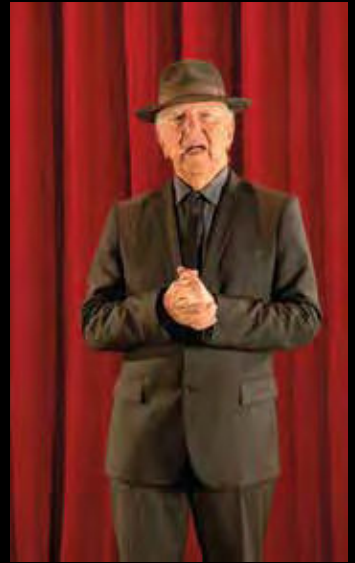
Yeah, my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not comin' on  
I'm just payin' my rent everyday in the Tower of Song

C.B., quoting Leonard Cohen, *Tower of Song*

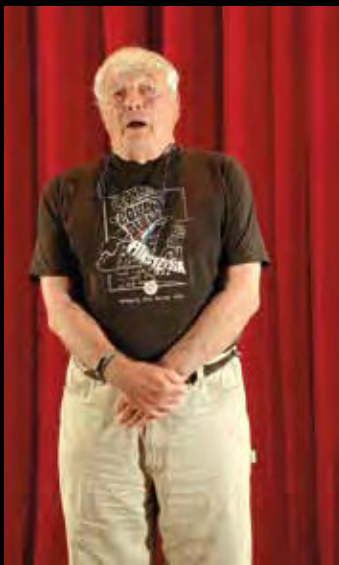












I'M YOUR MAN (1988)  
Album – Lyrics

FIRST WE TAKE MANHATTAN

They sentenced me to twenty years of boredom  
For trying to change the system from within  
I'm coming now, I'm coming to reward them  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'm guided by a signal in the heavens  
I'm guided by this birthmark on my skin  
I'm guided by the beauty of our weapons  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'd really like to live beside you, baby  
I love your body and your spirit and your clothes  
But you see that line there moving through  
the station?  
I told you, I told you, told you, I was one of those

Ah you loved me as a loser, but now you're  
worried that I just might win  
You know the way to stop me, but you don't have  
the discipline  
How many nights I prayed for this, to let  
my work begin  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I don't like your fashion business mister  
And I don't like these drugs that keep you thin  
I don't like what happened to my sister  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I'd really like to live beside you, baby  
And I thank you for those items that you sent me  
The monkey and the plywood violin  
I practiced every night, now I'm ready  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

I am guided  
Ah remember me, I used to live for music  
Remember me, I brought your groceries in  
Well it's Father's Day and everybody's wounded  
First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1986, 1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) /  
Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

AIN'T NO CURE FOR LOVE

I loved you for a long, long time  
I know this love is real  
It don't matter how it all went wrong  
That don't change the way I feel  
And I can't believe that time can heal this wound  
I'm speaking of  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure for love

I'm aching for you, baby  
I can't pretend I'm not  
I need to see you naked  
In your body and your thought  
I've got you like a habit and I'll never get enough  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure for love

There ain't no cure for love  
There ain't no cure for love  
All the rocket ships are climbing through the sky  
The holy books are open wide  
The doctors working day and night  
But they'll never ever find that cure for love  
There ain't no drink, no drug  
There's nothing pure enough to be a cure for love

I see you in the subway and I see you on the bus  
I see you lying down with me and I see you  
waking up  
I see your hand, I see your hair,  
your bracelets and your brush  
And I call to you, I call to you  
But I don't call soft enough  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure for love

I walked into this empty church –I had no place  
else to go—  
when the sweetest voice I ever heard, came  
whispering to my soul  
I don't need to be forgiven for loving you so much  
It's written in the scriptures, it's written there  
in blood  
I even heard the angels declare it from above  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure  
There ain't no cure for love

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1986, 1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) /  
Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

EVERYBODY KNOWS

Everybody knows that the dice are loaded  
Everybody rolls with their fingers crossed  
Everybody knows that the war is over  
Everybody knows the good guys lost  
Everybody knows the fight was fixed  
The poor stay poor, the rich get rich  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows that the boat is leaking  
Everybody knows that the captain lied  
Everybody got this broken feeling  
Like their father or their dog just died  
Everybody talking to their pockets  
Everybody wants a box of chocolates  
and a long stem rose  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows that you love me baby  
Everybody knows that you really do  
Everybody knows that you've been faithful,  
give or take a night or two  
Everybody knows you've been discreet,  
but there were so many people you just had to meet  
without your clothes  
And everybody knows

Everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Everybody knows that it's now or never  
Everybody knows that it's me or you  
And everybody knows that you live forever,  
when you've done a line or two  
Everybody knows the deal is rotten:  
Old Black Joe's still pickin' cotton  
for your ribbons and bows  
And everybody knows

Everybody knows that the Plague is coming  
Everybody knows that it's moving fast  
Everybody knows that the naked man and woman  
are just a shining artifact of the past  
Everybody knows the scene is dead,  
but there's gonna be a meter on your bed  
that will disclose  
what everybody knows

Everybody knows that you're in trouble  
Everybody knows what you've been through,  
from the bloody cross on top of Calvary  
to the beach at Malibu  
Everybody knows it's coming apart.  
Take one last look at this Sacred Heart  
before it blows  
And everybody knows

Everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows

Oh everybody knows, everybody knows  
That's how it goes  
Everybody knows  
Everybody knows

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen and Sharon Robinson  
©1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) / Geffen and Robinhill  
Music / Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

I'M YOUR MAN

If you want a lover,  
I'll do anything you ask me to  
And if you want another kind of love,  
I'll wear a mask for you  
If you want a partner,  
take my hand  
Or if you want to strike me down in anger,  
here I stand  
I'm your man

If you want a boxer,  
I will step into the ring for you  
And if you want a doctor,  
I'll examine every inch of you  
If you want a driver,  
climb inside  
Or if you want to take me for a ride,  
you know you can  
I'm your man.

Ah, the moon's too bright,  
the chain's too tight,  
the beast won't go to sleep  
I've been running through these promises to you  
that I made and I could not keep

Ah but a man never got a woman back,  
not by begging on his knees  
Or I'd crawl to you baby  
and I'd fall at your feet  
And I'd howl at your beauty  
like a dog in heat  
And I'd claw at your heart  
and I'd tear at your sheet  
I'd say please, please,  
I'm your man

And if you've got to sleep  
a moment on the road,  
I will steer for you  
And if you want to work the street alone  
I'll disappear for you  
If you want a father for your child,  
or only want to walk with me a while  
across the sand,  
I'm your man

If you want a lover,  
I'll do anything that you ask me to  
And if you want another kind of love  
I'll wear a mask for you

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen  
©1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) /  
Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

TAKE THIS WALTZ

Now in Vienna there's ten pretty women  
There's a shoulder where Death comes to cry  
There's a lobby with nine hundred windows  
There's a tree where the doves go to die  
There's a piece that was torn from the morning  
And it hangs in the Gallery of Frost  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take this waltz with the clamp on its jaws

Oh I want you, I want you, I want you  
On a chair with a dead magazine  
In the cave at the tip of the lily  
In some hallways where love's never been  
On a bed where the moon has been sweating  
In a cry filled with footsteps and sand  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take its broken waist in your hand

This waltz, this waltz, this waltz, this waltz  
With its very own breath of brandy and Death  
Dragging its tail in the sea

There's a concert hall in Vienna  
Where your mouth had a thousand reviews  
There's a bar where the boys have stopped talking  
They've been sentenced to death by the blues  
Ah, but who is it climbs to your picture  
With a garland of freshly cut tears?  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take this waltz it's been dying for years

There's an attic where children are playing  
Where I've got to lie down with you soon  
In a dream of Hungarian lanterns  
In the mist of some sweet afternoon  
And I'll see what you've chained to your sorrow  
All your sheep and your lilies of snow  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
With its "I'll never forget you, you know!"

This waltz, this waltz, this waltz, this waltz  
With its very own breath of brandy and Death  
Dragging its tail in the sea

And I'll dance with you in Vienna  
I'll be wearing a river's disguise  
The hyacinth wild on my shoulder,  
My mouth on the dew of your thighs  
And I'll bury my soul in a scrapbook,  
With the photographs there, and the moss  
And I'll yield to the flood of your beauty  
My cheap violin and my cross  
And you'll carry me down on your dancing  
To the pools that you lift on your wrist  
Oh my love, Oh my love  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
It's yours now. It's all that there is

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen, lyrics based on a poem  
by Federico García Lorca ("Pequeño vals vienés"  
(Little Viennese Waltz))  
© 1986, 1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) /  
Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

JAZZ POLICE

Can you tell me why the bells are ringing?  
Nothing's happened in a million years  
I've been sitting here since Wednesday morning  
Wednesday morning can't believe my ears

Jazz police are looking through my folders  
Jazz police are talking to my niece  
Jazz police have got their final orders  
Jazzer, drop your axe, it's Jazz police!

Jesus taken serious by the many  
Jesus taken joyous by a few  
Jazz police are paid by J. Paul Getty  
Jazzers paid by J. Paul Getty II

Jazz police I hear you calling  
Jazz police I feel so blue  
Jazz police I think I'm falling,  
I'm falling for you

Wild as any freedom loving racist  
I applaud the actions of the chief  
Tell me now oh beautiful and spacious  
Am I in trouble with the Jazz police?

Jazz police are looking through my folders

They will never understand our culture  
They'll never understand the Jazz police  
Jazz police are working for my mother  
Blood is thicker margarine than grease

Let me be somebody I admire  
Let me be that muscle down the street  
Stick another turtle on the fire  
Guys like me are mad for turtle meat

Jazz police I hear you calling  
Jazz police I feel so blue  
Jazz police I think I'm falling,  
I'm falling for you

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen and Jeff Fisher  
©1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) /  
Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

I CAN'T FORGET

I stumbled out of bed  
I got ready for the struggle  
I smoked a cigarette  
And I tightened up my gut  
I said this can't be me  
Must be my double  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember what

I'm burning up the road  
I'm heading down to Phoenix  
I got this old address  
Of someone that I knew  
It was high and fine and free  
Ah, you should have seen us  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember who

I'll be there today  
With a big bouquet of cactus  
I got this rig that runs on memories  
And I promise, cross my heart,  
They'll never catch us  
But if they do, just tell them it was me

Yeah I loved you all my life  
And that's how I want to end it  
The summer's almost gone  
The winter's tuning up  
Yeah, the summer's gone  
But a lot goes on forever  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember what

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen  
©1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) /  
Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

TOWER OF SONG

Well, my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not comin' on  
I'm just payin' my rent everyday in  
the Tower of Song

I said to Hank Williams "How lonely does it get?"  
Hank Williams hasn't answered yet  
But I hear him coughing all night long  
Oh, a hundred floors above me in  
the Tower of Song

I was born like this, I had no choice  
I was born with the gift of a golden voice  
And twenty-seven angels from the Great Beyond,  
They tied me to this table right here in  
the Tower of Song

So you can stick your little pins in that voodoo doll  
I'm very sorry, baby, it doesn't look like me at all  
I'm standin' by the window where the light is strong  
Ah, they don't let a woman kill you, not in  
the Tower of Song

Now, you can say that I've grown bitter but of this  
you may be sure:  
The rich have got their channels in the bedrooms  
of the poor  
And there's a mighty Judgement comin' but I may  
be wrong  
You see, I hear these funny voices in  
the Tower of Song

I see you standin' on the other side  
I don't... How the river got so wide?  
I loved you, baby, way back when...  
And all the bridges are burnin' that we  
might've crossed  
But I feel so close to everything that we lost  
We'll never, we'll never have to lose it again

Now, I bid you farewell, I don't know  
when I'll be back  
They're movin' us tomorrow to the tower down  
the track  
But you'll be hearin' from me, baby,  
long after I'm gone  
I'll be speakin' to you sweetly from a window in  
the Tower of Song.

Yeah, my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not comin' on  
I'm just payin' my rent everyday in  
the Tower of Song

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen  
©1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) /  
Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

## SHARON ROBINSON

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, 1958

LIVES AND WORKS IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

### ***Goodbye Stranger*, 2017**

Video-recorded musical performance, colour, sound, 5 min, looped

Sharon Robinson and Leonard Cohen shared a deep and extensive creative collaboration that lasted over thirty-five years. After Cohen passed away in November 2016, Robinson wrote *Goodbye Stranger*, a moving composition dedicated to her long-time artistic partner and friend. For this work she has collaborated with filmmaker Paula Walker to capture an intimate, stirring, live performance and tribute.

Sharon Robinson is a Grammy-winning songwriter, a recording artist and a producer. She has written songs for numerous artists, such as Patti LaBelle, Diana Ross, Roberta Flack and Aaron Neville. Robinson is best known for her work with Leonard Cohen, having toured extensively with him as a singer and having co-written some of his best-known songs, including *Everybody Knows*, *Waiting For the Miracle*, *Boogie Street* and *In My Secret Life*. Robinson produced and co-wrote his album, *Ten New Songs*, named one of the best albums of the decade by *Rolling Stone*.

I first became captivated by Leonard Cohen's writing in 1979 when I was singing with him on the *Field Commander* Cohen tour. After intermission, Leonard would go out and do a couple of songs alone, with just his guitar. I sat in the dark on the stairs at stage right, transfixed by the haunting brilliance of *The Stranger Song*.

I've watched Leonard put pen to paper many times over the years, slowly and deliberately distilling so much of the human heart into every verse, every line, every letter. Now, in the deepest realms of the soul, where there is no sun, no gravity, no morning or night, his words are a compass, an anchor and a light.

In loss, music becomes a way of breathing, of saying things that can be said in no other way. It was in this breath that the song *Goodbye Stranger* came to me. I wrote it songwriter to songwriter, friend to friend, but feeling and hoping that I was also writing it for everyone with whom I share a love of Leonard's words.

The Stranger, untouchable in his tower of song, but with so much love in his heart, has departed, but his words, in their wisdom and luminous beauty, will live forever. S.R.







## LEONARD COHEN

MONTREAL, QUÉBEC, 1934 –  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, 2016

**Self-Portraits, 2003-2016, 2017**  
Projection of 220 drawings documenting  
Leonard Cohen's self-portraits

If there were no paintings in the world,  
Mine would be very important.  
Same with the songs.  
Since this is not the case, let us make haste to get in line,  
Well towards the back.  
Sometimes I would see a woman in a magazine  
Humiliated in the technicolour glare.  
I would try to establish her  
In happier circumstances.  
Sometimes a man.  
Sometimes living persons sat for me.  
May I say to them again:  
Thank you for coming to my room.  
I also loved the objects on the table  
Such as candlesticks and ashtrays  
And the table itself.  
From a mirror on my desk  
In the very early morning  
I copied down  
Hundreds of self-portraits  
Which reminded me of one thing or another.  
The Curator has called this exhibition  
Drawn to Words.  
I call my work  
Acceptable Decorations.

– *If There Were No Paintings*, Leonard Cohen, 2007

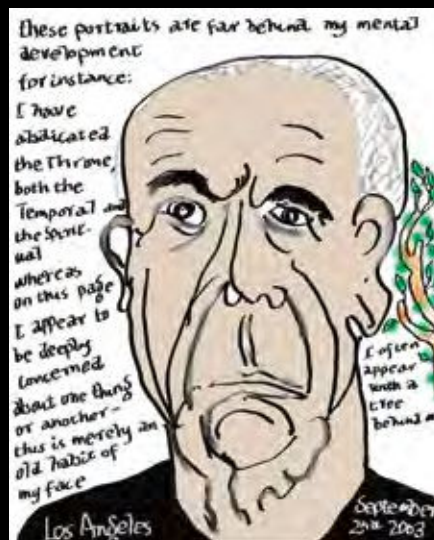
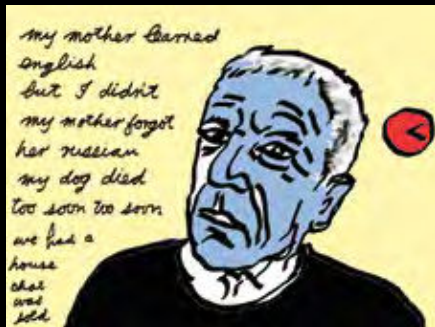
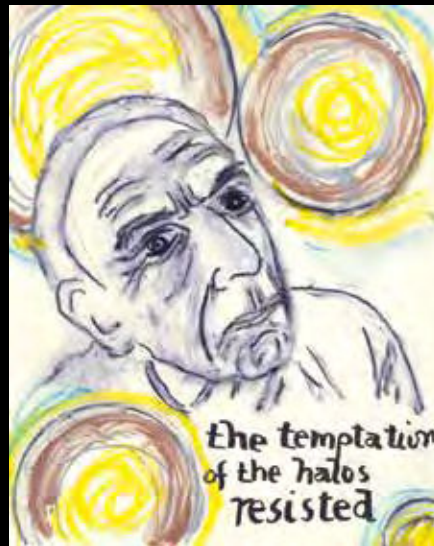
now we need more time



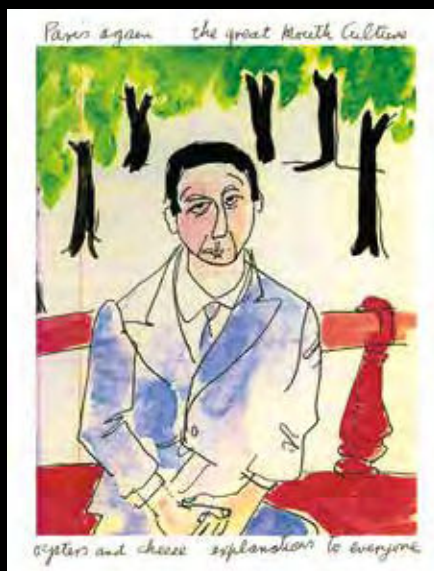
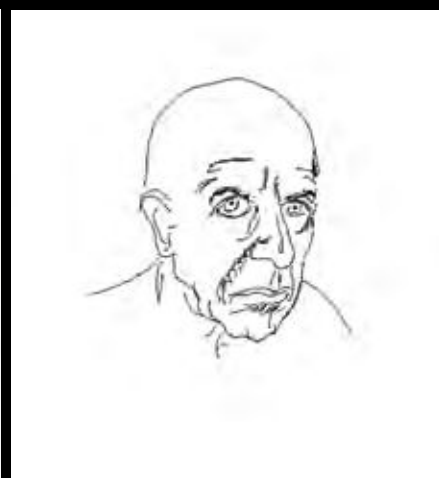
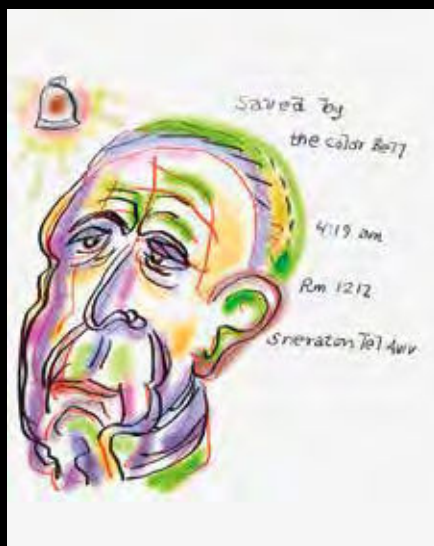
this is all we  
want to do

2/12/03









## THE SANCHEZ BROTHERS

CARLOS SANCHEZ: MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, 1976

JASON SANCHEZ: MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, 1981

COLLECTIVE FOUNDED IN 2000. BOTH LIVE AND WORK  
IN MONTRÉAL.

### *I Think I Will Follow You Very Soon*, 2017

Holographic and mixed-media installation  
Reconstructed architectural environment,  
visual effects, hologram, sound

Inspired by a photograph of Leonard Cohen taken by his friend Dominique Issermann, the Sanchez brothers harness holographic spatial technology to enable visitors to share an intimate, meditative moment with Cohen. Entering a re-creation of a room in the singer's Los Angeles home and peering through a window, the visitor glimpses Cohen sitting quietly on his veranda, overlooking the view across the street. Drawing inspiration from "Pepper's ghost," a fairground illusion technique popularized by John Henry Pepper in 1862 and modernized with state-of-the-art video projection technology, the Sanchez brothers offer the visitor a brief, if not fleeting, moment in the presence of the poet.

Carlos and Jason Sanchez are Canadian photographers and filmmakers known for their large-scale dramatic recreations. Their work centres thematically on the psychological and emotional states of their subjects, inviting the viewers, through self-analysis, to immerse themselves in the drama of the open-ended scenes. It has been the subject of solo exhibitions in North America and Europe. The Sanchez brothers have recently completed their first feature film, *Allure*.

For over fifteen years, we've collaborated in various media, all of which are linked to storytelling. Beginning in 2001, we focused primarily on creating staged photographs in which the production of each image was similar to that of a film; we built sets in our studio, used actors, etc. Although we've never created a series of images, there's always been a common thematic thread that's woven throughout each work. Our images deal with the darker sides of our existence; they shine light onto unspoken topics, and focus on studying the psychological states of the people and spaces captured within our frames.

In 2006 we created an installation piece entitled *Between Life and Death*. This project was an exciting shift for us as we experimented with new techniques, primarily that of holographic video. The installation allowed us to fully submerge the viewers within our created world, and it was liberating to have the opportunity to push an idea in a different manner than we had been capable of in photography.

*I Think I Will Follow You Very Soon* will mark our second project in which we use holographic video technology. During our research we were deeply inspired and touched by one of the last photographs taken of Leonard by his long-time friend Dominique Issermann. This image solidified our intention of wanting to make a piece about the man and not the celebrity. The image, taken from inside his modest Los Angeles home, depicted Leonard on his front balcony staring out into the distance. Knowing that he had passed away two months after the picture was taken, we were drawn to contemplate what he might have been thinking in that moment. Was he satisfied with his life and legacy? Was he thinking about things he would have done differently? Or was he simply enjoying the warm L.A. breeze with nothing at all on his mind?

In our installation the public enters a re-creation of his home, walks into his study and watches Leonard through a window, projected as a three-dimensional ghostly figure, sitting on his balcony looking out at the suburban L.A. landscape before him. With this installation we offer viewers the opportunity to spend a quiet and intimate moment with the man behind the legend, a moment to reflect on Leonard's life and what he meant to all of us, and hopefully also a moment to reflect on our own lives. S.B.



















## JON RAFMAN

MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, 1981  
LIVES AND WORKS IN MONTRÉAL.

### ***Legendary Reality*, 2017**

21-seat sculptural theatre installation, video projection, colour, stereo sound, 15 min 45 s, looped

*Legendary Reality* is a science-fiction essay film that portrays the recollections of a solitary narrator imprisoned in his own mind. Using a non-linear structure that weaves together dreams and memory, Jon Rafman creates a stream-of-consciousness meditation on art, identity and time that draws on the work of Leonard Cohen. The film intercuts digitally processed found photos and 3D landscapes sourced from video games to tell the enigmatic voyage of one man's soul.

Jon Rafman uses video, photography, sculpture and installation to examine the place which technology holds in contemporary life. He draws inspiration from the Internet and video game culture, as well as from modernism and the alienating effects associated with some particularly obscure sub-cultures found within the substrata of the web. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (2015), the Zabudowicz Collection, London (2015), the Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster (2016) and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2016). It has also been featured in prominent international group exhibitions, including *The Future of Memory*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2015), *Speculations on Anonymous Materials*, Fridericianum, Kassel (2015), Biennale de Lyon (2015), Berlin Biennale 9 (2016) and Manifesta 11 (2016).

Both Leonard Cohen's work and my own can be inscribed in the literature of quest, autobiographical narratives and travel memoirs. We are dark romantics who explore to find the Other and to find ourselves. Today the self is seen to be in serious trouble, a fiction of dubious ontological status. The boundaries between order and chaos, of inner and outer, of separation and reunion are subverted.

The seeker in *Legendary Reality*, bandaged by silence, frozen from his creative juices, knows whom he must seek out. While acknowledging with T.S. Eliot that each attempt at writing is a raid on the inarticulate, Cohen adds a condition that was perhaps the most significant for me—that we must be able to embrace death and failure. This was the interpretation that I gave to the phrase “a crack in everything,” and the honesty of this remark marked a breakthrough. I must destroy the versions of myself that provide too easy a solution, murder the selves that whisper untruths. The declared “real” world has been exposed as commodified, totally constructed, predigested and groundless, with no reference points in history, legacy or religion. Repentance and redemption used to be our spiritual tools, but these pathways have been ruined or abandoned. Here is only the war to recover what has been lost and found and lost again under conditions that seem more and more unfavourable.

Cohen and I both encounter the city with double identities and as rootless cosmopolites, characteristic of Jewish history; our experience and expression carry humour and irony, melancholy and loss. They are core features in Cohen's poetry as is the thin line between ethics and aesthetics in the search for truth. Recognizing these in my own work led me to recognize how Cohen has helped me find my voice as a Montréal Jew. I have tried to make the portrayal of the search for self as painful yet beautiful as the search for the poet. J.R.













## CLARA FUREY

PARIS, FRANCE, 1983

LIVES AND WORKS IN MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC.

### *When Even The*, 2017

Dance performance/installation

Solo dance performance in the presence of the sculpture *Coaxial Planck Density* (1999)

by Marc Quinn, with music, lighting effects and video installation

*When Even The* is a cycle of performances choreographed and performed by Clara Furey and inspired by the eponymous poem by Leonard Cohen. In this work, Furey engages in an existential reflection on memory, the passage of time and death—all major themes in Cohen's work.

In this, her first solo choreographed work, Furey abandons traditional performance spaces in favour of the space of the museum gallery, which encourages a more extreme breaking of the so-called "fourth wall"—an important motif in her work—and thus a more profound and intimate engagement with the public. Exploring the sensuality of the dead and the living, of non-permanence and non-existence, of the memory of physicality and touch, and the absence of the self, Furey places a mirror in front of our own human condition, one bound by ultimate mortality and the perishable state of being, offering us incarnations of our own finality, our own relationship to existence and disappearance.

Since 2012, after experimenting with several different art forms, including singing, music, film acting and dance, Clara Furey has focused on choreography. Exploring the boundary between the choreographed gesture and performance art, her poetry of movement is inscribed within an investigation of our deepest contradictions. She is interested in the mix of forms, languages and codes that compose a living work.

It is Cohen's sincerity that I have chosen to be influenced by.

His sincerity to admit he is distressed because he wants everything, his awareness of this sickness that most of us have today of never being satisfied and of not being in the present moment. He is aware that this is such a difficult task to address that it demands one's lifelong constant attention.

It is Cohen's lesson that beauty might appear after a long arduous process. Not beauty that appears out of nowhere, but beauty that is already there, under the layers and layers of accumulated "stuff" ready to be discovered when one "cleans."

It is Cohen's way of always trying to reach some kind of emptying that I am very much in conversation with in my work.

*When Even The*, situated in what we've called the "Meditation Room," is my way of getting closer to Cohen's Zen practice, which so deeply informed his life and work.

It attempts to be a crucible in which to cohabit with silence, simplicity, resonance and sincerity—a place where people can just sit in emptiness. This is the quintessential arsenal Cohen has handed down to me as an artist.

So I will dance for ninety minutes a day for ninety days, coexisting with his life. I am complicit, in solidarity with Cohen, sitting next to his language, standing by his constant play between saying a lot and saying nothing, knowing that language is everything, and acknowledging the limit of language.

I keep questioning every breath I take, every position I'm in, inspired by his search for the exact words to say what he had to say. C.F.



CLARA FUREY with a work by

## MARC QUINN

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, 1964

LIVES AND WORKS IN LONDON.

### ***Coaxial Planck Density*, 1999**

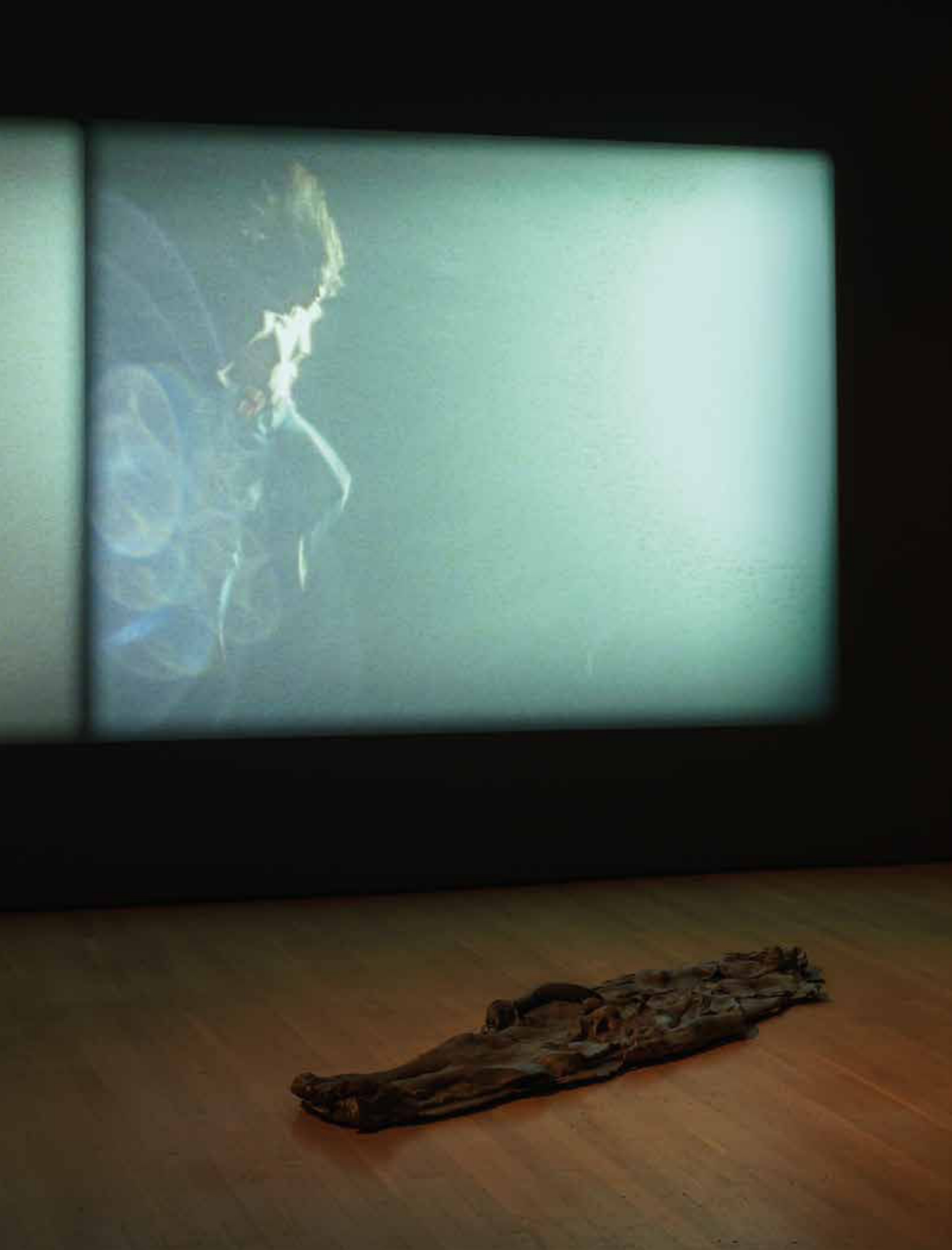
Lead

Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain  
de Montréal

*Coaxial Planck Density* continues the artist's investigation of our relationship with our mortal bodies, and specifically with our sensibility to a death that has become commonplace. Made of solid lead, this casting of the artist's body seems to have caved in after it was removed from its mould. The flattened form resembles a heavy, empty skin anchored to the ground through the absence of a redemptive spirit or, snake-like, the lead moulting of a man who has shed his old skin and left it there.

A notable member of the "Young British Artists" and a central figure in contemporary British art, Marc Quinn examines the body's mutability over time, its physical presence in space and the anxiety it undergoes within our culture. His work explores the themes of mortality, beauty, kinship and the interplay of art and science, in a practice that is as existential and philosophical as it is artistic.













## TACITA DEAN

CANTERBURY, UNITED KINGDOM, 1965  
LIVES AND WORKS IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA,  
AND BERLIN, GERMANY.

### *Ear on a Worm*, 2017

Single-screen film installation  
16-mm colour film, sound, 3 min 33 s, looped

*Ear on a Worm* is a film projected high up on the wall. The title plays on the German expression *Ohrwurm* ("earworm"), which refers to a song or a catchy piece of music that continually repeats in one's head after it is no longer playing. The film shows a life-size bird, a house finch, sitting on a wire for 3 minutes and 28 seconds before flying off.

Tacita Dean's art is carried by a sense of history, time and place, light quality and the essence of film itself. The focus of her subtle but ambitious work is the truth of the moment, the film as a medium and the sensibilities of the individual. Dean was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1998 on the basis of her films, drawings, photographs, audio recordings and installations. She has since been awarded the DAAD scholarship and artist residency in Berlin (2000-2001), the Aachen Art Prize (2002), the Hugo Boss Prize (2006) and the Kurt Schwitters Prize (2009). She was an artist in residence at the Getty Research Institute (2014-2015), participated in dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012 and has participated in the Venice Biennale on several occasions.

An earworm is an expression borrowed from German: *Ohrworm*. It describes a song or tune that is stuck in one's head. Often they are the most wretched of tunes, generated unknowingly and adopted unwittingly. In this way, an earworm resembles doodling in its lapse of conscious control, because one is beguiled into humming not what one chooses but what one's brain chooses.

However, earworms can also be associative, in that they are not necessarily triggered aurally. Sometimes they happen through other means, through some other signifier. For example, in the months after my son was born, I had three consistent earworms. I don't know where they came from but when I sought to comfort my child, they were there: unbeautiful, ridiculous and unrecognizable ditties. I am not sure they even existed in the real world; they were internal compositions activated when I nursed my son. We called them "born songs."

A song is a rare form, because of the simplicity and directness with which it can move. It begins as air and travels as air, and then enters our heads like a contagion, as air. This is the songwriters' art and responsibility. It is both their gift and their gift back to us. Songs are bestowed with this direct route in. In this way, a song is more like a bird than a worm.

There is nowhere more private than inside one's own head. It is a prevailing silence of thinking that conceals all manner of riotous cacophony that might be circulating within it. Only inside one's own thoughts is there true privacy.

For years I have listened to music, especially when I draw. There are songs that are embedded deep within the sedimentary layers of my work, as well as lodged inside the private and silent vaults of my mind. A song, once it is set free to enter these internal spheres of our unique and collective universes, can never be taken away again; it becomes ours to keep. When a song lands on the neurological fibres in my brain, it is mine. T.D.

# DAILY TOUS LES JOURS

INTERACTION DESIGN STUDIO  
FOUNDED IN MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, 2010

## *I Heard There Was a Secret Chord*, 2017

Participatory audio installation  
Octagonal architectural environment,  
including microphones, speakers, transducers  
and digital display

*I Heard There Was a Secret Chord* is a participatory humming experience that reveals an invisible vibration uniting people around the world currently listening to Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*.

Real-time user data representing these listeners is transformed into a virtual choir of humming voices that participants can hum along with and feel the collective resonance. It is a scientific and spiritual experiment to highlight the metaphysical connection between people on a common wavelength. The project comprises a room and a website.

The room contains a simple numerical display of current online listeners, each represented by a humming voice in the space. Underfoot, these sounds are transformed into low-frequency vibrations as visitors start humming along. The website, [asecretchord.com](http://asecretchord.com), operates as a one-song radio channel allowing people anywhere to tune into the same perpetually fluctuating choir of humming *Hallelujah* voices, and to connect to the Cohen universal magic.

Daily tous les jours creates large-scale, interactive installations driven by collective experiences. The design studio uses technology and storytelling to explore collaboration, the future of cities and the power of humans. It is best known for its work in public spaces, where passing crowds are invited to play a critical role in the transformation of their environment and their relationships. Daily tous les jours was co-founded by Melissa Mongiat and Mouna Andraos.

Our work seeks to enhance the power of individuals coming together, exploring how people relate to one another and their surroundings. Our studio is continuously investigating new forms of storytelling to expand ideas of connection and community, as Cohen did with his poetry and music.

Revisiting Cohen's body of work, we kept returning to one basic question: why is *Hallelujah* so popular, in so many places around the world, with people from different backgrounds and from different generations? As we write this, a single version of the song's official video online has been viewed over ninety-nine million times by people across the planet. This ever-increasing number inspired us to expand our research into collective experiences to virtual space. It attests to Cohen's ability to make that leap from the personal to the universal that is so critical in our own practice as we strive to connect strangers to one another. The way he observes and questions the human condition reveals the power artistic works can hold when they succeed in tapping into the collective spirit.

Could some of Cohen's magic rub off on us somehow? Could it provide another layer from which to expand our own work? By spending enough time with this song, we hoped to learn from it and build on its affective qualities to discover new means of touching people.

*I Heard There Was a Secret Chord* is an homage to this universality. It celebrates the emotional thread that connects us as humans; it imagines a sense of unity through a transcendent experience. As it can be difficult to understand large numbers cognitively, we chose to embody the data (these millions of listeners) in a physical and emotional frame—both online and in the exhibition—that focused on the mystical experience of the song. Using humming instead of words, we hoped to amplify the song's ability to reach the core inside ourselves, transforming both real and networked space into magical, sensory, pulsating fields that transport people across the planet to a unique shared place—just as Cohen has been doing for decades. D.T.L.J.















## HALLELUJAH

Now I've heard there was a secret chord  
That David played, and it pleased the Lord  
But you don't really care for music, do you?  
It goes like this  
The fourth, the fifth  
The minor fall, the major lift  
The baffled king composing Hallelujah

Hallelujah  
Hallelujah  
Hallelujah  
Hallelujah

Your faith was strong but you needed proof  
You saw her bathing on the roof  
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you  
She tied you  
To a kitchen chair  
She broke your throne, and she cut your hair  
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

You say I took the name in vain  
I don't even know the name  
But if I did, well really, what's it to you?  
There's a blaze of light  
In every word  
It doesn't matter which you heard  
The holy or the broken Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

I did my best, it wasn't much  
I couldn't feel, so I tried to touch  
I've told the truth, I didn't come to fool you  
And even though  
It all went wrong  
I'll stand before the Lord of Song  
With nothing on my tongue but Hallelujah

Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah

## ZACH RICHTER

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1984

LIVES AND WORKS IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

### *Hallelujah*, 2017

Virtual reality experience

*Hallelujah* is a virtual reality music experience that reimagines Leonard Cohen's universally acclaimed composition. The work is centred around a five-part a cappella arrangement, with each part sung in different vocal ranges by the arranger/composer, Bobby Halvorson. The experience is both composed and performed in the round with the viewer positioned in the centre. *Hallelujah* is the world's first VR music experience to be captured using Lytro Immerse, a light field cinema system that provides the viewer with a lifelike sense of presence and freedom in virtual reality. As the VR experience has been recorded using highly spatialized 360-degree binaural audio and video, visitors can experience and interact with the song in different ways by being able to physically move around the space and change their proximity to the performer.

Zach Richter is an award-winning filmmaker, creative director and graphic designer. He is best known for his work in virtual reality and interactive film combining interactive media, technology and storytelling. Richter's work has been shown at the Sundance, Tribeca and SXSW film festivals, and has been honoured with the highest awards in creativity and technology, including the Cannes Lions, the Webby Awards and the Clio Awards. Richter is currently the creative director of Within, a virtual reality company founded by Chris Milk and Aaron Koblin.

What I've always been drawn to in Leonard Cohen's music is his masterful ability to author lyrics that explore ambiguity and the "essence of meaning" in our lives. His songs look past the obvious; they challenge us, allowing the exploration of something different in each of us.

To me, this is most apparent in *Hallelujah*, a song that has been reinterpreted and covered over the years by so many different artists in so many different ways. Any two people can have very different personal reactions to and interpretations of this piece of music. It is a song that can be heard at weddings and at funerals, a song that is both secular and religious, a song that is both grounded in humanity and is also incredibly spiritual. These juxtapositions are what I was most interested in exploring in my own personal perspective on this song, and in creating a visual interpretation of his work.

A cappella is a fifteenth-century style of music which translates from the Italian to "in the manner of the chapel." We explore this in the work by transporting viewers to the church using bleeding-edge camera and audio technology, in the hopes of creating something entirely new with a song so familiar to all, but seen through fresh eyes and ears in a beautiful, meditative way. Ultimately, I wanted to make something in which listeners could each find their own meaning, a new reason for them to experience hallelujah. Z.R.









## JENNY HOLZER

GALLIPOLIS, OHIO, 1950

LIVES AND WORKS IN NEW YORK.

### ***For Leonard Cohen, 2017***

Light projection

Grain Silo No. 5, Old Port, Montréal,

November 7 to 11, 2017

Jenny Holzer has projected light onto buildings and landscapes since the early 1990s, creating large-scale installations that seek to illuminate and reveal. Words chosen to comment on themes such as sex, war, power, fear, love and loss are set in motion in public spaces, at times in startling juxtapositions that evoke solitary and shared contemplation. Here, Holzer presents *For Leonard Cohen*, a series of mammoth projections on Grain Silo No. 5, one of Montréal's most iconic architectural structures. The installation features phrases from Cohen's poems and songs, projected in both French and English. The integration of Cohen's writing into Holzer's monumental work offers an alternative perspective on the author's words, a new way of experiencing his meanings and messages. In manifesting the relationship between the image and the written word, the language of Holzer's projections becomes, in the words of poet Henri Cole, "direct, open, unselfconscious, precise and human."

Jenny Holzer was the first woman to represent the United States at the Venice Biennale, where she won the Golden Lion in 1990 for best pavilion. Over the years, she has been honoured with many other awards, among them the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award in 1996 and the Barnard Medal of Distinction in 2011. She holds honorary degrees from Williams College, the Rhode Island School of Design, The New School and Smith College. Her work is in major museum collections around the world.

Leonard Cohen had versatility, plain speaking, dry wit and the unreal voice packed with rocks. Cohen came back from a Buddhist monastery to find good words and himself, and to make music despite hard times and disappointment. He was at his best singing, but wrote poetry and novels sometimes related to his lyrics. His melancholy, his romanticism, his refusal to let go of love or grievances, and his craft do the trick. A political poet-singer—"Democracy is coming to the USA" he croaked with doses of irony—and a writer who could remind listeners and readers of shared vulnerability—"like a bird on the wire"—Cohen lived wild and long, and travelled in song across pathos and lust. His songs are easy to remember. Cohen spawned fans and fan clubs, melting devotees. He worked diligently over decades, at points more in the spotlight, at others, less. He could hit home. J.H.

CET ACCORD  
POUR QUE  
PERSONNE D'AUTRE  
NE MEURE  
IL Y EUT.

C'EST UNIT TERRIBLE  
ET ON A  
EST TONNE

UNE BLESSURE TERRIBLE

EST TONNE  
C'EST LA  
NE MEURE  
PERSONNE D'AUTRE  
LORS QUE  
EST TONNE



QUE NOUS  
NE POUVONS DÉLIER  
LE CHAGRIN  
ATTENDRIT TES YEUX  
HÉ

NE  
ATTENDRIT TES YEUX  
LE CHAGRIN  
NE POUVONS DÉLIER  
QUE NOUS



IN THIS KITCHEN  
I DON'T ASK  
AND I DON'T ASK  
HOW LONG  
SHE WOULD STAY  
I NEEDED SO MUCH  
TO HAVE HER

THE MAIN

I NEEDED SO MUCH  
SHE MIGHT STAY  
HOW LONG  
I NEEDED SO MUCH  
TO HAVE HER





# LISTENING TO LEONARD

Multimedia audio environment

In celebration of Leonard Cohen as a songwriter and recording artist, and in recognition of his vast catalogue of music produced over the past half-century, *Listening to Leonard* invites visitors to experience eighteen newly recorded covers of Cohen songs, produced, arranged and performed by a selected group of musicians and vocalists.

## FEIST

Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye 3:23

## HALF MOON RUN

Suzanne 4:22

## AURORA

The Partisan 3:00

## DOUGLAS DARE

Dance Me to the End of Love 5:45

## MÉLANIE DE BIOSIO

There For You 3:29

## BRAD BARR

Tower of Song 3:44

## LEIF VOLLEBEKK

Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye 3:21

## DEAR CRIMINALS

Anthem 5:11

## ARIANE MOFFATT

WITH THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE  
DE MONTRÉAL

Famous Blue Raincoat 9:08

## MOBY

Suzanne 5:57

## JULIA HOLTER

Take This Waltz 6:10

## SOCALLED

I'm Your Man 4:00

## CHILLY GONZALES AND JARVIS COCKER

WITH KAISER QUARTETT

Paper Thin Hotel 4:47

## THE NATIONAL

WITH SUFJAN STEVENS,  
RAGNAR KJARTANSSON  
AND RICHARD REED PARRY

Memories 7:28

## BASIA BULAT

Dance Me to the End of Love 4:10

## LITTLE SCREAM

I Can't Forget 4:13

## LI'L ANDY AND JOE GRASS

Democracy 6:50

## LOU DOILLON

Famous Blue Raincoat 4:24





## FEIST

I chose this song so I could sing it quietly, almost as much inward as outward. That's what I loved about Leonard Cohen's rumination. I have always heard his songs as memories unspooling from a privacy I could sense was intact and deeply invested in. It makes me aspire to that kind of privacy, with songs acting as the cracks in the walls of those inner rooms.

### Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye

I loved you in the morning  
Our kisses deep and warm  
Your hair upon the pillow  
Like a sleepy golden storm  
Yes, many loved before us  
I know that we are not new  
In city and in forest  
They smiled like me and you  
But now it's come to distances  
And both of us must try  
Your eyes are soft with sorrow  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I'm not looking for another  
As I wander in my time  
Walk me to the corner  
Our steps will always rhyme  
You know my love goes with you  
As your love stays with me  
It's just the way it changes  
Like the shoreline and the sea  
But let's not talk of love or chains  
And things we can't untie  
Your eyes are soft with sorrow  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I loved you in the morning  
Our kisses deep and warm  
Your hair upon the pillow  
Like a sleepy golden storm  
Yes many loved before us  
I know that we are not new  
In city and in forest  
They smiled like me and you  
But let's not talk of love or chains  
And things we can't untie  
Your eyes are soft with sorrow  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1967 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

Produced by Feist and Renaud Letang  
Engineered by Thomas Moulin  
Arranged by Leslie Feist with additional vocal arrangement by  
Daniela Gesundheit  
Mastered by Mandy Parnell



## HALF MOON RUN

Considering the work of Leonard Cohen, one can get a better understanding of the very function of the artist. His art is essential. It shines a light into dark corners of our collective human soul. It gives a magical spark of hope that perhaps life can be more transcendently beautiful than you can even imagine. He speaks to the poet inside all of us, and reinforces our life with meaning. He is a true heir to a set of traditions that are as old as articulated speech—a master of song, verse and narrative. One gets the sense that he could have been born in any century, and still his voice would have found a way to cut through to communicate with and illuminate those around him. It is an honour to pay tribute to the timeless soul of Leonard Cohen.

### Suzanne

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river  
You can hear the boats go by  
You can spend the night beside her  
And you know that she's half crazy  
But that's why you want to be there  
And she feeds you tea and oranges  
That come all the way from China  
And just when you mean to tell her  
That you have no love to give her  
Then she gets you on her wavelength  
And she lets the river answer  
That you've always been her lover  
And you want to travel with her  
And you want to travel blind  
And you know that she will trust you  
For you've touched her perfect body with your mind  
And Jesus was a sailor  
When he walked upon the water  
And he spent a long time watching  
From his lonely wooden tower  
And when he knew for certain  
Only drowning men could see him  
He said "All men will be sailors then  
Until the sea shall free them"  
But he himself was broken  
Long before the sky would open  
Forsaken, almost human  
He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone  
And you want to travel with him  
And you want to travel blind  
And you think maybe you'll trust him  
For he's touched your perfect body with his mind  
Now Suzanne takes your hand  
And she leads you to the river  
She is wearing rags and feathers  
From Salvation Army counters  
And the sun pours down like honey  
On our lady of the harbour  
And she shows you where to look  
Among the garbage and the flowers  
There are heroes in the seaweed  
There are children in the morning  
They are leaning out for love  
And they will lean that way forever  
While Suzanne holds the mirror  
And you want to travel with her  
And you want to travel blind  
And you know that you can trust her  
For she's touched your perfect body with her mind

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1967 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

# AURORA

## The love of Leonard Cohen, and an explanation of why

When I was little I loved to run in the rain... and if it rained, as I was walking home from school, it usually took me thirty minutes longer. I remember my mother understanding the magic in it, but also constantly trying to explain to me the risk of getting ill. And every time I changed out of my wet clothes, getting quite cold, my mother put on “Leonard Cohen” in the background. It made me really fall in love with the rain, and autumn. And being cold and wet knowing you’ll soon get dry and warm again. The calmness his songs gave my heart and mind, I haven’t felt from any other music since.

It also makes me calm to know that his music will always remind me of being a child, of a warm home and a warm mother, if I ever find myself without both. It gives me the feeling I can’t truly lose anything, as long as I have these songs to remind me of them. Two of Mr. Cohen’s songs have always found their way into my skin, built little warm places in my veins and felt home in me: *Suzanne* and *The Partisan*. There is something in the melody and nerve that explains to you what the song is about without even knowing the words. I knew it a long time before I could speak English. I felt it. I’ve always cherished songs that could communicate with humans on several levels. Not only with words, melodies and rhythms, but also energy, pain, happiness and in ways you can’t even make sense of yourself.

Words are power. And I’m very glad and grateful that there are people in this world that can remind us of that. It inspired me a lot in the beginning of my little career as a musician, to choose my words with care. And not waste space in people’s minds. Fill music with beautiful information, whatever that information might be. If it’s in the words, in a melody, or in the silence. All equally important. Cohen was a part of teaching me that.

Leonard Cohen will always be a very beautiful mark on human history, a mark that started when he was born but didn’t end when he went away.

### The Partisan

When they poured across the border  
I was cautioned to surrender,  
This I could not do  
I took my gun and vanished

I have changed my name so often  
I’ve lost my wife and children  
But I have many friends  
And some of them are with me

An old woman gave us shelter  
Kept us hidden in the garret  
Then the soldiers came  
She died without a whisper

There were three of us this morning  
I’m the only one this evening  
But I must go on  
The frontiers are my prison

Oh, the wind, the wind is blowing  
Through the graves the wind is blowing  
Freedom soon will come  
Then we’ll come from the shadows

*Les Allemands étaient chez moi  
Ils me dirent : « Résigne-toi ! »  
Mais je n’ai pas peur  
J’ai repris mon arme*

*J’ai changé cent fois de nom  
J’ai perdu femme et enfants  
Mais j’ai tant d’amis  
J’ai la France entière*

*Un vieil homme dans un grenier  
Pour la nuit nous a cachés  
Les Allemands l’ont pris  
Il est mort sans surprise*

Oh, the wind, the wind is blowing  
Through the graves the wind is blowing  
Freedom soon will come  
Then we’ll come from the shadows

—  
Original French version (*La Complainte du partisan*)  
written by Emmanuel D’Astier de la Vigerie and Anna Marly  
Adapted by Leonard Cohen and Hy Zaret  
© 1969 Universal Music Publishing Group

## DOUGLAS DARE

My introduction to Leonard Cohen wasn't through hearing his records or reading his poetry, but rather playing his songs on our old upright piano from sheets in my mother's songbooks. I would have been around nine or ten at the time, and *Suzanne*, *Dance Me to the End of Love* and *Hallelujah* were my favourites to play and sing. Since I had not yet experienced Cohen's originals, my interpretations turned out to be quite different. Years later, after being exposed to his recorded work, I was able to appreciate the music in the same way someone might first read a novel and later see the film adaptation. I feel extremely lucky to have made my own connection with these songs before ever hearing Leonard's versions. This is why the opportunity to reinterpret a piece from the catalogue resonated with me so greatly. Cohen's work has always said to me, "here's a story, but it's not mine to keep, you can take it and do with it what you will."

My recording of *Dance Me to the End of Love* is inspired by how I first played it when I was young but even more prominently from what I learned reading interviews with Cohen. He talked about the string quartets that were forced to play as their loved ones died in the concentration camps of WWII, and with respect I felt compelled to reflect this harrowing image in my interpretation of the song.

I thank Leonard Cohen and the museum for allowing me the opportunity.

## Dance Me to the End of Love

Dance me to your beauty  
With a burning violin  
Dance me through the panic  
Till I'm gathered safely in  
Lift me like an olive branch  
And be my homeward dove  
Dance me to the end of love

Let me see your beauty  
When the witnesses are gone  
Let me feel you moving  
Like they do in Babylon  
Show me slowly what I only  
Know the limits of  
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the wedding now  
Dance me on and on  
Dance me very tenderly and  
Dance me very long  
We're both of us beneath our love  
We're both of us above  
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the children  
Who are asking to be born  
Dance me through the curtains  
That our kisses have outworn  
Raise a tent of shelter now  
Though every thread is torn  
Dance me to the end of love

---

Written by Leonard Cohen

© 1984 Leonard Cohen and Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

Piano and vocals: Douglas Dare

First violin: Charles Mutter

Second violin: Odile Ollagnon

Viola: Reiad Chibah

Cello: Adrian Bradbury

Produced, mixed and engineered by Fabian Prynn at the 4AD Studio, London

Strings arranged by Douglas Dare

## MÉLANIE DE BIASIO

My most intimate relationship is with Leonard Cohen's written work *Book of Longing* and the wonderful collection *Stranger Music: Selected Poems and Songs*.

I turn to Leonard Cohen's work when I need to release myself to my heart. He opens so many doors. *There For You* is an example of this.

My connection to Leonard Cohen has many facets. His visions of purity, his humility, his vitality and curiosity, his quest to discover the boundaries of his fears, his ability to embrace this darkness, his commitments to love and to life, his attempts to understand the tiniest detail and be in service to it and in service to the universal. In other words, his dialogue of understanding with God. So many of his works are prayers.

Participating in this tribute is my humble, modest and incomplete way of thanking Leonard Cohen for opening my heart.

### There For You

When it all went down  
And the pain came through  
I get it now  
I was there for you

Don't ask me how  
I know it's true  
I get it now  
I was there for you

I make my plans  
Like I always do  
But when I look back  
I was there for you

I walk the streets  
Like I used to do  
And I freeze with fear  
But I'm there for you

I see my life  
In full review  
It was never me  
It was always you

You sent me here  
You sent me there  
Breaking things  
I can't repair

Making objects  
Out of thoughts  
Making more  
By thinking not

Eating food  
And drinking wine  
A body that  
I thought was mine

Dressed as Arab  
Dressed as Jew  
O mask of iron  
I was there for you

Moods of glory  
Moods so foul  
The world comes through  
A bloody towel

And death is old  
But it's always new  
I freeze with fear  
And I'm there for you

I see it clear  
I always knew  
It was never me  
I was there for you

I was there for you  
My darling one  
And by your law  
It all was done

—

Written by Leonard Cohen and Sharon Robinson  
© 2004 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

Music: Mélanie De Biasio and Pascal Paulus  
Flute and vocals: Mélanie De Biasio  
Hohner Clavinet, synthesizers, piano, drums and beats: Pascal Paulus  
Recorded and mixed by Pascal Paulus at ElectricWomanStudios, Brussels  
Mastered at Sunny Side Inc. Brussels

## BRAD BARR

One of the virtues of a great songwriter is to populate the world with songs that other people want to sing. Even more unique is to populate the world with songs that other people can *reinterpret* and somehow make their own. Leonard was particularly good at this, as his songs retain the characteristics of the clay he used to mould them. Complete, but open-ended. I am happy to live in a time when such an artist's music is available to me to learn from, to grow into and to reinterpret to whatever end.

I chose *Tower of Song* because it was the inspiration behind one of my own songs, a collaboration with my friend Nathan Moore called *I Know I Know*. I based it on the *Tower of Song* meter and progression. I introduced my arrangement back into Leonard's song in a sort of full-circle allegory.

### Tower of Song

Well, my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not comin' on  
I'm just payin' my rent everyday in the Tower of Song

I said to Hank Williams "How lonely does it get?"  
Hank Williams hasn't answered yet  
But I hear him coughing all night long  
Oh, a hundred floors above me in the Tower of Song

I was born like this, I had no choice  
I was born with the gift of a golden voice  
And twenty-seven angels from the Great Beyond  
They tied me to this table right here in the Tower of Song

So you can stick your little pins in that voodoo doll  
I'm very sorry, baby, it doesn't look like me at all  
I'm standin' by the window where the light is strong  
Ah, they don't let a woman kill you, not in the Tower of Song

Now, you can say that I've grown bitter but of this you may be sure:  
The rich have got their channels in the bedrooms of the poor  
And there's a mighty Judgement comin' but I may be wrong  
You see, I hear these funny voices in the Tower of Song

I see you standin' on the other side  
I don't... How the river got so wide?  
I loved you, baby, way back when...  
And all the bridges are burnin' that we might've crossed  
But I feel so close to everything that we lost  
We'll never, we'll never have to lose it again

Now, I bid you farewell, I don't know when I'll be back  
They're movin' us tomorrow to the tower down the track  
But you'll be hearin' from me, baby, long after I'm gone  
I'll be speakin' to you sweetly from a window in the Tower of Song

Yeah, my friends are gone and my hair is grey  
I ache in the places where I used to play  
And I'm crazy for love but I'm not comin' on  
I'm just payin' my rent everyday in the Tower of Song

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
©1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) / Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC



## LEIF VOLLEBEKK

When you listen to Leonard Cohen,  
you live inside his voice.  
And it gives you all the advice  
you eventually take.

### Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye

I loved you in the morning  
Our kisses deep and warm  
Your hair upon the pillow  
Like a sleepy golden storm  
Yes, many loved before us  
I know that we are not new  
In city and in forest  
They smiled like me and you  
But now it's come to distances  
And both of us must try  
Your eyes are soft with sorrow  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I'm not looking for another  
As I wander in my time  
Walk me to the corner  
Our steps will always rhyme  
You know my love goes with you  
As your love stays with me  
It's just the way it changes  
Like the shoreline and the sea  
But let's not talk of love or chains  
And things we can't untie  
Your eyes are soft with sorrow  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

I loved you in the morning  
Our kisses deep and warm  
Your hair upon the pillow  
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Yes many loved before us  
I know that we are not new  
In city and in forest  
They smiled like me and you  
But let's not talk of love or chains  
And things we can't untie  
Your eyes are soft with sorrow  
Hey, that's no way to say goodbye

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1967 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

## DEAR CRIMINALS

Great artists like Cohen leave a profound mark on the imagination, creating a kind of timeless nostalgia, as if they were able to reveal memories, even to the person who was discovering them for the first time. Also, while he was always rooted in reality, Cohen taught us to transcend meaning by using, in music, a poetry that is sometimes so close to painting, a literature that plays with shapes, colours and their resonances to create impressions, images.

For all these reasons, and because his creative output is so personal, we initially found it a bit daunting to pay tribute to him. So we approached his work with humility. Before all else, we wanted to convey our love of the great man's words, which were at once soft, potent and significant.

These words have become an instrument in themselves, one whose music, for us, was merely a score to be followed. The melody of the song *Anthem* is disarmingly simple and lovely. And since the power of a melody lies in the fact that it can be rearranged in many different ways, we found ourselves in the midst of a gigantic sandbox.

Faced with so many possibilities, it seemed obvious to us that we should wrap it sparingly, as minimally as possible, in order to let the words breathe, give free rein to the interpretation. A very modest attempt to fix the timeless for a few instants. "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

### Anthem

The birds they sang  
At the break of day  
Start again  
I heard them say  
Don't dwell on what  
Has passed away  
Or what is yet to be  
Yeah the wars they will  
Be fought again  
The holy dove  
She will be caught again  
Bought and sold  
And bought again  
The dove is never free  
Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in  
We asked for signs  
The signs were sent  
The birth betrayed  
The marriage spent  
The widowhood  
Of every government  
Signs for all to see  
I can't run no more  
With that lawless crowd  
While the killers in high places  
Say their prayers out loud  
But they've summoned up  
A thundercloud  
And they're going to hear from me  
Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything  
You can add up the parts  
You won't have the sum  
You can strike up the march  
There is no drum  
Every heart, every heart to love will come  
But like a refugee  
Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There is a crack in everything

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1992 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

## ARIANE MOFFATT

### WITH THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

The opening is meant to be mystical. The sound produced by the keyboard suggests a church organ, and the voices held in its reverberation replace—for this reinterpretation—the poet’s legendary nylon string guitar.

You have to do something original.

On fingertips, setting out along the long hallway with glitchy walls, with the voice of the original *Famous Blue Raincoat* as my raw material. Bringing in and out as I please Simon Leclerc’s arrangement—performed by the OSM—which I’ve taken the time to carefully rework.

Thank you to the OSM for this precious gift. I am aware and appreciative of its value.

Rhythmically, moving back and forth between the ternary and the binary while guarding the song’s mysterious narrative.

Constantly asking myself whether the arrangement is organic enough... feeling Leonard’s intrigued presence over my shoulder that’s keeping the beat.

Changing course momentarily for a new section that to me feels epic and liberating. A kind of taking flight, or ultimate love song.

Completing the journey in an atmosphere of calm chaos. Improvising on the piano, so that the raw material breaks down, producing an end-of-life noise as the sounds decay.

As a final mantra, the “Sincerely, L. Cohen” which we rightly hang on to. Realizing in the darkness of the studio that the piece is nearly ten minutes long...

And that the exercise was utterly life-saving.

## Famous Blue Raincoat

It's four in the morning, the end of December  
I'm writing you now just to see if you're better  
New York is cold but I like where I'm living  
There's music on Clinton Street all though the evening  
I hear that you're building your little house deep in the desert  
You're living for nothing now  
I hope you're keeping some kind of record  
Yes, and Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her  
The night that you planned to go clear  
Did you ever go clear?  
The last time we saw you you looked so much older  
Your famous blue raincoat was torn at the shoulder  
You'd been to the station to meet every train  
but then you came home without Lili Marlene  
And you treated my woman to a flake of your life  
And when she came back she was nobody's wife  
I see you there with a rose in your teeth  
One more thin gypsy thief  
Well, I see Jane's awake  
She sends her regards  
And what can I tell you my brother my killer?  
What can I possibly say?  
I guess that I miss you  
I guess I forgive you  
I'm glad that you stood in my way  
If you ever come by here for Jane or for me  
I want you to know that your enemy is sleeping  
I want you to know that his woman is free  
Yes, and thanks for the trouble you took from her eyes  
I thought it was there for good, so I never tried  
And Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her that night that you planned  
to go clear

Sincerely, L. Cohen

—

Written by Leonard Cohen

© 1971 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

## MOBY

One of my earliest memories is my mom playing piano and singing *Suzanne*.

Until I was four or five years old I just assumed it was a song she had written.

So even though I was briefly crestfallen to find out that my mom didn't write *Suzanne* it's still my favourite of Leonard's songs.

## Suzanne

Suzanne takes you down to her place near the river  
You can hear the boats go by  
You can spend the night beside her  
And you know that she's half crazy  
But that's why you want to be there  
And she feeds you tea and oranges  
That come all the way from China  
And just when you mean to tell her  
That you have no love to give her  
Then she gets you on her wavelength  
And she lets the river answer  
That you've always been her lover  
And you want to travel with her  
And you want to travel blind  
And you know that she will trust you  
For you've touched her perfect body with your mind  
And Jesus was a sailor  
When he walked upon the water  
And he spent a long time watching  
From his lonely wooden tower  
And when he knew for certain  
Only drowning men could see him  
He said "All men will be sailors then  
Until the sea shall free them"  
But he himself was broken  
Long before the sky would open  
Forsaken, almost human  
He sank beneath your wisdom like a stone  
And you want to travel with him  
And you want to travel blind  
And you think maybe you'll trust him  
For he's touched your perfect body with his mind  
Now Suzanne takes your hand  
And she leads you to the river  
She is wearing rags and feathers  
From Salvation Army counters  
And the sun pours down like honey  
On our lady of the harbour  
And she shows you where to look  
Among the garbage and the flowers  
There are heroes in the seaweed  
There are children in the morning  
They are leaning out for love  
And they will lean that way forever  
While Suzanne holds the mirror  
And you want to travel with her  
And you want to travel blind  
And you know that you can trust her  
For she's touched your perfect body with her mind

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1967 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

# JULIA HOLTER

## Translating Cohen

My first experience of Leonard Cohen was my dad playing *First We Take Manhattan* on guitar, when I was a kid. “He’s a poet, he’s different,” my dad would say. It’s true the words he was singing were more elusive to a child than those of the other songs my dad would play, like by the Byrds or even Bob Dylan. The words were that kind that somehow work but don’t “make sense” at the same time, and that he was put in this weirdo “poet” box in my mind may have intimidated me before I became more aware of Cohen’s music, although I found the mystery of the phrases I initially heard weirdly welcoming. Without being too dramatic about it, upon reflection, I do think my dad playing Cohen’s music on guitar may have been one of the first realizations I had of the truth that hides in abstraction—that the madness we experience in our heads can be the building blocks of beauty and understanding. Of course, most interesting art can potentially do this for young people, but I guess for me it might have been those nights listening to my dad playing Cohen.

His songs function in a different way than a lot of popular music, and yet they are celebrated all over the world. He has many whispers, often accompanied by otherworldly women’s hums, alongside soaring melodies, and uses incongruous but familiar imagery. I can see it as a kind of healing music—we need the reassurance that the ordinariness of our day-to-day lives has a beauty, in a world that is usually so goal-oriented. The music has a quiet acknowledgment of the feeling behind the simple things like “tea and oranges” or “blue raincoats,” maybe a spirituality for some. I think it is his playful, humble approach to writing, as found in this famous quote of his, that allows for the magic: “It’s like a bear stumbling into a beehive or a honey cache: I’m stumbling right into it and getting stuck, and it’s delicious and it’s horrible and I’m in it and it’s not very graceful and it’s very awkward and it’s very painful and yet there’s something inevitable about it.”

*Take This Waltz* has a dementedly seductive vibe and I wanted to “translate” it in my own way. Cohen’s text is a loose translation of a poem by Federico García Lorca, whose work also tends to feature surreal symbolic imagery. I feel more in touch with this play on  $\frac{3}{4}$  time than, say, with Ravel’s “La Valse.” I like the fragility and creepiness here: the song dances playfully through some painful kinds of longing and human desperation.

I like to think that art is always some kind of a “translation”—in *Take This Waltz*, Cohen is telling someone else’s story in a Cohen form, and in other songs of his, maybe there are translations of experiences he had in the world, or conversations, or visual art, or other writings. All the recordings he made have a loving mystery that allows them to be appreciated and further translated by a world in growing need of a softer yet resonant, more subtle beauty.

## Take This Waltz (after Federico García Lorca)

Now in Vienna there’s ten pretty women  
There’s a shoulder where Death comes to cry  
There’s a lobby with nine hundred windows  
There’s a tree where the doves go to die  
There’s a piece that was torn from the morning  
And it hangs in the Gallery of Frost  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take this waltz with the clamp on its jaws

Oh I want you, I want you, I want you  
On a chair with a dead magazine  
In the cave at the tip of the lily  
In some hallways where love’s never been  
On a bed where the moon has been sweating  
In a cry filled with footsteps and sand  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take its broken waist in your hand

This waltz, this waltz, this waltz, this waltz  
With its very own breath of brandy and Death  
Dragging its tail in the sea

There’s a concert hall in Vienna  
Where your mouth had a thousand reviews  
There’s a bar where the boys have stopped talking  
They’ve been sentenced to death by the blues  
Ah, but who is it climbs to your picture  
With a garland of freshly cut tears?  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
Take this waltz it’s been dying for years

There’s an attic where children are playing  
Where I’ve got to lie down with you soon  
In a dream of Hungarian lanterns  
In the mist of some sweet afternoon  
And I’ll see what you’ve chained to your sorrow  
All your sheep and your lilies of snow  
Ay, Ay, Ay, Ay  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
With its “I’ll never forget you, you know!”

This waltz, this waltz, this waltz, this waltz  
With its very own breath of brandy and Death  
Dragging its tail in the sea

And I’ll dance with you in Vienna  
I’ll be wearing a river’s disguise  
The hyacinth wild on my shoulder,  
My mouth on the dew of your thighs  
And I’ll bury my soul in a scrapbook,  
With the photographs there, and the moss  
And I’ll yield to the flood of your beauty  
My cheap violin and my cross  
And you’ll carry me down on your dancing  
To the pools that you lift on your wrist  
Oh my love, Oh my love  
Take this waltz, take this waltz  
It’s yours now. It’s all that there is

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen, lyrics based on a poem by Federico García Lorca  
(“Pequeño vals vienés” [Little Viennese Waltz])  
© 1986, 1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) / Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

Performed, recorded and produced by Julia Holter  
Includes field recordings made by Julia Holter on Hydra, the Greek island where Cohen lived and spent much time throughout his life.



## SOCALLED

What an honour to be a part of this active, creative, living celebration of the words and music of Leonard Cohen. I rarely sing in English: most of the texts that I sing are in Yiddish, a language of my culture that I do not speak fluently. But for some reason, I found my “voice” singing in this lost language of my ancestors. This is the second time I’ve tried to present a Leonard Cohen song, and once again I must say Cohen’s text just feels so right: his words feel eminently singable and relatable to me. I feel his passion, his despair, his hope, his courage in every word: his poetry speaks to my past and my present. His composed melodies also feel familiar, as if they contain the echo of that Yiddish world that I have dedicated so much energy to re-creating, re-discovering, re-learning. In order for me to perform something, I have to make it make sense to me, it has to come through me, to pass freely, honestly through my body and soul, transformed and processed by my brain and breath. In order to be true to myself, to be my own man, to be YOUR man, I did switch one word in the text, did you hear it?

## I’m Your Man

If you want a lover  
I’ll do anything you ask me to  
And if you want another kind of love  
I’ll wear a mask for you  
If you want a partner  
take my hand  
Or if you want to strike me down in anger  
here I stand  
I’m your man

If you want a boxer  
I will step into the ring for you  
And if you want a doctor  
I’ll examine every inch of you  
If you want a driver  
climb inside  
Or if you want to take me for a ride  
you know you can  
I’m your man

Ah, the moon’s too bright  
the chain’s too tight  
the beast won’t go to sleep  
I’ve been running through these promises to you  
that I made and I could not keep

Ah but a man never got a woman back  
not by begging on his knees  
Or I’d crawl to you baby  
and I’d fall at your feet  
And I’d howl at your beauty  
like a dog in heat  
And I’d claw at your heart  
and I’d tear at your sheet  
I’d say please, please  
I’m your man

And if you’ve got to sleep  
a moment on the road  
I will steer for you  
And if you want to work the street alone  
I’ll disappear for you  
If you want a father for your child  
or only want to walk with me a while  
across the sand  
I’m your man

If you want a lover,  
I’ll do anything that you ask me to  
And if you want another kind of love  
I’ll wear a mask for you

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
©1987 Stranger Music, Inc. (BMI) / Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

## CHILLY GONZALES AND JARVIS COCKER

WITH KAISER QUARTETT

*Paper Thin Hotel* is Leonard Cohen's lesser-known hotel song. He remembered her well at the Chelsea Hotel, but on *Paper Thin Hotel*, he remembers something more traumatic—a journey through sad denial, self-delusion and resigned acceptance.

Jarvis Cocker and I were searching for an appropriate encore after performing our hotel-themed song cycle *Room 29*. After rejecting *Hotel California*, it seemed fitting to turn to my fellow Montrealer for inspiration. I confess that I didn't know the *Death of a Ladies' Man* album very well, but Jarvis suggested *Paper Thin Hotel*, and its Phil Spector-produced wall of sound lent itself perfectly to our chamber-pop aesthetic.

### Paper Thin Hotel

The walls of this hotel are paper-thin  
Last night I heard you making love to him  
The struggle mouth to mouth and limb to limb  
The grunt of unity when he came in

I stood there with my ear against the wall  
I was not seized by jealousy at all  
In fact a burden lifted from my soul  
I heard that love was out of my control  
A heavy burden lifted from my soul  
I learned that love was out of my control

I listened to your kisses at the door  
I never heard the world so clear before  
You ran your bath and you began to sing  
I felt so good I couldn't feel a thing

I stood there with my ear against the wall  
I was not seized by jealousy at all  
In fact a burden lifted from my soul  
I heard that love was out of my control  
A heavy burden lifted from my soul  
I learned that love was out of my control

And I can't wait to tell you to your face  
And I can't wait for you to take my place  
You are the naked angel in my heart  
You are the woman with her legs apart

It's written on the walls of this hotel  
You go to heaven once you've been to hell

A heavy burden lifted from my soul  
I heard that love was out of my control

---

Written by Leonard Cohen and Phil Spector  
© 1977 EMI Music Publishing, Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

Kaiser Quartett:  
Cello: Martin Bentz  
Violin: Adam Zolynski  
Violin: Jansen Folkers  
Viola: Ingmar Süßerkrüb

Produced and mixed by Renaud Letang

## THE NATIONAL

WITH  
SUFJAN STEVENS  
RAGNAR KJARTANSSON  
AND  
RICHARD REED PARRY

## Memories

Frankie Lane, he was singing Jezebel  
I pinned an Iron Cross to my lapel  
I walked up to the tallest and the blondest girl  
I said, Look, you don't know me now but very soon you will  
So won't you let me see  
I said "won't you let me see"  
I said "won't you let me see  
Your naked body?"

Just dance me to the dark side of the gym  
Chances are I'll let you do most anything  
I know you're hungry, I can hear it in your voice  
And there are many parts of me to touch,  
you have your choice  
Ah but no you cannot see  
She said "no you cannot see"  
She said "no you cannot see  
My naked body"

So We're dancing close, the band is playing Stardust  
Balloons and paper streamers floating down on us  
She says, You've got a minute left to fall in love  
In solemn moments such as this I have put my trust  
And all my faith to see  
I said all my faith to see  
I said all my faith to see  
Her naked body

—

Written by Leonard Cohen and Phil Spector

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## BASIA BULAT

I've been listening to Leonard nearly all my life. His music has accompanied a lonely prom night, family holidays, open-sky drives on tour, new romances and failed romances, anxious worrying about the end of the world, walks along the Main and the moment I'm writing this. I wanted to record *Dance Me to the End of Love* because every time I've played it, I've felt as though I know it deeply and also as if I'm hearing it for the first time. A kind of reflection of all these different moments in my life where every new understanding has brought a deeper mystery, a sigh and a laugh.

### Dance Me to the End of Love

Dance me to your beauty  
With a burning violin  
Dance me through the panic  
Till I'm gathered safely in  
Lift me like an olive branch  
And be my homeward dove  
Dance me to the end of love

Let me see your beauty  
When the witnesses are gone  
Let me feel you moving  
Like they do in Babylon  
Show me slowly what I only  
Know the limits of  
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the wedding now  
Dance me on and on  
Dance me very tenderly and  
Dance me very long  
We're both of us beneath our love  
We're both of us above  
Dance me to the end of love

Dance me to the children  
Who are asking to be born  
Dance me through the curtains  
That our kisses have outworn  
Raise a tent of shelter now  
Though every thread is torn  
Dance me to the end of love

—

Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1984 Leonard Cohen and Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

Vocals, piano, stylophone, organ and hammered harp: Basia Bulat  
Acoustic guitar: Andrew Woods  
Backing vocals, keyboard: Sydney Lee  
Bass: Joel Young  
Trumpet: Kaveh Nabatian  
Drums: Matthew Woodley  
Additional percussion, backing vocals: Laura Jeffrey  
Produced by Basia Bulat  
Recorded by Mark Lawson and Andrew Woods  
Mixed by Graham Lessard  
Mastered by Harris Newman

## LITTLE SCREAM

When I was fourteen, a boy sent me a pirated cassette tape of a Leonard Cohen cover album called *I'm Your Fan*. The boy was handsome and loved poetry, and his father was in prison for gouging a woman's eye out in a bar. I was of course desperately in love with him. The songs on that tape were all about lust and longing, and they seemed to provide a perfect soundtrack for our burgeoning yet ultimately doomed romance.

When I listened to the stories inside those songs, I always envisioned myself as the protagonist—the seeker, not the sought. I was the one “burning up the road, heading down to Phoenix,” where I had this old address of someone that I knew. I pictured myself there in the future, a somewhat worn-out, tattered, drag version of myself in a roadside hotel, on a quixotic mission to gather together fragments of lost romances in order to reassemble them into some picture of myself that I could recognize. As I listened to those songs then, I felt a duty well up inside me—a duty to author a life for myself that would live up to the passion, romance and tragedy of all those prescient Leonard Cohen lines.

And here I am. And here we are now. In the conscious crosshairs of time's arrow.

## I Can't Forget

I stumbled out of bed  
I got ready for the struggle  
I smoked a cigarette  
And I tightened up my gut  
I said this can't be me  
Must be my double  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember what

I'm burning up the road  
I'm heading down to Phoenix  
I got this old address  
Of someone that I knew  
It was high and fine and free  
Ah, you should have seen us  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember who

I'll be there today  
With a big bouquet of cactus  
I got this rig that runs on memories  
And I promise, cross my heart  
They'll never catch us  
But if they do, just tell them it was me

Yeah I loved you all my life  
And that's how I want to end it  
The summer's almost gone  
The winter's tuning up  
Yeah, the summer's gone  
But a lot goes on forever  
And I can't forget, I can't forget  
I can't forget but I don't remember what

---

Written by Leonard Cohen  
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## LI'L ANDY AND JOE GRASS

This recording was made in the underground parking garage of Montréal's Palais des congrès, a location we did not have permission to record in. It was necessary to complete takes quickly and not every verse of the song as Cohen published it could be accommodated.

I began performing *Democracy* sometime in the 1990s, but recently I've found myself unable to hear its ambiguous refrain ("Democracy is coming to the U.S.A....") with the same humour its author perhaps intended, unable to approach its lyric with the same hopeful and "anthemic" quality Cohen said he wanted to give to the song.

I wanted to create a disquieting backdrop befitting the political and social change that makes us hear the song in this new way. So, late one night, pedal-steel guitarist Joe Grass and I covertly set up five microphones in the

Palais des congrès parking garage and let its acoustics and background noises act as a third instrument as we performed this version of *Democracy*.

There are few public spaces in modern civilization as sinister as an underground parking garage. The echo of footsteps, the closing of a car door, the roar of an engine, the squeal of tires—our senses have been trained to interpret these sounds as signalling threat or danger, the possibility of a violent attack. All of these attendant noises can be heard on the recording you hear in this exhibit.

I wanted to mix these ominous sounds with the beauty of the pedal-steel guitar and the fragility of a single human voice. My version of *Democracy* becomes something of an elegy or dirge for the idea of democracy, but one that by its very act of singing and playing suggests a small act of hope.

### Democracy

It's coming through a hole in the air  
From those nights in Tiananmen Square  
It's coming from the feel  
That this ain't exactly real  
Or it's real, but it ain't exactly there  
From the wars against disorder  
From the sirens night and day  
From the fires of the homeless  
From the ashes of the gay  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

It's coming through a crack in the wall  
On a visionary flood of alcohol  
From the staggering account  
Of the Sermon on the Mount  
Which I don't pretend to understand at all  
It's coming from the silence  
On the dock of the bay  
From the brave, the bold, the battered  
Heart of Chevrolet  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

It's coming from the sorrow in the street  
The holy places where the races meet  
From the homicidal bitchin'  
That goes down in every kitchen  
To determine who will serve and who will eat  
From the wells of disappointment  
Where the women kneel to pray  
For the grace of God in the desert here  
And the desert far away:  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.  
Sail on, sail on  
O mighty Ship of State  
To the Shores of Need  
Past the Reefs of Greed  
Through the Squalls of Hate  
Sail on, sail on, sail on, sail on  
It's coming to America first  
The cradle of the best and of the worst  
It's here they got the range  
And the machinery for change  
And it's here they got the spiritual thirst  
It's here the family's broken  
And it's here the lonely say  
That the heart has got to open  
In a fundamental way  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

It's coming from the women and the men  
O baby, we'll be making love again  
We'll be going down so deep  
The river's going to weep  
And the mountain's going to shout Amen!  
It's coming like the tidal flood  
Beneath the lunar sway  
Imperial, mysterious in amorous array  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.  
Sail on, sail on  
O mighty Ship of State  
To the Shores of Need  
Past the Reefs of Greed  
Through the Squalls of Hate  
Sail on, sail on, sail on, sail on  
I'm sentimental, if you know what I mean  
I love the country but I can't stand the scene  
And I'm neither left or right  
I'm just staying home tonight  
Getting lost in that hopeless little screen  
But I'm stubborn as those garbage bags  
That Time cannot decay  
I'm junk but I'm still holding up  
This little wild bouquet  
Democracy is coming to the U.S.A.

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen  
© 1992 Sony ATV Music Publishing LLC

Vocals: Li'l Andy  
Pedal-steel guitar: Joe Grass  
Recorded and mixed by Joe Grass in the Palais des congrès parking garage, Montréal  
Mastered by Ryan Morey  
Thanks to Emily Gan, Nasuna Stuart-Ulin, Dustyn Lucas and Mathilde Holland

## LOU DOILLON

My love for Leonard Cohen started when I was very young. I remember being in the back of my father's car, coming home from a long day of outdoor takes on his movie. I must have been eight or nine. We drove for hours back to his hotel, and I knew him enough to know that when he put music on, one had to shut up and listen...

He played the *Songs of Love and Hate* album, and I have this vivid memory of feeling like Leonard Cohen was talking to me. My father doesn't understand English, and I remember being embarrassed by this for the first time. I couldn't stand the fact that he was not hearing the poetry. I needed to share it with him, my first understanding of poetry.

When the car stopped for gas, I got in the front seat and said I would translate the entire album for him, as the music went along. I remember moving myself to tears as I was translating *Famous Blue Raincoat*. I had never witnessed such grace, generosity and kindness before: *l'ultime bienveillance* de Leonard Cohen.

Till then lyrics had always been somewhat binary: one hated or loved, one cared or didn't care... This was the first time that someone was singing to my intelligence, insinuating what I by then already knew, that love and hate were sides to the same coin, were a point of view, and understanding would lead to kindness, and that was maybe the only way to ride through life.

That light that Leonard Cohen turned on in my brain and heart has revealed the world that lies in between words, in between lines, in between the known and the unknown... That light has kept me curious for details, has kept my eyes open and has guided me through the rollercoaster of life, with tears and a merry heart.

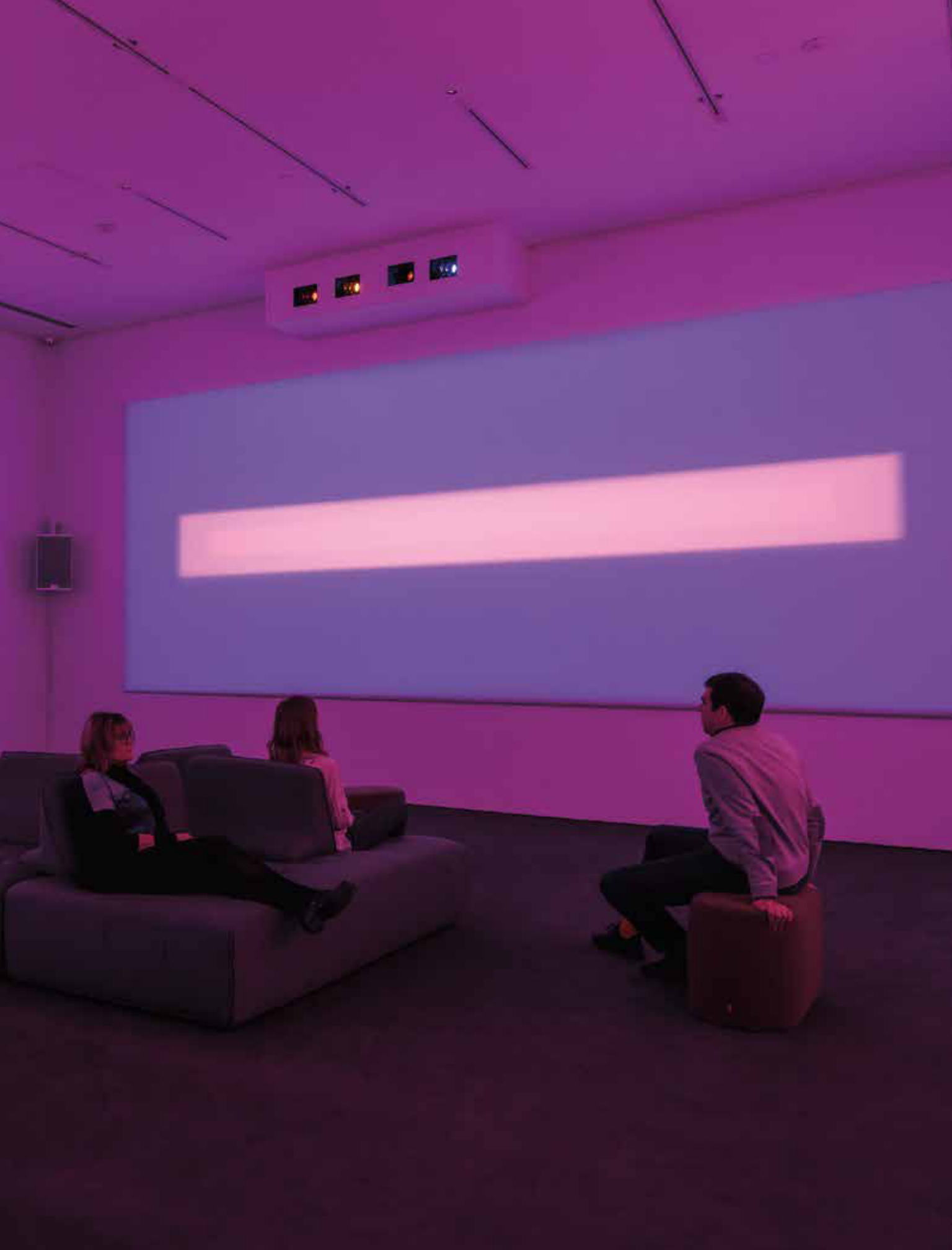
## Famous Blue Raincoat

It's four in the morning, the end of December  
I'm writing you now just to see if you're better  
New York is cold but I like where I'm living  
There's music on Clinton Street all though the evening  
I hear that you're building your little house deep in the desert  
You're living for nothing now  
I hope you're keeping some kind of record  
Yes, and Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her  
The night that you planned to go clear  
Did you ever go clear?  
The last time we saw you you looked so much older  
Your famous blue raincoat was torn at the shoulder  
You'd been to the station to meet every train  
but then you came home without Lili Marlene  
And you treated my woman to a flake of your life  
And when she came back she was nobody's wife  
I see you there with a rose in your teeth  
One more thin gypsy thief  
Well, I see Jane's awake  
She sends her regards  
And what can I tell you my brother my killer?  
What can I possibly say?  
I guess that I miss you  
I guess I forgive you  
I'm glad that you stood in my way  
If you ever come by here for Jane or for me  
I want you to know that your enemy is sleeping  
I want you to know that his woman is free  
Yes, and thanks for the trouble you took from her eyes  
I thought it was there for good, so I never tried  
And Jane came by with a lock of your hair  
She said that you gave it to her that night that you planned  
to go clear

Sincerely, L. Cohen

—  
Written by Leonard Cohen  
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## LIST OF WORKS

### KARA BLAKE

#### ***The Offerings*, 2017**

5-channel video installation, black and white and colour, sound,  
35 min, looped

Projection on three screens

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts

Courtesy the artist

Production Assistance: Alexandre Larose, Becky Blake, Marites Carino |  
Sound Mix: Steve Bates | Colour Correction: Francis Hanneman | Subtitles:  
Robert Paquin | Spotting: Hiventy | Translation: Michel Garneau (*Prayer for  
Messiah*), Jean Guiloineau (*Tower of Song*)

**Pages: 71-73**

### CANDICE BREITZ

#### ***I'm Your Man (A Portrait of Leonard Cohen)*, 2017**

Shot at the Phi Centre, Montréal, May-June 2017

19-channel video installation, colour, sound, 40 min 43 s, looped

18 suspended monitors and one single-screen projection

Commissioned and produced by the Musée d'art contemporain  
de Montréal

With the support of the Goethe-Institut Montréal

Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Director: Candice Breitz | Project Management: Sophie Cook, Alex Fahl,  
Gabrielle Gagnon-Fréchet | Casting: Candice Breitz, Sophie Cook | Assistant  
Director: Sophie Cook | Director of Photography: Yann-Manuel Hernandez |  
Sound: Max Schneider | Production Assistants: Gaby Girard, Dustyn Lucas,  
Aly Marguerite Neumann, Ellen Payne Smith, Nasuna Stuart-Ulin, Sarah Tue-Fee |  
Post Production: Alex Fahl | Still Photography: Edwin Isford

Participants: Lew Auerbach, Sheldon Azimov, Thomas L. Bohan,  
Don Cummer, Jean-Pierre Ducharme, Shaun Fawcett (in memory of  
Ellen C. Fawcett), Marc Gian, Jerry Golland, Fergus Keyes, Richard Lahmy,  
Peter Lau, Victor Neufeld, Claude Ouellet, Philippe, Denis S.J. Shackel,  
Paul G. Shaw, Edward Lyon Singer, Philip J. Taylor

Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue Choir: Roi Azoulay (Music Director),  
Cantor Gideon Y. Zelermyer (Soloist), Conor O'Neil (Arranger)  
Choristers: David Buzaglo, Victor Chisholm, Gabriel Frank, Joshua Goldman,  
Isak Goldschneider, Conor O'Neil, David Packer, Lorne Shapiro, Jake Smith  
Recorded by Howard Bilerman at Hotel2Tango

**Pages: 75-79, 156-157**

### JANET CARDIFF AND GEORGE BURES MILLER

#### ***The Poetry Machine*, 2017**

Interactive audio/mixed-media installation including organ,  
speakers, carpet, computer and electronics

Dimensions variable

All poetry written and performed by Leonard Cohen from  
*Book of Longing*, published 2006 by McClelland & Stewart

Dedicated to Leonard Cohen, 1934-2016

Special thanks to Robert Kory and Leonard Cohen Family Trust

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Courtesy the artists, Luhring Augustine, New York,

Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Koyanagi Gallery, Tokyo

**Pages: 67-69**



## CHRISTOPHE CHASSOL

### *Cuba in Cohen*, 2017

Single-screen video installation, black and white, sound,  
15 min 19 s, looped, including annotated musical scores  
Dimensions variable

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy the artist

Vocals: Sandra Samuel, Carlotta Menozzi, Kenneth Bailey and Jean Pierre Muller,  
Krisztina Nagy, Pauline Simon, Christophe Chassol | Recorded by Thibaut Javoy  
at Xavier Veilhan's "Studio Venezia"

**Pages: 9, 61-65**

## LEONARD COHEN

### *Self-Portraits, 2003-2016*, 2017

Projection of 220 drawings documenting Leonard Cohen's  
self-portraits

Editing by Alexandre Perrault

Produced by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy and © Leonard Cohen Family Trust

**Pages: 85-87**

## DAILY TOUS LES JOURS

### *I Heard There Was a Secret Chord*, 2017

Participatory audio installation

Octagonal architectural environment, including microphones,  
speakers, transducers and digital display  
434 x 590 x 590 cm (wooden structure)

434 x 242 cm (each panel)

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
and the National Film Board of Canada

With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts

Courtesy Daily tous les jours (JoDee Allen, Mouna Andraos,  
Fady Atallah, Michael Baker, Irene Chaudouet, Melissa Mongiat,  
Anne Ouellette, Eva Schindling, Bianca Su, Rebecca Taylor,  
Pierre Thirion)

Recording: Patrick McDowel, Dominique Girard (Tetra Sound Lab) |  
Choir Direction: Melodie Rabatel | Acoustic Consultant: Tim Hewling  
(Resonance TJL) | Fabrication: Double Effet | Website Programming: Folklore |  
Choirs: Ensemble Vocal Les Nanas de Montréal, Choeur Gai de Montréal,  
Ensemble vocal DivertisSon, La Serre, BAnQ, L'ensemble/Coristi de Laval

**Pages: 2-3, 109-113**

## TACITA DEAN

### *Ear on a Worm*, 2017

Single-screen film installation

16-mm colour film, sound, 3 min 33 s, looped

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy the artist and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

Director of Photography: Travis LaBella | First AC: Cate Smierciak | Loader:  
Craig Samuels | Location Sound Recording: Tacita Dean | Neg Cut: Steve  
Farman | Sound Design: James Harrison | Sound Facilitator: Stephen Felton,  
Sound Design Company | Sound Master: John Polito, Audio Mechanics |  
Optical Sound Transfer: DJ Audio | Colour Timing: Saul Escobedo | Film  
Scheduler: Denise Marques | Marketing Executive Panavision Hollywood:  
Jennifer Kuwabara Naples | Printed by Fotokem, Los Angeles | Originated on  
Kodak Motion Picture Film | Filmed using Panavision® Camera & Lenses |  
Installation: Kenneth Graham, KS Objectiv | Filmed on location in Venice,  
California

**Pages: 10-11, 106**

## THOMAS DEMAND

### *Ampel / Stoplight*, 2016

Multimedia video installation

Animated video on LED panel, colour, stereo, sound (Tyondai  
Braxton with Leonard Cohen), 20 min, looped

104 x 63 x 10 cm (panel)

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
© Thomas Demand / SODRAC (2017)

**Page: 59**

## KOTA EZAWA

### *Cohen 21*, 2017

16-mm animated film installation, black and white, sound,  
2 min 30 s, looped

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy the artist

**Pages: 46, 48-49**

## GEORGE FOK

### *Passing Through*, 2017

Multi-channel video installation, black and white and colour,  
sound, 56 min 15 s, looped

Projection on three walls

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Courtesy the artist

Assistant Editor and Editorial Research: Matthew Ober | Sound: An Audio Z  
Co-production | Executive Producer: Serge Laforest | Sound Design and Mix:  
Martin Rouillard, Rémy Sealey | Sound Installation: Martin Rouillard |  
Additional Mix: Johan Chacon | Subtitles: Semantikos (Elizabeth Marion Poitras)

**Pages: 41-45, 154-155**

## ARI FOLMAN

### ***Depression Chamber*, 2017**

Interactive computer-animated video installation, live camera, Kinect sensor, black and white, colour, sound, 5 min 10 s, including resting platform

Projection on three walls and ceiling

Architectural environment: 333 x 250 x 333 cm

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

With the support of the Swiss Foundation for Arts and Culture

Pro Helvetia and the Consulate General of Israel in Montréal

Courtesy the artist

Created by Ari Folman | Illustration: David Polonsky | 2D Animation: Sefi Gayego | Technical Direction and Programming: TinkaTinka | Production: Yael Nahlieli

**Pages: 1, 35-39**

## CLARA FUREY

### ***When Even The*, 2017**

Dance performance/installation

Solo dance performance in the presence of the sculpture *Coaxial Planck Density* (1999) by Marc Quinn, with music and sound design by Tomas Furey and light design by Alexandre Pilon-Guay, including video installation directed by Kaveh Nabatian

90 performances lasting 90 min each

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts

Courtesy the artist

+

## MARC QUINN

### ***Coaxial Planck Density*, 1999**

Lead

10 x 185 x 51 cm

Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Courtesy the artist

**Pages: 101-105**

## JENNY HOLZER

### ***For Leonard Cohen*, 2017**

Light projection

Grain Silo No. 5, Old Port, Montréal

Text: Lyrics and poems by Leonard Cohen

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Courtesy and © 2017 Jenny Holzer, Artists Rights Society (ARS),

New York / SODRAC, Montréal

**Pages: 4-5, 121-123**

## JON RAFMAN

### ***Legendary Reality*, 2017**

21-seat sculptural theatre installation, featuring video projection, colour, stereo sound, 15 min 45 s, looped

Dimensions variable

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Courtesy the artist, Sprueth Magers, Los Angeles, and Galerie

Antoine Ertaskiran, Montréal

For the film | Poetry and music by Leonard Cohen | Sound Design: Milo Reinhardt | Sound Mix: Xavier Arocha

**Pages: 94, 96-99, 152-153**

## MICHAEL RAKOWITZ

### ***I'm Good at Love, I'm Good at Hate, It's in Between I Freeze*, 2015-2017**

Multimedia installation featuring video projection, darkened monitor, archival artifacts and objects

Dimensions variable

Produced with the support of Creative Capital, Chicago, and the

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Courtesy and © 2017 Michael Rakowitz

For the film | Director: Michael Rakowitz | Director of Photography: Robert Chase Heishman | Editor: Robert Chase Heishman | Sound Engineer: Nate Sandberg | Leonard: Marc Joseph Berg | Story partially based on *Various Positions: A Life of Leonard Cohen* by Ira B. Nadel, published by Pantheon Books | A Falafel Western Film

**Pages: 50-53**

## ZACH RICHTER

### ***Hallelujah*, 2017**

Virtual reality experience

Headset, headphones, computer and electronics, including suspended theatrical drapes

Circular configuration: 335 cm (diam.)

Created by Zach Richter, Bobby Halvorson and Eames Kolar

Produced by Within in partnership with Lytro

Key Collaborators: Chrissy Szczupak, Orin Green, Jess Engel, ECCO VR, International Orange Chorale of SF, Chris Milk and Aaron Koblin

**Pages: 117-119, 158**

## SHARON ROBINSON

### ***Goodbye Stranger*, 2017**

Video-recorded musical performance, colour, sound, 5 min, looped

Commissioned by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Courtesy the artist

Director: Paula Walker | Producer: Allan Wachs | Director of Photography: Rolf Kestermann | Sound Recording: Keven Brennan

**Page: 83**

## THE SANCHEZ BROTHERS

*I Think I Will Follow You Very Soon*, 2017

Holographic and mixed-media installation

Reconstructed architectural environment with visual effects

by The Workshop in Montréal, hologram technology by

Mikael “Hologram Master” Fock/The Culture Yard in Elsinore,

and sound design by Mimi Allard

Artwork within the installation loaned by Morton Rosengarten

Dimensions variable

Commissioned by the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal

With the support of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec

and Culture Yard, Elsinore, Denmark

Courtesy the artists

**Pages: 89-93**

## TARYN SIMON

*The New York Times, Friday, November 11, 2016*, 2017

Mixed-media installation

Back issue of the *New York Times* newspaper

(dated November 11, 2016), including a glass display cabinet

61 x 30.5 x 56 cm (display cabinet)

Commissioned by the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal

Courtesy the artist and Gagosian Gallery, New York

**Pages: 55-57**

## ARIANE MOFFATT

WITH THE ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE DE MONTRÉAL

## AURORA

## BASIA BULAT

## BRAD BARR

CHILLY GONZALES AND JARVIS COCKER  
WITH KAISER QUARTETT

## DEAR CRIMINALS

## DOUGLAS DARE

## FEIST

## HALF MOON RUN

## JULIA HOLTER

## LEIF VOLLEBEKK

## LI’L ANDY AND JOE GRASS

## LITTLE SCREAM

## LOU DOILLON

## MÉLANIE DE BIASIO

## MOBY

## SOCALLED

THE NATIONAL  
WITH SUFJAN STEVENS, RAGNAR KJARTANSSON  
AND RICHARD REED PARRY

*Listening to Leonard*, 2017

Multimedia audio environment

Sound recordings of Leonard Cohen compositions

Light design by Jocelyn Labonté

Dimensions variable

Commissioned and produced by the Musée d’art contemporain  
de Montréal

Master recordings courtesy the artists

## Photo credits

Maxence Bilodeau: pp. 104-105

Geoffrey Boulangé: pp. 2-3, 109

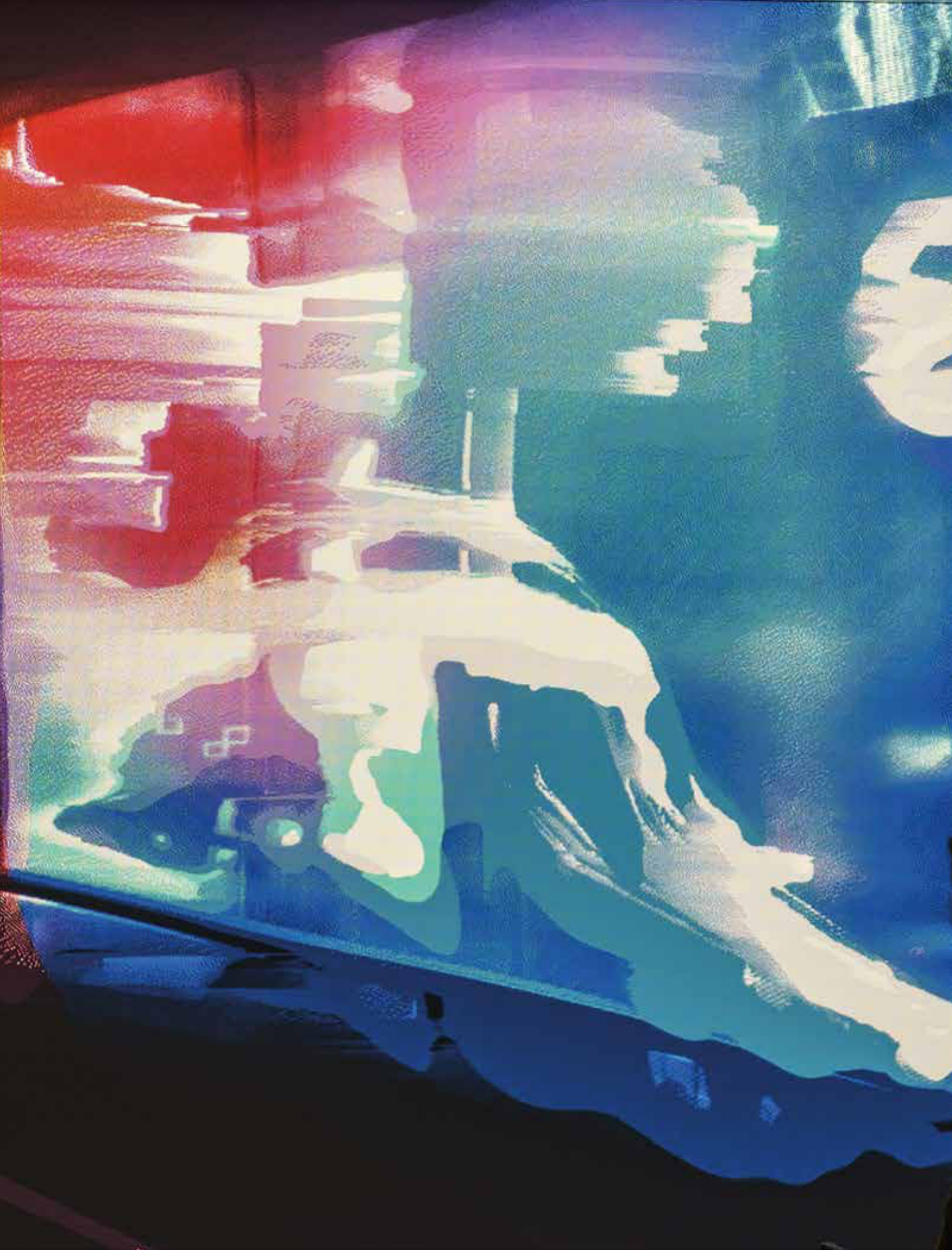
Gleb Gombert: pp. 4-5, 121-123

Guy L’Heureux: pp. 9, 35-39, 41, 44-45, 48-52,  
55, 61-63, 67-69, 71-73, 75-77, 83, 85, 89-94,  
96-99, 101-103, 106, 110-113, 117, 124, 126-127,  
146-147, 152-155, 158

Richard-Max Tremblay: pp. 30, 42-43

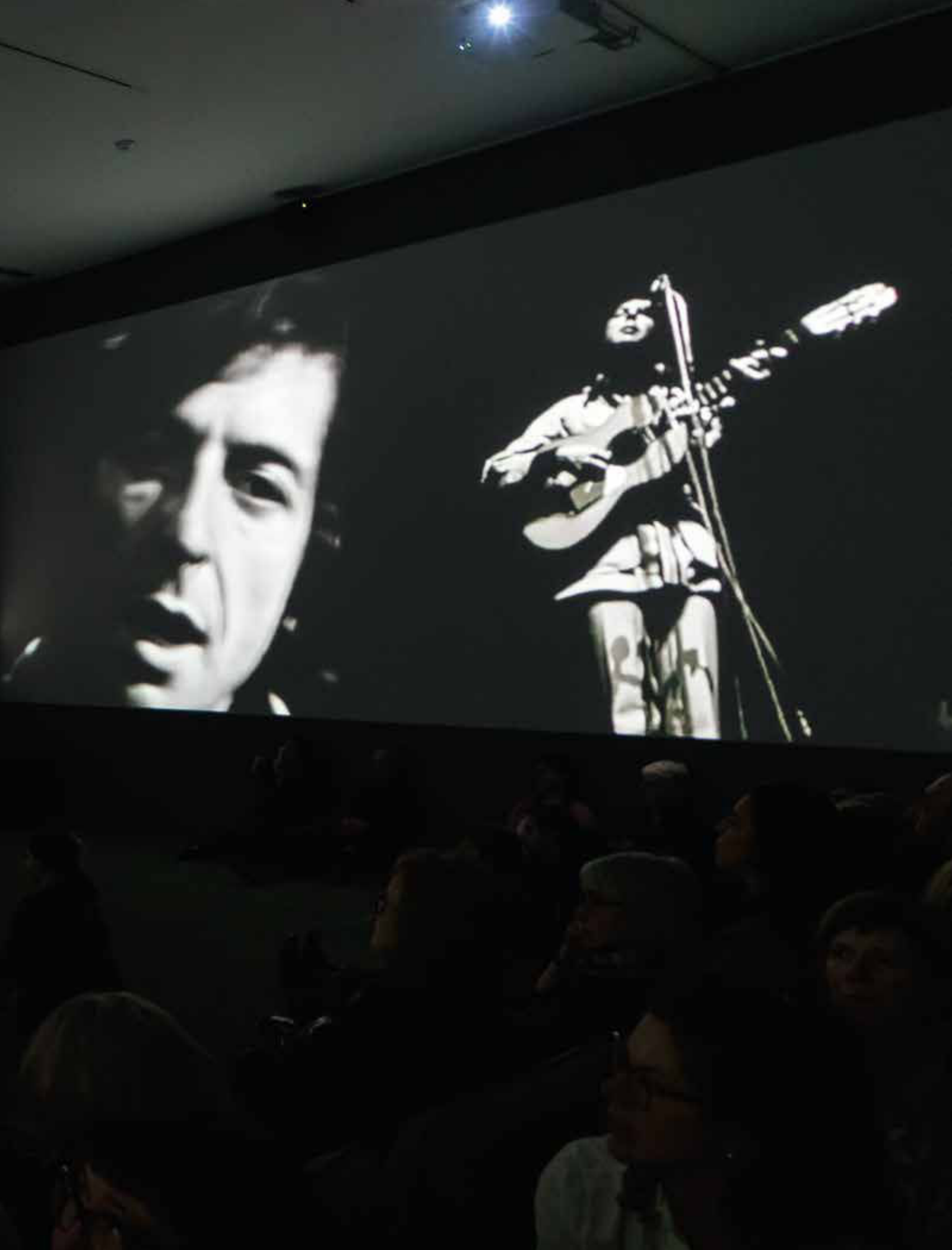




















## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC) wishes to thank the late Leonard Cohen, who in 2015 generously consented to the mounting of this exhibition. We also wish to thank the family, friends and associates of Leonard Cohen, in particular Robert Kory, Adam Cohen and Lorca Cohen, who provided invaluable access to the Cohen archives, writings, recordings, films, videos, photographs and other works.

The MAC is very pleased to be associated with its many institutional partners that have generously contributed to the production of this exhibition.

We are deeply grateful to the CBC/Radio-Canada, our exhibition presenter. The broadcaster generously made its archives available both to us and to our participating artists for the creation of new works for this project. Special thanks go to Carrie Haber, Debbie Hynes, Francine Allaire and Catherine Boivin.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to Alain Gignac and the Society for the Celebrations of Montréal's 375th Anniversary for their generous support for the project.

We are much indebted to the National Film Board of Canada (NFB), which generously shared its archives with our artists. We are further grateful to the NFB for joining forces with the MAC as co-commissioners to produce a new work of art with *Daily tous les jours*. Thank you Hugues Sweeney and André Picard.

Thank you as well to POP Montréal—Dan Seligman, Eric Cazes, Sarah Shoucri—for co-presenting the concert series *Leonard Cohen: Five concerts – Five albums*, and to all our guest musicians and series musical director Li'l Andy.

The MAC also wishes to acknowledge Sony Music and Sony ATV for granting us unprecedented access to a multitude of Cohen recordings, compositions and archival video materials, as well as permission to use them. A special thank you to Caryn Hanlon, George Maloian, Temi Argyropoulos, Janet Baker and Judy Naiberg.

We would like to express our gratitude to McClelland & Stewart and The Wylie Agency for providing us with access to many of Cohen's poems and writings. Thank you Jared Bland, Percy Stubbs and Katie Cacouris. Our appreciation goes as well to the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, for access to its Cohen archives.

We owe a heartfelt thank you to our curatorial assistants Sophie Cook and Geneviève Senécal and the rest of the MAC team, who worked with great enthusiasm and energy to realize the project. In no particular order: Anne-Marie Barnard, Carl Solari, Denis Labelle, Josée St-Louis, Alexandre Perreault, Marie-Eve Beaupré, Marie-Chantale Poisson, Eve Katinoglou, Marie-Renée Vial, Roxane Dumas-Noël, Valérie Sirard, Marlène Chapelain, Annie Alix-Paré, Emeren García, Chantal Charbonneau, François LeTourneux, Luc Perron, Yves Théoret, Anne-Marie Zeppetelli, Patricia DaPozzo, Sylvie Pelletier, Luc Guillemette, Naila Del Cid, Lesley Johnstone and Jocelyn Labonté.

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Our appreciation goes as well to the photographers, Michael Putland, Claude Gassian and Barry Masden, for providing us with stunning Leonard Cohen photographs.

The MAC also wishes to thank its exhibition partners: DeSerres, Aéroports de Montréal (ADM) and the Société de transport de Montréal (STM). Thank you, Canada Lands Company and Le Vieux-Port de Montréal.

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We are sincerely grateful to the following foundations and individuals for their generous support of the exhibition: The Azrieli Foundation, the Stephen and Lillian Vineberg Family Foundation, Nick Tedeschi and Sal Guerrero, the Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Family Foundation and Erin Battat. A particular thank you to the wonderful Lillian Vineberg, who accompanied and supported us from the inception of the exhibition to our opening.

Finally, we must extend our deepest gratitude to the artists and musicians who participated in this exhibition.

J.Z. and V.S.

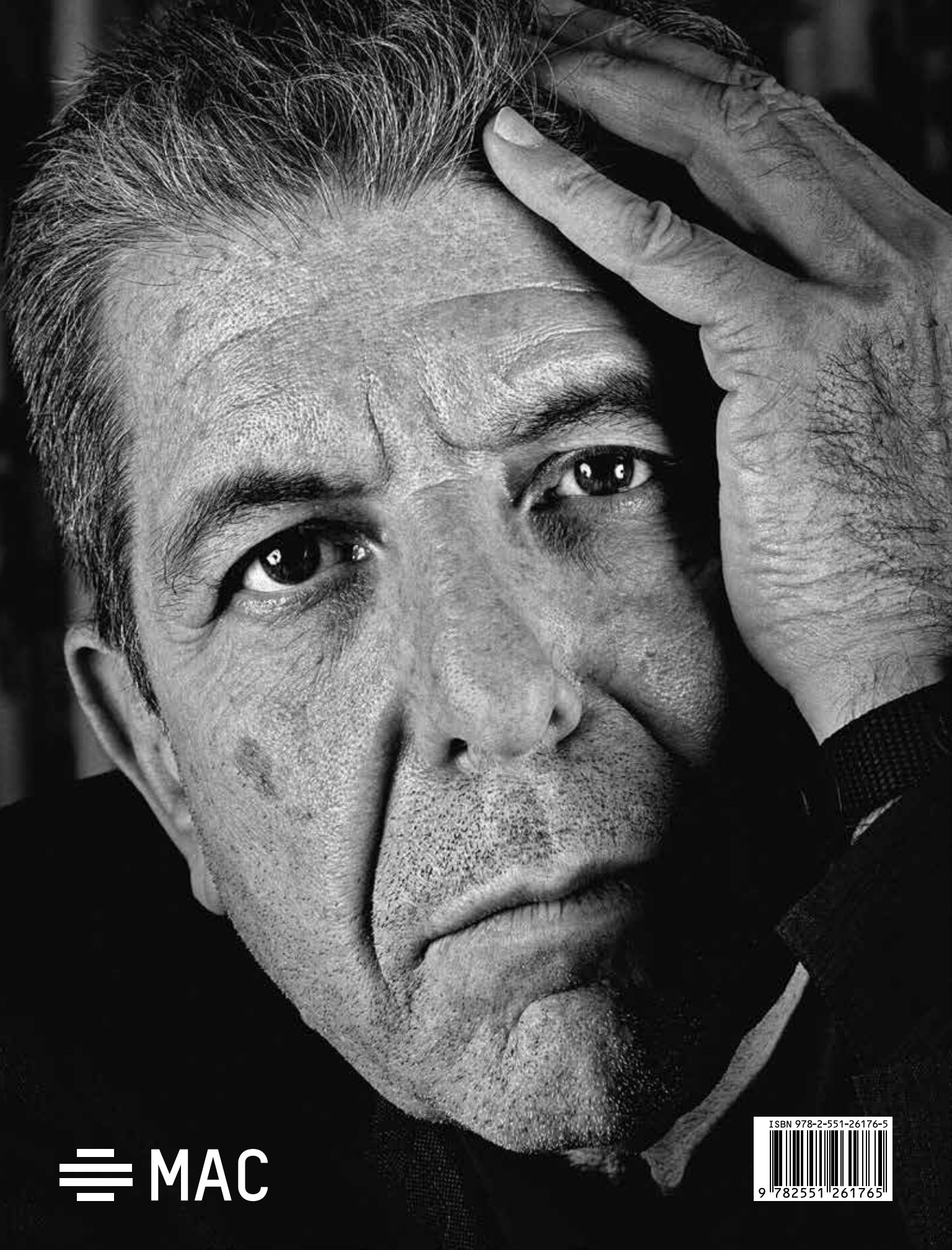
**JOHN ZEPPELELLI** is Director and Chief Curator of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal where he oversees a wide-ranging program of exhibitions, public programs and acquisitions, as well as spearheading a building transformation project. Sophie Calle, Simon Starling, David Altmejd, Jon Rafman, Dana Schutz, Ragnar Kjartansson, Teresa Margolles, Olafur Eliasson, and Lizzie Fitch/Ryan Trecartin are some of the exciting artists to have exhibited since his arrival. Before joining the MAC, he was curator at DHC/ART Foundation in Montréal where he organized many important solo exhibitions and an award-winning group show exploring loss and mortality, called *Chronicles of a Disappearance*. John worked at the ICA in London and in a commercial gallery in New York while he attended the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program. He has lectured at Concordia University and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design.

**VICTOR SHIFFMAN** is a guest curator at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Since 1988 he has worked in the arts as a producer, presenter and programmer across a variety of sectors including music, multimedia, film/video and performance. He has had the privilege to work with such artists as Radiohead, Bjork, The Beastie Boys, Boy George, Tears for Fears, Michel Gondry, Fela Kuti, Denis Villeneuve, George Clinton, Massive Attack, Tito Puente and George Benson. Born in Cape Town, South Africa, Victor attended Rhodes University, before moving to New York City in 1988 where he worked as a music publicist at The Ritz. He moved to Montréal in 1992, working as a programmer for the concert promoters DKD, Fogel/Sabourin and the Festival international de jazz de Montréal. He also has worked as a Creative Producer for Cirque du Soleil. Victor was a founding Vice-President at the Phi Centre in Montréal where he was responsible for the music program.

**SYLVIE SIMMONS** is an award-winning author and music journalist. Born in London, she left for Los Angeles forty years ago to become one of the rare women included in the predominantly male rock-writing elite; the BBC made a documentary about her titled *The Rock Chick*. Simmons has published fiction and non-fiction books, including a short story collection, *Too Weird for Ziggy*, and biographies of Neil Young and Serge Gainsbourg. Her most recent is *I'm Your Man: The Life of Leonard Cohen*, the best-selling biography that Janet Maslin at the *New York Times* described as "Smart, fearless and mesmerizing," and Brian D. Johnson at *Macleans* called "the most discerning, intimate and definitive biography ever written about Canada's pre-eminent singer, songwriter, poet and monk." Based in San Francisco, she writes about music for *MOJO* magazine. She is currently collaborating on a book with Debbie Harry of Blondie and working on a new record.

**CHANTAL RINGUET** is a Canadian award-winning author, scholar and translator. She is the author of collections of poems (2009 Jacques-Poirier literary award) and of works on Yiddish Montreal. With Gérard Rabinovitch, she has published *Les révolutions de Leonard Cohen* (PUQ, 2016), which received a 2017 Canadian Jewish Literary Award. With Pierre Anctil, she has published a translation of the early biography of Marc Chagall (*Mon univers. Autobiographie*, Fides, 2017). She has been a Fellow of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York, Scholar-in-Residence at the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute (Brandeis University) and Writer-in-Residence and literary translator in residence at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. She taught the course "Leonard Cohen: In Words and Music" at McGill University (Fall 2017).





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