POMONA COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

JOHN CAGE: ZEN OX-HERDING PICTURES

In honor of the centenary of John Cage’s birth, the Pomona College Museum of Art presents the traveling exhibition John Cage: Zen Ox-Herding Pictures from Sept. 4 to Dec. 16, 2012. The exhibition brings together 55 rarely seen watercolors created by Cage in 1988 at the Mountain Lake Workshop in Blacksburg, VA, revealing the powerful influence of Zen in his life and work. Cage was a renowned composer, philosopher, writer and visual artist whose interest in East Asian and Indian philosophy led him to abandon intention, memory and personal taste to focus instead on process and chance in music, performance, and visual art.

The public opening reception is Saturday, Sept. 15 from 4-6 p.m. Related special events at the Museum include a lecture by writer Kay Larson on her new book Where the Heart Beats: John Cage, Zen Buddhism, and the Inner Life of Artists, on Thursday, Oct. 11, at 5 p.m., and a performance by visual artist Steve Roden, on Thursday, Oct. 25, at 5 p.m. Roden will read from his new book 365 X 433, his diary of performing Cage’s 4’33” every day in 2011.

Born in Los Angeles in 1912, Cage attended Pomona College from 1928 to 1930. After a trip to Europe, Cage returned to the U.S. in 1931, eventually turning to music and art, studying with Richard Buhlig, Henry Cowell, Adolph Weiss and Arnold Schoenberg. In 1952, at Black Mountain College, he presented a theatrical event considered by many to have been the first Happening. 4’33”, written by Cage and performed by David Tudor sitting without playing in front of a piano for four minutes and thirty-three seconds, is one of the most famous and important pieces in 20th century avant-garde music and art.

Cage’s legacy extends far beyond music and art. He radically changed how we view the act of performance by investigating the ways music composed through chance procedures could become something beautiful. Beginning in the 1960s, he shifted his focus to literature, publishing his first book, Silence, in 1961, and in the late 60s, began experiments with chance in drawings, prints, and paintings.

On view at Pomona College are a series of exquisite small paintings dating from 1988. Ray Kass, the founder and director of the Mountain Lake Workshop, invited Cage there to paint, and they began a series of collaborative experiments with watercolor pigments. As Cage experimented with watercolor for the first time, he used paper towels as test sheets to acquaint himself with the new medium. Kass viewed these beautiful studies as more than
just test sheets and encouraged Cage to make an artwork with them. Cage then invited Kass to make a piece with them. Twenty years later, Kass, along with Dr. Stephen Addiss, returned to Kass’s collection of Cage’s archived paper towel paintings, selecting works that reflect the Zen narrative of Ox-Herding pictures, an illustrated parable for the path to and beyond enlightenment that Cage often referred to in his writings. Accompanying each of the images is a poetic fragment from Cage’s writings, selected by Addiss to further connect the images with the ancient Zen parable.

*John Cage: Zen Ox-Herding Pictures* was organized by the University of Richmond Museums, and curated by Addiss, Tucker-Boatwright Professor in the Humanities-Art and Professor of Art History, University of Richmond, and Kass, Professor of Art, Emeritus, Virginia Tech. The exhibition was made possible in part with the generous support of the University of Richmond’s Cultural Affairs Committee. A catalogue published by George Braziller, Inc. Publishers, New York, in association with the University of Richmond Museums, is available through Amazon.com.

Pomona College will celebrate the centenary of Cage’s birth with the exhibition as well as a variety of programs and musical performances. The events will include a 100th Birthday Party, with cake, on Wednesday, **Sept. 5**, at 7 p.m., in the courtyard outside the Museum of Art, and a Cage-O-Rama, on Saturday, **Oct. 27** at 8 p.m. at Bridges Hall of Music, both hosted by the Music Department; and many other events. Please see [www.pomona.edu/museum](http://www.pomona.edu/museum) and [www.music.pomona.edu](http://www.music.pomona.edu) for more information.

The Pomona College Museum of Art is located at 330 N. College Avenue, Claremont. The Museum is open to the public free of charge Tuesday through Sunday, from noon to 5 p.m. and Thursday, from noon to 11 p.m. For more information, call (909) 621-8283 or visit the museum’s Website: [www.pomona.edu/museum](http://www.pomona.edu/museum).

The Pomona College Museum of Art houses a substantial permanent collection as well as serving as a gallery for the display of temporary exhibitions. Important holdings include the Kress Collection of 15th and 16th century Italian panel paintings; more than 5,000 examples of Pre-Columbian to 20th century American Indian art and artifacts; and a large collection of American and European prints, drawings, and photographs, including works by Francisco de Goya, José Clemente Orozco and Rico Lebrun.

# # #