



A CENTURY OF SILENCE

Presented by the National Endowment for the Humanities
in cooperation with the National Film Preservation Foundation
Lynn Coopers

Odilon Redon, *Silence*, c. 1911, oil on gesso on paper, 21 1/4 x 21 1/2 in. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Lillie P. Bliss Collection.

A CENTURY OF SILENCE

Lynn Gamwell

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In Memoriam
John Cage
1912–1992

An age of silence has settled on art. It renders works of art obsolete. But while they do not speak any longer, their silence speaks all the more loudly.

Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*

In the other room, Rateau was looking at the canvas, completely blank, in the center of which Jonas had merely written in very small letters a word which could be made out, but without any certainty as to whether it should be read "solitaire" or "solidaire."

Albert Camus, *The Artist at Work*

What are you building?

I want to dig a subterranean passage. Some progress must be made. My station up there is much too high.

We are digging the pit of Babel.

Franz Kafka, *The Pit of Babel*

Whether or not one can directly experience reality — either external, natural reality or ultimate, divine reality — and whether reality can be represented in visual imagery or the spoken word has been debated for centuries. The ineffability of absolute reality and the superiority of abstraction over sensory experience have long been manifested in religious iconoclasm and the mystical tradition. But by the end of the nineteenth century, the hierarchy of terms in this old, largely theological debate had collapsed, and among its ruins began new deliberations in a century characterized by a more radically abstracted art and a population more severely alienated and withdrawn than previously known.

A core of genuine art in this century is drained dry: the canvas is blank, the actor stutters, the musician falls silent. Advanced psychotherapy is also an impoverished landscape where doubts about the ability of language to communicate threaten the "talking cure." Modern man, following the ancient admonition to "know thyself," turns away from traditional religion toward the new cultural sanctuaries and profes-

sional priesthoods, where he encounters the silent artist and the silent analyst.

This exhibition asks why this has been a century of silence and includes examples from twentieth-century visual and performing arts that manifest abstraction and a sense of withdrawal. The question obviously has multiple and complex answers, and I will comment on two topics that would be part of any response: the concepts of reality peculiar to this century, and modern attitudes toward the power of symbols to communicate that reality. I will join Theodor Adorno and others¹ in arguing that art in this century is silent (blank, empty, enigmatic, unintelligible) because certain artists have experienced modern scientific, social, and political conditions as threats and have withdrawn inward, away from the world of shared experience toward a psychologically isolated, inner core. In previous cultures, centers of meaning shifted, for example, from the supernatural to the natural, resulting in art forms that alternately were more idealistic or realistic; modern culture is characterized by a loss of meaning in all realms and an overwhelming distrust of communicative codes of any kind. Specifically, certain modern artists have both withdrawn from society's public realities and remained mute on the subject of their private psyches, resulting in the creation of a defensive art which is, if not completely silent, intentionally obscure on all fronts.



The most revolutionary discoveries of modern physics, such as the splitting of the atom and the theory of relativity, present highly abstracted views of the universe and are based on the indirect detection of phenomena not perceivable by humans. While these intellectual concepts of abstract, imperceivable realities have certainly led some artists in a nonrepresentational direction, it is the social impact of modern scientific and technological advances that have constituted assaults on the psyche and precipitated the psychological withdrawal cited above. Notable, although not exhaustive, examples include the secular, scientific intellectual environment with the concomitant decline in religion, the mass communication surfeit, and, most ominously, the threat of nuclear annihilation.

The psychological impact of the replacement of religious doctrine by scientific theory can be appreciated by remembering Freud's discussion of these topics in "The Future of an Illusion" where he wrote that the goal of science is "to gain some knowledge about the reality of the world" no matter how unpleasant or painful that might be.² Religion lulls believers away from knowledge by comforting them with infantilizing illusions, such as that they will enjoy an eternal life of bliss beyond the grave, or that they are the special child of an omnipotent deity who will protect them.

While new scientific explanations of the universe might be intellectually satisfying, even fascinating, the decline of religion has also meant that secular adults now face hostile elements without these illusions. On Freud's family model of religion, the psychological converse of an adult who feels protected by parental deities is the atheist who faces the terrors of nature, the cruelty of fate, and the power of the state with the dread of an abandoned child.³

The rapid pace of change and emphasis on clarity and verifiability in the scientific world, which has so diminished the power of religion over people's lives, has also been a threat to the aesthetic realm, which has traditionally been understood as transcendent of the material universe. The primitive psychological realm to which the artist withdraws is a haven from secular stoicism, a place where the rules of rationalism are not enforced and where illusions of artistic autonomy can be maintained.

The inescapability of endless information from the news and the culture industries endows modern artists with a historical consciousness which obviates the unselfconscious creation of anything. Withdrawal to a silent realm provides the artist with what Susan Sontag has called the desired "cultural clean slate."⁴ But, alas, the slate itself has inevitably been assigned an accession number in the contemporary museum of blank canvases. In this mediated culture, renunciation itself can become trendy and produce art that has been minimalized without a sense of loss.

Nuclear annihilation and other forms of mass destruction have shattered the syntax of art that even indirectly addresses these topics; there is something loathsome about presenting Hiroshima or Auschwitz as subjects in a traditional artistic format. Giving the unthinkable a rational forum, expressing agony in an aesthetic context, elevates atrocities as themes in a culture's artistic heritage. As Adorno has written, "By turning suffering into images, harsh and uncompromising though they are, it wounds the shame we feel in the presence of the victims. For these victims are used to create something, works of art, that are thrown to the consumption of a world which destroyed them."⁵

Confronted with annihilation and genocide, many artists have taken up a post in the bunker of irrationality. A good example is the treatment of mass destruction by Samuel Beckett in *Endgame*. Or is that the topic? The audience is never told exactly why there is no life outside the window. Beckett uses trivial and disjointed chatter in place of articulate dialogue to indirectly promote the audience's ominous feeling that something is dreadfully wrong — could it be that the game is ending? The play does not state a political theme; rather it resonates a primordial babble, or as Adorno has put it, "the violence of the unutterable is mimed by the dread of mentioning it."⁶

The psychological withdrawal from society by modern artists has superficial similarities to Eastern mysticism, but, unlike that ancient tradition, the silent art of this

century is essentially secular, even when artists themselves encourage a mystical interpretation. Their art moves progressively inward, to the solemn chant of aesthetics, and does not lead anywhere which is truly transcendent.⁷

Artists who withdraw exist in a kind of limbo. To become truly silent they would have to stop making art, as Marcel Duchamp did when he turned to chess. That master of irony taught us that when objects or events occur in an artistic context, an audience is inescapable. Much has been written about the ongoing battle between modern art and its public; Adorno, for example, has described the battle regarding music:

The opinion that Beethoven is comprehensible and Schoenberg incomprehensible is an objective deception. The general public, totally cut off from the production of new music, is alienated by the outward characteristics of such music. The deepest currents present in this music proceed, however, from exactly those sociological and anthropological foundations peculiar to that public. The dissonances which horrify them testify to their own conditions; for that reason alone do they find them unbearable.⁸

What about the audience which is not horrified but returns for the next concert because only dissonance rings true? Silent artists and their audiences share a bizarre bond; both find meaning in the absence/presence of the other. Defensive, dissonant art offers its audience the meager comfort of knowing that it is not being lied to, that it is being addressed in an authentic, though muted, voice.



The artist who has withdrawn from modern society is like the psychologist's "silent patient," one who has retreated to the noncommunicative core of his or her psyche for protection in times of stress.⁹ D. W. Winnicott has written that "at the center of each person is an incommunicado element; this is sacred and most worthy of preservation."¹⁰ The silent center of the psyche is preverbal and infantile in its lack of connection to the rational world. Withdrawal from everyday experience need not be pathological; indeed, Winnicott sees the capacity to be alone as "a highly sophisticated phenomenon" which is "closely related to emotional maturity."¹¹

Psychologists differ as to whether and by what means hidden aspects of the personality are knowable. Freud, describing his discovery of the unconscious realm of the psyche, which by definition is not perceivable, wrote that "reality will always remain unknowable."¹² It can, however, be known indirectly:

How are we to arrive at a knowledge of the unconscious? It is only, of course, as

something conscious that we know it, after it has undergone transformation or translation into something conscious. Psychoanalytic work shows us every day that translation of this kind is possible.¹³

Freud's faith in the communicative power of words, so fundamental to the psychoanalytic method, is manifest in his characterization of Moses, in *Moses and Monotheism*, as a prophet who verbally communicated his ideas to the chosen people of God. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi has contrasted Freud's anachronistic "verbal optimism" with the "verbal pessimism" of Freud's Viennese contemporary Arnold Schoenberg, who expressed his modern distrust of the capacity of words to communicate absolute reality, in his opera *Moses und Aron*, in which "Moses, the servant of the Absolute, is inarticulate: Aron, who cannot really share his brother's vision, is the man of words, overflowing with eloquence."¹⁴

This modern distrust of words, along with images and other symbolic codes, surfaced in the arts in the late nineteenth century and continues today. The following quotations from cultural critics give a sense of the communication crisis:

Modern music sees absolute oblivion as its goal. It is the surviving message of despair from the shipwrecked.¹⁵

The poetry of modernism is a matter of structured debris: from it we are made to envision, to hear the poem that might have been, the poem that will be if, when, the word is made new.¹⁶

But perhaps the dilemma has been best described by poets:

What an age is this anyway where
A conversation about trees is almost a crime
Because it entails being silent about so many misdeeds?
Bertolt Brecht (1933-38)¹⁷

A leaf, treeless
for Bertolt Brecht:

What times are these
when a conversation
is almost a crime
because it includes
so much made explicit?
Paul Celan (1971)¹⁸

This communication crisis has raised doubts about psychotherapy and the analytic situation, which is essentially a speech relationship that places an overwhelming valuation on verbal articulation. As George Steiner has noted, "There is in Freud's refusal to deal with psychosis a terror before the inchoate, before the semantically closed."¹⁹ The crisis has led to reformulations of classical Freudian theory on broader linguistic and symbolic foundations, including structural linguistics and transformational and generative grammars, along with nonverbal semiotic systems.²⁰ It also has caused a reevaluation of the meaning of silence in the psychoanalytic hour; whereas Freud and his early followers interpreted silence as resistance, later analysts have come to view silence as a goal because it is a sign that the patient is taking responsibility for his or her inner world and does not need to spill everything out.²¹ On the other hand, the ideal of the silent analyst has changed very little in this century, from Freud's 1912 "Recommendations to Physicians Practicing Psychoanalysis"²² to more recent studies of analytic technique such as Reed Brockbank's "On the Analyst's Silence in Psychoanalysis," which states "The analyst's silence can be a more potent stimulus to the patient's unconscious fantasies than any verbal interpretation he could make."²³

Donald Kuspit has related the obscurity of much modern art to the kind of psychological retreat described above by Winnicott: "At the core of unintelligible abstract art is a sense of true self, that is, a self that is really human — only it is in an incommunicado condition."²⁴ Silent artists who have withdrawn in a gesture of self-protection to the core of their psyche (their true self, their human essence) share this incommunicado stance. Winnicott has described the necessity of that protective position if the self is to remain whole: "Rape, and being eaten by cannibals, these are mere bagatelles as compared with the violation of the self's core, the alteration of the self's central elements by communication seeping through the defenses."²⁵ One can easily imagine that many artists would be wary of psychoanalysis and its ability to erode the defenses, as Freud proudly claimed:

He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore. And thus the task of making conscious the most hidden recesses of the mind is one which it is quite possible to accomplish.²⁶

It is well to remember that therapeutic gains in an analytic situation come at a price of self-disclosure, which is often unassessed. As Steiner has warned:

Though it claims as its therapeutic aim the reconstruction of a proper economy of internal resources, psychoanalysis, by virtue of its process, erodes the autonomous

energies of inward dictum and plenitude. . . . where a secret has been dislodged and published, a kind of malign emptiness remains.²⁷



The arts were given to mankind, along with fire, by the Greek god Prometheus. Zeus, enraged that man had been empowered with these gifts, chained Prometheus to a rock and sent a savage eagle to tear out his liver; Zeus promised to free Prometheus only if he would reveal a secret. In the face of this suffering, Prometheus remained silent, keeping the secret within himself.²⁸

Silent, defensive art is enigmatic, uninterpretable. Withdrawn from shared social realities and incommunicado about his or her personal core, the silent artist remains most profoundly human in a state of solitude.

Lynn Gamwell

Curator of the Exhibition

NOTES

1. Especially Donald Kuspit, Susan Sontag, and George Steiner, whose works are cited below.
2. Sigmund Freud, "The Future of an Illusion" (1927), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (hereafter referred to as SE), ed. and trans. by James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-74), p. 55-6.
3. On the psychology of secularism and its philosophical roots, see Patrick Masterson, *Atheism and Alienation* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1971).
4. Susan Sontag, "The Aesthetics of Silence," in *A Susan Sontag Reader* (New York: Farrar/Straus/Giroux, 1982), pp. 189-190, 192; on a related topic, see also Sontag's "Against Interpretation," in the same volume, pp. 95-104.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, "Commitment" (1962), trans. Francis McDonagh, in *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 1986), p. 189.
6. Theodor W. Adorno, "Towards an Understanding of *Endgame*" (1958), in *Twentieth Century Interpretations of Endgame*, ed. B. G. Chevigny (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 86. On the effects of genocide on language, see André Neher, *Exile of the Word: From the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz*, trans. David Maisel (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981); it is hard to concentrate on even such an excellent a study as this without hearing the echo of Adorno's remark, "All post-Auschwitz culture, including its urgent critique, is garbage," (*Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, [New York: Continuum, 1973], p. 367).
7. For a thoughtful attempt at incorporating the tradition of Eastern meditation into contemporary psychotherapy, see

Mohammad Shafii, "Silence in the Service of the Ego: Psychoanalytic Study of Meditation," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 54 (1973), pp. 431-42. Adorno has questioned whether this link can be made in the atomic age, when annihilation "has become the total Apriori, leaving a bombed-out consciousness no place from which it could meditate" ("Towards an Understanding of Endgame," p. 86).

8. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1948), tr. A. G. Mitchell and W. V. Blomster (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), p. 9.

9. The extensive literature on the silent patient, which begins with Theodore Reik's seminal paper "The Psychological Meaning of Silence" (1926), *Psychoanalytic Review* 55 (1968), pp. 172-86, is summarized in Stephen A. Kurtz's recent "On Silence," *Psychoanalytic Review* 71, 2 (1984), pp. 227-45.

10. D. W. Winnicott, "Communicating and not Communicating Leading to a Study of Certain Opposites" (1963), in *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment* (Madison: International Universities Press, 1965), p. 187. Others with a similar view include R. Laing, *The Self and Others* (London: Tavistock, 1961).

11. D. W. Winnicott, "The Capacity to be Alone" (1958), in *The Maturation Processes and the Facilitating Environment*, p. 36.

12. "Outline of Psychoanalysis" (1938) SE, 23, pp. 196-97.

13. "The Unconscious" (1915), SE, 14, p. 166.

14. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "The Moses of Freud and the Moses of Schoenberg: On Words, Idolatry and Psychoanalysis," in *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* 46, ed. Albert S. Solnit (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 6.

15. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 133.

16. George Steiner, *After Babel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 181-82; for a discussion of the possible social and linguistic causes of the crisis, see George Steiner's *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New York: Atheneum, 1967).

17. "An die Nachgeborenen," in *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt, 1967), vol. 9, p. 723, quoted in Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 58-59.

18. *Poems of Paul Celan*, trans. M. Hamburger (New York: Persea Books, 1988). p. 331.

19. George Steiner, "A Note on Language and Psychoanalysis," *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 3 (1976), p. 254.

20. For an overview, see Paul Ricoeur, "Image and Language in Psychoanalysis," in *Psychoanalysis and Language*, ed. Joseph H. Smith (New Haven: Yale University, 1978), pp. 293-324. Ricoeur especially stresses nonverbal models: "The universe of discourse appropriate to psychoanalytic discovery is not so much a linguistic one as that of fantasy in general" (p. 311).

21. Silence is seen as a defensive strategy in Freud, "The Dynamics of Transference" (1912), SE, 12, p. 101, and in Sandor Ferenczi, "Silence is Golden" (1916), in *Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), pp. 250-51. Silence is seen as an accomplishment of the patient in Winnicott, "The Capacity to be Alone," and in Didier Anzieu, "Éléments d'une Théorie de l'Interprétation," *Revue française de psychanalyse* 34 (1970), pp. 755-844.

22. SE, 12, pp. 111-20.

23. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 51 (1970), pp. 457-64.

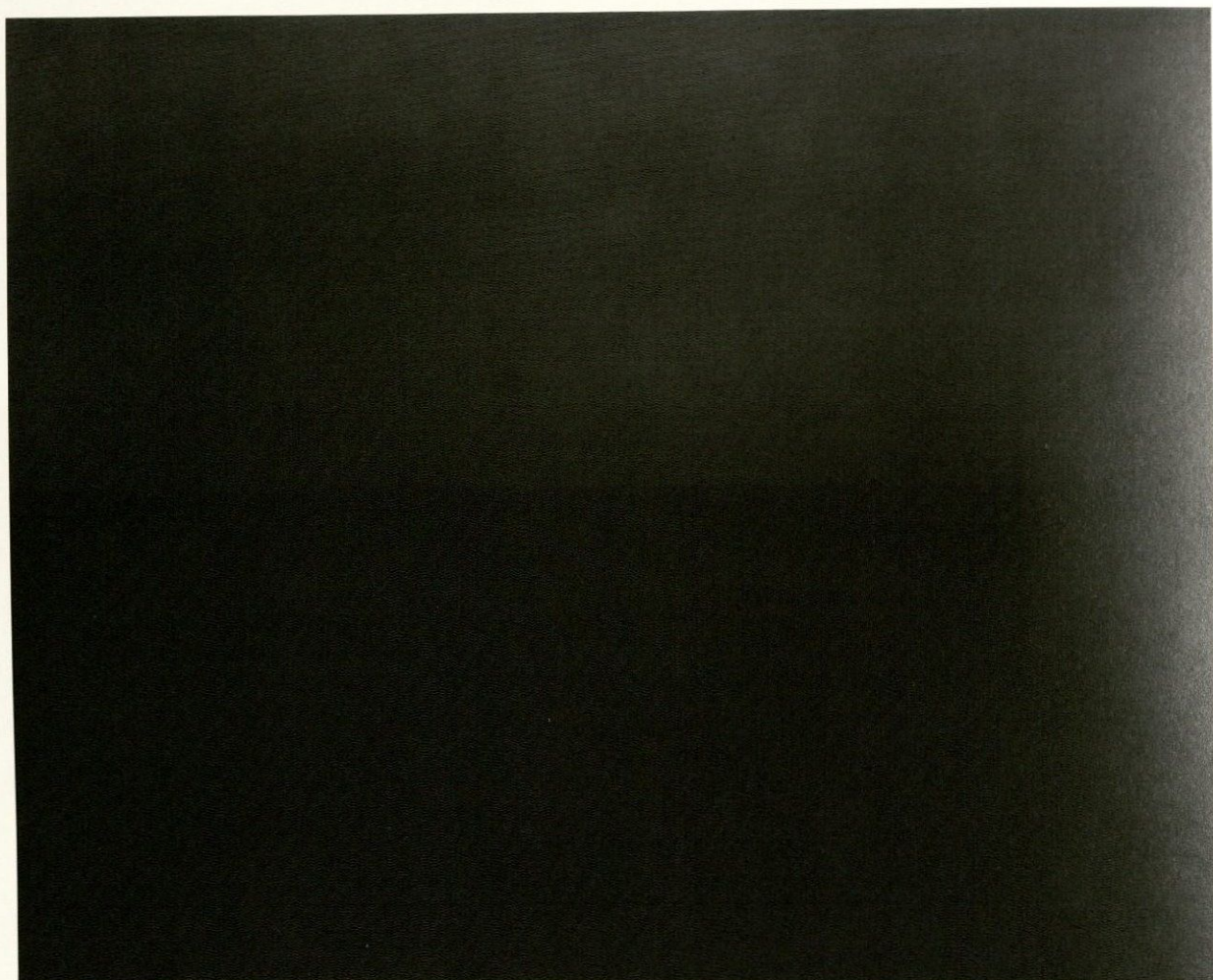
24. Donald Kuspit, "The Will to Unintelligibility in Modern Art," *New Art Examiner* (May 1989), p. 29; on a related topic see Kuspit's "A Freudian Note on Abstract Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47, 2 (Spring 1989), pp. 117-27.

25. Winnicott, "Communicating and Not Communicating," p. 187.

26. "Fragments of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" (1905), SE, 5, pp. 77-78.

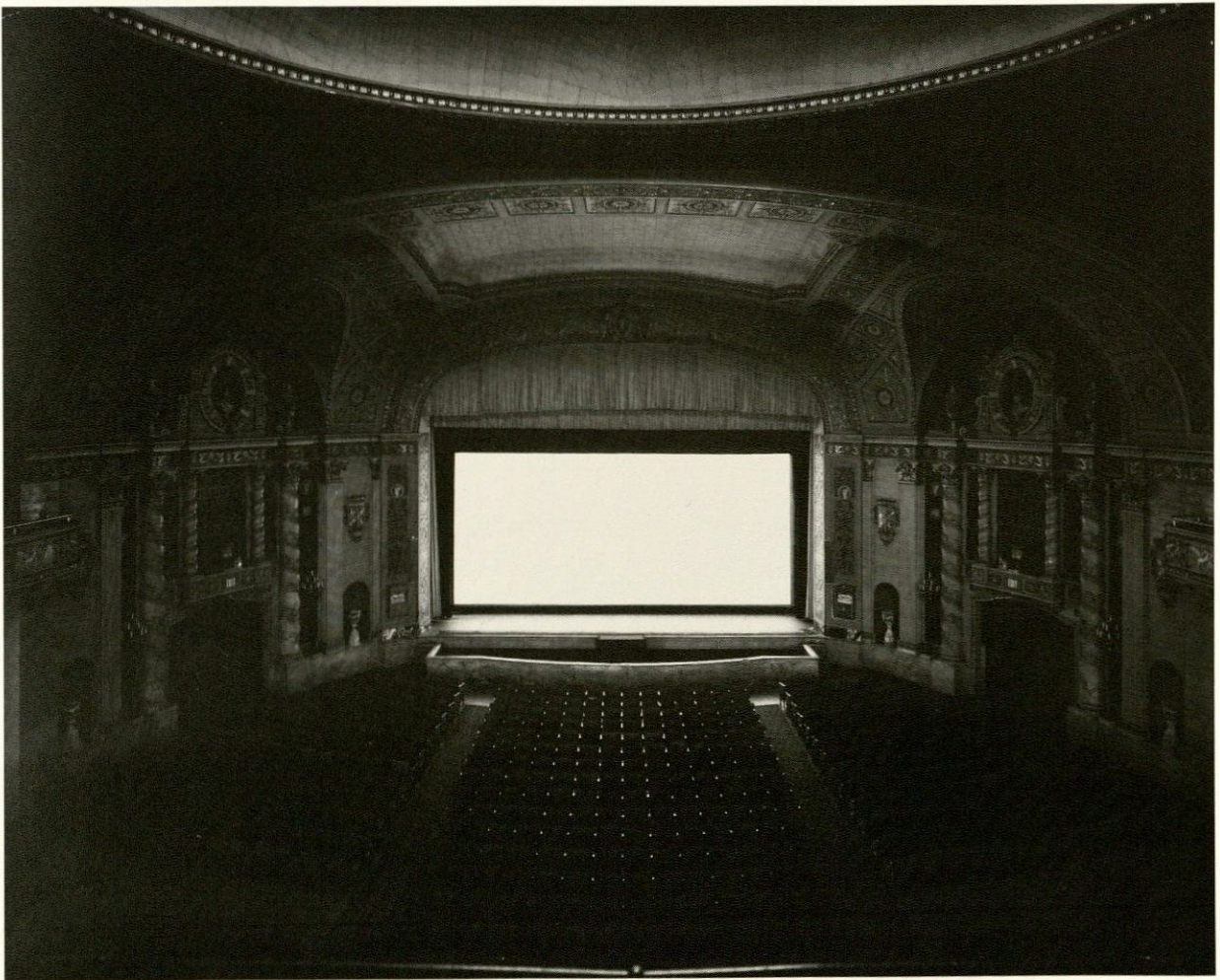
27. Steiner, "A Note on Language and Psychoanalysis," p. 257.

28. On the topic of the heroic nature of silence, see Ellen Handler Spitz, "Promethean Positions," in *Freud and Forbidden Knowledge*, ed. Peter L. Rudnytsky and Ellen Handler Spitz (New York, New York University Press, forthcoming in 1993).



◆ Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Ionian Sea, Santa Cesarea III*, 1990, black and white, ed. of 25, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

From a series of night seascapes.



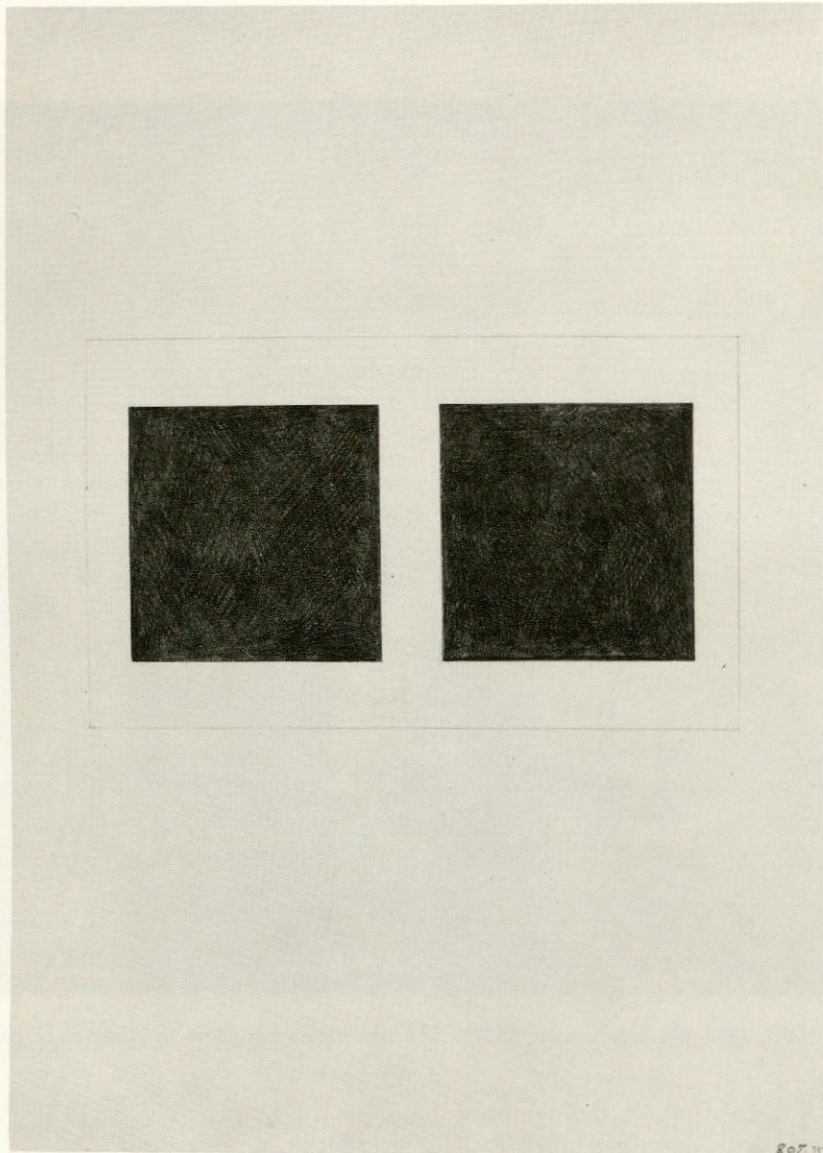
◆ Hiroshi Sugimoto, *U.A. Walker Theater, New York*, 1978, black and white photograph, ed. of 25, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

From Sugimoto's haunting series of black and white photographs of old movie houses, which he creates by making a time-lapse exposure of the darkened theater during the projection of a film. The glowing screen and highlights of the darkened interior are the visual "memory" of the film.



Max Ernst, *The Eye of Silence*, 1943–44, oil on canvas, 42 1/2 x 55 1/2 in. Collection of the Washington University Gallery of Art, Saint Louis.

Ernst began this painting by making a rubbing (“*frottage*”) on the canvas over a textured surface, then allowing this chance imagery to give rise to associations which play on the double identity of objects and the sight/sound ambiguity suggested by the title.



Kasimir Malevich, *Suprematist Elements: Two Squares*, 1915, pencil on paper, 19 3/4 x 14 1/4 in. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In 1913, Malevich painted the first completely blank, black square. A half-century later, looking back on the evolution of modern art, Adorno wrote:

If works of art are to survive in the context of extremity and darkness, which is social reality, and if they are to avoid being sold as mere comfort, they have to assimilate themselves to that reality. Radical art today is the same as dark art....The ideal of blackness is, in substantive terms, one of the most profound impulses of abstract art.

Aesthetic Theory, p. 58.



♦ Ingmar Bergman, *The Seventh Seal*, 1956, black and white film, sound, 96 minutes.

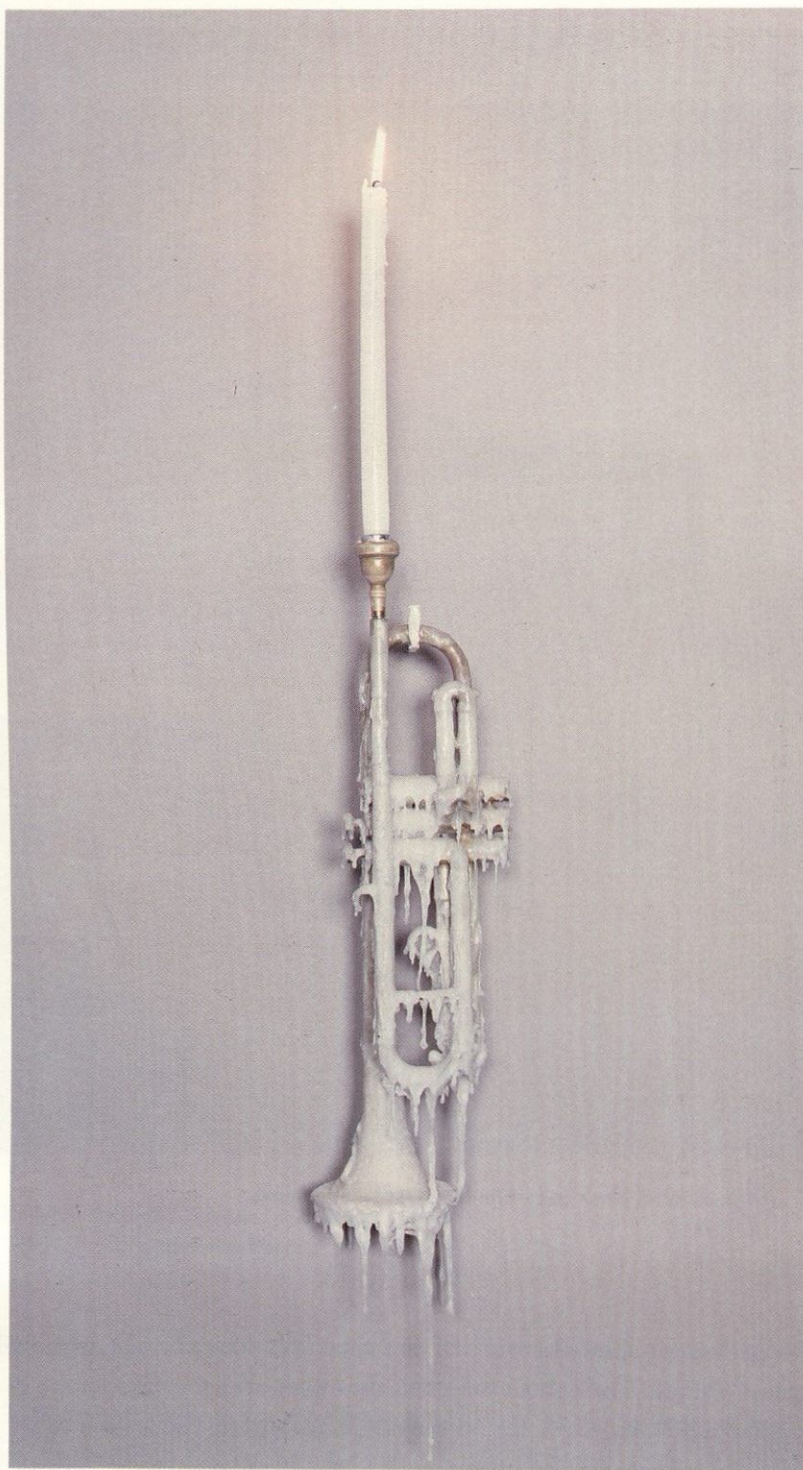
Death (Bengt Ekerot), shown here in his black cape, comes for a knight, who challenges him to a game of chess. Throughout the game, the knight tries to demonstrate to Death the basic goodness of mankind. But in the end, Death takes them all.

Knight: I want knowledge, not faith, not suppositions, but knowledge. I want God to stretch out his hand toward me, reveal himself and speak to me.

Death: But he remains silent.

Knight: I call out to him in the dark but no one seems to be there.

Death: Perhaps no one is there.



Donald Lipski, *Untitled*, 1991, trumpet, wax candle, 27 x 6 x 5 in. Courtesy of Galerie Lelong, New York



◆ John Cage in 1947.

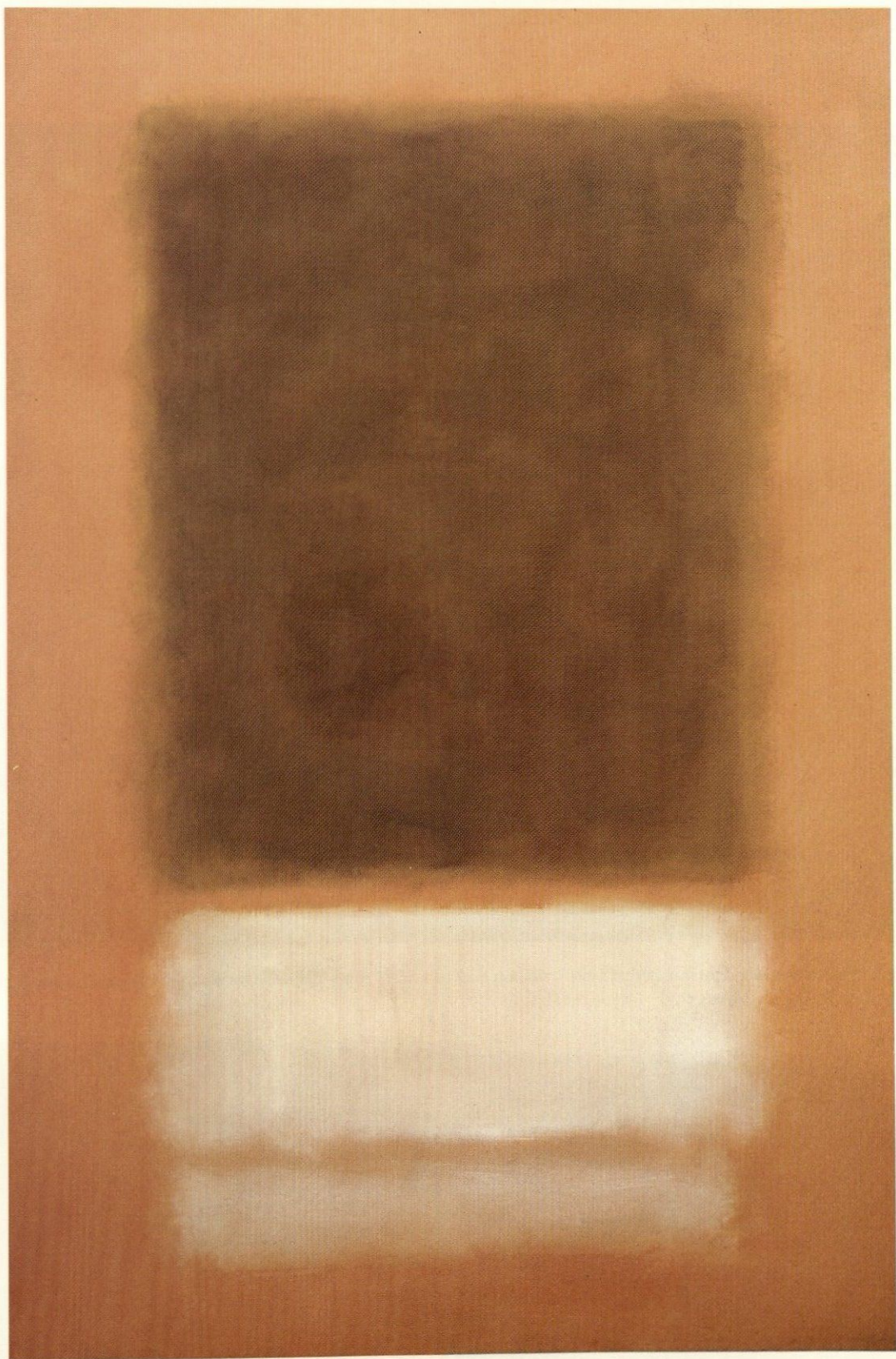
Throughout his long career, John Cage explored the role of silence in music and the incorporation of sounds which occur by chance into the performance of a written score. An extreme example is Cage's composition *4'33"* which was first performed in Woodstock, New York, in August of 1952 by David Tudor. The pianist sat motionless before the unopened grand piano for four minutes and thirty three seconds. Cage has described his music as follows:

For in this new music nothing takes place but sounds; those that are noted and those that are not. Those that are not noted appear in the written music as silences, opening the doors of the music to the sounds that happen to be in the environment.

Silence (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973, pp. 7–8.



Jackson Pollock, *Untitled*, 1951, black and colored inks on mulberry paper, 24 1/4 x 34 in. Collection of the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Joan and Lester Avnet Collection.



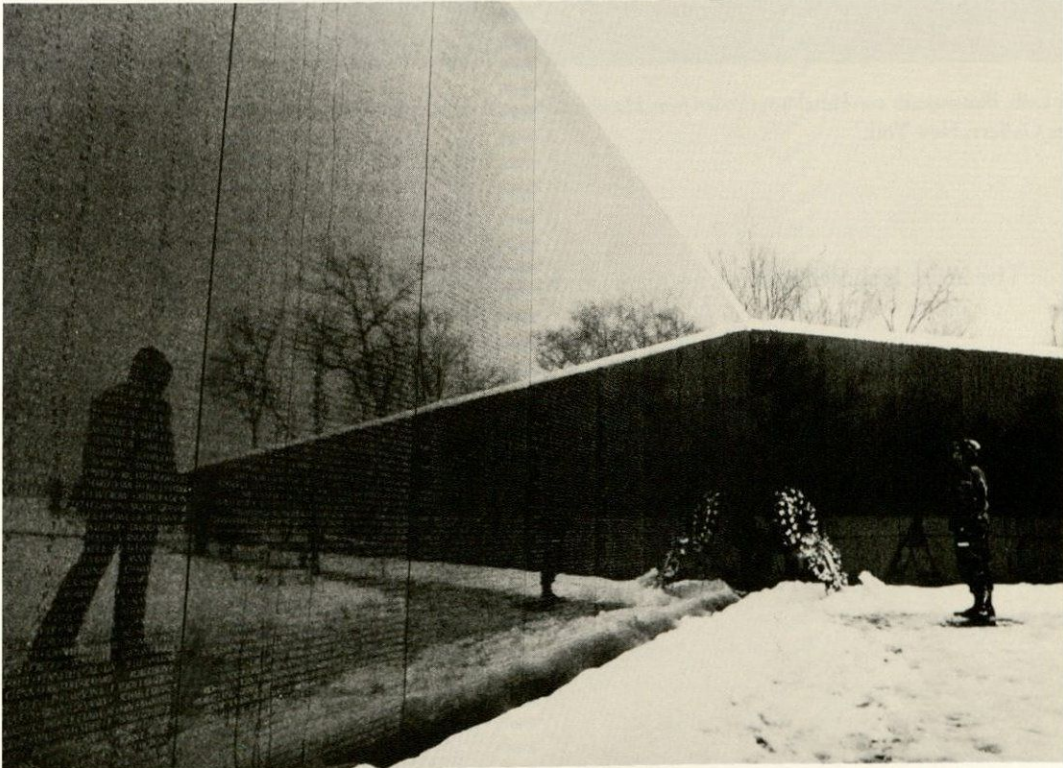
Mark Rothko, *Old Gold over White*, 1956, oil on canvas, 68 x 46 in. Collection of the Neuberger Museum, State University of New York at Purchase, gift of Roy R. Neuberger.



♦ Mary Ellen Carroll, *Motherland – darkness of earth praying*, 1992, cast iron pot, dirt from Dachau, microphone. Courtesy of the artist.



Maya Ying Lin, *Sketch for the Vietnam Memorial* (detail), 1980, pastel.

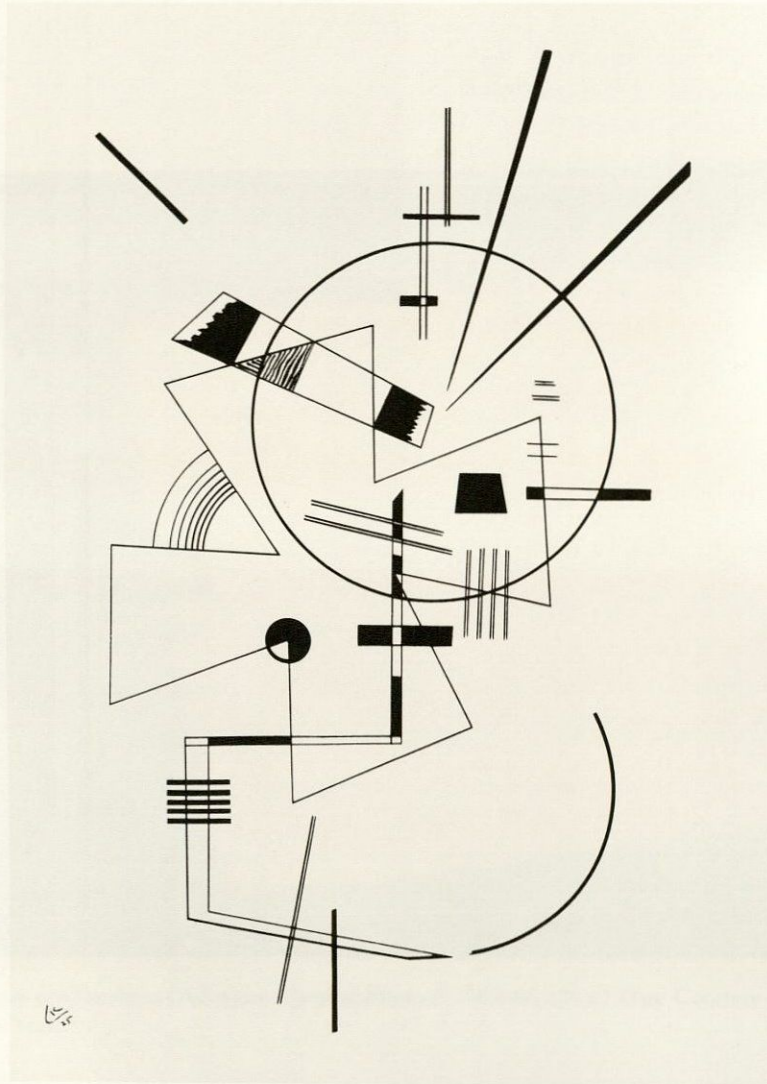


Maya Ying Lin, *Vietnam Memorial*, Washington, D. C., 1982, black granite, 10 ft. high.



Wolfgang Laib, *Blütenstaub von Haselnuss* (Pollen from Hazelnut Flowers), 1985–86, 126 x 138 in. Courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater Gallery, New York.

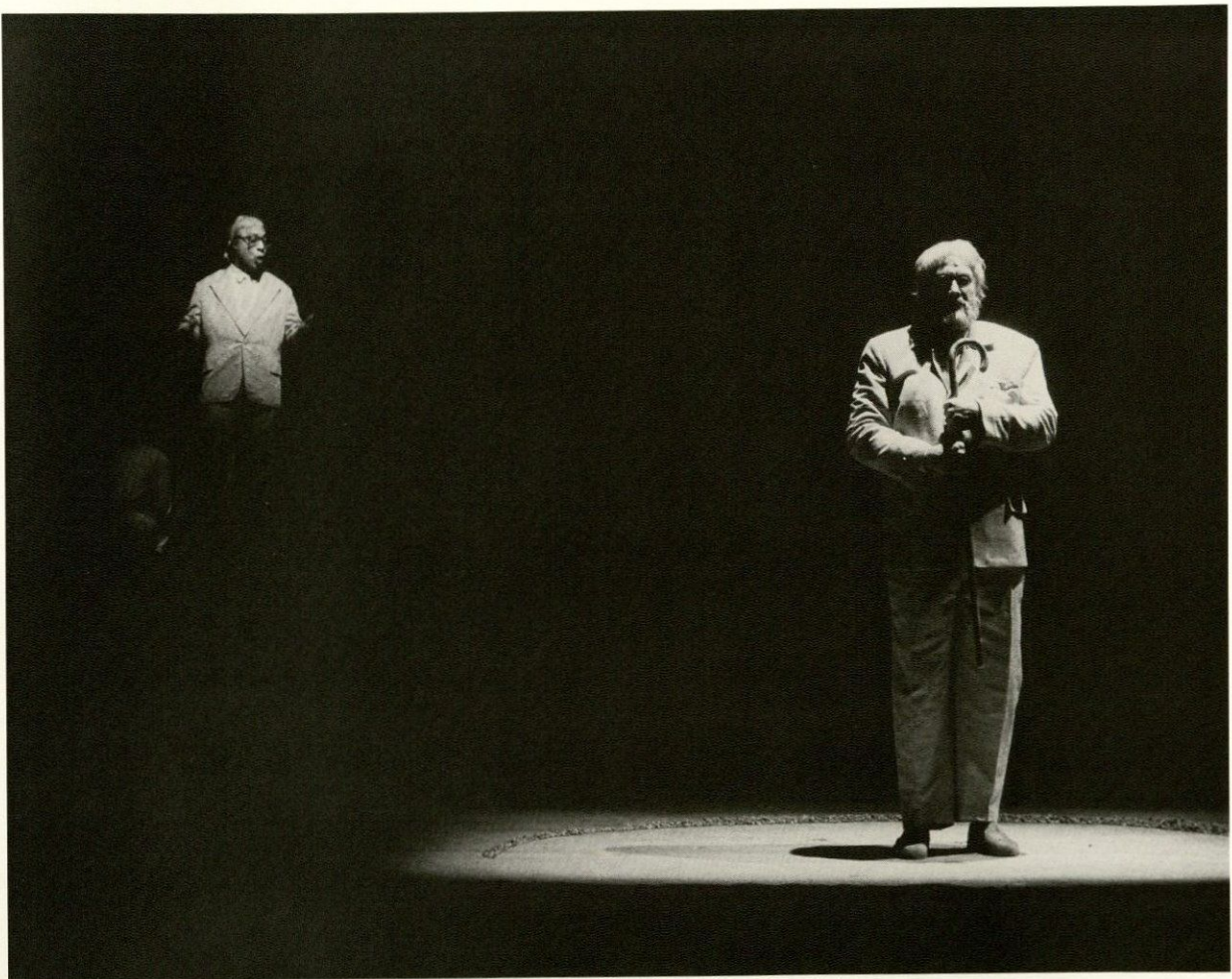
The artist is shown making a square on the floor with pollen he has gathered.



♦ Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition*, 1925, lithograph, 15 3/4 x 10 5/8 in. Collection of the State University of New York at Binghamton, gift of Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Finkelstein.

In Munich in 1910, Kandinsky created the first completely nonrepresentational painting of early modernism, based on the analogy between painting and music, both communicating their spiritual and emotional content through abstract elements such as color, form, chord and tempo. Early the following year, Kandinsky heard the music of Schoenberg for the first time and wrote to the composer:

In your works you have realized what I, albeit in uncertain form, have so greatly longed for in music. The independent progress through their own destinies, the independent life of the individual voices in your compositions, is exactly what I am trying to find in my paintings.



- ♦ Arnold Schoenberg began composing *Moses und Aron* in 1932 and it was unfinished at his death in 1951. First performed in Zurich in 1957, this photograph is from the 1991 New York City Opera production starring Thomas Young and Richard Cross. In addition to being a composer, Schoenberg also painted nonobjective art, thus it is not surprising that he was drawn to biblical prohibitions against imagery and the theme of how to communicate an abstract idea of divinity. It is perhaps fitting that the composer left his work on the theme of expressing the inexpressible unfinished.

Moses: Inconceivable God!

Inexpressible, many-sided idea, will you let it be so explained?

Shall Aron, my mouth, fashion this image?

Then I have fashioned an image too, false, as an image must be.

Thus I am defeated!

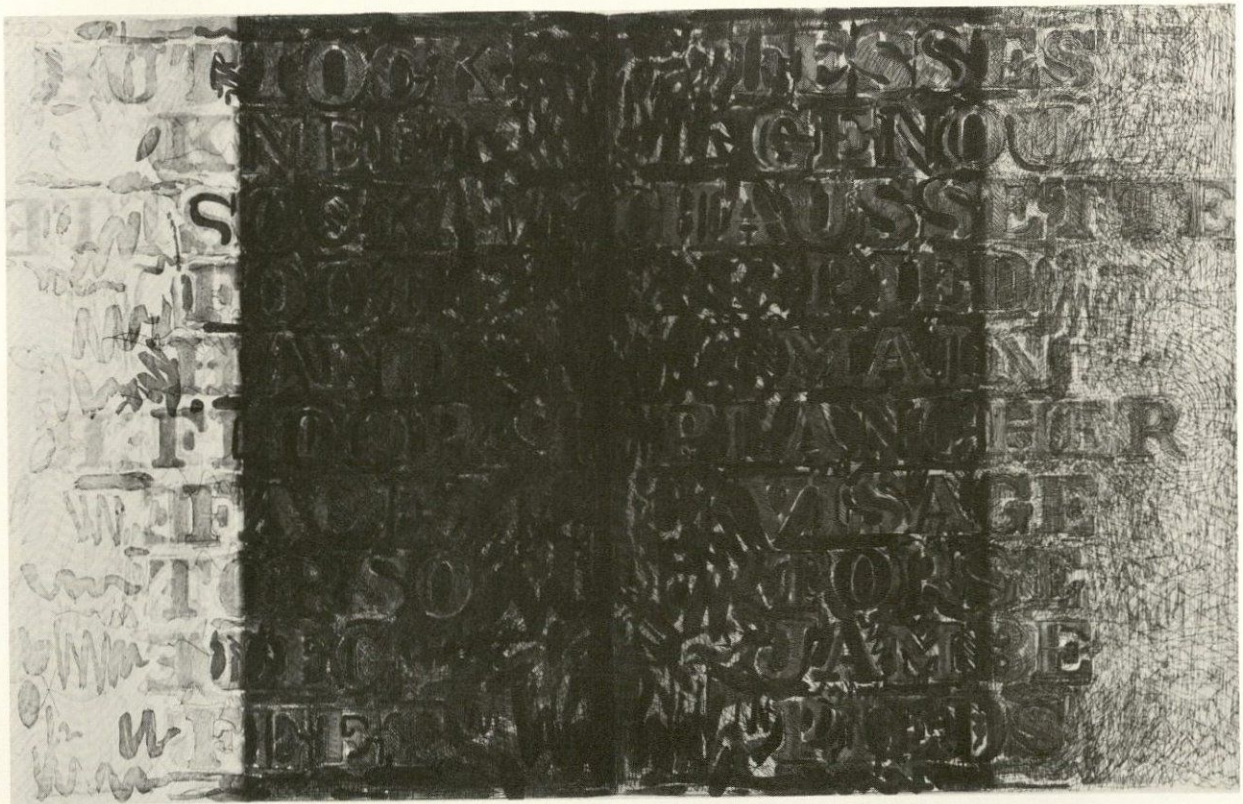
Thus, all was but madness that I believed before, and can and must not
be given voice.

Oh word, thou word, that I lack!



- ◆ Samuel Beckett's *Fin de Partie* was first performed in London in 1957. The dramatist's English translation, *Endgame*, is shown here in a 1958 performance at the Cherry Lane Theater in New York, starring Lester Rawlins and Alvin Epstein as "Hamm," the blind cripple in the wheelchair, and his companion "Clov."

Hamm: Did your seeds come up?
Clov: No.
Hamm: Did you scratch round them to see if they had sprouted?
Clov: They haven't sprouted.
Hamm: Perhaps it's too early.
Clov: If they were going to sprout they would have sprouted.
(Violently.) They'll never sprout.



Jasper Johns (with Samuel Beckett), *Words*, 1975–76, etching, lift-ground aquatint and burnishing, 10 9/16 x 17 1/2 in, plate vii/x from *Foirades/Fizzles* (Petersburg Press: New York, 1976). Courtesy of the artist and Petersburg Press, New York. © Jasper Johns/VAGA, New York, 1993.

Foirades/Fizzles was a collaborative publication which combined a text by Beckett and a suite of prints by Johns. Beckett wrote *Foirades* in French, the language of his adopted homeland, and translated it into his native tongue, English, as *Fizzles*. In the print, Johns used a list of seven words (names of the body parts in his painting *Untitled*, 1972) and printed them in such a way that they suggest the density of the Beckett text. On the left, the darker English words are printed over the burnished, reversed French; on the right the darker French words are over the burnished, reversed English.



♦ Ingmar Bergman, *The Silence*, 1963, black and white film, sound, 95 minutes.

A linguist (Ingrid Thulin), shown facing the audience on the left, becomes gravely ill while traveling in a foreign country whose language she does not understand. She can communicate neither with her foreign doctors, nor with her traveling companion, her psychologically mute sister. The film ends as the sister abandons the linguist and boards a train with her young son, who clutches a scrap of paper on which the linguist has written a word in the foreign tongue. The word is transcribed but not translated.



- ♦ Joseph Beuys, *Das Schweigen* (*The Silence*), 1973, edition of 50. Courtesy of Hirschl & Adler Modern, New York.

The piece is made from the five reels of 35mm film which comprise Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence* (1963), which Beuys covered with molten zinc so that the film can never be projected.



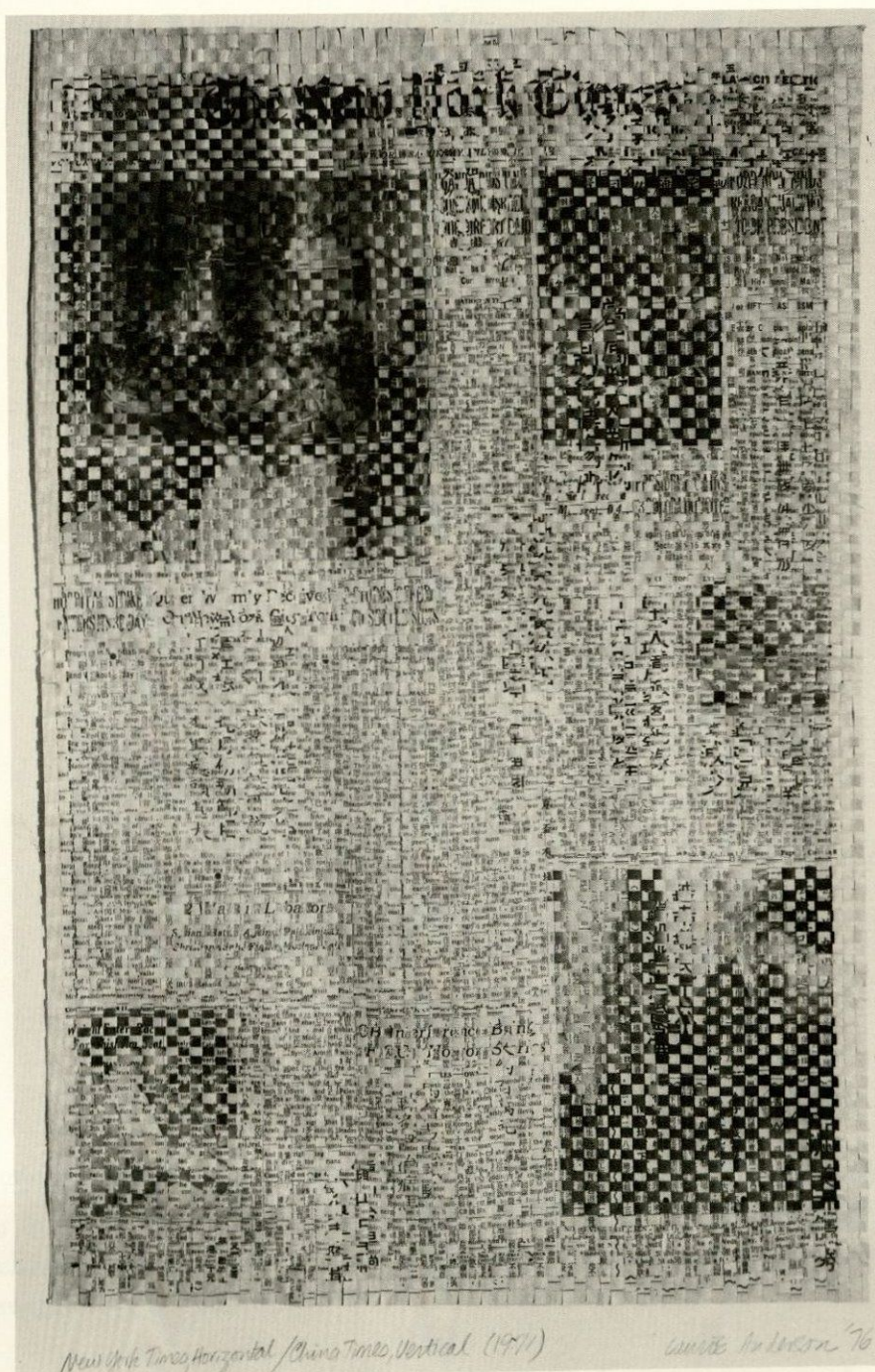
- ♦ Pina Bausch's *Palermo/Palermo* was first performed in 1991 in Palermo, Italy. This photograph is from the 1991 performance at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, which began with the collapse of a cinderblock wall, shown lying in the background, on the ruins of which the dancers then performed. In this episode from Act I the woman repeatedly demands that the man hold her, shakes herself free of him, demands again, and so on.



- ♦ In this episode from Act II of Bausch's *Palermo/Palermo*, six pianists play a romantic piece in unison, before a backdrop of dramatic cloud formations. Their audience is a single woman, draped in black as if in mourning, seated amidst debris.



♦ Peter Ambrose, *Torso*, 1986, lead on wood, 24 x 20 x 12 in. Private collection.



Laurie Anderson, *New York Times, Horizontal/China Times, Vertical*, 1976, woven newspaper, 22 1/4 x 14 1/2 in. Courtesy of Holly Solomon Gallery, New York.



♦ Joseph Beuys, *Noiseless Blackboard Erasers*, 1974, edition of 500. Courtesy of Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York.

After giving a lecture at a blackboard equipped with these felt erasers, Beuys claimed them as “art,” in the spirit of Duchamp claiming a “readymade.”

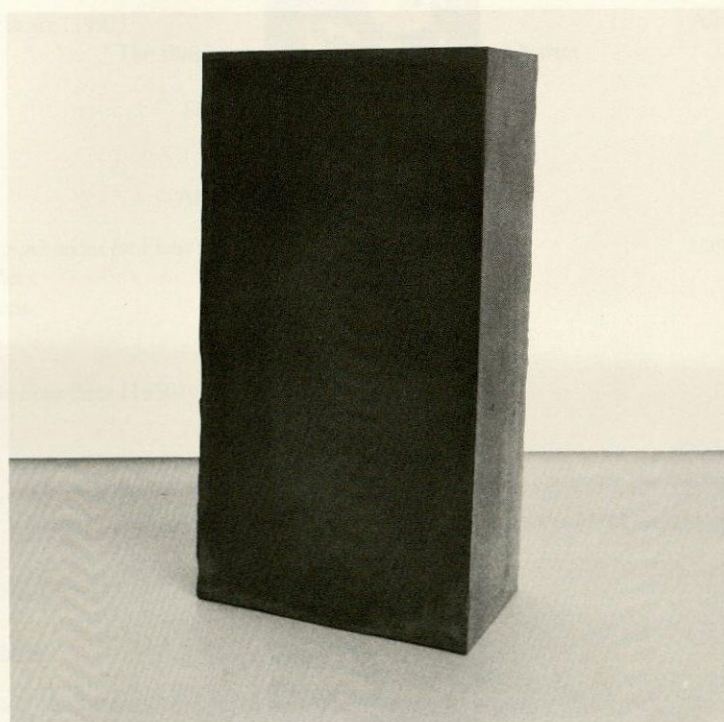


Photograph courtesy of Timothy Baum, New York. © Man Ray Trust and ADAGP, Paris, and ARS, New York.

- ◆ Marcel Duchamp playing chess, in a photograph taken by Man Ray around 1925, the year in which Duchamp announced that he had stopped making art. Years later Duchamp was asked what he had been doing since he stopped being an artist, to which he replied “I’ve been breathing – you could call me a *respirateur*.”



♦ Richard Serra, *183rd and Webster Avenue*, 1972, three-color lithograph, 32 x 44 1/2 in., edition of 62. Collection of the State University of New York at Cortland.



♦ Dean McNeil, *Untitled*, 1987, a SONY watchman cast in cement, 8 x 4 x 3 in. Courtesy of Linda Cathcart Gallery, Santa Monica.



- ♦ Andy Warhol, *Sleep*, 1963, black and white film, silent, an eight-hour film of a man sleeping, starring John Giorno. Courtesy of the Andy Warhol Film Project, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. © 1993 The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

Illustrations marked with a diamond ♦ are included in the exhibition. Additional objects in the exhibition, all of which are in the collection of the State University of New York at Binghamton unless otherwise indicated, are as follows:

- ♦ Richard Anuszkiewicz, *The Inward Eye*, 1970, lithograph, 18 x 23 in. Private collection.
- ♦ Karel Appel, *Untitled*, 1960, color lithograph, 17 7/8 x 22 3/8 in. Gift of Mrs. Ilse Hulse.
- ♦ Deborah Bright, *Crow Agency: Battle of Little Bighorn*, 1982, black and white photograph, 14 x 133 in.
- ♦ Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, 1986, lithograph, 23 x 30 in. Gift of the Atelier Project, State University of New York at Purchase.
- ♦ John Paul Jones, *White Table*, 1957, intaglio print, 17 3/4 x 17 3/4 in.
- ♦ Justin Knowles, *Black*, 1971, screenprint, 27 x 40 in. Gift of Mr. Ray Harrison.
- ♦ Robert Motherwell, *Untitled*, 1972, set of five screenprints, each 28 x 41 in., edition of 150. Gift of Mrs. Ira Levy.
- ♦ Dean McNeil, *Untitled*, 1987–89, Panasonic radio component in cement, 9 1/2 x 22 x 7 in. Courtesy of Linda Cathcart Gallery, Santa Monica, California.
- ♦ Kathy Porter, *Untitled*, 1986, lithograph, 23 x 30 in. Gift of the Atelier Project, State University of New York at Purchase.
- ♦ Hiroshi Sugimoto, *Palace Pennsylvania*, 1978, black and white photograph, ed. of 25, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

CONCERT

University Art Museum, February 26, 1993, 7:00 pm

The Sounds of Silence (1992)

The Binghamton University Saxophone Quartet

Albert Hamme

Sharon Heller, soprano saxophone
David Shure, alto saxophone
Matt Koza, tenor saxophone
Albert Hamme, baritone saxophone

From *Three Improvisations for Piano* (1991)

David Brackett

I Angles
II Lament

Seymour Fink, piano

String Quartet in Four Parts (1950)

John Cage

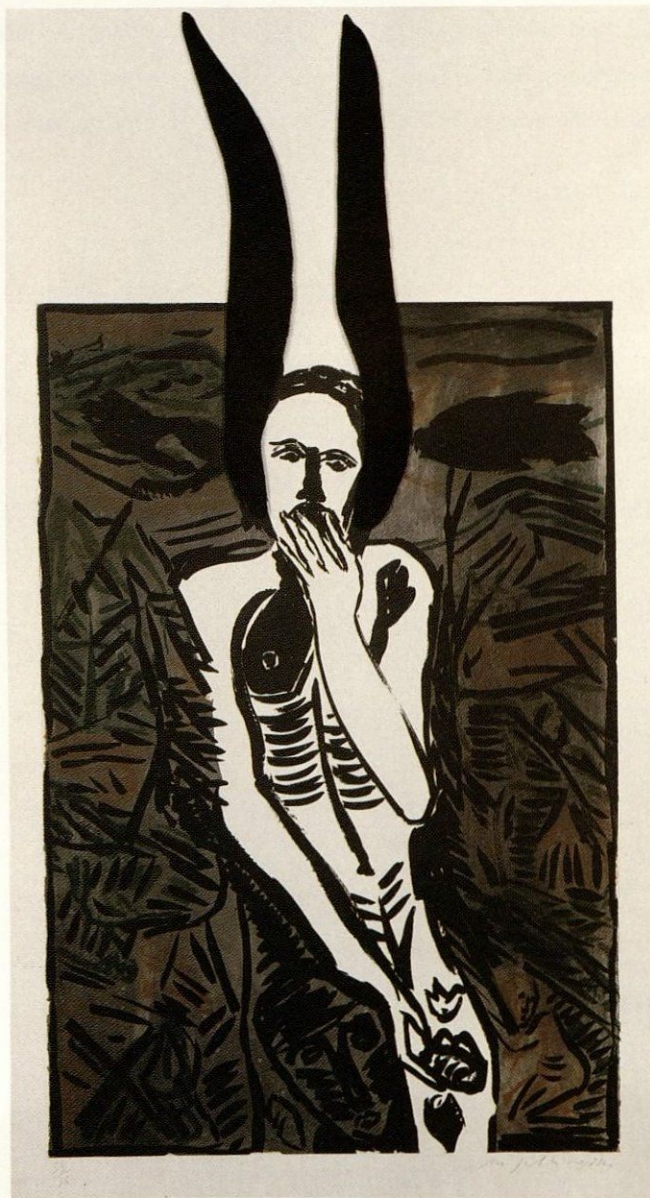
The Catskill String Quartet

Janet Brady, violin
Jennifer Reuning Myers, violin
George Myers, viola
Stephen Stalker, cello

FILM SERIES

Ingmar Bergman, *The Silence*, 1963, black and white, sound, 95 minutes.
University Art Museum, Video Room, 2:00 pm daily during the exhibition

Andy Warhol, *Sleep*, 1963, black and white, silent, 42 minutes (edited version of original 8 hour film).
Lecture Hall 6, February 3, 1993, 5:00 pm



Mimmo Paladino, *Muto (Mute)*, 1985, etching, sugar lift with aquatint and collage made of fur, on paper, 62 x 35 in. Courtesy of Waddington Graphics, London.

