

Christian Marclay



Christian Marclay, Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

When did you first approach art, how did your artistic journey begin?

When I was a child, I loved to draw and create objects, such as swords or wooden guns, which I then painted. My father taught me to use tools and understand craftsmanship, he was very gifted with his hands. My mother was very artistic and we would often visit museums. I also had two older cousins who adored finding art in the flea markets. They gave me a taste for the curiosities and sharpened my eye. This family environment taught me very early to observe and always supported me in my desire to make art.

What are the inherent difficulties in being an artist?

I do not think of art as a profession, but unfortunately it has become one today. Increasingly, you must be a businessperson to survive in the art market. You have to have thick skin, because as an artist you are always judged publicly and are at the mercy of criticism. A little bit like

politicians, elected one day and rejected the next day. But unlike politicians, we are not accountable, we are independent and free to do as we please. It is an extraordinary privilege to be an artist, but, as in any profession, nothing is easy.

What has enriched your creativity over the years?

Music opened my eyes, so to speak. I've never studied music, but it has always attracted me. Then at the beginning of the 70s through the Punk movement, I found I could be a musician without academic studies. It was a very liberating moment for me and opened a lot of doors. I make music not as a musician but as a visual artist. So I have a very different approach, always straddling both eye and ear.

What are your plans for the future, where will they lead you?

I will present my new video exhibit at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York in September and an exhibition at the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart in October and another in November, in Paris, at the Swiss Cultural Centre. I travel a lot between London, New York and Switzerland. The artist's life is very peripatetic. I feed on these trips.

What does this exhibition mean to you?

This exhibition spotlights my interest in onomatopoeia, and more generally on the visual manifestations of sound. This is a different perspective on various activities, there will be videos, paintings, photographs, collages and musical performances. The performance will play an important role, they form an integral part of the exhibition. I have not had a personal exhibition in Switzerland for a long time, hence its importance. It's a way to reconnect with my roots.

How do you judge the current Swiss art scene from your external point of view?

Today many Swiss artists are recognized internationally. The notion of the national or regional artist is meaningless. Often young artists leave their country for cheaper cities. It is an important and necessary migration, artists must open up and discover other cultures. We cannot live

closed in on ourselves when the art market is international. In any case Switzerland is very small, so obviously it overflows. It is these overflows that interest me.

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Action

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