

## MICHAEL SNOW. SEQUENCES

09.07 > 01.11.2015

La Virreina Image Centre

Curator: Gloria Moure

This retrospective exhibition looks at the career of Canadian artist Michael Snow (Toronto, 1928) and reflects the wide range of media he has worked with: music, film, video, painting, sculpture, books and installations. In all these media he explores the expressive possibilities of sound and image and challenges the vision/representation duality. His creative approach requires the active participation of the spectator, who is invited to see the object, perceive it, become involved with it. His compositions aim to direct attention in different ways and involve the viewer in the creative process. He breaks down boundaries not only by creating crossover pieces—both objects and images—but also by appreciating the space as a visual, plastic and sound element rather than a neutral container for creations. He is also interested in the space itself as a place for experimentation.

Ever inquisitive, for ten years (1962–1972) he worked as both an artist and a professional jazz musician. Filmmaking—with a particular focus on exploring the different forms of narrativity—has been a key interest since 1956, and especially so since 1967, when his film *Wavelength* won the Grand Prize at Exprmntl Experimental Film Festival in Knokke, Belgium, and became a landmark of avant-garde filmmaking eager to reflect on its own language.

*Michael Snow. Sequences* exhibits work from throughout his career, including many pieces never seen before in Europe. The show opens with his first film installation, *Little Walk* (1964), part of the *Walking Woman* series he worked on tirelessly between 1961 and 1967. Other pieces reveal his growing interest, from the late 1950s onwards, in breaking through the limits of traditional space by using the wall and floor as media. *Quits* (1960) and *Shunt* (1959) show how the relationship between two spaces can be visually described and activated and make clear his interest in the physical aspects of art and matter: “In my work I’m always a sculptor. Sometimes a sculptor of time/light. But I have also been, since my beginnings, a pure sculptor, an artist who makes objects, in three dimensions.”

In *Sighting* (1982), *Zone* (1982) and *First to Last* (1967), he attracts and directs spectators’ attention: “All these works are Directors of Attention in the sense that their forms suggest the paths a spectator’s eyes should take.”

*Scope* (1967) monumentalises the obvious reflexive phenomenon of the periscope by incorporating the spectator as part of the work. *Membrane* (1969) and *432101234* (1969), with their reflecting surfaces, emphasise his interest in reflections, which leads to pictorial questions (perception, superposition, reflection) found throughout his body of work.

With *Sight* (1967) he crosses space and creates a connection between inside and outside, front and behind: “This work contained one of my most radical uses of the inevitable, and almost always hidden, aspect of front and behind: the two-sidedness of planes.”

The material nature of his work comes to the fore once again in his photographic work: “They’re not just ‘images’ (if that were even possible); all my photo-works involve the physical nature of their existence, whether it is a framed colour print, a light box, or a suspended transparency on cloth. This is an important factor, as its size.”

*In Medias Res* (1998) and *Crouch Leap Land* (1970) stress the presentation of the work by creating an expanded space. The first piece is a Persian rug laid out on the floor when exhibited; the second one is suspended from the ceiling and spectators have to squat beneath it

in the same position as the artist when he took the photographs. *Shade* (1979) and *Powers of Two* (2003) both draw on the spectator's desire to see the other side of the surface. The second piece, featuring transparent photographs, takes the image of the spectators and makes them part of the piece. *Paris de jugement Le and/or State of the Arts* (2003), with its photographs of three female nudes admiring Paul Cézanne's *Les Grandes Baigneuses*, once again stresses the question of representation through the dialogue between painting and photography.

This show features several of Snow's sound installations, one of the least-known areas of his work. *Hearing Aid* (1976) uses the steady beat of a metronome to bring about constant changes in rhythm in the space, while *Diagonale* (1988) exploits the ability of electronic devices to produce unique, unbroken pure tones. Memory is the central experience in *Tap* (1969/1972): spectators have to find different kinds of objects scattered throughout the show. *Waiting Room* (2000) is a piece on time, on the ability to pay attention in real time, incorporating real sounds from the galleries at La Virreina Image Centre.

In *Piano Sculpture* (2009), an installation of four projections of the artist's hands playing the piano, each of the four recordings of the same piece has a different sound. Depending on where they are standing, spectators perceive a different combination of sounds that don't match the movement of the hands.

Snow uses alternating stretches of colour fields and photographic images to explore and analyse the kinetics of filmmaking—projects where nature is the subject of pictorial works that morph into landscapes and still lifes, creations on time and the passage of time. He explores the material properties of film and the mechanics of filmmaking in terms of space. He experiments with a single screen by creating themes, overlapping them or emphasising perceptive analysis. *Solar Breath (Northern Caryatids)* (2002) records a fluttering curtain blown by the wind in the window of his log cabin in rural Newfoundland about an hour before sunset: "While on one level *Solar Breath* is merely a fixed-camera documentary recording, it is also the result of years of attention."

In *SSHTOORRTY* (2005)—an amalgam of *short* and *story*—the narrativity is continuous time, but the superposition of the story folds past and future into the present.

In his film work, Snow draws a clear dividing line: some films are projections designed specifically for an art space, for a moving audience, and are the equivalent of looking at a painting or a sculpture; others have been created to be watched by a seated audience—who have agreed to pay attention for a given period of time—in a cinema or an auditorium, soundproofed places with the necessary acoustics demanded by films where sound is an important part of the experience. In keeping with these criteria, Snow's films will be screened at the Filmoteca de Catalunya, apart from his emblematic *Wavelength* (1967), which will be shown in the exhibition space.

*Wavelength* is a single 45-minute tracking shot, taken with a fixed camera, that pans the length of the artist's studio. In this film we can already see several recurring features of his work: the relationship between inside and outside and between front and behind, the mutating, lengthening and shortening of image and sound, the relationship between object and image, the reflection on space/time, light as matter, and the window as a motif: "When we look out a window from within a building, the window becomes the equivalent of our eyes and the building becomes the equivalent of our cranium (from which we look out). This association is latent in *Wavelength*."

*Slidelength* (1969–1971), a sequence of 80 slides projected in a loop, further develops some of the discoveries of *Wavelength* and *Sink* (1970), made up of 80 slides of the sink in his studio with light as its material. In *Slidelength*, all the colour variations depend on light, which is used to mix the colours that become the light projected in the final work.



Michael Snow's entire body of work stresses the experimental nature of his creative approach. While his works have a powerful conceptual and procedural dimension, the carefree and ironic character of some pieces reveals his decidedly humorous take on the world.

*Michael Snow. Sequences* celebrates the diversity the artist has espoused for more than fifty years: "I'm not a professional. My paintings are done by a filmmaker, sculpture by a musician, films by a painter, music by a filmmaker, paintings by a sculptor, sculpture by a filmmaker, films by a musician, music by a sculptor... sometimes they all work together [...]." This is exactly what this exhibition is about: everything working in favour of the experience of the image, space and sound.

**Gloria Moure**, curator of the exhibition



***Piano Sculpture*, 2009.** Artist collection, Toronto



*In Medias Res*, 1998

Centre National des Arts Plastiques Collection, Paris

## MICHAEL SNOW. BIOGRAPHY

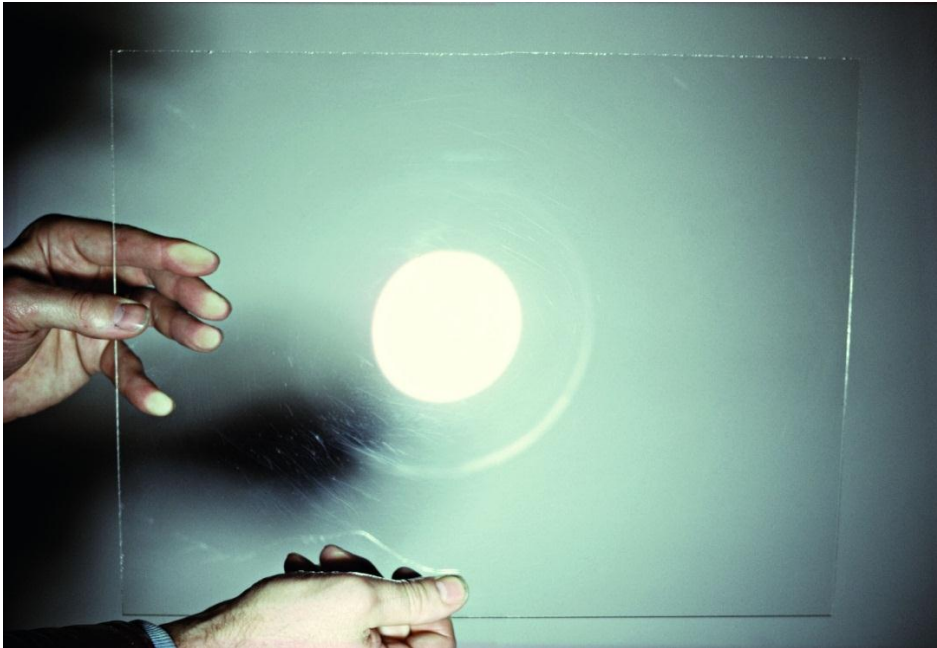
Michael Snow was born in 1928 in Toronto, where he currently lives. As a musician, he has played the piano and other instruments both solo and with several ensembles (most frequently with the CCMC of Toronto) in Canada, the United States, Europe and Japan. He has also released a number of recordings. His work as a filmmaker has been screened at festivals worldwide and can be found in several film archives, including the Anthology Film Archives (New York), the Royal Belgian Film Archives (Brussels) and the Austrian Film Museum (Vienna), among others. In 1967 his film *Wavelength* won the Grand Prize at Experimental Film Festival in Knokke (Belgium), and in 1982 *So Is This* won a Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award.

He is also a painter and sculptor, although since 1962 much of his work has been photography based or holographic. His work in all these media is represented in private and public collections worldwide, including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), MoMA (New York), Museum Ludwig (Cologne and Vienna), the Centre Georges Pompidou (Paris), and the Musée des Beaux-Arts and Musée d'art contemporain (Montreal).

He has created video, film and sound installations, designed books such as *Michael Snow / A Survey* (1970) and *Cover to Cover* (1975) and carried out several public sculpture commissions, including *Flight Stop* at the Eaton Centre and *The Audience* at Skydome, both in Toronto.

He has had retrospective shows at the Hara Museum of Tokyo (1988), the Cinémathèque Française of Paris (1999), the Anthology Film Archives (New York) and the Institut Lumière (Lyon). In 1994 *The Power Plant* and the Art Gallery of Ontario, both in Toronto, put on simultaneous shows of his work in all media. Additional retrospective exhibitions have been mounted at the Vancouver Art Gallery (1967 and 1979) and the Musée d'art contemporain (Montreal, 1995), as well as at the Art Gallery of Ontario (*Objects of Vision*, Toronto, 2012) and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (*Michael Snow: Photo-Centric*, 2014).

He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1982 and a Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres in 1995. In 2004 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Paris.



*Slidlength*, 1969-1971 Artist Collection, Toronto



*Powers of two*, 2003. Courtesy of Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris

## LIST OF EXHIBITION WORKS:

### ***Shunt, 1959***

Wood, oil paint

Gallery of Canada Collection, Ottawa

### ***Quits, 1960***

Wood, oil paint

Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto

### ***First to Last, 1967***

Painted wood, aluminium, periscopes

Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto

### ***Scope, 1967***

Stainless steel, mirrors, five elements

Collection National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

### ***Sight, 1967***

Aluminium, plastic

Vancouver Art Gallery Collection, Vancouver

### ***Aluminum and Lead, 1968***

Aluminium, lead

Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto

### ***432101234, 1969***

Chromed steel, aluminium, polyurethane foam

Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto

### ***Membrane, 1969***

Chromed steel, wood, rubber

Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto

### ***Zone, 1982***

Plexiglas, rubber

Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto

***Sighting, 1982***

Aluminium

Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto

***Little Walk, 1964***

Original 8 mm film transferred to DVD, colour, no sound, 12 min 30 s

*Walking Woman*: 152,4 x 61 cm (wooden cut-out)

Artist Collection, Toronto

***Sink, 1970***

Colour photograph, slide projector, eighty 35 mm colour slides

Artist Collection, Toronto

***Solar Breath (Northern Caryatids), 2002***

Video projection, colour, sound, 62 min 35 s, in a loop; speakers, chairs

Artist Collection, Toronto

***SSHTOORRTY, 2005***

Video, colour, sound, 1 min 45 s

Artist Collection, Toronto

***The Corner of Braque and Picasso Streets, 2009***

Closed-circuit video camera; real-time video projection, colour, no sound; plinths

Site-specific

***In the Way, 2011***

Video, colour, no sound, 23 min 10 s

Artist Collection, Toronto

***Tap, 1969-1972***

Framed b/w photograph, framed typewritten text on paper

National Gallery of Canada Collection, Ottawa

***Hearing Aid, 1976***

Three audio cassette players, tapes, metronome

MACBA Collection, Barcelona



***Diagonale, 1988***

Sixteen speakers, sixteen-channel synthesiser, sound system  
Artist Collection, Toronto

***Waiting Room, 2000***

Number dispenser, number display, loudspeakers, microphones, seating  
Artist Collection, Toronto

***Piano Sculpture, 2009***

Four-channel video projection, four speakers, colour, sound, 14 min  
Artist Collection, Toronto

***Slidelength, 1969-1971***

Slide projector, eighty 35 mm colour slides  
Artist Collection, Toronto

***In Medias Res, 1998***

Colour photograph on Lexan  
Centre National des Arts Plastiques Collection, Paris

***Powers of two, 2003***

Four photographic transparencies  
Courtesy of Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris

***Paris de jugement Le and/or State of the Arts, 2003***

Colour photograph on canvas  
Courtesy of Galerie Martine Aboucaya, Paris

***Shade, 1979***

B/w photographic transparency, Plexiglas  
Art Bank Collection Canada Council for the Arts, Ottawa

***Crouch Leap Land, 1970***

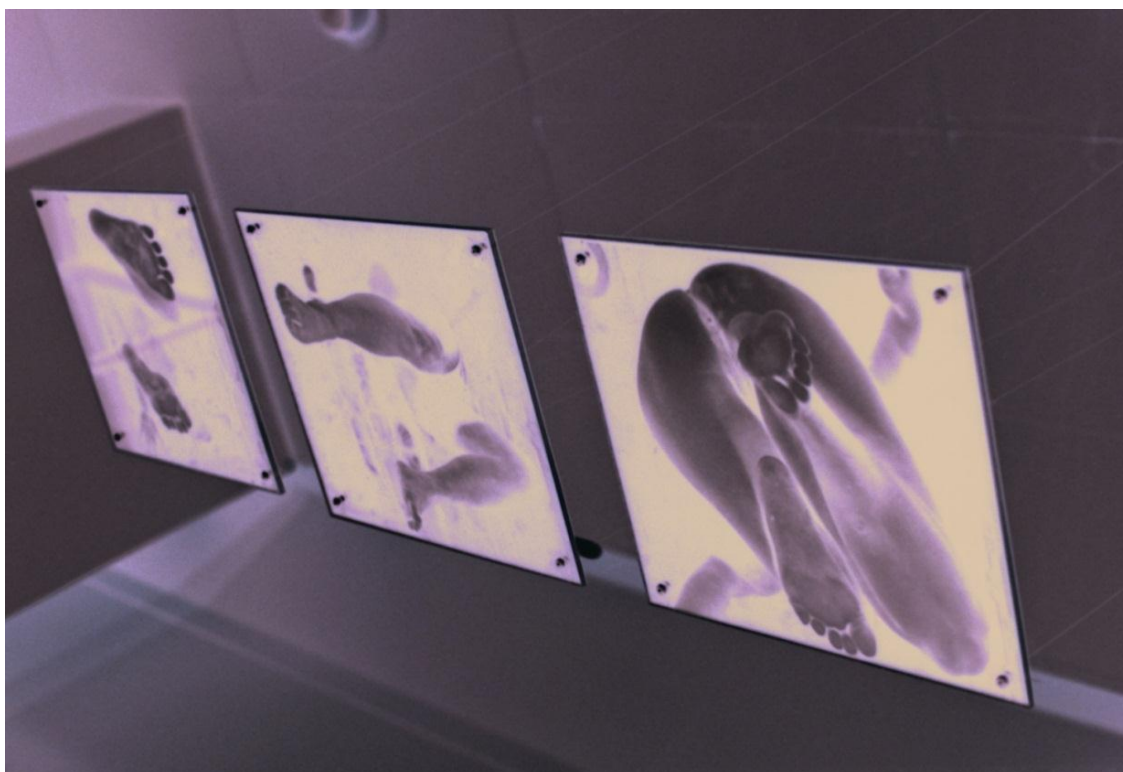
Three gelatin-silver prints, Plexiglas  
Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto



***Wavelength, 1967***

16 mm film transferred to high-resolution digital video, colour, sound, 45 min

Artist Collection, Toronto



***Crouch Leap Land, 1970***

Art Gallery of Ontario Collection, Toronto



## MONOGRAPHY

### ***MICHAEL SNOW. SEQUENCES. A HISTORY OF HIS ART***

The curatorial project is accompanied by a comprehensive and accurate monograph about Michael Snow in which both the artist and the curator have worked over the years. The publication, conceived as a corpus, includes a foreword by Gloria Moure, a vast essay by Bruce Jenkins and writings by the artist.

Edited by Polígrafa.



## GLORIA MOURE CURATOR

Gloria Moure (Barcelona) is an independent curator and art editor, PhD in Art History by the Universitat de Barcelona. She began her career as a freelance curator in 1977. In 1984, she organized the largest retrospective exhibition of the artist Marcel Duchamp held in Europe (Fundació Miró, Barcelona; la Caixa, Madrid, and Ludwig Museum, Cologne). From 1989 to 1995, she was director of the Fundació Espai Poble Nou in Barcelona, which hosted the first exhibitions in Spain of renowned artists such as Bruce Nauman, John Cage, Mario Merz, Sigmar Polke and Rodney Graham, among others. As director of the Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea (CGAC, Santiago de Compostela), between 1994 and 1998, she set the foundations of the programme and organized major retrospectives of Vito Acconci, Félix González-Torres, Giovanni Anselmo, Medardo Rosso and Ana Mendieta, among others, which contributed to the international recognition of the institution. From 1993 to 1997, she was a member of the management advisory committee of the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid (MNCARS).

Her latest exhibition projects were dedicated to artists Gordon Matta-Clark (2006), Paul Sharits (2009) and Marcel Broodthaers (2012) and the group show *On the Road* (2014).

She is currently associate editor at Ediciones Polígrafa, where she directs Colección 20/21, a series of monographs about contemporary artists, including *Sigmar Polke* (2014), *Marcel Broodthaers: Collected Writings* (2013), *An Art of Limina. Gary Hill's Works and Writings* (2009), *Dan Graham's Works and Writings* (2009), *Jeff Wall* (2007) and *Gordon Matta-Clark's Works and Writings* (2006).

## FILMOTECA DE CATALUNYA

### 'MICHAEL SNOW, SEQUENCES'. A RETROSPECTIVE

09/07/2015 - 22/07/2015

Michael Snow is a world-renowned figure in the visual arts and a pioneer of video art, as well as being considered the father of structuralist cinema. Parallel to the anthological exhibition 'Michael Snow. Sequences', at La Virreina Image Centre, the Filmoteca de Catalunya presents a retrospective of his films.

The season, also entitled 'Michael Snow. Sequences', includes key cinematographic works in which the artist explores new forms of non-narrative language.

The opening session of the retrospective will take place on **Thursday 9 July with the artist himself as special guest**. At **18.30**, he will present a selection of shorts filmed between 1964 and 1970 (amongst them the famous *New York Eye and Ear Control*, made in 1964), when Snow was already an internationally renowned filmmaker. From then until Wednesday 22 July we have programmed a total of six sessions in which twelve films will be screened, including the essential *La Région Centrale* (1971) and *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young)* by *Wilma Schoen* (1974), along with more recent works, such as *Triage* (2004) and *Reverberlin* (2006).

**Thursday 9 July, at 6.30 pm**

#### SESSION 1

Presentation: Michael Snow



*New York Eye and Ear Control*, 1964 (34 min)  
*One Second in Montreal*, 1969 (26 min)  
*Dripping Water*, 1969 (12 min)  
*Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film*, 1970 (20 min)

**Friday 10 July, at 7 pm**

#### SESSION 2



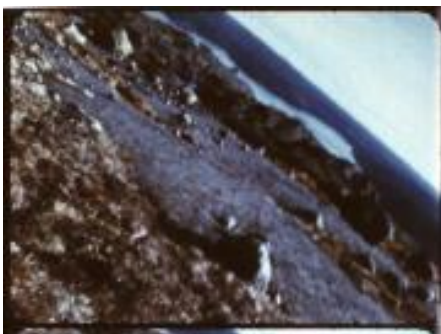
*Triage*, 2004 (30 min)  
*Reverberlin*, 2006 (55 min)

Saturday 11 July, at 7 pm  
SESSION 3



*See You Later / Au Revoir*, 1990 (17 min 25 s)  
*To Lavoisier, Who Died in the Reign of Terror*, 1991  
(53 min)  
*The Living Room*, 2000 (21 min)

Tuesday 14 July, at 6 pm  
SESSION 4



*La Région Centrale*, 1971 (190 min)

Wednesday 15 July, at 6 pm  
SESSION 5



*Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young)* by Wilma Schoen, 1974 (270 min)



Wednesday 22 July, at 6.30 pm  
SESSION 6



*Presents*, 1981 (90 min)

All the sessions in the Screening Room Laya,  
Filmoteca de Catalunya (Plaça Salvador Seguí, 1-9. 08001 Barcelona)  
Admission: 4 €  
Discounts and more information: [www.filmoteca.cat](http://www.filmoteca.cat)  
Limited Seating





## PRESS IMAGES

Pictures and video images for downloading are kept here:

<https://eicub.net/?grup=Virreinacentredeimaiatge>



*Piano Sculpture*, 2009 Colección del artista, Toronto



*Slidelength*, 1969-1971 Colección del artista, Toronto



*In Medias Res*, 1998 Colección del Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Ministerio de Cultura y Comunicación, París



*Powers of two*, 2003 Cortesia de la Galerie Martine Aboucaya, París



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Images for downloading are kept here :

<https://eicub.net/?grup=Virreinacentredelaimatge>

[www.barcelona.cat/lavirreina](http://www.barcelona.cat/lavirreina)