

**MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG PRESENTS SPOTLIGHT EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY
ACCLAIMED CONTEMPORARY ARTIST CHRISTIAN MARCLAY**

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St. Petersburg, Fla.--Christian Marclay has taken the art world by storm. He represented the United States in the 54th Venice Biennale and won the Golden Lion for his 24-hour montage, *The Clock* (2011). *Newsweek* has named him one of the 10 most important artists working today.

The MFA is now showing two of his works, *Telephones* (1995) and *Sound Holes* (2007), through Sunday, May 1, in the Helen and Dick Minck Gallery of New Media. Curator of Contemporary Art Katherine Pill selected the works.

Mr. Marclay likes to deconstruct or take apart images and sound and put them back together in surprising, inventive ways. They become something akin to collages. In *Telephones*, he combines scenes from 130 Hollywood movies. There are close-ups of phones and phone booths (remember them?) and a host of stars answering “Hello,” “Who is this?” “What happened?” and the like. *Telephones* moves back and forth between black-and-white, Technicolor gloss, and the color film of our time.

Editing is critical. The scenes are really brief, and even though pulled from different eras, they flow into each other seamlessly. It is impossible to resist the likes of Katharine Hepburn, Barbara Stanwyck, Clark Gable, Jimmy Stewart, Meg Ryan, Whoopi Goldberg, Sean Connery as James Bond, and many more, answering a wide array of phones. They range from old rotary to push-button to the classic pink princess.

Some of the scenes and juxtapositions are really funny, and as the video proceeds, it appears that these actors/characters are talking to each other across time. Mr. Marclay is clearly interested in the process of communication. We do not hear what is being said on the other end, and facial expressions can play a huge role in influencing our reaction. These snippets remind us that some of our most telling communication is nonverbal, and silence can be compelling.

Mr. Marclay first gained attention as a DJ/composer. He pioneered “scratching” in the late 1970s in New York Clubs, as did hip hop artists, who have taken the approach to a larger audience. Scratching involves using the turntable and records to produce different, often percussive sounds, largely built on chance. Mr. Marclay has noted that he wanted “to create a sound that was something else than just the sound that was in the grooves.”

In *Telephones*, the “hellos,” other verbal responses, and varied rings begin to have a cumulative musical effect. Some are more staccato and percussive. Others have a more lilting or dramatic quality. The overall sound is something other than what the individual scenes provide.

Communication is also at the forefront of *Sound Holes* (2007), a suite of 21 photogravures published by Graphicstudio, the renowned print atelier at the University of South Florida, Tampa. Mr. Marclay depicts entry phones or call boxes that look out of date and worn, replete with marks and scratches. He focuses on the central speaker/receiver, which resembles the human face.

The photogravures lead us to imagine the exchanges, secrets, trysts, all engineered by these entry devices, though we do not hear a single sound. Mr. Marclay once said, “We give machines—or see in them—anthropomorphic qualities. The machine is an extension of the human body.” This connects to the artist actually carrying the turntable in some of his performance pieces.

Mr. Marclay was born in California in 1955 and raised in Switzerland. He now divides his time between New York and London. He studied at the École Supérieure d’Art Visuel in Geneva; the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston, where he earned his BFA; and Cooper Union in New York. He has received solo exhibitions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Kunsthaus in Zurich; and the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, among many others. This is the first time his work has been shown at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg.

GENEROUS SPONSORS

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The MFA at 255 Beach Drive N.E. has a world-class collection, with works by Monet, Gauguin, Renoir, Morisot, Cézanne, Rodin, O’Keeffe, Willem de Kooning, and many other great artists. Also displayed are ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, and Native American art. The photography collection is one of the largest and finest in the Southeast.

Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, until 8 p.m. on Thursday, and noon-5 p.m. Sunday. **Admission is only \$5 after 5 p.m. on Thursday.** Regular admission is \$17 for adults, \$15 for those 65 and older, and \$10 for students seven and older, including college students with current I.D. Children under seven and Museum members are admitted free. Groups of 10 or more adults pay only \$12 per person and children \$4 each with prior reservations. The MFA Café is open from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. For more information, please call 727.896.2667 or visit www.fine-arts.org.

