

Institute of Contemporary Arts

PRESS RELEASE

Maryanne Amacher: *GLIA*
30 – 31 May 2019

30 May, 6.30 – 8.30pm

Bill Dietz and Amy Cimini in conversation, followed by screening of *Torse* by Charles Atlas

31 May, 7.00 – 8.00pm

Ghost Written Scenarios & Unnamed Sensibilities:

Amy Cimini & Bill Dietz on the work of Maryanne Amacher

31 May, 8.30 – 9.45pm

Performance of *GLIA*



Maryanne Amacher in Oakland, CA, 1993.
Courtesy Blank Forms and Estate of Maryanne Amacher

The Institute of Contemporary Arts, in collaboration with London-based experimental music series Kammer Klang and Swiss music ensemble Contrechamps, is proud to present a series of three events over two evenings devoted to the work of composer Maryanne Amacher. The programme culminates in the UK premiere of *GLIA* (2005) – a newly commissioned reconstruction of a rarely presented seminal work for seven instruments and electronics. The performance will be directed by a previous collaborator of Amacher's, Bill Dietz, and executed with Contrechamps and members of Berlin-based Ensemble Zwischentöne (1988–2015).

Maryanne Amacher (1938–2009) is a vital figure in late 20th-century experimental music and sound installation. In the late 1960s, she pioneered what she termed 'long distance music' – telematic, site-related works that would later crystallise into her renowned City-Links series (1967–1980). These works comprised long-

duration audio transmissions of distant urban sites via dedicated telephone lines. In the 1970s, Amacher developed ‘ear tone’ music (based on sounds organically generated by the ear, technically known as ‘otoacoustic emissions’) with the help of Marvin Minsky’s Triadex Muse, a synthesiser and compositional tool which utilises principles of artificial intelligence. Throughout her work, Amacher prefigured the ways in which technology – particularly telecommunications and machine learning – impact on perception, embodiment, and the human experience of space.

GLIA (named after the brain cells which assist in neurotransmission between synapses) was only performed once during Amacher’s lifetime, at the Berlin ‘media-art-laboratory’ TESLA in 2005. This premiere performance was directed by Amacher, assisted by the then director of Ensemble Zwischenräume Peter Ablinger and Bill Dietz, who succeeded him. With *GLIA*, Amacher imagined the listener as a sort of ‘glial’ interface between the electronic and acoustic instrumental elements of the work. She imagined the otoacoustic emissions created in the ears of the listener (‘ghost-written’ by the replica ‘ear tones’ emitted by the electronics and instruments) as this ‘neural interface’.

A week-long residency in the ICA Theatre by Dietz and members of Contrechamps and Ensemble Zwischenräume enables the development of this reconstruction of *GLIA*. In 2011, Dietz spent a month undertaking intensive research at Amacher’s former home in Kingston, New York, and found adequate source materials to enable the first reconstruction of *GLIA*, which took place in 2012 at the Hamburger Bahnhof-Museum für Gegenwart in Berlin. This initial reconstruction was part of a wider effort by Amacher’s friends and collaborators to address the posthumous legacy of the artist’s work after her sudden death in 2009. The performance of *GLIA* at the ICA forms part of this collective interpretive representation of Amacher’s practice.

On 30 May, Dietz will be in conversation with musicologist Amy Cimini, author of a forthcoming monograph on the work of Amacher, alongside a special screening of the film *Torse* (1977) by Charles Atlas. The two-channel film documents Merce Cunningham’s eponymous choreography through multiple cameras, performed to Amacher’s composition *Remainder* (1976).

On 31 May, the UK premiere of *GLIA* will be performed in the ICA Theatre, directed by Dietz and executed with Contrechamps and former members of Berlin-based Ensemble Zwischenräume. Preceding the performance, Dietz and Cimini will present a talk that contextualises *GLIA* within Amacher’s body of work, and considers her approach to installation and instrumentation.

For further information, images and to request interviews please contact:

Bridie Hindle, ICA, Press Officer
bridie.hindle@ica.art / +44 (0)20 7766 1409

Miles Evans PR
milesevanspr@gmail.com / +44 (0)7812 985 993

Sam Mackay, Kammer Klang
sam.mackay5@gmail.com / +44 (0)7941 343 399

Notes to Editors

GLIA performers

Susanne Peters and Dorothee Sporbeck, flute; Maximilian Haft and Akiko Ahrendt, violin; Lucy Railton, cello; Volker Schindel and Helles Weber, accordion; and Bill Dietz, sound engineer.

Tickets

£7 Full, £5 Concs/Green, £4 Blue. Red Membership includes free access to all programmes for £16.66/month.

Attend both events on 31 May for £8 Full, £6 Concs/Green, £5 Blue

Attend all three events on 30 & 31 May for £12 Full, £9 Concs/Green, £6 Blue

www.ica.art/maryanne-amacher-glia

Maryanne Amacher was born in 1938 in Kane, Pennsylvania. She enrolled in the University of Pennsylvania in 1955, where she studied with composer and theorist Constant Vaclain and composers George Rochberg and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Amacher went on to hold a series of fellowships – at the University of Illinois' Experimental Music Studio (EMS), MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies (CAVS), SUNY Buffalo, Radcliffe, the Capp Street Project in San Francisco and many others, including international fellowships. After meeting John Cage at the University of Illinois in 1968, she went on to collaborate with him on *Lecture on the Weather* (1975) and later created *Close Up* (1979), the sound component for Cage's *Empty Words* (1974). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Amacher developed 'Music for Sound-Joined Rooms' and 'Mini Sound Series', presentational models for how her subsequent work should be 'staged'. During the early 1980s, Amacher also worked on the materials for a multi-part drama originally imagined for TV and radio simulcast called *Intelligent Life*. While never fully realised, *Intelligent Life* reveals much of Amacher's thinking on music and the advancement of potentialities for future listeners, transcending the social and physiological limitations of music as we know it. In the 1990s, Amacher continued to work internationally, and in the US she was commissioned to compose a large-scale work for the Kronos Quartet, received a Guggenheim Fellowship, performed at Woodstock '94, and released her first CD on Tzadik (*Sound Characters*, 1999). In the 2000s, she participated in the Whitney Biennial (2002), joined the faculty of the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College, and released a second CD with Tzadik (*Sound Characters vol. 2*, 2008). In 2005 she received Ars Electronica Foundation's Golden Nica, their highest honour. Amacher died in Kingston, NY after sustaining a head injury and a subsequent stroke during the summer of 2009.

Amy Cimini is a violist and musicologist based in San Diego, CA. Her research, teaching and performance engage 20th-century philosophy and political thought with an emphasis on embodiment and ethics in experimental practice. Her musicological writing has appeared in *Gamut*, *Contemporary Music Review*, *Sound Studies*, *boundary 2*, *Twentieth-Century Music* and *The Opera Quarterly*. She is currently Assistant Professor of Music at UC San Diego and is happy to be finishing her first book, titled *Wild Sound*, about the musical thought of Maryanne Amacher. As a violist, Amy is a founding member of the chamber music collective Till by Turning and the improvising duo Architeuthis Walks on Land with bassoonist and composer Katherine Young. Touching Extremes notes the duo's 'manifest improvisational bravura (of the ruthless variety)'. Recently, Amy has enjoyed premiering Anthony Braxton's operas *Trillium R* and *Trillium J* as a member of Braxton's Tri-Centric Orchestra and touring the

US and Europe in support of Architeuthis Walks on Land's third record, *The Surveyors* (Carrier 2013).

Bill Dietz is a composer and writer, born in Arizona, and based in Berlin since 2003. Since 2012, he has been co-chair of Music/Sound at the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College. His work on the genealogy of the concert and the performance of listening has brought him to festivals such as MaerzMusik and the Donaueschingen Festival, museums such as the Hamburger Bahnhof, Tate Modern, the Brooklyn Museum, the Stedelijk Museum, and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Oaxaca. His work has been featured in publications such as *Performance Research*, *boundary 2*, *Blank Forms*, and the 2014 Whitney Biennial catalogue. Dietz's large-scale public works have been realised in sites such as Le Corbusier's Cité Radieuse in Marseille, the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin, and along the entire city block of Im Stavenhof in Cologne. From 2007 to 2015, Dietz was the artistic director of the Berlin-based Ensemble Zwischentöne, organising numerous festivals and concert series. In 2015, a monograph on his *Tutorial Diversions* was released, followed by a second monograph on his *L'école de la claque* in 2017.

Ensemble Contrechamps is a Geneva-based group of soloists who have specialised for over 40 years in the creation, development and diffusion of 20th- and 21st-century instrumental music. Since its creation, the ensemble has worked closely with a large number of composers (including Pierre Boulez, Rebecca Saunders, Brian Ferneyhough, Beat Furrer, Klaus Huber, Michael Jarrell and Matthias Pintscher) and also with a new generation of creators (including Rebecca Glover, Fernando Garneró and Paula Matthusen). Recent works have been commissioned by Chiyoko Szlavnic, Jacques Demierre, Bryn Harrison, Christine Sun Kim, Christopher Trapani, Abril Padilla and Massicot. The ensemble has recorded more than twenty albums, and in 2019 and 2020 will release two portrait albums in surround sound, one of Chiyoko Szlavnic and the other of Bryn Harrison, both under the Barcelona-based label Neu Records.

Since its founding by cellist Lucy Railton in 2008, the London-based monthly music series **Kammer Klang** has presented fresh takes on contemporary classical, experimental, improvised and electronic music. It has been praised as 'one of the capital's most exciting new-music series' (*Tempo*), 'one of [Cafe] Oto's mainstays' (*The Observer*), and namechecked by *The Guardian* as one of Britain's leading new-music organisations. BBC Radio 3 admires its 'strong track record in promoting innovative new-music events' and broadcasts many of its events. Recent premieres and commissions include work by Annea Lockwood, Henning Christiansen, Catherine Lamb, Rebecca Glover and Jennifer Walshe.

Kammer Klang gratefully acknowledges support from Arts Council England, the Hinrichsen Foundation, the RVW Trust and the Swiss Cultural Fund UK. Contrechamps is supported by the City of Geneva and the Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation.



ERTNO|CHAMPS
C O N T R E





Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**