

**Exhibition**  
28 September–30 December 2012  
Wednesday–Sunday  
11:00 am–6:00 pm

**Guided visits**

*Reservation advisable*

**A “Focus Cage’s Satie” visit**

› Friday 19 October, 12:30 pm

**“Une heure au musée”**

› Thursdays at 12:30 pm

**“Visite Thé”**

› Saturdays at 3:30 pm

**Sunday visits**

› Sundays at 3 pm

**Family visits**

› Sundays at 3:30 pm

**Random visit**

› Date and time to be decided by drawing lots

**Groups**

Customised group visits to one or more exhibitions

*Reservations: Service des Publics*

**Concerts**

3 concerts of Erik Satie’s and John Cage’s music

› Saturday 29 September from 2 pm to 8 pm

At the Museum and after at the CNSMD

**Performances**

— By Laura Kuhn, Director of the John Cage Trust in New York and Cage’s Satie curator

› Thursday 29 November at 6:30 pm

— By Vincent Barras, performer and musician, translator of John Cage

› Wednesday 12 December at 6:30 pm

**Lectures**

— *Satie-Cage, une rencontre du troisième type*

By Ornella Volta, Chairwoman of the Erik Satie Fondation in Paris

› Friday 7 December at 6:30 pm

— *Cage écrivain: « des éléments musicaux dans le monde des mots »*

By Lacy Rumsey, Professor in American and English poetry at ENS, Lyon

› Friday 14 December at 6:30 pm

— *Parade (1917), lever de rideau*

By Anne Bertrand, art historian and critic and Hervé Gauville, danse and art critic, authors from *Parade*

› Friday 21 December at 6:30 pm

**Music/Dance/Singing**

The students from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Lyon are invited at the museum to present a program of works from John Cage, Morton Feldman and Erik Satie...

› From Thursday 13 to Sunday 16 December



**Information and reservations**

**Service des publics**  
+ 33 (0)4 72 69 17 17  
publics@mac-lyon.com

**Next exhibitions**  
22 February–14 April 2013

1ST FLOOR  
LATIFA ECHAKHCH

2ND FLOOR  
HUANG YONG PING

3RD FLOOR  
GUSTAV METZGER

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# CAGE’S SATIE:

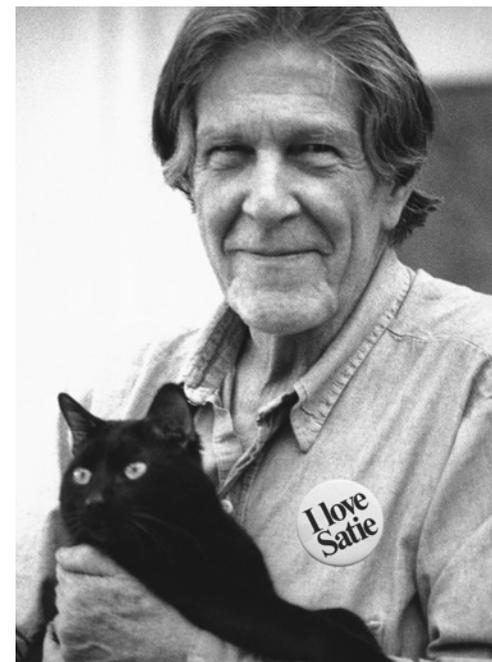
## COMPOSITION FOR MUSEUM

# 28.09

# 30.12.12



Photomontage: John Cage, 1989  
© Sabine Mathes  
& *I Love Satie*, John Cage  
“Erik Satie Memorabilia” Collection  
© John Cage Trust



# CAGE'S SATIE

## COMPOSITION FOR MUSEUM

**JOHN CAGE (1912–1992) WAS ONE OF THE FIRST COMPOSERS TO CONSIDER THE WORK OF ERIK SATIE (1866–1925) AS DECISIVE FOR THE 20TH CENTURY. IN 1963, CAGE ORGANIZED THE INAUGURAL PERFORMANCE OF SATIE'S *VEXATIONS* (1893) IN NEW YORK, A WORK CONSISTING OF A SINGLE MOTIF TO BE PLAYED 840 TIMES, WHICH LASTED OVER 18 HOURS AND INVOLVED THE PARTICIPATION OF A TAG-TEAM OF TEN PIANISTS.**

***CAGE'S SATIE: COMPOSITION FOR MUSEUM* IS ANALOGOUS TO A PIECE OF MUSIC ON TWO LEVELS. ITS FEATURED WORKS ARE THE MUSICAL TRIBUTE PAID BY CAGE TO SATIE THROUGHOUT HIS LIFE.**

This exhibition is essentially auditory: Cage's work is deployed across the first floor of the museum in an aleatoric, spatialized configuration. The music enters into dialogue with associated films of choreographies by Merce Cunningham, and with reproductions of Cage's own scores, poems, notes, and drawings.

On the second floor is *The First Meeting of the Satie Society*, a late work by Cage that showcases his collaboration with such distinguished artists as Robert Rauschenberg, Sol LeWitt, Robert Ryman, and Jasper Johns. Also on the second floor is Cage's 1982 radio play, *James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet*, heard and seen here in a new sound installation by Mikel Rouse that calls for public participation. And, finally, there's Cage's "Satie Memorabilia Collection"—a third roomful of documentary mementoes that Cage collected throughout his life, attesting further to his admiration for the maestro of Arcueil.

Laura Kuhn is the Director of the John Cage Trust in New York and the exhibition curator. Between 1986 and 1992, she worked with Cage. Here she replies to a number of questions.

### AS A CURATOR, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO CREATE THIS EXHIBITION ABOUT CAGE AND SATIE?

We quickly fixed on Satie as our focus, in part for the sustained significance of Satie in Cage's life. One of his earliest works was his arrangement of Satie's *Socrate* (1944), and among his last was *The First Meeting of the Satie Society* (1985–92), Cage's grandest homage, conceived as a collection of "presents" for Satie, an invitation by Cage to his esteemed artist friends to fill a Duchamp-inspired glass valise.

But it was also in part because they had music in common, which meant that Satie's questions were very much Cage's own. Cage studied Satie's work in depth, and by the end of the 1940s had become Satie's most ardent defender.

### CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHAT A COMPOSITION FOR MUSEUM IS?

The idea to make a sounded exhibition—to place the 14 exhibited works within a situation wherein they would intermingle within the walls of the museum—seemed a natural brainstorm: the perfect form given to remarkably interrelated content. This bears resemblance to a Cage *Musicircus*, wherein disparate musicians and musics are brought together for simultaneous, non-obstructive group performance, but there's a strong



John Cage  
Maeght Foundation, Saint-Paul de Vence, 1970  
© James Klosty



Picture of Erik Satie  
John Cage "Erik Satie  
Memorabilia" Collection  
© John Cage Trust

distinction here. For whether Cage's works are made to freely intermingle within an ever-changing soundscape in the museum or are arranged into a fixed simulation of a single visit as is heard in the exhibition catalog's CD, the works comprising *Cage's Satie* sound remarkably well together. This came as something of a surprise, but shouldn't have, since all of the works emanate from something of a single source, revealing in their commingling very real interrelationships.

So our process has been less one of execution than one of discovery. And that, for John Cage, is the essence of composition.

### WHY DID JOHN CAGE WORK WITH CHANCE? HOW DID HE USE IT?

In the 1950s, Cage's interpretation of Zen Buddhist doctrine gave rise to a dramatic shift in his aesthetic philosophy. In his understanding, Zen aims to diminish ego activity through disciplined physical meditations. In keeping with the underlying goals of such practices, Cage adapted his methods of work, taking the path of non-intentional composition. He selected the components of his pieces by chance, first by tossing coins or dice, later through the use of a random number generator that simulated the oracle of the *I Ching*, one of Oriental philosophy's most time-honored wisdom tools. His mature works thus did not originate

in psychology, drama, or literature, but were just sounds: free of judgments, free of fixed relations, free of memory and taste.

### THIS EXHIBITION PRESENTS WORKS THAT CAGE CREATED IN COLLABORATION WITH MERCE CUNNINGHAM, JASPER JOHNS, ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG, ROBERT RYMAN, AND SOL LEWITT. HOW DID HE WORK WITH THEM, CROSSING OVER DIFFERENT ARTISTIC PRACTICES, LIKE DANCE OR PAINTING?

Cage and Cunningham advocated an approach to collaboration in which dancing, music, and décor coexisted in the same time-space continuum while maintaining their autonomy: dance wasn't choreographed to music, music wasn't composed to the rhythms of dance, décor didn't illustrate stage action, but, rather, each was created separately, sharing only a single time frame. This aesthetic of independence arose in the 1950s, with both men employing chance techniques as a means of freeing their work from the bounds of personal expression. Cage abstracted the principle to his work in other art forms and to his collaborations: *The First Meeting of the Satie Society* arose from a simple invitation to his artist colleagues to fill a cracked glass valise with otherwise wholly autonomous words and images bound into eight hand made books.