

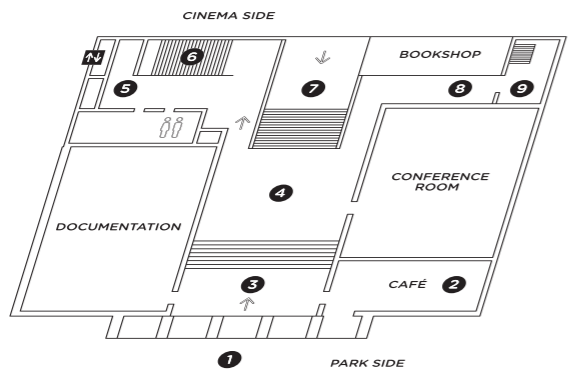
# GEORGE BRECHT

## 28.09 30.12.12

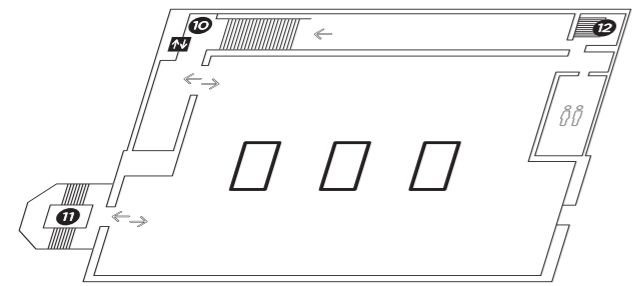
# WATER YAM, 1963: PARTITIONS

The events of Brecht are spread across the whole museum, except the exhibitions' spaces.

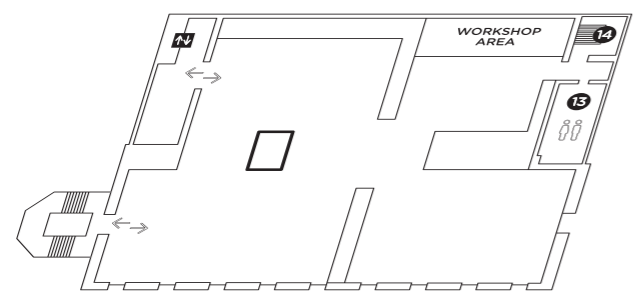
LEVEL 0



LEVEL 1



LEVEL 2



LEVEL 3



### OUTSIDE

- 1 On the museum facade  
- *Two Clocks*  
- *Position*
- 2 In the Café du musée  
- *Five Events*  
- *Chair Event*  
(christmas-tree ball)  
- *Solo for Wind Instrument*  
- *Three Broom Events*

### LEVEL 0

- 3 In the lobby (park side)  
- *Six doors*  
- *Two exercises*  
- *Three Aqueous Events*  
- *Realization*  
- *Three Yellow Events*

- 4 On the central mezzanine  
- *Three arrangements*  
- *Piano Piece, 1962*  
- *Card Piece for Voice*

- 5 In the corridor to the elevators  
- *Two Definitions*  
- *Mirror*  
- *Instruction*  
- *Two Vehicle Events*

- 6 In the big staircase  
- *Wheel*  
- *Exhibit Seven*
- 7 In the lobby (cinema side)  
- *Chair Event (grater)*  
- *Air Conditionning*  
- *Three Chair Events*  
- *Stool*  
- *No smoking Event*  
- *Three Lamp Events*  
- *Two Durations*  
- *Direction*  
- *Three Telephone Events*

- 8 On the balcony  
- *Comb Music*  
- *Three Window Events*  
- *3 Table and Chair Events*

- 9 In the staircase  
- *Word Event*

### LEVEL 1

- 10 In front of the elevators  
- *Three Gap Events*
- 11 In the stairwell to level 2  
- *Ladder*  
- *Drip Music*  
- *Motor Vehicle Sundown*  
- *Intermission*  
- *Six Exhibits*
- 12 In the stairwell to level 1  
- *Incidental Music*

### LEVEL 2

- 13 In the toilets  
- *Sink*
- 14 In the stairwell to level 1  
- *Suitcase*

### LEVEL 3

- 15 In the foyer  
- *Impossible Effort*



We invite the public to also play some events, symbolized by this symbol in the exhibition.

For reasons related to the layout of the exhibition, some moves may have been made.



*Chair Event, 1968*  
*Event Glasses, 1986*  
© photo Blaise Adillon  
© Adagp Paris, 2012



# GEORGE BRECHT

SCORES AND EVENTS:  
PERFORMANCES, 1959–2012

IN 1996, MAC LYON ACQUIRED GEORGE BRECHT'S 1963 *WATER YAM*, A SMALL CARDBOARD BOX CONTAINING FILING CARDS BEARING FREELY-INTERPRETABLE INSTRUCTIONS FOR EVENTS.

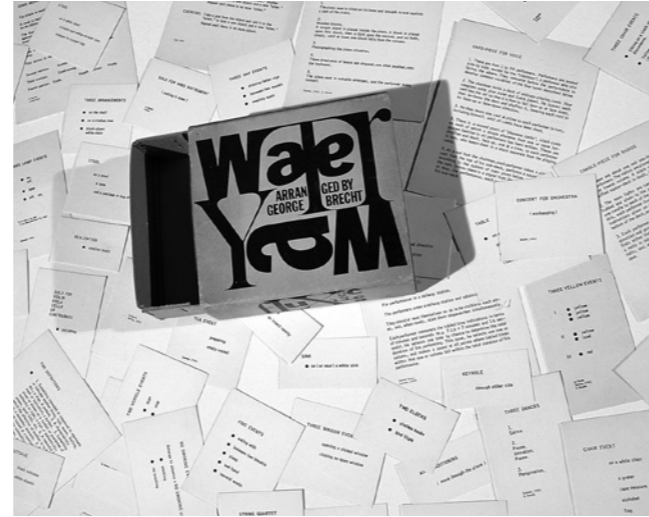
## THE ORIGIN OF THE EVENT

George Brecht was born in New York in 1926, and died in Cologne in 2008. A chemist by training, he worked for 15 years as an industrial researcher, and filed several patents. He also taught art, taking a particular interest in statistics and aleatory series. Between the two realms he found subjects, questions and objects for shared experimentation. Randomness is an object of research in mathematics, but it also comes into many artistic and musical compositions. Brecht produced paintings and drawings in different modes of randomness, and he summed up his projects in a short text that he sent to John Cage, who expressed encouragement. In 1957, he attended courses given by Cage at the New School for Social Research in New York, where he met artists such as Allan Kaprow, Dick Higgins and Al Hansen, who contributed to the ambient effervescence that would give rise to the Fluxus movement. With regard to the connections between art and music, time and space, and their extension to life, Brecht stated: "LIFE'S MUCH MORE THAN MUSIC. HAVING SAID THAT, I BELIEVE I'M A MUSICIAN RATHER THAN AN ARTIST. IT'S TIME THAT INTERESTS ME. OF COURSE THEY GO TOGETHER, SPACE AND TIME, BUT PERSONALLY I THINK MORE IN MUSICAL THAN IN ARTISTIC TERMS."

## WATER YAM: THE EVENT

During the following years, Brecht became increasingly interested in what was to be the central focus of his work: the *event*. He made written transcriptions of his events, which he saw as musical scores. But they extended into different categories—painting, sculpture, the theatre, music—amalgamating the mundane and the extraordinary, humour and mathematics, logic and irrationality. In 1963, he printed them on filing cards that he stored in a box with the title *Water Yam*. But the indications he gave were freely interpretable. The performer, whoever (s)he might be, enjoyed full freedom, and in fact could either play the score or do nothing, and simply muse... What was involved was a principle of interpretation, borrowed from music, to which Brecht gave its fullest possible extension. The *Water Yam* scores could be enigmatic, humorous or poetic. And the choice of cards, boxes or everyday objects (of low aesthetic value) sprang from a desire to avoid the spectacular, or the unique, and to embrace humour, as well as every imaginable possibility.

George Brecht executed some events himself, often using commonplace objects that interested him on account of their invisible presence and the indeterminacy



*Water Yam*, 1963  
mac LYON collection © photo Blaise Adilon  
© Adagp Paris, 2012

of their status: mere objects or art works? Chairs, he said, "PASS UNNOTICED; YOU CAN'T TELL WHETHER OR NOT THEY'RE WORKS OF ART." And scores could also be exhibited as such.

*Water Yam* is a box that can be produced in series or sent off in the post. It can take playful forms, in the sense of "word play", but also in the sense that an actor or a musician plays. Neither critical reaction nor a desire for popular acclaim can quell a total, permanent appetite for experimentation.

## THE EXHIBITION: PERFORMANCES

33 years after its creation, a version of *Water Yam* was incorporated into mac LYON's collection. And on the occasion of the museum's 1986 Brecht retrospective, it acquired *Nine Event Glasses*. The artist presented it with *Vide* and *26 Event Chairs*.

The *Nine Event Glasses* give a synthetic, immediate form to the idea of an *event*. The number, size, height, placing and orientation of the glasses are determined by chance, using tables of random numbers. What the visitor sees through the rectangles of the *Event Glasses* is foregrounded. What happens in front of an "event glass" becomes, in its turn, an action. But is it, or is it not,



*Glove*, 1966  
From: *The Book of the Tumbler on Fire*  
Wood chair painted in white,  
Painted cane, 2 black strips  
85 x 41 x 83 cm  
mac LYON collection © photo Blaise Adilon  
© Adagp Paris, 2012

a work of art? There are as many viewpoints as there are events. The event is that which, here and now, is a moment of totality: a work on the wall, a ray of sunlight, a visitor, a parquet slat, the entire room. With the *Event Glasses*, Brecht lets things just happen. But what always happens is (simply) life.

The *events* are dispersed around the museum (outside the exhibition rooms) according to various modes of operation. Each one is interpreted either literally or along with works belonging to the museum. There is a web site on which personal interpretations can be posted, and the most surprising of them will be executed during the exhibition.

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

## Guided visits

*Reservation advisable*

### A "Focus George Brecht" visit

› Friday 30 November, 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*

## Next exhibitions

22 February–14 April 2013

1ST FLOOR  
LATIFA ECHAKHCH

2ND FLOOR  
HUANG YONG PING

3RD FLOOR  
GUSTAV METZGER

## Lecture

### "Aux origines de la performance"

By Olivier Lussac, professor at the Université de Lorraine, author of *Fluxus et la musique*

› Friday 12 October, 6:30 pm

## Flash Mob

For the opening of the Fête des Lumières, with scores by George Brecht

› Thursday 6 December, starting at 6:00 pm

## Information and reservations

### Service des publics

+ 33 (0)4 72 69 17 17

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