

NEWS RELEASE

THE
CLARK
ART
INSTITUTE

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[Digital image available upon request]

CLARK ART INSTITUTE TO PRESENT *JANET CARDIFF: THE FORTY PART MOTET*

Williamstown, Massachusetts—Janet Cardiff's acclaimed 2001 sound sculpture, *The Forty Part Motet*, will be presented at the Clark Art Institute June 8–September 15. In this installation, forty separately-recorded choral parts are played through forty speakers in a reworking of Thomas Tallis's sixteenth-century composition *Spem in alium* (*Hope in any other*).

"*The Forty Part Motet* extends our emphasis on showing contemporary projects as a part of the Clark's exhibition program and will be our first sound installation. We couldn't have picked a more fascinating piece," said Olivier Meslay, the Hardymon Director of the Clark. "*The Forty Part Motet* is a seemingly simple yet incredibly complex work that combines historical and contemporary material. The experience of this site-specific sound installation is deeply affecting, and it will take on new dimensions when experienced in the glass-enclosed Michael Conforti Pavilion. We are extremely grateful to the National Gallery of Canada for lending this important and immensely popular work."

The Forty Part Motet is played in a fourteen-minute loop that includes eleven minutes of singing and three minutes of intermission. Cardiff's layering of voices creates a dramatic soundscape composed of individually recorded parts that are projected through speakers arranged inward in an oval formation. This arrangement allows visitors to circulate freely through the installation and around the speakers, moving in close to hear an individual singer's voice—and even breath—or standing in the center to take in the polyphonic force of the whole.

"While listening to a concert, you are normally seated in front of the choir, in traditional audience position. With this piece I want the audience to be able to experience a piece of music from the viewpoint of the singers," said Cardiff. "Enabling the audience to move throughout the space allows them to be intimately connected with the voices. It also reveals the piece of music as a changing construct."

The sound installation is the result of an elaborate recording process. Written for forty parts—or distinct musical lines—the motet is divided into eight choirs of five parts each (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone, and bass). Each chorister wore an individual microphone. It was necessary to edit out each singer's track when they were not

singing so that the “cross talk” of the others would not interfere with the spatial quality of the final presentation. When the singers took a break during the three-hour recording session, Cardiff and the sound editor, George Bures Miller, decided to keep recording. Talking and other sounds can be heard during a three-minute interlude, creating an intimate, direct connection between the performers and the listeners.

Thomas Tallis (English, c. 1505–1585) was the preeminent English composer of his generation. As a member of the Chapel Royal, he served as an organist to four English monarchs: Henry VIII, Edward VI, Queen Mary I, and Queen Elizabeth I. *Spem in alium* was likely authored in 1573, on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth I’s fortieth birthday, though it may have been composed in 1556 to honor Queen Mary I’s fortieth birthday.

Janet Cardiff: The Forty Part Motet features the voices of the Salisbury Cathedral Choir. It was recorded and post-produced by SoundMoves, edited by George Bures Miller, and produced by Field Art Projects. *The Forty Part Motet* is lent generously by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. Significant support is provided by Sylvia and Leonard Marx.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Janet Cardiff (Canadian, born 1957) is based in rural British Columbia. Her work has included media such as film, video, and photography. She participated in the Münster Skulptur Projekte in 1997, and exhibited in the Carnegie International in Pittsburgh, 1999. She also represented Canada at the Venice Biennale in 2001 in collaboration with George Bures Miller. Major surveys of Cardiff and Miller’s works have been shown at PS1 in New York, The Musée d’Art Contemporain, Montreal, The Astrop Fearnley Museum, Oslo, the Castello Rivoli in Turin, MACBA in Barcelona, Institut Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt, the Miami Art Centre in Miami, the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and the ARoS Kunstmuseum in Aarhus, Denmark. She is currently represented by Luhring Augustine Gallery in New York and Gallery Koyanagi in Tokyo.

ABOUT THE CLARK

The Clark Art Institute, located in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, is one of a small number of institutions globally that is both an art museum and a center for research, critical discussion, and higher education in the visual arts. Opened in 1955, the Clark houses exceptional European and American paintings and sculpture, extensive collections of master prints and drawings, English silver, and early photography. Acting as convener through its Research and Academic Program, the Clark gathers an international community of scholars to participate in a lively program

of conferences, colloquia, and workshops on topics of vital importance to the visual arts. The Clark library, consisting of more than 275,000 volumes, is one of the nation's premier art history libraries. The Clark also houses and co-sponsors the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art.

The Clark, which has a three-star rating in the Michelin Green Guide, is located at 225 South Street in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Galleries are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm; open daily in July and August. Admission is \$20; free year-round for Clark members, children 18 and younger, and students with valid ID. Free admission is available through several programs, including First Sundays Free; a local library pass program; EBT Card to Culture; and Blue Star Museums. For more information on these programs and more, visit clarkart.edu or call 413 458 2303.

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