

PHOTO, MEDIA AND DIGITAL ART

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PREFIX HOSTS LATEST INSTALLATION BY CHRIS MARKER

Beginning January 27th, **Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art** is honoured to present the Canadian premiere of *The Hollow Men* (2005), the latest work by iconic French media artist **Chris Marker**. A 19-minute looped video installation on eight monitors, *The Hollow Men* is the prelude to Marker's inspired plan to collect a multi-segment history of the 20th century under the title *Owls at Noon*. Prefix is pleased to host the work in Toronto following its recent inauguration at the Museum of Modern Art in New York under the curatorship of **Mary Lea Bandy** and **Colin MacCabe**. This exhibition is curated by **Sarah Robayo Sheridan**.

For more than 50 years, under various guises and pseudonyms, **Chris Marker** has considered topics as intricate as the paradoxes of time, the selectiveness of memory and the weight of history. Gathering up minutiae often scorned by public accounts, Marker is our generous escort in a garden of forking paths, providing critical insight and interpretation of disparate ephemera. In the case of *The Hollow Men*, the point of departure is T.S. Eliot's 1925 poem of the same name. Marker has selected Eliot's solemn expression of the devastation wrought by the First World War to signify the opening of the 20th century. Insinuating his own contemporary hold on Eliot's vision, Marker cultivates a multivalent terrain of recollections co-mingled with projections of the future, recalling that the First World War was once recorded as the war to end all wars. Direct sampling of Eliot's words combined with Marker's expert sortation of visual data lend the work the character of an imaginary museum whose innovative chief curator prefers the inconstancy of human perception and the illumination of perpetually sifting memories over the conservation of discrete objects.

About the installation, Marker muses: "Owls at noon, night birds in the day, things, objects, images that don't belong, and yet are there. Leaflets, postcards, stamps, graffiti, forgotten photographs, frames stolen from the continuous and senseless flow of TV stuff (what I'd call the Duchamp syndrome: once I've spotted 1/50th of a second that escaped everybody, including its author, this 1/50th of a second is mine). It's from that raw material, the petty cash of history, that I try to extract a subjective journey through the 20th century. Everybody agrees that the founding moment of that era, its mint, was the First World War, and that it was also the background on which T.S. Eliot wrote his beautiful and desperate poem 'The Hollow Men.' So the 'Prelude' to the journey will be a reflection upon that poem, mixed with some images gathered from the limbos of my memory."

Chris Marker was born in 1921 in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France. A pioneer in the use of every available media, he is an artist whose expression has crossed disciplines from journalism to cinema to photography to digital art. In 1953, he collaborated with Alain Resnais in the making of the documentary *Statues Die Also*, a critique of the consequences of French colonialism on African art. An innovator recognized for his development of the "cine-essay," a short selection of his films includes *La Jetée* (1962), *Le joli mai* (1963), *Grin Without a Cat* (1977), *Sans Soleil* (1982), *Détour*, *Ceausescu* (1990) and, most recently, *The Case of the Grinning Cat* (2004).

Prefix is pleased to celebrate the opening of *The Hollow Men* by **Chris Marker** on **Friday, January 27 from 7-10 PM** at **Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art**, located at **401 Richmond Street West, Suite 124, Toronto**. The curator and Colin MacCabe will be present. Admission is free. The exhibition continues until March 4, 2006.

Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art is a non-profit organization based in Toronto. Prefix fosters the appreciation and understanding of contemporary photographic, media and digital arts through exhibitions, publications and related activities.

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