

Michael Snow

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Michael Snow, CC (born December 10, 1929) is a Canadian artist working in painting, sculpture, video, films, photography, holography, drawing, books and music.

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Interior of the Eaton Centre showing one of Michael Snow's best known sculptures, called *Flightstop*, which depict Canada Geese in flight.

Life

Michael Snow was born in Toronto and studied at Upper Canada College and the Ontario College of Art. He had his first solo exhibition in 1957. Since then, his work has appeared at exhibitions across Europe, North America and South America. His works were included in the shows marking the reopening of both the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2000 and the MoMA in New York in 2005. In March 2006 his works were included in the Whitney Biennial.

Work

Films

Snow is considered one of the most influential experimental filmmakers and is the subject of retrospectives in many countries. In his 2002 Village Voice review of **Corpus Callosum*, J. Hoberman writes: “Rigorously predicated on irreducible cinematic facts, Snow's structuralist epics—*Wavelength* and *La Région Centrale*—

announced the imminent passing of the film era. Rich with new possibilities, **Corpus Callosum* heralds the advent of the next. Whatever it is, it cannot be too highly praised.” **Corpus Callosum* was screened at the Toronto, Berlin, Rotterdam, and the Los Angeles film festivals amongst others. In January 2003, Snow won the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, Douglas Edwards Independent Experimental Film/Video Award for **Corpus Callosum*. His numerous films have premiered in major film festivals all over the world. Five of his films have premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). In 2000, TIFF commissioned Snow with Atom Egoyan and David Cronenberg to make short films, *Preludes*, for the 25th Anniversary of the festival.

Music

Originally a professional jazz musician, Snow has a long-standing interest in improvised music, as indicated by the soundtrack to his film *New York Eye and Ear Control*. As a pianist, he has performed solo and with other musicians in North America, Europe and Japan. Snow performs regularly in Canada and internationally, often with the improvisational music ensemble CCMC and has released more than a half dozen albums since the mid-1970s. In 1987, Snow issued *The Last LP* (Art Metropole), which purported to be a documentary disc of the dying gasps of ethnic musical cultures from around the globe including Tibet, Syria, India, China, Brazil, Finland and elsewhere, with more thousands of words of pseudo-scholarly supplementary notes, but was, in fact, a series of multi-tracked recordings of Snow himself, who gave the joke away only in a single column of text in the disc's gatefold jacket, printed backwards and readable in a mirror. One track, purported to be a document of a coming-of-age ritual from Niger, is a pastiche of Whitney Houston's song "How Will I Know."

Other Media

Snow's works have been in Canadian pavilion at world fairs since his famous *Walking Women* sculpture was exhibited at Expo 67 in Montréal. His recent bookwork *BIOGRAPHIE of the Walking Woman / de la femme qui marche 1961-1967* (2004) was published in Brussels by La Lettre vole. It consists of images of the public appearances of his globally famous icon.

Snow was one of the four performers of the rarely performed Steve Reich piece *Pendulum Music* on May 27 1969 at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The other three were: Richard Serra, James Tenney and Bruce Nauman.

Anarchive2: Digital Snow describes Michael Snow as “one of the most significant artists in contemporary art and cinema of the past 50 years.” This 2002 DVD was initiated by Paris’ Centre Pompidou and was produced with the support of la foundation Daniel Langlois, Université de Paris, Heritage Canada, the Canada Council, Téléfilm Canada and Montreal’s Époxy. It is an encyclopedia of Snow's works across media, browsed in a manner inimitably and artfully created by Snow. Its 4,685 entries include film clips, sculpture, photographs, audio and musical clips, and interviews.

Retrospectives and Honours

In 1993 The Michael Snow Project, lasting several months, was a multivenue retrospective of Snow’s works in Toronto exhibited at



several public venues and at the Art Gallery of Ontario and The Power Plant. Concurrently his works were the subjects of four books published by Alfred A. Knopf Canada.

In 1981, he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada and was promoted to Companion in 2007 "for his contributions to international visual arts as one of Canada's greatest multidisciplinary contemporary artists"^[1]. He received the first Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts (2000) for cinema.

In 2004, the Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne awarded him an honorary doctorate. The last artist so awarded was Pablo Picasso.

Honorary degrees

Université de Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne (2004), Emily Carr Institute, Vancouver (2004) Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax (1990), University of Toronto (1999), University of Victoria (1997), Brock University (1975).

Academic Appointments

- Visiting Artist/Professor at MAPS (Master of Art in Public Sphere), Ecole Cantonale d'Art du Valais, Sierre, Switzerland (February 2005, January 2006)
- Visiting Artist/Professor at L'école Nationale Supérieure d'Art de Bourges, France. (December 2004, May 2005)
- Visiting Artist/Professor, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 2001
- Visiting Artist/Professor, le Fresnoy, Tourcoing France, 1997-8
- Visiting Professor, l'Ecole Nationale de la Photographie, Arles France, 1996
- Visiting Professor, Princeton University, 1988
- Professor of Advanced Film, Yale University, 1970
- CCMC artists in residence, La Chartreuse, Avignon Festival, France, 1981

Other Awards

- Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal, 2002
- Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, 2000
- Chevalier de l'ordre des arts et des lettres, France, 1995
- Guggenheim Fellowship, 1972

Major Installations

- "The Windows Suite" is a permanent installation comprised of 32 varied sequences of images, which are presented on 65" plasma screens in 7 of the windows of the façade of the Toronto Pantages Hotel and



In the background you can see multiple stadium sculptures on the Eastern side of Skydome.

Spa and related condo buildings facing Victoria Street in central Toronto. Some of these sequences one might possibly glimpse in the windows of a sophisticated hotel, condo, spa and parking garage building, but many sequences are “impossible,” e.g. in one sequence fish swim from window to window. This installation was opened as an official event of the Toronto International Film Festival September 2006.

- *Flightstop* - Toronto Eaton Centre a collection of life sized Canada geese in flight hanging over the main section of the mall.
- *The Audience* - SkyDome (now Rogers Centre in Toronto) is a collection of larger than life depictions of fans located above the northeast and northwest entrances. Painted gold, the sculptures show fans in various acts of celebration.

Filmography

- *A to Z* (1956)
- *New York Eye and Ear Control* (1964)
- *Short Shave* (1965)
- *Wavelength* (1966)
- *Standard Time* (1967)
- *One Second in Montreal* (1969)
- *Dripping Water* (with Joyce Wieland, 1969)
- <----> (Back and Forth) (1969)
- *Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film* (1970)
- *La Région centrale* (1971)
- *Two Sides to Every Story* (double 16mm installation, 1974)
- *'Rameau's Nephew' by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen* (1974)
- *Breakfast (Table Top Dolly)* (1976)
- *Presents* (1981)
- *So Is This* (1982)
- *Seated Figures* (1988)
- *See You Later* (1990)
- *To Lavoisier, Who Died in the Reign of Terror* (1991)
- *Prelude* (2000)
- *The Living Room* (2000)
- **Corpus Callosum* (2002)
- *WVLNT* ("Wavelength For Those Who Don't Have the Time") (2003)
- *SSHTOORRTY* (2005)



The Audience sculpture adorning the facade on the northwest corner of Rogers Centre stadium in Toronto. This photo only shows half of the art installation. The other set is located above the north east corner of the building, and is of similar size and configuration.

References

1. ^ Governor General Announces New Appointments to the Order of Canada (<http://www.gg.ca/media/doc.asp?lang=e&DocID=5252>) . *Governor General of Canada*.

External links

- Michael Snow's own autobiography (http://www.mayastendhalgallery.com/vital_signs_bios_snow.html)

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