

**Daniel Caux &
Michael Snow**

Do You Know Snow?

**An exhibition conceived by
Jonathan Pouthier and
Pierre Leguillon.**

**November 1, 2023 to
January 7, 2024**

**Opening
Tuesday October 31, 2023
6 pm**



Image: *DO YOU KNOW SNOW?*, 1978, DIAPORAMA COPYRIGHT DANIEL CAUX

**Centre
d'Art
Contemporain
Genève**

“I am not a scientist. Not having ‘ends,’ ‘goals,’ or utility, I react to this ‘vague desire to codify’ to the extent that I observe this ‘how one thing leads to another.’ Without a system, I am a system. Without a general conclusion? Yes, what I observe exists in my relationship to my works.”

— Michael Snow, excerpt from the article “Passage,” published in *Artforum*, September 1971.

A tribute to the Canadian artist and filmmaker Michael Snow (1928–2023), who died earlier this year, the exhibition *Do You Know Snow?* offers a new look at the work of a major 20th-century artist. Created from a slideshow thought to have been lost since it was last shown in 1978, the exhibition invites visitors to reflect on the nature of the work of art and the document. Combining experimental conceptual and informative practices, this immersive multimedia presentation (text, sound, image) explores the future of works of art in the era of dematerialized media.

Michael Snow presented his first solo exhibition in France at the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 1978. Centered essentially on cinematographic, photographic and sound works, “Michael Snow : Sept films et Plus Tard” emphasized the multidisciplinary nature of his production, as well as his fondness for exploring the permeability between media and insistently questioning the nature of images. Co-organized with the National Gallery of Canada, the exhibition went on to tour Europe, including a showing in Switzerland at the Kunst Museum in Lucerne in 1979, before returning to Canada to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts the same year. A tireless experimenter, Michael Snow always played on retrospection, unhesitatingly producing new works based on his previous production. His interest in transfer or translation from one medium to another lay at the root of several works that allowed him to develop his research into the plastic and conceptual potential inherent in the reproducibility of images. As early as 1970, when he was preparing his first solo show at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Snow produced a set of works – *A Survey, Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film* and *A Casing Shelved* – whose nature and formats would strongly influence how he thought about the circulation of his works. For Snow, each retrospective gesture – or endeavor – resulted in the creation of increasingly complex works, which in turn generated the possibility of a revitalized exhibition space, a ‘Chinese box,’ to use a term dear to the artist, in which the work and its reproduction, the image and its commentary, become conflated.

In tandem with his Paris show, Michael Snow accepted an invitation from Daniel Caux (1940–2008), a French musicologist and the founder of Radio France’s “Ateliers de la Création Radiophonique,” to take part in the production of the program *Do You Know Michael Snow?*, which was broadcast in France on September 29, 1978, a little over two months before the exhibition at the Centre Pompidou opened. Rather like a trailer for an upcoming event, Snow willingly assisted in the production of a radio account of his work. With contributions from the theorists and filmmakers Dominique Noguez, Claudine Eizykman, Guy Fihman and Chantal Akerman, and excerpts taken from Snow’s work and jazz interludes, the recording provides a unique experience of the artist’s work, shifting the focus from a visual perception to an aural one. Adapted by the producer and artist so it could be presented as part of

the exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, this aural retrospective, which had been supplemented by a slideshow of some 100 images, revealed Snow's conceptual and aesthetic concerns, as well as didactic experiments he was involved with at the time.

Long thought to have been lost, this missing facet of the 1978 exhibition has been recreated in the Project Space of the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, and is shown together with a copy of the original exhibition catalog, found on sale at the La Dispersion bookshop next to the Centre. This copy had belonged to Pascal Doury (1956–2001), a French illustrator and artist who collected images, as well as numerous books that he larded with other images and documents. He did so with this catalog, in which he notably included an invitation to the retrospective "Michael Snow, Panoramique" held in 2000 at the Centre pour l'image contemporaine Saint-Gervais Genève and the MAMCO. These three exhibitions, 22 and 23 years apart, are brought together by a multiple object – a catalog printed in several hundred copies – which, as a result of these operations, has regained its uniqueness. Drawing on some of the aesthetic and conceptual approaches initiated by Michael Snow, "Do You Know Snow?" explores the fine line between a work of art and a document in an immersive, multimedia presentation in which the written word, image and sound invite us to reconsider our relationship to the work, but also to screens.

An exhibition developed by Jonathan Pouthier and Pierre Leguillon. Graphic design by Roch Deniau.

This exhibition has been organized as part of "Zone grise de l'original (des bifaces aux NFT)," a research project directed by Pierre Leguillon (HEAD – Geneva, HES-SO), 2022–24. This project is supported by the HEAD – Geneva Art and Design Research Institute and the HES-SO Strategic Fund.

We extend our thanks to Jacqueline Caux and Peggy Gale for their trust throughout the development of this exhibition. We are also grateful to Amélie Boulin and Adélaïde Quenson, who have helped to bring this project to fruition, and to the FMAC and MAMCO for opening their archives to us.

Biographies

Michael Snow (1928–2023) is considered a major figure in contemporary Canadian art since the postwar period, and one of the great experimental filmmakers. Wide-ranging and multidisciplinary, his work explores the possibilities inherent in different media and genres, and embraces film, video, painting, sculpture, photography, writing, and music. Snow taught in universities across the world and presented his work on many occasions in solo and group exhibitions, such as the XXV Venice Biennale; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Kunstmuseum, Lucerne; Documenta 6, Kassel; Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo; MoMA PS1 (NY, 2009); Whitney Biennial (NY, 2006); the MAC Montreal; among others. His work has received prestigious awards and been the subject of numerous retrospectives.

Pierre Leguillon (b. 1969, Nogent-sur-Marne) is a multifaceted artist who works primarily on the production and reproduction of images, of which he has a large collection now assembled in his Brussels-based Musée des Erreurs. After training in the Plastic Arts at the University of Paris 1–Panthéon-Sorbonne, he began his career as an editor and art critic, before developing medium-format slideshows of photographs from exhibitions and documents. He has produced many artists' books, including *Ads* (Triangle Books, Brussels, 2019), which won the Bob Calle Artist's Book Prize in 2021, and more recently *The Barefoot Promise* (Triangle Books, Brussels, 2022) about foot fetishism in cinema. He was a resident at the Villa Médicis in Rome in 2003 and his work has been exhibited at the Louvre (Paris, 2009), MAMCO (Geneva, 2010), Moderna Museet (Malmö, 2010), Wiels (Brussels, 2015), the Fondation d'entreprise Ricard (Paris, 2019) and the Frye Museum (Seattle, 2019), among others. He teaches at HEAD – Geneva, where he is in charge of the research project “Zone grise de l'original.”

Jonathan Pouthier has been head of programming at the Centre Pompidou's film collection department since 2012. He has organized several exhibitions of contemporary artists who work with moving images, including “Ericka Beckman” (KANAL–Centre Pompidou, Brussels, 2019), “Jean Pierre Bertrand, Diamon'd” (Centre Pompidou, 2019), “Le reste est ombre. Pedro Costa, Rui Chafes and Paulo Nozolino” (Centre Pompidou, 2022), and more recently “Rosa Barba, Hear, There, Where the Echoes Are” (Centre Pompidou, 2023). He is the author of the recently published book “David Claerbout. The Silence of the Lens” (Éditions Hannibal Books, 2022).

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