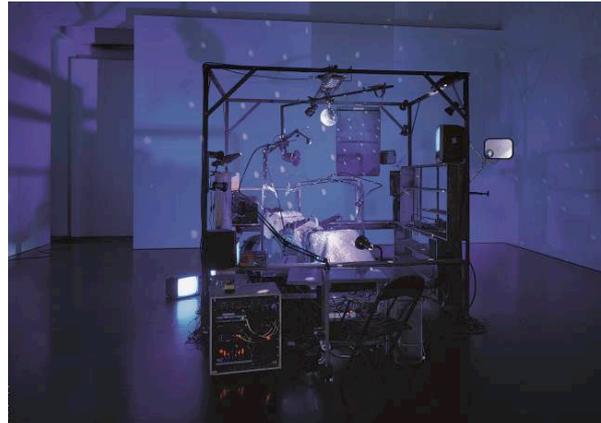


PRESS RELEASE

JANET CARDIFF AND GEORGE BURES MILLER *SOMETHING STRANGE THIS WAY*

29 NOVEMBER 2014 – 19 APRIL 2015



ARoS Aarhus Art Museum is proud to present *SOMETHING STRANGE THIS WAY*; a presentation of six spectacular multimedia installations by the internationally renowned Canadian artist duo Janet Cardiff (b. 1957) and George Bures Miller (b. 1960).

The majority of those interested in art will know Cardiff and Miller as sound artists. Many of us will have experienced, or heard about, their so-called 'walks' with Cardiff's intimate and thoughtful voice guiding us through public spaces. However, though sound is prominent and still constitutes the key element in Cardiff and Miller's works, they also work within many other kinds of media. Since the mid-1990s they have created a number of large, interactive and spectacular installations featuring sound, music, narrative, found objects as well as compelling light effects. These are the kinds of art works that form the core of the exhibition *Something Strange This Way* at AROS.

The title of the exhibition *Something Strange This Way* refers to mysterious places, amusement parks and museums where strange and bizarre forces are at play. Like a large number of Cardiff and Miller's works the exhibition plays on our expectations; they provoke our curiosity and seduce us, before twisting and revealing a new dimension.

PLAYING TO ALL THE SENSES

Cardiff and Miller deliberately use effects from melodrama and from the entertainment industry. The bright and gaudy staging, the unexpected sequences of events, and the pulsating lights entice us like the rides in the amusement park. Their theatrical and carefully choreographed moods are accomplished through the use of sound, light, and special effects. They successfully simulate lightning, thunder and the passing of trains that make everything tremble. The artists manage to achieve this without making the works look like hollow glittering shells. On the contrary, even though it is the visual appearance of the installations that draws us to them in the first place, they contain substance, a myriad of literary, musical, historical and filmic references. They make up narratives of longing and desire, of loss and love. The artists combine them with musical fragments taken from opera, rock and burlesque folk music composed by either themselves or others, with mechanized objects and instrumental animation throughout.

SPECTACULAR WORKS WITH A TWIST

The Carnie (2010) is a special kind of merry-go-round with rock music and discordant sounds. The interactive sound installation *Cabinet of Curiousness* (2010) represents an old card catalogue where we can pull out the drawers and listen to the various audio tracks installed in it. We can decide whether we want to listen to one sound track at a time or to several at once, this way creating our own cacophony of sound. In the work *Opera for a Small Room* (2005) we are immersed in a lonely opera lover's melancholy world. We can look into it through the big window at the end of the crate containing the work. There are old vinyl records everywhere, lying about on shelves and tables together with various record players, a lot of knick-knacks and old speakers. In this work Cardiff and Miller present us with a rock opera. We listen to music, particularly opera, to the sound of a passing train and to the man who talks about the woman he loved and lost, and who exploits the music to transport himself to cities far away that can offer opera and other stimulating cultural experiences. In *Storm Room* (2009), which from the inside resembles a derelict Japanese dentist's office, we experience a raging storm. *The Killing Machine* (2007), assigns us the role of executioner, but only if we decide to press the big red button plainly visible in front of the installation. Once you hit the button, there is no way back. *The Carnie* (2010) and *Storm Room* (2009) will be shown for the first time in Europe.

HEAVENLY SOUND

One of the most celebrated pieces of the exhibition *Something Strange This Way* is Cardiff's sound installation *The Forty Part Motet* (2001). The work is a reinterpretation of a moving choir piece from 1573 entitled *Spem in alium nunquam habui (I have never put my hope in any other)*, which was originally composed by the English Renaissance composer Thomas Tallis.

The soothing sound, emanating from forty speakers, greets us as we leave the dark labyrinthine of the exhibition and enter into the long, almost sacral foyer-space. The speakers are placed on stands in a circle on the floor. Streaming out of each speaker the forty choir voices range from low bass voices to high sopranos, exactly as in Tallis' original score. Contrary to a classical choir concert, where the choir performs on a stage in front of us, we are here free to move around among the voices. We can stop and listen to each individual voice, or we can position ourselves in the middle and listen to the whole choir at once. The experience is overwhelming. Finally, when the music fades away, we are left with an "intermission" where we can listen to the choir members speak about the banalities of their day intensifying the sense that each speaker is imbued with humanity.

Cardiff and Miller love surprises, complex feelings and open narratives. In the exhibition *Something Strange this Way* they take us on an unusual and wonderful journey through several dimensions in time, into a series of mental states, into the intellectual worlds of their fictitious characters, to the "strangest" places; the home of an opera lover, an abandoned dentist's office or an unusual amusement park.

The exhibition JANET CARDIFF & GEORGE BURES MILLER – SOMETHING STRANGE THIS WAY will run from 29 November 2014 – 19 April 2015 in the special exhibition gallery and the foyer on level 1.

The exhibition has received financial support from:



CATALOGUE

In connection with the exhibition and in collaboration with Hatje Cantz ARoS is publishing an art book featuring snapshots, old illustrations, encyclopedic texts and narratives that describe Cardiff and Miller's at once postmodern, ominous and playful universe. The book includes a foreword by director Erlend Høyersten, an introductory article by curator Maria Kappel Blegvad, an encyclopedic section with artist statements by Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller, and texts by Mieke Bal, Michael Turner, Michael Eigtved, Maria Kappel Blegvad, Robyn Moody, Mia Rose Brooks, Zev Tiefenbach, Nynne Martinusen and Ellen Skeel Langvold, as well as the short story "The Sound Machine" by Roald Dahl. (200 pages, 118 illustrations, 39 EUR)

Photos of exhibited works may be downloaded free of charge at www.aros.dk/presse indicating photographer's name. To download write Username: 123456, code: 123.

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ARoS Aarhus Art Museum is an international house of images and cultural experiences for children and adults alike. With a total of 17,700 square metres spread over nine floors, ARoS is one of the largest art museums in northern Europe. On an annual basis, ARoS arranges four major exhibitions with an international flavour, as well as four or five smaller exhibitions featuring contemporary or classical art. On the roof of the building, visitors may experience the permanent artwork Your Rainbow Panorama by the Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson.

WHO'S WHO

JANET CARDIFF

- **Born** 1957 in Brussels, Ontario, Canada
- **Graduated** from the University of Alberta in Edmonton in 1983, where she studied printmaking.

GEORGE BURES MILLER

- **Born** 1960 in Vegreville, Alberta, Canada.
- **Attended:** University of Alberta in Edmonton from 1980-1983. He also attended the Ontario College of Art, where he studied painting.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- In 1995 Cardiff and Miller created the installation *Dark Pool*, which was the duo's first official collaborative work. However, they have always helped one another ever since they first met in 1981. They were married in 1983.
- Janet Cardiff started her own walks in 1991. In the beginning they were recorded on a Walkman. Nowadays they are played on an iPod and include both sound and video. Since the creation of the *Ghost Machine*, which Cardiff and Miller co-produced for the Hebbel Theater in Berlin in 2005, they have produced their walks jointly. Since the mid-1990s they have collaborated to create a number of large, spectacular and immersive installations in which sound, music, narrative, found objects and evocative lighting combine to engage the viewer.
- The artist duo lives and works on their farm in Grindrod, British Columbia in Western Canada. At their "Grindrod Studio" they create their sound art and their intricate multimedia installations.
- **Recent exhibitions** include: Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Akademie der Künste, Berlin; Gallery Luhring Augustine, New York; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Modern Art Oxford, Oxford; The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; Miami Art Museum, Miami; Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; and Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt. They were represented with two new works at dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel. Their works have also been shown at: MoMA, New York; P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, New York; Tate Modern, London; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SF MOMA); Artangel, London; Public Art Fund, New York; Benesse Art Site Naoshima, Japan and Inhotim Contemporary Art, Brazil.
- Cardiff and Miller represented Canada at the 2001 Venice Biennale. On this occasion they received the Special Award of the Biennale and the 4th Benesse Prize. The artist duo furthermore received the Hnatyshyn Foundation Visual Arts Award in 2008, and in 2011 they were awarded the Käthe Kollwitz Prize by the Akademie der Künste.