

WILLIAM ANASTASI

DOVE BRADSHAW

JOHN CAGE

TOM MARIONI

ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG

MARK TOBEY

December 8, 1990 – January 19, 1991

Opening December 8, 1990, 4-6 pm

SANDRA GERING

GALLERY · 14 WEST 1TH STREET · NEW YORK · NY · 10011 · 212-3532633 voice · 212-533-0843 fax

...imitating nature in her manner of operation...

John Cage

John Cage has been conversing with Richard Kostelanetz, in person as well as in print, for a quarter-century now; for this preface Kostelanetz interviewed John Cage (Nisma Zaman, an undergraduate at Ithaca College transcribed).

What word would you use to characterize the artists in this show?

Well, the word I would use, or the word I have used, is “non-intention.” That’s specifically what I would say. Bill Anastasi likes the word “dumb.” I don’t know what Dove Bradshaw says about her work, but of late she’s involved with things where the material itself is involved in physical change over which she has no control.

Which is another kind of “dumbness” or “blindness.”

It’s acceptance of the material, and the material is in flux. Tom Marioni makes actions, accepting the results of actions that are not in themselves produced with graphic intent. You might call it contingency, where he does the action and the drawing results from the action, but something else as well could result.

Doesn’t that resemble Surrealism automatism?

No, not quite that. It’s not psychological; it’s physical.

Mark Tobey was also involved in activities in which the mind was short-circuited, gotten out of the way. One of his ways of teaching was to put paper on the wall, have the students look at a still-life that he had made. When they were satisfied they could draw it from memory, he had them go and put their noses and their toes both in touch with the wall, and in that position, never losing touch, to draw what they had seen. And they of course couldn’t do it. So they suddenly became modern artists; the mind was no longer in a position to control. And he worked with all kinds of materials, and many things, in order to arrive at results that weren’t in his mind.

Is there more to say about non-intentionality in Tobey?

Not that I know. He was very aware of the work as something to look at.

In Conversing with Cage is reprinted your marvelous anecdote about walking with him.

Walking along, yes, so that everything that we see he would be able to see in detail – all the changes, particularly the visual one, whether they’re in the distance or whether they’re close by.

How is your own visual art reflective of non-intention?

Well, my introduction of my Harvard book (I-IV, Harvard Univ. Press, 1990) is all about that.

But we have to get reprint permission to use that.

Well you can make it up.

Anastasi?

We play chess everyday. We're going to play today, and he'll either drive down or he'll take the subway. If he comes down the subway, he'll bring headphones without music, and papers, and a board to draw on, and pencils and so forth; and he'll make a drawing with his eyes closed, and his arms responding to the movement of the subway car.

How big are they?"

They're convenient for drawing on his lap.

He has done other work reflective of non-intention?

Oh, yes. Some of it is close to Tobey in that his face is close to the wall, or the surface on which he's drawing, so that he can't really see what he's doing.

Doesn't this relate to what Jackson Pollock did? Doesn't the physical aspect of what he's doing echo painting in general?

Pollock is a curious case, because he doesn't have an interest in what he sees in the way that Tobey has an interest in what he sees. I think of Pollock as being involved in gesture.

And Anastasi is not making gestures as much as extending, or representing, the subway's gestures.

Yes.

His arm responding to extrinsic forces, which Pollock would never allow.

No. And Pollock controlled the color in a way that Tobey would never dream of controlling the color, simply by putting it in a pitcher and pouring it out, you see, so that the white never changes, whereas with Tobey every brushstroke would be with a different white.

Is that controlling color, or not controlling color?

It's giving great complexity to the surface, the kind of complexity we see when we look at anything. We see that it's not all flat.

Or uniform.

Whereas with Pollock it's uniform. And with Tobey and with Anastasi it's not uniform.

Is there more to say about Tom Marioni?

Well, he draws until the pencil, or whatnot he's using wears out. And so, that kind of steady movement makes a sound.

Is this a performance?

Yes, he is a performance artist, so that his performances have graphic work and acoustic work as side products. Klaus Schöning of Westdeutscher Rundfunk is going to give a Horspiel (ear-play) that will be made up of the sounds that result from Marioni's performances.

Dove Bradshaw?

Well, I mentioned before her involvement with materials that are in flux. Some of the more recent ones are birds, and birds of course fly and have eggs, doing various things, and she thinks of the life of the birds and their activities as her work.

How does she incorporate them into her work?

By using birds as her materials.

As her subject?

Not her subject, but her materials. She would get two birds and put them in the gallery, and give them a place.

Are those live birds?

Yes. To sit on a bicycle wheel. For instance, there will be two birds. The question is are they going to make love and are they going to have eggs? What's going to happen?

Is there more to know about Dove's work on this theme?

I have one in which it is not birds but metal with an oxidizing agent that is in a state of flux, so that what is light or dark changes.

Is it an object?

It's like a drawing or painting.

This metal was oxidized so that it would be in flux.

Yes, though she sometimes makes works with fixed materials too.

Have others been doing that?

I think Robert Rauschenberg is an example of someone who works with flux.

When he used materials that were meant to disintegrate, such as works that no longer exist?

Yes. I think Jasper Johns is less open to change. He would be inclined, I think, if things changed, to correct them, to bring them back to the point where he had put them.

Have you seen the James Turrell installation at PS!?

No.

Do you know about it?

No.

It's in the tradition of your 4'33" except that he's framing the sky, which you watch change for one hour before and then an hour after sunset.

That sounds more like Alvin Lucier. I mean to say, it sounds more like a scientific experiment with a result that's fascinating, but it's alarmingly close to an object. In other words, what you're describing is something that separates it from the rest of the room, so that your way of looking is changed, and you could look anywhere.

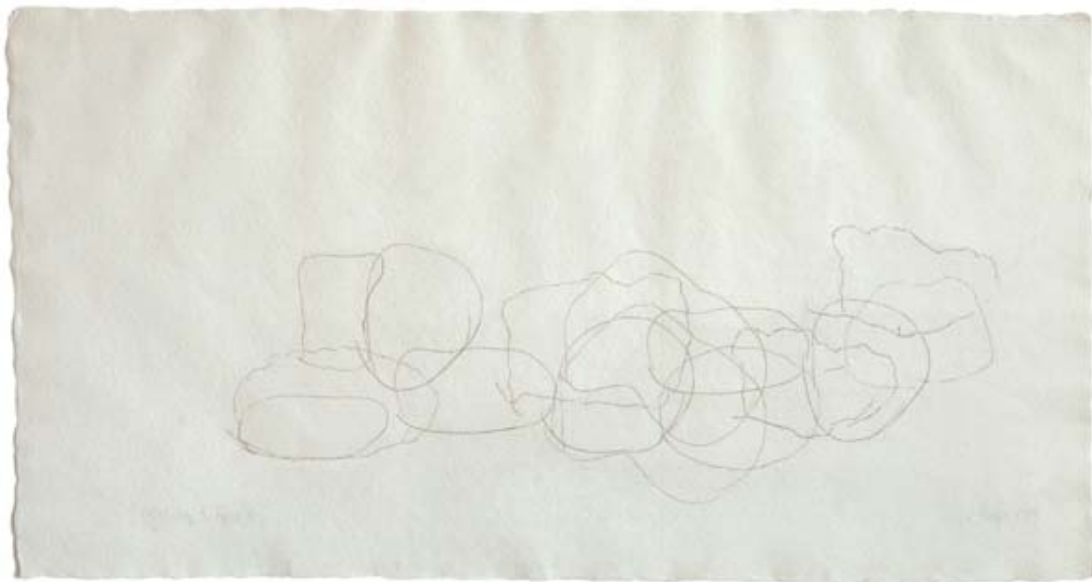
RICHARD KOSTELANETZ has published *Conversing with Cage* (Limelight) and *John Cage*, a documentary monograph that will be reissued in paperback next year. His essays *On Innovative Art(ist)s* will appear next year.



William Anastasi, *Without Title [Subway Drawing]*, 1990, pencil on paper, 11 ¼ x 7 inches



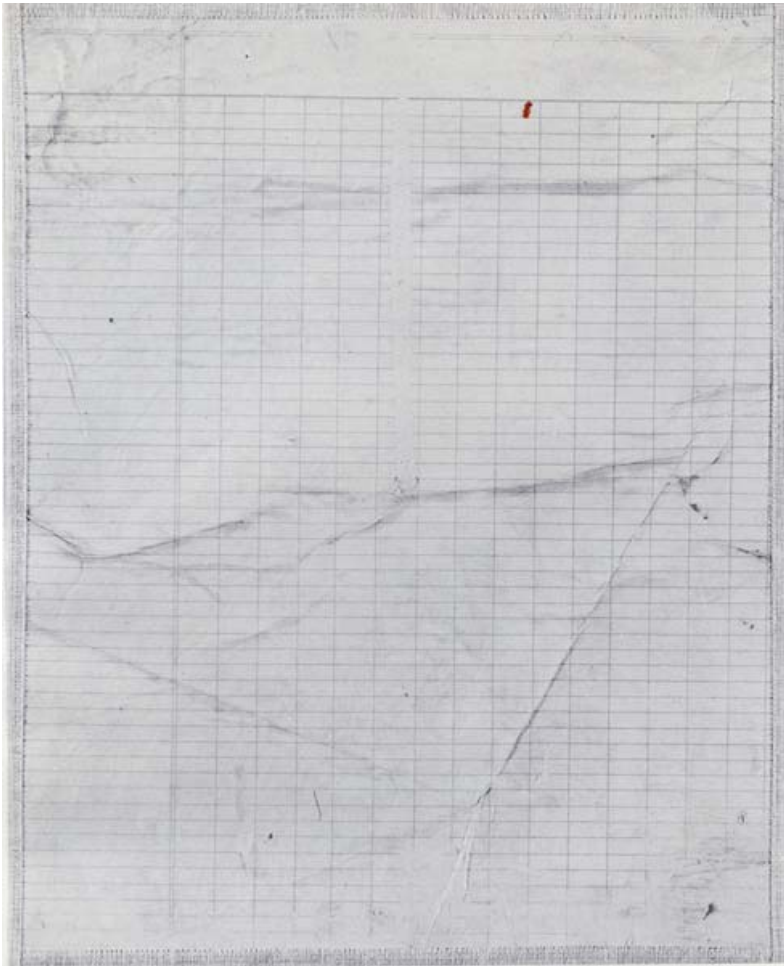
Dove Bradshaw, *Contingency*, 1990, silver, liver of sulfur, varnish on handmade paper, 32 x 22 inches



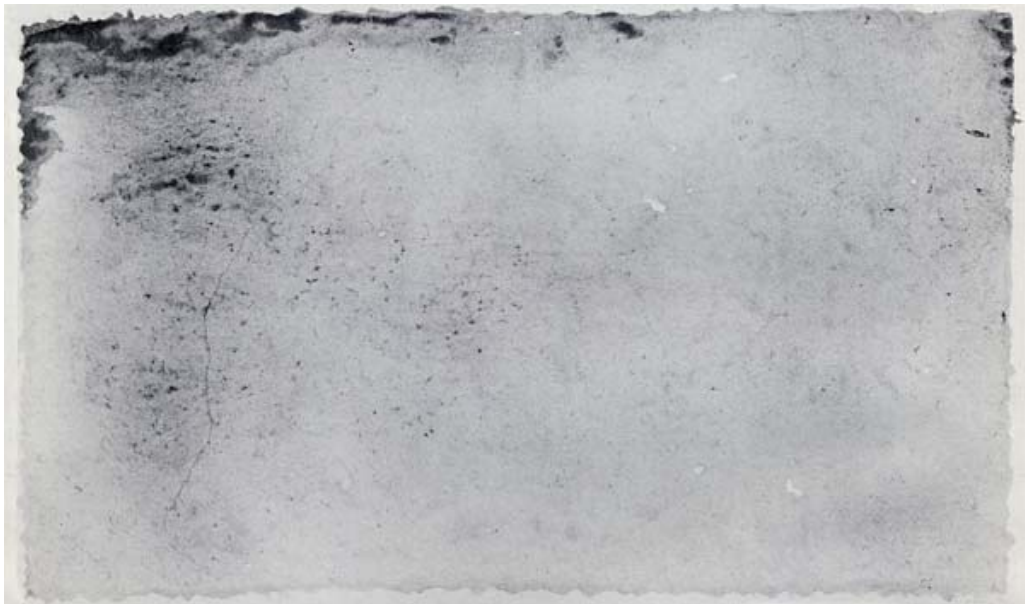
John Cage, *R 2* (where *R* = *Ryoanji*), 1984, pencil on paper, 19 x 10 1/8 inches



Tom Marioni, *Drumbrush Drawing*, 1972-1990, steel on sandpaper, 28 x 36 inches



Robert Rauschenberg, *Untitled*, not dated, paper on board, 10 x 8 ½ inches



Mark Tobey, *Untitled*, monotype, 1960, ink on paper, 12 ½ x 20 ½ inches

William Anastasi: *Sink*, 1963, rolled steel, water, 1 x 18 x 18 inches, collection of John Cage; *Without Title [blind drawing]*, 1990, graphite on paper, 50 x 40 inches collection of Edward Albee; two *Without Title [Subway Drawings]*, 1990, pencil on paper 11 ¼ x 7 inches, collection of the artist

Dove Bradshaw: *Without Title [Carbon Removal]*, 1981, carbon paper, 4 7/8 x 5 5/6 inches, collection of John Cage, *Without Title [Carbon Removal]*, 1990, carbon paper, 4 7/8 x 5 5/6 inches, collection of John Cage; *Riverstone*, 1990, graphite on paper, 10 x 19 inches, collection of John Cage; *Contingency*, 1990, silver, liver of sulfur, varnish gesso on paper, 32 x 22 inches, collection of the artist

John Cage: one print from *Signals*, 1978, copper plate etching, unique impression, 7 ¼ x 11 ¾ inches, collection of the artist; six *Where R = Ryoanji*, 1987-1990, pencil on paper, 9 x 19 inches, collection of William Anastasi and Dove Bradshaw

Tom Marioni: *Drawing a line as far as I can reach*, (finger) 1972-1990, pencil on paper, 3 ¼ x 2 ¼ inches, collection of John Cage; *Drawing a line as far as I can reach*, (hand), 1972-1990, pencil on paper, 11 x 8 inches; *Tree: drawing a line as far as I can reach*, (arm), 1972-1990, pencil on paper, 94 x 30 inches; *Drumbrush Drawing*, 1972 -1990, steel on sandpaper, 28 x 36 inches, collection of John Cage

Robert Rauschenberg: *Untitled*, not dated, paper on board, 10 x 8 ½ inches, collection of John Cage

Mark Tobey: *Untitled [monotype]*, 1960, ink on paper, 12 ¼ x 20 ½ inches, collection of John Cage; *Brown Composition*, 1960, tempura monotyped on crumbled and torn paper, 17 x 11 inches, collection of John Cage

John Cage's work is shown in cooperation with Crown Point Press and Magarete Roeder Gallery; Mark Tobey's work is shown in cooperation with Philippe Daverio Gallery, Milan

Photography: David Behl, Cosimo Di Leo Ricatto

Sandra Gering Gallery
14 W 11 Street
New York