

23 OCTOBER THROUGH 20 DECEMBER 2008

# CHARLES GAINES: MANIFESTOS

Charles Gaines will unveil his first new major project since the 2007 Venice Biennale.

**Manifestos** is a new ambitious suite of related drawings, musical scores and video installations in which Gaines examines the tradition of revolutionary manifestos and the way in which music is linked to revolutionary ideology.

Manifestos have been used by revolutionary groups to create awareness and solicit support for their movement. In this project Gaines applies the text of four revolutionary manifestos – the Black Panther Manifesto, the Perspective for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life Manifesto, the Socialist Congress Manifesto and the Zapatista Manifesto - to a system designed to translate the text into musical notation. The music is written by dissecting the text and scoring as musical notation any letter in the text that is used as a music notation, letters A-H. The use of the letter H represents the code used in early Baroque tradition for B-flat. All other letters and spaces between words are notated as rests. The original musical score that is realized is played and recorded by a piano quintet (one piano, two violins, a viola, and a cello). Through this systematic process, Gaines breaks down the manifesto's text and transforms it into a seemingly random, yet strikingly beautiful work of music. Much like John Cage's *Roratorio, an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake*, 1979, the elements derived from the systematic progression are not intended to work harmoniously, or relate to each other but are linked to the manifesto itself, conspicuous by its very absence.

Gaines may perhaps be best remembered for his recent participation in the Arsenale section of the 2007 Venice Biennale where he exhibited *Airplanecrash Clock*, 1997-2007. Rob Storr makes the following remark of Gaines' work:

*The dialectics of order, aberration and disorder define the basic dynamic of Gaines' multifarious practice and locate it at a point where abstraction meets representation. Anomalies serve as diagnostic tools for opening up systems to examine their latent tropes and their tendencies toward dysfunction. Some of the telltale signs Gaines scrutinizes occur within language or the structure of images: for instance, mapping the permutations of a tree's growth, diagramming a dance by choreographer Trisha Brown or noting the incidence of racially loaded terms in texts by Don DeLillo and James Joyce.*

Since his first solo exhibition in 1972, Gaines frequently exhibited with Leo Castelli and John Weber Galleries in New York. He is also the recipient of numerous awards, including most recently in 2007, a \$50,000 United States Artist Award. This will be Gaines' first gallery exhibition in New York since 2000.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10-6 pm.  
For more information please contact (212) 627-3680.

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CHARLES GAINES (b. 1944 Charleston, South Carolina)

MANIFESTOS is a multimedia project, conceived in 2007 and realized in 2008, based on four manifestos transposed into musical notations dictated by a conceptual system of chord and chord notation.

**Manifestos, 2007-2008**

The drawings:

Black Panther, (1966) 2008

Graphite on paper

62 ½ x 45 1/16 in.

**Zapatista**, (1993) 2008

Graphite on paper

75 5/16 x 45 in.

**Conscious Changes**, (1961) 2008

Graphite on paper

70 ½ x 44 ½ in.

**Socialist Congress**, (1917) 2008

Graphite on paper

70 ½ x 44 ½ in.

The videos:

**Manifestos**, 2008

Four single channel videos

Movement 1 Black Panther

Movement 2 Socialist Congress

Movement 3 Perspective for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life

Movement 4 Zapatista

Movement 5 Swarm

The musical score:

**The Consciousness Manifesto**

Original notation and chord sequence by Charles Gaines

Musical arrangement by Sean Griffin for Quintet

The equipment:

LG LCD HDTV (37LG30) (Four)

Pioneer DVD - 7400 players (Four)

Technovision Synchronizer (KPC2)

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KPC4DVD 4- Player Cable  
Onkyo amplification  
Four Monitor Stands

Notes:  
In Manifestos, Charles Gaines applies the text of four revolutionary manifestos to a system designed to translate the text into musical notation. The music is written by dissecting the text and scoring as musical notation any letter in the text that is used as a music notation, letters A-H. The use of the letter H represents the code used in early Baroque tradition for B-flat. All other letters and spaces between words are notated as rests. While the resulting composition does sound intentional, it is controlled only by the preconceived notation system which follows the compositional structure of language, producing the fluidity that the audience hears. Much like John Cage's Roratorio, an Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake, 1979, the elements derived from the systematic progression are not intended to work harmoniously, or relate to each other but are linked to the manifesto itself, conspicuous by its very absence.

The catalyst for the video works and musical score are four unique graphite drawings that are transcriptions of the complete text of each manifesto onto sheet music. No changes or alterations were made to the original manifestos. These manifestos were then systematically translated into musical notations as written by Charles Gaines, and arranged for quintet by a musical collaborator, Sean Griffin. The resulting musical piece, The Consciousness Manifesto, is played in syncopation with the video monitors scrolling thru the four original manifestos. Each manifesto has its own dedicated monitor.

Gaines transformed the manifesto texts into musical scores during a three part process. The resulting scores were performed and recorded in Los Angeles in September for the show:

#### FIRST

##### The Working Drawings for Manifesto

The artist drew by hand four pages of double musical staff, each sheet measuring 40" x 30".

It was his intention to transpose each of the four manifestos into musical notations for piano, one musical staff for the left hand, and one musical staff for the right hand. Onto each of these sheets the text of each manifesto was collaged underneath the double musical staff, and Charles made the systematic musical notations and chord notations by hand.

Working Drawing for Black Panther

Working Drawing for Zapatista

Working Drawing for Perspective for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life

Working Drawing for Socialist Congress

#### SECOND

##### Models for the Sheet Music

The "Working Drawings" had a random number of beats per measure, so using standard sheet music pages, Charles had to rewrite the entire musical score(s) to obtain a consistent four beats per measure.

Once this second step was completed which was written for piano, it was given to the collaborator, Sean Griffin who transposed the musical score digitally for performance by Quintet. This second set of hand notated musical scoring has no typography, and is notated as musical notations only.

Sheet Music for Black Panther

Sheet Music for Zapatista

Sheet Music for Perspective for Conscious Changes in Everyday Life

Sheet Music for Socialist Congress

#### THIRD

The Working Drawings are finally enlarged to double the size and are fully drawn, the musical notation and the Manifesto Text. It is this third step, these enlarged drawings, along with the four-channel video and musical performance, that are being sold as a complete installation.

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Notes on the musical score, by Charles Gaines. October, 2008:

The chords are determined by the musical notation of the top line. The chord is determined by the first letter that is used in musical notation of each word. So if the word is "are", the first usable letter is "A", so the chord is then an "A Major" chord. So, in this way, it is determined by the text.

There are four separate scores. They are independent of each other. Black Panther is the first score, Conscious Changes the second, Socialist Congress the third, and Zapatista the fourth. There is also a 5th score that combines the four separate score. That score is called "Swarm." It is performed by the musicians playing the melody lines of each of the 4 manifestos. It is random because those melodies are not changed from their original. Swarm is simply the combination of the four compositions without changing any of them.

The 5th part, Swarm, takes the melody notation from each of the four manifestos and combines them for the instruments to play in ensemble. A simplified example is this: I take the melody line (the top line with all the 8th notes and rests, not the bottom lines with the chords) from Black Panther and combine it with the other top lines (melody lines) of the other three manifestos. To understand this, it works this way. You take the first measure of Black Panther and write it out for the violin to play. Then you take the first measure of conscious changes and write it out for the second violin to play. Then take the first measure of Socialist and write it out for the cello to play, and the first measure of Zapatista and write it out for the viola to play. The time of all four scores is the same, 4/4 time. So you combine the four to play in ensemble so that the instruments play their individual scores, but since they play them together, it forms an ensemble. I simply did that with the entire music of each manifesto, not just one measure.

I don't invent, create or change anything in the music, I do create the system and its code. But the system does the rest.

I studied percussion from the age of 12 and played drums and tympani in my high school orchestra. I learned to play the double bass in college and played both percussion and double bass in my college orchestra. I was also trained as a jazz drummer, from 12 to 18, and played professionally until I went to graduate school. I learned music theory from my training as a musician. I also play piano, which I learned after graduating RIT. But my site reading for piano is fairly weak. I have written several musical pieces and performed and recorded them. But until now, I saw no relationship between my interest in music and my art.