

4.1.2016

PRESS RELEASE

**THE WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART ANNOUNCE THE WORLD
PREMIERE OF FEATURE FILM**

THE SILENT EYE

**FEATURING CECIL TAYLOR & MIN TANAKA
& DIRECTED BY
ACCLAIMED AUSTRALIAN FILMMAKER AND ARTIST
AMIEL COURTIN-WILSON.**

<http://whitney.org/Exhibitions/OpenPlanCecilTaylor>

THE SILENT EYE is the World Premiere of a new feature length performance film by Amiel Courtin-Wilson featuring Min Tanaka and Cecil Taylor. Shot in Cecil Taylor's home over three days in January 2016, the film is a highly intimate, impressionistic portrait of the unspoken rapport between two masters of their form.

Shot by Sundance award winning cinematographer Germain McMicking and featuring sublime slow motion cinematography of Cecil and Min at work together, the film plays out like a timeless, elegant conversation between the two men- at once meditative and highly moving.

The Robert D. Bielecki Foundation have just announced their generous support of the completion of the film and Robert had this to say about the project.

“Filmmaker Amiel Courtin-Wilson's *THE SILENT EYE* is a marvel of time expanded and contracted. He captures a journey between old friends filled with prescient reminiscence - a meditation in sound and movement between two masters catching up, rewinding, and spinning forward the way ocean currents undulate when kissed by the wind.”

Amiel is also thrilled to be working with the Robert D. Bielecki Foundation. “It is a humbling and deeply inspiring experience to be supported to create such a singular and specific film.”

Acclaimed director Amiel Courtin-Wilson's feature films have screened and won awards at Venice Film Festival (*HAIL*, 2011 *RUIN*, 2013) Cannes (*CICADA*, 2009) and Sundance (*CHASING BUDDHA*, 2000). Amiel is also a visual artist and recently received the prestigious career achievement and innovation Byron Kennedy Award in Australia- previous winners of this Award include Jane Campion and Baz Luhrmann.

THE SILENT EYE is also a forerunner to Amiel's upcoming sci-fi time travel biopic feature film about Cecil Taylor currently titled *THE CECIL TAYLOR PROJECT*.

Amiel has been shooting this science fiction portrait of Cecil for the last two years and is currently seeking finance to finish the film. As he says “Time travel is the perfect framing device to tell a highly entertaining, incendiary kaleidoscopic portrait of Cecil Taylor and his utterly formidable talents. The film's storyline spans millions of years and Cecil's music couldn't be more appropriate to score the beginning of the universe.”

For more information about the genesis of *THE CECIL TAYLOR PROJECT* read the following article written by Amiel Courtin-Wilson for Australia's The Monthly Magazine in 2015.

<https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2015/april/1427806800/amiel-courtin-wilson/cecil-taylor>

THE SILENT EYE screens twice on the 17th of April as part of the The Whitney Museum's 10-day Cecil Taylor retrospective “Open Plan: Cecil Taylor” organised by curator and curator of performance Jay Sanders and fellow curator Lawrence Kumpf from the 14th to the 24th of April.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/30/arts/music/a-cecil-taylor-retrospective-at-whitney-museum.html>

THE SILENT EYE

Directed and produced by Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Cinematographer: Germain McMicking

Editors: Alena Lodkina & Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Sound design and original score: Rosalind Hall

Line producer: Kate Laurie

Live performance sound engineer: Rosalind Hall

Special thanks: Rin Ishihara, Lawrence Kumpf, Jay Sanders, Adam Wilner, Gloria Jenkins, Emanuel Campbell

Duration: 70 min

SCREENING TIMES:

SUNDAY APRIL 17TH AT 12PM AND 4PM

(BOTH SCREENINGS WILL FEATURE A Q/A WITH AMIEL COURTIN-WILSON AND MIN TANAKA)

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BIOGRAPHIES

THE ROBERT D. BIELECKI FOUNDATION

The Robert D. Bielecki Foundation is committed to expanding the base of support for artists and arts organizations. Our grants aim to achieve a healthier *managed commons* by rebalancing the relationship between artists, presenters and audiences. Our decisions are guided by a simple, reciprocal question: What's our obligation to the art which nourishes us emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually?

CECIL TAYLOR

Cecil Taylor (b. 1929) is a towering, sometimes divisive figure within twentieth-century music. In the early 1960s, with fellow maverick artists Ornette Coleman, Albert Ayler and others, he revolutionized jazz by extending bebop into a radical terrain dubbed the "New Thing" or "free jazz"—the latter a term with political as well as aesthetic connotations given the social changes underway at the time in America. For Taylor, freedom meant a deep synthesis of the modern composers such as Béla Bartók and Igor Stravinsky that he encountered during his studies at the New England Conservatory of Music with the nuanced and original piano innovations of Thelonious Monk, Horace Silver, Bud Powell, and Duke Ellington, elaborated into an uncharted territory.

Taylor has extended the potential of jazz as an art form to include an exceptionally wide range of intellectual, conceptual, and spiritual expressions. The sheer speed and percussive attack of his piano playing, its extreme density of both ideas and notes, and his complete unlocking of pitch, harmony, rhythm, and tempo to exploit their vast multiplicities has for more than fifty years left some listeners baffled or overwhelmed and others ecstatically transfixed. Whether he is playing solo piano or leading one of his bands—which he often calls "Units" to underscore the structural, almost architectural nature of their improvisations—Taylor has remained an uncompromising musical innovator of the highest order. For him, music exists in a continuum that extends to all art forms, and his work is deeply informed by the artists he loves, whether musicians, dancers, architects, or poets. His expansive view of music has led him to write poetry himself (though rarely to publish it), and to branch out into dance and theater through his own performances and

by working with a remarkably broad range of collaborators including The Living Theater, Dianne McIntyre, Adrienne Kennedy, Mikhail Baryshnikov, Heather Watts, and Min Tanaka.

MIN TANAKA

Born in Tokyo in 1945, Min Tanaka is a pioneer within the vast landscape of dance. Since the early 1970's, he has been developing Body Weather research to explore the origin of dance through farming and dance work in a mountain village in Yamanashi in rural Japan.

Min Tanaka and his company have danced in theaters, museums, streets, fields, forests, gardens, deserts, rivers and oceans, and rooftops and basements around the world. Tanaka has collaborated with renowned artists from various fields— composers such as Luciano Berio, Werner Henze, Toshi Ichihyanagi, such as Cecil Taylor, Milford Graves, Derek Bailey, John Cale, Aki Takahashi and Felix Laiko, visual artists such as Giorgio Turcato, Karel Appel, Noriyuki Haraguchi and Richard Serra, writers such as Susan Sontag, Kenji Nakagami and Colin Wilson. He has been awarded Chevalier des arts et des lettres from France.

In addition to his own original solo and group work, Min Tanaka has been keen to revive important works of dance and created his version of “The Rite of Spring” with international groups dancers in Japan, France, Czech and Slovakia 1990-1992, and with Russian folk dancers in Moscow in 1997. He was appointed in 2003 as Master of the new dance department at the School of Dramatic Art in Moscow headed by Anatoly Vasiliev. With the dance company in Moscow he staged an original dance work “Goya—Guests from the Dark” which will tour in Europe in 2005.

The past few years have brought Min Tanaka many chances to be involved in projects around the globe, including: solo within the Yoko Ono retrospective exhibition in New York and MIT, Mass., choreography for a version of Werner Hentz's opera “Venus and Adonis” in Tokyo, an extensive tour in Europe and USA with series of works inspired by Goya's print work *Los Caprichos*. In March of 2004 created an original dance work “Towards Csontvari” for the Central Europe dance Theater in Budapest.

In 2002 he received the Best Supporting Actor's Award from the Japanese Academy Award for the film “Twilight Samurai”(directed by Yoji Yamada; nominated for 2003 US Academy Award for Foreign-Language Films) and is active also as a film actor.

Tanaka's performances have been critically praised in Japan and abroad, and today he is a highly acclaimed, influential dancer, choreographer, and actor. In 2006, Tanaka suspended his stage performances and shifted to a series of anonymous dances called *Locus Focus*, which took place in streets, parks, schools, fields and seashores in Japan, Indonesia, Spain and China.

AMIEL COURTIN-WILSON

At age 19, Amiel Courtin-Wilson's debut feature documentary, CHASING BUDDHA premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2000 and won many awards including best documentary at the IF Awards as well as Sydney International Film Festival.

Having directed over 20 short films and six feature length films, Amiel has also directed work and collaborated with Opera Australia, Chunky Move contemporary dance company and The Snuff Puppets Theatre Company.

His video installation work has toured internationally (I THOUGHT I KNEW BUT I WAS WRONG, 2004) and his films have screened at the National Gallery of Victoria, MONA in Tasmania, the Gallery of New South Wales and The Australian Centre for the Moving Image. Amiel has also lectured at UCLA with Peter Sellars, Yale, AFTRS and he is also a contributor to national and international film and art magazines and journals including most recently writing for the Monthly Magazine in 2015.

After forming the production entity Flood Projects in 2008, Amiel's feature documentary, BASTARDY won the Best Documentary Jury Prize at the 2009 Film Critics Circle of Australia Awards (FCCA), Best Documentary at the ATOM Awards, was released theatrically to huge critical acclaim across Australia and was nominated for three Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards.

Amiel's short film CICADA premiered at Cannes Film Festival as part of Directors' Fortnight in 2009 and won a slew of awards in Australia and internationally.

Amiel's prose has been published in the short story anthology Ten Years of Things that Didn't Kill Us (Paroxysm Press 2008), his public installations under the moniker of OXO OVO were published in the worldwide survey of street art "The Art of Rebellion" (Ginkgo Press, 2003) and his first solo exhibition of drawings was at Utopian Slumps Gallery in Melbourne in 2009. In 2012, Amiel collaborated with the Black Lung Theatre Company and a highly esteemed group of East Timorese artists and musicians on the production DOKU RAI which premiered at Darwin and Adelaide Arts Festivals in 2012 to great critical acclaim. Amiel's most recent solo exhibition of photography, drawings, field recordings and video work THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT at The Gertrude Contemporary Art Space received excellent reviews in late 2015.

<http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/in-the-galleries-20150922-gjrkw.html>

His dramatic feature film debut HAIL had its international premiere in competition at the Venice Film Festival (Orizzonti, 2011) and has screened at festivals around the world including Rotterdam, Istanbul, Karlovy Vary, and Munich. HAIL also won many awards internationally, was named best Australian film of 2012 by critic Adrian Martin, as well as the Age Critics Award for best Australian feature at the Melbourne International Film Festival.

Amiel's most recent feature film RUIN won the Special Jury Prize in the Orizzonti competition of the Venice Film Festival in 2013- the first Australian feature film in twenty years to win an award at Venice. Already screening at over twenty five film festivals, Ruin also won best Cinematography at the Tomorrow Film Festival in Moscow, Best Editing at the 56th Asian Pacific Film Festival, Best Film and Best Cinematography at the Sopot Film Festival in Poland and Best Direction at the Fantaspoa Film Festival in Brazil.

Amiel was also recently commissioned to create a short film for the 70th Anniversary of the Venice Film Festival as part of a project called "Venice Future Reloaded" alongside directors such as Bernardo Bertolucci, Catherine Breillat, Monte Hellman and Atom Egoyan.

In 2014 he received the AFTRS Creative Fellowship grant for an upcoming feature film about iconic jazz pianist Cecil Taylor. Amiel also recently exhibited a new video installation entitled "The Death of a King" at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney as part of a Yoko Ono retrospective.

Amiel is currently developing several feature film projects and a number of screen based installations including *THE SILENT EYE* a feature length performance film collaboration with Cecil Taylor and Min Tanaka for the Whitney Museum in 2016 and an upcoming international symposium of the moving image. Amiel will also be guest film curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Sydney in May and he is also creating an upcoming installation work about the free music instruments of composer Percy Grainger for the Ian Potter Museum in Melbourne in October.

Amiel is passionate about mentoring a range of emerging filmmakers and artists was recently awarded the mid career Byron Kennedy Award at the 4th AACTA Awards in Australia in recognition of his commitment to innovation in Australian cinema over the last two decades.