

Iannis Xenakis: *Composer, Architect, Visionary* January 15 – April 8, 2010

Main Gallery

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 14, 6–8:00 pm

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Iannis Xenakis, *Terretektorh, Distribution of Musicians*, 1965.
9 x 9 inches, Ink on paper.
Courtesy of the Iannis Xenakis Archives, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

New York, NY – The Drawing Center announces *Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary*, on view in the Main Gallery from January 15 – April 8, 2010. The exhibition will explore the fundamental role of drawing in the work of avant-garde composer Iannis Xenakis (1922–2001). One of the most important figures in late twentieth-century music, Xenakis originally trained as an engineer and was also known as an architect, developing iconic designs while working with Le Corbusier in the 1950s. This premiere presentation of Xenakis's visual work in North America will be comprised of samples of his pioneering graphic notation, architectural plans, compelling preparatory mathematical renderings, and pre-compositional sketches—in all, nearly 100 documents created between 1953 and 1984. *Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary* is co-curated by Xenakis scholar Sharon Kanach and critic Carey Lovelace and will travel to the Canadian Centre for Architecture (June 17 – October 17, 2010) and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (November 7, 2010 – February 13, 2011).

The exhibition will be accompanied by an ambitious schedule of public programs, concerts, and symposia around New York in collaboration with Electronic Music Foundation (EMF), 92YTribeca, Brooklyn Experimental Media Center at Polytechnic Institute of New York University, Diapason Gallery, the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), the New York University Percussion Ensemble, the Miller Theatre at Columbia University, and The Morgan Library & Museum. Programs will include a virtual-reality recreation of the programming within the Philips Pavilion, taking place at the Judson Church; a month-long sound installation recreating several of his works; a three-day symposium exploring the composer/architect's ongoing impact in music and design; performances of Xenakis's compositions; and a film program. The exhibition will coincide with the 2010 launch of The Xenakis Project of the Americas, under the auspices of the Barry S. Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation within the Graduate Center of City University of New York.

One of the world's most widely performed contemporary composers, Xenakis brought together architecture, sound, and advanced contemporary mathematics, moving away from traditional polyphony to create music comprised of masses of sound, shifting abstract aural gestures, linear permutation, and sonic pointillism. A groundbreaking interdisciplinary approach was also apparent in his architectural creations, such as the Philips Pavilion, an icon of twentieth-century architecture, which Xenakis created under Le Corbusier for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair. The design of the Philips Pavilion's volumetric structure was inspired by the glissandi—glides between pitches—that made up Xenakis's groundbreaking orchestral work *Metastaseis* (1953–54). The meticulously rendered works on view in the exhibition burst with kinetic energy and palpable sonic qualities, providing a singular insight into this extraordinary innovator's process of “thinking through the hand.” In addition, listening stations and preloaded iPods and will provide an intimate aural experience to accompany the works on view.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Iannis Xenakis was born in 1922 in Braïla, Romania, and died in 2001 in Paris, France. A Greek Resistance fighter in World War II, he fled to France as a political refugee in 1947. Having obtained an engineering degree from the Athens Polytechnic Institute, he collaborated with Le Corbusier in Paris from 1947–1959. From 1950–1953, while working with the noted architect, he studied composition at the Paris Conservatory under Olivier Messiaen. Xenakis's collaboration with Le Corbusier as an engineer and architect yielded innovative projects such as the Couvent de La Tourette (1955) and the Philips Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair (1958). Xenakis was also a speculative thinker, the author of such books as *Formalized Music: Thought and Mathematics in Composition*; *Music and Architecture*; and *Arts/Sciences: Alloys*. He was the founder (1965) and Director of the Center for Studies of Mathematical and Automated Music (CEMAMu) in Paris; Associate Professor, Electronic Music and founder and Director, Center for Mathematical and Automated Music (CMAM) at Indiana University in Bloomington (1967–72); researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) in Paris (1970); Gresham Professor of Music, City University London (1975); and Professor at the University of Paris (1972–89). Iannis Xenakis was awarded the Kyoto Prize in 1997, considered the Nobel Prize of Music, and the Polar Prize in 1999.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary is co-curated by Sharon Kanach and Carey Lovelace. Sharon Kanach, a Paris-based new music specialist who worked closely with Xenakis until the end of his life, has edited and translated several books of his writings. New York-based critic Carey

Lovelace is co-president emeritus of the International Association of Art Critics, U.S. Chapter, and a writer for *Art in America*, *Artforum*, and other publications. Lovelace, formerly an avant-garde composer, and Kanach both attended Xenakis's legendary class at the Université de Paris I, which he led from 1972 through 1989.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The Drawing Center will collaborate with New York City-based performing arts organizations, universities, and musicians to present performances of Xenakis's music, along with related public programs. Below is a list of events and programs.

<p>Iannis Xenakis: Interdisciplinary Connections Miller Theatre at Columbia University</p> <p>In advance of Miller Theatre's "Composer Portrait" of Iannis Xenakis on October 17, a consortium of artists and experts join together for a panel discussion focusing on the interdisciplinary connections between Xenakis's music and his work as a mathematician, architect, physicist, and political activist. Panelists include composer David Lang; Xenakis scholar Sharon Kanach; Mark Wigley, Dean of Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation; and Steven Schick, percussionist and conductor.</p>	<p>October 16, 2009 7pm</p>
<p>Concert by International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) Miller Theatre at Columbia University</p> <p>The International Contemporary Ensemble will present a "Composer Portrait" of Xenakis featuring 20 performers and percussion superstar Steven Schick, who will play and conduct <i>O-Mega</i>, Xenakis's final composition, together with other musical selections by Xenakis.</p>	<p>October 17, 2009 8pm</p>
<p>Opening Reception for <i>Iannis Xenakis: Composer, Architect, Visionary</i> The Drawing Center</p>	<p>January 14, 2010 6 – 8pm</p>
<p>Electronic Music Foundation: Poème Electronique Judson Church</p> <p>EMF hosts the "Virtual Electronic Poem", recreating a virtual-reality rendering of the multimedia spectacle included in Edgard Varèse's <i>Poème Electronique</i>, Xenakis's <i>Concret PH</i>, and images by Le Corbusier originally presented in the Philips Pavilion in 1958, which was designed by Iannis Xenakis for the Brussels World's Fair.</p>	<p>January 15, 2010 7pm</p>
<p>Exhibition walk-through with co-curators Sharon Kanach and Carey Lovelace The Drawing Center</p>	<p>January 16, 2010 2 – 4pm</p>

<p>A Xenakis Triple Gala Elebash Hall at the Graduate Center of City University of New York</p> <p>The inauguration of The Xenakis Project of the Americas, the latest member of the Barry S. Brook Center for Music Research and Documentation at CUNY, will be celebrated by the launch of the book, <i>Performing Xenakis</i> (Pendragon Press), as well as an all-Xenakis concert performed by some of the composer's "all-star" performers whose essays appear in the new publication, preceded by a lecture-presentation "Xenakis in America" by musicologist Charles Turner.</p>	<p>January 19, 2010 7:30pm</p>
<p><i>Xenakis: Past, Present, Future</i> Co-hosted by The Brooklyn Experimental Media Center and the Xenakis Project of the Americas</p> <p>This three-day colloquium will bring together Xenakis scholars, experts in computer-generated arts, musicians, architects, and artists from around the Americas and will include a multi-media concert by the BxmC team introducing its new <i>Xenakis 2.0</i>, a variable tempo sequencer inspired by the undulating glass panes developed by Xenakis under Le Corbusier's auspices for Chandigarh and La Tourette.</p>	<p>January 28, 29, 30, 2010</p>
<p>Concert by JACK Quartet The Morgan Library & Museum</p> <p>The dynamic JACK Quartet will perform the complete Xenakis String Quartets. A pre-concert talk will be held at 6:45pm. This concert is co-sponsored by the Electronic Music Foundation.</p>	<p>February 5, 2010 6:45 – 8:30pm</p>
<p>Daniel Teige performs Iannis Xenakis <i>Persepolis, Polytope de Cluny, Hibiki Hana Ma, Légende d'Eer, Bohor</i> Diapason Gallery</p> <p>Diapason Gallery will feature an overview of Xenakis's tape pieces in a multichannel environment. On February 6th, 2010, German sound artist Daniel Teige will perform an extended concert featuring a selection of these works adapted to the architecture and acoustics of Diapason Gallery. The result of this concert will be recorded and played as a sound installation in the gallery during the entire month of February (2/13, 2/20 & 2/27).</p>	<p>February 6, 2010 7pm & February 13, 20, 27 2 – 8pm</p>
<p>Iannis Xenakis: the Percussion Music - Concert and Panel Discussion Frederick Loewe Theatre – NYU</p> <p>A panel discussion with Q&A, followed by a performance of Xenakis compositions, <i>Rebonds A, Psappha, Okho, Persephassa</i>, and <i>Rebonds B</i>, will feature the NYU Percussion Ensemble, Jonathan Haas Conductor/Director. The panel will include the concert's performers and will be moderated by Jan Williams.</p>	<p>February 21, 2010 3 – 5:30pm</p>

<p><i>Xenakis and Japan</i> Judson Church</p> <p>A dance and music event featuring music by Iannis Xenakis; concept, choreography, stage design, and costumes by Luca Veggetti; and lighting design by Roderick Murray. The evening highlights Iannis Xenakis's lifelong interest in Japanese culture, particularly its music and theater.</p>	<p>February 28, 2010 8pm</p>
<p>SoHo Night Exhibition walk-through with co-curator Carey Lovelace The Drawing Center</p>	<p>March 4, 2010 6:30pm</p>
<p><i>French Transmission</i> Elebash Hall at the Graduate Center of City University of New York</p> <p>The American debut performance of the critically acclaimed Montreal-based ensemble <i>Transmission</i>, will feature works by Xenakis, Vivier, Aperghis, Murail, Boulez. A lecture-presentation on "Xenakis in Canada" by James Harley, author of <i>Xenakis: His Life in Music</i> will precede the concert. This evening is co-sponsored by the Xenakis Project of the Americas, EMF, and CALQ (Conseil des arts et lettres du Québec).</p>	<p>March 16, 2010 7pm</p>
<p>Film Screening 92YTribeca</p> <p>7pm: Opening remarks by Co-curator Carey Lovelace before a screening of <i>Something Rich and Strange</i> (1970, London (BBC), Mark Kidel), a documentary about the life of Iannis Xenakis, followed by <i>Orient-Occident: Images d'une Exposition</i> (1960, Greece, Enrico Fulchignoni), a film commissioned by UNESCO that uses the sounds of bowed boxes, bells and metal rods, sounds from the ionosphere, and a speed-altered excerpt from Xenakis's orchestral work <i>Pithoprakta</i>.</p> <p>9pm: <i>Charisma X</i> – Iannis Xenakis (2009, Greece, Efi Xirou), a documentary featuring interviews, musical compositions, architectural creations, and archive material, followed by <i>La Légende d'Eer</i> (1977-78, France, Gerard Pape), a powerful 7-channel electro-acoustic composition by Xenakis accompanied by a slideshow rendering of Xenakis's <i>Diatope</i>, an autonomous architectural structure created for the opening of the Pompidou Center in Paris.</p>	<p>March 24, 2010 7pm and 9pm</p>

PUBLICATIONS

To accompany the exhibition, The Drawing Center will produce a 200-page, full-color catalog. One of the first major publications on Xenakis to be produced in English, it will include essays by music writer Ivan Hewett, exhibition curators Carey Lovelace and Sharon Kanach, a text by his daughter, Mâkhi Xenakis, and nearly 100 illustrations, including Xenakis's musical scores, architectural blueprints, drawings, and studies, as well as archival photographs. The publication will be available in January 2010.

HOURS & ACCESSIBILITY

Gallery hours are Wednesday, 12pm – 6pm, Thursday, 12pm – 8pm, and Friday – Sunday, 12pm – 6pm (closed Mondays and Tuesdays). The Drawing Center is wheelchair accessible.

CREDITS

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This exhibition has been produced with the exceptional cooperation of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Drawing Center is the only not-for-profit fine arts institution in the country to focus solely on the exhibition of drawings, both historical and contemporary. It was established in 1977 to provide opportunities for emerging and under-recognized artists; to demonstrate the significance and diversity of drawings throughout history; and to stimulate public dialogue on issues of art and culture.