

Cerith Wyn Evans was born in Wales, U.K., in 1958. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Saint Martin's School of Art, London, in 1980, and a Master of Arts degree in film and video from the Royal College of Art, London, in 1984. Wyn Evans lives and works in London.

#### **Selected Recent Solo Exhibitions**

2002  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Institute of Visual Culture/Kings College Chapel, Cambridge, U.K.  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Galerie Neu, Berlin, Germany

2001  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Cologne, Germany  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Kunsthaus Glarus, Glarus, Switzerland  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Georg Kargl Gallery, Vienna, Austria

2000  
"ART NOW—Cerith Wyn Evans: Cleave 00," Tate Britain, London, U.K.

1999  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Asprey Jacques Contemporary Art Exhibitions, London, U.K.

1998  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Centre for Contemporary Art, Kitakyushu, Japan

1997  
"Cerith Wyn Evans," Deitch Projects, New York, NY

#### **Selected Recent Group Exhibitions and Film Screenings**

2002  
"Documenta 11," Kassel, Germany  
"Cardinales," Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo, Vigo, Spain  
"ForwArt," Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium  
"My Head Is on Fire but My Heart Is Full of Love," Charlottenborg Museum, Copenhagen, Denmark  
"Screen Memories," Contemporary Art Centre, Art Tower Mito, Tokyo, Japan  
"Iconoclash: Image Wars in Science, Religion and Art," ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany  
"It's Only Words," Mirror Gallery, London Institute, London, U.K.

2001  
"Yokohama International Triennale of Contemporary Art," Yokohama, Japan  
"Gymnasium," Bregenzer Kunstverein, Bregenz, Austria  
"How do you change...," Institute of Visual Culture, Cambridge, U.K.  
"Dedalic Convention," MAK, Vienna, Austria  
"The British Art Show 5," The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, Scotland, U.K.  
"The Greenhouse Effect," Serpentine Gallery, London, U.K.  
"Lost," Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, U.K.

1998  
"From the Corner of the Eye," Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

#### **Selected Recent Bibliography**

Bonami, Francesco and Hans Ulrich Obrist. *Dreams*. Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo Per L'Arte, Torino, 1999.

*Cerith Wyn Evans*. Centre for Contemporary Art, Kitakyushu, Japan, 1998.

*Close Echoes. Public Body and Artificial Space*. City Art Gallery, Prague; Kunsthalle Krems, 1998.

Farquharson, Alex. "Wales: Unauthorized Versions." *Welsh Days Festival*, organized by the British Council, Zagreb, 2001.

*From the Corner of the Eye*. Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1998.

Gillick, Liam, Andreas Spiegel and Mark Cousins. "Cerith Wyn Evans," *Afterall*, 2001, no. 4, pp. 82–101.

Gisbourne, Mark. "Cerith Wyn Evans." *Contemporary Visual Arts*, June–July 1999, no. 23.

Herbert, Martin. "Cerith Wyn Evans." *Time Out London*, April 1999, pp. 14–21.

Higgle, Jennifer. "Cerith Wyn Evans." *Frieze*, June–August 1999, no. 47, p. 95.

Huck, Brigitte. "Cerith Wyn Evans: Galerie Georg Kargl." *Springerin*, June–September 2001, vol. VII, no. 2.

*Material Culture*. Hayward Gallery, London, 1997.

"Meltdown at Modern Art Inc." *The Art Newspaper*, March 1999, no. 90.

Morley, Simon. *The Greenhouse Effect*. Serpentine Gallery, London (in collaboration with The Natural History Museum), 2000.

*Sensation*. Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1997.

Williams, Gilda. "Cerith Wyn Evans." *Art/Text*, 1999, no. 66, pp. 80–81.

*Young British Art: The Saatchi Decade*. Booth-Clibborn Editions, London 1999.

#### **Work in MATRIX**

*Take your desires for reality*, 2003

Mixed media

Approximately 5' x 18'

Courtesy of Jay Jopling/White Cube, London

**The MATRIX Program at the UC Berkeley Art Museum is made possible by the generous endowment gift of Phyllis Wattis.**

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COVER:

Cerith Wyn Evans: *Before the Flowers of Friendship Faded Friendship Faded (After Gertrude Stein)*, 2000; firework text supported by wooden frame; 541 x 12 in. (1375 x 30.5 cm); courtesy of Jay Jopling/White Cube, London.

INSIDE (LEFT TO RIGHT):

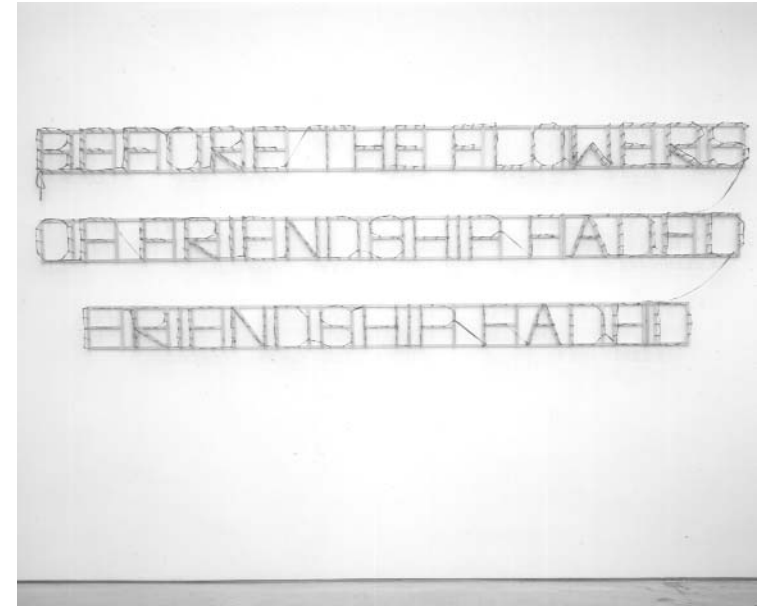
Cerith Wyn Evans: *PPP (Dedipus Rex)*, 1998; fireworks display, Wednesday 15 July;

location: Idroscala di Ostia, Italy; firework text supported by wooden scaffolding;

photo credit: courtesy of Jay Jopling/White Cube, London.

Cerith Wyn Evans: *Meanwhile E across town*, 2001; neon; 3 9/16 x 47 5/16 x 1 7/8 in. (9 x 120.2 x 5 cm); courtesy of Jay Jopling/White Cube, London.

Cerith Wyn Evans: *Cleave 00*, 2000; mirror ball, lamp, shutter, computer, text by William Blake, plants; dimensions variable; courtesy of Jay Jopling/White Cube, London.



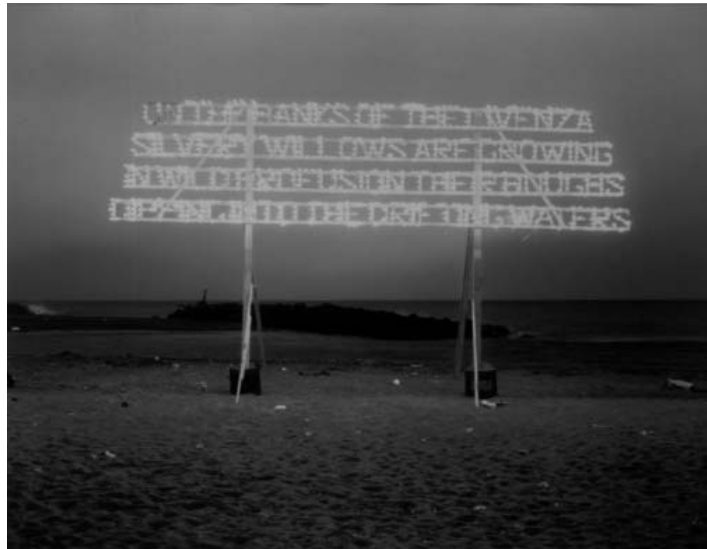
# *Cerith Wyn Evans*/MATRIX 201c

## *Take your desires for reality*

February 9, 2003

**University of California  
Berkeley Art Museum**

## Cerith Wyn Evans / miniMATRIX 201c



Concerned with the phenomenology of time, language, and perception, London-based artist Cerith Wyn Evans has been described by New York art critic Jerry Saltz as “a philosopher-artist who mixes traditions, materials, and techniques into elegant works full of intellectual anxiety.”<sup>1</sup> He has worked in a wide variety of media including Morse code, strobe lights, mirrors, neon lights, and even orchids fertilized with his own urine. For his miniMATRIX exhibition, Wyn Evans continues an exploration of quotations crafted from fireworks and mounted on wooden scaffolding. He created his first firework piece in 1996; since then he has completed six pyrotechnic works, three of which have been ignited. The remaining three have been exhibited, unlit, in galleries and museums.

Wyn Evans selects texts from literature, film history, and politics specific to the location in which the works are installed. He sees his pieces as captions or subtitles to a larger, unseen narrative, and uses them as a means to explore the role viewers play in the representation, perception, and translation of visual language.<sup>2</sup> For the artist, the unlit gallery pieces represent suspense and propose a promise of articulation. A large indoor piece exhibited, unignited, at the ARC, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, quoted Karl Marx: “BETTER THAT THE WHOLE WORLD SHOULD BE DESTROYED AND PERISH THAN THAT A FREE MAN SHOULD REFRAIN FROM ONE ACT TO WHICH HIS NATURE MOVES HIM.”

The text for Wyn Evans's miniMATRIX firework piece: “TAKE YOUR DESIRES FOR REALITY,” a variation on a well-known quotation by Situationist Guy Debord, is the same as the first firework sculpture he ignited in 1996 on a rooftop in Rome. The Situationist International was born in September 1957 out of 25-year-old Debord's desire to gather artists and writers to rethink the role of individuals in determining their own lives. The Situationists took from Jean-Paul Sartre their impetus for creating, as well as simply experiencing, “situation.” Focusing on the “suppression of art,” they intended to transform art and culture so as to fuse them into the everyday. They were against capitalist ideas of work and looked to play and spontaneity as the cornerstones necessary to modern life.

The Situationists achieved their greatest notoriety in May 1968 when students provoked a revolt against the Gaullist regime in the streets of Paris. At the end of 1967, a radical manifesto by Debord had surfaced that proved to have a major influence on events in France.<sup>3</sup> Graffiti started appearing on walls all over Paris: “I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires. Boredom is always counterrevolutionary.” The bastardization Wyn Evans presents is a particularly amusing twist, as it is altered to become a directive for material consumption. The artist originally spotted the phrase outside a boutique in Tokyo.<sup>4</sup>



While Wyn Evans's sentences made out of fireworks are legible in their unlit state, they metaphorically come alive when ignited, bringing forth the text's meaning. The first letter is set alight and takes some time to

catch, then the fire spreads slowly to its neighbor, and so on. The meaning appears to build faster and faster until it loses control and spills out over the remaining lines of text, filling out so fast that it almost obscures itself. For a fraction of a second, the whole structure is ablaze, replete, and then the first letters begin to fizzle out at exactly the same pace that they had lit up. Then they disappear, leaving the text as it was before: legible, but only a ghost of its fully realized sense.<sup>5</sup> Poignancy derives from the knowledge that the presence,



and subsequent disappearance, are the sum total of the meaning of the sculpture. Art critic Greg Hilty aptly explained that the pace of the burning gives the meaning the added resonance of a historical act.

Wyn Evans says, “The lit fireworks I always saw as subtitles burning into the image; into the scene. (The texts

are ignited in half-light, at twilight or dawn.) So the setting somehow ‘frames’ the text and determines it.”<sup>6</sup> His choice of a revolutionary slogan associated with students and art for presentation at the UC Berkeley Art Museum is apt. As E.M. Forster noted, “How do I know what I think until I see what I say?”

Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson  
PHYLLIS WATTIS MATRIX CURATOR

<sup>1</sup> Jerry Saltz, “Cerith Wyn Evans,” *Time Out New York*, April 1997, vol. 80, no. 3–10, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> Cerith Wyn Evans, e-mail conversation with the author, March 20, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.furious.com/perfect/situationism.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Greg Hilty, “We Go Round and Round in the Night and are Consumed by Fire,” *Parkett* 1999, vol. 56, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> The description of the burning is from Hilty's *Parkett* text. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Wyn Evans, e-mail conversation with the author, March 20, 2002.