

# CHRIS MARKER STARING BACK

Legendary French filmmaker, writer, and multimedia artist Chris Marker has assembled almost 200 black-and-white photographic portraits spanning six decades for this exhibition. In gathering the images from his archive that would become *Staring Back*, Marker eventually grouped them into four sections he's titled "I Stare 1," "I Stare 2," "They Stare," and "Beast of..." The designations reflect a divide between portraits of those looking away from his camera and those looking directly into its lens and, by reflection, at him. For this installation, "I Stare 1" and "They Stare" face each other from the gallery's opposing long walls, each image paired and sequenced precisely by Marker. "I Stare 2" takes the form of an enlarged photographer's contact sheet, on the gallery's north wall, adjacent to the alcove housing "Beast of..."

The images range in date from 1952 (the triple gold-winning Czech athlete Emil Zatopek in "I Stare 2," seen competing in the Helsinki Olympics) to 2006 (the demonstrators on the Paris streets in the spring of last year, on the right end of the "I Stare 1" sequence). These are some of the people Marker has remembered, during the course of his global wandering, and who have remembered him: a photo inventory of the many clans that have welcomed him into their folds.

As soon as Marker agreed to present a show of his photographs, he requested that music accompany the viewer's time in the gallery. When we'd presented his *Silent Movie* installation in 1995, Marker assembled his own soundtrack, 18 piano solos ranging from Satie to Ellington, from Scarlatti to Strayhorn, all evoking the modest intimacy of presound movie watching. For *Staring Back*, he's compiled a more heterodox playlist, as befits the range within the 200 portraits in the exhibition. Playing via random shuffle, the individual selections are drawn from the performers and composers listed below, some full albums and others compiled by "Guillaume-en-Egypte," Marker's cartoon alter ego.

Johann Sebastian Bach (*The Art of Fugue*;  
New Century Saxophone Quartet)  
Bertolt Brecht (*Die Nachgeborenen*)  
John Cage (*Ryoanji*)  
François Couturier (*Song for Tarkovsky*)  
Alfred Deller (*Sacred Songs*)  
Orlando Gibbons (*Fantasies*)  
Kronos Quartet (*Music of Bill Evans*)  
Moondog (*H'Art Songs*)  
Susan Reed (*Songs of the Auvergne*)  
Erik Satie (*Fourteen Songs*; Teodoro Anzellotti)



William Walton (*Façade*)  
Kurt Weill (*Der Kuhhandel*; Kolner Rundfunkorchester)  
Kurt Weill (*Lady in the Dark*)  
*Musics for a Cat* compilation (Anne Sofie von Otter and Elvis Costello, Glenn Gould, Alfred and Mark Deller with Desmond Dupree, Jane Monheit, Bill Carrothers, Judy Collins, Loreena McKennitt, Keith Jarrett, Madeleine Peyroux, Brian Eno, John McLaughlin, Souad Massi, Charlie Haden with Michael Brecker, Emilie Simon, Jan Gabarek, Sade, Wes Montgomery and Jimmy Smith, Mahalia Jackson)  
*Untitled compilation* (Keith Jarrett, Bill Evans, Alberto Ginastera, Scott Joplin, and others)

## Bill Horrigan

Director of Media Arts  
Curator of *Staring Back*

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Chris Marker (born Christian François Bouche-Villeneuve in 1921, in Neuilly-sur-Seine, France) emerged in post-WWII Paris as an artist working in music and theater, while making a name for himself through his elegant, wide-ranging critical commentary. Turning to filmmaking in the 1950s, he at first was closely associated with such other young directors as Agnes Varda and Alain Resnais (with whom he worked on several legendary short films). Marker became quickly distinctive for his uniquely poetic approach to the filmic essay and documentary traditions, and among his best known films are *Le Joli Mai* (1962), *A Grin without a Cat* (1977/1993), *Sans Soleil* (1982), and *The Last Bolshevik* (1993). Especially in the U.S., he is perhaps best known for *La Jetée* (1962), an extraordinary film constructed almost entirely from still images, which inspired Terry Gilliam's 1995 *Twelve Monkeys*. Marker has also produced *Immemory* (1997), a landmark CD-ROM, as well as a series of gallery installations, including *Silent Movie* (1995), which was commissioned by the Wexner Center as a Wexner Center Residency Award project in 1994–95 and has subsequently been exhibited in over a dozen venues internationally.

Look in the Wexner Center Store for the *Staring Back* exhibition catalogue, which features a complete set of the project's images, plus essays by Bill Horrigan and Molly Nesbit and the English language narration for Marker's film *The Case of the Grinning Cat* (2004).

