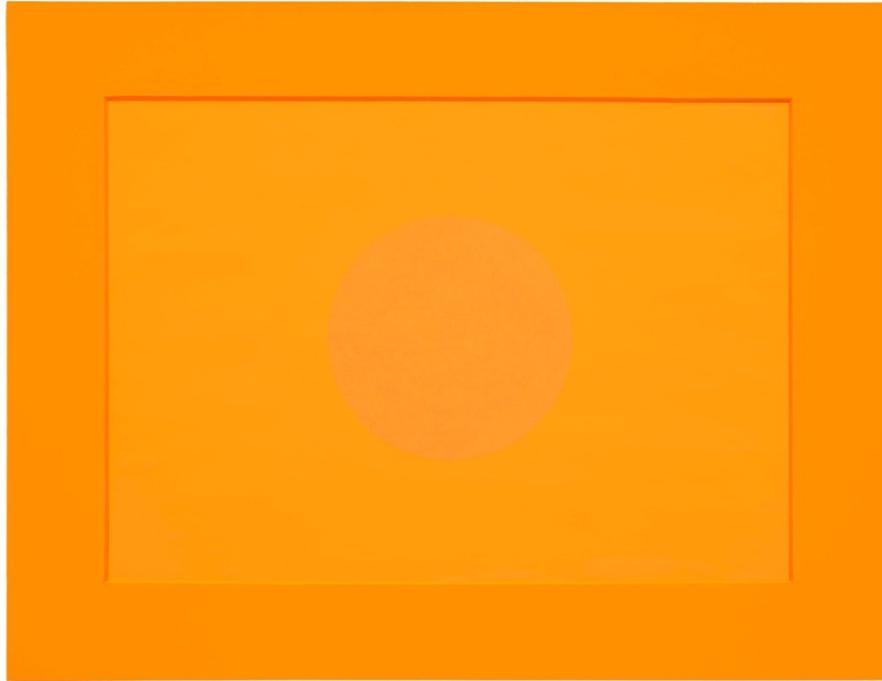


For Immediate Release

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**Dia to Present an Exhibition of Rarely Seen Works on Paper by Marian Zazeela
Opening October 5, 2019**



Marian Zazeela, *22 – 28 VIII 75*, 1975. © Marian Zazeela. Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio, New York, courtesy Dia Art Foundation, New York

New York – September 27, 2019 – This fall, Dia Art Foundation presents an exhibition at Dia:Beacon, Beacon, New York, of works on paper by renowned multidisciplinary artist Marian Zazeela. Since 1962 Zazeela has worked with her long-time collaborator, La Monte Young, on large-scale installations in sound and light. While Zazeela’s sculptures and light design have become well known, her works on paper have remained decidedly less so. This presentation features approximately thirty works on paper dating from 1962 to 1990, which showcase the range of materials and motifs that stem from the artist’s deep interest in calligraphy and ornamental forms, and link her divergent practices. The exhibition, which marks only the second solo presentation to date of Zazeela’s works on paper, opens on October 5, 2019, and will be on view through May 2021.

The works on view at Dia:Beacon advance what Zazeela terms “borderline art”—work that challenges the hierarchical distinction between decorative and fine art by using ornamentation in the fine art tradition and using borders as content in themselves. On visits to Morocco at the beginning of her artistic career in 1959, Zazeela was inspired by the Arabic lettering on marketplace signs. Building upon this early interest in calligraphy, she began to borrow forms from cursive writing and vary them to

Dia:

create new patterns. Through this experimentation, Zazeela developed the abstracted forms that emerge repeatedly in her works on paper. Since the early 1960s, when the artist made her earliest mature drawings, she has approached color and ornamentation as subjects in their own right and structured her work according to the laws of symmetry.

Zazeela's calligraphy frequently adorned concert and recording announcements throughout her and Young's collaborative performance practice, examples of these materials are on view in Dia's exhibition. In many cases, the artist's signature is not merely an addition to these compositions, but rather an integral part of its content; their initials came to symbolize their merging artistic and personal identities. Drawing over text (or, in her own words, "[obliterating] letters and words") is also part of her artistic mode. For *Index* (1962), Zazeela took a sheet from her father's medical textbook listing the symptoms of an indiscernible disease. Obscuring each malady with dense glyphs, only the words "index" and "over" remain visible.

Zazeela's densely repeated curvilinear shapes allude to organic textures like coral, fingerprints, and wood grain, while also interspersing primary shapes—squares are inscribed inside circles inside squares. Zazeela extends the use of these repeated organic forms into her works on Coloraid paper. Through these works—which often require careful scrutiny to discern the subtle graphite sheen against their intense hue and matte drawing surface—Zazeela proposes that color is never incidental to her work, but very much one of its subjects. This emphasis on color is furthered in her collaborative sound and light environments with Young, such as their *Dream House* installations. Zazeela's projections and sculptural light works imbue these environments with intensely saturated color.

This installation also features a twelve-part work from Zazeela's Portraits series, referring to Dia's cofounder Helen Winkler Fosdick. This body of work, according to the artist, presents "proper names . . . drawn with their bilaterally symmetrical, retrograde, and mirror-inverted images so that the abstract form of the written word may be viewed independently from its more literal meaning." Allowing the visual contents of the work (in this case the letters making up that person's name) to be contemplated as separate from their meaning, the artist's calligraphy serves as a stand in for the figure in a form of abstracted portraiture.

In conjunction with the display of Zazeela's work at Dia:Beacon, Dia will release a four-vinyl LP set in 2020 of La Monte Young's composition *Trio for Strings* (1958). *Trio for Strings Original Full Length Version* (1958–1998–2015) and *Just Intonation Version* (1984–2001–2005) was performed live by the Theatre of Eternal Music String Ensemble, led by renowned cellist Charles Curtis, during Dia's 2015 presentation of *Dia 15 VI 13 545 West 22 Street Dream House*. One of Young's earliest musical compositions, *Trio for Strings* is considered the very first work of musical Minimalism and has never before been available as a recording. The LP set will be accompanied by a 28-page collection of artist writings produced in collaboration with Young, Zazeela, and their senior disciple, the artist and musician Jung Hee Choi.

Dia:

As an institution dedicated to fostering in-depth relationships with artists, Dia's relationship with Young and Zazeela has spanned five decades and precedes the formation of the foundation itself. In July 1969, the first public presentation of *Dream House* took place at Dia cofounder Heiner Friedrich's gallery in Munich. Supported by Dia, Young and Zazeela inaugurated their Dream Festival in 1975, which included a *Dream House* environment, the American premiere of *The Well-Tuned Piano*, the exhibition *Marian Zazeela Lights, Drawings*, performances by the Theatre of Eternal Music, and concerts by Pandit Pran Nath. From 1979 to 1985, Dia presented Young and Zazeela's *Dream House* at 6 Harrison Street in New York City, which included Zazeela's *The Magenta Lights*. In 2015, Dia made a major acquisition of a unique site-specific version of *Dream House* titled *Dia 15 VI 13 545 West 22 Street Dream House*. The two artists created this new iteration in collaboration with Choi. In the same year, Dia presented this unique version of the installation as the inaugural show at Dia:Chelsea, New York, coinciding with the fortieth anniversary of the Dream Festival and signaling Dia's return to programming in New York City.

About the Artists

Marian Zazeela was born in New York City in 1940. She studied painting at Bennington College, Vermont, and has been working with light as a medium since the early 1960s. Her light installations and projection series have been exhibited widely throughout the United States and Europe. Since 1962 she has collaborated with her partner La Monte Young on *Dream House* installations and performances with the Theatre of Eternal Music. Like Young, Zazeela became a disciple of Pandit Pran Nath in 1970 and the two artists have devoted the last several decades to the performance of Indian classical music as part of their Just Alap Raga Ensemble. Zazeela's environmental and performance works have been credited with influencing Andy Warhol's multimedia event series *Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, and have been the object of group and solo presentations at Dia Art Foundation, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Kunst im Regenbogenstadl *Dream House* in Polling, Germany, where a retrospective of her drawings was organized in 2000.

La Monte Young was born in Bern, Idaho, in 1935. He began playing saxophone at age seven and pursued music studies in the 1950s with such recognized figures as Richard Maxfield, Leonard Stein, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. From 1960 to 1961, Young directed the first loft concert series at Yoko Ono's Chambers street studio. As a founding member of the Fluxus movement, he edited the artists' book *An Anthology of Chance Operations* in 1963 and orchestrated many of the movement's key events during that decade. In 1962 Young began collaborating with artist Marian Zazeela, featuring her light installations, sculptures, and calligraphic creations in his durational sound environments. The two artists became disciples of master Kirana Gharana singer Pandit Pran Nath in 1970 and their work has addressed both Western traditions and Indian classical music ever since. Young is credited as the founder of Minimalist music and is a historical reference for sustained-tone and drone-based compositions such as *The Well-Tuned Piano*—widely regarded as one of the major piano works of the twentieth century. Artists and musicians including John Cale, Walter De Maria, Brian Eno, Yoko Ono, Lou Reed, Terry Riley, and Andy Warhol have acknowledged Young's enormous impact. Together with his ensembles (including the Theatre of Eternal Music, the Forever Bad Blues Band, and the recent Just Alap Raga Ensemble), Young has influenced art-rock bands like the Velvet Underground, Faust, and many others.

Dia:

Jung Hee Choi was born in Seoul, South Korea, in 1969. She has collaborated with La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela since 1999. Choi's work has been presented in Asia, Europe, and North America at such venues as FRAC Franche-Comté in Besançon, France; Berliner Festspiele in Berlin; Solomon R.

Guggenheim Museum and the MELA Foundation *Dream House*, New York; and the Korea Experimental Arts Festival in Seoul. Choi is also a founding producer and director of Mantra TV—a cable and webcast vehicle for advanced arts in New York and Korea. Commissioned by MELA Foundation, her performance and installation *RICE* was presented at the ongoing installation of *Dream House* at 275 Church Street in New York in 2003. As disciples of the classical Kirana Gharana vocal tradition, Young, Zazeela, and Choi founded the Just Alap Raga Ensemble in 2002. Choi has performed as vocalist in every concert ever since, including those at the MELA Foundation *Dream House*; Pandit Pran Nath Memorial Tribute Tour in Berlin, Karlsruhe, and Polling, Germany, in 2012; Yoko Ono Courage Award ceremony; Guggenheim Third Mind Live concert series in 2009; and the Merce Cunningham Memorial celebration in 2009. Her work is in the collection of FRAC Franche-Comté.

Dia Art Foundation

Taking its name from the Greek word meaning “through,” Dia was established in 1974 with the mission to serve as a conduit for artists to realize ambitious new projects, unmediated by overt interpretation and uncurbed by the limitations of more traditional museums and galleries. Dia's programming fosters contemplative and sustained consideration of a single artist's body of work and its collection is distinguished by the deep and longstanding relationships that the nonprofit has cultivated with artists whose work came to prominence particularly in the 1960s and 1970s.

In addition to Dia:Beacon and Dia:Chelsea, Dia maintains and operates a constellation of commissions, long-term installations, and site-specific projects, notably focused on Land art, nationally and internationally. These include:

- Walter De Maria's *The New York Earth Room* (1977) and *The Broken Kilometer* (1979), Max Neuhaus's *Times Square* (1977), and Joseph Beuys's *7000 Eichen* (*7000 Oaks*, which was inaugurated at Documenta in 1982), all of which are located in New York City
- The Dan Flavin Art Institute (established in 1983) in Bridgehampton, New York
- De Maria's *The Lightning Field* (1977) in western New Mexico
- Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in Great Salt Lake, Utah
- Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76) in Great Basin Desert, Utah
- De Maria's *The Vertical Earth Kilometer* (1977) in Kassel, Germany

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