



27 March 2009

### **John Cale: Wales at Venice**

**collateral event of the 53rd International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia**

For the 53<sup>rd</sup> International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia, John Cale will present a new, specially commissioned audio-visual installation from Wales, curated by Bruce Haines. Wales provides an astonishingly rich lyrical and romantic, as well as political and social, context for artists to work within. This project resonates with the poetic, bardic tradition that underpins the cultural history of Wales, and has at its heart Cale's own personal relationship with the Welsh language and issues surrounding communication.

Known for his exploration of the physiognomy of sound, Cale undertook a series of cathartic physical performances in Wales to create work that draws upon his lifelong concerns with the passing of time, the durational and the multidisciplinary nature of presentation. It is work that is both of Wales' landscape and the rich history of performance art the country has played host to since the mid 20th-century.

The installation will be situated within Capannone 1 at the Ex-Birreria, a former brewery building on the traditional workers' island of Giudecca, home to three previous presentations from Wales at the International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia.

Born in Garnant, South Wales, Cale attended Goldsmiths College, London where he studied musicology and discovered John Cage through his seminal publication *Silence* (1961) before moving to New York. There he met LaMonte Young, collaborating with the Theatre of Eternal Music, which included artists Walter de Maria and Tony Conrad, before founding The Velvet Underground with Lou Reed.

Cale continues to reflect on duration as a concept, blurring the boundaries of music, film, performance and visual art. His writing and music has always resounded with the bleakness and solemnity of the Welsh landscape, as well as the rich tradition of Welsh language strict metre poetry. Perhaps Cale is a 'bard' himself in the widest sense of the word; as a published poet, initially in *Aspen* magazine during the late sixties, he acknowledges the influence of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas in the troubled souls of his protagonists inhabiting landscapes ruled by tyranny, war and compromise, subject matter prescient today.

*John Cale: Wales at Venice* is produced and managed by the Arts Council of Wales with support from the Welsh Assembly Government, British Council, Wales Arts International and with coordination in Venice by Nuova Icona.

## Notes to editors

1. *John Cale: Wales at Venice* takes place at Capannone 1, Ex-Birreria, Giudecca 800/o. Exhibition open: 7 June – 22 November 2009, Times: 7 June – 27 September, 11am – 7pm; 29 September – 22 November, 12 – 6pm. Closed Mondays. Vaporetto stop: Palanca. Free Entry.

2. Previous presentations from Wales include: *Further: Artists from Wales* in 2003 (Bethan Huws, Simon Pope, Paul Seawright, Cerith Wyn Evans); *Somewhere Else* in 2005 (Peter Finnemore, Laura Ford, Paul Granjon and Bedwyr Williams); *And So It Goes* in 2007 (Richard Deacon, Merlin James, Heather & Ivan Morison).

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