



RUBIN
MUSEUM
OF ART

*SOUND SCULPTURE INSTALLATION BY BILL FONTANA
CAPTURES THE ACOUSTIC ENERGY OF BELLS NOT RINGING*

*SILENT ECHOES
June – August, 2011*

*For immediate release
May 2011*

New York – On select Wednesday evenings this summer the Rubin Museum of Art will present the first U.S. installation of **Silent Echoes**, a sound sculpture by American artist Bill Fontana.

Silent Echoes creates an environment in which to hear the sounds of five Buddhist temple bells in Kyoto, Japan when they are *not* ringing. For Fontana sculpture is a way to make physical some state of the human condition. He created this sound sculpture in 2008 using vibration sensors and acoustic microphones to capture the bells’ reverberations as they responded to ambient sounds in the environment. Click [here](#) for a sound clip.

“In Silent Echoes, I have used modern measurement technology to reveal a hidden world of perpetual acoustic energy within an apparently dormant bell,” said Fontana. “These bells are portals to the acoustic energy around them and they have never been silent. John Cage many times said that ‘music is continuous and listening is intermittent.’”

This immersive meditative experience will take place in the Rubin Museum’s theater, renowned for its excellent acoustics. The room will be candle-lit and set with chairs and meditation cushions. Visitors may enter the theater when they wish and stay for as long as they like during the soundscape.

The Rubin’s Silent Echoes installation is inspired by [Pilgrimage and Faith](#), an exhibition that explores sacred journeys in Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. The featured bells—from Ohara, Nanzenji, Higashi, Chionin, and Toji—have served as pilgrimage destinations for centuries.

Tim McHenry, the Rubin Museum’s producer overseeing the installation, notes that “Kyoto is a destination for over 30 million visitors, many of whom are pilgrims to the over 2,000 shrines and temples there. This aural witnessing allows us to make a universal journey into a localized experience. Picture yourself suspended inside the largest bell in Japan—one which weighs 74

tons—and if you are successful, all you will ultimately be able to hear is the sound of yourself ringing.”

Projected onto a large screen will be near-life size images of the resounding temple bells captured by Fontana in high-resolution video footage. As the origin of the sound changes, audience members will see a projection of the corresponding bell.

Schedule

Wednesday, June 15
Wednesday, June 29
Wednesday, July 6
Wednesday, August 3

Visitors may enter the theater any time from 5:00—7:00pm. The experience ends at 8:30pm.

Saturday, August 13
Sunday, August 14

Visitors may enter the theater any time from 3:00—6:00pm. The experience ends at 6:00pm.

Tickets

\$10; Tickets are available online at www.rmanyc.org/silentechoes, by calling the Box Office at 212-620-5000 x344, or at the museum.

Tickets include admission to the museum galleries, and an optional tour of the exhibition, *Pilgrimage and Faith*, from 6:15 – 6:45pm on weeknights, and 4:00-4:45pm on weekends.

Rubin Museum of Art

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