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PRESS RELEASE

John Cage: Ryoanji – Catalogue Raisonné

The complete Ryoanji pencil drawings, for the first time in book form

**John Cage
Ryoanji**
Catalogue Raisonné of the
Visual Artworks Vol. I
Ed. By Corinna Thierolf
240 pages, 143 tritone plates
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€98,-, US\$ 125.-

American avant-garde composer John Cage (1912, Los Angeles – 1992, New York) is one of the extraordinary figures of the 20th century. Cage revolutionized music by making the world of sounds and silence acceptable as music. He was not only active as a composer, but also as a philosopher, poet, teacher, mycologist and visual artist leaving a great oeuvre.

Between 1983 and 1992 John Cage created some 170 pencil drawings, an intensive exploration of Japan's most famous Zen garden of the *Ryoanji* Temple in Kyoto. The *Ryoanji* drawings can be seen as the opus magnum of Cage's visual work, illustrating aesthetic and conceptual reflections relevant to his entire oeuvre.

In cooperation with Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, which owns an extensive selection of *Ryoanji* drawings, and the John Cage Trust in New York, Schirmer/Mosel is publishing *John Cage – Ryoanji*, which for the first time presents the complete series of drawings "Where R = Ryoanji."

John Cage first visited the *Ryoanji* Temple and its early 16th-century rock garden as early as 1962, during a concert tour. Measuring 30 x 10 meters, the garden consists of carefully raked white pebbles with 15 rocks arranged seemingly at random. Over a period of ten years Cage devoted himself to drawings addressing the aesthetic order of the complex that is revered in Japan as a perfect depiction of nature. As with his musical works, to produce the drawings Cage developed so-called chance operations determining, for example, the positions of stones circled by the artist's pen on the paper.

For this first volume of the catalogue raisonné of John Cage's visual art, the book's editor Corinna Thierolf, chief curator at Pinakothek der Moderne, has systematically compiled little known sources on the evolution and on the art-historical context of the *Ryoanji* drawings.

Our book shows, in extraordinarily delicate reproductions, the immense breadth of the *Ryoanji* drawings, their notations ranging from isolated circular lines to seemingly chaotic and overlapping networks of strokes. Provided with the proper sequence of all works in the series, the reader can for the first time indulge in fully experiencing the suspense and tension Cage so skillfully created between repetition and uniqueness, order and disorder, agitation and tranquility. One of John Cage's artistic goals was to achieve maximum insight with minimum stimulus – an achievement impressively attested to in this book.