

# ARTS CATALYST

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PRESS RELEASE  
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*Image: Mirror Dome Room at the Pepsi Pavilion, at Expo '70, Osaka Japan, Photo Shunk-Kender  
The 90 ft. 210 degree spherical mirror produced a real image of the floor and the people on it, hanging upside down above their heads. The mirror grew out of Robert Whitman's involvement in optics.*

## **Arts Catalyst presents 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering Revisited 1966/2016, a night of new cross-disciplinary performance art and an archival exhibition**

### **9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering Revisited 1966/2016**

Fri 7 October 2016, 7pm

Tickets £10 student, £15 standard, book via <http://bit.ly/9eveskingsx>

The Crossing, Granary Square, Kings Cross, London N1C 4AA

Robert Whitman presents a new Arts Catalyst commissioned performance called **Side Effects**.

### **Arts Catalyst presents Experiments in Art and Technology**

Thu 22 September – Sat 29 October 2016, Thursdays & Fridays, 12 noon – 6pm

Arts Catalyst Centre for Art Science & Technology, 74-76 Cromer Street, London, WC1H 8DR

An exhibition chronicling the history of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), the group who were behind the 9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering event.

Exactly fifty years after the legendary *9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering*, Arts Catalyst revisits this hugely influential art event with a new performance commission by **Robert Whitman**, participating artist in the original *9 Evenings* and co-founder of **Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T)** who produced it. An accompanying exhibition, talks and events programme will be held at Arts Catalyst Centre for Art, Science & Technology and other venues across the city, developed in collaboration with **Afterall** and students from **Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London** and **Goldsmiths, University of London**.

*9 Evenings: Theater and Engineering* was initiated by artist Robert Rauschenberg and the engineer Billy Kluver. This 1966 event was a pioneering project in large-scale collaboration between artists and engineers. *9 Evenings* was a significant moment in art history when many artists became aware for the first time of the implications that advancements in technology had for the development of their own artwork. Artists, including Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, Robert Whitman and Yvonne Rainier worked with engineers for 10 months to develop technical equipment and systems that were used as an integral part of the artists' performances, producing a blend of avant-garde theatre, dance and new technologies. The collaboration produced many 'firsts' with specially designed systems and with innovative use of existing equipment.

In October 2016, Arts Catalyst presents a contemporary re-imagining of this seminal event, with a programme throughout the month. Robert Whitman's performance will be held in The Crossing, an ex-industrial warehouse space in the new Kings Cross development. Whitman will present his new performance, **Side Effects**, commissioned for this event. This spectacular evening will mix pre-recorded and live-streamed moving image from across the city, animated by a live performance unfolding over eight acts.

Within walking distance, the Arts Catalyst Centre for Art, Science & Technology hosts an exhibition of film footage from the 1966 *9 Evenings* events, alongside an archival presentation of the broader work of E.A.T., making public this rich history of cross-disciplinary collaboration. In addition talks developed, in collaboration with Afterall's *Exhibition Histories* series, will reflect on the histories of art and technology in performance, transdisciplinary collaboration, and the influence of the 1960s on contemporary art today.

Finally, since January 2016 a working group of students from MRes Art: Exhibition Studies at Central Saint Martins and MFA Curating, Goldsmiths University of London, have been using *9 Evenings* and the work of E.A.T as a starting point to reflect on: re-staging and re-enactments as a method of doing art history, transdisciplinary practice and exhibiting the archive. The result of the working group will be three texts, compiled in a booklet that will be distributed both online and at the Arts Catalyst's October events. A working group made up of students from MA Art and Science at Central Saint Martins, as well as other programmes, will collectively develop their own performances, to be held at Arts Catalyst's Centre throughout October.

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Afterall

*ends.*

| \* Details of further events to follow. Interviews and images available on request.

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Notes to Editors:

1) **Arts Catalyst** is one of the UK's most distinctive arts organisations, distinguished by ambitious art commissions and its unique take on art-science practice. The organisation is funded by Arts Council England as part of its National Portfolio. Over 21 years, it has commissioned more than 125 UK and international artists' projects, often at pivotal moments in artists' careers, including major projects by Tomas Saraceno, Aleksandra Mir, Agnes Meyer-Brandis, Carey Young, Jan Fabre and the Otolith Group. Arts Catalyst works with artists and scientists to create artworks and generate new ideas exploring science and its role in society and culture: from the nature of air to environmental change, interspecies communication to the future of the moon. It aims to give audiences distinctive, thought-provoking experiences and to play a leading role in the dialogue around interdisciplinary artistic practice. The organisation collaborates with world-class galleries, museums, universities, arts organisations, science institutions and research centres.

2) **Robert Whitman**, in 1966 was one of 10 artists who worked with more than 30 engineers and scientists from Bell Telephone Laboratories to create *9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering* (nine events held between 13-23 October 1966). From this experience in collaboration Whitman joined engineers Billy Klüber and Fred Waldhauer and fellow artist Robert Rauschenberg to start Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.), a foundation that aimed to provide artists with access to new technology through collaborations between artists and engineers and scientists.

Whitman continued to collaborate with engineers on installations and works as varied as laser sculptures and a sound-activated Mylar mirror installation. His long collaboration with optics scientist John Forkner yielded an installation in which real images of objects float in space. He was also one of the core artists designing the Pepsi Pavilion at Expo '70, in which the interior of the Pavilion was a large Mylar spherical mirror, that produced real images of the floor and visitors hanging upside down in space.

**Further press images available on request**