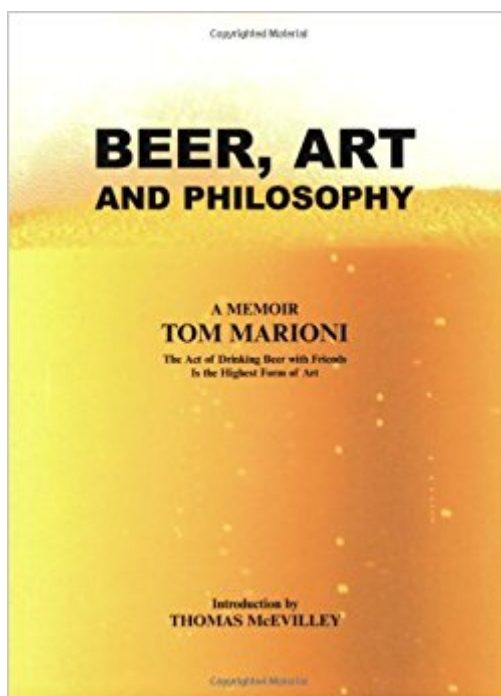


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Beer, Art And Philosophy: The Art Of Drinking Beer With Friends Is The Highest Form Of Art



Synopsis

“I would encourage everyone to get to know the work of Tom Marioni. There are many discoveries and delights there. I keep finding new things. It won't make you a better person but will make you happy to be the one you are.” --Sol LeWitt

Tom Marioni's 1970 exhibition, *The Art of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art*, was a forerunner of a type of contemporary Relational Aesthetics practices that involve eating, drinking and other social activities. In this memoir, Marioni demystifies and defines Conceptual art and answers the question, “What is art for?”

Thomas McEvilley, in the introduction, enlarges the historic context, comparing early Conceptual art activities in New York to the work of California artists like Marioni and John Baldessari, who embraced directness and humor and overleapt New York to find an audience in Europe. Of Marioni's writing, McEvilley says, “A fact is stated after a fact, and the meaning of putting them together comes through with a direct clarity like seeing.”

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Customer Reviews

This art memoir is also truly an interesting personal memoir, for Marioni starts with his life as a child in Cincinnati in the '40s, tells us about his family and friends, and brings us forward with him to the present. He recounts many interesting coincidences in his life where his life touches famous artists and architects early in his career, and then later he becomes friends with them or creates works that are part of their works like his relationship with John Cage and Marcel Duchamp and his commissioned sculpture for the Marin Civic Center, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. These stories and the explanations and descriptions of his many conceptual works of art and the circumstances

surrounding their evolution and development, create a text of engaging interest with important historical context and documentary evidence. ---Frank Cebulski, *Sculpture* magazine, July/August 2004

In a brochure for a 2005 exhibition titled; *Sounds Like Drawing*; at the Drawing Room in London, the show's curator, Anthony Huberman, describes Tom Marioni as; a seminal figure of the American conceptual art movement. He pioneered the use of social situations as art and explored performance as sculptural actions using sound, drawing, photography, and installation.; Thomas McEvilley in the introduction to Marioni's 2003 memoir, *Beer, Art, and Philosophy*, says that; in terms of the history of art, the moment of Marioni's arrival was the beginning of a new era. All the rules were about to be rewritten and he would be a part of it.; Marioni was born in 1937 in Cincinnati, Ohio, attended the Cincinnati Art Academy, and in 1959 moved to San Francisco, where he still lives. His first sound work, *One Second Sculpture*, 1969, was celebrated in the 2005 Lyon Biennial as presaging the work of many artists today who use sound and duration as subjects. His first museum show was in 1970 at the Oakland Museum of California. Titled; *The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends Is the Highest Form of Art*; it was an early example of social activity as art. Over the years, Marioni has been invited to repeat the work in various contexts around the world. In 1970 Marioni founded the Museum of Conceptual Art (MOCA), which he described at the time as ;a large-scale social work of art.; Until the museum closed in 1984, he organized many groundbreaking shows, including; *Sound Sculpture As*; in 1970. MOCA has entered history as the first alternative art space in the United States. Marioni had one-person shows in several significant venues for early conceptual art, among them the Richard Demarco Gallery in Edinburgh in 1972 and Gallery Foksal in Warsaw in 1975. In 1977 he had a solo show, ;*The Sound of Flight*; at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco. He has done installation/performance works at the Whitechapel Gallery in London (1972), the Institute of Contemporary Art in London (1973), the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris (1980), and the Folkwang Museum in Essen, Germany (1982), among other museums. Marioni was included in important sound art shows; ;*For Eyes and Ears*; (1980) at the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin, ;*Live to Air*; (1982) at the Tate Gallery in London, and; ;*From Sound to Image*; (1985) at the Stuttgart Staatsgalerie in Germany. His work was shown in ;*Out of Actions: Between Performance and the Object*; in 1998, organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. Drawing is central to Marioni's art, and in 1999 he had a drawing retrospective at the Mills College Art Museum in Oakland. His prints have been published by Crown Point Press since 1974. In 2006 the Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati presented a survey

exhibition of his work since 1968. Marioni was included in ;The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now,; in 2008 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and in 2009 in ;The Third Mind: American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989; at the Guggenheim Museum, New York. His work is in the collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Stadtische Kunsthalle in Mannheim, Germany, and other museums. He is represented by Gallery Paule Anglim in San Francisco and the Margarete Roeder Gallery in New York. -Crown Point Press website by Kathan Brown

Tom Marioni writes so you can read, enjoy, ingest, digest and come back for me. An insider's guide to Conceptual Art that is relevant and fun to read.

Great read! Funny, thought provoking, accessible.

As the author rightly proclaims, by the nineties "the idea of social interaction in an art context became an art movement," but in 1970, when Marioni performed his signature work, "The Act of Drinking Beer with Friends is the Highest Form of Art," at the Oakland Museum, in which the debris of a drinking session was exhibited, "social artwork" was scandalizing. Marioni's memoirs are the closest you get to sharing a drink with a respected artist, regaled with youthful impressions and insider artworld reflections, without the artist being present. Artists Chris Burden, William T. Wiley and Sol Lewitt, who contribute book jacket testimonials, have sat and drank with Tom Marioni. Why not you? Since 1995, I've been attending Marioni's infamous weekly Wednesday gatherings that have continued his thirty year commitment in an extended performance involving hundreds of artists and friends. We drink and swap war stories. Some of the yarns in the memoir are familiar, reappearing as good friends, perfectly shaped after repeated telling. It's a blessing to see them gathered in print and paraded before a larger audience. There's a reason Marioni's gatherings (and this book) are so successful. He's a perfect host and an entertaining raconteur. Difficult concepts are carefully constructed in terms his audience comprehend. Marioni's art may be challenging, but the ideas expressed are simply stated and make for great reading. His insights into the art of John Cage, with whom he interacted yearly from 1978 to 1992, when Cage would stay with Marioni and his wife Kathan Brown to explore visual art at Crown Point Press are especially moving. People ask Marioni what a particular work is about, and as an artist he is loath to answer, knowing how easily mood can be explained away. But Marioni is also a curator, a perfect host and writer, who enjoys recalling the personages and mysteries of art. Art critic, Thomas McEvilley, who contributes an

introductory essay, hails Marioni as "Northern California's foremost Conceptual artist." You'll see why after sampling this delicacy. Pull up a chair and get yourself a cool one. John Held, Jr., San Francisco, March 2004.

As a young kid, I grew up in my dad's studio. I remember various refrigerators with the "FREE BEER" sign on them and his weekly wednesday gathering of friends drinking beer in his studio or at the old San Francisco Breen's Bar on his turf corner at 3rd and Mission. Years later, I would see his refrigerator and a wall of empty anchor steam beer bottles lined up at the SFMOMA and would bring a humorous smile to my face--thinking my dad is the only person I know who could transform beer drinking into art--beer art. Although I am biased, I love my dad's work. There is always a puzzle, a natural beauty and a bit of humor in every one of his works. My father's book takes a look at the development and history of conceptual art in the 1960's until now through his eyes and his experiences. Many of his ideas and art were very advanced for his time and are very relevant today. If you want to get another perspective on conceptual art, read my dad's book....and have a nice cold beer ready. disclaimer: my dad did not ask me to write this :-)

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