

Paul Stiller – A Thousand Silent Lives

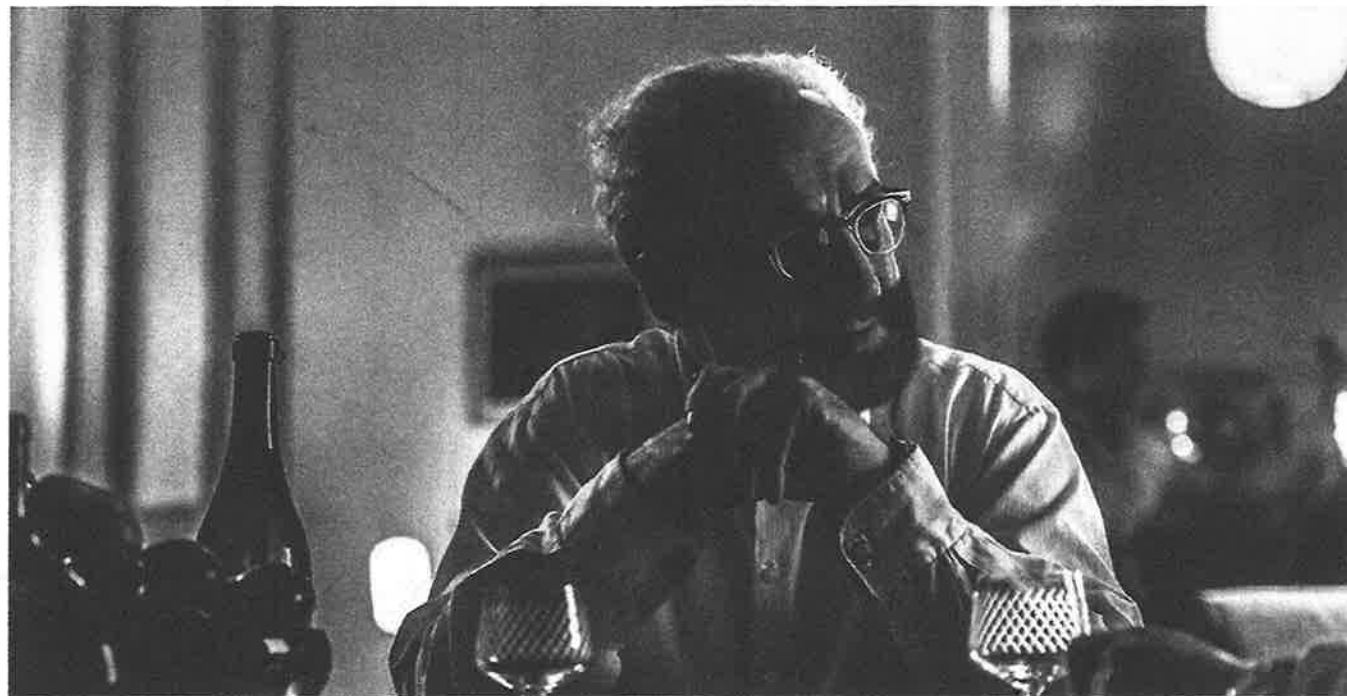
LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum of Art)

‘This weekend the LACMA opened a retrospective on the acoustic artist Paul Stiller’s life work, which will be on until April 15th.

By Daniel Rosenberg

Immerse yourself in a landscape of sound and echo, questioning what remains of the noise we made after we die. A dense show about a controverted artist’s life work, a man who continuously tested the boundaries of audio formats, and often played with the line between what we believe to be absent, and what present. The retrospective is built along a labyrinthine route, where the spectator is invited to “follow an acoustic reflection, oriented around the question of the preservation of being.” Considered one

of the most successful sound engineers since the advent of the talkies, Paul Stiller always maintained a DIY attitude. An early dropout, the self-taught man has repeatedly said that his “world of sounds” is the only thing that kept him out of the psych ward. His work is characterized by a simultaneous obsession and conscious impossibility of reconstructing the past and of materializing the ephemeral, “keeping a trace of all the moments of our lives, of all the objects we’ve come across, everything we’ve said and heard.” An immense goal, pursued with humble means. A mission doomed to fail, as testified by “REVOX – a tale of phantoms” (2015), the audio installation at the heart of the exhibition. Peering back at us through his work, Paul Stiller’s life story emerges – “small moments” strung together like so many pearls on a string – an ordinary life, the kind we are all acquainted with, built out of quotidian tasks looped in an endless cycle until death. A “sensitive and corrosive” piece, questioning the act of listening, what is



audible and what isn’t. Art which resonates, intended as “an awake-state, a hard, lucid look at our culture, its illusions and disenchantments,” offering a perspective on mankind, and what remains after

our passage - memories or oblivion, ideas, mementos... A splay of topics explored throughout the entire show. A “great metaphor of the human cycle,” a must-see.

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LACMA Los Angeles County Museum of Art
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Los Angeles, CA 90036

More about the exhibition at www.lacma.org

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