

For Immediate Release  
August 2007

Media contact: Chivan Wang  
cwang@ocma.net, 949.759.1122 x205

**The Orange County Museum of Art presents  
the groundbreaking work of documentary artist Joseph Grigely**

**Joseph Grigely: St. Cecilia**

October 7, 2007 – January 6, 2008, Snyder Gallery, Newport Beach  
August 26, 2007 – January 6, 2008, Orange Lounge, South Coast Plaza



Production still of *St. Cecilia*, 2007. collection of the Orange County Museum of Art. Photo by Dan Myers.

**Newport Beach, CA**—The Orange County Museum of Art presents the work of internationally acclaimed sensory artist Joseph Grigely. Deaf since childhood, Grigely is best known for creating works that explore the failures, idiosyncrasies and ruptures of language and communication.

His latest project, *St. Cecilia*, demonstrates the nuances between seeing and hearing a musical performance and the connection between his own memories of music as a child and his current relationship to experiencing music as a deaf adult. Recently purchased by the Orange County Museum of Art, *St. Cecilia* is on view at OCMA's Newport Beach galleries from October 7, 2007 – January 6, 2008 and a complementary exhibition by Grigely is on view at the Orange Lounge at South Coast Plaza from August 26, 2007 – January 6, 2008.

Born in Massachusetts in 1956, Joseph Grigely became deaf at the age of ten because of a childhood accident. He first became known in the early 1990s for a series he called *Conversations with the Hearing*, works of art ranging from

intimate wall-based works to room-sized installations that incorporated handwritten notes he used to communicate with the hearing world. Most recently, Grigely has begun a series of works that explore sound—from his own memories of sound as a child, to explorations of how sound “looks.”

Named after the patron saint of music, *St. Cecilia* features two single-channel videos with footage of the Baltimore Choral Arts Society singing three traditional Christmas carols with new lyrics written by Grigely to convey what he calls “lip misreading”—identical lip formations that produce dissimilar sounds. The choir members appear as if they are singing the same words to the same song, but as one looks closer, the words sung on each side are actually very different from one another: The sound tracks of the two song lyrics are separated in the installation so the viewer can experience the multiple distinctive aural sounds of this work—one of silence, one with the sound of familiar lyrics, and the other with Grigely’s own perceived lyrics.



*Remembering is a difficult job, but Somebody has to do it*, 2005. 2 single channel video projections, artificial palm trees, c-prints. 4 minutes 45 seconds. Photograph courtesy of the artist and Cohan and Lesile Gallery.

The exhibition at the Orange Lounge includes three additional works, each relating to sound or music. In the lounge’s back gallery is *Remembering is a difficult job, but somebody has to do it* (2005), an installation reminiscent of a tropical island with artificial palm trees and a projected image of water. On the floor is a small monitor with a video in which Grigely is first questioned about the music he remembers before he was deafened, then tries to sing the theme song to the *Gilligan’s Island* television program from his recollection.

In the front of the lounge, Grigely’s sound installation, *You* (2001), made with his wife, Amy Vogel, includes a set of speakers that projects the sounds of people

mispronouncing the name of the contemporary artist, Ed Ruscha—a familiar name in the art world, but relatively unfamiliar to those outside of it. The varying mispronunciations also appear in prints on the wall and reflect how commonly misunderstandings can occur. In the alcove is a monitor with the video work, *Something Say* (2000), also made with Amy Vogel, who appears on the brink of speaking as Grigely whistles in the background. In all of these installations, Grigely's overarching intent is to make works that create a situation where hearing people experience linguistic misunderstandings from a similar point of view as a deaf person.

#### **EXHIBITION CREDITS**

The OCMA presentation of these exhibitions was organized by Karen Moss, Curator of Collections & Director of Education & Public Programs. *St. Cecilia* was co-organized by the Contemporary Museum, Baltimore and The Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs. Joseph Grigely's new video installation, *St. Cecilia*, is co-produced by the Contemporary Museum and the Orange County Museum of Art. Major support for *St. Cecilia* is provided by the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, the Maryland State Arts Council, the Baltimore County Commission on Arts and Sciences, and Cohan and Leslie, New York.

#### **MUSEUM INFORMATION**

**Newport Beach** – Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach is located at 850 San Clemente Drive. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, with extended hours Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Admission is \$10/adults; \$8/seniors and students; children twelve and under and OCMA members are free. Third Thursdays are free. For more information, call 949.759.1122 or visit [www.ocma.net](http://www.ocma.net).

**Orange Lounge at South Coast Plaza** – The Orange Lounge is located at 3333 Bear Street in Costa Mesa. Hours are Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 am to 8 pm; Sunday, 11 am to 6:30 pm. Admission is free. For information, call 949.759.1122 ext. 272 or visit [www.ocma.net/orangelounge](http://www.ocma.net/orangelounge).