

Q

What do you like the look of?

A

I like brutalist architecture and the light in winter in the Icelandic highlands.



Jóhann Jóhannsson

What things keep you company in the space where you work?

Besides a vast number of items of electronic equipment (far too many of which bear the Apple logo), there is a painting by my friend Thilo Heinzmann. I don't own it, but it's been hanging in my studio (initially in Copenhagen, now in Berlin) for about four years. It's here because of a project called '12 Conversations with Thilo Heinzmann'. I've had the painting while I was writing 12 pieces for string quartet, each one based on a conversation between the two of us. Now that it's done, the painting will be returned to its owner. I expect I will miss it terribly.

What was the first piece of art that really mattered to you?

I read about Marcel Duchamp's *Étant Donnés* (Given, 1946–66) in my teens and I became fascinated by it; it still holds a strange allure for me. I finally saw it in Philadelphia a few years ago. I love the fact that Duchamp spent 20 years making it and kept it a secret the entire time.

If you could live with only one piece of art, what would it be?

Probably my old Schimmel upright piano.

What is your favourite title of an artwork?

Nan Goldin's *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1985).

What should change?

There's a lot of change in the air, it seems, and I hope it will be towards progress, although it doesn't exactly feel that way.

What should stay the same?

Nothing ever does, fortunately.

What music are you listening to?

There are periods when I listen to music and periods when I don't. I think the last thing I played obsessively was David Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion* (2007). I have also enjoyed Colin Stetson's records very much.

What are you reading?

Marilynne Robinson's *Gilead* (2004) and Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941).

What could you imagine doing if you didn't do what you do?

I would love to do nothing, to sit and read mystery novels all day, but I don't have the temperament for idleness. I have an unfortunate compulsion to do things.

Jóhann Jóhannsson is an Icelandic composer, musician and producer based in Berlin, Germany. In 1999, he cofounded Kitchen Motors, an Icelandic label, art and music collective, and was a founding member of the band Apparat Organ Quartet until 2012. In addition, Jóhannsson has released seven solo albums. In 2015, his score for The Theory of Everything won a Golden Globe and was nominated for an Oscar, as was his score for Sicario this year. Jóhannsson will be writing the music for the upcoming sequel to Bladerunner. On 16 April, he premiered '12 Conversations with Thilo Heinzmann' at the Conway Hall in London, UK; the recording will be released later this year on Funk Ibu with a limited-edition LP designed by Heinzmann.

Thilo Heinzmann
O. T., 2011, oil, pigment on
canvas behind Plexiglass cover,
92 × 82 × 9 cm

Courtesy
the artist; photograph:
Roman März