

Sean Dack's *Version/Variation*, Nowness.com, July 7, 2010

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The Digital Artist Takes a Slow Spin With Erik Satie

Erik Satie's "Gymnopédie No 1," written in 1888, sounds like a partially remembered dream, enriched by its gentle, almost imperceptible waltzing rhythm, and its wistful, hazily dissonant harmonies—which, in its year of release, were unprecedented. This proto-ambient piece is at the core of *Version/Variation*, one of artist Sean Dack's current projects. Music has always had a heavy influence on Dack: he first made his name with 2002's *No Encore*, a manipulated video montage of Kurt Cobain that riffed on the grunge hero's status as a suffering young artist (a wink to Dack's youth spent playing in rock bands), and he admits that much of his glitch-ridden photographic work owes more to the aesthetic of 90s electronic acts such as Autechre than to fine art history. In the as-yet-incomplete Satie creation previewed here today, the artist goes back to the roots of that scene, stretching and mixing together 15 different recordings of "Gymnopédie No 1" to make an album-length, droning composition. The fully realized work will be a "pretty massive" 15-channel installation, in which the different recordings of the piece (slowed down to a zen-like pace) will be "joshing off each other." It's a development of the artist's fascination with the possibilities of manipulation and interpretation, which he has previously explored in *Future Songs* (2006)—a songbook in which popular tunes from past years were paired with paranoid predictions from the late sci-fi writer Phillip K Dick. "I've always found sheet music really interesting," says Dack. "If you don't understand the code, it means nothing to you."