



# IN PURSUIT OF SILENCE

a meditative film about our relationship with silence, sound, and the impact of noise

"I am undone by this film...  
it lands in the mind, at least to this reviewer, with an  
impact reminiscent of seeing 1982's  
Koyaanisqatsi for the first time...  
Shen's *In Pursuit of Silence* incessantly inspires and  
sometimes takes the breath away and can even  
accomplish both at once."

**Wayne Alan Brenner | *The Austin Chronicle***

"Replete with imagery that shimmers with the kind of  
almost otherworldly wonder one might associate with a  
Terrence Malick movie...  
This film does more than just tell a story, it testifies to  
the sheer loveliness of anything — everything — when  
drenched in silence."

**Carl McColman | *The Huffington Post***

"The film actually helps you take that first step as you  
experience firsthand the joy of silence through  
disengagement from chatter devices and noisy  
environments."

**Mike Ryan | *Hammer to Nail***

"The movie is a majestic achievement in which art and  
philosophy are blended in a perfect meditative mix. It's  
an important film for our time."

**Chris Reed | *Film Critic***

# IN PURSUIT OF SILENCE

A film by Patrick Shen

**RUN TIME** 81 minutes

**AUDIO** 5.1 Surround

**SCREENING FORMAT** DCP

**LANGUAGE** English

**YEAR COMPLETED** 2015

[pursuitofsilence.com](http://pursuitofsilence.com)

[Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#)

[TRAILER NO. 1 \(4 mins 21 secs\)](#)

[TRAILER NO. 2 \(2 mins 19 secs\)](#)

## **UK CONTACT**

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## **PRODUCTION COMPANY**

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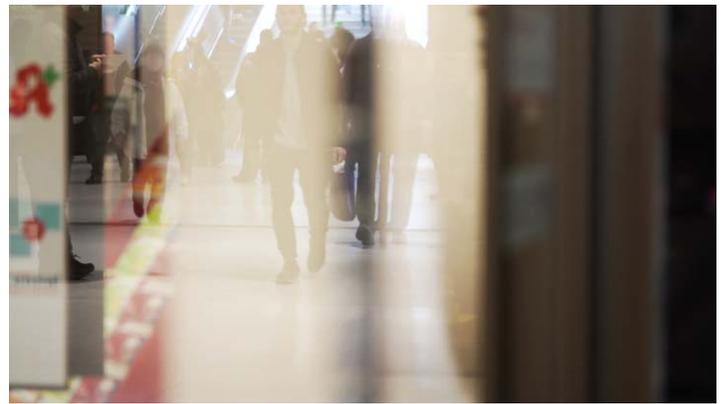
# //ABOUT THE FILM

## LOGLINE

*In Pursuit of Silence* is a meditative film that explores our relationship with silence, sound, and the impact of noise on our lives.

## SYNOPSIS

In our race towards modernity, amidst all the technological innovation and the rapid growth of our cities, silence is now quickly passing into legend. Beginning with an ode to John Cage's seminal silent composition 4'33", the sights and sounds of this film delicately interweave with silence to create a contemplative and cinematic experience that works its way through frantic minds and into the quiet spaces of hearts. As much a work of devotion as it is a documentary, *In Pursuit of Silence* is a meditative exploration of our relationship with silence, sound, and the impact of noise on our lives.



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*In Pursuit of Silence* is a meditative film that I also consider a piece of devotional work about a subject that many have tried to encapsulate in some form or another for ages. Rather than encapsulate we've tried in a sense to free it, paying homage to the ineffable qualities of silence.

The film was shot and edited in a way that mimics our experience of the world when we are still; you won't see any crane moves, sweeping drone shots, or pans. The overall rhythm of the film was carefully crafted with the human metabolism in mind.

Ultimately, I hope that the film challenges audiences to slow down and on some level make the world new again for them.

# //FILM STILLS



## [Tokyo Subway](#)

A girl awaits her train on a Tokyo subway platform. Tokyo is home to the world's busiest metro system, with approximately 8.7 million daily riders. (300dpi)



## [Denali National Park](#)

U.S. National Park Service Soundscape Technician Davyd Betchkal looks over Denali National Park. (300dpi)



## [Lonely Tree](#)

A solitary tree sits in the midst of a cornfield in Peosta, Iowa. (300dpi)



## [Tea Ceremony](#)

Japanese Tea Ceremony Masters sit outside a tea house in preparation for a ceremony at Urasenke School of Tea in Kyoto, Japan. (300dpi)



## [Blue Sky Tree](#) (300dpi)



## [Lloyds of London](#)

A moment of silence at Lloyds of London. (300dpi)

# // DIRECTOR PATRICK SHEN

## BIOGRAPHY

Patrick made his feature directorial debut in 2005 with the critically-acclaimed *Flight from Death: The Quest for Immortality* which was hailed by critics as being “one of the most ambitious films ever made” (PBS 106.7 Australia) and “moving and thought-provoking” (NBC). Beautifully photographed in eight different countries and three years in the making, *Flight from Death* was awarded seven “Best Documentary” awards at film festivals all over the United States.

In 2009, Shen premiered his award-winning *The Philosopher Kings* to sold-out audiences at AFI Docs after which the film opened theatrically in Los Angeles & New York.

Shen’s third documentary *La Source* premiered at AFI Docs in June 2012 where it received a standing ovation and a nomination for the Social Impact Award. Narrated by Oscar-nominated actor Don Cheadle, *La Source* tells the story of Josue Lajuenesse, a janitor from Princeton University who returns to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake to bring clean water to his village. *La Source* premiered theatrically in LA and New York in August 2012. Patrick has received a grant from the Fledgling Fund and for the past three years has been selected by the U.S. Department of State and the USC School of Cinematic Arts to participate in the American Film Showcase, a cultural diplomacy program that brings American filmmakers to countries all over the globe to screen their films and conduct filmmaking workshops.



## FILMOGRAPHY

*Flight from Death: The Quest for Immortality* (2005)  
*The Philosopher Kings* (2009)  
*La Source* (2012)  
*Hypaethral* (2015)  
*In Pursuit of Silence* (2015)

# // HIGHLIGHTS



## PRODUCTION

- The film was launched with a Kickstarter campaign in 2013, and further helped by a second successful Kickstarter campaign in fall 2014.
- Production took place in 8 countries (USA, Japan, UK, Germany, Belgium, China, Taiwan, India) over 2 years.
- Highlights from the production include filming in the anechoic chamber at Or-field Labs in Minneapolis (the Quietest Place on Earth), festival season in Mumbai (the loudest city in the world), Alaska's Denali National Park, a tea ceremony at the famous Urasenke Tea House in Kyoto, schools suffering under the elevated train in New York City, inside BMW's "sound cathedral", Trappist and Zen monasteries, and the "silent walker" who walked across America under a vow of silence.
- The film begins with 4 minutes 33 seconds of experiential silence as a tribute to composer John Cage's famous composition, 4'33". Cage is also featured throughout the film.



- The filmmakers spent one minute of silence with every interviewee before beginning an interview.



## POST PRODUCTION

- The film's sound was mixed by Sound Designer Steve Bissinger of Skywalker Sound. Skywalker's staff of sound designers and re-recording mixers have either won or been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Sound and Best Sound Editing every year since Star Wars in 1977.
- One of Patrick's heroes, renown avant-garde filmmaker Nathaniel Dorsky, spent two days with Patrick in the edit bay to provide notes and fine-tune the edit.
- Award-winning composer Alex Lu used minimal instrumentation for the film's original score. He relied heavily on the sounds of a prepared piano (a piano altered by placing objects between or on the strings) to give the score added texture -- while this style was made popular by John Cage in the 1940s, Cage attributed its origin to composer Henry Cowell.



## DISTRIBUTION

- *In Pursuit of Silence* premiered to a sold out crowd in Copenhagen at the CPH:DOX festival (November 11-13, 2015). A special screening was also co-presented by Roskilde Festival, Europe's largest music festival. An all-quiet encore screening of the film where no words were spoken prior to the showing included a special performance of John Cage's famous silent composition 4'33" by Danish pianist Søren Kjærsgaard. Closing the evening was a silent disco where attendees mingled and danced to music provided by the DJ duo Borneland broadcast through headphones.
- The film will premiere in North America at South by Southwest (March 11-15, 2016).
- Additional festival screenings are planned throughout 2016.
- Plans are being laid for an international screening tour of the film in late 2016 / early 2017, bringing the film experience to locally hosted events at universities, community organizations and faith based groups.



## // BEHIND THE SCENES



A cast and crew panel discussion at CPH:DOX.



Shen joins composer Alex Lu in his studio.



Shen walks with film subject, Dirk Sturtewagen in the hills of Belgium.



Shen shoots in Denali National Park.



Shen recording sound at the quietest place on earth in Orfield Laboratories' Anechoic Chamber.



Team In Pursuit of Silence in front of Maverick Concert Hall, where John Cage first shared his silent composition, 4'33".

# // CREDITS

## **DIRECTED BY**

Patrick Shen

## **PRODUCED BY**

Patrick Shen  
Andrew Brumme  
Brandon Vedder

## **CO-PRODUCER**

Cassidy Hall

## **EDITED BY**

Patrick Shen

## **CINEMATOGRAPHY BY**

Patrick Shen  
Brandon Vedder

## **ORIGINAL SCORE BY**

Alex Lu

## **EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS**

Andrew Brumme  
Larry Finegold

## **ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Michael Coleman  
Poppy Szkiler

## **EDITING CONSULTANT**

Nathaniel Dorsky

## **//CREW HEADSHOTS**

[Director/Producer - Patrick Shen](#)

[Producer - Brandon Vedder](#)

[Producer - Andrew Brumme](#)

[Co-Producer - Cassidy Hall](#)

[Crew Biographies \(click to view\)](#)