

PERFORMANCE DRAWINGS



Shuffle, a drawing by Alison Knowles. Pencil on laid paper, 8¾" by 11".

FLUXUS LONG WEEKEND

Alison Knowles

The Tate Modern in London proposed the Fluxus Long Weekend to run May 24–27, 2008.

I was invited to perform three event scores from the sixties: *Make a Salad*, *Newspaper Music*, and *Shuffle*. The event score *Make a Salad* had premiered at the ICA in London in 1962. Larry Miller was invited to suggest pieces for performance and to organize the Fluxus Olympiad but he was absent due to illness and was replaced by Simon Anderson from the Art Institute of Chicago. We all gathered in London the week before to prepare for the Weekend celebration in the Turbine Hall of the Tate, curated by Kathy Noble and Alice Koegel.

The first piece *Make a Salad* took place late afternoon on May 24th. We were at the nearby Borough Market to select the organic greens and vegetables the day before. The decision was to work with Tate's professional chefs on the bridge straddling the hall, cutting and chopping the more than 100 kilos of lettuce, radishes, carrots, and tomatoes, in addition to spring onions and chives. A cellist, Lucy Railton, accompanied the initial sounds of making the salad. All the chopping tables on the bridge were miked and the sounds carried throughout the hall. Before a crowd of 2500 people the lettuce was dumped over the bridge to fall twenty-five feet onto a tarp supported on all sides by Goldsmiths College students. Salad dressing followed, poured from above. The salad was tossed in the tarp and raked with a sterile metal garden rake. This salad may be the largest recorded in human history!

Each day the Turbine Fluxus Olympiad, the creation of the late George Maciunas, came alive with children, students, curators, and the audience participating. Relays and board games were organized with "prepared" ping-pong paddles with holes in them and tennis rackets six feet high! These games went on each of the three days with soft astro turf underfoot. Simon Anderson and Sara Seagull directed the events.

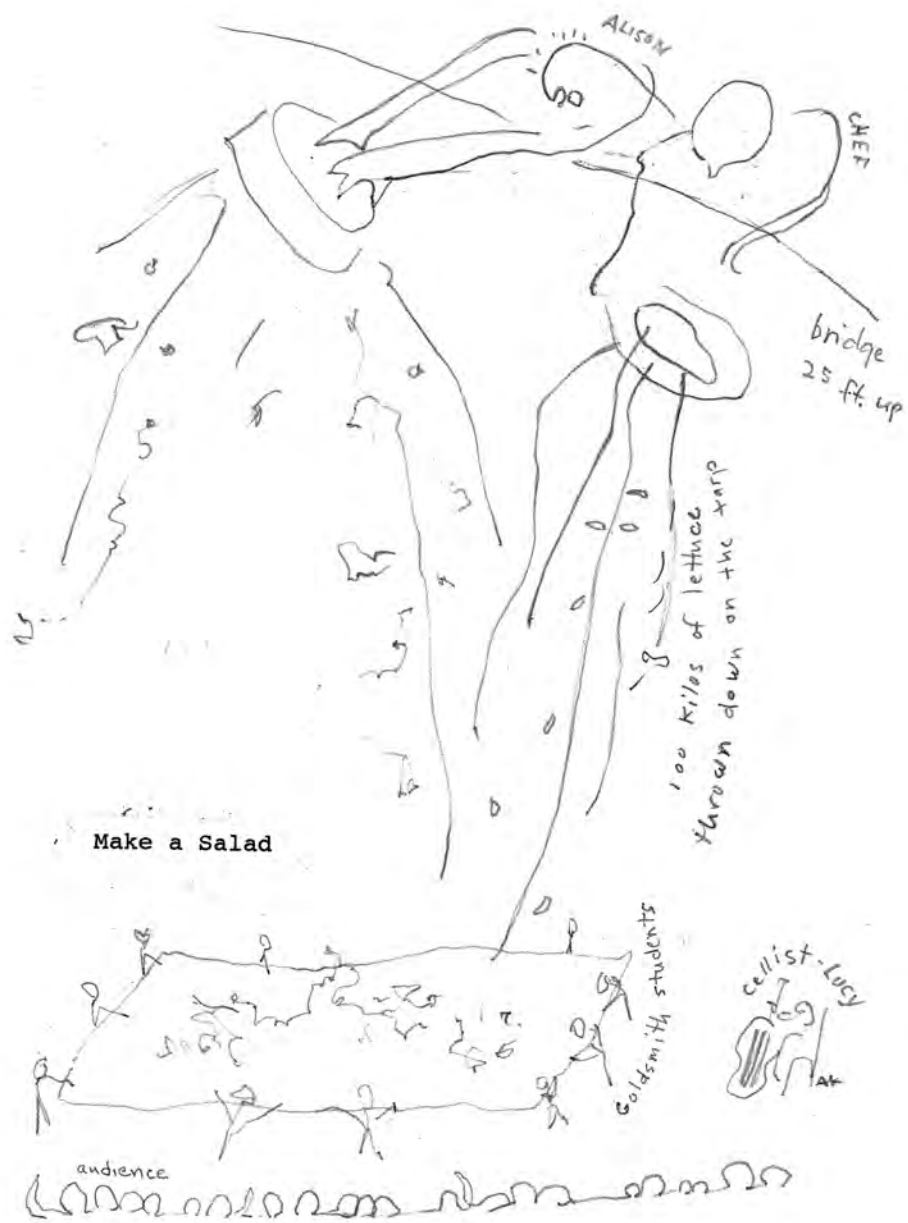
Newspaper Music had the participation of twenty or more Goldsmiths students. (This is also the largest participation we know of for this event.) Each chose a reading

from a newspaper of his/her language. A newspaper was read in sign language. The readings took place simultaneously while I served as “volume” conductor.

12 Piano Compositions for Nam June Paik by George Maciunas was directed by Sara Seagull following suggestions by cell phone from Larry Miller. Goldsmiths students dismembered the piano with saws while wearing white coverall suits. Simon Anderson drilled holes in the keys before nailing them down. Seagull and students painted the piano white with orange highlights, signaling the end of this classic Fluxus event score from the Wiesbaden performance of 1962.

Shuffle was conceived as a sound poem for the shoes and the floor. Also it provided a way for performers to enter and leave the stage by forming a conga line, holding each other by the waist. Anderson acted as a guide, wearing his elegant gray silk tuxedo, as I led the shuffle.

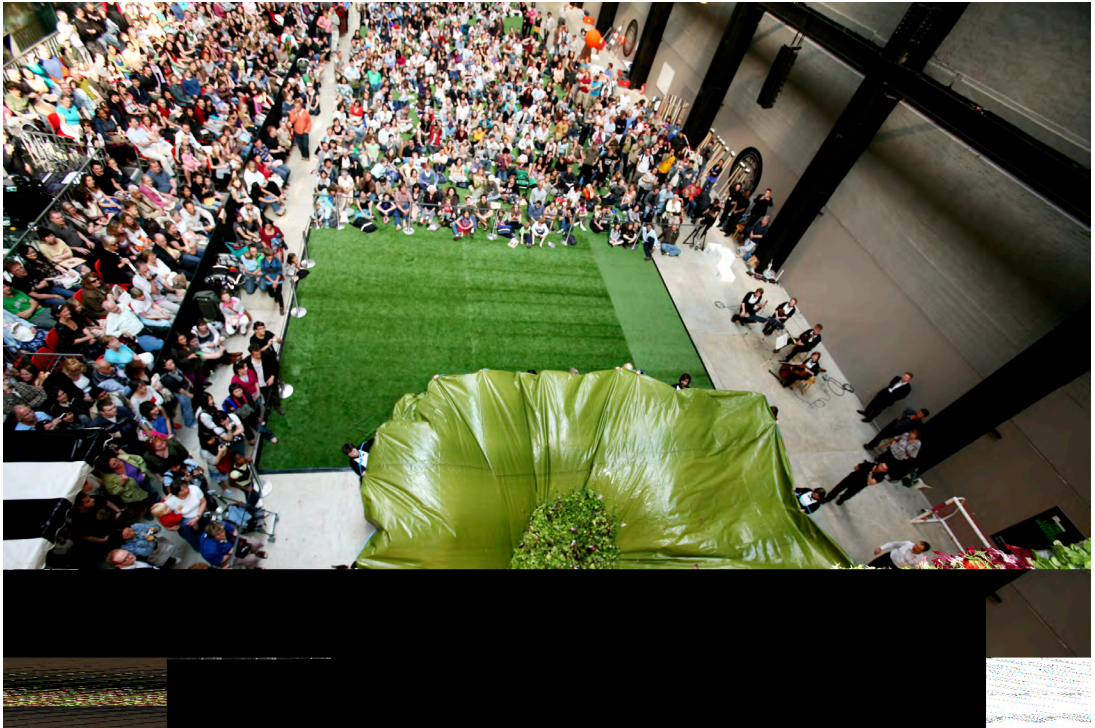
ALISON KNOWLES is a performer and intermedia artist who has been working in a multitude of art forms since she began her career as a founding member of Fluxus in the 1960s. She has created artists' books of all sizes, prints, sound art, event threads, radio plays, and performances through innovative experiments with text and image and materials. Her many works include the classic performance pieces *The Identical Lunch*, *The Bean Garden*, and *Make A Salad*; books such as *Bread and Water*, *Footnotes*, and the recent *Time Samples*. Her event scores and prints have been recently shown at the Miguel Abreu Gallery in New York City and Unimediamodern in Genoa. In 2000 Knowles began casting flax paper to make musical instruments. *The Bean Turner*, *Rattles*, *Wings*, and *Drums* use beans for sound with text and toys. She performs and lectures frequently in the U.S. and in Europe. At the Fluxus Long Weekend, held at the Tate Modern, May 24–27, 2008 she performed in her pieces *Make a Salad*, *Shuffle*, and *Newspaper Music*.



Make a Salad, a drawing by Alison Knowles on laid paper, 8¾" by 11".



Chopping salad on the bridge of the Tate Modern during the performance of *Make a Salad*, Fluxus Long Weekend at the Tate Modern, May 24–27, 2008.



Top: Dropping salad off the bridge to tarp below.
Bottom: Alison Knowles raking lettuce during the performance.
Photos: Sheila Burnett. Courtesy Tate Modern.





We expect the Goldsmiths students to show up for this performance each with a newspaper in their native tongue. Volume is provided by the conductor. Here, "full voice" with arms raised is indicated.

Newspaper Music, a drawing by Alison Knowles.
Pencil on laid paper, 8¾" by 11".



Alison Knowles conducting the performance of *Newspaper Music*. Photo: Sheila Burnett. Courtesy Tate Modern.



Top: *12 Piano Compositions for Nam June Paik* by George Maciunas, a drawing by Alison Knowles. Pencil on laid paper, 8¾" by 11".

Bottom: Performance of *12 Piano Compositions for Nam June Paik* by George Maciunas. Photo: Sheila Burnett. Courtesy Tate Modern.





Alison Knowles and others in *Shuffle*. Photo: Sheila Burnett. Courtesy Tate Modern.

Other *PAJ* features in the ongoing series “Performance Drawings”—

1. “*Deep Trance Behavior in Potatoland and Maria Del Bosco*,” by Richard Foreman, *PAJ* 90 (September 2008).
2. “*Geneva, Handfall*,” by Trisha Brown, *PAJ* 89 (May 2008).
3. “*The Threepenny Opera*,” by Robert Wilson, *PAJ* 88 (January 2008).
4. “Research Events,” by Ralph Lemon, *PAJ* 81 (September 2005).
5. “Studio as Study,” by Melinda Barlow, *PAJ* 71 (May 2002).