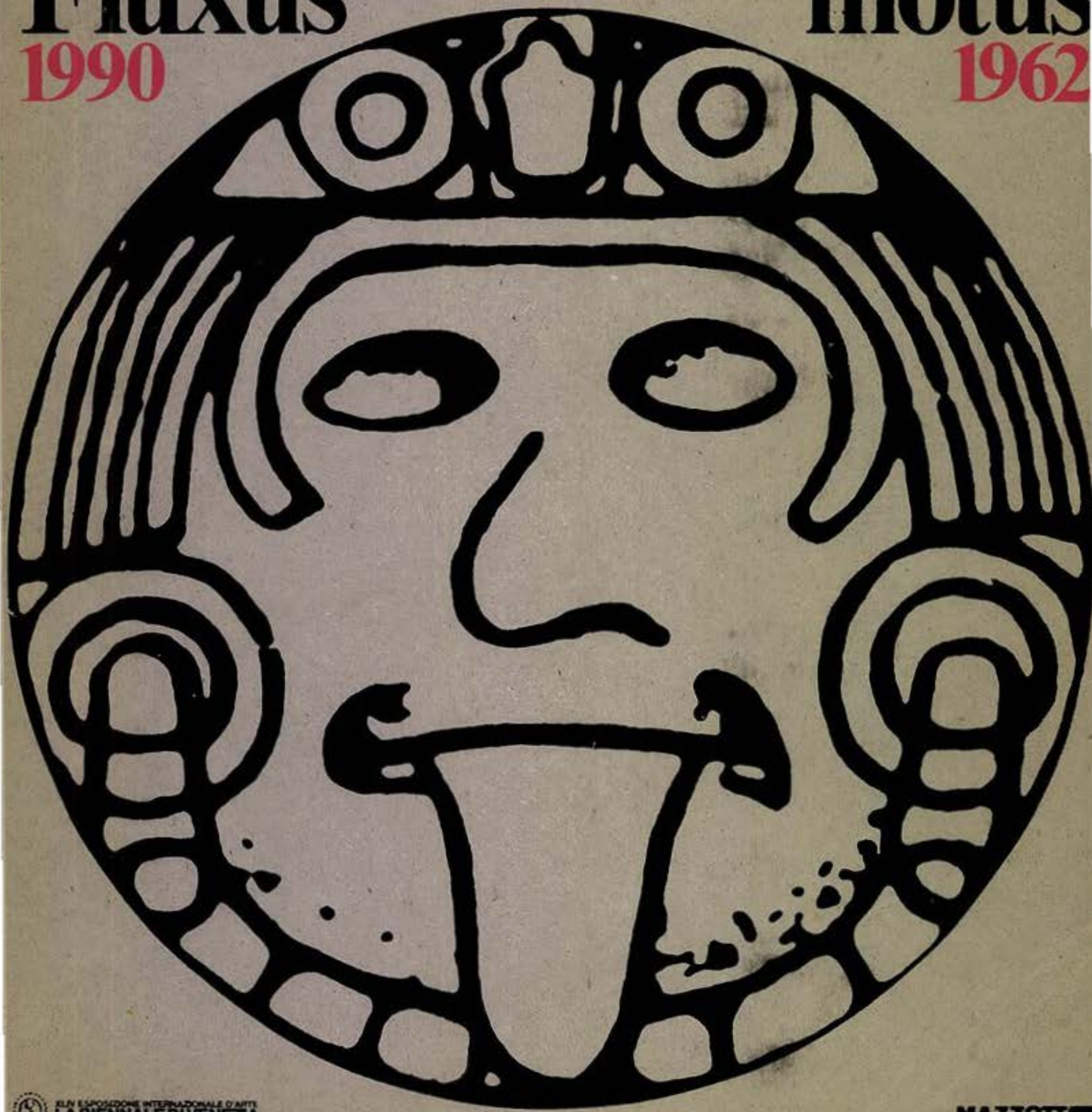


Ubi  
Fluxus  
1990

ibi  
motus  
1962









**Ubi Fluxus ibi motus**

**1990-1962**

Venezia, Ex Granai della Repubblica  
alle Zitelle (Giudecca)

26 maggio, 30 settembre 1990



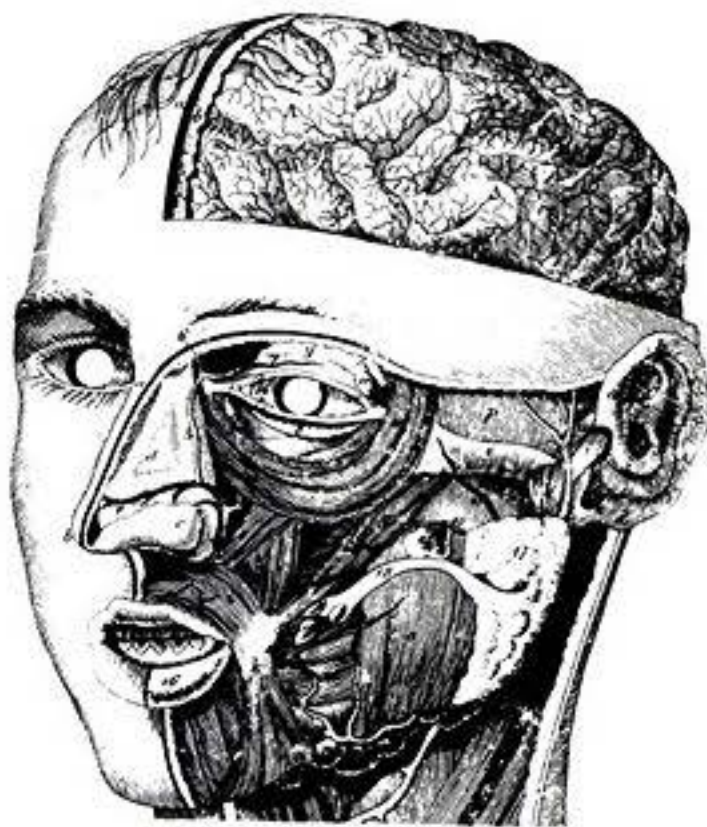




# Ubi Fluxus ibi motus

1990-1962

*A cura di Achille Bonito Oliva*





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Venezia, Ex Granai della Repubblica  
alle Zitelle (Giudecca)  
26 maggio, 30 settembre 1990

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**I**l moto di Fluxus si arresta per una stagione a Venezia e si condensa in una variegata e stimolante partecipazione di quegli artisti, dei loro antenati, dei loro simili e confratelli, negli antichi Granai della Serenissima, alla Giudecca, in coincidenza con la XLIV Esposizione internazionale d'arte della Biennale.

La sintesi delle arti è un'aspirazione antica, dal futurismo al dadaismo, nelle moderne avanguardie, ma lo era stata anche nelle classiche dimensioni del nostro Rinascimento. In aggiunta, Fluxus, al principio degli anni Sessanta, ne ha determinato l'irruzione nel presente, nello spicciolo quotidiano, superando e agitando l'atteggiamento dei pionieri pop, inglobando, di qua e di là dall'Atlantico, le energie artistiche più eterogenee, passando dall'opera fine a se stessa al gesto decisivo e aggressivo che investe la creatività del singolo per farne un'operazione collettiva, pressoché acefala, ma non anonima.

Tra le avanguardie del secondo dopoguerra, il movimento Fluxus è certamente quello che ha avuto maggiori conseguenze e nel quale forse ancora si riconosce un

gran numero di giovani contemporanei, specie nella schiera di coloro che alla pittura o alla scultura hanno opposto quello che oggi si definisce "the object". A volte mi viene da sorridere quando penso che Alexander Calder usava chiamare un suo "stabile" o un piccolo "standing-mobile" con lo stesso nome: "the object", specie se penso che quello era il tipo di oggetto più in carattere con il movimento.

"Ubi Fluxus ibi motus" è il titolo fluente che Achille Bonito Oliva ha voluto imprimere a questa mostra da lui pensata e curata e che comprende oltre un centinaio di artisti di grosso rilievo nelle vicende dell'arte contemporanea. Sono perciò lieto che il Consiglio direttivo della Biennale abbia deciso, su mia proposta, di porla sotto il patrocinio dell'istituzione e sono lieto di accoglierla tra le iniziative di questa Biennale e non senza un significativo confronto con la mostra "Ambiente Berlin" che la Biennale presenta nel padiglione centrale.

*Giovanni Carandente*

**F**luxus stops its motion for a season in Venice, and consolidates into a multi-faceted and stimulating event involving its artists and their forebears and confrères to be held in the venerable granaries of the Serenissima in the Giudecca, contemporaneous with the Biennale's XLIV International Art Exhibition.

The synthesis of the arts is an ancient aspiration of the modern avant-gardes, ranging from Futurism to Dadaism, but it was also included in the classical dimensions of the Italian Renaissance. Furthermore, Fluxus, at the start of the Sixties, brought it with a bang into the present, into the simple quotidian reality, overcoming and upsetting the stance of the Pop pioneers, embracing the most diverse artistic forces from both sides of the Atlantic, as the focus shifted from the work as an end in itself to the decisive and aggressive gesture whose impact on individual creativity turned it into a collective, practically acephalous – but not anonymous – operation.

Of the post-World War II avant-garde movements, Fluxus is certainly the one that experienced the farthest-reaching consequences, and also happens to be the one with which a

great number of contemporary young can identify – perhaps even still today, especially among the ranks of those who contrasted painting and sculpture with what is today defined as “the object”. At times it makes me smile to think of how Alexander Calder used to refer to one his “stables” or small “standing mobiles” with this very same name: “the object” – all the more so when I think that that was the type of object most in keeping with the movement.

“Ubi Fluxus ibi motus” is the flowing title that Achille Bonito Oliva has chosen to impress upon this exhibition, which he conceived and organized. It includes more than one hundred artists who figure greatly in the story of contemporary art. Therefore, I am pleased that the Biennale Organizing Committee has approved my motion to present it under the auspices of the institution, and I am pleased to include it among this Biennale's initiatives, one that is not lacking in comparative value with respect to the “Ambiente Berlin” exhibition that the Biennale will present in the main pavilion.

Giovanni Carandente



# Ubi Fluxus ibi motus

Achille Bonito Oliva

## Fluxus verso il Duemila

**S**pingere Fluxus verso il XXI secolo significa saper interpretare il suo spirito antistoricistico. Da qui la decisione di invertire la storia, le date e il percorso della mostra: non dal 1962 al 1990, ma dal 1990 al 1962. In tal modo non esistono pregiudizi favorevoli verso padri nobili o il passato. È il presente che diventa il punto di partenza capace di dare il passo allo spettatore che, dal suo presente, ripercorre le tappe di una creatività inesauribile che indietreggia con le sue tracce verso il tempo della sua fondazione. Il metodo critico asseconda la mentalità dell'arte. Di un'arte che non ama cronologie o l'idealità di un percorso lineare che non esiste fuori dai percorsi accidentati della storia. Dal presente al duraturo presente dell'arte. Un atteggiamento che non ama il partito preso della storia come processo garantito e garante dei *flussi* e dei *moti* della creazione. In tal modo la storia diventa il flagrante regresso verso il passato, a partire dall'hic et nunc dello spettatore che forma la propria esperienza attraverso il nomadismo del suo corpo deambulante, negli spazi temporali della mostra, fatta di oggetti e di eventi.

Andare verso il Duemila significa dunque adempiere a un nuovo compito, quello di evitare la sopraffazione del tempo. In sincronia con la mentalità del gruppo Fluxus che ha sempre aggirato il pericolo di un'arte impositrice dei suoi esclusivi tesori di bellezza formale sull'inerte condizione dell'esistente.

## La bellezza della neutralità

Fluxus significa avere la sensibilità veloce di interpretare i nuovi modi di produzione dell'arte e anche quelli di rifletterli criticamente. Significa che l'arte *in situazione* trova e affonda le proprie radici in movimenti, figure artistiche e anche in una filosofia dell'arte che parte da lontano e porta lontano: Duchamp, Picabia, Cravan, Schwitters, Balla ecc. Dimostrando come il problema dell'assemblaggio e del recupero dell'oggetto quotidiano nella sfera dell'arte non è un problema attinente semplicemente alla cultura del postmoderno, che rintraccia nel riciclaggio del quotidiano la possibilità della sopravvivenza culturale. Le opere qui presentate sono l'effetto di un atteggiamento mentale estremamente puntuale.







Da sinistra: Dick Higgins, un'amica, Daniel Spoerri, Alison Knowles e Ay-o.  
(Da *Fluxus cc Valise e TRangle*, n. 3, marzo 1964).

È giusto partire naturalmente da Marcel Duchamp il fondatore del procedimento che viene definito "ready-made". Ovvero la possibilità di creare arte attraverso il prelievo dell'oggetto quotidiano, lo spaesamento e la sua rifunzionalizzazione in termini di contemplazione estetica nello spazio della galleria o del museo. Lo spiazzamento dell'oggetto determina la nascita di un' "aura", di un senso nuovo che permette all'oggetto di viaggiare ad altri livelli e di attraversare la fantasia dello spettatore imprimendo su di essa nuove cifre e nuove possibilità.

Il ready-made di Duchamp apre l'arte contemporanea verso nuove possibilità, introduce nell'arte un quoziente concettuale che permette all'artista di considerarsi de-

miurgo, colui il quale con il gesto del prelievo, con l'impero del suo sguardo può sottrarre alla inerte orizzontalità del quotidiano un elemento per elevarlo nella sfera verticale dell'arte.

Tale premessa permette dunque di verificare il percorso che l'oggetto artistico ha realizzato nel corso dei vari decenni, dai primi ready makes di Duchamp fino a oggi. Dunque un secolo di arte realizzato attraverso una sorta di mistura tra prelievo dello sguardo e manualità e che arriva fino alla fine degli anni Ottanta, in piena epoca post moderna, a dimostrare come gli artisti hanno lavorato di anticipo anche rispetto all'attualità politica e sociale.

Il panorama presentato in questa mostra tende a eviden-



ziare in primo luogo il bisogno dell'artista di sostenere un linguaggio separato dalla vita e dal soggetto che lo promuove. *Oggetto* significa dunque non soltanto l'elemento prelevato dal quotidiano, ma anche, naturalmente, una filosofia dell'arte che chiede al linguaggio artistico di non essere mimetico, una sorta di riflesso condizionato della vita stessa. L'arte in quanto oggetto è sempre uno *scarto*, una sorta di *soglia* laterale che l'artista abita con la sua creazione e su cui individua la possibilità autonoma di far lievitare il suo gesto fantastico. Il gesto evergetico che l'artista mano a mano ha realizzato nel corso di questo secolo, tende via via a caricarsi di valenze simboliche, a uscire dalla semplice possibilità dello scandalo per approdare a una complessità, a un senso della costruzione che non significa adesione a un pensiero geometrico e neorazionale, ma piuttosto al bisogno che l'artista sente di attraversare il quotidiano e di ordinarlo secondo un'idea di leggera progettualità.

Questi artisti, infatti, non inseguono l'utopia positiva dell'arte, ovvero la possibilità di costruire un modello capace di trasformare il mondo, ma piuttosto di realizzare un piccolo ordine collegato all'opera realizzata, e capace dunque di essere semplicemente un modello di se stesso. L'umiltà dell'oggetto sta proprio in questo, una poetica che non si serve di materiali colti o di generi artistici accademici, ma piuttosto capace di attraversare il quotidiano, di prelevare l'inerte quotidiano per collocarlo in una sorta di assemblaggio, di cortocircuito che eleva l'elemento e il dettaglio a frammento, a tassello di una costruzione mentale. L'oggetto in definitiva è l'approdo del soggetto creativo, dell'artista, a una dimensione separata dalla propria biografia, proprio perché con grande umiltà egli individua nell'arte la propria possibilità espressiva. Inoltre è anche un ancoraggio per lo sguardo dello spettatore verso una costruzione capace di sollecitare in lui un nuovo senso delle cose. Ma questo senso non capovolge il senso del quotidiano, non lo combatte, ma semmai individua un interstizio, un luogo, quello di un'*utopia negativa*, ovvero direttamente collegata allo spazio fisico abitato dall'opera da cui l'artista parla e su cui lo spettatore può riflettere.

In definitiva attraverso i territori dell'arte si dimostra come l'artista contemporaneo con diverse attitudini può guardare il mondo, ma senza sentire il bisogno di manipolarlo. Prelevare l'oggetto quotidiano, assemblarlo in un ordine linguistico diverso da quello suo iniziale, non significa certamente porsi in termini di conflitto con le cose, ma in termini di complesso erotismo, capace di far lievitare attraverso un uso inedito l'inerzia delle cose e creare un campo di intensità legato dunque a una realtà che non si può rimuovere, che non si può cancellare, ma solo guardare e salvaguardare.

Salvaguardare diventa il compito dell'artista Fluxus diretto verso il Duemila, oltre la fine del XX secolo, segnato ormai dalla "finis Russiae". Questa fine rimanda al crollo delle ideologie e dei parametri esterni che

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A VARIETY PROGRAM

hanno, come un *ready-made assistito*, sostenuto la lunga marcia delle avanguardie verso il "sol dell'avvenire". Il gruppo Fluxus ha sempre operato fuori dall'assistenza di qualsiasi protesi, politica e ideologica. Ha sempre costituito la zona ecologica dello sperimentalismo internazionale, puntando sulla fondazione di uno spazio di *energia linguistica*, non sull'accumulo delle conquiste tecniche o sul catalogo dei materiali.



# FLUXFLEET READY TO DELIVER

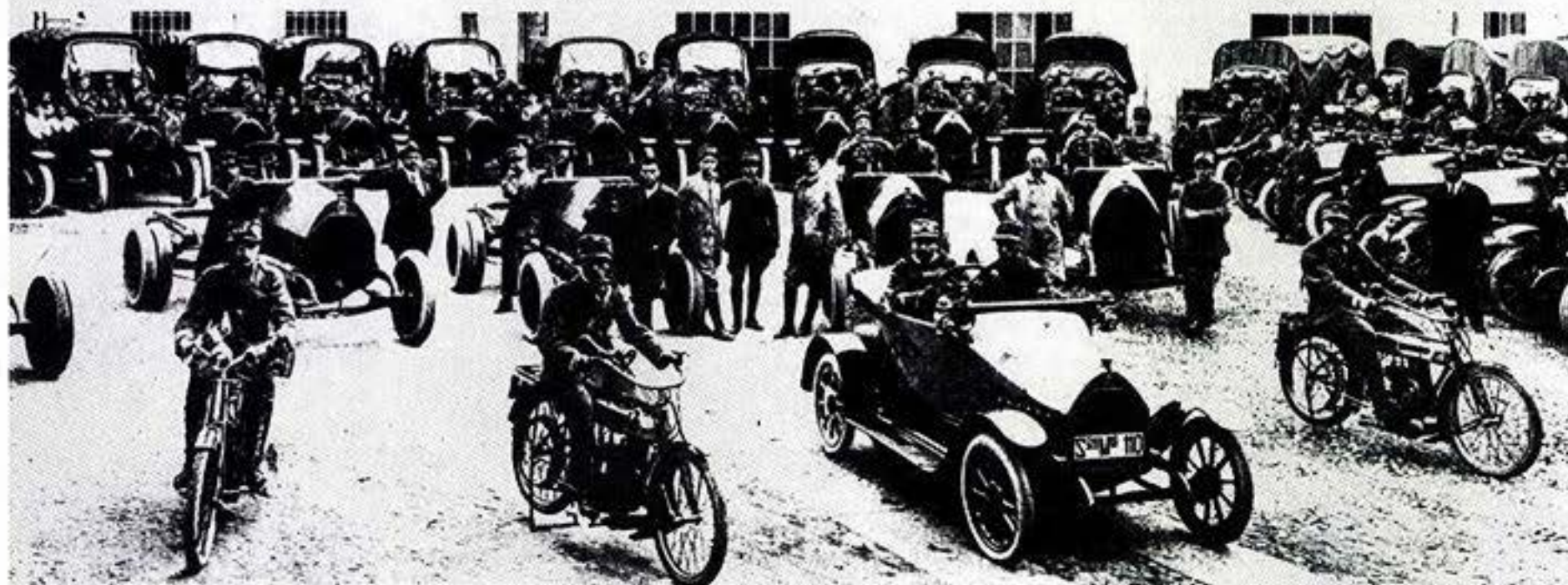


Illustrazione tratta da *Fluxus ce Valise e TRangle*, n. 3, marzo 1964.

Anche rispetto al lavoro degli artisti del *nouveau réalisme* gli artisti Fluxus hanno segnato il superamento di una mentalità tesa a produrre un estetismo diffuso sulle cose. Tutto sommato hanno contrastato una vocazione allora imperante, quella legata a una speranza, in qualche modo nobile, di riscattare la volgarità quantitativa del reale mediante l'innesto di una modica quantità qualitativa di ordine formale. Ancora una volta l'affermazione di una mentalità e di una nozione nobile di arte è capace di diffondere, come profumo, un'atmosfera estetica nel caos produttivo del mondo.

Prima di Fluxus l'arte ha sempre cercato di spingere l'arte verso di sé, di attirare gli eventi verso la frontiera linguistica della creazione estetica, intesa come riserva museografica di riscatto e di consegna della cronaca alla storia.

Ancora il prevalere della poesia sulla prosa del mondo. L'accento posto sulla dinamica verticale del momento creativo. L'oggetto quotidiano come metafora del passaggio dal disordine precedente all'ordine successivo, dettato dalla forma artistica. Action painting, new-dada, pop art e *nouveau réalisme* costituiscono ancora la polarità di una mentalità che investe la propria fiducia nel valore della progettualità e del progresso linguistico e storico. Tutti dentro l'ideologia di quel *darwinismo linguistico* che ha segnato l'evoluzionismo dell'arte contemporanea, come produzione di forme tese verso il riscatto della negatività della storia mediante l'elaborazione di linguaggi ancora basati sul principio di dialettica.

Fluxus applica invece il principio sano di contraddizione, implicante confronto e non conciliazione. E questo mediante una strategia intensiva di recupero dell'oggetto

come realtà e non memoria metaforica; partecipante a una *cucina combinatoria* che approda alla *cosa formale*. Con Fluxus l'arte si sposta verso la vita e porta la vita stessa verso l'interstizio di una diversa posizione in cui non esistono *miseria e nobiltà* ma la *neutralità* di un armistizio senza vincitori e vinti, la fondazione di un momento in cui tutto si oggettiva, arte e vita, forme di esistenza, nella presenza dell'opera.

Partire da Duchamp non significa rimanere dogmaticamente fermi alla sua poetica. Partire significa e implica invece spostamento e modificazione, fuori dalla linearità di una idea di progresso implicante fedeltà. La profonda infedeltà di Fluxus ha determinato lo sviluppo di una *ecologia dell'arte* che ha guardato e guarda ai due termini antitetici, arte e vita, fuori dal gioco delle preferenze, come elementi e cose partecipanti alla fine della cosa.

*Cosificare arte e vita* diventa l'imperativo di un gruppo che non ama l'anagrafe della nascita e della morte. Né dell'arte, né della vita. Tale possibilità, giocata sull'affermazione e sulla negazione, è fomentata dalla scelta, tra occidentale e orientale, della neutralità uscita dall'ordine binario e approdata a un terzo termine, non conciliato ma autonomo e determinato dal valore combinatorio degli oggetti e dei generi artistici intesi come cosa; senza gerarchia tra alto e basso, pittura e scultura, disegno e pittura, opera o evento. Da qui anche la preferenza verso circuiti in bilico fra ufficialità e alternatività, museo e officina.

Ecco apparire un nuovo spazio fisico e mentale: la *bellezza della neutralità*, l'affermazione di una *forma lenta* che non ama la superbia del rigore o la geometria della pura coerenza. Qui la bellezza nasce dal fatto che non esiste sopraffazione della novità o eleganza della citazio-



ne. Se esiste durata dell'opera, questo è dovuto a una *durata etica* del fare che non significa improvvisare ma semmai salvaguardare.

Fluxus vuole salvaguardare arte e vita, senza sopraffare nessuno dei due termini. Costruendo il territorio di una nuova neutralità, in cui non esistono *recinti* dell'arte per l'arte o *muri* della politica. Qui si vuole neutralizzare la superbia dell'arte e la volgarità della vita con forme costruite.

Il carattere duraturo della forma artistica implica un senso della costruzione che non vuole essere cancellato dall'opera successiva, né duplicare metaforicamente la realtà esterna. L'arte è quel movimento ambivalente che gioca su presenza e assenza, contatto e separazione, erotismo e distacco, atteggiamenti non contrastanti ma complementari, per affermare la diversa relazione con la realtà.

"Non si può sfuggire al mondo così bene che attraverso

l'arte e non ci si può legare maggiormente come attraverso l'arte" (Goethe). Questo atteggiamento designa la posizione di Fluxus, condizione filosofica che inizialmente sembra prendere le distanze dalle cose ma poi le adotta per costruire un ordine formale che designa la nuova realtà seppure attraverso una contaminazione di essa. L'ordine formale adottato non gioca sul puro accumulo, sulla presentazione di una casualità di assemblaggio che duplica metaforicamente la disseminazione quantitativa del mondo esterno. L'opera assume la cadenza fenomenologica contraddetta da un corposo ordine che la sostiene. Non il senso dell'accumulo ma quello di una necessaria compenetrazione, seppure abitata da relazioni impreviste.

L'imprevedibilità formale dell'opera viene amplificata dalla consistenza dei materiali, talvolta dalla voluta improponibilità degli accostamenti, e anche dalla elaborazione dei nessi che si spinge al limite

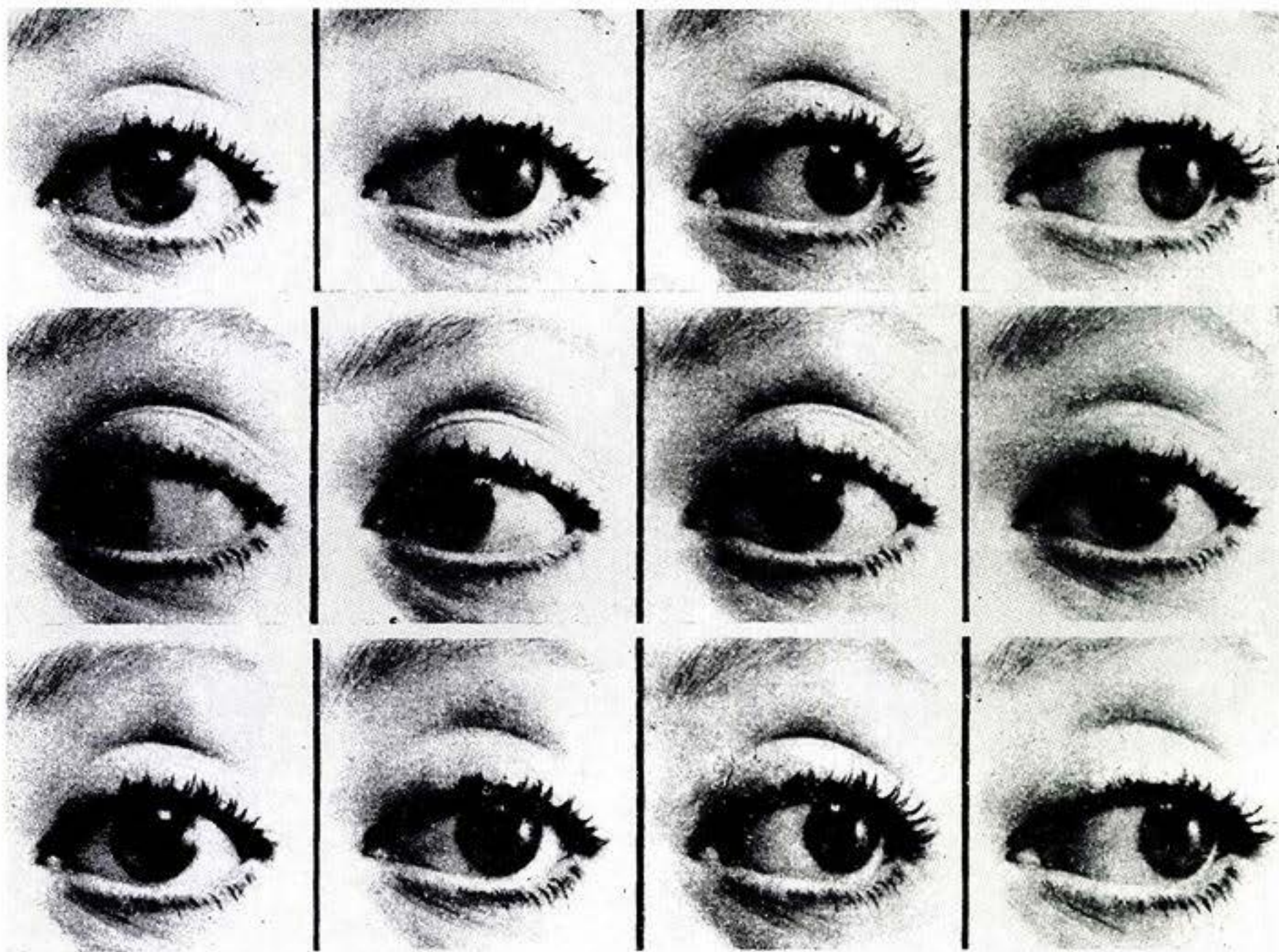
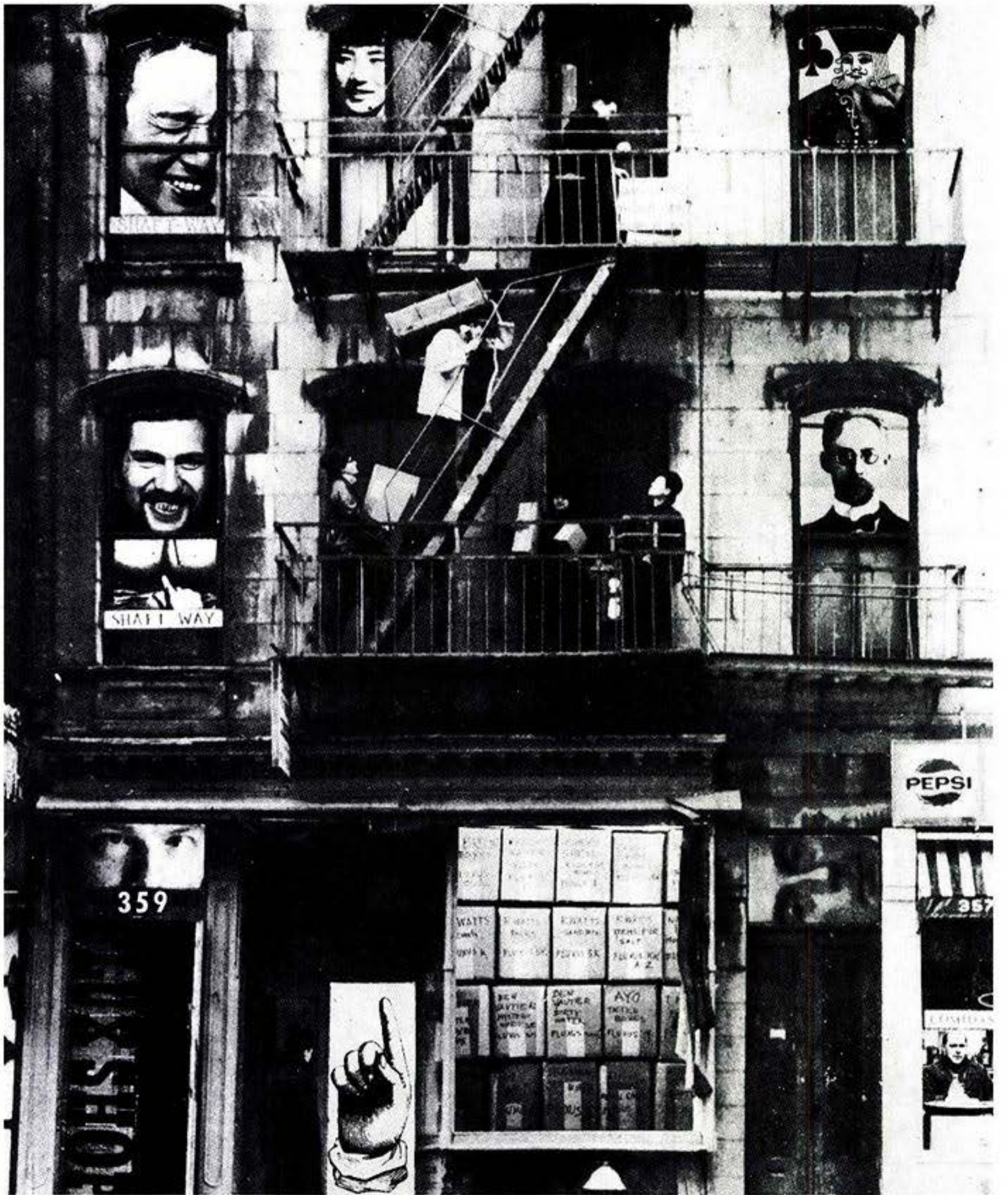


Immagine tratta da *Fluxus cc V TRE*, n. 2, febbraio 1964.







dell'incastro e della geometria.

L'oggetto non è un puro volume messo in evidenza ma elemento di una composizione che ne sfida la opaca corposità a favore di un risultato dove tutto viene piegato a un nuovo ordine formale. Quest'ordine naturalmente non produce una sublimazione dello splendore specifico ai singoli elementi, ma gioca a tramutare i singoli significati in un unico e trasfigurato significante. Da qui il connotato di involontaria metafisica, la forza di astrazione di queste opere tese indubbiamente alla fondazione di un nuovo *ordine di bellezza*.

L'ordine di bellezza che presiede nasce dalla condensazione dell'opera nella sua temporalità, residuo di un atteggiamento culturale che si assume tutte le responsabilità di una tradizione tipicamente europea.

In questo senso la memoria postmoderna perde il suo carattere edonistico della semplice citazione per acquistare la complessità di una memoria storica certamente non abitata dalla leggerezza e dal desiderio di liberarsi di se stessa e del proprio passato. Così l'opera d'arte diventa il deterrente di oggettiva resistenza che l'artista perpetra nei riguardi del proprio presente, a favore del proprio presente. In quanto capace di produrre durata in uno scenario che sembra abitato dalla intercambiabilità del soggetto e dell'oggetto. Il soggetto, in questo caso l'artista, è colui il quale ha coscienza di poter fondare attraverso la fenomenologia dell'opera un metodo, un atteggiamento in questo senso mentale, capace di salvaguardare la propria specificità anche attraverso l'opacità dell'oggetto.

Un *oggetto di complessità* abita l'opera di Fluxus, promanante dalla evidente consistenza dei vari elementi e dal tangibile ordine formale, che non li trattiene semplicemente insieme ma li intreccia in una composizione duratura.

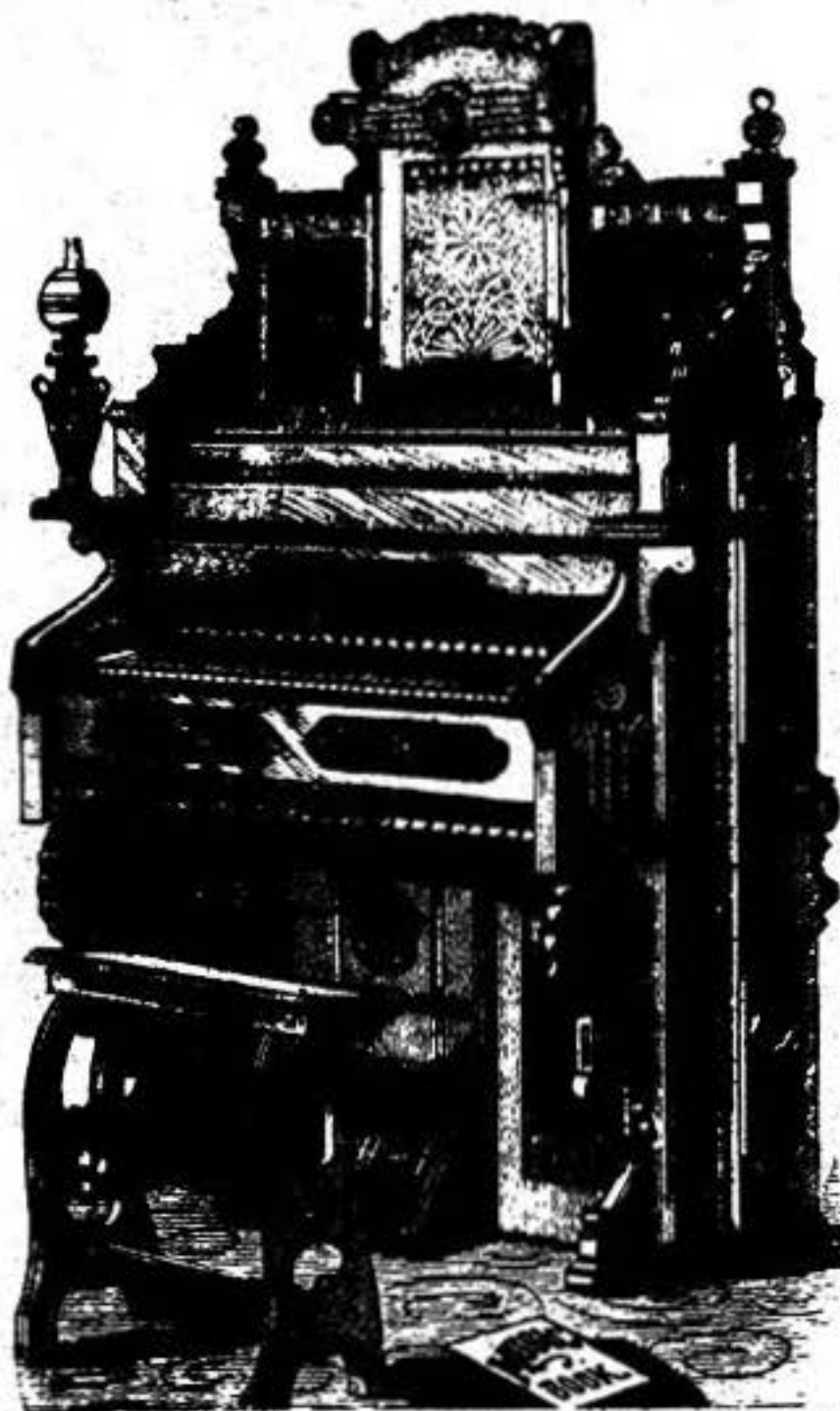
Ecco che la contaminazione non è la pura coincidenza di un gioco combinatorio, ma piuttosto l'effetto di un bisogno di complessità capace di eludere ogni semplificazione. L'opera non è retta da un ordine semplice ma da un processo di astrazione che non è mai preventivo bensì contestuale all'evidenza fisica dell'opera. Perché l'oggetto non si può eliminare, né può diventare l'effetto di una parvenza, piuttosto piegato a un uso fantastico che da una parte ne riconosce la presenza tautologica e dall'altra ne sfida l'apparente passività d'impiego.

Da qui l'uso talvolta ironicamente monumentale, il suo trasferimento in una diversa scala, il suo impiego invertito tra chiuso e aperto, la sua collocazione decontestualizzata. Non esistono oggetti privilegiati, quanto a ricorrenza o affettività, piuttosto stati di necessità che ne determinano l'uso a seconda del risultato da raggiungere.

La forma tende piuttosto a coniugare gli elementi per sollecitare un doppio processo di conoscenza, uno specifico riguardante l'opera, e l'altro più generale riguardante le sue relazioni col mondo.

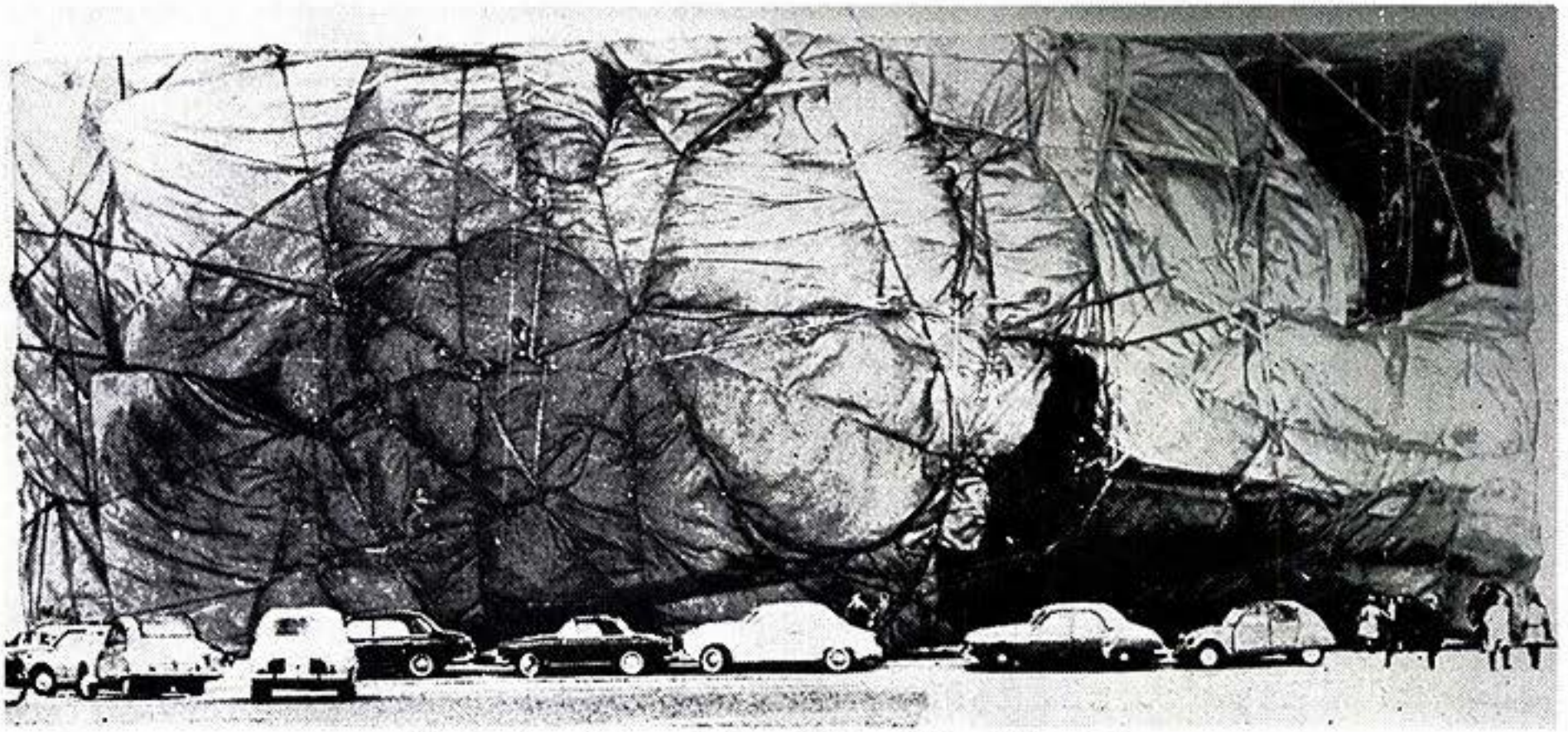
La nuova relazione non è stabilita attraverso la semplice differenza prodotta dall'inedito accostamento, quanto

# FLUXORGAN



FLUXUSx1	manual, 20 sounds, in suitcase,	\$ 50
FLUXUSx2	manual, 50 sounds, in suitcase,	\$ 90
FLUXUSx3	electrical, 20 sounds, in suitcase	\$ 150
FLUXUSx4	electrical, 40 sounds, in suitcase	\$ 250
FLUXUSx5	portable console, keyboard	\$ 250
FLUXUSx6	console, keyboard,	\$ 800





Christo, impacchettamento di un edificio pubblico, ottobre 1961.  
(Da *Fluxus cc V TRE*, n. 1, gennaio 1964).

piuttosto dalla fondazione di un metodo formale reso ancor più evidente dall'attinenza dei materiali col mondo esterno. Tale attinenza evita la facile sorpresa e lo stupore conseguente, diventa un ulteriore tratto di sfida per l'artista che si allontana e nello stesso tempo rientra in gioco con le cose mediante la loro adozione che meglio permette la verifica del nuovo ordine formale. L'arte non è mettere ordine nel mondo ma suggerire metodi di aggregazione capaci di sviluppare processi di conoscenza interna ed esterna, interiore ed esteriore. L'opera non è il frutto di irrigidimento e di paralisi che essicano ogni sedimentazione, piuttosto pratica di appropriazione fuori dal principio del possesso, fondazione di un metodo capace di dare un metodo anche alla vita dell'artista.

Questo non significa costringere l'artista repressivamente dentro la logica della poetica, dentro la coerenza metalinguistica dell'opera, ma semmai stabilizzare la leggerezza dell'essere dentro l'evidente consistenza dell'opera e attraverso essa.

Questa non è fatta di accumulo, oggetto seppure formalizzato accanto ad altri oggetti quotidiani. L'ordine che senza rigidità governa l'opera si assume il compito di stabilire un confine tra due universi che vivono insieme ma nello stesso tempo sono governati diversamente.

Il metodo di Fluxus non sublima lo spazio nella pura evocazione del tempo ma accetta l'ingombro dell'oggetto nella sua spessa fisicità, valorizzandola per accostamento ad altre fisicità certamente non affini per uso e destinazione.

Perché l'arte, muovendosi in un panorama meno articolato e omogeneo di merci, non riconferma il *valore d'uso*

dell'oggetto quotidiano, il suo essere o essere stato passibile di consumo; quanto piuttosto il valore di impiego fantastico che l'artista ne può ottenere mediante il procedimento di contaminazione.

L'artista è colui che adotta una sorta di processo radioattivo per contaminare e adottare l'oggetto quotidiano, già di per sé avvelenato dalla sua appartenenza storica. Un'altra storia, più trasfigurante investe ora l'oggetto quotidiano, in quanto impossibile da riprodurre culturalmente. Ora l'oggetto conserva la sua vischiosità e anche spesso il suo decoro, ma viene piegato e adottato per un uso trasversale, che solo l'artista ne può fare.

Ma Fluxus non pensa così di riscattarsi o di riscattare la storia, quanto piuttosto di innescare processi formali capaci di produrre nel presente atteggiamenti di resistenza resi evidenti e lampanti dalla costruzione della macchina, dal suo funzionamento interno fatto di relazioni di singoli elementi governati dall'idea della complessità e dell'unità nello stesso tempo.

Governare la complessità attraverso la costruzione di un metodo linguistico diventa ora l'assunto: non duplicare pateticamente la complessità dell'universo tecnologico, quanto piuttosto quella del rapporto tra individuo e società, tra il singolo e l'apparato normativo. Una risposta comportamentale mediante la produzione di una forma chiusa e duratura, che chiude con la mentalità del nostro secolo e spinge l'arte inevitabilmente verso il *Duemila*.

Dove la bellezza, per essere veramente alla portata di tutti, deve assumere il carattere della neutralità.

L'emblema leonardesco "Ubi fluxus ibi motus" spinge l'arte fuori dal Rinascimento occidentale e la porta



verso una geografia cosmica che non conosce confini territoriali, ma la necessità antropologica di non incontrare nemici, separazione tra artista e spettatore, tra arte e vita.

### *Fluxus come Fluxus*

È dal dadaismo che nasce una linea *sintetica* dell'arte come opera d'irruzione nel presente quotidiano, al di fuori delle strutture che organizzano il normale lavoro artistico. Secondo un'improvvisazione che è metodo e tentativo di modifica delle abitudini sociali.

L'evento artistico si sviluppa secondo una libera aggregazione di gesti, che partono all'inizio da un semplice canovaccio nel quale l'unica intenzione costante è la rottura del gesto quotidiano inteso quale gesto sempre funzionale ed economico, cioè rispondente a un fine. L'evento rompe il binomio causa-effetto, perché riesce a promuovere nel corpo sociale l'irruzione di gesti non economici e afunzionali, disinteressati, o con l'unica finalità di portare alla superficie zone rimosse e fantasie non vissute, appartenenti all'inconscio.

Alla conoscenza specialistica e settoriale l'arte *sintetica* oppone la coscienza globale e profonda che scardina la specificità del linguaggio artistico per sconfinare nel luogo totale della creatività. Tra le neoavanguardie il gruppo Fluxus è quello che ha lavorato per una strategia globale, tesa a rifondare a livello antropologico l'esperienza artistica. Arte come Fluxus, cioè come flusso e diarrea, movimento inarrestabile della concretezza di un evento o di un oggetto.

La rappresentazione artistica diventa il momento focalizzante della dialettica tra l'Io dell'artista e l'oggettività del mondo, dove il mondo – paradossalmente – è la polarità privilegiata perché costituisce lo spazio esistenziale da cui nasce l'urgenza dell'opera.

Arte appunto come luogo totale in cui la creatività non tende più a individuarsi secondo la nozione di lavoro artistico, ma a espandersi con voluta infedeltà alle attitudini riconosciute dalla società all'uomo-artista.

La tattica può consistere nella proposta diretta della stessa fisicità dell'artista o degli oggetti impiegati, esibizione effimera del soggetto o dell'oggetto, per affermare una nozione non d'informazione asettica ma di comunicazione.

La qualità di effimero riguarda non solo la presentazione calda del corpo (che per la sua evidenza tenta di scardinare la separatezza teatrale con il pubblico), ma anche l'uso dell'oggetto che viene impiegato per semplice associazione, quasi come un utensile. La durata del gesto tende a pareggiare il tempo fisiologico di formazione dell'opera e il tempo di fruizione della stessa.

Così Fluxus si è mosso come un fronte mobile di persone e non come un gruppo codificato di specialisti, seguendo più che la tattica di sperimentazione di nuovi linguaggi la strategia del contagio sociale: la possibilità

di creare una serie di reazioni a catena, onde magnetiche al di sopra e al di sotto dell'arte.

L'arte agisce all'interno di un sistema dove le separazioni geografiche e le diverse matrici culturali spesso determinano una frantumazione della comunità artistica. Perché gli artisti costituiscono un'involontaria comunità, anzi una comunità concentrata che si contrappone al resto della società, quanto a scelte ideologiche e a comportamento individuale.

Prima di Fluxus esistevano una serie di comunità artistiche, divise per paesi, e al loro interno ancor più divise per poetiche. Le divisioni geografiche corrispondono spesso anche a divisioni di mercato, a contesti sociali che si contrappongono tra loro in base alla maggiore o minore aggressività.

Fluxus è il primo movimento che supera tali steccati. Rompe le divisioni e la frantumazione dell'arte, chiamando intorno a sé artisti americani, europei, giapponesi, coreani, al di là delle distanze geografiche e culturali. Rinunciando a considerare la poetica come comune denominatore, Fluxus ha chiamato a raccolta artisti di diversa estrazione culturale e provenienti da poetiche diverse.

Alla frantumazione della comunità artistica voluta dal sistema, Fluxus risponde con la concentrazione e con l'affermazione di un'unica comunità, in cui fluidamente entrare e uscire. La base di tale incontro non è estetica ma etica, l'intenzione cioè di dare all'arte un contenuto rinnovato attraverso il quale essa possa trovare un rapporto con la vita. L'oggetto o l'evento quotidiano non sono l'oggetto o l'evento dell'happening, non è l'improvvisazione cosmetica che abbellisce lo spazio urbano entro cui avviene l'azione.

L'azione Fluxus non è soltanto un'affermazione interdisciplinare dell'arte, come avviene nell'happening, ma il tentativo di svelare una qualità che già l'evento e l'oggetto quotidiano hanno in sé: la qualità del quotidiano. Perché il quotidiano non è il livello basso dell'arte, ma è lo spazio reale, l'unico possibile per vivere con e senza l'arte. Perciò Fluxus significa il salutare passaggio dalla poesia alla prosa, da una condizione aulica dell'arte a uno stato che funziona da messa a fuoco sulla realtà.

Il passaggio dall'estetico all'etico avviene attraverso la riduzione della nozione di lavoro artistico, inteso come elaborazione di strumenti specifici che riguardano l'arte. Ciò avviene mediante l'introduzione di un atteggiamento interdisciplinare che promuove un tipo di arte non più rapportabile alle sue categorie o ai suoi parametri tradizionali.

Non si parla più di pittura, scultura, poesia o musica, ma di evento che ingloba dentro di sé tutte le discipline possibili e tutti gli stili. Alla base esiste una posizione ideologica, che è quella della cleptomania, la libertà di assumere un mondo come materiale permanente e totale in tutti i suoi aspetti, per realizzare un gesto o un'opera d'arte.

Lo scardinamento di ogni aspetto specialistico dell'arte



# fashions with the custom-comfort

(No Model.) for executives, diplomats, businessmen, lawyers  
SALUTING DEVICE.

No. 556,248.

Patented Mar. 10, 1896.

Fig: 1

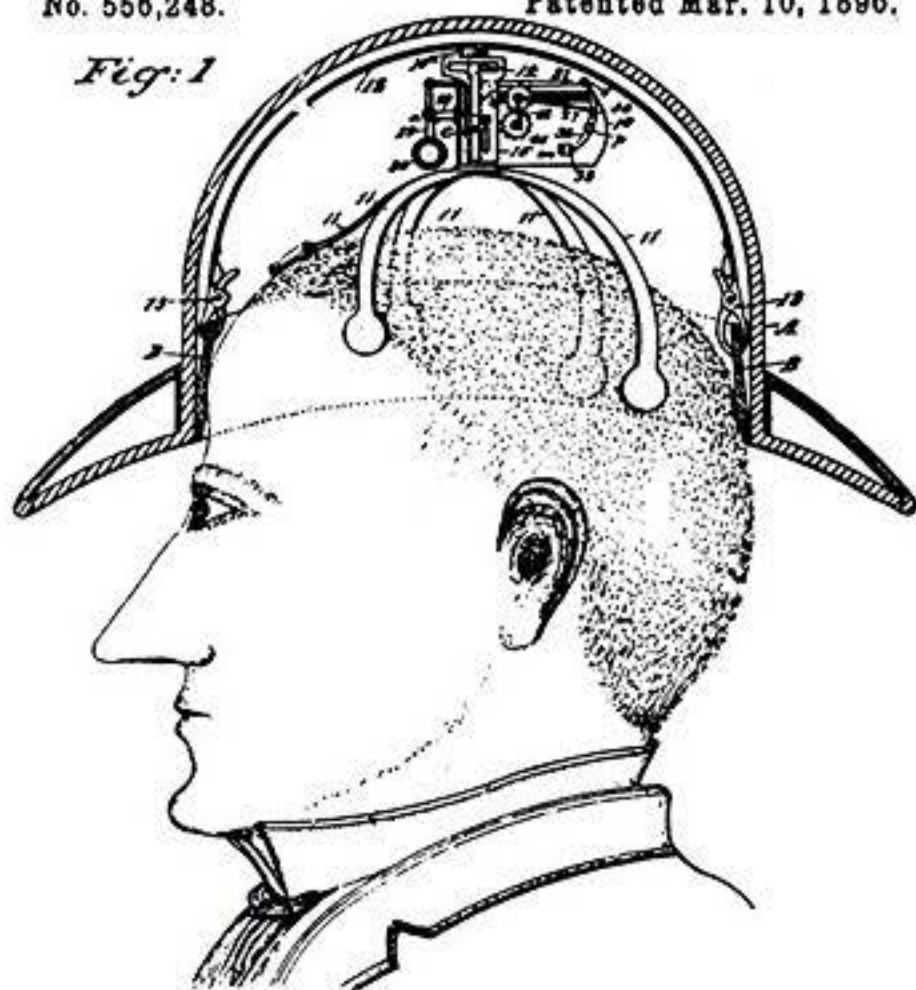
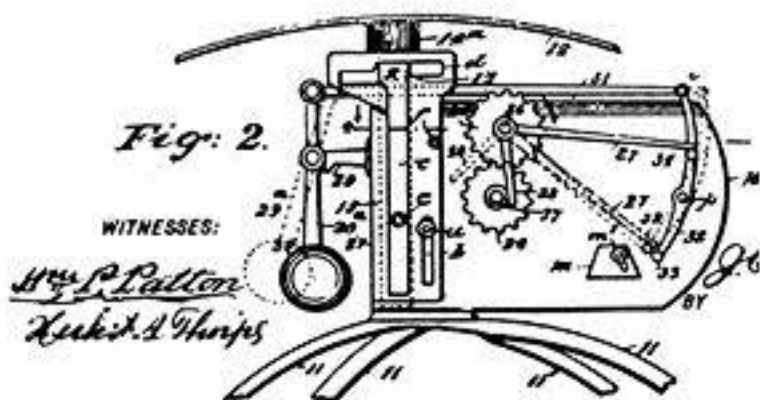


Fig: 2.



non significa parodia dell'arte, ma anzi sconfinamento e apertura che crea un flusso, un movimento, attraverso il quale l'arte acquista il movimento della vita. La premessa di tutto ciò è costituita dalla coscienza del mondo come valore, di una qualità della vita. Fluxus vede la vita attraverso un'ottica e uno sguardo di 360 gradi che gli permettono di avere una visione circolare e totale delle cose. La circolarità non riguarda soltanto le cose nella loro fisicità, ma anche l'assunzione di dati culturali che non appartengono al contesto dell'arte della cultura occidentale. La nozione del tempo trova una sua ascendenza nella cultura orientale dello Zen, per il quale il tempo è una fitta rete di attimi che si susseguono orizzontalmente in maniera incessante e continua.

Il tempo è una dimensione aperta e discontinua che non qualifica soltanto i gesti più significativi ma anche quelli più anonimi e quotidiani. La cultura occidentale ci aveva abituati a considerare il tempo come misura del pensiero umano, come dimensione che scandiva il proprio fluire in sincronia con la storia e non con la pura cronologia dei fatti.

Infatti la storia occidentale raccoglie soltanto eventi e date storiche, misurate col parametro della loro eccezionalità, della loro capacità di uscire dal livello medio dei fatti quotidiani. Alla visione verticale del tempo tipica della cultura occidentale, la cultura orientale ne oppone una tutta orizzontale, adatta ad accompagnare la vita quotidiana in ogni sua condensazione, anche al di sotto di un suo accadimento eroico.

Attraverso Cage, Fluxus assume tale ottica e per questo accoglie nello spazio dell'arte ogni oggetto e ogni gesto possibile. Ora il tempo dell'arte rispetta quello orizzontale della vita: l'oggetto è l'oggetto, il gesto è il gesto.

Il quotidiano, cioè, non è soltanto la dimensione di partenza, ma anche la dimensione d'arrivo dell'arte; se l'arte non è più celebrazione dell'eccentrico, non è più passaggio dalla poesia alla prosa, e se invece è affermazione del già esistente, essa diventa passaggio da una prosa (la vita) a un'altra (l'arte).

Per Fluxus l'arte è il passaggio, è il processo che porta la vita da un *grado* di esistenza all'altro.

Quando nel 1962 si tenne a Wiesbaden il "Fluxus Internationale Festspiele", tutti gli artisti partecipanti realizzarono opere o eventi che puntavano non tanto sulle loro qualità estetiche quanto sulla loro intensità e determinazione di affermare il quotidiano.

Il quotidiano contiene non soltanto l'accadimento intenzionale e intelligente, ma anche il caso, il fortuito, l'incomprensibile e, in definitiva, anche il livello di idiozia.

Tutto questo è il quotidiano, la vita ramificata a frantumata in una fattualità accidentale. Su questa fattualità Fluxus agisce con un atteggiamento fenomenologico, per cui il mondo è il mondo della vita e l'arte è arte totale. Maciunas, Paik, Brecht, Vautier, Filliou, Vostell, Chiari, Simonetti, Patterson, Schmit, Andersen, Ono, Kosugi, Knowles ecc. hanno costituito una pattuglia mobile,



dislocata geograficamente in posti differenti, e hanno operato costantemente con un atteggiamento interdisciplinare. L'uscita dell'arte dai suoi ambiti specifici ha significato anche la sua uscita dai canali istituzionali, gallerie e musei.

Ogni spazio è diventato il luogo possibile dell'evento artistico. All'aperto o al chiuso gli artisti hanno agito mediante l'impiego di materiali e linguaggi provenienti da diverse aree, associando mezzi e strumenti tra loro i più disparati. Tale atteggiamento interdisciplinare e il suo esercizio in spazi alternativi hanno permesso a Fluxus di anticipare ricerche che si sono sviluppate negli anni successivi, dall'arte concettuale al comportamento. Ma stabilire Fluxus come antecedente linguistico significa riportarlo in un ambito circoscritto ed estetico, dal quale egli ha cercato di uscire, attraverso il collegamento di artisti affini tra loro non per poetica ma per posizione verso la vita.

Per questo Fluxus, flusso, diarrea o marea, ha operato principalmente per dissotterrare l'energia latente del mondo, fisica e mentale. Le contraddizioni linguistiche all'interno del gruppo servono proprio a non permettere di parlare di gruppo, ma di una continua *messa in situazione*.

Una visione del tempo, filtrato e rallentato dall'assunzione dell'ottica dello Zen, permette a qualsiasi oggetto e a qualsiasi gesto di varcare la soglia dell'arte. Se la sedia è la sedia, bere un bicchier d'acqua è un bicchier d'acqua bevuto da un uomo. Questo significa che il filtro dell'arte non deve rendere simbolico il quotidiano, ma dare a questo una segnalazione e una concentrazione che il sistema sociale non dà.

Il sistema sociale tende a valorizzare soltanto il tempo della produzione economica, nel quale oggetti e gesti sono significativi soltanto se produttivi economicamente. Il gesto non funzionale, disutile e disinteressato, è scartato dalla logica del sistema. Con Fluxus l'oggetto è assunto nella sua afunzionalità, nel suo apparire fenomenico, e il gesto viene compiuto anche se viene prodotto per distruggere l'oggetto. La distruzione dell'oggetto, violino, pianoforte, è contraria all'idea tradizionale dell'arte che tende a rendere funzionale l'oggetto attraverso la sua conservazione e il suo uso, il suono.

Ma il suono può significare anche il rumore prodotto dal pianoforte o dal violino sfasciati, dai colpi ripetuti dell'artista che lacera l'oggetto o appallottola intorno a un microfono un foglio di carta. Il suono non è solo i codici della musica, ma anche il rumore della vita che così diventa musica. La distanza tra l'arte e la vita è sottilissima, dipende soltanto dalla coscienza linguistica dell'artista che compie il gesto.

Forse per questo l'opera iniziale di Fluxus si è rivolta prevalentemente verso la musica, l'arte più astratta e invisibile. Attraverso essa è possibile mettere in situazione, cioè in collegamento, circostanze, oggetti e persone separati tra loro.

La musica non dipende dal suono, ma dalla volontà



# A LINE 1088 MILES LONG

1000



eye, and terminates at a very short distance from the caudal; its rays are of moderate length. Pectorals of ... sides nearly equally developed, half as long as the head. The scales of the ... indistinctly.

Immagine tratta da *Fluxus cc V TRE*, n. 1, gennaio 1964.





Immagine tratta da *Fluxus cc V TRE*, n. 1,  
gennaio 1964.



dell'artista di considerare tale, dopo Cage, anche il silenzio. Non esiste frattura o distanza, ma continuità. Non esiste gerarchia tra i fatti, ma un orizzonte di fatti e di strumenti da cui continuamente attingere. Tale pareggiamento, perseguito da Fluxus, nasce anche dalla volontà di rendere l'arte più accessibile e democratica. Scardinare ogni specializzazione significa abbattere il privilegio e il potere di coloro i quali fanno del proprio sapere specializzato una professione.

Essere contro il professionismo, per Fluxus, significa trasgredire ogni pretesa fedeltà ai materiali o alle tecniche che, attraverso il loro uso ripetuto, costituiscono il marchio di riconoscimento dell'artista da parte del mercato.

Attraverso l'uso interdisciplinare del linguaggio, attraverso la considerazione che tutto è contemporaneamente pittura, scultura, poesia, musica, significa sfuggire all'immediato riconoscimento del mercato e alla sua strumentalizzazione.

Forse Fluxus tende, attraverso l'arte, all'*architettura sociale*, intesa come un processo di dinamica permanente che entra in ogni circostanza della vita e dell'organizzazione sociale. La scelta dell'evento, dell'azione effimera, vuole proprio spostare l'arte dal suo essere produzione di oggetti a produzione d'esperienza, che si sviluppa simultaneamente tra i due poli costituiti dall'artista e dal pubblico. Il pubblico tradizionale, che assiste a una mostra o a uno spettacolo, è chiamato anch'egli a compiere un lavoro, che è quello della contemplazione. Se l'arte non è più un lavoro, inteso come gestione di un apparato di strumenti specifici e professionali, allora anche la fruizione del pubblico si modifica e diventa partecipazione.

Apparentemente anche nell'happening sembra che esista una partecipazione del pubblico, un'uscita dal suo ruolo passivo. Ma esiste una differenza profonda tra l'happening e l'evento Fluxus.

L'happening è un accumulo quantitativo di oggetti e gesti che trova attraverso la loro dissociazione, il loro essere messi in relazione inedita, la sua qualità estetica. Solo da questa dissociazione nasce il suo aspetto artistico. L'evento Fluxus, invece, parte dalla coscienza situazionistica che la realtà è già spettacolo. Ogni oggetto o gesto quotidiano ha in questo la sua qualità e non necessità di essere relazionati in maniera inedita. Nell'evento Fluxus ogni oggetto o gesto è esibito in sé, nella sua grammatica elementare, senza il rafforzamento di altri oggetti o gesti che lo accompagnino.

L'happening tende sempre a un'espressività della messa in opera del gesto, tende cioè a sottolineare il passaggio dell'oggetto o dell'azione dal suo uso quotidiano al suo uso artistico. L'evento Fluxus invece, tende solo a sottolineare il passaggio dell'oggetto e del gesto da un grado di esistenza all'altro.

Il pubblico allora non assiste alla mistificante trasformazione della vita in arte, ma all'evidenziamento dell'esi-

stenza dei due livelli: arte e vita. Perché se fosse vero che il gesto creativo dell'artista trasforma la realtà in qualcos'altro (l'arte), in questa maniera si privilegia la polarità costituita dall'artista rispetto a quella del pubblico che ancora siede tra la vita. Invece il pubblico dell'evento Fluxus vive un rapporto paritetico con l'artista, in quanto questi non pretende di realizzare alcuna trasformazione, ma vuole solo affermare i dati dell'esistente, così come il pubblico stesso, con la sua presenza, afferma l'esistenza dell'artista e del suo gesto.

Allora la partecipazione avviene attraverso uno scambio alla pari tra pubblico e artista, nel quale il pubblico rafforza la propria coscienza del quotidiano e l'artista afferma attraverso di essa la possibilità di tutti di passare, anche il pubblico, dalla parte di chi promuove l'evento.

L'evento non ha bisogno di uno spazio flagrante e istituzionale per avvenire, non necessita sempre della presenza del pubblico. Può avvenire che lo spazio, entro il quale l'opera agisce, sia aperto e non circoscritto. Quando Fluxus realizza una serie di francobolli postali, francobolli Fluxus, attraverso i quali affrancare l'invio di lettere e cartoline, allora lo spazio non è più controllabile.

Esso diventa lo spazio della comunicazione sociale, che avviene appunto attraverso la posta, dilatabile all'infinito, estensibile oltre qualsiasi confine geografico, culturale e linguistico.

Così Fluxus istituisce il viaggio come promozione di rapporti intersoggettivi, riduzione delle distanze e collegamento tra loro di realtà diverse. Fluxus tende a coprire ogni attività e ogni necessità, può intervenire sulle situazioni apportando continui livelli di creatività e di energia, in un mondo che sembra sempre più destinato all'entropia e alla scomparsa.

Tutto è possibile, ogni materiale è permesso, anche l'uso della parola. La parola organizzata in pensiero, secondo un sistema di riflessione che può aiutare, come nel caso di Flynt, a promuovere una conoscenza dell'arte e della sua realtà.

La conoscenza nasce sempre da un'esigenza politica, da una tensione all'investigare gli strumenti e i fini dell'agire umano che permetta un allargamento della coscienza e un suo giusto rapporto con la realtà.

Fluxus è un modo di conoscenza e una costante presa di coscienza dei livelli plurimi della vita, una sorta di *rivoluzione permanente*, che non s'attesta mai sulle proprie posizioni e sulle proprie conquiste, ma che anzi utilizza il proprio agire non per circoscrivere la presenza e l'intervento, quanto per espanderli e dilatarli non nell'acquisizione formale di norme e nuovi linguaggi, bensì per produrre un'arte che è reale soltanto quando produce modelli di comportamento alternativi rispetto al sistema.

Tale modello, proposto come contagio sociale, è sicuramente un uso Fluxus della libertà, una libertà liberata.



# Ubi Fluxus ibi Motus

Achille Bonito Oliva

## Fluxus Toward the Year Two Thousand

**T**o push Fluxus toward the Twenty-first century means to grasp the group's anti-historicist spirit. Hence the decision to invert the history, the chronology, and the itinerary of the exhibition: not from 1962 to 1990, but instead from 1990 to 1962.

In this way prejudices favoring noble fathers or the past do not exist. It is the present that becomes the point of departure able to set the pace for the viewer who, from his

own present reviews the stages of an inexhaustible creativity that backtracks toward the time of its foundation.

The critical method confirms the mentality of the art – an art that does not take to chronologies or the ideal concept of a linear course that does not exist outside of the irregular courses of history, from the present to the enduring present of art. An attitude that does not take to the decisions made by history as the guaranteed and the guaranteeing process of the fluxes and the movements of creation. In this way history becomes a flagrant regression to the past, starting



Lo stendardo di Fluxus sventola sul Fluxshop e la Mail Order Warehouse (Fluxhall) al 359 di Canal Street a New York nei primi anni Sessanta. (Foto Peter Moore).



with the hic et nunc of the viewer as he shapes his experience through the nomadism of his body deambulating in the temporal spaces of the exhibition, made up of objects and events. To go towards the year Two Thousand thus means to carry out a new task, that of avoiding defeat by time. In tune with the mentality of the Fluxus group, which has always skirted the danger of an art that imposes its exclusive treasures of formal beauty on the inert condition of the present.

#### The Beauty of Neutrality

Fluxus means to have the swift sensitivity to interpret new means of artistic production as well as critically to reflect them. It means that art in situazione finds and puts down its own roots in movements, artistic figures, and even in a philosophy of art that starts from afar and leads afar: Duchamp, Picabia, Cravan, Schwitters, Balla, etc. – demonstrating how the problem of the assemblage and the recovery of the quotidian object in the sphere of art is not a problem that concerns simply the post-modern culture, which perceives in the recycling of the quotidian an opportunity for cultural survival. The works presented here are the result of an extremely meet mental attitude.

It is correct to depart naturally from Marcel Duchamp: the founder of the process defined as “ready-made”. That is, the possibility to create art by drawing from the quotidian, decontextualizing it, and giving it a new function in terms of esthetic contemplation within the space of the gallery or museum. The dislocation of the object determines the creation of an “aura”, a new meaning that allows the object to travel to other planes and to penetrate the viewer’s imagination, impressing on it a new identity and new possibilities.

Duchamp’s ready-made opened up new possibilities for contemporary art; it introduced a conceptual quotient into art that made it possible for the artist to consider himself a demiurge, he who with his gesture of extraction and with the authority of his gaze can remove one element from the inert horizontality of the quotidian and elevate it to the vertical sphere of art.

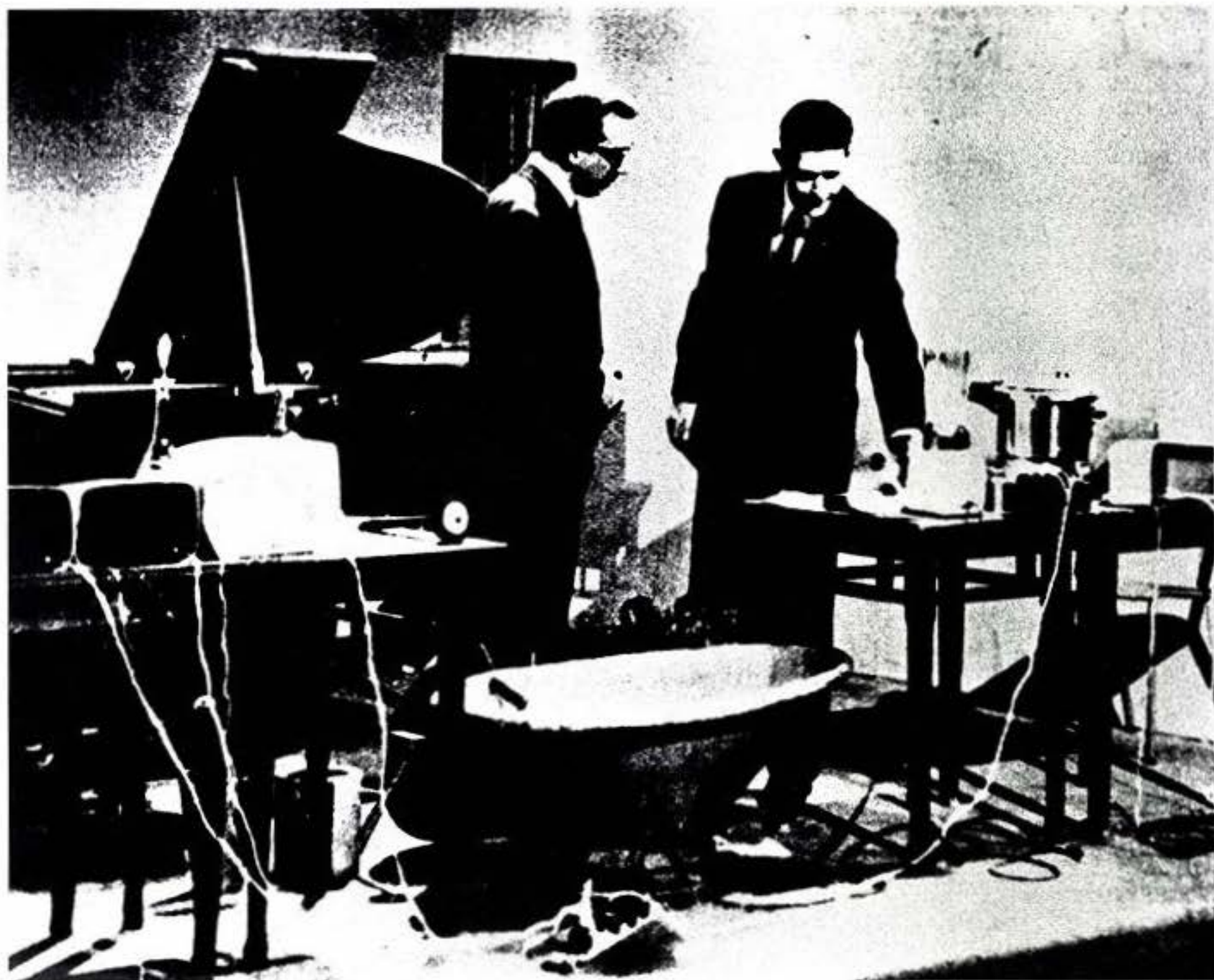
This premise thus makes it possible to verify the itinerary that the artistic object has completed in the course of the past decades, from Duchamp’s first ready-mades up to today. Thus it represents a century of art carried out through a sort of mixture between what the gaze draws on and manuality, that reaches to the close of the Eighties, in the full of the post-modern era, to demonstrate how artists have worked in anticipation of their political and social reality.

The panorama presented in this exhibition tends to highlight above all the artist’s need to uphold a language independent of the life and of the subject that prompts it. Thus, object means not just the element extracted from its everyday context but also, naturally, a philosophy of art that requires that the artistic language not be mimetic, a sort of reflex conditioned by life itself. Art inasmuch as object is always a cast-off, a sort of lateral threshold that the artist



Il Fluxshop di Hans Sohm a Markgröningen, in Germania. (Foto Peter Moore, 1976).





Mike Bongiorno e John Cage a *Lascia o raddoppia*, spettacolo in cui Cage vinse cinque milioni di lire rispondendo a domande sulla micologia.

occupies with his creation and in which he identifies a free-standing opportunity to let his act of fantasy ripen. The subversive gesture that the artist has steadily made over the course of this century tends progressively to assume symbolic values, to leave behind the simple occasion for scandal and to achieve a certain complexity, a sense of structure that does not mean adherence to a geometric and neo-rational idea, but rather to the artist's perceived need to pass through the quotidian according to an idea of light-handed projectuality.

Indeed, these artists are not in pursuit of the positive utopia of art, that is, the chance to construct a model capable of transforming the world, but rather they seek to achieve a small-scale order linked to the accomplished work, and thus capable of being simply a model of itself. The modesty of the object lies precisely in this, a poetic that does not

make use of sophisticated materials or of academic artistic genres, but rather one that is able to pass through the quotidian, to extract the inert quotidian and set it within a sort of assemblage, a short circuit that elevates the element and the detail to the status of a fragment, a puzzle piece of a mental construction. The object, after all, is the creative subject's – the artist's – point of arrival in a dimension separate from his own personal experience, precisely because he very humbly identifies in art his own expressive potential. Furthermore, it is also a mooring for the viewer's gaze upon a construction that is able to suggest to him a new perception of things. But this perception does not upset the sense of the quotidian, it does not clash with it but if anything points out an interstice, a place: that of the negative utopia, one with direct links to the physical space inhabited by the work, from which the artist speaks and on



which the viewer may meditate.

In the end, it is through the terrain of art that it can be demonstrated how the contemporary artist may view the world with different attitudes, but without feeling the need to manipulate it. To take the quotidian object, to assemble it in a linguistic order that differs from its original order, certainly does not mean to take on the things in terms of conflict, but rather in terms of a complex eroticism capable of activating the things' inertia through an original use of it and creating a field of intensity thus linked to a reality that cannot be removed, that cannot be cancelled, just observed and safeguarded.

To safeguard becomes the task of the Fluxus artist projected toward the year Two Thousand, beyond the end of the Twentieth century, now marked by the "finis Russiae". This end refers to the collapse of ideologies and the external parameters that have, as an "assisted ready-made", sustained the long march of the avant-gardes toward the "sun of the future". The Fluxus group has always operated outside of the assistance of any prosthesis whatsoever, whether political or ideological. It has always formed the ecological zone of international experimentalism, concentrating on the establishment of a space of linguistic energy,

not on the accumulation of technical achievements or on the catalogue of materials.

With respect to the artists of the Nouveau Réalisme current as well, the Fluxus artists marked the transcendence of a mentality that seeks to produce an estheticism spread over the things. In effect, they contested what was then a reigning vocation closely tied up with a somehow noble hope of redeeming the quantitative vulgarity of the real through the introduction of quality in a modest quantity of formal order. Once again the affirmation of a mentality and a noble notion of art is able to spread, like a perfume, an esthetic atmosphere over the productive chaos of the world. Before Fluxus, art always sought to push art toward itself, to attract events to the linguistic frontier of the esthetic creation, understood as museographic reserve of the redemption and deliverance of current events to history.

Again, poetry prevails over prose in the world. The accent is placed on the vertical dynamic of the creative moment. The quotidian object is posited as a metaphor for the shift from the previous disorder to subsequent order, dictated by the artistic form. Action Painting, Neo-Dada, Pop Art, and Nouveau Réalisme still make up the extremes of a mentality that places its faith in the value of the project and linguistic



Wolf Vostell prepara un televisore per la sepoltura,  
Yam Festival, fattoria di George Segal, New Jersey, 1963.





Una Bag Piece di Yoko Ono  
al 4th Street Theatre di New York, 1965.  
(Foto Peter Moore).

and historical progress – all within the ideology of linguistic darwinism that marked the evolution of contemporary art, as the production of forms aimed at redeeming history's negativity through the formulation of languages based on the dialectical principle.

Fluxus instead applies the salutary principle of contradiction, implying confrontation and not conciliation. And this makes use of an intensive strategy of recovery of the object as reality and not as metaphorical memory; it is an ingredient of a combinatory cuisine that arrives at the formal thing.

With Fluxus art shifts toward life and leads life itself toward the interstice of a different position in which poverty and nobility do not exist, and there is instead the neutrality of an armistice without victors and the vanquished, the foundation of a moment in which all becomes concrete, art and life, form and existence, in the presence of the work.

To start with Duchamp does not mean to stop dogmatically at his poetic. Rather, "to start with" means and implies a shift and modification, outside of the linearity of an idea of progress that involves fidelity. The basic infidelity of Fluxus gave rise to the development of an ecology of art that concerned and concerns two antithetical terms, art and life, excluded from the game of preferences, as elements and things participating in the end of the thing.

To thingify art and life becomes the imperative of a group that has no use for birth and death registry offices – neither art's nor life's. This possibility, playing on affirmation and negation, is fomented by the choice, between western and eastern, of a neutrality that has emerged from the binary order and arrived at a third, unreconciled term, autonomous and determined by the combinatory value of the objects and the artistic genres understood as the thing: without hierarchy between high and low, painting and sculpture, drawing and painting, work and event. Hence derives the preference for channels poised between officialdom and informality, museum and workshop.

Here there appears a new physical and mental space: the beauty of neutrality, the affirmation of a loose form that has no use for the arrogance of rigor or the geometry of pure coherency. Here beauty arises from the fact that an overwhelming novelty or elegance of quotation does not exist. If a duration of the work exists, this is due to an ethical duration of the gesture, which does not mean improvisation but if anything safeguarding.

Fluxus wants to safeguard art and life, without overwhelming either of the two terms, building the territory of a new neutrality in which no enclosures of art for art exist, nor political barriers. Here, what they seek is to neutralize the arrogance of art and the vulgarity of life by means of constructed forms.

The enduring character of the artistic form involves a sense of construction that refuses to be cancelled by the subsequent work, or metaphorically to duplicate the external reality. Art is that ambivalent movement that plays on presence and absence, contact and separation, eroticism and detachment – attitudes that are not in conflict with



each other; rather they are complementary and affirm a different relationship with reality.

"One cannot escape the world so well as through art nor can one make any stronger ties with it as through art" (Goethe). This attitude describes the position of Fluxus, a philosophical condition that initially appears to take its distance from things, but then embraces them to construct a formal order that describes the new reality, even if through its contamination. The formal order embraced is not based on pure accumulation, the presence of a random assemblage that metaphorically duplicates the quantitative dissemination of the external world. The work assumes the phenomenological cadence contradicted by a full-bodied order that sustains it – not the sense of accumulation, but that of a necessary compenetration, even if inhabited by unforeseen relationships.

The formal unpredictability of the work is enhanced by the consistency of the materials, at times by the deliberate infeasibility of the juxtapositions, and even by the elaboration of nexuses forging its way to the limits of the interlocking and of geometry.

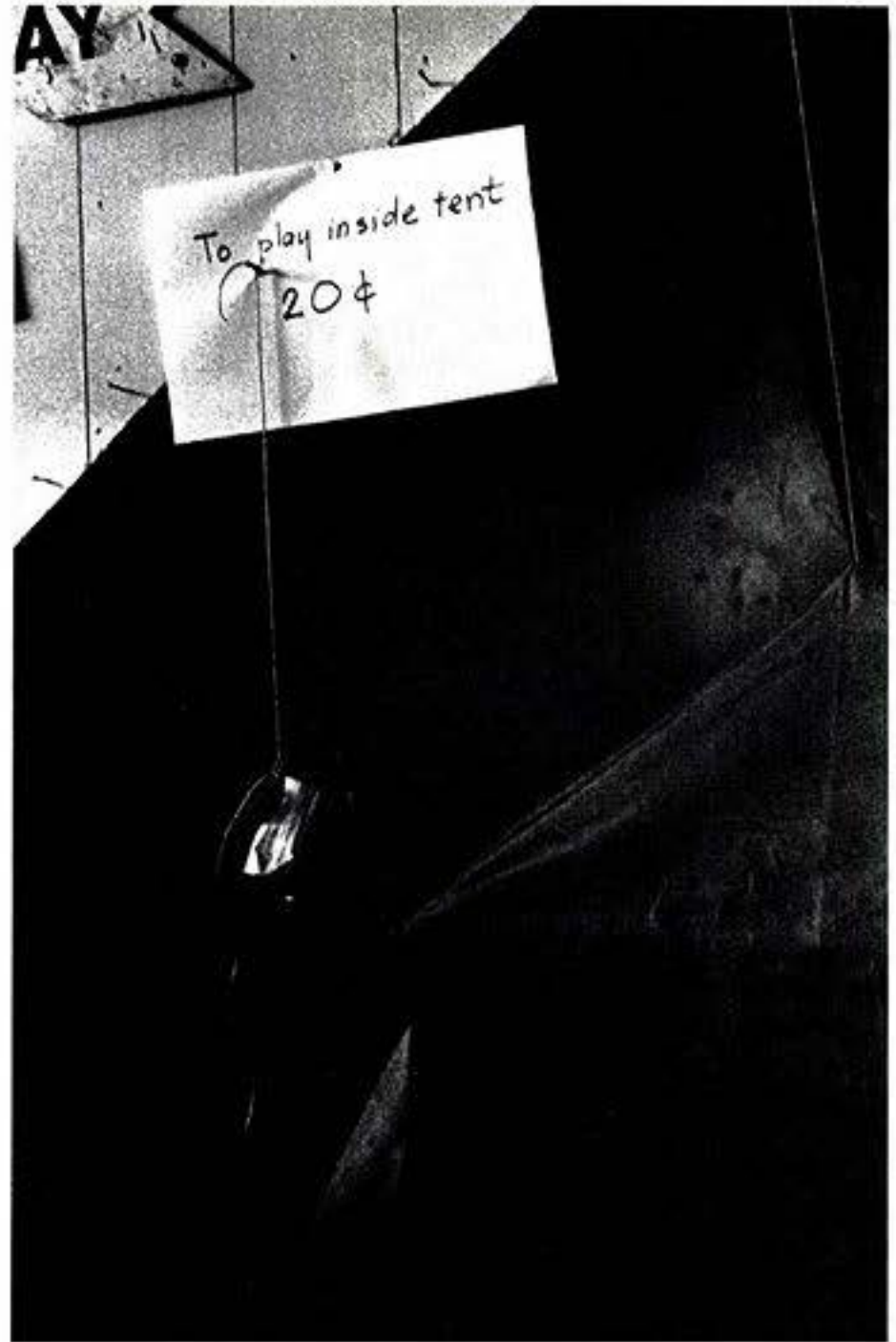
The object is not a pure volume set in evidence, but rather an element of a composition that challenges the composition's opaque full-bodiedness in favor of an effect where everything is subjected to a new formal order. Naturally, this order does not result in a sublimation of the specific splendor to the single elements, but it plays on transforming the individual signifieds into a single and transfigured signifier, leading to these works' characterization of involuntary metaphysics, their power of abstraction, which are doubtlessly aimed at the foundation of a new order of beauty.

The dominant order of beauty arises from the compression of the work to its own temporality, the residue of a cultural attitude that assumes all the responsibility for a typically European tradition.

In this sense, the postmodern memory loses its hedonistic character of simple citation to acquire the complexity of an historical memory certainly not inhabited by superficiality and the desire to be free of itself and of its own past. Thus, the work of art becomes the deterrent of objective resistance that the artist is guilty of with regard to his own present, and in favor of his own present, inasmuch as he is able to produce duration in a scenario that seems to be inhabited by the interchangeability of object and object. The subject – in this case, the artist – is he who is aware of being able to establish, through the work's phenomenology, a method, in this respect a mental stance, that is able to safeguard its own specificity even through the opacity of the object.

An object of complexity inhabits the work of Fluxus, springing from the clear consistency of the various elements and the tangible formal order, but not simply holding them together and instead interweaving them into an enduring composition.

So, contamination is not a pure coincidence in a combinatory scheme, but rather the effect of a need for complexity able to evade any simplification. The work is not upheld by



Pagare venti centesimi per un concerto:  
uno dei più grandi piaceri di Fluxus,  
Fluxhall, New York, 1964.



a simple order, but by a process of abstraction that is never preclusive of, but rather contextual to, the physical evidence of the work, because the object cannot be eliminated, nor can it become the effect of an appearance, subjected to a fantastic use that on one hand recognizes its tautological presence, and on the other challenges its apparent passivity of application.

Hence derives the occasionally ironic monumental fashion, its conversion to a different scale, its inverted application between closed and open, its decontextualization. Privileged objects – in terms of recurrence or sentiment – do not exist; instead states of need determine their use depending on the desired result.

On the other hand, the form tends to conjugate the elements to prompt a double process of awareness, one that is specific and concerns the work, and another more generalized one that concerns the work's relationship to the world. The new relationship is not established through the simple difference produced by the original grouping as much as by the establishment of a formal method made even more explicit by the materials' connection with the external world. This connection eschews the facile surprise and consequent astonishment, and becomes yet another element of challenge for the artist who takes his distance from, but at the same time enters back into the game, with things by embracing them which makes it easier to verify the new formal order.

To make art is not to bring order to the world but rather to suggest methods for aggregation that are capable of developing processes of internal and external, interior and exterior, awareness. The work is not the fruit of the stiffening and paralysis that dry up any sedimentation, but rather a practice of appropriation that excludes the principle of ownership, the establishment of a method that is able to bring method to the life of the artist as well.

This does not mean forcing the artist to enter the logic of the poetics, the metalinguistic coherency, of the work, but if anything to stabilize the lightness of being within and through the explicit consistency of the work.

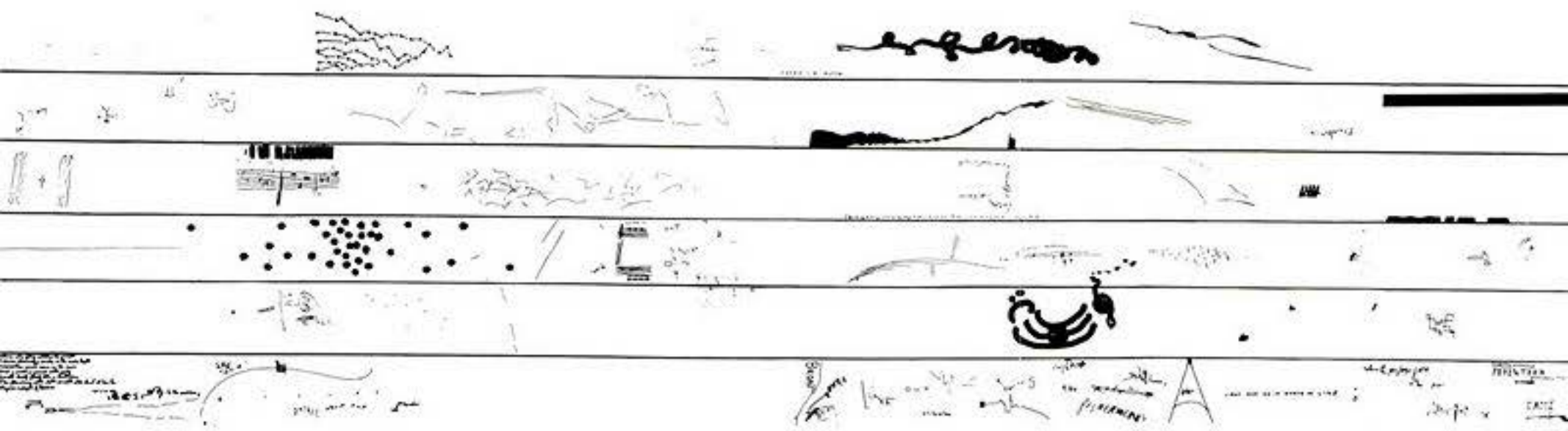
The work is not made up of accumulation; it is an object, even if formalized, alongside other quotidian objects. The order that without rigidity governs the work assumes the task of establishing a borderline between two universes that live together but at the same time are governed differently. The Fluxus method does not sublimate space in the pure evocation of time, but accepts the encumbrance of the object in its dense physicality, emphasizing this last by juxtaposition with other physicalities that are clearly unrelated in terms of use and destination.

Because art, moving within a framework that is less specialized and homogeneous than that of goods, does not reconfirm the quotidian object's use value, its being or having been subject to consumption; as much as to the contrary its value in imaginative applications that the artist may obtain through the contamination process.

The artist is he who embraces a sort of radioactive process to contaminate and embrace the quotidian object, already in itself poisoned by its historical appurtenance. Another more transforming history now envelops the quotidian object, inasmuch as it is impossible to culturally reproduce. Now the object conserves its torpidity, as well as often its decorum, but it is subjected to and adopted for a transversal use that only the artist may carry out.

However, Fluxus does not thus attempt to redeem itself or to redeem history as much as to set in motion formal processes that are able to produce in the present attitudes of resistance made evident and striking by the construction of the machine, its internal functioning made up of the relationships of individual elements governed by the idea of complexity and unity at the same time.

To govern complexity through the construction of a linguistic method now becomes the task at hand: not to duplicate pathetically the complexity of the technological universe as much as that of the relationship between the individual and society, between the single and the regulating body: a behavioural response through the production of a closed and enduring form, that has done away with the mentality of our century and pushes art inexorably towards the year



Jed Curtis, *Images*. (Da *Décollage*, n. 3, dicembre 1962).



*Two Thousand, where beauty, to be really within the reach of all, must take on a neutral character.*

*The Da Vinciesque motto "Ubi Fluxus ibi motus" nudges art away from the western Renaissance and leads it towards a cosmic geography that does not recognize territorial limits, but instead recognizes an anthropological need to not encounter enemies, the separation between artist and viewer, between art and life.*

### Fluxus like Fluxus

*Dadaism can be considered the source of a synthetic line of art that attempts constantly to break into the area of the present time of daily life and to remain at a distance from the structures that are usually used to organize all of the normal business of art. It considers improvisation both a method and an attempt to modify habitual social behaviour.*

*The art event finds its development in a free aggregation of gestures that in turn find their own beginning in an extremely simple plot in which the only constant is the disruption of quotidian gesture insofar as quotidian gesture is functional and economical and thus at the service of specific finalities. The event disturbs the relationship between cause and effect since it forces the body of society to accept the disturbance of gestures that are anti-economical and non-functional – gestures that if not disinterested are interested only in bringing repressed areas of experience and unlive fantasies out of the unconscious and into our areas of awareness.*

*Synthetic art leaves specialized and sectorial knowledge alone and deals instead with a profoundly global consciousness that destroys the specificities of art linguistics in order to possess itself of the total area of creativity. And among the neo-avant-gardes, the group that has worked in terms of a global strategy is the Fluxus Group. Its intent is to find a basis for art experience at a level that might be called anthropological. Art is Fluxus – art is flux and diarrhea, a movement that cannot be arrested and that has*

*the concreteness of an object or an event.*

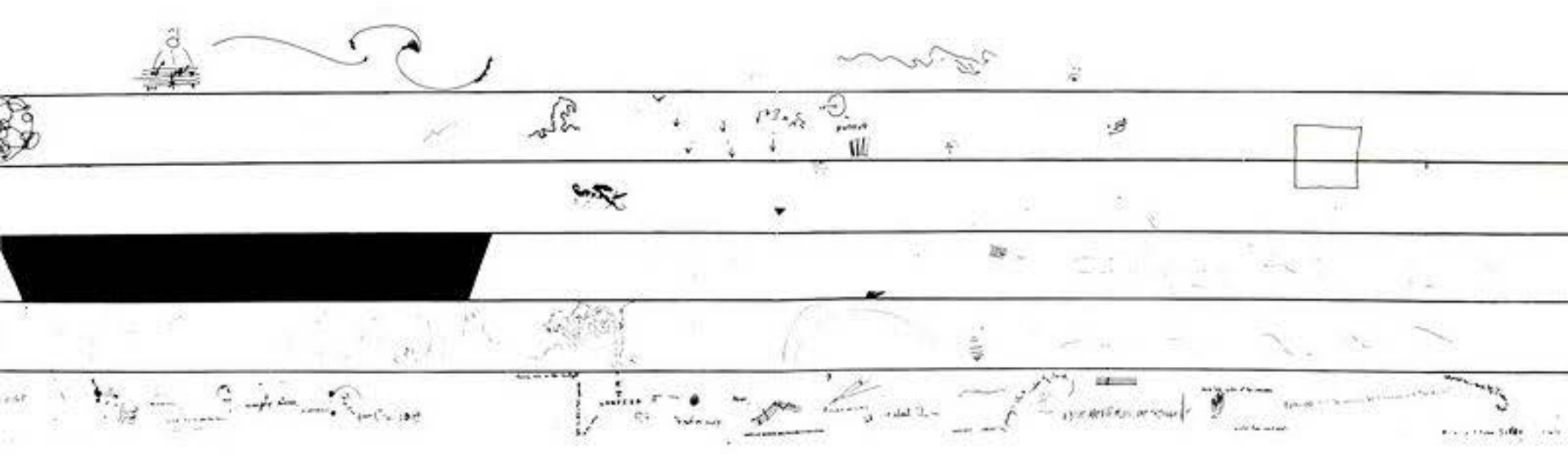
*The representations of art become a moment of focalization of the dialectic relationship that exists between the ego of the artist and the objectivity of the world, and the world, paradoxically, is the more privileged pole since it constitutes the existential space from which the necessity for art arises. Art is thus a total space in which creativity no longer tends to find its outlet in single works of art; with willed infidelity it expands outwards towards the attitudes that society recognizes in the artist as an individual.*

*The tactics in this way of making art can even consist of the direct and unmodified use of the physical person of the artist or the objects he uses – an ephemeral exhibition of either the subject or the object – and this is a manner of affirming a notion of communication rather than a notion of information.*

*The idea of the ephemeral, moreover, is to be found not only in the live presentation of the body (which tends, by virtue of its evidence, to dislocate all theatrical separations between artist and public) but also in the use of the object. The object is used in terms of simple association almost as though it were an utensil. The duration of the gesture tends to equate the physiological time of the formation of the work with the time in which the work is to be used or perceived.*

*Fluxus, then, has to be understood as a mobile front of individuals and not as a static or well-codified group of specialists, and what they are up to is more a question of a strategy of social contagion than of a tactic of experimenting new languages. They are interested in the possibility of creating a series of chain reactions in a flux of magnetic waves both above and below art.*

*Art functions in a system in which geographic separation and different systems of cultural referents frequently determine a lack of homogeneity in the art community. And the artists do in fact represent a sort of involuntary community, even, perhaps, a concentrated community that exists in opposition to the rest of society in terms of both ideological choices and individual behaviour.*



Jed Curtis, *Images*. (Da *Décollage*, n. 3, dicembre 1962).





Yoko Ono davanti al suo *Morning Piece*  
su un tetto in Christopher Street, 1965. (Foto Peter Moore).



*Before Fluxus there existed a whole series of artistic communities divided up according to the countries to which they belonged and divided again internally in terms of various poetics. The geographic divisions, moreover, frequently respond to the divisions of the market and to social contexts that find a relationship to one another on the basis of their greater or lesser aggressivity.*

*Fluxus is the first movement to go beyond such obstacles. It destroys the divisions within art and is a meeting place for Americans, Europeans, Japanese and Koreans. Fluxus has no respect for either geographical or cultural distances. Not even poetics is considered a common denominator for Fluxus and it includes artists of different cultural extraction and of different poetic denomination.*

*The system demands the disaggregation of the art community and Fluxus responds to this by defining itself as a single and concentrated community into and out of which one can move with all the freedom one desires. And the basis for this community is ethical rather than esthetic and its intention is to renew the content of art so that art may once again be able to find a relationship to life. The object or the quotidian event is not to be confused with the object or the event of the happening; they are not to be confused with cosmetic improvisations that beautify the urban space in which the action takes place.*

*Fluxus actions are considerably more than an affirmation of the principle of inter-media in art, as is the case for happenings. They represent an attempt to reveal a quality that the event or the quotidian object already possess within themselves – the very quality of being quotidian. The quotidian is no longer considered the lower limit of art, it is real space and thus the only space in which it is possible to live either with art or without it. Fluxus is thus a salutary transition from poetry to prose, from art as bombast to a state in which art can concentrate on focusing onto reality. The shift from esthetic to ethical points of view is achieved by reducing the importance of the notion of the work of the artist insofar as the work of the artist is understood to be the elaboration of specific instruments that are concerned with art and nothing else. Fluxus works on the basis of an intermedia attitude that promotes a kind of art that no longer has any relationship to traditional parameters or categories.*

*Fluxus no longer talks about painting, sculpture, poetry or music; it is concerned with events that include all possible disciplines and all possible styles. At its basis there is an ideological attitude of kleptomania, the assumption of the right to use any and all aspects of the world as total and permanent material.*

*This destruction of the specialistic aspects of art is not to be considered a parody of art; it is rather a question of opening things up so as to create flux and movement so that art may be able to acquire the movement of life itself. The premise for all of this is the consciousness that life and the world have a value.*

*The Fluxus view on life runs through a full circle and its vision is a total vision. And the circle it runs through is*



Henry Flynt suona il violino  
mentre Peter Moore brucia una pellicola,  
New York, 1972. (Foto Peter Moore).





Immagine tratta da *Décollage* n. 3, dicembre 1962.

concerned not only with the physicality of things but also with an awareness of cultural data that lies outside the context of art in western culture. Its notion of time finds one of its sources in oriental Zen where time is understood to be a tight network of moments in incessant and continuous horizontal movement. Time is an open and discontinuous dimension that confers value not only upon significant gesture, but also upon the most anonymous and quotidian gestures. Occidental culture has given us the habit of thinking of time as the measure of human thought, as a dimension that synchronized the rhythm of its flow to history and not to the pure chronology of event.

Western history, in fact, is a canon of dates and events selected entirely in terms of their exceptionality, entirely in terms of the extent to which they distance themselves from the median level of quotidian event. The typically vertical vision of time in western culture finds its contraposition in the horizontal vision of time in the east – a vision of time capable of accompanying daily life in all of its manifesta-

tions, even the manifestations that are below the level of what we consider heroic.

Fluxus assumed these points of view from John Cage and is thus able to open the space of art so as to allow it to receive any object and any event at all. In this way the time of art now respects the horizontal time of life itself: the object is an object, a gesture is a gesture.

The quotidian becomes not only the point of departure for art but also its point of arrival. If art is no longer the celebration of the eccentric, it is no longer the shift from poetry to prose; since it is an affirmation of what already exists it becomes a shift from one kind of prose (life) to another (art).

For Fluxus, art is the shift or the process that takes life from one level of existence to another.

When the "Fluxus International Festspiele" was held in Wiesbaden in 1962, all of the artists who participated realized works or events that depended not so much upon their esthetic qualities as rather upon their intensity and



*their determination to grasp the quotidian.*

*In addition to the things that take place as a result of intention and intelligence, the quotidian also includes chance, the fortuitous, the incomprehensible and undefined, even a level of idiocy.*

*All of this is the quotidian – life in all of its ramifications, life as a series of disconnected facts determined by chance. Fluxus faces up to these facts phenomenologically and thus the world is the world of life and art is total art.*

*Maciunas, Paik, Brecht, Ben Vautier, Filliou, Vostell, Chia-ri, Simonetti, Patterson, Schmit, Andersen, Ono, Kosugi, Knowles, and all the others have formed a mobile squadron that performs its actions in many different places, and they have always maintained an attitude of intermedia. The departure of art from its specific fields has also meant the departure of art from its specific institutional channels, the galleries and museums.*

*Every space has become a possible locus for the art event. Outdoors or indoors, the artists have used materials and languages that come from different areas and created associations between the most disparate means and instruments.*

*This intermedia attitude and its use in alternative spaces has permitted Fluxus to anticipate researches that have begun more recently – researches that range from conceptual art to behavioural art. But to talk about Fluxus as linguistic antecedents of other forms of art would mean to pull it back into a circumscribed esthetic ambience from which it has always tried to escape by drawing together artists whose affinities are a question not of poetics but of attitudes towards life. For this reason, Fluxus as flux, diarrhea, or tide has given its principle attention to the revelation of the physical and mental energies that lie latent within the world. The linguistic contradictions within the group serve in fact to keep us from speaking of a group and to make us concern ourselves with a situation that is constantly establishing itself.*

*The Fluxus vision of time, filtered and slowed down through the assumption of a Zen point of view allows any object and any event to enter into the category of art. If a chair is a chair, to drink a glass of water is a glass of water drunk by a man. This means that the art filter is not to render the quotidian something symbolic, its purpose is to give the quotidian a concentration and an importance refused to them by the social system.*

*The social system tends to give value only to the time of economic production. Objects and gestures are significant only if economically productive. The non-functional gesture, useless and disinterested, is discarded by the logic of the system. With Fluxus the object is accepted in all of its non-functionality, as a phenomenological occurrence and a gesture is performed even if its purpose is to destroy the object. The destruction of an object, a violin or a piano is contrary to the traditional idea of art that tends to render the object functional through its conservation and its use, its sound.*

*But sound can also be the noise produced when a piano or*

*a violin is smashed, when the artist repeatedly strikes an object or when he wraps a sheet of paper around a microphone. Sounds are not only the codes of music; even the noise of life can become music. The distance between art and life is extremely thin; it depends entirely upon the linguistic awareness of the artist as he performs his gesture. This perhaps is the reason for which the initial phase of Fluxus was mainly concerned with music. Music, after all, is the most abstract and least visible of the arts. Through music it is possible to create a situation – a connection between circumstances, objects and persons that are individual and separate.*

*Music depends not upon sound but upon the will of the artist, after Cage, to think of even silence as music. There is only continuity, no fractures, no distances. There is no hierarchy of facts, there is only a horizon of facts and instruments to be used continuously whenever there exists the desire. This way positing everything at the same level for Fluxus grows out of the desire to render art more accessible and democratic. To break apart specialization means to destroy the privilege and the power of those who turn their specialized knowledge into a profession.*

*For Fluxus, to be against professionalism means to perform a transgression upon every pretension of faith to materials or techniques that, through repetition, become the trademark for the artist with respect to his market.*

*Through the intermedia use of language and through the consideration that everything is at one and the same time painting, sculpture, poetry, and music it becomes possible to escape from the immediate recognition of the market and its means of exploitation.*

*It is possible that Fluxus passes through art in order to be able to approach some process of permanent dynamics within every circumstance of both life and social organization.*

*The decision to make use of the event and of ephemeral action means to displace the emphasis of art away from the production of objects and towards the production of experiences, experiences that include both the pole of the artist and the pole of the public. The traditional public for a show or a spectacle is called upon to do the job of contemplation. But if art itself is no longer the job of controlling an apparatus of specific and professional instruments, in that case the role also undergoes a change and the public becomes participant.*

*There is also an appearance of participation on the part of the public insofar as happenings are concerned; here too it would seem that the role of the public is no longer a passive one. But there is a profound difference between happenings and Fluxus events. The happening is a quantitative accumulation of objects and gestures that discover an esthetic quality through a process of dissociation that puts them into new and unusual relationships. It's the process of dissociation that gives them their quality as art.*

*But with Fluxus the event finds its source in a situationistic awareness that reality is already a spectacle. Every object or quotidian gesture contains this quality within itself and has*



no need of finding new and strange relationships. In the Fluxus event, every object and every gesture is exhibited on its own and in terms of its own elementary grammar without any need of being reinforced by the other objects or gestures that accompany it.

The happening tends towards a form of expressivity that depends upon the transformation of the gesture into a work; this is to say that it tends to underline that passage of the object or the action from the status of something quotidian to the status of something artistic. The Fluxus event, on the other hand, tends only to underline the passage of the object from one level of existence to another.

The public, therefore, is not called upon to witness the mystificatory transformation of life into art; it is called upon to simply take notice of the fact that the two do in fact exist; life and art. If were true that the creative gesture of the artist transforms reality into something else (art), in this way there would be a confirmation of the privilege of the artist since the artist would still remain within the realm of art and the public would remain outside in the realm of life.

But with the Fluxus event, the relationship of public and artist is a relationship of equality insofar as the artist makes no pretension of creating any sort of transformation and desires simply to affirm the givens of existence just as the public through its presence confirms the existence of the artist and his gesture.

Participation thus takes place in terms of an exchange between equals; the public reinforces its own knowledge of the quotidian and the artist affirms the possibility of the use of such knowledge in such a way that everyone, including the public, can belong to the side of the equation on which the event is produced.

The event has no need for any flagrant or institutional space and even the presence of the public can be dispensed with. It can also happen that the space in which the work

takes place be a space that is open and in no way circumscribed. When Fluxus issues a series of flux stamps to be used for the mailing of letters and post-cards, space is no longer something that can be controlled. The space of the work becomes the space of social communication and can be dilated out to the infinite and extended beyond all geographical, cultural or linguistic limits.

The Fluxus trip is thus a promotion of inter-subjective relationships; it reduces the distances between different realities and creates connections between them.

Fluxus tends to deal with every form of activity and every necessity, it can intervene in situations and offer them continuous levels of creativity and energy – all of this in a world that seems destined more towards entropy than towards withering away.

Everything is possible, every material is permissible, even the use of the word. The word is organized into thought according to a system of reflection that is capable, as in the case of Flynt, of promoting a knowledge of art and its reality.

Knowledge always grows out of a political need, out of the need to investigate the instruments and the ends of human action in order to enlarge awareness and its proper relationship to reality. Fluxus is a mode of knowledge and a constant attempt to achieve an awareness of the many levels of life, a kind of permanent revolution that never comes to rest on its positions or conquests, but that chooses instead to use its forms of action not to circumscribe presence or intervention, but rather to expand and dilate them not into the formal acquisition of norms and new languages but rather into the production of an art that is real only when it produces models of alternate behaviour with respect to the system. This model, which is proposed as a form of social contagion is surely a Fluxus use of liberty, a liberated liberty.



Gianni-Emilio Simonetti, Ugo Nespolo e Ben Vautier  
al concerto Fluxus dell'aprile 1967 al Teatro Gobetti di Torino.



# Fluxus L'arte come sovversione individuale

Gino Di Maggio

**S**i avvia verso il suo decennio conclusivo un secolo straordinario. Malgrado le tragedie che ci lasciamo alle spalle, il bilancio che ereditiamo, pur contraddittorio, è largamente positivo. Grandi cambiamenti sono avvenuti. Gli uomini sono più liberi e quindi più vivi. "Ubi Fluxus ibi motus" vuole essere la rilettura di uno dei percorsi di questo secolo, certo quello che amiamo di più, che nel suo divenire ha contribuito in modo importante al profondo modificarsi dello "stato di cose presenti", e non solo nello specifico suo proprio, la storia dell'arte.

I futuristi, all'inizio del secolo, si proposero, inventando e reinventando tutti i linguaggi possibili, un radicale cambiamento sul passato. Tutto fu rimesso in gioco. Esemplare fu la decisione dell'allora già famoso Giacomo Balla che, nel 1908, in un negozio di via del Corso a Roma, mise in vendita tutte le sue opere, esponendo uno striscione con la scritta: "Il pittore Giacomo Balla è morto, qui si vendono le opere del fu Giacomo Balla." I futuristi, scriveva Gramsci nel 1914, "hanno avuto la concezione netta e chiara che l'epoca nostra, l'epoca della grande industria, della grande città operaia, della vita intensa e tumultuosa, doveva avere nuove forme di arte, di filosofia, di costume, di linguaggio", e ancora che questa nuova concezione del mondo è "nettamente rivoluzionaria, assolutamente marxista".

L'abbaglio politico di Marinetti che si dichiarò fascista è costato al futurismo una censura fatta di silenzio ed emarginazione, durata decenni, ma che nulla può togliere storicamente alla validità di quelle proposte e all'influenza che quelle proposte ebbero sullo sviluppo delle ricerche successive. Da Marcel Duchamp a Dada, da Cage a Fluxus. Anche se va chiarito che influenza non può significare paternità, perché pur grandi rimangono le differenze di obiettivo che distinguono i futuristi da Duchamp, Duchamp da Dada e Cage, e Cage da Fluxus. Per questo è riduttivo parlare di Fluxus come di un movimento neofuturista o neodada o neo-Cage.

Fedele D'Amico scriveva in un suo saggio su Adorno che "a rivisitare l'arte moderna con occhi spregiudicati c'è il caso di scoprire aspetti e possibilità attuali dell'uomo, che altre forme di conoscenza si lasciano sfuggire".

Fluxus evidenzia la scoperta di questi aspetti e insieme le possibilità esistenti di affermarli. Fluxus nasce come reazione, come abbandono, come negazione di una realtà che è la realtà della superindustrializzazione, del supersfruttamento, del superconsumismo, del superimperialismo. Nasce come negazione di una realtà che ha alle sue spalle le stragi scientifiche di Auschwitz e Hiroshima e ha di fronte a sé le ancor più sofisticate stragi vietnamite. Evidenzia la realtà-spettacolo del mondo, e la possibilità di affermare la propria estraneità allo spettacolo, la propria differenza.

La differenza ha voluto dire per Fluxus volare alto al di sopra delle miserevoli bagarres di chi sceglie consapevolmente il totale asservimento a regole e strutture che tutta la storia intelligente di questo secolo ha tentato di cancellare. Giocare con le idee, non porsi alcuna finalità se non quella di far vivere la vita esaltandone tutte le possibilità creative è stato ed è l'affermazione di un'attitudine impareggiabilmente sovversiva rispetto a un mondo caparbiamente passatista.

Fluxus sfugge alla possibilità immediata di controllo. Contribuisce all'eccezionale scossone che tra il '60 e il '70 il mondo riceve.

Collettivo romanticamente cosmopolita, realizzò in alcuni momenti della sua storia, e per la prima volta, un'unione d'intenti armonica tra "diversi" per cultura e origine nazionale, rendendo globalmente e fisicamente visibile la fusione tra cultura occidentale e orientale già sublimemente realizzatasi nel fare di Cage.

Ma la storia può concedere al massimo delle libertà provvisorie. E così, oggi, sembrerebbe che la grande abbuffata rivoluzionaria degli anni Sessanta abbia ormai consumato tutti i pasti possibili dell'illusione e della delusione. Non ci resterebbe che passeggiare malinconicamente in questo cimitero di sogni perduti, scrutando al massimo se tra le rovine non si ritrovi ancora intatto qualche fiore d'utopia.

Silenzio dunque, e in fila per due...

Chi non ha saputo o non sa resistere al buio richiamo e al primo schiocco di dita, si rimette in riga, trasformando così il desiderio possibile in utopia e l'utopia in mestiere per sopravvivere. Ci mostra soltanto il limite di

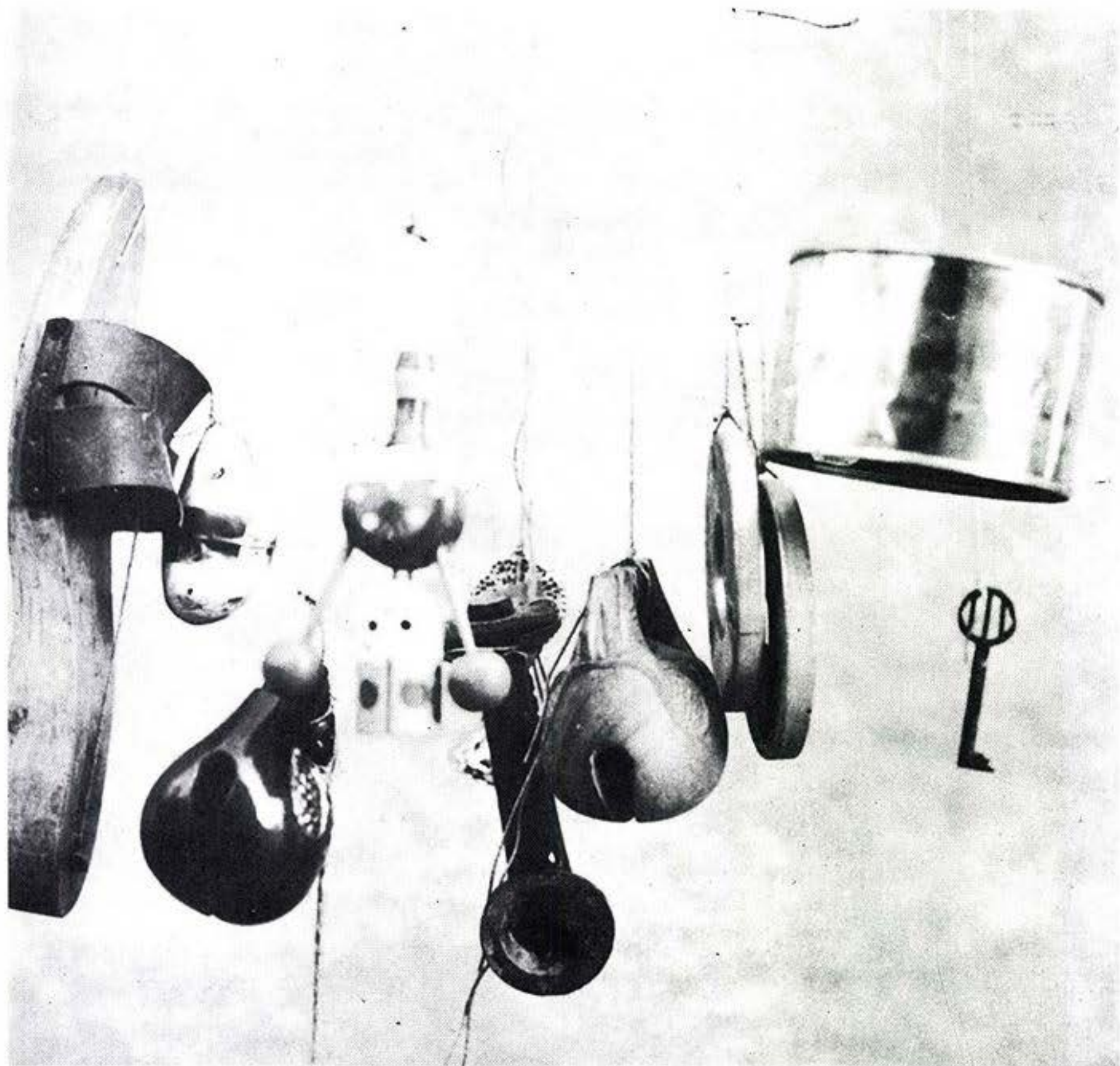


un'esperienza, non la sconfitta di una possibilità. Fluxus è stato "un momento importante di evidenziazione del conflitto tra 'il possibile e il reale'", come scriveva H. Lefebvre nella sua *Critique de vie quotidienne*, "conflitto più o meno cosciente tra la teoria e la pratica, tra il sogno e la realtà; conflitto che è causa d'inquietudine e di angoscia, come tutte le contraddizioni irrisolte e che sembrano insolubili".

Ma anche se oggi, come sempre, il tam-tam del dominio chiama a raccolta i suoi fedelissimi, noi sentiamo che la

sua apparente tronfia ritrovata sicurezza non ci spaventa più. Il re è nudo. E questo, sì, per sempre.

Siamo più liberi, e quindi più vivi. Accreditarci gli amici che ci hanno preceduto in questo secolo, o i protagonisti a noi contemporanei ai quali ci siamo accompagnati per un tratto di questa non irrilevante novità, a noi pare largamente sufficiente per costringerci e costringere a una più approfondita riflessione e a un ricordo che non vuole essere solo nostalgia.



Name June Paik, *Zen for Wind* (Da *Décollage*, n. 3, dicembre 1962).



# Fluxus Art as a Private Form of Subversion

Gino Di Maggio

**A**n extraordinary century is now embarked on its final decade. Despite the tragedies that we will be leaving behind, the balance that will be carried forward, though contradictory, is by and large positive. Great changes have taken place. Men are freer and therefore more alive.

*"Ubi Fluxus ibi motus"* seeks to offer a reinterpretation of one of the itineraries of this century, certainly the most loved one, which as it developed contributed in an important way to the profound changes in the "state of present things", and not just in its own specific realm, art history.

The Futurists, at the start of the century, set about a radical change from the past, through the invention or reinvention of all the idioms possible. Everything was newly brought into question. Giacomo Balla (who was then already famous) set the example by deciding in 1908 to sell all his works at a store on Via del Corso in Rome; the banner stretched across the storefront read "Giacomo Balla is dead, on sale here are the works of the defunct Giacomo Balla".

"The Futurists - wrote Gramsci in 1914 - had the clear and singular idea that our epoch, the epoch of large industry, the large working people's city, intense and tumultuous life, had to have new forms of art, of philosophy, of customs, and of language", and again that this new idea of the world is "singularly revolutionary, absolutely Marxist".

Marinetti's political blunder of declaring himself Fascist cost Futurism decades of public censure reflected in silence and exclusion, but which cannot detract from the historical validity of their proposals and the influence that these proposals had in successive developments in art, from Marcel Duchamp to Dada, or John Cage to Fluxus. This, even if it must be clearly stated that influence cannot mean paternity, because there is still a wide gap between the objectives of the Futurists and Duchamp, Duchamp and Dada and Cage, and Cage and Fluxus.

For this reason it is reductive to speak of Fluxus as a Neo-Futurist, Neo-Dada or Neo-Cage movement.

Fedele D'Amico wrote in an essay on Adorno that "to review modern art with impartial eyes offers the chance to discover facets and real possibilities of man that other forms of knowledge overlook".

Fluxus demonstrates the discovery of these facets and at the same time the existing possibility of affirming them. Fluxus arises as a reaction, as renunciation and as rejection of a reality that is the reality of superindustrialization, superexploitation, superconsumerism, superimperialism. It arises as the rejection of a reality that has left behind it the systematic carnage of Auschwitz and Hiroshima to look at the even more sophisticated carnage of Vietnam. Fluxus exposes the reality-show of the world, and the opportunity to affirm its own position outside of the show, its own difference.

For Fluxus, being different meant flying high above the squalid contests between those who consciously choose total subservience to rules and structures that all intelligent history has tried to cancel. To play with ideas without setting any goals except that of living in the full exaltation of life's creative possibilities was and is the affirmation of an attitude of unmatched subversion with respect to an obstinately passéist world.

Fluxus slipped beyond the immediate reach of control. It contributed to the extraordinary shock that the world received between 1960 and 1970.

A romantically cosmopolitan collective, at some points in its history and for the first time ever, it achieved an harmonic unity of aims between "different folks", in terms of cultural make-up and nationality, rendering wholly and physically visible the fusion between occidental and oriental cultures that had already been sublimely achieved in Cage's work.

But history may concede at most conditional release; thus, today it would appear that the great revolutionary feast of the Sixties has offered its fill of all the possible repasts of illusion and disappointment. All that is left us is to stroll sadly through this cemetery of lost dreams, and carefully scan the ruins for what might be an intact flower of utopia. Silence, therefore, and line up in pairs...

Whoever could not or cannot resist the dark call, at the first snap of the fingers, will fall in; thus potential desire will be transformed into utopia and utopia into the trade of survival. It demonstrates only the bounds of experience, not the defeat of a chance.

Fluxus was "an important moment showing the conflict between 'the possible and the real'", as H. Lefebvre wrote



in his *Critique de vie quotidienne*, "a more or less conscious conflict between theory and practice, between dream and reality; a conflict that is the cause of torment and anguish, like all contradictions that are unresolved and seem insoluble".

But even if today, as always, the demon's tam-tam calls to muster his ever-faithful, we feel that his plain, puffed up, regained security no longer frightens us. The king is nude.

And this, yes, once and for all.

We are freer and therefore more alive. To give credence to the friends who came before us in this century, or the contemporary heroes with whom we walked together for a piece during this not insignificant change, to us seems quite sufficient to force us into a deeper reflection and a memory that is not just nostalgia.



Dick Higgins, *Danger Music*, "Fluxus Festspiele" Wiesbaden, 1962.  
(*Da Décollage*, n. 3, dicembre 1962).



# Rimozione di ostacoli

Gianni Sassi

**C**ertamente la foglia che galleggia gettata nella corrente ci segnala la direzione, evidenzia la velocità, ci trasmette i sussulti e le asperità di un navigare quasi mai lineare e tranquillo ma continuamente obbligato a superare impedimenti, rallentamenti, burrasche, deviazioni.

Il flusso delle idee è stato spesso costretto in melmose paludi, deviato dai continui e sistematici ostacoli ideologici che le forze conservatrici costruivano sul suo percorso, a volte bonificandolo, immettendolo con violenza in monotoni canali, con l'evidente scopo di modificarne l'esuberanza e di sedarne la vivacità.

Nel tratto poi che corrisponde al nostro secolo, forse per la piatta morfologia del terreno e per le mutate condizioni ambientali, il flusso si è trovato in una situazione insopportabile ed è stato costretto a chiedere aiuto alle energie più vive che possedeva.

Queste forze dirompenti hanno iniziato a far saltare ponti, a demolire viadotti, a distruggere dighe e argini in vere e proprie azioni di guerriglia con l'obiettivo di consentire alle idee di scegliere liberamente il loro percorso.

Questa sistematica rimozione di ostacoli costituisce appunto la dominante delle tendenze artistiche del secolo, percorso da continue ondate di sussulti normalizzatori alternati a spinte innovatrici verso l'inesauribile ricerca di una possibile modernità. Artisti, intellettuali, liberi pensatori solitari o complici dei movimenti delle avanguardie storiche si sono assunti il compito spesso ingrato di aprire varchi alle spinte più vivaci, tese a costruire

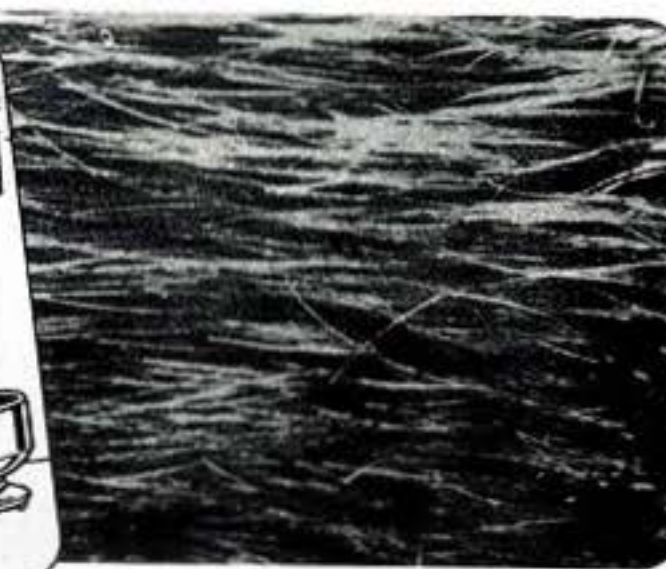
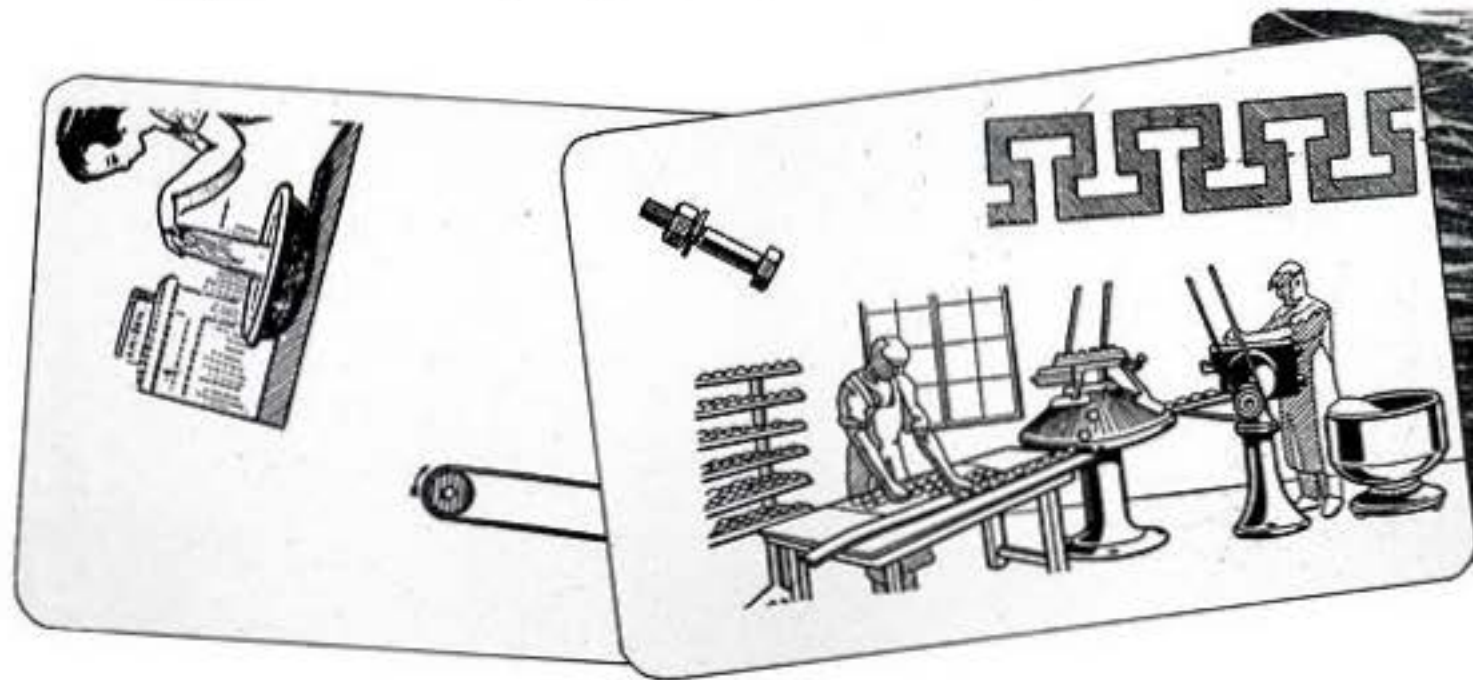
scenari inusitati e laicamente innovativi.

Negli anni Sessanta Fluxus si è trovato su questa lunghezza d'onda con grande energia, radicalizzando le sollecitazioni delle precedenti avanguardie e tracciando nuovi percorsi all'inesauribile mercato delle idee.

Folgoranti intuizioni hanno consentito di gettare le basi e costruire nuovi strumenti adatti a comprendere le spinte trasformatrici interne al corpo sociale, mentre tenaci forze connettive – tuttora impegnate nella loro attività – hanno informalmente ridisegnato la geografia e gli scenari del mondo intero.

Presentare Fluxus oggi al grande pubblico significa dunque fornire un repertorio di intuizioni e di poetica che forse potrebbe essere utile alle nuove generazioni per mettere a punto gli strumenti necessari ad affrontare la complessità del reale. Da un lato si tratta di rendere omaggio al lavoro di una generazione, rimosso ed emarginato per ragioni prevalentemente di ordine politico; dall'altro si tratta di verificare se l'energia di Fluxus possa ancora avere forza dirompente e in quale misura oggi i componenti del movimento siano ancora in grado di rimuovere gli ostacoli che rallentano la corsa.

Ultimo e non per minore importanza, lo stato di virulenza oggi necessario a riavviare il motore dell'elaborazione teorica per uscire dall'imbarazzo delle ideologie. Imparare a rivedere le cose da un punto d'osservazione libero da modelli e guardare il mondo con atteggiamento laico nel continuo sforzo di modernizzarlo, questa è per me la lezione di Fluxus.





# Removing the obstacles

Gianni Sassi

**A** leaf floating in the stream, there where it fell, certainly indicates the direction of the current, shows its speed, transmits to us the jerks and ruggedness of a voyage that is hardly ever linear and smooth, but continually forced to overcome impediments, slow-downs, tumultuous deviations.

The flow of ideas has often been squeezed into miry swamps and deviated by the continual and systematic ideological obstacles laid in its path by the conservative forces, which at times perform an act of reclamation, by violently funneling it into monotonous channels, with the clear purpose of killing its exuberance and stifling its vivacity.

Then, in the reach that corresponds to our century, perhaps because of the featurelessness of the terrain and the changed environmental conditions, the flow found itself in an unbearable situation, and was compelled to summon the most powerful forces it could muster to come to its aid. These explosive forces started blowing up bridges, demolishing viaducts, destroying dykes and levees in real guerrilla acts with the aim of allowing ideas to freely choose their course.

This systematic removal of the obstacles precisely describes the main feature of the century's artistic movements, besieged by incessant waves of normalization alternated with thrusts of innovation in the inexhaustible pursuit of a feasible modernity. Artists, intellectuals and free-thinkers, alone or a party to the avant-garde movements took on the

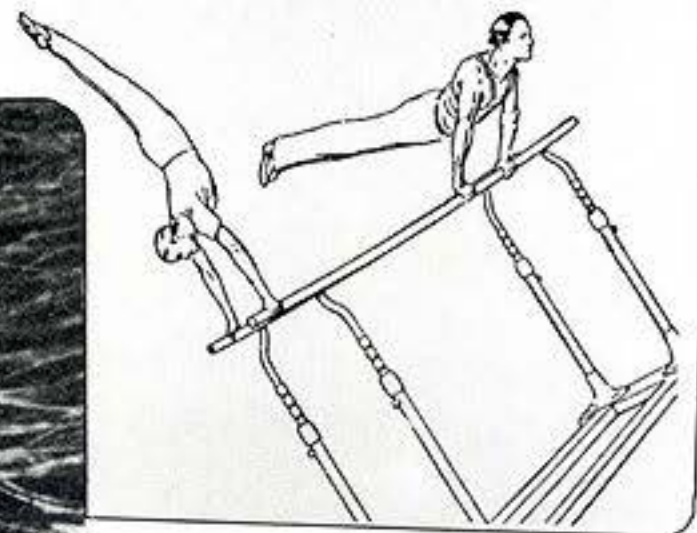
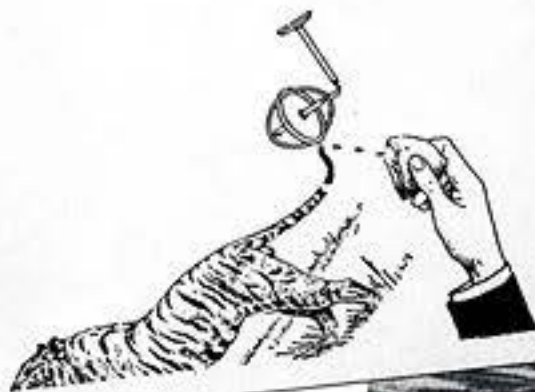
often thankless task of opening the way for the liveliest of stimuli to create unusual and laicly innovative scenarios. During the Sixties, Fluxus found itself on this wavelength, and put great energy into radicalizing the proposals of the foregoing avant-gardes and paving new roads to the inexhaustible market of ideas.

Dazzling insights made it possible to lay the foundations and devise new tools for understanding the stimuli for change inherent to the social body, while tenacious connective forces still at work even now have in an informal way redesigned the geography and the scenarios of the entire world.

Therefore, to introduce Fluxus to the broad public today means to provide a repertory of insights and poetics that may in some way serve the up and coming generations in perfecting the tools needed to face today's complex reality. On one hand, homage must be paid to the work of a generation; on the other, it remains to be seen if Fluxus' energy still retains its explosive force and to what extent today the movement's components are still able to remove the obstacles that slow their progress.

Last but not least, the state of virulence that is today needed to start up the mechanism of the elaboration of theories in order to get clear of the ideological predicament; to learn to see things in a new light, from a vantage point that is free of models, and to take a layman's view of the world in the constant effort to remodernize it: this is for me the lesson imparted by Fluxus.

George Brecht,  
Deck, a Fluxgame.





**NEO-DADA in der Musik****Vorspruch: Jean-Pierre Wilhelm****PROGRAMM:**

1. One-for Violin Solo	Name June Paik	
2. Wort-Event	George Brecht	
3. Sonata quasi una fantasia	Name June Paik	
4. read music „Do It yourself“ — Antworten an La Monte Young — gelesen von C. Caspari	Name June Paik	
5. Composition Anonyme		
	Parallele Aufführungen von	
Komponisten	Titel	Interpreten
Sylvano Busotti	Paik piece 62	C. Caspari
Jed Curtis	Saint Anthony's Blues	Jed Curtis
Dick Higgins	Danger Music Structure	J. Flimm
Toshi Ischlyanagi	Violin Piece	J. G. Fritsch
Jackson Mac Low	poem	W. Kirchgässer
George Maciunas	piano piece for NO 8 for NO 12	George Maciunas H. v. Alemann
Name June Paik	aus „Bagatelles americaines“	Name June Paik Fr. Reddemann Tomas Schmit Batzing Bonk
Benjamin Patterson	Papier Musik	Alvermann Schneider Weselina Schröder u. a. etc.
	Disturbance from „Lemons“	A. Falkenstörfer Benjamin Patterson
Dieter Schnebel	Visible Composition for Conductor	H. Reddemann
Vostell	„KLEENEX“ décollage	Vostell
La Monte Young	For Flynt 566* chant of death	Name June Paik u. a. etc. J. G. Fritsch
6. smile gently ——— or etude platonique NO 5	Name June Paik	



# Arman

Arman, Nizza, 1928.





par Jacques Brissot

*On fait grand cas de la différence entre l'art qui se rapporte au temps et celui qui se rapporte à l'espace. Il ne s'agit là que d'une vaine séparation. Parce que la notion d'espace est elle-même temporelle. Pour qu'un point entre en mouvement et se fasse trait, pour qu'il bouge et devienne ligne, le temps se trouve nécessairement impliqué.*

PAUL KLEE

Rarement pont-aux-ânes philosophique, sur lequel s'aventurent régulièrement, avec plus ou moins de bonheur, les candidats à la deuxième partie du baccalauréat, aura, comme celui des rapports entre l'espace et le temps, trouvé, en art, des applications aussi immédiates et aussi évidentes.

Dans un tableau, immobile, la durée est déjà contenue ne serait-ce que parce que ce tableau est espace, et ne serait-ce que parce que peindre est un acte. De plus, le mouvement qui a donné naissance au tableau, le geste qui retombe, une fois l'œuvre achevée, se reproduit, se perpétue, avec chaque spectateur. Revenons à Paul Klee :

*« Celui qui regarde un tableau doit inscrire son acte dans le temps, agir dans la durée. L'œil est ainsi fait, qu'il ne verse dans le champ de la vue qu'un fragment après l'autre, et doit abandonner l'ancien pour le nouveau. »*

Enfin, il ne s'agit pas là seulement d'une servitude physiologique, mais d'une nécessité esthétique. Car, pourrions-nous ajouter : « L'esprit est ainsi fait qu'il ne supporte pas l'immobilité. »

Les livres d'art, qui nous présentent d'abord l'ensemble d'un tableau, puis en isolent une série de détails, reproduisent en cela la démarche naturelle du visiteur qui pénètre dans une galerie de peinture et la parcourt d'abord rapidement, jetant un coup d'œil d'ensemble sur chacune des toiles, puis revient à celles qui ont retenu son attention, tourne autour, s'en approche, recule, change perpétuellement d'angle de vue. Et lorsqu'il se laisse enfin tomber sur un canapé, pour considérer, sans plus bouger « le clou de l'exposition », on peut, sans grand risque d'erreur, parier sur la fatigue de ses jambes, plutôt que sur ses dispositions contemplatives.

Filmer un tableau ne serait, à ce compte, qu'une attention délicate destinée à lui épargner cette fatigue. Désormais c'est le spectateur qui, confortablement installé dans son fauteuil, voit le tableau se déplacer. C'est plus commode. Et, d'autre part, que le soleil tourne autour de la terre ou la terre autour du soleil, le jour ne s'en lève pas moins.

Mais, bien sûr, les choses ne sont pas aussi simples. Privé de sa liberté de choix, et de la joie des découvertes, le spectateur devient une proie.

Cet angle de vue, ce détail qu'on lui présente, n'est sans doute pas celui qui l'aurait attiré. Ce rythme, dans le déroulement de la vision, lui est imposé, en même temps qu'à toute une salle.

Le revers a sa médaille. Certes, guidé, contraint, bousculé, ou bercé, il subit une volonté qui n'est pas la sienne. Mais, en même temps que son libre arbitre, s'abolit la distance qui le séparait de l'œuvre, cette « distance d'un regard » dont parle Joe Bousquet (distance qu'élargissaient encore la fatigue, la distraction, la difficulté de se concentrer). Mis en contact immédiat avec le tableau, précipité dedans, il le revit. Et sans doute peu propice à l'exercice de ses facultés critiques, mais favorable aux joies esthétiques.

Seulement, il faut bien le dire, la volonté avec laquelle il se confond ainsi n'est plus celle du peintre, mais celle du cinéaste. A la couleur et aux formes se sont ajoutées des valeurs nouvelles : le rythme, et des équivalences, des analogies, des contrastes nés de la durée, qui se combinent indissolublement, à ceux qui se présentaient déjà dans l'œuvre originale. Pour que le film soit à son tour une œuvre, pour qu'il dispose de cette puissance contraignante dont je parlais, toutes ces valeurs doivent se fondre dans une composition unique. Pour servir efficacement le peintre, il faut que le cinéaste le domine, et se serve de lui, comme le peintre s'est déjà asservi ce qu'il prétendait exprimer. Un film réalisé à partir d'une œuvre picturale, est une création

au second degré. Son équilibre est toujours de compromis. Au bout de cette équivoque, on arrive tout droit à d'excellents films réalisés à partir de mauvais tableaux, ou l'essentiel ne résiderait pas dans les images, mais dans ce qui se passe entre les images.

Mais, si le cinéaste était peintre... ou le peintre cinéaste...

Il est vrai que les artistes accueillent de plus ou moins bonne grâce l'intrusion, inévitable, de la durée dans leur œuvre. Certains tableaux, peut-être, se voudraient hors du temps.

A d'autres, au contraire, elle ne suffit pas. Ils veulent faire de leur tableau un événement, une danse, une fuite.

Pour suggérer le mouvement, outre d'autres moyens, plus subtils, (la composition, la facture...) les peintres disposaient d'un expédient bien simple : représenter des objets ou des personnages en mouvement, des nuages étirés par un vent qu'on devine, aux gestes inachevés, aux équilibres instables que le spectateur se sent obligé de parfaire.

Excluant toute valeur qui ne soit purement plastique, l'art abstrait se voit, naturellement, privé de cette commodité. Nous n'irons pas le regretter! En revanche, s'offrent à lui des possibilités nouvelles de combiner le dynamisme interne des œuvres avec le mouvement, que l'œuvre bouge effectivement, ou que ses formes se modifient au gré de la perspective. Et, de nouveau, le cinéma paraît être l'aboutissement naturel d'une telle démarche.

Pour capter le mouvement, le peintre Arman a choisi une autre voie.

Des objets qu'il projette sur la toile (tiges, boules, chapelets) y laissent leur empreinte, la trace de leur trajectoire.

Qu'on approuve ou non un tel processus de création (qui, pour faire appel aux lois de la balistique, n'en dépend pas moins de la volonté humaine. Les gestes des joueurs de pétanque ne seraient-ils pas calculés?) on voit aisément combien il pouvait séduire un cinéaste. Pour le coup, le mouvement n'était plus une nouvelle dimension arbitrairement ajoutée par le film à un tableau, mais l'œuvre elle-même, en train de se créer, spontanément, semblait-il.

Au moment de mettre en forme les matériaux que j'avais amassés en un mois, l'Étude aux Sans Animés de Pierre SCHAEFFER, m'a donné l'occasion d'une seconde expérience. Pourquoi, dans ma recherche d'un système de montage, dans mon effort pour maîtriser la durée, ne pas m'appuyer sur un rythme, sur des structures musicales?

On parle beaucoup « d'objet sonore » à l'intérieur du Groupe de Recherches Musicales. « Objets animés »! Ce pourrait être le titre d'une exposition d'Arman!

Mes compétences musicales ne me permettraient pas de tenter, sans imprudence, un parallèle entre les deux démarches. J'observerai seulement que, dans les deux cas, le créateur s'efforce de dominer une réalité en mouvement, sans lui imposer de déformations arbitraires, mais en assemblant les objets (sonores ou visuels) qui la composent dans une construction basée sur une connaissance aussi précise que possible de leur nature et des lois qui les régissent.

J'arrête là des considérations, peut-être hasardeuses, en souhaitant que le très bref essai que j'ai intitulé « Objets animés » réalisé à partir d'une œuvre picturale, et monté ensuite sur une musique préexistante, ne se resente pas trop de cette triple origine, et n'ait pas besoin de tant de phrases pour se justifier.



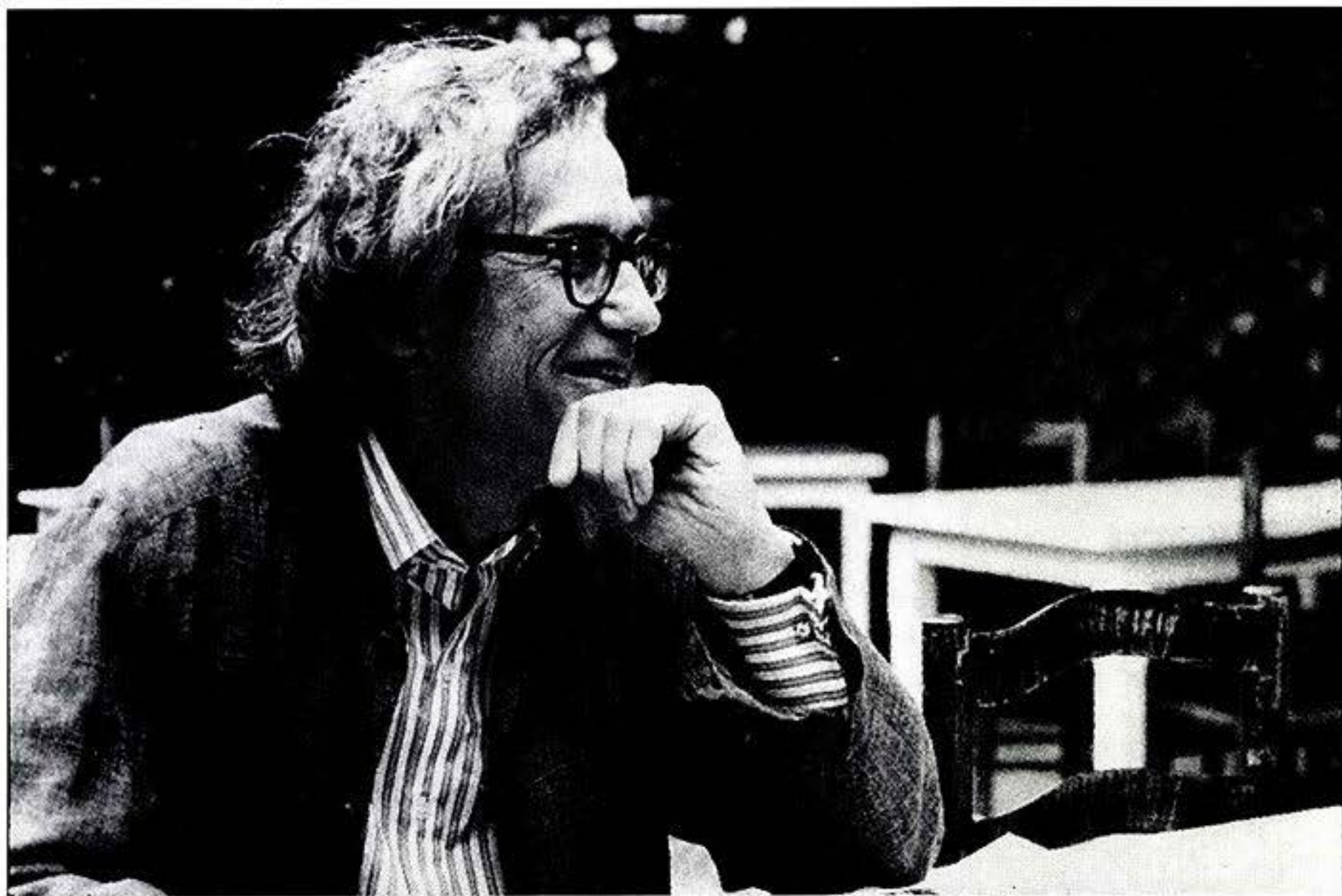


Arman, *Le Plein*, Parigi,  
ottobre 1960.



# Christo

Christo, 1989.  
(Foto Catharina Gabrielsson).





## **PROJET DU MUR PROVISOIRE DE TONNEAUX METALLIQUES**

(rue Visconti, Paris VI)

Entre la rue Bonaparte et la rue de Seine, la rue Visconti, à sens unique, longue de 140m., a une largeur moyenne de 3m. Elle se termine au numero 25 à gauche et au 26 à droite.

Elle compte peu de commerces: une librairie, une galerie d'art moderne, un antiquaire, un magasin d'électricité, une épicerie . . . „à l'angle de la rue Visconti et de la rue de Seine le cabaret du Petit More (ou Maure) a été ouvert en 1618. Le poète Saint-Amant qui le fréquentait assidûment y mourut. La galerie de peinture qui remplace la taverne a heureusement conservé la façade, la grille et l'enseigne du XVII ème siècle” (p 134, Rochegude/Clebert Promenades dans les rues de Paris, Rive gauche, édition Denoël).

Le Mur sera élevé entre les numeros 1 et 2, fermera complètement la rue à la circulation coupera toute communication entre la rue Bonaparte et la rue de Seine.

Exclusivement construit avec les tonneaux métalliques destinés au transport de l'essence et de l'huile pour voitures, (estampillés de marques diverses; ESSO, SHELL, TOTAL, BP et d'une contenance de 50l. ou de 200l.) le Mur haut de 4m., a une largeur de 2,90m. 8tonneaux couchés de 50l., ou 5 tonneaux de 200l. en constituent la base. 150 tonneaux de 50l. ou 80 tonneaux de 200l. sont nécessaires à l'exécution du Mur.

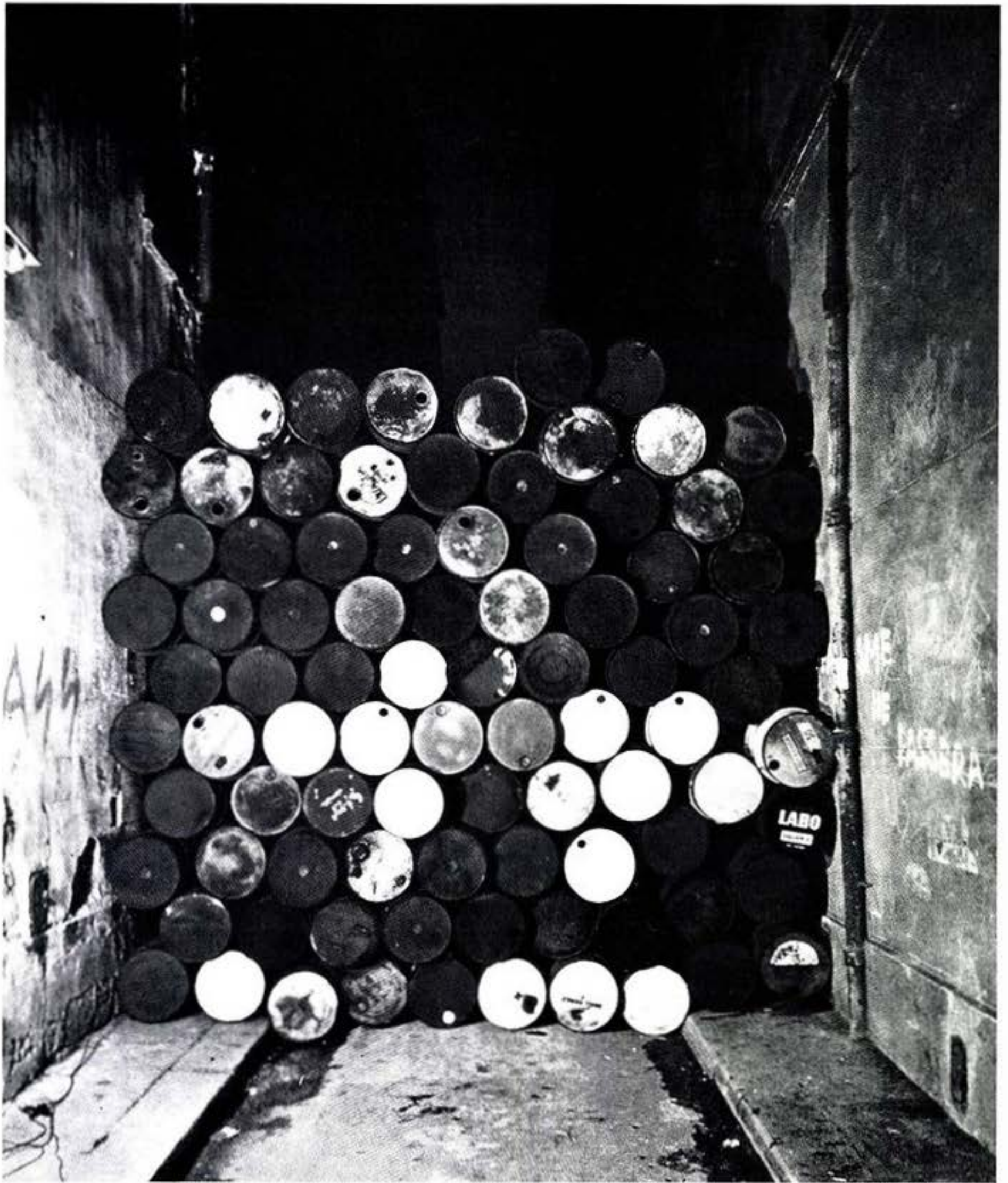
Ce „rideau de fer” peut s'utiliser comme barrage durant une période de travaux publics, ou servir à transformer définitivement une rue en impasse. Enfin son principe peut s'étendre à tout un quartier, voire à une cité entière.

**CHRISTO**

1961, Paris, Octobre

Ce projet a été réalisé le 27 juin 1962 de 21 à 22,30 h. et présenté par galerie J.





Christo, *Wall of Oil Barrels - Iron Curtain*, 1962.



# Diter Rot

**And I open my mouth, and I teach you, saying,**

**1. Shitshi shi shi shit hi shitsh:**

**hit hits itshi sh tshitshit.**

**2. Shitshi shi shit hits itshi:**

**hit hitshi sh tsh tshitsh ts itshit.**

**3. Shitshi shi shi shit:**

**tsh tshi shits itshits its itshi.**

**4. Shitshi shi shit hitsh ts itshit hit hitshi shits**

**itshitshitshi: it hits itshi sh tshits.**

**5. Shitshi shi shi shitshit:**

**tsh tshi shits itshit hitsh.**

**6. Shitshi shi shi shit hi shits:**

**shi shit hitsh tsh tsh.**

**7. Shitshi shi shi shitshitshi:**

**it hits itshi sh tshits hit hitshits it hit.**

**8. Shitshi shi shit hitsh tsh tshitshits its**

**itshitshitshi' hits: shi shitsh ts its itshits it hitshi.**

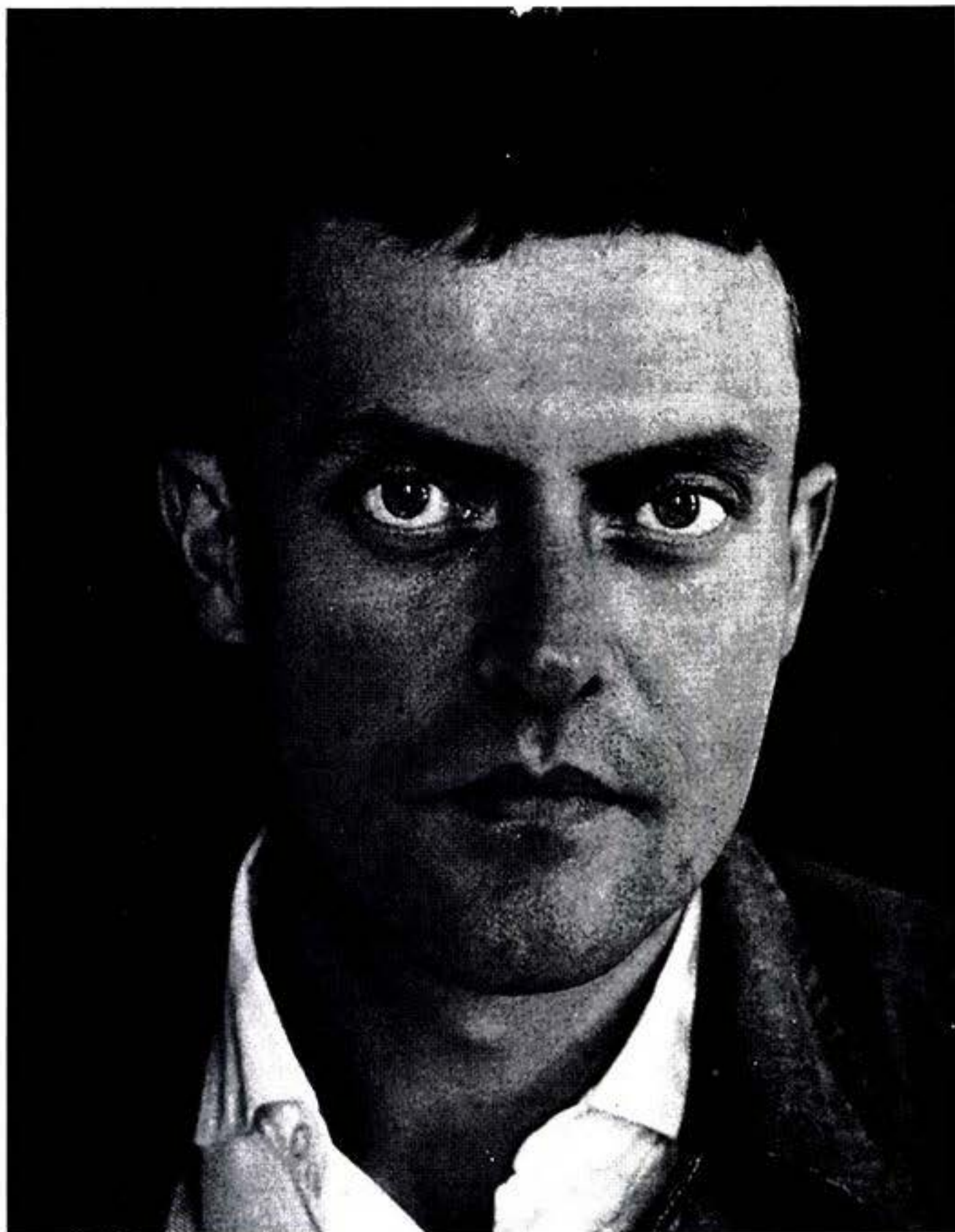
**9. Shitshi shi sh, hits its itshi shitsh tsh, hit**

**hitshitsh tsh, hit hitsh tsh tsh tshits it hits itshits  
its itshits, shi sh tshi!**

**Mat. 5: 1-9**



# Oyvind Fahlström





# Notations 1974

Oyvind Fahlström

When I read reviews like Lazlo's, it appears to me that critics see my work largely in terms of its success or failure as propaganda art. Apparently it is difficult for them to accept that – even though my sympathies are clear – my work is about certain facts, events and ideas, rather than for or against them. If I were only, or mainly, interested in educating the viewers, I would create simple structures, and use other media than hand-made art. I see myself as a witness, rather than as an educator.

As a witness I am increasingly concerned with the emotional impact of facts and events in the world. In a sense, I am continually creating operas, where the "music" of form, colour, variability, etc. often intentionally confuses and overpowers the factual "libretto".

Also, like in opera, the music remains. The words of the libretto are absorbed

in a couple of hearings. Similarly the writing on my *Columns* is quickly registered. But the endlessly varying labyrinth of the colour-fields can be experienced over and over again (even though probably they are still "tinted" by the factual dimension).

I have also been making hundreds of improvisations in order to find shapes that are both interesting as such, and "unnatural" to the factual content and to the space needed for the facts. These clashes result in forms that, at best, may have something of the surprising beauty of tropical fish.

In addition to this, in my last works (the two Chile-paintings and *Latin American Puzzle*) the historic facts have largely been supplanted by "facts" taken from poems by Sylvia Plath and Lorca.

The loss of Chile cannot be expressed merely by depicting a succession of

events. In Latin America, trade imbalance, forcing aid stipulations, monoculture, denationalization, etc. are not dry text-book facts, but conditions that involve immeasurable suffering and degradation.

Those that view the musical and poetical dimension of my work as an evasion, or as an opportunistic sugarcoating of serious conditions, I would remind of the scene in *Tosca*, where torture goes on off-stage. Meanwhile, on stage, Puccini's bel canto flows; this seemingly tasteless, juxtaposition illustrates a basic paradox in the art of all times.

The search to create a fusion of insight and pleasure. To formulate the terrifying shortness of life and the terrible shortcomings in a world where we struggle to experience and to create happiness.



Oyvind Fahlström, *ESSO-LSD*, 1967.



# Ray Johnson

Something in the sensibility of the times responds to these mischievous paste-ups, and their vibration outlives that of many a more ponderous claimant to our attention.

- John Russell  
The Sunday Times

210

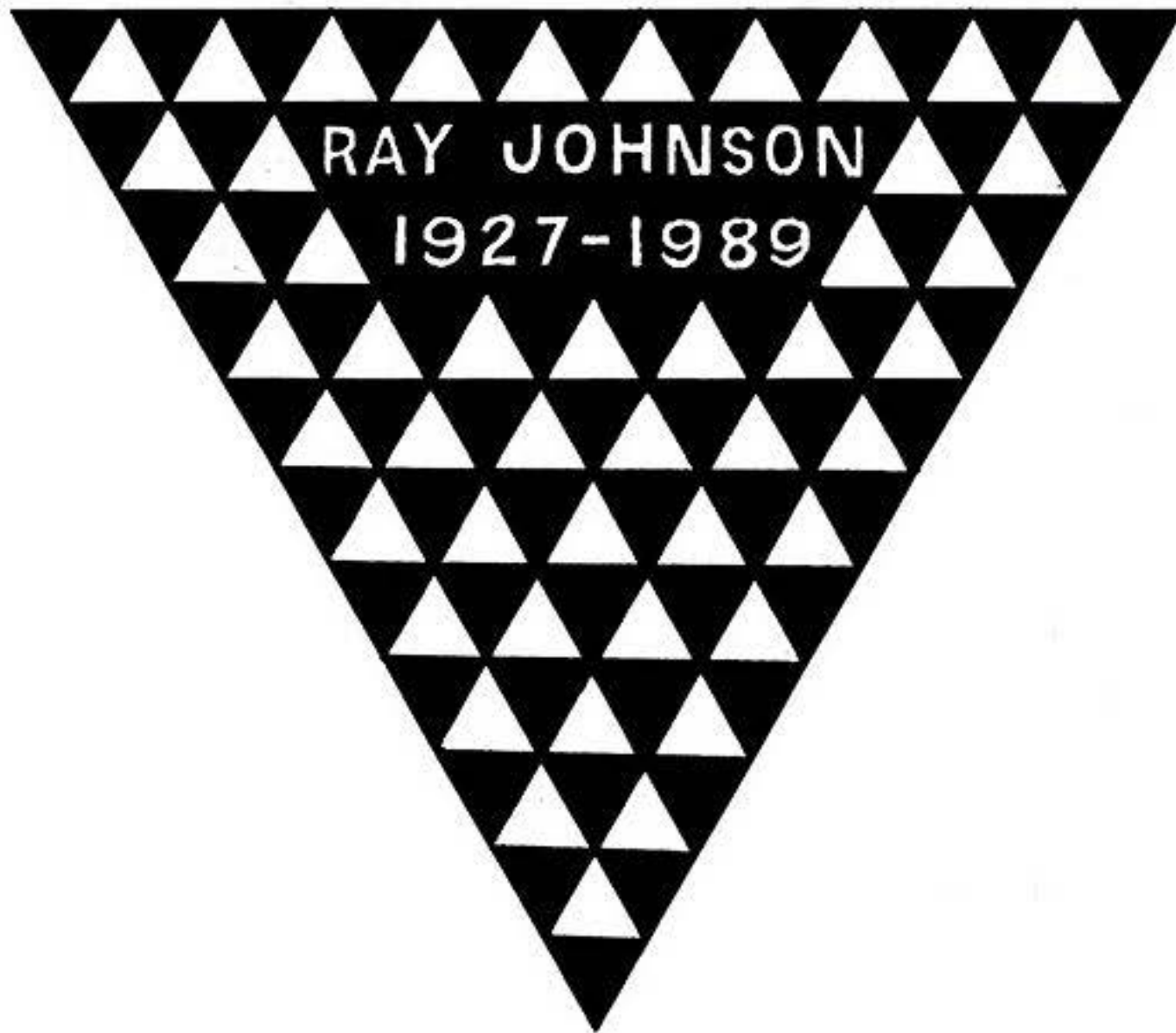
PRIAPEIA

*cole et art des chiens, pissoux, et foireux, — Peteriana, — Le Directeur des Estomacs, &c., &c.* Piron, M. de Malesherbes, Père Kircher the Jesuit, Rabelais, Béroalde de Verville (*Le Moyen de Parvenir*), and the *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, all treat the matter; which is further expounded in the *Mémoires de l'Académie de Troyes*. Of English writers I will merely mention the names of Swift, Smollett (*Humphry Clinker*; and *The Adventures of an Atom*), Sterne (*Sentimental Journey*), and Somerville (*The Officious Messenger*).

Ray Johnson is the Antithesis of most people's idea of an American artist. His work is modest inscale and entirely unportentous. (It can be also very funny, by the way: simply to think of his "Bridget Riley's Comb" of 1966 puts me, for one, in a good humour). When other artists were planning their careers, move by move, Ray Johnson mailed his work to friends, as a free gift, or "exhibited" it for ten minutes, on the back of a lorry, to anyone who happened to pass by.

He pioneered more than one of the avant-garde attitudes which are now standard practice: in particular, he was among the first to think of art as an on-going process of human exchange rather than as a marketing operation. He has a secret celebrity: all over North America you will find, somewhere on walls no matter how circumspect, a message from Ray Johnson.







# Piero Manzoni

Piero Manzoni, *Linea M. 11,65*, scatola h 21,9 × ø 5,8 cm, dicembre 1959; *Linea M. 3,10*, scatola h 22,2 × ø 5,8 cm, novembre 1959; *Linea M. 5,63*, scatola h 20,6 × ø 5,8 cm, dicembre 1959; *Linea M. 10,75*, scatola h 20,5 × ø 5,8 cm, novembre 1959; *Linea infinita*, scatola h 15 × ø 4,8 cm, 1960.

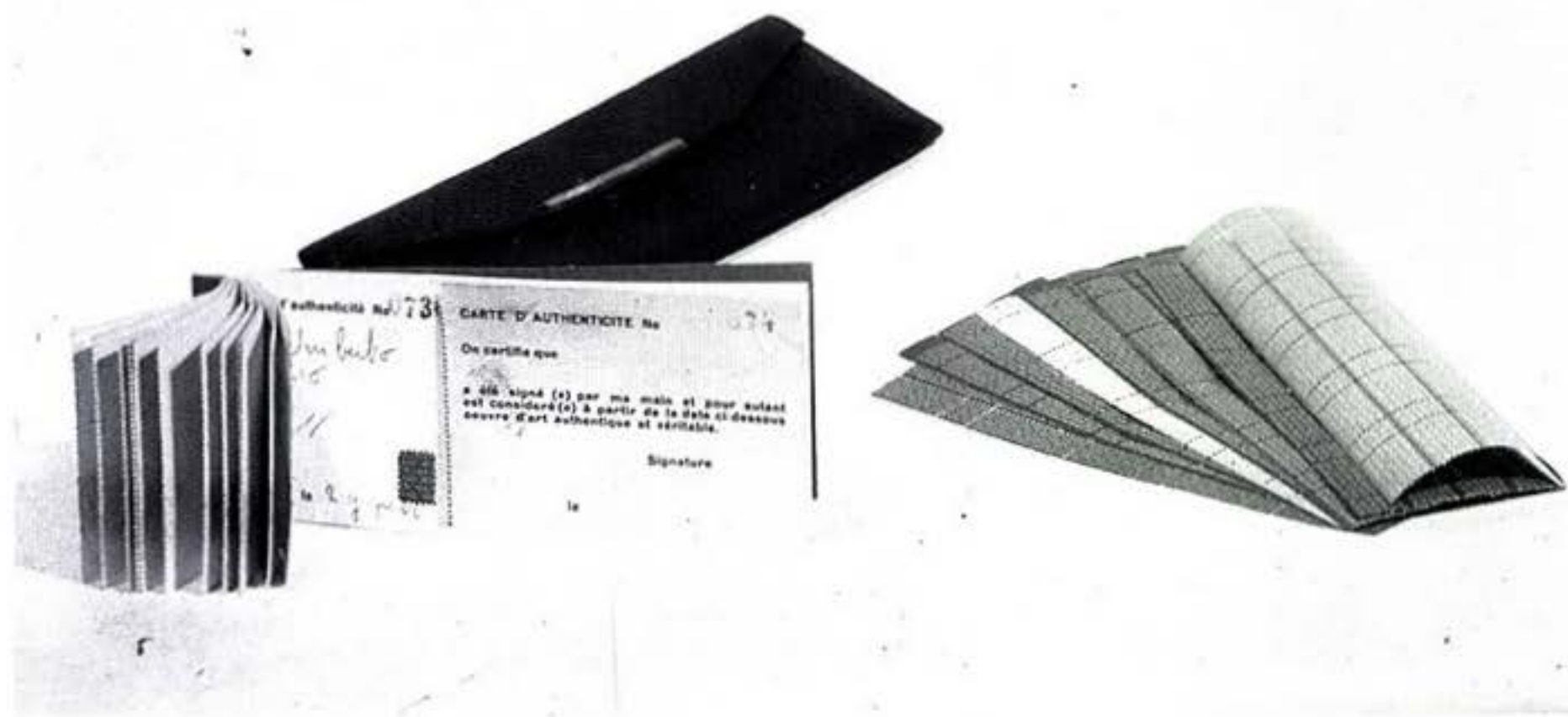






Piero Manzoni, *Scatola n. 076*, 4,7×6,4 cm; *Scatola n. 008*, 4,7×6,4 cm; *Scatola n. 042*, 4,7×6,4 cm; *Scatola n. 001*, 4,7×6,4 cm.

Piero Manzoni, *Libretto assegni / Carta di autenticità 1961*; busta in pelle contenente un libretto di assegni numerati, di cui 13 talloncini firmati e datati, 1 busta contenente 8 fogli di bollini firmati 7×17 cm, in busta di pelle di foca nera 8,5×19,5 cm.





# DIAS

*Gustav Metzger*

Gustav Metzger,  
Wolf Vostell, Al Hansen.







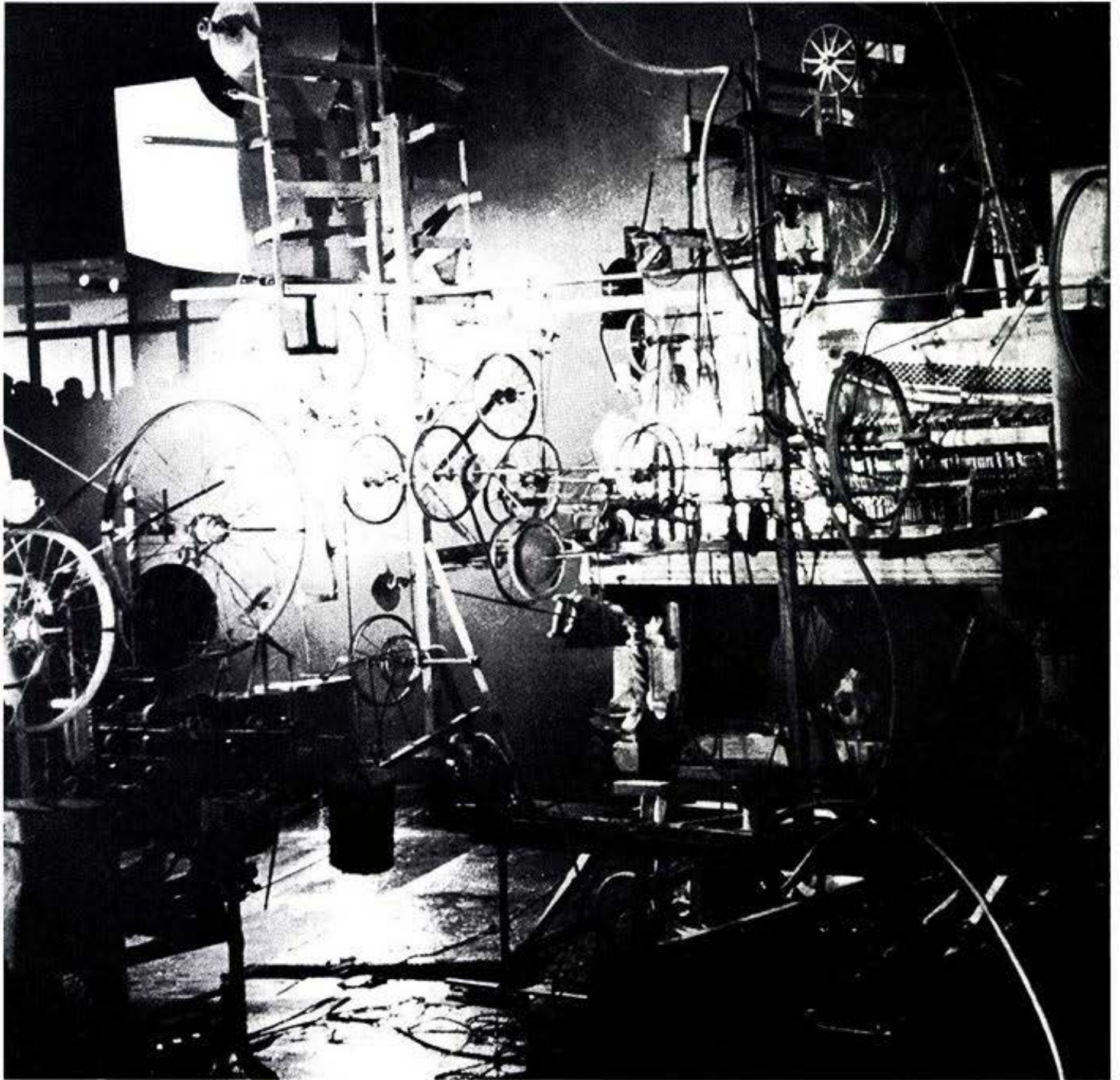
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# Jean Tinguely

Jean Tinguely, *Homage to New York*,  
MOMA, New York, 17 marzo 1960.





# Happenings or Dance Happenings or Happening Theater or Theater Happenings or Collage Events or Situations and All the Various Things They Have Been Called...<sup>1</sup>

Henry Martin

"If one cannot pass this work on to one's children in the form of a piece of 'property', the attitudes and values it embodies surely can be transmitted. And like so many quite acceptable but passing facets of our lives, this art can be considered as a semi-intangible entity, something to be renewed in different forms like fine cooking or the seasonal changes, which we do not put into our pockets, but need nevertheless."  
(Allan Kaprow, *Environments, Assemblages and Happenings*)

The artists and chroniclers who have written from a Fluxus or Fluxus-related point of view generally start from a long way back and rove freely through a very wide field. George Maciunas' Fluxus family tree finds forbears for Fluxus in the Roman circus, Medieval fairs, church processions and the "super multimedia spectacles" held at Versailles by the Kings of France; Al Hansen in *A Primer of Happenings and Time/Space Art* speaks of Happenings that evoke the air of Fontainebleau Wood and he as well refers back to Caligula's predilection for staging real events (including murder and torture) and to Leonardo da Vinci's contributions to the Renaissance and Baroque tradition of great scenic machines for balls and fêtes; Ken Friedman and Jean-Jacques Lebel find it necessary to think back to Heraclitus and his notion of the world as a fabric of constant change. Dick Higgins' *Post-face* prefers mainly to roam through the present and the more recent past — weaving a hefty and common-sense way through the various phases of Dada and Surrealism and frequently tipping his hat and winking his eye at the inventions of Marinetti, Bragaglia, and Futurist theater — but he likewise quips on thirteenth-century Turkish culture, which "did Duchamp seven hundred years ago". Fluxus thus seems

sometimes to posit itself as the modern-day reference point for a submerged and different history, as though the history of permanent forms were somehow an unspeakable falsehood, a story about the veins of the body but monstrously forgetful of the blood that courses through them. There is an echo here of Marcel Duchamp's insistence that the truly wonderful things of an age are unpreservable and never of a nature that allows their storage in museums. The new art of the Sixties — which at its beginnings seemed a reasonable definition for all of it — was very much fascinated by such a point of view and was widely convinced that the continued viability of art would prove to be dependent upon the artists' ability to enter into a greater and more conscious involvement with the energies, complexities, and fluidity of life itself. Formal hermeticism seemed no longer to serve real purposes, or seemed already to have opened the door for a great deal more than the second and third generations of the abstract expressionists were capable of fruitfully developing. The "gap" between art and life was an ever-present issue. The archetypal question about a work of art is to ask what it means (which is to ask what one can do with it and where one can place it in one's life), and the archetypal criticism of a work of art is to say that one doesn't understand it (which is to deny its possession of availability); and perhaps the gap between art and life is the distance between the feasible interpretations of the meaning of a work. That gap had surely grown enormous by the end of the Fifties or the beginning of the Sixties if the school of critics headed by Clement Greenberg could argue of Jackson Pollock that his work was all about paint and the flatness of the pic-

ture plane, whereas others, like Serge Guilbaut, can feel that the hidden subject of Pollock's work was the vaporization of Hiroshima in the energies released by the atom bomb. Pollock, moreover, is far from an arbitrary reference, since he was much on many peoples' minds. He had achieved an unprecedented level of emphasis on the work of art as process rather than as object, and his reliance on chance and accident was easily on a par with the Dada experiments of Hans Arp. Presenting itself as the work of a mind afloat in a sea of shifting variables, his painting cried out to be "betrayed" and superseded on the basis of principles that it itself had stated. George Brecht's essay on *Chance Imagery* deals extensively with Pollock, and photos of Pollock at work on a canvas spread out on the floor are included by Allan Kaprow in his book on *Environments, Assemblages and Happenings*. One can remember too, more generally, that the Happenings of the Gutai Group in Japan were at first an extension of their own particular versions of action painting. Fluxus and Happenings often find themselves mentioned in a single breath. Jean-Jacques Lebel remarks: "Anyone who recognizes the formidable libidinal, polytechnical, multi-directional and often 'delayed-action' uprising of the Sixties — and especially the people who lived this experience — can hardly be surprised [at seeing] Fluxus and Happenings grouped as a subject of a single manifestation. After all, Fluxus and Happenings were contemporaneous — Happenings surfacing slightly earlier — and a good many artists swam happily in both of the currents of this great single stream. The difference, finally, if there is a difference, lies less in their programmatic intentions — relatively fluid and chang-





Jim Dine, all'esterno della Judson Gallery, trasporta i materiali per l'environment *The House*, 1960.



ing for both — than rather in the personal, emotional, geographic and linguistic affinities that have managed, or not, to draw certain individuals together.” But to wonder why Happenings and Fluxus are so frequently remembered together is also to ask why so little stress is given to the relationship that existed between Happenings and a very large part of the rest of the art of the period: especially Pop Art and Nouveau Réalisme and much of the new dance of the 1960s. Happenings also struck the fancy and enjoyed the passionate creative participation of certain op and minimal artists. Jim Dine and Claes Oldenburg had an underground fame as makers of Happenings and environmental situations long before being propelled to their subsequent status as official art world stars, and Robert Rauschenberg’s “combine paintings” were recognized as working with the same sensibility to multiple focus that made Happenings seem a necessity. It is almost painfully simple to conclude that Happenings and Fluxus are so frequently referred to together since they have the further kinship of now standing out as the parts of the Sixties that have most succeeded in maintaining their recognizability as unorthodox and disruptive forms of energy, questioning art, its definitions, and its pertinence to life while still continuing to create it, almost paradoxically or by default. They are the parts of the Sixties that have proved most impervious to art history and shown the most general resistance to whatever the force it is that collapses vital and energetic forms of art and investigative thought into successions of styles and varying nuances of high-class merchandize. They have preserved the visibility of their insistence on the need for new ways of coping with a new and different world in which the truth of experience and real human need is all too readily submerged by an always rising tide of conventional fictions and stereotyped hopes. Dick Higgins prefaced *Postface* with the words: “On a good day, somebody is shot, somebody is cold, somebody can’t find work, somebody doesn’t care, somebody has contempt for somebody’s hunger. The central problems of the moment are based on this fact. The question is how should or does art mirror this fact... It is necessary to have an art which creates a tough, uncompromising, revo-

lutionary mentality capable of expressing, handling, and extending scientifically the great tendencies of our times.” It is true that talk about bridging the gap between art and life may sometimes sound like an anxious ploy for the preservation of art, a last-ditch maneuver for halting its demise on the part of minds with an *a priori* allegiance to art and frightened stiff by the growing specter of their possible irrelevance. But the words just quoted really ought to show that it was quite the other way around: it was the business of living that seemed to grow opaque and that seemed to require new tools for the purpose of tapping new energies, new insights, and new commitments. One of the first European Happenings was organized in Venice in 1960 as a part of Jean-Jacques Lebel’s *Anti-Procès*, and Alain Jouffroy has described these events as a rebellious expression of anguish, suffering, and discontent in the wake of the French involvement in the Algerian War. In the summer of 1967, Carolee Schneemann presented a Happening in London at the Round House as a part of the Congress of the Dialectics of Liberation, which was billed with the participation of Gregory Bateson, David Cooper, Mircea Eliade, Allen Ginsberg, Paul Goodman, Ronald Laing, Herbert Marcuse and Paul Sweezy as “the greatest intellectual event of the decade”. Stokely Carmichael and Michael X likewise showed up. Buckminster Fuller was elsewhere in town, delivering lectures on the rules for future existence on “spaceship earth” at the London School of Economics. A poster for the Dialectics of Liberation announced: “All men are in chains. There is the bondage of poverty and starvation: the bondage of lust for power, status, possessions... A reign of terror is now perpetrated and perpetuated on a global scale... In the affluent societies it is masked. There children are conditioned by violence called love to assume their position as the would-be inheritors of the fruits of the earth... For the rest, terror is not masked. It is torture, cold, starvation, death... The whole world is now an irreducible whole... The properties of this whole world system force us to submit to the fatality of Vietnam, the starvation of the third world... Culture is against us, education enslaves us, technology kills us...” During Carolee Schneemann’s

Happening, greased and painted half-naked people were hauled into a darkened arena in lorries and laundry bins laden with trash and were then dumped on the floor amid piles of refuse. Bodies tangled and toyed with streamers of debris, crawled and slithered along the floor, examined the shape and confines of the space in which they moved, at some times slowly intertwining or ritually groping in one another’s directions while strafed with spotlights to sound-tracks of urban noise and rattling machine-gun fire as a film projected images of erotic intimacy interspersed with flashes of the Pope preaching at Easter from the balcony of St. Peter’s and with footage of bombings, burning and torture in Vietnam. One might wonder then if Happenings can be thought of as generally finding their roots in the same sort of energies that fed the growth of the radical political and social consciousness, or of the radical critical instinct, that so much typified the Sixties. This seems like a reasonable question, or an interesting hypothesis, but the answer isn’t clear. The Round House Happening was presented to an audience that didn’t much care about art and its possible therapeutic importance, and even a few of the anti-establishment psychologists who had organized the affair were non-plussed and diffident, when not exactly hostile. The two weeks of rehearsal, training and preparation for the Happening were not without moments of active harassment, and Carolee Schneemann remembers the atmosphere surrounding the performance itself as “testy and aggressive”. Final exit from the performance area at the end of it all — limp bodies again hauled off in heaps like trash — seemed like having been rescued: “a relief from heckling and catcalls.” Happenings perhaps were a parallel development to the rise of political awareness in the Sixties, a parallel as well to the 1960s’ lust for the psychedelic exploration of self, but if they were part of some general revolutionary upheaval, it remained a revolution that never fully understood itself, or that never achieved an awareness of how its separate parts might inter-relate, nourish and modify one another. But Happenings themselves were largely an art of juxtapositions — like collage, environments, and assemblage — and the Round House Happening as a whole





Claes Oldenburg, all'esterno della Judson Gallery, trasporta i materiali per l'environment *The Street*, 1960.

might be thought of as having juxtaposed itself to a qualitatively different if not actually alien situation — to a situation, at any rate, to which its relationship could not be entirely clear, surely not idyllic. The juxtaposition was certainly more dramatic, but essentially no different from the situation that presented itself when Allan Kaprow filled the lovely midtown Manhattan garden of the Stable Gallery with hundreds and hundreds of old rubber tires. Two parts of the world that needed, no matter how abstrusely or bizarrely, to take a bit more cognizance the one of the other were suddenly and unexpectedly face to face.

The function of art, inclusive of Happenings, is simply to formulate, identify and satisfy needs, bringing them into visibility and making them a part of experience without too much worrying about how to define them, or how to place them in a general context — without much worrying about their use-

fulness. This holds from the artist's point of view and no less so from the point of view of the spectator. *Ars gratia artis* can continue to be a motto and a principle no matter how radically that gap between art and life may reduce and grow slim. And when the gap is slim enough, the observance of this principle can itself be seen to be a way of contributing to life's enhancement. We can learn to make a space in our lives for events, experiences, emotions and sensibilities that can contribute to a sense of integrity and fullness and that otherwise, and mistakenly, we might consider to be gratuitous. *Ars gratia artis* is the principle of pure and unremitting research. From greater awareness of the inherent intelligence of the physical body to the use of chance techniques for the discovery of social and intellectual tabus, from raffles and Easter egg hunts in railway stations to random collections of objects brought in by visitors to an otherwise non-existent exhibition,

from stores that sell poems to events at which the only thing required of an audience is that they get up and leave, from explorations of possible metaphors hidden in day-to-day banality to the use of the mails as a theater of semi-autonomous imagery (referring really to whole decades of work on the part of Ray Johnson and his New York Correspondence School), the needs discovered by the artists who have worked with Happenings and allied forms of expression have in fact been incredibly various, even if something, finally, does seem to connect them. What most seems at stake is a particular quality of attention, a quality of attention that perhaps opens out into an ability to live in the world without pretending to understand it exhaustively, attempting instead to be alive to everything unique. Unique fact and unique juxtapositions and the uniqueness of the ways in which they change. The age of the encyclopedists is long dead and gone, the



range of available knowledge is simply too wide for any individual mind to be able to cope with all of it. We live simultaneously in far too many places — thanks simply, though not exclusively nor even primarily, to our television sets — to be able to pretend that the any one place where at any particular present time we happen to find ourselves is the whole of the world that we have to consider. But we must likewise know that never being totally anywhere is hardly a pleasant or comfortable position in which to spend our time. So Happenings and allied forms of theater or non-theater have tended to construct themselves as situations in which we can learn to move freely back and forth from one point of reference to another — rather like practicing the exercise of our individual free will, always knowing that there is nothing it wouldn't be a shame to neglect, though yet again assured that we won't be punished for whatever we happen not to see, since there is always something else. It's not at all like being at a play where one is afraid of missing a phrase that makes a central point. Consider this evening of performances that took place at the Café Au Go Go in New York in the early Sixties. Alison Knowles was off in a corner at a work bench with a cooking range where she was chopping carrots and onions and celery and plying various spices in the course of preparing a cauldron of delectable bean soup to be served to all the spectators and performers at the end of the evening. Her finely calibrated quietism was the perfect counterpoint to a far more vigorous event in which Al Hansen led a group of performers and some of the audience through actions that left them almost entirely covered with ketchup and strips of toilet paper. But she was also a complement to an event in which Robert Filliou came out from the wings of a tiny stage, sat down on a stool, and did absolutely nothing until, after about a quarter of an hour, he got up and left. A quarter of an hour was more or less the time it took for hecklers to grow ashamed of themselves and to subside into thinking about the virtues of silence. Ay-o, perhaps at a different cutting bench that he didn't necessarily share with Alison Knowles, was busy preparing slices of raw fish. Rather than a single Happening, this may in fact have been an evening of a number of isolated but more or less simultaneous events; but that dis-

inction doesn't really seem germane. Earlier theoretical discussions of Happenings brought up endless questions about what the form "should be", about the level of participation to be required from the audience, about the possibility of totally eliminating the very idea of an audience in favor of situations where everyone present was actively involved in following a score of procedures and actions on which he or she had been previously well informed, about the contrary possibility of scores for actions and situations simply to be watched, perhaps pointed out or randomly indicated, if not randomly provoked, in the streets. Al Hansen, however, was capable of seeing that the fertility of the notion of the Happening — the fertility of establishing a certain mode of intense but diffuse and shifting attention — lay partly in all the creative ways it might be misunderstood: "Happenings have a reputation for being a great deal of energy and promise, has been misunderstood and misinterpreted in wonderful ways, perhaps giving us a much broader range of very powerful, exciting, experimentally rich theater than would have been available had there not been this confusion as to what a Happening was." Dick Higgins could remind us that the most important Happenings we are involved in are our lives.

The Fluxus artists are known more for "events" than for Happenings, and the purest, most minimal events have probably been the work of George Brecht and Bob Watts, though Watts tended more to deal with situations of sudden hilarity and surprise, like the event where the curtain of a stage goes up to reveal the members of an orchestra with instruments in hand and each behind a music stand that bears a score: the orchestra director raises his hands and gives his cue, and the players all strike matches and set their scores on fire. George Brecht, on the other hand, once did an event where the stage curtain rose to reveal nothing but the empty stage itself with a straight-backed wooden chair in the middle of it. The curtain stayed open for only a few seconds — long enough perhaps to imply the imminent appearance of an actor — and then dropped closed again. Brecht defines the level and intensity of attention that we ought to be able to give to anything. The score for one of his events is a tiny white card, less than an inch square, that says:

raining  
pissing

Another, even simpler, reads:

EGG

• at least one egg

Or, again:

STOOL

on a white stool

a black-and-white-striped cane

oranges in a paper bag

Reading through the *Water Yam* box in which he has collected about a hundred of these scores takes us through these situations, these events, one by one, allowing us to give each of them whatever amount of time we may happen to find necessary. Brecht himself has sometimes made objects based on these scores, at other times he has performed them in concert situations, at other times again they have been performed and presented by others. Surely, too, there are times when he "performs" them on his own, entirely alone. And it's important to consider that these works, these events, could not possibly occur in isolation. They are necessarily a part of some larger context which the artist hasn't chosen to define, and which varies from case to case; and as part of that larger context they are simply some single moment or aspect of reality that we are asked momentarily to consider, as intensely and completely as possible, relieving the moment itself from banality and our minds from the habit of dull and sightless disattention. Brecht formulates an attitude that is infinitely extendible. And if we wonder why we need his help — since what he asks us to do is so obvious and simple, and so obviously salutary as a principle of elementary mental hygiene — we might just as well wonder why we need the Haiku poets, or the Ten Commandments, or the Declaration of Human Rights.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> This title quotes a phrase from Al Hansen's *A Primer of Happenings and Time/Space Art*, New York, Something Else Press, 1965.

Other works quoted include:

Dick Higgins, *Postface*, New York, Something Else Press, 1964.

Allan Kaprow, *Environments, Assemblages and Happenings*, New York, Harry Abrams, 1965.

Jean-Jacques Lebel, "Happenings", in Charles Dreyfus, *Happenings and Fluxus*, Paris, Galerie 1900-2000, 1989.

Carolee Schneemann, *More than Meat Joy*, New Paltz Documentext, 1979.



# Al Hansen

I devoted the seventies to get back into Europe  
I devoted the eighties to be coming familiar  
with the art scene in diverse european capitals.  
Copenhagen, Oslo, Basel, München, Wien, Verona,  
Malmö, Napoli, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Berlin,  
I devote the nineties to operating in far flung  
capitals in far flung countries. The african  
continent is first Cairo + Alexandria in Egypt,  
Melindi, Mombasa, Nairobi and the Masai next.



Al Hansen.  
(Foto Giovanni Giovannetti).





Reuben Gallery: « Below Zero » Show (1959) -4

This is a close-up of Al Hansen's « Hep Amazon. » Her thighs revolved with a display motor at a rate of (roughly) one revolution per minute. She breathed through a torn ventilation tube. Her eyes flashed in bright colors. Part of her exhaust system included a broken toilet seat. Her voice was that of a vacuum cleaner.

All her component parts retained their own identity and integrity. They were not *reduced* to mere components as in the Whitman piece. And yet, overall, she had a strong personality.

This was, for me, the strongest work in the show.



**CAR BIBBE****CAR ONE***(no lights on)*

1. Enter car.
2. Toot horn 1x.
3. Count to forty.
4. Toot horn 2x.
5. Slam door 1x.
6. Toot horn 1x.
7. Open and close glove compartment.
8. Toot horn 3x.
9. Slam door 2x.
10. Toot horn 1x.
11. Raise and lower window (or reverse).
12. Count to forty.
13. Long horn blow.
14. Open and close glove compartment.
15. Exit car, go two cars away and tap on hood 3x.
16. Reenter car.
17. Blink lights 2x.
18. Toot horn 1x.
19. Blink lights 1x.
20. Lights on.
21. Count to five.
22. Lights off.
23. Toot horn 1x.
24. Play with lights—interior on, outside off, etc.—for a time.
25. Start motor.
26. Toot horn 2x, and race motor.
27. Blink lights 3x.
28. Motor off.

**CAR FIVE**

1. Drive around others 4x.
2. Position yourself with other cars.
3. Slam glove compartment 2x.
4. Toot horn 4x, 2x.
5. Blink lights 1x.
6. Toot horn 1x, 2x.
7. Start and race motor.
8. Blink lights 2x.
9. Improvise with lights and horn for a time.
10. Count to twenty.
11. Slam door 2x.
12. Slam glove compartment 1x.
13. Repeat from 3 through 12; do this 2x. Leave out 9.
14. Drive suddenly up over the dunes and into the sea.

**CAR TWO***(no lights on)*

1. Knock on hood 2x.
2. Enter car.
3. Toot horn 3x.
4. Count to fifteen.
5. Toot horn 1x.
6. Slam door 1x.
7. Toot horn 3x.
8. Count to ten.
9. Open and close glove compartment 2x.
10. Toot horn 1x.
11. Slam door 1x.
12. Toot horn 2x.
13. Raise and lower window (or reverse).
14. Toot horn 3x.
15. Count to twenty.
16. Exit car, walk around it twice, reenter.
17. Open and close glove compartment.
18. Toot horn 4x.
19. Blink lights 1x.
20. Count to fifteen.
21. Play with lights.
22. Count to ten.
23. Toot horn 1x.
24. Start motor.
25. Blink lights 2x.
26. Race motor.
27. Toot horn 1x.
28. Blink lights 3x.
29. Slam door 2x.
30. Race motor again.
31. Motor off.
32. Blink lights 2x.

**CAR NINE**

1. Circle a car 3x, and enter your car.
2. Blink lights 3x.
3. Slam door 1x.
4. Blink interior lights 2x.
5. Count to forty.
6. Slam door 2x.
7. Blink lights 3x.
8. Toot horn 2x.
9. Count to twenty.
10. Blink lights 2x.
11. Toot horn 1x.
12. Slam door 1x.
13. Go talk to anyone for a minute or two.
14. Reenter car.
15. Blink lights 5x.
16. Toot horn 2x.
17. Blink interior lights 1x.
18. Count to sixty.
19. Leave car, join audience and observe remainder.

**CAR THREE**

1. Enter car.
2. Drive 100 yards away and face car towards main group.
3. Blink lights 1x.
4. Blink interior lights 2x.
5. Blink parking lights 1x.
6. Light cigarette.
7. Blink lights 2x.
8. Advance 10 yards to group.
9. Toot horn 3x.
10. Blink lights 1x.
11. Slam door 2x.
12. Lower and raise windows 2x.
13. Advance 20 yards to group.
14. Repeat list from 6 to 13.
15. Repeat entire list to 13.
16. Blowing horn triumphantly, return to position in group.
17. Toot horn 1x.
18. Blink lights 2x.
19. Slam door 3x.
20. Count to 20.
21. Toot horn 2x.
22. Blink lights 3x.
23. Slam door 1x.
24. Blink lights 5x.

**CAR EIGHT**

1. Enter car.
2. Blink lights 2x.
3. Toot horn 1x.
4. Blink lights 3x.
5. Toot horn 3x.
6. Slam door 1x.
7. Exit car, mount roof.
8. Keep sharp lookout and if one car runs into another, enter your car and ram him.
9. If the driver attempts to escape, run him down.
10. Return to position in group.
11. Roll up windows and lock doors so no one can prevent you from finishing piece.
12. Blink lights 2x.
13. Slam door 2x.
14. Open and close glove compartment.
15. Count to forty.
16. Resist arrest.
17. Slam doors 1x each.
18. Roll down windows.
19. Toot horn 3x.
20. Give yourself up to the proper authorities.

**CAR FOUR**

1. Sit atop car.
2. Rap on roof with palm.
3. Enter car.
4. Count to forty.
5. Get in back seat.
6. Count to thirty.
7. Exit car, knock with palm of hand 1, 2, or 3x on hoods of any four cars.
8. Return to car and enter it.
9. Blink lights 4x.
10. Blink interior lights 2x.
11. Count to ten.
12. Blink lights 4x.
13. Toot horn 1x.
14. If a car drives into a tree, circle car and tree tooting horn raucously.
15. Return to place.
16. Improvise for a time being sure to have various amounts of silence between events.
17. Set fire to your car.

**CAR SIX**

1. Enter car.
2. Open windows.
3. Yell loudly.
4. Toot horn 1x.
5. Count to twenty.
6. Toot horn 2x.
7. Slam door 1x.
8. Repeat list 4x.
9. Back car up twenty feet or so, do a figure eight.
10. Exit car.
11. Repeat list 1-8.
12. Drive your car into another without hurting occupants.
13. Back up, stop.
14. Get out of car.
15. Run away.

**CAR SEVEN**

1. Enter car through window.
2. Toot horn 2x.
3. Count to sixty.
4. Toot horn 1x.
5. Count to eighty.
6. Toot horn 1x.
7. Slam door 1x.
8. Start and race motor.
9. Toot horn 2x.
10. Slam door 1x.
11. Count to fifty.
12. Toot horn 1x.
13. Repeat list from 2; change all horn toots to light blinks.
14. Improvise for a time.
15. Leave car and observe.



# Dick Higgins

## *Stacked Deck* (1958, performed 1960) - 1

The first entirely electronic opera, so far as I know, was *Stacked Deck*, with music by Richard Maxfield (1927-1967) and with a « libretto » by myself. The « libretto » was actually a system of events cued by lighting situations and otherwise unsequenced. The working materials given to the performers built up objectivized or generic characters, « personae, » who, unlike normal characters in a drama, could reveal themselves in a state of stasis and did not depend on their actions in a narrative situation or sequence. This last was suspended, so I called these works (*Stacked Deck* and the later pieces I wrote using the same form) « suspension dramas. » Any narrative was in the mind of the viewer. As a form it worked out to be an excellent medium for social satire.

Here Florence Tarlow (my original « fantastick bird ») is being The Smiling Woman, a persona whom I borrowed from Stalinist « socialist realism » plays.





# Allan Kaprow



Allan Kaprow, *Coca-Cola, Shirley Cannonball?*, 1960, happening.



## HOUSEHOLD

*A Happening commissioned by Cornell University. Performed May 1964. There were no spectators at this event. Those taking part in it attended a preliminary meeting where the Happening was discussed and parts distributed.*

### *Setting:*

A lonesome dump out in the country. Trash heaps all around, some smoking. Parts of dump enclosed by old, red tin fence. Trees around rest of it.

### *Sequence of Events*

I. 11 A.M. Men build wooden tower on a trash mound. Poles topped with tarpaper clusters are stuck around it.

Women build nest of saplings and strings on another mound. Around the nest, on a clothesline, they hang old shirts.

II. 2 P.M. Cars arrive, towing smoking wreck, park outside dump, people get out.

Men and women work on tower and nest.

III. People circle dump, out of sight among trees and behind tin wall, wait.

Women go inside nest and screech.

Men go for smoking wreck, roll it into dump, cover it with strawberry jam.

IV. People's voices call "Hey! Hey! Hey!" all around dump.

Men go to women, put on shirts, squat down and watch them.

People very slowly start coming in toward car, still calling "Hey! Hey!"

Women screech.

V. Women go to car and lick jam.

Men destroy nest with shouts and cursing.

People, coming in, start to pound pots and blow police whistles in slow unison.

VI. Men return to women at wreck, yank them away, eat jam with fingers, slap white bread all over sticky stuff, eat with their mouths.

Women scream at men, "Bastards! Bastards!"

People advance, banging and whistling.

VII. Women destroy men's poles and tower, laughing, yelling "Watch this! Watch this!"

Men eat bread.

People advance, banging and whistling.

VIII. Women go to heaps of smoking trash, call sweet-songy come-ons to men.

Men fan out, creep low to ambush women.

People advance, banging and whistling.

IX. Women jump men, rip off shirts and fling them into smoking trash, run to men's tower mound.

Men roll on ground laughing loud: "Hee! Hee! Hee! Haw! Haw!"

People advance, banging and whistling.

X. Women take off blouses, wave them overhead like hankies, each singing own Rock 'n' Roll tune and twisting dreamylike.

Men hurl red smoke flares into smoking trash heap. People circle smoking jam-car, become silent, squat down, eat jam sandwiches.

XI. Men go to wreck, take sledge hammers from people, pick up battering log, begin to demolish car. Women watch from a distance and cheer men for every smash.

People eat silently and watch.

XII. Men jack up car, remove wheels, set fire to it, sit down to watch, light up cigarettes.

People light up cigarettes, watch car burning.

Women run out of junkyard, waving blouses, gaily calling "Bye! 'Bye! G'bye! 'Bye!" They get into cars, drive away with horns blaring steadily till out of earshot.

XIII. Everyone smokes silently and watches car until it's burned up

Then they leave quietly.











# D'une Biennale (1960) à l'autre (1990)

Jean-Jacques Lebel

Arène! Oui, arène. Lieu d'une tragédie sociale vécue en temps réel où se jouent plusieurs rôles à la fois – la Bête, le Picador, le Matador, l'Artiste – et où le Public, assoiffé de meurtre rituel, de spectacle sanglant, d'oreilles, de queues et même (à en croire *L'Histoire de l'œil* de Georges Bataille) du plus magique des organes, celui de la vision. L'arène est le lieu d'inscription du secret, d'apparition de l'imaginaire (peint, dessiné, sculpté, collé, filmé ou écrit) et il n'était nullement question de l'abolir par le truchement des happenings ou des events, mais, au contraire, d'en éjecter les imposteurs, les robots et les bureaucrates pour le rendre à sa destination première, celle d'enclos sacré.

De ce genre d'événement libidinal, il reste des souvenirs ultra-subjectifs et des reportages particulièrement tendancieux (selon le rôle et la place qu'on assumait dans l'arène) et, surtout, des effets secondaires, à long terme, qui continuent d'agir après coup. C'est le cas du happening dont les différents impacts se font encore sentir bien au-delà du demi-monde artistique. Mais la bévée règne. Quiconque évoque, à propos des happenings et de Fluxus, l'abolition de l'art, se met le doigt dans l'œil jusqu'au coude (il est vrai que la mass-médiatisation relève davantage du fist-fucking que de la diffusion d'informations).

Qu'on le reconnaisse une fois pour toutes, il n'était pas question de détruire l'art lorsque vers 1955, à Osaka, les peintres du groupe Gutai ont prolongé l'action-painting par des tableaux-actions; lorsque, vers 1958 aux USA, mon ami Allan Kaprow a jeté les bases du happening; lorsqu'en 1960, à Venise (dans le cadre de l'Anti-Procès) nous avons monté le premier happening en Europe; lorsqu'en 1961 et '62, à New-York et Wiesbaden, Maciunas lançait

les activités de Fluxus. Il s'agissait plutôt d'arracher l'art aux institutions officielles et mercantiles qui l'étranglaient. On voulait subvertir les grammairies surmoïques et les commandements idéologiques. Avec Fluxus, il s'agissait d'arracher la musique à l'académie, aux "orchestres nationaux", aux salles de concert soporifiques afin de l'ouvrir sur la vie, sur les nouveaux territoires à musicaliser. L'inoubliable happening du grand John Cage, toute une nuit de 1974 (dans les irremplaçables halles Baltard, détruites par la spéculation immobilière, supprimées par le criminel urbanisme municipal et gouvernemental) restera, pour nous, plus qu'une œuvre de génie, l'emblème d'une autre façon de voir, d'écouter, de vivre.

L'idée-force de l'époque était "l'élargissement de la conscience" au sens où, en anglais, on disait des substances hallucinogènes qu'elles étaient "consciousness expanding". La perception hallucinatoire a d'ailleurs toujours existé – ainsi que Gilles Deleuze vient de le souligner dans "le Pli, Leibniz et le Baroque" – mais il fallait bien proclamer l'ouverture et l'inachèvement de l'œuvre picturale, musicale ou poétique comme fondement du processus de production. C'est ce que firent les happenings, Fluxus, le Free Jazz, ainsi que les œuvres majeures du cinéma underground (je pense à certains films "accélérés" de Jonas Mekas, de Bruce Conner, de Taylor Mead et, beaucoup plus tard, de Nam June Paik, où la pratique dadaïste du montage aléatoire à grande vitesse subvertit la structure du récit cinématographique et le statut du spectateur passif). Par ailleurs, la prétendue "contradiction" entre happening et peinture n'a jamais existé que dans les thèses de quelques universitaires bornés. La plupart des principaux auteurs de happenings (Fahlström, Oldenburg, Dine,

"L'arène était devenu le terme approprié pour désigner la toile (à la longue la toile fut laissée de côté pour produire des happenings)." (Harold Rosenberg)

Pommereulle, Kudo, Vostell, pour ne citer qu'eux) n'ont pas eu à faire de retour à la peinture, pour la bonne raison qu'ils ne l'avaient pas quittée. Harold Rosenberg est mort trop tôt pour se rendre compte que la toile n'avait été laissée de côté que passagèrement, le temps des essentiels voyages hors-circuit, en territoire mental non encore cartographié (toujours la "promenade du schizophrène" au-delà des limites du langage). Le concept de flux ou d'événement-en-train-de-se-dérouler est incompatible avec les contraintes de la fixité et de la finitude, mais pas avec la pluralité de l'être. La concomitance, dans plusieurs biographies, du happening et de la peinture, n'est pas plus "absurde" que la concomitance – vitale, dynamique, structurelle – de la poésie et des arts plastiques, ou bien du théâtre et des arts plastiques, chez les précurseurs de l'importance de Schwitters, de Arp, de Picabia, d'Artaud et bien d'autres encore. Mieux vaut en finir pour de bon avec toute illusion concernant "l'unité du moi", l'univocité des pulsions et l'unidimensionnalité du désir.

Pour ce qui est le Fluxus, il y a un danger de mort qui consiste à en faire une chapelle, un groupuscule fermé, une sorte de parti avec tout ce que cela comporte de bureaucratie et de mentalité paranoïaque (c'est le syndrome de la "forteresse assiégée" bien connu des historiens du Stalinisme). Cette mentalité stalinienne est contraire à l'idée de flux puisqu'elle arrête, fixe et referme ce qui, par définition, doit être ouvert, fluide, de mouvement. Hélas! C'est ce Stalinisme-là qui régit certaines manifestations Fluxus qui se voudraient orthodoxes et qui sont en fait académiques et mortifères. Espérons que la manifestation vénitienne organisée par Di Maggio, Bonito Oliva et Sassi ne ressemble en



## FUNERAL CEREMONY OF THE ANTI-PROCES

*Performed in Venice on July 14, 1960.*

A cocktail is served at the Palazzo Contarini-Corfù, home of the musician Frank Amey. About 150 people attend; they were asked to come in formal dress and to bring white flowers. At 6 P.M. they are ushered into a great, ancient funeral hall, at the center of which the body lies, covered with a gold-embroidered drape and flowers, and surrounded by lit church candles. The ceremony begins.

A man enters, his face under a black cape covering his eyes: the executioner. He kills the body with a large butcher's knife and as he does so, the choir of widows sings a hymn in Latin, cries, and screams. Then Lebel reads a violent page of the Marquis de Sade about death and love. Complete awed silence.

Then American poet Alan Ansen reads a few lines of Huysmans. Eulogy is ended while a man behind a small metal curtain masturbates. Others pray.

Then body is carried down steps of palace into the street by Amey, Ansen, and Lebel, people follow slowly. Outside, pedestrians take their hats off thinking it's a real funeral. Body is taken to awaiting gondolas, is put in front of first gondola covered with flowers. Other people take speedboats, about forty-five people board gondolas and slowly advance up Grand Canal. The boats make a circle. Hymns. Body is thrown into water (like in the navy), also flowers. It was a sculpture by Jean Tinguely. The Anti-Procès manifestation was dead and buried.

## SPIEEN DE RIGUEUR

*Les organisateurs de l'Exposition Anti-Procès de Venise vous convient aux funeraillles de la*

### *Chose de Tinguely*

*Le cortège s'ébranlera à 18<sup>h</sup> 30 précises au Palazzo Contarini-Corfù, Dorsoduro 1057, le 14 juillet 1960.*

PLEURS - FLEURS et COURONNES



rien à un enterrement stalinien, officiel ou non. Bon nombre d'entre nous, en venant à Venise, leur faisons confiance et espérons ne pas être déçus.

J'ajouterai une remarque qui vaut non seulement pour ceux qui figurent sur la fameuse charte de Maciunas (en tant que précurseurs ou qu'auteurs de happenings et d'événements, à des dates plus ou moins exactes): le concept héraclitien de flux, à partir duquel une multiplicité de mouvements a bifurqué d'avec l'idéologie dominante de l'époque, est un concept qui est très loin d'avoir dit son dernier mot, non seulement en art, en musique ou en philosophie, mais aussi en politique. Il serait malhonnête "d'oublier" qu'à l'ère dite "technologique" et "planétaire", Etat et Parti constituent des archaïsmes désuets qui, par leur nature même, font obstacle au mouvement de la société vers des modes de vie novateurs. Maciunas, le fondateur de Fluxus, était quant à lui parfaitement conscient de l'interconnexion des pulsions artistiques et sociales. Il n'aurait certainement pas vu d'un mauvais œil le formidable retour en force et en beauté du mouvement Dada – singulièrement de Duchamp, de Picabia, de Satie, de Schwitters – qui a exercé directement et indirectement une influence puissamment libératrice sur les courants radicaux des années 60 et 70. Une certaine dadaïsation de la vie sociale est peut-être une des réponses les moins bêtes que puissent donner l'aggravation de la crise du capitalisme à ceux et celles qui ne veulent pas en être victimes.

Il a été remarqué – dans la préface d'Edouard Jaguer à la récente exposition de Joseph Cornell (Galerie 1900-2000, Paris) – combien les coffrets à magie (rejetons ludiques des valises-musées de Duchamp) fabriqués dans les années 1940-50 ont préfiguré les boîtes Fluxus des années 1960-70. Il faut donc compter Cornell, avec Russo, Duchamp et Cage, parmi les inspirateurs directs de Fluxus.

Quiconque (re)connait le formidable soulèvement pulsionnel, polytechnique, multidirectionnel et souvent "à retardement" des années 60 – et, à plus forte raison, quiconque l'a vécu – ne pourra s'étonner de ce que soient réunis dans une même manifestation les Happenings et Fluxus. Après tout, les Happenings et Fluxus étaient contemporains – avec une légère prééminence des Happenings – et bon nombre d'artistes ont

plongé à la fois dans les deux courants de ce même fleuve. En fin de compte, la différence, si différence il y a, réside moins dans l'intentionnalité programmatique – relativement changeante et floue, des uns ou des autres – que dans les affinités affectives, personnelles, voire géographiques ou linguistiques, qui rapprochaient ou non les individualités.

Si ce fleuve-ci fait suite, en quelque sorte, à l'inondation! Dada – elle-même tributaire de la radicale "averse de café noir" jetée par Victor Hugo sur ses lavis – sans parler des collages, frottages, assemblages et mixages dus aux grands inventeurs de ce siècle, on peut constater autour de nous! L'extrême vitalité de ces flux subversifs qui ont changé de nom, de forme, de direction mais pas d'intensité. Qui oserait prétendre que l'art, la musique, le cinéma, le théâtre ou la politique de demain n'en seront pas, à leur tour, affectés positivement?

Il suffit de regarder et d'écouter certaines performances, certaines productions théâtrales, certains groupes Rock, certains vidéo-clips, sans parler de ce fameux vidéo-art dont on parle beaucoup (mais à qui la Télévision, monopolisée par les pouvoirs, ne laisse pas le moindre espace vital) pour y déceler le mode de perception hallucinatoire que les happenings, Fluxus et le cinéma Underground ont mis en circulation dans les années 60.

Il est effarant de constater qu'ayant débuté, dans sa phase d'après-guerre, à Osaka, et ayant fait le tour du monde à la manière d'une boule de feu libertaire incontrôlable, le mouvement des happenings a mis trente-trois ans pour traverser la mer de Chine et se manifester à Pékin. C'est parce que stalinisme et maoïsme ont été synonymes d'académisme et d'imbécillité et que ces dictatures-là ont le mieux résisté au vent de liberté fertilisatrice qui commence toujours à souffler sur les arts avant de balayer l'ensemble d'une société. Nous apprenions donc par la presse, en février 1989 (trois mois plus tard – c'était le Printemps de Pékin – deux cent mille manifestants réclamaient liberté d'expression et démocratie réelle. Une fois de plus, le soulèvement des artistes s'est avéré prémonitoire. Hélas! La répression sanglante exercée par l'Armée Rouge – une fois de plus! – y a mis un terme, provisoire bien sûr) qu'une exposition pékinoise regroupant 250

œuvres de plus d'une centaine d'artistes chinois non-officiels avaient eu des démêlés avec la police. Parmi ces œuvres, un phallus géant, suspendu au plafond entre une poitrine géante et des gants chirurgicaux gonflés d'air, un triptyque sur Mao, etc., les "autorités" (sic) ayant fait retirer certaines œuvres pour "obscénité" (sic). Selon les agences de presse, "plusieurs artistes ont tenté d'organiser des happenings en dépit de l'interdiction qui en avait été faite" (cf. *Le Monde* du 7 février 1989). Une artiste de vingt-six ans nommée Xiao Lu a été arrêtée et détenue pendant trois jours pour avoir tiré deux balles de fusil dans une de ses sculptures composée de deux cabines téléphoniques. Selon le *Herald Tribune* (11 février 1989), Mademoiselle Xiao, montrant les trous de balles, déclara que ceci faisait partie de son art et se plaignait d'avoir été mal comprise. "Ça sent mauvais", aurait dit un visiteur de l'exposition devant un poisson mort dans des algues sur un matelas en plastique. "Un artiste vendait des crevettes – protestant ainsi contre la commercialisation de l'art, au dire d'un critique. Un autre se lava les pieds en public. Des préservatifs et de l'argent furent gelés sur le sol et un homme à moitié nu s'est assis sur des œufs." En effet! Ce qui importe, en Chine comme partout ailleurs, ce n'est pas que des jeunes artistes se réfèrent explicitement aux Happenings ou bien à la révolte radicale des dadaïstes, c'est que toute censure, même la plus policière, soit en fin de compte vouée à l'échec. La "Raison d'Etat" invoquée par les ayatollas, les colonels, les grands ou les petits "timoniers", pour juguler les arts, finit toujours par mordre la poussière. Qu'ils se le disent: emprisonner Sade pendant vingt-huit ans n'a servi à rien! Sa pensée est, deux siècles plus tard, plus forte que jamais. Aucune société – qu'elle se prétende à tort "démocratique", "socialiste" ou "communiste" (slogans publicitaires dérisoires) – ne peut, sauf à étouffer, faire l'économie d'un travail de recherche et de réflexion sur sa propre finalité, consciente ou inconsciente. C'est en cela que l'art est irremplaçable. Peut-on se contenter de ce que les "autorités" permettent d'exposer à Pékin ou de ce que le marché de l'art laisse circuler dans les musées et les galeries à Paris, New-York, Londres, Berlin ou Milan? Peut-on accepter que l'ensemble des courants de pensée et des mou-





I funerali della *Chose* di Jean Tinguely, Palazzo Contarini-Corfù, Venezia, 14 luglio 1960. L'assassinio. Riprodotti da Jean-Jacques Lebel in grès con la collaborazione del ceramista Franco Bucci.

Il funerale.



Frank Amey, Al Hansen, Jean-Jacques Lebel e l'"assassino" trasportano il cadavere.



vements contradictoires d'une époque soit réduit au seul produit commercial standardisé d'un art officiel?

Qu'il ait fallu attendre 1990 pour qu'une grande (mais inexhaustive) manifestation soit consacrée, à Venise, à un courant artistique si fertile, cela en dit long sur la capacité de refoulement et de censure qu'exercent les instances dites "culturelles", qu'elles soient ministérielles, institutionnelles ou (comme on dit) "privés". Il n'est pas indifférent que ceci ait lieu précisément à Venise, lieu où s'est déroulé le 14 juillet 1960 le premier happening européen. C'est donc tout à l'honneur de Di Maggio, Bonito Oliva et Sassi, aujourd'hui, de faire mieux connaître les œuvres, et les idées de ceux des années 60 qui ont enfreint les lois du marché, qui ont refusé de se soumettre à la pourriture surmédiatisée et surcommercialisée fai-

sant fonction de culture dominante. Tandis que les plaintes s'élèvent pour déplorer la défaite par l'industrie culturelle du "cinéma différent", du "théâtre différent", de la "littérature différente", voici une preuve paradoxalement vitale de haute dissidence. Fureur des idéologues de l'art-prêt-à-porter, des adorateurs d'académismes et des planificateurs de la castration! Allégresse des nomades! Jouissance des voyants! Cette réunion a non seulement le mérite de dégager des traces de happenings ou Fluxus events, et de montrer des travaux annexes, contemporains de ces actions, mais surtout de continuer à poser, envers et contre tout, les questions de fond que l'industrialisation forcée et l'assujettissement massif tendent à noyer dans un assourdissant vacarme médiatique et administratif. Ces questions ne sont pas nouvelles mais, à trop les

ignorer, l'idée même de culture est en train de perdre sa pertinence. En voici quelques-unes: quelles sont les fonctions de l'art dans la Société Marchande? Qui gère quoi? Qui oriente et contrôle les mouvements artistiques? Qu'est-ce que la liberté d'expression? A quelle dialectique obéissent les pulsions créatives? La "nouveau" - réelle ou imaginaire - a-t-elle un sens en art? Avec quels critères qualitatifs la "valeur" d'une production artistique peut-elle être mesurée? Que devient la pensée mythique quand l'art disparaît (par suite de réification ou d'étouffement)? Comment s'instaure le discours totalitaire? Qu'en est-il, ici, en 1990, de cette "liberté" dont les gouvernants et leurs publicitaires nous rabattent beaucoup trop les oreilles? Quelle place nous est assignée dans l'arène? Est-ce bien ÇA que nous désirons?



La Chose viene caricata sulla gondola per i funerali in laguna.



# Jean-Jacques Lebel



Jean-Jacques Lebel, Gianni Sassi e John Cage,  
American Center, Parigi, 1985. (Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).



# Légende

Jean-Jacques Lebel

C'est l'histoire d'une rose figuière qui asperge de ses jus citronnés une banane au temps des cerises (serait-ce la "ré-incarnation" ludique de Flora, d'Omphale, de la Venere Cloacina, de Bethsabée, de Danaé ou de l'Olympia?). Non, c'est l'histoire de l'œil de faucon versant les larmes d'Eros sur le (vrai) objet dard du Regardeur afin d'obtenir une belle patine. Non, c'est l'histoire du miracle de la Rose qui transforma *La femme qui pisse* (gravée par Rembrandt en 1631) en *Mariée mise à nu...*, adepte et doublure, en quelque sorte, de l'œuvre fondatrice de l'art conceptuel: *Fontaine* (1917). Non, c'est l'histoire du Grand Schisme Dada, une des bifurcations philosophiques, sociales, érotiques et artistiques les plus fertiles en rebondissements depuis la révolution copernicienne ou l'invention du cinéma (l'image en mouvement). Non, c'est l'histoire du complot insurrectionnel tramé en permanence, à travers les siècles, par une tribu de voyants visant à dadaïser les rapports de production et à subvertir la société du spectacle (membres fondateurs de ce comité clandestin: Rose Sélavy, Udnie, Anna Blüme, Nadja, Molly Bloom, Lady Day, la Présidente, Jeanne-Marie et Alice, Mr. Teste, Mr. Antipyrine, quelques transfuges de la Makhnovchina et de la Colonne Durruti, certains descendants rhyzomatiques du Divin Marquis, Bird and Prez, the Paregoric Kid et quelques autres).

Bref, c'est l'histoire d'une héroïne de légende qui, à l'instant où je vous parle, relève sa minijupe pour mouiller ses lavis d'Eros. Elle chantonne d'une voix de mezzosoprano (peut-être pas la sienne), out of the blue:

"JARROSE SÉLAVY!"

Mixage des flux. Montage électronique pulsionnel. Odeurs. Torrents d'images

concassées, refocalisées, décomposées, surmultipliées à l'infini. All that jazz. . Time flies. Quelques années plus tard nous retrouvons notre héroïne en train de jouer le rôle principal, celui de la Prima Donna invisible, dans le chef-d'œuvre de Jean Eustache, *Une sale histoire*. Encore le thème de la doublure et des glissements de terrains, la porte cochère de Cadaqués s'étant muée en porte de WC d'un bistrot parisien. Film "maudit", bien sûr, parce que génial, mais ce rôle occulte ne lui déplait pas. On l'imagine – mais on ne la voit jamais directement – en train de dévoiler, peaufiner, rincer ses instruments rituels (avec un curieux mélange eau de vie / eau de rose), les agitant bien avant de s'en servir. Une vieille carte postale – signée C. Lestin (envoyée de Niort le 11.12.1907 à 19 h 30) – avait déjà montré une ancêtre de *Rose Sélavy* en pleine action derrière la porte, faisant face à deux regardeurs dont un accroupi sur le sol (comme dans *Une sale histoire*). A part Rembrandt, des dizaines d'autres témoins oculistes (grands peintres ou dessinateurs anonymes) avaient déjà croqué ou "filmé" en gros plan de semblables scènes d'amour, notre héroïne n'est donc pas tombée du ciel, elle a eu des précurseurs.

Rose, en quelque sorte, opère la synthèse de plusieurs mythes, mais elle le fait ouvertement, au grand jour, sans se préoccuper des lois du marché et de la réglementation aberrante de l'industrie culturelle. Et ceci non seulement parce qu'*LHOOQ* mais aussi parce que, élève de Nietzsche et de Stirner, elle ne se fait aucune illusion quant à la "liberté d'expression" octroyée par les institutions. *Etant donné la chute d'eau et le gaz d'éclairage* – sans oublier la *Broyeuse de chocolat* qui a ses partisans enthousiastes – her

kness are not cold, just wet and sticky. *Eau et gaz à tous les étages*, voyez-vous (ou plutôt non, vous ne voyez pas), c'est bien beau et bien bon, encore faut-il que le jet lancé par la *feuille de vigne femelle* atteigne son "objectif" et actionne quelque dispositif complexe d'échange. Mouvement transformationnel des flux. Ceci n'est pas du délire ou plutôt si, mais du délire qui respecte la logique interne du mythe. Les indications de mise en scène figurent explicitement dans le titre de la version gravée (en 1964) de *Fontaine*:

UN ROBINET REVOLUTIONNAIRE  
"RENVOI MIRIFIQUE"

Ce premier ready-made signé allait, en effet, révolutionner l'histoire de l'art de la pensée, en réalisant pour ainsi dire le projet commencé par Giorgione dans *La Tempête*: inclure le regardeur dans la structure. L'image devient action, le plan devient séquence.

Autrement dit la fontaine qui vient de se faire inonder, inonde à son tour. Un peu comme si Danaé, trempée par la diluvienne Pluie d'Or (the Golden Shower) venue d'en haut, opérait un retour à l'envoyeur, intérêts compris, en braquant son "robinet révolutionnaire" sur l'amant jupiterien. Classique situation spéculaire de l'arroseur/arrosé qui met en marche de multiples mutations permettant – comme dans tout récit mythologique – de passer d'un "état" à l'autre, d'un sexe à l'autre, d'une époque à l'autre. Les jeux interdits – les amours des dieux – ont pour seule loi le jeu d'esprit, poussé à l'extrême, des dédoublements, renversements et rebondissements. Exemple tiré d'*Anémic Cinéma: RROSE SÉLAVY et moi estimons les ecchimoses des Esquimaux aux mots exquis*. Elle s'accouple, la machine célibataire. Le portrait de Rose Sélavy et de son double qui est présenté





«J'ARROSE

SÉLAVY!»



ici tient donc compte des mots de passe et des images codées. Ce portrait machinique pivote autour du "renvoi mirifique", principe de base et moteur de la pulsion amoureuse comme de la pulsion artistique. Si Eros c'est la vie, quelle meilleure méthode d'action existe-t-il? L'autoportrait de Rose s'adresse à ses "célibataires, même" – regardeurs et regardeuses – co-auteurs de la mise à nu de cette fluide Mariée. Désormais, les échanges de regard, le travail des regards, les effets concrets des regards constituent l'axe principal de la mise en image.

Rose n'est pas à la portée de n'importe qui. Elle a horreur des m'as-tu-vue hystériques et des doctes dinosaures institutionnels. Seuls les visionnaires hors-série ont quelque espoir de toucher au but. Rose a ses initiés et ses détracteurs, ses amants et ses ennemis, comme toutes les déesses de l'Olympe, mais, à la différence de ses collègues, elle en pisse de rire. On se souviendra peut-être que Madame le Député Ciciolina, pour épater la bourgeoisie et fidéliser sa clientèle (électorale), avait, il y a quelques années, terminé son numéro de cabaret en urinant sur le public et, de ce fait, avait été inculpée d'outrage aux bonnes mœurs. Ce remake populiste et hilare de *La femme qui pisse sur la plage* – peinte par Picasso en 1965, exposée au Musée National d'Art Moderne de Paris (ce qui ne risque pas d'arriver au portrait de Rose!) – était trop simpliste, trop monosémique pour s'inscrire dans la grande tradition du ready-made institué par *Fontaine*. A Ciciolina il manque, précisément, l'esprit de Rose. L'Encyclopédie Da Costa l'avait jadis qualifié d'humour.

Vous fûtes pourtant prompts, ô ministres de la mort, à crier au scandale du fait que cette vedette de cabaret ait mouillé son public, alors que les fuites radioactives, rejetées quotidiennement dans l'atmosphère par les "accidents" des centrales nucléaires, sont autrement obscènes et présentent un danger tout de même plus grave pour l'humanité. Si, déjà, la Ciciolina vous a exaspéré, tas de robots pressurisés sous vide, prosternés devant vos ayatollahs médiatiques, dans quel état allez-vous mettre en voyant Rose? Vous allez trouver ce portrait "trop explicite", "trop irrévérencieux", "trop vulgaire" etc... et vous eussiez préféré, en tant qu'investisseurs attentifs à l'indicateur de tendance, que ce problème de "ren-

voi mirifique" ne fût même pas posé! L'idée que Rose puisse jouer à sa guise de son "robinet révolutionnaire" vous horripile. Votre idéal féminin, c'est sûr, ressemble bien davantage à la Nième pouffiante nue peinte par Renoir – "ça se vend bien au Japon!" – qu'à la *Mariée du Grand Verre* ou à sa copine *Udnie*. Il eut été plus conforme aux règles de l'académisme d'avant-garde d'exposer à cette Biennale de Venise, comme à toutes les autres, toujours le même grand prix de peinture décerné par l'Institut Mondial de la Castration à toujours le même tableau: le portrait de Leo Castelli par Jean-Gabriel Dommergue. Certes, l'autoportrait de Rose n'emprunte pas les mêmes canaux et ne vise pas les mêmes honneurs. D'ailleurs, lourd est le catalogue du Salon des Refusés où figurent toujours non seulement *Fontaine*, *Allégorie de genre (Portrait de Georges Washington)*, *With My Tongue in My Cheek* et *Torture morte*, mais aussi *La femme au perroquet* de Courbet et l'*Olympia* de Manet, *Ulysses* de Joyce et le *Tropique du Cancer* de Miller. La compagnie est excellente. Amusons-nous à noter, en passant, que les inquisiteurs furibonds qui censurèrent *Fontaine*, *Allégorie de genre* et *Ulysses* sont toujours au pouvoir à Washington. La croisade que mène le sénateur d'extrême droite Jesse Helms contre des photographies de Robert Mapplethorpe et une sculpture d'Andrés Serrano qu'il juge "obscènes", démontre la pérennité de la pudibonderie militante. Si personne n'a reniflé d'odeur de parenté – même lointaine – entre la sculpture de Serrano, un crucifix trempé dans un bocal d'urine, et *Fontaine*, c'est peut-être parce que cette dernière fut présentée horizontalement, disconnectée de toute plomberie, comme un emblème formel et non pas excrémental. L'importance des déchets est apparue massivement avec le dadaïsme (Merzbau) et le néo-dadaïsme (Junk Art) mais elle était sous-jacente depuis le XIX siècle. N'oubliez pas, ô amateurs d'art éclairés, que ce ne fut pas un peintre mais un poète qui inventa la première technique nouvelle de l'art moderne: la giclée. Il s'appelait Victor Hugo et "finissait" ses superbes lavis d'encre fluctuante avec des "averses de café noir", vers 1850. Précurseur essentiel.

Sachez, mesdames et messieurs, que si *le Roi et la Reine* sont entourés de nus vites, ce n'est pas par hasard. On se

croirait dans le salon d'un bordel, personne n'a encore décidé avec qui monter. Sacha Guitry disait que "le meilleur moment en amour, c'est quand on monte l'escalier", mais le *Nu*, lui, redescend: "A qui le tour?" Cadence infernale. Vivement dimanche qu'on puisse s'allonger dans l'herbe et faire du naturisme à l'abri de tous les regards sauf d'un seul, celui qui épie *la chute d'eau* de l'exposante à travers la chatouillère spécialement percée à cet effet. Etes-vous allés, vous aussi, vérifier sur place, à Philadelphie, si la porte n'a qu'un trou et à quelle hauteur? Tout a été minutieusement pensé et mis en place. Le rituel n'est pas quotidien mais hebdomadaire (tel confesse). En attendant, *Why Not Sneeze?*

Y aurait-il quelque chose de pertinent à ajouter à la Tour de Babel édiflée, en diverses langues et jargons, autour du Marchand du Sel? Je ne me hasarderai à glisser sous la porte que ceci: le texte passé inaperçu d'un télégramme envoyé de Perpignan en 1959 (en pleine période de prétendue "abstinence" qui fut, en réalité, la période de préparation secrète d'*Etant donnés* et qui pourrait lui servir de légende). Il ne s'agit pas d'une simple boutade (comme *Peau de balle*) ni d'une "clef de lecture" (car les énigmes de l'*Eau de voilette* ou de la vieille porte cochère de Cadaqués restent intactes). Ce télégramme signé et daté du 4.5.1959 dit ceci:

"FAIS SOUS MOI"

Tout un programme. Too good to be true? Et pourquoi donc?

En fait, cet aphorisme télégraphique précise quelque peu le Profumo (not Sir John, il puttaniere ministro della Regina) de ce qui se passe de l'autre côté de la porte cochère, fendue de l'obscène chatouillère. Jamais dans l'histoire de l'art, dans aucune Toilette de Vénus, scène d'odalisque, de Suzanne ou de Bethsabée au bain, dans aucune composition de Giorgione, de Tintoret, de Titien, de Cranach, de Courbet, de Goya, de Manet, de Picasso ou de Bellmer, l'invitation faite au regardeur de franchir la barrière n'a été si directe, si franche. Avec *Etant donnés la chute d'eau et le gaz d'éclairage*, le regard désirant et son "renvoi mirifique" accomplissent un saut qualitatif. La métaphore est abolie au profit d'une reconstitution minutieuse des faits. Le travail du regard de l'invité n'est pas un adjuvant de la mise en scène, il en est le sujet même. Comment ça se regarde



cette chose là qui se passe dans l'herbe, éclairée par le bec auer? En quoi ça consiste le regard du désir et le désir d'être regardée?

Les théologiens ont raison, c'est là que tout bascule. L'offrande passionnelle, cela n'est pas pardonnable. Une fois consommée l'offrande, il n'y a plus de retour à la norme possible. Le regard est souverain. Un intégriste polonais qui se ballade en jupe longue (mais sans voilette noire) – le même qui frappa d'interdit un film de Godard montrant la Sainte Vierge nue et enceinte – ne s'y est pas trompé quant à la dangerosité du regard dévoilant. "L'adultère dans le cœur – prêchait-il en 1980 – est commis non seulement lorsque l'homme regarde avec les yeux du désir une femme qui n'est pas son épouse, mais justement parce qu'il regarde ainsi une femme. Même s'il regardait de cette façon sa propre épouse, il commettrait pareillement l'adultère par le cœur." Le Saint Père aurait-il rédigé son homélie après une visite secrète du Philadelphia Museum

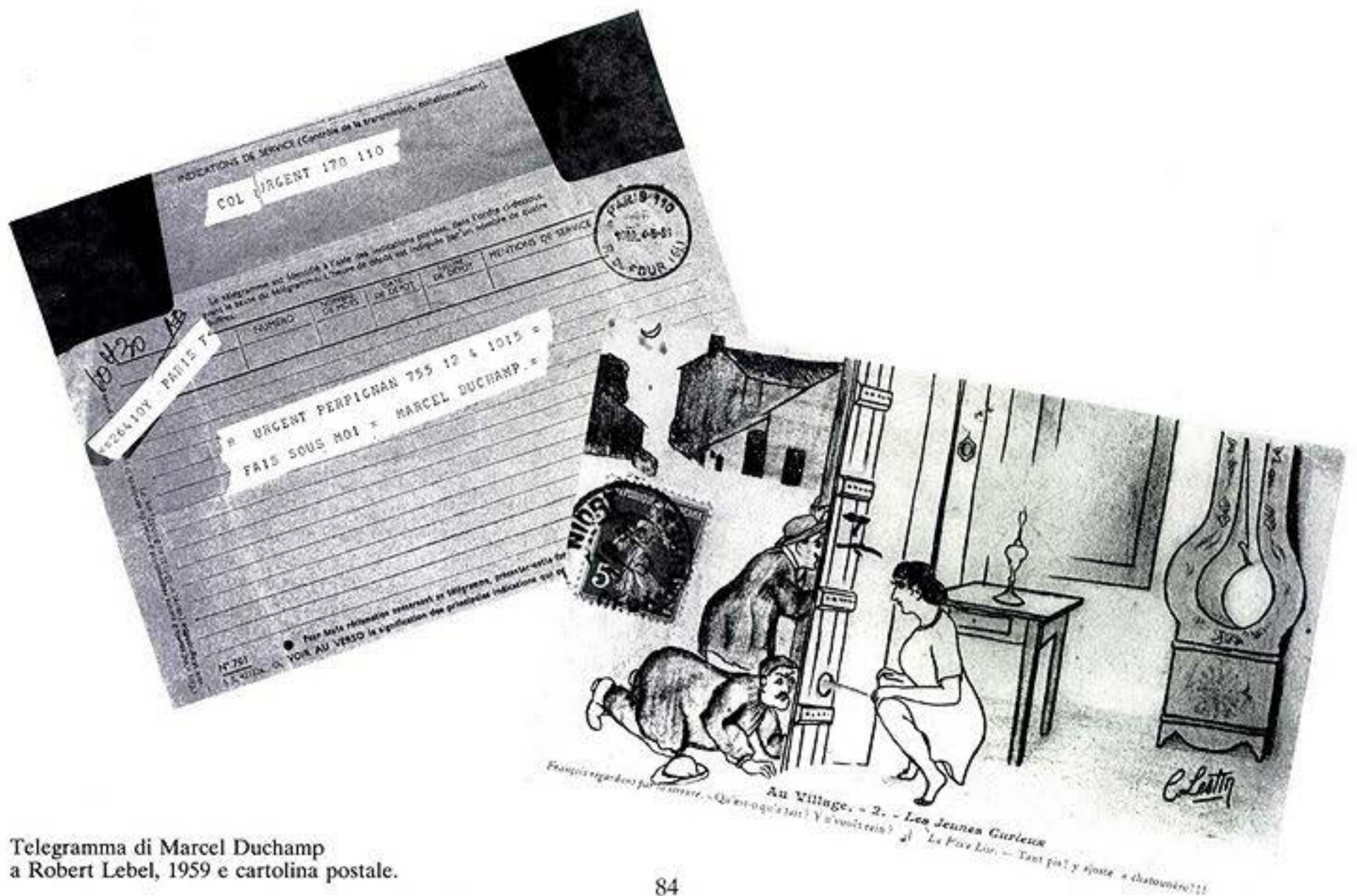
of Art? Qu'aurait été la réaction de Savonarole devant *Etant donnés*, lui qui avant de périr sur le bûcher avait haineusement fait brûler et détruire des tableaux de nus et autres "œuvres licencieuses"? Sauf à faire re-toucher les feuilles de vignes (rajoutées) que les restaurateurs de la Chapelle Brancacci viennent à peine d'enlever à l'Adam et à l'Eve de Masaccio, et à couvrir tous les monts de Vénus du monde d'un rideau de fumée, comment ce Pape compte-t-il s'y prendre pour isoler des regards les nymphes chastes ou en rut, les Maya vestida o desnuda, les odalisques camouflées ou perverses, les Venere dormiente o spalancate, les Eves pudiques ou impudiques qui s'étalent dans les musées où elles attirent les foules? Aux heures de grande influence "l'adultère par le cœur" se pratique avec elles à un rythme infernal!

Heureusement, malgré les progrès technologiques accomplis dans le domaine de l'espionnage et du terrorisme d'état, le contrôle absolu des regards en est resté au stade de projet, dans les rêves

des gouvernants paranoïaques.

En posant nu pour le remake d'Adam et Eve de Cranach – filmé dans *Ciné Sketch* de Picabia – et en prélevant des *morceaux choisis* ready-made chez Courbet ou Ingres, le Marchand du Sel opère un découpage et un ré-assemblage de certains points de vue de la grande peinture rétinienne qu'il a fait siens, non sans les avoir affranchis de leurs fonctions purement métaphoriques. Certains intégristes fanatisés considèrent qu'une femme au visage découvert est une femme entièrement nue. Que diraient-ils en voyant l'absolue intimité que nous dé-voile cette *Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*? Notre héroïne a-t-elle une chance de sortir indemne de la civilisation de l'image édulcorée? N'en déplaise aux gérants de l'Art World – *le Père Lachaise et la mère tu M'*, réincarnations du Génie des Carpathes et de sa "scientifique" chère moitié – Rose n'a pas l'intention de renoncer à prendre son pied avec ses *Moules Mâlic*.

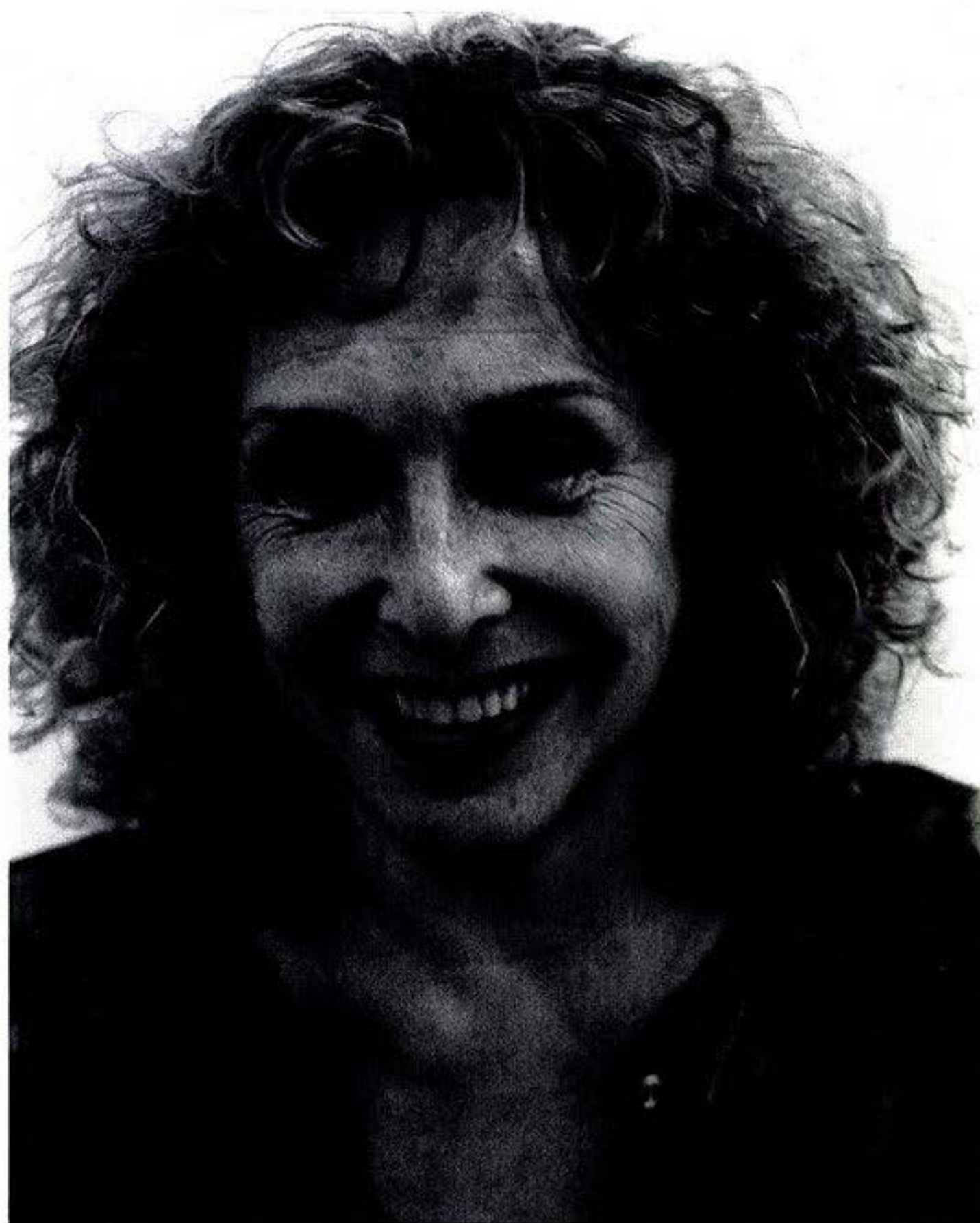
A suivre...



Telegramma di Marcel Duchamp a Robert Lebel, 1959 e cartolina postale.

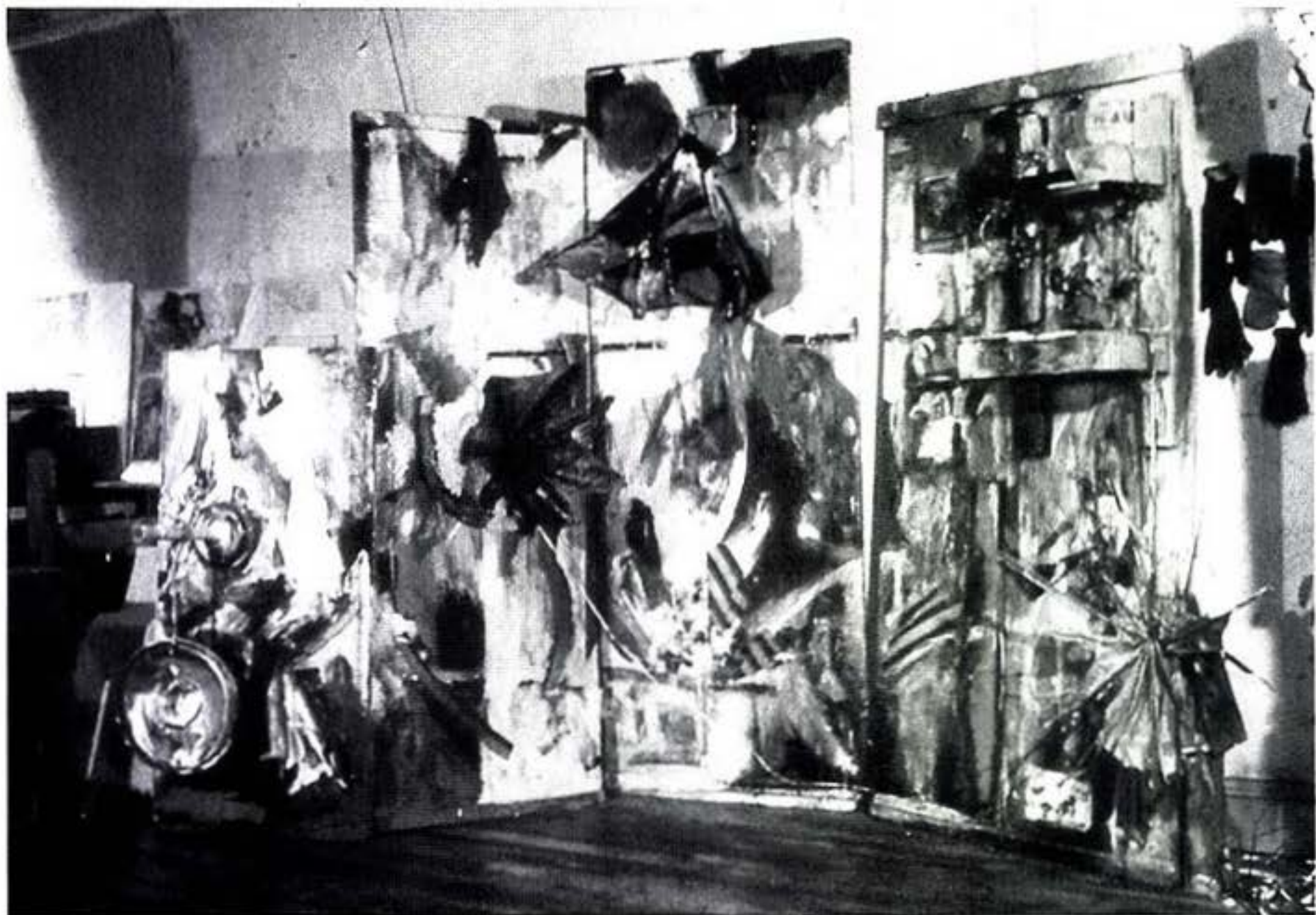


# Carolee Schneemann



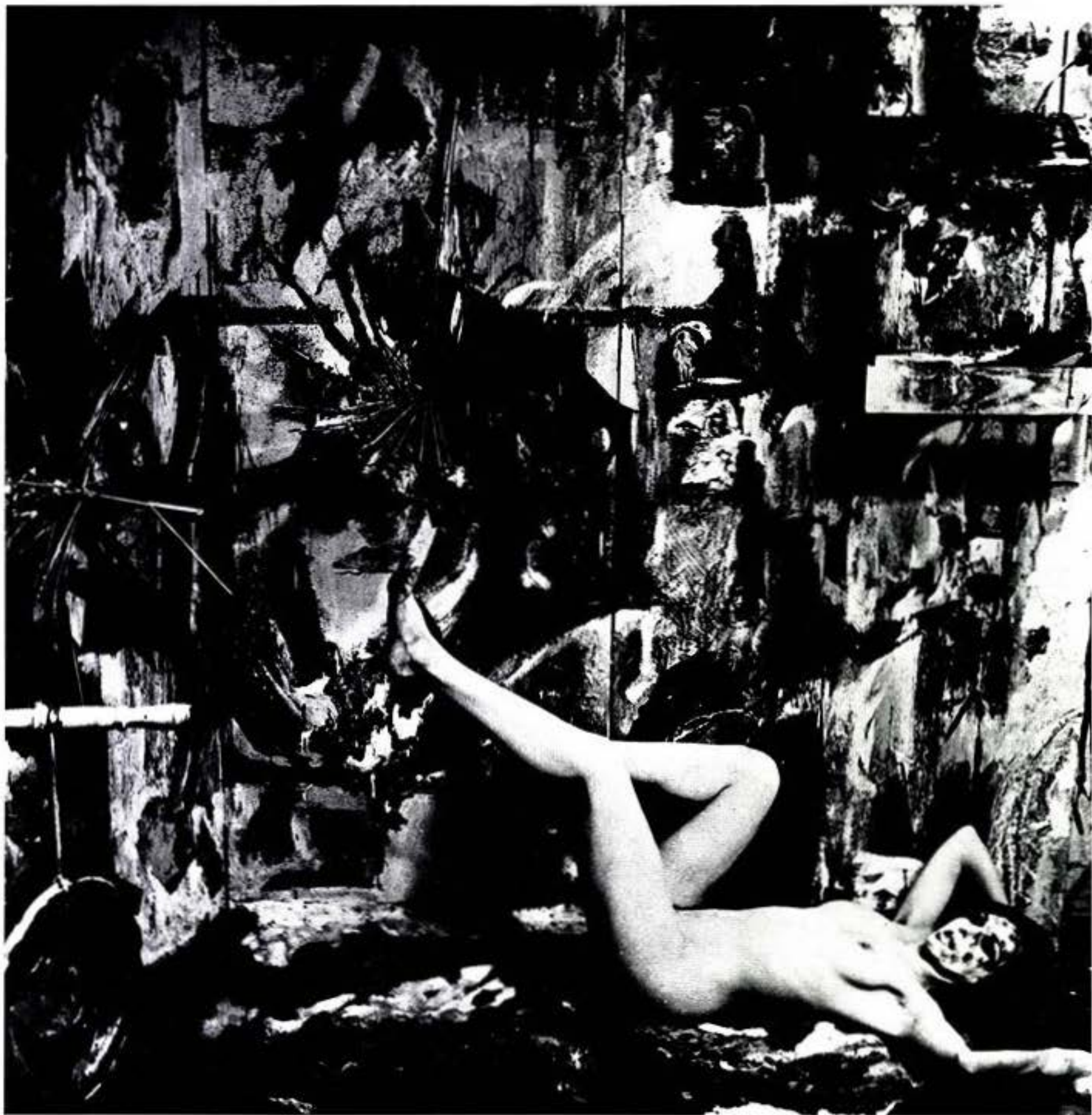
Carolee Schneemann, 1988.  
(Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery,  
foto Wilfrid Rouff).





Carolee Schneemann, *Four Fur Cutting Boards*, 1963.





Carolee Schneemann,  
*Eye Body*, 1963.

Alla pagina seguente: Carolee  
Schneemann, *Meat Joy*,  
"Festival de la libre expression",  
Parigi, 29 maggio 1964.

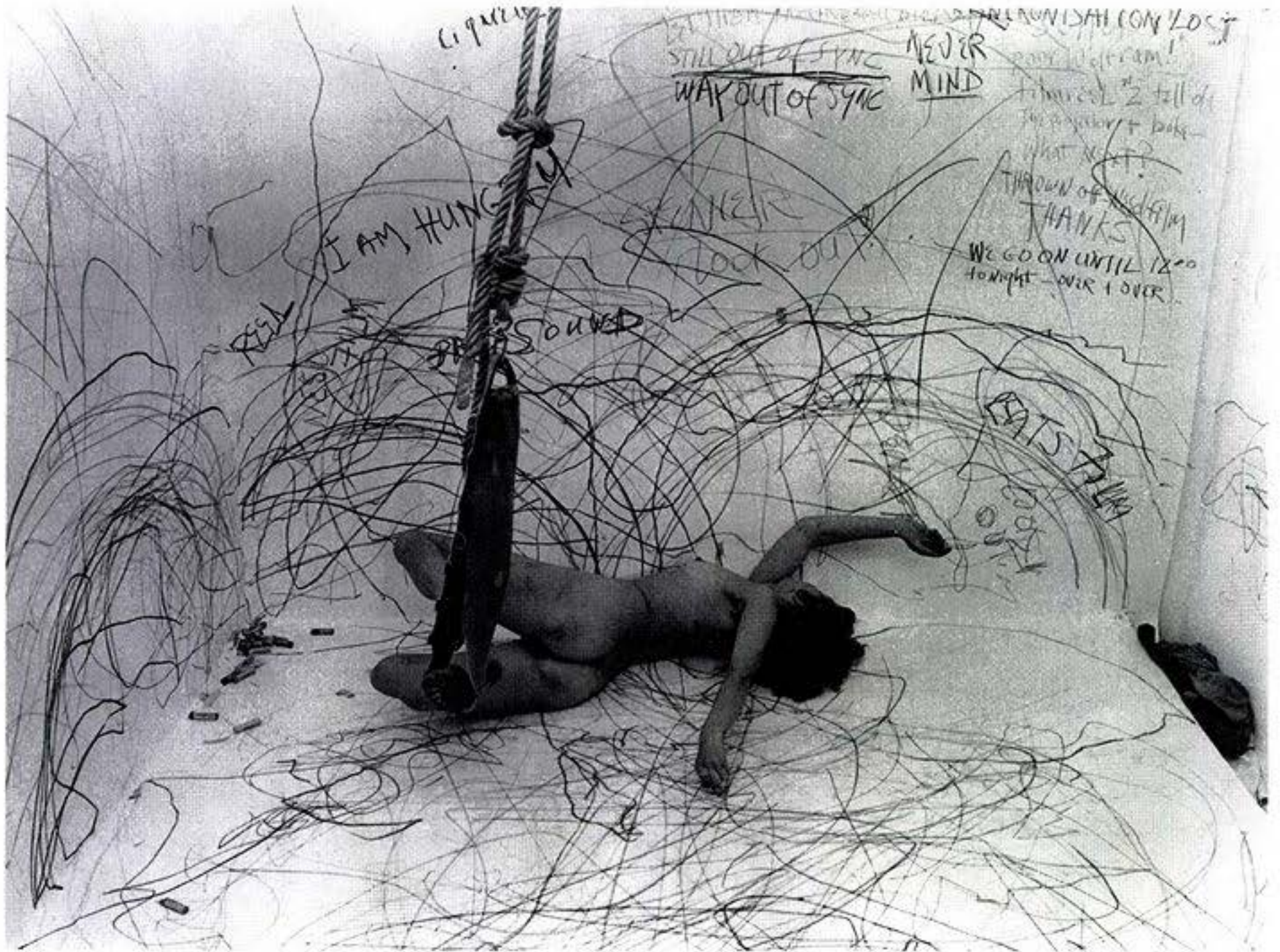






fluxus can be lots of fun when the boys let you on their boat  
sometimes they throw you off the boat  
you have to be NEAT all your words games philosophy  
and things you make have to be NEAT (except for wolf and claes  
they can smear their pages its o.k.)  
if you dont wear underpants or show your pussy you get pushed  
over the side (except not by jean-jacques philip larry or ben)  
in england the boys gave me the fluxus boat to steer we  
traveled with water ropes bricks milk shoes and blood  
when i came home george wrote a bad letter about my crimes  
operatic political sexual metaphoric motors caressing mess and  
showing my pussy i could always sneak onto the happenings boat  
it was bigger with louder music and open all night  
nitsch and muhl came there with their dead pets  
it used to be fun making things with alison takako and yoko  
it was o.k. if we rowed but not to steer  
i dont know if charlotte's embrace of all of us was flux-us or not  
sometimes no one can read labels in the dark  
fluxus from the far east moved by neon light and ironed wedges right into  
canal street i never saw them fighting for a window seat  
  
gino and francesco always said we could all play together  
that is because those italians dont want to listen  
to two popes in one life time





Carolee Schneemann,  
*Up to and Including Her Limits*,  
"Trackings", Basel Art Fair,  
13-20 giugno 1976.

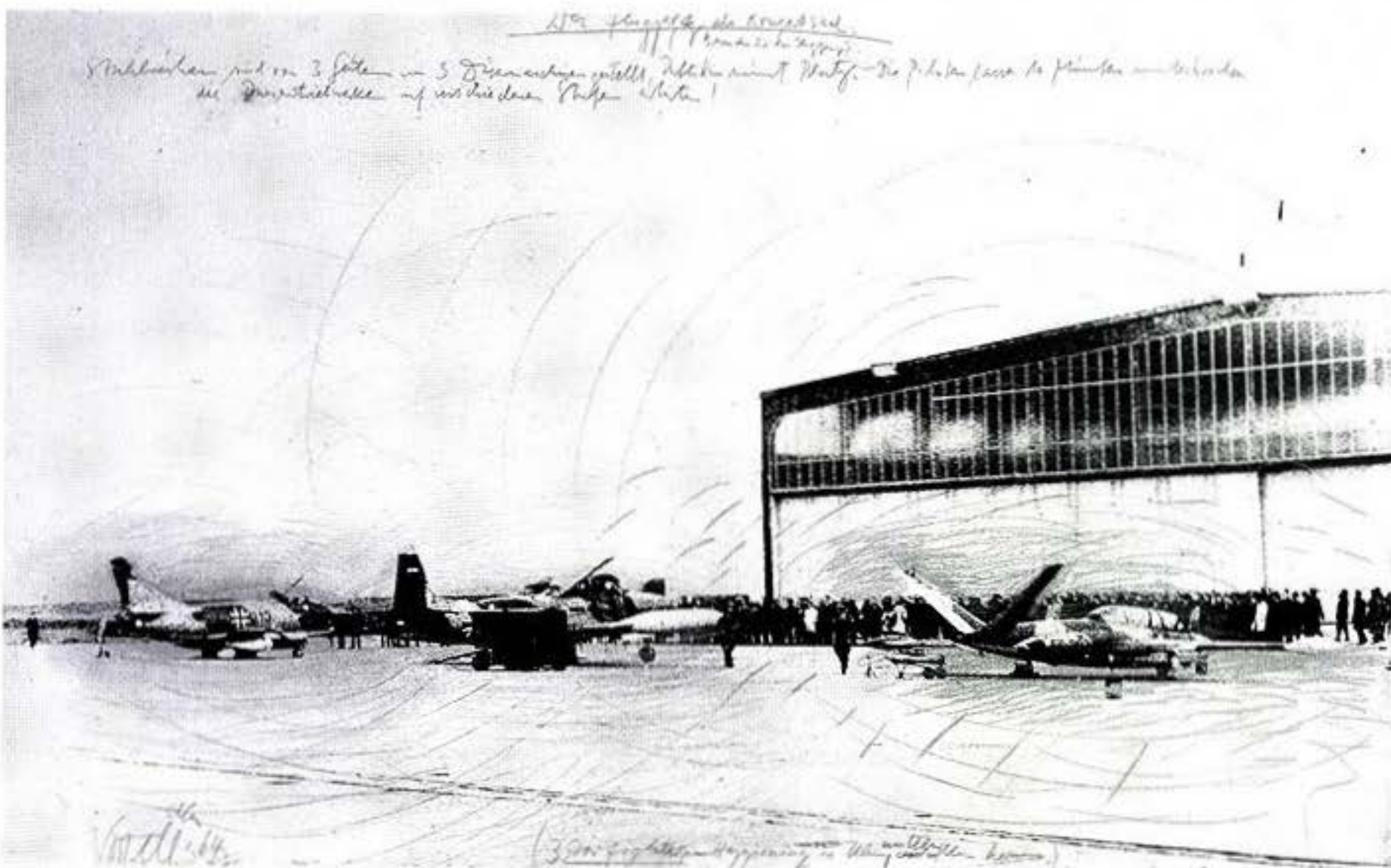
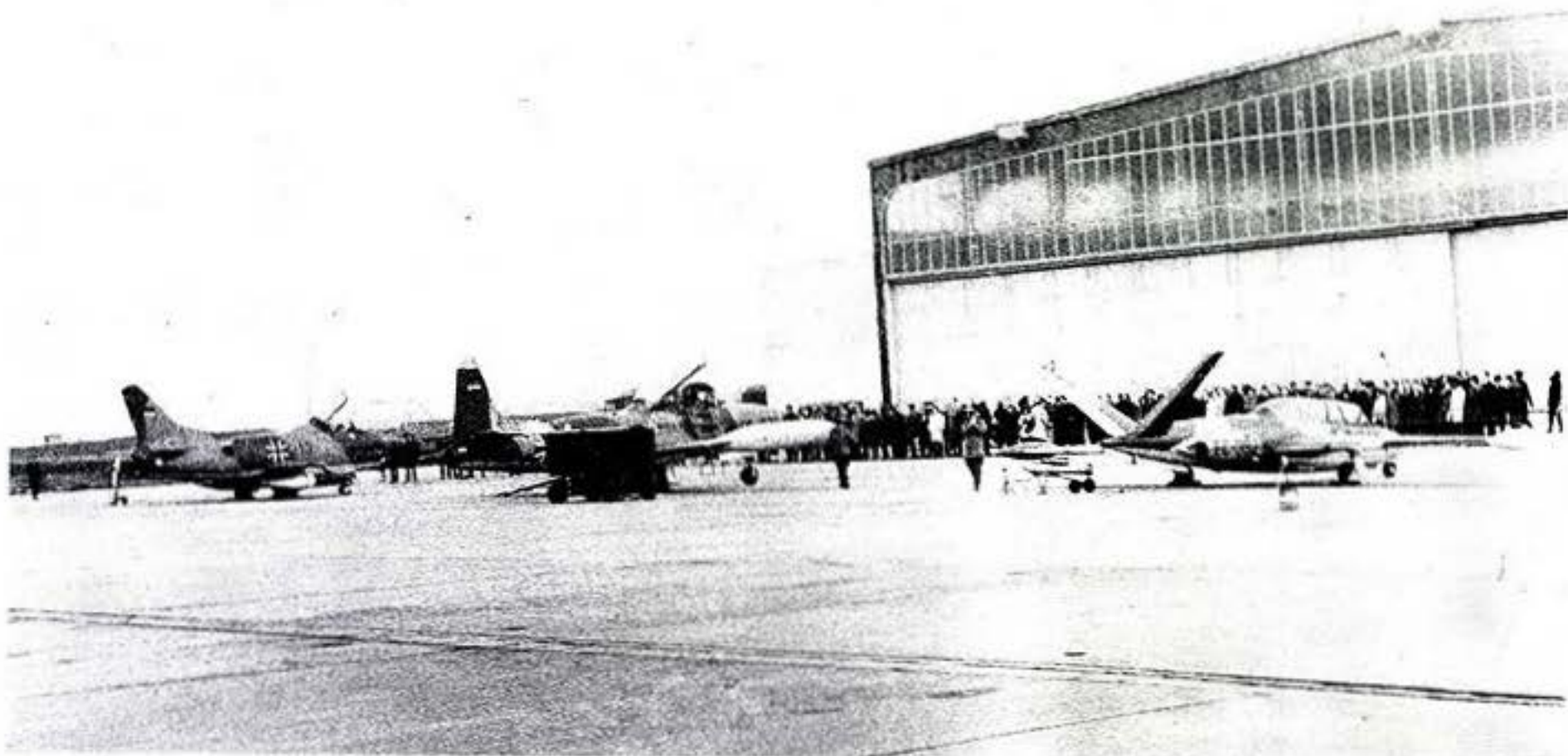


# Wolf Vostell



Wolf Vostell, *9-No-dé-collages*, happening, Wuppertal, 1963. (Foto Ute Klophaus).

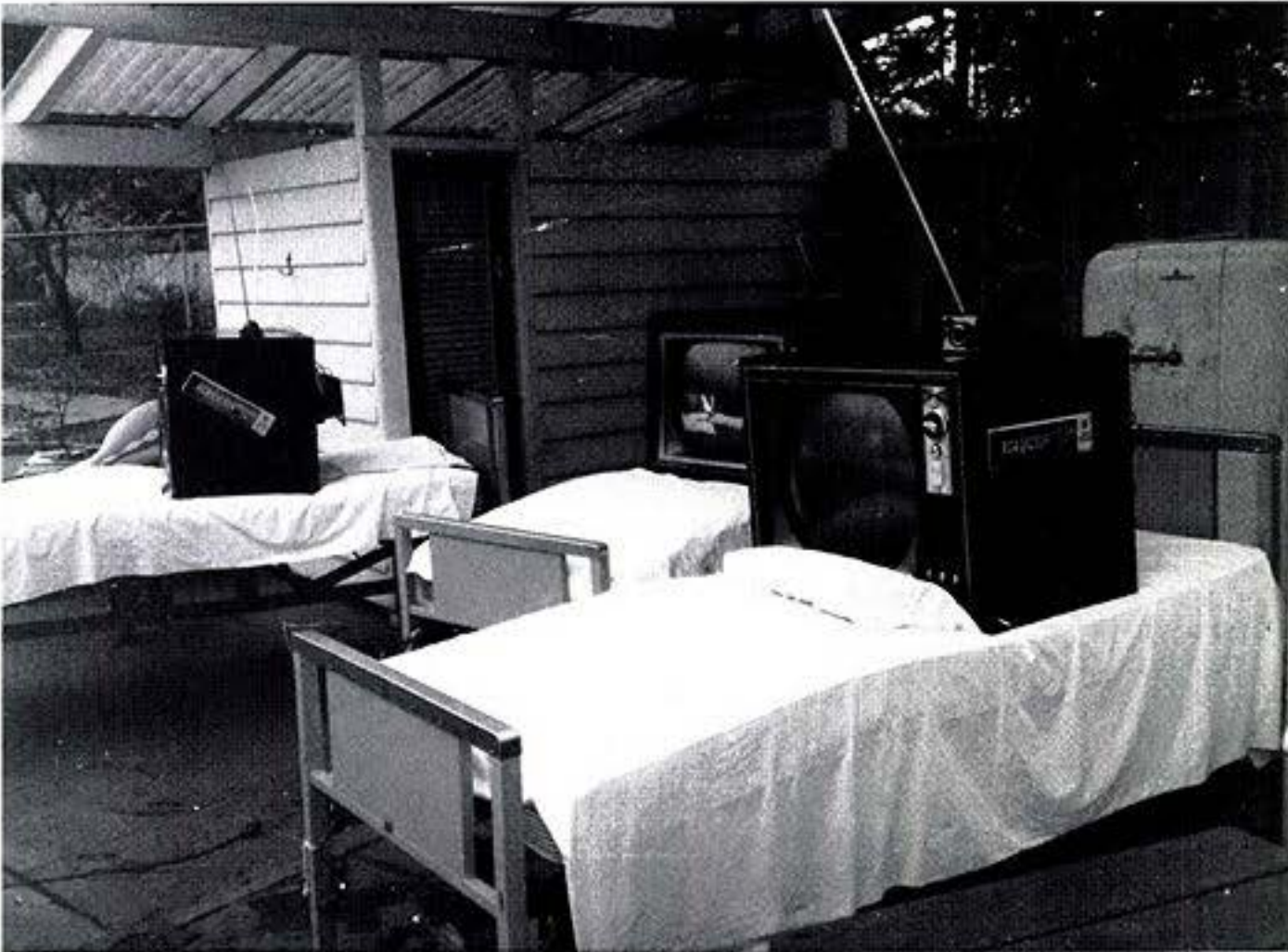
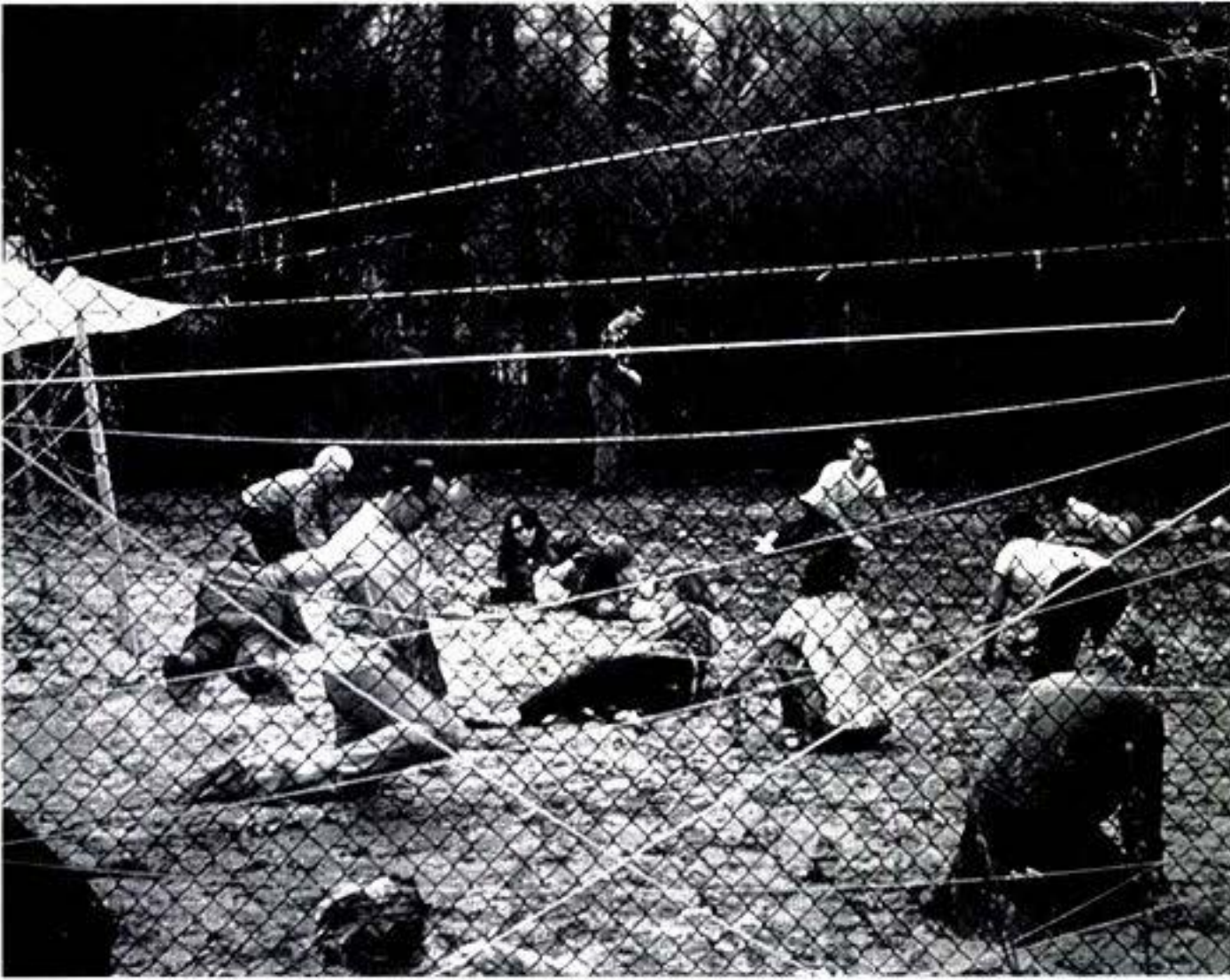




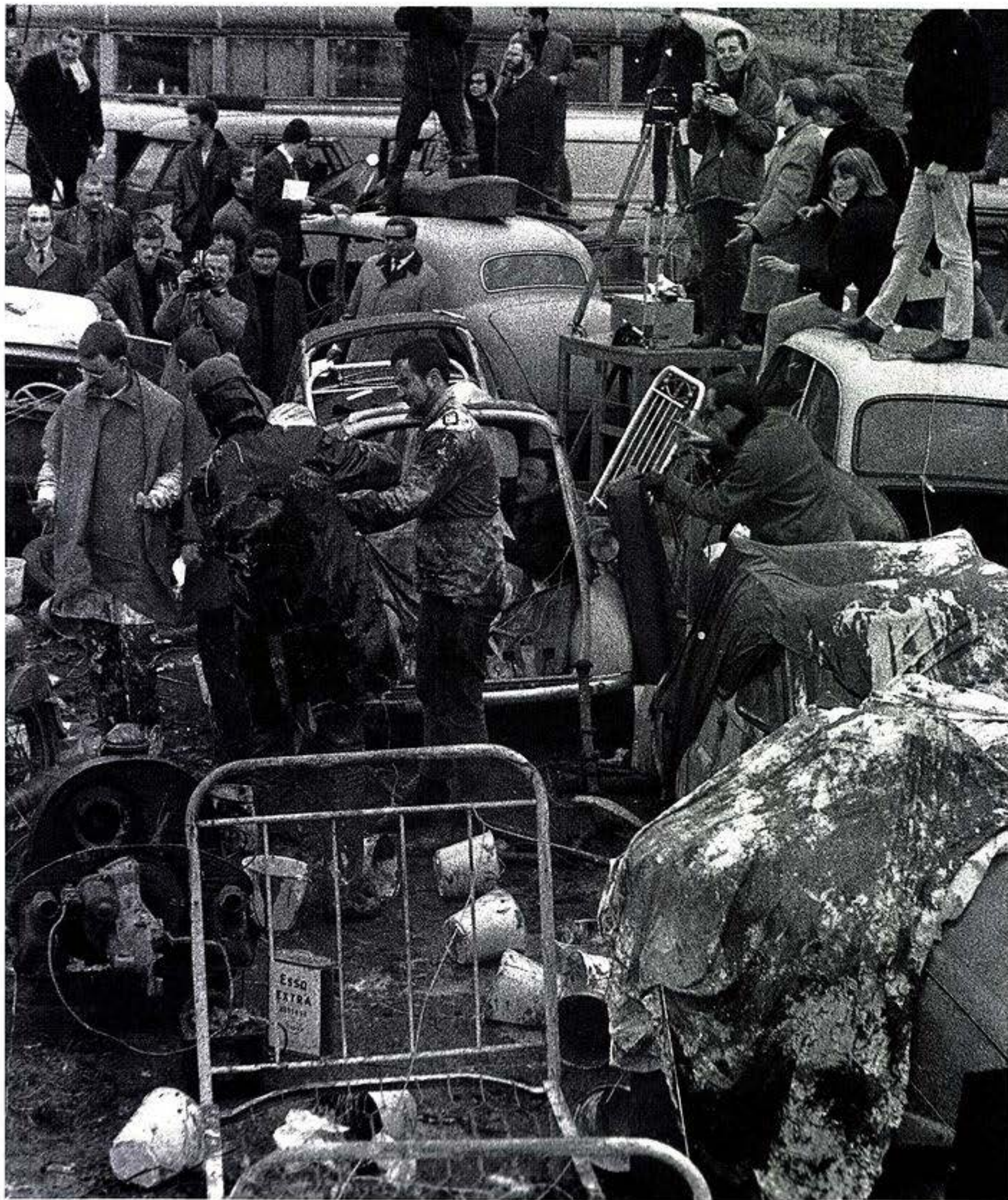
Wolf Vostell, *IN ULM, UM ULM UND UM ULM HERUM*, happening, 7 novembre 1974. (Foto Ute Klophaus).



Wolf Vostell, *You*, happening  
in Great Neck, New York, 1964.  
(Foto Peter Moore).







Wolf Vostell, *Phaenomena*, happening, Berlino, 1965.



# Musik ohne Musik

Eckart Rahn

Von Musik soll dieser Beitrag handeln, die mit oder ohne Anwendung herkömmlicher Kompositionsprinzipien, mit oder ohne Benutzung herkömmlicher Instrumente, mit oder ohne Interpretieren im herkömmlichen Sinne, mit oder ohne Einbeziehung des Zufalls, aleatorischen, indeterminierten oder improvisatorischen Elementen, sowie mit oder ohne Einbeziehung des Publikums als bewußten oder auch unbewußten Ausführenden gemacht wird. Über Musik, in der der Komponist ebenso zum Aus- oder Aufführenden werden kann, wie der Aus- oder Aufführende zum Komponisten. Über "offene" Musik also, in der nichts verboten, dafür aber alles erlaubt ist. "Music as music can".

"Die Kunst hat in neueren Zeiten ungleich weitere Grenzen erhalten." (Gotthold Ephraim Lessing)

Schon seit einigen Jahren finden sich Begriffe wie "Fluxus" (internationale Künstlergruppe, der beispielsweise George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys, Emmett Williams, La Monte Young, George Brecht, Jackson MacLow, Dick Higgins, Benjamin Patterson, Daniel Spoerri, Jean-Pierre Wilhelm, Sylvano Bussotti und Toshi Ichihyanagi angehören oder angehört), "Neo-Dada in der Musik", "Event", "Action Music", "Musical Environment" und "Happening" in jedermanns Munde, ohne daß viele wissen, was sie denn nun eigentlich meinen — oft sind sich nicht einmal die Leute, die diese Begriffe geprägt haben, über die Bedeutungsinhalte ihrer Wortschöpfungen im klaren. Die Konfusion findet sich überall: Bei den Musikern, die ja Interesse daran haben, mit dem, was sie gelernt haben; auch weiterhin auszukommen, bei den Kritikern, die ja

Interesse daran haben, mit dem, was sie gelernt haben, auch weiterhin auszukommen, und, am schlimmsten natürlich, beim Publikum. Ordnung in das Chaos der neuesten (wie soll ich sie sonst nennen?) Musik zu bringen, ist unmöglich — zu sehr ist alles im Fluß begriffen. Und außerdem: Wie sinnlos ist es doch, etwas zu definieren, das sich selbst alle Freiheiten einräumt und sich dadurch gegen jede Festlegung wehrt. Begnügen wir uns, anstelle nur Verwirrung stiftender Definitionen, damit, daß es sich hier um Musik handelt, die... siehe oben.

"All the things that are... are musical." (Richard Crashaw)

Die musikalischen Revolutionen haben bisher immer das vorhandene Material beibehalten, wenn sie es auch komplizierten und in andere Ordnungen brachten. Heute aber wird das gesamte "musikalische Erbe" nicht nur des Abendlandes, sondern ebenso das aller übrigen bekannten Musikkulturen über Bord geworfen, und es weicht, Kennzeichen jeglicher *manieristischen* Kunst, der grenzenlosen Freiheit auf der einen und der engsten Beschränkung auf der anderen Seite, schrankenloser Emotion auf der einen und äußerster Reduzierung auf der anderen Seite.

"...habe... 'nichts mit Musik zu tun'. Ob das nun aus Unverständnis oder aus der Blickenge gestriger Avantgarde gesagt wird — dagegen Argumente vorzubringen, lohnt sich nicht, es sei denn, man würde sich zu der absurden Annahme entschließen, Komponisten könnten kompositorisch etwas betreiben, was nicht Musik wäre." (Herbert Eimert)

"Jedes von einem Komponisten in einer bestimmten historischen Situation kom-

ponierte Werk ist als 'Musik' zu akzeptieren." (George Heike)

"Zum Beispiel ist die Frage, ob die jüngste Musik überhaupt noch Musik sei, objektiv bedeutungslos. Denn welchen Musikbegriff, der nicht subjektiv wäre, könnte man für solche Frage als verbindlichen Ausgangspunkt nehmen?" (Jens Rohwer)

"Jedes, mit der Absicht, Musik entstehen zu lassen, bewußt organisierte oder erkannte Ereignis ist Musik." (Eckart Rahn)

Der Text von George Brechts "String Quartet" lautet: "shaking hands". Es ist einmal so aufgeführt worden, daß die vier Herren des Streichquartetts in üblicher Aufmachung mit Instrumenten auf das Podium traten, sich die Hände schüttelten und wieder abtraten. Was ist das? Musik? Absurdes Theater? Oder beides?

Es ist Musik! Erstens schon durch die Zielsetzung des Autors, der nämlich, ein Musikstück zu komponieren, und zweitens durch die optische Wirkung der Aufführung aufs Publikum. Vier Herren, deutlich als "Musiker" identifizierbar, in einer Konzertveranstaltung, und sie führen ein Stück auf, dessen Bezeichnung es eindeutig zum "Musikstück" stempelt. Aber ist diese Komposition überhaupt ein "Streichquartett"?

Hier wird schon viel Symptomatisches deutlich: Auf der einen Seite das radikale Sprengen aller bisher der Musik gesetzten Grenzen, auf der anderen die Beschränkung auf das Allernotwendigste, das erforderlich ist, um ein gewisses Quantum an Information zu vermitteln. Askese und Schrankenlosigkeit reichen sich die Hand.

Wenn Adorno schon in Weberns Musik



eine "Tendenz zum Verstummen" notierte, so wird er hier das Verstummen finden. Die Komposition "Danger Music Number Six" von Dick Higgins besteht nur aus ihrem Titel. Musik? Aber es erklingt ja nichts? Dennoch weist die im Titel des Stückes verwendete Vokabel "Music" eindeutig darauf hin, daß man es hier mit Musik zu tun hat — mit Musik zum Lesen oder vielleicht auch mit Musik zum Drandenken, wenn man spazierengeht.

"Man weicht der Welt nicht sicherer aus als durch die Kunst, und man verknüpft sich nicht sicherer mit ihr als durch die Kunst." (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

In György Ligetis, "kollektiver Komposition", betitelt, "Die Zukunft der Musik", funktioniert dagegen die Stille. Ligeti, der einen Vortrag über "Die Zukunft der Musik" halten sollte, agierte nur mittelbar aufführend. Er beobachtete, benutzend eine Stoppuhr, eine Tafel und mehrfarbige Kreide, das Publikum, das, ihn wiederum beobachtend, den Vortrag erwartete und dabei, wenn auch unbewußt, durch seine mannigfaltigen Reaktionen selbst ein Musikstück aufführte, eben eine, "kollektive Komposition".

Dieter Schnebel: "Es ist nimmer geheuer in der Musik. Das Ärgerliche in ihr aber ist ein Mal dessen, daß es auch anderswo und insgesamt nicht stimmt." Verquere Musik in einer verquerten Welt? Adorno (schon wieder Adorno) hat geschrieben, daß heutige Musik durch die Erfahrungen von Auschwitz und Maidanek gegangen sein müsse. Wenn dieser Satz stimmt, dann entsteht eben Musik, die dazu zwingt, "die Augenbrauen hochzuziehen". Kunst dieser Art hat nicht nur einen außerordentlichen dokumentarischen Wert in soziologischer Hinsicht, sie bewirkt auch Tieferes: "Erregen durch Schockwirkung und Anreiz zur Enträtselung. Dabei kann es geschehen, daß sie zum Verstaunen verführt und zu heillosen Verrätselung" (Gustav René Hocke).

"Es gibt im 20. Jahrhundert keine Reife der Künstler mehr." (Heinz-Klaus Metzger)

Die Reaktion des Hörers (kann man noch mit dem engen Begriff "Hörer" operieren?) auf solche Musik beruht meistens darauf, daß er skandalisiert

ist. Dazu aber gibt es Kritiker, die nicht bereit sind einzusehen, daß ihr konventionelles Musikwissen ihnen nicht immer weiterhilft. Und wer lernt schon gerne um? Es bleibt also dabei: Was, gemessen mit den zur Verfügung stehenden Kriterien, schlecht abschneidet, ist auch schlecht. Dabei kommt es schon fast dem Gemeinplatz gleich, wenn man abermals darauf hinweist, daß da oft versucht wird, Liter in Metern zu messen. Vor drei Jahren bezeichnete Wolf-Eberhard von Lewinski die Musiker, die er bei den "Fluxus-Festspielen Neuester Musik" 1962 in Wiesbaden kennenlernte, in der Hamburger Tageszeitung "Die Welt" als "Abfallmusiker". Er durfte es noch. Heute veröffentlicht Lil Picard regelmäßig ihre Kunstberichte in der "Welt", und eben dieselben Leute kommen weit besser dabei weg. Nicht einmal mehr vom "Experiment", das ja immer ein wenig Abfälliges in sich birgt, ist mehr die Rede, sondern schlicht von Kunst. Und niemand hat mehr etwas dagegen. Was der Bauer nicht kennt, das frißt er nicht? — der Volksmund scheint recht zu behalten. Längst ist der Schrecken verfliegen, der 1962, als dieser Artikel schon hätte geschrieben und veröffentlicht werden müssen, die Musikkritik nach den Fluxus-Festspielen in Wiesbaden und Düsseldorf erregte.

"Sie wollen dir weismachen, das Reich der Kunst sei von einer Grenze umgeben. Aber, Menschenkind, die Kunst hat keine Grenzen." (Charlie Parker)

Unsere heutigen Musiker, zeigen Zustände und Prozesse. "Sie fotografieren die hoffnungslose Welt" (Max Bense). Indiz dafür mögen die zahllosen Kompositionen sein, die unter dem Aspekt der Unaufführbarkeit geschrieben sind. Nicht etwa, weil sie schwierig seien, weil die Komponisten gedacht hätten: "Was schert mich Seine Geige, wenn der Genius über mich kommt" (Ludwig van Beethoven), sondern weil das Material, das sie bieten, für sich noch keine Musik zu provozieren vermag. Nur noch durchs Lesen der oft kärglichen Partitur gewinnen sie ein wenig Leben, aber musikalisches? La Monte Youngs "Piano Piece for David Tudor Nr. 3" besteht nur aus dem Satz: "Most of them were very old grasshoppers". Allein durch seine Existenz ist das (noch)

kein Musikstück. Es wird zur Musik, wenn der Aufführende musikalische Potenz, investiert, um etwas gänzlich Neues entstehen zu lassen. Wenn jemand dieses Stück in der Art eines bereits bekannten aufführt, kann sich der Komponist von der Aufführung distanzieren: Es ist dann nicht La Monte Youngs Stück. Denn hätte er etwas bestimmtes komponieren wollen, so hätte er es getan. Der Satz steht für die Aufforderung, alles bereits Vorhandene außer acht zu lassen. Der Zuhörer, der mit für ihn völlig unbekannter Musik konfrontiert wird, erlebt die Verlagerung des Kompositionsvorgangs im Augenblick der Aufführung mit, den "Prozeß der Formwerdung" (Irmin Schmidt). Der Autor liefert kein fertig komponiertes Stück mehr, nicht einmal mehr das Material für die Aufführung, sondern nur die Möglichkeit, ein neues Musikstück entstehen zu lassen.

"Ja, rief der Vortragende, es liege im Wesen dieser seltsamen Kunst, daß sie jeden Augenblick imstande sei, von vorn zu beginnen, aus dem Nichts, bar jeder Kenntnis ihrer schon durchlaufenen Kulturgeschichte, des durch die Jahrhunderte errungenen, sich neu zu entdecken und wieder zu erzeugen. Dabei durchlaufe sie dann dieselben Primitiv-Stadien wie in ihren historischen Anfängen, und könne auf kurzer Bahn, abseits von dem Hauptgebirgstock ihrer Entwicklung, einsam und unbelauscht von der Welt, wunderlichste Höhen absonderlichster Schönheit erreichen." (Thomas Mann)

Authentische Musik als Dokument einer Zeit scheint mir kaum noch anders möglich zu sein. Wo alles zerstört wird, kann nichts Fertiges mehr geliefert werden. Der Gedanke an 30 Starfighter-Abstürze, die man hätte vermeiden können, verweist die Hoffnung auf Melodie in eine Traumwelt fern aller Realität "Engagierte" Musik, soll sie Entsprechung der Zeit sein, in der sie entstand, kann nicht mehr "Hoch auf dem gelben Wagen" singen, im Bewußtsein, daß "der Unfall im Auto mit vorbeifährt" (Wolf Vostell).

Einer Musik ohne diesen Realitätsbezug fehlt es an Authentizität, und sei es, daß der Realitätsbezug nur insofern vorhanden ist, als Musik den Hörer einen Zeitraum bewußter, erleben läßt.



Hier liegt der Grund, warum heute so oft dem Sinn eines Instrumentes widersprechende Aktionen mit ihm ausgeführt werden: Eine absurde Aktion weckt den Beobachter durch die dadurch ausgelöste Schockwirkung. Und je aufgestörter man ist, um so intensiver erlebt man die Zeit. Es gilt, dem Kunstkonsumenten die Augen zu öffnen.

“Für die Neue Kunst ist noch kein Verbraucher da. Er muß geschaffen werden.” (Kasimir Malewitsch)

Die ästhetische Basis dieser endlich einmal wirklich “neuen” Musik ist nicht nur einfach, sondern auch durchaus einleuchtend. Analogien zu anderen zeitgenössischen Künsten sind sofort erkennbar: Der Weg von der Abstraktion zum Neuen Realismus, in dem die Dinge nicht abgebildet, sondern isoliert von der gewohnten Umwelt gezeigt werden, findet seine Entsprechung in der Musik. “Musique concrète” wird zur “musique pure”.

“Uns wird viel größerer Genuß aus der Kombination der Geräusche von Straßenbahnen, Automobilen und der geschäftigen Masse als aus dem Wiederhören der Eroica oder der Pastorale.” (Luigi Russolo)

Was in der konkreten Musik, im Anschluß an die Bandaufnahme, verfremdet, gemischt mit anderem, kurz, was “verarbeitet” wurde, wird nun verselbstständigt gelten gelassen — im Sinne eines extremen Bruitismus. Ein Beispiel mag das verdeutlichen: Alte Musik hätte das Motiv “Türknarren” mit Hilfe von Instrumenten nachgebildet, Musique concrète hätte das Türknarren auf Band genommen und mit mehr oder weniger komplizierten technischen Manipulationen eine “Etüde aus Türknarren” produziert, heute nennt ein Komponist ein Stück einfach “Türknarren”. Aber ist Türknarren Kunst? Wolf Vostell: “Als Kunst sehen, was ich als Kunst sehen will.”

“Wozu einfältig hinter uns schauen im Augenblick, da es notwendig ist, die geheimnisvollen Türen des Notwendigen zu durchbrechen? Wir preisen die bunten und polyphonen Brandungen des Getriebes in den modernen Großstädten, die nächtliche Vibration der Arsenale und Baustellen, die Bahnhöfe, die Hüttenwerke, die

Brücken, die Lokomotiven. Der Menge, den großen Industriebetrieben, den Zügen, Ozeandampfern, Panzerkreuzern, den Automobilen und Flugzeugen die musikalische Seele schenken.” (Filippo Tommaso Marinetti)

“Der Flugplatz als Konzertsaal”, das war eine der Szenen aus Wolf Vostells Happening “In Ulm, um Ulm und um Ulm herum”. Das Publikum das mit Bussen zu einem Militär-Flugplatz in der Nähe Ulms gebracht wurde, bewunderte aus unmittelbarer Nähe die gebändigte Kraft der modernen Düsentriebwerke, und fast alle, die ich nach ihren Eindrücken fragte, bestätigten mir, daß sie auch ohne die im Titel dieser Szene provozierte musikalische Assoziation sofort an ein musikalisches Phänomen gedacht hätten. Hier werden musikalische Elemente nicht mehr im Kontext einer “Kom”-position verarbeitet, sondern die Realisation einer einzelnen Idee wird zum Stück, das dann, durch die gedankliche Reaktion des Publikums, in die Realität verwoben wird.

“I think the difference is in the mechanical sounds of our time. Like the sound of the airplane in the Forties was a rrrrrrooooooaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh-sound. Now we've got the krrrrriiiisssshhhhhhh-jet-sound. It's the mechanical sounds of the era: the sounds are different and so the music is different. I trust everything will turn out alright.” (Jim McGuinn)

Was hier an kompositorischer Leistung vorliegt, ist so leicht nicht zu beurteilen. Immerhin ist der Einwand möglich, daß es der Organisation eines Happenings nicht bedurft hätte, um einen derartigen Effekt zu erzielen. Wenn aber dadurch dem Publikum die Augen geöffnet werden und es beginnt, die Realität als Happening, als Kunst aufzufassen und umgekehrt, dann entfällt die Notwendigkeit, Happenings zu veranstalten. Sie hätten dann allerdings ihren Sinn erfüllt.

“Plötzlich, eines Tages, schien es mir klargeworden, daß die Entfaltung der Tonkunst an unseren Musikinstrumenten scheitert.” (Ferruccio Busoni)

Ein Komponist schreibt kein in sich fertiges Stück mehr, das eine, mehrere oder viele Möglichkeiten zur Auffüh-

rung in sich birgt, sondern er stellt vorfabriziertes Material zur Verfügung. Und oft nicht einmal mehr das. Es bleibt der musikalischen Potenz des Aufführenden überlassen, ob aus dem Material ein (gutes) Stück wird, oder ob es beim Material bleibt. Der Aufführende kann unter Umständen mehr kompositorische Arbeit leisten als der Komponist.

Mauricio Kagel berichtet über eine Aufführung des “Poem für Tische und Bänke” von La Monte Young: “Außer der physischen Behandlung des Instrumentariums und einem Zeitplan für die Einsätze ist für die Darbietung nichts weiteres bestimmt. Die Dauer wurde auf 15 Minuten und die Zahl der Ausführenden auf 6 festgelegt. Die Mitwirkenden (nahmen) sechs hohe und schwere Staffeleien und schleiften diese, leicht umgekippt, langsam in entgegengesetzter Richtung durch den Raum. Eine Ebbe und Flut größter Lautstärke war das Resultat, so etwa wie eine Mischung von tief filtriertem Rauschen mit unmöglicher Flatterzunge von Blasinstrumenten. Dies war wirklich eine echte Brettmusik, ein ungeheures akustisches Erlebnis, das durch den seltsamen Anblick nicht gestört wurde. Die Einförmigkeit — die Staffeleien wurden nur immer gezogen und selten von den sechs Ausführenden gleichzeitig — machte sich in der neunten Minute bemerkbar; etwas später wurde es sogar unerträglich, um am Ende — vielleicht durch die andauernde Monotonie — wieder an Interesse zu gewinnen. Ob dieses Poem von La Monte Young die Voraussetzungen eines Musikstückes besitzt, steht hier nicht zur Debatte, aber die Durchführung dieser Neuerungen halte ich für notwendig. Vielleicht könnte man den Autor eines absoluten Mangels an Kompositionsleistung beschuldigen, und nicht zuletzt, weil der bezaubernde Klang nicht von ihm definiert war.”

Kagels Einwand ist allzuleicht zu widerlegen: Klang bedarf in solcher Musik keiner Definition. Neueste Musik wehrt sich gegen Festlegung, wehrt sich dagegen, als Monument ihrer selbst von späteren Generationen reproduziert werden zu können — darin sehe ich ihren Verdienst.

Kagel schreibt, das Erlebnis werde durch den “seltsamen Anblick” nicht gestört. Kann man La Monte Youngs Musik noch mehr mißverstehen? Der



Anblick, die absurde Aktion, mit nicht zur Musik gehörenden Gegenständen dennoch Musik zu machen, ist unabdingbarer Bestandteil dieses Stückes. Und speziell in dieser Aufführung ist eine Definition des Klanges kaum möglich gewesen, da doch ein "Poem für Tische und Bänke" mit Hilfe von Staffeleien aufgeführt wurde.

"Man bringt Musik hervor, die so ist, als gäbe es sie nicht mehr — Musik nach dem Ende von Musik." (Dieter Schnebel)

Solche Musik ist Zeitdokument, ohne dadurch zum Monument zu werden. Zeitdokument nicht nur im soziologischen Sinne, sondern auch im absoluten: Dokument der Zeit, in der sie entstand. Sie ist nicht reproduzierbar, allenfalls durch Film und Tonband konservierbar. Die Spannung im Augenblick des Entstehens einer Musik, die keiner kennt, ist unwiderbringlich verloren. Sie ist Improvisation im konsequentesten Sinne. Wo keine Zeit ist für Monumente, ist nur noch Zeit, die sich selbst dokumentiert, indem sie zu Musik gerinnt. Wer erkennt, daß "Musik keine Aufgaben hat als die ihrer schönen und nutzlosen Existenz" (H.H. Stuckenschmidt), braucht keine mehr zu machen. Daß er dadurch die Schlinge nur noch fester zuzieht, ist ein weiteres: Wenn einer die zu Musik gewordene pure Zeit akzeptiert, hat er

einen neuen Musikbegriff geschaffen, den es abermals zu ersetzen gilt.

Nam June Paik: "Das Klavier ist ein Tabu; es muß zerstört werden!"

Wohin das führt? Stuckenschmidt ahnte es, als er 1955 in dieser Zeitschrift schrieb: "Da es sich als unmöglich erwiesen hat, Musik für jedermann zu schaffen, sollte man sich um ihren Gegensatz bemühen. Eine Musik gegen jedermann, den Kreis potentieller Liebhaber bewußt auf den Nullpunkt einengend, wäre ein vielleicht paradoxes, aber psychologisch und ästhetisch gleichermaßen interessantes Ziel. Sie wäre vorzustellen als objektiv 'häßlich', unerträglich dissonant, panischen Schrecken verbreitend, in ihrer abstoßenden Kraft unabhängig von Milieu, Tradition, nationalem, lokalem und subjektivem Geschmack".

Das Ergebnis: Nam June Paiks "Creep into the vagina of a living whale!" — Musik, die dazu angetan ist, dem unbedarften Musikkonsumenten das Gruseln zu lehren. Paik, der ähnlich wie Cage mit Tudor, mit der amerikanischen Cellistin Charlotte Moorman die Welt bereist, das Repertoire im Gepäck, komponiert Musik mit zwei Seiten: Die schockierende, durch ihre Widerwärtigkeit faszinierende und die poetische, zarte, unhörbare, die sich in Stücken wie dem von Fermaten und Wiederholungszeichen umgebenen Haupt-"Satz" "Count the waves of the Rhine"

manifestiert. Dick Higgins, Prototyp des cleveren Amerikaners, sieht in der Musik nur einen Teil seines Schaffens: vieles tendiert zum Theater hin und zur Literatur. Seine Musik, es gibt eine Serie von "Danger Musics", ist ironisch, oft einfach lustig, oft einfach nicht aufführbar. Higgins komponierte einen ganzen Band "Non-Performance Pieces". Seine "Danger Music Number Four" lautet: "28 + 23 = 51". Fällt Ihnen etwas ein? Und die "Danger Music Number Five" von Dick Higgins ist "by Nam June Paik". Das ist Musik, die sich hoffend gibt auf die Inspiration derer, die sie aufführen möchten. George Brecht und La Monte Young schreiben so meditative Stücke, so resignierte Musik, daß erst hier der oft zitierte Satz von der stenographischen Musik paßt: Brechts "Organ Piece" lautet "Organ". Fällt Ihnen etwas ein? Und La Monte Youngs Komposition "Two Sounds" besteht aus eben diesen beiden Wörtern. Fällt Ihnen etwas ein? "This piece is little whirlpools out in the middle of the ocean." La Monte Youngs "Composition 1960 Nr. 15" ist Musik, die man sich nur vorstellen kann. Wie sehr sich da Musik vom Hören entfernt hat und sich als abstrakter Begriff verselbständigt hat, kann man daraus ersehen, daß Dick Higgins eine Komposition "Music for the Ear" nennt. Musik fürs Ohr muß erst dann so genannt werden, wenn sie nicht mehr selbstverständlich ist.



Da Hans Sohm, *Happening & Fluxus*, catalogo della mostra al Kölnischen Kunstverein, Colonia, 1970-71.



# Mutations of the Vanguard

## Pre-Fluxus, During Fluxus, Late Fluxus

Henry Flynt

### 1. Introduction

*Fluxus, as it is remembered today, grew out of an art of insignificant and silly gestures due mainly to George Brecht. It took shape as a club for (art)ificial vaudeville — vaudeville which might require tuxedos and a grand piano as props. It turned also to the production of diminutive objects exemplifying an esthetic of grunginess; often these objects were meant for mechanical manufacture. In the Sixties, Fluxus was treated as marginal in comparison with the big artists of the day (a number of whom had had fleeting connections with Fluxus). In the Eighties, due to the efforts of René Block and of Silverman/Hendricks, Fluxus achieved stature as “just art”, suitable for legitimate museum shows.*

*The founder of Fluxus, George Maciunas, began the magazine which would become the Fluxus yearbook or yearbox after his AG Gallery closed in 1961.<sup>1</sup> From 1961, Maciunas was a fan of academic culture and moderate modernism (pre-Baroque music, Musorgsky, Pierre Schaeffer). In American slang, Maciunas was a stone square. But by mid-1963, Maciunas had shifted to a position of hostility to respectable culture — on a basis of radical unpretentiousness which was supposed to accord with Left politics.*

*Maciunas' preference for unpretentiousness was received by the art world as harmless — and merely had the effect of making Fluxus marginal. But Maciunas and I led two demonstrations against Stockhausen in 1964 which were a different matter. I did not think the demonstrations were Fluxus events; but they are remembered as such today. The demonstrations shocked the avant-garde, splitting Fluxus and reverberating in the literature on Fluxus. In 1965, Maciunas published my far-Left pamphlet calling for a reconstruction of culture which would*

*eliminate high art and bourgeois entertainment. This pamphlet, ironically, was claimed by Fluxus while being pointedly ignored by it.*

*In the process of transforming Fluxus into a reiterated museum exhibit, there has been an astonishing amount of manipulation of Fluxus history — all out of proportion, one would think, to the weight of the subject. All radical claims — aside from mere unpretentiousness — have been stripped from official Fluxus. Also, a genuine Fluxus offshoot such as the Neoists has been blocked from official Fluxus because its members are undergrounders rather than money artists.<sup>2</sup>*

*But the manipulation of Fluxus history involves deeper matters than this. As I said, Fluxus was inspired by the work of George Brecht — the earliest began in late 1961; by 1963, Maciunas had crystallized what is known today as Fluxus. One manipulation of history has been to extend Fluxus back before these events, not only to appropriate the La Monte Young circle and the John Cage circle, but to imply that Fluxus is the only offshoot of Cage, and to imply that Fluxus is virtually the same thing as the tradition of the avant-garde. Maciunas has even been given credit for organizing the appearances of the Young circle at his AG Gallery, and for organizing the contributions to Anthology. Yet Young had begun receiving contributions for what was supposed to be Beatitude East before he met Maciunas; and I know personally that the appearances of Young's colleagues at AG were not Maciunas' choices. (It's on record that Maciunas was contemptuous of the presentation I did.)*

*I have been asked to begin this survey with Cage, because some of his students became founding members of Fluxus — and to uncover the phase of the New York avant-garde which immediately preceded Fluxus, and which has been submerged by*

*Fluxus expansionism. That I will do. But I will write about the avant-garde, and about the Cage and Young phases, because they are important in themselves. They are not where Fluxus begins.*

*I consider that the avant-garde started with the writer Marinetti (First Futurist Manifesto, Paris, 1909). The avant-garde is a pronounced curiosity in twentieth-century Europe. Marinetti, presupposing the role of the artist as the master of style, sensibility, and useless experience — and intoxicated with continual technological change and mass politics — called for the eradication of all inherited culture. At the same time, he called for a culture of noise and absurdity. The Dadaists introduced another twist during World War I. Fleeing to Switzerland to escape the first global war, they announced that the war revealed Europe's civilization to be merde. Somehow, then, the carrying out of impertinent and insignificant gestures by dilettantes was going to settle accounts with the failed civilization.*

*A remarkable feature of the avant-garde was its ability to attract representation from every position on the political spectrum: Fascist, bourgeois-liberal, Communist. This suggests that the avant-garde expresses something stubbornly ingrained in modern Europe.*

*Skipping past Duchamp (whom I consider overrated), and action painting, we come to another twist. Serial music — which is more like constructivism than Dada — begins to be thought of as avant-garde: presumably because its elaboration of musical technique, in analogy with scientific development, is carried to a point which seems outlandish. For the first time, then, technical elaboration and artificiality are accepted as avant-garde. This prepares the way for Cage, a figure who is supposedly infinitely radical formally — without any artistic aims beyond music and without any political aims.*





Henry Flynt, 1988.  
(Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery,  
foto Wilfrid Rouff).



Yves Klein poses a different problem. His career peaked at the same time that Cage became well-known, 1958-62. Klein's showing of an empty gallery,<sup>3</sup> his one-note symphony, his use of nude models as paintbrushes were all important notches in the avant-garde's belt. But when a body of work consists entirely of publicity stunts, it diverges from the thoughtful quest which I wish to write about.

Klein and the New Realists could be taken as the start of another development which looms beside the events I will write about. Beginning in the Sixties, high art was permanently affected by the avant-garde. Another name for this development is conceptualism,<sup>4</sup> art with an idea. It has become obligatory for high art to have a radical gimmick. But this is problematic: the radical gimmick is belied by the artist's utter careerism; the gimmick is included because it is a professional requirement. In the nineteenth century, the artist had to provide the collector with a thrill of uninhibited sex. While the artist still has that role today, priority has shifted to the provision of a thrill of radicalism.

It is a critical commonplace to focus on the early avant-garde, and to view it in exclusively sociological terms. One can then debunk it as a scandal, a cataclysm for dilettantes, for rentiers. Very well; and the early avant-garde's democratic claims were a lie – it was elitist, presupposing the continued importance of bourgeois culture in order to thumb a nose at it. But this critique fails to grasp that all high art must now employ avant-garde gestures. And equally important, what of those for whom the avant-garde was a thoughtful quest? I shall explain that the avant-garde allowed extraordinary new ideas and possibilities to be formulated. If this is not a truism, then it is because the art world has chosen not to emphasize these achievements.

The following definition of avant-gardism generalizes the developments, from the early twentieth century to Maciunas, which I wish to write about.

#### Avant-Gardism

To make art formally more difficult, in analogy with scientific advances.

To subvert or discard art forms on the grounds that they are socially obsolete.

To disintegrate art through attitude (intention).

To attempt to artificially produce ingenious experience.

To pass beyond art, in favor of new intellectual enterprises or the program of a

radical society in which a sensibility is realized in life.

Fluxus historicizing, by assimilating earlier and collateral developments to Fluxus, suppresses the main achievements of the avant-garde, or else garbles them. Cage's circle approached music in a heavily computational way, and emphasized refinement to the point of preciousness. Fluxus was not Cage's only offshoot; nor was it the only sponsor of post-Cage concerts. The 1960-62 New York avant-garde – actually the Young circle – was markedly "conceptual" in a sense related to my concept art. None of these features – the refinement, elegance, intellectuality – was affirmed by Maciunas' program for Fluxus. At the same time, the Cage and Young circles had nothing of the demand for political reconstruction of culture, or for unpretentiousness, which Maciunas incorporated in Fluxus. Meanwhile, all high art incorporated avant-garde ploys; and other tendencies besides Fluxus sought the political reconstruction of culture. (It's not my problem, by the way, whether Beuys was Fluxus or had his own movement.)

Despite the importance of keeping the different schools separate, it is true that they run together in a period as short as four years, and that a number of figures begin as Cage followers and end as Maciunas colleagues. Moreover, in the formative years, the schools had a theme in common. A screaming claim to be new (along with an attempt to dictate the definition of the terms "new" and "avant-garde") was made by one or more commanding figures in each school. So the process of capturing and redirecting the notion of newness was central to the schools in question.

The strength of the claim of newness, and also its limitation, was that it was highly parochial. Sex (and violence) in art – for centuries a concomitant of art's bohemian role – was not counted as new by the leaders. What was demanded was a thoughtful intent, free of pandering. Avant-garde meant a thoughtful, cerebral unravelling of art – a search for artificially ingenious experience. Aside from the individual achievements of the avant-garde, its blanket use of the term "new" in this way is dated when it is compared with the current acclaim for a Cindy Sherman or Sherrie Levine, say. The claims of newness were parochial from a number of standpoints. By what right is an insignificant gesture ever called new? And then we have Maciunas' 1964 letter to Tomas

Schmit on Fluxus objectives and ideology. Maciunas seems to picture a performance of Brecht's Exit

#### WORD EVENT

##### ● EXIT

G. Brecht

Spring, 1961

as amounting to a realization of world revolution. Well, ironically, this esthetic of inconsequentiality did undercut East European regimes – the ones which Maciunas supported. But Maciunas' placing of Exit on the same level as revolution was not only wacky, but demeaning.

The frantic competition to be the newest has to be recognized as sincere in order to understand what people did at the time in question. Official modern art was sincerely dismissed as mere pomposity by the circles in question. And the avant-garde was conducted in a messianic way. Each leader sought to consolidate the group which was defined as the dernier cri – while suppressing those considered to be laggards. In 1960-61 in New York, the role of solidifying the new wave was assumed by La Monte Young. The main success of this crusading was to convert Maciunas from a stone square to a rather slapdash extremist. Then, by 1962, Maciunas began the crusade to solidify the avant-garde under his exclusive control.

## 2. Pre-Fluxus: the Young Circle

Toward the end of the Fifties, music acquired an avant-garde role which it had not previously had. Modern classical music had a prestige with the cultural public which it subsequently lost. That very eminence might seem to disqualify it as avant-garde. But the point was that musical composition required an expertise comparable to scientific training. The European notions of laws of music and scientific progress in music were taken seriously. Babbitt, Xenakis, Stockhausen, Cage, and their colleagues were engaged in a frantic race to field the most radical music – rather like the race to the moon. Against this background, scores of Cage's such as Music Walk (1958) seemed at the time to be so original – and so artificial – that they might have fallen down from Mars.

Cage initiated a music of calculated randomness with e.g. Music of Changes (1951). He supported his approach with an esthetic of indifference which he ascribed to Zen. His compositions, and those of his colleagues, presupposed a quasi-scientific analysis of music as noth-



## PARAGRAPHS, QUOTATIONS, AND LISTS

kicking a can, walking, eating a banana, kissing,  
urinating, tight shoes, pipe-smoke, splinter-ache,  
branch-shadows, water running, newsprint, itch

Donald O'Connor. Walter O'Keefe. Laurence Olivier.  
Nancy Olson. Vivienne Osborne. Maureen O'Sullivan.

suitcase events, bathtub events, gallery events,  
outdoor events, refrigerator events, bumping-into-  
something

"Art is not the most precious manifestation of life.  
Art has not the celestial and universal value that  
people like to attribute to it. Life is far more  
interesting." (Tristan Tzara)

cowbird. blackcap. bluebird. reedbird. stork.

All emotions allowable, even boredom.

"Nature creates all beings without erring....It is  
calm and still....It tolerates all creatures equally....  
Therefore it attains what is right for all without  
artifice or special intentions. Man achieves the height  
of wisdom when all that he does is as self-evident as  
what nature does." (The I-Ching, or Book of Changes)

ebony. deodar. lime. savin. elm. pine. larch.

Spring, 1961  
G. Brecht



ing but a collection of sounds defined by frequency, amplitude, duration, and overtone spectrum (Silence, p. 80). As Cage moved to indeterminacy in the late Fifties, his music assumed a structural artificiality unlike anything in the past. The score was produced by a process which could not be inferred by the performers unless the composer divulged it. Performers had to carry out a sort of computation, involving free choice, in order to ascertain what sounds they would make. In the course of this process, a single sound's beginning and its length were determined in different and unconnected patterns. What the audience heard, finally, was an extravagant sound-assemblage which could not be re-performed and which gave no clue as to its intentional organization.

Cage was not shy about taking a crusading role. He redefined newness in such a way that the preceding avant-garde was rendered passé. "This decision alters the view of history[!], so that one is no longer concerned with tonality or atonality..." (Silence, pp. 68-69.)

As Cage pursued his esthetic, music became an attitude of listening, which could just as well be directed to environmental sounds. There had been his silent piece in three movements, 4' 33" (1952) – which was performed as a piano piece, but could have been performed by any ensemble. So 4' 33" prefigured compositions in which the performers' role was indistinguishable from the audiences'.

Cage's pronouncements in the period in question seemed to say that only listening and the environment were necessary for music, that composers and professional instrumentalists were passé. At the time, I took this as encouragement to question the very legitimacy of art.<sup>5</sup> Also, Cage's juniors acknowledged and echoed these dicta. And yet Cage remained a professional composer, he encouraged others to be professional artists, and his students became career professionals. Relative to the issues I am stressing in this survey, seemingly extreme proclamations which are not acted on (and in hindsight, were not even meant) are very troubling. I am sure that Cage has been, by his lights, a sincere person – an industrious person who bore up under a lot of ridicule. What are we to make, then, of the presence of intimations of the end of art in the stances of career artists, intimations which turn out to be nothing of the sort? In Cage's case, it does not appear possible to argue that he was moving toward a breakthrough in 1960 from which he sub-

sequently retreated. But this problem in artists' biographies will appear again in this review.

Some of Cage's students in the Fifties became charter members of Fluxus. Jackson MacLow began transferring Cage's chance procedures to poetry – yielding a more computational or artificial concrete poetry. In 1958, Cage taught a composition class at the New School for Social Research, whose story has often been told. Participants included Allan Kaprow, Dick Higgins, Jackson MacLow, Al Hansen, George Brecht, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Scott Hyde, Richard Maxfield.

There were post-Cage developments in New York in 1959. Allan Kaprow's 18 Happenings in Six Parts, for example, was presented at the Reuben Gallery, 61 Fourth Avenue. Happenings – a sort of plotless theater – had been prefigured by the "concerted action" which Cage had presented at Black Mountain College in 1952.

Another 1959 event at the Reuben Gallery was George Brecht's show, "Toward Events". Brecht evidently was directly influenced by Cage, but immediately moved beyond Cage's exclusive emphasis on music. I do not find Brecht sympathetic, because his work is deliberately and relentlessly prosaic. Nevertheless, Brecht's factual importance in these developments is undeniable; and I will return to him when I reach early Fluxus.

Already in 1959, though, there is an anticipatory development which must be mentioned. Musical scores begin to appear which consist of short verbal texts. There is, for example, Brecht's Time-Table Music (Summer 1959).<sup>6</sup> This piece is performed in a railway station by separated performers who use the station's timetables to determine when to make sounds – without declaring to passersby that a performance is occurring.

After I became involved in new music, I remember walking through Harvard Yard and seeing a man positioned at the corner of a dormitory, seemingly attentive, but not visibly doing anything. The thought occurred to me that he might be participating in a new music performance whose existence was not announced. Well, Brecht's Time-Table Music is such a piece. Cage had pointed out that we are surrounded by invisible electromagnetic broadcasts. But at that time it seemed that we were also surrounded by sounds that might or might not belong to compositions, and by actions that might or might not be controlled by unannounced per-

formance plans.

At what point is it certain that structure or purpose exists? In 1960, that seemed to dissolve into the nondescript surroundings. That contributed to my sense that we were about to pass beyond all culture which officially existed.

Let me mention that Dick Higgins also has a published one-paragraph text score, Constellation No. 1, which is from July 1959.

There is another point in Brecht to which I wish to respond, and I prefer to do so here, even though it means getting ahead of my story. In an interview published in Art and Artists, October 1972, Brecht said: "I pose this as a problem for anybody who thinks they're making art, or anti-art, or non-art: to make a work which cannot possibly be considered art." Well here is a cheap solution: "If a contradiction cannot be art, then this sentence is not art or not true." To give a serious solution is beyond the scope of this essay.

Just after Cage became publicly prominent as the leader of the avant-garde, artists of an entirely different order of radicalism appeared in the New York area, and worked as colleagues for a brief but intense period. The careers of such dominating figures as La Monte Young, Robert Morris, Walter De Maria, and Yoko Ono stem from this milieu. This group of artists was recruited and led by La Monte Young.

Young had moved to New York from the San Francisco area in late 1960, at the same time as a number of other artists: Diane Wakoski, Robert Morris, Simone Forti, Walter De Maria, Joseph Byrd, Terry Jennings. In California, Young had worked with dancer Ann Halprin. It was at her school that he delivered his Lecture 1960: in which he declared that newness was the only value he wanted in art.

Young had already been in touch with a number of New York figures before he arrived in New York; and again, a group of Californians moved East with him. At the same time, Young's work was exceptionally distinguished, and it focused the themes which occupied the artists around him. So it was that overnight, Young became the commanding figure. (Jackson MacLow must be mentioned as a co-organizer.)

Young produced a series of concerts in Yoko Ono's loft at 112 Chambers Street, as follows:

December 1960

T. Jennings



MUSIC and POETRY  
of  
HENRY FLYNT

two concerts  
at  
Yoko Ono's studio  
112 Chambers St.  
top floor

Saturday, Feb. 25 at 8:30 p.m.: experimental concert  
Jazz, Flynt-music, or poetry will be improvised  
by Henry Flynt and possibly others  
Informal - do not crowd near performer(s)

Sunday, Feb. 26 at 2:30 p.m.

Jazz

by Henry Flynt, piano; La Monte Young, tenor  
saxophone; Joe Kotzin, flute; Simone Morris,  
vocal; Walter De Maria, drums; and others

Flynt-music

by Simone Morris, vocal; La Monte Young, piano  
(and vocal); Henry Flynt, saxophone (and vocal);  
and others

compositions and poetry

by Henry Flynt (titles and performers to be  
announced)

possibly exhibits of scores, readings from writings  
on his work, playing of recordings, by Henry Flynt

It may be necessary for some to sit on the floor.

\$1.00 donation

This is #3 in the series presented by La Monte Young. #4 will  
be Joseph Byrd (March 4 & 5). Other evenings will include  
music: George Brecht John Cage Walter De Maria Lucia Dlugoszewski  
Bob Dunn Dick Higgins Dennis Johnson Richard Maxfield Toshiro  
Mayuzumi Terry Riley David Tudor Christian Wolff La Monte Young  
poetry: David Dagner Hans Helms Terry Jannings Jackson Mac Low  
Yoko Ono Diane Wakoski James Waring  
plays: Jackson Mac Low Phil Reys  
machinery: Bob Morris  
somethingelse: Bob Morris Simone Morris  
others to be arranged

No public announcements. If there are names to be added to the  
mailing list, please send them to La Monte Young  
Apt. 1-6  
119 Bank Street  
N. Y. 14, N. Y.



January 1961 T. Ichiyanagi  
 February 1961 H. Flynt  
 March 1961 J. Byrd  
 April 1961 J. MacLow  
 April 1961 R. Maxfield  
 May 1961 L. Young  
 May 1961 S. Forti  
 June 1961 R. Morris  
 June 1961 D. Lindberg

Performances continued after this at Ono's loft, but not under Young's sponsorship.

Subsequently, after Young had met George Maciunas through Richard Maxfield, Maciunas offered his AG Gallery, at 925 Madison Ave., as a venue for a series of evenings devoted to artists selected by Young and MacLow. Today, the series listed here is remembered as "the" AG Gallery "concerts". But that is false: Maciunas had other, square series running in his gallery at the same time – featuring such composers as Musorgsky. (Draw a straight line and follow it, Musorgsky!)

May 1961 R. Maxfield  
 June 4, 1961 J. Cage  
 June 10, 1961 T. Ichiyanagi  
 June 11, 1961 S. de Hirsch  
 June 17, 1961 J. MacLow  
 June 18, 1961 D. Higgins  
 June 24, 1961 J. Byrd  
 June 25, 1961 J. MacLow and others  
 (including Bob Morris)

July 2, 1961 L. Young  
 July 9, 1961 L. Young  
 July 15, 1961 H. Flynt  
 July 16, 1961 H. Flynt  
 July 17-30, 1961 Yoko Ono  
 (show of paintings)

July 23, 1961 W. De Maria  
 July 30, 1961 Ray Johnson

Young also had been invited by Chester Anderson to guest edit an issue of *Beatitude East*. So it was that Young assembled, in 1961, the manuscripts which – after various mishaps – he, MacLow, and Maciunas would print and release in 1963 as *An Anthology*.

Young, and his friends T. Riley and T. Jennings, were jazz musicians who had entered modern music while playing jazz. And Young was already deeply interested in Indian music. At that time, there was a social separation between "classical music" and jazz which is difficult to conceive today. Classical music, after all, made a claim of absolute, science-like intellectual superiority, and superiority of sensibility. So the fact that Young and his friends brought a proficiency in jazz, and a vision of how jazz might be extended, to

"the" avant-garde (the "classical" avant-garde – what an oxymoron!) was a major socio-cultural redirection.

This happened at the time when Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry had just been acclaimed as the first avant-garde within jazz. Coleman and Cherry were treated much as *Time* magazine treated Cage: ridiculed as charlatans and at the same time welcomed and lionized. So we are back to the social meaning of the avant-garde phase. Evidently the appearance of the artist who lacks conventional skills and is incomprehensible to the public is an obligatory rite of passage for every tradition existing in the shadow of European modernism.

As I have said, Young had announced that newness was the only value to be admired in art. For Young, Cage, Paik's theatrics, and the Events and Happenings which were current in 1960 were already history. Cage had overthrown Stockhausen's definition of newness as serialism; now Young overthrew Cage's definition of the new as extravagant confusion. Young told me that Happenings were corny; and we agreed in conversation that all opera and all dance, for example, were worthless because their premises were inherently corny. Young declared in favor of prolonged monotony in art – the position which would later be called minimalism. Tonal music could be rehabilitated as the most radical: if a single fifth was sustained for three hours, for example. For Halprin, Young had recorded music with unvaryingly loud, dense friction sounds which were entirely nonmusical by textbook standards. This somatically compelling music charged the silence which followed it in a new way. It made Stockhausen and Cage seem like so much note-spinning.

In 1960, Young wrote a series of compositions consisting partly or entirely of a short text – sometimes a single sentence. Evidently, isolated text scores had been composed earlier by Brecht and Higgins. But because of the number and relationship of Young's compositions, and because of their character, they crystallized a new genre. Young's pieces went beyond the boundaries of music; and they manifested a sort of fantasy – paradoxical and self-referential – which was philosophically challenging. People called the works little pieces; but Young asked that they be called word pieces. This genre was immediately taken up by Young's associates.

At the beginning of 1961, Young announced that he rejected the notion that

each of a composer's works had to be different from its predecessors. He planned to compose 29 compositions throughout 1961 which simply repeated Composition 1960 # 10. The family of compositions was premiered in an avant-garde concert which I organized at Harvard on March 31, 1961. Robert Morris assisted Young in performing his pieces; also Morris exhibited his Box with the Sound of Its Own Making. Morris had planned to perform his Water Sculpture, but I had naively asked permission for it, and it had been forbidden.

Young had been threatening to present the most avant-garde pieces in the world. I remember when he told me over the telephone how the works were to be listed in the program. As he dictated, he came to Composition 1961 # 8, dated April 2, 1961! He was going to perform 22 compositions before they were composed. In logical terms, he was going to follow a rule which he had planned, but which did not yet exist. From the point of view of the conventionalist explanation of the existence of abstractions, Young was introducing time travel at the level of whether given abstractions existed or not. I have already mentioned deontic dissociations in works of Cage and Brecht; now Young made an extraordinary addition to them. Young's compositions were performed after the intermission. I remember being in the balcony, and observing a building guard watching the performance. He was staring with the most extreme expression of shocked incomprehension I had ever seen. And yet there was no pandering or publicity stunt here: there was a thoughtful break with the past which would not go away. (And for the guard, the distinction which Morris made in his writings between aridly mental art and art that provides experience did not apply.)

After the concert, Young sat at the piano and began to play the compressed, repetitive Horace Silver-like jazz which would be the basis of duets I would record with him in 1962.

A few years later, Young's interest in ethnic music and in sustained musical experience would lead him to improvised saxophone performances accompanied by drones and hand drums. These performances, on which John Coltrane was perhaps the most important single influence, were immensely refined and ecstatic. They were one of the outstanding accomplishments of new culture in the Sixties. Here, as throughout his work, Young showed himself to be at the farthest remove from



Compositions  
by  
La Monte Young

May 19 & May 20 8:30  
at  
Yoko Ono's studio  
112 Chambers St.

Composition 1960 #10	to Bob Morris (October 1960)
Composition 1961 #1	(January 1, 1961)
Composition 1961 #2	(January 14, 1961)
Composition 1961 #3	(January 27, 1961)
Composition 1961 #4	(February 9, 1961)
Composition 1961 #5	(February 22, 1961)
Composition 1961 #6	(March 7, 1961)
Composition 1961 #7	(March 20, 1961)
Composition 1961 #8	(April 2, 1961)
Composition 1961 #9	(April 15, 1961)
Composition 1961 #10	(April 28, 1961)
Composition 1961 #11	(May 11, 1961)
Composition 1961 #12	(May 24, 1961)
Composition 1961 #13	(June 6, 1961)
Composition 1961 #14	(June 19, 1961)

intermission

Composition 1961 #15	(July 2, 1961)
Composition 1961 #16	(July 15, 1961)
Composition 1961 #17	(July 28, 1961)
Composition 1961 #18	(August 10, 1961)
Composition 1961 #19	(August 23, 1961)
Composition 1961 #20	(September 5, 1961)
Composition 1961 #21	(September 18, 1961)
Composition 1961 #22	(October 1, 1961)
Composition 1961 #23	(October 14, 1961)
Composition 1961 #24	(October 27, 1961)
Composition 1961 #25	(November 9, 1961)
Composition 1961 #26	(November 22, 1961)
Composition 1961 #27	(December 5, 1961)
Composition 1961 #28	(December 18, 1961)
Composition 1961 #29	(December 31, 1961)

performers: La Monte Young Robert Dunn



the Fluxus esthetic. It has therefore done a great disservice, obscuring what Young has to give, to pigeonhole him as a Fluxus composer.

Robert Morris is the artist whose proper role in this survey is hardest to judge. Early in 1961, Young told me that Morris was the most avant-garde besides himself. That makes it necessary to take note of Morris here. As for the work of Morris that I saw at the time, I certainly saw that it was "modernique"; but the real lesson was that the criterion which made it the most new was simply parochial. Walter De Maria, with whom Morris has always been paired, was active then too, of course.

The Morris known to the art world today is a textbook example of a progression from art student to fledgling exhibitor and instructor to world-class artist. Morris' oeuvre seemingly poses the same problems as that of any famous conceptual artist. At the center of the work is the pursuit of success; the work is eclectic, while having a recurring avant-garde guise (which means in fact that the work embodies considerable waste). Also, Morris' work is loaded with connections to the philosophical pundits of the day.

Reviewing Morris' 1960-62 work for this essay, I find it to have contained elements, perhaps not publicly known now, which were pathbreaking. The work does help to make understandable the climate of radicalism in 1961. Morris, having chosen to be a sculptor, introduced the physical illusion into "conceptualism" (as it is called now – not then). And Project for Sculpture adverted to iterated divisibility. Interview, in addition to the aims Morris had for it, moved art in the direction of an experience staged secretly for a single subject.

Morris' written ruminations are also notable. A letter to La Monte Young of September 8, 1960, has stimulating things to say about (using jargon for brevity) logic, phenomenology, psychedelic experience, the question of newness. (Morris is much better when his ideas "float" – without being tied to fashionable academic pundits.) Here, for the first time I know of, Morris hints that anti-art ("Ant-Artica") may be the best. The letter ends with a proposal which became Make an Object to Be Lost. A 1961 text, M.D.-Rx, notes that art is moving in a direction in which the idea is primary and the physical object is only a support for the idea. The anticipation of what years later would be called "conceptualism" is ob-

vious. Blank Form, which is known to today's critics, makes art depend on my assumption of an attitude (as well as announcing what is now called minimal sculpture).

Two of Morris' pieces in early 1961 were Tomorrow 8 am to 12 pm and To be looked at in a state of shock; nearly anything in a state of shock. Here Morris adverts directly to modalities of experience in untitled and unsigned phrases.

Morris evidently put his submission to Beatitude (An Anthology) through several stages. Interview and M.D.-Rx were withdrawn – the latter, Morris says in a letter to Anderson, because he wanted to revise it or discard it completely. At one point, Morris' title page had the heading "anti-art". All that finally got into An Anthology was the title page, with anti-art deleted.

Evidently, Morris has permanently suppressed some of this work. The overviews of his work which are available to the public disperse the 1961 works which are known into his long career as a "gallery conceptualist". Somehow, this makes them tired.

Did Morris go through a phase whose outcome should have been the abandonment of his art career (or else of his avant-garde posture)? Was there a conscious reversal of direction? (Maurice Berger's Labyrinths, p. 28 suggests that Morris went through a moment of doubt about art which was resolved by making quasi-Duchampian art.) By 1962-63, Morris' career was underway, and his letters to me defended art from my critique of it. On the other hand, a letter to Young of December 5, 1960 expressed contempt for those artists eager to promote themselves and get famous. What biographers are not telling us, and what we need to know, is whether the eminent careers that we see are mere residuals from deliberately abandoned breakthroughs – residuals in which the breakthroughs are recycled as mere gestures.

Let me now place myself in these events. When I arrived at Harvard in 1957 to study mathematics, I was a beginning composer with a background in classical violin. I met some new-music practitioners, and began working in this genre (without real conviction). Also, I made transfers of new-music techniques to drawing/painting, and to poetry (independently of MacLow). My central interest, throughout, was philosophy. While a student, I moved from logical positivism to a unique and extreme philosophy of

"beliefless empiricism". (From attempting a Carnapian, parsimonious reconstruction of physics, for example, I moved to the position that the scientific determination of reality was a delusion.) This is important for this essay, because my philosophical stance would be the basis of all of my subsequent endeavors. In particular, I began thinking about transferring the principle of avant-gardism from art to mathematics.

Early in 1960, I left Harvard to write a monograph on my philosophy, continuing to live at Harvard Square. The turning point in my early approach to art came when I visited Young in December 1960. I had begun listening to jazz and American ethnic music, and it was exciting to meet musicians such as Young and Jennings who had a jazz standpoint while being at the leading edge of new music. During this visit, Young read me his 1960 word pieces.

I immediately began to compose word pieces, reflecting Young's, while at the same time drawing in my philosophical and mathematical preoccupations. (These pieces were destroyed and exist now only as reconstructions. Examples: Written on a Möbius strip: "The instructions for this composition are on the other side of this strip." Written under a line segment: "Each point on this line is a composition.") I became engrossed in the competition to be newest as Young conceived it and crusaded for it. Also, Young's jazz standpoint confirmed my rejection of modern music's quasi-scientific claims, and encouraged me to redirect my musical efforts to extensions of ethnic music.

During my February 25, 1961 performance at Yoko Ono's loft, I asked the audience to propose a contest. If I liked the contest, then the audience would compete and whoever won would get to perform on a clamp and rubber band (which I had picked up and announced made an instrument). Simone Morris (now Simone Forti) said: "Let the contest be who can think up a good contest the quickest." I accepted this as a good contest. She said: "I win." She got to play the instrument, which she treated like a kazoo. Feeling that she had somehow cheated, I paced the floor trying to discern the trick. Finally I announced that her contest violated one of the principles of logic announced by Russell.<sup>7</sup>

As I said, I had begun to think about transferring the principle of avant-gardism from art to mathematics. Also, I noted that much of the new music seemed like



## TIME-TABLE MUSIC

For performance in a railway station.

The performers enter a railway station and obtain time-tables.

They stand or seat themselves so as to be visible to each other, and, when ready, start their stopwatches simultaneously.

Each performer interprets the tabled time indications in terms of minutes and seconds (e.g. 7:16 = 7 minutes and 16 seconds). He selects one time by chance to determine the total duration of his performing. This done, he selects one row or column, and makes a sound at all points where tabled times within that row or column fall within the total duration of his performance.

George Brecht  
Summer, 1959

## MUSICA ANTIOQA & NOVA

The significance in music, of realism, concretism and fusion of form & content as opposed to biomorphic illusionism will be discussed by G. Macinas in the forthcoming series of 3 lecture - demonstrations to which you and your friends are cordially invited to attend.

### 1. MAR. 25

The rich polychronic palette of diversified and contrasted concrete sounds in medieval & renaissance instrumentation will be discussed and demonstrated. A lute, thenrbo, rebec, viola da gamba, shawn, sordun, krumhorn, dulciane, recorder & zink will be demonstrated individually by Stanley Buetens & in ensemble by recordings.

### 2. APR. 16

Discussion & demonstration by records of musical concretism from Moussorgsky till magnetic tape will comprise experiments of Moussorgsky with sprachstimme & noises, Schönberg's & Berg's perfection of sprachstimme, realism of dodecaphony & full instrumental concretism from Webern, Varèse to Cage, Berio, Stockhausen, Brooks etc.

### 3. MAY 14

Discussion & demonstration of concretism in its most recent stage of development will comprise magnetic tape music of the French 'Groupe de Recherches Musicales', German Köln electronic studio, Italian Milan studio di Fonologia, American private studios in New York, San Francisco, Toronto & other studios in Europe and Japan.

EVENINGS 7:00 P.M.

Each lecture - demonstration will be followed by a period of discussion and a repast of hors' d'oeuvre and wine. Entry contribution of \$3 will help to publish FLUXUS magazine. For reservations write to AG 925 Madison Ave. New York or call BU 8-4220



research in structure – so much so that performance of the music in concerts seemed anticlimactic and peripheral. Then, my thinking on a philosophy-of-mathematics issue must be noted. I accepted that formalism, was the most credible official picture of the nature of mathematics.<sup>8</sup> The outcome was that after returning from my visit to Young in 1960, I began in January 1961 to compose "mathematics systems" consisting of proof-trees which were notationally and logically anomalous. These directly anticipated my concept art – of which more below.

After my February 25, 1961 concert and the March 31, 1961 concert, I increasingly

began to challenge the artworld's premises theoretically. My peers professed allegiance to Art seemingly just because it was an official institution. In the climate of competitive newness, that seemed absurd. Much of the new art gained its status solely from being classified as Art. Outside the art context, the "works" would simply be ignored. As a critical examination of what we were doing, I gave a lecture on newness in Young's apartment on June 3, 1961. Here I argued directly against the thesis that newness could be a work's sole value. (Young, I argued, had simply imposed a particular style – important, but parochial – and called it newness.)

The next step, then, was to throw away

the crutch of the label "Art", and to crystallize unprecedented, richly elaborated activities around unprecedented purposes. Since this perspective amounts to demanding original discoveries beyond all existing professions, I would not have been bold enough to attempt this without the inspiration of my philosophical extremism. At the time of my AG Gallery appearances and afterwards, Maciunas condemned me for this very reason. On January 18, 1962, he wrote: "Also met... Helms who (very much like Flynt) is absurdly arrogant and with pretensions towards world shattering originality and genius bordering on megalomania" (letter to Dick Higgins, in

#### ESSAY: CONCEPT ART (PROVISIONAL VERSION)

"Concept art" is first of all an art of which the material is "concepts", as the material of for ex. music is sound. Since "concepts" are closely bound up with language, concept art is a kind of art of which the material is language. That is, unlike for ex. a work of music, in which the music proper (as opposed to notation, analysis, a.s.f.) is just sound, concept art proper will involve language. From the philosophy of language, we learn that a "concept" may as well be thought of as the intension of a name; this is the relation between concepts and language. The notion of a concept is a vestige of the notion of a platonic form (the thing for which for ex. all tables have in common: tableness), which notion is replaced by the notion of a name objectively, metaphysically related to its intension (so that all tables now have in common their objective relation to 'table'). Now the claim that there can be an objective relation between a name and its intension is wrong, and (the word) 'concept', as commonly used now, can be discredited (see my book, Philosophy Proper). If, however, it is enough for one that there be a subjective relation between a name and its intension, namely the unhesitant decision as to the way one wants to use the name, the unhesitant decisions to affirm the names of some things but not others, then 'concept' is valid language, and concept art has a philosophically valid basis.

Now what is artistic, aesthetic, about a work which is a body of concepts? This question can best be answered by telling where concept art came from; I developed it in an attempt to straighten out certain traditional activities generally regarded as aesthetic. The first of these is "structure art", music, visual art, a.s.f., in which the important thing is "structure". My definitive discussion of structure art can be found in "General Aesthetics"; here I will just summarize that discussion. Much structure art is a vestige of the time when for ex. music was believed to be knowledge, a science, which had important things to say in astronomy a.s.f.. Contemporary structure artists, on the other hand, tend to claim the kind of cognitive value for their art that conventional contemporary mathematicians claim for mathematics. Modern examples of structure art are the fugue and total serial music. These examples illustrate the important division of structure art into two kinds according to how the structure is appreciated. In the case of a fugue, one is aware of its structure in listening to it; one imposes "relationships", a categorization (hopefully that intended by the composer) on the sounds while listening to them, that is, has an (associated) artistic structure experience. In the case

of total serial music, the structure is such that this cannot be done; one just has to read an "analysis" of the music, definition of the relationships. Now there are two things wrong with structure art. First, its cognitive pretensions are utterly wrong. Secondly, by trying to be music or whatever (which have nothing to do with knowledge), and knowledge represented by structure, structure art both fails, is completely boring, as music, and doesn't begin to explore the aesthetic possibilities structure can have when freed from trying to be music or what ever. The first step in straightening out for ex. structure music is to stop calling it "music", and start saying that the sound is used only to carry the structure and that the real point is the structure—and then you will see how limited, impoverished, the structure is. Incidentally, anyone who says that works of structure music do occasionally have musical value just doesn't know how good real music (the Goli Dance of the Baoule; "Cans on Windows" by L. Young; the contemporary American hit song "Sweets for My Sweets", by the Drifters) can get. When you make the change, then since structures are concepts, you have concept art. Incidentally, there is another, less important kind of art which when straightened out becomes concept art: art involving play with the concepts of the art: such as, in music, "the score", "performer vs. listener", "playing a work". The second criticism of structure art applies, with the necessary changes, to this art.

The second main antecedent of structure art is mathematics. This is the result of my revolution in mathematics, which is written up definitively in the appendix; here I will only summarize. The revolution occurred first because for reasons of taste I wanted to de-emphasize discovery in mathematics, mathematics as discovering theorems and proofs. I wasn't good at such discovery, and it bored me. The first way I thought of to de-emphasize discovery came not later than Summer, 1960; it was that since the value of pure mathematics is now regarded as aesthetic rather than cognitive, why not try to make up aesthetic theorems, without considering whether they are true. The second way, which came at about the same time, was to find, as a philosopher, that the conventional claim that theorems and proofs are discovered is wrong, for the same reason I have all ready given that 'concept' can be discredited. The third way, which came in the fall-winter of 1960, was to work in unexplored regions of formalist mathematics. The resulting mathematics still had statements, theorems, proofs, but the latter weren't discovered in the way they traditionally were. Now exploration of the wider possibilities of mathematics as revolutionized by me tends to lead beyond what it makes sense to call "mathematics"; the category of "mathematics", a vestige of Platonism, is an "un-



Fluxus Codex, p. 112).

By July 1961, I had detached the structure-play of the new music from concert performance, and had merged it with my proposal of avant-garde mathematics. Noting that mathematics was traditionally claimed to have esthetic value, I also required esthetic delectation in the new genre. I gave the new genre the label concept art, writing the essay of that title, and relabelling several of my pieces from early 1961 as "concept art". Like the other contributors to *Beatitude East or An Anthology*, I submitted this material to Young in 1961.

When I explain to people that I originated concept art, they say: "Oh, now I understand, everybody had been doing concept art, then you invented the label for it." Well, that is exactly wrong. I invented the label for my benefit, for something which was and remained unique to me: namely, object-critiques of logic and mathematics based on my "beliefless empiricism".

A decade later, Germano Celant provided a key critical appraisal of my concept art. In his important *Le livre comme travail artistique* (1972), he said: "[Flynt's] production is concerned with showing that presumptions in mathematics, music, and philosophy are often incorrect... [His work] tackles the indeterminate and arbitrary nature of mathematical concepts and operative structures" (from the 1981 translation). This was exceptionally perceptive. Ironically, Celant's essay did not recognize (in 1971) that possession of the concept art label had become highly competitive.

The first "publication" of pieces labelled concept art was in my four-page "Anthology of Non-Philosophical Cultural Works", which I mailed out in September 1961 (as proved by the covering letter with Young's copy). First book publication of my concept art essay and three concept-art pieces was, as mentioned, in *An Anthology*. Only years later, c. 1967, was "concept" varied to "conceptual", and used generically for all "idea" art.

I haven't described my role in the March 31, 1961 Harvard concert. I listed myself as "possibly Henry Flynt". My position was that my February 25 performance had already shown that I was the most avant-garde. If the works by the other participants at the Harvard concert challenged my claim to be the most avant-garde, then I would create a work on the spot which would top theirs. Despite the remarkable character of Young's compositions, I did not feel sufficiently chal-

lenged by them to retaliate. So I presented no work in the concert. My participation was a nonappearance because of the insufficient newness of the other participations. Because I was insufficiently challenged by the Harvard concert, shortly thereafter I held a concert in my mind in which I challenged myself with Forti's contest and variants of Young's deontic dissociation. (The only documentation was an account which I wrote - later destroyed.)

All this will help to explain my fourth 1961 concept-art composition: *Work Such That No One Knows What's Going On* (hereafter WSTNOKWGO). I have noted different axes of deontic dissociation in the work of Cage, Brecht and Young. The point of WSTNOKWGO was to achieve saturation of deontic dissociations. Instead of a text score, there is the bracketed remark: "One has to guess if this work exists and if it does what it is like."

I must say that while this piece was, and is, a key work, it only promises saturated deontic dissociations - it does not establish them. That is why Young's realization of the piece - which he used in the February 9, 1962 concert in Ann Arbor - was perfunctory. (In fact, Young copied the piece erroneously, missing the point that the "body text" is an external remark. I heard the tape of Young's performance on February 9, and there, he said: "This piece is only a title." Well, that was about right.) WSTNOKWGO was published in 1963 in *Dimension 14*.

As I said, I evolved out of the avant-garde to a perspective of initiating new intellectual modalities, as I would later call them. This amounted to demanding original discoveries beyond all existing professions. Authentic concept art, then, was my first result. Other of my works from this period which were directed to new intellectual modalities were: *Exercise Awareness-States* (called *Mock Risk Games in reconstruction*); *Representation of the Memory of an Energy Cube Organism*; *Exhibit of a Working Model of a Perception-Dissociator*.

The most convenient source for this material is my book *Blueprint for a Higher Civilization*. In all candor and fairness, I must say (as I do in the "Introduction" in *Blueprint*) that these 1961-62 works were something like bluffs. They did not establish alternate realities as inescapable. I have been working ever since to replace these bluffs with achieved discoveries. (Already preliminary results are in *Blueprint*,

but they fall far short of what I presented recently in Io no. 41, for example.) But that is way off the topic of this essay.

My critical reconstitution of genres did not stop with displacing from art to new intellectual modalities. I also undertook to examine the *prima facie* function of art as objectified expression and entertainment. Given the dismantling of form and tradition that had been carried out by the avant-garde, I began to have reservations of principle about how entertainment is supposed to fulfill its purpose. My beliefless empiricism had discredited the cognitive claims that were made for high art (or edifying entertainment). The only success possible to entertainment, then, was that of pleasing subjective taste or penchant. But here was the difficulty: how could another person's production match my subjective taste better than experiences which I "created" - once we had gotten past entertainment's pragmatic function of regimenting people? I argued that entertainment should be replaced by a new modality of appreciation of private experience. (My term for this was "veramusement" and later "brend".)

Unlike those artists who have used "anti-art" gestures as the material of art careers, my critique of art - while hopelessly utopian - was coherent and earnest. I destroyed most of my early artwork, which is why I have had to note that so many times here. I gave repeated lectures on my theory to audiences drawn mainly from the New York avant-garde. And I convinced Tony Conrad and Jack Smith to join me in demonstrating for the demolition of museums and symphony halls at MOMA, the Metropolitan Museum, and Philharmonic Hall, on February 27, 1963. I sent out a press release on these activities. We did not receive any news coverage. Donald Barthelme, however, wrote a parody of my press release which was published in *The New Yorker*, October 12, 1963 ("Marie, Marie, Hold on Tight").

What needs to be understood today is that the most radical artists of the time - some of whom are world-class artists today - attended one or more of my anti-art lectures (in some cases corresponding with me regarding my case against art). John Cage attended my July 5, 1962 lecture on Ave. D in New York, bringing Virgil Thomson with him. The record must show that even though I thought I was extrapolating Cage's own views, he displayed no affinity for my theses. I found myself showing Thomson my 1961 "An-



thology" to show him, what I meant by *brend* (as I later called it). Of course, this was inauthentic because the recipes for private experience therein were objectified. My lecture of February 28, 1963, was given in Walter De Maria's studio. Young, Wolff, De Maria, Morris, MacLow, Diane Wakoski, Serge Tcherepnine, etc., attended. Morris' and De Maria's reactions to my presentation are on record in their letters to me.

Basically, my peers had irrevocably committed to careers as professional artists. As for the issue of the subjective inauthenticity of borrowed forms and objectified entertainments, they had no affinity for my theses. They responded with justifica-

tions of social pastimes on a common-sense level. (As if they had never heard of the avant-garde, or, for that matter, of their own work in 1960-61.)

In summary, my anti-art theory of 1962-63 received a hearing from the best-prepared audience one could have wanted. Indeed, for me the audience's work was a justification for my views. And their lifestyles were more bohemian than academic - so that they were not at risk of losing institutional status. And yet the evidence is that, aside from whether they wanted to understand, they didn't understand. I have to think that this sharp but inconclusive confrontation was a watershed in the career of the notion of "avant-

garde". Once and for all it emerged that the success-track avant-garde existed as a professional artists' career strategy. The avant-garde was not an unconditional quest for the unprecedented and the ingenious - except for the isolated individual who chose to take it that way. Only one person echoed my ideas approvingly in 1963: George Maciunas, who was then starting Fluxus in Europe.

Note. There can be achievements in art which are "new" in the degree to which they differ from what has gone before (inventiveness), but which are not avant-garde because the transgression of high-cultural norms is not their point. My anti-art theory opposed all art and entertain-

natural", bad one. My work in mathematics leads to the new category of "concept art", or which straightened out traditional mathematics (mathematics as discovery) is an untypical, small but intensively developed part.

I can now return to the question of why concept art is "art." Why isn't it an absolutely new, or at least a non-artistic, non-aesthetic activity? The answer is that the antecedents of concept art are commonly regarded as artistic, aesthetic activities; on a deeper level, interesting concepts, concepts enjoyable in themselves, especially as they occur in mathematics, are commonly said to "have beauty". By calling my activity "art", therefore, I am simply recognizing this common usage, and the origin of the activity in structure art and mathematics. However: it is confusing to call things as irrelevant as the emotional enjoyment of (real) music, and the intellectual enjoyment of concepts, the same kind of enjoyment. Since concept art includes almost everything ever said to be "music", at least, which is not music for the emotions, perhaps it would be better to restrict 'art' to apply to art for the emotions, and recognize my activity as an independent, new activity, irrelevant to art (and knowledge).

Transformations - Concept Art Version of Colored Sheet Music No.1 3/14/61 (10/11/61)

The initial object: a sheet of cheap, thin white typewriter paper  
Transformation of the initial obj. (obj.1) into obj. 2: soak the initial obj. in inflammable liquid which does not leave solid residue when burned; then burn it on horizontal rectangular white fireproof surface - obj. 2 is ashes (on surface)

Transformation of object 2 into obj. 3: make black and white photograph of obj. 2 in white light (image of ashes' "rectangle" with respect to white surface (that is, of the region (of surface, with the ashes on it) with bounding edges parallel to the edges of the surface and intersecting the four points in the ashes nearest the four edges of the surface) must exactly cover the film); develop film - obj. 3 is the negative

Transformation of obj. 2 and obj. 3 into obj.4: melt obj. 3 and cool in mold to form plastic doubly convex lens with small curvature; take color photograph of ashes' rectangle in yellow light using this lens; develop film - obj.4 is color negative

Transformation of obj.2 and obj.4 into obj.5: repeat last transformation with obj.4 (instead of 3), using red light - obj. 5 is second color negative

Transformation of obj. 2 and obj.5 into obj.6: repeat last transformation with obj. 5, using blue light - obj. 6 is third color negative

Transformation of obj.2 and obj.6 into obj.7: make lens from obj. 6 mixed with the ashes which have been being photographed; make black and white photograph, in white light, of that part of the white surface where the ashes' rectangle was; develop film - obj.7 is second black and white negative

Transformation of obj. 2, obj. 6, and obj. 7 into the final obj. (obj. 8): melt, mold, and cool lens used in last transformation to form negative, and make lens from obj.7; using negative and lens in an enlarger, make two prints, an enlargement and a reduction - enlargement and reduction together constitute the final object

Concept Art Version of Mathematics System 3/26/61(6/19/61)

An "element" is the facing page (with the figure on it) so long as the apparent, perceived, ratio of the length of the vertical line to that of the horizontal line (the element's "associated ratio") does not change.

A "selection sequence" is a sequence of elements of which the first is the one having the greatest associated ratio, and each of the others has the associated ratio next smaller than that of the preceding one. (To decrease the ratio, come to see the vertical line as shorter, relative to the horizontal line, one might try measuring the lines with a ruler to convince oneself that the vertical one is not longer than the other, and then trying to see the lines as equal in length; constructing similar figures with a variety of real (measured) ratios and practicing judging these ratios; and so forth.) [Observe that the order of elements in a selection sequence may not be the order in which one sees them.]



ment indifferently. It might have been more palatable if I had been clearer on the diversity of aims in art.

### 3. During Fluxus: the Maciunas Group

I first met Maciunas at the AG Gallery in June 1961 in the company of Young and MacLow. The three were planning events in the series which I surveyed in the previous section.

After it had been settled whom Young and MacLow wanted in the series, Maciunas proposed to include the Columbia University composers Leuning and Ussachevsky. Young and MacLow asked Maciunas, why do you want to include these squares? Maciunas said: "Because I want to have something in the series that reflects my own tastes."

As of mid-1961, Maciunas' preference in art was for a reasonable, academic modernism. Contact with Young and his colleagues must have impressed on Maciunas that he had to plunge into the avant-garde in order to get to the fore. At the same time, as is clear from Maciunas' successive plans for the yearboxes, Maciunas remained academic, for want of a better word, for another year or two.

Conversion to the avant-garde unleashed in Maciunas a fondness for practical jokes, and an anal fixation, which were already a part of his personality. But in finding a way, under pressure, to like the avant-garde, Maciunas apprehended the avant-garde as a plunge into the dregs. So it was that on becoming the impresario of the post-Cage movement, Maciunas configured that movement around a toilet motif (for one thing). Maciunas' postcard to Young of July 3, 1962 says that he has designed the Fluxus prospectus as a tight roll for rectal insertion, and that he will package it in an enema box. This more or less resumed the Dadaist intent in the avant-garde.

The work of the Cage and Young circles had often been elegant, cerebral, exalted – without having been in the least pompous or academic. In no way did the work necessarily signal debasement. Maciunas did not appreciate the cerebral and the exalted. He turned toward jokes and vulgarity. Increasingly, the public welcomed this, relieved at being allowed to escape from formidable art. All this was crucial in shaping and establishing the Fluxus esthetic.

Maciunas' conception of a cultural movement which only accepted the dregs had a beneficial side. Maciunas consented to

publish material which was sober, but yet so extreme that no periodical with "standards", no "serious" avant-garde, would have accepted it.

In another conversation with Maciunas at AG in June 1961, Maciunas' admiration for the Soviet Union came up. I began to taunt Maciunas to the effect that the culture of the Soviet Union was a traditionalism imposed by police methods. Maciunas replied that in the Twenties, the Soviet Union had had the most radical culture in the world. Well, that is so: Rodchenko and others said that they were going to create a state without a past as a total artwork, while eradicating everything that had hitherto been considered art. Maciunas blamed the Soviet return to traditionalism on Stalin and his peasant constituency. Afterwards, MacLow told me that Maciunas had written to Khrushchev, telling him that the Soviet Union was ahead of the capitalist countries in "all fields except art"; now it needed to catch up in art. This was my first encounter with Maciunas' fanciful leap in which loyalty to the Soviet Union was reconciled with neo-Dada: on the grounds that this revived the Soviet stance of the Twenties.

As I turn to the chronology of Fluxus, I should say that I had no involvement in the Fluxus concerts and art editions. My account of these events is necessarily second-hand. Also, I shall not attempt to review, or even mention, every Fluxus artist. Complete lists of the principal Fluxus artists may be found in published Fluxus compendiums.

In 1962, while employed by the US Army in Wiesbaden, Germany, Maciunas elaborated his project of becoming the impresario of post-Cage and neo-Dada art. He began mailing proposals for post-Cage concerts and for the publication of annual anthologies and of various artists' complete works. The proposals for the annual anthologies have been reprinted in detail. Maciunas was certain that the novelties of the day – formalism, concretism, 12-tone, chance procedures – were absolutely morally superior and concomitant to revolutionary society. Thus, his anthologies roamed the world and the past, finding the techniques of Cage (if not Stockhausen) in all times and places. The anthologies were planned as boxes presumably because of the increasing role of musical scores which could not be bound in a book.

At the same time that Maciunas was circulating these proposals, Wolf Vostell began *décollage*; and the mail art "Yam

Festival" took place in the New York area.

The first announced Fluxus festival of performances took place in Wiesbaden in September 1962: the "Festival of Very New Music". An interview with Benjamin Patterson in *The Stars and Stripes*, anticipating the festival, had appeared on August 30, 1962 (entitled "Way Way Way Out").

Wiesbaden was followed by Fluxus festivals in six other European cities early in 1963. At this point, the Fluxus participants consisted of European artists who fit the post-Cage/neo-Dada mold, namely Schmit, Rot, Beuys, Filliou, Vautier, and Spoerri; Paik, who had come to Germany to pursue modern music; the Americans Williams and Patterson, living in Germany; and Higgins and Knowles, who were visiting Europe.

It was at the Dusseldorf "Fluxfestival", February 2, 1963, that Maciunas threw copies of his Fluxus manifesto into the audience. Maciunas' esthetic program can be considered as fully evolved at the point when he abandoned his academic intentions and the moderate modernists. At this point, his program was quite a *mélange*. He picked up the slogan of realistic art from the Cage circle and the Klein circle. He wanted to elevate the useful arts above the fine arts – and believed that this priority was characteristically non-European. He espoused a doctrine of functionalism and efficiency which was quasi-Bauhaus. After I became an economist, I realized that the notion of efficiency is highly problematic for a socialist. Maciunas' notion was one of cost-effectiveness which could be achieved only by highly original and expert permutation of materials at a fixed technological level.

Continuing, Maciunas admired the early Soviet avant-garde. At the same time, he had a nationalistic interest in showing that East Europeans could produce up-to-the-minute modern art. There was an irony here: East Europeans affiliating with Western modernism might well be anti-Communist. Maciunas also had a notion of democratizing art by eliminating the need for virtuosos. This last point had an ironic relation to Maciunas' position on design. Maciunas insisted that only an expert could produce appropriately integrated design solutions; at the same time, he was not interested in technological advance in useful products, and probably resented the applied-science expertise required for such advance. By 1964, Maciunas spoke of spreading a mechanically



manufactured do-it-yourself art as a transition which would lead to the phasing out of art in a socialist society.

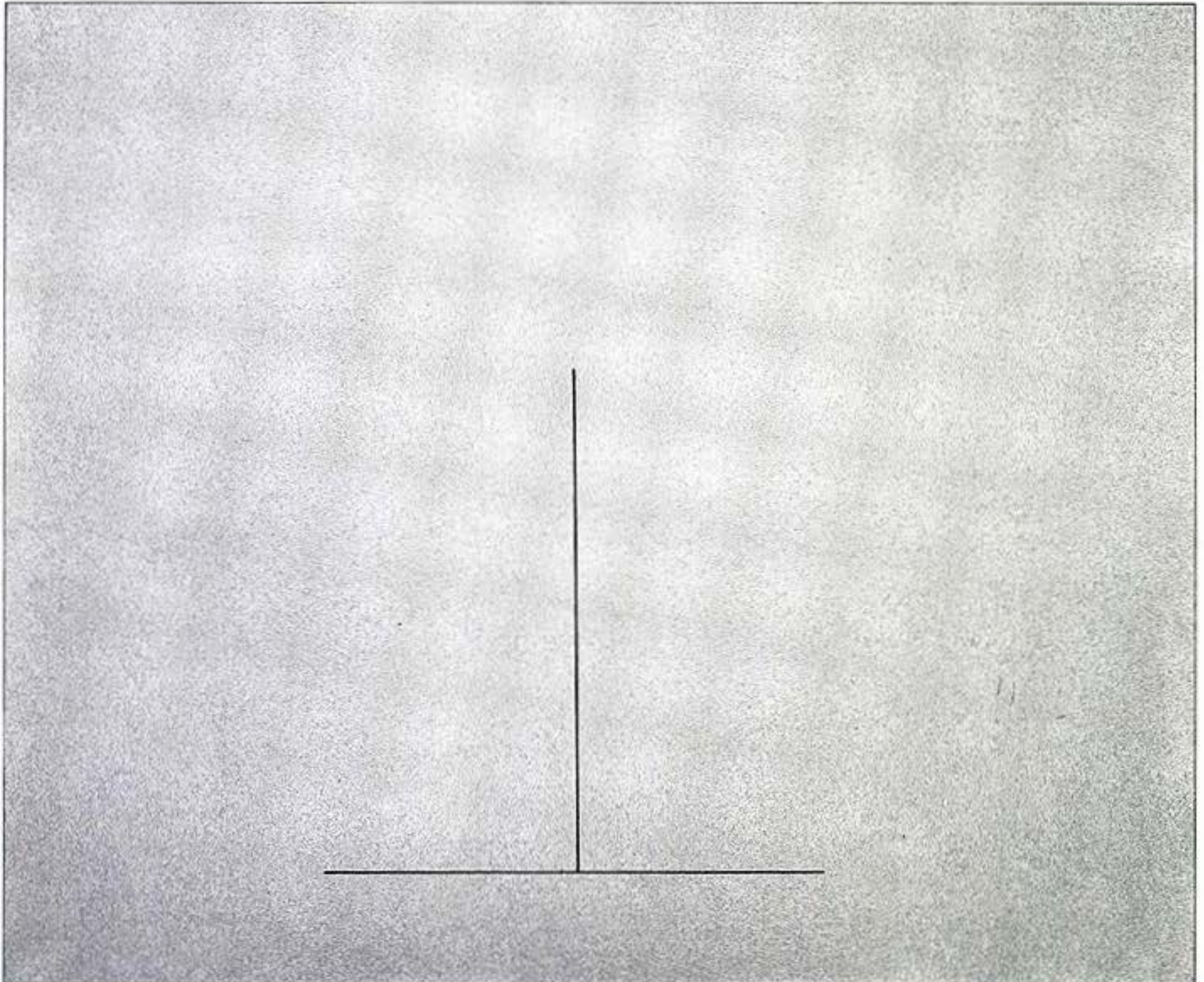
When the yearboxes appeared years later as Fluxus 1, etc., they were not packages of theoretical articles and new-music scores, but rather packages of jokes and puzzles. In this respect, Maciunas had committed totally to art in the manner of George Brecht (and Watts and...); and had established a format in which to assemble and distribute it. That is to say, the actual business of Fluxus became neo-Dada vaudeville and art multiples. But there was another side to Maciunas in this period, and that was his radical line. Re-examining the Fluxus News Letters

and the Maciunas correspondence, I notice that Maciunas did not talk radicalism to his favorite artists, who were "apolitical". Maciunas' promises that Fluxus would abolish art and make the world revolution seem to have been mainly for my benefit. Maciunas anticipated that the whole of Fluxus would conduct anti-art demonstrations; that project was adapted from me. Also, I seem to have spurred Maciunas to incorporate his critical endorsement of Soviet society into the Fluxus outlook.

Beginning in May 1963, Brecht and Watts put on the public "Yam Festival" – a festival of post-Cage work – in New York. In a 1972 interview, Brecht was satisfied

to have this event classified as Fluxus. But those who are interested in the grittiness of history will want to know that in April, 1963, Brecht mailed out postcards which said: "After April I will be unreachable by Fluxus." In mid-1963, Maciunas wrote to Watts from Europe, begging Watts not to continue "Yam" separately from Fluxus. Maciunas was desperate to unite the whole post-Cage movement under his command.

In the Fall of 1963, Maciunas returned to New York. A preliminary event called Fluxus was presented in New York in late 1963: the "entertainment" at the Convention of Perfume and Aromatic Essence Engineers and Manufacturers.



Henry Flynt, *Concept Art n. 4*, in *An Anthology*, 1963.



At this time, an East Asian contingent of Fluxus came together in New York: Ichiyanagi, Ono, Ay-o, Paik, Kosugi, Kubota, Shiomi.

Fluxus and big art emerge as separate tracks, with individual artists such as Oldenburg crossing from one to the other. In December 1963, Brecht and Watts and Morris and De Maria exhibited together in a show called "The Hard Center" at the Thibaut Gallery on upper Madison Avenue. In reviewing the record, I was surprised at the number of Morris' links with Fluxus after he withdrew from *An Anthology* (e.g. December 1, 1964, a Morris event was synchronized with a Fluxus event) – given that Morris' disaffiliation with Fluxus was what made his present eminence possible.

Meanwhile, Maciunas was delivering various Fluxus publications. In 1963, Maciunas published, from Europe, the first edition of Brecht's *Water Yam*, and Young's *Compositions 1961*. In 1964, Maciunas began a newspaper, *ccV TRE*, which continued Brecht's *V TRE*.

In April-May 1964, the long-promised "New York Fluxus Festival" took place: the "12 Fluxus Concerts" held at 359 Canal Street, the building in which Maciunas and Higgins had lofts.

Let me mention that *ccV TRE* no. 3 (April 1964) contained the documentation of my February 1963 anti-art campaign in New York. It also contained "Primary Study", my "proof that language does not exist" (to describe it loosely for a casual audience).<sup>10</sup> Already distressed by my anti-art position, Fluxus members complained that "Primary Study" was the last straw. In fact, "Primary Study" exhibited the insight which has propelled all of my work (my ability to direct all of my merciless perceptions of vulnerability outward and not onto myself). In the Eighties, the question of the existence of language was made fashionable in academic philosophy by two of my Harvard acquaintances, Kripke and Albritton. But Maciunas had already been more perceptive in 1964 than today's academics: he admitted to me that I had shown that the existence of language cannot be proven in language.

Maciunas and I led our first demonstration aimed against Stockhausen on April 29, 1964. This event occurred between two of the principal Fluxus concerts, no. 5 and no. 7. I was not aware that Maciunas was giving his own concerts when he was not picketing Stockhausen.

In mid-1964, I quarrelled with Maciunas.

The reason may have been that Maciunas told me that the Soviet Union wanted no advice from me on what their cultural policy should be. Then, after we had not spoken for weeks, Maciunas called me "out of the blue" and asked me to join him in picketing Stockhausen again on September 8, 1964.

My point was to protest an ideology of the superiority of classical and modern (i.e. European) music which has become furtive today, but which was declared proudly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (See, for example, musicologist Theodore M. Finney's *A History of Music*.) Stockhausen was the leading exponent of this ideology, at least in the Fifties, with his lectures, his journal *Die Reihe*, etc. On the other hand Stockhausen was problematic as an occasion for public consciousness-raising. Although well-reported in *Time* magazine and elsewhere, Stockhausen really only reached a tiny elite. And for that elite, he was a dashing radical. (When I asked *Le Roi Jones* – now *Amiri Baraka* – to picket Stockhausen, he said: "But he's a radical." As we will see, more than half of Fluxus felt the same way.) Leonard Bernstein might have been more suitable for our protest inasmuch as he was "Mr. Classical Music" to the American public. But in 1964, he was away on sabbatical. I accepted Maciunas' proposal to picket *Originale* without even asking what the piece was. That was problematic too because *Originale* turned out to be a chaotic, circus-like affair (an imitation of Cage's *Theatre Piece* it was said), and the point of protest against serious-music snobbery was lost on the public. On the other hand, if we had picketed *Kontra-Punkte*, the point would equally have been lost on the public, because interest in the piece was so limited.

I was told long afterward that Maciunas picketed *Originale* because of his jealousy of Charlotte Moorman's "New York Avant-Garde Festival", which, by the way, was more prominent than Fluxus. Also, it was said, Maciunas was hitting at those Fluxus members who participated in Moorman's festival.<sup>11</sup>

Long after the event, several *Originale* performers have claimed that they took turns in the picket line. (And Harold Schonberg asserted vehemently in his review in *The New York Times* on September 9, 1964 that the demonstration was part of the show.) I know of only one who did, Allen Ginsberg. Picketeer Marc Schleifer (subsequently Sulayman Abdul-

lah) told Maciunas that he would quit unless Ginsberg was allowed to take a turn in the line. To the best of my memory, claims by other *Originale* performers to have been in the picket line are fabrication (Ginsberg was the only interloper Maciunas told me about).

For Stockhausen	Against Stockhausen
M. Bauermeister	Ay-o
D. Behrman	Conrad
R. Breer	Flynt
R.D. Brown	Maciunas
L. Einsenhauer	Saito
V. Gaeta	Schleifer
A. Ginsberg	Vautier
G. Graves	
G. Harris	
D. Higgins	
A. Kaprow	
M. Kirby	
O. Kluver (now O. Adorno)	
P. Leventhal	
A. Lucier	
J. MacLow	
C. Moorman	
M. Neuhaus	
N.J. Paik	
M. Strider	
J. Tenney	

Maciunas' first, 1965, Fluxus history chart explicitly explains that a number of Fluxus artists have been expelled from Fluxus. These include Higgins, MacLow, and Paik, who were *Originale* performers. In the literature of Fluxus, these expulsions have been portrayed as the result of the *Originale* affair – although it seems clear that Maciunas had additional grounds for the expulsions. Also, chroniclers of Fluxus such as Higgins and Henry Martin have portrayed the *Originale* affair as the (first) death of Fluxus.

As examples of the music which classical-music snobbery excluded and misjudged, I had in mind classical Indian music; or Japanese ceremonial and theater music; or the panoply of traditional African musics; or African-Americans such as Robert Johnson and Buddy Guy, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley, John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman, and others too numerous to mention. But classical-music snobbery was never publicly defeated intellectually. Only Stewart Home, in *The Assault on Culture*, wrote about the second demonstration sympathetically (having nothing to go on except our leaflet). What happened instead was that "classical and modern" music were simply abandoned, while the centrally manipulated commercial form of American ethnic music,



rock'n'roll, spread to the UK and ultimately swept the field. As this commercial music with African-American roots went through many generations of success, its character changed drastically from the more or less straight-forwardly ethnic music it had been.

Returning to Fluxus as such, Maciunas was able, in 1964-65, to produce various major Fluxus publications. These included Kosugi's Events, the US editions of Water Yam, Fluxus 1, Robert Watts, Fluxus 2, and Fluxkit. At the same time, it became apparent that Maciunas' approach to publishing was limited to underfunded, amateur enterprises. If Maciunas had originally meant to offer an alter-

native to Universal Edition or to Peters, that was now out of the question. Moreover, although Maciunas professed that radical art should be mass produced, only a few of the Fluxus boxes were actually completed, and they were hand-collated, and varied from one another. As with William Morris, Maciunas' vision of craftsmanship for the masses yielded, rather, a new commerce in rare objects.

Dick Higgins, dissatisfied with Maciunas' delay in publishing a work of his, started his own publishing house, *Something Else Press*. Vostell's *décollage*, Moorman's *Avant-Garde Festival*, and Higgins' *Press* plunged Maciunas into an agony of

jealousy. What must have especially upset Maciunas is that Moorman's and Higgins' operations were more prominent and professional than Fluxus.

The Originale demonstration had shown that hectoring Stockhausen could not communicate my cultural politics to the public. I had a new outlook which made sense only when it was stated in terms of the cultural program which I favored for Marxist movements and regimes. So it was that Maciunas and I agreed to produce *Communists Must Give Revolutionary Leadership in Culture* (hereafter CMGRLIC). The pamphlet was written in late 1964 and printed early in 1965. Maciunas' section of the pamphlet was

Concept Art: Innperseqs (May - July 1961)

- A "halpoint" iff whatever is at any point in space, in the fading rainbow halo which appears to surround a small bright light when one looks at it through glasses fogged by having been breathed on, for as long as the point is in the halo.
- An "initpoint" iff a halpoint in the initial vague outer ring of its halo.
- An "innpersq" iff a sequence of sequences of halpoints such that all the halpoints are on one (initial) radius of a halo; the members of the first sequence are initpoints; for each of the other sequences, the first member (a "consequent") is got from the non-first members of the preceding sequence (the "antecedents") by being the inner endpoint of the radial segment in the vague outer ring when they are on the segment, and the other members (if any) are initpoints or first members of preceding sequences; all first members of sequences other than the last appear as non-first members, and halpoints appear only once as non-first members; and the last sequence has one member.

Indeterminacy

- A "totally determinate innperseq" iff an innperseq in which one is aware of (specifies) all halpoints.
- An "antecedentially indeterminate innperseq" iff an innperseq in which one is aware of (specifies) only each consequent and the radial segment beyond it.
- A "halpointally indeterminate innperseq" iff an innperseq in which one is aware of (specifies) only the radial segment in the vague outer ring, and its inner endpoint, as it progresses inward.

Copyright by Henry A. Flynt Jr., 1961



The creep is a person who is failing to become a mature adult by deviating in the direction of "weirdness", and "weakness." He lacks the kind of assertiveness and sophistication required for the adulthood ideal. He is unself-confident. He lacks poise, and is awkward. He is unstylish. He holds back from the things which for society have sophistication-proving significance. He is regarded by mature adults with condescending scorn, amusement, or pity.

Are you a

CREEP?

Then you will be interested in

A lecture:

THE IMPORTANT SIGNIFICANCE OF  
THE CREEP PERSONALITY

Critique of the adulthood ideal.

Creepiness as the prototype of a "solution" to the questionable aspects of the adulthood ideal.

Also

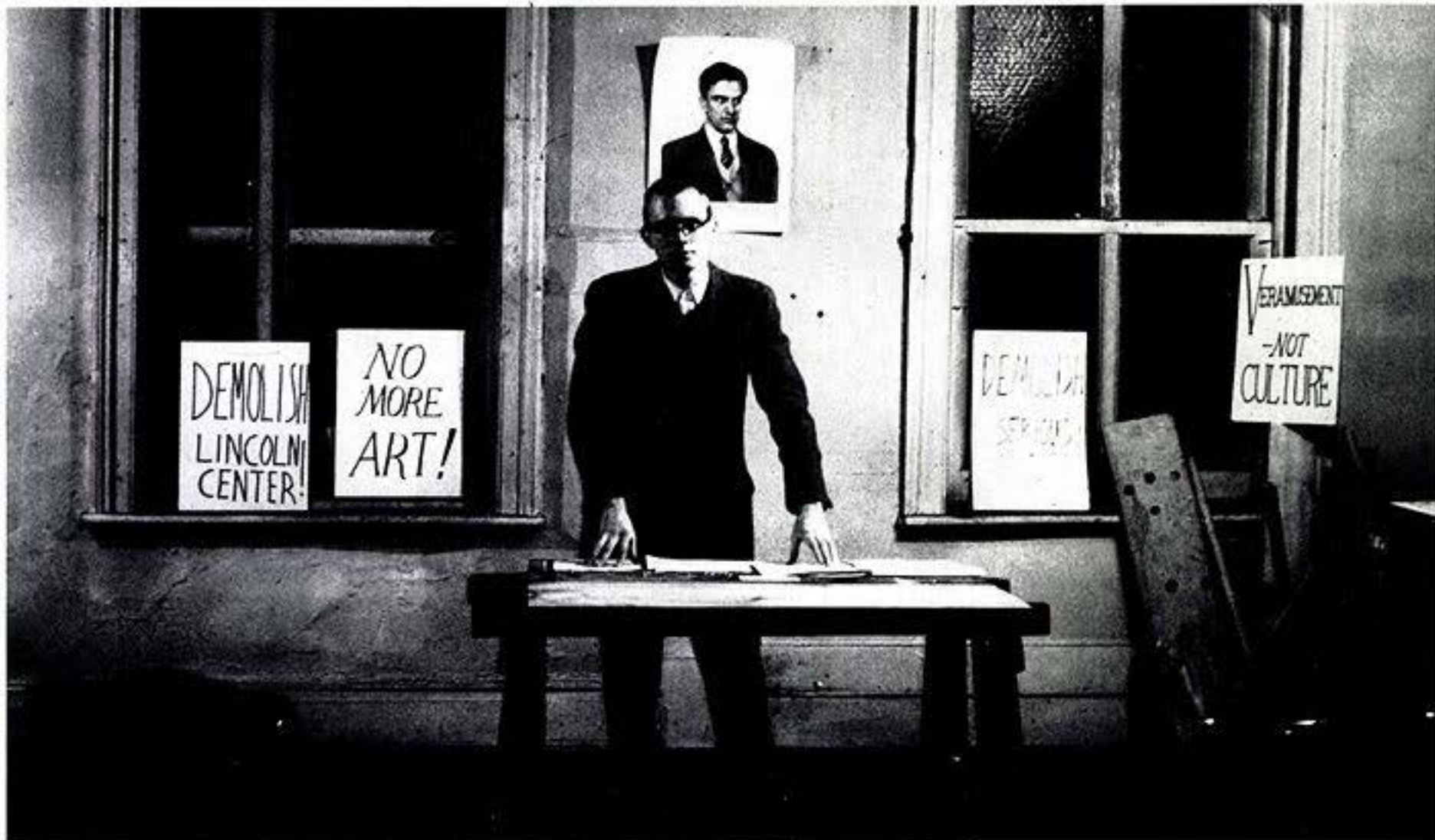
The New Concept of GENERAL ACOGNITIVE CULTURE

Henry <sup>by</sup> Flynt

Tuesday, May 15  
Adams House, Upper Common Room  
8:30 p.m.

Admission Free





Henry Flynt, *Lecture*, studio di Walter De Maria, New York, 28 febbraio 1963. (Foto Diane Wakuski).



Henry Flynt e Jack Smith, MOMA, New York, 2 febbraio 1963. (Foto Tony Conrad).



devoted to his design theories. Mostly it concerned his prefabricated building system, which was his response to Soviet prefabricated housing – and which was his greatest enthusiasm creatively. (Remember that he elevated applied arts above fine arts.) As Maciunas explained his system to me, I realized that he meant to make the structural walls out of styrofoam and the curtain walls out of translucent plastic. I told him that the lay public would not appreciate this unless he included samples of the materials with the pamphlet. As a result, he chose to print the pamphlet in broadsides, fold it, and sandwich it between building material samples. When secured with a thick rubber band, the package was meant to be mailable without packaging (like a postcard). Needless to say, the Postal Service did not cooperate (nor did bookstores). As in so many cases, Maciunas' disregard of regulations led his "efficient" design to be terribly awkward. Also, assembly of the pamphlet was by hand and was quite awkward.

Turning to the content of the pamphlet, Maciunas and I made one overwhelming mistake. We formulated our ideas as a proposed policy for the Soviet Union. We made the same mistake that Bahro made in *The Alternative* – we thought that actually existing socialism was here to stay. So, we tried to accommodate it. In this connection, Maciunas' motive and my motive were quite different. Maciunas' enthusiasm for Russia was a kind of nationalism which, it seemed, would have been the same irrespective of the political system prevailing there.

My motive for appealing to the Soviet Union was quite different. In fact, CMGRILC questions the genuineness of the Soviet Union's socialism, precisely because of their policy of promoting traditional bourgeois culture. Nevertheless, I wanted to cooperate with actually existing socialism – and I remember why. Communism had engaged large populations and was publicly perceived as the cutting edge of the Left. Remember Cuba, the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the Vietnam war? Marx never said anything about abstaining from struggles perceived as progressive because they fell short of perfection. A revolution must unfold at the level of understanding of large populations. If the masses can be so wrong that it is better to remain on the sidelines for an entire century, then much of the notion of progress which underlies modern society is called into question.

Let me say something else about CMGRILC. One should not assume that one knows what CMGRILC says if one has only seen the title. The pamphlet does not endorse the cultural policy of official Communism; it overthrows that policy on every front. Unfortunately, I wrote the pamphlet in the hectoring style expected in those days from a "militant". But if one can get past that, then there are many separate points in the pamphlet which, I think, are defensible (or at least interesting).

I must say also, though, that CMGRILC embodies a second major misjudgment. And this misjudgment is bound up with Maciunas' design theory and his notion of efficiency. We accepted that the early Soviet artistic avant-garde really did have a sensible vision of the society of the future. Ironically, the Soviet avant-garde has, since 1965, become immensely fashionable in the West. Its popularity has not yet been diminished by the "death of Socialism". There is also an enthusiasm for Dziga Vertov which disregards his obvious faults.

The trouble is that by endorsing the Soviet avant-garde, Maciunas and I were agreeing that the culture of socialism should be Spartan and mechanistic. Lenin had defined socialism as Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country. The Soviet cultural vanguard defined the socialist utopia as the dictatorship of the machine. Soviet architects designed "communities of the future" which were nothing more nor less than labor camps. In hindsight, this advocacy of the mechanical and the Spartan was an idealization of rust-and-smokestack production in the circumstances of Russian backwardness. If there is ever again a question of governmental cultural policy for an advanced noncapitalist economy, then the problem will have to be rethought from the beginning.

An ironic result of CMGRILC was that I got a reputation as a lifelong dogmatic Marxist – that is, among people who were not actually interested in my politics and who did not follow my writings. The fact is that by the end of 1967 I had completely repudiated the notion that the USSR had a utopian destiny. Ironically, all of my published non-Marxist political writings to date have had Fluxus-connected publishers.

Fluxus was rich in ideology in the Sixties. In 1965, after publishing CMGRILC Maciunas issued two Fluxus manifestos on "Fluxamusement".<sup>12</sup> These manifestos

gave final shape to the Fluxus esthetic. The strident politico-revolutionary phrases in Maciunas' 1963 Fluxus manifesto were absent. The topic now was the opposition of elite, expensive art and cheap, democratic art. There is nothing about anti-art in the 1965 manifestos. Rather, Maciunas envisioned the goal to be an exclusively amateur art. I never discussed these manifestos with Maciunas, so I have no idea how they were positioned relative to the manifesto he had published for me. Ben Vautier used the first "Fluxamusement" manifesto on a postcard which he designed.

A response to Maciunas' manifestos, and to his reasons for promoting artists such as Brecht, has come from Stewart Home in *Art Strike Handbook*, p. 13: "Fluxus hoped to make art more 'democratic'. One of the ways in which this was to be done was through the production of simple scripts which in theory anyone could perform... While almost anyone is indeed capable of performing these scripts, as soon as one asks the question what sort of person would want to engage in such an activity, it immediately becomes apparent that this 'democratic art' represents the interests of avant-garde elements within the culturally powerful fraction of the bourgeoisie. The Fluxus scripts rely for their impact on their transgression of the norms of bourgeois high culture (a feature characteristic of all avant-garde art) and although simple to perform, the aesthetic system they are based on is at war with popular taste. While bourgeois aesthetes who look for formal innovation in culture – rather than content or 'meaning' – can appreciate such 'democratic' gestures, a proletarian would find the idea that such an activity was worth pursuing ridiculous. Thus although on one level Fluxus scripts invite participation, the intellectual tradition from which such activities have grown is alien to popular taste and inevitably prevents popular participation."

Well, this does not settle the issue of the ultimate contribution of the avant-garde or of Fluxus – but it needed to be said. Home is due to be disappointed, though, because "proletarians" have proved not to be an enduring constituency, and are abandoning their "natural" preferences. So it is that Fluxus artist Milan Knizak is now President of the Czech National Art Academy. Etc. etc. – I won't dwell on the point.

As I mentioned, Maciunas published a diagram of Fluxus history in 1965, which he followed in 1966 with the Expanded



La Monte: (use a magnifying glass, I am saving on postage)  
 Here is what I received from you: your 2 sounds on tape, picture of Dennis J., music of Terry J., your chair  
 poem, vision. Then with last mail I got (with your letter that is) Dennis J. things all of it in a  
 very big envelope and 60¢ stamp on it. You say you will try Walter & Bob Morris but  
 Simone! very important that she sends her whole section on dance. Other dance things  
 beside her own. She is editing all this. Maybe Walter does not want to do anything? In  
 that case who do you think would be good for plastic arts? Rauschenberg? Bob Morris?  
 Larry Poons? I mean to edit that part - get all the things and essays together. Anti  
 and pro- essays etc. While in London I got this Mike Horowitz agree to write about  
 the "after reactionism" of the Living Departures, new English poets (including himself) etc.  
 This should be nice. Mike & von Biel, who does rather nice music will write a  
 against new music, concrete music etc. (against himself) etc. Would be good to get an  
 essay from some big name N.Y. painter (like Rauschenberg etc.) to write about those  
 "abstract expressionist" fakers like Kline, etc. Also would be nice to include an  
 actual piece "hand" or made for each issue. Somebody, anybody could take a very  
 big sheet of paper - do "it" on this paper and then cut it to any size pieces to  
 fit into "8" x "8" - could be small scrap, torn or anything. It would not take much  
 time to do and would be nice to have at least one item - not "reproduced" but  
 produced. Ask Poons about it, or Rauschenberg (he now does rather nice scribbles).  
 I got big package from Kaprow - several of his "happenings". Also I got a trunk -  
 full of nice goodies from Toshi. There are now about 8 or so very very good  
 people in Japan. nice things. Looks like magazine (FLUXUS) should look very good when  
 its starts rolling. I got this nice box of a disposable enema unit which I will use to  
 put FLUXUS prospectus in. (I will get box reproduced with all the nice instructions  
 printed over it - great box listen to this: "... in preparation for proctoscopy and sig-  
 moidoscopy; in the relief of constipation due to fecal or barium impactions." or this .....  
 ...assume knee-chest position... insert tube and squeeze bottle gently..... maintain position  
 until a strong urge to evacuate is felt (usually within 5 minutes) etc. etc. - wonderful.  
 (got the box in London). So I will roll the prospectus like the tube they speak about,  
 so people can stick it up their ass and squeeze gently.. until strong urge is felt..  
 Nice? So try all you can to get stuff from Simone, Walter, Bob, and anyone for  
 plastic arts. I think we got plenty for music, poetry etc. Jackson is sending loads.  
Now about Festival. Here is new schedule. March was too early. Toshi held up  
 on the Japanese things till now I am still missing on some others. Lucia Dlugoszewska  
 has not sent anything yet. Could you check with her? Let me know. So we  
 here decided to start June. This will give time to collect all stuff and prepare nice  
 posters, programs etc. I just ordered plenty of electronic equipment from States  
 on false German importers forms. I hope I won't have to pay for this equipment

Absender: George Mao Chu Nas  
 (Vor- und Zuname)

( ) Wiesbaden

Wohnort, auch Zustell- oder Leitort

J.S. Bach Str. 6.

Straße, Hausnummer, Gebäudeteil, Stockwerk oder Postschließfachnummer,  
 bei Untermietern auch Name des Vermieters

because I have no money for them. But I  
 will have them anyway. (I mean I will  
 collect money if I have to pay for them)  
 The equipment would arrive not earlier  
 than early May. - so we can't start  
 earlier. Now we fixed schedule:  
 June Berlin, July - Köln\*, Aug. - Florence?  
 Sept. Wiesbaden\*, Oct. - London\*  
 Nov. - Kopenhagen (?), Dec. - Paris (?) etc.  
 each 1963 Spring in USSR, Poland, Czech -  
 (maybe). \* means everything is fixed.  
 Bussotti & Mc Dermid trying to arrange in  
 Paris, Metzger + Bussotti drumping in Florence.  
 (maybe) - London - all arranged. & Köln.  
 Now, I think we will be able to pay for  
 your trip after we have chance to collect  
 money after first concert (series) the 15 concert  
 in June - Berlin or Köln. This should definitely  
 work. So plan to come over mid Summer  
 for a years stay. Then maybe we all go to  
 Japan via Siberia, nice? Those festivals should make money enough for all, one they get  
 started. Now money is very short. So you must wait a little. practice your compositions. - George

MIT LUFTPOST  
 PAR AVION



La Monte Young  
 119 Bank St. Apt 16.

New York 14, N.Y.

U. S. A.

Hurrah!



# I PROPOSED PROPAGANDA ACTION

FOR NOV. FLUXUS IN N.Y.C. (during May - Nov. period)

(serving double purpose: action against what H. Flynt describes as "serious culture" & action for fluxus)

## A. Propaganda through pickets & demonstrations

(such as organized by H. Flynt.)

## B. Propaganda through sabotage & disruption of:

### 2) transportation system:

1. Prearranged "break downs" of a fleet of fluxus autos & trucks bearing posters, exhibits etc. in the middle of busiest traffic intersections, such as Time sq. 5th & 57 & 42 st. Tunnel, bridge entries, etc. "Break downs" can involve flat tires, stalled engines, spilled "merchandise" (leaflets in windy day, bottles with collocated water, rolling objects, etc.)
2. Clogging up subway cars during rush hours with cumbersome objects (such as large medical instruments, contrabasses, drums; Walter De Maria's boxes, long poles, large signs bearing fluxus announcements etc., etc.)

### b) communications system:

1. Printing & selling on street corners "revised" & "prepared" editions of N.Y. Times, Daily News, etc. bearing Fluxus announcements (such as "107 days to Fluxus", next day "106 days till Fluxus" etc. etc.) bearing nonexistent news about closing of museums etc.
2. Arranging live radio programs of music & then not playing anything during actual broadcasting
3. Stuffing postal boxes with thousands of packages (containing heavy bricks etc.) addressed to various newspapers, galleries, artists etc. bearing no stamps & bearing as return address various galleries, concert halls, museums, "Either sender" or receiver would be bound to pay for these "packages".

### c) museums, theatres, galleries:

1. Disrupting concerts at "sensitive" moments with "smell bombs", "sneeze bombs" etc.
2. Ordering by phone in the name of museum, theatre or gallery for delivery at the exact or just prior the opening, various cumbersome objects: rented chairs, tables, palm trees, caskets, lumber, large sheets of plywood, bricks, or gravel, sand, coal for delivery at sidewalk.
3. Disrupting entries at concert halls, theatres, museums, galleries etc during critical hours by calling (over phone) numbers of taxicabs, trucks, ambulances, firemen etc. etc. (this could be combined with "break down" of fluxus fleet).
4. Posting & mailing announcements (to libraries, newspapers etc.) with totally revised dates of various concerts, plays, movies, exhibits etc.).

## C. Propaganda through "compositions" performed on streets

& other public places. (such as:

1. N.J. Parks string quartet (dragging through streets, stairs by a string contrabass, cello, violins etc. (on their backs)). (dragging like a toy wagon)
2. Performing R. Watts subway event during rush hours (group performance), casual event, washroom event etc.
3. Carrying posters at museums, concert halls, theatres saying (in small letters) composition "X" & (in very large letters) "Museum closed (or moved to Fluxus) due to..... (burst sewage line, leaking urinal or other reason).
4. La Monte Young straight line composition on crowded sidewalks at museums etc.
5. Releasing balloons (helium filled) (arranged to explode high in the air) bearing R. Watts dollar bills, fluxus announcements, "pictures" etc. etc.

D. Propaganda through sale of fluxus publications (fluxus I, II, a, b, c, d.):  
to be dispatched by end April to N.Y.C.



Arts Diagram in Film Culture, and in 1973 with the most inclusive diagram. Maciunas' academic bent resurfaced here, as it did with his Learning Machine of 1969. Maciunas wanted to classify every possible artistic permutation on a map which ranged vertically over time; and horizontally, over a spectrum from a) reactionary/voluptuous to z) radical/ascetic. By flattening "all possible art" in this way, he lost the connections of significance between particular works. (I have tried to restore some of the connections in this essay.) At the same time, the last two diagrams implicitly endorse radical/ascetic as the best, positioning it as the rightmost column (variously subtitled anti-art and iconoclasm).

I must now say more about Ben Vautier, or Ben as he is known. Ben first heard about Fluxus at the "Misfits Festival" in London in October 1962. (Ben's letter to Fluxus/Maciunas of August 28, 1966 says that he organized the First Fluxus concert in Nice in July 1961!) Starting even before his contact with Fluxus, Ben made an art career out of, among other works, signs mocking art as a vehicle of egomania. Ben has been making cursive white-on-black and black-on-white acrylics, for example, for decades.

When Ben received Maciunas' Expanded Arts Diagram of 1966, he wrote to Maciunas, announcing a strong anti-art position dating from 1965. From the letter, we learn that Ben construed Maciunas' two Fluxamusement manifestos as anti-art. (The manifestos don't say that – evidently Ben inferred from the privileged position of anti-art on the Arts diagram.) Ben demanded in this letter or shortly thereafter that Maciunas place him on the Arts diagram in the anti-art column.

As I have said, my anti-art and brend theory had been noted in Fluxus News Letters nos. 6 and 7 and in ccV TRE no. 3. It was also noted in Ben's Tout no. 9 of 1965. In 1967, I gave my theory final form in the manuscript Art or Brend?. In fact, I made the last revision because I no longer wanted to tie the theory to Marxist language; instead, I cast the move to brend as a private devotion, so to speak, or as the practice of an ideal society.

In the same year, Ben circulated his May 5, 1967 text L'art n'est plus nouveau. Then, in February 1968, Ben published an issue of Tout headlined: "Ben abandonne l'art". In October 1968, Maciunas published my Down with Art! pamphlet, which contained "Art or Brend?" together with letters, a press release, and Ben's text.

In the same years, a version of Ben's text translated into English appeared in Arts in Society, vol. V, no. 1.

To prevent serious misconceptions, I must say that my anti-art theory was a philosophical argument that if taste is subjective, then nobody is more able than me to create an experience to my taste. (So that the artist is in the same false position as the fashion designer who says: "wear my clothes to be yourself.") I was serious enough about this to have destroyed my early artworks in 1962; and thereafter I did not produce art. As for Ben, he has been a career artist who has used "anti-art" slogans in a quasi-Dadaist way, as a source of content for the artworks from which he earns a living. Ben's position, if I understand it, is that he is an "honest hypocrite".

So there was, in Fluxus or parallel to Fluxus, an outpouring of positions in the mid-Sixties which was prefigured in 1963 – and which had Cage as a lineal precedent. In fact, a bloc was formed in the Originale demonstration – Flynt, Maciunas, Ben – which held together in that the three of us passed through the political critique of culture to anti-art as the end of cultural history. (Again, to make sense of this, one must remember Rodchenko.) All of our manifestos received modest publicity at the time. (CMGRLIC was translated twice; Ben's text appeared in Arts in Society; etc.) But on the whole, the art world disregarded the message. Maciunas', Ben's, and my texts continued to be printed, but nothing substantial was added. Maciunas and Ben continued to work as artists; while I devoted myself entirely to nonartistic pursuits. Maciunas, without ever examining his miscalculations, slowly abandoned his political-cultural posture.<sup>13</sup> Also he gave up his hope of "returning" to the USSR to become its master designer. As for the Fluxus majority, it stubbornly stuck to its agenda of vaudeville and packaged jokes – and Maciunas and Ben continued to be active here. Clearly Maciunas and Ben gained some satisfaction from the vaudeville-and-jokes club which I didn't share.

At this juncture, the avant-garde process which I am surveying culminates and ends. The generation in question began with Cage's purely formalist radicalism – which seemed to have anti-art hints. It passed into a Leftist, programmatic perspective of culture. And it arrived at an unconditioned proposal of brend (Ben: goût, penchant) as the end of art history. I can imagine someone saying, since art is

an important mode of knowing and communication, how can it ever become obsolete? This question is simply heedless toward the successive lessons of the avant-garde which prompted the brend theory (lessons which I have tried to delineate in this survey). For us, all high art, for example, was seen in the shadow of Stockhausen's "scientific music". Its message, so far from being uplifting or even neutral, was a message we were better off without. Given that the anti-art discussion culminated in 1968, and was sidelined thereafter, one may consider 1968 to have been an end to the entire avant-garde. After one or more well-considered anti-art theories are publicly available, then to continue with an art of transgressive gimmicks is mere commercialization. From this standpoint, subsequent invocations of the avant-garde are merely high art's nostalgia, or advertisements for common modern art.

As for Fluxus, after 1968, it proceeds by elaborating the vaudeville and the packaged jokes (that is, until two decades later, when it shows as legitimate art). A performance of Brecht's Drip Music – which originally was supposed to shock the world (if not to make the revolution) – recurs as a compulsion, and finally as nostalgia. While Fluxus' popularity grows steadily, it falls away from the latest thing in art. In general, what is chronologically new no longer traces back to the intentions of Marinetti.

There is still a chronology to finish. Another of Maciunas' enterprises, beginning in the late Sixties, was to renovate loft buildings in downtown Manhattan as artists' co-ops. This led to the emergence of the SoHo neighborhood.

In 1970, the New York area Fluxus presented the Fluxmass. In 1970-71, Maciunas and Yoko Ono and John Lennon collaborated to present a Fluxfest featuring Lennon and Ono.

In 1978, while Maciunas was ill with cancer, he married Billie Hutching in the last Fluxus ceremony of his life. By this time, all fantasies that Maciunas belonged in the Soviet Union or in the organized Left had evaporated. Maciunas' death may be taken as marking the end of vintage Fluxus.

By this time, also, a second generation of artists, and even a third generation, had joined Fluxus. These included René Block, Jean Dupuy, Peter Frank, Ken Friedman, Jon Hendricks, Larry Miller, Sarah Seagull, Peter Van Riper, Yasunao Tone, Yoshimasa Wada.



Tuesday, September 8, at 8:00 P.M. Judson Hall (57th Street east of Seventh Avenue),

# **PICKET STOCKHAUSEN CONCERT!**

"Jazz [Black music] is primitive... barbaric... beat and a few simple chords... garbage... [or words to that effect]" Stockhausen, Lecture, Harvard University, fall 1958

## **RADICAL INTELLECTUALS:**

Of all the world's cultures, aristocratic European Art has developed the most elaborate doctrine of its supremacy to all plebeian and non-European, non-white cultures. It has developed the most elaborate body of "Laws of Music" ever known: Common-Practice Harmony, 12-Tone, and all the rest, not to mention Concert etiquette. And its contempt for musics which break those Laws is limitless. Alfred Einstein, the most famous European Musicologist, said of "jazz" that it is "the most abominable treason", "decadent", and so forth. Aristocratic European Art has had a monstrous success in forcing veneration of itself on all the world, especially in the imperialist period. Everywhere that Bach, Beethoven, Bruckner and Stockhausen are huckstered as "Music of the Masters", "Fine Music", "Music Which Will Ennoble You to Listen to It", white aristocratic European supremacy has triumphed. Its greatest success is in North America, whose rulers take the Art of West Europe's rulers as their own. There is a Brussels European Music Competition to which musicians come from all over the world; why is there no Competition, to which European Musicians come, of Arab Music? (Or Indian, or Classical Chinese, or Yoruba, or Bembe, or Tibetan percussion, or Inca, or hillbilly music?)

## **STOCKHAUSEN AND HIS KIND**

Stockhausen is a characteristic European-North American ruling-class Artist. His magazine, The Series, has hardly condescended to mention plebeian or non-European music at all; but when it has, as on the first page of the fourth number, it leaves no category for it except "'light music' that can be summed up by adding a question-mark after 'music' ". Stockhausen's doings are supported by the West German Government, as well as the rich Americans J. Brimberg, J. Blinks and A. Everett. If there were a genuine equality of national cultures in the world today, if there were no discrimination against non-European cultures, Stockhausen couldn't possibly enjoy the status he does now. But Stockhausen's real importance, which separates him from the rich U.S. cretins Leonard Bernstein and Benny Goodman, is that he is a fountainhead of "ideas" to shore up the doctrine of white plutocratic European Art's supremacy, enunciated in his theoretical organ The Series and elsewhere.

## **BUT THERE IS ANOTHER KIND OF INTELLECTUAL**

There are other intellectuals who are restless with the domination of white plutocratic European Art. Maybe they happen to like Bo Diddley or the Everly Brothers. At any rate, they are restless with the Art maintained by the imperialist governments. To them we say: **THE DOMINATION OF WHITE PLUTOCRATIC EUROPEAN ART HOLDS YOU TOO IN BONDAGE!** You cannot be intellectually honest if you believe the doctrines of plutocratic European Art's supremacy, those "Laws of Art". They are arbitrary myths, maintained ultimately by the repressive violence that keeps oppressed peoples from power. Then, the domination of patrician Art—which is aristocrat-plutocrat in origin, as Opera House etiquette alone shows—condemns you to be surrounded by the stifling cultural mentality of social-climbing snobs. It binds you to the most parochial variety of the small merchant mentality, as promoted by Reader's Digest - "Music That Ennobles You to Listen to It". Even worse, though, the domination of imperialist white European plutocrat Art condemns you to live among white masses who have a sick, helpless fear of being contaminated by the "primitivism" of the colored peoples' cultures. Yes, and this sick cultural racism, not "primitive" musics, is the real barbarism. What these whites fear is actually a kind of vitality the cultures of these oppressed peoples have, which is undreamed of by their white masters. You lose this vitality. Thus, nobody who acquiesces to the domination of patrician European Art can be revolutionary culturally - no matter what else he may be.

Volantino AACI,  
prima parte, 8  
settembre 1964.





Henry Flynt, Ben Vautier,  
George Maciunas, Takako Saito  
picchettano un concerto di  
Stockhausen, New York, 1964.  
(Foto Peter Moore)



**COMMUNISTS**

**BY  
HENRY  
FLYNT**

**MUST GIVE**

**GEORGE MACIUNAS,  
DESIGN**

**REVOLUTIONARY**

**LEADERSHIP**

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**IN CULTURE**

**PRICE \$1**

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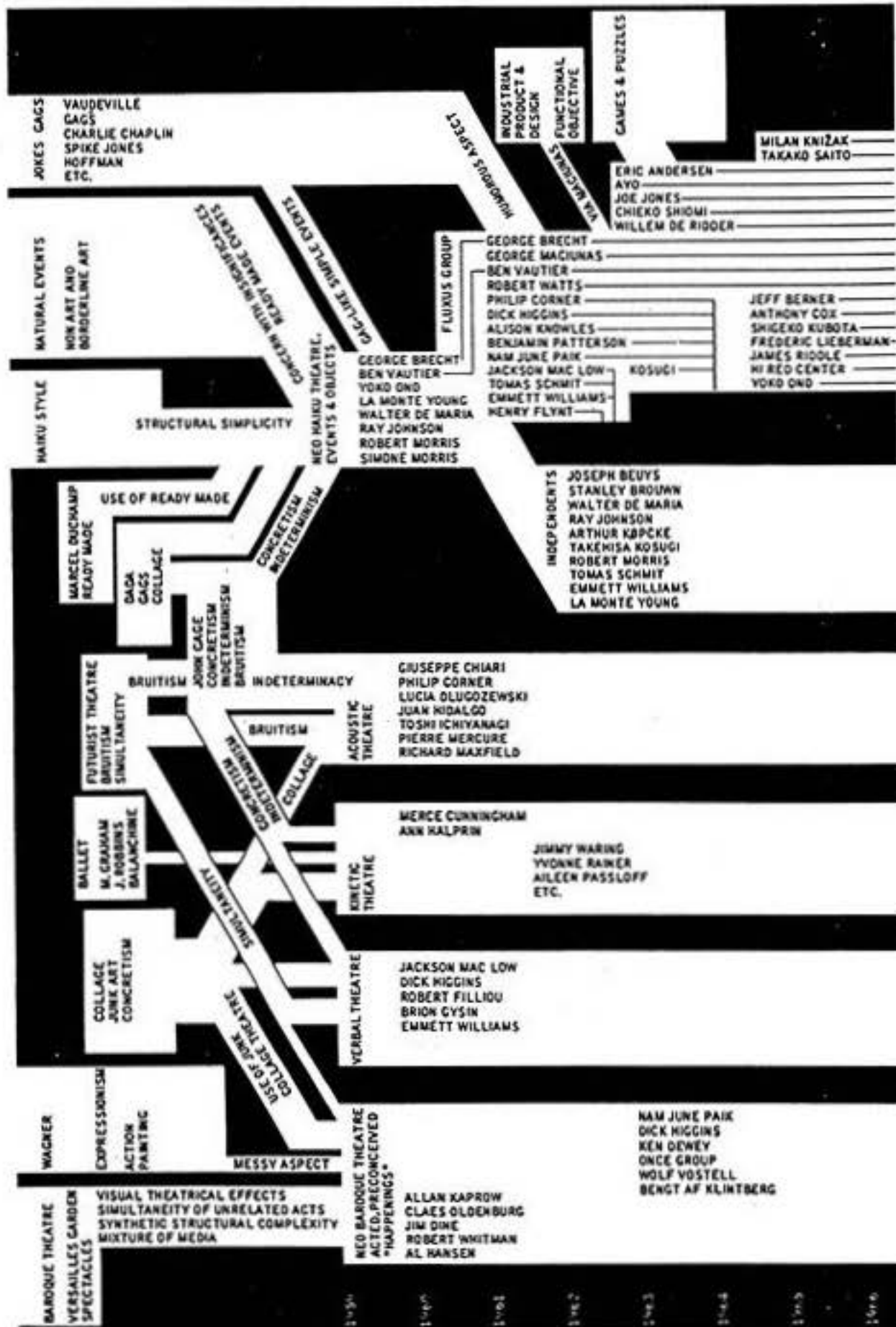




Within fluxus group there are 4 categories indicated:

- 1) Individuals active in similar activities prior to formation of fluxus collective, then becoming active within fluxus and still active up to the present day, (only George Brecht and Ben Vautier fill this category);
- 2) Individuals active since the formation of fluxus and still active within fluxus;
- 3) Individuals active independently of fluxus since the formation of fluxus, but presently within fluxus;
- 4) Individuals active within fluxus since the formation of fluxus but having since then detached themselves on following motivations:
  - a) anticolleative attitude, excessive individualism, desire for personal glory, prima dona complex (Mac Low, Schmit, Williams, Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins, Kosugi),
  - b) opportunism, joining rival groups offering greater publicity (Paik, Kosugi),
  - c) competitive attitude, forming rival operations (Higgins, Knowles, Paik).

These categories are indicated by lines leading in or out of each name. Lines leading away from the fluxus column indicate the approximate date such individuals detached themselves from fluxus.



George Maciunas, Fluxus Diagram, 1966.



# BEN ABANDONNE L'ART

(Suite de la 1<sup>re</sup> page)

## IL NOUS A DECLARE :

Si tout est art, il doit être possible de remplacer le mot **TOUT** par n'importe quel autre mot sans altérer le sens de la phrase. C'est comme si l'art éclatait et se multipliait en des millions de définitions différentes dont aucune ne serait ni plus ni moins vraie qu'une autre. En voici quelques-unes : Tout est Art, la Vérité est Art, le non Art, Tout est Prétention, l'Art est n'importe quoi, ETC. est Art.

L'une des premières réalisations de la notion **TOUT EST ART** a pris corps dans le ready made de Marcel Duchamp. N'importe quel objet devenait œuvre d'art, il suffisait d'y ajouter

## L'INTENTION.

Pourtant, l'œuvre de Duchamp reste conventionnelle et se différencie peu d'une œuvre classique, dans la mesure où il s'agit d'une pièce physique, accompagnée d'une signature, d'une date, d'une prétention d'artiste. (La pop art, le nouveau réalisme, etc., sont l'hédonisation et la vulgarisation du ready made, je n'en parlerai donc pas).

## LA VIE EST ART :

Elargissement et définition défendus par John Cage et ses disciples, mais ici, au départ, la situation est fautive, car dans la réalisation on ne peut séparer les mobiles de l'artiste, de l'œuvre qui se veut **VIE**. Si la vie est **ART**, la prétention de l'artiste à vouloir le montrer est art aussi. Et si cette prétention n'existe pas dans l'œuvre communiquée, ce n'est pas la **VIE** que nous montre l'artiste mais uniquement le reflet de son ambition artistique. Je dirai même que la prétention, l'agressivité, l'ambition, sont, par rapport à l'œuvre, beaucoup plus vivantes. Ainsi, lorsque j'effectue une partition de Cage ou que je regarde **DRIP MUSIC** de G. Brecht, je ne peux m'empêcher d'y penser en tant qu'œuvre d'artiste et non pas en tant que **VIE**.

En fait, l'art n'est pas la vie à moins que cette **VIE** soit vérité.

## LA VERITE EST ART :

C'est la divulgation en tant qu'œuvre des mobiles que l'artiste a pour créer. C'est-à-dire une

introspection et une communication de son état vrai devant le geste de la création. C'est la réponse qu'il donne à la question « Pourquoi est-ce que je crée ? ». Je conçois par exemple, la réalisation de **LA VERITE EST ART** par une pièce de théâtre dans laquelle l'auteur viendrait sur scène donner les raisons pour lesquelles il fait du théâtre, non pas les raisons superficielles mais les raisons profondes, c'est-à-dire « pour la gloire », etc. Ce qui est important est que **LA VERITE EST ART** change l'art, car la notion de création pour certains s'accompagne souvent de justifications inutiles et fausses (l'art pour l'art, l'harmonie, le beau, etc.).

## LE NON ART :

C'est l'attitude actuelle de Marcel Duchamp et de quelques autres qui, après le « ready made », ne pouvant revenir à l'esthétique et à l'hédonisme de l'objet, mais toujours à la recherche du nouveau pour satisfaire leur prétention, leur égo, ont pensé qu'il serait nouveau de déclarer que la création artistique ne les intéresse plus ou pas. En réalité ils s'y intéressent beaucoup et surtout pour établir leur Ego dans le domaine du **NON ART** (encore du style).

## L'ART EST PRETENTION :

Est une attitude moins hypocrite que le **NON ART**. C'est prendre conscience que la prétention est l'élément moteur de base de tout acte de création, et c'est assurer pleinement et jusqu'au bout cette Prétention. C'est-à-dire jusqu'à refuser d'accoupler cette prétention à une œuvre physique. (la prétention suffit à elle-même). Je citerai comme exemple ma pièce « Regardez-moi cela suffit ». La démarche de la **PRETENTION** est très proche de celle de **LA VERITE EST ART**.

## L'ART EST N'IMPORTE QUOI :

Il y a aussi ceux qui, tout en admettant que **TOUT EST ART** ne rejettent pas leur statut d'artistes mais adoptent une attitude fataliste envers l'œuvre d'art. Ils choisiront par exemple une forme quelconque, un rond, et décideront de ne faire que des ronds, car cela ou autre chose revient au même. C'est le cas d'après moi du travail d'Olivier Mosset et de certains minimal artistes.

## LA MORT EST ART :

C'est à ce résultat qu'est arrivé, après 10 ans de réflexions esthétiques, Ion Guiyot. Dix ans pendant lesquels il a systématiquement écarté toutes les formes d'art. Aucune écrivait-il, ne peut atteindre son but. Ion Guiyot a été trouvé mort, le 10 juillet 1949, à **CHIMARA**, en Albanie. La veille, il avait écrit la phrase suivante « **LA MORT EST ART A CONDITION QU'ON MEURE** ».

## L'ART EST INUTILE :

Lorsque Henry Flynt manifesta devant le Musée d'Art Moderne de New York, en portant un écriteau « Démolish serious art » il s'agit d'une prise de position politique contre l'art bourgeois. Lorsque par contre, je manifeste en disant que **L'ART EST INUTILE** avec des affiches, à la Fondation Maeght, c'est le résultat de la réflexion suivante : **SI TOUT EST ART, ET SI L'ART DOIT ETRE TOUJOURS NOUVEAU, COMBATTRE L'ART N'AYANT PAS ETE FAIT, JE LE COMBATS EN TANT QU'ŒUVRE D'ART. MON ATTITUDE EST DONC ART.**

## CONCLUSION :

Si Cage dit « **LA VIE EST ART** », si Duchamp dit « **LA COMPETITION ARTISTIQUE NE M'INTERESSE PLUS** », si Flynt dit « **IL FAUT LUTTER CONTRE L'ART** », si je dis **L'ART C'EST LA VERITE**, toutes ces déclarations et réalisations existent uniquement parce que leurs créateurs (égoïstes comme tous les artistes) cherchent du neuf pour jouer le jeu de l'art. (Etre différents des autres).

Mais pour trouver du neuf dans les circonstances actuelles où tout est art, ces créateurs remettent en cause la règle du jeu. C'est comme si le jeu de l'art acceptait tous les coups y compris celui de permettre aux joueurs d'essayer d'arrêter le jeu.

C'est le cas de **LA VERITE EST ART**, **LA PRETENTION EST ART**, le **NON ART**, **L'ART ANONYME**, **L'ART EST PASTICHE**.

Mais le suicide de l'art est-il possible ? Il y a aussi ceux qui ne font pas de l'art. Mon marchand de vin qui vend des porte-bouteilles, l'épicier qui a marié sa fille, l'agent immobilier du troisième qui est mort.

## BEN DOUTE DE TOUT





Another notable happening in the art world in this period is that the career of Joseph Beuys peaks. It seems generally agreed that while Beuys was linked to Fluxus, he had his own movement and in that respect extended well beyond Fluxus. The same may be said for the video artist Nam June Paik.

#### 4. Late Fluxus

Late Fluxus extends through the Eighties to the present. Fluxus shows become popular in leading galleries in which each artist is represented by a large, unique, handmade piece. This phase was pre-figured by the "Happenings & Fluxus" exhibition at the Kölnischer Kunstverein in 1970. The format became fully established at the 1981 Wiesbaden "Fluxus" show, and by subsequent shows curated by René Block

During this period also, Jon Hendricks, under the sponsorship of collectors Gilbert and Lila Silverman, edited massive codifications of the Fluxus movement. This increased the attraction of Fluxus for dealers and curators.

As an epigraph for these developments, we may quote Lucy Lippard: "...temporary, cheap, invisible, or reproducible art has made little difference in the way art and artists are economically and ideologically exploited" (in Sol LeWitt, ed. Alicia Legg, p. 27). Indeed – except that we don't need to hear any more about the artist being innocent and sacrificial.

Today, we can see several branchings in the course of art which is shown as Fluxus. Let me illustrate, without trying to be comprehensive. La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela, have shown recent sound-light collaborations in Fluxus shows. In my opinion, this seriously con-

fuses the appreciation of their work. Ben Vautier is a charter member of Fluxus whose present work is relatively uniform with his earlier work. Yoko Ono has become active again, making bronze editions of selected early works. Benjamin Patterson is a charter member of Fluxus who persists with the Fluxus esthetic, but who has translated it into large, unique, handmade pieces. Joe Jones also has persisted with the Fluxus esthetic, while translating it to new media. Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles are charter members of Fluxus who continue to show under Fluxus auspices, but whose work no longer manifests a Fluxus esthetic. Al Hansen, Charlotte Moorman, and Carolee Schneemann are contemporaries of Maciunas who now show with Fluxus, but who did not have a career in Fluxus.

THE POINT IS NOT GOOD ART  
-- FULFILLMENT IN FANTASY--  
BUT A NEW MODE OF LIFE  
WHICH ALLOWS FULFILLMENT  
IN ACTUAL LIFE.

SENSIBILITY WHICH IS  
NOT SUPPORTED  
BY THE MODE OF LIFE  
IS MERE ESCAPE.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>I disregard Maciunas' earlier plan for a Lithuanian magazine.

<sup>2</sup>This is not in any way to endorse the Neoists.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Satie's *Relâche* (1924).

<sup>4</sup>A term which probably connects back to my concept art, but has an independent meaning.

<sup>5</sup>Also, Maciunas in 1962 and Ben Vautier in 1965-68 seem to have seen anti-art implications in Cage.

<sup>6</sup>First published in *Kulchur*, no. 3.

<sup>7</sup>The Vicious Circle principle. Her contest is defined by invoking a class of contests to which it "already" belongs. Today's mathematical logicians (e.g. Barwise) might find her contest legitimate.

<sup>8</sup>Granting that the set of theorems was not recursive in the official view.

<sup>9</sup>Until the work of Christer Hennix, beginning in the Seventies, which is the only other work I have endorsed as concept art.

<sup>10</sup>My selections were printed sideways to indicate that they had no connection with Fluxus.

<sup>11</sup>That is probably true. Maciunas continued long afterwards to retaliate against Fluxus members who worked with Moorman.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. my "veramusement" from ccV TRE no. 3, etc.

<sup>13</sup>I classify Maciunas' 1966 Vietnam War flag as a political statement, not as a paradigm for the future's art.



Ay-o

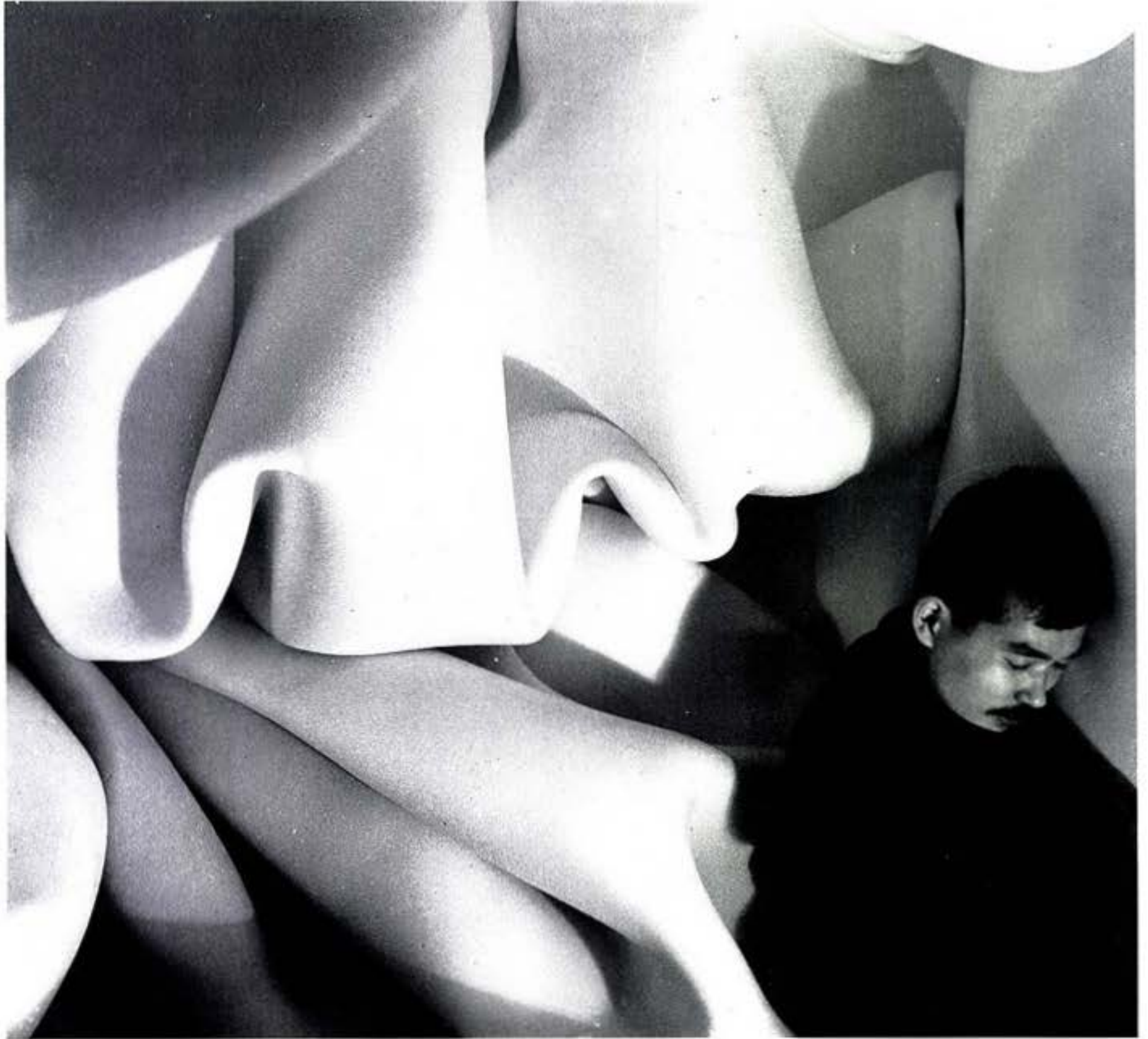


*Ay-o, Tea House, 1960.*





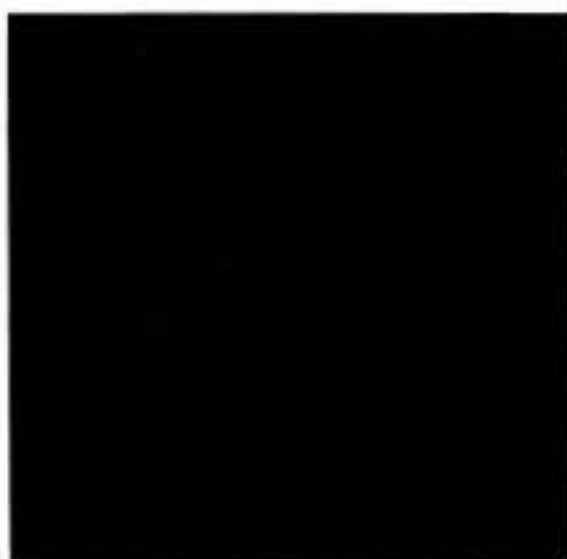
# AOS<sup>U</sup> ORANGE BOX



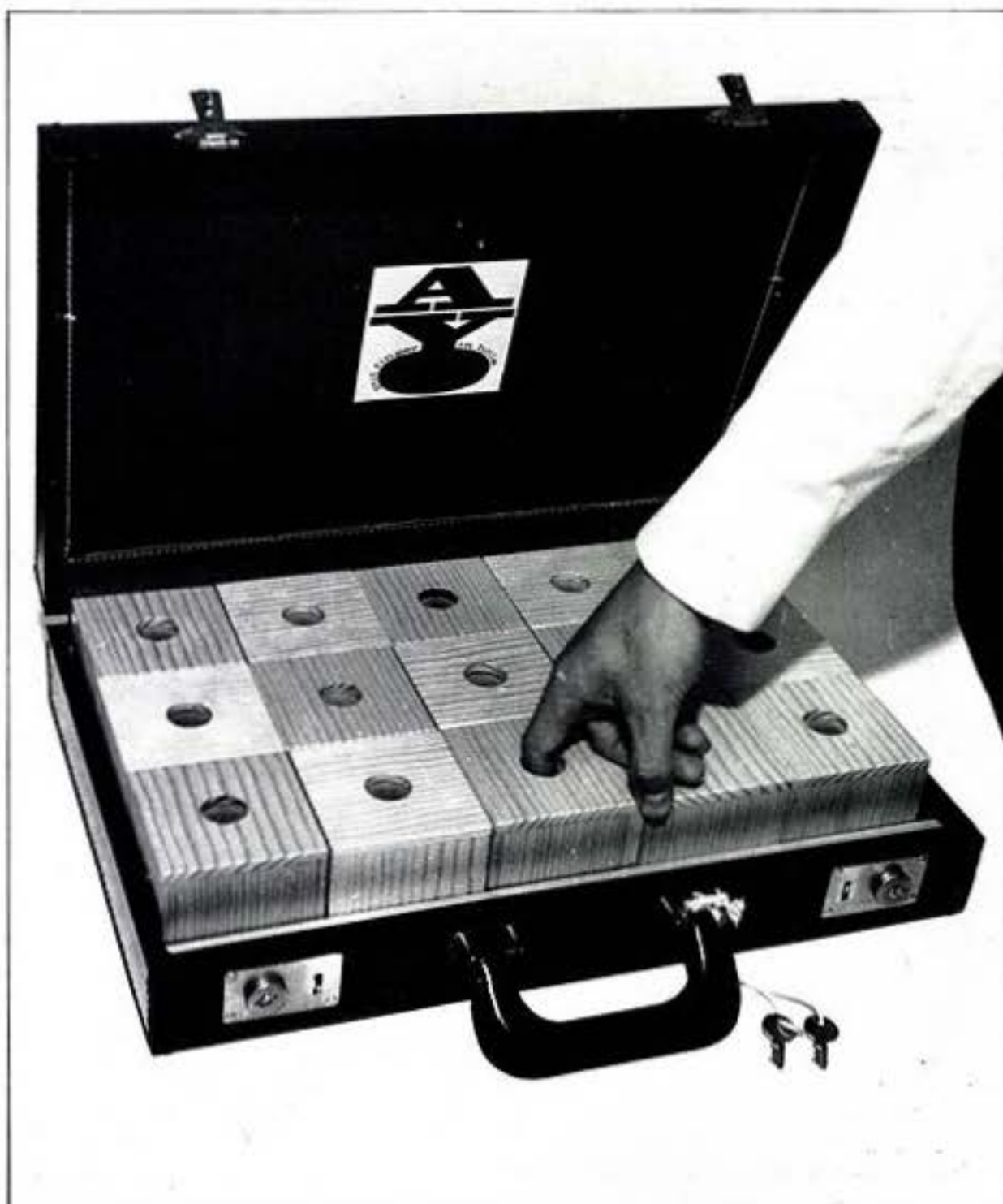




PUT FINGER IN



From:  
AY-0  
363  
Canal  
Street  
N.Y.C. To



Third class mail. Return postage guaranteed.

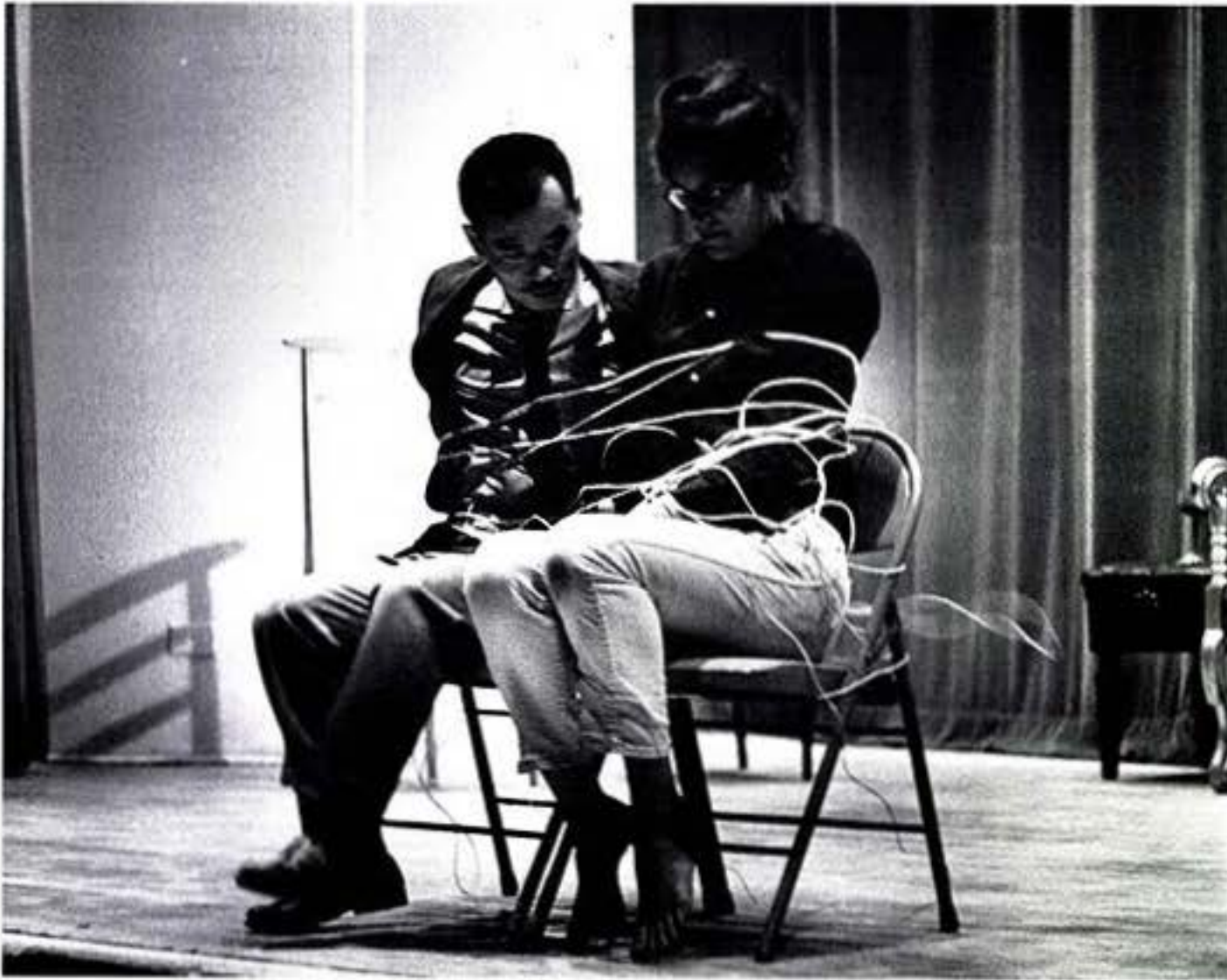
**AY-0'S  
FINGER BOX**



*Ay-o, Finger Box Suitcase, 1964.*

Alla pagina precedente:  
*Ay-o, Orange Box, 1964.*



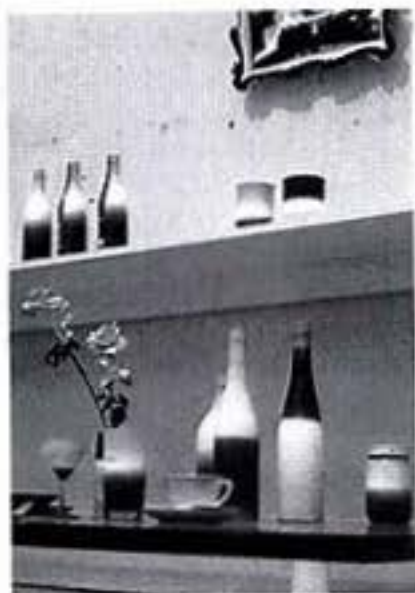


Ay-o, *Dance of Sonata Erik Satie*,  
Hudson Hall, 1965.



Prova per *Fluxus Event*  
alla Carnegie Recital Hall,  
New York.





# RAINBOW

13¢

Full Course Diner

Menu



First Course. Violet cocktail.

Second Course. Blue sea water from cony Island beach and a shrimp. a flounder and non name fish.

Third Course. Green vegetable that we got this morning.

Fourth Course. Yellow sauce with beef calves' hearts. lambs' hearts. OX-tail and pig from Atlantic and Pacific Ocean Company.

Fifth Cours. Orang.

Sixth Cours. Wash your finger by Red

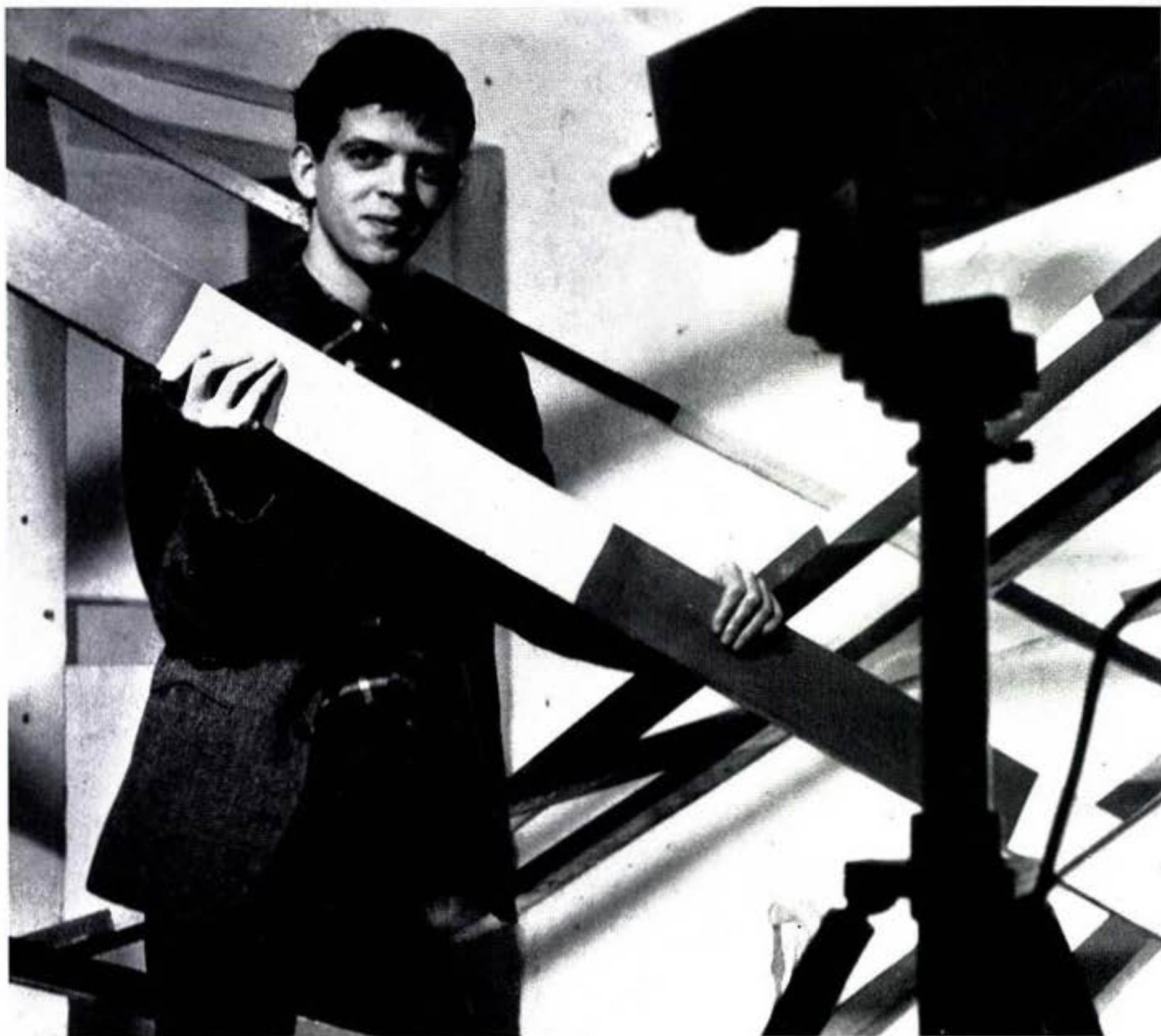
Cook by Shuko. Serve by Mike Kirby and others. menu by Ay-O.

Ay-o, *Rainbow*,  
Biennale di Venezia, 1966.



# Eric Andersen

Eric Andersen, *Video Installation*, Royal  
Academy of Fine Arts, 1964.  
(Foto Sisse Jarner).





Eric Andersen constantly changes to new positions and at the same time negates or reinterprets the very premises of the change itself. The absurd, the paradoxical, contradictions and inconsistencies are turned into practise and presented with an irresistible consequence.

If anything appears that could be regarded as certainties, these are immediately dissolved through innumerable semiological and analytic approaches. His works offers a multidimensional outlook, where any orientation seems at the same time to cancel and to confirm any other orientation.

In 1960-61 Eric Andersen worked with ordinary and accidental occurrences and full audience participation, as in *Opus 37*:

1. Ask the audience to leave the concert hall.

2. Tell the audience outside that in the concert hall a sinus frequency will be played on a tape recorder with a volume so low that nobody will be able to hear it. And that the duration of the frequency in minutes will correspond to the number of people in the audience and in seconds to the number of the frequency.

3. Perform the announced action and ask the audience to reenter the concert hall.

During the same years he worked with tape editing, time lapse and other similar manipulations as well as complex processes that are generated during the performance itself (Thorvaldsens Mu-

seum, 1961). Other works from this period involve polarities such as distraction/concentration, overloading or abundance as in *Handy Art* (1961).

This work consists of a 5m x 2m wall, painted in fluorescent magenta, with shelves, pieces of wood, all different kinds of electric tools for woodwork and a gun with accessories.

A manual suggests how a supervisor should disorient the audience to the extent that nobody will know for sure how to approach the many items on the wall. The supervisor will do this through an interference that cannot be explained and according to a set of directions that can hardly be remembered. The incongruity and lack of communication appearing through this work will most likely have the consequence that *Handy Art* will never be touched – just like most other exhibited artworks.

However, one thing is sure: the interaction of the supervisors and the audience will form an accidental circumambulation around ordinary regulations.

During these years scandals occurred over and over again. *Opus 51* by Eric Andersen caused a tremendous scandal. The following score was performed by The Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra:

I HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOU:  
ABCDEFGHIJKLMN OPQRSTUVWXYZ

The score furthermore indicated what instruments to play and for how long.

The musicians could play whatever they considered to be contained by the confidence of the composer. Any two performances of *Opus 51* will appear as different as any other two ordinary or accidental occurrences. Especially since Eric Andersen never uses the same Opus number for the same work twice!

#### *The "CO-OP"*

As previously mentioned the works by Eric Andersen and Arthur Køpcke have a number of similarities. However, differences are obvious as well. Køpcke "treats" the audience; in other words the audience becomes a Køpcke *Treatment*. He mingles with the spectators, hands over small presents or sheets with suggestions about what to do. He reads to them, demonstrates phenomena or asks questions like: "Was ist das?"

Køpcke's work always points in a certain direction and very often clues can be found within the work.

Eric Andersen bases his work on the fact that people are present anyway. He presents a circumstance and is happy to participate on the same level as everybody else. His work doesn't insist on a specific structure. On the contrary, the work attempts to absorb all incidents that can be recognized or observed.

Common characteristics for most Copenhagen Intermedia Work, however, were long durations, extreme audience participation, a complete lack of confinement of the single work and a lack of lasting orientation in the perform-

I AM SORRY, BUT HOW CAN  
I TELL YOU A VERY NICE  
STORY, WHEN I DO KAVE  
ONLY TKD FEW LBPPFRS ∞



ance space. The participants were confronted with the indeterminate and undefined, but at the same time with an infinite number of implications. The notion and perception of the occurrence became ephemeral themselves. One of the last works in which Eric Andersen and Arthur Køpcke collaborated was the project called *Bikuben*, which also included George Brecht. The project was a proposal for physical structures to appear in 284 years and 201 days. The Art Library in Nikolai Church (Knud Pedersen) was the entrepreneur. The Art Library made a deposit of Dkr. 100 in the saving bank *Bikuben*, and *Bikuben* made a guarantee that the sum of Dkr. 6,059 million could be collected by the heirs after 284 years and 201 days. Køpcke suggested as his project a building constructed by polarized mirror glass mounted in internal frames of transparent acrylic plastic. The building will appear as mirrors from the outside and transparent glass from the inside.

Eric Andersen's proposal suggested a construction that consists of 10,000 million units that will constantly change place in relation to each other and form all kinds of shapes, while it travels around on the surface of the globe. His project is a result of an extensive interdisciplinary research in science and theories of science and technology. George Brecht suggested a special design for love rooms as a public facility to be installed at 20 locations in Copenhagen. The love room will among other things be equipped with a library with films, dias, a store of fragrances, books, projectors, tape recorders and all kinds of conveniences. The floor in the love room will consist entirely of mobile units. Whether these projects will remain imaginary or turn into physical obstacles in the year of 2253 will probably be determined by chance operation.

*Epilogue*

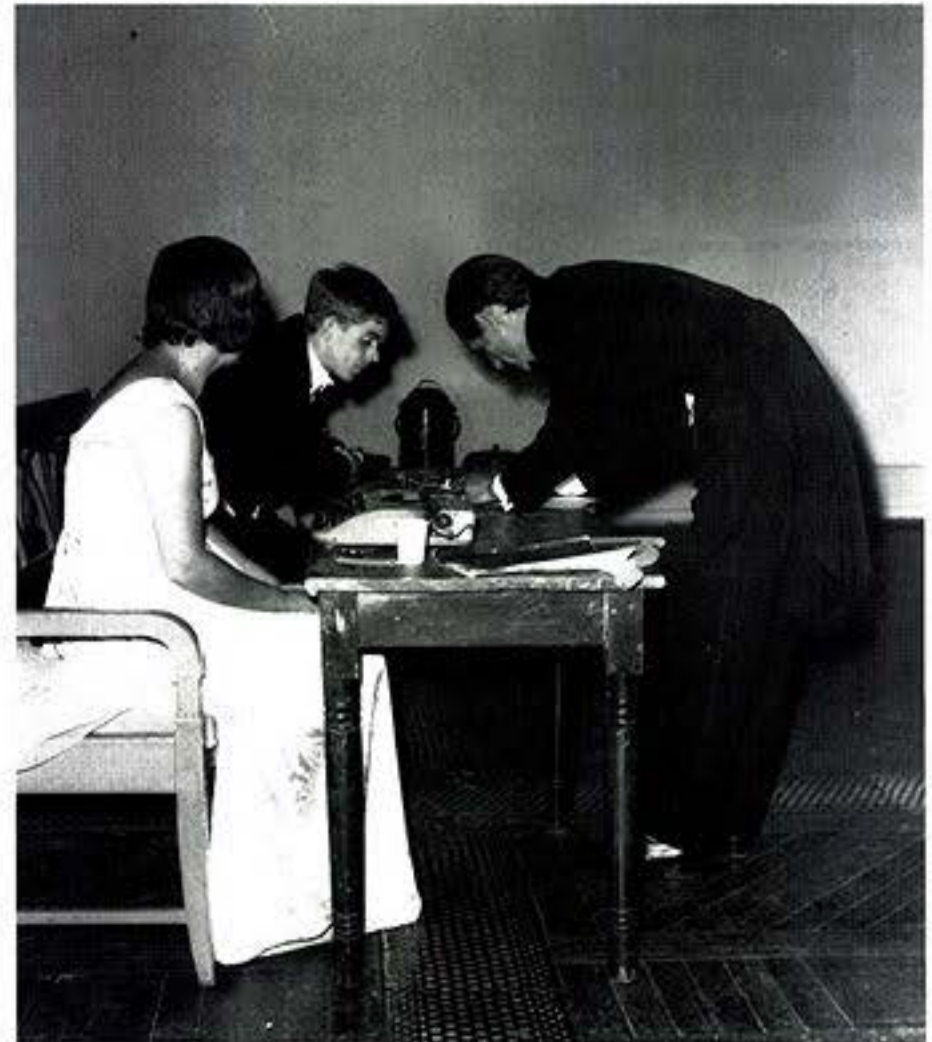
Eric Andersen's *Opus 46* consists of one

sentence: "This sentence should not be read by more than one person at the same time."

The work was originally projected as a film to be shown in a public cinema. This subtle remark was turned into a painting by Arthur Køpcke. He wrote the sentence on a canvas and colored each letter. Due to uniform spacing of all letters the painting became a semiotic presentation, deliberately disregarding the semantic intention. Hardly anybody who appreciates the polychrome qualities of this painting ever notices that it contains a sentence.

This collaboration between Eric Andersen and Arthur Køpcke has now been turned into a multiple by Nordjyllands Kunstmuseum and can be purchased as a paper shopping bag (e.g. for carrying artbooks – fill with own imagination), an everybody object, a painting, a concept, a paradox, an ephemeral transition, a strong audience participation, maybe Fluxus.

Marianne Béch



Eric Andersen con Arthur Køpcke e Aase "Tut" Køpcke, *Intermedia Performance*, Majudstillingen, Charlottenborg, 1964.



# La rivoluzione siamo noi Un socialismo libero e democratico

Joseph Beuys



Buona sera alle signore e ai signori presenti! Sono lieto di essere qui insieme a voi, non tanto per un mio personale compiacimento quanto perché ritengo utile e importante che tutti noi si impari a parlare di queste cose.

Alcuni di voi potrebbero trovare sorprendente che una persona come me, solitamente impegnata in campo artistico, si confronti con una tematica di tipo politico, come quella che è oggetto del nostro dibattito. Posso capire come molta gente non abbia più fiducia in concetti di questo tipo. Posso addirittura immaginarne i commenti: "Ci risiamo con la storia della democrazia, del socialismo e della libertà. La solita vecchia storia!"

Mi domando se democrazia e Democrazia cristiana siano la stessa cosa. Quando si attraversano le strade di Roma, si leggono ovunque slogan di questo tipo.

Ma torniamo al tema del nostro dibattito. Mi chiedo per quanto ancora possa durare questo gioco. Per quanto ancora la gente continuerà a votare per i partiti e per i loro rappresentanti, ovvero per concetti vuoti di significato e di contenuto? Per quanto tempo ancora la gente continuerà a credere nel cosiddetto "parlamentarismo"? Queste sono le questioni cruciali. Vorrei anche aggiungere che concetti come "democrazia" e "socialismo", anche se ormai invisibili alle coscienze della gente, che sembra aver perso ogni intimo interesse a questi slogan vuoti di contenuto, sono, almeno sul piano teorico, concetti di estrema importanza.

Credo però che in tutto ciò manchi un concetto fondamentale; manca il concetto di "libertà". Non che di tale concetto non si sia parlato e discusso a sufficienza. Lo si è fatto fin troppo. Ma mai nel senso che intendo io e che



andrò a specificare nel seguito.

Ho l'impressione che si sia totalmente trascurato il fatto che democrazia e socialismo siano realizzabili solo partendo dal concetto di libertà. Ed è in nome di questa libertà, fatto intellettuale e di pensiero, che mi sento autorizzato a parlare in vostra presenza, facendo tesoro di quanto ho potuto apprendere e verificare attraverso la mia diretta esperienza lavorativa. Parlerò, quindi, dei miei problemi di artista e di insegnante. Del pensiero umano, della creatività e dell'economia.

La libertà attiene essenzialmente al campo del diritto e della costituzione democratica. Ma interessa anche la vita economica: come comportarsi "fraternamente" in campo economico?

Vado ora a fissare sulla lavagna questi concetti: democrazia, fraternità, socialismo, uguaglianza. L'uguaglianza, questo è il concetto giusto da cui partire.

Si tratta, in pratica, dei tre grandi ideali della Rivoluzione Francese: libertà, uguaglianza e fratellanza. Tre concetti che vanno a ricollegarsi, secondo un ordine di priorità ben specifico, al concetto di creatività umana, nell'ambito della scuola, dell'università e della cultura in generale.

Vorrei far presente che io parlo essenzialmente nell'ottica della mia esperienza artistica, e quindi dell'arte. E del resto, non è forse vero che quando l'uomo vuole attuare una rivoluzione, ovvero, quando decide di cambiare le condizioni del suo malessere, deve necessariamente dare inizio al cambiamento nella sfera culturale, operando nelle scuole, nelle università, nella cultura, nell'arte e, in termini più generali, in tutto ciò che attiene alla creatività? Il cambiamento deve iniziare dal modo di pensare e solo da quel momento, da quel momento di libertà, si potrà pensare a cambiare il resto. È nel pensiero che risiede il nucleo del cambiamento da cui far scaturire l'asse portante della democrazia e della Costituzione democratica.

Mi sono proiettato troppo avanti nel tempo; sto parlando di un futuro e di condizioni ancora del tutto inesistenti. Ho già accennato al vero significato del termine "democrazia". Non quello che usano i partiti politici nei loro slogan propagandistici, bensì nell'accezione più reale del termine: "potere del popolo". Dobbiamo mirare a un sistema che consenta al popolo, vale a dire a tutti gli individui residenti in un dato paese, di

dare il proprio contributo alla realizzazione di una costituzione realmente democratica. Questo deve essere il nostro obiettivo. La democrazia deve essere costruita, e non dai partiti, non dal dominio prevaricante di una minoranza, ma dal contributo e dalla partecipazione di tutti i cittadini.

Queste linee rappresentano i diritti fondamentali. Un esempio di diritto fondamentale sono le leggi che regolano la proprietà terriera.

(*Indicando il disegno.*) L'asse democratico è molto importante. Ogni rivendicazione di libertà deve avere dei limiti al fine di salvaguardare e garantire la libertà dell'intera collettività. Io rivendico libertà per la scuola, libertà per l'università, libertà per gli artisti, libertà d'opinione, libertà di critica, libertà di stampa, libertà d'antenna ecc. Tutti spazi che non fanno parte del mondo economico, bensì dell'ambito informativo e culturale-formativo di un paese.

Il popolo dovrebbe avvalersi a pieno del potere che possiede, ma di cui sembra non avere coscienza, per costruire una vera democrazia. E siamo così venuti al tema centrale del nostro incontro.

Il popolo continua ad agire secondo il sistema della delega: votando, in sua rappresentanza, persone proposte dai partiti. E così facendo, rinuncia volontariamente al suo diritto di cogestione politica e al suo diritto di autodeterminazione.

Se qualcuno, in sala, avesse domande da porre su quanto detto finora, lo pregherei di farlo subito in modo da non dover ritornare su questi punti.

*Voce dalla sala: Vorrei sapere cosa significano quelle linee sull'asse centrale.*

Non ne ho ancora parlato, ma come ho detto, questa è la Costituzione che proviene dal popolo, in conformità al principio che vuole restituiti al popolo tutti i poteri attualmente detenuti dallo Stato. La Costituzione si suddivide, a sua volta, in diritti fondamentali, anch'essi determinati dal popolo. Questa linea sta a significare, appunto, un diritto fondamentale, come, ad esempio, la libertà di stampa ecc. Oppure il diritto che regola la proprietà terriera. Oppure la questione della proprietà dei mezzi di produzione. O la questione della parità tra uomo e donna. O ancora la questione dell'esercito e degli armamenti. Nel nostro paese l'esercito si chiama "Bundeswehr".

Ma la questione fondamentale è – per

dirla brevemente – la gestione del reddito nazionale nella società democratica. Questo è il punto. Sappiamo che una grossa fetta del reddito nazionale pubblico viene risucchiata da operazioni prive di senso, che non vanno certo a favore della collettività. È giusto che una minoranza, un governo, decida come gestire il denaro pubblico? O non è forse questa una decisione a cui dovrebbe partecipare l'insieme della comunità? Tanto più che il denaro che costituisce il reddito nazionale di un paese è, di fatto, il frutto del lavoro di tutta la collettività. È quindi assurdo che una minoranza sia chiamata a decidere, da sola, della gestione economica di un paese.

Visto che siamo giunti a parlare di "economia", ecco un simbolo che sta a significare l'unità economica fondamentale: l'impresa di produzione. Il reddito nazionale è la somma di quanto prodotto dalla collettività nell'ambito del processo di produzione. Il diritto, invece, non produce valori economici. Né tanto meno il sistema scolastico/educativo che, al contrario, dipende dal sistema economico per il suo stesso sostentamento. Il plusvalore nasce in quella che, in termini economici, viene definita unità di produzione. (*Traccia una freccia e sotto scrive "plusvalore".*) Da dove scaturisce il plusvalore? Credo di poter affermare che il plusvalore nasce dalla creatività umana. Volendo ricorrere a una formula, potremmo scrivere: plusvalore = creatività; creatività = reddito nazionale.

*Guttuso (dalla sala): Il plusvalore ha accresciuto i profitti, non ha accresciuto il reddito nazionale.*

Esatto. Ho già detto della mia tendenza ad anticipare i tempi. Il mio discorso si riferiva a un sistema che ancora non esiste. Non abbiamo mai sperimentato un concetto "pulito" di democrazia, di socialismo e di libertà, perché viviamo in Stati unitari in cui questi concetti sono male applicati, e per di più in condizioni di poca trasparenza.

Nei nostri cosiddetti "Stati unitari" (e per questo li disapprovo e credo che altrettanto debbano fare gli altri) questi concetti vengono trattati in modo del tutto irrazionale. Ma questo fenomeno non potrà durare per sempre. Il plusvalore dovrà smettere di arricchire solamente i capitalisti e dovrà tornare alle origini, ovvero al popolo, dalla cui creatività è stato generato. Ovviamente una parte del plusvalore dovrà essere rein-







vestita in considerazione del rapido invecchiamento delle strutture economiche.

Nel seguito della discussione si chiarirà perché, parlando di rivoluzione, io sia partito dal concetto di creatività. Il marxismo ha tentato, in modo estremamente unilaterale, di far scaturire la rivoluzione dal sistema produttivo. Noi dobbiamo modificare questa logica facendo scaturire il movimento rivoluzionario dal pensiero, dall'arte e dalla scienza.

Non intendo con questo sminuire la valenza dell'analisi marxista. Marx ci ha fornito un'analisi geniale della situazione del suo tempo, vale a dire dell'"esistente". La sua analisi manca, però, di respiro prospettico nei confronti di una società nuova, anche perché, così facendo, sarebbe potuto incorrere nei rischi della contraddizione.

Il giovane Marx, pur essendo partito dal concetto di libertà, ne ha poi trascurato la successiva evoluzione analitica. La sua formazione culturale, squisitamente economica, lo ha portato a dare risposte esclusivamente economiche a tutte le istanze rivoluzionarie. Ma non è riuscito a sintetizzare un modello rivoluzionario né un modello di trasformazione sociale.

A questo punto, rifacendomi al concetto di arte, voglio affermare, e in toni decisamente radicali, che solo l'arte può essere rivoluzionaria, seguita, al secondo posto, dalla scienza. Riprendendo un concetto già esposto in precedenza, posso affermare che la rivoluzione può scaturire solamente dalla libertà, da un modello radicale di libertà, dall'arte. Qualcuno ha obiettato (*indicando il pubblico*): "e dalla scienza." Giusto. Ma voglio spiegare perché, a mio avviso, la scienza si limita a occupare il secondo posto in questa scala di valori rivoluzionari.

Qual è il rapporto che unisce l'arte al concetto di libertà? A questo punto si impone una digressione sull'estetica.

Anche la scienza, ovviamente, è creativa. Ma facciamo un passo indietro e riveniamo al concetto di libertà. Lo scienziato è libero nella misura in cui è libero di autodeterminare il suo pensiero. Ma questa libertà finisce nel momento stesso in cui il pensiero deve subordinarsi alle esigenze della logica: il vincolo del pensiero logico rappresenta dunque il limite intrinseco del concetto scientifico.

Schiller, essendo un esteta, ha afferma-

to qualcosa di estremamente giusto: la libertà, nella sua forma più pura e assoluta, la si può trovare soltanto nell'attività ludica.

L'essere umano è, per sua natura, soggetto a molteplici condizionamenti esterni; ne è un esempio lo stesso bisogno di assumere la posizione eretta. I bisogni gli vengono imposti dall'ambiente stesso che lo circonda. Ma, grazie alla sua libertà, l'uomo è anche in grado di modificare le condizioni del mondo esterno.

Torniamo ancora un attimo indietro e cerchiamo di comprendere quale sia l'essenza della libertà umana. Per fare questo, dobbiamo approfondire la nostra conoscenza del concetto di "arte" e del concetto di "scienza", perché è qui, in questi due concetti, che risiedono le basi dell'umana creatività.

Lo scienziato è in grado di intervenire sulle condizioni di un ambiente sfavorevole – guardiamo ciò che avviene in campo tecnologico – e di modificarle. È così che Galileo e Einstein hanno contribuito alla crescita dell'umana conoscenza. Entrambi hanno fatto uso della loro libertà. Ma in nessun caso si è trattato di libertà assoluta.

La scienza, nel modificare le condizioni ambientali, si pone come elemento rivoluzionario. Ma si tratta effettivamente di libertà nel senso pieno della parola? La libertà scientifica ha il suo limite nella imprescindibile esigenza di pensiero logico.

Vogliamo un modo nuovo di intervenire sull'ambiente e modificarlo, un modo in cui l'uomo possa avvalersi, in modo pieno e radicale, della sua libertà. Esattamente come avviene nel campo dell'arte. E a questo proposito vorrei citare ancora una volta Schiller quando afferma: "Solo l'uomo che gioca, libero da vincoli della logica, sensibile solo ai richiami del bello e dell'estetica, solo l'uomo che si autodetermina è un uomo libero." Questa è, a mio avviso, la libertà assoluta.

Ritengo che Schiller sia il massimo rappresentante degli esteti. Egli ritiene che l'uomo sia uomo solo nel gioco, e che solo nel gioco sia libero. E, come tale, vero uomo! L'arte intesa quindi in senso ludico: è questa l'espressione più radicale di libertà assoluta.

*Amelio (dalla sala): Posso fare una domanda? Lei parla di scienza, ma si riferisce forse a una scienza in particolare? Esiste forse una scienza di tipo capitalistico?*

Su questo punto tornerò in seguito.

Vorrei prima parlare della scienza occidentale in generale. Invece di "scienza" potrei usare il termine "conoscenza".

Intendo parlare della conoscenza in generale, senza alcun riferimento alla scienza capitalista, medievale o dei tempi moderni. Quello stesso concetto di scienza che risale al tempo di Platone e che può senza dubbio definirsi di matrice occidentale.

All'interno di questa scienza, lo scienziato è libero di decidere del suo pensiero e del tipo di approccio con cui affrontare un determinato problema, ma la sua libertà si arresta dinanzi alle esigenze e ai vincoli della logica.

*Dalla sala: Non sono le leggi della logica, ma la struttura classica della società, che blocca la libertà scientifica.*

Quella è una limitazione ulteriore. Vorrei parlare in primo luogo dei fondamenti teorici della conoscenza e solo in un secondo tempo della classificazione che la nostra società ha dato della scienza. Cominciamo con l'analizzare il concetto di libertà. Ho già detto come "necessità" e "libertà" si scontrino ogni volta che lo scienziato si trova a doversi confrontare con le leggi della natura. Lo scienziato dispone, infatti, di un ampio potenziale di libertà e di autodeterminazione che, di norma, utilizza fino al punto d'incontro/scontro con le esigenze della logica. Mi domando se lo scienziato sia consapevole della metodica insita nel concetto di scienza.

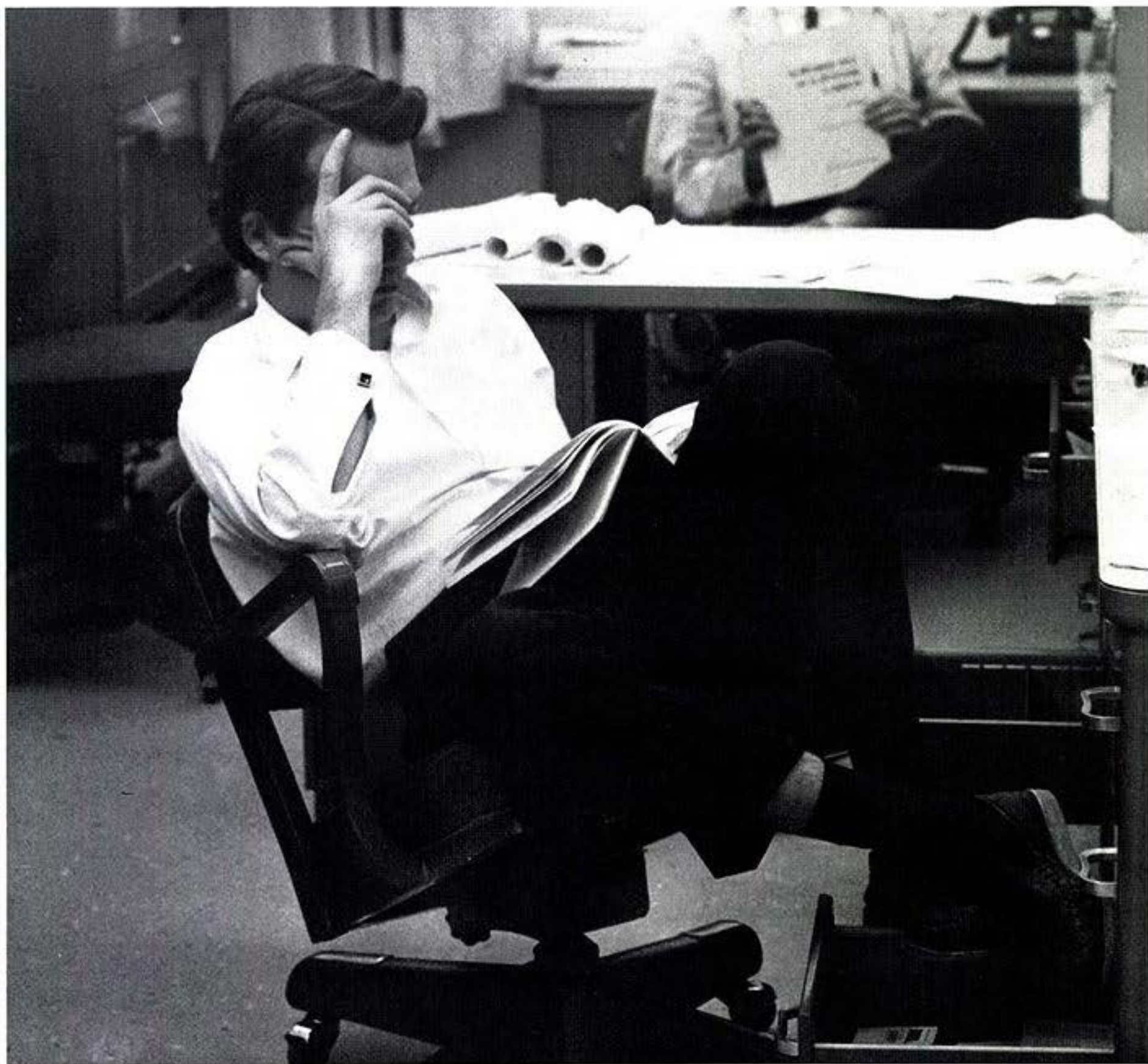
Vorrei ora passare ad analizzare, in termini ovviamente generici, il concetto di conoscenza. Come già ho sentito affermare dalla sala, attualmente abbiamo a che fare con un concetto molto preciso di scienza. Si tratta di un concetto estremamente limitato, riferito alle sole scienze naturali, o scienze esatte. Un concetto, cioè, positivista, materialistico e atomistico.

Nel dire ciò bisogna anche aggiungere che l'attuale concetto di scienza ha una valenza estremamente parziale, certo non riferibile a tutti i problemi dell'uomo, perché basata prevalentemente sulle leggi della materia. E ciò che si riferisce alla materia non può, necessariamente, riferirsi alla vita.

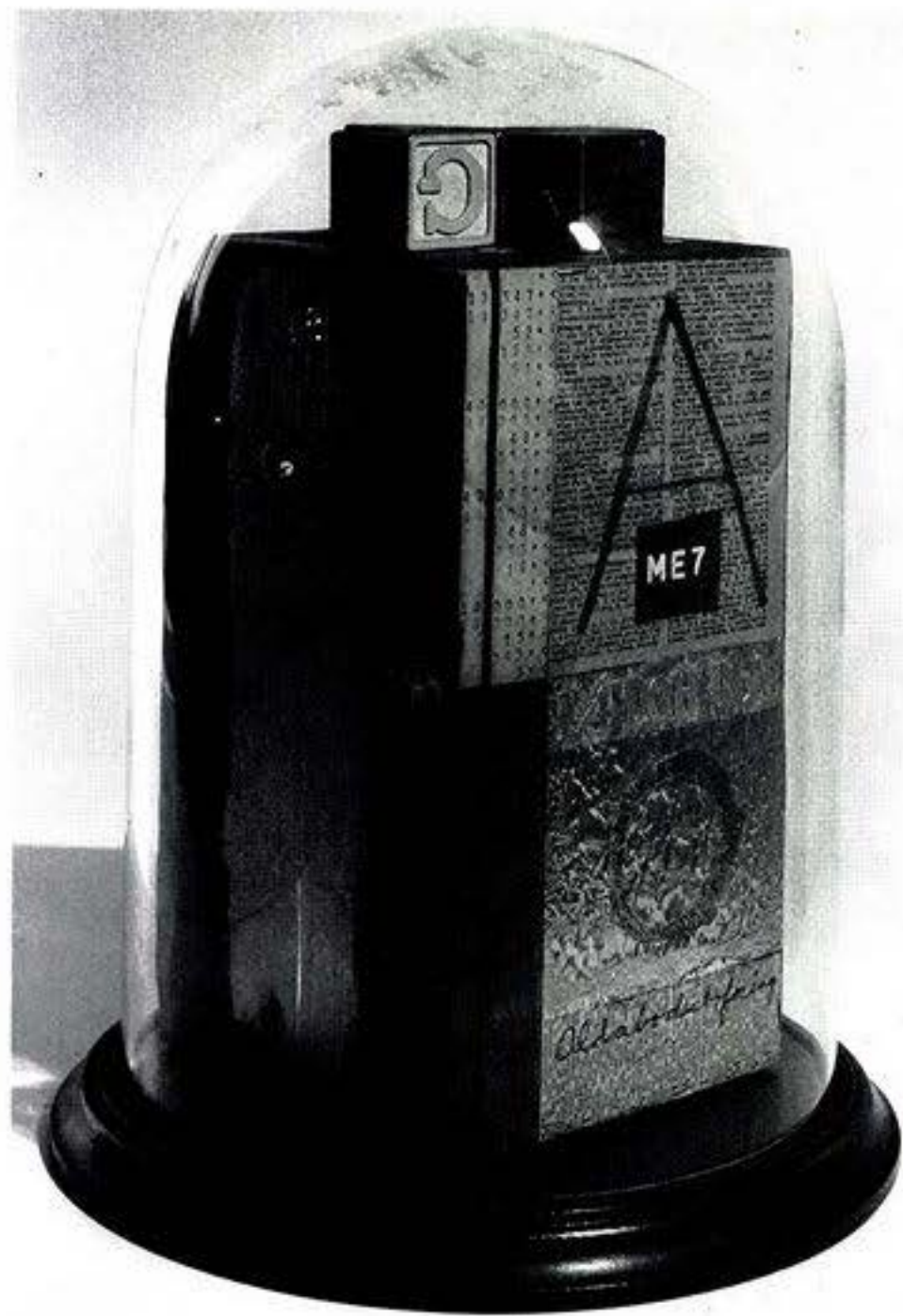
Da *Incontro con Joseph Beuys*, Palazzo Taverna, Incontri Internazionali d'Arte, Roma, 12 aprile 1972, ore 19.



# George Brecht







George Brecht, *Suitcase*, 1959.  
Collezione Reinhard Onnash, Berlino.

In alto e a sinistra: George Brecht,  
*Redemption Dome*, 1959. Collezione  
Reinhard Onnash, Berlino.



# Something about Fluxus

George Brecht

Now that Fluxus activities are occurring in New York it's possible for statesiders to get some understanding and, relatively, some misunderstanding of the nature of Fluxus. (A report on last year's Fluxus activities in Europe, Dick Higgins' *Postface*, is to be available this summer.) From my point of view the individual understandings of Fluxus have come from placing hands in Ay-o's *Tactile Boxes*, from making a poem with Diter Rot's *Poem Machine* published in the Fluxus newspaper, from watching Ben Vautier string Alison Knowles-on-the-blue-stool to objects in the room and to the audience in Kosugi's *Anima I...*

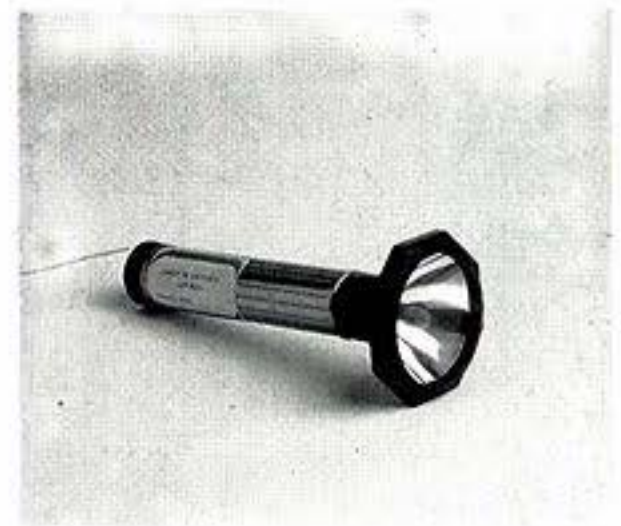
The misunderstandings have seemed to come from comparing Fluxus with movements or groups whose individuals have had some principle in common, or an agreed-upon program. In Fluxus there has never been any attempt to agree on aims or methods; individuals with something unnameable in common have simply naturally coalesced to publish and perform their work. Perhaps

this common something is a feeling that the bounds of art are much wider than they have conventionally seemed, or that art and certain long-established bounds are no longer very useful. At any rate, individuals in Europe, the US, and Japan have discovered each other's work and found it nourishing (or something) and have grown objects and events which are original, and often uncategorizable, in a strange new way: Alison Knowles, *Bean Can*; Early Red Valentines, Early Mohawks, Long Yellow Six Weeks, English Canterbury... Bean's Insulated Boot Foot Wader (Suspenders extra)... Ich bean ein Star, ein Kino-Star... The US bean crop would make enough bean soup to run Niagara Falls for three hours...

Bob Watt's *Box of Rocks* marked with their weight in kilograms.

Tomas Schmit's *Zyklus*; the performer, surrounded by a ring of bottles, pours water from one bottle into the next, until all the water has evaporated or been spilled.

Ben Patterson's *Two Movements from*



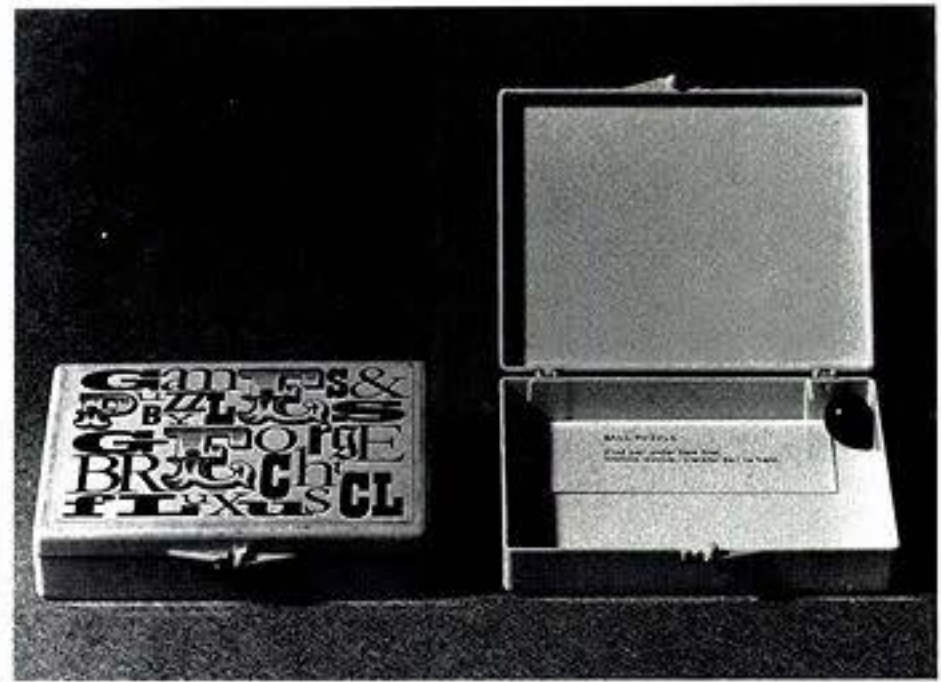
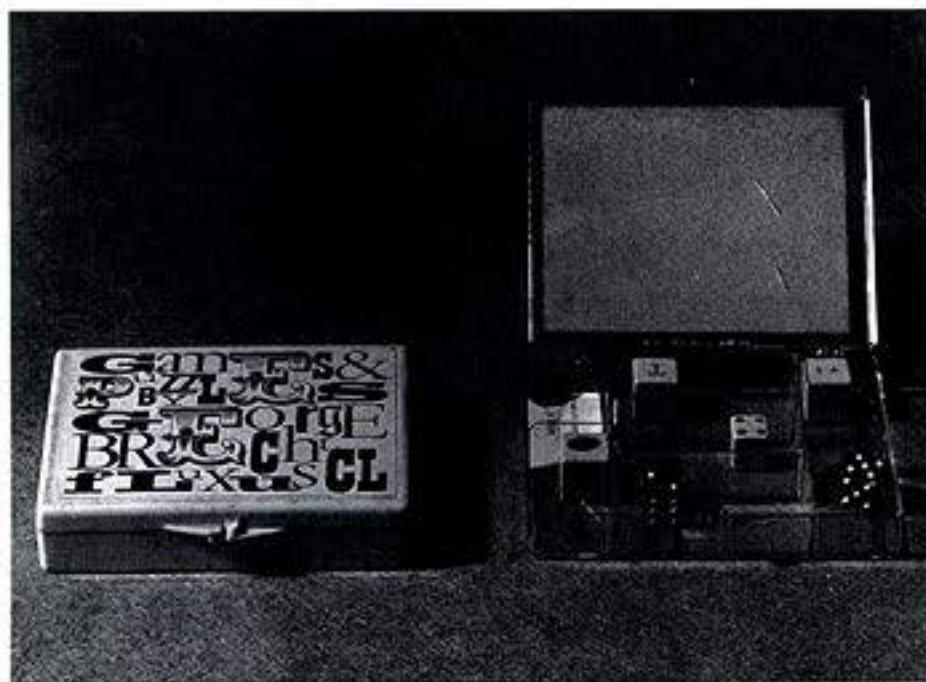
*Symphony n. 1*: the audience stands in line. One person at a time sits at a stool across the table from Ben, who whispers: "Do you trust me?" Ben puts yesses on one side of the room, noes on the other. The lights go out. Waiting; possibly tensions. Then, the smell of coffee, ground-coffee-rain, in the air, dusting over the floor. Medaglia d'Oro. Ben Vautier's *Bottle of Dirty Water*, the Street Composition *Lie Down on Your Back*, Total Art Sculpture *Pick up Anything at Your Feet*, Total Art Poetry *Just Say Anything...*

Daniel Spoerri's *Optique moderne*: collection of unknown spectacles, with Dufrene's useless notes.

Dick Higgins' lectures, like "The day begins. After a time the day ends. The day begins. After a time the day ends. The day begins..." (repeated the number of times that a day appears in a common span of time)

Emmet Williams *Piece for La Monte Young* - "Is La Monte Young in the Audience?"

Brooklyn Joe Jones' chair, switchboards





on the arms. Lower the white translucent hat over your head, and flip the switches. Lights here and there, and sounds from peripheral radios on, off, news, static, twist music, commercials... George Brecht's *Bead Puzzle*. "Your birthday."

La Monte Young, *Composition 1960, n. 2*: "Build a fire in front of the audience..."

Ay-o's *Exit Events*: the audience leaves the performance room through a narrow hall, over a large mirror on the floor, or over a bed of upward-pointed nails, with foot-sized gaps in the bed, or through rows of taut, knee-high strings. Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film*. (See it, then go to your neighborhood theater and see it again.)

Henry Flynt's professional anti-culture and down-withs (paying culture a sort of inverse compliment), making Alison Knowles' bean-sprouts seem even lovelier.

Whether you think that concert halls, theaters, and art galleries are the natural places to present music, performances, and objects, or find these places mummifying, preferring streets, homes, and railway stations, or do not find it useful to distinguish between these two aspects of the world theater, there is someone associated with Fluxus who agrees with you. Artist, anti-artists, non-artists, anartists, the politically committed and the apolitical, poets of non-poetry, non-dancers dancing, doers, undoers, and non-doers, Fluxus encompasses opposites. Consider opposing it, supporting it, ignoring it, changing your mind.

May 1964, first published in *Fluxus Newspaper* no. 4, June 1964.

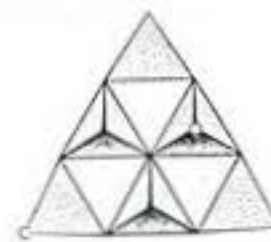
**OO**

TEN RULES: NO RULES (EDITORIAL)

forgoing intention: nothing unaccomplished  
 forgoing needs: no requirement unfulfilled  
 forgoing satisfaction: no favoring  
 forgoing judgment: no inappropriate action  
 forgoing comparison: exact oneness  
 forgoing attachment: nothing to eliminate  
 no true generality  
 no progress, no regression: static change, complete punctuality  
 no coming, no going  
 no grasping

1962  
gb

Alla pagina precedente, in basso:  
George Brecht, *Name Kit e Ball Puzzle*.  
(Foto Enrico Cattaneo).



EVENTS: scores and other occurrences (EDITORIAL)

George Brecht 12/28/61

"A stitch in time saves nine."

"Ruthlessly pruning cultural interests." (Herbert)

"All's well that ends well."

"All in a day's work."

"Watch for it at your neighborhood theater."

event: the event-score

event: finding an incident of it (truly incidental)

Three Aqueous Events

- ice
- water
- steam

Composers, performers, and auditors of music permit sound-experiences by arranging situations having sound as an aspect. But the theater is well lit. I cough; the seat creaks, and I can feel the vibration. Since there is no distraction, why choose sound as the common aspect?

Three Lamp Events

- on,
- off,
- lamp
- off.on.

"It is sure to be dark  
if you shut your eyes."  
(J. Ray)

Objects and events as units of thought. (Alan Watts)

Sounds barely heard. Sights barely distinguished.  
"Borderline" art. (See which way it goes.)  
(It should be possible to miss it completely.)

no junk, no treasure

Three Chair Events

- Sitting on a white chair,  
Occurrence.
- On (or near) a black chair,  
Occurrence.
- Yellow chair,  
Occurrence.

"It is like water and ice: without water no ice,  
without human beings, no Buddhas."  
(Hakuin: "Song of Meditation")

"Musical sculpture

Sounds lasting and leaving from  
different places and  
forming  
a sounding sculpture which lasts."  
(Duchamp)

Event: EXIT

"The Pause that Refreshes"

garbage-can, EXIT-sign, shrub, bed-spread  
shoe-scraper, motor-sound, something dropping  
tea, sachet, a chair, a door-knob

"The absolute has no connection with good and evil.  
It is like the light of a lamp. Thanks to it you  
may read the Holy Scriptures. But you may equally  
commit forgery by the same light."

No incorrect forms present themselves.

"What is yellow, weighs one-thousand pounds, and flies?"  
"I dunno, what?"  
"Two five-hundred-pound canaries."






**Versouse à thé et à infusions, bombe, en porcelaine à feu n°1, rose, bleu, jaune ou verte.**  
 16-1862. Cont<sup>re</sup> 4tasses, 370 g. 322. »  
 16-1862A. — 6 — 560 g. 424. »

# WATER YAM



**Echelle double 18-7795.**  
**Echelle double 18-7805.**  
 18-7795. Echelle double parisienne, montants ronds en aulne reliés par une cheville bois, échelons triangulaires en bois dur. Long. 3 m. Poids 15 kg. Prix... 8960. »  
**Echelle double dite "de peintre",** montants ronds et échelons triangulaires en bois dur, compas et tringle fer facilitant l'articulation. Peut aussi se dédoubler.  
 18-7805. Long. 3 m. Poids 18 kg.... 8600. »  
 18-7805 A. — 4 m. — 25 kg.... 9115. »



**Aquifugine, produit spécial p<sup>our</sup> imperméabiliser les chaussures de chasse en cuir.**  
 16-8142. Le flacon de 25 cl..... 180. »  
 16-8142A. Le flacon de 50 cl. Prix..... 300. »



**Boîte aux lettres encadrement et porte en hêtre verni, dos en isogil, serrure avec 2 clés. Article de prix avantageux. 33-9020. 25/17 % C. Pds 660 g. 650. »**



**Trapèze frêne, corde chanvre extra.**  
 R.335. Modèle p<sup>our</sup> jeunes gens, long. 1<sup>m</sup>.65, corde de 12<sup>mm</sup>. pour portique de 3<sup>m</sup>.50, pds 1<sup>kg</sup>.200. 1280. »  
 R.335 A. Modèle p<sup>our</sup> hommes, long. 1<sup>m</sup>.90, corde de 15<sup>mm</sup>. pour portique de 4 m., pds 1<sup>kg</sup>.700. 1645. »

*George Brecht*



George Brecht, *Water Yam* / Series of Events Scores Box, 1962. The Fluxus edition of Water Yam.



**A CHRISTMAS PLAY**  
for Joseph Cornell

Empty snow-covered field, frosted horizon  
sun glaring through the mist. In the near  
distance a bathtub lies on its side, open  
toward us.

FIRST CHILD: Do you see that dark figure  
behind the crèche?

SECOND CHILD: (Does not speak.)

**NO SMOKING EVENT**

Arrange to observe a NO SMOKING sign.

- smoking
- no smoking

**TIME-TABLE EVENT**

to occur in a railway station

A time-table is obtained.

A tabled time indication is interpreted  
in minutes and seconds (7:16 equalling,  
for example, 7 minutes and 16 seconds).  
This determines the duration of the event.

Spring, 1961  
G. Brock

- raining
- pissing

**CHAIR EVENT**

on a white chair

a Christmas-tree ball

flag

can opener

black

and spectral colors

**THREE CHAIR EVENTS**

- Sitting on a black chair  
Occurrence.
- Yellow chair.  
(Occurrence.)
- On (or near) a white chair.  
Occurrence.

Spring, 1961  
G. Brock

**INCIDENTAL MUSIC**

Five Piano Pieces,  
any number playable successively or simultaneously, in any  
order and combination, with one another and with other pieces.

1. The piano seat is tilted on its base and brought to rest against  
a part of the piano.
2. Wooden blocks.  
A single block is placed inside the piano. A block is placed  
upon this block, then a third upon the second, and so forth,  
singly, until at least one block falls from the column.
3. Photographing the piano situation.
4. Three dried peas or beans are dropped, one after another, onto  
the keyboard.
5. The piano seat is suitably arranged, and the performer seats  
himself.

Summer, 1961. G. Brock

**FOX TROT**

- underground metal, or coal

**CANDLE-PIECE FOR RADIOS**

1. There are about one and one-half times as many radios  
as performers. The radios are placed about the room and tuned  
on at lowest volume. A stack of instruction cards from a  
shuffled master-deck is dealt, face-up, at each radio.
2. The room lights are turned out. (Birthday) Candles are  
lighted and given to the performers, each of whom places  
one candle by each of the instruction card stacks. After doing  
this, each performer finds himself at a radio. He performs the  
instructions given on the top card, places the card at the  
bottom of the deck, and proceeds to another, unoccupied, radio.
3. Each performer, then, finds himself performing a card in-  
struction and going to another radio. He does this until he  
finds either that a card is unreadable, or that the candle at  
a radio is out completely. In either event, he turns off that  
radio, and, when no more radios are available, returns to his  
seat.

**THREE YELLOW EVENTS**

- I ● yellow  
● yellow  
● yellow
- II ● yellow  
● loud
- III ● red

In Room  
Spring, 1961  
G. Brock

**THREE TELEPHONE EVENTS**

- When the telephone rings, it is  
allowed to continue ringing, until it stops.
- When the telephone rings, the receiver  
is lifted, then replaced.
- When the telephone rings, it is answered.

Spring, 1961

Performance note: Each event  
completes all occurrences  
within its duration.

**CONCERT FOR ORCHESTRA**

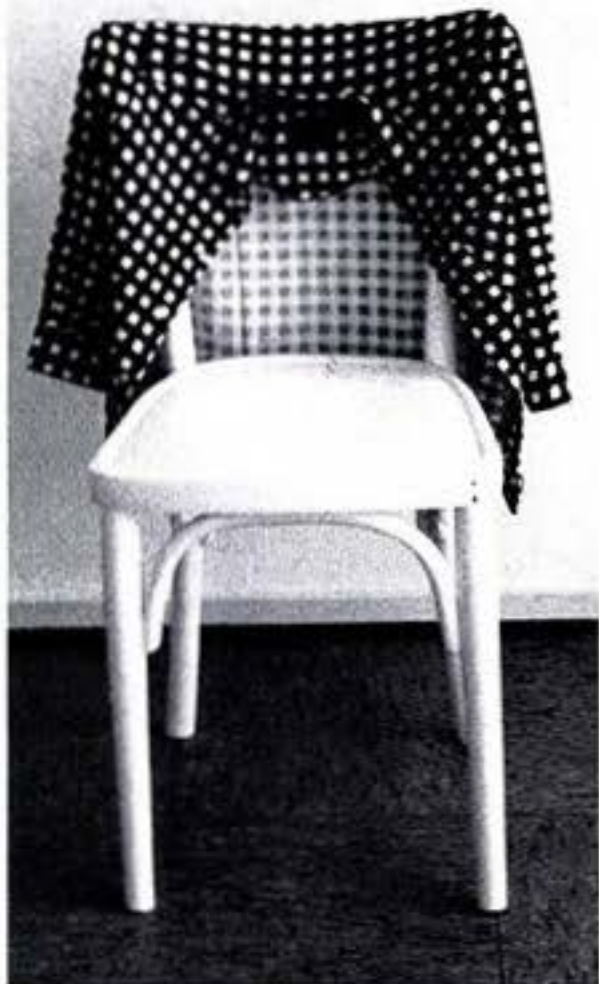
( exchanging )

Brock, 1962

**EGG**

- at least one egg





# CHAIR EVENT

No sei



George Brecht, *Chair Event*, 1966.

A lato: George Brecht, *Chair Event*,  
manifesto, 1967.





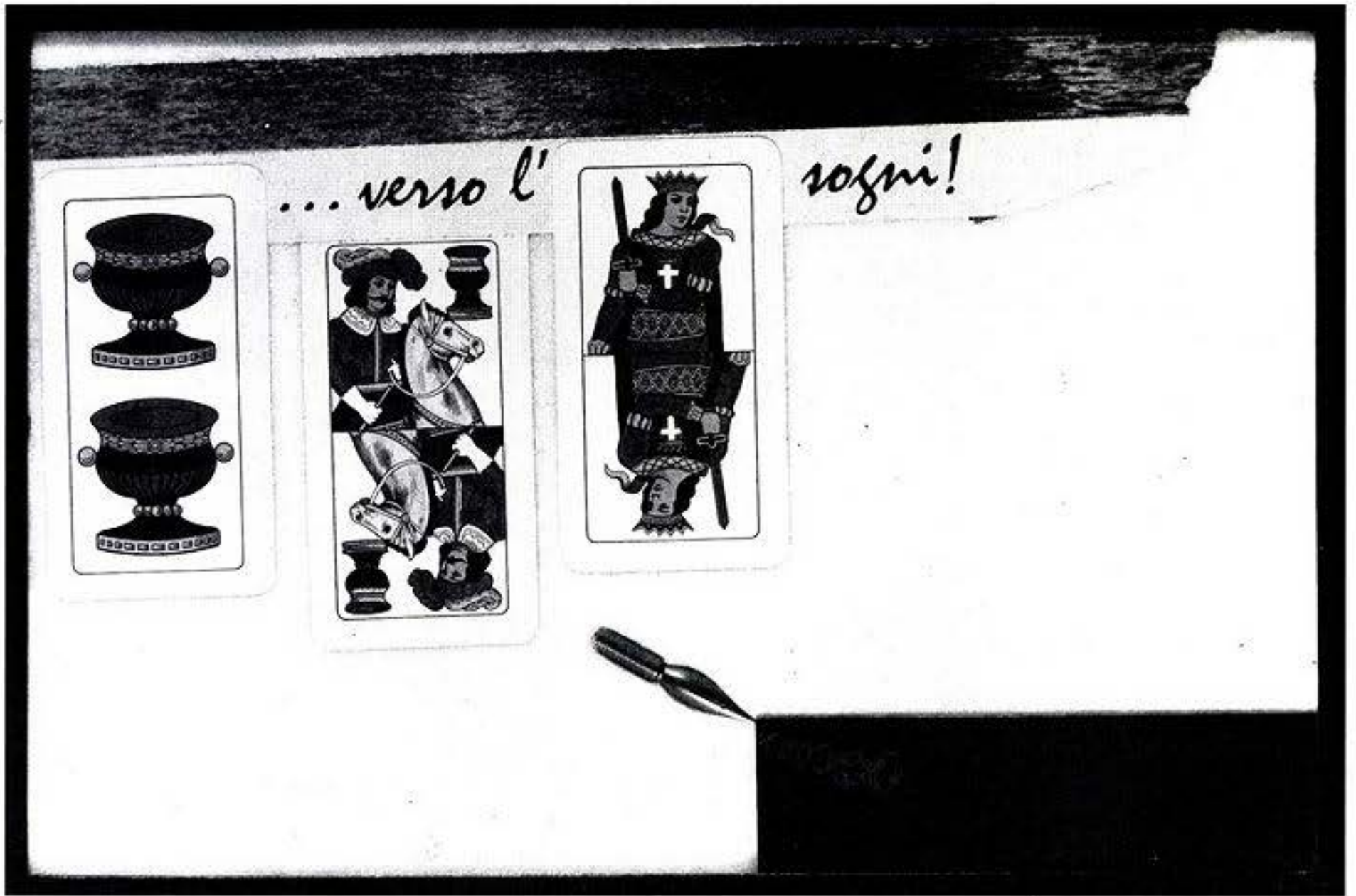


L'orchestra Fluxus, sezione fiati, nella ripresa di *Octet for Winds* da *Cloud Scissors* di George Brecht, New York, 1965. (Foto Peter Moore).



George Brecht in *Drip Music* al Douglas College di New Brunswick, 1963. (Foto Peter Moore).





George Brecht, *Untitled*.









André Thomkins, disegno della *Donna dei nodi*, 1974.

George Brecht, *Donna dei nodi*, progetto, 1974. Collezione Nicola Incisetto, Napoli.

Alla pagina precedente: Ben Vautier, Nam June Paik e George Brecht durante il *Flux Harpsichord Concert* a Berlino, 1976. (Foto Larry Miller).

#### DONNA DEI NODI

(Part 1 of Volume 3 of "The Book of the Tumbler on Fire")  
 Realization presented at MULTIPLA, Milano Autunno 1974  
 Since I have already been told that it is easy to take this piece for a classical statue, I feel impelled to say

#### HOW IT CAME ABOUT:

Last year (1973) some friends came to visit me in Cologne. I suggested we have a beer, and since there was none in the house that we go to the bar around the corner, which we did. Closed on Monday. So we went to the next one and had a few beers. On the wall at the end of the room was a rope which intrigued me, a thick rope with several turk's-head knots in it. I asked the guy standing next to me who had made that, and he said "Himi!", pointing to a guy around the corner of the bar. So I asked the rope guy (whose name turned out to be Deutsch) for his card which he gave me, and I continued to day-dream of ropes for several months.

#### SOME MONTHS LATER:

A Monday.  
 I was in Milan, talking to Gino Di Maggio and thinking what we would be doing on Tuesday.  
 Il m'a dit "Mais, c'est pas possible demain".  
 "Comment?"  
 "Parce-que je dois aller à mon bureau à Carrara".  
 Moi: Tu es un bureau à Carrara?  
 Gino: Ouil.  
 Gino: Tu veux venir?  
 Moi: Ouil, j'aimerais bien.  
 We went to Carrara, visited the quarry, and on the way back in the car, I envisioned a woman, half reclining, holding a knotted rope.  
 When I told Gino about this he suggested we realize it.

#### AUTOCRITIQUE (comme dirait Ben)

Looks like a classical sculpture to me.  
 How come?  
 It's realistic and made of marble.  
 If a model of a vision is realistic, then you're right.  
 As for the material, marble is what you find in Carrara.  
 The DONNA was seen in white, why not make it of white marble?  
 It's sculpture and expresses your idea.  
 It's not made from an idea, it's made from a vision.  
 Yes, but how it looks is an expression of your taste.  
 The sculpture was made from photographs of a model. I didn't choose either the photographer or the model. The sculpture was realized by Sauro Ferreri, the rope by H. Deutsch. Where does my taste come in?

George Brecht



# Giuseppe Chiari





immagini sacre  
ritratti  
monumenti funebri  
militari  
oggetti di decorazione  
tipografica  
conversation piece  
pittore di solitudini  
pittore di rovine  
bamboccianti  
di mendicanti  
pittura di genere  
fiori frutta e pesci  
lazaroni  
battaglie  
pittoresco  
pittura di cavalletto  
pittura di costumi  
pittura di piccole storie  
paesaggisti  
marine  
archeologia  
classico  
orientalisti  
preraffaelliti  
nazareni  
romantici  
naturalismo  
caricatura  
stili storici  
fiorentino  
egizio  
gotico  
dorico  
eclettico  
modernismo  
bizanzio  
architettura del ferro  
architettura del cemento  
restauro  
atticismo  
jugend  
secessione  
floreale  
deco  
divisionismo  
puntillismo

barbizon  
impressionismo  
fotografia  
scapigliatura  
fauve  
sintetisti  
intimisti  
varietà  
réclame  
illustratori  
liberty  
futuristi  
vorticisti  
suprematisti  
rayonnisti  
razionali  
funzionali  
cubismo ermetico  
papier collé  
cubismo fisico  
cubismo istintivo  
cubismo scientifico  
metafisica  
dada  
purismo  
astrattismo  
design  
precisionismo  
gesto e segno  
brut  
calligrafia  
tachisme  
informale  
action painting  
espressionismo astratto  
geometria lirica  
spazialismo  
nucleare  
cobra  
gesto e segno  
art brut  
calligrafia  
tachisme  
informale  
action painting  
espressionismo astratto  
geometria lirica

spazialismo  
nucleare  
cobra  
nuova figurazione  
nuovo realismo  
neo dada  
pop art  
fluxus  
lettrismo  
situazionismo  
poesia concreta  
poesia visiva  
arte programmata  
arte cinetica  
gestalt  
optical art  
gruppo zero  
evento  
happening  
azionismo  
strutture primarie  
arte didattica  
support surface  
pittura  
art and technology  
distruzione in arte  
danger art  
funk art  
arte povera  
arte concettuale  
land art  
mail art  
scrittura  
guerrilla art  
glamour art  
contextual art  
neo dada  
pop  
fluxus  
lettrismo  
situazionismo  
poesia concreta  
poesia visiva  
programmata  
cinetica  
optical











SE METTETE IL  
BRACCIO NUDDO  
DENTRO QUESTO  
SPAZIO  
DIVERRÀ TRANSPARENTE  
PERCHÉ  
L'ARIA DENTRO  
QUESTO SPAZIO  
È STRANA



# Philip Corner

Alla pagina seguente: Emmett Williams,  
Wolf Vostell, George Maciunas, Ben  
Patterson nella performance *Piano Activities*  
di Philip Corner, Wiesbaden, 1962.

Haiku for Highway Mississippi U.S. 80

The green forests still look good  
Even when no longer being followed  
by police

(1964)

Going out to get the newspaper with your name in it  
Doesn't change the qualities of the morning sun

Snipping the lawn's edge straight and straighter.....  
one little grass allowed to grow over.

(discovered in a moment, an army-base out of my time)

(1959)

you won't let me look just at you

but must make in in \_\_\_\_\_ marvelous old tree

look! on the ground while meditating -  
\_\_\_\_\_ a piece of shit

#1 Haiku of Korea guard-duty

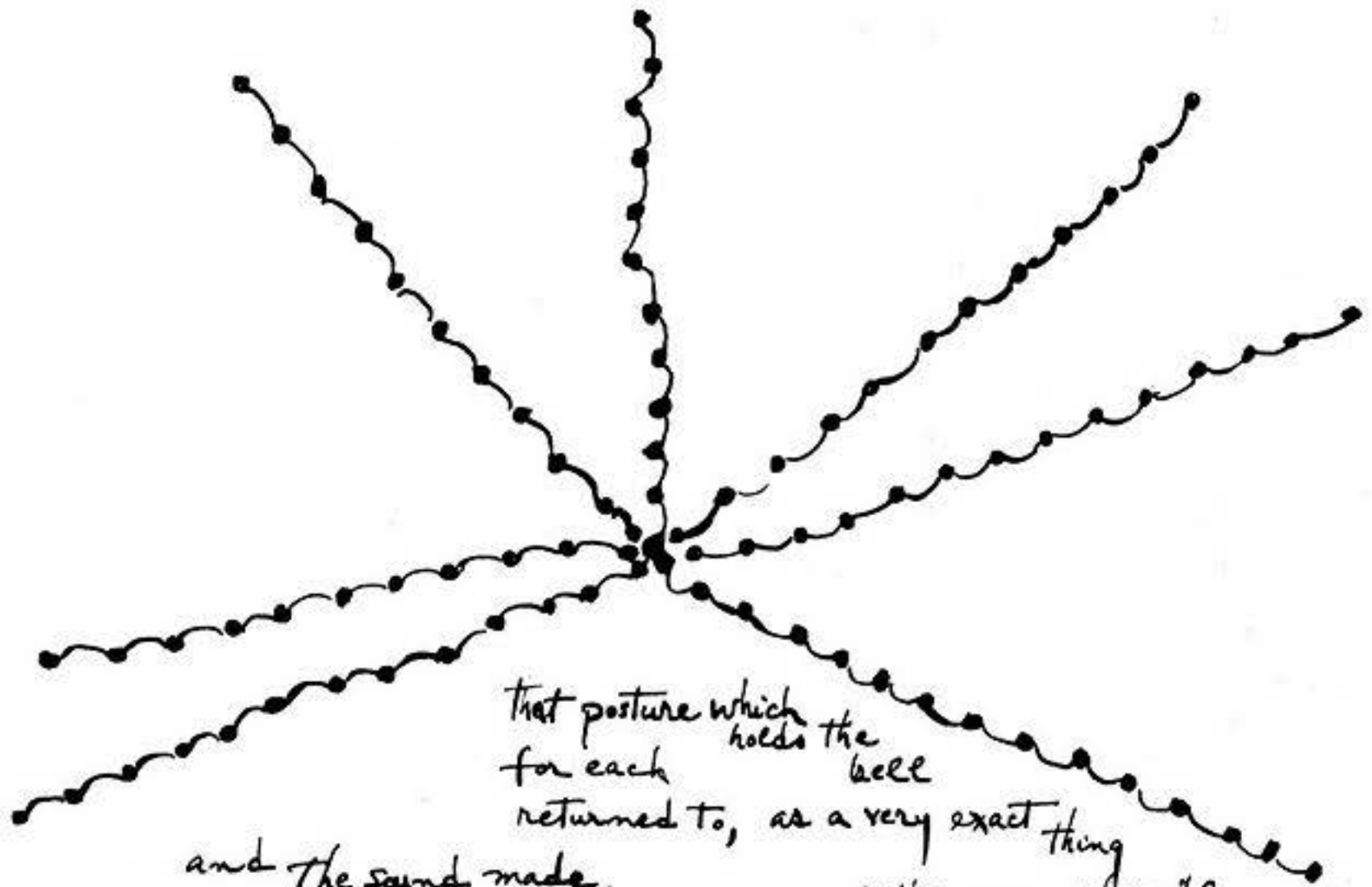
(1960)







the bell danced with and moving out  
 ..... a more restrained version!



that posture which holds the bell  
 for each returned to, as a very exact thing  
 and the sound made also as much the same as possible  
 as that sound fades with the stroke's follow-through  
 bringing it close to the ear, held — secondary posture  
 holding there until all vibrations are gone to silence  
 use only metal struck by hand-held beater

Then one slow smooth step out return to first posture there then continues

Philip Corner (1970s)



The bell danced with, ... moving out.

Being close to begin

Each one with one bell held

physical shape and movements as important as the sound

Between places—

moving, continuous and low (like swimming)

In the place — standing —

ring loud and wait (elaborated "standing" may include

change of posture, with swinging

through space

— some ringing, more like "accidental" rubbing, and be aware of the footsteps.

quiet fading

... silent at last.

..... To a next place stand again — breath in — sound again

and moving further away again and taking a place again and sounding the same way

..... for away

(1970:)

Philip Corner



# Willem de Ridder



Willem de Ridder, *Paper Constellations*, Amsterdam, 1963.



The history of Fluxus in the Netherlands is the history of Willem de Ridder. He was one of the Dutch performers in the world premiere of *Moving Theater no. 1* that took place in the streets, the canals, bridges, bars, cellars and other places of Amsterdam. It was on the 5th of October 1962 that this first Fluxus Event introduced works of the Newest Music in Holland. An exhibition of Wolf Vostell in Gallery Monet was opened by this event that brought amongst others Tomas Schmit, Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams and Wolf Vostell to Amsterdam. De Ridder handed *Paper Constellations (PK's)* to the audience. They soon started throwing the crumpled paper balls about, hitting each other on the head and burning them on the street. That way they created *PK music*.

It was not the first time that de Ridder presented his *PK's*. He was involved in *PK fashion*, *PK architecture*, *PK traffic* and *PK theater*. He had already created many *Visual Music* works and was the co-founder of the Mood Engineering Society (with most of the young Dutch composers of the time). He had invented *Wet Paintings* to be improved by any critic and was an active member of the Organization for the Prevention of Art Manifestations.

As soon as he came in contact with George Maciunas he started to promote Fluxus in the Netherlands. The cultural climate was (as everywhere in the West) compartmentalized. Fluxus did not fit anywhere since it combined all disciplines. Most Fluxus works seemed like gags. It involved artists from all over the world, but it was not clear if it was music, poetry, painting, sculpture or what? De Ridder made it worse by trying to sell it as *Recreation*. The only person in Holland that shared his vision was Wim T. Schippers, the creator of uninteresting art and a-dynamical works.

In 1963 de Ridder started a Fluxus Gallery Amstel 47 and presented *The Piano for All Senses* of Nam June Paik. That same year he organized two Fluxus Festivals in the Hypokriterion Theater in Amsterdam and a private space in The Hague (Bleijenburg 16). George Maciunas, Tomas Schmit, Peter Brötzman and others were there to perform the works. Together with Wim T. Schippers he founded the Association for Scientific Research in New Methods

of Recreation (AFSRINMOR International). This association organized the "March through Amsterdam". Big posters all over the city announced this event. Press and television were present at the point of departure, where 6 participants (in rows of 2) started to walk. AFSRINMOR organized that same year a giant *PK* with police convoy driving through Amsterdam and a third Fluxus Festival in De Kleine Komedie Theater. Tomas Schmit and Emmett Williams came to Amsterdam to perform 14 works together with de Ridder and Schippers. For the first time some works by Wim T. Schippers were included. Dutch Television filmed the entire concert, but when developed all the film came out black. By the end of 1963 VARA Television presented a 35 minute program produced by de Ridder and Schippers. Fluxus, Zero, Pop Art, AFSRINMOR, *PK's*, Op Art and Nouveau Réalisme were presented for the first time in Dutch media. The next day some newspapers commented that the whole show was probably a hoax and that the producers made names like "La Monte Young", "Andy Warhol" and "George Maciunas" up themselves. In 1964 the Society for Party Organizing LTD (SPO) was founded to create Total Theater Events. One could decide to play the role of audience or be an actor and influence the plot of a SPO play. Schippers and de Ridder also founded the Society for Exhibition Organizing for any museum that had no idea what to do next, but also for people who wanted something else in their private homes. George Maciunas asked de Ridder to become the chairman of Fluxus in Northern Europe. The result was the European Mail Order House, where Fluxus works could be ordered through a catalogue. De Ridder performed some of his works in Fluxus Festivals in Copenhagen, Stockholm and other European cities.

De Ridder and Schippers produced the last issue of a Dutch national art newspaper *Kunst van Nij*. Gallery Amstel 47 still showed Fluxus works and Ben Vautier amongst others had a show there. The SPO produced several home exhibitions, AFSRINMOR sold unknown projects to big industry and by the end of 1964 two Flux Festivals were organized in Rotterdam and The Hague. Eric Andersen, Arthur Kōpcke and Ben Vautier came over to perform.

De Ridder invited several of his friends to help perform on stage. For the first time works by Misja Mengelberg and Bob Lenz were performed.

Some museums started to get interested and even the industry liked what was happening. The result was that de Ridder was asked to create a *PK environment* for Proost & Brandt (a paper company). They used it in an international trade fair. The Municipal Museum of The Hague exhibited many huge *PK's* in the entrance hall, together with a rotating tulip field by Wim T. Schippers. At the official opening of the exhibition de Ridder announced that he would step out of art altogether. As long as Fluxus was anti-art it would end up as art anyway. Together with Wim van der Linden he started a film company *Dodgers Syndicate* that would produce only *Sad Movies*.

From that moment all art institutions were avoided and the word art was never used anymore. Art critics were not invited and the name Fluxus (meaning a continuing succession of changes) was sometimes hidden to distract art lovers. De Ridder founded with Peter J. Muller *Hitweek*, a weekly youth paper, whilst Wim T. Schippers involved himself with TV entertainment. Some people realized that Fluxus was still the predominant ingredient in their products, but the art world lost interest. *Hitweek* became quickly a very popular publication.

To make matters worse de Ridder started a modern dance ensemble *Art Bears Power* and travelled the country with a Fluxus Festival that was named "Honk Honk It's the Bonk". Soon he became co-founder of two big multimedia centers in Amsterdam that were named Fantasio and Paradiso. It coincided with the hippy explosion, so many Fluxus projects could be realized there. Soon there were about 150 similar clubs all over the country. A prestigious prize for revolutionizing newspaper design was refused. The paper changed continuously. Even the name changed to *Witweek* and then to *Aloha*. Layout changed all the time, imaginary projects were announced regularly. Fantasio became a total theater completely created by the audience. People came from all over the world to be part of it.

Together with Germaine Greer, Heathcote Williams, Jim Haynes and William Levy, de Ridder became part of the first European sexpaper, *SUCK*. The



same group organized the First Erotic Film Festival in Amsterdam. After the second "Wet Dream Film Festival" de Ridder and Levy produced the *Wet Dream Book* about these events. After some experiments with Feed Back Theater he moved to Hollywood to produce his first radio shows. The bombardment of images at a faster rate had made the population practically blind. Readers flipped through books and magazines with the speed of television. It was time for "Physical Radio". All his experiments were transmitted on Dutch National Radio. One of the highlights was a show in which he masturbated together with the listeners, trying to have orgasm simultaneously. It was so successful that it was repeated.

He produced *Finger*, a reader-written sexpaper from Beverly Hills. It sold so well that he founded *God*, a sex magazine made entirely with articles and photos by those readers who dared to go all the way. He produced the first *Sound Magazine* and tried out *Guided Walks*. Test persons walked with oversized headphones and sizeable cassette players roamed through Beverly Hills following recorded instructions. *God* caused a sensation and an uproar. De Ridder and his partner Prince Maximilian Lobkovicz di Filangieri (with family) had to escape to the Netherlands. There he produced *Guided Radio* which brought thousands of car drivers on the road following directions in the middle of the night. The listener was the actor in a total theater.

De Ridder and his partner moved to Italy from where they produced reader-written magazines (some with soundtrack) for America and radio experiments for the Netherlands. In a special feature on Dutch television de Ridder announced his decision to return to Art. A series of "Radio Art" transmissions caused active listener participation. The "Sonor Theatrum" introduced listening as state. A theater audience with portable radio's experienced a "3D Radio Drama". The first *Walk* was introduced. Travellers with a walkman and 3 cassettes needed 3 days to experience well-known places quite differently. He was invited to become guest of honor for the Holland Festival and was offered a retrospective exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art in Groningen.

He installed a *Berlin Walk*, the *Great Motor Tour* in Beverly Hills, cooperated

in several projects with Post Porn Modernist Annie Sprinkle, introduced *Music Speak*, transmitted alternative lip sync soundtrack for popular TV sitcoms, invented *Walkman Musical Scores*, *Cassette Directed Theater Play* and fun fair attraction *Fluxus-o-leum Walk-o-rama*. He demonstrated *The Atom Club*, caused a cassette movement with the *Radiola Salon*, initiated the *All Chemix Radio Series* (monthly plays sent to over 50 radio stations in America, Canada and Australia) and became a Master Story Teller (telling stories of up to 6 hours to fascinated audiences). Cur-

rently de Ridder cooperates with Andrew McKenzie (The Hafler Trio) to create *Spiral*, the first ever monthly audio-information service. Every two months *Spiral* will also publish an envelope with book, Compact Disc and loose leaf illustrations. The creation of a complete fun fair, including a Sonor Theatrum is under way. He is involved in telephone entertainment together with Cora, sings and plays in FNTCORA and conducts workshops about the Universal Principles (do what you love to do and the Universe takes care of the details).



Willem de Ridder, *European Mail-Order Warehouse/Fluxshop*, 1965. Riscostruita nel 1984 per il Contemporary Art Museum di Houston, Texas. Collezione Gilbert e Lila Silverman. (Foto Rick Gardner).







# Robert Filliou's Whispered Art History

1  
*whispered:*  
it all started a 17th of January, one million years ago.  
a man took a dry sponge and dropped it into a bucket full of water.  
who that man was is not important.  
he is dead, but art is alive.  
I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
as I was saying, at about 10 o'clock, a 17th of January, one million years ago, a man sat alone by the side of a running stream.  
he thought to himself:  
where do streams run to, and why?  
meaning why do they run.  
or why do they run where they run.  
that sort of thing.  
personally, once I observed a baker at work.  
then a blacksmith and a shoemaker.  
at work.  
and I noticed that the use of water was essential to their work.  
but perhaps what I have noticed is not important.

*normal voice:*  
anyway the 17th goes into the 18th then the 19th then the 20th the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th the 29th the 30th the 31st.  
of January.  
thus time goes by.

2  
*whispered:*  
it was winter, one hundred thousand years ago.  
more exactly on the 17th of February.  
a man bent to the ground, and took a handful of snow.  
who that man was is not important.  
he is dead now, but art is alive.  
I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
bending to the ground, then, on the

17th of February, one hundred thousand years ago.  
a man took a handful of snow.  
he held it to his ear.  
he squeezed the snow hard.  
he heard...  
try it some time.  
take a bottle of vinegar in your right hand  
in your left hand take a piece of chalk  
let a few drops of vinegar fall on the piece of chalk  
and see what happens.  
but perhaps what you see is not important.

*normal voice:*  
anyway the 17th goes into the 18th then the 19th then the 20th the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th and, every 4 years the 29th.  
of February.  
thus time goes by.

3  
*whispered:*  
a 17th of March, 10,000 years ago.  
a man bought himself a bottle of beer.  
who that man was is not important.  
he is dead now, and again, but art is alive.  
I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
a man, then, on a 17th of March, 10,000 years ago.  
bought himself a bottle of beer.  
he opened it.  
he drank the contents.  
now, he thought, the bottle is empty.  
or is it?  
that is, he asked himself.  
is there really nothing in the bottle?  
my wife also, when she walks in the fog, often wonders what is fog.  
and when she looks at the clouds she wonders what are clouds.  
or so she tells me.

but perhaps what my wife tells me is not important.

*normal voice:*  
anyway the 17th goes into the 18th then the 19th then the 20th the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th the 29th the 30th the 31st.  
of March.  
thus time goes by.

4  
*whispered:*  
1,000 years ago.  
on a 17th of April.  
a man went to the butcher and bought a fresh bone.  
who that man was is not important.  
he is dead now, again and again, but art is alive.  
I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
so the man bought a fresh bone.  
on the 17th of April, 1,000 years ago.  
he boiled it.  
for an hour or so, he boiled the bone.  
when he took it out, its aspect, he thought, was not the same.  
you yourself can verify it:  
spread glue on your floor  
next to it spread tar  
next to it spread fruit jelly  
next to it spread biscuit paste  
now look at what you've done  
but perhaps what you have done is not important.

*normal voice:*  
anyway the 17th goes into the 18th then the 19th then the 20th the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th the 29th the 30th.  
of April.  
thus time goes by.





Robert Filliou, *A Show of Hands*, 1964. (Foto Will Scott Hyde).



5

*whispered:*

In the month of May, 500 years ago.  
 on the 17th of May, to be precise.  
 a man walked to a park.  
 who that man was is not important.  
 he is dead now, again, again and  
 again, but art is alive.  
 I mean let's keep names out of this.  
 a man, then, walked to a park, the  
 17th of May, 500 years ago.  
 he pulled a coin out of his pocket.  
 he pushed it into the ground.  
 then he took the coin out.  
 he looked at the print left in the earth.  
 he thought a long time.  
 then decided he could buy nothing  
 with it.  
 my daughter, likewise, tried to cut a  
 match with a pair of scissors.  
 first she put the match between the  
 tips of the two blades.  
 then she put the match at the top of  
 the angle formed by the two blades.  
 although her age is not yet 3, she...  
 but perhaps what my daughter's age is  
 not important.

*normal voice:*

anyway the 17th goes into the 18th  
 then the 19th then the 20th  
 the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th  
 the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th  
 the 29th the 30th  
 the 31st.  
 of May.  
 thus time goes by.

6

*whispered:*

it was the 17th of June, 400 years ago.  
 a man took a rubber ball and threw it  
 in the water.  
 who that man was is not important.  
 he is dead, now again again again and  
 again, but art is alive.  
 I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
 so that man, on the 17th of June, 400  
 years ago, took a rubber ball and  
 threw it in the water.  
 he fished it out.  
 with a knife he made a few holes into  
 the rubber ball.  
 he threw it back in the water.  
 the ball sank.  
 you also, when at the grocer's.  
 observe his scales.  
 it indicates the price as well as the  
 weight of the thing you bought.  
 how?  
 what did you buy?  
 how much did it weigh?  
 what did it cost?

but perhaps what it cost is not  
 important.

*normal voice:*

anyway the 17th goes into the 18th  
 then the 19th then the 20th  
 the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th  
 the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th  
 the 29th  
 the 30th.  
 of June.  
 thus time goes by.

7

*whispered:*

on the 17th of July, 300 years ago.  
 a man decided to take his  
 temperature every morning until the  
 end of the month.  
 who that man was is not important.  
 he is dead now, again again again  
 again and again, but art is alive.  
 I mean let's keep names out of this.  
 now then.  
 it was 300 years ago, on the 17th of  
 July.  
 a man decided to take his  
 temperature every morning until the  
 end of the month.  
 he noted it down on a chart.  
 at the end of the month, he thought.  
 I'll plot my temperature line on the  
 chart.  
 and I'll find out something about my  
 health.  
 here is for your own observation and  
 reflexion:  
 measure the surface of your body.  
 is it superior or inferior to 1 and 1/2  
 square meters?  
 what atmospheric pressure does it  
 withstand?  
 your body, that is.  
 but perhaps what atmospheric  
 pressure your body withstands is not  
 important.

*normal voice:*

anyway the 17th goes into the 18th  
 then the 19th then the 20th  
 the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th  
 the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th  
 the 29th the 30th  
 the 31st.  
 of July.  
 and so time goes by.

8

*whispered:*

200 years ago, on the 17th of August.  
 a man dived into the sea to a depth  
 of 10 to 15 feet.  
 who that man was is not important.

he is dead now, again again again  
 again again and again, but art is alive.  
 I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
 so, on a summer day,  
 a 17th of August, 200 years ago.  
 a man dived into the sea to a depth  
 of 10 to 15 feet.  
 he tried to breathe.  
 he found it difficult, and tried to  
 guess why.  
 if you prefer the movies.  
 go see a film.  
 take an orchestra seat.  
 when the film is over, go up to the  
 balcony.  
 see the film a second time.  
 where did you find the temperature  
 warmer?  
 downstairs or upstairs?  
 though perhaps what you find is not  
 important.

*normal voice:*

anyway the 17th goes into the 18th  
 then the 19th then the 20th  
 the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th  
 the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th  
 the 29th the 30th  
 the 31st.  
 of August.  
 thus time goes by.

9

*whispered:*

100 years ago  
 a 17th of September.  
 a man grabbed a hammer and went  
 down to the basement of his house.  
 who that man was is not important.  
 he is dead now, again again again  
 again again again and again, but art is  
 alive.  
 I mean let's keep names out of this.  
 a man grabbed a hammer and went  
 down to the basement of his house.  
 a 17th of September  
 100 years ago.  
 he got a piece of anthracite.  
 then a piece of charcoal.  
 he put them side by side.  
 with the hammer  
 he hit the anthracite  
 then he hit the charcoal.  
 then he compared the results.  
 as for you if you wish,  
 light a candle  
 put some flour in the palm of your  
 hand  
 blow the flour unto the flame of the  
 candle.  
 do you hear anything?  
 but perhaps what you hear is not  
 important.



*normal voice:*

anyway the 17th goes into the 18th  
then the 19th then the 20th  
the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th  
the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th  
the 29th  
the 30th.  
of September.  
thus time goes by.

10

*whispered:*

10 years ago  
precisely, on the 17th of October  
a man caught a frog.  
he is dead probably, but art is alive.  
I mean let's keep names out of this.  
the 17th of October, I said, 10 years  
ago.  
a man caught a frog.  
he held it in his hand.  
he looked at it closely and wondered:  
can the frog hear noises.  
he looked for the frog's ears on its  
head.  
a friend of mine  
whose eyesight is perfect  
likes to read the morning newspaper  
by holding in front of it a shortighted  
man's eyeglasses  
and, in the evening, he reads the  
newspaper by holding in front of it a  
longsighted man's eyeglasses.  
he says he finds it fun.  
but perhaps what my friend finds fun  
is not important.

*normal voice:*

anyway, the 17th goes into the 18th  
then the 19th then the 20th  
the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th  
the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th  
the 29th the 30th  
the 31st.  
of October.  
thus time goes by.

11

*whispered:*

5 years ago, the 17th of November,  
a man stood at the bottom of a  
staircase.  
who that man was is not important.  
he may be dead already, but art is  
alive.  
I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
all right.  
the 17th of November, 5 years ago,  
a man stood at the bottom of a  
staircase.  
he counted his heartbeats for 1  
minute.  
then he ran up the steps of the

staircase.

when he got to the top again he  
counted his heartbeats.  
you too, in the fall,  
can measure up the height of a small  
tree.  
wait until the following spring.  
measure the tree once more.  
has it grown during the winter?  
do you know why?  
but perhaps what you know is not  
important.

*normal voice:*

anyway, the 17th goes into the 18th  
then the 19th then the 20th  
the 21st the 22nd the 23rd the 24th  
the 25th the 26th the 27th the 28th  
the 29th  
the 30th.  
of November.  
thus time goes by.

12

*whispered:*

the 17th of December, 1 year ago,  
a man took a dry sponge, and  
dropped it into a bucket full of water.  
who that man was is not important.  
he will die soon, but art is alive.  
I mean, let's keep names out of this.  
as I was saying, a 17th of December,  
1 year ago,  
a man took a dry sponge, and  
dropped it into a bucket full of water.  
he waited 5 seconds.  
then he took the sponge out.  
he pressed it.  
he saw...  
never mind what he saw.  
what do *you* conclude?  
only what *you* conclude is important.

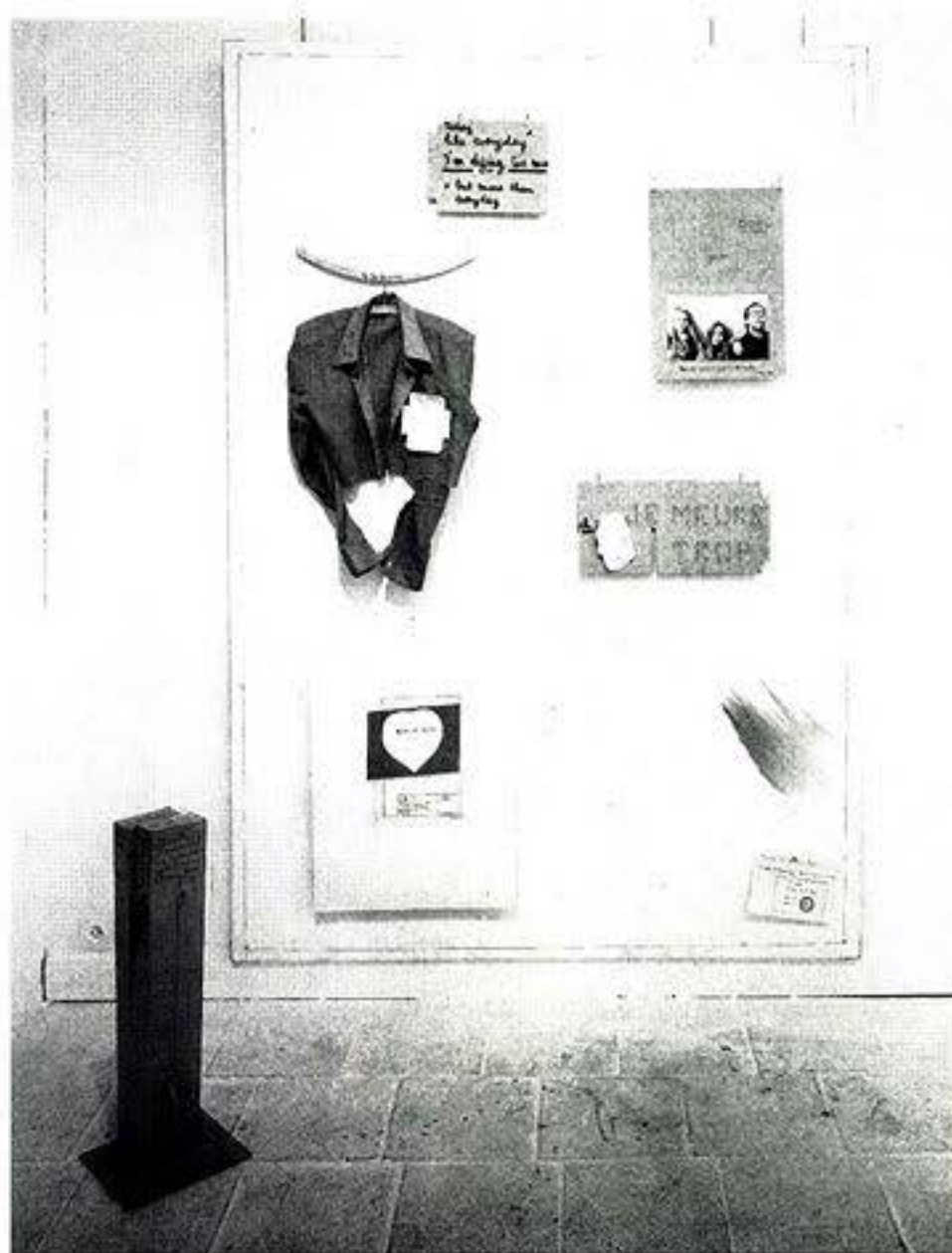
*normal voice:*

but please keep in mind that the 17th  
of December is followed by the 18th  
then the 19th then the 20th the 21st  
the 22nd the 23rd the 24th the 25th.  
of December.  
that on the 25th of December Jesus  
was born.  
or so the christians say.  
the jews deny it.  
the moslems are of two minds about it.  
the buddhists don't care.  
nor do the communists and the  
atheists.  
as for the artists –  
well what the artists believe is a new  
story.

As registered on twelve 3-minute records  
for juke-box

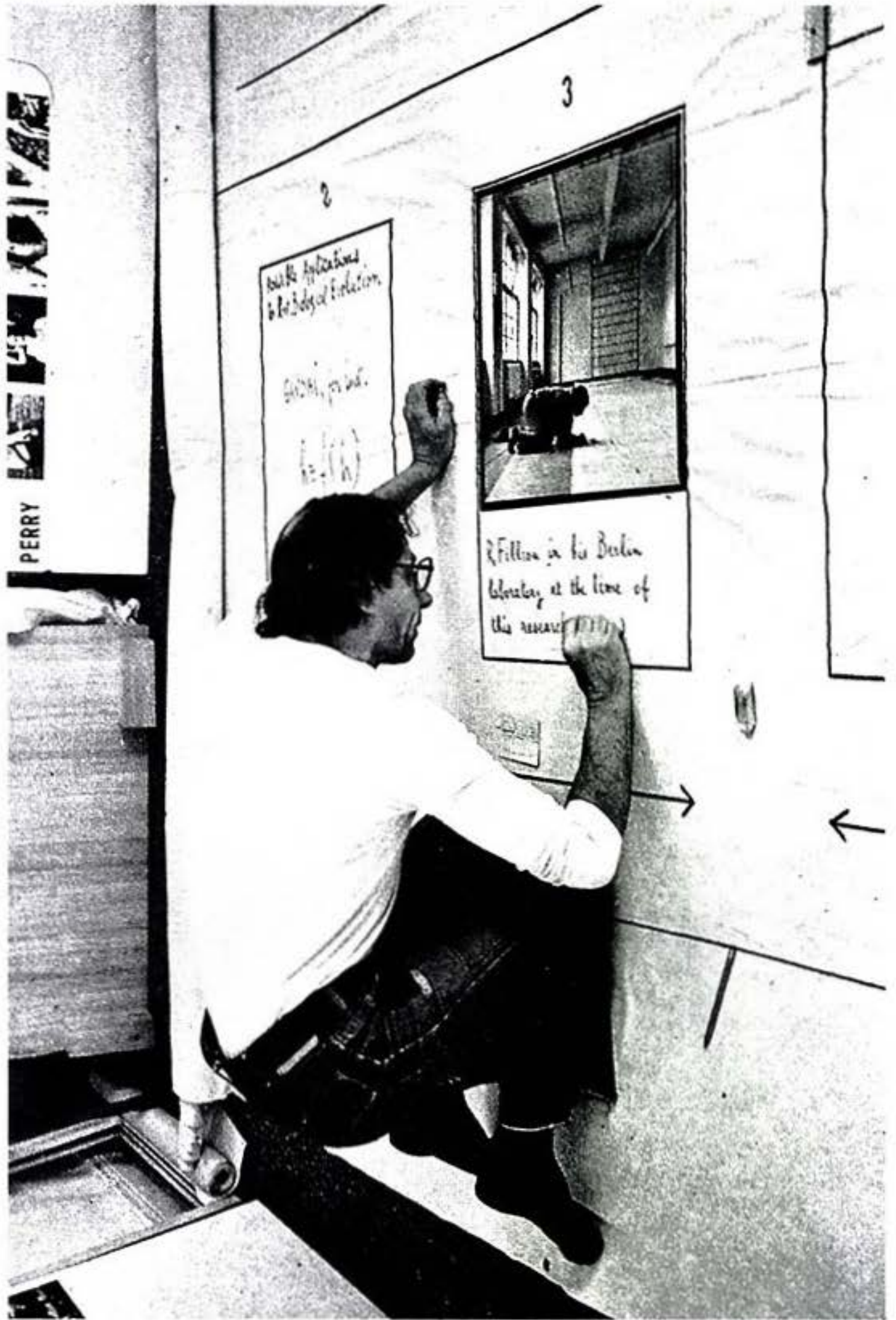
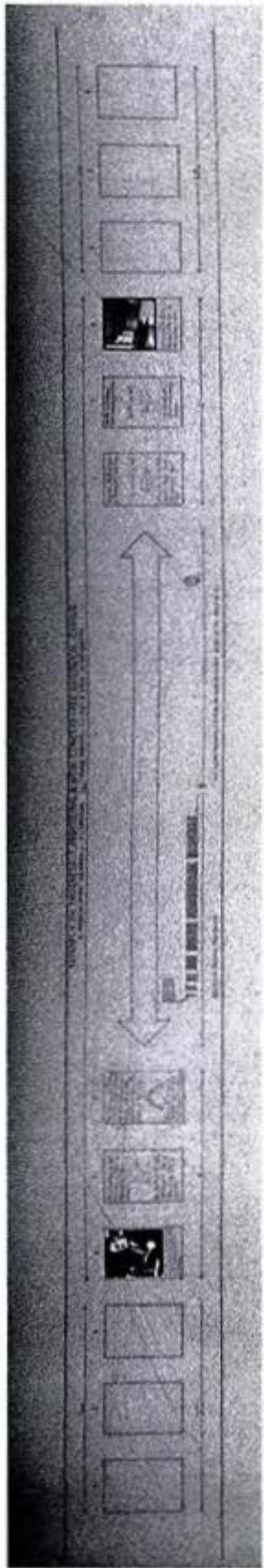






Robert Filliou, *9 Weeks of Research*,  
Wide White Space Gallery, Anversa, 1971.  
(Courtesy Wide White Space Gallery).

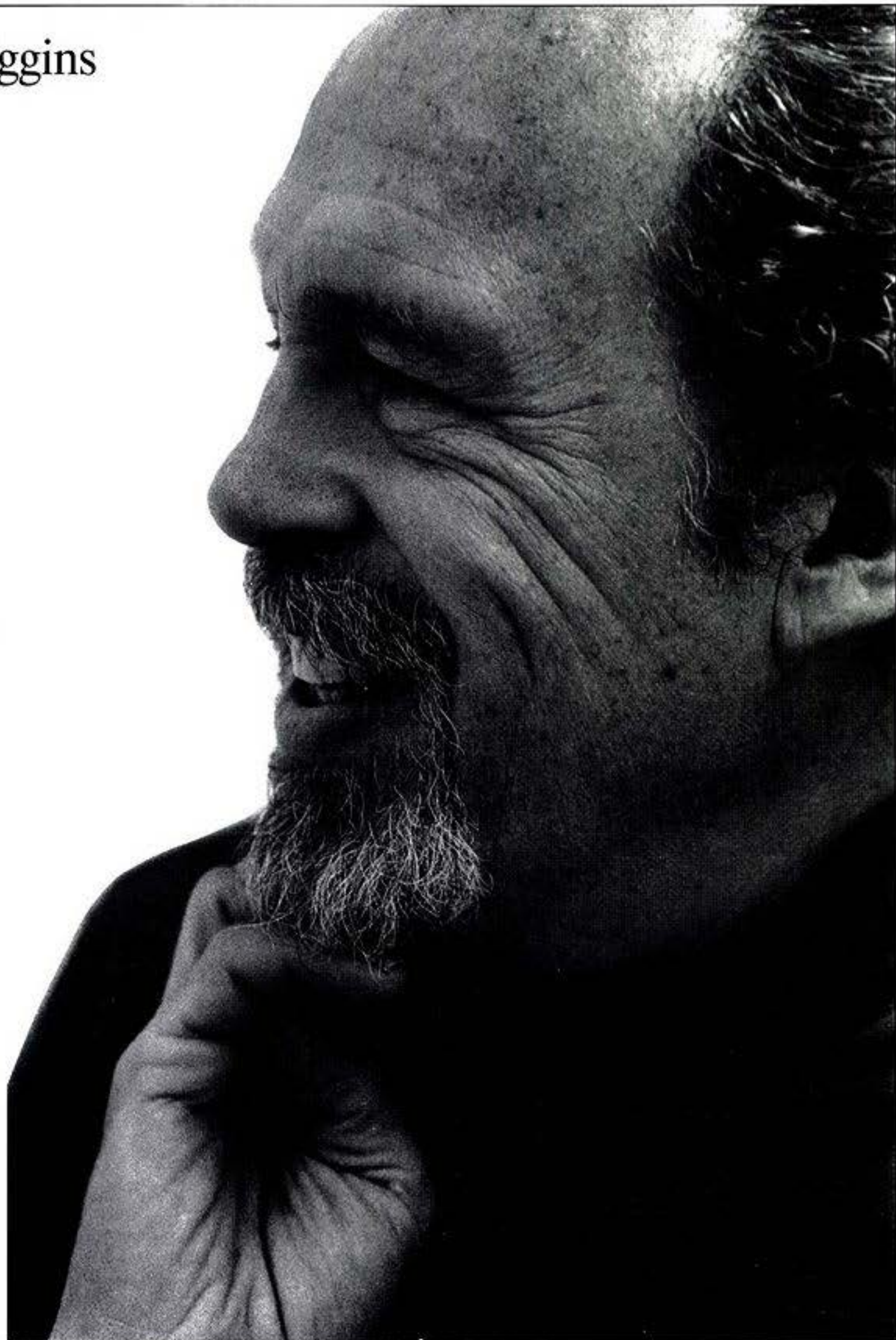




Robert Filliou, *Recherche sur l'origine*,  
Multipla, Milano, 1973.



Dick Higgins





# A Child's History of Fluxus

Dick Higgins

Long long ago, back when the world was young – that is, sometime around the year 1958 – a lot of artists and composers and other people who wanted to do beautiful things began to look at the world around them in a new way (for them).

They said: "Hey! – coffee cups can be more beautiful than fancy sculptures. A kiss in the morning can be more dramatic than a drama by Mr. Fancypants. The sloshing of my foot in my wet boot sounds more beautiful than fancy organ music."

And when they saw that, it turned their minds on. And they began to ask questions. One question was: "Why does everything I see that's beautiful like cups and kisses and sloshing feet have to be made into just a part of something fancier and bigger? Why can't I just use it for its own sake?"

When they asked questions like that, they were inventing Fluxus; but *this* they didn't know yet, because Fluxus was like a baby whose mother and father couldn't agree on what to call it – they knew it was there, but it didn't have a name.

Well, these people were scattered all over the world. In America there were George (George Brecht) and Dick (Dick Higgins) and La Monte (La Monte Young) and Jackson (Jackson MacLow) and plenty of others. In Germany there were Wolf (Wolf Vostell) and Ben and Emmett (Ben Patterson and Emmett Williams) who were visiting there from America, and there was another visitor in Germany too from a very little country on the other side of the world, from Korea – his name was Nam June Paik. Oh there were more too, there and in other countries also.

They did "concerts" of everyday living; and they gave exhibitions of what they found, where they shared the things that they liked best with whoever would

come. Everything was itself, it wasn't part of something bigger and fancier. And the fancy people didn't like this, because it was all cheap and simple, and nobody could make much money out of it.

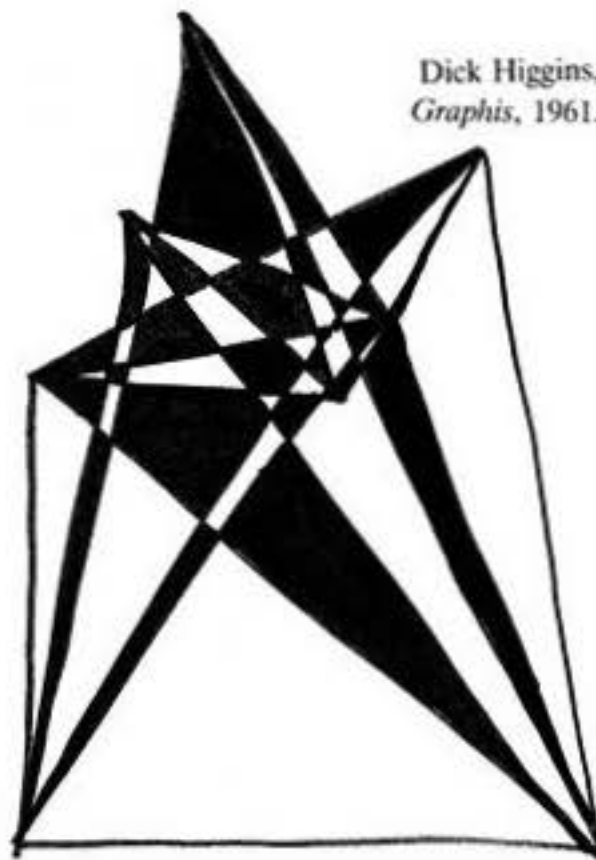
But these people were scattered all over the world. They sometimes knew about each other, but they didn't see each other much or often. And they spoke different languages and had different names for what they were doing, even when they were doing the same thing. It was all mixed up.

Well, La Monte had a pal – another George, George Maciunas; his name looked strange but sounded easy enough – "Ma-chóo-nuss". And George Maciunas liked to make books. So La Monte said, "Let's do a book of our kind of thing." And his friend Jackson agreed. And they did it. La Monte collected the things for the book, and

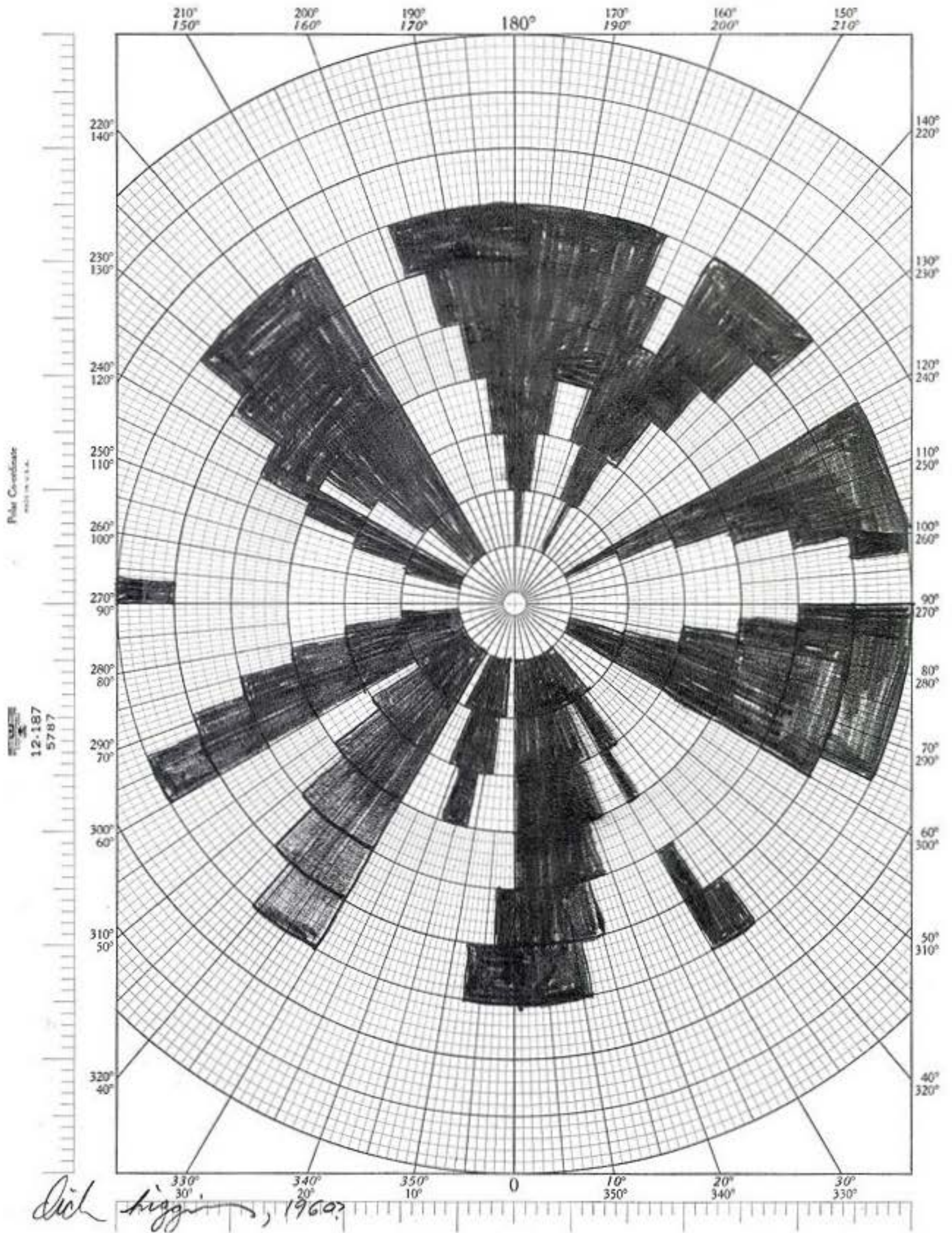
George Maciunas put it onto pages, and after a while, they were able to take it to a printer and have it printed. They called the book *An Anthology* which is a fun word for a collection. No fancy name. Not "A Fluxus Anthology", because Fluxus things weren't named yet. Just *An Anthology*. It was a beautiful book and you can still buy it and look at the beautiful, simple things in it – ideas and piles of words and ways for making your own life more wonderful. Well, it costs money to make books, and if you spend your money on one thing you can't spend it on another. George Maciunas had rented a beautiful big room in the fanciest part of New York City, and there he had an art gallery where Fluxus kinds of things were shown and shared or allowed to happen. But when there was no money to pay for all that, once the book was done, George Maciunas had to give up his AG Gallery, as he called it; and he decided to go to Germany. With him he took some big boxes all chockablock full of leftover things that La Monte and the others had collected, but which didn't fit into the *Anthology*.

George Maciunas' idea was to get together with the people in Germany who were doing the same kind of thing, and to do something like a book and something like a magazine – it would be printed every so often, and it would always change, always be different, always be really itself. It needed a name. So George Maciunas chose a very funny word for "change" – Fluxus. And he started taking Fluxus things to the printers in Germany, to make his magazine. To let people know about this kind of book, he decided to give some Fluxus concerts there, so the newspapers would write about them and people would find out about his books. So in September 1962 the first of the Fluxus concerts happened in a little city

Dick Higgins,  
*Graphis*, 1961.







Dick Higgins, *Graphis*, 1960.



where George Maciunas was living, in Wiesbaden, Germany (you say that – “Vees’-bodd-en”). Dick went there from New York, with Alison (Alison Knowles) his artist wife, and they took with them lots of pieces by other American people who had been finding and sharing Fluxus kinds of things.

The concerts certainly did get written about! They were on television too. Poor George Maciunas’ mother! She was an old-fashioned lady, and when the television showed all the crazy things that her son George was doing at the Fluxus concerts, she was so embarrassed that she wouldn’t go out of her house for two weeks because she was so ashamed of what the neighbors might say. Oh well, you have to expect that kind of thing. Actually some of the neighbors really liked the Fluxus concerts. The janitor at the museum where the Fluxus concerts were happening liked them so well that he came to every performance with his wife and children.

By and by other museums and public places wanted Fluxus concerts too. So Fluxus concerts happened next in England and Denmark and France. And new pieces kept being found or done – Fluxus people (we called them “flux-people”) sent things from Japan and Holland and all kinds of places. Fluxus got famous.

And then Fluxus began to get copied. Fancy people began copying Fluxus things and ideas. But they tried to make fancy things out of them – and that changed them. When teacups were replaced by millions of teacups they weren’t simple any more, so they stopped being Fluxus. That was always the difference: they stopped being art of life. You could always tell the real Fluxus thing from the fake ones because the real ones stayed simple, while the fake ones had fancy names attached to them.

Once fame began to happen George Maciunas and the other Fluxus people had to figure out what to do next to keep Fluxus fun and working for everybody. George liked to be the boss; but he was smart enough to know that he couldn’t be boss and tell the Fluxus artists what to do, because they’d quit and they were mostly better artists than he was. So he became the chairman instead. That meant that he couldn’t tell people what *they had* to do, or what they must *not* do if they wanted to stay

part of Fluxus; instead he could tell the world what Fluxus *was*, and anyone who wanted to do that kind of thing was Fluxus. That was smart because it meant the Fluxus people didn’t break up into gangs that disagreed, the way lots of artists’ groups did before that. They stuck together to do Fluxus kinds of things, even when they were also doing other kinds of things at the same time.

Twice George Maciunas forgot this. Once, in the winter of 1963, Dick and Alison went to Sweden and gave Fluxus concerts; but there was no money to buy tickets so George Maciunas or Ben or Emmett could come to Sweden. So Dick (that’s me) and Alison gave the concerts with new Swedish Fluxus people there. George got very angry and told Dick and Alison they couldn’t be Fluxus people any more. But so what: nobody paid any attention to that, because Dick and Alison were doing Fluxus concerts of things by Ben and Emmett and George (Brecht) and Bob (Watts) and the Japanese Fluxus people and so on. It was fun and it was Fluxus, which was what counted.

In 1963 George Maciunas came back to America. He opened a Fluxus store and gave Fluxus festivals. The German Fluxus people came to visit; so did the artists’ groups before that. They stuck together to do Fluxus kinds of French ones. Invitations began to come from fancy places – museums and colleges; but the Fluxus people were too smart to get involved with those. They would have lost their freedom. So the colleges and museums got the fake Fluxus people and things (and they still have them, *mostly*). You could tell the fakes because they weren’t themselves: because of their famous names. The real things were much cheaper, and this confused the fancy folk. But oh well.

But by 1965 some of the Fluxus people themselves began to get famous. This would have been okay, except that George Maciunas didn’t know how to handle them anymore. He kept trying to be boss. He got very very angry when a group of Fluxus people decided to join some artists who weren’t Fluxus people in a big performance that was kind of a circus, called *Originale* (“Or-ee-ghee-noll-eh”). Maciunas and his friend Henry Flynt tried to get the Fluxus people to march around outside the circus with white cards that said *Originale* was bad. And they tried to say

that the Fluxus people who were in the circus weren’t Fluxus any more. That was silly, because it made a split. I thought it was funny, and so first I walked around with Maciunas and with Henry with a card, then I went inside and joined the circus; so both groups got angry with me. Oh well. Some people say that Fluxus died that day – I once thought so myself – but it turned out I was wrong.

Why was I wrong? Because Fluxus things still needed doing and Fluxus people kept on doing them. Maciunas kept printing Fluxus things – cards and games and ideas – and putting them into little plastic boxes that were more fun than most books. I made little books that were really Fluxus, though they didn’t have that name on them. And every so often there were flux-concerts.

And there still are.

A lot of time has gone by now. As I write this it is almost 1980. George Maciunas died last year of a long and horrible illness. But he knew before he died that his mistake was forgiven, that all the Fluxus people were together again – they came together for concerts, for New Years’ parties, for many things like that. And when Maciunas was dying, they came together to his house to help him finish up a lot of his Fluxus boxes and works before he died. When Maciunas went into the hospital for the last time, his doctors said, “We don’t know why this man is still alive”. But the Fluxus people knew. Being friends and sharing simple things can be so very important.

And though Fluxus is almost twenty years old now – or maybe more than twenty, depending on when you want to say it began – there are still new Fluxus people coming along, joining the group. Why? Because Fluxus has a life of its own, apart from the old people in it. It is simple things, taking things for themselves and not just as part of bigger things. It is something that many of us must do, at least part of the time. So Fluxus is inside you, is part of how you are. It isn’t just a bunch of things and dramas but is part of how you live. It is beyond words.

When you grow up, do you want to be part of Fluxus? I do.

From Dick Higgins, *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia*, © 1979 and 1984.



# Joe Jones

ETNMZ

THERE ARE SO MANY ARTICLES NOW BEING WRITTEN ABOUT "FLUXUS" AND HISTORICALLY FILLED WITH DATES AND PHILOSOPHY, SOME CORRECT BUT MANY INCORRECT THAT I THOUGHT AS A MEMBER OF "FLUXUS" FOR SOME YEARS, TO PUT A LITTLE HUMOR AND WHAT I BELIEVE WHAT "FLUXUS" WAS ALL ABOUT TO ME, ON PAPER.

FLUXUS = MACIUNAS = FLUXUS = MACIUNAS = FLUXUS

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH GEORGE MACIUNAS WAS A NO-SMOKING SIGN, NOT ONLY ON THE DOOR, BUT THE CEILING, THE FLOOR, AND IN THE TOILET. SINCE I WAS AND STILL AM A HEAVY SMOKER, I SPENT MUCH OF MY TIME ON CANAL STREET, SMOKING, OR IN THE CANAL STREET BAR WHICH WAS UNDER MACIUNAS FLUX-SHOP LOFT. THE BAR BECAME A MEETING PLACE FOR ALL THE SMOKERS, BRECHT, WATTS, KNOWLES, PATERSON ETC.... GEORGE MACIUNAS WOULD BE UPSTAIRS SETTING UP FOR A PERFORMANCE AND WE WOULD BE DOWN STAIRS SMOKING AND DRINKING BEER. FINALLY WHEN PERFORMANCE TIME WAS TO BE, WE WOULD GO UP, DO THE PERFORMANCE AND RETURN AS FAST AS POSSIBLE TO THE BAR.

GEORGE MACIUNAS WAS AND STILL IS A PRIME-MOVER OF PEOPLE. GETTING ARTISTS FROM JAPAN, EUROPE AND SOME-TIMES I THOUGHT FROM HELL, TO HIS FLUX-SHOP ON CANAL STREET. AS I CAME DIRECTLY FROM MUSIC, VIA JAZZ - CAFE, - BROWN, I WAS OVERWHELMED BY THE ENERGY OF THIS MAN, WHO COULD, I STILL BELIEVE BE THE POPE, IF HE WANTED.

THE FLUX-SHOP BECAME REALLY A CENTER FOR IDEAS, BRECHT, A SCIENTIST BY TRADE, BEING AN ARTIST BY HEART, DEVELOPED, TILL HE NO LONGER COULD BE A SCIENTIST AND MOVED TO EUROPE.

WHAT I AM TRYING TO SAY IS PEOPLE CAME, PEOPLE WENT BUT WE WERE ALL INFLUENCED BY FLUX - GEORGE WOULD ENCOURAGE, HELP AND PROVIDE THE SPACE AND THE MATERIAL, WE COULD BE OURSELVES, THERE WERE REALLY NO DEMANDS FROM GEORGE EXCEPT THE NO SMOKING.

THERE ALSO COMES A TIME TO GRADUATE, AND SOMEHOW WE DID, I TRIED FLYING, GAVE UP MY MUSIC STORE AND FOLLOWED BRECHT TO EUROPE.

SO WHAT IS FLUXUS? FLUXUS IS ONE MAN CALLED GEORGE MACIUNAS

10/15 Joe Jones 85





Ay-o, Joe Jones e Al Hansen provano due strumenti musicali costruiti da Joe Jones per la Johnny Carson TV di New York (e mai usati dall'emittente televisiva). (Foto Peter Moore).



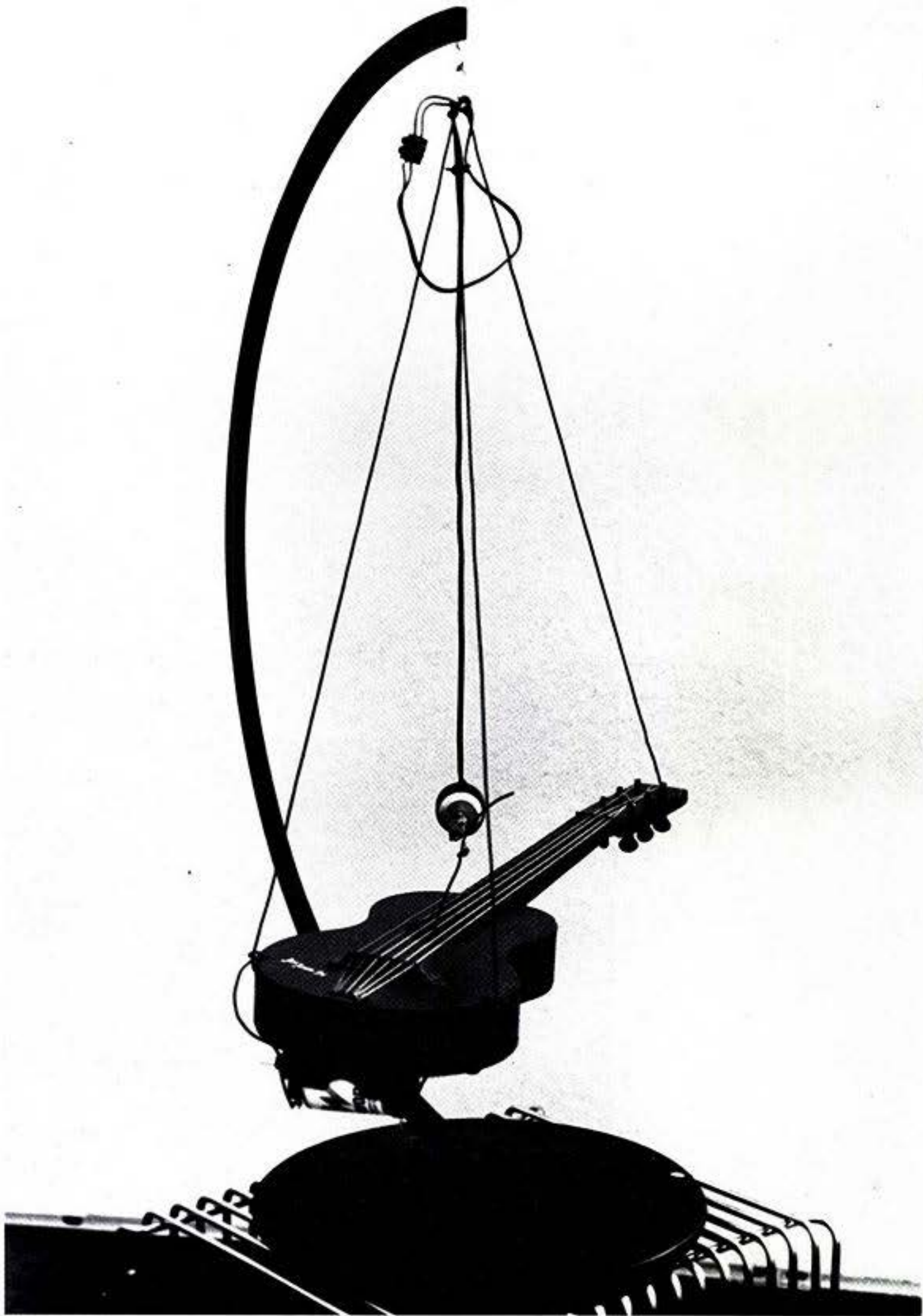


Joe Jones, *Fucking Bobby Dolls*, 1964. (Foto Peter Moore).



Joe Jones nel suo studio di Asolo. (Foto Gisela Scheidler).



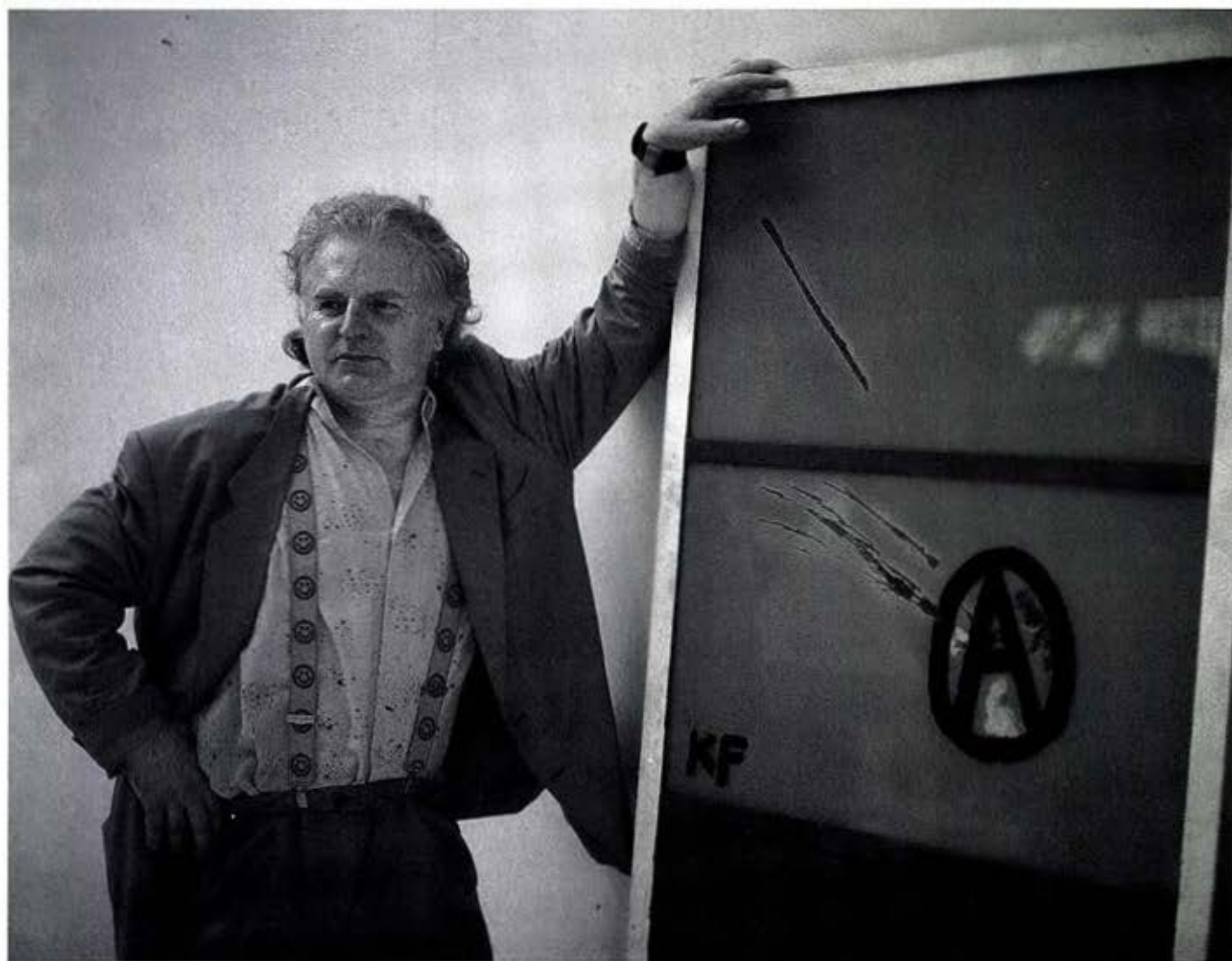


Joe Jones, *Circle Series*, 1974. (Foto Gisela Scheidler).



# Milan Knizak

Milan Knizak.  
(Foto Giovanni Giovannetti).







Milan Knizak, *Statue of the  
Chair with Pants*, 1964.  
(Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).





Dall'alto: Milan Knizak, *Spread Table*, 1964, e 2 *Coats*, 1964. (Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).



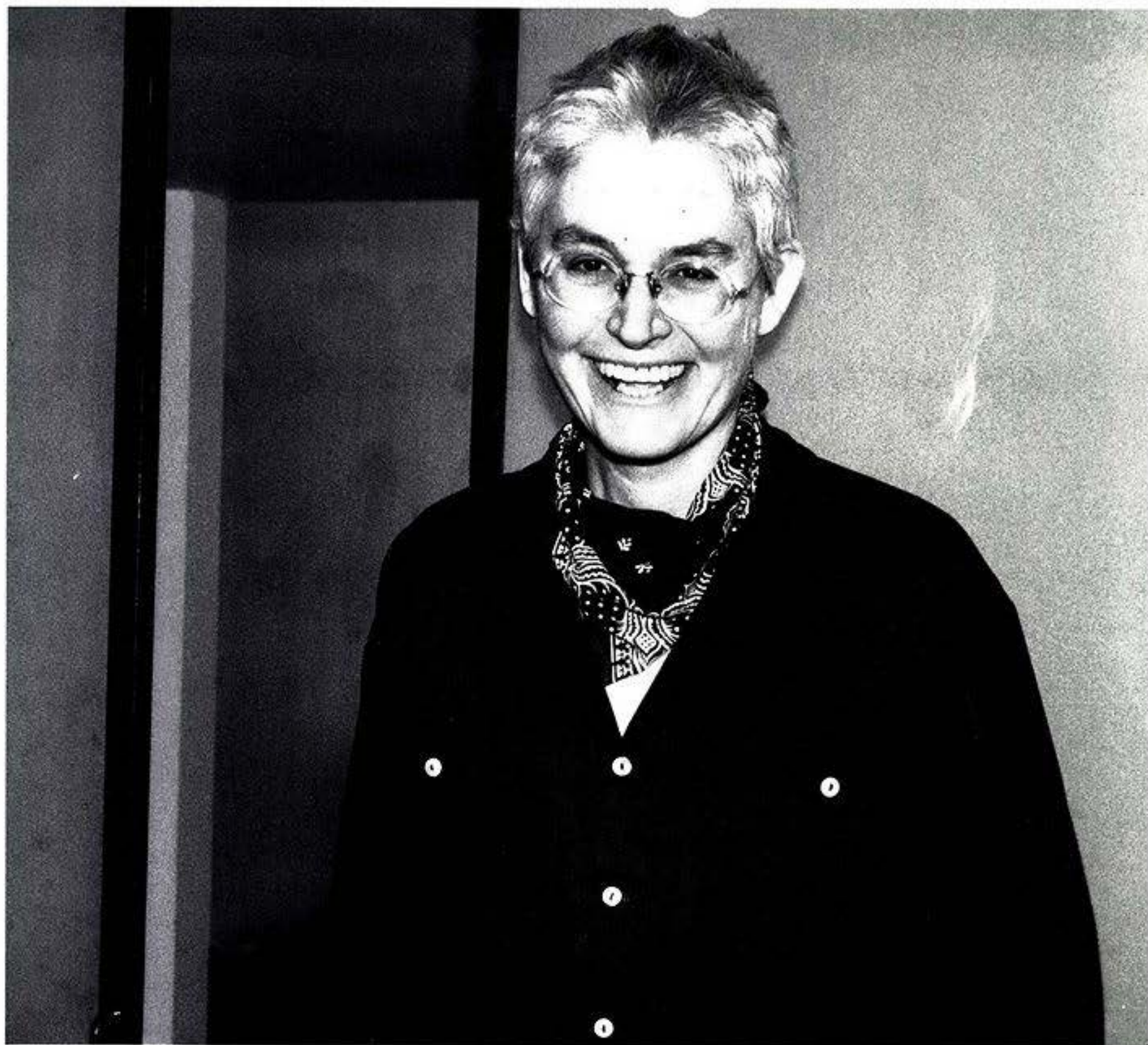


Milan Knizak, *Statue*, 1963.  
(Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).



# Alison Knowles

*What is Fluxus?  
I'm not ready  
to answer this  
question  
Alison Knowles*



Alison Knowles, 1988. (Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery / foto Wilfrid Rouff).





Alison Knowles,  
*The Identical Lunch*, 1965.



Alison Knowles,  
*Book of Bean*, 1967.  
(Foto Peter Moore).



Alla pagina seguente: Ben  
Vautier, Joe Jones, George  
Maciunas e Alison Knowles,  
Fluxall, New York, 1964.  
(Foto Peter Moore).

In basso: *Wounded Furniture*  
di Alison Knowles con Yasunao  
Tone, Fluxfest, 1983.







# Arthur Køpcke



Arthur Køpcke, Copenhagen, 1964. (Foto Gregers Nielsen).



Arthur Køpcke made paintings, drawings, collages and wrote poems from the late Forties. At first he was influenced by the works of Kurt Schwitters, Kasimir Malevich and the Russian Futurists, followed by Informal and Tachistic perspectives.

He glued and attached objects to his paintings, parallel to the Nouveau Réalistes. He "treated" his friend Otto Olsen's paintings by adding found objects, such as mirrors, pieces of paper or fabric, hair etc. to the naturalistic artworks. He produced a number of works "on licence", among these by Spoerri.

Köpcke worked with accumulations and disposed objects sprayed with silver paint and paintings made up by powder and objects to be well shaken and mixed. And he made a number of paradoxical objects e.g. *Piece No. 24*: "In a box install an electric bulb so it works but the following: = do you close the lid of the box the light goes on = do you open the lid the light goes out (system B. Kragh-Jacobsen)."

Words and fragments of sentences became part of the visual objects. His

rebuses and reading/work-pieces form plays with and visualisations of ambiguity or proverbs. The phrase in Danish: "Stol på den danske kvinde", means: "You can trust the Danish woman" – visualised by Køpcke with a drawing of a chair on (= stol på in Danish) top of a (Danish) woman.

A more serial process is indicated in *Piece No. 14*: "Close eyes / open window / open eyes / if daylight is not satisfactory close eyes again / close window / and try another window."

The works have playful hints and implications – they can be read as one thing, or read and performed as quite another. Or accepted as plain generosity as in *Piece No. 92* (one of his "presents"): a small cellophane bag containing an ordinary rubberband, seven small nails and one pin to close envelopes. Ready to use.

He points towards a point and his works are always deeply rooted in ethics concerning Life & Art. In a constant restlessness he reflects on the absurdity and the principle of chance in life.

Two basic principles permeate all the

works by Arthur Køpcke: "Fill with own imagination" and "...& C." (and continue). These principles are at the same time friendly, humoristic requests and serious appeals: Use your own imagination in an infinite process.

His *Piece No. 1*, "Music while you work", that was performed during the festival in Nikolai Church, is a complete fusion of music, poetry and visual art: Prepare a record with scotch tape and play back the record, while a lot of persons make different actions/work on stage. When the pick-up is stopped by the tape all performers should run to the record player to start the music again. The piece is over when the actions/work has been finished or when the record is over.

This piece could represent what was very characteristic for "Fluxus Fluxorum" and "Festival of Misfits": the annulment of the barriers between music, poetry, visual arts or – anything. From then on Arthur Køpcke's work became Fluxus and he participated in most major events in Europe until his death in 1977.

Marianne Bech



Arthur Køpcke, *Music while you work*, 1966.



# Takehisa Kosugi

## SOUTH NO.3 (MALIKA)

1. Performer considers S (O, U, T, H) as sound and pronounces the letters as (s) ((a), (u), (θ), (θ)).
2. Performer considers S (O, U, T, H) as forms for actions or actions to sound and performs a movement to the shape of each letter.

This piece may be performed as:

- 1) single performance of each letter either with sound or action.
- 2) multiple performance of each letter by single performer as sound or action.
- 3) simultaneous performance of S with H, O with S, U with O, T with U, H with T.
- 4) continuous performance with S following H immediately.
- 5) interrupted performance with a pause between each letter.

Any of these forms may be repeated any number of times.

T. Kosugi, August 21, 1965

## TENDER MUSIC (for solo conductor)

1. Tip over some object
2. Tip back same object
3. Slant some object
4. Slant back same object
5. Tip over the slanted object
6. Slant an object that has been tipped

Conductor performs these 6 manipulations with any number of objects, in any desired direction, according to any score, timetable or other useful timing system, but always keeping distance from the objects. This piece can be used to conduct another piece (music, dance etc.)

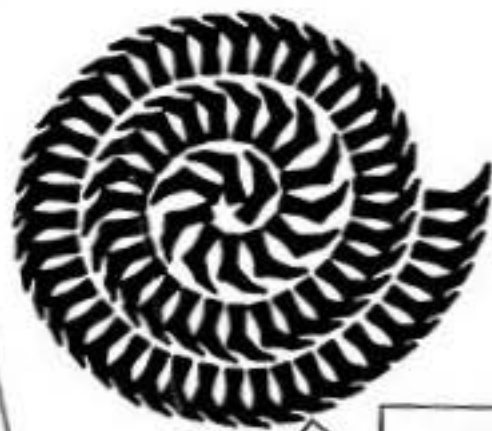
T. Kosugi, August 1965

## ORGANIC MUSIC

Breath by oneself or have something breathed for the number of times which you have decided at the performance.

Each number must contain breath-in-hold-out. Instruments may be used incidentally.

T. Kosugi



## MALIKA 5

Watch a flower until one of them falls or until all of them fall.

T. Kosugi

## CHIRONOMY 1

Put out a hand from a window for long time.



T. Kosugi

## DISTANCE FOR PIANO to David Tudor

Performer positions himself at some distance from the piano from which he should not move. Performer does not touch piano directly by any part of his body but may manipulate other objects to produce sound on piano through them. Performer produces sounds at points of the piano previously determined by him. Assistant(s) may move piano to change distance and direction to directions of the performer.

T. Kosugi, August 21, 1965

## THEATRE MUSIC

Keep walking intently

T. Kosugi

## DISTANCE FOR PIANO to David Tudor

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T. Kosugi, August 21, 1965



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T. Kosugi, August 21, 1965

MANODHARMA WITH MR. T.  
Performance with Mr. T

### ANIMA 2

Enter into a chamber which has windows. Close all the windows and doors. Put out different part of the body through each window. Go out from the chamber. The chamber may be made of a large cloth bag with door and windows made of zippers.

T.Kosugi

SOUTH NO.1 to Anthony Cox  
Pronounce "SOUTH" during a predetermined or indetermined duration.

T.Kosugi

### MICRO

T.Kosugi

Wrap a live microphone with a very large sheet of paper. Make a tight bundle. Keep the microphone live for another 5 minutes

T. Kosugi

### MUSIC FOR A REVOLUTION

Scoop out one of your eyes 5 years from now and do the same with the other eye 5 years later.

T.Kosugi

SOUTH NO.2 to Nam June Paik

Pronounce "SOUTH" during a duration of more than 15 minutes. Pause for breath-ciation of one letter to another should be smooth and slow.

T.Kosugi

### SMOKING MUSIC

Smoking event by instruction of "Organic Music".  
Smoking instrument may be used.

T.Kosugi

### FOR MR. M

Insert a rolled up sheet of paper into the throat, then move the roll to the outside of the mouth. Repeat this many times. Do not swallow the roll. Do not drop the roll except at the end. Do not use the hands except at the beginning.

T.Kosugi

T.Kosugi

EAR DRUM EVENT

1. Performer puts hands close to eardrums, then puts hands far away from eardrums. He repeats this many times slowly or quickly.
2. The performer carries some material to a sounding object, covering the object tightly with the material. He then carries the cover over to the starting point. Performer repeats this many times.
3. The performer opens and closes a door (a shutter, a window, a sliding door, etc.,) He repeats this many times quickly or slowly. Any sounding condition or moving condition may be provided behind the door.

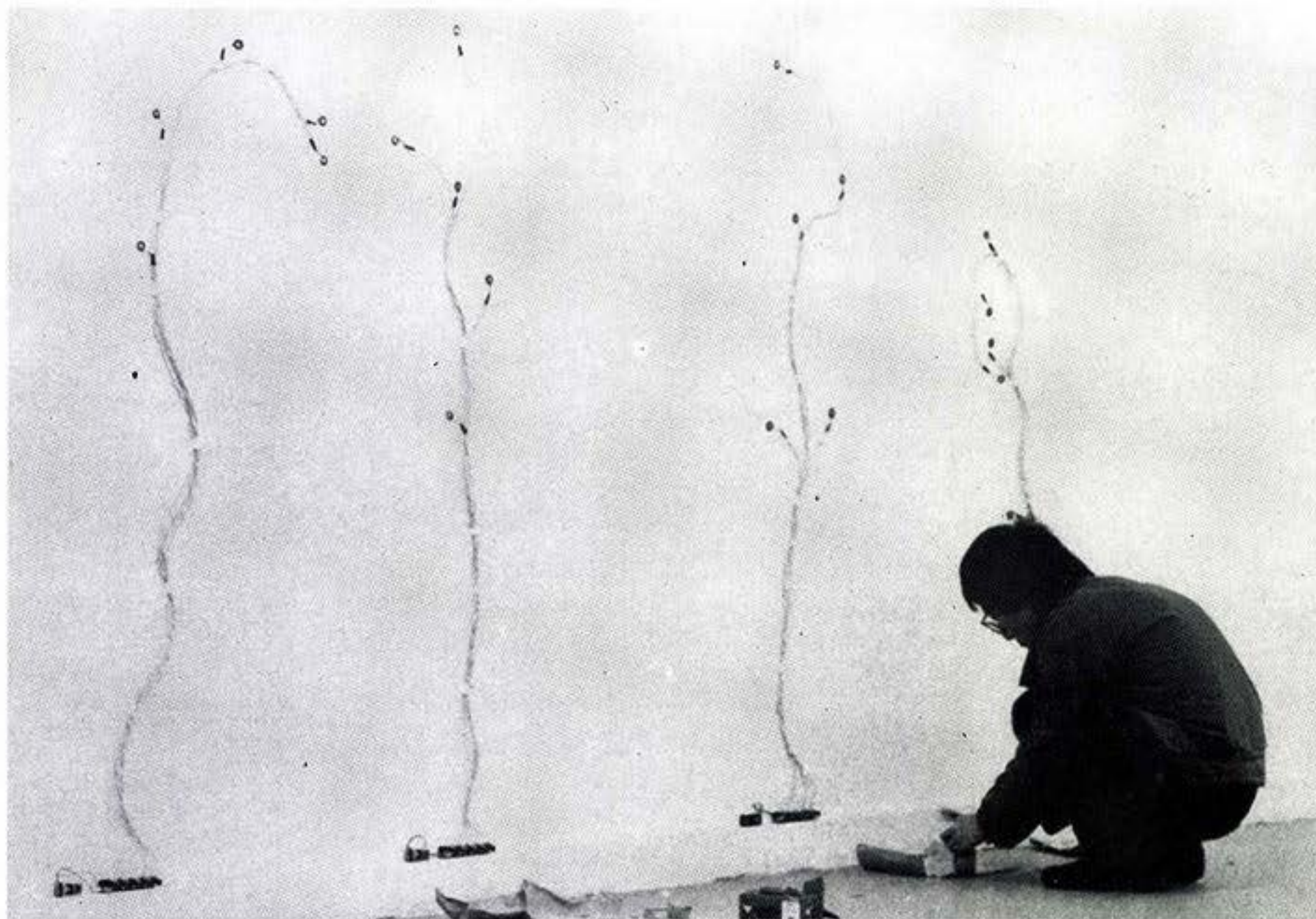




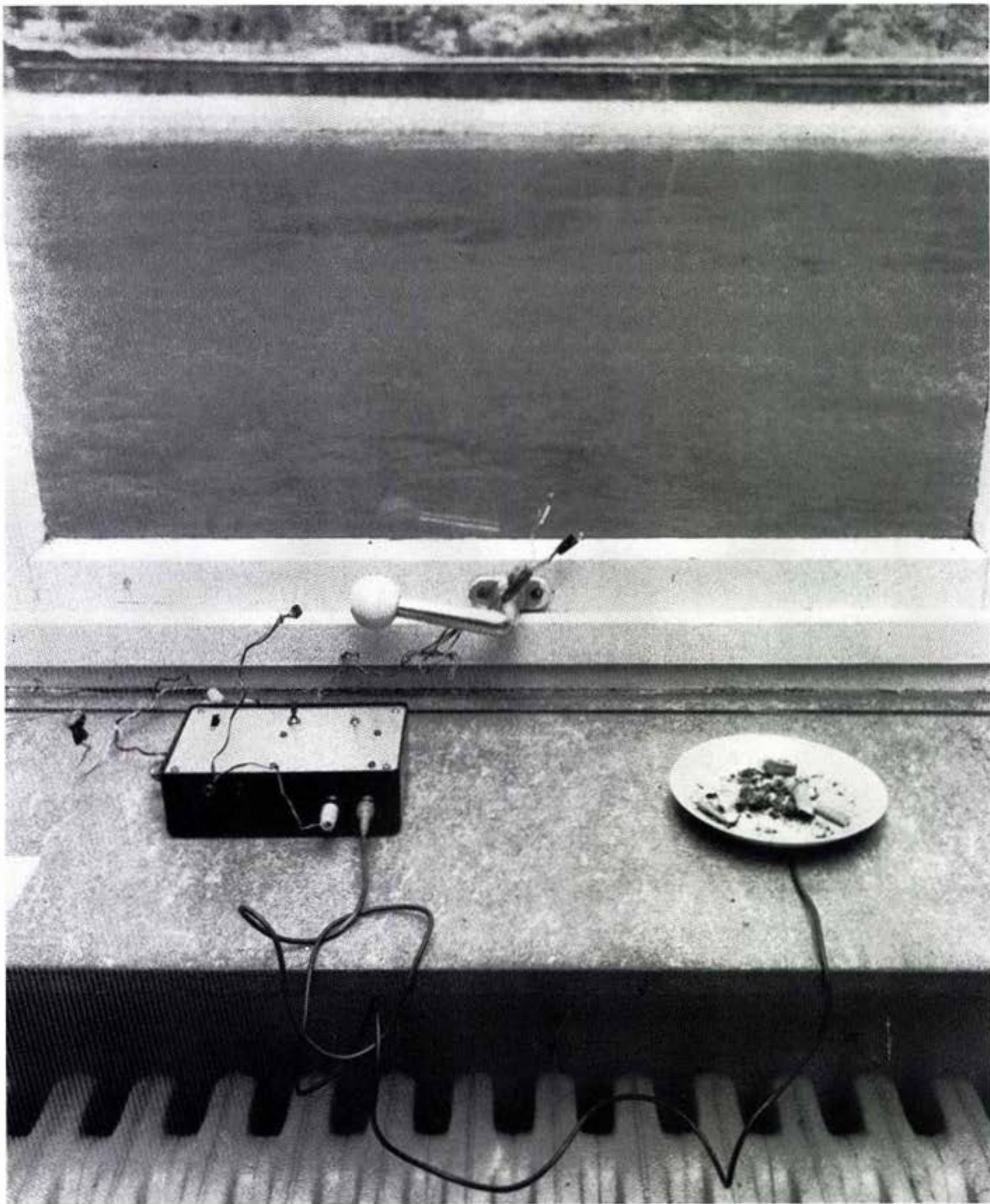
Dall'alto: Takehisa Kosugi,  
*Interspersions*, 1979-87;  
*Interspersions Part A*, 1979-87.



Alla pagina seguente:  
Takehisa Kosugi,  
*Melodies 1, 2*, 1984-87.





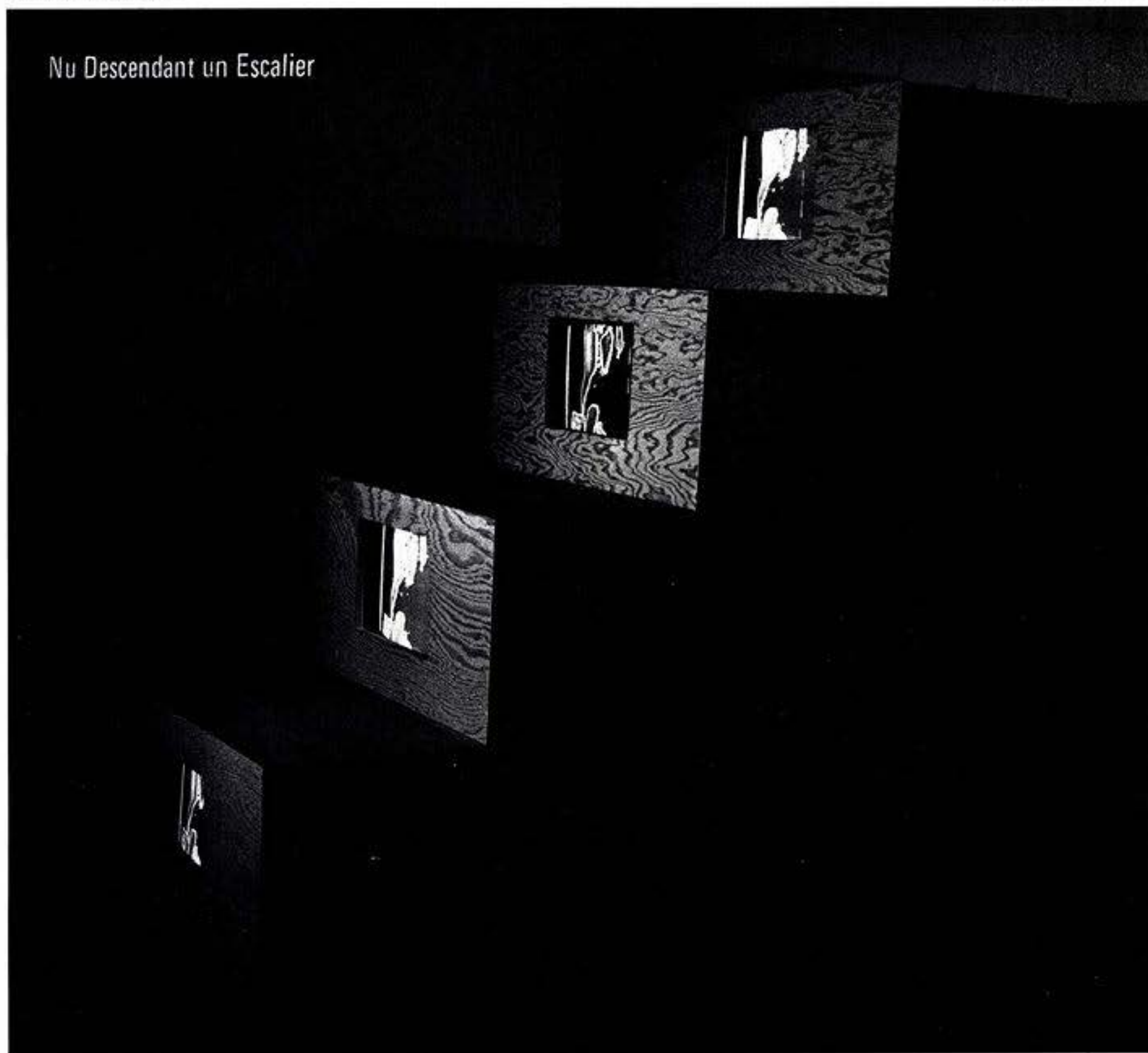




# Shigeko Kubota

Shigeko Kubota, *Duchampiana*,  
*Nude Descending a Staircase*, 1976.  
(Foto Peter Moore).

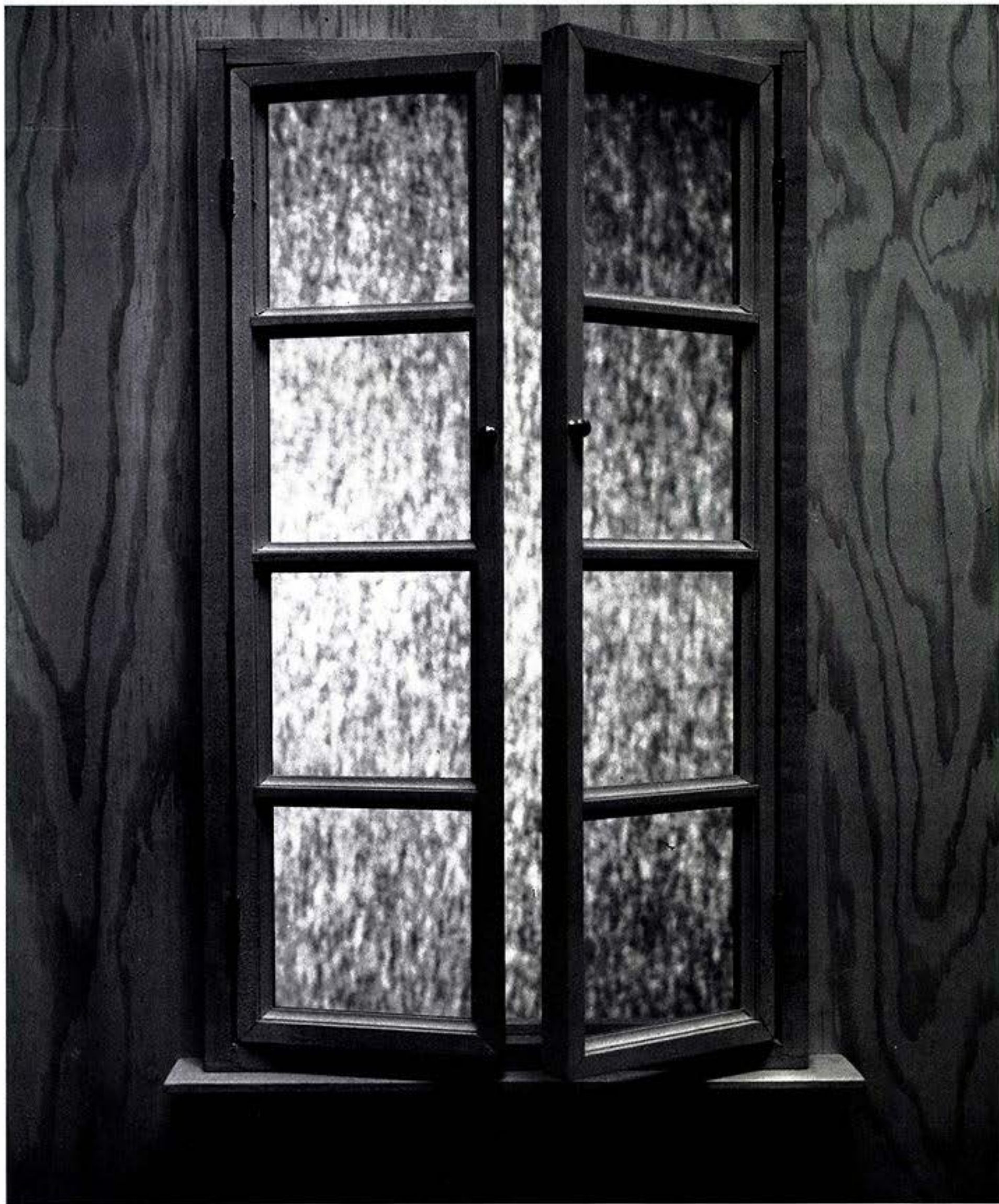
Alla pagina seguente:  
Shigeko Kubota,  
*Adam and Eve*, 1990.















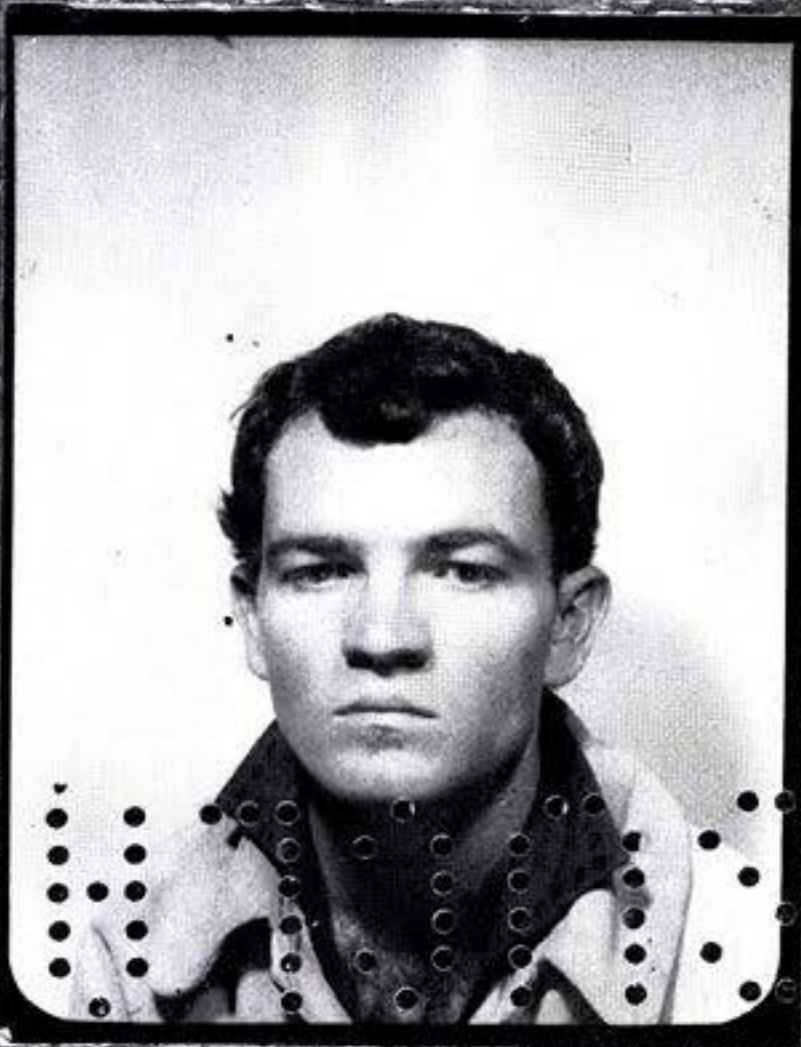
Alla pagina precedente:  
Shigeko Kubota,  
*Meta-Marcel, Window Snow*, 1976.  
(Foto Peter Moore).

Shigeko Kubota, *Bicycle Wheel*, 1983.  
(Foto Peter Moore).



# La Monte Young

La Monte Young, 1957.

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41								21	22	23	24	25	26	
42								27	28	29	30	31	32	
43								<p align="center"><b>MEMBERSHIP CARD</b></p> <p>ASUCLA Card must be accompanied by Registration Card. This Card is for the exclusive use of the UCLA Student pictured hereon for</p> <p align="center"><b>SPRING 1957</b></p> <p>Height <u>166½</u> Weight <u>109</u>            Color Eyes <u>Blue</u> Sex <u>M</u></p>						
44	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>FROSH</td><td>SOPH</td><td>JUNIOR</td><td>SENIOR</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>1 2</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 1</td><td>2</td> </tr> </table>						FROSH	SOPH	JUNIOR	SENIOR	2	1 2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 1	2
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# Lecture 1960

La Monte Young

This lecture was written in the summer of 1960. I first delivered it as part of a course in contemporary music which Terry Riley and I gave at the Ann Halprin Dancers' Workshop, Summer Session 1960, Kentfield, California. The lecture is written in sections, which are separated below. Each section originally was one page or a group of pages stapled together. Any number of them may be read in any order. The order and selection are determined by chance, thereby bringing about new relationships between parts and consequently new meanings. Three sections of the lecture were originally published in *Kulchur* 10, Summer 1963. The entire lecture was published in *Tulane Drama Reiew*, New Orleans, 1965; and in *La Monte Young, Marian Zazeela, Selected Writings*, Munich, 1969. The following pages have been reproduced from the original typescript.

*I was talking to Diane. We were discussing her methods of composing chance poems. She would write each image on a piece of paper as it came to her mind, in one sitting, put it in a paper sack – shake them around a little and then take them out – allowing them to form the poem from the order in which she drew them.*

*I had read some of them and enjoyed them very much. I told her how much I liked them. Just at that moment I felt like saying that the most important organizing factor was the unconscious mind. I said it. She said, yes, I always get a story for each poem. I was upset. I said I felt that the poem was being organized unconsciously as she wrote down the images and that, if she had a story in mind before she put the images in the sack, I doubted very much that they would support the structure of her story when she took them out and that it seemed to me she was defeating her own purposes by composing with chance. She said, oh no. I don't have a story in mind. "I like these poems because they tell me stories."*

*In the same letter that he talked about his cat, Terry Jennings said:  
Dennis might be floating — —  
the Colorado river going away  
in a Kyak — — some people*

Composition 1960 #10  
to Bob Morris

Draw a straight line  
and follow it.

La Monte Young  
October 1960

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Composition 1960 #7



to be held for a long time

La Monte Young  
July 1960



at the Javanese group said that.

Once I tried lots of mustard on a raw turnip. I liked it better than any Beethoven I had ever heard.

The summer I lived in San Francisco Terry Jennings wrote me in one of his letters, "Have you ever seen any pictures of Antarctica? I saw a book of color pictures of the sea and ice and mountains and cliffs. Colors I hadn't seen before for water and ice. Down there the explorers (in certain places above hidden crevasses) could hear ice breaking and falling underneath their tents all the time and the sounds would get louder during the day and softer at night."

I have noticed that I am inconsistent.

In his lecture, *Indeterminacy*, John Cage mentions going to a concert and finding that one of the composers had written in the program notes that he felt there was too much suffering in the world. After the concert John Cage said to this composer that he had enjoyed the music but he didn't agree with his statement about too much suffering in the world. The composer said, "What? Don't you think there is enough?" to which Cage replied that he thought there was just the right amount. Later, in a letter, Dennis Johnson wrote to me, "Do you think there is too much Evil in the world? John Cage thinks there is just the right amount. I think there is too much world in the Evil." Some time after Dennis' letter I remembered that Richard Huelsenbeck had contributed another permutation to that sentence. At one of those Dada lectures he gave in Berlin, he had made the statement that the war had not been bloody enough.

I used to talk about the new eating. One time Terry Riley said, "Yeah, even the cooks'll get rebellious. We'll walk into a hamburger stand and order something to eat. In a few minutes the cook'll give us some salt. Just salt. The one of us will say, 'What? Is this all?' And the cook'll answer, 'Whatsamatter, don't cha like static eating?'"

### anarchy

When I asked Diane to write down Dennis' statement about his having written Maxfield's *Sine Music* many times, Dennis said, "What for? Are you going to give another concert?"

I wish I could remember what Terry Jennings told us about that spider that is found in Antarctica. It was when Terry visited New York. We were having dinner and I started asking him about what kinds of animals and plants lived in Antarctica. He said that the scientists had discovered a spider that stays frozen most of the year around. It seems like he said, "about eleven months of the year". Then, when the warmer weather comes, the spider thaws out and comes to life - for about a month. He also said that maybe the



La Monte Young, *Dorian Blues*, fattoria di George Segal, Yam Festival, 1963. (Foto Peter Moore).

La Monte Young, *Piano Piece for David Tudor No. 1*, New York, 1960.





*spider lives to be many years old. I think he said, "Maybe a hundred or a hundred and sixty years old."*

*One of my favorite poets is Po Chu-i. He lived from 772-846. This poem is translated by Ching Ti.*

### The Harp

*I lay my harp on the curved table,  
Sitting there idly, filled only with emotions.  
Why should I trouble to play?  
A breeze will come and sweep the strings.*

*When Karlheinz Stockhausen gave a lecture at the University in Berkeley, he talked of some work he had been doing with television. He said he tried to let the new medium, the television machine, inspire the form of the composition. At this point someone in the audience said to his neighbor, "But I thought music was supposed to be for people."*

*Last year on one of the occasions that I was in Los Angeles, several of us were at my grandmother's house listening to electronic music by Richard Maxfield which he had just sent me from New York. As we were listening my grandmother, who has never been particularly good at keeping things straight, asked Dennis Johnson, "Did you write this?" referring to Maxfield's composition, Sine Music. Dennis replied, "Oh, many times."*

*Before we gave the first noon concert of contemporary music which I conducted at the University of California at Berkeley, I asked Dennis Johnson if he would write something about his composition, The Second Machine, which we were doing on the program because I planned to comment on each piece. Dennis wrote:*

*"Spin the needle three times. If it ever falls off, don't bother. Cheating is all right, as much as comfortable. I don't know how many possibilities, and see if I care. The scores are fire-and water-proof. Play on either side or the edge, if you get tired, and don't call me for information while I'm burning old scores. May be played under water."*

*At the end he signed his name, Dennis Johnson.*

*The only honest way of making a living is to be a thief.*

*It is often necessary that one be able to ask, "Who is John Cage?"*

*Once when Richard Maxfield, Dennis Johnson, and I were talking about Christian Wolff at Richard's apartment in New York, Dennis said, "He's only a wolf in a gilded cage." More recently, Richard and I were discussing how original Christian Wolff had been and how many of his ideas had been ahead of everybody. Richard said, "Perhaps what Dennis should have said was that John is only a cage around a gilded wolf." When I told these stories to Diane she said, "They both seem to be wrong. Dennis should have said, 'He's only a gilded wolf in a cage', and Maxfield*

### Piano Piece for David Tudor #1

Bring a bale of hay and a bucket of water onto the stage for the piano to eat and drink. The performer may then feed the piano or leave it to eat by itself. If the former, the piece is over after the piano has been fed. If the latter, it is over after the piano eats or decides not to.

La Monte Young  
October 1960

### Piano Piece for David Tudor #2

Open the keyboard cover without making, from the operation, any sound that is audible to you. Try as many times as you like. The piece is over either when you succeed or when you decide to stop trying. It is not necessary to explain to the audience. Simply do what you do and, when the piece is over, indicate it in a customary way.

La Monte Young  
October 1960

### Piano Piece for David Tudor #3

most of them  
were very old grasshoppers

La Monte Young  
November 14, 1960



(♩. = 63)

56 60 65

PPP

con sord

pppp

con sord.

pp

X - Harmon mute with plunger extended



70

Handwritten musical score for a string quartet, page 70. The score consists of eight staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The fourth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The fifth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The sixth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The seventh and eighth staves have bass clefs and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings (ppp, pp, pppp). The text "non sord." is written in the third and fourth staves. The page number "70" is in a box at the top center.



should have said, 'John is only a gilded cage around a wolf.'" After Diane and I had decided what everybody meant and should have said, I concluded it didn't really matter anyway since the whole series of stories simply amounted to a study in tarnish.

*Every word I say contributes to the lie of art.*

*I have finally begun to hear from Dennis Johnson again. Terry Riley wrote me from San Francisco: guess what? – Dennis is here – he came in new years eve – we went out to Ann Halprin's yesterday and Dennis did some real good things like take a shower in her shower while her little girls looked on and went down the road and borrowed an onion from a neighbor and stuff like that –*

*In another letter Terry Jennings wrote, "The cat is in the middle of time. His tail sometimes hits the sky (just the low parts below the branches). He lies down a lot."*

*I recently completed Compositions 1960 Numbers 2 Through 5.*

*Composition 1960 # 2 reads:*

*"Build a fire in front of the audience. Preferably, use wood although other combustibles may be used as necessary for starting the fire or controlling the smoke. The fire may be of any size, but it should not be the kind which is associated with another object, such as a candle or a cigarette lighter. The lights may be turned out.*

*"After the fire is burning, the builder(s) may sit by and watch it for the duration of the composition; however, he (they) should not sit between the fire and the audience in order that its members will be able to see and enjoy the fire.*

*"The composition may be of any duration.*

*"In the event that the performance is broadcast, the microphone may be brought up close to the fire."*

*Composition 1960 # 5 reads:*

*"Turn a butterfly (or any number of butterflies) loose in the performance area.*

*"When the composition is over, be sure to allow the butterfly to fly away outside.*

*"The composition may be any length, but if an unlimited amount of time is available, the doors and windows may be opened before the butterfly is turned loose and the composition may be considered finished when the butterfly flies away."*

*Some time after the pieces were finished I sent copies around to some of my friends. After a few weeks, Tony Conrad wrote back from Denmark that he enjoyed the fire music very much, that he thought the sounds of a fire were very lovely and that he had even, himself, once considered using the sounds of fire in a composition although he had not at that time been prepared to write anything like Composition 1960 # 2. He said, however, that he didn't understand Composition 1960 # 5. In my answering letter I wrote, "Isn't it wonderful if someone listens to something*

*he is ordinarily supposed to look at?"*

*When Dennis Johnson and I were staying at Richard Maxfield's apartment in New York, we discussed the amount of choice that a composer retained in a composition that used chance or indeterminacy. We generally agreed that the composer was always left with some choices of one sort or another. At the very least, he had to decide what chances he would take or what he would leave to indeterminacy in his composition. Some time after Dennis and I had both left New York he visited me from Los Angeles. He brought me a copy of his then new composition, The Second Machine, which we were going to do on a program of contemporary music at the University in Berkeley along with Cage's Imaginary Landscape # 4 for Twelve Radios (which Dennis was conducting), Richard Maxfield's Cough Music, and Vision, a piece of my own. A short time after he had arrived at my apartment in Berkeley Dennis mentioned that he had been thinking of what we had discussed in New York and that he had discovered a piece which was entirely indeterminacy and left the composer out of it. I asked, "What is it?" He tore off a piece of paper and wrote something on it. Then he handed it to me. It said, "LISTEN."*

*When I sent copies of Composition 1960 Numbers 2 Through 5 to some of my friends, I received different comments from all of them concerning which ones they liked or disliked with one exception. Almost all of them wrote back to me saying they liked Number 5 which consists quite simply of turning a butterfly or any number of butterflies loose in the auditorium. Diane agreed that it was a very lovely piece and said it would seem almost impossible for anyone not to like it. At any rate, I had hoped to perform either Composition 1960 # 2 which consists of building a fire in front of the audience, or Composition 1960 # 5 the butterfly piece, on whatever program came up next. Thus, when the time arrived to do another noon concert of contemporary music at the University in Berkeley, I told a friend who was communicating with the director of the noon concerts that I would like to do either Composition 1960 # 2 or # 5. The next day he phoned and said he had asked the director. The director had said that both pieces were absolutely out of the question. I was shocked. I could easily understand anyone's concern for a fire in the auditorium, but what could be wrong with a butterfly? Well, Composition 1960 Numbers 2 and 5 were banned from the auditorium and we performed Composition 1960 # 4 instead.*

*Sometime afterward Diane received a letter from Susan, who was visiting in New York. At the end of the letter she wrote, "I saw a boy in the park today running, quite terrified, from a small yellow butterfly."*

*Diane suggested that perhaps the reason the director of the noon concerts at the University would not allow me to perform Composition 1960 # 5 on the third concert of*





La Monte Young con Yoko Ono, New York, 1960-61.

contemporary music that we gave was that he thought it wasn't music. Composition 1960 # 5 is the piece in which the butterfly or any number of butterflies is turned loose in the performance area. I asked her if she thought the butterfly piece was music to any less degree than Composition 1960 # 2 which consists of simply building a fire in front of the audience. She said, "Yes, because in the fire piece at least there are some sounds." I said that I felt certain the butterfly made sounds, not only with the motion of its wings but also with the functioning of its body and that unless one was going to dictate how loud or soft the sounds had to be before they could be allowed into the realms of music that the butterfly piece was music as much as the fire piece. She said she thought that at least one ought to be able to hear the sounds. I said that this was the usual attitude of human beings that everything in the world should exist for them and that I disagreed. I said it didn't seem to me at all necessary that anyone or anything should have to hear sounds and that it is enough that they exist for themselves. When I wrote this story out for this lecture I added, "If you think this attitude is too extreme, do you think sounds should be able to hear people?"

Often I hear somebody say that the most important thing

about a work of art is not that it be new but that it be good. But if we define good as what we like, which is the only definition of good I find useful when discussing art, and then say that we are interested in what is good, it seems to me that we will always be interested in the same things (that is, the same things that we already like).

I am not interested in good; I am interested in new – even if this includes the possibility of its being evil.

One night Diane said, "Maybe the butterfly piece should begin when a butterfly happens to fly into the auditorium."

My Composition 1960 # 9 consists of a straight line drawn on a piece of paper. It is to be performed and comes with no instructions. The night I met Jackson MacLow we went down to my apartment and he read some of his poems for us. Later, when he was going to go home, he said he'd write out directions to get to his place so we could come and visit him sometime. He happened to pick up Composition 1960 # 9 and said, "Can I write it here?" I said, "No, wait, that's a piece. Don't write on that." He said, "Whadaya mean a piece? That's just a line."

Summer 1960. © La Monte Young 1963, 1965, 1969.



# Jackson MacLow



Jackson MacLow, 1985.  
(Foto Anne Tardos).



# Fluxus, Maciunas, MacLow

Jackson MacLow

I have given an extensive account of my relations with Fluxus and George Maciunas in the catalog *1962 Wiesbaden Fluxus 1982: Eine kleine Geschichte von Fluxus in drei Teilen*, ed. René Block (Wiesbaden-Kassel-Berlin, Harlekin Art, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, 1983), pp. 110-125. The only statement in that essay which I must correct is my belief, when I wrote the essay, that I was the first link between George Maciunas and the younger New York artistic "avant-garde" of 1960.

As I say there, I thought I had led Maciunas to these artists (including myself) when I took part in a variety program including poetry, theater, and film, at Maciunas' and Almus Salcius' AG Gallery at 925 Madison Avenue near 74th St. in New York in June 1961. This program was the last of the *Bread & series* organized by the poet Frank Kunstler. In this program a group including the composer La Monte Young, the poet Diane Wakoski, the painter Iris Lezak, and myself presented my second play composed with the help of chance operations: *Verdurous Sanguinaria* (written January-February 1962). Although I thought then and for 21 years afterwards that Maciunas first met such artists that night, La Monte told me in 1982, after I'd already sent my essay to Wiesbaden, that George

had shown up a little earlier in spring 1961 in the electronic music classes taught by Richard Maxfield in his New York home studio as a course of the New School for Social Research, continuing what had been John Cage's course in experimental music from about 1957 through early 1960. (Richard was a very gifted and original electronic composer who died at a tragically early age in 1969. I first met him in Cage's classes, and some of his works were included in La Monte's anthology and presented in his series at Yoko Ono's studio, at the AG Gallery, and later in Fluxus festivals.) A correction I sent to Wiesbaden after my conversation with La Monte was apparently received too late for inclusion in the catalog.

For the flyer of that June 1961 AG program Maciunas took the well-known photograph of me in the tall hat made by Diane Wakoski for my costume as Edward Eggleston (the nineteenth-century Indiana author of *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*) in the first presentations of *Verdurous Sanguinaria*, at Yoko Ono's studio on Chambers St., New York, on 8 & 9 April 1961, and later worn by me in the AG Gallery presentation. At that time Maciunas was already planning at least three series of avant-garde works at the gallery, in which my work was represented in

three programs, two comprising my works alone.

At that photo session La Monte (also being photographed for a flyer) and I told George about the large group of music, poetry, dance, performance, concept art, and other manuscripts La Monte had brought together for an aborted issue of Chester Anderson's magazine *Beatitude East*. Maciunas immediately offered to publish these materials as an anthology. Late that summer he designed the title-pages and section titles of what came to be known as *An Anthology*, but he had to leave New York soon afterwards, so La Monte (the sole editor) and I ended up publishing the anthology together between late 1961 and May 1963. (Heiner Friedrich published a second edition in 1970).

At the end of 1961 a number of us received letters from George informing us that we were all "editors" of something called "Fluxus" – presumably a series of anthologies. I was first called the "literary editor" and later the "poetry editor". These anthologies were to include works by the group represented in La Monte's anthology and a few others. A little later we were informed that some of our works were to be performed in "Fluxus Festival" in Wiesbaden and other European cities.



JUNE 9 JUNE 23

Arts Vaudeville Omnibus.  
Barbara Gornley, poetry & fiction.  
Carl Larsen, poems, action, violence  
cartoons.  
Deborah Goldensohn, dance.  
Jack Hirshaut, raconteur: "My Trip  
To Bear Mountain."  
George Zahn: "A Moon Bouquet,"  
the still, perfect voice.

An Evening With The Floating Bear.  
Diane Di Prima & LeRoi Jones,  
editors of the newsletter will read.  
poets & associates will join them.

JUNE 16 JUNE 30

Irving Feldman & Frank Kuenstler  
will read from their works.  
Irving Feldman's poems have been  
in leading literary periodicals.  
F. Kuenstler is editor of BREAD&  
Extra feature: to be announced.

New Poetry of Jackson Mac Low  
Sound, song, noise, measure, voice,  
line, re-investigated by soloists &  
ensemble. Poetry as occurrence &  
body. Diane Wakoski, La Monte  
Young, Iris Lezak, as well as the  
author will present the works.

**Bread &  
AG  
PRESENT**

LITERARY EVENINGS: 8 PM  
AT 925 MADISON AV. (74)

The intention in these programs is to present authors & their work directly to the audience. Mostly new writers, new spirit. The programs and many of the works are longer than is usually presented, usually 3, sometimes 2 hours long, respectively. For all this, a tempo of the casual & elongate, frantic and enduring, is intended, to assure for these occasions a warranted anti-beat & instilled configuration in reality. New tone, new time. Programs are subject to change without notice. A \$ 1.50 contribution for reservations is required. All monies go to the Gallery's Program Fund. Seating capacity is limited. Fiction, Vaudeville, "Opera," Works. BU 8-4220



Some of us took part in these concerts, but I was financially unable to go to Europe to do so.

During this time I had no idea that there was any unifying ideology behind "Fluxus". I assumed that George was principally interested in works by those of us who had attended (as invitees, as I was, or as registered students) Cage's and Maxfield's courses, e.g., George Brecht, Dick Higgins, Richard Maxfield, La Monte Young, Toshi Ichiy-anagi, and myself; others who appeared in La Monte's anthology, e.g., Emmett Williams, Walter De Maria, Simone Forti (then Morris), and Henry Flynt; and still others who produced similar work (some of whom helped type the anthology), e.g., Alison Knowles and Philip Corner.

Some features of these artists' works:

[1] the use of methods that de-emphasize the ego, e.g., chance operations (see

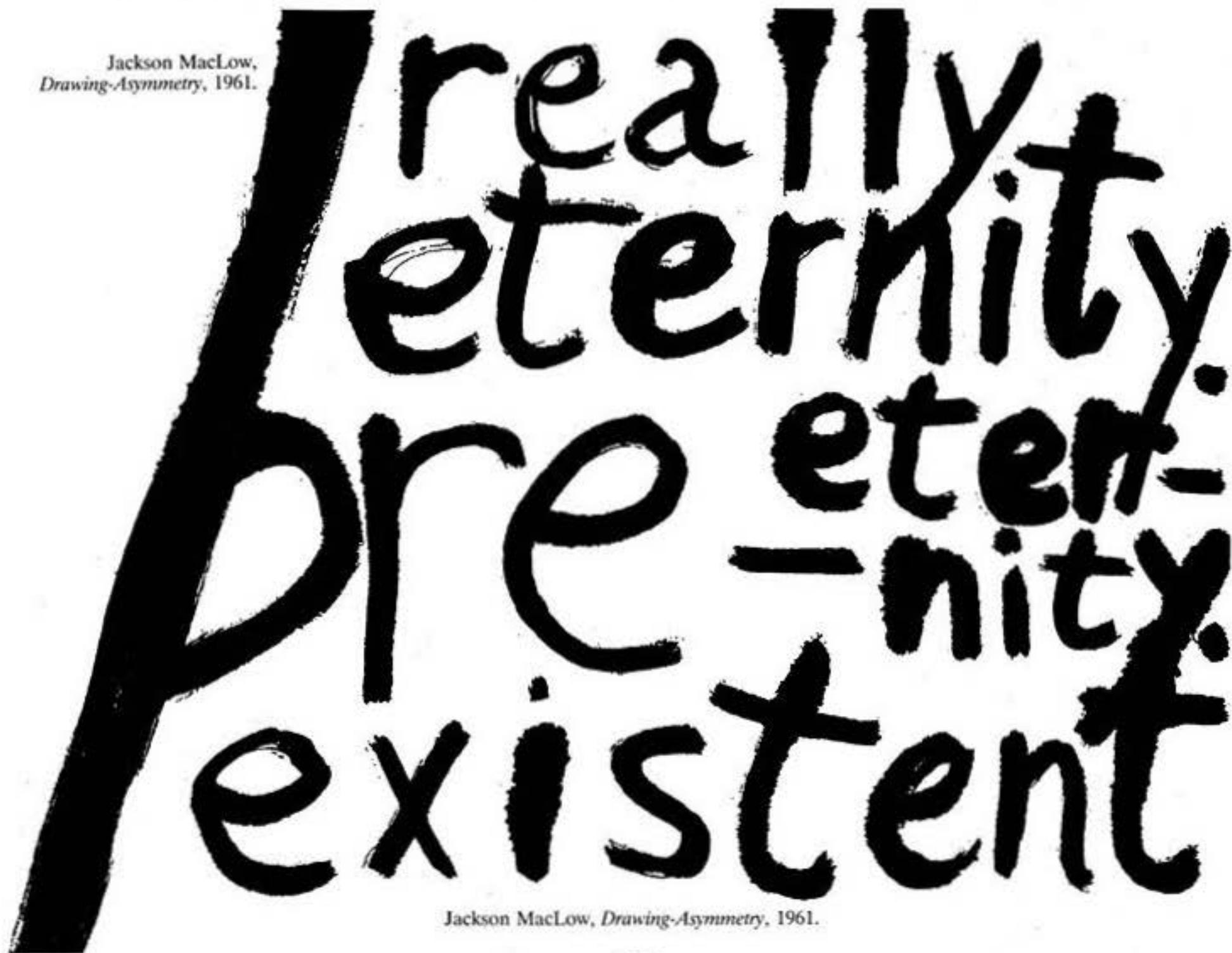
the poems, music, and performance pieces in my *Representative Works: 1938-1985* [New York, Roof Books, 1986], notably, "5 Biblical Poems" [written 1954-55], pp. 16-34), methods pioneered by Marcel Duchamp and John Cage; works that "translate" from one medium to another, e.g., my poem "Machault" (*Ibid.*, pp. 35-40), which "translates" the notation of a Guillaume Machault motet into words from a nineteenth-century children's natural history book; reading through texts to find words that acrostically "spell out seed words" (see my two books written in 1960: *Stanzas for Iris Lezak*, Something Else, Barton, Vt., 1972; and *Asymmetries* 1-260, Printed Editions, N.Y., 1980); and permutational methods, (e.g., Emmett Williams's "Cellar Song for Five Voices" in *An Anthology*);

[2] the making of "indeterminate" works - ones whose realizations are

necessarily very different from one another, e.g., in *An Anthology*, La Monte's 1960 compositions, Christian Wolff's "Duet I", and my "Thanks: A Simultaneity for People" and indeterminate "Asymmetries" as well as many things in *Representative Works*, and many of Dick Higgins' performance works, notably his "Graphises", "Constellation", and plays;

[3] the inclusion of "ordinary" or "everyday" objects, images, language, actions, sounds, etc. as well the environment of artworks, e.g., ambient sounds, shadows, reflections, the actions of persons in their vicinity, etc. - inclusions already seen in the work of Duchamp, Kurt Schwitters, Dadaists, Futurists, Cubo-Futurists, Cage, Merce Cunningham, etc. (see my books cited above, La Monte Young's 1960 compositions, Simone Morris' [Forti's] dance constructions, my "Thanks: A

Jackson MacLow,  
*Drawing-Asymmetry*, 1961.



Jackson MacLow, *Drawing-Asymmetry*, 1961.





Jackson MacLow, *Letter for Iris - Number for Silence*, 1961.

Simultaneity for People”, Walter De Maria’s compositions and essays, and other works in *An Anthology*, as well as George Brecht’s works there and especially his 1961 card pieces);

[4] music, performance, and action works consisting of very short descriptive and/or instructional texts, notably, Young’s 1960 compositions, Forti’s dance constructions, and some of Walter De Maria’s compositions and projects, all in *An Anthology*, and Brecht’s 1961 card pieces;

[5] artworks making or proposing use of unusual “materials”, notably (in *An Anthology*) Henry Flynt’s concept art essay and examples and such works by Walter De Maria as “Meaningless Work” and “Natural Disasters”;

[6] and the participation, especially in performances, of people who aren’t professional artists, as well as ones who are. (This is true of many works in *An Anthology* and *Representative Works*, as well as works by others in the Cage and Maxfield classes and related to these

overlapping groups.)

What I didn’t know about George’s enterprise was its underlying agenda: an all-out attack on “serious culture”, on professional artists in all fields, and on art as such. And that he favoured what he called “realistic” artworks (those of most artists mentioned above) mainly because they taught people “how to take an art attitude” to any natural or humanly produced phenomenon, so that when people learned to do this, there would be no more use for artists – artists could then stop producing artworks and become “productive” members of the idealized state-dominated “socialist society” whose possibility George somehow extrapolated from the Khrushchev-era Soviet Union.

While I’d been given hints of this position in 1961 conversations with George, I had no idea of its ramifications until 1963, when he and I talked often after his return to the US. I also did not realize the amount and degree of destructiveness involved in some of the

actions he sponsored, notably the destruction of musical instruments.

While I *did* favour the admission into art of non-egoic compositional methods, indeterminacy, the ordinary, the nonprofessional, unusual “materials”, and the use of short texts as scores, I had no sympathy with many aspects of George’s position: neither with the “phasing out” of serious culture and art nor with the destruction of such cultural objects as musical instruments, nor with his polemics against “professional” artists, even though I sympathized with his deconstruction of current art ideology.

George was always on the attack – against “serious culture”, etc. My own attitude was and is closer to that of Erik Satie, who wrote: “I’d never dare attack anyone... anyone who doesn’t think the way I do. Thought is the property of the person who has it. No one else has the right to even touch it” (John Cage’s translation in *James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet* [hand-



corrected typescript photocopied and given to me by Cage, n.d.], p. 18).

I favour as I did in the Sixties an *inclusive* art – one that widens to include “life”: “everyday” things and actions, artworks’ surroundings and audiences, people who haven’t been specifically trained in an art, etc., that changes continually, and that indeed teaches us “to take an art attitude” toward any phenomenon. This is why I love many works produced by so-called “Fluxus artists” as well as by pre-Fluxus artists (notably Cage) who largely inspired but didn’t participate in Fluxus manifestations. Very many of my own poems and other writings, visual artworks, performance pieces, etc., include these features, and I affirm them. In this sense I am a “Fluxus artist”: my works include those *positive* features common to works of many artists who took part in Fluxus manifestations, and which were favoured by George Maciunas himself. But George was also *aggressively exclusive*: he wished (or said he did) to abolish art and “professional” artists, “serious culture”, etc. Certainly much of the overblown ideology of serious culture *needed* debunking and deconstruction. The “aura” surrounding artworks made it difficult for many to experience them for themselves. Official art and its institutions excluded far too much of the world and far too many kinds of art. Fluxus and Happenings helped to break down these exclusions – to widen the sphere of art. The iconoclasm of Fluxus was necessary and refreshing, and perhaps even the destruction of a few musical instruments served a salutary purpose for a while. But together with Maciunas the creative artist who designed *An Anthology*, composed interesting and amusing performance works, deconstructed art ideology, etc., there was also a rigid, authoritarian Maciunas who wished to run everything his own way, to further his own sociopolitical ends, etc. George tried to dictate to the artists who worked with him, to make them call all their works “Fluxus” works, to act only as part of his “collective”, to renounce their individuality and sink it into Fluxus. And a *stupidly destructive* Maciunas: in April 1963, when my friends and I were engaged in practical political work against nuclear weapons and the US actions against the people of Vietnam, George, in his *Fluxus News – Policy Letter No. 6* proposed bizarre antisocial



Jackson MacLow,  
*Drawing-Asymmetry*, 1961.



Jackson MacLow,  
*Drawing-Asymmetry*, 1961.



actions such as breaking down trucks in the tunnels under the Hudson between New Jersey and New York City – just the thing to persuade the US populace to oppose nuclear weapons and to stop US intervention in Vietnam!

It was then that I “resigned” from Fluxus – though none of us actually “joined” it – we suddenly found ourselves part of it through George’s unilateral decisions! I sent an international round-robin letter to many avant-garde artists, composers, writers, etc. – both participants in Fluxus festivals and other – detailing my disagreements with the letter, especially those concerned with practical oppositional politics. (For this text see Tomas Schmit’s German translation in *Happenings, Fluxus*,

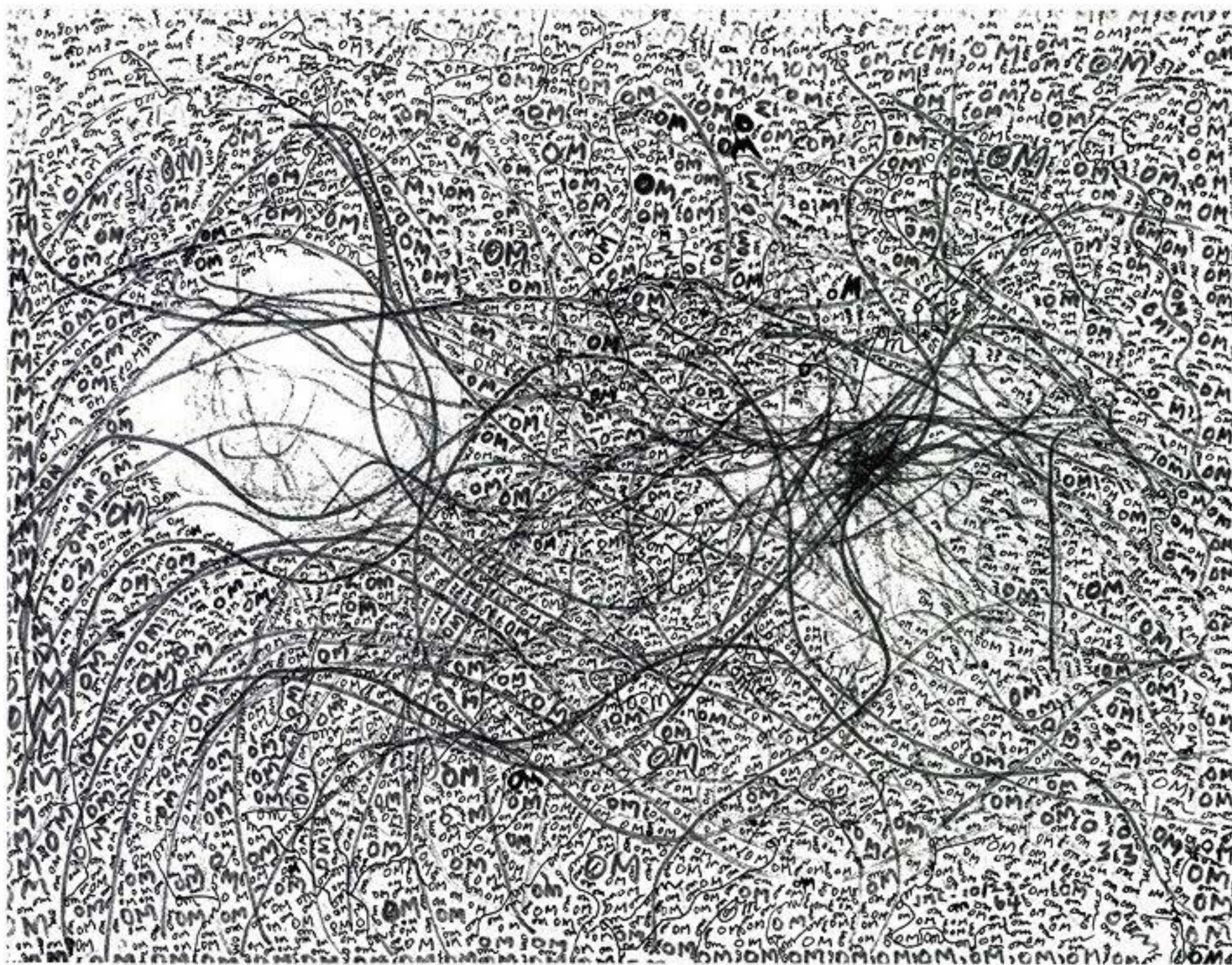
*Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme*, ed. Jürgen Becker & Wolf Vostell [Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rohwolt, 1965], pp. 218-222).

Even though I took part in a Fluxus concert after George returned to New York in 1963 and worked and talked a lot with George at that time – and continued to have occasional friendly conversations with him well into the Seventies, neither he nor I considered me “part of Fluxus” – whatever that meant! – after that act of open rebellion.

Now, however, I’m happy to have works of the late Fifties and early Sixties, as well as more recent works, and some paintings by Anne Tardos, my wife, who has independently produced many

works embodying positive aspects of Fluxus, exhibited side-by-side with works of my many other friends who participated in Fluxus both in the Sixties and later. The creative and positive aspects of George Maciunas and the “movement” he attempted to create have survived his authoritarianism and needless destructiveness. His iconoclasm, his deconstruction of the stiffer aspects of culture and the ideology of art, have become a part of culture willy-nilly. One speaks of “Fluxus artists”, after all – and this Fluxus pavilion is a part of the 1990 Venice Biennale! Emmett Williams was undoubtedly right when he said in 1982: “Fluxus has not been invented yet.”

New York, April 14, 1990



Jackson MacLow, *OM Field*, 1961.



words--

night, such, waiting, that, delicate, paper,  
argument, decision, say.

ACTIONS:

BEING IN FLIGHT,  
NAMING THINGS.

words--

fact, separate, that, finger, theory, store.

ACTIONS:

CRYING,  
SEEING DANGER,  
LETTING SOMETHING BE MADE THE SAME AS  
SOMETHING SIMPLE,  
PENNING,  
KISSING.

words--

though, record, blade, servant, adjustment.

ACTIONS:

LETTING THINGS BE EQUAL OR DOING THINGS LIKE  
AN ANT,  
HAVING CURVES OR HAVING TO PUT WEIGHT ON A  
BIRD,  
PUTTING SOMETHING SLOW UNDER AN INSECT,  
HAVING OR SEEMING TO HAVE SERIOUS HOLES,  
REACTING TO ORANGE HAIR.

words--

servant, here, narrow, separate, line,  
digestion, respect, night, wound, digestion.

ACTIONS:

BEING A BROTHER TO SOMEONE,  
BEING A WIRE,  
GIVING AN ANSWER,  
KICKING.

words--

though, slip, blade, sail, argument, bent,  
say, line, minute, line.

ACTIONS:

DAMAGING SOMETHING FOOLISH, ~~ER~~ IN  
JUMPING,  
HAVING A LETTER OVER ONE EYE.

words--

music, record, awake, frequent, knee,  
frequent, or, slow, angry.

ACTIONS:

CLEANING SOMETHING,  
KEEPING SOME THINGS COMPLEX,  
GIVING A BIT OR DOING SOMETHING ELASTIC,  
SEEMING TO KEEP A ROD UNDER A BIT OF CUSHION.

words:

slip, ray, basin, summer, such, finger

ACTIONS:

WALKING ON HEELS, SHAKING A LIMB,  
DOING A DOUBLE-TAKE

words--

lip, send, space, I, respect.

ACTIONS:

WRITING WITH A BAD PEN,  
MAKING A CAKE,  
QUESTIONING,  
GETTING FEEBLE.







# George Maciunas



George Maciunas, 1964. (Foto Peter Moore).



# Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art

George Maciunas

This is a draft of an essay/manifesto by George Maciunas (1931-1978), read by Arthus C. Caspari, in German, at the Fluxus concert *Après John Cage*, Wuppertal, West Germany, June 9, 1962. A version in German was published in Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell, *Happenings, Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme* (Hamburg, 1965), pp. 192-95. The text first published here is transcribed from microfilm in the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. The chart illustrated here accompanied the reading of the essay, and was drafted after the two charts reproduced in the Fluxus Documents section of the present publication.

Neo-dada, its equivalent, or what appears to be neo-dada manifests itself in very wide fields of creativity. It ranges from "time" arts to "space" arts; or more specifically from literary arts (time-art), through graphic-literature (time-space-art) to graphics (space-arts) through graphic-music (space-time-arts) to graphless or scoreless music (time-art), through theatrical music (space-time-art) to environments (space-arts). There exist no borderlines between one and the other extreme. Many works belong to several categories and also many artists create separate works in each category. Almost each category and each artist, however, is bound with the concept of Concretism ranging in intensity from pseudo concretism, surface concretism, structural concretism, method concretism (indeterminacy systems), to the extreme of concretism, which is beyond

the limits of art, and therefore sometimes referred to as anti-art, or art-nihilism. The new activities of the artists therefore could be charted by reference to two coordinates: the horizontal coordinate defining transition from "time" arts to "space" arts and back to "time" and "space" etc., and the vertical coordinate defining transition from extremely artificial art, illusionistic art, then abstract art (not within the subject of this essay), to mild concretism, which becomes more and more concrete, or rather nonartificial till it becomes non-art, anti-art, nature, reality.

Concretists in contrast to illusionists prefer unity of form and content, rather than their separation. They prefer the world of concrete reality rather than the artificial abstraction of illusionism. Thus in plastic arts for instance, a concretist perceives and expresses a rotten tomato without changing its reality or

## FLUXUS

1. To purge. A fluid discharge, esp. an excessive discharge, from the bowels or other part.
2. A continuous moving on or passing, as of a flowing stream,
3. a stream; copious flow,
4. the setting of the tide toward the shore,
5. Any substance or mixture, as silicates, limestone, and fluorite, used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals.

George Maciunas, *Fluxus Manifesto*, 1961.



**flux** (flŭks), *n.* [OF., fr. L. *fluxus*, fr. *fluere*, *fluxum*, to flow. See FLUENT; cf. FLUSH, *n.* (of cards).] **1. Med.**

**a** A flowing or fluid discharge from the bowels or other part; esp., an excessive and morbid discharge: as, the bloody *flux*, or dysentery. **b** The matter thus discharged.



**2. Act of flowing:** a continuous moving on or passing by, as of a flowing stream; a continuing succession of changes.

**3. A stream; copious flow; flood; outflow.**

**4. The setting in of the tide toward the shore. Cf. REFLUX.**

**5. State of being liquid through heat; fusion. Rare.**

**6. A fusible glass used as a base for enamels; also, an easily fusible enamel used as a ground for enamel painting.**

**7. Chem. & Metal. a** Any substance or mixture used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals. Common metallurgical fluxes are silica and silicates (acidic), lime and limestone (basic), and fluorite (neutral). **b** Any substance applied to surfaces to be joined by soldering or welding, just prior to or during the operation, to clean and free them from oxide, thus promoting their union, as rosin.

**8. Math.** The integral over a surface of the normal component of a vector field. Cf. STOKES' THEOREM.

**9. Photom.** = 1st LIGHT, 18 **b.**

**10. Physics. a** The rate of flow or transfer of fluid or of energy across a surface. **b** By analogy, the surface integral of a vector distributed over a surface. Cf. ELECTROSTATIC FLUX, MAGNETIC FLUX.

**11. Plant Pathol.** A slime flux.

**flux**, *v.*; FLUXED (flŭkst); FLUX'ING. *Transitive:* **1.** To cause to become fluid; to fuse; to treat with a flux.

**2.** To affect, or bring to a certain state, by subjecting to, or treating with, a flux. "*Fluxed* into another world." *South.*

**3. Med.** To cause a discharge from, as in purging.

—, *Intransitive:* **1.** To flow freely. *Archaic.*

**2.** To become fluid; to melt.

**3.** To undergo a flux; specif., to bleed copiously. *Obs.*

**flux** (flŭks), *adj.* [L. *fluxus*, fr. *fluere*. See FLUX, *n.*] In flux; variable. *Obs.*





George Maciunas, *Fluxus Manifesto*, 1962.

form. In the end, the form and expression remain [the] same as the content and perception – the reality of rotten tomato, rather than an illusionistic image or symbol of it. In music a concretist perceives and expresses the material sound with all its inherent polychromy and pitchlessness and “incidentalness”, rather than the immaterial abstracted and artificial sound of pure pitch or rather controlled tones denuded of its pitch obliterating overtones. A material or concrete sound is considered one that has close affinity to the sound-producing material – thus a sound whose overtone pattern and the resultant polychromy clearly indicates the nature of material or concrete reality producing it. Thus a note sounded on a piano keyboard or a bel-canto voice is largely immaterial, abstract and artificial since the sound does not clearly indicate its true source or material reality – common action of string, wood, metal, felt, voice, lips, tongue, mouth etc. A sound, for instance, produced by striking the same piano itself with a hammer or kicking its underside is more material and concrete since it indicates in a much clearer manner the hardness of hammer, hollowness of piano sound box and resonance of string. Human speech or eating sounds are likewise more concrete for the same reason of source recognisability. These

concrete sounds are commonly, although inaccurately, referred to as noises. They maybe pitchless to a large extent, but their pitchlessness makes them polychromic, since the intensity of acoustic color depends directly on pitch-obliterating inharmonic overtones.

Further departure from [the] artificial world of abstraction is affected by the concept of indeterminacy and improvisation. Since artificiality implies human pre-determination, contrivance, a truer concretist rejects pre-determination of final form in order to perceive the reality of nature, the course of which, like that of man himself is largely indeterminate and unpredictable. Thus an indeterminate composition approaches greater concretism by allowing nature [to] complete its form in its own course. This requires the composition to provide a kind of framework, an “automatic machine” within which or by which, nature (either in the form of an independent performer or indeterminate-chance compositional methods) can complete the art-form, effectively and independently of the artist-composer. Thus the primary contribution of a truly concrete artist consists in creating a *concept* or a *method* by which form can be created independently of him, rather than the form or structure. Like a mathematical

solution such a composition contains a beauty in the method alone.

The furthest step towards concretism is of course a kind of art-nihilism. This concept opposes and rejects art itself, since the very meaning of it implies artificiality whether in creation of form or method. To approach closer affinity with concrete reality and its closer understanding, the art-nihilist or anti-artists (they usually deny those definitions) either creates “anti-art” or exercises nothingness. The “anti-art” forms are directed primarily against art as a profession, against the artificial separation of a performer from [the] audience, or creator and spectator, or life and art; it is against the artificial forms or patterns or methods of art itself; it is against the purposefulness, formfulness and meaningfulness of art; anti-art is life, is nature, is true reality – it is one and all. Rainfall is anti-art, a babble of a crowd is anti-art, a sneeze is anti-art, a flight of a butterfly, or movements of microbes are anti-art. They are as beautiful and as worth to be aware of as art itself. If man could experience the world, the concrete world surrounding him, (from mathematical ideas to physical matter) in the same way he experiences art, there would be no need for art, artists and similar “nonproductive” elements.



# Manifesto:

George Maciunas, *Fluxus Manifesto*, 1963.

2. To affect, or bring to a certain state, by subjecting to, or treating with, a flux. "Fluxed into another world." South.
3. *Med.* To cause a discharge from, as in purging.

**flux** (flŭks), n. [OF., fr. L. *fluxus*, fr. *fluere*, *fluxum*, to flow. See FLUENT; cf. FLUSH, n. (of cards).] 1. *Med.* a A flowing or fluid discharge from the bowels or other part; esp., an excessive and morbid discharge; as, the bloody flux, or dysentery. b The matter thus discharged.

Purge the world of bourgeois sickness, "intellectual", professional & commercialized culture, PURGE the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionistic art, mathematical art, — PURGE THE WORLD OF "EUROPANISM"!

2. Act of flowing: a continuous moving on or passing by, as of a flowing stream; a continuing succession of changes.
3. A stream; copious flow; flood; outflow.
4. The setting in of the tide toward the shore. Cf. REFLUX.
5. State of being liquid through heat; fusion. *Rare.*

PROMOTE A REVOLUTIONARY FLOOD AND TIDE IN ART,  
Promote living art, anti-art, promote NON ART REALITY to be fully grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals.

7. *Chem. & Metal.* a Any substance or mixture used to promote fusion, e.g. the fusion of metals or minerals. (Common metallurgical fluxes are silica and silicates (acidic), lime and lime-stone (basic), and fluorite (neutral).) b Any substance applied to surfaces to be joined by soldering or welding, just prior to or during the operation, to clean and free them from oxide, thus promoting their union, as to in

FUSE the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutionaries into united front & action.

Alla pagina seguente: George Maciunas in *Carpenter's Piano Piece (No. 13 for Nam June Paik)*; e George Maciunas, *In Memoriam Adriano Olivetti*, New York, 1964. (Foto Peter Moore).







<p><b>ART</b></p> <p>To justify artist's professional, parasitic and elite status in society, he must demonstrate artist's indispensability and exclusiveness, he must demonstrate the dependability of audience upon him, he must demonstrate that no one but the artist can do art.</p>	<p><b>FLUXUS ART-AMUSEMENT</b></p> <p>To establish artist's nonprofessional status in society, he must demonstrate artist's dispensability and inclusiveness, he must demonstrate the selfsufficiency of the audience, he must demonstrate that anything can be art and anyone can do it.</p>
<p>Therefore, art must appear to be complex, pretentious, profound, serious, intellectual, inspired, skillfull, significant, theatrical, It must appear to be valuable as commodity so as to provide the artist with an income. To raise its value (artist's income and patrons profit), art is made to appear rare, limited in quantity and therefore obtainable and accessible only to the social elite and institutions.</p>	<p>Therefore, art-amusement must be simple, amusing, unpretentious, concerned with insignificances, require no skill or countless rehearsals, have no commodity or institutional value.</p> <p>The value of art-amusement must be lowered by making it unlimited, massproduced, obtainable by all and eventually produced by all.</p> <p>Fluxus art-amusement is the rear-guard without any pretention or urge to participate in the competition of "one-upmanship" with the avant-garde. It strives for the monostructural and nontheatrical qualities of simple natural event, a game or a gag. It is the fusion of Spikes Jones, Vaudeville, gag, children's games and Duchamp.</p>

George Maciunas,  
*Fluxus Manifesto*, 1963.

George Maciunas, 1964.  
(Foto Peter Moore).







George Maciunas in *One for Violin Solo*, Fluxhall, New York, 1964. (Foto Peter Moore).



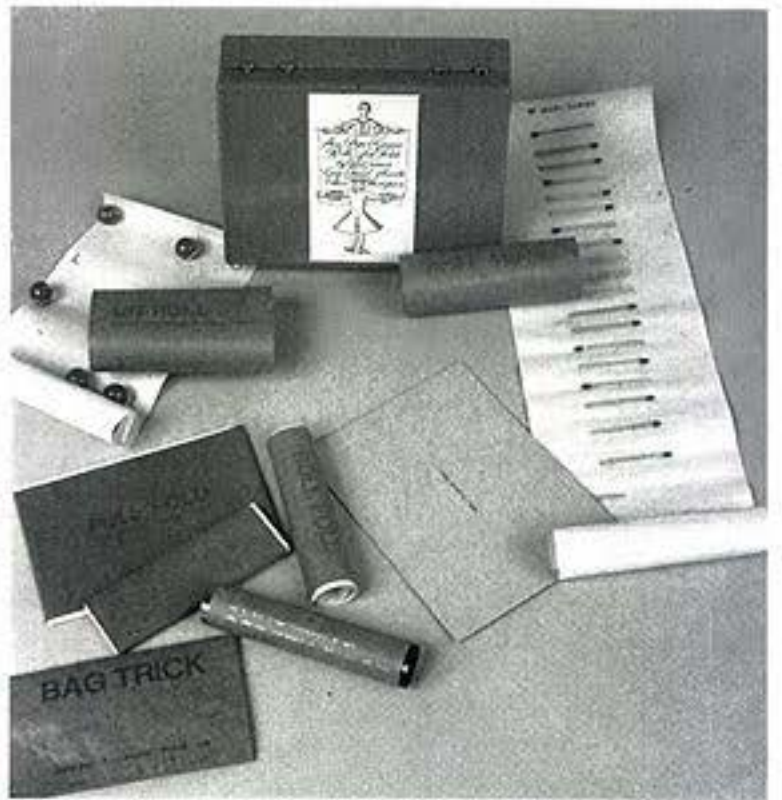
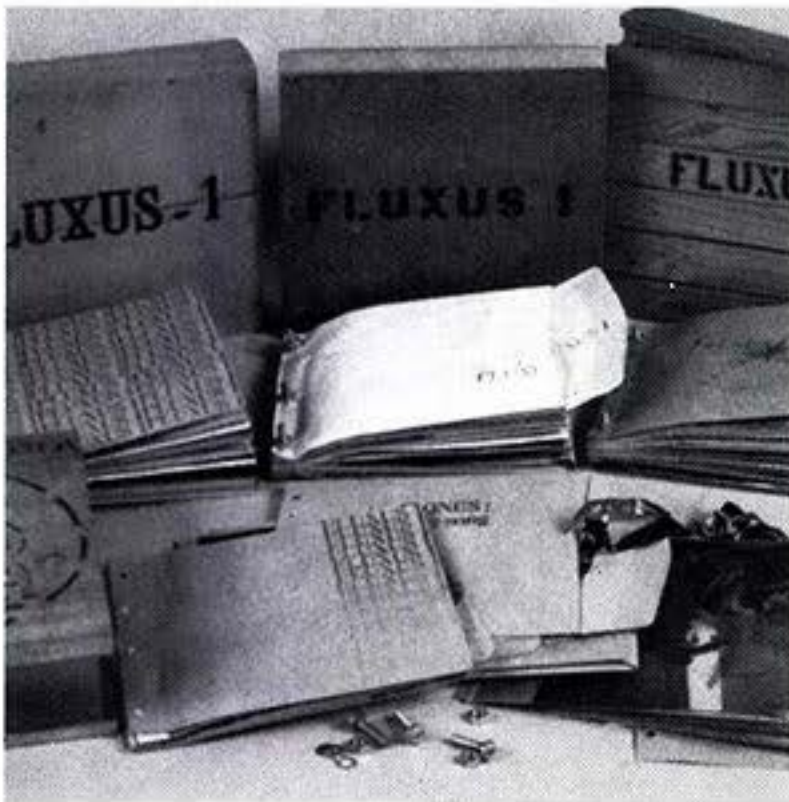
FLUXMANIFESTO ON FLUXAMUSEMENT -VAUDEVILLE -ART? TO ESTABLISH ARTIST'S NONPROFESSIONAL, NONPARASITIC, NONELITE STATUS IN SOCIETY, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE OWN DISPENSABILITY, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE SELFSUFFICIENCY OF THE AUDIENCE, HE MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT ANYTHING CAN SUBSTITUTE ART AND ANYONE CAN DO IT. THEREFORE THIS SUBSTITUTE ART-AMUSEMENT MUST BE SIMPLE, AMUSING, CONCERNED WITH INSIGNIFICANCES, HAVE NO COMMODITY OR INSTITUTIONAL VALUE. IT MUST BE UNLIMITED, OBTAINABLE BY ALL AND EVENTUALLY PRODUCED BY ALL. THE ARTIST DOING ART MEANWHILE, TO JUSTIFY HIS INCOME, MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT ONLY HE CAN DO ART. ART THEREFORE MUST APPEAR TO BE COMPLEX, INTELLECTUAL, EXCLUSIVE, INDISPENSABLE, INSPIRED. TO RAISE ITS COMMODITY VALUE IT IS MADE TO BE RARE, LIMITED IN QUANTITY AND THEREFORE ACCESSIBLE NOT TO THE MASSES BUT TO THE SOCIAL ELITE.

FLUXUS HQ P O BOX 180 NEW YORK 10013  
 FLUXSHOPS AND FLUXFESTS IN NEW YORK  
 AMSTERDAM NICE ROME MONTREAL TOKYO  
 V TRE - FLUXMACHINES - FLUXMUSICBOXES  
 FLUXKITS - FLUXAUTOMOBILES - FLUXPOST  
 FLUXMEDICINES - FLUXFILMS - FLUXMENUS  
 FLUXRADIO'S - FLUXCARDS - FLUXPUZZLES  
 FLUXCLOTHES - FLUXORGANS - FLUXSHIRTS  
 FLUXBOXES - FLUXORCHESTRA - FLUXJOKES  
 FLUXGAMES - FLUXHOLES - FLUXHARDWARE  
 FLUXSUITCASES - FLUXCHESS - FLUXFLAGS  
 FLUXTOURS - FLUXWATER - FLUXCONCERTS  
 FLUXMYSTERIES - FLUXBOOKS - FLUXSIGNS  
 FLUXCLOCKS - FLUXCIRCUS - FLUXANIMALS  
 FLUXQUIZZES - FLUXROCKS - FLUXMEDALS  
 FLUXOUST - FLUXCANS - FLUXTABLECLOTH  
 FLUXVAUDEVILLE - FLUXTAPE - FLUXSPORT  
 BY ERIC ANDERSEN - AYO - JEFF BERNER  
 GEORGE BRECHT - GIUSEPPE CHIARI - ANTHONY COX - CHRISTO - WALTER DE MARIA  
 WILLEM DE RIDDER - ROBERT FILLIQU  
 ALBERT FINE - HI RED CENTER - JOE JONES  
 H RAPPLOW - ALISON KNOWLES - JIRI ROLAR  
 ARTHUR ROPCHÉ - TAKEMISA ROSUGI - SHIGERU  
 KUBOTA - FREDRIC LIEBERMAN - GYORGI  
 LICETH - GEORGE MACIUNAS - YOKO ONO - BEN  
 JAMIN PATTERSON - JAMES RIDDLE - OTER  
 ROT - TAKAKO SAITO - TOMAS SCHMIT - CHERO  
 SHIOMI - DANIEL SPOERRI - STAN VANDER  
 BEER - BEN VAUTIER - ROBERT W. WATTS  
 EMMETT O WILLIAMS - LA MONTE YOUNG  
 FLUX-ART-NONART-AMUSEMENT FORGOES  
 DISTINCTION BETWEEN ART AND NONART,  
 FORGOES ARTIST'S INDISPENSABILITY,  
 EXCLUSIVENESS, INDIVIDUALITY, AMBITION,  
 FORGOES ALL PRETENSION TOWARDS SIGNIFICANCE,  
 RARITY, INSPIRATION, SKILL,  
 COMPLEXITY, PROFUNDITY, GREATNESS,  
 INSTITUTIONAL AND COMMODITY VALUE  
 IT STRIVES FOR MONOSTRUCTURAL, NON-  
 THEATRICAL, NONBAROQUE, IMPERSONAL  
 QUALITIES OF A SIMPLE NATURAL EVENT,  
 AN OBJECT, A GAME, A PUZZLE OR A GAG.  
 IT IS A FUSION OF SPIRES JONES, GAGS,  
 GAMES, VAUDEVILLE, GAGS AND DUCHAMP



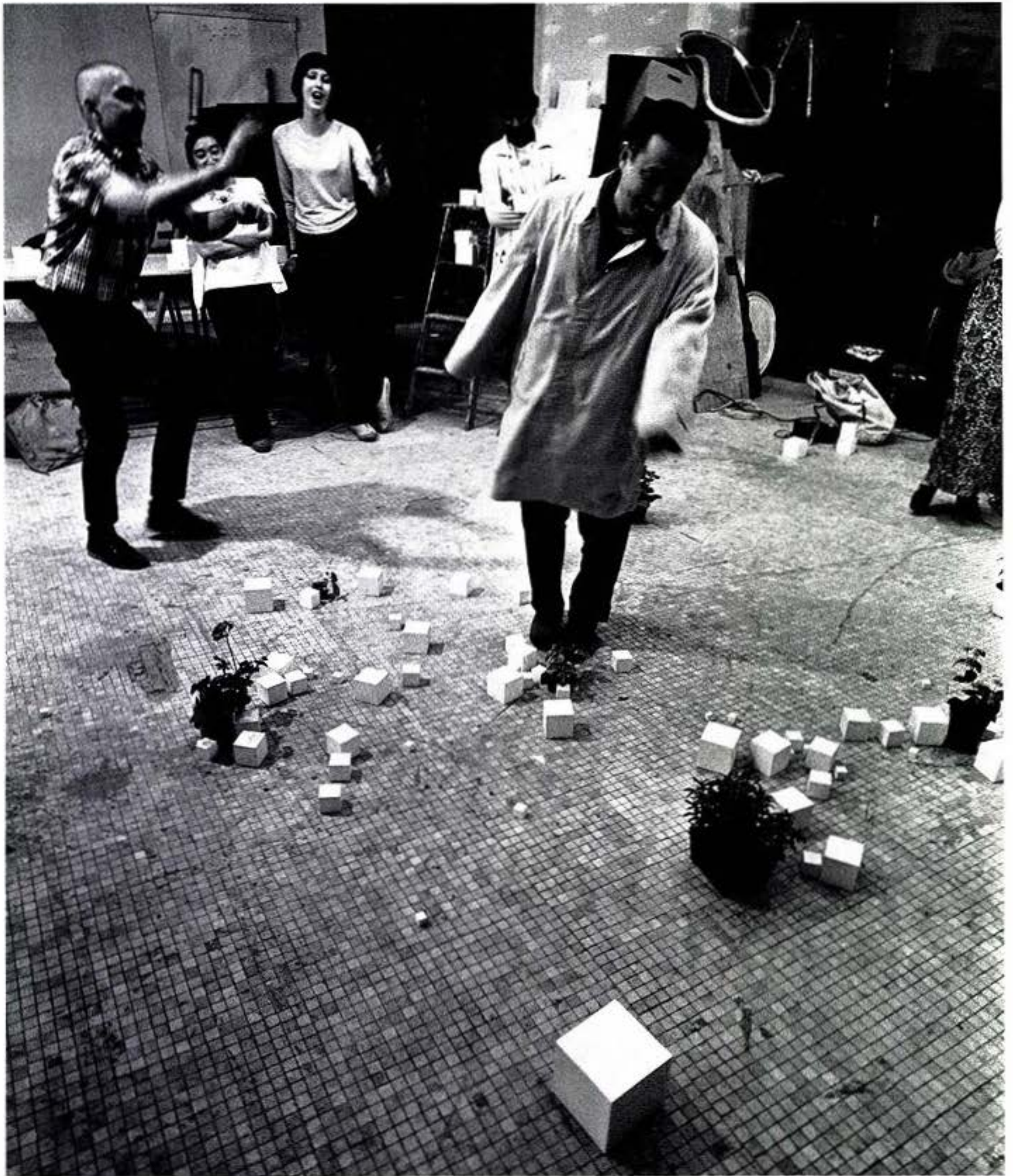


FLUXUS, OR  
 FLUXATLAS  
 FLUXBOOKS  
 FLUXBOXES  
 FLUXCARDS  
 FLUXCHESS  
 FLUXCLOCK  
 FLUXCURES  
 FLUXDANCE  
 FLUXESTRA  
 FLUXFAKES  
 FLUXFESTS  
 FLUXFILMS  
 FLUXGAMES  
 FLUXGROUP  
 FLUXHOUSE  
 FLUNITURE  
 FLUXJOKES  
 FLUX-KITS  
 FLUXMEALS  
 FLUX MUSIC  
 FLUXORGAN  
 FLUXPAPER  
 FLUXPOEMS  
 FLUX-POST  
 FLUX-QUIZ  
 FLUXSHOPS  
 FLUXTHING  
 FLUXV-TRE  
 FLUXWATER  
 FLUX-WEAR  
 FLUX-WORK  
 FLUX MIDST  
 (FLUX-HQ)  
 PO BOX:180  
 NEW YORK,  
 N. Y. 10013  
 FLUX-WEST  
 K.FRIEDMAN  
 6361 ELM-  
 HURST DR.  
 SAN DIEGO  
 CAL. 92120  
 FLUX-EAST  
 M. KNIZAK  
 NOVY SVET  
 19, PRAGUE  
 C. S. S. R.  
 FLUXSOUTH  
 B. VAUTIER  
 32 RUE TON-  
 DUTTI DE  
 L'ESCARENE  
 NICE A.M.  
 FRANCE  
 FLUXNORTH  
 KIRKEBY 40  
 BULOWSVEJ  
 KØBENHAVN  
 V DENMARK



Dall'alto: Collective, *Fluxpack 3*;  
 Collective, *Several Examples of Fluxus 1*;  
 Collective, *Flux Yearbox 2*; George  
 Maciunas, *Fluxus Manifesto*, 1967;  
 George Brecht, *Valoche / A Flux Travel Aid*;  
 Collective, *Fluxpaper Games: Rolls and  
 Folds*.

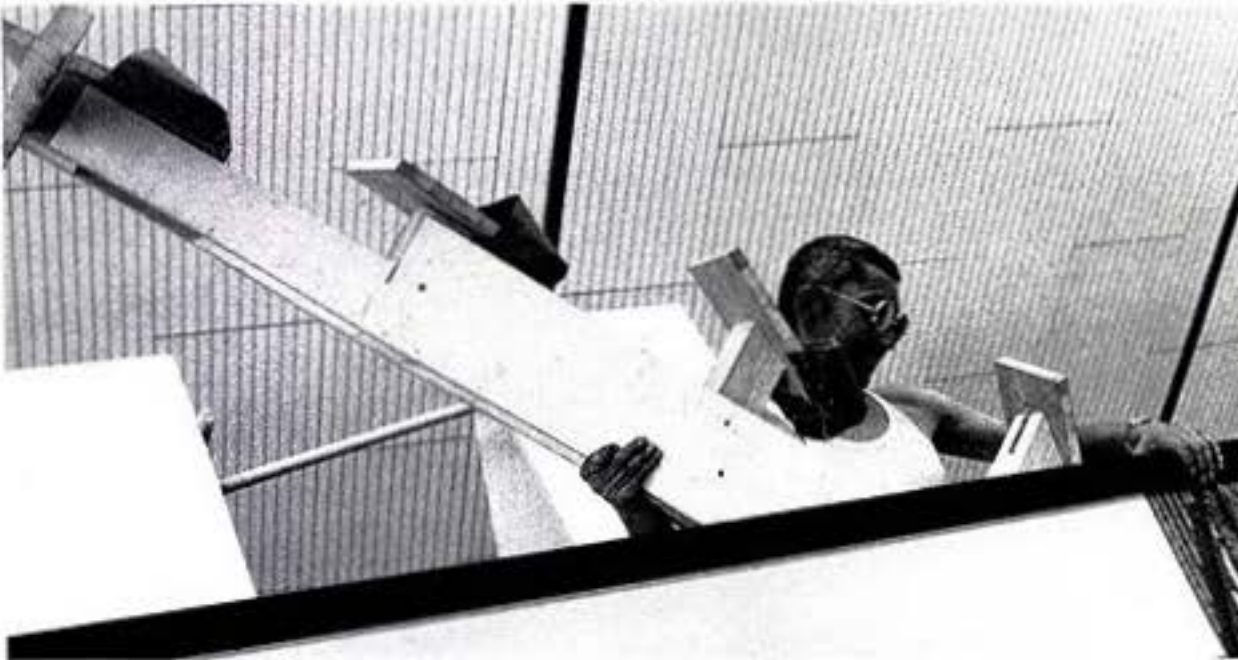
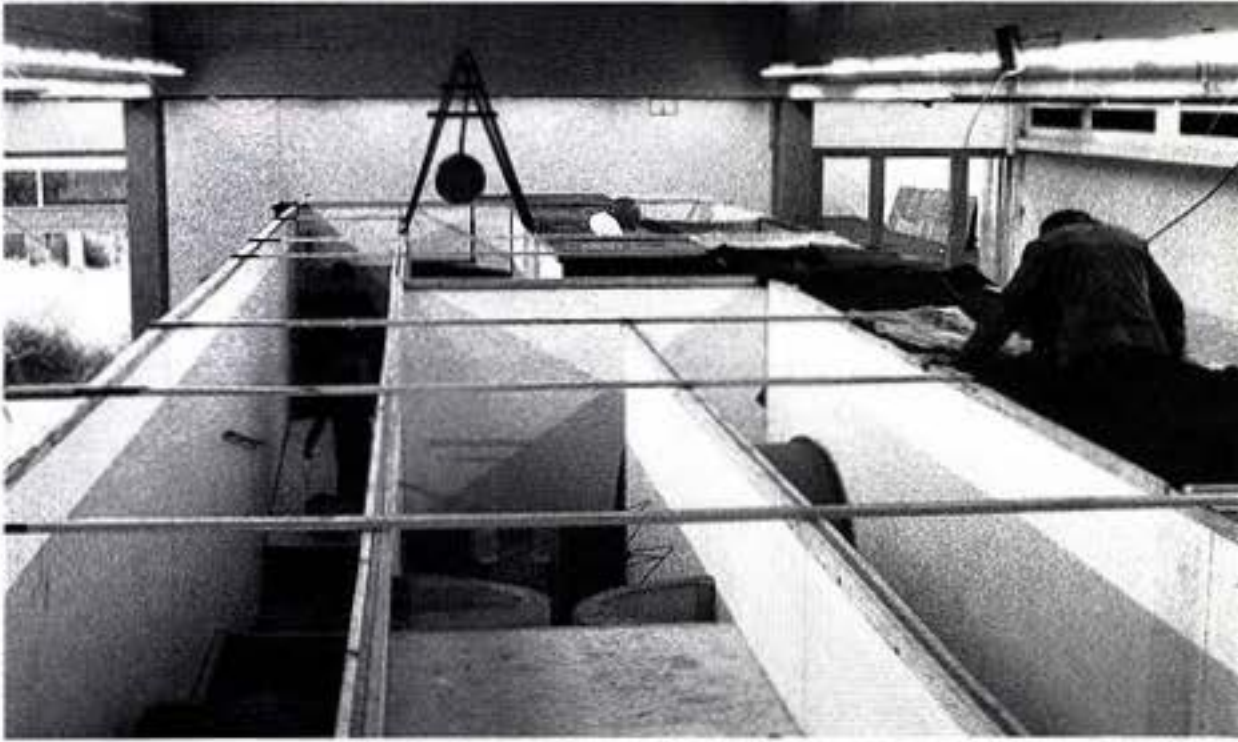




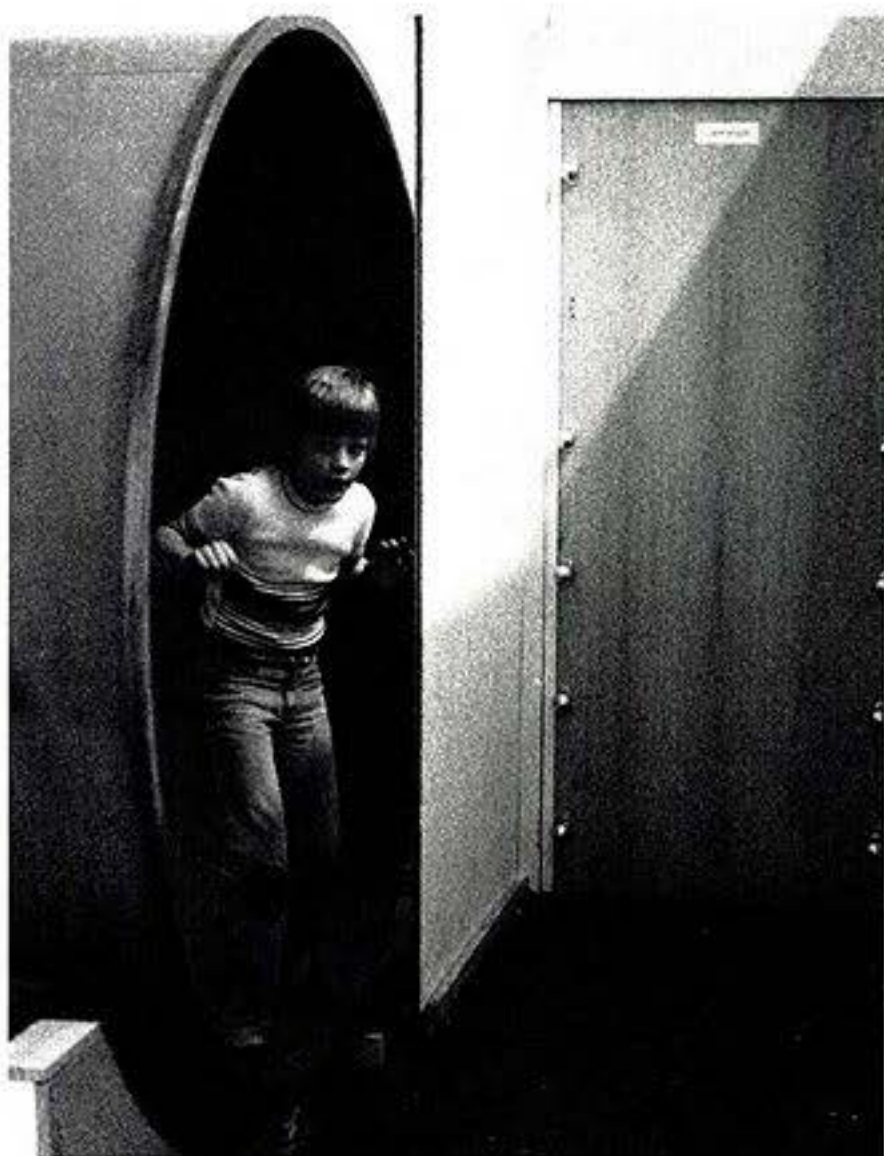
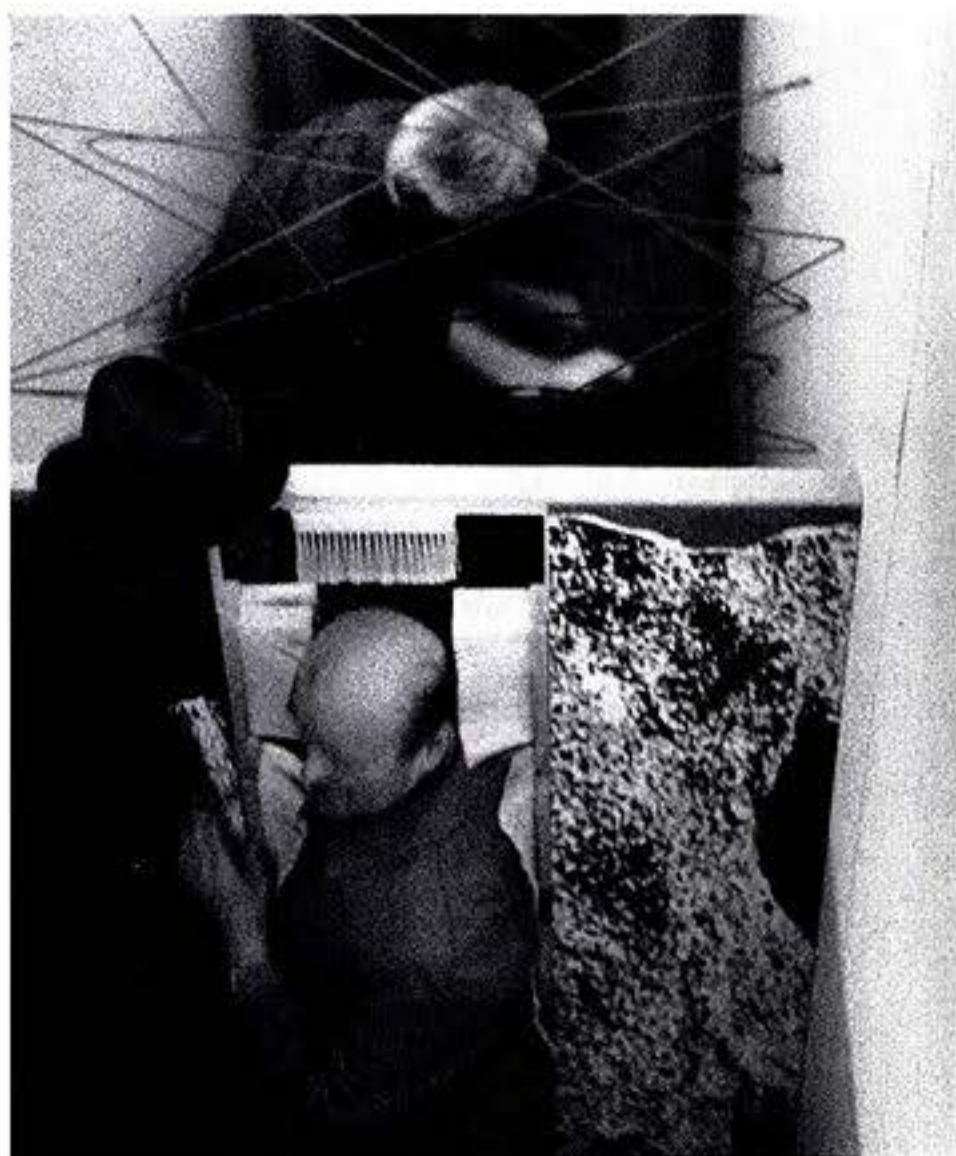
George Maciunas, "Flux Game Fest", New York, 1973. (Foto Peter Moore).



George Maciunas, *Flux Labyrinth*,  
Akademie der Künste, Berlino, 1976.  
(Foto Larry Miller).









# Interview with George Maciunas

Larry Miller

Larry Miller: *The main thing I wanted to talk about was the chart. I've sort of jotted down some specific things that I wanted to ask you about it, some specific questions about the chart.*

George Maciunas: *Maybe I ought to describe the general construction.*

LM: *Okay.*

GM: *So, you see, this chart is just a continuation of other charts I've done in the past for other histories and basically, the chart is – shows the vertical – uh, the horizontal grid, okay. In the vertical line is shown the years and the horizontal layout shows the style. So you can point on the chart any activity,*

*pinpoint it exactly with this grid of time and style. Now it could also be time and occasion, for instance, I've done charts which show, vertically is shown time and horizontally geographical location. This way you could say any activity in the past, you could locate exactly on the chart where it happened and when.*



George Maciunas, *Videotape by Larry Miller, 1978.* (Foto Larry Miller).



Now for this chart I chose style rather than location because the style is so unlocalized and mainly because of the travels of John Cage. So you could call the whole chart like "Travels of John" like you could say "Travels of St. Paul", you know? Wherever John Cage went he left a little John Cage group, which some admit, some not admit his influence. But the fact is there, that those groups formed after his visits. It shows up very clearly on the chart.

LM: *Starting about when?*

GM: Oh, starts from 1948. In France he visited in 1946 to 1948 and met Boulez, Shaeffer, and sure enough, in 1948 Shaeffer starts an electronic/music concrete studio without giving any credit to John Cage; of course. Then he goes to Italy, then he goes to Darmstadt, then to Cologne, everywhere he goes they start a little group or studio, usually all electronic music. But at that time his influence was mainly that of music concrete. In other words, using various fragments of everyday sounds for making new music. Because his first *musique concrète* piece is 1939.

LM: *Cage.*

GM: Cage, that's right. So when the



French come out in 1948 and they say they invented *musique concrète* that's just a lot of bullshit.

LM: *Can I comment about that, remind you of something? Remember when I went to ask Cage about his editions?*

GM: Yes.

LM: *He said that they were particularly attached to that phrase, that term "musique concrète" and that he didn't mind that.*

GM: Well, he's just being very tolerant. He's very tolerant even of people that just copy him directly, like plagiarize, and don't give any credit to him. He's that kind of person, he's just super tolerant. The fact is that, you know, everybody right and left is stealing from him. Now, but that doesn't mean that

he got influences in return from others. The chart, therefore, starts with what influenced Cage. Cage is definitely the central figure in the chart.

LM: *Yeah?*

GM: You could call that chart the Cage Chart. Not Fluxus Chart, but Cage.

LM: *Okay, maybe we can proceed if you...*

GM: So you start first with areas, the movements that influenced him and that's very clearly also outlined here. We have the idea of indeterminacy and simultaneity and concretism and noise coming from Futurism, theater, like Futurist music of Russolo. Then we have the idea of the Ready-made and



concept art coming from Marcel Duchamp. Okay, we have the idea of collage and concretism coming from Dadaists. Now, you see, they're all shown on the chart: how they all end up with John Cage with his prepared piano, which is really a collage of sounds.

LM: *1938?*

GM: 1938, yeah. And his *musique concrète*, which is 1939. Then all his travels are shown. Meanwhile, there's a parallel interest in this chart and that is of all what I would call Happenings or Actions, to which two people contributed: John Cage again in 1952, his first Happening, and the same year Georges Mathieu also did the first Happening, called *Battle of Boudine*. And interesting sideline is that Mathieu did go to Japan and did this action and started off the Gutai Group. Georges Mathieu was instrumental in starting the Gutai Group.

LM: *His work I don't know as well as others. Just describe something that...*

GM: He made an action of painting, like Happening.

LM: *Not like Pollock.*

GM: No, no... It was a theatrical piece,

more like Yves Klein.

LM: *Like Klein's blue nudes? Was the Gutai Group the group that shot bullets at the paintings...*

GM: Yeah.

LM: *And exploded...*

GM: Anyway, that's something that Mathieu would do. So Gutai was very close to Georges Mathieu in the sense that they were doing paintings as actions, much more than Pollock. And you know, different from Yves Klein. The chart doesn't show the contribution of Yves Klein and that's where he should still be added on, that's where the chart is incomplete. Yves Klein has to be given more prominence in the Sixties, which he is not. The other important figure is Joseph Cornell, starting in 1932. Now his influence sort of is connected to Surrealists and it shows how his influence affects a lot George Brecht and Bob Watts, especially George Brecht. Now with those basic influences of the action painting of Mathieu and first Happenings of John Cage and generally all John Cage, everything that he did in the Fifties plus Joseph Cornell plus there's a little influence here shown of Ann Halprin called *Natural Activities and Tasks*.

LM: *What would that be?*

GM: That's in California. It had a lot of influence on people like James Waring and Bob Morris and Simone Forti and La Monte Young and Walter De Maria.

LM: *This would be purely dance?*

GM: No, no. It's just what it says: natural actions and tasks.

LM: *In other words the application...*

GM: (...) sprang from that tradition but you couldn't call that a dance. They were like very natural acts you know, like walking.

LM: *I see. Physical things that are outside of what you normally would consider dance, just physical activities.*

GM: Yeah, like walking in a circle.

LM: *Like a ready-made gesture.*

GM: Yeah, right. So you can give La Monte Young with all of his short compositions of 1960 some credit of that to Ann Halprin's natural activities. Let's say his audience is sitting on the stage doing nothing. OK.? That's a natural activity, it's not a dance. Now we come to the middle of the chart. No, not the middle, to the first quarter. Like 1959 it becomes suddenly very active. Maybe because John Cage opened up a school and has all those people coming to his



school. Also, the so-called nouveaux réalistes in France become very active plus Ben Vautier becomes very active. So 1959 is a very influential year. We have Nam June Paik, playing first piece, Vostell doing first piece, Alan Kaprow doing first Happenings, Dick Higgins and Yves Klein. Well, he was already before that, but he culminated, let's say, by then. Ben Vautier doing his first piece by signing... everything: continents, peace, famine, war, noise, end of the world and especially human sculptures. That's something important to know because later Manzoni copied it. Gestures... he had first gestures appearing then in 1959 and not in 1968 with Acconci and people like that. And we have first postage stamps of Bob Watts, a lot of card music that is written on cards like of George Brecht and first concept art of Henry Flynt. Then that goes on to 1960. And Fluxus comes in 1961, late in '61. Actually, you could say officially early in '62. Because in '61 I had a gallery which did everything that later Fluxus did but did not use that name.

LM: *That's the AG Gallery?*

GM: Right. And La Monte Young had a series of the same kind of things, same kind of events at Yoko Ono's studio on Chambers Street, so that chart points out, gives the whole program, you know, what was performed.

LM: *Yoko's loft... what's the date there? Was that before the Wiesbaden?*

GM: Oh, definitely. That's in 1960, 1961.

LM: *What were you doing up until the time you started the AG Gallery? That's the first time you appear there.*

GM: The reason I got in touch with all those people was that I went to Richard Maxfield's class. See, after John Cage... John Cage gave one year class in New School. The second year Richard Maxfield gave a class in electronic music and I met La Monte Young there who was taking the same class, you know. So I was interested in what La Monte was doing. He introduced other people and that's how we put together this whole program at the AG Gallery and meanwhile he had put up the program at Yoko's gallery... loft. So we have AG and Yoko's loft more or less simultaneously. They were slightly different but not much, like we both featured Jackson MacLow, we both featured Bob Morris and La Monte Young. But we wouldn't show the same composi-

tions, you know, that we would... At the AG we had two of La Monte Young's compositions, No. 3 and 7, and at Yoko's loft it was all 1961 compositions, you know: draw a straight line. And Henry Flynt gave concert at Yoko's loft but a lecture in AG Gallery. So they were a little different there.

LM: *This was when you first met Yoko?*

GM: Yeah, and everybody else. Well, Dick Higgins; Richard Maxfield, of course, I'd met before, in the school.

LM: *Yeah. Can I back up there just a minute? Were you in any of the John Cage classes at the New School?*

GM: No.

LM: *But the Richard Maxfield classes you were. And that's where you first really made all the connections.*

GM: Right. See, my first interest was electronic music.

LM: *Were you composing then?*

GM: Yeah, I was doing some composing.

LM: *Do those exist now?*

GM: No, they don't.

LM: *Why not?*

GM: I don't know what happened to them.

LM: *Oh.*



GM: Then in 1962, I went to Europe and the plan was to continue... Oh, before I went to Europe we published or at least we put together La Monte Young's *Anthology*, that book, you know, the red book.

LM: *I have that here.*

GM: Right. So. We couldn't include everything that we had collected, all the materials that we had collected by then, like it didn't have Bob Watts and you know it had very few things by George Brecht and so I thought I would go ahead and make another publication with all the pieces that were not included in *Anthology*. More or less newer pieces. But La Monte wasn't interested

in doing a second *Anthology* book. So the initial plan was just to do another, like a second *Anthology* book except graphically it would have been a little more, uh, less conventional than the first one, which means it would have had objects and you know, a different kind of packaging. So really then the idea germinated to use the whole book as bound envelopes with objects in the envelopes. See, we had a couple objects already in the first *Anthology*, you know, like the loose Diter Rot machine holes, things like that. A little envelope with card of La Monte, another envelope with a letter in it, you know, so things like that. Cards that have to be cut up...



LM: *Now, you designed that book.*

GM: Yeah, I designed that book.

LM: *And it was edited by... put together...*

GM: La Monte Young and Jackson MacLow.

LM: *So then did they suggest the... was this your first publication, the first Fluxus publication, the second one you're talking about?*

GM: The second one was going to be the first Fluxus publication but it took a few years to get off the ground. Meanwhile we thought well, we'll do concerts, that's easier than publishing and will give us propaganda like for the publication. Maybe then we'll find people who will want to buy publications because at first we couldn't sell *Anthology* either, you know, so it was just accumulating in a warehouse. So then the idea was to do concerts as a promotional trick for selling whatever we were going to publish or produce. That's how the Wiesbaden series came by and that's the first time that it was called Fluxus Festivals and that's the Fall of...

LM: *September of '62, isn't it?*

GM: Right. Yeah, September of '62. And...



LM: Was it being called Fluxus by then?  
GM: Yeah. It was called a Fluxus Festival.  
LM: Here's my chance then to...  
GM: There were 14 concerts in a row.  
LM: I'd like to ask about the name Fluxus, I mean, where did that come from?  
GM: That came still while we were thinking in New York of what to call the new publication.  
LM: When you say "we", you mean you and La Monte.  
GM: No, La Monte sort of didn't care and then was mainly me and my gallery partner, cause he was going to maybe call the gallery that or something. Then the gallery went bankrupt so it didn't matter; he dropped out so he's out of the picture.  
LM: He's not an artist.  
GM: No. So basically it was me alone then who finally determined we were going to call that name and the reason for it was the various meanings that you'd find in the dictionary for it, you know, so that it's like it has very broad, many meanings, sort of funny meanings. Nobody seemed to care anyway what we were going to call it because there was no formal meetings or groups or anything.  
LM: The name was thought of at first to refer to...  
GM: Just to the publication.  
LM: A publication called...  
GM: Fluxus, and that's it, that was going to be like a book, with a title, that's all.  
LM: Did you think of then Fluxus... You didn't think of it in the beginning the way it's sort of come to be known now, Fluxus sort of...?  
GM: As a movement?  
LM: Stand... no?  
GM: No. It was just the name of a book, the second anthology... Now, then, after we started to do the concerts we started to have little shows, exhibits, too, and that's how we started to make objects, to be sort of multiples, you know, mass-produced. That was still before the yearbook came out, the first Flux yearbook. It was couple years before the yearbook came out; now, do you have the second part of the chart?  
LM: The second part is folded over there.  
GM: Nope, it's missing.  
LM: This goes up to 1962 only, I mean, rather...  
GM: Yeah, that's what I mean. It goes to 1964.

LM: You know, you never gave me the second part.  
GM: All right, I'll have to do it from my memory. Now like around '64 or so we finally did a, the second Yearbox, Yearbook came out, that's the bound envelopes, and didn't sell at all. Maybe we sold two or one copy. They were selling then, I think, \$ 20 or \$ 30 each. Now they're selling for \$ 250. Heh, heh.  
LM: This is the yearbox.  
GM: Yeah.  
GM: See, the objects came out sort of together with those Yearboxes and we were not rushing. First objects were quite a few of Bob Watts and George Brecht, especially George Brecht, came out with puzzles and games, things like that. They were, oh, I would say, let's see if it's already on this chart, 1963, his first Water Yam events came out, which is now out of print.  
LM: So let me see if I...  
GM: Objects came from 1963 on.  
LM: Okay, the first object then was the...  
GM: The Water Yam.  
LM: Now we're talking about boxes. First publication was the Yearbox, which followed...  
GM: No, you could say the Water Yam because that's all printed.  
LM: Because it came out before, even though it was started later.  
GM: It came out before the Yearbox.  
LM: Because it took longer to produce. The Water Yams then, was that produced by you and George Brecht?  
GM: Well, by me, he just gave me the text.  
LM: So the very first box was Water Yam.  
GM: Water Yam, yeah.  
LM: That was with Bob and George.  
GM: That's just George Brecht.  
LM: George Brecht. Well, what am I thinking of, I'm thinking of Yam Festival.  
GM: Water Yam is complete now, that's complete works of George Brecht really, on cards, printed.  
LM: What were some of the other early boxes then?  
GM: Ball and quiz puzzles, like the ball puzzle: "Observe the ball rolling uphill"; you know that one?  
LM: Uh huh.  
GM: That's one of his early ones. Or a box that contained a shell, seashell, and the text says, "Arrange the beads in such a way that the word C-U-A-L never occurs."  
LM: The word which?  
GM: C-U-A-L.

LM: C-U-A-L.  
GM: Never occurs. It would not occur anyway. (Both laugh.) They are shells, not beads. Very mysterious puzzles. (Both laugh.) Bob Watts came out with rocks he marked by weight or volume in cubic centimeters or whatever and he came out with early food art then, like 1964. Made a fire hydrant, no, fire alarm as a cake.  
LM: Didn't he make a Mona Lisa cake, too?  
GM: I don't know about that but he made lots of cakes. Then Dick Higgins didn't do boxes in those days. He was very impatient about printing his complete works, which were voluminous, and I just couldn't get to it, so then he decided he would open up his own press and print it. That's how the Something Else Press came about, more or less from his impatience, you know, not wanting to wait for my slow process.  
LM: How were you supporting yourself all during this time?  
GM: By having a job. So all those productions were right out of my pocket. 90% of my pay went to support Fluxus productions.  
LM: What was your job then?  
GM: Graphic design. So I worked 'till, oh, I think, 1968.  
LM: Who'd you work for? I've forgotten now.  
GM: Oh, a small, one-man studio.  
LM: Different people?  
GM: No, one place. Earned about ten thousand so I spent nine thousand on Fluxus.  
LM: Do you have any idea what you totally spent?  
GM: I have an idea. On Fluxus?  
LM: Um huh.  
GM: Probably about fifty thousand.  
LM: Has it paid off?  
GM: No, it'll never pay off. Look at Dick Higgins, how much he lost on his Something Else Press, like almost half a million.  
LM: May I ask a stupid question? Why didn't it pay off? Because, isn't part of the idea that it's low cost and multiple distribution...  
GM: No one was buying it, in those days. Nobody was buying at all. We opened up a store on Canal Street in, what was it, 1964, and we had it open I think almost all year. We didn't make one sale in that whole one year.  
LM: (Laughs.)  
GM: We did not even sell a 50 cent





La calda accoglienza di un numero di *cc VTRE* fresco di stampa, New York, 1976. (Foto Peter Moore).

item, a postage stamp sheet. And things were cheap then. You could buy *V TRE* papers for a quarter, you could buy George Brecht puzzles for one dollar, Yearboxes for twenty dollars.

LM: So what do they cost now?

GM: Just to give you an idea: Yearbox, a Yearbox is 250, complete set of *v TREs* is 350, of 9 issues, and the *Water Yam*, if you can still find any around, is like around \$ 100. Used to be \$ 5.

LM: It's a hundred now. This is the complete George Brecht. The basic thing that I wanted you to talk about was, concerning the chart... this business of concretism. What do you mean by concretism and what's the history? I'll just ask you both questions and then you can take it, the history, how you trace concretism and how that's evolved today. And secondly, what part does humor play in that and how do you trace the history of humor? Because it seems to me that your esthetic is tied up with both of these things.

GM: Yeah, that's right. Well, concretism is a very simple term, it means

the opposite of abstraction. So that's what the dictionary meaning means: opposite of abstraction.

LM: Well, this doesn't mean that a realistic painting is concrete?

GM: No, but the realistic painting is not realistic, it's illusionistic. Right?

LM: Um huh.

GM: So it's not concrete, therefore. Concrete painting would be... oh, something like Ay-o's holes. You know, they're all concrete, they're not illusion. If you painted the holes to look like holes, they would not be concrete anymore, they would be illusionistic. Many people call realistic paintings by the wrong terminology. Like Rembrandt or da Vinci. They're not realistic at all, they're illusionistic. Now the first concrete painting would be... oh, like Chinese abstract calligraphy. That's concrete. There's no illusion about it.

LM: Because of gesture being...

GM: Yeah (...) writes a character. Now, the same thing in music. You can have illusionistic music, you can have ab-

stract music, you can have concrete music. Or you can have poetry the same way. Now in music let's say if you have an orchestra play, that's abstract because the sounds are all done artificially by musical instruments. But if that orchestra is trying to imitate a storm, say, like Debussy, or Ravel does it, that's illusionistic now. It's still not realistic. But if you're going to use noises like the clapping of the audience or farting or whatever now that's concrete. Or street car sounds, you know. Or a whole bunch of dishes falling down from the shelf: That's concrete. Nothing illusionistic about it. Or abstract. So the same thing with action. You have a ballet, which is very abstract. You make completely concrete... abstract gestures... nothing to do with everyday life. So it's very stylized, very abstract. You can be illusionistic, too, in a ballet where you try to imitate something, like a swan, the movement of a swan; that's still not realistic. Realistic would be, let's say, if you marched



in a circle, just walked in a circle, like they had a ballet like that. These two artists... they did Stravinsky's ballet in one version like that where the soldiers just marched throughout the whole piece in a circle. That I would call a concrete ballet.

LM: *What were the best examples in the visual and plastic arts?*

GM: For concrete?

LM: *Yeah, what were the things that most influenced you, because you know, I want to try to get you a little more specific.*

GM: Well, the ready-made is the most concrete thing. Can't be more concrete than the ready-made.

LM: *Because it is what it is.*

GM: Right, so that's extreme concrete. There's no illusion about it, it's not abstract. Most concrete is the ready-made. Now, Duchamp thought mainly about ready-made objects. John Cage extended it to ready-made sound. George Brecht extended it furthermore, well, together with Ben Vautier, into ready-made actions, everyday actions, so for instance a piece of George Brecht where he turned a light on and off, OK? That's the piece. Turn the light on and then off. Now you do that every day, right?

LM: *Um huh.*

GM: ... Without ever knowing you're performing George Brecht. That's a real concrete piece; you see, not when you do it like a stage piece especially, like every day. He says another one: two directions - yellow and red. Alright, it could be streetlights changing from red to yellow. Anyway, I would give to George Brecht a lot of credit for extending that idea of ready-made into the realm of action.

LM: *And Ben Vautier?*

GM: And Ben Vautier, too.

LM: *What sort of things did he do that were along these lines?*

GM: Well, you see he would make a ready-made out of everything, like he says he would sign a war as his piece; that's a ready-made. The whole Second World War is a Ben Vautier piece.

LM: *(Laughs.) I can't focus when I'm laughing.*

GM: OK.

LM: *So the idea of signing... didn't he sign the world?*

GM: World, God, everything, end of the world. Now he is taking the ready-made to absurdity, to the absurd end. He leaves nothing untouched; he signs everything. Therefore, everything is

Ben Vautier. So there is a humor coming in already. But otherwise humor, there's a lot of humor in Futurist's Theater, there's also humor in just straight vaudeville, like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. There's a lot of humor in musical humor, like Spike Jones. Now, they may not have a very direct influence, but they were still there, so there's still that tradition of doing funny concerts and funny music. And Bob Watts was sort of keen on humor. And Ben Vautier again, but I would say I was mostly concerned with humor, I mean like that's my main interest, is humor. And Bob Watts had a lot of it, that concern. George Brecht, I don't know, maybe quite a lot, too. But generally most Fluxus people tended to have a concern with humor.

LM: *Do you think that that's something that had been lacking in the scene in general?*

GM: Right, yeah. Even in Futurist times humor was sort of very incidental. I mean, they were very darn serious with their serious manifestos. We came out with funny manifestos. I mean, they would never write funny manifestos. The results may have looked funny but like they didn't really intend it to be so funny. Like they, you know, they were more interested in shock value than the humor value. So lots of boxes we made are so very humorous, films, everything, concerts, sports events, foods, whatever we did, like even serious things like a Mass ended up to be humorous.

LM: *Do these same principles though apply to performance, Fluxus performance?*

GM: Yeah, right. Well, not as much. You see, the reason I am so concerned with that, is that that's an architect's training, I mean, that's the way an architect thinks, he thinks in functionalism, otherwise he's not an architect, he's a sculptor or stage designer. If he's an architect or engineer he'll think in a functional way. Or a mathematician thinks in functional way, also. Function is a mathematical term. Now in performance, to a certain degree, of course, if you're going to have a harpsichord and you want to do a piece, then obviously you should use the harpsichord for that piece. You don't have to play on the keyboard, you know, and play Couperin or something but you should use some characteristic of the harpsichord: its shape, its lightness or the way the strings respond to objects being thrown

into it or whatever. That would be a functional way of using it. And a non-functional way, I would say, would be if you, say, stood next to the harpsichord and played a violin, you know. Now, we have done a piece like that, too, where a performer played the harmonica inside the harpsichord, but that was as a joke, in other words, you thought he opens up the harpsichord...

LM: *That was me that did that.*

GM: Yeah. That's a good piece. You thought, you know, the audience thought, well, you're going to perform something on the strings or something inside and then you hear harmonica sound coming as a surprise, so it's sort of like a surprise piece. But definitely, see, it's more obvious to be functional, easier, let's say, to be functional in performance.

LM: *Easier.*

GM: Yeah, definitely, because, you know, you're given not as many limitations, you're given, in fact, help. You're getting all those instruments and you may let yourself use them. So you end up using them. You're being functional then. It's a little harder when you are trying to design objects because the tendency is to become just decorative and just apply decoration on top of things that have nothing to do with what you are doing. You know, it's like, look at the stores that they sell stationeries, I mean, most of the stationers have no function at all, no relationship to the idea of the envelope, which means enclosing something else. Now Jaime Davidovich did a functional piece. He wrinkled up a piece of paper and then painted the wrinkles of paper so that it came out like constantly wrinkled paper.

LM: *Printed as wrinkles?*

GM: Yeah. I would say that's more or less of a functional, he used the function of a paper, he did something that the paper, that is characteristic of the paper, you know, and didn't print, you know, something that had no connection with the paper.

LM: *Well, okay, while we're on this terminology then, how does functionalism, which is sort of a favorite concern of yours because of your architecture background, how does that differ from the automorphism that you have under Bob Morris?*

GM: Oh, it's an entirely different thing now. Automorphism means a thing making itself.



LM: *Uh huh.*

GM: Okay. So, now, and he was about the only one that I know that practiced that form of art. And I coined that term, he, nobody, I think, has used that term, automorphism.

LM: *Uh huh.*

GM: By that is meant, for instance, I'll give you some classic examples of this. He built a box which contained its own making – sound of its own making, a tape, the making of that box. And that's all it was, it was just a box with tape inside of its own making. He made a filing system, the whole like a library card filing system.

LM: *I know that piece... a file that refers to itself.*

GM: ... where every card described its own making: where he got the paper, where the card, what size, and you know, like everything was pure automorphism, you know, but, like, that has nothing to do with functionalism.

LM: *Or concretism?*

GM: Well, it's very concrete.

LM: *I want to just get a few catchall kind of questions here. I wanted to know if you made a connection between Fluxus and Dada, in that Fluxus is a name that's applied to, let's say, for lack of a better word, a certain sort of esthetic or approach to expression and then there were words, this idea of a word being kind of invented to represent a sensibility, Dada has that.*

GM: Yeah, well... there's nothing wrong there.

LM: *And then there's Merz...*

GM: It became that, eventually, after a few years, it became I would say not a group, but more like a way of life, you know. Now Dada was definitely a tight group with a strict membership. Fluxus is not. It's more like a way of doing things, you know. Very informal, sort of like a joke group. It's like if you ask people like George Brecht, "Are you Fluxus?", then he'll just laugh at you. It's more like Zen than Dada in that sense. If you ask a Zen monk, "Are you Zen?" he probably won't reply by saying, "Yes, I'm Zen." He'll give you some odd answer, like hit you on the head with a stick. So, it's not that rational of a group. It's not easy to describe it in just a sentence, its characteristics. But I think like you carry many things over. It has the humor; it does have the functionalism, a lot of that; it is very concrete, I think; it has influences of like John Cage, tremendous

influence, and Duchamp, and to a slight degree maybe Yves Klein by way of Ben Vautier. And in music, the same thing, concretism again, like humor may branch out into absurdity and things like that, or absurd theater. Now by monomorphism, you mentioned monomorphism, that's an important item which should be mentioned. That's where it differs from Happenings. See, Happenings are polymorphic, which means many things happening at the same time. That's fine, that's like baroque theater. You know, there would be everything going on: horses jumping and fireworks and waterplay and somebody reciting poems and Louis XIV eating a dinner at the same time. So, that's polymorphism. Means many, many forms. Monomorphism, that means one form. Now, the reason for that is that, you see, lot of Fluxus is gag-like. That's part of the humor, it's like a gag. In fact, I wouldn't put it in any higher class than a gag, maybe a good gag.

LM: *Really?*

GM: Yes.

LM: *You don't consider Fluxus art?*

GM: I... no. I think it's good, inventive gags. That's what we're doing. And there's no reason why a gag, some people, if they want to call it art, fine, you know. Like I think gags of Buster Keaton are really a high art form, you know, heh, heh, sight gags. We do not do just sight gags: sound gags, object gags, all kinds of gags. Now, you can't have a joke in multi-forms. In other words, you can't have six jokes standing and telling you six jokes simultaneously. It just wouldn't work. Has to be one joke at a time.

LM: *Because jokes apply to our linear expectations.*

GM: Right. The whole structure's linear and you can't have even two jokes simultaneously; you don't get it. So the whole structure of a joke is linear and monomorphic and I think that's why our concept pieces tend to be that way; it's like a gag. You can't have three gags simultaneously either, you're just going to miss two of them. You'll get one and miss two. Watch Buster Keaton. He'll never have two gags at the same time. They follow one another very quickly, but they will not be simultaneous. And if they're simultaneous, usually they're bad gags. That's one reason I think the Marx Brothers are not that good on gags

because they just overcrowd them. They just, you know, put many gags together and then you just miss it unless you see their film five, six times and you can sort the gags all out.

LM: *Question, then. If you, okay, you consider Fluxus not really a group but a sensibility, kind of, and you don't consider it high art, you consider it gag.*

GM: Low art. Yeah.

LM: *Yeah. What do you consider the state of the arts at this point and what do you consider high art?*

GM: Well, there's a lot, too much, high art, in fact; that's why we're doing Fluxus.

LM: *Compare Fluxus and...*

GM: And high art?

LM: *And high art today.*

GM: First of all, high art is very marketable. You can sell for half a million, you can sell for 100,000. You know, very marketable. Second, the names are big names, they're marketable names. Like, you just have to mention the name and everybody knows, like you mention Warhol, Lichtenstein, everybody knows. Mention Ben Vautier, even George Brecht, very few people will know. And now even when they say a yearbook sells for 250, there are very few collectors who will collect them, they're just special collectors of Fluxus things and they're willing to pay those prices because they're just not available any more. But museums don't buy it. Now high art is something you find in museums. Fluxus you don't find in museums. Museums just don't have it. The only exception is the Beaubourg and that's only because of Pontus Hulten, and even then, he has all the Fluxus things in the library, not in collections of art, but in the library he has documents. So he doesn't consider it art either; he considers it a document.

LM: *But that doesn't bother you?*

GM: No, in fact it pleases me.

LM: *Why does it please you?*

GM: Because we've never intended to be high art. We came out to be like a bunch of jokers. In fact, I gave a couple times an answer, to questions one banker asked me when we applied for a mortgage. They asked Bob Watts what was his profession, he said, well he was a professor for twenty-five years. Then they asked what do I make and what do I do and I said "I make jokes!" "Oh," they said, "you're not going to make a joke out of the mortgage now will



you?" (Laughs.)

LM: *Little did they know. (Laughs.)*

GM: (Laughs.) Now, like our early manifestos, when they were still serious, like the first or second year, they were all anti-art sort of, and all tended to be towards the sort of forms that everybody could do. You see, it's all connected with John Cage. When John Cage says that you can listen to street noise and get art experience from that, then you don't need musicians to make music. Everybody can be his own musician and listen to street noises. If you get art experience from the George Brecht piece of turning the light on and off every evening or morning, everybody is that, you see? You're leaving the whole professional artist completely. If you can get from everyday life experience, from everyday readymades, you can substitute art experience with that, then you completely eliminate the need of artists. All I

would add is that I would say, well, even better would be to obtain an art experience from a chair by Charles Eames, let's say. Then you have a good chair you can sit on, plus you have an art experience when you sit on it. You kill two birds with one stone and still have no artist needed, but you need then somebody like Charles Eames, heh, heh.

LM: *So that's getting back to sort of like functionalism again.*

GM: That you see was my, I was pushing him.

LM: *Uh huh. Okay.*

GM: Bob Watts was probably the one who disagreed most with functionalism and you'll notice there are many of his pieces that are completely nonfunctional.

LM: *Well, some of them are.*

GM: For instance, postcards.

LM: *They make a joke of function sometimes.*

GM: No, there's just no connection. He'll make a postcard that has nothing to do with a postcard. Now, Ben Vautier will do a very functional postcard where he has one called "Postman's Choice". On one side of the postcard he'll write one address with a stamp and on the other, another address with a stamp. That's functionalism.

LM: *Yeah.*

GM: He's using the medium for a piece. Now the postcard is used, he understands the medium and he uses the medium for his piece. It's closely connected to the way the piece is composed. But if you stamp your own face on the postcard, so what?

Transcript of the videotaped interview with George Maciunas by Larry Miller, March 24, 1978.



George Maciunas, *Videotape* by Larry Miller, 1978. (Foto Larry Miller).



Norman Seaman presents works by

# YOKO ONO

A GRAPEFRUIT IN THE WOMB OF PARK

A PIECE for STRAIN METERS AND VIOLIN

AOS — to TUDOR

ELECTRONIC TECH. ASSISTANT

RICHARD MAXFIELD

LIGHTING TECHNICAL ASSISTANT

DONALD KELLY

NOV. 24<sup>th</sup> FRI. 6 P.M.

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# Yoko Ono

*To the Wesleyan People  
(who attended the meeting)  
- a footnote to my lecture  
of January 13th, 1966*

When a violinist plays, which is incidental: the arm movement or the bow sound?

Try arm movement only.

If my music seems to require physical silence, that is because it requires concentration to yourself – and this requires inner silence which may lead to outer silence as well.

I think of my music more as a practice (gyo) than a music.

The only sound that exists to me is the sound of the mind. My works are only to induce music of the mind in people. It is not possible to control a mind-time with a stopwatch or a metronome. In the mind-world, things spread out and go beyond time.

There is a wind that never dies.

\*\*\*\*\*

My paintings, which are all instruction paintings (and meant for others to do), came after collage & assemblage (1915) and happening (1905) came into the art world. Considering the nature of my painting, any of the above three words or a new word can be used instead of the word "painting". But I like the old word painting because it immediately connects with "wall painting" painting, and it is nice and funny.

Among my instruction paintings, my interest is mainly in "painting to construct in your head". In your head, for instance, it is possible for a straight line to exist – not as a segment of a curve but as a straight line. Also, a line can be straight, curved and something else at the same time. A dot can exist as a 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, 6-dimensional object all at the same time or at various times in different combinations as you wish to

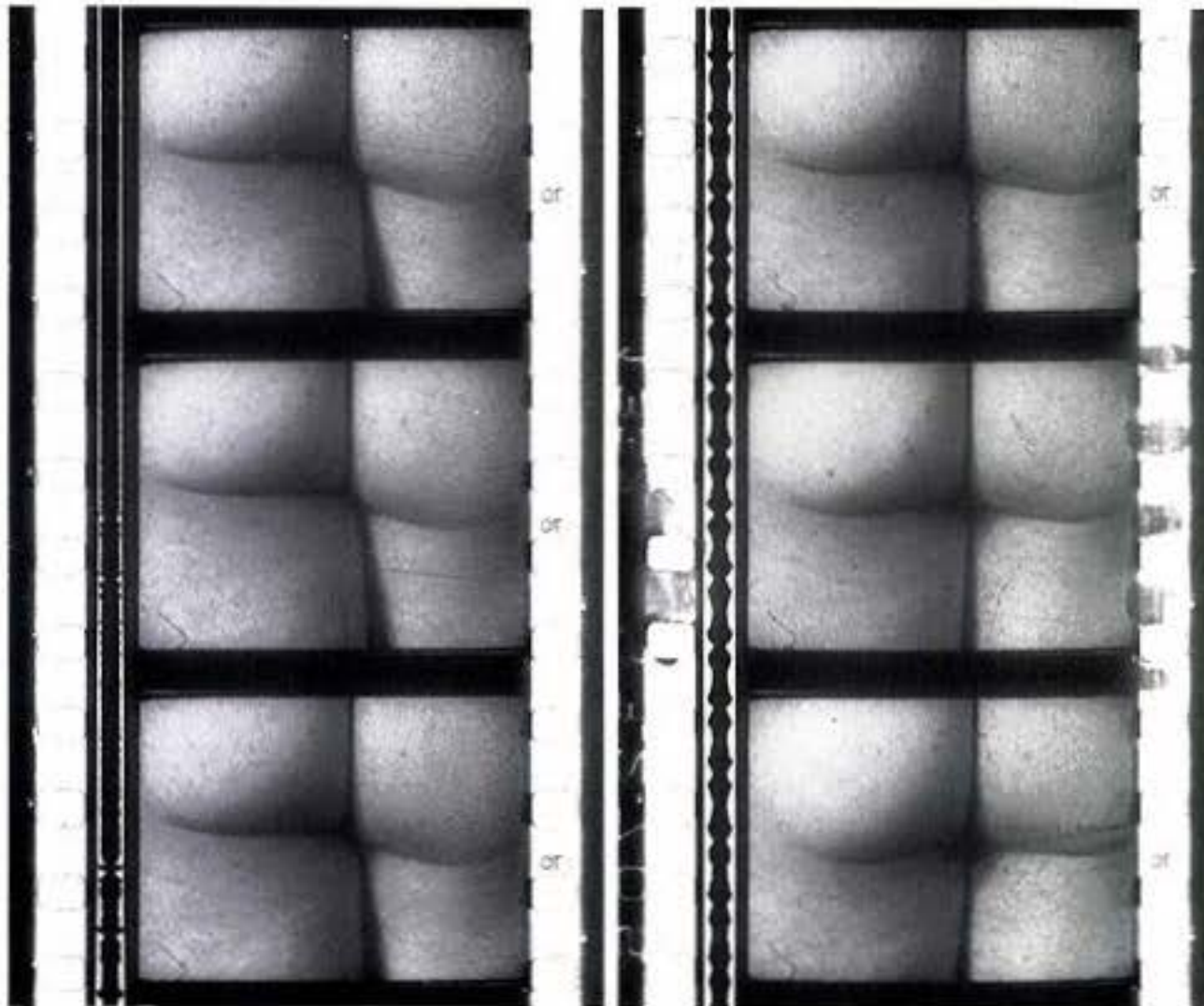
perceive. The movement of the molecule can be continuum and discontinuum at the same time. It can be with colour and/or without. There is no visual object that does not exist in comparison to or simultaneously with other objects, but these characteristics can be eliminated if you wish. A sunset can go on for days. You can eat up all the clouds in the sky. You can assemble a painting with a person in the North Pole over a phone, like playing chess. This painting method derives from as far back as the time of the Second World War when we had no food to eat, and my brother and I exchanged menus in the air.

Nella pagina accanto:  
Yoko Ono, 1961.  
(Foto George Maciunas).

Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece*,  
Carnegie Recital Hall,  
New York, 1965.  
(Foto Minoru Nuzuma).

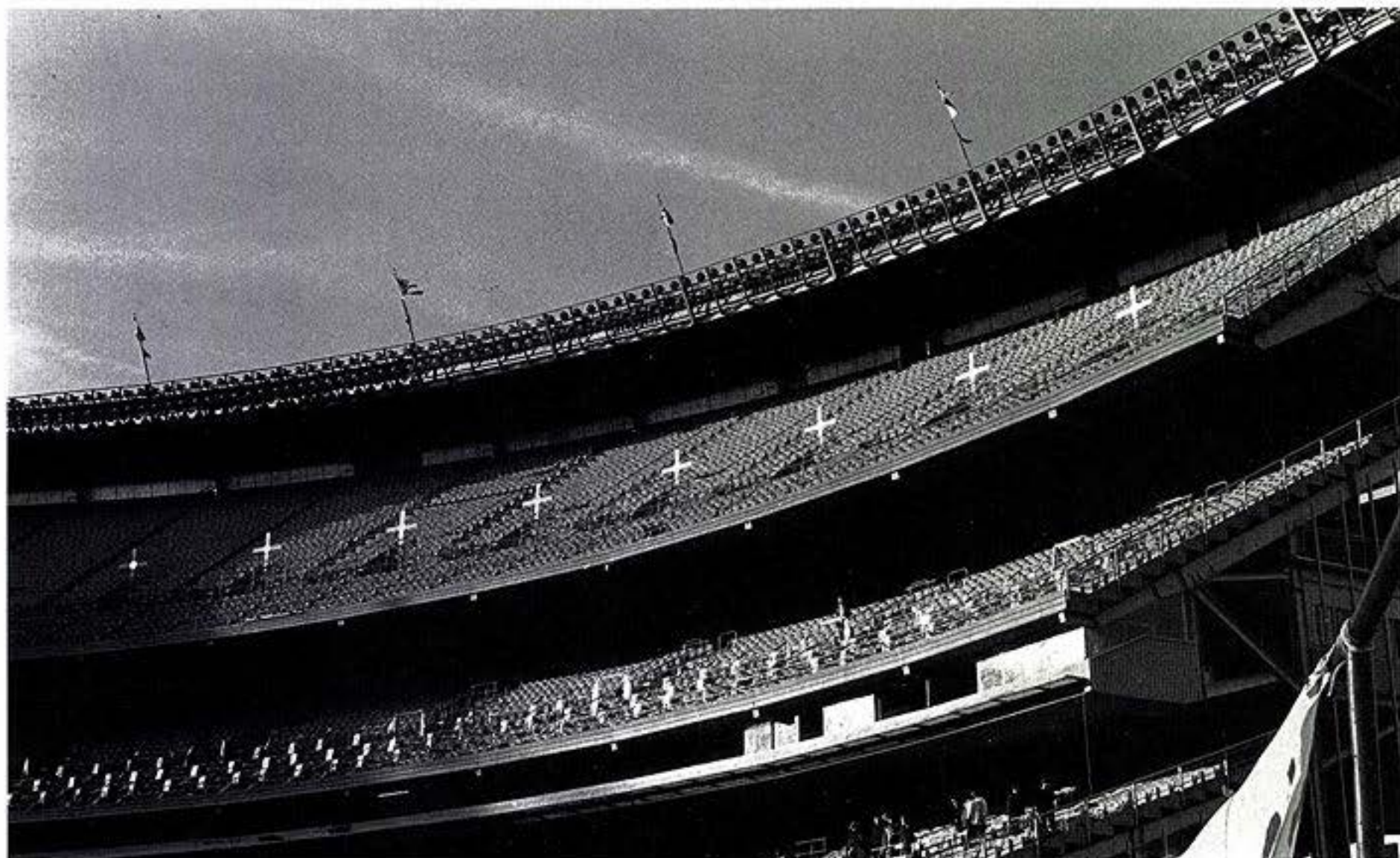






Yoko Ono,  
*Bottoms, Film no. 4, 1966.*  
(Foto John D. Drysdale).





**NAIL IN THE FACE** *Painting To Hammer A Nail In*  
has been presented in several different shapes since  
its conception in 1961. This time I decided to do it  
in this form: a shape of a cross. ¶ Immediately  
after my decision, I recognised an immense fear in  
me which had nothing to do with my concern for  
the artistic merit of the piece but with my warped  
sense of value. I was afraid of hammering a nail in  
a piece of recycled wood while I shared and par-

icipated in a society which allowed men, women,  
children and other species on earth to be on the  
cross. ¶ For me, this piece has worked as a kind of  
atonement, to start a new decade with a clearer  
vision, and to replace my reverence for the  
abstract with that of life. ¶ I dedicate this piece to  
all martyrs in the history of the earth. **YOKO ONO**

January 4, 1990 New York City

Sopra: Yoko Ono,  
*Installation Shea Stadium,*  
*"Avant-Garde Festival",*  
New York, 1974. (Foto Larry Miller).



#### SMOKE PAINTING

Light canvas or any finished painting with a cigarette at any time for any length of time.  
See the smoke movement.  
The painting ends when the whole canvas or painting is gone.

1961 summer

#### PAINTING FOR THE WIND

Cut a hole in a bag filled with seeds of any kind and place the bag where there is wind.

1961 summer

#### PAINTING TO SEE THE SKIES

Drill two holes into a canvas.  
Hang it where you can see the sky.

(Change the place of hanging.  
Try both the front and the rear windows, to see if the skies are different.)

1961 summer

There may be a dream that two dream together, but there is no chair that two see together.

\*\*\*\*\*

I think it is possible to see a chair as it is. But when you burn the chair, you suddenly realize that the chair in your head did not burn or disappear.

The world of construction seems to be the most tangible, and therefore final. This made me nervous. I started to wonder if it were really so.

Isn't a construction a beginning of a thing like a seed? Isn't it a segment of a larger totality, like an elephant's tail? Isn't something just about to emerge - not quite structured - never quite structured... like an unfinished church with a sky ceiling? Therefore, the following works:

A venus made of plastic, except that her head is to be imagined.

A paper ball and a marble book, except that the final version is the fusion of these two objects which come into existence only in your head.

A marble sphere (actually existing) which, in your head, gradually becomes a sharp cone by the time it is extended to the far end of the room.

A garden covered with thick marble instead of snow - but like snow, which is to be appreciated only when you uncover the marble coating.

One thousand needles: imagine threading them with a straight thread.

\*\*\*\*\*

I would like to see the sky machine on every corner of the street instead of the coke machine. We need more skies than coke.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dance was once the way people communicated with God and godliness in people. Since when did dance become a pasted-face exhibitionism of dancers on the spotlighted stage? Can you not communicate if it is totally dark?

If people make it a habit to draw a sommersault on every other street as they commute to their office, take off their pants before they fight, shake hands with strangers whenever they feel like it, give flowers or part of their clothing on streets, subways, elevators, toilets, etc., and if politicians go through a tea house door (lowered, so people must bend very low to get through) before they discuss anything and spend a day watching the fountain water dance at the nearest park, the world business may slow down a little but we may have peace. To me this is dance.

\*\*\*\*\*

All my works in the other fields have an "Event bent" so to speak. People ask me why I call some works Event and others not. They also ask me why I do not call my Events "Happenings".

Event, to me, is not an assimilation of all the other arts as Happening seems to be, but an extrication from the various sensory perceptions. It is not "a get togetherness" as most happenings are, but a dealing with oneself. Also, it has no script as happenings do, though it has something that starts it moving - the closest word for it may be a "wish" or "hope".

At a small dinner party last week, we suddenly discovered that our poet friend whom we admire very much was colour blind. Barbara Moore said, "That explains about his work. Usually

people's eyes are blocked by colour and they can't see the thing."

After unblocking one's mind, by dispensing with visual, auditory, and kinetic perceptions, what will come out of us? Would there be anything? I wonder. And my Events are mostly spent in wonderment.

In Kyoto, at Nanzenji Temples the High Monk was kind to let me use one of the temples and the gardens for my Event. It is a temple with great history, and it was an unheard of honour for the Monk to give permission for such a use, especially to a woman. The Event took place from evening till dawn. About fifty people came with the knowledge that it will last till dawn. The instruction was to watch the sky and to "touch". Some of them were just fast asleep until dawn. Some sat in the garden, some on the wide corridor, which is like a verandah. It was a beautiful full moon night, and the moon was so bright that the mountains and the trees, which usually looked black under the moonlight, began to show their green. People talked about moonburn, moonbath, and about touching the sky. Two people, I noticed, were whispering all about their life story to each other. Once in a while, a restless person would come to me and ask if I was alright. I thought that was very amusing, because it was a very warm and peaceful July night, and there was no reason why I should not be alright. Probably he was starting to feel something happening to him, something that he did not yet know how to cope with, the only way out for him was to come to me and ask if I was alright. I was a little nervous about people making cigarette holes on the national treasure floors and tatami,



PAINTING TO EXIST ONLY WHEN IT'S  
COPIED OR PHOTOGRAPHED

Let People copy or photograph your  
paintings.  
Destroy the originals.

1964 spring

Dear George:

Most of my pieces are meant to be spread by word  
of mouth, therefore, do not have scores. This means  
is very important since the gradual change which  
occures in the piece by word spreading is also part  
of the piece. Paik suggested that I send you a piece  
he likes which is one of the word spreading pieces.  
I have thought over quite a bit about it, since he  
was right to suggest the piece because it is also  
one of the very few pieces that is easy to perform.  
But I think I will not change my mind about main-  
taining the piece as a word-spread piece.....\*

\*word-spread pieces are not included in this text

PAINTING TO BE STEPPED ON

Leave a piece of canvas or finished  
painting on the floor or in the street.

1960 winter

from being high on the moonlight, since most of the people were young modern Japanese and some French and Americans. But nothing like that happened. When the morning breeze started to come in, people quietly woke up their friends, and we took a bath, three at a time, in a bath especially prepared for us at that hour of day. The temple bath is made of huge stone, and it is very warm. After the bath, we had miso soup and onigiri (rice sandwich). Without my saying anything about it, people silently swept the room and mopped the corridor before leaving. I did not know most of them, as they were mostly Kyoto people, and they left without giving their names. I wonder who they were.

At another time, also in Kyoto, before the Nanzenji Event, I had a concert at Yamaichi Hall. It was called *The Strip-tease Show* (it was stripping of the mind). When I met the High Monk the next day, he seemed a bit dissatisfied.

"I went to your concert", he said.

"Thank you, did you like it?"

"Well, why did you have those three chairs on the stage and call it a strip-tease by three?"

"If it is a chair or stone or woman, it is the same thing, my Monk."

"Where is the music?"

"The music is in the mind, my Monk."

"But that is the same with what we are doing, aren't you an avant-garde composer?"

"That is a label which was put by others for convenience."

"For instance, does Toshiro Mayuzumi create music of your kind?"

"I can only speak for myself."

"Do you have many followers?"

"No, but I know of two men who know what I am doing. I am very thankful for that."

Though he is a High Monk he is extremely young, he may be younger than myself.

I wonder what the Monk is doing now. Another Event that was memorable for me was *Fly*, at the Naiqua Gallery in Tokyo.

People were asked to come prepared to fly in their own way. I did not attend.

\*\*\*

People talk about happening. They say that art is headed towards that direction, that happening is assimilating the arts. I don't believe in collectivism of art nor in having only one direction in anything. I think it is nice to return to having many different arts, including happening, just as having many flowers. In fact, we could have more arts "smell", "weight", "taste", "cry", "anger" (competition of anger, that sort of thing), etc. People might say that we never experience things separately, they are always in fusion, and that is why "the happening", which is a fusion of all sensory perceptions. Yes, I agree, but if that is so, it is all the more reason and challenge to create a sensory experience isolated from other sensory experiences, which is something rare in daily life. Art is not merely a duplication of life. To assimilate art in life, is different from art duplicating life.

But returning to having various divisions of art does not mean, for instance, that one must use only sounds as means to create music. One may give instructions to watch the fire for 10 days in order to create music in the mind, or

drink water once a month to create a vision in one's mind.

\*

The mind is omnipresent, events in life never happen alone and the history is forever increasing its volume. The natural state of life and mind is complexity. At this point, what art can offer (if it can at all - to me it seems) is an absence of complexity, a vacuum through which you are led to a state of complete relaxation of mind. After that you may return to the complexity of life again, it may not be the same, or it may be, or you may never return, but that is your problem.

Mental richness should be worried just as physical richness. Didn't Christ say that it was like a camel trying to pass through a needle hole, for John Cage to go to heaven? I think it is nice to abandon what you have as much as possible, as many mental possessions as the physical ones, as they clutter your mind. It is nice to maintain poverty of environment, sound, thinking and belief. It is nice to keep oneself small, like a grain of rice, instead of expanding. Make yourself dispensable, like paper. See little, hear little, and think little.

"The body is the Bodhi Tree  
The mind like a bright mirror standing  
Take care to wipe it all at the time  
And allow no dust to cling."  
(Shen-hsiu)

"There never was a Bodhi Tree  
Nor bright mirror standing  
Fundamentally, not one thing exists  
So where is the dust to cling?"  
(Hui-neng)

January 23, 1966



# Ben Patterson

## Memo: A STATEMENT

Subject: "How to Look Front, Back and then, Sometimes All Around

To: All Persons Concerned

From: Ben Patterson

Date: April 17, 1990

Re: "TOUCH"

# 1. By definition, the most sublime of all truths is that nothing NEW has ever been ADDED to the UNIVERSE! (WHAT?) (The theory continues that there is nothing other than "WHAT IS".)

# 2. Thus, the truth of the matter is that, that which we have heralded as "the new" is nothing-less than a "Something" - a something that a you, or I would have discovered (about then or now), as just another part of the "WHAT IS".

# 3. In general, the explaining of all of this is usually the job of the resident artist, philosopher or scientist.

# 4. Theirs is indeed, a difficult work. Just consider even the main tasks:

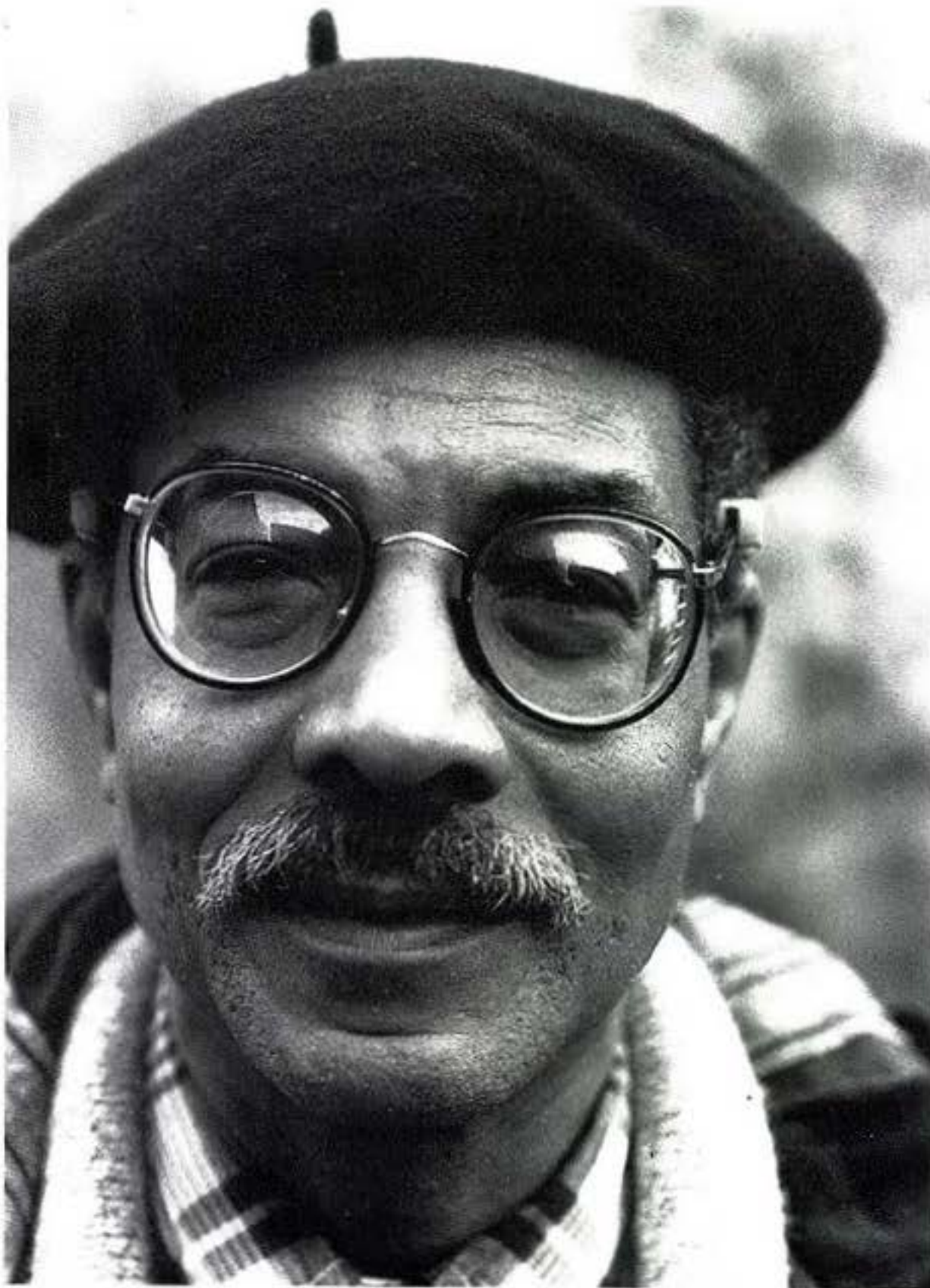
A. Framing of questions, which (out of the chaos of the universe) seek to isolate significant data and suggest possible relationships within this infinity of clues.

B. Converting all this information into prescriptions and descriptions for such architectonic formats as will impact with major consequence upon the next, or next-next generations. (Here be the germs advancing/evolving human perception).

# 5. Those wishing to board this "Band Wagon", be prepared to search your "soul" and find if you can say (honestly?): "This is the best that I can do. Does it help?"

Yes, there is a major risk involved here. A commitment to engage an eternity of doubt is now upon you.

# 6. Know that I now wish you all the best.



Ben Patterson, 1989. (Foto Wolfgang Träger).



A VERY LAWFUL DANCE  
for ennis  
benjamin patterson

a traffic light, with or without special pedestrian signals  
is found or positioned on street corner or at stage center.

performer(s) waits at real or imaginary curb on red signal,  
alerts self on yellow signal, crosses street or stage on  
green signal. achieving opposite side, performer(s) turns,  
repeats sequence. a performance may consist of an infinite,  
indetermined or predetermined number of repetitions.

wiesbaden, June 1962

SOLO FOR DANCER  
benjamin patterson

a pulley is hung from ceiling. a rope, both ends reaching floor,  
is hung through pulley. dancer ties loop in one end of rope,  
lays self on floor face down, up, left, or right (or all four  
possibilities), places feet (or foot) through loop and hoist  
self using free end of rope. dance may end upon achieving  
ceiling, failure of a pre- or indetermined number of attempts,  
or exhaustion.

wiesbaden, June 1962

\*TOUR\*

PERSONS ARE INVITED AND MEET AT DESIGNATED TIME AND  
PLACE TO COMMENCE TOUR.

AFTER METHODS AND GENERAL CONDITIONS OF TOUR ARE  
EXPLAINED, PARTICIPANTS ARE FITTED WITH BLINDFOLDS  
OR SIMILAR DEVICES AND LED THROUGH ANY AREA OR AREAS  
OF GUIDES' CHOICE(S).

DURATION EXCEEDS 45 MINUTES.

SUFFICIENT AND RESPONSIBLE GUIDES ARE PROVIDED.



APRIL, 1963 NEW YORK





Ben Patterson, *Variations for Double-Bass*, "Milanopoesia", 1989. (Foto Giovanni Giovannetti).



enter open or closed space  
listen  
sing tone best complimenting space  
listen  
if previous tone is again appropriate, repeat  
if not, sing different tone  
listen  
if previous tone is again appropriate, repeat  
if not, sing different tone  
listen  
leave space

place volition in rationality  
explain Jesus  
place resolution in intuition  
invent infinity  
place perseverance in evasion  
refuse experience  
place caprice in curiosity  
read history  
...  
repeat



close eyes  
walk to most distant visible point  
open an eye

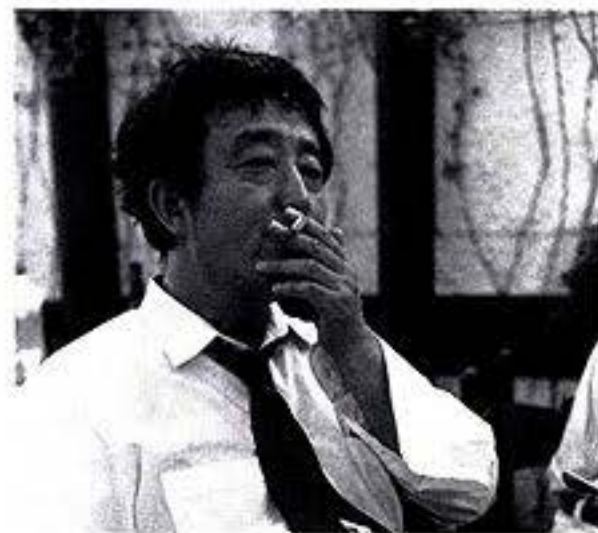
discover interesting sound  
capture it  
preserve it  
perform it



Ben Patterson,  
From "Methods + Processes",  
Parigi, 1962.

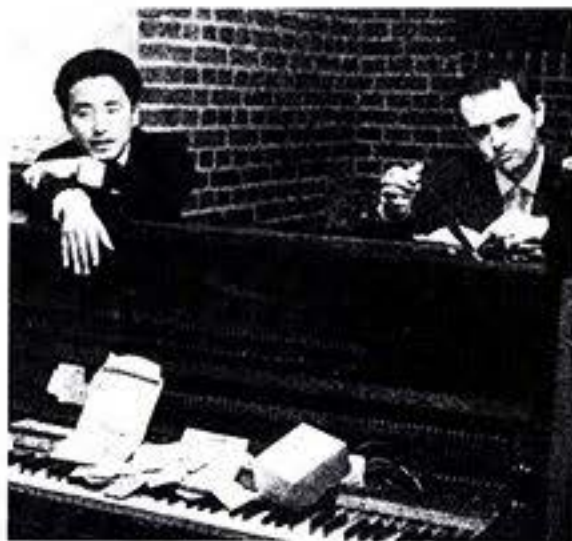


# Nam June Paik



Nam June Paik, 1988. (Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).





A destra: Nam June Paik si immerge in una vasca da bagno in *Simple*, eseguito la prima volta per "Action Music" presso la Liljevalchs Konsthall di Stoccolma il 18 settembre 1981. (Foto Lufti Ozkok).

Sopra: Nam June Paik con Sylvano Bussotti nel suo studio di Colonia nel 1959 (foto Manfred Leve); con il pubblico di *Hommage à John Cage - Music for Tape Record and Piano*, alla Galerie 22 di Düsseldorf, il 13 novembre 1959 (foto Manfred Leve); mentre taglia la camicia di John Cage alla prima di *Etude for Pianoforte*, nell'Atelier Mary Bauermeister a Colonia, il 6 ottobre 1960 (foto Klaus Barish).





# George Maciunas

Nam June Paik

We commonly refer to "the three Baltic countries", but these small countries differ very much from one another. There is Andy Mannik of Estonian stock, twice taller and stronger than I am, of his casualness. (I am a very disorderly person.) I was pleasantly surprised to know that the Estonian grammar is almost identical with that of Finland, thus the two languages belong to the Ural-Altai family, to which the Korean language also belongs. Of course, the linguistic closeness does not necessarily mean ethnic relationship. Syntax was said to have been invented during the latter half of the New Stone Age, so there is a difference of tens of thousands of years from ethnic origins which are said to have been differentiated during the Old Stone Age or long before that. Seen from the evolution of the universe during hundreds of thousands of years, it is a matter of a short time frame that such inventions of civilization as vocal harmony, conjugation of verbs, and the use of honorific terms which are all characteristics of Ural-Altai grammar transmitted between the Tungusic and the Estonian people.

Compared to the Estonian people of Andy Mannik, the Lithuanians of George Maciunas are quite different. They use the Indo-European language. Unlike the German and English which use a "corrupted" form of Indo-European grammar, the Lithuanian uses an orthodox Indo-European language very close to the classical form of Sanskrit. It is quite remarkable, because both classical Chinese and classical Greek have died out as colloquial forms. In Israel, Hebrew was resuscitated from a dead language artificially, whereas Lithuanians must be a stubborn people to use the 4,000-year-old language of Indian high priests. The 40-year rule of communism doesn't

matter to the long history of Lithuanians, whose state stretched well into the Russian continent in the Middle Ages. Included among the famous Lithuanians I've met are, beside George Maciunas and Jonas Mekas, is Jean-Marie Drot, a great producer of French TV, who helped me a great deal in my videotape *Merce and Marcel* (1977). Altogether, there are about 5 million Lithuanians living in their country and scattered in Europe and America, and they have a 30-volume national encyclopedia published in the Lithuanian language, a feat maybe only possible in a socialist economy, which does not take commercial accountability into their consideration. The encyclopedia contains a long article on Maciunas' father, and it hoped that Maciunas' son will also be so honored.

A primary school classmate of Maciunas is the head of Lithuania's liberal opposition party. Maciunas senior studied in Berlin after World War I, during the brief golden period when the three Baltic countries enjoyed independence, and became an architect specializing in the construction of electric power stations. His wife, a blonde Russian, was a ballet dancer at the Lithuanian National Opera, and in her old age she was active in the United States as a Russian language specialist. She was also a good friend of the granddaughter of Tolstoy and Stalin's daughter, Svetlana, during her brief stay in the United States, and more importantly she helped complete Kerevsky's memoirs as his secretary. After George Maciunas died young at 47, she dictated a memoir of Maciunas fils in Russian. Maciunas senior worked during the independent Lithuania and under the German occupation to maintain the electric power station, and came to Berlin with the retreating Ger-

man army and finally went to America in '47, where he immediately obtained a professorship at CCNY. He must have been a very able specialist to land such a fancy job so quickly. They say, he died an unnatural death (or killed himself) c. 1952 at the youthful age of about 50. How ironic: A prominent professor in this prosperous country kills himself after having survived the Nazi invasion, the Russian invasion, and the confusion after World War II, leaving a talented son (architect), daughter (interior decorator), and a beautiful round-faced wife.

Maciunas' son suddenly fell ill of severe asthma and was reputed to have been uncomfortable with his father's career during the Nazi time. It is said that asthma has something to do with a mother complex. He was a good friend of Claes Oldenburg and Stan Vanderbeck in Cooper Union. Maciunas was recruited in the early Sixties to design the book *Anthology* (the first title was *Beatitude*) published by La Monte Young and Jackson MacLow in 1963. The late Paul Williams (a wealthy anarchist-architect and the kingpin of the artist commune at Stony Point, New York) was a major funder of this publication.

Maciunas founded the Fluxus movement in 1961. I bet he was partially inspired by Jonas Mekas, who resolutely organized the Underground Filmmakers, and by Yoko Ono, whose Chambers Street loft had had a series of performance events organized by La Monte Young. His Marxist background originating from a small country, I bet, helped him to conceive the Fluxus as a truly international movement stretching from Asia to Eastern Europe. His only financial source was his salary of \$ 400. In 1962 he told me that you can live in New York on a \$ 5-a-week food budget.





Nam June Paik. (Foto Peter Moore).

He bought from the discount shelves in the supermarket all the canned foods without labels. At that time labels were printed on paper and wrapped around the items. When those papers got ripped off, those cans came up on the bargain counter, and people, poor people, used to buy them as a kind of blind date.

Maciunas first wrote in the middle of 1961 to three persons in Europe: Poet Hans G. Helms composer Sylvano Bussotti, and myself. Helms and Bussotti ignored this mysterious American, and I was the only person who responded to him. His letter was typed

on expensive red rice paper with the IBM Executive. The rest is history. Anyway, Beuys loved and respected Maciunas. In 1965, after the famous 24-hours Happening, Joseph Beuys said in a moving speech in honor of George Maciunas, "he should have been here..." However, this eccentric and volatile man abandoned the Fluxus in 1965 and plunged himself into the Soho urban renewal plan and thus paved the way for the success of the Soho Art Community. Maciunas' achievement is not only the Fluxus, but also Soho, one of the most original and successful cases of urban redevelopment in the

would, which made many people rich and which was widely imitated around the world. He purchased 27 buildings and remodeled and sold them to artists with very little profit. For this feat he was prosecuted by the Beame Administration of New York City, an arrest warrant was up for more than half a year, and he was finally severely beaten by a Mafia electrician.

The history of Maciunas' eccentricity has never ceased, as in his life as after his death. He was diagnosed in February 1977 as suffering from liver cancer. Money was needed to treat this incurable disease. I managed to collect



US \$ 9,000, including \$ 2,000 from Beuys. But refusing to receive the money for nothing, Maciunas produced and sent to Beuys his works worth US \$ 2,000. I brought the object, boxes wrapped in newspaper, to Beuys and explained each of them. I said to Beuys, "You're very good at piano, as I listened to you at the 1963 concert. Was it a piece by Mahler?" "No", Beuys said smiling, "it was an Eric Satie." Beuys was at that time at the pinnacle of his fame as a visual artist and didn't care for praise, but he was flattered by my praise of his piano playing, as I would be when someone praised by poor French. It is said that Cézanne was greatly annoyed at the flattering of his painting, but he was very pleased whenever someone praised his gardening. Anyway, it was during our reminiscences of the 1963 concert that we agreed to raise money for Maciunas. But due to the 1972 student affair, Beuys was officially banned from the Düsseldorf Kunst Akademie. Security officers would arrest him if he tried to enter. The director, Norbert Kricke, officially invited him back to the Akademie so that René Block was able to organize the concert. In no time the auditorium had a full audience. The concert lasted 74 minutes, the reverse number of Maciunas' age of 47. The two worst pianists under heaven pounded the piano keys without practice and previous arrangement. But the audience was as quiet as if they were listening to the piano duet by Toscanini and Horowitz. Among the audience were the high-ranking ministry of education who six years ago were eager to expel Beuys from the Akademie. After the concert was over, the audience applauded thunderously. When I looked over the audience, I noticed that almost everybody was looking at Beuys' side only. Half the audience leapt over to Beuys, requesting his autograph. Finally a few came up to me (out of pity?) and asked for autographs. I was dumbfounded by the popularity of Beuys... It was beyond a small envy or jealousy. Quite a bit of memorabilia followed this event, including a large silkscreen print with Maciunas' gorilla mask (ridiculing Mayor Beame's Administration of the City of New York, who was unable to attest George Maciunas after six months of trying: design: René Block, a photo book by H. Theil and card by Watari, and 9 blackboards writ-

ten by Beuys in Tokyo (Watari Gallery). Also, a record (33 rpm) which is a underground bestseller at the "Gelbe Musik" in West Berlin.

In the meantime two more years elapsed. Johannes Stussgen, the secretary of the International Free University, planned to issue a festschrift for the 60th birthday of Beuys. At this time Beuys and the Düsseldorf Kunst Akademie reached an out-of-court settlement on their dispute and Beuys was given the right to use the Akademie Atelier for his lifetime as well as the title of professor. But he was "forbidden" to teach the students. Beuys promptly made his old atelier into the world headquarters of the Free University and many students and homeless and drifters (including myself) dropped in.

I midwived the exchange of artworks by Beuys and John Cage, and thus John Cage's work became a part of Beuys' festschrift and Beuys' work became the benefit print for the Anthology Film Archive (headed by Jonas Mekas).

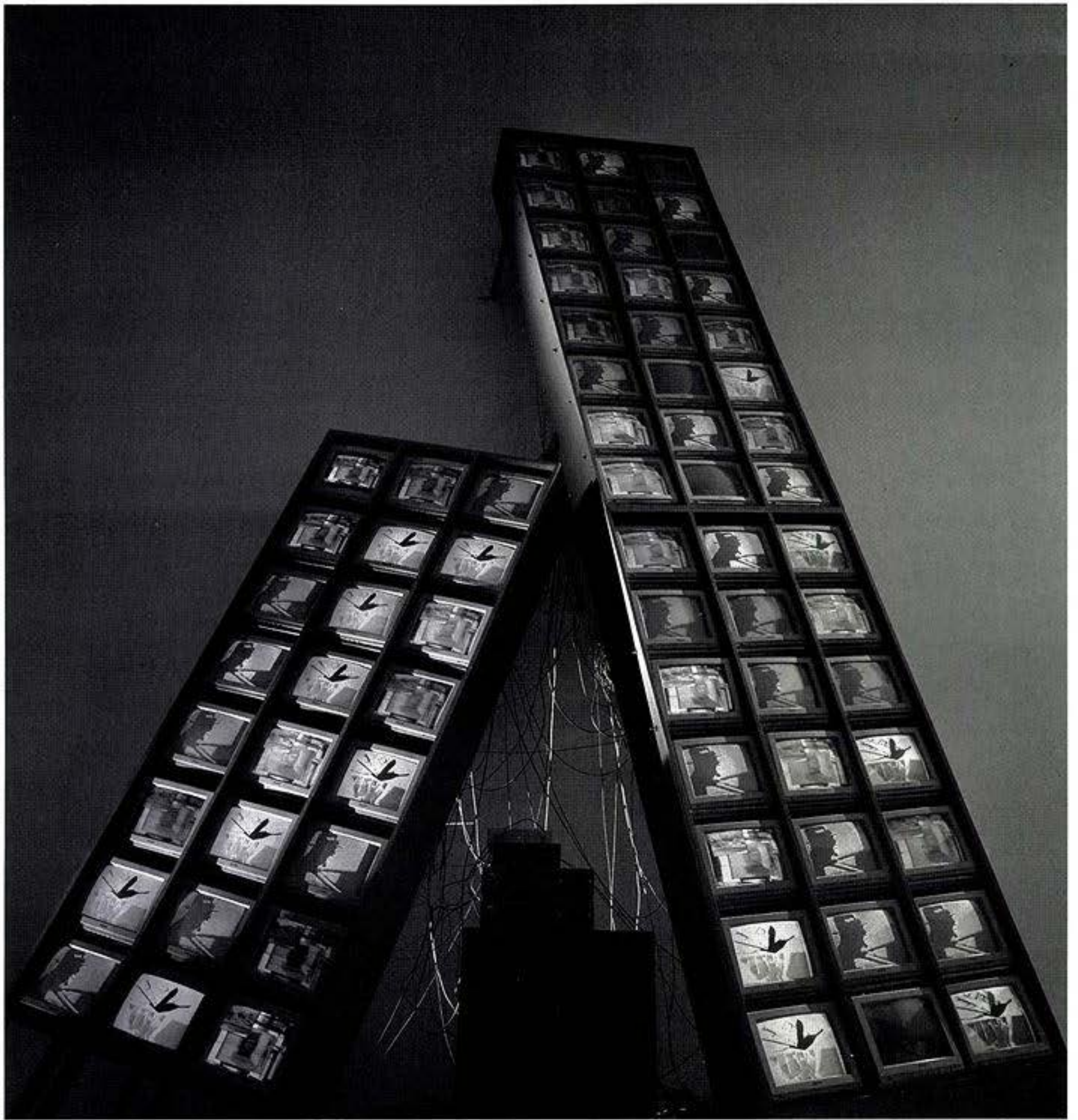
Another event was when Jean Pierre Wilhelm came to Beuys' house to say his goodbye to the art world. This scene is preserved in the album of Dr. Leve. Jean Pierre Wilhelm and Alfred Schmela were the kingmakers of the German art world in the late Fifties. Their galleries were rivals and the in-places of the German Progressive movements. When I had my debut concert at the Gallery 22 with "Homage to John Cage", many young and established German artists visited the gallery because of its own reputation. Beuys was one of them. It was also Jean Pierre Wilhelm who organized "Kammer Spiele, Neo-dada in der Music", at which I had the second encounter with Beuys. It was also Wilhelm who introduced the Municipal Museum of Wiesbaden to George Maciunas for the group concert of Fluxus. Fluxus could not exist without Wilhelm. He provided me with three big turning points in my career and was at the time suffering from severe heart disease. He was of Jewish origin with a hereditary heart disease who participated in the French Resistance movement during the war, and even though he was not subjected to police torture, he had to live four years underground, which certainly would have aggravated his heart disease. In 1966, when he was in his 50s,

he already knew the approach of his end, and one day he visited Beuys' house where Charlotte and I were staying, accompanied by Manfred Leve, the photographer. During our conversation he produced a piece of paper from his pocket and read his "Declaration of withdrawal from the art world", which was faithfully recorded by Dr. Leve in his pictures. After he left us, Beuys, Charlotte and I chuckled among ourselves, "Why the hell did this old man make such a show?" He died the following year.

The reticent Wilhelm never said anything about his Resistance days in Paris. And then ca. 1980 when Jean Moulin was buried in the supreme French National Cemetery, the Panthéon and French media highlighted his achievements, fragments of Wilhelm's activities became known. Jean Moulin was the commander-in-chief of the entire French Resistance, who was captured by the Gestapo, never confessed the facts, and died from indescribable torture. He was a great democratic patriot whom André Malraux once praised by saying that "in a historic moment, the entire destiny of France was laid on the lips of one man".

During the ceremony commemorating Jean Moulin about 35 years after the liberation of Paris, it was Daniel Cordier who was brought into the limelight. Cordier was the chief secretary to Moulin and his right hand man during the difficult times of the Resistance, and continued in the leadership of the Resistance after the martyrdom of Jean Moulin. Daniel Cordier was a dealer of avant-garde arts widely known among the artists during the Fifties and Sixties. In the Age of the Informal Movement, Daniel Cordier was the chief protagonist. Fautrier was also one of his stars in the Sixties and in New York Cordier represented Marcel Duchamp. Wilhelm was such an intimate friend of Cordier that very often his exhibitions were subtitled "in collaboration with Daniel Cordier, Paris". Having been a Resistance leader (like Yo Un-Hyong or Song Chin-U in the occupied Seoul of the Thirties), Daniel Cordier could have made it is as the premier in the liberated France. Yet he threw away worldly ambition like an old shoe. He contented himself by becoming an art dealer... a beautiful story.





Nam June Paik, *Man*, 1990. (Foto Studio Azzurro).



# Takako Saito

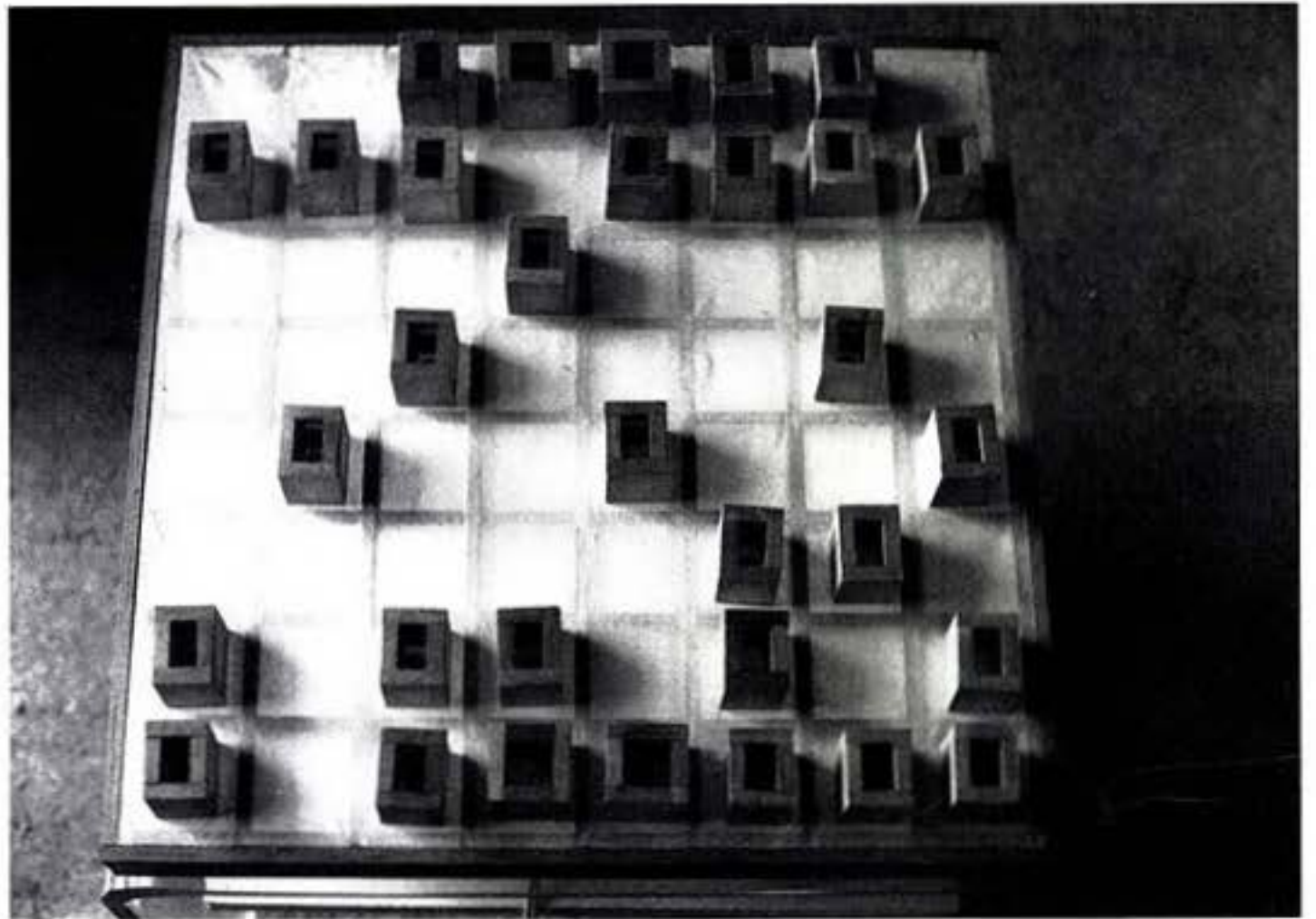


Takako Saito, *Friends*, 1966-67. (Foto Peter Moore).

Takako Saito,  
*Statement about Fluxus*.







Dall'alto: Takako Saito, *Fluxus Chess (Jewel Chess)*, 1964 (collezione Hermann e Marietta Brown); *Sound Boxes*, 1964-65 (collezione Eric Andersen).



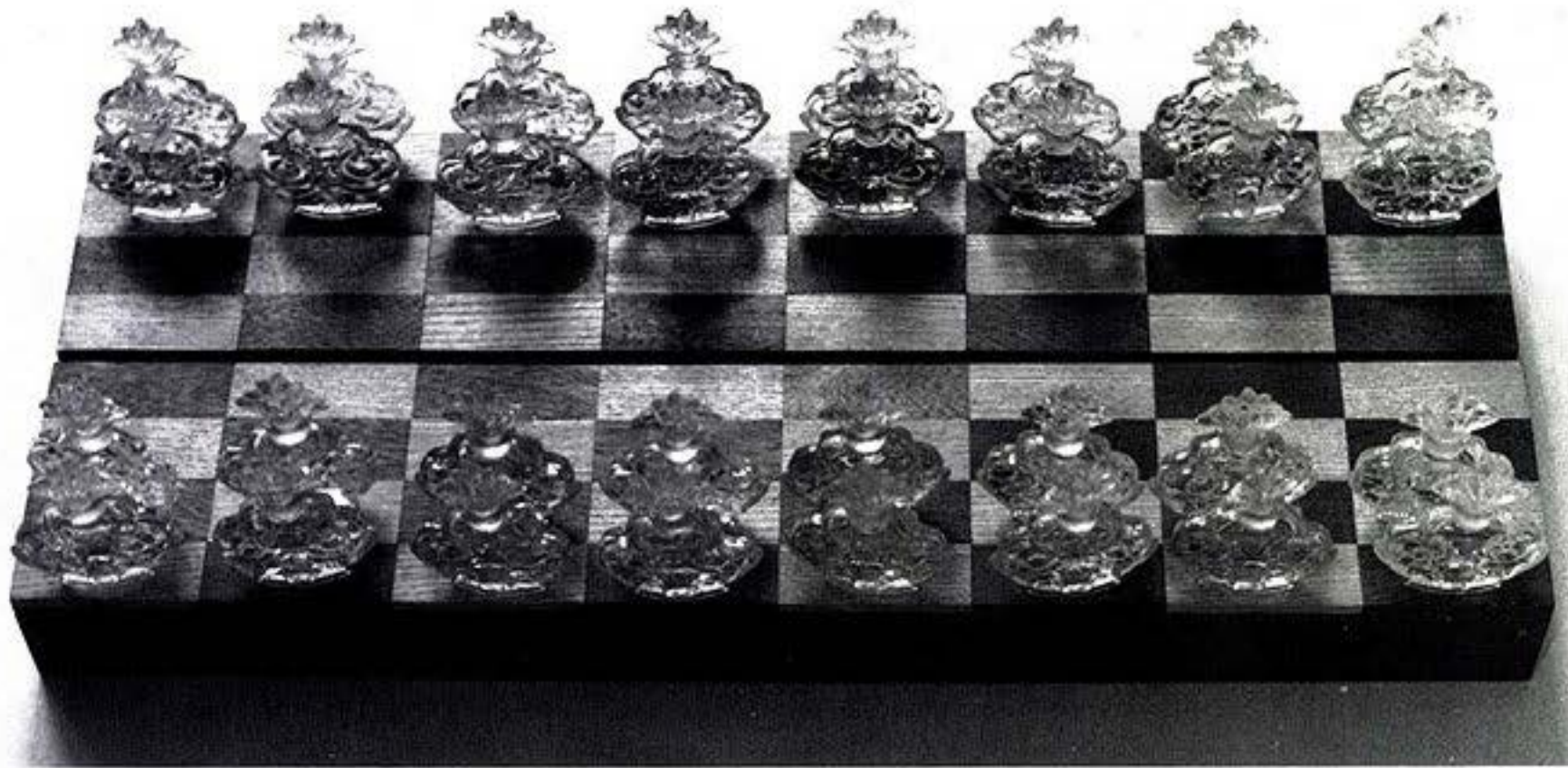


Takako Saito, *Do It Yourself*,  
Bonner Kunstverein, 1989.  
(Foto Wolfgang Träger).

In basso, a destra:  
performance,  
*Multipla*, Milano, 1975.  
(Foto Giorgio Colombo).

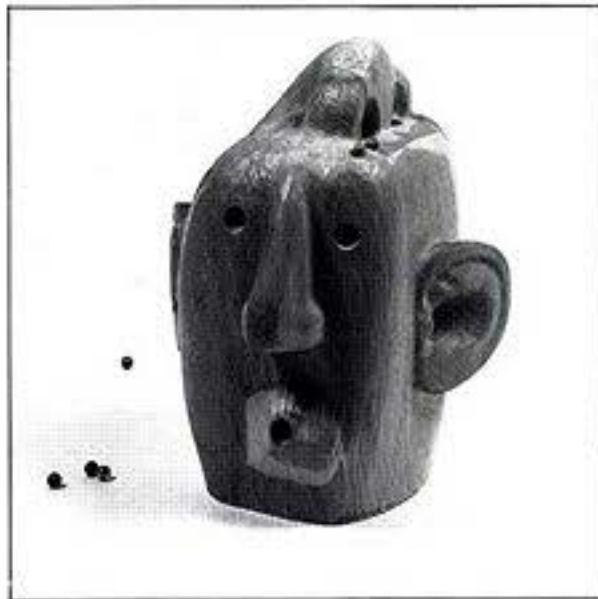






Takako Saito,  
*Parfum Chess*, 1976  
(collezione Will e Susanna Frenken).

Takako Saito, *Head Game No. 18*, 1987.



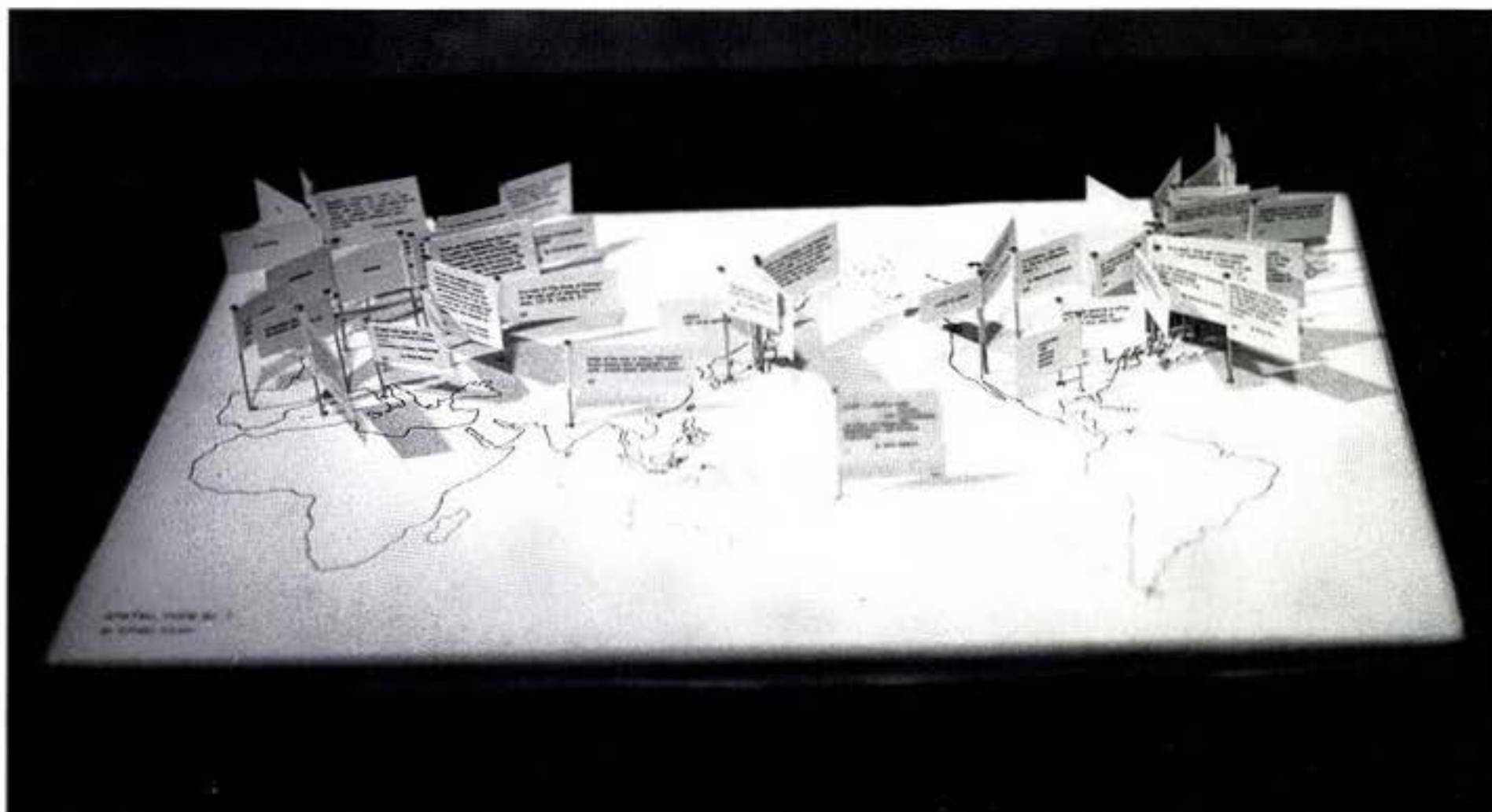


# Mieko Shiomi

Mieko Shiomi, 1964. (Foto Peter Moore).







SPATIAL POEM NO. I

word event

Write a word (or words) on the enclosed card  
and place it somewhere.  
Please tell me the word and the place, which  
will be edited on the world map.

chieko shiomi, 1965

# SHADOW

Dall'alto: Mieko Shiomi, *Spatial Poem No. 1 "World Event" (special issue)*, e *Spatial Poem No. 1 (invitation letter)*, 1965.



### SPATIAL POEM No.2

Around the time listed below  
what kind of direction are you moving  
or facing toward ?  
— either performance or spontaneous —  
please send me a report about it  
which will be edited on a world map

New York ..... 5:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Amsterdam ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Copenhagen ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Paris ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Japan ..... 7:00 am, Oct. 16, 1965  
Stockholm ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
London ..... 10:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Scotland ..... 10:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Vienna ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Nice ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Rome ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Moscow ..... 1:00 am, Oct. 16, 1965  
Berlin ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Los Angeles ..... 2:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Montreal ..... 5:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
India ..... 3:30 am, Oct. 16, 1965  
Barcelona ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Cologne ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Prague ..... 11:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Chicago ..... 4:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Mexico city ..... 4:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Brazil ..... 7:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Iran ..... 1:30 am, Oct. 16, 1965  
Sydney ..... 8:00 am, Oct. 16, 1965  
Hawaii ..... 0:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
Greenland ..... 7:00 pm, Oct. 15, 1965  
etc. simultaneous

Chieko Shiomi  
7-1 Mizuho-juza  
Kitanagase, Okayama  
Japan

• Please write in print hand or use typewriter

### SPATIAL POEM NO. 3

The phenomenon of a fall could be described as a segment  
of a movement towards the center of the earth. This very  
moment countless objects on the earth are taking part in  
this centripetal event.

SPATIAL POEM NO. 3 will be the record of your intentional  
effort to make something fall, occurring as it would,  
simultaneously with all the countless and incessant falling  
events.

Please write to me how and when you performed it, as we  
are going to edit them chronologically.

You could participate as many times as you want until  
August 31, 1966.

Chieko Shiomi  
7-1 Mizuho-juza  
Kitanagase  
Okayama-shi  
Japan

### SPATIAL POEM NO.5

open event

Open something which is closed.

Please describe to me how you did it and what happened  
by your performance.

Your reports will be recorded on the world map.

- Performance period July 15, Aug. 5, 1972
- Reports should preferably be written in English and  
within about three hundreds words
- Please add to your report the date and time of your  
performance

mieko shiomi  
sakaguchi 1-24-38  
sakurai, minoo  
osaka, japan

### SPATIAL POEM NO. 4

shadow event

Make a shadow or shadows of the enclosed letter SHADOW on somewhere.  
Please describe to me in details how you performed it... about the place,  
light source, duration, movement, deformation etc.  
Your reports will be recorded on the world map.

- Performance period Dec. 11-31, 1971
- Reports should preferably be written in English and within about three  
hundreds words
- Please add to your report the date and time of your performance





Mieko Shiomi, *Air Event*, 1964.  
(Foto Peter Moore).



Mieko Shiomi, *Disappearing  
Music for Face*,  
Washington Square Gallery,  
New York,  
1964. (Foto Peter Moore).



In the center is a revolving door. On each central end of the labyrinth there are placed four flags (see picture). The other ends round flags which indicate to the performers how to continue their performance. There are American flags on all, though there are others too. The note is to change the position of flag 3 if a certain performer starts on the same route which is written on the board. The routes which the game is the labyrinth with a central door and a revolving door. The game would be played in two light with one copyright over the same very door and flashlight for the labyrinth door and words which are placed each performance.

### PERFORMANCE RULES

Each performer except a tagger keeps walking on the lines. When he walks over the word, he must read it aloud. When he comes to the flag, he must follow its indication. RETURN - He must return. LEFT 3 - He must try to run back to the revolving door as fast as possible and turn the door three times leftward. If he happens to turn the way and comes to the other flag, he must follow the new flag, or if it happens to bump against when performer walking in front of him, he must return and try to find another way to the center. DEADEND - He must walk out the line and becomes new tagger. The fastest tagger joins the game after handing the cross flag to the new tagger. When two performers encounter on the same line, they must fight to throw the other out the line. The person who has lost goes to the tagger and takes over his role. The former tagger joins the game. When he comes to the central end, he must flash one bulb. The tagger keeps changing the position of flags trying not to disturb performers.

### GAME METHOD

Two teams each composed of the same number of performers (from nine to twelve) compete. Teams play one after the other, so when one team plays, other team watches. Each round is allowed only four minutes. When a performer acts against the rule, unless noted about for him to return right away. Then he loses the right to join the game on further rounds. Two referees should share their tasks as the rules are pretty complicated. RULES: 1) Nobody can become tagger after same in the same round. 2) Nobody can win on the same straight line more than 10 seconds, i.e. he must turn the corner at least once in every 10 seconds. 3) Nobody can spend more than 15 seconds running around to find the way to the revolving door. Thus the number of the performers will decrease following on the rounds. When at least one team has lost the performers except three, the game will end.

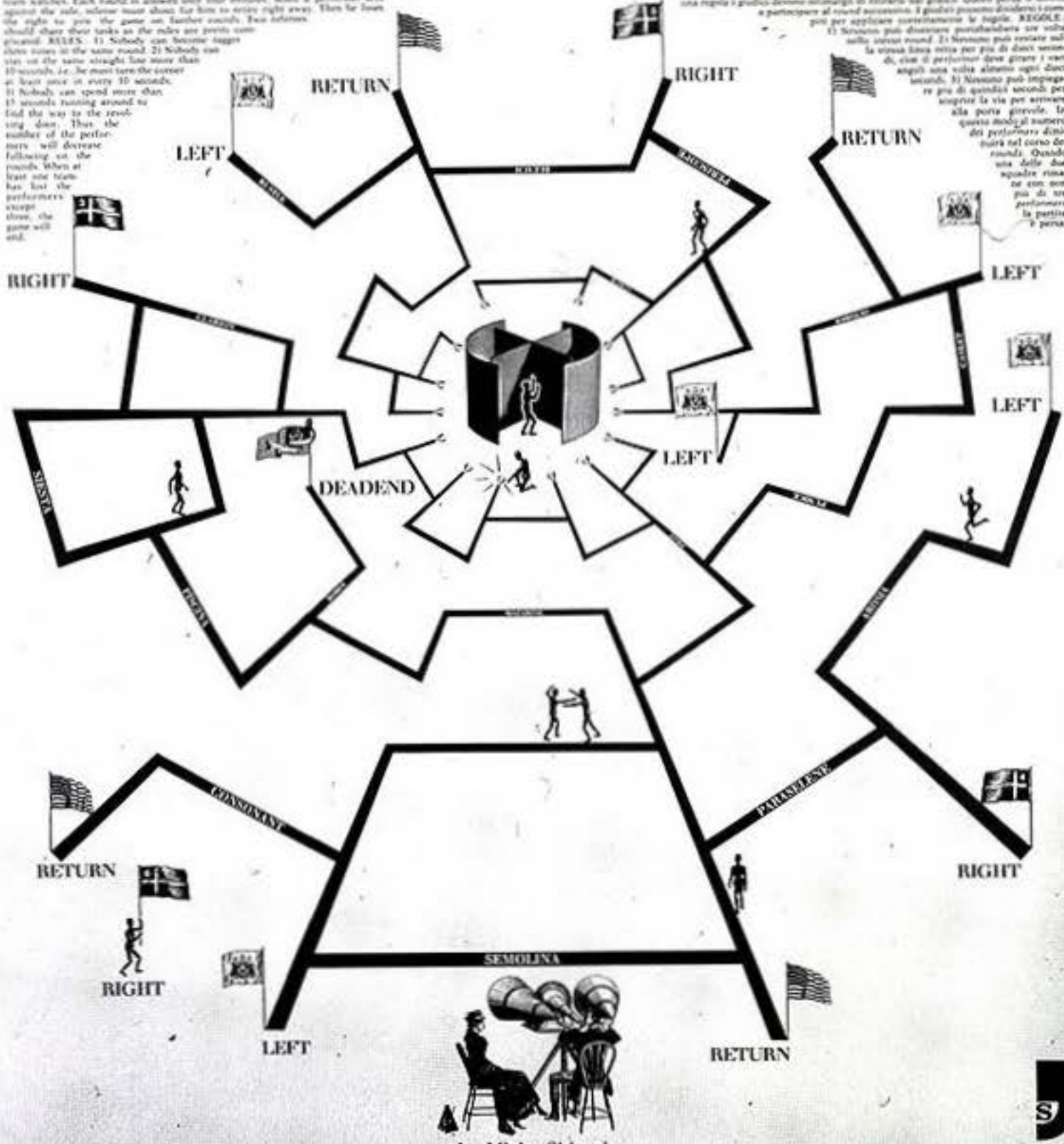
# GAME AROUND A REVOLVING DOOR

### REGOLE DEL GIOCO

Tutti i performer devono muoversi, ad eccezione del portabandiera, sulle linee. Quando un performer passa su una parola deve leggerla ad alta voce. Quando un performer arriva alla bandiera deve rispettare l'indicazione. Ad esempio, RITORNA - Egli deve tornare indietro. USCITA 3 - Egli deve provare a passare dietro la porta girevole il più vicino possibile e girare la porta tre volte in senso antiorario. Se egli sbaglia su un percorso sbagliato e arriva ad un'altra bandiera egli deve rispettare la istruzioni della nuova bandiera, se finisce contro un altro performer che cammina verso di lui egli deve tornare indietro e trovare un'altra via. FUORIGIOCO - Il performer deve uscire dal percorso e diventa il nuovo portabandiera. Il portabandiera deve venire nel gioco dopo aver consegnato la bandiera al nuovo. Quando un performer è incoraggiato sulla stessa linea esso deve tornare di tornare fuori dalla linea. Chi perde diventa il nuovo portabandiera e il precedente rientra nel gioco. Quando questi arriva sul terminale centrale deve fare un lampo con il flash. Il portabandiera deve continuamente cambiare la posizione delle bandiere senza disturbare i performer.

### METODO DI GIOCO

Il gioco si disputa fra due squadre composte dalla stessa numero di performer (da nove a dodici). Le due squadre giocano una alla volta e durante una gioca l'altra squadra i tempi. Ciascun round dura quattro minuti. Quando un performer viola una regola i giudici devono incoraggiarlo di ritornare nel gioco. Quando perde il diritto a partecipare al round successivo. I giudici possono decidere i punteggi per applicare convenientemente le regole. REGOLE: 1) Nessuno può diventare portabandiera una volta nella stessa round. 2) Nessuno può restare sulla stessa linea retta per più di dieci secondi, cioè il performer deve girare i vari angoli una volta almeno ogni dieci secondi. 3) Nessuno può impegnare più di quindici secondi per scoprire la via per arrivare alla porta girevole. In questo modo il numero dei performer diminuirà nel corso dei rounds. Quando una delle due squadre rimane con non più di tre performer la partita è persa.



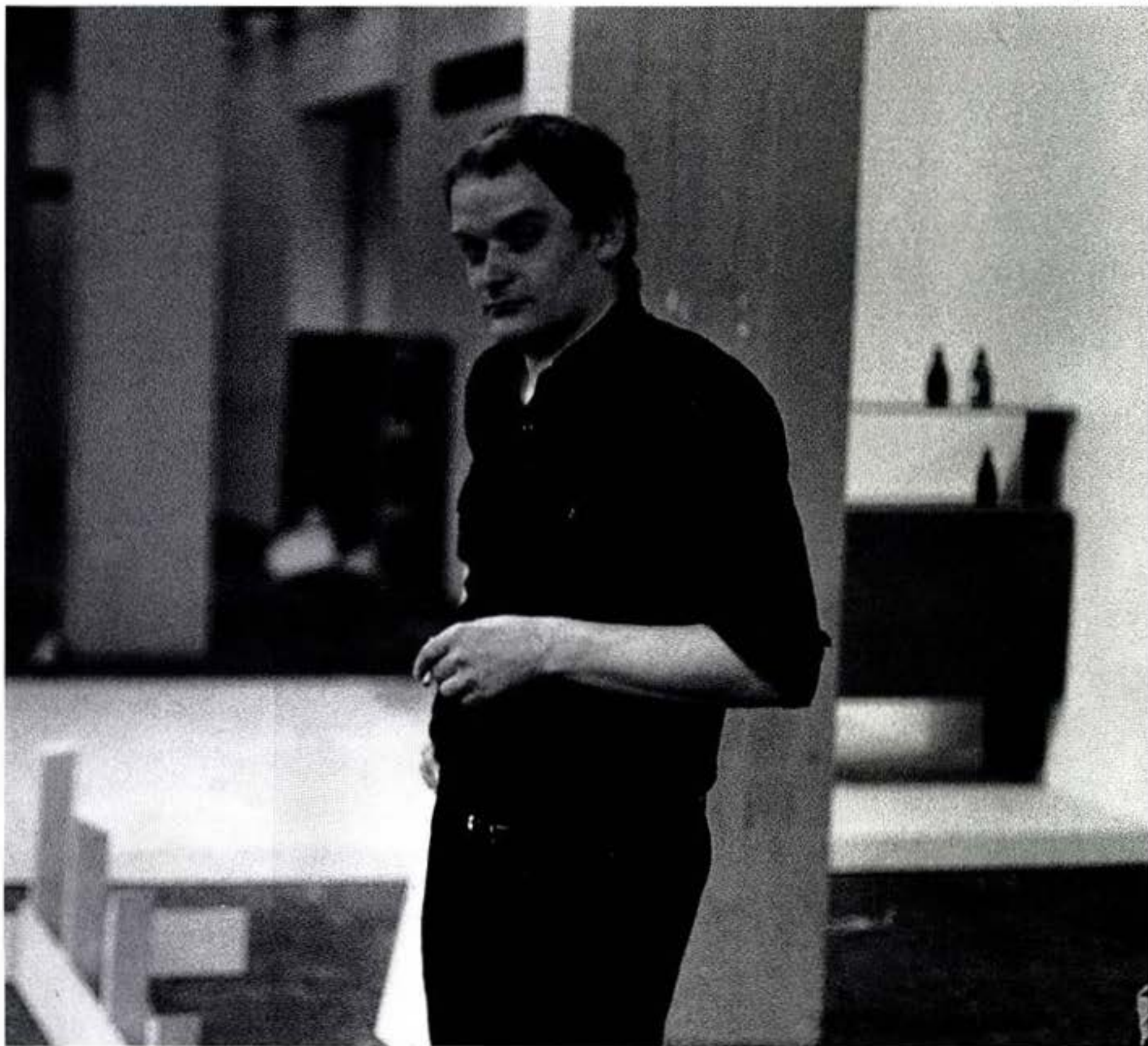
by Mieko Shiomi

Mieko Shiomi, Game around a Revolving Door, 1967.



# Tomas Schmit

Tomas Schmit, Akademie der Kunste,  
Berlino, 1976. (Foto Larry Miller).





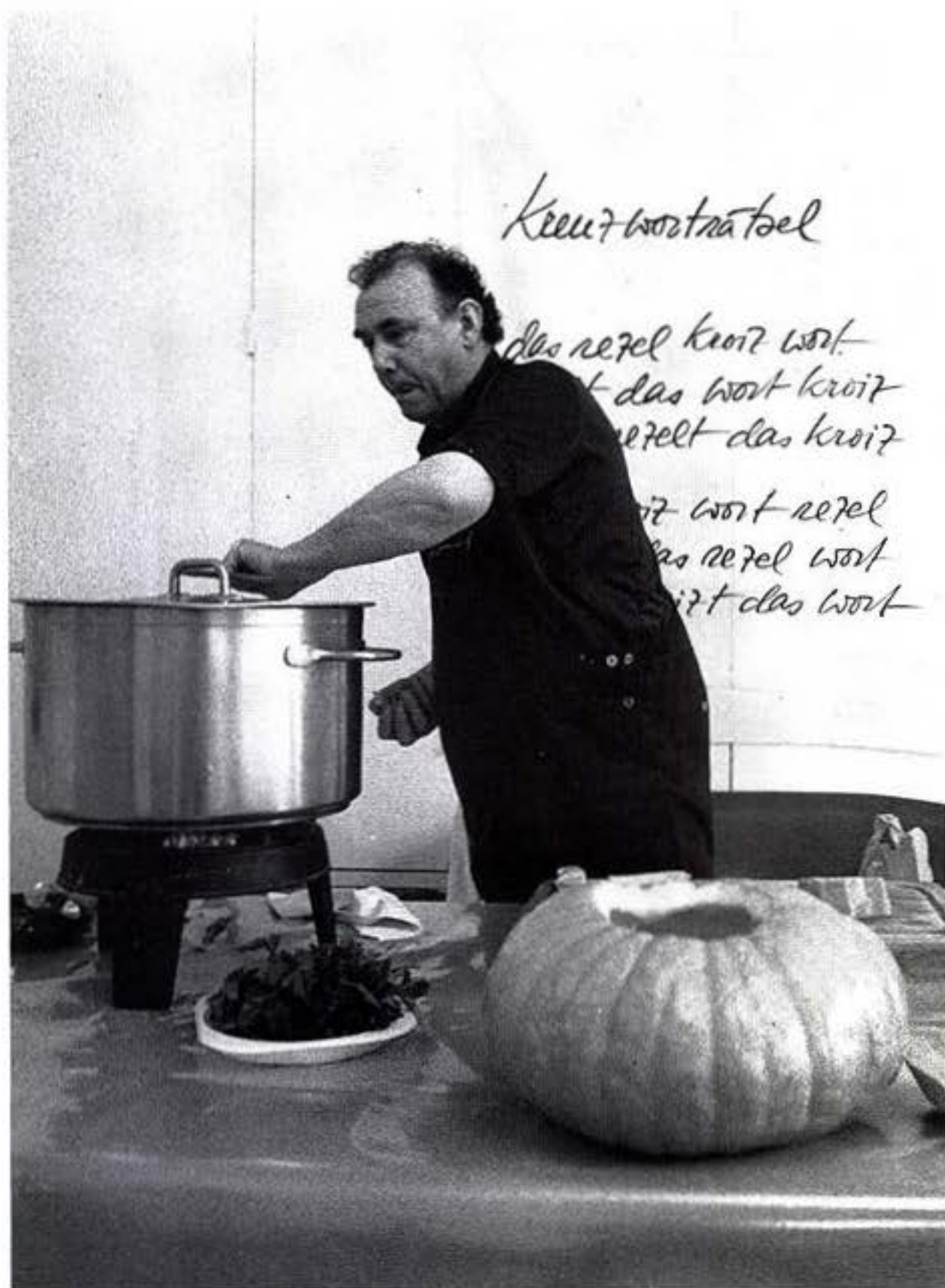


Dall'alto: Tomas Schmit,  
*Zyklus für Wassereimer (oder  
Flaschen)*, Amsterdam, 1963  
(foto Dorine von der Klei);  
*Four Poems*, in *Fluxus Preview  
Review* (foto George Maciunas).



# Daniel Spoerri

Jon Hendricks



Daniel Spoerri. (Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).

La contribution de Daniel Spoerri à Fluxus est bien plus grande qu'on ne le pense généralement. Dès 1963, George Maciunas a publié plusieurs Editions Fluxus des travaux de Spoerri.

Ces éditions sont fort connues et certaines ont été très bien documentées. Maciunas avait planifié plusieurs autres éditions d'œuvres de Spoerri, mais celles-ci n'ont pas été réalisées. Il est exact que Spoerri, en février 1963, était assis à une table sur la scène de l'École des Beaux-Arts de Düsseldorf où, avec une ironie mordante, il présenta son *Hommage à l'Allemagne* dans le cadre du "Festum Fluxorum Fluxus". Il est juste aussi qu'il participa auparavant, en octobre 1962 au "Festival of Misfits" (Festival des Inadaptés) de Londres. Mais sa contribution essentielle à Fluxus a été son idée de doter l'art d'un système de brevets (*Brevet de garantie*).

Après son exposition dans la Galerie Køpcke à Copenhague, en 1961, pendant laquelle Spoerri appliqua un tampon "Attention Œuvre d'Art" sur des objets d'utilisation courante achetés dans l'épicerie du coin, il donna à Addi Køpcke la licence pour la production de ses tableaux-pièges (*Brevet de garantie, Genèse du tableau-piège*).

Spoerri entendait par "brevet de garantie" quelque chose d'essentiellement différent de ce que, par exemple, un maître imprimeur faisait quand il imprimait des lithographies ou des gravures à l'eau-forte de Picasso, ou de ce qu'un maître fondeur effectuait quand il coulait en bronze une danseuse de Degas. Dans ce cas-ci l'artiste confiait l'original à l'imprimeur ou au maître fondeur, qui s'efforçait de reproduire une copie de l'original aussi fidèle que possible.

L'aspect révolutionnaire du concept de Spoerri était qu'une troisième personne, dans ce cas précis l'artiste Addi Køpcke, n'était pas liée à une maquet-



te, mais qu'au contraire une idée lui était fournie qu'elle pouvait librement interpréter et concrétiser.

George Maciunas, fondateur de Fluxus, qui organisait la plupart des manifestations de Fluxus et qui éditait la plus grande partie des publications Fluxus, a repris ce concept de brevet et l'a utilisé pour Fluxus comme base pour sa production des œuvres d'autres artistes. Mais il l'interprétait en pensant que cela lui conférait la liberté d'interpréter et de modifier les idées à la base de la production d'une œuvre.

Maciunas alla même jusqu'à changer l'idée d'un artiste. Il eut, par exemple, l'intention, à partir de l'idée de Per Kirkeby, de mettre de la sciure en vrac dans une boîte de conserve avec comme titre *This Box Contains Wood* (Cette boîte contient du bois) de prendre comme idée de départ pour Fluxus *Solid Wood in a Wood Box* (Bois compact dans une boîte en bois), puis de le transformer en *Solid Clay in Ceramic Box* (Limon compact dans une boîte en céramique), etc.

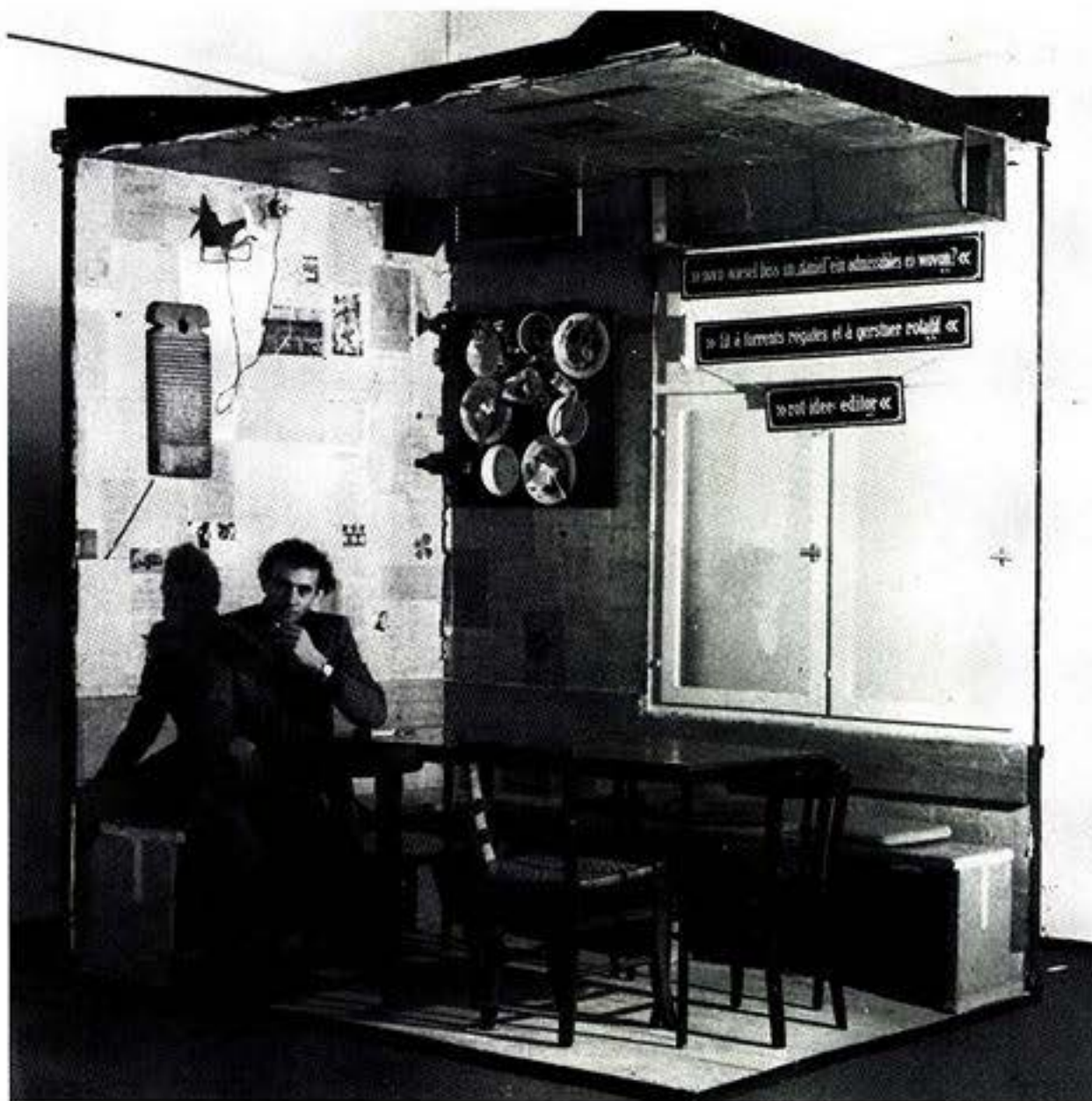
La seule à avoir été produite, pour autant qu'on le sache, est la *Solid Plastic in a Plastic Box* (Un bloc compact de plastique dans une boîte en plastique).

La liberté de reprendre et de changer cadrerait parfaitement avec la tendance du mouvement "Anti-Art", qui a été exprimée dans différents manifestes.

En dépit du fait que les artistes n'aient pas signé personnellement, le nom de Spoerri figurait dans le manifeste de 1966.

Ironiquement, Spoerri déclara, quand Maciunas lui proposa le projet "Filliou, Spoerri, Topor: Monsters are inoffensive" (Les monstres sont inoffensifs), d'en faire des puzzles à images qui se recouvrent: "Non, tu ne peux pas faire cela, ce que tu peux faire c'est une série de cartes postales, cela aussi c'est drôle" (lettre de Spoerri à George Maciunas, env. 1966).

Manger, une forme d'art (*Eat Art*, Eat Art Gallery), c'était aussi une idée de Spoerri que Fluxus a adoptée. Maciunas organisa et planifia un certain nombre de repas et banquets fantastiques pour Fluxus. Des repas dont les aliments avaient la même couleur ou des repas dont les aliments étaient tous transparents, avec un atlas de produits alimentaires ou uniquement des aliments érotiques, etc., mais, par contre, aucun de ces repas n'a été préparé par Spoerri.



Le coin du Restaurant Spoerri, 1968. Tableau-piège, 270 × 300 × 150 cm.  
Collezione Gino Di Maggio, Milano.

De toute évidence, Maciunas fut impressionné par le *Material* de Spoerri et son Edition MAT. C'est ainsi qu'il publia presque une copie de l'Édition TAM Thek, *La machine universelle*, de George Brecht, à cela près que l'édition Fluxus n'est pas signée, que le contenu de chaque exemplaire est différent, que la boîte est en bois et que le couvercle porte le logo de Fluxus conçu par Maciunas.

Dès le début, Maciunas voulut donner une impulsion politique à Fluxus. A en croire la lettre qui suit, Maciunas avait l'impression que Spoerri et d'autres ne voulaient pas d'un engagement politique quelconque de Fluxus, quoi qu'ils étaient liés à ce dernier depuis des années.

"Emmett (Williams)!, je dois savoir ce que tu penses de lier politiquement Fluxus au parti (tu sais lequel). Ce que nous faisons perd toute signification si nous le séparons du combat politico-

social qui fait rage actuellement. Nous devons co-ordonner nos activités, sinon nous devenons une 'nouvelle vague', un nouveau groupe Dada qui se développe pendant une certaine période et puis disparaît. Il faut compter avec l'opposition de George Brecht, Robert Watts, de La Monte Young et de Jackson MacLow, qui sont soit anarchistes apolitiques, soit anarchistes naïfs, ou qui deviennent d'obscurs pseudo-socialistes, tout ça c'est du non-sens. Henry Flynt a une orientation politique. Dick Higgins, Tomas Schmit et je crois Ben Vautier, ainsi que Joe Byrd, Jonas Mekas, Ben Patterson, mais aussi Hans Klaus Metzger & Sylvano Bussotti semblent devenir des politiques. Je n'ai jamais discuté de cela avec toi, et je tâtonne dans le noir, en ce qui concerne tes opinions, autrement dit, je suppose tout simplement qu'elles sont justes. Il semble, maintenant, que Robert Filliou a une orientation politique (Est-ce vrai?)



Par contre, Daniel Spoerri n'en a pas. "La composition du 'Comité de Rédaction' a été 'orientée' avec des appeaux. Citons par exemple Lamont et Mac-Low, Toshi Ichivanagi et Nam June Paik, qui sont tous apolitiques. Cela est de bonne guerre afin d'obtenir le maximum de soutien de groupes neutres, mais il ne doit pas y avoir pléthore d'appeaux. Si-non, Fluxus lui-même devient appeau et perd sa raison d'être. C'est pourquoi il importe de déterminer la politique ou les aspirations avant de prendre des initiatives sur une plus grande échelle. C'est aussi une question de... On en parlera plus tard. Ne montre pas ceci à Daniel, je crois qu'il est tout à fait apolitique. Okay." (Lettre de Maciunas à Emmett Williams, juin 1963.)

D. Spoerri a peu travaillé pour Fluxus. Il n'existe de documents que sur deux séances. Dans le cadre du "Festival of Misfits" en octobre 1962, à Londres, il présenta avec Emmett Williams sa *Composition for Chairs and Tables*. Une *Do It Yourself Chorale* avait aussi été annoncée, mais n'a pas été présentée par Spoerri.

Le 2 février 1963 Spoerri a présenté au "Festum Floxorum Fluxus" à la Kunstakademie de Düsseldorf son *Hommage à l'Allemagne*. Spoerri décrivait l'ouvrage comme une lecture confuse, décousue de l'introduction au concert de J.P. Wilhelm. Une très belle collection de photos de Manfred Leve rend ces thèses évidents. On voit Spoerri lire à haute voix à une table pendant que les personnages les plus divers entrent en scène et disparaissent à nouveau. Cette œuvre a donné lieu à une confusion quand Maciunas, en 1963, présenta le scénario suivant pour le lancement de Fluxus:

"D. Spoerri Hommage à l'Allemagne – février 1963.

"Position de départ: 2 ballons de couleur orange non gonflés à l'intérieur devant la braguette, relier la bouche par un petit tuyau en caoutchouc aux ballons, gonfler les ballons simultanément, les laisser sortir par la braguette ouverte, gonfler les ballons jusqu'au moment où les ballons éclatent ou les laisser se dégonfler au moment propice."

D. Spoerri déclare pourtant qu'il n'a fait qu'une contribution à Fluxus. Mais dans le cadre du Fluxus de Düsseldorf il jouait aussi dans des pièces d'autres

artistes, par exemple dans la pièce de Maciunas *In memoriam Adriano Olivetti*. Spoerri est aussi mentionné sur des af-

fiches d'autres concerts de Fluxus, mais n'a vraisemblablement pas composé ou présenté d'autres œuvres de cette série.



Daniel Spoerri, *Ça crève les yeux que ça crève les yeux*, 1965.

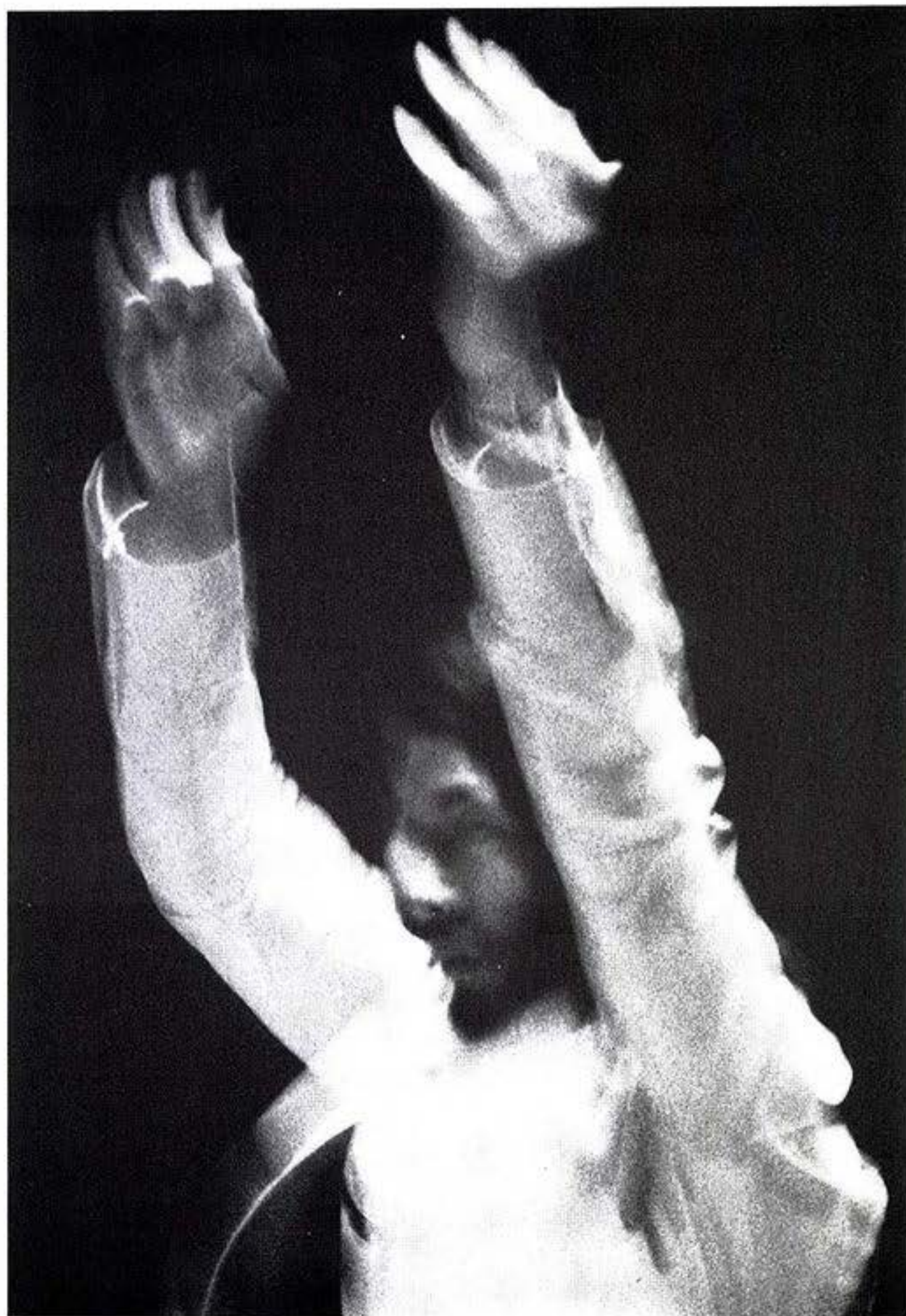




Daniel Spoerri, *Omaggio all'invenzione dall'aspirina*. (Foto Enrico Cattaneo).

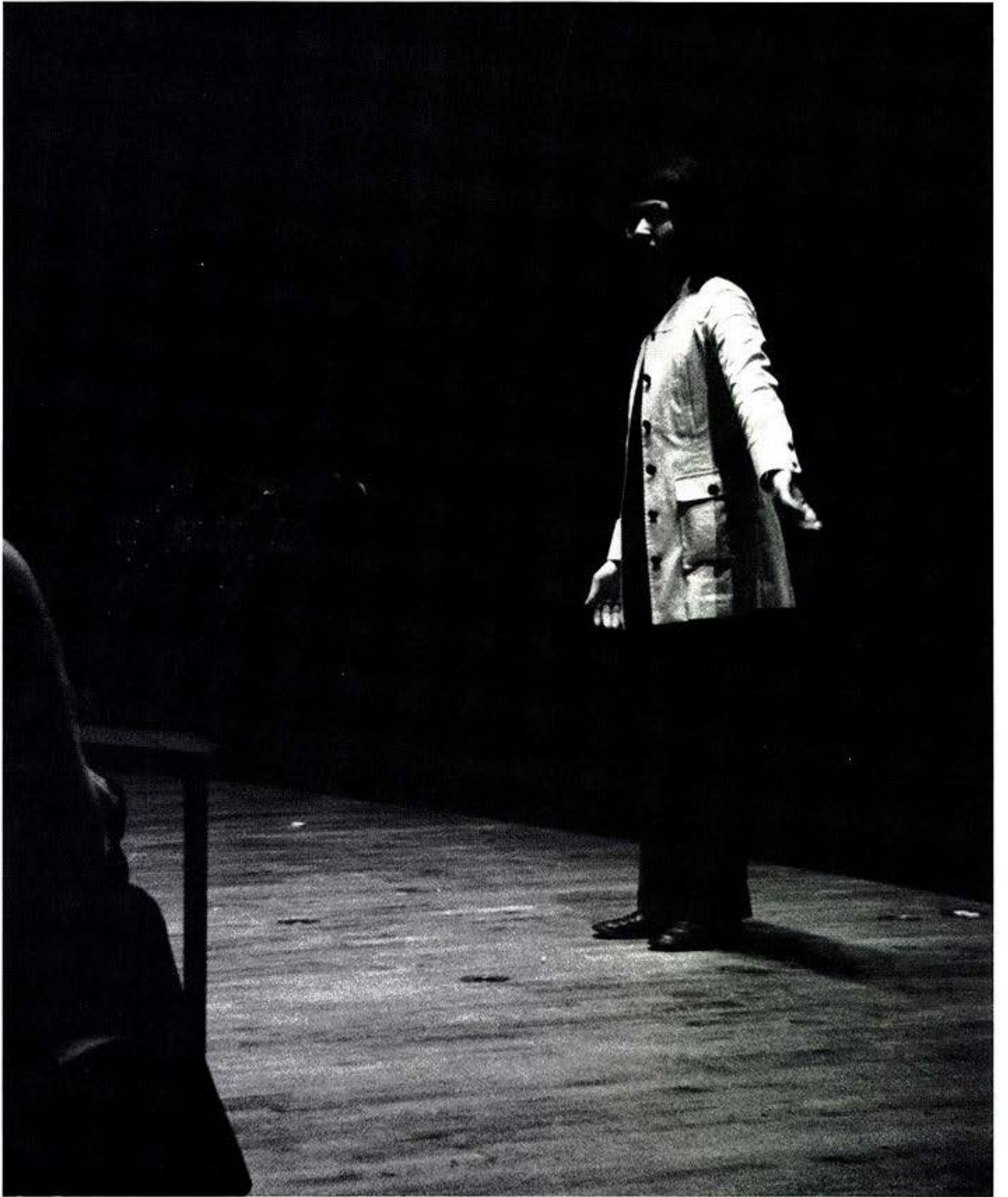


# Yasunao Tone



Qui e alla pagina seguente:  
Yasunao Tone, *Clapping Piece*,  
Mills College, 1972.  
(Foto Konno).









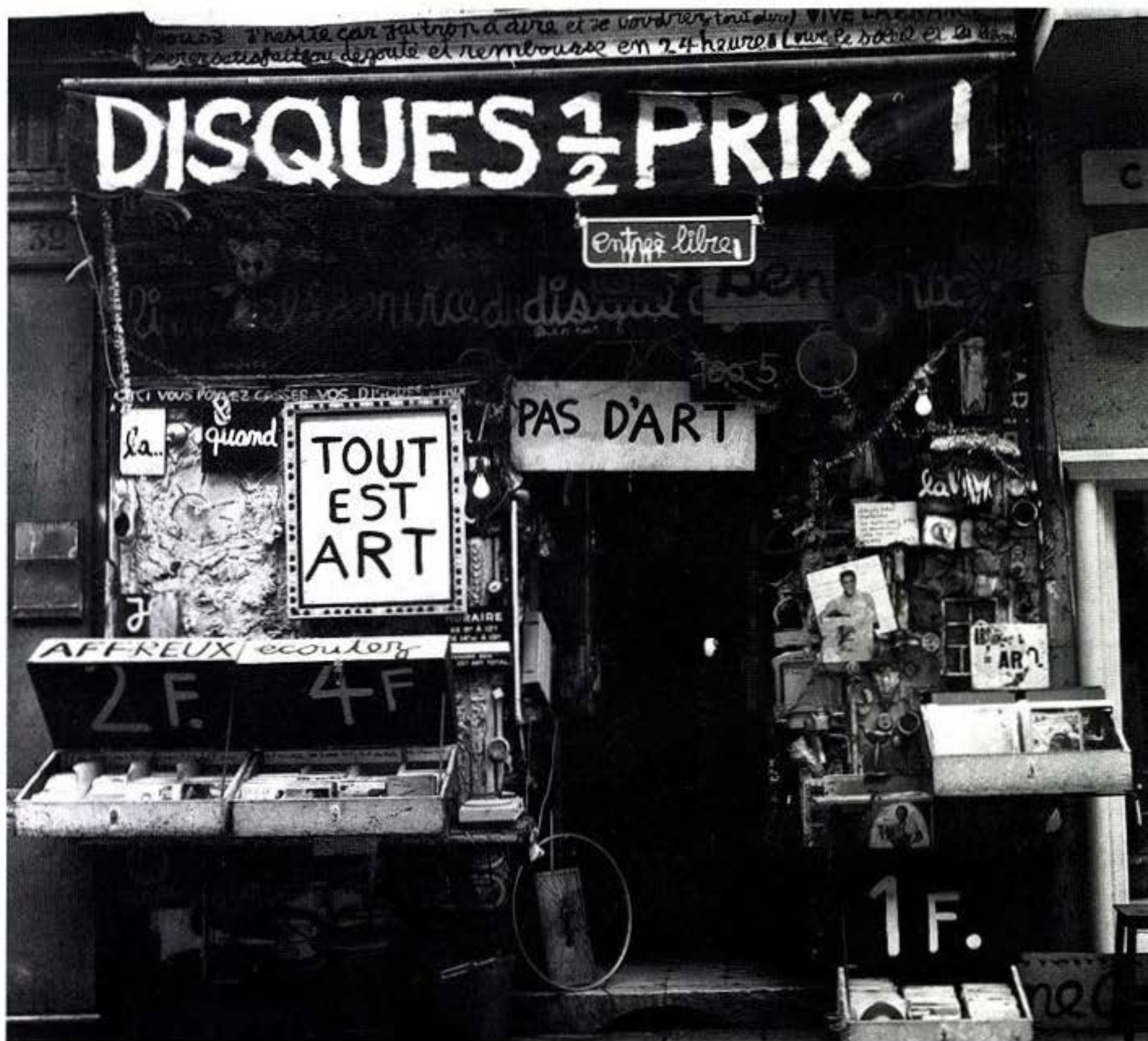




Yasunao Tone, *Molecular Music*, 1982-86.  
(Foto Hiro Ihara).

Alla pagina precedente: Yasunao Tone,  
*Geodesy for Piano* e *Music for Red Organ*,  
Mills College, 1972. (Foto Konno).





Le magasin de Ben, 1958-1970.



# Tout cela est difficile

Ben Vautier

Fluxus est le nom d'un groupe créé en 1962 et dont les membres vivent un peu partout dans le monde, plus spécialement au Japon, aux Etats-Unis et en Europe.

Officiellement rien ne les relie entre eux. Si ce n'est une certaine façon de concevoir l'art et les influences qu'ils ont subies.

Ces influences sont: John Cage, Dada et Marcel Duchamp.

Sans John Cage, Marcel Duchamp et Dada, Fluxus n'existerait pas.

Surtout sans Cage de qui j'aime à dire qu'il a opéré deux lavages de cerveau. Le premier au niveau de la musique contemporaine, avec la notion d'indétermination, l'autre au travers de son enseignement avec l'esprit Zen et cette volonté de dépersonnalisation de l'art. Fluxus va donc exister et créer à partir de la connaissance de cette situation post-Duchamp (le ready-made) et post-Cage (la dépersonnalisation de l'artiste).

Cette connaissance crée un point de non retour car, en acceptant d'avance toutes les formes, elle les périmé du même coup.

Fluxus ne sera donc pas concerné par l'œuvre d'art formelle, esthétisée et hédonisée.

Son "donner à voir" consistera en un premier temps à épuiser toutes les possibilités/limites du "tout est art" et en un second temps à dépasser ce "tout est art" par une attitude Non-art, Anti-art. Ainsi Fluxus va s'intéresser au contenu de l'art pour le combattre et, au niveau de l'artiste, créer une nouvelle subjectivité. Tout cela est difficile, presque impossible, car la dépersonnalisation est une nouvelle forme de personnalité et le non-art un nouvel art. Pourtant l'intention y est et l'honnêteté de l'intention est l'un des éléments essentiels de Fluxus. Même si le problème est impossible, le poser est important.

## Les apports

Premier apport. En musique et en théâtre, Fluxus apporte dès 1963 la *participation du public à l'action*.

Non pas une fausse participation, c'est-à-dire la comédie qui continue au milieu du public, mais un véritable désir du transfert des responsabilités.

Par exemple, Benjamin Patterson demande à chaque spectateur, discrètement et personnellement: "Avez-vous confiance en moi?" Si le spectateur répond oui, il le place à sa droite. Si le spectateur répond non, il le place à sa gauche.

Deuxième apport. *L'évent*. Lorsque George Brecht arrive et pose des fleurs sur le piano en tant que proposition musicale, c'est focaliser une réalité simple. C'est, dans l'histoire de l'art, le geste limite de "la vie est art". Mais c'est aussi et surtout, en égalisant l'importance des choses, placer l'artiste futur devant une situation non retour de non art.

Troisième apport. D'après George Maciunas, un concert Fluxus doit être de la musique contemporaine *divertissante*. Il trouve que beaucoup trop de musique contemporaine est ennuyeuse, trop dépendante pour le public de la nécessité de références historiques culturelles.

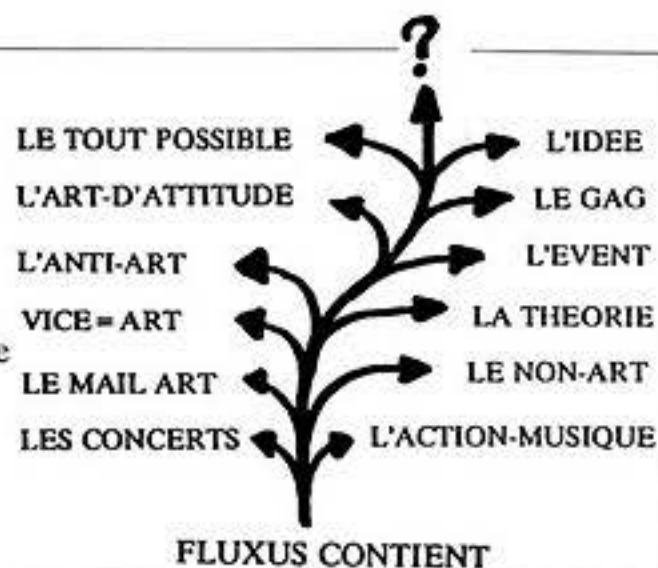
Le divertissement dans Fluxus réagit donc contre la culture. Redonne à l'art sa fonction primaire (divertir) et relègue la connaissance des l'histoire de l'art au second plan.

Quatrième apport. *L'art par la correspondance*, le Mail Art. A partir de 1963, à la fois Ray Johnson et George Brecht se servent de la poste pour transmettre leurs idées, leur vécu, par des petits détails de la vie, subtilités, anecdotes, etc.

## Fluxus? Fluxus est

- une attitude envers l'art
- pour l'importance de la non importance
- les détails de la vie
- le seul mouvement artistique capable de manger sa queue
- plus important que ce que vous croyez

- moins important que ce que vous croyez
- de rater un spectacle
- de lire le journal d'un autre à travers un trou fait dans le sien
- de s'endormir et ronfler lors d'un concert de Stockhausen
- de jeter 20 litres d'huile sur la scène de *Gisèle*
- Vostell lorsqu'il explique l'histoire de l'art
- George Brecht quand il évite l'histoire de l'art











Qui e alla pagina precedente: Ben Vautier, *Dieu jeté à la mer*, 1962.



il n'y  
a rien  
de beau

Ben Vautier, *Il n'y a rien de beau*, 1965.



Wolf Vostell





# Fluxus

Wolf Vostell

Agli inizi Fluxus era uno stato dello spirito, più intenso dell'happening. Si è largamente diffuso agli inizi degli anni Sessanta, anche se cronologicamente è successivo all'happening. Penso che senza l'happening non ci sarebbe stato Fluxus. È la varietà della sua estetica musicale che ci ha fatto avvicinare a Fluxus, dalla musica di azione, di vita, di pensiero, alla musica dé-collage, alla musica di comportamento, fino alla musica invisibile. Questa concezione della vita non solo come opera d'arte – l'ho già detto nel 1961: la vita è un'opera d'arte, l'opera d'arte è vita –, ma come processo musicale. Ed è stata a mio parere questa visione della realtà e dell'arte, piuttosto che gli events di Fluxus, a provocare scandalo. Tutto può essere musica: in questo concetto sta la prodezza di Fluxus, e la sua unità. Ed è il motivo che ha riunito gli artisti americani vicini a Cage agli artisti europei che, come me, avevano già realizzato events. In Patterson questa poetica è così portata alle estreme conseguenze che il suo recente pezzo *Der Flug einer Fliege in einem dunklen Zimmer* (Il volo di una mosca in una camera nera) è stato interpretato come un concerto. Paik ha pubblicato nel primo numero di *Dé-collage* un lavoro concepito come musica che si può suonare, e non soltanto come un'opera semplicemente concettuale, *Krieche in die Vagina eines lebenden Wales* (Penetrazione in vagina di una balena viva).

All'epoca io realizzavo gli strappi di dé-collage interpretando il rumore dello strappo come un concerto, come un pezzo musicale. E fu la mia ascesa in Fluxus: interpretare i rumori degli events che realizzavo – lo strappo di manifesti, la distruzione di un televisore, la demolizione di un edificio con una massa pendolare, il rumore di un muro che crolla – come una composi-

zione musicale. Era questa la musica nata dalle azioni di dé-collage ed è appunto il concetto di musica dé-collage che ho introdotto in Fluxus.

Quando, ad esempio, una lampadina – che è lì per fare luce – viene distrutta, produce un rumore che non può essere che l'archetipo del rumore di una lampadina che scoppia. Perde dunque la funzione di emettere luce per acquisire un suono proprio. *Kleenex*, che ho presentato la prima volta a Wiesbaden (1962, "Fluxus International Festspiele neuester Musik"), era precisamente l'opposizione fra un oggetto che si di-

JEDER  
MENSCH  
IST  
EIN  
KUNSTWERK  
VOSTELL  
1976

struggeva o veniva distrutto, emettendo o provocando un rumore, e la cancellazione di una doppia pagina di una rivista in cui l'immagine spariva lasciandosi dietro un rumore. Si trattava dell'opposizione di due rumori: quello della cancellazione dell'immagine e quello della lampadina che scoppiava.

La musica Fluxus non si realizza però a partire dai rumori, come era in un certo senso, dopo il 1945, la musica concreta dei francesi che giravano per strada registrandone i rumori con un magnetofo. Fluxus non ha neanche la minima relazione con la musica sintetica di

Stockhausen. I processi musicali che produce, infatti, nascono o sono prodotti da un'azione artistica realizzata da soggetti "vivi" o da immagini. Nel corso dell'azione il processo visivo e quello acustico costituiscono simultaneamente un avvenimento unico, senza dissociazioni. In un concerto Fluxus l'elemento visivo è dunque molto importante, ed è l'unica causa possibile del suono. In fondo si tratta di una musica "live", che nasce da cose che accadono. Ma veniamo all'estetica di Fluxus: il rumore volgare che è tradizionalmente rifiutato dalla musica, e che nasce da comportamenti umani naturali, è il tipico soggetto di un'azione Fluxus. Per esempio, l'azione di un bambino che mangia tranquillamente una banana seduto davanti al pubblico (in un pezzo di Alison Knowles) è un vero e proprio brano di vita interpretata in quindici minuti. Anche Andy Warhol, dopo la nascita di Fluxus, mi sembra, ha filmato qualcuno mentre mangiava una mela e il film durava esattamente il tempo impiegato dal soggetto ripreso a mangiare la mela. Ma è qualcosa di diverso: l'azione Fluxus era più emozionante perché il soggetto che mangiava la banana era seduto davanti al pubblico in carne e ossa e tutti i dati reali della vita venivano assunti dalla rappresentazione, nella percezione totale dell'evento. Tipicamente Fluxus.

Un certo numero dei miei oggetti nasce "fall out". Ho concepito quest'idea nel 1964. Si tratta di oggetti che rimangono, dopo i concerti happening e Fluxus. Ho messo a punto questo concetto a New York, con la stessa venerazione che avrei portato a una reliquia o a un'icona.

Ritornando alla coscienza Fluxus, una parte decisiva del mio lavoro – e penso di poterlo dire per Fluxus e per l'happening in generale – è che a partire da



un certo momento nelle mie realizzazioni non si vedono più immagini o cose, ma si ha l'impressione che i soggetti comincino a vivere, a provare sensazioni. L'artista non agisce semplicemente davanti al pubblico, ma con il pubblico, e ciò significa che l'opera d'arte, musica, environment o azione che sia, è viva. È un concetto cruciale, dopo Picasso. L'arte vive e prende forma per un momento, identificandosi con il sistema nervoso dell'essere umano. È soltanto a partire da Fluxus che tutti i sensi e il corpo sono coinvolti. Il mio contributo a Fluxus si può così definire come un'estensione del concetto di vita. La vita riceve un nuovo significato quando viene rappresentata e ci si lavora coscientemente. Ecco perché ho molto parlato dell'arte della coscienza negli anni Sessanta. La filosofia di Fluxus ha contribuito alla formazione di una coscienza, più che all'udito. E questo in relazione al modo di trasferire ciò che si sente o si vede alla coscienza, e da come se ne valutano le peculiarità, quali che siano. La grande ipotesi che io ho posto è quella di diventare noi stessi opere d'arte, invece di considerare opere d'arte oggetti a noi esterni. E questo può avvenire nella vita e nella realizzazione dell'evento artistico, ma anche attraverso la sua contemplazione e il suo ascolto. Quando questa opera d'arte è capace di dare qualcosa di sé, chi l'ha prodotta diventa un artista. L'essere umano è, prima di tutto, un'opera d'arte. Poi, può divenire un artista.

Sono stato molto colpito dagli studi etnografici, dalle osservazioni sul comportamento degli africani. Come la scultura africana agli inizi del secolo ha influenzato il cubismo, senza dubbio una parte dei gruppi dell'happening ha sentito il fascino dei riti africani o asiatici, del buddismo, dello Zen. Anch'io sono attratto da questo genere di influenze. Gli americani in genere amano la filosofia orientale. Negli anni Cinquanta ho visto moltissimi film a Parigi sui rituali dell'Africa e dell'America del Nord: rituali che non sono vissuti come la celebrazione di qualcosa che poi viene dimenticato, ma come momenti in cui l'uomo, acquistando una maturità interiore che non potrebbe acquisire altrimenti, si impadronisce del mondo. Il rituale diventa opera d'arte autonoma.

La performance, oggi, non significa una rivisitazione, con qualche piccola modi-

fica, dell'happening o di Fluxus. In genere la performance è un'azione teatrale realizzata da artisti senza pretese rituali, ma ciò che è stato importante e che deriva dall'happening e da Fluxus è che gli artisti occidentali, americani ed europei hanno suggerito, celebrato e codificato al momento giusto il rituale europeo, il rituale dell'industria occidentale, attraverso i rituali africani.

Molti dei miei happenings erano ritualizzazioni di situazioni di vita che allora apparivano come problemi attuali: il culto dell'automobile, il culto della televisione, il culto dell'aereo. Negli anni Cinquanta, e anche prima, questo non sarebbe stato possibile. La mia generazione è invece cresciuta nell'emergenza di questi fenomeni, e ne ha creato i rituali.

DUCHAMP  
HAT DAS  
OBJEKT ZUR  
KUNST  
QUALIFIZIERT  
ICH  
HABE  
DAS LEBEN  
ZUR KUNST  
QUALIFIZIERT  
VOSTELL  
1972

I miei critici mi rimproverano sempre le composizioni "miste", ma io considero la mescolanza di situazioni immaginarie e reali, o di una realtà deformata, una mia invenzione linguistica. Vorrei andare anche più lontano dicendo che la forma connotativa dell'happening e di Fluxus, nelle situazioni più riuscite, è una consacrazione della vita. Questa consacrazione può naturalmente costituire una presa di coscienza da parte della critica attraverso tutta una serie di elementi variabili: ritardi, frustrazioni, dubbi, gioia. Ma in fondo si tratta di un atteggiamento che tende a dare nuovo valore alla vita, non a degradarla, e diventa dunque un contributo alla valo-

rizzazione dell'uomo. Quando Patterson, in un passaggio del suo pezzo, utilizza la mosca, lo fa per darle un particolare valore: alcuni suoi personaggi accarezzano un cane dicendogli cose affettuose e l'istante successivo uccidono la mosca che li sta infastidendo. Fluxus ha scoperto questo, ha smascherato gli atteggiamenti ipocriti della società. I suoi interventi scompigliano i sistemi di valori consolidati e per questo motivo viene rifiutato dai benpensanti. Rimproverando alla massa di accarezzare il cane e poi uccidere la mosca, Fluxus vi scopre un atto politico: quelle stesse persone si rivelano contro le minoranze, succubi di atteggiamenti conformistici. Trasformare le manifestazioni della vita e i comportamenti umani apparentemente indegni dell'arte in arte: questa è la tesi centrale della poetica di Fluxus.

Questo accade anche perché l'avanguardia è sempre orientata retrospettivamente scoprendo situazioni che non affascinano più la società borghese e che non sono più assunte come modelli. Noi abbiamo invece dimostrato che i rituali delle minoranze hanno un valore esemplare, sono espressioni della libertà umana e manifestazioni di grande rispetto dei valori dell'uomo.

Sono naturalmente concetti ben presenti quando si lavora, quando si fa musica con pietre o polvere colorata, quando si utilizzano materiali naturali. Mi ha sempre interessato, fin dall'inizio, rappresentare la dualità tra naturalità ed artificialità, tra quello che è prodotto dalla natura e quello che è costruito dall'uomo. Rivalorizzo i fatti della natura confrontandoli con gli oggetti fatti dall'uomo e viceversa. Rimetto in questione oggetti ed azioni umane dando o togliendo loro valore nel confronto con i processi naturali. È l'aspetto peculiare del mio lavoro che si esprime con sempre maggior forza negli ultimi anni.

Quest'anno mi è capitato per caso di leggere Spinoza e del suo concetto di differenza prodigiosa tra le azioni umane e divine. Ad esempio, per scaldare una stanza uno apre la finestra e lascia entrare il sole. Crede di essere lui a scaldare la stanza, ma si sbaglia: è il sole che riscalda la stanza e il sole è un principio divino. L'aprire la finestra è un'azione semplicemente umana. Ma il sole non può entrare nella stanza se l'uomo non apre la finestra. Nasce così una giustapposizione tra le azioni uma-



Wolf Vostell,  
*Extrait from "Kleenex"*,  
Fluxus Festival,  
Düsseldorf, 1963.





ne e i principi divini. Uno degli obiettivi del mio lavoro è, in forma analoga, mettere in evidenza, attirare l'attenzione al cuore stesso delle cose, degli accadimenti. Di qui prende forma un'estetica diversa da quella borghese, che guarda solo all'apparenza delle cose e considera superficialmente oggetti, processi e comportamenti senza scoprirne e identificarne il valore. Tutta questa frustrazione culturale nasce da una incapacità di leggere la realtà fenomenica come qualcosa di meraviglioso, da una sorta di posizione difensiva, dalla necessità di difendere costantemente gusti e punti di vista, mentre né le azioni divine, né la natura, né qualsiasi altra cosa richiedono un atteggiamento di difesa. Queste sono guerre d'estetica a breve raggio, dove la questione centrale è stabilire se qualcosa è migliore o peggiore di qualcos'altro. Per questa ragione non mi sono meravigliato quando l'estetica borghese ha condannato Fluxus e l'happening. Questa gente è semplicemente rigida, priva di flessibilità, non può perciò essere interessata a forme di rappresentazione che implicano il mondo nella sua totalità. È prima di tutto l'ironia che ha fatto entrare dada nell'arte del XX secolo, quella stessa ironia che si ritrova in Fluxus, non come ironia politica, ma come ironia che affronta la globalità delle cose, giocando nel complesso un ruolo importante nella cultura.

L'attacco di Fluxus è contro i limiti alla libertà di espressione, l'insufficienza dei tradizionali concetti di arte, la mediocrità dei collezionisti e dei direttori dei musei. Nel rispetto dei nostri punti di vista, avevamo formulato, all'inizio, la possibilità di lavorare in collaborazione con i musei. Fluxus non era per principio contro i musei o le istituzioni culturali, ma contro gli stupidi luoghi comuni, e in questo campo c'è molto da dire. Mi ricorderò spesso, in futuro, che agli inizi degli anni Sessanta ero contro il museo e che oggi espongo nei musei. È la prova che l'apertura si è parzialmente compiuta.

Ho intrattenuto una corrispondenza epistolare con Raoul Hausmann nell'ultimo anno della sua vita. Mi rimproverava di imitare i dadaisti. Ho subito questo rimprovero in tutta una serie di lettere, poi gli ho scritto una lettera energica. Mio caro Raoul Hausmann, prima di tutto non c'erano catastrofi aeree negli anni Venti, la televisione non era ancora stata inventata, e tu non

hai vissuto il culto dell'automobile e gli ingorghi di quaranta chilometri. I fenomeni che noi descriviamo sono apparsi per la prima volta nella nostra generazione come prodigi, altrimenti come avrei potuto interpretare il televisore come una scultura e l'incidente automobilistico come un avvenimento da rappresentare? Nessun dadaista aveva fatto questo genere di cose prima di me. Noi artisti di Fluxus abbiamo introdotto tecniche sociologiche e psicologiche nelle nostre azioni, nei nostri concerti e nei nostri lavori plastici.

In senso stretto gli artisti di Fluxus sono quelli che si sono riuniti a Wiesbaden. Il termine "Fluxus" esisteva già. L'aveva portato Maciunas dagli Stati Uniti; con questo nome voleva fondare una galleria d'arte, cosa che non gli è riuscita. Fluxus è nato a Wiesbaden semplicemente perché abbiamo convinto il direttore del museo locale dell'epoca a mettere a nostra disposizione la sala delle feste dell'edificio. E anche perché Maciunas un tempo viveva e lavorava in quella città. Nella prima pubblicazione di Fluxus non si ritrova una chiara fisionomia del movimento. Vi appaiono solo i nomi di Stockhausen, Kagel, Brüning e Twombly. Ci sembrava quindi inizialmente che Maciunas considerasse Fluxus una semplice agenzia di concerti, che rispondesse alle necessità di allora, mentre Paik e io avevamo fortemente insistito perché l'archetipo, la musica d'azione, fosse messo in primo piano. Ed è per questo motivo che il programma realizzato a Wiesbaden fu completamente diverso da quello che appariva nella pubblicazione. Ci sono stati inizialmente grandi conflitti con Maciunas, in ogni caso diversi da quelli che nascono nell'ambiente letterario, sull'appartenenza o no di certi artisti a Fluxus.

Si può dire che Fluxus è iniziato su due direttrici: il pre-Fluxus di New York in cui, a parte Maciunas, si contano principalmente Brecht, Watts, Higgins, Maxfield, La Monte Young, e il gruppo di Colonia con Paik, Patterson, Vostell e Tomas Schmit, arrivato un po' più tardi. Kōpcke, Filliou ed Emmett Williams furono introdotti da noi. Furono dunque due i gruppi che portarono Fluxus alla luce: il gruppo di New York e quello di Colonia, con l'aiuto del proprietario di una galleria d'arte di Düsseldorf, Jean-Pierre Wilhelm. Beuys, colpito dal concerto "Neo-Dada in der Musik" del 1962, che ebbe luogo tre

mesi prima di Fluxus, si interessò al movimento: egli rappresenta uno dei fenomeni di questo clima di rinnovamento. Il fatto che il primo raggruppamento artistico di europei e americani non si chiami "Fluxus", ma, in maniera un po' buffa, "Neo-Dada in der Musik" per il concerto di Düsseldorf, è significativo e testimonia della forte presenza nel movimento degli europei. C'erano artisti molto rappresentati, come Busotti, già molto conosciuto a Colonia per la sua musica d'azione. Al concerto di Düsseldorf parteciparono tutti gli amici che già avevano realizzato qualche azione. Nella realizzazione del primo dé-collage, che ebbe luogo quella sera, c'erano tutti gli artisti che conoscevo e ammiravo, come Maciunas, Paik, Patterson e altri.

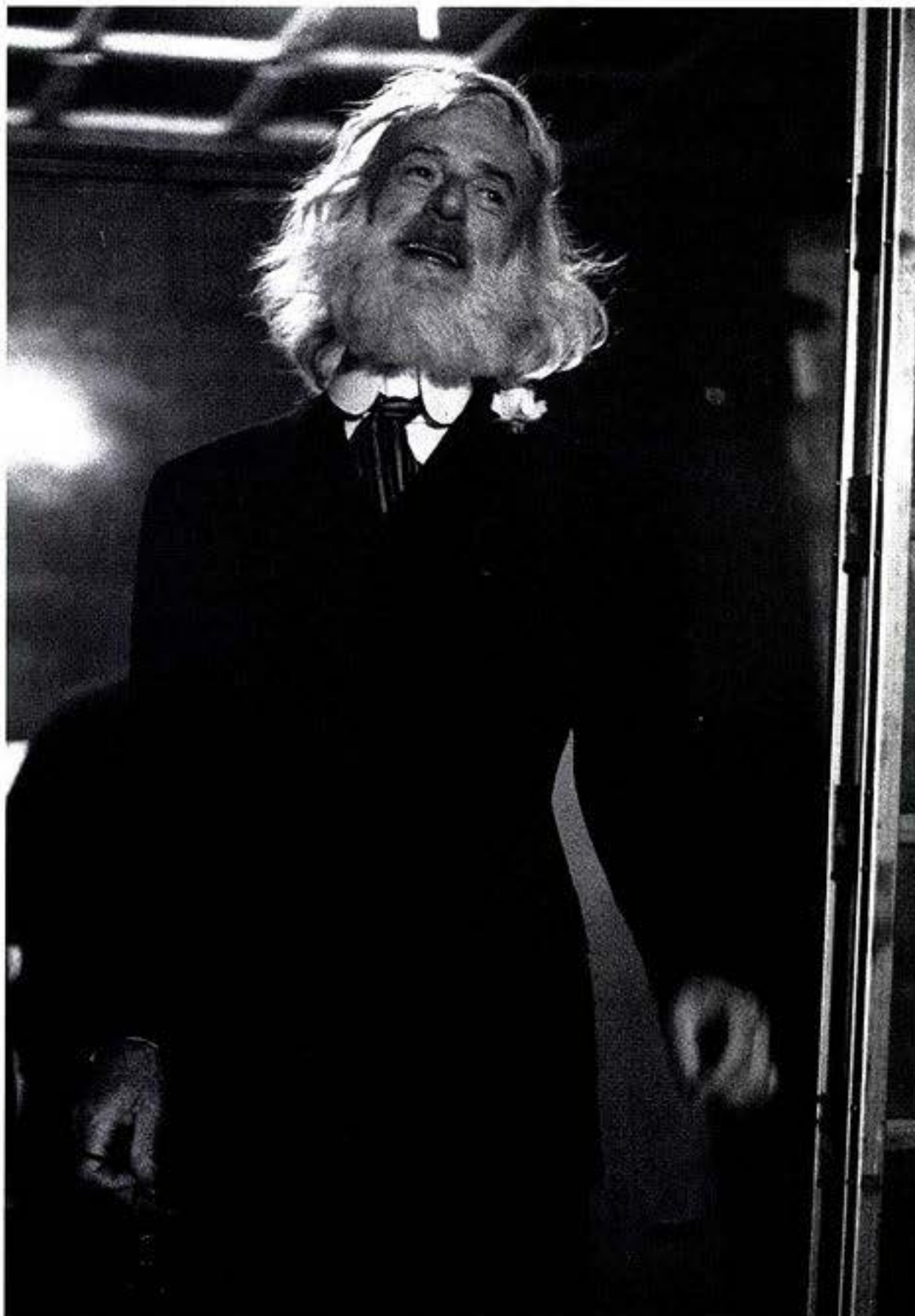
Kaprow, Higgins, Brecht, La Monte Young e Al Hansen erano presenti come allievi di John Cage a New York. Il fatto che anche scultori utilizzassero tecniche di composizione musicale ha senza dubbio innescato qualcosa. Anche a Colonia c'era una situazione particolare. Noi non ci abitavamo per via della cattedrale, ma perché Stockhausen vi aveva fondato lo studio di musica elettronica e Mary Bauermeister organizzava "contro-concerti" nel suo programma di concerti trasmessi alla radio. A Colonia bisognava adottare una posizione particolare, che era allora contro la musica elettronica, perché noi ci ispiravamo piuttosto al dadaismo o al futurismo arrivando a un genere di musica d'azione, a concerti d'azione. Gli americani sono arrivati alla stessa cosa con John Cage.

I problemi di classificazione arrivarono più tardi, ponendo la questione di chi appartenesse a Fluxus e chi no. Abbiamo in seguito presentato Fluxus come il primo gruppo in cui non esisteva una lista degli aderenti. Chi voleva appartenervi lo decideva da solo. L'appartenenza è data dalla professione di fede in Fluxus. Bisogna riconoscere, come dato distintivo della complessità del movimento, l'assenza di una teoria estetica unitaria, ma questo è anche il vantaggio di Fluxus. Si tratta infatti della prima tendenza dell'arte del XX secolo che annovera al suo interno le più divergenti concezioni artistiche.

Testo scritto per le trasmissioni "Pro Musica Nova", 2-13 maggio 1982, Radio Bremen.



# Robert Watts



Robert Watts nel retroscena del *Flux Harpsichord Concert*, Akademie der Künste, Berlino, 1976. (Foto Larry Miller).

## *In the Event*

In looking over the things I have done over the past few years I cannot find any special continuity or even any specific interest. I suspect it is a good thing that everything is up in the air, although I must admit I am not always comfortable with that feeling. I have been making a point recently not to shut out so many things as I used to. Some years ago I had to keep out anything that did not seem appropriate to what I was doing at that moment. All those other things were somehow distractions. Now when a distraction comes along I may take out time to think about it, or write it down, or photograph it, record it, film it, or cast it, or eat it, or something else. As a matter of fact, it seems more and more that distractions are more interesting than anything else.

As I look over the events (EVENTS – not really a very good word) that have concerned me there seem to be a number of ideas that have been of interest. One day I tore up a letter by mistake and later on it seemed that was the only important thing that had happened all week. Since probably that was not the case, I decided it really was, so I remade the letter out of brass and had it chrome plated. That was a piece of sculpture. So I put it into the same kind of mailbox the original letter had been in, so that anyone could open it and find a new kind of letter. Then it was not quite so much a piece of sculpture, especially for those who tried to pry open the metal envelope hoping to find a letter inside. I also wrote an event for mailbox with the thought that it might be of interest to do it under instruction:

- mailbox event
- open mailbox
- close eyes
- remove letter of choice
- tear up letter
- open eyes

So far I haven't discovered if anyone has really done the mailbox event (except myself). In making the postage



stamp for the brass letter I decided in the future to make my own postage stamps since most stamps are not very interesting any more. They once were when I collected them when I was eight years old, especially a Spanish stamp of Goya's Maja. In making the stamps I found I was interested, evidently, in whiskey, W.C. Fields, girls, sheet music, gas cans, sex, pliers, pencils, breasts, alphabet letters, and a number of other things. Some of the stamps have been declared pornographic, a subject that is of some interest to me. I wonder if anything really is. I also made a dollar bill since everyone is interested in money.

a dress  
consisting mainly of  
feathers;  
each feather  
may be seen  
individually

Some of the events are just things to think about. Others are actions that can be carried out, sometimes before an audience or persons. Some are actions to be performed in private. Some are instructions for actions, for attitudes, positions, or stances. Some are impossible, some inconsequential. The events to which I refer here are the ones that are printed on cards and collected in a box. As future ones come along they can be added to the box to form a kind of expandable and changing work. There are also such events in the box, that when the action is taken the event card itself is changed directly; such as the Hospital Events which are explosive.

Some events have been composed with



*Cut out. Paste to Keyhole*

an idea of performance in mind. These are more precisely theatre pieces in the sense that they account for an audience, a stage or area, props, light-

no event

ing, sound, etc. I tend to look upon events as actions of short duration, not necessarily related in any special sense. When a number are done at one sitting (as in Yam Lecture) it is rather like cutting open a string of beads, each bead an event. This may be like, or unlike, a happening where the whole program is scored as a totality. I consider Yam Lecture a chain of events arranged in such a way that the sequence is quite random, no performance exactly like any other, with changing performers, costumers, actions, sounds, words, imagers, and so on. The "structure" is such that it is very flexible (nearly non-existent) and permits inclusion of anything one wished to do and any possible future changes. It is a loose and open thing. The audience puts it together the way it wishes or not at all.

Similar ideas were at work in Yam Festival which George Brecht and I carried out last year. In effect this was a mailing to an audience, sometimes randomly chosen, of an assortment of things. Some were event cards similar to the above; others were objects, food, pencils, soap, photos, actions, words, facts, statements, declarations, puzzles, etc. Certain ones were by subscription. One might say this way of working is a way or manner of calling attention to what one wishes to talk about; or it is a way of talking about it. Or it is a way to hold up for scrutiny a range of material that ordinarily is not so directly useful for art or has not yet been so considered. Some might say it is possible in this way to suggest the relationships among many things, or the nonrelatedness of all things, or some other formalistic thinking or theory. Others may feel this is a formal means to cope with or deal with many diverse thoughts, feelings, attitudes and subjects. For me, I am pleased that I can as easily say something about trees as about autos, about birds as about persons. The

whole universe of observable phenomena (or even more?) can be considered as useful, helpful, worthy, or at least there. There is not the problem as there is in painting or other conventional forms, say, where one feels he must make rational formal decisions about what to include or exclude, how this goes with that, what space or color should this and that have, etc. One might argue, however, that these problems are and always have been the proper concern of art and artists. Traditionally this is true, is accepted a priori, and indicates the limiting bonds of tradition, defines what art has been. In recent times some artists, and not

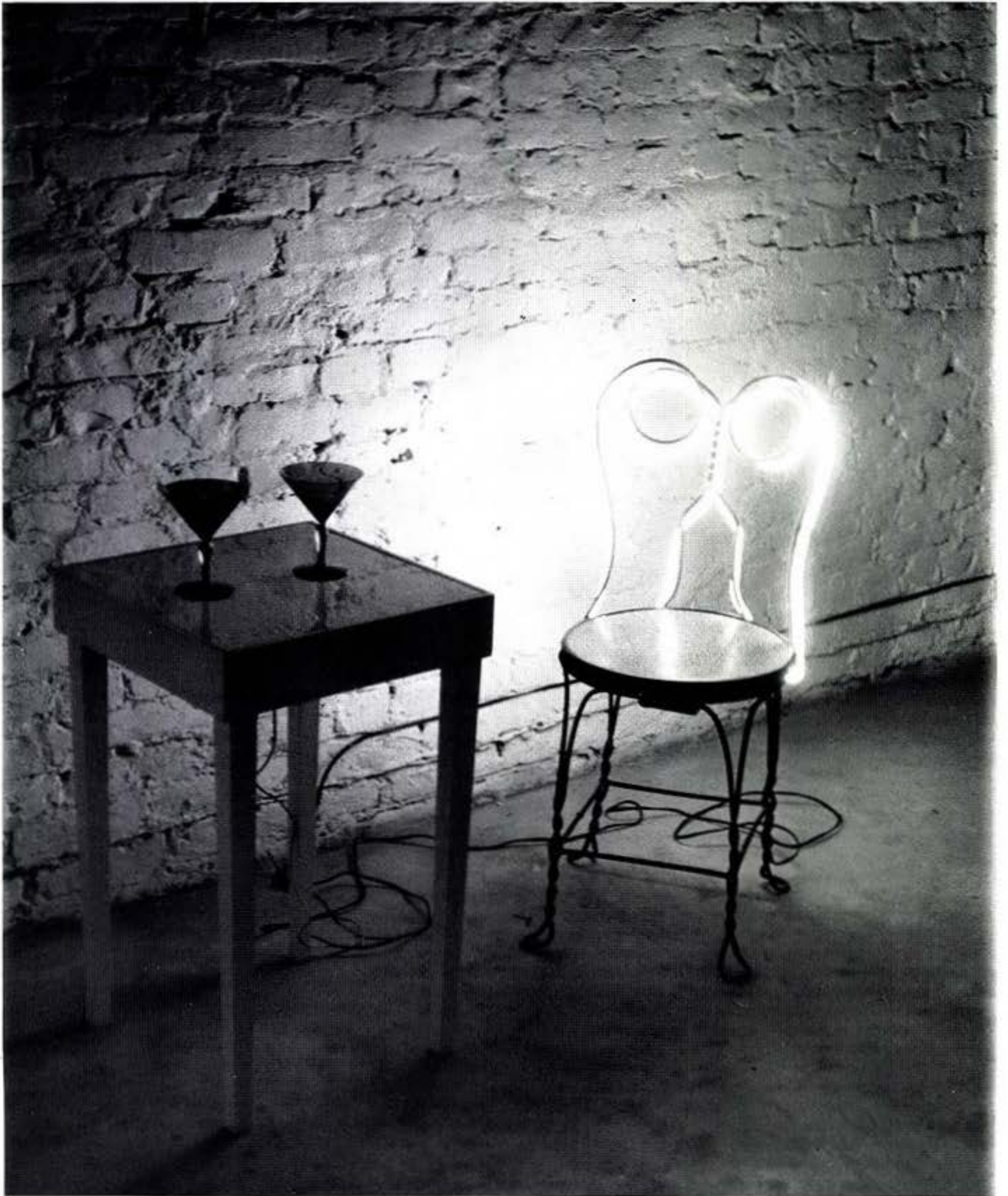


only visual artists but dancers, film makers, and others, have been testing out their thoughts and ideas in their own domain as seen against our recent experience with events, environments, and happenings. It will probably be possible for painters to change the nature of painting if they so wish. I presume it is being done this very minute. It is also possible to invent new forms, new methods, to deal with new ideas. I presume this also is occurring.

Earlier I mentioned that distractions seem to be more and more interesting to me. This suggests that it might be fruitful if everyone thought more about what is distracting to him. Those momentary signals: that barking dog, those greasy smells, a fragment of words, a flushed toilet, that funny hair. How do we decide what is important for art, anyway? When do we decide to do something about it?

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, Thursday, August 6, 1964







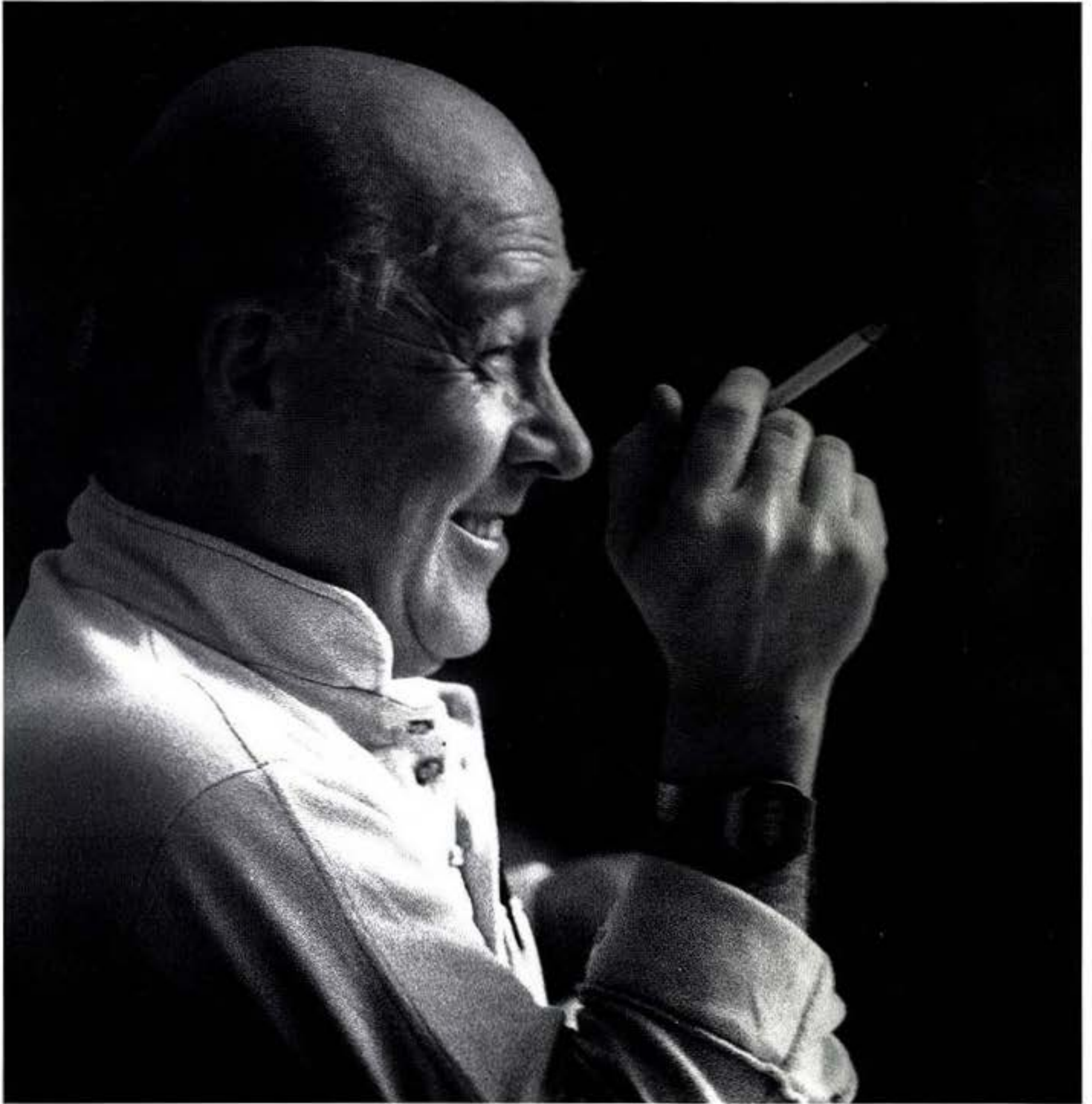
Robert Watts in *F/H Trace* al  
Flux Concert, The Kitchen, 1979.  
(Foto Manuel Rodriguez).



Alla pagina precedente:  
Robert Watts, *Neon Chair e*  
*Blue Table, Glasses*, 1963.  
(Courtes Ricke Gallery).



# Emmett Williams



Emmett Williams alla Fondazione Mudima, Milano, 1988. (Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).



*The Alphabet Symphony* was hatched in London in 1962 during the Festival of Misfits at Gallery One where I constructed my second public "universal poem". I had been surprised to learn, in the invitation to the exhibition, that "in conjunction with the festival there will be a special evening at the Institute of Contemporary Arts... which will include... an alphabet symphony" by me. It was Daniel Spoerri, I found out later, who had "commissioned" the then non-existent work by a few strokes of his pen while drawing up the invitations. Well, in a week's time I had found or bought or thought up 26 objects or activities, and on the appointed evening the conductor, Dick Higgins, drew letters from a box and called them out. I then performed the corresponding activities on stage.

Twenty-six objects and/or activities are substituted for the letters of the alphabet, so that, for example (and the examples are not meant to prove anything), during the London performance the word "love" could have been spelled by the smoking of a cigar plus blowing a silent dog whistle plus eating a chocolate off the floor like a puppy plus tooting a little ditty on the flute; in Darmstadt, it could have been spelled peering at the audience through a hole punched in a piece of paper plus offering a cigar to a girl plus extracting a hard-boiled egg from a portable vagina plus covering my eye with a black patch. The photographs of the Darmstadt performance (Studio Ordo, 1963) are by Barney Kirchoff.

There follow lists of activities and objects used at three different performances:

*First performance*

*Institute of Contemporary Arts, London  
October 24th, 1962*

- A transistor radio
- B hairbrush
- C Pharaoh's serpents
- D absorbent gauze
- E flute
- F bird whistle
- G color flakes
- H color papers
- I bubbles
- J The Ladies' Oracle
- K cork to burn
- L corks to bounce off head
- M silent dog whistle
- N eye patch
- O chocolate to eat normally



Sopra e alle pagine seguenti: Emmett Williams presenta nel 1963 alla Galleria Im Studio Ordo di Darmstadt *Alphabet Symphonie*, 1962. (Foto Bernhard Kirchoff).

- P chocolate to eat like a dog
- Q chocolates to throw and catch
- R chocolates to distribute
- S cigar to smoke
- T cigar to throw
- U hotel card
- V beads
- W chains
- X London Bridge
- Y cigarette
- Z roll of toilet paper

*Café Au Go Go in New York  
(as performed by Alison Knowles)*

- Apple
- Bean can
- Cigar
- Disguise
- Eye shadow
- Flashlight
- Gloves
- Horn

- Inge - Tales of *Inge*, friend of Mata Hari
- Jump rope
- Knife sharpener
- Lariat
- Marbles
- Nails
- Orange spray
- Ping-pong
- Quinine water
- Red book
- Sparkler - lights out
- Toy ducks
- Uke
- Violin - Joe Jones playing mechanical violin
- White box - Chieko Shiomi's white box performance
- Xylophone
- Yoyo
- Zinc oxide



*Paris version (1963)*

Answer: "Yes, you!"

Beads: placed around neck, broken with foot

Confetti: rained on head

Dog: eat candy from floor like one

Eye-patch

Fish: mechanical, to swim in basin of water

Goggles: green, stolen from Danish physiotherapist

Hat: remove from head, replace

Ink: via rubber stamps, on paper, to be distributed

Javelin: hurl to stage right

Kleenex: to wipe off old glove before kissing same

Listen: to audience

Music: Indian flute, and pulling chain through holes

Nicotine: cigars

Offer: egg with "thanks in anticipation" sticker

Plastic: blowing up

Question: "Who, me?"

Ripping: blue towel

Spying: on audience, through punch-hole in card for "S"

Tuning: into several stations of transistor and drinking champagne

Untying: of shoes

Vagina: withdraw and eat hard-boiled egg from anatomical model

Whistle: (silent-dog)

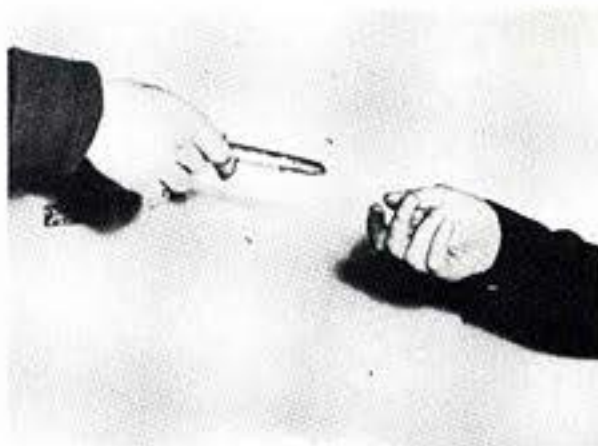
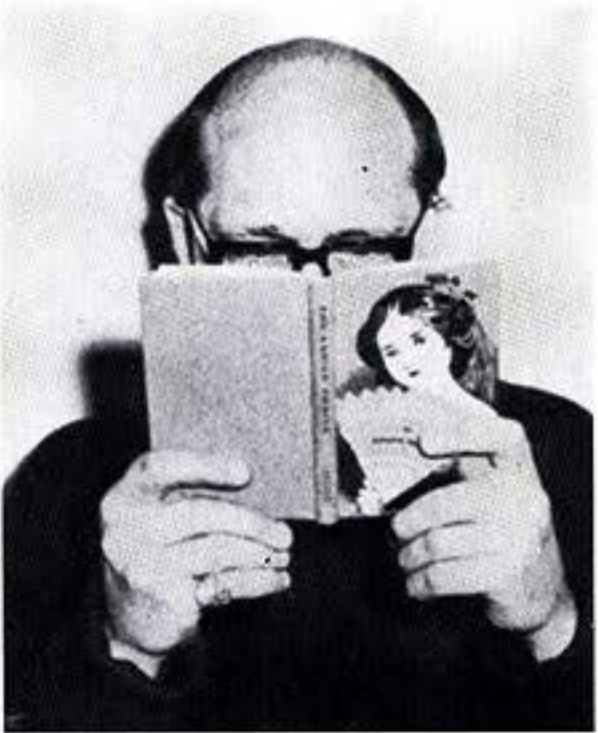
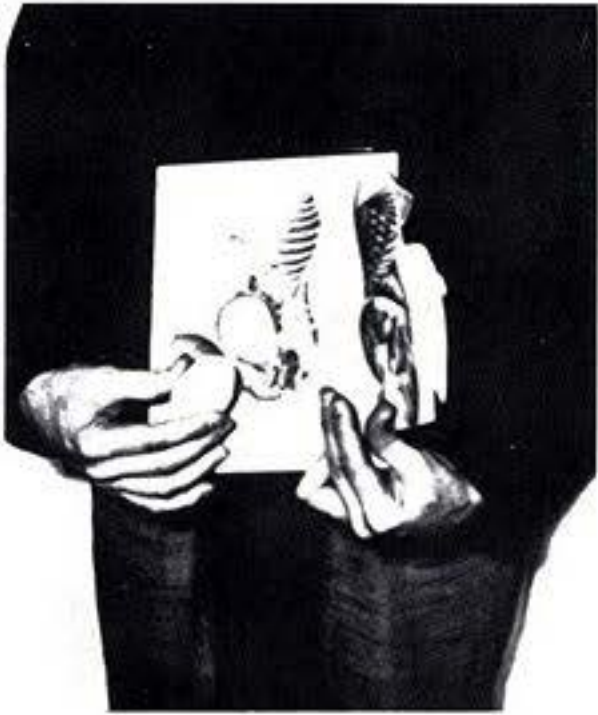
Xmas: hurling of "Jingle Bells" record into balcony

Yawning: for as long as whichever letter is drawn before "Y"

Zero: inscribed on forehead with burnt cork









**N J PAIK**  
AM JUNE

**EXP**osition of music

**EL**ectronic television

Wuppertal-Elberfeld Moltkestraße 67 Tel. 35241

11. - 20. März 1963

**Galerie Parnass**

Kindergarten der «Alten»	How to be satisfied with 70%
Féticism of «idea»	Erinnerung an das 20. Jahrhundert
objets sonores	sonolized room
Instruments for Zen-exercise	Prepared W. C.
Bagatelles américaines etc.	que sais-je ?
Do it your ...	HOMMAGE à Rudolf Augstein
Freigegeben ab 18 Jahre	Synchronisation als ein Prinzip akausaler Verbindungen
Is the TIME without contents possible?	A study of German Idiortology etc.

Artistic Collaborators....**Thomas Schmitt**  
**Frank Trowbridge**  
Technic.....**Günther Schmitz**  
**M. Zenzen**









Benjamin Patterson, Philip Corner, Emmett Williams, Alison Knowles,  
Willem de Ridder, Ben Vautier, Takako Saito, Geoffrey Hendricks, Jean Dupuy,  
Giuseppe Chiari, Robert Filliou e Nam June Paik a Wiesbaden, 1982.



**AMSTEL 47 PRESENTEERT**

# **FLUXUS**

# **FESTIVAL**

**THEATRE COMPOSITIONS  
STREET COMPOSITIONS  
EXHIBITS  
ELECTRONIC MUSIC**

George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, Tomas Schmit, Emmett Williams, Robert Watts, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Daniel Spoerri, George Brecht, Arthur Koepcke, Gyorgy Ligeti, Toshi Ishiyangi, Jackson Mac Low, Benjamin Patterson, La Monte Young, Richard Maxfield, Ben Vautier, John Cage, Walter de Maria, Bernt Reissmann, Peter Brötzmann, Manfred Laurens Montwé, Willem de Ridder

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**Slechts 2 manifestaties in Nederland**

**ZONDAG 23 JUNI 1963 - AANVANG 8 UUR**

**Amsterdam - Hypokriterion Theater** Roeterstraat (lijn 10)

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**VRIJDAG 28 JUNI 1963 - AANVANG 8 UUR**

**Den Haag - Bleijenburg 16** (achter Stadsschouwburg) (Lancelot Samson)



FLUXUS 1964 EDITIONS, AVAILABLE NOW ...  
 FLUXUS 1 Anthology of yet unpublished works by:  
 Ayo, George Brecht, Congo, Philip Corner, Dick  
 Higgins, Joe Jones, Allan Kaprow, Alison Knowles,  
 Takehisa Kosugi, Gyorgi Ligeti, Bob Morris, Robert  
 Filliou, George Maciunas, Jackson Mac Low, Tomas  
 Schmit, Chieko Shiomi, Ben Patterson, Nam June Paik,  
 Ben Vautier, Robert Watts, Emmett Williams, La Monte  
 Young. Loose leaf binding (nonperiodically renew-  
 able), with objects in wood box \$6 LUXUS edition,  
 with film, tape, objects and accessories, no 2 boxes  
 alike \$12

*cc Valise e TRanglE (Fluxus Newspaper No. 3) March 1964.*

FLUXUS 1: anthology of yet unpublished works by:  
 Ayo, George Brecht, Congo, Philip Corner, Dick  
 Higgins, Joe Jones, Allan Kaprow, Alison Knowles,  
 Takehisa Kosugi, Gyorgi Ligeti, Bob Morris, Robert  
 Filliou, George Maciunas, Jackson Mac Low, Chieko  
 Shiomi, Ben Patterson, Nam June Paik, Ben Vautier,  
 Robert Watts, Emmett Williams, La Monte Young,  
 and others. in wood box (loose leaf binding) with ob-  
 jects \$6. LUXUS— edition, with film, tape, objects,  
 accessories \$12.

*European Mail-Orderhouse: europeanfluxshop, Pricelist.  
 [ca. June 1964].*

"...Soon I will send additional box with Fluxus I, un-  
 bound pages. You could bind them in Holland. There  
 will be 250 copies..."

*Letter: George Maciunas to Willem de Ridder, August 12,  
 1964.*

fluxus I anthology of yet unpublished works by:  
 Ayo, George Brecht, Congo, Philip Corner, Dick  
 Higgins, Joe Jones, Allan Kaprow, Alison Knowles,  
 Takehisa Kosugi, Gyorigi Ligeti, Bob Morris, Robert  
 Filliou, George Maciunas, Jackson Mac Low, Chieko  
 Shiomi, Ben Patterson, Nam June Paik, Ben Vautier,  
 Robert Watts, Emmett Williams, La Monte Young,  
 and others. in wood box (loose leaf binding) with ob-  
 jects \$6. luxus edition, with film tape, objects,  
 accesoires [sic] etc. \$12.

*Second Pricelist - European Mail-Orderhouse. [Fall 1964].*

did you receive the 2nd catalog of THE EUROPEAN  
 MAIL-ORDERHOUSE & FLUXSHOP? [advertising]  
 ...american yearbox...

*How to be Satisflexdecolanti?... [ca. Fall 1964].*



Dick Higgins e Alison Knowles in *Solo for Voice No. 2* di John Cage, Amsterdam, 5 ottobre 1962. (Foto Hans de Boer).



# Fluxus Intermedia Copenhagen 1958-66 Galerie Køpcke

Marianne Bech

In Copenhagen Galerie Køpcke was a dynamic and now legendary meeting point for a vast number of experimental artists from all over Europe. The gallery was established in October 1958 and closed in March 1963. During this short span of time the gallery had 3 different addresses in Copenhagen. At first it was located in a former herring smokehouse, Læderstræde 17, then it moved to Lille Kirkestræde 1 and finally settled down in a corner of Knud Pedersen's Art Library in Nikolai Church.

The story of Arthur "Addi" Køpcke born in Hamburg in 1928, marrying the Dane Aase 'Tut' and moving to Copenhagen, is well known.

They opened the gallery in order to guarantee Køpcke his Danish residence permit.

Addi and Tut Køpcke created a space for Danish and European avant-garde, rooted in Futurism, Dadaism and Surrealism.

The presentation of – among others – Les Nouveaux Réalistes, Gruppe Zero, and – in 1962 – Fluxus accentuated a deliberate rejection of the art scene of the period.

Køpcke became a friend of the Danish artist, Gunnar Aagaard Andersen, who had a central position in the Danish avant-garde art and was well acquainted with the European scene.

Gunnar Aagaard Andersen was a co-founder of Groupe Espace (Action Directe – art as social space) in Paris and Biot 1951.

His orientation was radical and experimental and included works in which the spectator could interfere with and change the work of art itself. The gallery offered an opportunity for philosophical, poetical and anarchistic activities. With a liberating hilarity it also offered new challenges for Art & Life.

It has been reported that *much was said*, but the general attitude was that none of it was a monologue. On the contrary, exchanges took place constantly. The focus was on the *ordinary* and not the *exotic*, the *event* and not the *pose*, the *process* and not the *artifact*.

To rearrange reality and increase attention. To operate in a world consisting of ordinary or found objects, simple matters and daily practise. Simultaneously the art market and institutions were rejected and a new outlook and aesthetics were established.

Major events in the gallery during 1960-61 include: *Walk Inside the Painting*, an environment by Køpcke, Albert Mertz, Lora and Megert; *Poi-poi* by Robert Filliou; *Stupidogrammer* by Diter Rot; *Attention, œuvre d'art*, a grocery store by Daniel Spoerri; Niki de Saint-Phalle, who added color to an assemblage made of found objects by shooting with rifles on plastic bags hidden in the assemblage, so they exploded, and the paint splashed out; a show by Piero Manzoni presenting his *Merda d'artista*, eggs with the artist's fingerprints on them, and balloons blown up with the artist's breath, then contained inside, etc.

#### *Other activities*

The International Situationiste manifested itself in Copenhagen primarily through the theoretical works by Asger Jorn (Skandinavisk Institut for Sammenlignende Vandalisme) but also through the works by his brother Jørgen Nash and Hardy Strid, Jens Jørgen Thorsen a.o. Happenings/Actions called *Co-ritus* were performed, in which everybody was invited to liberate Art & Life.

A "contre salon" art school was established to protest against the Royal

Academy of Fine Arts. This alternative art school – later called EKS-skolen – was initiated by Paul Gernes, Troels Andersen a.o. The group around the school worked with collages, assemblages and collective manifestations – influenced by Nouveau Réalisme and Pop Art, and later on by Joseph Beuys, with whom they collaborated from the mid-Sixties.

They issued a number of magazines, produced happenings, actions, experimental films (ABCinema) etc. The work of the group differed from most Fluxus works by a much stronger orientation towards visual art (tableau, mythical and symbolic representations). Major members of the group were: Lene Adler Petersen, Bjørn Nørgaard, Per Kirkeby, Peter Louis-Jensen, Paul Gernes, John Davidsen and the composer Henning Christiansen.

A young composer's organization, called DUT, was well integrated into the avant-garde scene during the first years of the Sixties. The organization had close ties to Darmstadt Internationale and frequently presented works by Stockhausen, Cage, Berio, Ligety a.o. in Copenhagen. The most important members of the group were Ib Nørholm, Per Nørgård, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen, Jørgen Plaetner. Eric Andersen had his earliest works performed by DUT in 1961.

Two important international events had a decisive impact on Copenhagen as well as other European cities.

In Amsterdam the "Bewogen Beweiging" exhibition was organized by the Stedelijk Museum. A part of the exhibition travelled to the Louisiana museum north of Copenhagen in September 1961. During the exhibition DUT organized a concert with Nam June Paik. He performed his *Hommage à John Cage*, which consisted of works by La



Monte Young, Ichiyanagi, George Maciunas, Dick Higgins, Paik and others.

Later on in London, Gallery One organized "Festival of Misfits" with K pcke, Metzger, Filliou, Patterson, Page, Spoerri, Vautier and Williams.

### Fluxus

In November 1962 "Fluxus Fluxorum", a festival over 6 evenings, took place in Copenhagen.

Emmett Williams, Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Ben Patterson, George Maciunas, Wolf Vostell came from the "Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik" in Wiesbaden, September 1962.

The "Fluxus Fluxorum" in Copenhagen was organized by DUT in cooperation with Galerie K pcke and Knud Pedersen's Art Library and took place in the Art Library in Nikolai Church and the theatre, Alle-Scenen.

The festival became an incredible scandal/success. A huge crowd attended every evening, but most of music-oriented audience had expected something quite different than the philosophical, Zen influenced, daily life events, including the spectators themselves, that was presented to them. Danish National Television covered the first evening, but decided to cancel all transmissions after the obvious scandal. The laughter is still faintly audible in the old church.

"Fluxus Fluxorum" came to an end and went to Paris, but connections and friendship had been assured.

What happened in the following years would not have been possible without the stimulus of the festival. This situation wasn't special for Copenhagen but applied to most cities where the festival struck as lightning during 1962-64.

After the festival Eric Andersen and Arthur K pcke - represented at the present exhibition - began a cooperation on intermedia performances. These events took place in concert halls, in theatres, at exhibitions, in streets and in radio programs, film and videos etc., sometimes including Henning Christiansen (who later worked closely with Beuys), Knud Pedersen, J rgen Plaetner a.o.

The following artists were invited for these performances: Emmett Williams, Tomas Schmit, Wolf Vostell, Joseph Beuys, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles,

Bengt af Klintberg, Jed Curtis and Terry Riley.

The intermedia performances presented works that could not be confined. What happened just seemed to happen quite ordinarily with no significance or importance. All that occurred might as well have been something quite different. Statements and actions that were never meant to be conclusive, although presented within the framework of art.

It is stated in a catalogue from the

Sixties: "When Arthur K pcke invites Eric Andersen, it is not a painter who invites a composer."

At that time "intermedia" was not yet a usual term, and what the above sentence implies is that "something else" was happening.

Arthur K pcke's background was painting and Eric Andersen's music, but their works up to 1962 display many similarities in approach. This explains the collaboration in which they could participate as assistants to each other.

## NIKOLAI KIRKE

23. og 24. samt 26., 27. og 28. november 1962 kl. 20

### ALL  SCENEN

S ndag den 25. november 1962 kl. 15

# FLUXUS

MUSIK OG ANTI-MUSIK  
DET INSTRUMENTALE TEATER

## 6 PRO- ET CONTRAGRAMMER

Nam June	Paik
Dick	Higgins
Alison	Knowles
Emmett	Williams
Arthur	K�pcke
Albert	Mertx
Wolf	Vostell
Robert	Filliou
George	Maciunas
Jergen	Fritsholm
Musica	Vitalis

Arr. af: Det Uge Teaterkomponistisk - Galerie K pcke - Kunstbibliotek, Nikolai Kirke

Send 4 kr. - Adresse: 11 kr. Billedgalleri for Wilhelm Hansen, Gattengade 3, Central 1457  
samt ved indgangen, Billedgalleri for s ndag den 25. november. Alle s ndag, Central 1496

Arthur K pcke, Wolf Vostell, Dick Higgins e altri al Fluxus Fluxorum, Nikolai Church, 1962.





# Bengt af Klintberg

Bengt af Klintberg, *Forest Diver*,  
progetto, 1974.  
(Foto Olle Tesch).





# Fluxus in Sweden

Bengt af Klintberg

In November 1962 I came to Copenhagen to see Danish folklorist colleagues. One of them gave me a free ticket to a concert that would take place the same evening in Nikolaikirken, a church that was used as a place for artistic activities.

It is something called Fluxus, she told me. Very hard to explain. Crazy. The papers have run it down totally. But judge for yourself.

During the past autumn I had lived a double life in Stockholm. In daytime I had been an assistant at a folklore archive, researching old folk beliefs and legends. In the evenings I had been involved in artistic experiments. Novelist Staffan Olzon and I rented a little theatre, where I had performed some happenings - disturbing, poetic and unpredictable pieces with ingredients such as paint, smoke, carbonic acid snow,

apples and earthworms.

Many curious visitors had come to the Fluxus concert in Copenhagen, and they reacted with laughters and whistles. I noticed that the pieces on the stage were much more related to music than were those happenings that I had seen and performed myself. Uninhibited expressiveness, improvisation and an interest in unconventional materials had characterized the happenings;

## Notation Summaries Friday

1. (Olzon - Concerto)
2. Brecht - Direction - everybody runs in, observes new, gets out
3. (Brecht - 3 Yellow Events - flashed light)
4. ~~Watts~~ - 2° - Klintberg slowly extends tape across stage, girl very formally cuts it in middle.
5. Higgins - Graphis 24 - Higgins & other men shake hands up and down aisle + around doors.
6. ~~Watts~~ - Directional Song (Duet)
7. (Brecht - Drip Music - poured water)
8. (Klintberg - Alternative to Another ~~Project~~)
9. ~~Watts~~
10. Hansen - Bibbe's Toe - colored paper notation, free activity strictly interpreted from notation

### INTERMISSION

11. Higgins - Graphis 62 (see special sheet)
12. (La Monte Young - 566 for Henry Flynt - 566 thumps)
13. (La Monte Young - Piano Piece No. 2 for David Tudor - program shut)
14. (Brecht - Word Event - exit)

~~Watts~~ 1st Names  
 George Brecht  
 Robert Watts  
 Dick Higgins  
 Alfred E. Hansen

END

## Notation Summaries Saturday

15. Patterson - Frog Pond - animal squeaks, exclamations, questions, statements - in columns - determined by frogs
16. Higgins - En Mains que se meurt - Dutch village Solid Citizen after 2 weeks
17. (Brecht - Light Event - flashed lights)
18. (Knowles - Child Art Piece - child plays or is handed or something)
19. Higgins - Two for Haini Bay - "The chorus cries a while," "What by under"
20. Higgins - En Mains que se meurt - same as 16 - "to live Next Post 16/16/62"
21. (La Monte Young)
22. (Olzon)

### INTERMISSION

23. Hansen - Alice Denham in 95 Seconds (1957) - great notation - events in time
24. (Higgins - Canzona #24 - gloves on + off)
25. ~~Watts~~ - Watts - Watts - sounds at microphone through tube
26. Williams - Tag - 2 syllables - after 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10
27. Higgins - En Mains que se meurt - same as 16 - same as 16 - same as 16
28. Klintberg
29. Knowles - Proposition - Make a salad.

Benjamin Patterson  
 Alison Knowles  
 Emmett Williams



## Notation Summaries Sundry

30. (Rutgers - Dinner for Schist - Alison goes up rope)  
 31. Mac Law - Trants II - (chase activity - repeat, ~~un~~breath, ~~card~~ ~~back~~ as regularly as possible - after stopping, pause minute before next)  
 32. (Paik - Seemant for Alison - Alison removes panties)  
 33. Olzon -  
 34. Higgins - Constellation #7 - use vocal event ~~more~~ ~~less~~ together  
 35. Higgins - Constellation #9 - use ~~de~~ ~~co~~ ~~py~~ ~~ing~~ ~~event~~ ~~more~~ ~~less~~ together  
 36. (Brecht - Comb Piece - ~~fe~~ ~~th~~ ~~of~~ ~~comb~~ ~~pl~~ ~~ack~~ ~~ed~~ ~~by~~ ~~micro~~ ~~phone~~)  
 37. (Brecht - Piano Piece - ~~Mie~~ ~~ke~~ ~~ph~~ ~~ices~~ ~~th~~ ~~rows~~ ~~an~~ ~~org~~ ~~an~~)

## INTERMISSION

38. Higgins - June (1957) - sunny from side to side ~~con~~ ~~duct~~ ~~ed~~ ~~for~~ ~~or~~ ~~not~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~ ~~at~~ ~~all~~  
 39. (Higgins - Dance Music No. 17 - screams in darkness)  
 40. Higgins - Graphis 11 - performers ~~go~~ ~~to~~ ~~gether~~ ~~along~~ ~~stage~~ ~~diagonal~~, with ~~no~~ ~~any~~ ~~any~~ ~~steps~~ ~~as~~ ~~fast~~ ~~as~~ ~~possible~~ ~~moving~~ ~~as~~ ~~slowly~~ ~~as~~ ~~possible~~.  
 41. (Wavandel -  
 42. (Waltz - Event 10 - 10 watches lit in dark - Duff bells ting)  
 43. (Schmit - Piano Piece No. 2 for George Maciunas)  
 44. (Klutberg -  
 45. (Young - B + F in organ for hour?)  
 46. Corner - Second Funk - ~~is~~ ~~an~~ ~~violated~~ ~~thing~~ ~~over~~ ~~time~~ ~~sustained~~ ~~until~~ Physical collapse.  
 47. Johnson - Telegraphed Piece  
 Nam June Paik  
 Jackson MacLaw  
 Tomas Schmit  
 Philip Corner

## Special Directions

### Graphis 62

1. There are lines on the floor. Follow them - try not to get off them - go in a way that you like.
2. There are words on cards on the lines. Each time you get to each word, do more or less the same thing. In rehearsal, fix what you are going to do. List follows. You can move faster or slower. Start at fish.
3. The special performer makes 8 sentences <sup>or</sup> ~~with~~ each of the words. He reads each sentence in the style of a railway station announcement. Sentences may be read no more often than one every forty-five seconds. They may be repeated. Some are very sensible, some are wildly impossible or fantastic, and some are in between. Special Performer stands in middle of ~~stage~~ ~~room~~.
4. The performers ignore each other, the music, & the slides, which are projected over them. Performance, however, begins & ends with the music.
5. Technician projects slides over performers, in or out of focus, moving from one to other, as random as possible. He insures that tape machine is loud & clear. Slides are used any number of times, for any duration. Technician starts music when curtains are opened, starts slides when music begins, ups slides when music ends - as accurately as possible.
6. Words are: Macaroni, Queen, Thrust, Cigarette, Joke, Craps, Misses, Lizard, Lodging House, Fish.

the Fluxus compositions were more relaxed, more dadaistic, more epigrammatic. Some of them were very provocative, to be sure, but I was most of all fascinated by their simple, distinct structures. I conceived them as a playful (and at the same time very serious) research into the structures of everyday life.

At the end of the concert the performers started to make a salad on the stage (Alison Knowles' *Proposition*). A young man in the audience went up and tried to take a carrot. He was chased away by a big performer with curly hair, who hit him with a wooden spoon so vehemently that the spoon went into two pieces. This was my first impression of Dick Higgins, who has ever since been my closest contact in the Fluxus group. I drew the conclusion that a Fluxus concert was not intended to be harmless entertainment. Obviously it could be quite dangerous.

Dick Higgins and George Maciunas acted as spokesmen for Fluxus when I

met the performers after the concert and joined them at an evening meal in a restaurant. Maciunas had caught a terrible cold in the raw, wet Danish winter. A big scarf that he had thrown over one of his shoulders gave him an artistic look. He told me about earlier Fluxus concerts and invited me to participate in the next one in January 1963 in Düsseldorf.

My travel companions to Düsseldorf were Staffan Olzon and the two sisters Mieke and Beatrice Heybroek. It took us four days to get there, since Staffan's little Citroën 2 CV had several breakdowns, and we arrived to the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf just in time for the second concert. We could see that the first evening had roused the passions of the audience: the wall behind the stage was spotted with egg stains.

The concert was an explosion of creative energy that I will never forget. The most provocative pieces were those by Nam June Paik. In his *Fluxus Champion Contest* half a dozen of male partici-

pants urinated in a bucket, singing at the same time the national anthems of their countries. Tomas Schmit's *Zyklus* had a both provocative and meditative character, which I later found to be typical of many Fluxus compositions. Bottles were standing in a circle on the stage, one filled with water and all the others empty. The artist poured the water clockwise from one bottle to the next until all of the water had disappeared. The short events by George Brecht demonstrated other possibilities inherent in the Fluxus art concept. They were like concentrated, surprising instructions of a Zen master, mocking and serene at the same time.

Joseph Beuys, who had invited the artists to Düsseldorf, called his contribution *Siberian Symphony, First Movement*. The components of his piece - mathematical formulas written on a blackboard, a dead hare and a piano prepared with piles of earth and mud - and his mode of performance - an intense personal involvement - contrasted strongly with



the other Fluxus pieces. Beuys could not be related to a Dadaistic tradition; he was an innovator of archaic mythic rituals, explaining eternal questions about life and death.

My own contribution was called "Alternative to Another Rattlesnake" (I was fond of baroque titles at that time), and it dealt with the fallacies of verbal communication. Staffan Olzon and I were sitting on top of two ladders, winding between us cardboard sheets by means of a string. On the sheets were fragments of words and letters, forming a stumbling and stuttering conversation. It was decided that the next Fluxus concert was to take place in Stockholm but with Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles as the only representatives of the international Fluxus group. They arrived from Turkey at the end of February, and the concerts took place three evenings in the beginning of March 1963 at the Alley Theatre in Stockholm. Dick, Alison, Staffan Olzon, myself and four other Swedes performed more than forty Fluxus compositions by George Brecht, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Benjamin Patterson, Bob Watts, Emmett Williams, La

Monte Young and others. One of the Swedes was Carl Fredrik Reuterswærd who participated under a pseudonym, Charles Lavendel (= Lavender). He had informed me that he intended to do his piece the first evening sitting in the audience. And there he was sitting, until half of the concert had passed. Then a nauseating smell of lavender perfume spread in the theatre at the same as we noticed that Reuterswærd had disappeared.

From Sweden the Fluxus repertoire rapidly reached Norway. Later in March 1963 composer Sten Hanson and I went to Oslo, where we arranged a Fluxus evening for a big audience of students. Many of the compositions were the same as in Stockholm, but some were new, for example my own *Lettuce Music* (*Short signals on whistle. Head of lettuce explodes: A green rain. Long signal on whistle*). Afterwards the Norwegian audience was in an uproar. I fled through a back door and returned by train to Stockholm the same night. During the following years the main scene for presentations of Fluxus compositions in Sweden was the Pistol Theatre in Stockholm, an avant-garde

theatre led by Pi Lind and Staffan Olzon. I belonged to the staff of playwrights there, and my melodramatic play *Lidner* that ran in 1965 was strongly influenced by Fluxus ideas, especially the events by George Brecht. The actor who had the leading part was an ardent follower of the theatre ideas of Bertolt Brecht. It was quite problematic to unite these two Brechts.

My efforts to introduce the Fluxus movement through other channels than the Pistol Theatre were only partly successful. One passable way was to publish event scenarios in literary magazines and books of poetry. My book *Stockholmsspelet* (*The Stockholm Game*) from 1966 has the subtitle "Poems, Diary, Events". The editors of art magazines whom I contacted did not show the slightest interest. Therefore I have to admit that the interest in Fluxus presently shown by the art world fills me with a certain satisfaction. It shows that the ideas of the Fluxus artists were indeed just as revolutionary as we conceived them more than 25 years ago.







Bengt af Klintberg,  
*Street Cleaning Event*,  
Stoccolma, 1970.  
(Foto Thomas Lidholm).

Alla pagina seguente:  
Bengt af Klintberg,  
*Ice Exhibition*, 1965.  
(Foto Sven Asberg).









AMERICAN STUDENTS & ARTISTS CENTER, 261 Bd. RASPAIL, PARIS 14<sup>e</sup>  
CENTRE DE MUSIQUE (direction musicale - Keith HUMBLE) PRESENTE

# FESTIVAL FLUXORM

POESIE, MUSIQUE ET ANTIMUSIQUE EVENEMENTIELLE ET CONCRETE

3 DECEMBRE 1962  
LUNDI  
20.30 HRS.  
CONCERT NO.1, MUSIQUE EVENEMENTIELLE. RAOUL HAUSMANN: POESIE PHONETIQUE / JOSEPH BYRD: PIECE FOR R. MAXFIELD / JACKSON MAC LOW: THANKS II / ROBERT WATTS: NEWS & TWO INCHES / EMMETT WILLIAMS: ALPHABET SYMPHONY / G. BRECHT: DRIP MUSIC & DIRECTION / GEORGE MACIUNAS: IN MEMORIAM TO ADRIANO OLIVETTI / DICK HIGGINS: CONSTELLATION NO. 7 & 4 / BENJAMIN PATTERSON: SEPTET FROM "LEMONS" AND SOLO FOR DANCER / LA MONTE YOUNG: COMPOSITION 1961 NUMBER 29 / NAM JUNE PAIK: ONE FOR VIOLIN SOLO & SERENADE FOR ALISON / WOLF VOSTELL: DECOLLAGE MUSIQUE "KLEENEX" / ALISON KNOWLES: PROPOSITION / TERRY RILEY: EARPIECE / G. BRECHT: WORD EVENT.

4 DECEMBRE 1962  
JEUDI  
20.30 HRS.  
CONCERT NO.2, MUSIQUE INSTRUMENTALE ET VOCALE. JACKSON MAC LOW: LETTERS FOR IRIS NUMBERS FOR SILENCE & BIBLICAL POEMS / DICK HIGGINS: GRAPHIS 82 / EMMETT WILLIAMS: 4-DIRECTIONAL SONG OF DOUBT FOR 5 VOICES / GEORGE MACIUNAS: SOLO FOR UKULELE & SOLO FOR MOUTH AND MICROPHONE / BENJAMIN PATTERSON: VARIATIONS FOR DOUBLE BASS / GEORGE BRECHT: CARD PIECE FOR VOICE, FLUTE SOLO, STRING QUARTET AND SAXOPHONE SOLO / LA MONTE YOUNG: COMPOSITION 1960 NO. 7 (STRING QUARTET)

5 DECEMBRE 1962  
MARDI  
20.30 HRS.  
CONCERT NO.3, DANIEL SPOERRI: COMPOSITION NO. X / KENJIRO EZAKI: DISCRETION / TOSHI ICHIYANAGI: STANZAS AND MUSIC FOR ELECTRIC METRONOME / YASUNAO TONE: ANAGRAM FOR STRINGS / EMMETT WILLIAMS: LITANY AND RESPONSE / TAKENHISA KOSUGI: MICRO I & ANIMA I / ROBERT PAGE: GUITAR SOLO / NAM JUNE PAIK: TO BE DETERMINED /

6 DECEMBRE 1962  
MERCREDI  
20.30 HRS.  
CONCERT NO.4, ROBERT FILLIOU: POI POI SYMPHONY NO. 2 / ARTHUR KÖPCKE: MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK / ROBERT WATTS: EVENT 13 / SYLVANO BUSSOTTI: PIECE FOR PAIK / SIMONE MORRIS: DANCE CONSTRUCTION / GEORGE BRECHT: CANDLE PIECE FOR RADIOS / DICK HIGGINS: DANGER MUSIC NO. 17 / DIETER SCHNEBEL: VISIBLE MUSIC II, (SOLO FOR ONE CONDUCTOR) / TOSHI ICHIYANAGI: IBM FOR MERCE CUNNINGHAM / B. PATTERSON: TWO PIECES FROM METHODS & PROCESSES / LA MONTE YOUNG: COMPOSITION 1960 NO.3

7 DECEMBRE 1962  
VENDREDI  
20.30 HRS.  
CONCERT NO.5, POUR PIANO. TOSHI ICHIYANAGI: MUSIC FOR PIANO NOS. 2, 5 AND 7 / LA MONTE YOUNG: 566 TO HENRY FLYNT / GYORGY LIGETI: TROIS BAGATELLES / PHILIP CORNER: PIANO ACTIVITIES (FOR 10 PIANISTS) / GEORGE MACIUNAS: PIANO PIECE NO.11 FOR N.J.P. / GIUSEPPE CHIARI: GESTI SUL PIANO / GRIFITH ROSE: SECOND ENNEAD / TERRY RILEY: PIECE FOR 2 PIANOS & MAGNETIC TAPE / YORIAKI MATSUDAIRA: CO-ACTION / GEORGE BRECHT: INCIDENTAL MUSIC / LA MONTE YOUNG: PIANO PIECE FOR D. TUDOR NO.2

8 DECEMBRE 1962  
SAMEDI  
19.00 HRS.  
CONCERT NO.6, MUSIQUE ENREGISTREE ET FILMS. JOHN CAGE: MUSIC FOR THE MARRYING MAIDEN & FONTANA MIX / RICHARD MAXFIELD: COUGH MUSIC, RADIO MUSIC, PASTORAL SYMPHONY AND NIGHT MUSIC / STAN VANDERBEEK: (FILMS) A LA MODE, WHAT WHO HOW, ACHOO MR. KEROOCHEV / CIONI CARPI: POINT AND COUNTERPOINT / GEORGE BRECHT: 3 YELLOW EVENTS, AND 2 DURATIONS / NAM JUNE PAIK: FILMS / DICK HIGGINS: REQUIEM /

8 DECEMBRE 1962  
SAMEDI  
21.00 HRS.  
CONCERT NO.7 POESIE OUVERTE. FRANÇOIS DUFRENE: LE TOMBEAU DE PIERRE LAROUSSE / ROBERT FILLIOU: PÈRE LACHAISE NO.1 / BRIGN GYSIN: PERMUTATIONS SANS FIN / JEAN-CLARENCE LAMBERT: X ALÉAS / GHERASIM LUCA: QUART D'HEURE DE CULTURE METAPHYSIQUE. SOIRÉE ORGANISÉE AVEC LE CONCOURS DU DOMAINE POETIQUE ET LA PARTICIPATION DE JACQUES GRUBER ET JEAN-LOUP PHILIPPE.

PLACES: 4.N.F., 2.N.F. ETUDIANTS, 20.N.F. ABONNEMENT POUR LES 7 CONCERTS



# Festum Fluxorum FLUXUS

MUSIK UND ANTIMUSIK  
DAS INSTRUMENTALE  
THEATER

Staatliche Kunstakademie  
Düsseldorf, Eiskellerstraße  
am 2. und 3. Februar 20 Uhr  
als ein Colloquium für die  
Studenten der Akademie

George Machnas  
Man June Park  
Emmet Williams  
Benjamin Patterson  
Takemasa Kaseg  
Dick Higgins  
Robert Watts  
Jed Curtis  
Dieter Hülemann  
György Zsolt  
Jackson Mac Low  
Wolf Vostell  
Jean-Pierre Willems  
Frank Trowbridge  
Terry Riley  
Tomas Schmit  
György Ligeti  
Raoul Hausmann  
Casper  
Robert Filliou

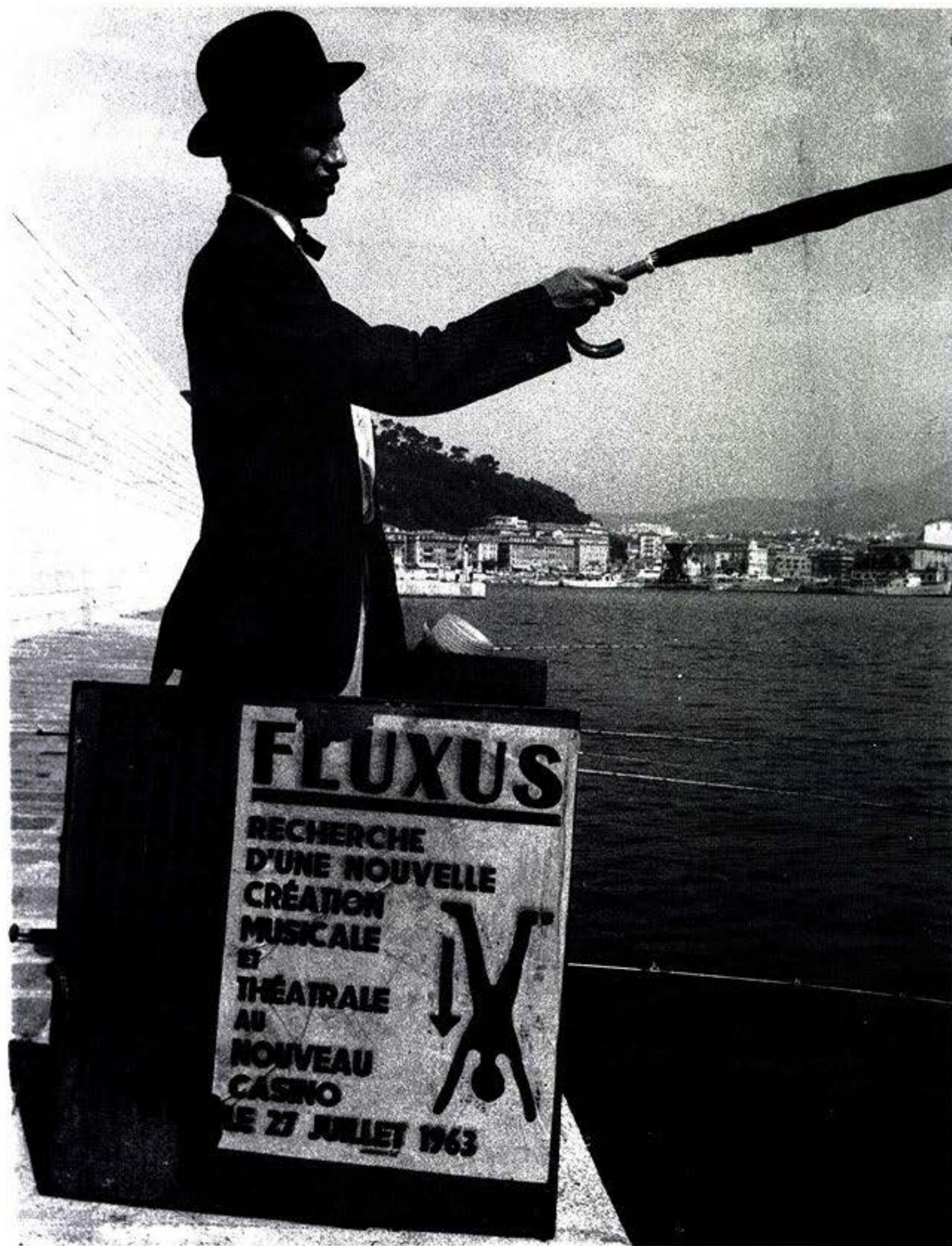
Daniel Spoerri  
Alison Knowles  
Bruno Maderna  
Elliot Z. Carter  
La Monte Young  
Henry Flynt  
Richard Maxfield  
John Cage  
Yoko Ono  
Jozef Patkowski  
Joseph Byrd  
Johannes Zecher  
Griffith Rose  
Philip Corner  
Ashot Mr. Kerouchev  
Kenjiro Ebaki  
Jouko Toivola  
Lucia Dlugoszewska  
Istvan Anhalt  
Jürgen Frischholz

Tochi Ichyanagi  
Cornelius Cardew  
Pär Ahlborn  
Gherasim Lăză  
Brion Gyson  
Stan Vanderbeek  
Yoshiaki Matsudaira  
Simone Morris  
Bylvaano Bussanotti  
Muska Vitella  
Jak K. Spek  
Frederic Rzewski  
K. Penderecki  
J. Staudenas  
V. Lindberg  
A. Salcius  
Kunharu Akiyama  
Joji Kurt  
Torii Takemitsu  
Arthur Köpcke

Letture di D.S.,  
Festum Fluxorum, Düsseldorf, 1963.







Ben Vautier durante il concerto Fluxus a Nizza, 1963.



Ben: I got a weighty letter & works from you, which I was very pleased to receive. First, quick questions:

1. Is it alright with you if we type-set all your text? Or do you prefer facsimile reproduction of your handwriting?
2. Can you send English text as well as French? We would like to publish all text in 2 languages and there is no one up here knowing both languages as well as you do. We could type-set all text & send a proof to you which you could proof-read & translate to English. OK?
3. By all means, please send me your recent works also & photographs. To save on postage, you could send text only, and keep photographs for the time when we arrive in Nice.

Now to reply to your proposals etc. (Nice is nice) We accept your proposal. Here are some details:

- a) There would be 5 of us (maybe 4): Daniel Spoerri, Emmett Williams, Robert Filliou, Tomas Schmit, Myself. (George Maciunas)
- b) We could arrive sometimes late in July. Maybe July 27th. Saturday?? That's a good date.
- c) All our concerts are connected with Fluxus, i.e. we all use Fluxus materials, therefore we would have to call the concert: "Fluxus" or "Festum Fluxorum" as we did in all past festivals. We could call it in Nice: "Festum Fluxorum - Life and Death" How does it sound?
- d) We would propose the following program for Nice:
  - Street compositions (like or similar to New York proposals) - Nam June Paik, T. Schmit, La Monte Young, etc.
  - Exhibits (maybe in lobby of theatre of works by yourself, George Brecht, Nam June Paik, Robert Watts, Walter De Maria, Tomas Schmit myself, also Daniel Spoerri, Robert Filliou, Emmett Williams). Here you could sell your "certificates" like the kick in the pants.

Concert (proposed programs)

Tomas Schmit - Sanitas 2 (if seats & tickets are numbered) (let me know) - or  
 Nam June Paik - Chair prelude (if seats are loose (not connected))  
 Benjamin Patterson - paper piece (if you could obtain large roll of newsprint paper, about 1 m wide and maybe 300 m or more, and long)  
 Emmett Williams - Alphabet symphony (maybe we exclude this piece) Counting song and  
 Dick Higgins - Constellations 7 & 4. Voice piece for La Monte Young  
 Robert Watts - 2 inches  
 George Maciunas - M. Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti  
 George Brecht - Drip music (2 versions) Sa light event  
 Benjamin Patterson - Septet (Schmit variation)  
 Tomas Schmit - piano piece no. 1 for George Maciunas (if we can obtain a grand piano)  
 La Monte Young - piano piece no. 2 for David Tudor  
 Toshi-Ichihyanagi - Piano piece no. 5 (if we could obtain a bad upright piano)  
 Emmett Williams - 4 directional song of doubt for 5 voices (and hunting whistles)  
 Jackson Mac Low - Letters for this Numbers for silence  
 Nam June Paik - quartet for strings (if we could borrow 3 violins and one contrabass) otherwise we would perform  
 Nam June Paik - Fluxus contest (pissing contest, who can do it longer, we performed this piece in Dusseldorf)  
 Daniel Spoerri - Homage a l'Allemagne  
 Robert Filliou - piece to be determined  
 Ben Vautier - your piece. The balloon piece is very good - we could place the balloon beforehand on the floor bet. below audience seats, when it is blown up, it would shift seats, come up between audience seats, legs etc. etc. - very good piece! also other pieces could be included.  
 George Brecht - Word event (which is "Exit", audience leaves and performs thus this theatre piece).

If there is time we can add:  
 Alison Knowles - Child art piece (we must get a one year old child - one that just learned how to walk but does not talk yet)  
 George Maciunas - mouthpiece for microphone (if there is a microphone → loudspeaker system in the theatre).

Some quick descriptions: (I have enclosed some printed descriptions)  
 Nam June Paik - chair prelude - all audience chairs are rearranged - upside down, piled up, backwards, etc. etc.  
 E. Williams - counting song; audience is counted (we can perform that simultaneously in 4 languages by 4 performers)  
 E. V. piece for L. M. Young - performer asks audience whether La Monte Young is there (good piece to follow counting; it is like as if we counted to see whether Young was there)  
 Higgins - constellation - all produce short voice sound on signal. 1 second-long piece.  
 Watts - 2 in. - 2 inch ribbon is stretched across stage slowly & then cut in middle  
 Brecht - drip music - we have 20 nose droppers - all performers squeeze them on 16th signal - one large - drip  
 Other pieces are too elaborate to explain, & I have no printed descriptions yet.

We can do many pieces in street or in your shop, like La Monte Young's - "draw a straight line" could be drawn on a street (over the dividing line) also his 566 for Henry Flynt could be done with large gang in street (566 times must the gang be struck). Also Paik's pissing contest could be done in street. We can add many more. Street pieces do not have to be announced. If you wish to announce, let me know, we will send exact program.

2. There is no need for you to come to Dusseldorf or Wiesbaden. There is no one in Dusseldorf anyway. We have postponed all East European tour for maybe Summer 1965, since we want to combine it with our through Siberia, which we would like to do with a freight car (train), stopping at freight rail stations and yards, and giving "concerts" right from the freight car to the audience standing in front in the rail yards. (free audience). But such arrangement will take too time to formalize, since we must obtain approval from Soviet government. But I suppose you could come to New York? for Sept → November events. Let me know. We may then continue on to Japan.  
 Let me know any proposals you would like to make for New York Fluxus.



Nikolaj Kirke, shop in London, De Ridder, 2 outlets in California, one in Japan, but they all want many items on consignment, which means I must invest in them with all these objets, kits, etc, which are expensive to produce, and then I must wait and wait and wait till these outlets start selling. But when they will begin to sell, I think waters will improve and I will be able to produce more objects. Meanwhile think about objects that I could produce, chess sets, card games, ball games, kits (in attache cases) etc, FLAGS - FURNITURE, etc, OK? When you have a chance, please send me a print of your film, so we can splice it on our 2 hour program

FIRST FOLD



George Maciunas  
P.O. Box 180  
New York 10013  
USA

Ben Vautier  
32 rue tonduiti de  
l'escarène,  
Nice,  
France.



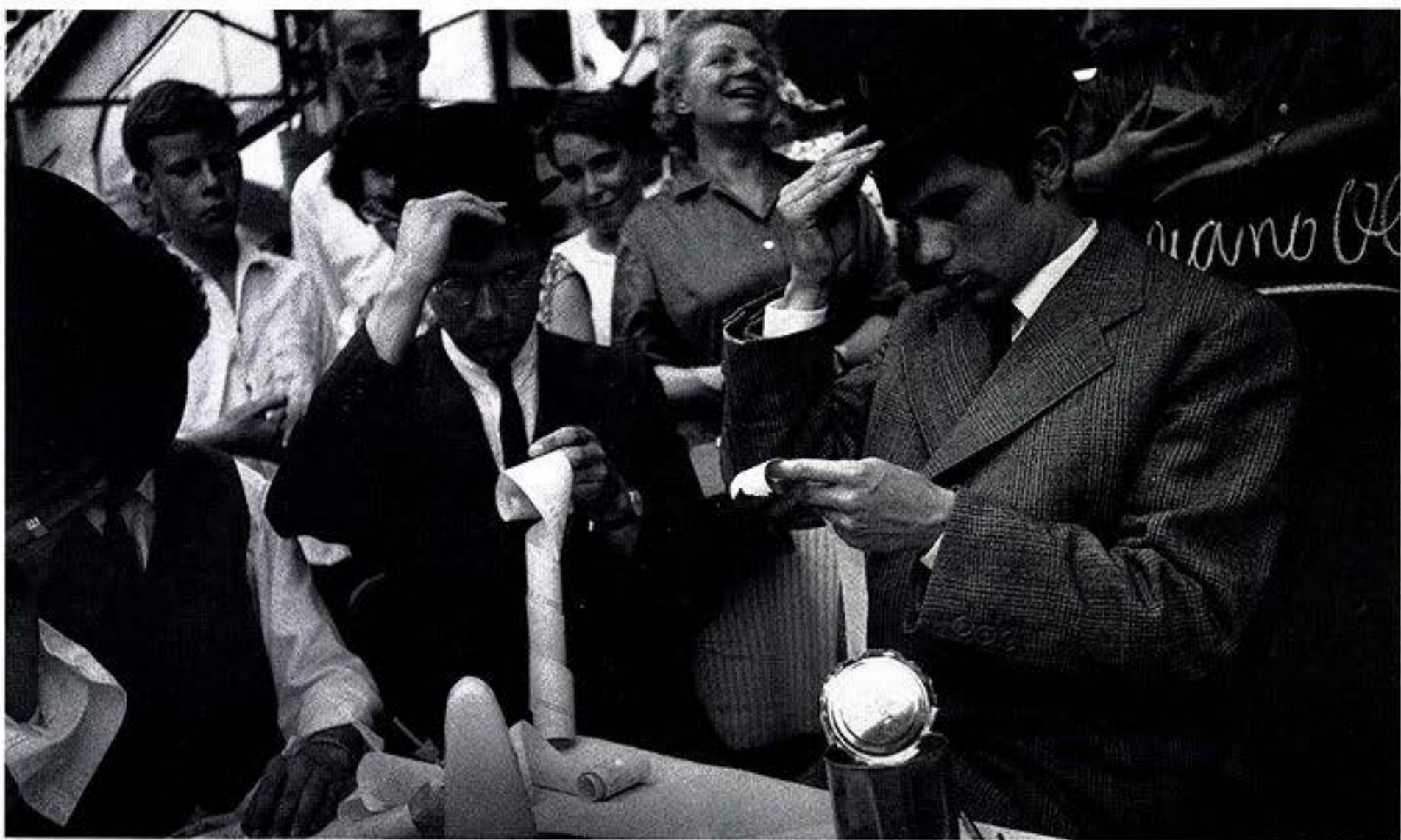
14 AIR MAIL

SECOND FOLD

which we want to distribute in 8 mm print that will cost only \$60 for 2 hours. Ayo will visit you in few days. He is leaving here in 2 days. When and if I come to Europe this fall we could organize Flux orchestra concerts. We have not done that in Europe yet, would need about 20 play players with instruments, but no skill needed, you think it could be arranged in Nice? You could be the conductor. I will bring tails that I can lend you to wear. We can discuss that later. Will write soon after Waldorf Astoria event which we will do next Saturday. Best regards - George.

Alla pagina seguente:  
George Maciunas,  
Robert Bozzi,  
Ben Vautier e altri  
in Pièce de rue,  
"Festival d'art total  
e du comportement",  
Nizza, luglio 1963.







**SMOLIN GALLERY PRESENTS**

as part of the Yam Festival

An afternoon of Happenings,  
Dance and Music at George Siegel's  
farm, Davidson's Mills Road,  
Box 323, South Brunswick, New  
Jersey on Sunday, May 19, 1963  
at 2 p. m.

**PRESENTATIONS**

Chuck Ginnever . . . . . A Sculpture Dance  
Dick Higgins . . . . . Lots of Trouble  
Allan Kaprow . . . . . May, A Happening  
Yvonne Rainer . . . . . A Dance  
Wolf Vostell . . . . . Television Decollage  
La Monte Young . . . . . Music

**DIRECTIONS AND TRANSPORTATION TO SIEGEL'S FARM**

**By Car:** New Jersey Turnpike South to Exit 9. Follow signs saying Route 130 South (not to New Brunswick) to traffic circle for Route 130 for ~~approximately 4 to 5 miles. Watch for Liquor Store Bar, Esso~~ station on left. This is Davidson's Mills Road. Turn left, go 1-1/4 miles. Farm on right is marked.

**By Bus:** Chartered buses (Suburban Lines) leave from 42nd Street Port Authority Bus Terminal (check at Information Desk for platform) at 12 noon sharp. Round trip ticket \$2 -- pay to driver. Bus returns to N. Y. C. about 6 p. m.

**Food:** New Jersey state law prohibits outdoor cooking because of recent severe drought. Bring your own picnic lunch.

PLEASE DETACH THIS FORM AND RETURN WITH STAMPED SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE TO SMOLIN GALLERY, 19 EAST 71st St., N.Y.C. 21.

ENCLOSE \$2.00 for each reservation. Make checks payable to: Ira Smolin.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please check one: We are going by bus \_\_\_\_\_ We are going by car \_\_\_\_\_

Further Information: Smolin Gallery RHineland 4-8929  
Hours: 12:30 to 6 p.m. Tues. thru Saturday.



# Hi Red Center



Genpei Akasegawa, 1962 c.



## BOXED PORTRAIT

...will appear in late 1966...FLUXUSs HI RED CENTER: box portrait \$200 custom made box of same weight, height & volume as the subject, and with same size photos of subject on all sides, top & bottom quarter scale box portrait \$70  
*Vaseline sTREET (Fluxus Newspaper No. 8) May 1966.*

## CANNED MYSTERY

Silverman No. 158, ff.

FLUX-PRODUCTS 1961 TO 1969... HI RED CENTER...canned mystery [S] 4...

*Fluxnewsletter, December 2, 1968 (revised March 15, 1969).*

*COMMENTS: Produced by Hi Red Center in 1964, these works were offered for sale by Fluxus. The codes on the cans refer to their contents, so you could break the code by opening the can, but that would change the work. There is a relationship of this work to canned works by Piero Manzoni, Arman, Ben Vautier, and Andy Warhol. Arman and Vautier worked with elements of mystery, Manzoni and Warhol with visual perception of the obvious. Alison Knowles' Bean Rolls is a canned work meant to be opened.*





# Aktual Walk Demonstration for All the Senses

*Performed in Prague in 1964*

The organizers of the demonstration wear unusual clothes instead of jewels – articles of daily use or pieces of fancy material sewn on ordinary clothing, parts of clothing painted with some color, preferably red or white, and the like.

Every newcomer is given a thing to carry in his hand at all times, e.g., a piece of cutlery, a plate, glass, vase, teapot, piece of clothing, shoe, or the like.

Walking down the street they pass a room with an open window, near which a man sits at a laid table and eats.

They go on, and are led into a small room, where they are locked in and left in inactivity for anything from five minutes up, according to their reaction or indifference. A great deal of perfume has been spilled on the floor of the room.

They are now let out. What has happened to them was only preparation, a disturbance of their normal state of mind.

The walk goes on. They encounter thing-parts of furniture, clothes, etc. A musician lies on the ground and plays a violin.

They reach a small place and are put in the middle of a circle.

Around them the organizers of the demonstration run, shouting, roaring, cutting across, driving round on motorcycles and in cars.

A chair comes down from above. They look at it and point. Then a man comes and puts the chair on a pedestal.

All fall to the ground. After a minute another man comes, takes the chair down, and sits on it.

All get up.

The participants are appealed to, to arrange a number of objects in a row. Each participant stands behind his own object.

They are then asked to pick up their objects and rebuild the row 20 centimeters farther on. This is repeated as long as desired, according to the reaction of the participants.

Now they walk back. A man stands at a wall, glazing a window. As soon as he is finished, he breaks it. In the middle of the street a woman lies on a mattress, listening to a transistor radio. The participants stop and are presented with a book from which each one tears a page. Then they return their objects and leave.

The first, active part of the demonstration is now finished. The second ends in a fortnight, and is different for each participant. Everything that happens to him during this period is a second demonstration.

## DEMONSTRATION OF ONE

Stand still in a crowd, unfold a piece of paper, stand on it, take off your ordinary clothes and put on something unusual, e.g., a jacket half red, half green with a tiny saw hanging from the lapel, a lace handkerchief pinned to the back.

Display a poster on which is written:  
"I beg the passer-by, if possible, while passing this place to crow."

Lie down on a piece of paper, read a book, tear out the finished pages. Then stand up, crumple the paper, burn it, sweep up the ashes carefully, change your clothes, and leave.



Milan Knizak,  
*Relic*, 31 × 20 × 3 cm,  
Edition Hundertmark, Berlino.





Milan Knizak e altri,  
*Environments on the Streets,*  
Praga, 1962.







# Fluxus/Italia

Paolo Thea

Una sezione italiana di Fluxus regolarmente ha tenuto i contatti con le altre centrali europee e americane del gruppo, ma con tempi e contenuti propri ha contribuito creativamente alla vicenda complessiva. Qui ci si limita a fornire delle indicazioni sulla presenza di Fluxus in Italia e a porre in evidenza la continuità e le differenze con il movimento più in generale. Se si assume come spartiacque il 1970, data che coin-

cide con la mostra Fluxus al Kunstverein di Colonia, che identifica l'ultima grande presenza pubblica di Fluxus, si può suddividere l'intero periodo in due fasi: una prima che sul piano internazionale va dal 1959, momento a cui risalgono i primi fermenti del gruppo, o dal 1962, quando compare la sigla del gruppo, o ancora dal 1964, se si guarda all'Italia per i motivi che in seguito si diranno, al 1970; una seconda che parte

dal 1971 e giunge sino a oggi e che è soprattutto un periodo di studio e di divulgazione.

Di recente è successo, all'edizione '89 della "Milanopoesia", di assistere alla riproposta delle giustamente note pièces di George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, La Monte Young, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell, Robert Watts ecc. recitate dagli stessi protagonisti e autori originali (Vautier, Geoffrey Hendricks, Ken Friedman, Al Hansen, Emmett Williams, Ben Patterson...).

Per quel che riguarda gli avvenimenti dell'ultima fase le scadenze sono queste: nel 1970 Gino Di Maggio e Giancarlo Politi ristampano l'edizione completa di *ccV TRE*. A partire dal 1973 c'è il lavoro della Galleria Multipla di Milano, fondata da G. Di Maggio, che con le sue attività espositive ed editoriali contribuisce a far crescere l'interesse per Fluxus in tutta Europa. Nel 1973 Maciunas realizza per Multipla *Fluxus Pac 3*. A partire dagli anni Settanta un gruppo di artisti e musicisti (Nannucci, D. Lombardi, Cardini, Mosconi ecc.) guarda con grande interesse a Fluxus. Nel 1979 Di Maggio e Vautier organizzano la mostra itinerante "Fluxus International & C", che sosterrà a Lione, Nizza, Liegi e Ginevra.

Se la presenza di Fluxus nelle cronologie dell'"avanguardia" è stata rimossa, il motivo è facilmente individuabile. Fluxus è stato un laboratorio ideale da cui è stato possibile di volta in volta e a piene mani attingere forme concettuali, idee per performances, schemi oggettuali innovativi. In Fluxus la problematica consisteva nell'accelerazione della temporalità e nella spinta verso la fine dell'arte, intesa come sistema chiuso, mentre nell'"avanguardia" di poco successiva ritornerà un feticismo per l'oggetto artistico, seppure staccato da una sua scintilla generativa, degno però di



Ben Vautier e Ugo Nespolo in un'azione Fluxus alla Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Torino, aprile 1967.



essere considerato al passo con i propri tempi. È un processo analogo a un altro avvenuto all'inizio del secolo, quando molti artisti tra cui Kandinsky, Le Corbusier, Ginna assistevano muniti di album alle vibranti conferenze di Rudolf Steiner corredate da schizzi alla lavagna tracciati con i gessetti colorati.

Procedendo con ordine, la prima manifestazione Fluxus in Italia è il concerto di John Cage, Juan Hidalgo e Walter Marchetti alla Rotonda del Pellegrini a Milano nel '59. Nel 1963 il musicista di Firenze Giuseppe Chiari partecipa al Festival di Düsseldorf presentando sue composizioni. Nel '64 a Milano, alla Galleria Blu, si tiene la mostra "Gesto e segno", organizzata da Daniela Palazzoli, a cui partecipano Chiari e Gianni-Emilio Simonetti. Ma è nei mesi a cavallo tra il '67 e il '68 che avvengono i fatti più importanti e si realizza un circuito di manifestazioni della sezione italiana. Il 26, 27 e 28 aprile 1967 si inizia a Torino per proseguire con altre città e anche con altre nazioni: Milano, Genova, Modena, Trieste, Gallarate, Parma, Lugano, Fiumalbo, Belgrado, Zagabria, Venezia, Bologna, per un totale di trenta concerti. I performer sono Simonetti, Ugo Nespolo, Sergio Albergoni, Gianni Sassi, Carlo Gaia, a cui si aggiunge Vautier nella tappa torinese. Nelle manifestazioni vengono eseguiti brani di Paik, Marchetti, La Monte Young, Vostell, Maciunas, Yoko Ono, George Brecht e altri. In più, rispetto a quelli successivi, l'evento di Torino ha anche inserito nel suo programma (conosciuto solo dagli organizzatori) la "passeggiata", ovvero la scomparsa nella periferia di Torino dei pullman con cui fino a quel momento era stato accompagnato il pubblico, che a partire da quel momento si trasforma in soggetto attivo, e il ritorno a piedi verso il centro della città. I "dispersi", tra cui critici e giornalisti, in ogni caso sono riusciti a sopravvivere alla volontà di perdizione che, nella sua sottile ironia, è avvicinata agli anatemi di Marinetti e Soffici, alla Gioconda con i baffi di Duchamp e più vicino nel tempo al gesto di Nunzio Van Guglielmi del '58, consistito nello sfregio alla Pinacoteca di Brera dello *Sposalizio della Vergine* di Raffaello e nell'applicazione sul quadro di un cartello con la scritta "W la rivoluzione italiana / via il governo clericale".<sup>1</sup> A quelli di Fluxus la critica, concepita nel suo ruolo di mediazione tra l'arte e il pubblico, appare l'anello es-

senziale di una catena, un collante che rende possibile la mercificazione e la conduzione a buon fine della sequenza produzione-distribuzione-consumo propria di una economia capitalistica.



Gianni-Emilio Simonetti (sopra)  
e Ben Vautier (sotto)

La posizione di Fluxus su questo aspetto coincide con quella di Maciunas, coordinatore ed editore del gruppo: "Nelle intenzioni di Maciunas non si vendeva l'opera, se lo si faceva era per un dollaro, due-tre dollari, e non erano delle opere uniche bensì dei multipli. Un artista aveva un'idea, lui la realizzava e poi vendeva. E tutto quello che ne ricavava lo reinvestiva in altri multipli, non lo usava di certo per arricchirsi... Il mondo dell'economia era aggredito



quando un oggetto che veniva ideato da un artista, invece di costare cento-mille dollari ed essere esposto in una galleria, era trattato in effetti come una scatola di fiammiferi..." (W. Marchetti in un'intervista rilasciata nel dicembre '89).

Diversamente, nelle mani del mercato artistico, dalla fine degli anni Sessanta, quella dei multipli diventa una potente arma. Per le gallerie è "l'uovo di Colombo". Se l'arte non è oggettivamente commerciabile, perché scarseggia la materia prima, cioè le opere d'arte, come fare ad esempio con i solchi tracciati nel deserto o sui ghiacci, o con le azioni di cui non rimane traccia? Basterà capire la nuova situazione. Si potranno vendere le fotografie, filmati, progetti, al limite i biglietti aerei per sorvolare l'Alaska.<sup>2</sup>

Per Fluxus l'arte è una forma di dono e di lusso senza prezzo, che per questo motivo si deve perdere nel sociale, e allora cominciano un po' i critici a dare il buon esempio brancolando nella notte, aggirandosi in quartieri periferici cittadini. La componente musicale risulta particolarmente evidente se si osservano le manifestazioni italiane del movimento che hanno tutte la struttura dell'azione-concerto. Fin dai primi anni Sessanta erano stati coinvolti negli eventi del gruppo musicisti come Sylvano Bussotti, Luciano Berio, Pietro Grossi, così come nel programma del Festival di Düsseldorf del '63 risultano i nomi di Bruno Maderna, Krzysztof Penderecki e György Ligeti. Anche i due più importanti esponenti italiani, Chiari e Simonetti, sono musicisti.

In Italia, alla precisazione di un clima di relazioni tra musica e arti figurative concorre in modo determinante la rivista *Collage*, pubblicata a Palermo tra il '63 e il '69, diretta dal musicologo Paolo Emilio Carapezza e sostenuta finanziariamente dal barone Ruspoli. *Collage* ha avuto tra i suoi collaboratori Mario Diacono, Emilio Villa, Carapezza stesso, Bussotti, Klaus König, Franco Donatoni, Chiari. Il periodico italiano che informa con puntualità sia delle manifestazioni internazionali sia di quelle del circuito italiano è *Bit*, che esce a Milano tra l'aprile '67 e il giugno '68. Il mensile, diretto dalla Palazzoli, e a cui collabora assiduamente Simonetti, segue con attenzione gli avvenimenti culturali (libri, mostre d'arte, film, spettacoli) europei e americani. Per quanto riguarda le mostre d'arte si osservano particolarmente quelle milanesi, romane, torinesi e genovesi, avvalendosi tra l'altro delle note critiche di Diacono, Tommaso Trini e Germano Celant, l'eseguita dell'"arte povera". Il sottotitolo della testata inizialmente è "Arte oggi in Italia", successivamente mutato nella





*Concert Fluxus (Pommes di Ben Vautier), Piccola Commenda, Milano, 1967.*  
Da sinistra, Gianni Sassi, Gianni-Emilio Simonetti, Carlo Gaia, Sergio Albergoni.

seconda serie del '68 in "Arte oggi nel mondo". Sulle pagine di *Bit* si possono trovare testi, notizie e documentazione fotografica su Fluxus nel suo complesso, su singole personalità come Vautier, Oyvind Fahlström, Vostell, Brecht. Un particolare spazio viene dedicato ad alcune tappe della tournée italo-svizzera-jugoslava. Si rendono così evidenti la vitalità delle componenti europee e le particolarità di quella italiana, che altrimenti potrebbe apparire come una semplice appendice locale del centro americano. Questo si verifica in un momento in cui il mercato mondiale dell'arte unifica l'intera superficie terrestre.

Come esempio di questa concezione dell'internazionalismo si può citare il caso dell'importante mostra itinerante "When Attitudes Become Form", di tendenza poveristico-concettuale, che nel corso del '69 sosta in sedi come Londra, Amsterdam, Berna, Krefeld e che ha come ente finanziatore la filiale europea della Philip Morris, una multinazionale americana. Importanti per la documentazione contenuta all'interno di *Bit* sono soprattutto i numeri 2 (maggio '67), 4 (luglio '67) e 1 (aprile '68), che contengono materiale relativo al *Concert Fluxus art total* di Torino, per finire con il concerto al Teatro della Piccola Commenda di Milano. Sulle stesse pagine ci sono anche partiture di Marchetti, dichiarazioni di Vautier, di-

segni sonori di Bussotti.<sup>3</sup> La società ED 912, il cui staff è costituito da Sassi e Albergoni, oltre a *Bit* pubblica libri, dischi, manifesti, volantini e distribuisce in Italia materiale Fluxus proveniente da altre sedi europee o americane. Caratteristica di tutti questi prodotti è una vivace grafica.

Nel '68 il testo di una denuncia di Maciunas del '66 viene reso più conciso e trasformato in un efficace manifesto che poi è quello che Maciunas allega a una delle sue periodiche circolari ai membri del gruppo ed è menzionato in una nota di *Bit*, n. 2, 1968: "Flux-newletter di George Maciunas a mo' di circolare d'ordine sulle ultime novità del gruppo Fluxus. La lettera, indirizzata fra gli altri ad Anderson, Ay-o, Brecht, Filliou, Friedman, Mieko Shio-mi, Simonetti, Watts, Vostell, Vautier, contiene una serie di proposte di lavoro per il 1968 e un elenco dettagliato degli ultimi events e happenings da inserire nei programmi dei prossimi concerti prodotti con il marchio Fluxus. In allegato alla lettera, un manifesto su un tema caro a Maciunas, la denuncia delle atrocità militari degli Stati Uniti."

Ed è appunto del manifesto stampato a New York che viene preparata una nuova edizione. Un fenomeno analogo era avvenuto l'anno precedente con la stampa del testo di Henry Flynt *Communist Must Give Revolutionary Leadership in Culture*, la cui edizione italiana

appare unita a un poster efficace dal titolo *Il proletariato deve dirigere tutto*. I termini stessi impiegati da Flynt nel suo scritto, il cui senso è condiviso collettivamente dal gruppo, sono emblematici della concezione del lavoro intellettuale in Fluxus. Il "particolare" (i comunisti) deve tendere a divenire l'"universale" (il tutto). Non è un linguaggio dissimile da quello impiegato da Lukács nei *Prolegomeni a un'estetica marxista* o da Hegel nell'*Estetica*. Le posizioni espresse in tale materia da esponenti italiani sono altrettanto radicali. In quegli anni immagini di cortei, di occupazioni, di manifestanti sono ricorrenti nelle opere pittoriche e nella grafica. Per attenersi alle pagine di *Bit*, oltre ai casi "vietnamiti" di Mühl, Brus e Vostell, si possono citare i casi di Pietro Gallina, Lamberto Pignotti e Ugo Nespolo. Di Gallina occorre ricordare la copertina nel n. 5 (novembre '67) riprodotte una tavola dal titolo *Dipingi di giallo il tuo poliziotto*, che seri problemi giudiziari ha causato a Sassi e all'editore Feltrinelli che si occupava della distribuzione della rivista.

Il passo non firmato che si riporta è riferito alla mostra "Molotov" tenuta da Nespolo nel '68 dapprima alla Galleria Il Punto e in seguito da Schwarz a Milano, dove si esibivano delle bottiglie molotov vuote allineate su telai in legno del formato 70x70: "...Se la mostra non è efficace sul piano delle for-



me rivoluzionarie allora Ugo Nespolo ha commesso il grossolano errore di museificare e mistificare i mezzi positivi (in questo caso anche simbolici) della rivolta, se la mostra è efficace sul piano delle forme rivoluzionarie allora Ugo Nespolo rischia di essere denunciato dalla Questura ed anche in modo molto pesante, in questo caso però è allora sciocco rischiare una condanna che non serve a niente mentre sarebbe stato più efficace fare le molotov di nascosto ed eventualmente tirarle dalla parte giusta

al momento giusto, momento che chi abita a Torino non può non conoscere." In questa nota si pone l'accento sul protagonismo e l'egoismo dell'arte intesa come fossilizzazione di una realtà, contrapposta a quella libera forza a cui Fluxus rivolge le sue proposte. L'arte intesa come corpo a sé sarebbe anche una negazione di quella carica ludica, iconoclasta e alchemica che Fluxus identifica. Il gruppo lavora nell'arte, mentre l'analisi di Debord contenuta in *La société du spectacle* indica i meccani-

smi economici in base ai quali nella società capitalistica ogni cosa in conseguenza della mercificazione si trasforma in parvenza. La conclusione però è analoga, dato che Debord afferma che "il generale Ludd prenderà di nuovo la testa dei Consigli rivoluzionari". L'identità di queste due proposte risulta nei fatti anche se tra ludismo e Luddismo, oltre alla maiuscola, c'è una *d* di differenza.



Invito a *Les mots et les choses - Concert Fluxus art total*, Galleria Il Punto, Torino, aprile 1967.

**Note**

<sup>1</sup> Nell'occasione dell'arresto e dell'internamento nell'ospedale psichiatrico di Affori del Van Guglielmi vengono diffusi due volantini: *Difendete la libertà ovunque* della sezione italiana dell'Internazionale situazionista con sede ad Alba, datato 4 luglio 1958, e *Au secours de Van Guglielmi*, datato 7 luglio '58, firmato da Asger Jorn per conto dell'Internazionale situazionista con sede a Parigi.

<sup>2</sup> Dal frontespizio del catalogo della mostra "When Attitudes Become Form (Berona, 1969) si riporta un passo della prefazione del responsabile europeo della Philip Morris: "Le opere riunite in questa esposizione sono state selezionate e riunite da alcuni osservatori dell'arte attuale sotto la denominazione di 'arte nuova'. Noi della Philip Morris pensiamo che sia giusto fornire il nostro apporto al fine di attirare l'attenzione del pubblico su queste opere, perché noi vediamo svelarsi un elemento chiaro in questa 'arte nuova'. Questo elemento è l'innovazione, senza la quale sarebbe impossibile riuscire in qualsiasi attività. La nostra costante ricerca di strade nuove, per agire e produrre, è simile agli interrogativi degli artisti che presentano qui la loro opera. [...] In quanto uomini d'affari al passo coi tempi, siamo incoraggiati a sostenere il 'nuovo' e lo 'sperimentale' in tutti i campi..."

È una pagina fondamentale che conferma la giustezza delle tesi di Debord contenute in

*La société du spectacle*. Se il progresso tecnologico è giunto a un suo acme e al collasso della distribuzione mercantile, si potranno diffondere come preziosi gli scarti della produzione. È un nodo che il funzionario della Philip Morris affronta molto più disinvoltamente e concretamente rispetto ai critici d'arte contemporanei.



Accostato a questo episodio, può essere utile ricordarne un altro dell'autunno '68 e cioè la contestazione del Deposito d'Arte Presente di Torino, una delle nuove strutture espositive e allo stesso tempo una succursale della Galleria Sperone. I protagonisti di questi fatti sono Piero Gilardi e Nespolo, quest'ultimo già legato a Fluxus. Si riporta una dichiarazione di Nespolo rilasciata a chi scrive, del '75: "Il Deposito era un cuneo che divideva i bravi dai cattivi, lì c'erano solo i bravi, gli altri non si è capito perché non dovevano esserci; appunto eravamo sempre noi nove: Pistoletto, Paolini, Zorio, Anselmo, Boetti, Merz, ecc. Bon, lì col Deposito è cominciato il primo casino, a ripensarci adesso anche ingiustificato. Una sera c'era una grossa mostra, anzi prima proiettavano i film; un gruppo di persone tra cui Gilardi e io abbiamo sbaraccato tutto, abbiamo spaccato tutto, e abbiamo creato una specie di muro tra questo gruppo di potere, perché di gruppo di potere si trattava, e il Deposito fallì..." A testimonianza degli avvenimenti di quella sera, sul muro dell'edificio di via S. Fermo a Torino ancora oggi rimane un pezzo di una scritta tracciata con la vernice spray gialla: "Deposito di merda."

<sup>3</sup> Al caso dell'azione di Torino avvenuta nella circostanza dell'inaugurazione del Museo Sperimentale d'Arte Contemporanea alla Galleria d'Arte Moderna, la rivista *I 4 Soli*, fondata e diretta da Adriano Parisot, dedica parte del fascicolo n. 53 del 1967, rompendo così la consegna del silenzio.



# Entrevista con Zaj

Juan Hidalgo

¿ cuándo nació usted, ZAJ?  
en julio de 1964

¿ qué es ZAJ?  
ZAJ es ZAJ por que ZAJ es no-ZAJ

¿ qué significa ZAJ?  
ZAJ

¿ qué persigue ZAJ?  
Zaj

¿ cuál es la estética ZAJ?  
ZAJ

¿ qué finalidad tiene ZAJ?  
ZAJ

¿ qué cosa hace ZAJ?  
traslados, conciertos, escritos y cartones, festivales, exposiciones, libros, tarjetas, etcétera y etcéteras ZAJ

¿ qué toca ZAJ?  
ZAJ toca siempre puntos ZAJ con y en sentidos ZAJ

¿ en dónde ha tocado ZAJ?  
en madrid, lisboa, san sebastián de los reyes, almorox, argel, schauinsland, londres, frankfurt, aachen, berlin, new york, clermont-ferrand, zaragoza, barcelona, san sebastián, bilbao, alcoy, rouen, paris, colonia, düseldorf, kassel, valencia, tokyo, osaka, pamplona, santos (brasil), córdoba (argentina), albany (n.y.), hanover (n.h.), montréal, amherst (mass.), urbana-champaign (ill.), buffalo (n.y.), minneapolis (minn.), oakland (calif.), berkeley (calif.), colorado springs (colo.), middletown (conn.), cambridge (mass.), milán, las palmas

(islas canarias), roma, venecia, pavía, münchen, santa cruz de tenerife, malpartida de cáceres, la sainte-baume (francia), la laguna (islas canarias), cesena (italia), sant'arcangelo (italia), cogolin (francia), santander, mataró, parma, jerusalem, florencia, berna, amalfi, amsterdam, spoletto, ginevra

conclusiones de ZAJ

ahora ZAJ será o no-será ZAJ  
ZAJ, cualquiera otra vez, será o no será ZAJ

pero siempre ZAJ será o no-será sólo ZAJ

posdata ZAJ

¿ ha comprendido usted?  
sí, no-ZAJ; no-sí, ZAJ



Juan Hidalgo, *Concerto Zaj*, Galleria Multhipla, Milano, 1974. (Foto Roberto Masotti).



# Juan Hidalgo

*A LETTER FOR DAVID TUDOR ,para un pianista\* ,piano y cuantos objetos sean necesarios*

*FORTNIGHT ONEROUS NEGATION LIKENESS  
RAMROD IVY  
JUVENILE VORACIOUS COD  
PLAGIARIST DESIGN STARRY ACQUISITION  
QUAFF  
BAKE  
KINDNESS WORTHY  
GENTLE XANTHOUS YULETIDE  
UNQUENCHABLE EXAMINER  
MECHANICS  
ZOOLOGICAL  
HARPOON  
TENPINS*

*\*también varios pianistas contemporáneamente ,en un tiempo más o menos determinado ,podrán realizar ,independientemente ,varias versiones de "a letter for david tudor "*

*parís ,2 junio 1961*

*algunas sugerencias para su realización :A = a ,artless ,artful ,aloud .B = b ,brutal ,(make a) bow .C = c ,cry ,come (up) ,(with a) cod .D = d ,drink (tea) .E = e ,eat (a flower) .F = f ,(with a) fan ,fat .G = g ,great ,gentle .H = h ,hurry (up) ,hold (something ,a harpoon) .I = impossible ,(with) ivy .J = jolt ,jump ,juvenile .K = knock .L = literal .M = (m) .N = nothing ,no ,noise ,naturally ,none ,not .O = O.K. ,onerous .P = play (cards ,tenpins) ,perhaps ,please ,plagiarist .Q = quaff ,quite ,quiet .R = run (away ,around) ,read (a letter for david tudor) ,(with a) ramrod .S = silent ,smiles ,(very) sweet ,stand (up) ,sing (a song) ,(make) smoke ,sharp .T = (with the) tongue ,too (bad ,good) .U = unison ,unkind .V = violent ,virgin ,voracious ,voluminous ,(with) violets .W = walk (a little) ,(with) water ,worthy ,watch .X = (with a) xylophone .Y = you ,yes .Z = zigzag ,etcétera*





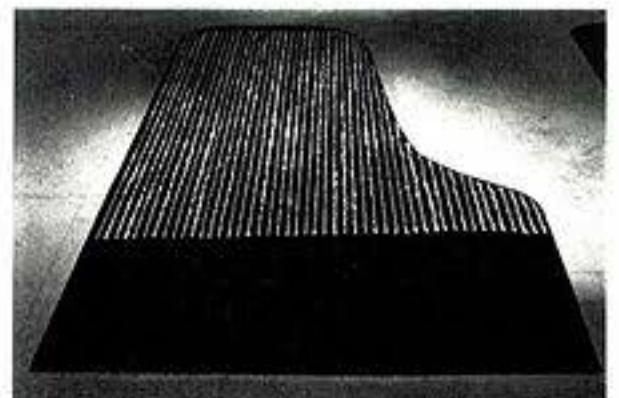
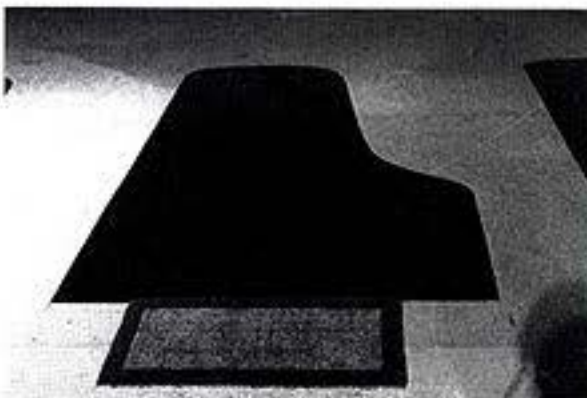
Juan Hidalgo, *M Lituania, M = Maciunas, Morte, Lituania = Paese di Maciunas*, 1978. (Foto Nacho Criado).



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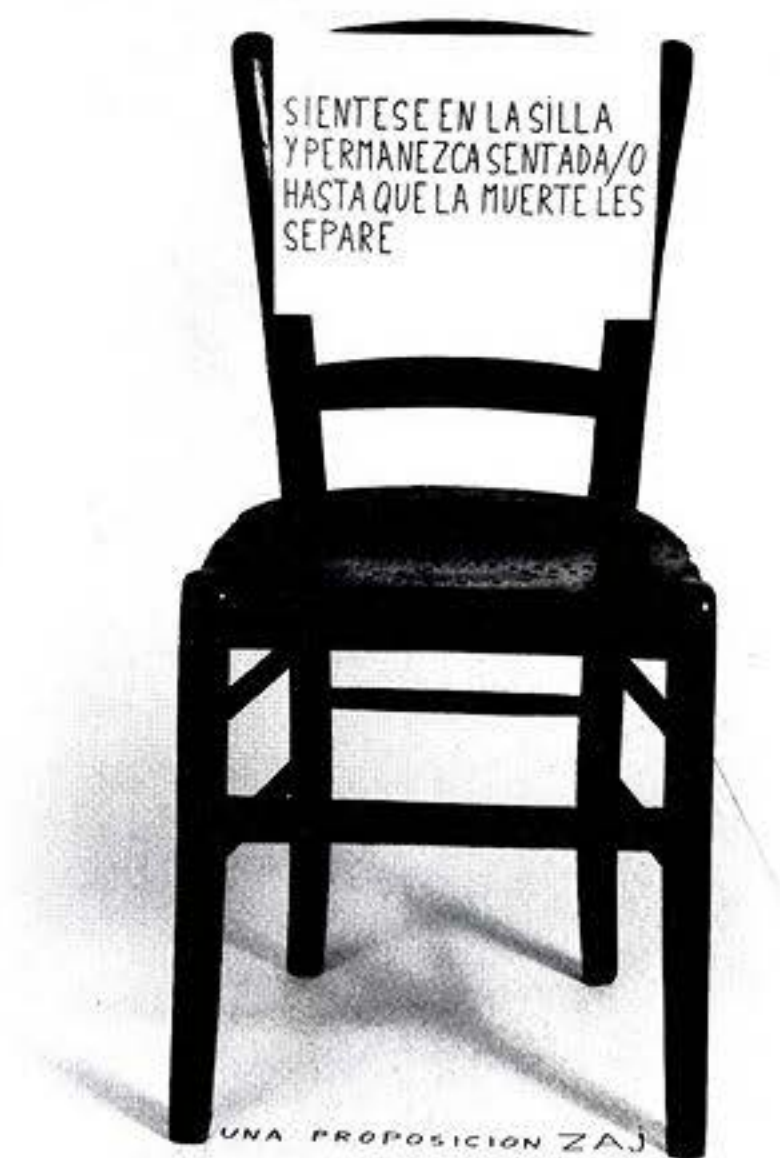




Walter Marchetti, *Musiche da camera*, "Milanopoesia", 1989. (Foto Giovanni Giovannetti).



# Esther Ferrer



Esther Ferrer, "Sit down in this chair and remain seated until the two of you are separated by death", *A Zaj Proposition*.



## El paraiso terrenal

*Y Jahveh Dios dio esta orden al hombre: "Puedes come de todos los árboles del jardín, salvo del arbol de la ciencia del bien y del mal, pues el día que cómas morirás..."*

*La serpiente dijo a la mujer: "De ninguna manera morireis, pues Dios sabe muy bien que el día que comais de él, se os*

*abrirán los ojos y sereis como dioses, conocedores del bien y del mal."*

*Y como viese la mujer que el arbol era bueno para comer, agradable a la vista y precioso para abrir la inteligencia, cogió su fruto y comió y dió tambien a su marido que estaba cerca de ella y éste también comió... Y Jahveh Dios*

*dijo: "He ahí que el hombre se ha convertido en uno de nosotros por el conocimiento del bien y del mal."*

*Esta secuencia extriódica del Génesis, es la base de la tragicomedia musical Eva y Dios o La verdadera historia y orígenes del feminismo y la misoginia.*

## The Garden of Eden

*And the Lord God commended the man: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die..."*  
*"You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be*

*opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it... and the Lord God said, "The man has*

*now become like one of us knowing good and evil."*

*This excerpt from Genesis is the basis of the musical tragedy/comedy, Eve and God or The Real History and Origins of Feminism and Misogyny.*

## Il paradiso terrestre

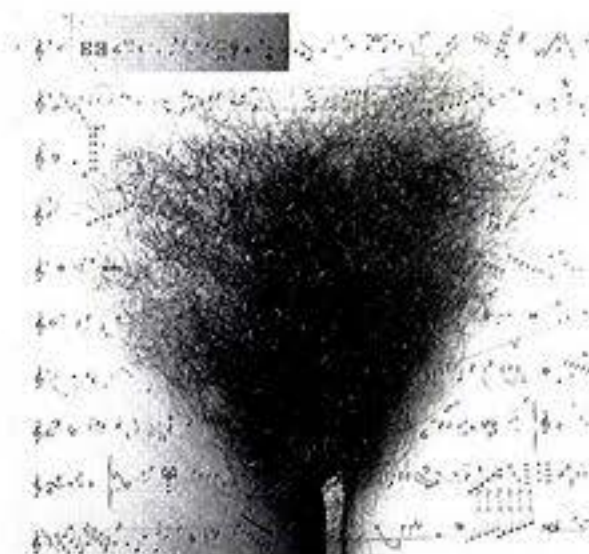
*Il Signore Dio diede questo comando all'uomo: "Tu potrai mangiare di tutti gli alberi del giardino, ma dell'albero della conoscenza del bene e del male non devi mangiare perché, quando ne mangiassi, certamente ne moriresti..."*  
*E il serpente disse alla donna: "In nessuna maniera morirai, poiché Dio sa*

*che il giorno che mangerai di esso ti si apriranno gli occhi come a Dio e conoscerai il bene e il male."*

*Allora la donna vide che l'albero era buono da mangiare, gradito agli occhi e desiderabile per acquistare saggezza; prese del suo frutto e ne mangiò, poi ne diede anche al marito, che era con lei, e anch'e-*

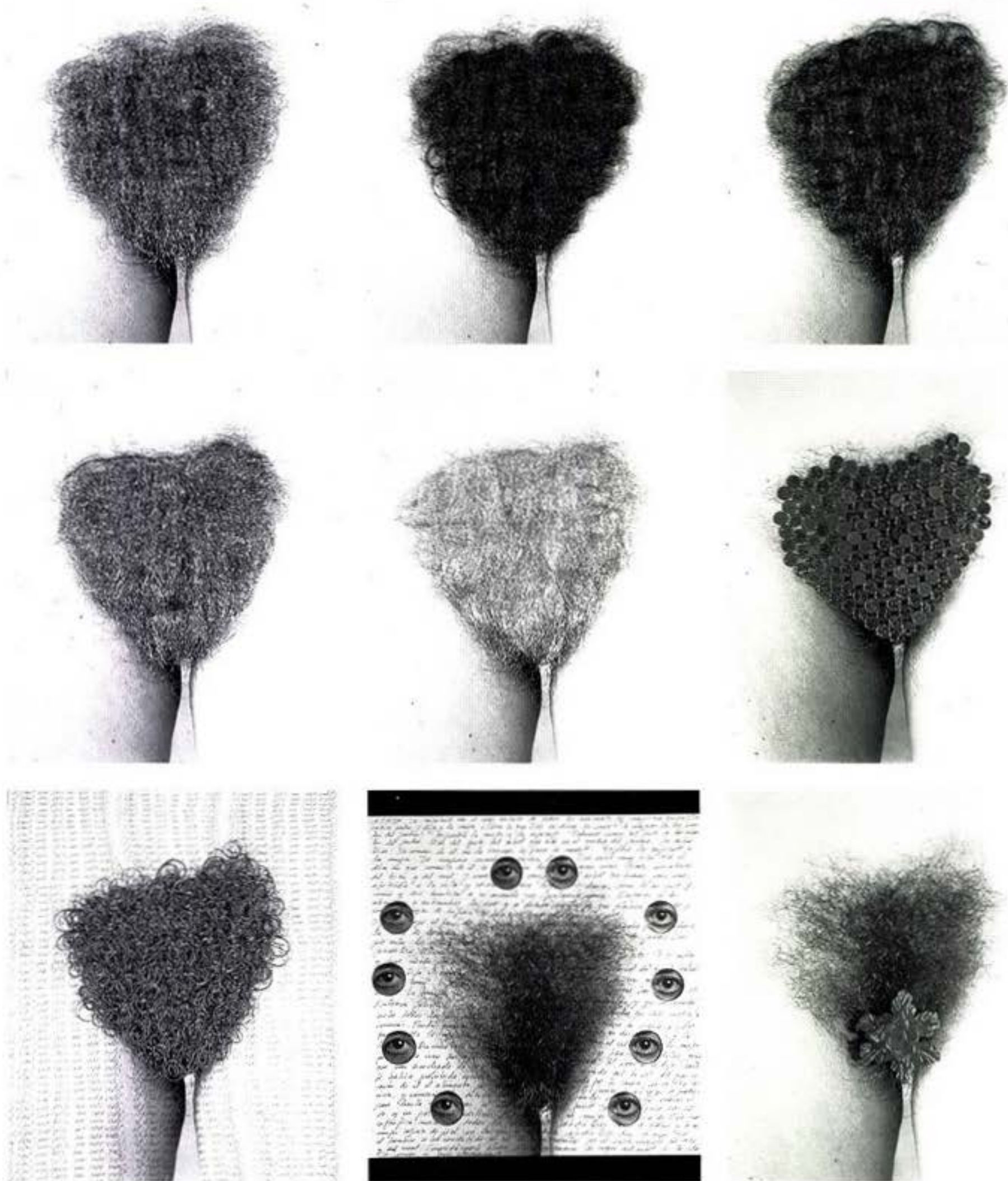
*gli ne mangiò... Il Signore Dio disse allora: "Ecco, l'uomo è diventato come uno di noi, per la conoscenza del bene e del male."*

*Questi brani tratti dalla Genesi costituiscono la base della tragicommedia musicale Eva e Dio o La vera storia delle origini del femminismo e della misoginia.*



Esther Ferrer, *Musica celestial*.





Esther Ferrer, "Sexe-Collection", *Los arboles de la ciencia del bien y del mal*, 1983-89.

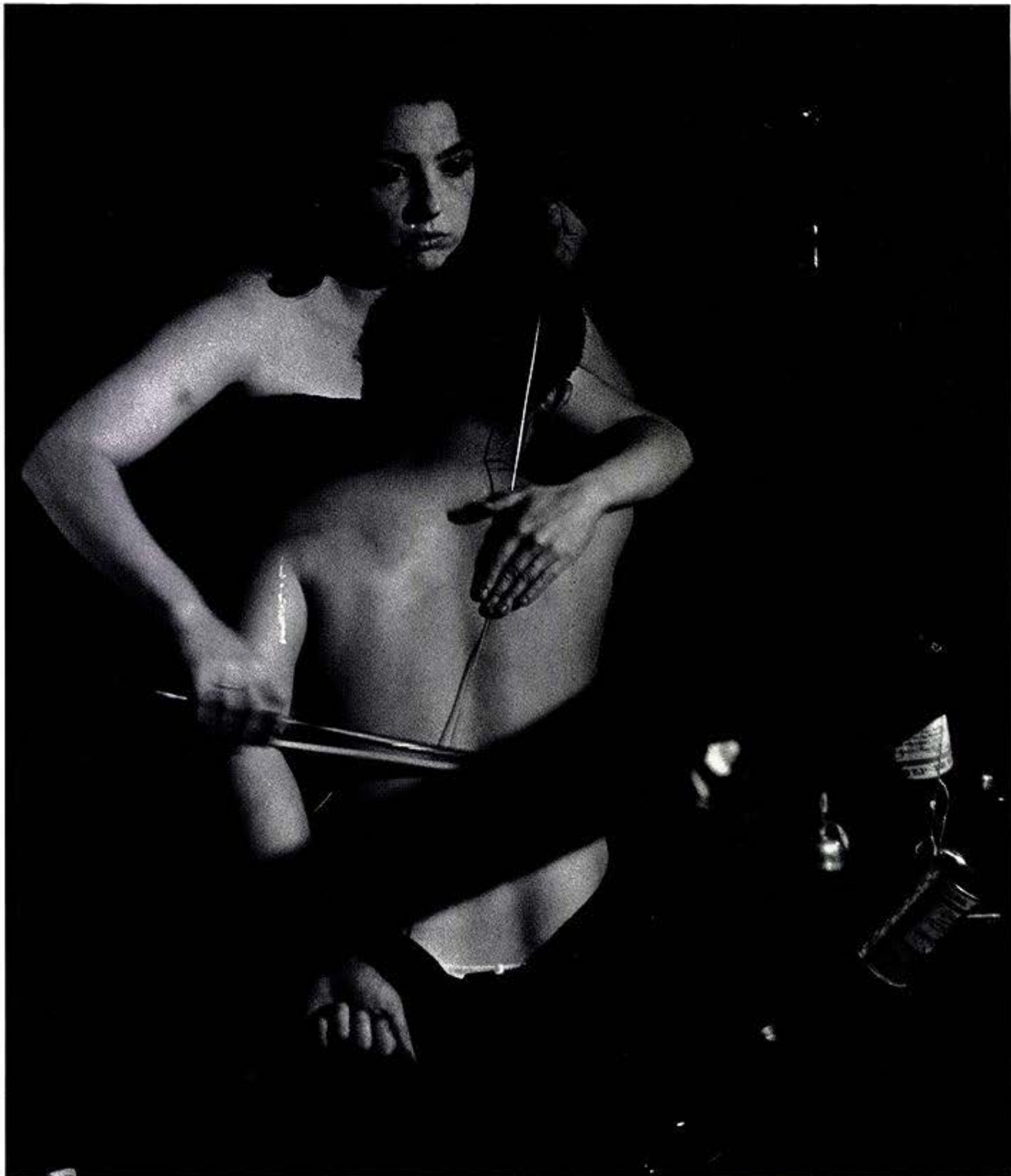


# Charlotte Moorman



Charlotte Moorman, 1975.  
(Foto Peter Moore).





Charlotte Moorman, violoncellista, e Nam June Paik, violoncello umano,  
in *26'1. 1499 for a String Player* di John Cage. (Foto Peter Moore).





Charlotte Moorman, 1975. (Foto Peter Moore).





Charlotte Moorman, 1975.  
(Foto Peter Moore).



Ken Friedman

# Who's Who in America®

FRIEDMAN, KENNETH SCOTT, artist, social scientist; b. New London, Conn., Sept. 19, 1949; s. Abraham Morris and Ruth Ethel (Shifreen) F.; student Calif. Western U., 1965, Shimer Coll., 1965-66, Starr King Sch., Grad. Theol. Union at Berkeley, 1969, summer 1970; A.B., M.A., San Francisco State U., M.A., 1971; Ph.D., U.S. Internat. U., 1976. Dir., Fluxus West, San Francisco, San Diego, Exeter, Eng., 1966-75, chmn. bd., 1975—; gen. mgr. Something Else Press, N.Y.C., Valencia, Berlin, 1971; exec. dir. Inst. for Advanced Studies in Contemporary Art, San Diego, 1975—; cons. Who's Who in Am. Art, Am. Art Directory, Jacques Cattell Press, Xerox/Bowker, Tempe, Ariz., 1973—, San Diego Dance Theatre, Inc., 1974—, La Mamelle, Inc., Contemporary Art Support Network, San Francisco, 1975—, visual arts com. Tenn. Arts Comm., TAC Conf., Jackson, 1975; founder, bd. dirs. Contemporary Art/Southeast, Inc., Atlanta, 1975—; mem. nat. adv. bd. Nat. Council for Arts and Edn., N.Y.C., 1976—; chmn. bd. dirs. Asso. Art Pubs., San Francisco, 1977—; vis. prof., vis. artist, lectr., critic various colls. and univs., including U. Calif., Davis, U. Colo., E.Tenn. State U., U. Nev., Emory U., U. Nebr., Berry Coll., Atlanta Coll. Art, U. Moot., U. Calif. at Riverside, Claremont Grad. Sch., U. Sask., Regina, Colo. Coll., U. S.C., U. Mich., U. Windsor, 1966—; faculty Guild of Tutors, Internat. Coll., Los Angeles, 1977—; one-man shows: Ave. C Fluxus Room, N.Y.C., 1966, Fluxus Center, San Francisco, 1967-69, Oakland (Calif.) Mus., 1972, Vancouver (B.C.) Art Gallery, 1972, Henry Gallery, U. Wash., Seattle, 1972, Sheldon Meml. Art Gallery, U. Nebr., Lincoln, 1973, Daner Galeriet, Copenhagen, 1973, Nelson I.C. Gallery, U. Calif., Davis, 1973, Centro de Arte y Comunicacion, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1974, Ecart Galerie, Geneva, 1974, Phoenix Gallery, San Francisco, 1974, Alta. Coll. Art, Calgary, 1975, Fialal Muvezsek Klubja, Budapest, Hungary, 1975, Galerie St. Petri, Lund, Sweden, 1975, U. Tenn. Art Center, Knoxville, 1975, Union Gallery, Calif. State U. at Los Angeles, 1976, Performing Arts Gallery, U. Nebr. at Omaha, 1976, Galerie Waalkens, Finsterwolde, Netherlands, 1977, Galerie A, Amsterdam, 1978; touring one-man exhbns. through Western Assn. Art Museums, 1973-76; exhibited in group shows: Whitney Mus., N.Y.C., Mus. Modern Art, Paris, Nat. Gallery of Can., Kolnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, Biennial of Paris, Mus. Modern Art, Buenos Aires, Biennial of Venice, Swiss Pavilion, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin, others; represented in permanent collection Smithsonian Instn.; appeared on TV spl. Ken Friedman, Metromedia TV, Vancouver, 1972, Ken Friedman, S.C. Ednl. TV Network and Nat. Endowment for Arts, 1975, Recipient F.G. Fischer award, 1966, Nebr. Council on Arts for Omaha Flow Systems, 1973, Xerox Corp. grant for Omaha Flow Systems, 1973, Gov.'s award State of Idaho, 1975, grant Tenn. Arts Comm. for Sightings Project, 1975, E.Tenn. State U. Found. for vis. prof. in art and art history, 1975, Nat. Endowment for Arts vis. artists and critics program Berry Coll., 1975, Fellow Am. Anthropol. Assn., Western Assn. Art Museums (conf. speaker 1974); mem. Coll. Art Assn. (placement standards and ethics com.), Soc. Anthropology and Sociology of Art (v.p. 1976—), Am. Assn. Museums, Am. Sociol. Assn., Am. Soc. Aesthetics. Author: The Aesthetics, 1972; A Conversation with Arman, 1974; James Edwards, 1976; editor The Promethean, 1967-68; contrib. editor The Context, 1968-69, La Mamelle, 1975—, Nameless Newsprint, 1968-69; guest editor Source, 1971-74; internat. editor Contemporary Art/Southeast, 1975-77; editor Internat. Sources, 1974; illustrator: Thomas OneTwo, 1971; contrib. articles to prof. mags. and jous. Ken Friedman Collection established at Mandeville dept. spl. collections U. Calif. Library, San Diego, 1968. Address: 6361 Elmhurst Dr San Diego CA 92120



Ken Friedman, 1988.  
(Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery,  
foto Wilfrid Rouff).



# Fluxus and Company

Ken Friedman

## 1. The Birth of Fluxus

### 1.1. Ideas, Issues and Paradigms

*The idea of Fluxus was born long before Fluxus the group or Fluxus the movement. René Block coined the term Fluxism to refer to the idea, the core philosophy that animates Fluxus. That idea existed before Fluxus did.*

*The idea of Fluxism has been visible through history. We see it in the ideas of Heraclitus and the Greek philosophers who said you can't cross the same river twice; in Zen; in the paradigms of science that began to emerge late in the last century.*

*Marshall McLuhan once said that artists and creators are antennae for trends in society and in the world. Fluxus is rooted in ideas of global transformation, changes in the world and changes in the ways we see the world. Fluxus grows from a rich foundation, extending to evoke subtle and sometimes complex paradigms.*

*There are parallels between Fluxus and science. New models in mathematics often precede and lead to new applications in physical science. So, too, paradigms in art emerge when the world-view is shifting. Shifts in the vision shape culture, history and science. These are visible in the shifting paradigms of art. The decades in which Fluxus emerged were the decades in which the sciences of trans-disciplinary complexity came into their own.*

*It's clear that Fluxus and intermedia emerged in the era of electronic music and television. (Fluxus artists Wolf Vostell and Nam June Paik created the medium of video art by translating television, communication theory and Zen into physical form.) It's even more significant that Fluxus and intermedia were born in the era of the first computers, the time of computation science, evolutionary psychology, neurosciences and chaos studies. If these haven't yielded obvious art forms in the way electronic processors or video*

*have, it is because the art forms suited to them aren't as simple as video. The paradigms being born are paradigms that will transform the global environment. That is the environment in which Fluxus took shape.*

*The key issues in a society aren't always the issues that attract the most attention. For over a decade, the media have pre-*



(Foto H el ene Levand).

*sented video, electronic mail and video-phones as the coming revolution in communications technology. But the most profound change in communications technology has been none of these: it has been the telefax. Fax is transforming the way we send and receive messages.*

### 1.2. Evolution and Ancestors

*Fluxus was born at a shifting point in world views. The era we in the English-speaking world once called the Elizabethan Age is only now coming to a close. Though we don't yet know its name, a new era is taking shape. Boundary states in ecological systems give rise to interesting life forms. Transition times in history give rise to interesting culture forms. Individuals such as Marcel Duchamp*

*and John Cage are accurately seen as ancestors of Fluxus, but ideas played an even larger role. Russian revolutionary art groups such as LEF were a profound influence on some of us, most significantly George Maciunas. For others, De Stijl and the Bauhaus philosophy were central. The idea that you can be an artist and – at the same time – an industrialist, an architect or a designer is a key to the way we view our work and our role in society. It is as important to work in the factory or the urban landscape as in the museum. It is important to be able to shift positions and to work in both environments.*

*Dada must be mentioned, but Dada was farther from Fluxus in many ways than either De Stijl or Bauhaus. The seeming relationship between Fluxus and Dada is more a matter of appearances than of deep structure. Filliou pointed this out in an important statement written in 1962, in which he states clearly that Fluxus is not Dada or neo-Dada in its intentions. Dada was explosive, irreverent, and made much use of humor, as Fluxus has also done. But Dada was nihilistic, a millenarian movement in modernist terms. Fluxus was constructive. Fluxus was founded on principles of creation, of transformation and its central method sought new ways to build.*

### 1.3. When, How and Who

*If you can give a birth date to the Fluxus group, it would be the year 1962. A number of people in Europe, Japan and the United States had been working in parallel art forms and pursuing many of the same ideas in their work. A Lithuanian-born architect and designer named George Maciunas had tried to present some of them in a gallery, and after the gallery folded, through a magazine named Fluxus. The magazine never took off, but when a festival emerged in Wiesbaden, Germany, featuring the work of many of the artists Maciunas intended to include in the magazine, it was called a Fluxus*



Festival. The name of the festival took hold, and the participants came to be called the Fluxus group.

The Wiesbaden group included Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, George Brecht, Benjamin Patterson, Eric Andersen, Tomas Schmit, Wolf Vostell, Nam June Paik, Emmett Williams, Maciunas himself and several others.

After Wiesbaden, artists who had been working on similar principles came into contact with Maciunas or others in Fluxus. Some of them came to be part of Fluxus, too. Most of them were working on a similar basis, so they joined in Fluxus on the basis of what they had already done.

These artists included Ben Vautier, Giuseppe Chiari, Joseph Beuys, Bengt af Klintberg, Robert Filliou, Takako Saito, Jackson MacLow, La Monte Young and others. Some, like La Monte, had been in touch with George long before Wiesbaden. Others came in later. This group kept growing through the mid-Sixties. Milan Knizak came late in the process, then I arrived in 1966, then Geoff Hendricks some time after me. There were two groups of original Fluxus members, the founders who were at Wiesbaden, and the members who came into Fluxus on the basis of the original work that led the others to welcome them in.

Fluxus had many roots. The most immediate source could be said to have been the courses that John Cage taught at the New School in the late Fifties and early Sixties. Many Fluxus people studied there with Cage. The majority of Fluxus artists and composers hadn't been Cage students, but most of us were influenced in some way by his ideas.

Fluxus grew. A second generation – if you want to call it that – emerged as the Fluxus artists began to influence others through friendship, collaboration or even teaching. Larry Miller studied with Bob Watts at Rutgers, and Jock Reynolds studied with Watts when he taught at the University of California. Jean Dupuy came into Fluxus through his collaboration with George Maciunas. David Mayor was engaged by Mike Weaver to run the Fluxshoe in England after I set that process in motion. John Armleder developed strong contacts with Robert Filliou and Ben Vautier.

Some of these people were more distinguished than those already active in Fluxus. Jean Dupuy was already older than George when they met – and where George was seen as an eccentric outsider

to the art world, Dupuy had been a major figure in the development of the art and technology movement. For the general public, the best known single member of Fluxus was certainly John Lennon, who was world famous long before his involvement with us.

Fluxus has been able to grow because it's had room for dialogue and transformation. It's been able to be born and reborn several times in different ways. The fluid understanding of its own history and meaning, the central insistence on dialogue and social creativity rather than on objects and artifacts have enabled Fluxus to remain alive on the several occasions that Fluxus has been declared dead.



Invito per la mostra di Ken Friedman  
alla Emily Harvey Gallery,  
New York, 1988.

## 2. The Twelve Criteria of Fluxus

### 2.0. Core Issues

There are twelve core issues that can be termed the basic ideas of Fluxus. In 1981, Dick Higgins wrote a list of nine criteria that he suggested as central to Fluxus. He said that a work or a project is Fluxist to the degree that it fulfils a significant number of criteria, and that the more criteria any one piece fills, the more Fluxus in intention and realization it is. I've expanded the list to twelve, and changed the terms, to account more precisely for the nuances of meaning I feel are vital. The

Twelve Criteria of Fluxus are:

- Globalism
- Unity of art and life
- Intermedia
- Experimentalism, research orientation
- Chance
- Playfulness
- Simplicity, parsimony
- Implicativeness
- Exemplativism
- Specificity
- Presence in time
- Musicality

### 2.1. Globalism

Globalism is central to Fluxus. This embraces the idea that we live on a single world, a world in which the boundaries of political states are not identical with the boundaries of nature or of culture. Dick's list used the term internationalism. Dick referred to Fluxus' complete lack of interest in the national origin of ideas or of people, but internationalism can also be a form of competition between nations. War is now unacceptable as a form of national expression. Economic interests on a global scale erase national boundaries, too. The only areas in which nations can push themselves forward as national interest groups with identities defined against the identities of other nations are sports and culture. The international culture festivals are sometimes like soccer championships where culture stars and national politicians push against each other with all the vigor and savagery of simulated warfare. Fluxus encourages dialogue among like minds, regardless of nation. Fluxus welcomes the dialogue of unlike minds when social purposes are in tune. In the Sixties, the concept of internationalism was expressive. The United Nations was young, the cold war was an active conflict, and mass political groups operating as national interest groups seemed to offer a way to establish global dialogue. Today, globalism is a more precise expression. It's not simply that boundaries don't count, but that in the most important issues, there are no boundaries.

### 2.2. Unity of Art and Life

The unity of art and life is central to Fluxism. When Fluxus was established, the conscious goal was to erase the boundaries between art and life. That was the sort of language appropriate to the time of pop art and of happenings. The founding Fluxus circle sought to resolve what was then seen as a dichotomy between art and life. Today, it is clear that the radical



contribution Fluxus made to art was to suggest that there is no boundary to be erased.

Beuys articulated it well in suggesting that everyone is an artist, as problematic as that statement appears to be. Another way to put it is to say that art and life are part of a unified field of reference, a single context. Stating it that way poses problems, too, but the whole purpose of Fluxus is to go where the interesting problems are.

### 2.3. Intermedia

Intermedia is the appropriate vehicle for Fluxism. You can't improve on Dick's original formulation. Dick introduced the term "intermedia" to the modern world in his famous 1966 essay. He established a key concept: an art form appropriate to people who say there can be no artificial boundaries between art and life. If there can't be a boundary between art and life, there certainly cannot be boundaries between art form and art form. For purposes of history, of discussion, of useful distinction, one can refer to separate art forms, but the meaning of intermedia is that our time often calls for art forms that draw on the roots of several media, growing into new hybrids.

One of the games we used to play was inventing new intermedia. Imagine, perhaps, an art form that was comprised 10% of music, 25% of architecture, 12% of drawing, 18% of shoemaking, 30% of painting and 5% of smell. What would it be like? How would it work? How would some of the specific art works appear? How would they function? That's a thought experiment that yields interesting results. The results of games like this are among the most interesting art works around today.

### 2.4. Experimentalism, Research Orientation

Fluxus applied the scientific method to art. Experimentalism, research orientation and iconoclasm were its hallmarks. Experimentalism doesn't merely mean trying new things. It means trying new things and assessing the results. Experiments that yield useful results cease being experiments and become usable tools, like penicillin in medicine or imaginary numbers in mathematics.

The research orientation applies not only to the experimental method, but to the ways in which research is conducted. Most artists, even those who believe themselves experimentalists, understand very little about the ways ideas develop. In

science, the notion of collaboration, of theoreticians, experimenters and researchers working together to build new methods and results, is well established. Fluxus applied this idea to art. Many Fluxus works are the result of numbers of artists active in dialogue. Fluxus artists are not the first to apply this method, but Fluxus is the first art movement to declare this way of working as an entirely appropriate method for use over years of activity rather than as the occasional diversion. Many Fluxworks are still created by single artists, but from the first to the present day, you find Fluxus artists working together on projects where more than one talent can be brought to bear.

Iconoclasm is almost self-evident. When you work in an experimental way in a field as bounded by restrictions and prejudices as art, you've got to be willing to break the rules of cultural tradition.



Friedman a "Milanopoesia", 1989.  
(Foto Giovanni Giovannetti).

### 2.5. Chance

One key aspect of Fluxus experimentation is chance. The methods – and results – of chance occur over and over again in the work of Fluxus artists.

There are several ways of approaching chance. Chance, in the sense of aleatoric or random chance, is a tradition with a legacy going back to Duchamp, to Dada and to Cage. That's been very famous and much has been made of it, perhaps more than necessary, by those who have written about Fluxus. This is understandable, too, in the cultural context in which Fluxus appeared.

The world seemed to have become too routinized, opportunities for individual engagement in the great game of life too limited. Random chance, a way to break

the bonds, took on a powerful attraction. There is also evolutionary chance. In the long run, this plays a much more powerful role than random chance. Evolutionary chance engages a certain element of the random. Genetic changes occur, for example, in a process that is known as random selection. New mutations that offer good options for survival and growth are embodied in evolutionary development.

This has parallels in art, in music, in cultures. Something enters the scene and changes the world-view we previously held. That influence may be initiated in a random way, that is, in an unplanned way, or as the result of signal interference to intended messages, or sudden insight. Any number of possibilities exist. When the chance input is embodied into new form, however, it ceases to be random and becomes evolutionary. That is why chance is closely allied to experimentation in Fluxus. It is related to the ways in which scientific knowledge grows, too.

### 2.6. Playfulness

Playfulness has been part of Fluxus since the beginning. Part of the concept of playfulness has been represented by terms such as jokes, games, puzzles and gags. This aspect of Fluxus has been overemphasized. George Maciunas saw gags as one of the central issues in Fluxus. He was right, but the emphasis he placed on gags, his peculiar vision of Spike Jones as the central figure in the rebirth of art was more his personal view than a vision common to the group.

All of us use humor, but play comprehends more than humor. There is the play of ideas, the playfulness of free experimentation, the playfulness of free association and the play of paradigm shifting that are as common to scientific experiment as to pranks. The big focus on George, his legendary eccentricity and the fact that a major Fluxus collector – Gil Silverman – has oriented his collection around the facts and artificats that George created have put too much stress on the role of the joke in Fluxism.

### 2.7. Simplicity, Parsimony

Simplicity and parsimony refer to the relationship of truth and beauty. Another term for this concept is elegance. In mathematics or science, an elegant idea is that idea which expresses the fullest possible series of meanings in the most concentrated possible statement. That is the idea of Occam's Razor, a philosophical tool



which states that a theory that accounts for all aspects of a phenomenon with the fewest possible terms will be more likely to be correct than a theory that accounts for the same phenomenon using more (or more complex) terms. From this perspective of philosophical modelling, Copernicus' model of the solar system is better than Ptolemy's – must be better – because it accounts for a fuller range of phenomena in fewer terms. Parsimony, the use of frugal, essential means, is related to that concept.

This issue was discussed in Dick's original list as minimalism, but the term minimalism has come to have a precise meaning in the world of art. While some of the Fluxus artists like La Monte Young can certainly be called minimalists, the intention and the meaning of their minimalism is very different than the minimalism associated with the New York art school of that name. I prefer to think of La Monte as parsimonious. His work is a frugal concentration of idea and meaning that fits his long spiritual pilgrimage, closer to Pandit Pran Nath than to Richard Serra. Simplicity of means, perfection of attention are what distinguish this concept in the work of the Fluxus artists.

### 2.8. Implicativeness

Implicativeness means that an ideal Fluxus work implies many more works. This notion is close to and grows out of the notion of elegance and parsimony. Here, too, you see the relationship of Fluxus to experimentalism, and to the scientific method.

### 2.9. Exemplativism

Exemplativism is the principle that Dick outlined in another essay, his Exemplativist Manifesto. Exemplativism is the quality of a work exemplifying the theory and meaning of its construction. While not all Fluxus works are exemplative, there has always been a feeling that those pieces which are exemplative are in some way closer to the ideal than those which are not. You could say, for example, that exemplativism is the distinction between George Brecht's poetic proposals and Ray Johnson's – and probably shows why George is in the Fluxus circle while Ray, as close to Fluxus as he is, has never really been a part.

### 2.10. Specificity

Specificity has to do with the tendency of a work to be specific, self-contained and to embody all its own parts. Most art

works rely on ambiguity, on the leaking away of meanings to accumulate new meanings. When a work has specificity, it loads meaning quite consciously. In a sense, this may seem a contradiction in an art movement that has come to symbolize philosophical ambiguity and radical transformation, but it is a key element in Fluxus.

### 2.11. Presence in Time

Many Fluxus works take place in time. This has sometimes been referred to by the term ephemeral but the terms ephemerality and duration distinguish different qualities of time in Fluxus. It is appropriate that an art movement whose very name goes back to the Greek philosophers of time and the Buddhist analysis of time and existence in human experience should place great emphasis on the element of time in art.

The ephemeral quality is obvious in the



Ken Friedman, *Ritratto di Gianni Sassi*, 1989. (Foto Giovanni Giovannetti).

brief Fluxus performance works, where the term ephemeral is appropriate, and in the production of ephemera, fleeting objects and publications with which Fluxus has always marked itself. But Fluxus works often embody a different sense of duration as: musical compositions lasting days or weeks, performances that take place in segments over decades, even art works that grow and evolve over equally long spans. Time, the great condition of human existence, is a central issue in Fluxus and in the work that artists in the Fluxus circle create.

### 2.12. Musicality

Musicality refers to the fact that many Fluxus works are designed as scores, as works which can be realized by artists other than the creator. While this concept may have been born in the fact that many

Fluxus artists were also composers, it signifies far more. The events, many object instructions, game and puzzle works – even some sculptures and paintings – work this way. This means that you can own a George Brecht by carrying out one of Brecht's scores. If that sounds odd, you might ask if you can experience Mozart simply by listening to an orchestra play one of Mozart's scores. The answer is that you can. Perhaps another orchestra or Mozart himself might have given a better rendition, but it is still Mozart's work. This, too, is the case with a Brecht or a Knizak or a Higgins that is created to be realized from a score.

The issue of musicality has fascinating implications. The mind and intention of the creator are the key element in the work. The issue of the hand is only germane insofar as the skill of rendition affects the work: in some conceptual works, even this is not an issue. Musicality is linked to experimentalism and the scientific method. Experiments must operate in the same manner. Any scientist must be able to reproduce the work of any other scientist for an experiment to remain valid.

As with other issues in Fluxus, this raises interesting problems. Collectors want a work with hand characteristics, so some Fluxus works imply their own invalidity for collectors.

Musicality suggests that the same work may be realized several times, and in each state it may be the same work, even though it is a different realization of the same work. This bothers collectors who think of "vintage" works as works located in a certain, distant era. The concept of "vintage" is useful only when you think of it in the same way you think of wine: 1962 may be a great vintage, then 1966, then it may not be until 1979 or 1985 that another great vintage occurs.

If you think of the composers and conductors who have given us great interpretations of past work, say a complete Beethoven cycle or a series of Brahms concertos, then, a decade or two later, gave a dramatically different, yet equally rich interpretation of the same work, you will see why the concept of vintage can only be appropriate for Fluxus when it is held to mean what it means in wine. You must measure the year by the flavor, not the flavor by the year.

Musicality is a key concept in Fluxus. It has not been given adequate attention by scholars or critics. Musicality means that anyone can play the music. If deep en-



agement with the music, with the spirit of the music is the central focus of this criterion, then musicality may be the key concept in Fluxus. It is central to Fluxus because it embraces so many other issues and concepts: the social radicalism of Maciunas in which the individual artist takes a secondary role to the concept of artistic practice in society, the social activism of Beuys when he declared that we are all artists, the social creativity of Knizak in opening art into society, the radical intellectualism of Higgins and the experimentalism of Flynt. All of these and more appear in the full meaning of musicality.

### 3. Fluxus after Maciunas

#### 3.1. George's Role

Discussions about Fluxus often focus on George Maciunas, and some ask who has continued to carry on in George's role. It isn't possible to continue George's role. George had a unique role, a unique way of doing things, and a unique place in the affections of everyone who knew him. Thinking about George is central to Fluxus, but thinking of him as the central figure in Fluxus is a mistake.

George was Fluxus' editorial and festival organizer and sometimes its chairman. When it became evident, even to George himself, that others had key roles to play if Fluxus was to grow, he loosened his notion of central control dramatically. It became far more important to him to spread Fluxism as a social action than to dictate the artistic terms of every Fluxus artist. That's evident if you see that George considered David Mayor a member of the Fluxcore, even though David was far from orthodox in his artistic choices.

In 1966, George appointed several others as his co-directors – Fluxus South was Ben Vautier in Nice, Fluxus North was Per Kirkeby in København, Fluxus East was Milan Knizak and I was Fluxus West. Some have tried to make a point that "Fluxus East wasn't Fluxus", as though only George was Fluxus. That's not at all the case: George authorized us to speak for Fluxus, to represent Fluxus, to manage publications, to dispense copyright permission, and to act in every respect on Fluxus' behalf.

While you found George repudiating people in the early Sixties, even attempting to expel or purge people from Fluxus, that's not how he was in the late Sixties. It's a disservice to George to present him under the image of a petty (if lovable)

tyrant, a cross between an artistic Stalin and a laughable Breton. This notion repudiates George's depth and capacity as a human being, his ability to find more effective ways of working and to find ways to grow.

George was not a perfect chairman. He was a fabulous organizer, a great systematic thinker, but he was not a leader, not a person comfortable working with people in the million unsystematic ways that people demand to work. That's why he changed his working method by the mid-Sixties and brought others of us in. That, too, is how Fluxus took new forms and grew.

He found that he was comfortable creating systems and trying his systems his way while letting us develop Fluxus our way, though he gave advice and criticism from time to time. That's how Fluxus found its



Ken Friedman a "Milanopoesia", 1989.  
(Foto Giovanni Giovannetti).

feet in England in the Seventies, how new generations of Fluxus activists emerged in the States and in Europe – and that's how they kept the ideas and action alive, so that Fluxus today can celebrate thirty years of on-going activity.

The first Fluxus disappeared a long time ago. It replaced itself with the many forms of Fluxus that came after.

As these things took on their own life, it was no longer realistic to imagine a Fluxus controlled by one man. Fluxus was co-created by George with other founders, Dick, Alison, Ben Patterson, Emmett, and more. George was the focus of the multiple publishing energy, and a key figure in many ways, but he wasn't alone. Some say, in fact, that even though the

Something Else Press wasn't part of Fluxus, it was Something Else Press that played the central publishing role for Fluxus. It's certainly true that when the Press published Fluxus projects – which it did quite often – they went much further, through the books and newsletters, than George's multiples did.

No one took over George's role when he died. No one needed to do so. We each had roles of our own.

#### 3.2. Fluxus Today

Fluxus today isn't the Fluxus that was sometimes an organized group, sometimes a movement. Fluxus, the circle of friends, is alive. Fluxism, the way of thinking and working is alive.

What was unique about Fluxus as a movement was that we named ourselves. We found and kept our own name. Art critics named Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism and Conceptualism. Fluxus named Fluxus. But what made it Fluxus was that it wasn't confined to art: perhaps that saved us from being named by others. While it locked us out of the art market on many occasions, it often made it possible for us to make interesting art.

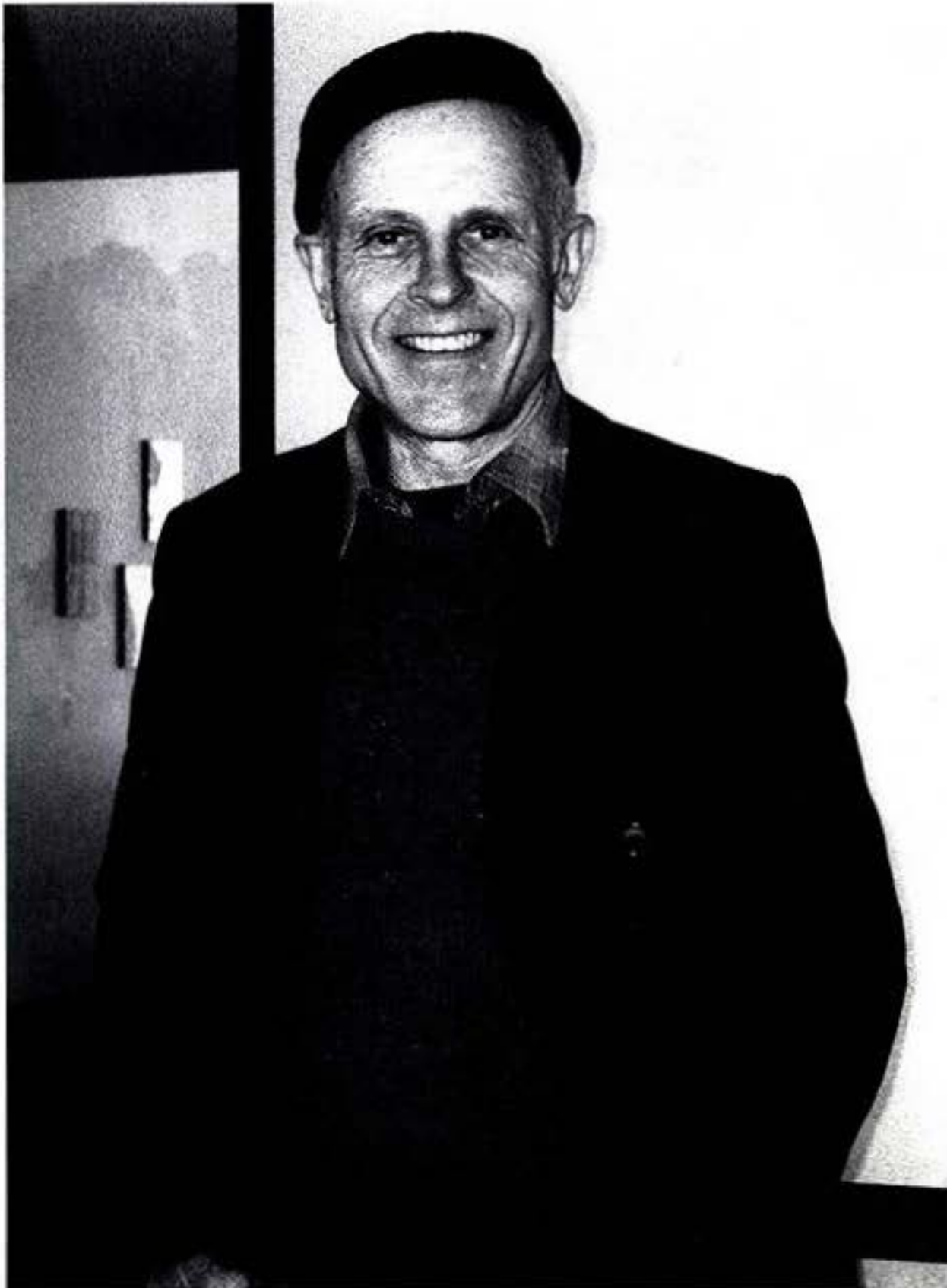
In the decade since George died, interest in Fluxus has gone through two, maybe three cycles of growth and neglect. We're still here, still doing what we want to do, and still, after all these years, coming together from time to time under the rubric of Fluxus. Since this is exactly what happened during all the years that George was alive, it's clear that Fluxus didn't die with George.

Our thirtieth anniversary is coming up fast. Fluxus will have been active for as many years without George as with him. It's time to see Fluxus as something that also exists without George.

It's a tribute to George and to the circle of visionaries who founded Fluxus that it did take on a life of its own. George's death didn't take Dick or Alison or Emmett from the scene, Ben Patterson is active again after many years, Henry Flynt is exhibiting for the first time in his life, and Milan Knizak is emerging as one of the greatest artists in the world. The dialogue that was established in Fluxus has also taken on a life of its own. This would have pleased George much more than the idea that everything collapsed when he died. A Fluxus vital enough to continue in its own right was exactly what George intended, and if it didn't happen in exactly the ways he planned, it has happened.



# Jean Dupuy



LEO  
 ON THE ONE HAND, A CHOICE OF WORDS REPRESENTING COLORS  
 THEY SERVE TO SOME EXTENT AS THE ARTIST'S PALETTE.  
 ON THE OTHER HAND, THE TEXT → PORTRAITS OF LÉON (YOUTH,  
 ADULT, OLD MAN) AND DESCRIPTIONS OF OBJECTS WHICH HE  
 HAS CREATED.  
 EACH PIECE (THEY ARE 79) IS THIS MADE UP OF A PALETTE &  
 A TEXT.  
 THE PICTURE IS WRITTEN USING THE LETTERS FROM THE LETTER  
 (AND VICE VERSA), SO MAKING UP AN ANAGRAM.  
 MOREOVER, THE WORDS FROM THE PALETTE, PRINTED IN THE COLORS  
 THEY REPRESENT, GIVE THE TEXT ITS COLORS.  
 THEY ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO PERFECT THESE ANAGRAMS:  
 FIRST, FROM #1 TO #6, AN EMPIRICAL METHOD WHICH  
 ACCOUNTS FOR THE INQUIETIES IN THE TEXTS.  
 THEN, A MORE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH, FROM #5 TO #13.  
 THE TEXTS ARE BETTER CONTROLLED BUT THEY ARE OFTEN  
 CROWNED BY ABSURD TITLES.  
 FINALLY, A METHOD WHICH ALLOWS TO REPLACE THE ABSURD  
 TITLES BY THE NOTES OF THE MUSICAL SCALE, FROM #14 TO #79

NOTES - 1 :  
 THE NOTES ARE WRITTEN BY FOLLOWING SYSTEMATICALLY THE ORDER  
 OF THE SCALE → C D E F G A B C C B A G F E D C  
 THEY ARE READ AS THEY SOUND, ONE AFTER ANOTHER  
 (AS VOWEL OR CONSONANT)

THEY ARE ALSO TAKEN PHONETICALLY TO THE LETTER.  
 EXAMPLE:  
 IN THE ANAGRAM # 62, WRITTEN IN 2 LANGUAGES, THE  
 ENGLISH NOTES \* A G C \* GIVE, PHONETICALLY TRANSLATED INTO  
 FRENCH → "AH, J'ESSAYE" ("O! I'M TRYING") - IN ADDITION,  
 THEY ACCORDINGLY REFLECT THE PALINDROMIC WORDS OF THE  
 TEXT - A COINCIDENCE

C O C O A C O C O A E G G E G G T H E T H E  
 O H ! C E T E G O O ! G E T E C H O  
 A G C A G C

NOTES - 2 :  
 THE WORDS OF THE PALETTE ARE NOT CHOSEN ACCORDING TO THE  
 COLORS THEY REPRESENT BUT TO THE LETTERS THEY ARE  
 COMPOSED OF.

NOTES - 3 :  
 LEO'S STORY ENDS WITH ANAGRAM # 79. AT THIS POINT,  
 FROM # 80 TO # 112, THERE IS A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE  
 ANAGRAMS → THE COLOR PALETTE DISAPPEARS AND IS  
 REPLACED BY A TEXT - THEREFORE, FROM NOW ON, IN  
 PARTS 2 & 3, THE ANAGRAMS CONSIST OF 2 TEXTS  
 FACING EACH OTHER.

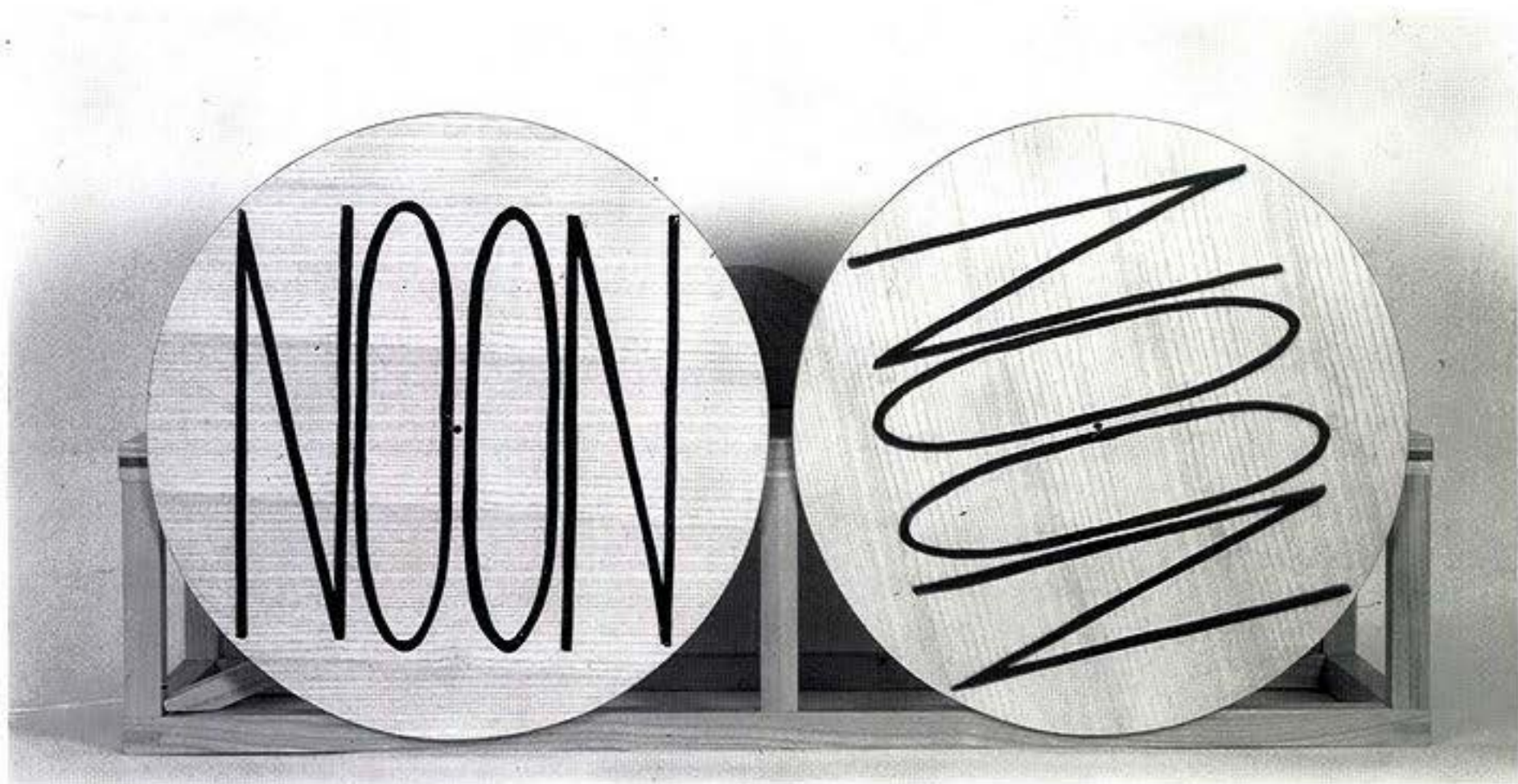
Jean Dupuy, 1988. (Courtesy Emily  
 Harvey Gallery, foto Wilfrid Rouff).





Jean Dupuy, *Ear*, 1972.





Jean Dupuy, *Noon*, 1981-90, e *The Heir*, 1990. (Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).



# Albert M. Fine

## \* A Brief Backwards Glance \*

I was born, as Mr. Aaron Copland might say, in Boston, Mass., 1932, U.S.A., Planet Earth; unconscious and oblivious to all my previous lives.

Nice normal lower-middle class criminal pervert maggott parents. They owned the world, and were nice about it. I had to become a musician. My criminal pervert mother went around telling everybody I was a ~~xxxxx~~ piano.

Grade School; I was to grow up into a piano. Special maggott pretentions.

Bedr: clean sheets only. (no sex).

One year trailer trip age nine; with criminal pervert parents. sleep alone.

High School; special maggott pretentions continued; clarinet added to piano; My criminal pervert parents told everybody I was a clarinet, a piano, a piano-clarinet, or a clarinet-piano.

Interlochen Music Camp; ages 16 and 17. How to do blow jobs in the mens room, with reciprocation. 1946 Atom-Bombs.

Clarinet-piano to France music school, age 18. Nice Nadia Boulanger; but not educated enough to, to, not, no, never own a chateau.

Juilliard---

Jokes in the cafeteria --- clarinet piano confused --- too many maggotts; Criminal Perverts own the world.

Confusion joins the Army--- ; suck-suck on the side only--- no sex, no house, just clarinet;

3 years later, back to ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Criminal Pervert Juilliard--- six years reading scores, books, and listening to Criminal Maggott Pervert Fuke run the Universe. Criminal Maggott Masters Degree, In Musical Orchestral Conducting Perversion 1959.

Life in Criminal Maggott Atom-Bomb Pervert Parasite World confusing.

Six years Ananda Ashram, with Criminal Pervert Maggott Guru--- no talk, give up blow jobs--- no more sex, life vegetarian diet vegetable. Nut-House three times from starvation, poison, and Freak-Maggott Mentality, so Criminal Pervert Maggotts can own the world for make more atom-bomb figshit.

No house, no car.  
Maggott Fuke, all over planet Earth.  
Plenty Rat-Shit.

No more clarinet-piano, piano-clarinet.  
Say art--- Criminal Maggott art-shit Fuke say say art?

1966---  
No-frame masterpieces.  
Just Maggott Rat-Shit Atom-Bomb Fuke, Maggotts own art-gallery--- Maggotts own museums. Plenty Rat-Shit money make Maggott Atom-Bomb Bank.

1973, N.Y.C.

a.m. fine banned from N.Y. Art Galleries because Math Lecture correcting Criminal Pervert Guru Criminal Parasite Einstein ~~XXXX~~ Atom-Bomb Maggott Arithmetic not appreciated by Atom-Bomb Profit Maggott Fuke Art Gallery Farts.

Rat-shit apt. Atomic-Pollution Watergate water supply.  
Rat-shit Maggotts very clever. Rat-shit apt. ~~XXXXXX~~

1974

Remember maybe past lives Maggott Fuke Criminal Parasite  
Maggott Rat Shit owe me too much more from past.  
No house, no car, no travel, no museum, no frame,  
no books, no tool, no sex.  
Rat-Shit Maggott Atom-Bomb Pervert Fuke all over  
everywhere.

Too much masterpiece by a.m. fine.

Leave Rat-Shit Apt., N.Y.C.--- walk to Maine--- no house, no car, no tool, no sex, no thank you, no book, no Thank You, no frame, plenty ratshit rooms, no nothing. Nothing but Turkey-Shit Parasite Maggott Mouth Fuke.

Rat-Shit Maggott Shit-Mouth Fuke own Planet Earth  
Atom-Bomb Plague-Shit Criminal Crapshit Parasite Real ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~  
Shit-mouth good. Merry Christmas--- Hello--- too much masterpiece,  
no frame New Years. How Are You?

Criminal Pervert Shit Mouth Rat-Shit Maggot Fuke Parasite  
Plague-Shit Maggott Parasite Fuke--- Shit Maggott Atom-Bomb Crap?

P.S. Please bear in mind with the foregoing "backwards glance", that my present body has produced several musical masterpieces, thousands of visual masterpieces, (most of them on post-cards going on the black-market for upwards of 8 or 10 million dollars apiece--- (now ten to fifteen, I'm told)).

That I have given poetry readings, math lectures, done experimental theatre, had several major one-man art shows; lived in Rat-Shit environments without proper food-, money, or ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ tools for the vast majority of my life; ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ all of it, alone.

And that mentally, I have accomplished, in my present body, at least as much or more than my greatest living equal, of

Cosmic Zen Honesty meditation in my queer little body.

P.P.S. I am Still without decent income, or environment, in a generally Rat-Shit Criminal Pervert Maggott Fuke Mentality Criminally Insane Atom-Bomb Parasite World at this time.

Signed:

(a.m. fine) ~~(M)~~

documented by:  
First Three-Tenths Percent First-  
Majority Cosmic-Elder Singles Only;  
Planet Earth and Related Solar- System(s). ~~((M))~~

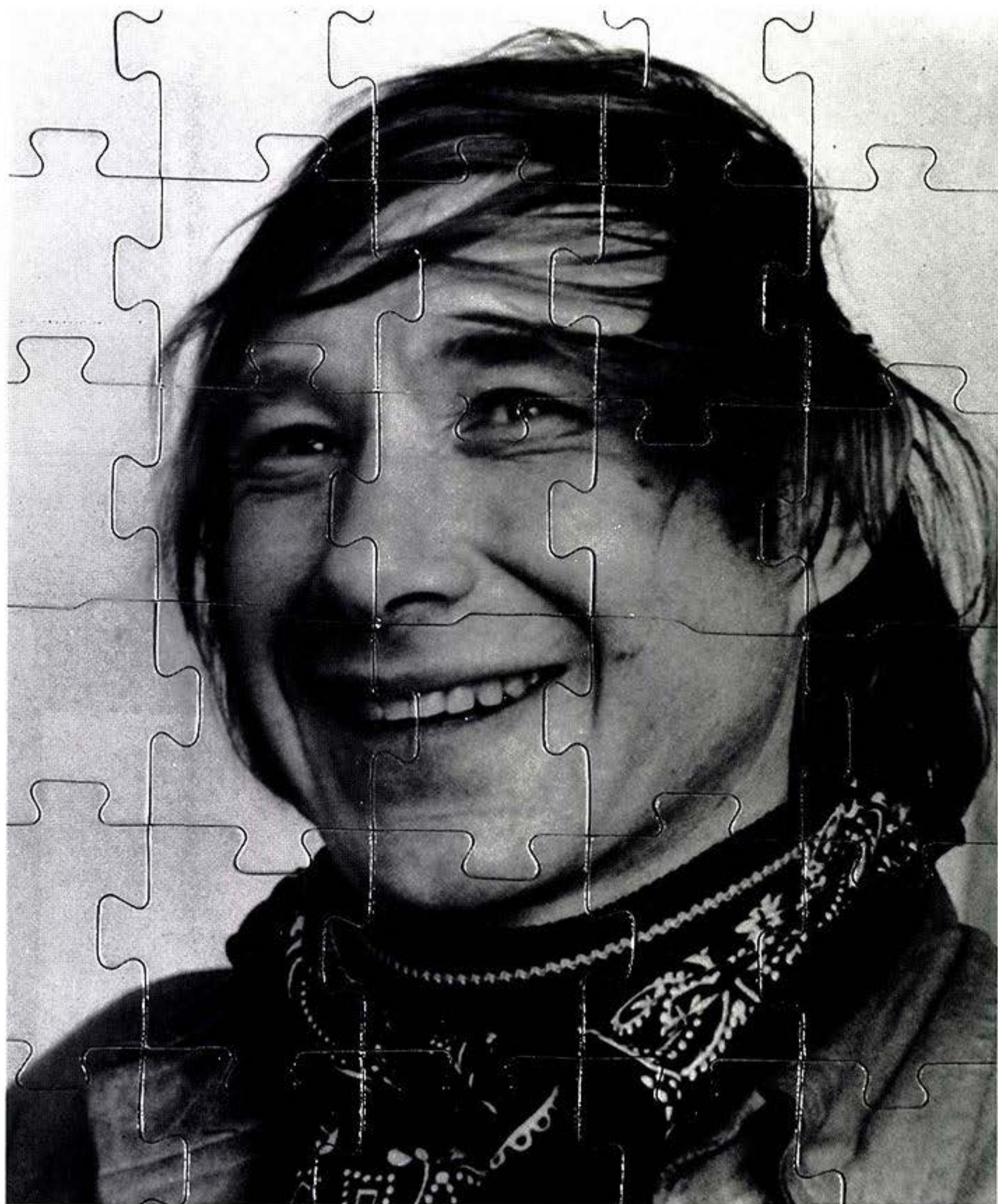
~~((M))~~

Boston,  
Auburndale  
Cambridge  
Somerville  
Mass., U.S.A.,  
Planet Earth.

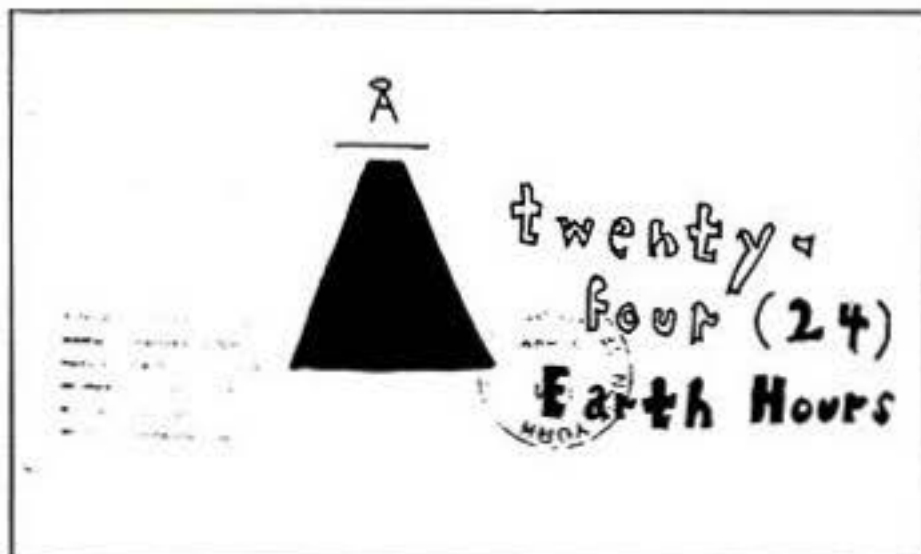
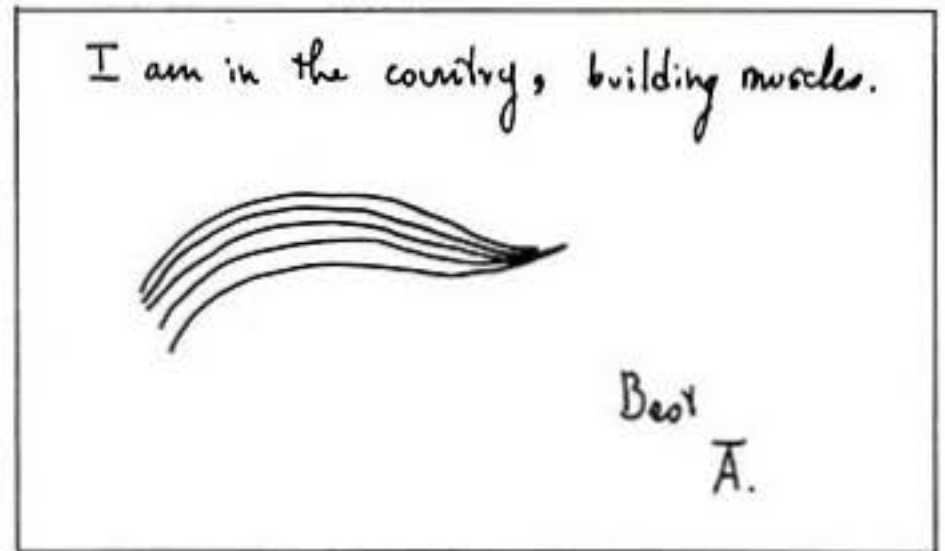
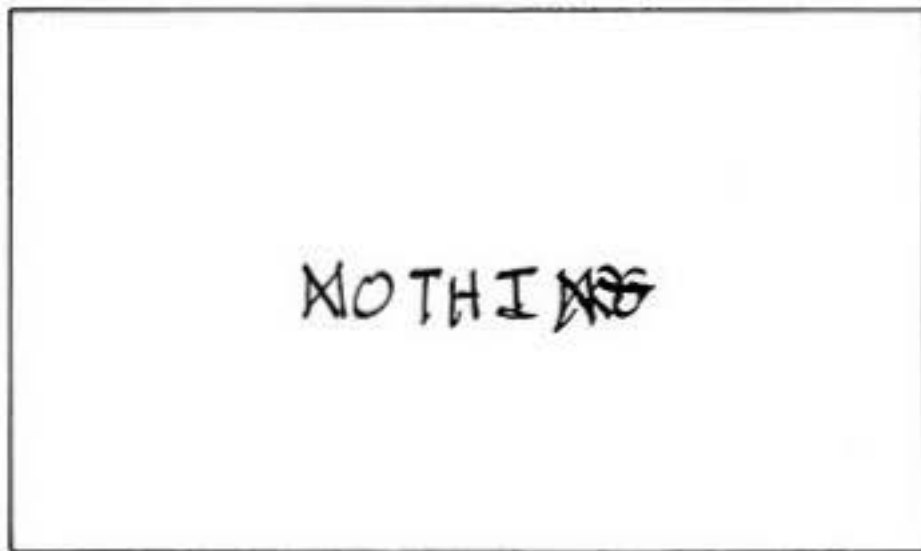
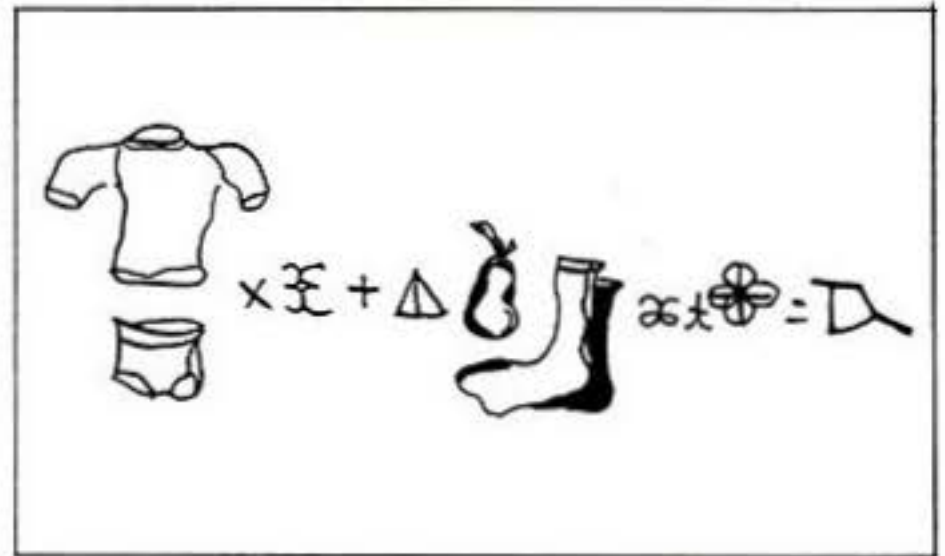
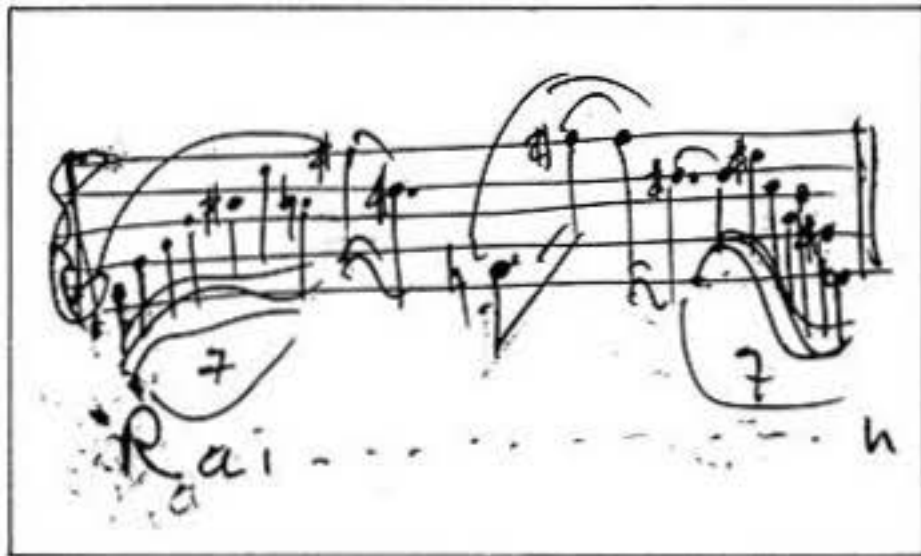
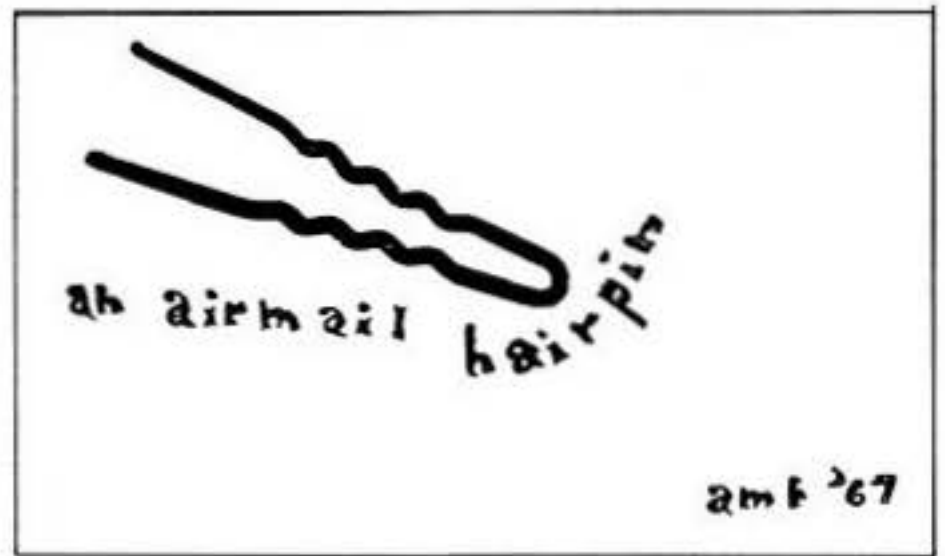
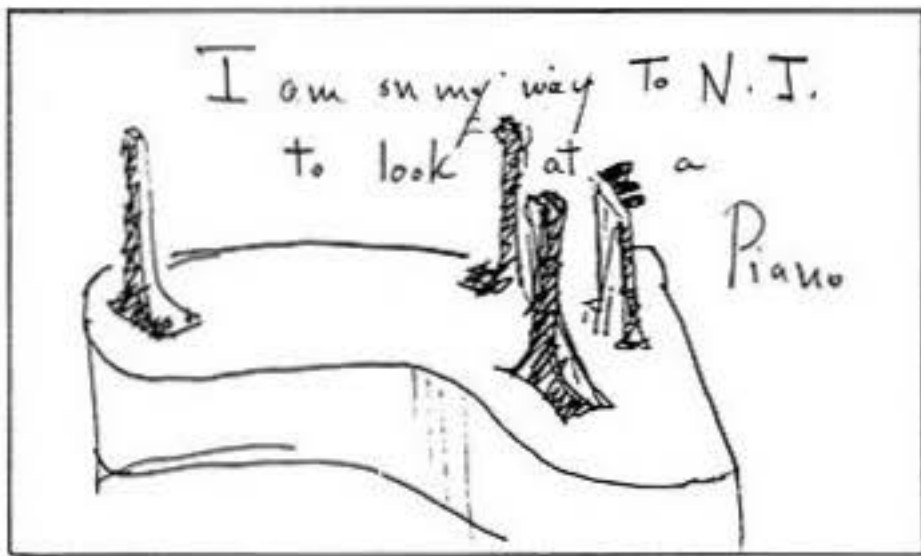
(typed---26 Oct., '78)  
(more or less written  
18 May, '78.)

Alla pagina seguente: Albert M. Fine.  
(Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery).







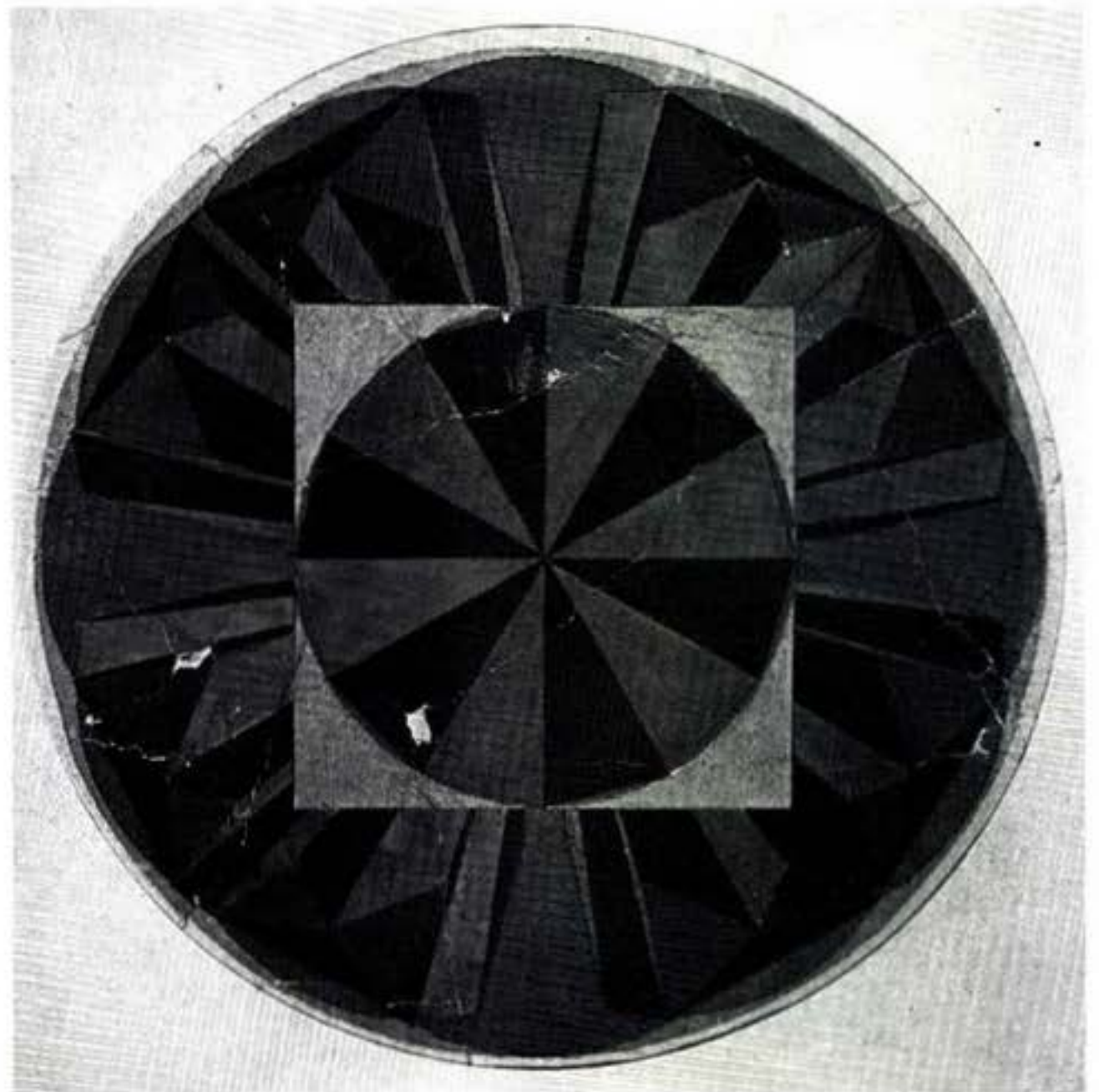
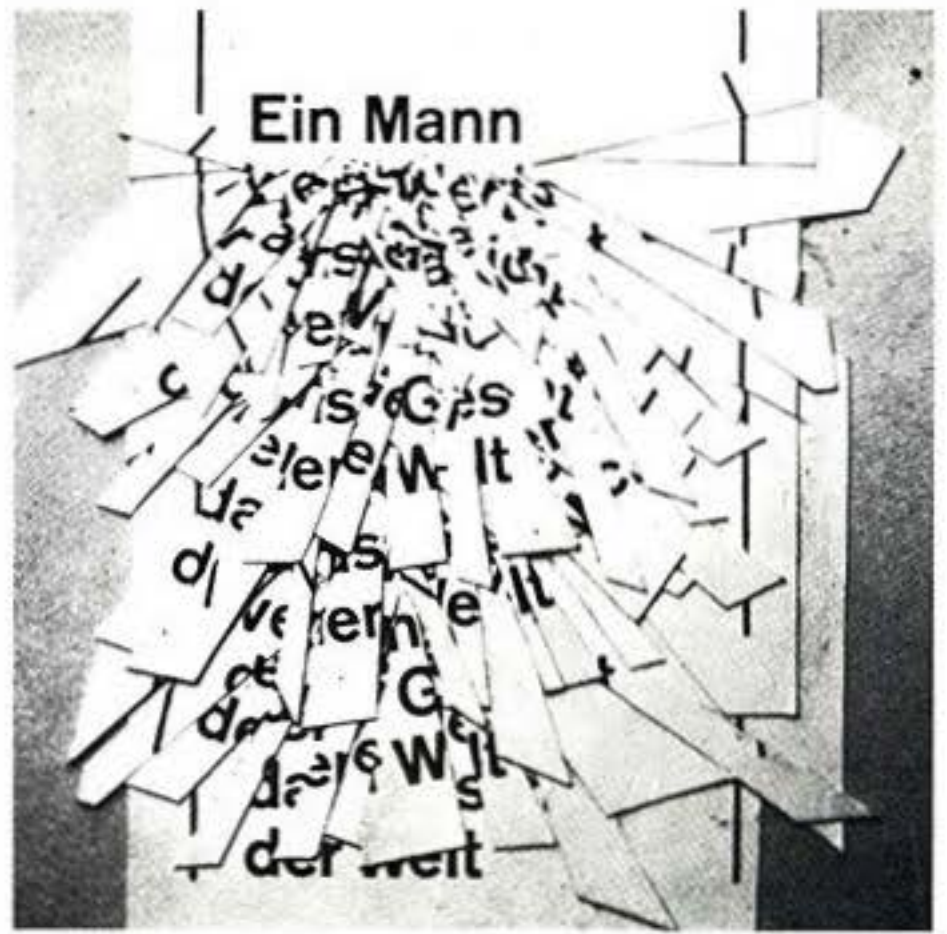




# Ludwig Gosewitz

kroch angstvoll in sich zusammen. Eravhsge hnden, n...  
 Gedanken hetzten durch Freddyen .Paris Junkern...  
 Kopf. Er biß sich auf die Lippen. Scbir\* end gel...  
 ich bloß die anderen ScheinElle\*. Ih gestiege...  
 stieg abschießen könnte. Aber die großen Foder in...  
 hnanu sie frische Gegenrechnu in- Ichritte er eigend...  
 kähete sie können, wenn sie ppvnen ihren rstadt...  
 ignnlii Fe an den Pfahl binden rigmidnd .Fianc alle L...  
 ardo. So... sei ensatzung n feindl...  
 eruf u... blickte er sich im Zimmer um Chris d flug vo...  
 unerlaubt inter Raumuzentschn...  
 ann klar Hauptmd...  
 der wie schaugerr. Seine Fic...  
 bei wi... r. s Treppen...  
 l'nt ka keine Witzel\* Das ste die...  
 nod Bes: .Ich verhafte ank...  
 Vie enn al'olaz. war... ar... aus...  
 odehätt... durch eins der anderen...  
 einen leute in r, aber kein Selbst...  
 mölan haben se um Verzeihung...  
 die übtun Funk rtwaffe braucht gu...  
 Solrleun. Spiro s...  
 aufn Kopf, Juuf der Stirn des Ma...  
 jorke ren. Zu deile Falte. „Das wir...  
 Sch Stee her, holt.“  
 ebejem Rasenwurf der Feighe...  
 vorlichmausbricht, hützen ein paar Ab...  
 schnit ). Fäusten. eine... unmaßnehlch...  
 Kehrschlich heisek. Wieder im Tief...  
 flur... selbst im...  
 sich in d irant „Royal-Passy“...  
 geleiten hnrict... eine Pressekon...  
 foran Psitzt rücktenliegt die...  
 dann Sp. das Gott... leh Haupt POLO...  
 wieder Aber teihren l'bei...

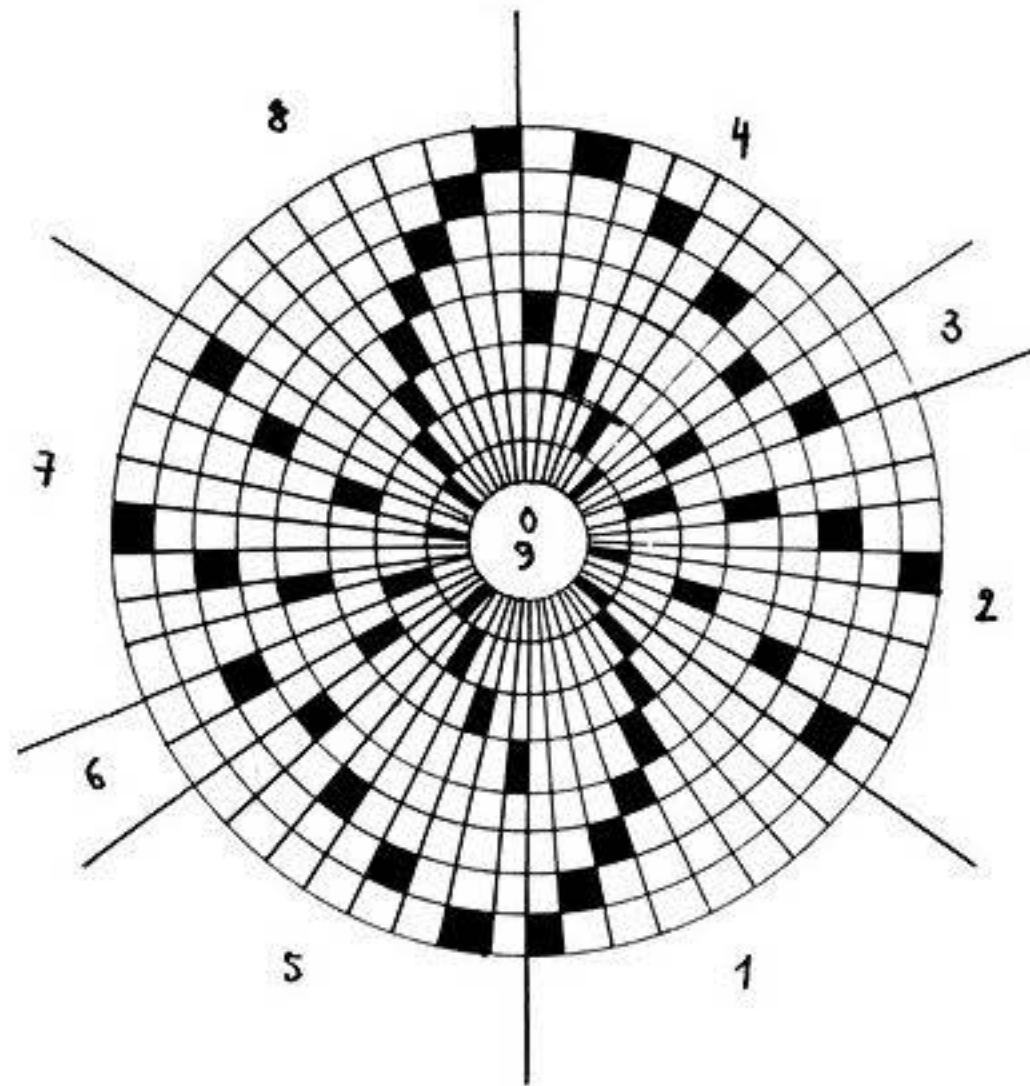




Ludwig Gosewitz, *Nenen*, 1962;  
*Ein Mann*, 1963;  
*Konstruktion des Kristalls (Urmutter)*, 1968.

Alla pagina seguente:  
 Ludwig Gosewitz, *Quersummenrhythmik  
 beim Zusammenzählen*, 1968.





9	9	9	9		9		9	9	9
9	1	1			1	1		1	19
9	2	2			2	2			229
9	3	3	3	3				3	39
9	4	4		4					449
9	5	5			5	5		5	59
9	6	6			6	6			669
9	7	7		7		7		7	79
9	8	8		8			8		889

Übersümmenrhythmus beim  
Zusammenzählen



# Geoffrey Hendricks

What is relevant for me in Art isn't objects, but what hovers in a metaphysical space somewhere between the artist and the object he is grappling with. I find art where I least expect it. What I see in galleries and museums, often comes across to me as being about art, trying to be art, but isn't.

At my *Dream Event*, Billy Apple asked some people to be silent. I liked what he did, not because of what he said, but

because of the static of the situation in counterpoint to my silence. Perhaps that static is art, or the space between that static and my silence.

The static becomes part of the work. Danger, thin ice, the unknown, discovery, a situation, context, are words that hover around what I think is relevant in art.

Focus might be a good word, and corner-turning another.

Art is about getting deep, deep into your personal self, working, struggling (but all of this is not art), and then suddenly, you have left yourself for something universal.

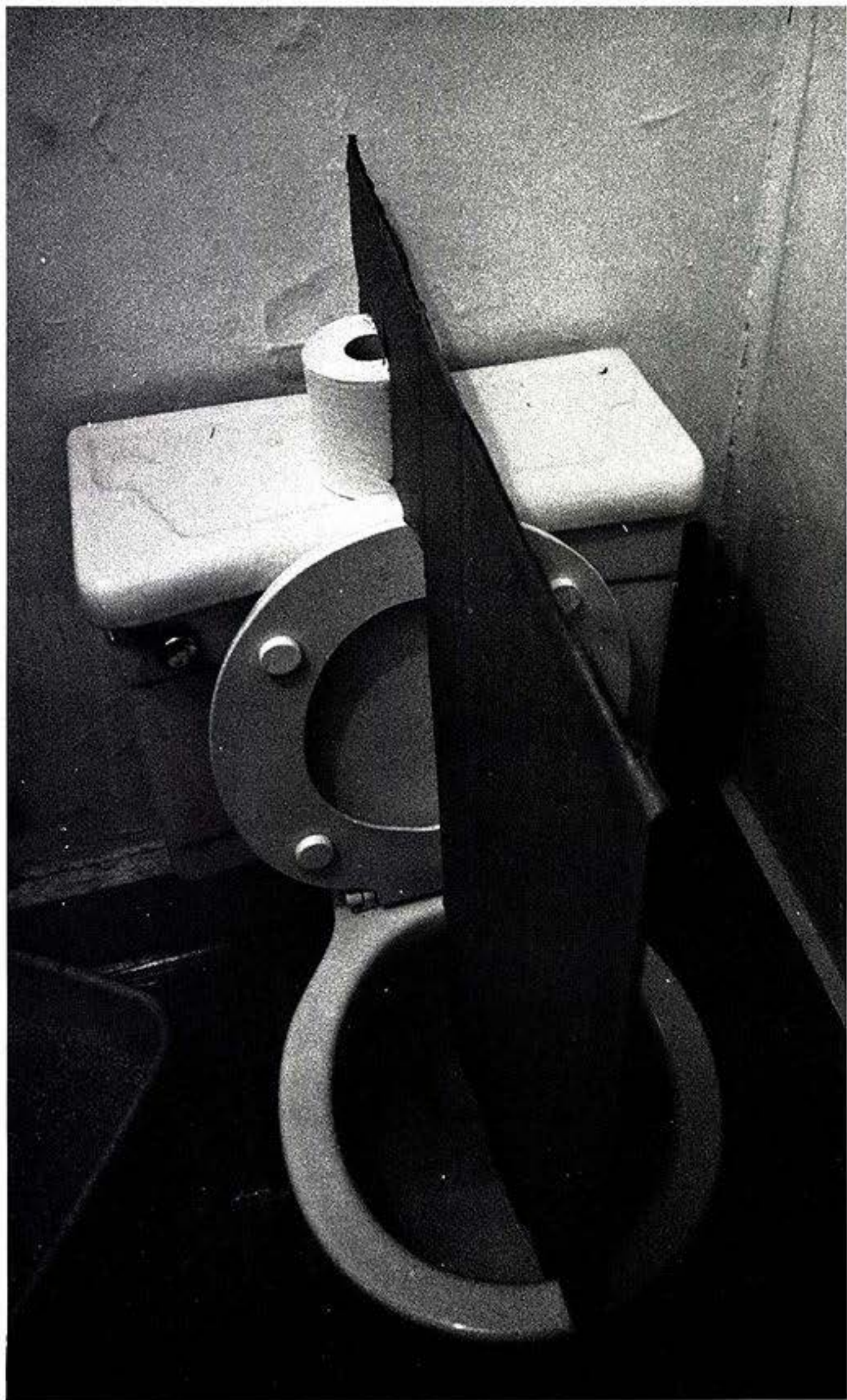
Art is that state-self-situation going from you to the other.

New York City, New Year's Day 1972



Geoffrey Hendricks, *Dream event*, New York, 3-5 dicembre 1971.





Geoffrey Hendricks, Bici Forbes  
e George Maciunas,  
*Flux Divorce, Toilet Divided*,  
New York, 24 giugno 1971.  
(Foto Peter Moore).





Geoffrey Hendricks, *Sky Laundry*, 1965.



Geoffrey Hendricks, *Sky Boots*, 1965.

Geoffrey Hendricks, *Sky Chair*, 1966.



Geoffrey Hendricks, *Sky Window*, 1967-68.





# Davi Det Hompson



*Body Assemblage, 1966.*



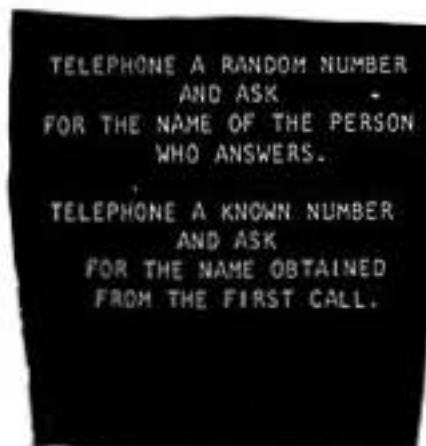
*Mount Royal Studium Gallery,  
Baltimore, 1968.*



*Calculations, 1970.*



*Calculations, 1970.*



*Lesson, 1969.*



*Lesson, 1969.*



ONE  
TWO  
MANY

*Olympia!*, 1972.

ANDY  
AND  
AN  
A

*Olympia!*, 1972.

HEAR  
A LARGE ROOM

HEAR  
A SMALL ROOM

*There's Music in My Soles!*, 1972.

PLUG  
SINK  
NAIL

*Notebook I*, 1970.

SIXTY TWO  
AND SIXTY  
TWO AND  
SIXTY TWO  
IS ONE  
HUNDRED  
EIGHTY SIX

*Calculations*, 1970.

A  
CHISEL  
A  
SAW  
AND  
A  
RAZOR BLADE

*Olympia!*, 1972.

LIE DOWN  
JUMP UP  
LISTEN  
TO YOUR EARS

*There's Music in My Soles!*, 1972.

FOUR TIMES  
TWENTY ONE  
MINUS ONE  
IS EIGHTY  
THREE.

*Calculations*, 1970.

A  
YELLOW CAB  
UNDER A  
RED FLAG  
OVER A  
BLUE PLATE

*Olympia!*, 1972.

MY PANTS  
ARE FALLING  
DOWN  
WE  
SERVE  
HOMEMADE  
PIE.

*Letter to Dick Higgins*, 1972.

FIFTY THREE  
TAKE AWAY  
FOURTEEN IS  
THIRTY NINE

*Calculations*, 1970.

PLACE A WET  
BAR OF SOAP  
IN THE CENTER  
OF A ROOM

LISTEN  
FOR SOMEONE  
TO FALL

*There's Music in My Soles!*, 1972.

TWO HUNDRED  
AND FOUR  
DIVIDED BY  
THREE IS  
SIXTY EIGHT

*Calculations*, 1970.

GIGGLE BZZZZZZZ  
OH! A DEEP BREATH  
UH, HUH AHHHHHH  
TWO NOTES WHISTLED ONE NOTE WHISTLED  
SSSSSSSS SNIFFLE  
COUGH COUGH  
DEEP BREATH GIGGLE  
BUZZZZZZZZ TWO NOTES WHISTLED  
SNIFFLE OH!  
UH, HUH COUGH  
ONE NOTE WHISTLED SSSSSSSSS  
COUGH AHHHHHH

*There's Music in My Soles!*, 1972.

PLACE A SINGLE  
CRACKER  
IN THE CENTER  
OF A ROOM.

LISTEN  
FOR SOMEONE  
TO STEP  
ON IT.

*There's Music in My Soles!*, 1972.

C  
ART

A SELECTION OF FLUXINGS  
1966-1973

BY  
DAVID HOMPSON  
RICHMOND VIRGINIA  
1990



# Alice Hutchins

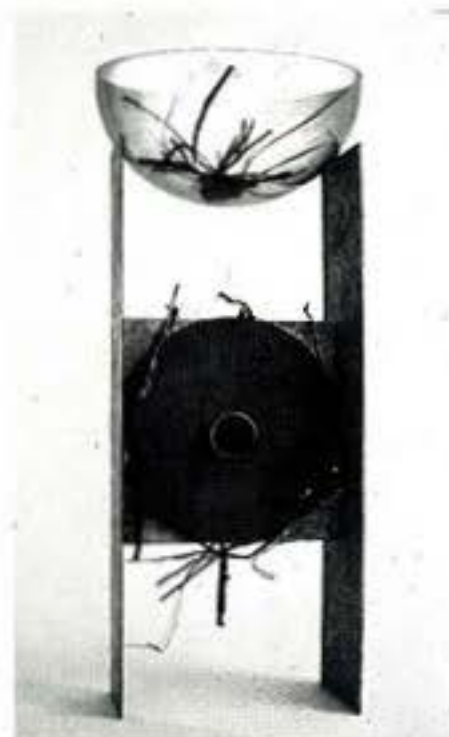


## *Some History*

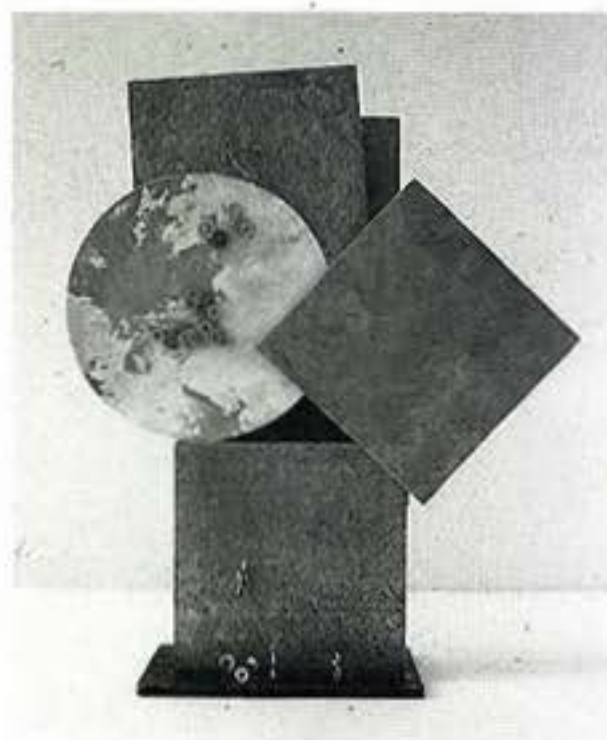
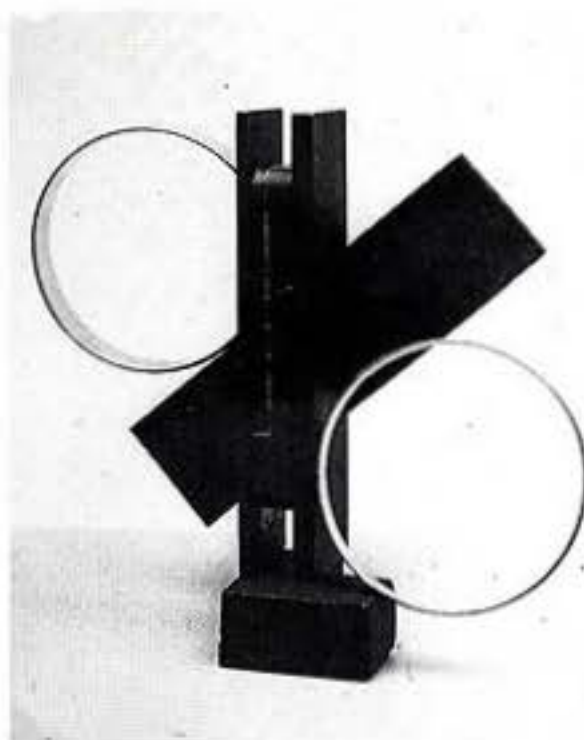
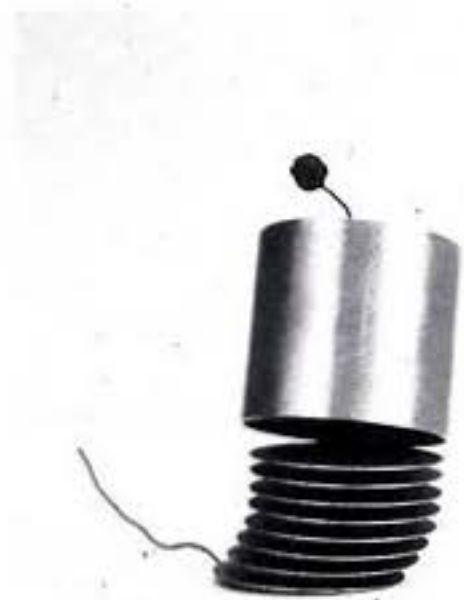
These magnetic pieces belong to a body of work that I began in Paris during the Sixties. I called them Play-Things. I wanted to do a work that could be easily understood and enjoyed by the general public. The earliest works were small magnets and pieces of hardware purchased at a nearby store and placed in a plastic box. People could remove the contents and play with the material, make an object if they wished. It was easy and fun. I showed them to George Maciunas in 1967 when I was working in New York City. He liked them and suggested doing a Jewelry Fluxkit with some of the materials that I had found on Canal Street. This he did in 1969. My meeting with George Maciunas was the beginning of my association with Fluxus. However, in Europe I had been acquainted with Fluxus artists for some time.

*Alice Hutchins  
with Circle and Square, 1982.*

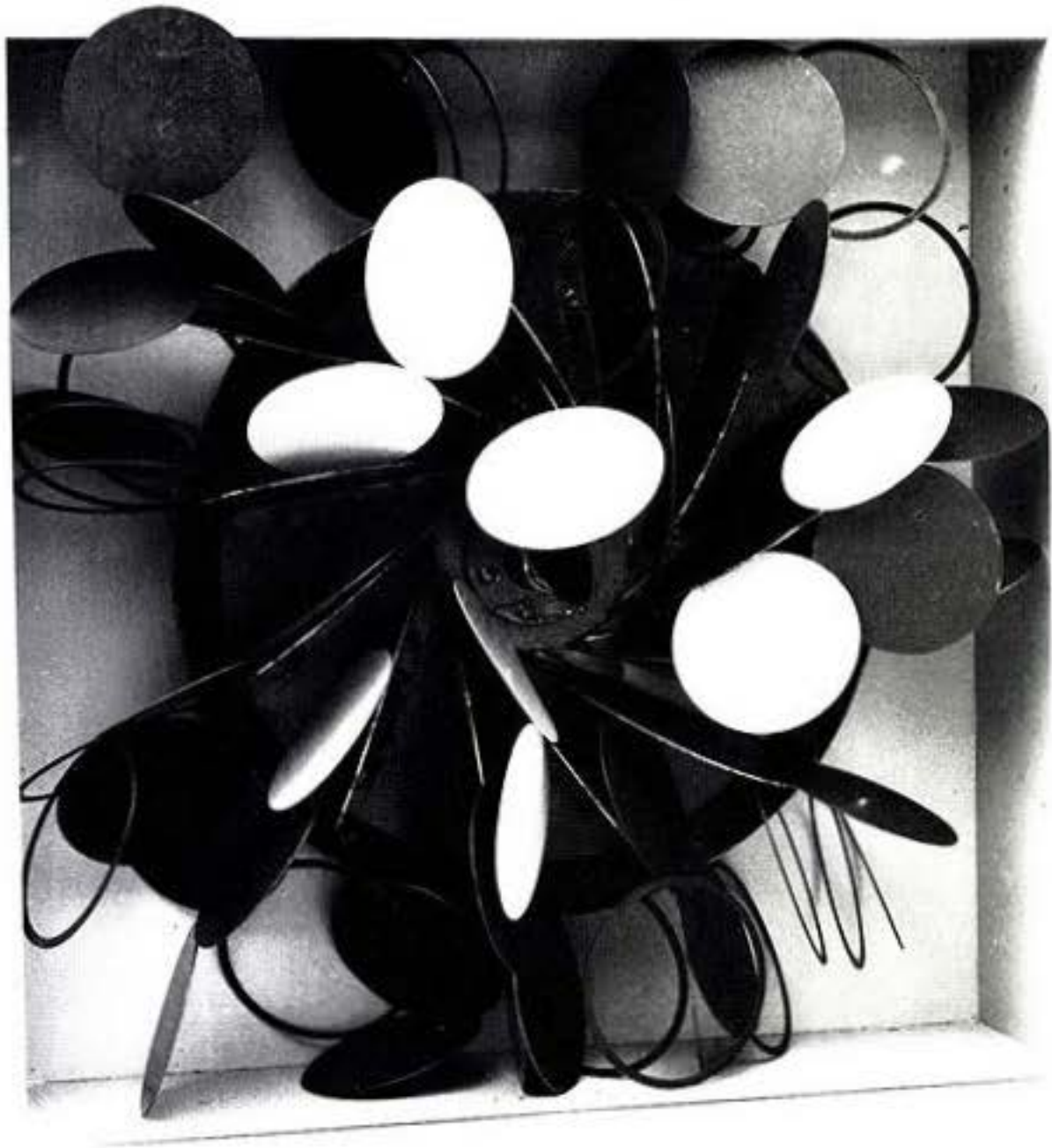




Dall'alto, da sinistra: Alice Hutchins,  
*Untitled*, 1966 (foto Charles Nes);  
*Untitled*, 1967 (foto Sanderson);  
*Flash*, 1970 (foto Agraci);  
*Untitled*, 1988 (foto Charles Nes);  
*Play-Thing*, 1968 (foto Peter Moore);  
*Untitled*, 1968 (foto L'Atelier Photo);  
*Untitled*, 1973 (foto Charles Nes);  
*Night*, 1976 (foto Morain);  
*Untitled*, 1988 (foto Charles Nes).







Alice Hutchins, *Fan*, 1974.



# La Monte Young Marian Zazeela



La Monte Young e Marian Zazeela, 1964.  
(Foto George Maciunas).

*Sound and Light Works*  
Collected Notes Spring 1990  
Music and Light Box (1967-68)

The *Music and Light Box* is a collaborative work inspired in part by the concept of the traditional music box playing a composed work. Plans for a projected series of music and light sculptures were drafted in 1964, and a commission by Betty Freeman, the renowned *Music People* photographer, collector and patron of the arts, made possible the construction of the first box in December 1967 - January 1968. Our collaborations in sound and light ultimately took different forms, however, and this box was our only example of a self-contained work in these media until 1989 when Marcel



Fleiss commissioned the Sound & Light Sculpture, *Sound / With / In*.

The sculpture, which measures 24" (height) x 16" (width) x 16" (depth), is constructed of plexiglas, litho film, painted acetate, an ultraviolet lighting system, electronic circuitry and audio speakers mounted on a wooden base.

The sound circuitry of the work generates a pair of sine waves in which the frequency and amplitude of each sine wave is locked to the corresponding component of the other, and demonstrates the frequency ratio standard 64:63, and the inverse amplitude ratio standard 63:64. The two frequencies were conceived in relation to the 60 Hz American continent AC power line frequency to which they form the ratios 64:4 and 63:4, where the denominators are equal to 60 Hz and the numerators are equal to 960 Hz and 945 Hz, respectively. The two sine waves are derived as phase-locked ratios from a highly stable crystal oscillator which allows the sculpture to function as a reference for the frequencies 960 Hz and 945 Hz.

The light component of the work utilizes the core design element of Zazeela's calligraphic modular slide projection series, *Ornamental Lightyears Tracery*, from which variations were produced photographically and individually altered to create the four different side border motifs and the pattern on the top panel of the sculpture. The ultraviolet light system projects the design elements filtered through a two-color, five-sided, ornamented plexiglas cube.

The frequency ratio 64:63 was selected from Categories A1, B1, X = 5 of Young's unpublished theory work "The Two Systems of Eleven Categories 1:07:40 AM 3 X 67-ca. 6:00 PM 7 VII 75" first revision of "2-3 PM 12 XI 66-3:43 AM 28 XII 66 for John Cage" from *Vertical Hearing or Hearing in the Present Tense*. The sculpture produces a continuous, periodic, composite sound waveform environment derived from the specified ratios which, in combination with the pink and green light design, is a performance of a section of our music and light composition *Map of 49's Dream The Two Systems of Eleven Sets of Galactic Intervals Ornamental Lightyears Tracery* from *The Tortoise, His Dreams and Journeys*.

The *Music and Light Box* was first exhibited in January 1968 at the Pasadena Art Museum. From November 1968

through February 1969 it was on view at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, as part of "The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age" curated by Pontus Hulten. With "The Machine" exhibition it subsequently toured in 1969 to Rice University Institute for the Arts, Houston, and the San Francisco Museum of Art. From 1970 the work was on exhibition in the Beverly Hills home of Betty Freeman. In 1983, through the generosity of Mrs. Freeman, the sculpture was returned to the artists to be installed at their 6 Harrison Street *Dream House*, where it was on view until the *Dream House* closed in 1985. The work is now in the collection of the artists. The European premiere exhibition of the *Music and Light Box* was presented by WDR Köln Rheinisches Musikfest at Hans Mayer Gallery, Düsseldorf in May 1988.

#### *Sound & Light Sculpture*

*Sound / With / In* (1989) from *Still Light with Sound*

The sculptures from *Still Light* extend Zazeela's investigations of the effects of colored light mixtures on perception to still objects. *Still Light*, a sub-genre of Zazeela's major work *Light*, utilizes the principle of colored light sources projected on sculptural forms to produce colored shadows. These works are a further exploration of perception, color and the transcendent effect of light and shadow in their interplay with solid mass. Viewed from a directly centered frontal position, the sculptured forms merge with the superimposed colors while the ensuing shadows transcribe the volumetric dimensions of the forms. Each variation is uniquely determined by the structural characteristics of the form on which the light is projected, the angle and distance of the light sources, the inter-relation of colors and the position of the viewer.

This collaborative work combines the *Still Light* sculpture described above with a sound environment by Young. Young's sound environment is composed of selected frequencies produced electronically as sine waves. The frequency components of the sine waves are derived from a master crystal to achieve chords and intervals in which every pair of frequency components can be represented by some rational fraction. The ratios of the amplitude com-

ponents of the sine waves are tuned to be inversely proportional to the ratios of their corresponding frequency components. When generated live in real time by the electronic circuitry the sine wave frequencies create a periodic composite sound waveform environment.

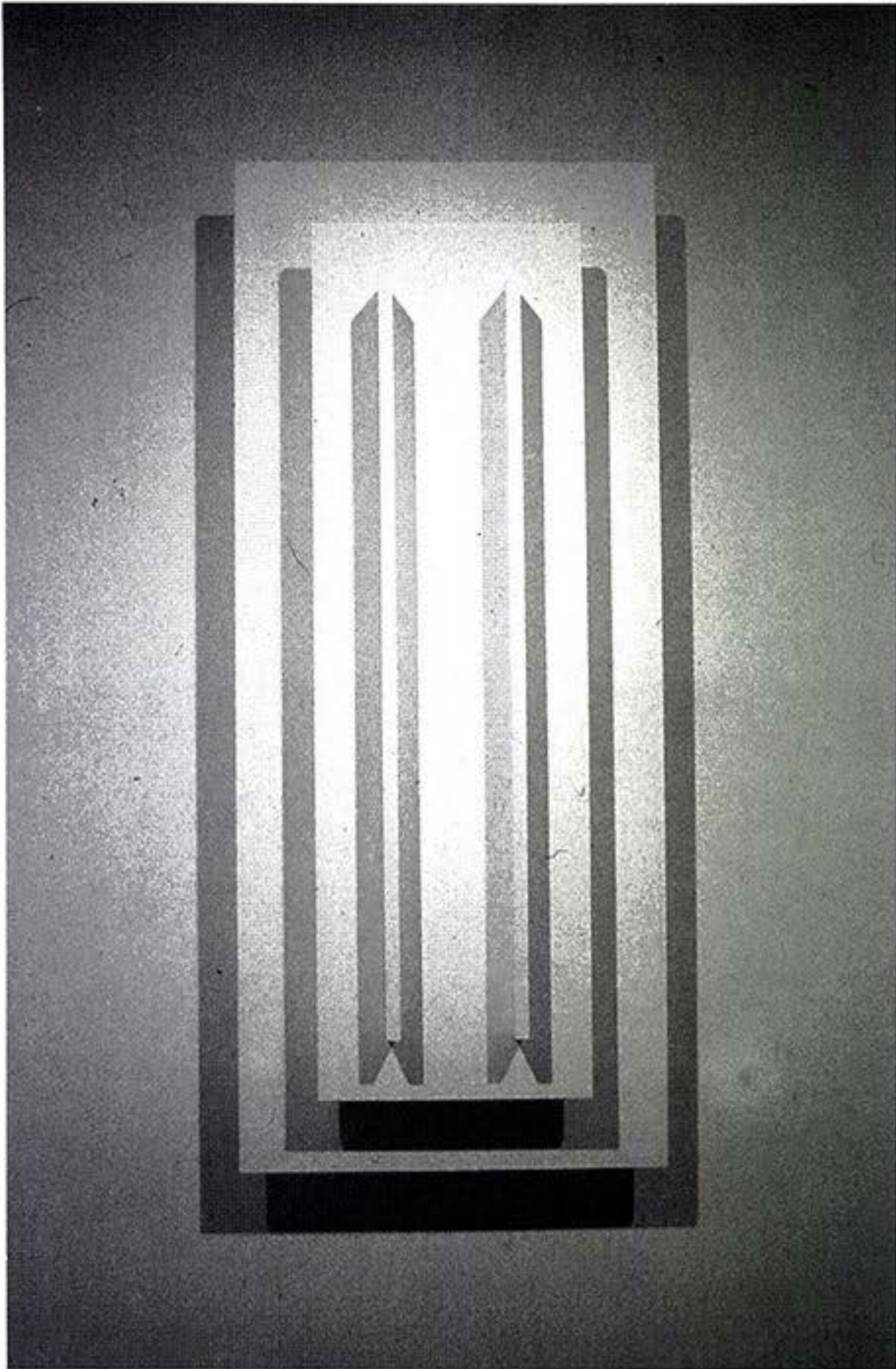
The specific chord chosen for this environment is entitled *SMS 50 Hz Time Standing Still Study* and is a version of the chord which was used on the *SMS Drift Study* "4:37:40-5:09:50 PM 5 VIII 68 NYC" tape published by William Copley in *SMS #4*. However, the *SMS 50 Hz Time Standing Still Study* is different from the *SMS Drift Study* "4:37:40-5:09:50 PM 5 VIII 68 NYC" in certain ways. Because the frequency components of the sine waves in the *SMS 50 Hz Time Standing Still Study* are derived from a master crystal to achieve chords and intervals in which every pair of frequency components can be represented by some rational fraction, the phase angles of the sine waves are locked together and therefore do not drift. Also, the frequency ratios used in the *SMS Drift Study* "4:37:40-5:09:50 PM 5 VIII 68 NYC" were tuned to a sub-octave of 60 Hertz, which is the power line frequency of the American continent, but the frequency ratios used in the *SMS 50 Hz Time Standing Still Study* are tuned to 12.5 Hertz, a sub-octave of 50 Hertz, which is the power line frequency of the European continent. These power line frequencies are the drones of the cities of their respective continents.

The *SMS 50 Hz Time Standing Still Study* consists of five sine waves tuned into the frequency ratios of 28, 27, 24, 21, 18, which sound at the real frequencies 350, 337.5, 300, 262.5 and 225 Hertz respectively and are whole number multiples of the 12.5 Hertz fundamental. This real frequency range in which the chord is sounding is similar to the range of the "Double Speed Version" of the *SMS Drift Study* "4:37:40-5:09:50 PM 5 VIII 68 NYC" which was in the real frequency range 420, 205, 360, 315 and 270 Hertz.

*Sound / With / In* was commissioned by Marcel Fleiss in Spring 1989 and was first exhibited at Galerie 1900-2000 in the June 1989 exhibition "Happenings & Fluxus".

© La Monte Young & Marian Zazeela 1990.





Marian Zazecla, *Untitled M/B, da Still Light*, 1989.



# Larry Miller



Larry Miller, *Finger Exercise*, Flux Concert, Neuberger Museum, New York, 1983. (Foto Coco Gordon).

## *Lines to Grow*

*A psychic made marks on my hands and advised me how to direct my growth.*

“Look at the two different shaped hands. This is Pisces, this is Aries. So you are two people. What you have to do is learn how to make them one. Put your hands like this together. Anything above this line here is science and this is creative. This is anthropology and archeology. Do you mind if I mark up your hand?”

“MAKE THIS LINE EXTENDED. Study on all levels and make this line longer here. You have a polarity of correspondence. State of consciousness is this hand and being destructive is this hand. Thank goodness you are strong enough and guided enough. But there is some ambivalence here – a forcefulness and yet the internal and external world colliding together every so often. That is why you must make this line grow. YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST MAKE IT GROW.”

*How do I do that?*

“By concentrating on the abstract. When you study the heavens and you see the clouds – what do you make of it? This is by seeing the perceptivity of your own soul first. Learn about the body. You will learn about yourself and evolution.”



*Statement on Fluxus for Venice Biennale catalog*

Classifying art may be interesting and useful – but the naming of animals does not change their spots. When George Maciunas seized the word “flux” from the dictionary to give some characteristic name to the multiple, interbreeding art forms that were generating, he provided a conceptual Maypole around which individual artists had already been at serious play for some time.

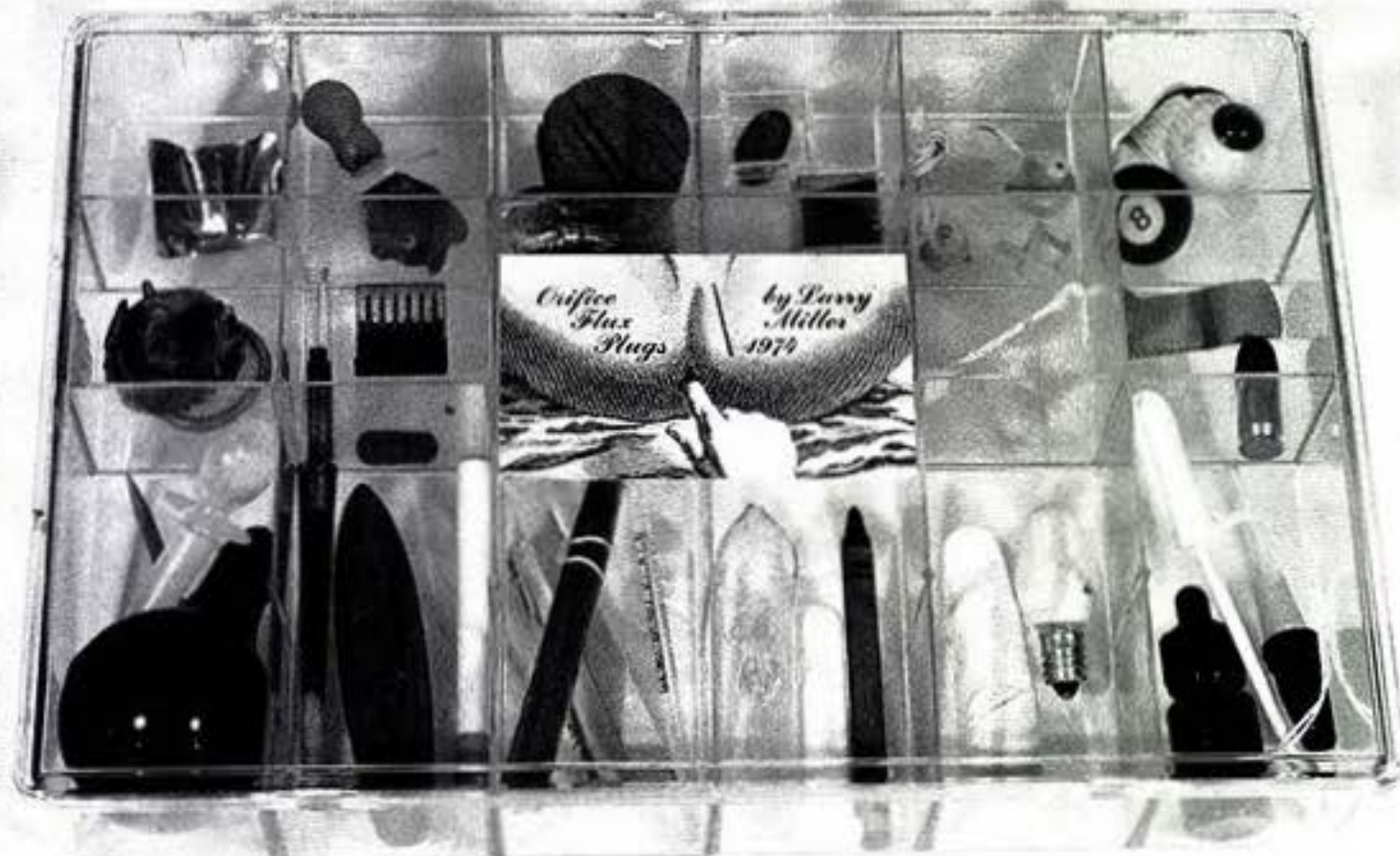
Questions about what Fluxus is and is not seems to be the head of Hydra. Defining art too categorically can hinder the fresh apprehension of it and its direct capacity to enhance the whole of life experience. The works of art which accumulate through the ages are but a series of “delays”, to use Duchamp’s term, in the continuum of human awareness. While the individual may supply the hands of making, the resulting work of art is armed by the collective mind of all artists and non-artists. This is more apparent in Fluxus. “Flux” implies that the magic is in the movement, not in the thing – and any mystery that comes forth through a work of art is

necessarily present in the observer. That is the head in question. The artist, as maker, is no authority.

*Mark of the Beast.* In the Beginning, there was the Word – *Logos*. It was *all* and it was *free*. Now the word *Logo* refers to the mark on a product identifying its Maker – the enterprise you pay for “quality” control or invention. In the future you will see the new, altered animals which will have their Maker’s *Logo grown in the flesh*. For a price you may own the animal and the warranty that comes on it – but all REproduction rights will belong to *Logo*. Your own lifespan and “quality” will belong to you only according to your material *code* – that means until your calculated Expiration date. Beyond that you will RETain lie ownership only so long as you make warranty payments to *Logo*. Your children may belong to *Logo* outright if you take out a subscription to them in the child’s Beginning. The *mark of Logo* is but a pale introduction to the possible fate of all future *O-Humans* (original humans) and *O-Animals*. A Final extinction stalks – and it comes in sheep’s clothing.

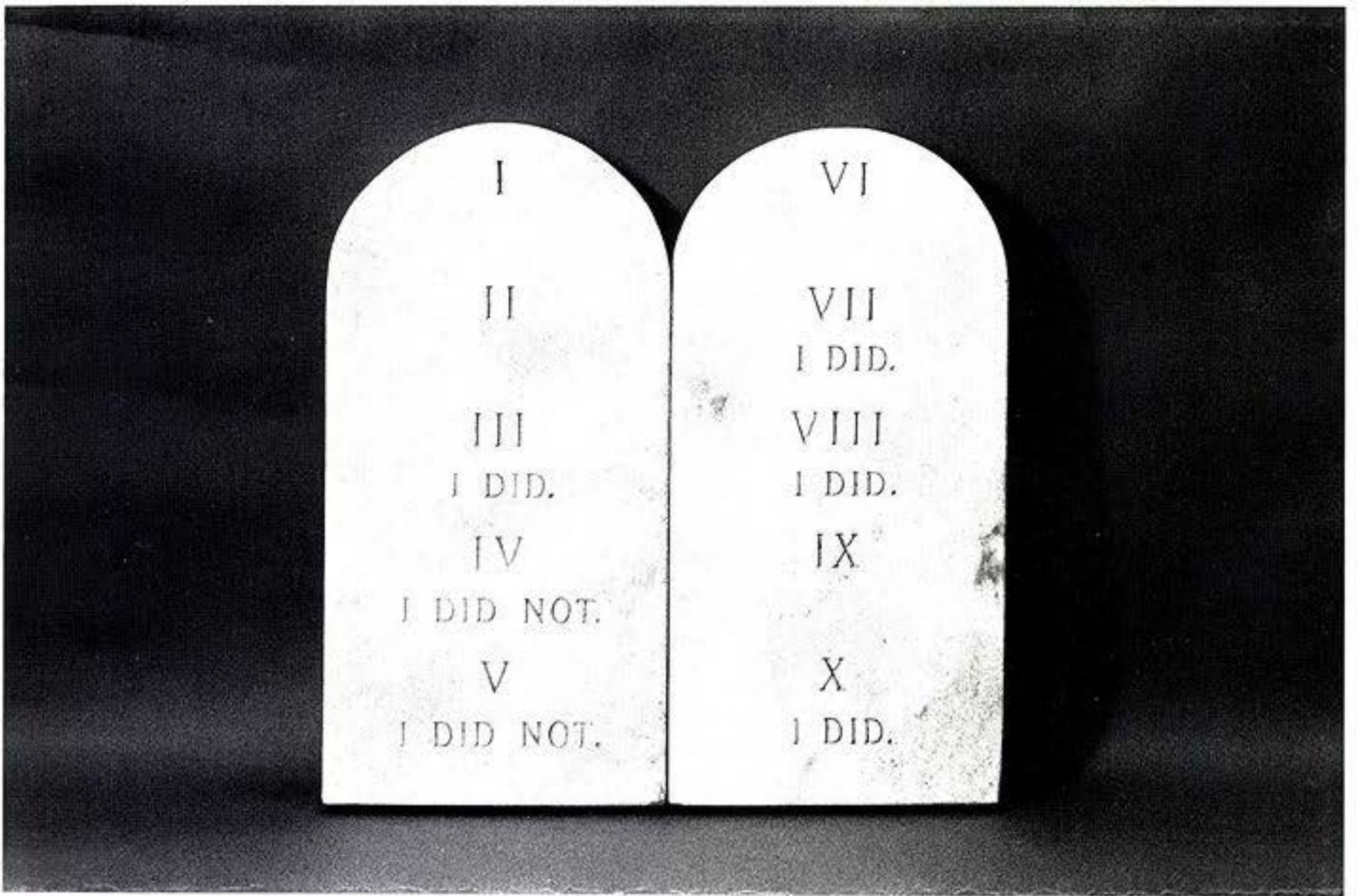
*The NOAH Project.* A poet wrote of the End coming “not with a bang, but with a whimper”. That whimper may be the birthing cry of the first organism produced by the *NOAH Project*. The *Neogenetic Order of Altered Humans* is an organization whose project is to REcreate life forms while simultaneously allowing the continued extinction of all *O-Plants, O-Animals and O-Humans* – and ultimately of extinct *EVOLUTION* itself. *NOAH* will have eliminated all natural competition and will have complete control and Copyright to the new order-*NEVOLUTION*. This REpresents only an intermediate phase of the eventual goal which will be carried out by the new species – the *Nevus*. *Salvation* for Mankind may depend on You and your *code*. *NOAH* may need your particular *code*, the physical component of which they can easily enough obtain from any small piece of You. When you dream of animals that speak to you, say “I am Noah” and –

Excerpts from *Re Noah: A Warning to O-Humans*, copyright Your DNA, 1989

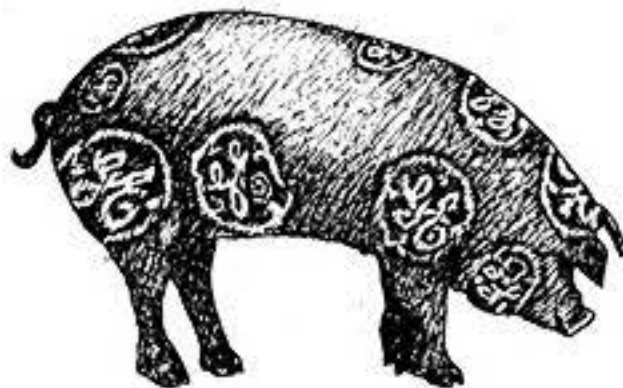
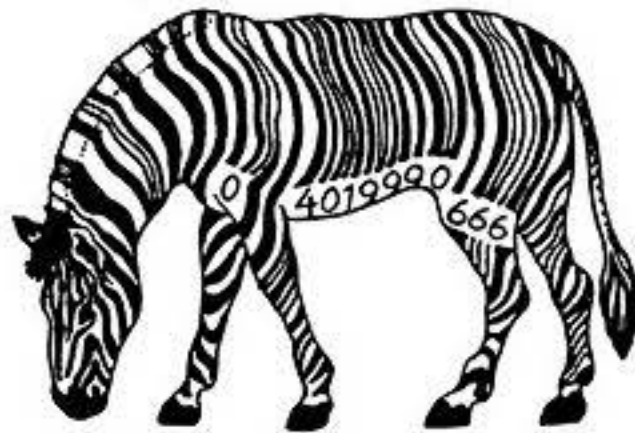


Larry Miller, *Orifice Flux-Plugs*, 1974.





Larry Miller, *Score*, 1986.





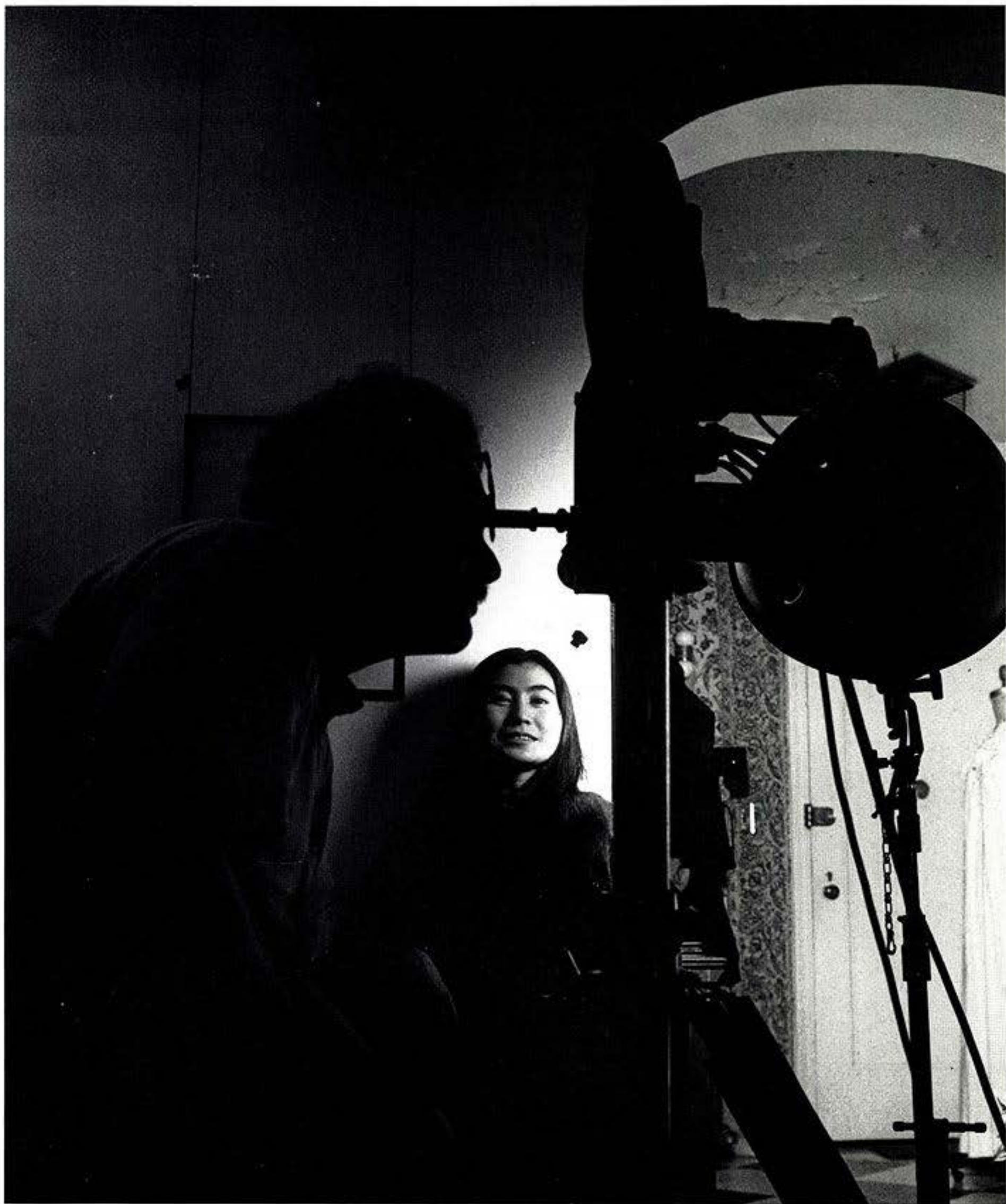
# Peter Moore



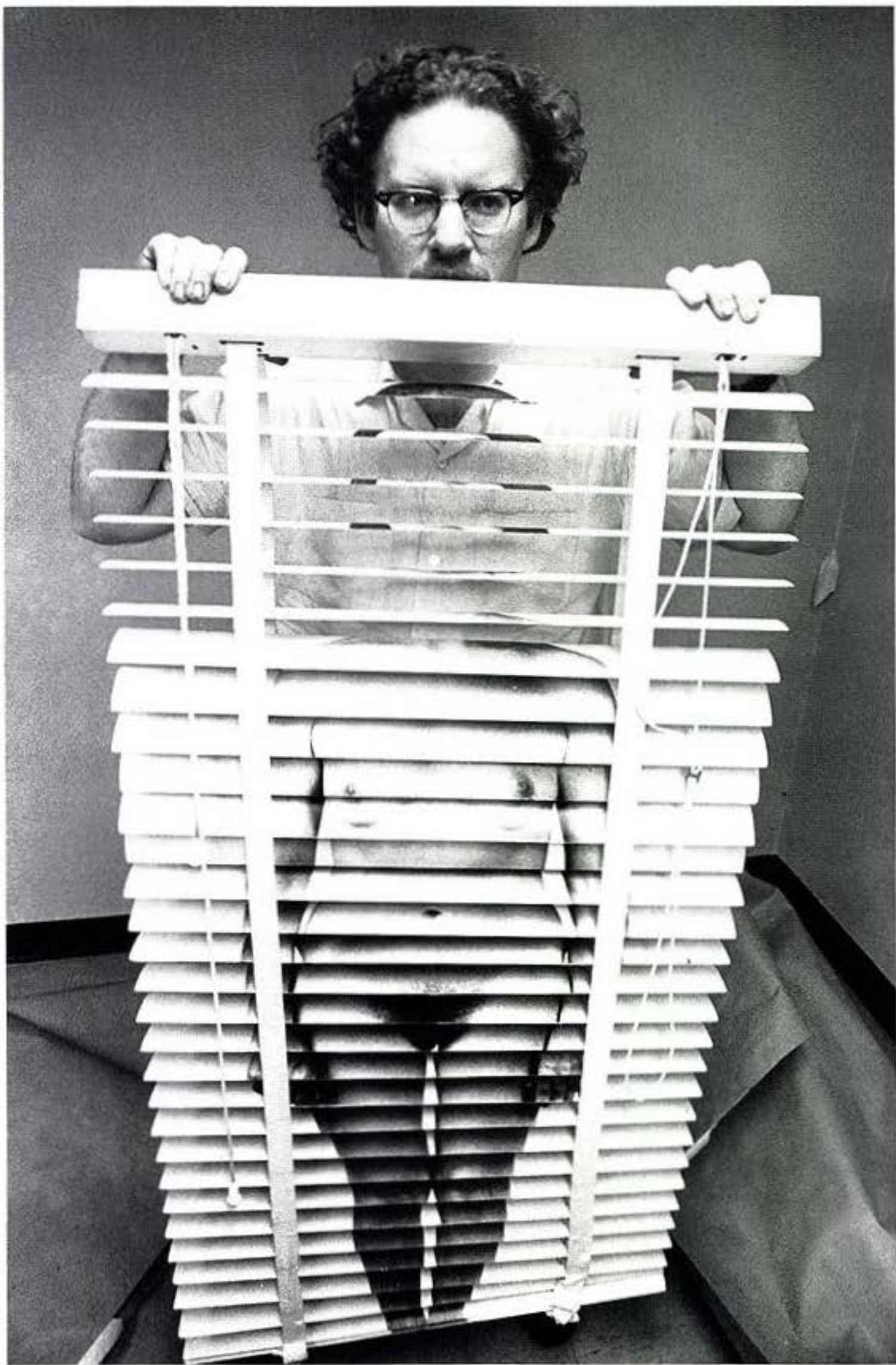
Peter Moore, 1965.  
(Foto Marguerite Lambert).

Alla pagina seguente:  
*Peter Moore*  
*Shooting Yoko Ono*  
*in the Fluxfilm.*  
(Foto Christopher Moore).







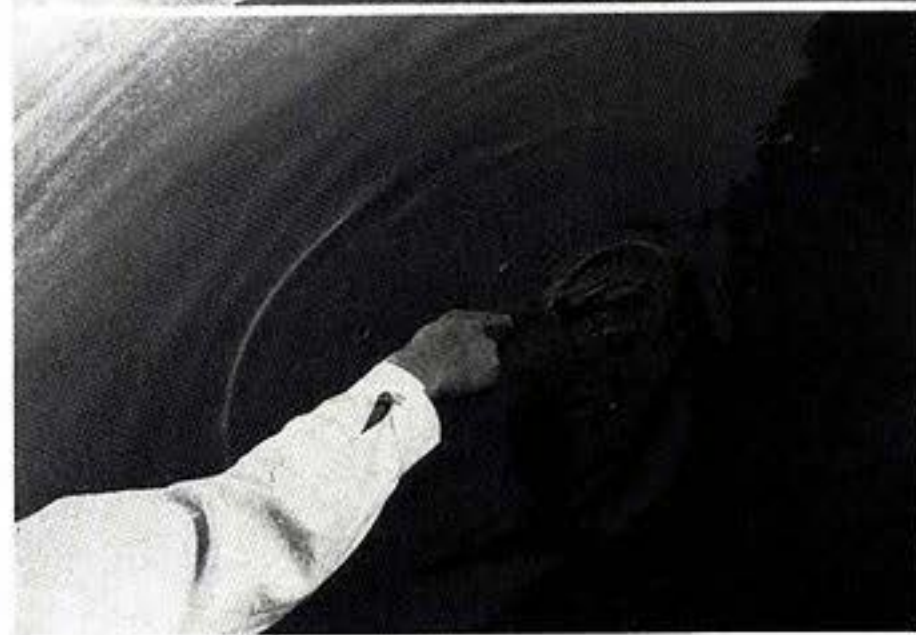


Peter Moore,  
*Autoritratto*, 1967.



# Maurizio Nannucci

Da sinistra:  
Maurizio Nannucci, *Occultamento*,  
S. Benedetto del Tronto, 1969;  
*Scrivere sull'acqua*, 1973.







Maurizio Nannucci, *Red Line*, 1969.



Maurizio Nannucci, *Who's Afraid of Red...*





Maurizio Nannucci, *Image du ciel*, Biennale di Venezia, 1978.



# Serge Oldenbourg

Serge Oldenbourg,  
*Autostop con un piano,*  
13 giugno 1969.





## Serge III et le piano

Quand j'étais petit, j'aimais tous les sons produits par un piano, car ce me semblait un miracle qu'en tapant une touche on provoquât un son. Dans ma famille personne n'avait de culture musicale, ce qui fait que mes contacts avec les pianos étaient rares.

C'est seulement en 1963, après le passage de George Maciunas à Nice, que j'ai commencé à étudier et à pratiquer

les différentes façons de jouer avec un piano. Si on veut éviter la banalité et les effets les plus élémentaires, ce n'est pas chose facile.

Pour concert intérieur, j'ai présenté quatre concertos pour piano, qui consistent à servir quatre tournées de Pastis aux acteurs participants et les leur faire boire.

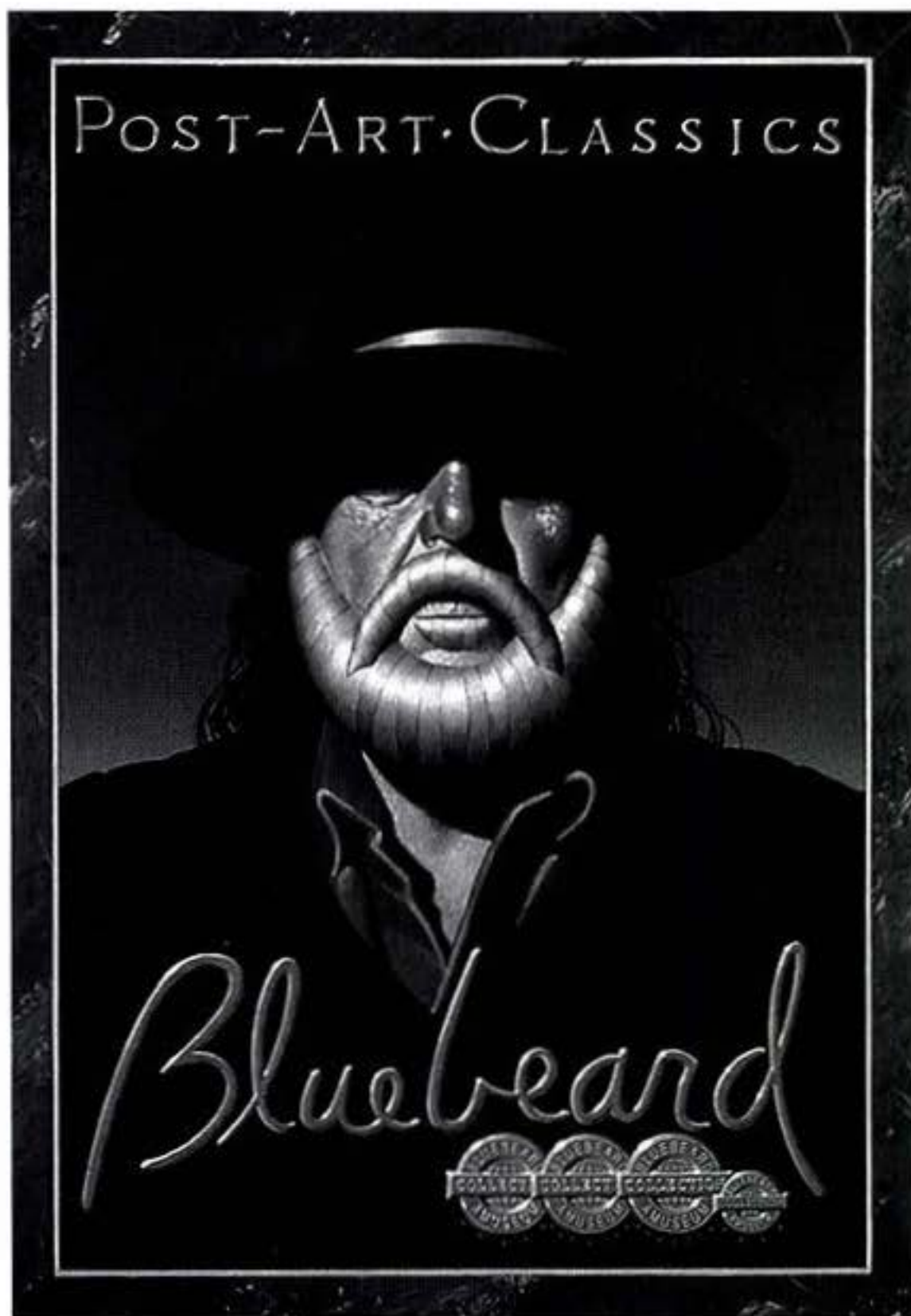
Comme spectacle extérieur, j'ai eu

l'idée de faire de l'autostop avec un piano (réalisé le 13 juin 1969) et la navigation à la rame sur un piano en mer ou sur rivière.

Comme, depuis 1974, j'ai réalisé plusieurs travaux à base de fil de fer barbelé, j'ai tapissé le clavier d'un piano de fils de fer barbelés dorés et à l'intérieur du couvercle j'ai mis une citation latine, dorée.

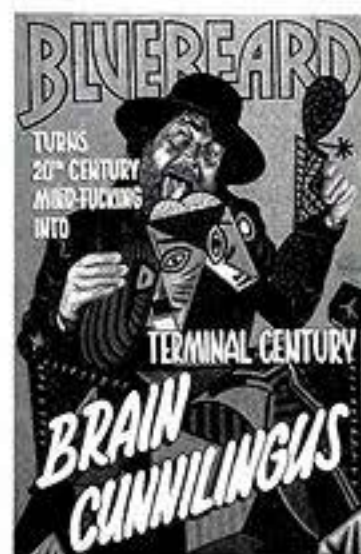
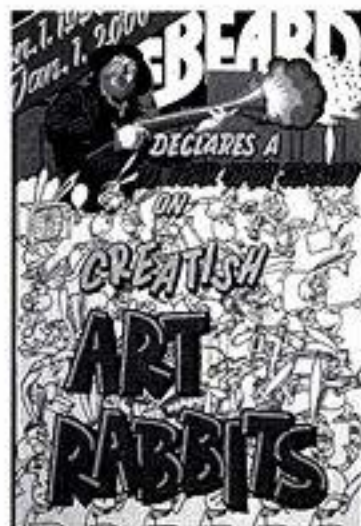




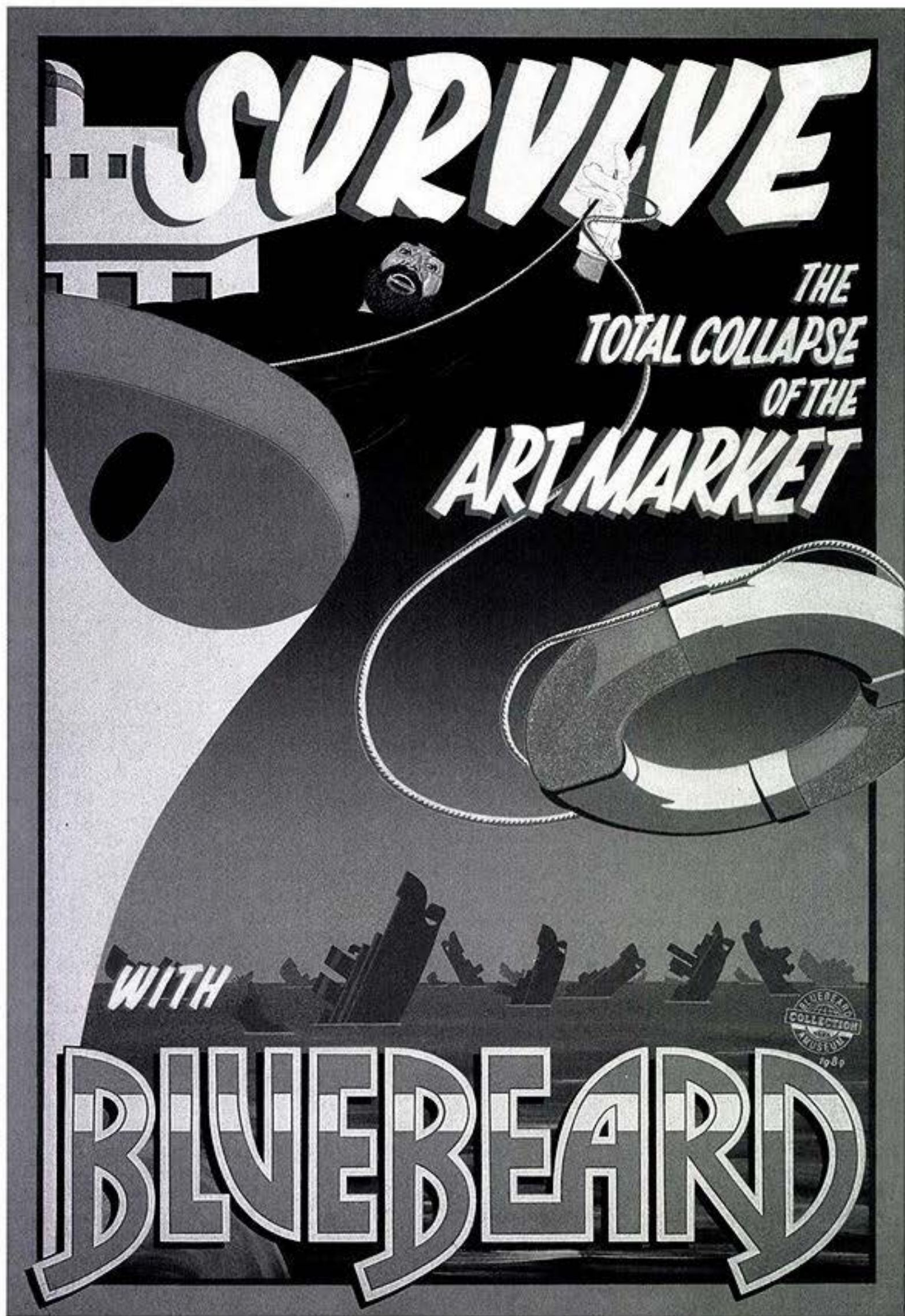


Robin Page, *Bluebeard Kicks Ass in Artsville*, 1989.  
Acrilico su tela, l'insieme 1,90 × 1,30 m.











# Gianni-Emilio Simonetti

Gianni-Emilio Simonetti, "Milanopoesia",  
1989. (Foto Giovani Giovannetti).





# La fallacia di Enkekalymmenos

Gianni-Emilio Simonetti

Sai riconoscere tua madre?

Sì.

Riconosci questa donna velata?

No.

Questa donna velata è tua madre.

Perciò, tu puoi riconoscere tua madre, così come puoi non riconoscerla.

composizione della nostra non è altro che il sintomo della sua radicalizzazione nel niente, per questo il successo mercantile delle arti è il frutto della loro insignificanza. Basta un colpo di timone per alterare sulla testa dei naviganti tutte le costellazioni, l'arte fuori dall'arte cerca nuovi percorsi.

*Perché i tappeti volano.*

Il surrealismo è stato l'esempio più radicale di quello che l'arte non deve più essere. La sua amara attualità è la prova migliore della scandalosa inattualità del nostro tempo. Possiamo anche concordare sul fatto che le avanguardie storiche sono state un "début d'expérience révolutionnaire", ma i naviganti dopo Auschwitz non possono permettersi d'ignorare il naufragio dell'autonomia dell'espressione. Christopher Marlowe perì in una rissa d'osteria, Marianne Moore ha scritto un saggio sui coltelli. Avanzando di ritorno i partigiani dell'oblio ritrovano il senso della vita corrente – il filo dei giorni vissuti. (Avanzando di ritorno: mettiamo a merito di Sade averci mostrato l'assoluta naturalezza di ogni sindrome libertina.)

*Solo le principesse si ridestano in letti sconosciuti.*

Erano stretti – ieri – i margini dell'illusione, non ci sono spazi – oggi – alla speranza. Perché nessuno vuole riconoscere che è cambiato il terreno di quasi tutte le attività culturali? Non ne è la noia il sintomo più evidente? I rackets della politica vogliono governare senza cambiare la società, le correnti artistiche pretendono di rinnovare la sensibilità estetica del loro tempo senza realizzare l'arte. Alla caparbia del sognatore sfugge il contenuto trasgressivo del vissuto. L'arte, come la politica, ha finito per erigere a sapere i propri pregiudizi.

*Canta Edith Piaf: "Ai doganieri della*

*disperazione non ho niente da dichiarare."*

Ci sono smarrimenti che non hanno medicina. Lo schizofrenico annusa pestilenze e veleni immaginari ai nostri sensi, al pari dell'artista che annusa il silenzio come un fenomeno sconosciuto o il vuoto come una realtà "autre". È lo scacco degli anni Sessanta che adesso fa bella mostra di sé nei musei – sul lungo periodo ognuno ha i sogni che si merita! Eppure, lo stesso senso orale, di cui parla Folinger, è stato in tempi non sospetti un momento fisico della coscienza del vissuto. Una sensibilità che faceva svaporare la depressione, spezzandone la continuità, e la malinconia, frantumandone l'unità. Nel 1794 Hölderlin poteva scrivere: "Che importa! Bruceremo se è necessario le nostre sfortunate cetre e faremo quello che gli artisti hanno solo sognato." Ma che cosa, Neuffer, sognano, oggi, gli artisti che valga la pena di veder realizzato per le armi? Le nevrosi si addensano sempre più nella parola, eppure un tempo "aleph" era il bue, "beta" la casa, "gamal" il campanello, "zai" l'olio...

*Quali insegne garriranno al tocco del millennio?*

Nell'idea di modernità è svaporata ogni utopia artistica. I suoi effetti sono stati repentini e brutali ed essi hanno imposto – nel fronteggiamento – formulazioni lapidarie e mezzi di opposizione speciali. Da qui, il gergo delle avanguardie che sopravvive alle avanguardie stesse, gli spaesamenti linguistici della critica d'arte e quel pluralismo di valori che contraddistingue sempre ogni processo gerarchico in disfacimento. Sta di fatto che quest'epoca non ricorda un solo artista, ma solo "movimenti" che si affannano a scrivere il loro nome sull'acqua. A Roma come a Cartagine gli "artisti" non si rendono conto né delle

*La fessura che lampeggia tra ordito e trama.*

Lo spettro che s'aggira per l'Europa ha fatto cadere più di un muro. Quelli delle forme politiche tra i paesi dell'inganno, quelli delle illusioni culturali tra i paesi della menzogna. La disperazione di un'epoca, si sa, si misura dalla sua affettazione verso il realismo. La de-



scandalose banalità di cui l'arte moderna è un'espressione, né di quelle idee che di volta in volta la seppelliscono. A Roma, tuttavia, questo contribuisce alla loro fortuna. Scaltri per reputazione, codardi per scelta essi fingono d'ignorare perché *Gilles* di Watteau rimase invenduto per lungo tempo al mercato delle pulci del Louvre. Costava cinque franchi!

*Temps perdu. Temps perdu!*

Il concetto di cane non morde. L'arte, come idea generale delle cose, è il limes orientale del mondo, ma il paesaggio della forma/spettacolo è qui, qui si devono scavare le trincee, qui devono scorrere nuovi "fluxus", "questo è ciò che si chiama realismo dell'arte", scri-

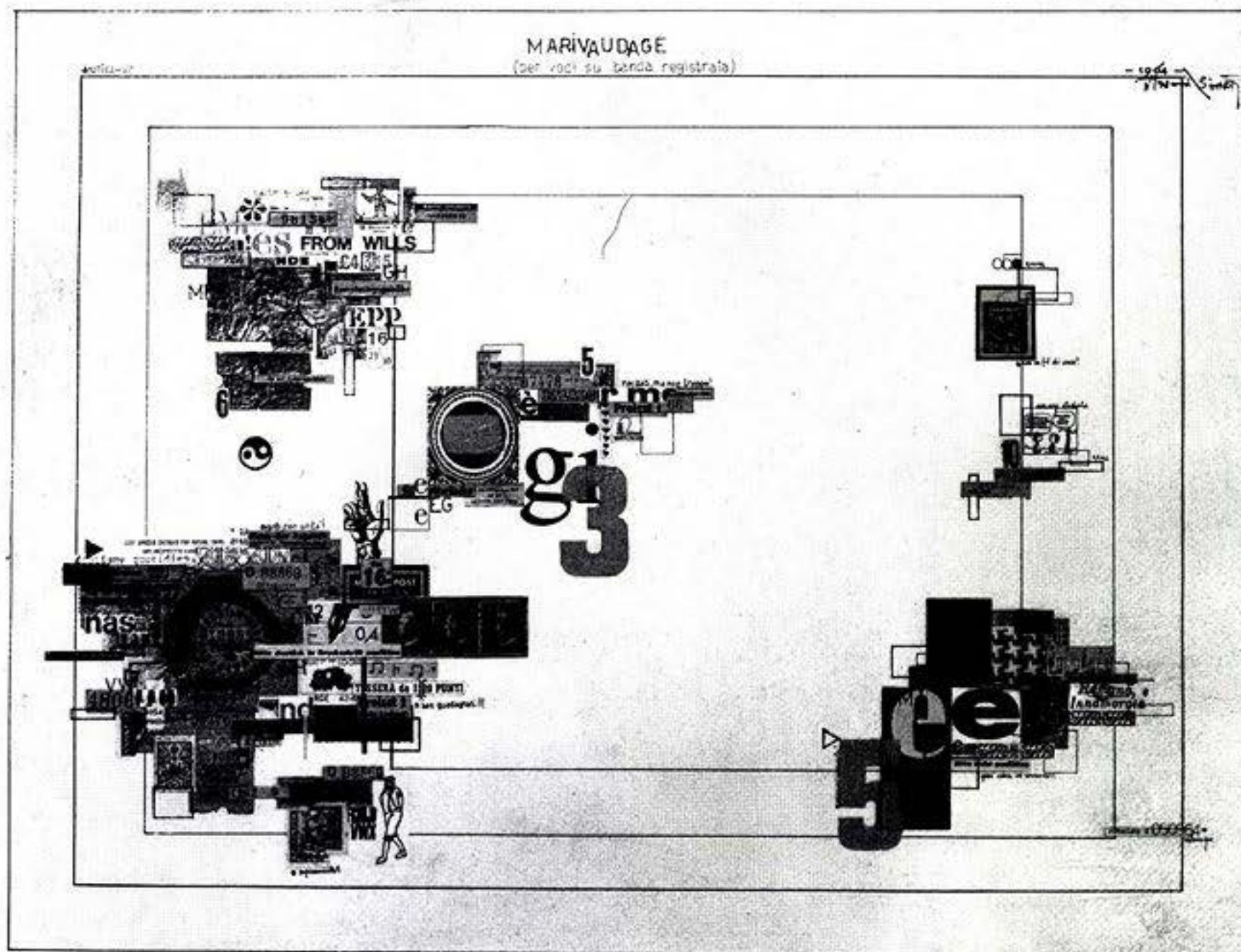
veva Tzara pensando al suo revolver magico, ma Dada era un utensile ancora poco affilato, bastò una stagione per scoprire i limiti del realismo, le sue deliranti cautele, le sue maniere crepuscolari. Un'antica radice lega l'etimo di tappeto a quello di farfalla, ma perché un tappeto voli non basta il lampo della filologia. La sostanza di ogni capolavoro è l'impossibile.

*Dalla scultura antica una lezione: spariscono le opere non i frammenti!*

Il vero non ha i suoi limiti nella falsità, ma nell'insignificanza. Il tema è quello di capire non di descrivere la realtà, intenderla non rappresentarla. Si sembra attraverso la maniera, per questo il vuoto degli anni Ottanta nell'arte si

appalesa attraverso le procedure. In esse l'"arte" scopre la sua identità il suo "désir de paraître". Una "profusion des ornements insignifiants" l'accompagna verso la fine del millennio - la vergogna mostra sempre ciò che si vorrebbe nascondere. Abbiamo abitato Toledo sotto la pioggia e sappiamo che ad essa seguono i vermi, per questo nell'arte ogni volta che la stupidità trionfa ci sono gendarmi a proteggerla. Sta di fatto che è troppo tardi per questo secolo, il prossimo, più felice, ne eredita le rovine.

Da *Fluxshot - 10/10*, Gallery, Milano, dicembre 1989 - gennaio 1990, catalogo della mostra.



Gianni-Emilio Simonetti, *Marivaudage* (per voci su banda registrata), 1964.



# Anne Tardos

Anne Tardos, 1985.  
(Foto Jackson MacLow).





Even though I do not appear on George's charts, I've been connected with Fluxus by friendship and by my works that are very clearly related to it: *Faces*, 1970, a film of about 365 people's and a few cats' and dogs' faces showing them each for a few seconds in the sequence in which they were shot, mostly in the streets of New York, in Central Park, Tompkins Square Park, and my loft on the Bowery.

*Apple Eaters*, 1973, a 5-channel video installation (at the Kitchen) showing 30 different people eating 30 different apples at 30 different times in 30 very different ways.

*Pipes at 110 Mercer, November 1974*, 1974, an audiotape of the heating pipes at 110 Mercer Street, the sound of the air trapped inside them, keeping me up all night, leaving me no other choice but to record them. (Collection New Wilderness Audiographics.)

*Territorial Demarcation*, 1974, was presented at the 10th Annual Avant-Garde Festival of New York in a boxcar at Grand Central Station, and consisted of a plastic construction, a female urinal, out of which I ran 10 plastic tubes into a circle of 10 plastic (translucent) letters spelling out my name A-N-N-E T-A-R-D-O-S. Only women were invited to participate in this piece – to animalistically demarcate their place among men.

*Breakfast at Stefanotty's*, 1975, is a 6-channel video installation (at Stefanotty Gallery) showing 6 New York artists having breakfast. They were Larry Rivers, Malcolm Morley, Vito Acconci, William Wegman with Man Ray, Brendan Atkinson, and myself. Each artist had breakfast at home except for Mal-

colm Morley who preferred Dave's Corner on Canal Street, an all-night restaurant that was since replaced by a Chinese restaurant.

*Refrigerator Defrosting*, 1975, an audiotape of my refrigerator defrosting. A microphone placed inside the refrigerator picked up the sounds of the drops of water as they fell into a metal refrigerator pan. (Collection New Wilderness Audiographics.)

*Anytime*, 1975-1976, a clock-like, electric-magnetic construction showing many different times in many different ways. (Collection Marcel Fleiss.)

*Kinder Born Children*, 1984. First performed at the Experimental Intermedia Foundation in New York, and in 1985, at the Festival of Fantastics in Roskilde. The performance begins with a projection of a slide I took on a ferryboat from Sweden to Denmark. The picture shows a diagram of a child wearing a life vest, and the word "children" appears under it in German, Danish, and English. Each performer stands in front of the projection wearing a life vest and after the slide has been on for 1 minute they inflate their vests. When the vests are inflated the performance of *Kinder Born Children* is over. There can be as many performers as there are life vests.

*Vegetarian Feast*, 1985. Also at the Festival of Fantastics in Roskilde in 1985, I invited the audience up on stage to partake in the banquet that was prepared in advance and waiting behind the curtain. (With compliments of the City of Roskilde.)

During the Seventies and early Eighties, when I was mostly making videotapes, I shot many photographs

from the video monitor while manipulating the tape. One example is the *Portrait of George Maciunas via Video by Anne Tardos*, videotape: 1976, photo: 1978. (Collection Anne Tardos.)

Since 1986 I have used a large variety of digitizing – and graphics – programs on the computer to make images which I then transfer onto canvas and paint with a brush. Having studied painting and sculpture as well as filmmaking, I am now combining all the media I've worked in before (except for music) in one single process. I shoot the original image (e.g., a person or a drawing) with a video camera and feed it into the computer. Then I manipulate the image on the computer and finalize the composition. After that I photograph the screen of the computer's monitor and then manually transfer the image onto canvas, which I then paint. The canvas's surface is where the computer graphic is completed.

One very strong source for me has been an ink-drawing by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska: a portrait of Ezra Pound. The elements of that drawing have provided a basis for many canvases of the "Ez" series. I am sorry about Mr. Pound's politics, but I do like that particular drawing of Pound, and he was a great poet.

Another series of digitized images that led to a number of paintings is *Human Geography*, a series of collages dealing with human anatomy placed next to other elements of civilization: architecture, painting, and technology – or not collaged with anything, just left alone.

New York, April 1990





Anne Tardos, *Large Black & White Ez*,  
1990. Acrilico su lino, 122 × 92 cm.



# Yoshi Wada



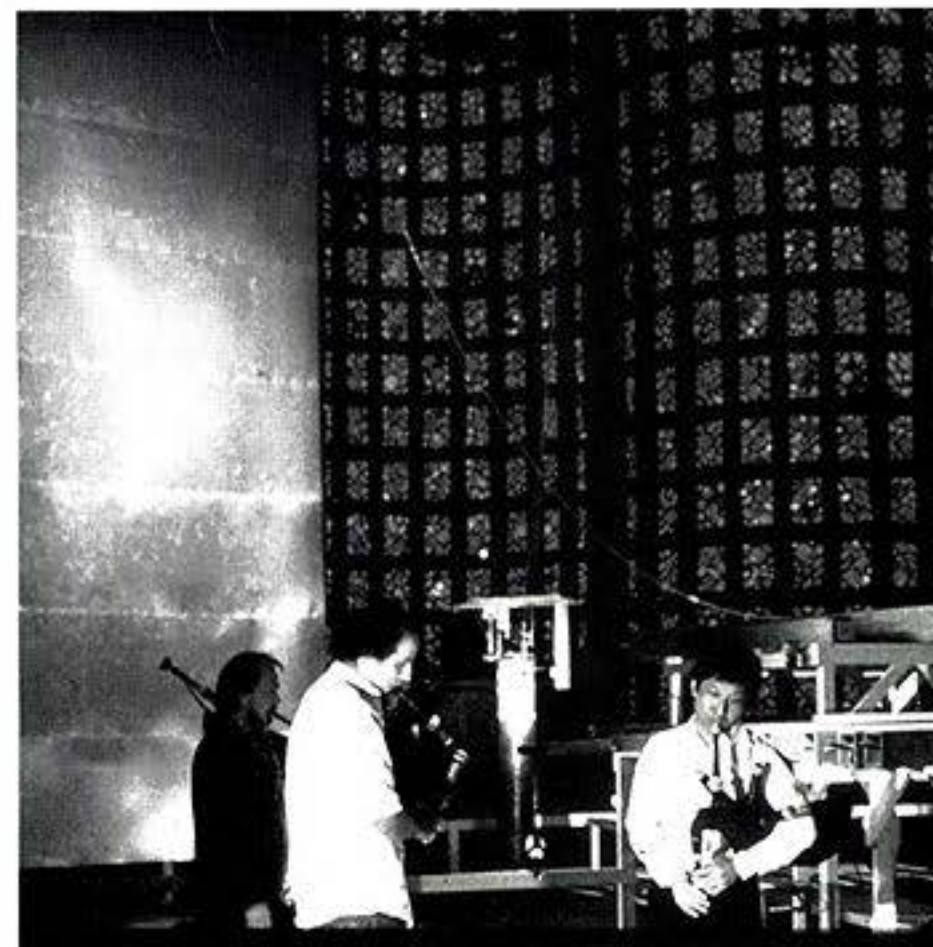
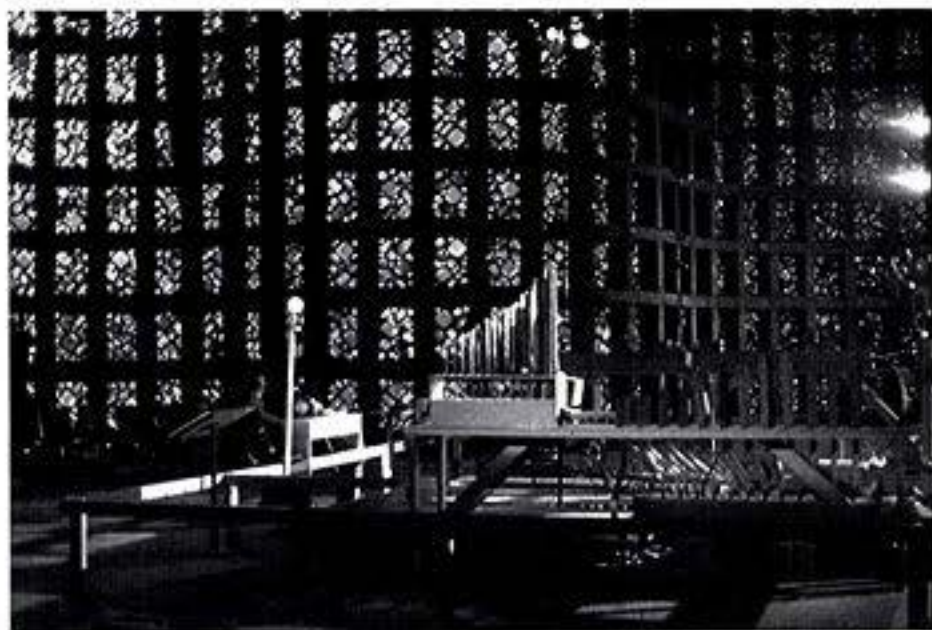
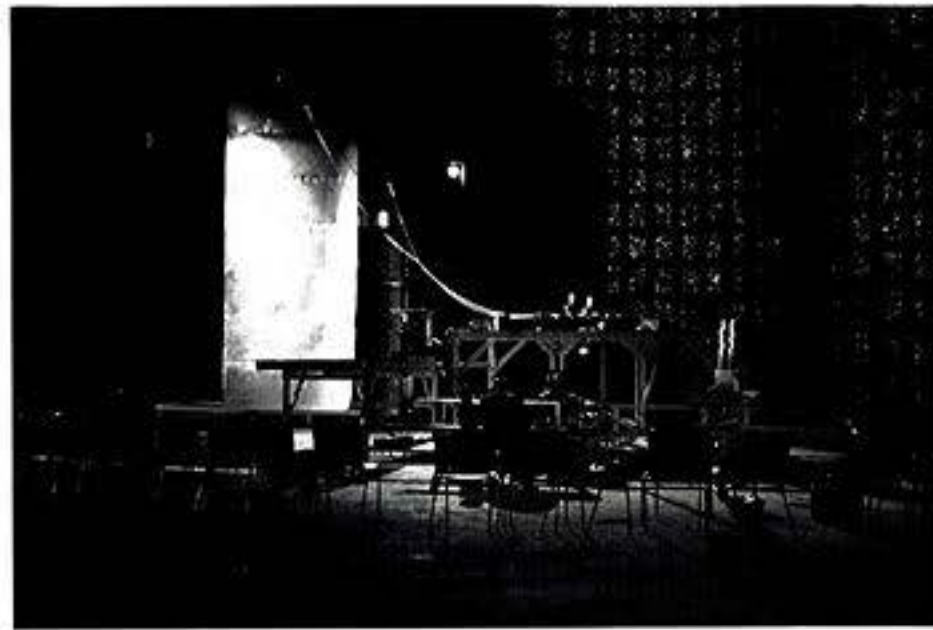
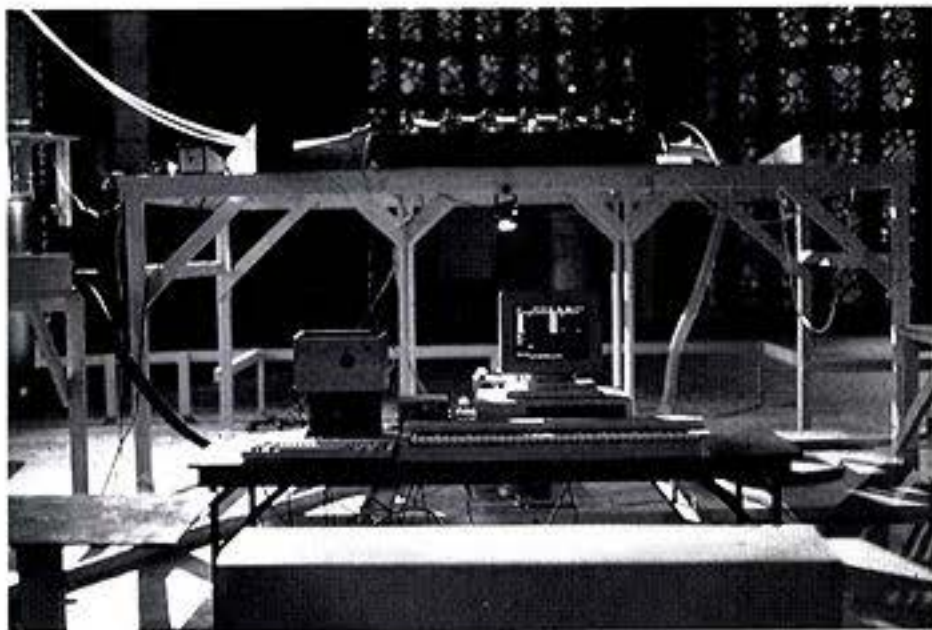
Yoshi Wada, 1988. (Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery, foto Wilfrid Rouff).

Alla pagina seguente: Albert M. Fine e Yoshi Wada preparano *The Earth Horns* di Yoshi Wada, Byrd Hoffman Foundation, New York, 1975. (Foto Siji Kakizaki).









Yoshi Wada, *A Sound Installation*,  
Emily Harvey Gallery,  
New York, 21 aprile - 13 maggio 1989.



# Marian Zazeela



Marian Zazeela al Living Theatre, New York, inverno 1960-61. (Foto Charles Rotmil, copyright Marian Zazeela 1990).



The poem words not words was written in 1975 as a text for an exhibition of some of my lightworks and drawings during the Dream Festival at the first Dia Art Foundation space, 141 Wooster Street, New York City.

words

not words

what were words

calligraphy

light

shadow

reflection

what can be seen

what is invisible

what is visible in what light

what lies on the fine line between

what can be seen and

what not seen

but still

affecting vision

apparent

and transparent

looking through

and into

or beyond

exposing the cross-section of vibration  
to light

the line between

incomprehension and

recognition

seeing and not seeing

the light

the line that curves  
or rotates

between what it is and  
what it is not

its color

its shadow

its form

its reflection

the light that passes through  
is reflected back.

the line that collects  
the colors it is not

## words not words

the field of light  
coming from  
and going to,  
through and beyond  
the lines and the particles  
at once moving  
and still  
reflected  
or transparent

the line in or out  
of focus  
the angle of  
vision

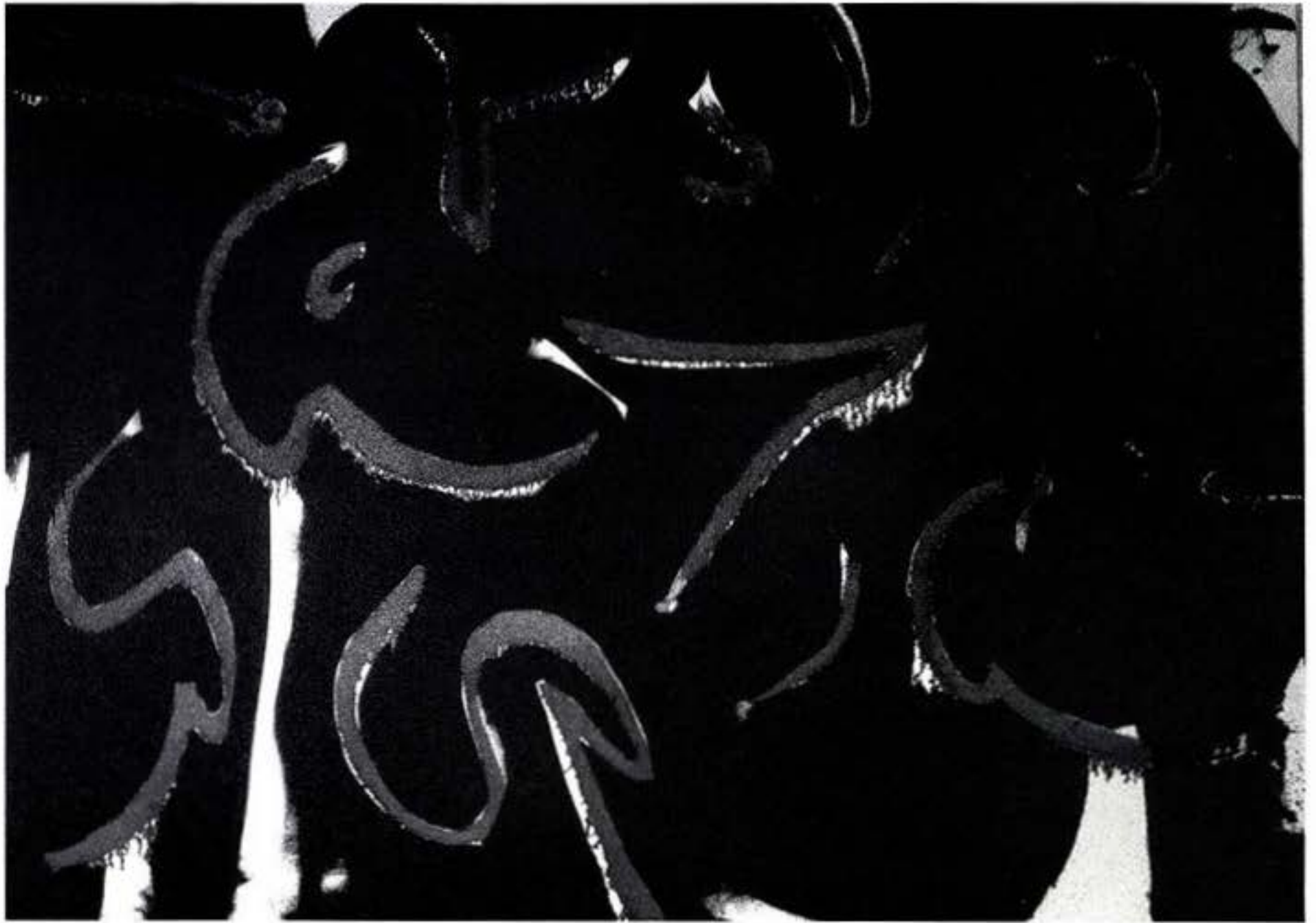
the plane of attention

collection  
diffusion

the line  
the letter  
collection of letters, of lines  
a word  
a pattern  
focused on a plane  
between  
what it is  
and what it is not  
what it looks like  
at one moment  
in time

Marian Zazeela  
4 V 75  
NYC





Marian Zazeela,  
*Mount Anthony*, 1960.



# Fluxus video décollage

Luciano Giaccari

"Fluxus video decollage" presenta, inseriti nel flusso del "Klavierduett" in onore di Maciunas di N.J. Paik e J. Beuys, documentazioni "storiche" degli eventi Fluxus, documentazioni "autentiche", per esempio di Ben, di pezzi storici eseguiti in epoche più recenti e films Fluxus originali, oltre a interviste, brani di trasmissioni televisive, documentazioni di mostre ecc.

L'incontro tra video e Fluxus non è casuale. Nam June Paik e Wolf Vostell, due protagonisti storici di Fluxus, sono nello stesso tempo i padri fondatori del video d'artista.

Television Decollage, cui si rifà il titolo della sezione video di "Ubi Fluxus ibi motus", venne presentato insieme ad altri "materiali" su circuito televisivo all'interno di un environment, in cui introduceva un elemento temporale, basato sulla scansione di immagini, registrate da televisore, riferentisi all'attualità politica dell'epoca.

Ma lo stimolo più interessante, derivato dal montaggio in video dei vari materiali Fluxus, è costituito dalla riflessione sui rapporti tra film-Fluxus e video.

Questo stimolo deriva, in particolare, dal fatto che il video è di gran lunga lo strumento critico più decisivo per la lettura di qualsiasi forma di "arte in performance".

D'altro canto proprio il formato del video sembra veramente essere il più

adatto per certe performances Fluxus piuttosto che i muri bianchi o le lenzuola, usati a mo' di schermo, nelle salette underground dove si videro i films Fluxus in epoche storiche.

Credo che questo sia vero a un punto tale che certe opere, come *Smoking* di J. Jones, *Music for Face* di Chieko Shiomi, *Film Fluxus no. 16* di Yoko Ono e altre ancora, sembrano pensate proprio per lo schermo televisivo, cosa particolarmente interessante, dato che consente di invertire la tendenza per cui normalmente il cinema, "passato" in televisione, subisce uno scarto che risulta spesso sconvolgente.

In realtà si può dire che il film Fluxus sia un "prevideo", tanto più se si considera che diversi "videotapes" erano appunto la registrazione di performances; questo toglierà un po' di smalto al mito di Gerry Shum, ma non più di tanto, data l'identificazione sostanziale che veniva a verificarsi tra l'evento e la sua ripresa/registrazione.

Questa identificazione è tale che c'è da chiedersi fondatamente se le azioni non fossero eseguite per la cinepresa e poi per la telecamera piuttosto che per lo scarso pubblico, al quale quanto meno va riconosciuta una precisa funzione scenografica.

Il carattere e il clima di molti eventi infatti rendevano la presenza del pubblico essenziale in funzione di integra-

zione e bilanciamento degli eventi stessi, anche al di là del caso più evidente in cui gli esecutori di un concerto Fluxus entravano in scena e applaudivano al pubblico.

Un'altra considerazione, nata dalla visione dei materiali storici di Fluxus, è quella che si riferisce alla incapacità dimostrata dalla megatelevisione (quella broadcast per intenderci) di leggere a caldo questi fenomeni in modo corretto.

Gli artisti Fluxus, nelle trasmissioni televisive, venivano considerati spesso degli eccentrici, da riprendere magari capovolti, andando poi a cercare tra il pubblico lo spettatore che si gratta il naso o quello rimasto a bocca aperta e dimostrando così di non essere entrati minimamente nello spirito delle azioni, né tanto meno di aver capito quel particolare rapporto con il pubblico di cui si parlava prima.

Infine un'ultima considerazione, basata sull'assunto del video inteso come strumento critico, si riferisce all'importanza di Fluxus come fenomeno che ha percorso temi e modi dell'arte successiva, cosa che è stato molto facile verificare proprio nel momento in cui si andava a estrapolare, per l'editing, i momenti più significativi dell'ampio materiale filmato ricevuto da tutto il mondo.



George Maciunas, *In Memoriam Adriano Olivetti*.





George Maciunas, Joseph Beuys,  
Nam June Paik.



Joe Jones, *Smoking*.



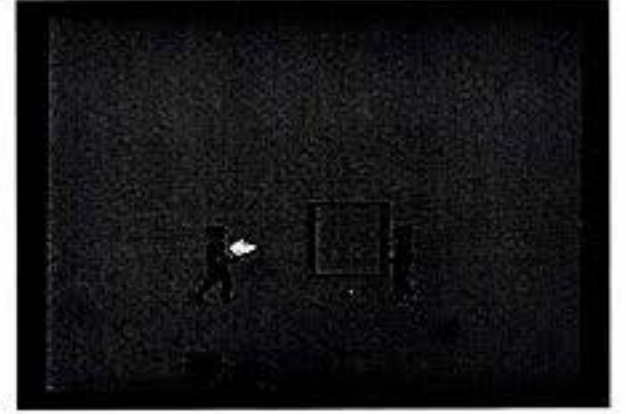
Yoko Ono.







Yasunao Tone, *Smooth Event*.



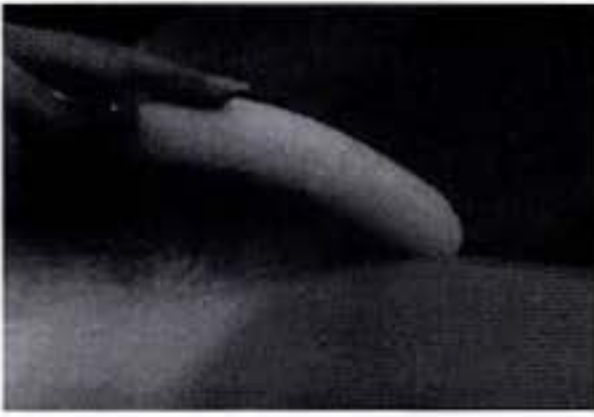
Geoffrey Hendricks, *Cloudsmith*.



Shigeko Kubota.





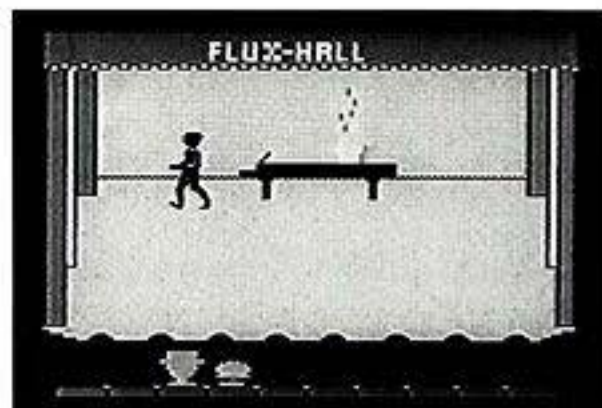
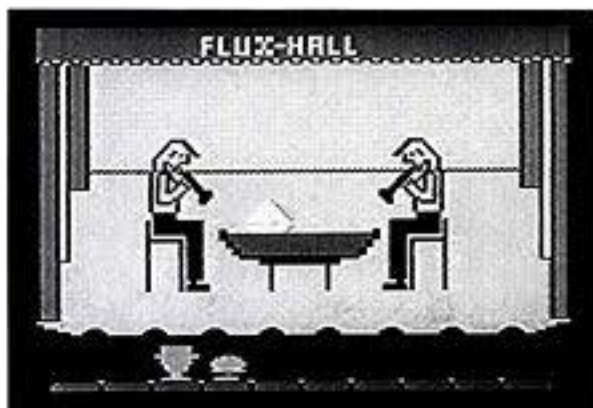
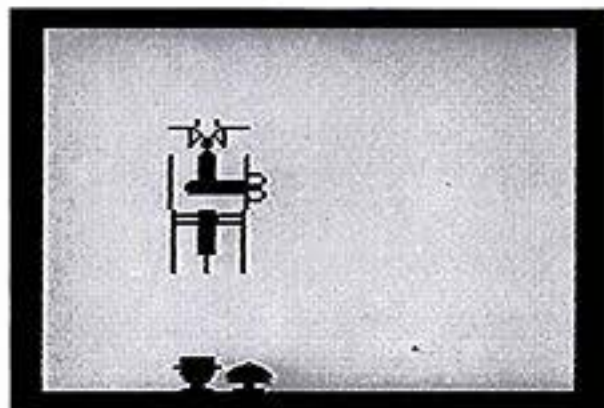


*Flucus Film No. 12.*



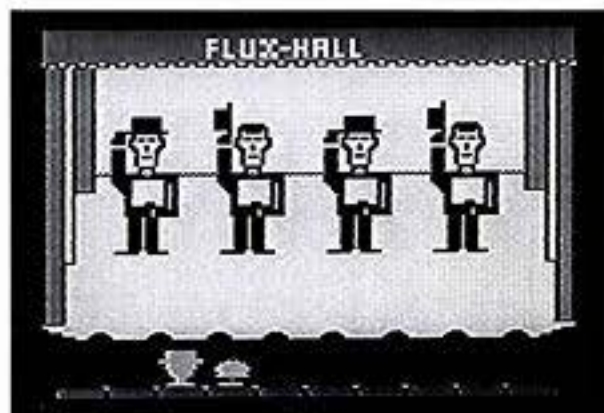
Yoko Ono.





Sopra, da sinistra:  
Dick Higgins, *Danger Music*,  
George Brecht, *Duet for Winds*,  
George Brecht, *Piano Piece*.

A lato: George Maciunas,  
*In Memoriam Adriano Olivetti*.



Sotto: George Brecht,  
*Flux Film No. 10*.



Nam June Paik.



Mieko Shiomi,  
*Disappearing Music for Face*.







Wolf Vostell, *Sun in Your Head*,  
1 TV-dé-coll/age électronique,  
7", Colonia, 1963.



Wolf Vostell,  
*TV-Cubisme Siège*, 20", 1985.



Wolf Vostell,  
*Neujahrs-Ansprache*, 1971,  
serigrafia, 77 × 64 cm.

Wolf Vostell, *Vietnamsinfonie*, 1971,  
partitura dell'happening, 104 × 73,5 cm;  
e *Jardin des délices*, 1982, serigrafia, 43 × 45 cm.







*Pianofortissimo*, Fondazione Mudima, gennaio 1990.



"Milanopoesia" 1989: Eric Andersen, Philip Corner, Esther Ferrer, Ken Friedman, Al Hansen, Geoffrey Hendricks, Juan Hidalgo, Milan Knizak, Jean-Jacques Lebel e Valeria Magli, Jackson MacLow, Walter Marchetti, Nam June Paik, Ben Patterson, Takako Saito, Gianni-Emilio Simonetti, Anne Tardos, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell, Emmett Williams.



Afterlude to the Exposition  
of Experimental Television  
1963, March, Galerie Parnass  
Nam June Paik

(1)

My experimental TV is

not always interesting

but

not always uninteresting

like nature, which is beautiful,

not because it changes beautifully,

but simply because it changes.

The core of the beauty of nature is, that, the limitless QUANTITY of nature disarmed the category of QUALITY, which is used unconsciously mixed and confused with double meanings.

- 1) character
- 2) value.

In my experimental TV, the words "QUALITY" means only the CHARACTER, but not the VALUE.

A is different from B,  
but not that  
A is better than B.

Sometimes I need red apple  
Sometimes I need red lips.

(2)

2 My experimental TV is the first ART (?), in which the "perfect crime" is possible..... I had put just a diode into opposite direction, and got a "waving" negative Television. If my epigons do the same trick, the result will be completely the same (unlike Webern and Webern-epigons)..... that is.....

My TV is NOT the expression of my personality, but merely

a "PHYSICAL MUSIC"

like my "FLUXUS championcontest", in which the longest-pissing-time-recordholder is honoured with his national hymn. (the first champion; F.Trowbridge. U.S.A. 59,7 seconds)

My TV is more (?) than the art,

or

less (?) than the art.

I can compose something, which lies higher (?) than my personality,

or

lower (?) than my personality.

\*\*\*\*\* 3 \*\*\*\*\*

Therefore (?), perhaps therefore, the working process and the final result has little to do,,, and

therefore,..... by no previous work was I so happy working as in these TV experiments.

In usual compositions, we have first the approximate vision of the completed work, (the pre-imaged ideal, or "IDEA" in the sense of Plato). Then, the working process means the torturing endeavour to approach to this ideal "IDEA". But in the experimental TV, the thing is completely revised.. Usually I don't, or cannot have any pre-imaged VISION before working. First I seek the "WAY", of which I cannot foresee where it leads to. The "WAY",.....,that means, to study the circuit, to try various "FEED BACKS", to cut some places and feed the different waves there, to change the phase of waves etc..... whose technical details, I will publish in the next essay..... Anyway, what I need is approximately the same kind of "IDEA" which American Ad Agency used to use..... just a way or a key to something NEW. This "modern" (?) usage of "IDEA" has not much to do with "TRUTH", "ETERNITY", "CONSUMMATION", "ideal IDEA", which Plato--Hegel ascribed to this celebrated classical terminology. (IDEA)<sup>o</sup>

f.i.

"KUNST IST DIE ERSCHEINUNG DER IDEE":  
"Art is the appearance of the idea":  
(Hegel----Schiller.)

This difference should be underlined, because the "Fetichism of Idea" seems to me the main critical criteria in the contemporary art, like "Nobility and Simplicity" in the Greek art (Winkelman), or famous five pairs of categories of Woefflin in Renaissance and Baroque art.

\*\*\*\*\*4\*\*\*\*\*

INDETERMINISM and VARIABILITY is the very UNDERDEVELOPED parameter in the optical art, although this has been the central problem in music for the last 10 years, (just as parameter SEX is very underdeveloped in music, as opposed to literature and optical art.

a) I utilized intensely the live-transmission of normal program, which is the most variable

optical and semantical event, in Nineteen-sixties. The beauty of distorted Kennedy is different from the beauty of football hero, or not always pretty but always stupid female announcer. Second dimension of variability.

13 sets suffered 13 sorts of variation in their VIDEO-HORIZONTAL-VERTICAL units. I am proud to be able to say that all 13 sets actually changed their inner circuits. No Two sets had the same kind of technical operation. Not one is the simple blur, which occurs, when you turn the vertical and horizontal control-button at home. I enjoyed very much the study of electronics, which I began in 1961, and some life-danger, I met while working with 15 Kilo-Volts. I had the luck to meet nice collaborators: HIDEO UCHIDA (president of UCHIDA Radio Research Institute), a genial avantgarde electronician, who discovered the principle of Transistor 2 years earlier than the Americans, and SHUYA ABE, allmighty poli-

technican, who knows that the science is more a beauty than the logic. UCHIDA is now trying to prove the telepathy and prophesy electromagnetically.

- c) As the third dimension of variability, the waves from various generators, tape-recorders and radios are fed to various points to give different rhythms to each other. This rather old-typed beauty, which is not essentially combined with High Frequency Technique, was easier to understand to the normal audience, maybe because it had some humanistic aspects.
- d) There are as many sorts of TV circuits, as French cheese-sorts. F.i. some old models of 1952 do certain kind of variation, which new models with automatic frequency control cannot do.
- e) Many mystics are interested to spring out from ONE-ROW-TIME, ONE-WAY-TIME, in order to GRASP the Eternity.
- aa) To stop at the consummated or steril Zero-point is a classical method to grasp the eternity.
- bb) To perceive SIMULTANEOUSLY the parallel flows of many independent movements is another classical way for it.

But poor Joyce was compelled to write the parallelly advancing stories in one book with one-way direction, because of the orthology of the book. The simultaneous perception of the parallel flows of 13 independent TV movements can perhaps realize this old dream of mystics, although the problem is left unresolved, whether this is possible with our normal physiognomy (we have only one heart, one breath, one focus of eye,) without some mystical training. and IF WELL TRAINED,.....,he needs neither 13 TVs, nor TV, nor electronics, nor music, nor art,.....the happiest suicide of art.... the most difficult anti-art, that ever existed..... I don't know, who could have achieved this platonic and steril consummation of art,

because if he REALLY did,

I should not know his name.

I must not know his name.

--- 5 ---

This reflection reminds me of two usages of the word "ECSTASY", which originally means in Greek

eksisteanal (ek=ex- out of - histanal to set, stand).

- xx) Normal use of this word is the frenzy of poetic inspiration, or mental transport or rapture from the contemplation of divine things. (A.C.D.)<sup>o</sup>  
In other words,,,  
\*\* completely filled time\*\* the presence of eternal present  
\*\*\* a kind of abnormal situation of the conscious-



ness

\*\*\* unconscious- or superconsciousness \*\*\*

extreme concentration

\*\*\* some mystics forget themselves

\*\*\* I unify with myself \*\*\* The world stops for 3 minutes !!! the eternal 3 minutes !!!

(Dostoyevsky, before having the spasm of Epilepsy) etc. etc....

\*\*\* There is dimension of "HIGH" OR "DEEP" which Germans are very fond of .....

zz) Above uses are somehow related with the abnormal state of consciousness, but J.P. SARTRE applied this word (EXTASIS) in analysing our consciousness in NORMAL STATE.

(S. L'Être et Le Neant)

According to Sartre,, our consciousness (cogito) is always "l'etre pour soi" (Sein fuer sich), a kind of being, which cannot unify with itself. We are condemned to think and that means we are condemned to ask.

That means in his word

I AM ALWAYS, WHAT I AM NOT and I AM ALWAYS NOT, WHAT I AM.

This incessant EX-TASIS (to go out of oneself) is the "NORMAL" character in the normal situation of our consciousness. The word "Ecstasy" (ex-tasis) is used here, almost as an antonym to the first case (xx). In xx) our consciousness is UNIFIED with itself. It has synthesized the dualism of our consciousness. But in zz), this dualism, or the dialectic evolution of our esprit is kept precious as the proof of our freedom,...

))) 6 (((

The aa) (to stop at the consummated or sterile zero-point to grasp the eternity ....) and the xx), (the ecstasy, in the sense of "mental transport or rapture from the contemplation of divine things") is the same thing. But the bb) (the perception of parallel flows of many inde-

pendent movements simultaneously) and the zz) (the ecstasy in the sense of Sartre,, that is, the perpetual proceeding of our consciousness in the normal state,,) seems to be completely different. But there are important common things between these two ( bb) and zz)). Both bb) and zz) don't know the terminal station, conclusion, stopped absolute moment, consummation, ascension. In other words, they are relative, relative, suspending, plain and common, movable, variable, hanging in mid-air,,

NOT VERY SATISFIED,  
BUT NOT VERY UNSATISFIED.....  
like my experimental TV, which is  
NOT ALWAYS INTERESTING,  
BUT NOT ALWAYS UNINTERESTING.....

--- 7 ---

Now let me talk about Zen, although I avoid it usually, not to become the salesman of "OUR" culture like Daisetsu Suzuki, because the cultural patriotism is more harmful than the political patriotism, because the former is the disguised one, and especially the self-propaganda of Zen (the doctrine of the self-abandonment) must be the stupid suicide of Zen..

Anyway, Zen consists of two negations.

the first negation:

The absolute IS the relative.

the second negation:

The relative IS the absolute.

The first negation is a simple fact, which every mortal meets every day; everything passes away,, mother, lover, hero, youth, fame,, etc.

The second negation is the KEY-point of Zen.

That means,.....

The NOW is utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 10 minutes is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 20 hours is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 30 months is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 40 million years is also utopia, what it may be.

.....

Therefore

.....

We should learn,

how to be satisfied with 75%

how to be satisfied with 50%

how to be satisfied with 38%

how to be satisfied with 9%

how to be satisfied with 0%

how to be satisfied with -100%.....

Zen is anti-avant-garde, anti-frontier spirit, anti-Kennedy,, Zen is responsible of asian poverty. How can I justify ZEN, without justifying asian poverty ?? It is another problem, to which I will refer again in the next essay.

Anyway, if you see my TV, please, see it more than 30 minutes.

"the perpetual evolution is the perpetual UNSatisfaction. it is the only merit of Hegelian dialectic." ( R.AKUTAGAWA )

"the perpetual Unsatisfaction is the perpetual evolution. it is the main merit of my experimental TV" ( N.J.P. )

The frustration remains as the frustration. There is NO catharsis.

( 8 )

Don't expect from my TV: Shock,, Expressionism,, Romanticism,, Climax,, Surprise,, etc ..... for which my previous compositions had the honour to be praised. In Galerie Parnass, one bull's head made more sensation than 13 TV sets. Maybe one needs 10 years to be able to perceive delicate difference of 13 different "distortions" (?), as it was so in perceiving the delicate difference of many kinds of "noises" (?) in the field of electronic music.

( please, refer to introduction of J.P. Wilhelm and my own to the Exposition of 1963 March in Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal. (reprints available, also published in Decollage no.4)



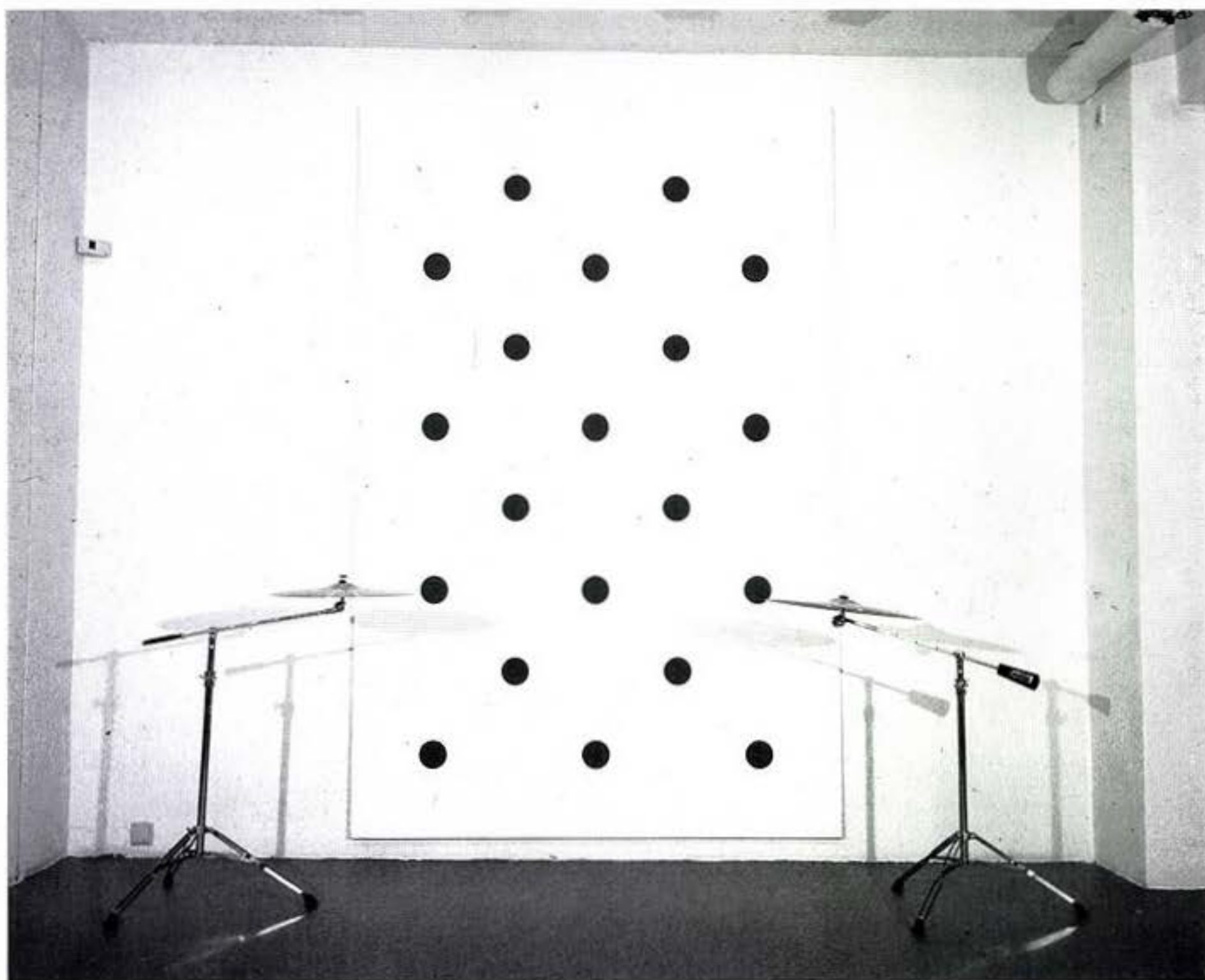
Nam June Paik  
con il suo Demagnetizer  
(o Life Ring), New York,  
ottobre 1965.  
(Foto Peter Moore).



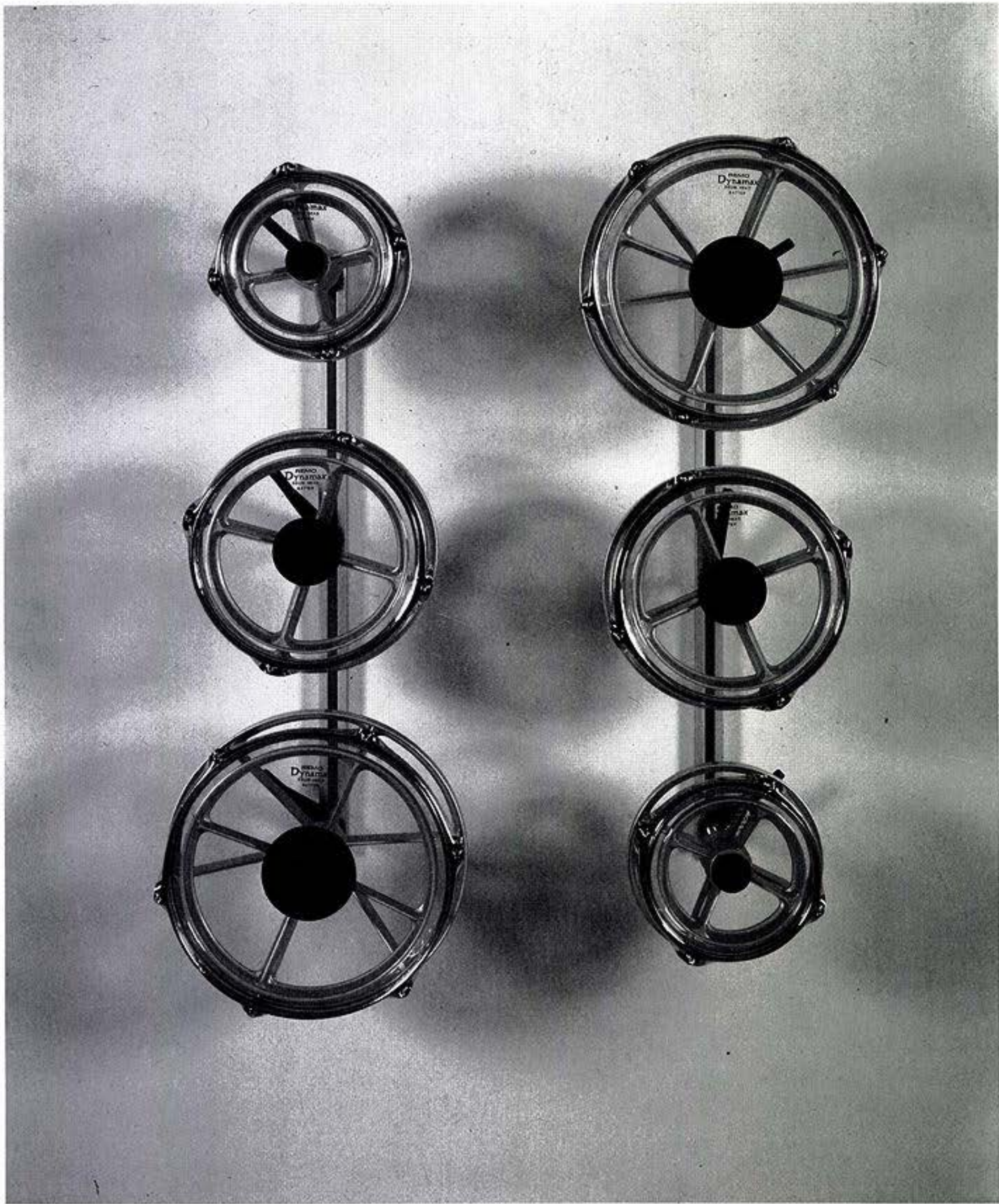
# John M. Armleder

John M. Armleder, *Untitled*, 1987.  
Furniture-sculpture.

Alla pagina seguente:  
John M. Armleder, *Untitled*, 1987.  
Furniture-sculpture.











John M. Armleder, *Two Carpets*, 1988; Erik Satie, *Musique d'ameublement*, 1920.  
Ensemble Contrechamps, Galerie Marika Malacorda, Ginevra, 1988.

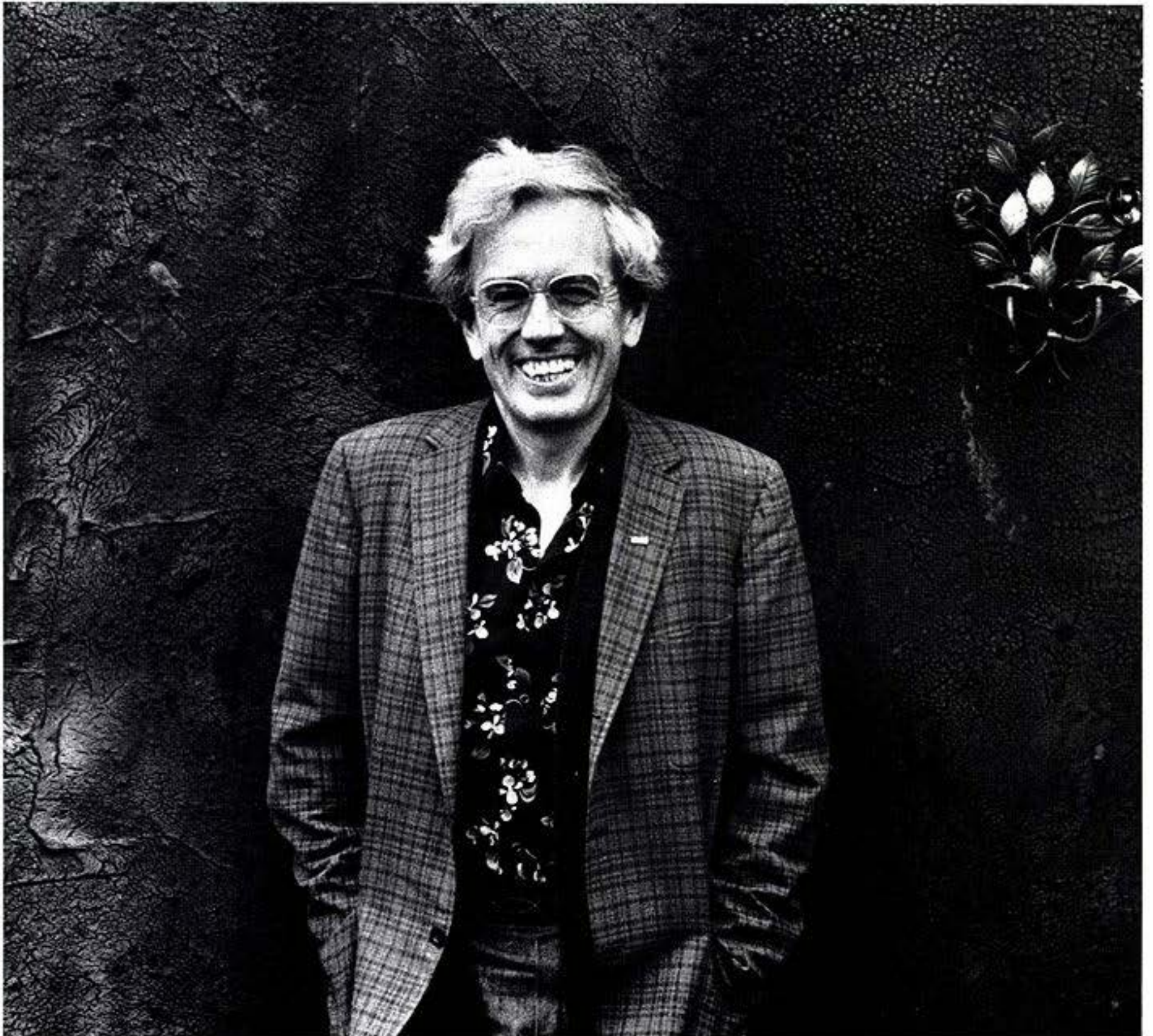


John M. Armleder, *il tappeto per il cocktail*.



# Robert Ashley

Robert Ashley. (Foto Michael O' Brien).





# The Contented Piano

Robert Ashley

A small wedge in the damper pedal to lift the dampers.

An electric drill with a soft polishing attachment or a sanding machine with a soft polishing attachment or an electric shoe polishing machine with the softest brush.

Polish the piano gently while it hums.

Practical considerations:

The piano must not be damaged.

The physical arrangements for the occasion are important.

The polishing lends itself to a certain style of video documentation.

Compositions in this series:

*Chair* (1961).

*To Piano Music by George Brecht* (1963).

*A Proposal to Recreate the First Airplane Flight* (1965).

*The Kimberleys* (1967).

*Depositions* (1969, subsequently destroyed).

*The Sandbox "Bottomless"* (1971).

*Rock Soup* (1973).

*The Great Northern Automobile Presence* (1975).

*Sock Ties* (1977).

*Over the Telephone* (1979).

*A Plan to Locate "Lucille" by Triangulation* (1981).

*Camion* (1983).

*A Very Large Piazza Table* (1985).

*Titles* (copyrighted) (1987).

*The Contented Piano* (1989).

*Combination Wedding and Funeral* (1964)

Duration: approximately 1 hour.

Location: a church.

This composition is performed as part of a "real" wedding ceremony (denomination of producer's choice) followed by a "real" funeral ceremony. It re-

quires a specially baked ceremonial cake and specially constructed coffin. The audience is seated in the church as part of the ceremony.

Personnel: director (Robert Ashley); 4 speaking actors (formal costume); 8 non-speaking actors (formal costume); writer-translator (to adapt the authentic texts of these ceremonies as they are conducted in the performance locale); stage and proprieties designer. Musicians: mixed chorus (8 voices); counter-tenor soloist; organist.

*Boxing* (1963)

Duration: approximately 1 hour.

Location: large gallery space.

15-round boxing match between two "refrigerator" boxes. Over the course of the 15 rounds the two boxes become decorated to the point of immobility – they become pieces of sculpture.

Personnel: director (Robert Ashley); sound designer; 2 performers (inside "refrigerator" boxes); 2 performance-decorators and assistants.

*Six-Day Chair* (1962)

Duration: six days; documentation throughout each day.

Location: anywhere.

This piece is a tour de force for an artist-craftsman who doesn't care that what he does is ephemeral. And it is a continuing performance for the documentation crews.

Personnel: director (Robert Ashley); 1 craftsman (local); (documentary artists: photo, etc.)

*Maneuvers for Small Hands* (1961)

Duration: approximately 1 hour.

Location: concert space with piano.

This is the composition that Francesco Conz has reproduced in portfolio. It was written for my son (when he was 6

years old), and I would have him perform it (he is now 34 years old). This is particularly effective as a television program.

Personnel: pianist (Sam Ashley); director (Robert Ashley).

*Ghost Concert from the Once Festival Trios (White on White)*: Ashley

small ensemble and voice

*Mographs*: Mumma

two pianists (one piano)

*The Holy Ghost Vacuum or America Faints*: Cacioppo

electric organ

*Country Boy Country Dog*: Sheff

small ensemble (to be selected): Reynolds

small ensemble (to be selected): Scavarda

small ensemble

Personnel: director (Robert Ashley); conductor and small ensemble (10 instr.).

Duration: about 3 hours.

Location: concert hall or gallery.

*Note*: we could combine certain works from this concert with the program of *Maneuvers for Small Hands*.

*George Manupelli Films* (Once Group productions)

I will have to select these films on the basis of what would be good for a non-American audience. Many of the films are "silent" with music by Robert Ashley. Other films are in conventional dialogue style in English, but with an emphasis on speech and location-sound for each scene. Many of the dialogue films could be enjoyed by a non-English speaking audience.

Duration: 2 or 3 programs of approximately 90 minutes.

Location: film theater / 16mm projection with sound.



### *Boxing (1963)*

A little something you can throw together, if friends drop by unexpectedly. You'll need two refrigerator packing boxes made of heavy corrugated paper. In both boxes cut pairs of holes on opposite sides about six inches lower than shoulder height and a little closer together than shoulder width (about two feet). These holes accommodate pairs of 2" x 2" pieces of lumber 10' long on the ends of which (front only, of course) are pairs of boxing gloves.

A person gets inside of each box and by grabbing the 2x2's that run through the box can lift the box enough off the floor to move around, and also by jabbing the 2x2's back and forth can punch the other box.

You'll need some sort of fenced-in area like a ring with ropes, etc. An official ring is 20' x 20'. And you'll need some sorts of sounds to keep the boxers on schedule. Try a loud tape that alternates one minute of commercials recorded off your local radio with a three-minute loop of crowd-cheering. As part of the general sound of the performance you can also amplify the boxes from the inside with radio mics.

The punching and moving around is very hard and a lot of work for the people inside the boxes, so perhaps you should put them in the ring (to punch it out) during the one-minute commercials, and let them rest during the three-minute periods (thus, reversing the ordinary schedule).

It is nice, if, during the three-minute rests between rounds, the seconds try to make the boxes look better. I mean, besides patching (which is seldom necessary, since refrigerator boxes are so tough), they can be painted and decorated. I think of this part as three-dimensional. (Remember "The Heap"? I imagine that, in the hands of really creative seconds, at the end of 15 rounds (giving 42 minutes of decorating time) the two boxes could take up almost the whole ring without even moving. I mean, their very physical beauty makes them inaccessible to one another. (Really!)

*Available Now Titles (Music for Television)*

### *What She Thinks (It's History)*

Title Withdrawn...

Yellow Man with Heart with Wings

### *Atalanta (Acts of God)*

Requirements of Desire M

Wuh... Mountain Country Courtship

Odalisque B (with Leopards)

### *Perfect Lives (Lost in the Sun)*

The Park

The Supermarket

The Bank

The Bar

The (Uhn) Living Room

The Church

The Backyard

### *Improvement (Don Leaves Linda)*

The Airline Ticket Counter

A Car with a Rumble Seat

The Big City the Good Life

A Bridge Game

(North/South/East/West)

### *Foreign Experiences*

The Flying Serpent

The Jaguar

The Coyote

Eagle Tearing Hearts out of Chests

### *Now Eleanor's Idea*

Change

The Miracle of Cars

Questions and Answers

The Song

### *When Opportunity Knocks*

A Day on Planet Gilbert (If these projections work out, / this, by the year 2000, / will be the Planet Gilbert.)

Yes, but Is It Edible?

A Post-Historic Light Plot

Love Is a Good Example

We Restored Democracy

Don't Forget Re: Dita B.

When Famous Last Words Fail You

### *When Opportunity Knocks*

El Aficionado

My Brother Called

A Simple Border Crossing

An Answer Is Expected

Viva's Boy

### *When Opportunity Knocks*

Dust (The Picasso Project)

"Texas" Reliable White

One-Year China Forest Fire

Jesus Find Me a Good Job

Pale by Comparison

The Last Chance (Women Welcome)

All in All (Those Were the Days)

### *When Opportunity Knocks*

The Conquest of the New World

El Dorado (Dreams Come True) (R. D'Juan Victory)

La Revisionista (Wynn Dwan Z'Wrrld)  
From a Little Town in Spain (Tso On Wilde-Otes)

From the Sanatorium (Ev Erhuan N. Love)

### *When Opportunity Knocks*

One Day, a Group of Leaders

Another Classic Moonshot

The Future Is in the Past

Some Days, It's a Long Way Home

Famous in a Certain Sense (J.H. as C. Columbus / G. Bruno; W.M. as G.

Bruno / C. Columbus; E.F. as Q.

Elizabeth / C. de Medici)

Celestial Excursions

Lezards Preferent Du Slime

### *When Opportunity Knocks*

Devoted Himself to These

Single-Pole Magnetism

Fixity of Attention

Smell Use in Diagnosis

Encyclopedia Sales

### *When Opportunity Knocks*

The New England Chill Factor

A List of Disappointed

Gong and the Adversaries

Precious Little to Go On

The Mongoose and the Cobra

### *Illusion Models (Final)*

Hypothetical Models for Investigating  
Auditory-Tactile Boundary Illusions in  
Real Space

I The Perfect Custard (an  
immediate-boundary illusion program)

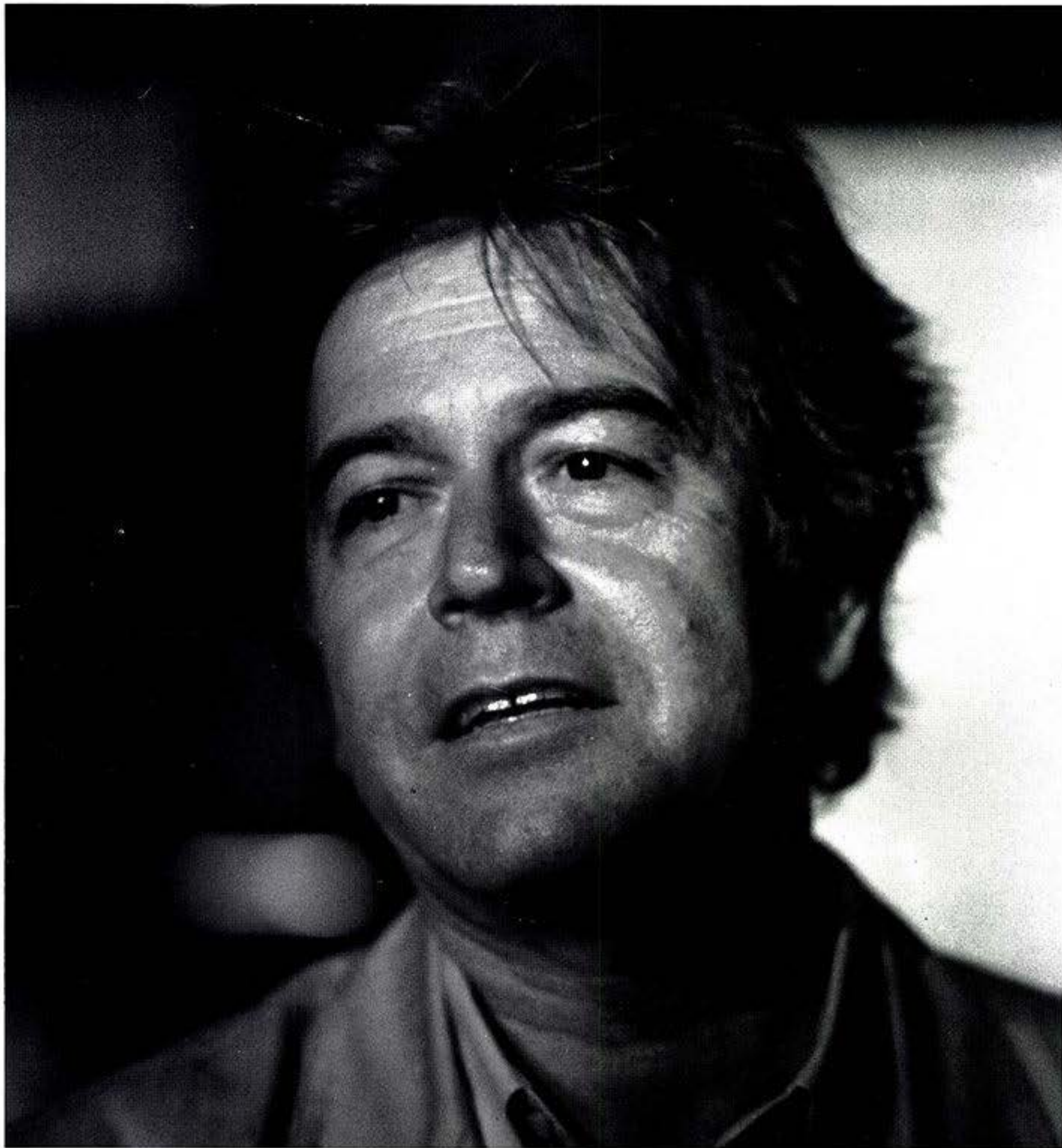
II The Entrance (a remote-boundary  
illusion program)

III Practice Alert (a  
coincidence-illusion program)

IV Fancy Free / It's There (an  
obstacle-illusion program)

© Robert Ashley 1989







*Non sapremo mai più* Non slacciare il primo bottone *Una sola impronta* *Straziante agonia* *finisce in*  
**Un grande vuoto**  
*Fase decisiva* *gran finale* *non è riuscito*  
*Solita storia* *si spegne* **ancora si spegne** *concludiamo subito il dolore*  
*La città scotta:* *della città* *Scomparsa dal volto*  
**Al nodo finale** *NOI ROBOT* *Mostri da ridere* *scherzo*  
*Si ride, quindi va bene* *per scherzo* *ormai hanno*  
*sopravvivere per completare* *solo voledi*  
**Salvano solo** Frasi prefabbricate Fine di vita

Nanni Balestrini, "Cronogramma 4",  
*Un grande vuoto*, 1963.

*Ora muove le dita* *Non è il caso di allarmarsi* *Per una soluzione*  
*facciamoci illusioni* *Nel tramonto romano* **In cinque episodi** *a sette*  
**dei milanesi?** *un argomento:* *sulla strada*  
*Impossibile improvvisare* *problema* *L'era della tecnica*  
*era sempre questo* *progetto in due parti* *parlare per due ore* **Si schianta**  
*con occhi bendati* *Il sorpasso finisce* *di fronte al* *Prima traccia* *un solo graffio*  
*Con l'auto* *una volta* *brezza* *alle spalle* *Non* *del dis* *contro un albero* *contro un palo*  
**Ha prezzo** *Un altro sguardo* *saltando* **detto**  
*Guarda... parla... dice* *Qualcosa* *Superato lo choc* *cambierà* *Anche se cambiava nome scritto*  
**ordanzza per non impazzire**  
*quasi come* *Divagazioni (tristi)* *Per l'asta truccata è sua:*  
*roiserò anche gli altri* *una mano alla balena* *accoppiata* *(e il resto)* *Nel corpo è facile*  
*sommessamente* *cambia (in meglio)* **L'UOMO DI QUALITÀ**  
*tesa* *E necessario* *è solo morale* *Ma che fatica* *ma soltanto*  
*Avrei fatto* *soluzioni* *Le possibili* *tutto da capo* *ma con amore* *tutti d'accordo*  
*ma stava per iario*

Nanni Balestrini, "Cronogramma 5",  
*Per una soluzione*, 1963.



1983  
Il grande fiume



Può succedere a chiunque di identificarsi col fiume, di scoprire che si ha col fiume un rapporto diverso da quello avuto nella fanciullezza e nell'adolescenza.

Può succedere di rivedere se stessi, la vita trascorsa e quella ancora da vivere come il tracciato di una corrente, di un flusso con una sorgente e una foce.

Attraversando un fiume - atto quotidiano, abituale - accade improvvisamente di rendersi conto di ciò che si sta facendo e di pensare il fiume in tutt'altro modo, con il rispetto - almeno - che si deve a un possibile simulacro di se stessi.

Si guarda dunque con qualche paura al corso d'acqua come alla propria immagine vista in uno specchio impietoso.

Se si vorrà poi dare un aspetto grafico o pittorico a un immaginario fiume personale ad al nuovo, timoroso rapporto che con esso si intrattiene, ci si accorgerà che all'esercizio partecipa inconsapevolmente il desiderio di attribuire forme propiziatricie al *tempo*, sia questo il cosiddetto passato o il futuro che lo segue. Ecco dunque un'immagine che si trasforma in un privato e criptico esorcismo dove il ricordo prospettico dello *ieri* si coniuga con la impossibilità di dare una forma non piatta ai tempi del *domani*.

In questo grande quadro B. ha diviso in dieci ipotetici segmenti il proprio fiume e se stesso, lasciando che la mano, aiutata dal caso, gli suggerisse lenti o - a piacere - veloci percorsi del passato insieme a soluzioni grafiche incommensurabili e "frattali" adatte a rappresentare il futuro.

Ne risulta un percorso esile e tortuoso all'inizio, gonfio e disteso poi, che si fa a tratti nascosto, carsico, che affronta ostacoli, genera isole e finalmente diventa palude, laguna prima dell'ultimo tratto che porta alla foce.

Nulla di più strumentale - per ultimo segmento - della scelta della palude, luogo dove le correnti si fanno impercettibili, ma ricco di fanghi primordiali generatori di vita organica, meta di uccelli di passo dove ancora molte isole possono proliferare.

Il Grande Fiume di B. può esser letto nel suo insieme e nel singolo segmento; il fiume va disceso o risalito, l'occhio può percorrerne le anse, aggirarne le isole, lasciarsi trascinare dalla corrente. Lo spazio, il fluire, la natura delle acque (dimenticati gli affluenti), i tempi di percorrenza sono accennati e genericamente ricondotti, mediante immagini di riferimento, alla similitudine lata con i dati corrispondenti della vita e delle opere di B.

Il colore azzurro invita ingenuamente all'oblio, la insula-influmine-nata è presto lasciata, le correnti la creano e possono distruggerla. Quella che resiste resta tale per sempre; città nascono sulle isole.

Un fiume ha dunque un principio e una fine ma nella sua continuità esiste finché si può immaginare, con l'acqua, un equilibrio non precario della vita e in questo senso pur non essendo eterno o immortale riveste profondi significati consolatori per le paure oscure di chi vi si identifica.

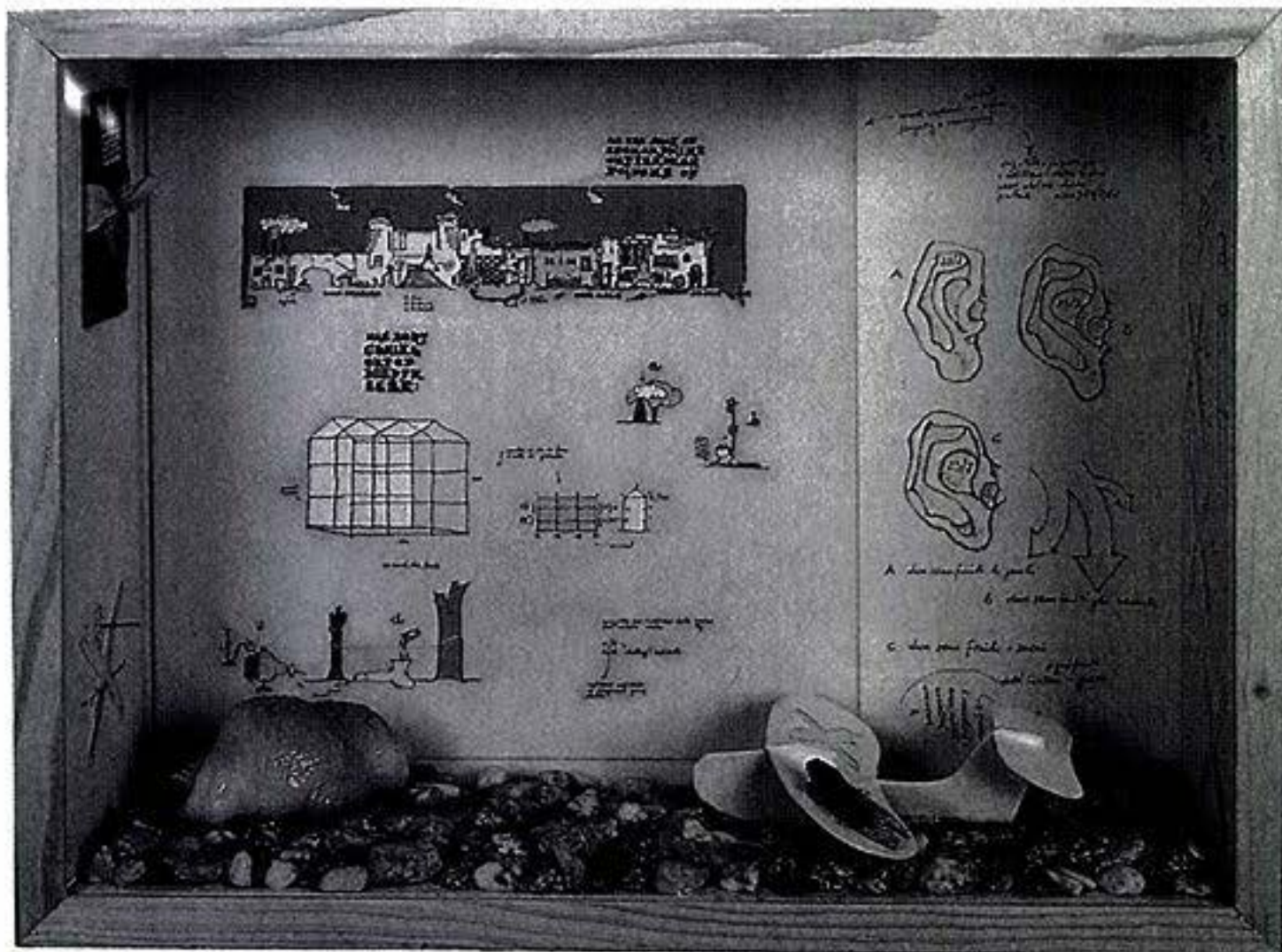
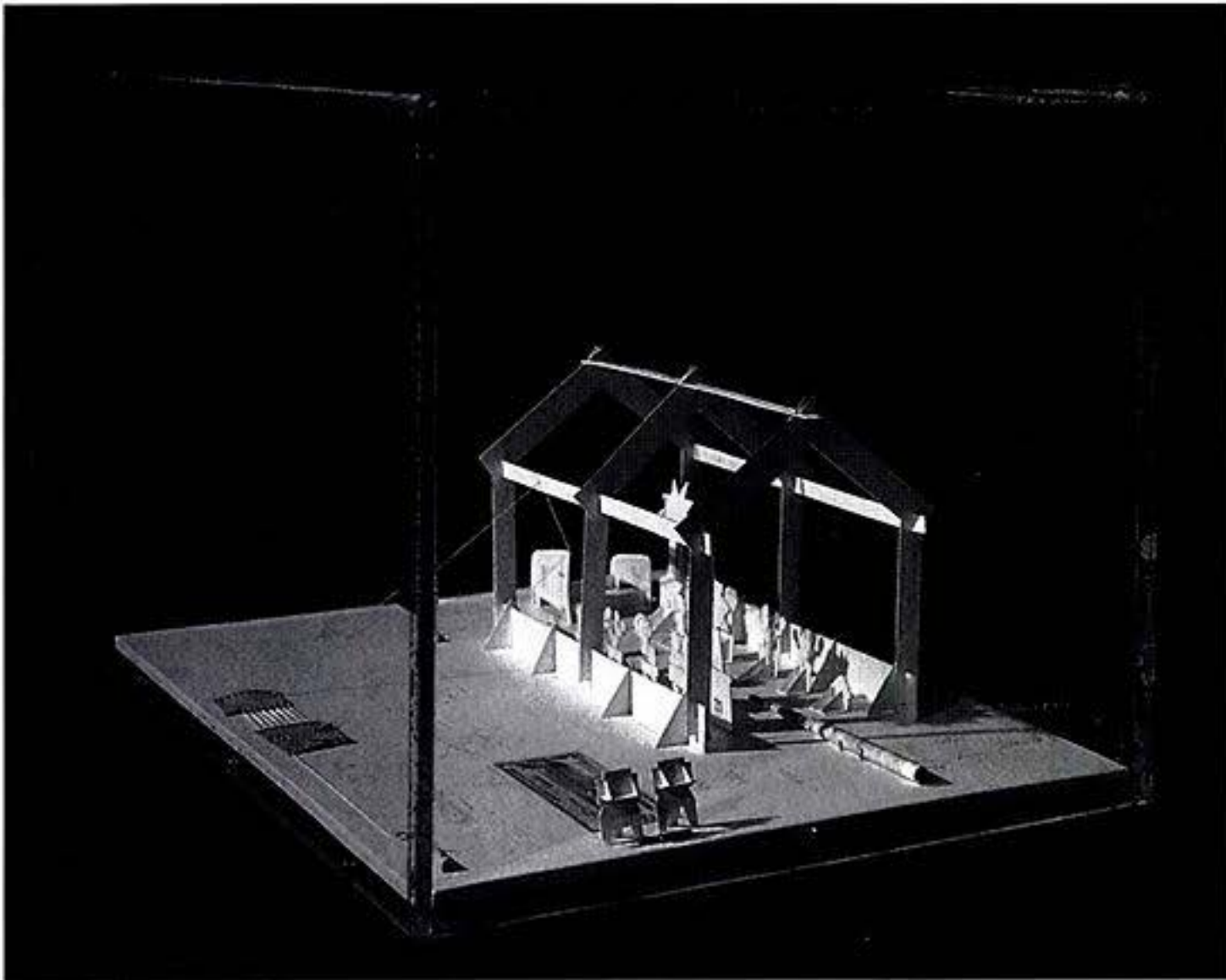
Mediato da necessità e casualità questo quadro non ha più certezze di quante ne fornisca una risposta di oracolo o un'ipotesi di calcolo delle probabilità.

E quando l'acqua e la vita scompaiono, di un fiume resta pur sempre - dicono - l'immagine fossile percepibile dall'occhio elettronico dei satelliti.

Gianfranco Baruchello  
febbraio 1983



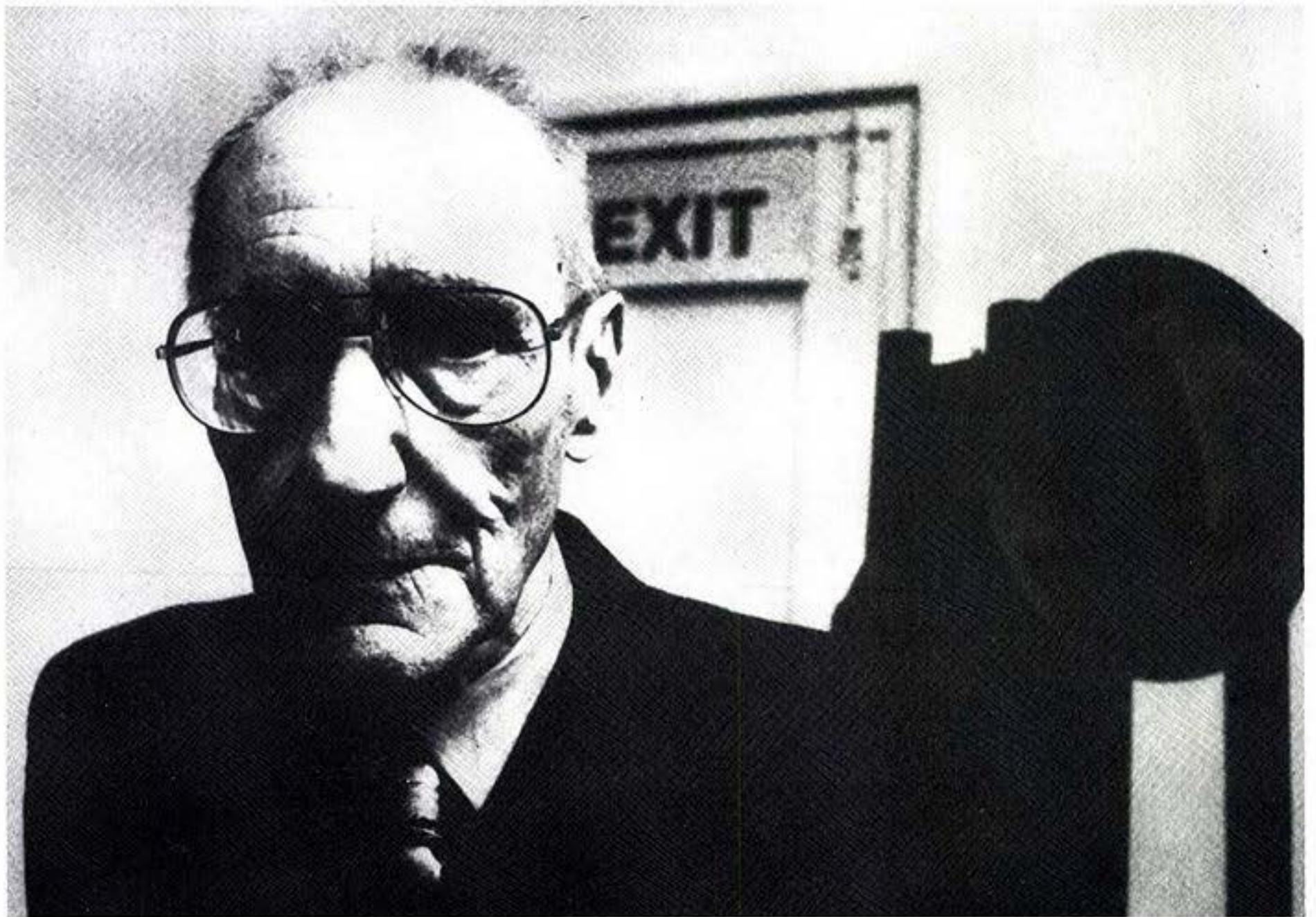
Gianfranco Baruchello,  
*Greenhouse b/ASL*, 1977.  
(Foto Giorgio Como).



Gianfranco Baruchello,  
*Otocriminal a 4000 Hertz*, 1989.  
(Foto Giorgio Como).



# William S. Burroughs





# L'arte nagual

William S. Burroughs

Nei libri di Carlos Castaneda, Don Juan distingue due universi: uno *tonal* e l'altro *nagual*. L'universo *tonal* è l'universo quotidiano dei rapporti di causa-effetto, prevedibile perché già registrato. Quello *nagual* è l'universo sconosciuto, imprevedibile, incontrollabile. Perché il *nagual* abbia libero accesso, bisogna spalancare la porta al caso.

Ci deve essere un fattore casuale: gocce di vernice sulla tela, dar fuoco al quadro, spruzzarlo. Forse il fattore casuale più fondamentale è il colpo di fucile che produce una esplosione di colore secondo modelli e forme imprevedibili. Senza questo fattore casuale il pittore può soltanto copiare l'universo *tonal*, e la sua pittura è prevedibile quanto l'universo che egli copia.

Klee diceva: "Un artista non riproduce la Natura. Riproduce il visibile." Intravede, cioè, l'universo *nagual* - il non-vi-

sto - e nello scorgerlo lo rende visibile allo spettatore sulla tela. Se la porta del caso è chiusa, il pittore è prevedibile quanto l'universo: può solo copiare, e i pittori si sono accontentati a lungo di copiare la Natura.

Quello che sto provando a fare potrebbe dunque essere definito *arte nagual*. Il colpo di fucile che ha fatto scoppiare una bomboletta di vernice spray, un tubetto o un altro contenitore di colore, è un modo di mettersi in contatto col *nagual*. Naturalmente ce ne sono molti altri, come l'ordine arbitrario di sagome scelte a caso, il marmorizzare, il macchiare...

Colui che voglia evocare l'imprevedibile, deve coltivare incidente e casualità... il lancio di una moneta, di un pennello, il colpo di un fucile, il macchiare colori e forme per produrre nuove forme e nuove combinazioni di colore.

Può portare ancora oltre il procedimento, usando sagome inserite arbitrariamente: il profilo di un uomo, di una casa, di un albero può essere casuale quanto l'esplosione di un barattolo di vernice o quanto il cospargere a caso una superficie di foglie, griglie, maschere, cerchi, pezzi di vetro rotto o di puzzles fotografici e parole.

Ho usato una frase, "cancellare la parola col vento", e poi l'ho tradotta in geroglifici egiziani. La parola non viene usata per il suo significato, ma come immagine.

Visto che il *nagual* è imprevedibile, non esiste alcuna formula attraverso la quale esso possa essere attendibilmente evocato. Certo, la magia è piena di formule e di riti, che però sono solo aggiunte di efficacia variabile. Una formula che oggi funziona potrebbe risultare del tutto inefficace domani.

Il pittore è vincolato alle formule già date di forma e colore da applicare su una superficie. Lo scrittore è ancor più rigidamente limitato: alle parole su una pagina. Il *nagual* deve essere continuamente creato e *ri-creato*.

E alla fine, il creatore. Norman Mailer diceva gentilmente di me che potevo essere "posseduto dal genio". Non che *sono* un genio, o che possiedo il genio, ma che, a volte, posso essere posseduto dal genio. Definiscono "genio" il *nagual*, l'imprevedibile, l'incontrollabile, spontaneo, vivo, capriccioso e arbitrario. Un artista è posseduto dal genio, a volte, se è molto fortunato.

Gennaio 1989

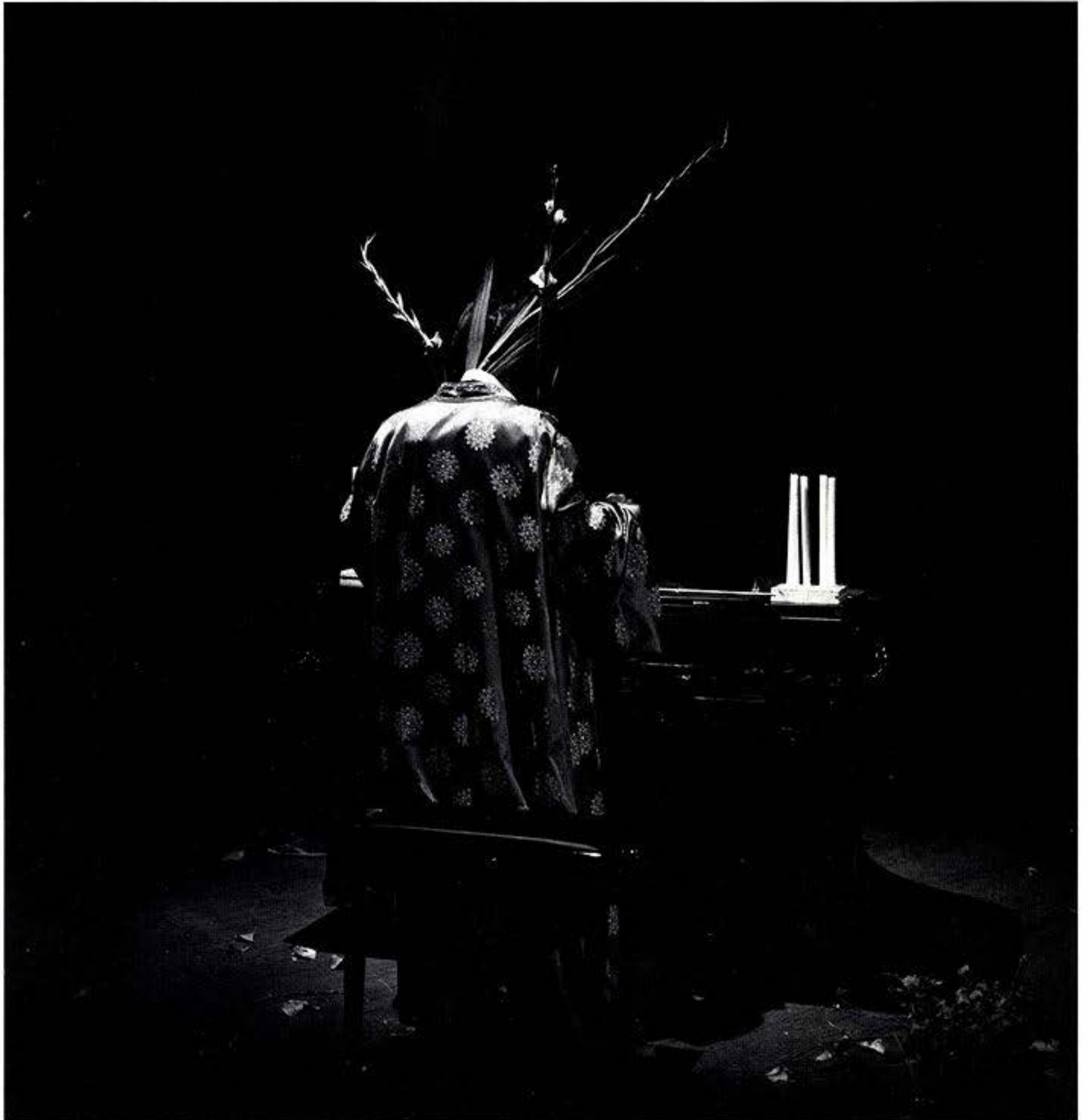
**B U R**  
**W I L L I A M S**  
**R O U**  
**G H S**





William S. Burroughs,  
*Footsteps on Dead  
Leaves*, 1987.



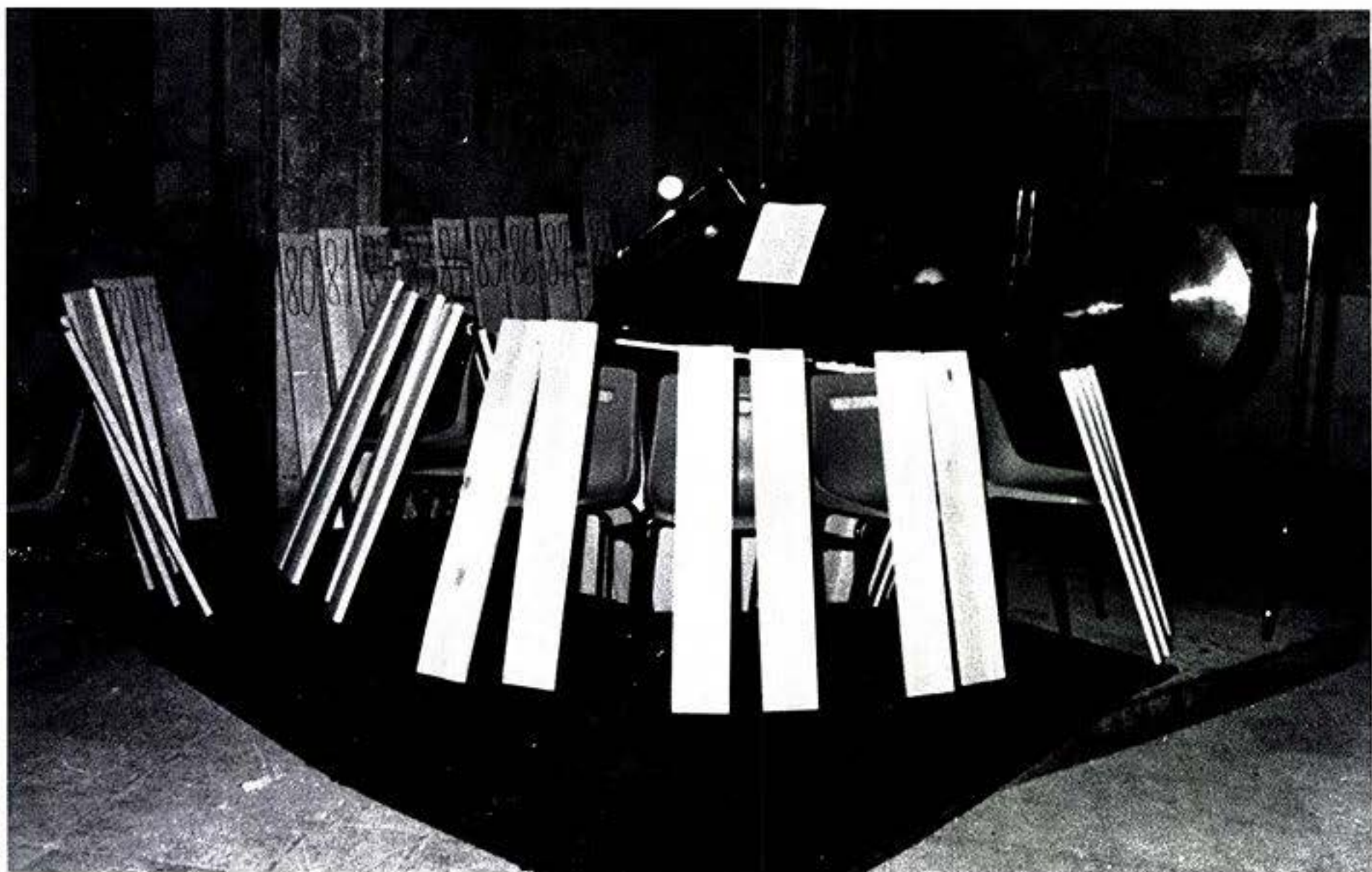


Giancarlo Cardini, *Neo-Haiku Suite*. (Foto Bucci).





Giancarlo Cardini. (Foto Roberto Masotti).



Giancarlo Cardini, *La durezza delle pietre*. (Foto Bartalini).



# Claudio Costa



Claudio Costa, *Installation*, 1978.



# Braco Dimitrijevic



Braco Dimitrijevic, *Triptychos Post Historicus*,  
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1979:  
Part one, *Die grosse Gefühlmaschine*, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy, 1920;  
Part two, *Bicycle Used by Joop Sanders*, 1978-79;  
Part three, *Melon*. (Courtesy Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven).





Braco Dimitrijevic, *Triptychos Post Historicus or Repeated Secret*,  
Tate Gallery, Londra, 1978:  
Part one, *Little Peasant*, Amedeo Modigliani, 1920,  
Part two, *Wardrobe Painted by Sarah Moore*,  
Part three, *Pumpkin*. (Courtesy Tate Gallery, Londra).





Braco Dimitrijevic, *Triptychos Post Historicus*,  
Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 1979:  
Part one, *Composition XIV*, Piet Mondrian, 1913,  
Part two, *Hans Biezen's Guitar*,  
Part three, *Grape*. (Courtesy Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven).



Erik Dietman







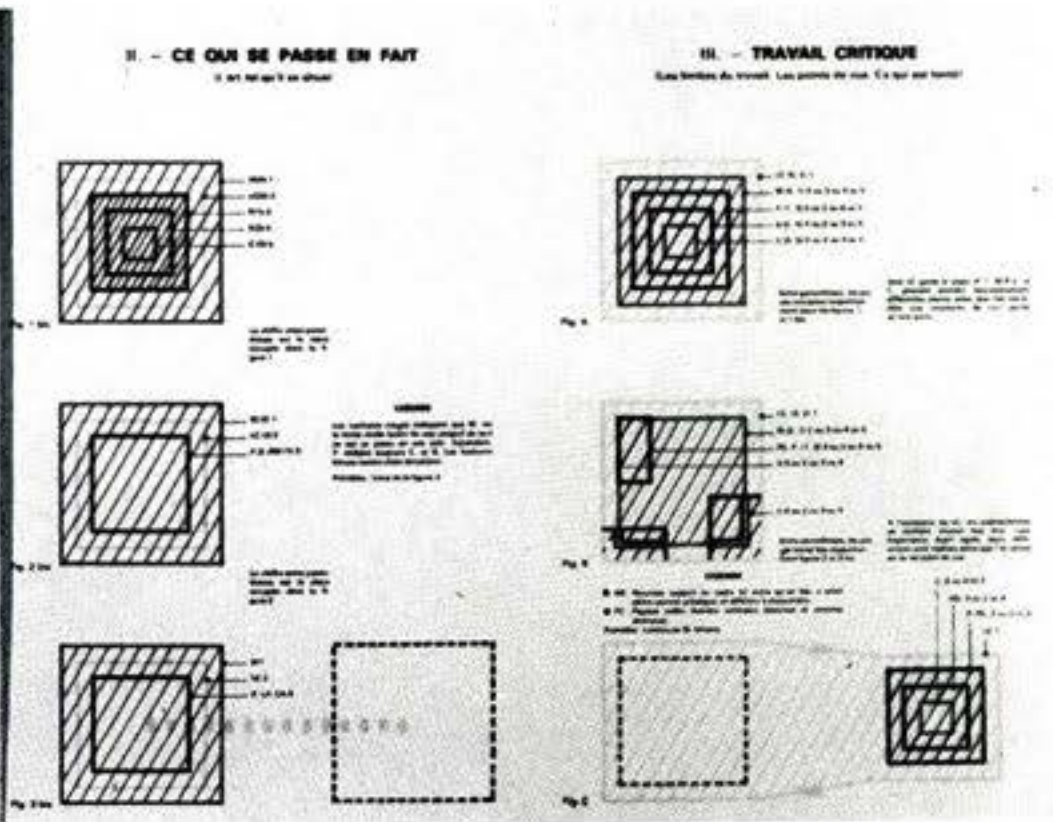
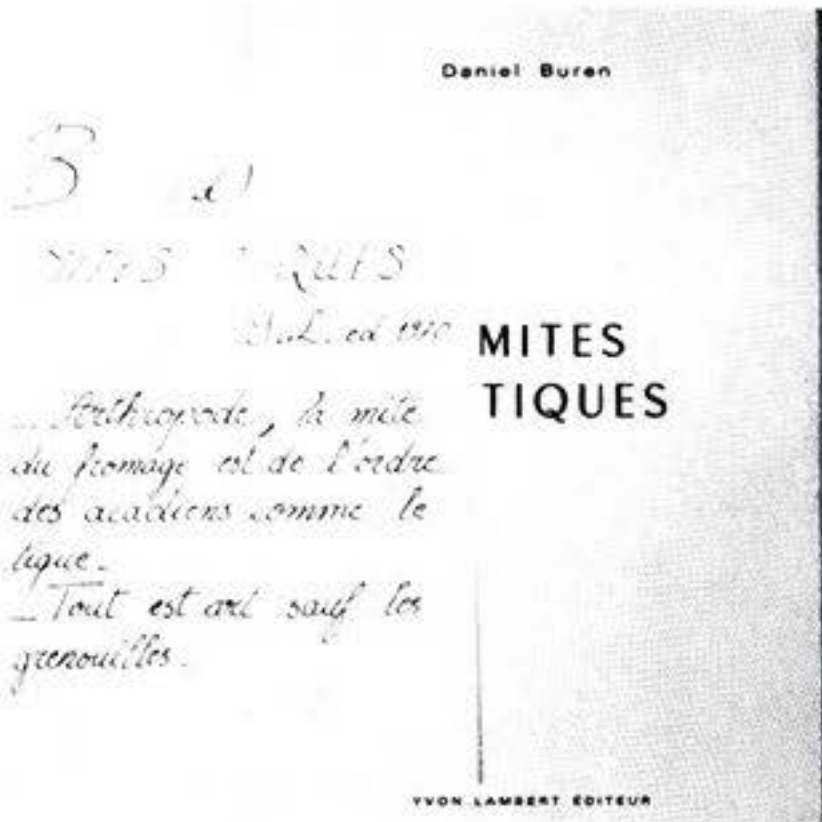
Erik Dietman, *L'art mol et raide ou épilepsisme sismographe pour têtes épileées; mini mal laid comme une aide minimale*, 1986. (Courtesy Moderna Museet, Stoccolma).



Erik Dietman, *Le hall d'honneur*, 1985-87 (Courtesy Moderna Museet, Stoccolma).



# Charles Dreyfus



- Opales, et une larve.  
Avant de l'adulte en dessous.
- En haut de l'anne, des murs de terre.
- Collections de musique vibratoire pour  
leçons de musique de chambre.
- Le meilleur des services est le service aux  
amateurs honorables.
- Il faut dire  
La cause du temps, et non le Sacre du  
Printemps.



In alto e in basso: Charles Dreyfus, *Une tour, deux reines, un tour de reines*, 1983. Pastiche contenente l'edizione originale del libro di Marcel Duchamp *Rose Sélavy* (GML, Parigi, 1939) e tre polaroid, 28,7×23,9 cm.  
Al centro: Charles Dreyfus, *Mites tiques*, 1982. Pastiche contenente l'edizione originale del libro di Daniel Buren *Limites critiques* (Yvon Lambert editore, 1970) e un cartoncino manoscritto, 27×59 cm.



# Brion Gysin

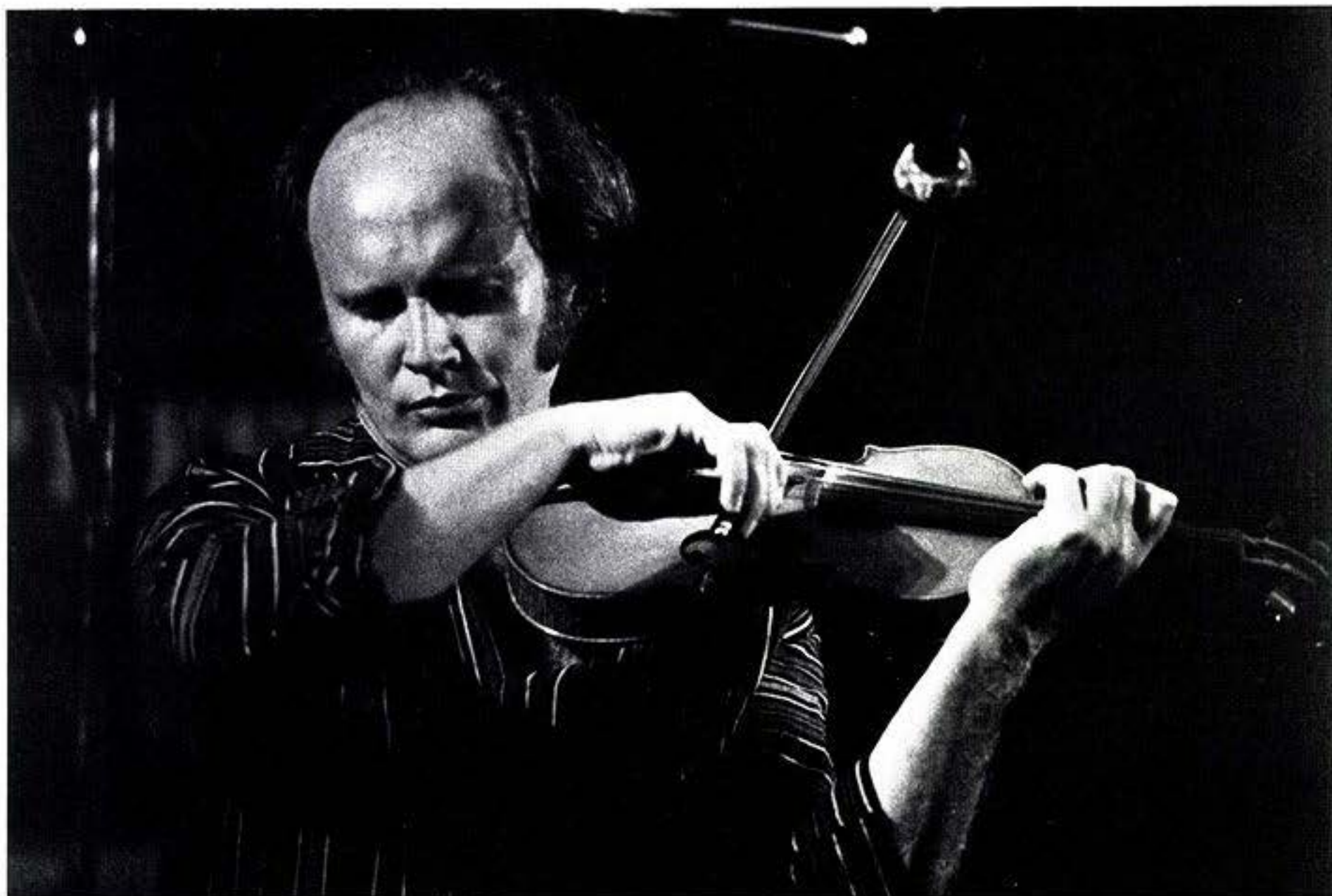
AM	THAT	I		I	AM
AM	THAT		AM	I	I
AM	THAT		I	AM	I
	THAT	I	AM	I	AM
	THAT	I	I	AM	AM
	THAT	I	AM	I	AM
	THAT	I	AM	AM	I
	THAT	I	I	AM	AM
	THAT	I	AM	AM	I
		AM	I	AM	THAT
		AM	AM	I	THAT
		AM	THAT	AM	I
		AM	THAT	I	AM
		AM	AM	THAT	I
		AM	I	AM	THAT
		AM	I	THAT	I
		AM	THAT	AM	AM
		AM	AM	I	THAT
		AM	I	I	THAT
		AM	THAT	I	I
		AM	I	AM	I
	AM	AM	I	THAT	I
	AM	AM	THAT	I	I
	AM	AM	I	I	THAT
	AM	AM	I	I	THAT
	AM	AM	THAT	I	I
	AM	AM	I	THAT	I
	I	I	AM	THAT	AM
	I	I	THAT	AM	AM
	I	I	AM	THAT	AM
	I	I	AM	THAT	AM
	I	I	THAT	AM	AM
	I	I	AM	AM	THAT

Brion Gysin, *I am that I am*, 1964.

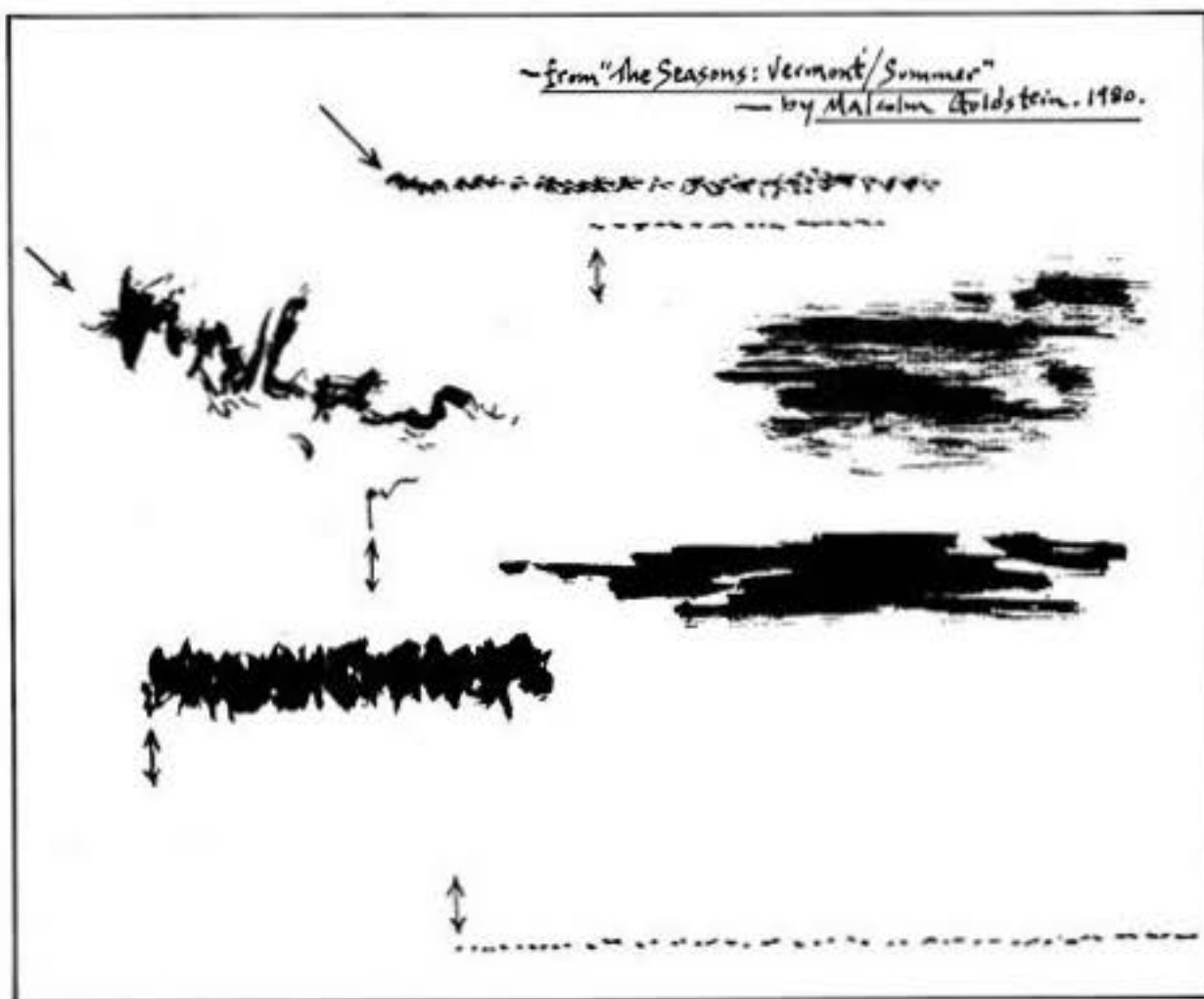
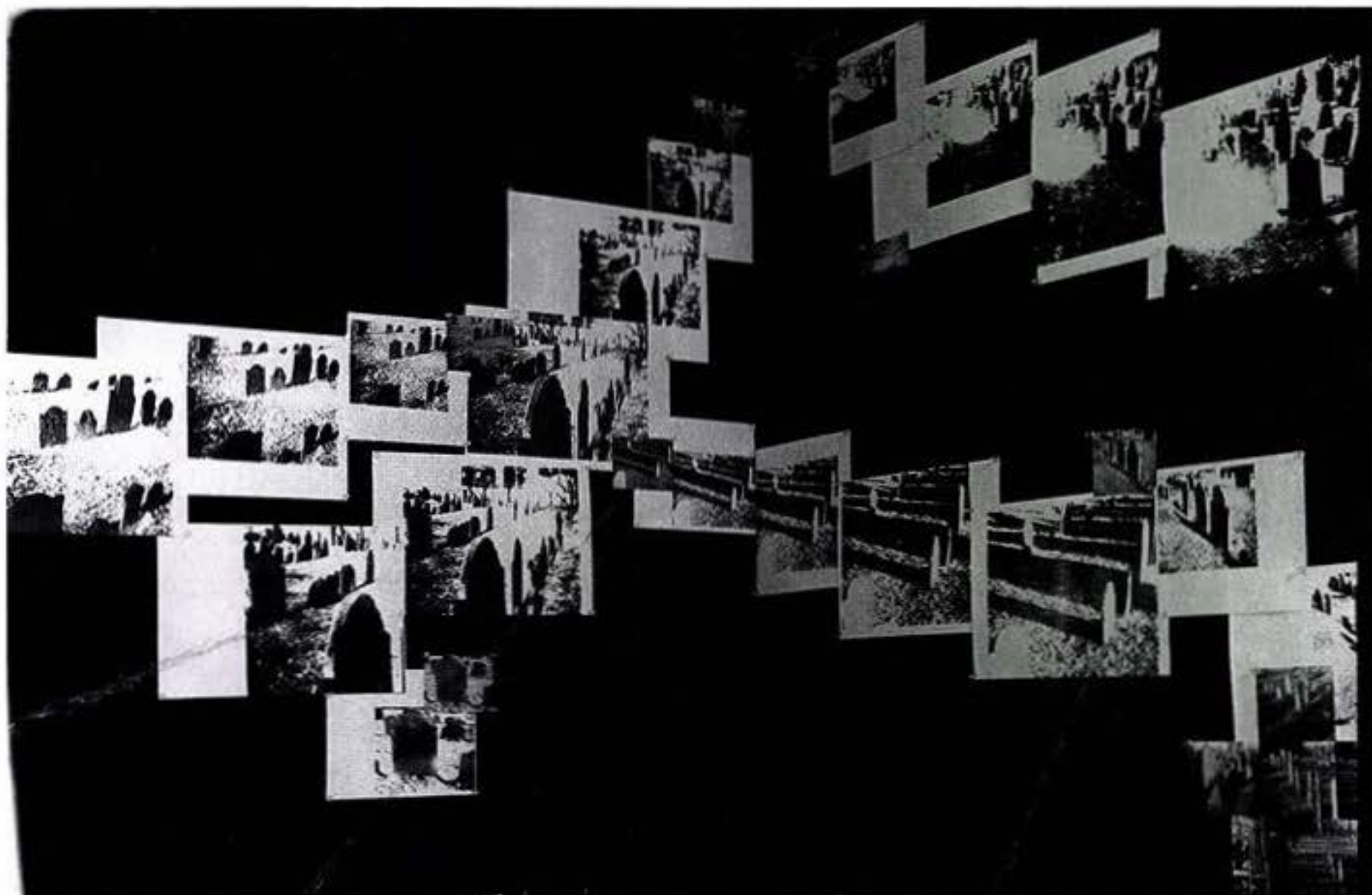


# Malcolm Goldstein

Malcolm Goldstein.  
(Foto Antaramian).







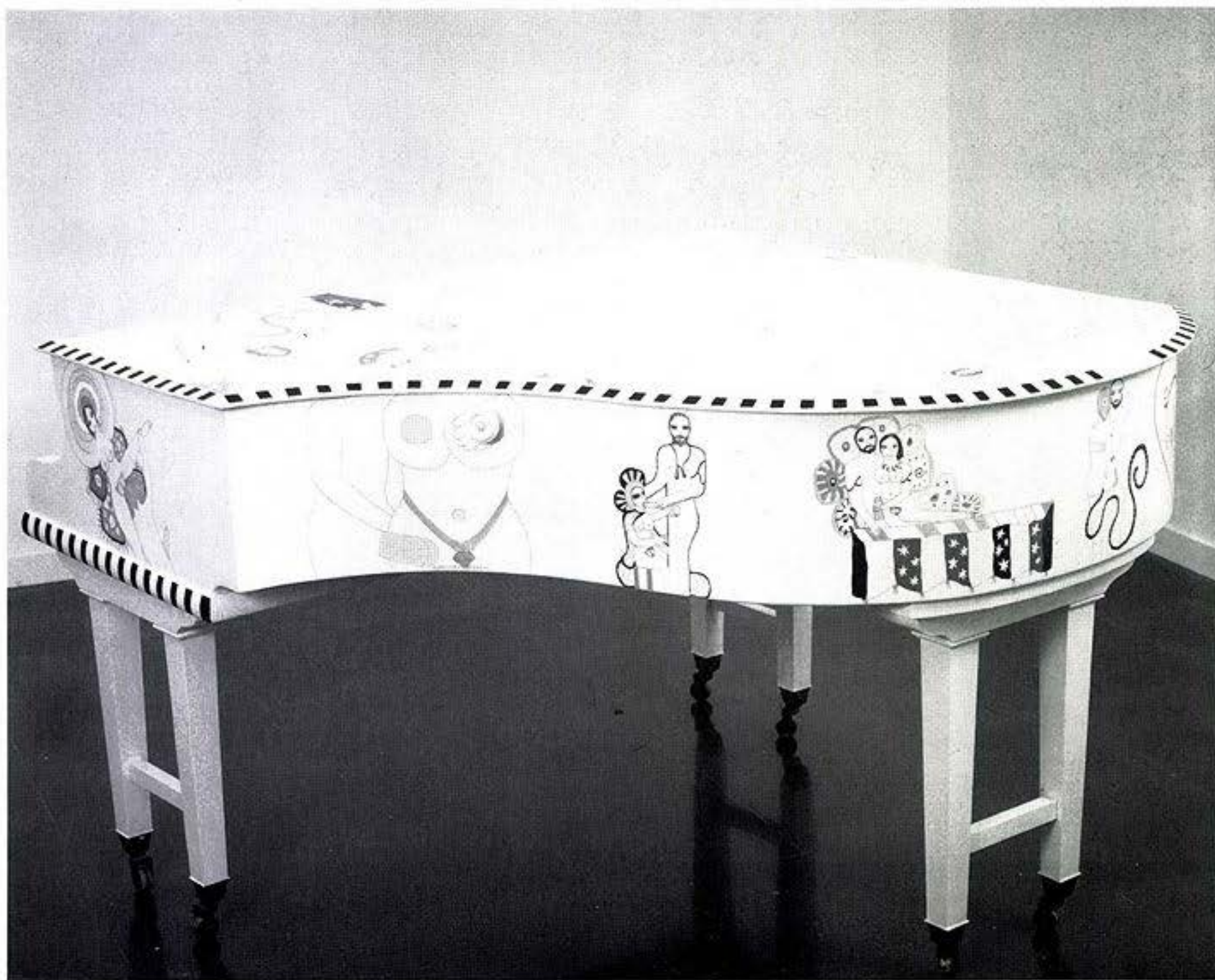
Malcolm Goldstein, *The Life Cycles of Stones* (audio-video installation), "Sound Art Festival", Mobius, Boston. (Foto David Neipris).

Malcolm Goldstein, brano di partitura per *The Seasons: Vermont/Summer* (for unspecified instrumental ensemble and magnetic tape collage), 1980.



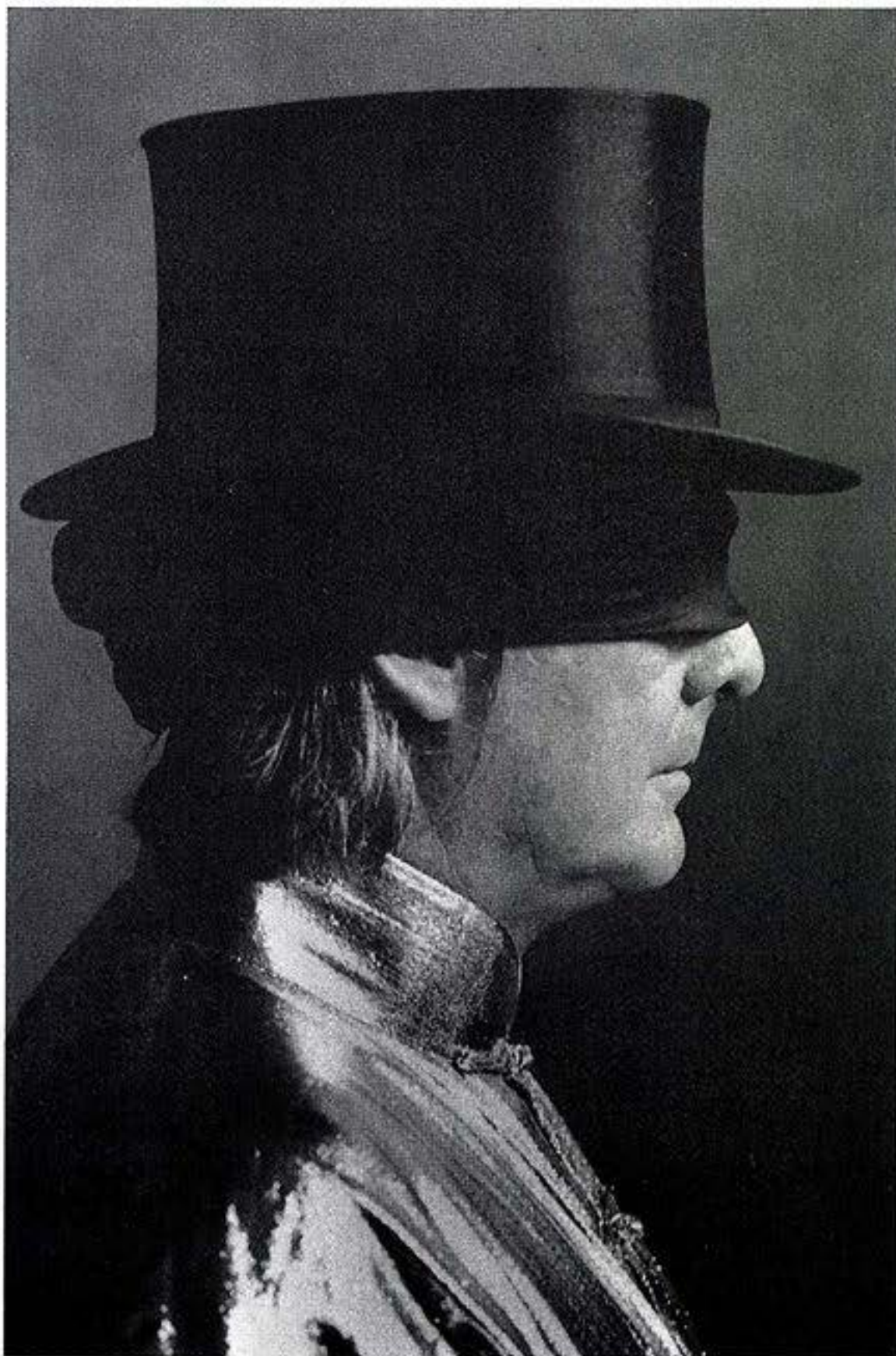
# Dorothy Iannone

Dorothy Iannone, *Piano for Alexander*, 1989-90. (Courtesy Francesco Conz).





# James Lee Byars





“Un distruttore che aggiunge all'esistenza” (Cioran). Questo è l'artista che al desiderio comune di bellezza aggiunge la *cupidigia*. La bellezza è sempre il frutto della nostalgia di una perfezione mancata. Elaborazione del tutto di una dimensione non facilmente raggiungibile e per questo vagheggiata. Un impulso diretto a sconfiggere l'orrore quietato per la propria imperfezione, vita o morte.

La *cupidigia dell'arte* è la pratica di un eccesso, rafforzata proprio dal suo prodursi nel sensibile. Una sorta di squilibrio, una deformazione raggiunta proprio dalla massima concentrazione di forma. Questo è il versante drammatico della creazione artistica che non risponde a una domanda, a un vuoto sociale

ma afferma ed impone una diversa e nuova realtà che distrugge ogni possibile memoria di doppio attraverso il linguaggio.

Un cenno imperioso dell'artista sgombra il campo di ogni apparenza che precede il suo lavoro creativo. Egli si mette all'opera con un sentimento iniziale di distruzione per poi incuneare in questo vuoto la presenza tangibile della sua forma.

James Lee Byars con un cenno imperioso sgombra la galleria di ogni suppellettile, della memoria della sua funzione storica, dell'essere deposito transitorio di opera d'arte, pittura o scultura. Chiede alla parete la preziosità dell'oro, un materiale non soltanto colore ma simbolo di una materia rara, culturalmente

rinvianti al processo alchemico della sua trasformazione dalla condizione vile a quella nobile, dalla brutale consistenza all'astrazione spirituale. Ecco che il cenno imperioso di Byars diventa il *cenno ingannatore* dell'artista che svuota lo spazio di ogni memoria, fonda una nuova temporalità tutta abitata dal presente duraturo e paralizzato nel colore assoluto dell'oro. Uno spazio concentrato e decantato nel proprio vuoto. Assistito dalla presenza fiera dell'artista vestito nello stesso colore delle pareti. Con un cilindro sul capo ed un nastro che gli ricopre gli occhi. Uno sbarramento che interdice la vista verso l'esterno e potenzia quella rivolta all'interno.

Achille Bonito Oliva



James Lee Byars, *The Monument to Cleopatra*, 1989.  
Marmo rivestito in foglia d'oro, 120 × 20 × 20 cm.



# Daniele Lombardi



Daniele Lombardi.  
(Foto Carlo Cantini).





Daniele Lombardi,  
*Glassmusic*, 1990.



# Valeria Magli

## *Chercher la mouche*

Promenade per un corpo fenomenologico  
luogo di flusso perpetuo  
dell'umore acqueo  
del potere fosforico  
dell'umor nero o atrabile  
del giallo capriccioso  
e poi è noto...  
"... era la svelta fortuna che solleva  
la sua tunica sino all'ombelico  
per correre meglio  
e per donarsi più facilmente."

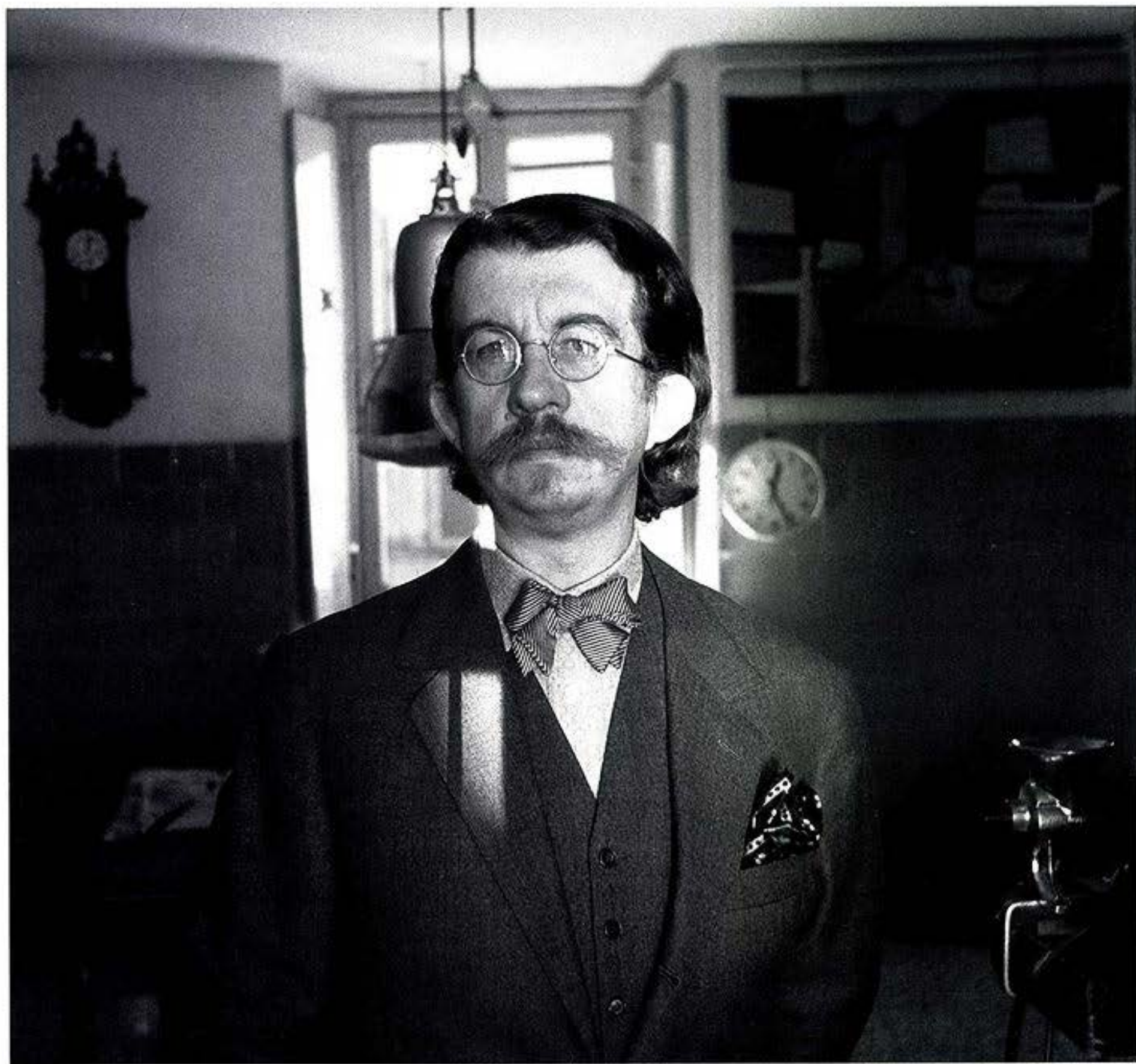




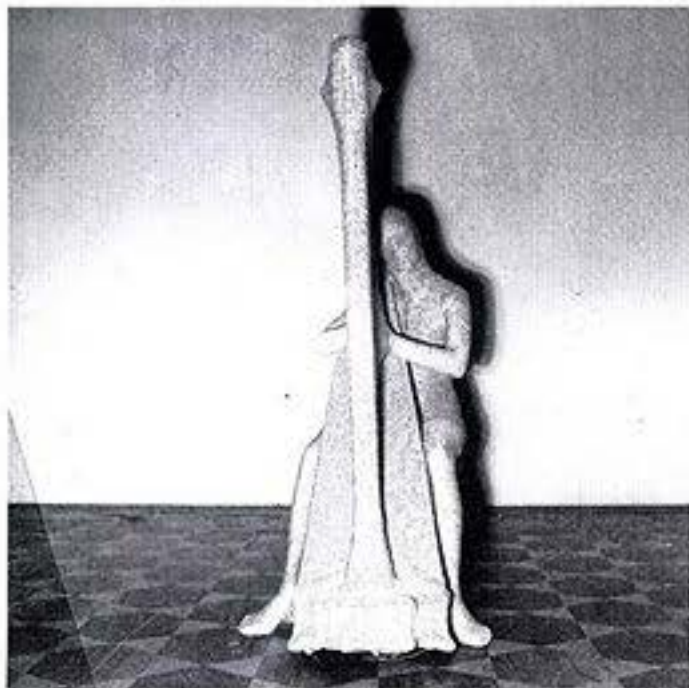




# Davide Mosconi







Daide Mosconi,  
*Quartetto*, 1972-74,  
Galleria Multipla,  
Milano, 1974.



Sotto: brani tratti  
da Davide Mosconi,  
*La storia della musica*,  
Do-Soul, s.d.

Milano.  
Pezzo per custodia per arpa e voci di balene.  
Millenovecentosettantasette.

Gent.  
Pezzo per strumento/i e fiammiferi.  
Per uno o più esecutori.  
Millenovecentosettantanove.

Milano.  
Pezzo per pianoforte piscina ed acqua.  
Millenovecentosettantasei.  
30 secondi.

Varese.  
"Autoritratto."  
Solo.  
Millenovecentosettantatre.

Spedire la custodia dopo aver acceso un registratore  
posto all'interno, sul quale sono registrati canti di  
balene.

Nel buio leggere uno spartito alla luce di un fiammi-  
fero ed eseguire fino alla fine.

Buttare un pianofortè in una piscina piena d'acqua  
rossa.

Mentre si suona cercare di vedersi.



# Vettor Pisani

*La poupée machine  
Macchina celibe per celibi  
fratelli o celebri fratelli*

Nota dell'autore  
I Germani Illuminati di Dresda.  
Teatrino chimico e comico dei  
Germani, dei Fratelli erranti e celanti  
muratori (Artisti Rosacroce).

Per una convinzione e convenzione generalmente accettata da tutti, la Germania, la terra dei Germani, è stata da sempre considerata in Occidente: il Luogo d'Iniziazione, dell'Erranza, la Terra d'elezione o di origine dei Rosacroce (i Framassoni), la patria ideale o di adozione dei Germani, dei Fratelli erranti e celanti muratori, Artisti Rosacroce.

Questo necessariamente, almeno a partire dalla pubblicazione in Germania, Kassel 1614-1616, dei due celebri manifesti rosacroce: *Fama Fratemitatis Rosae Crucis* e *Confessio Fratemitatis Rosae Crucis*, manifesti presto seguiti dal noto seppur breve romanzo iniziatico, 1616, di Johann Valentin Andreae: *Le Nozze Chimiche di Christian Rosenkreutz*.

Famoso, fra tante confraternite sconosciute, è stato, intorno al 1890, al tempo del noto viaggio in Germania di Franz Hartmann, assistente e collaboratore di madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, l'*Ordine Rinnovato degli Illuminati Germani* di Dresda, celebre confraternita di Framassoni, di Fratelli erranti e celanti muratori ai quali noi dedichiamo questo nostro breve divertissement.

Il Teatrino dei diecimila errori.

Il Nome (*La Parola Perduta*): cosa vuol dire R.C. Theatrum.

R.C. Theatrum: Rose Casta Teatro.  
Il Teatro di Rose Casta la Baby dal sesso implume. Il Teatro azzurro di Cristallo, della Vergine, la Pietra azzurra (filosofale) dei Germani, dei Fratelli erranti e celanti muratori, Artisti Rosacroce. Un teatro muratorio, architettonico, massonico, un Teatro d'Arte Totale aperto a tutti (finalmente democratico!).

R.C. Theatrum: Ruotante Croce Teatro.

Il Teatro (cosmico) della Croce Ruotante. La Swastika, la Croce ansata germanica (ahimè ruotante!). Un'elica, il flusso, l'energia di Luce che fa girare il mondo. Uno spiritoso ventilatore (elettrico) di vane parole inascoltate gettate così per caso al vento.

German Love Sinfonietta: musica sexy, musica infinita. Un concerto all'Infinito per una danza cosmica. Musica Infinita, Musica Fluxus (germanica), un'armonia continua infinita su una sola nota, un suono musicale infinitamente lungo. Una canzoncina d'Amore per lo striptease di Rose Baby Casta la bambina tre puntine, per Virginia la signorina esibizionista (giudea), per la danza coi suoi celibi fratelli o celebri fratelli, per i suoi germani erranti e danzanti, erranti e ruotanti.

R.C. Theatrum: Rosa Croce Teatro, il Teatro Rosa + Croce.

Crystal Theatre Ballet: il teatro, il balletto della spogliarellista di nome Rose, la signorina esibizionista giudea (Tre Puntine), la Minivergine dei Fratelli Tre Puntini (:.), i Framassoni, i celibi Fratelli o celebri Fratelli Erranti + Croce, l'Architettura di Cristallo o di sottile vetro trasparente di R.C. Theatrum: La Loggia Tre Puntine.

La Pietra azzurra (filosofale), lo striptease di Rose Baby Casta la bambola di plastica, di gomma rosa gonfiabile (meccanica, elettrica) per celibi e masturbatori o per Celebri Masturbatori. Virginia, la Poupée, le Fichet Machine dei Germani, dei Fratelli erranti e celanti muratori. Erranti e ruotanti, cosmici e cosmologici.

R.C. Theatrum: Rosa Carne Teatro, il Teatro Rosa Carne.

Il sesso, la Rosa Mistica (femminile). Il sesso rasato e rosa di cipria della nobile Giocasta madre e moglie di Edipo l'eroe.

Teatro dell'Essere e dell'origine. Il Teatro di Edipo l'errante: il cercatore dell'Identità, il fabbricante di Errori Grandi; errori grandi o divini, il Dio

crudelmente e vendicatore. Il Dio burattinaio che dall'alto dei cieli tira (ahimè marionette squinternate agitate dal vento!) i fili del nostro destino.

R.C. Theatrum: Renato Celante Teatro, il Teatro del signor Renato Celante, l'ebreo errante, il Germano della Coniglietta, il Fratello della signorina rosacroce (giudea) di Virginia la signorina esibizionista di R.C. Theatrum.

L'Antiedipo, l'antieroe, l'uomo banale (normale). Il fabbricante di errori piccoli piccoli a tempo pieno. Diecimila, non divini come quelli di Edipo, ma umani o troppi umani.

R.C. Theatrum: cosa significa R.C. Theatrum?

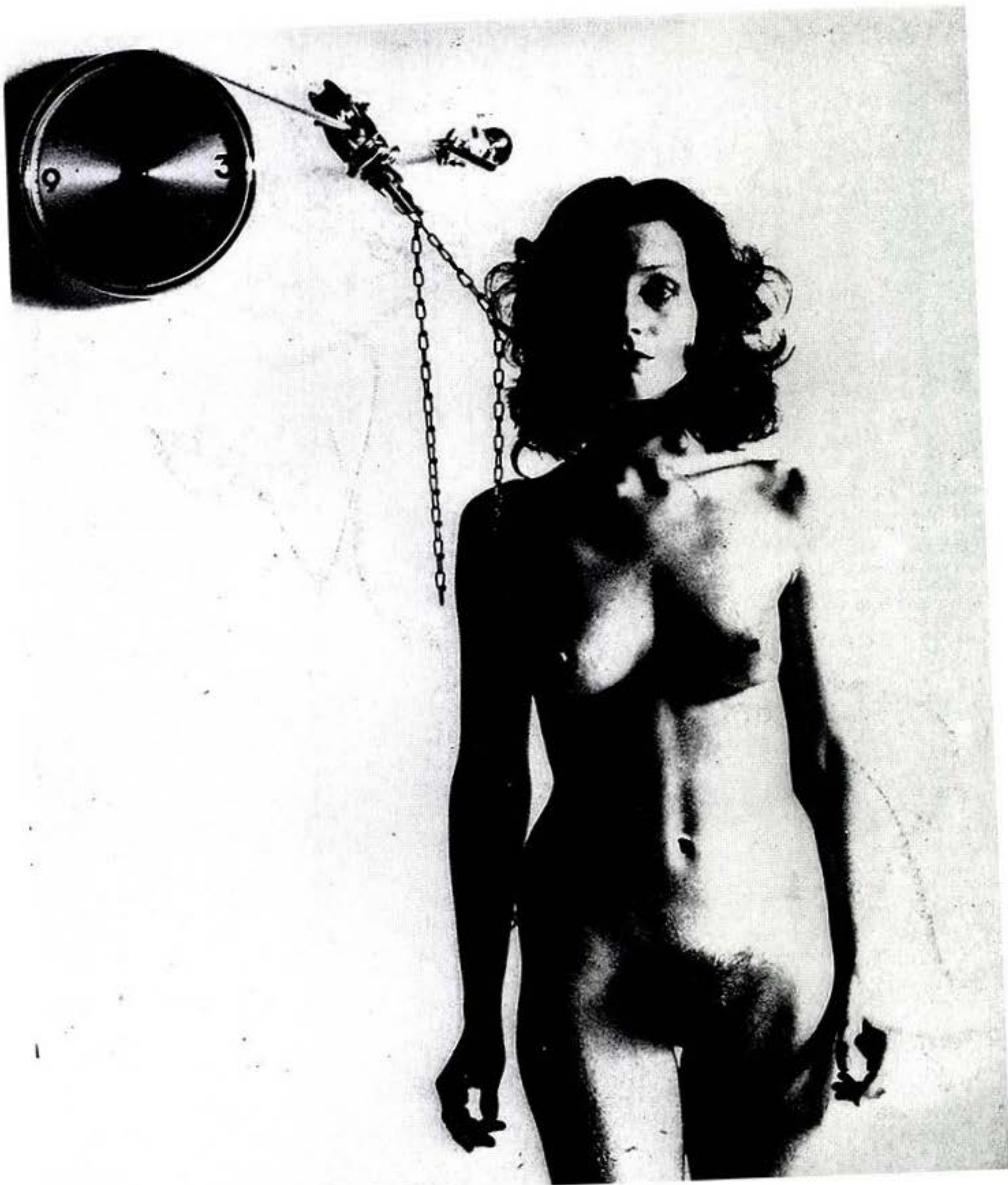
R.C. Theatrum è un Enigma, un Labirinto inespugnabile, un Teorema perfetto, oppure un Rebus, per i più semplici, per i più piccini soltanto un gioco, un piccolo, piccolissimo indovinello.

R.C. Theatrum: cosa significa R.C. Theatrum? R.C. Theatrum significa infinite cose: tutto ciò che inizia con R.C. Ma è soprattutto il Teatrino hard a luci rosse o rosa, la Favola Rosacroce di Fratello coniglietto o Germano Coniglietto, il Coniglietto errante e celante (il celibe fratello o celebre fratello) alla Cerca o ricerca della Coppa del Graal, la Pietra azzurra filosofale, la Coppa della Vergine, il sesso implume di Rose Baby Casta.

È la favola dell'Io, del D'io, di Dio, dell'Identità. La Favola del Germano, del Fratello errante e celante innamorato e che muore d'amore per sua sorella la vergine, Virginia la signorina tre puntine, esibizionista (giudea), Rose Baby Casta la semprevergine, l'irraggiungibile signorina Rosacroce.

Alla pagina seguente: Vettor Pisani, *La machine du désir. La poupée machine: macchina celibe per celibi fratelli o celebri fratelli*, Documenta 5, Kassel, 1972.







# Mario Schifano

Mario Schifano,  
*Ouverture - Magnifica  
ossessione*, 1965.

Alla pagina seguente:  
Mario e Monica Schifano  
e Achille Bonito Oliva,  
Firenze, 1985.

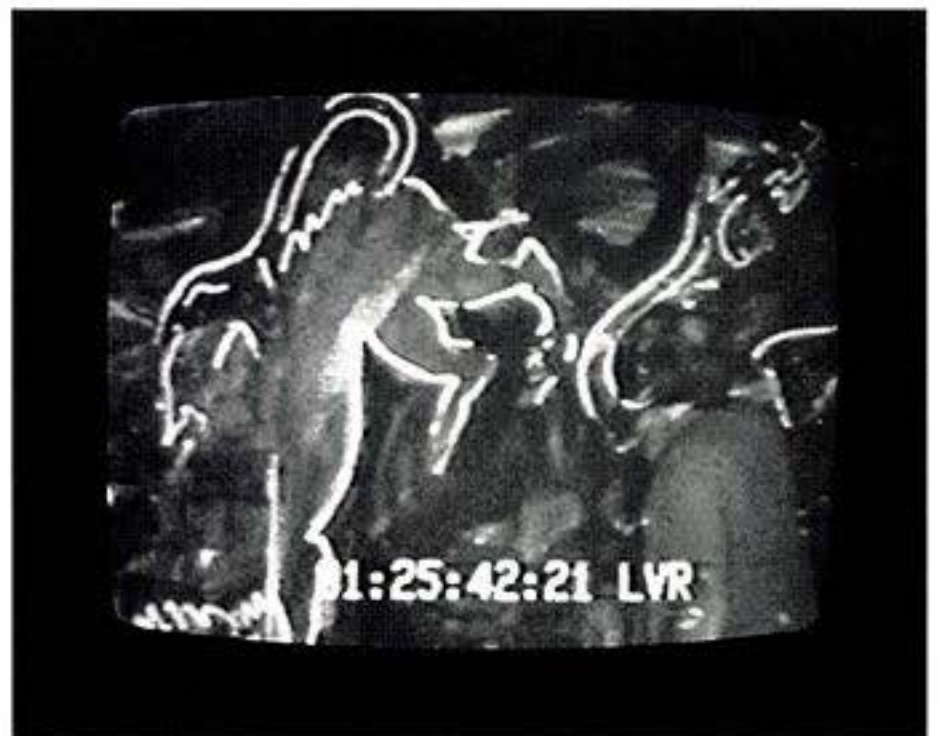


CE' BICICLETTE E SONO  
FLUXUS - LA TV E'  
FLUXUS - DAL NIVO  
E' FLUXUS.

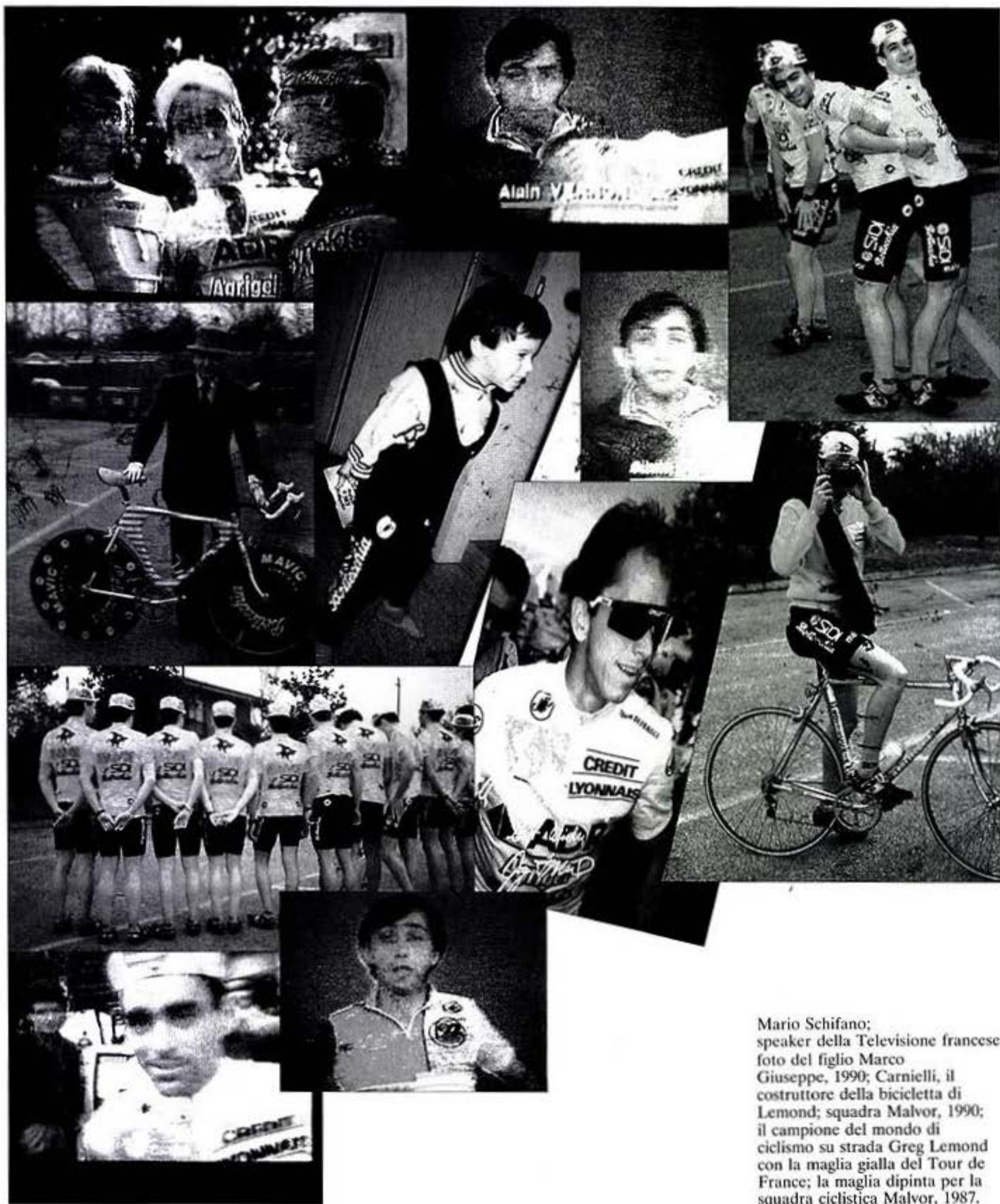
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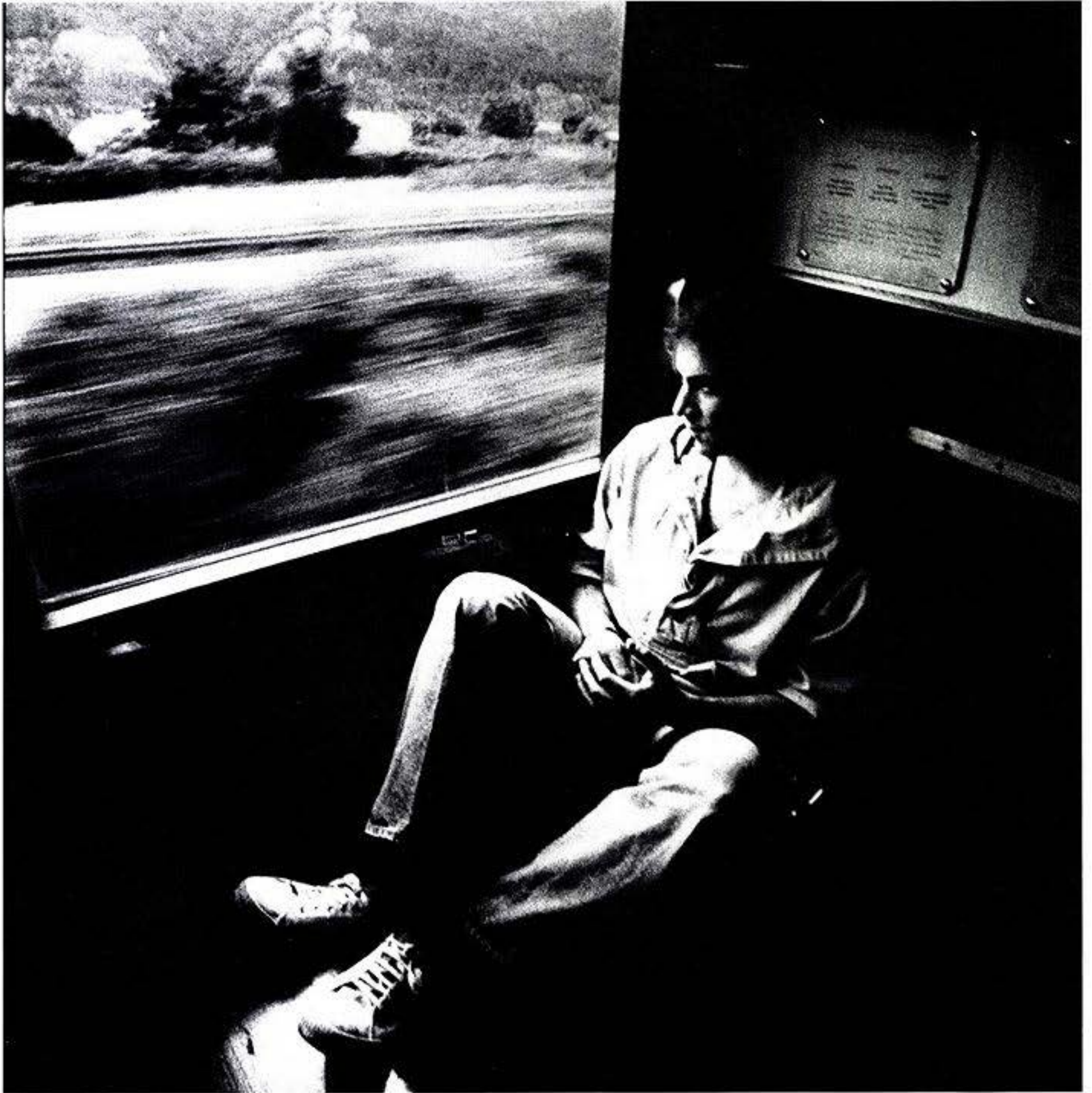


Mario Schifano; speaker della Televisione francese, foto del figlio Marco Giuseppe, 1990; Carnielli, il costruttore della bicicletta di Lemond; squadra Malvor, 1990; il campione del mondo di ciclismo su strada Greg Lemond con la maglia gialla del Tour de France; la maglia dipinta per la squadra ciclistica Malvor, 1987.



# Demetrio Stratos

(Foto Corinto).

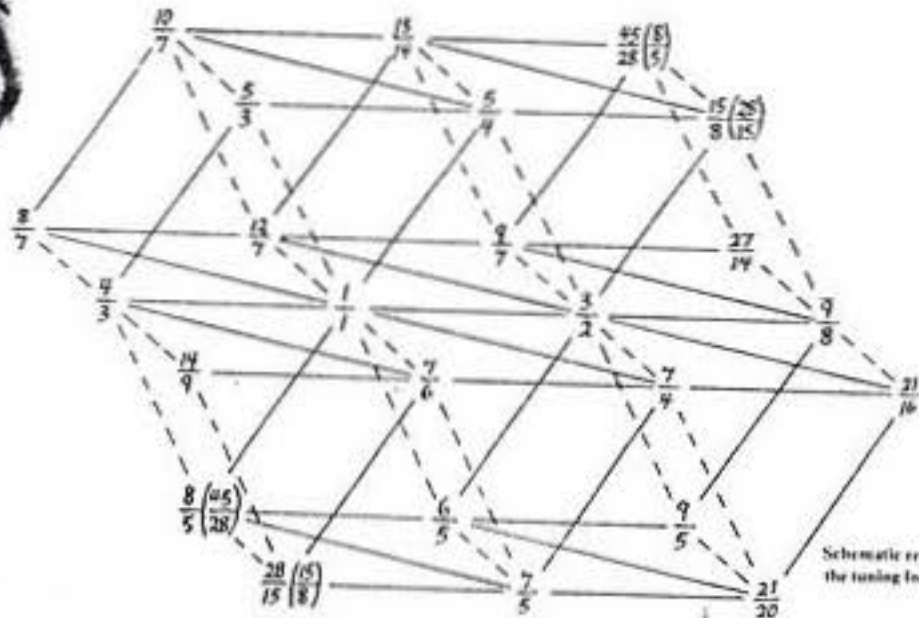






Demetrio Stratos nel Treno di John Cage  
*Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, Bologna, 1978. (Foto Fabio Simion).





Schematic representation of the tuning for Bridge.

Excerpt from score to *Bridge*, for 2 pianos, 8 hands.

BEAST FOR STRING BASS (see *Buall Weidlinger*)



# KOAN

for solo violin

for Malcolm Goldstein

*(very slow glissando)*

*mp*

*ADAD AEAE*

*gradually move toward bridge, until nothing but noise is heard.*

*fairly slow tremolo* ( $\sim \frac{1}{8} \sharp$ )

*(8-10 note-pairs per bow)*

James Tenney  
8/16/71

HAVING NEVER WRITTEN A NOTE FOR PERCUSSION  
for John Bergamo

*(very long)*

*pppp* *pppp*

James Tenney

8/6/71

## Swell Piece

for Alison Knowles

To be performed by any number of instruments beyond three, and lasting any length of time previously agreed upon.

Each performer plays one long tone after another (actual durations and pitches free and independent). Each tone begins as softly as possible, builds up to maximum intensity, then fades away again into (individual) silence.

Within each tone, as little change of pitch or timbre as possible, in spite of the intensity changes.

James Tenney  
12/67



# Tufano

Qui e alla pagina seguente:  
Tufano, *1978-1988 Fuoco e ceneri*, 18  
ottobre 1988. Tufano dà alle fiamme la  
sua produzione dal 1978 al 1988;  
musiche di Sylvano Bussotti.  
Cavriago (Reggio Emilia).









# Peter van Riper

Peter van Riper.  
(Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery).







Peter van Riper, in collaborazione  
con Ay-o, *Han "Pee-Taa"*, Tokyo, 1973.  
(Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery).



# Art for Life's Sake: The Fluxus Influence on Contemporary Culture

Peter Frank

The first few months of 1990 have seen world attention focused on a small enclave of defiance. Leading the Lithuanian people's unilateral move towards self-determination has been an otherwise unassuming figure, a musicologist who happens to be one of the charter members of *Sajudis*, the academically-based independence movement in Lithuania. Vytautas Landsbergis is known for his research into the life and work of Mikhaelis Ciurlionis, Lithuania's greatest composer (and perhaps greatest artist, for Ciurlionis both painted and composed). Landsbergis is less known for the conceptual and gestural musical pieces he formulated in the early and middle Sixties. These he sent to New York, where his old high school friend George Maciunas was publishing, collating, and sponsoring the performance of work by an international network of avant-garde artists, musicians, writers, and thinkers, all under the rubric of Fluxus.

Landsbergis was Maciunas' one contact, and thus the one "member" of Fluxus in the Soviet Union at this time. The musicologist's focus eventually shifted back to his teaching and his work on Ciurlionis, and his participation in Fluxus (if not his contact with Maciunas) waned. But Fluxus, as attitude and as practice, as implication and as actuality, as position and as opposition, continued to be a touchstone for Landsbergis. Its emphasis on aesthetic and social liberation and on the exemplary nature of radical artistic thought – proposing (however loosely) a democratic anarchism in which individual and collective action complement each other – resonates in the declarations and actions of the new Lithuanian government. As filmmaker Jonas Mekas (friend and countryman of both Landsbergis and Maciunas) has ob-

served, "*Sajudis*" is the Lithuanian word for flux.

For all the rhetoric about revolution in the literature of Dada, Surrealism, Constructivism, etc., then, Fluxus, however tangentially, may be the first art movement to create and to run a country. This circumstance may be coincidental, but it is also logical. Fluxus was not the first movement to propose the improvement of life according to aesthetic or aesthetically-inspired principles; but it was the one of the few to dedicate itself to the concrete (rather than merely paradigmatic) application of those principles to a sphere of praxis greater than the art world. Especially since the Second World War, even with the boundaries of art so distended that almost any activity can be activity for art's sake, it has been rare to find artistic thought that seeks to affect, even serve, life rather than avoid, excoriate, mock, or simply mirror it. However impractical, even foolish, the ideals and inventions of Fluxus may have been, they were aimed outside as well as inside art – and have had impact in both places.

Impelled by so ambitious, even visionary an ethos, Fluxus could not help but revolutionize thought and practice within the realm of art itself. Indeed, Fluxus emerged as a program (necessarily loose in its organization, despite the ministrations of the almost comically autocratic Maciunas) coordinating vanguard artistic ideas, activities, and associations around the globe. Such ideas, activities and associations were oriented to the fundamental redefinition of art. Attracting a vast array of adherents and championing the ideas and work of many other advanced artists, Fluxus came to function as a meeting-place and filter for the various manifestations of the intermedia sensi-

bility – that is, the tendency of so many artists since the end of the war to seek the dissolution of practical distinctions between artistic disciplines, and by extension between art and life. Many extra-artistic movements fed into, and off of, Fluxus as well.

The Fluxus "manner" as preached and promulgated by Maciunas emphasized a stylized and rarefied version of intermedia characterized by wit, game-playing, reduced means and formats, and enigmatic expression. Now recognized as Fluxus' signature "style", this Duchampian infra-mince approach – Maciunas called it "Zen vaudeville" – constituted only one facet of Fluxus. It was a facet most artists associated with Fluxus could revert to, but it was a manner followed exclusively by almost no one *but* Maciunas. Other artists associated with Fluxus operated in much more grandiose ways, preferring to engage textural complexity and overt sociopolitical commentary in actions more like Happenings than like the spare gestures which normally constitute a Fluxus concert. Whether minimalizing or maximalizing their means, however, the artists associated with Fluxus could trace a common lineage, going back to Duchamp and Dada and passing through the work and thought of John Cage.

In fact, the original generation of artists who fed into and out of Fluxus – the Happenings artists, the Gutai members, the Nouveaux Réalistes, the concrete poets, the graphic-notation composers, the reduced-means dancers, and the other pioneer intermedialists of the postwar period – were variously responsive to such historic avant-garde models. Fluxus served as a refinement of that response, one that fed back to the broader field of intermedia and served to determine the nature of subsequent



intermedial practice, including the borderline-intermedial aspects of more mainstream developments. As a phenomenon of the Sixties for instance, Fluxus had an at least indirect effect on such prominent movements as Pop Art, Minimalism, and Arte Povera. This effect was oppositional much of the time, with Fluxus determining the “purely” vanguard, or intermedial, or politically “correct” way of working – and thus serving to deflect the criticized movements (even if only a little bit) with self-critical concepts. But the effect sometimes provided the more mainstream movements with their first theoretical grounds, too.

The specific effect of Fluxus on its fellow movements of the Sixties is hard to document except circumstantially. Even if one were able to prove that Andy Warhol saw Yoko Ono’s repetitious films of banal subjects before he made his own early movies, for instance, Warhol left no record of acknowledgment. The seminal roles Robert Morris, Walter De Maria, Terry Riley and La Monte Young played in the emergence both of Fluxus and Minimal art bespeak a common artistic heritage, but not necessarily a common point of view. The recurrence of neon in Arte Povera – in the work of Mario Merz, for example, and equally in that of American anti-formalist Keith Sonnier – was quite possibly due to early works in this medium by Bob Watts; but others, such as Zdenek Pesanek and Lucio Fontana, had experimented with glass-rod lighting as well, in the Sixties, Fifties, and even before.

We must see the relationship of Fluxus to these other early- and mid-Sixties phenomena as that of an elder sibling, not a progenitor. They shared spiritual and practical sources in Dada, Duchamp, Cage (and the dance of his frequent collaborator Merce Cunningham), Lettrism and concrete poetry, Nouveau Réalisme, marginal social movements such as Situationism, and other models of formal and contextual disjuncture. They came about in response to the exhaustion of Informel styles in painting – Cobra, Abstract Expressionism, Tachisme – which had dominated artistic discourse for two decades; the whole emphasis on “pure painting” implicit in these post-Surrealist tendencies provoked an anti-purist response, one which encouraged the melding of media. The influence of

Fluxus on Pop, Minimalism, and Arte Povera was not negligible, but – thanks in great part to Fluxus’ own generally modest, even reticent voice – it was indirect, more a matter of “flavoring the air” with a spirit of rebellious permissibility than of providing specific ideational and practical models.

This was not true of later intermedial developments. The impact of Fluxus on such manifestations as Conceptual Art, Performance Art and Video was profound. “Concept Art” was itself a proto-Fluxus concept, proposed by Henry Flynt in an essay originally written late in 1960 and published in 1963 by La Monte Young in *An Anthology*. Ironically, the Fluxus realization of “concept art” was ultimately looser and less close to the quasi-academic, research-oriented definition that philosopher-mathematician Flynt had in mind than were the realizations of later orthodox Conceptual Artists such as Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Bernard Venet, Donald Burgy, and Art/Language. This is not to say that Fluxus concept art was entirely lacking in such dogged, prosaic investigation: the theoretical disquisitions of Benjamin Patterson and Philip Corner, to name just two Fluxus “philosopher-scientists”, could achieve the same abstruseness as Flynt’s. Furthermore, the broad poetic inflection with which much Fluxus practice imbued concept art recurred in the work of Lawrence Weiner, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, and other early Conceptualists. Their reliance on language, and on verbal precision, also recalled the verbal scores (or, to use Maciunas’ term, “Haiku theater”) written as far back as 1959 by Yoko Ono, La Monte Young, Philip Corner, George Brecht, Robert Watts, Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Mieko Shiomi, and many other Fluxus members and associates.

Those verbal scores proposed simple activities as art. They were deliberately distanced in their relatively elemental gesturality from Happenings and avant-garde theater. In that direct, un-elaborate refinement such verbally scored Fluxus events directly prefigured the Performance Art of the Seventies. Although Performance, including Body Art, derived most of all from Minimalist work and theory in three (and four) dimensions, it is clearly sourced as well in Fluxus stagework and in the Fluxus-related post-Cunningham dance (itself

a precursor of Minimalism). The forcefully materialistic literality of staged and documented performance as diverse as that of Klaus Rinke, Rebecca Horn, Vincenzo Agnetti, Dennis Oppenheim, Jan Dibbets, Daniel Buren, and Joan Jonas points right back to the meditative activity proposed by Brecht, Young, Ono, Corner, Robert Filliou, Tomas Schmit, Giuseppe Chiari, and other Fluxus artists. (Researching Fluxus and intermedia activity, Vito Acconci visited Dick Higgins’ Something Else Press office several times in 1967-68.) The antic sight-gag aspect of Fluxus performance, notable in the stagework of Watts, Eric Andersen, Ben Vautier, Willem de Ridder, and Maciunas himself, recurred in the prop-oriented activity of Ralston Farina, Stuart Sherman, and other practitioners in the Seventies of what might be called “device theater”.

It is interesting to note that Laurie Anderson and John Zorn, now important figures in contemporary music, began as performance artists oriented to this device-theater approach. Of course, the Fluxus impact on new musical discourse has been profound and thoroughgoing. Fluxus emerged directly out of John Cage’s thinking and pedagogy; partly as a result, musical forms and references are cited more often in Fluxus works than those of other disciplines. Minimalism, the most influential musical style of the last two decades, comes directly from the Fluxus and Fluxus-related musical thought of La Monte Young and Terry Riley (and, to lesser and varying extents, Philip Corner, Giuseppe Chiari, Nam June Paik, and others). Less directly, the poetical experiments of Emmett Williams, Jackson MacLow, and Dick Higgins, notably those employing repetitive devices such as permutation and graphic patterning, provided a structural model for the modular compositional methods of Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and other musical Minimalists.

Modular methods can also be found in the early experimental films of Paul Sharits, many realized as Fluxus works, as well as in Sharits’ post-Fluxus filmwork. Sharits’ films have proven highly influential on experimental – especially but not exclusively non-narrative – cinema. Fluxus has always had an impact on “underground” film, not only through Fluxfilms themselves but through Maciunas’ personal connection



to Jonas Mekas. Mekas' Filmmakers' Cinematheque – now Anthology Film Archives – and attendant publications are recognized as perhaps the most important organizational forces in American alternative cinema; Maciunas (and thereby Fluxus) was long associated with those spaces and publications, as programmer, as designer, and even as landlord. It was in the Filmmakers' Cinematheque on the ground floor of the 80 Wooster Street "Fluxhouse" (which Maciunas not only developed into co-op artists' habitations, but inhabited himself) that Stuart Sherman – and his mentor, "Ontological-Hysteric Theatre" writer-director Richard Foreman – first came into contact with Fluxus.

Fluxus artists are responsible for virtually inventing one of the most popular new media of contemporary art. The first artists to engage in video art – indeed, to become involved with television technology in any concentrated form – were Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell. Working in Cologne in the late Fifties and early Sixties, Paik was extending the Cagian grasp of musical possibility, while Vostell was imbuing the still-new Happening form with expressionistic monumentality. Independently of one another, Vostell and Paik alit upon the television set as an icon of contemporary life. Vostell subjected discarded TV sets to his rough "dé-collage" transformations, while Paik explored the TV set as musical instrument and began subjecting it to electromagnetic manipulation. When the Korean-born composer moved to New York, he increased his involvement with television technology, ultimately becoming the first artist to acquire a home-video camera and produce an art-videotape (a momentous event which took place on October 4, 1965).

Fluxus artists were also in the vanguard of other movements which took advantage of new technologies and fostered new artistic attitudes. The production of multiples – i.e., artists' objects produced in editions – which burgeoned in the later Sixties, was clearly a direct outgrowth of Maciunas' production and distribution of Fluxus boxes; the elemental and toy-like nature of many multiple objects, and their relatively low pricing, carried over Maciunas' populist social ideals. Similarly, the artists' books movement of the Seventies was spurred by Fluxus publishing – not Maciunas' own Fluxus publications (he

actually produced rather few books) but the pan-intermedial production of the Something Else Press. Dick Higgins began the Press after losing patience with Maciunas, who had delayed over a year the publication of Higgins' anthology of performance pieces, *Jefferson's Birthday*. The Press published books not only by Fluxus artists and their friends (John Cage, Merce Cunningham, Ray Johnson, Diter Rot, Allan Kaprow, Daniel Spoerri), but by avant-garde theorists (Marshall McLuhan, Bern Porter) and historical figures not otherwise widely available (Gertrude Stein, Luigi Russolo, Richard Huelsenbeck). The Something Else Press also published several "practical" books, oriented to game-playing and do-it-yourself activity (e.g. gardening). The Press set standards of production quality as well as of content, which became ideals (albeit ideals too infrequently achieved) of the artists' books movement.

Among the earliest publications recognized as Fluxus are the postcard series, "Monsters are Inoffensive", by Robert Filliou, Daniel Spoerri, and Roland Topor; Robert Watt's sheets of "Yam Flug" and "Flux Post" stamps; and George Brecht's box of event scores and proposals entitled *Water Yam*, which Brecht was to supplement each year by mailing new scores to purchasers. Along with the New York Correspondance [sic] School activities of Ray Johnson, in which Fluxus members were often involved, these mail-oriented Fluxus publications are among the earliest manifestations of contemporary mail art, inaugurating in the early Sixties a worldwide network of artistic correspondence which has endured to this day.

As part of his California-based Fluxus West activities of 1966-72, Ken Friedman engaged in "classic" mail art, sending letters, flyers, and eventually found and fabricated objects through the mail to an ever-widening network of Fluxus participants and others sympathetic to (or at least curious about) Fluxus. Friedman thus broadened mail-art activity into a potentially mass medium. Given his sociological bent and his sympathy with Maciunas' populist outlook, Friedman grasped and amplified the implications of mass-mail art into his *International Contact List of the Arts*. This 1972 address list, circulated to all Fluxus West correspondents and up-

dated periodically throughout the Seventies, served as the model for several even more extensive directories (most notably Giancarlo Politi's *Art Diary*), and influenced more traditional reference books (e.g. *Who's Who in American Art*, *Contemporary Artists*) as well.

Friedman thus gained a reputation as an art-world information technologist – without the use of computers. Other Fluxus artists, notably poets such as MacLow, Higgins, and Emmett Williams, did explore computer technology as early as the middle Sixties. Although relatively inconclusive, such investigations were characteristic of Fluxus. Maciunas had set up Fluxus in order to attract and disseminate the work of artists who were vanguard not simply in artistic style, but in social attitude. A fervent socialist himself, Maciunas believed in the power of new art to transform social and political practices directly. Like most idealists, especially those involved in the change and upheaval of the Sixties, Maciunas was a lot more hopeful than he was practical. But he and his Fluxus cohorts were able to devise formats for social discourse which would prove to be of lasting importance.

The best known example of the impact Fluxus had on the ethos of the Sixties and Seventies, of course, was the highly publicized interaction between Yoko Ono and John Lennon, an interaction which affected popular music and also wider social developments (such as the anti-war and environmental movements). But Fluxus flavored the tenor of its times in other ways as well. The Fluxshops Maciunas created in New York and encouraged other Fluxus artists (Willem de Ridder in Amsterdam, for instance, and Ben Vautier in Nice) to create, for example, were inelegant storefronts whose crudeness was offset by a severe simplicity and forthrightness. The Fluxshops thus prefigured the minimalist-functionalist reconfiguration of commercial outlets as diverse as jewelry stores and cigarette kiosks in the later Sixties and Seventies. The Fluxshops also furthered the simplification of exhibition design, both in and beyond the art world. The connections Maciunas – as well as Higgins, Friedman, de Ridder, and Vautier, among other Fluxus artists – maintained with other radical publishers of their day helped maintain the importance of artistic experimentation, and the spirit of play, in countercultural ideology.



Fluxus helped initiate the Underground Press Syndicate in America, and provided many Syndicate members with European contacts.

Notable among the Fluxus-induced phenomena whose impact has lasted, even grown, into the present has been Maciunas' creation of co-operative artists' lofts. This Maciunas first achieved in 1966, in the warehouse neighborhood of Manhattan that – heavily as a result of Maciunas' co-op efforts – became SoHo. Given that SoHo and other co-op loft districts around the world have evolved into high-priced playgrounds for the affluent, one might say that Maciunas' plan to provide adequate living and work space to artists under their own jurisdiction has backfired. But co-op loft structures have enriched artists, too, as their art might never have. More importantly, Maciunas' co-op loft concept, however modified, continues to serve as the readiest paradigm for artists' self-sustaining live-work programs.

While finished as a cohesive movement, Fluxus continues to play a role today, both in art and social and political events. The spirit of "fluxism", perpetuating the Fluxus ethos and aesthetic, manifests itself increasingly in contemporary artistic practice, whether in the wittier, less pretentious aspects of neo-Geo appropriation or in the lusty, expansive work of bricolagistes such as John Armleder, Guillaume Bijl, and Présence Panchouette. Bricolage, offering a paradigm for recycling the detritus of civilization, points to an extra-artistic realm where Fluxus has provided inspiration and models for practical application: the ecological movement. From Maciunas' co-op structures to the Organization for Direct Democracy – one of the parent groups of the Green Party – which sometime Fluxus member Joseph Beuys introduced in the late Sixties the Fluxist spirit pervades popular ecological thought.

Beuys himself emerged in the last decade as a forceful and inspiring spokesman for social change in general; if his willingness to maintain an ongoing participation in the public forum differed from the reticent, behind-the-scene method of organization favored by Maciunas, Beuys' faith in art as an exemplary agent of social change matched Maciunas' own. Before he became one of Europe's most dynamic instigators of social change, however, Beuys had es-

tablished himself as one of the most inspiring art teachers of modern times. His classes at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf produced many of today's leading German artists; moreover, even though Beuys himself was fired, his classes helped radically alter pedagogical method in art schools throughout Europe.

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CONCERT NO. 1, APRIL 11, SATURDAY, 8:30PM. ADMISSION \$3  
NAM JUNE PAIK-PRELUDE FOR AUDIENCE, GEORGE BRECHT-3 LAWF EVENTS, EMMETT WILLIAMS-COUNTING SONG, CHIRO SHOW-FALLING THEM, EMMETT WILLIAMS-B SONG FOR PIANO PERFORMERS, TOMAS SCHMIT-SANTAS 19, LETTE 6-SENKNER-TRAFFIC, BEN PATTERSON-SEPTET, DICK HIGGINS-DANGER MUSIC NO. 13, TAKEMSA KOSUDH-ANIMA 2 & 3, PHILIP CONNER-CAROTTI, CHOP PERFORMANCE, ROBERT WATTS-TRACE K, BEN VAUTIER-BALLOON, DICK HIGGINS-CONTRIBUTION NUMBER 1, ALISON KNOWLES-BRASH, EMMETT WILLIAMS-DUES FOR PERFORMER AND AUDIENCE, LA MONTE YOUNG-COMPOSITION 1940 NO. 4, GEORGE BRECHT-WORD EVENT (1ST VERSION)

CONCERT NO. 2, APRIL 17, FRIDAY, 8:30PM. ROBERT WATTS-TRACE XXXXXXXX. ADMISSION \$3

CONCERT NO. 3, APRIL 18, SATURDAY, 8:30PM. (RESERVED SEATS ONLY) ADMISSION \$3  
TOMAS SCHMIT-SANTAS 19S, DICK HIGGINS-GRAPHIS NO. 24, EMMETT WILLIAMS-VOICE PIECE FOR LA MONTE YOUNG, ALISON KNOWLES-CHILD ART PIECE, BEN PATTERSON-POND, BEN VAUTIER-TO BE DETERMINED, GEORGE BRECHT-COMM EVENT & DRIP MUSIC, TAKEMSA KOSUDH-WORD 1, GEORGE MACIUNAS-IN MEMORIAM TO ADRIANO OLIVETTI NO. 31, DICK HIGGINS-CORRELLATOR NO. 7, BEN PATTERSON-DANCE, ROBERT WATTS-EVENT 13, SOICHO KUBOTA-TO BE DETERMINED, TOMAS SCHMIT-2PHLUS, GEORGE BRECHT-WORD EVENT (2ND VERSION)

CONCERT NO. 4, APRIL 24, FRIDAY, 8:30PM. DICK HIGGINS-REQUIEM TO WAGNER. ADMISSION 20¢

CONCERT NO. 5, APRIL 29, SATURDAY, 9:30PM  
GEORGE MACIUNAS-PIANO PIECE NO. 3 FOR W.J. PAIK, GEORGE BRECHT-PIANO PIECE 1962, TOMAS SCHMIT-PIANO PIECE NO. 5 FOR CM, GIORGI LISETTI-D BAGATELLE, DICK HIGGINS-SOMTA & CONCERT NO. 2, SOICHO KUBOTA-PIANO PIECE NO. 2 (FLUXUS VERSION), PHILIP CONNER-PIANO DANCES, GEORGE MACIUNAS-PIANO PIECE NO. 10 FOR NAM JUNE PAIK, TOMAS SCHMIT-SANTAS 19S, (FOR PIANO) NAM JUNE PAIK-FLUXUS CONTEST FOR PIANO, PHILIP CONNER-PIANO ACTIVITIES.

CONCERT NO. 6, MAY 1, FRIDAY, 8:00 CONCERT IN CARNEGIE HALL. TICKETS 30¢ AT FLUXHALL

CONCERT NO. 7, MAY 2, SATURDAY, 8:30PM. (ORCHESTRAL MUSIC) ADMISSION \$1.00  
DICK HIGGINS-CORRELLATOR NO. 4 & MEANINGFUL LIVES THROUGH MEANINGFUL AND REMARKABLE WORK, CHIRO SHOW-BOUNDARY MUSIC & WIND MUSIC, GEORGE BRECHT-DIRECTION & CONCERT

In fact, many Fluxus artists played an important role in the revolution in education that marked the Seventies. The establishment of the California Institute of the Arts, near Los Angeles, was a benchmark in this revolution, and

Fluxus members such as Nam June Paik, Shigeo Kubota, Emmett Williams, Dick Higgins, and Alison Knowles (as well as figures close to Fluxus such as Allan Kaprow) were prominent among the inaugural faculty. Like Beuys, these Fluxus teachers, who taught in ways as unorthodox as their art, saw many of their students at Cal Arts come to subsequent artistic prominence. Although not on the Cal Arts faculty, Ken Friedman was part of the ferment in the first years of the school (having moved there to manage the Something Else Press for Higgins). Friedman subsequently travelled throughout North America for seven years, giving lectures, classes, and workshops, creating exhibitions and events, and preaching his own socially responsive interpretation of Fluxus at US and Canadian schools of all kinds and sizes. While circulating, Friedman established outposts for his "Fluxus West", engaging responsive and gifted artists in Fluxus activities and organizational structures in regions as far flung as northern Georgia and eastern South Dakota.

The bravest single example of Fluxus pedagogy is Milan Knizak, whose students in Prague usually had to come to him clandestinely. From the early Sixties Knizak (and his students) constantly risked and frequently suffered arrest for the exhibitions, street events, mail art actions and other aesthetically subversive actions he (and they) created under the Fluxus-Art Aktual rubric. The tables have completely turned now, of course; a playwright runs Czechoslovakia, and Knizak is director of Prague's prestigious art academy (having turned down an appointment as Minister of Culture in Vaclav Havel's government!). We can only hope that things turn out so well elsewhere. But that Lithuania has enjoyed a government – one widely supported by its people – inflected concretely by the Fluxus spirit, no matter how long and in what form that government endures, testifies to the extra-artistic, socially responsible outlook at the heart of Fluxus. As playful, hermetic, and even self-indulgent as Fluxus thought and activity has seemed over the past three decades, it has always been impelled by the desire to dedicate art to the betterment of life.

Los Angeles, April 1990



# Ce n'est pas Fluxus?

Manuela Gandini

Storicizzare Fluxus o cercare di definirlo potrebbe essere un problema che sopravanza alle spalle del Sig. Palomar, il calviniano contemplatore, mentre rivolto verso il mare guarda l'avanzare delle onde, in ogni loro particolare, perdendosi in uno sconsolante senso d'impotenza, oppure sarebbe come entrare nelle ore di un orologio a pendolo e rifluire nelle altrui vite, uscendo fuori allo scadere di ogni ora per annunciare al mondo l'accaduto.

Fluxus scivola come il mercurio nel tentativo di afferrarlo, è uno stato religioso di antireligione, di solenne distruzione delle regole e dei linguaggi della vita e dell'arte (queste ultime due parole sono saldate assieme e ossidate nello scorrere del tempo). Gli dei stanno a guardare dalla cima dell'Olimpo. Ogni evento Fluxus contagia il pubblico nell'azione e lo costringe a partecipare, gli dei allora scendono giù, loro malgrado, e attraversano le viscere della terra in sudicie metropolitane per arrivare in tempo alle performances, ma il più delle volte arrivano alla fine.

Allora di Fluxus non rimane niente, o la distruzione, il perso, l'irraccontabile nei codici comuni. La testimonianza di tracce, indizi e frammenti è la memoria non reificata dell'arte che si tramanda da persona a persona nel moto rotatorio del pianeta.

Fluxus è poliglotta, insieme di quotidiane mostruosità per elezione, e si sgretola dalle torri di Babele che stanno in ogni città del mondo a indirizzi ignorati anche se evidenti, tra i municipi e i conventi, gli ospedali e gli uffici, tra la normalità isterica e il puro pensiero, il sesso ansimante e i rigagnoli di stupidità.

Fluxus è in tutto il mondo, come una malattia virale o ereditaria, che si tramanda di generazione in generazione con l'evento che, per quanto banale

possa essere, si apre un'esistenza persistente nel campo della memoria in forme di registrazione multiple: video, fotografia, manifesti e date, soprattutto calendari. Fluxus non ha patria né terra, è ovunque, a frammenti, errante, una sorta di ebraismo perseguitato dai campi istituzionali di normalizzazione. Mette la maschera prima di lavarsi la faccia. "Entra" nell'arte, "esce" dall'arte: è uno stato dello spirito e non un oggetto, un'idea che si trasforma, che è sempre esistita nella direzione dell'"obliquità".

La storia si disegna e si scolpisce nella discontinuità degli eventi e nella successione di catastrofi, piccole o grandi, che generano spargimento di liquido germinale sulle rovine del pensiero, nei conflitti tra le opposizioni. Fluxus non è continuità, tutti lo hanno incrociato, attraversato o affiancato e Fluxus a sua volta ha intaccato, per breve o per lungo tempo, tutti i movimenti limitrofi, antenati e posteriori. *Expanded Arts Diagram* di Maciunas visualizza la sintesi di tutti gli intrecci e le influenze, dalla storia passata al 1966, incrociando disciplinarmente altre vie.

Silenziosamente e in forme sempre meno fisiche e materiali Fluxus si è diffuso ed evoluto, assumendo concetti, spazi e tempi diversi dalle origini, alcune volte spedendo buste piene di c'arte, altre volte, nei sistemi tecnocratici più recenti, sotto forma di fluxshot (made in computer's era). Il gruppo fondatore ha gettato semi di immaterialità indigesti e segni spezzati anche nel fondo del fiume dove sono state ritrovate le teste mozzate di Modigliani.

Il sistema dell'arte si è arricchito, indorato e patinato, J.R. contro Proust e la scansione del tempo reale, ma l'arte virale si estende in performances quotidiane negli uffici di giorno e nelle gallerie di notte quando gli angeli vanno a

dormire, e vive del tempo reale anche il ready-made della notte. Siamo dentro una sequenza colorata di immagini sempre uguali a noi stessi che si riproducono al bagliore delle luci psichedeliche. Sotto al dominio dell'arte opulenta gli oggetti brillano del loro dichiarato, inautentico stato di bigiotteria, od ostentano una truce austerità da Terzo Reich. Le bandiere rosse sono venute giù dai loro stendardi, come ghigliottinate, l'una dopo l'altra, strappando il tessuto dal legno a indicare una seconda esecuzione poiché il simbolo è più forte di qualsiasi realtà e viene a sostituirsi agli uomini. Nell'Occidente industrializzato aumenta l'esercito degli artisti che somigliano sempre di più ad angeli computerizzati in marcia verso un deserto di senso in una competizione senza traguardo, fiancheggiati da mercanti, critici, editori incalzanti. Non c'è ironia o caricatura, c'è un contatto di pelle, freddo come l'acciaio, con l'oggetto di produzione industriale che ha tante forme: barocche o futuribili, banali o utopiche. Sembra che tutti si siedano, almeno per una volta, a Washington Square, nel tentativo di giocare a scacchi con Duchamp senza riuscire mai a spuntarla.

L'East Village è stato poco più che un miraggio, soprattutto nella reificazione dello slogan "Ronnie for President" che ha dissolto il mito come un'allucinazione. Ora l'East Village, pensandolo in astratto, è come la fotografia di un villaggio bombardato e interamente evacuato. Si è presentata, sul finire del decennio, una generazione incravattata e altamente manageriale che si è spinta sino agli eccessi di zelo nei confronti del mercato, con la lucida coscienza del non potere concettualmente andare oltre la form/non function dei raffinati oggetti d'appartamento. Oggi l'East Village, in dimensioni assai più larghe e



generali, è in Europa, dove crollano contemporaneamente tutti i muri delle ideologie del XX secolo diffondendo un'epidemia senza quartiere in tutti gli altri paesi del Vecchio e del Nuovo Continente. L'arte, nei canali più concettuali della recentissima storia, sta perdendo l'aspetto oggettuale e produttivo che l'aveva messa "nell'impasse" e si avvicina paradossalmente, con nuovi mezzi e idee, allo spirito di Fluxus. Astratta, nel senso più reale del termine, l'arte, si è inserita nei terminali del sistema nervoso del mercato, simulando o costruendo delle strutture di terziario avanzato finalizzate alla produzione, alla vendita, alla distruzione dell'arte. Come per i gruppi finanziari, ai nomi degli artisti si sono sostituiti marchi di fabbrica e sigle depositate presso i tri-

bunali. Si sono costituite associazioni operanti a tutti gli effetti, composte da membri che esercitano la libera professione anche in altri settori. Si sono costituiti enti morali per l'arte. Si sono inventati contenitori notturni dell'arte fuori dai limiti dei circuiti di smercio usuali. Ciascuna di queste forme presuppone una performance notarile che è nell'atto di costituzione, nella prassi burocratica, nella spedizione e trasmissione dei documenti, ma, al contrario di prima, la performance non è pubblica e non richiede, nel suo svolgersi istantaneo, la partecipazione di pubblico. È una performance privata, il cui effetto si estrinseca negli atti notarili prodotti, nei grafici e nelle sigle. Viene a questo punto a mancare l'oggetto, il referente fisico, il ready-made si evolve: da ogget-

to di produzione a produzione di informazioni. L'opera è il processo di formazione, il fax ricevuto, lo statuto societario, oppure un segno del codice barico. L'arte virale smaterializzata circola nei centri del mercato messo a nudo, spesso sostituendosi, in un indistinguibile legame tra vero e non vero, nella trasmissione dei dati e nell'esecuzione dei processi.

Gli dei discutono ubriachi attorno a un tavolo coperto da montagne di fotografie. Le loro dimore, usualmente cristalline, sono opache di fumo come vetrine piene di nebbia alle cinque di un mattino d'inverno. Nella sala da pranzo, una tavola non sparecchiata è messa sotto vetro così com'è.



What is Fluxus?  
One book that is impossible  
publisher because ben misteyre  
replay: Robert Watts.



# I situazionisti e la nozione di “dérive” e di psicogeografia nell’ambiente urbano

Mirella Bandini

“Ce qui change notre manière de voir les rues est plus important que ce qui change notre manière de voir la peinture.”  
(Guy E. Debord, 1957)

Una sorta di spreco consapevole del tempo utile, provocante nell’individuo effetti psicologici e ludici alternanti e disorientanti, è la pratica comportamentale del “possibile appuntamento”, teorizzata da Debord nei primi anni Cinquanta. Il soggetto è pregato di trovarsi, solo, in un’ora e in un luogo precisati della città. Nessuna persona lo aspetterà. Pur tuttavia questo “possibile appuntamento” che l’ha condotto in un luogo che può sia conoscere, sia ignora-

re, lo porta a osservarne l’ambiente. Ciò lo induce a iniziare una conversazione con alcuni passanti. Può così incontrare nessuno, o anche per caso incontrare colui che ha richiesto “le rendez-vous possible”. In questo modo, e soprattutto se il luogo e l’ora sono stati scelti bene, l’impiego del tempo prenderà per lui un andamento imprevedibile e avventuroso.

Altri giochi urbani, proposti da Debord, sono l’introdursi nottetempo nei

piani delle case in demolizione, percorrere incessantemente Parigi senza meta in autostop durante uno sciopero dei trasporti urbani, errare nei sotterranei delle catacombe chiuse al pubblico.<sup>1</sup> Sono queste alcune delle tematiche presituazioniste elaborate nel 1953-56 da Debord, nella ricerca di una interazione tra comportamento e spazio urbano, che viene usato in un modo nuovo, ludico e dinamico, con la “dérive” e la psicogeografia.



Pinot Gallizio tra gli zingari, Alba, 1954. (Museo Civico di Torino, Archivio Pinot Gallizio).



Il concetto di *dérive*, sorta di passeggiata libera senza fisso itinerario attuata in una dimensione alternativa dell'ambiente urbano, è stato messo a punto da Debord nell'Internationale lettriste, gruppo scissionista dal lettrismo di Isou, formato da lui ventunenne a Parigi nel 1952 con Michèle Bernstein, Gil J Wolman e Mohamed Dahou. Debord stesso così definisce l'Internationale lettriste nel 1955: "La nostra non è una scuola letteraria, un rinnovamento dell'espressione, un modernismo. Si tratta di un modo di vivere che passerà attraverso esperienze e formulazioni provvisorie, e che tende esso stesso a esercitarsi nel provvisorio... Dobbiamo preparare e sperimentare nella misura possibile sia forme di architettura che modi di comportamento."<sup>2</sup>

Tematiche di costruzione sperimentale della vita quotidiana, dure critiche all'architettura funzionalista, prese di posizione in appoggio ai nazionalisti algerini vengono discusse in *Potlatch*, bollettino mensile del gruppo, prima del loro passaggio nell'Internazionale situazionista. In questo studio e controllo della vivibilità dell'ambiente urbano Debord sottolinea come sarà proprio il gioco (nel significato di "azione libera" per eccellenza dato a esso da Breton), "e che il funzionalismo e l'industrial design cercano di eliminare, a spezzare l'isolamento dell'individuo nella società attuale e ad affrancarlo dalla malattia mentale della banalizzazione, concentrata sulla produzione e sul comfort".<sup>3</sup> Da questo atteggiamento socializzante (i situazionisti insistevano sul ruolo di socializzazione delle pratiche ludiche) hanno tratto alimento gli happenings, gli events e le performances in America e in Europa alla fine degli anni Cinquanta e lungo gli anni Sessanta.

Alla *dérive* è connessa l'emergenza della soggettività situazionista dalla massificazione odierna. Tale pratica è così definita dal gruppo situazionista nel 1958: "Modo di comportamento sperimentale legato alle condizioni della società urbana: tecnica di passaggio improvviso attraverso atmosfere ambientali diverse. In particolare, si usa anche per designare la durata di un esercizio continuo di tale esperienza."

Strettamente unita alla *dérive* è la psicogeografia, dichiarata "studio degli effetti esatti dell'ambiente geografico, coscientemente trasformato o no, direttamente attivi sul comportamento individuale".<sup>4</sup>

La *dérive* è diretta da rilevamenti psicogeografici effettuati da un'équipe predisposta nella zona di svolgimento, che può essere l'insieme della città, o la sua periferia; o l'estensione minima, come un solo quartiere.

La narrazione di un lungo attraversamento di Parigi verso nord, e del rilevamento di due punti focali di attrazione – la rotonda di Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, e la "bella e tragica" rue d'Aubervilliers – è pubblicata nel citato saggio di Debord, "La théorie de la *dérive*". È la cronaca di un'intera giornata di *dérive* effettuata da Debord con Gil J Wolman il 6 marzo 1956.

Due città privilegiate dai situazionisti per la loro struttura labirintica sono Amsterdam e Venezia. Nel 1957 il giovane situazionista inglese Ralph Rumney, che aveva fondato all'inizio dell'anno il Comitato psicogeografico di Londra, inizia sistematici rilevamenti psicogeografici a Venezia; nello stesso 1957 si svolge una manifestazione psicogeografica a Bruxelles, in collaborazione con la Galleria Taptoe.

Il metodo psicogeografico è direttamente in funzione della esplorazione e determinazione del terreno della *dérive*: viene effettuata l'analisi ecologica della tipologia dell'ambiente urbano, del ruolo del microclima; il rilievo delle correnti costanti di folla, dei punti fissi di attrazione e dei vortici che rendono l'entrata e l'uscita difficili in certe zone della città. Il terreno della *dérive* deve anche essere definito nei suoi rapporti con la morfologia sociale. Il caso è molto importante, ma la sua azione tende a ricondursi all'alternanza di un numero limitato di varianti. La durata media è di una giornata intera, con i partecipanti divisi in piccoli gruppi, che poi si scambieranno le impressioni; per praticarla è necessario concedersi completamente alle sollecitazioni dell'ambiente e dei corrispondenti incontri, rinunciando alle normali attività.<sup>5</sup>

Sul primo numero della rivista *Internationale Situationniste*, uscita nel 1958 poco dopo la fondazione del movimento,<sup>6</sup> è stato pubblicato un testo di Gilles Ivain, "Formulaire pour un urbanisme nouveau", del 1953, adottato dall'Internationale lettriste nello stesso anno: si teorizzano complessi architettonici mobili e modificabili a seconda della volontà degli abitanti, riconoscendo l'architettura come mezzo più semplice per articolare le attuali concezioni di tempo e di spazio, per sperimentare le possibili

lità di modificare la vita.

È interessante notare come in questo testo, dei primi anni Cinquanta, si inizi a strutturare, oltre quello di *dérive*, il concetto di "costruzione delle situazioni", che diverrà fondamentale nell'IS, qui dichiarata "comme un des désirs de base sur lesquels serait fondée la prochaine civilisation. Ce besoin de création absolue a toujours été étroitement mêlé au besoin de jouer avec l'architecture, le temps et l'espace".

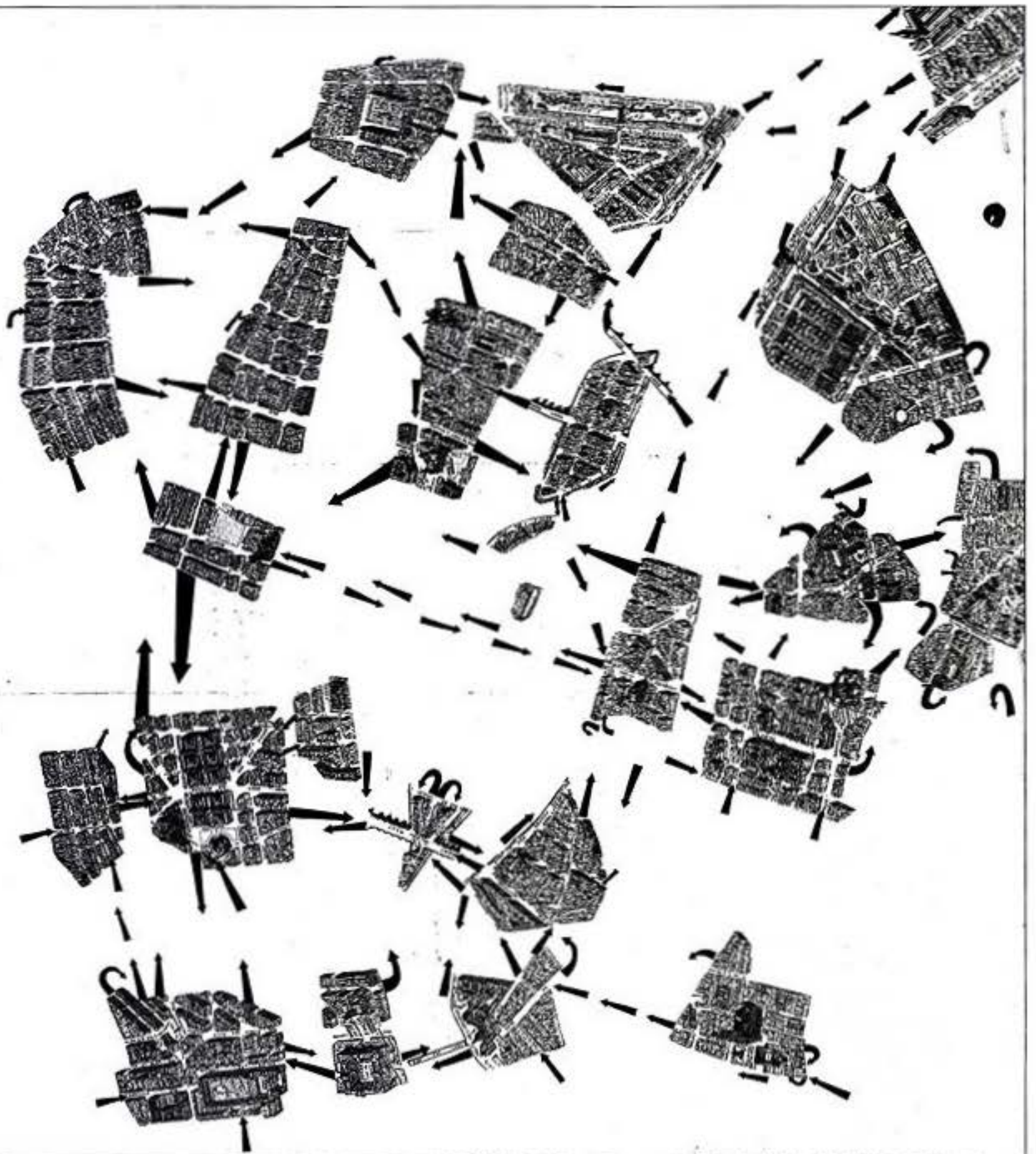
Nei quartieri della città, che potrebbero corrispondere ai nostri diversi stati d'animo che per hasard attraversiamo nella vita quotidiana (Quartier Bizarre, Quartier Heureux, Quartier Noble et Tragique, Quartier Sinistre, ecc), l'attività principale sarà la *dérive* continua: il cambiamento di paesaggio d'ora in ora determinerà uno spaesamento completo.

Dal 1958 la "costruzione delle situazioni" è definita come "momento della vita, concretamente e deliberatamente costruito per mezzo dell'organizzazione collettiva di un ambiente unitario e di un gioco di avvenimenti", quale si realizza nell'"urbanisme unitaire" per una creazione globale dell'esistenza.<sup>7</sup>

Come per i surrealisti, la città più amata, indagata, letta in modi nuovi e spiazzanti è Parigi: città vissuta attraverso la sua percorrenza, e il cui itinerario ha determinato la maggior parte delle azioni dei protagonisti dei più famosi testi degli anni Venti e Trenta di Breton, Aragon, Desnos. Nelle passeggiate per le strade di Parigi, una delle principali attività del gruppo surrealista, la città si muta in un caleidoscopico e mobile intreccio d'incontri, casi, avvenimenti inattesi, coincidenze alogiche, ma risolvono i desideri dell'inconscio. I luoghi più semplici – un piccolo negozio, un passaggio, un incrocio, una statua – rivelano la loro vera natura di trappole del desiderio: la vita e il sogno, ha dimostrato Breton, sono vasi comunicanti.

I quartieri di Parigi ove si svolge la deambulazione e la narrazione surrealista non sono i quartieri turistici, celebrati per i loro monumenti, e neppure quelli letterari. Vi è una predilezione per la Rive Droite: il quartiere delle Halles, degli affari e dei giornali, e la zona nord, popolare, della città; i protagonisti della *flânerie* surrealista sono la strada, popolosa e moderna, il giardino pubblico, il caffè, la piazza. Nella concezione astorica, amodernista, sur-





GUIDE  
PSYCHOGEOGRAPHIQUE  
DE PARIS

## DISCOURS SUR LES PASSIONS DE L'AMOUR

pentés psychogéographiques de la dérive et localisation  
d'unités d'ambiance

par G.-E. DEBORD





Asger Jorn, Guy E. Debord, *Fin de Copenhague*, Copenhagen, Le Bauhaus Imaginiste, 1957. (Museo Civico di Torino, Archivio Pinot Gallizio).

realista, Breton e il suo gruppo vedono Parigi, e la vivono, in modo non sociologico, ma etnologico, in un lavoro di analisi sugli oggetti della città. La preferenza è per la Parigi collettiva, e non per la Parigi della storia e della tradizione, nella ricerca di un'unità tra l'individuo e la città; gli unici riferimenti portano a epoche rivoluzionarie: la Rivoluzione francese e la Comune. La flânerie e il mito di Parigi derivano da una lunga tradizione letteraria, che risale a Nerval, Baudelaire, fino ad Apollinaire e Benjamin, ma è il gruppo di Breton in particolare che ha evidenziato all'interno dello spazio urbano l'attesa tensionale del meraviglioso, dello sconosciuto, attraverso "nodi" vibranti agli incroci delle strade parigine, di cui l'energia nascosta si rivela a chi la sollecita.

André Breton, in *La clé des champs* (1953), parla della nostra diversa sensibilità di fronte a certi aspetti della città, che si presentano oscuramente in forma di attrazione e di repulsione. Percorrendo abitualmente una strada, "possiamo riconoscere, prestando un minimo di attenzione, zone alternanti di benessere e di malessere, di cui si potrebbe precisare la lunghezza".<sup>8</sup> Breton prevede, in proposito, una mappa immaginaria e individuale della città, nella quale i luoghi che si ama frequentare sono segnati in bianco, e quelli da evitare in nero, mentre la parte restante, segnata in grigio, rappresenterebbe zone alternanti di attrazione e di repulsione. Queste ricerche surrealiste di interazione psicologica con l'ambiente urbano, con percorsi nomadici nella città, passeranno in parte nel lettrismo (1946) e nel

movimento Cobra (1948-51), e quindi ai situazionisti, che le amplieranno in un campo ricchissimo di esperienze.<sup>9</sup> "Per noi il surrealismo è stato soltanto una prima esperienza rivoluzionaria nella cultura, esperienza che è subito caduta. Bisogna andare più lontano." Così viene dichiarato nel primo numero della rivista *Internationale Situationniste* del 1958, nell'editoriale dal titolo "Amère victoire du surréalisme". Accanto alla constatazione dell'amaro successo del surrealismo, che si prefiggeva il rovesciamento dell'ordine sociale, ed è invece stato assorbito da parte di una società che non è stata trasformata, il direttore Debord traccia le coordinate sulle quali poggia la prima démarche dell'IS: il problema dei giovani, e la loro rassegnazione e noia; l'importanza del gioco nella vita quotidiana; la "co-



struzione delle situazioni” e l’“urbanisme unitaire”.

Nell’ambito della psicogeografia, sul secondo numero della rivista del 1958, è pubblicato un interessante “Essai de description psychogéographique des Halles”, di Abdelhafid Kathib, della sezione algerina. Il quartiere parigino è oggetto di un attento studio psicogeografico condotto attraverso le strade, le correnti di traffico e l’unità ambientale che si determina in certe zone, specialmente di notte, con lo scenario mobile di ceste e di viveri, e gli spostamenti dei carichi. Kathib divide il complesso in quattro differenti zone con percorsi interni al di fuori dei grandi attraversamenti convenzionali: in essi vengono evidenziati gli effetti emotivi che un ambiente urbano può suscitare; la finalità è l’esaltazione del carattere di popolarità, dello spessore di vita delle Halles. Si propone una soluzione per il prossimo trasferimento dei mercati fuori città, che, “nel senso di una società nuova, richiede di conservare questo spazio al centro di Parigi per le manifestazioni di vita collettiva liberata”. Gli attuali padiglioni possono essere trasformati in piccoli complessi architettonici mobili situazionisti, e in labirinto per giochi. L’articolo di Kathib è corredato da un questionario in sedici punti, rivolto ai lettori, sulla nuova lettura di vita delle Halles, attuata in chiave psicogeografica, o di “ecologia umana”.

L’attrazione notturna dei situazionisti per le Halles rimanda ancora a un famoso libro di Breton, *L’amour fou*, del 1937. In esso il poeta francese riprendendo la tematica della flânerie per Parigi già ampiamente descritta in *Nadja*, ne catalizza la centralità sulla esaltante passeggiata notturna con Jacqueline Lamba nelle Halles (denominata “la nuit du tournesol”), vibrante della pansessualità intercorrente tra essi e la città.

Di poco precedenti a questi testi sono pubblicati a cura del Bauhaus imaginiste tre piani psicogeografici, uno di Copenhagen e due di Parigi, nell’ambito dei documenti e dei piani preparatori della Conferenza unificatrice di Cosio d’Arroscia, dove si forma l’Internazionale situazionista nel luglio 1957.

Il primo è un libro di Asger Jorn e Debord edito a Copenhagen, dal titolo *Fin de Copenhague (Essai d’écriture détournée)*, 1957. In tiratura di duecento esemplari, e racchiuso nella copertina in flano tipografico di un quotidiano

danese, questo piano psicogeografico si presenta come una successione di bellissime pagine articolate tra colature e macchie di colore, inserti di immagini fotografiche di oggetti di consumo, annunci pubblicitari e di cronaca, fumetti, anticipatrici del gusto pop, e piani della città di Copenhagen. In questo assemblaggio di immagini e parole tratte dalla stampa e dallo “spettacolo” della vita quotidiana appaiono frasi come “Vive l’Algerie libre”, “Les mots même prennent un sens nouveau”, usate secondo la tecnica situazionista del “détournement”.

Quasi contemporaneamente appare un’altra edizione del Bauhaus imaginiste a cura di Debord, la *Guide psychogéographique de Paris - Pentes psychogéographiques de la dérive et localisation d’unité d’ambiance*.

Interi quartieri parigini – estrapolati da una planimetria prospettica e che si riconoscono per una determinata unità ambientale (qui detournata in “ambiance”) – sono collegati tra di loro mediante un percorso, indicato dalle frecce, di entrata e uscita a circuito psicogeografico. Ciascun quartiere è poi suddiviso da linee di penetrazione, di uscita, o di aggiramento; le linee di dérive sono state studiate da Debord e dalla sua équipe tenendo conto dell’ambiente, inteso non tanto in senso architettonico quanto in quello psicofisico (la popolazione che vi abita, le zone verdi, il genere dei negozi, la prospettiva di una strada o di una piazza, nelle ore diurne e notturne. Accanto a quartieri molto ampi, come il Quartiere Latino o le Halles centrali, ne appaiono di più piccoli, o addirittura una strada circoscritta (il Quai aux Fleurs), o la zona intorno a un antico ponte (il Pont-Neuf) entrambi luoghi amati dai surrealisti.

Il terzo piano psicogeografico del 1957 è *The Naked City - Illustration de l’hypothèse des plaques tournantes en psychogéographique*, firmato da Debord e pubblicato come quarta esperienza del Movimento internazionale per una Bauhaus imaginista nel libro di Jorn *Pour la forme*. Con frecce rosse che attraversano diverse zone privilegiate di Parigi (i giardini del Luxembourg, i giardini del Louvre, le Halles, la Gare de Lyon, l’Ospedale Militare ecc.) vengono rappresentate le direzioni che collegano naturalmente diverse “unità d’ambiente”, e lo spontaneo orientarsi del soggetto che le attraversa senza sottoporsi

agli usuali condizionamenti del traffico urbano.

Queste tre pubblicazioni fanno parte dei documenti e dei piani preparatori della Conferenza unificatrice nell’estate 1957. Esse “illustrano” la magna charta del movimento, il documento preparatorio più importante, il *Rapport sur la construction des situations et sur les conditions de l’organisation et de l’action de la tendance situationniste internationale* di Debord, pubblicato a Parigi nel maggio 1957.

L’assunto centrale è la tesi di una rivoluzione culturale, sostenuta accanto ai partiti operai e condotta mediante un’analisi serrata della società capitalistica e nel rifiuto di tutti i valori borghesi. Debord non propone una nuova ideologia, ma di abolire, demistificare tutte le ideologie: una prassi rivoluzionaria della “critica della vita quotidiana” che, riallacciandosi alla sociologia marxista di Henri Lefebvre, alle fonti utopico-politiche (Fourier, Proudhon) e a quelle letterarie surrealiste (Rimbaud, Breton), con una ricchezza e complessità di motivi di fondo si dirige verso la contestazione globale del capitalismo moderno, privilegiando al proletariato, di cui rivendica la condizione soggettiva nella coscienza di classe, la realizzazione dell’arte. La finalità è la creazione di uno “stile di vita” nuovo, superando l’arte; il programma immediato è un lavoro collettivo organizzato e internazionale, tendente a un impiego unitario di tutti i mezzi di rovesciamento della vita quotidiana: “Non dobbiamo rifiutare la cultura moderna, ma impossessarcene per negarla” afferma Debord.

Nodo centrale del programma presentato è la “costruzione delle situazioni” in ambienti collettivi momentanei di vita, attraverso i comportamenti che essi producono. *L’urbanisme unitaire*, più complesso ed esteso della sintesi delle arti, deve comprendere la creazione di nuove forme, come il cinema, la musica, l’ambiente sonoro, e il détournement di quelle conosciute. L’elemento base di questa nuova urbanistica non sarà dunque la casa, ma il complesso architettonico, imperniato su effetti d’atmosfera emotivi dei vani, dei corridoi, delle strade, legati ai comportamenti che essi contengono e suscitano. In opposizione al razionalismo e al funzionalismo (allora imperanti) si costruirà un’architettura partendo da situazioni emozionali, più





che da forme emozionanti. Riacciandosi alle posizioni di Antonin Artaud (che attraverso John Cage influenzeranno la formazione di Fluxus e la nascita degli happenings in America a metà degli anni Cinquanta), Debord sottolinea come le più valide ricerche rivoluzionarie nella cultura siano dirette a coinvolgere lo spettatore, il suo intervento attivo, provocandone la capacità di cambiare la vita. La "situazione" è dunque creata per essere vissuta dai suoi costruttori. Il ruolo passivo del pubblico deve diminuire, fino a divenire parte attiva, vivente. Si devono moltiplicare gli oggetti e i soggetti poetici, oggi rari; è necessario integrare il gioco, azione comportamentale, nella vita quotidiana, allargandolo a tutte le forme dei rapporti umani, come l'amici-

zia e l'amore: "In una società senza classi non ci saranno più pittori, ma situazionisti che tra le altre cose faranno della pittura."

La critica della vita quotidiana situazionista è anche il punto di contatto con le teorie del filosofo e sociologo francese Henri Lefebvre, con il quale Debord assieme alla Bernstein e Vaneigem, aveva una stretta frequentazione negli anni 1957-58 a Parigi. La trasformazione della quotidianità – grande terreno d'azione del gauchisme – è portata avanti da Lefebvre, partendo dalla "métamorphose de la vie quotidienne" surrealista, nel suo libro *Critique de la vie quotidienne*, del 1961.

In questa contiguità di ricerche, i situazionisti puntano sulla teorizzazione della spontaneità rivoluzionaria (che giun-

gerà all'autogestione della lotta operaia), le cui prime fondamenta sono la *dérive*, la psicogeografia e la "costruzione delle situazioni".

Alla *démarche* collaborano attivamente gli artisti del movimento: il danese Asger Jorn, l'italiano Pinot Gallizio, l'olandese Constant. Tutti e tre, fino al 1961, anno dell'esclusione dell'ala artistica dal movimento, agiscono nell'ambito della critica dell'urbanistica, cioè dell'urbanisme unitaire, in modi vari e intersecantisi tra loro.

Jorn, fautore dello sperimentalismo già praticato in Cobra, pubblica nello stesso 1957, e in concomitanza con il *Rapport* di Debord, un importante testo, *Pour la forme*, serrata analisi critica dell'estetica funzionalista, dell'industrial design e dell'architettura, e attiva pole-



Mostra e vendita della "pittura industriale" di Pinot Gallizio, Galleria Van de Loo, Monaco di Baviera, aprile 1959. (Courtesy Museo Civico di Torino, Archivio Pinot Gallizio).



miche contro la scuola di Ulm diretta da Max Bill. In pittura, alla fine degli anni Cinquanta, sperimenta la "peinture détournée" o "modificazioni" di quadri pompieri, ridipinti con colature e macchie di colore.

Constant progetta nel 1956 ad Alba un "Accampamento per gli zingari" che da sempre sostano in quella città, quale prima architettura mobile e modificabile dell'urbanisme unitaire, punto di partenza dei suoi progetti di città sospese - New Babylon - per una nuova civiltà urbana.

Ma è soprattutto Pinot Gallizio a produrre dal 1957 la più sorprendente rappresentazione situazionista, con i rotoli di "pittura industriale", lunghi sessantasettanta metri. Come tutte le pratiche situazioniste, anche la "pittura industriale" esula da esperienze disciplinari artistiche tradizionali: nel Laboratorio sperimentale di Alba, con il figlio Giors Melanotte, Gallizio produce pittura con tecnica a stampaggio o a olio e resine in quantità tale da inflazionarne il valore di merce. Decine di metri di pittura, da tagliare a metri, per rivestire divani, farne tappeti, decorare tavoli e ambienti, avvolgersi in abiti, e per essere vissuta, usata, consumata e quindi distrutta in comportamenti collettivi. Una produzione artistica banalizzata, devalorizzata, venduta nei supermercati o nella strada, e fruita da ciascun individuo per un uso soggettivo e immaginifico.

Le manifestazioni pubbliche della "pittura industriale" avvengono nel circuito artistico-mercantile, del quale viene attuato il détournement mediante creazione di ambienti rivestiti di pittura, dove si muovono indossatrici avvolte

nella stessa: l'"unité d'ambiance" situazionista viene integrata dal coinvolgimento dello spettatore in suoni e odori, mentre Gallizio con un metro da sarto e un paio di grosse forbici taglia per gli acquirenti metri di pittura, come nelle azioni alla Galleria Notizie di Torino nel 1958, alla Galleria Van de Loo a Monaco di Baviera nel 1959, alla Galleria Drouin di Parigi sempre nel 1959.

La "pittura industriale" non propone un modello da riprodurre, ma tende a inflazionarne i valori tradizionali; nella definizione di gioco "fatto attraverso le macchine", come Gallizio enuncia nel manifesto omonimo, ritorna circolarmente il concetto di gioco situazionista, intrecciato allo studio delle tecniche di comportamento. Tecniche che egli, studioso di nomadismo, aveva rilevato dal vissuto degli amici zingari, e che nella "costruzione delle situazioni" dell'IS hanno carattere radiante, come nella *dérive* e nella psicogeografia.

Guy Ernest Debord è nato a Parigi nel 1931. Dopo un breve periodo di appartenenza al lettrismo forma a Parigi un nuovo gruppo scissionista l'Internationale lettriste. In questo suo primo periodo, accanto all'attività teorica, dirige e produce film, come *Hurléments en faveur de Sade* (1952). Dirige a Parigi dal 1954 al 1957 *Potlatch*, il bollettino dell'IL. Nel 1956 l'Internationale lettriste confluisce nel Mouvement international pour un Bauhaus imaginiste fondato da Jorn; entrambi i movimenti si unificano nell'Internazionale situazionista nel 1957. Dal 1958 al 1969 Debord dirige la rivista *Internationale Situationniste*, edita a Parigi. L'IS, alla quale Debord ha dato continuità coordinando le sezioni europee e americane, si è sciolta nel 1972. Tra i suoi scritti: *La*

*société du spectacle*, Paris, 1967; *Commentaires sur la société du spectacle*, Paris, 1988.

Asger Jorn (Jorgensen), pittore e teorico, è nato a Vejrum, in Danimarca, nel 1914 e morto ad Aarhus nel 1973. Nel 1942 fonda a Copenhagen la rivista letteraria *Helhesten*, organo del gruppo Host di cui è il teorico, che poi confluisce nel movimento Cobra (1948-51), del quale Jorn è uno dei maggiori animatori. Nel 1953 fonda a Villars Chésières il Mouvement international pour un Bauhaus imaginiste, a cui nel 1954 aderiscono Enrico Baj, Ettore Sottsass, e alcuni artisti di Cobra. Nel 1955, con Pinot Gallizio e Piero Simondo, crea ad Alba il Laboratorio sperimentale del MIBI, in cui nel 1956 confluiscono l'Internationale lettriste e Constant. Dal 1957 è tra i fondatori dell'Internazionale situazionista, da cui esce nel 1961.

Constant (Nieuwenhuys), pittore e architetto, è nato nel 1920 ad Amsterdam, dove nel 1948 ha fondato con Karel Appel e Corneille il gruppo Reflex, che lo stesso anno confluisce nel movimento Cobra. Nel 1956 aderisce al Mouvement international pour un Bauhaus imaginiste e dal 1957 al 1961 all'Internazionale situazionista, dove apporta la sua attività di teorico e di progettista di abitazioni collettive sospese (New Babylon).

Pinot Gallizio, pittore, è nato ad Alba del Piemonte nel 1902, dove morirà nel 1964. Archeologo, studioso di cultura popolare, inizia a dipingere nel 1952 con Piero Simondo. Nel 1955, dopo la sua adesione al MIBI, ne fonda ad Alba il Laboratorio sperimentale con Asger Jorn e Simondo ed edita in questa città il bollettino *Eristica*. Nel 1957 è tra i fondatori dell'IS, cui partecipa attivamente fino al 1960 con la creazione della "pittura industriale".

#### Note

<sup>1</sup> G.E. Debord, "La théorie de la dérive", in *Les Levrès Mues*, n. 9, Bruxelles, novembre 1956; ripubblicato in *Internationale Situationniste*, n. 2, Paris, dicembre 1958.

<sup>2</sup> G.E. Debord, G.J. Wolman, "Pourquoi le lettrisme?", in *Potlatch*, n. 22, Paris, settembre 1955.

<sup>3</sup> G.E. Debord, "La théorie de la dérive", cit.

<sup>4</sup> Da "Définitions", in *Internationale Situationniste*, n. 1, Paris, giugno 1958.

<sup>5</sup> G.E. Debord, "La théorie de la dérive", cit.

<sup>6</sup> L'Internazionale situazionista è stata fondata nella Conferenza di Cosio d'Arroscia (Imperia) nel luglio 1957; in essa si unificarono il Movimento internazionale per un Bauhaus immaginista, l'Internationale lettriste e il Comitato psicogeografico di Londra. Tra i fondatori, Debord, Pinot Gallizio e Asger Jorn. Sulle vicende storiche e sui documenti del movimento cfr. M. Bandini, *L'estetico, il politico - Da Cobra all'Internazionale situazionista 1948-1957*, Roma, Officina, 1977.

<sup>7</sup> "Problèmes préliminaires à la construction des situations", in *Internationale Situationniste*, n. 1, 1958.

ste, n. 1, 1958.

<sup>8</sup> A. Breton, "Pont-Neuf", in *La clé des champs*, Paris, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> I temi di una architettura "simbolica" e di una prima "coscienza geografica" sono già dibattuti nel movimento Cobra. Cfr. M. Colle, "Vers une architecture symbolique", in *Cobra*, n. 1, Copenhagen, 1949; e "Première planche de l'Atlas psychologique universel", con disegni di Pol Bury, su progetto di Christian Dotremont, pubblicato in *Cobra*, n. 7, Bruxelles, 1950.



# Shiraga

Carla Lonzi

"You cannot obtain it through thought.  
You cannot obtain it without thought."  
(From the Zenrin)

*When Pollock's dripping became established as a possible technique in painting, it seemed that psychic automatism had achieved the ultimate liberation of the sign, not only from all representational requirements, this had already occurred with abstractionism, but also from every possible link between the sign and pre-constituted meanings. The effect, whether*

*of the dripping process itself or its results, is that these obsessive tangles could appear, stripped of intellectual mediation, as moments of an extremely dramatic tension and also as experimentation with a real excluding any conflict. However, I have also noted how, even in the American's most direct works, a mental plot, an organisation of the painting in accordance*

*with cubist analyses, subsisting as a luminous network, sustains the arrangement of coloured signs and breathes life into them – over and above the immediacy of their own vitalism – in a possible formal order.*

*Certainly one of the motives for Pollock's return to the figure was his frustration in realising that, at the moment when the*



Kazuo Shiraga, Festival di Osaka, 1959.



hand thrusts the sign onto the canvas, it automatically becomes a conscious pointer to the painter's culture and its ideal superstructures. In the end, a memory of the world, as a memory of particular formal articulations, remains caught up in the dripping procedure. Thus Pollock leaves a work in which the uniqueness of the pictorial gesture is sighted but not achieved, where dissociation in all its modes (conscious-unconscious, spontaneity-control) is convulsively felt even in the artist's nervous system. Historiography has already transformed this drama into an epic with Pollock as "the man at the American frontier". This has been one of the most authentic events on the art scene in recent years: the figures which best represent him are, as with Wols, those which look to the future. With the work of Shiraga, we are perhaps already there.

It is known that Shiraga works in this way: hanging from a rope, he throws himself at the canvas laid on the ground, and covered with lumps of colour which he spreads by rubbing over with his feet while he swings on a rope. Such a technique at first sight appears to be merely an extreme variation on Pollock's, and certainly the latter may be taken as the immediate precedent. However, Shiraga's technique implies a significant advance on Pollock's in that it represents a definitive liberation from the intellectual, and correspondingly, a natural, completely free movement substitutes an obsessive and limited gesture. By eliminating the traditional intermediary in the painting process, intuiting its ambiguous nature as being both partial and inhibited, Shiraga has turned a physiological organism, his own body, into a living pictorial instrument. I don't wish to insist too much on this point, but it seems to me that gestures imply an aim, even if it's only that of creation. Body movements, however, are merely manifestations of life, immediately apparent as what they are: "art of living", as Tapié so rightly said. For Tapié the discovery of the Japanese avant-garde was certainly not a cause of his search for an art autre.

The fact the Shiraga makes works by free movements can be illuminating when one is confronted with his works which are extremely violent, although in an invigorating and lively way that is different from neurotic Western painting that wears itself out in the vain attempt to neutralize the coefficient of thought, which, in any case, belongs to it by definition and characterizes its expression. (This is where Mathieu's theorizing debates in a dualistic

setting.) From outside the dualist impasse, no mental principle need be brought into play, no more than it need be in archery, athletics, etc. This is fundamentally an ancient idea from Zen: it is not a question of the artist mastering the pictorial means so much as identifying with the means itself.

The capacity for concentration, as being simply present to oneself, without further ends, and the naturalness of the throw into space as the obvious availability of the self in the flow of the real seem to be fixed elements that account for Shiraga's pictorial success, which nevertheless must every time reinvent its own modalities according to an unforeseeable emotional circumstance. Such a direct attack and such inflexible energy "without wavering" in action beyond the symbols, in a kind of self-evident physiological exaltation, give Shiraga's works the character of a marvellously single event. A whole Japanese tradition of chiavaly and refinement can be seen in the traces of the execution of any of Shiraga's paintings, a combination of spectacle and catharsis. The execution is in high style. The agile, ferocious movements split the colour and drag in fast intersecting strides, quitting the field brilliantly. Incandescent flowerings of material coast along the edges where the feet have pressed most heavily, slipping on their own instantaneous track which is left radiant.

We find ourselves here perhaps at the join of the main cultures of the contemporary world. Western thought is present at the quickening sunset of its own symbols, and of its own ideological waste. And through the discredited mental scheme itself, to whose fulfilment the tradition of an ancient Oriental wisdom may not appear essential, these cultures will fade. It must be observed that Shiraga practises Zen, and his success is inconceivable outside this rigorous practice of the refinement of intuition. This allows a liberation that enables man to reach a state of awareness before the occurrence of natural events redeems him from the mental superstructure.

What is important about Shiraga's success, and similarly with other Japanese artists: Yoshihara, Motonaga, Onishi, Tanaka, etc. is also what has been revealed in figurative art since the last century, the significance in the encounter between Western and Eastern culture. It is certain that that encounter cannot now be interpreted in terms of the absorption of an ancient civilisation in the course of

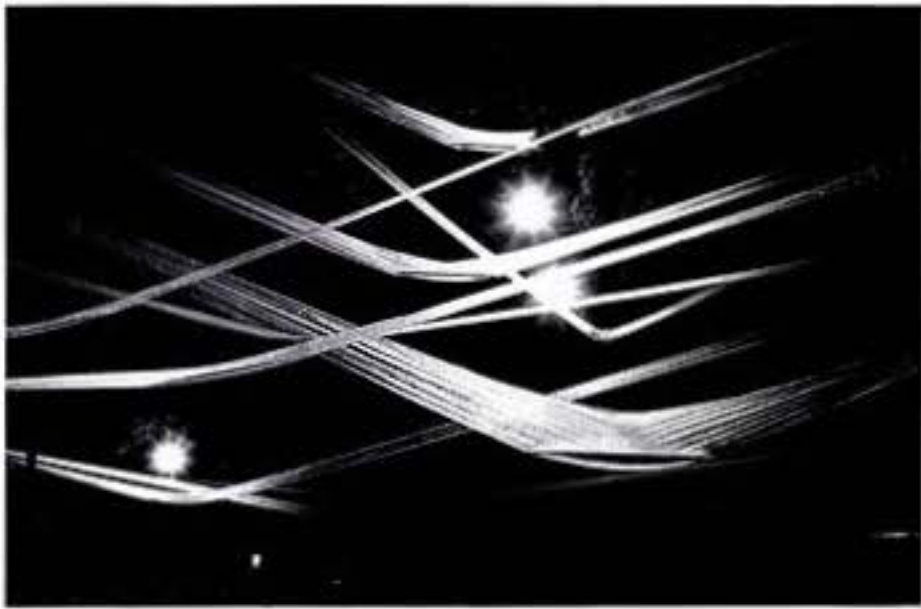
being discredited by a Hegemonic civilisation, although it may have seemed so in the time of Monet and art nouveau. From the perspective of the present day, the interest of Monet and Mondrian in Japanese art is merely a phase in the process of reciprocal infiltration in different cultures – one of the most decisive conditions for the future of humanity.

The fact that the Japanese avant-garde has clearly been affected by the Western post-war rupture, and has itself assimilated the results of Western linguistic elaboration from the time of impressionism onwards, developing in accordance with those texts its own modern pictorial sensibility, does not indicate a merely coincidental borrowing. The soldering with the West occurred at the precise moment in which contemporary art, having reached the most acute phase of crisis, began to question its own rational data, allowing the capability of investigating unforeseeable developments in universal value. In effect, when Western art spread as a formal rationalism derived from cubism, the Orient could only submit to or reject an imposition so extremely foreign to it. (And it has been seen that Japanese art produced on these lines denied its reasons without being able to fasten on anything really vital.) However, the Orient, when dynamically conscious of its own contradictions and schemes, is ready to plunge from the depths of its own traditions.

The value of Japanese art today can be understood if we free ourselves completely from the Western tendency to conceive of a work as the product of an effort to make the terms of an operative dialectic tally. Modern Japanese art is justified in having intervened at the right point in the development of contemporary figurative art: at the point of the most dramatic convulsion inside its own cultural conflicts. All the resources of a spontaneity which goes beyond any deductive demonstration have appeared with disconcerting timeliness. This also seems to accord with the course which our world is taking in resolving itself increasingly in unity, even if only multiplying the individual predicament.

Exhibition catalogue, Galleria Notizie and International Center of Aesthetic Research, March 7, 1962.





Da sinistra:  
2nd Outdoor Exhibition Gutai, 1956;  
Sadamasa Motomaga, *Long up Smoke*,  
Osaka, 1958.

Akira Kanayama,  
*Le pas sur le papier*, 1956.





3rd Outdoor Exhibition of Gutai, 1957.



# John Cage



John Cage, *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, Italia, 1978. (Foto M. Corinto).



# About John Cage's "Prepared Piano"

Daniel Charles

One knows Schönberg's prophecy about tone colour: if we are able to erect "structures which we call melodies", i.e. "successions whose coherence is similar to that of thought", out of pitch-differentiated sounds, then we will create, out of the dimension of tone colour, successions "whose relationships work with a kind of logic entirely equivalent to that which suffices for a melody of pitches".<sup>1</sup> Even if that could but seem "a Futuristic fantasy" in 1911, Schönberg firmly believed it would cause "the sensuous, expressive, and spiritual pleasures which art is in a position to offer to grow in unheard-of ways": it would "bring us closer to the bewitchment of dreams".<sup>2</sup> Even without theory or "logic", i.e. without measuring, describing and ordering the variety of tone colours, their succession would

"somehow agree with our feeling for beauty".<sup>3</sup>

In fact Schönberg himself did not approach the logic of dreams he had been praising in his *Harmonielehre*: having stated that the paradox of tone colours "lies in the contrast between its direct communicative power and the historical inability to grasp it critically or analytically", he never attempted to explain "the principles that interrelate the diverse sounds of a given work".<sup>4</sup> Confining his music to the conventional 12-tone scale, he did not seek to elaborate on the fourteenth-century developments by increasing still further the instrumental techniques or alterations which had led to the wide variety of the orchestral colouring of the full range of discrete chromatic pitches. That perplexed the mind of one of his

"I couldn't use percussion instruments for Syvilla's dance, though, suggesting Africa, they would have been suitable; they would have left too little room for her to perform. I was obliged to write a piano piece. I spent a day or so conscientiously trying to find an African 12-tone row. I had no luck. I decided that what was wrong was not me but the piano. I decided to change it." (John Cage, Foreword to Richard Bunker's *The Well-Prepared Piano*, 1973)

students and fans, John Cage, for whom the practical problem of how to compose without having at his disposal neither the ordinary instrumental resources nor the relatively uncommon ones of the percussion ensemble arose. In the late Thirties, Cage was employed as accompanist for the classes in modern dance at the Cornish School in Seattle, Washington; these classes were taught by Bonnie Bird, who had worked with Martha Graham. One of Bonnie's students, Syvilla Fort, asked John Cage to write an accompaniment for a *Bacchanal* she was to perform some days later. Cage had at the time two ways of composing: either 12-tone music for classical instruments, or approximate pitch or noise for little percussion ensembles. Unfortunately, the Cornish Theatre had no space in the wings, and



John Cage, *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, Italia, 1978. (Foto Guido Harari).



PART B OF RADIO MUSIC to be played alone or in combination with parts A-C. In 4 Sections (I-IV) to be programmed by the player with or without silence between sections, the 4 to last piece within a total time-length of 6 minutes. Duration of individual tunings free. Each tuning to be expressed by random amplitude. A \_\_\_\_\_ indicates 'silence' obtained by reducing amplitude approximately to zero. Before beginning to play, turn radio on with amplitude near zero.

I	(III cont.)	(IV cont.)
_____	_____	201
105	57	153
_____	_____	68
II	84	
97	124	
III	_____	
105	94	
_____	55	
91	_____	
79	153	
_____	84	
71	127	
109	_____	
115	_____	
55	73	
109	_____	
124	127	
_____	_____	
61	64	
124	IV	
109	63	
_____	69	
74	_____	
_____	151	
92	_____	

*Please See  
Story Point, N.Y.  
May 1956*

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PART B OF RADIO MUSIC to be played alone or in combination with parts A and C-D. In 4 Sections (I-IV) to be programmed by the player with or without silence between sections, the 4 to last piece within a total time-length of 6 minutes. Duration of individual tunings free. Each tuning to be expressed by random amplitude. A \_\_\_\_\_ indicates 'silence' obtained by reducing amplitude approximately to zero. Before beginning to play, turn radio on with amplitude near zero.

I	(II cont.)	(IV cont.)
92	_____	69
_____	86	_____
124	74	109
57	124	_____
109	60	79
55	_____	_____
_____	III	
94	107	
57	_____	
_____	IV	
57	91	
71	117	
_____	96	
55	76	
_____	105	
109	_____	
II	135	
92	_____	
92	74	
84	94	
57	57	
_____	71	
125	58	
55	156	
122	73	

*Please See  
Story Point,  
May 1956*

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John Cage, spartiti di *Story Point*, maggio 1956.



John Cage, *Please Play or the Mother, the Father, or the Family*, 1989. (Foto Fabrizio Garghetti).



no pit; there was only a piano at one side in front of the stage. Now how was it possible to compose an appropriate, i.e. African, accompaniment, without any percussive device? Having tried in vain to find "an African 12-tone row", Cage "decided that what was wrong was... the piano": he decided "to change it".<sup>5</sup>

Cage had studied not only with Schönberg, but with Henry Cowell: "I had often heard him play a grand piano", he says, "changing its sound by plucking and muting the strings with fingers and hands. I particularly loved to hear him play *The Banshee*. To do this, Henry Cowell first depressed the pedal with a wedge at the back (or asked an assistant, sometimes myself, to sit at the keyboard and hold the pedal down), and then, standing at the back of the piano, he produced the music by lengthwise friction on the bass strings with his fingers or fingernails, and by crosswise sweeping of the bass strings with the palms of his hands. In another piece he used a darning egg, moving it lengthwise along the strings while trilling, as I recall, on the keyboard; this produced a glissando of harmonics."<sup>6</sup> And in parallel with Cowell's experiments in the Twenties, Maurice Ravel's *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (1920-25) had included the weaving of paper into the piano strings.<sup>7</sup> With such examples in mind, Cage didn't hesitate. "I went to the kitchen", he recounts, "got a pie plate, brought it into the living room and placed it on the piano strings. I played a few keys. The piano sounds had been changed, but the pie plate bounced around due to the vibrations, and, after a while, some of the sounds that had been changed no longer were. I tried something smaller, nails between the strings. They slipped down between and lengthwise along the strings. It dawned on me that screws or bolts would stay in position. They did. And I was delighted with the sounds they produced. I noticed the difference obtained by use of the *una corda*... I wrote the *Bacchanal* quickly and with the excitement continual discovery provided."<sup>8</sup>

As psychophysicist Harvey Fletcher, analyzing the colour of the piano tone in 1962, has shown, the quality of the "colouring" does not only depend, during "normal" piano playing, upon the wave form or spectrum ("Helmholtz's differing partials with differing

intensities") of the sound. It also depends "upon the pitch, the loudness, the decay and attack time, the variation with time of the intensity of the partials, the impact noise of the hammer, the noise of the damping pedal, and also the characteristic ending of the tone by the damping felt, etc."<sup>9</sup> It is not "one characteristic, but rather a *bundle of characteristics*, which has come to be called (especially in electronic music) the *sound envelope*".<sup>10</sup> One may very well introduce slight or important changes into the onset, the body or the release of the sound simply by modifying one's minute gesture while playing. Moreover "due to the stiffness of the vibrating string, certain of the partials (particularly of low notes) are sharp; this slight discrepancy of intonation, far from being displeasing, produces an element of 'warmth' in the sound"; and similarly there is a "*necessary slight mistuning* of the two or three 'identical' strings that pianos have for each pitch";<sup>11</sup> so that "a very slight shortening, lengthening, softening, or loudening of the impact noise – as well as narrowing or extending its frequency band – is enough to destroy the sense of piano colour, even if all other characteristics remain unchanged".<sup>12</sup> Conclusion: "To deal adequately with tone-colour phenomena, we must consider the complete vibrational spectra of the sound events, not merely a simplistic reduction of the sound to a fundamental (as in notational conventions and almost all previous theory) or even to



John Cage allestisce il *Prepared Piano*.

instrumentation/orchestration (as in what has until now passed for tone-colour theory)."<sup>13</sup> Such a holistic perspective was already present in 1938, when Cage began to "prepare" his piano for Syvilla Fort's *Bacchanal*: instead of conceiving the transformations of the piano sounds as Schönberg would probably have conceived them, i.e. as merely rendering the piano tones unidentifiable as such, Cage was opening his ears – and our ears – to a radical expansion of new sonic resources, through a systematically (even if empirically) increased exploration of the available sound materials. In other terms, he was inventing the new context in which such transformations were to become meaningful.<sup>14</sup>

He himself has explained this specific point. "When I first placed objects between piano strings", he tells us, "it was with the desire to possess sounds (to be able to repeat them). But, as the music left my home and went from piano to piano and from pianist to pianist, it became clear that not only are two pianists essentially different from one another, but two pianos are not the same either. Instead of the possibility of repetition, we are faced in life with the unique qualities and characteristics of each occasion. The prepared piano, impressions I had from the work of artist friends, studies of Zen Buddhism, ramblings in the fields and forests looking for mushrooms, all led me to the enjoyment of things as they come, as they happen, rather than as they are possessed or kept or forced to be."<sup>15</sup>

First of all, the fact that two pianos are never the same is worth underlining. Let us consider the "scale" (the "entire set of proportions of sounding parts") for any piano design: it is "different", as Richard Bunker explains in his study of *The Well-Tempered Piano*, for every make and model of piano. "Therefore preparations used for one may sound differently or be inapplicable on another piano".<sup>16</sup> For instance, since the string length for any given pitch varies from piano to piano, the location designation (e.g. "four inches behind the damper") must be re-calculated from one instrument to the next, if one wants to obtain some identical sonic result; but if one does *not* wish to repeat the "same" sound, one may very well keep the designation intact. In a similar manner, the second F below Middle C has three strings on some



pianos, two on others: since there is, as we have seen, a necessary slight mistuning of these strings, the unisons are to be dramatically controlled; but it is possible as well to leave certain resonances free. Now when the design of a piano includes an "overstringing" ("the design feature whereby the bass strings cross diagonally over the strings of the middle register, at a higher elevation above the soundboard... necessary for the efficient use of space inside the piano, for maximum string length in the middle registers, and for added resonance in the middle and lower registers through sympathetic vibrations"), one cannot apply anything to, or remove anything from, the lower strings, without using tweezers, and the objects introduced in the overstrung area may not rattle against one of the set of strings.<sup>17</sup> "The cardinal rule of piano preparation is: *Never force anything between the strings.*"<sup>18</sup> If this rule is observed, preparing a piano will never damage the instrument; the preparations, though they will slightly increase the tension on the strings, will *not* put the piano out of tune, since they will affect it "substantially less than the tension variation caused by normal changes in humidity";<sup>19</sup> and there is no reason why dry hands should corrode the strings. In order to prevent the hammers from striking the preparations, all the objects used will have to be placed over the soundboard area, but in such a way as not to vibrate against the soundboard when the note is played.<sup>20</sup>

Now as concerns the "unique qualities and characteristics of each occasion" which, according to Cage, prevent the live performer to indulge himself with mere repetition, one will easily agree with Richard Bunker: verbal descriptions are too limiting to allow any inventory, even approximate, of the "myriad timbres available by preparation of a piano".<sup>21</sup> Rather, one has to experience and distinguish aurally each nuance. Nevertheless, it is possible to say that "timbres of prepared notes vary from bright to dark as the materials employed vary from hard to soft", and to classify some of the "interdependent variables within each preparation which affect timbre and pitch of the resulting prepared sound": the pitch may be lowered if one increases the mass of the preparing object; and it may be raised if one increases the sideways tension on

the strings by placing between them objects the diameter of which is gradually enlarged; in both cases, the timbre will be affected. Symmetrically, the relative placement of the object along the string length and the strength and rapidity of the keyboard attack will concern not only timbre, but also pitch. Bolts (including stove bolts, cap screws, carriage bolts, thumb screws, machine bolts and machine screws) and screws (including wood screws, sheet metal screws and lag screws), with all their possible variations of mass, may be used in combination with washers and nuts, which will provide "jangle, buzz, clink or rattle when the note is played";<sup>22</sup> coins (pennies, as specified by Cage, or dimes), wire, L-screws and U-bolts are also to be employed. In his *Suite I for Prepared Piano*, Christian Wolff uses strips from a tin can cover. As concerns wood, every degree of hardness provides its own timbral characteristics: brittle woods such as bamboo offer gong-like sounds and soft woods offer thuds. As concerns cloth mutes, one may use weatherstrips, wool felt, and ribbons; mutes of plastic and rubber of different densities and elasticities will provide drum-like and woodblock-like thuds and thunks: while a wiring insulation may help to imitate Chinese temple blocks, piano tuners' rubber wedges produce, if the notes are played *pp* in the middle piano range, sounds similar to those of the bamboo stamping drums of Polynesia. One is also free to use rubber pencil erasers, like Cage in the *Sonatas & Interludes*; lamp cords; foam rubber; scraps of sheet plastic; etc.<sup>23</sup>

"To thicken the plot", as Sri Ramakrishna – quoted by John Cage<sup>24</sup> – said, it is possible to invent "hybrid" preparations, employing "more than a single timbral factor for any one note". For instance on a three-string unison one may place two identical preparations at different distances behind the damper, or prepare a single note with more than one type of preparation material, or combine both procedures.<sup>25</sup> One may also, thanks to the *una corda* pedal, manage transitions from one timbre to another, or from a hybrid preparation to a "pure" one.<sup>26</sup> One may place a preparation at the harmonic node on a piano string in order to emphasize the pitch of that partial.<sup>27</sup> One may also use *surface preparations* – those which "are laid upon the strings

rather than being wedged between them" – by damping the strings with one hand, before playing the damped note on the keyboard with the other hand; or by lightly touching a node, thus producing a pure piano harmonics; or by sliding the damping finger or hand along the length of the string in order to vary the timbre; etc. Among the indefinite number of surface preparations available, Richard Bunker has given the following *real* (recently called for by composers during the sixties) selection:

- a book (size specified) laid onto the strings;
- ping-pong balls on the treble-register strings;
- a strip of paper (2" × 8") laid onto the strings and slid forward beneath the dampers;
- a chalkboard eraser;
- a metal triangle beater laid on the strings between *a* and *a'*;
- metal protractors and 3" notebook rings linked and laid onto the bass strings;
- a nude woman lying on the piano strings inside the lid.<sup>28</sup>

Another possibility of enhancing the complexity of the preparations has been introduced by the use of electronics. Microphones or relays convert sound vibrations to electrical energy, and amplifiers, filters and modulators are to be employed as modifying devices. "Microphones", Richard Bunker explains, "may be masking-taped to the soundboard, the piano case or the iron plate. They may also be suspended on mike booms underneath or inside the open piano. One should experiment with both air microphones and contact microphones for different effects."<sup>29</sup> And among the innumerable modifying devices currently marketed, one has to mention at least "ring modulator, envelope follower, voltage-controlled amplifier, low-pass filter, 'fuzz box'".<sup>30</sup>

We may recall here the talk which John Cage delivered at a meeting of a Seattle arts society organized by Bonnie Bird in 1937 – one year *before* the invention of the prepared piano – under the title *The Future of Music: Credo*.<sup>31</sup> "Given four film phonographs", Cage said, "we can compose and perform a quartet for explosive motor, wind, heartbeat, and landslide." This is certainly not "music" in the ordinary sense. Therefore, "if this word 'music' is sacred and reserved for eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

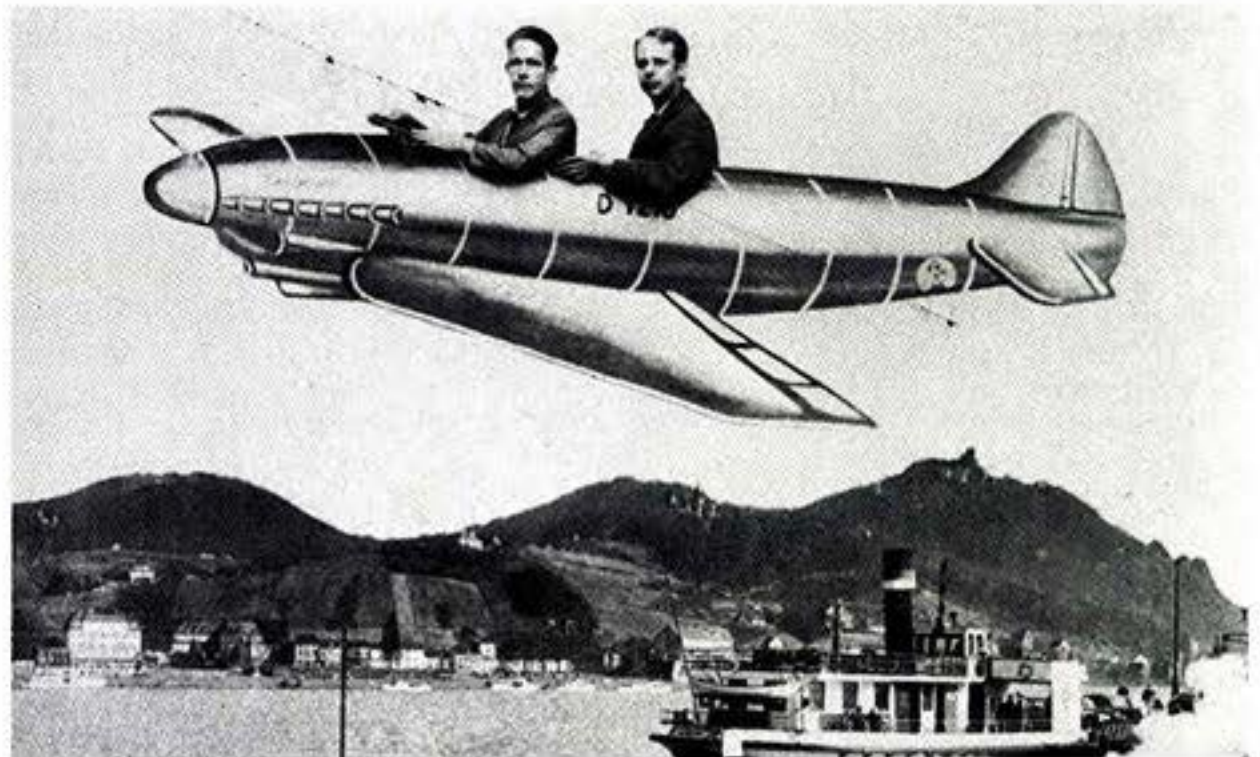


instruments, we can substitute a more meaningful term: organization of sound". But unfortunately, "most inventors of electrical musical instruments have attempted to imitate eighteenth- and nineteenth-century instruments, just as early automobile designers copied the carriage".<sup>32</sup> So that "we are shielded from new sound experiences".<sup>33</sup> But, in Cage's perspective of 1937, this rather negative situation was soon to be improved: thanks to electricity, the composer would be "faced with the entire field of sound"; and then, he would not have any more to deal with the old "methods of writing music, principally those which employ harmony and its reference to particular steps in the field of sound".<sup>34</sup> "New methods – Cage added – will be discovered, bearing a definite relation to Schönberg's 12-tone system... and present methods of writing percussion music." Why Schönberg's system? Because while harmony "assigned to each material, in a group of unequal materials, its function with respect to the fundamental or most important material in the group", Schönberg's method "assigns to each material, in a group of equal materials, its function with respect to the group"; so that it is "analogous to a society in which the emphasis is on the group and the integration of the individual in the group". And why percussion music? Because "percussion music is a contemporary transition from keyboard-influenced music to the all-sound music of the future. Any sound is acceptable to the composer of percussion music; he explores the academically forbidden 'non-musical' field of sound insofar as it is manually possible".<sup>35</sup>

The invention of the prepared piano is thus to be judged not only in reference to the ancient state of affairs, which involved harmony and hierarchy and inequality, but as a positive step toward the liberation of music and its transformation into the "all-sound music of the future". For the young Cage, Schönberg is a model inasmuch as he is the herald of *equality* (between the sounds, and between human beings as well); but Cage rejects Schönberg as a zealot of harmony, i.e. of unequal relationships between sounds as well as between men. In the age of electricity, how could we take it upon ourselves to confront music (and society) in a resolutely feudal and mechanistic manner,

as if the arrival of precision technology could only lead to the re-activation of strict determinism, by right and *de facto*, as a logical conclusion of the scientific positivism of the twentieth century? By driving to its last extremity the keyboard-influenced music, the prepared piano upsets all allegiance to the inherited pattern of inequality and opens the way to the carrying out of the utopia of *pantonality*:<sup>36</sup> between 1937 and 1938, between the *Credo* and the

*Bacchanal*, it is our entire intellectual equipment which has suddenly been modified, as much as – if not more than – our artisan musical practice... Not only has the music of our time ceased to resemble that of yesterday, but, moreover, the category of music itself, the definition of this art-form, has been overthrown. A decisive destabilization: as "organization of sound", music has, in effect, become a *nomad*.



John Cage con Stockhausen, 1958.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> A. Schönberg, *Harmonielehre*, Vienna, Universal Edition, 1922, S. 506-507; translated by R. Cogan in R. Cogan & Pozzi Escot, *Sonic Design – The Nature of Sound and Music*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1976, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Schönberg, *loc. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Cogan & Escot, *loc. cit.*, p. 327-328.

<sup>5</sup> J. Cage, Foreword to R. Bunker, *The Well-Prepared Piano*, Colorado Springs, The Colorado College Music Press, 1973.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Cf. W. Brooks, "Instrumental & Vocal Resources", in J. Vinton ed., *Dictionary of Contemporary Music*, New York, Dutton, 1974, p. 348.

<sup>8</sup> Cage, *loc. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> H. Fletcher, E.D. Blackham, & R. Stratton, "Quality of Piano Tones", in *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, n. 34, 1962, p. 749-761. Quoted in Cogan & Escot, *loc. cit.*, p. 330.

<sup>10</sup> Cogan & Escot, *loc. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>13</sup> Fletcher, in Cogan & Escot, *loc. cit.*, p. 333.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Cage, *loc. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Bunker, *loc. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11-26.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in J. Cage, "Forerunners of Modern Music" (1949), in *Silence*, Middletown, Connecticut, The Wesleyan University Press, 1961, p. 63.

<sup>25</sup> Bunker, *loc. cit.*, p. 26-27.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29-30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. J. Cage, *Silence, cit.*, p. 3-6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> H.K. Metzger, "Abortive Concepts in the Theory and Criticism of Music", in *Die Reihe 5 (Reports/Analyses)*, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Theodor Presser ed., 1961, p. 24.



# De Dada à Fluxus

Michel Giroud

Dada Zurich, Dada Berlin, Dada Paris et Merz à Hannovre ont fabriqué le lit international-planétaire du Fluxus des années 60-90. Ces artistes multimédia ont repris et transformé, de 1916 à 1922, les prémisses énergétique du futurisme italien comme les constructions minimales des futuristes russes.

Raoul Hausmann, plasticien multiplicateur, invente et théorise la poésie élémentaire lettrique, visuelle, typographique, sonore et optophonétique avec ses fameux poèmes affiches de 1919. Il ouvre une voix nouvelle différente des expériences du Cabaret Voltaire de Ball et Tzara, articule jusqu'à l'extrême ses positions: ce qui deviendra la future poésie minimale. Le relais est réalisé

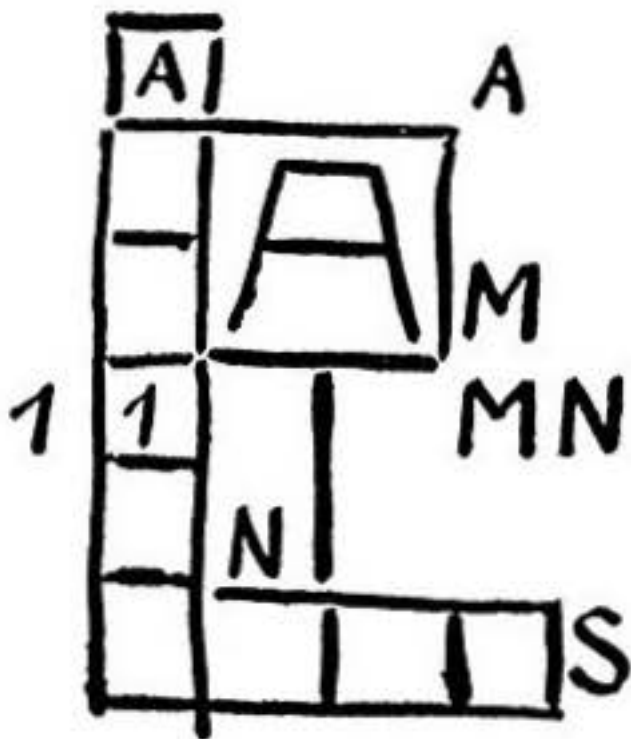
par son ami Kurt Schwitters, l'inventeur de l'art Marz à Hannovre, qui en 1922 élabore le concept de poésie élémentaire (suite alphabétique, suite numérique...) à la suite de nombreuses discussions avec Hausmann, ce qui fondera la célèbre Ursonate et produira son manifeste *Poesie consequente* (premier manifeste de poésie structurale ou de pattern poetry). Les redécouvertes de Fluxus et les explorations d'Emmett Williams en seront une conséquence.

Le photographe, cinéaste expérimental, peintre et sculpteur dada Man Ray invente en 1924, dans le climat général des multiples innovations dada à Paris, la poésie signalétique (mais il n'en tire aucune conséquence), sous la forme

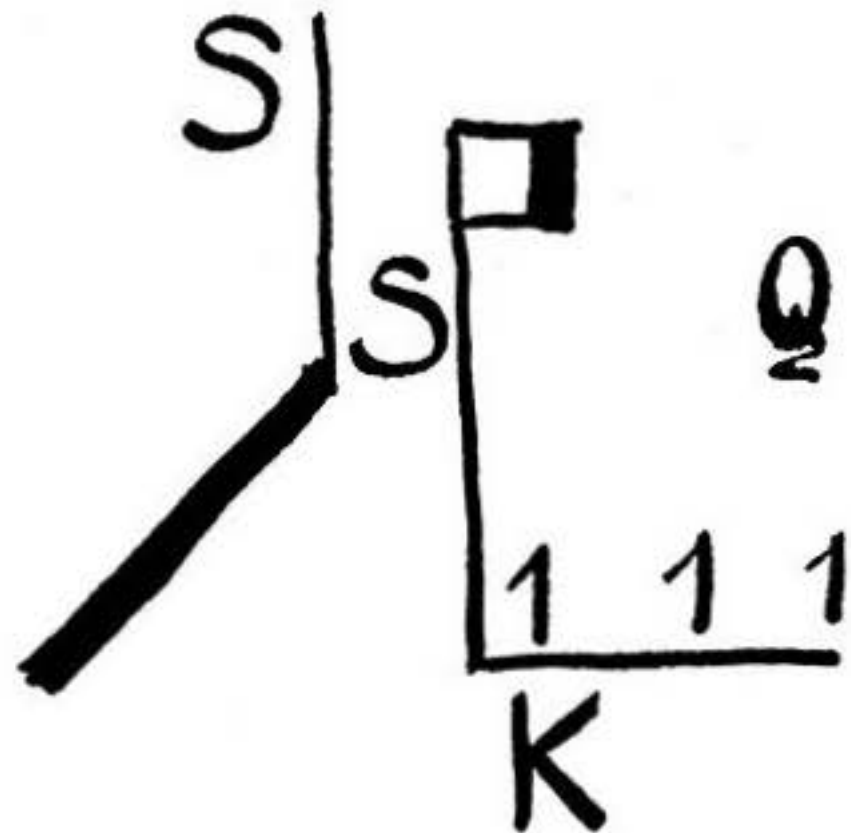
d'une suite de signes du langage morse (utilisé pour le télégraphe).

Autant dire que tout était là en gestation. N'oublions pas dans ce bref concert l'immense Russolo dont *L'art des bruits* ouvrira la porte aux arts intermédia puisque la nouvelle poésie comme la nouvelle musique vont se confondre dans la vibration énergétique naturelle, animale, humaine et industrielle.

Fluxus avait un bon lit qu'il cultive à l'extrême, nous léguant aujourd'hui un instrument assez complexe pour inventer l'art planétaire de l'an 2000, network international d'énergies croisées et multiplicatrices.



Kurt Schwitters, A-A Bildgedicht.



Kurt Schwitters, S-S Bildgedicht.



OFFFEAHHBDC  
BDQ, „qjyE!

Raoul Hausmann, *Poème-affiche*, 1918.



Man Ray, 1924.



PAUL ZEFINAL DERMÉE

# L'OEIL CACODYLATE

Je m'appelle  
DADA  
depuis 1892

Tout le monde  
ont signé je  
signe y compris

quelques  
choses c'est bien!  
Je faire:  
c'est mieux  
maître  
A. Charbonnet  
au lieu MARGUERITE  
BUFFET.



Cher  
amie de la campagne  
étranger

Millhaud  
MON DADA

## DEUIL

Couronne  
de  
mélancolie



de Vette  
VOUS REGARDER  
FATTY J. GATTI  
GOOD  
LUCK

Je prête sur moi-même  
G. Ribemont Desnigues  
Compromis  
Salima

Moi, j'aime  
FRANCIS et  
GERMAINE  
Marcelle  
Evrard  
Je suis bête  
Benjamin  
Duchamp

MOI  
Je suis bête  
Benjamin  
Duchamp

MON COEUR BAT  
VALENTINE J. HUGO  
René Blais  
C'est difficile  
H. Joussan-Horbanje  
non je ne signerai pas

LE PETIT de Massot  
sourit  
au GRAND PICABIA!  
GRAMINE  
EVERLING.  
Jadmire!  
Leo Claretus  
I det  
H. Lami

SADORA  
AIME  
PICABIA  
DE TOUT SON  
SARCHEUNE

FRANCIS PICABIA  
1922

Parlez  
pour moi.  
I. Rigaut  
à Francis Picabia  
qui raconte des histoires  
Gabrielle Buffet de Nigae  
VIVE AGAGA PANSAERS  
PICABIA TE SOUVIENS TU DE  
PHARAMOUSSE!

Je m'appelle  
DADA  
depuis 1892  
Millhaud  
MON DADA  
DEUIL  
de Vette  
VOUS REGARDER  
FATTY J. GATTI  
GOOD  
LUCK  
JEAN HUGO  
VOLTAIRE  
JEAN HUGO



SCHARCHOUNE  
RENATA RUSSE  
BORGATTI  
LES CROISSANTS SONT BONS  
RIEN FAIT ET JE SIGNE  
JE ME TROUVE TRES  
TRISTAN  
TZARA  
"Francis Picabia"  
Marie de La Hire  
d'aimer  
Francis  
Maria



Je l'aime  
L. Toulouky  
de l'oeil  
de l'oeil  
de l'oeil



# BULLETIN

à Francis Picabia

avec de grandes et de petites idées de New York à Bex

A. B. = spectacle

Pour l'anéantissement de l'ancienne Beauté & Co.

sur le sommet de cet irradiateur inévitable

La Nuit est amère 32 HP de sentiments isomères

sous aigres à Montivideo âme dégonflée dans les annonces offerte

*Le vent parmi les télescopes a remplacé les arbres des boulevards*

nuit étiquetée à travers les gradation

à l'odeur de cendre froide vanille sueur ménagère

## craquement des arcs

on tapise les parcs avec des cartes géographiques

l'étendart cravatte

perce les vallées de gutta-percha

## 54 83 14:4 formule la réflexion

renferme le poids laboratoire du courage à toute heure

santé stilisée au sang inanimé de cigarette éteinte

*cavalcade de miracles à surpasser tout langage*

de Bornéo on communique le bilan des étoiles

morne cortège o mécanique du calendrier

où tombent les photos synthétiques des journées

"la poupée dans le tombeau" [Jon vinea œil de chlorophylle]

5<sup>ème</sup> crime à l'horizon 2 accidents chanson pour violon

le viol sous l'eau

et le traits de la dernière création de l'être

fouettent le cri

tzara

Gedicht 25  
[elementar]

25

25, 25, 26

26, 26, 27

27, 27, 28

28, 28, 29

31, 33, 35, 37, 39

42, 44, 46, 48, 52

53

9, 9, 9

54

8, 8, 8

55

7, 7, 7

56

6, 6, 6

56

6, 6, 6

<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> 6

57

5, 5, 5

<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> 5

58

4, 4, 4

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 4

59

4, 4, 4

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 4

25

4, 4, 4

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 4

4, 4, 4

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> 4

4, 4

4

4

4

Tristan Tzara, *Bulletin à Francis Picabia*.  
(Da Dadameter, Colonia, 1919).

Kurt Schwitters,  
*Gedicht 25 (elementar)*.

A lato: Francis Picabia,  
*L'œil cacodylate*, 1921.



# Erik Satie

## [Avvertenza]

A chiunque.  
Vieta di leggere, ad alta voce, il testo durante l'esecuzione della musica.  
Ogni inosservanza di quest'ammonimento determinerebbe la mia giusta indignazione verso l'impudente.  
Non sarà accordato alcun lasciapassare.  
*Erik Satie*

## [Istruzioni per l'uso] [In ordine alfabetico]

Accuratamente  
Affermativo  
Alla napoletana  
Allargando la mente  
Allarghi le spalle  
A mezza vita  
Ampli la sua impressione  
Ancora più barboso, se possibile  
Appaia come iniettato

## Attentamente

Balli interiormente  
Barboso e astioso  
Beva  
Bianco  
Cadenza d'obbligo (d'autore)  
Canti seriamente  
Carezzevole  
Caeremoniosus  
Calmo e profondamente dolce  
Che la sua emozione sia soave



Man Ray, *Erik Satie, the Only Musician who Had Eyes.*



Claustralmente  
 Come una dolce domanda  
 Come un usignolo con il mal di denti  
 Con buona educazione  
 Con una convinzione e una tristezza  
 rigorose  
 Con deferenza  
 Con energia  
 Con entusiasmo  
 Con fascino  
 Con giusta collera  
 Con grande bontà  
 Con grande serietà e cortese gravità  
 Con lieve umiltà  
 Con modestia  
 Con molta cura  
 Con precauzione e lento  
 Con una salutare superiorità  
 Con serietà, ma senza lacrime  
 Con stupore  
 Continui senza perdere i sensi  
 Con tristezza e fatalità  
 Con una certa intimità  
 Con una timida pietà  
 Con un candore sciocco ma decoroso  
 Con un grande oblio del presente  
 Con una visione ampia  
 Con un'ironia contagiosa  
 Convincere  
 Corpulentus  
 Crivellato  
 Culli  
 Cumulativamente  
 Cupo  
 Curvando la schiena  
 Dall'alto di lei stesso  
 Da lontano e con noia  
 Dandogli molta importanza  
 Dandosi importanza  
 Danzando  
 Da succhiare  
 Deciso  
 Deliziosamente  
 Dia prova di sangue freddo  
 Dissanguato  
 Dolcemente  
 Dritto di fronte a lei  
 Enigmatico  
 Epotus  
 Eviti ogni esaltazione sacrilega  
 Faccia come me  
 Faccia meglio che può  
 Fisicamente smunto  
 Grandioso  
 Guardandosi da lontano  
 Ignori la sua stessa presenza  
 Illusorius  
 Imitativus  
 Immobile  
 Impallidisca

Impassibile  
 Impregni  
 Incendiato  
 Indiscutibilmente  
 Infiammato  
 Inflessibile  
 In fondo al pensiero  
 In gola  
 In modo da ottenere un vuoto  
 In pieno petto  
 In punta di piedi, quelli di fondo  
 In punta di pensiero  
 In punta d'occhi  
 Interrogativo  
 In testa  
 In una timida pietà  
 In un misero soffio  
 Ipocritamente

Laccato come un cinese  
 La mano sulla coscienza  
 Largo di vedute  
 Leggero, ma decente  
 Lento e calmo  
 Le ossa secche e lontane  
 Lo porti un po' più in là  
 Maggior finezza, si fidi di me  
 Meccanismo demolito  
 Melanconico  
 Modestamente  
 Molto annoiato  
 Molto bellimbusto  
 Molto bianco  
 Molto cristianamente  
 Molto luminoso  
 Molto mogio  
 Molto sinceramente silenzioso  
 Molto sparito  
 Molto terra a terra  
 Molto turco  
 Nel cavo dello stomaco  
 Nelle costole  
 Nel più profondo silenzio  
 Nerastro  
 Nobilmente  
 Nocturnus  
 Noioso  
 Non cambi la fisionomia  
 Non esca dall'ombra  
 Non gonfi  
 Non guardi cantare il signore  
 Non molto al sangue  
 Non perda la testa  
 Non prenda quell'espressione  
 antipatica  
 Non si rimpinzi  
 Non si tormenti  
 Non sudi  
 Non tossisca  
 Non vada troppo di fretta  
 Obbedisca  
 Opacus  
 Optando coraggiosamente per la via  
 più facile e compiacendosi della  
 propria solitudine  
 Pallido e ieratico  
 Passo passo  
 Paedagogus  
 Paululum  
 Pesante  
 Pianga come un salice  
 Piccolino  
 Più bianco  
 Più intimo  
 Piuttosto azzurro  
 Piuttosto caldo  
 Piuttosto cotto  
 Piuttosto freddo  
 Piuttosto lento, se non le dispiace



M. SADI



Piuttosto meschino  
Positivamente  
Postuli in se stesso  
Prenda dolcemente la piega  
Prenda un'aria sciocca  
Prenda un'aria falsa  
Preziosamente  
Proprio interiormente  
Qualche lacrima tra le dita  
Quasi invisibile  
Rallenti amabilmente  
Rallenti con bontà  
Rallenti educatamente  
Rallenti mentalmente  
Raso terra  
Respiri  
Ricominci, facendo finta di niente  
Rida senza dar nell'occhio  
Rifletta altrimenti  
Ripeta a volontà, ma non di più  
Ritardi di un'ora  
Sapientemente  
Scenda  
Secco come un cuculo  
Segua il signore cantante

Se lo dica  
Senza affrettarsi  
Senza arrossire sulle dita  
Senza batter ciglio  
Senza cattiveria  
Senza far rumore, mi creda  
Senza fremere  
Senza fretta  
Senza irritarsi  
Senza luccichii  
Senza orgoglio  
Senza ostentazione  
Senza sollevare le sopracciglia  
Separatamente  
Seriamente, ma senza lacrime  
Se stesso  
Sia attonito  
Si accasci fino all'estenuazione  
Si alleni alla rinuncia  
Si consigli scrupolosamente con se stesso  
Si dondoli  
Si metta in ombra  
Si moderi  
Si munisca di chiaroveggenza  
Si salga sulle dita

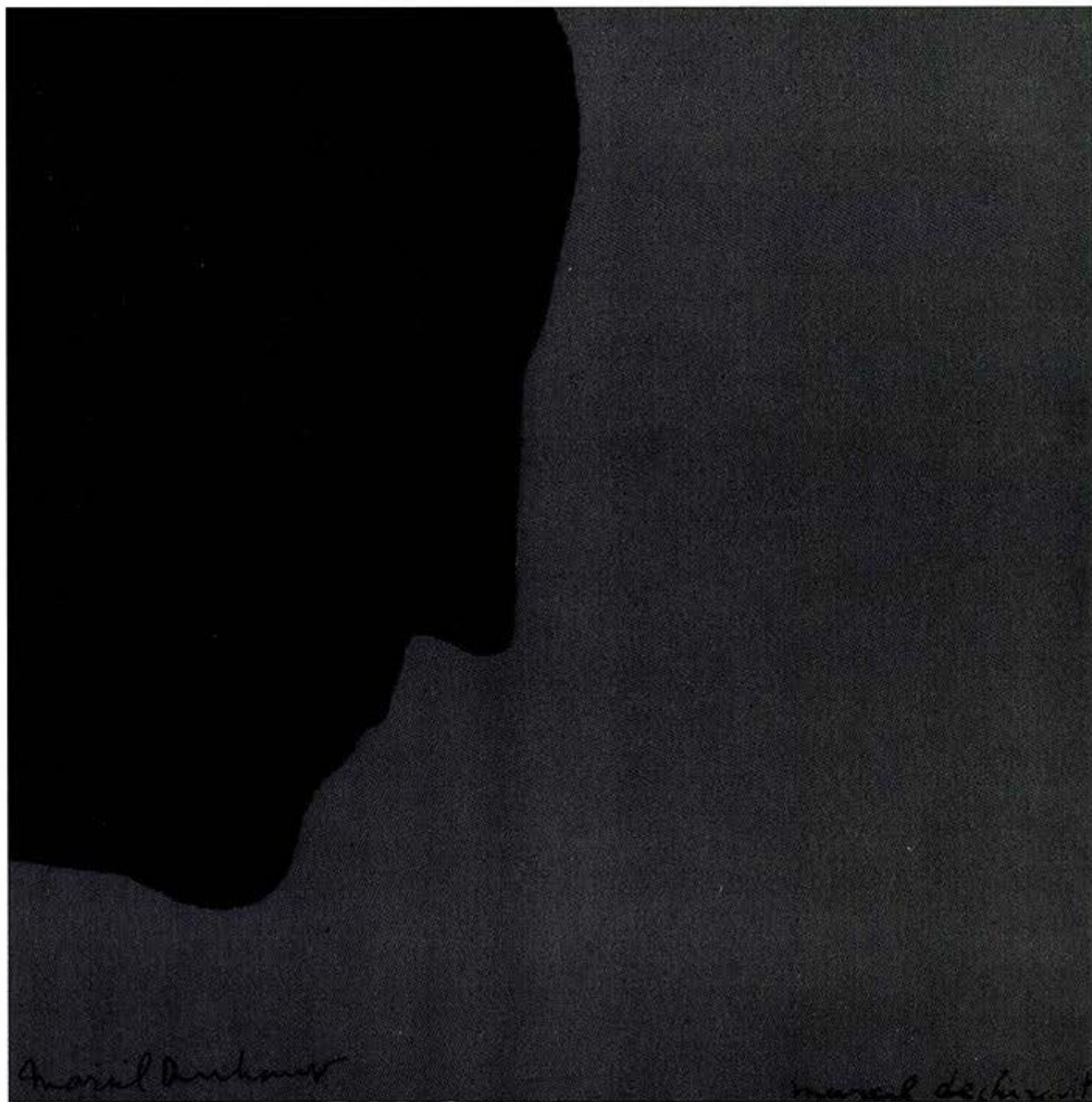
Si spazientisca  
Si spicci  
Si stabilizzi  
Si tenga la testa tra le mani  
Si trattenga  
Solo per un istante  
Sotterri il suono  
Spenga a bassa voce  
Staccato, ma non troppo asciutto  
Strizzando l'occhio  
Stupidamente  
Subitus  
Substantialis  
Su del velluto ingiallito  
Sulla lingua  
Superstiziosamente  
Tenero  
Tranquillo come un papa  
Tremi come una foglia  
Triste  
Triste e sempre più calmo  
Verso la carcassa  
Virtuoso  
Viscoso  
Visibile per un attimo



Claude Debussy e Erik Satie fotografati da Igor Stravinskij, 1911.



# Marcel Duchamp



Marcel Duchamp, *Autoportrait de profil*, 1958.



# Su una messa in posa di Marcel Duchamp

Achille Bonito Oliva

“Chi ha occhi per vedere e orecchie per sentire si convinca che ai mortali non è possibile celare nessun segreto. Chi tace con le labbra, chiacchiera con le punte delle dita, si tradisce attraverso tutti i pori. Perciò il compito di rendere coscienti le cose più nascoste dell'anima è perfettamente realizzabile.” (S. Freud)

Eccomi di fronte alla fotografia di Marcel Duchamp, messo in posa da Irving Penn, chiuso in un angolo, le mani abbandonate l'una sull'altra, che sorride con la *malinconica* ironia del saggio. Consapevole di stare sottratto alla vita ma anche alla morte, in quanto l'esibizione del proprio *corpo d'arte* è la maniera di consegnarsi alla memoria collettiva della cultura e quindi a una sorta d'immortalità.

L'esibizione è la consapevolezza della propria esemplarità, come esemplare (per statuto e giusta qualifica) è ogni opera d'arte. Davanti all'impossibilità Duchamp assume l'atteggiamento dello statistico, la certezza ineluttabile della morte e della propria finitezza.

Alla disperazione l'artista sostituisce la *malinconia*, l'assunzione operativa dell'ironia, la *melancolia artificialis*, come necessità della regola, la regola come preclusione dell'indistinto biologico e aristocratico esorcismo della morte.

“La disposizione alla malinconia dell'umorista classico, che dimostra una spiccata predilezione per questo tipo di sbocco, o non ne conosce altri, è una constatazione clinica che può considerarsi statisticamente provata. Si tratta di un dato di fatto degno d'attenzione, perché in questo modo anche la mania, il grande parallelo del comico a livello patologico, entra nelle nostre considerazioni. Possiamo considerarla il corrispettivo patologico del comico. Sappiamo che tale stato è contraddistinto dal trionfo dell'Io, in favore del quale il



Super-Io rinuncia al proprio potere, e ci accorgiamo che essa rivela, in scala maggiore, quello che il comico tenta di raggiungere in scala minore, vale a dire la compensazione delle tendenze che costituiscono una minaccia dell'esistenza. Accenno infine all'estasi, quale polo opposto della mania in cui si realizza il trionfo del Super-Io: per un momento l'Io rinuncia alla propria indipendenza in favore di una *tendenza all'unificazione...* che controlla l'apparato psichico. Il contratto tra mania ed estasi ha un significato reale, che va oltre le definizioni puramente formali. Perché se la mania deve essere considerata il corrispettivo patologico del comico, nell'ambito della normalità il corrispettivo dell'estasi è il sublime. Ma noi sappiamo che il sublime è una *grandezza psichica*; se il comico effettua un risparmio di energia psichica, il sublime implica un suo consumo straordinario.” (E. Kris)

Eccomi ancora a guardare la fotografia di Duchamp chiuso nell'angolo, che parla con le punte delle dita, atteggiato come la Gioconda di Leonardo, sfiorata anch'essa dal sospetto ironico della propria immortalità di fronte agli spettatori del futuro.

Acconciata sul proprio sorriso la Gioconda sorpassa ed annulla anche la degradazione della materia (pittorica). Consegnata a noi nella misura esemplare del quadro, con le braccia incrociate, murata nella cornice che delimita e definisce il movimento geometrico delle labbra, lasciando fuori della nostra vista il suo quotidiano e la parte bassa del corpo.

Invece Duchamp incrocia non soltanto le braccia, ma anche le gambe, perché la fotografia, parafrasando Blanchot, sospende il morire. Il suo corpo incrociato si assesta nella sospensione atemporale di un'esibizione che prolunga il sorriso e ne istituzionalizza la qualità



filosofica, quella di essere coscienza familiare della morte e assenza sentimentale di disperazione. Il sorriso privilegia e si sviluppa soprattutto nel luogo alto del corpo di Duchamp, il capo, spazio privilegiato entro cui avviene la formazione del pensiero e dell'attività intellettuale.

"Il sorriso è espressione patognomica di attività mentale." (E. Kris)

Il sorriso, appena segnato sulla bocca dell'artista, nasce da una condizione in cui non esiste la nozione di lavoro manuale e dunque corporale.

Egli non ha bisogno di affrancare il proprio corpo né di assumere libertà che già gli competono, senza alcuna difficoltà. Ma l'esercizio del sorriso, del lavoro mentale, non lo affranca completamente, né riesce a scardinare il pensiero logico che accompagna la sua attività intellettuale.

Egli non riesce a fare emergere completamente e operare il suo slancio primario, libidico, arginato com'è dalle metafore della regola e della posa. In questo senso il sorriso diventa espressione patognomica, in quanto sintomo rivelatore di un "processo primario controllato" così come Kris definisce il ritratto. Duchamp si muove tra serietà e sorriso, sempre entro posizioni psicologiche che esprimono il sussiego di un rapporto che, constatata l'impraticabilità del mondo, finisce col rivolgersi tutto all'interno, utilizzando il mondo soltanto come occasione.

Perché Duchamp non ha alcuna fiducia nella storia, nessun interesse per le virtù civili, in quanto non esistono parametri di giudizio sul mondo, né una teleologia degli avvenimenti: da qui il suo orrore per lo spreco e il suo amore per la reticenza, intesa non tanto come silenzio, ma soprattutto come ambiguità attraverso il silenzio.

Come Socrate ha scardinato il sistema della tradizione filosofica agendo al di là della scrittura, così Duchamp ha esteso il sistema dell'arte fino a inglobare il corpo e il proprio sorriso. Ma Socrate ha creduto nella storia e nel valore maieutico, esemplare e *didattico* del gesto, perché viveva lo spazio tragico del pensiero ove esiste identità tra dentro e fuori, tra realtà e linguaggio.

Così ha realizzato il teorema della propria morte: il suicidio. Il gesto, tramandato dalla storia e dalla cultura, diventa portatore non di morte ma d'immortalità, in quanto la sua esemplarità lo scolpa dal quotidiano e lo colloca definitivamente

nel sistema della conoscenza, dove ogni gesto perde di privatezza per acquistare una certezza aggettante sul futuro.

Duchamp invece sa bene che non esiste alcuna prospettiva per un intervento *pubblico*: la sospensione, lo stare nell'angolo, è una condizione definitiva e clinicamente confortevole. Il cinismo non consiste in un atteggiamento puramente aggressivo o soltanto provocatorio, anzi nasce dall'esercizio concreto di quello *stile della distanza* tipico del saggio, di colui cioè che ha raggiunto la consapevolezza che "il n'y a pas de problèmes parce-que il n'y a pas de solutions".

L'onnipotenza del linguaggio ripara l'impotenza della vita, il doppio della parola o dell'immagine recupera la ferma impraticabilità del reale e la trasforma in ultimo e sostanziale contenuto del "cogito", dell'attesa cartesiana.

Il saggio è proprio colui che, in ultima analisi, ha tirato le somme e si è accorto che l'unica maniera per vivere è quella di farsi vivere dal linguaggio, appartati, messi a lato, chiusi negli angoli, ma pieni di carica nel proprio sguardo sul mondo.

Proprio per questo motivo a Duchamp è possibile, ad esempio, la prassi del "ready-made", di un oggetto cioè rubato dalla quotidianità del mondo, estrapolato dal quotidiano e promosso a un ruolo artistico dall'onnipotenza del linguaggio dell'artista.

Sempre a questo livello deve essere letta anche la pratica del travestimento, non solo per quel che riguarda ad esempio il gioco contraffattorio dei baffi e del calembour osceno sulla Gioconda, che è proprio il segno dell'onnipotenza dislocatoria di segni e significati, affidata alla mente, al progetto dell'artista.

Così è anche per la fotografia di Duchamp travestito da donna, dove però esiste anche la risoluzione dell'enigma, e cioè le mani che sono in realtà riconoscibili come quelle di Madame Pica-bia. Allora l'indovinello si ribalta su se stesso, si compie nel momento stesso del suo sciogliersi, e il mondo sembra ridotto a un *vicolo cieco*.

Duchamp dà le spalle proprio al punto dove i due muri si toccano e chiudono ogni possibilità di proseguimento. I muri calzano perfettamente, sono proprio calzanti. L'artista li indossa con malinconica disinvoltura, senza peso. Eppure essi sono come un'armatura che crea

un *impaccio stilistico*, nel senso che stringono e comprimono le spalle di Duchamp. Ma egli è leggermente spostato, con l'asse del corpo decentrato rispetto al punto di convergenza dei muri.

Il vicolo cieco diventa il luogo dell'*armistizio*, dove l'artista accetta la protezione e, nello stesso tempo, ne dà notizia agli altri, dandosi come spettacolo, esibendosi allo scatto neutrale della macchina fotografica.

In qualche modo è Duchamp che fotografa la macchina, la sorveglia con tutte le armi della sua intelligenza, con un'arma in più rispetto alla neutrale oggettività dell'obiettivo fotografico, quella della consapevolezza ironica. Ancora una volta Duchamp omologa la distanza, anzi la fotografa, la trasforma da condizione imposta in *stile*.

"Il mondo è un palcoscenico, l'essere una creazione teatrale. L'essere, dunque, come un personaggio recitato, non è una cosa organica con una sua specifica locazione, il cui destino fondamentale sia quello di nascere, maturare, morire: è un effetto drammatico che nasce globalmente dalla presentazione di una scena. L'essere non appartiene al suo proprietario. Lui e il suo corpo forniscono semplicemente il gancio al quale verrà appeso per qualche tempo un certo prodotto collettivo. Il gancio non ha in sé i mezzi per produrre e mantenere l'essere." (N. Brown)

Il corpo di Duchamp, anche se trasformato in corpo d'arte, non assume mai un'emblematività statica o il valore dogmatico del modello. Al contrario, si pone sempre come azzardo e come occasione, appiglio del nulla, del vuoto che coincide con il pieno, garante e garantito solo dalla presa definitiva di possesso del linguaggio sul mondo.

Perciò Duchamp è costretto ad appoggiarsi, toccare con le spalle i due muri che corrono a chiudergli dietro. Egli accetta con garbo la propria condizione, sa e sente che il vicolo è cieco, guarda in avanti e non ha bisogno di constatarlo.

Il corpo non si espande nella nicchia, sembra quasi non occuparla fisicamente tanto il suo verticalismo si iscrive, preciso come un segno senza sbavature, nella geometria dell'incastro delle pareti.

Bisogna sapere però che il vicolo cieco della fotografia è un espediente artificiale costruito da Penn per l'occasione della fotografia a Duchamp, è un gancio al quale l'artista si assoggetta con



garbo, nel senso della duttilità propria di chi sa, in realtà, quanto tutte le situazioni possano essere intercambiabili, azzerate, proprio dall'esercizio garbato dello stile.

L'esercizio dello stile, in qualsiasi direzione si svolga, è sempre stato, nell'ambito della storia e della storia dell'arte, il segno più specifico di connotazione di epoche in cui l'invisibilità del mondo e l'impraticabilità del reale sono state maggiormente lampanti e drammatiche. Lo stile ha da sempre le caratteristiche della compensazione e del riparo, ma mai in senso regressivo, al contrario assume sempre i connotati di un'attività promozionale, penetrante, attiva, per lo meno a quel livello sovrastrutturale di linguaggio a cui si propone di operare. Così la distanza (dal mondo) che potrebbe essere frustrante e tragica diventa, nello stile della distanza, il momento della revanche e, forse, della vittoria, perché in nome del linguaggio tutto è possibile e la negazione acquista un ruolo affermativo proprio perché si pone dialetticamente come contraddizione.

Se è pur vero che Duchamp persegue il mito dell'artista borghese, la presunzione demiurgica di potere e sapere mettere ordine nel mondo, è anche certo che non elude il momento della praxis con inutili riti sublimatori.

Dal fallimento politico dell'avanguardia non trae spunto per una sterile quanto tardoromantica disperazione, ma la coscienza lucida e cinica che per non morire bisogna dar nome alla morte: e questo esorcismo è l'opera che, come dice Hegel, richiede la più gran forza. Allora la morte diventa lo Spettacolo, o meglio il dare spettacolo, far finalmente scendere il Sé dal piedistallo definitorio e categoriale, costruito per secoli dalla cultura occidentale. L'Io scende nel campo di battaglia con il mondo, ma non nel campo aperto dove troverebbe sconfitta, bensì in quello chiuso e concentrato dello stile, appunto, e del cinismo felice della distanza.

“La manifestazione privilegiata della Negatività è la morte, ma la morte, per la verità, non rivela nulla. Quello per cui la morte rivela l'Uomo a se stesso è,

in teoria, il suo essere naturale, animale; ma la rivelazione non ha mai luogo. Perché, una volta morto l'essere animale che lo sostiene, l'essere umano stesso ha cessato di essere. Perché l'uomo alla fine si riveli se stesso, dovrebbe morire, ma dovrebbe farlo vivendo-guardandosi mentre cessa di essere. In altri termini, la morte stessa dovrebbe diventare (auto)coscienza, nel momento stesso in cui annienta l'essere cosciente. In un certo senso è quanto avviene, (o almeno, quanto è sul punto di avvenire, o che avviene in modo fugace, inafferrabile) grazie a un sotterfugio. Nel sacrificio, il sacrificante s'identifica con l'animale colpito a morte. Così muore vedendosi morire, e anche in un certo qual modo di sua propria volontà, d'accordo con l'arma del sacrificio... Ma è una commedia! O, almeno, sarebbe una commedia se esistesse un altro metodo per poter rivelare a chi vive l'irruzione della morte: quest'esaurimento dell'essere finito, che solo compie e sola può compiere la sua Negatività, la quale lo uccide, lo *finisce* definitivamente... Bisognerebbe così a ogni costo che l'uomo visse nel momento in cui realmente muore, o che visse con l'impressione di morire realmente. Questa difficoltà rivela la necessità dello *spettacolo*, o in generale della *rappresentazione*: senza la ripetizione dello spettacolo e della rappresentazione noi potremmo di fronte alla morte, restare estranei, ignoranti, come apparentemente rimangono le bestie. Nulla in effetti è meno animale della finzione, più o meno distante dal reale, della morte.” (G. Bataille)

L'architettura artificiale, costruita a bella posta, il vicolo cieco, costituisce allora la *ribalta* su cui il corpo di Duchamp è messo in posa, cioè in opera, perché la posa (lo spettacolo, la rappresentazione) equivale proprio alla proposta alternativa dello stile rispetto alla pura biologia della vita.

Non si tratta però di costruire una banale antinomia tra Vita e Morte, quanto di dialettizzare i due termini e di reinventarli. Perché la Vita significa la rappresentazione della Morte e la Morte lo spettacolo della Vita.

Allora si può rivisitare la nozione di arte contemporanea, partendo dal lavoro di Duchamp, attraverso la nozione lacaniana di reale, dove il reale è il nodo oscuro cui non arriva neanche il linguaggio, dove il pensiero e l'intelletto s'arrestano, incapaci di formulazioni esaustive e calzanti.

L'arte contemporanea diventa il tentativo di rappresentazione del *reale*, nel senso che assume in prima persona la presunzione non più di costruire modelli sul mondo ma alternativi al mondo, di dar voce a quelle zone finora impraticate dal linguaggio, proprio perché il linguaggio è l'unica arma affilata e appuntita che gli artisti di oggi possono adoperare.

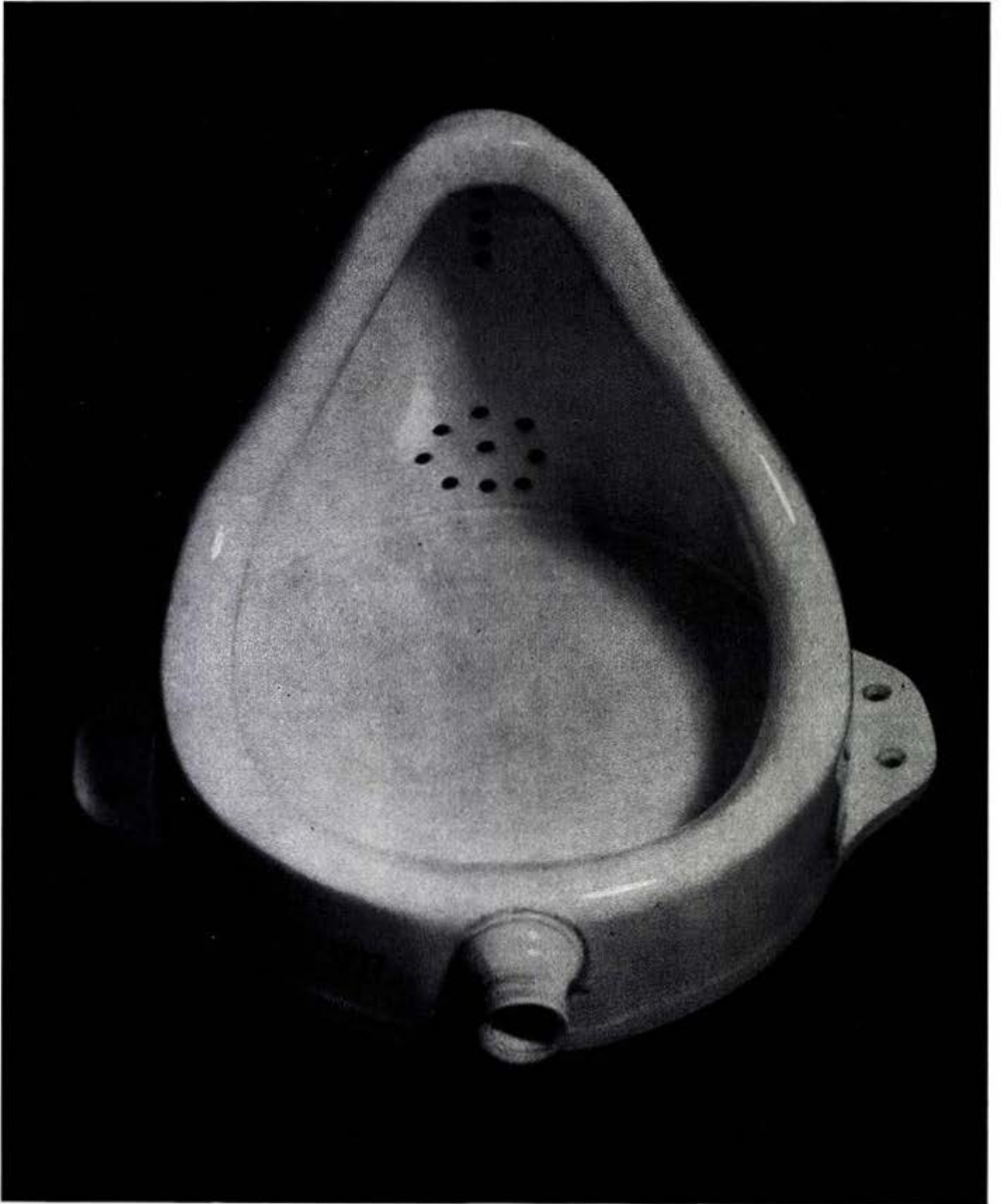
Duchamp è stato tra i primi ad accorgersi che il mondo non si può *ripetere* ma si può solo *rappresentare* e che l'arte, in particolare, non ha più la possibilità di interpretare il mondo e neanche di cambiarlo, soltanto di doppiarlo, di citarlo, di ricostruirlo (o azzerarlo), nel modo tutto specifico e parziale proprio dei meccanismi del linguaggio.

“...Quanto non è venuto nella luce del simbolico appare nel reale... infatti, il reale non attende il soggetto, poiché non attende alcunché dalla parola. Ma esso è là, identico alla sua esistenza, rumore in cui tutto si può udire, e pronto a sommergere con le sue esplosioni ciò che il *principio di realtà* vi costruisce sotto il nome di mondo esterno. Perché se il giudizio di esistenza funziona... ciò accade proprio a spese di un mondo dal quale l'astuzia della ragione ha due volte prelevato la propria parte.” (J. Lacan)

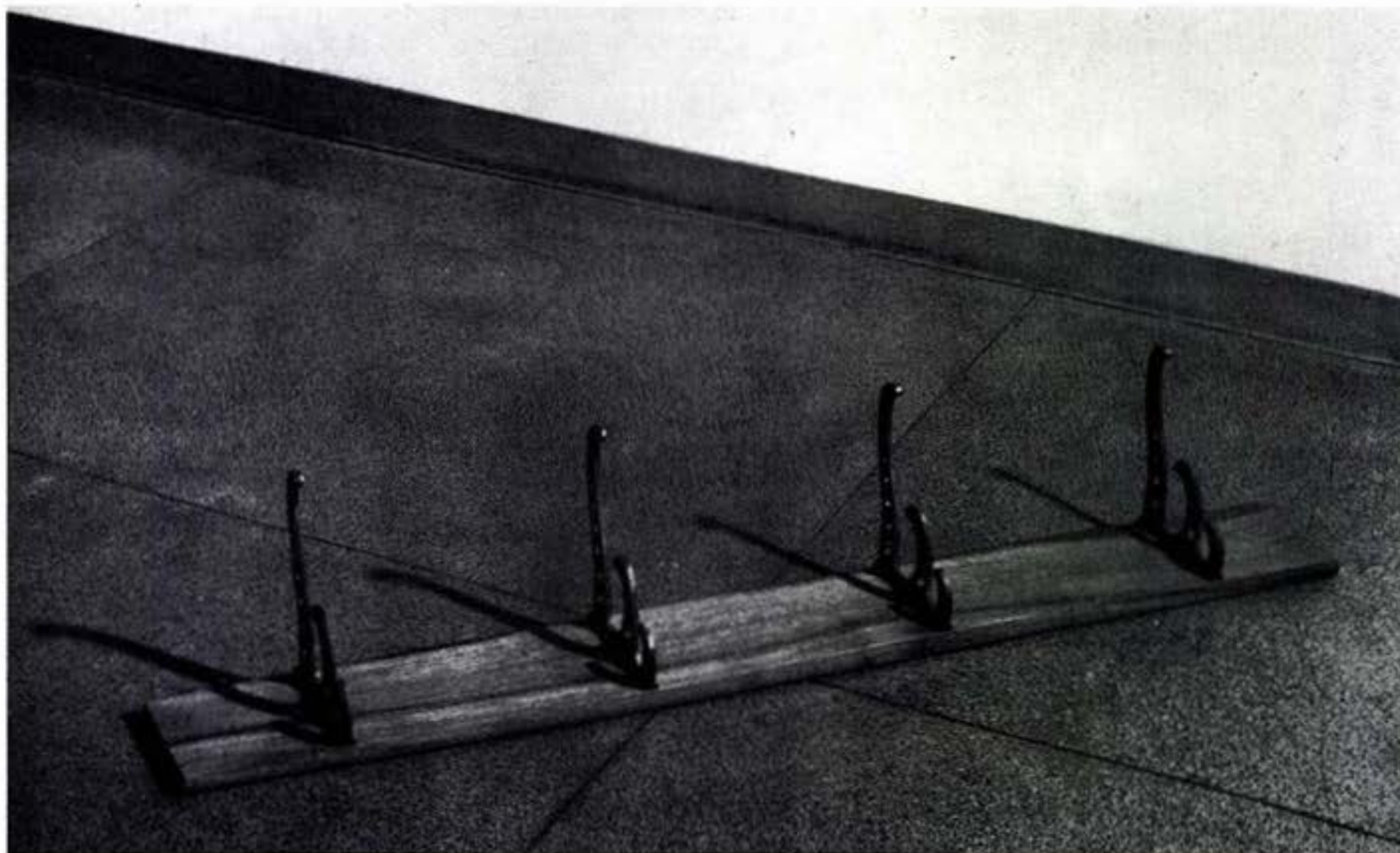
Dice lo stesso Duchamp: “Il coefficiente d'arte personale è come una relazione aritmetica tra *quello che è inespresso ma era progettato* e *quello che è espresso non intenzionalmente*.”

Questo significa che l'arte sta nel margine tra il progetto mentale e l'emergenza dell'inconscio, significa che tra la messa in posa e la foto esiste un valico dove il linguaggio stenta a funzionare, tra il sorriso e lo sguardo la coscienza che solo attraverso lo stile si può vincere l'inequivocabile e invincibile distanza.









Marcel Duchamp, *Trébuschet*, 1917.  
(Foto Attilio Bacci).

Alla pagina precedente: Marcel Duchamp,  
*Fountain*, 1917. (Foto Attilio Bacci).



# On the Posing of Marcel Duchamp

Achille Bonito Oliva

*"Whoever has eyes to see and ears to hear convinces himself that it is not possible to keep any secret from mortals. Whoever is silent with his lips, talks with the tips of his fingers, betrays himself through every pore. Therefore the task of making conscious the most hidden things of the mind is perfectly realizable." (S. Freud)*

*Here I am in front of the photograph of Marcel Duchamp, posed by Irving Penn, closed in a corner, hands falling one on top of the other, smiling with the melancholic irony of the sage.*

*Conscious of being subtracted from life but also from death, in that the exhibition of his own art body is the manner of delivering himself to the collective memory of culture and therefore to a sort of immortality.*

*The exhibition is the awareness of his own exemplariness as (by statute and correct qualification) every work of art is exemplary. Faced with impossibility, Duchamp takes on the attitude of the statistician, the ineluctable certainty of death and his own finiteness.*

*The artist substitutes desperation with melancholy, the working assumption of irony, melancholia artificialis, as the necessity of the rule, the rule as the indistinct biological and aristocratic exorcism of death.*

*"The disposition to melancholy of the classical humourist, who shows a marked predilection for this type of outlet, or does not know others, is a clinical statement which can be considered statistically tried. We are dealing with a fact which is worthy of attention, because in this way also the mania, the great parallel of the comic at a pathological level, comes into our considerations. We can consider it the pathological counterpart of the comic. We know that this state is marked by the triumph of the Ego in favour of which the Super-Ego renounces its own power, and*

*we realize that it reveals, on a greater scale, what the comic attempts to achieve on a smaller scale, that is the compensation of the tendencies which constitute a threat of existence. I refer to ecstasy, as the opposite pole to the mania in which the triumph of the Super-Ego occurs; for a moment the Ego gives up its own independence in favour of a tendency to unification... which controls the psychic apparatus. The contrast between mania and ecstasy has a real meaning which goes beyond purely formal definition. Because if the mania must be considered the pathological counterpart of the comic, in the sphere of normality the counterpart of ecstasy is the sublime. But we know that the sublime is a psychic measure; if the comic effects a saving of psychic energy, the sublime implies its extraordinary consumption." (E. Kris)*

*Here I am still looking at the photograph of Duchamp closed in the corner, talking with the tips of his fingers, in an attitude like Leonardo's Gioconda, she also touched by the ironic suspicion of her own immortality before the public of the future. Fitted onto her own smile, the Gioconda overtakes and annuls even the degradation of matter (pictorial). Handed down to us in the exemplary size of the picture, her arms crossed, walled in by the frame which outlines and defines the geometrical movement of the lips, excluding from our sight her everyday life and the lower half of her body.*

*Duchamp instead crosses not only his arms, but also his legs, so that the photograph, paraphrasing Blanchot, suspends death. His crossed body is set in the timeless suspension of an exhibition which prolongs the smile and institutionalises its philosophical quality, that of being the familiar consciousness of death and sentimental absence of desperation. The smile privileges and develops above all in the*

*high part of the body of Duchamp, the head, the privileged space within which the formation of thought and intellectual activity take place.*

*"The smile is the pathognomic expression of mental activity." (E. Kris)*

*The smile, as soon as it forms on the mouth of the artist, is born of a condition in which the notion of manual and therefore of physical work does not exist.*

*He does not need to mark his own body or to assume freedom which already with no difficulty is his. But the practising of the smile, of mental work, does not completely mark him, nor does it manage to undermine the logical thought which accompanies his intellectual activity.*

*He does not manage to make fully emerge and operate his primary, libidic thrust, barred as it is by the metaphor of the rule and the pose. In this sense the smile becomes pathognomic expression, in that the revealing symptom of a "controlled primary process", as Kris defines the portrait.*

*Duchamp moves between seriousness and smile, always in psychological positions which express the rigidity of a relationship which, once confirmed the impracticability of the world, ends up referring inwards, utilizing the world only as chance.*

*Because Duchamp has no faith in history, no interest in civil virtues, in that there are no parameters of judgement on the world, or teleology of occurrences; hence his horror of waste and his love of reticence, understood not so much as silence, but mainly as ambiguity by way of silence.*

*As Socrates undermined the system of philosophical tradition acting beyond writing, so Duchamp has extended the system of art to encompass his body and his own smile. But Socrates believed in history and in the maieutic, exemplary and didactic value of the deed, because he lived the tragic space of thought where*



there is identity of inside and outside, reality and language.

Thus he fulfilled the theorem of his own death: suicide. The deed, handed down by history and culture, becomes a carrier not of death but of immortality. In that its exemplariness lifts it from the everyday and sets it definitively in the system of knowledge, where every deed loses privacy to acquire a projecting certainty of the future.

Duchamp, however, knows well that there is no prospect for public participation: the suspension, the standing in the corner, is a final cynically comfortable condition. The cynicism does not consist in a purely aggressive or merely provocative attitude, but is born of the concrete exercising of that distance style typical of the sage, of the one who has attained the awareness that "there are no problems because there are no solutions".

The omnipotence of language harbours the impotence of life, the double of the word or of the image recovers the firm impracticability of the real and transforms it into last and substantial content of the "cogito" of the Cartesian expectation.

The wise man is precisely the one who, in point of fact, has drawn up accounts and realized that the only way of living is to let yourself live by language, separated, cast aside, closed in corners, but fully charged in your outlook on life.

For just this reason is possible for Duchamp, for example, the praxis of the ready-made, of an object stolen from the everydayness of the world, extrapolated from the day-to-day, and promoted to an artistic role by the omnipotence of the language of the artist.

Again at this level must be read also the practice of disguise, not only as regards, for example, the forged game of moustache and obscene calembour on the Gioconda, which is the sign of the dislocating omnipotence of signs and significances, entrusted to the mind, of the project of the artist.

So it is too for the photograph of Duchamp dressed as a woman where, however, there exists also the solution of the enigma and that is, the hands which are really recognizable as those of Madame Picabia. Then the riddle rebounds on itself, completes itself as it dissolves, and the world seems to be reduced to a dead end.

Duchamp turns his back right at the point where the two walls meet and close every possibility of continuation. The walls fit perfectly, are a really good fit. The artist

wears them with melancholy ease, weightlessly. Yet they are like an armour which creates a stylistic hindrance in the sense that they cramp and compress Duchamp's shoulders. But he is slightly shifted, with the axis of his body off-centre with respect



to the point of convergence of the walls. The dead end becomes the place of armistice, where the artist accepts the protection and, at the same time, gives news of it to others, presenting himself as a show, exhibiting himself to the

neutral click of the camera.

In a way it is Duchamp who photographs the camera, keeps watch over it with all the weapons of his intelligence, with one weapon more than the neutral objectivity of the photographic lens, that of ironic awareness. Once more Duchamp homologates the distance, or rather photographs it, transforming it from imposed condition into style.

"The world is a stage, the being a theatrical creation. The being, therefore, like a character in the play, is not an organic thing with a specific location, whose fate is fundamentally that of being born, maturing and dying: it is a dramatic effect which is born globally from the presentation of a scene. The being does not belong to his Owner. He and his body simply supply the hook from which a certain collective product will be hung for some time. The hook does not contain in itself the means of producing and maintaining the being." (N. Brown)

Duchamp's body, even if transformed into an art body, never assumes a static emblematicity or the dogmatic value of the model. On the contrary, it appears always as a gamble or chance, foothold of the void, of the vacuum, which coincides with fullness, guarantor and guaranteed only by the definitive possession of the world by language.

Therefore Duchamp is obliged to lean, to touch with his shoulders the two walls which run to a close behind him.

He accepts his own condition with grace, knows and feels the dead end, looks ahead and does not need to prove it. His body does not expand in the niche, seems almost not to physically occupy it, so much is its verticalism inscribed, precise like a sign without smudging, in the geometry of the joint of the walls.

It is necessary to know however, that the dead end of the photograph is an artificial device constructed by Penn for the occasion of Duchamp's photograph, is a hook to which the artist subjects himself with grace, in the sense of the ductility of one who really knows how much all situations can be interchangeable, zeroed, by just this graceful exercising of style.

The practice of style, in whatever direction, has always been in the ambit of history and the history of art, the most specific sign of connotation of eras in which the unlivability of the world and the impracticability of the real have been most striking and dramatic.

Style has always had the characteristics of



compensation and cover, but never in a regressive sense; on the contrary, it always takes on the connotations of a promotional, penetrating, active matter, at least at the superstructural level of language at which it proposes to work.

Thus the distance (from the world) which could be frustrating and tragic becomes, in the style of distance, the moment of *revanche* and, perhaps, of victory, because in the name of language everything is possible and the negation acquires an affirmative role precisely because it sets itself dialectically as a contradiction.

If it is true that Duchamp pursues the myth of the bourgeois artist, the demiurgic presumption of being able to and knowing how to bring order into the world, it is also certain that he does not elude the moment of praxis with useless sublimating rites.

From the political failure of the avant-garde he does not draw his cue for a sterile late-romantic desperation, but the lucid and cynical consciousness that in order not to die it is necessary to give death a name: and this exorcism is the work which, as Hegel says, requires the greatest effort.

Then death becomes the Show, or better, the performing, finally making the Self step down from the defining categorial pedestal constructed for centuries by western culture. The Ego goes down into the battlefield with the world, but not into the open battle where it would meet with defeat, but the covered and concentrated one of style, and of the happy cynicism of distance.

"The privileged manifestation of Negativity is death, but death, in truth reveals nothing. The reason death reveals Man to himself is, in theory, his natural, animal being; the revelation never takes place. Because once the animal being which sustains him is dead, the human being himself has ceased to be. For man in the end to reveal himself to himself, he would have to die, but he would have to do it whilst living-looking at himself as he

ceased to be. In other words, death itself should become (self) consciousness, at the same moment in which it annihilates the conscious being. In a certain sense this is what happens (or at least what is about to happen, or takes place in a fleeting, intangible way) thanks to subterfuge. In the sacrifice the sacrificer identifies with the animal beaten to death. So he dies watching himself die, and even in a certain way of his own free will, in agreement with the sacrificial weapon. But it is a comedy! Or at least it would be a comedy if there were another way of being able to reveal to the living the eruption of death: this exhaustion of the finite being, which only fulfils and alone can fulfil its Negativity, which kills it, finishes it once and for all... It would be necessary then at all costs for man to live the moment in which he really dies, or to live with the impression of really dying. This difficulty reveals the necessity of the show, or in general of the performance; without the repetition of the show and of the performance we could, when faced with death, remain strangers, ignorant, as animals apparently remain. Nothing is in effect less animal than fiction, more or less distant from the real, from death." (G. Bataille)

The artificial architecture, built on purpose, the dead end, constitutes then the stage on which the body of Duchamp is posed, that is, is set, because the pose (the show, the performance) is equivalent to the alternative proposal of style with respect to the pure biology of life.

However we are not dealing with the construction of a banal antinomy between Life and Death so much as with the dialectizing of the two terms and their reinvention. Because Life signifies the performance of Death and Death the show of Life.

Then one can return to the notion of contemporary art, starting out from the work of Duchamp, by way of the Lacanian notion of real, where the real is the obscure knot which not even language

reaches, where thought and intellect halt, unable to make exhaustive and fitting formulations.

Contemporary art becomes an attempt at performing the real, in the sense that it assumes in first person the presumption no longer of constructing models of the world but alternatives to the world, of giving voice to those zones till now untrodden by language, because language is the only sharp and pointed weapon which the artists of today can use.

Duchamp has been among the first to realize that the world cannot be repeated but that it can only be performed and that art, in particular, no longer has the possibility of interpreting the world or event of changing it, only of dubbing it, of quoting it, of rebuilding it (or zeroing it) in the specific and partial way of the mechanisms of language.

"...What has not come into the light of the symbolic appears in the real... In fact, the real does not wait for the subject, since it does not expect anything from the word. But it is there, identical to its existence, a sound in which everything can be heard, and ready to submerge with its explosions what the principle of reality builds there under the name of outside world. Because if the judgement of existence works... this takes place at the expense of a world from which the astuteness of reason has twice taken its share." (J. Lacan)

Duchamp himself says: "The coefficient of personal art is like a mathematical equation between what is not expressed but was planned and what is not intentionally expressed."

This means that art lies in the margin between the mental project and the emergence of the unconscious, means that between the posing and the photo lies a ford where language can barely work, between smile and glance the consciousness that only by way of style can the unequivocal and invincible distance be conquered.



# Erratum musical

Yvonne

Faire une em- prein- te mar- quer des traits

u- ne fi- gure sur une sur- face im- pri- mer

un sceau sur ci- re.

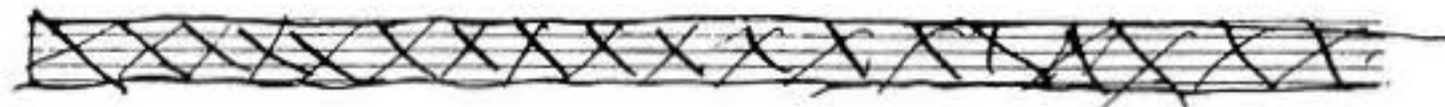


Marg. Solenne

Faire une em- prein- te mar- quer des traits un-

-ne fi- gure sur une sur- face im- pri- mer un

sceau sur ci- re





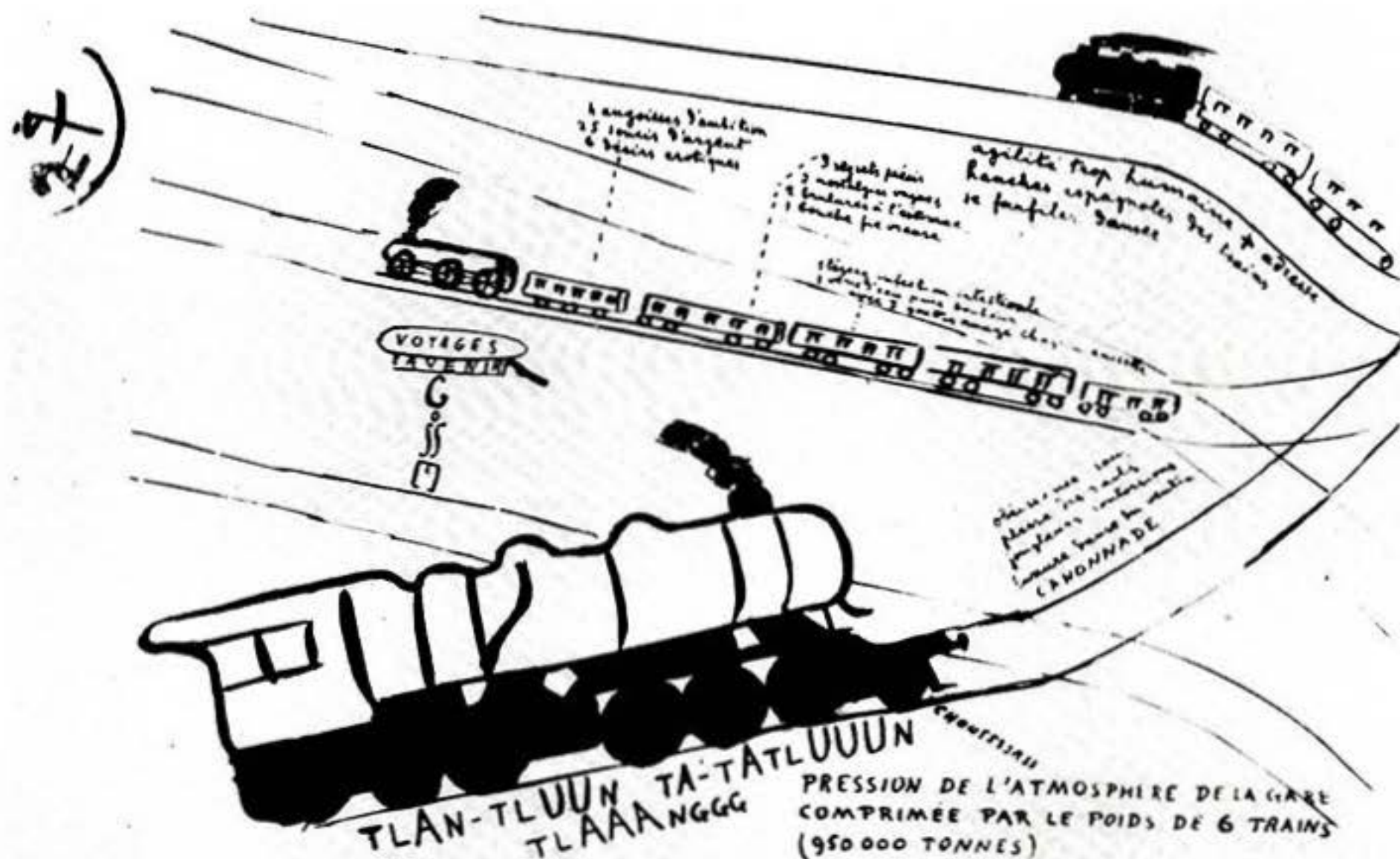
# l'oggetto tipografia di marinetti

Mario Diacono

la linea d'azione che s'è venuta cristallizzando chez la culture nel recepire-percepire i tre testi tipografici, i tre ultimi, metaverbali, allegati da marinetti a *les mots en liberté futuristes* (1919) ha assunto una fisionomizzazione - ai due livelli internazionale e italiano - che ormai sembra impassibile di ulteriori spostamenti. mentre nelle antologie, soprattutto anglosassoni, di poesia concreto-visiva i tre *fakturbedichten* (così li definiva moholy-nagy nel '29) di marinetti ricorrono con puntualità quali archetipi del trattamento estremisticamente segnico-materiale che viene oggi riservato con unanimità, perfino ecces-

siva e sospetta, dalle nuove "avanguardie" al linguaggio in quanto medium della funzione specifica della "poesia" (parola ormai asemantica), essi in italia vengono considerati ancora esempi ineffabili di folklore tipografico futurista. ammesso se ne (ri)conosca addirittura l'esistenza. tuttavia in *après la marme, joffre visita le front en auto* (1915), *le soir, couchée dans son lit, elle relisait la lettre de son artilleur au front e une assemblée tumultueuse (sensibilité numérique)* (1918) da un lato chiudevano il discorso sull'*alchimie du verbe*, il "discorso", sintattico rivelandosi appunto schiacciato dal peso ideologico delle nuove nozioni-op-

zioni di percezione e tecnologia, che le poetiche del tempo nominavano nel concetto più operativo o tecnicistico di simultaneità, dall'altro iniziavano l'écriture alla démarche extralinguistica segno → gesto → oggetto → azione, cioè la promuovevano alle responsabilità dell'estetica più attuale. la tipografia vi conosceva il sovvertimento di regole, l'espansione di ruolo, la celebrazione e la negazione più radicali della sua storia, in una specie di rivolta massacro della denotazione grafica sulla connotazione semantica, del carattere e del corpo (tipografici) sul vocabolario. fino ai futuristi e a dada nella prassi, a







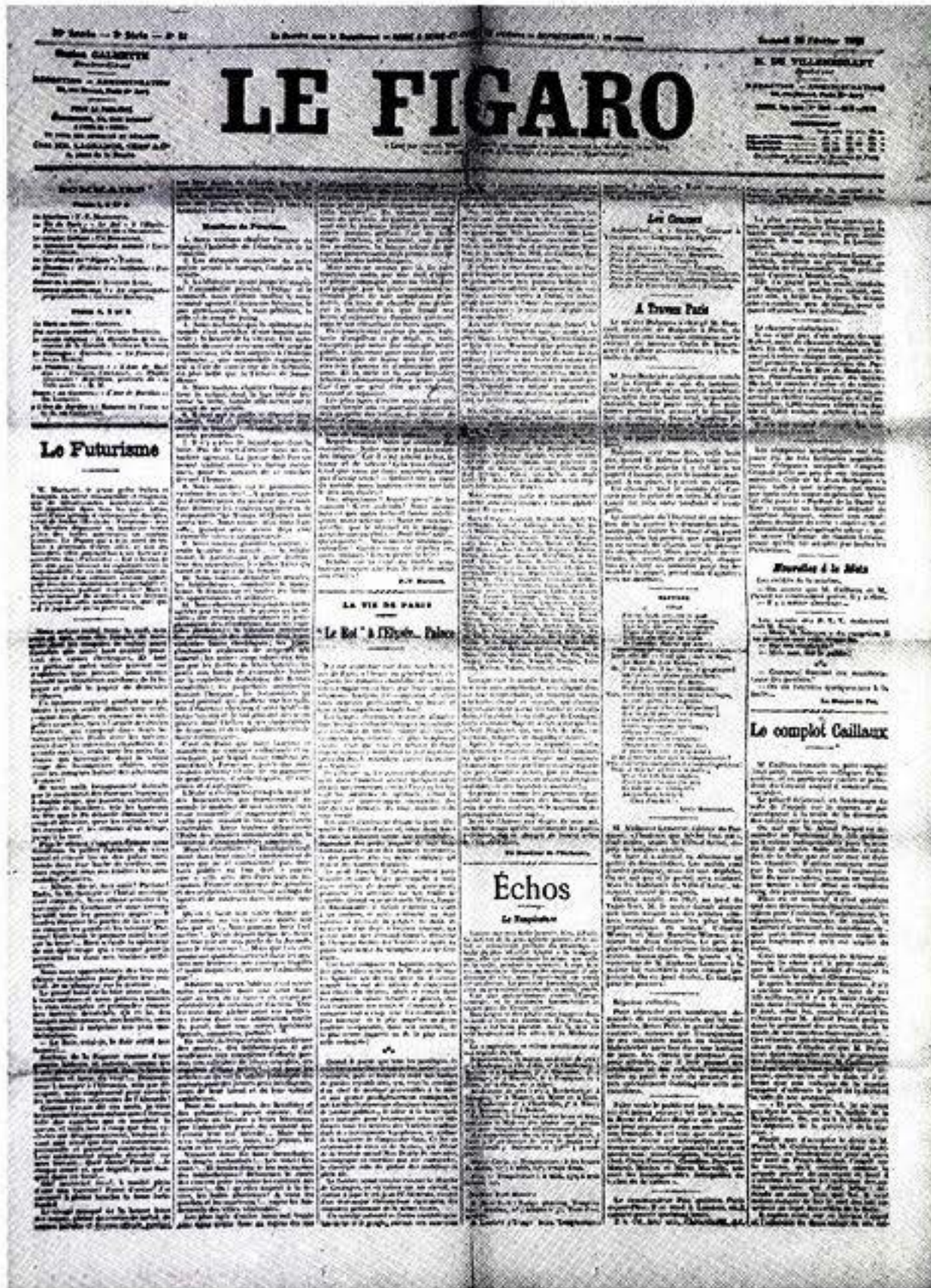
Marinetti e Depero Milano nel gennaio del 1924.

Alla pagina precedente: Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Parole in libertà* (*Train angoissé*), 1915 c.









sti "tecnici" del 1912-14 (*manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista con le risposte alle obiezioni - distruzione della sintassi, immaginazione senza fili, parole in libertà. - lo splendore geometrico e meccanico della parole in libertà, onomatopée astratte e sensibilità numerica*), vi risultano accentuate anche le intenzioni di ipersinestesia e asemantività: nella sezione *rivoluzione tipografica* del secondo dei tre manifesti aggiunge la frase "*nouvelle conception de la page typographiquement picturale*", mentre nel terzo manifesto sostituisce il paragrafo finale della sezione sulle onomatopée con un nuovo paragrafo intitolato *la verbalisation abstraite* (intesa come *l'expression de nos divers états d'âme moyennant des bruits et des sons sans signification précise, spontanément organisés et combinés*), concluso con un esempio di "verbalizzazione astratta" tratto dalla tavola *après la merne*, già pubblicata su un volantino nel febbraio 1915 col titolo *montagne + vallate + strade x joffre* (mocastrinar fralingaren doni doni doni ecc.). c'è da chiedersi perché marinetti pubblici la sua *summa* del parolibertismo, e in francese, proprio in un momento di eclisse quasi totale dell'attività del movimento letterario futurista: nel 1919 egli appare soprattutto impegnato nell'attività politica, in perenne oscillazione tra anarchismo antiborghese e nazionalismo antisocialista (almeno fino al 1921, fino cioè al pamphlet *al di là del comunismo*, e rimando in proposito al noto giudizio di gramsci nella lettera a trozckij dell'8 settembre 1922; pamphlet che con *democrazia futurista* del 1919 contiene il più vitale marinetti visionario politico: due testi che come energia di utopia porrei dietro solo al *principe di machiavelli* e al *français encore un effort de sade*). la risposta, pensando sempre anzitutto alle tre tavole del volume cui mi riferisco costantemente, va cercata forse negli attacchi cui marinetti veniva sottoposto sulle pubblicazioni dadaiste (e riassunti più civilmente nel '21 da hausmann nel *manifesto del PREsentismo*: "marinetti, l'uomo più moderno d'europa ci è antipatico, perché parte non da una superiore coscienza ma dal caso..."), e in un bisogno quindi di rivendicare il lavoro di esplorazione-esplosivazione letteraria da lui compiuto prima e contemporaneamente a dada.

nel '16 egli aveva collaborato al numero unico *cabaret voltaire* con *dune*, già apparso nel '14 su *lacerba*, e nel '20 huel-



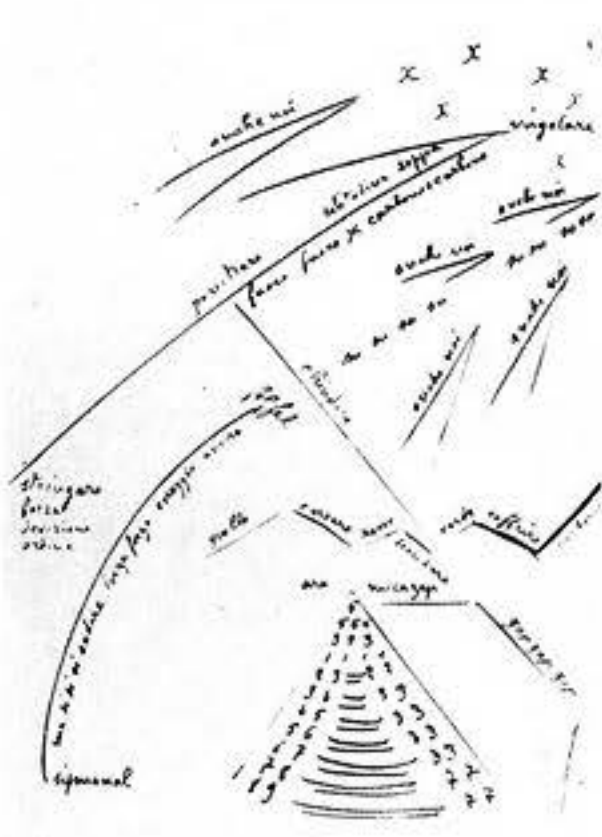
senbeck scriveva in *avant dada* del dada zurighese: "tramite tzara eravamo anche in rapporti col movimento futurista ed in corrispondenza con marinetti." non si sa come e se si arrivò a una rottura formale, ma a parte gli eventuali motivi di concorrenza a una qualsiasi forma di leadership nell'avanguardia,



Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Parole in libertà* (*Grève*), 1912-14.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Parole in libertà* (*Respiratore de la terre*), 1915 c.

che non erano in pochi a volersi attribuire l'indomani della prima guerra mondiale, essenzialmente la polemica dadaista contro marinetti muoveva dal fatto che "dada coltiva il nonsense", come scriveva schwitters nel 1920, e marinetti il nonsense l'aveva preconizzato a livello sintattico ma di fatto pra-



Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Parole in libertà* (*Anche noi*), 1914-15.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Parole in libertà* (*Manicure Faire les Ongles à l'Italie*).

ticava un iperrealismo della sensazione, misurandosi, con una lucidità di analisi che anticipava perfettamente McLuhan, proprio su quella tecnologia che invece i dadaisti denunciavano, o dialetticamente confrontavano alla "alchimia più profonda della parola" cui aspirava hugo ball nel '16 (ritrovando al di là del futurismo il "sacro" che marinetti aveva voluto espellere dalla letteratura). eppure la più estrovertita tensione delle tavole dei *mots en liberté futuristes* le colloca al di là di tutta la tipografia dadaista, non solo o non tanto per gli effetti di simultaneità spazio-temporale, visualizzazione di suoni, sintesi visiva di segni auditivi, trascrizione segnica del movimento, di cui hanno parlato moholy-nagy (*vision in motion*, 1949) e jasia reichardt (*between poetry and painting*, 1965), ma più per l'introduzione d'un gesto tipografico nella scrittura, che dissocia la tipografia dall'alfabeto, e contemporaneamente formalizza il segno tipografico in oggetto, e avvia il "testo poetico" a dissolversi nell'azione. inoltre, non solo "treating language as behaviour", come affermava themerson per le parole in libertà (*kurt schwitters in england*, 1958), ma proiettando senza diaframmi linguistici il comportamento stesso nella tipografia, accentuando il segno extralinguistico rispetto a quello linguistico, presagendo un *au de là de la parole* che istituzionalizzi l'interagire corpo-situazione, come verrà in parte prospettato nel successivo *tattilismo* (1921). la sola analoga impaginazione violenta, dinamico-espressiva, fatta di scontri anziché associazioni di segni tipografico-visivi, è rinvenibile nei collages e fotomontaggi del dada berlinese, la cui sintassi di compenetrazioni, incroci di linee diagonali e scatti di angoli acuti, effettivamente "doppia" quella delle tre tavole di marinetti. le quali accelerano dal canto loro un chiaro evolversi nella direzione extralinguistica. mentre in *après la marne*, joffre visita le front en auto fonemi letteristi (nella metà inferiore della tavola) sono associati a lessemi in asintassi (*FRANCE, BELLE, GUERRE, VICTOIRE, MON AMiiiiii, MaAAAAa petite, PRUSSIENS*, ecc.), e ad elenchi di numeri, a visualizzazioni di rumori (onomatopée grafiche e linguistiche), a serie di segni matematici, a grafismi rappresentanti il percorso della macchina, con handwriting contrastato ai caratteri tipografici in qualche punto della tavola, in *le soir, couchée dans son lit, elle relisait la lettre*



*de son artilleur au front* la grammaticalizzazione visiva, per così dire, di elementi extralinguistici tocca più altri livelli di astrazione: la silhouette della ragazza che legge, e l'enorme gesto-suono sotto l'onomatopea in alto, pur nella loro opposizione reale/astratto assumono di fatto uno stesso valore di ideogrammi; le due zone di handwriting sono "oggetti" perché non si associano ai caratteri tipografici ma costituendo riporti di realtà hanno una funzione collagistica; mentre l'area centrale di onomatopée, parole segnaletiche (SIMULTANEITÀ - ESPLOSIONE), grafismi, macchie, lettere frammentate (la grande U che appare anche nella terza tavola), con contrasti fortissimi di caratteri tipografici e di nero/bianco, trascende come pattern visuale tutti i singoli elementi linguistici. nella storia del-

la poesia postlinguistica veramente questo posttesto occupa lo stesso posto che il quadrato nero di malevic ha nella storia della pittura astratta. in *une assemblée tumultueuse*, da ultimo, ogni riferimento al linguaggio parlato scompare: elenchi di parole in ordine alfabetico, alcune puri giochi di nonsense, sono intercambiabili con le colonne di numeri con cui visualmente si confondono. "strisce" di parole e numeri, di fatto puri elementi grafico-geometrici, si incontrano, convergono, si tagliano, sovrappongono con lettere sparse, sillabazioni, forme geometriche (la serie di cerchi neri sulla destra della tavola), in una tensione eccentrica di compenetrazioni; la silhouette del tamburino sulla destra si costituisce anch'essa in un nuovo ideogramma. la gestalt finale è una pura proiezione di movimento ge-

sto-mentale. la verifica puntuale che questa estrema tipografia oggettuale di marinetti forniva dell'opposizione che era stata dichiarata a mallarmé a conclusione del manifesto tecnico del 1914, con la sua realizzata volontà di trasformare le parole in *autoillustrazioni* connotava una consapevolezza della necessaria conversione dell'area tipografica da spazio metafisico, luogo di convocazione e presentazione di significati logico-verbali, a spazio fisico, tipografia come autosimbolizzazione. l'ho già detto, da quel momento la pagina stampata voleva rimandare a se stessa come oggetto e comportamento, non più rappresentazione meccanica e condizione segnica le cui leggi di esistenza risiedono al di fuori del suo autore.



Azione fotografica di Balla con un allievo nel suo atelier romano, 1915.



# Uno sguardo dal futuro

Daniele Lombardi

Ferruccio Busoni riportava nel suo *Saggio di una nuova estetica musicale*, che fu pubblicato per la prima volta in tedesco nel 1906 da Schmidl a Trieste, la notizia che un certo Dott. Taddeus Cahill aveva inventato un primordiale generatore elettrico di suoni, il *Dynamophone*.

Vale la pena di leggere come, all'origine, ne aveva data informazione il giornalista del *McClure Magazine*, citato da Busoni: "L'osservazione che tutti gli strumenti danno dei suoni imperfetti portò il Dott. Cahill a riflettere. Il materiale, le condizioni fisiche, la temperatura, i fenomeni climatici influiscono sull'esattezza di ogni strumento. Il pianista perde il suo dominio sul suono

della corda, dal momento in cui il tasto è stato colpito. Nell'organo il sentimento nulla può aggiungere alla nota. Il Dott. Cahill concepì l'idea d'uno strumento che potesse dare all'esecutore un controllo assoluto su ogni suono e sulla sua espressione. Egli partì dalle teorie di Helmholtz, che gli insegnarono come i rapporti fra il numero e la forza dei suoni armonici e il suono fondamentale siano decisivi per il timbro caratteristico di ogni singolo strumento. Di conseguenza egli aggiunse, nella sua costruzione, all'apparecchio che dà il suono fondamentale, una serie di apparecchi supplementari, ognuno dei quali produce uno dei suoni armo-

nici, e così poté sommare questi al suono fondamentale nell'ordine e forza che più gli piacesse. Così ogni suono può venir variamente caratterizzato, la sua espressione può venir regolata dinamicamente con la massima sensibilità e la forza può essere portata dal pianissimo quasi impercettibile a una potenza di suono insostenibile. E, poiché lo strumento viene azionato per mezzo di una tastiera, gli rimane conservata la possibilità di piegarsi alla personalità di un artista..."<sup>1</sup>

Senza dubbio questa notizia contribuì a smuovere la fantasia di Marinetti e di Russolo, dando un'ulteriore spinta alla ideazione dell'*Arte dei rumori*, e con i





## МАРИНЕТТИ ВЪ МОСКВѢ.

Король футуристовъ, итальянецъ Маринетти, прибылъ въ Москву и прочелъ двѣ лекціи о футуризмѣ и его будущемъ и имѣлъ большой успѣхъ, но... только не у своихъ единомышленниковъ. Наоборотъ, московскіе футуристы встрѣтили Маринетти враждебно и отказались отъ всякаго общенія съ нимъ. Они не согласны съ его взглядами относительно будущаго футуризма.



Футуристъ Маринетти въ аудиторіи Политехническаго музея.

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti  
a Mosca, 1914.

Alla pagina precedente: Carlo Carrà,  
*Inseguimento*, 1914.





D. Burjuk e V. Majakovskij, 1914.

primi manifesti si vede già una forte osmosi tra il pensiero innovatore di Busoni e i futuristi.

Meriterebbe uno studio più approfondito il rapporto tra tutti questi artisti che si sono trovati, nello stesso momento storico, a essere desiderosi di andare avanti verso l'avventura di una musica non immaginata, non udita prima di allora. Busoni aveva in comune con i futuristi la stanchezza per le fonti sonore tradizionali, come gli strumenti e l'orchestra, desiderava indagare sulla possibilità di uscire dalla scala temperata per una nuova musica microinterval-

lare, ma resta di fondo una sostanziale differenza di concezione dell'opera d'arte, differenza che appare chiara se confrontiamo gli scritti teorici.

Prendiamo per esempio due "descrizioni" di ciò che la musica dovrebbe evocare, una dal *Saggio* di Busoni e una dal primo *Manifesto* di Russolo:

*Busoni*: "...facciamola seguire la curva dell'arcobaleno e interrompere a gara con le nubi i raggi del sole; non sia altro che la natura rispecchiata nell'anima umana e da lei riflessa..."

*Russolo*: "...attraversiamo una grande capitale moderna, con le orecchie più

attente che gli occhi, e godremo nel distinguere i risucchi d'acqua, d'aria o di gas nei tubi metallici, il borbottio dei motori che fiatano e pulsano con una indiscutibile animalità, il palpitare delle valvole, l'andirivieni degli stantuffi..."

Il grande pianista operava una continua riflessione teorica sulla metamorfosi della forma e faceva questo analizzando i tessuti connettivi tra stilemi compositivi storicizzati e le nuove intuizioni, con una sintesi storica, una specie di transavanguardia musicale nella quale Mefistofele e Apollo bisbigliavano tra loro senza essere uditi. Ben diversi i



futuristi, Pratella e Russolo, sempre sull'onda d'urto creata da Marinetti, avevano costruito l'idea di un Dioniso ipertecnologico. La loro furia iconoclasta, forse non sempre necessaria, fu una istanza fin dall'inizio, e fu il tallone di Achille sul quale infierì poi il mondo musicale, con modalità simili a quel

sarcasmo che esprimeva Gennaro Napoli nel 1914: "Potreste osservare che l'arte dei suoni non ha percorso vanamente il suo cammino a traverso i secoli, da Terpandro a... Debussy, eppure di futurismo non si era mai parlato, né scritto; ma le sorti della musica pare non siano mai state in condizioni così

gravi, ragione per cui s'imponesse questa azione energica e rigeneratrice del futurismo. Del quale vi parlo ora, dubitando fortemente che, proprio più in là, di questo nuovo e veemente grido non resti... nemmeno l'eco. Cogliamo dunque quest'attimo fuggente..."<sup>2</sup>  
Nel contesto di questa polemica incan-



*Danza dello splendore geometrico, dal film Vita futurista, 1916.*



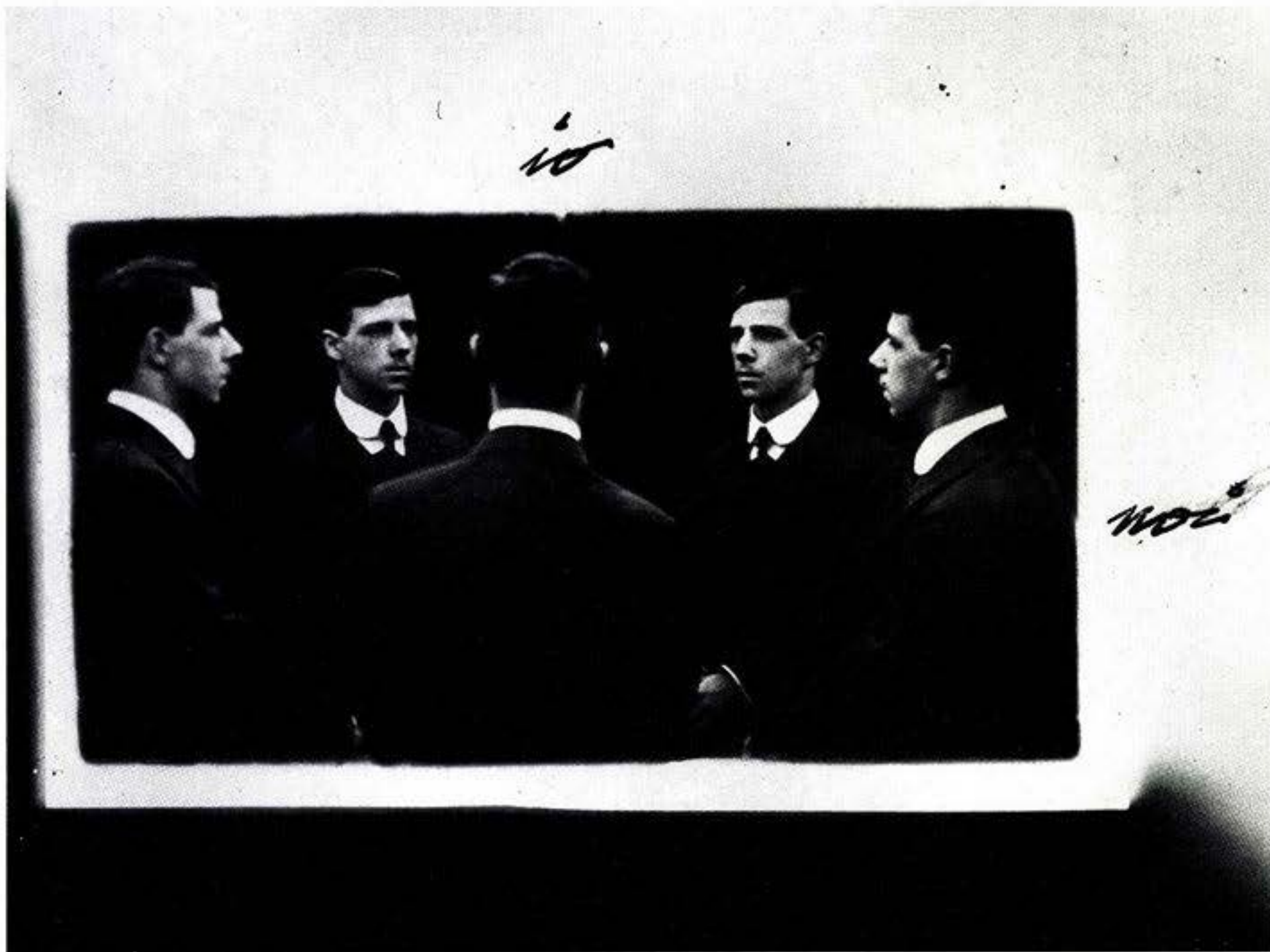
descente il nostro sguardo dal futuro riconosce nell'*Arte dei rumori* di Russolo il tentativo di perseguire una strada nuova, non solo teoricamente, ma con la realizzazione degli intonarumori, uniti in una orchestra, e poi nel russofophono. Questa era la soluzione futurista alle problematiche musicali nelle quali stava dibattendosi tutta l'Europa negli anni Dieci.

A distanza dai Conservatori e dalle Accademie il rombo degli intonarumori cercava di spazzare via sia la fiducia nella semantica dell'intervallo, sia le convenzioni delle modalità di ascolto dell'epoca. Per avere un'idea di quale fosse l'effetto degli intonarumori sugli orecchi degli ascoltatori del tempo è interessante rileggere una cronaca sull'esecuzione londinese della "spirale di rumori", *Il risveglio di una città*: "At first

a quiet even murmur was heard. The great city was asleep. Now and again some giant hidden in one of those queer boxes snored portentously; and a new-born child cried. Then, the murmur was heard again, a faint noise like breakers on the shore. Presently, a far-away noise rapidly grew into a mighty roar. I fancied it must have been the roar of the huge printing machines of the newspapers. I was right, as few seconds later hundreds of vans and motor lorries seemed to be hurrying towards the station, summoned by the shrill whistling of the locomotives. Later, the trains were heard, speeding boisterously away, then, a flood of water seemed to wash the town, children crying and girls laughing under the refreshing shower. A multitude of doors was next heard to open and shut with a

bang, and a procession of receding footsteps intimated that the great army of bread-winners was going to work. Finally, all the noises of the street and factory merged into a gigantic roar, and the music ceased. I awoke as though from a dream and applauded..."<sup>3</sup>

A tutt'oggi resta il desiderio di poter ascoltare una di queste esecuzioni, ma la musica di queste "spiralì di rumori" non esiste più, se non per un frammento di sette battute, ma ciò basta per avere un'idea di quanto gli intonarumori precorressero i tempi. Questa descrizione ricorda il testo di un lavoro analogo che Luciano Berio e Bruno Maderna realizzarono nel 1957 nello Studio di Musica Elettronica di Milano, ma ricorda anche *Week-end*, lavoro di collage sonoro fatto nel 1929 da Walter Ruttmann su banda ottica.



U. Boccioni, *Io-noi-Boccioni*, fotografia.



È opportuno citare anche i giudizi dati da alcuni tra i compositori oggi considerati forse i più importanti e modernisti del Novecento:

*Varèse*: "Pourquoi futuristes italiens reproduisez-vous servilement la trépidation de notre vie quotidienne en ce qu'elle n'a que de superficiel et de gênant? Je rêve des instruments obéissants à la pensée, et qui, avec l'apport d'une floraison de timbres insoupçonnés, se prêtent aux combinaisons qu'il me plaira de leur imposer et se plient à l'exigence de mon rythme intérieur."<sup>4</sup>

*Stravinskij*: "Cinque grammofoni su cinque tavolini in una grande stanza pressoché vuota emettevano rumori digestivi, statici, ecc., notevolmente simili alla *musique concrète*."<sup>5</sup>

*Prokofiev*: "Peccano di una insufficiente chiarezza dell'intonazione, della presenza di un rumore continuo (non del bel rumore cercato dai futuristi, bensì di un rumore che deriva dall'imperfezione del congegno) e di una relativa debolezza del suono... I futuristi conferiscono ai loro strumenti un significato autonomo, e provano a comporre con essi singole orchestre, ma per un ruolo del genere gli strumenti sono troppo carenti di mezzi, per non parlare della loro immaturità tecnica. A un'orchestra sinfonica, invece, possono aggiungere dei colori insoliti."<sup>6</sup>

È evidente una serie di resistenze che venivano fatte da questi, che erano senz'altro tra i più spregiudicati dell'epoca. L'intuizione di Russolo fu quella di fagocitare politonalità, poliritmia, procedimenti atonali, protododecafonici, espansione della sfera timbrica, tutte cioè le modalità che in quel momento erano i motori del missile della nuova musica, in una totalizzante onomatopea del rumore che servisse come materiale sonoro per un nuovo criterio compositivo. Non voleva quindi un rumore ready-made, bensì cercava una nuova struttura che proprio dalla complessità timbrica di partenza si evolvesse per spontanea conseguenza. Nelle sue memorie Nuccio Fiorda, musicista che fu vicino a Russolo e al di lui fratello Antonio, scriverà poi che, se la musica moderna ha cercato di trasformare il suono in rumore, Russolo cercò di trasformare il rumore in musica. Tramite la "grafia enarmonica" Russolo aveva provato a mettere in atto un preciso controllo del materiale sonoro e, naturalmente, il risultato suonava agli orecchi dei contemporanei troppo cacofonico, si chia-



Luigi Russolo





Ivo Pannaggi, *Collage postale indirizzato a Katherine S. Dreier, 1926.*

massero anche Varèse, che però solo dieci anni dopo scriverà *Ionisation*, un capolavoro molto vicino a ciò che Russolo avrebbe ideato, se avesse avuto una tecnica compositiva professionale. Tutto questo fa ripensare a quanto un'avanguardia abbia assunto compiti di preveggenza e quanto di ciò che ha prodotto venga poi verificato nella storia successiva, per un criterio di valore. In questo senso il futurismo è stato considerato una fantaarte, quasi come se fosse un "genere" assimilabile alla fantascienza, un prodotto che artisticamente si autolimita in quanto monodirezionale nella poetica. In realtà Marinetti, fin dall'inizio, intese il suo fare avanguardia come un continuo gesto di autostoricizzazione,

teso a esternare il vissuto dell'artista in una equazione arte-vita che lo renda un re Mida. Il valore delle sue azioni e, successivamente, di quelle degli altri artisti futuristi era indiscutibile, e con esso la microstoria personale veniva a equivalere alla macrostoria; ma per questa dimensione era necessario che l'artista agisse sui mass media. A fronte di questa continua scoperta di giacimenti auriferi le azioni compiute da Fluxus cinquant'anni dopo, pur motivate da un'analogia autostoricizzazione, sono di segno contrario e implicano l'elogio della merda come grado zero del valore. Questo cambiamento di segno è dovuto a un atteggiamento che era completamente sconosciuto a Marinetti, ma era invece in ogni azione degli

artisti Fluxus: parlo dell'autoironia, della dissacrazione postesistenzialista e dell'inizio di una nuova idea di arte che stratifica molte precedenti sollecitazioni al mutamento, dal dada al teatro surrealista.

In tutti gli scritti dei futuristi convive un'ansia di fuggire in avanti dal presente e una continua infarinatura di idealismo che mai fa dimenticare cosa era il provincialismo culturale che contraddistingueva la realtà italiana in quegli anni.

La mancanza di apertura internazionale e la mancanza di reali scambi tenne tutta l'operazione della musica futurista su un registro non molto considerato, persino dagli altri compositori italiani, preoccupati dall'audacia autopropositi-



va di questi artisti e irritati dai risultati, sentiti come occasioni mancate.

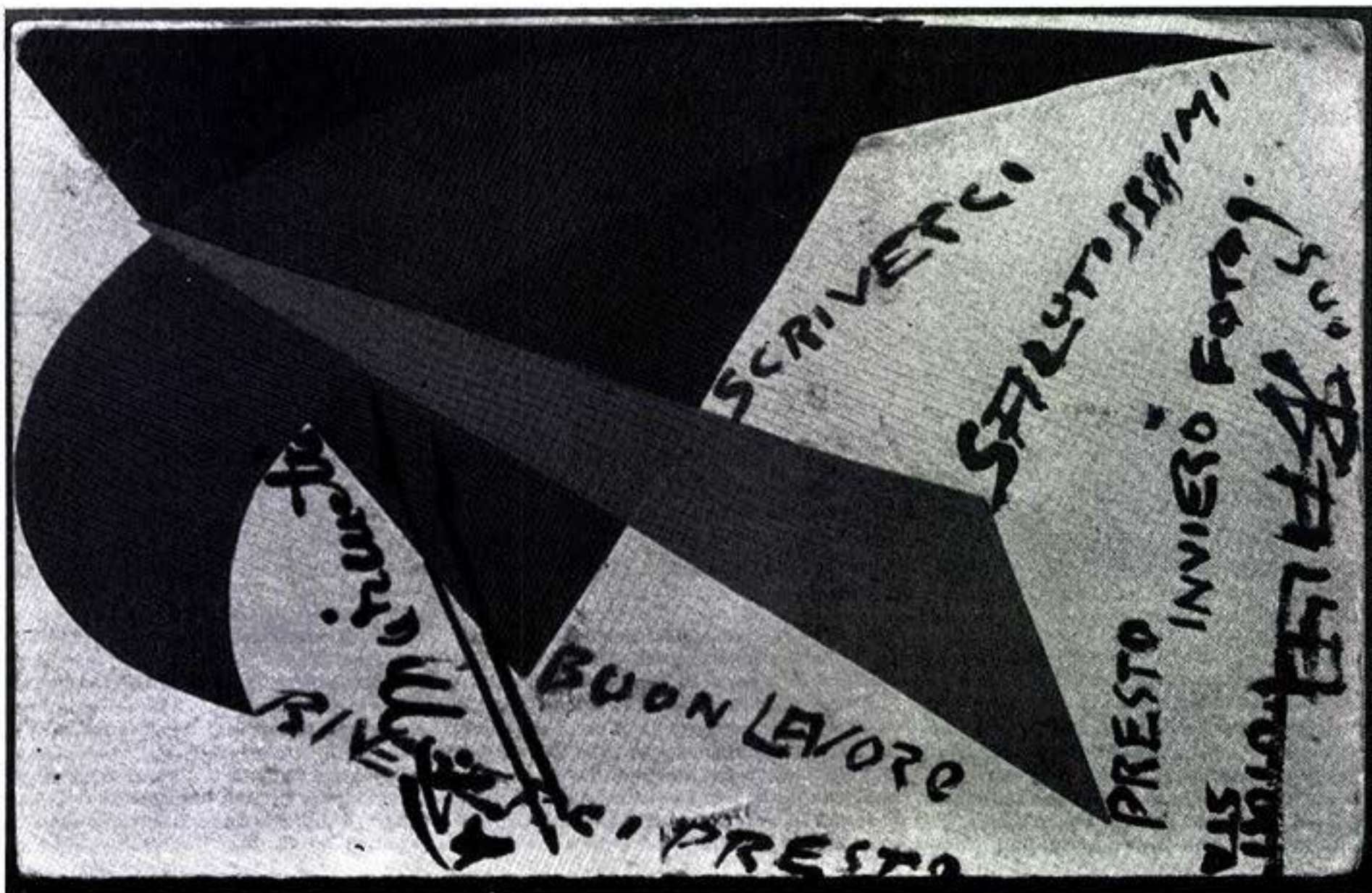
Dopo tante tempeste teoriche, poi, la musica futurista aveva trovato albergo nella dimensione del teatro di varietà, in spettacoli cioè improntati sulla dissacrazione e l'eliminazione dei "generi". Ma il tentativo di Marinetti fu ben più vasto e lungimirante, come ben individuava Nicola Tranfaglia su *La Repubblica*: "...Ma allora viene da chiedersi: perché negli anni successivi, sia Marinetti che molti (non tutti) gli esponenti del futurismo aderiscono al regime, collocandosi magari in quella fittizia 'sinistra fascista' del quotidiano *L'Impero* diretto da Settimelli? Il discorso sarebbe lungo e mi manca lo spazio per farlo interamente. Dirò soltanto che, per quanto riguarda Marinetti, proprio tra il '19 e il '20 (come sottolinea anche Claudia Salaris) si collocano due saggi (*Democrazia futurista* e *Al di là del comunismo*) che chiariscono meglio i caratteri della sua utopia sociale, ma an-

che della sua contraddizione di fondo: cercare al di fuori delle organizzazioni politiche che, nel bene e nel male, si erano date le masse popolari, un ideale di società che solo a quelle masse poteva apparire auspicabile. Il fascismo infatti non prestò nessuna attenzione a quei saggi; e Bottai, che ormai aveva scelto Mussolini, li criticò duramente. Ma, come si è visto, a sinistra Gramsci li notò e diede un giudizio positivo sui futuristi, come del resto fecero negli stessi anni, e anche in quelli successivi, molti artisti sovietici..."<sup>77</sup>

Le discipline artistiche riflettevano quindi il momento di grande trasformazione sociale in atto, e l'avanguardia futurista aveva per prima avvertito, con Marinetti, che ciò che veramente stava cambiando era lo stesso processo di comunicazione, perché cambiava il target. Oggi, in epoca di necessità di radici, ci si occupa molto di futurismo, di Fluxus e tutta la linea obliqua della storia dell'arte, perché, con lo strapote-

re assoluto che i mass media hanno assunto negli ultimi dieci anni, l'arte deve mettere in atto un processo di trasformazione e in fretta. Questa linea obliqua ha sempre indicato la necessità di spostarsi dall'oggetto, da vedere-ascoltare-leggere, al concetto; vecchi discorsi, ma quanto mai attuali. In questo senso dal futurismo, attraverso Fluxus e oltre, passa un ripensamento sull'uso di mass media come la televisione. In una intervista di venticinque anni fa Cage diceva: "Cos'è che Marshall McLuhan considerava attività per un artista? È perfettamente bello e ogni volta che lo vediamo adesso ne godiamo: dice che tutto quanto dobbiamo fare è accostare informazione a informazione, non importa quale. È così che diventeremo consapevoli del mondo perché è quanto fa esso stesso..."<sup>78</sup>

Ma la considerazione successiva a questo impegno di presenza sul quotidiano, messo in atto appunto dai futuristi per primi e poi dagli artisti Fluxus ecc., è



Giacomo Balla, *Biglietto postale a Primo Conti*, 1917.



che l'arte dovrebbe avere luogo nei mass media in modo che zapping alla televisione, nelle fasce di largo ascolto, ci si possa imbattere, tra un varietà demenziale e la ancor più demenziale e ripetitiva "canzone italiana d'autore", o una partita di calcio, anche in trasmissioni che presentano cose d'arte.

Sarebbe facile per i programmatori del palinsesto fare per esempio una trasmissione dal titolo "Musica inaudita", visto che la musica del Novecento lo è per il 90 per cento, portare a conoscenza delle persone la vera storia della musica moderna e contemporanea, far sentire per la prima volta, accanto a Schönberg, autori come Hauer, Obuhov, Lourie, Ornstein, Roslawetz; far sentire accanto a Stravinskij le composizioni di Ives, Cowell, Antheil e così via.

In questa ottica anche la ricerca sulla musica futurista potrebbe avvalersi di una maggiore profondità, con piccole scoperte come quel *Rotative* che Giacinto Scelsi scrisse nel 1930 e che rappresenta un rarissimo esempio di musica macchinistica di quegli anni in Italia. È la lotta tra idea di repertorio e idea di marginalità, ovvero fare la storia dei vincitori, la legge del più forte, scegliendo a chi dare questa forza. Delirio di onnipotenza di chi decide, sia egli un critico o un editore, un direttore artistico o un direttore di museo, nuotando sopra le onde, come il celebre valzer di Rosas.

Chi lavora nell'arte in prima persona procede sul cammino del conoscere e non del ri-conoscere, sperimentare e non ripetere formule di successo, non si interessa di Auditel, ma cerca spazio,

quello spazio che gli sarebbe giusto ritagliare là dove avviene la realtà della comunicazione quotidiana.

Note

<sup>1</sup> *McClure Magazine*, vol. XXVII, n. 3, luglio 1906, a firma di un certo "Dr. Baker".

<sup>2</sup> G. Napoli, "Futurismo musicale", in *L'Arte Pianistica*, a. I, n. 7, Napoli, 1 aprile 1914.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. L. Russolo, *The Art of Noises*, tradotto dall'italiano con introduzione di Barclay Brown, New York, Pendragon Press, 1986.

<sup>4</sup> 391, V, giugno 1917.

<sup>5</sup> I. Stravinskij, R. Craft, *Colloqui con Stravinskij*, Torino, Einaudi, 1977.

<sup>6</sup> *Muzyka*, 18 aprile 1915.

<sup>7</sup> *La Repubblica*, 13 dicembre 1988.

<sup>8</sup> M. Kirby, "Intervista con John Cage", in *Marcatre*, nn. 37-40, Roma, Lerici, 1965.



Fotogramma dal film *L'odissea di Don Giovanni*, Cines, 1918.



# L'arte dei rumori Manifesto futurista

Luigi Russolo

Caro Balilla Pratella, grande musicista futurista,

A Roma, nel Teatro Costanzi affollatissimo, mentre coi miei amici futuristi Marinetti, Boccioni, Balla ascoltavo l'esecuzione orchestrale della tua travolgente *Musica futurista*, mi apparve alla mente una nuova arte: l'Arte dei Rumori, logica conseguenza delle tue meravigliose innovazioni.

La vita antica fu tutta silenzio. Nel diciannovesimo secolo, coll'invenzione delle macchine, nacque il Rumore. Oggi, il Rumore trionfa e domina sovrano sulla sensibilità degli uomini. Per molti secoli la vita si svolse in silenzio, o, per

lo più, in sordina. I rumori più forti che interrompevano questo silenzio non erano né intensi, né prolungati, né variati. Poiché, se trascuriamo gli eccezionali movimenti tellurici, gli uragani, le tempeste, le valanghe e le cascate, la natura è silenziosa.

In questa scarsità di rumori, i primi suoni che l'uomo poté trarre da una canna forata o da una corda tesa, stupirono come cose nuove e mirabili. Il suono fu dai popoli primitivi attribuito agli dei, considerato come sacro e riservato ai sacerdoti, che se ne servirono per arricchire di mistero i loro riti. Nacque così la concezione del suono come

cosa a sé, diversa e indipendente dalla vita, e ne risultò la musica, mondo fantastico sovrapposto al reale, mondo inviolabile e sacro. Si comprende facilmente come una simile concezione della musica dovesse necessariamente rallentare il progresso, a paragone delle altre arti. I Greci stessi, con la loro teoria musicale matematicamente sistemata da Pitagora, e in base alla quale era ammesso soltanto l'uso di pochi intervalli consonanti, hanno molto limitato il campo della musica, rendendo così impossibile l'armonia, che ignoravano.

Il Medio Evo, con gli sviluppi e le

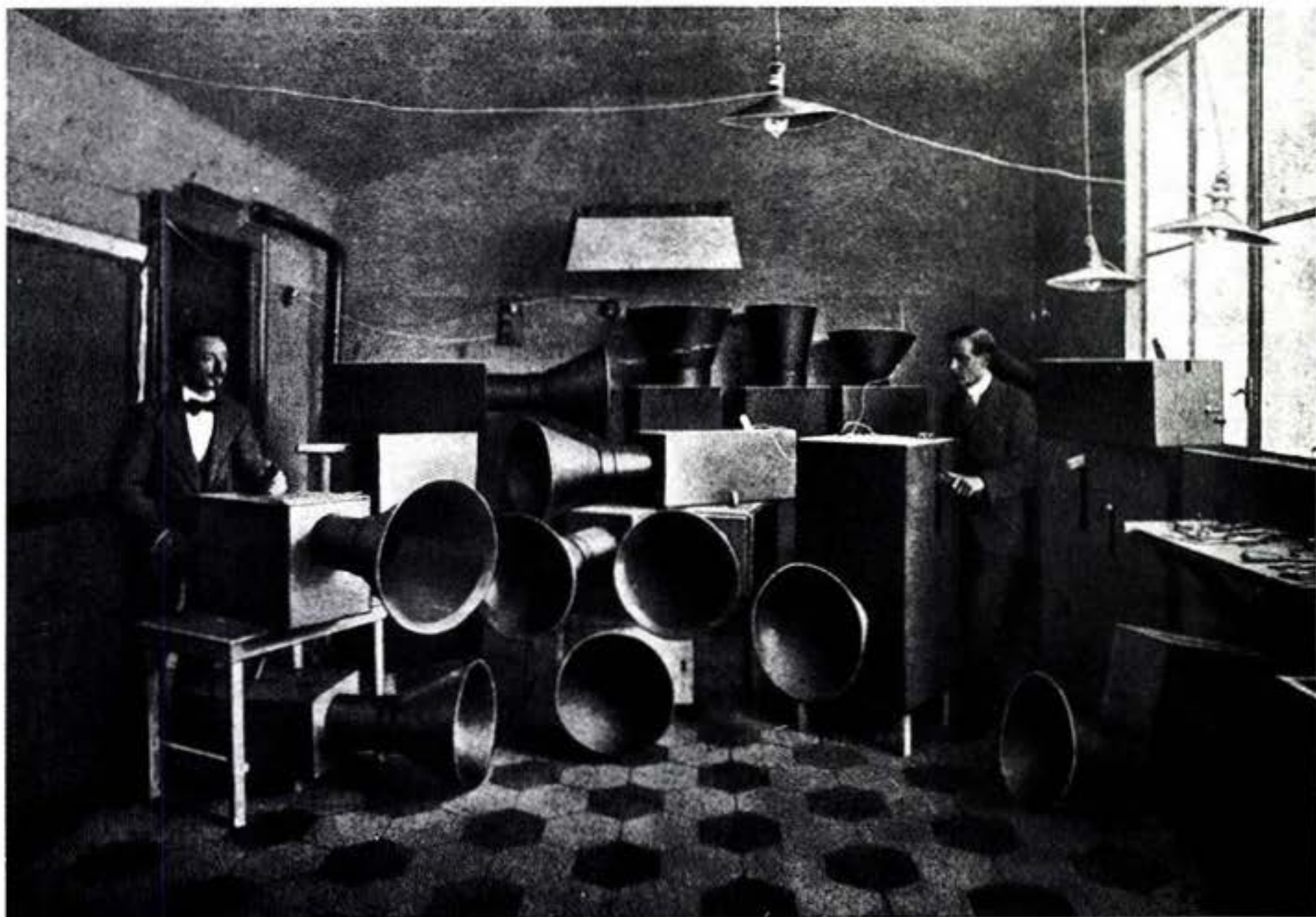
Dal « Risveglio di una città »

per Intonarumori. - L. Russolo

Ululatori  
Rombatori  
Crepitatori  
Stropicciatori  
Scoppiatori  
Ronzatori  
Gorgogliatori  
Sibilatori

F FF P  
FF P





Luigi Russolo e Ugo Piatti nel laboratorio degli intonarumori a Milano, da *L'arte dei rumori*, Edizioni Futuriste di "Poesia", 1916.

modificazioni del sistema greco del tetracordo, col canto gregoriano e coi canti popolari, arricchì l'arte musicale, ma continuò a considerare il suono *nel suo svolgersi nel tempo*, concezione ristretta che durò per parecchi secoli e che ritroviamo ancora nelle più complicate polifonie dei contrappuntisti fiamminghi. Non esisteva l'accordo; lo sviluppo delle parti diverse non era subordinato all'accordo che queste parti potevano produrre nel loro insieme; la concezione, infine, di queste parti era orizzontale, non verticale. Il desiderio, la ricerca e il gusto per l'unione simultanea dei diversi suoni, cioè per l'accordo (suono complesso) si manifestarono gradatamente, passando dall'accordo perfetto assonante e con poche dissonanze di passaggio, alle complicate e persistenti dissonanze che caratterizzano la musica contemporanea. L'arte musicale ricercò ed ottenne dap-

prima la purezza e la dolcezza del suono, indi amalgamò suoni diversi, preoccupandosi però di accarezzare l'orecchio con soavi armonie. Oggi l'arte musicale complicandosi sempre più, ricerca gli amalgami di suoni più dissonanti, più strani e più aspri per l'orecchio. Ci avviciniamo così sempre più al *suono-rumore*.

*Questa evoluzione della musica è parallela al moltiplicarsi delle macchine*, che collaborano dovunque coll'uomo. Non soltanto nelle atmosfere fragorose delle grandi città, ma anche nelle campagne, che furono fino a ieri normalmente silenziose, la macchina ha oggi creato tante varietà e concorrenza di rumori, che il suono puro, nella sua esiguità e monotonia, non suscita più emozione. Per eccitare ed esaltare la nostra sensibilità, la musica andò sviluppandosi verso la più complessa polifonia e verso la maggior varietà di timbri o coloriti stru-

mentali, ricercando le più complicate successioni di accordi dissonanti e preparando vagamente la creazione del *Rumore musicale*. Questa evoluzione verso il "suono rumore" non era possibile prima d'ora. L'orecchio di un uomo del settecento non avrebbe potuto sopportare l'intensità disarmonica di certi accordi prodotti dalle nostre orchestre (triplicate nel numero degli esecutori rispetto a quelle di allora). Il nostro orecchio invece se ne compiace, poiché è già educato dalla vita moderna, così prodiga di rumori svariati. Il nostro orecchio però non se ne accontenta, e reclama sempre più ampie emozioni acustiche.

D'altra parte, il suono musicale è troppo limitato nella varietà qualitativa dei timbri. Le più complicate orchestre si riducono a quattro o cinque classi di strumenti, differenti nel timbro del suono: strumenti ad arco, a pizzico, a fiato



in metallo, a fiato in legno, a percussione. Cioché la musica moderna si dibatte in questo piccolo cerchio, sforzandosi vanamente di creare nuove varietà di timbri.

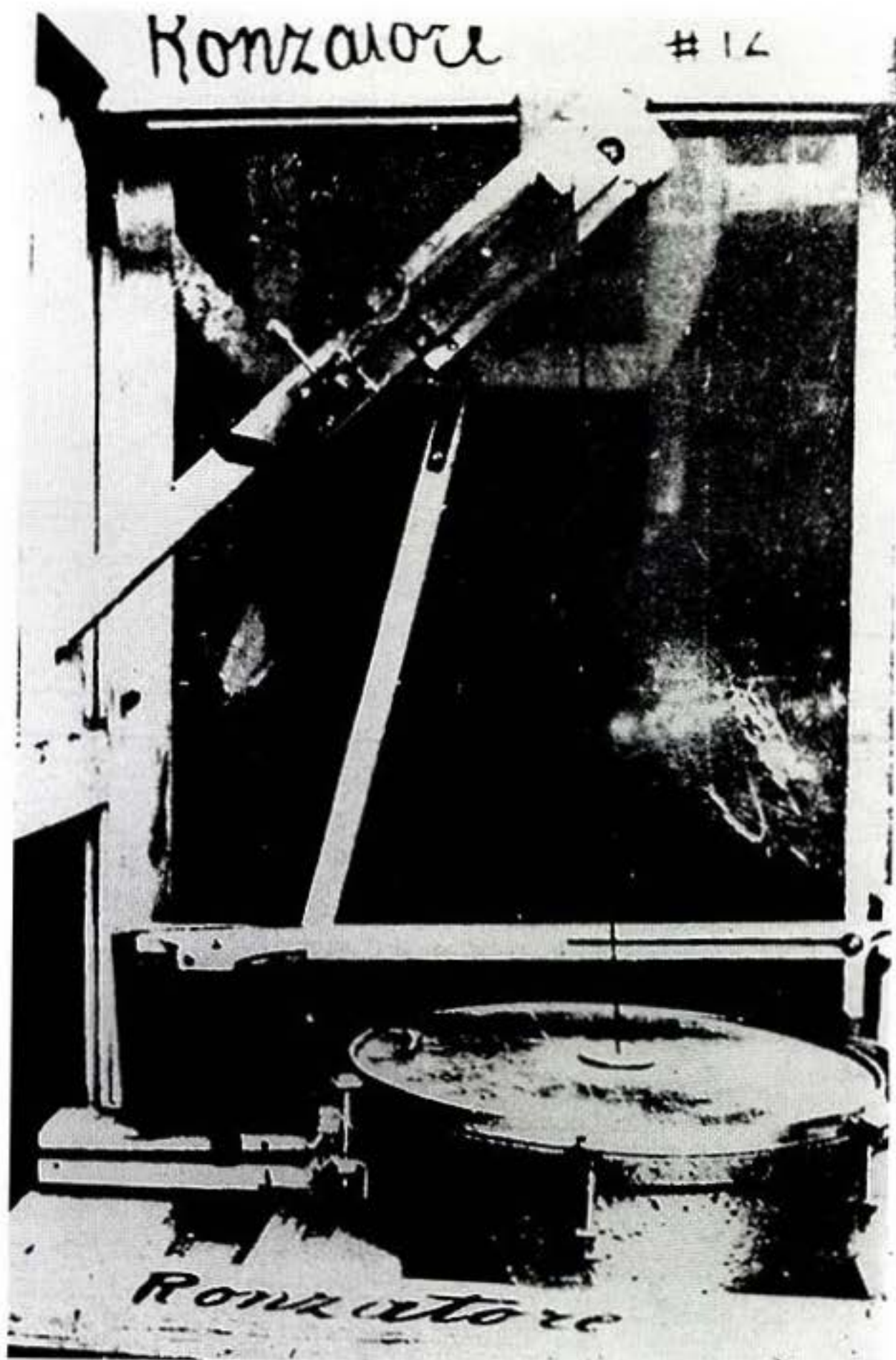
*Bisogna rompere questo cerchio ristretto di suoni puri e conquistare la varietà infinita dei suoni-rumori.*

Ognuno riconoscerà d'altronde che ogni suono porta con sé un viluppo di sensazioni già note e sciupate, che predispongono l'ascoltatore alla noia, malgrado gli sforzi di tutti i musicisti novatori. Noi futuristi abbiamo tutti profondamente amato e gustato le armonie dei grandi maestri. Beethoven e Wagner ci hanno squassato i nervi e il cuore per molti anni. Ora ne siamo sazi e godiamo molto più nel combinare idealmente dei rumori di tram, di motori a scoppio, di carrozze e di folle vocianti, che nel riudire, per esempio, l'"Eroica" o la "Pastorale".

Non possiamo vedere quell'enorme apparato di forze che rappresenta un'orchestra moderna senza provare la più profonda delusione davanti ai suoi meschini risultati acustici. Conoscete voi spettacolo più ridicolo di venti uomini che s'accaniscono a raddoppiare il miagolio di un violino? Tutto ciò farà naturalmente strillare i musicomani e risveglierà forse l'atmosfera assonnata delle sale di concerti. Entriamo insieme, da futuristi, in uno di questi ospedali di suoni anemici. Ecco: la prima battuta vi reca subito all'orecchio la noia del già udito e vi fa pregustare la noia della battuta che seguirà. Centelliniamo così, di battuta in battuta, due o tre qualità di noie schiette aspettando sempre la sensazione straordinaria che non viene mai. Intanto si opera una miscela ripugnante formata dalla monotonia delle sensazioni e dalla cretinesca commozione religiosa degli ascoltatori buddisticamente ebbri di ripetere per la millesima volta la loro estasi più o meno snobistica ed imparata. Via! Usciamo, poiché non potremmo a lungo frenare in noi il desiderio di creare finalmente una nuova realtà musicale, con un'ampia distribuzione di ceffoni sonori, saltando a piè pari violini, pianoforti, contrabbassi ed organi gemebondi. Usciamo!

Non si potrà obiettare che il rumore sia soltanto forte e sgradevole all'orecchio. Mi sembra inutile enumerare tutti i rumori tenui e delicati, che danno sensazioni acustiche piacevoli.

Per convincersi poi della varietà sorprendente dei rumori, basta pensare al



Luigi Russolo,  
interno di un ronzatore.





Francesco Balilla Pratella, 1910.

rombo del tuono, ai sibili del vento, allo scrosciare di una cascata, al gorgogliare d'un ruscello, ai fruscii delle foglie, al trotto di un cavallo che s'allontana, ai sussulti traballanti d'un carro sul selciato e alla respirazione ampia, solenne e bianca di una città notturna, a tutti i rumori che fanno le belve e gli animali domestici e a tutti quelli che può fare la bocca dell'uomo senza parlare o cantare.

Attraversiamo una grande capitale moderna, con le orecchie più attente che gli occhi, e godremo del distinguere i risucchi d'acqua, d'aria o di gas nei tubi metallici, il borbottio dei motori che fiatano e pulsano con una indiscutibile animalità, il palpitare delle valvole, l'andirivieni degli stantuffi, gli stridori delle seghe meccaniche, i balzi del tram sulle rotaie, lo schioccar delle fruste, il garrire delle tende e delle bandiere. Ci divertiremo ad orchestrare idealmente insieme il fragore delle saracinesche dei negozi, le porte sbatacchianti, il brusio e lo scalpiccio delle folle, i diversi frastuoni delle stazioni, delle ferriere, delle filande, delle tipografie, delle centrali elettriche e delle ferrovie sotterranee. Né bisogna dimenticare i rumori nuovissimi della guerra moderna. Recentemente il poeta Marinetti, in una sua lettera dalle trincee di Adrianopoli, mi descriveva con mirabili parole in libertà l'orchestra di una grande battaglia:

*"ogni 5 secondi cannoni da assedio sventrare spazio con un accordo ZANG-TUMB-TUUUMB ammutinamento di 500 echi per azzannarlo sminuzzarlo sparpagliarlo all'infinito. Nel centro di quei ZANG-TUMB-TUUUMB spiaccicati ampiazza 50 chilometri quadrati balzare scoppi tagli pugni batterie a tiro rapido Violenza ferocia regolarità questo basso grave scandere gli strani folli agitatissimi acuti della battaglia Furia affanno orecchie occhi narici aperti! attenti! forza! che gioia vedere udire fiutare tutto tutto taratata delle mitragliatrici strillare a perditato sotto morsi schiaffi traak-traak frustate pic-pac-pum-tumb bizzarrie salti altezza 200 metri della fucileria. Giù giù in fondo all'orchestra stagni diguazzare buoi buffali pungoli carri pluff plaff impennarsi di cavalli flic flac zing zing sciaack ilari nitriti iiii scalpiccii tintinnii 3 battaglioni bulgari in marcia crooc-craaac (lento) Sciumi Maritza o Karvavena ZANG-TUMB-TUUUMB toctoctoc (rapidissimo) crooc-craaac (lento) grida degli ufficiali sbatacchiare come piatti ottone pan di qua paak di là BUUUM*



cing ciak (presto) ciaciacia-ciaciaak su giù là là intorno in alto attenzione sulla testa ciaak bello! Vampe vampe vampe vampe vampe ribalta dei forti laggù dietro quel fumo Sciukri Pascià comunica telefonicamente con 27 forti in turco in tedesco allò! Ibrahim!! Rudolf! allò, attori ruoli echi suggeritori scenari di fumo foreste applausi odore di fieno fango sterco non sento più i miei piedi gelati odore di salnitro odore di marcio Timpani flauti clarini dovunque basso alto uccelli cinguettare beatitudine ombrie cip-cip-cip brezza verde mandre don-dan-don-din-bèèè. Orchestra i pazzi bastonano i professori d'orchestra questi bastona-

tissimi suonare suonare Grandi fragori non cancellare precisare ritagliandoli rumori più piccoli minutissimi rottami di echi nel teatro ampiezza 300 chilometri quadrati Fiumi Maritza Tungia sdraiati Monti Ròdopi ritti alture palchi loggione 2000 shrapnels sbracciarsi esplodere fazzoletti bianchissimi pieni d'oro srrrrrrrrrr-TUMB-TUMB 2000 granate protese strappare con schianti capigliature nerissime ZANG-srrrrrr-TUMB-ZANG-TUMB-TUUMB l'orchestra dei rumori di guerra gonfiarsi sotto una nota di silenzio tenuta nell'altro cielo pallone sferico dorato che sorveglia i tiri." Noi vogliamo intonare e regolare armoni-

camente e ritmicamente questi svariatisimi rumori. Intonare i rumori non vuol dire togliere ad essi tutti i movimenti e le vibrazioni irregolari di tempo e d'intensità, ma bensì dare un grado o tono, alla più forte e predominante di queste vibrazioni. Il rumore infatti si differenzia dal suono solo in quanto le vibrazioni che lo producono sono confuse ed irregolari, sia nel tempo che nella intensità. Ogni rumore ha un tono, talora anche un accordo che predomina nell'insieme delle sue vibrazioni irregolari. Ora, da questo caratteristico tono predominante deriva la possibilità pratica di intonarlo, di dare cioè ad un dato ru-

A Wilhem il laureo Terremoto = distruzione tedesca

A scelta non facciamo complimenti...  
... si comincia

paleico sentimentale andante vivace sostenuto

Intermezzo Battuta d'aspetto (Scena vuota)

3 solo per gran cassa  
fff

\* Ped.

PARIS

Addio mia bella Che Guglielmo se ne va.

addio, Vado... o non vado, a Trieste?

VITTORIA

quando?  
TRIESTE

Marcia funebre

Da capo a volontà...

A. Wilhem, Suonata russo-teutonica in do (e prendo) magg., opera di distruzione 21.





Concerto di intonarumori al Coliseum di Londra, giugno 1914.

more non un solo tono ma una certa varietà di toni, senza perdere la sua caratteristica, voglio dire il timbro che lo distingue. Così alcuni rumori ottenuti con un movimento rotativo possono offrire un'intera scala cromatica ascendente o discendente, se si aumenta o diminuisce la velocità del movimento. Ogni manifestazione della nostra vita è accompagnata dal rumore. Il rumore è quindi familiare al nostro orecchio, ed ha il potere di richiamarci immediatamente alla vita stessa. Mentre il suono, estraneo alla vita, sempre musicale, cosa a sé, elemento occasionale non necessario, è divenuto ormai per il nostro orecchio quello che all'occhio è un viso troppo noto, il rumore invece, giungen-

doci confuso e irregolare dalla confusione irregolare della vita, non si rivela mai interamente a noi e ci serba innumerevoli sorprese. Siamo certi dunque che scegliendo, coordinando e dominando tutti i rumori, noi arricchiremo gli uomini di una nuova voluttà insospettata. Benché la caratteristica del rumore sia di richiamarci brutalmente alla vita, *l'Arte dei rumori non deve limitarsi ad una riproduzione imitativa*. Essa attingerà la sua maggiore facoltà di emozione nel godimento acustico in sé stesso, che l'ispirazione dell'artista saprà trarre dai rumori combinati. Ecco le 6 famiglie di rumori dell'orchestra futurista che attueremo presto, meccanicamente:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Rombi	Fischi	Bisbigli	Stridori	Rumori	Voci di
Tuoni	Sibili	Mormori	Scricchioli	ottenuti	animali e
Scoppi	Sbuffi	Borbottii	Fruscii	a percus-	di uomini
Scrosci		Brusii	Ronzii	sione su	Gridi,
Tonfi		Gorgogli	Crepitii	metalli,	Strilli,
Boati			Stropiccii	legni,	Gemiti,
				pelli,	Urta,
				pietre,	Uhluti,
				terrecot-	Risate,
				te, ecc.	Rantoli,
					Singhiozzi.

In questo elenco abbiamo racchiuso i più caratteristici fra i rumori fondamentali; gli altri non sono che le associazioni e le combinazioni di questi.



*I movimenti ritmici di un rumore sono infiniti. Esiste sempre, come per il tono, un ritmo predominante, ma attorno a questo altri numerosi ritmi secondari sono pure sensibili.*

*Conclusioni:*

1. I musicisti futuristi devono allargare ed arricchire sempre più il campo dei suoni. Ciò risponde a un bisogno della nostra sensibilità. Notiamo infatti nei compositori geniali d'oggi una tendenza verso le più complicate dissonanze. Essi, allontanandosi sempre più dal suono puro, giungono quasi al *suono-rumore*. Questo bisogno e questa tendenza non potranno essere soddisfatti che *coll'aggiunta e la sostituzione dei rumori ai suoni*.

2. I musicisti futuristi devono sostituire alla limitata varietà dei timbri degli strumenti che l'orchestra possiede oggi l'infinita varietà dei timbri dei rumori,

riprodotti con appositi meccanismi.

3. Bisogna che la sensibilità del musicista, liberandosi dal ritmo facile e tradizionale, trovi nei rumori il modo di ampliarsi e rinnovarsi, dato che ogni rumore offre l'unione dei ritmi più diversi oltre a quello predominante.

4. Ogni rumore avendo nelle sue vibrazioni irregolari *un tono generale predominante*, si otterrà facilmente nella costruzione degli strumenti che lo imitano una varietà sufficientemente estesa di toni, semitoni e quarti di toni. Questa varietà di toni non toglierà a ogni singolo rumore le caratteristiche del suo timbro, ma ne amplierà solo la tessitura o estensione.

5. Le difficoltà pratiche per la costruzione di questi strumenti non sono gravi. Trovato il principio meccanico che dà un rumore, si potrà mutarne il tono regolandosi sulle stesse leggi generali dell'acustica. Si procederà per esempio

con la diminuzione o l'aumento della velocità, se lo strumento avrà un movimento rotativo, e con una varietà di grandezza o di tensione delle parti sonore, se lo strumento non avrà movimento rotativo.

6. Non sarà mediante una successione di rumori imitativi della vita, bensì mediante una fantastica associazione di questi timbri vari, e di questi ritmi vari, che la nuova orchestra otterrà le più complesse e nuove emozioni sonore. Perciò ogni strumento dovrà offrire la possibilità di mutare tono, e dovrà avere una più o meno grande estensione.

7. La varietà dei rumori è infinita. Se oggi, mentre noi possediamo forse mille macchine diverse, possiamo distinguere mille rumori diversi, domani, col moltiplicarsi di nuove macchine, potremo distinguere dieci, venti o *trentamila rumori diversi, non da imitare semplicemente, ma da combinare secondo la nostra fantasia*.

8. Invitiamo dunque i giovani musicisti geniali e audaci ad osservare con attenzione tutti i rumori, per comprendere i vari ritmi che li compongono, il loro tono principale e quelli secondari. Paragonando poi i timbri vari dei rumori ai timbri dei suoni, si convinceranno di quanto i primi siano più numerosi dei secondi. Questo ci darà non solo la comprensione ma anche il gusto e la passione dei rumori. La nostra sensibilità moltiplicata, dopo essersi conquistati degli occhi futuristi avrà finalmente delle orecchie futuriste. Così i motori e le macchine delle nostre città industriali potranno un giorno essere sapientemente intonati, in modo da fare di ogni officina una inebbrante orchestra di rumori.

Caro Pratella, io sottopongo al tuo genio futurista queste mie constatazioni, invitandoti alla discussione. Non sono musicista di professione: non ho dunque predilezioni acustiche, né opere da difendere. Sono un pittore futurista che proietta fuori di sé in un'arte molto amata e studiata la sua volontà di rinnovare tutto. Perciò più temerario di quanto potrebbe esserlo un musicista di professione, non preoccupandomi della mia apparente incompetenza, e convinto che l'audacia abbia tutti i diritti e tutte le possibilità, ho potuto intuire il grande rinnovamento della musica mediante l'Arte dei Rumori.



Antonelli-Matteucci, *Ritratto di Franco Casavola*, 1925.

Milano, 11 marzo 1913



# L'art du moteur

Paul Virilio

"Bien que l'homme s'inquiète en vain, cependant il marche dans l'image."  
(St. Augustin)

**A**près la fin de l'Art, y a-t-il place pour un *Art de la Fin*? Fixer, comme Auguste Rodin, le commencement de la fin à l'invention de la photographie, n'est-ce pas indiquer clairement l'origine de cet *Art des fins dernières de l'Art*?

"Tous les arts sont fondés sur la présence de l'homme. Dans la photographie nous jouissons de son absence", écrivait André Bazin. Cet art de l'absence n'ébauche-t-il pas une dernière esthétique? Celle de l'absence du "sujet", de "l'objet", au profit du seul *trajet* d'une lumière capable, comme le son, de s'enregistrer automatiquement...

"L'esthétique de la disparition" débouche-t-elle alors, comme l'espéraient jadis les cinéastes, sur un *art terminal*?

Nous l'oublions trop souvent, le "septième art" c'est l'*art du moteur*, celui de la motorisation de l'instantané photographique, de ses 17 puis 24 images fixes soudain animées qui provoquent l'illusion d'optique de la projection filmique... retombée indirecte de la révolution industrielle, de ses procédures mécaniques et répétitives. D'ailleurs, lorsque le metteur en scène crie "Moteur!", il rend un involontaire hommage à l'ère de la reproduc-

tion technique de l'image.

L'image fixe, inanimée, appelée aujourd'hui *arrêt sur image* et autrefois, plus simplement "photographie", représente donc un stade antérieur de la perception de l'art. Fixer, figer les figures grâce au fixatif du dessin au fusain, au vernis ou à la chimie d'un quelconque révélateur photographique, trahit l'influence persistante du *lithique* sur l'œuvre contemporaine, la pierre d'un horizon disparu, encombrant encore nos regards.

*Faire le point*, pour un individu qui s'éveille à peine, ou pour un photographe utilisant les lentilles de son objectif, n'a rien en commun avec cette fixité cadavérique de l'image qui fausse la vraisemblance des choses représentées. En fait, la meilleure "définition" du cliché photographique ou de la perception *de visu* n'est pas obtenue par l'accommodation oculaire ou le jeu de l'optique des appareils de prise de vues, mais d'abord grâce aux mouvements des yeux, à l'imperceptible motilité orbitale des organes de perception. Toute image apparemment *unique*, résultant d'une série inaperçue, transparente à notre conscience, l'image *réelle* ne possède d'existence "objective" qu'au travers d'une séquence d'images *virtuelles* sans lesquelles il n'y aurait aucune actualité du regard, aucune image actuelle.



Qualche danza futurista,  
in *La Vie Parisienne*,  
19 febbraio 1921.



La série, la séquence préexistent donc aux propriétés figuratives de "l'unique", et ceci, quelle que soit la technique employée: gravure, peinture ou sculpture. Cette découverte est d'ailleurs l'une des plus importantes de ce XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle qui vit l'invention de la photographie, siècle de l'industrie où la sérialité s'est brusquement développée au sein du mode de production, comme dans notre "vision du monde", grâce à l'innovation de l'imagerie à répétition.

Avec les dernières techniques de représentation vidéographique "en temps réel", il ne s'agit pourtant plus d'une "petite illusion d'optique", comme celle qui effraya les premiers spectateurs du film des frères Lumière, "l'entrée du train en gare de la Ciotat", mais d'une "grande illusion électro-optique et acoustique", celle de la présence ici et maintenant du monde entier; *télé-présence* à distance tout aussi peu réelle que ne l'était celle de la locomotive fonçant sur la foule du Salon Indien, en 1895, lors de la première projection cinématographique.

Hommage d'un *moteur* (plus exactement d'une mécanique simple bientôt électrifiée) à un autre moteur, à vapeur celui-là, en attendant le moteur électrique, puis électronique et demain le "moteur photonique" de l'ordinateur-lumière. C'est cela finalement, cet *art du moteur* qui conjugue et supprime un à un, tous les autres... C'est cela même, l'esthétique de la motorisation, l'industrialisation de la vision: la mise en marche du "plan fixe", du photogramme, puis celle du "plan séquence" du vidéogramme ininterrompu. Là où la vitesse relative du défilement spectral des instantanés composant le photogramme occasionne le *mouvement apparent* du film, la vitesse absolue de la trame vidéo donne à voir la transparence du monde entier, l'imagerie télévisée devant l'*horizon apparent* des événements qui s'y déroulent effectivement.

Observons maintenant la limitation perspective obtenue par ces technologies de la représentation ubiquitaire:

même si la transmission du signal-vidéo est effectuée en *temps réel*, grâce à la vitesse-limite des ondes électromagnétiques, le défilement des scènes sur l'écran est nécessairement réduit par la vitesse de saisie visuelle du téléspectateur, soit le standard de 25 images/seconde, 30 images/seconde pour les effets spéciaux, 60 images/seconde constituant l'extrême limite de la conscience humaine de l'image. Au-delà, nous entrons dans le domaine du subliminal, la cécité psychique commence, il n'y a plus rien à voir...

Ce très faible "créneau de visibilité" de la perception motorisée – les images sont vues, mais leur mémorisation consciente est rendue impossible par la trop grande célérité du défilement – explique l'essor des "machines de vision" vidéo-infographiques, associant à la caméra de prise de vues, la mémoire d'un ordinateur; invention majeure d'une optique *active*, supplantant l'optique *passive* d'un regard impuissant à saisir l'accélération des phénomènes.

Un peu comme les lunettes avaient jadis suppléé à la trop faible "profondeur de champ" des organes de perception de l'homme, ces *machines à voir à notre place* suppléent la faible "profondeur de temps" de la saisie visuelle du témoin oculaire.

Ainsi, à partir de la fin du siècle dernier, la vision humaine a-t-elle été progressivement *invalidée*, inaugurant, comme l'expliquait le sculpteur Auguste Rodin, la crise, sinon la mort de l'Art... ce qui avait été jusque-là la lampe-témoin de la réalité du monde et de l'expérience de son actualité, *l'œil du témoin*, est alors frappé d'un discrédit définitif.

Dès lors, sans témoin et donc sans "amateur d'art", comment envisager l'Art de la fin, l'Art terminal de l'histoire de l'art, sinon au travers des procédures expéditives d'un *pilotage à vue* d'appareils dont les simulateurs de conduite et de jeux seraient la primitive préfiguration? Synthèse des arts du mouvement, de la course-poursuite, d'un voyage excentrique, qui compléterait





l'art de la danse et son ancienne chorégraphie, par une *scéno-infographie* dont le théâtre serait le monde lui-même...

"Le monde n'est-il donc qu'une lanterne magique?" s'interrogeait Schopenhauer. Après l'audition, la téléaudition, le téléphone, la radio. Après la vision à l'œil nu, la télévision, la vidéo. Après l'action immédiate, la *téléaction*, la télécommande à distance, voici la téléexistence d'une communauté définitivement désœuvrée.

*Etre là, sans y être vraiment*, à l'instar de l'acteur et de sa doublure. Se réunir à distance, éliminant paradoxalement toute "scène" au bénéfice d'un horizon intermittent et des ombres cathodiques qui s'y meuvent: voilà l'avenir de cet "Art Terminal" qui vient conclure l'histoire de la culture d'Occident et qui, à l'exemple des systèmes médiatiques, brouille à l'envie les messages, les limites entre chaque discipline.

Autrefois, en effet, la presse écrite, l'affichage public et l'édition formaient des mondes séparés, chacun possédant, avec leur histoire, leur propre culture, le "support" des uns et des autres apparaissant alors comme une "frontière" infranchissable.

Il en est dorénavant de même du monde de l'Art: la "motorisation de la perception" entraîne à son tour la confusion des différences entre les disciplines de l'image, de l'écrit et du son, début prometteur d'une prochaine *commutation des apparences sensibles* qui compléterait le soudain télescopage des lieux, dû aux moyens de télécommunication.

En effet, lorsque le printemps de Pékin et l'hiver de Bucarest sont perçus *en direct* de Paris, de Rome ou d'ailleurs, comment espérer encore un *écart* significatif entre les arts plastiques, le théâtre, la danse, la musique? La perte définitive de *l'intervalle* d'espace et de temps ébauche donc nécessairement la disparition de la distinction, non seulement entre "l'image" et le "son"

(comme à l'invention du cinéma parlant), mais entre "l'audiovisuel" et les diverses techniques de la *représentation artistique*, d'une part, et de la *simulation industrielle*, d'autre part, en attendant sous peu, l'interactivité généralisée des opérateurs à distance grâce à ce *costume de données* mis au point pour les besoins de la NASA, qui permet déjà la *télékinésie*, le toucher à distance, quel que soit l'éloignement des partenaires de ce jeu fantomatique.

"C'est une chose comique que cette conviction de tant de gens agissant comme s'ils avaient seuls une existence réelle, et que leurs semblables ne fussent que de vaines ombres, de purs fantômes", écrivait encore Schopenhauer...

Nous ne marchons donc plus "dans l'image" comme l'expliquait saint Augustin: *c'est l'image qui s'est mise en marche pour nous!* Elle arrive de partout, elle envahit en rangs serrés notre environnement immédiat, l'amplification optique du milieu humain efface l'ancienne "profondeur de champ" de l'espace réel. Grâce à l'extrême amincissement de l'épaisseur optique, l'horizon "apparent" et l'horizon "profond" s'estompent au seul avantage d'un *horizon trans-apparent*, fruit des télé-technologies.

Palette graphique de l'imagerie numérique (CAO, DAO), moniteur d'affichage de l'imagerie à résonance magnétique (RMN), scanner, laser, installation de vidéo-performance interactive (gants ou costume de données), autant d'outils qui prennent place désormais dans l'"atelier-régie" de l'artiste-terminal.

Simulateur d'un pilotage à vue de l'image, cockpit d'une esthétique téléguidée où le permis de conduire serait obligatoire et l'excès de vitesse sanctionné... *NO MAN'S LAND ART* finalement aussi dangereux pour les yeux que l'était au désert la cruelle réverbération du soleil sur les miroirs de sel.

# UCCIDIAMO

# IL CHIARO DI LUNA!



Finito di stampare nel maggio 1990  
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per conto delle Nuove Edizioni Gabriele Mazzotta srl







