FLUXUS

A CONCEPTUAL COUNTRY

Estera Milman, Curator/Guest Editor

Exhibition Venue

New York City Franklin Furnace,
September 18–November 14, 1992

Emily Harvey Gallery
Ten Years on Broadway: Fluxus 1982–1992,
September 18–November 14, 1992

Anthology Film Archives
In and Around Fluxus: Film Festival and Fluxfilm Environments,
September 19–October 11, 1992

Madison, Wisconsin Madison Art Center,
December 5, 1992–January 31, 1993

Iowa City, Iowa The University of Iowa Museum of Art,
March 27–May 23, 1993

Institute for Cinema and Culture,
February 19–21, 1993

Montgomery, Alabama Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts,
July 14–September 1, 1993

Evanston, Illinois Mary and Leigh Block Gallery
Northwestern University,
September 23–December 5, 1993

Foreword	**Martha Wilson**	9
Introduction Fluxus: A Conceptual Country	**Estera Milman**	11
Historical Precedents, Trans-Historical Strategies, and the Myth of Democratization	**Estera Milman**	17
Historical Design and Social Purpose: A Note on the Relationship of Fluxus to Modernism	**Stephen C. Foster**	35
Proto-Fluxus in the United States, 1959–1961: The Establishment of a Like-minded Community of Artists	**Owen F. Smith**	45
John Cage Discusses Fluxus	**Ellsworth Snyder**	59
Fluxus and Literature	**Roy F. Allen**	69
Fluxacademy: From Intermedia to Interactive Education	**Craig Saper**	79
Road Shows, Street Events, and Fluxus People: A Conversation with Alison Knowles	**Estera Milman**	97
Dé-Collage and Television: Wolf Vostell in New York, 1963–1964	**John G. Hanhardt** Photographs by **Peter Moore**	109
Notes on George Maciunas' Work in Cinema	**Jonas Mekas**	125

On Open Structures and the Crisis of Meaning, A Dialogue: Eric Andersen, Stephen C. Foster, and Estera Milman	**Eric Andersen,** **Stephen C. Foster,** and **Estera Milman**	133
Two Sides of a Coin: Fluxus and Something Else Press	**Dick Higgins**	143
Fluxus: Global Community, Human Dimensions	**Ken Friedman** *Fluxchart,* by **James Lewes**	155
Notes on Soho and a Reminiscence	**Hollis Melton**	181
Circles of Friends: A Conversation with Alice Hutchins	**Estera Milman**	203
Fluxus Fallout: The Creation of the Fluxist Sensibility	**Peter Frank**	211
FluxBase: An Interactive Art Exhibition	**Joan S. Huntley** and **Michael Partridge**	221

Exhibition Check Lists

Fluxus: A Conceptual Country	**James Lewes**	230
In and Around Fluxus: Film Festival and Fluxfilm Environments	**Jonas Mekas**	242
Ten Years on Broadway: Fluxus 1982–1992	**Emily Harvey**	244

ROY F. ALLEN, associate professor of German and Spanish at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, has taught at universities in both this country and West Germany. His past publications include *German Expressionist Poetry, Literary Life in German Expressionism and the Berlin Circles*, "Zurich Dada, 1916–1919: The Proto-Phase of the Movement," and "From Energy to Idea: The Origins of 'Movement' in the Event." In keeping with his areas of concentration, Dr. Allen's interests move freely between the literary and visual arts.
Wartburg College, Foreign Language Department, Waverly, IA 50677

STEPHEN C. FOSTER is professor of the History of Art and director of The University of Iowa's Program for Modern Studies. His publications include *The Critics of Abstract Expressionism* and *"Event" Arts and Art Events*. Foster currently serves as the general editor for *Crisis and the Arts: A History of Dada*, a thirteen volume monograph and catalogue accompanied by a fiche library of ten thousand images to be published by G.K. Hall and Company. In addition he is curating a comprehensive Franz Kline retrospective exhibition originated by the Tapies Foundation in Barcelona.
School of Art and Art History, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242

PETER FRANK is editor of *Visions* art quarterly, art critic for the *L.A. Weekly* and director of the Art Gallery at Long Beach City College. He has served as critic for *The Village Voice* and *The SoHo Weekly News* and as Los Angeles correspondent for *Contemporanea*. Listed among the numerous exhibtions that he has curated are *19 Artists–Emergent Americanists, Young Fluxus* and *The Theater of the Object*. His *Something Else Press: An Annotated Bibliography* was published in 1983.
PO Box 24A3, Los Angeles, CA 90024–1036

KEN FRIEDMAN became the youngest member of the classic Fluxus group at the age of sixteen, when Wolf Vostell dubbed him "Der Fluxus Mozart." Between 1966 and 1975, he was the director of Fluxus West. Friedman divides his time between a studio in New York and an office in Oslo, Norway, where he directs planning projects for government and industry.
PO Box 7071 Homansbyen, N–0306 Oslo 3, Norway

JOHN G. HANHARDT is curator of Film and Video and head of the Department at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The many exhibitions and retrospectives he has curated include *A History of the American Avant-Garde Cinema, Nam June Paik, The Films of Andy Warhol, Andy Warhol's Video and Television, Francesco Torres: A Retrospective* and *Buky Schwartz*. Hanhardt has written and lectured extensively on film and video history and aesthetics. His anthology,

Video Culture: A Critical Investigation, appeared in 1986.
Film and Video, Whitney Museum of American Art, 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York, NY 10021

DICK HIGGINS, who is one of the founding members of the Fluxus group, studied composition under John Cage and Henry Cowell in 1958–59. He participated in many of the early happenings, founded Something Else Press in 1964, is credited with having developed the concept of Intermedia in 1965 and mounted the first United States exhibition of concrete poetry at his Something Else Gallery in 1966. A prolific author of numerous books and articles, Higgins' *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* appeared in 1987.
PO Box 27, Barrytown, NY 12507

JOAN S. HUNTLEY is a research and development leader at The University of Iowa's Weeg Computing Center and serves as director of the Computer Assisted Instruction Laboratory. Her group's achievements have been featured in *NeXT On Campus*, *Multimedia Review* and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Huntley has served as a research consultant to 3M's Software Engineering Group, EDUCOM and the Modern Language Association.
Weeg Computing Center, Lindquist Center, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242

JAMES LEWES is working toward a cross-disciplinary Ph.D. at The University of Iowa. For the last year and a half, he has served as project assistant to the School of Art and Art History's Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts. Lewes is currently compiling an in-depth Fluxus concordance.
Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, School of Art and Art History, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242

JONAS MEKAS is a film-maker and author of five books of poetry in Lithuanian. His post-war diaries, *I Had Nowhere to Go*, were published by the Black Thistle Press in 1991. Mekas is program director for the Anthology Film Archives.
Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10003

HOLLIS MELTON is a photographer who lives in New York City. She is founder of Black Thistle Press.
491 Broadway (Broadway and Broome), 6th Floor [six], New York, NY 10012

ESTERA MILMAN is founding director of The University of Iowa's Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts and adjunct associate professor, the History of Contemporary Art. Her recent publications

include *Through the Looking Glass: Dada and the Contemporary Arts*, *American Pop: The Work of Art in the Post-Industrial Age* and "Process Aesthetics, Eternal Networks, Ready-made Everyday Actions, and Other Potentially Dangerous Drugs." Milman currently serves as general editor for G.K. Hall and Company's multi-volume revisionist publication project, *Modern Art Historiographic and Bibliographic Series: Reference Publications in Art History*.

Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, School of Art and Art History, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242

PETER MOORE, a highly respected, prolific photographer, is considered to be one of the primary chroniclers of Fluxus performances, people and events. He began photographing Fluxus and other avant-garde performances in the early sixties and he is still at it.

351 West 30th Street, New York, NY 10001

MIKE PARTRIDGE was a senior programmer/analyst for Second Look Computing at The University of Iowa's Weeg Computing Center and has participated in joint projects within the University and beyond at the Getty Center for Education in the Arts and 3M Corporation. Partridge is currently programming on the NeXT at Boss Logic.

CRAIG SAPER is an assistant professor of English at The University of Pennsylvania. He has published articles on media and cultural theory in many journals including *SubStance, diacritics, Journal of Urban and Cultural Studies, Visible Language, Yearbook of Interdisciplinary Studies in the Fine Arts* and *Lusitania*. He is currently completing a manuscript on Invention-Tourism from Situationists to Fluxus.

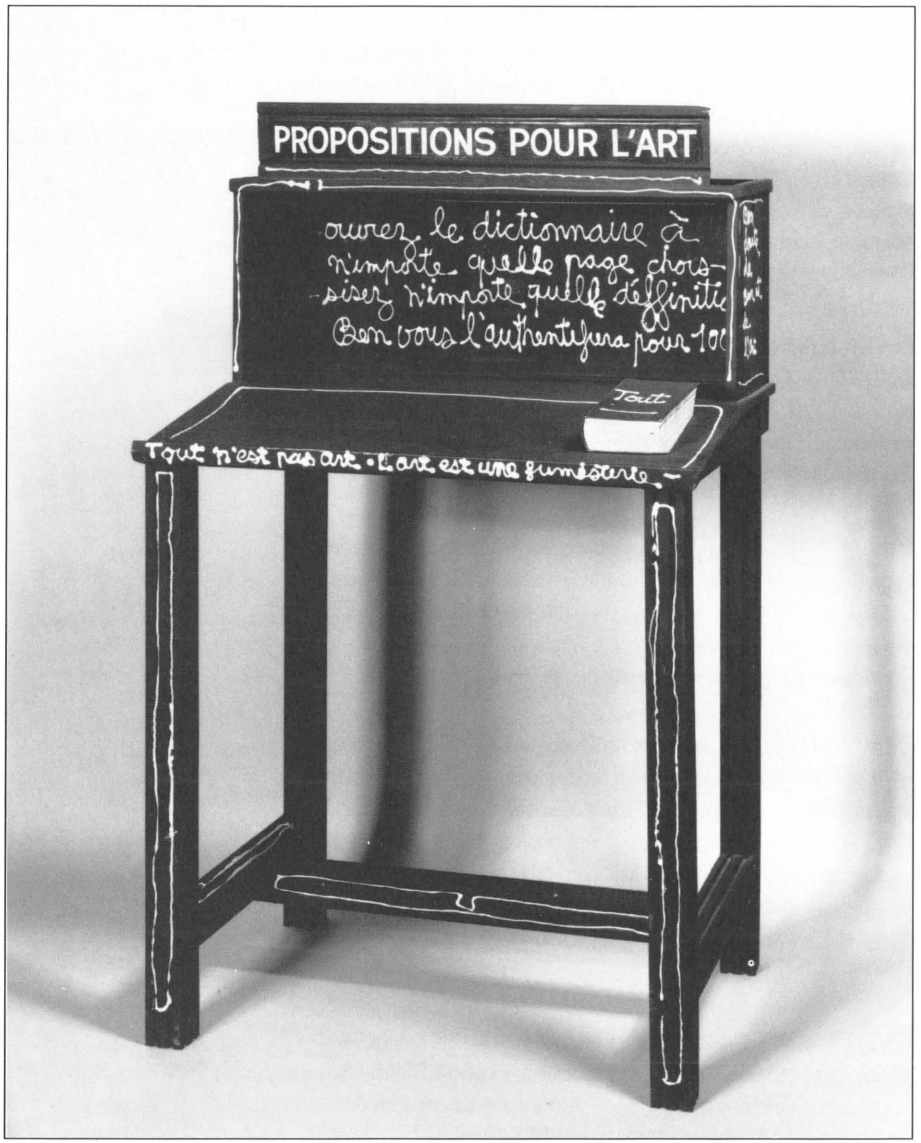
School of Arts and Sciences, Department of English, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 19104–6273

OWEN F. SMITH is an assistant professor of Art History at the University of Maine in Orono. He is specialist in non-traditional art forms and is currently working on "a" history of the Fluxus group.

Department of Art, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469–0112

ELLSWORTH SNYDER is a musician and artist living in Madison, Wisconsin, where he is music director of the First Unitarian Society. A pianist known for his performances of contemporary music, Snyder has been a friend of John Cage for over thirty years and, in April 1991, he gave the first public performance of a work written for him by the composer.

26 Grand Canyon Drive, Madison, WI 53705



Ben Vautier, *Propositions Pour L'Art*. Metal desk painted black with white enamel lettering, 147.3 x 90.2 x 57.1 cm., and a copy of *Larousse Elementaire*, 1955 edition, 1966/modified 1976. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Gift of Jan and Ingeborg van der Marck. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*, Beaumont-May Gallery, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, November 22, 1978–January 14, 1979.

FOREWORD

Martha Wilson
Founding Director, Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.
New York City

Fluxus, thirty years old in 1992, holds that change is the only constant. This movement contributed the term "intermedia," and popularized the time-based performance, video, film, installation and published multiple forms that artists and the public take for granted today. Franklin Furnace is proud to present *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* to celebrate Fluxus' anniversary. The exhibition has been organized as part of Franklin Furnace's ongoing commitment to presenting antecedent movements to contemporary artists' publishing in response to the fact that the innovations of the Fluxus artists have left an indelible mark on the field now known as "artists' books." The exhibition *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* at Franklin Furnace, Emily Harvey Gallery's *Ten Years on Broadway: Fluxus 1982-1992*, Anthology Film Archives' *In and Around Fluxus: Film Festival and Fluxfilm Environments* in New York mark the inauguration of a national tour that we hope will widen understanding of the value of these conceptually-based works of art, and appreciation of the community that spawned them.

My thanks are due, first of all, to the public and private collectors without whose generosity this exhibition could not have been organized. I would like to single out The Hood Museum of Art which lent major Fluxus objects, in particular, a body of works included in Jan van der Marck's 1978 groundbreaking show, *A Tribute to George Maciunas*, and Jonas Mekas, much of whose private trove has never been exhibited before now. Additionally, important works were lent to *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* from the Ellsworth Snyder Collection; The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library, in Evanston, Illinois; Emily Harvey Gallery; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection; and Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts of The University of Iowa, which includes among its holdings, the Fluxus West Collection, initially established through donations by Dr. and Mrs. Abraham M. Friedman.

I am deeply indebted to curator Estera Milman for her depth of knowledge and sensitivity to the Fluxus community of artists as well as their works. Grateful thanks are due to artist Ken Friedman for his poster/announcement design. And many thanks to Michael Katchen, Director of Collections and Management Services of Franklin Furnace, who coordinated the organizational effort.

The journal *Visible Language* continues the vision of its founder, Merald Wrolstad, through the hard work of Sharon Helmer Poggenpohl. The double issue devoted to *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* will serve as

a catalogue to the exhibition during its national tour, and will provide scholars and the public with an authoritative text on Fluxus long into the future.

Franklin Furnace is particularly pleased to include the virtual reality computerized NeXT Fluxbase project as part of *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country*, as interaction and Fluxus are practically interchangeable terms. I am certain that if this technology had existed in the early 60s, George Maciunas and the whole merry band of Fluxus artists would have employed it. As it is, the audience of this exhibition will have simulated access to materials now too fragile and rare to handle.

Franklin Furnace gratefully acknowledges funding to organize *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; the New York State Council on the Arts; HarperCollins Publishers; The University of Iowa; the friends and members of Franklin Furnace; and the participating institutions in its national tour; The Madison Art Center; The University of Iowa Museum of Art; The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts and the Mary & Leigh Block Gallery of Northwestern University. My personal thanks are extended to Rene Barrilleaux, Curator of the Madison Art Center and Richard Fleischman, its Director; Mary Lyman of The University of Iowa Museum of Art and Stephen Prokopoff, its Director; Bruce Lineker, Curator of Exhibitions at The Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts and J. Brooks Joyner, its Director; and David Mickenberg of the Mary and Leigh Block Gallery for their enthusiasm and professional collaboration.

FLUXUS

Estera Milman

Estera Milman, pp. 11–15
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

Introduction

> The positivity of Fluxus has given the possibility of meeting each other and staying together. Individually artists existed before and after, but for a few years they had the same ideals, though not the same opinions.
>
> —Wolf Vostell[1]

> It was not the work of Fluxus that we liked (and what we needed), but its very existence. When the Aktual-activity started – at that time we were here completely isolated with our ideas and activities, but knowing that somewhere [there was] someone who was similar to us…helped us a lot during that period.
>
> —Milan Knízák[2]

By the mid–late 1950s and early 60s, a shared intuition surfaced among groups of artists around the world that the work of art had relinquished its authority as object and shifted to the position of catalyst for an interactive relationship between art maker and art receiver. This international tendency was loosely based on the influence of the Dada myth, an ahistorical construct launched during and directly following, the first World War. Historiographically speaking, it was the resurgence of interest in Dada[3] that was also responsible for the conviction that art activity must be withdrawn from its special status as rarefied art experience and resituated within the larger realm of the everyday experience of everyman, a belief that informed the art activities of the Japanese Gutai Group, the French Le Nouveau Realisme circle, John Cage and his students at both the Black Mountain College and the New School for Social Research, and the groups of artists who performed at Yoko Ono's loft on Chambers Street and George Maciunas and Almus Salcius' AG Gallery, many of whom were later to become participants in Fluxus. Of all the artists involved in these art actions, it is the participants in Fluxus who were most directly involved in the structuring of an "art culture." Informed by its curator's conviction that Fluxus works and the movement's social structure are congruent, the exhibition and this publication propose to investigate how this act of culturing took place through an in-depth analysis of the transactional basis of the movement's art objects, events and performance relics. Composed of materials borrowed from a number of North American public and private collections, the show is intended to familiarize the American art public with a pivotal moment in twentieth century art history during which a group of artists, composers and poets consolidated utopian convictions that had surfaced simultaneously within mid-century art communities world-wide and composed a cosmopolitan artists' network, the activities of which continue to provide a model for contemporary artists committed to the media arts, artist's bookmaking, performance, correspondence art and intermedia works.

In response to the fact that Fluxus is most often defined through those objects and events that were generated under its banner, the exhibition is composed, to a certain extent, of multiples, paperworks, object works, correspondence art, bookworks and other publications realized and circulated under the rubric of "Fluxus." In addition, performance relics, documents of Fluxus performances and performance

scores are included. Because Fluxus was the coalition of an international "constellation of individuals" into a conceptual community, a country whose geography was a figment of the communal imagination, whose citizenry was transient and, by definition, cosmopolitan, works executed by individuals who were involved with the group, yet which extend beyond the Fluxus banner, are also exhibited. In the final analysis, it is through its investigation of Fluxus as a strategy for the consolidation of concurrent art activity that the exhibition and its concurrent publication promise to most directly serve their publics and the field of twentieth century cultural studies.

Through the design of a new virtual reality NeXT prototype, the exhibition also provides unprecedented computer access to Fluxus objects. *Fluxbase II* allows the exhibition public to open Fluxus works, play the multiples, view film loops, respond to performance scores, access information about the artists, documents, performances, etc. By introducing an intermediate virtual reality into the Fluxus world, people are once again allowed to interact with Fluxus works as their makers intended. I would like to commend Joan S. Huntley and Michael Partridge and their staff at Second Look Computing, The University of Iowa's Weeg Computing Center, for conceiving and realizing this electronic miracle.

The selection of works for inclusion in this exhibition was based, to a large extent, upon its curator's attempt to illustrate that Fluxus was, first and foremost an occasion for the consolidation of an international art community. In keeping with these intentions effort has been made to represent a number of collective actions and interactions realized by members of the group. One such collaborative event was the establishment, in 1978, of the George Maciunas Memorial Collection at the Dartmouth College Museum and Galleries, soon after George Maciunas, "the epicenter of the 60s Fluxus phenomenon,"[4] died. According to Jan van der Marck, then the Museum's Director,

> [Fluxus was a] battle cry, esthetic focus, correspondence network, purveyor of entertainment and moveable feast...a loose association of the like minded spirits formed for the purpose of performing and publicizing works that bore an iconoclastic relationship primarily to music and secondarily to literature, theatre, dance and the visual arts [but above all] Fluxus was George Maciunas, art entrepreneur extraordinary, Pied Piper and master of ceremonies.[5]

As is also the case for The University of Iowa's Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, the George Maciunas Memorial Collection is composed, in part, of materials donated by friends and members of the Fluxus community. From November 22, 1978 through January 14, 1979, the exhibition, *A Tribute to George Maciunas*, was mounted in the Beaumont-May Galleries at Dartmouth's Hopkins Center. Alongside additional materials lent, the show was composed of the first thirteen gifts to the collection, including works donated by Josef Beuys, Alison Knowles, John Cage, Peter Moore, Claes Thure Oldenburg, Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins and others. All of these works that are capable of

travel are included in the current exhibition, *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country*, as are a number of exhibited works lent that have since been incorporated into the Collection.

The press release that accompanied the 1978 exhibition announced that, "Friends of George Maciunas decided to honor his memory by establishing at Dartmouth a collection of Fluxus and Fluxus related art with the express purpose of educating students and other museum patrons about an ephemeral aesthetic not documented or easily accessible anywhere else."[6] The statement also projected that a campaign was to be mounted "for the organization of a traveling exhibition to maximize the educational potential of this collection and to perpetuate the reputation of Fluxus as moveable feast."[7] I would like to thank Timothy Rub, current Director of Dartmouth's Hood Museum of Art for facilitating the realization of the original intentions of the donors to the George Maciunas Memorial Collection.

In 1979, van der Marck also noted that John Cage was "the true catalyst of Fluxus to whom every member of the group is individually or collectively indebted."[8] In response to such perceptions, of which the above statement is but one among a host of others, *Fluxus A Conceptual Country* includes works by the composer as well as a broad cross section of scores by individuals affiliated with Fluxus that are permanently housed in the John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library, Evanston, Illinois The Collection came to Northwestern at Cage's request and includes over 400 musical notations by some 300 composers, some of whom were associated with Fluxus and all of whom chose to collectively participate in a benefit for the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Arts. Selected works were published by Something Else Press, Inc., in 1969, under the title *Notations*, edited by John Cage and Alison Knowles. As it is the curator's conviction that collaborative artists' anthologies often serve as a record of self-constituted artists networks, or temporal communities in their own right, the inclusion of these selected Fluxus related works in the current exhibition is fully in keeping with the project's objectives and further serves to illustrate that the Fluxus community was often contexted within larger art cultures. I would like to thank Don Roberts, Head, Northwestern University Music Library and Deborah Campana, Music Public Services Librarian, whose expertise and commitment to these works made their inclusion in this exhibition possible.

The complex and little discussed inter-relationship between Fluxus and avant-garde film is brilliantly brought to public attention by Jonas Mekas, of the Anthology Film Archives, who curated *In and Around Fluxus: Film Festival and Fluxfilm Environments*, the media portions of this project. In the course of preparing these events, all existing Fluxus footage was reconstructed for the first time and new Fluxus related materials collected. I am particularly grateful to Mekas for his ground breaking efforts and am deeply pleased to have had the occasion, over the course of the last year and a half, to become more familiar with him

and with his activities.

Emily Harvey, who curated, *Ten Years on Broadway: Fluxus 1982-1992*, the contemporary component of this collaborative effort, is deserving of accolades for having established the premier exhibition space for contemporary works by artists who were associated with Fluxus. Her gallery at 537 Broadway is housed in the Cast Iron Court Corporation, the last of the Fluxhouses. It had earlier served as George Maciunas' last studio space in New York City; it was there that he lost his eye and there that the Fluxwedding took place. The loft was next owned by Fluxus participant Jean Dupuy who eventually curated a series of group shows for the Gallery in the early 1980s. *Loose Pages* by Alison Knowles, the first exhibition devoted to a first-generation Fluxus artist that Harvey curated, opened in 1983. The current exhibition eloquently illustrates the breadth of her long and ongoing commitment to this community of artists and their contemporary works. It is also worth noting that, in November of 1991, Ay-O opened his permanent installation, *Black Hole, Dedicated to George Maciunas*, in the sub-basement of 537 Broadway.

I would like to acknowledge contributions to this project by two Project Assistants to Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts: James Lewes, who facilitated research and who compiled and annotated the accompanying Exhibition Checklist, and Tracy Kreis, without whose diligence and expertise the mechanics of securing loans and preparing this manuscript for publication would not have been possible. And finally, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to my colleague, Martha Wilson, Founding Director, Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc., with whom I have long enjoyed working and who made it possible to open this celebration of Fluxus' thirtieth anniversary on its North American home court.

NOTES

[1] Wolf Vostell during an interview with Giancario Politi, first published in *Flash Art*, 72-73, March–April 1977, reprinted in *Flash Art*, 149, November–December, 1989, p. 102.

[2] Milan Knizak, "Interview with Milan Knizak," first published in *Flash Art*, March–April 1977, reprinted in *Flash Art*, November–December, 1989, p. 104.

[3] For a discussion of the extent to which Dada served as model for aspects of American Fluxus, see my essay, "Historical Precedents, Trans-historical Strategies, and the Myth of Democratization," in this volume. It is interesting to note that during his interview with Politi, Vostell stated, "Something which influenced me a lot was the Dada retrospective in Duesseldorf in 1958. I think that it's wrong to talk of a Dadaistic influence only in U.S.A. as described by criticism during the 60s. Dada history has taught me much on photomontage, on the environment idea in Merz works by Schwitters, then I saw the bicycle wheel of Duchamp and other things. The most essential moments in my life during the 50s, were Dada with its will-power of not escaping 'reality-as-a-thing,' which none did at that time, and the dé-collage with its attention to violent and destructive phenomena," *Flash Art*, p. 102.

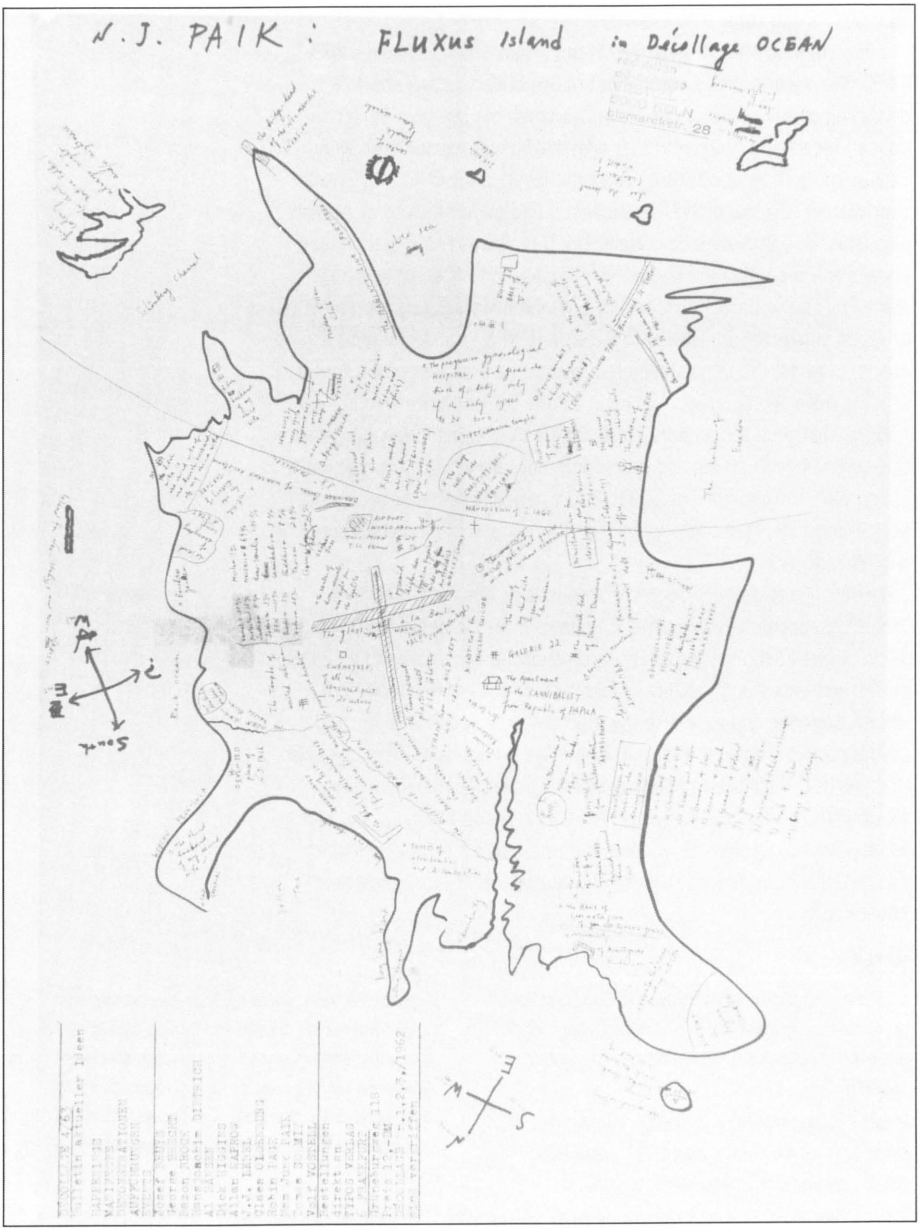
[4] Jan van der Marck, as cited in "Pied Piper of a moveable feast," in *Art News*, March 1979, Volume 78, Number 3, p. 14.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Press Release, "Beaumont-May Gallery. A Tribute to George Maciunas, 22 November 1978–14 January 1979." Hood Museum Archives.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Van der Marck, p. 15.



Nam June Paik, *Fluxus island in De-Coll/Age Ocean.* Advertisement for *De-Coll/Age #4*, Wolf Vostell, editor. Offset lithograph printed black on white newsprint, 41 x 57.2 cm., 1963. Ellsworth Snyder Collection. Photograph by Angela Webster, Courtesy of Madison Art Center.

The essay briefly outlines some of the uncanny coincidences between the birth of Dada and the birth of Fluxus, charts the adoption of similar ahistorical strategies by members of both movements as they attempted to position themselves historically and questions our assumption that democratization of the arts is the natural result of artistic actions that purportedly attempt to break down the line of demarcation between art and life. In the process, the article provides introductions to both the World War I movement and its post-World War II successor.

Historical Precedents, Trans-historical Strategies, and the Myth of Democratization

Estera Milman

Estera Milman, pp. 17–34
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

Of all the many stories that Fluxus has generated, perhaps the one that is most often repeated is the recounting of the tale that describes how, during one of the early 1960s concerts in Europe, the *hausmeister*, the individual who cleaned the concert hall, responded so well to the performance that he brought his whole family to subsequent concerts. Of all artistic movements[1] that came into being in the second half of our century, there were few that were more overtly concerned with the need to reposition the art experience within the domain of the common man and woman than was Fluxus. There were fewer still that looked so directly to Dada for their historical precedent or that so successfully generated a trans-historical myth that ran parallel to the powerful fiction that informed our perception of the World War I movement. Suggesting that these attributes are correlative is the primary intention of the following.[2]

Historical Dada came into being in Zurich, Switzerland, sometime in the Spring/Summer of 1916. The stage for the movement's debut was set by the brilliant, unstable expressionist poet, dramatist, and frustrated proponent of "total theatre," Hugo Ball, and his collaborator, the singer, performer poet and part time puppeteer, Emmy Hennings. Ball and Hennings had relocated from war torn Germany to neutral Switzerland the previous Spring and, having toured for some time with Swiss variety troops and worked in Zurich's amusement quarter, the two disenfranchised German citizens decided to attempt to make a better, more stable living by operating an "international" literary and artistic cabaret. Ball described the founding of this nightclub, a small bar in a less than reputable section of Zurich, which became the breeding ground for both historical Dada and its powerful ahistorical myth in his editor's preface to *Cabaret Voltaire*, a proto-Dadaist publication realized by what we were subsequently to identify as the Zurich Dada group (and which shares certain characteristics with the proto-Fluxus publication *An Anthology*). Ball's introduction closes with the following statement:

> The present booklet is published by us with the support of our friends in France, Italy and Russia. It is intended to present to the Public the activities and interests of the Cabaret Voltaire, which has as its sole purpose to draw attention, across the barriers of war and nationalism, to the few independent spirits who live for other ideals. The next objective of the artists who are assembled here is the publication of a *revue internationale. La revue paraîtra à Zurich et portera le nom* "Dada" ("Dada"). Dada Dada Dada Dada.
>
> Zurich, 15.Mai 1916[3]

As is also the case for Fluxus, it is difficult to ascertain the point in time at which we can be reasonably confident that historical Dada became aware of itself, that is to say, that it began its existence as a movement. As Ball's preface indicates, the Cabaret Voltaire opened on the 5th of February, 1916. The retrospective description of its founding is dated May 15th, 1916 and appeared in print in June of that year. Ball is very careful throughout his statement to historically position himself as the founder of the nightclub around which a group of artists had assembled.

He thanks individual members of the group for their "assistance" but makes little or no reference to the existence of a coalescent avant-garde community.

It could be convincingly argued that the loose knit cluster of individuals circumstantially assembled in Zurich could not be transformed into a coherent community prior to the existence of the word "Dada," the banner around which their activities appear to have coalesced and under which both historical Dada and the Dada myth were propagated internationally. Scholars often date the coming into existence of the word to March or April, 1916, and cite the preface to the review *Cabaret Voltaire* as the first public appearance of the term in print. Some will argue that Tristan Tzara was responsible for its choice, and others that Ball and Richard Huelsenbeck should be credited with its selection. It has been suggested that Dada was initially to serve as the stage name for a singer in the cabaret. It has also been argued that it was originally chosen, as Ball explains in his editorial preface (and as coincidentally was also the case for Fluxus), as the proposed title for an international review. Regardless of which of these accounts is true, I would posit that the historical movement could not have existed until such time as the word came to serve as the rubric for the Zurich group's activities. Furthermore, I would insist that a shared self-conscious awareness, among members of the group, of their participation in an historical avant-garde movement, that is to say, in a community collectively involved in a series of acts and events designed to facilitate change, was a further prerequisite to historical Dada's existence.

As it migrated throughout war torn and post-war Europe and briefly touched upon America's post-war shores, historical Dada became a response to a series of specific contexts. Its inherent flexibility allowed it to speak to each of these contexts in kind. For most of us, however, Dada, as a historical reality, can not easily be separated from the ahistorical myth that it has concurrently generated, a myth which pervades our consciousness far more effectively than does its historical counterpart and which, separated though it is from the accomplishments of movement as historical realities, invites us to say that a particular activity or work of our own present, "is very Dada." We do not say as much, or as little, of Cubism, Futurism, Expressionism, or Constructivism. Although we certainly participate in its perpetuation, the Dada myth is not of our own making. Nor, do I believe, was it a deliberate construct of the Dadaists who generated it, at least not in the beginning. The myth of Dada came into being by accident. Like historical Dada, its birth was a response to a specific set of circumstances; it came to life as a side effect of Dada's attempt to position itself within the tradition of the avant-garde, a tradition that by definition is concerned with the mechanics of the making of history.

Although the Dada myth appears to be deliberately trans-historical, there were few early twentieth century avant-garde movements more overtly concerned with their historical positioning within an avant-garde

tradition than was Dada. One evidence of this preoccupation is the proliferation of early histories of Dada written by participants in the movement. One such account is Tristan Tzara's "Zurich Chronicle 1915–1919,"[4] which originally appeared in the 1920, Berlin based, *Dada Almanach*. It was later reprinted in Robert Motherwell's influential *The Dada Painters and Poets* (1951) and as an appendix to Hans Richter's *DADA Art and Anti-Art* (1964).

Although Tzara briefly makes reference to the word Dada in the third entry of his retrospective chronology (February 26th, 1916), the term is defined as the "latest novelty," and has little to do with either the development of a plan of action or the identification of an avant-garde community.[5] His fourth entry (June, 1916) describes the preliminary stages of the establishment of a community of artists, who "took an oath of friendship on the new transmutation that signifies nothing."[6] However, according to Tzara, it was not until July 14, 1916, that the first official Dada evening took place, an event that occurred, not at the *Cabaret Voltaire* but rather, at Zurich's Waag Hall. The fifth entry to his Zurich Chronicle is quite specific: "*July 14, 1916* For the first time anywhere at the Waag Hall: First Dada Evening (Music, dances theories, manifestos, poems, paintings, costumes, masks)..."[7]

Perusal of Tzara's description of this event provides evidence that the thrust of his rhetoric has taken a most drastic turn. Words such as "demonstrate, demand, shouting, fighting, protest," and "demolish" have replaced his earlier references to "ascendancy of New Art, music, singing," and "recitation." This obvious shift implies that, by 1920, Tzara wanted his readers to believe that historical Dada came into being at an extremely specific moment of time. Whether or not his particular recollection can be validated as the identification of the point in time when the movement was established is not here at issue. Far more important is his insistence that the distinction between proto-Dada and the historical movement be made, for Tzara was the individual most responsible for propagating Dada's deliberately ahistorical myth, a system of ideas that has effectively convinced us, even against our better judgment, that the movement was capable of encompassing events that preceded its historical birth and that succeeded its demise.

Tzara's chronicle lists two distinct entries under the repeated date, "July 1917." It is the only instance in the retrospective account that its author chooses to do so. The first reads, "July 1917 Mysterious creation! Magic Revolver! The Dada Movement is launched."; the second opens with the announcement, "July 1917 Appearance of *Dada* No. 1, a review of art and literature..."[9] The implication inherent in this presentation is, that for Tzara, despite the fact that Dada had been active in Zurich for at least a year, the historical movement did not begin to fulfill its true mission until an international review, published under the Dada masthead, appeared, the very periodical to which Ball spoke at the

close of his editorial preface to *Cabaret Voltaire*. That such was the case is understandable in view of the fact that, throughout the early twentieth century, the literary and artistic review was the primary means by which avant-garde communities communicated with one another, kept abreast of each other's activities, and, for all intents and purposes, positioned themselves historically within their own tradition. It is also worth noting that it was Tzara who served as the sole editor of the "official" litte review.

"Zurich Chronicle 1915–1919" inadvertently provides us with evidence of the process by which the Dada movement came to capture the imagination of contemporaneous art communities. In succeeding entries to the piece, Tzara welcomes parallel periodicals and parallel spirits into the Dada community. Examples of such networking include his reference, under the heading "February 1919," to the American based periodical, *The Blind Man* (April and May, 1917), and to Marcel Duchamp;[10] and, under the heading "May 1919," to the New York based, *TNT* (March 1919),[11] none of which had any direct affiliation with historical Dada, at that time. However, I would posit that the identification of such kindred spirits was one of the primary objectives of the Zurich group and thus, that Tzara's inclusion of these individuals and publications was fully in keeping with his concern for the propagation of the *historical* movement.

Such acts of appropriation undeniably also served to propagate the schema of imagination which Dada inadvertently generated and which has since attained mythical status. Evidence of such strategy is available in Tzara's insistence, under his entry for the December 1918, that "Dschouang-Dsi [was] the first Dadaist,"[12] for it is through its ability to encompass and appropriate a spirit that stretches back through history and forward into the present that the myth of Dada ascended to power. Furthermore, it is through this trans-historical act of assimilation that Dada continues to capture the imagination of subsequent generations of artists.

Tzara succeeded in his attempt to enter the mainstream and carried Dada to Paris where it temporarily served as a conscience for the war weary French avant-garde. He was even more successful in his ongoing commitment to the propagation of Dada's trans-historical myth. In April, 1921, he authored a mock authorization giving Duchamp and Man Ray the right to publish their own review under the Dada masthead. The statement is included in *New York Dada*, the only American based little magazine specific to Dada. In his authorization, Tzara claimed credit for the choice of the word Dada as the title of *his own* Zurich/Paris based review and, in the spirit of democratization, insisted that Dada belonged to everyone. He explained that the movement itself was neither "a dogma or a school, but rather a constellation of individuals and free facets,"[13] and, once again calling upon Dada's burgeoning myth, goes

on to state that,"Dada existed before us (the Holy Virgin) but one cannot deny its magical power to add to this already existing spirit..."[14]

In his "Lecture on Dada 1922," originally published in the Hannover based review, *Merz* (Vol.2, No.7, January, 1924), and reproduced in translation in Motherwell, Tzara attempts to describe Dada as being anti-historical by making reference to what had since become its full fledged ahistorical myth.

> We are well aware that people in the costumes of the Renaissance were pretty much the same as the people of today, and that *Chouang-Dsi was just as Dada as we are* [emphasis mine]. You are mistaken if you take Dada for a modern school, or even for a reaction against the schools of today. Several of my statements have struck you as old and natural, what better proof that you are Dadaists without knowing it, *perhaps even before the birth of Dada* [emphasis added].
>
> You will often hear that Dada *is a state of mind* [emphasis mine]. You may be gay, sad, afflicted, joyous, melancholy or Dada...Slowly but surely, a Dada character is forming.[15]

Later in the essay, Tzara reiterates, "Dada is a state of mind. That is why it transforms itself according to races and events."[16]

It is important to remember that, by 1922, Dada, as a historical reality, had undeniably ceased to be an effective force in Paris and having peaked had left in its wake a powerful ahistorical myth, a schema of the imagination that the poet had long been instrumental in propagating.

By 1951, an older, more reflective Tzara overtly shifted his strategies and openly attempted to distinguish between the Dada myth and the movement as a historical reality. Tzara opens his essay, "An Introduction to Dada," (a statement that was originally circulated as an insert to the first edition of Motherwell's, *The Dada Painters and Poets* and which subsequently appeared as an appendix to the text's second printing) with the statement, "From the point of view of poetry, or of art in general, the influence of Dada on the modern sensibility consisted in the formulation of a *human constant* which it distilled and brought to life."[17] Despite this preliminary reference to the very life blood of the Dada myth, the author quickly shifts gears and begins a clear and concise description of the context to which Dada responded and the intentions and convictions shared by participants in the historical movement.

> When I say "we," I have in mind that generation which, during the war of 1914–1918, suffered in the very flesh of its pure adolescence suddenly exposed to life, at seeing the truth ridiculed, clothed in cast off vanity or base class interest. This war was not our war; to us it was a war of false emotions and feeble justifications. Such *was the state of mind* [emphasis mine] among the youth when Dada was born in Switzerland thirty years ago.[18]

In the essay's penultimate paragraph, its author reiterates:

> Dada was a brief explosion in the history of literature, but it was powerful and had far reaching repercussions. It lay in the very nature of Dada to put a term

> to its existence... For Dada, a literary school, was above all a moral *movement* [emphasis mine]. It was individualistic, anarchic in certain respects, and it expressed the turbulence of youth of all times. A product of disgust aroused by the war, Dada could not maintain itself on the dizzy heights it had chosen to inhabit, and in 1922 it put an end to its existence.[19]

Dick Higgins opens his essay, "A Child's History of Fluxus," with statements that can be read almost as a manifesto for the democratization of the arts.

> 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 wet boots 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 Mac Low] 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.[20]

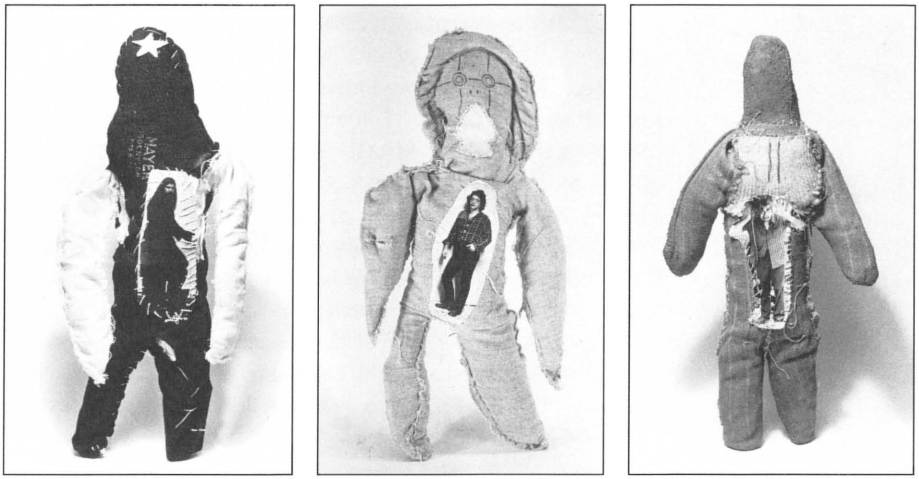
He then goes on to briefly speak of the compilation of La Monte Young and George Maciunas' [sic] proto-Fluxus, *An Anthology*, which was not entitled, "'A Fluxus Anthology,' because Fluxus things weren't

named yet," and which Higgins describes as "a beautiful book [composed of] beautiful, simple things…ideas and piles of words and ways for making your own life more wonderful."[21] "A Child's History of Fluxus" then proceeds to explain how George Maciunas planned to execute a sequel to this publication, "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."[22] The essay then describes the European concerts, originally designed to publicize the planned Fluxus anthology but during which the term Fluxus came to be associated with the activities of the international group of artists who were to come to be known as the Fluxus group. Higgins speaks of the press and the electronic mass media's response to these concerts; recounts the tale of the *hausmeister* ("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."[23]); very briefly chronicles some of the events that occurred between this point in time and Maciunas' death in 1978; and closes his retrospective history of Fluxus with the following reference to the trans-historical Fluxus spirit.

> 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 a part of Fluxus? I do.
>
> New York City
> 7 April, 1979[24]

Despite its deliberately youthful tone, Higgins does not take this essay lightly and speaks of it, in a subsequent article entitled, "Fluxus: theory and reception," as one of his attempts "to explain what Fluxus is and was and where it came from."[25] In the later essay, Higgins begins by discussing the relationships between Futurism, Dada and Surrealism, and Fluxus. He describes Futurism as "A goddess, nineteenth century style, with one leg on the future and one in the conventional past and not too much on the present…[as a movement that] falls a little flat in the evolution of modern sensibility…as a starter and a precursor [that has generated works that] have only moderately intrinsic interest as works."[26] Dada is described as appearing "more unique than it is."[27] Higgins goes on to write:

> In the 1950s, the journalistic image of Dada was considered to be the limit of the extremely crazy in art – as wild as possible, as droll as possible, simply inexpressibly "far-out," to cite the slang of the time. Thus, early Happenings and fluxus (like the works of Rauschenberg and Johns) were often dismissed



Larry Miller, *The Art of Influence*. Effigies of Jeffrey Lew, George Maciunas, Willoughby Sharp, sewn clothing, hair, fingernails, blood, straw, photographs, each approximately 33–27.9 cm. high and videotape document of psychic healer applying energies to the effigy of Jeffrey Lew. Courtesy of the artist. Photographs by Larry Miller.

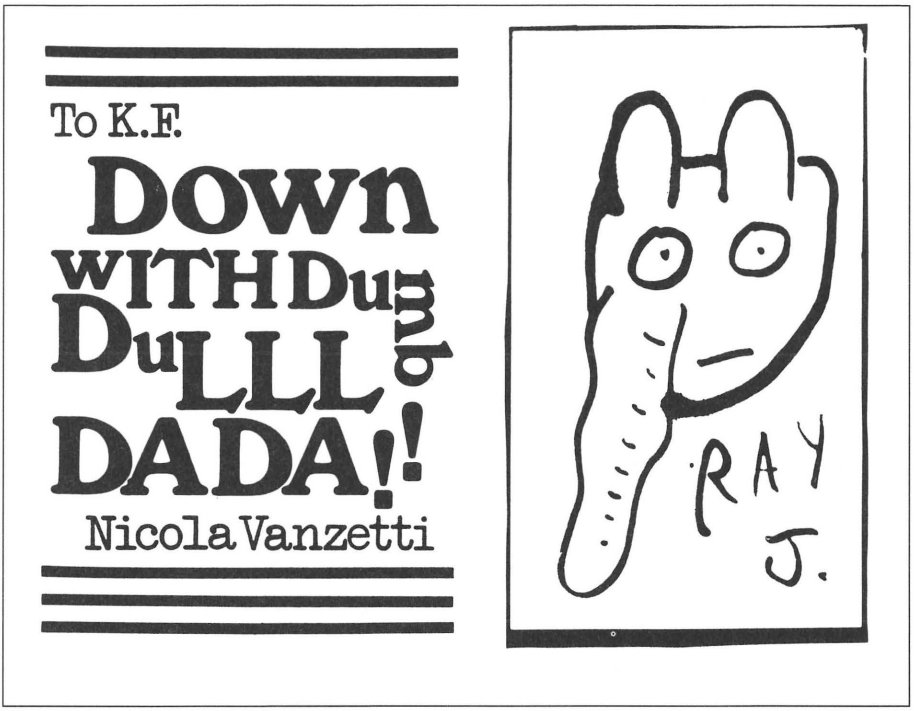
> as "neo-Dada." This was, of course, extremely annoying and embarrassing to those of us who knew what Dada was or had been.[28]

The author then explains that he personally knew a number of the "old Dadaists" and recounts his publication, as director of Something Else Press, of a facsimile edition of the 1920 Berlin based, *Dada Almanach*, which, it should be stressed, included, among its contributions, Tristan Tzara's "Zurich Chronicle 1915–1919," wherein the invention of the word Dada, its effect toward the consolidation of the Zurich group, and the relevance of the appearance in print of the first review bearing the Dada masthead are duly noted. Surrealism is at first described as a historical outgrowth of Dada which was, however, "quite self-consciously, a 'movement,' unlike Dada, which was more unruly, spontaneous perhaps, and undirected."[29] Higgins proceeds to discuss the autocratic nature of André Breton's directorship of the movement: describes what he defines as the first stage of historical Surrealism (the period from the mid-1920s through the late thirties); and briefly speaks of the influence of the movement upon the post-World War II American art scene.

> The Surrealists constituted the nucleus of the then avant-garde. Some of us who later did fluxus works were very conscious of this. I, for example, attended school with Breton's daughter Aubee ("Obie," to us) and, being curious what her father wrote, acquired a couple of his books – that was my entre into Surrealism as a place to visit. Furthermore, from time to time there would be Surrealist "manifestations," and some of these things were similar to the "environments" out of which Happenings developed. These were, in any case, locked into our sensibility, as points of reference in considering our earlier art experiences, and Surrealism was absolutely the prototypical Art Movement, as such, for Americans at the time.[30]

The following page in "Fluxus; theory and reception" is broken into three parts: the first briefly discusses Futurism and Fluxus and the third briefly touches upon the relationship between Fluxus and Surrealism. It is the second, to which most of the page is consigned, that is of direct interest to the present discussion and, as such, is worthy of quoting in its entirety. So doing is particularly important in view of the fact that the statement identifies the specific point in time when members of the group became self-consciously aware that their activities had coalesced under a new banner.

> Fluxus seems to be like Dada – at least like the popular image of Dada – in being, well crazy, iconoclastic, essentially a negative tendency rejecting all its precedents, and so on. In fact, there *is* some truth to this: but it is oblique. Fluxus was never so undirected as Dada, never so close to its historical precedents. Dada was, in fact, a point of discussion on those long nights at Ehlhalten-am-Taunus, during the first Fluxus festival at Wiesbaden in 1962, when George Maciunas, myself, Alison Knowles and, occasionally, others would talk into the wee hours of the morning, trying to determine what would be the theoretical nature of this *tendency* [emphasis mine] to which we were giving birth, which we were participating in. Maciunas was intensely aware of



Buster Cleveland, *Untitled*. Paste up for *NYCS Weekly Breeder*, selected pages, each 28 x 21.5 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa. The Buster Cleveland Collection. Includes works on paper and rubber stamp images by Joseph Beuys, Fluxus West, Ray Johnson, Daniel Spoerri among others. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.

> the rivalry between the French and German Dadaists; we wanted to keep our group together and avoid such splits as best we could. What could we do to prevent this fissioning? The answer was to avoid having too tight an ideological line. Maciunas proposed a manifesto during that 1962 festival – it is sometimes printed as a "Fluxus manifesto." But nobody was willing to sign the thing. We did not want to confine tomorrow's possibilities by what we thought today. That manifesto is, then, Maciunas' manifesto, not a manifesto of Fluxus.[31]

My decision to devote so much space to a reiteration of Dick Higgins' perspective on Fluxus was not an idle one. Higgins was one of the most prolific participants in the Fluxus movement and has since attained position, with the group's sanction, as Fluxus' theoretician. His publishing house, Something Else Press, Inc., although often described as a Fluxus offshoot, was one of the most influential underground publishing organs of the period and probably, in its own right, far surpassed Fluxus in its impact upon the period. However, it is important to keep in mind that Higgins is maintaining an insider's position when he speaks of Fluxus. Let us catch our breath, for a moment, and step back to the outside.

One point that Higgins has chosen not to mention in the above is that the festival, or series of concerts, during which Fluxus came to capture the imagination of the European public was overtly related to neo-Dada.

Prior to the September 1962 concert in Wiesbaden, in which Higgins, Alison Knowles,[32] and George Maciunas participated (and which was billed as the *Fluxus International Festival of New Music*), a concert entitled *Neo-Dada in der Musik* (*Neo-Dada in Music*) had taken place in Dusseldorf (June 16, 1962). The program for the Neo-Dada festival lists, among its participants, Maciunas and Higgins, as well as a number of other composers who were to become members of Fluxus. There is little question then, that Dada should well have been one of the topics of discussion during "those long nights at Ehlhalten-am Taunus." Having thus been given direct access back to the World War I era, let us look for a moment at the manifesto that is sometimes referred to as the "First Dada Manifesto," and sometimes as "Hugo Ball's Manifesto," presented at the first public Dada evening at Zurich's Waag Hall (July 14, 1916).

> Dada is a new *tendency* [emphasis mine] in art. One can tell from the fact that until now nobody knew anything about it, and tomorrow everyone in Zurich will be talking about it. Dada comes from the dictionary. It is terribly simple. In French it means "hobby horse." In German it means "good-bye." "Get off my back." "Be seeing you sometime." In Romanian:"yes, indeed, you are right, that's it." But of course, yes, definitely right, and so forth.
>
> An international word. Just a word, and the word a movement. Very easy to understand. Quite terribly simple. To make of it an artistic tendency must mean that one is anticipating complications.[33]

In his diaries, Ball refers to this manifesto as a "thinly disguised break with friends."[34] The points of contention between Ball and other members of the Zurich Dada circle revolved around his opposition to the association of the concept "art" with the activities of the group, on the one hand, and his unwillingness to mount an artistic school, on the other. Earlier in his diaries, Ball had written:

> 11.IV [1916]
>
> There are plans for a "Voltaire Society" and an international exhibition. The proceeds of the soirées will go toward an anthology to be published soon. H. [Huelsenbeck] speaks against "organization"; people have had enough of it, he says. I think so too. One should not turn a whim into an artistic school.[35]

Ball's entry for March 18, 1916, often referred to as the earliest evidence that the word Dada existed, once again makes reference to the planned anthology of which he spoke above:

> [Tristan] Tzara keeps on worrying about the periodical. My proposal to call it "Dada" is accepted. We could take turns at editing, and a general editorial staff could assign one member the job of selecting a layout for each issue. Dada is "yes, yes" in Rumanian,"rocking horse" and "hobby horse" in French. For Germans it is a sign of foolish naiveté, joy in procreation, and preoccupation with the baby carriage.[36]

I have attempted, through reference to but a few Dada memoirs and the writings of one Fluxus member, to briefly outline the uncanny coinci-

dence between the birth of Dada and the birth of Fluxus. One need not rely on Tristan Tzara's "Zurich Chronicle 1915–1919," or on Hugo Ball's diaries to prove such a point, nor need one depend upon the essays of Dick Higgins. Writings by various Fluxus members are replete with such information. Throughout my discussion of the relationship between historical Dada and the movement's trans-historical myth, I deliberately choose to concentrate on statements by Dadaists which were easily accessible to the general public, for it is through the general public's response to a concept that myths come into existence. Thus many of my references were borrowed from Robert Motherwell's *The Dada Painters and Poets*, an anthology published in New York in 1951 which provided the American avant-garde with easy access to the Dada myth and to certain historical aspects of the movement. Adopting a formal device employed by both the Dadaist and the *Fluxus Leute* (the Fluxus people), and opening the *Painters and Poets*, at random, I find the following statement by Tristan Tzara:

> Dada is a state of mind. That is why it transforms itself according to races and events. Dada applies itself to everything, and yet it is nothing, it is the point where the yes and the no and all the opposites meet, not solemnly in the castles of human philosophies, but very simply at street corners, like dogs and grasshoppers.[37]

Higgins is the individual credited with being responsible for defining Fluxus as a "tendency" rather than a "movement." In "Fluxus: theory and reception," he makes reference to the Fluxus state of mind and its own trans-historical intentions while attempting to explain why the movement was not a movement, another position that Tzara maintains in many of his early Dada writings that are reproduced in Motherwell.

> Fluxus was not, then, a movement; it had no stated consistent program or manifesto which the work must match, and it did not propose to move our awareness of art from point A to point B. The very name *"fluxus,"* suggests change, being in a state of flux. The idea was that it would always reflect the most exciting avant-garde tendencies of a given time or moment – the *flux*attitude – and it would always be open for new people to "join." All they had to do was to produce works which were in some way similar to what other fluxus artists were doing.[38]

Fluxus member, Alison Knowles also maintains that Fluxus was not a movement, as do a great many, if not most, of the Fluxus participants. In a personal interview with the artist, (see "Road Shows, Street Events, and Fluxus People: A Conversation with Alison Knowles," in this volume) she described Fluxus as a chance grouping of disparate people who agreed upon very little. There is one point in the discussion, however, when Knowles does speak of one perspective that was shared by the group as a whole. As it is the only instance that I am aware of, where such a characteristic has been identified by a participating member of the collective, it is worth quoting the entry in its entirety. In response to

my reference to Tristan Tzara's manifesto, "To Make a Dadaist Poem," the artist replied:

> **AK:** Yes, the importance of the Tzara self-portrait…I think that *for the whole Fluxus group*, [emphasis mine] the key to the Tzara portrait was that it's your nature. When you paste it down, it looks like you; you have touched those pieces of paper and they have taken on form. When [John] Cage brought the use of chance to symphony you could tell right away that it was a Cage symphony. Now that is magical. Why would your use of chance, or mine, be different from anyone else's use of chance? Somehow the act of using what one would think was a very abstract structural base becomes very definable, in terms of the nature of what you can get.[39]

A little later in the interview, Knowles explains that one can not speak about Fluxus and chance procedure without talking about John Cage with whom many of the participants in Fluxus studied prior to their involvement with the group. Since Marcel Duchamp was Cage's own mentor, we are once again brought, full circle, back to the early twentieth century. One of Duchamp's experiments with chance procedure comes immediately to mind in response to the above: his *3 Standard Stoppages* (Paris, 1913–14), of which the artist spoke as an experiment designed to preserve and imprison forms obtained through the workings of his "own" chance. By the early 1950s, Cage was using chance procedure, for example, systems of coin tossing derived from the I Ching or random number tables, to determine the structure of his symphonies. Although Cage's works were composed of everyday sounds and silences, the pieces themselves tended to be so complex that these everyday occurrences were lost within the structure of his symphonies. His students, who were to compose a sizable portion of the original Fluxus community, tended through their own use of chance, to isolate the individual incident borrowed from the everyday world, thus drawing full attention to its everydayness. Many Fluxus performance works are informed by their deliberate concentration upon a single idea that stresses duration, the latter, an awareness of the time during which something lasts, being another central characteristic of Cage's own compositions.

Knowles' statement about Tzara's manifesto, "To Make a Dadaist Poem," clearly states that, not only was the group aware of Cage's experiments with chance but that the group was thoroughly familiar with Tzara's own writings about the procedure. There is another of Tzara's statements that, although it may not have been familiar to everyone in the group, was in all probability known to some. The manifesto to which I am referring is entitled "Dada vs. Art," and appeared on the poster/exhibition catalogue of Duchamp's influential 1953 Dada exhibition at the Sidney Janis gallery, in New York.

Duchamp's exhibition presented American artists at mid-century with two hundred and twelve works by a broad cross section of poets and painters who had participated in the historical movement. It is interesting to note that, were one so inclined, the statement could be renamed,

Fluxus vs. Art, provided of course that the banner "Fluxus" was superimposed over the movement's historical grandparent's own rubric.

> *Dada vs. Art*
>
> The attitude of Dada toward art is impregnated with that equivocal spirit of which Dada cultivated the ambiguity...and it is in this very contradiction that one finds the richness of Dada's own nature...
>
> Dada tried to destroy, not so much art, as the idea one had of art, breaking down its rigid borders...humbling art...subordinating its values to pure movement which is also the movement of life...
>
> Was not Art (with a capitol A) taking a privileged...position on the ladder of values, a position which made it sever all connections with human contingencies...
>
> It should be noted – and this is a trait common to all its tendencies – that the artistic means of expression lose, with Dada, their specific character. These means are interchangeable, they may be used in any form of art and more over may employ incongruous elements – materials noble or looked down upon, verbal cliches or cliches of old magazines, bromides, publicity slogans, refuse, etc...
>
> Dada never preached, having nothing to defend; it showed truths in actions and it is as action that what is commonly called art will henceforth have to be considered...
>
> Dada's scorn for modernism was based, above all, upon the idea of relativity since any dogmatic codification could only lead to a new academism. In virtue of that, Dada did fight against Futurism, Expressionism, and Cubism, declaring itself for continued change and spontaneity. Dada, wanting to be constantly in motion and transformable, preferred to disappear rather than bring about the creation of new Pompiers.[40]

One of George Maciunas' manifestos presents what he believed constituted the distinctions between "Art" and "Fluxus Art Amusement." The statement describes art as an attempt to justify the artist's parasitic, elitist status in society, a system that attempts to convince the public of its dependency upon the artist, that insists that only the artist is capable of making art. "Fluxus Art-Amusement," on the other hand, is defined as follows:

> To establish artist's nonprofessional status in society, he must demonstrate artist's dispensability and inclusiveness, he must demonstrate self sufficiency of the audience, he must demonstrate that anything can be art and anyone can do it.
>
> Therefore, art-amusement must be simple, amusing, unpretentious, concerned with insignificances, require no skill or countless rehearsals, have no commodity or institutional value.
>
> The value of art amusement must be lowered by making it unlimited, mass produced, obtainable by all and eventually produced by all.

> Fluxus art-amusement is the rear-guard without any pretension or urge to participate in the competition of "one-upmanship" with the avant-garde. It strives for the monostructural and non-theatrical qualities of simple natural event, a game, or a gag. It is the fusion of Spike Jones, Vaudeville, gag, children's games and Duchamp.[41]

Of the American participants in the Fluxus movement, Maciunas was among those most deeply committed to leftist ideology, and it is to his writings and manifestos that we must look for the most overtly utopian definitions of the collective's intentions. Although most surviving participants in Fluxus repeatedly insist that Maciunas was but one of the founding members of the community, it should be remembered that he coined the word Fluxus, the banner around which the activities of the group coalesced and spread internationally; that he was the one member of the group most responsible for the propagation of the movement and for the presentation of its public face; and that for many the historical movement ceased to exist soon after his death, in 1978. However, all of the participants in the movement are in agreement that Fluxus was about the relationship between everyday living and art. Ironically, despite the movement's professed intention to convince the art public of its self-sufficiency, it tended, in the long run, to speak most directly to itself and to other communities of art makers. As such, it became a kind of self-destruct system for its followers, who were, after all, being trained to liberate themselves from their privileged, elitist status within culture, that is to say, to stop being artists. With the exception of Maciunas himself, who separated his "professional" self from his Fluxus other, there were few of the Fluxus people who succeeded in convincing themselves of their own "dispensability" as artists, despite their commitment to the everyday experience. While we applaud their efforts to democratize the art experience, we are somewhat aware that concepts such as "democratization" and "the arts" may well be mutually exclusive. As was the case for the Dadaists, so was it for the participants in Fluxus: art making carried with it the unspoken assumption that the artist's own transaction of an everyday experience was somehow more intense, more valuable as an occurrence, than anyone else's relationship with the everyday. It is an assumption shared by both the art maker and his or her public – a reciprocal agreement.

In this 1921 mock authorization for the publication of *New York Dada*, a periodical that was reprinted in facsimile form in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, Tzara insists that "Dada belongs to everyone."[42] But we know as Tzara did, that this was a fiction, and a well written one, at that. Like many of his colleagues, Maciunas often recounted the incident involving the *hausmeister*, his family, and an early Fluxus performance. We are aware, however, that the *hausmeister* was but one member of one audience. It is the fact that he was singled out from the crowd and committed to memory that speaks most eloquently of the *flux*attitude.

Notes

[1] I am fully aware that by choosing to use the word movement I place myself in direct opposition to other individuals who have written about Fluxus. I have chosen the word quite consciously. (Scholars have long ceased to be self-conscious when applying the term to historical Dada which was, in reality, a great deal more than a "constellation of individuals and of free facets.") I ask that the word here be understood as both an act, process, or insistence on change and a connected series of acts and events tending toward some more or less definite end. The similarities between dictionary definitions for the word flux and the word *movement* (that is to say both as a moving, shifting, or act of flowing and in reference to bodily excretions) further suggests that had the word fluxus been originally chosen to identify the activities of the group, Maciunas might well have called it the Fluxus Movement in much the same way that Marcel Duchamp intentionally chose the redundancy, *Société Anonyme*, Inc.(Incorporated, Inc.), as the title for the New York gallery that he founded with Katherine Dreier and Man Ray in the spring of 1920.

[2] This essay is based, in part, on "Fluxus and the Democratization of the Arts," Estera Milman, first published in *Dada Conquers! The History, the Myth, and the Legacy* (Taipei, 1988) pp. 237–247. Sections of a companion article have been integrated into the current version. The second essay is an in-depth analysis of the process by which the Dada myth, a World War I era ahistorical construct, ascended to power. For the complete article, see Milman, "The Dada Myth," in *Dada Conquers! The History, the Myth and the Legacy*, pp. 113–128.

[3] Hugo Ball, "Editorial Preface," in *Cabaret Voltaire*, reproduced in translation, in Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti Art* (New York and Toronto, 1978), p. 14.

[4] Tristan Tzara, "Zurich Chronicle 1915–1919," Ralph Manheim, trans., in Richter, pp. 223–228. According to Richard Huelsenbeck, the Dada myth came into being well before the historical movement emerged within the sphere of action or fact. The author begrudgingly gave Tzara credit for the propagation of this myth: "Tristan Tzara had been one of the first to grasp the suggestive power of the word Dada. From here on he worked indefatigably as the prophet of the word which was only later filled with a concept. He wrapped, pasted, addressed, he bombarded the French and the Italians with letters: slowly he made himself the 'focal point.'" Richard Huelsenbeck,"En Avant Dada: A History of Dadaism," Ralph Manheim, trans., in Robert Motherwell, ed., *The Dada Painters and Poets*, (New York, 1951–67), (second edition), p. 26. It is interesting to note that many of Maciunas' co-participants in Fluxus would retroactively describe Fluxus' primary impresario in a similar fashion.

[5] Ibid., p. 223.

[6] Ibid., pp. 223–224.

[7] Ibid., p. 224.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p. 226. It is important to note that it was not simply to the establishment of a Dada based publishing organ to which Tzara, as prophet of the word, referred, in his entries for July 1917. The chronicle had carefully made note of the appearance, throughout 1916, of publications realized under the "Collections Dada" imprint, texts such as *The First Celestial Adventure of M. Fire-extinguisher* (July 1916), *Phantastische Gebete* (September 1916), and *Schalaben Schalomai Schalamezomai* (October 1916).

[10] Ibid., p. 227.

[11] Ibid., p. 228.

[12] Ibid., p. 226.

[13] Tristan Tzara, "New York Dada," in *New York Dada*, Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, eds. (New York, April 1921), p. 2. A facsimile of the little magazine appears in Motherwell, pp. 214–218.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Tristan Tzara, "Lecture on Dada. 1922," Ralph Manheim, trans., in Motherwell, pp. 249–250.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Tristan Tzara, "An Introduction to Dada," (New York, 1951), n.p. Because Tzara and Huelsenbeck refused to have their recent statements on Dada published under one cover, the piece was originally produced in pamphlet form and inserted, alongside Huelsenbeck's, "Dada Manifesto, 1949," in the 1951 edition of *The Dada Painters and Poets*. Both statements subsequently appeared in the second edition. See Motherwell, pp. 394–398 and 390–394, respectively.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Dick Higgins, "A Child's History of Fluxus," in *Lightworks* (Number 11/12) Michigan, 1979, p. 26.

[21] Ibid. It is Higgins who credits the publication to Young and Maciunas. The author makes no reference to Jackson Mac Low who served as the anthology's co-publisher.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., p. 27. It is interesting to note that Higgins composed this essay one year after Maciunas' death.

[25] Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: theory and reception," [paper presented during *Fluxus: A Workshop Series*, Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa School of Art and Art History, April 1985], p. 1. Although, versions of this essay have appeared in print, I have chosen to refer to the manuscript that the author sent me.

[26] Ibid,. p. 4.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid., p. 5.

[30] Ibid., pp. 6–7.

[31] Ibid., p. 7.

[32] During the first Fluxus concerts in Europe, Alison Knowles, who was still concentrating on her work as a painter, participated as a performer rather than as a composer. Knowles has spoken to me of the fact that, having performed so many of her friends' compositions, she responded to the "group spirit" and began to compose her own works. Her name does not appear on the announced programs for these concerts until *Moving Theater No. 1* took place in Amsterdam on October 5, 1962. For a carefully prepared listing of the program participants for these concerts and other Fluxus performance events, see, Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus etc.* (Cranbrook Academy Museum of Art, 1981), pp. 360–410.

[33] Hugo Ball, "Dada Manifesto," Christopher Middleton, trans., in the appendix to Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, (New York, 1974), p. 220.

[34] Hugo Ball, *Flight Out of Time: A Dada Diary*, Ann Raimes, trans. (New York, 1974), p. 73.

[35] Ibid., p. 60

[36] Ibid., p. 63.

[37] Tristan Tzara, "Lecture on Dada. 1922," Ralph Manheim, trans. Originally published in *Merz*, vol. 2, no. 7. 1924. In Motherwell, p. 251.

[38] Higgins, "Fluxus: theory and reception," p. 10.

[39] See Estera Milman, "Road Shows, Street Events, and Fluxus People: A Conversation with Alison Knowles," in this volume.

[40] Tristan Tzara, "Dada vs. Art." The manifesto is reproduced on the poster/exhibition catalogue for the show Duchamp mounted at the Sydney Janis Gallery in New York, April 15 through May 9, 1953. Visitors to the exhibition received a copy of the catalogue in the form of a crumpled ball. Luckily, the handsome, oversized sheet also doubled as a poster and announcement for the event. Examples of the uncrumpled version have survived and have found their way into collections of both Dada and Fluxus works. In 1965, Maciunas made direct reference to Duchamp's poster when he designed *Bundle of Events* for the Japanese based Hi Red Center group. See James Lewes' annotated check list in this volume. I can not help but include yet another excerpt from Tzara's manifesto: "To the collages and objects of Max Ernst and Schwitters must be added chance introduced by Marcel Duchamp as a source of creation...and the Ready mades..."

[41] The manifesto is reprinted on a 1965 Fluxus broadside, as well as on other Fluxus handouts and flyers.

[42] Tzara, "New York Dada," p. 2. In the opinion of this author, despite the publication of this little review (hastily put together by Man Ray just prior to his relocation in Paris), the existence of an active Dada center in New York is but another well written fiction. The little magazine appears, in facsimile form, in *The Dada Painters and Poets*, pp. 214–218.

This paper explores why Fluxus' ambiguous affirmations and denials of modernism are not contradictory but part of a self-conscious strategy designed to manipulate the operational apparatus of modernism without submitting to its agenda. Aware that the cannons of modernism rest less in the specifics of its terms than in their organization, Fluxus dislocated traditional means and ends relationships endemic to modernist objectives and dismantled the dependent relationships that account for modernism's legibility as "historical movement." Capable of expanding in an indefinite number of opposite, but mutually inclusive directions, Fluxus submitted to everything. Yet, in its separation of means and ends, Fluxus lost the authority to author itself, became the subject of a traditional modernist debate and the unwitting victim of modernist historical subjugation.

Historical Design and Social Purpose

A Note on the Relationship of FLUXUS to Modernism

Stephen C. Foster

Stephen C. Foster, pp. 35–44
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

> What interested me about Fluxus was that it had a sharp, crisp approach to culture.
>
> —Kenneth Friedman[1]

I would like to venture that Fluxus can be, and frequently has been, successfully understood for what *it* was, what *it* became, the metamorphosis by which *it* successively became, and *its* means of becoming all these things. Scarcely a shocking proposition, what appears to be its logic (the logic of "it") has become truistic in the literature on modern art and reflects, in the curve of its development, the historical, or more accurately the historiographic momentum of the avant-garde. What a thing was, although liberally discounted as "absolute" truth, nevertheless defines the base upon which one analyzes what it became and the characteristics and historical parameters guiding what it successively became. How it became what it was is typically imputed to the actions and intentions of those responsible for what it became or successively became. Seen as a whole, these propositions describe the directionality of an overarching historical design for the progress of modernism of which the avant-garde becomes a specific case.

> Fluxus had made lasting contributions to our thinking about art and culture…had enduring value. —Jean Sellem[2]

> The aims of Fluxus, as set out in the *Manifesto of 1963*, are extraordinary, but connect with the radical ideas fermenting at the time.
>
> —Clive Phillpot[3]

> Fluxus had its antecedents in those enlightened, earlier twentieth-century artists *who wanted to release art from the moribund constraints of formalism.*
>
> —Jon Hendricks[4]

The purpose of this paper is to pose some questions concerning the relationship of Fluxus to this scheme of things; its alteration of the scheme, acceptance of it or rejection of it. In posing the questions, the point is not to determine the correct answer (Fluxus is avant-garde, modern or whatever) so much as it is to formulate a sensible means for answering the questions; that is, how can we know if Fluxus is modern, avant-garde or whatever?

Now, of course, there are and have always been enormous problems with this modernist scheme, but none of an order that has prevented it from working (at least until very recently) for approximately two centuries. Even recently, criticism of it has been more probing than effective. It would be easy to level well warranted criticism at those proposing that Fluxus be understood as a "real" thing, to dismiss its successive "realities" as illusions of an illusion and to convincingly demonstrate that "how" it became should not imply "what" it became. Yet, since the model has been, and surprisingly enough remains, operational, it is not altogether clear what purpose the criticism would serve. As Arnold Isenberg noted long ago concerning normative models of criticism, their internal contradictions not only failed to prohibit their use,

Davi Det Hompson, *Thanks Again for Everything*. Photomontage, 27.5 x 35 cm., 1972. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.

but they had no significant bearing as an effective means of analyzing critical communication.[5] I would say much the same for the question under consideration here. I think Kenneth Friedman implies as much when he claims: "When the work being done on Fluxus by trained historians – art historians, cultural historians, anthropologists – is more complete, you'll see the diversity of views brought forward in much greater clarity than the unity implicit in Jon's [or other existing] books."[6] In our particular case, and in specific reference to Fluxus, one might reasonably maintain that understanding and criticism of traditions as movements, historically substructured as "real" things, although fraught with hopeless historical, theoretical, moral, ethical and other problems, continues to work. This is true in spite of the group's denial of modernism and the avant-garde, and in spite of the group's clear recognition of their reasons for rejecting them.

> There's certainly interest in it [Fluxus] as an historical movement, but many of the artists themselves don't want to look at it historically.
>
> —Bruce Altschuler[7]

> Promote living art, anti-art... —George Maciunas[8]

> Definitions, especially the definitions of art history, seem to work the best on dead subjects. It's easier to bury Fluxus and to set up a three-sentence epitaph on our headstone than to understand what Fluxus is or was.
>
> —Jean Dupuy[9]

> *Fluxus objectives are social* (not aesthetic)...and concern [themselves] with: *Gradual elimination of fine arts...* —George Maciunas[10]

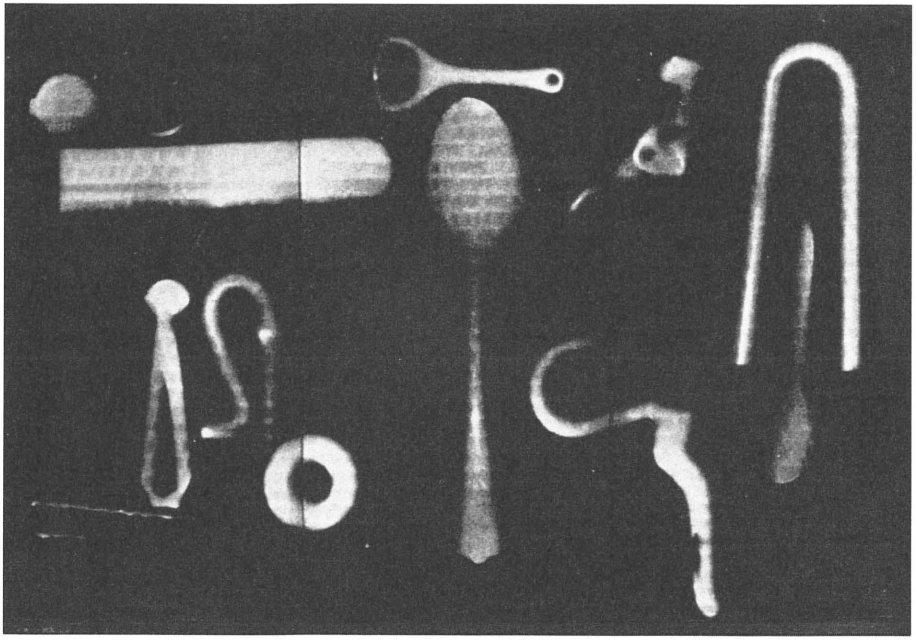
Having said this, however, it is nevertheless true that some Fluxus artists invoked these schemes again and again.

> On one hand, Fluxus appears to be an iconoclastic art movement, somewhat in the lineage of the other such movements in our century – Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, etc. And, indeed, the relationship with these is a real and valid one.
>
> —Dick Higgins[11]

> Fluxus is a permanent state of improvisation – it doesn't matter what, it doesn't matter how, it doesn't matter where and, most important of all, no-one should really know what it is is an error. —Marcel Fleiss[12]

To the extent that any contemporary group would continue to use this modernist scheme, as I maintain that Fluxus did, at least in certain important ways, requires an explanation. That is, why would a group maintain the historiographic structures of modernism, modernistically refute its content, and still consider itself detached from modernism? I believe that Fluxus, to a significant degree, behaved in these ways and for what I think are fairly definable purposes.

Highly self-conscious historically, and sophisticated in its manipulation of history's use, Fluxus tried to eclectically organize itself around the advantages of existing strategies at the same time that it attempted to avoid their abuses. Fluxus was committed to social purpose, but



Albert M. Fine, *Untitled.* Black spray paint on corrugated cardboard, 31.7 x 43.8 cm., ca. 1972. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

opposed the authoritarian means by which it was historically achieved; denied the metaphysic of the avant-garde's "progress," although it embraced its means for organizing a group; rejected the dominant culture's popularization of the avant-garde, but embraced its myth of the "masses"; communicated with "everyman," but warranted itself with the captive audiences for the avant-garde in the university and the marketplace; rejected "art," where the rejection rested largely on nothing more than a counter-definition of the establishment's concept of art; identified their sources as those parts of modernism defining themselves against the tradition; competed for artistic influence by not competing with art, and competed for social influence by competing with art ("*Purge* the world of bourgeois sickness, intellectual, professional & commercialized culture, PURGE the world of dead art...," (George Maciunas)[13]; veiled belief in experience, community in coalition, and art in environmental metaphors.

Looked at individually, none of their points strikes us as particularly surprising or new. We are more likely to be impressed by the fact that Fluxus seemed to adopt, more or less indiscriminately, all of them in ways that frequently seem to be contradictory and internally illogical. Yet, it must be said that none of these postures lay outside positive or negative assessments of the modernist and avant-garde debate, a debate that, of course, belongs to modernism. It is tempting to conclude that Fluxus is better defined through its "use" of modernism and

Buster Cleveland, *Untitled.* Paste up for *NYCS Weekly Breeder*, selected pages, each 28 x 21.5 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa. The Buster Cleveland Collection. Includes works on paper and rubber stamp images by Joseph Beuys, Fluxus West, Ray Johnson, Daniel Spoerri among others. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.

the avant-garde than it is through any rejection of them. As Estera Milman notes, "That the phenomenon appears to resist definition is based, in part, on the fact that Fluxus changed its public face to suit its intentions, its specific context and the purposes of its many diverse practitioners."[14]

Interestingly enough, the whole question of definition does not settle the question of whether Fluxus is modern, avant-garde or whatever. That we can define Fluxus through these terms carries no particular weight; nor does the fact that Fluxus might have defined *itself* through these terms, since the definition might well be better understood as something motivated by strategy rather than theory.

Another approach to the question of the relationship between Fluxus and the avant-garde might posit that the group provided an alternative to modernism and the avant-garde without implying a positive or negative critique. But this won't do. The fact that all the terms are too familiar is burdened further by the fact that nothing suggesting an alternative language is available in the group's publications or works. Furthermore, Fluxus continually condemned the avant-garde, or parts of it; "Fluxus art-amusement is the rear-garde...," (George Maciunas),[15] but made extremely liberal use of historical precedents such as Dada (see Milman's essay in this collection).[16] One might go further and maintain

(correctly, I believe) that alternatives were available and that Fluxus opted, knowingly or otherwise, not to use them.

This brings me closer to my thesis; that Fluxus was basically a reconfiguration of the modernist or avant-garde paradigms. Its use of typically modernist and avant-garde terms might superficially seem to make Fluxus a maverick modernism. Or, one might speculate that the group kept the modernist model and adjusted, or even ditched the content. Regardless of the truth of the latter, it strikes me that what is more important is the group's reorganization of modernism's terms. *The importance of this resides in the fact that the canon of modernism or the avant-garde rests not in the specifics of the terms but precisely in their organization.* That Fluxus is modern or not rests less on the use of the specific terms than the specific use of the terms. As the use of modernism's terms strike confirmed modernists as illogical, it would seem that this could only be accounted for in comparison with that modernist canon as it was conventionally organized; for a number of reasons, however, even this is not altogether clear.

The problem concerns whether modernism would have assessed Fluxus' use of its terms as illogical or merely idiosyncratic or misunderstood. The source of the organization of terms that constituted the modernist canon were located in its concept of history. To the degree that Fluxus maintained that concept, there was a misunderstanding of sorts. But it must also be said that it was a misunderstanding of rather little consequence, since modernism easily tolerated minor abuses of this sort and would have viewed it as little or no threat to the fundamental basis of its historical design.

> It is to falsify history to describe Fluxus as an art movement.
>
> —Eric Anderson[17]

Because of Fluxus' acceptance of the history, the canon was never fully raised to a level of visibility as a question.

If Fluxus rejected anything, it would seem to be the system or structure of the modernist program or project, but in a way that required saving modernism's program, in part, for maintaining the group's *operational* objectives (a point I will return to later in the paper), objectives that should not be confused with the more straightforwardly *transactional* basis of the historical work Fluxus so often claimed as part of its genealogy (Dada, Constructivism, etc.).

This gets us somewhat further, because it implies that in Fluxus there was a separation of means and ends atypical of modernism and the avant-garde as we normally understand them; considerations that bring us closer to identifying their substantial rather than polemical separation from modernism and the avant-garde. Fluxus seems to dislocate traditional "means and ends" relationships that are endemic to modernism and the avant-garde and that account, in large part, for their curve as it was represented at the beginning of this essay. If Fluxus wished to accomplish something, it was not embodied in the ends implied in its

means. I would suggest, in fact, that Fluxus represents a unique situation where both "means" and "ends" serve equally as objectives or goals; objectives which were historically, within the context of modernism, reserved only for ends. Nominally anti-art, and part of the late modern resistance to the "art object," Fluxus sought appreciation and engagement in its means. Self-conscious of its historical place, it sought its significance and position in its ends. The importance of this lay in the non-dependent relationship between the means and ends and the respective audiences that supported the objectives attached to each. Position was no longer contingent on appreciation; significance on engagement, etc. Engagement and significance, for example could be equally achieved, but in totally unrelated ways.

What is true of its strategies is true of its works (they are more or less the same thing). They affirm modernism and the avant-garde; they deny it, manipulate it, embrace it and shun it. Most importantly, they undermine the legibility of its canons and the relationship posed between the means and ends of art.

> ...the creativity, the lightness, the rethinking of culture, of our approach to life are the context in which *Water Yam* takes place and from which it emerges.
>
> —Kenneth Friedman[18]

> [Fluxus] 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.
>
> —Achille Bonito Oliva[19]

All this also broke apart the normal discourse levels through which the group was approached. No longer concerned with means and ends, criticism could be conceived around either, with no loss to either.

> ...Fluxus encompasses opposites. Consider opposing it, supporting it, ignoring it, changing your mind.
>
> —George Brecht[20]

Indeed, with luck (and it was almost inevitable with the variety of critical models in service) criticism of Fluxus would be substructured variously by consideration of both means and ends and exist on what amounted to a non-competitive basis. The same was true of historical approaches. Indifferent to its location in the street, alternative space or museum, the historiographic mandates of modernism yielded to a highly permissive situation where it was difficult to be wrong. Yet, and this is important, no matter how right one was, Fluxus was always prepared to claim that it was only a half-truth. The cleverness of Fluxus, was that it was the only party to play all the possible positions simultaneously (if not by any one particular individual, at least by the group considered collectively). With means and ends unrelated, Fluxus could be *made* modern, partially modern or anti-modern. Its artists and critics could easily, and without contradiction, fill the pages of a xerox magazine, *Artforum* or an Abrams *Corpus*. They could fight among themselves, appropriate individuals into their ranks who could not have been otherwise available,

and expand in an indefinite number of future directions – all with equal impunity from the critics and historians. In the hands of the right writer, they could be, and no doubt are being, made suitable for textbook discourses. There is no threat in any of this, because there is always a way out.

> What is significant in a Fluxus exhibition is the diversity of strategies and the complementary nature of the varied artists' intentions.
>
> —Robert C. Morgan[21]

From the point of view of the modernist, the position may seem irresponsible. From the point of view of Fluxus, it is versatile and operational.

I think there are some interesting conclusions to be drawn from all this; that is, that Fluxus was not at all *necessarily* anti-art, anti-purpose, anti-institution or anti-modern. It could, of course, equally well be all of these. Fluxus, however, was decidedly not anti-historical, and this seems to be a position that was *not* reversible in spite of hopeful opinion to the contrary.

> To push Fluxus toward the Twenty-first century means to grasp the group's anti-historicist spirit. —Achille Bonito Oliva[22]

> To go towards the year Two Thousand thus means to carry out a new task, that of avoiding defeat by time. —Achille Bonito Oliva[23]

The group could reject modernism and its historical design but not its history. By that I mean that the various, weighty and contradictory options to which Fluxus willingly and happily submitted remains, without exception, historically conceived options. In the separation of means and ends, Fluxus lost the authority to convincingly author itself, or to have others author it in its own image.

> By creating an absence of authorship, Fluxus has revived itself as a *significant tendency in recent art.* [emphasis mine] —Robert C. Morgan[24]

The relationship of Fluxus to modernism remains ambiguous only insofar as it may or may not be modern. But the "means" of being made one or the other is distinctly modern. History is a modern phenomenon, and anyone submitting to it becomes, to some extent, a subject of modernism. Since this is the case, any proposition that Fluxus radically separated itself from modernism is substantially weakened.

In closing, I am left, and leave the reader, with a slightly puzzling question. How much of all this was deliberate, planned or expected? Is contemporary Fluxus a rationalization of an early misunderstanding, or is it the fruits of a sophisticated, Duchampian refusal to commit? It seems to me that the question is related to why Fluxus, as modernism (as opposed to the other options), seems to have won the day. Although it could be, and surely will be argued that Fluxus was simply assimilated, absorbed and appropriated by an insensitive, voracious artworld and its

publics (the solace of all failed radicalisms), I would maintain that Fluxus, from the beginning, was never in a position to determine its fate otherwise. Its flirtation with history firmly secured its place in modernism.

NOTES

[1] Jean Sellem. "Twelve Questions for Ken Friedman," in *Fluxus Research*, (Special Issue), *Lund Art Press* 2, 2, University of Lund (Sweden), 1991, p. 95.

[2] Jean Sellem. "Fluxus Research," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 5.

[3] Clive Phillpot, "Fluxus: Magazines, Manifestos, *Multum in Parvo*," in *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, Clive Philpot and Jon Hendricks, eds. (New York, 1988), p. 11.

[4] Jon Hendricks. "Introduction to the Exhibition," in *Fluxus: Selections*, p. 17.

[5] Arnold Isenberg, "Critical Communication," in *The Philosophical Review* 58 (July 1949), pp. 330–44.

[6] Jean Sellem. "Twelve Questions for Ken Friedman," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 104.

[7] Bruce Altschulen, cited in Matthew Rose. "Fluxussomething? Is there a Renaissance in Fluxus or Just Boredom with Everything Else? A Survey of Fluxus in America," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 15.

[8] George Maciunas. "Manifesto" printed in *Fluxus: Selections...*, p. 2.

[9] Jean Dupuy. "Where," in *Fluxus!* (Brisbane, 1990), p. 13.

[10] George Maciunas, cited in Jon Hendricks. "Introduction to the Exhibition," in *Fluxus: Selections...*, p. 24.

[11] Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 26.

[12] Marcel Fleiss, "Fluxus in Paris," unpublished typescript, p. 1, no date (1989).

[13] George Maciunas. "Manifesto," reproduced in *Fluxus: Selections*, Clive Phillpot and Jon Hendricks, eds., p. 2.

[14] Estera Milman, *Fluxus and Friends: Selections from the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts Collection*, (Iowa City, 1988), unpaginated.

[15] George Maciunas, "Manifesto," broadside, 1965, cited in Milman, *Fluxus and Friends*, unpaginated.

[16] Estera Milman, "Historical Precedents, Trans-historical Strategies, and the Myth of Democratization," in this volume.

[17] Jean Sellem, "About Fluxus, Intermedia and So...: An interview with Eric Anderson," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 60.

[18] Jean Sellem "Twelve Questions for Ken Friedman," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 95

[19] Achille Bonito Oliva, "Ubi Fluxus ibi Motus," in *Ubi Fluxus ibi motus* (Milan, 1990), p. 26.

[20] George Brecht. "Something About Fluxus," in *Ubi Fluxus...*, p. 144.

[21] Robert C. Morgan. "The Fluxus Phenomenon," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 125.

[22] Achille Bonito Oliva. "Ubi FLuxus ibi Motus," p. 26.

[23] Achille Bonito Oliva. "Ubi Fluxus ibi Motus," p. 27.

[24] Robert C. Morgan, "The Fluxus Phenomenon," in *Fluxus Research*, p. 125.

The essay discusses the early developmental phase of Fluxus, which George Maciunas called proto-Fluxus. Concentrating on the presentations of the New York Audio Visual Group, the Chambers Street performance series, events at the AG Gallery and the development of the publication, *An Anthology*, the article addresses the evolution of a Fluxus community and the development of a Fluxus performance sensibility.

PROTO-FLUXUS IN THE UNITED STATES

1959–1961: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIKE-MINDED COMMUNITY OF ARTISTS

OWEN SMITH

Owen Smith, pp. 45–57
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

It is not possible to determine to any exact extent when Fluxus began. There was no initial manifesto which declared the birth or existence of Fluxus. It is misleading to cite the first Fluxus festival in Wiesbaden, Germany, or the first use of the word as a date for the conception, immaculate or otherwise, of Fluxus. This is due in part to the fact that Fluxus did not develop out of a specific ideological program, but rather out of a need for a mechanism to present and disseminate a growing number of new works certain artists were producing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In New York at that time, artists who were to become associated with Fluxus were part of a larger group of artists exploring the ramifications of post-Cagean thinking, especially as it related to a focus on the real world instead of traditional aestheticism. When a concept of a publication to be called *Fluxus* began to be formulated in the United States in 1961, it was to have potentially included a broad cross-section of artists who were concerned with similar post-Cagean issues and/or exploring related ideas in their work. Allen Kaprow, Walter De Maria, Robert Morris, and Simone Forte [Morris], were listed and several of their colleagues considered for inclusion, for example Al Hansen, Claes Oldenburg, and Jim Dine. Conversely, some of the works by Fluxus artists, such as the assemblages of George Brecht and the Happenings of Dick Higgins, were initially seen in connection with the broader developments in the New York avant-garde rather than as directly connected to Fluxus. As this period developed, however, a more specific community of artists began to emerge who would become significant early contributors to activities of the Fluxus Group.

The years 1959 and especially 1960 were marked by an increasing number of new performance presentations by an ever-growing number of artists in New York. During this same period there were similar performances by groups and individuals in other cities both on the East and the West Coasts. In San Francisco in May 1960, for example, La Monte Young, De Maria and Terry Riley presented a simultaneous performance of four compositions by Higgins, Young, Riley and De Maria.[1] In New York during these years, the happenings of Dine, Oldenburg, Kaprow, Robert Whitman and Red Grooms were presented.[2] There were also a number of performances of new music, including the performance, "A CONCERT OF NEW MUSIC," presented by the Living Theater in March of 1960, which included works by John Cage, Kaprow, Brecht, Hansen, Robert Rauschenberg and Richard Maxfield. All of these performances, as well as others not mentioned, were important for the development of a new performative sensibility among proto-Fluxus artists. However, there were particular activities in New York that were central to the evolution of a community of like-minded artists who would eventually form the principle American contingent of the Fluxus Group. These included the activities of the New York Audio Visual Group, the performances presented as part of the Chambers Street series (December 1960 – May 1961) and those held at the AG Gallery (beginning in March 1961), and the compilation and production of the book, *An Anthology*.

Yoshimasa Wada, *Earth Horn*. Instrument made of copper tubing, 12.7 x 183 cm., 1974. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery. Vintage installation shot by Seiji Kakizaki.

Although several dates can be chosen for the beginnings of what Fluxus pioneer George Maciunas called the "proto-Fluxus" phase, 1959 was the first year in which activities and events started to bring together ideas and artists that would subsequently lead to the formation of a Fluxus Group. In mid to late 1959 and 1960 many artists who had met in John Cage's class at the New School for Social Research in New York began to publicly present their ideas and works. One of the first of these artist-organized performance associations was the New York Audio Visual Group, a direct continuation of the interactions among the students in Cage's class.[3] Al Hansen described some of the group's weekly activities as follows:

> The New York City Audio Visual Group met on Sunday mornings at a Bleecher Street coffee shop called the Epitome where we performed and taped experimental notations. Very few of these tapes of these pieces are in existence, but usually a good crowd was there. There seemed to be a predilection for vocal works; I remember at that time I was very involved in making experimental notations for creating sounds. So were Dick Higgins and Jackson Mac Low, as well as several others who have disappeared into the mists of bohemia.[4]

"A Program of Advanced Music," one of the Audio Visual Group's first large public presentations took place on the seventh of April, 1959, in the Kaufmann Concert Hall in New York City. Included were works by

Hansen, Higgins, Cage and others. One of the specific works presented in this concert was Hansen's *Alice Denham in 48 Seconds*. Hansen described this performance as follows:

> We used five-and-ten toys, broke bottles with hammers, nailed nails, and made rattles specifically for this performance by putting different amounts of nails and tacks and pins in boxes and taping them shut. One of the first big happenings in public for a theater audience was this performance of *Alice Denham in 48 seconds*, my music happening. The piece began with the curtain opening and proceeded from there. Toward the end of the piece, Larry Poons stopped nailing nails with a hammer and drumming on a table top with a broom handle and began to sweep up some of the debris. But he swept up the debris according to notation: so many movements in so many seconds.[5]

In August, 1960, the Group presented, "NEW MUSIC," another large public performance, at the Living Theater in New York City. The event included various compositions by Higgins, Ray Johnson, Reginald Daniels, Al Hansen and Jackson Mac Low. That same month, Dick Higgins wrote a statement formalizing the goals of the Audio Visual Group, which correlates in a number of ways to what would, by 1962, emerge as Fluxus' generalized objectives.

> 1. To provide performing ensembles and/or performing equipment for dramatic, musical, literary, cinematographic, and other artistic works which require either performing ensembles or performing equipment.
>
> 2. To provide means and/or assistance for the republication, publication, or release of artistic works in book periodical, recorded, printed, or graphic form.
>
> 3. To encourage experimentation in all the arts.[6]

Following this general lead set by the New York Audio Visual Group two other performance series were initiated in 1960 and 1961 that were to have significant impact on the later formation of the Fluxus group. These were the Chambers Street series and the performance series presented at the AG gallery.

Although there is no evolutionary link, it was the Chambers Street series that most directly continued sponsoring activities of the New York Audio Visual Group. Organized by the composer and musician La Monte Young, who had studied with Cage in Darmstadt, Germany and who moved to New York from San Francisco in 1960, the Chambers Street series was also intended to provide a forum for the presentation of experimental works in music, poetry, plays, events and other "new" art forms. Although it had no official name, it has come to be known as the Chambers Street series because the performances took place in a loft at 112 Chambers Street, rented by Yoko Ono and her first husband Toshi Ichiyanagi. Initially Young intended to present the works of over twenty-four artists, poets and musicians. In actuality, over the course of six months, he organized and presented performances of works by or

related to approximately eight individuals.[7] Each performance took place over the course of two concurrent evenings.

The first presentation on the 18th and 19th of December, 1960 was devoted to the work of Terry Jennings, a composer and musician whom Young had known in California and who was then visiting in New York. There are two programs for this performance.[8] The first of these, which stated, "There will be no public announcements. If there are names to be added to the mailing list, please send them to La Monte Young..." It is clear from Young's statement that the Chambers Street events were enacted for the performers themselves and for a select group of people who already knew or could understand the work being presented.[9] In addition, the first program boldly announced that, "THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERIES IS NOT ENTERTAINMENT." While being interviewed by Eric Mottram in 1973, Dick Higgins explained that these events were a form of experimentation or "research art."

> **Higgins:** La Monte was interested in...the new kinds of research art or whatever we wanted to call it – what we now call Fluxus, but then it was still research art.
>
> **Mottram:** You mean that you were involved in exploring possibilities of systems, charts, randomizations....
>
> **Higgins:** Systems, charts, randomizations and so on, but in a concrete way – that is, not for their own sake at all, not for the sake of the theory, but for the result of the experiment. The difference between this type of research and a normal research is that with a normal research, after the experiment is concluded, the shrimp are killed, or whatever you have been working with is destroyed....But in this case we were concentrating on our own results....
>
> **Mottram:** It was, in fact, right from the start a kind of theater.
>
> **Higgins:** Well, a kind of sequential witnessing, let's say; I wouldn't say theater, no. La Monte Young, for instance, very much rejected the concept of entertainment or of theatrical value, dramatic value; he likes to be, you might say, boring, although that is not what it was.[10]

The Audio Visual Group's presentations and the Chambers Street series can be linked to the development of proto-Fluxus in the United States not only because of the content and style of the performances but also because they set a precedent of an artists'-organized forum for this kind of work. The Chambers Street series was of particular significance because it reinforced associations between a group of artists, musicians and performers, many of whom would later form a significant core of the Fluxus group up through 1964.

Young met George Maciunas in a continuation of John Cage's experimental composition class taught by the composer Richard Maxfield at the New School for Social Research in late 1960 or early 1961.[11] Maciunas was subsequently invited to come to the Chambers Street series and it was there that he first became acquainted with Higgins, Mac Low, Henry Flynt, George Brecht and others who would later be

involved with the Fluxus group. It is important to note that this meeting did not serve as Maciunas' introduction to new art forms but rather to a new group of artists, musicians and poets.[12]

In 1960/1961 Maciunas and a fellow Lithuanian named Almus Salcius opened the AG Gallery at 925 Madison Avenue.[13] For the most part, Maciunas was responsible for the events and performances presented at the gallery and Salcius for the selection and installation of the art works displayed.[14] The first actual performance was "Bread & AG" an evening of literary works put together by Frank Kuenstler and presented on March 14, 1961. This performance was the first presentation of a two-part literary series that was scheduled to run through the 30th of June and consisted of eight different evenings in which the works of Jackson Mac Low, La Monte Young, Iris Lezak, Leroi Jones, Diane di Prima and others were presented.

Shortly after its opening, *Musica Antiqua et Nova* (Music Old and New), a seemingly incongruous multi-part musical performance series was presented at the gallery. According to the brochures Maciunas produced, these events were designed to "rejoice in the polychromy where it can be discovered – at the frontiers of the ancient and the very new music."[15] In keeping with their organizer's didactic intentions, *the series* opened with two concerts (March 25th and April 16th) and one demonstration (May 14th) on the history of "concretism" in music, from medieval music to the then current experiments in magnetic tape music. The second segment of the series took place in May and June and included several performances by an instrumental ensemble that played music from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries on reproductions of antique instruments Maciunas was then importing from Europe; the third was devoted to the works of Richard Maxfield and was scheduled to be performed on the 17th, 21st and 28th of May. Soon thereafter, Maciunas initiated several additional series from March through July of 1961. These included presentations of new film and several series of electronic and new music by Higgins, Cage, Young, Mac Low, Flynt, Joseph Byrd and numerous others.[16]

Although the Chambers Street and the AG series included many of the same performers, composers, and artists, there were several major differences between the two. As part of an experimentalist approach, the Chamber Street events were deliberately directed toward a limited audience of the performers and other artists. On the other hand the various performances presented at the AG Gallery were specifically directed toward a broader, more general public, and were publicly advertised and open to anyone who came and/or paid admission.[17] Thus, Maciunas expanded the idea of a presentation forum for "experimentation in the arts," as was the case for the members of the Audio Visual Group and participants in the Chambers Street series, and assumed the role of sponsor, and most importantly, public promoter. Maciunas' intent

for the various AG events was not only to present new work but, to develop a following for it which would support continued experimentation. His series was an educational program as well.

Musica Antiqua et Nova was in all probability organized as an introduction to the kind of music Maciunas labeled "concretism."[18] The first program focused on the "rich polychromic palette of diversified and contrasted sounds in Medieval & renaissance instrumentation;" the second program, concentrated on "musical concretism from Moussorgsky till magnetic tapes"; the third presented "concretism in its most recent stage of development" which included works on magnetic tape by composers from Europe, the United States and Japan, including Cage and Maxfield. Although some artists, such as Henry Flynt, have subsequently stated that these performances were just a manifestation of Maciunas' more conservative leanings in this period,[19] the material presented in this series and its recognition of the audience was much more than the reflection of conservative tastes. Maciunas' reasons for producing the variety of performances at the AG Gallery were multifaceted. He more than likely saw this as a potential means to generate income, but more importantly he saw this as an opportunity to establish an audience for new work that he found fascinating. The variety of programs that he developed were intended to educate and thus create both a market and an audience. The educative approach was an organized attempt by Maciunas to develop a wider audience for new musics and performance by documenting the connections between the history of classical music and the new concretist music.

Another major difference between the Chambers Street and AG series was that the programs that Maciunas organized for the AG Gallery were clearly directed toward both educating and *entertaining* the audience. Whereas in the Chambers Street series, the work itself and not the audience was of primary significance, in the AG Gallery events the performances were organized and developed specifically to appeal to the audiences.[20] A number of the AG announcements contain references to forms of popular entertainment, particularly "vaudeville." The use of the word vaudeville is significant both as a reference point for the audience and as a defining characteristic of certain forms of enjoyable and entertaining activities.[21]

Even at this early period, Maciunas' commitment to these presentations was a total one. As it would also later be the case with Fluxus, Maciunas worked during the day as a draftsman to help pay for the related costs of the gallery and the performance series, since they were not financially self-sufficient. This additional support, however, was not enough, and the costs of the gallery and Maciunas' earlier losses from various business ventures began to accumulate. The financial situation of the gallery rapidly got worse: after the end of June the performances were presented by candlelight because the power had been turned off.[22] Sometime shortly after the presentation of Ray Johnson's "Nothing"[23] on the 30th of July, the AG Gallery went out of business.

Maciunas had begun to plan the development of a publication to promote and distribute information about the "research work" which was then being presented at the Chambers Street series and at the planed AG presentations as early as March of 1961. He was convinced that through the publication of a magazine that would be funded by the profits from the performances and other presentations at the AG Gallery, a wider audience for the work could be developed. Because of time and money constraints, however, this plan was postponed but, as a result, Maciunas became very excited when he heard about the plans for the publication of *An Anthology*.

The collection of poetry, music, performance scores and other work that has come to be known under the collective title *An Anthology* began as the result of a contact between La Monte Young and the poet Chester V. J. Anderson. In the Fall of 1960 Anderson, who had been editing the magazine *Beatitude* in San Francisco, came to New York where he attended a reading by Young and Mac Low during which they presented a number of other artists' work, including the work of Henry Flynt.[24] After this performance Anderson invited Young to guest-edit a planned issue of an East Coast version of the magazine *Beatitude*, to be called *Beatitude east*. Having been given free rein to include whatever kind of work he felt was appropriate, Young began to contact people and by early 1961 had collected a large body of material, including experimental music scores, essays, poetry and performance scores, from the United States, Japan and Europe, a collection Jackson Mac Low called a "triumph of knowledge, taste, imagination and industry."[25] Young then gave these materials to Anderson and awaited the publication of *Beatitude east*. Nothing happened and it seemed that Anderson had disappeared with the collected materials. By May or early June, Anderson reappeared and returned the collected materials. *Beatitude east* had folded after only one issue.[26] Thus in June of 1960 Young and Mac Low had a collection of important work, but no outlet through which it could be publicly distributed. That same month, as Maciunas was photographing Young and Mac Low for an AG Gallery announcement, the collection of materials for the now defunct *Beatitude east* magazine was discussed and, as a result, the publication of *An Anthology* became a collaboration between Maciunas (designer), Young (editor and co-publisher) and Mac Low (co-publisher). The actual production of the master copy of the book began in the loft of a friend of Maciunas' sometime after the middle of September. Jackson Mac Low wrote of the design process:

> I remember George as sitting at his drafting table for 2½ days solid, producing the now-famous designs for the title pages and section titles of *AN ANTHOLOGY*. The rest of us typed poems, essays, etc., on George's IBM....[27]

Maciunas' finished design was an example of his sometimes peculiar attempts to minimize costs that resulted in a striking visual unity for the diverse materials contained in this collection of scores, poems, essays

George Maciunas, editor, *Flux Year Box 2*, New York. Fluxus Edition, ca. 1968. Boxed collaborative multiple, 19.7 x 19.7 x 8.9 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection. This copy contains objects, games and scores by George Brecht, Willem de Ridder, Frederic Lieberman, Ken Friedman, Claes Oldenburg, James Riddle, Paul Sharits, Bob Sheff, Ben Vautier, Robert Watts and film loops by Eric Andersen, George Brecht, John Cale, John Cavanaugh, Albert Fine, Dan Lauffer, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, Paul Sharits, Stan Vanderbeek, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell and Robert Watts. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.

and events. He used a variety of colored paper stock (cheap kraft papers) which he already had in his possession to reduce the overall production costs of the book. The result of this cost cutting procedure, combined with Maciunas' designs, was the creation of a book that possesses a distinctive physical presence. The designs of the title pages were the main graphic inclusions by Maciunas. In these designs a striking use of type placement and size shifts created a visual rhythm that both played off and reinforced the meaning of the text.[28] After the mechanicals were produced Maciunas sold his stereo to Dick Higgins to cover the down payment on the printing work for *An Anthology*.[29]

The publication project was significant for the formation of Fluxus because it helped to solidify developing relationships among a group of artists interested in experimental work in poetry, music, theater and the visual arts. Many of the artists whose work was included in *An Anthology* or who worked on its production became the initial members of the Fluxus Group, for example, La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, George Maciunas, Henry Flynt, Emmett Williams and George Brecht.[30] The artists organized and produced collective publication became a catalyst for the subsequent development and publication of several collective Fluxus anthologies, including *Fluxus Review Preview* (1963), *FLUXUS I* (ca. 1964) and *Flux Year Box 2* (ca. 1966). In fact it could be argued that Fluxus began as a publishing venture that largely resulted from the artists experience with *An Anthology*.

During the production process, Maciunas saved many of the works not included in *An Anthology* and asked Higgins, Philip Corner, Mac Low and a number of other artists, for additional contributions intending to publish a second anthology. Young was not interested in being involved in a second book and Maciunas proceeded to develop the new publication on his own.

> 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....So the initial plan was just to do another, like a second *Anthology* book except graphically it would have been...less conventional than the first one, which means that it would have had objects and you know, a different kind of packaging.[32]

In fact, Maciunas had been thinking about producing a publication for at least several months prior to his involvement with *An Anthology*. In the announcement for one of the early *Musica Antiqua et Nova* programs printed prior to the 25th of March, he stated that,"Entry contribution of $3 will help to publish Fluxus magazine."[33] It was in relation to this plan that the word Fluxus first came to be used in conjunction with the experimental post-Cagean work in music, poetry and the visual arts that had been developing in the United States, Japan and Europe in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In an interview with Larry Miller, Maciunas discussed the origin and the intended use of the word Fluxus:

> **LM:** I'd like to ask you about the name Fluxus, I mean, where did it come from?

GM: That came while we were still 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 reason for it was the various meanings that you'd find in the dictionary for it, you know, so that 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 of 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.[34]

The first use of the word Fluxus by Maciunas was thus not as a reference to a style, an attitude towards art, or even a group but simply as a title for a publication. Before these plans for the development of the magazine could be put into practice, however, Maciunas left the country to work in Europe.[35] While there he continued to plan for the development and production of this projected publication, keeping in contact with numerous American artists, especially Dick Higgins. By the beginning of 1962, however, the plans for Fluxus were translated from a magazine into a subscription-based series of anthologies and a performance series which was to tour Europe, Asia and America. It was only as the idea of Fluxus later developed in Europe that Fluxus gained a more specific focus, emphasizing action music and events, with a more specifically anti-institutional stance. Thus, it was not until some time after 1962 that the "Fluxus Group" and the specific kinds of works which have come to be associated with it, fully emerged.

NOTES

[1] *happening & fluxus*, ed. Hans Sohm (Cologne, 1970), n.p.

[2] For information on the various happenings performed in this period see Michael Kirby, *Happenings* (New York, 1965).

[3] This group was also called at various times The Audio Visual-Group and the American Audio-Visual Society.

[4] Al Hansen, *A Primer of Happenings and Time/Space Art* (N.Y., 1965), p. 102.

[5] Hansen, p. 102.

[6] Dick Higgins, [untitled manuscript], dated August 5, 1959, Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

[7] These performances, which began in December of 1960 and ran through May of 1961, featured the work of Terry Jennings (December 18–19, 1960), Toshi Ichiyanagi (January 7–8, 1961), Henry Flynt (February 25–26, 1961), Joseph Byrd (March 4–5, 1961), Jackson Mac Low (April. 8–9, 1961), Richard Maxfield

(April. 29–30), and La Monte Young himself (May 19–20, 1961) and Simone Forti (May 26–27, 1961). In addition to these documented performances there were several other activities, the most notable of which was a constructed sculptural environment by Robert Morris in June of 1961.

[8] Copies of both of these programs are contained in the collection of the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

[9] George Brecht made this same observation in a personal interview in Cologne on June 18, 1988. It is important to note that Young himself was very interested in the audience as a social situation. For more information on this aspect of La Monte Young's work see Michael Nyman, *experimental music Cage and beyond* (London, 1974), pp. 70–72.

[10] Dick Higgins, "Call it 'Something Else'" Dick Higgins in Conversation with Eric Mottram, *Spanner*, No. 9 (1973), p.160; hereafter referred to as *Spanner* No. 9.

[11] Peter Frank and Ken Friedman, "FLUXUS A Post-Definitive History: Art Where Response is the Heart of the Matter," *High Performance*, 7, No. 3 (1984), p. 39. Maciunas, who had been born in Lithuania came to the United States with his family after World War II. In 1949 he enrolled at the Cooper Union School of Art and studied art, graphic art and architecture until 1952. In 1952 he transferred to The Carnegie Institute of Technology. There he primarily studied architecture, but also became involved in music performance and history. In 1954, after receiving his Bachelors Degree in Architecture, Maciunas left the Carnegie Institute to take care of his mother (his father had died that year) and he began to work for an architect, mainly as a draftsman. Maciunas quickly tired of this job. He came to believe that young architects were often consigned to drafting, which required neither talent nor education. In 1955 he went back to school at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, to study art history and to get an advanced degree so that he could eventually teach. At the Institute of Fine Arts Maciunas became engrossed in working on a project to map the history of art in graphic form. In the spring of 1960 when his favorite professor died, he lost heart in becoming an art history professor and soon quit New York University.

[12] By the time of these meetings Maciunas had some knowledge of this new work and its historical precursors through Maxfield's class at the New School for Social Research and through his graduate studies at New York University through which he had been exposed to the ideas of eastern philosophy, such as Zen, and the works of the Dadaists, Futurists and Surrealists.

[13] The name of this gallery was derived from the first letter of each of the partners first names, A = Almus and G = George. Dick Higgins remembered that the "...situation in 1961 was, then, that work existed for which there was no outlet. And it was in that year that George Maciunas contacted a large number of the people who had been doing or proposing happenings since the beginnings some years earlier. Maciunas was a friend of Richard Maxfield, a pioneer in electronic music, and he [Maciunas] had a half interest in an art gallery....Maciunas wanted his AG Gallery to sponsor a series of festivals of the avant-garde of all kinds and in all media, as opposed to the purely visually-oriented work being promoted by the galleries. Of course we all jumped for joy and arranged to do performances. This resulted in a series of about twelve really exciting concerts and readings and Happenings." Dick Higgins, "Something Else about Fluxus," *art and artists*, 7, No. 7 (October. 72), p.16.

[14] Jackson Mac Low, "Wie George Maciunas die New Yorker Avantgarde kennenlernte" in *1962 Wiesbaden 1982*, eds. Rene Block and Anne Marie Freybourg (Wiesbaden, 1983), p. 110. Most of the painting displayed at the AG Gallery was the type of work that fell in the categories of action painting and/or Tachism, although both Maciunas himself and Yoko Ono also had exhibits of their work at the AG Gallery. It is worth noting that Maciunas' interest in this kind of work, although seemingly somewhat retrograde for the early 1960s, was directly connected to his interest in chance, indeterminacy and oriental philosophy. His own paintings that were shown in the AG Gallery were produced by dropping ink onto heavily soaked paper and letting the interactions of the ink and the water determine the pattern or design.

[15] George Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova," [announcement brochure], n.d., Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

[16] Specifically these performances included "Cinema Frontiers" on March 21 and 28, April 4 and 11, and "Cinema Frontiers 4 Evenings of Surrealism" on May 9, 16, 29 and 30; "Musica Antiqua et Nova Presents Festival of Electronic Music" scheduled to run on four evenings from June 4th to June 28th, which presented the works of a variety of artists including Dick Higgins, John Cage, Jackson Mac Low, Earle Brown, David Johnson; "Musica Antiqua et Nova Presents Concerts of New Sounds & Noises," also started in June, and presented on the evenings of the 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th and included works by Toshi Ichiyanagi, Jackson Mac

Low, and Joseph Byrd; "Musica Antiqua et Nova Presents Evenings" on six different days in the month of July including performances of works by La Monte Young, Henry Flynt, Walter De Maria and Ray Johnson. Examples of the various brochures that Maciunas designed and produced for these performances are contained in the collection of the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

[17] In the announcement for the first "Musica Antiqua et Nova" series Maciunas indicated his interest in not only presenting a variety of work but also in making it more accessible. The size of the audiences for the different performances at the AG Gallery varied from around 5 to 25 and although they were mostly made up of people who were interested in this kind of work they were not restricted to only people who had been specifically invited. Dick Higgins, *Spanner*, No. 9, p. 161.

[18] In a text from 1962 Maciunas stated that concretism was, "...against the artificial forms or patterns or methods of art itself; it is against the purposefulness, formfulness and meaningfulness of art; Anti-art [concretism] is life, is nature, is true reality..." George Maciunas, "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art," n.d. [ca spring 1962], Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

[19] Henry Flynt, "Mutations of the Vanguard: Pre-Fluxus, During Fluxus, Late Fluxus," *Ubi Fluxus ibi motus* 1990–1962, ed. by Gino di Maggio and Bontio Oliva, (Milan, 1990), p. 105.

[20] Concerning this difference, especially with regards to humor, Henry Flynt wrote that 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 excape from formidable art. All this was crucial in shaping and establishing the Fluxus esthetic." Henry Flynt, p. 112.

[21] Vaudeville is one of the words which Maciunas will consistently use as characteristic of Fluxus, especially after 1964.

[22] Mac Low, p.115

[23] When the audience members arrived at the gallery they first encountered the darkened stairway up to the second-floor gallery space. If they tried to mount the stairs they would discover that Johnson had placed loose pieces of wooden doweling on the stair treads to impede the ascent. Finally, if they managed to make it up the stairs, they found the gallery door locked and "nothing" in the gallery.

[24] Mac Low, pp. 113–114.

[25] Ibid., p. 114.

[26] Ibid., p. 114.

[27] Ibid., p. 115.

[28] For more information on Maciunas' design style for this project and others see, Barbara Moore, "George Maciunas: A Finger in Fluxus," *Artforum*, 21, No. 2 (October 1982), pp. 38–45.

[29] Mac Low, p. 115. "Del Mar," on Lafayette St., was selected by Maciunas because they had printed the announcements for the AG Gallery and he thus felt that they could competently follow his instructions.

[30] The work of a number of the other artists included in this anthology was also presented in later Fluxus performances even though they themselves were not directly involved in the development of the group. They included: John Cage, Richard Maxfield, Toshi Ichiyanagi, and Terry Riley. The connection between *An Anthology* and the later Fluxus performances is reinforced by the fact that a number of the pieces that were included in this publication were the exact works that were performed in a number of the Fluxus festivals and presentations, among them Young's compositions, Brecht's events and Mac Low's poetry.

[31] George Maciunas, "Transcript of the Videotaped interview with George Maciunas by Larry Miller," March 24, 1978 in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, ed. Jon Hendricks (New York, 1983), p. 14; hereafter referred to as M/M Interview.

[33] George Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova" [performance brochure], n.d. [ca. March 1961], Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

[34] M/M Interview, p. 16.

[35] Even though Maciunas left the United States he continued to participate in the production process of *An Anthology*. There are several letters from Maciunas to La Monte Young from the Fall and Winter of 1961 that include ideas and suggestions for this publication, particularly about the cover and the means of binding the collection. These letters are now part of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection in New York and Detroit.

George Maciunas, *Gift Box for John Cage: Spell Your Name with These Objects.* Box with twelve removeable parts, 10.5 x 23.8 x 5.4 cm., ca. 1972. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, Gift of John Cage. Originally included in the exhibition, *A Tribute to George Maciunas.* Beaumont-May Gallery, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, November 22, 1978–January 14, 1979.

The topics addressed in this informal discussion include John Cage's response to George Maciunas' work, the composer's recollections of Marcel Duchamp, the complex relationship between inelegant material and revealing works of art, neo-Dada and neo-Fluxus, Wittgenstein and the artist's ultimate responsibility to initiate a change in the viewer or receiver.

JOHN CAGE DISCUSSES F L U X U S

ELLSWORTH SNYDER

Ellsworth Snyder, pp. 59–68
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

ES: John, because so many of the people involved in Fluxus had formerly been students of yours at the New School for Social Research in New York, you have been thought of as the spiritual father of Fluxus.

JC: You could also say not a spiritual father but kind of a source, like a root; and there were many roots and I was just one. You've seen the tree design that George Maciunas made of Fluxus. Well you recall that the roots are given at the top and my name is connected with one of the roots. So I wasn't the only one who brought it about, but I was one of the ones. And I never had...oh, a sense of being one of the roots. It was George Maciunas who actually thought of Fluxus, who put me in his design of the tree with roots. It was his idea. But his idea of Fluxus is not necessarily another person's idea of Fluxus. So that there could be, and I think there must be, so many people involved with Fluxus who don't think of me as a member of Fluxus, or as having anything to do with it.

ES: I never thought of you as being a member of it, only a resource at the beginning.

JC: But some would think I had not even that function.

ES: I tend to think of Maciunas as the Diaghilev of Fluxus. Does that make any sense to you?

JC: Yes. I think, though, that he was a very interesting artist himself. He gave me a piece that was in some way based on my name. He worked letteristically to take the C of Cage and then the A and the G and the E, much as I make my mesostics (you know, paying attention to letters). He paid attention to the letters and made something in a box that was based in part on the principles of collage and juxtapositions. His craftmanship was extremely elegant. The box, for instance, was filled with beautifully chosen material. And everything was arranged in such a way that there was no wasted space. One thing abutted another and it was very beautiful. I don't have his work now because I gave it to someone who had an interest in Fluxus...I've forgotten his name.

ES: Why didn't you become more involved in Fluxus?

JC: For the same reason that Marcel Duchamp didn't become more involved in Dada. I don't like organizations, and I don't think any artist really does. And when a term gets to be an umbrella, a person who wants to remain free of organizations, moves out from under the umbrella. I'm not opposed to Fluxus, but I'm opposed to being in an institution or part of an organization.

ES: Do you think Fluxus is still going on?

JC: It's having a rebirth now, it's having a great renaissance. It's being given an important place rather than being ignored.

ES: It's another case of intending not to make art, which turns out to be art.

JC: Well, I think that what George Maciunas was doing was clearly art, but it was not an art based on two plus two equals four, or even upon I love you or I hate you. And those are common conventional views of art – that you should have something to say that can be expressed in numbers or in emotions and say it. All right? But he wasn't doing that. He was involved in collage.

ES: But he did say that the artist shouldn't be doing what we call the fine arts, he ought to be doing practical arts, such as journalism or design. That the artist should do something practical from 9 to 5...

JC: Yes, but what does that mean, though? I mean, the practicality of one person is not the practicality of another.

ES: Well...it seems as if he wanted to make a kind of anti-art statement.

JC: Yes, but his own work was very elegant and beautiful.

ES: Is there a way to make art that isn't art?

JC: I don't think one need approach that as a problem. Maybe Duchamp did. He's often connected with anti-art.

ES: Though he certainly considered it art.

JC: But we're not sure, are we, that it is? I have every now and then the idea that Marcel's work is memorabilia. I have over there a membership card in the Mushroom Society, which Marcel signed, and he signed it beautifully. It's thought of as an important work of his because it has a certain connection with the check which he signed...

ES: For the dentist?

JC: Yes. So that seems to be more memorabilia than art. I doubt whether all that has happened in the name of Fluxus would be enjoyed by Maciunas were he still living. Some people have taken it as an excuse for not doing their work carefully.

ES: The work that was done was, as you say, elegant.

JC: His work.

ES: And inventive.

JC: Yes. And a great deal of other works are things one can enjoy. But some of them seem to move toward the acceptance of the careless.

ES: Because some of them began to think of it as something flushable.

JC: Have you noticed the difference between Duchamp and [Francis] Picabia?

ES: Yes.

JC: And though there are some beautiful Picabia's, there are many that are careless. And there's almost nothing by Marcel that's careless. It's all elegant.

ES: I don't want to go too far afield here, but can art be careless?

JC: I don't think it should be. I think that a definition of art could be "paying attention." That would include the work of Duchamp because he was able to sign my card, for instance, not in just any old way, but in such a way that the card is not changed by his signature.

ES: But could an artist intentionally be careless? I mean, if you considered it to be a kind of spontaneity. There are some people who think certain forms of abstract expressionism are careless.

JC: Well, there is certainly some Fluxus that goes in that direction.

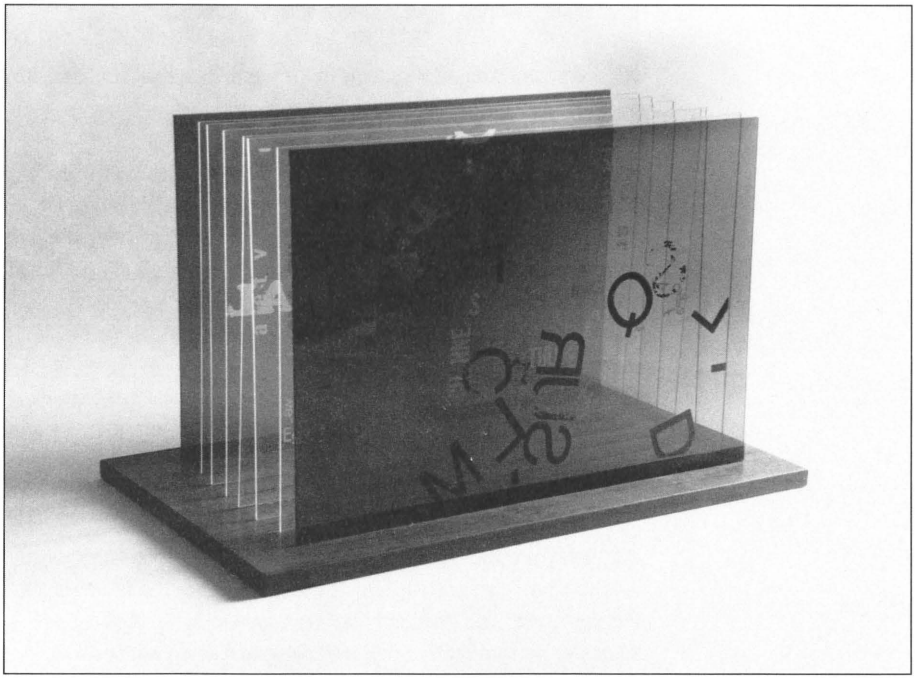
ES: Spontaneity shouldn't be construed as license...

JC: Yes, well, I think they do. I think many do. And when I say many, do I mean it? But what happens if we go to an exhibition of Fluxus? Do we see the elegance of Maciunas, or do we see the principles of spontaneity, and so forth, taken to the extent of license?

ES: Well, I quite agree that we see a lot of that. But the problem is that if you choose to use mundane materials, there is a great tendency to then use them in just any old way.

JC: Well, there's also the possibility of using them beautifully. There's a great deal of work by Robert Rauschenberg that is beautiful and the materials are clearly inelegant, where the result is revealing. All right? And we can also see works by lesser artists that are in no way revealing, which are simply careless and sloppy.

ES: Do you think Fluxus is depersonalized art?



John Cage, *Not Wanting to Say Anything About Marcel.* Multiple, eight silkscreened plexigrams each 35.6 x 50.8 x 0.3 cm., walnut base 36.8 x 61 x 1.9 cm., 1969. Ellsworth Snyder Collection. Photograph by Angela Webster, Courtesy of Madison Art Center.

JC: Oh, do you mean that a Fluxus work is a work that doesn't have any personality?

ES: I was thinking more of how much ego removal is there?

JC: Well, I think in the case of Maciunas there is a great deal. I think in the case of some others, there's not. That could be another way in which one could criticize, or think about, Fluxus work.

ES: Or help draw the line between that which...

JC: ...seems to be good and that which doesn't.

ES: One reason I brought that up is that Ben Vautier has said that one of your great contributions to Fluxus was your insistence on depersonalizing art; and that, he seemed to think, was a kind of brainwashing that had been done early, that helped the possiblity of formulating Fluxus.

JC: How do you think of him, of Vautier...do you think of him as a descendent of Maciunas?

ES: He seems to me, I guess, like a different stream.

JC: A different stream? He seems to me more like a critic. But he's also an artist.

ES: Yes. About a year ago, when I was in New York, I saw a wonderful painting of his that was nothing but a black background and then in white, written in his hand, it said "The story of my life" and then down below it said "death."

JC: That's quite beautiful.

ES: And I thought it very provocative and quite beautiful, but often the things he says seem to me not to be any better than I could think them, and I guess one of the things I like is to come in contact with art that is better than I can think or make.

JC: Well, you could change what you just said; by substituting for, however you put it, "as good as," you could put it around the other way so that you wouldn't be less than what you were looking for, but equal somehow…it should be written in the language which you speak.

ES: I need art that can make the mind twist. I also remember the remark that Richard Wright made about meeting Gertrude Stein, when he said, "She blew the hinges off the doors of my mind!"

JC: And Bob Rauschenberg has said the same kind of thing, that you can tell whether a work of art is good or not by whether it changes you, and if it doesn't change you, it's either no good or you're stupid, one or the other.

ES: Or I suppose it could mean you've already been changed.

JC: Well, but all of these important things have to be repeated – so that you don't give up the need to be changed, you have to be changed continuously. Isn't that it? That's why we have to brush our teeth.

ES: I just want to say, that's why you have meant so much to me – because it seems to me that you always are doing something that does something for my sensibility when I come in contact with it; which helps this change take place, or this growth, or whatever. I don't know what to call it. I think that's one of the things I look for in a really great artist. One of the big things that bothers me right now is that there seems not to be enough of a line between simplicity (i.e., taking something of great complexity and by a process of distilling coming up with something simple) and just being simple-minded. It seems to me much of that we come in contact is…

JC: The thing that makes me question Vautier, or not be wholly grateful to him is...are his critical views, particularly of Duchamp.

ES: I actually don't know about those.

JC: I don't know if I'm right, either, but he has written so many, what you might call, "open letters," in which he questions the basic importance of Marcel Duchamp's work.

ES: But he, of course, is younger than Duchamp, so I always think of what Mrs. Schoenberg said about Boulez when he wrote the article "Schoenberg est Mort."

JC: What did she say?

ES: She met him shortly thereafter, at a party, and said, "Don't worry, I know it is the habit of the young to ride the backs of the old."

JC: And that's how the *Making of Americans* begins. Isn't it?

ES: "I only dragged my father this far." Yes.

JC: When I saw Marcel in Venice, I said, "Isn't it strange that I'm doing now what you did when I was born."
And he smiled and said, "I must have been fifty years ahead of my time."

ES: That's wonderful. Are there any figures in Fluxus besides Maciunas who particularly interest you?

JC: I grow increasingly interested in the work of Alison Knowles (I don't know whether it's properly called Fluxus) – and Dick Higgins.

ES: Certainly Maciunas felt that way.

JC: And I find her work more and more, oh, useful.

ES: You know, Maciunas, at one point in a letter to Vostell, said the current Fluxus Committee is this: myself, chairman; Kubota, co-chairman, for New York; Barbara Moore, administration, for New York...

JC: She's the wife of the photographer.

ES: Peter, yes. And then he has co-chairman, Akiyama, for Japan; and de Ridder and Vautier, co-chairmen, for Europe. And then the inner core Fluxus people: George Brecht, Ay-O, de Ridder, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Joe Jones, Kubota, Kosugi, Maciunas, Ben Paterson, Shiomi,

Vautier, Robert Watts, Emmett Williams and La Monte Young. Jackson Mac Low didn't make his list.

JC: It's an interesting list.

ES: But none of their works particularly interest you.

JC: On the contrary, I find it an interesting body of work. I go with pleasure to these Fluxus exhibitions. One of the last ones I saw was in an important museum, outside Zurich, a beautiful exhibit with some astonishing work by Nam June Paik. Was he on the list?

ES: He wasn't listed, but certainly he could have been, he was in *An Anthology*, he was certainly very active. And you know, I have from the collection of your letters at Northwestern, the letter that La Monte wrote asking you to contribute to *Beautitude east* which never came out, and a lot of that material is what became *An Anthology*.

JC: A beautiful book.

ES: In the letter he mentioned that because you couldn't agree with a lot of the people involved, you weren't sure if you wanted to contribute or not. And at that point he also lists some other people, like Bob Morris (who is the one person who had his contribution withdrawn from *An Anthology*), and then Henry Flynt is listed, and Terry Riley, Dennis Johnson, Walter DeMaria, Toski Ichiyanagi, Ray Johnson, James Waring (whom I don't know), Richard Maxfield, (and another name I don't know) David Degener and Terry Jennings. And he was also asking Christian Wolff, David Tudor, Hans Helms, Dieter Rot and Claus Bremer. He said, "Also I want to get something from or about Nam June Paik," and he was asking if you had his address. People talk about Dada as if there were still something going on that could be called Dada. Is this a misapplication of the term? Or do you think there is such a thing?

JC: Are you speaking now of what we sometimes call neo-Dada? Well, I think there is such a thing and I think that could be related to Fluxus, in particular to what we could now call neo-Fluxus.

ES: Exactly. That's where I was heading. But would it make sense now to call what happens in the name of Fluxus, so to speak, neo-Fluxus?

JC: Yes. Or even find things that are happening now that seem to be more in the society…in connection with Fluxus; and Fluxus very much helping the idea of Dada and vice versa, don't you think?

ES: I think it could really be that what we're talking about is a kind of sensibility, right? A kind of mentality…

JC: The insistence upon an alternative culture...a culture which is not authoritarian. That I think is a big principle in both Dada and Fluxus.

ES: But the principle of doubt...

JC: ...of anarchy, really...

ES: ...that at some point, anything I've ever been able to think or say could be art. But only if the statement is not careless.

JC: Yes. It's a very difficult situation in which to say what you mean. It may be that we can't do it, I don't know. We know what we mean, but we're not able to say it.

ES: Well, that's true. I vacillate, you see...I think of that Santayana saying, when someone asked him what beauty was, and he said, "If you know what it is, then you don't need to define it; and if you don't know what it is, you can't define it." And I vacillate between thinking that's an adequate thing to say, and that it's a cop-out.

JC: How do you feel about Wittgenstein saying that beauty has no meaning and it just means that it clicks with us, that is to say, we approve of it. And if we approve of it, that only means it clicks, then why don't we have a clicker in our pocket and mechanically make something beautiful by clicking. That comes close to Duchamp. That's very profound. And that we might have to take the clicker with us to the Fluxus exhibition and we might fail...to make something beautiful.

ES: To have the clicker click. Is the clicker clicking when it has tripped our capacity to be delighted, but not necessarily just delighted on a mundane plane, but on the level of changing us...but that's a delight. Am I making any sense?

JC: Yes, yes. No, I think that's what it has to do. If we don't accept something and then do, we've changed. That's what the clicker would do. Then we would be interested in art as something that changed us. And that's what Rob Rauschenberg says is necessary. I think we agree with him.

ES: And we'd be going constantly on trying to find the next click.

JC: And our changes, the changes in us, would be toward the broader use of our perceptions rather than toward the narrowing of our perceptions. So that instead of moving toward virtuosity, for instance, or

elitism, or any of those things that require polishing, we would be moving toward, oh, toward the world that isn't art or hasn't been thought of as art, and turning it into art. Isn't that true?

ES: Yes, I think that's true. My question is, if we don't polish, how do we get elegance?

JC: By paying attention – particularly to what we do. And what should we do? I would say we should do something in such a way that our doing leaves no traces.

ES: No dust on the mirror.

JC: Exactly. In our discussion, why have we not heard the name of Al Hansen? He wrote music, and he was a performing artist.

ES: Are there any others that aren't listed of whom you think highly?

JC: I thought of him as one.

ES: Is there any other kind of statement about Fluxus that comes to your mind or seems important to you?

JC: There's one interesting thing we haven't talked about, and that is that in many of these statements it all seems to be here in New York, but it was spread around the world.

ES: As we sit here, I am wondering: is the clicking of the sounds from Sixth Avenue memorabilia?

JC: Yes, of course it is. It's momentary ephemera. It's junk sound. Not junk mail. But it comes to you.

ES: It's memorabilia passing through circumstances, but in this case the circumstances are sound.

JC: Yes, and the receiver transforms it all into art. I mean, it couldn't be better art. It doesn't matter who made it. Or that it hasn't been made. We know through Duchamp that it exists apart from being made and is only made when it is perceived. Or just the perception of it makes it. I can't think of any sonic experience that I've had that is superior to the sound that is freely given and received here on Sixth Avenue.

This discussion took place on December 28, 1991, in New York City.

The paper discusses the Fluxus revolution in literary expression during which the tradition of letters was challenged through erasure of the separation of the verbal from other forms of expression and through the rejection of the passive role of the reader. In the process of describing Fluxus' reinterpretation of the concept of "literature," the author provides a means through which to distinguish Fluxus works from Concrete Poetry, one of their direct precursors, through the latter's dependence on verbal text as starting point of the poetic experience and the former's inherent contingency and provisionality.

F L U X U S and Literature

Roy F. Allen

Roy F. Allen, pp. 69–78
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

Radical transmutations crisscross our century and are symptomatic of profound changes in the material and intellectual environment of the arts. They are attempts to find forms of expression more compatible with and appropriate to an unstable, volatile, dynamic environment of constantly evolving modes of manufacture, trade, transportation, habitation and communication. Fluxus is their culmination, bringing us to the threshold of the eclectic distancings that dominate our post-avant-garde era.[1] And Fluxus was one of the first of recent tendencies to provide some of the decisive redefinitions of traditional boundaries: between order and chaos, clarity and confusion, seriousness and frivolity, melody and cacophony, meaning and meaninglessness, art and non-art.

Fluxus begins with the argument that medium and function in all the arts of our time are in a state of continual transformation and fusion ("flux").[2] This position is the basis of Fluxus' program and the determining principle in its artistic manifestations. Most of the noise of Fluxus focused, of course, on musical, theatrical and artistic events or happenings. But a quiet revolution also took place in literary expression. Fluxus challenged the tradition of letters in two major ways: it erased the neat and tidy separations of the verbal from other forms of expression and rejected the passive role of the reader. Most Fluxus objects even call the bluff of the whole concept of "text." For example, George Maciunas' innocuously titled *Fluxus Paper Events* (1976) is actually a powerful statement which destabilizes the solidly entrenched concept of book: the Fluxus version is a bound volume of paper sheets, each of which is altered in a way different from the others, being wrinkled, folded, stapled, etc. The sheets bear no printed words or letters; they have no superimposed (Fluxus term: "illusionist") message.[3] Yet, this book is also to be "read" – not, obviously, in the sense of page + language = meaning, rather as neutral, uncircumscribed image.

New Criticism was a final, exaggerated stage of the 18th century tradition of literature and its reception. It wanted to convince us of the hermetic self-containment of the work of art by requiring that its interpreter render, through scrupulous deciphering servilely devoted to the letter of the text, a meticulously fashioned rendition of the author's precise intent. Postmodernist theory – itself an instance of the same tendencies represented by Fluxus – posits a counter theory which defines art as a totally open form of expression: its meanings adjust to the orientation of its particular audience. All responses to artistic expression are seen now as autonomous imaging: the artist's signs merely trigger memories of analogous experiences in the respondent's mind. "Reading" is thus composing autobiography along the guideposts laid by the artist.

Within these new parameters of interpretation Fluxus attempts both to enhance the expressive capacities of art and articulate a new interpretive theory. Maciunas' concept of "Concretism," which he tauted at the very beginning of Fluxus as the key to the new epistemology, involves a fundamental revision of the relationship of medium and function in art.[4] Form is traditionally determined functionally by content: a

table's shape acquires meaning as a place at which to eat, write, confer, etc; sounds assume significance in a tightly structured sequence of alternation and repetition; language serves as symbols of established images or ideas. In concrete art, on the other hand, form and content are unified: a musical note is pure sound; a physical object is pure form; language is typological design and sound. No adventive function/meaning is superimposed. In Maciunas' words: the Concretist conceives of a rotten tomato as a rotten tomato [not, say, as lost food].[5] The ultimate aim of Fluxus epistemology is, as Maciunas maintained, to revolutionize the whole purpose of art and the art object. On the ideological level, it is a desire to "divert" to "socially constructive ends" the energies of the artist from the creation of objects which in meaning are separated from other human labors and made to live functionally gratuitous lives in museums, theaters, libraries, etc.[6] Fluxus was consistently very conscious of its debts for ideas to predecessors, such as Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, Lettrism; and it usually gave fair acknowledgement of sources.[7] The debt to Futurist bridge-burning is evident in Maciunas' latter precept, as is also Dada's demystification of creativity. But Fluxus went a step further: taking a cue from the artists around Vladimir Mayakovsky's LEF in Russia in the 1920s, it wanted to eliminate the whole business of the "fine arts," the concept which has planted the most obstructive snags for reform. By definition, the notion "fine arts" is elitist, exclusivist: it sponsors and sanctions the creation of art which, regardless even of any social message it might want to communicate, is to be sold and appreciated as a separate entity, a self-sufficient object whose main economic function is to sustain the artist as a professional.[8] Fluxus opposes art as a "nonfunctional commodity"; it is thus "antiprofessional": the Fluxist is supposed to earn his bread by participating in the general, utilitarian labors of society. And because the artist must consider function when he labors, there is no space for solipsistic message or other "personal intrusion on the part of the artist."[9] For Fluxus, the heretofore almost unquestioned tradition of the uninhibitedly self-absorbed, self-revelatory Renaissance artist is to be avoided.

Fluxus is also anti-individualistic. Maciunas spells all this out most straightforwardly in a letter addressed to Tomas Schmit in January, 1964. Schmit had written expressing interest in joining Fluxus. As Maciunas advises Schmit regarding this intention near the end of his let-

ter, he breaks with the till then rarely offended tradition of the avidly protected permanency of art by explaining Fluxus as only a "transitional" phase in the developments he supports:

> Fluxus objectives are social (not aesthetic). They are connected to the LEF group of 1929 in Soviet Union (ideologically) and concern itself with: *Gradual elimination of fine arts* (music, theater, poetry, fiction, painting, sculpt- [sic] etc., etc.). This is motivated by desire to stop the waste of material and human resources (like yourself) and divert it to *socially constructive ends.* Such as applied arts would be (industrial design, journalism, architecture, engineering, graphic-typographic arts, printing, etc.). – these are all most closely related fields to fine arts and offer best alternative profession to fine artists....
>
> Thus Fluxus is definitely against art-object as nonfunctional commodity – to be sold & to make livelihood for an artist. It could temporarily have the pedagogical function of teaching people the needlessness of art including the eventual needlessness of itself. It should not be therefore permanent....
>
> Fluxus therefore is ANTIPROFESSIONAL (against professional art or artists making livelihood from art or artists spending their full time, their life on art).
>
> Secondly Fluxus is against art as medium or vehicle promoting artists ego, since applied art should express the objective problem to be solved not artists' personality or his ego. Fluxus therefore should tend towards collective spirit, anonymity and ANTI-INDIVIDUALISM – also ANTI-EUROPEANISM (Europe being the place supporting most strongly – & evenly originating the idea of – professional artist, art-for art ideology, expression of artist's ego through art, etc., etc.).
>
> These Fluxus concerts, publications, etc. – are at best transitional (a few years) & temporary until such time when fine art can be totally eliminated (or at least its institutional forms) and artists find other employment. It is very important therefore that you find a profession from which you could make a living.[10]

The program Maciunas lays out here applies to all the arts. In verbal genres it introduces a reinterpretation of the concept of "literature." Most attempts to revise literature have focused mainly on language and theme; Fluxus directs the main thrust of its efforts at changing the essential role and relationship of author and reader in communication through a text. Message in a conventional literary text is deeply enmeshed in language; it must be extracted by the reader through cautious, highly attentive linear deciphering. The author guides response directly through continuous, specific, interconnected verbal cues whose denotations and connotations are largely determined by consensus usage. The reader is thus for the most part a passive observer; the author is allowed maximum control and space, as Maciunas would argue, to exercise at will the full force of his ego.

Fluxists have identified some of the forces which have undermined this tradition. First of all, the transformation of our culture from a word-oriented to a visually-oriented one has begun to challenge the traditional separation of media. As Dick Higgins puts it in the essay "Structural

Researches" (1968), traditional "distinctions that characterized our compartmentalized word-oriented approach to the world seem to be breaking down."[11] What appears involved in Higgins' assessment is the awareness of the great burden of a long history of various artistic forms and genres whose restrictions on expressive possibilities are being increasingly resisted by artists aware of the inability of these forms to express adequately a new, drastically altered physical and social reality. Higgins cites the example of the novel:

> A novel is expected to gain its identity from its identifiability with the tradition of the novel, and this creates a pressure on the writer to conform to the classical models rather than allow his work to determine its own form (and possibly lose its identifiability in developing its unique identity). The writer sets out to write a novel and to this extent, makes himself alienated from what might be more direct needs for his work.[12]

Of course, Fluxus' opposition to the "fine arts" in general would be well served by abandoning the separations of the media which the older tradition had protected self-servingly for so long. Also, a more fully participatory, active or dynamic reader and a more extroverted author would be more compatible with Fluxus' announced "social objectives" and its corollary opposition to egoistic individualism in artistry. Bici Hendricks, in a small prospectus for the Black Thumb Press (1966), talks therefore of requiring the reader of the new literature which her press will sponsor to do the actual "assembling" and "integrating" of the work:

> We hope to deliver the materiel [sic] of a new art form which the reader will assemble, integrate, and use himself. Walt Whitman said the reader must do something for himself, and that it is he, or she, who needs to be the complete thing, rather than the book. We agree. It is not a passive philosophy, but we think Basho and Gertrude Stein would approve.[13]

Finally, Higgins, this time in his *Exemplativist Manifesto* (1976), points to a determinant in the postmodern condition. The postmodern individual, he argues, is more open and flexible intellectually, less cognitively oriented ("post-cognitive," as he terms it), and assumes more roles in our society than his antecedents. The new art, which Higgins calls "exemplative," accommodates this change by granting the audience greater freedom in its response. A work of art thus is no longer "an end in itself," but "a communication of the entire range of possibilities of an aspect of reality":

> The audience constructs, by means of the notation and the work, an image of the set of possibilities intended by the artist. Any realization of such a set will necessarily be to some extent arbitrary, and is therefore an example rather than a fixity. For this reason, such art can be called exemplative.[14]

Higgins' comment might explain what is in part behind a report by Bici Hendricks that the contemporary audience lacks the time required for concentrated attention by the reading of traditional literature.[15] The pur-

ported lack of time is no doubt rather impatience with forms which restrict response too much and are too much bound to tradition to be able to articulate well the present human condition.

Fluxus, then, like traditional art, wants to induce in its audience a response, or what Bici Hendricks calls "reverberations"; the Fluxist difference is in the nature of the response.[16] By mixing conventionally separated media, Fluxus utilizes more of the faculties of the respondent; and, by requiring the respondent to complete the work, i.e., to provide most of the extrapolations of basic signs normally provided by the artist and to synthesize in a more substantial way all the parts, Fluxus guarantees more active participation.[17] The result, the Fluxist claims, is that the artist and the audience share in "a richer experience."[18]

As I suggested earlier, in implementing this program Fluxus borrowed heavily from precursors. Concrete Poetry is a special instance of this. It was an experiment originally launched in the mid-1950s by Europeans and Brazilians which itself drew, in turn, on earlier linguistic innovators. It was still active, however, when Fluxus appeared, and was quickly adopted by the newer group. Dick Higgins later made their affiliation with Fluxus formal by publishing one of the major anthologies of Concrete Poetry under the editorship of a leading practitioner (Emmett Williams) in his Something Else Press, which he had established in 1964 as a Fluxus forum.[19] Although Concrete Poetry itself has to be considered proto-Fluxist because it falls short of fully realizing what became some of the most essential precepts of the group's later program, it, nonetheless, provided one of the important models for Fluxus in literature.

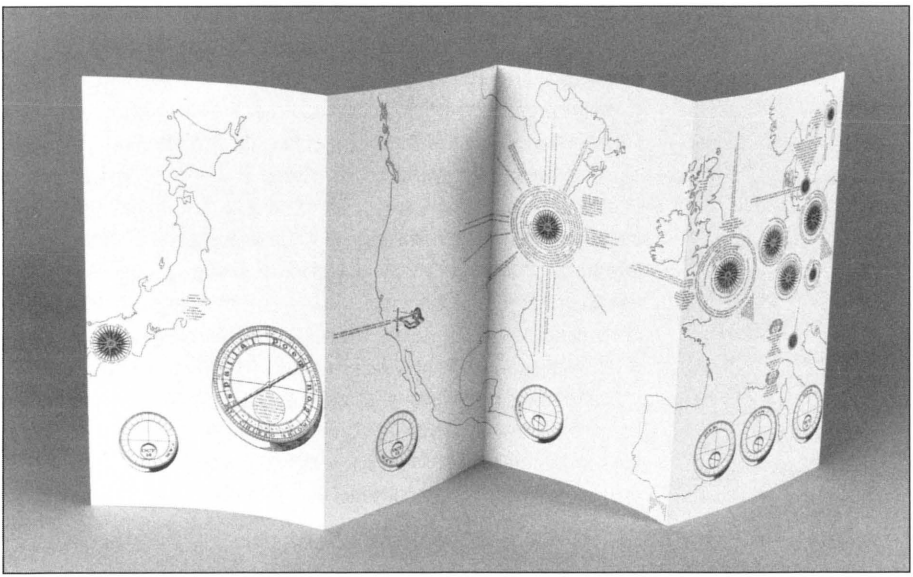
Concrete Poetry is "a poetry of material."[20] It attempts to subvert the traditional poetic equation word = symbol = idea/image by drawing attention to the essential substance of poetry: the configurations of letters on the page which form words and the orienting space that surrounds and divides them.[21] In its simplest form, the concrete poem is ideogrammatic: it attempts to force the reader to receive letter configurations in a context which highlights the physicality, the "material," which its traditional reference denotes. Concrete Poetry often triggers associations which are subjective, apperceptive, autonomous and autobiographical. The reader is forced to become actively involved in the creation of the total poem; to complete the poem in a way the author normally does.[22] In the traditional response to poetry, the reader is able to elaborate autonomously on an image only within the contextual restrictions established by the author; in the concrete poem, such elaborations constitute the very essence of the poem, i.e., are in fact the actual poem.

Concrete Poetry also often transports the reader into a world of intangibles and waxes philosophical. Again, in these instances, the author imposes limited interpretive guidance on the reader, granting him considerable freedom to supply the philosophical deliberations elicited by the poem, say, on the nature of reality or existence – creating in the course of this act the actual poem itself.

Where Concrete Poetry typically falls short of becoming full-fledged Fluxus is in its dependence on verbal text as the starting point of the poetic experience; it fails thereby to shed itself as fully as it might of decisive burdens of literary and linguistic tradition. Joseph Byrd's "poem for readers" entitled "Homage to Jackson Mac Low" exemplifies Fluxus' ability to provide for a more completely liberated reading experience.[23] Byrd accomplishes the feat by eliminating written text altogether and adding the dimensions of event and indeterminacy. His own text consists only of directions for creating the poem referred to in the subtitle; they, in turn, simultaneously furnish the vocabulary of which it is to be constructed (the reader must select five words for the poem at will from the directions). Since the vocabulary thus selected is extracted from its native environment, its original context is indeterminant. To inhibit the generation of a conventional stabilized text, Byrd requires that the poem created by the reader's choices be read aloud, not written; and to enhance free association in response to it, he stipulates that the words of the poem be read as sounds, not signs. Byrd's own composition is thus an open framework in which the reader makes his own interpretative decisions with maximal freedom.

From a Fluxus perspective, it could be argued that Byrd's piece is still bound to tradition by being word-based: his starting point is still language laden with meaning largely pre-established by consensus. Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi's "Spatial Poems" (1965–1975) cast this last vestige

figure 1.
Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, *Spatial Poem No. 2 (a Fluxatlas).* Concept work, New York, Fluxus Edition, 36.8 x 82.6 cm., 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.



aside by being event-based. Nine such poems were completed between March, 1965, and June, 1975, and subtitled "event."[24] They are all precisely dated, something typical of Fluxus works and appropriate to the group's strong sense of temporality (see Maciunas' statement on this in his letter to Tomas Schmit cited earlier).[25] Such temporality is, of course, the nature of events, which occur at specific points in time as well as in space (as alluded to in the poems' main titles). All of the poems were executed according to the same compositional scheme, so "Spatial Poem No.2: Direction Event" (*figure 1*) will serve as an example of the whole.

Shiomi began the work by sending out instructions to the participants: each was asked to record the direction in which he was facing or moving at 10:00 p.m. on October 15, 1965 (time adjusted for different geographical divisions of the Greenwich time standard). With the response, Shiomi composed a lithographic map, marking the geographical location of each participant and briefly describing his action on it. The spatiality of the event was concretized both by the map and a series of compasses distributed across it; its temporality by a series of clock images indicating the equivalent Greenwich hour. The reader is thus prompted by a very generalized sense of an individual acting in time and space to proffer the amplificatory associations and images from his own autonomous and personal store of experience. Shiomi's work, like Byrd's, is thus a mere skeletal outline which must be completed and synthesized by the reader to become a poem, i.e., a work, to use Bici Hendricks' phrasing again, which induces the reverberations in the reader typical of a response to artistic expression.

The individual respondent must, in the end, decide whether Fluxus successfully achieves the desired effect and whether it makes a valuable contribution to our culture. What cannot be disputed, I think, is the boldness of Fluxus' challenge to conventional thinking about the forms which artistic expression should assume. It is also evident that Fluxus is better able, than traditional or even modernist modes, to render effectively the present condition. Such modes have failed to harmonize, either convincingly or with lasting success, the complexities, contradictions, and ambiguities which have surfaced in our post-industrial era. Postmodernist thinking therefore rejects any further attempts at centering or totalizing and embraces instead the relativity and tentativeness of all efforts. Shunning all visions of utopias or similarly facile solutions to human problems and dilemmas, postmodernism favors open-endedness, plurality and distancing. The instability of language and the discontinuity in the development of human history which can no longer be explained away have made apparent the illusory nature of history and rung the deathknell of notions of originality, authenticity and authority of the human personality. One major artistic correlative of the postmodernist position is, without question, the art of Fluxus with its inherent

contingency and provisionality. At the least, Fluxus challenges us in the present intellectual climate more forcefully than most other innovations to rethink several hundred years of complacent artistic practice and its critical assessment.

Notes

I wish here to acknowledge the generous assistance of several individuals who put the materials in two major Fluxus collections at my disposal and helped me to find my way through them in preparation for the writing of this essay: of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Elizabeth Armstrong, Siri Engberg, Rosemary Furtak, Susan Lambert, Joan Rothfuss; of The University of Iowa Department of Art and Art History, Estera Milman, James Lewes.

[1] Friedman, Ken, "The Birth of Fluxus," *Fluxus subjektiv* (Vienna, 1990), 1f.

[2] Two major versions of a definition of the concept "Fluxus" were issued: *Fluxus* (prospectus for the Fluxus yearboxes distributed at the public debut of the group in the Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, June 9, 1962) (n.d., n.p.), [1]; *Manifesto* (thrown to the audience at the Festum Fluxorum Fluxus in the Art Academy, Düsseldorf, Germany, February, 1963). These two statements are reproduced in Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, (New York, 1988), pp. 24, 91, 104. See Dick Higgins' similar definitions in Higgins, Dick, "Something Else about Fluxus," *Art and Artists 7*, no.7(1972), p. 16; Higgins, Dick *Postface/Jefferson's Birthday* (New York, 1964), p. 83.

[3] George Maciunas, *Fluxus Paper Events* (Berlin: Edition Hundertmark, 1976). See Maciunas' outline for this work in a letter to its publisher, Armin Hundertmark, in *Fluxus etc./Addenda II*, ed. Jon Hendricks (Pasadena, 1983), p. 227. The transvaluation of the concept "book" was a preoccupation of Maciunas. See, e.g., also his rebinding of the Manhattan Yellow Pages index for 1964 as a readymade with the new spine title *Encyclopedia of World Art*. On the term "illusionist" in the Fluxus sense, see Maciunas, George, "Neo-Dada in den Vereinigten Staaten" (manifesto read to the audience by Arthur C. Caspari at the Fluxus concert Aprés John Cage, Wuppertal, Germany, June 9, 1962), reproduced in *Happenings: Fluxus, Pop Art, Nouveau Réalisme*, ed. Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1965), pp. 192–195; trans. into English in *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, ed. Clive Phillpot and Jon Hendricks (New York, 1988), pp. 25–27.

[4] *Fluxus: Selections*, pp. 25–27. See also Higgins, "Something Else about Fluxus," p. 16. Maciunas' use of "concrete" is not without its precedents. See similar thinking behind Hans Arp's use of the term: "creations" for sculptures he produced in the 1930s in the "Abstraction-Création" group and in his essays from the 1940s on "Concret Art": Arp, Hans, *Arp on Arp: Poems, Essays, Memories*, ed. Marcel Jean (New York: Viking, 1972), pp. 139–140, 244; Max Bill's theories of geometrical art spelled out in connection with the exhibition "Konkrete Kunst" in Basel in 1944; Pierre Schaeffer's concept of "musique concréte" in France in the late 1940s; and Theo van Doesburg's program for the journal *Art Concret* (April, 1929): Joost Baljeu, *Theo van Doesburg* (New York, 1974), pp. 97–100.

[5] Maciunas, "Neo-Dada," p. 165. See also La Monte Young's similar comments on music in La Monte Young, "Lecture 1960," *Tulane Drama Review* 10, no. 2 (1965), pp. 80–81.

[6] Maciunas, George, Letter to Tomas Schmit, dated January, 1964, reproduced in *Fluxus etc./Addenda II*, ed. Jon Hendricks (Pasadena, 1983), p. 165. See also *Fluxus Broadside Manifesto* (ca. September, 1962) which opposes the traditional artist's "professional, parasitic and elite status in society" and advocates for him a "nonprofessional status in society" and an art which is "unlimited, massproduced, obtainable by all and eventually produced by all." This manifesto is reproduced in *Codex*, p. 26.

[7] See, e.g., Maciunas' charts graphing the historical development of the avant-garde through Fluxus: Maciunas, George, *Diagram of Historical Development of Fluxus and other 4 Dimensional , Aural, Optic, Olfactory, Epethelial and Tactile Art Forms* (ca. 1973): Maciunas, George, Fluxus Diagram (1962); Maciunas, George, *Fluxus: Its Historical Development and Relationship to Avant-Garde Movements* (ca. 1966); the former and the latter of which are reproduced in *Codex*, pp. 329–337 and 350, respectively; Higgins, Dick,

"Fluxus 25 Years," in *Fluxus 25 Years* (Williamstown, 1987); Friedman, "Birth," 2ff.

[8] Maciunas, "Neo-Dada," 165. On LEF's espousal of a deaestheticized, functional art, see, e.g., Christian Lodder, *Russian Constructivism* (New Haven, 1983), 105–108; Edward J. Brown, *Mayakovsky: A Poet in the Revolution* (New Jersey, 1973), pp. 209–218.

[9] Higgins describes this tendency in Fluxus as "almost a cult" or "fetish, carried far beyond any rational or explainable level which idealized the most direct relationship with 'reality,' specifically objective reality." Higgins, "Something Else about Fluxus," p. 17.

[10] Maciunas, Letter to Tomas Schmit, p. 165.

[11] Higgins, Dick, "Structural Researches," in The Something Else Newsletter 1, no. 8 (April, 1968), p. 2. Higgins offered the term "intermedia" for new art that falls between the traditional media, in "the grey lands between music and action painting, the visual arts and daily activities." See Higgins, "Intermedia," The Something Else Newsletter 1, no.1 (February, 1966); Higgins, "Something Else about Fluxus," p. 17.

[12] Higgins, "Structural," p. 2.

[13] Hendricks, Bici, *Statement of Aims and Purposes of the Black Thumb Press* (New York, 1966), [3–4]. See also the *Fluxus Broadside Manifesto* which advocates the "selfsufficiency of the audience," and Higgins, Dick, *An Exemplativist Manifesto* (New York, 1976), which theorizes that "the audience constructs" the ultimate work in Fluxus art.

[14] Higgins, *Exemplativist Manifesto*.

[15] Hendricks, *Statement*, [4].

[16] Hendricks, *Statement*, [4].

[17] Becker, *Happenings*, pp. 12–14, describes this as the aim of Fluxus happenings also.

[18] Hendricks, *Statement*, [4].

[19] The major anthologies of Concrete Poetry are: *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, ed. Emmett Williams (New York, 1967); *Anthology of Concretism*, ed. Eugene Wildman (Chicago, 1969, 1970); *Concrete Poetry: A World View*, ed. Mary Ellen Solt (Bloomington, 1970); *Konkrete Poesie*, ed. Eugen Gomringer (Stuttgart, 1972, 1991.)

[20] Michelson, Peter, "Introduction," *Anthology of Concretism*, viii. See also Solt, *Concrete Poetry*, pp. 7–8.

[21] Many concrete poets use the term "constellation" to describe the arrangement of letters on a page so as to make use of the space that surrounds them as an integral part of the poetic utterance. See, e.g., Gomringer, Eugen, *"definitionen zur visuellen poesie,"* and Mon, Franz. *"buchstabenkonstellationen,"* both in *Poesie*, pp. 165 and 175, respectively.

[22] Kathleen McCullough speaks of the reader thus playing a "more dynamic role in concrete poetry than in conventional," which grants the reader thereby greater freedom than he is used to. See McCullough, Kathleen,"Introduction," in *Concrete Poetry: An Annotated International Bibliography, with an Index of Poets and Poems* (Troy, 1989), pp. vii–viii.

[23] *An Anthology*, ed. La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low (Munich, 1970), n.p.

[24] The original versions of the poems were issued as lithographs; they were finally collected and published in book form in Mieko Shiomi, *Spatial Poem* (Osaka, 1976); however, the book versions differ substantially from the lithographic.

[25] Friedman: "Time, the great condition of human existence, is a central issue in Fluxus and in the work that artists in the Fluxus circle create." "Birth," 9.

The article advocates a Fluxus based experimental pedagogy which is particularly well suited for scholarship confronted with film and electronic media. Fluxus works have the potential to work the frame of reference, and, by doing so, encourage creativity, and what Saper calls "invention-tourism." The theory explored in Fluxacademy focuses specifically on the use of intermedia for interactive education.

FLUXACADEMY

From Intermedia to Interactive Education

Craig Saper

Craig Saper, pp. 79–96
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

In an archive's file on Fluxus participant Ken Friedman, a loose page of scribbled notes suggests the potential connection between the alternative arts and pedagogy.[1] The page is entitled *The Academy of Fluxus*, and it provokes us to consider the connections between Fluxus and the academy in flux. Although people associated with Fluxus are usually thought of as artists, their work also addresses the contemporary crisis in education.

In terms of the academy in flux, scholars confronted with the information explosion, electronic media, and demands for easier access to knowledge have begun to suggest new strategies (e.g., interaction, non-sequential ordering, etc.) and a new metaphor (i.e. tourism) for scholarship and education. Fluxus applied these same strategies and the tourism metaphor to artworks which can function as models for educational applications. While scholars have suggested the usefulness of, for example, describing learning with hypermedia computer programs as a tour of information, they have not worked through applications on a broad-scale. Fluxus has already suggested potential routes.

It is a commonplace to explain that Fluxus was not concerned with the formal issues of an art medium; for example, *inter*media (Dick Higgins' term for much Fluxus activity) plays off of, but is not synonymous with, *multi*media precisely because the stress is on works which resist formal categorization as belonging to any (or even many) media.[2] *THE DISTANCE FROM THIS SENTENCE TO YOUR EYE IS MY SCULPTURE* (1971) by Friedman suggests this *inter*media quality. Not only does the work challenge our definition of sculpture (and art), but it also suggests a social network built on *interaction* among people, activities and objects.

In a letter to Tomas Schmit, George Maciunas argued that Fluxus' objective was social, not aesthetic, and that it "could have temporarily the pedagogical function of teaching people the needlessness of art."[3] This social project specifically concerns the dissemination of knowledge: the social situation of pedagogy. Simone Forti suggests that in the context of this social (anti-aesthetic) project, Fluxus work does not have any intrinsic value; the value of the work resides in the ideas it implies to the reader, spectator, participant, etc. She goes on to explain that, "when the work has passed out of their [the producers'] possession, it is the responsibility of the new owner to restore it or possibly even to remake it. The idea of the work is part of the work here, and the idea has been transferred along with the ownership of the object that embodies it."[4] Forti explains that in the process of transferring ideas, the audience performs the piece. The work is "interactive."[5] The term interactive suggests the shift away from the notion of passing some unadulterated information from an author's or teacher's mind directly into the spectator's/student's eyes and ears. Instead, the participants interact with the ideas, playing through possibilities rather than deciding once and for all on the meaning. Higgins' description of Fluxus "art-games" can function as a coda for a particular type of playfulness

employed in the Fluxus pedagogical situation. He writes that in the art-games one "gives the rules without the exact details," and instead offers a "range of possibilities."[6] The details of the actual event are left open.

Aesthetics, usually defined in terms of stable criteria (formal, social relevance, artworld history, etc.), gives way to a Fluxus traveling research strategy, a kind of nomadology, a science of flux. The most thorough study of nomadology occurs in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's encyclopedic volume *A Thousand Plateaus*. Not coincidentally, that volume begins with Fluxus associate Sylvano Bussotti's *Piano Piece for David Tudor*. Indeed, one could argue that Deleuze and Guattari build implicitly on the Fluxus model of scholarship,[7] however, in terms of the current argument, we need only mention that nomadology offers "another way of traveling and moving: proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going instead of starting and finishing."[8] Fluxus works the middle, the *inter-*, of media, research, and action, and makes use of what Deleuze and Guattari call "becoming" and "involving."

> Becoming is involutionary, involution is creative. To regress is to move in the direction of something less differentiated. But to involve is to form a block that runs its own line 'between' the terms in play and beneath assignable relations.[9]

In terms of the effort to involve, Fluxus runs its own line between art activities and everyday life, audience and performers, education and entertainment. Its works play through the borders or work the frame in order to explore involution as an invention strategy.

John Hanhardt explains that Fluxus work challenges the social and cultural frames of reference. He specifically examines how Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell "removed television from its conventional setting by incorporating it into their performances and installations."[10] Furthermore he states that these works disrupted the frames of reference by using humor. Hanhardt defines humor as "a subversive action from inside the frame that mocks or undermines conventions of behavior – to highlight the obvious." He continues by quoting Umberto Eco, who,

> reminds us of the presence of law that we no longer have reason to obey. In so doing it undermines the law. It makes us feel the uneasiness of living under the law – any law.' The work of Paik and Vostell attempted to undermine the 'law' of television by employing collage and de-collage to make us uneasily aware of how television functions as a medium shaping our world views.[11]

Significantly, these works do more than merely criticize a dominant mode of television; they work the frame of reference. Academic scholars choose various conceptual axiomatics and methodologies (e.g., Marxist or Neo-Marxist, Formalist or Neo-Formalist, etc.), but they usually do not challenge the essential foundation of the modern University: scientific normativity. The normativity appears, not in the content of an argument (radical or not), but rather in the modes of presentation and demonstration. The work of the FluxAcademy, on the other hand, chal-

lenges the framing of reference in order to transform modes of writing and approaches to pedagogy. In discussing this type of transformative work, Jacques Derrida explains that "those who venture forth along this path…need not set themselves up in opposition to the principle of reason, nor need they give way to 'irrationalism.'" Instead, he explains that the chance for this type of activity appears in a "wink" or a "blink," it takes place "in the twinkling of an eye."[12] The "wink" of the FluxAcademy does not pretend to destroy the frame, nor does it claim to stand outside the existing institutions of academics. It works the frame. Derrida suggests that this working of the frame occurs "between the outside and the inside, between the external and the internal edge-like, the framer and the framed, the figure and the ground, form and content, signifier and signified…the emblem for this topos seems undiscoverable; I shall borrow it from the nomenclature of framing: the *passe-partout* [the matting]."[13] Erving Goffman has written an extensive analysis of the effects produced by working the frames of reference. He explains that the primary experience of a participant confronted with, for example, a Fluxus happening is to become "*interactionally* disorganized" [emphasis added].[14] Reading interaction in terms of how Fluxus (dis)organizes and disseminates knowledge can help explain precisely the effects produced by a Fluxed pedagogy. Goffman explains that when the audience encounters an event like a Fluxus happening watching becomes doing; it would be a mistake to argue that a listening, watching and still audience is passive. In fact, the opposite may be the case. The breaking of the normal reference can actually induce involvement. Goffman explains, however, that the initial reaction to the event will probably be negative.

> If the whole frame can be shaken, rendered problematic, then this too can ensure that prior involvements – and prior distances – can be broken up and that, whatever else happens, a dramatic change can occur in what it is that is being experienced…negative experiences…[15]

Among the various ways to shake the frame or reflexively examine the frame and its dissolution, Goffman mentions brackets, direct address to the audience, the "fool" character in a play, and, in terms of Fluxus, the spectacle-game. The spectacle-game addresses the whole matter of the show under presentation and, in doing so, sets in motion a merger of performers and spectators; in some sense, the spectators (and their expectations) are put on stage.[16] One way Fluxus plays the spectacle-game is to announce a performance in a conventional way; the audience arrives and some of the expected activities occur, but the traditional performance does not take place. In this situation, Goffman explains that an audience is made "conscious of its own restrictive conventions." Fluxus happenings, create a situation where the audience has to interact with the frame of reference. As Goffman explains in a discussion of happenings, "actual performances of this kind often do succeed, of course,

in driving the audience up and down various keys in their effort to arrive at a viable interpretation of what is being done to them."[17] As we will see, this type of self-reflexive thinking is crucial not only for understanding Fluxus work, but also education in general.

Joseph Beuys (Fluxus Associate) has commented on his working of the pedagogical frame by stressing the shamanistic aspect of his work. The shaman works his wonders by disrupting the normal order of things; rules of classification and rational methods give way, for a moment, to the interference of the shaman's work. Beuys explains that "when I appear as a kind of shamanistic figure, or allude to it, I do it to stress my belief in other priorities and the need to come up with a completely different plan for working with substances. For instance, in places like universities, where everyone speaks so rationally, it is necessary for a kind of enchanter to appear."[18] Again, like the shaman, and Fluxus pedagogy in general, Beuys wants to stimulate rather than merely transmit information. This stimulation is a kind of invention strategy. This invention strategy works the frame with a "wink," which functions as a becoming or middling; it leads to interactionally disorganized participants who function in a state of involution (involve). We can describe this Fluxscholarship as a nomadic type of invention: picking-up ideas and running with them.

Academy In Flux

Fluxus' irreverent wit not only criticized the aesthetic criteria of the "Artworld," but also the frame of the organization and dissemination of knowledge. The work inherently suggests an alternative to formal readings of artworks. Instead, exploring the notion that artworks do not reflect reality, these Fluxus works constitute a social connection. They have more than a physical manifestation; they also suggest a way of organizing information in order to change the way we understand and share information: precisely a pedagogical project.

1. *Interaction/Intersections*, a term reminiscent of *interactive art*, now orients much of the research on designing computer programs for educational applications. While learning used to depend a great deal on "following along," the current notion of interaction denotes a way of organizing and sharing information which allows users to connect any piece of information to any other piece of information. This organizational mechanism suggests an alternative to the sequential logic of reading a book; interaction connotes a web of associations: non-sequential learning; the ability to access and study even insignificant details; and quite often, game-like situations for learning.[19]

2. *Tourists*. Hypermedia, the electronic form of interactive education, allows users to create materials, make and follow links, and access information without clearly delineating between the modes of author and readers; and, because any user can add materials or links, the overlapping interactions make distinction between original and found informa-

tion moot.[20] In any event, the structure of learning changes: the terms student and teacher no longer accurately describe the learning experience in the hypermedia environment. Instead, the metaphor of touring and tourism better describes the ways a user navigates around non-sequentially organized information. These new hybrid learning situations sometimes follow well-charted routes and sometimes meander. Significantly, the participant functions much like a tourist who can wander off and make different connections.[21] However, if the interactive environment is designed as a *guided* tour the extent to which any user can meander around the information is limited.[22]

Interactive education allows for the mixing of structured orientations and meandering tours through information. Although one can use the book-centered forms of interpretation, the interactive format allows users to also explore alternatives to book-centered logic. According to the Grapevine project on designing hypermedia programs for educational applications, "as a space-time-traveling tourist, your first choice is to decide on a brief Highlight Tour, a Regular Tour, the Full Tour,"[23] or (we might add) a detour. Fluxus offers a detour.

3. *Detour (working the frame).* Working the frame leads to what Paul Feyerabend calls an "open exchange," because each move a participant makes, influences and determines every other move by constantly switching frames of reference. For Feyerabend, there are two ways to exchange ideas. The guided exchange has participants adopt a specified tradition and accept only those responses that correspond to its standards, while the open exchange has the participants develop the tradition as the exchange goes along. Even fictitious or apparently nonsensical theories work for communities engaged in this type of on-going exchange. According to Susan Stewart, switching frames of reference *requires* an ability to entertain nonsensical information. She goes on to explain that nonsense is "a domain between realizable domains…It is a place to stand in the middle of change." Nonsense offers "the motion which is characteristic not only of change, but of learning as well."[24] The connection between learning and nonsense is precisely the intersection/interaction explored in the FluxAcademy. In order to learn something, one must be able to use the information in new and different situations. As Stewart explains, "learning depends upon freeing the message from the constraints of the situation-at-hand."[25] Because learning depends on the progressive decontextualization of information, it relates to the apparently out-of-context and encourages learning by liberating information from particular contextual and functional constraints. Through the effort to apply information outside of the situation where you learned it, a self-reflexive learning about learning takes place. The learner must "break" or work the frame of reference in a particular situation in order for the information to have a use in other situations.[26] With its specific use of nonsense, the FluxAcademy offers a particularly apt model for a transitional pedagogy based on an open exchange of

knowledge and encourages learning as a form of problem solving. Information is applied across frames of reference; a kind of alchemical reaction among intersecting/interacting elements is set off. One could call this aspect of the FluxAcademy invention-tourism.

Pedagogy on Tour

The ideas and members of Fluxus grew out of experimental pedagogies at Black Mountain College during the summer sessions of 1948 and, especially, 1952[27] and at the New York School for Social Research during John Cage's 1958/59 seminar. Black Mountain College focused on a redefinition of the arts by stressing a holistic/experimental approach rather than a technical or formal approach to art. The 1952 summer session added to, and changed, this experimental approach to art. Cage, fast becoming a major influence on the experimental arts, brought to the summer session his concerns with the *I ching*, "chance," etc. His *Theatre Piece #1*, which assigned a specific time bracket within which each performer had to perform a specific action, became the prototype of "Happenings." Buckminster Fuller summarized the experimental nature of these influential summer sessions: "failure is a part of experimentation, you succeed when you stop failing." Although Black Mountain College eventually folded, the teachers present during those two summer sessions (including Cage, Fuller, M.C. Richards, and Merce Cunningham) conspired to create a traveling school: "the finishing school was going to be a caravan, and we would travel from city to city, and it would be posted outside of the city that the finishing school was coming...we would finish anything...we would really break down the conventional way of approaching school."[28]

George Maciunas also planned for the organization of a school. In a prospectus for the New Marlborough Centre For The Arts, he described a think-tank which would devote itself to:

> 1. study, research, experimentation, and development of various advanced ideas and forms in art, history of art, design and documentation;
> 2. teaching small groups of apprentices in subjects not found in colleges;
> 3. production and marketing of various products, objects and events developed at the centre; and
> 4. organization of events and performances by residents and visitors of the centre.[29]

Thus it does not require a large leap of the imagination to claim that Fluxus works and social structures address pedagogical concerns. More importantly, Fluxus works became models for alternative forms of social organization. Indeed, as Estera Milman explains, "Fluxus work (objects, paperworks, publications, festivals, and performances) and the movement's social structures became congruent and interchangeable."[30] Because they function not as mere objects, but as clues to a special form of social organization, the works can provide models for *interactions* among students, teachers and information. In fact, it could

be argued that George Maciunas' manifesto for Fluxus could function equally well for education in the electronic age.

> FLUX ART: non art-amusement forgoes distinction between art and non-art forgoes artist's indispensability, exclusiveness, individuality, ambition, forgoes all pretension towards a significance, variety, inspiration, skill, complexity, profundity, greatness, institutional and commodity value. It strives for nonstructural, non-theatrical, nonbaroque, impersonal qualities of a simple, natural event, an object, a game, a puzzle, or a gag. It is a fusion of Spike Jones, gags, games, Vaudeville, Cage and Duchamp.[31]

Of course, we have more than manifestos to use as guides for appropriating Fluxus for the academy in flux; we have the objects, games, gags, etc. The goal here is to use Fluxus as a model for pedagogy and, what better place to begin than with Ken Friedman's *Visa TouRiste (Passport to the State of Flux)* (1966/77). In his efforts to find a topos for his description of working the frame, Derrida, finally chooses the image of the *pass-pourtout* [matting of a picture]. This homophonic pun with "passport too," expresses quite nicely the transient working of the frame found in Fluxus work. Friedman's passport supposedly enabled the bearer to "pass freely without hindrance" into a Fluxfest. The passport also suggests a peculiar kind of tourism. It suggests an altered social relation, a different way to proceed. The passport gives the bearer the right of entry into what Milman has defined as "a country whose geography was a figment of the communal imagination, whose citizenry was transient."[32] Robert Filliou's *Permanent Creation* (instead of art) asks participants to create their own territory. *His Territory 2 of the General Republic*, located in a farmhouse outside Nice, dedicated itself to pedagogical research into genius and "stupidology." In this way, Fluxus connects this transient approach to invention and creates what one might call an invention-tourism. The metaphor of touring and travel connects specifically to an "interactive" invention; an invention-tourism. And, this is precisely the theoretical model interactive education has asked theorists to create. This sort of alchemical tourism or transported-tourism plays through the old metaphor or vehicle of tourism and examines the implication of a new vehicle.

In his work, *Fish-Video*, Nam June Paik offers the alchemical or hybrid intersection between invention and tourism that the passport (*passe-partout*) suggests. He uses a video projection of postcards with live fish swimming in front of the projections in a tank. The "Then-Far-Away" postcards play off of the "Here Now," and begin a process of thinking about tourism in relation to time and memory. The "exotic" tropical fish represent a traditional promise of tourism. Yet, Paik's work functions not as celebration of exoticism of foreign countries (e.g., Korea) as in some forms of tourism; instead it places tourism in relation to the blurring of the new/world far-away/close-at-hand. Because it (dis)organizes (without opposing) the traditional classification of exotic as far-away, it places tourism in relation to an interactive invention process. We might rename

Paik's work as "Go Fish," which would suggest an invention strategy, a rhetoric for coming up with ideas: playing with how we classify and organize information.[33] The transition from Paik's *Fish-Video* to the "Go Fish" educational strategy presents a startling logic. It not only seems to mock traditional norms of scholarship and to suggest a connection based on a pun on the word/image of fish, but it also suggests a way of translating Fluxus work into Fluxus pedagogy. In this example, interpreting the image/work as an activity allows us to think about the work as the embodiment of a social relationship: a game-like activity. The spectacle-game, the term Goffman uses to describe works which disrupt the frame of reference, suggests a pedagogical game which works the frame in order to provoke invention.

Post-Cognition

In his book on intermedia, Dick Higgins describes the post-cognitive alternative to the cognitive model of education. He defines cognition as the "process of becoming known by perception, reasoning or intuition." Higgins is also concerned with "the expressionistic, self-revealing, and uncovering of reality (transcend personal view) in order to interpret the world in new way."[34] Futurists, Dadaists, Duchamp, Cage and others have explored the disappearance of the cognitive dimension in art and culture. It was Henry Flynt, who coined the phrase conceptual art, who began using the term post-cognitive. The cognitive model attempts to interpret and describe reality and, at least in its current incarnation, attempts to postulate the abstract rules of supposedly pure unadulterated thought. Conceiving of social interaction in terms of an algorithmic thought-code machine, cognitive explanations describe supposed origins of moves in a thought-game rather than generating novel moves. The post-cognitive works set out to play the game rather than determine who made the rules or where they come from. In short, the post-cognitive creates novel realities.

Higgins explains that Fluxus work fits into a postcognitive model. In fact, if we attempt to find a logic in Fluxus activities, they resemble *Zen koans* more than a reflection or description of social or artistic realities. These activities-koans have a peculiar structure which allows for both simplicity and an alchemical disruption or "breaking of the frame of reference." Greg Ulmer describes this structure and provides an example by quoting Joseph Beuys.

> Another decisive fluxus element was the 'lightness and mobility of the material.' The Fluxus artists were fascinated by the opening up of the simplest materials to the total contents of the world...[Beuys]: "Everything from the simplest tearing of a piece of a paper to the total changeover of human society could be illustrated."[35]

Fluxus works function by turning the most particular (even autobiographical elements) into widely disseminated ideas. Beuys' transformation of his autobiographical art into first a Fluxus program and, from there, into a grassroots participational political movement and then into the Green

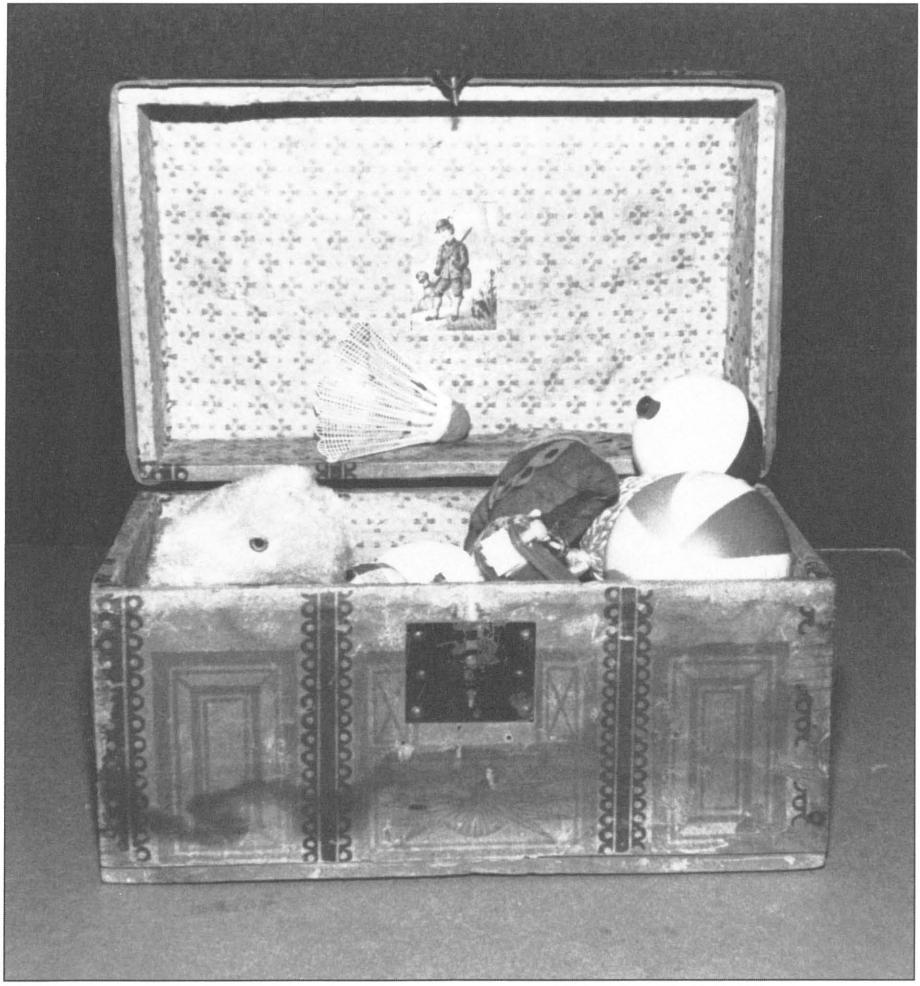
Party offers the most obvious example of this process.[36] This transformation is part of an "Instant Theory," which suggests, once again, that academic scholars can make use of the simple and quick structure of Fluxus work.[37] The works will not offer much to those who fail to interact with the activities-koans; their works will offer little to those looking for a description of the world. Yet, to anyone willing to take the peculiar course of training suggested by the FluxAcademy, these activities will lead to post-cognitive transformations.

Course of Training

In Nam June Paik's *Monthly Review of the University for Avant-Garde Hinduism* (1963), one finds torn postcards, strange messages from different parts of the world and essays in an envelope stamped with the review's title. The significance of the work resides in the interaction with the particular koan-activity. It suggests that the University for Avant-Garde Hinduism exists somewhere in transit, and that being "in transit" is an aspect of the University's peculiar course of training. George Brecht's *Valoche/A Flux Travel Aid* (1975) offers an aid in traversing this course. It contains 26 balls (gaming toys, sports balls, fake eggs, etc). According to Brecht, this square wooden *necessaire de voyage* (17th, 18th, or 19th century traveling kit, often cylindrical wood, to fit into a saddle bag) can accompany one on many journeys including visits to the after-life. He explains that "in the last month of his life, George Maciunas was preoccupied with assembling these works and was in the process of making a special one for himself when he died."[38] The neologism, valoche, suggests valise, valuables, and even the colloquial term valoose, which means "money" (and is used by American soldiers traveling in places where Arabic is spoken). The traveling aid offers a way to move between frames by "having a ball" with the 26 letters of the alphabet. It is precisely on the level of the play of letters that Fluxus activities work.

Media Education

Fluxus films attempt to reinvent the wheel (i.e., they attempt to invent a protocinema within a mass produced industrial mechanism) in order to ask what if the history of film had taken a different route. The Fluxus films (and Maciunas' graphic design) focused on the moment when popular culture was still not institutionalized to the point of a modern industry. Dick Higgins describes Maciunas' choice of type style ("extremely ornamental type faces, such as Romantique") as "deliberately archaic."[39] Fluxus went back to the protocinematic experiments of Muybridge and the cinema's first decade for models of film making. In doing so, they desedimented the perceptual and cultural experiences now buried by Hollywood's mode of film making. Tom Gunning explains that in the way these early films restructure both traditional representations of space and "the relation of spectacle to the audience we may find a link to avant-garde practice."[40] The same preoccupations of the early and



George Brecht, *Valoche 1959–1975. A Flux Travel Aid.* Small sea chest filled with objects and toys, 18.5 x 18.5 x 30.5 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection. This copy was found in George Maciunas' room after his death in 1978. Photograph by Hollis Melton.

proto-cinema appear in the Fluxus films, many of which are experiments in time and movement without any narrative progression. These Muybridge-type experiments in time-motion studies (stoppages in Duchamp's terminology)[41] suggest the same pre-occupation with travel, movement, and movement/travel as change as we have seen in other Fluxus work. We can see the Muybridge-like isolations of particular movements (and the effort to capture the progression of time) in the flux film of an Eye Blink, Higgins' mouth eating motion, Ono's film of buttocks moving, or Paik's clear film accumulating dust, or Maciunas' flip-

book made from stills of Ono's face smiling and relaxing. In terms of the early cinema's use of short reels, Fluxus films often were film loops about two feet long. Maciunas also explored the possibility of a different history of cinema with his rope in sprocketless projector.

A fluxus media education teaches us through the projection of a "what if" situation. In repeating the proto-cinematic experiments in the contemporary world, they did not make a nostalgic return to a phenomenological project of isolating animal and human movements. Instead, they used the frame of reference of those earlier cinematic experiments to disrupt both the perverse phenomenology of the Muybridge studies and the contemporary narrative cinema. Afterall, there is a difference between Ono's film of buttocks moving and Muybridge's proto-cinematic investigations of a horse galloping. Both focus on the isolation of a single movement, but the content of the films makes the Fluxus work a corrosive joke and the Muybridge experiment merely a document about an attempt to capture the truth of a movement. Fluxus projected the possibility of a cinema which would use "the relation of spectacle to the audience" as a vehicle for invention rather than mere description. With this possible muse of media in mind, the FluxAcademy uses machines not merely as processors of information but as provocations for learning.

Learning Machine

For the Fluxamusement center, John Lennon and Yoko Ono designed/planned a series of dispensing machines. These included machines which dispense water (without a cup), sand and glue, an endless stream of water, slugs (for money), and a crying machine which would dispense tears. Those machines led the way to the most important contribution to FluxAcademy, a learning machine. Yoko Ono's *Chewing Gum Machine Piece* (1961) which placed wordcards in a gum machine, hints at how a learning machine might work. We get a more developed version of this possibility in George Brecht's *Universal Machine* (1976), which consists of a box with many diagrams and pictures printed on the bottom inner surface of the box. The diagrams resemble nineteenth-century drawings of animal life. A number of objects (a golf tee, marbles, plastic numbers, coiled string, etc.) are loose inside the box. The directions explain how to use the machine:

> ...for a novel: shake the box, open, chapter one. close. shake the box. open. chapter two. close. shake the box...for poems: substitute line one for chapter one, etc. For plays; Actor one. For dance: movement one. For music: sound one. For event score: event one...For biography: divide life into units, shake for each unit makes biography substitute countries and make histories; substitute religions and make spiritual narrative; substitute families and make genealogies...5. write question, put it in box, open, conjunction of paper edges, words on paper, holes in paper with the objects and the images of floor of box answers question....9. Are you sad? Shake box. obtain joke.

> 10. resolution of marital problems. 11. consider adding or subtracting objects; extending or contracting images on floor of box. 12. For generating new languages, logics, mathematics....15. Inventing. Consider any two elements in an existent relationship. Replace either or both elements and/or the relationship using the Universal machine. Consider repeating...18. Travel Itineraries.

The *Universal Machine* sets up a situation where the participant uses a series of variable combinations to write novels, plays, and biographies, solve problems, tell jokes, make further plans, or even change the parameters of the machine. The fifteenth possibility, Inventing, explains a process which resembles the basic methods described above in terms of the FluxAcademy. When two elements have an "existent relationship," then they both appear in the same frame of reference. If one replaces one or both elements using an arbitrary constraint, then the disrupted frame produces both the nonsense associated with learning through decontextualizing information and the interactions/ intersections associated with a relay in-transformation (or involution). The eighteenth possible use of the machine, "Travel Itineraries," also suggests the way the machine produces an invention-tourism. The *Universal Machine* (reminiscent of the early name for the computer) suggests a way to combine information, not as part of a descriptive system (as a cognitive work), but as part of generative interactions (as a post-cognitive work). In this way, the machine functions on both the particular and the general level simultaneously: both the general rules and the particular situation shift with each move in the "open exchange."

Maciunas had experimented with machines which use arbitrary constraints to change the frame of reference. His *Learning Machine*, Preliminary Version, (1969) functions as the transitional work between Fluxus and the FluxAcademy. It would have contained charts, diagrams, and atlases; it would have recategorized fields of knowledge. Maciunas only completed a two-dimensional diagram and tabulation, which was intended as the first surface of the three-dimensional storage and retrieval system. Even these incomplete plans suggest a plan for using electronic media for a memory theater dedicated to invention rather than mere descriptions. Indeed, one could argue that the machine hints at a Fluxus memory (post-cognitive, involutionary, and interactive).

Maciunas' machine lists all knowledge in a classification system. For the most part the grid is not exceptional. It closely resembles traditional taxonomies of knowledge, and it suggests the classifications found in memory theaters – systems of classification and organization used in remembering large amounts of information (even all known information). In the memory theaters of Giulio Camillo, all knowledge was stuffed into an imaginary Roman amphitheater. This encyclopedia, thesaurus and poetry machine became "a work of manic idiosyncrasy, resembling a private museum like those of [Duc Jean Floressas] des Esseintes, [Joris-

Karl] Huysman's paragon of decadence."[42] The Learning Machine resembles this effort to describe all knowledge.[43] The use of a memory theater shifts the process of knowing and remembering from an organic cognition to a discursive practice.

There are a few anomalies in Maciunas' system. For example, he includes a heading called uology. This apparent neologism suggests a science of "u." Of course, there is no traditional science of uology, but the possibility of such a science suggests the play between the particular and the general discussed above. Another suggestive neologism is flexography, which may hint at a flexible writing practice – a way to write in the FluxAcademy. In terms of how the Machine organized information, the term "food" is listed under "light," which is in turn listed under "chemical," which is listed under "engineering." This suggestive organization makes one re-think the way we normally classify the notion of food. In another organizational abberation, "textual criticism" is listed under philology, which is in turn listed under cybernetics, which is in turn listed under biological sciences (which appears as two separate headings). Cybernetics is listed under math *and* under physiology. In terms of organizational suggestiveness, the art and design section is the most interesting because it appears to function as a *mise-en-abyme* for the rest of the memory grid. Everything in the rest of the classification grid is at least suggested in the art and design section. Different than most classifications of art and design, sculpture has no listing, and painting and drawing have only minor listings. In most traditional taxonomies those three listings would be the dominant areas. Maciunas' classification does not quite match mere description of art and design. One possibility suggested by the classification is how a category can shift from one heading to another; for example, cinema is listed under photography, but there is a special listing for "expanded cinema." What Maciunas does in this work, and in his chart on the history of art movements, is to provoke new possibilities through the unusual classification of information. The startlingly wide scope of the art and design classification includes wars, orgies, prisons, clouds, fountains, shells, insects, food, cybernetics, etc. This notion that any and all of these can be included in discussions of art and design makes the system a provocation as much as a description; how, for example, can one make insects into art or how are they already aesthetic or part of design?

As mentioned above, besides a few anomalies, the *Learning Machine* does not, at first, appear to diverge from traditional taxonomies of knowledge. Yet, on closer examination it does not organize the information into epochal categories; that is, it does not put the categories into headings according to historical chronologies, movements or periods, nor does it organize the information according to authors, artists, inventors, leaders, etc. Much of the knowledge taught in universities and especially in secondary schools depends on these markers for legitimacy. We rarely have departments or pedagogies premised on a taxonomy which organizes information in alternative to history and "great men."

The *Learning Machine* works the frame of reference for organizing our knowledge; it suggests alternatives to disseminating that knowledge; and, it also functions (potentially) as a generative machine producing interactions within and among our frames of reference. These interactions (e.g., asking why orgies and wars are included as art and design) suggests more than a semiotic reading of culture as designed; it suggests that culture and taxonomies are open to art and design, that in an open exchange of knowledge even nonsense may play a crucial role in learning, and that if you do not risk anything, do not give a part of yourself, then you will never understand either *uology* or *flexography*.

In (Trans)Formation of the FluxAcademy

Changing classification methods from the notion of a Book to the notion of a Machine changes how we read and understand knowledge. In the Book model we read once, and we move from knowing-nothing to truth, argument or moral of the book. It offers a kind of window on the world. One starts with a given theme or idea, and unpacks the ideas in a chronological sequence: 1, 2, 3. The Machine model (with hypermedia as an example) allows for many readings, many juxtapositions; it suggests an infinite allegorization or metaphorization of information as it finds itself as a frame for other bits of information. This poetic or jig-saw puzzle method of reading also leads to a delayed effect, and a knowing by interacting. The argument about a shift in models or frames from the Book to the Machine (electronics as a logic not a medium) is not a modernist argument about the purity of a single medium (in this case, electronics); rather it suggests the tensions this constellation of socio-discursive effects (computers in the classroom) foregrounds. Fluxus deals, at least in part, with a socio-discursive frame (i.e., pedagogy, learning, invention), and the works offer strategies for working (on) that frame; it does not offer a particular set of common formal properties or techniques, nor a shared set of aesthetic preoccupations, nor an epochal explanation (authors, movements, etc.); rather, understood in terms of the Learning Machine, Fluxus work teaches us about taxonomic frames (and the breaking or playing with those frames). This essay has explored how these experiments actually work the frame, and how these frame breaking works function as a "passport to" (not merely a pun on *passe-partout*) an imaginary continent of social relationships. These pedagogical activities work as symbiotic, antidotal, or homeopathic shocks to the academic system. They use the Learning Machine, not as an object of study, but as a *passe partout* for the (Flux)Academy.

NOTES

[1] From the archive of Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Estera Milman, Director. Pincus-Witten argues that "ephemeral notebook pages [are] typical of Fluxus flourish," Robert Pincus-Witten, "Introduction," in *Fluxus Codex*, ed. Jon Hendricks (New York, 1988), p. 37.

[2] Dick Higgins, in *A Dialectics of Centuries: Towards A Theory of the New Arts* (New York, 1978), pp. 12–17. See also, Stephen Foster and Hans Breder, *Intermedia* (Iowa City, 1979), and *Theoretical Analysis of the*

Intermedia Art Form: A Round Table Discussion (New York, 1980). In a poster entitled "Some Poetry Intermedia," Higgins offers a number of definitions of intermedia. "Intermedia differ from mixed media in that they [intermedia] represent a fusion conceptually of the elements: for instance, opera is a mixed medium since the spectator can readily perceive the separation of the musical from the visual aspects of the work, and these two from the literary aspect." Higgins also explains that it is "pointless to try and describe the work according to its resolvable older media." He coins the term intermedia in order to "describe art works being produced which lie conceptually between two or more established media or traditional art disciplines." My definition of intermedia differs from Higgins' slight stress on *formal* innovation: "the intermedia appear whenever a movement involves innovative formal thinking of any kind, and may or not characterize it." I am of the opinion that formal innovation is irrelevant to an object's or event's status as intermedia.

[3] Cited by Pincus Wittin in Hendricks, p. 37.

[4] Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion* (Halifax, 1974), p. 45. cf. Dick Higgins' "Five Traditions of Art History, An Essay" (a poster). Higgins categorizes Fluxus under the phrase Exemplative Art, which he defines as "art as illustration or example or embodiment of idea, especially abstract conception or principle." See also, Lucy Lippard, *Six Years* (New York, 1973).

[5] Forti, p. 58.

[6] Higgins, "Intermedia," pp. 20–21. See also, Schechner, Richard. "Happenings," *Tulane Drama Review* 10 no. 2 (Winter 1965). Schechner argues persuasively that happenings resemble scientific laboratory experiments.

[7] In another article, I take up this connection at greater length. Craig Saper, "Electronic Media Studies: From Video Art to Artificial Invention," *SubStance* 66, (1991) pp. 114–134. This article uses Nam June Paik's *Tele-Cello* as an alternative model for using electronic media. The cello's body is constructed from three video monitors. When one plays the strings with a bow, visual images on the three screens echo the musical vibrations. This Fluxus instrument looks and functions quite differently than the dominant designs of computers and software. Computer designs often depend on a simplified notion of cognition as a metaphor for how computers "should" work, while the *Tele-Cello* offers a post-cognitive model of how computers *might* work. Instead of designing computer programs to function as computational code machines, the post-cognitive design uses the computer to generate potential paths around and through information. The article concludes with a demonstration of the postcognitive model. In that simulation of a computer hypertext journey, the "player" performs, rather than merely reads, *A Thousand Plateaus*. The performance suggests a "plateau of intensity" around the issues of a "Mind Without Cognition" and "Artificial invention." The discussion here on FluxAcademy serves as a useful introduction to the Tele-Cello performance of *A Thousand Plateaus*.

[8] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1987), p. 25.

[9] Ibid., pp. 238–9.

[10] John Hanhardt, "Dé-collage/Collage: Notes Toward a Reexamination of the Origins of Video Art," in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (Aperture with BAVC, 1991), p. 74.

[11] Ibid. Including quotation from Umberto Eco, "The Frames of Comic 'Freedom,'" *Carnival*, Thomas A. Seboek, ed. (Berlin, 1984), p. 18.

[12] Jacques Derrida, "The Principle of Reason: The University In The Eyes of Its Pupils," in *diacritics* 13 no. (fall/1983), p. 16.

[13] Jacques Derrida, "Passe-partout," in *The Truth in Painting*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago, 1989), pp. 11–12.

[14] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Expertise* (Boston, 1986), p. 375.

[15] Ibid., p. 382.

[16] Ibid., p. 399.

[17] Ibid., p. 408.

[18] Joseph Beuys, interview, in Robert Filliou, *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (Cologne and New York, 1970) p. 23, quoted in Gregory Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Joseph Beuys to Jacques Derrida* (Baltimore, 1986), pp. 237–238.

[19] Researchers in educational media note that the computer offers "not merely stacks of books, articles, videotapes, and the rest, but a wealth of material like that [books, articles, videotapes, etc.] *connected* or *linked* to form paths that lead students to intriguing byways and illuminating vista points." Robert Campbell and Patricia Hanlon, "Grapevine," in *Interactive Multimedia* ed. Sueann Abron and Kristina Hooper (Redmond, Washington, 1988), p. 161.

[20] Norman Meyrowitz, "Issues in Designing a Hypermedia Document System," in *Interactive*

Multimedia, p. 37.

[21] See also, Bernard Frischer, "Links or Stories – A Compromise," in *Interactive Multimedia*, p. 302.

[22] Thomas Anderson notes, "If we think of the information spreadsheet as a map, then we can package 'tours' simply by specifying which places (data cells) are to be visited in what order. For each such tour, we can create an advance organizer that previews what the tour is about and where it goes. Then we can create a voice-over that ties the individual pieces of media together into a coherent whole. This is what we did for the orientation tours." Thomas Anderson, "Beyond Einstein," in *Interactive Multimedia*, p. 203.

[23] Campbell and Hanlon, p. 191.

[24] Susan Stewart, *Nonsense Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature* (Baltimore, 1979), pp. 202–203.

[25] Ibid., p. 203.

[26] Ibid., p. 204.

[27] Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (Cambridge, Mass, 1987). Ray Johnson, founder of the New York Correspondence School and very influential in the Mail-Art movement, attended Black Mountain College as a student that summer.

[28] Buckminster Fuller quoted in *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, p. 156.

[29] "Prospectus for New Marlborough Centre for the Arts," by G. Maciunas (xerox).

[30] Estera Milman, *Fluxus and Friends; Selections from the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts Collection* (Iowa City, 1988), n.p. cf. Musgrave, Victor. "The Unknown Art Movement," *Art and Artists*, special issue on "Free Fluxus Now" 7 no. 79 (Oct., 1972).

[31] Maciunas' Manifesto, reproduced in Milman. While Vaudeville, Cage, and Duchamp have secured prominent places in scholarship on art and mass culture, Spike Jones remains a somewhat marginal figure. Yet, his "Musical Depreciation Revue" offers a whole array of useful jokes, gags, puns, spoonerisms, etc. In 1942, Spike wore a crown of corn(y) ears as the "King of Corn" in one of his publicity stunts. In 1982, forty years later, I attended a lecture/demonstration on Cage, Duchamp and Puncepts in which the professor held up an ear of corn. That lecture changed dramatically the course of my life. In a "time bomb" effect, I just now realize, in 1992, the importance of POP to the FluxAcademy and the future of cultural studies.

[32] Milman, n.p.

[33] Sean Cubitt offers a condescending criticism of Paik's *Fish Video*. He argues that although Paik plays with tourism, the image still suggests an imperialistic fund of images (a bank, a hoard, a treasure, etc.). Sean Cubitt, *Timeshift: On Video Culture* (NY: Routledge, 1991), 117. My reading of the work suggests that the images are something more and other than a "fund" (Cubitt's word, not Paik's). Ken Friedman describes Paik's performances as "interactive." Ken Friedman, "Fluxus Performance," in *The Art of Performance*, eds. Gregory Buttock and Robert Nicholas (NY, 1984), p. 64.

[34] Higgins, *A Dialectics of Centuries: Towards a Theory of the New Arts*, 7 and Dick Higgins, *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia* (Carbondale, 1984), pp. 20–21.

[35] Greg Ulmer, (citation) 240; quoting from Gotz Adriani, Winfired Konnetz and Karin Thomas, *Joseph Beuys: Life and Works*, trans. Patricia Lech (Woodbury, NY, 1979), p. 79.

[36] Pincus-Witten, p. 16. Larry Miller's interview of Maciunas appears in a posthumous issue of *avTRE* (#11, March 24, 1979) dedicated to the Fluxus founder. Maciunas explains that Fluxus is "more like a way of doing things." He goes on to elaborate what this entails by repeating that "Fluxus is gag-like…a good inventive gag. That's what we're doing." In order for the gag-like element to work, objects and events must have a very simple "monomorphic" structure. Fluxus offers a way to reduce concepts and ideas to simple gag-like events or objects. When taken-up by the audience (when they "get it"), these *sapates* or deceptively small gifts can lead to many transformations like the bits and pieces of Beuys' autobiography which later provoked the foundation of the Green Party.

[37] Craig Saper, "Instant Theory: Making Thinking Popular," *Visible Language* 22:4 (1988), pp. 371–398. This manifesto for Instant Theory investigates alternative ways to package, disseminate, and represent knowledge. It focuses on two related questions. Can particular ways of sharing information provoke creativity? And in order to sell these evocative and provocative ideas, can we use pop culture's effects as strategies? These strategies function for the conservation of the (im)possible and the relay/caution of the suggestive. The FluxAcademy shakes-n-bakes Instant Theory to make it useful for pedagogy.

[38] Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, p. 215.

[39] Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," special issue on "Fluxus Research," *Lund Art 2* (no. 2) p. 37.

[40] Tom Gunning, "An Unseen Energy Swallows the Space: The Space in Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film," in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John L. Fell (Berkeley, 1983), p. 356.

[41] Craig Adcock, "Marcel Duchamp's 'Instantanés': Photography and the Event Structure of the Ready-Mades," in *"Event" Arts and Art Events*, ed. Stephen Foster (Ann Arbor, 1988), pp. 239–266. Adcock explains that Duchamp understood "that time could affect artistic outcomes" (239); for example, the description of the Ready-Mades as "instantanés" or "snapshots" suggests the effort to capture a moment of public taste from the flow of time. The object implicates the passage of time. In terms of the Fluxus films, Duchamp's *3 Stoppages etalon* suggests not only the freezing of a moment (string twisting freely and then glued down as it lands), but also a homophonic reference to Muybridge's serial-photographs of a horse galloping (one can translate *etalon* as both standard and stallion). Yoko Ono's film of buttocks moving not only follows Duchamp's efforts to "reduce, reduce, reduce" the image to a single gag and Muybridge's effort to isolate serially a particular movement, but her film also suggests another frame of reference to the horse/stallion homophonic chain: her film is, afterall, of an ass.

[42] Michael North, *The Final Sculpture: Public Monuments and Modern Poets* (Ithaca, 1985), p. 136.

[43] See also, George Maciunas, *Expanded Arts Diagram* (a poster/diagram charting out an amazing genealogy of Fluxus in terms of many other art movements).

The discussion recounts the point in time when the Fluxus community first became self-consciously aware of itself during the early European concert tours and provides insights into the identification of criteria by which aspects of European and American Fluxus performances can be delineated. In addition, topics addressed include the use of chance procedure by members of the group, their debts to John Cage and the relationship between the composer/performer of F!uxus event works and his or her audience.

Road Shows, Street Events, and Fluxus People; A Conversation with Alison Knowles

Estera Milman

Estera Milman, pp. 97–107
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

EM: I know that there is a great deal of contention these days about who was a Fluxus artist and when. For example, some people will insist that Nam June Paik was always Fluxus, but that Joseph Beuys and Milan Knizak were never more than tangentially related to the group. Conversely, others will state that when Beuys and Knizak were Fluxus, they were "very Fluxus" whereas Paik was always Paik. In the tradition of the late George Maciunas, everyone seems to be keeping their own lists. Was it easier to figure out in the early sixties? You were part of the very beginning, the birthing of the community, as it were. You were there in Europe, during that 1962–63 concert tour when the group identity was first established. How did members of the group determine which of their pieces were suitable for presentation as Fluxus works…which of the events were Fluxus events?

AK: Well, we were billed as a "Fluxus Concert." That's how our event pieces were presented. If these same events had been performed in another context, we would not have called them "Fluxus event pieces," but just an "event by George Brecht," for example. We selected which pieces were to be performed at Wiesbaden together. George Maciunas did a final shape up, but since we each managed our own pieces we had a lot to say about what each concert would contain. What should be mentioned here is the pressure we were under to come up with one concert after another. We were, so to speak, brought together from the outside. I am sure there is a tropic name for it but, if you have two hundred people waiting for a Fluxus concert from one city to another, you are jolly well going to get a concert together. It looks now as if we were of a piece; that we agreed about a lot of things which we never in fact spoke about. You can't imagine what disparate people we were. We were not a homogeneous group, nor were we seasoned performers, but once we had done the concert in Wiesbaden it became like a road show; it was like something that happened to Janis Joplin, except within an art context. Sometimes it seemed as if the only reason that we came to any agreements at all was because we had to produce a concert the next night. We knew there were a few hundred people showing up each night, so we got it together, often just before the performance. It was under this duress and excitement that I started to write my own. I started with "Make a Salad."

Now to address what a Fluxus piece is. Fluxus events are what went on during those concerts. It all started as a kind of motley road show of event pieces pulled together into "Fluxus Concerts" and it took off. The best records of what finally happened are the *Great Bear Pamphlets*, [published by Something Else Press], Brecht's *Water Yam* and Dick Higgins' *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface*.

EM: I have the "by Alison Knowles" pamphlet in the Alternative [Traditions in the Contemporary Arts] Collection. Your performance scores/recipes are quite wonderful. But what about the objects…not

the event-based objects, "the fan, the ladder, and the apple," but the published object works that we identify with Fluxus. To be more specific, what about the multiples, the "Fluxus Editions" for example? How do they fit in?

AK: There you must give credit to George [Maciunas] who loved objects and graphics. The object making, the little plastic boxes from Canal Street, kept New York Fluxus going. George would go downstairs to the plastic store on Canal Street and buy a gross of the little sectioned boxes. They were linked as much to books as to art objects, I think. They were hand-held book-boxes. Canal Street in those days abounded in job lot sales. That's any overproduced item that has been "jobbed" out for quick sale. These small objects in barrels were multiples in themselves. They fascinated me – five hundred plastic watch straps, all one color and each selling for under a nickel. So, I'd say the plastic box editions that George loved to make up were directly linked to the fortuitous positioning of Fluxus and George Maciunas at Green Street and Canal. Anything can, after all, become art, particularly (George might say) if it's worthless or separated from its practical context (like half a pair of scissors).

EM: There is one particular object, a booklet, as a matter of fact, that provided me with my first real insight into Fluxus. It's the piece called *Visa TouRistE: Passport to the State of Flux* that Ken Friedman conceived in the sixties and Maciunas realized in the seventies. When I first saw it I thought that, more than anything else, Fluxus was a kind of conceptual country that granted short-term citizenship to an international community of self proclaimed cosmopolites. It provided them with a nationality. Then later I saw Nam June Paik's *Fluxus Island in a Dé-collage Ocean* and Chieko Shiomi's *Spatial Poem/Fluxatlas* and I knew that I was right.

AK: And do you know another idea that's linked to that, I love it, it's Bob Watts' idea that Fluxus could overtake the existing institutions, the churches, the grocery store and of course George's minesweeper; all of Fluxus gets on the minesweeper and goes around the world. Alison pulverizes the fish to make bread, someone else has the role of getting the flags up to guide the ship. In a funny way it was a world of people. We had our mothers and fathers aboard in some sense. We were a kind of grand Fluxus family – Emmett Williams as story-teller/Papa and George as eccentric uncle. That's absolutely right. The world of Fluxus did exist somewhere, you know, a world of fluxus weather, fluxus books, fluxus people, fluxus art...

EM: ...and Fluxus events. Let's talk about the events again; the European events and their American counterparts. We've already spoken of the fact that the community was defined in Europe during the first

concert tour. What happened when those of you who were based in New York came back in 1963, having become the "Fluxus people" while you were abroad?

AK: I think that the Fluxus street event delineates differences between European and American Fluxus very well. The only significant street event that happened in Europe was in Amsterdam. It was the most exciting, violent, and scandalous Fluxus that we had...kind of *New York Post* headline material. When we got back to New York, we had no concert halls, we had no audience at all. How were we going to keep together? What had held us together in Europe was the people on the outside who responded to our work for all kinds of political, artistic and personal reasons. The pieces often made people angry. We were helping them say, "Yes, the *hausmeister* (the man who shuts down the hall and cleans up) should have a seat in the hall." Those issues were terribly important there, but they weren't in America. America was, you know, patting itself on the back. It already had its new art form going [Abstract Expressionism], but we could have the street. We opened a little store front. We'd sell the objects that George was always madly making; or we had Canal Street Open Saturday Nights. We did a series in a jazz club called the Cafe au Go Go which drew a small public. The street evenings involved four, five people, seven, maybe ten people – Barbara Moore and Peter, Joe Jones, Ay-o, Dick and myself, maybe George Brecht. It was like the family getting together over chicken dinner, once a week to see if we had any new material. I can remember an ear-stroking piece, sitting at two tables...two people stroking each others' ears. I think we were ten people that evening. When the Europeans would visit, they would ask, "Well, where's the concert?" and we'd answer, "there isn't one; it's only working among ourselves; we're doing objects, we're active." When Ben [Vautier] came we did events on the streets, often on the loading docks. We set a chair out there and did *Alison Knowles String Piece*. I tied him to the loading dock using the fire hydrants. We held up signs to announce the pieces to passersby, who, of course, took little notice...We were shocked to discover that we didn't have an audience in New York. At the same time, we did such interesting street work. I don't do it myself anymore, but I loved the street as an arena for those simple performances. They fit in so perfectly with George Maciunas' values; no cost, no waste, and lots of surprises.

EM: Were those street event "Fluxus works" merely because a number of Fluxus people got together or was there something about those

Alison Knowles, *Big Book*. Installation shot of non-extant work, 1967. Courtesy of the artist.

events that was particular to fluxus rather than to any other kind of street performance that was going on at the time?

AK: Well, those event pieces did have particular qualities I've mentioned: no cost, no fuss. Let's add that they had a single idea and a limited time duration. We could say they were minimal.

EM: Let's talk about that a little more. I'm interested in "the single idea" concept.

AK: All right. "Draw a straight line and follow it." "Make a salad." "Within one minute, within one clock minute, make any sound." "Put a child on the stage and see how long the child will stay there."

EM: Why was that an important concept for the group?

AK: I think that Fluxus stood forcefully against anything theatrical. That was the aesthetic. If you're making a piece of a theater you're not just going to say, "make a salad," you're going to say, "let's have a green drape, let's have the hostess in a red robe to contrast with the green." "Let's have a banquet table and I'd like to have six spoons left on the left." You provide a theatrical construct for the event to fit into. But when you're getting into a new town and the performance is in two hours, you have to make it minimal, simple; you have to be able to apply it to perhaps no media, no microphones or lighting at all; you have to find the materials right there. In the case of the salad event, we collected bushels of vegetables from the market near the Nikolai Kirche and sent the tab to the music conservatory. Eric Andersen somehow got that bill cleared up before he "resigned" from the academy.

EM: You aren't speaking to the New York events now. You've already said that you didn't have an audience there. You're speaking of the European Fluxus concerts now. But what about the audience that was available to you in European concerts; what did you expect back from that audience through the repetition of the "single idea" concept? In other words, once you established the "single idea" as a formal principle, as a working boundary of sorts, what kind of relationship did you attempt to establish with your audience, that group of receivers/outsiders, that could walk in and out of your pieces at will.

AK: Why would they come back? In Europe the concerts were a kind of antidote to traditional art. In America? Well as I said, the audiences were small and devoted. Most of the people who came were having some trouble swallowing Expressionism. The non-theatricality of those pieces encouraged people to find art within their own lives. These were the most ordinary and accessible materials made magical with simple ideas. There was a print and type teacher named Bob Forman who

would make the trip in from Long Island to see us. He had no background in art, but we obviously brought something into his life.

EM: You've talked about what you wanted to give your audience – of your roles as artist/teachers (I suppose Beuys would have said "artist/priests") – but what did you want back from them?

AK: Now you're asking me about the content of my own pieces. I don't know what other people wanted. It's nice when people can relax and be attentive, watchful...empty; not so much eager but more a stance of waiting and noticing. Those early pieces we're speaking of and what I do now ask the same thing: that the audience be unencumbered and quiet...oh yes, and patient as well. I find myself allied a little bit to La Monte Young in my early pieces. A kind of moral fiber is evident, almost a kind of didactic thing. "Draw a straight line and follow it." Now for me, the implications of that piece are very refreshing and stabilizing for whatever you are doing in your life. It took many hours with a plumb line to draw that line and then we could walk it. These works are not expressionistic and indulgent. I think that many of the pieces are just simple refreshment pieces done for whatever day's work you have to do, supporting occurrences in life. It gives members of the audience the ball; they can make their own salad differently, even if they are doing it for their family. It supports those very daily events as being relevant for your art, like the "Identical Lunch." Whatever it is you have to touch and work with, you can make a kind of performance of it, but it has to be stripped of the hangings and accoutrements of theater. What happens is that kind of revelation, no an *emptiness*, opens up. Members of the audience are watching almost nothing going on. The action must be done exactly, precisely and modestly to allow the emptiness to appear – say pouring water from a ladder into a pan to make music – a quality inhabits the room. People often feel awkward with this quality and laugh. That's fine.

EM: There's an awareness that the audience has, and that the performer or performers have, of participating in a situation that stands outside everyday experience.

AK: Yes, there is. It's hard to define that ingredient, but it's what made the making of a salad in London absolutely amazing. Everybody handles lettuce and cucumbers, carrots, and blue cheese. And yet it was...you could just hear every crack of the knife; there were six of us mixing it in a big huge pickle barrel borrowed from the Cross and Blackwell Co. and rolled through the streets of London to the hall. People finally realized it was going to go on for a while, and they got angry and left. Some came back after a while. There was an extraordinary event in Denmark which left Eric Andersen standing in front of an angry audience for an hour or more. He was waiting for Emmett Williams to move from under the bap-

tistry. The piece stated that one could not leave the stage until a predecided action (one you yourself had decided upon) had happened. Both of these people had decided that the other had to make an exit. Each held to it and stood out there; Eric on stage facing his countrymen, if you will, Emmett crammed under the baptistry. From an ostensibly simple direction in the score an amazing situation arose. Finally Emmett had to use the toilet. When he left the stage that ended the piece. Eric was free to leave the stage also. Such an occurrence could never be planned without the audience sensing it. The audience, none the less, stayed for the duration, jeering and hooting. This audience you see, had no idea why they stayed, but there must have been some reason why they didn't leave. Just what was the audience looking for? Maybe the simpler events like these allow for unforeseen occurrence. It's why we preferred the live event to recorded music. The nature of the performer can easily obstruct these "mysteries," I mean the performer has to allow the audience to see these things for themselves, to feel them (by "them" I mean the sometimes very small actions, gestures, and inflections that happen in the act of doing something). It is an attitude we were after of not promoting anything within the action. That's why Zen is mentioned in terms of Fluxus event performing. The action is directed and precise with nothing added.

EM: You've called your pieces recipes. You do not obfuscate the structure of the works; you don't deliberately mystify.

AK: No, no, not to intentionally mystify but I do take a kind of magical view, finally, about a good event piece. You can know all about it; how it's different or what's gone into it, and still the reasons for its success, its working, are quite difficult to put into words. And I think that if you try to make things intentionally mysterious and don't reveal their structure, then the audience misses the pleasure of the process of having it happen *with* them. I feel very close to my audience, and I feel that if they know what I'm trying to do that they also are, in a sense doing it with me. I state in the recipe exactly what is going to happen, e.g. *Make a Salad*. After that the rest is up to the performer. So, these pieces allow for mystery, emptiness; things not easily verbalized but felt by everyone.

EM: Would you say that, for the most part, Fluxus performance works were about access to structure (the sharing of an experience with the audience) or about the intentional mystification of that public (a kind of, "I have a secret, and if you're going to be a part of this art situation then you have to trust me," posture)?

AK: I can't easily answer that question. Emmett Williams, for example, loves tight structure. He loves patterns of all sorts, but he's not afraid, as you say, to expose them to the audience, and he'll hold up a four-

directional song of doubt, with the different colored circles, and you're a circle red and you're a circle blue and you make the sound, you just never quite know, to the baton. And then he'll turn it around so the audience can see it. Again, maybe more or less my position, the mystery in the piece is even more wonderful if they know all about it. Robert Filliou, in his performance pieces, I think, took a more aloof position. Dick [Higgins] works within a very tight structure. But he doesn't feel the need to explain or talk about the structure much in his pieces. Dick's work has sort of a wonderful "crazy" quality. I think of him when I read Kwakiutl Indian events. It's always in his work (even when students do it in Berlin), a kind of crazy element. Dick's work is eclectic, (one piece can cross various language structures, or whatever). It's all sort of crammed into a tight structure, yet it comes off as sort of magical.

EM: Let's talk for a couple of minutes about chance. The twentieth century seems to have generated an ongoing dialogue among artists about chance, procedure, not just as a means by which to get a good piece together, but as a device for cultural criticism – an utopian alternative to "unnatural" cultural constructs, for example. I have always felt that [Tristan] Tzara's manifesto, "To make a Dadaist Poem," has provided contemporary artists with their most powerful paradigm and with their greatest stumbling block, at one and the same time. (I suppose that all paradigms serve as stumbling blocks once they have attained status as such.) You know his recipe for the interaction among a newspaper, some scissors, a paper bag, and chance procedure that results in a poem that "resembles you."

AK: Yes, the importance of the Tzara self-portrait...I think that for the whole Fluxus group, the key to the Tzara portrait was that it's your nature. When you paste it down, it looks like you; you have touched those pieces of paper and they have taken on form. When [John] Cage brought the use of chance to symphony you could tell right away that it was a Cage symphony. Now that is magical. Why would your use of chance, or mine, be different from anyone else's use of chance? Somehow the act of using what one would think was a very abstract structural base becomes very definable, in terms of the nature of what you can get.

EM: Much earlier in the century, the Zurich Dadaist Hans Arp used the terms "Laws of Chance" and "Natural Order" to describe the end result of his own experience with chance – structures unearthed through chance procedure that provided an alternative to man-made cultural constructs. [Marcel] Duchamp, of course, made use of chance regularly (and overtly). Were some of the Fluxus people thinking of the mystical quality of chance procedure and others concerned with breaking down

cultural norms, or was everyone just excited about the liberation that Tzara offered with his paper bag and his pieces of newspaper?

AK: I don't think that we can talk about Fluxus and chance without talking about Cage. I think that the influence of his class at the New School [for Social Research] can not be overestimated. I was just on the fringe of it, just getting to know the people. They talked about what was going on in that class. Those introductions and experiments with chance affected all the participants in that class, and through them it moved into other avenues.

EM: You spoke earlier of the Kwakiutl Indian events. Have they been particularly influential on your own event pieces?

AK: I love the Indian Kwakiutl events, and I've studied them a lot. I did a piece called *Gift Event*, which is directly based on Kwakiutl events. It's a piece with no audience necessarily. One finds things in the street and makes an object that then one attempts to give away to some passerby. The piece has nothing to do with usual gift giving because usually gifts are beautiful. We recognize them as coming from a store (and being blue because your mother likes blue). All these aspects of gift giving are shattered by the piece. You have this nameless object, made of a collection of things you found in the street and you have to, in some way, *sell* it to a stranger. When you say, "excuse me, but I have something I want to give you here in my hand, isn't it beautiful? Look at how the coffee works for that piece of gum," you immediately have a situation where that stranger and you and the thing have an art experience.

EM: What makes that an art experience?

AK: It's preconceived. It somehow has to do with the performer pushing through his or her own fears; transforming that garbage; putting it together to make something. In *Gift Event* the performers have sort of pushed out regular life, dragging with them all those "normal" materials, whatever they could find. They are using everyday materials, but they are no longer everyday, they are doing a performance. The attitude of the performer is so important. It may be jocular or droll, but it is very serious also. Can you imagine presenting five bottle caps to a passerby as a serious gift and having it received. The hardest part of the event is getting the passerby to accept the gift.

EM: You've reminded me of something that came to mind earlier when we spoke of the found-objectness of the things used in Fluxus performances (the pickle barrel, for example), and now we've talked about the found-objectness of the "gift." Does the residue of the everyday, the residuum of functional, non-art based cultural usage that these rejected objects make reference to have something to do with it?

AK: Yes it does. The artifacts and objects tied together and dusted off should certainly come from the vicinity of the performance. They do carry a "residuum of non-art culture," as you suggested. The situation asks for ingenuity from both the giver and receiver. With the *Gift Event* the performers are out there on their own, in this very lonely, exciting place, looking for something. You have to make a whole new world in a moment with this stuff. And what's more, you even have to try to convince someone else that they have something in their hand.

This conversation took place in Iowa City in the Spring of 1985 during *FLUXUS: A Workshop Series*.

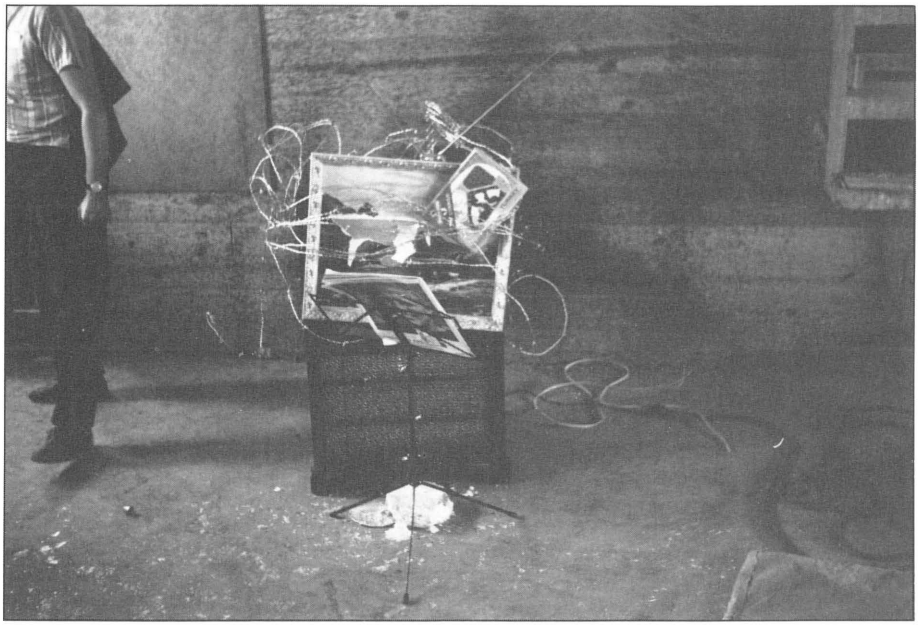


figure 1. Scene from Wolf Vostell's performance TV Dé-collage at the Yam Festival organized by the Smolin Gallery in New Brunswick, New Jersey, May 19, 1963.

The photographic essay features photo documentation by Peter Moore of three Wolf Vostell projects produced in New York during the period 1963–64. "Dé-collage and Television" focuses on Vostell's use of dé-collage technique as a means to critique broadcast television. The projects represented are Vostell's first one-artist show in New York at the Smolin Gallery and participation in the "Yam Festival of Happening" at George Segal's farm, both in 1963.

Dé-Collage and Television

Wolf Vostell in New York, 1963–64

John G. Hanhardt
Photographs by Peter Moore

John G. Hanhardt, pp. 109–123
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

decomposition is dé-collage TV —Wolf Vostell

In 1963 and 1964, the German Fluxus artist Wolf Vostell participated in a series of performance and installation projects in New York City, Long Island and New Jersey. I have chosen to focus on those events in which Vostell incorporated the television set. My interest in Vostell's use of the television is part of an ongoing project investigating the early history of the artist's use of television in the United States.[1]

My research has been greatly facilitated by the documentary record provided in Peter Moore's photographs. Moore's presence as a witness to the extraordinary variety of avant-garde art events from the late 1950s through the present has provided us with an unique photographic record of artwork that has been by definition transitory. Moore's photographs and his wife Barbara Moore's archive announcements, invitations, posters and ephemera generated by these events give the historian the means to uncover the seminal importance of the changing artworld of the late 1950s and 1960s.

The thesis I am exploring in this photographic essay is that, in appropriating the materials of everyday life and traditional culture, Fluxus artists sought to turn these discourses inside out, in the process revealing the constrictive conventions and rhetoric limiting liberated individual expression and desire. One of the key Fluxus strategies was Vostell's dé-collage technique, which erased or transformed the message contained within the surface codes of dominant cultural and ideological transmission. These actions of dé-collage were primarily directed toward magazines and newspapers but also included the television set.

In the early 1960s television was emerging as the dominant technology for transmitting news, information and entertainment. It had by the mid 1960s firmly established itself in this country and Europe as a rival in popularity and influence to the movies, radio, magazines and newspapers. Television was a conduit, a one-way street of audio-visual transmissions for which the viewer played the role of consumer. Television programming was produced in the studio, a highly capitalized center of new technology not available to the artist. It was only after 1965 that a portable videocamera recorder and player was developed that allowed artists to gain ready access to the medium. In the 1970s cable television provided a means for alternative television, including public access, in the United States. The history of artist's video and television is a complex one, involving both artists' initiatives and developments in technology. The Korean-born Nam June Paik, a performance artist and member of Fluxus, was to play a seminal role in Europe and the United States in fashioning a discourse and place for video as an artist's medium. However, in the fluid artworld of the early 1960s, Vostell was, along with Paik, among the very first artists to appropriate the television set and begin to remake it as both an installation medium and a paradigm for a critique of technology. Although video did not remain central to Vostell's artmaking, the extension of his dé-collage strategy to the broadcast

text continues on page 123

figure 2. Wolf Vostell, TV Dé-collage, 1963. Installation with same title at Smolin Gallery, New York.

figure 3. Wolf Vostell, TV Dé-collage, 1963. Installation with same title at Smolin Gallery, New York.

figure 4. Wolf Vostell, TV Dé-collage, 1963. Installation with same title at Smolin Gallery, New York.

figure 5. Wolf Vostell, TV Dé-collage, 1963. Installation with same title at Smolin Gallery, New York.

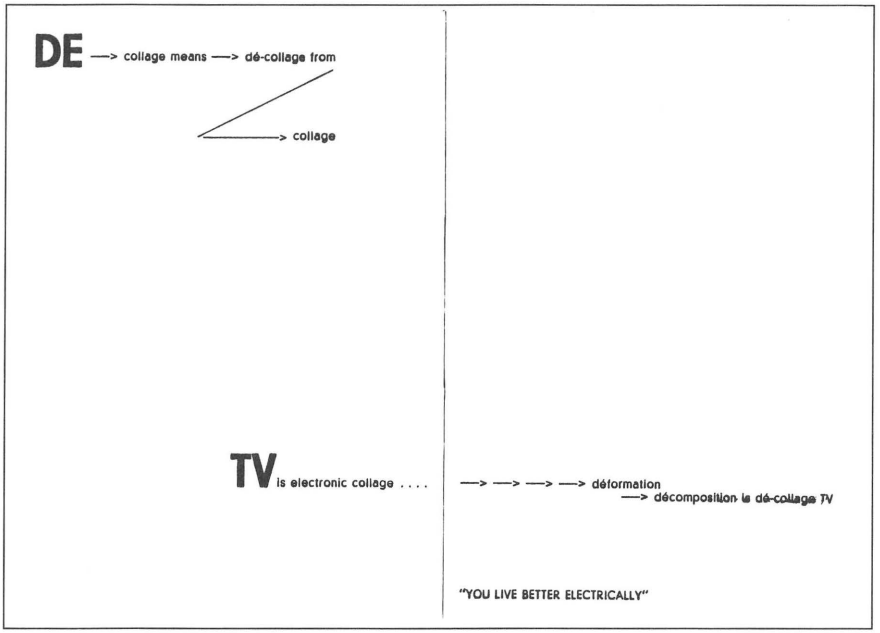
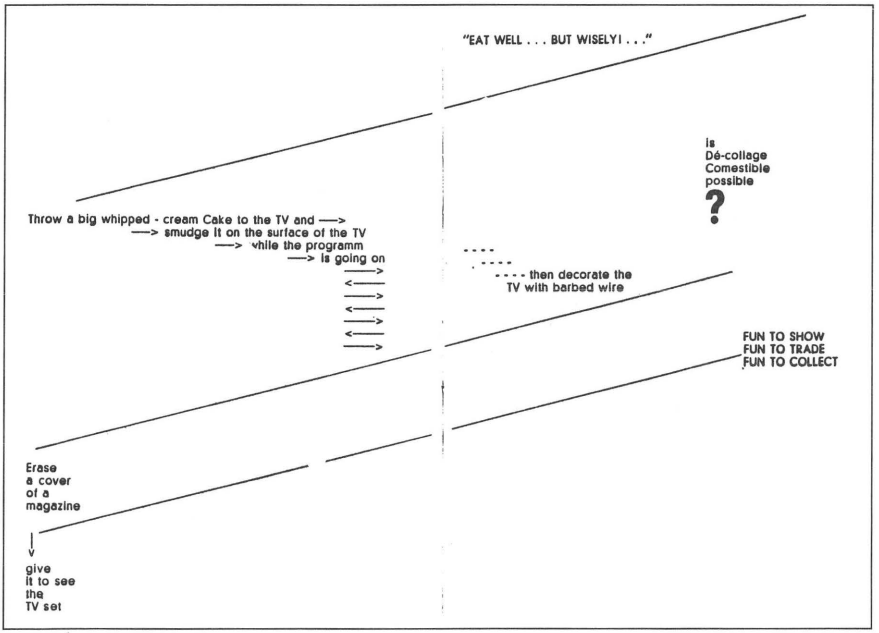


figure 6. Selection from text by Wolf Vostell describing his TV Dé-collage at the Yam Festival in New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1963.



figures 7. Selection from text by Wolf Vostell describing his TV Dé-collage at the Yam Festival in New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1963.

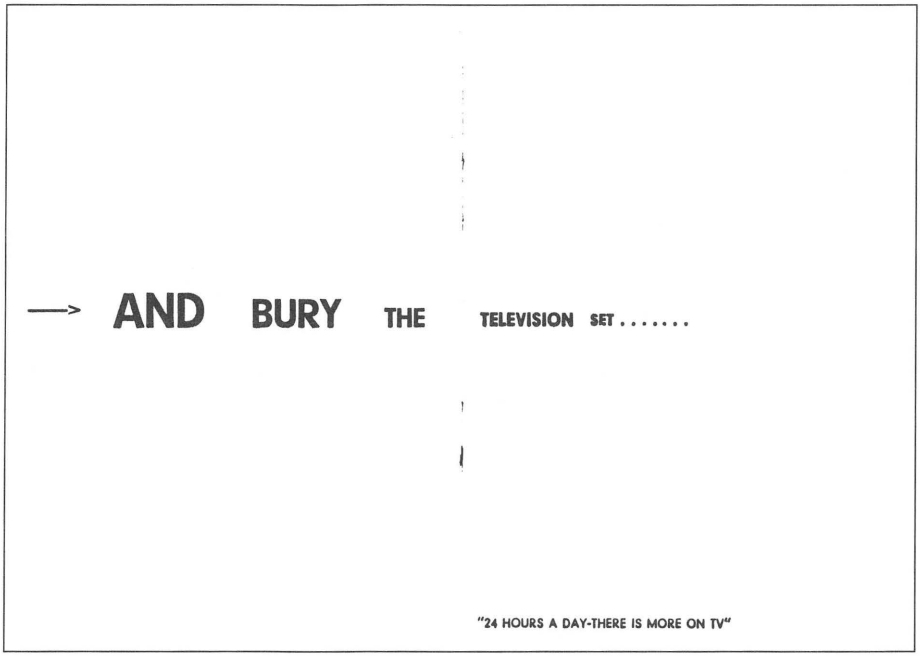


figure 8. Selection from text by Wolf Vostell describing his TV Dé-collage at the Yam Festival in New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1963.

figure 9. Wolf Vostell's performance in the "You" event at Cricket Theatre in New York, 1964.

figure 10. Wolf Vostell's performance in the "You" event at Cricket Theatre in New York, 1964.

figure 11. Wolf Vostell's performance in the "You" event at Cricket Theatre in New York, 1964.

figure 12. Wolf Vostell's performance in the "You" event in Long Island, 1964.

figure 13. Wolf Vostell's performance in the "You" event in Long Island, 1964.

figure 14. Vostell installation in the "You" event in Long Island, 1964.

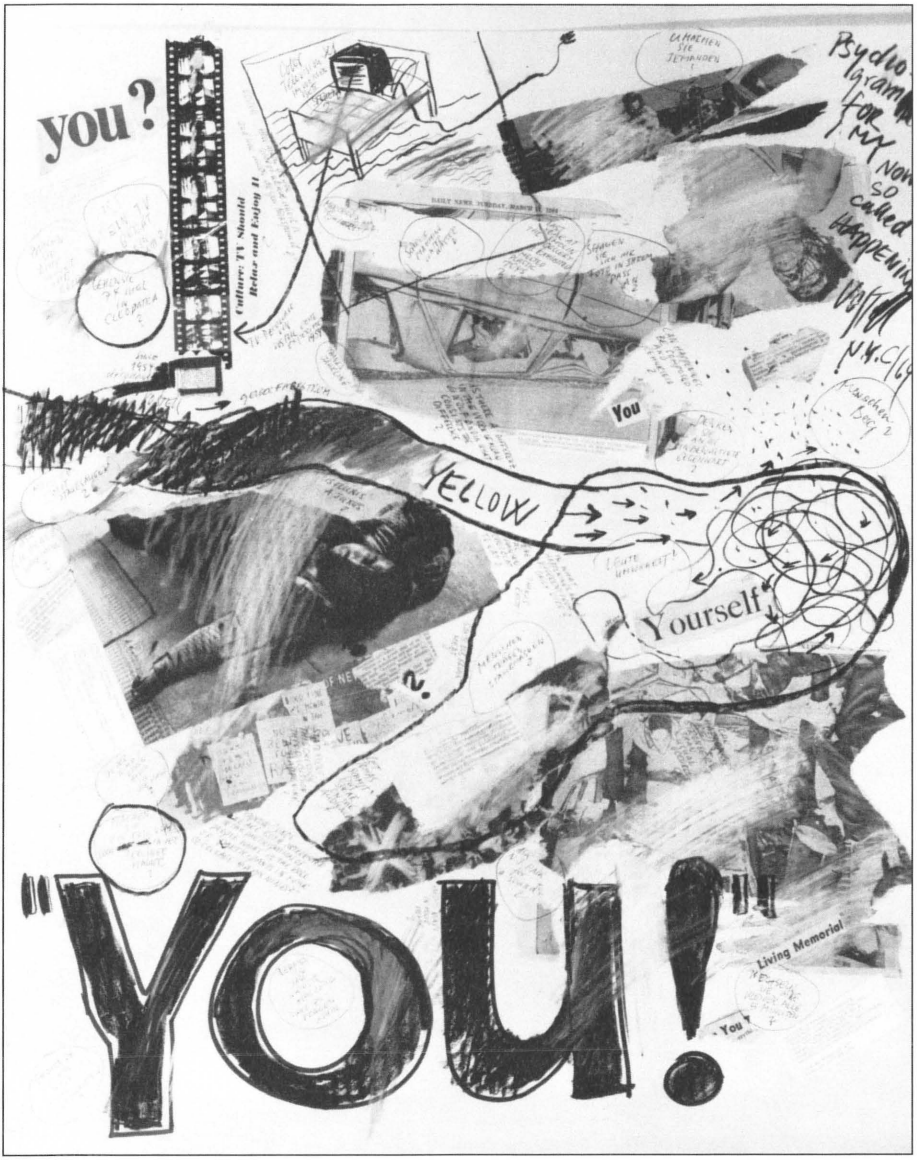


figure 15. Drawing by Wolf Vostell, 1964.

image and the inclusion of that work alongside his two-dimensional artwork represent an important vision and a landmark example of the transformation of the television medium.

On May 19, 1963 at the sculptor George Segal's farm in South Brunswick, New Jersey, an "afternoon of Happenings, Dance and Music" was presented by the Smolin Gallery as part of the Yam Festival. Among the artists who participated were Chuck Ginnever, Dick Higgins, Allan Kaprow, Yvonne Rainer, Wolf Vostell and La Monte Young. Vostell's performance consisted of "preparing" a television: distorting the broadcast image, covering the set with barbed wire and a picture frame, and placing a music stand before the screen (*figure 1*). The television was then carried outside where Vostell used a jackhammer and shovel to dig a hole in which the set was buried.

A few days later on May 22, 1963, the Smolin Gallery, at 19 East 71st Street in New York City, presented "Wolf Vostell & Television Dé-collage & Dé-collage Posters & Comestible Dé-collage." The invitation showed a photograph of a wall of Life magazine covers and the announcement "DO IT YOURSELF! You are invited to participate in the Creation of Dé-collage at the opening. Reserve the area in which you wish to create by calling Smolin Gallery. Materials for Dé-collage will be provided." Inserted in the invitation was a photograph of a series of television screens with distorted reception. The installation in the gallery also placed the televisions with prepared and distorted reception alongside the dé-collaged walls (*figures 2, 3, 4*). The viewers were given a vial of carbon tetrachloride which, when applied to the magazine covers, smudged and distorted the photographs and text (*figure 5*). In this dé-collage installation, the artist dialectically engaged different media and materials to subvert the stable authority of news and information. In the publication produced for the Smolin Gallery's Yam Festival, Vostell graphically laid out his dialogue with television through his dé-collage strategy (*figures 6, 7, 8*).

A year later on April 19, 1964, Vostell participated in a "Dé-collage Happening" entitled "You" at the Cricket Theatre in New York. The event was organized by the owners of the theater Robert Delford Brown and his wife, Brett. The event included an "action lecture," "The Art of the Happening," by Vostell and Allan Kaprow. Vostell's performance consisted, in part, of his creating dé-collage artwork in the midst of the audience while a prepared television played on the stage. Once again television was part of the performance activity (*figures 9, 10, 11*). At this time Vostell also participated in another "You" event at the Brown's home in Long Island. As part of that program Vostell burned a television set in a fenced in enclosure (*figures 12, 13*). Inside the house, he placed televisions in beds, thus creating a persona out of the television

receiver (*figure 14*). His dé-collage drawing for the "You" program integrates the television and other media with the injunction "Culture: TV Should Relax and Enjoy It." (*figure 15*)

These images of Vostell's performances, installation and writings reveal an "anti-aesthetic" strategy which moved between media and materials as he sought to destabilize the institutionalized codes and meanings of the dominant culture. This effort by Vostell to erase and recompose imagery, both through viewer participation and the disruption of television, reveals a politics which seeks to rupture the seamless flow of information and entertainment by empowering the individual.

NOTES

[1] Hanhardt, John G.: "Video in Fluxus," in *Art & Text*, No. 37, September 1990; "The Anti-TV Set; Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell in 1963," in *From Receiver to Remote Control: The TV Set* (New York, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991); "Dé-Collage/Collage: Notes Toward a Re-Examination of the Origins of Video Art," in *Illuminating Video* (New York, Aperture Press, 1991).

The essay traces George Maciunas' interest in cinema beginning with his work for Film culture in 1955, his methods of producing/making films, his relationship to the main film avant-garde of the sixties and his ideas of cinema.

Notes on George Maciunas' Work in Cinema

Jonas Mekas

Jonas Mekas, pp. 125–132
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

Jack Smith will show "Normal Love." Poster/announcement for screening at Anthology Film Archives, March 18 and 19, 1971. Offset lithograph, 21.5 x 12.5 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts. The University of Iowa, Gift of Jonas Mekas.

I met George for the first time in 1952. I had met his sister Nijole a year or so before. She wanted to be a singer, but had given it up. George was twenty, and Nijole was about twenty-four. We spent a lot of time together, on weekends. Nijole was very upset when I took her one afternoon to see Buñuel's *Los Olvidados*, in a dingy Brooklyn Spanish theater. It horrified her. She was also horrified to hear me rave about it. When she found out that I was also "making" movies, she asked me to take some footage of her father. She said it in a tone of voice from which I got an impression that there was a very serious reason for doing it. So one weekend I went to their suburban, neat house and did some filming. That's when I met George. It's possible that I had met him before, but had never noticed him. Their father, however, died not very long after. The cause of death has been always a guarded secret of the family. Nam June Paik thinks he committed suicide. I don't know where his information comes from.

A few weeks later I visited Maciunas family again and showed my footage. Everybody was excited to see themselves, but George was excited only about one very funny shot of himself: George swinging a baseball bat and making a "funny" face. The same kind of "making a face" that became his trademark throughout the rest of his life. Nam June Paik immortalized this shot in a painting he dedicated to George in 1989. George liked only the funny parts of the film. He thought the shot of him was really funny. While the rest was only so-so. I had to agree with him on that.

During the next couple of years we saw a lot of each other. I discovered that he was among the very few Lithuanians who had bought and seen and read *ZVILGSNIAI*, an avant-garde literary quarterly, which I had published with my brother and a couple of other poets and writers in Wiesbaden and later in Kassel. It wasn't, really, that avant-garde. But it was pretty avant-garde for the Lithuanian literary community in exile.

When in 1955 I began publishing *Film Culture* magazine, I often turned to George for help on the art work, the design, the layout. He had been doing that kind of work for a Lithuanian literary-political quarterly I was writing for at that time, and I liked what he was doing. On some issues of *Film Culture* he only assisted. On others he designed absolutely everything – type, layout, paper, format. He did so for the issues 14 through 18, 30 and 43 through 45. He became a regular patron of the Thalia theater, which ran a perpetual repertory of selected American and European movie classics. We saw a lot of movies there.

In the Spring of 1961 when George and Almus Salcius opened the A/G Gallery on the upper Madison Avenue, he asked me to organize a film series there as part of the Gallery activities. I showed some of Stan Vanderbeek's films and Dick Preston films, both of which he liked. But most of all, he liked George Binkey's *Film #2*, an irreverent collage film

Jonas Mekas, *Yoko Ono and John Lennon*. Frame enlargement from the film, *Scenes from the Life of George Maciunas*. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

in which a U.S. army sex education film was turned into a surrealistic film fare. Binkey, by the way, was the pseudonym of my brother Adolfas. Adolfas' reading of his short story "Boredom" was one of the A/G Gallery's highlights in late 1961.

So this was where it all began.

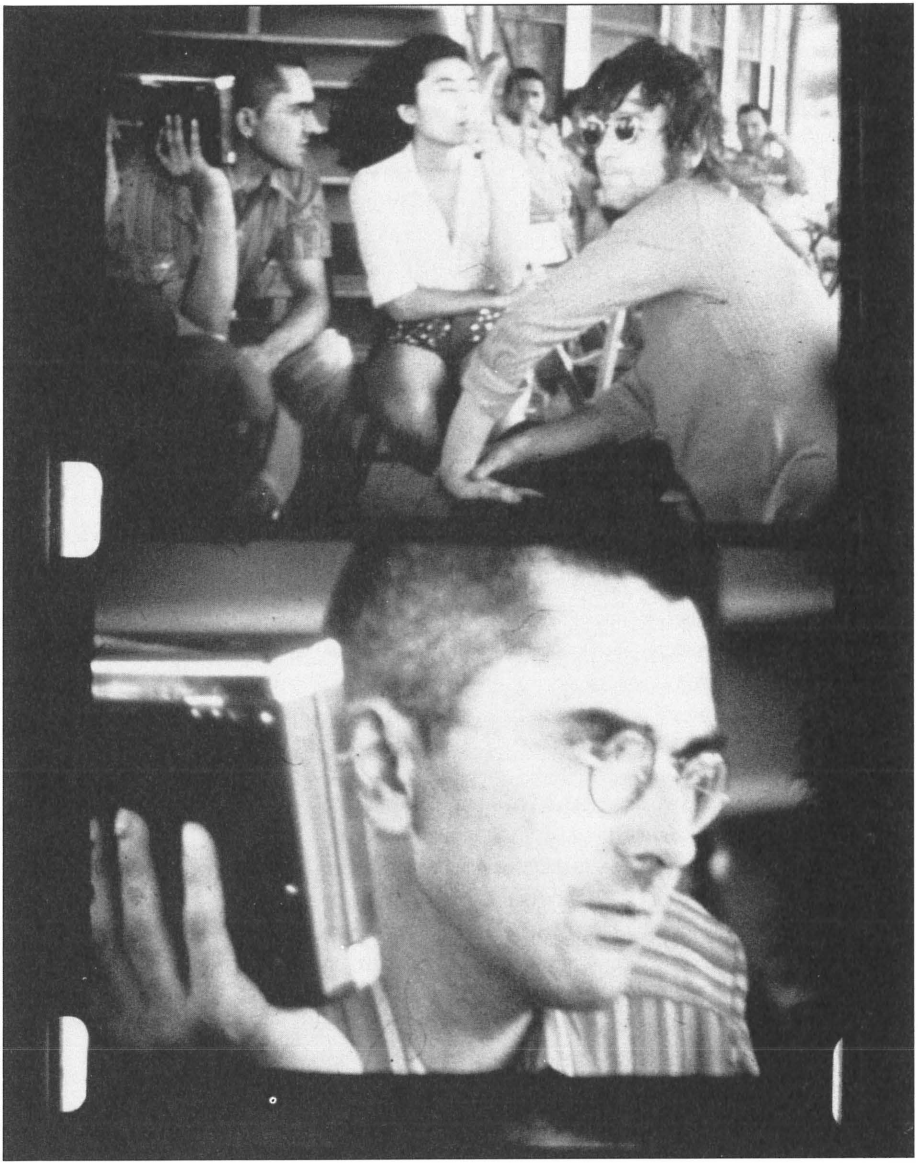
Now some generalities:

As time went on, George saw a lot of what I was showing, and I followed George's activities. From the very beginning, however, I noticed that George was more interested in the "fun" aspect of cinema than in any "creative," "self-expressive," "auteuristic" activity. I would go as far as to say that during the entire auteuristic period, George's position was a pure anti-auteurist position. He didn't care about self-expression. The measure of a "good" film or scene for him was: was it funny or not. For George, the greatest scene in modern cinema – he had told me this hundreds of times – was in De Sica's *Miracle in Milan* – a film which he would see again and again and again – a scene where the poor people of Milan watch the setting sun as if they were watching a theater performance. The other measure of greatness was exactitude of the historical recreations, especially if they were funny. According to George, the masterpiece of that kind of cinema was Rossellini's *The Rise to Power of*

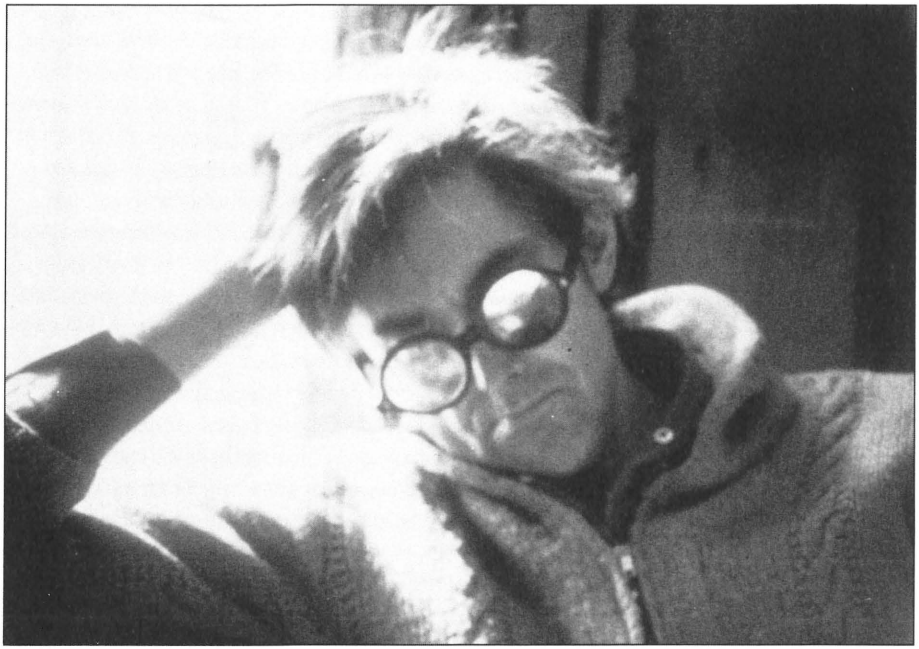
Louis XIV. He kept telling me, how true and how exact the historical recreations of the details were in this film, and how funny. The only avant-garde film-maker that approached these two in funniness, according to George, was Stan Vanderbeek. And here we split. I liked Vanderbeek, but not as much as, say, Stan Brakhage. George liked some of Brakhage. Whenever I screened anything of Brakhage, on 80 Wooster Street, he made a special trip from the basement, to see it. He also approved Kubelka's *Arnulf Rainer*. But that was about it.

I should say something about the basement, to which I just referred. It was the basement of 80 Wooster Street, the first Soho cooperative building George created. That's where Soho began. I took the ground floor and the first floor for the Film-Makers' Cinematheque. That was the only way George could take over the building, with the $8,000 that Jerome Hill, the film-maker and a good friend, gave us to pay for the space. That was the deposit money George needed. Once we moved in, I gave George the basement to live in for no fee, for friendship's sake. He stayed there until he had to move out of New York in 1976.

It's not very clear around what time George began his Fluxfilm project. Unnoticeably, slowly, he began collecting films that seemed to fit into his code of what Fluxus cinema should be. Curiously enough, the films that he either materialized/produced/made or accepted, were not that overtly or obviously "funny." Some, yes, some were funny. Some of



Jonas Mekas, *Three Friends* and *George Maciunas*. Two frame enlargements from Mekas' 1992 film, *Scenes from the Life of George Maciunas*, footage for which was shot between 1952 and 1978. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.



Jonas Mekas, *George Maciunas, March 1978, Just Prior to his Death.* Frame enlargement from the film, *Scenes from the Life of George Maciunas.* Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

them could be considered as Fluxus jokes. But their humor was, or rather is, very pure, minimal, abstract. George's concept of "funny" and "joke" were beyond the usual, daily "funniness." The joke and fun had to be pushed to the utmost degree of lightness, all sentimentality and romanticism stripped away: it had to be pure, abstract, paradisical. But as it has been true from Cinema's very beginnings, such intense concentration of focus always produces the most intense cinema. So that Fluxus films such as *Entrance* or *Disappearing Music for Face* deal more with essential possibilities of cinema, than with the literal content. Yes, they were intended as "conceptual films," one could say. But once these concepts were "materialized" on film, they became visual, cinematically radical events.

It's curious, that George developed his Fluxfilm anthology during the same period as George Landow and his colleagues were developing, or rather working with the self-referential possibilities of cinema. George was immensely interested in the technical possibilities of the camera. For several of the films he used Ed Emshwiller's high speed camera, in order to slow down the actual movement of, say, cigarette smoke to a practically unnoticeable speed. George was especially attached to the high contrast black and white film, which was – and this was of extreme importance in George's scale of values – extremely CHEAP!

The aesthetic juggernauts of the Sixties were still De Kooning, and abstract expressionism, and in cinema, Stan Brakhage; and this did not go at all with minimalist "fun" and "concept" aesthetics. And although several of the Fluxfilm participants were also main avant-gardists of the Sixties – Sharits, Landow, Cavanaugh – the majority of the Fluxus "film-makers" were not really "film-makers": they were men and women of ideas that George executed. George was the MGM of the Fluxus. And it was in this way that he practiced his critique of the auteur theory: every film, every "auteur" became just another, anonymous brick in the fluxfilm project – little toy gadgets that you cranked, with your eye close to the little eye-piece, sometimes seeing something, some little image, plane crash, or some climactic little action, but mostly nothing, it was only a blur, but it was a representation, a symbolic event of some unsubstantial almost abstract reality that was as essentially Fluxus as Mother Goose.

This animated conversation ranges from discussion of the overt questioning of understanding, meaning and the validity of the art situation to the conscious, recurrent renewal of "crisis" as a catalyst for the arts. Topics addressed include: the requirements of culturing, the relationship between randomness and the unavoidable reconstitution of meaning as well as the frustrated expectations of the spectator within a deliberately "non–structured" art situation.

On Open Structures and the Crisis of Meaning, a Dialogue:

Eric Andersen, Stephen C. Foster, and Estera Milman

Estera Milman and Stephen C. Foster, pp. 133–142
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

SF: I think that most often, when people talk about Fluxus, they have a kind of abbreviated account to give of Fluxus, and then basically go on to talk about their own work. This strikes me as reasonable, if we can give a reasonable account for why that should happen.

EA: I think there are very good reasons for that.

SF: Well, exactly, but that's what I'd like to ask you about.

EA: Because, apart from George Maciunas, nobody considered himself to be a Fluxus artist. There are a few exceptions later on, of course. But by then just to call yourself a Fluxus artist provided some advantages.

EM: You're suggesting that there was no sense of community at the outset.

EA: We were, of course, involved in events called Fluxus and provided work that could be published by George Maciunas in what he named Fluxus editions and so on; but we did not consider ourselves to be Fluxus artists. That was especially true of the situation in Europe when we all met in '62. We did not even consider ourselves to be doing the same kind of work.

SF: Could you have used any word to indicate just a mere recurrence of the gathering of the same kind of people – you could have called it "ajax" – or you could have called it anything?

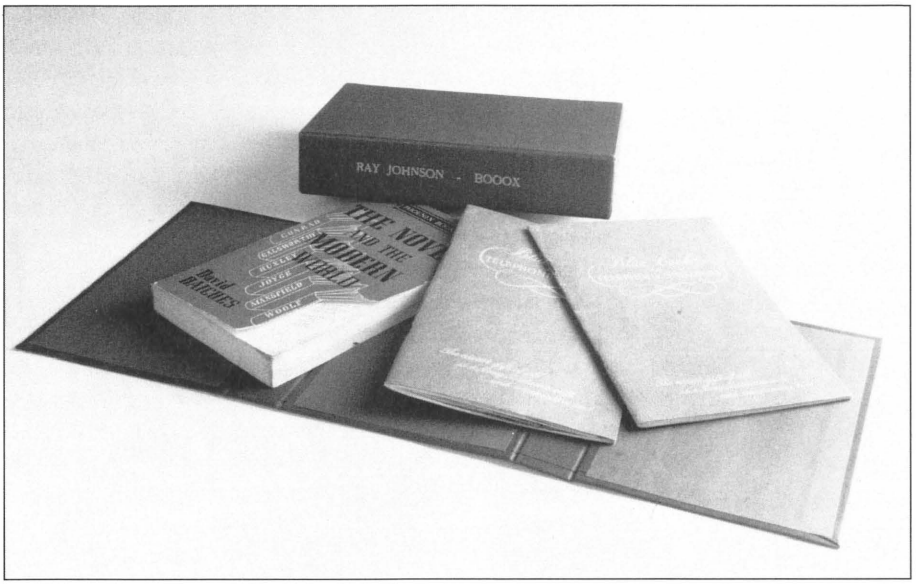
EA: We could have. It could have been any word. But Fluxus was a very appropriate term. Because the meaning of Fluxus is of course flux.

SF: Well can I ask you another question? Is it a mistake to refer to Fluxus as a movement because it's misleading; is it a mistake for scholars and critics to pursue it as though it were something real? In other words, if a person trains their vision onto Fluxus are they quite simply making a mistake – are they deceiving themselves about there being an actual object of study present?

EA: Yes – yes and no. It has too limited a scope, especially in this country. In Europe it's not such a big problem because nobody takes the term seriously. But in this country the scope of Fluxus is too limited; it is seen as a movement. But that has one advantage in that people can discuss what then could be called "Fluxus" work.

EM: Are you talking about American Fluxus works or Fluxus works in general?

EA: The work in general. The kind of work that was done in Europe in '62 and '63 provided a completely new approach to making art at that



Ray Johnson, *Booox*. Boxed set of three altered books, *Admonition of Kwanzan Kosushi as Interpreted by Uncle Ray Johnson* (*The Novel and the Modern World*, by David Daiches); *Blue Book of Telephone Numbers with Cut Out Cats* (cats to Higgins, Knowles et al.); *Blue Book of Telephone Numbers with Collage Drawings*, 18.7 x 14 x 4.1 cm., early 1960s. Ellsworth Snyder Collection. Photograph by Angela Webster, Courtesy of Madison Art Center.

time, and if you try to define these traits – this way of understanding these activities, the way to see yourself as an artist – if we call these Fluxus works, then it makes good sense. I would define a Fluxus work as a completely open piece…

SF: But not one that shares any other particular attributes with other works?

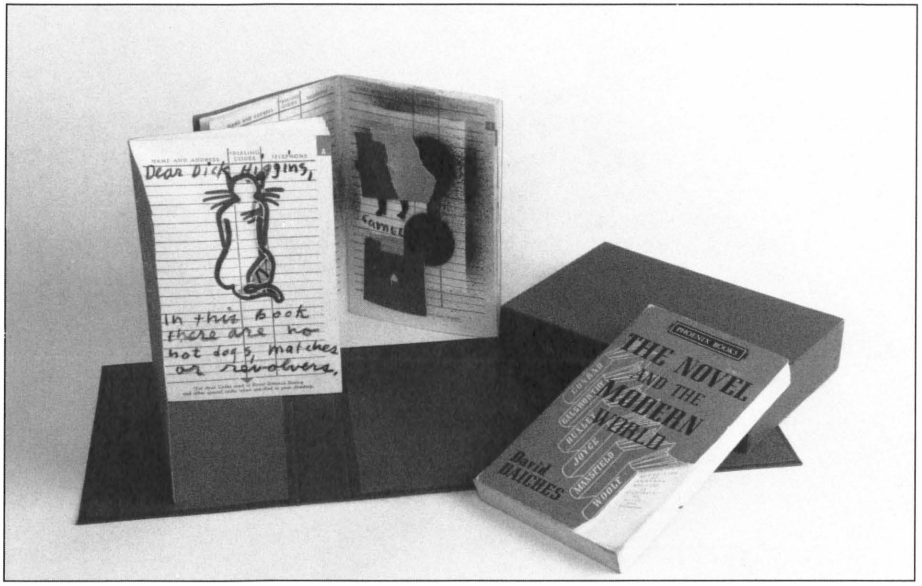
EA: No.

SF: What you're suggesting is that Fluxus indicates a certain kind of historical benchmark where the nature of thinking about how to make art shifted from one place to another.

EA: That is true, if we add that this kind of work was actually done by most of us before we met at the festivals in Europe in '62 and '63. The Fluxus festivals became a meeting point; the first major platform for these works.

EM: And you're saying that it had a two year life span – this benchmark – that it lasted for two years.

EA: It lasted for two years, yes. It changed completely when George came back here and kind of formed his own court around him, and, you



Ray Johnson, *Booox*. Boxed set of three altered books, *Admonition of Kwanzan Kosushi as Interpreted by Uncle Ray Johnson* (*The Novel and the Modern World*, by David Daiches); *Blue Book of Telephone Numbers with Cut Out Cats* (cats to Higgins, Knowles et al.); *Blue Book of Telephone Numbers with Collage Drawings*, 18.7 x 14 x 4.1 cm., early 1960s. Ellsworth Snyder Collection. Photograph by Angela Webster, Courtesy of Madison Art Center.

know about all the disagreements that George and Dick [Higgins] had and the disagreements with Emmett [Williams], and so on and so on. I would prefer to use the term to describe those works done during this period in Europe.

EM: Well you just began to define that period by saying that "open works" were produced. What else would you add? Because, after all, the production of open works went on well beyond '62 and '63.

EA: Yes, they went well beyond, but that kind of work emerged in the art scene at that time. You hadn't seen that kind of work to the same notable extent before. You never saw that work with the Dadaists or the Futurists – not anywhere. It was a new understanding of art.

EM: What do you mean by an open work then? Let's be very specific.

EA: First of all there's no substance and there's no core in the work. There's no united concept. That's why Fluxus differed tremendously from later Conceptual Art. What you set up is a kind of procedure. But this procedure has no meaning specific to the work itself. So that's why it lacks structure – there is no structure to the work; there is a procedure, a rough design, and this sets off the piece. Then the piece takes place in a way that is really unpredictable. Of course from psychological perspectives you can predict a piece. You can say, "if you set up this kind

of procedure then it's most likely that this and that will happen," but not based on aesthetic considerations. As far as aesthetic considerations are concerned, there are not limits. It's just a way to start up somewhere and construct an environment for the piece, but it's not the piece itself.

SF: But don't you think that when you set up that kind of structure, no matter how loose it is, then one thing you are doing is providing cues, or clues to something?

EA: Yes, whatever you do will provide such cues and clues.

SF: I mean you're focusing perception, at least on certain kinds of parameters.

EA: Of course you are, but if the clues are contradictory or can be understood in many ways – if they are undefinable by the nature of...

SF: You mean only undefinable ahead of time; because when any single individual goes into that situation, he's going to construe it in such a way that it seeks parity with some of his own structures. The work is concretized in individual cases, and that these don't coincide doesn't matter.

EA: No, it doesn't matter.

SF: But they are concretized based on the perceptions of these cues.

EA: Yes. And it becomes a weakness if the person who set up the procedure performs the piece as a solo. It is much better when other artists perform the pieces based on suggestions or proposals. And that did take place – it was typical of '62 and '63 – we did mostly perform pieces other than our own.

SF: Was it part of the intention of the work to make the performer aware of his performance of "a thing?" Was it, in a sense, a way of making that person perceive himself or herself in the process of performing? I mean, was there that kind of self-reflexiveness built into the work?

EA: Yes, in the sense that...yes, it is self-reflexiveness, but not in the sense that you gain any kind of understanding of yourself by doing this, apart from the awareness that you are doing it.

EM: How did the pieces function then? What was the purpose of the thing in the first place? Why did the whole thing happen?

EA: Why?

EM: What were your intentions?

EA: Why did Fluxus happen in 1962 and '63?

EM: Why did those sort of open, amorphous kinds of events take place; what was the purpose; what was the intention?

EA: There was no intention other than establishing a new understanding of aesthetics. An understanding based on the observance that an aesthetic need not deal with form and structure.

SF: But, I think that what Estera's getting at is that when you say that it's made to promote a new understanding, that requires that somebody understand it – on some level and at some point.

EA: That is mainly a problem of logic.

SF: Well you know that I am not really trying to present a logical problem. All I'm saying is that I think that when one says that something is intended to promote a new understanding of the arts, the implication is that someone understands something anew, from some place, whether it's the artist or spectator or both; not necessarily understanding in any single way. I would hazard, for example, that it may be the question of *understanding* itself that's at stake, not of anything in particular or any kind of understanding structure, but that the very facts and nature of understanding itself may have been at question.

EA: I agree with that. The basic position is the experimental approach; to pull and push categories, to question understanding and meaning, and to make no sense. If that is actually what you're saying.

EM: It seems to me that the dangerous little precipice that you stand on, you as a spokesperson, at present, is that when you talk about pushing an art situation, or the perception that an art situation is being enacted – when you push it (or pushed it in '62) to those extremes, what you are basically doing is questioning the whole validity of an art situation to begin with.

EA: Yes, sure, we were conscious of that.

EM: The point is that you succeeded in questioning the validity of an art situation in 1962–63, but then you persisted – each of you, on your own, or as a group that got together for a dinner now and again – you persisted in repeatedly re-negotiating this questioning of an art situation which you, in a sense, purportedly invalidated in the very beginning. It seems to me that this process is kind of questionable, that, in fact, you repeatedly *reconstituted* the myth of art rather than dismantle it.

EA: It is a good point. It's important to see the works as situations of invalidization.

EM: Are the works themselves invalid?

EA: Yes, they are invalid as art, as we understood art until the second half of this century.

SF: It's the renewing of a crisis or renewing of a question, or the renewing of a position...

EA: The questions are recurring anyway whether we deal with them or not. What we are talking about are recurring questions and we said, "let's keep this on the surface – let's be aware of this all the time." I don't think that we were attempting to arrive at a sort of solution, or completion or to provide answers or anything.

EM: You spoke earlier of Dada and Futurism. Some of us, who look at peculiar aspects of the twentieth century as something almost like a continuum of sorts, are conscious of the fact that earlier in the century, when people attempted to push aesthetic boundaries, they were often concerned with more than simple innovation within the arts. When they attacked "structure" they were looking for new structures. There was a sense of responsibility to culture-at-large that, in a sense, served to validate what was being attempted from within the arts. When Tzara tore apart his pieces of language and put them in a paper bag, he wasn't simply saying, "I'm questioning an art situation." He was attacking what for him was the very basis of culture itself. His actions were informed by utopian convictions about change, in the large sense. What you are suggesting is that, between the teens and the sixties, concepts such as the inter-relationship between artistic innovation and cultural revisionism were lost – that what was left revolved around aesthetic considerations. We can not help but look at Tzara as having been somewhat overly optimistic, but once you give up belief in the convictions that informed his actions, what's left?

EA: I think that's a very interesting matter. It has for milleniums been fundamental to Western civilization that it is in permanent crisis. I think we stopped being too concerned about the actual crises and began dealing with what crises are as such.

SF: Well, I was going to say that in the early part of the twentieth century, there was conviction, that even if problems, questions couldn't be solved, you nevertheless go ahead and attempt to solve them. And con-

sequently, Tzara could say at the very beginning of the movement that Dada pisses in different colors – that the world was defunct – but that Dada was shit too.

EA: Okay.

SF: Yet, you know there's always an allowance for that kind of succession as a group attempts to come to terms with its problems. They make an assumption that the resolution of these problems and questions into some place – into some positive place – is a requirement of culture. It's how culture works. And you're saying in a way, if I understand you correctly, that you refuse to take that step – and that you constantly pose the question, but that you refuse, in a sense, to attempt to resolve it in any kind of single assumption.

EA: I think it is too simplistic to attempt anything specific.

SF: But you know damn well that everybody else is going to attempt to resolve it some place. So isn't that, in a sense, sort of side-stepping the issues?

EA: Of course we wouldn't prevent anybody else from attempting to resolve anything. We have this culture of permanent crises, I would say, and we are participating in that culture, those crises, ourselves. That is the opposite of side-stepping.

SF: So you're going to be a conscience, in a sense, to whatever kinds of solutions or resolutions other people make to these questions. Is that right? If you keep the questions – make them question the nature of their enterprise – on the surface, and allow them to work with/towards solutions or whatever…

EA: Yes, the questions are plenty. We don't need the answers.

SF: You'd mentioned the word meaning. Can you tell me how you, yourself, or how you perceive other Fluxus artists looked at the the concept of meaning?

EA: For myself I always tried to avoid anything in a work that could assemble itself into meaning or could be understood as meaning, or sense, or logic. I hope my works achieve that, that they appear and remain completely meaningless; that they cannot be put into a context of understanding – at least not a fixed context of understanding. But I know other people have a completely different view. Dick [Higgins], for example, has another view of meaning.

SF: It seems to me that you're saying that the work doesn't mean in some sense – that the work doesn't *mean* from itself to the rest of the world in some singular kind of way.

EA: I think the work doesn't mean in any sense and that...

SF: I think basically, that it would hold for just about anything. I think that's the way we think about meaning these days. But you wouldn't deny, I assume, that these works are going to acquire meaning in the course of people working them out – that they are going to accrue meaning, at least for particular individuals in particular kinds of settings.

EA: Yes. But people are aware that meaning is achieved at random or through a pre–conditioned situation that is not a part of the piece. That's okay. I'll even go further. Even if people do conceive that a piece of mine conveys a very specific meaning to their life or to a certain situation, I would accept that as a part of the piece. I would not fight it.

EM: Randomness – randomness is another sort of recurring concept throughout the twentieth century. In general it was used in such a way that new structures were developed out of random structures. There was always some kind of sense that structure would re–constitute itself...

SF: It was just an undetermined structure, one that hadn't been articulated, but that didn't mean that it wasn't a structure; it's one that simply hadn't been articulated.

EM: When you use a kind of language in your pieces – and you often do – then you can't possibly talk about the myth of "meaninglessness." Regardless of how random the breakdown of a particular language is...

EA: Of course – we use tools – you cannot have a piece appear if you don't use a tool – and that tool always has a meaning, always has its proximity to language, as you mentioned. But I don't think the fact that we use tools related to meaning is contradictory to the making of the non-structured piece.

SF: I don't think that the tools would necessarily mean anything in and of themselves. I think they are just something that has been brought to a situation. The spectator is also brought to the situation. He comes with whatever equipment or memories or anything he's got. Meaning is accrued in that kind of situation. On the other hand, it seems to me that when you set up that situation, you're making a basic assumption that that is going to happen. You do, in fact, rely on a concept of meaning. You know that's latent in the setting up of the situation. You know that this god-damned concept is present. That you sneak it in the back door doesn't matter. It's still present.

EA: Did I sneak it in the back door? I don't think so. Phantoms exist everywhere, but still we don't consider them real.

EM: What about frustrations or intentional obfuscation? What spectators do when they come to a piece that has some structure that they can identify is hope that eventually they will have access to a second structure, and it is in the awareness of having achieved that access, that the pleasure, or sense of having accomplished anything in relation to the piece, happens. If you set up as your major premise the fact that you're going to subvert that...

EA: You've not accomplished anything at all. The piece never accomplishes anything. I do not hope that people attending a performance accomplish anything. One thing that people should never have when they come to one of my performances is expectations of any kind.

SF: But they have to have some expectations. When you set up a situation that requires or invites spectators, what you're doing is inviting a spectatorial role. Just the very fact that they come with a spectatorial role means a set of expectations. They're going to adjust whatever you present them to these.

EA: This mechanism of course works if you do it in an institution, in a gallery or whatever. Many of my pieces are done in the streets and people don't even realize that something is going on, like the first *Idle Walk*.[1] Nobody knew they were taking part in it. People that know my work and what kind of person I am, certainly do not react to an invitation the same way they react to an invitation to an art show. I've considered avoiding setting up these situations – avoiding them completely – never inviting anyone to anything, never announcing that a piece is taking place and so on. But I am not convinced yet that it's necessary to take that step.[2]

This conversation took place in Iowa City in the Spring of 1985 during *Fluxus: A Workshop Series*.

Notes

[1] According to the artist, *Idle Walks* are circumambulations that "pop up and disappear without notice or by extremely enigmatic announcements..." The first *Idle Walk* took place on August 29, 1983, and was described to me as "a one hour live national broadcast from the streets of Copenhagen. Reporters interviewing pedestrians that, without their knowledge, are taking part in an *Idle Walk*." Fifteen to twenty different *Idle Walks* have occurred since 1982. [EM]

[2] Upon reviewing the closing sentence of the typescript for this dialogue, Mr. Andersen stated, "I think phantoms can be accepted. To me inconsistency, in a classical sense, is a very important ingredient of an open piece."

After briefly outlining the process by which the Fluxus community coalesced, the author proceeds to recount the birthing of Something Else Press, Inc., and the transformation of aspects of the Press' objectives into Printed Editions. In the process, the essay discusses many of the parallel concerns shared by both Something Else Press and Fluxus publication activities as well as their divergent agendas and strategies.

Two Sides of a Coin
Fluxus and the Something Else Press

Dick Higgins

Dick Higgins, pp. 143–153
Visible Language, 26:1/2

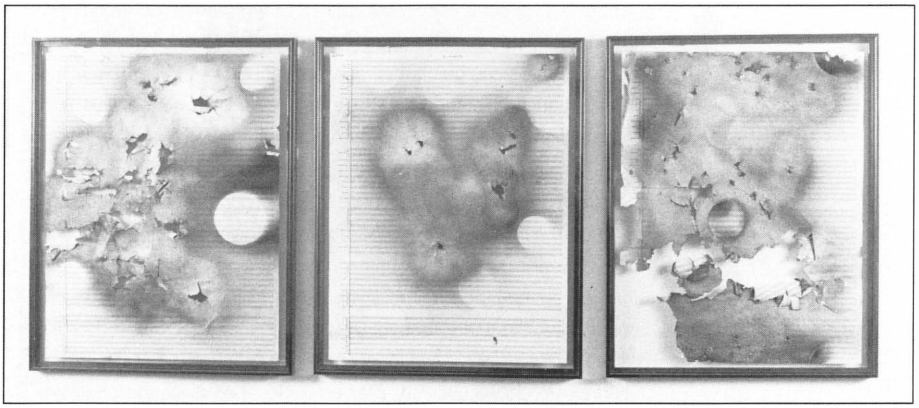
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

When happenings and events began to be performed in New York and elsewhere in the late 1950s, there was some consensus that the works which visual artists performed in spaces of their own devising (usually constructed in or sponsored by art galleries) constituted "Happenings." There was, however, no name for works which were made by people who were not primarily visual artists. These were spoken of simply as "events," a convenient term used by myself and my fellow students in John Cage's class in "Experimental Composition," at the New School for Social Research.[1] At first the individuals who were doing them had no agreed-upon name for what they were doing, but performances of this kind of work at Yoko Ono's loft on Chambers Street in New York (1960–61) and at George Maciunas' AG Gallery on Madison Avenue (1961), made it obvious that a name was needed. Maciunas gave up his art gallery in 1961 and undertook the design and production of La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low's *An Anthology*.[2] When his work was done, Maciunas found that he still had a large amount of intriguing material which he wanted to publish, so he proposed a magazine and publication series, to be called "Fluxus." Maciunas went to Europe at the beginning of 1962 and organized a series of performances to promote Fluxus, called "Festum Fluxorum" ("Feast of Fluxuses"), the first of which was to take place at an art museum in Wiesbaden, Germany. Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams and I were among the participants in those "Fluxus Concerts," which would later be described as "Fluxconcerts." These concerts caused a great scandal and the press began to call the work "Fluxus" and the participants *die Fluxus Leute*, (the Fluxus people). After performances we stayed at Maciunas' house outside Wiesbaden in Ehlhalten am Taunus, staying up most of the night trying to figure out the implications of what we were doing, discussing Turkish music and Heideggerian hermeneutics,[3] which I saw as an appropriate theoretical underpinning to our work. Along the way we planned the tactics of our next steps, mapped out new pieces and dined on such delicacies as pink or green mashed potatoes and imbibed Unterberg, a bitter liqueur. If we were "the Fluxus people," what was this Fluxus we had unleashed, and what was it for? It was already several years too late to write a proper manifesto setting out our program, as most movements have done. Maciunas later drafted one, but only a few people signed; we were too far along in our work and too diverse for that.[4]

At Ehlhalten we had lots of time to talk about the history of what we were doing. Maciunas was well aware of Hellenistic Greek visual poetry that paralleled our colleagues' concrete poetry, though he mistakenly ascribed it to the Byzantines.[5] I told Maciunas about Quirinus Kühlmann (1644–1688), a German visionary poet who made visual poems called "Kühlpsalms" which were printed in his *Külhlpsalter* and recited on "Kühldays." Eventually Kühlmann was burnt as a heretic by the Tsar of Russia in Moscow, where he had gone to see if the Tsar would like to found a new church with him. Maciunas was delighted by the story. From Kühlmann we picked up the habit of using terms like "Fluxconcerts,

Fluxartists, Fluxreasons," and "Fluxanythings." These terms were useful to us since we were not happy with the connotations of "art," its liminality and overtly elitist associations. We preferred to think that the art-life dichotomy lay at the basis of Fluxus, that "Fluxart" was somehow closer to life than other art forms.

Before Maciunas returned to America in 1963 to present Fluxus formally in the USA, he had asked me to prepare the manuscript of what became *Jefferson's Birthday* (a cross section of my work from 1962 to 1963) for publication. Since I had been trained as a printer, was working at Zaccar Offset,[6] and was used to copy-editing, design and all the tech-



Dick Higgins, *1,000 Symphonies*. Three segments of a seven part musical score made by machine gun, each 52.1 x 44.4 cm., 1963. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

nical sides of printing and publishing, it was natural for me to be involved in the production of my book. However, when the book did not materialize in what seemed to be a reasonable amount of time, and when Maciunas could not promise when he could get to it, I founded Something Else Press,[7] incorporated on February 2, 1964 as "Something Else Press, Inc." *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface* was completed in August 1964. *Postface* was an account of the background and beginning of Fluxus, and the two books were bound together so that theory would not be divorced from practice. I called myself the "President" (and, for a time, sported a necktie in "presidential blue"). Barbara Moore was the first editor, and when she left in 1966, Emmett Williams moved from Europe to New York and became the next editor. The Board of Directors varied slightly, but it usually consisted of myself, Alison Knowles and Emmett Williams. While the Press never had more than five employees at one time (as many people as one could stuff into a taxi cab) we did have some interesting people aboard over the years. At the shipping and order desk alone we had dancers Meredith Monk and Judy Padow, composer-violinist Malcolm Goldstein, artist Susan Hartung, poets Denis

Dunn and Lawrence Freifeld, writer Mary Flanagan and others, not to mention the artists and writers who worked for the press in other capacities, for example Ann Noël Stevenson and Fluxartists Al Hansen and Ken Friedman.

Between 1966 and 1973, when I finally left "the Press," we produced ninety-five books. The problems we faced were typical of those of any small, independent publisher. Even though prices of books were high for the times, we lost so much money through distribution that our best selling titles were a threat to our very existence.[9] After my departure, two others were produced: Manfred Eaton's *Biofeedback Music* and a facsimile edition of Gertrude Stein's *As a wife has a cow, a love story*, which was printed but not distributed. My successor at the press was Jan Herman, a good editor who wanted to run the operation, but it turned out he had no gift for fund raising or diplomacy. While he would wrap packages and do chores, he would not do what the president of an organization should do: write grant proposals, visit with possible patrons, handle major sales, etc. By the Autumn of 1974, the debts of Something Else Press had accumulated to about $240,000, and, though its assets were much more than that, I was in no position to return to the Press and work this out. As co-owner of the Press (with Emmett Williams), I filed for bankruptcy.[10]

In 1972, I had started publishing very small, model editions of my works under the name "Unpublished Editions." Alison Knowles joined me in the project in 1976, and in 1978 so did John Cage, Philip Corner, Geoffrey Hendricks, Jackson Mac Low and, soon thereafter, Pauline Oliveros and Jerome Rothenberg.[11] That same year we changed the name of the press to "Printed Editions," as "witness to our new identity" (as our catalogue put it). Structurally, the new press was an unincorporated syndicate. The books were produced by each artist/member and sold through the network that had been built up for Something Else Press. All promotions were done on a cooperative basis and monies received were credited to the artist/author and paid out. There was only a minimal overhead to deal with. The system worked well until the end of 1986, at which time so many other publishers wanted to produce our main titles, that we had no major books for Printed Editions. So we agreed to disband – mission accomplished. That was the end of my formal involvement in book publishing.

As for Maciunas, his own first publications appeared in 1962 and 1963. *Fluxus*, intended as a magazine, never appeared except as an annual. The repro proofs which we had carefully corrected at Ehlhalten were never printed – they were eventually destroyed in a flood in Maciunas' car. But Fluxus did serve as the imprint on the yearbooks, books and "Fluxboxes" which began to appear in 1963. Maciunas set up shop in Canal Street among the surplus shops, and there he bought plastic boxes, collected the makings of kits, and pasted Fluxlabels onto covers. At the time of his death, in 1978, Maciunas was still producing Fluxus publications of one sort or another, mostly Fluxboxes. A few

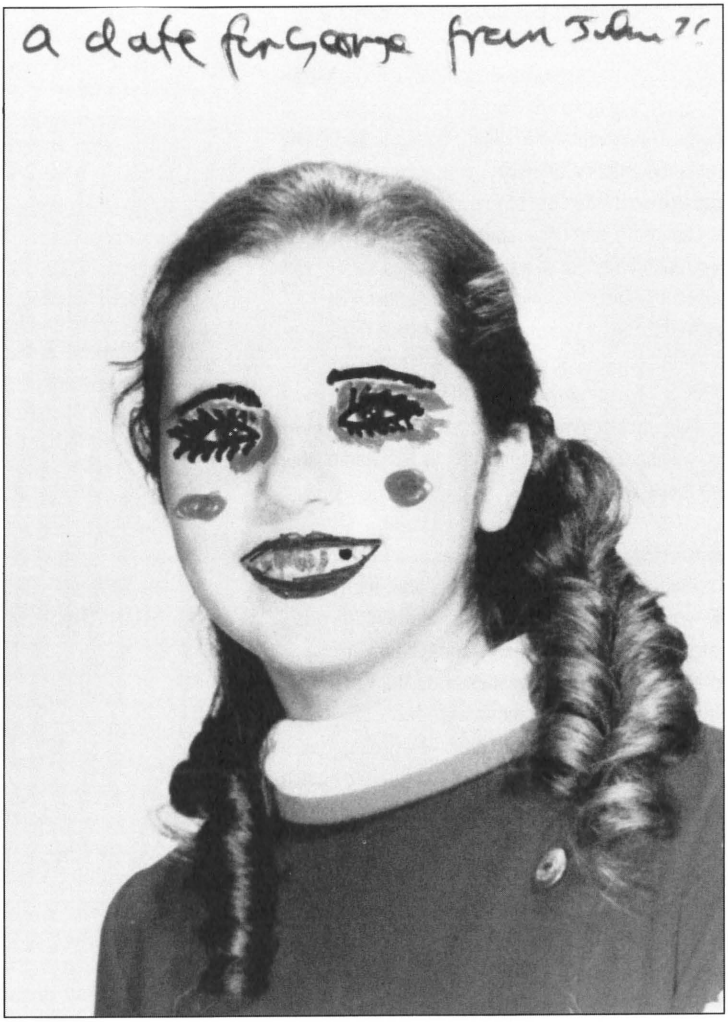
were even produced to his specifications posthumously by Barbara Moore's Reflux Editions.

Maciunas' style of publishing stressed original design, unusual materials, and the hand-made; objects in boxes and printed sheets held together by nuts and bolts. The advantage of object books is that there are minimal editorial costs: no binders' dies and sample cases to worry about, etc. However, the unit cost (the cost of making each copy) is relatively high, the results cannot be sold universally, and the production of large numbers takes too much time. For example, Maciunas set us up with piles of papers to crumple and then unfold for Mieko (formerly "Chieko") Shiomi's page in the *Fluxus Yearbox* (1963). It took three people an evening to produce the papers for her one page. There were to be forty or so pages. This is why so few copies of the *Fluxus Yearbox* were produced. In fact, Maciunas sometimes produced each copy of the publication to order, waiting a few weeks until the orders had built up and then assembling whatever was needed.

Maciunas' politics were crypto-communist; while never a party member, he loved to affect a conspiratorial manner, and his adoration of the USSR was not precisely rational. However, he had very little of the popular touch. Most of our circle, Fluxartists and Fluxfriends, had a strong populist streak which made us concerned about whether the Fluxboxes and publications were too elitist. (Our productions were "collectibles," and perhaps we were simply producing as much "for the collector" as traditional artists.) With this on my mind, around 1964 I began to have a vision of our publications being sold in supermarkets and other improbable mass outlets.

Nobody seems to know how Maciunas first learned graphic design, but throughout the 1960s he made his living doing design, paste-ups and mechanicals – what was known in the trade as "finished art," often for the Jack Marchard Studios.[12] But Marchard's main business was brochures, labels, logotypes, posters and pamphlets. The normative style of the time was the "Helvetica look" – set everything in Helvetica typeface, give it lots of room and let it go. Maciunas favored a tight, energetic look, which he achieved by using san serif types, especially News Gothic, which he then juxtaposed with old-fashioned and florid display faces, such as the old wood type faces in the romantique family. The layouts themselves were those appropriate to Marchard's business. Usually they were based on grids into which, or over which, the types were laid out so as to suggest a cellular form. For the Fluxus publications, for which Maciunas was not limited by the needs of Marchard's clients, he frequently placed his types upside down or at least on their sides; this too had the effect of emphasizing the grid, as well as having a humorous effect.

I, too, rejected the "Helvetica look." My design style became whatever was appropriate to book formats. Grids were, for the most part, useless for such large scale work. So I laid out my pages recto-linearly but



John Lennon, *a date for George from John*. Altered polaroid of an anonymous Beatle fan, 10.8 x 8.9 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

lined up the elements along the diagonals of the pages, setting my type to form triangles and trapezoids wherever possible and, when feasible, set poems and short chapters flush bottom on the type pages (usually they are set in the middle). I used larger and bolder running heads at the tops of pages than is usual in order to tie the page together and because I liked the legibility it gave to a sometimes scattered unorthodox page. Since I did not wish to develop favoritism among type faces, I used whatever aces a particular supplier had, often making my selections by means of chance operations, using dice.[13] In this way I became familiar with many seldom-used or old fashioned fonts which gave the Something Else Press books their look of old – but new. I liked Maciunas' designs, but he never commented on mine so I assume he didn't reciprocate. But what Maciunas really did *not* like was the withdrawal of my energy from the production of Fluxus publications.

Yet all along the move had been all but inevitable. I wanted to offer Fluxus to everybody, to have Fluxus and Fluxus-type work (similar works by other artists who were outside our circle) available in airport book shops and in grocery stores. Maciunas focused on the work being cheap but gave little attention to making them accessible to ordinary people; to promotion and distribution beyond the order forms that were printed in his *CC V TRE* newspapers, which, of course, had to circulate among the right people to function at all, people who already had some idea what they were looking at. Concern about this made my withdrawal from the production of the publications more or less just a matter of time.

I had protested strongly to Maciunas in response to his threat to withdraw his legal sponsorship of Ay-O and other foreign Fluxartists (whose status required letters of support) if they participated in Allan Kaprow's production of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Originale*, which was being produced as part of Charlotte Moorman's Festival of the Avant Garde for 1966. Both Moorman and Stockhausen were anathema to Maciunas, the former as an exponent of European cultural chauvinism (was American cultural chauvinism any better, I asked) and the latter as an unprincipled opportunist.[14]

Maciunas chose to view my protest and involvement in the production of *Originale* as a withdrawal from Fluxus. He denounced me in the chart histories which he constantly revised. In two versions of the chart, he stated that I had withdrawn from the group to found a rival organization.

However, I kept describing myself as a Fluxperson and my Fluxfriends kept including me in their projects. So I was not really excluded from Fluxus. Then, one july day in 1966, Maciunas and I sat down outside the Something Else Press office in the city park which served as my private conference room, and we talked over our objectives. Maciunas and I might not have agreed about the relation of our activities to society as a whole, but we did agree on the objectives of our publishing activities. While the Fluxus publications should serve as paradigmatic models or prototypes of various sorts, the best role for Something Else Press was an outreach series, useful for getting our ideas beyond the charmed circle of cognoscenti to which, reluctantly, we belonged; one which could present all kinds of alternative and intermedial work to the larger public. The press tried to be "something else," to provide an alternative to what commercially oriented trade publications were doing and, since there was The Something Else Gallery in the front room of Alison's and my home, to what commercial galleries were showing. This was a position of which Maciunas heartily approved, and thus the schism ended. I was again included by Maciunas in Fluxus and so it continued until his death.

Fluxus was to be thought of as having four aspects: a series of publications, a group of artists, the forms associated with these publications and the artists' performances and the theoretical positions inherent in these. It was not so much a movement, with a clearly defined group of artists setting out to achieve a particular program, as a "tendency," organized on a collective basis: something more pluralistic and less exclusive than the other iconoclastic movements of our century which it in one way or another resembled – Dada, Futurism, Surrealism, Russian Constructivism.

Something Else Press was to be a parallel expression, covering much the same ground; committed to the development of a context for Fluxus and intermedial art forms by bringing the work to the largest possible public in an undiluted form. Whatever we did, however, it would have to coincide with our name and be "something else."[15] But if it was to fulfill its roles, the Press would have to include kinds of intermedia other than Fluxus. Otherwise we would not be creating an appropriate context for our reception. The editorial Board – Emmett Williams (and, earlier, Barbara Moore), Alison Knowles, myself and, at the end, Jan Herman – focused on other possibilities: printing such intermedial areas as concrete poetry (which Emmett Williams had pioneered),[16] new forms of fiction or proto-novel,[17] and works of past avant-gardes which we felt were important yet either misunderstood or under-appreciated.[18] This was in keeping with Maciunas' and my view that cultural innovation is cumulative, that each innovation adds to the store of possibilities and does not simply replace some earlier mode forever as, by contrast, is often true in science.

The assumption that replacement applies to culture and art as much as science, that the introduction of a new form does not simply add to the available possibilities but makes the older ones obsolete, is what I

call the "neoteric fallacy" ("neoteric" is a rare word but it is not my coinage; it denotes a taste for or interest in the new). Opposed to this fallacy would be Maciunas' and my views that brothers and sisters in artistic innovation have always been active, that the avant-garde is eternal, but that many of the most worthwhile innovations have been lost over the centuries or have been repressed. This would be true of secular drama in the Middle Ages, of unusual styles of music in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries or in some non-Western classical music tradition (notably Central Asian Turkish and Mongol styles), as well as of such forms of intermedia such as visual poetry and graphic musical notation.

Maciunas announced several issues of his *Fluxus* magazine which would be devoted to this kind of material. However, they never appeared and, in fact, he barely had a chance to scratch the surface. I was more fortunate, because when I left Something Else Press I had the leisure to gather materials of this sort together, resulting in my book *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (1987).[19] I also worked out the first stages of a hermeneutic theory for intermedia art in general and Fluxus in particular,[20] thus completing some of the objectives which had been set out during our late night discussions at Ehlhalten in 1962, namely clarifying the historical context and roots of Fluxus and beginning the task of establishing its theoretical matrix, without which it is hard to evaluate individual works or to develop a critical vocabulary for Fluxus or, indeed, for many other art currents of recent years – conceptual art, art performance or, arguably, language poetry.[21]

So Fluxus and the Something Else Press had related objectives, but they were different too. The Press largely grew out of Fluxus, and Unpublished/Printed Editions out of the Press. The Press could not have performed its outreach if it had used the kind of experimental formats which were appropriate to Maciunas' Fluxus publications, nor could he have provided the experimental prototypes, if he had confined himself to books. Of course there are exceptions to this as well as overlaps. Maciunas did, in fact, do several traditional-format books early on in Fluxus, and Something Else Press issued several books in boxes or on cards or portfolio books. For example, Robert Filliou's *Ample Food for Stupid Thought* (1965) came in two editions, a traditional book one and a postcard set in a box. Wolf Vostell's *Dé-coll/age Happenings* (1966) came in a box which included a set of black and white reproductions of his happenings notations, a book with their texts, and Alka Seltzer® packet glued to a piece of aluminum foil and a trimmed matzoh cracker. Allan Kaprow's *Calling* (1968) was arranged as a visual poem on vinyl sheets with plywood covers. My own *foew@ombwhnw* (1969) was bound as a prayer book.[22] But these are just that, exceptions. Most of the Something Else books were only experimental as regards the printed page, not in format, trim size or binding. We also published twenty pamphlets on handsome colored papers, the Great Bear Pamphlets. These cost up to $2.00 and were thus rather inexpensive, even for the

time. They were available in at least one grocery store – the Berkeley Coop in Berkeley, California where they were available for some time in a display case beside the vegetable counter.[23] We also became the object of a satirical wisecrack in an article in *Harper's Magazine*, which mocked the "poetry readings at the Something Else Gallery." The only reading we ever had there was a non-stop marathon reading of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Maybe Joyce was too modern for them. Anyway, the appearance of such mention in an establishment magazine, or the reviews of the Williams' *Anthology of Concrete Poetry* in *Vogue* and *Newsweek* indicate that we were getting to places which the new arts seldom penetrate, and this too was appropriate to our program.

Not only did Fluxus and Something Else Press include many of the same participants, but our objectives were closely parallel. They were twin sides of the same coin. Although it included fewer people, Printed Editions had similar objectives to those of Something Else Press, objectives more suited to Printed Editions' role as a smaller "small press" (a term which covers too many independent publishers), but our needs and purposes were appropriate to a cooperative and our entire program was devoted to aspects of our members' work. The relationship between Fluxus and Something Else Press was, therefore, a symbiotic one, while Printed Editions zeroed in on a portion of Something Else Press. All three form an overall story.

NOTES

[1] The term "event," used in this way, is of uncertain origin; the composer Henry Cowell, with whom both Cage and myself studied, used it, but Cowell may have picked it up from Cage as well as vice versa.

[2] La Monte Young [and Jackson Mac Low], eds., *An Anthology* (New York, 1962). The book was reprinted by the Heiner Friedrich Gallery in New York in 1970.

[3] While Maciunas viewed Heidegger as a lifelong fascist whose work was a justification for fascism, I didn't.

[4] He never had the authority within our group that, say, André Breton did among the surrealists. Maciunas might try to read people in or out of Fluxus, but as a group we operated more by consensus, regarding Maciunas as a member of the group who had great gifts for publicity and energy for correspondence, but ultimately as just one among equals. Though tempted to be dictatorial at times (who isn't?), Maciunas was glad to accept that Fluxus was a collective and, usually, to function within that context.

[5] Actually the seven principal Greek visual poems are much older, and the few Byzantine pieces are mesostics. All this I subsequently described in my book *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (Albany, NY, 1987).

[6] Zaccar Offset became the main printer for Maciunas and Fluxus. The 1977 feast in honor of Maciunas took place on the premises of Zaccar Offset, though by then they had moved to a different space from the one described in my *Postface* (1964).

[7] The general story of the Something Else Press has been described elsewhere, most fully by Peter Frank in his monograph *Something Else Press* (New Paltz, 1983).

[8] Since those days Ms. Moore has written memorably about Fluxus, and she is currently preparing the catalogue for a major exhibition of Something Else Press, to take place at the Granary Gallery in New York.

[9] We produced a total of 18,000 copies of Emmett Williams' *An Anthology* and 17,000 copies of Claes Oldenburg's *Store Days* (1969), respectable numbers by any accounting.

[10] Jan opposed the bankruptcy, as did Emmett, though he had no idea where new capital might be found. In the aftermath of the bankruptcy the two of them attacked me roundly, accusing me, in an interview published in the *West Coast Poetry Review* (Winter 1976–77), of such things as, when "things got rough," taking a pleasure jaunt to Frankfurt, Germany with my secretary, Nelleke

Rosenthal and implicitly wasting the Press' resources. Well, I did have a part-time secretary, Nelleke, who was Dutch and who had a brother in Frankfurt. In September 1973, although I had left the Press in July, I decided to attend the Frankfurt Book Fair, and Nelleke came along to visit her brother and to help staff our booth at the Fair. We worked hard and sold more books in one week there than Jan Herman had sold during the entire year. While Emmett came to understand this, Jan Herman never did figure out just what had gone wrong.

[11] All but Oliveros had been Something Else Press authors, and an Oliveros book had been proposed.

[12] Marchards studio had the advantage of being a place where nobody smoked, important to Maciunas since he had terrible asthma.

[13] To do this, I would make a list of up to thirty-six faces, assign a number to each, then use dice to select a number between one and thirty-six, and then start from whatever face I had selected. This resulted in some of the Something Else books being set in unusual faces or faces which are normally only used for display.

[14] This was in line with the Marcyism of the *Worker's World* politics of Henry Flynt, a marginal Fluxperson who took an interesting but, I felt, unproductive anti-art position which saw art as bourgeois, a view which even Lenin had once denounced as "typically Trotskyite." In fact this is why, by way of contrast, Emmett Williams and I, the next year, invited the W.E.B. DuBoise Clubs, which was a communist youth group, to contribute a manifesto to the *Manifestos* pamphlet published by the Something Else Press in our inexpensive Great Bear Pamphlets series in 1967. All the other manifestos in that booklet were either by Fluxus artists or were somehow in the same spirit as these. I was adamantly opposed to our potential marginalization for the sake of ideological purity; we were already marginalized enough in the cultural world without adding to the problem. Most of the Fluxartists were, in any case, quite apolitical in spite of the typical political militancy of the times.

[15] In the 1950s the Fluxartist Robert Filliou had already issued his *Manifesto d'Autrisme*, declaring the need always to be doing something other than the normative. This was very close to the Something Else Manifesto, which I authored in 1963 when I first decided to start Something Else Press. Both manifestos are included in the *Manifestos* pamphlet, already mentioned. I have been unable to find out where Filliou's manifesto first appeared, and was unaware of its existence when I wrote my own manifesto; mine first was printed inside the dust jacket of the first Something Else Press book, *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface* (1964), also already mentioned.

[16] Such works include Emmett Williams, *An Anthology of Concrete Poetry* (1968), Eugene Gomringer, *The Book of Constellations* (1970), and the various books of Emmett's own poetry which we produced.

[17] Daniel Spoerri's *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance* (1966), my own *A Book About Love War Death* (1972) Kostelanetz, ed., *Breakthrough Fictioneers* (1972) and Toby Mac Lennan's *1 Walked Out of 2 and Forgot it* (1973) are of this sort.

[18] For example, such works would include Richard Huelsenbeck's *Dada Almanach* (1966) or Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans* (1969) and the four other Stein works which we reissued. These last began the current popularity of Stein today, since, at the time we were doing our reissues, Stein was sometimes discussed but, since her works were so hard to obtain, she was very seldom read.

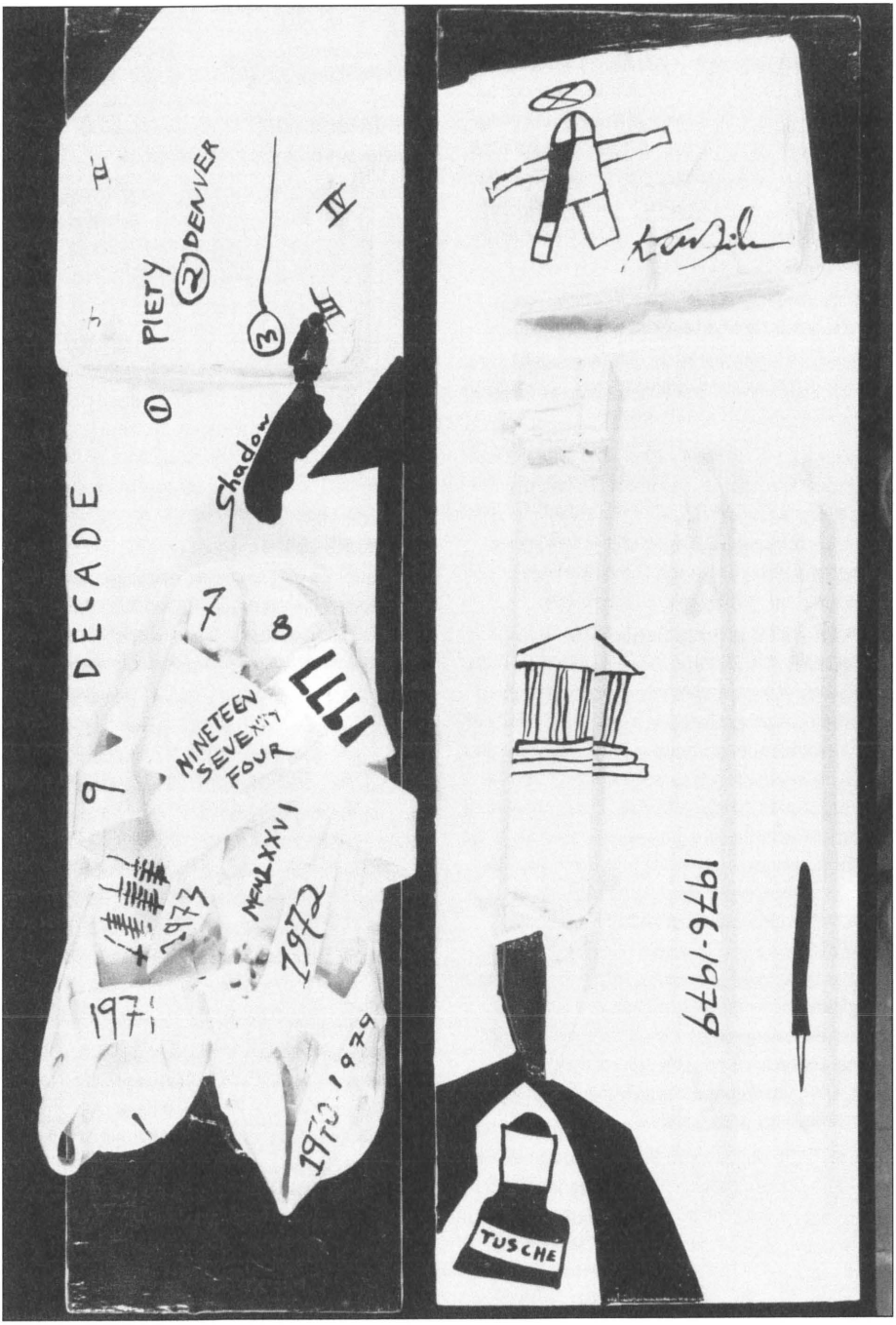
[19] This book, already mentioned, documents some 1800 visual poems from before 1900 C.E. from all over the world and also presents a gathering of related phenomena, such as old graphic musical notations.

[20] These theories originally appeared, for the most part, in the *Something Else Newsletter*, starting in February 1966 with "Intermedia," which revived that term from S.T. Coleridge. The early texts went through various revisions, as they began to compose parts of a whole, until they reached their final versions in two books, *A Dialectic of Centuries: Notes towards a Theory of the New Arts* (1st ed., West Glover, VT, 1978 and [revised] 2nd ed., West Glover, VT, 1979) and *Horizons: the Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia* (Carbondale, IL, 1983).

[21] Most of what passes for criticism in those areas offers potential vocabulary but little insight, since the relationship among the words is not clear and no contextualization is offered for the work in terms of its diachronic or current relationships. This point I expand on in an article, "Five Myths of Postmodernism" in *Art Papers* 13 n. 1 (1989).

[22] There were also others. Somehow these publications can also be viewed as early Artists' Books.

[23] I used to have a photograph of the rack of *Great Bear Pamphlets* beside the green peppers.



Ken Friedman, *Decade* and *Tusche*. Two relief sculptures, 64 x 16.5 x 9 cm. and 63.5 x 21 x 7.5 cm., ca. 1979. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts. The University of Iowa. Gift of Ken Friedman. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.

The author discusses the development of Fluxus as a community of individuals who responded to complex, context-specific interactions among themselves, yet who persisted in their struggle against the codification of their activities into "artistic cohesion." Myths of periods of ideological unity and the hierarchy of status dependent upon participation in key Fluxus events are refuted while an attempt is made to provide an overview of concensus among scholars, curators and critics concerning core and peripheral membership in the Fluxus circle.

F L U X U S:
Global Community, Human Dimensions

Ken Friedman with James Lewes

Ken Friedman, pp. 155–179
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

The Birth of a Community

As Fluxus enters its fourth decade, it has become the focus of far more attention than it received thirty years ago. When Dick Higgins and George Maciunas brought me into Fluxus in 1966, many of the people I met in the art world were mystified. "Fluxus is dead," they'd say with the certainty of people who thought they knew everything there was to know in the New York art world, which seemed to mean that they thought they knew everything there was to know between the sun and the outer moons of Jupiter. Being just a kid at the time, I didn't know what they were talking about, and that's just as well.

Fluxus had been born in Wiesbaden some four years before I arrived on the scene. It actually went back to the 1950s, when a series of meetings, friendships and relationships in different places on different continents began to bring a community of people into contact with each other. These people, in America, in Europe, in Japan, were eventually to form what is now known as Fluxus.

There are legends on top of legends surrounding Fluxus, some true, some half-true, some so ridiculous they could never have been true and some so good they ought to be true. I realized early on that everyone in Fluxus had a rather different vision of what Fluxus was or ought to be. I heard different stories explaining its origin, and different accounts of what it meant. There is some element of truth in many of the misinterpretations of Fluxus. George Maciunas did coin the name Fluxus, but he was not the founder of the Fluxus group, the community that came to use the name. He was the founder of a magazine named Fluxus that never appeared, and convenor of a festival that provided an occasion for the name to find its use. Maciunas may have tried to found a Fluxus group or a Fluxus Collective, but it never happened. Instead, he became a central and influential figure in the group that did. The real origins of Fluxus extend back into the 1950s, before Maciunas, and Fluxus endures after. As significant a figure as he was, Fluxus did not begin or end with George Maciunas.

As one of several founders, George Maciunas played a key role in shaping many of the Fluxus activities. So did Emmett Williams, George Brecht, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik and several others. So did several who were not at Wiesbaden, whose work helped to precipitate the 1962 festival tours, artists including La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, Yoko Ono and Robert Watts. Other artists had been working in experimental ways; people like Willem de Ridder, Henning Christiansen, Joseph Beuys and Ben Vautier. Still others began to enter Fluxus through contact with members of the burgeoning community; for example, Milan Knizak, Jeff Berner and me. The shape of Fluxus was defined by a variety of meetings and engagements. Geoffrey Hendricks had been on the scene since the mid-50s, but instead of joining John

Cage's class at the New School, he was busy getting an MA in art history at Columbia. Two other Columbia figures from that era, Bici Forbes Hendricks and Philip Corner, also became members of the classic Fluxus group. Some moved on, like Berner and Forbes Hendricks. Others came along. Davi det Hompson and the Sharits brothers, Paul and Greg, got in touch from Indiana. Larry Miller worked with Robert Watts at Rutgers, and Jock Reynolds studied with him at the University of California. Things kept growing, and changing. The way Fluxus evolved has shaped the meaning that it holds. There's been a lot of talk about Fluxus over the years. If it's interesting to talk about Fluxus at all, it's interesting to talk about Fluxus in interesting ways.

Considering a Community

One of the most interesting ways to explore Fluxus is to consider its development as a community. Fluxus was a community. It began as communities do, in the migration and meeting of people. For nearly thirty years, discussions of Fluxus have been launched in the negative, descriptions of what Fluxus is not. That sort of analysis eventually leads nowhere. What Fluxus *isn't* is important, yet it is only important as the emptiness at the center of a cup is important to the cup's nature. It does not describe what the cup does. While Fluxus has been a floating "festival of misfits" for over three decades, that simple fact doesn't explain Fluxus' durability. It certainly fails to explain its achievements.

Partial Definitions

It is valuable to examine a number of the ways in which Fluxus has been defined. Each of these definitions has been partially accurate and somewhat inadequate. Fluxus has been seen as a "group, a forum, a movement, a school, a collective, a philosophy, a cooperative," and more. In part – and only in part – it has been all these things, resonating to the frequencies implied in each of these terms while fulfilling none of them completely. Aspects of each term denote aspects of the reality of Fluxus. None of them describes properly what Fluxus is.

As any community grows, Fluxus grew through the actions and interaction of the people who developed it. Unlike many communities that formalize into towns or nation-states, churches or universities, there was never a point at which the Fluxus community codified itself through a formal statement. One issue is a key to understanding the fluid, loose nature of the Fluxus community and its identity. Nearly everyone in and around Fluxus agrees on at least one thing: Fluxus will never have a specific and single definition. That may be considered the first clause in the unwritten Fluxus charter, an agreement to disagree.

Dismissing a Myth

Despite discussions of a "collective" or "euphoric" period in the evolution of Fluxus, there was never a time of ideological unity. The notion that a Fluxus manifesto once existed that a number of the artists signed is a myth. It has been supported by ambiguous evidence, artifacts that

have been misinterpreted as documents. The items in question are graphic artifacts created by George Maciunas. They bear statements that might – under appropriate circumstances – be read as manifestos. Some of the statements were even *proposed* as manifestos. No one ever signed them, not even Maciunas himself.

Several of the documents also present lists of names. It's a physical fact that the lists appear on the same artifacts as the statements. What the lists mean is another matter. At no time did the artists whose names appear in the lists sign the manifestos voiced in the statements. All of the artists with whom I have spoken are clear about this. Further, Maciunas seems never to have represented these artifacts as *signed* statements: their actual nature was ambiguous.

No original manifestos have been found bearing signatures because none existed. The notion that any Fluxus artist once agreed to these statements, later to change his or her mind, is based on the misguided assumption that the statement was signed in the first place. No evidence supports this assertion. To the contrary, there exists a large body of correspondence between artists and Maciunas and among the artists themselves that declares specific refusals to sign any of the proposed manifestos.[1]

Different scholars offer a number of plausible conjectures regarding these graphic presentations and the lists of names that are associated with them. One suggestion is that Maciunas printed statements that he felt to be characteristic of Fluxus, including a number of proposed manifestos. To these he appended lists of the names of artists, composers and others whom he felt represented what he saw as the Fluxus position. If this is so, the conjunction of statements and names is innocent and circumstantial. Another hypothesis suggests that Maciunas put the statements forward as proposed manifestos together with the names of artists he hoped would come to sign them. This suggests wishful thinking or an active political campaign. A more recent suggestion is that Maciunas, familiar with Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideology, intended that it appear as if these manifestos had in fact been signed, even though they had not. In this view, the documents were a form of propaganda or agit-prop. The purpose of the exercise would have been to convince individuals that most of the others had already signed, and that they, too, should go with the tide of historical dialectic by acquiescing, retroactively, to having signed.

Some evidence exists for each view. I feel that the matter is best left open. Each of these three interpretations of the artifacts and their associated lists has merit. However, the conclusion supported by all three views – the notion of a Fluxus summoned into being by George Maciunas as an ideological, revolutionary cadre – is nonsense. Because this has been repeated so often, it bears refutation in any serious discussion of how the Fluxus community took shape. Fluxus was – and is – far richer and more interesting.

Definitions of Community

The best short definition of Fluxus is an elegant little manifesto published by Dick Higgins in the form of a rubber stamp:

> Fluxus is not:
> – a moment in history, or
> – an art movement.
>
> Fluxus is:
> – a way of doing things,
> – a tradition, and
> – a way of life and death.

In these words, Higgins summarizes the ephemeral (that is, time-bound), transient (that is, transformational) and essentially human (that is, interactive) development of Fluxus. Defined by patterns of action and interaction, Fluxus grew organically through a number of periods in time.

Fluxus lacked the ideological and artistic cohesion to be characterized as an art movement. Even so, the ways that people worked with each other, and the traditions they developed created enough cohesion to make the term movement appropriate in other ways. Those ways became the reality of Fluxus. That reality gave Fluxus its living, durable qualities, qualities reflected in and developed through the lives of its members. Those qualities are well summarized by the term community. As defined in Webster's, the term illuminates several aspects of Fluxus:

> **community:** *1: a:* a unified body of individuals: as a: STATE, COMMONWEALTH *b:* the people with common interests living in a particular area; broadly : the area itself <the problems of a large ~> *c:* an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location *d:* a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society <a ~ of retired persons> *e:* a group linked by common policy *f:* a body of persons or nations having a common history, or common social, economic and political interests <the international ~> *g:* a body of persons of common and esp. professional interests scattered through a larger society <the academic ~> *2:* society at large *3: a:* joint ownership of participation <~ of goods> *b:* common character : LIKENESS <~ of interests> *c:* social activity : FELLOWSHIP *d:* a social state of condition.[2]

Fluxus is a community, much like any other. One can imagine Fluxus as a kind of town spread a little farther through space and time than most, the original global village.

Imagine a town, a community of people who see each other on a regular basis, some of whom also work together. In their lives together, they cooperate, they compete, they form friendships, antagonisms, loyalties and jealousies. Often the same people who work together on one project work against each other on the next. Two loyal friends who support each other on a personal level, fight vigorously on opposite sides of a political issue and yet remain fast friends. Political or business associates work together on specific projects yet dislike each other as individuals. Today's argument is tomorrow's joke. The myriad shifts of

thought, affection and commerce that define human interaction take place in time and space through a series of balances and shifts. That's Fluxus, if anything is.

This is true of other communities. It simply demonstrates the fact that the paradigm of community is valid here as elsewhere. One sees it in the priestly hierarchy of the Catholic church. One sees it in the lay body of the Lutherans. One sees it in cities and in towns. One sees it in universities.

There are both similarities and distinctions in Fluxus. We are a special community,[3] as all communities are special at a specific level. Like a professional community (e.g., "the community of scholars, the intelligence community"), our community is international. Like a self-declared nation-state (Ireland, Norway or Zimbabwe) or an organization (Union Club, Red Cross or the International Chess federation), we convened ourselves, rather than being summoned into existence. Like many communities, we do not remain together for ideological or economic reasons, but for issues more complex that may perhaps touch on both. Like all communities that endure, Fluxus is cemented by "a way of doing things, a tradition, and a way of life and death."

Who Fluxus Is (or Was)

If one considers a circular field of members, with concentric rings moving outward from core involvement to participation on a less central basis, few dispute the fact that many people have been involved in Fluxus. However, the issue of key participation by central artists is a subject of dispute, and has been for years. For example, Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles are among the few whose activities extend from the pre-Fluxus period through the present day. Their engagement began in the 1950s during the Cage course. They were leading figures in pre-Fluxus activities long before Maciunas himself became involved. Their participation continues through *An Anthology*, the so-called collective period, the era of feuds and disputes, and on into the time after Maciunas' death. A curator, who defines Fluxus based on continued active participation, will thus see them as central figures. On the other hand, an individual who defines Fluxus predominantly in the light of Maciunas' projects and who measures importance by the number of Maciunas-produced multiples objects and editions, would weigh Robert Watts and George Brecht as the central figures. Conversely, a curator or historian who views a Fluxus based on philosophy, may well identify Robert Filliou, Ben Vautier or even Joseph Beuys as the key members. Questions of centrality, organizing principles and participation are important enough to have been the subject of many arguments and assertions, now and since the first days.

A Broad View of Fluxus

In 1981 or so, Peter Frank and I did a simple checklist analysis of the names of artists presented in the exhibitions, catalogues and books on Fluxus up to that time which Frank organized into a chart. James Lewes,

who as a graduate research assistant at Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts at The University of Iowa, is interested in Fluxus as a communicative environment, brought the chart forward in time.[4]

Fluxchart: An Overview of Assessments of the Fluxus Community

> This chart is intended to provide an overview of consensus amongst a group of scholars, curators and critics concerning the core and periphery membership of Fluxus. To establish such a consensus, a number of sources including George Maciunas' Fluxlists (published between 1964 and 1974), Jon Hendricks' four volumes and nineteen exhibitions have been used. Each artist is marked with an ⊗ under the relevant entries, and by tracking the artists across different entries, one is able to view at a glance where the scholars/curators have located him/her with regard to the core or periphery of Fluxus.
>
> The artists are listed alphabetically across the top of the chart and the exhibition catalogues and Fluxlists are listed numerically and in chronological order on the left-hand side. —J.L.

Key to exhibitions, catalogues and Fluxlists:

1 Listed by George Maciunas as Fluxmembers (1966–1974).

2 *Happening & Fluxus* (1970). Exhibition at Kölnischer Kunstverein (Cologne), curated by Hans Sohm & Harold Szeemann.

3 *Fluxshoe* (1972). Traveling exhibition, (exhibited in Falmouth School of Art, Exeter University, Croydon, Museum of Modern Art Oxford, Cardiff, Nottingham, Blackburn & Hastings), curated by David Mayor.

4 *Fluxus International & Co* (1979). Exhibition at Elac (Nice) and Galerie d'Art Contemporain (Nice), curated by Gino Di Maggio & Ben Vautier.

5 *Fluxus the Most Radical and Experimental Art Movement of the 1960s* (1979) Harry Ruhé.

6 *Fluxus: Aspekte Eines Phänomens* (1981). Exhibition at Von der Heydt Museum (Wuppertal), curated by Ursula Peters.

7 Artists included by Jon Hendricks in *Fluxus Etc* (1981), *Fluxus Addenda I* & *Fluxus Addenda II* (both 1983) and *Fluxus Codex* (1988).

8 *1962 Wiesbaden Fluxus 1982* (1982) Exhibition at Harlekin Art (Wiesbaden), Museum Wiesbaden (Wiesbaden), & Neue Galerie der Staatliche (Kassel) curated by René Block.

9 *Fluxus 25 Years* (1987) Exhibition at Williams College Museum of Art (Williamstown, Massachachusetts), curated by Dick Higgins.

10 *Fluxus and Friends: Selection From the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts Collection* (1988). Exhibition at the University of Iowa Museum (Iowa City), curated by Estera Milman.

11 *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (1988). Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (New York), curated by Jon Hendricks and Clive Philpot.

12 *Fluxus & Happening* (1989) Exhibition at Galerie 1900–2000 & Galerie du Genie (Paris) curated by Charles Dreyfus.

13 *Fluxus & Co* (1989). Exhibition at Emily Harvey Gallery (New York), curated by Emily Harvey.

14 *Fluxus: Moment and Continuum* (1989). Exhibition at Stux Gallery (New York), curated by Vik Muniz.

15 *Fluxus SPQR* (1990). Exhibition Galleria Fontanella Borghese (Rome), curated by Alessandro Massi.

16 *Fluxus* (1990). Exhibition at Høvikodden Kunstsenter (Norway), curated by Ina Bloom.

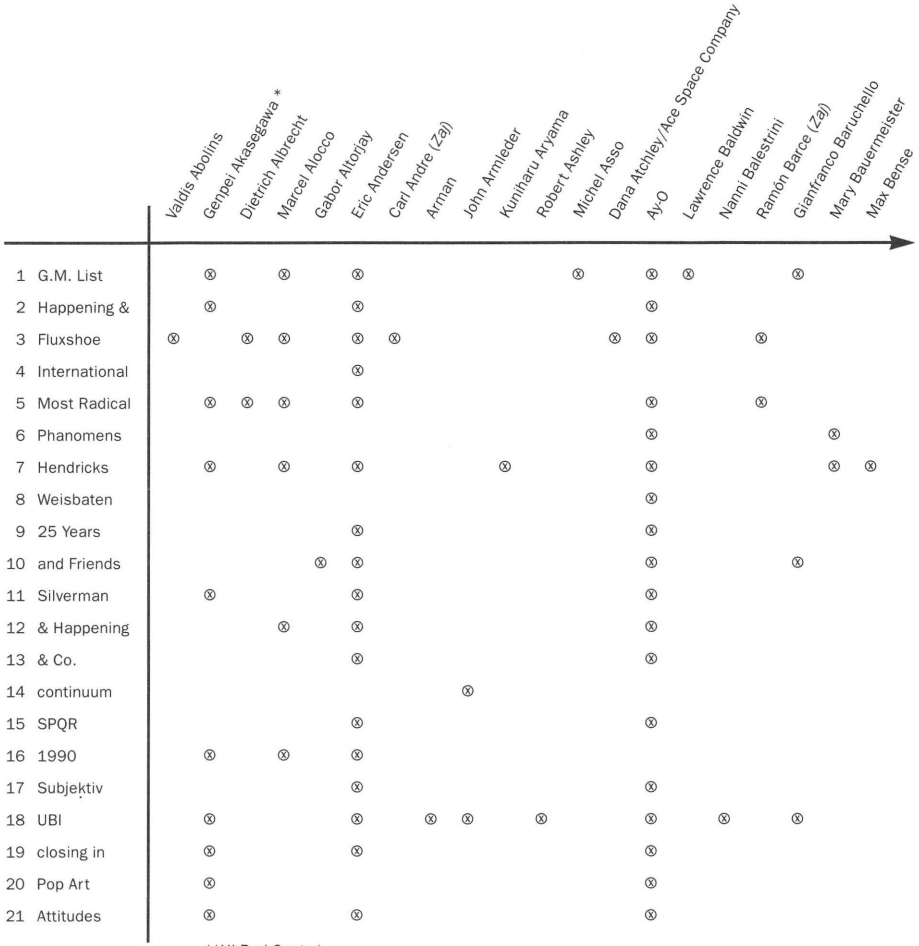
17 *Fluxus Subjektiv* (1990). Exhibition at Galerie Krinzinger (Vienna), curated by Ursula Krinzinger, Milan Knizak, Peter Weibel, Brigitte Kowanz, Hermann Nitsch, Ben Vautier, Francesco Conz.

18 *Ubi Fluxus, Ibi Motus* (1990). Exhibition at the Venice Biennale, curated by Achille Bonito Oliva, Gino Di Maggio, Gianni Sassi.

19 *Fluxus Closing In* (1990). Exhibition at Salvatore Ala (New York), by Salvatore Ala and Caroline Martin.

20 *Pop Art* (1991–1992). Traveling exhibition (opened at Royal College of Art London), curated by Marco Livingstone & Thomas Kellein.

21 *Flux Attitudes* (1991–1992). Traveling exhibition (opened at HallWalls, Buffalo New York), curated by Susan Hapgood and Cornelia Lauf.



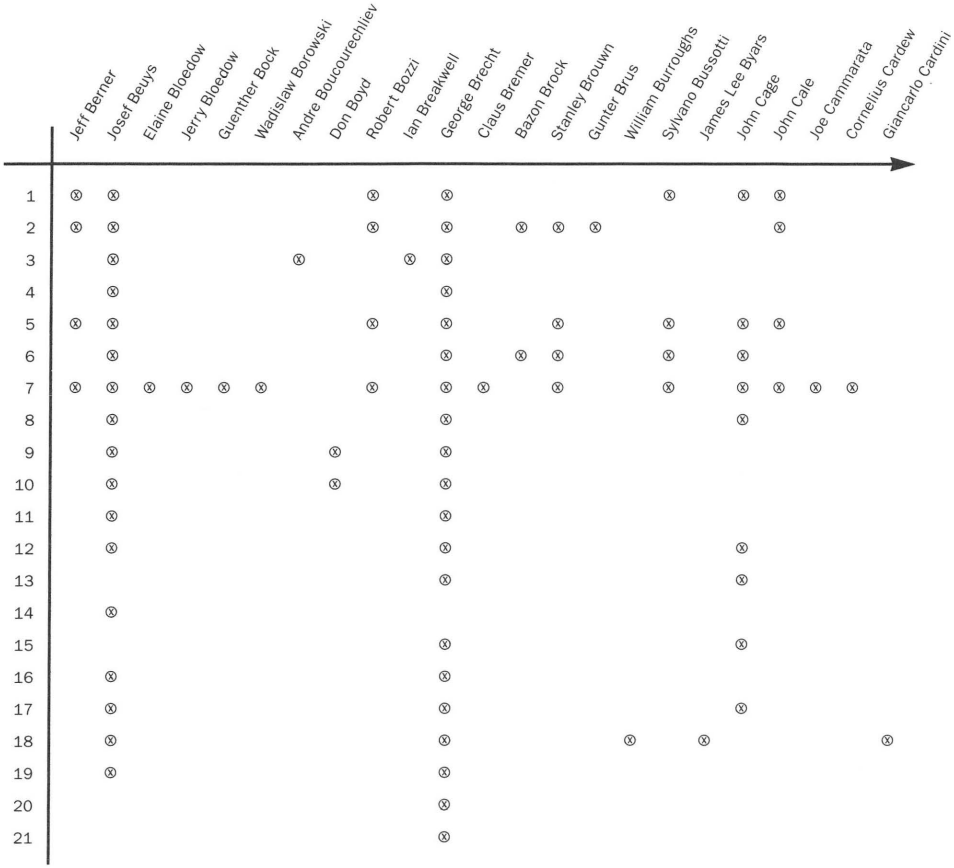
(Hi Red Center)

Chart compiled by James Lewes, April 3, 1992

Interpreting the Chart

Different ways of organizing historical facts will reveal different issues. Some will demonstrate a sense of centrality to the community venture. Some will show the divisions and discontinuities in Fluxus, different lines along which the community is shaped. Any community is as much defined by its divisions as its cohesions, and Fluxus is no different.

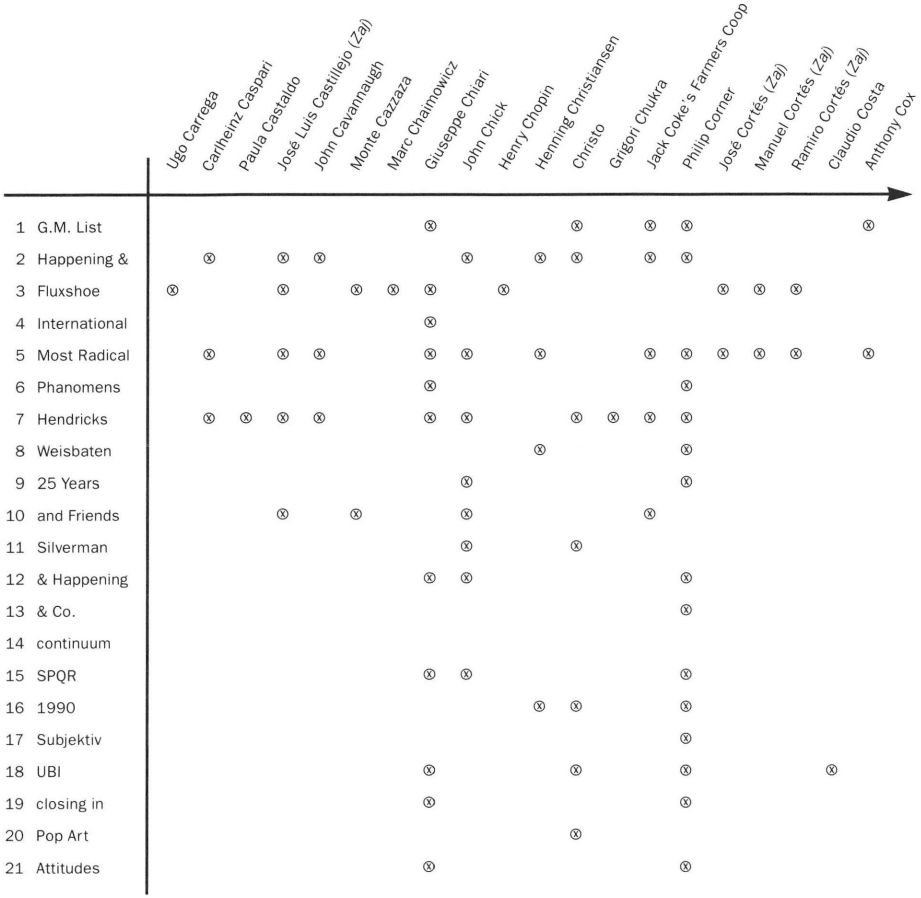
It would seem fair to consider inclusion in more than half of the compilations as representing a consensus of opinion that an artist is a key participant in Fluxus. On that basis, the following artists could be seen as the core of the Fluxus community: Eric Andersen, Ay-O, Joseph Beuys, George Brecht, Phillip Corner, Jean Dupuy, Robert Filliou, Albert Fine, Ken Friedman, Al Hansen, Geoffrey Hendricks, Dick Higgins, Joe Jones, Milan Knizak, Alison Knowles, Addi Koepcke, Takehisa Kosugi, Shigeko Kubota, George Maciunas, Larry Miller, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Benjamin Patterson, Takako Saito, Tomas Schmit, Mieko Shiomi, Daniel Spoerri, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell, Yoshimasa Wada, Robert Watts, Emmett Williams and La Monte Young. These thirty-three names represent a broad vision of the Fluxus community as determined by

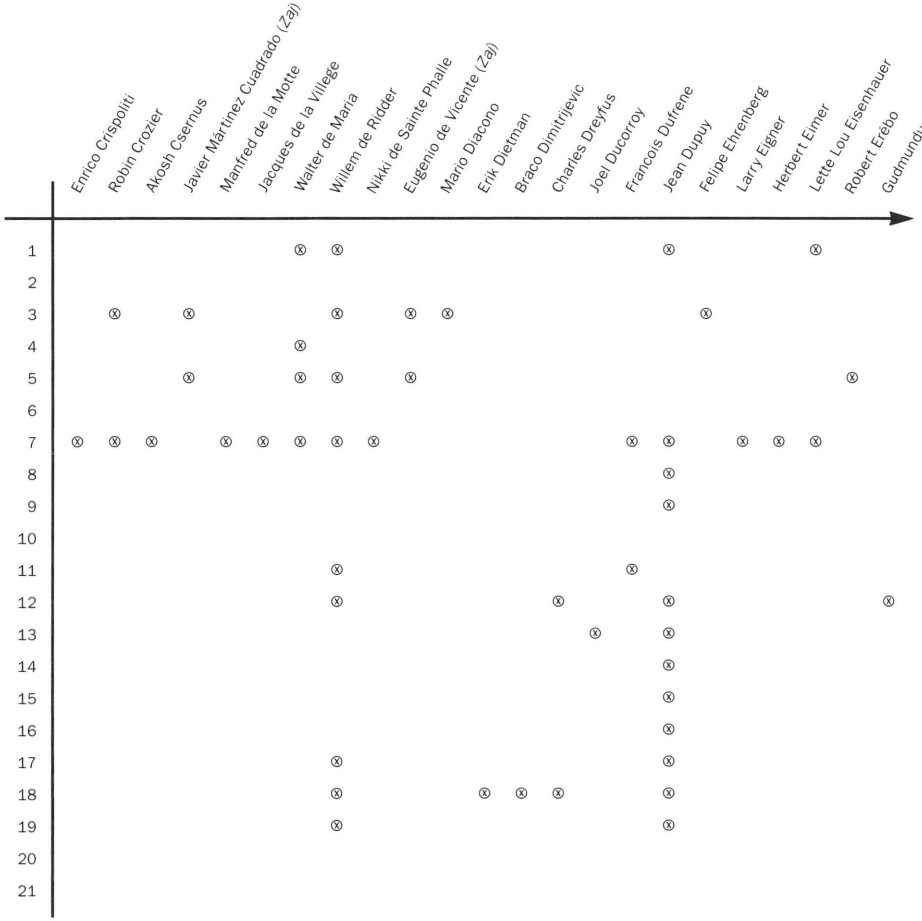


objective content analysis. This method is inconclusive, but it is not exclusive. Some names not on this list would nevertheless be considered central by many. A perfect example of this is Bengt af Klintberg, who in the mid 1960s withdrew from the art world to pursue his work as a folklorist. As a result, he vanished from Fluxus history until recent research began to highlight the significance of his early role.[5] Another central figure, Jackson Mac Low, is also an example. As a poet, he produced far less visual work than others. As a result, he appears in only ten of the twenty-one exhibitions, placing him just below the cut-off point.

Styles of Participation

There are many ways in which scholars and curators view membership or participation in Fluxus. The ways in which the artists themselves view these issues are equally varied. Artists who became active in the pre-Fluxus era continue to be defined as Fluxus even when they themselves were somewhat diffident. This was the case with Jackson Mac Low and La Monte Young, who formally withdrew from Fluxus. It was also the case with Henry Flynt, who maintains a definite distance from Fluxus and




Enrico Crispoliti
Robin Crozier
Akosh Csernus
Javier Martínez Cuadrado (Zaj)
Manfred de la Motte
Jacques de la Villeglé
Walter de Maria
Willem de Ridder
Nikki de Sainte Phalle
Eugenio de Vicente (Zaj)
Mario Diacono
Erik Dietman
Braco Dimitrijevic
Charles Dreyfus
Joel Ducorroy
Francois Dufrene
Jean Dupuy
Felipe Ehrenberg
Larry Eigner
Herbert Eimer
Lette Lou Eisenhauer
Robert Erébo
Gudmundur Erro
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

of George Brecht, who asserts that "Fluxus has Fluxed." Brecht has declined to attend any Fluxus project, festival or activity for years, yet he is considered to be the central figure in any Fluxus retrospective, due in part to the unique stature of his *Water Yam* box and his event scores.

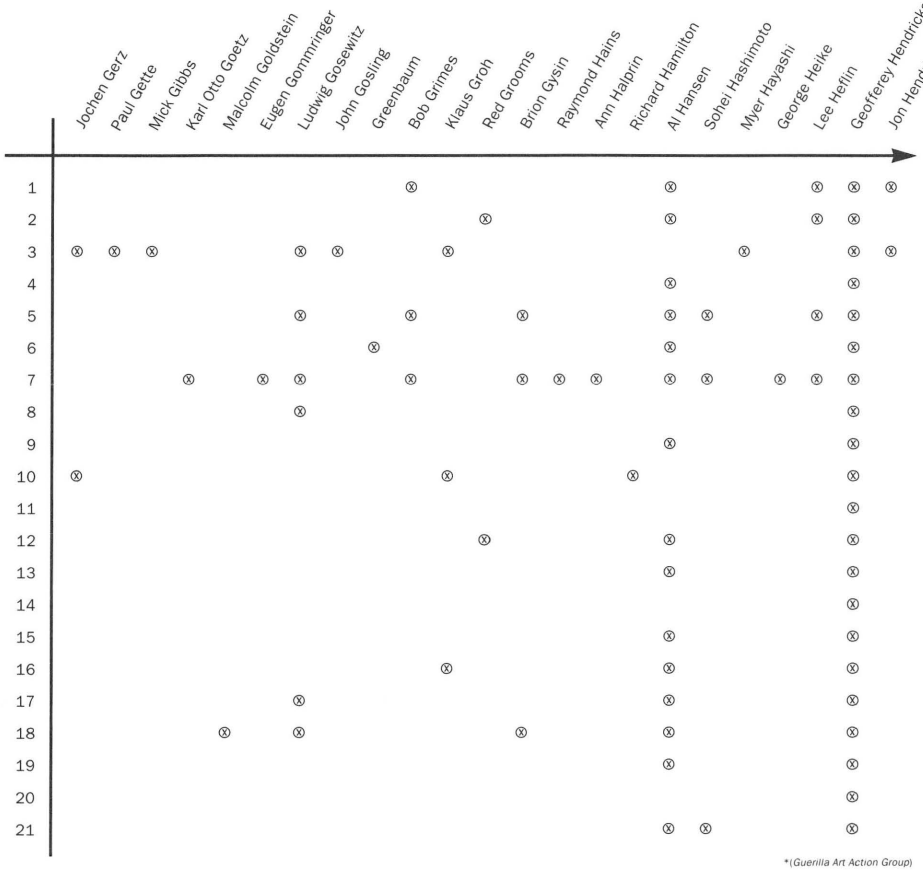
Artists who took part in one or more key events seem to regard each other as a special group within Fluxus, regardless of artistic or personal differences among themselves. The most important of these events was the first festival at Wiesbaden. To some, the participants in this festival are enshrined as central figures in the mythology of Fluxus. Mythology is a powerful force in defining any community. The Wiesbaden festival was important historically, but it has become even more important as a legend. Dick Higgins and others assert that "Fluxus is not a moment in history," yet despite Higgins' definition, the focus on Wiesbaden suggests that for some, Fluxus *was* a moment in history. It also suggests that participation in this brief moment is seen by some as more central to an artist's engagement in Fluxus than an enduring participation in Fluxus activities.[6]

Even though Fluxus is not a group in any formal sense, a claim to

	Kenjiro Ezaki	Oyvind Fahlström	Morton Feldman	Wolfgang Feelisch	Niel Felts	Esther Ferrer	Robert Filliou	Albert Fine	Henry Flynt	Bici Forbes	Simone Forti	Terry Fox	Jerry Foyster	Carolyn Foznick	Ken Friedman	Winfred Gaal	Bill Gaglione	Heinz Gappmayr	Tibor Gayor	Karl Gerstner
1 G.M. List						⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
2 Happening &						⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
3 Fluxshoe					⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗			⊗		⊗		⊗		
4 International						⊗								⊗						
5 Most Radical						⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
6 Phanomens						⊗								⊗						
7 Hendricks	⊗	⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗			
8 Weisbaten						⊗								⊗						
9 25 Years						⊗	⊗							⊗						
10 and Friends				⊗		⊗	⊗		⊗					⊗						
11 Silverman						⊗		⊗						⊗						
12 & Happening		⊗				⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗					⊗						
13 & Co.							⊗	⊗						⊗						
14 continuum														⊗						
15 SPQR						⊗								⊗						
16 1990						⊗	⊗							⊗						
17 Subjektiv						⊗	⊗	⊗						⊗					⊗	
18 UBI		⊗			⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗						⊗						
19 closing in						⊗	⊗	⊗						⊗						
20 Pop Art						⊗		⊗						⊗						
21 Attitudes						⊗		⊗						⊗						

group status and rank has been heavily invested in a specific group within Fluxus. While general Fluxus attitudes suggest that the Fluxus ideal values the spirit of experimentation and the method of philosophical inquiry over the domination of history, participation at Wiesbaden nevertheless defines a hierarchy of status. Anyone who took part in Wiesbaden has an automatic platform within the group, while everyone else must argue forcefully for their ideas or for their vision. Two contrasting examples will demonstrate the distinction.

Ben Vautier has been a central influence within Fluxus since the beginning. He has been active in publishing, in organizing concerts and in presenting exhibitions for three decades. His own work is considered by many to be typical Fluxus work. Even so, because he wasn't at Wiesbaden some of the Wiesbaden people look on Ben as a "latecomer." In contrast, consider the reborn, vigorous career of Ben Patterson, who withdrew from active participation on the art scene to pursue other career options. In the 1980s, he once again became active as an artist. Patterson had been one of the Wiesbaden participants, and his absence had left a niche in a small, select group, since,

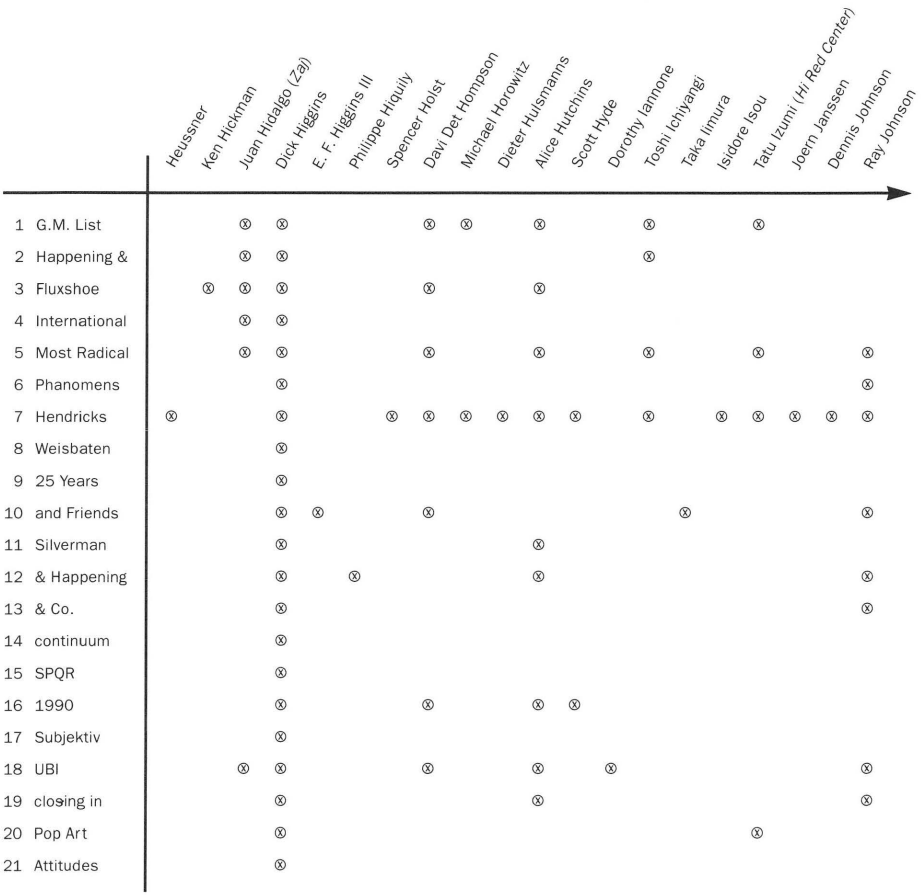


tautologically, only those who were at Wiesbaden could be honored as the ones who were at Wiesbaden. It was by definition impossible to fill the place that Patterson held. As a result, on his return to activity as an artist, he reassumed a role in the Fluxus community as though he had never left.[7] Many saw it as welcoming an old friend who had been away on a short trip.

A Community of Customs

Every community develops a range of customs and practices that govern its social life. In large-scale communities, these customs cover everything from kinship and marriage to religious rituals and taboos, from table manners to business transactions. Some of these communities are governed by written covenants, as a nation is or the publishing community is. At the same time many unwritten practices also serve to organize the practices of community life.

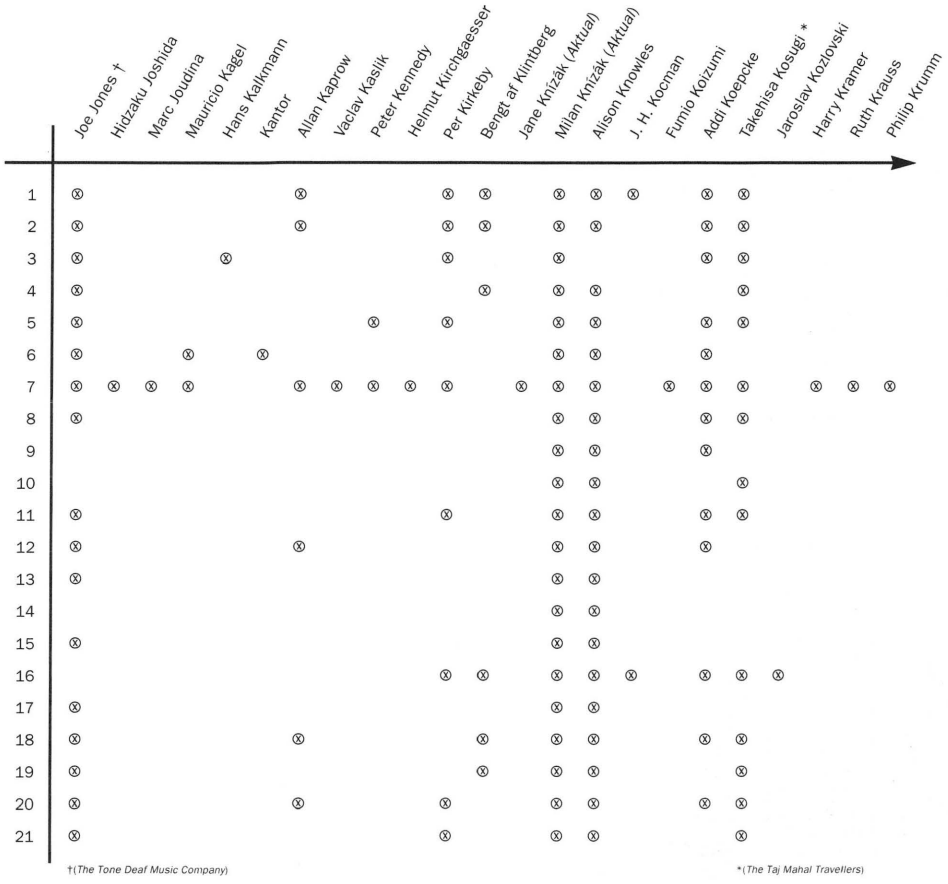
Even though the members of the Fluxus community were never bound by any formal manifesto of political belief or artistic practice, they did share a number of social practices governing the ways in which they related to one another on several issues. Some of these customs



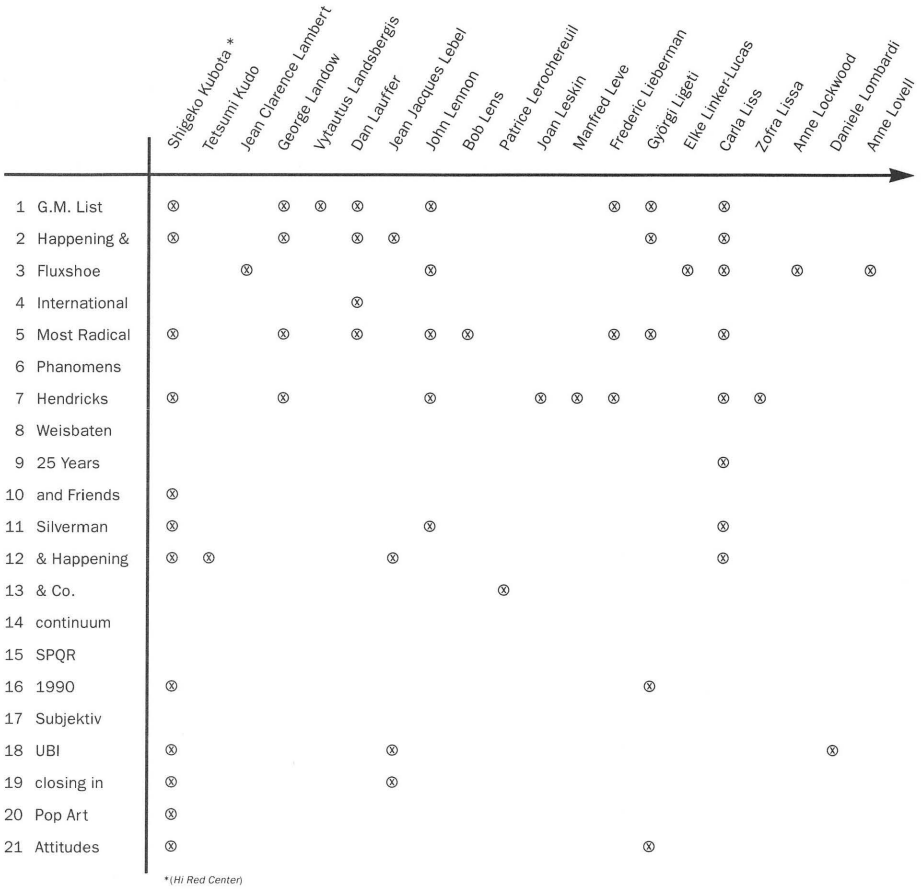
were partially formalized. Others were totally informal, and yet quite strong and customary. In some circumstances, the customs accepted by one group of artists conflicted with the customs of another group. This defined some of the boundaries, collisions and rivalries of smaller communities within the Fluxus community.

Some of the different factions within Fluxus revolved around practices established by George Maciunas. The three rules governing the use of Fluxus work and the Fluxus name at concerts, exhibitions and publications is an example. According to Maciunas, one was permitted to use Fluxus material in concert provided that any work performed be identified as Fluxus work with credit to the artist and copyright acknowledgement to Fluxus. If fifty percent or more of the content of a performance, festival or concert was Fluxus work, the concert or festival must be identified as Fluxus. If less than fifty percent was Fluxus work, the concert could not be called Fluxus. Maciunas encouraged the extension of these rules to exhibitions and to publications.

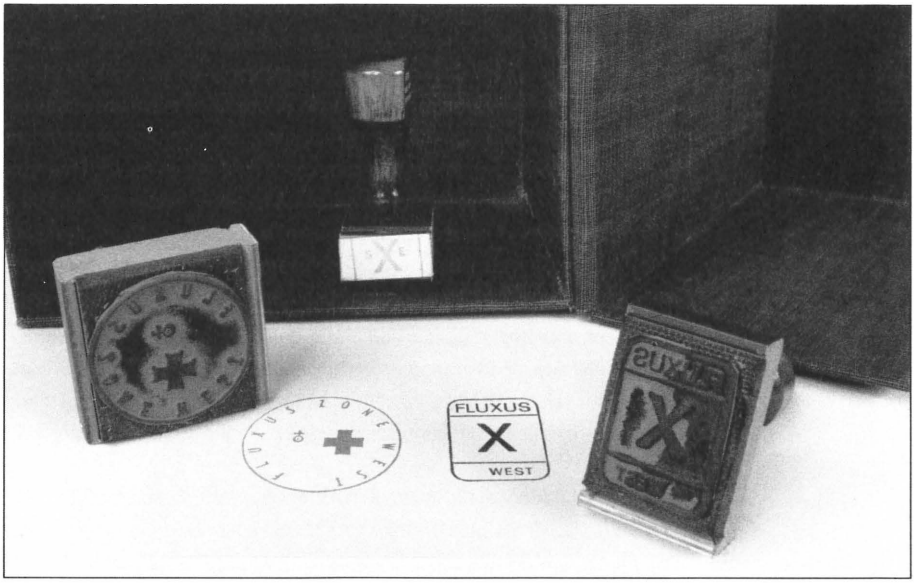
Whether or not they were formally accepted, these "rules" became customary for most Fluxus artists. At the same time, Maciunas' demand that



facing page. Joseph Beuys and Ken Friedman, *Fluxus Zone West, Fluxus West.* Collaborative stamp project, three rubber stamps made in Rome, Georgia cased in blue linen-like box, 13.3 x 21.6 x 19.7 cm., n.d., and Joseph Beuys, *Postcard by Joseph Beuys.* Postcard, *Fluxus Zone West* stamp by Joseph Beuys, *Fluxus West* stamp by Ken Friedman, 11.4 x 14.9 cm., n.d. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec. Photograph by Angela Webster.



*(Hi Red Center)

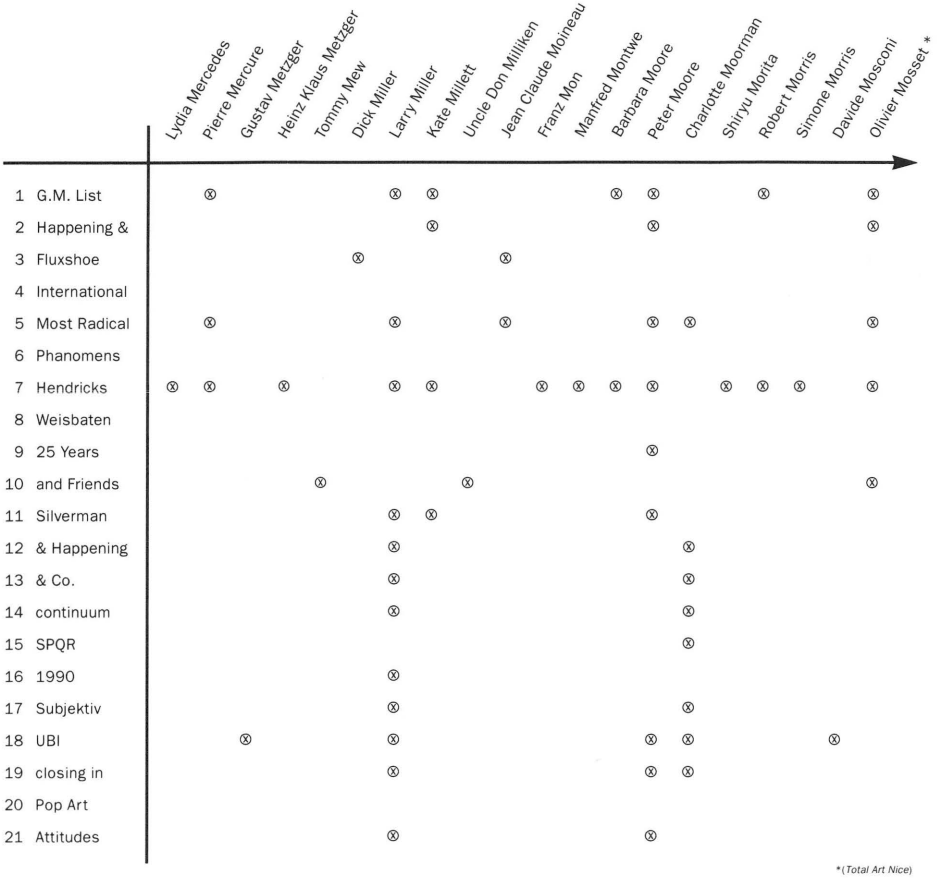


	Ghérasim Luca	Boris Lurie	George Maciunas	Charles Maddermed	Angus Maclise	Jackson Mac Low	Valeria Magli	Tim Mancusi	Piero Manzoni	Walter Marchetti (Zaj)	Tomas Marco (Zaj)	Tom Marioni	Yoriaki Matsudaira	Joan Matthews	Harvey Matusow	Dora Maurer	Richard Maxfield	David Mayor	David McCall	Barry McCallion	Adolfas Mekas	Jonas Mekas	Misha Mengelberg
1			⊗			⊗				⊗		⊗		⊗			⊗	⊗			⊗	⊗	
2	⊗		⊗			⊗				⊗												⊗	
3	⊗		⊗					⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗	⊗			
4			⊗							⊗													
5			⊗			⊗				⊗	⊗			⊗			⊗					⊗	⊗
6			⊗																				
7			⊗	⊗	⊗							⊗									⊗	⊗	
8			⊗			⊗				⊗													
9			⊗																				
10			⊗																				
11			⊗																				
12			⊗			⊗																	
13						⊗																	
14			⊗																				
15			⊗			⊗																	
16			⊗														⊗						
17		⊗	⊗			⊗				⊗													
18			⊗			⊗	⊗		⊗	⊗													
19			⊗			⊗				⊗													
20			⊗																				
21			⊗			⊗																	

all work by every artist associated with Fluxus be published, copyrighted and administered by Fluxus was acceptable to no one. The concept foundered first on the fact that Maciunas was simply unable to handle the publishing load for as much work as the Fluxus artists and composers could produce. But finally, his demand for control and conformity on artistic and political issues became even more of a stumbling block.[8]

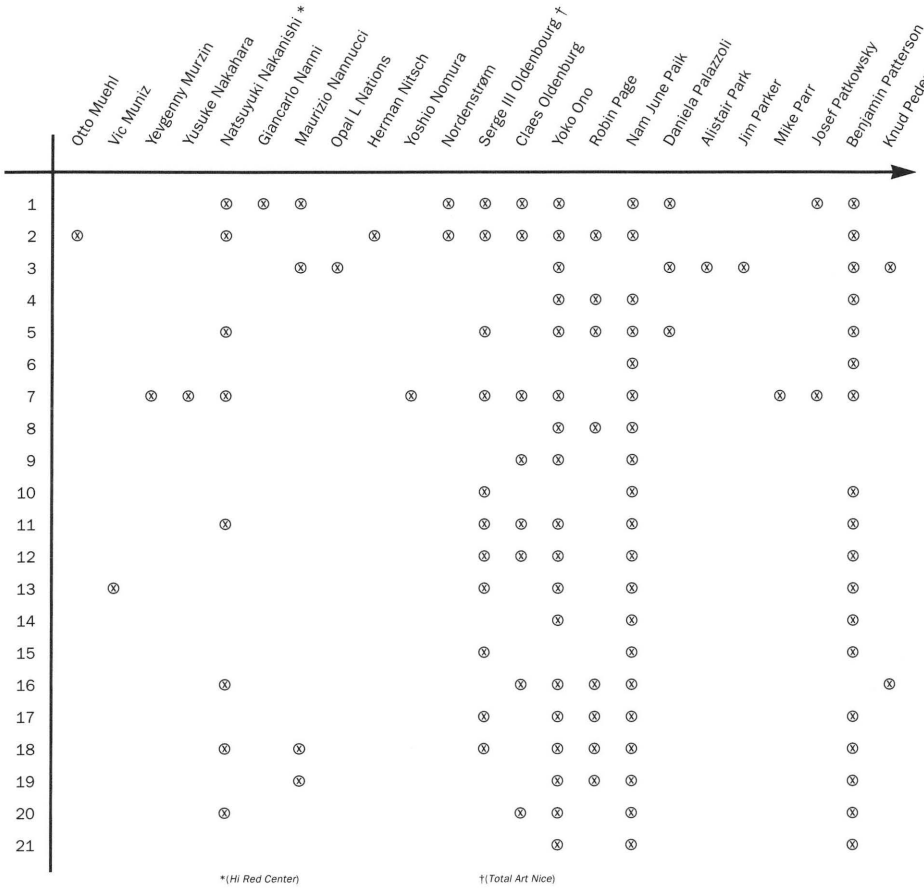
Copyrights and the anti-copyright Fluxmark were further issues. The custom of Fluxus people acknowledging each others' work was a common habit. Even so, most people maintained their own copyright. Certain works were copyrighted by Fluxus when they were published by Fluxus. In 1966, Maciunas authorized Ben Vautier, Milan Knízák, Per Kirkeby and me to grant permissions and rights and to supervise royalties on behalf of Fluxus. What this has meant in practice is the right to encourage and grant permission, which I've been doing for twenty-five years.

The anti-copyright Fluxmark registration is even more interesting. In 1972, David Mayor, associate director of Fluxus West in England, director of the Fluxshoe, and co-publisher of Beau Geste Press, invented the



anti-copyright mark. The mark was an X in a circle, a hybrid form based on the marriage of the copyright circle and the Fluxus West X. The mark meant that anyone was free to use or to reproduce the marked material. It was a fascinating idea, but it never caught on, though the liberties taken with copyrighted Fluxus material suggest that in practice the Mayor anti-copyright philosophy is more powerful than Maciunas' rules. Or, perhaps it is just that no one knows how to enforce our copyright.

Festivals, concerts, performances, publications and exhibitions have been the most common forms of Fluxus community interaction. A body of practices has emerged, ranging from several forms of performance style to the way programs are selected. These practices differ among groups within Fluxus. There are other customs that characterize the Fluxus community. Some are public, or become public as performance practices do. Others are private, shared experiences among friends, like the dinners and food events that have been a tradition in Fluxus since the beginning. These become a medium of exchange and development. Some become the basis of the paradigms, models and algo-

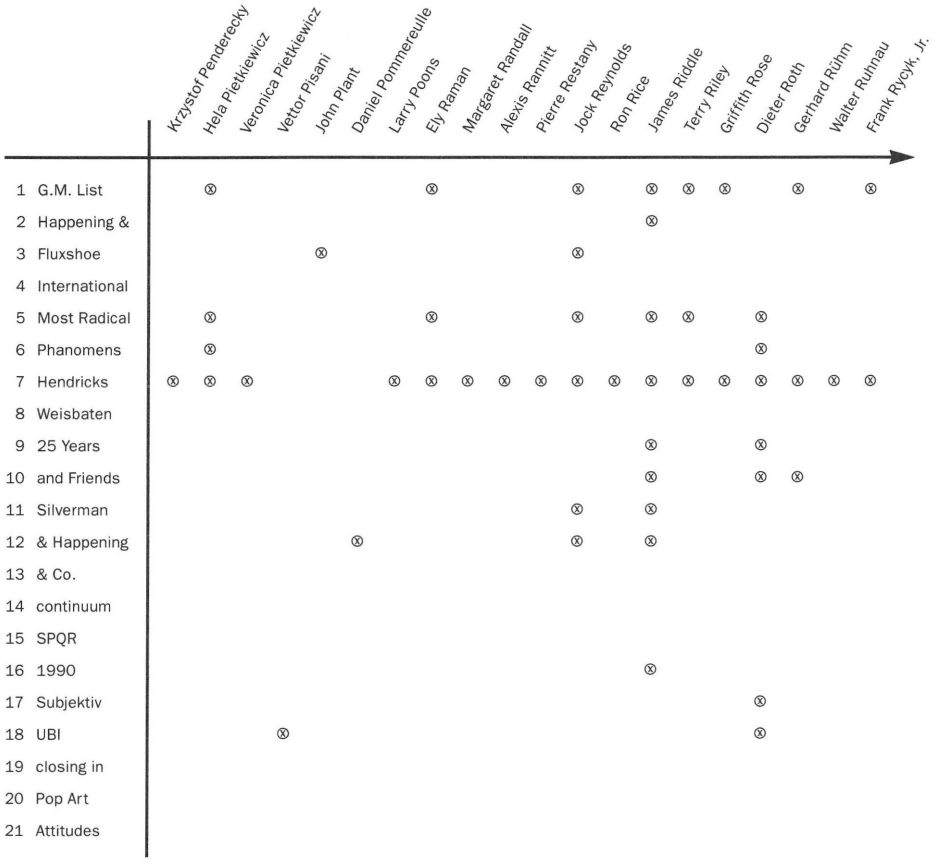


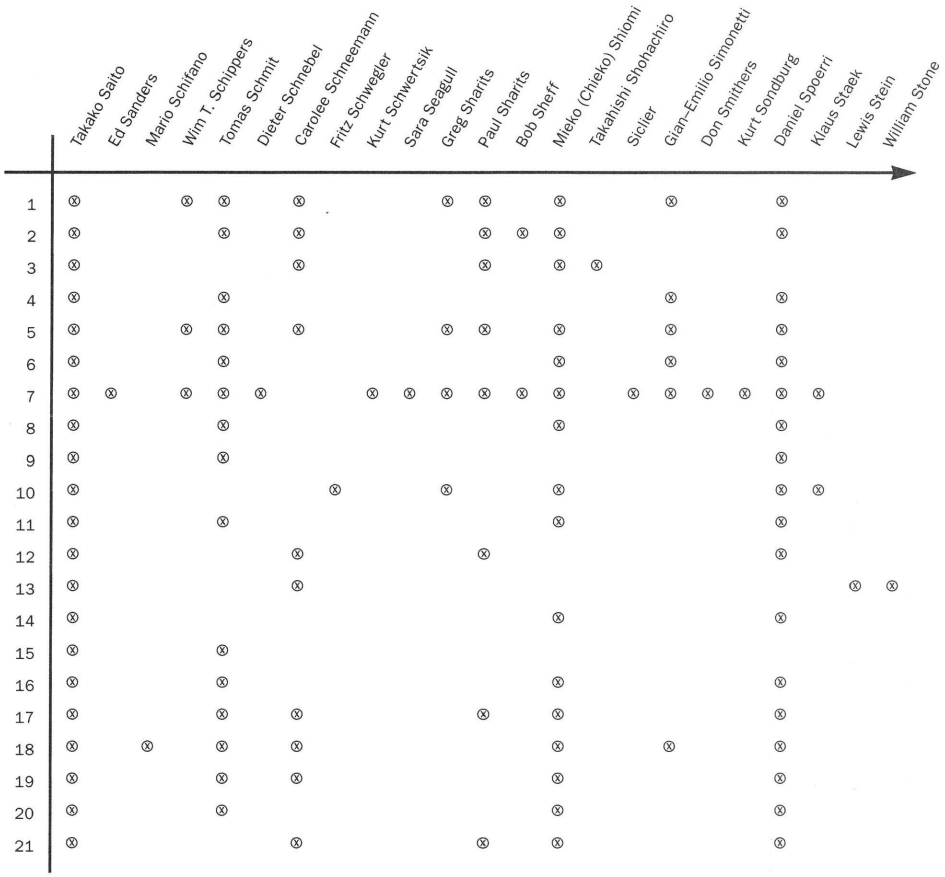
rithms that also inform Fluxus work. Above all, Fluxus is a community of work; art work, music work, transformative work and intermedia work – including the important form of work known as play.

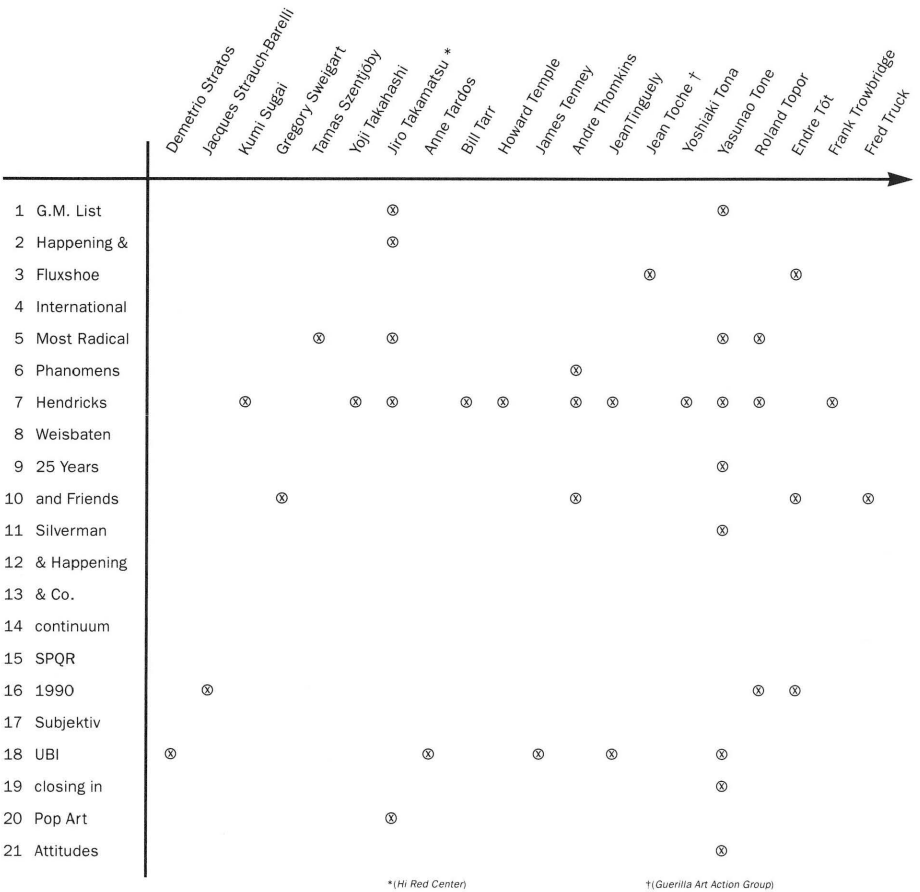
A Concept of Community

It always amused me that Jean Brown's archive was established and located for many years in an old Shaker seed house in the Berkshires of Massachusetts, not far from New Marlborough, the site of George Maciunas' last attempt to build a utopian community. In the surrounding territories, utopian communities had always been a tradition. This was so from the birth of the Commonwealth to the grand experiment of the Republic. It was true for the American Renaissance spurred by Emerson, Thoreau and the Transcendentalists to the settlements of the Shakers. It was true when Jean Brown set up shop a little ways down the road from a half dozen communes.

I spent the summer of 1972 in Tyringham working with Jean Brown. Every evening when we ate dinner together, she would quote the old Shaker proverb, "Hands to work and hearts to God." It could have been



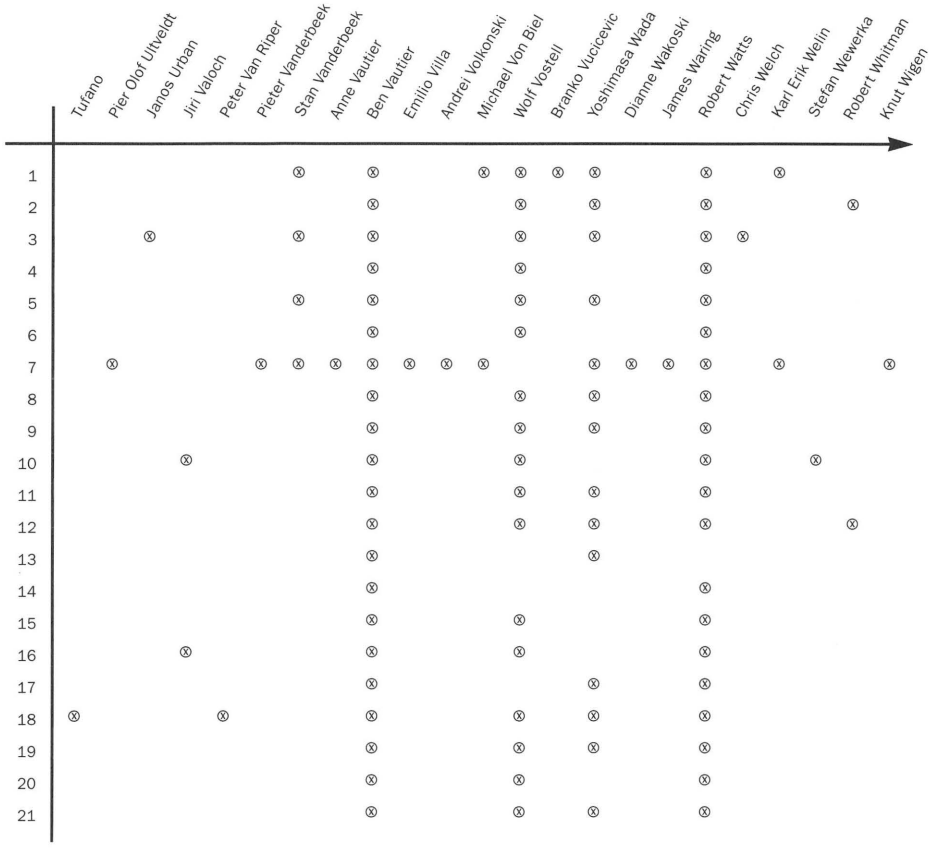

Takako Saito
Ed Sanders
Mario Schifano
Wim T. Schippers
Tomas Schmit
Dieter Schnebel
Carolee Schneemann
Fritz Schwegler
Kurt Schwertsik
Sara Seagull
Greg Sharits
Paul Sharits
Bob Sheff
Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi
Takahishi Shohachiro
Sicilier
Gian-Emilio Simonetti
Don Smithers
Kurt Sondburg
Daniel Spoerri
Klaus Staek
Lewis Stein
William Stone
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21


Demetrio Stratos
Jacques Strauch-Barelli
Kumi Sugai
Gregory Sweigart
Tamas Szentjóby
Yoji Takahashi
Jiro Takamatsu *
Anne Tardos
Bill Tarr
Howard Temple
James Tenney
Andre Thomkins
JeanTinguely
Jean Toche †
Yoshiaki Tona
Yasunao Tone
Roland Topor
Endre Tót
Frank Trowbridge
Fred Truck
1 G.M. List
2 Happening &
3 Fluxshoe
4 International
5 Most Radical
6 Phanomens
7 Hendricks
8 Weisbaten
9 25 Years
10 and Friends
11 Silverman
12 & Happening
13 & Co.
14 continuum
15 SPQR
16 1990
17 Subjektiv
18 UBI
19 closing in
20 Pop Art
21 Attitudes
*(Hi Red Center)
†(Guerilla Art Action Group)

a prayer or a grace. Later, I arranged a meeting between Jean Brown and George Maciunas. I knew they'd hit it off, but I never knew how well. It seemed entirely appropriate to me that Maciunas found his way to Brown's corner of the world, heartland of the Shaker expansion.

The Shakers were among the first great utilitarian utopians of the modern era. They were a religious community, to be sure, but their religion was a religion of service. They established some of the first mass production industries in the world, selling objects and artifacts through catalogues and by mail order. Their furniture, so superb in design, so perfect in balance, was the first example of industrial design and ergonomic sensibility in the furniture trade. They supplied America's farms and gardens with top quality seed.

A seed house was a building where seeds were sorted and packaged. The packages could be ordered individually by catalogue or mail order. There were also seed kits with an assortment of packages in a tidy box not too different in shape or size from the Fluxkits of the 1960s. Like the Fluxkits, only a few of these remain. It is an interesting coincidence that the most complete extant seed kit is to be found in the



museum of the old Shaker Village a few minutes' drive from Hanover, New Hampshire, where the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College houses a Fluxus collection established in honor of George Maciunas. [9]

Fluxus people other than Maciunas have not been celibate and abstemious, which the Shakers – like Maciunas – famously were. In other regards, there were delightful similarities. The union of work and life, an art and a music which were not separate from life, a sense of industry combined with a light spirit were the characteristics that seem to me to be central to the Shaker community. These qualities typify what is best in the Fluxus community as well.

It may be only my interpretation, but it seems to me no coincidence that America's first great Fluxus collection was established in a Shaker Seed House.[10]

	Jean-Pierre Wilhelm	Emmett Williams	La Monte Young	George Yuasa	Zamok	Vyacheslav Zavalishin	Marian Zazeela
1 G.M. List	⊗	⊗	⊗				
2 Happening &		⊗	⊗				
3 Fluxshoe							
4 International		⊗					
5 Most Radical	⊗	⊗	⊗				
6 Phanomens		⊗	⊗				
7 Hendricks		⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗	⊗
8 Weisbaten		⊗	⊗				
9 25 Years		⊗	⊗				
10 and Friends							
11 Silverman		⊗	⊗				
12 & Happening		⊗	⊗				⊗
13 & Co.			⊗				⊗
14 continuum							
15 SPQR		⊗					
16 1990		⊗	⊗				
17 Subjektiv		⊗	⊗				
18 UBI		⊗	⊗				⊗
19 closing in		⊗	⊗				⊗
20 Pop Art		⊗	⊗				
21 Attitudes		⊗	⊗				

NOTES

[1] Many of these letters can be read at Archiv Sohm in Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, at the Jean Brown Archive in the Getty Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, and in other major collections of Fluxus correspondence.

[2] *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*, (Springfield: 1990).

[3] Fluxus has been looked at in many ways, but some of the most interesting and obvious have been overlooked. It had never been examined as a population or a community. This essay is the view of one member of the Fluxus community. The issues are quite real, but the considerations and interpretations are my own.

[4] In 1991, James Lewes began his expansive *Fluxus Concordance*, a cross-referenced chronology with biographies and bibliographies on Fluxus and the artists of the Fluxus community.

[5] Af Klintberg is a poet and writer who created many delightful event structures and scores in the early 1960s. Despite the importance of his performable ideas, he produced little *exhibitable* or *salable art*. By the late 1960s, he was no longer active on the scene. Ken Friedman, "The Case for Bengt af Klintberg," in *Fluxus in Scandinavia*, a lecture for the Royal Academy of Art, Copenhagen, February 1992.

[6] Some of the Wiesbaden participants have had relatively little to do with Fluxus since the early 60s, except when they have been invited to take part in exhibitions and festivals. Even so, they have been given far greater attention than an artist such as Larry Miller, who worked closely with George Maciunas and Robert Watts from the late 1960s. Miller has been an active custodian of the Fluxus heritage, yet while many discussions of Fluxus stress the communal spirit, little emphasis has been placed on Miller's contribution to that spirit, despite the fact that Miller has now been active in Fluxus for more years than Maciunas was at the time of his death. Maciunas' influence on the Fluxus community was profound and central, but he served his own, unique vision of Fluxus, a Fluxus that was, at times, political, even eschatological. In contrast, Miller's presence has been much more low-key, yet far more communitarian in spirit.

[7] It should be noted that Patterson is a quintessential Fluxus artist in many important ways. His work captures the astonishing, enchanted humor of Fluxus perfectly with performance at the border of objects and objects that establish a theatrical presence. In every human community, physical meetings and friendships are more important than intellectual or artistic issues. For many, an absence of twenty years was little different than working with an artist like Mieko Shiomi, who had been physically distant in Japan. Patterson, had once been an immediate and close part of the community in a way that Shiomi never had. For many, Patterson's return was much homier and less exotic in feeling than Shiomi's infrequent visits – despite the fact that Shiomi had been more continuously active in Fluxus while Patterson's career had taken a dramatic detour.

[8] The question of forbidding performances or publications is essentially moot. It was already moot when Maciunas once or twice tried to forbid things back in the early 1960s. There is today no conceivable reason to do so, though there may be if the question of royalties becomes more significant. Even so, as long as all four of us remain alive, any one of us has unilateral right to grant permission even though the others may refuse. My sense of things has been to encourage people to follow the three rules.

[9] When George Maciunas died on May 9, 1978, a number of his friends established a collection of Fluxus and Fluxus-related art in his honor at Dartmouth. In November, 1979, an exhibition entitled, *A Tribute to George Maciunas*, opened at the College's Beaumont-May Gallery. Many of the works from that show are included in the current exhibition, *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country*.

[10] Many of the materials collected by Jean Brown are currently housed at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, in Santa Monica.

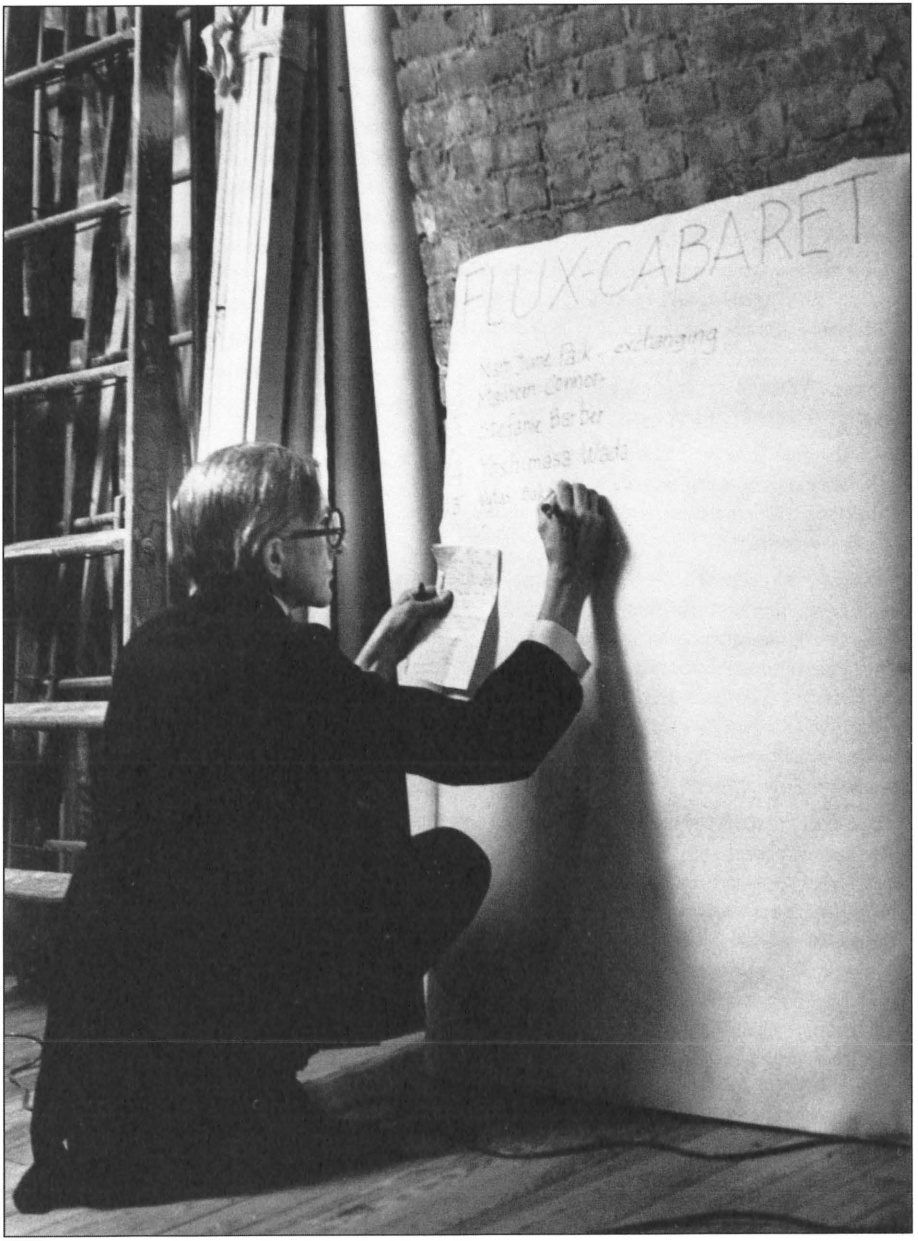


figure 1. Flux Cabaret, George Maciunas, Feb. 25, 1978.
Photograph by Hollis Melton.

George Maciunas' pivotal contributions to the renaissance of SoHo, the burgeoning New York City community south of Houston Street, are discussed. The essay recounts the establishment of Fluxus cooperatives, the history of the Film-Makers' Cinematheque (the precursor to the Anthology Film Archives), Maciunas' long and active struggle with the Attorney General's Office and closes with a description of the February 1978 erotic Flux New Year's Cabaret and Maciunas' marriage to Billie Hutching. In addition, Melton's photographs of the wedding and of Maciunas' and Hutching's piece, Black and White, are reproduced.

Notes on SoHo and a Reminiscence

Hollis Melton

Hollis Melton pp. 180–201
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

> The determination of his individual dwelling lies, as it has with the residential housing throughout history, on his financial means, technical know-how, and personal whim. Only in this way can we open the way to the essential quality of organic diversity within the urban environment which has been the natural outcome of human settlement in the past. This diversity is an imponderable no architect can forsee, only the inhabitants and time can create.The architect provides construction whose relationships suggest a certain way of life; the people make of those shells a city.
>
> —Roger Katan, Architect[1]

The 43 block area bounded by Houston Street on the north, Lafayette Street on the east, Canal Street on the south and West Broadway on the west was designated as a landmark for cast iron architecture. The style of the cast iron buildings is called "palazzo," an American adaptation of the Renaissance palace for nineteenth century business. These statuesque buildings line Broadway, Mercer Street, Broome Street, Greene Street, Spring Street, Wooster Street, West Broadway, Crosby Street and Lafayette Street. What used to be called "The Valley" by the city planners, or "Hell's Hundred Acres" by the Fire Department (because there were so many fires caused by violations in the buildings) is now called SoHo, the name taken from the City Planners' map of New York: So. Ho. (South of Houston Street).

The remaining businesses and artists co-exist side by side in SoHo, surrounded by NYU to the north, by Little Italy to the east, the south Village to the west and Tribeca to the south (an extended version of SoHo, with artists' lofts, non-profit performance spaces, galleries, restaurants, bars, etc). To walk through SoHo on a Saturday is to see hundreds of tourists flocking to the galleries, the chic boutiques, the bars and restaurants. The streets are alive with musicians, mime artists, magicians, trick dog acts, cookie vendors, etc. To walk through SoHo on a Monday morning is to see big trucks, textile workers, factory owners, supers, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, painters, welders, window washers. On Sundays, Broadway becomes a shopping carnival. The factory outlet clothing shops are open, street vendors are selling barbecued meat on sticks, hot dogs, clothes and shoes. Cars line the street with people lounging on them, a portable living room away from the home. Hasidic men in beaver hats, with long *peyas*, black suits and white shirts, scurry in and out of dark shops, and the air is filled with the sound of children's voices, big radios. Spanish-speaking women bustle in and out of numerous shops carrying large bags of merchandise, newly purchased with the previous week's hard earned wages. Some thirty years ago this area was considered a commercial slum, destined to be demolished.

The History

The history of SoHo's survival and renaissance is related to the history of artists in search of economical living/working spaces. After World War II artists started moving into commercial buildings in lower

Manhattan – on Broadway just south of 14th Street (De Kooning, Jasper Johns, Franz Klein, Jackson Pollack and Mark Rothko), on the Bowery (Robert Frank), in the East Village, and further downtown in places like Coenties Slip, which was demolished in the Sixties and now serves as the location for the downtown branch of the Whitney Museum of American Art (Ellsworth Kelly, Agnes Martin, James Rosenquist). The artists lived in the commercial buildings illegally and their occupancy was tenuous. They could rent the raw space very cheaply, renovate it and then the landlord could refuse to renew the lease in order to rent the improved space (improved at no cost to the landlord) to another tenant at double the rent.

In 1961 the Artists Tenants Association was formed; about nine-hundred artists threatened to strike the City by refusing to exhibit in City art galleries, if the City did not amend its multiple dwelling laws to accommodate their housing needs. In 1963, the City instituted the A.I.R. concept (Artist-in-Residence), and amended the multiple dwelling laws to permit artists to live in loft buildings.

However, in 1962, the City Club had published a study called "The Wastelands of New York City," which listed Spring, Broome, Mercer and Greene streets as commercial slum area No. 1 and recommended demolition and rebuilding. "The analysis clearly showed," said the study, "that there are no buildings worth saving."[2] The developers were ready to move in with bulldozers and the area south of Houston Street would have been demolished and built up into high-rise dwellings for the middle class had it not been for the Rapkin Report. Chester Rapkin, a city planner, made a city financed study in 1963 to determine the value of the area south of Houston Street to the City. The study revealed that some of the industries in the area recycled wastes – rags into paper, newspaper waste into paper boxes. These and other industries in the area employed thousands of minority workers, many of whom did not speak English and would have been otherwise unemployable. There were also many small manufacturers who were just starting their businesses and could not afford a higher rent area. The City Planning Commission followed the recommendation of the study and decided to protect the industries by forbidding any form of residency in the area.

This move perpetuated the history of artists' evictions and harassments by the City. Ironically those who had registered as A.I.R.'s with the Department of Cultural Affairs were the first to be evicted, while those who had ignored the law requiring artist certification often went unnoticed. But artists continued to move into the area despite the illegality of loft living; there were many unoccupied lofts; even whole buildings had been abandoned as the industries shut down or moved away, seeking better alternatives. The landlords were happy to rent to artists who would improve the space, and who could then be easily evicted since they had no legal protection.

The general consensus is that the major influx of artists to SoHo was in 1966, and again the general consensus attributes this factor to the

vision of the late George Maciunas, founder of Fluxus, who introduced the concept of artist owned and run cooperative buildings.

The first successful Fluxhouse Cooperative to be organized was 80 Wooster Street. Maciunas purchased the empty loft building for the cooperative in 1967, with loans from the Kaplan Foundation and the National Foundation of the Arts. Among those invited to join the cooperative venture was Jonas Mekas. Mekas had been looking for a permanent home for the Film-Makers' Cinematheque since 1961. Prior to this, the group had been screening films in rented spaces, often being chased from one space to the next, and never had the security of a permanent home. The price of renting commercial space was too great for a non-profit organization and the screening conditions were inadequate. The dream of the Cinematheque was to design and construct its own theater suitable to the needs of the independent-avant-garde cinema.

> This will be our experimental showcase open to anyone who has a film or mixed media show, happenings, events, etc. with no strict "quality" control over the programming. The audiences will have to take chances with new artists and with new works of established artists. This will be our workshop, our testing ground where anything goes. It will premiere all new Coop works [Film-Makers' Cooperative].[3]

The Buildings Department refused to issue the Film-Makers' Cinematheque a Certificate of Occupancy, and then refused to issue them a theater license because there was no Certificate of Occupancy. The Cinematheque was presented with a list of thirty-seven violations, the major one of which was that artists, fellow cooperative members, were living illegally on the floors above the Cinematheque. Mekas wanted the neighborhood to organize itself and push for the legalization of loft living and called a meeting of artists from the neighborhood on April 22, 1969. Out of this meeting came the SoHo Artists Association (SAA). The group published a newsletter, met periodically with members of the City Planning Commission, and along with the Artists against the Expressway, helped to save SoHo from the Broome Street Expressway.

The SAA sponsored the first SoHo Artists Street Festival in May 1970; its opening coincided with the Kent State Massacre. In lieu of cancelling the festival, the SAA draped the fire escapes of the Greene Street Cooperative buildings in black crepe and Yvonne Rainer led a procession of mourning for the dead at Kent State. Thousands of tourists came. The festival received attention from the media and John Lindsay and Nelson Rockefeller publicly recognized SoHo as a healthy entity. The artists succeeded in drawing attention to their fight to legalize loft living, and finally in September 1970, the City Planning Commission passed a resolution permitting artists to live in SoHo lofts whose size did not exceed 3,600 square feet. Buildings owned cooperatively would be legalized regardless of size.

The artists won a victory, but the Cinematheque, which was the first public non-profit performing arts and screening space in SoHo never succeeded in obtaining a license to screen films. In 1968 the Buildings

figure 2. (left) Billie Hutching, (right) George Maciunas, Fluxus Wedding. Photograph by Hollis Melton.

figure 3. Jonas Mekas, Fluxus Wedding, Feb. 25, 1978.
Photograph by Hollis Melton.

Department forbade all screenings, but Richard Foreman performed his first play, *Angelface*, there in 1968. Hermann Nitsch had an action there, his first in New York. Phil Glass, La Monte Young and Archie Shepp had concerts there, and interspersed with these activities were Fluxus New Years' events and concerts.

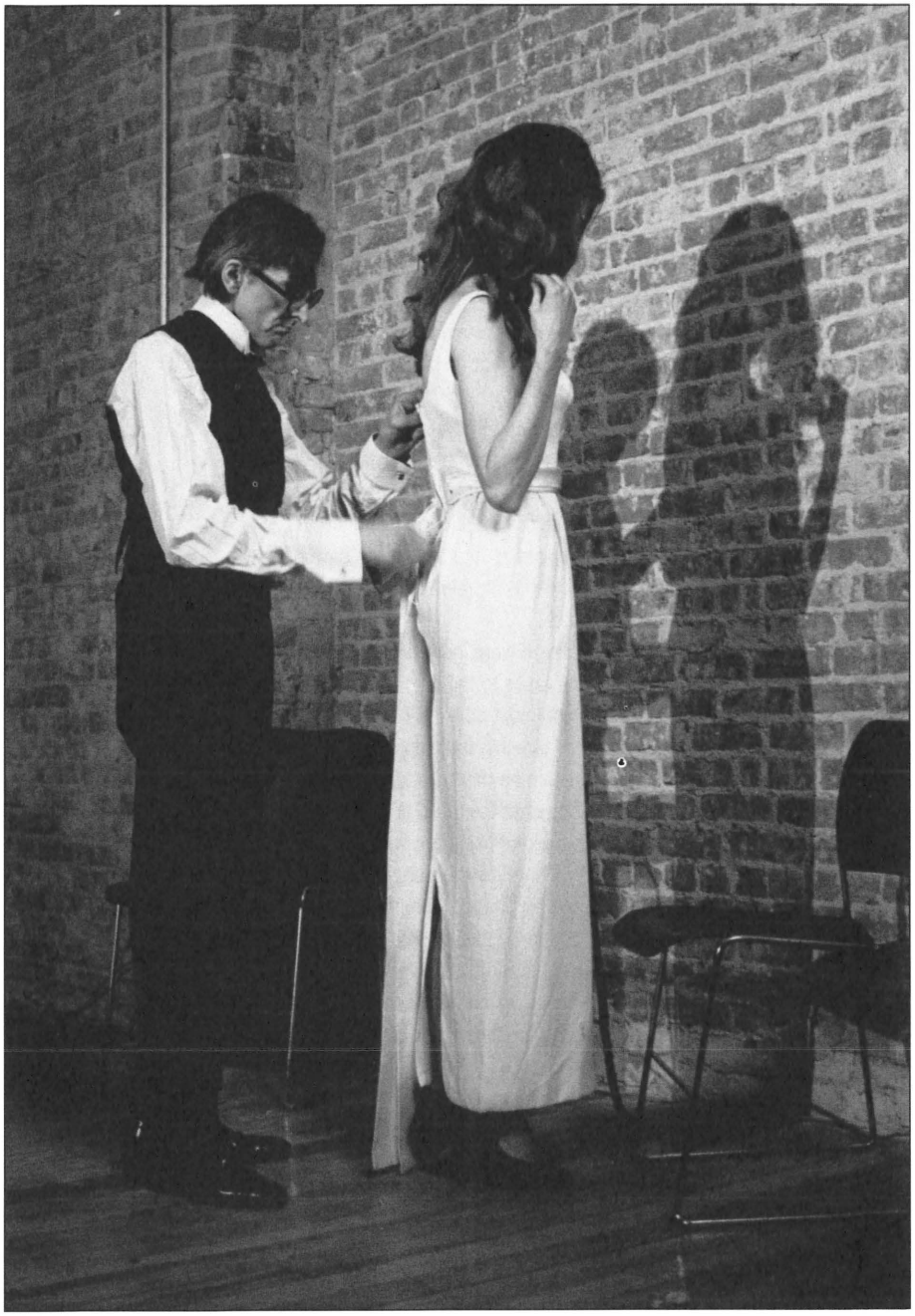
In 1971 the Cinematheque moved its screening activities to the Shakespeare Theater on Lafayette Street, where it opened as Anthology Film Archives. Pressed by rising rents and expenses Anthology Film Archives returned to 80 Wooster Street in November 1974, where it reopened after spending $75,000 renovating the ground floor and basement spaces under the supervision of George Maciunas. In May 1978 it was again shut down by the Buildings Department for operating without a theater license.[4]

Maciunas organized fifteen co-ops between 1966 and 1975 without ever filing a prospectus.[5] This brashness infuriated the Attorney General's Office; a warrant was sent out for his arrest in 1974. Maciunas' response to the warrant was characteristic; he designed a series of elaborate disguises for wearing out in the street, kept right on with the business of forming co-ops and renovating lofts, and made a Fluxus kit of disguises for the A.G.'s office.

The cooperative owners were safe. There were increasing numbers of them; they were homeowners, paying taxes to the city; the status of ownership gave them greater stability and clout politically. Maciunas, who had studied architecture and whose father was an engineer, was always very forthright with those with whom he dealt; he knew the building code inside and out and knew exactly what the structural problems of each building were. He never recommended fixing anything that wasn't necessary to the safety of the building and the people living there. His methods were unorthodox and his financial manipulations were staggering to a normal person, but he was never dishonest and his vision was so far reaching that one could forgive his transgressions, provided one could appreciate his particular vision. Many couldn't. Many of his initial cooperative buyers revolted against his iron rule and forced him out of their co-ops.

At that time he lived rent free in the basement of 80 Wooster Street. His room was filled with five or six big Norfolk pine trees and some huge rubber tree plants, which he put outside in summer. Tools were hanging up along the wall and from the ceiling beams, there was a white harpsichord that he had put together himself and a metal table with glass top and white metal chairs around it. The chairs weren't very comfortable. Though neat, the room always seemed to be bursting with its contents. Full length windows looked outside to the courtyard where he had built a tiled garden. He slept on a cot in a tiny room off the main room and had built a secret escape tunnel to the film editing room of Anthology Film Archives. From there he had cut a hole in the ceiling that led to the ground floor and gave access to the street, just in case he needed to escape from inside to get away from the A.G.'s men. He had fortified

text continues on page 198



figures 4–13. George Maciunas, Billie Hutching, "Black and White," performance piece, Feb. 25, 1978. Photographs by Hollis Melton.

figure 5.

figure 6.

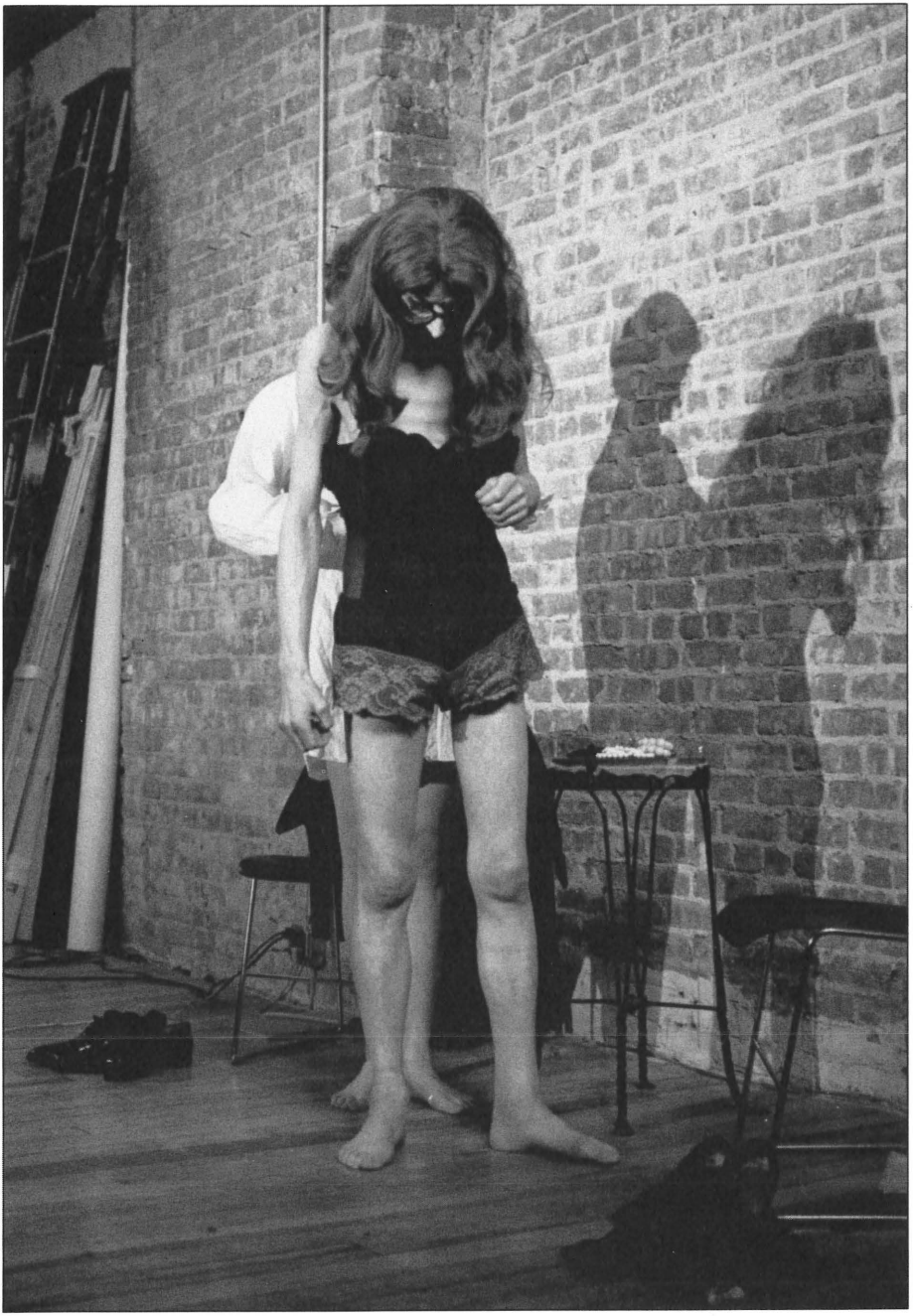


figure 7.

figure 8.

figure 9.

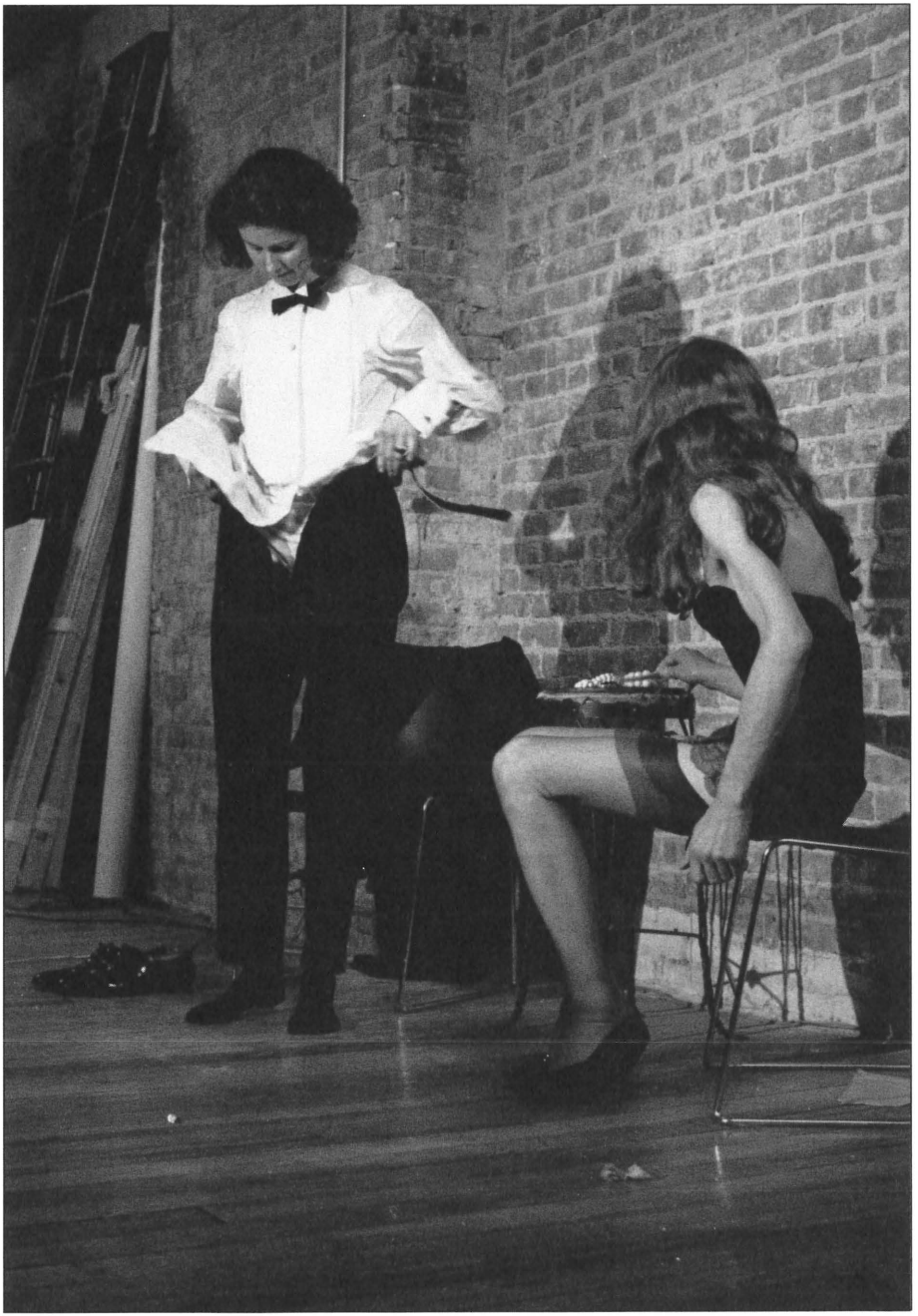


figure 10.

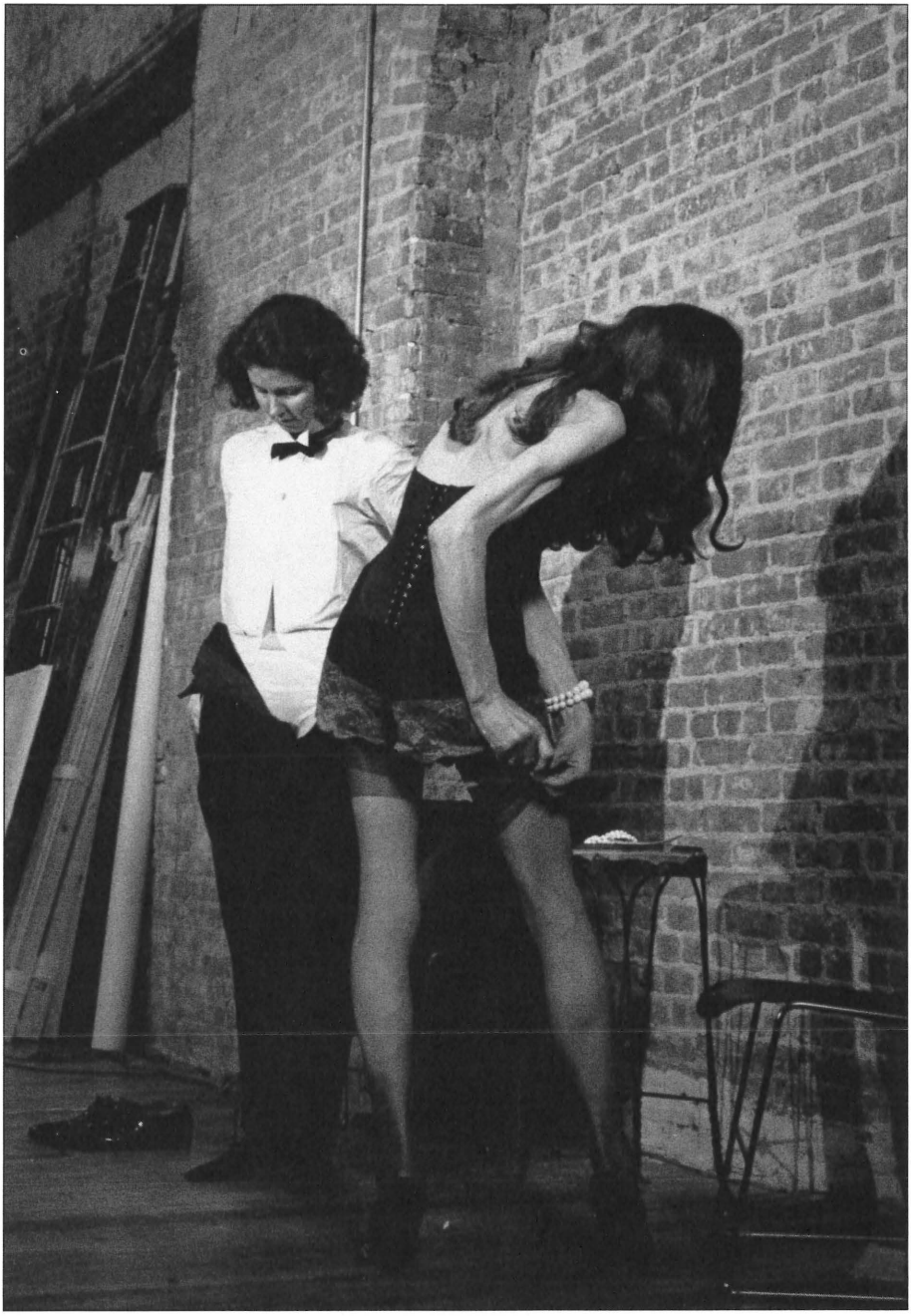


figure 11.

figure 12.

figure 13.

 text continued from page 187

the door to his room with an extra panel, and in between the panel and the door he had installed rows of very sharp blades. The Fire Department had forced him to cover the blades with the panel, to protect innocent visitors. A sign on the door warned visitors of the blades behind the panel. To gain entrance in those days one had to know the secret knock and then announce oneself in a clear voice that was not a shout.

A Reminiscence: George Maciunas

I used to visit George a lot in 1975. As President and Treasurer of the co-op he had organized for us, I needed a lot of help, which he was always willing to give. He showed me how to keep books, how to organize all of the bills, how to pay the real estate taxes with a certified check so that the building would have an instant receipt to show the Mortgagee. He passed to me all of the summonses made out in his name for violations on the building, and when I went to the court to straighten these out, the woman clerk couldn't believe George was walking around free with so many warrants out for his arrest. He always stressed that we should learn to run the building ourselves, and gradually I became more confident and began to enjoy doing work for the co-op. We had some terrible arguments, but I could never remain angry with George for long; he had a quick temper that would erupt and then everything would be calm as if there had been no outburst. He said his quick temper came from taking cortisone injections everyday for his asthma and the outbursts were the result of cortisone in his system. I came to respect and trust his judgment; he had an incredible purity and singularity of vision. Sometimes he reminded me of Don Quixote. He used to say that lawyers and artists were parasites and used to make jokes about them. He said he thought home-making was the greatest art. He was always willing to help anyone who had a plan or a dream and was always encouraging people to make up Fluxus games or jokes. He had a dream of buying a big ship and going around the world, everyone on the ship would be a useful expert – doctor, nurse, botanist, engineer, fisherman, mechanic, biologist, sailor, navigator, etc. He spent long hours making a tape anthology of his favorite music – Monteverdi, Schuetz, Machault, Adam de la Halle, Couperin – he didn't like anything classical after the Baroque period, but he liked Bob Dylan. He would sell the records he had taped for his selected anthology to friends at big discounts. He liked to cook: Borsht, Mousaka, Beef Bourguignon. Whenever he came to visit he would bring a big bottle of semi-sweet German white wine. He knew all about the history of food and machines and he was working on a map of the world which would encapsulate the history of art and civilization. He greatly admired the culture of Burgundy in the fourteenth century. Sometimes he spoke of going to Japan to study the art of archery.

On November 8, 1975 (his birthday) two men lured him to a vacant loft on Mercer Street, under the pretense of being prospective buyers. They beat him up with metal pipes – they broke two ribs, collapsed a

lung and damaged his left eye so that he lost the sight. He said they were from the electricians union. He owed them money; they beat him up because he told them they would have to wait for the money. It was a bad time. He was trying to raise $130,000 to meet the balloon mortgage payment on the co-op at 141 Wooster Street. The other shareholders were beginning to turn against him and threatened to sabotage the deal because they did not want George to remain a controlling factor in the co-op, then known as Good Deal Realty (a typical Maciunas corporate name). The balloon payment was met, though at a great cost to George's health. Soon after that he found a forty-acre farm in New Marlborough, Massachusetts, which was formerly owned by a family who bred race horses. There were many barns and outlying structures on the property. George persuaded his sister, Nijole Valaitis, and his partner, Robert Watts, to put up money to purchase the farm. He slowly began moving his belongings (an enormous collection of odds and ends salvaged from empty lofts he had renovated – boxes full of ribbon, mannequins' heads, artificial roses, etc. – all the things he had collected during his fifteen year stay in SoHo. The move to the farm coincided with his withdrawal from the real estate business. "Too risky," he said. He didn't want to lose his other eye. Getting away from the city and the pressures of the A.G.'s office and the SoHo real estate business transformed him. He worked on the renovation of the farm, spent more time making Fluxus objects, and helped Jean Brown, an important Fluxus collector, organize a Flux archive in her home in Tyringham, Massachusetts. By the second summer the farm was like a resort. Friends came and rented rooms and George dreamed of making the farm into a school, patterned after the Black Mountain School.

During the fall of 1976 Maciunas participated in a large show entitled, "New York – Downtown Manhattan: SoHo," sponsored by the *Akademie der Kunste and the Berliner Festwochen*, in Berlin, to commemorate the American Bicentennial. He designed a Flux-Labyrinth and participated as a performer. The catalogue for the show is over four-hundred pages, with illustrations, biographies of the participating artists and articles about SoHo by Rene Block, Lawrence Alloway, Peter Frank, Lucy Lippard, Douglas Davis, Stephen Reichard and Joan La Barbara.

In the summer of 1977, Maciunas organized a big Fluxus exhibition which was sponsored by the city of Seattle. He came back very elated with anecdotes and jokes, but was very thin and complained of pains in his stomach. He joked and said he was losing weight so he could fit into the antique clothes he found in a trunk on the farm. Throughout the fall he kept losing more weight and his doctor gave him morphine to kill the pain. He was planning to organize a Flux New Year's Cabaret in which everyone would have to perform an erotic Cabaret act or bring an erotic dish for an erotic Flux feast. His health kept deteriorating and he decided to enter the hospital for tests right after Christmas. The tests revealed nothing, but exploratory surgery revealed a tumor in his pancreas. The cancer had spread to the liver. But George kept making

plans. He decided to get married and have a Fluxus wedding combined with the erotic Flux Cabaret (*figure 1*). All the time he was actively investigating cures for cancer. His energy was phenomenal; he would come thundering into the city in his high riding boots and riding pants, wearing an orange leather coat and leather captain's cap and race around buying up toys, and odds and ends from Canal Street and Job Lot, the raw materials for Fluxus objects.

The wedding and cabaret were on February 25, 1978, at Jean Depuy's loft at 537 Broadway. George kept very tight control over the whole event. For the wedding both George and Billie Hutching, the woman he married, wore bridal gowns (*figure 2*). Geoff Hendricks prepared a special Fluxus ceremony and officiated as the priest. The bridesmaids, Jon Hendricks and Larry Miller, were in drag and the best man, Alison Knowles, in tails. Jonas Mekas was dressed as a San Franciscan monk and only spoke Lithuanian (*figure 3*). There was a wonderful feeling at the wedding feast but poor George couldn't eat any of the food; his digestive system had become so frail that any intake of food resulted in tremendous pain. For the Cabaret he and Billie performed a piece called "Black and White" (*figures 4 through 13*) to a recording of Monteverdi's madrigal "Zefiro Torno," a duet. George and Billie walked into the performance space dressed very elegantly; he in black tails, she in a wig, and a long white satin evening gown, with long white gloves. Very slowly, very carefully they performed an exchange of clothes. The piece had an overwhelming dignity and was very beautiful; classic.

After the Flux wedding and Cabaret, George and Billie returned to the farm. Larry Miller and Joe Jones went to help him assemble the Fluxus objects which he would give to those who had contributed money towards his cure. Unfortunately, his cancer had progressed very far. One of the doctors from Sloan-Kettering Institute told him there was no hope; his pain would get worse and he would grow weaker; he gave him two to four months to live. He went to a clinic in Jamaica that specialized in nutrition and vitamin therapy, but he kept getting weaker and weaker, bravely holding on until he died in a Boston hospital on May 9, 1978.

He left no will; he had removed his name from all property deeds because of the problems with the Attorney General, and a suit brought against him by the 141 Wooster Street co-op. The farm has been sold. The estate is in litigation. But his legacy remains; Fluxus lives on.

NOTES

1 *New York: Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, World Cultural Guides*, text by Dore Ashton, (New York, Chicago and San Francisco, 1972), p. 202.

2 Ada Louise Huxtable, *The New York Times*, May 24, 1970.

3 Quoted from letter from Film-Makers' Cinematheque to All Friends of Cinema, August 20, 1967.

4 In 1979 Anthology Film Archives purchased the Courthouse building on 2nd Avenue and 2nd Street. In 1988 it reopened with two theaters, a library and art gallery.

5 Jim Stratton, author of a book about lofts, *Pioneering in the Urban Wilderness* (New York, 1977), used to write a column in the *SoHo Weekly News* about lofts. In the November 28, 1974 issue he devoted the entire column to the law that requires a cooperative to file a prospectus with the A.G.'s office:

The main function of the prospectus is to increase the price of the building to the person co-oping it and to restrict the developer population to only those who can afford it. Legal fees to a good lawyer for drawing up a prospectus can run to 10,000. Then there are engineering reports, surveys, accountings and all of them cost money.

The prospectus, therefore, assures that the developer will be monied and shrewd, out for big profits, and the lofts will go for a bundle. Then the A.G. is happy. The buyers have no more than they would have had without a prospectus, except it cost more. That's the American way.

Curiously, most "illegal" offerings I've seen can be read like an open book by any layman who wants to dig a little and ask a few questions. A phalanx of lawyers, however, know no more about a building after reading the prospectus than they did before they opened it.

Except that now they know they can't sue [the seller].

Alice Hutchins, *Untitled*. Three small stackables containing different objects, letraset on covers, ca. 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Alice Hutchins. Photograph by Barbara Bremner.

The dialogue addresses the context to which Paris based artists of the 1960s responded, culminating in the 1968 workers and student strikes in May of 1968. In addition, insights are provided into the community structure of the New York based Fluxus circle and evidence is presented which illustrates that this "art culture" served as a support mechanism for an international group of artists who shared similar convictions about the function of the art experience and the responsibilities of the art maker.

Circles of Friends: A Conversation with Alice Hutchins

Estera Milman

Estera Milman, pp. 203–209
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

EM: I would like to talk about the transition/ transformation of your work from painting to object making and situation initiating. We should probably begin in 1960 or so when you first met Jean Dupuy through whom you began your acquaintance with a number of poet/painters in France whom you call your circle of friends. It was an informal grouping, of people that you felt comfortable with, people who were working with language, performance and the visual arts and attempting to integrate these media – to break down boundaries.

AH: And to find something new. Many of us were reading books on Zen. There was a lot of innovation. One night in my studio there was a performance in which simultaneously Bernard Heidsieck recited his poetry, Paul Gette drew insects on large sheets of paper, a dancer danced and three firemen performed acrobatics – it was great. There were other evenings – mostly of poets. John Giorno was one.

EM: It was through Dupuy that you met Bernard Heidsieck and Françoise Janicot and during the *soireés* at their house that you became familiar with Chopin, Emmett Williams, [Robert] Filliou, Carolee Schneemann…

AH: Carolee was a visitor. She had just performed *Meat Joy*. Anytime visiting artists came, Bernard and Francois would host parties.

EM: Was the relationship to [John] Cage a direct one?

AH: Not for most of us. We just knew his work. He gave a number of concerts in Europe. I think he might have been better known in Europe than in America, at that time.

EM: You said, when we spoke last, that Cage had served as a model for the group.

AH: It wasn't really a group. We were friends. It was very loose – much more loose than Fluxus here. There was no organizer. I don't think Cage served as a model in a formal way.

EM: But curiously enough, we have Williams, Brecht and Filliou in this circle.

AH: But they came as guests to Bernard's parties. I met them there on a social basis. Or there were performances, and I'd go.

EM: So these people were just passing through. Why did you pick them out of the crowd? Why is it important to you to identify these people as particular guests at those parties?

AH: All right, that's fair. They were people who interested me – their ideas were liberating. Filliou very often was living in Paris. Emmett passed through. Brecht was there for a while.

EM: Of the group of friends who became your community in Paris, Chopin and Dupuy were primary friends.

AH: And [Paul] Gette, the Heidsiecks, Renée Baslon and Jean Degottex.

EM: Williams and Brecht and Schneeman just passed through your life, and retroactively you can pull out those occasions when you met them as having been important. But Brecht was special, would you say?

AH: I only met him once or twice in Paris and then in Ville Franche. Some of my work was on sale at *La Cédille qui Sourit*. But he was impressive. The work we heard about and that influenced me a lot were the Happenings. Jim Dine's and [Allen] Kaprow's. *Art News* had very graphic descriptions of these events and I was translating some of the articles for a friend. If anything, I think my work with magnets take off from the Happenings. But back to my Paris friends – what was so special was the friendly relations we had with each other and the interest we took in each other's work – the sharing of experience – the cooperation – for instance when Paul Gette started to make up small inexpensive editions of bound paper, works that he circulated in non-traditional ways, he asked different ones of us to contribute a page. This was in the mid-60s. We had more time then.

EM: This was a distribution mechanism for new works, in the same way that *An Anthology* was (and some of the Fluxus publications), a kind of strategy for distributing the work and also a strategy for connecting the people. When you put a bunch of people between covers, you, in a sense, make a community.

AH: That's right. And it was friends that you asked, or friends of friends. It was like an alternative gallery. These often weren't sold to people, they were just sent out.

EM: When you started working on the multiples – filling and stacking those found objects – you started being concerned with other people, with interactivity. You have told me before that interactivity was an extension of your interest in happenings; that you were converting that concept into small and personal kinds of things.

AH: Yes, exactly. I like the word personal.

EM: What interactivity assumes is that you have an audience, or at least an individual receiver. Your work can not help but take the process of

communication for granted. You want a person to become involved in an active fashion in this situation that you've initiated and you assume as you conceive the work that someone is going to come toward it and do so.

AH: This idea of sharing an experience with someone else gave me a lot of pleasure. I began to give away those things as gifts – the idea of play came in. I very much wanted closer relationships.

EM: And these objects were mechanisms for human contact...

AH: Exactly. I was propelled by isolation and was definitely attempting to reach out directly to other people.

EM: So the works became transactional devices – things that could initiate a relationship between you and someone else. It wasn't the artist/-public thing; it was just you and some other person – very personal.

AH: Yes.

EM: You've talked about the coincidence between your interactive objects and what was happening in France in the late 1960s. You've said that the form which this work took coincided with the climate of revolution; the climate of the strikes; the challenging of the social and economic structure of France by the students and the workers.

AH: While I was doing these things, I wasn't looking at them in this way. It's when I looked back that I realized what I had done. It was absolutely afterwards that I said, "It's the demythification of the artist, it's democratization, it's participatory." But this was following the uprising of 1968.

EM: But this was also after you came back from New York. You had become involved with another community of people in Manhattan – one that was very consciously a community; a group of people doing kinds of things that were similar, in certain respects, to your own work. You came back to France, taking with you the knowledge that this community existed for you, experienced in 1968 uprising, and then put it together.

AH: I did that. And at that time, the group in Paris sort of separated. We went our different ways. Dupuy was in New York. We all got busy. I had shows. They had shows. We didn't see each other as often.

EM: When you were working on the multiples, did you carry the concept "art" with you?

AH: Never. That's what was wonderful. I may have offended people. For example, Martha Wilson, introduced me as a sculptor five or six years ago; and I more or less blew up. I shouldn't have. I wrote a letter of apology.

EM: What are you?

AH: I like to say that I make magnetic objects. Ay-O came to see me once in Paris. It was after the Fluxshoe in London. He was looking at the work and he said, "oh, very nice sculpture." And I was upset.

EM: When you met George Maciunas did you share those opinions with him?

AH: Well, I didn't have those opinions then. I was just making little games. It never concerned me. We just laughed. I opened up my box of things, and he showed me everything he had in his place and gave me lots of gifts. I don't think there was any question of art or not. We weren't thinking in those terms.

EM: Let's talk about your interaction with the Fluxus community. When you were going to New York, you wanted to know if there were people you should get in touch with. Was it Paul Gette…

AH: Paul Gette certainly told me that I should get in touch with Maciunas. He said, "There's this strange guy in New York putting things in boxes."

EM: This was based, in part, on the little stackables that you were doing. You got in touch with Maciunas in December of 1967. Had you met Dick Higgins yet?

AH: He's the first person I met. I came to New York wanting to make contact with New York artists and, for some reason, I found Something Else Press in the phone book. (Maybe Brecht had told me about the Press.) So I called and we had a conversation. I told him I knew Filliou and Brecht and was a good friend of Chopin; and Dick was very warm and he said, "Oh yes, those are good friends and friends of those people are friends of mine. We're very busy, but why don't you come over and see us at 10:00 tonight." So I went over and helped Alison [Knowles]. She was working in her studio on the top floor after the twins went to bed. I remember Ben Patterson came in. She was doing some silkscreening. That became a real friendship; we made exchanges. Mind you, Dick was my daughter's age.

EM: The Something Else Gallery was on the main floor and the Press on the second.

AH: Alison had the top floor, and there was a living space on the lower level.

EM: And your interactive show at the Gallery took place in 1968.

AH: In February. It was a weekend show. Dick made bread. There was champagne; it was a party.

EM: Talk a little bit about your meeting with Maciunas.

AH: I finally made contact with George through the Goodman Gallery. (They were showing a few of my multiples.) I went to his apartment. It was small and there were interesting things around. We got along immediately. I had taken some objects in a valise and spread them around, and he liked it. We made some funny jokes, and he told some funny stories. He sent me out with a lot of Fluxus objects. The telephone kept ringing and he said, "Do you want to buy a loft?" And I ended up buying this loft. He told me about things to see. He said, "Go down to the Cinematheque. Henry Flynt is very interesting; you should go down and see him." And I did; as I remember, I was the only person in the audience. Another time I went to hear Jackson Mac Low after a terrible snow storm and was again the only member of the audience. What they were doing interested me. It was challenging. I liked that; I had found a place where I felt I belonged.

EM: I am particularly interested in the process by which members of the Fluxus community networked. You're talking about how you were welcomed into a community and provided with exactly what you were looking for. It wasn't what it had been like when you were hanging out with Dupuy and Chopin in Paris. There you had a kind of support mechanism but not the sense of belonging to an active community. But there was in New York.

AH: So much was going on – everyone was working hard and so commited. People told me where to go for materials. Alison sent me down to Canal Street (everyone seemed to know Canal Street), and I bought up a lot of material. When I went to see George I had it with me and he said, "Let's do a Jewelry Kit."

EM: He called it a jewelry kit? He named it.

AH: Yes. I wasn't doing jewelry. I just had this material; the bells, the rings. He put it together.

EM: Do you think of the kit as a collaboration with George?

AH: Yes and he did too. He said "*Let's* do a Jewelry Kit."

EM: So he responded to the work you were doing, suggested the collaboration, physically constructed the Kit, and put *your* name on the label.

AH: Weren't the other boxes like that too?

EM: I would think many of them were. But that raises interesting questions about his own intentional loss of self in the process. I mean, he wasn't interested in co-signing your box.

AH: No, I think that's very true. He was very much opposed to the idea of the artist as star.

EM: But you and he never talked about that.

AH: No, we'd just laugh about how engineers could do technology-art better than artists could. We just had kinds of chats. It was a lot of fun.

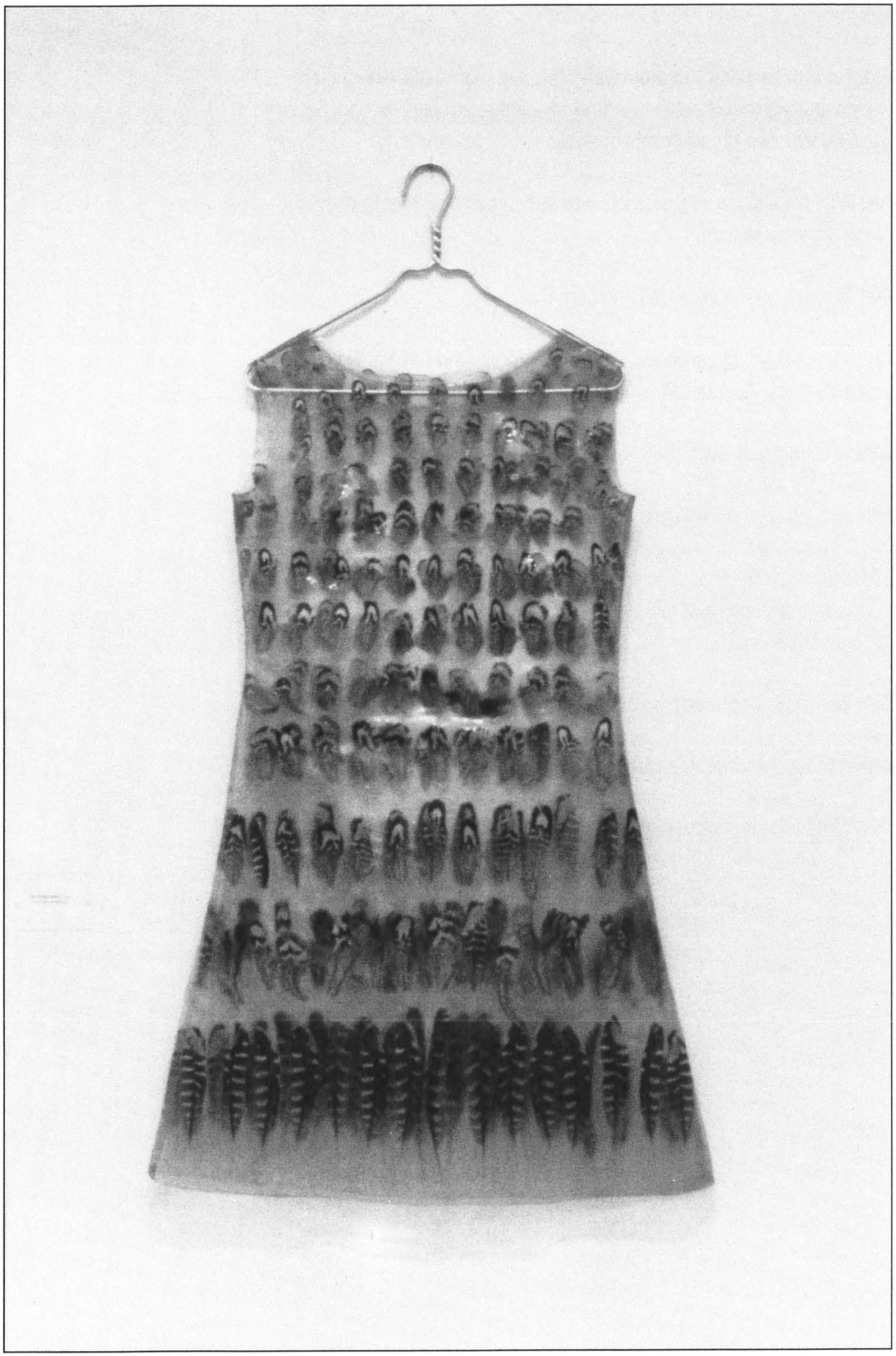
EM: When did you leave New York?

AH: I stayed here from September through April, and then I went home. I was supposed to stay longer, but when the death of Martin Luther King occurred, I just felt that I had had enough of the city. Bobby Kennedy had been shot, and I just thought I should go. I got home just in time for the May 1968 events.

EM: When you went back to Paris did you keep up with Dick and Alison?

AH: Yes. We remained friends.

This conversation took place in New York City, in March of 1992.



Robert Watts, *Feather Dress*. Feathers encased in clear vinyl, 96.5 x 64.8 x 1.3 cm., 1965. Courtesy Larry Miller and Sara Seagull. Photograph by Larry Miller.

The New York-based Fluxus movement began an extended period of dissemination, and in some senses dissolution, around 1967. At the same time the "fluxist" sensibility began to manifest itself in New York art beyond Fluxus' own specific artistic practice – and, as New York still dominated American artistic discourse at this time, the fluxist inflection in New York art inevitably entered art elsewhere in America as well, adding to the limited but growing influence of established regional Fluxus pockets. The essay addresses various phenomena that abetted the "fluxizing" of American art.

FLUXUS Fallout:
New York in the wake of the new sensiblility

Peter Frank

Peter Frank pp. 211–220
Visible Language, 26:1/2

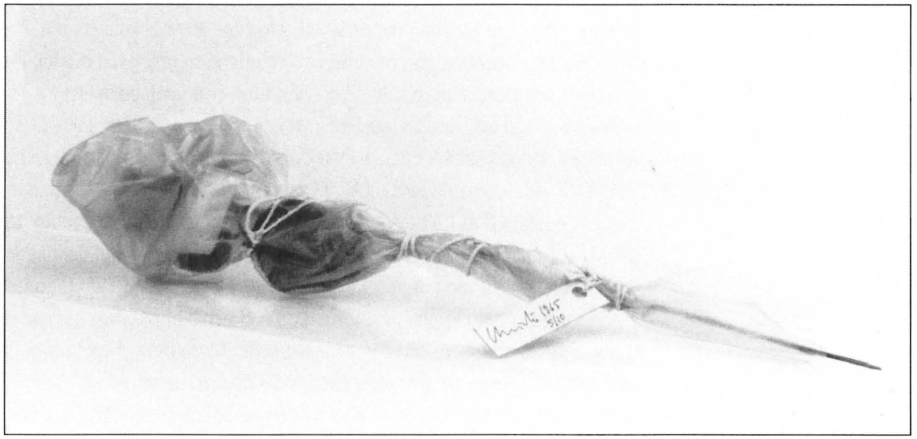
Rhode Island School of Design
Providence,,RI 02903

Around 1967, the Fluxus movement – by then securely centered in New York – began an extended period of dissemination, and in some senses dissolution. During this time, for various personal, artistic and broader social reasons, the close camaraderie and sense of collaboration among Fluxus' principal participants weakened. Leaving the Fluxus orbit, however, did not mean abandoning allegiance to the sensibility associated with the movement. In fact, the loosening of Fluxus artists' roots in New York helped spread Fluxus contact and practice throughout the rest of the country, adding to the limited but growing influence of established regional Fluxus pockets (e.g. Ken Friedman's Fluxus West in California, the Fluxus "cell" at the University of Indiana). Also abetting this spread was the fact that the "fluxist" sensibility began to manifest itself in New York art beyond Fluxus' own specific artistic practice; as New York still dominated American artistic discourse at this time, any fluxist influence in New York would inevitably inflect art elsewhere in America.

We can cite the dispersion of the original Fluxus group, notably to Europe, upstate New York, New England and California (where Fluxus artists were briefly, but importantly involved in the early years of the California Institute of the Arts outside Los Angeles) as the factor most directly responsible for the "fluxification" of vanguard Western art in the late 1960s and early '70s. Fluxus had as profound an impact on the avant-garde in New York itself, but the general nature and specific manifestations of this localized impact were more diffuse and less acknowledged in Fluxus' "home town." Two secondary documents testify to the seminal, yet oblique, mark Fluxus left on late-1960s vanguard practice in New York.[1] In his controversial article historicizing Conceptual Art,[2] Benjamin Buchloh attributes the coining of the term "Concept Art" to Henry Flynt in 1961, but cautions that:

> [a]s is usual with stylistic formation in the history of art, the origin and the name of the movement are heavily contested by its major participants. [Robert] Barry, [Joseph] Kosuth, and [Lawrence] Weiner, for example, vehemently denied in recent conversations with the author any historical connection to or even knowledge of the Fluxus movement of the early 1960s. Nevertheless, at least with regard to the invention of the *term*, it seems correct when Henry Flynt claims that he is "the originator of concept art, the most influential contemporary art trend. In 1961 I authored (and copyrighted) the phrase 'concept art,' the rationale for it and the first compositions labeled 'concept art.' My document was first printed in *An Anthology*, ed. La Monte Young, New York, 1962." (La Monte Young's *An Anthology* was in fact published in 1963)...[3]

Much earlier than Buchloh's essay (originally written for the 1989 exhibition *L'art conceptuel: une perspective* at the *Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris*), Lucy Lippard cites Fluxus several times at the outset of



Christo, *Package*. Blue plastic rose wrapped in transparent polyethylene with twine, New York, Fluxus Edition, 6.3 x 47.9 x 14 cm., 1965. Ellsworth Snyder Collection. This copy was found in Maciunas' archives after his death in 1978. Photograph by Angela Webster, Courtesy of Madison Art Center.

the chronology comprising the bulk of her *Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972*. Indeed, the very first entry is:

> BOOKS
> Brecht, George. *Chance-Imagery*. New York, 1966. Independently and in association with the Fluxus group, Brecht has been making "events" that anticipate a stricter "conceptual art" since around 1960...[4]

Fluxus is thus identified as a distinct precursor of Conceptual Art, but not a true source for it. With the important exception of Robert Morris (who can be identified as a progenitor as well as an early "fellow traveler," of Fluxus), the artists Buchloh discusses evince little contact with Fluxus art and activity. The early work of such artists as Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham and Mel Bochner take their cues from – and in reaction to – the proto-Minimalism of Don Judd and Ad Reinhardt and the philosophical constructs (from Wittgenstein to Kubler to Barthes) that impelled these artists' inquiries into the nature of experience. The ends of the "orthodox" Conceptualists, who emerged in the mid-1960s, were clearly distinct from those of the Fluxus artists, much as the ends towards which the post-Cubist rationalists strove, were fundamentally different from the Dadaists'. But, just as the Dadaists and the artists of De Stijl, the Bauhaus and Russian constructivist groups all derived their stylistic

means from an admixture of Cubist form, Expressionist social idealism and Futurist hyper-modernity, the Fluxus artists shared a generalized approach – one rejecting standard studio practice, engaging extra-visual concerns about perception and behavior and superimposing and even fusing many disparate disciplines – with their Conceptualist near-contemporaries. The artistic models which gave the Conceptualists the "permission" to dematerialize artwork into phenomenological postulates and arguments were precisely those who provided such permission – as well as spiritual and intellectual inspiration – to Fluxus artists. In 1960s New York, Marcel Duchamp and John Cage were everyone's (grand)dadas.

Even in its "heyday" (1962–66), Fluxus rarely manifested itself in a manner designed to garner specifically art-world attention. The intimate, private, often introspective nature of the particular sensibility identified with Fluxus gave even the most overt of the movement's presentations a sly and diffident air. Public performances and exhibitions were not widely advertised, and were often not really public. More often Fluxus events took place either in semi-private circumstances or, unheralded, out in public, witnessed for the most part by unsuspecting passersby. Formal presentations, whether at uptown recital halls or downtown galleries, were announced through very selected mailings and hardly thorough bill postings, and of course gained little mass-media attention.

By themselves, however, Fluxus artists were not nearly as shy and secretive; and, integrated into other, larger contexts, Fluxus and Fluxus-associated objects and gestures enjoyed at least decent exposure. Those Fluxus artists not self-limited to George Maciunas' infra-mince sensibility – notably New York-based Fluxists such as Dick Higgins and Carolee Schneemann and visitors such as Wolf Vostell and Milan Knízák – proved adept at mounting attention-getting spectacles, often identified (correctly or not) as Happenings. Certain Fluxus participants specifically oriented towards the infra-mince approach (Yoko Ono, for example) were also good at putting their objects and their actions in front of the public (which remained mystified, if no longer oblivious). The highest-profile spectacle in which Fluxus artists were involved, of course, was Charlotte Moorman's Avant-Garde Festival, which grew from a series of evening concerts in a midtown recital hall into a one-day blowout of the vanguard arts located in some public venue (Central Park, Grand Central Station, Shea Stadium and the 69th Regiment Armory, among others). This annual event was one of the most eagerly anticipated of each art season throughout the 1960s and '70s. Maciunas and Flynt boycotted the Festival almost from its inception, but most other New York Fluxus artists – and many from abroad – participated regularly. Nam June Paik made his 1964 American debut in the context of the Festival; also he began his ongoing collaboration with Moorman at that time.

Thematic group exhibits in which Fluxus artists participated did not normally identify those artists as Fluxus, but could not hide – indeed, often emphasized – the extreme eccentricity of what Fluxus artwork was included. Robert Watts, Geoffrey Hendricks and Ay-O, among oth-

ers, frequently contributed distinctly Fluxus work to non-Fluxus exhibits. The Fluxus connection was more likely to be cited when such artists held one-person shows in commercial galleries (e.g. Smolin, Thibaut, Bianchini). But Fluxus-associated artists were generally less active in commercial galleries after 1966 than they were before. Fluxus artists opted early on to exhibit in non-commercial situations (the gallery in the basement of the Judson Church, for example, where Hendricks and his wife Bici Forbes created several collaborative shows). Thus, in the mid-1960s, Fluxus artists prefigured the general disenchantment with the established gallery situation and the creation of "alternative spaces."

The alternative-space boom of the mid-1970s – which in New York spawned such now-established organizations as Artists Space, the Institute for Art and Urban Resources, White Columns (née 112 Greene Street) and Franklin Furnace – evolved directly out of early-'70s anti-gallery sentiment, early-'60s co-op galleries and individual and group initiatives of the mid- and late-'60s. Among the latter must be counted Maciunas' own Canal Street Fluxshop (1964–66) and Dick Higgins' Something Else Gallery (occupying the ground floor of his brownstone on West 22nd Street between 1966 and '68). The latter space, at least, received some critical notice.

So did the Gallery's parent organization, Higgins' Something Else Press,[6] a 1964 outgrowth of Maciunas' own publication and edition activities. [*See Dick Higgins, "Two Sides of a Coin: Fluxus and Something Else Press," in this volume.*] Something Else Press publications were available in most Manhattan bookstores featuring new literature – this at a time when such outlets were flourishing and even proliferating, thanks in great part to the post-Beat explosion in experimentalist writing and self-publishing (what Higgins, writing back then in his Something Else Newsletter, called "the mimeograph revolution"). The books of the Press attracted favorable review in art publications as well as in underground periodicals, and could not entirely have escaped the attention of even the orthodox Conceptualists. The Conceptual artists may have professed to Buchloh no contact with Fluxus, but – as the Press made Fluxus and Fluxus-related material available without identifying it as such – they may well have had such exposure without knowing it.[7] It is interesting to note in this context how the dissemination strategies of Seth Siegelaub, principle agent for the Conceptualists in the late '60s, straddled those of Maciunas and of Higgins. The books Siegelaub published were not standardized, nor were they distributed to general book stores, but they could be found in art book stores, and were sent out to a fairly extensive mailing list. Likewise, exhibitions Siegelaub arranged, in New York and elsewhere, were one-shot guerrilla affairs, not quite as secretive as Maciunas' but less regular in schedule or locale than those of the Something Else Gallery.

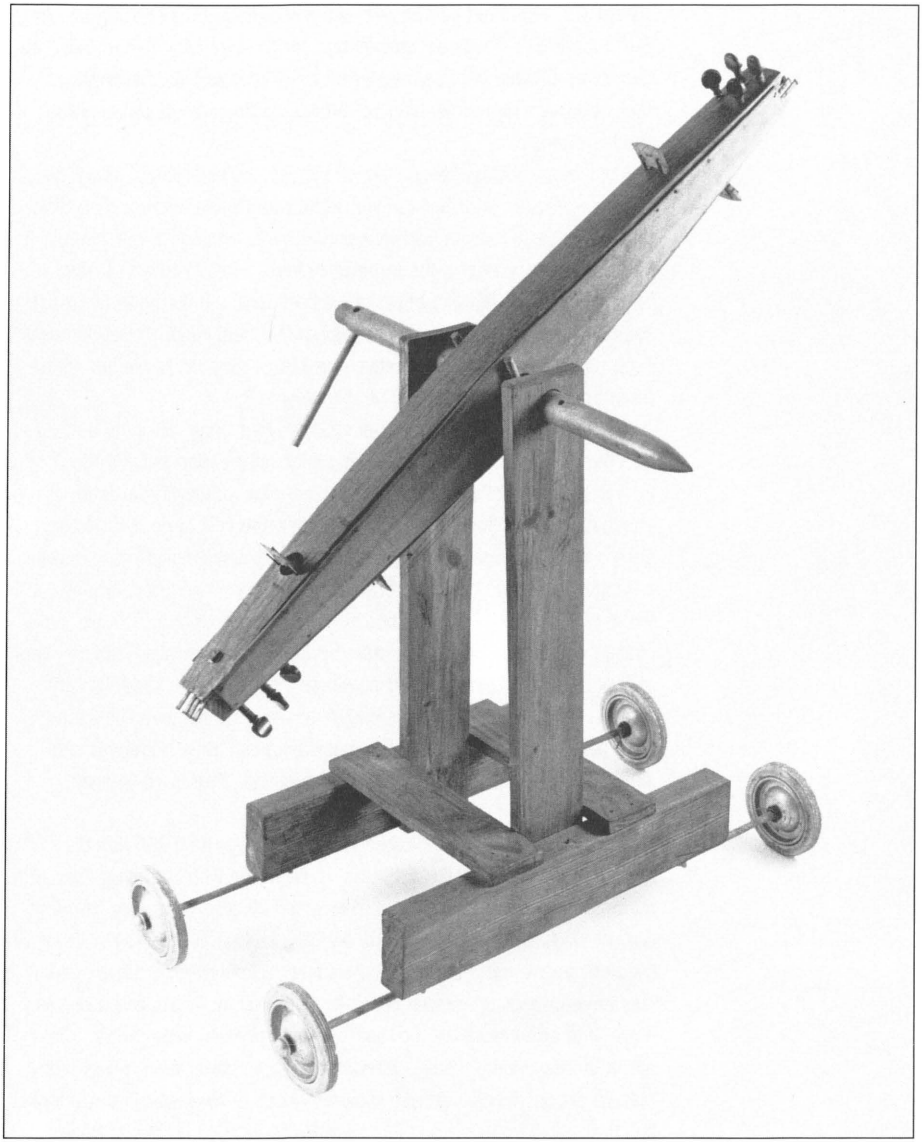
In 1967 and '68, Higgins was visited several times by a young poet researching Fluxus and intermedia. This poet, Vito Acconci, was already beginning to publish an experimental conceptually-oriented magazine,

0 to 9, and was interested in familiarizing himself with the various ways the conceptualist impulse was manifesting itself. The relative catholicity of conceptualist practice displayed by issues of *0 to 9* not only anticipated the richly various artwork created by Acconci himself, but prefigured all the post-conceptualist tendencies of the 1970s – as, in other (if often similar) ways, did Fluxus and the Something Else Press themselves. The deliberately straightforward, inelegant, even scruffy format of Acconci's magazine embodied the anti-object sentiment of early-'70s vanguardism. But Higgins' and Maciunas' high production values were also in evidence at this time, such as in the informational periodical *Avalanche*. As the number of artists involved in producing books grew throughout the decade, the Press (which disbanded in 1974) and Fluxus were rediscovered and their methods as well as messages emulated.

As an experimental writer, Acconci had gravitated to the lively "scene" at the St. Marks Church, headquarters for the second (and third, and nth) generation of New York School poets. There, he figured importantly in a group of especially adventurous writers who, through contact with visual artists, theater people, filmmakers, musicians and dancers, evolved their work into performance, often entirely devoid of the spoken or written word. In 1968 this loosely defined, unnamed group began presenting performance group shows in various indoor – and, occasionally, outdoor – spaces, emulating the poetry reading in format, but also recalling the chamber concert, the drama-class solo sequence and especially the evenings of solo dance pieces which were then proliferating in the wake of the choreographic revolution set in motion by the Judson Dance Theater. Of course, the idea of presenting simple gestural events in a concert context was pure Fluxus – as was the "Streetworks" format, in which the participants simultaneously realized their events in a specific geographical location (a particular city block, for example) during a specified time period.

Some of the performers in these stageworks and streetworks (e.g., Anne Waldman, Bernadette Mayer) came straight out of the bosom of St. Marks, while others (Marjorie Strider, Jon Henry) were active as visual artists and still others (Bernar Venet, Adrian Piper) were tangentially involved with Conceptual Art. But some participants, including Hannah Weiner and John Giorno, were close with Fluxus artists (notably writers such as Higgins and Jackson Mac Low) and were quite aware of, even admittedly influenced by, the Fluxus aesthetic. Comments made at the time by several stagework-streetwork artists indicated that they found Fluxus compelling as a sensibility but impenetrably and distastefully cliquish as a movement or group. In a sense, this flurry of Fluxus-like activity in 1968-70 was fluxism before the fact, an attempt to recapitulate the Fluxus approach without having to get permission from Maciunas to do so.

Fluxus methods and messages impacted various other aspects of New York art practice and artistic life as well. As early as 1963, Maciunas and Flynt, both dedicated radical socialists, had issued their



Joe Jones, *The Longest Pull-toy in the World.* Wood, wire. metal and plastic, 73.7 x 91.4 cm., 1968. Emily Harvey Collection.

own condemnations of the Vietnam War, leafletting and posting handbills – by themselves and in occasional concert with other radical groups – long before anti-war sentiment galvanized into a mass movement. [A colorful transformation by Maciunas – whose gift for innovative graphic design was a constant refining influence on Fluxus activity – of the American flag into a litany of American war statistics is regarded by cultural historians as one of the great protest posters of the '60s.] The Guerrilla Art Action Group, one of the art world's most con-

sistent and vehement sources for anti-war agitation, had strong ties to Fluxus. (The GAAG was essentially two people, Jean Toche and Geoffrey Hendricks' brother Jon; as curator of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, Jon Hendricks later became an important Fluxus archivist and historian.)

Maciunas' socialist ideals also led him into other areas of social discourse where his efforts, however oddly undertaken and however distant in their results from his original intentions, proved far-reaching. Maciunas was, in effect, the inventor of the SoHo loft co-op,[8] taking both the co-op ownership-governance structure and the notion of artists' neighborhood to a previously unimaginable extent when he began working on the "Fluxhouse Cooperatives" in 1966. [*See Hollis Melton, "Notes on Soho and a Reminiscence," in this volume.*]

The first art organization to benefit from Maciunas' co-oping activity was the Filmmakers' Cinematheque, which later expanded into the Anthology Film Archives, the first public center for viewing artistic endeavor in SoHo (predating Paula Cooper, the first serious SoHo art gallery by over a year) and served not only as a screening room, but as a theater for various budding drama groups and individuals. Among these were Richard Foreman and his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre, one of the principle playwright-directors and groups associated with the "theater of images"; Stuart Sherman, whose early one-man "Spectacles" evinced the influence of Fluxus and in turn anticipated, even influenced, such performance artists(-turned-musicians) as Laurie Anderson and John Zorn; and Fluxus itself. [*See Jonas Mekas, "Notes on George Maciunas' Work in Cinema," in this volume.*]

The unravelling of coordinated Fluxus activity after 1966 can be attributed in great part to Maciunas' involvement with co-oping. Even at the beginning such an involvement diverted his attention away from producing objects and concerts; but, as things began to go awry (thanks to his unorthodox and often unwise business practices), Maciunas spent less time organizing performances and fabricating boxes and more and more time arguing with co-op members and boards, with contractors, and with municipal officials.[9] Despite that, the charismatic, if hermetic, Maciunas continued to attract acolytes, whether Fluxus artists' students (such as Larry Miller, who studied with Watts and Hendricks at Rutgers University) or more established artists – mostly foreign – who recognized a strong affinity for Fluxus practice. Among these latter were Yoshimasa Wada and Jean Dupuy.

By the time he actually fell in with Maciunas and Fluxus in 1976, Dupuy had organized several controversial and well-attended installation and performance "group shows." Dupuy was aware of Fluxus while still in France, as he was strongly influenced by the models offered by Ben Vautier's Total Art activities and by Robert Filliou's (and, for a time, George Brecht's) involvement in the *Cedille qui Sourit* Fluxstore. These cunning admixtures of formal and informal organization showed Dupuy how the contributions of many artists could be coordinated into an over-

arching entirety without suppressing each artist's distinctiveness. In the early and mid-1970s, "About 405 East 13th Street," "Soup and Tart," "Chant a cappella," "Revolving Stage," "Grommets" and other group frameworks included pieces by many of New York's most innovative and ultimately influential "post-studio" artists.

However self-contained and even aloof it may have been as a circle of artists or an aesthetic practice, and however far removed it may have been from the mainstream, Fluxus was hardly removed from New York's artistic discourse. Acknowledged far more readily outside its home town than in, Fluxus flourished in semi-obscurity while helping in unusual as well as typical ways to shape the nature of New York art in the later 1960s and throughout the '70s. The current upsurge of interest in Fluxus is bringing the movement and its attendant sensibility into the limelight, for the first time in New York since Fluxus' furtive bid for attention in the early '60s. That upsurge suggests that Fluxus can once again have, and may once again be having, an impact on art and life in New York. Given the current state of art and life in New York, that impact comes not a moment too soon.

NOTES

[1] It should be reiterated that, at this time, the lion's share of immediately influential avant-garde investigation was occurring in New York. Even when not identified as such, the examples cited here were all part of New York's artistic discourse – appearing and taking place in educational forums such as the School of Visual Arts, galleries such as Lannis (run by Joseph Kosuth), Daniels (run by Dan Graham), Siegelaub and Dwan, and publications ranging from *Artforum* (which moved to New York from Los Angeles in mid-1966) to *Art-Language* and Vito Acconci's *0 to 9* – before they were part of the worldwide discourse.

[2] Buchloh, Benjamin H. D., "Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October 55* (Winter 1990), pp. 105–143.

[3] Ibid., p. 107. Flynt actually wrote his "Concept Art" essay in late 1960 and Young edited it into *An Anthology* in 1961. The compilation was indeed not published until 1963.

[4] Lippard, *Lucy. Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972* (New York, 1973) p. 11. The entry following Brecht's, Allan Kaprow's *Assemblage, Environments and Happenings* (New York, 1966), is also rich in Fluxus material identified as such.

[5] The Brecht book cited by Lippard was *Great Bear Pamphlet* #3.

[6] My *Something Else Press: an annotated bibliography*

(New Paltz, New York, 1983) provides a detailed history and analysis of the Press.

[7] To judge from his essay, Buchloh did not inquire of Weiner, Barry, Kosuth *et al.* as to their familiarity with the books of the Press. Buchloh does not directly consider the importance of books as well as periodicals in the early activities (ca. 1967–1970) of these artists; he implies, however, that those artists were prompted to consider the book format primarily, if not entirely, by the model of Edward Ruscha's self-published books. As Buchloh writes: "Among the key strategies of future Conceptual Art that were initiated by Ruscha in 1963 were the following: to choose the vernacular (e.g., architecture) as referent; to deploy photography systematically as the representational medium; and to develop a new form of distribution (e.g., the commercially produced book as opposed to the traditionally crafted *"livre d'artiste."* Buchloh, p. 119. Ruscha's books, however, printed in Los Angeles in initially very small editions, were available in very few New York outlets (albeit ones, such as Wittenborn's, likely frequented by the Conceptualists), far fewer than carried Something Else Press publications.

[8] Simpson, Charles R. *SoHo: The Artist in the City* (Chicago, 1981), p. 156. Simpson's detailed sociological study chronicles Maciunas' early (1966–68) efforts at setting up his Fluxhouse Cooperatives, including his less-than-forthright managing of maintenance and development funds. (Predictably, Maciunas is ultimately portrayed not as a crook, but simply as a control freak.)

[9] Maciunas was able to fend off the wrath of co-op members and the city with a barrage of eccentric memos, declarations and posturings, at one point barricading himself in his basement lair so that he could not be served papers. He was not so lucky with contractors; one had him attacked, and he lost an eye in the encounter.

Using a NeXT computer, art historians and computer software researchers at The University of Iowa created an electronic representation of Fluxus art objects which accompanies the traveling exhibition, Fluxus: A Conceptual Country. The computer program gives exhibition attendees an opportunity to experience the Flux objects in the spirit in which they were originally created. Viewers can, for example, open a Flux box, select an object inside, view the components and move them around. Since the value of the original art objects has increased, they are normally exhibited under glass; the computer program provides a virtual approximation to the original without damaging it.

FluxBase: An Interactive Art Exhibition

Michael Partridge and Joan Huntley

Mike Partridge and Joan Huntley, pp. 221–227
Visible Language, 26:1/2

Rhode Island School of Design
Providence, RI 02903

Introduction: The Fantasy

Imagine yourself in a room at a traditional art museum. The lighting is soft, the high ceilings and walls are an unassertive off-white. Visitors stroll about, peering at tiny identifying cards. They nod and murmur reverently before the creations of the great masters. The works themselves are thoughtfully displayed, as befits their status as high expressions of their culture. The mood is quiet yet somehow charged as you ponder each image and object; they evoke feelings familiar and unfamiliar, personal and universal. As you leave the room, you notice the security guard, whose presence silently reminds you of the parental edict "do not touch."

Now imagine yourself in another room. The lights are a bit brighter and the decor more suited to contemporary tastes and budgets. "Fluxus: A Conceptual Country," reads the banner over head. Then there are the creative works themselves: George Maciunas', *Prototype for Robert Watts' Fluxrock*, looks like a rock glued to a small tray; Milan Knizak's *Killed Book* is shot full of holes.George Brecht's various *Games and Puzzles* kits do seem as if they would be fun to play with; the dice could have been lifted from a *Monopoly* set and their little plastic boxes are identical to those containing the assorted bolts you bought yesterday at the hardware store. And what could be on an 8mm film loop by Yoko Ono? But never mind, you cannot touch them, even though the mood is more K-Mart than *kunstwerk*, and even though the artists had intended that you play. As befits their new status, the objects are now protected from you by plexiglass cases.

You turn and discover a cyberspace, an artificial reality, and find yourself looking at a large computer screen with those Fluxus things in front of you; reproduced in realistic color and grayscale images. You discover that the objects on the screen are not static. You can interact with them.

Using a "mouse," you "touch" the latch on the wooden box and the box opens. It is filled with cards, plastic and paper boxes, envelopes, and who knows what else.

You continue "playing" and choose an object. A window opens on the screen as you select a menu option. The window tells you that the object you are playing with is the *Total Art Matchbox* by Ben Vautier. You can read about the piece or see a biography of the artist, annotated with graphics and sound. The matchbox's label instructs you to "USE THESE MATCHES TO DESTROY ALL ART." You open the box – yes, there are matches inside; you strike one and it bursts into (artificial) flame. The French Impressionists in another gallery briefly cross your mind in a rather wicked context, but you decide you have done enough for one fantasy, and return to the subject at hand.

Origins of the FluxBase Project

As suggested in the little fantasy, there can be problems with the presentation of Fluxus objects in traditional exhibition formats. These prob-

lems arise from the forms of the works themselves and the avant-garde context in which they were created. Fluxus art has strong roots in the Dada movement of the early part of this century. Estera Milman, Director of The University of Iowa's Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, notes that "Dada was Fluxus' self-professed great-grandparent."[1] Discussing parallels between Fluxus and Dada, she writes:

> Fluxus, also, quickly united a generation of artists who, although scattered throughout the world, collectively questioned the myth of artistic privilege and shared the conviction that art activity must be withdrawn from its special status as rarefied experience and be resituated within the larger realm of the everyday experience of everyman. Fluxus has come to be identifiable through its language works, its minimalist performance pieces, its street events, its concentration on the everyday activity, its publications, object games and event kits, its relics, and through its personae, *die Fluxus Leute* (the Fluxus people). Fluxus was (is) a fusion of all of these things but, perhaps more importantly, Fluxus was the coalition of an international "constellation of individuals" into a conceptual community, a country whose geography was a figment of the communal imagination, whose citizenry was transient and, by definition, cosmopolitan.[2]

Characteristics of Fluxus Objects

1. Multitude of forms
2. Relationships among artists and objects important for understanding Fluxus art

In 1989 Milman mounted the conference, *Art Networks and Information Systems*, in collaboration with Franklin Furnace Archives. The project was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and The University of Iowa. Attendees included librarians, museum conservators, artists and technologists from the Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Research Libraries Group, the Library of Congress, the J. Paul Getty Art History Information Program and the Stanford University Libraries among others. Milman's motivation in organizing the conference was to seek better ways of sharing information about non-traditional art forms which did not conform easily to traditional cataloging methods. Because such art works were located in museums, libraries, galleries and private collections – each of which had its own organizational mechanism – it was important that representatives from these various worlds meet together to consensually address the problem.

Earlier we developed a visual database supporting computer-based retrieval of 35,000 videodisc images for the School of Art and Art History. This application evolved from a Prime mini-computer to its current form as a Macintosh Hypercard stack, *Pieta Resistance*. Based on this earlier work, we were asked to share our concept of how technology might be used to ameliorate the problems in indexing, retrieving and sharing information about alternative art forms.

After several meetings with Milman, we decided to concentrate on Fluxus as a movement and *Flux Year Box 2* as the work of art. Our charge was to address bibliographic problems. But it seemed that the ultimate motive for indexing was to help people get more information about the works of art so that they could better understand them. We therefore proposed a system to include multi-media representations and opportunities for users to experience the essence of the art through computer-based encounters.

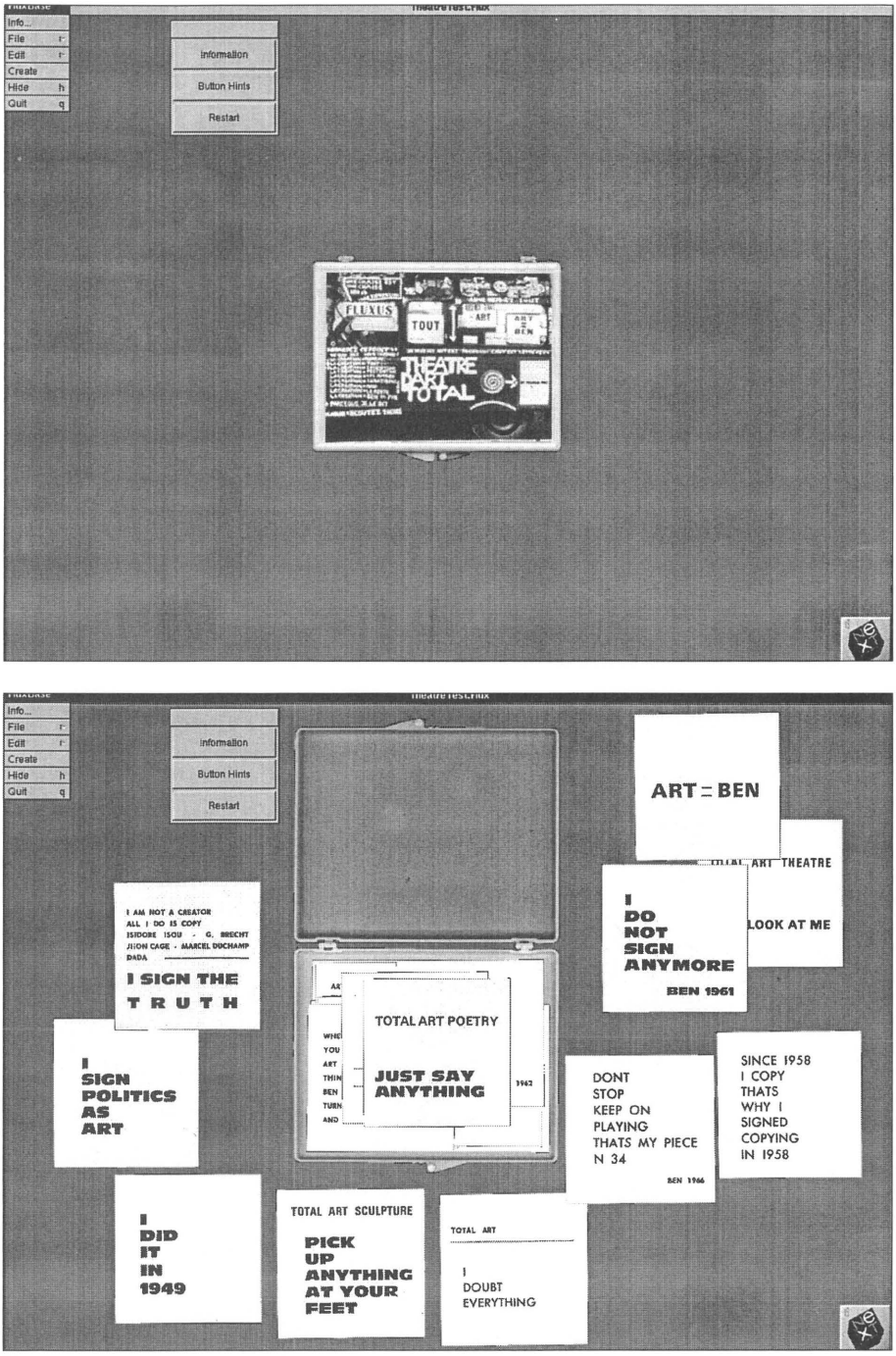
We envisioned a system which would expand the information normally associated in a bibliographic database. For example, we desired an environment where users could learn about the lineage and offspring of Fluxus – branch out to read about alternative educational systems and Zen Buddhism, watch an interview with and listen to music by John Cage and view examples of correspondence art and book art. Besides traditional keyword based access, we envisioned access through graphical representations – tree structures as it were – of the information contained in the system. We sought access by timelines and geography to give users a sense of being able to travel in time and place and view the Fluxus movement as it existed then. We envisioned representing the life-cycle of a work of art, traveling in its perspective as it went from creation to collection to exhibition etc. We wanted to be able to see the objects' life size, not just a predetermined view size. To instill the sense of community and the notion of evolving art, we want the users themselves to create works and annotate and leave their mark, making an organic rather than closed creation. And finally we wanted to give users the sense of physicality, of actually touching and using the objects – of experiencing – not just observing.

For the April 1989 conference, we presented the conceptual schematic for the system. By September, we developed an actual working prototype on the NeXT computer which we presented at the *Optical Information Systems* conference in Washington D.C. The prototype focussed on the direct manipulation aspects of the conceptual model.

There are currently two FluxBase applications: the *FluxBase Prototype* which was developed in response to certain issues surrounding the *Art Networks and Information Systems* conference in 1989, and the new *FluxBase* displayed as part of the exhibition, *FLUXUS: A Conceptual Country*. Each application functions in two capacities:

1. As an interactive exhibition, presenting the art objects on the computer screen to the primary users who could optimally experience the exhibition "on-site" (i.e., in a traditional gallery space) or "remotely," by connecting to the exhibition computer via an electronic network, from a location almost anywhere in the world.
2. As a tool for constructing such exhibits from a given collection of digital media (images, sounds, text, etc.). The curators and designers responsible for creating the exhibits would use the program in this mode.

The prototype modeled the work, *Flux Year Box 2*, a Fluxus "collaborative multiple." Literally a small wooden box, *Flux Year Box 2* contains a



FluxBase: A Virtual Exhibition, NeXT computer prototype. Two print-outs of Ben Vautier's *Fluxus/Theatre D'Art Total*. Boxed concept works, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 9.3 x 1.2 cm., ca. 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

number of objects contributed by twenty-one artists. The primary goal of the prototype was to give the user a sense of exploring the contents of the box and handling its objects, as intended by the artists who created the actual work. A secondary goal was making information about each object available to the user upon request.

The new *FluxBase* is conceptually similar to the prototype. Its enhancements are mainly in the areas of added function and much greater scope of content, with emphasis on these extensions:

1. Many more art objects
While the work modeled by the prototype contained a number of objects, it still represented only one work. We have included a variety of additional Fluxus works from the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts collection at The University of Iowa and a select few from other institutions. These works were chosen to represent additional forms, artists and relationships not present in *Flux Year Box 2*.

2. More data on the objects and artists
James Lewes, a research assistant from Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts was assigned to the FluxBase project and provided scholarly information about the objects and artists.

3. Support for multimedia information
Some forms of Fluxus art such as performances and events which feature live participation can be presented more effectively through sound and motion pictures. Material such as audio/video interviews can be presented in near "native" form. The NeXT currently provides excellent support for sound (up to CD quality) and graphics (thousands to millions of colors on screen at high resolutions). The new *FluxBase* was designed to make immediate use of sound and color graphics and to incorporate motion video.

Implementation of the FluxBase Applications

The *FluxBase* applications are implemented on a NeXT computer. The NeXT was chosen for its object-oriented software development environment, its hardware and software support for high quality graphics and sound, and its large standard monitor. The object-oriented programming environment proved critical to the successful development of the prototype.

The desire to treat the computer representations of the art objects in *Flux Year Box 2* as separate entities with similar behaviors lent itself naturally to implementation with object-oriented methodologies as did the construction of the graphic user interface.

NeXT computers come with a rich set of software tools to support object-oriented programming. Central to the system is the *AppKit*, a class library which provides most of the typical objects (e.g., windows, buttons, menus) which are used to build an application with a graphic user interface.

In an abstract sense, producing a computer program which met the "visitor" goals, noted above, involved implementing the following functions:

1. Displaying images of the objects on the screen
2. Dragging images around the screen under user control
3. Displaying other such images in response to user input
4. Displaying information about an object in response to user input

Meeting the "creator" goals required adding the following functions for constructing the exhibit:

1. Incorporating the digitized image files into the exhibit
2. Defining areas on the image which produce a response when clicked
3. Providing an interface to enter text with associated graphics and sounds

Summary

The current *FluxBase* project embodies many of the desirable aspects we proposed at the 1989 conference. We expanded the media forms represented and extended the number of artworks accessible to the participant. Most importantly, *FluxBase* is now in a form in which new Fluxus objects can be easily added by non-technical people, thus inviting collaborative work among Fluxus scholars. The program is designed so that – with time and funding – our other goals – time and space access, real size representation and giving viewers the opportunity to create their own electronic Flux creations – can be readily added to our program. With time and participation among the community, we hope *FluxBase* – like the original artworks themselves – will challenge and inspire, provoke and perpetuate the spirit of the Fluxus movement.

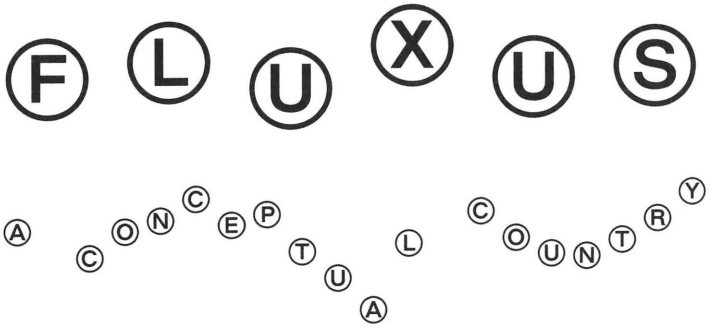
NOTES

[1] Estera Milman, *Fluxus and Friends: Selections from the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts Collection* (Iowa City, 1988), n.p.

[2] Ibid.

Carla Liss, *Untitled*. Bottle of river water, dried mosses and flowers sealed in a plexiglass box, 22.9 x 17.8 x 3.2 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection. Photograph by Hollis Melton.

Curated by Estera Milman
Exhibition checklist compiled and
annotated by James Lewes



Works

A

Eric Andersen, *182550–182949*. Boxed concept works, Berlin, Edition Hundertmark, 21 x 29 x 1 cm., 1971. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Eric Andersen, *Untitled*. Four multiples, Copenhagen,1852 Edition, each 12 x 8 x 2 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Eric Andersen, George Brecht and Arthur Koepcke, *Building Project*. Pamphlet, 21 x 21 x 0.5 cm., 1968. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Eric Andersen, Robert Filliou, Pino Paschali, Knud Pedersen, *Divide Denmark*. Portfolio, 30 x 21.4 x 0.3 cm., ca. 1971. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Anonymous, *Charlotte Moorman Performing Takehisa Kosugi's "Chamber Music"*. Three black and white photographs, each 20.3 x 25.4 cm., ca. 1974. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Anonymous, *Fluxworker Jacket*. Altered ready-made lab coat from Hi Red Center Street Cleaning Event, Grand Army Plaza, New York City, June 11, 1966. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

> This was an enactment by the New York Fluxus group of an event composed by the Hi Red Center Group in Tokyo and originally performed October 16, 1964.

Anonymous, *Green River Utah*. Rock with hand written title on masking tape, approximately 17.8 x 5.1 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Ay-O, *Finger Box Kit*. Fifteen finger boxes in black briefcase with red lining , 38.1 x 8.9 x 25.4 cm., ca. 1964. Emily Harvey Collection.

Ay-O, *Tactile Box #25*. Felt hat encased in wooden box, 25.4 x 25.4 x 25.4 cm., and cardboard container, 30.4 x 30.4 x 30.4 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

B

Gianfranco Baruchello, *Dear Globus Albus*. Oil and collage on aluminum, 40 x 39.5 cm., 1966. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Jan and Ingeborg van der Marck.

> Originally included in the exhibition, *A Tribute to George Maciunas*., Beaumont-May Gallery, Hopkins Center, Dartmouth College, November 22, 1978–January 14 1979.

Joseph Beuys, *Postcard by Joseph Beuys*. Postcard, *Fluxus Zone West* stamp by Joseph Beuys, *Fluxus West* stamp by Ken Friedman, 11.4 x 14.9 cm., n.d. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec.

Joseph Beuys, *Zwei Fraulein Mit Leuch Tendens Brot Reisen Hin Uber*. Language work with chocolate, 20.3 x 76.2 x 27.9 cm., 1966. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

> Published in an edition of five hundred in *De-Coll/age* No. 5, Wolf Vostell, editor.

Joseph Beuys and Ken Friedman, *Fluxus Zone West, Fluxus West*. Collaborative stamp project, three rubber stamps made in Rome, Georgia cased in blue linen-like box, 13.3 x 21.6 x 19.7 cm., 1971/1985. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec.

Don Boyd, *Fluxus West Leather Envelope*. Correspondence art, envelope with attached leather bag, 12 x 17 cm., 1977. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

George Brecht, *Chapter XI of The Book of the Tumbler On Fire*. Typing on piano roll paper, 26.6 x 65.5 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

George Brecht, *Deck by George Brecht/ A Fluxgame*. Boxed artist's playing cards, New York, Fluxus Edition, 6.8 x 9.4 x 2.3 cm., ca. 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

George Brecht, *Games & Puzzles*. Clear plastic box, divided into eighteen compartments, containing a variety of small objects, New York, Fluxus Edition, 22.9 x 34.3 x 6.3 cm., ca. 1967. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Brecht, *No Smoking (Warning)*. Sign, four copies, each 42.5 x 42.5 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Brecht, *Valoche 1959–1975. A Flux Travel Aid*. Small sea chest filled with objects and toys, 18.5 x 18.5 30.5 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection. This copy was found in George Maciunas' room after his death in 1978.

George Brecht, *Water Yam*. Boxed concept works, New York, Fluxus Edition, 24.4 x 22.5 x 5.1 cm., ca. 1964. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

C

John Cage, *Not Wanting to Say Anything About Marcel*. Multiple, eight silk screened plexigrams each 35.6 x 50.8 x 0.3 cm., walnut base 36.8 x 61 x 1.9 cm., 1969. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Jose Luis Castillejo, *Composition with Red, Blue and Yellow*. Language work, 13 x 13.5 cm., 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

> Juan Castillejo was a founding member of the Fluxus related Spanish Zaj group. The group consisted of Castillejo, Ramon Barce, Javier Martinez Cuadrado, the brothers Jose, Manuel and Ramiro Cortes, Esther Ferrer, Juan Hidalgo, Walter Marchetti, Tomas Marco and Eugenio de Vicente.

Giuseppe Chiari, *La Strada*. Envelope with cards packaged by Willem de Ridder, New York, Fluxus Edition, 7 x 10.8 cm., 1964. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Giuseppe Chiari, *Teatrino*. Three drawings, typing, ink, colored crayon on paper, 14 x 22.3 cm., 22.8 x 28 cm., 33 x 47 cm., and portfolio clamped by two winged clamps, 1963. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

John Chick, *Flux Food*. Boxed assembling, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 9.3 x 1.5 cm., ca. 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Henning Christiansen, *Incompatability*. Typing and black ink on paper, 21 x 34 cm., 1964. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Christo, *Package*. Blue plastic rose wrapped in transparent polyethylene with twine, #5/10, New York, Fluxus Edition, 6.3 x 47.9 x 14 cm., 1965. Ellsworth Snyder Collection. This copy was found in Maciunas' archives after his death in 1978.

Buster Cleveland, Paste-up for *NYCS Weekly Breeder*. Six pages recto verso, 28 x 21.5 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, The Buster Cleveland Collection.

Paste up of works on paper and rubber stamp images by Joseph Beuys, Herve Fischer, Fluxus West, Ray Johnson, Daniel Spoerri among others. This issue of the *NYCS Weekly Breeder* was edited by Buster Cleveland and published under the collective name the East Side Dadaists, which included Bill Gaglione and other members of the West Bay Dadaists. The East Side/West Bay Dadaists, were the third group of editors of the *NYCS Weekly Breeder*, the first being Ken Friedman et al. in San Diego, the second being Stuart Horn in San Francisco.

Jack Coke's Farmers Cooperative, *Find the End/A Fluxgame.* Boxed object, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 9.3 x 1.4 cm., ca. 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Philip Corner *Ear Journeys: Water.* Plexiglass hinged box, containing booklet and seaweed, Barrytown New York, Printed Editions, 18.3 x 13 x 1.3 cm., 1977. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec.

Philip Corner, *Letting the Metal Swing Back and Forth.* Ink on Rice Paper, 30.5 x 48.3 cm., n.d. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Jose Cortes, *K K.* Ink on paper, 11 x 69 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Manuel Cortes, *Sonata Manifesto.* Ink on folded paper, three pages, 23.5 x 33.5 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Robin Crozier, *Anthologie Six A.* Book, assembled from other works, 20 x 24.5 x 0.5 cm., 1977. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Artwords and Bookworks Collection.

D

Marcel Duchamp, *Erratum Musica.* Two drawings on music paper, 35 x 54 cm. , ca. 1914. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Jean Dupuy, *Clock.* Clock and mirror, 25.4 x 9 x 22.9 x 15.2 cm., 1972. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

Jean Dupuy, *Lazy Art.* Page taken from New York City phone book, 27.9 x 22.9 cm., ca. 1970. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

Jean Dupuy, *Lazy Art.* Pencil drawing with split pencil, 55.9 x 76.2 cm., 1974. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

F

Wolfgang Feelisch, *Fluxus Keeps Left.* Miniature, 4.5 x 5.5 cm., 1970. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Wolfgang Feelisch was the owner, editor and publisher of *Vice Versand* (Remscheid), which was one of the four principal outlets for Fluxus material in Germany in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the other three being the *Hansjorg Mayer* (Stuttgart), *Reflection Press* (Stuttgart) and *Edition Hundertmark* (Berlin).

Robert Filliou, *Fluxdust collected by Robert Filliou.* Boxed sweepings, New York, Fluxus Edition, 11.3 x 9 x 1.3 cm., ca. 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Robert Filliou. *Futura No. 26.* Language work, Stuttgart, Hansjorg Mayer, 63.5 x 47.9 cm., 1968. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Robert Filliou, *Telepathic Music #2.* Paper, plastic, metal music stand, 42.2 cm. high, 1973. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Arman. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas.*

Robert Filliou, *2 x Yam = 3,000,000,000.* Ink on paper, 15 x 23 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Robert Filliou, Daniel Spoerri & Roland Topor, *Monsters are Inoffensive.* Boxed Set of Cards, Fluxus Edition, 16.2 x 11.4 cm., ca. 1968. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Robert Filliou, George Maciunas, Peter Moore, Daniel Spoerri and Robert Watts, *Monsters are Inoffensive.* Screen print on paper for table tops, table cloths, etc., 88.9 x 88.9 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Albert M. Fine, *Piece for Fluxorchestra.* Boxed performance score, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 9.3 x 1.3 cm., ca. 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Albert M. Fine, *Scale Piece for John Cage.* Box with scale and weight, 17 x 14 x 2.5 cm. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Albert M. Fine, *Untitled.* Black spray paint. on corrugated cardboard, 31.7 x 43.8 cm., ca. 1972. Courtesy Emily Harvey.

Henry Flynt, *Blueprint for a Higher Civilization.* Book, Milan, Multhipla Edizione, 23.5 x 17.1 cm., 1975. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Henry Flynt and George Maciunas, *Communists Must Give Revolutionary Leadership in Culture.* Two texts packaged between plastic and styrofoam, bound with rubber band, New York, World View Publishers, 15.2 x 22.2 x 3.5 cm., 1966. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Henry Flynt, *Communists Must Give Revolutionary Leadership in Culture* and George Maciunas, *Soviet Prefabricated Building System.* Two artists' statements, one black on orange, one black on white, each 15.2 x 22.2 x 3.5 cm. Inside pages of Henry Flynt, *Communists Must Give Revolutionary Leadership in Culture*, New York, World View Publishers, 1966. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Henry Flynt, *Down With Art.* Manifesto, New York, Flux-Press, 10.8 x 27.3 cm., 1968. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Ken Friedman, *Coffin.* India ink and gesso on primed wood,152.4 x 27.9 x 27.9 cm., 1978. Alice and Jack Hutchins Collection.

Ken Friedman, *Decade.* Relief sculpture, 64 x 16.5 x 9 cm., ca. 1979. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Ken Friedman.

Ken Friedman, *Killed Book (in response to a killed book by Milan Knizak).* Book object, 17.2 x 12.7 x 2.5 cm., ca. 1970. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Ken Friedman.

Ken Friedman, *Tusche.* Relief sculpture, 63.5 x 21 x 7.5 cm., ca. 1979. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Ken Friedman.

Ken Friedman and George Maciunas, *Visa TouRistE, Passport to the State of Flux.* Artists' passport, proposed by Ken Friedman in 1966, and realized by Maciunas in 1977, 13.8 x 10 x 0.3 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

G

Jochen Gerz, *Postsachen (1968–1972).* Boxed language and concept works, Berlin, Edition Hundertmark, 32.5 x 24.5 x 2 cm., 1978. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The

University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Guerilla Art Action Group, *Bloodbath*. Manifesto announcing and communique explaining the group's November 1969 demonstration at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, and three photographs of the action by Kwa Kwang Hui, each 20.3 x 25.4 cm. Jon Hendricks Collection.

> This action, the third involving the Guerilla Art Action Group, was carried out in the name of both the Guerilla Art Action Group and the Art Workers Coalition, and publicized as such in *Flug/Flux Blattzeitung #12*, published by Dietrich Albrecht in 1970. The action was a piece of political street theater, during which the members of the group tore each others clothes off inside the museum and broke bags of blood concealed under their clothes in the ensuing melee. *Bloodbath*, was thus an extension of experiments in radical street theater being performed by such groups as *'Bread and Puppet Theater Company'*, into the confines of elite establishments.

H

Al Hansen, *Car Bibbe*. Ink on paper, three pages, 21.5 x 35.5 cm. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Al Hansen, *Hep Amazon*. Non extant assemblage, ca. 1959. Custom color enlargement, commercial grade, printed from vintage slide, 20.3 x 25.4 cm. Photographed by Dick Higgins. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa.

Al Hansen, *Homage to the Girl of our Dreams*. Paper collage on wood, 19 cm. x 16.5 cm. x 1.9 cm., 1966. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Armand P. Arman. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*.

Bici (Forbes) Hendricks, *Language Box Box Language*. Boxed language work, Black Thumb Press Inc., 9.5 x 11.4 x 3.81 cm., 1966. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Bici (Forbes) Hendricks and Geoffrey Hendricks, *Fluxdivorce*. Announcement/invitation, printed on white card stock and cut into two equal halves, each 14 x 8.5 cm., 1971. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Bici (Forbes) Hendricks and Geoffrey Hendricks, *The Friday Book of White Noise, volumes 2, 4*. Two composition books, 18.5 x 24.7 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Geoffrey Hendricks, *Picnic Garbage Vinyl Placemat (photograph by Peter Moore)*. Serigraph on vinyl, New York, Fluxus Edition, 35.6 x 41.9 cm. , 1973. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Jamie Davidovich.

Geoffrey Hendricks, *Sky Painting #3*. Oil on cotton, rope, wooden clothespins, 114.2 cm. x 195.6 cm., 1966. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Jean Brown. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*.

Geoffrey Hendricks, *300 Kitchen Safety Matches for George*. Standard matchbox "Diamond Kitchen Safety Matches" containing 300 burnt matches, 12.1 x 6 x 3.81 cm., 1972. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Hi Red Center, Shigeko Kubota, editor, *Bundle of Events*. New York, Fluxus Edition, documentation detailing activities of Hi Red Center from September 1962–April 1964, 55.9 x 43.2 cm.,1965. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

> Members of the Tokyo based Hi Red Center group included Genpei Akasegawa, Tatu Izumi, Takehisa Kosugi and Shigeko Kubota. George Maciunas' design for *Bundle of Events* was based on the 1953 Sidney Janis Gallery Dada poster/exhibition catalogue by Duchamp.

Hi Red Center, *Fluxclinic*. Folded card, offset black on white card stock, New York, Fluxus Edition, 19.7 x 13 cm., ca. 1968. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Juan Hidalgo, *El Recorrido Japones*. Ink on paper, 14.5 x 22 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Dick Higgins, *Al Hansen and Anita Reuben at the Reuben Gallery*. Custom color enlargement, commercial grade, printed from vintage slide, 28 x 35.5 cm., ca. 1959. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa

Dick Higgins, *Allan Kaprow "in" the set for "18 Happenings."* Custom color enlargement, commercial grade, printed from vintage slide, 20.3 x 25.4 cm., October 1959. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa

Dick Higgins, *Graphis #140*. Ink on graph paper five acetates and final photograph, 53.5 cm x 41 cm., 1967. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Dick Higgins, *Graphic #144 Wipeout for Orchestra, Graphic #143, Softly for Orchestra*. Offset lithograph with acetate element, 60.3 x 50.8 cm., 1967. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Dick Higgins, *Installation shot of "Below Zero"*, Reuben Gallery. *Figure* by George Segal, *Mountains* by Allan Kaprow, *Hanging* by Claes Oldenburg, *Canyon* by Robert Whitman, *Dog* by Red Grooms. Custom color enlargement, commercial grade, printed from vintage slide, 28 x 35.5 cm. ca. 1959/1960. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa.

Dick Higgins, *1,000 Symphonies*. Three segments of a seven part musical score made by machine gun, each 52.1 x 44.4 cm., 1963. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

> The intention of this piece was to illustrate both the violence that Higgins argued was the heuristic of all creativity and the power relationship "which characterizes our understanding of the execution and imposition of one will over another in the most dictatorial and technical way" (Dick Higgins, *The Thousand Symphonies* 1967).

Dick Higgins, *George Brecht and Jim Dine*. Custom color enlargement, commercial grade, printed from vintage slide, 28 x 35.5 cm., ca. 1959. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa.

Dick Higgins, *Ray Johnson and Anita Reuben at "Below Zero"*. Custom color enlargement, commercial grade, printed from vintage slide, 28 x 35.5 cm., ca. 1959. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa.

Dick Higgins, *Stacked Deck*. Six custom color enlargements, commercial grade, printed from vintage slides, each 28 x 35.5 cm., 1959. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa.

Dick Higgins, *Untitled*. Serigraph 76.2 x 55.9 cm., 1973. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec.

Davi Det Hompson, *Thanks Again for Everything*. Six photomontages, each 27.5 x 35 cm., 1972. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Alice Hutchins, *Untitled*. Ten small stackables containing different objects, letraset on covers, one box @ 11.6 x 8.8 x 4.8

cm., three boxes @ 8.7 x 5.8 x 4.8 cm., six boxes @ 5.8 x 4.3 x 4.8 cm., ca. 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Alice Hutchins.

Alice Hutchins, *Jewelry Flux Kit*. Boxed multiple, New York, Fluxus Edition, 6.5 x 6.3 x 5 cm., 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Alice Hutchins.

Alice Hutchins, *Passport Retouch*. Enlarged altered photograph, 65 x 50 cm., 1968. Original photograph by Peter Moore. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Alice Hutchins.

Alice Hutchins, *Wall Piece with Magnets, Spring and Bells*. Interactive assemblage, 72 x 5 x 5 cm., 1968/1991. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Alice Hutchins.

> Athough the work was restored by Hutchins in 1991, it is of the same vintage as similar wall pieces exhibited during the artist's show at Something Else Gallery in 1968.

I

Toshi Ichiyanagi, *The Field*. Embossed paper, 44.3 x 31.5 cm., 1966. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Tatu Izumi, *Untitled*. Painting on burlap, 96.5 x 109.2 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

J

Ray Johnson *Booox*. Boxed set of three altered books, 1] *Admonition of Kwanzan Kosushi as Interpreted by Uncle Ray Johnson* (*The Novel and the Modern World* by David Daiches), 2] *Blue Book of Telephone Numbers with Cut Out Cats* (cats to Higgins, Knowles et al.), 3] *Blue Book of Telephone Numbers with Collage Drawings*, 18.7 x 14 x 4.1 cm., early 1960s. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Ray Johnson, *Upim Labo*. Typing on colored card, 9 x 13 cm., 1964. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Joe Jones, *The Longest Pull-toy in the World*. Wood, wire, metal and plastic, 73.7 x 91.4 cm., 1968. Emily Harvey Collection.

K

Allan Kaprow, *Self Service*. Collage, colored inks on yellow ruled paper collaged into cardboard, four pages, 44 x 45 cm., 1966. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Per Kirkeby, *Solid Plastic in Plastic Box*. Boxed object, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 9.3 x 1.3 cm., 1969. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

Bengt af Klintberg, *Orangerimusik*. Collage, ink on paper, 42.3 x 30.5 cm., 1963. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Milan Knízák, *Aktuálni Umumění*. Portfolio of writings, photographs, performance pieces in Czech with English translations, 22.5 x 30.5 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Milan Knízák, *Body Shirt, From Milan Knízák Objeckte*. Burned silk in plastic, Berlin, Edition Hundertmark,116.9 x 91.5 cm., 1971. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Milan Knízák, *Killed Book, From Milan Knízák Objekte*. Book object, Berlin, Edition Hundertmark, 19 x 14 x 3.8 cm., 1966–1971. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Milan Knízák, *Relic From Milan Knízák Objekte*. Object, yellow sponge in shape of hammer and sickle, Berlin, Edition Hundertmark, 23 x 31 x 3.5 cm., 1970. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Alison Knowles, *Bean See Bein*. Poem for two voices, two pages from New York City phone book, 27.9 x 45.7 cm., 1965/1978. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

Alison Knowles, *Big Book*. Installation shot of non-extant work, custom color enlargement, commercial grade, printed from vintage slide, 35.5 x 28 cm., 1967. Courtesy the artist.

Alison Knowles, *Blue Ram*. Six silk screen prints on cardboard, 48 x 72 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Alison Knowles, *The Identical Lunch with George Maciunas*. Silk screen on canvas, image approximately 35.1 x 44.4 cm., canvas unstretched approximately 50.4 x 58.7 cm. 1963. Collection, the Artist.

Arthur Koepcke, *Cigarette Piece*. Pencil on back of cigarette-package wrapper, 7.3 x 10.7 cm., 1962. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Takehisa Kosugi, *Events*. Boxed performance scores, New York, Fluxus Edition, 11.8 x 9.1 x 1.2 cm., 1964. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Takehisa Kosugi, *Untitled*. Collage, magnetic tape on card with instructions, 23.5 x 3.7 cm., n.d. The John Cage Notations Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Shigeko Kubota, *Flux Medicine*. Boxed assembling, New York, Fluxus Edition, 11.8 x 9 x 1.5 cm., ca. 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

L

John Lennon, *a date for George from John*. Altered polaroid of an anonymous Beatle fan, 10.8 x 8.9 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Frederic Lieberman, *Tertiary Systems*. Typing, ink on 4 cards, 13.6 x 8.9 cm., 1965. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

György Ligeti, *Volumina*. Pencil, red and black ink on paper, 29.7 x 29.5 cm.,1961. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Carla Liss, *Untitled*. Bottle of river water, dried mosses and flowers sealed in a plexiglass box, 22.9 x 17.8 x 3.2 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

M

George Maciunas, *American Flag Samurai Hood*. Screen print on cotton, approximately 45 cm. high, 1967–1968. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

George Maciunas, *Andy Warhol*. Paste-up of page from *Film Culture #45 (Warhol Issue)*, 30.2 x 22.9 cm., ca. 1968. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Burglary Fluxkit By George Maciunas*. Paste-up, 10.8 x 14 cm., 1971. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Composition 1971 by George Maciunas*. 17.1 x 21.6 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Contemporary Man*. Paste-up, 50.8 x 40 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Die*. Hinged plywood cube with holes created for *Flux New Years Eve Disguises*, 78.7 x 78.7 cm., ca. 1973. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Excreta Fluxorum*. Mixed media, New York, Fluxus Edition, 10.8 x 21.3 x 3.5 cm., 1973. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of John Cage. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*.

George Maciunas, *Flux Dreams By Milan Knízák*. Paste-up, 19.4 x 12.7 cm., 1969. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Flux Fest Sale, Expanded Arts Diagram*. Collection of scores and a chart, 55.9 x 86.4 cm., 1966. Published in *Film Culture #43*, Jonas Mekas, editor. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Fluxfest Presents 12 Big Names*. Twelve glass slides, Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Philip Glass, Allan Kaprow, Les Levine, Bruce Naumann, Piero Manzoni, Yoko Ono, Klaus Rinke, Michael Snow, Wolf Vostell, Andy Warhol, each slide 5.1 x 5.1 cm., 1975. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Originally performed at the Film-Makers' Cinematheque on April 25 1975. Each slide was projected for ten minutes.

George Maciunas, *Flux Furniture*. Paste-up, 18.4 x 14.6 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Flux Shop List Box 3*. Paste-up, 10.2 x 15.2 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Flux White Meditation by Milan Knízák*. Paste-up, 20.3 x 15.9 cm., 1969. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Fluxfest of Avant Tongue Music*. Paste-up, 14.6 x 10.2 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Fluxpost (ageing men)*. Artist's stamps, New York, Fluxus Edition, 27.9 x 21.6 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

George Maciunas, *Fluxshop Sheet*. Serigraph, New York, Fluxus, 53.3 x 16.8 cm., 1964–1966. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec.

George Maciunas, *Fluxtour Ticket*. 21.6 x 27.6 cm., ca. 1970. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Maciunas, *Gift Box for John Cage; Spell Your Name with These Objects*. Box with 12 removeable parts, 10.5 x 23.8 x 5.4 c.m., ca. 1972. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of John Cage. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*.

George Maciunas, *Grand Central Moderns, West 56, NYC*. Paste-up of poster for A. M. Fine exhibition, December 17, 1966–January 12, 1967, 28.6 x 22.9 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Homage to Yoko Ono, by George Maciunas Jan 11, 1962*. Monogram on translucent paper, 20.9 x 18.7 cm., 1962. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Intestinal Design Apron*. Serigraph on vinyl, New York, Fluxus Edition, 50.8 x 40.7 cm., ca. 1973. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Jaime Davidovich.

George Maciunas, *Mystery Flux Animal*. Bottle with blue lid containing dried animal intestines, New York, Fluxus Editions, 6.5 cm. high 3.5 cm. in diameter, ca. 1965. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

George Maciunas, *Name Box for Jonas Mekas*. Clear plastic box, containing a diversity of small objects, 24.1 x 21.6 x 3.8 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *New Flux Year*. Confetti, New York, Fluxus Edition, ca. 1965. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

George Maciunas, *New Flux Year*. Snake in a box, New York, Fluxus Edition, 11.9 x 6.9 x 6.9 cm., ca. 1965. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

George Maciunas, *Paik Winking*. 27.9 x 21.6 cm., 1973. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Maciunas, *Photographs of Hi Red Center Street Cleaning Events*. Grand Army Plaza, New York City June 11, 1966, nine photographs, each 10.4 x 10.4 cm. Printed by Hollis Melton. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

George Maciunas, *Single Card Fluxdeck*. Unboxed set of fifty two cards, ten of spades, New York, Fluxus Edition, 8.9 x 6.3 cm., ca 1969. Madison Art Center, Gift of Emily Harvey and Christian Xatrec.

George Maciunas, *Untitled*. Poster for Yoshimasa Wada concert, ca. 1974. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

George Maciunas, *Untitled*. Key embedded in metal handle, approx 12.7 x 12.7 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas, *Venus De Milo Barbecue Apron*. Serigraph on vinyl, New York, Fluxus Edition, 75.6 x 40 cm., 1973. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Jaime Davidovich.

George Maciunas and Billie Hutching , *Black and white*. Performance piece, February 25, 1978, ten black and white photographs, each 27.9 x 35.6 cm. Photographs by Hollis Melton. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

George Maciunas and Robert Watts, *Prototype for Watts Fluxrock*. Rock glued to small tray, rock approximately 4.5 x 1.9 cm., tray 17.8 x 12.7 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Jackson Mac Low. *1st Milarepa Gatha*. Vajrayana Bhuddist mantra, written in Tibetan, #108/200, 49.5 x 34.6 cm., n.d. To E.S. on August 16, 1980. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Jackson Mac Low, *Hare Krsna Gatha 3 (In Memoriam: A.J. Muste)*. Ink on paper, 31.6 x 24 cm., 1967. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Walter Marchetti, *Madrigale d'Autunno*. Ink on card, 22 x 13 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

David Mayor, *Fragmen*. Language works in plastic bag, Collumpton, Beau Geste Press,14.8 x 10 cm., 1972. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Jonas Mekas, *Reminiscensijos*. Book with wooden cover, Published by Jonas Mekas, 14 x 20.3 cm., 1972. Designed by George Maciunas. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Jonas Mekas, *Untitled*. Four frame enlargements from Jonas Mekas' 1992 film, *Scenes from the Life of George Maciunas*, footage for which was shot between 1952 and 1978, custom color enlargements, commercial grade, each 28 x 35.5 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Hollis Melton, *Flux Wedding, George and Billie, February 28, 1978*. Two photographs in photobook, unfolded 19 x 27.9 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Larry Miller, *The Art of Influence*. Effigies of Jeffrey Lew, George

Maciunas, Willoughby Sharp, sewn clothing, hair, fingernails, blood, straw, photographs, each approximately 27.9–33 cm. high. Courtesy of the artist.

Larry Miller, *The Art of Influence*. Photo document, 40.6 x 50.8 cm., 1974. Courtesy of the artist.

Larry Miller, *Orifice Flux Plugs*. Objects in a compartmentalized box, New York, Fluxus Edition, 22.2 x 33 x 5.7 cm., 1974. Courtesy of the artist.

Larry Miller, *Outer Space Banner*. Black and white sewn banner, 320 x 59.7 cm., 1974. Courtesy of the artist.

Larry Miller, *Outer Space Sign*. Paste-up, 43.8 x 36.2 cm., n.d. Copyright Egglamp Graphics, Egstra, Egglumm, Egglump. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Peter Moore, *Photograph of George Maciunas*. Silver print enlargement, 49.5 x 79.5 cm., 1975. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Peter Moore.

Peter Moore, *Untitled*. Photograph of model wearing Robert Watts' *Feather Dress*, 35.5 x 28 cm., 1966. Courtesy of Larry Miller and Sara Seagull.

Robert Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily*. Documentation of performance in the form of an accordion book, closed 30.4 x 10.8 x 1 cm., 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Olivier Mosset/"Total Art Nice," *Flux Dots*. Boxed assembling, New York, Fluxus Edition, 11.9 x 9.1 x 1.5 cm., 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

O

Serge III Oldenbourg/"Total Art Nice," *Flux Contents*. Glass bottle with blue lid filled with white plaster, New York, Fluxus Edition, 6.5 cm. high x 3.5 cm. in diameter, 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Serge III Oldenbourg, *Untitled*. Object, poster with barbed wire, 1979. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

Claes Oldenburg, *Rubber Food Prototype/ Rubber Food Fluxkit*. Boxed objects in shape of fruit and other food, 13 x 18.1 x 5.1 cm., 1966. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Jan and Ingeborg van der Marck. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*.

Yoko Ono, *A Box of Smile*. Box with mirror, New York, Fluxus Edition, 5.4 x 5.4 x 5.4 cm., 1971. Signed by artist in 1984. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Yoko Ono, *Concert Pieces for John Cage*. Title page, instructions and twelve scores, ink on paper, 20.5 x 25.5 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

P

Nam June Paik, *Danger Musik for Dick Higgins*. Ink on mended tissue, 21 x 29 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Nam June Paik, *Fluxus Island in De-Coll/Age Ocean*. Advertisement for *De-Coll/Age #4*, offset lithograph printed black on white newsprint, 41 x 57.2 cm., 1963. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

> *De-Coll/Age* was a publication edited from 1962 to 1969 by Wolf Vostell. The first three issues were published by Vostell, the last four by Typos Verlag (Cologne). The publication presented works by Joseph Beuys, George Brecht, Henning Christiansen, Robert Filliou, Henry Flynt, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Milan Knizák, Alison Knowles, George Maciunas, Claes Oldenburg, Nam June Paik, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell, La Monte Young and Zaj.

Nam June Paik, *Fluxsonata*. Offset lithograph, 27.9 x 21.6 cm., 1973. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Nam June Paik, *Zen for TV*. Television set, 53.3 x 39.3 x 31.1 cm., 1963/1978. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Nam June Paik. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*.

Benjamin Patterson, *Instruction No. 2*. Boxed event kit, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 9.3 x 1.7 cm., ca. 1965. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Benjamin Patterson, *Performance Score for Dance*. 78.1 x 50.8 cm., 1964. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

R

Willem de Ridder, editor *European Mail Order House, Post Box 2045, Amsterdam, Holland*. Folder with Catalogue, 27.9 x 24.1 cm., ca. 1964. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

> Willem de Ridder, who became active in the Fluxus group in 1962, set up the European Mail-House as an outlet for Fluxus Editions and original works in late 1963 in his gallery Amstel 47 in Amsterdam. The Mail Order House issued a number of price lists between 1964 and 1965 and along with the Flux Shop sales lists published in *cc V TRE*, provide the most comprehensive listing of the early Fluxus Editions. The European Mail Order House was reconstructed for the 1984 exhibition of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston.

Willem de Ridder, *Paper Flux Works*. Ten scores in a plastic box, New York, Fluxus Edition, 8.8 x 11.5 cm., 1964. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

James Riddle, *E.S.P. Fluxkit*. Boxed concept work containing six colored pieces of paper and instructions, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 8.3 x 0.8 cm., ca. 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

James Riddle, *Instant Happening*. Bottle containing morning glory seeds, produced by James Riddle and distributed by Fluxus, 6.3 x 3.7 cm. 1964. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

James Riddle, *Untitled*. Miniature bicycle wheel; wood, wire, paper, ink and paint. Approximately 12.7 x 5.7 cm., ca. 1964. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

Dieter Rot, *Snow*. Book, #54/100, Wasser Press, 23.5 x 17.8 x 4.4 cm. ,1974. Special version of 1964 edition. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Dieter Rot, *Taschenzimmer*. Boxed drawing and dirt, Remscheid, Vice Versand, 10.5 x 7.5 x 2 cm., 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Gerhard Ruhm, *Voyeurobjekt*. Keyhole and miniature photograph, mounted on a wooden base, Berlin, Edition Hundertmark, 29.8 x 19.9 x 4.1 cm., 1969–1971. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

S

Takako Saito, *Heart Box*. Paper box, 14 x 14 x 14 cm., 1970. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Alison Knowles. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas*.

Tomas Schmit, *Postmusic in Homage to N.J. Paik.* Typing and postmarks on paper, 15.8 x 22.3 cm., 1963. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Carolee Schneemann , *Cezanne She Was a Great Painter.* Artist's book, 28 x 21.5 cm. 1974. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Artwords & Bookworks Collection.

Carolee Schneemann, *Snows (sequence 4–7).* Ink, pencil and collage on paper, 43 x 31.5 cm., 1967. The John Cage Notations Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Greg Sharits, *Flux 1, 2, 3.* Language work, 27.9 x 21.5 cm., 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Paul Sharits, *Death.* Artist's book, 10.2 x 18.7 x 0.9 cm., 1965. Designed and Printed by Paul Sharits at Indiana University. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Paul Sharits, *Mirror Meat.* Artist's book, 17.8 x 10.8 x 0.9 cm., 1965. Designed and Printed by Paul Sharits at Indiana University. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Paul Sharits, *Open the Door: An Inclusion.* Accordion book, closed 16.8 x 11.4 x 0.3 cm., 1966. Designed and Printed by Paul Sharits at Indiana University. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, *Events and Games.* Boxed performance scores, New York, Fluxus Edition, 13 x 8.2 x 3.1 cm., ca. 1964. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, *Spatial Poem No. 2 (a Fluxatlas).* Concept work, New York, Fluxus Edition, 36.8 x 82.6 cm., 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, *Spatial Poem # 3, A Flux Calendar 1968.* Leather covered calendar bound with nuts and bolts, 40.6 x 12.7 cm., 1968. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, *Water Music.* Glass bottle with blue lid, New York, Fluxus Edition, 6.5 cm. high x 3.5 cm. in diameter, 1964. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Gianni-Emilio Simonetti, *ANalyse du vir.age.* Collage on cardboard, 70 x 49.8 cm., 1967. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Daniel Spoerri, *31 Variations on a Meal.* Screen printed tablecloth, three versions, *Eaten by Arman, Eaten by Ben Patterson, Eaten by Jack Youngerman,* New York, Fluxus Edition, each 66 x 75 cm., ca. 1965. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

Klaus Staek, *Sieg Heil "Wir Setzen uns Durch."* Knuckle dusters 6 x 10 cm. and wooden plaque 21 x 10.7 cm. Remscheid, Vice Versand, 1968. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

T

Andre Thomkins, *Zahnscutz gegen gummiparagraphen.* Boxed object, rubber tag with elastic bands 4.5 x 10.5 cm., and cardboard box 11 x 8 x 2.4 cm., Remscheid, Vice Versand, n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Yasunao Tone, *Anagram for Strings.* Score, New York, Fluxus, 1963. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

Roland Topor, *Panic.* Book, San Francisco, City Lights Books, 15.7 x 12.8 x 0.5. cm., 1965. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Endre Tot, *Cup with Shoe Lace.* Aluminum cup with black shoelace, Remscheid, Vice Versand, 8 cm. high x 11.5 cm. in diameter, n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Endre Tot, *Zeropost.* Green and white sheet of artist's stamps, Edition Galerie Howeg, 29.7 x 20.9 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Artwords & Bookworks Collection.

V

Ben Vautier, *Buttocks Wallpaper.* Four sheets, each sheet 55.9 x 43.2 cm. Frame enlargement from Yoko Ono's film *No. Four.* Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Ben Vautier, *Dirty Water.* Glass bottle with black lid, New York, Fluxus Edition, 6.5 cm. high x 3.5 cm. in diameter, 1964. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Ben Vautier, *Fluxbox Containing God.* Sealed box, New York, Fluxus Edition, 11.9 x 10.4 x 1.2 cm., ca. 1969. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Ben Vautier, *Fluxus/Theatre D'Art Total.* Boxed concept works, New York, Fluxus Edition, 12 x 9.3 x 1.2 cm., ca. 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Ben Vautier, *Kleine Kunst, Pas d'Art, No Art, Art Total.* Paper bag, 45.1 x 34 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Ben Vautier, *Propositions Pour L'Art.* Metal desk painted black with white enamel lettering, 147.3 x 90.2 x 57.1 cm., and a copy of *Larousse Elementaire,* 1955 edition, 1966/ modified 1976. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Jan and Ingeborg van der Marck. Originally included in *A Tribute to George Maciunas.*

Ben Vautier, *To Destroy Art, To Be Yourself, Not To Expose.* Three acrylic paintings on wood, each 76.2 x 76.2 cm., n.d. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

Wolf Vostell, *Duchamp has Qualified the Object into Art. I Have Qualified Life into Art. 20th Century New York.* Language work, #250/500, 14 x 17.8 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Wolf Vostell, *Futura No. 22.* Language work, Stuttgart, Hansjorg Mayer, 63.5 x 47.9 cm., 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Wolf Vostell, *TV-Dé-collage-Ereignisse für Millionen.* Collage, fluorescent, black and colored ink on paper, 1 sheet, 64.2 x 50 cm., 1959. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Wolf Vostell, *Untitled.* Assemblage composed of photo-transfer on canvas, forty one shellacked bread loaves, L'Unita Newspapers and string, 91.5 x 123.1 cm., 1974. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

W

Yoshimasa Wada, *Earth Horn.* Instrument made of copper tubing, 12.7 x 183 cm., 1974. Courtesy Emily Harvey Gallery.

Robert Watts, *Banner for Outside (Yam Day), and Notes and Sketches.* Banner and nine pages, colored ink and crayon on ruled ledger paper, 21.5 x 28 cm., ca. 1963. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Robert Watts, *Feather Dress*. Feathers encased in clear vinyl, 96.5 x 64.8 x 1.3 cm., 1965. Courtesy of Larry Miller and Sara Seagull.

Robert Watts, *A Flux Atlas*. Objects in compartmentalized box, contains seven rocks, New York, Fluxus Edition, 9.2 x 12.1 x 2.5 cm., 1973. Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, Gift of Dr. Abraham M. Friedman.

Robert Watts, *Flux Timekit*. Boxed assembling, New York, Fluxus Edition, 9 x 11.8 x 2.8 cm., ca. 1967. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Robert Watts, *Fluxpost 17-17*. Artists' stamps, New York, Fluxus Edition, 1964. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Robert Watts, *Fluxus Tuxedo Print Shirt*. Serigraph on cotton, New York, Fluxus Edition,76.2 x 143.5 cm., n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Robert Watts, *Pork Chop With Pea*. Lucite and laminated photograph on wood, 24.8 x 24.8 x 3.81 cm., 1965. Courtesy of Larry Miller and Sara Seagull.

Robert Watts, *Shadow Flag*. Printed and sewn cloth, 205.7 x 144.8 cm. and American flag, 88.9 x 142.2 cm., 1976. Courtesy of Larry Miller and Sara Seagull.

Robert Watts and George Maciunas, *Money Box*. Wooden chest filled with $1.00 bills, 7.6 x 41.3 x 17.8 cm., 1972. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection. Gift from George Maciunas to Jonas Mekas on his 50th birthday.

Emmett Williams, *ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQWRSTUVWXYZ*. Language work, New York, Fluxus, 223 x 5.9 cm., 1963. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

Emmett Williams, *An Opera*. Language work, New York, Fluxus Edition, 178 x 9.9 cm., ca. 1963. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

Emmett Williams, *Untitled*. Collage, spray-paint, 60 x 80 cm., nd. Signed in 1980. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

Emmett Williams, *White for Governor Wallace*. Ink on ruled paper, 21.5 x 34 cm., n.d. The John Cage *Notations* Collection at Northwestern University Music Library.

Y

La Monte Young, *La Monte Young Compositions 1961 (Draw a Straight Line and Follow it)*. Book, New York, Fluxus Edition, 8.9 x 9.2 cm., ca. 1963. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

La Monte Young, *Trio for Strings Score = September 5, 1958, Copyright 1914 La Monte Young 1961*. Score with translucent covers, from *Fluxus 1*, George Maciunas, editor. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Periodicals and Anthologies

George Maciunas, editor and designer, *Ekstra Bladet*, Wiesbaden, West Germany, Fluxus, 1963. Newspaper roll, 114.5 x 20.9 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

La Monte Young, editor *An Anthology*, New York, Jackson Mac Low and La Monte Young, 1961/1963. Book, 19.7 x 22.7 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Inscribed "To Ellsworth Snyder with hope for peace and freedom, Jackson Mac Low 3/28/68." Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Maciunas, editor and designer, *Fluxus Preview Review*, Cologne, Fluxus,1963. Newspaper-roll, 166.4 x 10.2 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Brecht, editor, *V TRE*, Metuchen New Jersey, 1963. Newspaper, 32.1 x 24.8 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Brecht and Robert Watts, editors and designers, *Yam Festival Newspaper*. New York, George Brecht and Robert Watts, 1963. Newspaper, 73.7 x 15.2 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Maciunas, editor, *Fluxus 1*, New York, Fluxus, 1964. Boxed bolted anthology, 22.5 x 24.1 x 5.1 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Brecht and Fluxus Editorial Council for Fluxus, editors, *Fluxus cc V TRE Fluxus/Fluxus Newspaper No. 1*, New York, Fluxus, January 1964. Newspaper, 58.4 x 46.4 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Brecht and Fluxus Editorial Council for Fluxus, editors, *Fluxus cc V TRE Fluxus/Fluxus Newspaper No. 2*, New York, Fluxus , February 1964. Newspaper, 58.4 x 45.1 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Come One Come All! Hurry! Hurry! See, hear all 12 Fluxus Concerts. Offset on newsprint, 88.9 x 56.8 cm. Inside pages of *Fluxus cc Valise e TRanglE/Fluxus Newspaper No. 3*. New York, Fluxus, March 1964. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

The Great Wall of Garbage. Offset on Newsprint, 58.4 x 45.7 cm. Back cover of *Fluxus cc fiVe ThReE/Fluxus Newspaper No. 4*. New York, Fluxus, June 1964. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Ben Vautier, editor, *Tout #7: Fluxus group e de Nice*, Nice, Ben Vautier, 1965. Periodical bound with two split rivets, 21.6 x 16.5 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Perpetual Fluxfest and *Flux Shop Mail Order*. 55.9 x 86.4 cm. Inside pages of *Fluxus Vacuum TRapEzoid/Fluxus Newspaper No. 5*, New York, Fluxus, March 1965. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Maciunas, editor, *Fluxus Vaudeville TouRnamEnt/Fluxus Newspaper No. 6*, New York, Fluxus, July 1965. Newspaper, 58.4 x 45.7 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Yoko Ono and Dance Co. and *58 Propositions for One Page*. 56 x 87 cm. Inside pages of *Fluxus 3 newspaper eVents for The pRicE of $1/Fluxus Newspaper No. 7*, New York, Fluxus, February 1, 1966. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

> Ben Vautier's, *58 Propositions for One Page* was reprinted in John Wilcock's *Other Scenes* September 1968. Through this reprint, the piece was made available to the members of the Underground Press Syndicate, whose founding members included Fluxus West.

George Maciunas, editor, *Fluxus Vaseline sTREet/Fluxus Newspaper No 8*, New York, Fluxus, May 1966. Newspaper, 55.7 x 43.3 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Daniela Palazzoli and Gianni-Emilio Simonetti, editors, *Da-a/u dela*, Milan, ED 912, October 1966. Periodical in accordion format, 26.3 x 13.2 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Palazzoli and Simonetti, who became acquainted with Fluxus through Ben Vautier, organized a series of Fluxus events in Italy between 1967 and 1969.

Manifestoes, New York, Something Else Press, 1966. Great Bear Pamphlet, 21.5 x 14 x 0.4 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa , Fluxus West Collection.

Hi Red Center, *One Thousand Yen Note Trial*, 58.4 x 43.2 cm. Inside pages of *Psyche Journal*, August 1967. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Maciunas, editor, *Flux Year Box 2*, New York, Fluxus Edition, ca. 1968. Boxed collaborative multiple, 19.7 x 19.7 x 8.9 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Flux Year Box 2 was assembled by Maciunas, and published in a number of different editions between 1966 and 1978, with the contents of each box varying slightly, depending upon the materials available. This copy contains objects, games and scores by George Brecht, Willem de Ridder, Frederic Lieberman, Ken Friedman, Claes Oldenburg, James Riddle, Paul Sharits, Bob Sheff, Ben Vautier, Robert Watts, and film loops by: Eric Andersen, George Brecht, John Cale, John Cavanaugh, Albert Fine, Dan Lauffer, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, Paul Sharits, Stan Vanderbeek, Ben Vautier, Wolf Vostell and Robert Watts.

Dietrich Albrecht, editor, *Flug/Flux Blatterzeitung No.4*, Stuttgart, Reflection Press, 1969. Periodical, 29.8 x 21.3 x 0.5 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Dietrich Albrecht, editor, *Flug/Flux Blattzeitung No. 6/Die Fabelhafte Getraume Von Taifun-Wili*, by Dick Higgins, Stuttgart, Reflection Press, 1969. Periodical 21.2 x 15 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Die Fabelhafte Getraume Von Taifun-Wili was republished a year later in the United States by Abyss Press.

Dietrich Albrecht, editor, *Flug/Flux Blattzeitung No. 11/Krieg*, by Dietrich Albrecht, Stuttgart, Reflection Press, ca. 1970. Periodical, 21 x 14.8 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Dietrich Albrecht, editor, *Flug/Flux Blattzeitung No. 12/Art Workers Coalition*, by Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche, Stuttgart, Reflection Press, ca. 1970. Periodical. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Dietrich Albrecht, editor, *Flug/Flux Blattzeitung No. 14/A Little Book of Ben*, by Ben Vautier, Stuttgart, Reflection Press, ca. 1970. Periodical, 14.3 x 10.3 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

John, Yoko + Flux, black print on white paper, 52.3 x 43.2 cm. Cover of *all photographs copyright nineteen seVenty by peTer mooRE /Fluxus Newspaper No. 9* (misnumbered No. 8), New York, Fluxus, 1970. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

George Maciunas, editor *Flux Fest Kit II*. New York, Fluxus, 1970. Tabloid publication, 56 x 43 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Dieter Albrecht and Wolfgang Feelisch, editors, *Milan Knizák*, Stuttgart, Reflection Press/Vice Versand 1973. Pamphlet, 29.3 x 21.9 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Produced in response to Knizák's arrest, the publication includes Knizák's description of the event, responses from around the world and a petition to be sent to the Czech Government demanding Knizák's release.

Felipe Ehrenberg, editor, *Aktual Schmuck*, Collumpton, Beau Geste Press, 1974. Periodical 29 x 20.5 x 0.5 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Produced in response to Knizák's arrest, the publication concentrates on his work with Group Aktual.

Geoffrey Hendricks, Sara Seagull, Robert Watts, editors, *FLUXUs Maciunas V TRE FLUXUS laudatio ScriPTa pro GEoRge/No. 10*, New York, Fluxus, May 1976. Newspaper, 58.4 x 44.6 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Geoffrey Hendricks, editor, *a V TRE EXTRA/No. 11*, New York, Geoffrey Hendricks, March 24 1979. Newspaper, 38.1 x 29.2 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Posters, Announcements and Exhibition Catalogues

Dada 1916–1923. Poster/catalogue for retrospective exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery, New York, April 15–May 9, 1953. 95 x 62 cm. Designed by Marcel Duchamp. Jon Hendricks Collection.

Stacked Deck. Poster/announcement for performance by Dick Higgins and Richard Maxfield at the Village Gate, New York, April 1959. 35.6 x 25.4 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Toward Events. Poster/announcement for George Brecht exhibition at the Reuben Gallery, 61 4th Ave., New York, 16 October–5 November 1959. Offset Lithograph on paper bag, 25.4 x 15.9 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Below Zero. Poster/announcement for group exhibition at Reuben Gallery, 61 4th Ave., New York, December 1959 to January 1960. 30.8 x 44.4 cm. Designed by Allan Kaprow. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Festum Fluxorum: Poesie, Musique, et Antimusique, Evenementielle et Concrete. Poster/announcement for performance at American Students & Artists Center, 261 Blvd Raspail, Paris 14e, December 3–8 1962. Offset white on black, 32.4 x 22.9 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Yam Festival Calendar (Maytime/Yamtime). Poster/announcement listing the schedule for the Yam Festival, May 1963. Recto/verso,55.7 x 21.5 cm. Designed by George Brecht and Robert Watts. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

"YOU"a DECOLLAGEHAPPENINGbyVOSTELL. Poster/announcement for Wolf Vostell performance at Cricket Theatre, 2nd Ave at 10th St., New York, April 4, 1964. Offset Lithograph, 43.2 x 53.3 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Ay-o's Tactile Box. Cardboard box announcement for exhibition of Finger Box and Orange Box Environment at the Smolin Gallery, 17 East 71st St., New York, April 20–25, 1964. 8.2 x 8.2 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Hurry, Hurry, Fully Guaranteed Perpetual Fluxfest. Poster/announcement for Fluxus Festival at Washington Square Gallery, 528 West Broadway, New York, September 1964. Offset lithograph, 44.3 x 41.3 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Flyer for New School. Poster/announcement for Nam June Paik performance at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th St., New York, January 8, 1965. 41.3 x 19.7 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

New School Presents. Poster/announcement for Nam June Paik performance at the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th St., New York, January 8, 1965. 41.3 x 19.7 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Spoerri's Room #631 at the Chelsea Hotel (Photos by Peter Moore). Poster/announcement for Daniel Spoerri exhibition at Green Gallery, New York, March 1965. Offset lithograph, 54 x 26 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

2ieme Festival de la Libre Expression. Poster/announcement for schedule of events and activities at the Centre Americain des Artistes, 261 Blv. Raspail, Paris XIV, May 17–25, 1965. 54.9 x 31.7 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

24 Stunden. Poster/announcement for performances at the Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, 5–6 June 1965. 50.8 x 64.8 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Opus 45. Poster/announcement for Eric Andersen performance at New Cinematheque, 58 East 4th. St., New York, July 11, 1965. Offset lithograph, 26.7 x 20.8 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Morning Piece (1964) to George Maciunas. Poster/announcement for performance by Yoko Ono on the roof of 87 Christopher St, New York, September 12, 1965. 27.9 x 21.6 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Fluxus Orchestra. Poster/announcement for Fluxorchestra at Carnegie Recital Hall, 154 West 57th St., New York, September 25, 1965. Offset Lithograph, 43.2 x 30.2 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Electronic Video Recorder. Poster/announcement for Nam June Paik's first video performance at Cafe au Go Go, 152 Bleecker St., New York, October 1965. Offset lithograph. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Fugs Astor Place Playhouse Fugs. Poster/announcement for 3 successive performances, Astor Place, New York, December 1965. Screenprint on page of the *New York Times*, 57.5 x 36 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

> The Fugs were initially formed in the early 1960s by Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupfberg, two New York beat poets, as a vehicle for political activism. At the time Ed Sanders ran Peace Eye Books in the East Village and edited *Fuck You a Magazine of the Arts*. Amongst those whose works appeared in *Fuck You* were members of the proto-Fluxus New York Audio Visual Group, organized by Al Hansen and Dick Higgins. The Fugs would later became closely connected with the Yippies and represent the more anarchistic tendencies latent in the movement.

America. Today, U. S. Surpasses All Nazi Genocide Records. Program for Film Makers Distribution Center, ca. 1966. Offset Lithograph, 26.7 x 40.6 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Charlotte Moorman Presents 4th Annual Avant Garde Festival. Program and scores for performances on Central Park Mall, September 9, 1966. 57.1 x 22.2 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Ken Friedman, Sebastopool James. Poster/announcement, ca.1967. Offset lithograph, 27.9 x 21.6 cm. Designed by Ken Friedman. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

> In this poster, Ken Friedman connects Fluxus West to Fluxus New York, the Something Else Press, and the Underground Press Syndicate. Thus, Friedman illustrates the nature of the conceptual country that was Fluxus, in a manner similar to Knízák, who in a 1965 photograph situates Aktual in relation to the Dutch Provo Group and Fluxus.

U. S. Surpasses All The Genocide Records. New York, Implosions Inc, ca. 1967. Large flag, offset lithograph, 54 x 87.9 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

> Implosions Inc., was a company organized by George Maciunas and Robert Watts, to mass produce Fluxus objects, amongst the products marketed by the company were Flux-tattoos and stick-ons.

Lenny Bruce at the Village Theatre, 2nd av. 6th st. Poster for a Lenny Bruce performance, February 17 1967. 57.1 x 44.4 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Fluxus, La Cedille, Qui Sourit, Art Total, Poesie, Action. Poster for performance at Lunds Konsthall, March 10–12, 1967. Printed on tissue paper, 59 x 41.9 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

The Key To Art. Recto/verso poster announcement for *The Key to Art ? (Handshow)* by Robert Filliou and Scott Hyde in the Windows of Tiffany's, New York, April through May 1967. 41.9 x 19.7 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Les Mots et Les Choses/Concert Fluxus Art Totale. Poster/announcement for performances at Teatro Stabile di Torino, April 26–28 1967. 47.3 x 32.4 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Ray Johnson, *Papa R. Snake.* Flyer, offset black on white, 35.6 x 21.6 cm., 1968. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, The Michael Crane and Ken Friedman Correspondence Art Collection.

Ray Johnson, *"A Pair of Ears", "Mailed in Morocco", You Are Invited to a Spare New York Correspondence School Meeting.* Three New York Correspondence School announcements, each 27,9 x 21.6 cm. ca. 1968–1970. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, The Michael Crane and Ken Friedman Correspondence Art Collection.

Banqueroute, La Cedille Qui Sourit. Poster announcing the bankruptcy/closure of George Brecht and Robert Filliou's store, October 1968. 49.8 x 32.4 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

> George Brecht and Robert Filliou opened La Cedille Qui Sourit in October 1965 and closed it on the third anniversary of its opening. The activities at the store were outlined by Brecht and Filliou in *Games at the Cedilla*, published by Something Else Press.

Compañeras and Compañeros: A Documentary About Cuban Youth. Poster/announcement for film by Adolf Mekas, Barbara and David Stone, ca. 1970. 27.9 x 43.5 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Flux Mass, Flux Show, Flux Sports 1970. Poster/announcement for Fluxus activities at Douglass College, New Jersey, February 16–20, 1970. Offset black on white paper, 58.4 x 44.1 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

John & Yoko Fluxfest. Poster/announcement for schedule of performances, May 1970. Offset black on glossy white paper, 40.6 x 43.4 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Jack Smith will show "Normal Love." Poster/announcement for screening at Anthology Film Archives, March 18 & 19 1971. Offset lithograph, 21.5 x 12.5 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Jonas Mekas.

Daniel Spoerri, *Eat Art Galerie.* Announcement, 1971. Offset lithograph, 30 x 21.2 cm. Alternative Traditions in the

Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

"Les Paravents" La Galerie Ben Doute De Tout. Catalogue/portfolio for exhibition at Ben Vautier's Galerie De La Salle in Vence, 31 July–6 August 1971. Envelope, containing artists postcards by George Brecht, Robert Filliou, Ray Johnson, Arthur Koepcke, Serge Oldenbourg, Daniel Spoerri, Klaus Staek, Ben Vautier and others, 11 x 16 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa , Fluxus West Collection.

> This exhibition was organized by Robert Filliou. Filliou's announcement of the show included a dotted silhouette of a fish, with *Artiste D'Avril* inscribed on it. This is a pun on *Poisson d'Avril*, the French expression for April Fool's Day, when children traditionally cut out fish in newspaper or cardboard and hang them on people's backs with wire.

Chris Welch, *Fluxshoe.* Poster listing participating artists and the thematic contents of exhibition, 60.5 x 43 cm, 1972. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Fluxshoe. Collumpton, Beau Geste Press, 1972. Exhibition catalogue, one hundred and forty four pp., 29 x 21 x 1 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

Felipe Ehrenberg, editor *Fluxshoe Add end A 72–73.* Collumpton, Beau Geste Press, 1973. Portfolio, containing poster and documents for the Fluxshoe exhibitions and related performances by the Taj Mahal Players, 35 x 23 x 1.5 cm. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Ken Friedman Papers.

20 Fluxfilms at Anthology Film Archives. Poster/announcement, April 5, 1975. Offset lithograph, 26.8 x 21.5 cm. Designed by George Maciunas. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Gift of Jonas Mekas.

Nova Billy. Poster/announcement, for performance by Nova Billy, a country rock band formed by Henry Flynt, at 80 Wooster St, January 27, 1975. 35.2 x 50.8 cm. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

3 Concerts of Improvised Music. Poster for La Monte Young performance, 27.9 x 21.6 cm., n.d. Designed by Marian Zazeela. Ellsworth Snyder Collection.

Fluxrelics

Greetings From Vilnius. Souvenir plastic box, containing 5 liquors in bottles, from George Maciunas' apartment at 80 Wooster Street, 16.5 x 27.9 x 5.1 cm., n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Icons. 2 small portraits, guilded lame frames, red string. From George Maciunas' apartment at 80 Wooster Street. Each 32.4 x 37.8 cm. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Untitled. Ecology necklace belonging to Milan Knízák, n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Untitled. Hair from Yoko Ono Haircutting Event, 1966. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Untitled. Plastic Buddha on string purportedly belonging to Nam June Paik, n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Untitled. "Stradivarius," copy broken during a Fluxus performance, n.d. Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.

Working Materials. Glass jar, with small multi-colored plastic disks and empty cans, from George Maciunas' apartment at 80 Wooster Street. 25.4 x 15.24 cm. in diameter, n.d. Jonas Mekas and Hollis Melton Collection.

Virtual Reality

FluxBase: A Virtual Exhibition, NeXT computer, prototype, designed and realized by Joan S. Huntley and Michael Partridge of Second Look Computing, with assistance from James Lewes and the Advanced Undergraduate and Graduate Design Workshop, The University of Iowa.

> The virtual reality computer prototype allows the exhibition public to interact with Fluxus event kits, collaborative multiples, and film loops, and to access information about participants in the Fluxus community.

Curated by Jonas Mekas
Anthology Film Archives

IN AND AROUND FLUXUS

FILM FESTIVAL AND FLUXFILM ENVIRONMENTS

FILM FESTIVAL

Flux Film Anthology, Anthology Film Archives Version

No. 1 Nam June Paik, *Zen for Film* (1964), 20 min.
No. 2 Dick Higgins, *Invocation of Canyons and Boulders* (1966), 3 min.
No. 3 George Maciunas, *End After 9* (1966), 1 min. 20 sec.
No. 4 Chieko Shiomi, *Disappearing Music for Face*, 10 min.
No. 5 John Cavanaugh, *Blink* (1966), 2min. 30 sec.
No. 6 James Riddle, *9 Minutes* (1966), 9 min.
No. 7 George Maciunas, *10 Feet*, 45 sec.
No. 8 George Maciunas, *1000 Frames* (c. 1966), 30 sec.
No. 9 Yoko Ono, *Eyeblink* (1966), 1 min.
No. 10 George Brecht, *ENTRANCE to EXIT* (1966), 6 min. 30 sec.
No. 11 Robert Watts, *Trace #22*, 1 min. 15 sec.
No. 12 Robert Watts, *Trace No. 23* (1966), 3 min.
No. 13 Robert Watts, *Trace No. 24* (1966), 3 min.
No. 14 Yoko Ono, *One* (1966), 4 min. 30 sec.
No. 15 Yoko Ono, *Eye Blink* (1966), 1 min.
No. 16 Yoko Ono, *Four*, 5 min. 30 sec.
No. 17 Pieter Vanderbiek, *5 O'clock in the Morning* (1966), 4 min. 30 sec.
No. 18 Joe Jones, *Smoking*, 6 min.
No. 19 Eric Andersen, *Opus 74, Version 2* (1966), 1 min. 20 sec.
No. 20 George Maciunas, ARTYPE. 4 min. 20 sec.
No. 21 Alison Knowles, Untitled (1966), 30 sec.
No. 22 Jeff Perkins, *Shout* (1966), 2min. 30 sec.
No. 23 Wolf Vostell, *Sun in Your Head* (c. 1963), 6 min.
No. 24 Albert Fine, *Readymade* (1986), 45 sec.
No. 25 George Landow, *The Evil Faerie* (1966), 30 sec.
No. 26–28 Paul Sharits, *Sears Catalogue 1–3*; *Dots 1 & 3*; *Wrist and Trick*; *Unrolling Event*; 2 min.
No. 29 Paul Sharits, *Word Movie*, 4 min.
No. 30 Albert M. Fine, *Dance* (1966), 2 min.
No. 31 John Cale, *Police Car*, 1 min.
No. 36 Peter Kennedy and Mike Parr, *Flux Film No. 36* (1970), 2 min. 30 sec.
No. 37 Peter Kennedy and Mike Parr, *Flux Film No. 37*, (1970).
No. 38 Ben Vautier, *Je ne vois rien, Je n'etends rien, Je ne dis rien* (1966), 5 min.
No. 39 Ben Vautier, *La traverse du port de Nice a la nage* (1963), 2 min.
No. 40 Ben Vautier, *Fair un effort* (1969), 2 min.
No. 41 Ben Vautier, *Regardez moi cela suffit* (1962), 3 min.

Individual Films

Klaus Barrisch, *Nam June Paik: Fragment* (1961), 7 min.

Joseph Beuys, *Coyote: I Like America and America Likes Me* (1974), 23 min.

Albert M. Fine, *Feet* (1966), 45 min.

Dick Higgins, *The End* (1962), 12 min.

Dick Higgins, *Flaming City* (1963), 2 hours 15 min.

Jonas Mekas, *Scenes from the Life of George Maciunas* (1992), 45 min. Premiere.

Dieter Rot, *Early Works* (1957–60), 9 min. Includes *Pop I*, *Pop II*, *Dock I*, *Dock II*, and *Flip*.

Paul Sharits, *Ray Gun Virus* (1966), 14 min.

Stan Vanderbeek, *Paik TV and Paik in Studio* (1962), 7 min.

Wolf Vostell, *Four Films* (1963–67), 21 min. Includes *Sun in Your Head*, *Aachen*, *Starfighter*, and *Notstandsbordstein*.

Robert Watts, *Cascade*, (1962) 26 min.; *G.W. & Sons*, (1963), 15 min.; *Yam Lecture*, with George Brecht, (Jan. 21, 1963), 30 min.; *89 Movies*, (1965), 30 min.; *Pea On Nipple, Breast to Breast, Water & Blue Sky*, etc., n.d.

Jud Yulkut, *P+A-I(K)* (1966), 10 min.

Recreation of a Film Program Presented at the AG Gallery in 1961

Stan Vanderbeek, *Achoo Mr. Keroochev* (1959), 1min. 45 sec.; *ALA MODE* (1958), 5 min.; *Astral Man* (1957), 1 min. 45 sec.; *Blacks and Whites, Days and Nights* (1960), 5 min.

Ray Wisniewski, *Doomshow* (1960), 10 min.

Sidney Peterson, *The Lead Shows* (1949), 17 min.

George Binkey [Adolfas Mekas], *Antifilm #2* (1951), 18 min.

Flux Film Environments

Reconstruction of wallpaper events and environments by Carla Liss, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, Paul Sharits, and others.

FLUXUS Film Loops

A series of film loops to be hand threaded on a 16 mm projector. Unless otherwise noted, each loop should be projected for at least ten minutes. Includes loops by John Cage, John Cavanaugh, William de Ridder, Albert M. Fine, Dick Higgins, George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, Paul Sharits, and Stan Vanderbeek. Higgins', *Invocation of Canyons and Boulders/For Stan Brakhage* (1963), should run for six to eight hours.

FLUXUS Slide Events

George Maciunas, *Fluxfest Presents 12 Big Names*, Reconstruction of slide event originally performed at the Film-Makers' Cinemateque, April 25, 1975. Twelve slides projected for ten minutes each. Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Philip Glass, Allan Kaprow, Les Levine, Bruce Naumann, Piero Manzoni, Yoko Ono, Klaus Rinke, Michael Snow, Wolf Vostell, Andy Warhol.

George Maciunas, *Fluxslides*, A newly discovered group of slides collected by Maciunas.

FLUXUS Videos and Video Installations

"Harlekin Art Wiesbaden", *Fluxus Festival Neueste Music*, Wiesbaden (1962), 6 min.

Joe Jones, *A History of Fluxus* (1989)

Larry Miller, *Art of Influence* (1974); *George Maciunas: On Making Boxes* (1978) 30 min.; *George Maciunas Waitressing at Ear Inn* (1978); *Interview with George Maciunas* (1978), 60 min.; *Some Fluxus* (1978–90), 60 min.

Esther Harriot Schwartz, *Nam June Paik Interview* (1978), 30 min., Steina Vasulka, Camera.

Robert Watts, David Behrman and Bob Diamond, *Cloud Music*, an installation developed collaboratively by the three artists during the years 1974 to 1979. It consists of a video camera (black & white 1974–78, color thereafter), which scans the sky; a video analyzer, which senses the changes in light produced by passing clouds; and a home-made electronic sound synthesizer, which responds musically to the passage of clouds overhead. New York only.

Two Maciunas Favorites

Vittorio De Sica, Director, *Miracle in Milan* (1950), 95 mins. Screenplay by Cesare Zavattini. New York Only

Roberto Rossellini, Director, *The Rise of Louis XIV* (1965), 100 min. Screenplay by Philippe Erlanger and Jean Gervault, photography Georges Leclerc. New York Only.

Curated by Emily Harvey
Emily Harvey Gallery

Ten Years on Broadway:

FLUXUS 1982 – 1992

Eric Andersen, *Marianne*. Two hand-colored photo-animations, graphics and text, 1986.

Ay-O, *10 Stories Apartment*. Finger Box Tower, 40 finger boxes of cedar wood with mystery contents, 1992.

Ay-O, *Black Hole*. A permanent installation in sub-basement of 537 Broadway, dedicated to George Maciunas, will be on view certain hours, 1991. (New York Only)

Ben, *Since Marcel Duchamp*. Bath tub with acrylic text, 1991.

Don Boyd, *Theatre, Orchestra and Remote Music*. Three drawings on paper, 1992.

George Brecht, *Experimental Enlargement*. Silkscreen on cloth, Francesco Conz Edition, 1988.

John Cage, *Notations for A.K.* Ink on paper, 1987.

Guiseppi Chiari, *Untitled*. n.d.

Henning Christiansen, *All the cage is a stage "Canary Songs."* Music scores, 2 yellow canaries in wire cage with painted tree branches and Plexiglas, 1992.

Philip Corner, *Artificial Pieces of Reality: Basket of Balinese Fruits*. Carved and Painted wooden fruits with objects inside to create sound, 1990. Realized in collaboration with G. Har.

Jean Dupuy, *Leo's Lazy Art — an example: The Printing Table*. Acrylic on canvas, 1986.

Albert M. Fine, *postcards*. Assorted postcards with ink, paint and/or found objects, ca. 1980s.

Henry Flynt, *Flinx in Flux*. Found paperback book mounted on mirror in wooden frame, 1989.

Simone Forti, *Morning the Telling*. Collage, 1992.

Ken Friedman, *Fluxus har skapt en folkebevegelse*. Acrylic on life-size color photograph of the artist, 1991.

Al Hansen, *Detroit Venus*. Cigarettes and wooden fruit box, 1990.

Geoffrey Hendricks. *2 Rakes for George*. Wooden rakes with hinges, 1983.

Dick Higgins, *Graphis 181, Pennsylvania Dutch*. Acrylic on canvas, 1986.

Dick Higgins, *Symphony #72, 4 movements*, 1991. i. Andante-allegro, ii. Lento, iii. Scherzo, iv. Finale. Stencil music score from 1968 machine gunned series, 1991.

Alice Hutchins, *Magnetic Montage*. Photograph with metal and magnets, 1992.

Joe Jones, *A Sunshine Piece*. Zither, wagon, child's fishing pole, solar cell, solar motor, 1992.

Joe Jones, *A Sunshine Piece*. Child's fishing rod mounted on wagon with guitar, 1992.

Ray Johnson, *Untitled*. Letter exchange with collage, 1988.

Ray Johnson, *Untitled*. Ink on Xerox, 1989.

Ray Johnson, *Untitled*, Map with ink, 1990.

Bengt af Klintbert, *Identification Exercise*. 1965/92.

Milan Knízák, *People don't Express Music*. CDs and vinyl records, 1992.

Milan Knízák, *Double Cord*. Paint on wall with CDs, 1992.

Alison Knowles, *Finger Book*. Metal base which serves as cover with braille, wood, mirror, paper, cloth and found objects, 1987.

Jackson Mac Low, *Tara*. Acrylic with marker on canvas, 1991.

Larry Miller, *King's Evidence*. Walnut, velveteen cushion, copper, neon bulb, electronics, 1988.

Charlotte Moorman, *Needle Cello: Shadow of my Cello*. Plexiglas cello with syringes used to administer Charlotte's morphine, 1989.

Yoko Ono, *Painting to Hammer a Nail In*. Bronze, n.d.

Nam June Paik, *Maciunas told Bakaitis (poet) that he believes in reincarnation and he wanted to become a frog in the reincarnation*. Painting, 1992.

Ben Patterson, *A Short History of 20th Century Art*. Alphabet blocks, paint chips, cuckoo clock, mechanical toy, alarm bell on 4 panels, 1989.

Peter Van Riper, *Coral*. Lazer-light photographs with silkscreen, 1984.

Takako Saito, *Mystery Box*. Wooden box with beans, 1986.

Carolee Schneemann, *Cycladic Imprints*. Motorized violin with 2 photographs on acetate, 1990.

Serge III, *Bottle Contents*. Plaster, 1989.

Paul Sharits, *Circles of Confusion*. Robots and snake dance game on metal disk, 1990.

Meiko Shiomi, *Balance Poems No. 1 & No. 24*. Photo-copy collage, 1991.

Yasunao Tone, *Anagram for Strings*. Ink on graph paper, 1991.

Yoshi Wada, *Would you listen carefully?* Sound installation requiring audience participation, 1992.

Bob Watts, *Fluxus Cartoon*. Enlarged, found cartoon with text altered, 1981/1987.

Emmett Williams, *Many are Called*. Watercolor on paper, 1980.

La Monte Young, *Sketch 89 XI 21 10:44 PM NYC for Sculptural Tableau Realization of Piano Piece for David Tudor #1 (October 1960) – Classical, Sketch 89 XI 21 10:44 PM NYC for Sculptural Tableau Realization of Piano Piece for David Tudor #1 (October 1960) – Comedy*, and *Sketch 89 XI 21 10:44 PM NYC for Sculptural Tableau Realization of Piano Piece for David Tudor #1 (October 1960) – Tragedy*. Charcoal pencil on vellum finish 2-ply bristol paper, 18 x 20 in., n.d.

Marian Zazeela, *in memorium George Maciunas (78 V)*. India ink on plate finish 2-ply bristol drawing paper, in 4 parts, 1989.

SPIRALS '91

a publication of the
Graphic Design Department
Rhode Island School of Design

SPIRALS '91, the first of an annual publication, is a cased set of eight A-4 format (8.3"x11.7") booklets that total 360 pages. ***SPIRALS '91*** contains information that documents or presents the results of teaching and a variety of topics related to the study of graphic design at Rhode Island School of Design. Content represents mostly current material.

SPIRALS grew out of a need and interest to share the diverse thought and action of a rich learning experience that prepares future designers.

***SPIRALS* is for anyone interested in the subject of design, or in participating in our unending human search and growth.**

SPIRALS is for design practitioners, who will appreciate the variety of the experiences; for design educators, who dedicate their lives to the betterment of our younger and future generations; for all students who are curious and have a thirst for learning; for non-designers, such as clients, parents of students in art and design, educators outside design who have an interest in or must know something about design education; and for the person on the street who is curious about design as the consumer of the many products designers create as impulses for them to act.

summary of content for SPIRALS '91:

Book One Program Philosophy and Information
Articles by Thomas Ockerse outlining the structure, position and specifics of the program.

Book Two Lectures, Alumni, Visiting Designers
Articles by and interviews with faculty and visiting lecturers.

Books Three, Four, Five, Six Results of Teaching
Descriptions and examples of faculty and student exploration of design form, content and context.

Book Seven Graduate Theses
Presentation of two graduate thesis projects.

Book Eight Thomàs Gonda Prize
Description of the Thomàs Gonda Prize for design responsibility in social issues and *Notes on Visual Formalism* by Mr. Gonda.

Order Form for *SPIRALS '91*

Please send ***SPIRALS '91*** @ $105 per copy
Number of copies: ..... Total: $ .....

Plus Postage and Handling:
$5 per copy if in the USA
$10 per copy if outside USA Total: $ .....

Check or Money Order in US Dollars
enclosed for a **total of** $ .....

Fill out information below to secure your order:

Name

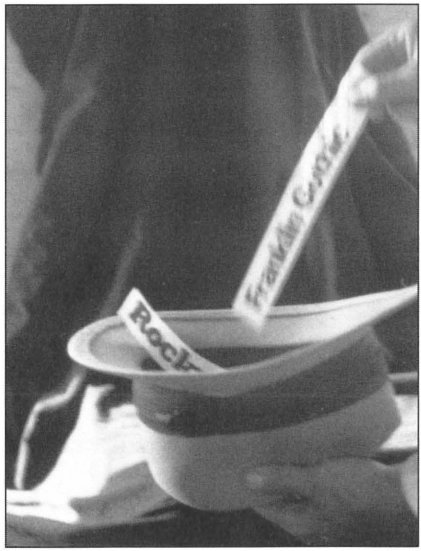
Street

City, State, Zip Code /Post Code

Country

Make your check or money order payable to:
Rhode Island School of Design

Mail your order to:
SPIRALS '91, Graphic Design Department,
Rhode Island School of Design,
2 College Street, Providence, RI 02903 USA



Colophon.