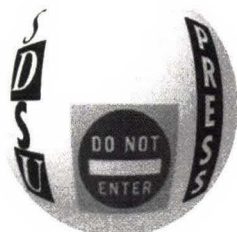


# fluxus



the **HISTORY** of  
an **ATTITUDE**

*OWEN* *f.* *SMITH*



**SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS**





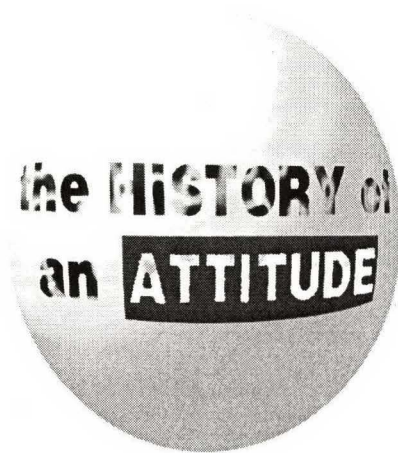


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# fluxus



OWEN *f.* SMITH



1998

SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS



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The digitally-altered simulacrum of a falling plane on the front cover is derived from an unattributed photomontage, including a facsimile of John Cage, and is based upon a reproduction of the same in *Ubi Fluxus ibi motus 1990-1962* (Milan: Mazzotta, 1990). An adaptation of a "By Special Appointment Logo" by Alison Knowles appears on the back cover as well as a digital improvisation based on "Fluxus Ausstellung Poster" by Josef Beuys. Photon configurations resembling these items may be screened at <http://www.panix.com/~fluxus/>.

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*To Charles and Meribah Smith,  
who first showed me that art and life are one.*

*This book is also dedicated  
to the memory of  
Dick Higgins (1938-1998),  
Fluxus Founder,  
Writer, Artist, Composer, and Theoretician.  
He will be missed by all,  
but we are blessed for he has left  
a profound legacy  
of work, ideas, and personal example  
that will continue to enrich us all.*

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*Simultaneous Performance at Neo-Dada in der Musik, Dusseldorf (1962). Photo George Maciunas, courtesy of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit.*

## *Introduction*

Each of us had his own ideas about what Fluxus was and so much the better. That way it will take longer to bury us. For me, Fluxus was a group of people who got along with each other and who were interested in each others work and personality.<sup>1</sup>

Fluxus was once called “the most radical and experimental art movement of the sixties,” but for anyone seeking to learn more about the historical nature of Fluxus and its conceptual framework it might more readily seem to be just plain frustrating rather than radical.<sup>2</sup> This is in part the case because Fluxus is historically complex and philosophically difficult to define. This very ambiguity, however, is an aspect of its radicality. Fluxus is both an attitude towards art-making and culture that is not historically limited, and a specific historical group. As an attitude, Fluxus is part of a larger conceptual development that is a significant, although often overlooked, current of the twentieth-century Western avant-garde. This attitude is in part traceable to the network of interrelated ideas about culture, politics, and society explored earlier in the twentieth century by the Futurists, the Dadaists, and the Surrealists. Some of these same ideas were later explored after World War II by artists associated with groups such as Letterism, International Situationism, Nouveau Realisme, and Fluxus itself. The period in which Fluxus developed was one of significant cultural as well as political and social change, and Fluxus was just one of a number of artistic groups that developed between the late 1940s and early 1960s as a response to, and a reaction against, cultural norms and even the

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prevailing practices of the artistic avant-garde. Even though these groups are linked to the earlier cultural revolts of Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism in the first part of the twentieth century, this connection was conceptual more than genealogical and cannot be seen through stylistic association.

What was Fluxus historically? Fluxus should not be thought of as a movement like Russian Constructivism or Surrealism. It was a fluid group of artists who were associated personally and conceptually at various times with the rubric "Fluxus." Chronologically, the performance and publication ventures of these individuals as a group began in 1962 and continues in one form or another up to the present, even though a case can be made that Fluxus lost a central aspect of its collective energy in 1978. Fluxus began as an idea for a magazine that would publish materials by experimental artists, writers, and musicians. From this starting point Fluxus grew into something quite different. As Fluxus developed and changed, however, it always maintained a connection with its point of origin. The rationale for publishing a magazine was to expose a wider range of people to the "good things being done," as Dick Higgins described them, that were not otherwise being widely presented or disseminated.<sup>3</sup> From this initial idea Fluxus evolved into a sponsoring structure for a collective of like-minded artists, musicians, and writers, as well as an historical expression of a network of related ideas and issues about art and life.

What was Fluxus as an attitude? In an essay entitled "A Child's History of Fluxus," Dick Higgins explained the formative impulse behind Fluxus.

Long long ago, back when the world was young—that is some time around the year 1958—a lot of artists and composers and other people who wanted to do beautiful things began to look at the world around them in a new way (for them).

They said: "Hey!—coffee cups can be more beautiful than fancy sculptures. A kiss in the morning can be more dramatic than a drama by Mr. Fancypants. The sloshing of my foot in my wet boot sounds more beautiful than fancy organ music."

And when they saw that, it turned their minds on. And they began to ask questions. One question was, "Why does everything I see that's beautiful like cups and kisses and sloshing feet have to be made into just a part of something fancier and bigger? Why can't I just use it for its own sake?"

When they asked questions like that, they were inventing Fluxus.

...<sup>4</sup>

As Higgins intimates, the Fluxus attitude was based on an unpretentious directness that brought into question the notion of high art or, as George Maciunas called it, "serious culture." The Fluxus attitude was, thus, part of the larger, more general development in the twentieth-century avant-garde that sought not just to change art but to change the way people perceived the world and cultural differentiations.

Even though it may seem antithetical to some of my remarks in this introduction, this study is nonetheless structured chronologically. Chapter One is a survey of related developments in twentieth-century culture (related to the "second form of modernism") that had a generative influence on Fluxus. Chapters Two through Seven survey the historical development of the Fluxus group from the late 1950s up through the late 1970s, particularly as related to the organizational activities of George Maciunas, detailing the principal period of Fluxus' shift from an indistinct attitude to a "collective front" or institutional façade. The historical development of Fluxus from the initial idea of a publication to a sponsor of performative activities and a producer of artists' works can be broken into three broad, somewhat overlapping chronological and conceptual stages: the proto-Fluxus period and the early period of Fluxus festivals and event performances from 1961 to 1964 (Chapters Two through Five); the period of Fluxus publishing and multiples from 1964 to 1970 (Chapter Six); and the period of late Fluxus performances from 1970 to 1978 (Chapter Seven). The last chapter (Chapter Eight) is a consideration of the Fluxus attitude, the conceptual outlook that underlies the specific activities of the group. A final qualification: the three primary historical phases of Fluxus laid out in this book are not intended to be exact or mutually exclusive divisions. They represent periods of primary emphasis; in all of these phases performances were presented, and publications or multiples were produced.

All of the "official" or "institutional" Fluxus activities from 1962 to 1978 have one historical common denominator: George Maciunas.<sup>5</sup> The wide variety of projects undertaken by Fluxus in this period were primarily organized and directed by Maciunas. This situation, and by extension this study itself, should not be seen

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as supporting the idea that Maciunas was Fluxus, but that historically Fluxus was singularly indebted to him and that Fluxus would have not been what it came to be, or possibly even existed at all as a historical group, without him. This study, however, is also not an account of everything that Maciunas did or everything that should be considered as Fluxus. The focus of this project is the interrelationship between Maciunas and Fluxus. It attempts to discern how the general developments of Fluxus were shaped by Maciunas' interactions with various artists and with the collective and individual projects of the group. The important role that Maciunas played in the history of Fluxus has been indicated by many of the artists associated with Fluxus. Emmett Williams, one of the early members, wrote:

The ringleader was George Maciunas, a Lithuanian born entrepreneur who was also a designer, art historian, musicologist, agent provocateur, and a terrible businessman. He was also something of a genius to keep the show on the road for so long, under so many adverse circumstances, and with so many prima donnas.<sup>6</sup>

Ken Friedman also stated of Maciunas:

Discussions about Fluxus often focus on George Maciunas, and some ask who has continued to carry on in George's role [after he died]. George had a unique role, a unique way of doing things, and a unique place in the affections of everyone who knew him. Thinking about George is central to Fluxus, but thinking of him as the central figure is a mistake.<sup>7</sup>

Even though Maciunas was the organizer of many of the Fluxus events, festivals, and activities, the specifics of these presentations as well as the general development of Fluxus as a group was the product of all the artists involved. To understand the early development of Fluxus one must look not just at Maciunas but at Maciunas' interactions with the work and ideas of a variety of artists, including La Monte Young, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, George Brecht, Ben Vautier, and numerous others. Many of the developments of the Fluxus group were directly impacted by events in Maciunas' personal life. Maciunas was the designer, underwriter, and producer of almost all the Fluxus publications, objects, and materials, although he was assisted by the artists



Tomas Schmit, Larry Miller, and others in this production process. Thus, even though Fluxus multiples were the work of different artists and reflect this fact conceptually, there was also a consistency of design in all the Fluxus publications and objects due to Maciunas' involvement. Because of the central and unique roll Maciunas played in a history of the Fluxus group, this study has been structured primarily around George Maciunas' activities in association with the whole of the Fluxus group. As a consequence of this method of framing, some events and activities that could be and have been previously considered Fluxus activities will not be examined in this study.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the focus of this study is what I have increasingly come to think of as the "institutional" phase of Fluxus, that period of the history of one aspect of Fluxus, from 1962 to 1978. This focus should in no way be taken as a definition of Fluxus, either historically or philosophically, but rather one period and one type of Fluxus, the forms and activities of which are demarcated by Maciunas' role as an organizer and designer.

A few further observations should be made about the methodological issues related to a historical consideration of Fluxus and research materials utilized in this study. Although Fluxus is a reasonably recent historical development, the nature of the historical record is affected by the absence of some important materials and inconsistencies in available sources. These problems are most apparent in the primary and secondary sources from early Fluxus (1962-1964) but are a factor for all of Fluxus. During this early period the primary activity associated with Fluxus was a series of performances, first in Europe and later in New York City. For all of these performances, or "festivals" as they were most often called, posters and programs were printed. These documents list the pieces to be performed and, often, who was to perform them. In actuality, however, the festivals never followed the printed programs. This situation is complicated further by conflicts in other available materials. Newspaper reviews or accounts of the performances are often plagued by inaccuracies as a result of the incongruities between the written documents and the actual presentations. The reviewers often used the printed programs and incorrectly equated what they saw being performed with what was announced on the program. As a result, many of these articles and reviews describe one piece (the piece actually performed) and identify it by citing the title and author of a completely different piece (that listed on the program).

The situation confronting anyone endeavoring to follow the history of Fluxus is further complicated by the transitory aspects of many of the works, especially the performances. After the actual performance of a work such as the Fluxus version of Philip Corner's "Piano Activities," for example, one is left with the initial score for the piece, documentary materials such as photographs of the actual performance or performances, and possibly physical residue from the performance, such as a fragment of a piano. These *a posteriori* documents, however, are only evidence of an event having occurred, and in most cases they are only a partial or misleading reflection of the actual performance. Many Fluxus events were also modified or altered from presentation to presentation. George Maciunas' "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti," for example, had several different versions that were developed over the course of its presentation in the festivals in Europe. Each performance of the work varied given the performance score of the work itself (which made use of found Olivetti adding-machine tapes), the version of the score (what the equivalent actions for each number on the tape was), the availability of props, and who the performers were.

In turning from Fluxus performance to objects and publications, one is also confronted with incongruities and puzzling circumstances. For example, many Fluxus objects and publications referred to in announcements, advertisements, and personal correspondence were never made, made in a very different form, or made at a much later date than originally announced. Another complication is that Fluxus objects were not made as precious or unique objects like modernist easel paintings. For Fluxus, objects were not intended as ends in themselves as conceived by modern art within a predominantly self-referential frame, but as a means to something else, like Marcel Duchamp's readymades. Their value was seen as instrumental, not intrinsic. As a result of this philosophical standpoint (as well as other factors, such as Maciunas' lack of money to produce some of the works that had been planned), two issues arise in considering Fluxus objects: first, Fluxus works were often made as multiple objects; however, there is a great deal of variation within the same work. Although the specifics of this situation will later be discussed in detail in Chapters Five and Six, one should mention it now as a general factor that shaped this study. One cannot examine a single example of any given multiple and assume that all others will mirror or even resemble it. One must

look at a number of examples of the same work so as to form what might be called a consensus type. The results of this examination, however, are contingent on factoring in the date of the particular work in question, for some works were made over a long period of time and varied quite widely.

Second, when looking at a Fluxus object, one must take into consideration that the physical object before one is not necessarily intended to be the center of one's attention. Objects such as Ben Vautier's cans of "mystery food" function essentially to create tension between their continued existence as objects (i.e., cans of some unknown contents with new Fluxus labels) and the realization of their inherent performance value (i.e., opening the can to discover what the contents might be, and even eating them). In *Mystery Food*, performed by Vautier himself in Nice in 1963, the re-labeled food cans do not simply exist as objects but as opportunities to be resolved by opening. Like many Fluxus objects, the form and content of the mystery-food cans cannot be determined by studying the objects themselves, for their identity depends on a larger complex of ideas, thoughts, and interactions in which the physical object plays various roles.

Three categories of source material have been utilized for this study: interviews with individual artists who were associated or involved with Fluxus at various times; primary written source materials, the most important of which are letters to or from Fluxus artists; and a small but growing number of secondary sources. Most of the artists involved with Fluxus are still alive and represent one of the most valuable resources for anyone endeavoring to better understand Fluxus. The five exceptions to this (artists unfortunately not still alive)—George Maciunas, Robert Watts, Robert Filliou, Joe Jones, and Arthur Adde Kopcke—were important artists for Fluxus and associated artistic developments from the late 1950s into the 1970s. Their insights and thoughts would have much enriched any consideration of Fluxus. Several taped interviews with the some of these artists also exist; of special significance are two interviews of George Maciunas, one made shortly before his death in 1978 and the other in 1976. In addition to these sources, the author has personally interviewed and talked with several of the artists or individuals associated with Fluxus. These included Ben Vautier, Emmett Williams, Dick Higgins, Wolf Vostell, George Brecht, Ken Friedman, Bengt af Klintberg, Tomas Schmit, Jackson

MacLow, Larry Miller, Ben Patterson, and Geoff Hendricks. All were very receptive to questions and quite helpful, although after the passage of 20 to 30 years a number of questions had to be answered by "I don't know." Most of the artists who were actively involved in Fluxus have also written about the history of Fluxus and the ideas it embodies. The most important, as well as most prolific, is Dick Higgins, who has written numerous articles, books, and essays on Fluxus.

Research materials upon which this study relies most heavily, primary sources, are mostly retained and preserved in three large archival collections, as well as in the personal collections of artists and individuals associated with Fluxus. The oldest of the archives is the Hans Sohm Archive in the Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Germany. Begun in the mid-1960s, this archive contains a large selection of artists' correspondence, including a collection of letters to or from George Maciunas and the personal correspondence files of Dick Higgins from 1958 to 1976; materials relating to the development of Fluxus in Europe, among them performance documents and source materials on European artists (performance scores, publications, writings, etc.); a diverse and representative cross-section of Fluxus objects, publications, multiples, and materials relating to their development and production; European newspaper and magazine clipping files on Fluxus performances, activities, and exhibitions; and half of the papers from Maciunas' estate.<sup>9</sup> The Sohm Archive is also valuable for its extensive collection of materials not specifically or directly related to Fluxus but crucial to understanding the general developments of which Fluxus was a part.<sup>10</sup> Because of the extensive nature of the collection and its European materials (not available in other Fluxus archives), the Sohm Archive was the primary source of documents utilized for this study.

A second major source for Fluxus materials is the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection located in New York and Detroit. The most important components of this collection are its exhaustive selection of Fluxus multiples, objects, and publications and a small but very significant collection of artists' correspondence and scores, particularly those of Tomas Schmit, Willem de Ridder, Ben Vautier, and La Monte Young.<sup>11</sup> The third major collection of Fluxus materials is the Jean and Leonard Brown Collection now at the Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities in Santa Monica,

California. This archive also contains primary-source materials from various artists associated with Fluxus, particularly Dick Higgins, Emmett Williams, and George Maciunas, as well as a collection of Fluxus publications and multiples.

To conclude this introduction, I will, in true Fluxus spirit, contradict myself, particularly a general premise that informs the whole study. Contrary to what one might gather from this study, Fluxus is much more than a particular series of historical activities or a collection of certain materials and works. The primary sources for Fluxus history, particularly statements by artists involved with Fluxus, constantly emphasize that Fluxus should not be considered a "movement." As one of the original associates of the Fluxus group, George Brecht, stated:

as far as I'm concerned [Fluxus] was and is people who like each others' work. We're not people who ever put out manifestos – nobody is going to hit anybody over the head to believe in what you're doing. There just turned up all these friends whose work I liked.<sup>12</sup>

As this statement and others like it indicate, traditional art - historical categories, and even this study itself, are in many ways antithetical to Fluxus. Art historians generally determine historical groupings on the basis of visual or conceptual coherencies. Fluxus offers no such visual connections; in fact, one of the distinctive features of Fluxus is the seeming lack of consistent stylistic determinants throughout the entire period in which Fluxus was active as a group. Fluxus contains a conceptual coherency, but it offers no fixed conceptual or visual qualities complete in themselves which an historian might use to determine its definitive characteristics. At the moment of seeming visual or conceptual closure, Fluxus works begin to shift. These displacements appear to the viewer, listener, or historian as a series of constantly shifting overlapping grids rather than a set of quantifiable characteristics. Dick Higgins' performance work "Two Contributions for the Theater," in which the performer(s) pick something to happen, wait for it to happen, and then leave the performance space, illustrates this quality. This work was presented at the Fluxus festival in Copenhagen in November of 1962:

Eric Andersen . . . chose to wait till everyone else had left the stage. Emmett Williams sat down behind a lectern and chose the same. Neither knew of the other choice. Forty-five minutes they waited. Then someone told them that there would be an intermission in five minutes, assuming that they would stay there for the rest of the concert and perhaps beyond. But they understood that they were to leave in five minutes and did. So that the only reason that they left was because of a misunderstanding. But that was a marvelous fifty minutes, because what was happening was very interesting, the relationship between the two men waiting and the audience was always changing.

. . . <sup>13</sup>

Thus, in both the original performance and in the description of it the viewer and historian are not presented with static characteristics, even within a single work.

Fluxus consistently exemplifies an internal characteristic that in itself works against the notion of categorization. Although this aspect of Fluxus will be considered in greater detail in Chapter Eight, it is important to refer to it now in these introductory remarks, because it mandates the type of approach a scholar can use. In the adoption of open-ended principles such as viewer participation and de-centering as principal goals, the Fluxus attitude replaces the traditional master codes (static points of conceptual reference or grounding such as a single type or style of performance) with a constantly shifting code of situational references, particularly in the form of an open-ended play of difference. Thus, one confronts the paradox that to define Fluxus by traditional methods (delimiting its master codes) is to negate the value of such a definition. The diversity of Fluxus undertakings was intentionally opposed to definitional approaches so that any definition of Fluxus based on traditional methods is misleading because it denies this central aspect of Fluxus. Fluxus was by nature both expansive and contradictory. Fluxus must be considered, therefore, in a more conditional way than any traditional definition would allow.

An alternative method for a consideration of Fluxus looks to artists themselves as a delimiting factor (artists x, y, & z comprise group A). This approach also is not wholly applicable to Fluxus. Although what might be called a core group can be identified in the early performance years (1962-1964), there was a completely different core group in the later years (1970-1978). Some artists whose works were performed or produced by Fluxus, such as Christo

Javaceff, Claes Oldenburg, and Al Hansen, never considered themselves Fluxus artists. Some artists who associated themselves with Fluxus were never really a part of the Fluxus group or developed work antithetical to an aspect of Fluxus. (The most notable example is Joseph Beuys.) Finally, many artists who were active in Fluxus, such as Dick Higgins and Nam June Paik, were simultaneously producing Fluxus and non-Fluxus works. Thus, the membership issue for the Fluxus group is a very complicated one and cannot be used as a means to define a Fluxus movement, or even a group.

As a last note in this introduction, I would like to emphasize that Fluxus is still very much alive as an ongoing artistic form of expression and a way of thinking about creative engagement with the world. Although the initial stage/s of Fluxus (its institutional phase) can be said to have passed, there are still artists working in the Fluxus mode, and the Fluxus attitude is still an active force. Thus, care must be taken with any kind of conceptual framing in order to allow for current or future developments. It is important always to keep in mind that Fluxus is by nature anti-reductivist, for it does not seek the illumination of some end or fact but celebrates participation in a non-hierarchical density of experience. In this way Fluxus does not refer to a style or even a procedure as such but to the presence of a totality of social activities. Fluxus seeks to shift from traditional utilitarian-based proscriptions to an open-ended, less evaluative participation in the processes themselves. In a general sense all Fluxus activities seek to question meaning, significance, and worth as fixed, pre-determined, or even determinable through the functioning of "higher social contracts" (social situations as a manifestation of power relations and knowledge). If there is an end or a goal in the Fluxus world view, both in its expressions today and in the past, it is to have no fixed end or goal, and if there are hierarchies they are to have no hierarchies. Although Fluxus may adopt and participate in directed actions and activities, such as those historical activities described in this book, they are more importantly a manifestation of the desire to achieve a particular end that will in turn lead to a general disinterest in fixed ends. Finally I would add only that it might be of interest for the reader to keep in mind Tomas Schmit's response to a request from the collector Gilbert Silverman to define Fluxus in ten words or less. Schmit ended his two-page response with the following line: "we must consider carefully when we disclose that Fluxus hasn't ever taken place yet!"<sup>14</sup>



Alison Knowles performing *Music by Alison* (with Ben Vautier), during the Flux Festival at Fluxhall, "Street Events" NYC, May 23, 1964. Photo George Maciunas, courtesy of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit.



## *Chapter One*

# Pre-Fluxus Conceptual Developments and Generative Influences

Historical considerations of the visual arts in Western Europe and the United States in the 1950s and 1960s tend to focus on the developments in late modernist extensions of painting and sculpture. This period has been seen as driven by an Existentialist world view or at least the rhetoric of mid-twentieth-century Existentialism with its focus on the individual as the main factor in determinations of artistic essence. This outlook is especially evident in the work by historians who have focused their studies on styles such as Abstract Expressionism and Post-Painterly Abstraction in the United States and Informal and Tachism in Europe.<sup>1</sup> A number of artistic explorations of the 1950s and 1960s were, however, antithetical to the idea of art as a form of personal expression. In this period, a number of issues about art and art-making began to be developed or, in some cases, re-developed, which would profoundly alter the direction of contemporary art. Numerous artists in all fields of creative expression became increasingly dissatisfied with the dominant forms of modernist expression, such as Abstract Expressionism in the visual arts, Beat poetry in the literary arts, and serial music in the musical arts. The underlying principles of most of these modernist art forms had become dominated by an aesthetic amplification of artistic autonomy.<sup>2</sup> These presumptions about the autonomy of art, coupled with an existentialist emphasis on the individual, resulted in a separation of art from social praxis.

In the 1950s, many artists in the United States, Europe, and Japan began posing questions in their work that contributed to the

deconstruction of modernist artistic practice: is an artist someone whose special talents make her or him better than other people? Is a work of art intrinsically valuable? For there to be a work of art, does an artist have to make something? Does a work of art have to be an object? The consideration of such questions was not fundamentally new, but a re-emergence, although in a somewhat altered form, of issues raised by the Futurists, Dadaists, and Surrealists in the first half of the century.<sup>3</sup> This period of questioning in the 1950s forms a significant theoretical background for the later developments associated with Fluxus.<sup>4</sup> As Fluxus developed in the 1960s, it in turn became the transmitter of such ideas to other artists and artistic groups.

Modernism has most often been considered as a very generalized set of unifying characteristics. In the visual arts, the modern period is most often determined by the use of a chronological frame, which begins in the mid-nineteenth century and ends, if it has at all, no earlier than the late 1960s or early 1970s. Secondly, the rubric modern art also refers to certain formal elements generally related to a Kantian conception of aesthetics and the nature of art. As several historians have recently emphasized, however, it is much more accurate to divide this monolithic term modern art into two oppositional directions. The first is the modernism of Impressionism, Post-impressionism, Cubism, Expressionism, and non-objective art, which is generally socially progressive, rationalistic, competitive, and utopian in nature. It is this form of modernism that is most often referred to when the term modern art is used. The second modernism, or avant-garde modernism, is that of Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, self-critical movements formed to pose general critiques of the cultural status quo and thus predisposed to draw into question the considerations of the rational, progressive, and utopian bases of the first modernism.<sup>5</sup> It is the avant-garde modernism of Futurism, Dadaism, and, to a lesser degree, Surrealism that forms the conceptual progenitor of Fluxus and other so-called "alternative" arts developments of the post-World War II period.<sup>6</sup> These developments contributed in turn to what might be called a nascent stage of a postmodern sensibility.<sup>7</sup> Writing about the historical evolution of Fluxus, Dick Higgins stated that "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 is a real one."<sup>8</sup>

By far the most pervasive as well as the most general concern transmitted from Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism to Fluxus artists in the 1960s was the aspiration to break down the culturally determined artificial distinctions between art and life. The project of the Futurists, Dadaists, and Surrealists was not so much a critique of other modern-art forms as one of the institutional function of art as a mirror of bourgeois egoism, materialism, and passivity. Their goal was to utilize artistic structures to challenge the substructures of bourgeois culture, the ultimate goal being to alter world history not art history.

The Italian Futurists saw the dependence on the past as suffocating. Although many modern-art movements challenged the visual or stylistic aspects of art, they still possessed a fundamental link to past aesthetics in their lack of any social or life praxis. The artists of the twentieth century, the Futurists declared, should look to life and its dynamic, non-static qualities as a model for their work and activities and simultaneously reject the primacy of rationality. The Futurist preoccupation with dynamism and change owed a considerable debt to the ideas of the French philosopher Henri Bergson. Bergson argued that what reason tells us about the ultimate nature of reality is wrong because the reasoning process is an analytical progression toward essences or conclusions about Being. The problem with rationalist methodology, according to Bergson, is that there are no basic, solid constituent units of reality. "Matter" is constantly changing and in a state of flux: everything is always in a state of becoming something else. Bergson argued that apprehension of flux requires exercise of the powers of intuition rather than the operations of logic; through intuition one could begin to experience nature as process.

Adopting these ideas about the ultimate nature of reality, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and the other Italian Futurists increasingly emphasized change, flux, and indeterminacy in their work. The role of the artist was to liberate himself/herself from rational conventions and the established social norms to become as active, aggressive, and dynamic as possible. Artists would become directly involved in the political and social concerns of the day. This recognition of dynamism necessitated the development of new art forms, a non-static art. The development of new, dynamic art forms, among them *parole in libertà* compositions and forms now generally referred to as "performance art," fulfilled two important

objectives for the Futurists. The first was that these art forms could be utilized to confront aggressively the cultural values and sensibilities of the bourgeois, or passésists. Varieties of performance were thought to be more immediate, more reflective of the flux of reality than easel painting or traditional sculpture, and thus more likely to challenge the barriers that normally distanced artworks from the viewer and from life. The most significant element of performative work for the Futurists, however, involved the assumption that the dynamic shifting qualities of performance mirrored the energetic evolution of modern life. The Futurists sought not to create new art but new art forms, an art that went beyond older forms of art to create a new dynamic method of expression:

There is no reason why every activity must of necessity be confined to one or another of those ridiculous limitations that we call music, literature, painting, etc. . . . EVERY ARTIST WILL BE ABLE TO INVENT A NEW FORM OF ART . . . in which would be found mixed in accordance with a new measure and scale, the most diverse means of expression — words, colors, notes, implications of shape, of scent, of facts, noises, movements and physical sensations. . . .<sup>9</sup>

It is this shift or alteration in emphasis from traditional, static, object-based art forms to the more open-ended forms of art, such as the parole in libertà and the performative arts, that established one of the primary strategies for the reintegration of life into art favored by Futurists, Dadaists, and Surrealists. Although the Dadaists and the Surrealists rejected the Futurists for their nationalism and pro-war stance, they adopted some of the performance forms that the Futurists had developed.

Like the Futurists, the Dadaists believed that it was not just cultural institutions and practices that needed to be altered, but the whole underlying structure of society. Philosophical discourses, science, and rationality, they decided, had artificially determined what was taken as the “true” nature of reality and all of its operations. In his “Dada Manifesto” from 1918, Tristan Tzara elaborated on the way in which such an “overestimation of reason” falsified any potential understanding:

There is no ultimate Truth. The dialectic is an amusing mechanism which guides us / in a banal kind of way / to the opinions we had in the first place. Does anyone think that, by a minute refinement of logic,

he has demonstrated the truth and established the correctness of these opinions? Logic imprisoned by the senses is an organic disease. To this element philosophers always like to add: the power of observation. But this magnificent quality of the mind is the proof of its impotence.<sup>10</sup>

For the Dadaists, Western culture had become an arena limited by the underlying philosophical constructs of rational thought. Art and culture, as elements of the Western intellectual network, were seen as unconcerned with the chaos of freedoms inherent in life and as a self-reflexive, institutionalized extension of the bourgeois mechanism of production and distribution. Like the Futurists, the Dadaists realized that the potential power of art existed in its potential for altering the practices of life. Life, however, was not defined as the life of the comfortable bourgeoisie, the life of rationalized cause-and-effect relationships, but ordinary daily-life experiences which included irrationality, chance, and inherent contradictions.

Dada; elegant and unprejudiced leap from a harmony to the other sphere; trajectory of a word tossed like a screeching phonograph record; to respect all individuals in their folly of the moment: whether it be serious, fearful, timid, ardent, vigorous, determined, enthusiastic; to divest one's church of every useless cumbersome accessory. . . Freedom: Dada Dada Dada, a roaring of tense colors and interlacing of opposites and of all contradictions, grotesques, inconsistencies: LIFE.<sup>11</sup>

The Dadaists not only wanted freedom from bourgeois culture, but from logic, order, and anything familiar, accepted, or an attribute of the status quo. To this end, Dadaists employed irony and humor in their performances and in the objects they created. Turning to the absurd, naive, primitive, and effects created by chance, the Dadaists attempted to mystify the seemingly complacent bourgeoisie by focusing on the paradoxes of life. Art objects were not important in themselves for most of the Dadaists but were used as a means of communication: painting and sculpture, such as the work of Francis Picabia, for example, were vehicles for commentary, parody, or blasphemy, not treasures as they had been thought of before. The concept of art as a kind of "cerebral revolver shot," as Tristan Tzara called Dada acts, the repudiation of rationalism and "Truth," the rejection of the mechanisms of bourgeois

artistic culture, and the desire to make art more directly correspondent to life form a strong conceptual link between Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, and Fluxus.

French Surrealism of the 1920s and 1930s can be seen to have evolved in part out of Dada. Although the specific developmental relationships between Dadaism and Surrealism are still debated, Surrealism carried on and expanded several key ideas of Dadaism, especially the attack on the division in bourgeois culture between what is called art and life; this division was held to prevent the achievement of art's full potential.<sup>12</sup> Surrealism, too, saw bourgeois culture as dominated by the supremacy of rationalist thought. The irrational and non-rational responses of the Dadaist artists to these kinds of bourgeois sensibilities, however, were replaced in French Surrealism by an interest in a systematized consideration of the non-rational structures of the Freudian unconscious.

For the Surrealists, the creative act resulted in the unification of images from the unconscious mind with the realm of ordinary occurrences and objects into a super-reality, or Sur-realism. Within this framework, artistic production was a vital means for exploring the unconscious, rather than a means of producing aesthetic objects for sale. Surrealism is most accurately described as a way of thinking, a philosophy and a way of life, as opposed to a style of art or literature. It is this idea of artistic production as a way of life that was to be one of the Surrealists' greatest legacies for the artists of the 1960s and 1970s. This significance of Surrealism for the post-World War II American artists was commented on by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins:

The Surrealists constituted the nucleus of the then avant-garde. Some of us who later did fluxus works were very conscious of this . . . from time to time there would be Surrealist "manifestations," and some of these both in Europe and the United States, rather resembled 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.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to the Futurism-Dadaism-Surrealism network of the early twentieth century, the ideas of two individual artists and thinkers – Marcel Duchamp and John Cage – must be added to the historical backdrop of Fluxus. Ben Vautier commented on the significance of these two individuals for Fluxus:

Officially nothing ties them [the artists associated with Fluxus] together, if not a certain way to conceive art and the similar influences by which they have been affected. These influences are: John Cage, Dada and Marcel Duchamp. Without Cage, Marcel Duchamp, and Dada, Fluxus would not exist . . . Fluxus exists and creates from the knowledge of this post-Duchamp (the readymade) and post-Cage the depersonalization of the artist situation.<sup>14</sup>

Although Marcel Duchamp was associated with both Dadaism and Surrealism, he should be considered individually because of the significance that his ideas had for artists after World War II.<sup>15</sup> The work and ideas of Marcel Duchamp incorporate a number of the ideas that became central to the development of “non-gallery” art in the late 1950s and 1960s, such as the work of Robert Morris and Ben Vautier. A central element of Duchamp’s thinking was his campaign against what he called “retinal art.” A work of art has at least two general aspects, the first of which corresponds to the sign—that is, the visual elements—and the second to the signifier, what might be loosely described as the conceptual elements. Duchamp felt that in the arts too much importance had come to be placed on the physical attributes of the sign. Through this emphasis on the purely visual, art had become intellectually limited and over-valued as an object endowed with special physical properties.<sup>16</sup> By rejecting retinal art, Duchamp wanted to put art back into the intellectual realm. This did not mean for him that art should be logical or rational, but that it should be “in the service of the mind.”

Duchamp also argued that the idea that art possessed some special enduring quality was an ingenious cultural construct. “I doubt its [art’s] value deep down,” he wrote. “Man invented art. It wouldn’t exist without him. All of man’s creations aren’t valuable. Art has no biological source. It’s addressed to a taste.”<sup>17</sup> He drew attention to the influence of taste in the act of creation itself. Artists can become a kind of machine, copying themselves to produce works that possessed the individual qualities recognized by cultural institutions and art buyers.

Duchamp maintained that “fine” artists were no different from any other classes of people who make things.

Fundamentally, I don’t believe in the creative function of the artist. He’s a man like any other. It’s his job to do certain things, but the businessman does certain things also. . . . Now everyone makes something, and those who make things on canvas, with a frame,

they're called artists. Formerly, they were called craftsmen, a term I prefer. We're all craftsmen, in civilian or military or artistic life.<sup>18</sup>

In his work, Duchamp attempted to de-mythologize the role of the artist, to undermine the perception of the artist as a "genius," and to counter the effects of taste in creation. He used chance techniques, for example, to remove the interference of the ego and limitations of personal taste.<sup>19</sup> He also made use of impersonal methods of production associated with industry. Probably the most historically significant of these was the utilization of readymades.<sup>20</sup> With his readymades, Duchamp raised a number of questions that would become central to the thinking of many artists in the 1960s and 1970s: what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for art or art-making? Does an artwork have to be "made" by an artist? Is something a work of art if an artist says it is? If something is not a work of art, why not?<sup>21</sup> The significance of Duchamp's ideas as an alternative to mainstream modernism for the development of post-World-War-II "alternative" arts, and Fluxus in particular, was indicated by George Brecht, who described what he felt was a paradigm shift associated with these ideas of Duchamp. In an interview with Henry Martin, Brecht discussed this shift:

We've been talking about a change in paradigm or about the way a new paradigm began to emerge around 1915 and we've been calling it the Duchampian paradigm, just for want of something better, right? ... [it's] important to notice the way the Duchampian paradigm seems to show up the kind of development that's typical of an artist's work. Take Monet, for example, or any artist between Monet and Duchamp, including Picasso, and there's a straight line quality in the development of his work when it's considered as a whole. With Duchamp . . . The works are like points scattered off into many different directions . . . like a spiral. Duchamp's work no longer develops along a straight line but distributes itself through a series of points that lie on a spiral and you can intuit the center but you can't see any straight line development at all . . . .<sup>22</sup>

The relationship between Fluxus and John Cage, who met Duchamp in the late 1940s and was profoundly impressed by his work, was much more direct than between Duchamp and Fluxus. Ben Vautier stressed the central role of Cage's ideas for the development of Fluxus, stating that Fluxus would not exist "especially



without Cage who, I would like to say, has done two brainwashes. The first, at the level of contemporary music by the notion of indeterminateness, the other, by his teaching through the spirit of Zen and his will to depersonalize art."<sup>23</sup>

The study of Zen in the mid 1940s had taught Cage that rationality gives a false impression of the world as static, for Zen holds that the world is a united web of interrelationships that are in a state of constant flux and change. As Bergson noted, the idea that everything is related through process and change and that everything interpenetrates ultimately transcends the limits of reason. Zen metaphysics also extend to notions of the self and led Cage to a critique of the notion of the artist as genius. Zen looks at the individual not as an isolated entity, but as parts of an essentially integrated whole. According to Cage

. . . turning [away from intentionality] is psychological and seems at first to be a giving up of everything that belongs to humanity . . . This psychological turning leads to the world of nature, where, gradually or suddenly, one sees that humanity and nature, not separate, are in this world together; that nothing was lost when everything was given away. In fact everything is gained.<sup>24</sup>

The unifying force of process and change, in Cage's view, integrates all life activities within the concept of nature. Thus, Cage came to believe that art should harmonize with nature and its processes. Art should utilize the operations of the natural world; thus, chance and change should be a part of the artistic process.<sup>25</sup> The use of chance for Cage is a way to liberate the artist from taste, habit, and ego. Cage also believes that to be consistent with nature art must be concerned with equivalences. In Zen metaphysics there are no natural hierarchies; thus, Cage concluded that art should mirror an equivalency of values instead of suggesting that "artistic" experiences are more elevated than "ordinary" experiences. In this way, art becomes important as a means to make one aware of one's actual environment.

And what is the purpose of writing Music? . . . the answer must take the form of a paradox: a purposeful purposelessness or a purposeless play. This play, however, is an affirmation of life – not an attempt to bring order out of chaos nor to suggest improvements in nature, but simply a way of waking up to the very life we're living . . .<sup>26</sup>

The primary function of art, Cage believes, is not only to be a means of increasing one's awareness of actuality, but also a way of celebrating these new awarenesses.<sup>27</sup> These celebrations, though, are not an end in themselves for Cage: they are instruments for making people more aware of the significance of life around them.

The attitude that I take is that everyday life is more interesting than forms of celebration [art], when we become aware of it. That *when* is when our intentions go down to zero. Then suddenly you notice that the world is magical.<sup>28</sup>

The thinking of John Cage overlaps with that of Marcel Duchamp in several important ways although they came to related conclusions for very different reasons. In referring to this link, between his outlook and that of John Cage, Duchamp said, "If people choose to associate us, it's because we have a spiritual empathy and a similar way of looking at things."<sup>29</sup> For the purpose of this study, their ideas come together most markedly on two important points. First, artists are not "advocates of high truth." Second, the effect of personality and taste should be removed from art-making processes. These two ideas form the crucial core of what would develop in the late 1950s and 1960s into a situational view of aesthetics that is central to Fluxus.<sup>30</sup>

The significance of John Cage as a role model for many of the artists who would become associated with Fluxus cannot be understated. His importance is evident on a number of different levels that include, but are not limited, to his activities as a teacher, writer, performer, and composer. One of the most significant aspects of Cage's work and ideas in the 1950s was the development of new theatrical qualities in musical performance. By the early 1950s, Cage had come to believe that musical performance was a kind of theater, analogous to the theater of life, and as such it should engage both the "eye and the ear."<sup>31</sup> One of Cage's first performative explorations of these ideas is the now-famous Black Mountain multi-media performance in the summer of 1952.<sup>32</sup>

In the late 1950s, Cage's influence on artists, musicians, and composers was beginning to be evident throughout the United States, Western Europe, and Japan. In this period, Cage came into direct contact with several of the artists who would later become central in the development of early Fluxus and had an important impact on their thinking. Cage first performed in Europe in 1954

with David Tudor.<sup>33</sup> This performance and the ideas on which it was based at first outraged critics, but by the late 1950s, these ideas had become respected within European avant-garde music circles. Like Cage, many of the leading European composers began to make use of indeterminacy in their own works in the 1950s. Some composers, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen in his classes in Darmstadt, in turn introduced younger composers to these ideas.<sup>34</sup> When Cage and Tudor returned to perform in Germany in 1958 and 1959, they found a very receptive audience that included, among others, La Monte Young and Nam June Paik, both of whom would later become central in the development of Fluxus in the early 1960s.<sup>35</sup> In the United States, Cage's contact with other younger artists who would become active in Fluxus was primarily through his class on "Composition of Experimental Music," taught at the New School for Social Research in New York in the late 1950s.<sup>36</sup> Dick Higgins described the significance of the ideas presented in this class:

Cage used to talk about a lot of things going on at once and having nothing to do with each other. He called it autonomous behavior of simultaneous events: I called it independence. In fact, the beauty about studying with Cage was that he brought out what you already knew and helped you become conscious of the essence of what you were doing . . .<sup>37</sup>

Through this class, a number of artists not only came into direct contact with Cage and his ideas but also one another.<sup>38</sup> In 1958, the students and participants in Cage's class included, among others, George Brecht, Dick Higgins, and Jackson Mac Low, all of whom would become central in the development of new performative art forms and Fluxus in the early 1960s. Through the ever-increasing network of interaction among people like Higgins, Brecht, Mac Low, Toshi Ichiyonagi, Henry Flynt, and La Monte Young, a number of works were developed and produced in New York that would directly lead to the idea for the Fluxus group and its eventual formation.



*Fluxus I*, various examples (circa 1964-1978), The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit. Photo by Brad Iverson, courtesy of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit.

## *Chapter Two*

# Proto-Fluxus in the United States from 1959 to 1961

It is not possible to determine an exact time or place when Fluxus began. There was no initial manifesto that 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 because Fluxus developed 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, not out of a specific ideological program. The Fluxus group came into being through a series of developmental stages; it is impossible and/or incorrect, therefore, to pinpoint a specific date or location for its beginnings. Chronological determinations are also complicated because the development of Fluxus should also be seen as the development of an attitude about the social role of art-making (discussed in Chapter Eight), as well as a progression of historically determinable and chronologically ordered events.

The early developmental phase of Fluxus, which Fluxus pioneer George Maciunas called "proto-Fluxus," can be seen as beginning around the middle of 1959 through early 1960 and continuing into the first half of 1962.<sup>1</sup> Sometime between the spring and fall of 1962, Fluxus entered a second phase, early Fluxus—a period one historian has also called the "heroic" phase—which lasted up through 1964.<sup>2</sup> Early Fluxus is distinguishable from proto-Fluxus first and foremost by the type of work associated with Fluxus at that time, particularly the event and action-music pieces by artists such as George Brecht, Dick Higgins, La Monte Young, and Emmett

Williams, and secondarily by their festival form of presentation. This heroic early phase comes to an end with the factionalization of the group as a result of the debates around the staging of Stockhausen's "Originale" in the fall of 1964. After 1964, the directions, activities, and artists associated with Fluxus changed markedly, for a number of the artists originally associated with Fluxus withdrew from active or consistent participation in Fluxus-sponsored activities.

The significant events and developments in the proto-Fluxus phase were closely linked to a need to find or establish a mechanism through which new directions in music, performance, art, and poetry could be disseminated. This need for new distribution systems ultimately inspired the development of a publication to be called *Fluxus*, through which the artists' ideas and works could be more widely distributed, as well as the establishment of new national and international performance venues for the presentation of these new works.

Although several dates can be chosen for the beginnings of the proto-Fluxus phase, 1959 was the first year that activities and events started to bring together ideas and artists who would subsequently lead to the formation of a Fluxus Group.<sup>3</sup> In middle 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 publicly to present their ideas and works, especially those kinds of works that were an outgrowth of the ideas presented in Cage's classes. One of the first of these artist-organized performance associations was the New York Audio Visual Group, a direct continuation of the interactions between the students in Cage's class.<sup>4</sup> After each weekly class, artist Al Hansen, who would become active in Happenings, Dick Higgins, who would be one of the future founders of Fluxus, and other students would meet to discuss ideas and interests and to consider how they might form a group in order to continue to work together after the class ended.<sup>5</sup>

In August of 1960, Dick Higgins wrote a statement formalizing the goals of the Audio Visual Group. These included the following:

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.<sup>6</sup>

The group began its activities in 1959 and met weekly to carry out various activities. Al Hansen described some of these weekly activities in his book *A Primer of Happenings and Time/Space Art*.

The New York City Audio Visual Group met on Sunday mornings at a Bleacher 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.<sup>7</sup>

One of the first large public presentations by the Audio Visual Group took place on April 7, 1959, in the Kaufmann Concert Hall in New York City. The title of this performance was "A Program of Advanced Music." Included was Hansen's *Alice Denham in 48 Seconds*. Hansen described parts of 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.<sup>8</sup>

In August of 1960, the Audio Visual Group presented another large public performance at the Living Theater in New York City. This presentation was titled "New Music" and presented various compositions by Dick Higgins, Ray Johnson, Reginald Daniels, Al Hansen, and Jackson Mac Low.

The years 1959 and especially 1960 in New York were marked by an increasing number of other new performance presentations

by an ever-growing number of artists. During this same period, there were similar performances by groups and individuals in other cities, both on the East Coast and the West Coast. For example, in San Francisco in May, 1960, La Monte Young, Walter De Maria, and Terry Riley presented a simultaneous performance of four compositions by Higgins, Young, Riley, and De Maria.<sup>9</sup> In New York during these years, the happenings of Jim Dine, Claes Oldenburg, Allan Kaprow, Robert Whitman, and Red Grooms were presented.<sup>10</sup> 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. This concert included works by John Cage, Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, Al Hansen, Robert Rauschenberg, and Richard Maxfield.<sup>11</sup> All of these performances, as well as others not mentioned, were important for the development of a new performative sensibility among proto-Fluxus artists. Two other New York performance series, however, were very important in the evolution of Fluxus as an organization and the development of a specifically Fluxus performance sensibility. These two series were the Chambers Street series (December, 1960-May, 1961) and the performances held at the AG Gallery, beginning in March, 1961.

Although there is no direct link between the activities of the Audio Visual Group and the Chambers Street performance series, the latter followed the direction of the former as a kind of sponsoring organization. The Chambers Street series was organized by the composer and musician La Monte Young, who had studied with Cage in Darmstadt, Germany, and who had moved to New York from San Francisco in 1960. This series was intended to be a forum for the presentation of experimental works in music, poetry, plays, event, and other "new" art forms. Although this series 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. In an interview in 1968 Ono explained the way she had become involved.

A friend of mine told me that there was this group of artists who were thinking of putting on their works and would I mind if they joined me and did things together. And I said no, I wouldn't mind, and perhaps they wouldn't mind painting my loft for free. Everyone was lazy and didn't get around to painting it white. . . . But there was no mention that I should have a concert there, and I wasn't going to be the one to mention it . . .<sup>12</sup>



Initially, Young intended to present through this series the works of at least 24 artists, poets, and musicians.<sup>13</sup> In actuality, over the course of six months at Ono's loft, Young organized and presented performances of the work of only seven individuals. These performances included new music and poetry by Terry Jennings, Toshi Ichiyangi, Henry Flynt, Joseph Byrd, Jackson Mac Low, Richard Maxfield, and Young himself.<sup>14</sup> Although the specific nature of these performances is not easily discernible in every case, the comments of several people who were present, either as performers or audience members, such as Brecht, Jerome Rothenberg, Higgins, and Mac Low, can help give a general picture of what happened.

The first presentation on December 18 and 19, 1960, was devoted to the work of Terry Jennings, a composer whom Young had known in California and who was visiting in New York. There are two programs for this performance, the first of which is rather general and includes information about upcoming performances; the second lists nine works by Jennings and three works about Jennings (by Maxfield, Riley, and Young) under the heading "Some of the following Compositions will be performed."<sup>15</sup> On the first program, Young wrote two statements that are, when elaborated, significant for understanding the nature and direction of this performance series. Printed at the very bottom of the program page is the statement "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 this statement that Young did not consider this a public performance series; rather, the performances were for people who already knew or could understand the work being presented.<sup>16</sup> This series was not intended to be entertainment for the audience, even though Young himself was very interested in the audience as a social situation.<sup>17</sup> On the first program, Young typed in bold letters "THE PURPOSE OF THIS SERIES IS NOT ENTERTAINMENT." In a 1973 interview with Eric Mottram, Dick Higgins points out 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.<sup>18</sup>

The critic and writer Jerome Rothenberg, who was in the audience for a performance of Jackson Mac Low's works, later recounted his reaction to the presentation.

My first response to Mac Low was one of resistance, which (since I was still inexperienced) I didn't recognize as a sign that something important & new was going on. The occasion I now remember was in 1961, a performance of his play, *VERDUROUS SANGUINARIA*, at Yoko Ono's loft . . . Diane Wakoski & La Monte Young were "acting" in it & Wakoski was the one who had coaxed some of us to come along. We just couldn't get with it that night—although it touched off the obvious comparison to things we said we admired: Dada or the works of Gertrude Stein: the great tradition of 20th century experimental poetry & art. But it's one thing to carry the torch for events already historical—another to tune into the work of a contemporary moving in what (at the time) seemed like a bewildering, even a "self-indulgent" direction.<sup>19</sup>

Although one might argue that Rothenberg reacted this way because he was uninformed, as Rothenberg himself says, his reaction was somewhat indicative of the general nature of the performances in this series and of some of the audience members' reaction to them. George Brecht was a member of the audience for several of these presentations and had a similar reaction to them. Brecht, who by the time of this series had presented several of his own performances and "arrangements" (the most well known of which was "Toward Events," presented in 1959), similarly described these performances as self-absorbed and fairly limited in their appeal.<sup>20</sup> Even though new work was being presented, these performances were rather self-referential; after all was said and done, Brecht

suggested that the Chambers Street series simply did not seem very interesting, even to those already interested in similar performance issues.<sup>21</sup>

These presentations of the Audio Visual Group and at the Chambers Street series can be linked to the development of Fluxus, not only because of the content and style of the performances but also because they set a precedent of a forum organized by artists for this kind of work and because they reinforced the associations among a group of artists, musicians, and performers who would later form a significant part of the core of the Fluxus group up through 1964.

On several occasions, another member of the Chambers Street audience was George Maciunas.<sup>22</sup> Young had met Maciunas in a continuation of Cage's class taught by the composer Richard Maxfield at the New School for Social Research in late 1960 or early 1961. Young invited Maciunas to come to the Chambers Street series. There, Maciunas first became acquainted with Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low, Henry Flynt, George Brecht, and others who would later be involved with the Fluxus group. This meeting between Maciunas and the others was not an introduction to art for him but an introduction to a new kind of art, music, and poetry that would markedly change his interests.<sup>23</sup>

Maciunas, who had been born in Lithuania, came to the United States 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 Bachelor's 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.<sup>24</sup> 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.<sup>25</sup> At the Institute of Fine Arts, Maciunas became engrossed in working on a project to map the history of art in graphic form.<sup>26</sup> In the spring of 1960 when his favorite professor died, he became discouraged about pursuing a university career in art history and soon quit New

York University.<sup>27</sup> Then he again worked as a designer and draftsman but wanted to do other things as well. Some time in 1960 or 1961, most likely early in 1961, Maciunas and a fellow Lithuanian named Almus Salcius, opened an art gallery at 925 Madison Avenue, which they called the AG Gallery.<sup>28</sup> This was recounted by Maciunas' mother.

On the advice of a friend he rented a place on Madison Avenue and opened a gallery. He took ultra-modern avant-garde paintings. The paintings didn't sell well and the gallery was very poorly attended. Yurgis [George Maciunas] worked as a draftsman and all his earnings went to this gallery, printing and dispersing of prospecti and letters. He also sketched himself, drops with India ink on a white background. We sold one such work, but cheaply, for fifty dollars. I had to sit in this gallery all day and clean up the huge hall.<sup>29</sup>

Maciunas' involvement in forming this gallery seems in part related to the first performance series he was involved in organizing. In early 1961, together with the poet Frank Kuenstler, Maciunas helped present a series of literary evenings in conjunction with Kuenstler's magazine *Bread &*. These performances, for which Kuenstler arranged the literary performers and Maciunas designed the brochures and located the performance space, were to be held at the Lithuanian Society auditorium in New York City. At the last minute the first performance was canceled. In 1979 Maciunas' mother recounted these events.

At that time some people turned up who were sympathetic to Communism . . . They decided to acquaint the large American public with the new direction of the magazine [*Bread &*]. There were announcements in the papers, they sent out invitations, and the auditorium was lent by the Lithuanian Society. But when the appointed day came the Board of Directors of the Lithuanian Society rescinded its agreement since they had found out the essence of the meeting. To them, who had fled from the Communists, it seemed blasphemous to hold such a meeting if it even vaguely recalled Communism. Yurgis and his friends had to stand at the entrance of the auditorium and turn everyone back. Yurgis was very disappointed and rejected the Lithuanian Society completely. He even changed his name from Yurgis to George.<sup>30</sup>

The Board of Directors apparently concluded that the intended literary performance was connected to Communism because

Kuenstler and some of the other intended performers were also associated with the pacifistanarchist discussion group connected with the magazine *Resistance*. Thus, when Maciunas and Salcius opened the AG Gallery, part of Maciunas's motivation seems to have been to provide a space in which he could present performances such as the "Bread &" evenings; in fact, these planned evenings were moved to the AG Gallery when it opened.

It seems that, for the most part, Maciunas was responsible for the events at the gallery and Salcius for the art displayed in it. Most of the painting displayed at the AG Gallery was the type of work that fell into 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.<sup>31</sup> Shortly after the opening of the gallery, two seemingly incongruous performance series were developed and presented at the AG Gallery. 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.<sup>32</sup>

The first performance at the AG Gallery, on March 14, 1961, was an evening of literary works put together by Kuenstler and titled "Bread & AG." This performance was the first of a two-part series that was scheduled to run through June 30 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. At the same time, Maciunas organized a multi-part performance series at the gallery under the general title "Musica Antiqua et Nova." According to the brochures Maciunas produced, this general series was designed to "rejoice in the polychromy where it can be discovered — at the frontiers of the ancient and the very new music."<sup>33</sup> The first part of this series, which ran on three

different days, consisted of two concerts (March 25 and April 16) and one demonstration (May 14) on the history of "concretism" in music, from Medieval music to the then-current experiments in magnetic-tape music. The second part included several presentations in May and June of an instrumental ensemble that played music from the thirteenth through the seventeenth centuries on reproductions of antique instruments Maciunas was then importing from Europe. The third part of "Music Antiqua et Nova" was devoted to the works of Richard Maxfield and was scheduled to be performed on May 17, 21, and 28.

Soon after these events began, Maciunas, with the help of some other artists, initiated several additional series from March through July of 1961: "Cinema Frontiers" on March 21 and 28, and April 4 and 11; "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 4 to June 28, and 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," presented on June 4, 11, 18, and 25, including works by Toshi Ichiyangi, Jackson Mac Low, and Joseph Byrd; and "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.<sup>34</sup>

The poet Jackson Mac Low, who would later become one of the artists associated with Fluxus, described one of the performances, his "Nuclei for Simone Morris" (renamed "Nuclei for Simone Forti" after Forti divorced her husband Robert Morris), which was performed on two different occasions at the AG Gallery.

During my "New Sounds" program . . . Simone had performed brilliant improvisations based on a few cards in the "Nuclei" set, on each of which is typed one to ten separated words and one to five action-naming gerund phrases, both groups derived from C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards' Basic English word list through chance operations . . . Simone's most impressive improvisation had been based on a card including the word "angry" and the action phrase "GIVE THE NECK A KNIFING OR COMING TO GIVE A PARALLEL MEAL, BEAUTIFUL AND SHOCKING". During it she madly pushed a large conference table around the center of the gallery—the audience members surrounding her having sometimes to flee as she shoved the huge

table toward them—biting at its edges and calling out between clenched teeth “HUNGRY! ANGRY! HUNGRY! ANGRY!”<sup>35</sup>

The Chambers Street series and the AG series included many of the same performers, composers, and artists. Maciunas was careful to point out, however, that he and La Monte Young tried not to have the same work, even if they presented the same artists.

So we have AG and Yoko’s loft more or less simultaneously. They were slightly different but not much, like we both feature[d] Jackson Mac Low, we both featured Bob Morris and La Monte Young. But we wouldn’t show the same composition . . . At the AG we had two [of] La Monte Young’s compositions, No. 3 and 7, and at Yoko’s loft it was all 1961 compositions.<sup>36</sup>

There were, however, several major differences between the AG Gallery performances and the in-group series presented at the Chambers Street series. The performances at the AG Gallery were publicly advertised and open to anyone who came and paid the admission.<sup>37</sup> Thus, it should be assumed that Maciunas’s intentions were to make this kind of work available for as diverse an audience as possible. The educational objectives of the AG series are further indicated in the text of the various announcements; Maciunas’ announcements for the “Bread & AG” evenings include the following explanation:

The intention of these programs is to present authors & their work directly to the audience. Mostly new writers, new spirit. The programs and many of the works are longer than are usually presented, usually 3, sometimes 2 hours long, respectively. For all this, a tempo of the casual & elongate, frantic & enduring, is intended, to assure for these occasions a warranted anti-beat & instilled configuration in reality. New tone, new time.<sup>38</sup>

This statement evidences a willingness to accommodate an audience not familiar with this type of work. In the announcement for the first “Musica Antiqua et Nova,” Maciunas further indicates his interest in not only presenting a variety of work but also in making it more accessible. This series included an educational program.

The significance in music of realism, concretism and fusion of form & content as opposed to biomorphic illusionism will be discussed by G. Maciunas in the forthcoming series of 3 lecture-demonstrations . . . <sup>39</sup>

This three-part series was probably organized as an introduction to the kind of music Maciunas labeled "concretism." In a later text from 1962 Maciunas described concretism.

Concretists in contrast to illusionists prefer the unity of form and content, rather than their separation. They prefer the world of concrete reality rather than . . . abstraction [or] illusionism . . . 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 . . . The furthest step towards concretism is of course a kind of art-nihilism. This concept opposes and rejects art itself . . . <sup>40</sup>

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.

Consistent with Maciunas' wider educational objectives, the second major difference between the Chambers Street and AG series was that the AG series sometimes could be considered entertaining. A number of the AG announcements also 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 as to what to expect (some kind of broad entertainment) and as a defining characteristic of certain forms of enjoyable and entertaining activities.<sup>41</sup> Among the humorous performances at the AG Gallery was Ray Johnson's "Nothing." 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.



Even at this early period, Maciunas' commitment to these presentations was total. As 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.<sup>42</sup> This additional support, however, was not enough, and the costs of the gallery and Maciunas' earlier losses from various business ventures began to accumulate. Maciunas' mother remembered that:

though his earnings weren't bad, much money had been lost in the unsuccessful affairs with instruments and canned goods and the gallery also cost money and Yurgis [George] became a debtor for the first time and to many people. His apartment wasn't even paid for the last two months.<sup>43</sup>

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.<sup>44</sup> Sometime shortly after the presentation of Ray Johnson's "Nothing" on July 30, the AG Gallery went out of business.

At the same time he was presenting the performance series at the AG Gallery in the spring and early summer of 1961, Maciunas also became involved in a second major project that would have a direct bearing on the future development of Fluxus, the book *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. While there, he heard a reading by Young and Mac Low in which they presented a number of other artists' work, including that of Henry Flynt.<sup>45</sup> After this performance Anderson asked if Young would guest-edit a planned issue of the East Coast version of *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 whose work he knew in 1960. By early 1961, Young 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."<sup>46</sup> Young then gave these materials to Chester 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, though, Anderson reappeared and returned the collected materials; *Beatitude east* had folded after only one issue.<sup>47</sup> 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. Maciunas was soon to change this situation.

Sometime in June, while Maciunas was photographing Young and Mac Low for one of the AG Gallery announcements, one of them happened to mention the collection of materials for the now defunct *Beatitude east*. Hearing about this collection, Maciunas exclaimed without any hesitation "I publish it: I have lots of paper — look!"<sup>48</sup> To the surprise of Young and Mac Low, he showed them a back room in the gallery that contained reams and reams of a variety of papers.<sup>49</sup> *An Anthology* eventually became the collaborative project of three individuals: 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 about the design process that:

I remember George as sitting at his drafting table for 2 1/2 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 . . .<sup>50</sup>

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, and events. Maciunas used a variety of colored paper stock (cheap kraft papers) that 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.<sup>51</sup> After the mechanicals

were produced, Maciunas sold his stereo to Dick Higgins to pay the printer ("Del Mar" on Lafayette St.) a deposit on the printing work for *An Anthology*.<sup>52</sup>

The development of *An Anthology* was significant for the formation of Fluxus because it helped to solidify the growing 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: La Monte Young, Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, George Maciunas, Henry Flynt, Emmett Williams, and George Brecht.<sup>53</sup> *An Anthology* was also a model for collective publications on which many of the early plans for Fluxus anthologies were based and 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).

During the production process, Maciunas saved many of the works not used for *An Anthology*, and he asked a number of the artists, such as Dick Higgins, Philip Corner, Jackson Mac Low, and others, for additional contributions. Maciunas's original intention was to publish a second anthology that would include mostly newer works and those not in the original book, but Young was not interested in being involved in a second book.<sup>54</sup> So Maciunas proceeded on his own with the idea to develop a new publication.

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.<sup>55</sup>

In fact, Maciunas had been thinking about producing a publication for at least several months prior to his involvement with the project for *An Anthology*. In the announcement for one of the early "Musica Antiqua et Nova" programs printed prior to March 25, he states that the entry fee for the performances will help publish a magazine. It was in relation to this plan that the name 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. The announcement reads, "Entry contribution of \$3 will help to publish FLUXUS magazine."<sup>56</sup> 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.<sup>57</sup>

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 to a publication. Before these plans for the development of a magazine with the title "Fluxus" could be put into practice, though, Maciunas left the country to work in Europe.<sup>58</sup> His experiences in this first proto-Fluxus phase in New York had introduced Maciunas to numerous artists, writers, and musicians and to the variety of new, post-Cagean work they were exploring. While in Europe, Maciunas continued to develop plans for the Fluxus publication and to seek out new contacts with artists who would participate in such ventures. It was Maciunas's experiences in the proto-Fluxus phase in the United States, coupled with his later knowledge of and experiences with the variety of artists working in post-Cagean forms in Europe, that would eventually lead to the formation of the Fluxus group.

## Chapter Three

# Proto-Fluxus and the Development of Early Fluxus in Europe from 1961 to 1962

The proto-Fluxus period in Europe was a continuation of the developments that had begun in the United States in 1960 and 1961. The shift in this period of the developmental center of Fluxus to Europe was a direct result of George Maciunas' centrality to the nascent group. This change would also have a lasting effect on the formation of Fluxus and its conceptual grounding. In Europe, Fluxus began to take shape as more than a magazine and a loose association of artists (that was more a matter of convenience than anything else). The initial group of artists who had come together through the performances associated with the Audio Visual Group, the Chambers Street series, the AG Gallery, and the publication project *An Anthology* was greatly expanded in the European proto-Fluxus phase. In this period, Maciunas was able to bring many more artists into association with the various Fluxus projects, and by so doing, he began to develop a general, but more focused, formulation of a conceptual stance in Fluxus and the kinds of works that reflected this stance.

Sometime in the fall of 1961, Maciunas decided to take a civilian job as a designer of printed materials for the United States Air Force at a base in Wiesbaden, West Germany.<sup>1</sup> Maciunas may have taken this job in part as a means of escaping the debts he had accrued in his failed business ventures and the AG Gallery. Maciunas' mother described the events that led up to their arrival in Germany.

Finally he [Maciunas] decided to escape further from these failures and got himself a job in the American Army as a private architect. We

left some of our things with my daughter, the remainder Yurgis rapidly liquidated; he gave more away than he sold, and since the trip and the apartment in Germany were paid for by the army for us both, we left for Wiesbaden, Germany.<sup>2</sup>

Even though Maciunas left New York and his contacts there, he did not give up on his plans to develop a publication of new performance, literary, and musical work. When he traveled to Germany, he took with him copies of the works to be included in *An Anthology*, as well as numerous other performance scores and tapes by Richard Maxfield, John Cage, and others. Through the late fall and winter of 1961-62, Maciunas developed plans for various publications to be grouped under the name Fluxus. As he continued to work out the possibilities for various publications, he came to realize that Fluxus should be more than just a magazine. Fluxus could become a sponsoring organization for a variety of endeavors beyond publications, especially performances. According to Maciunas,

the first Fluxus publication . . . took a few years to get off the ground. Meanwhile we thought, well, we'll do concerts, that's easier than publishing and will give us propaganda like for the publication . . . So the idea was to do concerts as a promotional trick for selling whatever we were going to publish or produce. That's how the Wiesbaden series came by and that's the first time it was called Fluxus Festivals . . .<sup>3</sup>

The development of this idea that Fluxus could become involved with a series of performances was clearly an extension of Maciunas' performance series at the AG Gallery in New York, as well as his knowledge of other performances such as the Chambers Street series. It was through his ever-widening awareness of the active European performance scene and his contact with artists there, though, that the possibilities for a related performance series in Europe began to take shape. The fact that Maciunas ended up in Germany had a tremendous impact on the establishment of these connections, for at that time Germany was one of the primary centers of "new music," happenings, and concrete poetry in Europe. Emmett Williams and Daniel Spoerri were working in Darmstadt with Claus Bremmer in the "Darmstadt Circle" of concrete poetry and dynamic theater. Darmstadt was also the location for the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik where Cage had

taught several seminars. The Westdeutscher Rundfunk in Cologne, run by Karlheinz Stockhausen in the early 1960s, was a center of explorations in electronic music. Cologne was in general a center for new musical and performance forms that had drawn many musicians and artists, including Nam June Paik, Ben Patterson, and Wolf Vostell. Examples of avant-garde activities that would have attracted Maciunas include the new-music developments in Cologne associated with Karlheinz Stockhausen, such as the performance of his "Originale" in 1960; the activities at the Parnass Gallery directed by Jean-Pierre Wilhelm; the Keller group in Darmstadt with which Emmett Williams was involved; the many new-music performances at Mary Bauermeister's studio, including Paik's now famous "Homage to John Cage;" Vostell's performance work, such as "Cityrama 1" and his de/collage actions; and a variety of performances by Paik, Patterson, and others.<sup>4</sup> Maciunas thus re-located himself to the geographic center of many of the new developments in the arts in Europe. Because of Maciunas's contacts with and knowledge of artists with similar interests in both the United States and Europe, he initiated a significant link between them, which was to develop into the Fluxus group.

To expand the planned publication "Fluxus," Maciunas began to make contact with various artists in Germany and other European countries, people he had heard about from La Monte Young, Dick Higgins, and others in the United States and/or whom he had contacted prior to his going to Europe. When Maciunas arrived, he quickly made use of these contacts to discover other artists who were doing work that could be published in a Fluxus magazine. One of the most important of these early contacts was the Korean musician and composer Nam June Paik, then living and working in Cologne. In the summer of 1961, while Maciunas was still in the United States, he had begun to correspond with Paik. Paik had been active in the new-music field in Europe since he had come to Germany as a student in 1956 and was knowledgeable about adventuresome work by composers, musicians, and performers working in other media such as art and poetry. Primarily through Paik, Maciunas soon became acquainted with other artists in Europe and the vital performance scene then largely unknown in the United States. Paik introduced him to artists and musicians such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Emmett Williams, Mary Bauermeister, and Karl Eric Welin. During this period in late 1961 and early 1962,

Maciunas also met or contacted by mail, either directly or indirectly through Paik, Wolf Vostell, Ben Patterson, Jean-Pierre Wilhelm, and numerous other individuals who would later become involved with some aspect of the development of early Fluxus in Europe.

In the middle of January, Maciunas wrote to Dick Higgins, describing Paik and some of his other more recent contacts in Europe.

He [Paik] is very modest and unpretentious which is in great contrast to many people here and in NY. In fact he is not eager to perform or have his work performed at all, which is even more unusual . . . I also met [Sylvano] Bussotti and [Heinz-Klaus] Metzger . . . also unpretentious. They all will be of tremendous help for the magazine and festival. Also met [Bruno] Maderna who looks like a fat butcher, and [Hans G.] Helms who (very much like Flynt) is absurdly arrogant and with pretensions toward world shattering originality and genius bordering on megalomania. I met also people like Mary Bauermeister . . . [Mauricio] Kagel, [Konrad] Boe[h]mer + others whose names I now forget. They showed me some diagrams + perform. instructions of new composers which seem very good (especially a group of Sicilians doing good work) also quite a few doing concrete compositions.<sup>5</sup>

Maciunas saw the need for a new review for presenting and promoting these new developments; there was no real organization in Europe that would produce performances of their work or publish their scores.

The origins of the now-legendary Fluxus festival series, presented in Europe between the fall of 1962 and the summer or 1963, have not been considered in detail in other studies on Fluxus. For this reason, the following section explores the manner by which Maciunas, Higgins, Paik, and the other artists involved in Fluxus in this period expanded the initial conception of Fluxus as a magazine into a performance group. These presentations were to have a lasting impact on avant-garde artists in Europe, the United States, and Japan. The Fluxus festivals initiated a recognition of the possibilities for artist-run forums, free from the limitations of the art-world establishment, to present artists' experimental works. The performance and aesthetic sensibilities of Fluxus that developed in these festivals also contributed to the wider growth of many significant new forms of art in the 1960s, including conceptual art, process art, mail art, performance art, and others.



As a partial outgrowth of his awareness of European artists and their activities, in the late fall and early winter of 1961, Maciunas began simultaneously to outline plans for a series of publications or issues of *Fluxus* and a series of related performances. Beginning some time in October or November, he organized a series of concerts in Europe. These initial plans were elaborated in conjunction with Paik. In a letter to Higgins dated November 28, 1961, Maciunas first mentions the start of such plans.

I must have your . . . tape of your last piece — I may possibly play it here in a series I am organizing also in a grandiose “caravan” concert tour Paik is organizing. We will also perform your other things (I mean musical things) if I ever get my trunk with your sheets . . . <sup>6</sup>

Sometime between November and December of 1961, Maciunas produced the first two versions of a prospectus for the magazine *Fluxus* and associated performance activities.<sup>7</sup> Three very similar brochures were sent out in late 1961 and early 1962, and it is not exactly clear which Maciunas produced first because none is precisely dated.<sup>8</sup> What is most likely the first version of his *Tentative Plan for the First 6 Issues* [of *Fluxus*] will be called version A. This prospectus was developed by Maciunas to send out to various individuals as a kind of announcement or advertising as well as a means to solicit additional works from other artists, writers, and musicians. Maciunas sent version A to Emmett Williams on December 16, 1961, with a letter requesting his “participation in our effort to publish an international periodical devoted to a new tide in art, music, literature, etc.”<sup>9</sup>

For this *Tentative Plan* of Fluxus publications and festivals of very new music, Maciunas developed a provisional pseudo-definition of Fluxus that he included as the first section of all versions of this prospectus. This was the first of a number of such definitions Maciunas would use throughout 1962 and 1963. The definition was taken almost word for word from *Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary’s* definition of the word “flux”:

#### FLUXUS

1. To purge. A fluid discharge, esp. an excessive discharge, from the bowels or other part.
2. A continuous moving on or passing, as of a flowing stream,
3. a stream; copious flow,

4. the setting of the tide toward the shore,
5. Any substance or mixture, as silicates, limestone, and fluorite, used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals.

After this definition Maciunas listed proposed contents of the first six issues (nos. 1-6) and one unnumbered issue (no. X) of *Fluxus* magazine. The divisions among these seven issues were mostly determined on the basis of geography (Japan, Western Europe, and the United States), although two issues were to focus on precedents, "homage to the distant past" and "homage to dada."<sup>10</sup> Following the tentative contents of these seven issues, Maciunas lists the editors, who included himself as publisher and editor-in-chief and a number of others, including Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins, Jean-Pierre Wilhelm, and Nam June Paik, as the editors of each of the geographically determined sections. According to this plan, all six of the numbered issues were to be published by May of 1963. At this stage in Maciunas' development of these publications, the format was somewhat traditional, even if the contents were not: a bound, printed publication of essays and scores for works.<sup>11</sup> By listing the scores for works and other related materials in a section labeled "anthology," Maciunas was most likely referring to *An Anthology* as well as using this title as a category for collected works.

Following this tentative plan for the first seven issues of the publication *Fluxus*, Maciunas listed a "Tentative Programme for the Festival of New Music." In version A, he does not refer to this performance series as a Fluxus Festival but only as "festival of new music."<sup>12</sup> This distinction seems to underscore his later assertion that these performances were at first only intended to act as advertising for *Fluxus* magazine and were not part of a Fluxus "program." In version A, Maciunas lists 23 concerts that were divided both geographically and by musical or performance type. For each of the performances, or concerts, as he calls them, Maciunas indicates the type of music (such as piano compositions, compositions for voice or instruments, electronic music, and so on) and the composers, although in many cases he does not specify which compositions by these individuals were to be performed. In the cases where he does specify the works to be performed, they are almost without exception by American composers and musicians with whom he was still more familiar. Many of the scores and tapes of works were also indicated as being in Maciunas' possession.<sup>13</sup> It

is noteworthy that, at this point, most of these works, although experimental, were predominantly musical in nature. Few of the actions and events that would later become the core pieces for early Fluxus performance were included.

By the time that version B of the first Fluxus prospectus brochure was produced, sometime around the very end of 1961 or in the first two weeks of 1962, Maciunas had made several changes and additions to the initial plans he had listed in version A. The general organization remained the same in the first two versions, although some of the changes are significant, such as calling each publication a "yearbook" rather than an "issue" as he had in version A. This change is significant because it indicated the start of the evolution of *Fluxus* magazine toward a more radical conception of a Fluxus publication: a production of actual works by artists, not just reproduced scores and essays. Another change was that a small section was added to the content listings for the "Western European Yearbook I:" here Maciunas indicates that an insert would also be included in this publication. This insert, intended to be in the form of a newspaper foldout, was to be a "programme of FLUXUS festival of new music" and was to include a calendar of events, a directory, and reviews. Thus, this number, to be issued in May of 1962, would also act as a means of publicizing the upcoming festivals planned by Maciunas to start in June of 1962. This note is also significant in that it was most likely the first use of the word "Fluxus" to encompass anything other than the publication itself. Although Maciunas had repeatedly used the word as the title of a magazine he wanted to publish, until this application in version B, he had never used it before to encompass performance events.

The most significant change in the listing of the performances was in version C. Here the number of concert performances is markedly reduced from the 22 concerts in version B to only 16 concerts. Most of the kinds of works to be presented remain essentially the same, but the categories of concerts are combined and cut down. As with the previous lists of performances, each of the concerts is divided according to geographic origin. This new "Tentative Programme for the Festival of Very New Music" includes three concerts of piano compositions (numbers one to three), three concerts for "other instruments" (numbers four to six), three concerts of "noninstrumental compositions and happenings" (numbers seven to nine), six concerts of magnetic tape music (numbers

ten to 15) and one concert of "new music" from Eastern Europe and the USSR (number 16). In addition to these specific changes, Maciunas added a new section at the end, containing a performance schedule, names of a festival planning committee, and a list of tentative performers for the concerts in Europe. The "Tentative Planned Schedule" for the concerts is a list of the intended performance locations for the festival. Maciunas' intention, as listed in this plan, was to hold one festival in a major European city from June of 1962 through September of 1963, a festival in New York at the end of 1963, and then one in Tokyo in January of 1964. Of the 18 different cities listed, only four are marked as having established dates and locations: Wiesbaden, London, New York, and Tokyo.<sup>14</sup>

By the end of May, Maciunas compiled all the changes made over the several months since the issuance of version C. He then produced a new plan for the publication series, and he sent out the concert series as *News-Policy-Letter No. 1*, dated May 21, 1962.<sup>15</sup> This newsletter, which exists in two different forms in the Silverman collection and in the Sohm Archive, is primarily devoted to the altered plans for Fluxus-related activities Maciunas had developed and was sent out at the beginning of the year. The changes he incorporated were a result of both the responses to the initial prospectuses and to his new contacts with artists such as Robert Filliou, Daniel Spoerri, and others. As are the three earlier prospectuses, the newsletters are divided into two parts: the "Fluxus Yearbook-Box" and the "Tentative Program for the Festival of Very New Music."

The section of the newsletter which covers the "Fluxus Yearbook-Box" exists only in the first undated version, but was probably included in both the dated and the undated version. As Maciunas states at the top of this section, this was "the latest plan for the forthcoming issues of *Fluxus*." A notable change in this description is that the physical form of the publication had been altered to reflect the changing nature of the contents, with a greater emphasis on non-traditional printed materials. As Maciunas explained, the form was to be a box rather than a series of bound pages.

1. It was decided to utilize instead of covers a flat box to contain the contents so as to permit inclusion of many loose items: records, films, "poor-man's films-flip books", "original art", metal, plastic, wood

objects, scraps of paper, clippings, junk, rags. Any compositions or work that cannot be reproduced in standard sheet form or cannot be reproduced at all.<sup>16</sup>

Maciunas' overall concept of this publication is indicated in item three of the section dealing with the yearbook-box publications. This section is an invitation to recipients of the newsletter, who had not been previously invited, to submit materials for the publication. Maciunas gives the following categories or types of materials for inclusion in the Fluxus publications:

- a) critical or noncritical, rational or irrational essays, and/or literal compositions—letters, notes, statements, prose, poetry, etc.
- b) news items regarding art or non-art events of interest (festivals, exhibits, publications, scandals, revolutions, etc.)
- c) compositions: scores, instructions of magnetic tape for reproduction into records
- d) visual compositions for reproduction: drawings, collages, photographs, reliefs for vacuum formed plastic, perforated sheets for die cutting etc. or
- e) 200 original aural, visual or literary compositions: solid objects, scraps, collages, smears, junk, garbage, rags, ready-makes [sic], found objects, etc. These can be either whole objects or an object (like a flat painting) cut into 200 parts.
- f) kinetic compositions: whole films or parts, series of photographic prints (of at least 100 successive frames) to be printed into flip-books or "poor mans movie". Original drawings for flip books. Instructions for happenings, film or photo essay of happenings, original "equipment" for happenings (200 of them) etc.<sup>17</sup>

The idea of including actual works, not printed reproductions, and using a box to contain them, was being considered by Maciunas as early as the beginning of March.<sup>18</sup> This change in format was a response to some of the materials that Maciunas lists in his first series of prospectuses and reflected the nature of the material and ideas he was receiving from various contributors and potential contributors. This expanded version of *Fluxus* was planned to have two different versions. The first of the two editions, the standard edition, would be more traditional in that it would contain only reproducible materials. This was to include "some 150 . . . bound pages and 12 loose sheets, fold outs or boards. . . ." <sup>19</sup> The items to be included in the standard edition would be drawn from the catego-

ries a) through d) listed in *News-Policy-Letter No. 1*. The second version or edition, which Maciunas called "luxus-fluxus," was to consist of the materials included in the standard edition with the addition of several non-reproducible works or objects, such as those given in the categories e) and f).

When this newsletter was written by Maciunas in May, 1962, it was already a foregone conclusion that the original schedule for publication of seven issues of *Fluxus* was not going to be met. According to his initial schedules, the first two issues of *Fluxus* were to have been published by May. By the end of February, however, Maciunas realized the materials he had collected for issue number one consisted almost exclusively of music and poetry. In order to include materials from other artistic disciplines, he put off the date of issuance.<sup>20</sup> His original plan was quite unrealistic, not so much in coverage or the types of materials to be included, but in not allowing adequate time to collect the works and to produce the publication. In a section of the May *News-Policy-Letter*, Maciunas refers to the delays in publishing the first two issues of *Fluxus*.

6. Publication of issue no. 1 and 2 have been delayed due to:

- a) very late receipt of materials from contributors.
- b) extremely high printing costs in Germany
- c) acquisition by us for long range economy of an offset printing press by July, which will be utilized for printing all Fluxus issues, festival programs and individual publications collections such as collections of prose, poetry, music scores, graphs etc.<sup>21</sup>

Immediately following this explanation for the delay, Maciunas lists a new schedule for the various issues. Although he lists all seven issues, he only gives specific dates for the first four: 1 (United States) August 15, 2 (German) September 15, 3 (French) December 1, and 4 (Japanese) March 15, 1963. His desire was to produce the first two issues in time for the Wiesbaden festival, now the first planned festival location, and the third issue in time for the festival in Paris, both of which had already been arranged.

The plans for the tentative program for the festival of new music were also altered. The most notable difference was that the number of concerts had again been shortened to 13 different programs. In addition to a slight reordering of some of the concerts and the inclusion of several new artists and their works, the most

prominent change is that this program list of concerts does not include a number of the previously listed concerts.<sup>22</sup> The concerts, as they were listed in the *News-Policy-Letter No. 1* of May 21, 1962, include three concerts of "piano music by U.S. composers" (number one), "Japanese composers" (number two), and "European composers" (number three); three concerts of compositions for "other instruments and voices by United States, Japanese, and European composers" (numbers four, five, and six); two "concerts of noninstrumental and happenings" by United States and Japanese artists (numbers seven and eight); one concert of "non-national happenings" (number nine); three concerts of "magnetic tape music" by United States (numbers 11 and 12) and French (number 13) composers; and one concert of "magnetic tape music and experimental film" by Japanese artists and composers (number 14).

In this same period from the end of 1961 through spring of 1962, a good deal of Maciunas' time was spent trying to line up specific venues for the performance festivals. His approach was first to determine the cities in which he felt the festivals should be presented and then to look for sponsors and/or locations in each of the cities.<sup>23</sup> In this way, although he was dependent on his connections with artists and possible sponsors, Maciunas was personally responsible for determining the locations in which these festivals were to be presented. One of the first potential sites for a festival he contacted (or one of the first that we have specific documentation for) was the *Staedtisches Museum* in Wiesbaden. On December 14, 1961, Maciunas wrote to the director, Clemens Weiler, and requested permission to hold a concert series be held in the small hall of the museum. It is probable that Maciunas developed and produced the first prospectus, version A, in order to send to Weiler with his request.<sup>24</sup> This initial contact was in part facilitated by the influential art critic and gallery owner, Jean-Pierre Wilhelm. Through Nam June Paik, Maciunas had been in contact with Wilhelm prior to his letter to Weiler and had discussed his plans for a Fluxus publication and related concert series. Wilhelm suggested that Maciunas contact Weiler about the possibility of holding a concert series in Wiesbaden.<sup>25</sup> Wilhelm himself had also contacted Weiler to support Maciunas' proposal and recommended that such a concert series was worth having at the Wiesbaden museum.<sup>26</sup> Maciunas wrote to Weiler regarding the planned series.

The first project consists of organizing several festivals of avant-garde music at several cities. Your sympathies to new arts as [in] such exhibits as "Interferenzen" testify, led us to hope that possibly you would agree to our request which we wish to make hereby, for your esteemed collaboration in organizing the first festival at the Staedisches Museum, here in Wiesbaden.<sup>27</sup>

In response to these requests by Maciunas and Wilhelm, Weiler agreed to Maciunas' proposal for a concert series to be held at the museum.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the first Fluxus festival, a month-long series of performances, was set for Wiesbaden, in September of 1962.

When Maciunas sent out the third version of the initial prospectus, version C, in the middle of January, 1962, he listed three additional cities marked as "definitely established dates and locations" for the festivals.<sup>29</sup> These were London in October, 1962, New York in November and December of 1963, and Tokyo in January of 1964. As Maciunas indicated in a letter to Dick Higgins, the venue in London was set up in conjunction with the musician and composer Michael von Biel. A specific location for the festival in New York was probably not set up at this time, but Maciunas may have assumed this would not pose a problem, given his connections there. The venue in Tokyo was most likely set up in conjunction with the composer Toshi Ichiyanagi, whom Maciunas lists as the member of the festival planning committee for Japan. By the end of May, when he sent out the *News-Policy-Letter No. 1*, the tentative schedule also listed San Francisco and Paris as "definitely established" locations for festival presentations, although Japan was no longer so marked. It is not clear whom Maciunas had contacted in San Francisco, but possibly it was one of La Monte Young's many contacts on the West Coast. The festival in Paris was arranged for the month of December, in conjunction with several artists, musicians, and writers, particularly Jean Claude Lambert and Francois Bayle, with the help of Charles Mac Dermid, Sylvano Bussotti, and Pierre Schaeffer.<sup>30</sup> The fact that Maciunas' plans for the specific sites to be included in the series of festivals were constantly changing is indicated in a postcard he wrote to La Monte Young in March of 1962.

Now about festival. Here is new schedule. March was too early. Toshi held up on Japanese things till now, I am still missing some others . . . So we here decided to start June. This will give time to collect all



stuff and prepare nice posters, programs, etc. I just ordered plenty of electronic equipment from States . . . the equipment would arrive not earlier than early May. - so we can't start earlier. Now we fixed schedule: June - Berlin, July - Köln\*, Aug. - Florence? Sept. Wiesbaden\*, Oct - London\*, Nov. Kopenhagen (?), Dec. - Paris (?) etc. 1963 Spring in USSR Poland, Check - (maybe). \* means all fixed.<sup>31</sup>

If one compares the above statements about the schedule for the performance series with the schedule Maciunas issued in May, several significant changes are notable. By May he had dropped all the festivals to be held prior to September of 1962 and begun the schedule with the first city that had already been arranged, Wiesbaden. In fact, even though Maciunas indicates that Köln is "all fixed" in his card to Young, he dropped it along with Berlin by the end of May and never rescheduled them.

From the documentation of Maciunas' plans for both the Fluxus publications and the related concerts, it is possible to make several conclusions about the development of his thinking and his contact with artists in Europe by the middle of 1962. It is evident from the somewhat grandiose nature of the proposed plans that Maciunas' experiences in New York, including the failure of the AG Gallery, in no way inhibited the potential direction and scope he saw for Fluxus as a sponsoring organization for producing publications and presenting performances of experimental works in music, poetry, and the visual arts. The "Tentative Plan" for the contents of the first seven issues, or Yearboxes, of *Fluxus*, evidences Maciunas' rapidly widening awareness of the diversity of new music, art, and poetry from all over Europe, the United States, Asia, as well as their historical precedents. Over 40 individual artists were to be included in these issues; although Maciunas had known about several of the non-American artists prior to moving to Europe, a majority, such as Ben Patterson, Wolf Vostell and Daniel Spoerri, were new to him and were relatively unknown in the United States in 1961 and 1962. Maciunas' role in this linkage of individuals who would become active in Fluxus was more than just a compiler of names. With the advice of several people, such as Paik and Higgins, Maciunas began almost single-handedly to bring together an international group of non-gallery-oriented artists who would form the core of Fluxus in the early 1960s and serve as a key connection between the avant-garde in the early twentieth century and the development of "alternative forms" of art in the late 1960s and 1970s.

It is also evident that, by the middle of 1962, Maciunas had already set certain parameters for Fluxus. These consisted of two primary categories that would form the basic divisions of the collective activities of the Fluxus group: first, the promotion, organization, and presentation of performances or festivals and second, publication/production of works by a diverse group of artists from a variety of artistic disciplines.<sup>32</sup> From the contents specified in these lists, it is evident that the coverage, and especially the artists involved, were intended to be international in scope. This internationalism would fundamentally shape the development of Fluxus in its early stages. It is also significant that the artists listed under the Japanese and European sections, for both the Yearboxes and performances, were for the most part relatively recent contacts for Maciunas. By the time of the first prospectuses, he had not received many scores from them or, possibly, in some cases, had not contacted them directly or gotten them to agree to participate. Thus, although Fluxus was to remain international, the membership would change over the next year.<sup>33</sup> Further, it should be noted that many of the artists/participants in the European sections were people whom Maciunas had heard about or met through Paik; as a result, many of the first European contacts were artists particularly involved in new music and/or who had a strong emphasis on performance works. Although Fluxus has often been historically categorized as a direction in the visual arts, it was in fact first and foremost a performance arts organization associated with the developments of new music, concrete music, action music, and other intermedial performance work.<sup>34</sup> Even though Maciunas elaborated plans for publications, stressed the importance of Fluxus as a publishing organization, and produced several publications in the first several years of Fluxus, this Early Fluxus period was dominated by performance activities.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1962, Maciunas continued to work on refining the contents of the various Fluxus yearbooks and the concert programs. During this period, he was in constant contact with numerous artists in Europe: with La Monte Young, and, above all, with Dick Higgins in New York. Maciunas often asked them to contact other artists in order to get contributions to Fluxus and frequently asked their advice on a variety of topics related to the development of his European plans. This relationship, and by extension the association between Maciunas

and all of his editors (or at least the more productive of them), is exemplified by an exchange of letters between Maciunas and Higgins in the winter and spring of 1962. The exchange begins with a request for information from Maciunas to Higgins about a long list of artists Maciunas had submitted.

Are any of these good? (for FLUXUS) & Fluxus diagram? . . .

John Chamberlain NYC . . .

Jim Dine NYC . . .

C. Oldenburg NYC . . .

This is a list from John Goldsworthy, I don't know how trustworthy it is. Can you weed names out. Reduce it to just good ones? (if there are any)<sup>35</sup>

Higgins responds by selecting a number of the artists from the list and making comments about them and their work:

I have been looking over your list fluxcluworthy and I see that the entire list consists of visual artists . . . John Chamberlin, does very terrible sculptures strictly for Martha Jackson. Is avantgardist by association. Very posh gent . . . Jim Dine – very faddy gent, made junk art when it was the thing, did happenings when Kaprow came along (though his own were very vaudevillian psychological entertainments more then happenings), now has gotten very neat, and is painting neckties . . . C. Oldenburg – he is a realist of wholly original cast. For example when he wanted to do work on a store, he went out and rented a store . . . His happenings were vaudevilles, like Dine's, but they never represented situations, they were much more concrete, and they had a very patient bear-like power that nobody's but Allan Kaprow's had . . . I really admire his work, totally different though it may be from my own, aesthetically and structurally. I have the notion that Claes and myself are the only two realists in theater, and, except for Jackson and perhaps Dick Maxfield, the only realists on the American scene. I think it is really too bad you never asked him for something for Fluxus . . .<sup>36</sup>

In response to this information Maciunas then asks Higgins, "As editor of happenings can you obtain some materials for Fluxus from [Al] Hansen, [Claes] Oldenburg etc.?"<sup>37</sup> Shortly after he had sent this request, Maciunas wrote Higgins again with another, more specific proposal. Initially, Walter de Maria had been listed as the United States editor for visual arts and sculpture and Higgins as the United States editor of happenings, theater, and politics, but Maciunas had received no material from de Maria.

It seems like Walter de Maria is dead or a primadonna or unwilling to go to a wedding so I must be bothering you to save the situation . . . Why not edit for Fluxus happenings, theater together with all the other visual-plastic arts (minus cinema) . . . For happenings – it would be nice of you to collect a nice box with nice essays, instructions from nice people who you know like Hansen, Dine, Oldenburg, Whitman, etc . . . Do you agree? OK? . . . I will delay Fluxus a whole month to get these nice things from you. OK? . . .<sup>38</sup>

To this Higgins replies:

I will get in touch with Claes and I will see if I can contact Hansen . . . to do something for you. Yes I will collect for and serve as visual editor if none other can be found, but do not name me as any sort of visual editor for this country.<sup>39</sup>

In a following letter, Higgins gives Maciunas an update on his contacts with Hansen and Oldenburg: “I have tried to reach Al Hansen with no success . . . I spoke to Claes Oldenburg, who is interested in doing something for Fluxus . . .”<sup>40</sup> Maciunas encourages Higgins to pursue the matter further:

Would you also ask Oldenburg to write something within a whole month? Also maybe for special issue on the past? . . . I hear Larry Poons is writing too, so with Oldenburg + your writings there should be enough for the plastic arts . . .<sup>41</sup>

As a result of his inquiries, Higgins later informs Maciunas that:

On, Fluxus, Claes . . . said he would send you something . . . Al . . . said . . . he had lots of stuff to send, and George baby if you every manage to get a thing by Al Hansen, oh wow, because he is a rare bird and a dedicated man . . .<sup>42</sup>

Finally, around the beginning of May, Maciunas brought this exchange to a conclusion.

Great thanks for your efforts in fishing up Al Hansen & Claes. Fluxus will be more complete now. I got stuff from Kaprow (but no essay) from Larry Poons (diagram & few words) I hope Claes will send an essay in addition to other things. Walter de M. sent a portrait of Cage & his followers. Also got things from Dennis Johnson & a thick batch of poetry etc. from JML [Jackson Mac Low] & his friends . . .<sup>43</sup>

Beyond the significance of this exchange as a document showing the early desire of Maciunas and Higgins to involve in Fluxus artists associated with happenings, it is valuable as evidence of the methods Maciunas used to develop the plans for Fluxus publications. As the general editor of Fluxus, he primarily acted as a compiler and organizer. It was, to a certain extent, the job of each of the area editors, such as Higgins, to find appropriate artists, contact them, and solicit materials for Fluxus. Maciunas continually kept in contact with the other editors, suggesting individuals to contact, asking for status reports, requesting additional information and materials, and generally acting to oversee the whole process, as well as nagging them to ensure that progress was being made. His emerging leadership role in the organization of Fluxus was also indicated by the fact that the final decisions as to whom to include, what works by these individuals to incorporate, and which year-book would include them were ultimately made by Maciunas, although these decisions were usually made in conjunction with his editors. In addition to Higgins, these editors included Philip Corner, Jackson Mac Low, Jonas and Adolfas Mekas, La Monte Young, Nam June Paik, Jean-Pierre Wilhelm, Wolf Vostell, Daniel Spoerri, Toshi Ichiyanagi, Henry Flynt, Heinz-Klaus Metzger, Michael von Biel, and several others. Many of them often made suggestions and comments about the developing plans for Fluxus.<sup>44</sup> This collaborative process is indicated in a letter from Higgins to Maciunas that was in part a response to version A of the prospectus for the Fluxus publications.

About Fluxus Magazine: I see you have many Musical things . . . for #4, I think you should do Kirchner, because there is nothing on him at New York or Columbia or Yale . . . In #5, a paper should be done on abstract writing, but for goodness sakes, Why not ask [Isador] Isou to do it? He's articulate but a bit scattered . . . My essay was intended primarily for continental Europe, and I'm certainly annoyed not to say what I want to say to the people I intend to say it to . . . Furthermore, you have assembled such an interesting collection of peoples work, most of whom are too poor or disinclined to get to Europe, a German or a French edition is virtually the only way this work could be made available to anyone on the continent . . .<sup>45</sup>

A similar kind of relationship between Maciunas and his editors was involved in the development of the plans for the performance festivals. In the same letter in which Higgins responds to Maciunas'

plans for the publication, he also makes several suggestions about the plans for the concert series listed in version A of the *Tentative Programme for the Festival of New Music*.

In your concerts, almost any of my pieces could be used in #10. If you want to use me in #9, I have one piece—you know it—To Everything Its Season, in The Musical Wig—that could be appropriate. In #12 I suggest you invite Al Hansen to contribute . . . In #14 I am sending you the second making of my long tape piece . . . “Requiem for Wagner the Criminal Mayor” . . . There is said to be a group of electronic composers in Rotterdam . . . you might be able to turn them up, perhaps for #22 . . .<sup>46</sup>

During this same period, the first four or five months of 1962, Maciunas continued to contact other artists, musicians, and composers as a means of both getting an increasingly wider variety of individuals involved with Fluxus and to help arrange for the performance festivals. In a letter to Dick Higgins from February of 1962, Maciunas describes his new contacts from a recent trip to London.

I met there Michael von Biel who is doing very nice things, better than Cornelius Cardew anyway, and much better than those New Departure people, who are only departing backwards. Got M. von Biel to edit English nothings for European issue II (FLUXUS). Also arranged festival in London for Oct. (that's definite) . . .<sup>47</sup>

In another letter to Higgins, sometime in the spring of 1962 but prior to May 21, Maciunas wrote, “We are joined now by some good people like Daniel Spoerri, Robert Filliou, Vostell, Ben Patterson—all happenings people.”<sup>48</sup> These artists would all become important participants in early Fluxus in Europe, but their involvement at this stage was important because their influence on Maciunas would increasingly shift his focus (in Fluxus) away from new music as such toward a broader conception of new performance works, or toward what Maciunas referred to as “happenings” and/or “concrete music.” The other result of the involvement of these new associates is that, through their participation, Fluxus found its first forums for public presentations. Robert Filliou, Wolf Vostell, Daniel Spoerri, and Ben Patterson would be central in helping set up the first proto-Fluxus performances in Europe and sometimes in mak-

ing the initial contacts for the Fluxus festivals. It was Paik, however, who was most responsible for helping to arrange the first public manifestation related to Fluxus, the performance *Zum Kleinen Sommerfest "Après John Cage."*

In the late spring of 1962, the director of Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, Rolf Jahrling, contacted Paik about the possibility of his doing a performance at the gallery. Jahrling wanted Paik to perform for the opening of the gallery's summer festival in June. Paik, however, was busy with a variety of other projects, especially the concert "Neo-Dada in der Musik," then being planned in Dusseldorf for the end of that same month. Paik had to turn Jahrling down because he did not have enough time to prepare for such a performance. Since Paik could not organize a performance, he suggested that Jahrling contact Benjamin Patterson and Maciunas and ask them to do something together. Both Maciunas and Patterson agreed to Rolf Jahrling's proposal, and the result was the performance evening titled on the program "*Après John Cage.*"

The performance is listed in the invitation as beginning at 8:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 9, 1962. This program was performed for the guests who had come for the opening of an exhibition of abstract paintings on display in the gallery.<sup>49</sup> The presentation was to include a lecture by Maciunas and the performance of three compositions, two by Patterson and one by Maciunas. The lecture by Maciunas, who is listed in the program as the "chief editor of the new art magazine FLUXUS," is titled "Neo-dada in New York." The first two listed works to be performed are "Variation for Contrabass" and "Duo" by Patterson. The last work is listed as "Lip Music" by Maciunas. Much like most of the future Fluxus festivals, the actual performance was, however, quite different from what is listed on the invitation and program.<sup>50</sup>

This presentation was for Maciunas an occasion to publicize the planned Fluxus publications as well as the upcoming concert series, not just a chance to perform in public. Thus, he intended to make the most of this opportunity. For this event Maciunas prepared a brochure to distribute to the viewers, *Fluxus [Brochure Prospectus for Fluxus Yearboxes]*.<sup>51</sup> Although the brochure was a direct outgrowth of the numerous plans and lists he had previously produced, he compiled and produced this version specifically for public distribution. None of the other plans was so intended.<sup>52</sup> The contents of this four-page brochure includes a definition of Fluxus

that was a minimally altered dictionary definition of the word "flux," similar to the one he had used in the earlier prospectuses, a list of editors for the Fluxus Yearboxes, and a list of contributors and contents for the first seven issues of the Fluxus Yearboxes. Also featured in this brochure is a design made from various words related to Fluxus, such as "anti-art," "concept art," "concrete art," "automatism," "indeterminacy," "music," "Dada," "theatre," "prose," "philosophy," "happenings," "bruitism," "cinema," and "dance." Maciunas had never before used this word-based design element in his other plans. Although it undoubtedly functioned as a design element for the brochure/prospectus, the inclusion of these terms also should be seen as part of Maciunas' continuing desire to interest and educate the public about the nature of the new art forms being grouped under the name Fluxus.<sup>53</sup> In addition to the brochure/prospectus, Maciunas also produced and distributed announcements for La Monte Young's *An Anthology* as material related to Fluxus.<sup>54</sup>

The actual performance, introduced by Rolf Jahrling, comprised not four but seven elements, including an introductory text and six performances. The evening was initiated by the presentation of Maciunas' text "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art," read in German by Carlheinz Caspari. During this reading a large chart by Maciunas was held up behind Caspari. It was intended graphically to represent the ideas in the text of the paper in relation to artists such as Jackson Mac Low, Dick Higgins, George Brecht, La Monte Young, and others. The chart was horizontally divided into seven sections specifically addressed in the speech:

Neo dada, its equivalent, or what appears to be neo dada manifests itself in very wide fields of activity. It ranges from "time" arts to "space" arts; or more specifically from literary arts (time-art), through graphic-literature (time-space-art) to graphics (space-arts) through graphic-music (space-time-arts) to graphless or scoreless music (time arts), through theatrical music (space-time-art) to environments (space-arts).<sup>55</sup>

Although this text seems convoluted, Maciunas was attempting to lay out for the public the underlying concepts of the work they would see performed later that evening. He wanted first to stress that the works were not to be categorized by traditional distinctions of art types and second to emphasize that this work was not illusionistic or referential but "concrete."



There exist no borderlines between one and the other extremes [of the categories on his chart]. Many works belong to several categories and also many artists create separate works in each category. Almost each category and each artist however, is bound with the concept of concretism . . . Concretists in contrast to illusionists prefer the unity of form and content, rather than their separation. They prefer the world of concrete reality rather than the artificial abstraction of illusionism . . . concrete sound is considered one that has close affinity to the sound producing material . . . a note sounded on a piano keyboard . . . is largely immaterial, abstract and artificial since the sound does not clearly indicate its true source or material reality – common action of string, wood metal, felt, voice, lips, tongue, mouth, etc. A sound, for instance, produced by striking the same piano with a hammer . . . is more material and concrete since it indicates in a much clearer manner the hardness of the hammer, hollowness of [the] piano sound box and resonance of [the] string. These concrete sounds are commonly, although inaccurately, referred to as noises.<sup>56</sup>

What Maciunas was seeking to elaborate in this speech was the nature of music as sound, not harmony or melody or even pitch, which are artificial constructs that have been imposed on the reality of sound. He realized that, because concrete music was sometimes thought of as just noise, “the extreme of concretism which is beyond the limits of art, and therefore [is] sometime[s] referred to as anti-art, or art-nihilism.”<sup>57</sup> At the end of the text, Maciunas goes into greater detail about the relationship between concretism and anti-art attitudes. In this statement many of his ideas parallel those of John Cage about the reintegration of art and life:

The furthest step towards concretism is of course a kind of Art-nihilism. This concept opposes and rejects art itself, since the very meaning of it implies artificiality whether in creation of form or method . . . The anti-art form[s] are directed primarily against art as a profession, against the artificial separation of a performer from audience, or creator and spectator, or life and art; it is against the artificial forms or patterns or methods of art itself; it is against the purposefulness, formfulness, and meaningfulness of art; Anti-art is life, is nature, is true reality – it is one and all . . . If man could experience the world, the concrete world surrounding him, . . . in the same way he experiences art, there would be no need for art, artists and similar “nonproductive” elements.<sup>58</sup>

This reading of Maciunas' text by Caspari was then followed by a performance of six works that seem to have been chosen as specific examples of the application of the ideas contained in the text. The first two works performed were, in their order of appearance, Ben Patterson's "Duo" and "Variation for Double-bass," performed by Patterson and William Pearson. All the other works were performed by Maciunas, Caspari, Paik, Jed Curtis, Alverman, Terry Riley, and Tomas Schmit.<sup>59</sup> Only three of the last four works Maciunas listed on the program are specifically identifiable: his "Homage to Adriano Olivetti," Terry Riley's "Ear Piece," and Dick Higgins' "Constellation no. 2."<sup>60</sup> Both works by Patterson utilize the double-bass in non-traditional ways to produce sounds similar to the descriptions in "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art." Maciunas defined the production of concrete sound as sound that "indicate[s] its true source or material reality — common action of string, wood metal, felt . . ." <sup>61</sup> In Maciunas' speech he also refers to the use of "voice, lips, tongue, mouth" to make concrete music. In the collective performance of his own piece for the program, "Homage to Adriano Olivetti," the performers interpreted the numbers on adding-machine tapes as a score for producing various sounds with their mouths, lips, and tongues.<sup>62</sup>

Maciunas' interest in concretism was connected to a general Fluxus rejection of abstraction, or the artificiality of art. His views owed a considerable debt to the ideas of Cage and Duchamp, especially Duchamp's readymades. Maciunas stated that "the readymade is the most concrete thing. Can't be more concrete than the readymade."<sup>63</sup> Concretism for Maciunas was also related to the need for a materialist art and an art of political action. In part because Fluxus works were concrete in nature, Maciunas saw Fluxus as an art for the masses in a Marxist-Leninist sense. In the early 1960s, Maciunas wrote to the Chairman of the Presidium in the Soviet Union, asking for a Fluxus tour in the Soviet Union. Maciunas stated that Fluxus publications were intended to express the following:

- (1) our desire to purge the sickness of the bourgeois world,
  - (2) our desire for continuous moving forward of arts, music, and philosophy towards concretism-realism and
  - (3) our desire for reapprochement [sic] and unity between concretist artists of the world and the concretist society which exists in the USSR.
- All of these objectives are best summarized in the very meaning of flux and fluxus.<sup>64</sup>

It was this notion of a direct equivalence among Fluxus work, concretism, and anti-bourgeois politics that resulted in Maciunas's belief that Fluxus was most suited for audiences in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; these areas were always listed, therefore, in his plans for Fluxus festival presentations.

In the spring and early summer, Paik had been working on putting together a program of his own and other performers' works at the Chamber Theater in Dusseldorf. The title that Paik used for this performance, "Neodada in der Musik," was possibly a direct reference to Maciunas's speech at the Wuppertal performance, "Après John Cage."<sup>65</sup> After the performance at Wuppertal, Paik invited Maciunas to participate in the "Neo-Dada in der Musik." This event took place on June 16, 1962. In the pre-performance publicity, the event was described as "an exceptional tidbit . . . for the followers of 'Dada' . . ." <sup>66</sup> This announcement also listed five works to be presented: three by Paik, one by George Brecht, and one "anonymous composition." The actual performance as listed in the program guide was fairly close to the previously announced program and included the following works:

PROGRAM:

1. One for Violin Solo Name [Nam] June Paik
2. Word-Event George Brecht
3. Sonata quasi una fantasia Name June Paik
4. read music "Do it yourself" Name June Paik — answer to La Monte Young — read by C. Caspari
5. Anonymous Composition. . . .
6. smile gently — or stude platonique NO 5 Name June Paik

The most significant difference between the program and the performance was that what had been previously listed as simply an "anonymous composition," in actuality was a simultaneous performance of thirteen different pieces by eleven different composers.<sup>67</sup> This collage of works consisted of numerous pieces collected by Maciunas and/or Paik for possible inclusion in some of the Fluxus publications and in the upcoming Fluxus festival series. In fact, several of the works presented in this simultaneous performance had been listed in Maciunas' *News-Policy-Letter No. 1* as compositions to be performed in concerts seven, eight, and nine. These included Dick Higgins' "Danger Music" (a series of works the scores for which were short, open-ended statements, such as

"Get a Job for its own sake" or "Hit back"); Maciunas' "Piano pieces for Nam June Paik nos. 8 and 12" (the scores for which read "place piano upside down and put a vase with flowers over the sound box" [no. 8] and "let piano movers carry piano out of the stage" [no. 12]); and sections from Ben Patterson's "Lemons," a sound piece using kettles filled with boiling water, the spouts of which were fitted with balloons.<sup>68</sup>

Although "*Après John Cage*" and "*Neo-Dada in der Musik*" both contained many of the elements, particularly the stress on action music that would become central to early Fluxus performance, these particular presentations should not be considered Fluxus as such. These evening events were part of the larger development of a performance style that occurred in Europe between the spring and fall of 1962 and which would later be associated with the rubric "Fluxus." At this stage, however, Fluxus as a collective of individuals and as a performance and creative sensibility was still in the process of development. Maciunas himself called the activities in this period "Proto-Fluxus."<sup>69</sup>

The result of Maciunas' involvement in these two events was that he became more convinced of the importance of such performances and of the need for the planned Fluxus publications. In several letters around this time, Maciunas comments that he expected to make enough money on performances to bring people from the United States, especially La Monte Young, to Europe and to sponsor a Fluxus tour through Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. At this time the potential for Fluxus was seeming better and better to Maciunas. Work was progressing, although somewhat slower than he had hoped, on *Fluxus Yearbox 1*. More people were sending him works, his contacts with artists in Europe were steadily increasing, and he had arranged with Patterson and Filliou to present a "sneak preview of Fluxus" in Paris at the beginning of July.

Filliou had arranged for an exhibition of the works of Benjamin Patterson in Paris on July 3, 1962. This presentation was organized under the auspices of Filliou's "Galerie Legitime," or, as he called it, "a hat as it was," for his "gallery" was a kind of conceptual space, literally in his hat.<sup>70</sup> In the written announcement, Filliou stated, "you are requested to take part in a private viewing . . . of Ben Patterson's exhibition, the place and hours (approximate) will be announced; this will also be in the streets, busses, metro[s] leading from one place to another and in many cafes along these streets."<sup>71</sup>

The invitation also reproduced the route across Paris for this traveling exhibition, slated to begin at four in the morning and end around ten in the evening. The exhibition consisted of a number of small objects by Patterson that Filliou put in his hat; he then wandered along the indicated route, and those who wanted to could meet him at various places and times along the way and view the works. A performance held at the Galerie Girardou located on 23 Boulevard Pasteur was scheduled to take place at the end of this day-long traveling exhibition. The event, titled "Sneak Preview: Fluxus, happenings, environments, poems, dances, compositions," was a simultaneous performance of over 20 works by Young, Brecht, Maciunas, Filliou, Patterson, Higgins, Mac Low, Maxfield, and numerous others and included several works that would become some of the primary pieces performed at the later Fluxus festivals.<sup>72</sup>

In July and August, Maciunas increasingly began to focus his energies on the upcoming Fluxus festival scheduled in Wiesbaden throughout the month of September. On July 12, he issued *News-Policy-Letter no. 2*, which was specifically concerned with the plans for Wiesbaden and, by extension, the other festivals.<sup>73</sup> This newsletter contained three numbered considerations, all of which are headed by the term "INVITATION." The first point is a repeated call for submissions of work to be performed at the festival. Maciunas announces that everyone who received the newsletter was invited to submit her or his "newest piano, instrumental, happenings and/or magnetic tape compositions . . ." <sup>74</sup> The call for materials is modified by four limitations.

To make this series economically realizable on very limited funds, it was necessary to limit the repertory to compositions requiring:

- a) no more than 5 musical performers from among: 4 string players, 2 piano players, 2 single or double reed players, and one brass wind player.
- b) no more than 1 group rehearsal and 4 individual rehearsals
- c) no more than 1 piano at Wiesbaden, 2 pianos at other locations.
- d) no more than 2 channel electronic reproduction at Wiesbaden and London, 4 channel electronic reproduction at Paris, for magnetic tape music or performances requiring microphones.<sup>75</sup>

Although the existing copy of this newsletter is only one page long, there were originally more pages, for there is no list of the

performances and performers to which Maciunas refers on the first page. It can be assumed, however, that the attached list was at least similar to that attached to the *News-Policy Letter no. 1*.<sup>76</sup> The list of designated performers is mostly made up of artists Maciunas knew who were then in Europe. The two most important exceptions to this are Dick Higgins and La Monte Young, both of whom were still in the United States. In the summer of 1962, Maciunas wrote to Higgins about this.

When you come mid. Sept. — you will be in time for the “happenings” part of the festival in Wiesbaden. You should stay a year, because in 1963 we may pull off a grand tour through Siberia . . . <sup>77</sup>

Maciunas had been corresponding with Higgins and Young about coming to Europe since the early spring of 1962 and had included them on the list of performers in the *News-Policy-Letter No. 1*.

At the end of July, Maciunas was able to establish a venue for a Fluxus festival in Copenhagen through a new contact with the artist Arthur Adde Kopcke. The continued importance of Maciunas' association with artists such as Vostell, Paik, Williams, Spoerri, and Filliou is evidenced in the first contact between Maciunas and Kopcke. After learning about Maciunas and his plans for Fluxus from Spoerri, Vostell, and others, Kopcke wrote the following to Maciunas:

I hope you heard of me by emmett or spoerri or robert (poi poi) or vostell . . . nicolaj kirke . . . this is a church where I arrange exhibitionhappeningsorhowwewanttocall [sic] . . . it would be good for sleepy Copenhagen to do festivals here spoerri-emmett-paik-filliou vostell . . . <sup>78</sup>

Maciunas quickly responds that it would be very good to have a Fluxus festival in Copenhagen and asks Kopcke for more information.

I heard about you from Paikvostellspoerriwilliamskopcke [original form] . . . with next mail — in about a week I will send you a package and other propaganda. Fluxus festival in copenhagen would be very nice, especially in a church. all — 14 concerts yes???? maybe in february 1963 after parts and dusseldorf) can you make all arrangements? . . . Please give me more details about nicolaj kirke-how many seats, stage

space, room for two pianos ?? on the altar or where ???? outlets for connecting electronic equipment ?? etc.etc.etc.etc. . . .<sup>79</sup>

During the summer of 1962, Maciunas began to change his thinking again about the proposed concert series and the Fluxus publications. The emphasis of the concerts had been primarily on new music. By early July, he was thinking of dropping Stockhausen from the concert series, but Paik wrote to Maciunas and insisted that Stockhausen be included. Maciunas's response to Paik on this matter evidences his changing views.

OK, if you absolutely INSIST we shall include Stockhausen's XI piano piece or was it IV . . . In Paris we will have to "cut-cut-cut & revise" (as you said yourself) WE will have to cut out some Italians, [Konrad] Boehmer, [Gottfried] Koenig, Stockhausen & myself. Festival will have to be "new music" — more post-Cage. less pre-Cage or Cage. more neodada no-reactionaries, imitators, etc. etc.<sup>80</sup>

What Maciunas means when he says that the festival will have more new music and less Cage or pre-Cage is that he wanted the works presented to be more event-based and that there should be less new music, such as musical forms dependent on serial-music developments. In a letter to Paik later in the summer, Maciunas is more specific in enumerating the kind of changes he felt were needed.

I think Fluxus festivals and book must lean more towards neo-dada — action music — concrete music [dashes are arrows] at least. Otherwise we will slide backwards to Darmstadt [referring to the musical experiments associated with the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik there in the late 1950s]. No? Therefore, in future, I think we should eliminate all non-action, non neo-dada, non-concrete pieces even if they are beautiful. I do not say Stockhausen is not beautiful NO! His pieces may be very beautiful, but so are pieces of Webern, Schonberg, Stravinskii, J.C. Bach, Montiverdi . . . etc. etc. We cannot include them all — so we must draw the boarderline [sic] somewhere. If we include Stockhausen we should include 100 others like him, but you will agree that fluxus is not interested in all that is produced today. Stockhausen may be as famous as Cage, but Cage has originality while Stockhausen has not. Fluxus is interested in originality, fresh thinking not imitations or overworked forms.<sup>81</sup>

To a certain extent, what Maciunas wanted to achieve with this reshaping was to emphasize action music, events, and non-instrumental music. This was, in part, the reason that Maciunas had shortened the initial program of 23 concerts to just 13 for Wiesbaden. The implementation of these conceptual priorities did not promptly occur. This delay was primarily the result of Paik's opposition to excluding people like Stockhausen, Gottfried Koenig, and Konrad Boehmer. Maciunas knew, however, that it was important for this first Fluxus festival at the Municipal Museum of Wiesbaden to present a strong focus and sense of purpose for Fluxus. Although Maciunas wanted to move away from certain types of music that he thought were not "original" and concentrate instead on action music and concrete music, this modification occurred in the middle of the Wiesbaden festival, as direct result of certain personality conflicts.<sup>82</sup>

In the proto-Fluxus period, several important developments occurred that were to shape the later activities of the Fluxus group and their European festivals in 1962 and 1963. When Maciunas arrived in Europe in 1961, he had a few contacts with artists such as Paik. Maciunas quickly expanded on these contacts to establish the beginnings of an international network of writers, musicians, composers, and artists who would form the core of early Fluxus participants. As the concept of the Fluxus group expanded around a proposed series of publications and performance festivals, Maciunas played a pivotal role as the organizer of the group. In this period, Fluxus gradually came together as a group that was related to but divergent from the general new-music performance scene in Europe. Maciunas spent many hours developing and redeveloping various plans for Fluxus publications and festivals. His single-minded dedication to these projects was of tremendous importance for the development of the Fluxus group, for, without his involvement, the group would have never coalesced in the way it did, if at all. Fluxus began to take shape, under his direction, as an increasingly intermedial direction in the arts with a particular emphasis on concrete music, action music, and events. Maciunas's growing emphasis on concrete performance works was reflective of both the collaborating artists' shared aesthetic and his own interest in materialist-based forms of cultural expression. It was this accent on post-Cagean concretism, as expressed through certain forms of action music and events, that was to lead to a discernible Fluxus performance sensibility in the early 1960s.



## Chapter Four

# Early Fluxus in Europe from 1962 through 1963

In the early phase of Fluxus in Europe, the general developmental directions begun in the proto-Fluxus phase continued. In 1962 and 1963, though, Fluxus increasingly gained a specific identity. The conceptual focusing of the group and the establishment of Fluxus as an association of specific artists were among the primary occurrences during this time. This period saw the first public manifestations of some of the Fluxus publication and performance plans. The initial notion of Fluxus as an anthology publication was also expanded to encompass a much wider conception of publications in the form of plans for the production of individual artists' "complete works." This phase also saw the nascent forms of Fluxus grow into a specific group of artists, poets, writers, and musicians. 1962 and 1963 were thus the first years in which Fluxus established itself as a recognizable affiliation associated with a specific program of action music, concrete works, and published and performance forms.

Throughout the month of August, 1962, Maciunas worked on finalizing the plans for the festival at Wiesbaden. In early August, he sent out *News-Policy-Letter No. 3* to the various individuals who would be involved in the Wiesbaden festival.<sup>1</sup> This document primarily included information for the arriving performers, such as a map and information on hotel accommodations, a list of the performers, what works they would be performing, and when these performances were scheduled to take place. This list has only 11 performers: (in the order and form by which they were listed) R.

E. Welin, F. Rzewski, M. Raimondi, M. von Biel, Mrs. von Biel, Egon Mayer, Griffith Rose, Benjamin Patterson, Nam June Paik, P. Mercure, and Jed Curtis.<sup>2</sup> Most of these performers are listed as performing only in the first four concerts to be held on the two consecutive weekends of September 1-2 and 8-9. Those who were to perform in the later concerts of action music, happenings, and concrete music on the weekend of 14-16 are Ben Patterson, Nam June Paik, Pierre Mercure, and Jed Curtis. The newsletter lists no performers for the concerts of magnetic-tape music on September 21-22. It is probable that Maciunas intended that at least Jed Curtis would stay through the end of the concert series to help him with the magnetic-tape music concerts, but since these do not require a "performer," he did not list these concerts in the newsletter. In addition to those performers listed in the newsletter, Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles were scheduled to arrive in Wiesbaden on September 7, Wolf Vostell was to come for the third weekend of concerts, and several other people, such as Emmett Williams, said that they would come to the performances.

To help spread the news about the upcoming festival, Emmett Williams wrote a preview about the concert series in the armed services magazine *Stars and Stripes*, titled "Way Way Way Out," which appeared in the August 30, 1962, issue. In this article, Williams interviewed Ben Patterson as if he had no familiarity with Fluxus or the kinds of works that were to be performed.

Get one thing straight at the beginning. This isn't "new music" this is *very new Music*. in fact, some of it is anti-music, according to the American Impresario George Maciunas . . . Pittsburgh-born Benjamin Patterson, now living in Paris, was very helpful in clearing up some of the more troubling aspects of the "very new" . . . "How would you describe your *Variations for double Bass* which you're going to perform at the festival?" "I would call it a juxtaposition of objects brought together into a metaphysical relationship . . . or let's say a poetic relationship. Well anyway some kind of relationship. . . . "Would you call this a visual or auditory experience?" "Decidedly both." "But is it music?" "What do you mean, is it music? Of course it's music. It's performed on a musical instrument, it's taking place in a concert hall, and I'm a composer and a trained musician." <sup>3</sup>

As the interview goes on, it is clear that Williams is not only alerting the reader about what to expect, but he is making a kind of an inside

joke about the potential reactions of the press to the kinds of works to be presented at the festival.

During the last period of preparation for the Wiesbaden festival, Maciunas hoped to finish the compilation of *Fluxus Yearbox I* and to have it printed for distribution at the gathering. He also saw that having this publication would further legitimize Fluxus as a serious venture. Another underlying consideration was that he still saw the publishing activities as the primary focus of Fluxus, so he wanted to have a Fluxus publication available. Because of a variety of reasons, though, *Fluxus Yearbox I* was not completed in time for the festival. What Maciunas did manage to produce was a re-worked and updated version of the Fluxus brochure prospectus he had first distributed at the "Après John Cage" performance in Wuppertal. He also designed and had posters printed for the festival that could double as programs for the concert series. He sent these posters to various people associated with the Fluxus projects around Europe and put them up all around Wiesbaden several weeks prior to the festival.

For this first Fluxus festival Maciunas created a title for the series of concerts: "Fluxus \* Internationale Festspiele Neuester Musik." The program/mailler and poster announced 14 different concerts that would take place in the lecture hall of the Municipal Museum of Wiesbaden, September 1-23.<sup>4</sup> In actuality, however, the concerts and the individual pieces that were performed were not what had been announced on the posters or listed in the program mailers. Instead, the works actually performed were mostly determined the week before each of the weekend concerts, or in some cases just prior to the actual concert, and then written on a blackboard to the side of the stage.<sup>5</sup> Also, although many of the works that had been originally listed were performed during the Wiesbaden festival, they were not presented in the order or on the specific day indicated on the posters and programs. The general structure of the concert sequence, however, was at least partially maintained. The overall organization of the concerts as they were actually performed was as follows: The first weekend of concerts, September 1-2, was predominantly to consist of compositions of piano music; the concerts on the second and the third weekends were compositions of action music and events; the concerts on the fourth weekend were primarily of tape music.<sup>6</sup>

The different concerts were roughly divided into the same four categories Maciunas had initially formed in the *News-Policy-Letter*

No. 1. These were compositions for piano, compositions for other instruments and voices, happenings and concrete music, and magnetic-tape music. The categories of compositions for other instruments and voices and happenings and concrete music, although not dropped, were not retained as separate concert programs. These categories were combined and performed in the concerts on the second and third weekends. Many of the works that had been listed in these categories were performed but in conjunction with one another. These categories thus became melded into one broader new category of works. This change, enacted during the course of the Wiesbaden Fluxus Festival (after the first weekend of concerts), was in part a result of Maciunas' not receiving the scores for some of the listed works, particularly those by Japanese composers.<sup>7</sup> More importantly, this change was the actualization of Maciunas' desire for more "post-Cage" and less "Cage" or "pre-Cage" material. By combining the previously announced separate categories, Maciunas superseded his earlier, more traditional distinctions based on media and performance types. The result of the re-combination was the establishment of a grouping of performance works, subsequently called action music and/or events, which would become inseparably linked to the name Fluxus.

The first weekend of performances in the Wiesbaden festival consisted entirely of piano music, or at least music that made use of a piano. As a result of the kinds of works performed September 2-3, and the selection of works not performed, an argument occurred between Maciunas, on the one hand, and Welin and von Biel, on the other. Dick Higgins describes this occurrence and its result in *Postface*.

In line with his idea of Fluxus being a united front, Maciunas had invited a bunch on International Stylists to perform: Von Biel, Rose and a couple of others. But they did not like some of the pieces Maciunas was doing and quarreled with him, and they had a style of living that was too self-indulgent to be concrete with the lively aspects of Fluxus. So we kicked Von Biel's crowd out and Rose left.<sup>8</sup>

Although this was more than likely part of what had happened, Higgins' account leaves out one key factor. If one checks the performance schedule Maciunas sent out in *News-Policy-Letter No. 3*, most of the "International Stylists" were only to perform for the first and second weekends. Thus, their departure directly affected

only the second weekend's performances. This occurrence was nonetheless significant, for it showed the gradual shaping of the limits of Fluxus performance work that happened in the course of the Wiesbaden festival. The action music, concrete music, and event pieces presented on the next two weekends would become the basis on which most of the rest of the European Fluxus festivals would be determined. It is for this reason that several artists associated with Fluxus in this period, such as Emmett Williams, have stated that if there was a date around which Fluxus was established, it would be during the second and third weekends of the Wiesbaden Fluxus festival.<sup>9</sup>

Alison Knowles and Dick Higgins arrived in Wiesbaden from the United States just prior to the beginning of the second festival weekend. They immediately took an active role in shaping the upcoming concerts as well as performing in them. For the next several concerts, the primary performers were Maciunas, Paik, Knowles, Patterson, Williams, Wolf Vostell, and Bengt af Klintberg. During the week prior to each of the weekend concerts, the performers would meet, go over the performance Maciunas had drawn up, and discuss the works to be performed.<sup>10</sup> These were then rehearsed by the performers and more fully developed for each particular presentation. Even in this process there was a certain amount of flexibility, for they usually rehearsed four times as many pieces as they actually performed in any one of the concerts.

During these concerts on the second and third weekends, a number of works were presented that were to become "classics" of the event type or action-music performances of early Fluxus shows. Several of these works were by George Brecht, such as his "Drip Music." Of the two versions listed on the score, the first was the one most often used. This reads, "a source of dripping water and an empty vessel are arranged so that the water falls into the vessel." Although the specific performance of this piece in Wiesbaden has not been documented, the means most often used to execute these instructions was to employ a pitcher that contained water and pour or drip the water into an empty pot, often while standing on a ladder. La Monte Young's "Poem for Chairs, Tables, and Benches, Etc., or Other Sound Sources" was also performed in the same concert as Brecht's "Drip Music."<sup>11</sup> This piece called for the performers to push, pull, drag, or scrape the items given in the title over

the floor according to timings and spacings determined by consulting a random number table or telephone book. This piece is significant in that its open-ended structure allowed for the performance to take place on any floor surface, inside or outside traditional performance spaces, with any suitable materials. Thus, the piece, as with a number of other Fluxus event works, had the potential to be performed at any time by anyone, not just by a performer on a stage.

Another work presented at Wiesbaden that was to become a Fluxus "classic" was Ben Patterson's "Paper Piece." This work was altered each time it was performed. As composed by Patterson in 1960, it was to be performed by five people with "15 sheets of paper per performer approximate size of standard newspaper, quality varied, newspaper, tissue paper, light cardboard, colored printed or plain" and "three paper bags per performer . . ." <sup>12</sup> The piece was begun by a signal from a "chairman," and the performers entered the stage area when they wanted to. The score instructs each performer individually to arrange the materials and select the sequences of activities for the performance from a list of potential actions that include shaking, tearing, twisting, crumpling, and popping the bags. According to Patterson's score, this piece was to last ten to 12 minutes; when all the paper was used up in the performance, the piece was finished.

Three other works gained the most notoriety of all. Although these works, two by Higgins and one by Corner, attracted a lot of media attention at Wiesbaden, they were not performed at any of the other Fluxus festivals in Europe because of logistical complications. These works were Higgins's "Danger Music No. 2" and "Danger Music No. 15" and Corner's "Piano Activities."

The two "Danger Music" pieces were presented back-to-back without a clearly defined break or separation. They were performed by Higgins and Knowles ("Danger Music No. 2") and by Higgins himself ("Danger Music No. 15"). The performance was described in an article/review "There's Music-and Eggs-in the Air," published in *Stars and Stripes*.

Higgins entered and took a bow. He sat himself beside a bucket. His wife, Alison Knowles, appeared with a pair of scissors. She began to cut his hair. Higgins looked content. After 15 minutes, the audience grew restless. Paper airplanes circled from the back row. Conversations took over . . . At this moment, Higgins sprang from his barber's seat and seized two pounds of butter and a container of a dozen eggs

... he smashed some of the eggs on his now completely shaven head. He tossed eggs into the air, onto the floor, and gently into the audience. Those in the know nonchalantly unfurled umbrellas. One egg dripped sadly from the wall. Higgins mixes butter and eggs and advanced towards the audience. An elegantly dressed lady fled through an exit expecting the mess to be hurled into the air. Instead, Higgins placed it tenderly in the hands of several members of the audience.<sup>13</sup>

The score for "Danger Music No. 2" reads only "Hat. Rags. Paper. Heave. Shave." Higgins' interpretation of these instructions, as he himself wrote, was "shaving my head [which Knowles did for Higgins] and heaving political pamphlets into the audience ..."<sup>14</sup> The part of the performance with the eggs and butter that the reviewer describes was "Danger Music No. 15."<sup>15</sup> The score for this work reads, "Work with butter and eggs for a time." Higgins later described this piece as it was performed at Wiesbaden and his motivation for it.

By "working with butter and eggs for a while" so as to make an inedible waste instead of an omelette. I felt that was what Wiesbaden needed. For a while eggs were flying through the air every couple of minutes. A very smart alec sculptor named Viebig reached out his hand to dare me to throw an egg - I did (splat) up his arm up to his face.<sup>16</sup>

Philip Cornér's "Piano Activities" was actually presented on several different weekends over the course of the festival. This piece was to become the most famous and infamous one performed in this whole festival. "Piano Activities" gained notoriety because the method of performance (determined by the performers, including Patterson, Maciunas, Paik, Knowles, Williams, Higgins, and Vostell) was to damage and eventually destroy the piano physically as a means of playing it.<sup>17</sup> The press recounted this piece numerous times, often commenting on the destruction of a piano belonging to the museum and how the director of the museum would be shocked about the hooliganism "when he returned from his vacation." The destroyed piano, however, had been purchased by Maciunas for this concert. In a letter of October, 1962, to La Monte Young, Maciunas recounts this performance.

Then on the end we did Corners piano activities not according to his instructions since we systematically destroyed a piano which I bought for \$5 and had to have it all cut up to throw away, otherwise we would

have to pay movers, a very practical composition, but German sentiments about this "instrument" of Chopin were hurt and they made a row about it.<sup>18</sup>

At the conclusion of this ongoing performance, the piano was reduced to pieces, which were then auctioned off to the audience.<sup>19</sup> The fame of this piece was quite widespread, for this particular performance was filmed for presentation on German television, and a shortened version of the film was shown four times.<sup>20</sup> Maciunas' mother, who was living with him in Germany, remembered this performance and the reaction of the people who had seen it on television.

This extraordinary performance was even going to be shown on television. The evening arrived and I, fortunately, didn't see the program (we didn't have a television.) The next day I met the former landlady of our hotel on the street and I was grieved by her sympathy as if some kind of terrible kind of grief had come to me. They had seen the previous evenings program and had been horrified. It showed how several young people, including my son, had destroyed a piano with hammers and axes . . .<sup>21</sup>

Most of the performers and participants felt that the festival was very much a success. Maciunas wrote to Young that "Wiesbaden was shocked, the mayor almost had to flee the town for giving us the hall. We gave very good performances . . .," and after "all the publicity we got in Wiesbaden it is easier to do festivals elsewhere . . ." <sup>22</sup> Maciunas also commented that reviews of the festival had appeared in some dozen newspapers and four magazines from "even as far as Florence, Austria, Danemark, [sic] etc. . . ." <sup>23</sup> Higgins also commented on the success of the festival. "Because fo [sic] its scope . . . the Wiesbaden Fluxus was all that might be hoped for in such a series." <sup>24</sup>

If there were any shortcomings to this performance series, it was for Maciunas that the festival had not made money; in fact, he lost around \$500 of his own capital.<sup>25</sup> He had hoped to make some money at Wiesbaden to help pay for the printing of *Fluxus Yearbox I*, but the opposite occurred: he ended up losing the money he had already saved to help pay these print costs, so once again he had to put off publishing all of the material for *Fluxus Yearbox I*. These delays in production were exacerbated by his health problems.



Maciunas had been taking cortisone, which he found had started to affect his motor skills and lowered his energy level. In addition, he had developed a lung infection during the festival, and as he wrote to Young, he "was hardly able to finish the festival."<sup>26</sup>

Just prior to the beginning of the festival, the planned program for a performance series in London was canceled. Until the Copenhagen Fluxus festival in November, therefore, there would be no scheduled Fluxus performances. In the period from the beginning of October to the end of November, Maciunas continued to work on collecting materials and planning for publications and for upcoming performance festivals. Because of his poor health, however, he was unable to do much work on these various projects for several weeks. By the end of October, 1962, though, he had taken a lot of the collected materials for *Fluxus Yearbox I* to a printer he had located in Germany, who had agreed to do the work on credit.

Fluxus I is definitely coming out, in fact the whole issue is at the printers, I have done all my work. Printer is doing on credit (my bowler hat having impressed him), except i have to pay for the papaer [sic] in advance, not a bad deal. I figure the issue should go out in mid November, since it is a rather fat book and the printer is not very fast.<sup>27</sup>

At about the same time as Maciunas took the materials for *Fluxus Yearbox I* to the printer sometime around the end of October, 1962, he also wrote a draft of *News-Policy-Letter No. 4*.<sup>28</sup> This was a very significant document for the history of the development of Fluxus publishing. The newsletter draft includes references to the plans for future Fluxus festivals and a timetable for *Fluxus Yearbox II*, but, most importantly, it contains references to what Maciunas referred to as "special editions." A new category of materials to be produced by Fluxus, these would be collections of works by individual artists. In relation to this new variety of planned Fluxus publications, Maciunas listed seven individual artists, composers, and writers for whom special editions were then being planned.

George Brecht complete works, boxed cards  
La Monte Young 1962 Compositions  
Allan Kaprow Happenings  
Henry Flynt collective essays  
Adolfas Mekas "Boredom I & II", "Quiritare Humana"  
Jackson Mac Low collective works  
Toshi Ichiyanagi complete works<sup>29</sup>

This list is one of the first indications of Maciunas' expanding conception of Fluxus publications. It is also the first "public" expression of the transition of Fluxus from a particular publication or magazine toward a collective that would produce works by individual artists. The notion of publishing works, scores, and essays by individuals was a logical extension of the constantly growing collection of materials Maciunas had been accumulating and which could not all be published in the various planned Fluxus Yearboxes. These new ideas and directions, though, would not crystallize in a specific plan until near the end of that year. New plans were subsequently published in *Fluxus Newsletter No. 5*, distributed in early January, 1963.

During October and November, there were also two exhibitions and related performance events that, even though they were not called Fluxus, were important for the development of the Fluxus group and a Fluxus performance sensibility in Europe. The first was "Parallele Afführungen Neuster Musik," held on October 5 in conjunction with an exhibition of Wolf Vostell's work in the Galerie Monet in Amsterdam. The second was an exhibition, "Festival of Misfits," held in London from the October 23 to November 8. Part of the activities associated with this London exhibition was a performance that took place on October 23-24 that included performances by Filliou, Higgins, Knowles, Patterson, Spoerri, and Williams. These two events helped to solidify the core group of Fluxus performers and artists that had begun to coalesce during the Wiesbaden festival. The presentations were also significant because they introduced several new people to Fluxus who would later become important members of the group, helping to shape its development.

While Vostell was at the Wiesbaden festival, he invited a number of the people performing there to participate in a performance at the Galerie Monet in conjunction with his opening on October 5.<sup>30</sup> The initial plan was that there would be several works performed in the gallery space, after which Vostell would present a happening on the street outside the gallery. Several of the performances associated with this event, particularly a piece by Dieter Hulsmanns, generated a negative response, particularly on the part of Higgins, who later wrote to Allan Kaprow, expressing his general dislike of what had occurred.

Actually except for the riot, which was not planned that evening was unbelievably boring - all the pieces were so far-fetched, as if everyone was trying to be as far-out, remote, even uncommunicable, as possible.<sup>31</sup>

Here, Higgins was primarily referring to the performances of Hulsmanns and Stahl (as well as some of the other works performed in the gallery space). Higgins describes the work by Hulsmanns as a reading of "some shove-it-into-him pornography" and Stahl's piece as a "very very very long metaphysicalerotic tape" played on a bed in the gallery.<sup>32</sup>

After the presentations, Vostell's street piece agitated a crowd of mostly students who set a pile of papers on fire. The audience and performers became increasingly antagonistic (Higgins ended up punching one of the audience members who tried to burn him), and the police showed up, canceling the rest of the event.<sup>33</sup> The importance of this experience was that it focused the attention of Knowles, Higgins, and Williams on the greater potential of types of "post-Cage" work more specifically related to action music, such as those pieces performed at Wiesbaden on the third weekend of concerts.<sup>34</sup> The event is also notable because it introduced Tomas Schmit to Higgins, Knowles, and Williams and thus initiated Schmit's interaction with the Fluxus Group. Schmit participated in this presentation by performing some pieces by himself and later, after the "riot," some works by Paik, including one in which he jumped into a canal.<sup>35</sup>

The second important non-Fluxus group event relevant to the development of Fluxus occurred at the end of the same month in London. The "Festival of Misfits" had been organized by the curator Victor Musgrave at Gallery One. The exhibition included work by Spoerri, Robin Page, Filliou, Gustav Metzger, Arthur Kopcke, and Ben Vautier. The specific works in the exhibition were mostly installations and interactive displays. Spoerri described the intent of the exhibition: "The whole idea is to show situations rather than individual works of art. The aim is to involve the audience."<sup>36</sup> Of all of the works in this show, Vautier's garnered the most attention. According to a reporter, "Ben fixed up the gallery window and lived there for two and one-half weeks, displaying himself as a work of art behind glass on which he had written with a cake froster such slogans as: 'We are all works of art,' 'art is dead,' 'I will be here every day for 2 weeks,' etc."<sup>37</sup> The performance evening held in conjunc-

tion with this exhibit was organized by Spoerri and was described by Higgins in the same letter to Kaprow in which he mentioned the Amsterdam performance.

They did do a live program, organized by Spoerri independently & half-associated with the program. Williams did his Alphabet Symphony—a marvelous piece—letter blocks in a hat. Cards with each letter of the alphabet on the stage, tiny objects (whose names begin with each letter) on them. Draw each block from the hat—use each object on the stage. Nice? Metzger, wearing a gas mask, & working with black light, dropped a set of glowing glyphs to the floor of a line magnetically, then destroyed a sheet of nylon with hydrochloric acid. Very silly. . . . Robin Page kicked a guitar around the block. I did My fourth Symphony—“something big & something small.” Kopcke did a nice piece cabaret—he put scotch tape on a phono record—“Music While You Work.” He began cleaning the stage, but every time he made a few passes with his broom, the music began repeating & he had to stop work, run & fix it again. Filliou did a melodrama called a 53 kilo poem—a suitcase filled with gravel, He asks serious questions, & throws the gravel to another man who gathers up the gravel which comes to stand for his (Filliou’s) troubles. Not up to his best. At the end, we did Alison’s very nice “Proposition,” which goes simply “Make a salad.” Crosse & Blackwell donated a lovely pickle barrel—what a marvelous aroma! and at 4:30 AM before the performance we went to Covent Garden & bought the loveliest, freshest vegetables you ever saw. We got enough for 200 people but there were only 100 there, since that was the day of the Cuban Crisis. But what a salad! Everybody got some. All the artists even Metzger & Ben helped. All told it was one of the finest evenings I’ve been involved with. . . .<sup>38</sup>

As with the non-Fluxus performance “Parallele Aufführungen Neuester Musik” in Amsterdam, this exhibition and performance helped to reinforce the association among artists who became active in Europe in Fluxus as a result of the Wiesbaden festival and Maciunas’ work on the Fluxus Yearboxes. It also introduced new artists to the Fluxus group and specifically to Maciunas, who had traveled to London for this exhibition. He had corresponded with Spoerri and Kopcke, but this was his first chance to meet them in person. He also was introduced for the first time to Ben Vautier and Robin Page, who would both subsequently become active in Fluxus activities. The most important of these new contacts for future Fluxus activities was Maciunas’ meeting with the French artist and performer Ben Vautier. Maciunas immediately invited him to

contribute materials to Fluxus and to participate in the upcoming Fluxus festivals.<sup>39</sup> In addition to introducing new artists to Fluxus, the performance, which Spoerri had organized, also presented several new works to Maciunas and the other active and soon-to-be active members of Fluxus. Some of these works, particularly Kopcke's "Music While You Work" and Williams' "Alphabet Symphony," would subsequently become important pieces in the repertoire of early Fluxus performance presentations in Europe.<sup>40</sup>

Another aspect of this presentation in London, important to the development of Fluxus, were the materials and objects in the exhibition. Many of these were in a number of ways precursors, on a larger scale, of the types of work Maciunas would later produce as Fluxus multiples and other projects. These correlations include: Spoerri's installation "Labyrinth" and the *Fluxlabyrinth* that Maciunas would build much later in Berlin, Page's "Suicide Chamber" and Ben Vautier's *A Flux Suicide Kit*, Kopcke's reproduction of the Mona Lisa accompanied by a hammer and nails, which invited the viewer to pierce her anywhere; Robert Watts's *Hospital Events*, and Emmett Williams's and Robin Page's use of rubber stamps, which became a standard feature of several Fluxus multiples. Even if these associations were coincidental, they were important evidence of a shared outlook among the diverse international group of artists.

In the time between the Wiesbaden and the Copenhagen Fluxus festivals, Maciunas developed a new concert guideline sheet for both the Copenhagen and the upcoming Paris festivals. For both of these concert series, Maciunas invented a new festival name, "Festum Fluxorum," which he put at the top of the new performance program. It is clear from this guideline that Maciunas wanted to incorporate the changes that had occurred in the course of the Wiesbaden festival as well as the experiences of the performances in Amsterdam and in London. The total number of concerts was reduced from the fourteen concerts originally planned at Wiesbaden to the more manageable number of six concerts. The specifics of each of the concerts also reflect a greater emphasis on action music and event-type works. Concert number one was to be "Noninstrumental Action Music;" number two, "Instrumental & Voice Compositions;" number three, "Instrumental, Voice & Action Music;" number four, "Noninstrumental Action Music;" number five, "Piano Compositions;" number six, "Magnetic Tape and

Films." The performers listed for these concerts are Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik, Emmett Williams, Arthur Kopcke, Wolf Vostell, Robert Filliou, and George Maciunas. This group of performers was to become the main core of most of the Fluxus festivals in Europe.<sup>41</sup>

Of the numerous changes evident in this list, one of the most noticeable is that the concerts are no longer organized on the basis of geography or nationality.<sup>42</sup> This change does not reflect a lessening of the internationalism of the group, but rather the development of a group of specific individuals with shared ideas and interests, many of whom rejected the nationalist and competitive bases of the term internationalism. Initially, Fluxus was established as an organization to sponsor work by artists from different countries. As Fluxus began to develop in this period, though, the group increasingly rejected the significance of national identities. Thus, the cessation of organizing concerts on geographic and national divisions was reflective of a developing a-national emphasis in Fluxus. This stress can be seen in part as a rejection of the kind of internationalism that had come to dominate the Cold War era, but also an increased acceptance of an open-ended form of nationalism.<sup>43</sup>

The second noticeable change is that the presentations are by a much smaller group of composers who are represented by a greater number of their works. This narrowing signals the early establishment of a rather small group of artists and what might be called a "Fluxus repertoire" of their performance works. The artists who should be included in this core group of significant early Fluxus composers and/or performers were George Maciunas, George Brecht, La Monte Young, Dick Higgins, Emmett Williams, Ben Patterson, Nam June Paik, Alison Knowles, and Wolf Vostell. There was a second group of composers of individual works, who were very important as well, but they were not as central in this period as the above-mentioned individuals because they were either not in Europe at the time, or they were newly associated with Fluxus and/or their works were not often performed. This second group included Tomas Schmit, Robert Filliou, Arthur Kopcke, Jackson Mac Low, Terry Riley, Takehisa Kosugi, Philip Corner, Robert Watts, and Toshi Ichiyangi.<sup>44</sup>

After his initial contact with Arthur Kopcke in the summer of 1962, Maciunas asked him to make the necessary arrangements for

the Copenhagen festival in November of 1962. The actual setting up of this performance series was a joint venture between Kopcke, who acted as the contact person and sought out a sponsor (the official sponsor of the festival was *Det unge Tonekunstnerselskab*, The Young Musical Artists Company) and the Danish writer Knud Pederson, who was responsible for the actual presentations and the needs of the performers.<sup>45</sup> Prior to the arrival of the performers in Copenhagen, Kopcke and his colleagues there made up posters for the upcoming Fluxus festival and put them up all over the city.<sup>46</sup> Kopcke constructed and painted a large backdrop to be placed on the altar of the Nikolaji Church that was to act as the stage for the five concerts. On this backdrop Kopcke painted, "We make unspecialized art, which is no longer theater, music, poetry, nor painting, but an unspecialized, intellectual development."<sup>47</sup> Maciunas, Knowles, and Higgins arrived a few days prior to the first concert, followed by Vostell and Williams, and the preparations for the whole concert series began in earnest. The various arrangements were presided over by Maciunas, and the primary performers held a press conference. According to Pedersen,

George Maciunas, the artistic-business director of the Fluxus performances, presided over the press conference with his small asthma apparatus in front of him. He organized the whole affair, the order of the numbers [events] and the printed material . . .<sup>48</sup>

The festival itself was presented on six different days from Friday, Nov. 23, through Wednesday, Nov. 28. The festival had been arranged so that five of the concerts were held in the Art Library of the Nikolaj Church, while one of the concerts took place in a larger hall in the theater *Alle Scenen*. Of these six concerts, five were performances of concrete music, action music, and event-type pieces. The last concert was a performance of predominately tape music. The main performers for these six concerts were Higgins, Knowles, Vostell, Williams, Kopcke, and Maciunas. There were several others who performed in certain works — Eric Andersen, Albert Mertz, Henning Christenson, and several other unidentified people. The actual concert performances were, like those at Wiesbaden, not exactly performed as they had been listed on the programs, although the concerts were in many ways fairly close to the program listings. Of the ten works originally on the program for

the first concert, seven were performed on the announced evening. Most of the others were performed, but on different evenings. In contrast to the complete changes of the concerts that took place in Wiesbaden, the concerts in Copenhagen were only slightly altered from the original listings. This is significant, for it indicates a focus on a particular set of works and a general establishment of a "standard" concert program for the Fluxus group of action music and event-type pieces.

By this time, the Fluxus festivals were beginning to present a more specific kind of performance work. Many of the pieces were minimal in their means, emphasizing their concreteness, but were specifically expressive of a post-Cagean view of art, music, and poetry. The form of presentation was still like that developed for the Wiesbaden festival. Each performance, or concert, as they were called, consisted of a series of individual works presented one following the other in a rather traditional performance structure. The first concert presented at Copenhagen exemplified the form and organization of these individual Fluxus concerts. This performance was presented to a full house of several hundred and was filmed for television, although it was never actually shown.<sup>49</sup> The actual pieces performed at the Concert No. 1 were as follows:

Emmett Williams - "A German Chamber Opera for 38 Marias"  
 Joseph Byrd - "Piece for R. Maxfield"  
 Jackson Mac Low - "Thanks II"  
 Robert Watts - "2 inches"  
 Emmett Williams - "Alphabet Symphony"  
 George Brecht - "Drip Music" "Direction"  
 George Maciunas - "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti"  
 Dick Higgins - "Constellation nos. 4 and 7"  
 Alison Knowles - "Nivea Cream Piece"  
 Ben Patterson - "Paper Piece"  
 George Brecht - "Saxophone Solo"  
 Wolf Vostell - "Kleenex Decollage Music"  
 Terry Riley - "Ear piece (for audience)"  
 George Brecht - "Word Event"<sup>50</sup>

This first concert was somewhat similar to the concert presented at Wiesbaden on Saturday, September 8. Both of these concerts included the following works: "Piece for R. Maxfield," "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti," "Two Inches," and some of Higgins' "Constellations." This concert also included several other



pieces, such as "Ear Piece," "Kleenex Decollage Music," and "Paper Piece," which had also been performed at Wiesbaden.<sup>51</sup> To these works several new pieces, and works that had not been performed at previous Fluxus festivals were added. An example of a new work was Knowles' "Nivea Cream Piece—For Oscar Williams." The score for this work was as follows:

First performer comes on stage with a bottle of hand cream, labeled "Nivea Cream" if one is available. He pours the cream onto his hands, and massages them in front of the microphone. Other performers enter, one by one, and do the same thing. They join together in front of the microphone to make a mass of massaging hands. They leave in the reverse order they entered, on a signal from the first performer.<sup>52</sup>

Two other works presented in this festival that became standard Fluxus pieces were Kopcke's "Music While You Work" and Williams' "Counting Song." The performance of Kopcke's piece was described as follows:

Kopcke performed "Music While You Work," in which a phonograph is played, while various artists undertook several activities. One washed the floor, one swept the stage, one gave a speech and one laid there and slept. In a short time the record began to play in the same groove [skip] and they all left their work in order to fix it.<sup>53</sup>

The record for this piece has been altered by placing tape on the surface to cause it to skip after a while. The series of actions given above, interrupted by fixing the skip in the record, is repeated again and again for a set period of time before the piece ends. Williams's "Counting Song" was created for this festival.

Williams went on to the altar and began to count the public, in which he pointed out every single person. After this he went on and counted the columns in the church, the lamps and the chandeliers. The public followed with great interest.<sup>54</sup>

(The rationale for this piece was that the performers needed an exact count of the audience to ensure that they were receiving their share of the box-office receipts and not being cheated by the management.<sup>55</sup>)

The general feeling of all the performers and those involved in these presentations was that the Festorum Fluxorum in Copenhagen went very well. Dick Higgins wrote, "All in all, it was probably the most interesting Fluxus that we did," and almost all the other participants agreed.<sup>56</sup> The only drawback to this concert series was that, as in Wiesbaden, it did not make any money, but not for the same reasons. There were very large audiences who had paid admission, but because of the costs of transportation, housing, and equipment needed for the concerts, there was nothing left over after the expenses were paid. Thus, there was still no extra money to help fund the variety of publishing projects Maciunas was then working on for Fluxus. In addition to this, the next Festum Fluxorum in Paris was as artistically unsuccessful as the one in Copenhagen had been successful.

The third Fluxus festival was scheduled Dec. 3-8 to begin in Paris only a few days after the Copenhagen event. This festival was much like the one in Copenhagen, but there were seven scheduled concerts for the Paris Festum Fluxorum. The first six were to be similar to the six concerts performed in Copenhagen, while the seventh was to be an additional presentation of poetic works organized by the poet Jean-Clarence Lambert with the assistance of the organization *Domaine Poétique*.

As with the Copenhagen festival, Maciunas had arranged for a contact person in Paris to set up the hall, put up announcements, and generally take care of advance publicity for the festival. The advance guard for the Paris event was Jean-Clarence Lambert, who was to work in conjunction with the hosting facility, the American Students' & Artists' Center in Paris. Although this arrangement had worked very well for the Copenhagen festival, in Paris it did not. Dick Higgins wrote that:

At Paris, Maciunas had entrusted the American students' Center & J-C Lambert jointly with the publicity. The ASC, whose auditorium we used, sent out the mailing Maciunas sent them duly to their membership, mostly consisting of language and exchange students & a sprinkling of pianists and the like. Lambert, who was given a poetry evening at the end of the series for himself, had a set of special announcements printed up, put them in their envelopes, "never thought" to include Maciunas' announcements in the mailing. Result? Nobody knew about us. No house, no publicity, except for his evening. We found this out Saturday, so . . . we ran around sticking up posters everywhere. Even so, public posters get you nowhere.<sup>57</sup>

There is very little information available on this festival, especially about the details of the concerts. The primary point of agreement among the people involved was, however, that it was poorly attended and, in general, a rather poor festival, especially in comparison to the preceding Copenhagen event.

After the Festum Fluxorum in Paris, Maciunas returned to Ehlhalten, and for the next several weeks, he focused on a variety of publishing projects. The completion of the *Fluxus Yearbox I* was delayed again because the money needed to pay for the printing had been completely spent to cover the costs of the Paris festival. Because of this Maciunas focused his energies not on completing the *Fluxus Yearbox I* but on several other new projects still in the planning stages and thus not requiring monetary expenditures he could not meet. In December, 1962, and January, 1963, Maciunas worked primarily on the development of "complete works" by various artists, especially George Brecht.

These plans for new projects, in addition to the yearboxes, had been mentioned by Maciunas in the draft of his *Fluxus News Letter No. 4* in the fall/winter of 1962. In January, 1963, he elaborated on these ideas in *Fluxus Newsletter No. 5, January 1, 1963*. This newsletter provided two primary points of information: the nature of the plans to produce new kinds of materials by Fluxus and the conditions under which such projects would be produced. The new works proposed for were of two kinds:

1. Special collections will comprise whenever possible, the complete works of a single author, to be contained in a box which will be perpetually renewable and expandable as long as the author is living and constantly producing new works. A basic box will be issued containing works up to 1962 and supplements will be issued every coming year or less frequently depending on quantity of new works produced. New boxes will be added to the first issues as the first ones are filled up.

2. Special items will consist of films, magnetic tapes, objects, etc., that will be reproduced or produced by authors themselves or Fluxus and sold through Fluxus distribution system in USA, West and East Europe and Japan. 80% of the profits from the sale of such collections and items will be assigned to the authors. The remainder will be retained by Fluxus.<sup>58</sup>

Maciunas' ideas about the nature of the "complete works" series had developed in two significant ways since he first mentioned this.

The proposed collection of works by individual authors was now described as being "in a box which will be perpetually renewable and expandable. . . ." This concept developed out of Maciunas' discussions with George Brecht and what Maciunas refers to in several letters as a "Soviet Encyclopedia." Sometime in the fall of 1962, Brecht wrote to Maciunas about the general plans for the "complete works" series and about his own ideas for projects. In this letter Brecht mentions that he was "interested in assembling an 'endless' book, which consists mainly of a set of cards which are added to from time to time . . . [and] has extensions outside itself so that its beginning and end are indeterminate."<sup>59</sup> This idea for an expandable box is also later mentioned by Maciunas as being related to "that of Soviet encyclopedia — which means not a static box or encyclopedia but a constantly renewable — dynamic box."<sup>60</sup> The exact origin of this idea of an expandable publication, though, is not as important as the fact that it is another indication of the general development of Fluxus publications away from more traditional notions of art publications.

Related to this idea of producing complete works of various Fluxus artists in an expandable box was the second point mentioned by Maciunas in this newsletter. As Maciunas' ideas about the nature of the publication activities of Fluxus evolved, he increasingly moved away from the notion of publications as being limited by the traditional categories of publications — printed text on pages bound together (such as books or magazines). Maciunas began to redefine the concept of Fluxus publications as any printed materials or multiple object that could be produced for wide distribution.<sup>61</sup> The mention of the production and distribution of special items such as films, tapes, and objects in the *Fluxus News Letter No. 5* is indicative of this shift in emphasis. Part of this more expanded notion of Fluxus publication activities was also the result of the kinds of works that several artists associated with Fluxus were then producing or interested in producing. The two artists who most affected Maciunas' expanded thinking were George Brecht and Robert Watts. Both had been in contact with Maciunas throughout the last five or six months of 1962 when they had mentioned several ideas about a variety of materials that could be

published. In the summer of 1962, Watts wrote to Maciunas about two works, *Dollar Bill*, which was a drawing of a United States one-dollar bill the same size as an original but with the face on both sides, and his *SAFE POST/K.U.K. FELD POST/JOCKPOST*, which were a series of artists' stamps he produced in 1961 and 1962. Maciunas responded very enthusiastically, saying that he would use Watts' stamps to mail Fluxus materials asking Watts about the bills. "HOW MANY ?? What kind of paper? Funny paper? like cardboard, wrapping paper, toilet paper . . ." <sup>62</sup> In 1962 Brecht also wrote to Maciunas that he had been developing, among other things, a newspaper and a set of cards. <sup>63</sup> These cards could be used for playing a variety of games, and Brecht mentioned to Maciunas that "If you would be interested in publishing this game, let me know and we will work on it together." As with Watts, Maciunas responded to Brecht that he liked the idea for the card set. He told Watts that he could have them printed and requested that Brecht "write me more about this game. How about inventing a new object game, like chess?? WORK ON GAMES! This is a good idea!" <sup>64</sup> These early ideas are of great significance, not so much because they immediately resulted in production but because they influenced Maciunas' thinking about the nature of Fluxus publication activities.

The second major section of the *Fluxus News Letter No. 5* is a statement of the conditions under which the "complete works" and other objects would be produced.

Fluxus will require, however, the following conditions to be met by the authors agreeing to have their works constantly published:

1. authors are to assign exclusive publication rights to Fluxus. They will not submit any works to any other publication without the consent of Fluxus.
2. Fluxus will undertake to publish all past and future works submitted by authors and obtain international copy-rights [sic] to protect the authors from unauthorized copy and performance. Failure on the part of Fluxus to meet these obligations will relieve the authors from their obligations. <sup>65</sup>

This proposal for exclusive copyright of the artists' works was intended by Maciunas as a draft for a more specific contract to be drawn up between Fluxus (Maciunas) and each of the individual artists. <sup>66</sup> This idea of restricted publication rights in return for

publication of their complete works was met by a general cautiousness on the part of many of the artists and in some cases a rather more aggressive and outspoken negative reaction. Brecht's reaction was indicative of the general feeling of many of the artists.

I am against copyright unless absolutely necessary. If we sent you any works exclusively, couldn't you publish . . . before others could copy? also, you mention "unauthorized performances." Do you envision giving permission for performances? Won't this lead to the crappy situation of German tape music . . . Especially with my work, "permission to perform" becomes rather meaningless . . . What is FLUXUS "propaganda"? What kind of "demonstrations"? "infiltrations"? co-ordination with useful people in what kind of activities? <sup>67</sup>

Other artists associated with Fluxus reacted more strongly against this plan for copyright and Maciunas' "common front." Probably the strongest reaction came from Paik.

Your news policy No. 5 made much trouble. You strive for monopol, [sic]—quite antidadaistic—will more hurt you, than profit you. The world consists of give and take. All tends to forget, what he took. The largest success of Fluxus is Copenhagen. Who made it? VOSTELL! I had no acquaintance with Kopke [sic]. Vostell brought me to him one day and we, Vostell and I—recommended you to Kopke. Vostell made propaganda of you and Fluxus in Decollage No. 1 and No. 3 . . . FLUXUS No. 1 you said at latest in September or till Copenhagen . . . and should I let wait Ligeti's article one year or more? or has Vostell no right to print a article sent to him? I think I can write more strong letter to you, because no one did so much for you in Europe. . . . FLUXUS was good because of harmonious co-operation of many (especially JPW [Wilhelm]) If you want to centralize, as seems in the last news policy it will more hurt you than profit you. I warn and advise you for your interest. <sup>68</sup>

The reaction from Paik indicated several factors in addition to the issue of Fluxus copyright that were also part of Maciunas' reasoning in *Newsletter No. 5* and his desire to "centralize" Fluxus. Maciunas' immediate reaction to Paik's letter was one of disbelief. Maciunas wrote back to Paik that the general reaction had been very positive and that he had already gotten agreements from Brecht, Filliou, Patterson, Young, Williams, Schmit, and Yoko Ono to publish their complete works. <sup>69</sup> Maciunas further responded to Paik's attack on his plans for centralization.

I have always been striving for a common front & CENTRALIZATION, but such front must constantly be purged of saboteurs & 'deviationists' just like the Communist Party. Communists would have long split into 1,000 parts if they did not carry out the strict purges. It was the purge or FLUX that kept them united & monolithic.<sup>70</sup>

In this statement, Maciunas leaves unsaid other more specific reasons for his support of centralization and what he calls "purges." One of the main factors was the changing dynamics between himself and some of the other individuals, particularly Vostell, who had been active in Fluxus.

By the beginning of 1963, personal conflicts had arisen between some of the people involved in Fluxus, especially between Maciunas and Vostell.<sup>71</sup> The principal conflict between these two developed as a result of Vostell's publication of *De/collage* magazine. Maciunas increasingly came to believe that Vostell was publishing this magazine as a way to undermine Fluxus by first publishing the kinds of materials that had been planned for the various Fluxus yearboxes, thus taking credit for the ideas that had been developed for and by Fluxus. Maciunas' justification for believing this was that Vostell had printed some materials in the first several issues of *De/collage* by artists such as Henry Flynt, whom Maciunas had intended to include in Fluxus publications. In response to Paik's letter, and particularly about Vostell and *De/collage*, Maciunas wrote the following:

I know Vostell received things from Philip Corner—which he could have printed, since there are very few things of Corner that I print, while I am doing a box of Henry Flynt. So it was no "fair play" to omit Corner and include Flynt. . . . Vostell never asked me nor told me what he was going to print, WHILE HE KNEW WHAT I WAS PRINTING, SINCE HE HAD MY PROSPECTUS. All he had to do to avoid duplication is to look in the prospectus & find there Flynt's—Acognitive Culture. I can not work with Vostell Harmonically if he KNOWINGLY sabotages Fluxus.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, it was specifically Vostell to whom Maciunas was referring to when he told Paik that "purges" were necessary to maintain a united front for Fluxus. The primary reason behind the growing conflict between Maciunas and Vostell, as well as Maciunas' desire for exclusive copyrights, was the increasing delay in producing the

various Fluxus publications. Maciunas was aware of this problem. In an attempt to justify the slowness of producing the various announced Fluxus publications, Maciunas wrote to Paik.

What I am planning with fluxus may seem gigantic only in relation to time. To do it in one month would be . . . demanding too much. To do it in one, two & more years is quite possible. I do not wish to do something half way, sloppy or incomplete. It must be either comprehensive, carefully collected & prepared series or none at all. . . I would therefore do Fluxus right and more perfect then do it fast. If I did it fast like Decollage I would harm the authors more then myself.<sup>73</sup>

As the date of issuance for the Fluxus yearboxes was postponed again and again, some of the artists to be included began to seek other sources, such as *De/collage*. Intentionally or not, *De/collage* and Vostell thus became for Maciunas a rival to Fluxus. Maciunas' desire for exclusive copyright arrangements with the artists who were to be published in the various Fluxus projects was in part grounded in his need to keep the artists from publishing their work in other sources until he could complete his projects. This was the first of a number of similar conflicts based on Maciunas' inability to publish Fluxus material that would directly affect the membership of Fluxus. Maciunas also truly believed in centralization as a means of de-personalizing the artistic process, and he saw actions like Vostell's as grandstanding. Maciunas felt that he had to develop a mechanism to resolve this kind of problem in the future.

In January of 1963, Maciunas also made a change in the manner in which he had been producing the Fluxus publications. Although nothing came of it, Maciunas had asked Jed Curtis to help him with the Fluxus publications in the summer of 1962 in an attempt to speed up the production process.<sup>74</sup> Paik then suggested to Maciunas in January, 1963, that he hire Tomas Schmit to help him produce the publications.<sup>75</sup> Paik had, in fact, contacted Schmit and suggested that, in exchange for room and board, he should work for Maciunas on the Fluxus publications. Schmit agreed to this working arrangement, starting in February, 1963.<sup>76</sup>

During this same period, from the end of 1962 through the beginning of 1963, Maciunas was able to finalize the arrangements for a Fluxus festival in Dusseldorf. As with the Festival in Wiesbaden, the initial contact with a local organizer for this festival was made through Jean Pierre Wilhelm.<sup>77</sup> Wilhelm contacted Joseph Beuys,



who was then a professor at the Dusseldorf Art Academy, about helping to organize this Festival. Beuys, who had heard quite a bit about Fluxus and was interested in it, agreed to work on setting up the event. On Wilhelm's suggestion, Beuys wrote to Maciunas. In his letter of January 9, 1963, he proposed that a Fluxus festival be held in Dusseldorf on February 2-3.<sup>78</sup> Maciunas responded to Beuys' offer as follows:

February 2 and 3 (Saturday and Sunday) would be very good for us. We can definitely provide Fluxus with two concerts. Our planned program is enclosed. Electronic music is not included as the equipment is very difficult to transport and is not worth the effort for the concerts.<sup>79</sup>

In this same letter Maciunas goes on to specify several other points with regard to holding a Fluxus program in Dusseldorf. He tells Beuys that, because the duration of the program was only two days, they could not pay for publicity, programs, or the rental of a hall, but they would pay for the lodging of the performers.<sup>80</sup> Maciunas listed the potential performers for these two concerts as Paik, Schmit, Williams, himself, and four other possible performers, Filliou, Spoerri, Knowles, and Higgins.<sup>81</sup> In addition to these performers, Maciunas also told Beuys that they would need four other performers for the concerts. On January 16, Maciunas wrote Beuys again to inform him of other aspects about the performances and some changes in the performers.

I have enclosed a slightly revised program. I doubt very much whether Dick and Alison Higgins will receive my communication early enough to be back from Turkey for February 2 and 3. I have therefore asked the very good Swedish "events" composers Bengt af Klintberg and Staffan Olzon to participate. They will arrive by car fully packed with their materials and other performers.<sup>82</sup>

Maciunas also requested whether Beuys could supply a number of items, such as a ladder, bucket, rope, slide projector, and even a baby (for a piece by Knowles).<sup>83</sup> Maciunas ends the letter by saying that he believed that the concert would be successful and that "it will be concentrated and compact. We are planing a 1-1/2 hour long program for each evening."<sup>84</sup> This shortening of the *Festum Fluxorum* was in part a result of the fact that there were only

two days for the performances in Dusseldorf, but Maciunas also wrote to Paik that he felt such a change would make for a better presentation.

In festivals—selection of materials and especially performers must be achieved during festivals. Since pieces must be performed and performers tested before judgment can be made on audience impact etc. etc. So in Wiesbaden we started with 14 concerts which I was able to cut to 6 & 7 in Copenhagen & Paris & which we are cutting to 2 or 3 for Dusseldorf and future cities . . . But these 2 or 3 will be very concentrated and comprehensive. We will make the best events, action music, etc. etc. from USA, Japan, Scandinavia, Germany, etc. etc.<sup>85</sup>

In this statement, several important factors are evident about Maciunas's ideas concerning the festivals. He makes the point that the change in the number of concerts in each of the festivals was not simply a result of uncontrolled occurrences but something desired and indeed sought after. Maciunas links the shortening of the total number of concerts to the general development of Fluxus-type works. The more musical and less concrete works in the first weekend of concerts in Wiesbaden were those indicated as being excludable. This refocusing of the role of Fluxus on action music and events rather than on simply existing as a general sponsoring organization had been part of Maciunas' thinking since the fall/winter of 1962 and possibly as early as the middle of the Wiesbaden festival. The fact that Maciunas increasingly sought to shape a specific profile for Fluxus is indicated in his use of words such as "select," "tested," and "judgment." This process of concentration was not limited to the kinds of works presented at the Fluxus festivals but was applied to the performers as well. Although the underlying motivations are not clear, in the end of 1962 and the beginning of 1963, Maciunas had developed his own more specific vision of what Fluxus was and should be.

On January 17, 1963, Maciunas again wrote to Beuys, this time responding to an inquiry from him. Of the several points Maciunas makes, two are especially noteworthy. One significant question Beuys had asked of Maciunas was regarding a possible manifesto for Fluxus. It is not clear if Maciunas had mentioned this previously to Beuys or not, but it seems likely that it was Beuys who brought up the possibility of producing a Fluxus manifesto for the festival at Dusseldorf.<sup>86</sup> In response to Beuys' query, Maciunas wrote to him

that "our manifesto could be a quotation from the dictionary (enclosed) about the meaning of Fluxus."<sup>87</sup> The quote Maciunas included with his letter to Beuys was probably very similar to the definition of flux that Maciunas had used in the first plans for Fluxus in late 1961 or the early part of 1962. In any case, the final form of this "manifesto" produced for the Dusseldorf festival was somewhat similar to Maciunas' definition of a year earlier, and it was thrown out into the audience as part of Patterson's "Paper Piece" in the first concert at Dusseldorf.

The larger significance of this "definition" of Fluxus was that it was another manifestation of Maciunas' interest in a direct relationship between the audience and Fluxus. This objective, however, was not expressed through a traditional declarative manifesto but through an open-ended expression, an appropriated dictionary definition of the word "flux." (This appropriation reflected the concrete nature of many Fluxus works by utilizing a ready-made definition.) The main change in the way that Maciunas used this definition from the early uses in some of the Fluxus publications was that he modified it to reinforce his view of the conceptual emphasis of Fluxus and the potential praxis of Fluxus' ideas. Maciunas added to the definition that Fluxus sought to "Purge the world of bourgeois sickness, 'intellectual,' professionalized & commercialized culture." To replace the aestheticized and commercialized art of "serious culture," Fluxus wanted to "promote living art, anti-art, promote NON-ART REALITY to be grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals." Although the stance indicated in the Dusseldorf "manifesto" was not reflective of all of the Fluxus artists, it did reveal certain political and social sentiments that existed in Fluxus as a general rejection of art as separate from "reality."<sup>88</sup>

From Maciunas' January 17 letter to Joseph Beuys, it is also clear that Beuys had asked about the performers and the works to be included in the festival, probably responding to Maciunas' list of performers sent earlier. Beuys had asked about possibly including works by himself, Wolf Vostell, Dieter Hulsmanns, and Frank Trowbridge. Maciunas answers that:

We would be very happy and pleased if you would participate as a performer at the Festival. Wolf Vostell, Dieter Hulsmanns and Frank Trowbridge can also participate as performers and composers. I have revised the program again and added your compositions, although I

do not know which compositions by Trowbridge can be performed. I must see him before I can say.<sup>89</sup>

Maciunas tells Beuys that he and Paik, Williams, and Schmit would travel to Dusseldorf together and arrive around 1 p.m. on February 2.<sup>90</sup> When they arrived, they would go directly to the Art Academy and rehearse several of the pieces for the concerts with the "new assistants" Beuys had arranged for the festival.<sup>91</sup>

The concerts of the *Festum Fluxorum* in Dusseldorf were scheduled for two evenings: Saturday, February 2, and Sunday, February 3. These were held in the auditorium of the Art Academy and were listed on the poster as being a colloquium for the students of the Academy. The performers for both concerts were the same, with one major exception. Although Williams was able to contact Knowles and Higgins in Turkey to inform them about the concerts in Dusseldorf, they were not able to return to Germany in time for the first concert, but both performed in the second concert. The other performers were Williams, Maciunas, Schmit, Paik, Vostell, Kopcke, Beuys, Spoerri, Bengt af Klintberg, Staffan Olzon, and Frank Trowbridge.<sup>92</sup> These two concerts reflected the growing specificity of the works presented under Fluxus in that they consisted predominantly of action music and event works. Most were those works that have come to be most directly associated with Fluxus in its early European phase. This included Brecht's "Word Event" (in which the word "EXIT" is posted at the end of a concert) and "Drip Music," Williams' "4 Directional Song of Doubt for Five Voices" and "Counting Song," Maciunas' "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti," Higgins' "Constellation No. 4" and "Constellation No. 7," Patterson's "Paper Piece," and Watts' "Two Inches" (in which a two-inch wide strip of paper is stretched across the stage and then cut). Several other new works were also performed in this festival and garnered a certain notoriety, specifically Beuys' "Siberian Symphony – First Movement" and Paik's "Fluxus Contest."<sup>93</sup>

By the time of the Dusseldorf festival, Fluxus had developed a performance viewpoint fully reflective of their interest in a post-Cagean, concrete form of work. Many of the Fluxus event works, especially Brecht's, evidence an interest in particularity. Brecht's events are based on taking a simple occurrence from life and projecting the specific nature of it into a performance form. "Drip Music" is a simple unitary action based on a daily occurrence,

dripping water. The score for the second version is simply "Dripping." This work and its performance made use of non-precious materials and simple actions; the standard Fluxus performance of this event was to pour and drip water from one vessel into another. The materials used were not special, and the performance necessitated no special skill on the part of the performers. Many of these works were concerned with showing the performance qualities of elements of life and generally with an interest in, as Maciunas describes it, "nontheatrical . . . impersonal qualities of a simple natural event."<sup>94</sup> Fluxus event works were a delineation of a view that saw no value in the continued separation of art from life or particularly the elevation of art above life. Many of the works that became "standard" performance pieces in this period were not simply expanding the boundaries of existing forms but existing between traditional media distinctions, as what Higgins would later call intermedia works. Action music was an intermedial form that combined the action of drama and the sounds of music: these works were both music and theater and, at the same time, neither music nor theater. Williams' "Counting Song" consisted of elements from life (the concrete need of determining the audience number), poetry (the recitation of juxtaposed words), music (the rhythmic production of sound), and drama (the unfolding of an action with narrative implications). In combination, all of these elements resulted in a work that existed in a new or intermedial space.

One of the main differences between the Dusseldorf festival and earlier festivals, besides its brevity, was the inclusion of a simultaneous performance of a number of works as the second concert's last presentation. The second concert and the festival were concluded with a simultaneous performance. This was new for Fluxus festivals, but not new in and of itself. This kind of performance had been presented previously at the "Neo-Dada in der Musik" concert in the summer of 1962 and even earlier in many Dadaist performances from the World War I era.<sup>95</sup> The collaging of a number of pieces in Dusseldorf was not without controversy among the performers. Dick Higgins felt that this "represented a step backwards, in that it was a concession to facile taste rather than a tactical progression. . . ." <sup>96</sup> Schmit, Paik, and especially Maciunas, however, felt that this approach was a viable means to make the festivals a more concentrated experience. These reactions were

based on two divergent points of view on the same issue— a concern with the merger of art and life and the creation of a “non-art reality.” Higgins’ reaction was in part based on the idea that such a simultaneous performance was more about artfulness and a performance artificiality than reflective of the realities of life. Maciunas, Paik, and Schmit felt, in contrast, that this presentation was a mirroring of the simultaneities of life. Eventually, though, Maciunas would come to share Higgins’ belief, and thus the future festivals did not include any simultaneous presentations.

After the Dusseldorf Festum Fluxorum, Maciunas and Schmit returned to Ehlhalten. Knowles, Higgins, Vostell, and Kopcke went to Cologne to do a show there, and the other performers went their own various directions. The exhibition in Cologne was not a Fluxus event, but it did involve a number of people associated with Fluxus. Higgins later described this show in *Postface*.

Knowles did an environment that included a quiet chair away from any fuss. I did three see-saws, called “Troubles,” in that their implications were troublesome — one was painful, one squeaked but had little else to distinguish it, and the third had enough flowers so that it could not be used as a see-saw. I also stuck a shoe in front an easel on a wire with the caption, “The subject matter that an artist uses is always more interesting than what he does with it” . . . Kopcke used whatever was in the place where we did the show, mostly gluing things down and spraying them a color he called “Silver — it’s stupid” . . . Vostell hung fish and suggestive items and toys in front of white canvasses, and lungs and chickens in front of two pieces. These last, naturally decollaged themselves, so that the gallery stank and could not allow the usual publicity activities, let alone any prolonged viewing and savoring of the show.<sup>97</sup>

This exhibition was a rather remarkable presentation for Germany at this time. The works were entirely temporary installations involving quotidian objects exhibited as a means of drawing into question the assumptions of the institutions of art. This exhibit was also important for Fluxus in that it helped to reinforce Maciunas’ growing belief that Fluxus might also be involved in organizing exhibitions and not just performances and publications. The idea of having Fluxus exhibits was not new for Maciunas. In fact, he had at one point been considering an exhibition of materials related to Fluxus at the Paris Festum Fluxorum in December of 1962.<sup>98</sup> The potential for Fluxus’ involvement in exhibitions was another direct

extension of Maciunas' interest in developing a non-commercialized distribution system. Maciunas did not view the possibility of shows and exhibitions of Fluxus works as a return to a more conservative role for art but as another means to present concrete works of the kind that he envisioned Fluxus producing. This show had reinforced for Maciunas how an exhibition could circumvent some aspects of commercialism and directly question others.

After this exhibition, Knowles and Higgins went to Stockholm at the invitation of Bengt af Klintberg. The idea was developed that a Fluxus festival should be held there in March. Higgins wrote to Maciunas in late February about the possibility of holding a festival in Stockholm. Maciunas did not like this idea, especially because of the short notice and the potential costs involved in putting on a Fluxus festival in Stockholm. None of the festivals except Copenhagen had made any money, and Maciunas had had to pay some of the costs for several of the festivals out of his own pocket.<sup>99</sup> In fact, although Maciunas had not envisioned this, he had become the financial underwriter for Fluxus. Most of the money he made at his job for the Air Force (except living expenses) was used to cover the costs of printing the materials for the publications and covering the extra expenses of the festivals.<sup>100</sup> Maciunas wrote to Higgins that in order to hold a "Fluxus festival" in Stockholm certain performers must be brought there, and nothing must be purchased for the performances.<sup>101</sup> In addition to these requirements, Maciunas sent Higgins a program for two complete evenings of performances that was fairly similar to the Dusseldorf festival. At the end of this letter Maciunas stated that if the airfare for the needed performers could not be obtained, the festival must be canceled. If the festival could not be given with the proper people and preparation, he felt, it should not be given at all.<sup>102</sup>

Don't do on any account a FLUXUS Festival on your own — it would be very incomplete & not at all representative of the FLUXUS COMMON FRONT — you may do an informal concert preview of "Higgins festival" but no FLUXUS FESTIVAL . . .<sup>103</sup>

Higgins was unable to get the airfare for the other performers, and although he did not really like Maciunas' restrictions, he complied with Maciunas' request of not presenting a "Fluxus Festival." The performances were held in Stockholm on March 1-3, but not as a Fluxus festival.<sup>104</sup> Although the posters for these performances

listed FLUXUS in large letters, Higgins explained to Maciunas that these performances were:

Completely and utterly separate from Fluxus, I announced that clearly, the press and the public understood it, and we did it carefully so that everybody is eagerly awaiting fluxus in fall. Tried to do pieces not in ordinary fluxus repertoire to avoid duplicating what you will do.<sup>105</sup>

This interaction between Higgins and Maciunas was indicative of a growing insistence by Maciunas on presenting Fluxus as a collective. Fluxus, Maciunas felt, must operate as a common front. To achieve this anti-individualist, egalitarian recognition by the public, he increasingly believed that Fluxus must collectively promote the group as a whole, not individuals in the group. Although his reaction seemed dictatorial, and to a degree it was, the real basis for Maciunas' stance was his philosophical attitude.<sup>106</sup> A part of the Fluxus opposition to "serious" art was a rejection of the individualistic nature of institutionalized culture in an attempt to "FUSE the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutionaries into a united front & action."<sup>107</sup> Maciunas hoped that such a stance by Fluxus artists would eventually evolve into a situation in which Fluxus could "destroy the authorship of pieces & make them totally anonymous — thus eliminating artists' ego' . . ." <sup>108</sup> The replacement for the artist, Maciunas argued, must be the group as a whole; thus, all of the works produced under Fluxus would be by "Fluxus."

Several other important occurrences took place after the Dusseldorf Festum Fluxorum. The first was that when Maciunas returned from Dusseldorf in early February he found a letter waiting for him from the British musician John D. Cale concerning a festival being organized in London at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. Cale wanted to be able to perform some Fluxus works and was seeking permission to do so from Maciunas. Maciunas' correspondence note on this letter states:

Organizes "A Little Festival of New Music" at College, Provisionally for July 6. 2 concerts. 2nd Neo-Dada. 1st Performances by: Robin Page, Michael Garrett, Edwin Mason etc. Wishes to include two pieces of La Monte Young's & my piece? Can Fluxus overlook payment? They could not afford.<sup>109</sup>

Maciunas responded that there was no objection to Fluxus material being used in this festival if this was not being done to make a profit.



<sup>110</sup> He then suggested that the whole concert be under Fluxus aegis and not just represent them with a few works.<sup>111</sup> Although Cale's exact response is not known, it seems that he agreed and that Maciunas would organize a second concert of Fluxus works. Maciunas reported to Williams about this new possibility for a festival in London.

Now I have some people, Cale is his name wishing a + FESTVM FLVXORVM + in London, so he says he will organize one in the university, July or so. Will you be able to make the trip to London (from Paris) on your own \$\$?? I would try to make it & maybe Thomas. They will have plenty of assistants (up there) Robin Page & those kind of people.<sup>112</sup>

Shortly after this exchange of letters, probably in the second week of February, Maciunas had to be admitted to the hospital because of his continuing health problems. Maciunas spent about two weeks in the hospital and was released sometime around the beginning of March. While in the hospital, he corresponded with Robert Watts, who sent him some "Hospital Events."

I got your letter the last day in the hospital (they did not succeed in curing me!) So I was not able to do the Hospital events—first I would be too tired and then had no dice . . . Your letter, you know, the one to the hospital did not have my name on the envelope HA! HA! So what did they do? they opened to see to whom it could be & what do they find? the Hospital Events & the cards . . .<sup>113</sup>

The cards Maciunas mentions consisted of several hand-made collaged playing cards.<sup>114</sup> The *Hospital Events* was a series of appropriated commercial photographs onto which numbered black dots (under which were caps) were applied. With these photographs was a card with the following instructions:

place on firm surface  
strike sharp blow with hammer and nail  
on black dots  
in sequence indicated by numbers

Rather than scores for performance works, these two works were object-based and were representative of the work then being produced by a number of artists associated with Fluxus. These

works further reinforced Maciunas' own thinking about the advisability of a greater focus on individual artists' projects and object-based works as opposed to the multiple-artist collections and/or anthologies such as the Fluxus yearboxes. Maciunas was coming to realize that these individual works were more manageable and cheaper to produce than the larger projects. Also, these kinds of projects probably seemed to Maciunas to be more related to his gradual narrowing of the parameters of Fluxus, displacing the earlier planned anthologies, with their large, multi-directional contents. The relationship between these new plans for individual works and Maciunas' evolving conception of Fluxus was related to his awareness of the work that the individuals associated with Fluxus were producing and the potential audiences for it. As the artists became more specific, Maciunas began to alter the production plans to reflect their interest and their particular work. The incorporation of the production of individual works, such as those by Watts, and not just scores, was thus a direct outgrowth from the nature of the artists' work. As Maciunas' own ideas changed about a potential praxis for Fluxus, he began to emphasize work that was less audience specific and more open-ended, such as Brecht's event scores and Watts' projects such as his stamps and *Hospital Events*.<sup>115</sup>

In March Maciunas had a chance to exhibit some of the new Fluxus material he was then developing and beginning to produce. This chance came about in conjunction with an exhibition of Paik's prepared pianos and prepared televisions at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal. It seems that Maciunas went to the exhibit prior to the official opening, and while he was there, Rolf Jahrling offered him one room for an exhibition of Fluxus materials. This room was actually a kitchen space in the gallery. Although Maciunas had only one day to set up the exhibit, he and Tomas Schmit were able to put something together very quickly.

Too bad I was given such short notice & had to set up only the things I had on hand. I used many printed pointed hand symbols which I set in a row so they went like this [drawing of series of hands pointing the same direction] until they hit some "Exhibit" like Brecht's light switch "on-off-on" . . .<sup>116</sup>

In a letter to Robert Watts, Maciunas further describes the Fluxus exhibition he and Schmit were able to put together.

Paik has exhibit for next two weeks at Wuppertal where I was yesterday—I got one room for fluxus. So I set 3 things of yours: the playing cards, puzzle, and the hospital event which the visitors can perform. . . . In that room I also set various cards of George Brecht's—light event in front of light switch, Keyhole over keyhole . . . 2 things of Ben Vautier (very good man!) & various "poems" of Thomas [sic] Schmit.<sup>117</sup>

This chance for an exhibition of Fluxus materials convinced Maciunas that such displays could be a new and important addition to the types of activities associated with the festivals and other organized presentations. Thus, exhibitions would be a way for Fluxus to expand its public interaction as well as display the material that it produced for sale.

This exhibit gave me idea that we should integrate in future all fluxus festivals with fluxus exhibits of items that are not performable but can be exhibited (or performable by audience like Watts hospital event). SO PLEASE THING [sic] UP SOMETHING OF YOUR OWN FOR SUCH EXHIBITS. We could of course exhibit your poems, but for instance something like your clock would be better suited to exhibit . . . also please ask Robert, Daniel & others for contributions of portable exhibits for . . . Fluxus Exhibits.<sup>118</sup>

It is clear from this as well as other statements and activities by Maciunas that he was evolving a new vision of what Fluxus could be, placing a greater emphasis on physical objects that had an inherent performance aspect. Thus, these exhibitions were seen as extensions of the general performance focus of Fluxus.

When Maciunas returned from the hospital in the beginning of March, he also continued to work on the various ongoing publication projects. In this process, he was now being assisted by Tomas Schmit. Although Maciunas constantly sought new materials for Fluxus to publish, during the first several months after the Dusseldorf festival, he and Schmit primarily worked on producing several projects already initiated by Maciunas.

One of these was the development and production of the Fluxus yearboxes. The printed materials for the *Fluxus Yearbox I* were still at the printer and had been there for quite some time.<sup>119</sup> Maciunas thought this yearbox would be completed sometime that spring. In early March, he wrote to Bob Watts that "in a few weeks I will mail to you via parcel post a case of FLUXUS 1's . . . [so] you

can distribute them.”<sup>120</sup> Just about a week later he wrote to Watts again.

Fluxus I \$2000 (now 400 pages thick) is 80% completed – very slow printer! but I think I will have them ready end of March. . . . Quota in US is 200. I will send 40 each to you, G. Brecht, Jackson M.L, Dick Higgins & J. Mekas.<sup>121</sup>

The materials for Fluxus Yearbox II (German & Scandinavian) had been rather slow in coming from the various contributors, so Maciunas had decided to shift this yearbox to a later publication date and move some of the other yearboxes ahead of it in the production schedule. To replace this yearbox in the schedule, he had decided to prioritize the West European Yearbox II, which had originally been listed as “Fluxus No. 5,” and make it the next published yearbox, also changed to include only French materials. The reason for this was that Maciunas had made Spoerri one of the editors of this yearbox in 1962, and he, along with François Bayle and Jean-Clarence Lambert, had been actively collecting materials for it throughout the fall and winter of 1962-63. In 1963, though, Spoerri became the sole editor of this yearbox.<sup>122</sup> Maciunas had received a good deal of the material for this yearbox by the end of February and the beginning of March, 1963. Maciunas then put Schmit to work organizing and re-typing the materials he had received for it.<sup>123</sup> In March, Maciunas wrote to Ben Vautier about this publication and its production.

we are now in the process of printing the French FLUXUS which included many of your very nice pieces - the “holes” terraine vague-vomit bottles, a box of god, etc. etc. . . .<sup>124</sup>

Throughout the spring, Maciunas also continued to collect and solicit further materials for inclusion in this and other yearbooks.<sup>125</sup>

In addition to the various yearbox projects, Maciunas and Schmit worked on several ongoing projects for individual artists and two publicity publications during March and April. These included George Brecht’s *Water Yam* (a publication of his event scores on cards), La Monte Young’s *Compositions 1961* (a realization of a performance piece by Young in booklet form), Daniel Spoerri’s and François Dufrêne’s *L’OPTIQUE MODERNE*, Nam June Paik’s “music periodical” *Monthly Review of the University for Avant-garde*

*Hinduism, Fluxus Preview Review* (a combined publicity publication/performance document that included a limited collection of scores), and *Ekstra Bladet* (a reproduction of performance reviews to be used for publicity).<sup>126</sup>

One of the first projects Maciunas put Schmit to work on, besides the yearboxes, was *L'OPTIQUE MODERN*, a book of text and images created around Spoerri's collection of "found" and altered glasses by several artists. This project was a priority because Maciunas had convinced Spoerri that he could produce this publication by March 20 for an exhibition of Spoerri's work at Galerie Schwartz in Milan.<sup>127</sup> Spoerri had been developing this project for some time, but not as a separate publication. Until the beginning of January, Maciunas had intended to produce individual elements of this project as part of the *Luxus* edition of the *French Fluxus Yearbox*.<sup>128</sup> When the project evolved into a separate book, Schmit typed out Dufrêne's text and arranged the text and photographs of the various glasses according to Maciunas' directions. Maciunas initially intended to print two versions of this book.

I will have the books bound in two ways. One with card covers that could be sold for \$ 2 but not less! (and if bookstore must get 50% discount then it must be sold for \$ 4, since we must get \$ 2 per book back. [ ] ) I will also have some books bound in linen—delux job that can be sold for \$ 4. Book will have some 120 pages, expensive paper, many photographs, so it is not a "cheap" book. format: 20 cm high about 16 cm wide. Box will be 20 x 20 x 4 like all Fluxus boxes, so I can interchange them (I mean box for actual spectacles) . . .<sup>129</sup>

The second, cloth-covered version of this book was to include one of the actual spectacles illustrated in the book. All of these materials were also to have been contained in a single larger box. This second version, though, was never produced.<sup>130</sup>

Around October, 1962, Maciunas had made a final agreement with La Monte Young to print his *Compositions 1961* in a booklet. He had received the manuscript from Young by the end of 1962, but he did not begin to produce it until the spring of 1963. In a letter to Young, Maciunas affirmed that he would finance the printing.

I will print your 1961 compositions on my own money (I mean my own no-money), in other words I will start work, get paper etc. and ask printer to start work. So I hope we will have it done in time for copy-right this year. OK? Anyway it will definitely be printed, whether

you send money or not, though \$50 of \$100 would be of considerable help.<sup>131</sup>

The composition Maciunas offered to print was an extension of Young's "Composition 1960 No. 10," "Draw a Straight Line and Follow It."<sup>132</sup> This booklet was a printed version of this composition as well as a document of its initial creation in the form of a performance work. On each page was printed a date of realization for each version of the composition, followed by the line of text "Draw a straight line and follow it "<sup>133</sup>

A third major artist's project on which Schmit and Maciunas worked in the spring of 1963 was Nam June Paik's *Monthly Review of the University for Avant-garde Hinduism*. Sometime in the beginning of 1963, Paik had told Maciunas about his idea to start a subscription-based "periodical" of what Paik referred to as "Postmusic." Paik describes this concept as coming "from my search for the new ontology of music and, simultaneously is the first . . . 'La poste pour la poste' in the same sense of 'l'art pour l'art'."<sup>134</sup> This work was thus a pun on "post-music," meaning "after music," on materials that were to be sent through the mail. At the end of February, Maciunas told Paik in a letter that he would prepare this review since it would not be too difficult, especially with the help of Schmit. This project involved mailing out various three-dimensional materials, such as nose-drop bottles, chopsticks, and even motor parts, to the subscribers. On several occasions, in February and March, Maciunas sent Paik a list of materials he had collected or had access to, which could be used for this project. The first step in this project was to publish the initial issue, which varied from the other later materials in that it was solely a printed flyer/manifesto. Written by Paik and produced by Maciunas and Schmit, this issue was a double-sided, single-sheet, newspaper-like publication. On one side was a collaged statement about action music and this particular project's relation to these new musical forms. Paik's essay "New Ontology of Music" was printed on the other side of this flyer. Maciunas and Schmit were able to produce and mail this project at least by the end of May, 1963.<sup>135</sup>

In this period of publishing activities, Schmit and Maciunas also worked on producing two other publications. These publications were developed to be used for publicity for the upcoming Fluxus festivals in Europe and in the United States. The first of these was entitled *Ekstra Bladet*, which was the name of a Danish news-

paper publication and literally meant "Extra Leaf."<sup>136</sup> This publication was an assemblage of various newspaper reviews of the Wiesbaden and Copenhagen Fluxus festivals. It was Maciunas' intention that this would be mailed to various people as a record of the previous festivals and as a form of advertising for upcoming festivals. The other similar publication produced in this period, *Fluxus Review Preview*, was actually intended to be sent out with *Ekstra Bladet*, one rolled inside the other.<sup>137</sup> *Fluxus Review Preview*, assembled by Maciunas with Schmit's assistance, was intended to be a prospectus of upcoming events and publications, a photographic record of some Fluxus performance works (primarily from the Dusseldorf festival), such as Patterson's "Paper Piece," and the first Fluxus anthology publication of artists' scores. The publication itself was printed in several sections that were to be pasted together to form a long roll (167 x 9.9 centimeters). Maciunas described the publication in a letter to Ben Vautier.

I will mail you several copies of the new Fluxus prospectus—which includes past press reviews, photos of performances, several short fluxus compositions . . . plus Fluxus schedule of publications . . .<sup>138</sup>

This publication served several purposes for Maciunas. First, it was a new, updated version of a prospectus for Fluxus publications, like the two prospectuses he had produced in 1962. Maciunas also thought that it could be used for advertising and even as a poster. Most importantly, since the Fluxus Yearboxes kept getting postponed, *Fluxus Review Preview* was the first anthology publication of some of the artists' scores Maciunas had collected over the last several years. The significance of this was emphasized by Maciunas himself, who even referred to *Fluxus Review Preview* as a "miniature fluxus magazine."<sup>139</sup> Although Maciunas and Schmit worked on these projects throughout the spring of 1963, they were not, however, actually printed until the beginning of the summer.

In the spring of 1963, Maciunas and Schmit also worked on producing the collected works of Emmett Williams, a project by Robert Filliou, and, most importantly, the completion of Brecht's collected event scores, *Water Yam*. Although Schmit typed the various cards (on which were printed the individual event scores) for Brecht's *Water Yam*, a fair number of the cards had already been done by Maciunas.<sup>140</sup> By this point, in the winter and early spring of 1963, the final arrangements had been made between Brecht and

Maciunas about the format of this work. The final form of *Water Yam* followed the general idea Brecht had sketched out, in which cards of varying sizes were placed loose in a flat rectangular box. While Schmit worked on finishing the cards for the box, Maciunas began to design the label that would be placed on the outside of the box. The pre-production work on *Water Yam* was completed some time around May and sent to the printer.

In 1963, as Maciunas began increasingly to focus on the works of individual artists, he developed a system for categorizing these artists and their works. In this system, Maciunas assigned a letter to each artist and work. In a note to Robert Filliou, Maciunas explained this system.

Your book will come out in May . . . Now you are "F" Fluxus f, because all special solo editions are lettered, (yearboxes are numbered), understand? now Nam June Paik's review is Fluxus a, Daniel's book is "b", George Brecht's Yam box is "c", La Monte Young's 1961 compositions . . . (very simple little book) is "d" & I forgot what is "e", Maybe you are "e" and not "f", I must look at the chart . . . then Emmett is "f" or "g" and so on till x,y,z, then there will be a-a, b-b, etc, then a-a-a . . .<sup>141</sup>

Maciunas used this letter system for the first several years of Fluxus production. Initially, it was his intention that the system would replace the use of an individual artist's name on the work as a means of emphasizing what Maciunas felt to be the collective, anti-individualistic nature of Fluxus activities and work. The potential practice was never fully implemented, though, because of some of the artists' negative reactions to it. These letter designations were eventually used as a code system for artist on both the work (for example, on the first several issues of the Fluxus newspaper *cc V TRE*, the "cc" stood for Brecht because the initial idea for this publication was based on the paper he did for the YAM festival), for advertising purposes, and in Fluxus brochures. Later, however, as the publication activities of Fluxus expanded, Maciunas did not use the practice uniformly. Eventually, he discontinued it altogether in the middle to late 1960s.

These first Fluxus projects were significant for several reasons. They formed the first actual published Fluxus works and increased the international visibility of the activities of the group. The works resulted in an exploration by many artists of new performance forms, non-gallery art work, and use of commercially available



materials that reflected a more open-ended artistic sensibility. Brecht's *Water Yam* had the greatest impact of any of the first Fluxus publications. The availability of Brecht's event scores to a wider audience exposed many more people to such Fluxus-type work. The long-term result of this wider awareness of Brecht's events was a general development of performance works by many artists, who were directly indebted to Fluxus. The first publications subsequently shaped the directions of the future Fluxus projects as well. The problems that Maciunas had encountered with the publication of Daniel Spoerri's and François Dufrène's book *L'OPTIQUE MODERNE* and Brecht's *Water Yam* resulted in his increasing desire to go beyond designing and distributing such works and to establish a Fluxus printing facility.

Throughout the spring of 1963, Maciunas also continued to plan an extended Fluxus tour through Western and into Eastern Europe. He had been able to set tentative dates for festivals in Amsterdam and the Hague with Willem de Ridder, in Nice with Ben Vautier, and in Florence with Guiseppe Chiari. As late as April, 1963, Maciunas was also planning to tour the Fluxus performance festivals to Florence, Stockholm, Prague, Zagreb, Warsaw, and into the USSR. The only festivals that would actually be held, however, were those in Amsterdam, the Hague, and Nice. To a certain degree, these continuing plans for a "Flux tour" were ended because of Maciunas' illness.<sup>142</sup> Because of his poor health, the army offered to pay his way back to the United States if he would resign from his position, but this Maciunas refused to do.<sup>143</sup> He realized, though, that it was only a matter of time before the army would not renew his job and thereby cut off the means by which he supported himself and the variety of Fluxus activities he had been organizing in Europe. Maciunas wrote to Williams that "when my contract comes up for renewal in November, they most likely will not renew, in which case I will have to go back to the states, since only there can I earn enough to publish all the Fluxus projects."<sup>144</sup> At the end of this very same letter he added a postscript.

Between the time I wrote the top of this letter & now many things happened. The hospital here insists that I be "evacuated" by the end of June, which means losing my job & being dumped in N.Y. — all this upsets my plans. I will stay in Europe somehow through July & Aug. & return Sept.<sup>145</sup>

Maciunas realized he would have to change the dates of some of the festivals or postpone them. He initially tried to change the tentative dates of the Florence and Stockholm festivals but eventually decided to postpone them and the tour of the eastern European cities until at least 1965.<sup>146</sup>

Even though Maciunas had to shorten the planned tour in Europe, he went ahead with the planning for the festivals in London, Amsterdam, and Nice. By the end of May or the beginning of June, Maciunas had firmed up these plans but had not yet set specific dates for either Amsterdam or Nice. Maciunas told Williams in a letter of these tentative plans.

Amsterdam maybe on June 22 or 23 organized by Willem de Ridder, composer of events, also has gallery . . . After Amsterdam we go London . . . say on July 3rd or so. OK? London is fixed on July 6-7 . . . Nice [on] July 27 Saturday. . . I like Ben Vautier . . . I seem to feel he can organize things, so Nice Fluxus should come off well.<sup>147</sup>

In conjunction with these plans for the festivals, Maciunas continued to develop the idea of expanding the festivals by organizing an exhibition component.

With Festival we shall also put together Fluxus exhibit . . . So if you come (which you must do) bring "Exhibits" with you: spaghetti sandwich, nail soup, fakir spectacles — many small items for everyday use . . . Idea is to make this Fluxus exhibit a "traveling" one. We take it to London then to Nice etc . . .<sup>148</sup>

The other new aspect that Maciunas wanted to develop for these festivals were various street performances. The incorporation of these and an exhibit was planned for the Nice "Festum Fluxorum." He wrote to Spoerri, Williams, and Filliou about these plans, proposing the following program:

1. Street Compositions (Paik, La Monte, Tomas, yourself, Brecht, etc.)
  2. Exhibits (in theater lobby: Paik, yourself, Tomas, Brecht, Watts, De Maria, Daniel, Robert, Ben Vautier, etc.)
  3. "Concert" the "usual" program. Since only one evening, we should have only short pieces: like your 4-dir song, voice piece for La Monte & counting song . . .
- Question to Daniel — I suggested your *Homage a l'Allemagne* — it is a very good piece & we should perform it. Tomas can perform. Rob-

ert! – Which piece of Robert ? Do you have the Poi Poi Symphony Box ready ??? !!! – we should perform this piece with the box !! Think up street compositions, you all 3!!!<sup>149</sup>

This new, more multifaceted form of the festivals was in part linked to the change in Maciunas' thinking that had been developing throughout 1963. He no longer saw Fluxus just as a sponsoring organization for performances and publications. It is clear from his letters and notes that he increasingly thought that Fluxus must have a more distinct political agenda.

Through the spring of 1963, Maciunas talked and wrote more and more about Fluxus activities in political terms. He mentioned the significance of a "common front" in a number of his letters from this period, but the phrase is increasingly used as part of a wider political stance, not just as a copyright issue. In late February, Maciunas mentioned to Watts that a common front was important so that "we can make World Revolution. . . ." and that "all PROLETARIANS SHOULD UNITE !!!"<sup>150</sup> He used this kind of language in part as a means of legitimizing his desire to unify the efforts of like-minded artists, but it also signals a broader political view. This perspective was indicated in a comment that he made in a letter to Emmett Williams late in the spring of 1963.

Chruschov [Nikita Krushchev] is not hot on fluxus at this very moment, although he agrees with us in being against abstract art!!! So he is closer to Fluxus than say New York "Abstract Expressionists" and the French "Tachistes". Yes? So I believe Fluxus has the best breeding ground in Soviet Union which was not spoiled yet by abstractionists (or at least Stalin corrected that !) So we must all work towards eventual Fluxus in S.U. OK? . . . Best to work through political agitators and present Fluxus as what they have been looking all along to have against the art revolt brewing there.<sup>151</sup>

From these comments, it is clear that Maciunas was at this point becoming more adamant that Fluxus must have a political position, specifically one associated with Soviet Communism. The opposition of Fluxus concretism to abstract forms of art was for Maciunas associated with the development of a potential Communist form of art. Maciunas saw the "concreteness" of Fluxus work as related to the materialism of Marxism and as a truer form of "socialist realism" than the politicized academic style to which the term

commonly referred. Beyond the specific link he felt Fluxus had with the Soviet Union, he also believed that this work must have a broad socio-political basis. He wrote to Williams that he believed Fluxus "activities lose all significance if divorced from socio-political struggle going-on now. we must coordinate our activities or we shall become another 'new wave' another dada club, coming & going."<sup>152</sup>

In order to achieve a more specifically activist stance for Fluxus, Maciunas wrote *Fluxus News-Policy Letter No. 6* in April of 1963. Here he proposes various actions against the cultural establishment and announced plans for the entry of Fluxus into the United States, with various ideas for concerts and events in New York City.<sup>153</sup> This newsletter had two primary sections. The first concerns a series of propaganda actions that were to serve two purposes: "actions against what H. Flynt [the musician, philosopher, and originator of the term concept art] describes as 'serious culture' & actions for Fluxus." The second section lists the "proposed preliminary contents of NYC Fluxus in Nov."<sup>154</sup>

The proposed propaganda actions listed in this newsletter were to take place from May to November of 1963 and to be carried out by people in New York City as a series of pre-festival activities. These actions included picketing, demonstrations, performance of works on streets and in public places, sabotage and disruption of transportation and communication systems and museums, galleries, and theaters, as well as the sale of Fluxus publications. The proposed actions included:

Prearranged "break downs" of a fleet of Fluxus autos & trucks bearing posters, exhibits, etc. in the middle of busiest traffic intersections . . .  
Clogging-up subway cars during rush hours with cumbersome objects (such as large musical instruments . . . long poles, large signs bearing fluxus announcements. . . )

Disrupting concerts at "sensitive" moments with "smell bombs", "sneeze bombs".

Ordering by phone in the name of museum, theater or gallery for delivery at the exact or just prior [to] the opening, various cumbersome objects: rented chairs, tables, palm trees, caskets, lumber, large sheets of plywood, bricks . . .<sup>155</sup>

These proposed events and actions for New York City were quite different from the Fluxus festivals that had taken place in

Europe. The most important change was that the concerts, which had been the primary, and in some cases the only activities associated with the festivals, were now only one part of a much broader series of events. As Maciunas' ideas developed about Fluxus, he came to realize that concerts should be presented in a variety of ways and should be only one part of a more widespread group of activities. The activities of Fluxus he believed must be concerned with a praxis beyond the "art world." He was one of several Fluxus artists concerned with social and political dimensions of their work, but it was he in particular who tried to integrate these ideas into the activities of the Fluxus group.

In *News-Policy-Letter No. 6*, Maciunas also expanded the list of activities that he felt Fluxus should involve in New York.

1. "Concerts" in enclosed spaces (theaters, lofts, public places etc.) (possibly 10 concerts)
2. "Concerts" in open spaces (streets, parking lots, river etc.) such as Brecht-Motor Vehicle Sundown, or T. Schmit sanitas 79 etc. etc. "Concerts" on moving autos etc.
3. Lectures by Henry Flynt.
4. Exhibits of objects, environments, events at galleries, on streets, on moving vehicles, lobbies, toilets, bulletin boards of libraries etc. etc. etc.
5. Sale of Fluxus, Yam publications & exhibits, sale of Ben Vautier's "certificates", disposal of garbage etc. in galleries, by moving vehicle, fruit carts etc.
6. 'Armory show of new American pornography' (films, pictures, events, objects) — being arranged by J. Mekas & Film Vulture [sic] (& to include Paik — sex pianos.)
7. Fluxus "championship" contests, races etc. such as Paik contest no. 1 (pissing contest) & no. 2 etc.
8. Banquet on last day of Nov. giving distinguished guests food prepared with strong enema producing medicines — ending No. Fluxus with a strong fluxus. (possibly arranged by D. Spoerri)<sup>156</sup>

These new plans reflect the development of Maciunas' thinking about the festivals in 1963, as well as the more general change in his attitude towards the potential role and place of Fluxus.<sup>157</sup> The plans also directly reflected the importance of specific individuals and their work for the development of Fluxus. An example of this is point 8, the "Banquet," which was a direct extension of some of the work which Spoerri was then developing. (Maciunas indicated this by listing that the Banquet might be arranged by Spoerri.)<sup>158</sup>

The reaction to the plans listed in *Fluxus NewsPolicy Letter No. 6* was quick and strong, but not what Maciunas had expected. Some of the American artists felt the propaganda actions for New York City were quite negative. The most direct response came from Jackson Mac Low. He wrote to Maciunas that, even though he was against certain aspects of "serious culture," specifically the commercialization of it, in general he was "ALL FOR IT [serious culture] & HOPE & CONSIDER THAT MY OWN WORK IS A GENUINE CONTRIBUTION TO IT."<sup>159</sup> Mac Low particularly attacked Maciunas' specific plans for propaganda actions.

I AM . . . AGAINST ALL SABOTAGE & NEEDLESS DISRUPTION. I CONSIDER THEM UNPRINCIPLED, UNETHICAL & IMMORAL IN THE BASIC SENSE OF BEING ANTISOCIAL & HURTFUL TO THE VERY PEOPLE WHOM MY CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ARE MEANT TO HELP. IT SEEMS ALL SILLY SADISM. & AS SUCH IT SMACKS MORE OF FACISISM THAN ANY KIND OF SOCIALISM WORTHY OF THAT NAME. . . . I WOULD NOT, EXCEPT IN CERTAIN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES, BOTHER TO ATTACK & OR DEFILE WRONG TYPES OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY . . . THUS I FAVOR ALL PROPOSALS FOR PUBLIC & PRIVATE EXHIBITS, CONCERTS, &C., WHICH HAVE A BENEVOLENT & HELPFUL AURA ABOUT THEM . . . THE OTHER STUFF IS OLD TIME MIDDLE-CLASS (TO SHOCK THE MIDDLE-CLASS IS A FAVORITE MIDDLE-CLASS ACTIVITY) SADISTIC DADA & SADLY OUT OF PLACE IN OUR PRESENT WORLD. I HAVE NO IDEA WHY YOU THOUGHT I WOULD WANT TO ENGAGE IN SUCH ACTIVITIES OR WHY YOU THOUGHT GEORGE BRECHT OR LA MONTE YOUNG OR BOB MORRIS OR RICHARD MAXFIELD OR ANY OF THE OTHERS EXCEPT MAYBE HENRY (WHO ALSO THINKS THEY ARE, FOR THE MOST PART, UNPRINCIPLED & NOT AT ALL USEFUL) . . . I HOPE YOU WILL COME UP WITH A WHOLE DIFFERENT MODERN NON-DADA APPROACH TO "FLUXUS PROPAGANDA" & OTHER FLUXUS ACTIVITIES . . . <sup>160</sup>

George Brecht also responded negatively to Maciunas' suggestions for actions in New York City. He told both Maciunas and Flynt that he saw anti-art as an aspect of art and that he was indifferent to both of them. He then stated, "I can't see myself taking part in the tunnel tie-ups. I am interested in neutral actions . . ." <sup>161</sup> This reaction by several of the American artists associated with Fluxus points to an important difference between the European and the American

cultural environments at this time: the Europeans were more comfortable with anti-establishment positions (even if they didn't exactly share Maciunas' specific convictions), while many American artists were either not willing to pursue or were not interested in such direct action.

The variety of negative reactions encouraged Maciunas to rethink these plans. He told Williams that Brecht thought the plans were too "terroristic & aggressive," that Mac Low thought they were not "serious enough," and that Flynt thought that they were too "Artistic."<sup>162</sup> Privately, Maciunas thought that most of these reactions indicated that the artists in the United States were either "a-political, or naive anarchists, or becoming sort of indistinct pseudosocialists."<sup>163</sup> Publicly, however, he realized that he would have to rework these plans for New York in order to maintain the cohesiveness of the Fluxus group. He wrote to Williams the following:

this explosion in N.Y. and disagreements in N.Y. Total disagreement to do any political agitation, join Flynt, or do any art-terroristic activities, meant we have to arrive at a entirely different platform that we can all agree to. . . . Then . . . in New York we can have a thorough discussion and see how political Fluxus can be. . . .<sup>164</sup>

To forestall any further divisiveness in the group, Maciunas quickly issued *Fluxus News Letter No. 7* on May 1, 1963.<sup>165</sup> What he did here was to split up the various activities and to address the particular complaints of the individual artists. He specifically mentions the nature of the activities in which Flynt and Mac Low would take part and states about Mac Low, "In general: association with positive social action & activities, never with antisocial, terroristic activities such as sabotage activities mentioned in newsletter 6."<sup>166</sup> At the bottom of this newsletter, Maciunas includes a qualification regarding the proposals given in the *Fluxus News-Policy Letter No. 6*:

Newsletter 6, seems to have caused considerable misunderstanding among several recipients. This newsletter 6 was not intended as a decision, settled plan or dictate, but rather — as a synthetic proposal or rather a signal, stimulus to start a discussion among, and an invitation for proposals from — the recipients (which it did — partly). The actual plan for Fluxus Festival will depend on the planning committee (after

all the proposals have been considered by all), and will be formalized most likely in September, since no enthusiasm was shown for activities to be carried out during Summer months.<sup>167</sup>

With the clarifying material contained in *Fluxus News Letter No. 7*, Maciunas was able to calm down those who had become upset over the proposed propaganda actions in New York. He stated in May of 1963 that the "Fluxus crisis is over & resolved . . . by newsletter 7."<sup>168</sup> Maciunas' seeming retraction from the more confrontational program presented in *Fluxus News-Policy Letter No. 6*, however, did not mean that he had abandoned these plans. He still wanted to carry out these actions in New York City, but not necessarily as activities that the whole group would be involved in. He realized that these more political or aggressive actions would have to be done by himself and other sympathetic artists, such as Schmit and Paik.<sup>169</sup> Beyond the political implications of these activities, Maciunas did not want to abandon the proposed propaganda actions listed in the newsletter because he felt that Fluxus must make a strong impact in New York. He intended for these actions to publicize Fluxus prior to the festivals. He thought his program was a way to generate free publicity, as well as to make a commentary about the cultural systems.

Also my motive for street disturbances was largely "commercial" — the more disturbances — the more press notice, the more audience, etc. etc. If for two months we keep associating Fluxus with all kinds of disturbances or "street compositions" . . . then people will begin to get curious as to what will Fluxus do in a theater, etc.<sup>170</sup>

Maciunas believed that if Fluxus did not generate some pre-festival interest, it would have a hard time generating any interest at all in New York. This concern was largely based on his experiences with the programs at the AG Gallery.

I had very bad experiences as regards audiences in N.Y.C. Just can't get any. Halls always half filled or less. To La Monte's concert only 5 came. Imagine 8 performers & 5 audience !!! We will run into the same difficulty if we don't promote Fluxus. And we must promote without expenditures — that's the trick, since I won't have a job in N.Y. & will have no \$\$\$\$. So my scheme was to promote at no cost to us through various methods described in newsletter 6, 7 . . . If we can't promote we can't give Fluxus in N.Y. It will draw fewer people than Paris did.<sup>171</sup>



Maciunas was so adamant about the importance of pre-Fluxus promotion that he threatened to cancel his trip back to New York City if the conflict over propaganda actions could not be resolved.<sup>172</sup> Eventually, though, he decided to let this situation (of what to do for publicity and propaganda without antagonizing some of the American artists) defuse itself by waiting and leaving the consideration of the various options for propaganda in New York City for when he returned from Europe in September.

In part, Maciunas' desire for a strong pre-festival presence of Fluxus in New York City was related to another series of activities organized for the spring of 1963. From the beginning of 1963, several American artists associated with Fluxus, primarily George Brecht, Bob Watts, and Ben Patterson, had been developing a series of events, exhibits, and activities for the month of May. This series was given the name YAM, a reversal of the letters of the month of May. Brecht wrote to Maciunas about these plans and their relationship to Fluxus.

Patterson, Watts and I are working on a program for the month of May, possibly to be called MAYTIME, in co-operation with Kaprow, and the Kornblee and Smolin galleries (and Fluxus which we will name in the program.) . . . Since we will give credit to Fluxus wherever possible and tie it in to other sponsors, people will have some idea of the lively things Fluxus will undertake in the Fall, and will know something of the "Fluxus people." I do not feel that any of the interest Fluxus may arouse will be lessened by this Spring's arrangements . . .<sup>173</sup>

Maciunas' concern, which is indicated by Brecht's comments above, was that YAM would lessen the significance and impact of the New York City Fluxus festival planned for the fall of 1963. Because of this concern, Maciunas suggested to Brecht that the activities associated with YAM be combined with Fluxus. Although Brecht agreed that both YAM and Fluxus were "centers of activity," he also felt that they were different enough to keep them separate.<sup>174</sup> Brecht explained his point of view to Maciunas by stating that he felt that Fluxus was much more specific than YAM. Fluxus seemed to Brecht to be a "group of activities with an 'identity' . . ." <sup>175</sup>

To me, as opposed to FLUXUS becoming something with its own identity, recognizable, defined, in a sense, YAM FESTIVAL is change-

able, undefined, likely to disappear or change into something else at any moment. Undefined it is all-embracing . . . <sup>176</sup>

Brecht thought, though, that Fluxus and YAM were still related and could work together, or in conjunction.

So perhaps Yam can be a momentary representative for Fluxus, putting in the paper what needs quick dispersal, and leaving you free for the longer-range projects . . . It seems to me, then, that FLUXUS ought to maintain its own identity, and Yam Festival maintain its lack of it, and at the same time that we are working practically to help each other achieve the immediate works: performances, object-exhibitions, publications, etc. <sup>177</sup>

As the month of May approached, more and more people got involved in the YAM project. By the time a calendar was issued for the festival, there was something planned for every day of the month. Some of these activities were singular events, such as the May 3 "say YES to everything"; other activities consisted of exhibits and happenings and a two-day-long concert of events, poetry, music, and other performances, called YAMDAY. Dick Higgins describes this variety of activities in a letter to Maciunas.

The Yam festival has been taken over financially by the Smolin Gallery (which is Kaprow's and Alison's gallery). They are going to do all the business except a couple of George's most private projects. The festival goes on all over the city throughout May. Funds will be raised at auction (Al Hansen is the auctioneer) around April 20th. . . . Some of the events, apart from the Yamdays, are a skywriting event by Brecht (that's the most expensive), my Tart [a happening by Higgins], a water day, the George Segal farm day, a May day celebration, and a whole mass of events around the city by Brecht, Watts, Patterson, Myself, Bob Morris, Hansen, etc. They are renting about six buildings for the month—a boxing ring for my Tart, a brownstone for some destructive project of Kaprow's, a garage for decollages (were expecting the arrival around May 1st of about 263 pounds of Koeln ham), a yard for my seesaws, a room for Alison's hats, a hall for Yamdays, and for the beauty contests, a playing field for Hansen's Maypole and for the gameday, etc. The whole thing has become incredibly ambitious

. . . <sup>178</sup>

Because of the expanded nature of the YAM festival, Higgins told Maciunas that it had become something very different — much less

open-ended – than what Brecht had originally envisioned.<sup>179</sup> Higgins, though, still felt that the YAM festival would not resemble Fluxus and that the “yamdays will not duplicate fluxus, we’ll try to see to that on the program, and besides it’s all one marathon 72-hour round-the-clock concert [referring to one of the primary presentations of the month long festival], with no tape or movies . . .<sup>180</sup> In the aftermath of the actual festival and YAMDAY performances, it was clear to a number of people that it had not duplicated Fluxus.<sup>181</sup> In a letter to Nam June Paik, Higgins briefly indicates his disappointment in the YAM festival.

The yam festival is over. It was everybody’s ego-show and it had very little public. You would have liked it because it was a secret. Comparatively . . . Allan Kaprow did a very Wagnerian thing. He led an attack on a mountain of hay, killed La Monte Young (in a way) who was playing on the mountain, chopped down a tree, and died himself. Goetterdaemmerung.<sup>182</sup>

The disappointment in the YAM festival resulted from several factors. In general, people like Higgins felt that some of the artists behaved in a self-serving way. There was no sense of collectivity in the varied actions and events during this festival, and the very diverse group of artists who participated in YAM was never a group of like-minded artists as Fluxus had come to be.

By the end of the spring of 1963, Maciunas had established the dates for the performances in Amsterdam on June 23, in the Hague on June 29, in London on July 5-6, and in Nice from July 25 to August 3. The plans for the festival in London had to be modified, however, because Maciunas could not make the trip. At one point, he considered dropping the London festival altogether but then decided to go ahead with it under the direction of Tomas Schmit and Emmett Williams.<sup>183</sup>

The first of the planned festivals in the summer of 1963 was in Amsterdam, although this festival and the one in the Hague were planned in conjunction with each other. These were presented under the auspices of Willem de Ridder’s gallery, Amstel. The two people responsible for making arrangements for the festivals were de Ridder and the Dutch artist Lancelot Samson. Although Maciunas was very interested in these festivals, he also realized that they could not be as extravagant as some of the earlier ones, particularly because of the lack of money. He wrote to Ben Vautier, inquiring if he would be able to participate in the festival.

Amsterdam . . . Fluxus concert — it seems like it will be definite, but no money in it or from it . . . Maybe better if you save money for New York trip, since it will be more important there, Amsterdam will be in small scale (like it was in London).<sup>184</sup>

At this point, Maciunas realized that Fluxus could not make any money from the festival, and as a partial result, the concerts for the two festivals in the Netherlands were to be only one day each. Even though he felt it was necessary not to spend much money on these festivals, he also thought that more European festivals would be good publicity for the upcoming New York City festivals.<sup>185</sup> By this juncture, several factors were beginning to come into play. There was very little money for the festivals, and all of the costs that the individual artists could not meet were paid for by Maciunas, but he did not have much money, either. Thus, the possibilities for large-scale presentations were limited. There was increasing interest in Fluxus by artists across Europe, but the initial group of writers, musicians, and artists associated with the previous Fluxus festivals had become less cohesive. Higgins and Knowles had returned to the United States, Maciunas and Vostell were not speaking to each other, Paik and Spoerri were involved with their own projects and had little time for Fluxus festivals, and many of the artists, such as Williams, could not afford to pay their own way to the upcoming festivals and thus could not participate. The result of these factors was that the last Fluxus festivals organized by Maciunas in Europe were presentations of “standard” Fluxus works and events, but they were performed by groups of local artists under Maciunas’ supervision and not by the Fluxus group itself.

The planned activities for the festivals in Amsterdam and the Hague directly reflected Maciunas’ changing concept of Fluxus festivals. On the poster for these two events, it was indicated that the festival would include theater compositions, street compositions, exhibits, and electronic music. Thus, these activities were planned to include much more than the previous festivals, which had primarily been composed of a number of concerts. This change was in part a response by Maciunas to a lack of a touring group of “Fluxus performers.” However, he did not see this as a negative factor, but as a justification to shift the focus of Fluxus from a group of particular individuals to the “Fluxus Collective” and to expand the nature of Fluxus presentations.

The exhibitions planned in conjunction with the festivals in the Netherlands consisted of two different shows. The first was an exhibition of Paik's work titled "Piano for All Senses," held in de Ridder's gallery, Amstel 47, from June 22 through July 13, 1963. This exhibition was organized by de Ridder, and the installations were constructed by Paik, Tomas Schmit, Manfred Montwe, Peter Brotzmann, and Willem de Ridder. The other exhibit to be held in conjunction with the festivals was organized by Maciunas. This was to be a traveling show of the work of a number of artists associated with Fluxus that would accompany all of the remaining European Fluxus festivals. Maciunas wrote to Emmett Williams about his plans for this exhibition.

With Festival we shall also put together Fluxus exhibit . . . So if you come (which you must do) bring "exhibits" with you: spaghetti sandwich, nail soup, fakir spectacles — many small items for everyday use . . . Idea is to make this Fluxus exhibit a "traveling" one.<sup>186</sup>

Although Paik's exhibition in the Gallery Amstel 47 was realized, there is no record that the exhibition of "everyday items" was actually carried out. It was probably the case that Maciunas' plans for this type of exhibition were never realized in the Netherlands, but as some of the published Fluxus materials were there, he might have exhibited these instead.<sup>187</sup> It also seems likely that none of the other additional activities that were planned and listed on the poster, such as the street compositions, were actually carried out in either Amsterdam or the Hague.

The single evening of performances for the Amsterdam festival was held on Sunday, June 23, in the Hypokriterion Theater and was scheduled to begin at 8 p.m. The performers for this concert were mostly new, except for Tomas Schmit and George Maciunas. The other identifiable performers included Willem de Ridder, Lancelot Samson, Manfred Montwe, and Peter Brotzmann.<sup>188</sup> Instead of the usual procedure of writing the works to be performed on a blackboard, a typed, single-page program was produced by Maciunas. This concert was mostly made up of what might be described as "standard" pieces for the Fluxus festivals, including Patterson's "Paper Piece," Williams' "Counting Song," Brecht's "Drip Music," and Higgins' "Constellation No. 7." Of the 24 works performed, only six had not been performed numerous times before at other Fluxus festivals, and even most of these had been performed at least once before.

The second festival at the Hague in the Netherlands was initially intended to be a repeat of the concert program presented in Amsterdam. In actuality, though, the concert was an altered and much-shortened version of the Amsterdam concert. The performance in the Hague was held on Friday, June 28, only five days after the one in Amsterdam. Presented in the studio of Lancelot Samson, the concert did not include the 24 works presented in Amsterdam. According to Maciunas' handwritten performance notes, only nine pieces were included in this presentation. He wrote to Williams describing the situation regarding this concert.

Hague concert was not good since the organizer disappeared [Samson] and with him the quartet of 4 violins which was to fill the evening. We had to resort to last minute preparation and decide on pieces while concert was in progress. Real flux !  
 . . . I will sleep in car most of the time till Nice. Besides we hardly sold any fluxus things in Holland. Financially very dismal.<sup>189</sup>

After the festival in the Hague, it had been Maciunas' original intention to travel to London for the performances of "a little festival of new music" at Goldsmiths College.<sup>190</sup> As indicated earlier, this festival was to consist of one concert of Fluxus pieces and another one of work by some like-minded musicians and composers. Although Maciunas set up the program for the single Fluxus concert, he avoided going to London because he had not made any money in the Netherlands and he felt that the channel crossing was too expensive. He thought that Williams and Schmit would be going to London and that they could oversee the program. In the end, the only person who had previously performed at Fluxus festivals who was able to attend was Tomas Schmit, who ended up overseeing the concert.<sup>191</sup> In addition to the Fluxus concert, there was a small exhibit of works listed as an "Exhibition of Objects courtesy of Fluxus." According to Schmit, this show included some of his poems, some constructions by Robin Page, and a few other printed Fluxus pieces, such as those that had been exhibited at Wuppertal in the spring of 1963.<sup>192</sup>

For most of the month of July, Maciunas traveled through France, sightseeing with his mother as he made his way toward Nice for the upcoming festival there at the end of July. In early July, he passed through Paris and left some Fluxus material for Spoerri, Williams, and Filliou. This included 150 copies of *L'OPTIQUE*

MODERNE, 100 boxes for Brecht's *Water Yam* (but without the cards or the labels that Schmit was to bring to Paris at the end of the month), ten pasted-up copies of the *Fluxus Preview Review* (and the sections for many more copies), and some film transparencies for scores.<sup>193</sup> It was Maciunas' intent when he left these materials that they be completed, if possible, and then sold.

Maciunas arrived in Nice around July 24-25. By this time, most of the general organization for the festival had been carried out by Vautier, who had arranged for the Nice Fluxus festival in conjunction with his Galerie d'Art Total. When the initial arrangements with Vautier had been made, he agreed to pay the expenses of this festival, such as the theater rental, promotion, and lodging, but not the performers' travel costs to Nice.<sup>194</sup> Maciunas and Vautier had planned a wide range of activities with a number of street events and a concert in the performance space of a casino. Maciunas wrote to Williams, Spoerri, and Filliou about these plans for the festival in Nice.

Nice July 27 Saturday. DON'T GET EXCITED ABOUT STREET COMPOSITIONS! You are not forced to participate in streets. Everything will be OK! Thomas, Vautier & his "crowd" plus myself . . . will perform in street. Then we all with you 3 perform in theater OK? <sup>195</sup>

Ben Vautier had written to Maciunas about a number of ideas he had for activities that could be done in association with the festival. For the most part, the suggestions consisted of performances and events to take place not in a traditional theater space but on the street or in Vautier's gallery. In late May, Maciunas wrote to Vautier about his suggestions for the festival.

Your plans for "nervous crises" in your shop & 'Bens Publik'—very good—also good to give conference on total-art, tracts of various kinds. All such agitation is in the Fluxus spirit. (Unfortunately it was lacking in Paris & Germany). . . .

Your plans for street sound fine; Aguigi, St.Tropez, Fountain—especially the band—VERY GOOD! except costly. Can you afford it? <sup>196</sup>

In this same letter, Maciunas also mentions a series of posters Vautier had made for some of the proposed non-concert events. Vautier had sent Maciunas samples of these posters. In fact, Vautier's letter was written on the back of several of these posters. Maciunas

wrote back to Vautier that the posters looked good and that he should go ahead and produce them for the various events.

Your posters look very good and appropriate. In fact they look very much like Fluxus publications (including the paper)—so use that wrapping paper & the type you have—it looks good . . .

—go ahead with posters—add your pieces & suggestions plus those of your 5 disciples (and those of the 12 apostles). WE can always add things later-on, otherwise it would not be Fluxus (if you know all the meanings of fluxus)<sup>197</sup>

Two aspects of this statement are worth noting: first, the posters for the Nice festival were not designed and produced by Maciunas but by Vautier. These posters are among the few examples of publicly distributed Fluxus materials that Maciunas did not design himself.<sup>198</sup> Secondly, Maciunas told Vautier that he could add his own pieces as well as pieces by his “disciples.” This is another significant change from his earlier organizational methods. For the past festivals, Maciunas would very specifically determine the pieces to be performed and their order, but for the Nice festival, he turned a fair amount of the organizational control over to Vautier and simply stated that “WE can always change things later-on . . .”<sup>199</sup> The Nice festival was in fact a Fluxus festival combined with Vautier’s “Festival d’Art Total,” and the program that Vautier produced for the festival was headed by: “FESTIVAL OF TOTAL ART AND ORGANIZED BEHAVIOR BY BEN WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FLUXUS GROUP . . .”<sup>200</sup> This distinction was made primarily to indicate that this was a joint venture organized and carried out by both Vautier (Festival d’Art Total) and Maciunas (Fluxus festival). Even though it is not necessary to distinguish which part was Fluxus or which was Total Art, one should recognize that the activities associated with this festival were to a large degree shaped by Vautier and his concept of total art, which was not so different from that of Fluxus.

Although Maciunas had hoped that a number of the artists associated with Fluxus—including Schmit, Williams, Filliou, Sylvano Bussotti, and Heinz-Klaus Metzger—would to come to Nice for the festival, none was able to attend. The performances and events were therefore realized by Maciunas himself, Vautier, and the other provisional members of the “Theater Total,” including



Serge Oldenbourg, Robert Erbo, and Robert Bozzi. This was not a problem, for by this time, Maciunas had developed a standard Fluxus program of works that could be performed by anyone. His main concern was that, in these presentations, the new performers would not dramatize the actions but just carry them out.

The Fluxus and Total Art festival at Nice was presented from the July 25 through August 4. The central activities were the concert in the Hotel Scribe and the street performances. Although it had been clear that Maciunas was already moving away in his thinking from the concept of the Fluxus festivals as solely a series of concerts, prior to Nice he had not been able to implement any street performances. Thus, these performances in Nice were the first that he was able to present such activities and gauge their effectiveness. After the event, Maciunas wrote Williams about his thoughts on the street performances.

In fact it convinced me that the street is best theater to give concerts in – it's free, we don't have to advertise & we get big audiences. Since we don't spend any money on rent & promotion we can't lose anything. Up to now all these festivals meant only loss & small audiences. (limited diffusion of Fluxus). I think we should concentrate in New York on these street manifestations or at least on areas that we can get free for performances. These street performances are also a very good way to promote concerts in halls since it makes people curious about what the hell is this all about.<sup>201</sup>

The Nice performances proved to Maciunas that they should be central to future Fluxus performances and festivals, especially those planned for New York City. After Nice, Maciunas went to Florence where he had hoped to produce a festival with Bussotti and Metzger, but neither of them was there in early August, so the planned event never materialized. Maciunas and his mother then resumed their trip before returning to New York in the fall of 1963. Mrs. Maciunas remembered this experience.

We traveled over almost all Europe in this big beautiful station wagon. We saw Belgium, Holland, France, Italy and Austria . . . We saw museums, castles, cloisters and an endless number of temples. Everywhere Yurgis knew what to look at and how to look . . . He was absorbed by the beauty of the architecture and art and I was happy taking in the knowledge and delighting in my son for three months, as if he had been reborn for Beauty.<sup>202</sup>

When Maciunas left Europe in the fall of 1963, activities associated with Fluxus in Europe did not come to a stop. Many Fluxus-related performances, activities, and other developments continued to expand on the ideas and forms that had been presented under the name Fluxus between the beginning of 1962 and the fall of 1963. In this period of development, Fluxus had a tremendous impact on the establishment of new intermedia arts in Europe, especially new performance forms. As an outgrowth of their awareness of Fluxus, numerous European artists, such as Joseph Beuys, Bazon Brock, Ludwig Gosewitz, and Wim Schippers, began to explore possibilities of performance works and to develop their own performance forms and ideas. Many of the European artists associated with Fluxus, such as Ben Vautier, Tomas Schmit, Robert Filliou, Daniel Spoerri, and Wolf Vostell, continued to produce Fluxus-type work. A number of the activities by these artists, especially Ben Vautier, even made use of the name of Fluxus and the artist-sponsored Fluxus presentations, but the core of activity shifted to New York City when Maciunas moved back to the United States in 1963.<sup>203</sup>

The early Fluxus period in Europe, from 1962 through 1963, was marked by a continuing development of performance forms that would come to be called Fluxus works and of a parallel development of the general form of presentation, the Fluxus festival. Although Maciunas worked on many plans for publications and was able to realize a few important works, such as Brecht's *Water Yam*, the main activity in this phase was performance.

This first series of European Fluxus festivals ended in the summer of 1963. These festivals had started out as presentations of new music, action music, happenings, events, and recorded or tape music.<sup>204</sup> As this series progressed, the types of works presented became much more tightly focused on event and action music. To a certain extent, Maciunas achieved this reshaping through focusing the festivals, emphasizing what he had listed in his various plans as "happenings and noninstrumental music." The works that would become "standard" Fluxus pieces were mostly of a particular type, such as Brecht's "Exit," Emmett Williams' "Counting Song," and Robert Watts' "2 Inches." Maciunas and the other artists associated with the organization of these concerts increasingly realized that it was important to present a strong focus to a particular performance form, the event, and/or action music. In

Nice the idea for these festivals was again expanded by Maciunas, who worked with the artist and local organizer of the festival, Ben Vautier. In this festival, a new change was enacted to include street performances, rather than just presentations in theater or staged settings.<sup>205</sup>

Maciunas played a crucial role in shaping the development of Fluxus in this period through his organization of the group's activities and his interest in a social and political praxis for Fluxus. This interest, however, would lead to a growing factionalization of the artists associated with Fluxus, and the early period of Fluxus would eventually come to an end in 1964 because of such disagreements.



*Fluxkit* (1964; this example 1966), vinyl case with mixed media. 12 x 17 x 5 overall. Photo courtesy of the Walker Arts Center. Courtesy of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit.

## Chapter Five

# Early Fluxus in the United States from 1963 through 1964

In New York in the early 1960s, the artists 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. The main link between Fluxus and these other artists was a general rejection of the concept of aesthetic production associated with Abstract Expressionism. This larger group included artists experimenting with happenings, new dance, minimalist sculpture, pop art, assemblage, and junk materials. In the early plans for Fluxus publications, artists working in various new art forms, including Allan Kaprow, Walter de Maria, Robert Morris, and Simone Morris, were listed as being included in the United States issue of *Fluxus*. Several of their colleagues were additionally considered for inclusion, such as Al Hansen, Claes Oldenburg, and Jim Dine. Some of the work of Fluxus artists, such as the assemblages of George Brecht and the happenings of Dick Higgins, was initially seen in connection with the broader developments in the New York avant-garde rather than directly connected to Fluxus. For these reasons, Fluxus was first thought to be not so much a particular approach or attitude but part of a larger, less defined pattern of post-World War II avant-garde activity in New York.<sup>1</sup>

When the concept of the publication called *Fluxus* began to be formulated in the United States in 1961, it was seen as including all artists concerned with similar post-Cagean issues and/or exploring related ideas in their work. As Fluxus developed in Europe,

though, it gained a certain focus, emphasizing action music and events, and it developed a more specifically anti-institutional stance. Under the *de facto* direction of Maciunas, Fluxus developed into a distinct group of artists, and because of his own Communist leanings, it gained a more politically directed attitude. Because of Maciunas' increasing concern with social activism, when he returned to the United States in 1963, he ran into problems with many of the American artists: although they were interested in the aesthetic implications of post-Cagean thinking, they, like Cage himself, had no real interest in political activism.

The early Fluxus phase in the United States was marked by a playing out of some of the personal and ideological conflicts within the Fluxus group. Fluxus had existed as a group for at least a year, and the differences among some of the associates, at first downplayed, were now becoming more apparent. The result of these changing group dynamics was that the cohesiveness of Fluxus was tested. Central here was the question of what role, if any, Fluxus should play in relation to larger social and political concerns.

When Alison Knowles and Dick Higgins returned to the United States in March of 1963, they stayed in contact with Maciunas in Europe and acted as the temporary New York organizers of Fluxus in preparation for the festivals in the fall of 1963. Initially Maciunas had wanted to have a series of propaganda activities for Fluxus, outlined in the *Fluxus News Letter No. 6*, but these had to be canceled.<sup>2</sup> When the artists in New York reacted negatively to Maciunas' proposed propaganda actions, Higgins worked to mollify those who were most upset. He wrote to Maciunas that a lot of people, including Mac Low, Brecht, Young, himself, and others, did not like these "terroristic plans," and he suggested to Maciunas that:

There's no point in antagonizing the very people and classes that we are most interested in converting. Our point of view is strong and insidious, and is best established by meetings, lectures, and shrewd publicity. The publicity of our activities so long as it is not completely a fabrication, cannot help but interest people, no matter how hostile.<sup>3</sup>

Maciunas wrote back suggesting that Higgins hold a meeting with the artists in New York and go over the general plans for possible pre-Fluxus activities. Maciunas further proposed several courses of action and organizational divisions that various artists or groups of artists might be involved in:

1. Henry Flynt – in charge of his own campaign plans. (independent).
2. Mekas – in charge of finding all enclosed spaces: theaters & in charge of film programming.
3. Maxfield – in charge of electronic music programming
4. Robert Watts & Geo. Brecht in charge of all exhibits, environments, etc. if they can not undertake this because of their being in New Jersey, I suggest that they find someone to assist them, like Bob Morris.
5. Jackson Mac Low – in charge of peripheral 'social action' etc.etc. but not integration of fluxus, with his group of anarchists. Instead – broadening the fluxus festivals into 'alliances' (you understand what I mean).
6. Yourself – in charge of 'formal concerts' & a sort of co-chairman, keeping meetings in order.
7. Ben Patterson – in charge of 'street compositions' (He has done a few in Paris). & informal or 'illegal concerts.' He would have to work closely with Paik & Tomas . . .<sup>4</sup>

These proposed divisions of activities were suggested in *News Letter No. 7* (May, 1963) in response to the differences of opinion about the form and approach of pre-festival propaganda and advertising. This situation was best resolved, as Higgins advised, by letting people "cool down." Maciunas put off any final decision on these activities until his return to New York in September. In a letter to Schmit, Higgins also brought up the fact that many of the artists in New York were hesitant to participate in these organizational tasks because they were afraid they would be swamped with things to do; thus, none of them would accept responsibility for organizing any activities.<sup>5</sup> This lack of interest in organizational requirements by the other American artists is further evidence of Maciunas' pivotal role in the formation and perpetuation of Fluxus group activities. Responding to this situation and the resulting lack of pre-Fluxus propaganda activities, Maciunas expressed his diminished enthusiasm for festivals to Higgins.

We must plan on the assumption that there would be little money available. I am much more interested in spending money in publishing than festivals, since publishing promises some sort of returns, while festivals – just a hole in the bag. I already spent too much on them.<sup>6</sup>

Maciunas was discovering that there was a basic difference in orientation between most of the American and European Fluxus artists. As his ideas about Fluxus and its potential social praxis

expanded, he increasingly came to emphasize the anti-institutional stance implicit in most of the work. The artists who had been involved in Fluxus in Europe (and not just the Europeans) had been much more aware of and interested in the political and social implications of their work: Paik, Higgins, Schmit, and Vostell, for example, emphasized that their own work was part of a general critique of establishment practices. Maciunas' interactions with them, therefore, supported his thinking about the political and social ramifications of Fluxus. Most of the American Fluxus artists except Higgins, though, had little interest in expanding their work into direct action against institutional culture. Robert Watts and George Brecht had no interest in political concerns at all. Brecht later admitted that he had "never been able to see why anyone would take an interest in politics, why men devote their lives to such a field."<sup>7</sup> A major exception to this was the musician and philosopher Henry Flynt, who had met Maciunas at the AG Gallery in 1961. The two men had several political discussions. Even though Maciunas was a supporter of Soviet Communism and Flynt was a Maoist at that time, they were in agreement about the necessity of a social and political reconstruction of culture. Throughout 1962 and 1963, they occasionally corresponded about political and cultural issues. This relationship led many people to believe that Maciunas had "come under the influence of Flynt" as he became more politicized, but Flynt's ideas essentially reinforced Maciunas' own views. But Flynt's reaction to Maciunas's proposals for actions and propaganda in New York was also negative; his criticism was that they were too art-like.<sup>8</sup> Thus, when Maciunas returned to the United States, he faced a situation in which he had either to modify his views of a political praxis for Fluxus or lose the support of many of the Americans associated with it.

After the beginning of June, the correspondence between Higgins and Maciunas ceased, as did any specific plans for actions in New York. Higgins wrote to Williams at the end of July, wondering what was happening in Europe as he had not heard from Maciunas about the festivals there or the situation with *Fluxus Yearbox 1*.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Higgins thought that Maciunas had gone to Eastern Europe and did not know about the festivals in London, Amsterdam, the Hague, or Nice.<sup>10</sup> So it surprised many of the American artists associated with Fluxus when Maciunas returned to New York in late August without a word to anyone.



Upon his return, Maciunas began rather quickly to start organizing the events, actions, and concerts for the planned Fluxus performances in New York City for 1963 and 1964. Because there had been no propaganda activities in the spring and summer of 1963, Maciunas initially postponed the planned presentations until January or February, 1964. In the first week of September, he asked Higgins to call Mac Low, Brecht, Young, Watts, and Patterson to tell them that there would be a meeting about Fluxus in New York City at the beginning of the second week of September.<sup>11</sup> Higgins also contacted Al Hansen about this meeting so that he could meet Maciunas and become involved in the planning. Higgins wrote to Hansen about Maciunas.

The guy that did all the festivals in Europe, that is publishing my book, that has lots of other books being planned, George Maciunas, has come to new york, quite unexpectedly and I do not know for how long (he has bad asthma and can't take the climate). He is planning a very ambitious festival in January, which could produce \$\$\$\$ (though who knows?). He's contacting us tonight (Tuesday) since he knows Brecht and Watts will be there. But I don't think he knows the problems of trying to work on a practical level with George [Brecht] and Bob [Watts], and also I would like to see more goings on of our kinds of things. So I would like very much for you to be included from the outset in his plans. If you could either come by between eight and nine, sort of by accident, that's when I expect George Maciunas to show up. Or else you could call us and make some arrangement for you to meet him, before Saturday which is when he is going to start things moving for January.<sup>12</sup>

The result of this organizational meeting was that a number of plans were devised for Fluxus activities in New York City. These plans were to be the responsibility of specific individuals. Maciunas wrote the following to Williams:

we divided up responsibilities among ourselves so that things will get done, so Al Hansen takes charge of all outdoor events demonstrations etc., Alison of all outdoor propaganda—printing stencils on sidewalks etc. etc., Dick of 'logistics' & technical manager of the printing operation, Brecht & Watts editing new Fluxus monthly newspaper, Bob Morris—exhibits & environments, Mekas—films, La Monte—getting instruments & myself in charge of theater programming & being 'secretary.' This arrangement does not overload anyone & is more collective which I like.<sup>13</sup>

By the middle of October, there had been an agreement on a modified series of propaganda activities to take place over several weeks. Maciunas described these as consisting of:

sending for next few weeks 'fluxus' calling cards to press, 1st by envelope, then special delivery envelope, then in a big box, then in jar (all Paik music for post ideas), finally a telegram just saying "FLUXUS". then we send them posters & propaganda, etc. Now we are already printing name of 'Fluxus' on sidewalks, over other posters, etc. etc. so people will familiarize with name before even we start anything.<sup>14</sup>

Most of the previously proposed propaganda activities had been dropped, but there were still some street events initially planned for the end of October.<sup>15</sup> These performances, organized by Al Hansen, were postponed until November. A specific date was arranged, but in the end, the street performances did not materialize.<sup>16</sup> Further, the plans for advertising the upcoming Fluxus activities generated controversy because several people, particularly Higgins, felt that the plans were too specific and directed only at the press and would therefore not attract much of an audience.<sup>17</sup>

One Fluxus performance, though, did occur in fall, 1963. This was a rather hurriedly arranged short performance of several event pieces for a meeting of the American Association of Perfumers in New York City. Higgins described this performance thusly:

We gave a concert for the American Association of Perfumers last Wednesday. We did Paik, Higgins, Mac Low, Maciunas, Brecht, and Young. If we could have done some sneezing powder we would have done Vostell. But it was a last-minute thing. I liked to work with all those commercial scientists. They were very intelligent people, but terribly naive. . . . I felt that in their case the best thing would be not to shock them but to amaze and force them to consider themselves. However, the concert was much too entertaining, as it turned out. They laughed too much. I wanted to accuse the president of the Association of propositioning me, of requesting to kiss my prick, but this was rejected. It would have been a wonderful situation.<sup>18</sup>

The general plans for the various activities and a festival seemed to be progressing, though not as fast as Maciunas had wanted, and a theater had been located in which to present the concert series.

We are getting a nice theater (200 seats) to use for 14 concerts, which will be spread out during Jan. & Feb. weekends. + 2 of them will be film, 2 electronic, 10 live.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to these activities relating to the organization and planning for the events and performances, in fall and winter, 1963, Maciunas worked on several Fluxus publications. When he arrived back in New York, he moved into the lower floor of the building where Knowles and Higgins were living. Maciunas's plan was to set up a printing shop in this space so that he could have the materials for *Fluxus* printed as he wanted. On September 16 Higgins wrote to Vostell that

The whole story of the *Fluxus I* [*Fluxus Yearbox I*] that was to include the American stuff is very strange and long. The simplest form of it is that Maciunas was unable to get the printers to do the work correctly, and, since he is a perfectionist, he is buying a press himself.<sup>20</sup>

The numerous problems Maciunas had with printers in Europe convinced him of the necessity of Fluxus having its own press. Maciunas undoubtedly also felt that then a variety of planned materials could be printed with less expense and with better quality control. These plans never materialized.<sup>21</sup>

Sometime in fall or winter, 1963, Maciunas decided to establish a space just for Fluxus activities. Most likely around October, he decided to convert a second-floor space at 359 Canal Street into a center for Fluxus. This loft was to be divided into one space for a "FLUXSHOP" and another for a "FLUXHALL." The shop would be a distribution center for Fluxus publications and objects and a store where people could purchase these same materials. A performance space for the presentation of activities, events, and concerts, the "FLUXHALL" was to be connected to this.<sup>22</sup> Maciunas specifically developed the Canal Street Fluxhall as a performance space that he could count on having when he needed it for the upcoming performances, should none of the other theater spaces be available.

At the same time, he also continued to work on unfinished projects that he had begun in Europe, as well as starting a few new artists' projects. Thus, he started to work on *Fluxus Yearbox I*, renamed *Fluxus I*, some of the other anthologies, and several individual artists' works. In another letter to Vostell, Higgins

elaborated the developing plans for a press and Fluxus publications.

Maciunas, as always, is a joy to have around. He is settled, has a job, and is about to buy a printing press. Fluxus was completed, as you know (the American issue). But it was not good enough, so he threw some of it away. This fall he plans for a lot of things to appear at once. Everything from my book to American Fluxus, the Williams and Filliou books.<sup>23</sup>

The various Fluxus yearboxes had not been continued in, fall, 1963. Maciunas wanted to print additional materials to supplement those already printed in Europe, or to reprint some of them, and he anticipated the setup of Fluxus' own press in the United States. In addition to the yearboxes, which were partially finished, he had brought from Europe the various elements for Brecht's *Water Yam* (the printed score cards and the labels), which he assembled and tried to sell in New York along with Young's *Compositions 1961* and Spoerri's *L'Optique Moderne*. Although he gave away a few of these completed works, it seems that he was not able to sell many at all, nor could any of the other "distributors" in Europe, such as Tomas Schmit, Willem de Ridder, or Ben Vautier. This was primarily the result of the fact that at this time there was no real distribution mechanism in operation and thus no way to sell these works to an audience other than artists and musicians. Until 1964, then, the Fluxshop in New York City existed more on paper than in reality; also, not many works were actually ready for sale until after 1963.

In addition to these projects, Maciunas continued to develop other new publications, especially those by individual artists. These included Ay-O's *Tactile Box, Events* by Takehisa Kosugi, *Events* and *Endless Box* by Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, Alison Knowles' *Bean Rolls*, several works by Ben Vautier including a *Mystery Box*, and *Events* by Robert Watts. All were part of a program Maciunas had begun to formulate in fall, 1962 for publishing the complete works as well as individual pieces by the artists associated with Fluxus. The other major new project Maciunas began at the end of 1963 was a Fluxus newspaper. This was an extension of Brecht's idea of a newspaper for the YAM festival in May, 1963. Brecht had written to Maciunas in Europe telling him about his idea.

by mid-January I would like to publish the first edition of something like a newspaper, announcing the availability of works like FLUXUS,

Patterson's Methods & Processes, Higgins' Legends, event scores, etc.; carrying public notices, who's doing what; perhaps including works themselves (of course!), announcing Yam Lectures, Yamtime, Festi Fluxori (or whatever the pl. is) . . . Would you like to print this—do you have the press time—or could it be done as easily and cheaply here . . . However it looks for your doing the printing, please send me by airmail FLUXUS ads, notices, news, anything you would like to include in the first issue.<sup>24</sup>

Maciunas was unable to print Brecht's newspaper in Germany, so it was produced in the United States for the Yam festival. Maciunas, however, liked the idea so much that when he returned to New York he asked Brecht to do more issues of a newspaper that would be underwritten and published by Fluxus. Brecht was uncertain about the arrangements, so Maciunas wrote to him at the end of September of 1963.

Alison tells me you have ready material for the next newspaper and are not certain whether Fluxus would finance it . . . But Fluxus *WILL FINANCE IT!* So either send us your paste up or go ahead & print it—OK? May call it any name then add FLUXUS CC [outlined in a box] your Water Yam is FLUXUS C so your newspaper CC OK? <sup>25</sup>

Eventually, the first issue, which appeared in January 1964, was called *cc V TRE*, the *cc* being Maciunas' designation for a Brecht work and *V TRE* coming from Brecht's earlier YAM festival newspaper. Once again in the fall and winter, 1963, however, all the ongoing projects as well as the newer projects were postponed, sometime in November, 1963. This situation was the result of Maciunas' continuing poor health, monetary problems, and his persistent desire to try to do too much at once.

In the middle of November, he wrote to Philip Kaplan (who had ordered a copy of *Fluxus I*) that it had been decided not to issue *Fluxus I* in the form of a separate anthology.<sup>26</sup> Maciunas further told Kaplan that the collected contents from this yearbox would be published instead in the Fluxus newspapers, and the emphasis of the future publications would be on "Fluxus solo editions."<sup>27</sup> The reason he gave for this change was simply "financial difficulties."<sup>28</sup>

Maciunas' renewed series of health problems made it especially hard for him to continue to organize and direct the plans for Fluxus in New York City. Dick Higgins wrote to Schmit about Maciunas'

poor health and how this affected the development of the various Fluxus projects.

George is very sick. He takes so much medicine it ruins his nerves, but he refuses to stop — maybe he can't. You have to tell him every thing three times, and even then he forgets. But worst of all, he doesn't believe he is half-incapacitated. He thinks he has done things he hasn't, he forgets he has already done things. He is always angry — or seems angry, when he is not. DON'T TAKE HIS SCOLDING SERIOUSLY, not now. Until he recovers his health, he is not able to do much effectively, and there will be no NYC Fluxus.<sup>29</sup>

Because of Maciunas's health problems and his hope that several of the artists then in Europe and Japan would come to New York in spring, 1964, the plans for the New York festival were postponed again until March through May, 1964.

By the beginning of January, several changes occurred so that it briefly seemed that Fluxus might have a better year in 1964. A space had been located by Jonas Mekas for one of his own projects, but Fluxus could also use this space as a theater for its concerts. Maciunas wrote that:

We FINALLY got our own theater: in a fireproof concrete former garage — 183 Christopher Str . . . Mekas has leased it for \$400 per month & given me one evening per week for whole year. So we can make year-long FLUXUS festival.<sup>30</sup>

By the beginning of 1964, Maciunas had also changed his mind and decided not to abandon *Fluxus I*, issuing it in a new form. The geographic or national format was dropped in favor of a more open, internationally based pool of artists.<sup>31</sup> Maciunas also reduced the amount of material to be included so that the new contents would consist primarily of what had been already printed.<sup>32</sup> All the essays and poetry that had initially been planned for inclusion were also to be dropped from this revised version.<sup>33</sup>

Another reason that 1964 seemed to start off well was that one of the new major projects, *cc V TRE*, had been successfully produced by the beginning of that year. The first issue of the Fluxus newspaper, which came out in January, was edited by "George Brecht and the Fluxus Editorial Council." This council was primarily Maciunas, who had done much of the design work for the newspaper and had solicited a fair amount of the material repro-

duced.<sup>34</sup> This issue included advertisements for Fluxus works from 1963 and 1964, announcements for the "Fluxus Festival in N.Y. March—May," scores for numerous pieces and events by artists associated with Fluxus, and various found texts and images Brecht had arranged.

In addition to the newspaper, Maciunas planned to produce several new works and publications in the coming year. Although most of these pieces had been discussed or were in progress since 1963, they were listed as "1964 Editions." *cc V TRE* announced that these new 1964 editions would include works by Henry Flynt, Alison Knowles, Robert Filliou, Ben Patterson, Dick Higgins, Robert Watts, Nam June Paik, and others. The list also indicated that several essays by Henry Flynt, a "canned bean roll" by Alison Knowles, a "Suitcase" by Robert Watts, and a selection of Ben Patterson's works were to be included in "complete works" publications, and that plans were being made for some single works and "complete" or "collected works" of several other artists, including Tomas Schmit, Emmett Williams, Ben Vautier, and Robert Filliou. Maciunas was also in the process of producing a publication by Dick Higgins, *Jefferson's Birthday*, a collection of Higgins' writings and works from April, 1962, to April, 1963.

The first Fluxus publication from 1964, *cc V TRE*, was the focus of a certain amount of attention, but not all of it was positive. A number of artists, such as Knowles, Brecht, Watts, and Vostell, approved of this publication, but there were several others who did not like it at all. Higgins thought it was a mish-mash of material, and he told Vostell that he "was very disappointed. Such Raggie-taggle—sort of a more mechanized version of Picabia's '22.'"<sup>35</sup> The strongest and most negative reaction to *cc V TRE* came from Tomas Schmit, who wrote a long letter to Maciunas about what he thought to be the childishness of the newspaper.

dear george (as well Brecht as Maciunas) since i am not sure who is responsible for the V TRE . . . i am deeply disappointed and angry about that "V TRE" !!!!! . . . the whole paper, looks exactly like what comes out if bourgeoisie gets drunk—maybe you know the german "kegelklubs" (sort of bowling clubs []) . . . which is a very typical institution of german bourgeoisie: if those people make a feast, they print newspapers—"bierzeitungen"—that look really to[o] much like your V TRE: nicely mixed up and nicely silly—and we (and all german students) used to make such papers . . . just to enjoy ourselves—BUT

FLUXUS people should keep away from just only enjoying themselves!!!! . . . the other junk . . . and the mixing up . . . i say its terrific silly!!! . . . you simply cant expect me distributing that in germany!! dont send me any more—please look for another fellow doing the distribution! . . . george: i hope you regard this letter as part of my constructive way of FLUXUS collaborating—i do so—its really a bad thing the V TRE. . . .<sup>36</sup>

The role of humor became one of the main issues that divided Fluxus artists. Some, such as Schmit, felt that humor, particularly the kind evidenced in *cc V TRE*, was too plebian. Maciunas, by contrast, saw humor and games as an effective means to attack serious culture. Even with this mixed reaction, he and Brecht went ahead and organized and published *cc V TRE* No. 2 in February, 1964.<sup>37</sup>

The negative reaction to the newspaper was just one aspect of the growing dissatisfaction of a number of artists then associated with Fluxus. By the middle of February, what had seemed to be a positive start in the new year became an increasingly tense situation that potentially jeopardized the continuation of Fluxus as a group. The continual delays in Fluxus publications were becoming a serious point of contention between Maciunas and some of the Fluxus artists. Ben Patterson, Dick Higgins, and Tomas Schmit had all begun to distance themselves from Maciunas and Fluxus because of what they felt were problems with the ability of Fluxus—that is, Maciunas—to get things done. Higgins wrote to Vostell about this situation and confided in him that:

My relations with Maciunas are a little strained. He is alienating people whom I like very much—you, Thomas, and now Emmett. Patterson is seriously considering withdrawing from all future Fluxus publications and events after the New York Festival (March through May) for which he is committed, because Maciunas keeps postponing his (Patterson's) book. Similarly, I am committed to do my book with George, but afterwards I prefer to withdraw . . . This is, of course very confidential.<sup>38</sup>

The increasing tension among the various artists associated with Fluxus was not just between Maciunas and the others, but also among several different individuals. A number of people, but particularly Dick Higgins, felt that Ben Patterson was too focused on himself and not the collective activities of the group;<sup>39</sup> Daniel



Spoerri had angered some by suggesting that, as a "professional," he "did not want to be mixed in Fluxus affairs;"<sup>40</sup> several artists felt that Robert Watts was not serious enough.<sup>41</sup> These complaints stemmed from the artists' diverging points of view as to the future direction of Fluxus. Many of the Europeans saw the increasing emphasis on humor as a depoliticization of Fluxus objectives. The influence of Watts, and to a degree Brecht, on Maciunas was viewed as the cause of this shift. The influence of the less politically motivated Fluxus artists on Maciunas was taken as evidence that Fluxus was losing its confrontational edge and becoming non-political. In an odd way, this negative reaction to the incorporation of humor was based on the view that Fluxus could degenerate into a re-hashing of Dada. In fact, as several artists began to disagree with the directions of Fluxus, a convenient attack was to say that Fluxus was just doing what Dada had done. Maciunas, though, saw the incorporation of humor into Fluxus not only as a means to attack higher art but also as a way to create a "non-art reality" that would attract an increased audience. Maciunas had not abandoned his own interests in more direct confrontational actions, but he also realized that he could not get the group to agree on such plans. He was thus beginning to re-evaluate the means and methods that Fluxus could use to achieve its goals of a more open-ended awareness of "reality" while simultaneously questioning the pretentiousness of art.

The other major issue in these disputes was related to the nature of the Fluxus "collective." Fluxus had since its inception presented itself as a collective, but in actuality it operated as a much looser association of artists. What had given Fluxus its collective quality was the organizational efforts of Maciunas. As Maciunas' ability to get everything done increasingly faltered in this period, many artists started blaming one another and Maciunas for the lack of a collective attitude. This was in part a valid observation: since Maciunas was not able to realize the artists' individual projects, they began to lose interest in the group and became less involved in its activities. Maciunas' increased emphasis on a collective front for Fluxus in this period was in part related to his desire to maintain a unified public image for Fluxus when it was actually becoming more and more factionalized. The real issue was not that Fluxus was becoming less collective, but that many artists were becoming more frustrated because Fluxus was at a productive standstill.<sup>42</sup>

Higgins attributed a possible break-up of the group to "organizational problems."

When the big bust comes, it's not that we'll fight, since, to begin with, there is no group, it's that over the years so many of our activities have been done together, and after they'll be separate. I think that organizational unity isn't healthy in this case . . .<sup>43</sup>

The problems with "organizational unity," as Higgins describes it, indicate that the focus of most of the growing tension was predominantly directed toward Maciunas, since he had taken it upon himself to be primarily responsible for the general organization of Fluxus events and all the publications. Higgins in particular had begun to conclude that beyond just not getting the materials produced Maciunas was expanding his organizational role into that of a leader of a "movement." "There's no point in belonging to a 'movement,' and Maciunas more and more behaves like an admittedly-anonymous founder of a movement."<sup>44</sup>

This situation was not one-sided. Maciunas felt that other artists were not participating to the extent needed in order to carry out the various Fluxus projects. He was increasingly isolated, however, because he had not finished many of the planned or started projects. This situation was made even more problematic because his growing isolation from some of the key artists made it even harder for him to finish the ongoing projects.

In February, nevertheless, the second number of *cc V TRE*, which was very similar to the January number, was issued. Included were found texts and images, a list of the Fluxus publications for 1963 and 1964, scores and texts for works, and an advertisement for the upcoming New York Fluxus festival. Although some of the artists did not recognize it at the time, January and February, 1964, was a very productive period for Maciunas and would lead to the completion of 15 or 16 Fluxus works by the beginning of March. The tensions in the group, however, were still increasing. On February 1, Maciunas wrote to Williams that most of the people had failed to do what they had agreed regarding planned projects, especially for the preparations for the upcoming New York City event.

Everything happened as I was afraid it would, all people assigned to be responsible in certain activities just did nothing, so Al Hansen

disappeared, George Brecht asked me to continue on paper V TRE (him contributing a portion, but me doing all the mountain of technical work—paste-up, etc, etc.) & nobody doing anything about theaters, exhibits, promotion—so now it ends up that I have to do it all, Dick & Alison being the only ones helping actively, while all others are just waiting for all arrangements to be made so they can come as “stars” to perform, etc. That’s the very last festival I am organizing (on such basis).<sup>45</sup>

Although Maciunas wrote that Knowles and Higgins were the only ones still actively helping in the preparations, Higgins was also becoming increasingly aggravated with Maciunas and thus less inclined to work with him. Higgins wrote to Schmit in the end of February that:

I am not interested in Flynt or in Maciunas’s newspaper, and as soon as my manuscript is set in type, I will quit Fluxus. I feel sorry for those poor Japanese who are coming all this distance for nothing. Maciunas has got a little tiny theater, which will be almost completely empty, since he does not think it important to make publicity, and since he sends out announcements only to “important people” (who do not know about us, and, therefore, don’t come) and ignores newspapers, bulletin boards where students could read, and so on. I’m fed up it’s a big comedown from Copenhagen.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout the month of March, Maciunas continued to develop and produce Fluxus works and publications as well as prepare for the concert series. In March, the third number of the newspaper was published. This was edited by the “Fluxus Editorial Council,” with Brecht acting only as a contributor. The change in editorship was also indicated in the title of the newspaper, which incorporated *cc V TRE* into the extended title, *Fluxus cc Valise TRangle*. The expanded titles making use of V TRE in a sentence or phrase appeared in all future issues produced by Maciunas. Although this issue continued the basic format of the first two numbers, there were some significant changes as well. Among them were Flynt’s “Primary Study (1956-1964),” a short treatise on language, and “From ‘Culture’ to Veramusement,” which was a press release for a picket against “serious culture” by Flynt, Jack Smith, and Tony Conrad that had occurred at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Also included was a lecture by Flynt concerning the doctrine on which this action was based. These two

elements gave the newspaper a more specific theoretical and political edge. The other significant feature of this third number was the center section of the paper that, when folded out, acted as a combined poster for the upcoming Fluxus concerts and events as well as an order form for Fluxus objects and publications. In this section, Maciunas's functionalist design aesthetic is visible. The idea was an extension from his thinking about concretism. He felt that design, especially two-dimensional design, must have a direct association with its use and should not merely decorate an object or visually enhance a text. Thus, Maciunas consistently utilized images in his designs that related directly to the material or idea being presented; for example, the image in his poster for the performance "Street Cleaning Event" was an enlarged photograph of a cobbled street into which he incorporated the text. His combining of images and text was based on an interest in utilizing and modifying appropriated images and employing text as a design element. This latter was related to his awareness of the developments of aspects of concrete poetry in Europe, which emphasized visual qualities of text as related to, but not dependent on, the meaning of that text.

The Fluxus concerts listed in the center section of *Fluxus cc Valise TRangle* were to run from April 11 through May 23. These performances were to include 12 different concerts and presentations which, for the most part, alternated between those of a single work or piece by a single artist, and concerts of multiple works by several artists. In addition to this, the newspaper lists a series of eight lectures by Dick Higgins from April 2 to May 1, and "Street Events each weekend March to May."

The other half of the center foldout contains information on the Fluxshop and the various Fluxus works that one could buy. The Fluxshop, listed as being open daily 2 p.m. to 10 p.m. from April 10 to May 30, is characterized as both a shop and as a "mail order warehouse." This notice illustrates the expanding nature of Maciunas' conception of Fluxus as a distribution mechanism. Although this notice suggests that the warehouse and shop were large operations with cartons of objects waiting to be shipped when ordered (rather than a converted loft space with no real stock other than a few assembled samples and the pre-printed labels and other materials for the various products), it is nevertheless very important. Rather than distributing scores and other conventionally publishable materials, the notice indicates that the focus of Fluxus had

become more object-based (or at least based on types of three-dimensional materials, such as boxes that contained objects like Watts' *Rocks Marked by Even Numbers* or scores on cards like Brecht's *Water Yam*.)

Maciunas' interest in developing the Fluxshop and mail-order warehouse was derived from his idea that the Fluxshop and use of the mail represented non-elitist, broad-based distribution systems. Additionally, these distribution mechanisms, especially the postal system, could be used to distribute three-dimensional materials as well as print. With this in mind, Maciunas designed the list of "available" Fluxus editions as a checklist of works that doubled as a mail-order form, the "FLUX HORN haNDY ORDER."

The contents of Fluxus Editions had been expanded greatly since the last published list in *cc V TRE No.2*. This section is very important, for it provides evidence of the completion of several of the proposed Fluxus works. The list published in March expanded the number of available works from the 22 listed in February to 59. Some of these, such as Brecht's *Pendants, Flags, and Signs*, had multiple variations. Although it is undoubtedly true that not all of these works had been produced already or possibly even designed, many were in fact available. Included in this March issue is a photograph of a number of the completed works, including Ay-O's FLUXUS q *Tactile Box*; George Brecht's FLUXUS c *Water Yam*, FLUXUS cl *Games and Puzzles*, and FLUXUS cm *Boxes*; Alison Knowles' FLUXUS p *Canned Bean Roll*; Takehisa Kosugi's FLUXUS r *Events*; Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi's FLUXUS d *Endless Box*, FLUXUS dd *Events*; Ben Vautier's FLUXUS na *Mystery Boxes*, FLUXUS no *Dirty Water*; Robert Watts' FLUXUS ka *Sand Boxes*, FLUXUS kb *Egg Boxes*, FLUXUS kc *Worm Boxes*, FLUXUS kl *Events*, FLUXUS ku *Odd Numbered Rocks*; La Monte Young's FLUXUS h *Compositions 1961*; (George Maciunas') FLUXUS x *Fluxus Machine*, FLUXUS xx *Mystery Medicine*; FLUXUS 1.<sup>47</sup> By the end of February, when the newspaper was printed, Maciunas had completed at least a prototype version of all of the above-listed works.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout March, as Maciunas prepared for the concert series in April, he had less and less help from other people. In addition to all the organizational activities he had to perform, he was primarily responsible for the design of the graphic elements for the various projects and publications, which he also manufactured and/or assembled himself. He was working full-time as a designer

in a commercial firm in order to pay for all the materials and printing costs. It is no wonder that, by the beginning of April, he was almost to the point of abandoning Fluxus altogether. He increasingly came to believe that no one else was dedicated to the Fluxus collective and that the other artists were primarily concerned with themselves. In early April, Maciunas wrote to Williams expressing his growing feeling that Fluxus was doomed.

I have to work 8 hours, then 8 hours FLUXUS (newspaper, other publications, festival preparations, fixing loft for FLUXSHOP & FLUXHALL), and all ENTIRELY ALONE. Even Dick & Alison does not help anymore. They are all very involved with their own individual compositions & have no time (or desire) for "THE COLLECTIVE", Made big fuss just to put 1 hours work during Saturday for FLUXUS. I think FLUXUS is doomed . . . Thomas [sic] Schmit sold himself to Vostell. Willem de Ridder is promoting only himself. Ben Vautier is promoting only himself. All New York "Fluxus crowd" are promoting only themselves. Japan is still holding out . . . So I have been very dissatisfied [sic] with Fluxus people and am contemplating of "Fazing-out" by this summer & maybe going to Japan.<sup>49</sup>

Another aspect of Maciunas' disappointment about Fluxus was related to continuing money problems. He was coming to realize that, at least for the immediate future, there was no possibility of making any money to expand activities or even to cover the production costs on the various publications and objects. In the beginning of April he wrote the following:

At this time we have sold in N.Y. 4 Brecht complete works, (Water Yams) 996 still on our hands, or \$600 loss, so there is a limit to my expenditures, especially when there is no workable distribution of these works. Newspaper is costing me \$120 each month without one single sale.<sup>50</sup>

The result of these monetary problems (since he was the primary funder) was that several projects could not be completed: the slated "complete works" editions by Williams, Patterson, and Filliou could not be finished as individual works because there was not money to pay for their production. Instead, some of these materials were included in *Fluxus 1*.<sup>51</sup> Any of the problems that confronted Maciunas at this time would have been bad enough individually, but together they seemed overwhelming. The lack of money,

coupled with the apparent lack of support for the collective, was almost more than Maciunas could handle:

I must be out of my mind to flush my money down the drain this way, especially not succeeding, even of holding fluxus people together. Everyone has the mistaken idea that Fluxus is Maciunas the way Decollage = Vostell, instead of Fluxus = collective.<sup>52</sup>

Even though these problems were daunting, both Maciunas and the Fluxus group turned out to be stronger, or at least more resilient, than they looked at the end of March and the beginning of April, 1964. As planned, even with the increasing tensions, the first Fluxus concert series in the United States began in the first week of April at the Canal Street Fluxhall in New York City.<sup>53</sup>

The individual performances of this series were held on the weekends from April 11 to May 23, 1964. The concerts were primarily presented in the second-floor loft space at 356 Canal Street that Maciunas had converted into the Fluxshop and Fluxhall. Along the wall of the stairway leading up to the loft, he had pasted a large number of the printed pointing hands originally produced in connection with his interpretations of Brecht's event piece "direction."<sup>54</sup> To the left of the entrance was a large number of doorbell buttons, pulls, and horn bulbs connected to various noisemakers that one could push, squeeze, or pull simultaneously to announce one's presence and create a kind of sound event. The first space one entered was the Fluxshop, the walls of which were lined with posters from the European Fluxus festivals and other related printed materials. One wall was also lined with cubical shelves that contained various Fluxus objects, publications, and other goods for sale, such as the several issues of *V TRE*, Ay-O's *Finger Boxes* (small boxes with a hole in one side and an invitation to the interactor to stick his finger into the hole to feel what was inside), and Alison Knowles' *Bean Rolls* (a series of square cans that contained small rolls of text and dried beans—a "canned book" as Knowles described them). The performance space was accessible through a door from the Fluxshop. The Fluxhall itself was a medium-sized, rectangular room with no demarcated stage, but a space for performances was set off near the entrance to the hall. There was no physical separation between the audience and the performers, many of whom presented in the first New York Fluxfestival involv-

ing direct interaction between performers and audience. Because of this physical arrangement, there was no sense of an invisible separation or "fourth wall," which traditionally exists in performance spaces and theaters.

This first United States Fluxus festival was scheduled to run from the April 11 through May 23.<sup>35</sup> There were to be a total of twelve concerts. These United States concerts were similar to the European festivals in that the works listed on the posters and in other published materials often were not those presented in the concerts. The total number of documentable performances in this festival was eleven. These consisted of ten concert performances of both single-piece presentations, such as Paik's "Zen for Film" (a clear length of film stock that when shown only projected the white light of the projector), and concerts of numerous works by various composers. The festival also included a street performance by Ben Vautier, Dick Higgins, and Alison Knowles.

The works presented in "12 New York Fluxus Concerts" included many of the kinds of pieces previously presented in the European festivals, such as Brecht's "Word Event" (the word "Exit") and "Drip Music," Williams' "four directional song of doubt for five voices," Maciunas' "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti," Paik's "One for Violin Solo," and most of the works that had become Fluxus standards in Europe. In addition to these, however, a large number of new works that were noticeably different from these earlier pieces were added. In addition, several new event and action-music pieces by Watts, Corner, and others were presented.

This first series of performances in New York City showed evidence of several significant developments, the most important of which was the increasing number of participatory works, particularly in concerts eleven and twelve. Throughout this series, there were several works for which there was no specifically delimited cast of performers or audience. In earlier concerts, works — for example, Bob Watts' "Eat a Fire Alarm" (in which a cake decorated like a fire alarm was served to the audience), or Patterson's "Lick Piece" (in which Letty Eisenhower was covered with whipped cream and the audience was invited to lick it off) — were presented within a series of other event-type pieces that at least implied the separation of performers from the audience, even though the works themselves involved the audience as participants in the



actions. In the eleventh concert of the New York series, two different interactive pieces were presented: Patterson's "Seminar I" and Ay-O's "Shoes." Neither of these had an "audience" or "performers;" rather, all the people at this concert were participants. In the score for "Seminar I," Patterson states that the work was based on team participation and improvisation of the participants. All of the people present were paired off and involved in exploring a series of actions based on those modeled by Patterson and Alison Knowles. These actions included one person making a statement and the other responding; three symmetrical events agreed on by both participants using fingers, eyes, and ears; and one person slapping the other and asking a question, the the second person returning the slap and the question. After these actions were carried out, the participants discussed them and developed their own actions based on these models. In Ay-O's "Shoes," several individuals tied their feet to long boards and tried to walk around the room together. This activity was attempted by several different groups of participants. These pieces illustrate two of the primary directions that future Fluxus performance works would develop: Patterson's work emphasized the performance aspects of ordinary human interactions, while Ay-O's piece stressed a model of activity that many later Fluxus pieces and performances would emulate. Rather than theatrical or musical models, which dominated many of the other event pieces, this new work utilized entertainment-based models such as sports and games.

Two other developments were significant. Several pieces in this concert series countered traditional notions of musical performance. This was not in itself new: many of the action-music performances in earlier Fluxus concerts and festivals had been commentaries on traditional forms of musical performance. In the newer works presented in the "12 New York Fluxus Concerts," however, the relationship of these works to established musical models changed. Rather than aggressively attacking more traditional notions of music and musical performance, as did the Fluxus version of Corner's "Piano Activities" and Young's "556 for Henry Flynt" (the "Fluxus" performance of this piece consisted of striking the keys of a piano 556 times), these newer works presented a more ironic view of musical performance. In Watts' "KKK Trace," for example, the action is not aggressive but humorous. The score essentially describes the actions in the performance of this piece:

French horn is filled in advance with small object or fluid (rice, bearing balls, pingpong balls, mud water, small animals, etc.). The performer then enters the stage, and bows to the audience tipping the bell so the objects cascade out toward the audience.<sup>56</sup>

This performance presented viewers with an unexpected occurrence, but the nature of the surprise was funny rather than shocking. On one level, this kind of work conformed to expected musical conventions: the performer, in this case Maciunas, wore the formal dress expected in a traditional concert performance. The presuppositions about performance types based on the performer's dress were then drawn into question when objects cascaded out of the bell as the performer bowed. What seemed like the action leading up to the performance became the performance itself. The importance of this work and others like it was that it illustrated the expanding role of humor in Fluxus.<sup>57</sup> A humorous playing with expectations of traditional music performances was the primary focus of the next performance, the Flux-orchestra presentation in July, 1964. Prior to this, however, several other important developments for Fluxus occurred.

Sometime in the spring of 1964, the growing conflict between Maciunas and Higgins came to a head. Higgins' desire to see his *Jefferson's Birthday* project published, and Maciunas' inability to publish it, resulted in Higgins' beginning to distance himself from Maciunas and Fluxus, and, most importantly, in Higgins' establishment of Something Else Press. He had waited for Maciunas to publish *Jefferson's Birthday* for almost a year. In fact, work supposedly had begun on the typescript while Maciunas was still in Europe, but by the spring of 1964, the project was still not finished.<sup>58</sup> At this point, Higgins took his manuscript back from Maciunas. The interchange between Maciunas and Higgins was later recounted by Higgins.

One day I dropped by, downstairs in the studio I had found for Maciunas. I asked him when he actually planned to print some of the books he had said he meant to. He said "Maybe next year." I became quite cross, and went out and had quite a bit to drink. I came back. I picked up some of the manuscripts I had gotten for him and took them upstairs to my studio. Then I went home to Alison Knowles . . . I told her that we had founded a press. She asked what its name was. I said it was "original Fluxus." She said that was too aggressive, and why didn't I call it "something else." So I did.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to the frustration Higgins felt about his own publication, he thought Maciunas was not doing what Fluxus had originally been established to do.

The reason that my press has been founded is that I originally wanted to do what Fluxus had been founded to do, namely to propagandize and provide a rostrum for a certain body of material that was 1., experimenting with form (which has been unfashionable for the most part since the 1920's) and 2., exploring the boundaries between arts and other fields, such as politics, psychology, philosophy, etc.<sup>60</sup>

The establishment of Something Else Press was thus directly connected to Higgins' desire to see carried out what he felt to be the original goals of Fluxus. The correctness of his statement that Fluxus was not accomplishing its original goals was debatable, however, and Maciunas believed that Higgins founded Something Else Press in order to compete with Fluxus. More than anything else, this split was the result of differences of opinion about Fluxus and Higgins' frustrations over the lack of printed material being produced by Fluxus. At this point, Higgins did not completely withdraw from Fluxus, but he increasingly focused his attention on Something Else Press.

During the months of April and May, there was little or no Fluxus publication activity. There were no issues of *cc V TRE* produced, and apparently no new Fluxus works of any kind were produced between April and June. Several new projects, though, were being developed by Maciunas and the individual artists with whom he was working, although they would not be produced until the middle of that summer. One of these was the next issue of *cc V TRE*. In June, 1964, the fourth issue of *cc V TRE* was published, entitled *Fluxus cc FiVe ThReE*. Although this issue lists the editors as the "Fluxus Editorial Council," it was more than likely edited primarily by Maciunas, who clearly designed the layout as well. This issue contained an essay by Brecht titled "Something about Fluxus," an essay by Paik on TV and video, a full-page collage by Watts, listings for the Flux Shop and Mail Order Warehouse; twenty documentary photographs by Peter Moore of performances from the Fluxus concerts in April and May, and a full-page announcement for an upcoming Fluxus presentation.

One of the most significant new Fluxus products listed in the announcements for the Fluxus Mail-Order Warehouse was the

*Fluxkit*. This was an anthology of multiples and published materials Maciunas had assembled and packaged in a businessman's attache case. Initially this collective work was to contain 29 different pieces, including scores and other printed works, multiples such as Vautier's *Dirty Water*, Watts' *Rocks Marked by Weight*, *Flux Music Box* (a mechanical music box) by Joe Jones, and two film works by Higgins and Paik. In one of the first preserved references to the *Fluxkit*, Maciunas calls it a "miniature FLUXSHOP."<sup>61</sup> Although the *Fluxkit* was meant to be sold as a unit, it was also clear that Maciunas thought of it as a collective presentation of available Fluxus works, almost like a traveling salesman's sample case. This idea for a grouping of materials was mentioned by Maciunas as early as March, 1963. In a letter to Bob Watts, Maciunas wrote:

now about the contents of your letter: boxes, etc. I mean that we could publish . . . objects which you would 'mass produce' like in a factory . . . like a suitcase of goodies . . . So I suggest for box to do like this: like a travelers suitcase a 'travelers kit' sell for maybe \$50 or so. Then inside all compartmentalized . . . So the suitcase can be sold as a whole or only parts of—each compartment separately. We can advertise . . . this 'hand crafted attache case' with all that a businessman-traveler needs.<sup>62</sup>

It has been suggested that this kind of collective presentation was borrowed by Maciunas from Duchamp's *Boite en Valise*.<sup>63</sup> Although Duchamp was probably an important influence, there were other, more direct precursors to this form of presentation. The most important of these was Bob Watts. From 1962 to 1964, Watts had been using a small suitcase to carry around his performance materials and props.<sup>64</sup> Maciunas undoubtedly had seen this case, which probably influenced his thinking about the development of the *Fluxkit*. As far as can be determined, no *Fluxkit* was produced from the original list of contents published in the fourth issue of the Fluxus newspaper (June, 1964). The date of the first *Fluxkit* cannot be specifically documented, but one of the first was probably made by Maciunas around the summer or fall of 1964 and sent to Willem de Ridder in Amsterdam.<sup>65</sup> The list of *Fluxkit* contents published in newspaper no. 5, *Vacuum TRapEzoid*, March, 1965, fairly accurately indicates the types of works included in the early versions of the *Fluxkit*.<sup>66</sup> The specific contents of the number of *Fluxkits* that Maciunas produced over the next several years varied as new works were developed and produced and as older works were discontinued.

One of the inclusions in the fourth issue of *cc V TRE, Fluxus cc FiVe ThReE* was an announcement in poster form of the next major performance event, "Fluxus Symphony Orchestra in Fluxus Concert." This announcement was printed as a full page that could be torn out and used as a poster for the recital of the Fluxus Symphony Orchestra. This kind of design was typical of Maciunas' creative solutions to his constant need to produce materials at a minimum cost.

Throughout May and into June, Maciunas worked on organizing this Fluxus presentation for the Carnegie Recital Hall.<sup>67</sup> This venue, a smaller space than the main stage and hall, could be rented for events and performances, which Maciunas did. This was not the first time he had been involved with presenting a performance at the recital hall; he had organized a concert of what he called "antique music" there in 1961, prior to his departure for Europe. As an outgrowth of some of the newer kinds of Fluxus pieces and of his recognition that trying to organize another concert series would be too much work for him, Maciunas decided to organize and present a single evening concert of the "Fluxus Symphony Orchestra" rather than a series of events or performances as most of the other presentations had been. By focusing on a single evening, he was able to organize the manifestation without the same kind of problems of collective participation and organization that would arise with a more involved series.

By the time the fourth issue of *cc V TRE* was published in June, Maciunas had determined the program for the Carnegie Recital Hall presentation. The works initially to be performed by the Fluxus Symphony Orchestra were listed at the bottom of the poster. The program includes several "standard" Fluxus works, such as Brecht's "3 Lamp Events" and "Word Event," Paik's "One for Violin Solo," some newer pieces such as Shiomi's "Falling Event" (performed by letting something fall), and some works, that had never been performed in a Fluxus presentation, or were written for this concert, such as Corner's "4th Finale" (in which the performers marched out of the hall and into the street while playing their instruments as a conclusion to the concert). Because some of the works required a fairly large number of performers to make up the "Symphony," Maciunas had to recruit fifteen to twenty performers, many of whom had not previously participated in Fluxus concerts.<sup>68</sup> Presented on June 27, the performance, Maciunas thought, went quite well. He wrote to Williams about it.

We gave a nice formal Flux concert on June 27, at Carnegie Recital Hall with 20 or 25 man symphony orchestra, conductor in tails and all very formal. Hall was almost filled about 250 audience.<sup>69</sup>

This concert was reviewed by Jill Johnson in her "dance" column for the *Village Voice*; she described the concert and many of the individual works performed and also discussed the uniqueness of this kind of work.

All things being exceptions it follows that each thing is a law unto itself, thus how could there be any competition for value among things which have no meaning beyond their own particular design? There can therefore only be indifference to value and not to the performance of a particular duty. Value resides in the performance. That is the elegant high purpose of it. Not indifference but engagement. Fluxus composers are not pro-art or anti-art.<sup>70</sup>

The concert was an extension of the growing number of Fluxus pieces developed as commentaries on traditional musical performances. Several pieces, such as Williams' "Counting Song" and Maciunas' "Piano Piece No. 12 for Nam June Paik," had already been performed at the previous New York Fluxus concerts and in the European festivals. Many of these "standard" works were partially altered to reflect this particular performance situation. Many of the early Fluxus artists and composers were involved with music. Fluxus performance works had always had an important relationship to traditional as well as contemporary music, but the newer works presented in this concert were focused on making fun of the symphony and the audience's expectations of music as "serious culture." This kind of relationship is exemplified by works such as Brecht's "Solo for Violin" and Ay-O's "Rainbow for Wind Orchestra." In these pieces, and others like them, the performers make use of a musical instrument, sheet music, or other standard musical elements, but they do not "play" or perform with them in a traditional manner. In Brecht's "Solo for Violin," the performer polishes the violin rather than playing; in Ay-O's "Rainbow for Wind Orchestra," the musicians use their instruments to blow bubbles.

Several of the other pieces listed in the announcement for the Fluxus Symphony Orchestra in *Fluxus cc FiVe ThReE* were also versions of existing works, such as Shiomi's "Wind Music," that had been adapted for presentation in a symphony concert setting.

The score for "Wind Music," as published by Fluxus in Shiomis' *Events and Games*, is as follows:

WIND MUSIC

1 Raise wind.

2 Be blown by wind. Let anything be blown by wind.

3 Wind at the beach, wind in the street, passing by the car.

Typhoon.<sup>71</sup>

The performance of this piece consisted of the sheet music on the performers' stands being blown away by a large fan in the stage wings.

In all of the presented works, there was an accent on humor and play. It was this same kind of emphasis that Schmit had complained so vehemently about in relation to *cc VTRE*. The growing stress on humor was one of the most significant ways in which Fluxus in the United States was changing from its earlier European phase. Such an approach was seen by some of the European artists as a kind of "dumbing down" of Fluxus, but Maciunas favored this for that very reason. He felt that humor was an improved strategy because the work itself was unpretentious, reflecting his own desire that Fluxus create a non-art that would be non-professional, require no skill, have no commodity value, be concerned with insignificances, and, ultimately, be dispensable.

After the concert at the end of June, Maciunas turned his attentions again to the development and production of Fluxus publications and multiples. Although he continued to focus on producing the works themselves in spring and summer, 1964, he began to realize that a broader system than a single mail-order outlet was needed for distributing and selling the materials. At about this same time, Willem de Ridder, who ran the Amstel 47 gallery in Amsterdam, expressed interest in selling the various Fluxus works in Europe. So in the summer of 1964, Maciunas decided to "decentralize" Fluxus and establish several locations from which the works could be purchased.

I am so piled up with newspapers, cards, boxes of all kinds, I can hardly turn around or scratch myself. That's why I thought it wise to follow Chrushchev's [Nikita Krushchev] advice and Decentralize Fluxus—at least to 3 centers Tokyo—New York—Amsterdam. De Ridder is very energetic and even got an assistant to help out on fluxwork.<sup>72</sup>

From this initial idea, only two “centers” were actually established—one in New York, which already existed, and one in Amsterdam, run by de Ridder. The relationship between Maciunas and de Ridder was not new. De Ridder had received various materials from Maciunas and Schmit as early as summer, 1963, which he sold through his gallery. Maciunas had previously considered establishing several Fluxus centers in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere, and in June, 1964, he decided to confer a kind of “official” Fluxus status on de Ridder’s operation. Although de Ridder had been selling Fluxus material previously, it was not until June or July that the “European Mail-order Warehouse—europeanfluxshop” was officially established as a distribution center in Europe. The European Mail-Order Warehouse and European Fluxshop never really existed as a physical space but only as a location from which one could order various materials through the mail.

In early summer, 1964, de Ridder prepared a price list for the materials to be offered by the European Mail-Order Warehouse.<sup>73</sup> In addition to the materials on these lists, de Ridder added works from other European artists not produced by Maciunas, who had been or were still associated with Fluxus, among them Arthur Kopcke, Eric Andersen, Wim Schippers, and de Ridder himself. The list was sent to Maciunas, who made several corrections and changes and then returned it to de Ridder. It was also mailed out to a number of artists in July, 1964, with an introductory letter from de Ridder’s “secretary,” Lydia M. Luyten. The following letter explains the goals of the European Mail-Order Warehouse:

Our intention is not only to have a centre where to phone or write to get any information about anybody/anything, we did also print provisional price lists for the EUROPEAN MAIL-ORDERHOUSE and the EUROPEAN FLUXSHOP (you’ll find one in this envelope), we have also the opportunity to sell all interesting or uninteresting works, books, magazines, anthologies, boxes, objects, tapes, films . . . etc. etc. (not only FLUXUS) out of all parts of the world here in Europe. That is why we hope you will inform and send us anything you want to get published, performed or either exhibited or sold . . . From here we hope to organize concerts, fashion-shows, exhibits, street events, publications, lectures, performances, etc. in all european countries.<sup>74</sup>



It is evident from this letter that de Ridder's desire was to make this venture not only a Fluxus distribution center but a center for various activities and works from all over the world.<sup>75</sup>

During this period, Maciunas changed his approach to packaging. Until the end of spring, 1964, the various Fluxus objects and publications, such as Brecht's *Water Yam*, Watts' *Events* and *Rocks Marked by Weight*, and Kosugi's *Events*, were contained in wood boxes. Beginning in June, Maciunas began to package some of the existing works in commercially available plastic boxes. The first documented use of a plastic box for this purpose was for Watts' *Rocks Marked by Weight*, advertised in the June issue of *cc V TRE* as being in a "compartmentalized plastic box." Beginning around July, as Maciunas produced new works and made additional copies of existing works, he began to use plastic boxes for all of them. This change was important, for it reduced the necessity of hand-making the wooden boxes, decreasing the associated production costs and labor. The use of pre-existing, commercially produced boxes also eliminated any craft value that might have been associated with the hand-made wooden containers and reinforced the status of the work as a concept.<sup>76</sup>

In, fall, 1964, an event was organized by Maciunas that significantly affected Fluxus: a picketing of Karlheinz Stockhausen's "Originale" performed as part of the "Second Annual New York Festival of the Avant Garde" organized by Charlotte Moorman. This yearly festival had been initiated by Moorman and was indebted to Fluxus for the idea of holding a festival presentation of experimental works in music, art, and performance. Maciunas recognized this and was incensed because he felt that Moorman had purposefully arranged the "First Annual Festival of the Avant Garde" in 1963 to sabotage an interest in a Fluxus festival in New York. As part of this second festival in 1964, Allan Kaprow arranged to present the multi-media performance "Originale." Kaprow invited several of the artists associated with Fluxus, such as Higgins and Paik, to take part in this event. Maciunas, however, was opposed to Stockhausen in general, and to this performance in particular.

Maciunas had a long history of disliking Stockhausen. On February 18, 1963, Maciunas had written to one of the Eastern European associates of Fluxus, Jozef Patkowski, that Fluxus had "completed our 'winter offensive' against bourgeois reactionaries

& Stockhausen . . . .”<sup>77</sup> In another letter from about the same time, Maciunas called Stockhausen a “nationalistic megalomaniac.”<sup>78</sup> Because of his dislike for Stockhausen, Maciunas had already taken part in a demonstration against him organized by Henry Flynt on April 29, 1964.<sup>79</sup> Maciunas also suggested to Vautier that he “could organize also to picket against such composers as Stockhausen in France & Holland . . . .”<sup>80</sup>

The demonstration was held on the day of the performance, September 8, at the Judson Hall, where “Originale” was being performed. There were only about six demonstrators, including Maciunas, Flynt, Ay-O, Saito, Marc Schliefer, and Tony Conrad.<sup>81</sup> The demonstrators marched in front of the entrance carrying signs declaiming “FIGHT MUSICAL RACISM” and “FIGHT RACIST ‘LAWS’ OF MUSIC” and passed out a single-page leaflet declaring their position against Stockhausen and European “high art.” The demonstration was rather uneventful: one reviewer even thought that it was all part of the performance.<sup>82</sup>

Maciunas organized the “Originale” picket for two reasons. The first was his view that Stockhausen represented the cultural elitism of “high culture” and thus should be attacked because of the inherent racism of musical “high culture.” Secondly, Maciunas singled out Stockhausen because of his fame and position as a European “leader” in new music, which Maciunas felt was racist because it disregarded the music of non-whites, particularly Blacks. The elements of “serious culture” that Stockhausen represented were attacked by Maciunas and the other protesters in the flyer handed out at the demonstration.

Of all the world’s cultures, aristocratic European Art has developed the most elaborate body of “Laws of Music” ever known . . . Stockhausen is a characteristic European-North American ruling class Artist. His magazine, *The Series*, has hardly condescended to mention plebeian or non-European music at all . . . But Stockhausen’s real importance . . . is that he is the fountainhead of “ideas” to shore up the doctrine of white plutocratic European Art’s supremacy.<sup>83</sup>

The other probable reason Maciunas wanted to picket this performance was that he saw the sponsoring organization, the New York Festival of the Avant Garde, and particularly Moorman, as competitors to Fluxus. He thought that Moorman, a cellist who would become a long-time collaborator with Paik, was an oppor-

tunist and that by organizing such a presentation she was trying to undercut the Fluxus collective. As Maciunas explained to Brecht,

Charlotte[']s activities here begin to look like a grotesque contest of up-manship. Upon arrival here she found out the Flux-orchestra -[changed] plans and frantically rushed to put together her own festival a few weeks before Flux- even though it fell in a bad season. This "who can be firstest" attitude did not end there. I sponsored Kosugi's arrival here for Flux- , so could feature many of his pieces perf[ormed] by himself, so sure enough she entices him to perf[orm] practically same pieces in her affair. We printed with your symph.3 and she comes up with no. 4. You see it could not have be 2 or 1. but 4. (one-up). It would be just plain comical if her purpose was just a tournament in up-manship, rather than an urge of an inflated ego to destroy Fluxus as competitor.<sup>84</sup>

Because of this rivalry, Maciunas asked that none of the artists associated with Fluxus participate in the 2nd Annual New York Festival of the AvantGarde. He also wrote to Moorman and told her that these artists would not participate because she was not part of Fluxus.<sup>85</sup> The increasingly dictatorial manner of Maciunas as evidenced in this exchange was ultimately based upon his approach to maintaining the strength of the collective. He had told Higgins he believed that in democracies people only contributed what they pleased and that to "extract all possible contributions from all, requires strong totalitarianism."<sup>86</sup> The repercussions of this protest against Stockhausen (which Maciunas later claimed was not even a part of Fluxus) were ultimately more significant to Fluxus than the protest. Because of his apparently dictatorial statements, the tensions between Maciunas and Higgins exploded into an outright conflict. In August of 1964, Higgins explained his position to Vostell.

Maciunas told Charlotte Moorman that Brecht, Ay-O, and I could not be in an interesting festival she was making, because she was [not] part of fluxus. This was outrageous. I had already told George that I was not interested in fluxus, that I would live up to my commitments and after that, nothing. So he doesn't yet know it, but I am going to have to get him out of the way. I am less diplomatic than you, and much less political. But now I have to be either a bastard or be cut off from my friends. George has been trying to cut me off from Allan Kaprow — which is impossible, since I am a fighter for Allan and vice versa, since

years. But since he is trying to blackmail me into sticking with him, I will use the same procedure. I am going to join Allan Kaprow in Originale, which Brecht and Jones and Ay-O were prevented from working-in by Maciunas's blackmail (naturally the result was that Brecht, Jones, and Ay-o are now completely against Fluxus). Maciunas is picketing the performance (with Flynt). He expects me to join him. I am 1., not going to join him, thus depriving him of expected support. 2., I will perform my vocal sonata and expel him from Fluxus. 3., I have already sent Flynt's work to my friend Mne. Joudina, who is asst. director of the Ministry of Culture in Moscow, and is my main contact there . . . explaining that Maciunas published it, and that he (she knows this already, and has known him for years) wants to emigrate there: since Flynt is an out-and-out Trotskyite, though he doesn't admit it, Maciunas will not be allowed into Russia again. 4. I am sending Flynt's papers to Japan to the key people there — Ay-O has already written them — to discourage the people there from doing the fluxus festival they plan for march, and 5. I am sending around a mimeo pamphlet comparing Flynt cum Maciunas with Goebbels cum Streicher to the political groups through whom both work. This goes against the grain, but there are things which must be done. Maciunas has progressively antagonized all the best people, who started out to work with him, from you, Hansen, Spoenri, Kaprow, etc. through (very recent) Paik, Brecht, and myself. His presence is not just embarrassing, it is damaging and intolerable.<sup>87</sup>

Higgins' views, or for that matter those of the other artists who felt similarly, did not immediately manifest themselves in relation to Fluxus as a collective. It was not until October that these tensions came to a head. The negative reaction to the "Originale" picket and the events surrounding Maciunas' opposition to the performance was primarily directed at Maciunas.

Although Higgins had shared some of Maciunas' political views in the past, he was coming to believe that such views were destructive to Fluxus. In numerous letters from this period, Higgins mentions that Maciunas was "alienating all the best artists." There were two primary issues involved in this conflict between Maciunas and Higgins. First, this conflict was really a power struggle for leadership of the group of artists associated with Fluxus, if not Fluxus itself. Thus, Higgins' reactions should be seen as part of an undermining of Maciunas as an attempt to get other artists to reject him. Secondly, this was the most significant manifestation of the artists' very divergent beliefs about the political role for Fluxus.

Ultimately, Maciunas was the only member of Fluxus who was committed to developing a social and political praxis.<sup>88</sup> Many of the other artists, such as Higgins, talked about political commitment, but they were not willing to go as far as Maciunas. Thus, the specific political nature of Fluxus was a result of Maciunas' own concerns, rather than a reflection of the views of the group as a whole.

By the beginning of October, the situation had come to a crisis point. Several artists asked Maciunas to step down as the organizational leader (or "chairman") of Fluxus. Higgins explained to Schmit in a letter dated October 10th that:

Maciunas is gone. Joe Jones, George Brecht, and Ay-O kicked him out of Fluxus. I was already out, so I couldn't help. Paik too. Maciunas and Flynt made the stupidest picket of Kaprow's "Stockhausen Originale" — very good Kaprow and more Kaprow than Stockhausen.<sup>89</sup>

The situation surrounding the aftermath of the picket against the performance of "Originale" was later explained in a little more detail by Higgins:

It was most embarrassing to those of us who took fluxus seriously. Joe Jones was the only one who didn't complain to Maciunas: he asked him to resign from Fluxus, so that the name might somehow continue to be of use. Maciunas did, naming Watts as new chairman . . .<sup>90</sup>

These occurrences, though, seemed to have little effect on the plans of Fluxus as a sponsoring organization. Shortly after the picket against "Originale," and around the time that Maciunas stepped down as the chairman, another Fluxus festival began. This presentation series began in the middle of September and included, in addition to Maciunas, a number of the artists who had been opposed to the picket, such as Higgins, Ay-O, and Joe Jones.

Maciunas had been planning for at least a month what he called a "Perpetual Fluxus Festival" to begin in September, 1964, at the Washington Square Gallery. This series of events was to be a year-long presentation with two or three performances or activities each month. These presentations were initially scheduled to begin on September 4, but because of the protest against "Originale" and the tensions it created, the first performances never occurred. The first presentation was the "Fluxus Olympic Games" on the September 18. Of the 26 originally advertised presentations, only five were held:

"Fluxus Olympic Games," "Ayo: 3 Rainbow Events" (October 16), "Chieko Shiomi: Compositions" (October 30), "Joe Jones: Treasure Hunt" (November 3), and "Dick Higgins: Theater" (December 11). This series lasted only a short time because the gallery in which it was being presented closed and probably because there was no one else besides Maciunas willing or able to oversee the organization of the series.<sup>91</sup>

By the end of November, Maciunas wanted to reaffirm his commitment to Fluxus as a collective, which in actuality meant that he again wanted to be in charge of the organization. Higgins wrote to Tomas Schmit about Maciunas and Fluxus in the end of November.

Maciunas has become disillusioned with Flynt. As a result, he wants to refound Fluxus. But nobody will work with him. At the same time, Paik wants to start Fluxus again, with some Japanese designer for chairman. I say fine, but under a new name, or a variant of the old name — anybody for "Fujuxus?" But really, it's all an attempt to blow life into a dead body. So much water is under the bridge. So many of us have had problems. We are older: we know a little more. Any new fluxus would have to be made up of young men who acted like old men, warming their hands around a dying fire. I'm afraid this is not our need. So Maciunas walks quietly through the city. He is really most unhappy. It is Flynt who has won, nihilistic Trotskyite that he is, and nobody else. . . . I saw Maciunas today, and, thomas, it is really tragic how sad and broken he is. What can we say? <sup>92</sup>

Although Maciunas had supposedly turned the chairmanship of Fluxus over to Watts in September or October, Watts was not that interested in doing all the day-to-day organizational work Maciunas had done. Sometime in the last month or two of 1964, Maciunas again reassumed the organizational leadership of Fluxus because Watts did not want to do it; in fact, no one was interested or able.<sup>93</sup> But in the middle of December, Maciunas' health deteriorated again, and on his doctor's orders, he left New York City and went to Arizona for a while to try to help his asthma.<sup>94</sup> As a result of continuing tensions — primarily between Maciunas and Higgins — and Maciunas' departure for Arizona, there was no public activity under the name Fluxus from the middle of December, 1964, until February, 1965.

The period from the fall, 1964, to the spring, 1965, was a crucial period in the development of Fluxus. Because of the conflicts at the end of 1964, Fluxus would change both in terms of the artists associated with the collective and its direction and emphasis. From 1965 onwards, the activities would markedly shift away from the emphasis on public performances and concerts. While Fluxus had always directed its energies toward publication (and, beginning in 1963, toward production of artists' multiples), it derived its principal public recognition from performances and festivals. With several original members of the Fluxus group, including Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low, La Monte Young, Alison Knowles, Wolf Vostell, Tomas Schmit, and Nam June Paik, distancing themselves from Maciunas at the end of 1964, this performance emphasis was altered. Looking back to this period, Maciunas wrote to Higgins in 1966 that, by the end of 1965, if not earlier, he assumed that many of the artists were no longer interested in directly participating in Fluxus activities.

you said . . . that you quit Fluxus, not only you, but in your own words "everybody". So, all I did was take your word for a fact and assumed everybody quit, except that is people who later denied this assumption. That is how Phil Corner, Alison, Ben Patterson & Paik got themselves in company with yourself (& for a while Bob Watts), because as you said you were all shocked by Henry's & mine action. . . . Kosugi did a classic double cross a year ago. Tomas quit himself. Henry Flynt quit himself, Jackson quit himself . . .<sup>95</sup>

With the factionalization of the original group in 1964 and 1965, Fluxus began to focus more attention on the production of artists' multiples and publications until the beginning of the 1970s. There were still performances sponsored by Fluxus, but the importance of performances and concerts as a public outlet was never again as strong or significant as it had been from 1962 to 1964.

The early phase in the United States significantly altered the membership and directions of Fluxus. The differences between the artists in the group, particularly those concerning political questions, became much more apparent. As Fluxus gained a more specific focus under Maciunas' organizational leadership, its nature as a loose association of artists was brought into question. Maciunas' ideas about expanding the concrete nature of Fluxus work in relation to his view of Marxist materialism encountered

strong opposition from many of the American artists who were either not politically inclined (Brecht and Watts) or did not share Maciunas' specific political views (Mac Low, Young, and Higgins). Maciunas' continued interest in a political and social praxis, coupled with the personal conflicts of the members, resulted in a re-evaluation of Fluxus. This process was not analytical, for the artists determined their continuing relationships with Fluxus not so much on only political grounds as on those of personality, commitment to collectivity, and their own aims in relation to those of Maciunas and Fluxus.



## Chapter Six

# The Middle Years: The Development of Fluxus Multiples and Publications from 1965 to 1969

The second phase of Fluxus, from 1965 to around the end of 1969, focused on publication and production of Fluxus multiples rather than performances.<sup>1</sup> Although Maciunas had developed extensive plans for publications in the first period of Fluxus and actually produced several works such as George Brecht's *Water Yam*, La Monte Young's *Compositions 1961*, and Daniel Spoerri's and François Dufrène's *L'OPTIQUE MODERNE*, it was not until 1964, and particularly between 1965 and 1968, that the majority of Fluxus multiples were produced. In this second phase, the principal activities of the Fluxus group were focused on the objects, publications, and multiples Maciunas developed from the artists' original ideas and designed and produced under the name Fluxus. This shift in emphasis was in part a response by Maciunas to the factionalization of the original group, but, more importantly, it was linked to the evolution of his thinking about "non-art reality." He saw the creation and production of multiples as a necessary change in the emphasis of Fluxus. The idea of multiples was his extension of printing production techniques into the production of three-dimensional material. Maciunas desired to produce objects that would have the same qualities as mass-produced printed materials, including low cost, high volume, and little or no evidence of exclusivity. Most of these multiples required interaction by the audience. He hoped that this feature would demonstrate the relative dispensability of the work and the self-sufficiency of the audience, and that "anything can be art and anyone can do it."<sup>2</sup>

The Fluxus group was still reforming after the conflicts and changes occurring in 1964 and at the beginning of 1965. In addition to changes already mentioned, George Brecht permanently left the United States for Europe at the beginning of the year.<sup>3</sup> Although Brecht remained an important member of the group, his direct association with Maciunas and Fluxus in the United States decreased after spring, 1965. At the beginning of 1965, Maciunas was still in Arizona for health reasons. From the end of 1964 to the first part of 1965, though, he was simultaneously working on several projects for Fluxus publications and multiples, some of which he was completing and some of which he was just initiating.

Although Maciunas had assembled several copies of *Fluxus I* in 1964, the first major assembly and production of this publication was completed either while he was in Arizona or shortly after he returned to New York.<sup>4</sup> The final form of *Fluxus I* was a series of brown mailing envelopes that contained various individual artists' works, such as Kubota's *Flux Napkin* and Knowles' *Glove to be Worn While Examining*, pages of texts, including Filliou's "Whispered History of Art (incomplete)," scores for many action-music and event pieces, photos, and other printed materials, such as a number of monogram cards based on verbal puns or visual experiments with the artists' names. These envelopes were bound together using bolts.<sup>5</sup> This format, utilizing envelopes to contain the contents, was the final form of Maciunas' idea for making this publication expandable. By using envelopes, he could and did alter the contents of *Fluxus I*. At this point he was no longer considering issuing both a regular and a "luxus" edition, but only one version that combined aspects of both.<sup>6</sup> When Maciunas first produced these copies of *Fluxus I* in 1965, he made two slightly different variations. One version contained the artists' name monogram cards in an envelope at the front of the book, while in the other version these same monogram cards were joined together in an accordion fold attached to the back of the book. Maciunas explained to Vautier:

I have mailed to you: 5—Fluxus no.1 anthology, without boxes & with cards in front envelope instead of back harmonica 1—Fluxus no. 1 in wood box and harmonica type contents.—let me know if you want harmonicas for the other 5 books. I can send them separately.<sup>7</sup>

Eventually, Maciunas chose to produce only the version with the accordion-folded monogram cards. *Fluxus I* was also intended to be contained in wooden boxes that were to be like "little crates," as he described them.<sup>8</sup> He wrote to Vautier at the end of January about *Fluxus I*, asking for more materials and explaining the production process:

Fluxus I . . . books are limited in number (total only 100), because they are all hand made [assembled] and it takes a few hours to make each one. So we sell them for \$12, but you can sell them for less. You do not have to send me money . . . PLEASE ! send 100 copies of your part in the book. We ran out of your "bag over the head" then ran out of small booklets you sent, then ran out of record labels, so we have NOTHING FROM YOU TO PUT IN FLUXUSI!!! So please send a quantity of your contribution. Send anything you like.<sup>9</sup>

Because of the evolving form of *Fluxus I* and the nature of its contents, many of which could not be printed, assembled, or bound in a traditional way, each copy of *Fluxus I* required a fair amount of time to produce and assemble. As a result, Maciunas thought that their cost was relatively high. Although he had originally intended publications to be mass-produced and thus inexpensive, *Fluxus I* did not end up being such a work because the time required for assembly allowed him to produce only a few at a time.<sup>10</sup>

During this same period, Maciunas also decided to renew publishing the Fluxus newspapers (*cc V TRE*). In another attempt to reduce the amount of work he was directly responsible for, Maciunas made an arrangement with Shigeo Kubota to put out these new issues. Kubota had come from Japan in the summer of 1964 with Chieko (Mieko) Shiomi and participated in some of the Fluxus performances during the fall. By the beginning of 1965, Maciunas had convinced Kubota to organize, publish, and pay for new issues of the newspaper.<sup>11</sup> In order to make this process more workable, Maciunas agreed to help edit and design the newspaper as well.<sup>12</sup> By the end of January, the process of organizing a new issue of the newspaper had progressed enough for Maciunas to tell Vautier that the next issue would come out in March.<sup>13</sup>

Maciunas also initiated another major new project in the first part of 1965, *Flux Year Box 2*. At the end of January, he wrote to a number of artists, including Vautier, de Ridder, and Watts, asking them for work to include in this new collection.

Now we are preparing Fluxus no. 2. Which will be not a book like no.1 but a box like the drawing, with various small items in it, like flip-books (movies) bottles, small games,—all kinds of loose items, a kind of GAME BOX. So please send me also anything you think will fit into such a miniature Flux-kit. Maybe you can make flip-book movies? They should be at least 50 pages to work well. We also will issue only 100 copies. for this you have time till mid Summer. OK? <sup>14</sup>

In the accompanying drawing referred to above, Maciunas sketched a square box that had several different open-topped compartments. This box is indicated as a “wood box opening from top.”<sup>15</sup> The compartments are also drawn to show that they will be designed to hold specific types of materials, such as films, flip books, bottles, and “Geo. Brecht ball games.”

From the start, Maciunas tried to make this project more manageable than *Fluxus I* had been by restricting the types of materials to be included and by selecting a specific group of contributors. He wrote to Bob Watts:

FLUXUS 2 yearbox is now in Planning stage & I am requesting various people to contribute . . . Fluxus 2 will be a more selected collection of people: Ayo, Brecht, Akasegawa, Brouwn, De Maria, Kubota, Kosugi, Bob Morris, Ben Patterson, Yoko Ono, Shiomi, Vautier, Watts, La Monte Young & Saito.<sup>16</sup>

*Flux Year Box 2* reflects Maciunas' developing interests as well as his experiences from other projects. The shape and organization of the box were an extension of his development of the similarly compartmentalized *Fluxkit*. The types of materials slated for inclusion in *Flux Year Box 2* were related to his current interests: games, flip books, multiples in plastic boxes, and especially film.

These anthology productions were another of his design solutions related to the problem of distribution. The works were portable exhibitions that presented the varieties of Fluxus projects in a compact, highly portable form. *Fluxus I*, the *Fluxkit*, and *Flux Year Box 2* represented more than collections of materials: they were events in themselves. The collections were designed and packaged for presentation and interaction; the individual elements must be taken out and handled, interacted with, and manipulated. *Fluxus I* contained many scores for events so that it was an anthology of Fluxus performance work that called for enactment. *Fluxkit* was a

collection of multiples that could become a display of the varieties of projects, many of which were interactive, and *Flux Year Box 2* contained many film loops and a hand-held viewer and was thus a film festival.

Maciunas had long had an interest in producing film as part of Fluxus.<sup>17</sup> As early as August of 1962, he had been in contact with filmmaker Stan van der Beek and had corresponded about using some of his films for a "luxus" version of the initially planned Fluxus yearbooks. Van der Beek suggested Maciunas make flip books from films.<sup>18</sup> Most of the announcements for the early plans of the Fluxus yearboxes included films in the list of contents for the luxus editions. The idea of films was not implemented until 1964, however, when the first films by Higgins and Paik were produced as fluxworks. Throughout the last half of 1964, Maciunas corresponded with numerous other artists about making films for Fluxus and was developing plans for several film projects by Shiomi, George Landow, and others. None of these projects, though, was realized until 1965.

This interest in film was one of the principal factors in the form of *Flux Year Box 2*. The idea of producing the specific format of films (eight millimeter film loops) in *Flux Year Box 2* is traceable to 1963. In a letter to Bob Watts around spring, 1963, Maciunas suggested that Watts might be interested in making films.

then there can be a special offer to sell films . . . Or another idea — I can get in England for one \$ little hand operated 8mm projectors — for one eye, they work only for loops — so why dont you specially make a 8mm film loop !! or several loops — and we included those loops with the 1\$ hand projector . . . but you must design films in loops — any diameter loops. Tell george that too!<sup>19</sup>

This comment is significant in that it was the first mention of the 8mm film loops with hand-held viewers that would later be used in the final version of films in *Flux Year Box 2*.

In March of 1965, Maciunas issued an unnumbered Fluxus newsletter containing a section about the plans for *Flux Year Box 2*, which outlined the types of materials to be included in this publication.

Fluxus 2 . . . will be limited to book events only, i.e. events that are enacted by the reader automatically as he inspects the book or box.

This does not include instructions for theater pieces, poetry of music scores, or events requiring more than one performer. It may include flip books, solo games, or puzzles made of paper or other materials.<sup>20</sup>

Rather than the music and performance scores, poetry, illustrations, statements, and other similar printed materials in *Fluxus I*, *Flux Year Box 2* was to include works that were intentionally interactive. Maciunas gave several examples of this type of work, such as Watts' *Hospital Events*, Ay-O's *Finger Envelope* (a work, based on the principle of his finger boxes, that uses an envelope), and Ben Patterson's *Instruction No. 2* (containing a paper towel, a bar of soap, and the instructions "Please wash your face"). The emphasis of *Flux Year Box 2* on interactive and viewer-activated works, films, and multiples was another example of Maciunas' interest in decentering the role of the artist and artwork and in making the viewer realize that "art" is a pretentious construct, that the ultimate power lies with the audience. This egalitarianism was derived from his political thinking. These interactive works—in fact all Fluxus works—were to be dispensable once they had stimulated a new awareness in the audience. For Maciunas, they were like the Marxist notion of the "vanguard of the proletariat," necessary for a time but ultimately dispensable after they had served their purpose.

This project was also to be different from *Fluxus I* in the way it was funded and assembled. The costs for *Fluxus I* had been paid by Maciunas out of his own earnings, which contributed to some of the delays in production because often he did not have the money needed to pay for the printing costs. In the newsletter statement about *Flux Year Box 2*, he states that the new project will be collectively financed in the following way:

1. Each contributor will prepare 100 of his event (which may be flat or 3-dimensional) and ship them to the address below not later than June 1, 1965.
2. All Flip books will be printed very economically by Fluxus and will be charged to contributors, unless they wish to print these themselves.
3. Fluxus will assemble all contributions into an 8 x 8 x 2 inch box (8 x 8 side to open).
4. Fluxus will distribute 4 free boxes to each contributor.<sup>21</sup>

Under the plans outlined in the Fluxus newsletter from March, 1965, Maciunas would no longer be responsible for everything in

*Flux Year Box 2*, although he would still be in charge of organization of the contents, duplication of the film loops, purchasing the viewers, and assembling and packaging of the whole project. Thus, this work was to be somewhat more collective in the manner of production as well as in content than *Fluxus I*.

The fifth issue of the Fluxus newspaper, titled *FLUXUS Vacuum TRapEzoid*, was issued March, 1965, after Maciunas returned to New York City from Arizona.<sup>22</sup> Although this issue had been previously planned to be published by Kubota, it was probably produced by Maciunas,<sup>23</sup> and while it did not list an editor, as the previous issues had, it was undoubtedly designed by Maciunas and probably edited by him as well. It contains only four different sections on each of the four pages. The front page is a collage based on a repeated found image (a man holding a newspaper, on which is the same image of a man holding a newspaper, on which is . . .) designed by Maciunas. The back page is another piece by George Brecht, similar to his previous text and image collages for the newspaper, entitled *Science River Wax Science*. This composition is a collection of found illustrations and texts on science, medicine, and math. The third page was an advertisement of publications and multiples, including "*Fluxus I*, *Flux Year Box 2* (available September), *Fluxkit*," and numerous works by individual artists available through the "Flux Shop & Mail Order Warehouse." Included in this list of works are several multiples made by Eric Andersen, Arthur Kopcke, and Willem de Ridder that were to be sold through de Ridder's European Flux Shop. Maciunas decided that he wanted to sell these works as well. The third page is another of Maciunas' newspaper announcements that could double as a poster, a full page advertisement for a new "Perpetual Fluxfest" to begin in June, 1965.

Between March and June, when the second "Perpetual Fluxfest" was originally announced, and when the first of these performances was presented, Maciunas continued to work on the numerous projects he had started earlier that year, particularly *Flux Year Box 2*. In the first several months of 1965, he began work on several new works, including pieces by Shiomi, Ay-O, Jones, Saito, Watts, and others. These new pieces included Bob Watts' *FLUXPOST* stamps, of which Maciunas had printed a run of 2,000 and several different versions of Takako Saito's chess sets.<sup>24</sup> In 1965, Saito gave Maciunas a number of chess sets she had created that reinterpreted traditional chess pieces. Instead of the standard pieces, these sets

used grinder bits. In another series of sets, the rank of the individual pieces was not based on visual differentiation but required the players to use other criteria, such as smell or weight, to distinguish each piece.<sup>25</sup> Based on the original sets, Maciunas had some Flux chess sets made. He produced and designed several multiples of his own, including *Ball Checkers*, a checkers set made from an industrial light-diffusion grid and marbles; *Mystery Flux Animal*, a piece of twisted sinew or leather floating in a small bottle of water; and a prototype for his *Fluxorgan*, a series of rubber squeeze bulbs connected to various air-activated, sound-producing devices.<sup>26</sup> Other pieces he worked on in the first half of 1965 included Eric Andersen's *50 Opera* (a series of instruction cards in a plastic box); Ay-O's *Rain Machine* (a sealed plastic box containing moisture); Guiseppe Chiari's *La Strada* (a performance score); Hi Red Center's *Bundle of Events* (a crumpled broadside of events and photo documentation from the Japanese group, edited by Kubota); Joe Jones' *Fluxmusic* (a small plastic box with several wind-up music chimes) and *Flux Music Box* (a larger version of *Fluxmusic* in a briefcase); Chieko Shiomi's *Spatial Poem #1* (a physical manifestation of an earlier event in the form of a map and cards on pins; in the original event she had sent cards to various people around the world, asking them to write something on the card and place it somewhere); and several "Fluxus Tablecloths" (photo prints on cloth of remnants of meals) based on Daniel Spoerri's "31 Variations on a Meal." Most of these pieces, as well as other new works were advertised for sale in the March issue of the Fluxus newspaper (No. 5), but not all of them were actually produced by this time.

The first "Perpetual Fluxfest" had been cancelled in the middle of December, 1964, but by the end of January, 1965, Maciunas was already beginning to plan its revival. In a letter to Vautier, he wrote the following:

Starting March—we shall revive the Perpetual Fluxus festival. Each week an evening devoted to one composer. We will continue through the whole year. This will go on at the Film co-op theater. So we would like to produce an evening of your pieces alone. Therefore—please send us a detailed program of your pieces that you would like us to perform. OK? We would like to plan your evening for April. Please include new pieces also.<sup>27</sup>

The poster/announcement published in March for the upcoming "Perpetual Fluxfest" included a list of nine presentations: eight



performances of a single artist's works and one presentation of "FLUXFILMS." These performances were to be held at the Cinemateque film center run by Jonas Mekas on Sundays from June through August. This new or renewed "Perpetual Fluxfest" presented work by some of the artists scheduled for the first "Perpetual Fluxfest" (but not performed), including Yoko Ono, Willem de Ridder, Guiseppa Chiari, Ben Vautier, and Shigeko Kubota. The announced list of performers also included two artists, James Riddle and Frederic Lieberman, new associates of the group, and one artist, Eric Andersen, who was not new to Fluxus, but not much of his work had been previously performed in Fluxus presentations. Only four of these advertised presentations for the "Perpetual Fluxfest" were actually performed. The first, presented on June 27, was Yoko Ono's "Bag Piece" in which she, her second husband Anthony Cox, and some other people got into a large cloth sack, removed all their clothes, and took a nap (some people have said that they made love). Shigeko Kubota's "Vagina Painting" was presented on July 4, Eric Andersen's "Now you see it, now you don't" on July 11, and several individual pieces of Vautier's that were performed by Maciunas on July 18.<sup>28</sup>

In July, the sixth issue of the Fluxus newspaper, titled *Fluxus Vaudeville TouRnamEnt*, was issued. Like the fifth issue, this one was only four pages long. The contents were: Front page—numerous photographs of several Fluxus and related performances, including the "Fluxus Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall" (June 27, 1964); "Perpetual Fluxfest" at Washington Square Gallery (Fall, 1964); "Fluxus Street Events" (May, 1964); Hi Red Center's "Cleaning Event" and "Roof Event" in Tokyo; and "Fluxfest in Hague."<sup>29</sup> The whole of the middle two pages was used for a poster for the continuation of the "Perpetual Fluxfest" in September, October, and December, 1965. The last page was also used for an announcement of another upcoming presentation, the second Fluxus Symphony Orchestra concert, in September, 1965.

Throughout the summer, Maciunas continued to focus on overseeing and producing the various objects and multiples. Although there do not seem to have been many new works readied for distribution in this period, he worked on a variety of the individual artists' works and on *Flux Year Box 2*. Initially, he had hoped that *Flux Year Box 2* would be ready by the end of the summer, but the production had to be postponed due to a lack of funds to duplicate

the film loops.<sup>30</sup> This anthology contained a varying number of film loops by Maciunas, Ono, Shiomi, Stan van der Beek, Paul Sharits, John Cale, and John Cavanaugh. Most of the films were either realizations of events, such as Shiomi's *Disappearing Music for Face*, a close-up of a gradual transition of someone smiling to not smiling, or experiments with the physical nature of film, such as Cale's *Police Car*, an underexposed sequence of blinking lights on a police car. In this period Maciunas also began to plan for the second "Fluxus Symphony Orchestra" concert.

The success of the first such presentation in 1964, particularly the interest and enjoyment of the audience, convinced Maciunas to present another similar performance. The 1965 performance was planned to include a number of new works, including some by new associates of the group. In summer, 1965, Maciunas actively solicited new compositions for the performance from a number of Fluxus artists, such as Ben Vautier, Yoko Ono, and Anthony Cox. Maciunas wrote to Vautier.

Would you care to compose a piece for orchestra for our Fluxorchestra sept. 25 concert. There will be some 25 players, violins, trumpets, french horn, etc. and Kosugi (who is arriving from Japan) will be the conductor.<sup>31</sup>

In this letter Maciunas goes on to describe some of the other activities to be included in the second Fluxorchestra presentation.

Joe Jones is building a whole mechanical orchestra for the second part. The tickets will be printed on balloons, which must be inflated to permit entry, then the ticket taker will pierce each balloon with a pin. Then the programs will be made into airplanes, and flown down from the balcony to audience. Orchestra members will wear costumes made by Bob Watts, ("T" shirts imprinted with a photo of full size hairy chest - for men, & breasts for women. conductor will wear trousers with imprint of penis).<sup>32</sup>

At the end of the summer of 1965, several problems developed directly related to Maciunas' attempt to control the copyright of Fluxus materials. The first of these was another intensification of the tensions between him and Higgins. Maciunas was increasingly convinced that Higgins' activities with Something Else Press were in direct competition with the activities of Fluxus.

Since he [Higgins] started his publishing venture he has tried as hard as he could to duplicate my efforts by asking Fluxus people whom Fluxus publishes to publish with him not me. Now that is not very ethical. He has so pirated Ben Patterson, Filliou, tried unsuccessfully to pirate Barbara Moore, who is collecting a Flux-cook-book. I don't mind at all when he publishes people like Tomas Schmit, Al Hansen, Ray Johnson, Mac Low, who are not planned for Fluxus publications. There are enough unpublished people around he could use. There is no need for piracy. It is the technique of Wolf Vostell all over again [a reference to Vostell's magazine *De/collage*].<sup>33</sup>

Maciunas also continued to believe that Charlotte Moorman was trying to undermine the performance ventures of Fluxus. By 1965, he had concluded that the Festival of the Avant-Garde was being organized in part as an attempt by Moorman to play a game of onepsmanship with Fluxus.

As a result of these jealousies and Maciunas' desire to stem what he felt was unfair competition, he issued two statements concerning Fluxus copyright arrangements. The first was a single page on the "Conditions for Performing Fluxus Published Compositions, Films & Tapes." This sheet gave a "Basic Condition" and an "Alternative Condition" that applied to the works by the artists listed on the same sheet. The basic condition stipulated that if the "Fluxus compositions outnumber numerically or exceed in duration other, non-fluxus compositions in any concert, the whole concert must be called and advertised as 'FLUXCONCERT' or if the opposite of the above were the case then the presentation of each Fluxus work must be followed by a notice indicating 'BY PERMISSION OF FLUXUS or FLUX-PIECE'." <sup>34</sup> Alternatively, if the conditions were not met, then a fee of \$50 had to be paid to "Each applicable composer, through Fluxus, for each composition performed."<sup>35</sup> At the end of this sheet was a statement concerning the result of any non-compliance by the producers and/or performers with these conditions. In such a case, they would be "liable to a suit in court of law for the recovery of amounts mentioned in alternate condition."<sup>36</sup> These conditions were described as being applicable to the complete works of George Brecht, Hi Red Center, Milan Knizak, George Maciunas, Chieko Shiomi, James Riddle, Ben Vautier, and Robert Watts. In addition to the works by these artists, some individual works by Knowles, Kosugi, Mac Low, Patterson, Paik, Schmit, Williams, Young, and a few others were listed as being covered by the conditions on this sheet.

These stipulations provoked strong reactions among a number of artists listed on the sheet, just as had his first presentation of copyright considerations in *Fluxus News Letter No. 5*. Many felt that such conditions were inappropriate and that people would not perform their works rather than adhere to the conditions. Further, several people thought the sheet meant their works could not be performed without the permission of Fluxus (i.e., Maciunas), or that whenever anyone, other than the artists themselves, wanted to perform a work, he or she would have to pay a fee. Because of these reactions, Maciunas had to issue a kind of disclaimer about the conditions.

SOME HYSTERICAL OUTBURSTS HAVE RECENTLY RESULTED FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE FAILED TO READ THE ATTACHED SHEET AND YET INTERPRETED WHAT WAS NOT WRITTEN. ALL THE SHEET STATES IS THAT PERMISSION IS GRANTED TO ANYONE, ANYWHERE, ANYTIME TO PERFORM ANY FLUXUS PIECE AT NO COST WHATSOEVER, PROVIDED PUBLICITY IS GIVEN TO THE FLUXUS GROUP. CHARGE IS MADE ONLY AS A NEGATIVE INCENTIVE . . . THE RULES WERE ESTABLISHED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING WORKS OF PEOPLE FROM FLUXUS GROUP. EVEN WHEN A SINGLE PIECE IS PERFORMED ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WILL BE PUBLICIZED COLLECTIVELY AND WILL THUS BENEFIT FROM IT. ANYONE OBJECTING TO SUCH A SCHEME SETS HIMSELF IN OPPOSITION TO COLLECTIVE ACTION AND THUS HAS NO BUSINESS BEING ASSOCIATED WITH FLUXUS, WHICH IS A COLLECTIVE NEVER PROMOTING PRIMA DONAS [sic] AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHER MEMBERS.<sup>37</sup>

It is clear from the last part of this statement, as well as from his correspondence from this same period, that Maciunas was increasingly feeling taken advantage of by artists who were not interested in the collective but only in how Fluxus could benefit them. From very early in its development, he had believed that Fluxus must be a collective and that the group should have a certain kind of precedence over the individual. At first this had not been a significant issue; by 1964 and 1965, however, many of the artists felt that this view was unnecessary and too limiting to their own personal development and objectives. Had Maciunas had been willing to downplay this issue, the development of Fluxus might have been different after 1965. But he became more and more outspoken about

the significance of collectivism, and he stridently opposed some of the artists, especially Paik and Higgins, who were now "acting like prima donnas." As a result of Maciunas' views and other factors, by the time of the second Carnegie Recital Hall Concert, many of the artists who had been primary members of the group from 1962 through 1964, such as Higgins, Mac Low, Schmit, Paik, Vostell, Spoerri, and Williams, were no longer directly associated.

By September, 1965, Maciunas had developed a finalized program for the second Fluxorchestra concert. This was published as the "Fluxorchestra Circular Letter No. 2." Here he gives rehearsal and performance times and lists a "revised" program of sixteen compositions for the concert. On September 23, two days before the actual concert, he advertised the concert in the *Village Voice*.

FLUXORCHESTRA PERFORMS 20 WORLD PREMIERS! of  
avant-gardist music, ying yang music, rear garde music, Donald Duck  
Music, antineobaroque music, pataphysical music, no music  
LA MONTE YOUNG conducting an orchestra of 20 unskilled instru-  
mentalists  
LATEST WORKS by the fluxmasters of ding dong: George Brecht, La  
Monte Young, Robert Watts, S. Vanderbeek, Yoko Ono, Chieko Shiomi,  
Joe Jones, Anthony Cox  
FLUXSHOP EXHIBITION at Carnegie Recital Reception Room.

In addition to the concert on September 25, the event included an exhibition of a number of Fluxus publications and multiples. Among them were the works Maciunas had developed with the artists, designed, and produced in 1964 and 1965. In two photographs of the exhibition, set up on a table in the reception room of the Carnegie Recital Hall, a number of works are visible, including *Fluxus I*, several different chess sets by Saito, *Fluxstamps*, *Egg Kit* in a briefcase, *Fingerprint* and *Events* by Watts, *Games and Events* by Shiomi, *Events* by Kosugi, *Bundle of Events* by Hi Red Center, *Games & Puzzles* by Brecht, *Flux Music box* by Jones, and at least one copy of *Fluxkit*. There was an emphasis on humor in many of these works, particularly in the games such as Brecht's *Games & Puzzles*, the various chess sets by Saito, and Watts' *Egg Kit* (not strictly a "game"), which corresponded to the humorous qualities of performances presented in the concert.

Because of the changing nature of the membership in Fluxus at this time, Maciunas had to advertise for performers for this presentation. On August 5, 1965, he placed a small ad in the *Village Voice*

stating: "Instrumentalists wanted by Fluxorchestra for Carnegie Recital Hall concert of Sept. 25. No skill needed." The people who performed in the second Fluxorchestra mostly consisted of those who responded to the ad, some of the artists who were still active in Fluxus along with some of their acquaintances. Thus, the concert was the first Fluxus performance in which the performers were not primarily the artists themselves. This change was in part a reflection of the shifting dynamics of the group, but it was also an indication of the changing emphasis of the performance work of Fluxus.

These works presented in the concert stressed humor, structures of play, and games. The element of humor was to some degree evident quite early in Fluxus performance pieces by Brecht, Patterson, and particularly Watts. From 1965 on, however, the emphasis on humor became a more central feature of Fluxus performances. Two of the pieces performed in particular illustrate this involvement with games: George Brecht's "octet for winds" and Anthony Cox's "tactile pieces for orchestra." Maciunas describes these two pieces in the "Fluxorchestra Circular No. 2."

George Brecht: octet for winds. 4 performers will be seated opposite another 4. A large pan with water will contain a toy sailboat. Performers will blow their instruments at the sail of the boat to push it to opposing side . . . Winning team will get the sailboat, losing one the water in the pan, which they must remove from stage.

Anthony Cox: tactile pieces for orchestra. The orchestra is divided into teams, winds and strings, sitting in opposite rows. Wind instruments must be prepared to be able to shoot out peas . . . Stringed instruments are strung with rubber bands which are used to shoot out paper V missiles . . . In this piece performers are required to hit a performer of opposite team with a missile. If a performer is hit he must exit. The conductor will act as referee.<sup>38</sup>

In both of these pieces, the basic model was games and contests. The humor was an essential part of the performer's activities rather than a by-product of them. In this way, the performers, most of whom were not associated with Fluxus (but people who had responded to Maciunas' ad), had an enjoyable experience, as one would when playing a game. One might play in front of spectators for her or his enjoyment, but one also would play for one's own enjoyment. Similar to team sporting events, these events were a primary experience for the performers and a secondary experience for the audience.

Some of the pieces performed by the Fluxorchestra show evidence of a shift from solo performances to more group-oriented works that were less dependent on specific performers. They also illustrate another significant change in emphasis: most of the works previously performed in Fluxus concerts and festivals did not emphasize traditional performance values or skill. Certain pieces, however, were specifically dependent on the composer as performer, such as Paik's "Simple," performed at the Fluxus festival in Wiesbaden. One reviewer described the actions of this piece as follows: "Paik covered himself with shaving foam, scattered rice and pebbles [beans] on to the floor and into the audience and lamented over a roll of cheap paper. Then abandoning his whimpering he took a running, screaming dive into an antique bathtub full of water."<sup>39</sup> This work and others like it, such as Vostell's "KLEENEX-decollage," were more dependent on the performers' interpretation and were only performed by the composers. Other earlier events and action-music pieces seemed to be modelled after the traditional categories of solo performances or small groups such as quartets. The works presented in the second Fluxorchestra concert were based instead on the form of the orchestra, a larger group of performers in which no one performer has a dominant position. Although this difference could be ascribed to the simple dissimilarity of the musical types on which these performance were based, it was much more than just that. The performances were more collective in nature, less dependent on the performers' skill of interpretation.

To a degree, the change in performance types was related to the change in the composition of the group. In the first several years, Fluxus had been a group of individuals who cooperated, working together presenting their own individual works as well as the works of the other members. Beginning in 1965, however, Fluxus became more of an organization through which a changing cast of participants took part in various activities. By necessity, the activities became more group-based and less dependent on specific individuals. The performances and activities of the group in this period began to focus less on work related to music or theater performance and more on activities related in form to sporting contests, games, and other types of collective "team" activities. The second Fluxorchestra concert was one of the first public manifestations of this more activity-based, collective phase in Fluxus performance.

At the end of 1965, there was one more public presentation by Fluxus, Ay-O's "Rainbow Staircase."<sup>40</sup> This was a one-day presentation, on November 20, of an environment constructed following Ay-O's instructions in the stairway at 365 Canal Street in New York City. This environment was an extension of Ay-O's Exit Events and his tactile boxes (the drawing for the construction of this piece lists it as a "Tactile Staircase Environment"), and it incorporated different colored lights on each landing, altered steps including "rope steps," "soft steps," steps filled with balloons, steps that were covered over, and various other tactile elements, including a series of finger boxes that contained a progression of materials from soft to hard.

From the fall of 1965 through the spring of 1966, Maciunas continued to work on the production of *Fluxus I* and *Flux Year Box 2*, Saito's chess sets, Brecht's *Puzzles & Games*, and, by now, numerous other works by Watts, Brecht, Vautier, and others. The new works that involved Maciunas during this period included several single works by Hi Red Center, Kubota, Shiomi, Vautier, and Albert Fine.<sup>41</sup> Maciunas still planned to produce collections of artists' works, or what he called "Complete Works." In 1965 and 1966, it was his intention to produce the complete works of at least two of the artists new to the Fluxus group, Milan Knizak and Albert Fine.<sup>42</sup> In addition, Maciunas had begun to focus on two specific categories of Fluxus products in 1965 that continued into 1966. These were works related to games and to a new type of Fluxus project he referred to as "Fluxfurniture & accessories."

Maciunas wanted to expand into production of works related to puzzles and games, specifically card games. From the end of 1965 into 1966, he was working with several artists on developing different card games. Although not all were produced at this time, and some were never produced at all, card games by Kubota, Brecht, Filliou, Vautier, Watts, Berner, Maciunas, and possibly others were refined in this period. The first and most important of these card sets was *Deck by George Brecht a fluxgame*. The development and design of *Deck* were begun by Maciunas and Brecht early in 1963. This deck was based on the standard form of playing cards, but the faces were combinations of pictorial line drawings, and the backs were a close-up photo-reproduction of a section of the back of Brecht's head. The cards were produced by a commercial playing-card company and advertised for sale for the first time in the Fluxus Newspaper (number eight) in March, 1966. The only other card games developed



and actually produced in 1966 were *Fluxus Missing Card Deck* (a deck of cards with a missing card) by Ben Vautier, and *Same Card Deck* (a deck of all the same card) by Maciunas.<sup>43</sup>

The increasing emphasis on games and sports was a manifestation of Maciunas' continuing interest in creating a non-art reality. In this period, he began to describe the concerns of Fluxus a little differently than he had previously; now Fluxus was concerned with "art-amusement." He continually emphasized the importance of establishing the artist as a "non-professional," and he came to believe that "art-amusement" would be the most direct method to achieve this goal. Fluxus "art-amusement" contained the qualities of a "simple natural event, a game or a gag. It is the fusion of Spike Jones, Vaudeville, gag[s], children's games and Duchamp."<sup>44</sup> Thus, Fluxus was becoming more and more focused on "art as purposeless play," as Cage had suggested.

In this same period, Maciunas developed several ideas for Fluxus furniture and accessories. As with many other of the new categories of materials, after an initial idea was formulated, he would request submissions and proposals for possible works in this vein. The general idea for this new category was probably related to his work for the design company Knoll Associates, which produced furniture. In addition to this possible source for Fluxus furniture, several artists, particularly Spoerri ("Tableau-piege"), had made reference to furniture. The importance of Spoerri to this category is indicated by the fact that one of the first projects that Maciunas worked on and produced was a work by Spoerri. In 1964, Spoerri had produced a work for the Allan Stone Gallery in New York, entitled *31 Variations on a Meal*.<sup>45</sup> For this exhibition, with the help of some other people, Spoerri had prepared several meals which were then eaten by various art-world personalities. The leftovers, including the dishes and silverware, were then affixed to boards and exhibited as art. Photographs of these pieces were taken, which were used to produce both tablecloths and photo-laminated table-tops entitled *Meal Variation No. . . . Eaten By. . . .* Although Spoerri had produced 31 original meal variations, only five were actually made as Fluxus multiples: those by Duchamp, Patterson, Jack Youngerman, Ferro, and Arman.<sup>46</sup> By May, 1966, the Fluxfurniture offerings were expanded to include pieces by Peter Moore and Takako Saito. The three works by Moore included a "photo-rug," "photo-Venetian blinds," and "photo-floor tiles"; the work by Saito was *Musical*

*Chairs*.<sup>47</sup> By summer, 1966, the category of Fluxfurniture also included several photo-laminated table tops and tablecloth works by Bob Watts, such as *Desk Blotter*, *Crossed Nude Legs Table Top*, and *Dinner Setting Table Top*. By this time, the category was expanded to include other types of furniture, especially a series of modular storage units that Maciunas was particularly interested in.

I don't know whether I mentioned our involvement now in making furniture—Mostly utilizing 15" cubes as cabinets, lamps, tables "musical chairs" (sitter activates some event inside the chair, like rolling balls, squirting water etc.). Also using photolamination on table tops—like table after meal, or messy desk top, or photo of girls crossed nude legs.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout 1966, Maciunas continued to work on the development and production of Fluxfurniture; he also went on soliciting ideas from various artists, such as Sharits, Vautier, and others, for new furniture. As well, Maciunas designed the cover and compiled and designed a fold-out for a special issue of *Tulane Drama Review* (Winter, 1965) and was able to produce two more issues of the Fluxus Newspaper *V TRE*.

The first of these was issue No. 7, 3 newspaper *eVenTs for the pRicE of \$1*, issued on February 1, 1966. The contents include photos of the second Fluxorchestra Concert and Kubota's "Vagina Painting" (the front page), a graphic presentation of a number of events by Yoko Ono entitled "Do It Yourself Fluxfest" (p. 2), "Fifty eight Propositions For One Page" by Ben Vautier (p. 3), and "One Hour" by James Riddle (p. 4). This issue of *V TRE* in part reflects the change of approach also evident in the second Fluxorchestra concert. The three pages, each by a single artist, were intended specifically to relate to the medium, in this case the printed page, which is most clearly evident in Ben Vautier's page, where the 58 propositions were written to relate in particular to the medium of the printed page. The contents of the publication resulted from Maciunas' earlier request for various artists to submit works and proposals for *Fluxus 2* that would be "book events only, i.e., events that are enacted by the reader automatically as he inspects the book or box."<sup>49</sup> The other idea was to maximize the use of those materials included. Each of these artists' pages was also printed on card stock so that they could be used as an edition as well as part of the newspaper. To do this, Maciunas had designed the presentations

based on a repeated unit, such as a square, so that the pages could be cut up and used as event-type cards for three separate boxed works.

In spring, 1966, he began to develop ideas for a new and greatly expanded Fluxshop. These were in part connected to the possibility of financial backing for such a venture. At the end of March, Maciunas told Vautier that he had a potential backer willing to finance a new shop and pay for advertising "in some fancy place like madison [sic] Ave."<sup>50</sup> The concept was an extension on the existing Fluxshop, but Maciunas envisioned it as both a shop to sell Fluxus materials and as a kind of interactive performance. In May, he wrote to Milan Knizak about the plans for the performance elements of the new shop.

We plan to make the FLUXSHOP as a continuous event mechanism. Cash register keys would be connected electrically to all kinds of events; sounds of all kinds or movements, such as falling artificial snow, or shutting off lights, etc, etc. Every time a sale is made and appropriate keys pushed, some different combination of events would occur. It would have amusing effects. We would try to display all the Fluxus objects (about 100 different objects) in some funny way.<sup>51</sup>

Maciunas solicited ideas for events for this cash register from many of the Fluxus artists and developed actions based on the ideas of Watts, Jones, and himself.<sup>52</sup> He envisioned the cash-register project as a single collective composition rather than a number of separate events, describing it as similar to the collective nature of Medieval cathedrals.<sup>53</sup> The expanded shop, however, was never realized; the financial backing never materialized. Maciunas, however, did not abandon the idea for a mechanical cash-register event, and he continued to list it as a planned project in 1967 and 1969.

Throughout spring, 1966, he continued to solicit new ideas for works from various artists, such as Ben Vautier, George Brecht, Bob Watts, and others. Some of the new works were Vautier's *Mystery Food* (a commercially produced can of food with a new Fluxus label not listing the contents) and several postcards, including *Postman's Choice* (a postcard with an address space on both sides of the card, so the postman would have to choose to whom it should be delivered), more variations for Brecht's *Games & Puzzles*, and the final label design for Brecht's card game *Deck*. Maciunas also requested that the artists work on additional ideas for "more

objects that I could produce, chess sets, card games, ball games, kits (in attache cases) etc."<sup>54</sup> Additionally, he was planning to produce some new collective works and works by artists who had not been previously been published by Fluxus. One of the collective pieces was a stamp set he described in a letter to Ben Vautier.

We will also come out with 100 Fluxstamps—collective designs, by various people—so let me know your ideas. all you need to do is send drawing, picture, anything. If it is halftone (dotted) it should be about same size as stamp, because dots can't be reduced to over 120 lines per inch.<sup>55</sup>

By the middle of May, Maciunas had completed Brecht's *Deck* and a second *Spatial Poem* by Shiomi, but *Flux Year Box 2* had still not been issued. This project was mostly completed, but its production was still delayed by lack of money for duplication of the film loops. Maciunas was again in a rather difficult funding situation by spring, 1966, although it was different from earlier, similar problems: there was a growing interest in various Fluxus multiples, films, and publications, but with this increased demand for materials, Maciunas was having a hard time underwriting the production costs. He described the situation to Ben Vautier.

Fluxus II is all ready but production of 100 copies (of film loops) also held up by money shortages. The difficulty is that we now have many outlets like Galleria Schwarz, Arch-do in Milan, Ville Franche, Nikolaj Kirke, Shop in London, De Ridder, 2 outlets in California, one in Japan, but they all want many items on consignment, which means I must invest in them all with these objects, Kits, etc, which are expensive to produce, and then I must wait and wait and wait till these outlets start selling.<sup>56</sup>

The difference in his reaction to funding problems in the spring of 1966 compared to spring, 1964, is quite significant. In 1964, he had almost quit Fluxus as a partial result of funding problems, but in 1966, they did not seem to affect him negatively. In 1964, Maciunas' reaction to the funding problems was directly linked to what he perceived as a general lack of support for the Fluxus collective; in 1966, however, interest in Fluxus was rapidly growing. Now there were several shows of Fluxus materials in the United States, Europe, and Japan, as well as work by artists associ-

ated with the group. Several new artists were becoming involved. Thus, Maciunas was working on new as well as ongoing projects, hoping that the financial situation would rectify itself. When the shops and galleries began to sell, he concluded, "I think matters will improve and I will be able to produce more objects."<sup>57</sup>

Throughout the first half of 1966, Maciunas' primary projects were the development of various films for *Flux Year Box 2* and the compilation of *Fluxfilms* by individual artists. By the beginning of March, he had assembled a film program of about two hours in length, comprised of about 15 films.<sup>58</sup> In March, this Fluxfilm program was shown at the Ann Arbor Film Festival and won a critics' award.<sup>59</sup> The contents of the film program were indicated in a letter from Maciunas to Vautier as including the following:

1. Disappearing music for face by Chieko Shiomi — 20 min.
2. Fluxfilm — my own — 20 min.
3. James Riddle — 10 minutes, 10 min.
4. Entrance-Exit by George Brecht 6 1/2 min.
5. Blink by Yoko Ono or her "Walk"
6. Smoking by Joe Jones — 20 min<sup>60</sup>

These films and an additional six made up the initial Fluxfilm program.<sup>61</sup> The nature of the films is exemplified by Jones' *Smoke* (referred to as "Smoking" in the above list), a sequence of cigarette smoke shot with a high-speed camera, and Brecht's *Entry-Exit*, a transition from white, through gray, to black (chemically produced by the developing) accompanied by sound track that shifted from a sine tone to white noise. By May of 1966, the list of supposedly available Fluxfilms, advertised in the eighth issue of the Fluxus newspaper, had expanded to a total of twenty films, including ones by Shiomi, John Cavanaugh, James Riddle, Maciunas, Brecht, Watts, Ono, Stan van der Beek, Joe Jones, Eric Andersen, and Albert Fine.<sup>62</sup> At this point in 1966, the film program was available in only a very limited manner. Because of the financial shortfall, Maciunas had not been able to make any additional duplicates of this program. As late as November of 1966, there was only one print of the film program in the U.S. available for showings.<sup>63</sup>

In May, 1966, Maciunas issued the eighth Fluxus newspaper. The format, titled *Fluxus Vaseline sTREet*, resembled the last several

issues. Included are several pages of announcements for upcoming events; these pages could also be used as posters. Also to be found are an artist's page, which was an interactive event for the reader, and a page of advertisements for Fluxus publications, materials, and multiples. In this case, the artist's page is a work by Wolf Vostell entitled "Yellow Pages or An Action Page," which is a score for a month-long event using a food-ration card and a page of New York grocery stores. The instructions for this event read as follows:

Take this page as an instruction plan with you and during one month buy the quantities of groceries indicated in the lebensmittelkarte (ration card) at the designated grocers. Try to subsist that month with these comestibles only.

The Fluxshop information included in this issue of *V TRE* was similar to previously published lists of materials for sale, including *Fluxus I*, *Fluxkit*, *Fluxfurniture*, and a number of works by individual artists, such as Brecht, Ay-O, Jones, Watts, Shiomi, and others. The new materials included 20 available *Fluxfilms* and a number of works slated to appear late in 1966. This last group comprises several new kits by Watts, card decks by Jeff Berner, Watts, and Kubota, "complete works" by Milan Knizak; other new works by Albert Fine, Ono, Hi Red Center, Kubota, and Shiomi; *Fluxus 2*; several works by Claes Oldenburg; and one work by Christo Javaceff. Maciunas wrote to Vautier about the involvement of Christo and Oldenburg with Fluxus.

Fluxkit now has also object by Christo and Oldenburg & Hi Red Center. Christo has a bundle of wrapped artificial flowers, Oldenburg a rubber cows udder attached to cover, so when you open the cover of kit, udder pops down. Oldenburg is also doing 3 solo fluxkits. One with a rubber dinner which pops up when you open suitcase. Another with various destruction machines: grinders squeezers, crushers, and many objects to be destroyed.<sup>64</sup>

The inclusion of Claes Oldenburg and Christo Javacheff was the result of Maciunas' efforts in late 1965 and 1966 to involve new artists in Fluxus.

The last two sections in *Fluxus Vaseline sTREET* are two announcements/posters for the upcoming events in June by Fluxus and the Japanese group Hi Red Center.<sup>65</sup> The two events, "Hotel Events" and "Street Cleaning Events," were presented on June 11,

1966. These activities were not performed by the members of Hi Red Center but by Barbara and Peter Moore, Geoff and Bici Hendricks, Dan Lauffer, George Maciunas, Robert Watts, and various other artists and participants. The "Street Cleaning Event" took place around 3 p.m. on the sidewalk near the Grand Army Plaza in New York. Maciunas, remembering the problems that the last Fluxus street performance had had with the police, got an official Parks Department permit for the event. The general instructions or score for this work is as follows:

A small (about 4 sq. meters) area of sidewalk should be cleaned by Fluxus performers in a very thorough way, but using devices not normally used in streets such as: steel wool, steel brushes, powder cleaners, dental picks, toothbrushes, bleaches, cotton balls and alcohol, etc. etc.<sup>66</sup>

The performers were dressed in white laboratory-technicians' coats as they cleaned the designated section of the sidewalk. The performance lasted 30 to 40 minutes. During the course of the event, several of Brecht's flags, "START," "MIDDLE," and "END," were used for the first time in a performance by running them up a nearby flagpole.<sup>67</sup>

The other Hi Red Center event was performed on June 11. "Hotel Event" took place in a rented room at the Waldorf Astoria. This presentation was an interactive performance in which the viewer was checked and measured in a variety of ways.

The measurements consist of weights of body, body with one foot off the scale, head over scale, volumes of head (insert head into pail of water, measure displaced water), capacities of mouth (water held in cc), palm, dimensions of height, head min. and max. diameter, nipple to nipple, max. nail length, shoe and foot difference, strength of hair, forefinger punch into some soft material such as expanded polystyrene (measure depth of hole), strength of fist slam, (breaking a stick between 2 supports — measure strength by span of stick), capacities of sucking (water in cc), saliva production in one minute (in cc or grams), capacity between fingers (number of rice seeds that can be held), dimensions of extended tongue, width of inflated cheeks, grasp in diameter of object, foot to mouth minimum standing, or minimum sway during 30 seconds. Contents of pockets to be weighed.<sup>68</sup>

For "Hotel Event" Maciunas designed and printed a *Fluxclinic Record of Features and Feats* in which the various measurements and data were recorded for each participant/visitor. This piece, although based on a work by Hi Red Center, was modified (especially the types and kinds of measurements) by Maciunas and Watts for this Fluxus performance.

"Street Cleaning Event" and "Hotel Event" further illustrate the shifting nature of Fluxus performance work in the mid-1960s. Neither of these events was presented in a traditional performance setting, and neither was done in a manner that suggested a clear distinction between performers and audience. In "Street Cleaning Event," designated individuals carried out certain actions, but the model for these actions was not so much performers as it was workers. The reference for these actions was daily activities, such as cleaning and public works, which contain a performance element. In "Hotel Event," although directed by the Fluxworkers, the actions were carried out by the "viewers" themselves. The type of actions also referred to daily activities, particularly medical check-ups and fitness tests. Both events are based on a humorous skewing of daily activities, reflecting the increased importance of non-art activities and humor for Fluxus in the middle and late 1960s. Although Maciunas had initially planned other United States performance events in 1966, only these two events were presented.<sup>69</sup>

In 1966, a number of new artists joined or became more closely associated with Fluxus. These included Milan Knizak, Jeff Berner, David E. Thompson, Paul Sharits, Greg Sharits, Kate Millet, and Ken Friedman. From this group, the three most active were Milan Knizak, Paul Sharits, and Ken Friedman.<sup>70</sup> Paul Sharits produced a number of films in the summer of 1966 that were included in the *Fluxfilm* compilation and available individually as well. He corresponded with Maciunas concerning ideas for other projects, several of which were later realized.<sup>71</sup> Ken Friedman, introduced to Maciunas by Dick Higgins, became very active in Fluxus, especially on the West Coast, and became head of a Fluxus West in San Francisco.<sup>72</sup> A number of Fluxus works by Friedman were also produced over the next several years. Friedman spent part of summer and fall, 1966, in New York, and while there he ran a Fluxshop for Maciunas on Avenue C in the East Village.<sup>73</sup>



Maciunas intended to go back to Europe for another tour in fall, 1966. His plan was to go to Europe in mid-November, after which he "would continue to Japan via Siberia. We would perform in Fluxfests in Nice, Milan, (maybe Madrid), Paris, Amsterdam and then go to Prague, Krakow, Warsaw, (maybe USSR also). Winter 1967."<sup>74</sup> This trip was in part related to the Fluxfest in Prague that he had been planning with Knizak since the beginning of 1966. Initially this concert was to be held in the spring of 1966, but it was then postponed until the fall.<sup>75</sup> But in the summer, Maciunas became involved in a new project that caused him to postpone his plans to travel to Europe.<sup>76</sup> The Prague Fluxfest went ahead without him, as scheduled, in October, 1966.<sup>77</sup>

Maciunas postponed this trip in the summer of 1966 because he had initiated the plans for the development of a series of artists' co-ops in New York. In early August he wrote to Vautier about the development of this project and his reasons for not going to Europe:

The reason I am not going is twofold: NO MONEY & our buying a FLUXHOUSE, in which we will have Fluxshop, Fluxtheater and 5 floors for us to occupy for living studios. The reason we can do it (with out any money) is due to a recent "Experimental Housing Bill" US Government passed, which loans money to artists who wish to buy loft buildings & convert them to own use. So we will go ahead. found a building (6 floors 32ft x 95ft) will install elevator, central air conditioning, bath + kitchen for each, basement with workshops, dark-rooms, etc. for use of the occupants. All occupants become part owners, a regular collective or KOLHOLZ.<sup>78</sup>

The attractiveness of such a project for Maciunas is immediately apparent because of the collective nature of the occupancy, the social and political implications of artists' collective housing, and because it would allow him to create certain facilities, especially a theater and shop space, that could be used by Fluxus. By the middle of August, he had written and sent out an announcement for this planned project. Entitled *Loft Building Co-operative Newsletter No. 1*, this single-page flyer includes the requirements for joining the cooperative, the planned building improvements, and a list of the buildings being considered. All interested parties were invited to come to a meeting on August 24. It was decided to purchase the building at 18 Greene Street for the first group of collective members and perhaps to purchase a second building for other mem-

bers.<sup>79</sup> In *Fluxnewsletter*, March, 1967, Maciunas lists the activities associated with Fluxus in 1966, and he states the intent and nature of this project:

The aim of Fluxhouse coop. is to purchase, renovate and maintain suitable loft buildings for artists' occupancy and activities. (we may later acquire also farms for same purpose). A comprehensive survey led us to select the area in Manhattan between Houston and Canal streets as the most economical building market . . . Renovation will include self service elevators, central air heating and cooling system, kitchens, bathrooms, partitions, flooring, etc. Installation of metal, wood workshops, photo darkroom, film-processing lab, editing room, sound studio, possibly printing press. Moreover two buildings will house theaters on ground floors (120 and 200 seat capacity), fluxshop in one building, food cooperative (purchase of certain wholesale foods) etc. etc.<sup>80</sup>

The relationship between Fluxus and the Fluxhouse Co-operatives, though, was that the principal organizer of both was Maciunas. In fact, he wrote that the only direct connection between Fluxus and Fluxhouse Cooperative Building Projects was that a Co-operative "Fluxshop will be located in one of these buildings, we will have a permanent hall for performances. Most Fluxus people from New York will be housed in these buildings . . . and we will have much better workshop facilities there."<sup>81</sup>

Although in 1966 Maciunas' involvement with the Fluxhouse Co-operatives was just beginning, by the end of 1966, his involvement was beginning to dominate his time, so he had less opportunity for the design and production of multiples and publications. In response to this situation, he, Watts, and Lee Heflin began organizing a production company in the fall called Implosions, Inc.. Maciunas wrote to Vautier explaining the relationship between Fluxus and Implosions Inc.:

The arrangement I now have with Watts & Heflin, is that all they do is propose any printing or manufacturing project to me first. i.e. giving me first choice. then if I can't afford to do it or don't want to do it for any reason, they can take it to whomever they please. That's very fair to all I think. i think it's unfair when someone secretly offers some work to a competitor. (Dick is not the only competitor in N.Y. there is also Black Thumb Press, Art Reproductions, MAT, Multiples, etc. etc.).<sup>82</sup>

He further explained to Vautier that this new association allowed for two different kinds of agreements between Fluxus (Maciunas) and the individual artists. The first would fall under the above agreement with Implosions Inc., or, if the artist preferred,

The alternative is what I have with Shiomi, Brecht (and yourself I think) where I am bound to print all your works on the year that they are composed in return for exclusive right. You have a choice of these two schemes. In fact when you have a chance — you can mention these 2 schemes to G. Brecht — He can choose also which he prefers.<sup>83</sup>

Although this new company was not intended to replace Fluxus as a producer of artists' works, especially those that had already been issued under Fluxus, it was intended to remove some of the pressure from Maciunas so that he could produce certain kinds of new works and those he had not yet been able to produce under Fluxus. In addition to any work he turned over to Implosions under his right of first refusal, there were specific kinds of materials that would be produced through Implosions:

1. Stick-ons (disposable jewelry) . . . images may be photographs (will be screened) or drawings, engravings, words, etc any color. Plastic sheets will have self-adhesive backs that will permit them to be stuck on skin or clothing . . .
2. Paper aprons (made from special woven paper). Used for outdoor cooking, these apron designs will be offered to various beer and food manufactures as premiums etc. Any photographic or line image can be printed on this paper.
3. Sweat shirts (printed front and back, or front alone), may have images of statements like: "front", "back"; made from 100% cotton etc.etc." "pass on the right not on the left" etc etc.
4. Disposable paper table cloths, napkins, towels, dishes, cups.
5. Postcards, stamps (same as Flux-postal kit)
6. Low cost furniture (like stool of Kate Millet)
7. Playing cards and other games (Flux playing cards of Bob Watts, Robert Filliou etc. and cube hollow rubber "ball" of Ayo.)<sup>84</sup>

The association of Maciunas with Watts and Fine was intended to allow Fluxus-type materials to be made available to a mass market. These materials were also meant as money-making products, as Maciunas described them, of a mostly practical nature. In *Fluxnewsletter*, March 8, 1967, he explains that, although the relationship between Fluxus and Implosions had not been specifically

determined as of that point, "we could consider at present Fluxus to be a kind of division of or subsidiary of Implosions."<sup>85</sup>

By the end of 1966, the primary period of development, design, and production of Fluxus multiples, objects, and publications began to come to an end. This is not to say that no more material was produced under the name of "Fluxus," but only that the volume of new materials produced slowly decreased through the late 1960s. Over the next several years, a number of new objects and multiples were produced, primarily by the younger or newly associated artists, such as Friedman, Geoff Hendricks, Paul Sharits, Carla Liss, and others. For the next several years, Maciunas involved himself with the various and ever-increasing Fluxhouse Cooperative projects, putting less and less time into designing and producing Fluxus publications and objects. Another outgrowth of his involvement with the development of the Fluxhouse projects was that, in 1966, he somewhat decentralized Fluxus by shifting some of the activities he controlled to regional centers: Fluxus West in San Francisco, established by Friedman, and Fluxus East in Prague, established by Knizak. It was Maciunas' intention that these two centers would stock various items, act as distribution centers, and coordinate various festival activities<sup>86</sup>

One of the first projects that Maciunas completed in 1967 was the publication *Fluxfest Sale*. This publication was a large format (17" x 22") single page, printed front and back, that reproduced scores by several artists associated with Fluxus, and Maciunas' "Expanded Arts Diagram." This publication was a reprint from two pages of an "Expanded Arts Special Issue" of *Film Culture* (No. 43, Winter, 1966) that he had compiled, edited, and produced in the last several months of 1966.<sup>87</sup> On the front page of *Fluxfest Sale*, under the heading of Fluxfest Information, he describes the contents as representing "about half of the fluxus repertory."<sup>88</sup> He then goes on to clarify that the texts for the pieces were descriptions and that most of these were abbreviated. The scores and descriptions included works by Ay-O, Robert Bozzi, George Brecht, Albert Fine, Lee Heflin, Hi Red Center, Joe Jones, Milan Knizak, George Maciunas, Ben Patterson, Paul Sharits, Tomas Schmit, Chieko Shiomi, Ben Vautier, Robert Watts, and Emmett Williams. Some of the pieces that had longer scores simply listed "score" under their titles, meaning that a score was available and could be ordered for 25 cents. The text additionally states that all of these scores could be

performed “anytime, anyplace and by anyone without payment to Fluxus . . .,” provided that certain conditions were met by the performers and/or sponsors of the performances. The conditions were essentially the same as those he had published earlier in the one-page statement “Conditions for Performing Fluxus Published Compositions, Films & Tapes.”<sup>89</sup>

In addition to the reproduced scores and descriptions of pieces, this publication includes a diagram by Maciunas that “categorizes and describes planometrically the development of various “expanded performing arts” movements.”<sup>90</sup> This diagram was a re-issue, in an enlarged form, of his planometric chart from 1966.<sup>91</sup> The 1967 diagram was Maciunas’s description of the history of Fluxus, as well as other related groups and activities. He later referred to this diagram as a “Flux-history-chart,”<sup>92</sup> which he considered to be only the first of several potential editions, and for which he solicited comments and suggestions from readers for additions and changes.<sup>93</sup>

The general groupings in this chart, from bottom to top, consisted of the following categories: Verbal Theater, Happenings—Neo-Baroque Theater, Expanded Cinema, Kinesthetic Theater, Acoustic Theater, Events—Neo-Haiku Theater, and Anti-Art. The organization of the groups was based on his perception of them within “a spectrum of artificiality.”<sup>94</sup> He states that the “most ‘artistic’ or cultural or serious are at the bottom [Verbal Theater and Happenings] and least so at the top ending with anti-art at the very top.”<sup>95</sup> The Expanded Arts Diagram is constructed to reflect the development of what he called “movements” rather than individuals. The vertical axis of the diagram is determined by groups and movements, while the horizontal axis was chronological, primarily covering the period 1959 to 1966. The primary focus of the diagram is the Fluxus group, particularly as distinguished from Happenings and other types of expanded-arts developments, which Maciunas considered more “art-like.” Maciunas differentiated four different types of artists’ associations with Fluxus:

- 1) Individuals active in similar activities prior to formation of Fluxus collective, then becoming active within Fluxus and still active up to the present day, (only George Brecht and Ben Vautier fill this category).
- 2) individuals active since the formation of Fluxus and still active within Fluxus.
- 3) individuals active independently of Fluxus but presently associated with Fluxus.
- 4) individuals active with Fluxus since the

formation of the collective but having since then detached themselves. (Higgins, Patterson, Paik, Schmit, Williams, Flynt, etc.)<sup>96</sup>

This distinction of differing types of artists' associations with Fluxus was to a large degree a result of the factionalization that occurred in Fluxus after 1964. Maciunas clearly marked on the diagram the year 1964 as a major point of change in the membership. Although several years had passed since the partial break-up after the picket of "Originale," the resulting tensions were still very much a factor for Maciunas, who felt that the activities of Dick Higgins and Nam June Paik, for example, were anti-collective and intended to rival Fluxus. Maciunas was essentially correct in his viewpoint, especially in that the importance of these individuals tended to overshadow the other artists in the group. The key element in his thinking was that if specific individuals became the focus of attention one of the central concerns of Fluxus — undermining of the equation of art with the activity of a "special person," an individual who was valued because of his or her "indispensability and exclusiveness" — would be rendered ineffectual.

There had been continuing tensions between Maciunas and Higgins in relationship to Fluxus since 1964. In summer, 1966, these tensions increased as a result of the publication of Maciunas' first version of his planometric diagram. In this version of the diagram, he specifies the motivations of artists who fell into the fourth category 4), individuals active within Fluxus since the formation of Fluxus but having since detached themselves.

- a) anticollective attitude, excessive individualism, desire for personal glory, prima donna complex (Mac Low, Schmit, Williams, Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins, Kosugi),
- b) opportunism, joining rival groups offering greater publicity (Paik, Kosugi)
- c) competitive attitude, forming rival operations (Higgins, Knowles, Paik).<sup>97</sup>

When Higgins found out about this, he was upset, especially about what he felt was misrepresentation by Maciunas.<sup>98</sup> One of the main points of contention between Higgins and Maciunas was Something Else Press and whether it was a rival organization to Fluxus. Higgins wrote to Maciunas that Something Else Press was related to Fluxus but not a rival.

Your remark in 4-C, that I left Fluxus because of a competitive attitude, to form a "rival organization" just isn't fair . . . The purpose of my Press is, after all, quite different, completely different from the purpose of Fluxus. We are essentially trying to diffuse and disseminate information about a body of work. Our publications are designed to be sold in bookstores . . . It is cheap and efficient to stick within the confines of the book form. On the other hand, Fluxus is an information center more than a disseminator. The Fluxus objects are works of art or non-art. They are not intended to be sold in all bookstores. They are typically at least partly hand made. You do not make 2000 copies of everything the way we do because for your purposes there would be no point in it. So where is the rivalry of our organizations? <sup>99</sup>

Maciunas' view of this situation was different. On this matter, he wrote to Ben Vautier:

I do not agree however that Dick is not competing with fluxus. There are too many incidents where he offered to publish some piece that was intended for fluxus (like Barbara's cook book, Bob Watts book of Photos, etc. etc.)<sup>100</sup>

Higgins wrote to Maciunas again at the end of August about this chart and that he felt Maciunas was "destroying" the usefulness of the term Fluxus. Higgins states in this letter that Maciunas must "not assume that it is possible for you to elect yourself exclusive dictator with the exclusive right to the term."<sup>101</sup>

while you invented the term "Fluxus" (and nobody will deny you that) you have consistently destroyed its utility, antagonized your real friends, and mis-used the whole situation for your personal cultism and aggrandizement, if not as a artist, then as a critic . . . But Fluxus means too much (and I insist on that) to allow any individual person to reduce it to a means of confinement of people's work on the basis of your own personal taste, what Breton has done with Surrealism for example. I made a grievous error in 1963 not to perform the Stockholm Fluxus without you, and in so doing, for the first time, I established a precedent on the basis of which you have been able systematically to reduce the most important artistic tendency of the last half century (with Dada, of the last century) to a personal fief.<sup>102</sup>

Maciunas did not understand this reaction by Higgins. Maciunas believed that he had analyzed the occurrences in 1964 and 1965 and had made a correct assessment that Higgins had left Fluxus and was no longer interested in working to further its goals. Referring

to this observation and to Higgins' reactions, Maciunas wrote the following:

I can't figure out Dick's intentions at all. In the Rohwolt-Vostell book he wrote that FLUXUS WAS DEAD and that he and "others" have quit it or lost interest in it on account of Flynt-Maciunas picket I suppose. Well, I took that statement for a fact, and in an essay I wrote for a Czech magazine I wrote that Dick & his friends quit or left fluxus—motivated by a desire to start a rival operation (Something Else Press) — & Prima done complex. — this I deduced — reasoned out, (not invented) ... The next development of course was Dick's explosion about being left out from fluxus in my essay. But after all, how could I know he wanted to be in, when he writes that he was out. I know only what people write. I am not a mind reader. the second explosion came when Dick objected to call Fluxus any piece from fluxus group. Now, this is diametrically opposed to his 1st explosion, since if he felt he was still part of Fluxus, why should he object to publicize Fluxus ????

Although this confrontation was not settled in winter, 1966-67, the result of the interchange was that Maciunas did alter the description for the planometric chart for its 1967 publication in the *Fluxfest Sale*. He dropped the specific descriptive section that listed the reasons for various individuals "leaving" Fluxus and simply wrote that "some of them have even published [their] own statements confirming their exodus."<sup>104</sup> Even though it can not be determined with any certainty, this renewed conflict between Maciunas and Higgins over Fluxus probably did have an effect on Maciunas' work on certain Fluxus projects. It is possible that this was also one of the reasons behind both his statement that the Fluxhouse projects were not directly connected to Fluxus and his interest in setting up Implosions to produce various materials.

As stated earlier, the major projects he worked on throughout 1967 were the Fluxhouse cooperatives.<sup>105</sup> In that year, Maciunas worked on at least seven different buildings purchased in 1967: 80 Wooster Street; 16-18 Greene Street; four buildings at 64, 66, 68, and 70 Grand Street; and 31 Wooster Street.<sup>106</sup> Related to these plans for Fluxhouses and the development of projects for Implosions in 1967 was another new project for a company to be called "The Greene Street Precinct, Inc.," developed by Watts and Maciunas as an entertainment and game center.



The Greene Street Precinct will function as a total entertainment environment with dancing on the ground floor. the 2nd floor will contain shops, booths and concessions devoted to merchandise in demand by the audience. It will feature aspects of pop culture heretofore not associated with a discotheque such as historically oriented jazz record section, a palmist, an astrologer, and an underground press booth.<sup>107</sup>

This company would also act as a distribution center for the products of Fluxus and Implosions, Inc., as well as other new works by artists and designers. This aspect of the Green Street Precinct project was another attempt to develop a more effective distribution center for artists' products, such as those produced by Fluxus and Implosions.

An intimate part of the Greene Street Precinct will be the new product line together with a new merchandising method—shopping will become an entertainment-adventure combining both existing products and the "house" line. The Greene Street Precinct line will consist of low cost imaginative items (such as Implosions presents) to offset competitors together with a more avant-garde offering including the Fluxline.<sup>108</sup>

This notion of shopping as entertainment was directly linked to Maciunas' earlier ideas for the unrealized Fluxshop. At several points he even called this project a Fluxshop.<sup>109</sup> In other statements regarding the plans for this project, he specifically stated that earlier ideas first proposed for a Fluxshop in 1966-1967 were to be used here, including a cash register and a time clock connected to various events, sounds, lights, and other mechanical or electrical actions. The idea of an entertainment and shopping center was the latest version of the ever-expanding notion of a Fluxshop, which was now becoming a distribution center for a much wider variety of materials.

Aside from the publication of *Fluxfest Sale*, Maciunas produced no more than ten new Fluxus works in 1967. One work comprised two rubber stamps, one by Ken Friedman reading "INCONSEQUENTIAL IS COMING—FLUXPOST" and one by Ben Vautier reading "BEN VAUTIER CERTIFIES THIS TO BE A WORK OF FLUXART." These stamps, initially planned to be marketed as part of the *Flux-postal kit* (which was not completed in 1967), were produced only as individual pieces.<sup>110</sup> In addition to these stamps,

Maciunas also completed the printing of several postcards by Vautier, including (1) *Receive* (2) *Return* and *Postman's Choice*. He also made at least a couple of prints of the compilation of shorter films by various artists, *Fluxfilm* (in an 8mm version), and, late in 1967, *Flux Year Box 2*. Although the year box was one of the most important of the works produced in 1967, it was not new.<sup>111</sup> In late 1967, Maciunas was able to obtain enough funds to produce the first few copies of this publication.<sup>112</sup>

In addition to the works produced solely by Fluxus, several works by artists associated with Fluxus were produced by Implosions in 1967. These included a number of self-adhesive stickers (what Maciunas called "disposable jewelry") by Watts and Maciunas, *Plastic Egg Boxes* by Watts, and *Flag Poster* and set of postcards entitled *Monsters are Inoffensive* by Filliou.<sup>113</sup>

The actual number of performances or events organized by Maciunas and realized by Fluxus in 1967 was also rather small. Although several other events had been planned for 1967, only two happened. Of these, only one was truly a public performance. Entitled "A Paper Event by the Fluxmasters of the Rear-Garde" and presented on November 15, 1967, at the Time-Life Building in New York City,<sup>114</sup> this concert was developed and presented to accompany the opening of an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York. The pieces performed were combined and organized by Maciunas but based on the ideas of a number of people. According to Maciunas, the various individuals involved were himself, Ay-O, Dan Lauffer, Shiomi, Patterson, Vautier, Watts, Ken Jacobs, and Bici and Geoff Hendricks.<sup>115</sup> The performance was divided into two general sections. The first, "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti for Paper Orchestra," was a version of Maciunas' earlier piece, "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti." This new version, performed in darkness, required a larger number of performers to manipulate various paper materials, such as bags, tubes, and sheets of paper, to produce different sounds. The second part of the performance was based on the theme "kill paper not people." A single performer dressed in a suit of samurai armor shot a series of arrows into a large paper screen, triggering a series of sounds and actions, such as a release of confetti or shaving cream, the sounding of a gong, and the extinguishing of the lights in the auditorium. The performance ended with a large frame made of paper tubes being lowered onto the heads of the audience.<sup>116</sup>

The only other Fluxus event that took place on the East Coast of the United States in 1967 was the first of what would become an annual event for the next several years, a Flux-holiday meal event. This event, which Maciunas called "Flux-Christmas-meal-event" in his 1968 *Fluxnewsletter*, was held in the New York loft of Bob Watts.<sup>117</sup> The idea had been discussed by several people associated with Fluxus for several years and announced by Maciunas in March, 1967, to take place in late 1967. In this event, the participants brought altered or manipulated food for consumption by the whole group. The participants were Ay-O, Barbara Moore, Per Kirkeby, Saito, Albert Fine, Watts, Geoff Hendricks, Frank Rycyk, and Maciunas.<sup>118</sup> The food they brought included intact eggshells containing jello instead of eggs; wine dispensed from an enema container and tubes; sky dessert-blue cake with blue layers, blue cream, blue dishes, blue napkins, and sea grass that was textured like "stewed rubber bands."<sup>119</sup> In many ways, the event was just a party among friends, illustrating the continuing alteration of the conception of performance events in Fluxus in the late 1960s. This "Flux-Christmas-meal-event" was one of the first actualizations of a fuller diminution of "performance" in Fluxus. As the presentations continued to stress the non-separation of performer and audience and a parallel emphasis on the centrality of participation, it became harder and harder to distinguish performance actions from daily-life events.

Under the auspices of Fluxus West, a number of additional performances and activities were carried out on the West Coast as well as in other areas of the United States. These performances, which Maciunas described as "gigs, instant events, and lots of street theatre games," were made possible because Friedman had purchased a Traveling Fluxmobile and was moving up and down the coast of California doing a variety of events and several Fluxfests in the San Diego area.<sup>120</sup> In fall, 1967, Friedman also traveled across the United States from San Francisco to Boston and New York, performing a series of "cross-country events."<sup>121</sup>

Over the next two years, Fluxus experienced few or no significant new developments, primarily because Maciunas was spending most of his time working on his Fluxhouses. The plans for the Greene Street Precinct amusement center and Fluxshop had to be abandoned in 1968 because of the objections of some of the other cooperative members. As always, though, Maciunas was only

partially deterred by this setback. In 1969, he decided to purchase another building, at 18 Mercer Street, without any other cooperative members in order to avoid interference in the future.<sup>122</sup> The immediate result was that all of the planned activities for 18 Mercer Street, such as the Fluxfest, also had to be postponed.<sup>123</sup> In addition to the Fluxhouse projects in 1968 and 1969, Maciunas made extensive plans for the Ginger Island project, a new communal-living project. This project entailed the purchase of a whole island in the British Virgin Islands for a cooperative of 60 members who would live on an eleven-acre Fluxcolony. Throughout 1969, he made extensive plans for a self-sufficient colony on this island. It was later discovered, however, that there was no water on the island, so the project was abandoned.<sup>124</sup>

The years 1968 and 1969 might have been considered a period of stasis for Fluxus publications, multiples, and performances, although several new objects were produced, including pieces by Ken Friedman, Jane Knizak, Carla Liss, Alice Hutchins, Jack Coke, Milan Knizak, Maciunas, and a collective work entitled *Paper Games, Events, Etc.* by Greg and Paul Sharits and Bob Grimes. A large amount of the work that Maciunas did on multiples and publications was related to the assembly of already finished works. When there was a request or an order for a specific work, he would assemble it from his stores of components, but he kept very few preassembled examples. The performances and events in New York in this period were limited to two more end-of-the-year Flux-feasts, both of which were called "New Year's Eve Flux-Feast" because they were held on December 31 (one in 1968 and one in 1969).<sup>125</sup> Several other planned events took place—a Fluxolympiad and Fluxorchestra concert in 1968, and a month-long Fluxfest at Stony Brook in 1969 (which was to include a Fluxconcert, a Fluxolympiad, street events, a Fluxshow, and numerous other activities, but none actually came to fruition). At the end of 1969 and into early 1970, Fluxus began to go through a regenerative period that would lead to the third and final historical phase of Maciunas' involvement with the Fluxus group.

In the development, design, and production of Fluxus multiples, objects, and other items in the mid-1960s, Maciunas and other Fluxus artists began to explore the possibilities of extending their ideas into the manufacture of "useful" items. This approach, which had a precedent in the later work of the Italian Futurists and

the Russian Constructivists, was a result of an interest in abandoning the notion of exclusivity and focusing on utility. Maciunas saw art, even the work of artists exploring the aesthetic dimensions of Cage's ideas, as a "non-functional commodity—to be bought & sold to make livelihood for the artist," but Fluxus sought "to stop the waste of material and human resources . . . and to divert it to socially useful ends."<sup>126</sup> A large part of this emphasis was a result of Maciunas' own design interests in utility and what he called "functionalism." He believed that, in developing and designing a work, object, or even performance, there must be a direct equivalency between the item's use and its visual qualities. This idea is evident in all of his designs for Fluxus works: for example, the container of *Fluxus I* was designed to look like a packing crate, which it actually was. Many of the inventive labels he designed for Fluxus multiples take this notion of equivalency and use it to give an added dimension to the work. The multiple *Flux Clippings* by Ken Friedman contains random clippings of printed material. The label Maciunas designed uses a wood block print of a beheading; thus, there is a "functional" equivalency between the label and the contents of the work, but it is shifted in such a way as to give the work an added dimension.

Throughout the mid-1960s, Fluxus, in its outlook and in its projects and publications, began increasingly to emphasize means of de-centering the concepts of "art" and "artist." The distance between "art" and "life" in Fluxus work and its activities became smaller and smaller. Fluxus, under the direction of Maciunas, turned from its initial attacks on "serious culture" to a concern for implementing what he referred to as "Fluxus art-ammusement." The works produced in this period, such as Vautier's *Postman's Choice* or Hi Red Center's "Street Cleaning Event," still question cultural assumptions, but they become less directly concerned with criticism as a primary motive. Fluxus was opposed to the gallery system and the kind of art it supported, but it was not against marketing and commerce, as long as the purpose was not just to make a profit for the individual artist. Fluxus sought to make use of commercial distribution systems as another means to challenge the cultural system by producing and distributing goods that were decidedly "commercial" in nature, a replacement of "high art" with "low commerce." It is these kinds of "commercial" goods that are truly closest to the Fluxus ideal of an art-amusement that is non-

exclusive, simple, and ultimately disposable. Fluxus thus carried the implications of Cage and Duchamp much further than other artists exploring these ideas, such as Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and Robert Morris. The radical stance of Fluxus was an abandonment of the self-awareness and self-critical artistic cognizance seen in work of these other artists, for seemingly "purposeless play."

## Chapter Seven

# Late Fluxus and the Development of a New Performance Sensibility from 1970 to 1978

Unlike the designation of "proto-Fluxus," "late Fluxus" was not a specific term used by Maciunas or any of the other artists associated with the trend. However, the late phase was a period recognizably distinct from the prior historical periods detailed above. One of its main characteristics, in contrast to the middle period, was a downplaying of publication and production activities, together with a renewed interest in performance.<sup>1</sup> These activities, however, were not a return to the types of performance found in the first phase. The events and performances presented between 1970 and 1978 fall into two categories: the first was characterized by increasing interest in early Fluxus performance by museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions, such as the exhibition "happenings & fluxus" in Cologne in 1970, the second by a continuation of the development of Fluxus performance toward more open-ended, interactive types of activities and presentations. In the late period, the number of performances and other activities was rather limited, but in the activities that did occur, a distinctive sensibility emphasizing non-art activities was evident.

After the rather slow period of performance presentations from 1968 through 1969, the activities of 1970 seem numerous. The *Flux Newsletter* issued in January, 1970, expressed this renewal of group activities and performance events.

Since interest in Flux-activities is beginning to grow (Sohm Archives, Flux-fest at Douglass College in February, at Stony Brook in Spring,

traveling exhibition of Happenings and Fluxus organized for late 1970 . . . etc.) need has arisen to organize all diverse and dispersed documentary information regarding all past Flux performances and exhibits.<sup>2</sup>

Maciunas asked individuals to send him documentary information relating to any and all Fluxus activities. The institutional interest in Fluxus galvanized Maciunas once again to become more active in organizing Fluxus activities in late 1969 and 1970. By January, 1970, he had already planned to produce new works by Shiomi and Brecht and also to publish another issue of *V TRE*.<sup>3</sup>

The renewed interest in performance in the late phase can be said to have begun with the "New Year's Eve's Flux-fest." This was the largest event of its type up to this point and even included a number of artists, such as Dick Higgins and Henry Flynt, who had not been active in the activities organized by Maciunas for several years. As with two earlier end-of-the-year Fluxus events in 1967 and 1968, one of the main themes of this evening was a variety of manipulated and altered foods. In addition, there were several pieces performed by Henry Flynt, Dick Higgins, George Maciunas, and others.<sup>4</sup>

One of the first late-Fluxus activities Maciunas was involved in organizing was the Fluxfest at Douglass College presented in 1970. The planning for this event had begun in autumn, 1969, but the event itself did not take place until February, 1970. The possibility for this festival came as the result of Geoff Hendricks' involvement with Fluxus and his interest in performance. Hendricks was then an art-department faculty member at Douglass College (associated with Rutgers University) and had been elected to the Voorhees Assembly Board in 1969,<sup>5</sup> which oversaw the planning of programs for students for the Voorhees Chapel at Douglass College, and Hendricks proposed that they have a Fluxconcert there.

My suggestion for a Fluxconcert which I described, was well received, and so I went to talk with Maciunas about the idea. Since it was to be in a chapel he felt strongly that it had to be a *Fluxmass*, something we had never done. As we talked he suggested expanding the project to a whole Fluxfestival. The honorarium would go entirely into materials and supplies in order to have as spectacular an event as possible. Next to the Chapel was the old gym. We must have a Fluxolympiad and there would be an exhibition in the art gallery.<sup>6</sup>



As with some of the earlier events, Maciunas produced the poster for the Douglass College Fluxfestival, which also functioned as a program. The poster/program lists three areas of activities: a "Fluxmass," "Flux-sports," and a "Flux-show." This publication is divided into three sections and lists various traditional elements of the Mass on which the Fluxmass was to be based, the pieces to be included in the Flux-Sports events, and some of the works and artists to be exhibited in the Flux-show.

The development of this Fluxfestival consisted of two parts. The specific works of the Fluxolympiad and activities associated with the exhibition were taken from the various plans for previously unsuccessful events.<sup>7</sup> The other main event, the Fluxmass, was planned from scratch. Maciunas researched all aspects of the Catholic Mass and proposed humorous elements that would correlate to the various parts of it.<sup>8</sup> He also put out a call for additional suggestions for the event, which at first he called "Flux Church."<sup>9</sup> In the initial stage, the program was divided into seven sections, headed with "Ceremonies or the Seven Sacraments: 1. Baptism, 2. Confession, 3. Communion, 4. Confession, 5. Holy Orders, 6. Matrimony, and 7. Extreme Unction." In this early stage of planning, the event, to be held in the chapel, was conceived in relation to the whole institution of the Church, not just the Mass. However, the Mass became the focus. By the early part of January, Maciunas had finished the outline of the "Fluxmass."<sup>10</sup> The presentation was described by Geoff Hendricks.

The Priest's assistants wore gorilla costumes, and the front of the priests' vestments changed from images of Napoleon to the Venus de Milo to George Washington. Yoshimasa Wada was the priest. The sacrament wine was in a plasma tank with a hose. Wafers were laxative and blue urine cookies. The consecration of the bread, a giant loaf filled with sawdust, was done by a mechanical dove (Holy Spirit) made by Joe Jones which moved across overhead on a wire and dropped mud from a can onto the loaf. Antiphonal "chanting" consisted of sound effects such as barking dogs and locomotives, and in another instance bird calls answered by gun shots from the priest. The Lord's prayer was said in a dozen languages. Signal flags were used. Smoke bombs became candles. An inflated superman filled with wine was "Bled." It was a spirited performance in true Fluxus style, enjoyed by many, but it infuriated the Episcopalian chaplain.<sup>11</sup>

The other activities were also generally well received. The "Flux-Sports" took place in the old gym. These events included several races, such as "100 yard race while drinking vodka" and "100 yard candle carrying dash," as well as team events, such as "crowd wrestling in confined spaces," "soccer with ping pong ball pushed by blow tubes," and several other events that were take-offs on sports, such as boxing and tennis.<sup>12</sup> The two event-based parts of the Fluxfest were presented only on February 17; the "Flux-Show," set up in the Douglass College Art Gallery, however, was scheduled for February 16-20. This exhibition included the works of different artists, including several new associates of Fluxus, such as Carla Liss and Alice Hutchins, as well as older associates, such as Ben Vautier, Bob Watts, and George Brecht.

The next Fluxus presentation in 1970 began in April, only two months later, in New York City. This was a series of presentations that lasted from the middle of April to the end of May and was collectively entitled "Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon & Yoko Ono." This festival was the result of the association between Maciunas and Ono. Although very little information is available on the organization of these events, it seems that the direct involvement of either Ono or Lennon was rather minimal. Ono and Lennon were primarily the financial backers.<sup>13</sup> Although some of the presentations were related to Ono and Lennon, such as an exhibition based on Ono's and Lennon's ideas, entitled "Do it Yourself" (in which the works were to be created by the spectators), several other proposed events, such as "Measure by John & Yoko + Fluxdoctors," however, were not dependent on either of them.

The "Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon & Yoko Ono" began on April 11 with two events: "*Grapefruit Flux-Banquet* by Flux-Chefs" and "Do It Yourself by John & Yoko + Everybody." The Flux-Banquet was held as part of the opening for the festival and was an extension of the use of manipulated foods used in earlier Fluxus presentations. All the food was variations of/on grapefruit, referring to Ono's book of scores, projects, and ideas published under the title *Grapefruit*.<sup>14</sup> For this event, Maciunas also produced paper masks of Lennon and Ono for the audience/participants to wear so that they could impersonate Lennon and Ono. In addition to the Flux-Banquet, there was an interactive exhibition, "Do It Yourself," a realization of a number of Ono's pieces, as well as some by Maciunas and Lennon, among them "Painting To Be Stepped On," "Do It Yourself Painting," and "Painting To Hammer a Nail."

The next event advertised in association with this Fluxfestival was "Tickets by John Lennon + Fluxtours," advertised for April 18-24. This was actually a non-event in that it was not a specific occurrence to take place at a particular time. Tickets to various destinations could be purchased, but there was no other specific activity involved unless people chose to try to use the ticket. Maciunas printed some tickets for the advertised places, but most of the tickets were bus or plane tickets. The ones that were printed, for example, Maciunas' facsimile ticket to Grolier Club Exhibitions, 1893, and Lennon's Ticket to Cortland Alley, were worthless; they were either to places where one did not need tickets for admission or for events that had already occurred. This conceptual event further illustrates the continuing shift in Fluxus performance away from "performed" events toward stressing the performance nature of daily life.

Following the non-event of the "Fluxtours" was an event that had been performed before, but it was slightly modified and renamed for this particular presentation. This was "Measure by John & Yoko + Fluxdoctors," scheduled to take place April 25-May 1. The presentation was in actuality only a slight modification of events enacted in Hi Red Center's 1965 "Hotel Event."<sup>15</sup> Essentially, the concept was the same, but for the 1970 presentation, several new types and forms of measurement were added. The last four scheduled parts were interactive environmental installations, which consisted of "May 2-8: Blue Room by John & Yoko + Fluxliars," "May 9-15: Weight & Water by John & Yoko + Fluxfaucet," "May 16-22: Capsule by John & Yoko + Fluxspace Center," and "May 23-29: Portrait of John Lennon as a Young Cloud by Yoko Ono & Every Participant." Three of the presentations were exhibits. The "Blue Room" was a room in which everything was painted white, including the floor, walls, ceiling, and all the furnishings. Inside was an exhibition of a number of Ono's works and some compositions by Lennon and Brecht, many of them signs.<sup>16</sup> "Weight & Water" included pieces by Watts, Maciunas, Brecht, Lennon, and Ono. Several, such as Watts' *step on it*, were intended to be participatory or cause an interaction on the viewer's part by virtue of an element of surprise. Watts' *step on it* consisted of a sunken basin of water covered with crushed styrofoam floating on top. Thus, if one took the title to be an instruction for an action, the result would have participants sinking into the water under the styrofoam. The third

presentation, *Capsule*, was a realization of the idea Maciunas had previously worked on for a proposed film environment.<sup>17</sup> This event was to take place in a six-by-six-foot enclosure, on the walls of which a number of different films were simultaneously shown to one viewer at a time.<sup>18</sup> The last of the presentations was a participatory environment entitled "Portrait of John Lennon as a Young Cloud." Although this piece started out as wall of drawers and doors, by the time Maciunas had completed it, it had become a maze with eight doors, each opening a different way, intended to be completed by the viewer's interaction with the maze and doors; thus, the maze was not the "work" but a means of actualizing the idea.<sup>19</sup>

The performance in the Fluxfest at Douglass College, the "Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon & Yoko Ono," and the "New Years Eve's Flux-Feast" were not completely new developments. Elements of these 1970 performances can be found in many of the performances and presentations in the middle period, particularly in events such as "Hotel Event" and "Street Cleaning Event." All of these performances from late 1969 and 1970 show evidence of the establishment of a more open-ended performance sensibility. A comparison between an early Fluxus festival, such as the Wiesbaden Festum Fluxorum, and the Douglass College Fluxfest clearly demonstrates a change in the type of works presented and in the general approach to performance. The most noticeable was that works such as Higgins' "Danger Music No. 2" or Paik's "One for Violin Solo" had been principally presented in a traditional cultural matrix (such as in a museum or concert hall) as part of an intended countering process to conventional notions of culture. The later presentations, however, occurred in non-traditional art contexts, such as on the street or in a college gym. This change, although in part related to the nature of available performance venues, was more significant, though, as a reflection of an attitudinal shift concerning the role of Fluxus, from seeing Fluxus in direct opposition to serious culture to a general celebration of humor, games, and experiences. Put simply, whereas early Fluxus performance works had more to do with traditional culture, late works had more to do with daily life.<sup>20</sup>

Following these two festivals in February and April-May of 1970, Maciunas produced two new publications. They were documentation of the festivals as well as extensions of them. The first

was *Flux Fest Kit 2*, another collection of scores, events, festivals, and activities that could be used by interested parties to organize their own activities and presentations.<sup>21</sup> This publication included a list of Flux members and their biographies, descriptions of numerous activities, concerts, sporting events, and films, and a list of "FluxProducts 1961 to 1970." It served as a kind of documentation for the Douglass College Fluxfest as well as a presentation of the other planned activities that had not been realized, such as those for the proposed festival at Stony Brook. Whereas the first collective publication of events and scores, *Fluxfest Sale*, primarily consisted of event-type works characteristic of the performances from 1962 to 1965, *Flux Fest Kit 2* contained interactive work more indicative of later Fluxus, such as "Flux Foods and Drinks," "Fluxolympiad," "Flux-Clinic," and proposals for presentations such as a "Flux-Parade," "Swimming Pool Events," and "George Maciunas: Flux-Mass of the Faithful."

The second publication from 1970 was a new issue of the Fluxus Newspaper entitled *John Yoko & Flux No.8 all photographs copyright nineteen seVenty by peTer mooRE*. This issue, although labeled no. 8, was in fact the ninth issue of *V TRE*. Number 8 documents some of the then-recent Fluxus-sponsored events. The newspaper contains a large number of photos from the "New Year's Eve's Fluxfest" in 1969, the "Fluxfestival" at Douglass College, and the "Fluxfest presentation of John Lennon & Yoko Ono" in 1970. In addition to the four pages of photographs by Peter Moore, the issue includes a loose sheet, printed on both sides, listing the specific elements of these events and performances and correlating them to the photographs. In addition to these publications, Maciunas produced a few new Fluxus works by individual artists in 1970, including Jock Reynolds, Geoff Hendricks, and himself.<sup>22</sup>

In the years 1971 and 1972, the number of Fluxus activities was limited in the United States.<sup>23</sup> Although Maciunas continued to issue works that had already been developed, the number of new works actually produced was rather small. In his history chart, Maciunas lists only four new works developed during 1971 and 1972. The one major new project he initiated in 1972 was the third collective Fluxus publication, to be called *Fluxpack 3*. It was not until 1973, however, that the development of this publication began in earnest. Although, in the late period, the emphasis again shifted away from the production of publications and multiples toward

performance, this does not mean that there were large numbers of performances. In several of the years between 1970 and 1978, there was often only one presentation, in New York; in the years 1971 and 1972, there was only one major Fluxus-sponsored presentation organized by Maciunas in the United States, "Flux Divorce."<sup>24</sup>

"Flux Divorce" was a collaboration between Geoff and Bici Hendricks and George Maciunas. Much like the "Fluxmass," this event was conceived as a parody from the ideas and actions involved in a divorce. Geoff Hendricks later described the initial idea for this presentation.

Early in 1971 Bici Forbes and I were approaching our 10th wedding anniversary. We were in the midst of a lot of internal changes. It was not clear whether we were going to separate or not. But as the date June 24th got closer we were still together, though on a different basis, and I suggested that we celebrate with a Flux Divorce. On reflection Bici liked the idea and I went and talked with George Maciunas about collaborating. Yes, he was excited about it.<sup>25</sup>

Maciunas and Hendricks outlined a number of actions based on divorce, including "division of the house," "separation," "division of property," and a "celebration" of the event. The enactment of the "Flux Divorce" took place on June 24, 1971.

The house was divided in many funny ways. For the "separation" Bici and I [Geoff] were in winter coats sewn back to back and in the backyard (where Bici had made a large ice sculpture to melt/defrost). We were separated by a tug-of-war with the men pulling on a rope tied around me and the women on a rope tied around Bici. I had arranged a "division of property" in the bedroom and with paper cutter, scissors, power saw, ax, etc. wedding documents, clothing, double bed, wicker loveseat were all literally cut in half, followed by a celebration party.<sup>26</sup>

In conjunction with this event, or as an outgrowth from it, Geoff Hendricks developed another work, entitled "Flux Divorce Album," a kind of document of the event as well as a work itself.<sup>27</sup>

In 1972 and 1973, Maciunas worked on the third collective Fluxus publication, *Fluxpack 3*. Initially proposed by him as early as 1968, this project was eventually produced in collaboration with Multhipla in Milan, Italy, in the early 1970s. It was conceived in conjunction with *Flash Art* and Giancarlo Politi, who had given

Maciunas \$2,000 to help produce it. By the end of 1972, he had sketched out a list of proposed contents and a budget. The preliminary list included works by Peter Moore, Ben Patterson, Ben Vautier, Takako Saito, Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi, Geoff Hendricks, Nam June Paik, George Brecht, Robert Filliou, Robert Watts, Paul Sharits, George Maciunas, and several others. Although the list seems quite large and diverse, Maciunas was rather disappointed by the response he had gotten from the artists for this project.<sup>28</sup> By April of 1973, the list had been refined to several categories of materials, including tablecloths, posters or wallpaper, stationary, postage stamps, postcards, aprons, masks, and hats.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Maciunas was still soliciting additional material and even still considering another category of games for inclusion.<sup>30</sup> Eventually, he decided against including any games, telling Politi that he would save them possibly to include in a publication that would be a "package of games only."<sup>31</sup> The works eventually produced consisted mostly of those by Maciunas (nine works), with several by Geoff Hendricks (one work), Vautier (one work), Watts (two works), and Brecht (one work).<sup>32</sup> The pieces were produced and printed under the supervision of Maciunas in New York and sent to Italy for packaging in a tube by Multhipla.<sup>33</sup> Although all of the materials for this publication were produced by the beginning of 1974, the very few examples of the assembled and packaged *Fluxpack 3* that were assembled seem to have been completed in 1975.<sup>34</sup> Maciunas also produced several other new works by individual artists in 1973, including works by himself, Watts, Carla Liss, and Shiomi.<sup>35</sup>

There were two primary Fluxus presentations in 1973. The first was a "Flux-Game Fest," presented in New York in May. Maciunas had announced this upcoming event in the April *Fluxnewsletter*.

In the latter part of this May, starting May 19th, we shall have a Flux-Game Fest at 80 Wooster St. ground floor and the street itself. The 19th and the 20th are scheduled for games by Takako Saito, Shigeo Kubota, Nam June Paik, Y. Tone, Bob Watts and George Maciunas. Anyone wishing to organize games for 26th and 27th of May should let me know by May 6th or sooner. In connection to these games, I need as many bicycles as possible together with riders for May 19th or 20th. A giant bicycle vehicle . . . will be built. . . .<sup>36</sup>

It was Maciunas' initial intent that this "Flux-Game Fest" be an ongoing event to last at least two weeks. The majority of the games

and activities, however, took place on only May 19. These were advertised as two different events. Maciunas designed and produced flyers for a "Flux-Game Fest" using an Aztec drawing depicting gambling and a "Flux Vehicle Day." The latter was part of a larger presentation of a "Flux-Game Fest."<sup>37</sup> The outdoor activities, which took place on the street in front of 80 Wooster, included the construction and riding of Maciunas' multi-tandem bike, constructed using bikes several people had brought and a modular tubing system that Maciunas had developed to connect the bikes. After all the bikes were joined, various people took turns riding it up and down Wooster Street. Other events consisted of several different team races, one by Ay-O (team race on one pair of skis), and one by Watts (canvas loop team race). The last outdoor activity was another construction by Maciunas related to transportation, the Giant Wheel, a large, hollow, wheel-like construction that the participants walked inside of, causing it to turn. Games that took place inside 80 Wooster Street were interactive. There was a jousting game on swings by Maciunas, a hide-and-seek game using a video camera by Paik, several games using boxes, such as "flipping boxes race" and "kicking boxes billiards" by Saito, a game of soccer on stilts by Bici Hendricks, and several other games for groups. Completing this event was a theme-food party like some of the earlier New Year's Eve events.

The other Fluxus-sponsored event for 1973 was a New Year's Eve's event, also held at 80 Wooster Street and based on a theme, although one not specifically related to food. The event included a variety of food, as had the earlier versions of this event, but the primary focus now was on the theme of "Disguises." In the *Flux Newsletter* from May, 1975, Maciunas lists the various activities that took place at this event.<sup>38</sup> Disguises included masks and costumes — paper face masks made by Peter Moore from a photograph of Maciunas, Paik with a sign saying that he was "George Brecht," and Maciunas hidden inside a one-meter-square die.<sup>39</sup>

Little Fluxus work was produced under Maciunas during 1974 and 1975, and few Fluxus events were held.<sup>40</sup> He spent most of 1974 working on the various Fluxhouse cooperative projects.<sup>41</sup> Because of these activities, he came under the scrutiny of the New York State Attorney General. Maciunas had not always done the work required on these buildings or adhered to the building code regarding construction methods during refurbishment. The Assistant



Attorney General, Lawrence Ravetz, issued Maciunas several subpoenas and tried to bring him to court for these violations.<sup>42</sup> His response was to create a Fluxus event based on aspects of this procedure in 1975.<sup>43</sup> He had a number of Fluxus artists in different parts of the world send the Attorney General postcards saying that he was in Nice or Japan. He also made various disguises for himself and fashioned different escape routes from his living space. In a letter to Gino Di Maggio, Maciunas described these events and his interest in making a Fluxus work from them.

The reason for my urgent departure is that the New York State Attorney General is after me for having organized 12 cooperatives. (without having paid him a bribe of \$5000 per building). I antagonized him even more when I decided to play games with him. When they subpoenaed my friends to bring a photograph of myself (they dont know even what I look like), I sent them a photo of myself with a gorilla mask, and promised to send them throughout the year 50 variations of my portrait (neither recognizable), that will be a Flux piece for 1975 "portraits for N.Y. Attorney General ." <sup>44</sup>

Maciunas also continued planning several other projects in 1974, including several possible Fluxevents in Europe and America, among them a Flux Amusement Arcade and Flux Game Room for an exhibit at the Rene Block Gallery in New York. The exhibition project was never realized because of expense.<sup>45</sup> The only Fluxevent that occurred in 1974 was a "Flux New Year's Eve Event" that was a "colored meal" in which all the foods were one color, such as orange, violet, black, yellow, etc.<sup>46</sup> Maciunas had become increasingly wary of spending time or money on new proposals for events and activities in the mid-1970s, especially when he would be dependent on someone else to complete them. In 1974, Gino Di Maggio wrote him about some possible new joint projects, but Maciunas' response was less than enthusiastic.

You also write of publishing a book of all the editions I did, that is some 200 objects. I do not have photographs of them, and it would take me a few months to make all these editions, because I never keep any of them, only the components for them . . . Also I am a little skeptical of these projects. I usually do a lot of preparatory work, and then nothing comes off . . . I have and had many unrealized flux projects, such as town festivals, sports events, amusement arcades, mazes, etc.<sup>47</sup>

His hesitancy about possible new projects was not based just on the fact that they might not be completed but on the nature of the proposed projects as well. As historical interest in Fluxus developed, Maciunas received several requests for his involvement in projects. Generally, however, he refused to be involved if they were repeating something that had already been done by Fluxus. As he said on several occasions, he had no interest in repeating the same thing, as many artists did.<sup>48</sup>

It would be foolish to participate in eclectic projects such as publishing books about past events and objects. There have been many books and articles about the past already. Such inflating projects are good only to the people who wish to inflate their egos, and I hope there are none among Fluxus people, otherwise I would stop doing Fluxus.<sup>49</sup>

In 1975, two new performances were presented. The first was a harpsichord concert held in March at 80 Wooster Street in New York. The "Flux Harpsichord Recital" was inspired by a harpsichord that Saito had bought as a kit, assembled, and given to Maciunas in the early 1970s.<sup>50</sup> He decided that he wanted to hold a concert in which all the works presented made use of this harpsichord. The concert, presented on March 24, consisted two kinds of works that used the instrument: older pieces by artists such as La Monte Young, Toshi Ichianagi, Brecht, Schmit, and others were modified to make use of the harpsichord, and new pieces by Yoshi Wada, Paik, Watts, Joe Jones, Maciunas, Knowles, and Larry Miller that had been written specifically for this presentation.<sup>51</sup> In a number of ways, this concert was a return to the action-music and event-type performances associated more with the early phase of Fluxus. However, this presentation was an extension of what Fluxus had done before; the "Flux Harpsichord Recital" was a kind of thematic presentation, much like the "Fluxorchestra" and the "Flux New Year's Eve Events," rather than a concert of varied, thematically unrelated works, such as the festival performance at Copenhagen in 1962.<sup>52</sup>

In April, 1975, another new type of performance was presented. Entitled "Fluxfest Presents 12! Big Names!," this presentation was a reaction by Maciunas to the way in which name value is often more important than the ideas or works of artists. The poster he designed for this event was vague enough so that the announced activity could have been any number of things, but the poster

would generally lead one to assume that the work of the following artists (or the artists themselves) was being presented: Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Philip Glass, Allan Kaprow, Les Levine, Pierro Manzoni, Bruce Nauman, Yoko Ono, Michael Snow, Rinke, Wolf Vostell, and Andy Warhol. The performance itself, however, was precisely what the flyer lists. The presentation, which took place on the evening of April 21, featured large projections (20 feet wide) of the advertised names one at a time, for about five minutes each.<sup>53</sup> Maciunas later wrote about this presentation.

Since many of the works of chosen big names are imitative of work of smaller names, the large audience attendance must be the cause of the names and not the works. We satisfied the audience, therefore, by omitting the works altogether and adding instead more big names.<sup>54</sup>

This presentation underlines the continuing importance of humor for Fluxus, especially as a mechanism to question the nature of the art system. Many of the later Fluxus performances, especially the various parties and semi-private events, seem hard to consider as art at all. In some ways, though, this was exactly the point: they are not art because art as a thing or system is an artificial construct, much like the "Fluxfest Presents: 12! Big Names!"

There was another end-of-the-year event planned for 1975, but as a result of an occurrence in November, it was postponed until 1976. In the refurbishment of the various Fluxhouse cooperatives, Maciunas had been subcontracting the work to different individuals, and he got into a dispute over a bill with one of the subcontractors, Peter Di Stefano. According to Maciunas,

[De Stefano] decided to cut it short by addressing himself to my bones instead of my reason. Thus on November 8th, 2 hired gorillas lured me out of my fortress . . . Immediately upon entering the loft the gorillas commenced to settle the dispute by the "Sportsman's" method — by using my head for a soccer ball or baseball.<sup>55</sup>

Maciunas was seriously injured and had to be hospitalized for quite some time. He eventually recovered from his injuries but lost an eye. As a consequence, all the Fluxus activities planned for the end of 1975 were postponed.<sup>56</sup>

The delayed "Flux New Year's Eve Event" was rescheduled for April, 1976. Maciunas began the planning for this event at the end of 1975 and issued a "Proposal for 1975/76 Flux-New Year's Eve

Event at the Clock Tower" that lists a number of possible events, objects, and foods for this occasion. He also requested additional works from the participants that would be "time-pieces, which could be either time or clock objects, or time events or time foods."<sup>57</sup> The event was called "Delayed Flux New Year's Eve Event" and took place on April 18, 1976. There was a very large response, partially as a show of support for Maciunas, with the participation of over twenty artists and friends.<sup>58</sup>

Maciunas' involvement with the last three years of the historical Fluxus period, from 1976 to 1978, were quite active, especially in comparison to the late 1960s. Many events and activities occurred during these years, but few, if any, new Fluxus publications or multiples were produced. Existing works were produced primarily on demand. In these last several years, Maciunas was assisted in the assembly process by the artist and associate Larry Miller, who worked on many of the multiples. The primary emphasis of Maciunas, however, was on Fluxus activities and performances.

In spring, 1976, two Fluxus events took place. The first was a series of tours offered in May. These "Free Flux-Tours" had been organized by Maciunas in the early part of 1976 when he was arranging events at the Clock Tower for April. The flyer he produced for these tours lists 15 different tours, one every day from May 1 to May 16.<sup>59</sup> The tours, which were a commentary on the increasing tourism in the Soho area, consisted of visits to a variety of locations, such as "curb sites," "alleys, yards & dead ends," "subways," and even a "Souvenir Hunt," a hunt for dog excrement in the grass of Central Park. The "Flux-Tours" were in many ways exemplary of the interactive and humorous qualities of many later Fluxus events. Not all of the scheduled tours occurred, but those that did were rather well attended and generally enjoyed by all.<sup>60</sup>

In May, another Fluxus event was organized to honor Maciunas and his contributions to Fluxus. All of the Fluxus artists, despite their personal conflicts with him, recognized the central role he had played in the organization and duration of the group. In 1975, George Brecht and Geoff Hendricks decided to organize a "Festschrift banquet" to recognize Maciunas' contributions to Fluxus. After he was attacked and beaten, the actualization of this event became even more important. Geoff Hendricks recounted the organization of this event in winter, 1975:

I wrote to Brecht that I felt that this was the time to plan the Festschrift. Brecht agreed. Together with Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Bob Watts and others we planned a banquet at Zaccar's Offset Print Shop. We sent out a request for pieces in tribute to George. I made a Festschrift leather covered box/book with all our contributions inside. George Brecht gave the celebration the title *Laudatio Scripta pro George Maciunas Concepta Hominibus Fluxi*. Bob Watts with Sara Seagull put together a V TRE for the occasion.<sup>61</sup>

The celebration took place on the evening of May 2, which included a Flux-Feast, several performances, a presentation of Hendrick's Festschrift box/book containing contributions of 28 different people, and the distribution of the special V TRE issue.<sup>62</sup>

The major Fluxus project in 1976 was the development and final realization of Maciunas's plans for a *Fluxlabyrinth*. This project was designed for and installed in Berlin as part of the "26th Arts Festival" in September. Maciunas had developed a plan for a similar interactive environment called a Fluxmaze in 1974 in association with the proposed exhibition at the Rene Block Gallery in New York.<sup>63</sup> The *Fluxlabyrinth* was a collective project designed and produced by Maciunas with the assistance of Miller.<sup>64</sup> The completed *Fluxlabyrinth* contained a number of tactile and sensory interactions (on the floor and walls of the labyrinth), doors, passageways, and other elements. In addition to the labyrinth, a second harpsichord concert was performed, which included over 20 pieces by Fluxus artists, by Brecht, Ben and Anne Vautier, Maciunas, Higgins, Filliou, Watts, Miller, Jones, and Schmit.<sup>65</sup> Although not exactly the same as the concert performed previously in New York, this one did feature many of the same pieces.

In 1976, as a partial result of his problems with the Fluxhouse projects, Maciunas moved from New York City to New Marlborough, Massachusetts. He had bought a large house and farm, where he hoped to develop a center for the arts. It was his intention to develop this property into a center with artists' studios, a school/workshop, a library, a performance space, and a technical workshop.<sup>66</sup> Although most of these plans were never realized, a number of Fluxus performances, events, and activities did occur in New Marlborough in 1977 and 1978.

The first event at Maciunas' New Marlborough home took place on January 22 and 23, 1977. This was the postponed "New Year's Eve Event" from the previous year.<sup>67</sup> In preparation for the

rescheduled event, which Maciunas at first called the "Flux Snow Event" and subsequently the "Flux Food Atlas & Snow Event," he produced a plan that he sent to all the potential participants,<sup>68</sup> including a list of the foods people would bring. Each food item was to be from a different country, and each participant was asked to plan to do an event with either snow or ice on the nearby frozen lake.<sup>69</sup> The activities began on Saturday, around nine in the evening, with the participatory performance of "Flux Food Atlas." For this event, the food and drinks, each from a different country, were set on a large map to correspond with the foods' countries of origin. After the dinner part of the event, and after the people who were not spending the night there had left, Higgins suggested they hold an impromptu Fluxus concert.<sup>70</sup> Five event pieces (by Higgins, Young, Shiomi, and Mac Low) were performed and a toast was given to all the members of Fluxus who were not able to be there.<sup>71</sup> The events on Sunday were held in the late morning and early afternoon, including the realizations of the snow or ice pieces by a number of the people there, including Maciunas, Knowles, Geoff Hendricks, Brian Buczak, Yasunao Tone, Jean Dupuy, Jon Hendricks, Joan Mathews, and others. Many of these works, such as Knowles' "Snow Sing" and Maciunas' "Marching Pieces" and "Sledding Pieces," were participatory and involved everyone. There were also several individual impromptu presentations, such as Geoff Hendricks' peeing "FLUXUS" in the snow and Dupuy's drawing of Maciunas in the snow.<sup>72</sup>

These were events insofar as all actions and activities were event-based. Many of the pieces "presented" could not be distinguished physically, or in some cases conceptually, from any other "normal" day-to-day event. This illustrates the full-circle development of certain aspects of Fluxus performance works, which, at one time event pieces based on daily activities, were now supplanted by daily events possessing references to the earlier event pieces but not presented as separate from daily life at all. This quality is demonstrated in the description by Brian Buczak of some of the "events" enacted at the "Flux Snow Event."

[My] favorite event [was] the search in the snow for Jean Brown. Next came that great shopping trip with all those pickles. Jean Brown's snow search piece was a perfect prelude to my get lost, you're all wet piece which I had planned for the next day. All went perfectly. I wasn't found and the ice gave way just as I had thought I had crossed the pond

without falling in . . . In a similar tone since then, I have performed two new pieces called "Falling down on the icy sidewalk" Parts one and two. They consisted of slipping and falling down on the sidewalk when least expecting to do so.<sup>73</sup>

This lack of framing clearly evident in Buczak's statement reinforces the general recognition in some later Fluxus actions and events of the performance aspects of all actions, even without separating and presenting them as "performances."

In spring, 1977, Maciunas began to plan for two additional activities for later that year. The first was the continuation of his plans for an arts center on his property at New Marlborough. Although he wanted to develop the whole art center, he was very short of money, particularly since the mortgage on the property was almost \$600 a month. He realized that he would have to develop the center piece by piece over a period of time.<sup>74</sup> The first activities that Maciunas began to plan, therefore, were not the full physical realization of an arts center but a Flux festival to be held there in summer, 1977. In a letter to George Brecht, he describes these plans.

[Next] (coming) Summer we were planning to organize a flux-festival in the Berkshires, in and around our farm. So far Ben, Filliou, Joe Jones, and most of the people from New York agreed to come . . . There is a large 3 story barn and a carriage house, some 40ft x 100ft which we will convert into a performance space. We should also plan to do pieces in the countryside, forest, lakes, roads etc.<sup>75</sup>

He outlined eight different two-day Fluxfests for this summer festival, planned to occur July 4-August 21. Each was to have a specific theme, such as "Nature," "Foreign Visitors," "Audience Participation," or "Sky & Water." Maciunas applied to several governmental arts funding agencies to help pay for these proposed Fluxfests, but he did not receive any grants. Thus, he had to cancel the planned activities.

During this same time, Maciunas began to plan for another, unrelated festival for the fall. In May, he had received a letter from the musician Frederic Lieberman in Seattle, who taught at the University of Washington and had been somewhat active in Fluxus for several years. Lieberman and several other artists in Seattle decided that they wanted to hold a two-week festival there.<sup>76</sup> They

wanted to hold this festival at a small non-profit space called and/or, and Lieberman wrote to Maciunas to ask him if he would be interested in being involved in the planning and coming to Seattle for the actual festival.<sup>77</sup> Maciunas agreed to be involved, indicating that he would like to produce a "Flux Toilet" installation for the exhibition. By July the plans had advanced quite well. Artist Nori Sato, one of the other Seattle organizers, wrote to Maciunas describing their plans and sending him a diagram of the toilets at and/or for his "Flux Toilet" piece.

We are planning an exhibition of older Flux pieces as well as new pieces produced especially for this FluxFest. We hope to do the Flux Clinic at the end in order to, among other things, de-flux people, play Fluxus games in which no one wins or loses, inviting people to make the games up. We will have a concert with some older pieces which have been performed in other Fluxus concerts and new pieces created by some of the latent Fluxus artists of this area.<sup>78</sup>

The festival was held in Seattle from September 24 through October 2. It began on Saturday with the issuance of Fluxpassports, called Visa TouRistE, that were to be used as a "special entry card to Fluxus events during this FluxFest."<sup>79</sup> The program for that week included a number of ongoing and single events. The ongoing events, which took place at several locations around Seattle, included a Flux Store, a science exhibit, game exhibits, Maciunas' "Flux Toilets" (a series of altered toilets and toilet stalls based on several artists' ideas, including an adhesive toilet seat, metallic toilet paper, flushing that triggers a tape of clapping and laughing sounds, and a mobile "Flux Clinic" that was a truck driving around to different areas of the city and performing actions based on "Hotel Event." In addition, a Fluxconcert was presented on the evening of September 29 and was advertised as a concert of new, old, local, and international pieces. People were invited to come as performers or as part of the audience. The other single-occasion events connected with this festival included a "Fluxdance," a "Game Night" where people were invited to play the various Fluxus games on exhibit, an old car rally, a performance of Brecht's "Motor Vehicle Sundown Event," an abbreviated version of a Fluxolympiad combined with a picnic, a Fluxfilm program, and a "Bus Event." Maciunas came to Seattle prior to the beginning of the festival to oversee the setting up of the "Flux Toilets" and was involved in many of the events in the



first part of the week, but he was not feeling well and had to leave before the completion of the festival.<sup>80</sup>

After his return from Seattle, he began to finalize the arrangements for the next Fluxfest. This event, which he had begun planning prior to his trip to Seattle, was to be held at his house in New Marlborough on the weekend of October 29 and was appropriately called "Flux Halloween." As with all the other events of this kind, the weekend had a theme, and the participants were asked to bring a particular kind of food. On this occasion, the participants were all to come with a different identity, which was a theme related to Halloween and costumes, and the food was all made from either apples or potatoes.<sup>81</sup> Several participants came as members of the opposite gender. Both Knowles and Olga Adorno came as men, whereas Maciunas dressed as a woman with a blond wig and spike heels. The two other main activities associated with the Halloween event were a tour in costume of the local garbage dump and the performance of spontaneous events there and a tour in costume of the antique stores in Great Barrington.<sup>82</sup>

Through 1977, Maciunas' health had been getting progressively worse. By autumn he had an almost constant stomachache, which especially bothered him after he ate. He went to the doctor several times and had tests done, but nothing specifically wrong with him was discovered.<sup>83</sup> Because of his health problems, the New Year's Eve event for 1977 that he had planned was cancelled. On January 6, a biopsy was performed, revealing cancer of the pancreas.<sup>84</sup> The cancer was too advanced to remove, and the doctors gave Maciunas only about two more months to live.<sup>85</sup> As a result of this prognosis, Maciunas hurriedly set to work to organize several new events he had been thinking about over the last several months of 1977.

The first major presentation was a "Fluxwedding."<sup>86</sup> In 1977, Maciunas had taken several boarders into his home at New Marlborough to help pay his bills; one of his tenants was a young woman named Billie Hutchings who helped Maciunas with daily activities; as a result, they became good friends.<sup>87</sup> By the time of the "Flux Halloween" event, Maciunas had decided that he wanted to marry Billie Hutchings and told Geoff Hendricks that he was thinking about a Fluxwedding and that Hendricks should be the officiating "Fluxminister."<sup>88</sup> The "Fluxwedding" of George Maciunas and Billie Hutchings took place on February 25, 1978, at

the loft of Olga Adorno and Jean Dupuy, also called the Grommer Art Theater. Geoff Hendricks later recalled the events associated with the "Fluxwedding."

George and Billy [sic] were both in white bridal dresses. The ceremony was followed by a Fluxfest of erotic food and performances which included Ben Patterson's "Lick", and George and Billy's "Black and White" where they exchanged clothes.<sup>89</sup>

In the period following the "Fluxwedding," Maciunas's health became worse. He was taking large quantities of morphine for the pain and had to lie down most of the time.<sup>90</sup> He succumbed to cancer and died the afternoon of May 9, 1978.

Although a primary aspect of the historic period of Fluxus came to an end because of Maciunas' death, his death itself generated one of the last major late-Fluxus events. He had told Geoff Hendricks that the cycle of Fluxus events including a "Fluxwedding" and a "Flux Divorce" should be completed with a "Fluxfuneral."<sup>91</sup> Remembering Maciunas' request, Hendricks organized the "Fluxfuneral" for Maciunas.

At the simple memorial service of the family and Fluxusfamily at the Crematorium in Queens the desire of George that there should be a Fluxfuneral came to me. Following the service I spoke with Jonas Mekas about the idea and the availability of 80 Wooster Street, a place so close to George. May 13th a few days away was possible. The consensus of those at the service who I spoke to was that we should do it.<sup>92</sup>

The "Flux Funeral for George Maciunas" was held May 13 and included the reading of a letter from Maciunas's mother, a videotape of Maciunas giving a lecture on bananas, a funeral procession with a Fluxminister, pallbearers and even a Fluxwidow (who was actually Larry Miller), an invocation, and a service. The Fluxfuneral ended with a performance arranged by Dick Higgins of "In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti in Memorium to George Maciunas."<sup>93</sup> Following the Fluxfuneral, there was a "Fluxfeast & Wake" for which all the food and drinks were either black, white, or purple. A number of Fluxus works and tributes to George Maciunas were also performed at the "Fluxfeast & Wake."<sup>94</sup>

It is difficult to say when Fluxus ended, if it has at all. Fluxus as a historic development and group came to a kind of conclusion with the death of George Maciunas. Insofar as Maciunas was the one

constant throughout all of the stages and periods of Fluxus and was the primary organizer and designer of most of the Fluxus presentations, publications, and multiples, it is arguably correct to mark the end of Fluxus as a historical group in 1978. Although Maciunas was not Fluxus, it would not have existed in the same way without him. Over the sixteen years that Fluxus was active as a group, Maciunas was responsible for maintaining the group's cohesion and giving it direction. Many of the activities reflect Maciunas' own interests and concerns, particularly in their political dimensions and concern for social praxis. He was responsible for shaping Fluxus from a concept of a magazine to a loose association of individuals to a particular performance aesthetic associated with events and action music to a publishing and production company of artists' multiples, scores, and objects, and, finally, to a group of artists who explored the promise that life was more interesting than art. When Maciunas died, a part of Fluxus died with him. This does not mean, however, that Fluxus as an attitude toward art, culture, and life came to an end in 1978, for as an attitudinal stance Fluxus still remains vital to this day.



*Flux Year Box 2* (1966; this example 1968), wood box with mixed media, 8 x 8 x 3 3/8. Photo by Buzz Silverman. Courtesy of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit.

## Chapter Eight

# The Fluxus Attitude

Although an element of historical Fluxus can be said to have ended with George Maciunas' death in 1978, Fluxus lives on in the underlying attitudes of the historical activities of Maciunas and the Fluxus group. A number of the artists associated with Fluxus emphasized that it was primarily a group drawn to one another's work and ideas. Emmett Williams said about Fluxus that:

The miracle was not that these artists of different nationalities, cultural backgrounds, artistic temperaments and status in the world of art worked so well together, but that they were able to work together at all. There was no aesthetic to unite them in a common cause. It is wrong to think of FLUXUS as a movement, or even a group. It's closer to the bull's-eye to call it a United Front. The United Front provided them a forum, free from the entanglements of the art establishment, in which to perform their own works, and the works of kindred spirits.<sup>1</sup>

What Williams' statement underscores is the importance of recognizing that Fluxus was principally a loose-knit association of individuals who shared certain ideas and interests, and worked together to realize their ideas. In a letter to Maciunas, Ben Vautier emphasized his own view of the nebulous nature of who and what Fluxus was.

When I think of Fluxus I think of a general spirit in art consecrating the notion of Everything in: Detail, Life, simple gestures, non professionalism, divertissement etc. I think of George Brecht's pieces, La Monte

Young's compositions, Ray Johnson's letters etc. I also think of a concert composed of small non artificial pieces ranging from Paik's violin solo to George's simple piano pieces, of items from Watts, A-Yo [sic], Fine, Shiomi, Kosugi, Schmit, Joe Jones, Eric Anderson, etc. Yes all these people mean Fluxus to me even if they are not Fluxus or have quit, or have been expelled, or have never been Fluxus.<sup>2</sup>

As Vautier confirms, the commonalities among the various individuals involved with Fluxus were fundamentally conceptual. Fluxus artists not only shared an attitude toward art-making, but a much broader philosophical world view. In an interview, Maciunas stated that Fluxus was not a group but:

a way of doing things, very informal, sort of like a joke group. You know if you ask people like George Brecht, 'Are you Fluxus?' then he will just laugh at you. Its more like Zen than Dada in that sense. If you ask a Zen monk 'Are your Zen?' then he probably won't reply, saying 'Yes, I'm Zen.' He will give you some odd answer like hitting you on the head with a stick.<sup>3</sup>

The word "Fluxus" was thus both a name used by a varying community of individuals as a convenient label for their collective activities and a term for a generalized attitude not necessarily linked to a specific activity.<sup>4</sup>

The diversity of Fluxus works, performances, and publications contains no quantifiable visual commonalities, yet this totality does possess shared aspects. To understand the nature of this totality, it is useful briefly to compare Fluxus and Surrealism. In an unpublished version of the essay, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," Dick Higgins suggests that there has been a tendency to overestimate the resemblance of Fluxus to Futurism and Dada and a parallel inclination to underestimate the "mental inflow" from Surrealism to Fluxus.<sup>5</sup> Surrealism's main contribution to Fluxus, Higgins believes, was that it provided a model to the artists associated with Fluxus for how they should behave as a group.<sup>6</sup> This comparison with Surrealism can also be extended to the way in which Fluxus has been considered by art historians. As with Surrealism, if one considers only the physical works and performance documents, one can not necessarily determine why this work should be associated with a single artistic group. The visual qualities of surrealist paintings, ranging from the veristic Sur-

realism of Salvador Dalí to the abstractions of André Masson, are radically different. The commonalities, though, lie at a deeper and more generalized conceptual level. To find coherence among these productions, one must refer to the conceptual envelope within which the works came to be created, not just the works themselves. In this respect, Fluxus can be meaningfully compared with Surrealism. Both Fluxus and Surrealism developed from a broad program that took individual artists in a variety of diverging directions in their work. Many of these underlying ideas are not even really art-specific, but are broad political, social, and metaphysical concerns that led artists to reconsider the world around them and the institutions of the status quo. Surrealism developed a much more coherent and centralized program than Fluxus, however, because Fluxus activities were ultimately predicated on an affirmation of indeterminate structures and shifting situational constructs.

Any historical consideration, which by necessity is reductive, will tend to skew what Fluxus was and is. It will never be possible, or even desirable, to specify the full meaning of Fluxus, for like chance events in general (themselves a key element of many Fluxus activities), when defined they become part of a means-to-an-end rationality and thus are no longer truly indeterminate. It is this very quality in Fluxus, though, that gives it its attitudinal strength. Maciunas' earliest pseudo-definition of Fluxus highlights it not as a static group, but as a dynamic attitude. At various times, he used the dictionary definition of flux as part of a definition of Fluxus. One of these definitions is the "Act of Flowing: a continuous moving on or passing by, as of a flowing stream; a continuing succession of changes."<sup>7</sup> The choice and use of the word Fluxus emphasizes the fundamental role of change. The result of this idea was that variability and contradictions were inherent in all Fluxus activities and attitudes, as a continually shifting process. Although Fluxus can be historically described, it should be remembered that it was also an attitude towards art, culture, and life that is not historically limited.

The proposition that, in addition to what might be called "historical Fluxus," there was a network of interrelated concepts and ideas forming what I have called the "Fluxus attitude" is not new. Several of the artists associated with Fluxus have subsequently proposed a series of points that form a conceptual basis for Fluxus. The most specific of these attempts to discern the Fluxus attitude

were put forth by Dick Higgins and Ken Friedman, both of whom have proposed lists of "qualities" contained in Fluxus-type works and events. Higgins suggests a list of nine criteria that included: internationalism, experimentalism, iconoclasm, intermedia, minimalism, the resolution of the art/life dichotomy, implicativeness, play or gags, ephemerality, and specificity.<sup>8</sup> Ken Friedman suggests a slightly larger list of 12 criteria that include: globalism, unity of art and life, intermedia, experimentalism and research orientation, chance, playfulness, simplicity and parsimony, implicativeness, exemplativism, specificity, presence in time, and musicality.<sup>9</sup> An interest in expressing the qualities contained in the Fluxus attitude is also evident, although somewhat more diffusely, in the writings and statements of George Brecht, George Maciunas, Emmett Williams, and many others. From the convergence of these sources, one can discern the significance of several issues for the Fluxus attitude, including internationalism, collectivism, egalitarianism, indeterminacy, unity of art and life, de-centering, intermedia, participation, and humor.

Fluxus was from its inception international. The artists who participated with Fluxus were from a variety of backgrounds and countries, including the United States, Japan, Germany, Korea, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, and Czechoslovakia. This international makeup was related to the opposition within the Fluxus group to nationalistic divisiveness. Many of the Fluxus artists in the early 1960s felt that the intertwining of nationalist stances and cultural developments in the arts had led to what Eric Andersen referred to as "National Masturbation."<sup>10</sup> The international aims of Fluxus were reflected in the early plans for publications and festivals. In the *Tentative Plan for the Content of the First 7 Issues* developed by Maciunas with the assistance of a number of other artists, the proposed publications were divided into geographic areas of coverage. These were to include the United States (No. 1 U. S. YEARBOOK); Germany, Scandinavia, Holland (No. 2 WEST EUROPEAN YEARBOOK); Japan (No. 3 JAPANESE YEARBOOK); France, Italy, England, Belgium, Spain (No. 5 WEST EUROPEAN YEARBOOK II); and Poland U.S.S.R. (No. 6 EAST EUROPEAN YEARBOOK). The other two proposed issues (Numbers 4 and 7) were to focus on the past, specifically HOMAGE TO THE PAST and HOMAGE TO DaDa. These two issues were also international in scope, covering material from Italy, Japan, Korea,



England, China, Russia, Germany, and other countries. The audiences for these publications were likewise perceived as international, and for this reason, the various issues were to be published in multilingual editions. The proposed festival cycle was also international in scope, including works from most of the areas to be covered in the publications. These festivals were initially to be presented throughout Western and Eastern Europe, the United States, and Japan.

As plans for these publications and festivals developed, it became clear that this approach was still somewhat nationalistic in that it still preserved separations based on countries. Partially as a result of this recognition, Maciunas gradually abandoned the original plans in 1963 and 1964. The initial multi-national proposal was replaced by a less-categorized, but still international, collective model. The international nature of Fluxus was thus an inherent part of its collectivism from its inception.

The collective nature of Fluxus was an outgrowth of several differing but related considerations. Part of the significance of collectivism was as an opposition to the commercialism, professionalism, and individualism of much of the then-current art, music, and poetry or, as Dick Higgins called it, "the Going Thing." But Fluxus was a collective first and foremost because it was a group of artists who had shared interests and who worked together (at least off and on) to realize their ideas. As Higgins wrote in 1965, Fluxus "started out as a collective, because there were so few ways open to us to present our work."<sup>11</sup> Maciunas also stated the following in the mid-1960s:

Fluxus is not an individual impresario & if each does not help another collectively by promoting each other, the collective would lose its identity as a collective and become individuals again, each needing to be promoted individually . . . .<sup>12</sup>

This relationship between constituent members was unusual for a twentieth-century avant-garde art group, but it was quite close to the kinds of relationships often found in political contexts.<sup>13</sup> The name Fluxus was used by Maciunas to refer to collective activities of the group, such as concerts, festivals, and actions. Presentations such as "<sup>13</sup> Fluxus Concerts" or "Free Flux-Tours" included single works by particular artists, but the performances as a whole were collective in that all the individual elements became part of a

unified, collaborative presentation. In this way, Fluxus as a collective group was always more than the sum of its parts. As Fluxus evolved, many later activities, such as the "Fluxmass" and the "Flux-Sports" at Douglass College, became even more collective in nature. These presentations involved a number of artists, but the events were more unitary and the distinctions among individual contributions became much more difficult to draw and much less significant.

Fluxus publications were of two types: collective and individual works. Only the collective publications, such as *Fluxus I*, *Fluxkit*, and *Flux Year Box 2*, were specifically entitled "Fluxus," underscoring the commitment to collectivity. The Fluxus publications by individuals were presented differently from the collective works. In the works by individuals, "Flux" was used in the titles primarily as an adjective. The adjective, as used in the titles of the individual works, such as Shigeo Kubota's *Flux Medicine* or John Chick's *Flux Food*, indicated that the work was reflective of some aspects of the Fluxus attitude but not the whole of Fluxus.

A salient aspect of this attitude was a commitment to egalitarianism and a related rejection of Fluxus productions as traditional artistic commodities. Although not all of the artists associated with Fluxus were overtly political, most were social critics who felt that artistic practices had become overly restrictive and commercialized and that the art profession was too dependent on a social elite. Jackson Mac Low, one of the least interested in early activist/politically-oriented Fluxus activities, admitted in a letter to Dick Higgins that "serious culture" had become problematic:

I'm disgusted by its corruption & commercialization, & I agree that certain kinds of art, music & literature have acquired completely wrong kinds of prestige, & that far too many people have been bullied & bulldozed into trying to "succeed in the arts."<sup>14</sup>

The desire to produce new publications that inspired so much Fluxus activity was a reflection of many artists' dissatisfaction with the available distribution mechanisms for their work. Maciunas' attempts to set up several different Fluxshops and the development of several Flux Mail-Order Warehouses were directly aimed at establishing a new, more egalitarian means for distributing works and publications. In a statement from 1978, Nam June Paik elaborated on the significance of Fluxus as a distribution mechanism.

Marx gave much thought about the dialectics of the production and the production medium. He had thought rather simply that if workers (producers) OWNED the production's medium, everything would be fine. He did not give creative room to the DISTRIBUTION system. The problem of the art world in the '60s and '70s is that although the artist owns the production's medium, such as paint or brush, even sometimes a printing press, they are excluded from the highly centralized DISTRIBUTION system of the art world. George Maciunas' Genius [sic] is the early detection of this post-Marxistic situation and he tried to seize *not only* the production's medium *but also* the DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM of the art world.<sup>15</sup>

The various distribution approaches used by Maciunas and Fluxus were direct attempts to circumvent the elitist nature of museum and gallery systems and to make Fluxus works and performances potentially available to anyone.

The concern with distribution systems was consistent with a general cognizance by Fluxus of a need for social praxis, particularly social education. The significance of Fluxus for many artists lay in its potential for producing and promoting egalitarian works and events that could act as a non-programmatic means of instruction about cultural operations and structures. Maciunas wrote that Fluxus sought to:

Purge the world of Europeanism, bourgeois sickness, intellectual, professional, commercial culture. Purge the world of dead art, imitation, artificial, abstract art, serial art etc. etc.<sup>16</sup>

Maciunas emphasized that an ambition of Fluxus was to "establish artists['] nonprofessional, nonparasitic, nonelite status in society . . . . [He] must demonstrate own dispensability, he must demonstrate selfsufficiency [sic] of the audience, he must demonstrate that anything can substitute [for] art and anyone can do it."<sup>17</sup> Many Fluxus performances and objects thus sought to undermine and debunk established notions about the fine arts, in both their manner of creation and in their manifestation. In addition to the depersonalization of the creative act and an emphasis on collectivism, Fluxus favored works that were consciously unpretentious and had "no commodity or institutional value."<sup>18</sup> Ephemeral performances, for example, are by nature difficult to commodify. Fluxus objects and publications were in general not intended to be made, bought, or sold as expensive or unique objects. The intention of most

Fluxus artists was to produce works that would circumvent the traditional equation of art with rarity. Although Maciunas never achieved this level of production, his hope was to mass-produce all Fluxus works so that they would be less likely to be seen as exclusive commodities. He wrote that the monetary value of Fluxus "art-amusement must be lowered by making it unlimited, mass produced, [as to] have no commodity . . . value."<sup>19</sup> As a means of opposing art's exclusiveness, Fluxus publications and works most often utilized commercially produced and found materials with little or no special qualities. Per Kirkeby's *4 Flux Drinks*, for example, contains four Lipton or Lyons tea bags; Maciunas' *Burglary Flux Kit* contains an assortment of old found keys; and Bob Watts' *Light Flux Kit* contains a number of different light bulbs (among other things). These elements are all contained in commercially produced plastic boxes, with printed labels designed by Maciunas. None of these elements possesses, either individually or in combination, the traditional artistic elements of craft value, nor are they unique creative statements. Like Duchamp's readymades, the Fluxus multiples could be described as "situations" or conceptual commentary intended to pose questions rather than give answers.

Furthermore, Fluxus publications, objects, and other works were not intended as ends in themselves: the value of Fluxus performances and works was based on their instrumentality. The physical object one sees or holds was not usually intended to be the center of one's attention. Many works, like Friedman's *Open and Shut Case*, which contained a card that read "SHUT QUICK," were actualized by the viewer's interaction. Other works called for their own destruction, such as Ben Patterson's *Instruction No. 2*, which contained a piece of soap, a paper towel, and the instructions "please wash your face." Such works were instigators for a performance interaction between work and viewer. Thus, they functioned essentially as physical performance scores: the "work" was created when the viewer acted. Most Fluxus works and publications were intended to be transitory. Maciunas hoped they would "temporarily have the pedagogical function of teaching people the needlessness of art, including the eventual needlessness of itself."<sup>20</sup>

Several aspects of the Fluxus attitude sprang from a general concept of a unity of all things. This notion, which many of the Fluxus artists had been exposed to through a study of Zen philosophy and through Cage's teachings and writings, permeates ele-

ments of the Fluxus attitude, including an egalitarian or non-hierarchical framing, a recognition of indeterminacy as a fundamental component of nature, and a unification of art and life. Most individual works were viewed as part of a larger complex of ideas, thoughts, and interactions of which the individual physical object or the performance realization was only one manifestation.

Like many Fluxus artists, George Brecht felt that his event pieces, such as those contained in his *Water Yam*, were not ends in themselves.

The event, for me, has always been a more individual focusing than a performance. With a few exceptions . . . the event-scores could always be "performed," or, better-said, "realized" by anyone, anywhere, coincidentally.<sup>21</sup>

What Brecht was referring to was an extension of Cage's idea that an artist should not make art out of life, but he or she should reject the notion of hierarchies and the separation of categories of experiences based on evaluative judgments. Fluxus objects and performances were not intended to elevate quotidian materials and experiences but to shift the notion of an "art work" to a situation with open-ended potential for realization by "anyone, anywhere."

The open-ended quality of most Fluxus publications, multiples, and performances was in many ways directly related to the general significance of indeterminacy as an underlying element of the Fluxus attitude. Almost all the artists associated with Fluxus indicated that indeterminacy was an underlying factor for Fluxus-type work. In his pamphlet *Chance Imagery*, George Brecht wrote the following:

Chance in the arts provides a means for escaping the biases engraved in our personality by our culture and personal past history, that is, it is a means of attaining greater generality. . . . The receptacle of forms available to the artist thus becomes open-ended, and eventually embraces all of nature, for the recognition of significant forms becomes limited only by the observers self.<sup>22</sup>

Chance, specifically aleatoric or random chance, however, should not be overemphasized for Fluxus, since its significance was transformative rather than formative: chance as a method of creation used by Fluxus artists was another means to an end, but not the end itself. Although the principle of indeterminacy is a significant

aspect of the Fluxus attitude, its application as a specific method of production was only one of a number of tools used by the artists associated with Fluxus. Random chance for Brecht was restricted to a technical meaning derived from its use in statistics, where it is employed as a method for the elimination of bias in sampling.<sup>23</sup> Random chance, as Brecht suggests in *Chance-Imagery*, was a means to break the restrictive mind-set of cultural conditioning for many artists associated with Fluxus. It was used by various artists, particularly Brecht, as a way of generating events and as a means of determining various qualities of the Fluxus publications and works. For example, Maciunas and Ben Vautier developed a work entitled *Mystery Boxes*, the contents of which would randomly vary based on whatever unwanted materials were at hand when these works were produced.<sup>24</sup>

Indeterminacy also had a much more general significance for Fluxus as a philosophical concern. Fluxus views were related to the ideas of John Cage. The unifying force in nature, Cage believed, was one of open-ended process and change. Cage taught that art should harmonize with nature in its manner of operation and as an anti-deterministic experience. In his essay "Fluxus and Company," Ken Friedman discusses the significance of this type of abstract chance, or as he calls it "evolutionary chance."

Something enters the scene and changes the world-view we previously held. That influence may be initiated in a random way, that is, in an unplanned way, or as a result of signal interference to intended messages, or sudden insight. Any number of possibilities exist. When the chance input is embodied into the new form, however, it ceases to be random and becomes evolutionary. That is why chance is so closely allied to experimentation in Fluxus.<sup>25</sup>

Indeterminacy, as Friedman suggested, was more than a method of artistic production for Fluxus; it created a basis for a kind of "world view." In the early 1960s Maciunas wrote that Fluxus "promote[s] imagination, change, movement, growth—FLUX in art."<sup>26</sup>

This recognition of indeterminacy as a prevailing principle of nature created within the Fluxus attitude a conception of the world based on ambiguities, ruptures, and incongruities. The scores for many Fluxus event pieces, therefore, were often ambiguous, leading to a variety of potential performance variations: the score for one of Eric Andersen's "Opera Instructions," for example, reads

"Do and/or don't do something universally"; Alison Knowles' "Street Piece" instructed the performer to "Make something in the street and give it away"; the score for Larry Miller's "Like/don't Like" was "Something liked. Something not liked." Similar to many of Cage's compositions, the open-endedness of Fluxus scores like these ruptured the traditional relationship between the written score and the performance of it. Many Fluxus works did not require an enactment of a set of instructions by the performer, but presented a multitude of potential readings.

The significance of indeterminacy to the Fluxus attitude was also related to the concern with the merger of life and art. Most Fluxus artists would agree with Ken Friedman when he wrote:

When Fluxus was established, the conscious goal was to erase the boundaries between art and life . . . . The founding circle sought to resolve what was then seen as a dichotomy between art and life. Today, it seems that the radical contribution Fluxus made was to suggest that there is no boundary to be erased.<sup>27</sup>

Central to Fluxus is the idea that art is part of life, as opposed to culture, and should therefore imitate the universal processes of flux and change. This attitude evolved not only out of Cage's ideas but also from the awareness many artists had of the ideas of Zen. Many endorsed the view that "daily life" operations reflected the processes of nature in that indeterminacy is characteristic of both. In nature, hierarchies did not exist, so in their activities, artists also rejected hierarchies of experiences. The ultimate objective of this kind of thinking was to eliminate the idea that "art" possesses special qualities that distinguish it categorically from nature and daily life. It was held by many Fluxus artists that art should equal daily life, and daily life should equal art, for it is within life that the things of greatest interest and fascination are to be found. Maciunas stated that "Fluxus people must obtain their 'art' experiences from everyday experiences, eating, working, etc. — not concerts etc."<sup>28</sup> Although all Fluxus publications, objects, and performances were concerned with or made use of aspects of "daily life," it is especially in late Fluxus performances that the significance of everyday experiences becomes more central. As the nature of performances changed, they increasingly emphasized not only the performance nature of mundane day-to-day activities but also the performance and cathartic nature of conventional social celebrations, such as parties, weddings, and even funerals.

A major genre of Fluxus event pieces, such as those by Brecht in *Water Yam* or many of those by Tomas Schmit, is concerned with simple, almost mundane occurrences. In the book *The Four Suits*, for example, Schmit includes a number of pieces called "instructions":

PLEASE SHUT THIS BOOK!,  
and turn on all the faucets in your apartment; and listen!  
PLEASE SHUT THIS BOOK!,  
and take a walk!  
PLEASE SHUT THIS BOOK!,  
and count the moths in your wardrobe! <sup>29</sup>

Many of these pieces were also recordings of events the artists had experienced, which Maciunas called "temporal readymades." <sup>30</sup> Brecht was referring to this idea of a "temporal readymade" when he described the shifting relationship between a scored event and an event experienced in daily life.

Using the first of the THREE YELLOW EVENTS as an example: at a certain point (imperceptibly beginning) it became evident that an event like Yellow Yellow Yellow could occur and the score was written down. Some time later, possibly days or weeks, I was walking one very foggy evening and saw three dandelions growing from a single point. Later, on another evening, about midnight, I saw three yellow traffic lights blinking in unison. So not only was the score unintended, but so were the realizations. <sup>31</sup>

Much like Brecht's description of his "Three Yellow Events," many Fluxus event pieces were what might be described as "focused normal events." These were brought into "focus" through the selection of the artist and the presentation through notation. "Temporal readymades" include pieces such as Milan Knizak's "CAT": "Get a cat"; Takehisa Kosugi's "Theater Music": "Keep walking intently"; and Bob Watts' "Winter Event": "snow." The notations further emphasized their open-ended realization as part of one's daily life. The scores are short and include little or no indication of the methods of performance, emphasizing that they are not "performance works" but simple occurrences that provide little or no evidence of the artist's/composer's personality or expressive intention.

Fluxus objects, too, were often simple in materials and direct in content. Bob Watts' *Rocks Marked by Weight in Grams* exemplifies this: the piece was just what the title indicates—several small rocks



marked by their weight, contained in a compartmentalized plastic box. The use of commercially available materials like the plastic boxes and the machine-printed materials employed in the various Fluxus works was not only a statement about traditional craft values but also a direct expression of that aspect of the Fluxus attitude that sought to merge art and life. The materials were chosen to demonstrate that an art medium need not be "special." The direct use of materials also challenged the traditional view of the artist as alchemist, elevating quotidian materials into high art. For Fluxus it was only the association of the materials that created something new, not their physical modification as a means to express something artistic.

Fluxus works were often a manifestation of the desire to reject the artifice of art for the artfulness of life. Many works were intended to have daily-life utility and were not to be saved or preserved. Maciunas' aprons and stationary, and Bob Watts' pencils, pens, and stamps were intended to be used. Other Fluxus works, seemingly different from these quotidian objects, were also viewed in instrumental terms, in part illustrating Maciunas' belief that Fluxus performances and objects were only transitional. The praxis implied was that the instructional elements of their work would eventually cause it to become unnecessary:

The best Fluxus 'composition' is a most nonpersonal, 'readymade' one like Brecht's 'Exit' — it does not require any of us to perform it since it happens daily without any special 'performance' of it. Thus our festivals will eliminate themselves (and our need to participate) when they become total readymades (like Brecht's exit). Same applies to publications & other transitional activities.<sup>32</sup>

Another significant attitudinal aspect of Fluxus was the concept of de-centering. In several ways, Fluxus drew into question the accepted singularity of entities, whether they are individuals or objects. Based on a Zen-like recognition of a dynamic unity of all things, the presumed exclusivity of a work or the author of the work is dissolved into a borderless plurality. Fluxus consistently drew into question the notion of categorization and differentiation. This idea was central to the Fluxus attitude and often resulted in the creation of performance pieces and objects that seemed without boundaries, such as Higgins' "Danger Music Number Seventeen" ("Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream!") or Vautier's

*Holes* (a variety of objects with holes in them). A related concern is the rejection of the traditional notion of the author. In Brecht's "Piano Piece, 1962," for example, the score read, "a vase of flowers on (to) a piano." Such works lack any clearly definable point of view because they either contain everything or nothing. Additionally, Brecht was no longer the "father" or "owner" of the work. Revering his intentions as the composer or his authority as creator could not be an issue. Both the performer, through the score's interpretation, and the viewer, through her or his reading of the performance, expand the "work" far beyond a condition of authorial control or meaning.

The significance of de-centering was in part related to a characteristic quality of Fluxus works and events: although often simple, they were very expansive in their potential for differing definitions and meanings. The works often had no specifically determined closure, use, or meaning. The most general result of the operation of de-centering was that Fluxus tended toward inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. The open-ended nature of the pieces invited (even required) the viewer to participate if there were to be any kind of closure. Thus, the viewer was no longer passive but becomes active in a kind of co-authorship of the event or publication on both a mental and physical level. Fluxus works, although often physically simple, were rather complex in their ability to refer to a broad range of issues and ideas. It is this expansiveness that Higgins had labeled "implicative."

There was a danger that working with such minimal materials would lead to facile meanderings, to Fluxartists grinding out endless mountains of minimalist pieces which had no reason to exist. Thus a very important criterion for avoiding this danger came to be the notion that a Fluxpiece should be implicative as possible — that it should imply a maximum of intellectual, sensuous or emotional content within its minimum of material.<sup>33</sup>

Fluxus works were not intended just to involve the "viewer" but to maximize involvement. Even though the specific material/s or action/s that made up a work might be minimal, because these works were fundamentally open-ended, the potential for the play of difference was intensified. Fluxus texts cannot be "read," for the link between the signifier and the signified is indeterminate.

The operation of de-centering can be seen in the predominance of Fluxus work Higgins has labeled "intermedia." Intermedial work (as opposed to multi-medial) does not fall into any one category but exists between the boundaries of traditional media, or in several categories at once. In a 1965 essay, Higgins writes that intermedia were a hallmark of a new mentality.

[This new mentality is evident in] the work of such composers as Philip Corner and John Cage, who explore the intermedia between music and philosophy, or Joe Jones, whose self-playing musical instruments fall into the intermedium between music and sculpture.<sup>34</sup>

Most Fluxus work is not limited to any one medium but is constructed out of elements that were taken from a variety of media. The resultant forms were not a combination of existing media but a hybrid that exists between traditional media classifications.<sup>35</sup> In addition to being intermedial in this sense, Fluxus works were also intermedial because they were not necessarily linked to a specific medium. Fluxus pieces could often be realized in differing media according to varying situations. The "same" Fluxus work, for example, Friedman's *Mandatory Happening* or Ono's *Self Portrait*, could be a performance, an object, or even both at the same time. Fluxus work thus de-centered the notions of a static relationship between a work and a medium. Mieko (Chieko) Shiomi's *Water Music* presents a small bottle filled with water and a label that reads: "Chieko Shiomi: Water Music 1. give the water still form 2. let the water loose it's [sic] still form," implying a myriad of uses and meanings from rather minimal materials. It could simultaneously be an object, a performance event, and a point of reference for a new perception concerning water and/or music. A further extension of the intermedial in Fluxus works involved the employment of found materials, or temporal readymades, for these works existed in the zone between art and non-art. Discussing the work of Marcel Duchamp, Higgins wrote that the "ready-made or found object, in a sense an intermedium since it was not intended to conform to the pure medium, usually suggests this [intermedia], and therefore suggests a location in the field between the general area of art media and those of life media."<sup>36</sup>

The lack of center is also evident in the use of fragmentary structures, such as collage and montage and in the employment of

unpredictable found materials. The object, the Fluxus work, was often no longer a complete or distinguishable whole. Fluxus' use of disparate and displaced materials created shifting situational definitions. Appropriated and adopted elements were used to create new or different meanings for objects and materials. These elements, such as in the numerous labels Maciunas designed for the Fluxus works by individual artists, never fully become a permanent unified whole; they are centrifugal in the way that they create a series of references. Only through the intervention of the viewer do the elements combine, but these are temporary associations that continually dissolve and reform. This open-endedness is intertwined with Fluxus' use of expansive associations of images and materials. For example, in Ben Vautier's *Flux Holes* (the label for which is a part of an old medical illustration of a rectal exam; the contents are objects with holes in them, such as washers, sink traps, and straws) and in Maciunas' *Burglary Fluxkit* (the label for which contains illustrations for various tools such as saws, blow torches, and files), while the contents, in the later versions of this work, were an assortment of old keys) there is an interplay between the quotidian associations of the images and objects and new expansive references created by their combination in the works. The images, text, and materials used in Fluxus works contain some of their original contexts and references, but these are played against new uses and connotations. Thus, the elements create an active dual relationship between an original and a new use or reference. The material references, as signs freely shift between preconceived definitions or references and new ones created by the object. Fluxus works and events inhabit a space in which a variety of meanings, sources, and even functions blend and clash. The recognition of the layering and multiplicity of life's experiences is thus reflected in the polyvalence of these Fluxus works.

All aspects of Fluxus contained elements that mitigated the traditional relationship in art of the passivity of the viewer and the domination of the object. Fluxus publications, objects, and multiples replaced the static cultural object with an idea manifested in an impermanent material form. Most Fluxus works involved interaction with a participant, who in other forms of art would be called a viewer. Typical Fluxus works, such as Ken Friedman's *A Flux Corsage* (containing loose flower seeds or a commercial package of flower seeds) or James Riddle's *E.S.P. Flux kit* (containing several smooth colored cards and instructions to blindfold oneself and rub

one's fingers over the colored papers; "with practice you can learn to distinguish between the different colors") were fundamentally participatory, for the work and the potential for the ideas it referred to were determined by the participant. In discussing Fluxus work, Higgins writes that the focus was on the:

object qua object, the poem within the poem, the word within the word—the process as process, accepting reality as a found object, enfolding it by the edges, so to speak, without trying to distort it (artistically or otherwise) in its depiction. The work becomes the matrix - any kind of matrix will do for the particular needs of the particular work. The artist gives you [the audience] the structure: you may fill it in yourself.<sup>37</sup>

In a large number of Fluxus performances, the viewers were participants, being counted in Emmett Williams' "counting piece," for example, or being physically involved in the "Fluxolympics." Ben Vautier felt that this dissolution of the separation of the audience and performer was one of the primary contributions made by Fluxus.

In music as well as the theater, Fluxus, since 1963, brings "the participation of the audience into the action." Not a phony participation, that is, the play going on in the audience, but a real wish to transfer the responsibility.<sup>38</sup>

In some event pieces and particularly the late Fluxus activities, the distinction between performer and audience was broken down even further so that there were no distinctions between performers or audience; there were only participants. The operation of egalitarianism and the significance of de-centering for Fluxus shifted the focus from the potential performance nature of art to the existent performance qualities of daily life. The score for Knowles' "#2—Proposition" was simply "Make a salad."

In addition to de-centering, another characteristic of many Fluxus works was their apparently simple-minded use of puns and "bad" humor. This facet of the Fluxus attitude, although evident in all phases of Fluxus, became predominant in the second and third phases (it was, in fact, the increasing emphasis on humor in the mid-1960s that caused some of the original artists associated with Fluxus, particularly Wolf Vostell and Tomas Schmit, to distance themselves from the group). The growing significance of humor

was part of a larger aspect of the Fluxus attitude that could be termed "carnivalization." Generally, this aspect recognized and celebrated a comic and absurdist ethos and the disorder of an irrational world. Humor was evident in a whole range of Fluxus work, including Ben Vautier's *Postman's Choice* (which had one space on each side of the postcard for two different addressees); the Fluxus version of Hi Red Center's "Fluxclinic" (in which the volume of one's head was measured by sticking it in a bucket of water and measuring the amount of displaced water); and Maciunas' own "Fluxwedding" (in which he and Billie Hutchings exchanged clothes as well as vows). In these works, and in many others, humor, play, and gags operated as means to attack the seriousness of art, to involve the viewer, and to create liminal states without becoming "serious culture" themselves. Like Dada, Fluxus was serious about not being serious.

Referring to humor in the Fluxus attitude, Emmett Williams states that "the essence of the best Fluxus pieces and publications" was described in Maciunas' "Fluxmanifesto on Fluxamusement":<sup>39</sup>

. . . FLUXUS-ART-NONART-AMUSEMENT FOREGOES DISTINCTION BETWEEN ART AND NONART, FOREGOES ARTIST'S INDISPENABILITY, EXCLUSIVENESS, INDIVIDUALITY, AMBITION, FOREGOES ALL PRETENSION TOWARDS SIGNIFICANCE. . . IT IS A FUSION OF SPIKE JONES, GAGS, GAMES, VAUDEVILLE, CAGE AND DUCHAMP.<sup>40</sup>

The joke-like aspects of Fluxus were linked to a general desire to combat the pretensions of high art. Humor opposed the seriousness of high art, its over-emphasis on professionalism, and the notion of the artist as a genius. In other words, Fluxus asked, "Who says art has to be 'serious' to be effective or interesting?" In addition, Fluxus art contained an expansive element that went beyond mere opposition to "serious culture." Humor in works such as Ay-O's *Flux Rain Machine*, Ben Vautier's *Dirty Water*, and Yoko Ono's *Self Portrait* was used as both a confrontational and a generative mechanism. *Dirty Water* is what the title describes, a bottle of dirty water; on one level this directly questions the nature of an art work as something special and the role of the artist in the creation of a work of art, but it also makes one laugh and sets up a whole series of realizations about "art" and "life." The cathartic potential of Fluxus works was contained not in communicated states of psychological or expressionistic concerns, but in the open-ended, transformative nature of humor.

Humor also came into play in the relationship between various elements of the Fluxus attitude, balancing an active directness and the implicativeness/expansiveness of de-centering. Amusement allowed Fluxus to assume certain stances while not becoming locked into a narrow, limited political and/or philosophical position. Irony, in particular, resulted in the questioning of everything, even a work's own premise. One of the card scores in Watts' *Events* called for the card itself to be destroyed; Vautier's "Sale" called for the performers to "sell the theater"; and Maciunas' presentation "12 Big Names" consisted of large-scale projections of twelve well-known artists' names. This ironic quality allows many Fluxus works to be simple as well as continually expansive. Irony was also a factor in the critical edge of Fluxus works that brought into question assumptions about art and art-making.

The greatest significance of humor in Fluxus was its relation to an underlying philosophy connected to indeterminacy and flux. Game-playing for Fluxus was the open-ended notion of "keeping everyone in the act of play." Mirroring the dynamism and fluidity of life, play was evident in specific works and events. Play as an element of production can also be related to what might be termed "constructionism" — an emphasis on the necessity of the process and actual making itself.<sup>41</sup> This focus on process acted as a substitute for the goal of institutionalized culture: the completed work of art.

The values of production and process in and for themselves thus replaced the value of the creation of a unique product with a special set of qualities. In this way, play became the operative structure of Fluxus — the need to continue, to produce, to act, not necessarily to finish or to reach a stage of completion but to keep the processes running. The open-ended nature of play as a structure was a nondeterminist means for Fluxus to incorporate a dynamic system of relationships.<sup>42</sup> It was in the Fluxus act that the significance of process was both manifested and perpetuated as a kind of liminal state.<sup>43</sup> A result of this "play structure," with its emphasis on process, was that as the object value of the work was disregarded, so was the traditional object-oriented value determination.

Inherent in all the performance and participatory aspects of Fluxus was the goal of eliminating art as a categorically higher activity. In a letter to Tomas Schmit, Maciunas wrote "Fluxus is not an abstraction to do on leisure hours — it is the very non-fine-art

work you do (or will eventually do)."<sup>44</sup> In another letter from around the same period, Maciunas further explained to Schmit that:

FLUXUS IS ANTI-PROFESSIONAL

if you have read the manifesto.

Fluxus people must obtain their "art" experience from everyday experiences, eating, working etc.—not concerts etc. Concerts serve only as educational means to connect the audiences to such non-art experiences in their daily lives[.]<sup>45</sup>

Maciunas continually tried to demonstrate that Fluxus was neither serious culture nor anti-serious culture, but something else entirely, a hybrid intermedium. This separation was intended to reinforce the idea that Fluxus was not part of the cultural system. For Maciunas, as well as many other artists associated with Fluxus, there was a process of transformation and education inherent in their activities. Fluxus works and performances were intended to transgress boundaries, de-center their own activities, and gradually lead to the elimination of the category of fine art. The Fluxus attitude is formed on a general critique of the cultural status quo and thus is predisposed to draw into question the rational, progressive, and utopian bases of modern art. Fluxus, though, was not just deconstructive; it sought to replace extant systems with a situational perspective. The stress on egalitarianism and the merger of art and life are played out especially in the form of gags, humor, and games.<sup>46</sup> It is in relationship to these aspects of the Fluxus attitude that the normal barriers of "serious culture" become inoperative. Fluxus was, and still is for those who understand the implications of the attitude, a manifestation of the desire that people who call themselves artists direct their activities toward a way of life, not toward a profession and a means to make a living.

Fluxus was part of a larger conceptual development in the 1960s and 1970s that called into question the tenets of high modernism. Fluxus was an important development of this second modernist tradition, in fact, forming a transition between the second modernism of the pre-1950s and the development of what has now been labeled postmodernism. Fluxus played a significant role in the introduction of "non-gallery" art forms, such as performance art, mail art, and book art, into the United States and Europe in the 1960s. In an essay entitled "Styles in Cognitivism," Higgins dis-



cusses the conceptual nature of this linkage. He sees a direct association between high modernisms and what he calls cognitive art, or art that emphasizes the "I," and in which the artists attempt to reinterpret "the outer world in meaningful ways." For Higgins, the modernist/cognitive question "Who am I?" has been replaced, by the tradition that Fluxus was a part of, with "I accept."

The cognitive [modernist] question is the only one which has been asked by most artists in western art, which becomes . . . obsessive in the modern period (ca. 1900-) only to have its absence explored with increasing frequency during our century (by some Futurists, Dadaists, Duchamp, Cage and, now since 1958 most of us) who are therefore post-"modern" or post-"cognitive." The question is basically this: HOW DO I FIT INTO WHAT REALITY . . . the emphasis is a new one—the introduction of new philosophical attitudes towards subject matter, notably "I accept my subject" on the part of the artist rather than "I choose it." Thus the subject might be an assigned one, given to a group of artists to work with as their project . . . or it simply might be the adoption of whatever is at hand.<sup>47</sup>

For Fluxus, as with the Futurists and the Surrealists, art was to be transferred to the praxis of life. The abandonment of art as a separate activity resulted in an attempt to destroy the concept of the work of art as a categorically distinct entity. In Fluxus and in other developments of the second form of modernism (Futurism, Surrealism, and International Situationism), the artists sought a model of engagement to replace the model of the alienated modernist. The conceptual and attitudinal development of Fluxus had two general phases. The first was marked by a specific attack on the conventions, institutions, and concepts of modern art. The second phase, which began in the mid-1960s, was less concerned with critiquing the institutions of culture than with producing a form of social praxis. Moving beyond a "theory-making" phase, Fluxus advanced toward more open-ended actualizations. The self-conscious aspects of a production of exemplative art and not-art was replaced by an enjoyment of life or, a life praxis.

This book may be destroyed.<sup>48</sup>

# FREE FLUX-TOURS

(EXCEPT FOR COST OF TRANSPORTATION & MEALS IF ANY)

- May 1: MAYDAY guided by Bob Watts, call 226-3422 for transportation arrangements.  
May 3: FRANCO-AMERICAN TOUR, by Alison Knowles & Robert Filliou, 2pm at 80 Wooster st.  
May 4: TOUR FOR FOREIGN VISITORS, arranged by George Brecht, start noon at 80 Wooster st.  
May 5: ALLEYS, YARDS & DEAD ENDS, arranged by G. Maciunas, start 3pm at 80 Wooster st.  
May 6: ALEATORIC TOUR, arranged by Jonas Mekas, meet at noon at 80 Wooster st.  
May 7: MUSIC TOUR & LECTURE, by Yoshimasa Wada, start at 2pm at 80 Wooster st.  
May 8: GALLERIES, guided by Larry Miller, start at noon at 80 Wooster st.  
May 9: SUBTERRANEAN TOUR I, guided by Geoff Hendricks, start at noon at 80 Wooster st.  
May 9: SUBTERRANEAN DANGER by Charles Bergengren, start 11pm at 47st. & Park av. island.  
May 10 & 11: at Gani go to 17 Mott street and eat Wonton soup (says Nam June Paik).  
May 12: SUBTERRANEAN TOUR III, arranged by George Maciunas, start 2pm at 80 Wooster st.  
May 13: SOUVENIR HUNT meet at noon at 80 Wooster st.  
May 14: SOHO CURB SITES, guided by Peter Van Ripper, meet at 3:30pm at 80 Wooster st.  
May 15: EXOTIC SITES, guided by Joan Mathews, meet 3pm at Oviedo Restaurant, 202W 14 st.  
May 16: ALL THE WAY AROUND & BACK AGAIN, by Peter Frank, meet at noon 80 Wooster



*Free Flux Tours* (1976), offset black on white paper, designed by George Maciunas. Courtesy of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit.

# Endnotes

## Introduction

<sup>1</sup>George Brecht, "Interview with George Brecht by Irmeline Lebeer," reprinted in Henry Martin, *An Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire* (Milan: Multhipla Edizioni. 1978), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Fluxus was called "the most radical and experimental art movement of the sixties" by Harry Ruhe in the title of his catalogue *Fluxus: The Most Radical and Experimental Art Movement of the Sixties* (Amsterdam: "A," 1969).

<sup>3</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd [ca. spring, 1962], Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart; hereafter the Archiv Sohm will be referred to as AS.

<sup>4</sup>Dick Higgins, "A Child's History of Fluxus," *Horizons The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), p. 87.

<sup>5</sup>It is, in fact, the centrality of Maciunas to the Fluxus group that is the basis for ending the historical period of Fluxus in 1978. He died in this year, and although Fluxus as an "attitude" did not end, its activities as a group were for the most part concluded, with the exception of a few anniversary and/or group retrospectives, such as the performances at the 1962 Wiesbaden 1982 exhibition.

<sup>6</sup>Emmett Williams, "Happy Birthday, Everybody!" in *1962 Wiesbaden 1982*, eds. Rene Block and Anne Marie Freybourg (Wiesbaden: Harlekin Art, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, 1983), pp. 86-87.

<sup>7</sup>Ken Friedman, "Fluxus and Company," *Lund Art Press*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer/Autumn, 1990), p. 297.

<sup>8</sup>Some of the activities which are not included in this study are the undertakings of artists associated with Fluxus but not specifically presented under "Fluxus" (this would include individual works by most of the artists associated with Fluxus). A fairly large number of performances presented in Europe, organized by Ben Vautier, Willem

de Ridder, and others, from 1964 through the 1970s, have also not been included in detail in this study. Another aspect of Fluxus not considered here are the activities of Ken Friedman and Jeff Berner on the West Coast and Fluxus West.

<sup>9</sup>The other half of the materials from the estate of George Maciunas is now in The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, New York and Detroit; hereafter The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection will be referred to as GLS.

<sup>10</sup>These documents include materials relating to concrete poetry, happenings, other performance groups, such as Zero, and many other resources relating to the development of alternative art forms in Europe, the United States, and Japan.

<sup>11</sup>A further significant factor related to the Silverman Fluxus Collection has been the publication of three volumes of documented Fluxus source materials and reproductions of objects and multiples. More recently The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection has published a comprehensive book on Fluxus objects and multiples entitled *Fluxus Codex*. For specifics on these sources, consult the bibliography.

<sup>12</sup>George Brecht, "George Brecht an interview with Robin Page for Carla Liss (Who Fell Asleep)," *Art and Artists*, 7, No. 7, issue 79 (Oct., 1972), p. 30.

<sup>13</sup>Dick Higgins, *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface* (New York: Something Else Press, 1964), pp. 74-75

<sup>14</sup>Tomas Schmit, Letter to Gil Silverman, Feb. 3, 1981, p. 2. GLS. Reproduced in *Fluxus. etc.*, p. 49.

## Chapter One

<sup>1</sup>For example, see Aldo Pellegrini, *New Tendencies in Art* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1966) and Irving Sandler, *The Triumph of American Painting* (New York: Icon Editions, Harper & Row, 1970).

<sup>2</sup>For more information on the development of an aesthetic modernism, see Peter Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

<sup>3</sup>It is partly for this reason that some of the artistic developments in the fifties and early sixties, especially Fluxus and related developments, were often incorrectly referred to as Neo-Dada.

<sup>4</sup>Beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s, many artists sought to establish new forms of art and to return art to a social praxis. This concern was based on the desire to establish an art that would be direct in nature and collective in approach. In the middle and later 1950s, the ideas of the second form of modernism developed in two directions: the political and social implications of these ideas were developed by the Lettrist International and International Situationism groups, and the non-rational, intra-arts potentials found expression in the visual arts in the work of Pierro Manzoni in Italy, Yves Klein in France, and some of the other artists who would later be grouped under the name *Nouveau Realisme*. Fluxus was not a direct evolution from any of these ideas or groups, but it was part of these general cultural developments, so that many of the general ideas explored by these groups and individuals would find new forms of expression through the artists later associated with Fluxus. One of the key links was that in addition to creating new collective visual, aural, and written modes, they simultaneously developed alternative methods of distribution. The Fluxus group with its stress on collaborative enterprises and its desire to create an oppositional distribution mechanism was part of this history of alternative culture in the post-World War II period. Fluxus, though, has some significant conceptual differences from these groups that sets it apart from them. This is most evident in the significance of play and humor that increasingly affects the development of Fluxus. For more specific information on these groups and their activities, see Jürgen Schilling, *Aktionskunst Identität von Kunst und Leben?* (Frankfurt: Verlag C.J. Bucher, 1978) and Stewart Home, *The Assault on Culture* (London: Aporia Press & Unpopular Books, 1988).

<sup>5</sup>This idea of two separate modernisms is discussed at length in Burger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, and in Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987 [1977]).

<sup>6</sup>The critic and historian Peter Burger has discussed the development avant-garde modernism as a turning against both "the distribution apparatus on which the work of art depends, and the status of art in bourgeois society as defined by the concept of autonomy" (p. 22). The network of ideas/concerns/issues that links the attacks of the avant-garde with the revolts of the post-World War II anti-modernists is a general critique of the institutions of art in the twentieth century. This took the form of a desire to establish a life/art continuity in opposition to the notion of artists as romantic geniuses or alchemists with a socially proscribed role as non-utilitarian perceivers of the world. The result of this position was a shift towards a dematerialization of art, from the object to an emphasis on processes, actions, performance, behavior, and life. Within this shift a key idea was the recognition of indeterminacy as

a characteristic of life (i.e., nature), which also carried over into an interest in a life/art continuity.

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion of this connection between the avant-garde (as separate from modernism) and the development of postmodernism, see John McGowan, *Postmodernism and its Critics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986); Rosalind E. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1985); and others. For a specific discussion of the connections between the post-World War II anti-modernists and postmodernism, see Dick Higgins, "Postmodern Performance: Some Criteria and Common Points," in *Performance by Artists*, eds. A. A. Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1979).

<sup>8</sup>Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception" (unpublished essay, n.d. [1982]). A copy of this manuscript is contained in the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart. A revised version of this essay was published in *Lund Art Press* Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 25-50.

<sup>9</sup>Bruno Corradini and Emilio Settimelli, "Weights, Measures and Prices of Artistic Genius—Futurist Manifesto 1914," trans. J. C. Higgett, *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. Umbro Apollonio (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 146.

<sup>10</sup>Tristan Tzara, "Dada Manifesto," in *Dadas on Art*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard, trans. Margaret Lippard (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 17-18.

<sup>11</sup>Tzara, "Dada Manifesto 1918," p. 20.

<sup>12</sup>For further information of Surrealism as a social and political weapon, see Herbert S. Gershman, *The Surrealist Revolution in France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969). For further information on the relationship between Dada in Paris and the development of Surrealism, see Richard Short, "Paris Dada and Surrealism," in *DADA Studies of a Movement*, ed. Richard Short (Buckinghamshire, England: Alpha Academic, 1980).

<sup>13</sup>Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Ben Vautier, "What is Fluxus?" *Flash Art*, 84/85 (1978), p. 52.

<sup>15</sup>The need to consider Duchamp separately from Dadaism and Surrealism is also a result of the fact that his relationship to these two move-

ments is a very complex one, for he was not specifically a member of either but worked with several Dadaist groups and with Surrealism at various times.

<sup>16</sup>For more information, see Marcel Duchamp, "A Window onto Something Else," [discussion between Marcel Duchamp and Pierre Cabanne], Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc.: 1987 [1967]), pp. 39-43.

<sup>17</sup>Duchamp, in Cabanne, p.100.

<sup>18</sup>Duchamp, in Cabanne, p.16.

<sup>19</sup>Duchamp stated that "The idea of 'chance,' which many people were thinking about at the time, struck me too. The intention consisted above all in forgetting the hand, since, fundamentally, even your hand is chance. Pure chance interested me as a way of going against logical reality . . ." Duchamp, in Cabanne, p. 46.

<sup>20</sup>Referring to his piece "In Advance of a Broken Arm," Duchamp said, "the word 'readymade' thrust itself on me then. It seemed perfect for these things that weren't works of art, that weren't sketches, and to which no art terms applied. That's why I was tempted to make them." In Cabanne, pp. 47-48. For a further discussion of readymades, see Anne d'Harnoncourt and Rynaston McShine, eds. *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1973)

<sup>21</sup>It is worthwhile noting at this point that in raising these kinds of questions, Duchamp does not infer that if an artist says so, it is a work of art. The post-World War II emphasis that anything is potentially a work of art is in fact a result of John Cage's influence in the transmission of the questions first raised by Duchamp. For more information of the relationship between the ideas of Cage and Duchamp and their impact on artists in New York in the 1950s, see Irving Sandler, *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the 1950s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

<sup>22</sup>Henry Martin, *Part One: Never change anything. Let changes fall in. Einfallen. Es Fällt mir ein Part Two: Never say never. A conversation with George Brecht by Henry Martin* (Bologna: Exit Edizioni, 1979.), pp. 40-42.

<sup>23</sup>Vautier, "What is Fluxus?" p. 52.

<sup>24</sup>John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1966), p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Cage has stated that "Those involved with the composition of experimental music find ways and means to remove themselves from the activities of the sounds they make. Some employ chance operations, derived from sources as ancient as the Chinese Book of Changes, or as modern as the tables of random numbers used also by physicists in research." *Silence*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> *Silence*, p. 12.

<sup>27</sup> Cage has expressed his belief that if "there is a lack of distinction between art and life, then one could say: Well, why have the art when we already have it in life? A suitable answer from my point of view is that we thereby celebrate." In Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner, "An Interview with John Cage," *TDR*, 10, No. 2 (1965), p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Cage, in Kirby and Schechner, p. 65.

<sup>29</sup> Sandler, *The New York School*, p. 163.

<sup>30</sup> For more on this, see Michael Kirby, "The Art of Time: The Aesthetics of the Avant-Garde," in *The Art of Time: Essays on the Avant-Garde* (New York: E.R. Dutton, 1969), pp. 17-62.

<sup>31</sup> Cage, in Kirby and Schechner, pp. 50-51.

<sup>32</sup> For a description of this performance, see Kirby and Schechner, pp. 51-53.

<sup>33</sup> This performance was in Donaueschingen, Germany, and is recounted in Hans Stuckenschmidt, *Twentieth Century Music*, trans. Richard Dereson (New York: McGraw Hill, 1969), p. 218.

<sup>34</sup> La Monte Young, "La Monte Young" [interview between Richard Kostelanetz and La Monte Young], Richard Kostelanetz, *The Theater of Mixed Means* (New York: Dial Press, 1968), p. 191.

<sup>35</sup> For more information on the significance of the works and ideas of Cage on these two musicians and composers, see Kostelanetz, pp. 190-94 and Martha Gever, "Pomp and Circumstances: The Coronation of Nam June Paik", *Afterimage*, 10 (Oct., 1982), p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> Cage said of this period that one of interests in the late 1950s was teaching the ideas that he was himself developing to other people. What he envisioned as teaching was to make himself available to those who



were showing an interest in the possibilities contained in his compositions and ideas. John Cage, "[The New School]," in *John Cage*, ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 118-20.

<sup>37</sup>Dick Higgins, *Postface*, p. 51.

<sup>38</sup>The specifics of these classes are described by both Higgins in *Postface*, pp. 48-52 and by Alan Hansen in *A Primer of Happenings & Time / Space Art* (New York: Something Else Press, 1965), pp. 91-102.

## Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup>According to Maciunas, this period contains elements of what would later be called Fluxus but also elements that would not. Most of the activities of the proto-Fluxus period were also not specifically called Fluxus or presented under the name Fluxus. The result of these interwoven factors is that it is almost impossible to clearly determine when the proto-Fluxus phase ends and the Early Fluxus phase begins.

<sup>2</sup>Home, *The Assault on Culture*, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup>The existence of artist-run and organized performance venues in the late 1950s and early 1960s was not new: what is important is that these performances established an association among a number of artists who would later become involved in Fluxus and also formed a prototype for the later Fluxus performance festivals. The establishment of artist-run sponsoring organizations for anti-establishment art forms can be directly traced at least as far back as the Futurists and Dadaists in the twentieth century.

<sup>4</sup>This group was also called at various times the Audio Visual-Group and the American Audio-Visual Society.

<sup>5</sup>Hansen, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup>Dick Higgins, [untitled manuscript], dated August 5, 1959, Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart. These points correlate in a number of ways to what might also be seen as the generalized objectives of the Fluxus group when it was first developed in 1962.

<sup>7</sup>Hansen, p. 103.

<sup>8</sup>Hansen, p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> *happenings & fluxus*, ed. Hans Sohm (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1970), np.

<sup>10</sup> For information on the various happenings performed in this period, see Michael Kirby, *Happenings* (New York: E P. Dutton, 1965).

<sup>11</sup> A copy of the program for this concert is contained in the collection of the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

<sup>12</sup> Yoko Ono, quoted in Jonathan Cott, "Yoko Ono and Her Sixteen-Track Voice," in *The Ballad of John & Yoko*, ed. Jonathan Cott and Christine Doudna (Garden City, NY: Dolphin Books Doubleday, 1982), p. 118.

<sup>13</sup> This series was initially intended to include individual performances of the following people: George Brecht, Joe Byrd, John Cage, Walter De Maria, Bob Duan, Henry Flynt, Toshi Ichiyonagi, Dennis Johnson, Richard Maxfield, David Degner, Hans Heims, Jackson Mac Low, Yoko Ono, Diane Wakoski, James Waring, Phil Reys, Bob Morris, Simone Forti, La Monte Young, and others to be arranged.

<sup>14</sup> Each performance took place over the course of two evenings and included both works by the featured individuals and pieces dedicated to or related to them. These performances, which began in December, 1960, and ran through May, 1961, featured the work of Terry Jennings (Dec. 18-19, 1960), Toshi Ichiyonagi (Jan. 7-8, 1961), Henry Flynt (Feb. 25-26, 1961), Joseph Byrd (Mar. 4-5, 1961), Jackson Mac Low (Apr. 8-9, 1961), Richard Maxfield (Apr. 29-30), and La Monte Young (May 19-20, 1961).

<sup>15</sup> Copies of both of these programs are contained in the collection of the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

<sup>16</sup> George Brecht made this same observation about this series in a personal interview in Cologne on July 4, 1988.

<sup>17</sup> For more information on this aspect of La Monte Young's work, see Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music Cage and Beyond* (London: Studio Vista, 1974), pp. 70-72.

<sup>18</sup> 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.

<sup>19</sup> Jerome Rothenberg, "PRE-FACE," *Paper Air*, 2, No. 3 (1980), p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Personal interview with George Brecht, July 4, 1988.

<sup>21</sup> Personal interview with George Brecht, July 4, 1988.

<sup>22</sup> 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.

<sup>23</sup> 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 where he had been exposed to the ideas and works of the Dadaists and Futurists.

<sup>24</sup> Mrs. Alexander Maciunas, "My Son," (1979), p. 7, Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart; hereafter cited as "My Son." This is a translation of the unpublished reminiscences of Maciunas's mother about his life and activities that was written shortly after his death.

<sup>25</sup> "My Son," p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> A substantial section of these graphic charts still exist and are now in the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

<sup>27</sup> "My Son," p. 8. The exact year when this took place is not known, but all of the available information suggests 1959 or 1960, although it might have also been as early as 1957. Although Mrs. Maciunas states that his favorite professor died, she does not give his name, and I have been unable to determine who he might have been.

<sup>28</sup> The name of this gallery was derived from the first letter of each of the partners' first names, A=Almus and G=George.

<sup>29</sup> "My Son," p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> "My Son," p. 8. Although in this section of Mrs. Maciunas's remembrances she calls this magazine "Fluxus," what she was really referring to was Kuenstler's Magazine *Bread &*.

<sup>31</sup> Jackson Mac Low, "Wie George Maciunas die New Yorker Avantgarde Kennenlernte," in *1962 Wiesbaden 1982*, p. 110. It is worth noting that Maciunas's interest in this kind of work, although 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, letting the interactions of the ink and water determine the pattern or design.

<sup>32</sup> Dick Higgins, "Something Else about Fluxus," *Art and Artists*, 7, No. 7 (Oct., 1972), p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> George Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova," [announcement brochure], nd, AS.

<sup>34</sup> Examples of the various brochures that Maciunas designed and produced for these performances are contained in the collection of the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.

<sup>35</sup> Mac Low, p. 115.

<sup>36</sup> George Maciunas, "Transcript of the Videotaped Interview with George Maciunas by Larry Miller," Mar. 24, 1978, in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, ed. Jon Hendricks (New York: INR &, 1983), p. 14, hereafter referred to as M/M Interview.

<sup>37</sup> The size of the audiences for the different performances at the AG Gallery varied from around five to 25 and although the public was mostly made up of people interested in this kind of work, it was not made up only of people who had been specifically invited. Dick Higgins, *Spanner*, No. 9, p. 161.

<sup>38</sup> George Maciunas, "Bread & AG" [performance brochure], nd, AS.

<sup>39</sup> George Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova" [Performance brochure], nd, AS.

<sup>40</sup> George Maciunas, "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art," nd [ca. spring, 1962], AS.

<sup>41</sup> Vaudeville is one of the words Maciunas will consistently use as characteristic of Fluxus, especially after 1964.

<sup>42</sup> "My Son," pp. 7-8.

<sup>43</sup> "My Son," p. 9

<sup>44</sup> Mac Low, p. 115.

<sup>45</sup> Mac Low, pp. 113-14.

<sup>46</sup> Mac Low, p. 114.

<sup>47</sup> Mac Low, p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> George Maciunas, quoted in Mac Low, p. 114.

<sup>49</sup> Mac Low, p. 114.

<sup>50</sup> Mac Low, p. 115.

<sup>51</sup> For more information on Maciunas's design style for this project and others, see Barbara Moore, "George Maciunas: A Finger in Fluxus," *Artforum*, 21, No. 2 (Oct., 1982), pp. 38-45.

<sup>52</sup> Mac Low, p. 115. This printer was selected by Maciunas because he had printed the announcements for the AG Gallery.

<sup>53</sup> 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 included in this publication were the exact works performed in several Fluxus festivals and presentations, among them Young's compositions, Brecht's Events, and Mac Low's poetry.

<sup>54</sup> M/M interview, p. 15

<sup>55</sup> M/M interview, p. 15

<sup>56</sup> Maciunas, "Musica Antiqua et Nova."

<sup>57</sup> M/M interview, p. 16.

<sup>58</sup> Even though Maciunas left the United States, he continued to participate in the production of *An Anthology*. There are several letters from him to La Monte Young from the fall and winter, 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.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup> The exact date when Maciunas left the U.S. is not known. Jon Hendricks has suggested that he left in the late summer or fall, 1961.

The month of his departure was probably October because Jackson Mac Low remembers that Maciunas did most of the design work for *An Anthology* in September. Mac Low, p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>"My Son," p. 9. Several sources report Maciunas did not have a job in Wiesbaden prior to leaving for Europe, but it seems probable that he did have at least a contact for a job there that paid his way to Germany, since he most likely did not have the money to pay for it himself.

<sup>3</sup>M/M Interview, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>For more information on these performance developments, see J. Schilling, *Aktionskunst*, and Sohm, *Happening & Fluxus*.

<sup>5</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, Jan. 18, 1962, AS.

<sup>6</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, Nov. 28, 1961, AS.

<sup>7</sup>These dates are not definite, but the first known dated version of this plan was mailed to Emmett Williams on Dec. 16, 1961, and the second version of the prospectus was produced prior to Jan. 18, 1962, the date it was mailed to Dick Higgins in the United States.

<sup>8</sup>These first three plans can be assigned only general dates based on when they were mailed to various individuals. The earliest date that can be assigned to any of these is Dec. 14, when that version A was mailed to Dr. Clemens Weiler in Wiesbaden, who was then the director of the Städtisches Museum there. Although it cannot be proved, Maciunas may have produced version A as early as November, 1961. Version B of these plans has no specific date, but version C was produced by Maciunas prior to Jan. 18, 1962 (when it was posted to Inge Baecher). In addition to these provisional dates, it seems most likely that version A predates version B because the former is much less specific (the coverage of each of the concerts is not as well defined). Version C is most likely the last of these three plans because it illustrates the greatest developmental alterations. It includes a listing of a "festival planning committee" and a schedule of performances not included in either version A or B. I have chosen to use the letter designations A, B., and C—which Jon Hendricks, the curator of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, uses—to avoid any unnecessary confusion about the historical designation of these three plans.

<sup>9</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Dec. 16, 1961, Jean and Leonard Brown Collection, The Getty Center for the Arts and Humanities, Santa Monica, California; hereafter the Jean and Leonard Brown Collection will be referred to JLB.

<sup>10</sup>The contents for most of these individual issues listed in version A fall into two basic categories: essays and scores of works. As an example, in the "No. 1 U.S. issue," the first section of the contents is listed under "Essays." These were primarily writings by artists about issues, concerns, and developments related to their own and the work of others like themselves, such as the planned essay by Kaprow on the historical precedents for "Environmental-happenings" or the essay by George Brecht on Events. The second section, headed by "Anthology," was intended to contain artists' works, scores, recordings, and related inserts.

<sup>11</sup>It is interesting to note that the more original pieces in terms of form were the least emphasized at this stage, such as inserts and actual works like Knowles's "A Glove." When Maciunas actually did produce the *Fluxus I* (the end result of these plans), it featured mainly works, objects, and other materials not traditionally included in publications, although it did include a quantity of printed material.

<sup>12</sup>The reference to performances as being related to or organized by Fluxus is not made until version B and even then only rather obliquely at the end of the contents for issue No.2.

<sup>13</sup>This difference in listing of the works is probably related to the fact that those that he specifies were the works that he had brought with him to Europe. Although he knew the names, or possibly had met the European and Japanese composers, he had not received any of their scores and could not, therefore, list any specifics for them.

<sup>14</sup>The other cities included in this list were Berlin, Cologne, Florence, Copenhagen, Paris, Moscow, Warsaw, Prague, Stockholm, Rome or Milan, Vienna, Amsterdam, and Bruxelles.

<sup>15</sup>It should be noted that the *News-Policy-Letter No.1* exists in at least three different versions. For more information, see Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1988), p. 592.

<sup>16</sup>George Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter No. 1* [first version], AS. Another copy of this publication is also reproduced in Jon Hendricks, ed., *Fluxus etc., Addenda 1: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (New York: Ink &, 1983), pp. 139-46. In this reference to the changing nature of the magazine's contents, Maciunas foreshadows the later development of Fluxus objects, multiples, and editions.

<sup>17</sup>George Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter No. 1* [first version], AS.

<sup>18</sup>The development of this change in form was indicated in a postcard that Maciunas sent to La Monte Young on Mar. 7, 1962. when he suggested that it "would be nice to include an actual piece 'hand' or made for each issue . . . to fit into 8" x 8" — could be small scrap, torn or anything." George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, Mar. 7, 1962, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, New York and Detroit. This letter is also reproduced in Clive Philpot and Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1988), p. 34.

<sup>19</sup>See George Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter No. 1* [first version], reproduced in Hendricks, *Fluxus etc. Addenda I*, p. 140.

<sup>20</sup>See George Maciunas, letters to and from Dick Higgins and La Monte Young from spring, 1962. In these, Maciunas asked particularly for materials related to dance, happenings, and the visual arts. These letters (Higgins) are contained in the Dick Higgins correspondence files in the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart and (Young) in the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, New York and Detroit.

<sup>21</sup>George Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter no.1* [first version], AS.

<sup>22</sup>The concerts that were dropped were Canadian (no. 15 on version C) and European (no. 13 on version C) tape music and the concert of new music from Eastern Europe and the USSR (no. 16 on version C).

<sup>23</sup>Ken Friedman has observed that this approach to things typified the scientific and experimental orientation of Fluxus. "You determine where things ought to be, and how they ought to get there, then you experiment, check, verify and modify. This applies here to the festivals, but you see it over and over in the publishing programs, the charts, [and] the way we developed art ideas, works and projects in a programmatic way." "Notes for Owen Smith," p. 21.

<sup>24</sup>This is possible because the available documentation shows that Maciunas produced this first version of his plans for both the publication and the concert series around the date of his letter to Weiler.

<sup>25</sup>Personal interview with Wolf Vostell, Berlin, Apr. 28, 1988.

<sup>26</sup>Personal interview with Wolf Vostell, Berlin, Apr. 28, 1988.

<sup>27</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Clemens Weiler, Dec. 14, 1961, Städtisches Museum, Wiesbaden.



<sup>28</sup> Although the specific date on which Weiler agreed, even provisionally, to the use of the Städtisches Museum for a festival of new music is not known. Maciunas lists this as being an established location by the middle of Jan., 1962.

<sup>29</sup> George Maciunas, *News-Policv-Letter No. 1* [third version], AS.

<sup>30</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd [ca. early spring, 1962] AS.

<sup>31</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, postmarked Mar. 7, 1962, GLS.

<sup>32</sup> Although at this time Maciunas had not begun to plan the production of individual artists' works in addition to the anthologies, this second point is based on the author's viewpoint that the later production of multiples by Fluxus was a direct development from the expanding notion of publishing artists' works and not specifically a new development concerned with the production of objects made by artists.

<sup>33</sup> Maciunas often used the tactic—what might be called misrepresentation or over-estimation—of making unrealistic announcements of publication projects and dates of appearance, including artists as participants or members who were not or had not fully committed themselves to involvement in Fluxus. This was used by Maciunas as an inspirational method to bring artists and participants into the fold, as it were, and as a method of organizing, prodding, and motivating the participating and potentially participating artists, composers, writers, and critics.

<sup>34</sup> The emphasis on Fluxus as a development in the visual arts came about primarily because it has come to be seen as having had the greatest effect on the visual arts. Up to this point, Fluxus has also been primarily considered in exhibitions, books, and catalogues in relation to its production of multiples and other artists' objects. A good example is *Fluxus Codex*, which contains very little specifically on the performance aspects of Fluxus. This might, although not the editor's intension, give one the impression that Fluxus was primarily a group of visual artists who produced objects. Fluxus, however, reflected the diverse interests and backgrounds of its members and was thus intermedial. The interesting result of the intermedial nature of Fluxus is that scholars who are inclined to take a limited, medium-based position, whether in music, literature, or the visual arts, have often excluded Fluxus from their considerations.

<sup>35</sup> George Maciunas, letter and list sent to Dick Higgins, nd [early 1962], AS. The full form of this list includes 66 different artists' names. The names chosen here were selected because Higgins specifically mentions them in his response to Maciunas.

<sup>36</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>37</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, post dated Feb. 21, 1962, AS.

<sup>38</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, Mar. 15, 1962, AS.

<sup>39</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>40</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>41</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, Mar. 19, 1962, AS.

<sup>42</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>43</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd, AS.

<sup>44</sup> The full list of editors in spring, 1962, is contained in *News-Policy-Letter No.1*, May 21, 1962.

<sup>45</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd [ca. Feb., 1962], AS.

<sup>46</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd [prior to Jan. 18, 1962], AS.

<sup>47</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, Feb. 21, 1962, AS.

<sup>48</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd [prior to May 21, 1962], AS.

<sup>49</sup> Jon Hendricks has suggested – in his essay “Fluxus: Kleines Sommerfest / Neo-Dada in der Musik / Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Neuster Musik / Festum Fluxorum Fluxus Wuppertal, Wiesbaden, Dusseldorf 1962/63” in *Stationen der Moderne*, eds. Michael Bolle and Eva Zuchner (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie and Nicolaische Verlagsbuchhandlung Beuermann GmbH, 1988), p. 494 – that this performance was intended to be “an amusing distraction” for the guests. Jahrling, however, was familiar with Paik’s performance work. It is likely that Jahrling had at least some idea about what to expect and did not see this performance evening as mere amusement.

<sup>50</sup> George Maciunas, [notes on performance program], nd, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, New York and Detroit. The actual performance can be determined from a program Maciunas himself altered to reflect the pieces performed and their order.

<sup>51</sup> This was the first of two versions Maciunas would produce; the second version was produced by Maciunas, prior to the first Fluxus festival in Wiesbaden.

<sup>52</sup> This brochure prospectus was in fact the first of two versions Maciunas produced in 1962, specifically for public distribution. The second, revised version was produced for the Fluxus festival in Wiesbaden.

<sup>53</sup> This interest in educating the audience was related to the difference between Maciunas's AG concert series and Young's Chambers Street series. See chapter two for more information on these two series. Maciunas would also endeavor to include, throughout the proto-Fluxus and early Fluxus periods, an educational element such as this graphic representation or the lectures by himself and later by Jean-Pierre Wilhelm, given at some of the European Fluxus festivals.

<sup>54</sup> These announcements took the form of a four-sided wristband (a cube without the top or bottom), that can be seen on some of the guests in photos of the performance.

<sup>55</sup> George Maciunas, "Neo Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art," nd [ca. June, 1962], AS. This text is contained on one of several rolls of microfilm (#1/92) on which Maciunas copied numerous early Fluxus-related documents and scores. Several rolls of this film are now contained in the Archiv Sohm.

<sup>56</sup> George Maciunas, "Neo Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art," nd [ca. June, 1962].

<sup>57</sup> George Maciunas, "Neo Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art," nd [ca. June, 1962].

<sup>58</sup> George Maciunas, "Neo Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art," nd [ca. June, 1962]. Although the full meaning of Maciunas's reference to "no need for art" is not elaborated in this text, he is referring to and rejecting two traditional notions of art. First, he rejects the idea that art is intrinsically valuable. For Maciunas all elements, not just art, must play a functional role and thus are to be valued for instrumental reasons. Second, he infers that art as an ontological category does not

exist. The art status of certain objects is not an essential property of the objects themselves but rather the result of socially prescribed, artificial categories, masking the true nature of art as a mode of perception.

<sup>59</sup>This information is based on an interview with Tomas Schmit by the author on Apr. 27, 1988, and on Maciunas's notations on the performance invitation.

<sup>60</sup>On Maciunas's altered program he lists a last piece performed (no. 7), which I have not been able to identify, in part because the handwriting is partially illegible.

<sup>61</sup>George Maciunas, "Neo Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art," nd [ca. June, 1962]

<sup>62</sup>George Maciunas, "Neo Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art," nd [ca. June, 1962]

<sup>63</sup>M/M, interview, p. 21.

<sup>64</sup>George Maciunas, letter to the Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR, nd; a copy of this letter is contained in the Archiv Sohm.

<sup>65</sup>Jon Hendricks gives this relationship between the two performances in his essay "Fluxus: Kleines Sommerfest . . ."

<sup>66</sup>Program announcements for the Dusseldorf Chamber Theater, nd (ca. June, 1962) AS.

<sup>67</sup>Because of the length, I have not listed them in the quoted program, but see Hans Sohm, *happenings & fluxus* (Cologne: Kölnischer Kunstverein, 1970) for a reproduction of the complete program for "Neo-Dada in der Musik."

<sup>68</sup>*News-Policy-Letter No 1*, May 21, 1962, AS. Many of the other pieces that had not been listed in the festival plans prior to this performance would be subsequently included in some of the actual Fluxus festivals (including Patterson's "Paper Piece," Vostell's "'KLEENEX' de/collage" and Dieter Schnabel's "Visible Composition for Conductor.")

<sup>69</sup>There are several other reasons that these presentations should not be considered Fluxus performances, most specifically, that they were not called Fluxus events by the artists involved, including Maciunas himself, Paik, Vostell, and Schmit.

<sup>70</sup> For more information on Filliou's Legitimate Gallery, see Sohm, *happenings & fluxus*, np.

<sup>71</sup> Sohm, *happenings & fluxus*, np.

<sup>72</sup> There are no descriptions of this event, or if it even occurred at all.

<sup>73</sup> George Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter No. 2*, July 12, 1962. An original copy of this document is in the AS.

<sup>74</sup> Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter No. 2*. Included for the first time on the list of recipients are Joseph Beuys and Willem de Ridder.

<sup>75</sup> Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter No. 2* Point two was a request that all scores, instructions, and tapes be submitted three weeks prior to the festival so that copies could be made and sent to the performers. The final point, number three, was an invitation to any of the recipients of the newsletter who were not already participating to perform "the compositions on the dates designated by performer index in the program." This also included a reminder to those who had already agreed to participate to note the compositions and the dates/times of their performances. A final note stated that all performers would be reimbursed by Maciunas, hopefully from the proceeds from the gate, for their travel and living expenses while at Wiesbaden.

<sup>76</sup> It is possible that the supposed other version of the *News-Policy-Letter No. 1* reproduced in *Fluxus etc., / Addenda I* on pp. 42 through 46 is the second part of *News Policy Letter No.2*, for this version includes performer designation letters mentioned in the first page of no.2 and are not included in the dated version of no.1.

<sup>77</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd, AS.

<sup>78</sup> Arthur Kopcke, letter to George Maciunas, July 24, 1962. A copy of this letter is contained in Maciunas personal microfilm records (# 1/103) now in the Archiv Sohm.

<sup>79</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Arthur Kopcke, postmarked July 31, 1962, AS.

<sup>80</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, postdated July 19, 1962. A copy of this letter is contained in the Archiv Sohm.

<sup>81</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd [ca. Aug. 15, 1962]. A copy of this letter is in the Archiv Sohm.

<sup>82</sup>This occurrence was recounted by Higgins in *Jefferson's Birthday/Postface*, p. 68.

#### Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup>A copy of this *News-Policy-Letter No. 3* was sent to Dick Higgins on the Aug. 4, 1962, AS.

<sup>2</sup>This is probably not complete for a number of the performers whom Maciunas knew would be there were not listed, such as Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams, and others.

<sup>3</sup>Emmett Williams, "Way Way Way Out," *Stars and Stripes*, Aug. 30, 1962, p. 11. A copy of this entire text is reproduced in the catalogue *1962 Wiesbaden FLUXUS 1982*, p. 80.

<sup>4</sup>This announced series consisted of four concerts of piano music (concerts one to four) by United States, Japanese, and European composers; three concerts for other instruments and voices (five to seven) by United States, Japanese, and European composers; three concerts of concrete music and happenings (eight to ten) by United States, Japanese, and "international" composers; two concerts of films and tape music (eleven and thirteen) from the United States and Japan; and two concerts of tape music (twelve and fourteen) by Richard Maxfield and French composers. This announced concert series is almost the exact one that Maciunas sent out in May, 1962, in the *News-Policy-Letter No. 1*, the main difference being that he had added one more concert of European piano music.

<sup>5</sup>Dick Higgins mentions this method of listing the works to be performed in a letter to Allan Kaprow, nd, AS.

<sup>6</sup>We don't know for certain that the fourth-weekend concerts were only of tape music.

<sup>7</sup>George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd, the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, GLS.

<sup>8</sup>Higgins, *Postface*, p. 68

<sup>9</sup>Emmett Williams, personal interview, Apr. 27, 1988.

<sup>10</sup>Emmett Williams, personal interview, Apr. 27, 1988.

<sup>11</sup> The specifics of the performance of Morris's "Dance" piece or any sense of its performance in this concert are as yet unknown to this author.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Patterson, "Paper Piece," [score] Sep., 1960. A copy of the original score for "Paper Piece" is contained in the Archiv Sohm.

<sup>13</sup> Richard O'Regan, "There's Music-and Eggs-in the Air," *Stars and Stripes*, Oct. 21, 1962, p. 11.

<sup>14</sup> Higgins, *Postface*, p. 69.

<sup>15</sup> In Higgins's *Selected Early Works 1955-64*, the specific piece that corresponds to the described actions for this "Danger Music" is listed as #15, not #17, although it was written on the blackboard as #17 for the Wiesbaden performance.

<sup>16</sup> Higgins, *Postface*, p. 69.

<sup>17</sup> This version of "Piano Activities" (the pianowas gradually destroyed) was not, however, what Corner had intended when he wrote the score. When, in fact, Corner learned about the way his score had been actualized in Wiesbaden, he was quite aggravated.

<sup>18</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd [ca. Oct., 1962], the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, GLS.

<sup>19</sup> This piece was performed in several different concerts over the first, second, and third weekends of the festival; thus, it did not come to a conclusion until the third weekend of the festival.

<sup>20</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd [ca. Oct., 1962], the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, GLS.

<sup>21</sup> "My Son," pp. 9-10.

<sup>22</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd, p. 1, the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, GLS.

<sup>23</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd, the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, GLS.

<sup>24</sup> Higgins, *Postface*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>25</sup> In 1962, \$500 was a considerable amount of money, equivalent to around \$4,000 or \$5,000 dollars in terms of today's purchasing power.

<sup>26</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd, the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, GLS.

<sup>27</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd, p. 1, the La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, GLS.

<sup>28</sup> George Maciunas, *News-Policy-Letter No. 4* [draft], nd, Archiv Sohm. Only a two-page draft exists of this newsletter as a microfilm copy (1/93) in the Sohm Archiv.

<sup>29</sup> George Maciunas, [possible draft for] *News Policy-Letter No. 4*, nd, AS.

<sup>30</sup> Personal interview with Emmett Williams, Apr. 28, 1988. Williams said that Vostell had invited Higgins, Knowles, Paik, Patterson, himself, and Maciunas to participate in this event. Of these, only Patterson, who was otherwise involved, and Maciunas, who was too sick, could not participate.

<sup>31</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Allan Kaprow, nd, AS.

<sup>32</sup> Dick Higgins, *Postface*, p. 71.

<sup>33</sup> Dick Higgins, *Postface*, p. 71.

<sup>34</sup> These are the same kinds of work Maciunas referred to when he stated to Paik that Fluxus must be more post-Cage and less pre-Cage or Cage.

<sup>35</sup> Tomas Schmit, personal interview, Apr. 27, 1988.

<sup>36</sup> Quoted in Jeremy Hornsby, "The Day I Stumbled on Neti Neti," *Daily Express*, Oct. 19, 1962, np.

<sup>37</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Alan Kaprow, nd, AS.

<sup>38</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Allan Kaprow, nd, AS.

<sup>39</sup> Ben Vautier, personal interview, July 28, 1985. As he expressed to me in this interview, Ben Vautier prefers to be referred to as just "Ben."

<sup>40</sup> This was true for the performances in London and Amsterdam; Paik's new piece "Serenade for Alison," which would later become a Fluxus "standard," was performed for the first time in Amsterdam.



<sup>41</sup> Most of these artist/performers did not personally participate in the last three European Fluxus festivals of 1963, in Amsterdam, the Hague, and Nice, although their performance works still figured prominently.

<sup>42</sup> Although Maciunas had dropped this designation in writing, the third was still predominantly works by Japanese artists and composers.

<sup>43</sup> I am indebted to Ken Friedman for emphasizing the significance of this change. It is this specific emphasis in Fluxus that Friedman refers to as its globalism. He stressed this point to the author when wrote that in Fluxus “. . . borders between nations are as uninteresting as borders between media.” Ken Friedman, “Notes for Owen Smith,” p. 30.

<sup>44</sup> This kind of categorization is a bit problematic, for such a determination of significance is a bit misleading in that the group in this period was rather fluid. This observation of a core group of artists, however, is important in that it was this group who primarily shaped a Fluxus performance aesthetic in Europe.

<sup>45</sup> Fairly good information is available about this Fluxus festival in Copenhagen because Pedersen recorded his remembrances in *Der Kampf gegen die Buraermusik*, (Cologne: Michael Werner, 1973). This was a German translation of the 1968 original Danish book by Pedersen and Ludwig Gosewitz.

<sup>46</sup> Pederson and Gosewitz, p. 97.

<sup>47</sup> Pederson and Gosewitz, p. 97.

<sup>48</sup> Pedersen and Gosewitz, p. 98.

<sup>49</sup> Dick Higgins mentions in a letter of Allan Kaprow that the Young Musical Artists Company was expecting something “more musical,” and when they found out what was going to be performed they split into two factions. The more conservative faction, opposed to what was going to be presented, was able to get the TV showing stopped. Dick Higgins, letter to Allan Kaprow, nd, AS.

<sup>50</sup> The performance listings of this concert and all the other Copenhagen concerts were reconstructed from performance notes by Maciunas, written materials by Dick Higgins, Pedersen’s written remembrances, and reviews of performances. Thus, these listings of works, although not definitive, do reflect all of the available materials.

<sup>51</sup> For a description of these pieces, see the relevant sections on the Wiesbaden festival in *1962 Wiesbaden 1982*.

<sup>52</sup> This score is reprinted in Sohm, np.

<sup>53</sup> Pedersen and Gosewitz, p. 103.

<sup>54</sup> Pedersen and Gosewitz, p. 101.

<sup>55</sup> Emmett Williams, performance notes, nd, np, AS.

<sup>56</sup> Dick Higgins, *Postface*, p. 75

<sup>57</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Allan Kaprow, nd, AS.

<sup>58</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News Letter No. 5, Jan. 1, 1963*, np, AS.

<sup>59</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd [ca. Nov./Dec., 1962], p. 2. AS. Although the date on this letter is not certain, it was sent after *Newsletter No. 4* and prior to the middle of December when Maciunas responded to it.

<sup>60</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd [after Jan. 15, 1963], AS.

<sup>61</sup> This general idea was not new but the work to be produced was. Given Maciunas's associations, the most obvious precursor to subsequent production of multiples (objects like publications mechanically produced in a number of copies) was Editions MAT that Spoerri developed and ran in the late 1950s and early 1960s producing editions by Soto, Vasarely, d'Agam, Tinguely, and others. These works, though, were more closely linked to the limited-edition nature of prints, whereas Maciunas's ideas were associated with the more open nature of publications, particularly as a distribution mechanism.

<sup>62</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Robert Watts, nd, [ca. Summer 1962], GLS.

<sup>63</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, p. 2, AS. The newspaper that Brecht mentions in this letter is the inception for his *V TRE*, which was later taken over by Maciunas in 1964.

<sup>64</sup> George Maciunas, letter to George Brecht, nd, p. 2, AS.

<sup>65</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News Letter No. 5 January 1, 1963*, np.

- <sup>66</sup> George Maciunas, letter to George Brecht, nd, p. 2, AS.
- <sup>67</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.
- <sup>68</sup> Nam June Paik, letter to George Maciunas, Jan. 15, 1963, AS.
- <sup>69</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd, AS. In various conversations the author has had with some of the individuals Maciunas listed here, although Maciunas had contacted these artists about publishing their complete works, the artists for the most part had not agreed to the copyright restrictions listed in *Fluxus News Letter No. 5*.
- <sup>70</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd, AS.
- <sup>71</sup> This antagonism was principally from Maciunas toward Vostell.
- <sup>72</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd, AS.
- <sup>73</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd, AS.
- <sup>74</sup> Nam June Paik, letter to George Maciunas, postmarked Jan. 15, 1963, AS.
- <sup>75</sup> Nam June Paik, letter to George Maciunas, postmarked 1.15.63, AS.
- <sup>76</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd, AS.
- <sup>77</sup> Personal interview with Wolf Vostell, Berlin, Apr. 29, 1988.
- <sup>78</sup> Although Beuys's original letter no longer exists, Maciunas' response indicates the contents and nature of this letter. Maciunas' letter is reproduced in Gotz Adriani, et al. (*Joseph Beuys Life and Works*, Woodbury, New York: Barron's, 1979), p. 88.
- <sup>79</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, reproduced in Adriani, p. 88.
- <sup>80</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, reproduced in Adriani, p. 88.
- <sup>81</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Benys, reproduced in Adriani, p. 88. Maciunas was not certain if Knowles and Higgins would be at the concerts because they had taken a trip to Turkey.
- <sup>82</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, Jan. 16, 1963, reproduced in Adriani, p. 89.

<sup>83</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, Jan. 16, 1963, reproduced in Adriani, p. 89.

<sup>84</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, Jan. 16, 1963, reproduced in Adriani, p. 89.

<sup>85</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Nam June Paik, nd, AS.

<sup>86</sup> This seems to be the case since none of the other letters from Maciunas to Beuys mentioned a manifesto or even that a manifesto was being considered for distribution at this festival.

<sup>87</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, Jan. 17, 1963, reproduced in Adriani, p. 91.

<sup>88</sup> Although this might seem to be a "Fluxus Manifesto," it was never agreed upon by the group as a whole. It was more a statement of Maciunas's personal ideas. The "manifesto" also reflects the more politically aggressive stance of many of the European artists who had become associated with Fluxus in this period, but not the American artists, such as George Brecht and Robert Watts.

<sup>89</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, Jan. 17, 1963, reproduced in Adriani, p. 91.

<sup>90</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, Jan. 16, 1963, reproduced in Adriani, p. 89.

<sup>91</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Joseph Beuys, Jan. 16, 1963, reproduced in Adriani, p. 89.

<sup>92</sup> Olzon and Klintberg were included in this festival by invitation from Maciunas, and in fact Klintberg had performed at the Wiesbaden and Copenhagen festivals, where Maciunas had first invited him to participate in other festivals such as that at Dusseldorf. Trowbridge and Vostell were included in part as a result of Beuys's request to Maciunas. Because of the number of performers, there was no need to use the other "new associates" whom Maciunas had requested Beuys to contact.

<sup>93</sup> Neither of these pieces had much lasting affect on the development of Fluxus performance. The "Siberian Symphony" was performed by Beuys in this festival because he had helped to organize it; afterwards, most of the Fluxus artists felt that it was too expressionistic, too "art-like" for their concept of Fluxus. The Paik piece, which was a contest to see who could urinate the longest into a bucket on the stage

while singing their respective national anthems, was at first well received by Maciunas, but later he decided that it was too dependent on scandal and shock.

<sup>94</sup> George Maciunas, [Fluxus Manifesto], nd [1966], AS.

<sup>95</sup> Maciunas was familiar with this form of presentation because he had participated in the earlier simultaneous performance at Darmstadt along with Vostell, Paik, and Schmit (all of whom were also performers at Dusseldorf.) Although the reasons for the use of a simultaneous performance at Dusseldorf were unclear, it was undoubtedly based on Maciunas's concern with a compaction of the festival presentations.

<sup>96</sup> Dick Higgins, *Postface*, p. 78.

<sup>97</sup> Dick Higgins, *Postface*, p. 78.

<sup>98</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Daniel Spoerri, nd, AS.

<sup>99</sup> Even the money made from the gate at Copenhagen was rather little and all subsequently spent on covering the costs of the unsuccessful festival in Paris.

<sup>100</sup> These costs were also defrayed by the fact that in many cases the artists were responsible for paying for their own personal expenses.

<sup>101</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, postdated Feb. 26, 1963, AS.

<sup>102</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, postdated Feb. 26, AS.

<sup>103</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, postdated Feb. 26, AS.

<sup>104</sup> Higgins describes this festival in *Postface*, p. 79.

<sup>105</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd [ca. mid-March, 1963], AS. For additional material on this presentation, see *Postface*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>106</sup> Maciunas thought that some artists would be reluctant to promote the group over themselves, and thus he saw the potential need for dictatorial approaches to mandate compliance. This idea was later developed into a plan for copyrighting all the works produced by Fluxus as "Fluxus" works rather than works by individuals. Thus, Maciunas intended to use a traditional method of protecting authorship as a means to attack the very same concept.

<sup>107</sup> Maciunas, [Fluxus Manifesto], nd [1966], AS.

<sup>108</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd [ca. Jan., 1964], GLS, New York and Detroit.

<sup>109</sup> George Maciunas, Correspondence notes, nd, np, AS.

<sup>110</sup> George Maciunas, Correspondence notes, nd, np, AS.

<sup>111</sup> George Maciunas, Correspondence notes, nd, np, AS.

<sup>112</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>113</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Robert Watts, nd (before Mar. 11, 1963), GLS.

<sup>114</sup> This was another indication of the interest in chance by most of the Fluxus artists, particularly "games of chance," later to become one of the primary interests of Maciunas, Watts, and, as a result, Fluxus. Within the next several years, the importance of games as an element of "non-art reality" and unpretentious creativity would increase to the point that Maciunas would often compare Fluxus to gags and games.

<sup>115</sup> Most of the earlier plans for the anthologies were, in actuality, potentially limited in their appeal because of their nature; much of the material was not exemplary of post-Cagean thinking. Maciunas hoped that by emphasizing work that had a more general appeal, such as Watts's *Hospital Events*, Fluxus would reach a wider audience.

<sup>116</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd, AS.

<sup>117</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Robert Watts, nd, GLS.

<sup>118</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>119</sup> The printer had all the materials Maciunas had collected up to that point for *Fluxus Yearbox I*. The final published version, however, contained other materials he added later.

<sup>120</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Robert Watts, nd, GLS.

<sup>121</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Robert Watts, Mar. 11 or 12, 1963, GLS.

<sup>122</sup> This change was because of Maciunas's belief that Bayle and Lambert were directly responsible for the relative failure of the *Festum Fluxorum* in Paris.

<sup>123</sup> Although this yearbook was never published, a partial typescript for it exists and is now in the AS.

<sup>124</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 5, 1963, GLS. Although Maciunas stated that this yearbook was being printed, it is probable that he was referring to Schmit's production of the typescript.

<sup>125</sup> There is no documentation on whether or not any pre-printing work was done at this time for these other yearbooks. It is probable that these materials were simply collected but not worked on to ready them for printing in the yearbooks.

<sup>126</sup> Throughout this period, Maciunas put Schmit to work doing the typing for these publications. The three things on which Schmit worked the most were *L'OPTIOUE MODERN*, "Compositions 1961," and "Monthly Review of the University for Avant-garde Hinduism."

<sup>127</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Daniel Spoerri, Emmett Williams, and Robert Filliou, nd, JLB. It is not clear when Maciunas had arranged to produce this book, probably no earlier than Dec., 1962, and very possibly not until Feb., 1963.

<sup>128</sup> Letter from George Maciunas to Nam June Paik, nd [prior to Jan. 23, 1963], AS.

<sup>129</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Robert Filliou, and Daniel Spoerri, nd, JLB.

<sup>130</sup> In fact, there were last-minute production problems because Spoerri did not send the last section of the text for the book until quite late, and there was barely enough time to finish the project close to the scheduled date. Maciunas, in a letter to Emmett Williams (nd, AS), mentioned that there was only "one week left" and that the book "will be now a few days late." It is possible that the deluxe edition was not made because of this time delay and also in part because Maciunas did not have the money to pay for the whole printing job for the paperbacks, let alone a hardback edition.

<sup>131</sup> George Maciunas, letter to La Monte Young, nd [Oct., 1962], p. 2, GLS.

<sup>132</sup> For a description of the method used by Young to create this realization of this composition, see Richard Kostelanetz, *The Theater of Mixed Means* (New York: The Dial Press, 1968), p. 204.

<sup>133</sup> Even though Maciunas had told Young that he would start on the actual production of this work in fall, 1962, the typescript was not completed until spring, 1963. This was, in fact, one of the projects on which Schmit began to work in February; he remembers that this was one of the first typing projects he finished in March or Apr., 1963. These typescripts were then sent to the printer, Becker, some time around the end Apr., 1963.

<sup>134</sup> Nam June Paik *Monthly Review of the University for Avant-Garde Hinduism*, Mar., 1963, np, AS.

<sup>135</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, May 26, 1963, GLS. Although Maciunas did not continue to produce this project, Paik continued this "post-music" project on his own.

<sup>136</sup> Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, p. 43.

<sup>137</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd [Aug., 1963], GLS.

<sup>138</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [late May or early June, 1963], GLS.

<sup>139</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, May 26, 1963, GLS.

<sup>140</sup> Personal interview with Tomas Schmit, Apr. 27, 1988.

<sup>141</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Daniel Spoerri, and Robert Filliou, nd, Jean and Leonard Brown Collection, GLS.

<sup>142</sup> It is hard to say if Maciunas would have been able to pull off a tour into Eastern Europe and the USSR even if he had not gotten sick. He tended to overestimate most situations, but it is also definitely the case that he was able to do some remarkable things on a very limited budget and with only minimal contacts.

<sup>143</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, AS. Maciunas's ill health was a continuing problem with a severe case of asthma and several other serious related problems. This condition was not new, for he had been rather sickly most of his life, but the severity of poor health had increased while he was in Europe.

<sup>144</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, AS.

<sup>145</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, AS.



<sup>146</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, AS.

<sup>147</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>148</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>149</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Daniel Spoerri, and Robert Filliou, nd [after May, 1963], JLB.

<sup>150</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Robert Watts, nd [ca. Mar., 1963], GLS.

<sup>151</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>152</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>153</sup> These "propaganda actions" for New York City were linked to the idea that Fluxus must go beyond just concerts of new music and become more socio-politically active. It is important to note, however, that these plans were primarily related to cultural practices and not specifically political in and of themselves.

<sup>154</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News-Policy Letter No. 6*, Apr. 6, 1963, np, AS.

<sup>155</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News-Policy Letter No. 6*, np, AS.

<sup>156</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News-Policy Letter No. 6*, np, AS.

<sup>157</sup> This list of activities included all of the kinds of performance activities that would be carried out under the name Fluxus up through 1978, even though many of the specific plans were abandoned or downplayed in 1963.

<sup>158</sup> Maciunas was particularly interested in these ideas of Spoerri because they were related to his wider conception of Fluxus activities. This was a kind of approach to creativity also related to Maciunas's and Spoerri's shared interest breaking down the boundaries between art and life.

<sup>159</sup> Jackson Mac Low, letter to George Maciunas, Apr. 25, 1963, AS.

<sup>160</sup> Mac Low, letter to George Maciunas, Apr. 25, 1963, AS.

<sup>161</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, Apr. 18, 1963, AS.

<sup>162</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd., JLB.

<sup>163</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, AS. This reference was made in particular to Jackson Mac Low and his letter to Maciunas, but the statement was also a reference to the general negative reaction of most of the American artists to the proposals contained in *News-Policy Letter No. 6*.

<sup>164</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>165</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News Letter No. 7*, May 1, 1963, np, AS. In this newsletter, Maciunas did not use "News-Policy" in the headline as he had with the previous one. This alteration may reflect some change in his thinking but probably not a major change because he had used the term News Letter before in "News Letter No. 5."

<sup>166</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News Letter No. 7*, May 1, 1963, np, AS.

<sup>167</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus News Letter No. 7*, May 1, 1963, np, AS.

<sup>168</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd [May, 1963], AS.

<sup>169</sup> Paik's interest in such actions was more directly connected to his own interest in attacking culture rather than as a form of political terrorism.

<sup>170</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>171</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>172</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>173</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>174</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>175</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>176</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>177</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>178</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>179</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>180</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>181</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS. In this long letter, Higgins describes the specific performances that took place during YAMDAY. His general reaction was that it was very disorganized and very disappointing. He states that even Brecht was quite unhappy with the performances.

<sup>182</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Nam June Paik, May 29, 1963, AS.

<sup>183</sup> George Maciunas, postcard to Emmett Williams, nd, AS. In the end, Williams was also unable to go to London for this performance, so only Schmit was there from the core group of Fluxus.

<sup>184</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. late May or early June, 1963], GLS.

<sup>185</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>186</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>187</sup> Tomas Schmit, who was at these festivals, stated that he did not remember there being any events or exhibits, other than Paik's "Piano for all Senses" exhibition and the one evening of Fluxus performances, but he also said that this was not a clear remembrance. Personal interview with Tomas Schmit, Apr. 27, 1988. The intended plans for this show were not realized because Williams, Spoerri, and Filliou were unable to participate in these festivals.

<sup>188</sup> Most of the usual performers who were still in Europe were not able to make it to this festival. In addition, Knowles and Higgins had returned to the U.S., and Vostell was not invited to participate.

<sup>189</sup> George Maciunas, postcard to Emmett Williams, nd [between June 28 and July 5, 1963], AS.

<sup>190</sup> Although this performance at Goldsmiths College has been listed numerous times in several secondary sources as being presented in 1964, it was actually presented in 1963.

<sup>191</sup> It is difficult to list this performance as a Fluxus festival like those in Copenhagen and Wiesbaden. Although a number of standard Fluxus works were presented and a member of Fluxus was there to oversee the performance of these pieces, this concert was not really a Fluxus concert because it was not the same kind of collective performance as at the other Fluxus festivals. Also, this festival was not advertised as a Fluxus festival.

<sup>192</sup> Tomas Schmit, notes on the presentations [for George Maciunas], nd, AS.

<sup>193</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>194</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Robert Filliou, and Daniel Spoerri, nd, JLB.

<sup>195</sup> Letter from George Maciunas to Emmett Williams, Daniel Spoerri, and Robert Filliou, nd, JLB.

<sup>196</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. late May, 1963], GLS.

<sup>197</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. late May, 1963], GLS.

<sup>198</sup> This was the first time that Maciunas did not personally design the Fluxus materials. Some of the other materials he did not design were later posters and announcements of Fluxus performances by Ben Vautier in Europe in the middle and later 1960s, the printed materials for Fluxus West, and some of Ken Friedman's other touring activities in the late 1960s.

<sup>199</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. late May, 1963], GLS.

<sup>200</sup> Program for the Fluxus and Total Art Festival in Nice, nd [July, 1963], np, AS.

<sup>201</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd [after July 29, 1963], JLB.

<sup>202</sup> "My Son," pp.10-11.

<sup>203</sup> Although some of these activities and performances in Europe after fall, 1963, are very much Fluxus presentations or at least in the Fluxus spirit, they will not be considered here, not because they are somehow less Fluxus or even less important, but they simply do not fit into the framework of this discussion because they did not directly involve Maciunas. Those events and activities in Europe that had a direct relationship to the development of Fluxus in the U.S., however, such as Willem de Ridder's European Mail-Order House, will be discussed in association with the related developments in the U.S. and Maciunas's similar activities.

<sup>204</sup> The first festival in Wiesbaden consisted of 14 concerts. Only five were presented in Copenhagen and Paris, Dusseldorf featured only two, and only one was presented in Amsterdam and The Hague.

<sup>205</sup> Although Maciunas had been thinking of adding street performances to the activities of the Fluxus festivals as early as the winter of 1962-63, this was the first occasion for such performances at a Fluxus festival.

## Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup>The interrelated aspects of Happenings, Fluxus, assemblage, New Dance, and Pop Art in New York in the late 1950s and early 1960s were acknowledged in a major exhibition, entitled "BLAM!: The explosion of Pop Art, Minimalism, and Performance 1958-1964," organized by Barbra Haskell in 1984. For more information on this subject, see the catalogue from this exhibition, Barbara Haskell *BLAM! The Explosion of Pop, Minimalism and Performance 1958-1964* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, in Association with W.W. Norton & Company, 1984).

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter Four for a discussion of these plans and their eventual cancellation.

<sup>3</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, nd [ca. April, 1963], AS.

<sup>4</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd [ca. April, 1963], AS.

<sup>5</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, May 5, 1963, GLS.

<sup>6</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, May 5, 1963, GLS.

<sup>7</sup>George Brecht, letter to Dick Higgins, Feb. 17, 1967, AS.

<sup>8</sup>Flynt felt that most of the American artists were committed to "careers as professional artists" even though their work was aesthetically radical at that time. In this same period (mid-1964), Maciunas and Flynt had an argument about politics and culture because Maciunas had told Flynt that the Soviet Union was not interested in his ideas on cultural policy. Thus, Flynt had no direct involvement with most of the Fluxus activities in 1963 and 1964, because he saw them as too aesthetically motivated and without a direct political or social component. Flynt agreed to participate in Maciunas's picket of "Originale" in Sep., 1964, not because it was related to Fluxus or his ideas but because Flynt also saw Stockhausen as a leading proponent of an elitist cultural ideology.

<sup>9</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Emmett Williams, July 30, 1963, AS.

<sup>10</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Emmett Williams, July 30, 1963, AS.

<sup>11</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, Sep. 16, 1963, AS. Although Higgins does not give a date for this first meeting, it was most likely held on Tuesday, Sep. 9, the week before Higgins wrote this letter.

<sup>12</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Al Hansen, nd, AS.

<sup>13</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>14</sup> George Maciunas to Emmett Williams, Oct., 1963, JLB.

<sup>15</sup> George Maciunas to Emmett Williams, Oct., 1963, JLB.

<sup>16</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, Nov. 11, 1963, AS.

<sup>17</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd, AS.

<sup>18</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, nd, AS. This performance, which has never before been mentioned in any of the histories of Fluxus, is further documented by notes on the back of a copy of Knowles's business card, listing the pieces performed in this concert as the "Program of First NYC Fluxus:" Polish—solo for 4 strings, Voice piece, Thanks 2, Govudry music, GeneralConstill, Brecht flowers, La Monte Y—lid, Maciunas Quartet (jack), Brecht shake hands, lecture #7, "Turn 180", Home on Range, Knowles "shuffle" out side. Performance notes [no author], nd, AS.

<sup>19</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>20</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, Sep. 16, 1963, AS.

<sup>21</sup> Although the reasons for this are not clear, this was in part a result of a lack of money to purchase the printing equipment. The other factor was that there had been a misunderstanding between Higgins and Maciunas, for he thought that Higgins was going to buy a press, while Higgins thought that Maciunas was going to buy one.

<sup>22</sup> Although all the details are not clear, it seems that this space was not to be the only space for Fluxus performances, but one of a number of such spaces. Maciunas set up this space, however, because several of the others that he had planned to utilize had not worked out.

<sup>23</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, nd, AS. The plans for a press for Fluxus, however, never materialized. Although the specific reasons for this are not clear, this resulted in part from a lack of money to purchase the printing equipment. The other factor was a misunderstanding

between Higgins and Maciunas, for the latter thought the former was going to buy a press, and vice versa.

<sup>24</sup> George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.

<sup>25</sup> George Maciunas, postcard to George Brecht, Sep. 25, 1963, AS.

<sup>26</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Philip Kaplan, Nov. 17, 1963, GLS. This letter is reproduced in part in *Fluxus Codex*, p. 108

<sup>27</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Philip Kaplan, Nov. 17, 1963, GLS.

<sup>28</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Philip Kaplan, Nov. 17, 1963, GLS.

<sup>29</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, Dec. 7, 1963, AS.

<sup>30</sup> George Maciunas, letter to George Brecht, nd, AS.

<sup>31</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, Jan. 30, 1964, AS.

<sup>32</sup> George Maciunas, letter to George Brecht, nd, AS.

<sup>33</sup> George Maciunas, letter to George Brecht, nd, AS.

<sup>34</sup> The full membership of this Fluxus Editorial Council was Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, George Brecht, and George Maciunas.

<sup>35</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, Jan. 30, 1964, AS.

<sup>36</sup> Tomas Schmit, letter to George Maciunas, nd, GLS.

<sup>37</sup> For more information on the contents of this second issue of the Fluxus newspaper (*cc V TRE* No. 2), see *Fluxus Codex*, p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, Jan. 30, 1964, AA.

<sup>39</sup> As early as Sep. 16, 1963, Higgins wrote to Vostell that "Patterson, as with everything, did not want to come, just to do his own pieces. Personally I am very close to Ben. I see him often. But he does not have any concept at all of collectivity. This is understandable in situations like your own: most of your pieces are philosophical manifestations that require only yourself. But why should I perform Patterson who won't perform me? Hansen and Brecht seem to feel the same way." (AS).

<sup>40</sup> Williams had organized a performance in 1963 after Maciunas had left Europe. Spoerri was supposed to help with this performance, but instead, as Williams told Maciunas in a letter on Oct. 15, 1963 (JLB), Spoerri "... showed up the morning of the big day for the only rehearsal in the museum auditorium, he announced that he was a professional and wanted not to be mixed up in 'one of these fluxus affairs.' i requested him to leave, because his presence was demoralizing me and my performers . . ."

<sup>41</sup> This feeling was in particular linked to what several people thought was the failure of the Yam Festival, which they blamed in part on Watts. The other reason that this feeling existed toward Watts was that several people thought he was not politically motivated enough and thus not serious.

<sup>42</sup> With regards to the idea of the collective nature of Fluxus, Ken Friedman noted in a letter to the author (June 23, 1991) that "There is a dispute on the issue of whether Fluxus was ever a 'collective,' — if it was — what the term 'collective' meant. No one seems ever to have agreed to the idea of an anonymous, communist collective with all property (copyrights, etc.) held in common. That was simply George's idea."

<sup>43</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, AS.

<sup>44</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, Feb. 21, 1964, AS.

<sup>45</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, post-dated Feb. 1, 1964, JLB.

<sup>46</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, Feb. 21, 1964, AS.

<sup>47</sup> The lower-case letters in this list are the author designations that Maciunas used in this period of Fluxus production.

<sup>48</sup> Some of the works listed in this photo were not actually ready for distribution at the time the photo was taken. Most notable was *Fluxus I*, which was not completed until several months later, although a box cover for *Fluxus I* is visible in the photograph.

<sup>49</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Apr. 2, 1964, JLB.

<sup>50</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Apr. 2, 1964, JLB.



<sup>51</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Apr. 2, 1964, JLB.

<sup>52</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, Apr. 2, 1964, JLB.

<sup>53</sup> This was not the first Fluxus performance in the United States (which was the short performance at the meeting of the American Association of Perfumers, in autumn, 1963), but it was the first concert series in the United States.

<sup>54</sup> For more information on this work, see *Fluxus Codex*, p. 190.

<sup>55</sup> With the exception of the weekend of the first concert on Apr. 11 and the last concert on May 23, all the concerts were scheduled to be held on consecutive Fridays and Saturdays. Most were listed as consisting of a Friday concert of a single work, such as Watts's "KKK Trace" on Apr. 17, and a concert of a number of works by various artists the following Saturday.

<sup>56</sup> George Maciunas, *FLUXFEST SALE*, nd, the author's collection.

<sup>57</sup> Although humor was illustrated in a number of earlier Fluxus works as well, it most often tended to be one of a number of intertwined components and did not tend to shape the works in a primary way. The humor in Brecht's "Quartet" (the performers shook hands) was more ironic, whereas in works like Watts's "KKK Trace" the humor was gag-like without the more subtle overtones of Brecht's work.

<sup>58</sup> According to a letter from Maciunas to Schmit, the former had at least some of the material for this book as early as May, 1963. George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, between May 15-26, 1963, GLS.

<sup>59</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Tjeena Deelstra, Mar. 13, 1967, AS. This event has been retold many times, but in most of these re-tellings the initial name for Higgins's new press has been given as "Shirtsleeves Press." This version, however, seems to be more correct. It is most likely that, given Higgins's frustration with Maciunas's inability to get much of the material published, and Maciunas's increasing move away from more traditional kinds of publications, as had been originally planned in 1962 and 1963, the name "Original Fluxus" was Higgins's first choice for his press.

<sup>60</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to Tjeena Deelstra, Mar. 13, 1967, AS.

<sup>61</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, June 12, 1964, GLS.

<sup>62</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Bob Watts, nd [prior to Mar. 11, 1963], a photocopy of the original letter is in the AS [there is no indication on this photocopy as to the present owner].

<sup>63</sup>*Fluxus Codex*, p. 76.

<sup>64</sup>Letty Lou Eisenhauer, "Transformations from Nature: Letty Lou Eisenhauer Discusses the Work of Bob Watts," *Art and Artists*, 8 (Nov., 1973), p. 23.

<sup>65</sup>Although Maciunas wrote to Vautier that he was sending him and de Ridder Fluxkits as early as the end of July, 1964, Vautier did not actually receive one until 1965. Whether or not de Ridder received a Fluxkit earlier than this is not clear. He did receive one at least by the end of 1964 or the beginning of 1965 when a photo was taken of it with Dorothea Meijer.

<sup>66</sup>The specific contents of each Fluxkit varied, depending on when it was made. They generally included copies of published material, such as the Fluxus newspaper (*cc V TRE*), Young's *Composition 1961* and *An Anthology*, Brecht's *Iced Dice*, and numerous individual works in boxes, such as Brecht's *Water Yam*, Watts's *Rocks Marked by Weight*, Kosugi's *Events*, Kubota's *Fluxmedicine*, and various other objects, such as Knowles's *Canned Bean Rolls*, Vautier's *Dirty Water*, and Maciunas's *Mysterious Animal*.

<sup>67</sup>The organization of this concert was not an easy task for Maciunas, but it does seem to have been smoother than that for the European festivals and the previous New York concert series. The primary tasks for setting up this presentation after the hall had been reserved were developing the works to be presented, determining the specific works for the concert, getting the needed performers, and advertising the concert.

<sup>68</sup>Because most of the performers had not performed in a Fluxus concert and some of the works were new or new versions of older pieces, this concert was rehearsed just prior to the evening performance.

<sup>69</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd, JLB.

<sup>70</sup>Jill Johnson, "Fluxus Fuxus," *Village Voice*, July 2, 1964, p. 7.

<sup>71</sup>Chieko (Mieko) Shiomi, *Events and Games* (New York: Fluxus, nd [ca. 1964]), np.

<sup>72</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Emmett Williams, nd [late June or early July, 1964], JLB.

<sup>73</sup>This list was compiled from the various other lists that Maciunas had published in the first several issues of the Fluxus newspapers.

<sup>74</sup>Lydia M. Luyten, open letter to artists, July, 1964, GLS. This letter is quoted in *Fluxus Codex*, p. 236.

<sup>75</sup>As an outgrowth of this new relationship, in the spring, 1965, Maciunas asked de Ridder to take charge of the plans for a European Fluxus publication. Initially, Maciunas asked him to edit and prepare an anthology for northern Europe, but this was later expanded to all of western Europe. Maciunas turned the materials that he had originally collected and printed for Fluxus No. 2 West European Yearbox over to de Ridder for this proposed "European Fluxus" anthology. In order to expand this group of materials, de Ridder sent out a letter to a number of artists requesting additional items for inclusion. The project, however, as with many of the proposed Fluxus projects, was never produced.

<sup>76</sup>Throughout summer, 1964, Maciunas continued to work on several other projects. Some of the works produced by Fluxus for the first time were Shiomí's *Water Music*, Vautier's *Flux Holes*, Brecht's *Games & Puzzles/Ball Puzzle*, Maciunas's *Fresh Goods from the East*, Patterson's *Instruction #2*, Watts's *Dollar Bill and Finger Print*, Paik's *Zen for Film*, and Higgins's *Canyons and Boulders*. During this time, several other works, such as Patterson's *Instruction #1* and James Riddle's *Mind Event in a Bottle*, were distributed by Fluxus even though they were not made or packaged by Maciunas. Some of these works may have been made by Maciunas at the end of spring, 1964, but it is more likely that the majority were not finished (in anything other than just prototype forms) until July at the earliest. For more information on these individual pieces, see the relevant sections in *Fluxus Codex*.

<sup>77</sup>George Maciunas, correspondence notes, nd, AS.

<sup>78</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Robert Watts, nd, AS.

<sup>79</sup>Because of this association between Flynt and Maciunas, it has often been suggested that Maciunas set up the picket against "Originale" as a result of being influenced by Flynt. It is clear from *Fluxus News Policy Letter No. 6* that Maciunas thought confrontational tactics, such picketing, were appropriate and necessary. For these reasons, this second demonstration against Stockhausen was less a result of Flynt's influence than Maciunas's long-standing dislike of Stockhausen.

<sup>80</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, July 21, 1964, GLS.

<sup>81</sup>Flynt said that Ben Vautier was also one of the picketers and that Allen Ginsberg was allowed to take "a turn in the line." Ben Vautier, though, was not in New York at this time. He had taken part in the first demonstration in Apr., 1964, and it is probably this event that Flynt was remembering.

<sup>82</sup>Harold Schonberg, *New York Times*, Sep. 9, 1964.

<sup>83</sup>"Picket Stockhausen Concert!" [leaflet], 1964, AS.

<sup>84</sup>George Maciunas, correspondence note on letter sent to Brecht, Aug. 28, 1965, AS.

<sup>85</sup>Even though Moorman had performed in the Fluxus Orchestra concert as one of the musicians and was soon to become Paik's collaborator, Maciunas felt that she did not share the collective attitude of Fluxus and thus was not part of the group.

<sup>86</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, postmarked Mar. 3, 1962, AS.

<sup>87</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Wolf Vostell, Aug. 16, 1964, AS.

<sup>88</sup>In actuality, Flynt was the most politically committed artist associated with Fluxus, but he did not see himself as a part of the group, in part because many of the other artists saw him as too political and too radical. Consequently, he was only peripherally involved and never took an active part in most Fluxus-sponsored activities.

<sup>89</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, Oct. 10, 1964, AS.

<sup>90</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Anne Wehrer, Jan. 11, 1965. AS. What Higgins was referring to when he states that Maciunas "named" Watts as the new chairman of Fluxus was that Maciunas simply appointed Watts to take over the organizational duties that he had been performing.

<sup>91</sup>It is possible that Maciunas was actually organizing this festival for Watts as well and that the perpetual festival was abandoned when Maciunas left New York City in December, about the same time that this festival ended.

<sup>92</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Tomas Schmit, Nov. 27, 1964, AS.

<sup>93</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Anne Wehrer, Jan. 11, 1965, AS.

<sup>94</sup>This trip to Arizona was not a new idea for Maciunas. As early as fall, 1963, he had mentioned in several letters that he might have to go to Arizona or some other dry climate as a result of his lung problems. The fact that he chose to go there at this time is interesting in that this trip thus became a way for him literally and figuratively to distance himself from the problems and tensions in New York.

<sup>95</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd, AS.

## Chapter Six

<sup>1</sup>There were some Fluxus performances in this period, such as the "A Paper Event by the Fluxmasters of the Rear-Garde" (New York City, Nov. 15, 1967) and the second "Fluxorchestra" performance (Carnegie Recital Hall, Sep. 25, 1965). In the three years of the proto-Fluxus and early Fluxus phases, there were over 35 performances and festivals. In the six years of the middle phase, however, there were just over ten performances in the United States. Also, a number of performances were presented by Fluxus West in and around the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and San Diego in the late 1960s. In Europe, Fluxus still maintained more of a performance emphasis. There were at least 20 more presentations of Fluxus event and action music concerts in Europe, a large number of which were organized by Ben Vautier.

<sup>2</sup>George Maciunas, "Fluxus Broadside Manifesto" (New York: Fluxus, [nd ca. 1965]), GLS.

<sup>3</sup>According to Barbara Moore (a participant in many American Fluxus activities and a subsequent Fluxus scholar), Brecht left the United States some time in late April (after the 20th), 1965. Personal interview with Barbara Moore, Dec. 5, 1990.

<sup>4</sup>This is a supposition on my part based on the following factors. It is known that Maciunas had produced some complete copies of *Fluxus I* possibly as early as summer, 1964, when he sent one to de Ridder in the Netherlands. According to Barbara Moore, the first documentable copy of *Fluxus I* was produced in fall, 1964, about the time that Maciunas applied for a copyright on October 2. At this time, however, he had not produced more than a few copies. In fact, multiple copies did not appear until after his return from Arizona in February, 1965, when he sent several copies to a number of people. While Maciunas was in Arizona, he sent letters to several artists, most notably to Ben Vautier, about the assembly of *Fluxus I*.

<sup>5</sup>The first mention by Maciunas of using bolts as a binding mechanism was in 1961, but not in reference to *Fluxus I*. In a letter to La Monte Young in fall, 1961 (now in the Silverman Fluxus Collection), Maciunas suggested that *An Anthology* might be bound with bolts. Several people have suggested that his use of the bolts is indebted to Fortunato Depero's 1927 book *Depero Futurista*. Maciunas had studied Futurism in an art-history class at NYU, but there is no documentary evidence that he knew about the Depero book. Up until March, 1965, Maciunas had always referred to *Fluxus I* in advertisements as having a "loose leaf binding." The first mention of *Fluxus I* being bound was not until after the beginning of 1965. The first public mention of *Fluxus I* being bound with bolts was not until *Vacuum TRapEzoid (Fluxus Newspaper No. 5)* in Mar., 1965.

<sup>6</sup>The combination of the two proposed versions is mentioned by Maciunas in a letter to de Ridder, Jan. 21, 1965, GLS.

<sup>7</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 25, 1965, GLS. In this quote, Maciunas is referring to the accordion-folded group of monogram cards. For some reason he called the accordion fold a "harmonica."

<sup>8</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Willem de Ridder, Jan. 21, 1965, GLS. Maciunas never used the plastic boxes for *Fluxus I* that he used for the other works. He used these "little crates" not because they were "hand-made" but, because they were similar to mundane packing crates.

<sup>9</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 25, 1965, GLS.

<sup>10</sup>For more information on the specific contents of *Fluxus I*, see *Fluxus Codex*, p. 110.

<sup>11</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Feb. 1, 1965, GLS.

<sup>12</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Feb. 1, 1965, GLS.

<sup>13</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 25, 1965, GLS.

<sup>14</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 25, 1965, GLS.

<sup>15</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 25, 1965, GLS.

<sup>16</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Bob Watts, Jan. 21, 1965, GLS.

<sup>17</sup> Maciunas's interest in film was also related to his close association with Jonas Mekas. In the early 1960s, Maciunas designed a brochure for a film by Adolfas and Jonas Mekas. Mekas was also listed as a contributor to several of the Fluxus Yearbooks. In the middle 60s, Maciunas also designed several issues of *Film Culture*, which Mekas edited, and was involved with Mekas designing the space for Anthology Film Archives.

<sup>18</sup> George Maciunas, correspondence notes with Stan van der Beek, nd, AS.

<sup>19</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Bob Watts, nd [ca. Mar., 1963], GLS.

<sup>20</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus Newsletter*, nd [ca. Mar., 1965], GLS. This is also reproduced in *Fluxus Codex*, p. 122.

<sup>21</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus Newsletter*, nd, GLS.

<sup>22</sup> The fifth issue of the *Fluxus Newspaper* is dated March, 1965, but there is a possibility that it was not actually issued until late May. In a letter to Ben Vautier dated May 11, 1965 (GLS), Maciunas states that a new Fluxus Newspaper will be coming out in two weeks with a new price list. The only two issues of the *Fluxus Newspaper* that are close to this date are 5 (March) and 6 (July). Of these two, only the earlier contains a price list. There are two primary possibilities to account for this. Maciunas either intended to produce an issue in May or June that he never did, or the issue dated March, 1965, did not really come out until May or June.

<sup>23</sup> It is not known to what extent Kubota was involved in the eventual production of this issue or if she paid for its publication, as Maciunas had previously told Ben Vautier.

<sup>24</sup> Letter from George Maciunas to Bob Watts, Jan. 21, 1965, GLS. These stamps were printed by Jan., 1965.

<sup>25</sup> For more information on these chess sets, see *Fluxus Codex*, pp.455-61.

<sup>26</sup> For more information on these pieces, see the relevant sections of *Fluxus Codex*.

<sup>27</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 25, 1965, GLS.

<sup>28</sup> The date of the Vautier performance is somewhat in question, but it seems that it was presented on July 18 as a replacement for the performance by Lieberman originally scheduled on this date.

<sup>29</sup> Although Maciunas lists these two photos as being of the "Fluxfest in Hague," they are in fact photos of a performance entitled "Flux Festival" held in Scheveningen on Nov. 13, 1964.

<sup>30</sup> The high costs of duplicating the various film loops for *Fluxus 2* delayed its completion and issuing until late in 1967 or possibly early 1968.

<sup>31</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [summer, 1965], GLS.

<sup>32</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [summer, 1965], GLS. By the time that Maciunas had written this letter, he had also developed a program of the works to be presented in part in the concert. This was not the final list as he was still soliciting new pieces from various artists. A provisional list was sent by Maciunas to Ben Vautier in summer, 1965, with a request for other pieces. An identifiable copy of this first list of works, however, has not been located.

<sup>33</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [summer, 1965], GLS. Although Maciunas never published Barbara Moore's cookbook, Moore did so herself in the mid-80s; it was entitled *Cookpot*.

<sup>34</sup> George Maciunas, "Conditions for Performing Fluxus Published Compositions, Films & Tapes", nd, AS.

<sup>35</sup> George Maciunas, "Conditions for Performing Fluxus Published Compositions, Films & Tapes", nd, AS.

<sup>36</sup> George Maciunas, "Conditions for Performing Fluxus Published Compositions, Films & Tapes", nd, AS.

<sup>37</sup> George Maciunas, "Some Hysterical Outbursts . . .", nd, AS.

<sup>38</sup> George Maciunas, "Fluxorchestra Circular No. 2," nd, np, GLS. This is reproduced in *Fluxus etc / Addenda I*, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, New York: Ink &, 1983, p. 160.

<sup>39</sup> Richard O' Regan, "There's Music—and Eggs—in the Air," *Stars and Stripes*, Oct. 21, 1962, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> It is possible that this environment was originally listed as Ay-O's presentation for the second Perpetual Fluxfest.

<sup>41</sup> For information on these specific works, see the relevant sections of the *Fluxus Codex*.



<sup>42</sup> Although Fluxus works by both of these artists were produced in the middle 1960s, Maciunas's planned "Complete Works" publications by them were never realized.

<sup>43</sup> Several other of the card sets that had been initially planned as Fluxus editions, such as those by Watts, Filliou, Jeff Berner, and Rubota, were later planned to be manufactured by Implosions for Fluxus. Although they were never produced, prototypes of some of these card sets and/or labels still exist, several of which are now in the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.

<sup>44</sup> George Maciunas, "Fluxus Broadside Manifesto," (New York: Fluxus, nd [ca. 1965]), GLS.

<sup>45</sup> This piece was originally entitled "29 Variations on a Meal," but it was expanded to 31.

<sup>46</sup> Several other of these original meal variations, by Spoerri himself, Kirby, and "a famous model," were developed, but there is no documentation that any of these others were produced by Fluxus.

<sup>47</sup> *Vaseline sTREet* (*Fluxus Newspaper No.8*) May, 1966, np.

<sup>48</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Paul Sharits, nd [ca. fall, 1966], GLS. This letter is also reproduced in part in *Fluxus Codex*, p. 71.

<sup>49</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxus Newsletter*, nd [ca. Mar., 1965], GLS. This newsletter is reproduced in part in *Fluxus Codex*, pp. 122-23.

<sup>50</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 29, 1966, GLS.

<sup>51</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Milan Knizak, May 19, 1966, GLS.

<sup>52</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 29, 1966, GLS.

<sup>53</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 29, 1966, GLS.

<sup>54</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 29, 1966 GLS.

<sup>55</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, May 19, 1966, GLS.

<sup>56</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 26, 1966, GLS.

<sup>57</sup> George Macionas, letter to Ben Vautier, May 19, 1966, GLS.

<sup>58</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, May 19, 1966, GLS.

<sup>59</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 5, 1966, GLS.

<sup>60</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 29, 1966, GLS.

<sup>61</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Mar. 29, 1966, GLS.

<sup>62</sup> By the end of summer, 1966, this list was expanded even further to include several films by Paul Sharits and one by Wolf Vostell.

<sup>63</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ken Friedman, Nov. 14, 1966, GLS.

<sup>64</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 10, 1966, GLS.

<sup>65</sup> This group consisted of three artists. The name for the group was taken from the meaning of each of their names: Takamatsu = Hi; Akasegawa = Red; Nakawishi = Center.

<sup>66</sup> George Maciunas, "Proposed Program for a Fluxfest in Prague, 1966," 1966, p. 7, AS.

<sup>67</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. fall, 1966], GLS.

<sup>68</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. fall, 1966], GLS.

<sup>69</sup> In early 1966, Maciunas wrote to Ben Vautier that there was to be another Fluxorchestra concert in spring and a snow-event at either Bob Watts' place or in New York. He also mentioned that he planned to construct a bicycle for 100 people and ride it up Fifth Avenue in New York. George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Jan. 10, 1966, GLS.

<sup>70</sup> A statement like this is potentially dangerous for it seems to possess a value judgment, but this is not my intention. From this group of artists, it was Ken Friedman and Paul Sharits who would be the most directly involved with Fluxus activities and the making of works for production by Fluxus.

<sup>71</sup> For more information on Paul Sharits' ideas and Fluxus works, see *Fluxus Codex*, pp. 467-74.

<sup>72</sup> Although Friedman was quite young (16) when he joined Fluxus in 1966, he immediately became one of the more active members. As a result, in the next Fluxnewsletter, there was a section devoted to the activities of Friedman and Fluxus West. Even though there were a large

number of events and performances on the West Coast, many of which were organized by Friedman, they will not be covered here in detail. This history of Fluxus dealt with here is not *the* history but *a* history of Fluxus. Karen Moss recently completed a dissertation at USC on West Coast art and Fluxus.

<sup>73</sup>Peter Frank, "Fluxus in New York," *Lightworks*, 11/12 (fall, 1979), p. 36.

<sup>74</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Milan Knizak, May 19, 1966, GLS.

<sup>75</sup>Maciunas wrote to Brecht on Jan. 24, 1966, that "... Fluxus people are being invited to Prague ... to organize a FLUX FEST there ... Event planned for mid march ... without my participation). Would you be interested to go there? to organize the whole series & be in charge of programming like the Yam fest ??" AS.

<sup>76</sup>As late as the end of Sep., 1966, Maciunas still planned to travel to Europe in 1967, but his increasing involvement with the development of Fluxhouses and his lack of money eventually made this trip an impossibility.

<sup>77</sup>In Sep., 1966, Maciunas sent Knizak a long proposed program for the Fluxfest that included a Fluxorchestra concert and three other musical concerts, a Fluxfilm program, a Fluxsports event, a Fluxclinic, and a series of street events. The eventual concerts took place on two evenings in the middle of October and were performed by Ben Vautier, Jeff Berner, Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins and Serge Oldenbourg.

<sup>78</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Aug. 7, 1966, GLS.

<sup>79</sup>The specifics of these plans are described in the " [Loft Building Co-operative] Newsletter No. 2," GLS. This is reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (New York: INK &, 1983), p. 171.

<sup>80</sup>George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, March 8, 1967, pp. 3-4, reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, pp. 174-75.

<sup>81</sup>George Maciunas *Fluxnewsletter*, March 8, 1967, p. 3, reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, p. 174.

<sup>82</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. Oct., 1966], GLS.

<sup>83</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. Oct., 1966], GLS.

<sup>84</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, March 8, 1967, p. 3., reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, p. 174.

<sup>85</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, March 8, 1967, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> At this same time, the activities of Friedman and FLUX-WEST on the West Coast, and even into the Midwest, increased significantly.

<sup>87</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. Mar., 1967], GLS.

<sup>88</sup> George Maciunas "Fluxfest Sale," New York: Fluxus, 1967, p. 1

<sup>89</sup> This text is reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, p. 158.

<sup>90</sup> George Maciunas, "Fluxfest Sale," p. 2

<sup>91</sup> George Maciunas, "Fluxus (Its Historical Development and Relationship to Avant-Garde Movements)," New York: Fluxus, 1966. This publication is reproduced in *Fluxus Codex*, p. 350.

<sup>92</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, December 2, 1968 (revised March 15, 1969), p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> George Maciunas, "Introduction to Diagram," "Fluxfest Sale," p. 2.

<sup>94</sup> George Maciunas, "Introduction to Diagram," p. 2.

<sup>95</sup> George Maciunas, "Introduction to Diagram," p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> George Maciunas, "Introduction to Diagram," p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> George Maciunas, "Fluxus (Its Historical Development and Relationship to Avant-Garde Movements)," np, AS.

<sup>98</sup> Ken Friedman remembered that when he went to see Maciunas in 1966, on the recommendation of Dick Higgins, Maciunas gave him a copy of this single-sided one-page publication, and Friedman "... brought it back to show Dick, without even realizing what it was. Dick and Alison were non-plussed and a bit pissed because George had never bothered to send them a copy." Ken Friedman, letter to the author, June 23, 1991.

<sup>99</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, Aug. 17, 1966, AS.

<sup>100</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. Oct., 1966], GLS.

- <sup>101</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, Aug. 23, 1966, AS.
- <sup>102</sup> Dick Higgins, letter to George Maciunas, Aug. 23, 1966, AS.
- <sup>103</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, nd [ca. Oct., 1966], GLS.
- <sup>104</sup> George Maciunas, "Introduction to Diagram," p. 2.
- <sup>105</sup> The specific developments of the various Fluxhouse Co-operative projects will not be dealt with in detail in this study. This topic is a large and important one, but a separate consideration is needed. There is a considerable amount of material on these projects contained in the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection.
- <sup>106</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, January 31, 1968, 1968, p. 2. This publication is reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, pp. 180-88.
- <sup>107</sup> George Maciunas and Robert Watts, "Proposal [for the Greene Street Precinct, Inc.]," nd, np, GLS. This proposal is reproduced in *FLUXUS, etc. / Addenda I*, pp. 177-79.
- <sup>108</sup> George Maciunas and Robert Watts, "Proposal [for the Greene Street Precinct, Inc.]," nd, np, GLS.
- <sup>109</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, January 31, 1968, p. 2. GLS.
- <sup>110</sup> When the collective work "Flux Post Kit 7" was eventually issued both of these stamps were included.
- <sup>111</sup> Although Maciunas had most of the materials for this publication in early 1966, he added new material, such as Friedman's *A Flux Corsage* and P. Sharits' *Flux Music*, to it throughout 1966 and 1967. Thus, this work evolved until it was finally distributed.
- <sup>112</sup> The issue date of the first few copies of *Flux Year Box 2* is not known, but it was either late in 1967 or early in 1968. According to Dr. Hans Sohm, Maciunas had told him that he had finished the first few copies in 1967, but Dr. Sohm did not receive a copy of this publication until 1968. Personal interview with Dr. Hans Sohm, Nov. 14, 1987.
- <sup>113</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, January 31, 1968, p. 2. This work has often been considered a Fluxus work and not necessarily one produced by Implosions. This confusion comes from the rather nebulous relationship between Fluxus and Implosions. The cards are printed with "by Fluxus, division of Implosions, Inc.," and even though Maciunas lists

this work as produced by Implosions, it is by Fluxus *and* Implosions. The cards were created by Filliou, Spoerri, and others by manipulating the drawings of the cartoonist Roland Topor and combining them with photographs by Vera Spoerri. For more information on these cards, see *Fluxus Codex*, p. 246.

<sup>114</sup> Initially, there were to be two performances, on Nov. 15 and 29, but only the first was presented.

<sup>115</sup> George Maciunas, "Paper Concert by the Fluxmasters of the Rear-Garde" [program notes], nd, p. 1, AS.

<sup>116</sup> Maciunas also produced one other collective work for this performance. This was a paper envelope that contained five works on paper handed out to the audience members. This piece contained *fluxsound* by P. Sharits, *E.S.P. Flux-kit* by Riddle, *Fluxgame* by de Ridder, *Flux-game* by Vautier, and *disappearing flux-music for envelopes* by Shiomi.

<sup>117</sup> Personal interview with Barbara Moore, Dec. 5, 1990.

<sup>118</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, Jan. 31, 1968, p. 1, GLS.

<sup>119</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, Jan. 31, 1968, p. 1, GLS.

<sup>120</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, Jan. 31, 1968, p. 2, GLS. Ken Friedman in a letter to the author stated that there were in fact three different Fluxmobiles (all were Volkswagen buses), the first purchased in 1967, the second in 1970, and the third was given to him by his father in 1979 when the second Fluxmobile was destroyed in a collision. Ken Friedman's letter to the author, June 23, 1991.

<sup>121</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, Jan. 31, 1968, p. 2, GLS..

<sup>122</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, Dec. 2, 1968 (*Revised Mar. 15, 1969*), p. 1. This newsletter is reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, p. 198.

<sup>123</sup> It is not clear what happened, but Maciunas never realized this project for an amusement center and Fluxshop at 18 Mercer Street.

<sup>124</sup> A number of the materials that Maciunas issued for this Finger Island project are reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, pp. 197 and 206-14. Another reason has often been given for the eventual cancellation of this project, that the owner died on the day the sale was to be finalized, and the heirs did not want to sell the island at the agreed-upon price.

<sup>125</sup> There was also a Fluxus exhibition at the University Art Gallery and a Fluxconcert at the University of California, San Diego, in 1968 that were put on with the assistance of Bob Watts.

<sup>126</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd [ca. Jan., 1964], GLS.

## Chapter Seven

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the early 1970s, Maciunas also continued to work on the various Fluxhouse cooperatives and other related housing projects.

<sup>2</sup> George Maciunas, *Flux Newsletter Jan. 8, 1970*, p. 1, Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart. This newsletter is also reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, p. 229.

<sup>3</sup> George Maciunas, *Flux Newsletter Jan. 8, 1970*, p.1, Archiv Sohm, Staatgalerie, Stuttgart.

<sup>4</sup> For specific list of the people involved in this event, the foods prepared, and the works performed, see the insert for the Fluxus Newspaper No.8 all photographs copyright nineteen seVenty by peTer MooRE, Fluxus, 1970, np and *Flux Newsletter Jan. 8, 1970*, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Geoff Hendricks, "Fluxrites," 1962 Wiesbaden *FLUXUS 1982*, p. 151.

<sup>6</sup> Geoff Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 151.

<sup>7</sup> Maciunas had made plans for several such Fluxfestivals. The most complete of these plans were for the unrealized Fluxfestival at Stony Brook, which had included a Fluxolympiad and exhibition as well as other activities.

<sup>8</sup> Geoff Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> George Maciunas, "Call for Ideas: Flux Church," nd [ca. late 1969 or early 1970], np, AS.

<sup>10</sup> This outline was sent out to some of the people associated with Fluxus with the *Fluxnewsletter* dated Jan. 8th.

<sup>11</sup> Geoff Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 151. The chaplain was more than just infuriated, but the nature of the Fluxmass and as a result of the humorous but rather blasphemous nature of the event was such that the chapel had to be reconsecrated after the performance.

<sup>12</sup>George Maciunas, insert for *John Yoko & Flux no. 8 all photographs copyright nineteen seVenty by peTer mooRE*, np, collection of the author.

<sup>13</sup>George Maciunas, note on performances for "Fluxfestival Presentation of John & Yoko Ono," np, AS. This was also related to the agreement that Maciunas had made with Ono to produce a number of her works, which she would in turn pay for, such as the exhibition and the works in Ono's 1971 show at the Everson Museum in Syracuse.

<sup>14</sup>The list of Fluxchefs for this meal consisted of Bici and Geoff Hendricks, Hala Pietkiewicz, George Maciunas, and others.

<sup>15</sup>This observation is reinforced by the fact that Maciunas referred to this event in the release as "Clinic by Yoko Ono + High Red Center."

<sup>16</sup>For specific information on what was included in this exhibition, see the listings in the insert for *John Yoko & Flux no. 8 all photographs copy-right nineteen seVenty by peTer mooRE*.

<sup>17</sup>Maciunas referred to projects for film environments in the *Fluxus Newsletters* from 1967 and 1968.

<sup>18</sup>Although I have not been able to determine the extent to which the plans for this were developed, it seems that this part of this festival was never fully realized.

<sup>19</sup>This basic idea was later expanded by Maciunas for his *Fluxlabrynth* exhibited in Berlin in 1976.

<sup>20</sup>In the late phase of Fluxus, there are also performances that are clearly more related to this earlier approach of non-traditional work in a traditional art matrix. An example would be the two Flux-harpsichord concerts performed in 1975 and 1976.

<sup>21</sup>The first of these collections was *Fluxfest Sale* published in 1967.

<sup>22</sup>The specific works that Maciunas lists as being produced in the last version of his Flux history chart included four pieces by himself, four by Reynolds, and one by Hendricks.

<sup>23</sup>In this period, there was, however, a very important series of performances and exhibitions held at various locations in England under the name Fluxshoe, and a number of individuals (who were then associated with Fluxus) were active.



<sup>24</sup> Even this performance was more the work of Geoff and Bici Hendricks than Maciunas. Some would argue that the exhibition of Yoko Ono's and John Lennon's works "This is not Here" at the Everson Museum should also be considered a major Fluxus event in 1971. This position is partially substantiated by the involvement of several associates of Fluxus and because of Maciunas's involvement in this project. This exhibition will not be considered here; even though was generally related to Fluxus, it was not really a main part of the historical development of Fluxus. The other possible addition to the list of Fluxus presentations in 1971 and 1972 with which Maciunas was involved (although it was not presented in the U. S.) would be the traveling exhibition called "Fluxshoe" that toured England in 1972 and 1973. This exhibition, organized by David Mayor, Felipe Ehrenberg, and others, also included a number of performances and other "live" presentations. For more information, see *FLUXSHOE ADD END A* (Exeter: Beau Geste Press, 1973). These presentations are just two of a much larger number of performances and events considered here but were part of a much broader view of international Fluxus.

<sup>25</sup> Geoff Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 151.

<sup>26</sup> Geoff Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 153.

<sup>27</sup> The "Flux Divorce Album" consisted of a number of photos of the original event by Peter Moore that have been altered, a text, and relics from the event. This work was made by Geoff Hendricks in a very small edition and offered for sale through Fluxus.

<sup>28</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Giancarlo Politi, nd, reproduced in *Fluxnewsletter*, April 1973 (Fluxus: 1973), np.

<sup>29</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, April 1973, np.

<sup>30</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, April 1973, np.

<sup>31</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, April 1973, np.

<sup>32</sup> For more information on the specific contents of "Fluxpack 3," see *Fluxus Codex*, p. 127

<sup>33</sup> Although this project was initially developed with Giancarlo Politi and *Flash Art*, it was eventually taken over by Gino Di Maggio, the publisher of *Multhipla*. How this change came to pass, however, is not clear.

<sup>34</sup>This delay in the assembly of *Fluxpack 3* might be connected to the switch from *Flash Art* to the Italian publishing company Multhipla, although the reason for the delay and lack of distribution is not known.

<sup>35</sup>For a list of these works, see George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, April 1973, np.

<sup>36</sup>George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, April 1973, np.

<sup>37</sup>The flyer for the "Flux Vehicle Day" was produced at least in part as an attempt to advertise the event and to get more people to come with their bicycles to participate in the creation of a multi-tandem bike.

<sup>38</sup>George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter* May 5, 1975, np. This newsletter is reproduced in *Fluxus etc. / Addenda I*, p. 244.

<sup>39</sup>George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter* May 5, 1975, np.

<sup>40</sup>The only two new documentable Fluxus pieces produced by Maciunas in this period were Brecht's *Universal Machine III*, which was a reissue of a work by Brecht previously produced as a multiple by Edition Mat Mot in 1965, and Larry Miller's *Orifice Flux Plugs*, which was one of the few really "new" Fluxus multiples produced in this period.

<sup>41</sup>Barbara Moore wrote to Dr. Sohm that "George Maciunas is very busy fixing up beautiful loft buildings in Soho. It is now legal to live there and he was among the first to make cooperative buildings there. Since it is now getting to be a bit of a tourist attraction and it is very chic to live there, he spends almost all his time on real estate." Barbara Moore, letter to Dr. Hans Sohm, Aug. 3, 1974, AS.

<sup>42</sup>Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, pp. 342-43.

<sup>43</sup>For additional information on the proposed Fluxevent, see *Fluxnewsletter*, May 3, 1975, reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, p. 244

<sup>44</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Gino Di Maggio, nd [response to a letter dated Oct. 14, 1974]; a copy of this letter is contained in the AS.

<sup>45</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Gino Di Maggio.

<sup>46</sup>For additional information on this event, see *Fluxnewsletter*, May 3, 1975.

<sup>47</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Gino Di Maggio, nd; a copy of this letter is contained in AS.

<sup>48</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Daniela Palazzoli, nd, reproduced in *Fluxnewsletter*, April 1973.

<sup>49</sup> George Maciunas to Gino Di Maggio, nd. A copy of this letter is contained in AS.

<sup>50</sup> *Fluxus Codex*, p. 279.

<sup>51</sup> for a complete description and list of the works performed, see *Fluxnewsletter*, May 3, 1975.

<sup>52</sup> This concert also illustrates the problems of categorizations and how there are always exceptions to any rule, especially when dealing with Fluxus.

<sup>53</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, May 3, 1975.

<sup>54</sup> George Maciunas, *Fluxnewsletter*, May 3, 1975.

<sup>55</sup> George Maciunas, "To Avoid Repeating the Story Endlessly . . ." [flyer describing the circumstances leading to the "Hospital Event"], nd [Nov. or Dec., 1975], collection of the author.

<sup>56</sup> There were also two other results of this occurrence; first, Maciunas decided to turn this into a Fluxus edition to be called "Hospital Event," and, second, he was forced to produce more work to help pay the hospital bills.

<sup>57</sup> George Maciunas, "Proposal for 1975/76 FluxNew Year's Eve Event at Clock Tower," nd [ca. Nov.-Dec., 1975], np.

<sup>58</sup> The specific events, performances, and foods for this event at the Clock Tower are recounted by Maciunas in "Delayed Flux New Year's Eve Event at Clock Tower (Leonard & Broadway) on April 18, 1976," nd, AS.

<sup>59</sup> For a list of the actual Flux-Tours, see Jon Hendricks, ed., *FLUXUS etc. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan: Cranbrook Academy of Art, 1981), p. 404.

<sup>60</sup> Brian Sherman, letter to George Maciunas, May 14, 1976, AS.

<sup>61</sup> Geoff Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 156.

<sup>62</sup> The specifics of this event are described in "Laudatio Scripta pro George Maciunas Concepta Hominibus Fluxi – May 2, 1976, 7:30 P.M.," nd, np, AS.

<sup>63</sup> This idea has its origins farther back in AyO's "Rainbow Staircase Environment" from 1965 and in Maciunas's realization of Ono's "Portrait of John Lennon as a Young Cloud" from 1970, as well as a number of other related Fluxus projects and works.

<sup>64</sup> Maciunas designed the structure, and Larry Miller did most of the construction of it in Berlin, although Maciunas also traveled to Berlin and worked with Miller on the final stages of its construction.

<sup>65</sup> For a list of the works performed and the performers, see *FLUXUS etc. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, pp. 404-05.

<sup>66</sup> For a complete description of Maciunas' proposed New Marlborough Arts Center, see George Maciunas, "Prospectus for New Marlborough Centre for the Arts," nd, GLS. This is reproduced in *FLuXUS etc. / Addendum I*, p. 287.

<sup>67</sup> The planned new Year's Eve event was also scheduled to be held at Maciunas' home in New Marlborough and was also to have included a Fluxfeast and a snow event. The invitation for the cancelled New Year's Eve event is reproduced in *FLUXUS etc. / Addenda I*, p. 289.

<sup>68</sup> George Maciunas, "Announcement for Flux Snow Event," nd, np, GLS. This is reproduced in *Fluxus etc. / Addenda I*, p. 290.

<sup>69</sup> George Maciunas, "Announcement for Flux Snow Event," nd, np.

<sup>70</sup> Barbara Moore, "Corrected Chronology of Events at Fluxus Weekend, New Marlborough, Mass." nd, p. 1, Archives of Experimental Art, New York.

<sup>71</sup> Barbara Moore, "Corrected Chronology of Events at Fluxus Weekend, New Marlborough, Mass.," p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Geoff Hendricks, letter to George Maciunas, Feb. 11, 1977, AS.

<sup>73</sup> Brian Buczak, letter to George Maciunas, Feb. 12, 1977, AS.

<sup>74</sup> George Maciunas, letter to George Brecht, nd, AS.

<sup>75</sup> George Maciunas, letter to George Brecht, nd, AS.

<sup>76</sup> Ken Freidman had also helped set the stage for a Fluxus performance in Seattle. In 1972, he had had an exhibition at the Henry Art Gallery on the University of Washington campus, entitled *Work in Progress*, and he later gave a lecture at the and/or Gallery in 1974 on a variety of topics, including Fluxus. This exhibition is in particular worth noting because many of the people central to the organization of the Flux Fest in Seattle were then associated with the University of Washington as either students or teachers.

<sup>77</sup> Frederic Leiberman, letter to George Maciunas, May 20, 1977, GLS.

<sup>78</sup> Nori Sato, letter to George Maciunas, July 20, 1977, GLS.

<sup>79</sup> "Program for FluxFest at and/or," 1977, np, collection of the author. This work was based on a work by Ken Friedman originally entitled "Passport to the State of Flux."

<sup>80</sup> Maciunas was having rather severe stomach problems during the first part of the festival; eventually, he felt that he had to leave early because of his concern for his health.

<sup>81</sup> G. Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 153.

<sup>82</sup> J. Hendricks, *FLUXUS etc.*, p. 409.

<sup>83</sup> "My Son," p. 15.

<sup>84</sup> "My Son," p. 15.

<sup>85</sup> "My Son," p. 15.

<sup>86</sup> The first event after Maciunas found out about his cancer was an unadvertised event at the Ear Inn in New York City. This event, which has come to be called "Waitress at Ear Inn," consisted of Maciunas and his future wife, Billy Hutchings, waiting on tables and Jean Dupuy and Olga Adorno working in the kitchen.

<sup>87</sup> "My Son," p. 15

<sup>88</sup> G. Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 153. The personal reasons for Maciunas wanting to get married at this point are not really clear, but his mother remembered that "He wanted to repay her [Billy], and most importantly he felt depressed at night and panicked at being alone." "My Son," p. 16.

<sup>89</sup>G. Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 153. For more information about the specific actions of the "Fluxwedding" and the performances that followed it, called a "Flux Cabaret," see *FLUXUS etc.*, pp. 408-09.

<sup>90</sup>"My Son," p. 17.

<sup>91</sup>G. Hendricks, "Fluxrites," p. 153.

<sup>92</sup>G. Hendricks, "Fluxrites," pp. 153-56.

<sup>93</sup>Geoff Hendricks, ea., a *V TRE EXTRA*, No. 11, Mar. 24, 1979, p. 11. This special issue of the *Fluxus Newspaper* was initiated and edited by Geoff Hendricks, designed by Sara Seagull, and was a special tribute to Maciunas. It includes information on him, tributes to him, and documentation of the last several Fluxus events, such as the "Fluxwedding," "Fluxfuneral," and "Waitress at Ear Inn."

<sup>94</sup>For specific information on the "Fluxfeast & Wake" and the performances, see a *V TRE EXTRA*, p. 11

## Chapter Eight

<sup>1</sup>Emmett Williams, "Happy Birthday, Everybody!", 1962 Wiesbaden 1982, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup>Ben Vautier, letter to George Maciunas, Aug. 28, 1966, GLS.

<sup>3</sup>George Maciunas, interview with Larry Miller, Mar. 24, 1978.

<sup>4</sup>Beyond the fact that the name Fluxus originated with Maciunas, there is little information about its possible source. Although there is no proof, perhaps Maciunas encountered the word "fluxist" as a college student in New York. In his studies, one of the many areas that he was interested in was philosophy, especially eastern and ancient philosophy. In some texts on ancient philosophy, some of the pre-Socratic philosophers were referred to as the fluxists because of their belief in change or impermanence as the basis of reality (particularly in relation to Heraclitus vs. the atomatists).

<sup>5</sup>Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception" (unpublished essay, nd), p. 6. A copy of this essay is contained in AS.

<sup>6</sup>Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," p. 6.

- <sup>7</sup>George Maciunas, "Fluxus Manifesto" (1963), AS. The dictionary definition of flux was in fact used by Maciunas as the basis for this so-called "Fluxus Manifesto" distributed at the Fluxus Festival in Dusseldorf at Joseph Beuys' suggestion.
- <sup>8</sup>Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," pp. 16-18.
- <sup>9</sup>Ken Friedman, "Fluxus and Company," Lund Art Press, 1, no. 4 (summer/autumn, 1990), pp. 292-96.
- <sup>10</sup>Eric Andersen, letter to Dick Higgins, nd [ca. 1962], AS.
- <sup>11</sup>Dick Higgins, letter to Chaluppecky, Sep. 9, 1965, AS.
- <sup>12</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Dick Higgins, nd [ca. late Aug., 1966], AS.
- <sup>13</sup>It was in part this factor, combined with Maciunas' specifically Marxist leanings, that undoubtedly contributed to his specific choice of the term collective as a descriptor for Fluxus.
- <sup>14</sup>Jackson Mac Low, letter to Dick Higgins, Apr. 22, 1963, AS.
- <sup>15</sup>Nam June Paik, "George Maciunas and Fluxus," *Flash Art*, No. 84-85 (Oct.-Nov., 1978), p. 48.
- <sup>16</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd, GLS.
- <sup>17</sup>George Maciunas, *Fluxmanifesto on Fluxamusement*, 1965, np, GLS. This is reproduced in *FLUXUS etc.*, p. 8.
- <sup>18</sup>George Maciunas, *Art/Fluxus Art Amusement*, 1965, np, author's collection. This published statement is also reproduced in *FLUXUS etc.*, p. 9.
- <sup>19</sup>George Maciunas, *Art/Fluxus Art Amusement*, np.
- <sup>20</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd, GLS.
- <sup>21</sup>George Brecht, letter to Jan Van der Mark, Sep. 8, 1974, AS.
- <sup>22</sup>George Brecht, *Chance Imagery* (New York: Something Else Press (Great Bear Pamphlet No. 3), 1966), p. 14.
- <sup>23</sup>Brecht, *Chance-Imagery*, p. 10.

- <sup>24</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Ben Vautier, Feb. 6, 1964, GLS. There were three versions of this piece. Maciunas suggested in this letter that the "carton" version could include ". . . chipped plaster, used mimeograph stencils, dried up tea bags (used), orange skins, etc."
- <sup>25</sup>Ken Friedman, "Fluxus and Company," p. 294.
- <sup>26</sup>George Maciunas, draft of a letter, nd [ca. 1964], AS.
- <sup>27</sup>Ken Friedman, "Fluxus and Company," pp. 292-93.
- <sup>28</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, 1963, GLS.
- <sup>29</sup>Knowles, Schmit, Patterson, Corner, "The Four Suits," p. 102.
- <sup>30</sup>George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.
- <sup>31</sup>George Brecht, letter to George Maciunas, nd, AS.
- <sup>32</sup>George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd [1964], GLS.
- <sup>33</sup>Dick Higgins, "Fluxus: Theory and Reception," p. 18.
- <sup>34</sup>Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," *Something Else Newsletter*, 1, No.1, (1966), p. i. This essay is also reproduced in Higgins, *Horizons*, p. 18-28.
- <sup>35</sup>Higgins also wrote that intermedia "is not governed by rules; each work determined its own medium and form according to its needs. The concept itself is better understood by what it is not, rather than what it is." "Intermedia," p. 2.
- <sup>36</sup>Dick Higgins, "Intermedia," in his *A Dialectic of Centuries: Notes Towards a Theory of the New Arts* (New York: Printed Editions, 1978), p. 14.
- <sup>37</sup>Dick Higgins, "The Post-Cognitive Era: Looking for the Sense in it All," *A Dialectic of Centuries: Notes Towards a Theory of the New Arts* (New York: Printed Editions, 1978), p. 8.
- <sup>38</sup>Ben Vautier, "What is Fluxus?" *Flash Art* No. 84-85 (October/November, 1978), p. 52.
- <sup>39</sup>Emmett Williams, "Happy Birthday, Everybody!" pp. 87-88.
- <sup>40</sup>George Maciunas, "Fluxus Manifesto," 1966, author's collection.



<sup>41</sup> I have borrowed the term "constructionism" from Ihab Hassan, who used it refer to the necessity of continual making as a replacement for the loss of a center. I have somewhat modified his use to refer to an interest in making as a process without a necessary goal. This term is to be clearly distinguished from Constructivism, the Russian art movement.

<sup>42</sup> The significance of making use of situational relationships was an outgrowth of the Cagean and Zen-type recognition of nature as a non-static system of relationships.

<sup>43</sup> The idea of liminality is a concept developed by the anthropologist Victor Turner, literally meaning "Being-on-a-threshold." "Liminality is full of potency and potentiality. It may also be full of experiment and play. There also may be a play of ideas, a play of words, a play of symbols, a play of metaphors. In it, play is the thing." "Flame, Flow and Reflection: Ritual and Drama as Public Liminality," in *Performance in Postmodern Culture*, ed. Michel Benamou and Charles Caramello (Madison, Wisconsin: Coda Press, 1977), p. 33.

<sup>44</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd [Jan., 1964], GLS.

<sup>45</sup> George Maciunas, letter to Tomas Schmit, nd [1963], GLS. Part of this letter is reproduced in *FLUXUS etc./Addenda II*, p. 165.

<sup>46</sup> The Fluxus projects that had the most far-reaching, non-art impact were some of their gag-like items, such as those for impositions. Several of these ideas, such as Watts's "Parking Meter Decal," were later produced by other individuals and sold widely through various practical joke and humor shops.

<sup>47</sup> Dick Higgins, "Styles in Cognitivism," *A Dialectic of Centuries: Notes Towards a Theory of the New Arts* (New York: Printed Editions, 1978), pp. 96-99.

<sup>48</sup> This statement is a "sleight" modification of Robert Watts' piece "this card may be destroyed," contained in his *Events* (New York City: Fluxus, nd [ca. 1964]).



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THE AVANT GARDE / ART HISTORY / CULTURAL STUDIES / SOCIOLOGY

# 'fluxus, therefore we are.'

Herbert Ashe, *Orbis Tertius*



*Fluxus: The History of an Attitude* is based on the author's exhaustive archival research tracking the physical remains of this fascinating interdisciplinary and international arts movement that began in the 1960s. As Smith has it, "Fluxus was once called 'the most radical and experimental art movement of the sixties,' but for anyone seeking to learn more about the historical nature of Fluxus and its conceptual framework it might more readily seem to be just plain frustrating rather than radical. This is in part the case because Fluxus is historically complex and philosophically difficult to define. This very ambiguity, however, is an aspect of its radicality. Fluxus is both an attitude towards art-making and culture that is not historically limited, and a specific historical group. As an attitude, Fluxus is part of a larger conceptual development that is a significant, although often overlooked, current of the twentieth-century Western avant-garde. This attitude is in part traceable to the network of interrelated ideas about culture, politics, and society explored earlier in the twentieth century by the Futurists, the Dadaists, and the Surrealists. Some of these same ideas were later explored after World War II by artists associated with groups such as Letterism, International Situationism, *Nouveau Realisme*, and Fluxus itself." Also, Smith claims the Fluxus is still very much alive today and that "Fluxus is by nature anti-reductivist, for it does not seek the illumination of some end or fact but celebrates participation in a non-hierarchical density of experience. In this way Fluxus does not refer to a style or even a procedure as such but to the presence of a totality of social activities. Fluxus seeks to shift from traditional utilitarian-based proscriptions to an open-ended, less evaluative participation in the processes themselves." The book is provided with a comprehensive bibliography and index.

Owen F. Smith is Professor of Art History at the University of Maine, Orono.

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