Benjamin Patterson

Born in the State of FLUX/us

VALERIE CASSIE OLIVER

With essays by
BERTRAND CLAIVE
CHARLES GAINES
JON HENDRICKS
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REED MOTEN
BENJAMIN PATTERSON
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CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM HOUSTON
Foreword

There was a time when the artists associated with Fluxus did not garner due respect from many museum professionals. Fluxus was neither a movement nor a period in the sense that art historians usually define those terms. Perhaps it is best understood as a philosophy or a radical ideology, a stance equal parts Zen and revolution that sprang to life in the 1960s but is still in active play today. Even ten years ago it was considered too incorporeal to collect, its most accomplished practitioners rarely using fine art materials and giving away their objects as often as selling them. As such its output was also too aggressively uncompromisable to be preserved as rare luxury museum objects. It was understood as anti-art, resistant to being collected, studied, analyzed, and respected because its makers obeyed few of the standard art rules.

In recent years a generational shift has occurred in the seats of cultural power. In that shifting of the guard, Fluxus has steadily infiltrated the establishment, one poetic whisper at a time. Great private collections of Flux work have been acquired by leading institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, Germany, and the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. And museums such as the Tate Modern, London; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, have developed important holdings. Sometimes museum registrars discovered that key Fluxus objects were already sitting in flat files in their institutions, having been gathered by visionary museum librarians and archivists when they arrived in the morning mail but not actually accessioned until decades later. (A thesis needs to be written about the value of the loose tribe of museum librarians who successfully circumvented the power of collections committees and allowed radical artworks to be under the same roof as Jasper Johns well before the curatorial was ready.)

Because of chance anomalies in my intellectual biography, I was reared in a climate in which the provocations of Fluxus artists were widely seen as beautiful and worthy. As a child I went to Friends Seminary, a Quaker school in New York City, where John Cage was a god and avant-garde poets and visual artists were on the faculty. The father of my best friend in junior high was a leading critic who had works by Fluxus-associated video pioneer Nam June Paik around the house. And finally, my first full-time job in the art world was in the same building as Re-Flux Editions, so I would wander upstairs during lunch and play with and often buy for myself the amazing and affordable Flux multiples. It was not uncommon to leave there with a great work of art that cost less than my lunch.

As I write this foreword, I have Larry Miller’s Office Flux Plugs and a Yoko Ono Box of Beach Sand near my desk. The Miller is a plastic box of objects, from pacifiers to bullets, that could in theory plug bodily orifices, and the Box of Beach Sand, without revealing its secret, is meant to be given to someone to make them smile. And it is highly effective. These interactive editions have kept me sane in the face of many writing deadlines, and I have kept them within reach for nearly thirty years. In that time their status has changed...slowly. For while they are today firmly part of the canon of postwar art, their cheap materials and the fact that they need to be handled to function make them unlikely masterpieces.

When I assumed the directorship of the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston in the spring of 2009, I was startled to see a survey of Ben Patterson on the schedule of future exhibitions. I had never seen a show in a U.S. museum devoted to a single Flux-associated artist, with the exceptions of Yoko Ono and Nam June Paik. Even Fluxus leader George Maciunas had not been thoroughly examined in this country. As for Patterson himself, I had known his name as an early Flux artist but had, like most U.S.-based art lovers, seen and experienced little in person. Monographic museum shows are the single best way of getting to know an artist’s trajectory and thought processes, and for an antimovement like Fluxus, this treatment seems ideal. I, for one, cherished the opportunity to really get to understand Patterson’s achievement. So many of his signature gestures—such as musically employing the sounds that result from ripping, tearing, and crumpling different types of paper—are now somewhat mainstream, used by celebrated composers like Academy Award winner Tan Dun. The general public today is open to hearing the musicality in such sounds. Yet Patterson’s most radical gestures were always tempered by the fact that he involved nonprofessionals in making the sounds that they were enjoying—who can resist the sound of paper ripping when one is actually doing the ripping?

Patterson was closely tied in with the musical activities of the period, and the narrative of his art production begins with his musical activities. Yet as this show makes clear, it is almost impossible to mark a clear division between sound and sculpture, between action and object, and in earlier periods before the (over)professionalization of the art world, the avant-gardes in music, art, film, and literature tended to be very closely linked, and artists were less prone to defining themselves through specific mediums. That sort of deliberate confusion of genres and categories is the spirit of Fluxus.

Valerie Cassel Oliver has been working on this exhibition for several years. In many ways that was required because Fluxus (like Dada, the earlier art movement to which it is most closely allied) thrives on flâneur networks and itinerant practices. This is an intimate art requiring a meditative, attentive state in its nuances has been earned over time, and its labor of love, and her work is infectious. As a curator Valerie and her assistants filter the work in this book's essays, I am sure texts cited by art historians for decades is a tremendous accomplishment. For when a contemporary art museum has such a long history. We could not have made this exhibition public the generous support of the Art for the Visual Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Their acknowledgment of this project means so much to me. I extend to them our sincere thanks to Valerie’s conviction that Patterson is a titan from them.

All the many supporters of the museum make this exhibition a reality, but it is the work of our Major Exhibition Fund donors that pursue curatorial excellence unceasingly. Generosity year after year allows us to do their important scholarly work to live on in the lifeblood of our curators, writers, artists, and curators. Fluxus Jon Hendricks has been crucial to the making of this project, and when we faced a crisis due to some unexpectedly swells from him rallied a considerable amount of that along with the many types of support that he so willingly shared, we are eternally grateful to all of those who responded to Jon’s one thousand times.

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As I write this foreword, I have Larry Miller’s Office Flux Flags and a Yoko Ono Box of Smile near my desk. The Miller is a plastic box of objects, from pacifiers to bullets, that could in theory plug boldly into boxes, and the Box of Smile, without revealing its secret, is meant to be given to someone to make them smile, and it is highly effective. These interactive editions have kept me sane in the face of many writing deadlines, and I have kept them within reach for nearly thirty years. In that time their status has changed… slowly. For while they are today firmly part of the canon of postwar art, their cheap materials and the fact that they need to be handled to function make them unlikely masterpieces.

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Valerie Cassel Oliver has been working on this exhibition for several years. In many ways that was required because Fluxus (like Dada, the earlier art movement to which it is most closely allied) thrives on far-flying networks and itinerant practices. This is an intimate art requiring a meditative, attentive state, and her expertise in its nuances has been earned over time. As such, this has been a labor of love, and her passion for Patterson’s work is infectious. As a curator Valerie is known for projects that rewrite the standard histories. Having read the drafts of this book’s essays, I am sure that I will see these texts cited by art historians for decades to come. That is a tremendous accomplishment and what one hopes for when a contemporary art museum considers a figure with such a long history.

We could not have made this exhibition a reality without the generous support of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Their acknowledgment of the importance of this project means so much to a museum like CAMH.

I extend to them our sincere thanks for supporting Valerie’s conviction that Patterson is an artist whose time is now.

All the many supporters of the museum have helped make this exhibition a reality, and it is truly the work of our Major Exhibition Fund donors, that allows CAMH to pursue curatorial excellence unencumbered. Their vision and generosity year after year allow our great curators to do their important scholarly work, and being able to count on them is the lifeblood of our museum.

Curator, writer, archivist, sage, guru of all things Fluxus Jon Hendricks has been crucial from the beginning of this project, and when we faced a crisis late in the process due to some unexpectedly swollen expenses, a letter from him rallied a considerable amount of support. For that, along with the many types of support and wisdom that he so willingly shares, we are eternally grateful. And to all of those who responded to Jon’s appeal, thank you one thousand times.

This catalogue is made possible by a grant from the Brown Foundation, Inc. Its support is pivotal in allowing the research and scholarship so carefully developed by
Valerie Cassel Oliver to illuminate this wonderful art for thousands of people, particularly future art and music students who might now be inspired by Paterson's achievements. Essayists Bernard Clavel, Charles Gaines, Jon Hendricks, George Lewis, Fred Moten, and Marcia Reed have added much to my education on Paterson and his times, and I thank them for the clarity that they bring to his achievements.

The CAMH staff has once again dedicated its considerable expertise to making this an exhibition to be engaged. Special thanks go to former curatorial manager Justine Waitkus and registrar Tim Barkley for dealing with the complicated logistics of a show with many small, fragile artworks traveling from many locations on the planet. I would also like to thank former director Mari Mayo and interim director Linda Sauer for their earlier support of the project. Without their vision this exhibition would not be a reality today.

My final thanks go in advance to you, the museum public, as this art requires a fair degree of engagement to be fully enjoyed. While I can guarantee that the openness and spirit of Fluxian play you bring through our doors will be repaid in joy and intellectual stimulation, it is really up to you to be willing to bring the artworks of Benjamin Paterson to life. And for that we at CAMH thank you in advance.

BILL ARMING
Director
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Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUXus is the manifestation of several years of research and involved the efforts of many people. The initial impetus for the project, however, came from Jon Hendricks, former curator of the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection and currently Fluxus consulting curator at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, which now houses the Silverman collection. In 2000 Jon traveled to Houston to oversee the installation of the exhibition Yes: Yoko One at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston. During the installation Jon and I talked constantly. Our easy conversations about Fluxus and the constellation of artists at its core meandered, but there was one name that Jon brought up repeatedly: Benjamin Patterson. It was not until later—when I was looking at a photograph of Philip Corner’s Piano Activities and asking, “Who is the black man in this picture?”—that I understood Jon’s reference. That man was Ben Patterson, a radical presence in the midst of a radical avant-garde. It would take an additional five years and a Getty Curatorial Research Fellowship before I would begin in earnest to research his work. What I found was little written documentation but a groundswell of encouragement to continue my research. Along the way I have been assisted by numerous individuals, and to all those who have touched this project in large and minute ways, thank you.

For support in the early stages of the project, I am indebted not only to Jon Hendricks but also to Carl Solway, who provided me with a means of contacting Patterson, who has long lived in Germany. Michael Solway and Angela Jones of SolwayJones Gallery in Los Angeles were instrumental in coordinating my first meeting with Patterson. Marcia Reed, chief curator at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, deserves special recognition for her unwavering enthusiasm and for encouraging me to run through the Jean Brown Papers, an extraordinary repository of Fluxus materials that is now part of the Getty’s holdings. I must also acknowledge Elii Kreiter for her immense generosity in housing me during my many visits to Wiesbaden.

Organizing an exhibition such as this—in a retrospective that represents more than forty years of an artist’s work—is a considerable endeavor, and I am tremendously grateful to my personal and professional families for supporting me through the journey. The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston allowed me to take a sabbatical to conduct the initial research for the project. It is rare to have not only the financial support of an institution but also the resource of time to develop an exhibition from primary research. I am grateful to Mario Mayo, former director, who initially granted me the gift of focused time; Linda Sherer, who continued the commitment of institutional support; and Bill Arning, under whose directorship this project has come to fruition.

Invaluable support during the early phases of my research was provided by interns in both Houston and Wiesbaden. I am grateful to Jane Duffler, Sarah Levitt, Cheyenne Ranno, and Lisa Solomine for their foundational efforts.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the many private and public supporters and collectors of Patterson’s work. They not only opened their galleries, archives, and homes for research but also generously lent works to this exhibition. They include Paul Anczykowski, Kleiner Raum Clasing & Galerie Etage, Münster, Germany; Luigi Bonicco, Mulvena, Italy; Carola Bodenmuller, Frank Kleinbach, and Manfred Prinzhorn, Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, Stuttgart, Germany; Enzo Cattelan and Tiberio Cattelan,

Modena, Italy; Emanuele Cancano, Milan; Bertrand Clavel, Paris; the late Francisco Corti, Cristina Corti, Gian Luca Corti, and Esther Wolmas, Archivo Corza, Verona, Italy; Dr. Sabrina and Klaus Felhemann, Rosa Foorut, Foorut Arte Contemporanea, Padua, Italy; Marcel Fellus, David Fleiss, Sylvan Rouklen, Julie Richard, and Rodica Stibley, Galerie 1900–2000, Paris; Peter Frei and Ilona Lüden, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany; Rosalene Goldberg, Performed, New York; Elke Gruhn, Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden; Catarina Gualco, Genoa, Italy; Jon Hendricks, Fluxus consulting curator, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Elii Kreiter, Wiesbaden; Marcia Reed, Jeanette Cologne, Naazle Harlem, and Irene Lowpeich-Phillips, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; Harry Ruhl, A Gallery, Amsterdam; Heinrich W. Rakem, Bad Rothenfelde, Germany; Christel Schüppenhauser, Cologne; Marc Schultz, Hannover, Germany; Michael Solway and Angela Jones, SolwayJones Gallery, Los Angeles; Sandra Solimano and Francesca Serrattie, Museo d’Arte Contemporanea di Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy; Greetchen Wagner, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Donna Wingate, New York; and Christian Xare, Emily Harvey Foundation, New York. For negotiating crucial loans, I want to especially acknowledge Paul Anczykowski, Catarina Gualco, and Christel Schüppenhauser.

Also crucial in shaping this exhibition were my conversations throughout the process with Charles Gaines, Rosalene Goldberg, Jürgen Heinrich, Jon Hendricks, Hannah Higgins, Alison Knowles, Clifford Owens, Xiaena Simmons, and Carl Solway. Other conversations over the course of time were invaluable in helping me to understand the totality of Patterson’s influence, including encounters with Geoffrey Hendricks, Elaine Summers, Sur Rodney Sur, and Christian Xare.

No project of this magnitude can be undertaken without the full support and encouragement of the staff of the organizing museum, and I want to thank each of

my colleagues for their work on this development and presentation. In the education department, special thanks to director of education and public programs Gary Lucas; education associate, who coordinated the materials. They organized a series of lectures and performances, inviting scanning on the work of Ben Patterson continued the museum’s efforts toward collaborations with local arts organizations. CAMH continued its collaboration with featured Patterson in an evening concert Museum of African American Culture, scored a performance by Pamela Z; i.e., of Houston and Rice University, woven into the classroom to work ably coordinating various aspects of the publication as well as keeping it indebted to former curatorial manag and interim curatorial manager Jenny registra; deserves special thanks for the opportunity to oversee complicated national shipping and loan agreements, as does Jeff Shore, for his amazing exhibition liaison would not have been possible, looked so good, without the talents of museum’s installation crew. I am also museum’s director for external affairs, for her diligence in ensuring this project regionally, nationally, and internationally assist to the director, deserves re ing through multiple incarnations of a draft to final copy with as much to last but not least, Amber Winsor, di minister and administration, and her team, thanks for their enormous efforts in se project.
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Cassel Oliver
Initial work on the exhibition was supported by the Getty Foundation, which generously provided me with a Curatorial Research Fellowship. The importance of this project was validated by grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, which stepped in at the very beginning with crucial support, and the National Endowment for the Arts, whose generosity infused this project with new dynamism. When we were faced with last-minute expenses, Jon Hendricks spearheaded an initiative to raise much-needed funds among the Fluxus family and friends. We were very fortunate to have financial support from Chrisco/CV Corporation, Jean Dupuy, Letty Lou Eisenhauer, Henry Flynn, Geoffrey Hendricks, Jon Hendricks, Yoko Ono Lennon, Phoebe Neville and Philip Corner, the Oldenburg van Bruggen Foundation, Jeffery Perkins, Lily and Gilbert Silverman, Miyuki Sugaya and Toshiyuki Nempto, Jean Toche, and Yoshimasa Wada. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

For this extraordinary publication, I want to thank all at Marquard Books: Ed Marquard, Sara Billups, Zach Hooker, Adrian Lucia, and Brynn Wariner among many others. They showed immense acumen in organizing the various components of this important document. The book also benefited from the considerable expertise of Bertrand Clavel, Charles Gaines, Jon Hendricks, George E. Lewis, Fred Moten, and Marica Reed, who contributed essays, as well as Emanuele Carcano, who compiled the musical documentation for the double compact disc featured in the publication. Additionally, Meredith Goldsmith, former curatorial associate at the museum, was instrumental in compiling the substantial chronology of Patterson's life and work. She deserves a special note of appreciation not only for taking on such an immense task but also for securing copyright waivers and permissions for many of the photographs featured throughout this publication. I am grateful for the exceptional talents of Karen Jacobson, editor of this publication, who painstakingly pored over the texts to create a seamless and unified narrative. My hope is that this catalogue will become essential reading for anyone interested in the life and practice of this important artist.

For their contributions in providing or securing images for this book, I am grateful to Cristin O'Keefe Apowitz, Wolf Vostell Estate, Jennifer Bel, Art Resource, New York; Lourdes Castro, Lisbon; Bertrand and Claudia Clavel, Paris; Marco Curnan and Paula Lahad-Bozotto, Archivo Bozotto, Modena, Italy; Jon Hendricks, New York; Frank Kleinbach, IFA, Stuttgart; Irene Lotspeich-Philips, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles; Barbara Moore, VAGA, New York; Anna Noel, Düsseldorf; Christel Schüppenbauer, Galerie Schüppenbauer; Cologne: Jacqueline Taquinio, Susanne Velmeren Los Angeles Projects; Wolfgang Träger, Wiesbaden, Germany; Donna Wingate, New York; and Lydia Yee, Barbican Art Centre, London.

Sarah Levit helped to organize much of the information that would later become essential in mounting this exhibition and also produced a wonderful short documentary on Patterson featured in the museum's resource room. A project of this magnitude also necessitated the assistance of many to produce or digitize images and video and sound works. I am deeply indebted to Wolfgang Träger, who was always willing to document existing and new work; Don Quinlan, who not only scanned numerous documents for this catalogue but also generated the first iteration of the publication; and Rick Gardner, who contributed significantly to ensuring that a batch of last-minute performance documents were digitized for this publication. In addition to works reproduced in the catalogue, the exhibition included video documentation of performances. I am appreciative of Espace multimédiab Gannet, Bourgogne, France, whose funding allowed the artist to transfer film and video documentation into digital files. The transfer of these files for the museum's presentation was made possible by Michael Ehes Studio, Wiesbaden. I am grateful to Kenya Evans for transferring original sound works presented in the exhibition from audiotapes into digital files.

For their willingness to ensure that this exhibition is seen by a larger audience, I am grateful to Theja Golden, Naomi Beckwith, Thomas Lux, and Lauren Hayes at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, and Elke Grunau at Nassausche Kunstrichverein, Wiesbaden.

Finally, I would like to thank Benjamin Patterson for entrusting me with contextualizing his enormous contributions not only to the avant-garde but also to the field of contemporary art. My first encounter with him came in the form of a recorded message left at my office. He was calling in response to a letter that I had faxed to him only days earlier, telling him of my interest in researching not only his role in Fluxus but also his contributions in its aftermath. Patterson, always measured in his speech, asked, "Are you sure you have the right person? That response, humorous and self-deprecating, marks his true genius. It has been an extraordinary honor to become familiar not only with this artist's practice but also with the artist himself. This project is a testament to his tremendous generosity in opening his life to me. It is but a very small measure of his immense contributions, which simply cannot be contained in a finite space or seen in a finite period of time. This catalogue is nevertheless an invaluable document, and neither it nor the exhibition would have been possible without his persistence, extraordinary talent, and radical presence.

Valerie Cassel Oliver
Senior Curator

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Sarah Levit helped to organize much of the information that would later become essential in mounting this exhibition and also produced a wonderful short documentary on Patterson featured in the museum’s resource room. A project of this magnitude also necessitated the assistance of many to produce or digitize images and video and sound works. I am deeply indebted to Wolfgang Träger, who was always willing to document existing and new work; Don Quinlan, who not only scanned numerous documents for this catalogue but also contributed the first iteration of the publishing; and Rick Gardner, who contributed significantly to ensuring that a batch of last-minute performance documents were digitized for this publication. In addition to works reproduced in the catalogue, the exhibition included video documentation of performances. I am appreciative of Espace multimédia Cannier, Bourgogne, France, whose funding allowed the artist to transfer film and video doc- umentation into digital files. The transfer of these files for the museum’s presentation was made possible by

Michael Esken Studio, Wiesbaden. I am grateful to Kenya Evans for transferring original sound works presented in the exhibition from audiocassettes into digital files.

For their willingness to ensure that this exhibition is seen by a larger audience, I am grateful to Thelma Golden, Naomi Beckwith, Thomas Lax, and Laurence Gauthier at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, and Elke Grähn at the Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden.

Finally, I would like to thank Benjamin Patterson for entrusting me with contextualizing his enormous contribu- tions not only to the avant-garde but also to the field of contemporary art. My first encounter with him came in the form of a recorded message left at my office. He was calling to respond to a letter that I had faxed to him only days earlier, telling him of my interest in researching not only his role in Fluxus but also his contributions in his aftermath. Patterson, always measured in his speech, asked, "Are you sure you have the right person?" That response, humorous and self-deprecating, marks his true genius. It has been an extraordinary honor to become familiar not only with this artist’s practice but also with the artist himself. This project is a testament to his tremen- dous generosity in opening his life to me. It is but a very small measure of his immense contributions, which simply cannot be contained in a finite space or seen in a finite period of time. This catalogue is nevertheless an invaluable document, and neither it nor the exhibition would have been possible without his persistence, extraordinary talent, and radical presence.

VALERIE CASSEL OLIVER
Senior Curator

CASSEL OLIVER
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Carlo Cattelan, Modena, Italy
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10. Molena, Italy
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30. Schipper, Stuttgart, Germany
The Curious Case of Benjamin Patterson

VALERIE CASSEL OLIVER

Such developments as conceptual art, text art, video art, performance art, minilimation, simulation and even the social engineering arts or the political art of people such as Joseph Beuys are being re-examined, and the roots are being found, perhaps in Fluxus. What exactly was my role in all of this? Quite simply I was there at the instant of birth, so to speak.

—BENJAMIN PATTERSON

In a bit of irony, Benjamin Patterson stepped onto the stage of art history at the dawn of the 1960s, amid a groundswell of political, social, and cultural upheaval. His emergence is owed in part to political and social conventions that sought to render his own presence invisible. And so, at the beginning of the 1960s and in a land foreign from that of his birth, Patterson, a classically trained African American musician, joined the avant-garde. His was a radical presence, not simply because of his blackness but also because of his participation in the birth of Fluxus, a practice and ideology determined by a loose constellation of artists, which would arguably become the most influential experiment in the history of art, changing the course of art history and laying the foundation for contemporary art practice.

The fact that Patterson, a celebrated cultural icon in Europe, is underrecognized in cultural and academic circles in the United States speaks to myriad issues with regard to how the history of art is recorded, selectively reproduced, and perpetuated as fragmented narrative. In contextualizing Patterson's early contributions and his more recent practice as being anything but integral to Fluxus, one is immediately faced with the inherent limitations of avant-garde criticism. One could argue that Patterson himself was born in a state of flux, never truly embraced by historians of the avant-garde and virtually erased in many assessments of Fluxus while being celebrated in his adopted country of Germany.

To be generous, the artist's apparent status as a minor player in the annals of the avant-garde may have been predetermined by his early "retirement" from Fluxus in the mid-1960s. Moreover, his continued absence until the 1980s, some twenty years, could also account for his frequent omission from the pantheon of artists associated with the movement—including George Maciunas, George Brecht, John Cage, Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys, and Yoko Ono—whose works produced seismic shifts in how we now understand artistic practices of the later twentieth century. Patterson's imprint could never fully be erased, however, not only because his compositions have been presented as standard fare in Fluxus concerts but also because we find iterations of his "compositions for actions," or action scores, now being performed, discussed, and examined by a new generation of artists. So while his contributions may have been overlooked in recent scholarly presentations examining the phenomenon of Fluxus, a fuller examination of Patterson's development as an artist—in particular, his innovative practice of the "action as composition" in experimental music—points to his presence at the very formation of the movement and his invaluable contributions to it. Moreover, one of the last surviving artists from its core group, Patterson represents the continuation of Fluxus.

Born in Pittsburgh between the World Wars, Patterson exhibited a voracious appetite for learning at an early age. In his teens, he was already well versed in classical music and the sciences (both parents had advanced degrees in engineering and chemistry), and he excelled in sports. His life typified a black America rarely recounted. His family defied the prevailing African American stereotype of the era in that it was not only middle class but also highly functional. Throughout high school and from the outset of his studies at the University of Michigan—where he majored in music, focusing on composition, conducting, and double bass—Patterson was on a crusade to "be the first black to break the color barrier" in an American symphony orchestra.

Patterson's crusade was, however, short-lived. Upon graduation, he was unable to secure a position in an American orchestra. Instead, he found employment in Canada, where he served as principal bassist and an assistant conductor for the Halifax Symphony Orchestra. While he played classical music by day, he was conducting experiments in new music forms by night. Most likely, the seeds of his interest in new music were planted during his days at the University of Michigan, where he studied under composer Leslie Basset and knew of the work of Gordon Mumma.

In 1957, a year after Patterson's graduation and departure from Michigan, Mumma, along with Robert Ashley and three other composition students from the University of Michigan (Roger Reynolds, George Cacioppo, and Donald Scavarda), would establish Once Group, a platform for experimental music in Ann Arbor. Patterson would also have known Space Theater, the venue founded by the painter-turned-multimedia-artist Milton Cohen, who insisted on the radical concept of "stretcing imagery into a format or presentation in real time, real motion, real space." Cohen also insisted on several principles on which Space Theater would be established, including to "shrink distance between artist and spectator; spectator and spectacle to score music, light, poetry, dance with a single notational system; suggest the museum as a creative performance; of spontaneous act contemporary technology as a mystery and subvert the machine." While on his way to articulating his own path, Canada would be interrupted. In an opportunity that (who had to leave because institutionalized segregation defacto segregation in the North prevented from getting a job with an American orchestra) subscribed into the United States Army.

For two years Patterson served in Symphony Orchestra, based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Upon returning, he resumed his career with major halls throughout Europe, Patterson established in Germany. In St. Paul, he found a burgeoning scene of music practices. The social political an the aftermath of World War II not only differences between traditional conventions already being felt in the United States little ground to invent and reinvent cultural forms. Despite being discharged, Patterson remained working at the Philharmonic Orchestra and also assumed his experiments with an electronic music studio at the Center. The prevailing binaries of new concept of surrealism and "free choice" sectors of a score" versus that of indeterminate the time Patterson's compositions lean towards surrealism, a method of composing that either systematic recurrence or any numerical proportions without regularity. At the time surrealism was commonly by composers Karlheinz Stockhausen and Boulez. Once Patterson returned to
Curious Case of jamin Patterson

VALERIE CASSEL OLIVER

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Patterson's crusade was, however, short-lived. Upon graduation he was unable to secure a position in an American orchestra. Instead, he found employment in Canada, where he served as principal bassist and an assistant conductor for the Halifax Symphony Orchestra. While he played classical music by day, he was conducting experiments in new music formats by night. Most likely, the seeds of his interest in new music were planted during his days at the University of Michigan, where he studied under composer Leslie Bassett and knew of the work of Gordon Mumma.

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For two years Patterson served in the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra, based in Stuttgart. While the orchestra toured extensively to major and minor concert halls throughout Europe, Patterson took advantage of his home base in Germany. In Stuttgart as well as in Cologne, he found a burgeoning scene for experimental music practices. The social, political, and cultural arenas in the aftermath of World War II not only reflected the tensions between traditional conventions and "new practices" already being felt in the United States but also offered fertile ground to invent and reinvent cultural practices. After being discharged, Patterson returned to Canada, this time working at the Philharmonic Orchestra of Ottawa. He also resumed his experiments with new music, working in an electronic music studio at the National Research Center. The prevailing binaries of new music surrounded concepts of serialization and "free choice in predetermined sectors of a score" versus that of indeterminate actions. At the time Patterson's compositions leaned heavily toward serialization, a method of composing that subjected notes to either systematic recurrence or assigned them equal numerical proportions without regard for traditional tonality. At the time serialization was championed principally by composers Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez. Once Patterson returned to Europe, however,
his predisposition would abruptly be reversed within a twenty-four-hour period. After a planned meeting with Stockhausen and an unplanned meeting with John Cage. In addition, Patterson would later set aside his interest in electronic music in favor of simplified actions and humble materials.

The Immutability of Experation

Living and working in Ottawa, Patterson was better to get back to Europe. The experimental music scene was rapidly evolving, and its vital centers sat squarely in Germany. He decided to attend the Internationale Gesellschaft für Zeitgenössische Musik (International Society for Contemporary Music), or IGZM, Festival in Cologne, which would feature Stockhausen and Boulez. It was 1960, and Patterson, armed with a letter of introduction, had the opportunity to meet Stockhausen, arguably the most prolific and visible of the serial music composers of his generation. The meeting, which Patterson has often described as a disaster, would forever alter his future as a musician and, subsequently, as an artist. Rather than attending the remainder of the IGZM conference/festival, Patterson soon found his way to Mary Bauermeister's studio, which was hosting the counterfestival of new, new music. As the festival, designed to showcase the most "radical" experimentation in music, he found himself in the company of young composers from around the world who wanted a solid break with the traditions of the past. Among these composers were John Cage, Nam June Paik, David Tudor, Cornelius Cardew, François Bel, and Sylvano Busotti. Patterson spoke with Cage after the performance and was invited to join the following evening's performances. That event would prove to be a turning point in his life and work.

On the following evening Patterson did join Cage, Tudor, Cardew, and others to perform seminal works by such composers as La Monte Young, Toshi Ichiyanagi, George Brecht, and Cage himself. The ease with which he found himself immersed in the scene was astounding, so much so that Patterson extended his scheduled one-week stay into weeks. A strike by the Ottawa orchestra, which resulted in the cancellation of its season, all but solidified his presence in Europe for the remainder of 1960 and the years to follow. His time in Germany would prove fruitful not only in the extension of his new network of friendships and collaborations but also in the development of his own distinctive musical style, which moved further away from serialism and toward the indeterminate practices of composers like Cage and Young. For Patterson, the indeterminate practice not only offered a chance to extend conversations around improvisation that he had already begun investigating within the classical music sphere but also raised questions regarding the incorporation of action into the creation of musical composition. This was the very concept behind Paper Piece (1960), a work that he had composed in direct reaction to Stockhausen's composition Kontakte (1958–60), which integrated electronic and instrumental music. Unable to travel to Pittsburgh for the holidays, Patterson sent his family a composed "action" to be performed for their amusement. He provided instructions for the performance of the work: number of participants, materials to be used, and actions to be taken, such as the tearing, crumpling, twisting, and rubbing together of discarded wrapping paper. The letter would serve as the first iteration of Paper Piece.

Patterson would continue to develop Paper Piece, publishing the work later that year in an issue of the Hamburg art paper Ich bin schön. He would also publish an essay "An Experiment in Expanded Rhythms" in the Hamburg independent arts journal Die Villa ist verstaubt. The essay was important for two reasons. First, it provided a platform for Patterson to discuss critical issues in music production, showing how alternating and extending the modality of notes could affect a listener's perception, particularly in his early experiments in looped electronic music. The text also became foundational in that he began to develop further his ideas regarding action as music, a concept that sat at the intersection of sound materiality and signification. He found that music actions could accomplish different kinds of representations culturally and psychologically. For instance, Patterson noted that by defying the expected action of playing the double bass with his fingers or the bow, as dictated in classical music, and by playing the instrument with various nontraditional objects, he shifted the action into an area of sound materiality. Secondly, the article provided evidence of what would become Patterson's sustained interest in psychology, as seen in his later writings and works.

Patterson would become a prolific composer during this time, creating a substantial body of scores for music and actions. He would debut many of his seminal early works in 1960 at Galene Haro Lausus in Cologne, initially performing at exhibition openings. Exhibition, Patterson performed Rig for Wolf Vostell (1960). Situations for and Duo for Voice and a String Instrument, a noted African American artist who taught at the Robert Schumann University in Düsseldorf, later he would present V Bass (1960) for the opening of an exhibition with Mimm Roefra and a short program in conjunction with an exhibition. Daniel Spoerri, also at Galene Haro use of the annotated score format, but he saw a consciousness in the past because it rendered notations of action visually as a visual index of the concept of chance and indeterminacy. Action as performance.

It would not be until the creation of the Society for New Music in 1960, however, that Patterson's first opera, The Secret of St. Vitus, fully bridge sound with visual and kinaesthetic experience. At Studio Vostell in Cologne, in the first interdisciplinary project, integrated by Patterson and Vostell, dance performed by Olivo and reconstructed paintings of Leonor Fuentes. Patterson's work was presented as a series of music and sculpture objects, and the visual and aural performance was integrated. The concept of chance and indeterminacy was central to the project, and the visual and aural performances were integrated in a way that was unique to the time.

Radical Presence: The Birth of Fluxus

Performing actions, Patterson moved beyond visual and aural performance to create a series of concerts and happenings, many of which took place in the United States and the United Kingdom. In London, he performed a series of actions, including "Actions for the Living" and "Actions for the Dead," which were part of the "Actions for the Living and the Dead" project. These actions were performed in various locations, including the Tate Gallery and the Institute of Contemporary Arts. The events were attended by a diverse audience, including musicians, artists, and art critics, and were documented in a series of photographs and publications. These actions were part of a larger project, "Actions for the Living and the Dead," which aimed to create a new form of performance that combined music, dance, and visual art. The project was influenced by the work of Fluxus, a group of artists and musicians who were interested in creating new forms of performance that were based on the concept of chance and indeterminacy. The project also had a political dimension, as it was intended to challenge the traditional boundaries of art and culture.

In New York, Patterson continued to create and perform a series of actions and happenings, including "Actions for the Living and the Dead," which took place at the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum. These actions were documented in a series of photographs and publications, and were also performed at various other locations, including galleries and universities. The events were attended by a diverse audience, including musicians, artists, and art critics, and were documented in a series of photographs and publications. These actions were part of a larger project, "Actions for the Living and the Dead," which aimed to create a new form of performance that combined music, dance, and visual art. The project was influenced by the work of Fluxus, a group of artists and musicians who were interested in creating new forms of performance that were based on the concept of chance and indeterminacy. The project also had a political dimension, as it was intended to challenge the traditional boundaries of art and culture.

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George Brecht, and Cage himself. The ease with which he found himself immersed in the scene was astounding, so much so that Patterson extended his scheduled one-week stay into three. A strike by the Ottawa orchestra, which resulted in the cancellation of its season, all but solidified his presence in Europe for the remainder of 1960 and the years to follow. His time in Germany would prove fruitful not only in the extension of his new network of friendships and collaborations but also in the development of his own distinct musical style, which moved further away from serialism and toward the indeterminate practices of composers like Cage and Young. For Patterson, the indeterminate practice not only offered a chance to extend conversations around improvisation that he had already begun investigating within the classical music sphere but also raised questions regarding the incorporation of action into the creation of musical composition. This was the very concept behind Paper Piece (1960), a work that he had composed in direct reaction to Stockhausen’s composition Kontakte (1958–60), which integrated electronic and instrumental music. Unable to travel to Pittsburgh for the holidays, Patterson sent his family a composed “action” to be performed for their amusement. He provided instructions for the performance of the work, number of participants, materials to be used, and actions to be taken, such as the tearing, crumpling, twisting, and rubbing together of discarded wrapping paper. The letter would serve as the first iteration of Paper Piece.

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Patterson would become a prolific composer during this time, creating a substantial body of scores for music and actions. He would debut many of his seminal early works in 1961 at Galerie Haro Lasch in Cologne, initially performing at exhibition openings. For Wolf Vostell’s exhibition, Patterson performed Paper Piece, Discoloage for Wolf Vostell (1961), Situations for Three Pianos (1960), and Duo for Voice and a String Instrument (1963), with William Pearson, a noted African American bass-baritone who taught at the Robert Schumann Conservatorium in Düsseldorf. Later he would present Variations for Double Bass (1963) for the opening of an exhibition of work by Mimmo Rotella and a short program of action compositions in conjunction with an exhibition of works by Daniel Spoerri, also at Galerie Haro Lasch. Patterson’s use of the annotated score format became more prevalent during this period, in part because it helped him to render notations of action visually as well as to emphasize the concept of chance and indeterminacy in the presentation of action as performance.

It would not be until the creation of Lémois (1960), however, that Patterson’s first opera, that he would successfully bridge sound with visual and kinetic material. His presentation at Studio Vostell in Cologne marked his first interdisciplinary project, integrating music provided by Patterson and Pearson; dance performed by Gisela Ohlroth and deconstructed paintings by Vostell. The success of Lémois propelled Patterson to extend his thinking beyond the confines of music and into areas of poetry, theater of spectacle, and the visual arts. To fully realize this interdisciplinary approach in his work, in 1961 he decided to leave Cologne for Paris, where he felt that he could extricate himself and his practices from the narrow framework of experimental music.

Radical Presence: The Birth of Fluxus

Commuting between Paris and West Germany, Patterson began working with George Maciunas to help organize and perform in a series of concerts and events in Germany and beyond. Maciunas, Lithuanian by birth and living in New York, already knew many of the artists who
The first of these concerts was Kleines Sommerfes: April John Cage, organized by Macunias and featuring performances by Patterson. The event was held at Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal. At the event, Macunias gave the lecture "Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry and Art," a kind of manifesto for new practices, as a preface to the evening's performances. In truth, the event, in Patterson's words, served as the "unoffical birth" of Fluxus.10 Patterson also performed at the Neo-Dada Music Concert at the Kammerspiele in Düsseldorf. The concert, organized by Paik, featured Patterson and Thomas Schirmit performing their own works as well as works by George Macunias, George Brecht, Dick Higgins, Yoshi Ichiyanagi, Jackson Mac Low, and La Monte Young. Drawing upon the constellation of artists whose works were featured at the events in Wuppertal and Düsseldorf as well as the counterfestival in 1960, Macunias would begin work on a much larger festival to be held in September. He enlisted the help of Patterson, Emmett Williams, and Wolf Vostell to construct the foundation for what would become the historic Internationale Festspiele neuer Gesellschaft, held at the Städtisches Museum in Wiesbaden in 1960. The presentation of an event at the municipal museum not only served to validate the ideas and practices of Fluxus but also shifted its ideology from the margins of a "subculture" to the center of high art. Keenly aware of this opportunity, Macunias sought to extend the presence of this radical group. He worked with Patterson, Williams, and Vostell to organize a festival to be held over two weeks. To promote the festival, Williams, then editor of the travel section of the U.S. Army's daily newspaper, Stars and Stripes, interviewed Patterson about the scheduled events. This interview would become the first article about Fluxus to be published. Similarly, a film documentation of Fluxus, news coverage by a local German television station, featured Patterson's performance of his composition Variations for Double Bass. Variations and Philip Corner's Piano Activities (1968) were provocative in that they directly challenged the traditions of classical music in their seemingly reckless abandon and their attacks upon the instruments themselves. The presentation of Patterson's composition Paper Piece would also prove significant in that, for the first time since Cabaret Voltaire (founded in Zurich in 1916), the great divide between audience and performer would be challenged.11 The work, once initiated by the five performers onstage, spread outward into the audience, who were no longer passive spectators but active participants—crumpling, tearing, folding, and waving paper. Patterson recalls: "It was by accident but was incorporated into the composition and subsequent events—a happy happenstance. The event, which began onstage, suddenly worked its way into the audience. And, so this is how it would be from that point forward."

Also happenstance was the use of printed copies of the now iconic manifesto written by Macunias. The text was read by Giuseppe Chiat at the beginning of the concert, and copies were then thrown into the audience, which subsequently used these sheets of paper to participate in Paper Piece. While Fluxus concerts continued throughout 1960 and into the following year, Patterson left Paris, returning to New York. Several of his compositions, however, continued to be performed in absence, including Paper Piece, along with Septet from Leons (1961), among others. In fact, in correspondence with Patterson from 1965, Macunias reported the success of finding the requisite teakettles and hot plates for presenting Septet from Leons for the Fluxus concert in Stockholm. While many of the artists working in Europe would also decide to return to the United States, specifically New York, for Patterson the sense of solidarity and shared purpose of his early years in Europe would never fully be reconstrued.
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Born in the State of FLUX in 20

I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background.
—ZORA NEALE HURSTON

Patterson returned to New York amid the backdrop of complex social, cultural, and political events both in Europe and at home. Germany had been divided by the Berlin Wall. The war in Vietnam, which began in 1959, was escalating. And European colonies in Africa were fighting, successfully so, for their independence. In the United States the civil rights movements was gaining momentum despite political setbacks. The violent responses to student sit-ins and voter registration events in the South had all but solidified the necessary political resolve to sign civil rights measures into law:

Patterson did not see his artistic engagement with Fluxus as antithetical to the social and political issues at home. After all, Macunias's early manifesto was predicated upon an ideology of revolution—social, cultural, and political. Breaking with the conventions of society was part and parcel of what this "radical" band of artists had set out to do, and their actions, while rooted in art, took aim at the greater sociopolitical and cultural hierarchies of the day. Although there was consensus and solidarity around opposition to the Vietnam War and other political causes of the time, that solidarity seemed to wane in the year of his return, especially in regard to civil rights.

The year 1963 was a major turning point in the civil rights movement. And while Patterson's decision to return to New York was not prompted by this critical moment in history, it became paramount for him to participate. This impetus, however, was not shared by those of his Fluxus colleagues who were living in the United States. This sorely disappointed Patterson, who for the first time felt the corporeal reality of his blackness among his liberal friends. Though he cited his sometime
discomfort as an "other" living in Germany in the early 1930s, he had always felt an unfettered comfort among this diverse and international conglomeration of artists with whom he shared a radical practice.

In the book Postface, Dick Higgins marvels at Patterson's ability not to be tethered to the preconceptions of race:

And so Patterson married and went to France, as he had gone from the U.S. before, where he did not want to be a "negro artist" but just one. Hell of a good one and, among other things, a negro. Only James Baldwin and Benjamin Patterson have ever attained that proportion. Actually Patterson's way of using periodic repeats and the blues feeling that this produced being so ingrained and natural struck me so much that when he first sent me a copy of methods and processes, I wrote to him and suggested he was a negro, but considering this does not get one very far with what he does. The main thing is that his work acquires a remarkable unity with our lives as we absorb and forget it. It seems oddly ethical, oddly concrete.30

Although Patterson was not bound by race, he was neither indifferent to its presence nor insulated from the racial upheaval at hand. He participated in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. He understood the ideology behind Fluxus to be about revolution, and since the March on Washington was about revolution, he was unclear as to why he stood alone. Ultimately issues of race forced a particular reality upon the artist, not unlike the feeling of being a "stranger in the village" described by James Baldwin.31 In "I'm Glad You Asked Me That Question," his self-interview published in the present volume, Patterson recounts the incident, adding, "But now I recognize that we simply did not share the deep-rooted

(albeit hidden) alienation that I lived with as the only black in this crowd."

As Higgins noted, Patterson did many in Europe and moved back to New York, and this forced another reality upon him, one of economics. Now a father, he determined that gainful employment was more of an imperative than taking down the status quo through the arts and actions of Fluxus. Although he would continue to participate in numerous events presented in New York under the banner of Fluxus (including meeting with George Brecht and Robert Watts to plan the Yarn events), Patterson soon withdrew from the group in search of an "ordinary life." Enrolled in Columbia University, he earned a master's degree in library science and worked as a reference librarian for the emerging performing-arts division of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. There, he began organizing "new music" concerts. The experimental nature of the music proved problematic, however, and the quiet life of a librarian that he envisioned was short-lived. Patterson's passion for new music and his ability to provide composers and musicians with opportunities to present their work resulted in his development of his own music management company, Ben Patterson Limited.

Patterson's passion and administrative acumen virtually ensured that the ordinariness that he sought in his professional career would be elusive, and he went on to develop an extensive professional resume as an arts administrator. He was author of a program for the New York State Council on the Arts to sponsor performances for "new music" composers; deputy director of the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of New York; director of several music organizations; director of development for the Negro Ensemble; professor and chairman of the Department of Performing and Creative Arts at State Island Community College; and arts consultant par excellence. Patterson was even principal fund-raiser for the historic meeting of the South African political arms of the African National Congress and the South West Africa People's Organization at Riverside Church in New York prior to the release of Nelson Mandela and the advent of the all-race elections in that country.

Despite the passing of twenty years and impressive professional achievements, Patterson's self-imposed "retirement" from Fluxus was nearing an end. Although he reemerged for the perforcunary anniversary events, it would not be until 1981, with his solo exhibition at the Emily Harvey Gallery in New York, that Patterson would resume his artistic career. The exhibition, simply titled Ordinary Life, was a mature articulation, drawing equally on the tongue-in-cheek Fluxus humor of the 1960s and a more assured awareness of the political and social dynamics of contemporary times. The intermedia nature of the exhibition— which included painting, sculpture, and installation work— also denoted a profound evolution beyond the artist's earlier forays into interdisciplinary practices.32 Early precedents included not only the artist's extensive performance work, which would become the bedrock of his practice, but also annotated scores, the opera Lemos, and seminal work initiated in Paris in 1965.33 Patterson's brief time in France would prove formative in that it allowed him the opportunity to fully explore conceptual practices that would integrate music and performance with literature and the visual arts. While the limited scholarship on Patterson's work has focused on his early compositions for action, which I will revisit here, it is equally essential to look at the artist's early and subsequent visual art practice.

Conceived Operations: Action Poems and Instructions
The opera Lemos broadened Patterson's conception of his work beyond the framework of music, although music would remain central to his practice. While the use of the libretto or operatic narrative would prove a natural extension of his work as a classical musician, it would also open the door for the artist to explore more specifically poetry, as a vehicle for his work. Conflating the device of the concrete poem, Patterson worked to use imagery to further reinforce instruct or to psychologically interrogate the image, idea, and ideology.34 In 1965, a Daniel Spoerri, he would self-publish a significant book of poetry, Methods.

Patterson's first poem appears in a book: the phrase "grasp here" is plotted, perhaps, by a right-hand corner, accompanied by a number from the lowest point of the corner, then turning the page from its upper right corner, and printing the page accordingly. In this book, he also included a poem in which the artist is sitting, reading a book. Within the book, no more than a few words or lines from the text are visible to the reader. The text is not visible, and the reader must rely on their own intuition and imagination to interpret it. This process encourages the reader to become more actively engaged in the creative process, and to imagine what the poem might say.

The artist's use of the word "instructions" in the title of the piece is significant, as it suggests a form of action that is open to interpretation and receptivity. The piece invites the reader to become actively involved in the creative process, and to imagine what the poem might say.

In Methods and Procedures, Patterson offers a reading from one of his own engagements: an active engagement with the process of creating "action poems." In addition, T's process, he would produce several other books, including a book of instructions titled A Case for Bombing Rauschenberg's ABC's (1961; p. 43). The artist worked with the artist Lourdes Cahn on the alternative arts magazine Kowtow. Cahn would produce two publications: a volume containing several poems from Methods is
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Constructed Operations: Action Poems and Instructions

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Patterson's first poem appears on the cover of the book; the phrase "grasp here" is positioned in the lower right-hand corner accompanied by a bold black line originating from the lowest point of the corner and acting to the left with an arrow at its tip, denoting the action of turning the page grasped between one's fingers to the left. This device is subtle in that it makes visible an action rarely dissected: the simple act of turning a page while reading a book. Within the book, short poems—some no more than a few words or lines long—ask the viewer to perform actions:

capture it

As with his scores for actions, Patterson grew prolific in creating "action poems." In addition to Methods and Processes, he would produce several artist's books, including Untitled (A Case for Bombing Paris) (c. 1962; p. 44) and ABC's (c. 1961; p. 43). The artist would also begin a collaboration with the artist Lourdes Castro, the founder of the alternative arts magazine KWY. Together they would produce two publications: a volume of the magazine featuring several poems from Methods and Processes and a
special edition called *Prints and Comments* (1962, p. 44), which featured new poems by Patterson in response to images created by Castro.

Patterson would also collaborate with Robert Filliou, a fellow artist within the constellation of Fluxus, in the presentation of his puzzle-poems. As the name suggests, puzzle-poems were at the simplest level puzzles. The viewer had to literally put the pieces of the poems together to read the text. These stand-alone pieces were made of cardboard, onto which words and images were collaged recto and verso. The collages were then cut into pieces like actual puzzles and were often placed in ready-made containers such as discarded food or other product packaging. The imagery—drawn from fashion magazines, newspapers, and printed advertisements—threw into sharp relief the burgeoning generational, social, and political divides of the 1960s. The works showed images of famine in Africa, shocking scenes from the Algerian War, fashion, disaffected youth, and political and religious leaders juxtaposed with collaged words and phrases drawn from similar sources, these images provide oblique commentary on the cultural, social, and political tensions of the day.

The puzzle-poems demanded not only a performative dimension but also engagement. Patterson's collaboration with Filliou in presenting the works paralleled the participatory constructs of his earliest work, *Paper Piece*, in that the work was put out into the public realm, where the spectator became a participant. In his self-interview, Patterson recalls: "It was only toward the end of 1962, when I was living in Paris, that I began to make visual objects, works that I called 'puzzle-poems.' Robert Filliou liked these works very much and offered me an exhibition of miniature 'puzzle-poems' in his Galerie Légitime, which was located on top of his head under his hat. Since such a gallery obviously had great mobility, we decided that for the 'opening' we should go to the public rather than asking them to come to the gallery." Patterson and Filliou traveled Paris over a twenty-four-hour period by foot, metro, and bus, encountering thousands and setting puzzle-poems from Filliou's beret-cum-gallery. Considered as a prelude to the upcoming Fluxus concert, the event would become Patterson's first exhibition in France. It also became a means of widely distributing his poems across the city to a group of people of diverse backgrounds and experiences.

After his return to the United States, Patterson made only a few more puzzle-poems but continued to create artist's books and a limited number of wall art pieces. His mail art, created by collaging printed matter, echoed the politics of the moment as well as the pulse of New York in the early 1960s. His artist's books, in contrast, initially created using repurposed cards-off, dustjackets, and discarded consumer items—served the duality of challenging the hierarchy of art through the use of everyday materials and allowed the artist (who had been trained as a musician) to create a significant body of visual art.

**Necessary Objects: Into and Out of Actions**

From the beginning of his artistic career, Patterson's work has existed primarily in the imaginary realm of performance. Much of the focus of his artistic production has been on scores for actions or documentation of these actions. As works such as the puzzle-poems and the artist's books indicate, however, his practice has also embraced the creation and use of the object. Drawing upon early twentieth-century concepts of the readymade, as popularized by Marcel Duchamp and Kurt Schwitters, Patterson has developed a substantial body of works, some designed in the service of and as relics of performative actions; others, as stand-alone objects.  

Early evidence of Patterson's interest in the object as residual or evidence of performance can be seen in several of his earliest action scores, including *Septet from Lemons* (1960), in which teakettles filled with water are heated to inflate balloons attached to the spouts. The inflated balloons were then targeted by a series of participants using darts. *Solo for Dancer* (1960) required a pulley with which a dancer would try to hoist herself up until exhausted, and *Pond* (1962, p. 93) employed mechanical toys on a grid drawn in chalk on a floor, to determine a sound, its duration, and its volume.

While there are precedents within the Fluxus movement for the creation of works as residues of actions, it is also productive to think of Patterson's work within the framework of Nouveau Réalisme. In Paris, Patterson formed a close relationship with Daniel Spoerri, who is associated with both Fluxus and Nouveau Réalisme. Spoerri was formally trained as a ballet dancer but soon turned to the avant-garde practices of the day. The two met almost daily over coffee or wine during Patterson's yearlong residence in France. It was Spoerri who encouraged him to publish *Methods and Processes* and who introduced him to Robert Filliou. The concept of distributing his puzzle-poems in a "happening," under the aegis of Filliou's Galerie Légitime, appropriately places Patterson's use of the readymade within the concentric spheres of these complementary practices. Many of the artists affiliated with Nouveau Réalisme rejected painting in favor of making assemblages from everyday objects, but above all their work is characterized by "the primacy... placed on the act, both in the production of objects for exhibition and the exclusion of performative actions."  

After his return from retirement, Patterson would continue to create objects both as props in the service of performances or actions and, conversely, "out of actions," as residuals of performances. The present exhibition includes several striking examples of works created out of actions. *Smoker's Rights* (1988, p. 78), for instance, is an object that was transformed into an artwork after the artist had completed a series of actions, such as removing a cigarette from its package, lighting it and then affixing it onto a bottle of nail polish and duration figure prominently, as does the impact of performance upon *Flying Boss* (1980–2002). was created upon the double bass over 1.  

After each performance, Patterson and the bass, creating an accumulated history. After the written narrative had consumed the instrument, he added wooden rails with small torches to simulate the formation into a trophy. In its press suspended from the ceiling to create instruments in flight (p. 105),.

Another work created out of an act after *Nana* (Jean-Paul Cula's One for Violin) (Patterson performed Paik's 1967 act Violin Solo. The violin is lifted slowly smashed upon a table or another so however, extends the life cycle of its fragments as still life. Closer to classical music, Patterson has composed musical instruments themselves. The sculptures Cello (Yellow) (Blue) (2005, p. 99) were composed birdhouses to push blooms, then add fire. While limited in their range of functional instruments, and Patterson's performance of the compositional (2001, p. 201). In 2004 Patterson emblazoned Siberian journey to celebrate his seventeenth top of Mount Fuji. The journey is a performance work, and the chronicled event in time cards, he chronicled his life in dated entries. The cards were set in this exist as a residual of the event (p. 101).
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After his return from retirement, Patterson would continue to create objects both as props in the service of performances or actions and, conversely, "out of actions" as residuals of performances. The present exhibition includes several striking examples of works created out of actions, Smoker’s Rights (1968, p. 29), for instance, is an object that was transformed into an artwork after the artist had completed a series of actions, such as removing a cigarette from its package, lighting it, drawing upon it, and then affixing it onto a bottle rack. In this work, action and duration figure prominently, as does the transformative impact of performance upon the object. Likewise, Flying Fish (1978–1982) was created after the artist performed upon the double bass over a period of five years. After each performance, Patterson would document the experience with a short narrative written directly onto the bass, creating an accumulated history of experiences. After the written narrative had consumed the surface of the instrument, he added wooden wings accessorized with small torches to simulate the double bass’s transformation into a turbot. In its present form, the piece is suspended from the ceiling to create the illusion of the instrument in flight (p. 105).

Another work created out of an action is Two for Violin after Nam June Paik’s One for Violin (1991, p. 87), in which Patterson performed Paik’s 1962 action score One for Violin Solo. The violin is lifted slowly overhead and then smashed upon a table or another solid fixture. Patterson, however, extends the life cycle of the object by assembling its fragments as still life. Closer to his own origins as a classical musician, Patterson has created a number of functioning musical instruments that he has used in performance. The sculptures Cello (Yellow), Cello (Red), and Cello (Blue) (2003, p. 99) were composed by assembling birdhouses to push brooms, then adding steel wires and frets. While limited in their range of notes, the cellos are functional instruments, and Patterson used them in his performance of the compositional work A Clean Slate (2001, p. 201). In 2004 Patterson embarked upon a trans-Siberian journey to celebrate his seventieth birthday on top of Mount Fuji. The journey itself became a performance work, and the chronicle of events, an object. Writing on time cards, he chronicled his monthlong journey in dated entries. The cards were set into a rack and left to exist as a residual of the event (p. 101).

Born in the State of FLUXus
2/4

CARRIE OLIVER
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In his early practice, Patterson also exhibited leanings toward creating objects to be used either as props for performances or as devices to engage the public in an action. Early precursors of his use of objects as devices for action and audience participation include his puzzle-poems as well as a series of objects that he would create prior to and in the aftermath of his "retirement." Beyond the puzzle-poems, Patterson created a body of work in the early 1960s under the rubric of Instructions. Instruction No. 2 (1964: p. 60), probably created for one of Maciunas's Fluxkites, provides a paper washcloth and novelty soap within a box. Upon the washcloth is stenciled, "Please wash your face." Patterson also created other instruction works, including a series of instructions in the form of dance diagrams. Instruction No. 7 (1966: p. 58) is a dance diagram composed of several large sheets of paper with the outline of shoes with stenciled numbers arranged across each sheet. Patterson and audience members performed this work at Maciunas's Flux Concert held at his Canal Street loft. Also included in this early body of work were a number of "examinations" that Patterson would ask his audience to take. Audience members were asked to "define and elaborate [on]" their attitudes toward death and dying, as well as art making as a durational, ephemeral, and elusive concept. Patterson would keep complete exams as documents of his performances, and several are presented in this exhibition. While his "examination" works were accumulated and presented as objects, Patterson employed other sculptural objects designed to engage the viewer. One such work is Uncle Ben's Art Shoppe (1992: p. 88), an old-fashioned toy dispenser that he repurposed as a mechanism to "sell" his art. Viewers were invited to insert a coin and turn the knob, and the machine would dispense an original work of art.

Patterson also created several large-scale installations that mimicked ordinary social contexts, an aspect of his practice that presages the asistic tendencies of the 1990s that Nicolas Bourriaud discussed under the rubric of "relational aesthetics." The first of these works was Ben's Bar, initially created at the Salvatore Ala Gallery in New York in 1990. The installation, a functioning bar, featured a wooden bar, padded wall panels, tables, chairs, and a three-panel mirror with one of the following phrases — "to be heard," "to be seen," and "to be there" — written in vinyl across each panel. Patterson also designed a drink menu and served as the bartender, engaging the public as they ordered their drinks. The bar was reinstalled at the Ala Gallery in 1994, before being shipped to Germany, where it was first installed at the Friends of Fluxus Society in Wiesbaden. After the society closed its doors, the work was relocated on permanent loan to the Nasaucter Kunstverein in Wiesbaden, where it continues to function as a bar. Ben's Bar typifies later performance works in the artist's repertoire, which are discussed later in this essay.

Another large-scale installation that typifies Patterson's eye toward participatory engagement is Blame It on Pittsburgh or Why I Became an Artist (1997: p. 93), which has been reconstituted for the present exhibition. To create this work, Patterson sat for nearly twenty-six sessions with a psychotherapist, who analyzed the artist's life for clues as to why he became an artist. Patterson tape-recorded the sessions and reconstituted the fragmented narratives, combining them with photographs from his life as a child, youth, and adult. Text and images were then silk-screened onto large Plexiglas panels and hung in a darkened room. Viewers are asked to take a flashlight and essentially walk through the mind of the artist.

Stand Alone: Readymades

In addition to objects created for and out of actions, Patterson has also produced a substantial body of stand-alone assemblages and readymades. Early examples of readymades can be seen in a series of books that he created in the late 1960s, such as Speed of Light (1965).

Volgograd (1966), and The Book of Genesis (1969: p. 44). Combining through junk shops and often simply walking through the streets of New York, Patterson found objects that he would later use in the creation of works. He would minimalize the found objects through the use of one or by juxtaposing the piece with another object: to create an illusion around it; an alternate narrative of its origins and purpose. This would be true of other books that the artist would create in the late 1960s, such as Joyce and Eugene (1968: p. 66), in which he combined two found diaries of young girls, placing them side by side to create the illusion that the girls knew each other and shared experiences. Nearly-Ninety (1986), consisting of jewelry placed in velvet bags and then placed in a tin reminiscent of a safe deposit box in a bank vault to give the illusion of wealth and preciousness (1990: p. 67), a small vase filed with vials. Perhaps the most visually arresting of sculptures that Patterson created — one that is as much a part of the readymade as is his body — is the one he made between 1980 and 1990, he ties his own fishing lures, arranging them as artworks, meticulously designed to communicate with, critique, and employ. In Hooked (1980), he used a tackle box as a tool to make the work becomes a self-portrait. Talbot's Trout Bag (1983: p. 74) contains fishing tackle handcrafted using found materials.
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were altered by adding found objects within and outside the frame of the text and images. The issues confronted within this body of work include immigration, unplanned pregnancies and women's reproductive rights, education, imperialism, and class structures. Among his most powerful works from this period is Hell on Wheels (1988), a child’s desk covered in padded camouflage cloth. The work is poignant in its support of education as a means to empower the masses.

Patterson pays homage to the avant-garde in A Short History of Twentieth-Century Art (1993, pp. 89–92), whose four panels with assembled objects and plastic lettering acknowledge the seismic shifts in art practice and the seminal artists who forever altered the various disciplines. It reads in part: “Since John Cage, this is music. … Since Merce Cunningham, this is dance.” More recently, Patterson has created other works that pay homage to his colleagues in the art world. Fluxus Constellation (2003, p. 100) celebrates the international artists who were part of the vast network of Fluxus. The artists are profiled by their astrological signs, which are silk-screened and stretched over domed lights. As with a constellation of stars, the lights alternate as if mimicking the pulsing patterns of stars in the heavens. In Fluxus Constellation, Patterson provides insight into his ability to use the ready-made or found object and transform it into something through subtle manipulation and by shifting its context through assemblage. In extending his practice, however, he also transformed an ordinary object into something extraordinary.

Transference: The Ordinary as Extraordinary

Patterson has not often been afforded the opportunity to work with precious materials, but when he has, the results have been nothing short of visually arresting. In the past decade he has worked in factories and in collaboration with artisans, particularly in Italy, to realize a number of projects. The first of these works was commissioned by Francesco Conz of Archivo Conz. Marble Hat (1991) is a panama hat that was meticulously crafted from the famed Carrara marble from the region of Verona, where Conz resided. Upon first glance the piece seems artificial, but the pristine quality of the white marble proves otherwise. The weighty marble stands in stark counterbalance to the virtual weightlessness of the straw ordinarily used to make such hats. In using marble mined from the same quarries that produced the material used by Michelangelo some five centuries earlier, Patterson transforms our perception of an ordinary object.

Over a period of years, Patterson has also collaborated with Massimo Lardi, a working in glass, as the two have created numerous works, two of which appear in this exhibition: Il primo sogno della ragazza (1994, p. 93) and A Nose for Wine (2008, p. 103). Patterson engaged twelve close friends in the creation of the latter work. Carefully cutting their noses with modeling clay, he then worked with his collaborator to create “poppies” porpoising the molds taken from each.

Recently Patterson was again consulting with Francesco Conz/Archivo Conz to create plastic toy tools as ready-made in silver. The transformation of a chiseling object placed in a jeweler’s universe into a piece that provokes the viewer to think in new ways regarding the materials and their use.

Performance Revisited

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Over a period of years, Patterson has also collaborated with Massimo Lardiano. Working in glass, two have created numerous works, two of which appear in this exhibition: *Il primo segreto della grappa* (1994; p. 93) and *A Nose for Wine* (2008; p. 101). Patterson engaged twelve close friends in the creation of the latter work. Carefully casting their noses with modeling clay, he then worked with his collaborator to create "portraits" in glass by incorporating the molds taken from each into wine bottles.

Recently Patterson was again commissioned by Francesco Conz/Archivo Conz to create an edition. Using plastic toy tools as ready-made molds, he cast them in silver. The transformation of a child's toy into a precious object placed in a jewel box underscores the artist's assured insight into society and its values. Tongue-in-cheek humor, dry wit, and haiku-style commentary on the social and political landscape characterize Patterson's work in all media, whether objects crafted in precious materials or ephemeral performances.

**Performance Revisited**

While a more thorough examination of Patterson's performance work and its legacy is presented by Charles Gaines in his essay for this catalogue, I would be remiss in not discussing performance within the larger context of Patterson's work. Throughout Patterson's career his performance work has been predicated on "scores," or "instructions," for action. While there are a few exceptions, it is important to note that at the outset of his career, terms like performance artist simply did not exist. What scholars and curators who focus on contemporary art have come to accept as a given was established in part because of Patterson's practice and the endeavors of those around him. His collection of scores—Benjamin Patterson: "The Black and White File": A Primary Collection of Scores and Instructions for His Music, Events, Operas, Performances, and Other Projects: 1958-1998, which he self-published in 1999 (p. 165) —provides a succinct overview of the artist's practice over a forty-year period. Upon review of this collection and in the context of subsequent work, several observations surface; the first of which is that one can easily trace Patterson's evolution as an artist, his interests and preoccupations, through the scores presented in the volume. This is markedly true in

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reviewing works from the early 1960s in which he fluctuates between graphic scores and scores for actions as a means to create indeterminacy, from the mid- to late 1960s, when his investigations into psychoanalysis further prominent, from the late 1980s, when scores were designed as an elaborate staging for public interventions or as devices to engage unsuspecting audiences, as in The Clinic of Dr. Ben (BM, MS) (1995; p. 201) and his travel agency, Reisebüro Fluss (1994) and from the late 1990s, which saw a return to iconic classical works. In the aforementioned works, Patterson uses commonplace venues to stage his artistic interventions. For The Clinic of Dr. Ben, the artist used a former doctor's office in downtown Wiesbaden to set up a makeshift practice. The public, some knowingly and others inadvertently, found themselves engaged in an artwork that included a brief examination and a very lengthy diagnosis that bordered upon the absurd. In Fluss Reisebüro, Patterson set up a tourist office in the window of PrivArt Gallery near the train station in Wiesbaden. Visitors to the gallery and those passing by could book travel to see Fluss sites in France, Germany, or Italy. The price points varied for each location, but the engagement was real, and those who booked travel were not merely treated to a tour but also given the opportunity to participate in various flux games and performances, such as the artist's action score for First Symphony (1964); in which, for a short period, guests were led blindfolded through the streets of Veonna.

A second observation is that Patterson has continued to experiment with modes and formats for presentation that determine not only duration, volume, and tempo, as in his earlier works, but also "place." Site-specificity becomes important as a political, social, and cultural device for framing the work. Köhler Koffler (1999; p. 98), a performance work, is predicated upon both place and time. The work was prompted by the political scandal involving illegal campaign contributions that snared former German chancellor Helmut Kohl and his conservative Christian Democratic Union. The work was conceived as a public intervention in which the artist walks the streets wearing a black fedora and overcoat and carrying a briefcase, advertising his "cleaning business" to those he encounters. Another work about place as figural and literal site of engagement is The Museum of the Unconscious (1998). This work, in which Patterson performs in the role of curator, offers members of the public the opportunity to donate their subconscious upon their deaths. With more than two hundred pledged to date, Patterson has dedicated not only a site in Namibia but also a second site in Tel Aviv and, more recently, a third, at the site of a condor's nest near the banks of Rio Candelaria in the Salta Province of Argentina. In conjunction with this exhibition, Patterson will create a fourth site in Texas and, during the period of the exhibition, accept applications from visitors who wish to make a donation. Past performance and part haiku to mortality and spirituality, The Museum of the Unconscious interrogates site as poetic and polydimensional but ultimately unknowing.

A final observation regarding Patterson's performance work is his return to his classical foundations as an act of reclamation. Notable in this respect is his reconfiguration and distillation of opera; beginning in 1994 with Maurice Ravel's Boléro, followed in 1997 by Giacomo Puccini's Madama Butterfly, Georges Bizet's Carmen, and Richard Wagner's Tristan und Isolde. In disseminating these iconic works, Patterson transforms their respective librettos into Cliffs Notes for performance. Each work, which portrays the dynamics of love and longing, is reduced to a duration between eight and twenty minutes, with Patterson, actors, and the audience participating in the performance. With these performances, Patterson continues the deconstruction of classical tradition that he began in the early 1960s in an effort to make these works accessible, even relevant to new generations. Ironically, the artist is also redefining these narratives to highlight their humble origins, which include short stories, folkloric myths, and vaudeville. In a very pragmatic way, Patterson's desire to deconstruct and dematerialize what could be deemed elite structures reasserts his practice as one still very deeply rooted in.

Within the structure of an ethics of dematerialization, Patterson disappears. He reemerges in republication, in enactment, in repertory, by way of the recording and its digital and cybernetic reproduction—the para-ontological remains of Patterson's performances, which take the form of a serving of and through remains, a continual serving of leftovers, of fucked-up, funny, generatively unfunky licks and pieces of licks. Matter is art's embarrassment; enjoyment is its shame. This double illegitimacy bestows so much of what is valorized under the rubric of Fluxus, which moves within a disingenuous forgetting of this fact, which is, in turn, disingenuously and sometimes profitably forgotten.

—FRED MOTEN

Benjamin Patterson is one of the great visionaries of our time. In the early 1960s, when he first emerged as a member of the avant-garde, his presence was radical not only because of his identity as an African American but also because of his innovations in music, action, and spectacle. Although Patterson was a participant in the inception and birth of Fluxus and a contributor to its development, he rarely figures prominently in books and articles on the movement published outside Germany. Nevertheless, his notion of "action as composition" was seminal in helping to define and shape our understanding of Fluxus, arguably the most groundbreaking experiment in the history of art. Fluxus gave rise to many of today's contemporary art practices—from Conceptualism to Minimalism to performance art to a range of multidisciplinary forms of art and beyond. Although his work in the 1960s provided a blueprint for practices, particularly in the area of social engagement within social practice, it has also helped to shape a generation of artists among them Clifford Owens, Rod Xaviera Simmons. Moreover, Patterson's manager and administrator, Peter Fendrich, who until his retirement in 1980, the totality of Fluxus. Patterson's art is of a significant role in ensuring his place in the history of art. As one of the last surviving members he has been an ambassador not only for Patterson but also for those who embody Fluxus. His relevance to the various art practices—particularly performance music and visual art—is in so, in an ironic twist, it is fitting that a artist's work should be mounted in his lifetime. In 1996, he refused to include him in its catalogue of the transgressive nature of his presence figure upon the stage. While Patterson was breaking the race barrier in U.S. art in the 1950s, he did help to usher in one of the most innovative, inventive, and influential modern and contemporary art movements.
form former German chancellor Helmut Kohl and his conservative Christian Democratic Union. The work was conceived as a public intervention in which the artists walked the streets wearing a black fedora and overcoat and carrying a briefcase, advertising his "cleaning business" to those he encounters. Another work about place as figurative and literal site of engagement is The Museum of the Subconscious (1996). This work, in which Patterson performs in the role of curator, offers members of the public the opportunity to donate their subconscious upon their deaths. With more than two hundred pledges to date, Patterson has dedicated not only a site in Namibia but also a second site in Tel Aviv and, most recently, a third, at the site of a condo's next door near the banks of Rio Candelaria in the Salta Province of Argentina. In conjunction with this exhibition, Patterson will create a fourth site in Texas and, during the period of the exhibition, accept applications from visitors who wish to make a donation. Part performance and part haiku to mortality and spirituality, The Museum of the Subconscious interrogates site as poetic and polydimensional but ultimately unknowing.

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Patterson's legacy, although still underappreciated, has been building gradually over the decades. The recognition that he has received is due in no small part to the exemplary efforts of scholars like fellow Fluxus artist Geoffrey Hendricks, who until his retirement persisted in teaching the totality of Fluxus. Patterson himself has also played a significant role in ensuring his growing recognition. As one of the last surviving members of its core group, he has been an ambassador not only for his own work but also that of others who embraced the practices of Fluxus. His relevance to and imprint upon contemporary art practice—particularly performance art, experimental music/sound art, and visual art—is unquestionable. And, in an ironic twist, it is fitting that a retrospective of the artist's work should be mounted in Houston, a city that in 1956 refused to include him in its orchestra because of the transgressive nature of his presence as a lone black figure upon the stage. While Patterson did not succeed in breaking the race barriers in U.S. symphonies in the late 1950s, he did help to usher in one of the most enduring, inventive, and influential movements in twentieth-century art. And that changed everything.
NOTES
2. See Paterson, “I'm Glad You Asked Me That Question,” in this volume.
3. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
7. Paterson recalled that it took approximately two hundred hours of rehearsal time for the instrumentalists to master Stockhausen's Kontakte (conversation with the author, March 9, 2005).
8. Both productions were created by Irar Rutkowsky.
9. Hannah Higgins, Fluous Experiences (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 55. While Higgins mentions Paper Piece, the work is not analyzed in light of Philip Corner's Piece-Articulated. The analysis, which focuses on creating a visual gestalt of action and the subject-object relationship, is, however, apropos.
10. See John Rauschenberg of Fluous Stories (from 1961 to 2001). Rauschenberg and Walker, 2000 (compact disc), Paterson recalls his involvement with Rauschenberg and their work together leading up to and during the mounting of the International Festival, the first to be held in Britain.
11. For information on Zorn and Oda and the precursors to the telephone music in Weideman's piece, see “Im Glad You Asked”.
14. See Paterson, “I'm Glad You Asked.” Subsequent conversations with the writer reinforced his surprise and disappointment at the lack of involvement of Fluous in the establishment of equal rights for blacks living in the United States.
16. See James Baldwin, Notes of a Native Son (Boston: Beacon, 1955), especially the essay “Strangers in the Village,” in which Baldwin11 relates his experience of being the only black living in a rural frontier village. The psychological poetics is poetic. While Paterson was not living among strangers in the rural towns of the Alps, he does understand that his colleagues could not be stopped by the issues despite their liberal leanings.
17.Intermediate, a term coined and popularized by Dick Higgins, refers to works that combine two or more disciplines.
18. Paterson recalled that while he had created several works that incorporated the speech technique, he never embraced it as anything other than musical in scope (conversation with the author, February 10, 2003).
19. In writing about Paterson's poetry, I am focusing on the work that predated the period in question. These were exceptions, and other hybrid forms, including the poem-score itself, 11. a Regrammed History (Regrammed) by Jackson Mac Low (1964—66), The "human voice" completes the work, which was conceived to be spoken.
20. Benjamin Paterson, conversation with the author, August 7, 2005. Paterson would later like these action poems to his compositions for action.
22. Ibid., 35.
23. In a number of conversations Paterson referred to his examinations as "event scores." I have, however, framed the actual event and the completed responses of the participants as "objects" or residues from the event.
25. This quotation was taken from initial notes for the essay written by Fred Allen for this catalogue. It has been used with the permission of the author.
26. Paterson wrote in regard to his exhibition in Houston: "Recently, I remember that of all the twelve to twenty conductors of American orchestras for whom I auditioned in the Spring of 1976, only Leonard Slatkin—then conductor of the Houston Symphony Orchestra—really tried to make a difference. Asking me to play for nearly 4 hours (a normal audition is limited within fifteen minutes) in his 5th Ave, New York apartment, Slatkin said, 'I really like your playing and want you to come to Houston. But, you know we have a problem. However, I am going back to Houston to fight with the Board of Directors because we can't solve the problem.' Thus, over the next months I received several telegrams, saying 'We have another Board member on our side'... until a telegram in late May reading 'Very sorry. Late night the Board voted 'No.' I was, however, the last telegram I received from the Maestro. In late July I received another telegram, asking me to 'reconsider my decision not to join the Houston Orchestra' and that he was still looking for a double-bassist. It seems that the Maestro had a fascination for orchestral sound and color, but was usually mentally 'color-blind.' He had truly forgotten the 'problems' about which I had to remind him in a return telegram. The 'error,' of course, is this retrospective in Houston a half-century later."
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16. See John Patterson, "Fluxus
Scores (from 1917 to 1965),"
Rochael Vandermark, 2000
(anonymous). Paterson
courtesies his involvement with
MacLeish and their work
together leading up to and
during the mounting of the International Festival
Neutered Musik in Weihbaden.

17. See information on Zurich
and Stuttgart and the preoccupations of
patronymic art, before Fluxus,
see Rudolf Fritzie, The Art of
Neutered: 1913 to Now (San
Francisco: San Francisco Museum of
Modern Art, 2000).

18. Benjamin Paterson, conversa-
tion with the author, August 1, 2010.

19. Zina Neale Harrison, "How It
Feels to Be Colored Me" in The
Black American Essay of the
Century, ed. Cary C. Oates and

20. See Paterson, "I'm Glad You
Asked." Subsequent conversations
with the artist reinforced his
surprise and disappointment at
the lack of involvement of Fluxus in
the issue of equal rights for
blacks living in the United States.

21. Dick Higgins, Postcard (New
York: Something Else Press, 1964),
38-40.

22. See James Baldwin, Notes of a
Nigger Sat (Boston: Beacon, 1964),
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32
Sophisticated Refuse: Benjamin Patterson's Cool Works on Paper

Unassuming and eminently disposable, paper is an unlikely material to select as a signature medium. Yet twentieth-century artists have embraced paper for books and prints, installations and performance. Compared with major works collected by museums, sold at auction, and shown in galleries, paper makes a direct, unmonumental statement that is emblematic of the new. Among artists associated with Fluxus in the early 1960s, Benjamin Patterson was an early adopter of paper. He used it in performances and as a performative medium for instruction sequences and events. The works employing paper parallel his musical compositions, often these came together in the same piece.

Defining Words

The two heteronymous words sophisticated and refuse work well to describe Patterson’s mindful selections of materials. They acknowledge the ambivalent content he presents and the overarching importance of methods and processes. Sophistication, not a pure or original state, conveys seasoned knowledge with some extra wrinkles that imply feigning or adulteration. Particularly in the book trade, to sophisticate—the last syllable is pronounced “Kate”—means to alter, doctor, or make up copies, which then lose their authenticity as historical objects. In terms of Patterson’s work, it points to his subtle layers of meaning beyond a facade of simple materials and basic presentations.

Refuse is both a noun and a verb. The noun refers to something that is left over or discarded. As a verb, to refuse is to deny or be unwilling to comply. It positions Patterson’s negating response to traditional art, music, literature, and performance. Unlike sophisticated, neither use of refuse conjures images of the pleasurable or the polite. Patterson’s material could easily come from the wastebasket or go into it. But his selection of refuse is purposeful, a refusal to engage with major media. It is both a challenge and a discipline to make something from whatever is on hand. Notably morose, his works on paper could appear to be superficial and spontaneous. Privileging process, the activity of art itself is transformative. Works are frequently on paper that was formerly something else: a magazine, a newspaper, a postcard. There is an implicit change of identity, but it is hardly ever like a butterfly emerging from a cocoon or the male peacock flourishing his magnificant tail. Rather, Patterson’s cutouts from popular magazines are quietly provocative; occasional suggestive snippets are meant to disturb the decorum. As with Patterson’s instruction pieces, made to be performed or just to be pondered, simply viewing his works sets the mind on a path. These works are sophisticated because they seem composed, never just thrown together. They seem so cool and casual that they make you out in a positive way.

ABCs

As a serviceman stationed in Germany, Patterson used a French-language children’s ABC coloring book as a scrapbook in which he filed and pasted pictures and ephemera alphabetically. Collecting material for the book, Patterson engaged in an “old-lady” pastime, clipping articles or columns from magazines and newspapers. If you know your ABCs, it means that you know what you’re doing. Inside the cover of the coloring book is a printed sheet on which the following phrase is repeated in lines of type that get progressively smaller: “Der Erlösendes durch die Gestaltung ab” (The success of the endeavor depends upon design). Each opening presents its own picture cutouts, with collaged comments on a small composition painted in, illustrating the range of Patterson’s influences in his late twenties. ABCs (c. 1961, p. 49) portrays the array of media that fed into his work. He used old postcards: “Berceuse” (Happy Birthday) shows a boy holding a large pink bouquet pasted on a foldout of the Alps from Paris Match paired with a poem in German titled “Für Benjamin” dated July 1961. On the verso of B is pasted another postcard: “Bébé à vendre” (Baby for sale). The page for the letter J holds a small collage book with photos of Johnny Holloway, the French popular singer. On V is pasted a handwritten text for Patterson’s project: Roderic’s Ants (1960–63) on the back of one of the images of ants from the project. This, “A six minute activity of a number of ants in a park in Düsseldorf, Germany in August afternoon is represented through graphic reduction of a series of photographs recording this event.” Reuse and revision are ongoing compositional strategies.

P is for Patterson

The page for P has printed phonetic p pr—p—p—p—p. Perfect for Ben¬
ties, sounds are seen on paper. Picot show a father, labeled in red crayon (Picasso). Clipped texts include: “pour me sleeper,” “pouvoir garder la ligne” (to avoid des mains irrisistibles)” (To have “Post-Office Department” is pasted a page.

Postal officials are working on a p

vors of a nuclear attack locate it in a large building. Survivors would register by pa

address. A central office would be able to answer individual queries about all registered survivors.

En français, P is for palette and papier (collage of a painting for use with miniature so that only silhouettes of autos would ride from Patterson’s Project 4386, an 8 typed text: an anti-passive-consumptive act a restatement of cause and effect by probability.

The image at center left shows the holding swords on a streetside, n ink. The caption for the central solid green for all other colors ———> to the right ———>.

The ABC’s scrapbook illustrates Pat

sinuously simple and arcane. p

Unlike many of his Fluxus colleagues and worked day jobs in the nine-

library work, administration, and fi

that have supplied subject ma

Kahn Reed
Ph's for Patterson

The page for P has printed phonetic pronunciations: pi—pro—poon—pur. Perfect for Ben’s acoustic propensities, sounds are seen on paper. Pictures from magazines show a father, labeled in red crayon “Papa,” and “Pablo” (Picasso). Clipped texts include: "pour rester jeune" (to stay young), "pour garder la ligne" (to hold the line). "Pour avoir des mains invisibles" (To have invisible hands).

"Post-Office Department" is pasted in the center of the page.

Postal officials are working on a plan to help survivors of a nuclear attack locate family and friends. Survivors would register by past and present address. A central office would collate the data, be able to answer individual queries about the whereabouts of all registered survivors.

En français, P is for palette and papillon. Paste-ins include a collage of a parking lot with miniature car shapes cut out so that only silhouettes of autos remain and an excerpt from Patterson’s Project 458, an 816-by-1 sheet with typed text:

"an anti-‘passive-consumptive’ action
a restatement of cause and effect as amended by probability"

The image at center left shows three collaged soldiers holding swords on a seasaw, with notations in pen and ink. The caption for the central soldier reads: "to the left; for all other colors ....... to the right; for blue eyes only ......... ."

The ABC’s scrapbook illustrates Patterson’s connections: simultaneously simple and arcane, personal and political. Unlike many of his Fluxus colleagues, he has always lived and worked day jobs in the nine-to-five world, doing library work, administration, and fund-raising activities that have supplied subject matter and media.
compilation of ABCS forecasts the paper formats that he would use in later publications and performances. Coincidentally, ABCS now shares the same archival box in the Getty collections with a sketchpad titled Untitled (A Case for Bombing Pause) (c. 1962, p. 44). Combining brief observations with life-like photographical images, Patterson’s seven-page text points out beneficial effects of suspending military activities for victims, soldiers, and their families. At the end of the sketchbook is a score with a photocopied one-page explanation, “Six transparent sheets having single straight lines, five having points,” and a six-page handwritten score for amplifier, sarangi, and tape recorder.

Acoustics and Surprising Sounds

Words, images, and music flow together. All Patterson’s work is informed by his natural talent for music and his engagement with sound. He plays the double bass, and he is deeply absorbed in composition. In an interview recorded in 2002 in Wiesbaden, Germany, he reflects on early Fluxus performances, stressing that many of the artists involved were trained musicians, and emphasizes the place of music in his own work. On the CD he has a bad cold, so there is an additional chance element of sound—throat clearing, coughing. The conversation proceeds in composition with a recording of Richard Strauss’s Ein Heldenleben (A Hero’s Life). In the liner notes, Patterson mentions that the classical piece was his selection. At a particularly loud moment of Strauss, Patterson speaks to the question of whether his works are provocative, referring to Paper Piece. “If you announce that this is a quintet for paper and start tearing up paper or throwing it at the audience, you will be surprised. My initial interest in making this piece was the sound of paper which was an extraordinarily variable element.” He crumples a piece of paper loudly into the microphone, producing crackling sounds that drown out Strauss.

Normally the bass player provides rhythm and color in the background. For Fluxus performances and other events, Patterson foregrounds his role as a composer and musician, often playing solo. Sound contributes an essential element, often paired with words. Patterson’s compositions are not electronic or symphonic but rather emphatically acoustic, whether they employ the sounds of the double bass, crumpled paper, or dripping water. Describing the goal of Fluxus in the same interview, Patterson expresses protest against materialism in art. It is not about buying and selling but about ideas or changing people’s ideas. Thus manifestations of Fluxus are ideally immaterial. The model is a performance or event that could be experienced by a live audience with whom the performers could engage spontaneously.

P is for Paper

Patterson’s Paper Piece has become a canonical example of a paper performance. His handwritten score, penned in Cologne and dated August 1960, details the elements of the paper-based work for five performers and various kinds of paper, including newspaper, tissue, heavy drawing paper, cardboard, and three paper bags. Sounds of paper are organized by timings, designated by quantities of paper sheets, with onomatopoeic names:

- 7 sheets…“Shake, Break, Tear”
- 5 sheets…“Crumple, Rumble, Bumble”
- 3 sheets…“Rub, Scrub, Twist”
- 3 bags…inflated by mouth “Poo, Pop”

Patterson notes that performers can select their materials and arrange the sequence of events. “Dynamics” should be carefully improvised within the material boundaries of the approximate “RF” (an air sound) of the “Pop” and the “ppp” of “The Twist.” Similar alphabetical figures for the sounds appear again in the 1960 visual score for String Music.

The title of Paper Piece—especially its German title, Papierstück für fünf Spieler (Paper Piece for Five Players)—echoes those of earlier classical musical compositions as well as works by Fluxus colleague Philip Corner’s Piano Activities (1960) and Thomas Schmit’s Piano Piece No. 1 (1962), as well as Robert Watts’s Piece with Balloon (c. 1962). As with George Brecht’s Drip Music (1960), its focus is elements of sound, both previously designated and performance-specific. Paper Piece is a short concert of tearing, crumpling, and throwing paper. The artwork, paper, is both the instrument and the source of sound, and is eventually obliterated as it is thrown out to the audience. Carefully timed, Paper Piece is a transactional event, its sounds cease when the allocation of paper has been expended. This early performance points to one of the principal ways Patterson composes for paper, using it as a medium of exchange with the audience. Unlike parallel performances in which the audience watches occasionally somnolent activities of the Fluxus artists on stage, such as pissing into a pail, Patterson’s events engage the audience. The pieces are designed to participate and generally share substance and content.

Patterson’s compositions did accumulate. At the 1988 Festival Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Paper Performance, dramatically introduced and art critic Jean-Pierre Wilhelm: “The concert begins. Two performers came on stage with paper; sounds of paper crumpling coming from behind a screen. The down at the same time as sheds a light on the audience from behind sheets with a text, taken from Gete of manifesto, were dumped on
early Fluxus performances, stressing that many of the artists involved were trained musicians, and emphasizes the place of music in his own work. On the CD he has a bad cold, so there is an additional chance element of sound—throat clearing, coughing. The conversation proceeds in competition with a recording of Richard Strauss's Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life). In the liner notes, Patterson mentions that the classical piece was his selection. At a particularly loud moment of Strauss, Patterson speaks to the question of whether his work are provocative, referring to Paper Piece. "If you announce that this is a quintet for paper and start tearing up paper or throwing it at the audience, you will be surprised. My initial interest in making this piece was the sound of paper which was an extraordinarily variable element." He crumples a piece of paper loudly into the microphone, producing cracking sounds that drown out Strauss.*

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Surprising Sounds

Surprising Sounds and music flow together. All Patterson's ed by his natural talent for music and his rich sound. He plays the double bass, and he's also a musician. In an interview in Wiesbaden, Germany, he reflects on

of the paper-based work for five performers and various kinds of paper, including newspapers, tissue, heavy drawing paper, cardboard, and three paper bags. Sounds of paper are organized by timings, designated by quantities of paper sheets, with onomatopoetic names:

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Patterson's compositions did appear in other circumstances. At the 1961 Festschrift Fluxus at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Paper Piece was part of a performance, dramatically introduced by the gallery director and art critic Jean-Pierre Wilhem: "Should a manifesto be launched today? It would be too beautiful, too easy. The heroic epoch of manifestos—Dada, Surrealism, . . . is well past. . . . no longer a matter of yelping, it's a matter of mattering." The concert began with Paper Piece. Two performers came on stage carrying large sheets of paper; sounds of paper crumpling and tearing were heard, coming from behind a screen. The large sheets dropped down at the same time as sheets and balls were thrown out to the audience from behind the screen. Printed sheets with a text, taken from George Maciunas, a kind of manifesto, were dumped on the audience.
the world of bourgeois sickness, 'intellectual', professional & commercialized culture. PURGE the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionistic art, mathematical art. PURGE the world of 'EUROPEANISM! . . . PROMOTE A REVOLUTIONARY FLOOD AND TIDE IN ART. Promote living art, anti-art, promote NON-ART REALITY to be grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals . . . FUSE the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutions in unified front & action' Printed matter was the signature material. Following Patterson's piece, Wolf Vostell presented Devisalge: Kienes, and Maciunas and others performed In Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti, reading scrolls of typed paper in performers' hands.

Not infrequently Patterson introduces a common format in a unique presentation. A world map shows up in Variations for Double Bass (1961), serving as a location device for this iconic musical performance. Patterson's typescript score presents an array of ways to use paper acoustically.

1. Unfold a world map on floor. Circle with pen, pencil, etc. city in which performance is being given. Locate end pin of the bass in circle . . .

2. weave strips of gold papers through the strings . . .

3. XI. agitate strings with . . . 2. corrugated cardboard, a newspaper holder (wooden sticks used by libraries) filled with tissue paper, newspaper . . .

4. toilet paper, etc. . . .

5. XV. lay bass on side . . . (fan with Japanese or Spanish hand fan . . .

6. XV. peg-box previously prepared with . . . colored paper . . . (and 3) Choose texts or pictures from newspaper, magazine, etc., crumple and place in peg box.

In the final section (XVII), "the performer should address, write message (reading aloud) and stamp picture postcard. Post in Envelope."

Paper works and musical compositions fall into two types. Paper Piece, String Music, and Variations for Double Bass, among others, are performances intended for an audience. Patterson's scores and instructions for these works are composed graphically, as visual works on paper. Other works, like ABC's, are made for single viewers, possibly only Ben Patterson. Scores, poems, and collages are texts to be read; meditative words or visual poems in boxes and games in envelopes stimulate participation and encourage reflection. Even the compilation title—Benjamin Patterson: "The Black and White File: A Primary Collection of Scores and Instructions for His Music, Events, Operas, Performances, and Other Projects: 1958-1968 (p. 150)—is a graphic reference to the colors of printed matter as well as a double entendre concerning race. String Music has elaborations in pen and ink, and Duo for Voice and a String Instrument (1961) is embellished with abstract notes. Photographs are not a frequently used medium, but for Aris, a 1960 composition of Benjamin Patterson to be used in conjunction with 1963 compositions of George Maciunas, Patterson provides visuals in the form of nine-by-twelve photographs, each with twenty to thirty tiny ants. Patterson rarely forgets an opportunity for humor, and his life-size insect portraits might also be seen as performance documentation.

P is for Puzzle
Putting together the assembled collages of a two-sided jigsaw puzzle, a puzzle-poem (1964) reveals a pruriens undercurrent. On one side, text borrowed from an advertisement is paired with an image of a diver circled by a shark: "That feel-better feeling is just a swallowed away. On the reverse, scenes of rockers and a stripper kneeling in front of a man are punctuated by a printed clipping on the Christian symbolism of a German abbey altar. The activity of facing together the pieces of the puzzle-poem until it is legible ends in an epiphany that the subject could be sex.

Patterson in the Archive
The range of Patterson's paper works is seen in the archive that the collector Jean Brown acquired from him in 1978.*
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The range of Patterson's paper works is seen in the archive that the collector Jean Brown acquired from him in 1972.
NOTES

I would like to thank my former research assistant Nadine Horen for her research connections, suggestions, and assistance with obtaining photographs.

1. A hestonim is one of two or more words that have the same spelling but differ in pronunciation and meaning.

2. Emphasizing their importance, Paterson gave the title leadership to his solo work.

3. This seems to be a direct borrowing from John Cage’s Variations form it.


5. Jean Brown Papers (accession no. 30, folder 22, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles), includes the handwritten score and printed ephemera for the event performed in Cologne, September 1960.


8. The complete text is in at least two copies at the Getty Research Institute and the Silverman Fluxus Collection at the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

9. Jean Brown to Benjamin Paterson, October 19, 1959. Ever the enthusiastic collector, she writes: “I do, of course, want everything you can send to me.

My Fluxus archive is growing very rapidly. I saw George Maciunas twice last week and he is helping me enormously.” See also letters from Paterson dated October 13, 1973, and June 2, 1978, and on December 19, 1978, a letter from Jean Brown concerning her “going through” his papers. This collection is now at the Getty Research Institute.

10. Reginald Howard. Fragments (for Jackson Mac Low) (1916–46); p. 13, with works for servants’ status (such as deceased and discharged) organized in blocks of eight.

11. Such as American Studies, with its difficult questions typed on five-by-eight-inch note cards in a dark brown file envelope.

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collection is now at the Getty
Research Institute.

10. Regimental History, Fragments
   (for Jackson Mac Low) (c. 1967-69;
   xii, 55), with words for service men's
   status (such as "enlisted" and
   "discharged") organized in blocks of
   eight.

11. Such as American Studies, with
    its difficult questions typed on
    five by eight-inch note cards in a
dark brown file envelope.

12. The Vital Jean Brown Papers
    [1963-1975], from the Stedler 32,
    Getty
    Research Institute.

Born in the State of FLUXiae:
Chance Operations: Instructions, Poems, and Books

ABC's, c. 1961
Children's coloring book, ink, crayon, collage
13 x 10⅞ x ⅜ inches
Gerry Research Institute, Los Angeles
ABC's, c. 1961
Children's coloring book, ink, crayon, collage
13.1 x 14.8 x 0.4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Prints and Comments (Prints, Lourdes Castro; Comments, Benjamin Patterson), 1962
Handmade paper, vellum, ink
10 x 8 / 8 x 7 inches

Untitled (A Case for Bombing Pause), c. 1962
Spiral-bound notebook, ink, crayon, collage
10 x 8 3/4 inches

Un seul Dieu adoreras, et aimeras parfaitement

C'est au chocolat, c'est un petit gâteau.

Puzzle-Poems, 1962
Collage on card, metal box
Box 9 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches
Puzzle poems 3 1/4 x 4 5/8 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection

Born in the State of FLUXus

CHANCE OPERATIONS
untitled (A Case for Bombing Pause), c. 1962
Spiral-bound notebook, ink, crayon collage
11" x 8 1/2" inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Puzzle Poems, 1962
Collage on card, metal box
Box: 7 x 3 1/4 x 3 1/4 inches
Puzzle-poem: 3 1/4 x 4 1/4 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Flussa Collection Gift
Puzzle Poems, 1962
Collage on card, wooden box (recto/verso)
Wooden box: 5 1/2 x 7 1/4 x 1 1/2 inches
5-piece puzzle poem: 6 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist

Puzzle Poems, 1962
Collage on card, wooden box (recto/verso)
Wooden box: 8 x 2 1/3 x 1 3/4 inches
5-piece puzzle poems: 5 1/2 x 4 inches
Courtesy the artist
1962
wooden box (recto/verso)
2⅞ x 1⅞ inches
11 6 x 5 inches

Puzzle Poems, 1962
Collage on card; wooden box (recto/verso)
Wooden box: 8 x 2½ x ⅛ inches
3 piece puzzle-poem: 5½ x 4 inches

Born in the State of FLUXus

CHANCE OPERATIONS
A Volume of Collected Poems, Volume 1, Poem 2, 1962
Collage on card, yogurt cups, plastic bag
Plastic bag: 14 1/8 x 9 3/4 inches
Card: 3 1/8 x 2 inches
Apricot: 3 1/2 x 2 inches
Bananas: 3 1/2 x 3 inches
Cherries: 3 1/2 x 3 inches
Framboise: 3 1/2 x 3 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York;
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Collage on card, paper and linen boxes, plastic bag
Plastic bag: 14 1/8 x 9 3/4 inches
Card: 3 1/8 x 8 inches
Linen box: 3 1/8 x 2 1/2 inches
8-piece puzzle-poem: 17 1/2 x 8 inches
15-piece puzzle-poem: 10 1/2 x 6 1/2 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York;
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift
A Volume of Collected Poems, Volume 7, Poems
32, 33, 34, 44 and 56, 57, 1962
Collage on card, paper boxes, plastic bag.
Plastic bag: 14 1/4 x 9 3/8 inches
Card: 3 3/8 x 8 1/4 inches
Tablet chocolate box: 7 3/8 x 7 3/8 x 3 1/2 inches
9-piece puzzle box: 3 3/4 x 3 3/4 inches
Pocket puzzle poem: 2 3/8 x 3 1/2 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York,
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Regimental History: Fragments
(for Jackson Mac Low), c. 1962–63
Ink on paper
10 x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Collected Poems, Volume 7, Poems
and 36, 37, 1962
open box, plastic bag
a 96 inches
b 15 x 15 x 17 inches
c 150 x 150 x 17 inches
d 150 x 150 x 17 inches
e 150 x 150 x 17 inches
f 150 x 150 x 17 inches

Regimental History: Fragments
(for Jackson Mac Low), c. 1962-63
ink on paper
11 x 8½ inches
Gerry Research Institute, Los Angeles
UNTITLED (who taught you to think like that?),
c. 1962–63
Printed ink on paper
11 x 8½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Game: Three Capacities and One Inhibition, c. 1963
Index cards, collage, stamped ink, marker
4 index cards, 3 x 5 inches each
Envelope 3½ x 6¾ inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

BORN IN THE STATE OF FLUXUS
52

CHANGE OPERATIONS
53
UNTITLED
who taught you to think like that?,
c. 1962–63
Printed ink on paper
11 x 8 ½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Game: Three Capacities and One Inhibition, c. 1963
Index cards, collage, stamped ink, marker
4 index cards, 3 x 5 inches each
Envelope: 5 ½ x 6 ½ inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Gilbert and Lily Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift
A Study, 1963
Carbon copy on onion skin paper
2 pages, 11 x 8½ inches each
Gert Ryen Research Institute, Los Angeles

Notes: Instructions for the use of a new musical instrument, c. 1963
Typed ink on paper
2 pages, 10 x 8½ inches each
Gert Ryen Research Institute, Los Angeles

Untitled (Dixie Beer), 1963
Typed ink and collage on index card
3 x 5 inches
Staatliche Stuttgart, Hans Sohn Archive

Untitled (Goldwater Can't Win), 1963
Typed ink and collage on card stock
7 x 2 inches
Staatliche Stuttgart, Hans Sohn Archive
Notes: Instructions for the use of a new musical instrument, c. 1963
Typed ink on paper
2 pages, 8x10 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Watch Me, c. 1963
Stencil and marker on index card
3 cards, 3 9/16 × 4 9/16 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

What else is necessary?, 1963–64
Ink on index card, envelope
5 cards, 3 × 4 9/16 inches each
Envelope: 3 9/16 × 6 1/4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Untitled (If You Think This Is a Dream), c. 1963
Typed ink and collage on paper
3 9/16 × 6 inches
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Hans Sohn Archive

Untitled (Sorry I Missed It), 1963
Paper collage, ink, envelope
2 pages, 3 9/16 × 9 inches each
Envelope: 3 9/16 × 9 inches
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Hans Sohn Archive
a Think This Is a Dream, c. 1965
gel on paper
art, Hanns Sohm Archive

Watch Me, c. 1963
Stencil and marker on index card
3 cards, 2 3/4 x 4 3/4 inches each
Gecy Research Institute, Los Angeles

Untitled (Sorry I Missed It), 1963
Paper collage, ink, envelope
2 pages, 11 5/8 x 8 7/8 inches each
Envelope: 4 3/4 x 6 1/2 inches
Saatgalerie Stuttgart, Hanns Sohm Archive

What else is necessary?, 1963–64
Ink on index card, envelope
5 cards, 2 3/4 x 4 3/4 inches each
Envelope: 3 1/2 x 6 1/4 inches
Gecy Research Institute, Los Angeles
Instruction No. 1 (Steps 1–4), 1964
Ink and rubber stamp on construction paper
37½ x 26½ inches (frame)
30½ x 20¾ inches (sheet)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York:
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift
Instruction No. 2 (Please Wash Your Face), 1964
Plastic box, guest soaps, paper hand towel with stamped ink
Box: 3½ × 3½ × 4½ inches
Unfolded towel: 16½ × 4½ inches
Soap: 7½ × 1¾ inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York:
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Puzzle-Poem, 1964
Collage on board, plastic bag
Bag: 14¼ × 9⅝ inches
Puzzle poem: 10½ × 9⅜ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
2 (Please Wash Your Face), 1964

Collage on board, plastic bag
Bag: 11 3/4 x 9 1/8 inches
Puzzle-poem: 16 x 10 1/4 inches

Born in the State of FLUXus

60
Troubles that begin with harsh toilet tissue—often end on the operating table.

Untitled (Scott Tissue), c. 1964
Photocopy paper collage
8½ × 14 inches
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Hans Salton Archive

It's Vital, 1965
Ink on index card, envelope
5 cards: 3½ × 5 inches each
Wrapper: 3½ × 3½ inches
Envelope: 3½ × 6½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Troubles that begin with harsh tissue—often end on the operating table

Untitled (Scott Tissue), c. 1964
Photocopy paper collage
30% x 14 inches
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Hanne Sohn Archive

It’s Vital, 1965
Ink on index card, envelope
3 cards, 5 3/4 x 4 1/4 inches each
Wrapper: 3 1/4 x 7 3/4 inches
Envelope: 3 1/4 x 7 3/4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Speed of Light, 1965
Metal, scale, marker, braided, mixed media
1 1/4 x 3/4 x 3/16 inches
Collection Cinemex Guatler, Genoa, Italy

The Book of Genesis, 1969
Leather, antique photo book, photographs, ink
6 x 4 1/2 x 3/8 inches
Collection Enzo Garzotto, Genoa, Italy

Valigetta, 1966
Box, antique glass bulbs, cut photo negatives, gloves, ink
6 x 4 x 3/8 inches
Collection Cinemex Guatler, Genoa, Italy

Born in the State of FLUXIon
64

Untitled (Introductory Note ... In Skinnerian Learning Theory), 1965
Ink and colored pencil on index card, envelope
6 cards, 8 x 5 inches each
Envelope: 5 7/8 x 8 1/4 x 1/4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

CHANCE OPERATIONS 65
The Book of Genesis, 1969
Leather antique photo book, photographs, ink
6 × 4½ × 3½ inches
Collection Erna Gazzera, Genoa, Italy

Valigetta, 1966
Box, antique glass bulbs, cut photo negatives, gloves, ink
6 × 8 × 3½ inches
Collection Caterina Guallaci, Genoa, Italy

Born in the State of FLUXus

of Light, 1965
Pen, marker, bulbs, mixed media
6 × 3½ inches
Collection Caterina Guallaci, Genoa, Italy

Untitled (Introductory Note... In Skinnerian Learning Theory), 1965
9½ × 7¼ inches, 9 cards, 8 × 5 inches each
Envelopes: 5½ × 8½ × 1¾ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

CHANCE OPERATIONS
65

In Skinnerian learning theory, shaping is defined as "the building of a behavior or set of behaviors through the differential reinforcement of progressively more adequate forms of behavior."
**Untitled (Is Are What), 1966**
Ink on paper
8 x 5 inches
Schausammlung Stuttgart, Hans Sohm Archive

**Joyce and Eugene, 1973**
Aluminum box, found autograph books, paper, ink
5.5 x 12 x 2.5 inches
Collection Marcel and David Fleiss, Galerie 1900–2000, Paris

**Aphrodissiaca, 1990**
Cloth boxes, accordion book with text, bottles
Box 1: 15 x 35 x 1 inches
Box 2: 8.5 x 5 x 1 inches
Collection Cinzia Guzzio, Genoa, Italy
Joyce and Eugene, 1973
Aluminum box, found autograph books, paper, ink
3 1/4 x 12 1/8 x 1 1/2 inches
Collection Marcel and David Flies, Galerie 1900-2000, Paris

Aphrodisiacs, 1990
Cloth box, accordion book with textile, bottles
Box: 11 1/4 x 3 1/4 x 2 inches
Collection Camilla Guasco, Genoa, Italy

Born in the State of FLUXus
66
My Grand 70th Birthday Tour, 2003
Ink on paper, plastic, mixed media
5 x 44 inches
Courtesy the artist

Concrete Poem No. 6, 2005
Wooden box, concrete, marker, violin fragment, mixed media
10 x 15 x 2 inches
Courtesy the artist
Concrete Poem No. 6, 2005
Wooden box, concrete, marker,
silver fragments, mixed media
30 x 15 x 4 inches
Courtesy the artist
Thank you, Luigi, 2005
Wooden box, vintage children’s blocks, easel, mixed media
Book: 6 × 9½ × 2 inches
Easel: 11 × 12½ inches
Collection Bertrand Clavier, Paris

The Therapeutic: One Hundred Actions Poems, Volume A, 2009
Collage and ink on paper
28 pages, 10½ × 8½ inches each
Courtesy the artist
Thank-you, Luigi, 2005
Wooden box, vintage children’s blocks, easel, mixed media
Book: 6 x 9 1/2 x 2 inches
Easel: 17 x 17 1/2 inches
Collection Bertrand Claver, Paris

The Therapeutic: One Hundred Actions Poems, Volume A, 2009
Collage and ink on paper
28 pages, 11k × 8 1/2 inches each
Courtesy the artist
Necessary Objects: Paintings, Sculpture, and Installations

Helm, 1975
Buri, bread board, hand saw, mixed media
37 in × 48 × 13 in
Courtesy Galerie Schüppenhauer, Cologne
Helmut, 1975
Buoys, bread board, handsaw, mixed media
43.8 x 48 x 51.8 inches
Courtesy Galerie Schüppenhauser, Cologne
Trout Bag, 1981
Canvas satchel, metal sinkers, fishing license, 10 altered fishing lures in plastic boxes
Canvas satchel: 9½ x 7½ x 7½ inches
10 plastic boxes, 4⅛ x 2⅜ x ⅞ inches each
Wax's Pachyderm lure: 2⅜ x 2⅜ x ⅞ inches
Green Caddis lure: 3⅛ x 2⅜ x ⅞ inches
Brown Stonefly lure: 1½ x 1½ x 2¾ inches
Yellow P arrogant lure: 1⅝ x 2⅜ x 2½ inches
Deerfly lure: 2½ x 2¾ x 3½ inches
June Nymph lure: 2⅝ x 1½ x ¼ inches
Pink Glove lure: 1⅝ x 2½ x 3 inches
Royal Coachmen lure: 1½ x 3½ x 2⅛ inches
Wooly Bomber lure: 1¾ x 4⅛ x 2⅞ inches
Rainbow Hopper lure: 1⅝ x 3⅛ x 4⅛ x ¼ inch
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection
Trout Bag, 1981
Canvas satchel, metal snips, fishing license, 10 altered fishing lures in plastic boxes
Canvas satchel: 9½ x 7½ x 6½ inches
10 plastic boxes: 4½ x 3½ x 2½ inches each
Watt's Pachyderm lure: 2½ x 3½ x 4½ inches
Green Caddis lure: 1½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
Brown Stonefly lure: 1½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
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Deerfly lure: 1½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
June Nymph lure: 3½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
Pink Ghost lure: 1½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
Royal Coachmen lure: 1½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
Woody Bopper lure: 1½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
Rainbow Hopper lure: 1½ x 1½ x 1½ inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Flax Collection Gift
Candyland, 1988
Board games, toys, mixed media on wooden shelves, brackets
40 × 36 × 14 inches
Courtesy the artist.

Hell on Wheels, 1988
Wooden desk, plastic, cloth, steel
36 × 40 × 24 inches
Collection Heinrich Rokim, Bad Rothenfelde, Germany

It's a Nice Piece of Cake, 1988
Metal bakery display rack, traffic sign, decorative cake toppers
92 × 246 × 146 inches overall
Collection Marcel and David Flenn, Galerie 1900–2000, Paris
Candyland, 1988
Board games, toys, mixed media on wooden shelves, brackets
40 x 30 x 14 inches
Courtesy the artist.

Hell on Wheels, 1988
Wooden desk, plastic, cloth, steel
36 x 40 x 24 inches
Collection Heinrich Rokin, Bad Rothenfelde, Germany

It's a Nice Piece of Cake, 1988
Metal bakery-display rack, traffic sign, decorative cake toppers
53 1/4 x 24 1/4 x 18 inches overall
Collection Marcel and David Hess, Galerie 1900–2000, Paris

Born in the State of FLUXius
76
Old Chinese Proverb, 1988
Antique Chautauqua industrial art desk on stand, mixed media
34 x 23 x 3 inches
Collection Klaus Fehlemann, Dortmund, Germany

Smoker’s Rights, 1988
Antique bottle rack, tape, cigarettes
37 1/2 x 16 x 6 inches
Courtesy the artist

Old Latin Proverb, 1988
Antique Chautauqua industrial art desk, mixed media
34 x 23 x 3 inches
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Schipperhaus, Berlin

Necessary Objects 79
Smokey's Rights, 1988
Antique desk tack, tape, cigarettes
22½ x 16 x 16 inches
Courtesy the artist

Old Latin Proverb, 1988
Antique drafting table, model of desk, mixed media
14 x 22 x 3 inches
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Schipper, Cologne
The Great Switch, 1990
Poster mounted on plywood, mixed media
26 x 24 x 2 inches
Collection Eros Castellani, Modena, Italy

Pan Am, 1990
Poster mounted on plywood, mixed media
26 x 26 x 3 inches
Collection Eros Castellani, Modena, Italy

Pregnant?, 1990
Poster mounted on plywood, mixed media
25 x 17 1/2 x 6 inches
Collection Eros Castellani, Modena, Italy

Say Your Prayers, 1990
Poster mounted on plywood, mixed media
39 1/8 x 35 x 3 1/4 inches
Collection Eros Castellani, Modena, Italy
Pan Am, 1990
Poster mounted on plywood, mixed media
20 x 25 1/2 x 3 inches
Collection Enzo Cattelan, Modena, Italy

Pregnant?, 1990
Poster mounted on plywood, mixed media
23 1/4 x 14 1/2 x 6 inches
Collection Enzo Cattelan, Modena, Italy

Say Your Prayers, 1990
Poster mounted on plywood, mixed media
36 x 25 1/2 x 3 1/2 inches
Collection Enzo Cattelan, Modena, Italy
Born in the State of FLUX 82

Show Off Your Skin, 1990
Collage paper and painted canvas mounted on wood, mixed media
30 x 48 x 6 inches
Collection Heinrich Riksen, Bad Rothenfelde, Germany
(Detail, opposite)
Show Off Your Skin, 1990
Collage paper and painted canvas mounted on wood, mixed media
33 × 48 × 6 inches
Collection Heinrich Rösen, Bad Rappenwöhr, Germany
(Detail, opposite)
**Fluxus Protected,** 1991  
Wood and metal boxes, cloth, chain, mixed n  
31 1/4 × 104 × 34 inches  
Collection Enzo Credaro, Modena, Italy

**Marble Hat,** 1991  
Cut Carrara marble  
12 × 24 × 10 inches  
Courtesy the artist

**Untitled,** 1990  
Collage fabric and painted canvas mounted on wood  
41 1/4 × 24 1/4 × 1/2 inches  
Courtesy the artist and the Emily Harvey Foundation, New York/Venice

Born in the State of FLUX/US
84

NECESSARY OBJECTS
85
Fluxus Peated, 1991
Wood and metal boxes, cloth, chain, mixed media
7½ x 10¼ x 9 inches
Collection Enzo Castellani, Modena, Italy

Marble Hat, 1991
Cut Carrara marble
12 x 24 x 10 inches
Courtesy the artist

Untitled, 1990
Collage fabric and painted canvas mounted on wood
24½ x 34½ x 1½ inches
Courtesy the artist and the Emily Harvey Foundation,
New York/Venice
The Temptations, 1991
Wood, mixed media
66 x 40 x 96 inches
Collection Carla Castelani, Modena, Italy

Two for Violin after Nam June Paik
One for Violin, 1991
Broken violin, wood cabinet door, music box
30 x 19 x 4 inches
Courtesy Galerie Schippenhaus, Cologne
Two for Violin after Nam June Paik's
One for Violin, 1991
Broken violins, wood cabinet door, music box
32 x 19 x 4 inches
Courtesy Galerie Schüppenbauer, Cologne
Early Chess, 1992
Wooden table, mixed media
29 × 15 1/8 × 24 inches
Collection Carlo Castellani, Moderna, Italy.

Uncle Ben's Art Shoppe, 1992
Toy-dispensing machine, plastic containers, mixed media
19 × 10 × 9 1/4 inches
Courtesy the artist.

A Short History of Twentieth-Century Art, 1993
Mixed media on wood panels
5 parts, 11 × 14 × 3 inches each
Institut für Ausstellungs- und Kunstwissenschaften e.V., Stuttgart, Germany
(Right and pages 90–95)
Early Chess, 1992
Wooden table, mixed media
29 x 25½ x 24 inches
Collection Carlo Cazzanelli, Modena, Italy

Uncle Ben's Art Shoppe, 1992
Toy-dispensing machine, plastic containers, mixed media
19 x 10 x 9½ inches
Courtesy the artist

A Short History of Twentieth-Century Art, 1993
Wood panels on wood panels
5 parts, 11 x 14 x 3 inches each
Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V., Stuttgart, Germany
(Right and pages 90–91)
SINCE MARCEL DUCHAMP
THIS IS ART

SINCE NAM JUNE PAIK
THIS IS MUSIC VIDEO

SINCE GERTRUDE STEIN
THIS IS LITERATURE

SINCE MERCE CUNNINGHAM
THIS IS DANCE
SINCE
JOHN CADE
THIS IS
MUSIC

SINCE
FLUXUS
THIS IS
THE END
SINCE
JOHN CAGE
IS
 THIS IS
FLUXUS
THE END

Il primo segreto della grappa, 1994
Handblown glass bottles
155 x 23 inches
Archivio Boratto, Moloena, Italy

NECESSARY OBJECTS
91
Museum of the Subconscious
(Namibia, guidelines and ephemera),
1996
Metal plaque, wooden box, mixed media
Plaque: 11 x 14 inches
Box: 12¼ x 12½ x 1½ inches
Courtesy the artist

Blame It on Pittsburgh; or, Why I Became an Artist, 1997
Silk screen on Flexiglas
16 panels, 59 x 39 x ½ inches each
Courtesy the artist
Museum of the Subconscious  
(Namibia, guidelines and ephemera),  
1996  
Metal plaque, wooden box, mixed media  
Plaque: 11 x 14 inches  
Box: 12 1/2 x 12 1/2 x 4 inches  
Courtesy the artist

Blame It on Pittsburgh; or, Why I Became an Artist, 1997  
Silk screen on Douglas  
12 panels, 30 x 30 x 3 inches each  
Courtesy the artist

NECESSARY OBJECTS
Trains of Thought (Josef Haydn), 1997
Discarded train signs, wooden boxes, cassette tape player, audiostreamer, mixed media
72 x 12 x 35 inches
Courtesy the artist

Trains of Thought (Maurice Ravel), 1997
Discarded train signs, wooden boxes, cassette tape player, audiostreamer, mixed media
72 x 12 x 35 inches
Collection Efi Kröner, Wiesbaden, Germany

Trains of Thought (Verdi), 1997
Discarded train signs, wooden boxes, cassette tape player, audiostreamer, mixed media
72 x 12 x 35 inches
Collection Efi Kröner, Wiesbaden, Germany
ght (Josef Hayden), 1997
wooden boxes, cassette tape player.
3 media
it: Wiesbaden, Germany

ght (Maurice Ravel), 1997
wooden boxes, cassette tape player.
3 media
it: Wiesbaden, Germany

ght (Verdi), 1997
wooden boxes, cassette tape player.
3 media
it: Wiesbaden, Germany
Kohler Koffler, 1999
Leather briefcase, ink on paper, office on paper, mixed media
34 x 11/2 x 2 inches
Courtesy the artist

Cello (Blue), 2003
Wooden push broom, birdhouse, metal strings, wooden spoon
33/4 x 10 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist

Cello (Red), 2003
Wooden push broom, birdhouse, metal strings, wooden spoon
33/4 x 10 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist
Kohler Koffier, 1999
Leather briefcase, ink on paper, offset on paper, mixed media
14 x 11½ x 2 inches
Courtesy the artist

Cello (Blue), 2003
Wooden push broom, birdhouse, metal strings, wooden spoon
5½ x 10 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist

Cello (Red), 2003
Wooden push broom, birdhouse, metal strings, wooden spoon
5½ x 10 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist
Fluxus Constellation, 2003
Silk screen on nylon, glass sconces, electrical system, tube lights
34 sconces, 23 x 8 x 8 inches each
Dimensions variable
Museo d'arte contemporanea di Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy

It Was Roses All the Way (My Grand 70th Birthday Tour), 2004
Metal time-card machine, ink and marker on time-card, artificial flowers, Plexiglas
40 x 20 x 10 inches
Collection Archivo Banca di, Monza, Italy
Fluxur Constellation, 2003
Silk screen on nylon, glass sconces, electrical system, tube lights
34 sconces, 23.6 x 8 x 7.6 inches each
Dimensions variable
Museo d'arte contemporanea di Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy

It Was Roses All the Way (My Grand 70th Birthday Tour), 2004
Metal time-card machine, ink and marker on time cards, artificial flowers, Plexiglas
40 x 20 x 10 inches
Collection Archivio Bonotto, Molevena, Italy
Ski Poles (from Climbing Mt. Fuji), 2004
Broom handles, rubber plungers
60 x 6 x 4 inches
Courtesy the artist

Industrial Chic (a.p.), 2007
Cats-alive toy tools, velvet jewelry boxes
6 parts, 3 x 2 x 1½ inches each
Courtesy the artist

A Nose for Wine, 2008
Wine bottles with cast molding
12 bottles, 11½ x 3/4 inches each
Collection Andrea Bonato, Milano, Italy

NECESSARY OBJECTS 103
**Ski Poles (from Climbing Mt. Fuji), 2004**

Brown handles, rubber plungers

60 x 6 x 1 inches

Courtesy the artist

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**Industrial Chic (a.p.), 2007**

Cast-silver toy tools, velvet jewelry boxes

6 parts, 3 x 2 x 1 inches each

Courtesy the artist

---

**A Nose for Wine, 2008**

Wine bottles with cast molding

12 bottles, 11½ x 2½ inches each

Collection Archivo Bonotto, Molvena, Italy
Effigy for Dick Higgins II, 2010
Effigy: paper jump suit, costume hat, mask, collage, mixed media
Base: collage on wood, drier, light, turntable
Effigy: 70 x 20 x 7 inches
Base: 27 x 20 x 1/4 inches
Courtesy the artist

Flying Bass II, 2010
Double bass, metal, ink, metal propane burners, mixed media
70 x 50 x 12 inches
Courtesy the artist
Effigy for Dick Higgins II, 2010
Effigy: paper jumpsuit, costume hat, mask, collage, mixed media
Base: collage on wood, die-cut, light, turntable
Effigy: 70 x 30 x 7 inches
Base: 21 x 30 x 16 inches
Courtesy the artist

Flying Bass II, 2010
Double bass, metal, ink, metal propane burners, mixed media
70 x 36 x 12 inches
Courtesy the artist
The Museum of the Subconscious —
Houston Annex, 2010
Plastic, wood, paint, mixed media
Hanging armature: 10 x 14 x 32 inches
Courtesy the artist.

Sit Down, 2010
Pantone injection-molded plastic chair,
metal rod with stuffed bear, recorder
Chair: 30 x 90 x 35 inches
39 x 90 x 35 inches overall
Courtesy the artist.

Swiss Symphony II, 2010
Wooden wall clock, collage on board, crossbow, mixed media
60 x 100 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist.
Sit Down, 2010
Panthene injection-molded plastic chair,
metal rod with stuffed bear, recorder
Chair: 35½ × 39¼ × 31½ inches
39½ × 39½ × 37½ inches overall
Courtesy the artist.

Swiss Symphony II, 2010
Wooden wall clock, collage on board, crossbow, mixed media
60 × 16½ × 5 inches
Courtesy the artist.
I'm Glad You Asked Me That Question

BENJAMIN PATTSON

Dieter Daniels suggested that he would like to do a piece on Ben Patterson in a special Fluxus issue of Kunstforum. He suggested an interview as an interesting format, and an appointment was arranged. During the next day, however, I began to remember how much I disliked interviews—that is, how I considered myself as a person who tends to think and speak slowly and rarely expresses himself well in interviews. So I decided to borrow one of the techniques of the manipulated political press conference and "plan" some questions for which I would have prepared answers (as in "I am glad that you asked me that question . . ."). When I informed Dieter Daniels of my intentions, he not only approved of the idea but also further suggested that I should do the whole interview of myself by myself. We reviewed the questions that I had wished to "plant," and he suggested several other general topics and specific questions that I should address. Thus the following interview with Ben Patterson, conducted by Ben Patterson in various places in Europe and America between May 1990 and February 1991.

Q: Is it true that the exhibition at Galerie Schuppenhauzer last April was your first solo exhibition, not only in Cologne but also in Europe?

A: Well, yes, that is almost true. As you know, I lived in Cologne from 1960 to 1962 and was active first in the radical fringe of the "new music" scene and later in the birth of Fluxus, if the event Ein kleines Sommertafel at Galerie Paruns in Wuppertal in June 1962 is accepted as the "unofficial" birthday of Fluxus, then you might say that George Maciunas and I were the charter members, as we were the only performers that evening. And of course, until I returned to New York in 1965, I participated in nearly all the European Fluxus events. But during this period I thought of myself as some sort of a composer-performer (the term performance artist hadn't been invented yet), and most of my work was presented in the context of a Fluxus festival or concert. These works—if not exactly music—were still based primarily in time and activity, not space and color. It was only toward the end of 1962, when I was living in Paris, that I began to make visual objects, works that I called "puzzle-poems." Robert Filliou liked these works very much and offered me an exhibition of miniature "puzzle-poems" in his Galerie Légitime, which was located on top of his head under his hat. Since such a gallery obviously had great mobility, we decided that for the "opening" we should go to the public rather than asking them to come to the gallery. So we planned a twenty-four-hour tour of Paris by metro, by bus, and on foot, and we sent out announcements, which were in fact a map of our tour route, indicating the specific times we would be at certain locations. It was a wonderful "opening" attended by thousands of people, and we sold more than half of the exhibition (at five francs each) during the opening. Thus, to be historically correct, this event in Paris in 1962 was my first solo exhibition in Europe.

Q: I want to ask you about Paris later, but first I would like to know more about Cologne. Why did you come to Cologne? What did you do there? Whom did you work with, etc.?

A: Well, first you must know that for the previous four years I had been a professional classical double bassist (including two years in the U.S. Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Germany) and that during the season before Cologne (1959–60) I worked during the day as principal double bassist with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Ottawa, Canada, and experimented at night at a primitive electronic music studio in the National Research Center in Ottawa. My original plan was to spend the summer holidays visiting the major electronic music studios in Cologne, Milan, and Paris and return to Ottawa in the fall. I was especially interested to meet and perhaps work with Stockhausen. So I arrived in Cologne in time for the first concert of the International Society of Contemporary Music Festival, and after the first concert, at which I thought was an appropriate moment, I presented myself (with a letter of introduction from the German ambassador to Canada, who was also Stockhausen's brother-in-law) to Stockhausen. For better or for worse, this meeting, which lasted less than five minutes, was the beginning and the end of our working relationship. However, the next day I learned that a kind of counterfestival had been organized by Mary Bauermeister and that John Cage and David Tudor would be there to present several programs of works by the most radical of the younger American composers. It was during these counterconcerts that I met Cage and Tudor, and because I was immediately invited to be a performer in several works in the following evening's concert, I came to learn firsthand the compositions of many artists who would later become "core" Fluxus people. Needless to say, the approach to art that these compositions represented was a revelation to me and a major turning point in my artistic development. During the days of these concerts I also discovered a small international group of young artists (David Behrman from the U.S., Cordell Cardew from England, François Briol from France, Sylvano Bussotti from Italy, Kurt Schwertzig from Austria, Wolf Vostell from Germany, and of course Nam June Paik from Korea) living in Cologne, who shared a similar excitement about such radical experimentation. In short, when I learned a little later that a musician's strike in Ottawa had caused the cancellation of the coming season, I was already off to stay in Cologne.

The next year was more or less only a visit. No money, no money, sometimes I had a few dollars, sometimes not, and in need of free or cheap housing, but that is a separate story. I studied and, by the end of 1961, I had participated in several music festivals in Vienna and Copenhagen in the fall. I was especially interested to meet and perhaps work with Stockhausen. So I arrived in Cologne in time for the first concert of the International Society of Contemporary Music Festival, and after the first concert, at which I thought was an appropriate moment, I presented myself (with a letter of introduction from the German ambassador to Canada, who was also Stockhausen's brother-in-law) to Stockhausen. For better or for worse, this meeting, which lasted less than five minutes, was the beginning and the end of our working relationship. However, the next day I learned that a kind of counterfestival had been organized by Mary Bauermeister and that John Cage and David Tudor would be there to present several programs of works by the most radical of the younger American composers. It was during these counterconcerts that I met Cage and Tudor, and because I was immediately invited to be a performer in several works in the following evening's concert, I came to learn firsthand the compositions of many artists who would later become "core" Fluxus people. Needless to say, the approach to art that these compositions represented was a revelation to me and a major turning point in my artistic development. During the days of these concerts I also discovered a small international group of young artists (David Behrman from the U.S., Cordell Cardew from England, François Briol from France, Sylvano Bussotti from Italy, Kurt Schwertzig from Austria, Wolf Vostell from Germany, and of course Nam June Paik from Korea) living in Cologne, who shared a similar excitement about such radical experimentation. In short, when I learned a little later that a musician's strike in Ottawa had caused the cancellation of the coming season, I was already off to stay in Cologne.

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Question

BENJAMIN PATTERSON

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view with Ben Patterson, conducted
various places in Europe and America

the exhibition at Galerie Schippen-
See your first solo exhibition, not only in
Europe!

al is true. As you know, I lived in
or to 1982 and was active first in the
the "new music" scene and later in the
event Ein Kleines Sommerfest at Gal-
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a twenty-four-hour tour of Paris by metro, by bus, and on
foot, and we sent out announcements, which were in fact
a map of our tour route, indicating the specific times we
would be at certain locations. It was a wonderful "opening"
attended by thousands of people, and we sold more
than half of the exhibition (at five francs each) during the
opening. Thus, to be historically correct, this event in Paris
in 1962 was my first solo exhibition in Europe.

Q: If I understood you correctly, until 1960 you were
a professional classical musician. But by the end of 1960
you were creating Happenings; and a year later you were
participating in the "birth" of Fluxus. I would think that
this required a very rapid and radical change of aesthetics and
philosophy. How was this possible?

A: Well, first you must know that for the previous four
years I had been a professional classical double bassist
(including two years in the U.S. Seventh Army Symphony
Orchestra in Germany) and that during the season before
Cologne (1958–60) I worked during the day as principal
double bass with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Ottawa,
Canada, and experimented at night at a primitive elec-
tronic music studio in the National Research Center
in Ottawa. My original plan was to spend the summer
holidays visiting the major electronic music studios in
Cologne, Milan, and Paris and return to Ottawa in the
fall. I was especially interested to meet and perhaps work
with Stockhausen. So I arrived in Cologne in time for the
first concert of the International Society of Contempo-
rary Music Festival, and after the first concert, at what
I thought was an appropriate moment, I presented myself
(with a letter of introduction from the German ambas-
sador to Canada, who was also Stockhausen’s brother-in-
law) to Stockhausen. For better or for worse, this meeting,
which lasted less than five minutes, was the beginning
and the end of our working relationship. However,
the next day I learned that a kind of counterfestival had
been organized by Mary Bauermeister and that John Cage
and David Tudor would be there to present several programs
of works by the most radical of the younger American
composers. It was during these counterconcerts that
I met Cage and Tudor; and because I was immediately
invited to be a performer in several works in the following
evening’s concert, I came to learn firsthand the compo-
sitions of many artists who would later become "core"
Fluxus people. Needless to say, the approach to art that
these compositions represented was a revelation to me
and a major turning point in my artistic development.
During the days of these concerts I also discovered a small
international group of young artists (David Behrman from
the U.S., Cornelis Kamerlingh Onnes from England, François Bel
from France, Sylvano Busotti from Italy, Kurt Schwert-
ig from Austria, Wolf Vostell from Germany, and of
course Nam June Paik from Korea) living in Cologne, who
shared a similar excitement about such radical "experi-
mentation." In short, when I learned a little later that a
musician’s strike in Ottawa had caused the cancellation
of the coming season, I was already prepared and happy
to stay in Cologne.

The next year was more or less the typical life of a
young artist: no money, sometimes hungry, and always
in need of free or cheap housing. But there was plenty
of activity, and by the end of 1961 I had participated in "radical"
music festivals in Vienna and Venice and had pre-
sented at Galerie Naro Laubs in Cologne three concerts
of works I had composed during the year. (As a historical
footnote it may be interesting to know that one of these
concerts was for the opening of Christo’s first show
in Western Europe, the second was for the opening of Dan-
iel Spoerri’s first exhibition in Germany, and the third was
for Wolf Vostell’s first solo exhibition.) Included on these
programs were two works that became standard in the
Fluxus repertoire: Paper Piece and Variations for Double
Bass. Also in August 1961 I presented a relatively major
work in Vostell’s studio: this work, which I called Lemons,
was composed of twenty-three brief scenes, each lasting
anywhere from three seconds to three minutes, with lots
of darkness in between. The "score" for this work required
a dancer (Giuliet Ovitz), a singer (William Pearson), an
artist (Wolf Vostell), and a musician (myself). I believe
that it was the first "happening" in Cologne.

Q: If I understood you correctly, until 1960 you were
a professional classical musician. But by the end of 1960
you were creating Happenings; and a year later you were
participating in the "birth" of Fluxus. I would think that
this required a very rapid and radical change of aesthetics and
philosophy. How was this possible?

A: Well, first—and perhaps this is more a "New World"
than an "Old World" trait—I have found that many
people are not always only what their business card
announces them to be. As a child and through high
school, I dabbled in the visual arts, literature, and music, as well as in the natural sciences, Eastern and Western philosophies, and religions. By age four I had heard, via the Metropolitan Opera radio broadcast, every major opera at least twice. By age twelve I had read every word (not always with complete understanding) up to the letter M in the twelfth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica. By age sixteen I was a volunteer assistant at both the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the Pittsburgh Zoo, working in the entomology department of the former and in the herpetology department of the latter. I also managed to find time for sports and briefly held local and regional records in several middle-distance track events. All in all, I was on my way to being a "Renaissance man."

But when the serious business of university studies began, I elected music for my profession. And I also embarked on a crusade—to be the first black to "break the color barrier" in an American symphony orchestra. You must remember that this was in the 1950s, when there was still official segregation in the South and de facto segregation in most of the North and particularly in the places of high culture.

Fortunately I did have some talent, and I received excellent musical training at the University of Michigan, and so when I left the university, I was well equipped to compete with the best. But in the end, even though such a famous conductor as Leonard Bernstein sought strongly on my behalf, America was not yet ready for a black symphony musician, and so I went to Canada. My point, however, is that although before university I was exploring a wide range of subjects, media, and materials, from anthropology to Zen—all of which eventually found a place in my art—the urgency/discipline of my "crusade" kept me pretty much on a "straight line" all the way through university. In other words: although I read Joyce, Beckett, Ionesco, and the existentialists and wrote serial exercises à la Webern or silly songs à la Virgil Thomson, I really never allowed myself the time to sit back and contemplate. "What is wrong here? What else can be done?" And although the university as a whole was still stained by the ravages of McCarthyism, it was not an impossible place for new thoughts. Only a year after I left Michigan, Gordon Mumma (a classmate and a close friend), together with Bob Ashley, founded the Group II and started producing amazing events. So the answer to your question—"How was this rapid and radical change possible?"—is that there already existed a mental background prepared to act when the circumstances and stimulation were appropriate. As it happened, circumstances and stimulation collided first in Cologne, and then I followed them, or they followed me, to Paris and later, for a few years, to New York.

But if there was ever a critical moment, it was the collision of circumstances and stimulation in Cologne at Mary Bauermeister's "counterfestival." Even now I still have a vivid memory of telling myself, when I heard the first works by John Cage, that this is the music that I had been hearing in my head for years but had never thought possible to realize.

Q: Since you raised the issue of "circumstance and stimulation," I must assume that you are not claiming to be a completely original and unique artist without antecedents or influences. If so, then tell me who do you now think were the most important influences in your development?

A: Hmm... Well, if I were to do my American "showbiz" thing properly, I would have to start by naming my mother and father, my grandmothers and grandfathers, etc. But that is obvious, even as a cursory look at my work suggests that I did not have an unhappy childhood. But to seriously answer the question, I am glad that you asked me only about these three cities.

In Cologne:
1. Stockhausen (negatively). The excesses of his egocentricity revolted me so much that I eventually went into isolation for three days to ponder a more socially responsible way of making art. Paper Piece was the result.
2. Cornelius Cardew (positively). He embodied—for me—the highest moral ground. I had some difficulty with his collaborations with Stockhausen, but it was clear where his real feelings were. He was above all a person of great intelligence and a tireless innovator, gifted with a high tolerance and a recognition of social responsibility.
3. Wolf Vostell (positively). As he was then still bumbling around, still caught between continuing an established career as a commercial artist and an overwhelming need to be recognized as a fine artist—as well as a decent and generous "mensch"—I could only respect and deeply admire the pregnancy and energy of his efforts.
4. And then of course I met John Cage, David Tudor, and Merce Cunningham first in Cologne—with all that implies.

In Paris:
1. Daniel Spoerri (positively). During my first months in Paris, I visited him in Place Contrescarpe almost daily. Over coffee and wine our conversations roamed widely and wildly. But in the end I remember three important things:
   - He introduced me to Robert Filliou.
   - He encouraged me to publish and distribute Methods and Processes.
   - And he once said something like, "Ben, we are lucky. I began as a classical ballet dancer. You began as a classical symphony musician. We both learned the discipline of art elsewhere, and now that we have changed media, we are free to create without bearing the historical baggage of our first art."

In New York:
1. Robert Filliou (most positively). As I think it will ever get to the truth, this was my first and, with one or two more to come, work we'd ever met. Naturally, Robert's work—his being older—was more "mature," but never competitive, but we seemed to be complementary. It seemed that we each had a new work somehow to fall more closely to recent work of the others. Perhaps if my own work were to fall more closer work of the others, perhaps if my own work were to fall more closer work of the others, perhaps if my own work were to fall more close.

2. Jan Voss (German), Benita Sanciani, and Bob Thompson (black Arne. I mention these three expatriate, more artists in one breath because they are forced, both through their personal, not to live as their heads wish, to find a solid base of what they think they do what they think they do.

In any case, I return to New York to continue the constant paradox of my artistic (even my career. At that time (50s-60s) every New York, or came for extended visits, or possibly 80 to 50 percent of Fluxus art was found somewhere within thirty miles of the city. Building on any given day. Probably a magnet attracting the European art return of George Maciunas to New York in 1966 and his sometimes activities and projects he was.Higgins' Something Else Press created all throughout. These were all Charlotte garde Festivals, the Judson Churches, Happenings, "be-in's," etc.
in the visual arts, literature, and music, natural sciences, Eastern and Western religions. By age four I had heard, via the radio broadcasts, every major opera. At age twelve I had read every word (not just the headings) and more up to the letter M of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. In the summer I was a volunteer assistant at both the Carnegie Museum of Natural History and the Pittsburgh Zoo, and during the school year I was a member of the former's entomology department of the latter. I also spent a fair amount of time on sports and briefly held local and national music roles. As a Renaissance man, I also studied biology, psychology, and biology. I was a business of university studies began, in my profession. And I also embarked on the first black to "break the color barrier" of the colorless orchestra. You must know it was in the 1950's, when there was still a 5% in the South and de facto segregation, I guess particular in the places of high

I had some talent, and I received training at the University of Michigan. At the university, I was well equipped in the arts. But in the end, even though I had fun as a Leopold Stokowski fought half, America was not yet ready for a musician, and so I went to Canada. My that although before university I was best at subjects, now, and a little bit of love for it. I guess particular in the places of high

Q: Since you raised the issue of "circumstance and stimulation", I must assume that you are not claiming to be a completely original and unique artist without precedents or influences. If so, then tell me who do you now think were the most important influences in your development. In college, in Paris, in New York, etc.?

A: Hmmm ... Well, if I were to do my American "showbiz" thing properly, I would have to start by naming my mother and father, my grandparents and grandfathers, etc. But that is obviously, as even a cursory look at my work suggests that I did not have an unhappy childhood. But to seriously answer the question, I am glad that you asked me only about these three cities.

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3. Wolf Vostell (positively). As he was then still bumbling around, still caught between continuing an established career as a commercial artist and an overweening need to be recognized as a fine artist—as well as a decent and generous "mensch"—I could only respect and deeply admire the poignancy and energy of his efforts.
4. And then of course I met John Cage, David Tudor, and Pierre Huyghe first in Cologne—with all that implies.

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In New York:
1. Robert Filliou (most positively). This was as close as I think it will ever get to true artistic "brotherhood". Our works were on adjacent, parallel tracks even before we met. Naturally, Robert's work—he being ten or more years older—was more "mature," but not only were we never competitive, but we seemed to strive to be complementary. It seemed that we each tried to adapt each new work somehow to fall more closely in line with the newest work of the other. (Perhaps this thought is just my overblown romantic tribute to a beloved comrade, but I do think a comparison of works will pass at least the first test.)
2. Jan Voss (German), Benita Sanders (Welsh Canadian), and Bob Thompson (black American) (positively). I mention these three expatriates, more or less traditional artists in one breath because they each mutually reinforced, both through their personalities and through their works, my continuing respect not only for craftsmanship but also for the solid base of continuing values that empowered their works. Yes, despite my Fluxus credentials, I still hold on to some traditional values.

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Pop Art, and generally a very big and hoity-spiced stew. "Avant-garde" (we still called ourselves avant-garde then) activity was intense and continuous. And since the "core" audience was always the same thirty or forty people (regardless of whether it was a Happening, concert, dance performance, poetry reading, or art exhibition), with a fringe of foreign visitors, everyone met everyone at least weekly, if not nightly. Thus I met everyone in or passing through New York. But curiously, with only a very few did I find a kinship that would qualify as an influence. I admired and respected the work of Jackson Mac Low, HenryFlynt, and La Monte Young, but I don't think they became major influences. Yvonne Rainer, Richard Maxfield, and Robert Morris were also impressive but not influential. The Happenings gang—Hansen, Kaprow, Wherman, Oldenburg, etc.—were already so "big time," as were William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, and Andy Warhol, etc., etc., etc. Yes, to varying degrees they all became friends of a sort. But now I recognize that we simply did not share the deep-rooted (albeit hidden) alienation that I lived with as the only black in this crowd.

Thus, in the end I would probably cite only Robert Watts, George Brecht, Ay-O, and perhaps Dick Higgins as influences during these years—and most likely because they approached the work through poetics rather than mathematics.

And now to complete the "chart of influences," I must mention Emmett Williams and George Maciunas, both of whom I met first in Wiesbaden. For me, Emmett is the very American Robert Fillou (and vice versa). There is a purity and sensitivity in his work that are never endangered by the gloss of pseudoformalism with which he structures his work. And since our first meeting in 1962 until today, we have remained great "drinking buddies." In contrast, with Maciunas I must confess that I never felt that we shared anything more than a perfunctory personal relationship. Our habits and sins differed too widely. Thus it is probably not surprising that I was not greatly impressed with most of his artworks. (George was a notorious plagiarizer/"arranger" of other people's ideas.) However, a few I think are genuine "Fluxus masterpieces" (such as his Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti). In the end my basic problem with George was that he was the ideological hammer with which he tried to nail together all the varied Fluxus personalities and activities into a Maciunas-controlled monolithic structure.

Despite his claims to be an anarchist, George was much more a Stalinist than a Buchanites. Nevertheless, without George, art historians today would not be able to profit by commenting on whatever it was that we were doing during then under the rubric Fluxus.

Q: That reminds me of another question that I wanted to ask. What do you know about how this phenomenon came to be called Fluxus?

A: Well, you assume you are not asking about the Latin origins of the word or its standard dictionary definitions, since those are well known. So I will just give you my version of how the word got associated with the work.

"In the beginning..." Somewhere in the mid- to late 1950s George Maciunas, a young Lithuanian immigrant living in New York and concerned about the future of his native country, proposed to me (in my capacity as a publisher) to launch a magazine for the Lithuanian community in the U.S. About developments in the arts, culture, and politics in the homeland, to be called Fluxus, which, I am told, in Lithuanian means something like "freedom." For whatever reasons, the idea did not excite the community, and George went on to do other things, including founding the AG Gallery (which, I am also told, featured heavy doses of early Renaissance music), as well as slowly becoming involved with some of the "guiding lights" of what was to become New York Fluxus. It was this involvement that eventually led to the publication of An Anthology, the seminal publication documenting the advances of the leading edge of the American avant-garde at that time.

If nothing else, George M had a great "nose," and he sniffed that here lay a great future. Plans to edit and publish an unconventional magazine dedicated to the works of the Fluxus artist were proposed and developed, and the title Fluxus was carried forward. Shortly thereafter (1961?) George transferred his residence to Wiesbaden, Germany. (Some usually reliable sources suggest an escape from loan sharks.) I see that there George decided to produce a grand festival (five to ten days) of all that was "new" in the arts as a promotion for the release of the first issue of Fluxus, the magazine. The festival would be called Fluxus. It was, in the end an introduction by Emmett Williams. Somehow the chemistry was right at that moment, and we worked well together, not only to realize the Wiesbaden Festival but also to produce the pre-events, the Galerie Parnass Wuppertal evening, and later the Paris "Fluxus sneak preview," which I organized in conjunction with the opening of my exhibition at Robert Fillou's Galerie Légitime.

As you know, the greatest part of the program of this Wiesbaden festival consisted of works—music, dance, film, or poetry—that (in my view) could only be called "new," as the signature date was sometime after 1950.

The really radical stuff—La Monte Young, John Cage, George Brecht, Phil Corner, etc.—represented hardly more than one-tenth of the entire festival. However, in those days, when a bunch of young people (I don't think of any of us were over twenty-five years old) presented "new" culture in Wiesbaden by attacking a Steinway grand piano with ax, hammer, saw, screwdriver, etc., baby, that was news.

And thus Phil Corner's Piano Activations for Double Bass got front-page publishing television news coverage through. But since this was done in the name of the fore had to be considered seriously, [what] to handle? How do we pigeonhole this box? what is now known as Fluxus did not know what it was.

Q: Hmmm, interesting information. But I have another question. You know about Fluxus, the political animal. The question is: Was Fluxus political?\n
A: Of course, more or less, not only. [A hard "yes" or "no" could not give this answer because, given that many nations, how could a singular answer be?] Let's start by remembering that: Fluxus—whether created in Europe, or happened between 1956 and 1962. T great political upheaval in the U.S. unwittingly found reflections in the world. It was a time (according to
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the release of the first issue of Fluxus, the magazine.
The festival would be called Fluxus. It was during this time—
probably early spring 1960—that I first met George, by
way of an introduction from Emmett Williams. Some-
how the chemistry was right at that moment, and we
worked well together, not only to realise the Wiesbaden
Festival but also to produce the pre-events, the Galene
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tions for Double Bass got front-page print and early eve-
nings television news coverage throughout the country.
But since this was done in the name of art, and there-
fore had to be considered seriously, what was the "news
handle"? How do we pigeonhole this business? Until then,
what is now known as Fluxus did not know what it was—
or even if it was enough to claim a new designation. So the
German news media decided that the overall festival title,
Fluxus, not having been applied previously to any other
art movement, was available (without copyright restric-
tions) to be applied to the actions of these "crazy young
artists," which must be somebody, since the festival was
taking place in the Municipal Theater of Wiesbaden).
Thus this hardly even loosely associated collection of
artists from Japan to Yugoslavia (most of us knew at best
30 percent of the names and 10 percent of the works,
and maybe 5 percent of us had actually met [shock to
shock] was formalized, more or less overnight, and without prior
approval, into a "new art movement" called Fluxus! In
short, we became Fluxus because the German press/ 
media couldn't find a better term to describe "awful."

Q: Hemm, interesting information. But now I would like
to ask about Fluxus the political animal. First, of course, is
the question, Was Fluxus political?

A: Of course, more or less, not only certainly, and per-
haps. (A hard "yes" or "no" could not be Fluxus.) I have
given this answer because, given that Fluxus included so
many nations, how could a singular answer be possible?
Let's start by remembering that "seminal works" of
Fluxus—whether created in Europe, the U.S., or Japan—
happened between 1958 and 1962. This was a period of
great political upheaval in the U.S., which willingly or
unwillingly found reflections in many places elsewhere in
the world. It was a time (according to me) when no artist...
should "sit on the fence." But in general I think Fluxus did sit on the fence. True, many of the Fluxus artists during that time were very willing to "confess" to harmless friends that they were really anarchists, communists, socialists, and/or something or other in that direction. But I must state that I never got a telephone call from "Fluxus Central" asking me to join next Saturday's "March on Washington"—for any purpose. (Although other organizations, which knew me only as a "likely" telephone number, called regularly. And, yes, I did march—
not every weekend but enough to get a good taste of tear gas.) Nevertheless the demonstration against the performance of Stockhausen's Originale at Carnegie Hall and Henry Flynn's picketing of MoMA stirred up storms of sufficient strength to encourage George Maciunas to pronounce his first "excommunication." What a silly business! (What are the atrocities represented here?)

Despite all Maciunas's protestations as well as his own political leanings, Fluxus was never really political. All it really did with its reputation for radical aesthetics was to provide a safe refuge and masks for a bunch of well-meaning artists.

Yes, I was disgusted, and yes, the lack of support for civil rights and antiwar efforts was an important factor in my subsequent "retirement" from the art scene. But please know that I have been talking only with reference to the American/New York Fluxus scene. Perhaps the European scene was a little different. But then what are the risks if racial prejudice has not yet raised its ugly head or if you are only a spectator to a distant war? Basically I don't think that Fluxus had the formal capacity to be political. The simplicity of the one-line gag aesthetic, as dictated by George Maciunas, may have had some validity in attacking overblown cultural illusions, but the form simply had no capacity to deliver even a moderately sophisticated political message. From this perspective, I think Fluxus may have been a great mistake, although many or most Fluxus artists were "on the left" and I think/know that they wanted to confront the issues. But while there may well be one or more simple answers to complex problems, the work must have the capacity to manifest more complex answers when it becomes clear that the simple answer is not working.

Q: Let's use that answer as a lead-in to a few questions about your own work. Assume from the above that you consider it important for an artist to be socially critical and even overtly political. Yet your work seems to depend heavily on humor, kitsch, and toys. How do you think you can address life's serious questions with these materials?

A: Well, from the beginning humor or fun was a very prominent element of Fluxus, especially for the Americans. A lot of us, I believe, started out to have nothing less than some very serious fun, debunking what we considered the pretensions of 'high art'/culture. Bob Watts was amused by the idea of trying to lure "flying saucers" to land on his farm by setting up automobile hubcaps as flying-saucer decoys.

Although Dick Higgins titled his piece Danger Music No. 2, I am sure he thought it would be "fun" to have his head shaven in public. It was certainly fun to stick a finger into one of Ay-O's boxes. Likewise I hope Phil Conner intended us to have fun wrecking the piano in Weilbaden, because I certainly did. And there were all the funny pieces by Emmett Williams, and even the performances of my Dick Piece were always more funny than erotic. And above all there was always George Maciunas, the master of slapstick and the one-line gag.

In Europe there was something else afoot. Humor, yes. But not so direct as in the U.S. Satire and irony and other more complex forms of humor played a larger role. Bepo or Tomas Schmit found the best line. In Japan the humor was infected with Zen, or maybe the other way around.

Yes, I think we were all serious about our work, but we did not feel that work expressing "seriousness" was either the best or only path. To answer your question directly, from my point of view I do believe that "life's serious questions" (as well as politics) begin with art. Art establishes a cultural foundation from which all else proceeds. Naturally one can approach this problem from many directions—logically, didactically, minimally, etc. But personally, when making art (and therefore culture), I prefer to use humor as it often provides the path of least resistance/resistance for the implanting of subversive ideas. Remembering, as I mentioned before, that I grew up as a black in an America of legalized racial segregation, which allowed few means of protest (please know that we blacks used satirical humor as a protest form). This is best exemplified in one of my works exhibited at Galerie Schippenhauer, titled Educating White Folks. In this piece I quote a black folk story, which goes like this:

"The appropriation for the Negro school was used for the white school. The superintendent explained this to the Negro principal, who of course couldn't make a direct protest. So he said, 'The one thing we need most of all is educated white folks.' So that is where I come from.

Q: It seems that the iconography of your work depends almost exclusively on "found objects"—often cheap, familiar, and kitschy. Is this true? Do you feel that this "simplified" iconography limits your development of more subtle subjects and ideas?

A: Well, yes. The iconography does often depend on cheap, familiar, and kitschy materials. But there are differences between (a) the simple physical presence of an object and (b) the cultural context from which it has been appropriated and (c) the ways that the object—
most Fluxus artists were "on the left" and I think/know that they wanted to confront the issues. But while there may well be one or more simple answers to complex problems, "the work" must have the capacity to manifest more complex answers when it becomes clear that the simple answer is not working.

Q: Let's use that answer as a lead-in to a few questions about your own work. I assume from the above that you consider it important for an artist to be socially critical and even overtly political. Yes your work seems to depend heavily on humor, kitsch, and toys. How do you think you can address life's serious questions with these materials?

A: Well, from the beginning humor or fun was a very prominent element of Fluxus, especially for the Americans. A lot of us, believe, started out to have nothing less than some irreverent good fun, debunking what we considered the pretensions of "high art" or culture. Bob Watts was amused by the idea of trying to lure "flying saucers" to land on his farm by setting up automobile hubcaps as flying-saucer decoys.

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Q: It seems that the iconography of your work depends almost exclusively on "found objects"—often cheap, familiar, and kitschy. The result is that the message or content of your works appears not only very direct but also quite simple. If this is true, do you feel that this "simplified" iconography limits your development of more subtle subjects and ideas?

A: Well, yes. The iconography does often depend on cheap, familiar, and kitschy materials. But there are differences between: (a) the simple physical presence of an object and (b) the cultural context from which it has been appropriated and (c) the ways that the object-

cum-icon relates to other object-icons, texts, or images appearing in a particular work. For starters, as an eternal optimist, I believe that life can, or at least could, be simple. Next, I am not convinced that if there is something to be said it gains profundity through obscurity. On the one hand, there are certainly such things as mysteries, and they are wonderful subjects for study, but I don't find that a "mystical" treatment of a mystery (such as the mystery of death) does much to either advance understanding or inspire awe. On the other hand, toys and kitsch are instruments for measuring how much we have trivialized life. In the end the types and qualities of the objects that I have used for iconographical purposes limit me only in the rigor required to find precise and meaningful solutions to their relatedness—both internally and externally.

Q: There is another question that I want to ask about your work. It is about "craftsmanship." Compared with other American Fluxus artists—let's say George Maciunas, Bob Watts, or George Brecht—your work, if you will excuse me for saying so, seems often "unfinished" or even crude. Is this intentional or only because you are lazy?

A: Well, I don't think that I am lazier than most people. But it is true that my work does not have a "high-gloss" finish. I could fall back on the excuse that I was never trained as a visual artist and have only recently started making objects again, after a twenty-five-year "vacation." But that is not the issue. You may remember that even my earlier performance work, which depended on my training as a musician, often seemed roughshod and "in process." So you may conclude that my low-tech approach is intentional. Although I admire craftsmanship, I don't think that the kind of technically flawless (if such is really possible) work is consistent with an overview that accepts that the haphazard and even chaos are part of the acceptance of life. And in the end I think that works of
"Flawless craftsmanship" intentionally or unintentionally give the observer/viewer the "easy way out" of reacting to the superficial qualities of the work without engaging whatever more substantial discourse may be present.

Q: Okay, I have only one final question. Your first works — those created in Cologne and Paris — were what we now might call "conceptual art" or "performance art." That is, they were based in time, language, gestural, and acoustic events, and the end product had no material permanence. In fact, I understand that these works were informed by a strong anti-materialist bias. Now you are making works that have a physical permanence; they are exhibited in galleries, have acquired commercial value, and are available to be sold and bought. Why? Have you rejected your original idealism?

A: Well, there are several parts to the answer of this question. First, I like most of humanity, must labor by hand or mind for my daily bread. And during the first twenty years, when Fluxus was at its fringey fringe phenomena, it held few or no commercial opportunities sufficient to support a family. I did have a family to support. That has changed somewhat during these last years.

Second, you are correct, at least with respect to my work, that it was informed by an anti-materialist bias. But that does not mean that I did not wish (rather than expect) that the work would be a means to earn a livelihood. To be perfectly honest, there was little to find in my early work to be commercialized. Works like Methods and Processes were very slippery, meant to infiltrate at a near-subliminal level and then exit, leaving behind little or no trace/evidence that a foreign matter had entered and tweaked a bit of your mind.

So as you can imagine, that kind of work had very limited commercial possibilities. Now of course, the work is "art history," and original copies have some commercial value. It is also true that my early objects (the "puzzle-poems," for example) were intentionally designed to have no or little intrinsic, commercial value — and to be cheaply reproducible. But quote frankly, even if the "content" of the work could have been "packaged" in a form having greater commercial value, at that time (and I think all of us were ready to sell) there was no one with money interested in what Fluxus was doing. Thus, for the most part we ended up exchanging our works with other like-minded and equally moneyless souls. Now, of course, there is a bit of a market for Fluxus, and being the lazy human being that I am, it is only natural that I now try to see if it is not easier to earn my livelihood by making silly objects rather than by working as a bureaucrat in a boring office.

Q: Finally, do you agree that Fluxus is dead now that Maciunas is dead?

A: The final truth is that Fluxus — however laudatory our various initial pronouncements may have been — was never much more than a pragmatic episode (not even a collective), which floundered into a circumstance rich enough to accommodate a very wild but also very focused bunch of 1960s radical artists. Without George Maciunas the various strains of Fluxus would have probably disappeared as "early attempts" at this or that recent art form (Pop Art, Minimalism, Conceptual Art, Mail Art, etc., etc., etc.). But because of George Maciunas, not only is the Fluxus legacy still alive, but it is also dead.

As a nonbeliever, I have no idea about how George M. may or may not be enjoying "life after death." But I do believe not only that Fluxus has survived George but also that now that it is finally free to be Fluxus, it is becoming something/nothing with which George should be happy!
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In Search of Benjamin Patterson: An Improvised Journey

GEORGE E. LEWIS

Benjamin (Ben) Patterson, Born 1934 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I wish I knew Ben Patterson. In a way, I've been searching for him all my life, even though he was always and already there. I'll explain that in a moment, but I should say at the outset that the work being performed by this article somewhat exceeds my original intent to examine Patterson's work in terms of contemporary ideas about improvisation.

There's a long tradition in jazz of referring to musicians by their first names, shortened first names, or nicknames. Insiders—musicians and listeners but not necessarily the general public—refer confidently to Miles and Duke and Hawk and Bud and Trane. Although Ben Patterson's life and work did not have much to do with jazz, at least according to the standard portrayals, Fluxus narratives also asserted first-name familiarity with allacry. The stories always seemed to invite you to imagine (or wish that you yourself had been on the Fluxus scene.}

There was another Ben—Ben Vautier—who's e-mail list of my I was on for years. I have no idea who put me on his list, but as a longtime denizen of several experimental music scenes, I enjoyed being on, an irregular basis, to keep up with the doings of George and Shigeko and Emmett and Alison and so on. These e-mails presented lots of stories, more than a few complaints, and a strong, celebratory sense of community.

So many Fluxus narratives—like the narratives of its predecessor movement, the Beats—trade on the familiar: personal stories and histories, sometimes with a point or edge, sometimes not. During my early years in New York, the mid-1970s, I would sit placidly—by turns mysoiled, fascinated, nonplussed, and here and there a bit bored— as older artists who knew the principal players in the drama—or, as I found out later, were players themselves—told Fluxus stories that never made the books but that "everyone" somehow knew. I was flattered to be there since I am considerably younger than the Fluxus originators, and I don't think they're taking on new members— or rather, we want our own clubs and our own names anyway.

George Maciunas's 1969 mapping of Fluxus and its relation to the avant-garde presented the esoskeleton of a socio-artistic network concerned with the production of knowledge—oral, written, graphic—about itself. This epistemologically centered identity-formation project is central to many art movements, but the degree to which Fluxus publicly articulated this kind of networked affinity consciousness is particularly noteworthy. It is this sense of affinity that produces art, movements, and genre membership, and the oral histories absorbed in those bar and backstage sessions not only constituted valuable preparation for the textual histories and collegial connections I encountered later but also whetted my appetite for actually meeting this mysterious figure, Ben Patterson.

A later reason why I wanted to get to know Patterson in some way—at least historically, if not personally—is that a fair amount of my current scholarly direction centers a critical, contextualizing eye upon the frequent discrepancies between scholarly and popular histories of experimentalism and what artists actually experienced in and around those experimental art worlds. This isn't quite the same thing as reading a history of the period and complaining, "That's not the way it happened!"; rather, what is of concern here is an analysis of mediation, critically examining differences between what James Scott would call "public" and "private" transcripts.\footnote{Scott}

Another reason why I wanted to get to know Patterson is more personal. I've been associated for many years with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, an influential African American musical avant-garde that is roughly contemporaneous with Fluxus. As I noted in my book on this musical collective, "AACM musicians updated and revised a model pursued by black classical composers, an important group of creative music makers who, I maintain, have been all but ignored by the major black cultural critics and public intellectuals who have come to prominence since 1970—composers like Tania Leon, Halim Both, Anderson, and Alvin Singleton, who, like Patterson, pursued more or less conventional Western classical music training.\footnote{Lewis}\

Now this working-class, grassroots experimental music movement appears not only in otherwise whiteness-imbedded historical accounts of experimental music but also in canonical histories of African American music. In contrast, black music scholar Dominique-René de Lern's review of the 1971 edition of Eileen Southern's no-canonical survey text, The Music of Black Americans, notes that Patterson isn't even listed in the index.\footnote{De Lern's} Even more oddly, a review of the literature finds that although Fluxus is mentioned in at least one of the major surveys on African American art, its role black exponent and arguable co-founder, Benjamin Patterson, was somehow overlooked.\footnote{Lewis} A computer search finds that the canonical Black Music Research Journal never mentions him in more than a quarter-century of excellent scholarship on music of all types, including my own article in the journal.

On the other side of the tracks (so to speak), Patterson fares somewhat better, but a curious tandem of display and erasure dominates his presence. While he is invariably mentioned in nearly every prominent account of the movement,\footnote{Lewis} his work is seldom the critical writing on Fluxus or in the reminiscences. Perhaps the most exhausted collection of Patterson's early work in the book Fluxus Codex (1988), edited and a comparatively substantial review including color reproductions of his liaisons, can be found in a volume in 2007.

A more typical example is Ken Friele's The Fluxus Reader, which makes only a passing reference to Patterson, an article by Dick Higgins in which recovers a Patterson street event on light dist in New York's Times Square more successful Fluxperformances\footnote{Friele} article claims, "There's no denying it: his obsessive operation, invoking Patterson in a further claim that "there were probably artists of color associated with Fluxus previous grouping of artists in Custer as I have been able to determine, few articles on Patterson's work have been written. Thus we might say (unchartedly) it comes to Fluxhistory, Benjamin Pat- teron's Spokk Who Sat by the Door,\footnote{Lewis} properly positioned by well-meaning colleagues) to retrospectively bolster thin bones fided. While imitations (simplistic and unwarrented, to present do not inflow historiographies and, perhaps, experimentalism would be needful particularly given the lack of a race in scholarly histories of the avant-gardes investment in liberal theories of art articulated in most commentary on the talk, markedly with recent scholarship in As a consequence, before examining
So many Fluxanarivies—like the narratives of its predecessor movement, the Beats—trade on the familiar: personal stories and histories, sometimes with a point or edge, sometimes not. During my early years in New York, the mid-1970s, I would sit placidly—by turns mystified, fascinated, nonplussed, and here and there a bit bored—as older artists who knew the principal players in the drama—or, as I found out later, were players themselves—told Fluxus stories that never made the books but that "everyone" somehow knew. I was flattered to be there since I am considerably younger than the Fluxus originals, and I don't think they're taking on new members—or rather, we want our own clubs and our own names anyway.

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Now this working-class, grassroots experimental music movement appears not only in otherwise whiteness-imbued historical accounts of experimental music but also in canonical histories of African American music. In contrast, black music scholar Dominique-René de Lern's review of the 1971 edition of Ellen Southern's now-canonical survey text, The Music of Black Americans, notes that Patterson isn't even listed in the index. Even more oddly, a review of the literature finds that although Fluxus is mentioned in at least one of the major surveys on African American art, its sole black exponent and arguable cofounder, Benjamin Patterson, was somehow overlooked. A computer search finds that the canonical Black Music Research Journal never mentions him in more than a quarter-century of excellence on music of all types, including my own article in the journal.

On the other side of the tracks (so to speak), Patterson fares somewhat better, but a curious tandem of display and erasedness dominates his presence. While he is invariably mentioned in nearly every prominent account of the movement, his work is seldom the focus, either in the critical writing on Fluxus or in the first-person Flux reminiscences. Perhaps the most extensive and diverse edition collection of Patterson's early works is to be found in the book Fluxus Codex (1988), edited by Jon Hendricks, and a comparatively substantial review of his later works, including color reproductions of his objects and installations, can be found in a volume published in Brazil in 2002.

A more typical example is Ken Friedman's 1998 book The Fluxus Reader, which makes only modest mention of Patterson; an article by Dick Higgins in the volume briefly recounts a Patterson street event on the edge of a red-light district in New York's Times Square as "one of the more successful Fluxperformances." Even as a 1997 TDR article claims, "There's no denying it: Fluxus was an inclusive operation," invoking Patterson to corroborate the further claim that "there were probably more women and artists of color associated with Fluxus than with any other previous group of artists in Western art history," as far as I have been able to determine, few critical or historical articles on Patterson's work have been published.

Thus we might say (uncharitably, to be sure) that when it comes to fluxhystory, Benjamin Patterson functions as the Spook Who Sat by the Door, a metonymy prominently positioned by well-meaning scholars (and possibly colleagues) to retroactively bolster the movement's diversity bona fides. While imputations of racism would be simplistic and unwarranted, to pretend that issues of race do not influence historiographies and personal narratives of experimentalism would be needlessly (or willfully) naive, particularly given the general lack of attention to issues of race in scholarly histories of the avant-garde. In fact, the dogged investment in liberal theories of color blindness articulated in most commentary on the period contrasts markedly with recent scholarship in many other fields.

As a consequence, before examining Patterson's work in
the context of improvisation, it might be useful to take a virtual tour of the artist's early history.

Formative Years

Benjamin Patterson's background was superficially similar to that of many white experimentalists whose crucial formative years spanned the 1950s and 1960s. As a child, he listened assiduously to classical music, particularly opera, and pursued postsecondary classical music study in composition and double bass performance at the University of Michigan, where he went to school with composer Gordon Mumma.25

After Patterson graduated from college in 1956, according to his own account, "I also embarked on a crusade—to be the first black to break the color barrier" (and play) in an American symphony orchestra. . . . But in the end, even though such a famous conductor as Leonard Slatkin fought strongly on my behalf, America was not yet ready for a black symphony musician, and so I went to Canada."26 During his initial brush with expatriate life, Patterson performed as a contrabassist with the Halifax Symphony Orchestra and the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra, and also became involved with electronic music, working in Ottawa with Canadian pioneer Hugh Le Caine and performing his own experiments.27

Here Patterson's narrative diverges from the normative white experimentalists' biography; moreover, it is precisely at this point that one could say that Fluxus's prehistory becomes bound up with race. As a result, let us say that, in the event, the U.S. classical world's concomitant rejection of black Americans as performers proved fortuitous; had matters been otherwise, Patterson might have ended up buried at the side of the stage behind the cellos, with no time to create visual works, installations, compositions, or "events." The composer himself hinted at this in 1999, describing his symphonic Jackie Robinson as a distracting cross he forced himself to bear. "My point, however, is that although before university I was exploring a wide range of subjects, media, and materials, from anthropology to Zen—all of which have eventually found a place in my art—the urgency/discipline of my "crusade" kept me pretty much on a 'straight line' all the way through university."28

Another divergence from the standard experimental music biography was Patterson's stint in the United States Army, in which he performed, not with "army bands," as one finds on many post-Vietnam jazz resumes, but with the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Germany.

From this point, divergences abound. For instance, while the literature on Black American artforms expatriates to Europe concentrates largely on the French experience, in 1960 we find Patterson in Cologne, where after an encounter with Katharina Stockhausen, he met John Cage, David Tudor, La Monte Young, and George Brecht at Mary Bauermeister's studio events (the Fluxus equivalent of Minton's Playhouse), experiencing a moment of self-realization that one might compare with Charlie Parker's legendary chill house epiphany: "Even now I still have a vivid memory of telling myself . . . that this is the music that I had been hearing in my head for years but had never thought possible to realize."29

Staying in Cologne, Patterson met Emmett Williams, Daniel Spoerri, Nam June Paik, Cornelius Cardew, and others, and he began working on new ways of making music. "As some point or other" Patterson recounted in 2001, "George Maciunas fell into our lives and the Weisenbad Festival happened"—the signal event that announced the name Fluxus to the larger world of art and music, and arguably rendered Patterson a founding member of the movement.30

At least part of the reason for Patterson's modest presence in histories of experimental art making might well be laid at the composer's own door. Where he appears, his biographies are lacunae, even cryptic. Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell (the latter a card-carrying Fluxus artist) list him in their 1966 survey, but in that volume's set of self-submitted biographies, one notes the contrast between the expansive Nam June Paik and the only factual Patterson.

| Name: Benjamin A. Patterson, Jr. |
| Height: 180 cm. |
| Weight: 77 kg. |
| Wears glasses. Excellent health. Married (2 children). |

What follows is a medieval-style, basically nonnarrative chronicle, a set of annals presenting dates that may or may not be important, followed by a modestly presented list of public and performance venues. That's all.

1952: Penn High School (Pittsburgh, Pa.)
1956: University of Michigan (Bachelor of Music)
1956–60: Contrabassus (with Halifax Symphony Orchestra; U.S. Army 7th Army Symphony Orchestra; Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra)

By his own account, Patterson was active in Fluxus from 1962 to 1967 and "semi-active" after that. A 1990 self-biography lists Patterson as working at the New York Public Library in 1965, getting a master's degree in Library science at Columbia University in 1967, and "retiring as an artist in the late 1960's to pursue an ordinary life."31

During his "retirement," Patterson engaged deeply with creating new cultural infrastructures for African American and other artists of color. A 1970 article by Dominique-René de Lermor identified Patterson as a former president of the Society of Black Composers,32 and in March 1972 the composer participated in a panel discussion titled "Music in Black America" at the Music Educators National Conference in Atlantic, alongside Weimar chair of the music department at his house college.33 Patterson helped to sponsor in Performance programs for the Council on the Arts, as well as serve as the Department of Performing and Creative Island Community College. He serves on the Symphony of the New World, devoted early on to fostering ethnochords in symphony orchestras, including composers and as director of the Negro Ensemble Company.34

Methods and Processes (fl)

Patterson's text pieces are usually a general heading of what are now known to have been pioneered in the early 1970s by La Monte Young, Yoko Ono, and the Fluxus work is generally seen as being an early possibility of the medium.35 On the poetics of text scores:

Rather than pulverizing language fragments, the scores focus on themselves as poetic material. This is deeply prosaic everyday syntax of short, simple, vernacular words, quasi-instrumental forms of lists that emerge in the postwar era as a clearer the earlier avant-garde practices musically, and semiotic disrupts modes and de-skilled these "in an artistic practice driven by but the recording and reproductive" that would increasingly restructure 50s the postwar era.36
n's background was superficially similar white experimentalists whose crucial anned the 1950s and 1960s. As a child, Jourson to classical music, particularly d postsecondary classical music study d double bass performance at the Unin, where he went to school with com- 

n graduated from college in 1956, own account, "I also embarked on a new black to 'break the color barrier' erican symphony orchestra... But in ugh such a famous conductor as Leo-might strongly on my behalf, America or a black symphony musician, and so l During his initial brush with exasperate aimed as a contrabassist with the Hal- chers and the Ottawa Philharmonic lso became involved with electronic Ottawa with Canadian pioneer Hugh rening his own experiments.\footnote{3} l's activity diverges from the normative a biography; moreover, it is precisely one could say that Fluxus's prehistory up with race. As a start, let us say that, U.S. classical world's contemporane-americans as performers proved items been otherwise, Patterson might ried at the side of the stage behind the e to create visual works, installations, etc.\footnote{5} The composer himself hinted nting his symphonic Jackie Robinson- g cross he forced himself to bear: "My point, however, is that although before university I was exploring a wide range of subjects, media, and materials, from anthropology to Zen—all of which have eventually found a place in my art—the urgency/discipline of my 'crusade' kept me pretty much on a 'straight line' all the way through university.\footnote{6} Another divergence from the standard experimental music biography was Patterson's stint in the United States Army, in which he performed not with "army bands," as one finds on many pre-Vietnam jazz résumés, but with the Seventh Army's Symphony Orchestra in Germany. From this point, divergences abound. For instance, while the literature on black American artistic expan-sions to Europe concentrates largely on the French experience, in 1960 we find Patterson in Cologne, where after an encounter with Karlheinz Stockhausen, he met John Cage, David Tudor, La Monte Young, and George Brecht at Mary Bauermeister's studio events (the Fluxus equivalent of Minton's Playhouse), experiencing a moment of self-realization that one might compare with Charlie Parker's legendary chill house epiphany: "even now I still have a vivid memory of telling myself, ... that this is the music that I had been hearing in my head for years but had never thought possible to realize."\footnote{7}

Staying in Cologne, Patterson met Emmett Williams, Daniel Spoerri, Nam June Paik, Cornelius Cardew, and others, and he began working on new ways of making music. "At some point or other," Patterson recounted in 2001, "George Maciunas fell into our lives and the Wlesbaden Festival happened"—the signal event that announced the name Fluxus to the larger worlds of art and music, and arguably rendered Patterson a founding member of the movement.\footnote{8}

As least part of the reason for Patterson's modest presence in histories of experimental art making might well be laid at the composer's own door. Where he appears, his biographies are lacunae, even cryptic. Jürgen Becker and Wolf Vostell (the latter a card-carrying Fluxus artist) list him in their 1965 survey, but in that volume's set of self-submitted biographies, one notes the contrast between the expansive Nam June Paik and the dilly-fact- 

Patterson: Name: Benjamin A. Patterson, Jr. 
Height: 180 cm. 
Weight: 77 kg. 
Wears glasses. Excellent health. Married (3 children).\footnote{9}

What follows is a medieval-style, non-narrative chronicle, a set of annals presenting dates that may or may not be important, followed by a modestly presented list of publication and performance venues. That's all:

1952: Penn High School (Pittsburgh, Pa.)
1956: University of Michigan (Bachelor of Music)
1956–60: Contrabassist with Halifax Symphony Orchestra; US. Army 7th Army Symphony Orchestra; Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra

By his own account, Patterson was active in Fluxus from 1962 to 1967 and "semi-active" after that. A 1990 self-biography lists Patterson as working at that time.\footnote{10} The New York Public Library in 1963, getting a master's degree in library science at Columbia University in 1967, and "retiring as an artist in the late 1960s to pursue an ordinary life."\footnote{11} During his "retirement," Patterson engaged deeply with creating new cultural infrastructures for black American and other artists of color. A 1970 article by Dominique- René de Lencquesaing identified Patterson as a former president of the Society of Black Composers, and in March 1972 the composer participated in a panel discussion titled "Music in Black America" at the Music Educators National Conference in Atlanta, alongside Wendell Whalum, then chair of the music department at historically black Morehouse College.\footnote{12} Patterson helped to develop the Com- poser in Performance programs for the New York State Council on the Arts, as well as serving as chair of the Department of Performing and Creative Arts at Staten Island Community College. He served as general manager of the Symphony of the New World (an ensemble devoted early on to fostering ethnic and gender diver-sity in symphony orchestras, including both performers and composers) and as director of development for the Negro Ensemble Company.\footnote{13}

Methods and Processes (1)

Patterson's text pieces are usually grouped under the general heading of what are now known as "event scores," said to be pioneered in the early 1960s, in particular by La Monte Young, Yoko Ono, and George Brecht, whose Fluxus work is generally seen as being emblematic of the early possibilities of the medium.\footnote{14} Critic Liz Kosz focuses on the poetics of text scores:

"Rather than pulverizing language into sonorous fragments, the scores focus on the instructions themselves as poetic material. This alternate poetics, of deeply prosaic everyday statements, comprised of short, simple, vernacular words, presented in the quasi-instrumental forms of lists and instructions, emerges in the postwar era as a counter-model to the earlier avant-garde practices of asynchronicity, musicality, and semiotic disruption... Physically modest and de-skilled, these 'scores' represent an artistic practice driven by but also counter to the recording and reproductive technologies that would increasingly restructure sound and language in the postwar era."\footnote{15}
While many of Patterson's text scores incorporate a freely significative poetics, unlike Brecht's works, they neither necessarily valorize the everyday nor situate events at a threshold point between performance and its environment. Rather, some of these works perform a more traditional role of asking listeners and performers to locate themselves in interaction with sonorous experience. As French critic Nicolas Feuille stated in 2002: "Benjamin Patterson maintains about his concept of 'events' that the instructions require special involvement by the interpreters. Rather than an art that is distracting or soothing, and in contrast to the uniquely playful aspect that such 'events' may seem to have in general, he affirms their essentially personal dimension, the character of lived experience that enriches those who create them, and the immediacy that their apprehension requires—a demand that abandons the very notion of art."

Further, these Patterson pieces differ from other Fluxus scores, later conceptual art/music pieces, and traditional scores in that their realization cannot take place in the imaginary; to be perceived at all, they must be performed—physical, real-world action must be asserted. The consequences of this must be experienced, and no attempt is made to anticipate or control audience or environmental response or orientation to time, memory, or history.

Writing in 1964, Patterson himself declared: "I demanded of an experiencer (not a passive viewer or listener) to act in the position of performer, interpreter and even as creator in the event. I was not concerned about stimulating retina or eardrum, but instead to make that which would address the integration of experience and relevant capabilities."

A 1991 "interview with himself" first published in German translation in the journal Kunstforum International (the original English version is included in the present volume) provides perhaps the most extensive critical autoethography of Patterson's view of his early works. "But during this period," he related, "I thought of myself as some sort of a composer-performer (the term performance artist hadn't been invented yet), and most of my work was presented in the context of a Fluxus festival or concert. These works—if not exactly music—were still based primarily in time and activity, not space and color." Fluxus artists were inordinately fond of including themselves on taxonomically articulated lists and genealogies. Patterson appears on nearly all the lists, but the nature of his presence varies. The composer's own list comes in the form of a piece, Constellations of the First Magnitude (2001), rendered as a sample of Renaissance visual cosmology, complete with astrological signs. Patterson's self-produced narratives are relatively modest in scope and number, and like many African American artists working in whiteness-imbedded art worlds, he may well have realized that he would be obliged to writer himself back into his own history.

Typically Patterson performs this historiographical function with a certain modesty and self-effacement that, alternatively, could be viewed as a strategy of masking. In 2000 he noted the relation between a certain whimsy and playfulness that his work evoked and "the old saying that you catch more flies with honey than with vinegar, which has something to do with the African American that I am ... the standard Arnes and Andy situation of getting through difficult situations with humor with more smile on your face is one of the things I learned as a survival technique." The comment seems to add new dimensions to the context within which Fluxus humor has been presented. Indeed, critic Kristine Scales saw cryptic references to race in Patterson's use of coffee grounds in the text score of his 1964 First Symphony:

FIRST SYMPHONY
One at a time members of audience are questioned. "DO YOU TRUST ME?" and are divided left and right, yes and no.
the room is darkened.
firely ground coffee is scattered throughout the room.

Quoted by the critic, Patterson himself was less sanguine about this interpretation. "I must admit that I do not remember being so consciously aware of ... racial impli-
view of his early works. "But during this period," he related, "I thought of myself as some sort of a composer-performer (the term performance artist hadn't been invented yet), and most of my work was presented in the context of a Fluxus festival or concert. These works—if not exactly music—were still based primarily in time and activity, not space and color." 89

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FIRST SYMPHONY
One at a time, members of the audience are questioned, "DO YOU TRUST ME?" and are divided left and right, yes and no. The room is darkened, freshly ground coffee is scattered throughout the room. 91

Quenched by the critic, Patterson himself was less sanguine about this interpretation: "I must admit that I do not remember being so consciously aware of... racial implications when I made this work. Of course, I knew I was a Negro (the terminology in those days) and quite a bit about racism and how it was affecting my life. But, consciously, I really did not understand how deeply racist affected my work. Obviously, subconsciously a lot was happening." 92 For Patterson, the centerpiece of First Symphony was the use of the "pop" sound of opening a can of coffee on stage in the dark as a means of provoking audience anxiety: "[It was] a sound familiar to many people (male and female) at that time (and military experience or 'civil rights' marches, etc.)". 93 Nonetheless, Sillers is reluctant to embrace Patterson's disclaimer, concluding that "issues of race found both overt and covert expression" in his work and that, in First Symphony, Patterson "seemed to confront his predominantly white avant-garde audience with its veneer of sophistication, that gloss that thinly cloaks deep and unresolved racial conflicts." 94

What seems equally plausible upon further reflection, however, is that the composer expected even a nominally white audience for avant-garde work to recognize and respond to the sounds of protest demonstrations, including the ominous sounds of lethal authority. In this way, rather than being narrowly focused on confronting and thereby centering the experience of whiteness, Patterson was using sound to universalize the experience of social protest, something experienced by citizens of all races at the time.

This is not to say that Patterson avoided confrontation with race in his work. In his 1991 self-interview, he notes that he prefers to use humor "as it often provides the path of least resistance for the implanting of subversive ideas." 95 His assertion of this method in one piece could be seen as a precursor of Adrian Piper's even more pointedly ironic participation work of 1982, "Funk Lessons." 96 As Patterson described it: "This is best
exemplified in one of my works exhibited at Galerie Schipperhaus, titled "Folksing White Folks." In this piece I quote a black folk story, which goes like this: "The appropriation for the Negro school was used for the white school. The superintendent explained this to the Negro principal, who of course couldn't make a direct protest. So he said, 'The one thing we need most of all is educated white folks.' So that is where I come from." The possibility that Patterson was uninterested in having the reception of his work overdetermined by race may have accounted for his embrace of Europe, as with so many other nineteenth and twentieth-century African American artists. This account appears to be supported by Sally Banes's quotation of a 1964 article by Dick Higgins, whom she characterized as "someone indignant against prejudice": Patterson married and went [from Germany] to France, as he had gone from the U.S. before, where he did not want to be a 'negro artist' but just one Hell of a good one and, among other things, a negro. Only James Baldwin and Benjamin Patterson have ever attained that proportion. Nonetheless, to the extent that simply being "a negro" automatically announced race in a whiteness-valuing art world, one could reasonably expect that race and its naturalizations would come dangerously close to overdetermining the responses of critics, audiences, and even colleagues. Thus, even Higgins felt able to publicly declare in 1964 that, before meeting Patterson, he suspected that he was black, apparently just from reading his 1964 book Methods and Processes: 'Actually Patterson's way of using periodic repeats and the blues feeling that this produced being so ingrained and natural struck me so much that when I first sent me a copy of methods and processes I wrote to him and guessed he was a negro.' In this light, it is not difficult to imagine that Patterson's use of the "survival technique" of humor involved both musical and collegial aspects.

The Role of Improvisation

Patterson's early pieces are often composed of three main elements: (1) a set of materials, physical and/or temporal; (2) performance instructions and process elaboration; and (3) limit and ending conditions. A typical example is his famous Paper Piece (1960), in which performers are given a variety of sounds using paper bags. The piece could be presented as public and interactive, and as the score notes, "dynamics are improvised within natural borders." [Materials]

5 performers

instrumentation:
15 sheets of paper per performer approximate size of standard newspaper, quality varied, newspaper, tissue paper, light cardboard, colored, pinned or plain.
3 paper bags per performer; quality, size and shape varied

[Performance instructions and process elaboration]

procedure: A general sign from a chairman will begin the piece. Within the following 30 seconds performers enter at will. By each performer, 7 sheets are performed SHAKE.

BREAK—opposite edges of the sheet are grasped firmly and sharply jerked apart TEAR—each sheet is reduced to particles less than 1/10 size of the original... dynamics are improvised within natural borders of approximateipp of TWIST and lift of POP...

each performer previously selects, arranges, materials and sequence of events.

[Limit conditions]

duration: 10 to 12 minutes... The piece ends when the paper supply is exhausted.

Early on, Patterson saw openings in avant-garde music for improvisative modes of encounter. "In the series of Bauernzei," he recalled, "I met John and David and Cage's earliest work and recordings such as Radio Music, so I introduced myself and I asked to perform with them the next night. And it was like a duck taking to water, and it was so natural for improvisation." In contrast, Fluxus cofounder George Maciunas felt compelled to differentiate between Fluxus composers and Fluxus improvisers. By this time the art world had forgotten the late nineteenth-century origins of Western music's proscription of improvisation and was in thrall to the working out of the "Quiet Revolution" that attempted to erase the historical and cultural processes that preceded improvisation's fall from grace. For Maciunas, the prevalence of improvisative practices in the new movement seemed to imply the need for new modes of encounter and dissemination. "Generally, there are very few Europeans doing compositions, so few I really can't think of anyone," he wrote in a 1963 letter to George Brecht. "Maybe [Robert] Filliou and... [Wolf] Vostell and [Daniel] Spoerri. The last 2 do not write down their happenings but improvise on the spot so I can't tell you or send their things to you. Of non Europeans best are Ni Paik, Ben Patterson, Emmett Williams. Paik again does not write down his compositions, but a few simple ones I can describe." The possibility that the binary opposition between improvisation and composition might constitute a merely vestigial remnant of Western music's post-Romanticism occurred to few at this time, at least publicly. In any case, Patterson, who did not study with Cage, seemed unfazed by that community's suspicion of improvisation, and the

improvisation-composition binary is moral force commonly assumed for in a decided difference from Cagen's Dude, Paper Piece could be Donn according to mood, and at least for 1990 performance of the work, the toward the former. Moreover, despite negative reaction to Stockholmus, if the older composer's notion of comp than that of Brecht or Young. The only other African American associated with Fluxus was the ink-jazz-identified singer Jeanne Lee. At last has it: "Lee was briefly married to with sound poet David Hazletson and

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The possibility that the binary opposition between improvisation and composition might constitute a merely vestigial remnant of Western music's post-Romanticism occurred to few at this time, at least publicly. In any case, Patterson, who did not study with Cage, seemed unfazed by that community's suspicion of improvisation, and the improvisation-composition binary evidently lacked the moral force commonly assumed for it at the time. Thus, in a decided difference from Cagean aesthetics, a performance of Paper Piece could be Dionysian or Apollonian according to mood, and at least from the evidence of a 1999 performance of the work, the tendency was clearly toward the former. Moreover, despite Patterson's initial negative reaction to Stockhausen, the pieces resemble the older composer's notion of composer control more than that of Brecht or Young. [59]

The only other African American who has been associated with Fluxus was the innovative avant-garde jazz-identified singer Jeanne Lee. As historian Eric Porter has it: "Lee was briefly married to and collaborated with sound poet David Heselson and worked with other
artists affiliated with sound poetry, Fluxus, and Happenings. She became interested in sound poetry's dedication to conveying emotional meaning through intonation, communicating via non-verbal utterances, and connecting poetry to bodily movement and sensation. Lee was also drawn to the experientialism, ritual, audience participation, and iconoclasm associated with Fluxus and Happenings.44

For the most part, however, the canonical literature on Fluxus has been careful to distance the movement from jazz. The closest affinity to jazz runs through saxophonist La Monte Young, whose background in jazz was well known, albeit commonly portrayed as an aspect of his past that has little to do with the scope of his career.45 Nonetheless, Porter argues that Lee's notion of the relation between performed sound and the environment connects jazz with Fluxus, in that it "suggests a commitment to human interactivity during the creative process that creates non-hierarchical relationships among performers and audience members and invites the audience to participate in the creation of meaning around the performance. It is an ethos that can be found in the work of Fluxus and Happenings participants, as well as that of African American improvisers such as members of the AACM, and multi-instrumentalist Marion Brown, on whose Afternoon of a Georgia Faun Lee performed."46

Similarly, a communal interaction with the audience is audible on the archival live recordings of Patterson's 1981 Variations for Double Bass and Duo for Voice and a String Instrument. "Sudden silences are punctuated by unusual and evocative sounds, both great and small, and members of the gallery audience are talking, laughing, and freely applauding Patterson's performance efforts, as in a jazz bar. Moreover, photos of performances of Variations from 1962 and 1969 (see p. 199) indicate that the piece was as much visually as sonically articulated.

A deceptively complex example of improvisation from Methods and Processes uses materials from the environment itself—in this case, a bakery:

- enter bakery
- smell
- leave
- enter second bakery
- smell
- leave
- enter third bakery
- smell
- leave
- continue until appetite is obtained.47

The piece asks participants to interact with a potentially large number of bakeries but gives a limited set of instructions as to how that interaction is to be performed. In Cagian terms, this is a moment in the score that would ideally be "indeterminate with respect to performance," but in everyday-life terms, innumerable small acts, performed in the spirit of the piece, require indeterminacy to live alongside agency in ways that cannot be conflated with what Cage called "the dictates of ego."48 These small acts include not only physical motion and decision making as to timing but also self-reflection, attention, and evaluation with regard to the experience itself—elements that, after all, are explicitly called for in the piece and that draw upon essentially universal human tendencies and capabilities.49

The notion of improvisation subsumes all these acts and in the end constitutes a much better descriptor of the actual affective worth of performance. As Patterson notes, "My piece, as they appear on paper, have neither material nor abstract value." Rather, for Patterson, "They can only achieve value in performance, and then only the personal value that the participant himself perceives about his own behavior and/or that of the society during and/or after the experience. (In fact, any piece is just this: a person, who, consciously or not, does this or that. Everybody can do it.)"50

What Next?
Patterson returned to active Fluxus in 1988, around the time of a general recrudescence of interest in Fluxus. Besides his important sound and music works, he was also a printmaker and a painter, and he created sculptures ranging from the ubiquitous Flux-box form to room-size installations that have been exhibited in solo and group shows and performances around the world.

In the interim, digital compact disc has become a prime contemporary form for sonic dissemination, one far more tractable and less expensive to produce and distribute than the bulky analog vinyl discs of the 1960s. New recordings began to appear, such as the seven-part Liverpool Song Lines from 2002 and 2003's hilariously thought-provoking Surveying Western Philosophy Using China Tools,51 as well as archival recordings and new performances of Patterson's acknowledged classic works, such as Variations for Double Bass, Duo for Voice and a String Instrument, and Paper Piece.52

Patterson's 2002 recording of his work The River Mersey indicates that his commitment to improvisation has not slackened. The piece combines periodic repetitions of R & B-style audio, spoken event instructions, elements of Duo for Voice and a String Instrument, and audibly jazz-identified performance of a graphic score.53 While such scores can function as sites for the improvisative act's signature combination of indeterminacy, agency, history, and memory, one might observe, as I have noted elsewhere, that "once a graphic score migrates conceptually beyond the communities in which it originated, however, the metatext that it represents inevitably becomes transformed. In that sense, either the improvisation can become a site for re-

With or, articulating fealty to, a revised future history of any graphic score or be partly oral, partly aural as mediate, and partly related to the texts that and journalists have produced about The River Mersey shows us that the citation of a graphic or textual score for the composer and the contemporary at the time of its original conception in the histories of its current perform the scores can remain alive, resisting to the visibilities and necessities of moment. In this way, each performance and "original" with respect to time a major trope of Benjamin Patterson's pl "ty staying alive—to possibility and to"

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A deceptively complex example of improvisation from *The Old Man Who Loved his Country* uses materials from the environment itself—in this case, a bakery:

- Enter bakery
- Smell
- Leave
- Enter second bakery
- Smell
- Leave
- Enter third bakery
- Smell
- Leave
- Continue until appetite is obtained.

The piece asks participants to interact with a potentially large number of bakeries but gives a limited set of instructions as to how that interaction is to be performed. In Cagean terms, this is a moment in the score that would ideally be "indeterminate with respect to performance," but in everyday-life terms, innumerable small acts, performed in the spirit of the piece, require indeterminacy to live alongside agency in ways that cannot be conflated with what Cage called "the dictates of ego." These small acts include not only physical motion and decision making, but also self-reflection, attention, and evaluation with regard to the environment itself—elements that, after all, are explicitly called for in the piece and that draw upon essentially universal human tendencies and capabilities.

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What Now?

Patterson returned to active Fluxus in 1988, around the time of a general recrudescence of interest in Fluxus. Besides his important sound and music works, he was also a printmaker and a painter, and he created sculptures ranging from the ubiquitous Flux box form to room-size installations that have been exhibited in solo and group shows and performances around the world.

In the interim, digital compact discs had become a prime contemporary form for sonic dissemination, one far more tractable and less expensive to produce and distribute than the bulky analog vinyl discs of the 1960s. New recordings began to appear, such as the seven-part *Liverpool Sonnet Lines* from 2002 and 2003’s hilariously thought-provoking *Surveying Western Philosophy Using China Tools* as well as archival recordings and new performances of Patterson’s acknowledged classic works, such as *Variations for Double Bass, Duo for Voice and a String Instrument*, and *Paper Piece*.

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The *River Meny* shows us that the sound of any realization of a graphic or textual score fortuitously transmutes the composer and the contemporaneous environment at the time of its original conception. Thus embedded in the histories of its current performers and audiences, the scores can remain alive, resisting any notion of “historically correct performance” as they remain responsive to the vicissitudes and necessities of the creative social moment. In this way, each performance can be unique and “original” with respect to time and space. Indeed, a major trope of Benjamin Patterson’s work concerns simply staying alive—to possibility and to experience. I once saw singer Richie Havens on a television show; the host of the show, noting that it had been a long time since mainstream media audiences had seen Havens, asked him if he had a message for the public. “Tell them I’m still here,” came the reply.

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NOTES
I wish to thank Valerie Case and Otis for access to a partial text of Benjamin Patterson's Motivax and Patterson.
1. This flavus mapping is reproduced in Harriett Higgins, Flavus Experience (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 79.
6. This is except for Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flavus, accessed May 1, 2009), but Patterson could fix that himself.
10. The reference is to Sam Green’s classic tale, in which the central trope explored in Ralph Ellison’s classic novel Invisible Man is reimagined by way of the character of "Freeman," a CIA-trained African American who becomes a mole in Chicago’s social services system, combining his training with "his "invisibility" to covertly sabotage and subvert white dominance. See Sam Green, The Speech (which was set by the Door) (Deerose: Wayne State University Press, 1990).
11. One recent exception is Sally Green’s work on the New York avante-garde scene of the early 20th century. Even though I have criticized Bon’s approach elsewhere, her work stands out among scholars of her generation for its relatively forthright treatment of race, which otherwise seems relegated to non-critical status in most published critical commentary on experimental music in see Sally Barnes, Greenwich Village, 1920-1945: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995). For a critique of Bon’s views, see Lewis, Power Stronger Than Itself, 79–84.
14. Ibid. Also see Hoffberg, "Ben Patterson in Los Angeles," 79.
15. Patterson, "I’m Glad You Asked."
17. Ibid.
22. Oliva, El Flavus, 249.
27. Hoffberg, "Ben Patterson in Los Angeles," 79.
29. Hoffberg, "Ben Patterson in Los Angeles," 78.
31. Quoted ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Patterson, "I’m Glad You Asked.
36. Patterson, "I’m Glad You Asked.
40. Hoffberg, "Ben Patterson in Los Angeles," 79.
42. Quoted in Kotz, "Post-Cagian Aesthetics," 300.
43. See Ben Patterson, Early Works, Alga Marigha, 100 (compact disc).
44. For a discussion of the differences between the two composers' understandings of event scores, see Kotz, "Post-Cagian Aesthetics," 31. In this light, the well-known debate between Cage and Young on this issue becomes a matter of situating the locus of compositional control, rather than a philosophical discussion of free will.
46. The scope of the "Harlem jazz musician" is common in the experimental music literature. As I have written elsewhere, the trope embodies "a double reflection: the engagement itself works against charge of elitism, while the discourse frames involvement with jazz as a form of youthful indiscipline." Lewis, Power Stronger Than Itself, 300.
48. Patterson, Akrath and Praxios.
50. Patterson, "Belémrita," 261; translation by the author.
52. Recordings of these works appear on Patterson, Early Works.
53. See Patterson, Liverpool Soundwheels, Volume Two.
Fluxus: Unimaginable Without Benjamin Patterson

JON HENDRICKS

Ben Patterson has had an enormous role in Fluxus. His presence and work dominated the very first Fluxus concert in Wuppertal, Germany, at Galerie Parnass on June 9, 1963, an event titled Kleines Sommerfest: Apollos John Cage. Two of Patterson's works were performed: Duo for Voice and a String Instrument (1961), with William Pearson, was a seemingly improvisational noise music work with two voices: Pearson's vocal intonations and Patterson's double bass, attacking, retelling, and embracing each other's sounds. The second work, Variations for Double Bass (1961), became an iconic Fluxus work that was later performed in numerous Fluxus concerts and festivals.

Patterson, a classically trained musician, used his antique double bass in as many irreverent ways as seemed possible. In fact, Variations for Double Bass was scored not in a traditional way with musical notations but as a textual score. Two of the notations:

IV. Place a number of wooden and plastic spring-type clothespins on strings several inches above bridge in such a manner that they rattle and/or produce odd tones, arrco tremolo, trills and/or long tones.

X. Perform pianissimo, medium and short tones arco with mute.

The sounds were delicious, assaulting the well-dressed upper-class German audience. The actions produced laughter and bewilderment.

I doubt very much that anyone present, other than the Fluxus artists on the program, had ever experienced anything as unconventional. Fortunately, the director of the gallery, Rolf Jährling—an architect in the town with a vibrant curiosity and love of the new, who had traveled throughout the United States, even visiting Black Mountain College—arranged to have photographs and a sound recording made of this Fluxus event, which preserves the experience so that visitors to Patterson's exhibition in Houston were able to see and hear what took place that night.

In 1962 in Paris, Patterson self-published an important collection of his scores, titled Methods and Processes. The publication contained several works that became Fluxus classics, including Lick Piece (1962 p. 103), performed for the first time in New York in the spring of 1964 at the Fluxhall, 350 Canal Street, during Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts. Benjamin Patterson, Robert Watts, and others covered artist Letty Eisenhauer's naked body with a Reddi-wip type of whipped cream from aerosol cans as she watched in bemused expression on her face. In one of Peter Moore's photographs of this process, Patterson's score Instruction No. 1 is visible on the floor underneath his flip-top cardboard box—though he was performing two of his compositions simultaneously.

The piece probably most associated with Fluxus is Paper Piece, written in 1960 and performed in nearly every Fluxus festival from the fall of 1962 onward. The Fluxus interpretation of the work generally involved large pieces of paper hanging in front of the stage and artists standing behind, making holes, at times performing other works such as Nam June Paik's Young Pennis Symphony (1962), in which performers put either their fingers or their penises through the holes, throwing programs or Fluxus scores through the holes made in the paper curtain, then breaking through the paper and extending it out over the audience.

Patterson had written a somewhat more structured score for Paper Piece, which was exhibited in Houston. Some of the sounds included in the score associated with paper are "shang," "break," "tair," "crumple," "tumble," "bumples," "rub," "scrub," "twist," "poof," and "pop." Patterson's action music was among the most radical of the time and helped to define Fluxus as both humorous and outrageous, an affront to cultural normalcy.

George Maciunas, the visionary Lithuanian-American artist who was the conceptual instigator of Fluxus and its primary theoretician and organizational planner, was invited to Wuppertal at the suggestion of Nam June Paik. Paik, another major Fluxus artist, had been invited by the Galerie Parnass director, Rolf Jährling, to organize an event for the opening of a summer exhibition of Art Informel at the gallery. Remarkably, among the list of painters and sculptors was none other than "Hulbeck-New York." "Hulbeck" of course was Richard Huerlenbeck, one of the several founders of Dada at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in the spring of 1916, forty-six years earlier.

Paik felt that he didn't have enough time to prepare an event, so he suggested Maciunas. Things started, and Maciunas's plan for the event that early summer was the first public manifestation of Fluxus. The invitation card lists Benjamin Patterson USA Paris) together with George Maciunas (USA) on top, as though to imply that the two were the artistic presenters of this Apollos John Cage soirée and the sole performers—indeed, the printed program lists only four works:

Einführung: Neo-Dada in New York Maciunas
Chefredakteur der neuen Kunst-Zeitschrift FLUXUS
Variation for contrabass Patterson
Duo Patterson
Lippen Musik Maciunas

However, the copy of the program invitation card in the Silverman collection has holographic notations by both Maciunas and Rolf Jährling. Maciunas and Rolf Jährling, Ma and changed the program number to 5 and number 5 becomes runum name (added by Jährling). Then Ma ber 5, "Ear Music—Terry Riley" and lation No. 2 Dicky Higgins and cha work under number 4 from Lipp to Adorno Olivetti. A number 7 is a handwritting, "Tribute to Curtis" wi notes in Jährling's hand. Maciunas "Caspar," "Konsig," "pete Curtis US Altermann C. Thomas" [Thomas Sch Paig] [Nam June Paik]—thus create sampler.

Maciunas's text read by Arthur C. at the beginning of the program it laying out the territory of Fluxus. It wrote and published the "Brochure" which was distributed to the guests.
I doubt very much that anyone present, other than the Fluxus artists on the program, had ever experienced anything as unconventional. Fortunately, the director of the gallery, Rolf Jährling—an architect in the town with a vibrant curiosity and love of the new, who had traveled throughout the United States, even visiting Black Mountain College—arranged to have photographs and a sound recording made of this Fluxus event, which preserves the experience so that visitors to Patterson's exhibition in Houston were able to see and hear what took place that night.

In 1961 in Paris, Patterson self-published an important collection of his scores, titled Methods and Processes. The publication contained several works that became Fluxus classics, including a piece (1961), performed for the first time in New York in the spring of 1964 at the Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, during a gallery exhibition of Fluxus concerts. Benjamin Patterson, Robert Watts, and others curated another event at the Fluxhall, called "The Cup of the Body of Christ," in which Patterson's score, which specifies a series of actions, was performed by the audience.

The piece is probably most associated with Fluxus is Paper Piece, written in 1960 and performed in nearly every Fluxus festival from the fall of 1960 onward. The Fluxus interpretation of the work generally involves large pieces of paper hanging in front of the stage and artists standing behind, making holes, at times performing other works such as Nam June Paik's Young Men's Symphony (1960), in which performers put either their fingers or their pens through the holes, throwing programs or Fluxus scores through the holes made in the paper curtain, then breaking through the paper and extending it out over the audience.

Patterson had written a somewhat more structured score for Paper Piece, which was exhibited in Houston. Some of the sounds included in the score were "shake," "break," "tear," "crumple," "tumble," "rub," "scrub," "twist," "poof," and "pop." Patterson's action music was among the most radical of the time and helped to define Fluxus as both humorous and outrageous, an affront to cultural normalcy.

George Maciunas, the visionary Lithuanian-American artist, who was the conceptual instigator of Fluxus and its primary theoretician and organizational planner, was invited to Wuppertal at the suggestion of Nam June Paik. Paik, another major Fluxus artist, had been invited by the Galerie Parnass director, Rolf Jährling, to organize an event for the opening of a summer exhibition of Art Informel at the gallery. Remarkably, among the list of painters and sculptors was none other than "Hurhbeck-New York." "Hurhbeck" was a pseudonym for Richard Hirschbeck, one of the several founders of Dada at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in the spring of 1916, forty-six years earlier.

Paik felt that he didn't have enough time to prepare an event, so he suggested Maciunas. Things start, and Maciunas's plan for the event that summer was the first public manifestation of Fluxus. The invitation card lists Benjamin Patterson (USA-Paris) together with George Maciunas (USA) on top, as though to imply that the two were the artistic presenters of this April's John Cage soirée and the sole performers—indeed, the printed program lists only four works:

- Einführung: Neo-Dada in New York. Maciunas
- Chefredakteur der neuen Kunst-Zeitschrift FLEXUS
- Varieté und Kontrabass Patterson
- Duo Patterson
- Lippen Musik Maciunas

However, the copy of the program invitation card in the Silverman collection has holographic notations by both Maciunas and Rolf Jährling. Maciunas has enlarged and changed the program: number 2 becomes number 3, and number 3 becomes number 2 with Paik's name (added by Jährling). Then Maciunas adds a number 5, "Ear Music—Terry Riley" and number 6, "Constellation No. 2—Dick Higgins" and changes the title of his work under number 4 from Lippen Musik zu Homage to Adriano Olivetti. A number 7 is added in Maciunas's handwriting, "Titiritu/Curtis," with some additional notes in Jährling's hand. Maciunas adds the names—"Caspari," "Kosut," "Jed Curtis USA," not readable, "Vandermann Cz," "Thomas," "Krzysztof Wodiczko," and "Nam June Paik." Maciunas then adds—thus creating a Fluxus cabaret sample.

Maciunas's text read by Arthur C. Caspari in German at the beginning of the program is clearly a manifesto laying out the territory of Fluxus. In addition, Maciunas wrote and published the "Brochure Prospectus" for Fluxus, which was distributed to the guests for the very first time,
and Maciunas’s designed announcement card cube for Fluxus. And Benjamin Patterson was present—not as a spectator but as a featured performer. His presence would be felt as the movement evolved, throughout that year and the next, in concerts and publications, in Europe, and in New York on Maciunas’s return to the United States at the end of 1963. When one studies programs from these early years of Fluxus, one can see the importance of Patterson’s work.

A week after the Galerie Parnass concert, on June 16, 1963, in the Kammermusiker in Düsseldorf, during a concert organized by Nam June Paik and George Maciunas titled Neo-Dada in der Musik, Patterson’s Paper Piece and Disturbance from Lemons were performed. On July 3, 1963, during Sneak Preview: Fluxus on the streets of Paris, organized by Robert Filliou and Patterson to coincide with the opening of Patterson’s exhibition at the Galerie Girardon, Patterson’s Paper Piece and Variations for Double Bass were performed. On September 9, at the Städtisches Museum, Wiesbaden, during Flussex internationale Festspiele neue Musik, Patterson performed Variations for Double Bass. And on September 16, for the same festival in Wiesbaden, Patterson performed two works: Septet from Lemons (1961) and Overture I and II (1963). On October 24, 1963, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, in conjunction with the Festival of Misfits, Patterson’s Paper Piece was performed. Paper Piece was performed again on November 23, 1962, at Festum Fluxorum/Musik og Anti-Musik det Instrumentale Theater at the Nikolaj Kirke, Copenhagen. In the same festival, this time at the Alte Scenen, Copenhagen on November 25, Solo for Dancer (1961) was performed. On November 26, back at the Nikolaj Kirke, Septet and the world premiere of Pond (1962) took place. On December 3, at the American Studiens and Artists Center in Paris, during Festum Fluxorum poétique, musique et anamusique événementielle et cinétique, Paper Piece was performed. The next day, Patterson performed Variations for Double Bass, and on the December 6 concert of the festival, he performed two pieces from Methods and Processes. The next year, on February 2 and 3, in Düsseldorf at the Staatliche Kunstakademie, in a concert organized by George Maciunas and hosted by Joseph Beuys, Paper Piece, Septet from Lemons, and Pond were performed.

In 1966 Maciunas prepared Fluxus versions of Patterson’s scores, which were simplifications and pared-down instructions of the more precise and elegant scoring that Patterson used. These simplifications were typical of Maciunas’s approach to work for Fluxus concerts and to distribute publicly for others to perform. They are reproduced here to give a sense of how performers might have interpreted Patterson’s work for Fluxus concerts in which Patterson was not the performer.

Ben Patterson

PAPER PIECE
Improvisation with paper.
Ben Patterson

SEPTET (FROM “LEMONS”)
7 kettles, each equipped with different whistle in nozzle is fitted over nozzle with balloon. As water is boiled balloons inflate while whistles play. Three performers shoot at balloons with pistols or darts or bows or arrows.

Ben Patterson

VARIATIONS FOR DOUBLE BASS
11 variations are performed such as:
locating pin of bass over location of performance on a map, attaching clothespins on strings and rattling them, agitating strings with comb, corrugated board, feather duster or chair, eating edibles from peg box, posting a letter through the fence, etc., etc., etc.

Ben Patterson

POND, for 4, 8 or 12 performers.
Performer voices repetitive sounds after a jumping mechanical frog engages his own on a charted floor.
Score.

Published in Fluxist Sale (Winter 1966).
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Improvisation with paper.
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SEPTET (FROM ‘LEMONS’)
7 kettles, each equipped with different whistle in nozzle is fitted over nozzle with balloon. As water is boiled balloons inflate while whistles play. Three performers shoot at balloons with pistols or darts or bows or arrows.

Ben Patterson
VARIATIONS FOR DOUBLE BASS
12 variations are performed such as: locating pin of bass over location of performance on a map, attaching clothespins on strings and nailing them, agitating strings with comb; corrugated board, feather duster or chain, eating edibles from peg box, posting a letter through the f hole, etc., etc., etc.

Ben Patterson
POND, for 4, 8 or 12 performers.
Performers voices repetitive sounds after a jumping mechanical frog enters his zone on a charted floor. Score.

Published in Fluxfest Sale (Winter 1966).
Methods and Processes: Essays, Actions, and Environments

(Paper Piece)

3. Paper will be perforated
   "Part - which will mount"
   "Part -"

Dynamex should be inserted within the internal borders of the paper to the "part" and the "part" to the "part."

Each perforation will be carefully selected and arranged to create a variety of sounds. Any variation of the sound of each event may create a new sound. The events - "part" "part" "part"
   "part -" "part -" "part -" "part -"

"Part" and "Part" should be considered "Part" "Part." It is crucial to meet the method of performance on each sheet.

(Paper Piece)

Instruments: 25 sheets of paper for performers offering area of vibrating, humming, moving, cut, and sound insertion. Paper and cardboard, cardboard, paper, cardboard, cardboard.

Duration: Between 25 minutes and 30 minutes

Procedure: a signal from a conductor will begin the piece, while the following 30 seconds each performer creates at will. The piece ends when the final sound is silhouetted. Paper mounted on cardboard.

"Part" "Part" "Part" "Part" "Part" "Part" "Part" "Part"

Paper Piece, 1960
Ink on paper, envelope
8 x 6 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Flavin Collection Gift

Methods and Processes

135
Papierstück für fünf Spieler, from *Ich bin schön*, 1960
ink on paper

 Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
"Situation" for Three Pianos, 1960

Ink on composition paper
2 pages, 11 x 8.5 inches each

Getsey Research Institute, Los Angeles
String Music, 1960
Ink on watercolor paper
Instructions: 10.75 x 16 inches
Graphic score: page 10.75 x 16 inches
Graphic score: page 13.375 x 20 inches
Graphic score: page 14 x 16 inches

String Music, 1960
Ink on watercolor paper
Instructions: 10.75 x 16 inches
Graphic score: page 10.75 x 16 inches
Graphic score: page 13.375 x 20 inches
Graphic score: page 14 x 16 inches

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
String Music, 1960

[Instructions and score details]

138
Composition for Any Situation, 1960–62
Ink on paper
8½ × 8½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Ants, 1960–62
Ink on paper. Black-and-white photographs
Photograph: 8⅝ × 11 inches
Sheet: 10⅞ × 7⅛ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Composition for Any Situation, 1961
Ink on paper
8⅝ × 8⅞ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

METHODS AND PROCESSES
A Disturbing Composition, 1961
Typed ink on paper
16⅛ x 7⅞ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
A Disturbing Composition, 1961
Typed ink on paper
20 x 27 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Duo for Voice and a String Instrument, 1961 (detail)
Black and colored ink on paper and transparency
Instructions: 2 pages, 9⅞ x 8 ⅝ inches each (above)
Transparency: 9⅞ x 8 ⅝ inches (opposite)
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
and a String Instrument, 1961 (detail)
ink on paper and transparency
63. 1/4 x 93. 4/4 inches each (above)
63 x 83 inches ( opposite)
Los Angeles
Overture, Overture (Versions II and III), 1961
Ink on paper
10½ x 8¼ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.
(version III.)


tecture

(preparations:
see version II: substitute a "canned" woman's laugh for noise
maker. 1)

performance:
a performer unfolds, unwraps, and opens containers, turn off
laugh when "canning" device is unwrapped.

1. laugh is "canned" on small transistor tape-recorder
or similar device.
2. device should be wrapped in such a manner that
laugh is inaudible at beginning.

struments, plastic bowls, mache, perhaps brads, microwaves,
amount; etc.

(4)

(4)

(4)

(4)

(4)

(4)

1. A single device to be taped, stuck or in a tube with
an instruction, preferably enclosed in a protective
envelope, made of paper, cellulose, rubber, cloth,
wood, metal, plastic, etc.
2. Wrapping are of paper, cellulose, rubber, cloth,
wood, metal, plastic, etc.
3. Sealing are of wax, glue,AFP, cellophane, celloid, rubber,
plastic, cellophane, wax and plastic, etc.
(tissue, mastic, wax, cellophane, plastic, celloid, rubber,

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3. Sealing are of wax, glue,AFP, cellophane, celloid, rubber,
plastic, cellophane, wax and plastic, etc.
(tissue, mastic, wax, cellophane, plastic, celloid, rubber,
"Portrait of an Egg" 1961
Ink on paper
20 x 8 1/4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
"PORTRAIT OF B.B."

Benjamin Patterson

"...death of 200...

...moment of reverent silence...

...200, sweater...

...sensation of split, split, splat, spatters (L.) to outline of paper (R.)...

...snapshot of 200, June 21, 1961...

...as virulence of double-base (R.)...

...as Niki de Saint Phalle...

...something spirit (R.)...and bound in brotherhood...

...degenerate postwar diversions of 200...

...through "curry door"...crawling (sitting on toilet) (covered with...girl...fainted. [R.]

...a shrubbery immortality...

...on stilts (over room), lights candles (R.), rings bell, shines lanterns (R.); note deep hole ([R.]; or parts wall...is photograph of "flite" lighting during stilts ceremony..."

Portrait of an Egg, 1961

ink on paper

40 x 36 inches.

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

SET...the letter "h"

methods and processes
Décollage Piece for Wolf Vostell (handwritten iteration), 1961

Ink on paper
9 x 11 inches

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

DECOLLAGÉ PICE - 1961
for WOLF VOSTELL

A collage, made of 11 x 1 layers, is prepared on each of four surfaces. Y, X, Y, X. Choice of materials is free: paper, wood, metal, stone, plastic, liquid, etc. A program of events is written out as events of décollagé and is prepared from the given materials in the following manner. Pick the three transparent squares, T, T, T, over the larger non-transparent square. The interactions along the continuous line [square X] suggest a succession of single events, décollagé actions, within a time continuum of any pre-determined length. The passage of this continuum through various dotted and underlined areas of the non-transparent square determines the surface on which events are performed, the number of events on a given surface, the occurrence of rests (underlined areas), the relative duration of events and rests and the sequence of events and rests from point y to point z within the time continuum. The acoustic amplitude of an event and any alterations of this amplitude are determined from the projections of squares II and III.

The given area of the non-transparent square. Choice and assignment are free. Impasse when necessary. As many readings as necessary are made to provide a program of any length. May be performed with Papier-Piece - 1961.

Benjamin Patterson
Köln, 1961

Décollage action is a removal of a portion of a collage. Technique is free: tearing, cutting, covering, grinding, pasting, shaving, burning, etc.

Pavane for Flutes
benjamin patterson

a flute (transverse or vertical) and a music stand on which to find a geometrically quotiented X, Y, or Z base musical motive are placed at a point midway between a chosen entrance and exit.

a child, as young as possible, enters and interprets on flute, the assigned motive as well as possible, replaces flute for another and exits. a second child enters, interprets, exits; a third child, etc., as many children as possible. as many flutes and stands and differing motives are used as there are separate entrances and exits. all children perform on all flutes, as many cycles as possible are performed, any children should not be excluded.

1. an entrance for one flute may serve as an exit for another flute and visa versa.

p.c., 1961
resided; Pittsburgh, 1962

METHODS AND PROCESSES

151
Double Bass, 1961-62
bes each
rate: Los Angeles
Methods and Processess, 1962 (detail)
Printed ink on paper
10 7/8 x 7 3/4 x 7/4 inches
Gyanto Research Institute, Los Angeles

Pond, 1962
Ink on paper
2 pages, 7 9/16 x 8 3/4 inches each
Gyanto Research Institute, Los Angeles
ink on paper
3 pages, 11 x 8 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Untitled (handwritten iteration of Variations for Double Bass), c. 1962
ink on paper for Fluxus internationale Feriapale musicus Mutik, 11 x 8 inches (unframed); 15 x 8 inches (framed)
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Solo for Dancers" and "Dance for Erris," 1962

Untitled (handwritten iteration of Variations for Double Bass), c. 1962
Ink on paper for Fluxus internationale festspiele neuer musik
16" × 16" inches (unfolded): 5½ × 4½ inches (folded)
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
FIRST SYMPHONY

The first members of audience are questioned, "DO YOU KNOW BUT" and are divided left and right, face and ear.
the room is darkened,
Freshly ground coffee is scattered throughout the room.

May, 1964
New York City

First Symphony, 1964
Ink on paper
10 15 × 16 7/8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Three Ways to a Tape, 1966
Ink on paper
19 1/2 x 10 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

METHODS AND PROCESSES 161
One at a time members of audiences are questioned, "DO YOU WANT YES?" and are divided left and right, yes and no.

the room is darkened,

finely ground coffee is scattered throughout the room.

May, 1966
New York City

First Symphony, 1964
ink on paper
10½ x 16½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Three Ways to a Tape, 1966
ink on paper
4⅞ x 9⅞ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Requiem

Herz, gib ihnen die ewige Ruhe,
und lasst die ewige Licht ihnen iubere.

O Gott, du heiliger Lichte in Seh
und Welt, gib dem neuen Leben! in Jerusalem.

Ich, der mein Glaube,
und laß die ewige Licht ihnen iubere.

Hier, ohne dich zu weinen,
Chor, ohne dich zu weinen.

Segovia
Tag der Reichen, Tag der Armen,
Werdet euch zu Freunden.

Liebe und die Freude klagen
und die Taten klagen,
Wir für die Taten klagen.

Und das Licht, das aufgeht
und das in Erinnerung,
Jede Stunde aus Erinnerung.

THE THREE OPERAS

(A work by Ben Patterson
based on music by
Bizzotto, Puccini "Madama Butterfly"; and
Bach---"Tristan and Isolde".)

Foreword: These instructions for the performance of "THE THREE OPERAS" represent my present thoughts about this work, which spans more than three decades. The "stage-action" for "TRISTAN AND ISOLDE" was originally a discrete "event happenings" piece, published in Paris, 1983. "Madama Butterfly" was written in 1981, and the title was added only in 1982. "Carmen" was designed to fill the "preliminary" gap between "CARMEN" and "TRISTAN AND ISOLDE" for the first performance of "THE THREE OPERAS" in Seoul, Korea, 1992.

At the first performance in Seoul, Korea, I only saw this as three acts, but related works, the public reaction was: "it was a great education for me. The public saw a unity that I had not yet seen. Since then, of course, I knew of this "unity". Still, this big question remains: What does it all mean?"

Ben Patterson
Kiesboden, 1997

Das Bahnhof Requiem, 1995 (detail)
Ink and collage on paper
Instructions: 2 pages, 11x5 x 8 inches each
Score: 4 pages, 11x5 x 8 inches each
Courtesy the artist

The Three Operas, 1997 (detail)
Ink on paper
5 pages, 11x5 x 8 inches each
Courtesy the artist

METHODS AND PROCESSES
163
Das Bahnhof Requiem, 1995 (detail)
Ink and collage on paper
Instructions 2 pages, 11.5 × 8.5 inches each
Score 4 pages, 10.5 × 15.5 inches each
Courtesy the artist

The Three Operas, 1997 (detail)
Ink on paper
5 pages, 11.5 × 8.5 inches each
Courtesy the artist

THE THREE OPERAS

Ben Patterson

Wiesbaden, 1997

METHODS AND PROCESSES
Photocast paper in black binder
12 x 9 5/8 x 11 inches
Courtesy the artist

File includes the following scores and actions:

- Paper Piece, 1960
- Aria, 1960–62
- Duo for Voice and a String Instrument, 1961
- Lovers, 1961
- Overture, Overture (Versions II and III), 1961
- Suite from Lovers, 1961
- Passare for Flutes, 1965–66
- Variations for Double Bass, 1961–62
- Pend, 1963
- Portrait of an Egg, 1962
- Seraf, 1967
- Solo for Flute, 1969
- A Very Loose Dance for Orissa, 1962
- A Billir Piece for Pyla, 1983
- Examination, 1963
- First Symphony, 1954
- How the Average Person Thinks about Art, 1983 (4 pages)
- I Violated the U.S.A., 1987
- Artists' Greeting, 1988 (5 pages)
- Critical Encounters, 1988
- Signature No. 1, 1991
- Signature No. 2, 1991
- Ballad, 1994
- Das Behelfsbeispiel, 1995 (2 pages)
- On the Road with Ali ... a Gedächtnisperformance for Ali Hamsa, 1996 (2 pages)
- A Simple Opera, 1996 (2 pages)
- The Future Makes Progress, 1997 (2 pages)

Some "Found Objects"—Quotations—Recently Discovered by Benjamin Patterson, 1997
- The Three Operas, 1959 (Carmen, 1990; Madame Butterfly, 1990

[2 pages]; Tristan und Isolde, 1985–86)
- Words for Weather, 1997

The Creation of the World, 1998 (3 pages)

How to Make Art: Benjamin Patterson's Foolproof Methods, 1998

Bolt, 1994

Das Behelfsbeispiel, 1995 (2 pages)

On the Road with Ali ... a Gedächtnisperformance for Ali Hamsa, 1996 (2 pages)

A Simple Opera, 1996 (2 pages)

The Future Makes Progress, 1997 (2 pages)

Some "Found Objects"—Quotations—Recently Discovered by Benjamin Patterson, 1997

The Three Operas, 1959 (Carmen, 1990; Madame Butterfly, 1990

[2 pages]; Tristan und Isolde, 1985–86)

Words for Weather, 1997

The Creation of the World, 1998 (3 pages)

How to Make Art: Benjamin Patterson's Foolproof Methods, 1998

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METHODS AND PROCESSES 165

1: composition notebook, 2: map, 3: world map.
Digging, 2000

A Simple Opera
by Ron Patterson, 1996

This is a simple opera.

It was simple to compose.

It is simple to perform.

It is simple to understand.

Obviously, the reason that this opera is simple to understand is that it has no deeper meaning.

Thank you for this wonderful evening!
Digging, 2000
% on paper
sheets, 6 x 8 inches each
Gummed to the artist

A Simple Opera
by Ben Poteete, 1996

This is a simple opera. 1. Dino
It was simple to compose. 2. Dino
It is simple to perform. 3. Dino
It is simple to understand. 4. Dino

Obviously, the reason, but 5. Dino.
This opera is simple to understand 6. Dino
That, it has no deeper meaning 7. Dino
8.

Thank you for this wonderful evening! 12. Dino
"This is my Tone"
Ben Patterson, 2005

To introduce this work, may I tell you a true story told to me (Ben Patterson) in 1975 by Robert Mass, who at that time was the first violinist of the Julliard String Quartet.

This story took place around 1960-1965, when the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. were still conducting a "cultural Cold War" to win the "hearts and minds" of "Third World countries". In this context the U.S.A. Department of State sent numerous, high-profile performing arts ensembles on tour throughout the world. Thus, the Julliard String Quartet was sent on a two-week tour to West Africa. After concerts in the several capitals and major cities of Ghana, Nigeria, Congo, etc., the Quartet discovered - much to their surprise - that the final concert would be in a true, Rural, Bantu village...deep in the "Jung". Arriving at the village, they found their spectator confirmed: the setting was somewhere between a Hollywood "safari film" and a 1950's ethnological documentary film. Of course, the first question the Quartet asked instinctively was, "What do we have in our repertoire to play for this audience?" Finally, they decided on "Honesty", which meant to present these compositions, for which, at that time, their live performance and recordings enjoyed world-wide acclaim. So sitting in the open, under an African moon, circled by several hundred villagers, in front of the chieftain's hut, the Julliard String Quartet performed Beethoven's third "Rasumovsky Quartet", Opus 59.

According to Robert Mass, the extraordinary circumstances inspired the Quartet to present their "best ever" performances of these three quartets. Finishing the last note of the concerto, each member of the quartet felt, that they had finally achieved a truly transcendent interpretation of these great Beethoven compositions. However, and greatly disturbing for the Quartet members, was the complete lack of any apparent reaction — negative or positive, by the audience...no applause, no clapping of feet, no presentation of flowers or anything else to suggest that they appreciated this extraordinary performance. The villagers simply stood up with aaudited form, milled around silently for a while, and then finally sat down to begin the feast...read-ending the event. The members of the Quartet were seated next to the chieftain...and us, after some polite conversation and after an appropriate amount of food and drink had been consumed, Robert Mass dared to ask the chieftain about this public relations disaster. Robert Mass explained that the the Quartet members thought that they had just performed their "best ever" performance of these quartets...and that they were surprised that the villagers, apparently did not appreciate their efforts. The chieftain, getting into the distance...not wishing to present bad news, eye-to-eye, replied, "My people feel great sympathy for you. They see that you are already so old, and they feel that you have, not yet, found your tone."

POSTSCRIPT:
To understand this reply by the chieftain, it is necessary to understand a few basic principles of the polyphonic music of the Banda tribes of West and Central Africa.

My Tone, Your Tone, His Tone, Her Tone, 2005 (detail)
ink on white and colored paper
6 pages, 11k x 8.5 inches each
Courtesy the artist.

A Fluxus Elegy (Audiovisual Performance),
c. 2006
ink on paper
7k x 11k inches
Courtesy the artist.
This is my Tone
Ben Patterson, 2005

My Tone, Your Tone, His Tone,
Her Tone, 2005 (detail)
ink on white and colored paper
6 pages, 11x14 inches each
Courtesy the artist

A Fluxus Elegy (Audiovisual Performance),
c. 2006
ink on paper
7½ x 11½ inches
Courtesy the artist
"Ants...revisited"
Ben Patterson, 2010

This story of this composition begins in July 1986. Discovering an "ant hill", a group of "ants", I placed two small sticks in the center of a sheet of paper and then made 6 photographs over a period of 10 seconds, recording the new positions of the ants at each of those 6 moments. I transferred these "tremendous" data (from 6 pages of black-and-white film) into music notes. A movement, interesting "voices", a "fly" set on an ant-management system was completed. (Each photograph was a "moment", and of course, a "moment" is not "now". I then, with this strategy, made an animation with the "future projection" film.)

Four years later...In New York, I opened this film again and published "Ants II", a composition to be used in conjunction with a 1986 performance of "George Harrison." To date, I have used the ant's movements in a variety of works. In 1991, 50 years later we have "Ants Revisited", based on recent scientific behavioral studies of the methods of communication among ants. In this version, I have created the original ants and their escape from that sheet of paper, primarily communicating with pheromones (in this score represented by an accompanying sheet of long lines) and secondarily..."decorating" (the Internet) by means of clicking sounds. The "art" of inserting pheromones serves as a reference for determining time and phish-relations. The resulting "compositional" act is a tree-content of the original myth of pheromones and phish-behavior..."decorating"...between these acts, but neither a prosopagnosic, acoustic model based on the meaning of this..."decorating".

Ants Revisited, 2010
ink on paper
3 pages, 11x8.5 inches each
Courtesy the artist

"Duo for Voice and a String Instrument"
arranged for
Voice and String Quintet

Duo for Voice and a String Instrument
for Voice and String Quintet, 2011
ink on paper
Instructions: 11x8.5 inches (folded), 11x8.5 inches (unfolded)
Score (16 pages): 11x8.5 inches (folded), 11x8.5 inches (unfolded)

Methods and Processes
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"Duo for Voice and a String Instrument" arranged for Voice and String Quintet

Notes to the score:

For this arrangement 16 sets of "notes and responses" have been prepared. The notes "source" and the string "response". In the voice, the voice "comments" during the "responses". At any moment of the piece may be performed in any order. The score and the parts contain only the notes which are present in the score. Amplitude, duration and frequency are left to interpretation. A set may be performed in a chord, a group, an individual manner or in a group, parallel, opposed manner, or in any other manner. In the parts to the guitar, symbols which appear in the space between the notes in the score are used for the pedal points. The symbols used here indicate the pedaling or changing sound. The symbols which appear below the string instrument in the manuscript are "prepared" sounds, paper clip on a string, etc... to perform all or some of the immediately succeeding symbols. Adornments are recommended where necessary (no musical notes).

Ben Patterson  
Oct. 13, 2010

Mimaihwa

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"Ants...revisited"  
Ben Patterson, 2010

The story of this composition begins in July 1986. Cropping an "ant hill" in a garden in Bedford, I became fascinated by the ants' approach to electronic music. I taped up a bunch of these ants, dropped them onto the center of a sheet of paper and then recorded the result. The score shows each of these "ants" in a box. A box in a page of black music staffs, expecting interesting "notes". A try-out of my double-horn was quite disappointing. Only much later did I realize that what I had discovered was a "reed"... and, of course, a "reed" is not a "note." Thus, this first attempt was abandoned and placed in the "failed projects" file.

The year was 1987. I was in New York, I opened the Beats and published "Ants Revisited", a book to be used in conjunction with my 1980 composition of the same name. In 1987, I issued a no public performance of this version. Now 30 years later we have "Ants Revisited" based on recent scientific behavioral studies of the methods of communication among ants. In this version, I have assumed that the original ants organized their escape from that sheet of paper, a piece of communicating with the ants. (See a score, which is based on an existing sheet of ant's music) and secondly with the ant's are also included as a reference for determining the two and their relationships. The result is a composition of a new piece named "Ants Revisited." The piece contains the results of communication signals between ants, but rather a convergence, a new model based on the resulting evidence.

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Duo for Voice and a String Instrument Arranged for Voice and String Quintet, 2010 (detail)

link on paper
3 pages: 11 × 8 1/2 inches each

Courtesy the artist

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METHODS AND PROCESSES
"GIVE ME A BREAK"
Ben Paterson, 2010

A breakdancer (breaking) "pops" or "freezes" instantaneously at any point and any moment of the freestyle, just as the need or desire arises. In this sense, the performance of a breakdancer is a dance for dance's sake. The dancing is not a means to an end, but an end in itself. The breakdancer is free to explore the beauty and potential of the human body and the rhythmic possibilities of sound. The breakdancer is free to create a new language of movement, one that is not bound by the constraints of the traditional dance form. The breakdancer is free to express their creativity and individuality through the medium of dance. The breakdancer is free to break free from the limitations of the past and to explore the possibilities of the future. The breakdancer is free to be free. The breakdancer is free to be themselves. The breakdancer is free to be anything they want to be. The breakdancer is free to be a breakdancer.

A. Terminology: What exactly is a "break"? A "break" is the motion or the position of the body in a dance. The "break" is the movement of the body in rhythm. The "break" is the body's response to the rhythm. The "break" is the body's expression of the music. The "break" is the body's interpretation of the music. The "break" is the body's translation of the music. The "break" is the body's embodiment of the music. The "break" is the body's manifestation of the music. The "break" is the body's realization of the music. The "break" is the body's creation of the music.

B. History: In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the "break" was developed by the pioneers of the New York City breakdancing scene. The "break" was created by the pioneers of the New York City breakdancing scene. The "break" was developed by the pioneers of the New York City breakdancing scene.

C. Technique: The four primary techniques of breaking are:
1. The "head spin" is a spin on the head with the body upright. The head spin is a spin on the head with the body upright. The head spin is a spin on the head with the body upright.
2. The "spin" is a turn on the head with the body upright. The spin is a turn on the head with the body upright. The spin is a turn on the head with the body upright.
3. The "spin" is a turn on the head with the body upright. The spin is a turn on the head with the body upright. The spin is a turn on the head with the body upright.
4. The "spin" is a turn on the head with the body upright. The spin is a turn on the head with the body upright. The spin is a turn on the head with the body upright.

D. It's Fingerboard Time:
A. A fingerboard is basically a down-scaled violin. Most authorities consider the 1860 documentary "Fingerboard" to be the earliest known video of a fingerboard. It was shot in 1860 and is considered to be the earliest known video of a fingerboard. It was shot in 1860 and is considered to be the earliest known video of a fingerboard. It was shot in 1860 and is considered to be the earliest known video of a fingerboard.

Give Me A Break, 2010
ink on paper
10 pages, 10⅝ x 15⅝ inches each
Envelope 12⅝ x 15⅝ inches

Courtesy the artist

172
A BREAK

Descriptor: breakdancing, a popular style of street dance that originated in the communities of young people in the United States during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Breakdancing is characterized by acrobatic movements, spins, flips, and other dynamic techniques performed on the ground. The name "breakdancing" comes from the term "break" or "breakin'," which refers to the act of performing dance moves on the ground, often in response to music. The style has evolved and spread to various parts of the world, becoming a significant cultural phenomenon. Breakdancing has since been featured in movies, music, and various forms of visual media, highlighting its influence and popularity. With its roots in urban culture, breakdancing continues to evolve, incorporating new styles and techniques while maintaining traditional elements.

Terminology: What exactly is a "break"? In popular culture, a break is a moment during a song when the-drummer stops hitting the drums or the bassist stops playing the bass. This allows the other musicians to take advantage of the pause to perform their own parts. The term "break" is often used to describe the entire duration of a break, from the moment the drummer or bassist stops playing until the next time they start again. This can vary in duration, from a few seconds to several minutes, depending on the style and tempo of the music. "Break" is also used to describe the entire duration of a break, from the moment the drummer or bassist stops playing until the next time they start again. This can vary in duration, from a few seconds to several minutes, depending on the style and tempo of the music. "Break" is also used to describe a particular style or approach within a musical genre.

A. Terminology: What exactly is a "break"? In popular culture, a break is a moment during a song when the drummer stops playing the drums or the bassist stops playing the bass. This allows the other musicians to take advantage of the pause to perform their own parts. The term "break" is often used to describe the entire duration of a break, from the moment the drummer or bassist stops playing until the next time they start again. This can vary in duration, from a few seconds to several minutes, depending on the style and tempo of the music. "Break" is also used to describe the entire duration of a break, from the moment the drummer or bassist stops playing until the next time they start again. This can vary in duration, from a few seconds to several minutes, depending on the style and tempo of the music. "Break" is also used to describe a particular style or approach within a musical genre.

B. Terminology: What exactly is a "break"? In popular culture, a break is a moment during a song when the drummer stops playing the drums or the bassist stops playing the bass. This allows the other musicians to take advantage of the pause to perform their own parts. The term "break" is often used to describe the entire duration of a break, from the moment the drummer or bassist stops playing until the next time they start again. This can vary in duration, from a few seconds to several minutes, depending on the style and tempo of the music. "Break" is also used to describe the entire duration of a break, from the moment the drummer or bassist stops playing until the next time they start again. This can vary in duration, from a few seconds to several minutes, depending on the style and tempo of the music. "Break" is also used to describe a particular style or approach within a musical genre.

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, breakdancing has become an international phenomenon, with competitions and events taking place in various countries around the world. The sport has also gained recognition as a legitimate form of artistic expression, with many breakdancers using their skills to create unique and visually stunning performances. The popularity of breakdancing has also led to the development of a variety of substyles and techniques, each with its own distinct characteristics and movements. Whether performed alone or as part of a larger dance routine, breakdancing continues to be a popular and dynamic form of expression in the world of dance and performance.
Notes on Fluxus/
Notes on an Ordinary Life

Performance documentation for Paper Piece,
1960
Performed at Hypokriteron Theatre, Amsterdam, June 23, 1965
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Oscar van Alphen)
7 1/2 x 11 inches (unframed)
20 x 12 inches (framed)
Archive Bonotto, Medicina

DOCUMENTATION
173
Performance documentation for *Paper Piece*,
1960
Performed at Hypokriteren Theater, Amsterdam, June 29, 1965
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Oscar van Arcken)
7½ x 11 inches (unframed)
20 x 12 inches (framed)
Archivo Bonoro, Molveno
lemons

benjamin patterson

25
scorns
für

1961
35.50 cfr
bôe

18


Performance documentation/brochure for
Lemons: Benjamin Patterson, 1961

8½ x 5¼ inches (unfolded)

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Documentation
177
Performance documentation/brochure for
Lemons: Benjamin Patterson, 1961
Offset on paper
8⅝ × 11¾ inches (unfolded)
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Letter from Benjamin Patterson to Michael Porier, 1960
ink on paper (verso, poster)
22 1/2 × 16 1/2 inches
Courtesy the artist

Performance documentation for Décollage Piece for Wolf Vostell, 1961
Black-and-white photograph
8 × 11 inches
Photographer unknown
Cercy Research Institute, Los Angeles

Performance documentation for Wolf Vostell: Décollages, Collages, Ausstellung 15.5–28.5.1969
Offset on paper, mounted on paper
8 1/4 × 11 1/2 inches (sheet)
10 1/4 × 8 1/2 inches (mount)
Courtesy the artist
Letter from Benjamin Patterson
to Michael Porier, 1960
Ink on paper (verso, postcard)
17x6 x 16 inches
Courtesy the artist

Performance documentation for Décollage Piece
for Wolf Vostell, 1961
Black-and-white photograph
8 x 11 inches
Photographer unknown
Geary Research Institute, Los Angeles

Performance documentation for Wolf Vostell:
Décollages, Collages, Ausstellung 15.5–28.5.1961, 1961
Office on paper, mounted on paper
10x8 x 18 inches (mount)
Courtesy the artist
Performance documentation for *Variations for Double Bass*, 1961
Performed by the artist at Kleines Sommertor, Apels John Cage, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, June 9, 1961
Gelatin silver prints (photograph by Rolf Ehrich)
2 prints, 9 3/4 x 7 3/4 inches each
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Performance documentation for *Duo for Voice and a String Instrument*, 1961
Performed by the artist at Kleines Sommertor, Apels John Cage, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, June 9, 1962
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Rolf Ehrich)
8 x 10 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Performance documentation/brochure for *Sneak Peek: Fluxus, Happenings, Environments, Poems, Dances, Compositions at Galerie Girandon*, 1962
Offset on paper with ink and postage stamp
7 1/8 x 11 3/4 inches (unfolded)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift
Performance documentation for *Duo for Voice and a String Instrument*, 1961
Performed by the artist at Kleines Sommerhaus/Arles John Cage, Galerie Parron, Wuppertal, Germany, June 9, 1960
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Rolf Jährling)
8 x 10 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Performance documentation/brochure for *Sneak Peek: Fluxus, Happenings, Environments, Poems, Dances, Compositions at Galerie Girardon, 1962*
Offset on paper with ink and postcard stamp
7½ x 9¾ inches (unfolded)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The G. L. C. and D. L. C. Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift
Performance documentation for Lick Piece, 1962
Performed by Letty Eisenauer and an unidentified individual at
Fully Guaranteed to Fluxus Concerts, Canal Street, New York,
May 9, 1964
Gerstein silver print (by Peter Moore)
9⅞ x 6⅞ inches, 18⅞ x 14⅞ x ⅛ inches (framed)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York;
The Gilbert and Lily Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift;

Performed by Letty Eisenhauer and unidentified individual at Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts, Canal Street, New York, May 9, 1964.

Gelatin silver print (by Peter Moore)
9½ × 6½ inches; 24 × 16 cm (framed)
The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.
NEO-DADA in der Musik

Vorspruch: Jean-Pierre Wilhelm

PROGRAMM:
1. Oliver Rock Salt
2. Welt Erde
3. South East via Hanoi
4.霓虹灯
text & design by C. Phipps

Kammerphilharmonie Düsseldorf

Program for Neo-Dada in der Musik, 1962
Offset on paper
3 x 6 inches (folded)
2 x 16 inches (unfolded)
Courtesy the artist

Letter to Emmett Williams from
Patterson, 1963
Ink on paper
11 x 8½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Program for Neo-Dada in der Musik, 1962

Letter to Emmett Williams from Benjamin Patterson, 1965

Photo courtesy of the artists.

Donations to the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.
Letter to Benjamin Patterson from George Maciunas, 1963

ink on paper

19 x 17 inches

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles
Letter to Benjamin Patterson from George Maciunas, 1963

ink on paper
10½ × 7½ inches

Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Mailer for Yarn Day Festival, 1963

Offset on paper
22⅝ × 8⅝ inches

Courtesy the artist
Photograph of Patterson portrait sketched by Alison Knowles for brochure announcing The Four Suits, c. 1965
Gelatin silver print
6 1/4 x 6 1/4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Jefferson's Birthday/Postface, 1965
The Four Suits, 1965
Publications edited by Dick Higgins
Offset on paper
Brochure 11 x 16 inches (folded)
Book: 9 3/4 x 6 7/8 x 1/8 inches
Published by Something Else Press
Courtesy the artist
Photograph of Patterson portrait sketched by Alison Knowles for brochure announcing
The Four Suits, c. 1965
Carbon silver print
6⅝ x 4½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Jefferson's Birthday/Postface, 1964
The Four Suits, 1965
Publications edited by Dick Higgins.
Offset on paper.
Brochure: 11 x 14 inches (folded)
Book: 9½ x 6½ x ¾ inches
Book: 8½ x 5½ x ¾ inches
Published by Something Else Press.
Courtesy the artist.
FLUXUS - the most radical art movement of this century

In September 1961 a 14 day festival of the "most radical art" manifestations in the arts of music, poetry, film, dance and other visual media was presented in Vondelpark, Amsterdam by the artists and performers of Fluxus. This was the beginning of the "New Music Movement." Since then, Fluxus has grown and matured into a wide-ranging and inter-disciplinary art form that has influenced many other art forms.

Fluxus is an art movement that is characterized by its use of experimental, non-traditional materials and techniques. It is often described as a "radical" art movement because it challenges traditional notions of art and its role in society.

Fluxus is characterized by its use of non-traditional materials and techniques, as well as its emphasis on collaboration and the idea that art is not limited to a particular medium. It is often described as a "radical" art movement because it challenges traditional notions of art and its role in society.

The Fluxus movement is often associated with the idea of "art for everyone," and it has been influential in shaping the way that art is consumed and appreciated today. It has also been influential in shaping the way that artists think about their work and the role of art in society.


ink on paper
8 x 11 inches
Courtesy the artist
FLUXUS: the most radical art movement of this century.

[Fluxus: The Most Radical Experimental Art Movement of the Sixties, published by Galerie A in Amsterdam]

Excerpt from the 1972 book by Harry Ruhié.
This letter and attachments will replace the previous materials in your files related to the "Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles of the Peoples of Southern Africa."

Since I am pleased to inform you that all is well - including the expected and normal problems and complications - the preparations for the conference are going well. The list of speakers grows daily. Among the latest additions are Arthur Okari, the International Longshoremen's Association, AFSC-CC and Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm. (See attached press release, prepared by Pacfic.) The mayor conference speakers have been announced and their lectures will be broadcast on WBAI, New York, by Monday. Based on the reports of the regional coordinators and pre-registrations arriving in the office I expect that we still will finish very close to our target of 3000 delegates. A press and electronic media are beginning to show genuine interest in the conference.

On the fund raising front, progress is reasonable and encouraging. We will note from this attached revised budget that we have been able to reduce the overall estimated expenses budget from $350,000 to $315,000. In the house this for days we have received a total of over $275,000 and we have raised another $25,000 from the Unitarian Universalists, the National Council of Churches, and the 45 Better Against Apartheid within the last 3 days. This leaves a balance of $25,000 from the Council on Religion and Social Action and $1500 from the World Council of Churches. The balance needed we hope will be mailed by the weekend of August 1st. Further, we have already received the benefit of our friendship with Peter Sachs, registration fees and outstanding projects to the Delta Foundation, the Annie Frank Foundation and North Star.

Our request to North Star Fund for a grant of $2000 (specifically on the following grounds: "If a change of mind occurs, we will refund the amount requested") in addition to "precautionary" funds for prearrangements, publicity, New York office and for a vis-a-vis the February 14th meeting will be given by representatives of AHA, 33RE, and Anglo (probably the Federation) and a United Nations Congresswoman (probably Joan Helsinki). We believe that if a meeting of the 45 Better Against Apartheid with Patricia Roberts Harris and Marjorie Helm will make possible the two days in New York for the conference with the 45 Better Against Apartheid, we shall be able to complete our plans.

We are pleased to announce that
Benjamin A. Patterson
has been appointed
Director of Development

We are pleased to announce that
Benjamin A. Patterson
has been appointed
Director of Development

165 West 46th Street
Suite 800
New York, New York 10036
212-575-5860

Announcement card for Negro Ensemble Company in New York, c. 1982
Office on card, envelope
Card: 5½ x 4⅛ inches
Envelope: 4⅛ x 5⅞ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Patterson's business card for Pro Musica Foundation
1984
Ink on paper
3 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist.

Correspondence from Patterson to the Community Review Board regarding the "Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles of Peoples in Southern Africa," September 1981
Ink on paper
8 x 10 inches
Courtesy the artist.
I am pleased to inform you that the conference is proceeding well, the list of sponsors grows daily. Among the contributions are Arthur Ashe, the International Union of Students, AP-CAW and Congress of Industrial Organizations. The attached press release gives credit to all of the sponsors. The event has been well publicized and all papers and float sheets will be ready for pick-up by 11:00 A.M. The program of the conference will be announced at a later date.

We are pleased to announce that
Benjamin A. Patterson
has been appointed
Director of Development

165 West 46th Street
Suite 800
New York, New York 10036
212-573-5860

Announcement card for Negro Ensemble Company in New York, c. 1982
Offset on card, envelope
Card 2½ × 4½ inches
Envelope: 4½ × 5½ inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Patterson's business card for Pro Musics, c. 1984
ink on paper
2 × 3 inches
Courtesy the artist
BEN PATTERSON: ORDINARY LIFE

Emily Harvey Gallery presents an exhibition of assemblages, constructions, texts, games and other new works dedicated to ordinary life by an original Fluxus artist Ben Patterson entitled "Ordinary Life". This show, a continuation of a six-year project, focuses on domestic tranquility and national security.

Exhibition dates: Sept. 23 - Oct. 23, 1988

For those who have known Ben Patterson primarily as a seminal creator of works in the genre of conceptual art, performance art and Even Theatre, this exhibition of his recent visual assemblages will be a great and exciting surprise.

Ben Patterson was born in 1930 in Pensacola, Fl. He was in Wainsden with George Maciunas to organize the historic 1962 Fluxus International and continued to be a major presence at Fluxus events until the early 1970's when he retired to pursue an ordinary life. Although he has remained out of the art world in the past decades, he did surface with performances and new works in 1986 and 1987 to celebrate the 20th anniversary Fluxus Festival and the 35th Biennial de Sao Paulo, Brazil.

His best known early works include "Paper Piece" (1963), "Methods & Procedures" (1964-65) and "Tenor II" which were published in Tenor Folia Sutra, Institute Fries Press, 1965.

Ben Patterson
Manuals, Models, Games and other Lessons
Sept. 23 - Oct. 23, 1988
Tues-Sat. Noon - 6:00
Opening: Friday, Sept. 23rd
6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Emily Harvey Gallery
537 Broadway at Spring - 2nd Floor
New York, New York 10012
(212) 925-7651
FLUXUS CODGER PRESENTS HIS FIRST EVER SOLO NEW YORK SHOW

EMILY HARVEY GALLERY
607 Broadway, 3rd Floor (at Spring)
New York, N.Y. 10012

Tel: 212-925-7661

September 15, 1986

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BEN PATTERSON: ORDINARY LIFE

Emily Harvey Gallery presents an exhibition of assemblages, constructions, texts, games and other new works dedicated to ordinary life by an original Fluxus artist Ben Patterson entitled "Ordinary Life." This show, a continuation of a life long project, focuses on domestic tranquility and national security.

Exhibition dates: Sept. 20 - Oct. 31, 1986

Gallery hours: Tues. - Sat. Noon - 6:00

For those who have known Ben Patterson primarily as a seminal creator of works in the areas of conceptual art, performance art and mime theatre, this exhibition of his recent visual assemblages will be a great and exciting surprise.

Ben Patterson was born in 1934 in Pittsburg, Pa. He was in Wiesbaden with George Maciunas to organize the historic 1962 Fluxus International Festival and continued to be a major presence at Fluxus events until the early 70’s when he retired to pursue an ordinary life. Although he has continued to work on his 'sun, sand and sea' project over the past decade, he has surfaced with performances and new works for such events as the 20th anniversary Fluxus Festival in Wiesbaden in 1982 and the 1985 Ensembl de St. Poche, Brazil.


Ben Patterson

Manuals, Models, Games and other Lessons

Sept. 23 - Oct. 23, 1986
Tues-Sat. Noon - 6:00
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537 Broadway at Spring - 2nd Floor
New York, New York 10012
(212) 925-7661
Announcements for Fluxus anniversary exhibitions/events
Fluxus Festival, Chicago, 1993
Fluxus Da Capo, Wiesbaden, 1992 (opposite)
Offset on paper
22 x 33 3/8 in, 35 x 33 3/8 in.
Courtesy the artist
Patterson performing Nam June Paik's One
for Violin (1962) with Peter Kotik of SEM
Ensemble, New York, Akademie der bildenden
Kunst, Vienna, June 1989
Black-and-white photograph (by Wolfgang Trüger)
7 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist.

Patterson performing Variations
as part of the concert event Happ
Fluxus, Ecole Nationale des Beaux
with an exhibition at Galerie 196
August 8–29, 1989
Color photograph (by Francesco Cama)
8 x 10 inches
Courtesy the artist.
Patterson performing Nam June Paik's *One for Violin* (1962) with Peter Kotik of SEM Ensemble, New York, Akademie der bildenden Kunst, Vienna, June 1989
Black-and-white photograph (by Wolfgang Träger)
7 x 5 inches
Courtesy the artist

Color photograph (by Francesco Cenacchi)
8 x 10 inches
Courtesy the artist
Patterson performing *The Clinic of Dr. Ben (BM, MS)* as part of the anniversary exhibition *Fluxus Da Capo* at Villa Clementine, Wiesbaden, Germany, 1992
Color photograph (photographer unknown)
45 x 32 inches
Courtesy the artist

Patterson and unidentified performer in *Tristan and Isolde*, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, November 17, 1993
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Morten Langkilde)
41 x 7 inches
Courtesy the artist

Patterson at dedication ceremony for the *Museum of the Subconscious* in Namibia, 1996
Color photograph (by Francesco Colci)
12 x 8 inches
Courtesy the artist

Patterson performing *A Clean Slate* at Haus der Deutschen Ensemble Akademie, Frankfurt, December 16, 2001
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Ell Kreiter)
12 x 8 inches
Courtesy Ell Kreiter, Wiesbaden, Germany
Patterson and unidentified performer in *Tristan and Isolde*, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, November 17, 1993

Gelatin silver print (photograph by Morten Langkilde)

4½ x 7 inches

Courtesy the artist

Patterson at dedication ceremony for the *Museum of the Subconscious* in Namibia, 1996

Color photograph (by Francesco Cone)

12 x 8 inches

Courtesy the artist

Patterson performing *A Clean Slate* at Haus der Deutschen Ensemble Akademie, Frankfurt, December 16, 2001

Gelatin silver print (photograph by Elf Kreiter)

12 x 8 inches

Courtesy Elf Kreiter, Wiesbaden, Germany
Boleto, 1995
Performed at Konzerthaus der Stadt Gera, Gera, Germany.
May 13, 1995
Digital video
22 minutes
Courtesy the artist

Creation of the World, 2003
Performed at the Goethe Institute, Madrid, February 4, 2005
Digital video
15 minutes
Courtesy the artist

Galerie Légitime: A Reenactment
Performed by Benjamin Patterson and Berto
streets of Paris, June 2, 2009
Digital video
15 minutes
Courtesy Bernand Claves, Paris
Creation of the World, 2003
Performed at the Goethe Institute, Madrid, February 6, 2003
Digital video
25 minutes
Courtesy the artist

Galerie Légitime: A Reenactment, 2009
Performed by Benjamin Paterson and Bertrand Clave in the streets of Paris, June 5, 2009
Digital video
15 minutes
Courtesy Bertrand Clave, Paris
Patterson's Parisian Years: A Seminal Moment on a Fertile Ground

BERTRAND CLAVEZ

The presence of Benjamin Patterson in Paris in 1961 might be somewhat surprising. At the time Patterson was deeply involved in the Cologne experimental music and art scenes and fresh to a successful German fashion illustration; Pyla Patterson, soon to be the mother of their first child, Emile, so his departure for Paris would seem to be highly counterproductive. Moreover, with regard to the evolution of the art world, this choice seems to be a mistake: Paris was then losing its preeminent position as a cultural capital, whereas New York and the German scene at large were taking an increasingly prominent role. Nevertheless, one has to minimize what might appear today as a strategic failure—first, because in 1961 the art scene in Paris was still very competitive with that in New York and, second, because this choice was highly beneficial for the artist and his art. In effect, it was during his sojourn in the French capital that Patterson expanded his work from the music sphere to encompass the broader poetic and visual ground that it still occupies today. From his book Methods and Processes (1963) to his puzzle-poems (1963), it was a whole new universe that he first envisioned in Paris, and even his actions were transformed and informed by his presence in the City of Light.

When, during the autumn of 1961, Ben and Pyla arrived in Paris, he was already quite active on the Cologne art scene, having met Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage on the same day; he quickly got involved in the new music scene. He had played with David Tudor and Richard Maxfield, performed at Mary Bauermeister's studio, worked with Haro Lauth at his gallery and premiered his own Sextet from Lemons in Wolf Vostell's studio. He had met and worked with everyone: those gravitating around Stockhausen's studio in Cologne (Francis Baude, Cornelius Cardew, Mauricio Kagel, Gwörgi Ligeti, and Luigi Nono) and those brought together by the countercultural dynamic and Bauermeister's studio (Bauermeister herself, Lauth, Maxfield, Tudor, Vostell, Theodor W. Adorno, Merce Cunningham, Heinz-Klaus Metzger, and Nan June Paik), not to mention those involved in action art at large in Germany (Joseph Beuys, George Maciunas, Daniel Spoerri, and Emmett Williams).

However fully engaged Patterson might have seemed to be, he felt early on that the possibilities provided by the art situation in Germany would remain fairly limited. As he once told me: "Germany was mainly Cologne and a little bit Düsseldorf, and once you got past this new music thing, there was not that much more going on. And Paris just appeared to be a larger situation and a more, quite cosmopolitan situation, just... a richer environment to work in, and Paris itself is of course a bit more attractive than Cologne." Beyond the romantic situation underlined by the "attraction" exerted by Paris on a young, couple in love and, what is also evident in this comment, is an implied critique of the art situation in Germany: the experimental music scene, as interesting as it could be and despite its apparent diversity, was pretty uniform under the aegis of the new possibilities offered by electronic and electroacoustic technologies, on the one hand, and the heritage of serialism and dodecaphony, on the other. On such a basis, as sensible an observer as Patterson could easily conclude that the whole phenomenon of new music was not free of academicism or, even worse, formalism. Moreover, if his encounter with the music of John Cage was a mind-opener for Patterson, this music was only a small part—and in many ways still is—of the experimental music scene, and there was something unsatisfying to him about such a situation.

The scores that Patterson was producing then, in their diversity of structure as much as in their nature and inspiration, are quite revealing of this gap. Between Ares, still pretty much influenced by Cagean serendipitous processes of composition and dated 1960, and Variations for Double Bass from 1961, something had definitely shifted away: the possibility of envisioning music as a satisfactory medium. Beyond its humorous and acrostic aspects, Variations for Double Bass is a genuine farewell to the instrument. Starting with the instruction to "produce a number of arco, quasi-webmen sounds," it goes on with a sample of a score ("Andante mosso," a solo for double bass in act 2 of Verdi's Rigoletto), followed by a recipe for the realization of a "clavic" prepared instrument in the manner of Cage's early prepared pianos: "put a number of wooden and plastic spring-type clothespins on strings just above bridge in such a manner that they rattle and/or produce odd tones. Arco, tremolo, trills and/or long tones." Once again followed by an excerpt of the same Verdi score, to be played with the prepared double bass.

On the folk movements, in which "plastic butterflies" are fastened to the strings, one is supposed to perform "normal Barok" and "fingernail piccato" in order to "catapult butterflies from strings." From Verdi to Cage, passing through Webern and Bartok, Patterson presents a whole history of modern music since romanticism, even if in a very ironic manner. He proves his virtuosity through Verdi's solo for double bass, which is a well-known morceau de bravoure for the instrument, but he also dismisses this virtuosity by applying various experimental music recipes to the mic preparation of the instrument, overseen of piccato or long tones—a kind of play extensively practiced by Charlotte Moorman, for example, in her numerous collaborations with Nam June Paik. In the Double Bass shows the limits of instrument pushed beyond its limits into pure acout to the mask of the burlesque, ever the virtuosity of a talented young int super academic training, still the result Patterson with what he really sought.

The enlightenment offered by Cage and musical devices, despite its limitations, Patterson's scores and pieces, was nevertheless itself to give shape to the artistic universe was inventing, and one can see that Patterson's universe was widening action art, of course, but also poetry ars (1961) is an interesting example of a linked to a complex code of colors, synesthetic researches of the early overtone score is annotated by Wolf Vostell, and then often worked, and one can see of Vostell himself, but of painting at work art on the conception of the composition Pearson), a musician (Patterson), a dancer and a painter (Vostell) are at work to spill of a series of colors that determine example: "5’s"—(dancer on call), a musician (thunder-sheet, blue). One Kandinsky's Claren as much as of F. Stack Deck Opera or the decadence between Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, ningham as fruitful sources for Patte to Paris somehow completed the whole prog way getting out of Germany was get entering France was entering the

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However fully engaged Patterson might have seemed to be, he felt early enough that the possibilities provided by the art situation in Germany would remain fairly limited. As he once told me: "Berlin was largely a bubble and a little bit Düsseldorf, and once you got past this new music thing, there was not much more going on. And Paris just appeared to be a larger situation and a more, quite, cosmopolitan situation, just... a richer environment to work in, and Paris itself is of course a bit more attractive than Cologne." Beyond the romantic situation underlined by the "attraction" exerted by Paris on a young couple in love, what is also evident in this comment is an implied critique of the art situation in Germany: the experimental music scene, as interesting as it could be and despite its apparent diversity, was pretty uniform under the two axes of the new possibilities offered by electronic and electroacoustic technologies, on the one hand, and the heritage of serialism and dodecaphony, on the other. On such a basis, as sensible an observer as Patterson could easily conclude that the whole phenomenon of new music was not free of academicism or, even worse, formalism. Moreover, if his encounter with the music of John Cage was a mind-opener for Patterson, this music was only a small part—and in many ways still is—of the experimental music scene, and there was something unsatisfying to him about such a situation.

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The enlightenment offered by Cage's compositional and musical devices, despite its lasting influence on Patterson's scores and pieces, was nevertheless inadequate by itself to give shape to the artistic universe that the young artist was inventing, and one can see from the scores that Patterson's universe was widening—to encompass action art, of course, but also poetry and visual art. Lemons (1966) is an interesting example of such an evolution. Linked to a complex code of colors, not far from the synthetic researches of the early twentieth century, the score is annotated by Wolf Vostell, with whom Patterson often worked, and one can see the influence, not of Vostell himself, but of painting and the picturesqueness, on the conception of the composition: a singer (William Franey), a musician (Patterson), a dancer (Cindy Olbrich), and a painter (Vostell) are to work together under the spell of a series of colors that determine the actions, for example: "U/D"—"dancer (iron balls), painter (blow torch), musician (thunder-sheet: blue). One thinks of Wassily Kandinsky's blues as much as of Dick Higgins's 1959 Stacked Deck Opera or the decade-long collaboration between Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and Merce Cunningham as fruitful sources for Patterson. In fact, going to Paris somehow completed the process: in a symbolic way, getting out of Germany was getting out of music, and entering France was entering the visual arts.

Interestingly enough, Lemons, performed in Vostell's studio on July 14, 1961, was followed by Sextet from Lemons, briefly described in Lemons as "poet—painter—singer—musician (whistle-kettle seque), 'white,'" which radically
differs from (Lotris) isolated from its original composition, the Septet is a genuine event. In the Fluxus mode, in which performers are asked to throw darts at balloons inflated by boiling water in a tea kettle, every time one succeeded, a new whistle would enter the action. This emphasis on a meaningless device to produce a whimsical interpretation of the competition at the heart of musicanship is typical of the new manner that Patterson was developing at the time, the one that led him to produce some of the best pieces ever performed under the banner of Fluxus: Paper Piece (1960), Solo for Dancer (1962) also present in (Lotris), Tour (1963), Ink Piece (1962; published in Methods and Processes), and a few others.

Berts arrival in France was nothing but triumphant: the young couple first stayed in a hotel before finding a small apartment on rue Juge, near Montparnasse, an area well known for its artists' colony. If Pyla was successful in her work, Ben never succeeded in getting a work permit and ended up doing what a lot of young American expatriates were doing at the time: selling encyclopedias and Bibles to American soldiers based in France and Germany. Strangely enough, and clearly demonstrating how much his attitude toward musical performance had changed, he never played double bass while he lived in Paris, even though he could easily have earned his living in its numerous and very active jazz clubs.

Being in Paris during this period was not very easy: the Algerian War was in its final months, there had been a purgatory against the French Fifth Republic and assassination attempts against Charles de Gaulle, and terrorism was coming from both sides: independence fighters as well as colonialists were exploding bombs every day in Paris and executing people. The Parisian bohème was more active than ever, and aside from seeing American artists and friends, Patterson was also meeting Daniel Spoerri and Robert Fillou on a daily basis. These two artists really introduced him to the Parisian bohemian life.

even though he was not directly involved in Situationism, which Fillou knew pretty well, in Nouveau Réalisme, which Spoerri was officially part of; or in the soon-to-be Domaine Poétique, whose principal instigator Jean-Clarence Lambert had liked Methods and Processes enough to invite Patterson for dinner with his family, he was pretty well informed of what was going on in Paris by his friends involved in these circles. Besides, if one looks at the Parisian bohème map of the 1950s and early 1960s, its epicenter is the Place de Contrescarpe and more precisely its three cafés: the Mouffetard, the Cinq Bilards, and La Choppe, which served as the headquarters of the bohème and the departure point for every daily action, artistic or not. With the Lettres at La Choppe, the Situationists at the Café Moineau on rue du Four, and Spoerri and Erik Dietman living in the Hôtel Cacassonne on rue Mouffetard, there was bound to be overlapping.

This played an influential role in Patterson's work, as we see him heading down new paths; toward poetry with Methods and Processes, toward visual arts with his spot poems, which were so close to the processes of Nouveau Réalisme and toward a conception of displacement as an art form, through the Galerie Légitime vernissage on July 3, 1962, and A Very Lawful Dance for Ennis (1962).

Displacement as an art form is one way to describe the Situationists' psychogeographic drift, yet there are substantial differences between Patterson's propositions and the Situationists', and one of the most obvious is their different backgrounds. The displacements proposed by Patterson, though apparently innocent, had a deep political meaning, whereas those performed by the Situationists were, despite their political assertions, more closely related to the history of the French bohème. Since its very beginnings in the nineteenth century, the bohème was bound between two major concepts: the subversion of all aspects of life and Jardine as a mode of drifting in the modern city as a direct source of inspiration. As a movement through the city guided by spontaneous reactions to the atmosphere, chance encounters, and sudden desires—close to the desires aroused by merchandise on display, as theorized by Walter Benjamin—it can be seen as a prototype for psychogeographic drift. Patterson's wanderings in Paris are recorded in his literary walk around town, but in a broader sense, he was himself drifting around the world, from Pittsburgh to Ottawa, from Ottawa to Cologne, from Cologne to Paris, and he was surrounded by professional drifters: Daniel Spoerri, born in Rome, bred in Switzerland, revealed in Darmstadt, then in Paris, soon to be in Düsseldorf; Robert Fillou, who had lived and worked in California, Greece, Argentina, and Germany; and who was living in France before going to the next place; Emmett Williams, who had lived in England, Germany, and Paris; and Wolf Vostell, who, though living in Cologne, had spent a decade in Paris and was starting to live in Spain—not to mention George Maciunas and Nam June Paik.

These nomadic artists shall not, however, be compared with the art of displacement proposed by Ben Patterson. In effect, since 1955, Rosa Parks, and the Montgomery bus boycott, walking has also had the potential to be political. In the very simple score A Very Lawful Dance for Ennis, written in June 1962, the performers, while being perfectly respectful of the law as they cross the street on the green signal for pedestrians, end up completely blocking traffic with their unswerving crossing. In a very similar manner, the participants in Tour created the following year, must fully present themselves to the "captured alive Negro" about to lead their blindfolded odyssey as they wear brown paper bags on their heads: not only do they then resemble a Ku Klux Klan procession but, moreover, they can see only brown because of the paper bags.

Patterson minimizes this aspect of his work, however, recalling that he stopped making art in order to dedicate himself to the civil rights struggle. In Patterns, given a highly sensitive account of processes, linking Patterson's "way of using and the blues feeling that is produced as a nego," Fillou also used similar poems at the same moment, however their friendship, it is not surprising to find between the two artists, in fact, the possession of such structure, reveals Paix concerns, as in "think color of brown".

Think color of brown
(azure)
think smell of roasting coffee beans
think feel of brown suettle leather
think color of cognac
think smell of coconut shell
think feel of cognac brown indians (lavender)

The repeated references to the color brown by the imagery employed by Patterson tradiated by the intersection between bluish colors; whereas the impression pure pigment, the brown is ingrained creativeness though powerfully poetic.

Methods and Processes brought Patterson from the French poets as much as can artists to whom he mailed it. This Sporen's help: he advised Patterson book and to send it for free to a cesta on Spooner's mailing list (who were a very consequential given his internation-the mid-1950s). This again recalls the egy regarding their own publication in an early review produced by Guy Deb was sent to chosen persons not on
even though he was not directly involved in Situation-ism, which Filiou knew pretty well, in Nouveau Rééolisme, which Spoerri was officially part of, or in the soon-to-be Domaine Poétique,19 whose principal instigator, Jean-Clarence Lambert, had liked Methods and Processes enough to invite Patterson for dinner with his family, he was pretty well informed of what was going on in Paris by his friends involved in these circles.20 Besides, if one looks at the Parisian bohème map of the 1950s and early 1960s, its epicenter is the Place de la Contrescarpe and more precisely its three cafés: la Mouffetard, the Cinq Billets, and La Clope, which served as the headquarters of the bohème and the departure point for every daily action, artistic or not. With the Lettrists at La Clope, the Situationists at the Café Moinieux on rue du Four, and Spoerri and Erik Dietman living in the Hôtel Carcassonne on rue Mouffetard, there was bound to be overlapping.

This played an influential role in Patterson's work, as we see him heading down new paths, toward poetry with Methods and Processes, toward visual arts with his puzzle-poems, which were so close to the processes of Nouveau Rééolisme, and toward a conception of displacement as an art form, through the Galerie Légrière vernissage on July 3, 1962, and A Very Lawful Dance for Ennui (1962).

Displacement as an art form is one way to describe the Situationists' psychogeographic drift, yet there are substantial differences between Patterson's proposals and the Situationists, and one of the most obvious is their different backgrounds. The displacements proposed by Patterson, though apparently innocent, had a deeply political meaning, whereas those performed by the Situationists were, despite their political assertions, more closely related to the history of the French bohème. Since its very beginnings in the nineteenth century, the bohème was bound between two major concepts: the subversion of all aspects of life and filière as a mode of drifting in the modern city as a direct source of inspiration. As a movement through the city guided by spontaneous reactions to the atmosphere, chance encounters, and sudden desires—close to the desires aroused by merchandise on display, as theorized by Walter Benjamin21—it can be seen as a prototype for psychogeographic drift. Patterson's wanderings in Paris are recorded: he literally walked this town, but, in a broader sense, he was himself drifting around the world, from Pittsburgh to Ottawa, from Ottawa to Cologne, from Cologne to Paris, and he was surrounded by professional printers; Daniel Spoerri, born in Romania, bred in Switzerland, revealed in Darmstadt, then in Paris, soon to be in Düsseldorf; Robert Filiou, who had lived and worked in California, Korea, Egypt, and Denmark, and who was living in France before going to the next place; Emmett Williams, who had lived in England, Germany, and Paris; and Wolf Vostell, who, though living in Cologne, had spent a decade in Paris and was starting to live in Spain—not to mention George Maciunas and Nam June Paik.

These nomadic artists shall not, however, be compared with the art of displacement proposed by Ben Patterson. In effect, since 1955, Rosa Parks, and the Montgomery bus boycott, walking has also had the potential to be a political act. In the very simple score A Very Lawful Dance for Ennui, written in June 1962, the performers, while being perfectly respectful of the law as they cross the street on the green signal for pedestrians, end up completely blocking traffic with their unremitting crossing.22 In very similar manner, the participants in Touche created the following year, must fully entrust themselves to the "captured alive Negro"23 about to lead their blindfolded odyssey as they wear brown paper bags on their heads: not only do they then resemble a Ku Klux Klan procession but, moreover, they can see only brown because of the paper bags.

Patterson minimizes this aspect of his work, however, recalling that he stopped making art in order to dedicate himself to the civil rights struggle. In Pastface, Dick Higgins gives a highly sensitive account of Methods and Processes, linking Patterson's "way of using periodic repeats, and the blues feeling that is produced" to his identity as a "negro."24 Filiou also used similar techniques in his poems at the same moment, however, and considering their friendship, it is not surprising to find such similarities between the two artists.25 In fact, the poems themselves, as much as their structure, reveal Patterson's early racial concerns, as in "think color of brown!":

Think color of brown (azure)
think smell of roasting coffee beans
think feel of brown suede leather
think color of cognac
think smell of coconut shelled crabs
think feel of cognac brown indian silk (lavender)

The repeated references to the color brown, emphasized by the imagery employed by Patterson, is regularly con
trasted with the interjection between brackets of pure blush colors: whereas the interrupting blue is ideal and pure pigment, the brown is ingrained in reality and concreteness though powerfully poetic.

Methods and Processes brought Patterson early recognition from the French poets as much as from the American artists to whom he mailed it. This was the result of Spoerri's help; he advised Patterson to self-publish the book and to send it for free to a certain group of people on Spoerri's mailing list (who were at that time already very consequential given his international activities since the mid-1950s). This again recalls the Situationists' strategy regarding their own publication in the 1950s, Potlatch, an early review produced by Guy Debord and his friends, was sent to chosen persons not only because of their
support of the blossoming movement but also because their opposition to it could help construct the situation.

The adherence to subversive values by this new bohème is evident, but this creates the need for a clarification: first, the Situationists stated that the revolution should come from the parties and not from the party, and all the members of that bohème, even the more politically conscious ones, had ceased their relationships with the Communist Party, which in the early 1950s was still an important leader in French culture as much as policy. The party, because of its involvement in the recreation of a contemporary socially conscious art in the early 1950s, had failed to associate itself with new tendencies in art, and the concept of the young poets for people like Louis Aragon was one consequence of this failure. The Surrealists, who were committed to Trotskyism in the 1930s, were also rejected as a gang cancelling the art institutions and newspapers, and finally the notion of Situationist engagement was also dismembered because of its obvious lack of effect on the social situation.

Second, the choice of subverting common social values does not mean the refusal of any kind of communion with the public, nor does it mean the denial of the quest for recognition. If the Situationists did choose to address themselves to only a tiny elite selected by them, whose members were sent copies of their publication, this is certainly not the case for people like Filou, Parrant, or Spooner, who did seek a communion with the public and, as is clear in the case of Spooner, broad recognition. Spooner's book An Annotated Topography of Chance, published in France in 1961, is a good example of what is meant here. Topography sets an open situation in which chance operations can turn into anecdotes, networks, and exchanges of utilities and ideas. Topography shows the situation as a ground and not as a field—that is, as a place to meet and not as a place to fight—whereas geography, undermined by the Situationists' psychogeography, is of military origin. Filou's Galerie Légitime might be the best example of this open situation. Located in his flat, the gallery aimed to create a direct encounter with the public through the display of small artworks by his friends to be sold on the street, just as the vendors near his home in the Jewish quarter of Paris would sell watches hidden in their coats.

Parrant's show was the first exhibition of the Galerie Légitime, and it was also the most famous, in part because of its invitation flyer printed by Macianus with the mention of a "Fluxus Sneak Preview" which makes it the first manifestation under the rubric of Fluxus. This anecdotal fame unfortunately overshadows the actual performance as well as the actual flyer, however, which clearly shows a symbolic map of the town, to direct clearly starting at 2 a.m., it ended at 10 p.m. in Ursula Girardin's gallery in the Montparnasse area, where a party was organized. The wandering artistes alternated areas with a strong labor flavor, like Les Halles, where they were at 5 a.m., which was the time when the workers were finishing their preparation of the market and eating in nearby restaurants and cafes, with entertainment districts such as Pigalle and cultural pilgrimages like the appointment at 9 a.m. in front of Erneste Sekino's grave at the Père Lachaise cemetery to perform a complete program of Fluxus pieces.

Actually, and surprisingly even to the artists themselves, the exhibition almost sold out. Pieces sold for five francs each, and they managed to sell them to metro workers, to passersby going to or from work, and even to those who were leaving music bars and places of entertain-

entertainment. And when they arrived at Ursula Girardin's gallery, almost nothing was left in the hat. Moreover, nothing is left from the performance but the flyer: no took pictures; no one followed the artists. They were sometimes met by friends at the appointment marked on the map, which is significantly different from the later, highly publicized street actions under the leadership of George Maciunas or Ben Vautier after 1965, or even from Allan Kaprow's public space Happenings. Here two artists involve the public in their art in a very natural and traditional manner: they offer their production directly to the real, unfeathered population.

The year and a half spent by Benjamin Parrant in Paris was crucial in the development of his art: not only did he expand his work into areas with which he was not yet familiar, but he also fully absorbed the extraordinary creativity of the city at the beginning of the 1960s. To recall this sparkling experimental field is also to restitute part of the singularity of Parrant's work within the Fluxus movement: this later attraction to sociology and to the sociological framework as a way to create artworks—reflected in later works such as Pets and Seminar II, both from 1965—cannot be understood without considering their roots in the French situation.

In Germany, Parrant learned that he was a contemporary composer; in France, he learned to be an artist, before learning later in the United States that he was a "negro artist." He would soon choose to be "negro" fighting for his rights rather than as an "artist" fighting for recognition.
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In Germany, Patterson learned that he was a contemporary composer; in France, he learned to be an artist, before learning later in the United States that he was a “homo artist.” He would soon choose to be “homo” fighting for his rights rather than an “artist” fighting for recognition.
France (Daniele, France Centre Pierre Francastel, 2005).

12. When asked whether he knew about the Situations at that time, however, Paterson admitted that he recalled an exhibition of Situational documents in Bauerman's studio in 1978 but that he was not influenced by what he saw in the "supercomplicated,各区 theore- nal approach" (conversation with the author, October 14, 2004).

13. In a very prophetic way, if one considers the situation in Paris after World War II, in 1992 Benjamin wrote in "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century": "In the Impression the intelligence sets foot in the marketplace—emptiness to look around, but in much to find a buyer in this intermediate stage, in which it still has passions but is already beginning to familiarise itself with the market, it appears as the dilemma. To the uncertainty of its economic position corresponds the uncertainty of its political function. The latter is manifest more clearly in the professional conspirators, who belong to the dilemma. Their initial field of activity is the army; later it becomes the petty bourgeoisie, occasionally the profes- sorate. Nevertheless, this group views the true leaders of the proletariat as its adversary." Walter Benjamin, The Work of Art in the Mediatic Age, trans. Howard Eiland (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 64.

14. A traffic light, with or without special pedestrian signals is found or positioned at street corner or at stage center. Performer(s) wait at real or imaginary curb or red signal; alters shift on yellow signal; crosses street or stage on green signal. Achieving opposite side.

performer(s) turns, repeats the sequence. A performance may consist of an infinite, un- determined or predetermined number of repetitions.

15. War is dated April 1915 and was written in New York, but it can be seen as the continuation of the pieces created earlier, together with First Symphony (May 1916), in which participants are asked by Paterson, "Do you trust me?" A similar path is followed by these pieces, inviting as they deeply engage the audience in the action. Besides, Benn and Pityk's departure from Paris happened in late January 1915, and the coffee used in First Symphony echoes the "smell of roasting coffee beans" of Hitchcock and Proust.

16. Quotation from the poster for the Festival of Multiple at Gallery One in London (October 25- November 8, 1965), in which Robert Ellis is presented as 'the eye of good-for-nothing Hugie- net' and Daniel Speiser as a "romanian adventurer".


18. As was also the case with some of the poems of Emmett Williams, though he was more impressed in the structure of the meaning distorted by his permutations.

19. The previous festival actions, which occurred in Wuppertal and Düsseldorf one month earlier and in which Paterson also per- formed, were still titled as neo- Dada evenings. Besides, the Galacíz Ligurin Pyer was designed by Paterson and not Maduets, as is often said.
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In Eye/Body Schneemann was not only image but image-maker, and it is this overt doubling across the explicit terrain of engagement which marks Eye/Body as historically significant for feminist performance art. Though there are possible important corollaries that can be resurrected from history—such as, as some suggest, the proto-performance of nineteenth-century hysterics—in Eye/Body Schneemann manipulated both her own live female body and her artist’s agency without finding herself institutionalized as mentally ill. Instead, she found herself excommunicated from the “Art Stud Club.” George Maciunas, father of Fluxus, declared her work too “messy” for inclusion.

Rebecca Schneider

I was jolted into a new appreciation of the work of Ben Patterson recently when I was made aware that a performance piece, Lick, which I had long attended to Bob Watts, was really the work of Ben Patterson. Because the piece was performed nude, and was in the intimate yet publicly accessible surroundings of the Fluxus Canal Street loft, it was likely that Watts had to persuade me to do the performance. Lick was presented on a very hot summer (or spring) (May 9, 1964) day. My naked body was sprayed with whipped cream and the audience was invited to “lick” it off. The cream curdled or melted and ran in disgusting rivulets off my steamy body. My embarrassment and fear that some stranger might actually lick me probably also contributed to my overheated state. I don’t think anyone in the audience volunteered to lick the cream off. … Ben and Bob demonstrated, but neither of them pursued the task with vigor. Lick may have been one of the culminating pieces in my history as an art world nude and in the Dada-Fluxus tradition of poking fun at the formal art convention of painting/sculpting the nude body and perhaps taking Duchamp’s Nude Descending a Staircase a step further. This piece was only a “pubic hair” away from being a “blue performance” presenting as a public action a possible intimate portion of the sex act during a sexually conservative period.

Letty Eisenhammer

I have this classic music background. I still love Beethoven. I still love Bach. I still love Brahms. You look at my record collection and there’s very … I hope I don’t have any Stockhausen—but you know, everything else, Ravel and Avenaise. They’re there because they were great musicians, they were good composers. The problem that I had with how they were perceived or how they were presented in a concert hall had nothing more to do with the music or what they were trying to do. It was much more about society—who’s sitting in the first row, how wavy is the hair of the conductor, does he wiggle his rear end well, you know. And all of these marketing things … really have nothing to do with the music. … My three operas—Madame Butterfly, Carmen, Tristan and Isolde—all three in one hour! Some people think of it as pretense but it’s not really that. It’s a tribute to them but reduced and pointed in a different direction so that “ah, that’s what it was about. It’s not about how much you paid for your ticket or if you are in the royal box.”

Benjamin Patterson

Music Discomposed

Nineteen sixty-four was a big year in the history of what Rebecca Schneider calls “the explicit body in performance.” Carolee Schneemann’s Site and Meat Joy would follow her actions for camera of the previous year, Eye/Body. These performances are centered on a new mode of self-presentation in which the nude female body enacts a resistant reanimation of the aesthetic/sexual object. The sensuous becomes an artist’s tool, in disruptive continuity of her trial. Is Benjamin Patterson allowed—or is he, in fact, required—to take up and adjudicate this cause? Is the double operation, which Schneider so aptly theories and describes, that renders Schneemann both eye and body, both subject and object, available for Patterson, particularly when he does the worn mantle of the artist in appearing to make explicit another’s body but not his own? After Schneemann, to be cloaked is to be recognized as having staked a kind of claim, at the convergence of the explicit and the implicit. The claim is illegitimate not only because the brutal authority of its object—the power to expose—has been exposed but also because Patterson’s assertion of it must remain unheard and invisible. The unrecognizability of the black male artist is part of the general constitution of the atmosphere—we’ll call it the art world—within and out of which Patterson’s work emerges. He stands, in that world, as a prefigurative variation on Adrian Piper’s mythic being, whose accompanying Karan cartoon bubbles set off a body whose essence in an assumed barrenness of life renders it explicit even when it is cloaked. Anticipated by Schneemann, whom he anticipates, Patterson is subject to a double exposure. Overexposed, in the glare of the nothing that is not there and the nothing that is, he disappears.

Something remains, however: not just a photograph but also the ghost it captures (or the spirit that animates it). Patterson’s Lick Piece was performed on May 9, 1964.

MOTEN

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Notes for Piece

FRED MOTEN

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I have this classic music background. I still love Beethoven. I still love Bach. I still love Brahms. You look at my record collection and there's very ... I hope I don't have any Stockhausen—but you know, everything else, Ravel and Avenaize. They're there because they were great musicians, they were good composers. The problem that I had with how they were perceived or how they were presented in a concert hall had nothing more to do with the music or what they were trying to do. It was more about society—who's sitting in the first row, how wavy is the hair of the conductor, does he wiggle his rear end well, you know. And all of these marketing things ... really have nothing to do with the music. ... My three operas—Madame Butterfly, Carmen, Tristan and Isolde—are all in three hours! Some people think of it as pastiche but it's not really that. It's a tribute to them but reduced and pointed in a different direction so that, "ah, that's what it was about. It's not about how much you paid for your ticket or if you are in the royal box." Benjamin Patterson

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Western Philosophy Using China Tools (2003), bear this out. There is an ethical and aesthetic obligation, then, to play back the photographic record. lick piec is one of those Fluxus works that seem always to have been more in the vein of performance art than music in what can be taken as its visual, tactile, gestural, and culinary displacements of sound. But it is precisely by way of the gestural and the culinary, which intimate that Patterson’s concerns link with and echo some crucial formulations of Bertolt Brecht regarding the nature of opera, that the sound of Patterson’s encrypted claim is revealed, as a kind of surprise.

Lick piec’s claim to a place in the history of opera is staked by its update, more than forty years later, in Patterson’s discompositions of Carmen and Tristan and Isolde (p. 200), which render asymptotic the seemingly remote trajectories of Brecht and Schneemann. This proximate nonconvergence moves by way of intersection: consider the multiple positions that Patterson cakcs up on stage. He conducts. He composes. He cooks. He consumes. He is consumed. He serves. Focus is shifted—inintermittently, glanceingly—from the bodies (which is to say the questions) that he poses. One of those bodies is his, which remains explicit though it is not nude. The explicitness of the black body, the explicit body’s blackness, is not only about the way a certain lived experience can be said to bear the traces of bareness; nor is it encompassed in what it is to wear the only black body on-site or onstage or in the room or in the frame. For what is also brought into relief is a kind of dynamic facuity, an “impossible purity,” that the irreducible interplay of blackness and femininity bodies forth. Does the black (who is, by illegitimate definition, never legitimatly an artist, in his composition of the female nude, also bear the bare sexuality that he exploits? Is the sheer corporeal fact of sex centered only on her figure? Is the artist transported outside of the sexuality that her exposure rearranges? Or does his black body remain in a reductive hypersexualization held in the danger of his own arranging hands? One way to look at it is that (Marin and his model and her maid and her car occupy different worlds and different times. If, by contrast, in Lick piec Patterson and Eisen, hauer cohabit, however temporarily, on the border between public and private, then is a criminal occupation, a dangerously black as well as blue preoccupation. The racial mark is emotive but unremarked in Eisen’s recollection. Perhaps it’s because she couldn’t have known that Patterson was both composer and conductor when he was posed as a servant like Olympia’s maid, helping her to prepare for visitors, within the tableau’s narrative frame, which is broken again by another of its constitutive elements. In reality, it’s Bob Watts who helps Patterson help Eisenhauer so that everybody but her can help himself. Who could have known? When Patterson takes the stage, music is discomposed and discomposed. Isomorphic as the servant was already there, helping to prepare the eyes/ body’s active repose, discomposition is given, anagonistic, best understood as a kind of anticipatory refreshment. Musical theater turned off Broadway at Canal Street so it could get something to eat. Leaves Eisenhauer has a recipe in the Fluxus cookbook. Right down the street someone named Richard Eisenhauer designs and patents food warmers. Lick it up. I mean, look it up. Google is a kind of gumbie, a (website) gap with endless repercussions. It’s easy to overindulge: Does too much whipped cream make you gain? It’s messy. Did Lick piec make Macunis laugh, or is it too deformed by the kind of messiness he hated, the kind that got Schneemann kicked out of Fluxus, which she helped to start? There’s a relationship between messiness and gagging, between the gag and the gag reflex, between Fluxus and reflux, destructive recreativity and astatic indigestion. Fluxus traffics in acridity and corrosiveness. Messiness is its messianic, manic, Macinian double gesture. The expression, through Patterson, of “female creative will” against and therefore with Macunis’s will, disseminates overexposure, radiates overheating. Lick piec must have made Macunis laugh, a recurring event that Patterson describes as a hacking cackle that more often than not led to an asthma attack. Lick piec must have made Macunis gag. He couldn’t have thought it was funny even though the gag became “George’s lemon test for determining which works by whom would be included in a Fluxus performance or publication.” Why was it that Schneemann turned out to be insufficiently funny, too serious? Or was it that her seriousness was too funny, too piercing, too scary insofar as it was always already poking fun at the (wrong) man, which is another good way to start some mess? Schneemann certainly thinks it’s fear that drove Macunis unsuccessfully to try to gag her. He would have thrust something in her mouth, to keep it open and thereby silent just as he thrust absurdities down the throat of the art world, as Patterson implies. To prick, to wound, to make a thrust. To be a prick. To resist being pricked, though when one is pricked, one laughs to the point of gagging. Eisenhauer speaks of “George’s need to control or to work with artists who were as constrained as he was [which] governed not only the art works produced for sale but also the performance of the scores. AY-O’s Finger Boxes, newly engineered and executed to fit into a briefcase, are a good example of George’s aesthetic and his personality: pristine on the outside but with a surprise—obviously sexual and potentially sadistic—when you poke a finger through the opening. . . . George did not like messes.” Did Lick piec make Macunis laugh? Lick piec, too, is more than just musical. The gap, as Patterson employs it, is more than “just a persiflage.” It’s a gag, a jest, a gig, on gest, some notes, on gesture. On Google, on YouTube.

You can help yourself, if you take too mu Giogio Agamben writes, by way of Gi descriptions of the syndrome that we (and by way of an unfinished text of Ber ory of Bearing) about a European box by the end of the nineteenth century. The loss of gesture is all bound up wit Both, in turn, are bound to a double drutionary agent of its own decay: the itse (its sense, its gestures) in being as it acquires itself, in loss of itself in itself by way of acquisition; the general general equivalences set what Peter Boe dramatic imagining to work in an i the sacredness that regulatory under endangers. For Brecht, opera’s parti tion of metre and drama is the gest in which this game of lost and found rplayed, long played, you will, like a But what if the loss of gesture is m ined as gesture’s quickening, its een enriched sounding and a contain the sacred? Agamben speaks of bear carrying on, of gesture in enduring, in pure means without end, of the hume Gesture, then, is the communication i as, for Brecht, the theatrical activi sible a movement from the realm o that of mass communication. What Gi Agamben adds, “is that in nothing is acted, but rather something is being pornt. The gesture, in other words, the more proper sphere of it. But in what way is an action endured what way does a res become a res gi way does a simple fact become an ev movement in the photograph of
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unsuccessfully to try to gag her. He would have thrust
something in her mouth, to keep it open and thereby
silent just as he thrust absurdities down the throat of
the art world, as Patterson implies. To prick, to wound,
to make a thrust. To be a prick. To resist being pricked,
though when one is pricked, one laughs to the point of
gaggery. Eisenhaber speaks of “George’s need to control
or to work with artists who were as constrained as he
was [which] governed not only the art works produced
for sale but also the performance of the scores. Ay-O’s
Finger Boxes, nearly engineered and executed to fit into
a briefcase, are a good example of George’s aesthetic and
his personality: pristine on the outside but a sur-
prise—obviously sexual and potentially sadistic—when
you poke a finger through the opening…. George did
not like messes.” Did Lack Peice make Macinacus laugh?
Lack Peice, too, is more than meat joy. The gag, as Pat-
erson employs it, is more than “just a pantomime.” It’s a
gag, a jest, a gig, on geste, some notes, on gesture, on Google,
on YouTube.

Born in the State of FLUSS 214

You can help yourself, if you take too much
Giorgio Agamben writes, by way of Gilles de la Tourette’s
descriptions of the syndrome that would bear his name
( and by way of an unfinished text of Balzac’s called “The-
ory of Bearing”) about a European bourgeoisie that had,
by the end of the nineteenth century, lost its gestures.
The loss of gesture is all bound up with the loss of sense.
Both, in turn, are bound to a double imposition: revolu-
tionary agent of its own decay, the bourgeoisie loses
itself (its sense, its gestures) in being itself. itself insular
as it acquires itself, in loss of itself insular as it constitutes
itself by way of acquisition, the general catastrophe of the
general equivalent sets what Peter Brooks calls “the melo-
dramatic imagination” to work in an attempt to recover
the sacredness that regulative understanding constantly
endangers. For Brecht, opera’s particular intermedia-
nation of mimes and drama is the gestic/gesural medium
in which this game of lost and found is serially played,
replayed, long-played, if you will, like a record.
But what if the loss of gesture is more rigorously imag-
ined as gesture’s quickening, its internal differentiation,
an enriched sounding and a continual intensification of
the sacred? Agamben speaks of bearing, of carrying or
carrying on, of gesture as enduring, as the emergence of
pure means without end, of the human as pure medi-
ality. Gesture, then, is the communication of communicability
as, for Brecht, the theatrical activation of gest makes pos-
sible a movement from the realm of entertainment to
that of mass communication. What characterizes gesture,
Agamben adds, “is that in nothing is being produced or
acted, but rather something is being endured and sup-
ported. The gesture, in other words, opens the sphere of
ethos as the more proper sphere of that which is human.
But in what way is an action endured and supported? In
what way does a res become a res gesta that is, in what
way does a simple fact become an event?” This indexes
a movement in the photograph of the explicit body in

MOTEN 213

MOTEN
performance that goes against the grain of its having been posted, of her having been posted. Apposition is given in the form she bears, in bearing that moves and sounds, in stillness and silence. It steps across the distance between pose and gest, bridges the gap between gest and gesture, like a cinematic event, an operatic happening. But this is to say that what is at stake is not simply a reclamation of lost gesturality but something Brecht might recognize as that rich internal differentiation of gesturality that he speaks of as gest or, more precisely, as social gest. A certain fugacity of the gest/ure will have already been remarked in apposition, as it aways its music, in impure medality, for an impulsion of that seemingly held, seemingly stilled, irregularity (which Brecht associates with jazz and with what he calls "the freening of the Negroes," but which is figured more precisely when blackness and escape combine to form the name of the general interim). This racialized irregularity moves now, not so much as what Brecht might have called gestic music or the music of social gest, but rather by way of a necessarily flavorful advance, something Miles Davis called social music, which is what Patterson discomposes, like a virus in Wagner's previously finite score.

Brecht avows his antipathy to the culinary by staging and inducing gluttony. Eating too much whipped cream, for instance, will have been always in bad taste, but it can be put to use insofar as it exemplifies and exposes the bourgeoisie's self-consuming jones, which can be traced in operas devotional arc.

The Magic Flute, Falstaff, Figaro all included elements that were philosophical, dynamic. And yet the element of philosophy, almost of daring, in these operas was so subordinated to the culinary principle that their sense was in effect coterring and was soon absorbed in sensual satisfaction. Once its official "sense" had died away the opera was by no means left bereft of sense, but had simply acquired another one—as sense qua opera. The content had been smothered in the opera. Our Wagnerisms are now pleased to remember that the original Wagnerisms posited a sense of which they were presumably aware. Those composers who stem from Wagner still insist on posing as philosophers. A philosophy which is of no use to man or beast, and can only be disposed of as a means of sensual satisfaction. We still maintain the whole highly-developed technique which made this pose possible: the vulgarian strikes a philosophical attitude from which to conduct his hackneyed ruminations. It is only from this point, from the death of the sense (and it is understood that the sense could die), that we can start to understand the further innovations which are now plaguing opera: to see them as desperate attempts to supply this art with a posthumous sense, a "new" sense, by which the sense comes ultimately to lie in the music itself, so that the sequence of musical forms acquires a sense simply qua sequence, and certain proportions, changes, etc. from being a means are promoted to become an end.

Sense toters and is then absorbed in sensual satisfaction. The absorption of sense—of a philosophial, dynamic, daring element—leads to the acquisition of another one, a value that will have been, as it were, intrinsic to opera as opera. At stake is the relation between self-indulgent sensuality and fetishization, the illusion that art is or could ever be for its own sake. Sense has been absorbed by sensuality; content has been absorbed by form; operatic innovation produces a pale afterlife of sense in the form of a purely formal self-reference or, perhaps more precisely, self-regard. When opera acquires another sense and then posits that acquisition as always already its own, it asserts the acquisition of its form as an absolute value and the acquisition of a certain fetishized sense of itself, of a sense of itself as (in) sensuality of that sensuality as the form that opera is, that opera has and that opera takes. This complex—wherein acquisition and element, sense and sensuality, blue—disurbs and therefore reveals a deeply regulatory and fundamentally Kantian impulse in Brecht, one whose rogue object is the nonsense that turns out to be irreducible in opera, the cantian impurpations or Kasten flights that constitute its form while deforming its content. But the deformation of content need not be understood either as its absorption or its death if one can imagine that the one who is disposed of as a means of sensual satisfaction—the one who is posed, posed, but who troubles the already given content and the already assumed agency of composition—is a philosopher; or, perhaps more precisely, that insofar as there is philosophy, it moves only in and by way of her impossible, impossibly sounded and sounding movement. Here is an elemental philosophy of anacrophilia, of that essential value of the outside that cuts and augments suffering and enjoyment. Her apposition of the pose from its interior, moving theatrically against a range of absorptions by way of the operatic gest/dure of the working girl is social gest in social music, which Patterson's performative, compositional conductions discomposes.

The convergence of content and pleasure is terrible. It is the cause and the cost of flight. Therefore Brecht must risk the scandal and the regression that attends pleasure. Brecht will, as it were, allow himself to be absorbed by pleasure: he'll have whisky or you'll know why. Such absorption will have been both submission and release, a self-sending that is carried out in the interest of salvation, by way of being-consumed, within which the necessarily disagreeable, whose excessive flavor must be in bad taste, puts itself forward as a kind of pharmakonic capsule meant to poison the gluton's more subtle realization of the structuration between enjoyment, flight, and culinary brings to life is, for Brecht, rapt capitulation to the degraded and degr the bourgeoise in the form of false in prepared to let us wallow in enjoyment.

Patterson moves in and against his w

The opera's not over...

Phonic meticulousness is a visual gest accomplished through a set of repetitive formed and interpreted severally, see Music is an encoding and deferral of p is embedded and embodied in pho The knowing enactment of this int aization and rematerialization is Patter more generally, Fluxus occupies, is a precious balance between bare mar ing dematerialization. Music's bare lif in, is further, poised between gesture if the rougher and more vulgar sense locale of the likeliest and severest th No, because matter is only ever in Deployed in the interest of such di haps the most vulgar art form of all, veracious, delivered gesturally, by bo not to be out of all compass, hyper nonsensical. Opera always threatens, material, to deliver nothing more. F see art's ultimate refinement in denta an embarrassment. The bourgeoise, adhere to this particular understand sensation. In advance of such embar regressions toward dematerialit that are most bound to the materia
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The convergence of content and pleasure is terrible. It is the cause and the cost of flight. Therefore Brecht must risk the scandal and the regression that attends pleasure. Brecht will, as it were, allow himself to be absorbed by pleasure; he’ll have whisky or you’ll know why. Such absorption will have been both submission and release, a self-sending that is carried out in the interest of salvation, by way of being-consumed, within which the necessarily disagreeable, whose excessive flavor must be in bad taste, puts itself forward as a kind of pharmonic capsule meant to poison the gluton that consumes it. A more subtle realization of the structurally necessary relation between enjoyment, flight, and resistance that the culinary brings to life is, for Brecht, nothing more than capitulation to the degraded and degrading hedonism of the bourgeois in the form of false innovation. Brecht is prepared to let us wallow in enjoyment in order to kill it; Patterson moves in and against his wake.

The opera’s not over...

Phonic materialization is a visual, gestural, theatrical affair accomplished through a set of repeatable operations performed and interpreted separately, separately, every time.

Music is an encoding and deferral of phonic material that is embedded and embodied in phonic materialization.

The knowing enactment of this interplay of dematerialization and rematerialization is Patterson’s métier; though more generally, Fluxus occupies, is preoccupied with, the precarious balance between bare materiality and unsparring dematerialization. Music’s bare life, its mere materiality, is further, poised between gesture and the culinary, as if the rougher and more vulgar senses are the most likely locale of the likeliest and severest threat. More matter, less art? No. Matter is simply ever and always delivery system. Deployed in the interest of such delivery, opera is perhaps the most vulgar art form of all, born in and by the vernacular, delivered gesturally, by bodies more likely than not to be out of all compass, hyperbolic, hyperphysical, nonsensical. Opera always threatens, in the delivery of its material, to deliver nothing more. For the refined, who see art’s ultimate refinement in dematerialization, opera is an embarrassment. The bourgeois, who may or may not adhere to this particular understanding of refinement, are willing to pay for it in any case.

In advance of such embarrassment, the most radical movements toward dematerialization are the ones that are most bound to the material. Patterson not only
enacts but also celebrates this paradox, reducing opera to its most base and basic elements. The materiality that insist ed in and on such performance is in the air or, more precisely, in the airlessness of cyberpace, digitally recorded and disseminated but never by way of the transfigurable solidity of the compact disc or the DVD. You can see for yourself on YouTube. The difference of this opera is in its being seen and seen again. Lip smacking, mouthwatering, the hyperbolic body made explicit, fully detached now from the sound (production) that would have justified such embodiment. There to be consumed, enjoyed, and nothing more. What led Conceptualists and Fluxists to dematerialize the work was, precisely, the intensity with which work had been given over to and disappeared by the valuation of what was always immaterial in and to it. Aesthetic acculturation, as Adrian Piper discusses it, tends toward dematerialization, but so too does the resistance to it. The critique of aesthetic value (or, more precisely, the critique of bourgeois aesthetic valuation) disappears but for a kind of retreat of the material. This insight—sense's oscillation between the lost and the found—is continually given and enacted in the work—the setting to work of the work, the working on or over of opera. The explicit invisibility of the servant is, too, a kind of dis/appearance. Within the strictures of an ethic of dematerialization, Patterson dis/appears. He reemerges in repudiation, in enactment, in repertory, by way of the recording and its digital and cybernetic reproduction—the paracritical remainders of his performances take the form of a slitting of and through remains, a continual serving of leftovers, of fucked-up, funny, generatively unfunny licks and pieces of licks. Matter is art's embarrassment; enjoyment is its shame. This double illegitimacy betrays so much of what is valorized under the rubric of Fluxus, which moves within a disingenuous forgetting of this fact, which is, in turn, disingenuously and sometimes profitably forgotten. There was a Fluxus show at the Hamburger Bahnhof, but Patterson's train never made it to the station. There is a structure of recognition in the retrospective—there was this man who did some things, made some things, or was involved in a particularly resonant and interesting mode of making whose methods and processes of fabrication never left us; with anything ready or present-to-hand. There is, at the same time, a profound ethos of preparation—in the absence of something made, on the performative outskirts or against the phonic/graphics backdrop of the readymade, Patterson works to make things ready. His is an ethics of preparation; his privileged gesture is the recipe, in which the combination of stringency and extravagance sometimes achieves a kind of lyricism. At bottom, within and against a certain tradition of the inhabited and abandoned bottom, where bassists walk and walk away, Patterson cooks, prepares a table for us, a phrase resonant in its demand that we prepare ourselves and in the fearsome imposition of its constantly renewed offer to prepare us. It is not so much that there is a thin line between listening and consumption but rather that there is a thin line between their interminanization and a devouring that leaves nothing intact. But is anyone left intact? This is a question concerning the culinary-musical pleasures of the lick and what it prepares in and for us. The virtuosic basic (fore)play for us, the lick obstinately returns from variation, and we are prepared to make something out of nothing. But why extend this sacrificial economy just for the sake of a point you have to make? On the one hand, he prepares some food for us; on the other, he prepares it for himself so he can eat in front of us. The careful preparation is on stage in Patterson's Carmen. The director as stagehand, performer, prop, asks us to consider the long, unbreakable connection between music, sex, and food. The musical material, embolded by dematerialization, is rematerialized as desert—there is no question of nourishment, or necessity. Patterson conducts from onstage, after serving as stagehand. The characters present themselves and by way of a gift of material that the players bear to the conductor's hand. This transaction is staged but detached from the music that construes that staging's background. The music is not played in the orchestra pit but played back offstage, as if Patterson put a photograph on the phonograph. The music is the material trace of a prior transaction. The players give themselves over to be blended, discomposed.

When opera becomes emphatically, self-conscious, culinary, it also becomes more emphatically visual. Staging, and consequent revisions and invasions of the stage, predominate. The music is reduced to backdrop, decor, which is what Adorno would have long-standing record remedy. But Patterson deploys the LP and its compact variant to render visuality even more insistently, not in the interest of a nonvisual cum structural listening (in which the visual experience to which the music is made subordinant is eliminated so that the music itself can be seen and not heard) but rather in the service of a total subordination of the musical material so that it can be given, now as staging. Opera replaces the spectacle of exertion in concert with staged gestures that are both detached from and driven by the music that is produced in the orchestra pit. Now the kinetics of musical production is rendered more remote by mechanical reproduction. Reproduced music brings unproductive gesture into relief. In this counterproductive mise-en-scène the senses become conceptual in their practice. The sensorial apparatus is recalibrated. Or, rather, it's as if by way of Patterson we can now go open to the opera for what it is that we always wanted: something to enjoy. The asceticism that attempted to separate music from food and that, more generally, wished to protect hearing from the contamination of the other senses and which of conceptual visuality to do so, the Don Juan project, is hereby relinquished. The enjoyment is the revaluation of meat almost taste while the bassist puts itself, which you can feel when the aorta of the one who lives in the exclusive zone where they have accumulated, where they receive possession is where they are enjoyed by owning, exorcism, having paid the highest price, cross-fades to black. Because he is a DJ, Patterson is able to make up and enjoy. Because he is the lick is, therefore, basic, Patterson is with the persistence, our repetitive cifriline fragment, the culinary meat stock pattern or phrase that always times fills in the open possibility of the instrumentation to which such a sense. Patterson's solo variations act as if virtue and virtuosity—now that himself in the feminized locus of a cut in the interest of a pleasure that is not reproductive—are breaking up that all along music was drama, a thing on the general antagonism. Liken the composition of the lick—and the filth of the work—began in Variations for with differences in Paper Piece's torn and revived in Carn's and Tristram's reflexive commodification. Patterson unacknowledged remainder, is given a rupture of the familiar. He reconstrains specificity and regifts the purity. It confers upon opera. Enabled and d
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The musical material, ennobled by its dematerialization,
that he would correct, rearranging the submissive aggression to which he aggressively submits himself, having consented to become the more and less than singular instrument he abusively prepares, Patterson performs the messy, irregular, divine methods and processes by which violence overturns itself.

NOTES
3. Benjamin Patterson, Ben Patterson 18th Flatus Stories (from 1992 to 2001). Record/Marker (Q 07, 2002), compact disc.
5. Ibid., 31.
8. Certain iconic moments in nineteenth-century French art seem more on playing (this out in a range of inadequate modular calculations—Olympia is one instance, Corregio's Afro-Cuban/Afro-Roman thing is another). This is something Jennifer Devere Carson illuminates with great precision. See "Black Caji Fever: Manifestations of Marsel’s Olym- pia," *TheatreJournal* 53 (March 2001): 95-118.
15. Tristan and Isolde and Carmen were performed at the Asian Film Festival XXVI, November 22 and 23, 2007, respectively. Excerpts from Carmen last accessed August 18, 2010, at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjQ9hGj6k4o (CoMeture-related: Tristan and Isolde last accessed August 18, 2010, at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cjQ9hGj6k4o (CoMeture-related).
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5. Ibid., 35.
The History of Gray Matter from the Avant-garde to the Postmodern

CHARLES GAINES

I have been thinking about the relationship between Benjamin Patterson's performance work and that of younger artists such as Dave McKenzie and Rodney McMillan. Central to my thinking is that each side holds both opposite and complementary views of performance. Trained as a musician, Patterson comes from the tradition of musical performance—that is, the performance (expression) of musical notation. This more than likely informed his idea of Fluxus, a contemporary art movement that he helped inaugurate. Because of his background in music and involvement in avant-garde practices, Patterson investigated the idea of the autonomy of the performance event. In music performance there is a bilateral relationship between the composer and the performer. The composer writes the score, but it is the performer who interprets (performs) it. In this context, the score can be understood as an autonomous element in relation to the performer, who responds to it, who transforms it from object to subject in the space of performance. The avant-garde rethinks the role of the performer, however, taking away the power to transform according to his subjective interests.

The result is a concrete or pragmatic space of performance, which is, like a score, autonomous and independent of the performer. The importance of this is that rather than emphasizing the performance space as an opportunity for the self-expression of the performer, there is in the Fluxus event a merging of avant-garde theater and concrete musical performance that gives little to no importance to the subjectivity of the performer. Performers follow a set of instructions that leave no room for subjectivity—no identity, no psychology, no theater (or if there is theater, it is the avant-garde theater of Jean Genet or F. T. Marinetti). This is generally the case with Benjamin Patterson's early Fluxus pieces. But as we will explore, there is in Patterson's work what I call "gray matter," the aura of the political and the social—that is, cultural references that imply but do not affirm the presence of subjectivity but possess a radical politics.¹

Dave McKenzie, by contrast, thinks of the space of performance not only as a site of subjectivity but also as a rigorous interrogation of identity, culture, and politics. Performance becomes the opportunity to realize a particular understanding of self by positing it as the other. In an article about McKenzie, Glenn Ligon quotes Franz Kafka: "How pathetically scanty my self-knowledge is compared with, say, my knowledge of my room?"² It is natural to want to reveal that which is obscured, and McKenzie intends to do precisely that. This "wanting to know" can be a forceful motivation coming from an artist who could be described as shy and unassuming. Performance for McKenzie is a type of psychological theater in which permission is given to behave in ways in which one would otherwise not, in which other identities can be assumed and used to interrogate the self, society, and cultural values. Glimpses of the self are realized at the limits of culture, and to these limits is where his work must take him. For to know the self one must know what is possible and what is not possible, experience the limits of the imagination in order to locate the limits of subjectivity. A mapping of these limits shows that they reveal where the self and the other meet. McKenzie uses performance to navigate this place in order to become the other. By employing performance as a type of ritualistic form—that is, by performing as an artist common acts or by appropriating common objects—he is able to merge art with ordinary life.

An interest in the commonplace is something that both Patterson and McKenzie share. For McKenzie, it is the site where ordinary experiences can be employed to push boundaries of the subject, and for Patterson, it is employed to push the boundaries of art. For both it is the site where art and life merge. In this respect, Patterson fits David T. Dorris's description of the Fluxus artist as a group who "surveyed the peripheral territories of their respective disciplines, or rather the margins between those disciplines. The new structures that resulted from these explorations tested received notions of the limits of the arts, as well as the limits of our ability to perceive those structures as art."³ McKenzie inherits from Patterson (and from the avant-garde in general) the idea that art is about invention and change and that the strategy of displacement can be employed in order to invoke change. The primary purpose of this effort is not to question art practice but to realize displaced locations that the artist's subjectivity can occupy. In doing this, McKenzie rethinks the Patterson avant-garde. Patterson performs actions in order to rethink accepted ideas and McKenzie uses the everyday to invert the nature of the self. The result is a representation works, a query into its limits perhaps less interested in the limits of a practice than limits of social and cultural understanding.

We can now begin to understand the relationship between Patterson's and McKenzie's performances, which the statement by Kafka underlines. In this quote, the self is the subjective realm of the other. The objective world of things is the other's, and Patterson, the latter Kafka metaphor, intriguingly it is the former who rethinks the room and its objects empirically. Patterson, whereas it is the obscurantist McKenzie finds fascinating. This subject matter interests McKenzie the subjective, Pattern, forms the recursive structure that bir in the present day. A comparison of works sheds light on this relationship with Very Lawful Dance for Ennis (1962), the assumption that a Bill Clinton mask and a suit and tie can create a kind of homoerotic tension. McKenzie's We Shall Overcome (2001) is a kind of homoerotic tension. McKenzie's We Shall Overcome (2001) is a literal and figurative and metaphor for the politics of desire. In the present day. A comparison of works sheds light on this relationship with Very Lawful Dance for Ennis (1962), the assumption that a Bill Clinton mask and a suit and tie can create a kind of homoerotic tension. McKenzie's We Shall Overcome (2001) is a literal and figurative and metaphor for the politics of desire. In the present day. A comparison of works sheds light on this relationship with Very Lawful Dance for Ennis (1962), the assumption that a Bill Clinton mask and a suit and tie can create a kind of homoerotic tension. McKenzie's We Shall Overcome (2001) is a literal and figurative and metaphor for the politics of desire.

The difference between the two what each "script" puts into place. McKenzie's creation of the situation in that making power but gives himself an absolute power, his absolute power is to control the circumstances.
story of Gray Matter
the Avant-garde to the Modern

CHARLES GAINES

But the relationship between performance work and that of younger McKenzie and Rodney McMillian is that each side holds both opposite views of performance. Trained as composers from the tradition of music, it is the performance (expression) of their art that is most immediately apparent. This performance is an autonomous element in relation to the object, and it is transformed through the form of an object or image. The role of the composer, however, is to transform according to his or her own vision the score or performance as an art that expresses the composition as a self-expression of the performer.

There is a division in the Fluxus event a merging of avant-garde theater and concrete musical performance that gives little importance to the subjectivity of the performer. Performers follow a set of instructions that leave no room for subjectivity — no identity, no psychology, no theater (or if there is theater, it is the avant-garde theater of Jean Genet or F. T. Marinetti). This is generally the case with Benjamin Patterson's early Fluxus pieces. But as we will explore, there is in Patterson's work what I call "gray matter," the aura of the political and the social — that is, cultural references that imply but do not affirm the presence of subjectivity but possess a radical politics.

Dave McKenzie, by contrast, thinks of the space of performance not only as a site of subjectivity but also as a rigorous interrogation of identity, culture, and politics. Performance becomes the opportunity to realize a particular understanding of self by posing it as the other. In an article about McKenzie, Glenn Ligon quotes Franz Kafka: "How pathetically scary my self-knowledge is compared with, say, my knowledge of my room." It is natural to want to reveal that which is obscure, and McKenzie intends to do precisely that. This "wanting to know" can be a forceful motivation coming from an artist who could be described as shy and unassuming. Performance McKenzie's is a type of psychological theater in which permission is given to behave in ways in which one would otherwise not in which other identities can be assumed and used to interrogate the self, society, and cultural values. Glimpses of the self are realized at the limits of culture, and to these limits is where his work must take him. For to know the self one must know what is possible and what is not possible, experience the limits of the imagination in order to locate the limits of subjectivity. A mapping of these limits shows that they reveal where the self and the other meet. McKenzie uses performance to navigate this place in order to become the other. By employing performance as a type of ritualistic form — that is, by performing as an artist common acts or by appropriating common objects — he is able to merge art with ordinary life.

An interest in the commonplace is something that both Patterson and McKenzie share. For McKenzie, it is the site where ordinary experiences can be employed to push boundaries of the subject, and for Patterson, it is employed to push the boundaries of art. For both, it is the site where art and life merge. In this respect, Pattersonfit David T. Doris's description of the Fluxus artists as a group who "surveyed the peripheral territories of their respective disciplines, or rather the margins between those disciplines. The new structures that resulted from these explorations tested received notions of the limits of the arts, as well as the limits of our ability to perceive those structures as art." McKenzie inherits from Patterson (and from the avant-garde in general) the idea that art is about invention and change and that the strategy of displacement can be employed in order to invoke change. The primary purpose of this effort is not to question art practice but to realize displaced locations that the artist's subjectivity can occupy. In doing this, McKenzie recursively extends the Patterson avant-garde. Patterson performed everyday actions in order to rethink accepted ideas of art, practice, and McKenzie uses the everyday to interrogate the limits and nature of the self. The result is a rethinking of how representation works, a query into its limits. McKenzie is perhaps less interested in the limits of art than he is in the limits of social and cultural understandings.

We can now begin to understand the differences between Patterson's and McKenzie's ideas about performance, which the statement by Kafka that I quoted earlier underlines. In this quotation there is a dualism: one pole is the subjective realm of self-knowledge, and the other the objective world of things. McKenzie occupies the former, and Patterson the latter. To continue the Kafka metaphor, intriguingly it is the ability to describe the room and its objects empirically that interests Patterson, whereas it is the obscurity of the self that McKenzie finds fascinating. This subject-object relationship McKenzie's the subjective, Patterson's the objective forms the recursive structure that binds the two artists in the present day. A comparison of their performance works sheds light on this relationship. In Patterson's A Very Lawful Dance for Ennis (1960), the participants were asked to walk along a street in Manhattan, following the directions of the traffic lights at each intersection for a period of time until the piece was completed. In McKenzie's We Shall Overcome (2004), the artist wore a Bill Clinton mask and a suit and walked the streets of Harlem in a kind of homage to the fact that the former president recently moved his offices into the neighborhood but that no one ever saw him.

The difference between the two works begins with what each "script" puts into place. Patterson's walk is an objectification of the situation in that he has no decision-making power but gives himself over completely to the minute-to-minute circumstances of the environment.
This makes his thoughts about past, future, and context irrelevant to the execution of the event or experience. In contrast, McKenzie's work is designed to get the environment to respond to him. This begins with the fact that he assumes a character, Bill Clinton, and by wearing a mask of his likeness, undertakes in an alien fashion an ordinary activity of the Harlem street. Of course, this draws the attention of people as they try to figure out what this means. Social tropes explode in this work as a "30-year-old black artist assumes the role of the first black president." Reactions (from passersby) ranged from jaded shrugs to shrinks of delight and even an appeal for government assistance: "I'm homeless. Can you help me?" one woman asks.6

Patterson privileged the autonomy of the event over the subjectivity of the performer, whereas McKenzie's work seems to belie this idea. We Shout Overcome, like many of McKenzie's performances, is an allegorical narrative that invokes meditations on race, gender, and identity. In order to do this, it undertakes the trope of the ordinary even at its aims for extraordinary results. In this work, concepts drawn from ordinary life find their representation as ordinary objects or subjects, and as such they actually constitute a looking back to Patterson and the idea of the primacy of the event. At the same time we are able to see in Patterson's early performance a looking forward to our contemporary moment. This is because Patterson's performance work is a bit more open-ended than the simple and direct instructions found in other Fluxus pieces of its time. Dick Higgins, in fact, said that his work "goes for the grey."7 To help explain what Higgins meant by this, we might refer to a comment made by artist Paul McCarthy about one of Allan Kaprow's performances. According to McCarthy, the Happening, as Kaprow's events are called, is often "a type of absurd activity, but I think an activity to make you reflect on your life."8

This "gray area," or what I referred to at the beginning of this essay as "gray matter," is the moment of self-reflection that McCarthy calls about, a cognitive moment that is also at the core of McKenzie's performances, a faculty probably inherent in performance itself that perforce links the avant-garde to the postmodern. Hence we can hear echoes of McKenzie in Higgins's comment from 1964 that Patterson "seems to accept, even to encourage, the non-memorable, disappearing aspect of his work. In pieces such as 'A Lawful Dance,' . . . Patterson gets somewhere that nobody else is. Marvelous things happen to you while you cross the street. The last time I performed this piece at Times Square [which at that time was full of bars, porn shops and drugs] . . . was briefly joined by Bea, Lindy, and Shirley, three overdeveloped young ladies with colossal hands. They saw me (and a group of others) crossing back and forth, and it occurred to them that it would be fun to join in; they did, no questions asked."9

The cultural interaction that compels McKenzie's work is also present in Patterson's. And in this way they come together: Patterson critiques culture through a radical removal of subjectivity, and McKenzie critiques culture by aggressively imposing subjectivity.

Fluxus grew out of several sources in the middle to late 1950s: the musical avant-garde, particularly the ideas of John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen; the radical theater of Claes Oldenburg and Herman Nitsch; and Dada and Concrete Art. The common thread linking these various art forms was the radical critique of subjectivity and symbolic representation. Traditional theories that defined these disciplines—for example, theater, visual art, and music—stressed specialized techniques and executions that identified their specific genres. This specialization was necessary to produce a symbolic language of forms, one that was separate from the ordinary world but that gave art a metaphoric capacity to express and to represent on a level higher than what would be permitted by ordinary language. From the early to middle twentieth century a change took place, displacing these specialized techniques and strategies with ones that employed the objects and experiences of the everyday, hence challenging received ideas about art and resulting in a more radical approach to art. This had a defining effect on the development of Fluxus as it sought to continue this challenge by employing the antisybolic language of the avant-garde through the use of either nonsymblic abstraction or the pragmatic markers of ordinary objects or "lived experience." Fluxus performance particularly became identified with avant-garde practice because of its use of real time (duration) as "lived experience." (For example, in ordinary life when we hear the telephone ring, we do not interpret the event symbolically; nor do we identify it as an expression of someone's subjectivity. Instead we interpret it pragmatically: it is just the sound of the telephone existing in real time.) To a significant degree the appeal of performance was due to its ability to define itself as an inherently radical practice, to produce a nonsymbolic sense of "lived experience."10

John Cage's theory of indeterminacy in musical composition was very important to the development of Fluxus artists such as Patterson since it was among the earliest attempts to critique the role of subjectivity. Cage called this idea the "autonomous behavior of simultaneous events."11 The idea of indeterminacy in music developed out of Cage's interest in Zen Buddhism, with its critique of Western subjectivity, and from this George Maciunas developed his theory of the Fluxus event. Consequently, many works were performed from simple, concrete instructions that produced no "gray area" of interpretation, such as La Monte Young's Shadow of the Flame (1960), in which a helmet was struck 866 times with a drumstick; Robert Watts's Two Holes (1963), in which the instruction was to stretch a two-inch ribbon across the stage or street and then cut it; or George Brecht's Three Large Events (1960), in which a tuned gong, turned off, then on, and so on.

One of the more complex works early Fluxus-related event, the Festos Fluxus in 1966 in Düsseldorf, was Patterson's. In this work, "two performers enter on the wings carrying a large piece of cloth, kneel down and begin to hold the heads of the audience as it is performed. At the same time, sounds of crumpled paper could be heard from behind the screen, in which a number of small holes have been made. The piece of paper held over the audiients dropped as shreds and balls of paper over the screen and out into the audience. The piece of paper held over the audiients dropped as shreds and balls of paper."

Before Patterson's performance in Düsseldorf, the gallery director and art critic Jean-Philippe had prepared a script as an introduction to the piece. Following this, some of the paper into the audience during the performance manifesto written on it. The nature of the paper in this is unclear; the documentous, Patterson recalls, however, that the manifesto was an accident. It was not the intention to include it as a piece. [a] "practical act," to dump a lot of facts that the effusion to politics was a play of the 'gray area' that Patterson produce. Politics for him was not an
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Fluxus grew out of several sources in the middle to late 1950s: the musical avant-garde, particularly the ideas of John Cage and Karlheinz Stockhausen; the radical theater of Claus Bremer/Mani Aktei, and Genie; and Dada and Concrete Art. The common thread linking these various art forms was the radical critique of subjectivity and symbolic representation. Traditional theories that defined these disciplines—for example, theater, visual art, and music—stressed specialized techniques and executions that identified their specific genres. This specialization was necessary to produce a symbolic language of form, one that was separate from the ordinary world but that gave art a metaphoric capacity to express and to represent on a level higher than what would be permitted by ordinary language. From the early to middle twentieth century a change took place, displacing these specialized techniques and strategies with ones that employed the objects and experiences of the everyday, hence challenging received ideas about art and resulting in a more radical approach to art. This had a defining effect on the development of Fluxus as it sought to continue this challenge by employing the antisybolic language of the avant-garde through the use of either nonsymbolic abstraction or the pragmatic markers of ordinary objects or "lived experience." Fluxus performance particularly became identified with avant-garde practice because of its use of real time (duration) as "lived experience." For example, in ordinary life when we hear the telephone ring, we do not interpret the event symbolically nor do we identify it as something of someone's subjective reality. Instead we interpret it pragmatically: it is just the sound of the telephone existing in real time.) To a significant degree the appeal of performance was due to its ability to define itself as an inherently radical practice, to produce a nonsymbolic sense of "lived experience." John Cage's theory of indeterminacy in musical composition was very important to the development of Fluxus artists such as Patterson since it was among the earliest attempts to critique the role of subjectivity. Cage called this idea "the autonomous behavior of simultaneous events." The idea of indeterminacy in music developed out of Cage's interest in Zen Buddhism, with its critique of Western subjectivity, and from this George Maciunas developed his theory of the Fluxus event. Consequently, many works were performed from simple, concrete instructions that produced no "gray" area of interpretation, such as "La Monte Young's 56" for Henry Flynt (1966), in which a helmet was struck 56 times with a drumstick; Robert Watts's Two Inches (1965), in which the instruction was to stretch a two-inch ribbon across the stage or street and then cut it; or George Brecht's Three Lamp Events (1965), in which a lamp was to be turned on, then off, then on, and so forth.

One of the more complex works performed at an early Fluxus-titled event, the Festival of Fluxionary Fluxus, held in 1962 in Düsseldorf, was Patterson's Paper Piece (1965).

In this work, "two performers entered the stage from the wings carrying a large 'j' sheet of paper, which they then held over the heads of the front of the audience. At the same time, sounds of crumpling and tearing paper could be heard from behind the on-stage paper screen, in which a number of small holes began to appear. The piece of paper held over the audience's heads was then dropped as sheets and balls of paper were thrown over the screen and out into the audience." At the time of the Düsseldorf event, Marxism was influencing Maciunas's Fluxus ideas, and he argued in a manifesto that Fluxus was an attack on bourgeois values. For him, Fluxus was about reasserting the dominance of European social, political, and aesthetic values. By 1960 Theodor W. Adorno and Heinz-Klaus Metzger were denouncing the idea of autonomy in art in their lectures. And Maciunas was arguing that Cage's notion of the acceptance of the everyday was a critique of the social order.

Before Patterson's performance in Düsseldorf began, the gallery director and art critic Jean-Pierre Wilhelm read a prepared script as an introduction to the event. Paper Piece followed this. Some of the paper that was tossed into the audience during the performance had Maciunas's manifesto written on it. The nature of Patterson's collaboration in this is unclear; the documentation is ambiguous. Patterson recalls, however, that the inclusion of the manifesto was an accident. It was neither his nor Maciunas's intention to include it as a political act: "It was only [a] practical act, to dump a lot of excess paper!" The fact that the allusion to politics was accidental is exemplary of the "gray area" that Patterson's performances produce. Politics for him was not an entirely univassed.
consequence of the performance. In other words, there was no intention for it to be directly political—that is, an active participation in a very specific political agenda. But it is interesting to note that even though the inclusion of the manifesto text may not have been intentional, its (or any other “accidental” event’s) link to the performance cannot be discounted. This sense of legitimate belonging sans intention might be understood through the metaphor of the “echo,” in which a primary sound reverberates against surfaces as it passes through space and time. In repetition, the echo is linked to the primary sound even though each reverberation has its own unique qualities and is changed by circumstances of the echo that the primary sound cannot control.

The differing reactions to Maciunas’s manifesto display the wide range of Fluxus positions regarding politics. According to Higgins, artists, mostly the Americans, would not sign on to Maciunas’s Fluxus manifesto because Manicité ideology (or any specific agenda-driven ideology, for that matter) was for them antithetical to the ideas of Fluxus. But artists such as Nam June Paik and Wolf Vostell became more political, and Joseph Beuys offered his own manifesto at a 1963 Fluxus performance.18 For many, politics was implicit in avant-garde radicalism even if that politics was not specifically Manicite. Patterson comments:

First, remember, doing anything as radical as Fluxus at that time was by definition POLITICAL! Perhaps, I did or did not agree with all of the points of that, or later manifestos, which George M. produced. But, we were all in the LFT and "anti-establishment." (Actually, "Paper Piece" was a direct reaction to the "establishment-sponsored" elitism of the "official" new music scene at that time [which] was principally, the clique of Stockhausen, Boulez (company) based in the electronic music studio at West German Radio (WDR) in Cologne. I was trying to find a way for "ordinary people"—people without years of technical training—to have a direct "musical" experience. Thus, "Paper Piece"; it was already a "political statement".)19

So within this context, Patterson’s Paper Piece and other works, such as The Clinic of Dr. Ben (BMW, MS) (1962); his famous and provocative Lick Piece (1964), in which he covered a nude woman’s body with whipped cream and asked the audience to come onto the stage and lick it off; and A Very Lawful Dance for Ennis, discussed earlier, all raise interesting questions about representation and the role of political and social critique in Fluxus.

Hence, in comparison to that of artists such as Brecht and Watts, Patterson’s work passively administers a powerful and wider social effect: we think about gender issues when experiencing Lick Piece, and we think about the reaction of the environment in A Very Lawful Dance. In The Clinic of Dr. Ben, we think about the ineptitude of bureaucrats as he collects useless statistical information. In addition to the antiestablishment politics of the performance, the work opens pathways to provocative insinuations about subjectivity, even though Patterson himself does not become a subject in his work but, as has been stated, maintains a type of distance by being the composer-conductor in the tradition of the musical performance.

This is important when thinking about the relationship of Patterson’s practice to that of another young artist, Rodney McMillian. Again we can speak about the similarities and dissimilarities between their practices in order to reveal Patterson’s importance to younger artists and the way that their work is received. Like Dave McKenzie, McMillian often examines popular cultural production. He attempts to inhabit the space and time of this production through a process of reconstructing or recreating, using found objects and materials (in the case of his objects), or by "rel ease them" (in the case of his performance work). Either way, his art transfers diachronic events into the synchronic present, thus allowing him to take possession of them within the space of his own subjectivity. In my view, McMillian believes that the cathartic experiences this produces double as a critique of these subjects, eliciting thoughts and feelings about them that are revelatory. Although this happens through the lens of his own subjectivity, the process can be extrapolated generally as an examination of the world at large rather than only an examination of his self.

One good example is McMillian’s installation Unititled (Unknown) (2001). In this work he created an environment that loosely references classical architectural structures such as Greek or Roman temples, wrapping fifteen columns in fabric and placing them around a found bust of a man. McMillian uses the readymade to construct this mise-en-scène and by this action transfers a diachronic experience into a synchronic present. Found materials form the aesthetic and expressive language of this installation, thereby p markers that expand the subject of di to include the process by which it is experienced. For example, a reading an iconic object expands into one in an agent of expressivity, particularly of materials, which contribute to the ences and visceral sensations to the re Objects enter a space of existential th and materials that form them are reacptive moments of the artist’s riental elements of the objects. This is d except that in McMillian’s case it open and political issues. The scene becom all its parts form a synchronic pattern of expression in the same way that in facs.

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This strategy of the readymade recalls Patterson's own interest in the idea of the event as a function of the present and in this manner locates the origin of this gesture in the avant-garde. But since synchronicity for McMillan produces subjectivity, this recasting of history into the present makes it possible for him to engage it as a subjective experience and, as Trine Dalbon correctly observes, creates the opportunity for his installations to "allude to his life performances.""

In a performance from 2000, for example, McMillan recited Verlaine for more than two and a half hours, Lyndon Johnson's 1968 "Great Society" speech. We can almost imagine him becoming the bust of the man from Untitled (Unknown), now interpreted as a power icon. He performed it as an endurance work so that the exhaustion of his body would make the words from the past exist materially in the present. He did not anticipate that performing the work would result in an exhaustion that felt like, as he put it, "a little death." He recalled, "I finished the text as best I could and I exited the stage.... The next
Although McMillan’s postmodern performance and Patterson’s avant-garde performance operate within different domains, McMillan’s use of performance as a means to engage ordinary experience, to reframe his own subjectivity, to believe in the “performance event” as a radicalizing agent in this reanimation, are all possible because of the history of the avant-garde. Hence Patterson’s commitment to rethinking the language of art becomes the formal means for both McMillan and McKenzie to rethink the language of culture, politics, and subjectivity. The gray area that Dick Higgins refers to in describing the effect of Patterson’s performance work becomes a portal that allows postmodern artists to engage with their own subjectivity, found in ordinary events and used to widen the social, political, and poetic “gray matter” of representation.

NOTES
1. The term gray matter refers to a neural issue in the brain and spinal cord that connects and coordinates behavior, homeostasis, and mental functions such as cognition, memory, and learning. 
6. Higgins writes: "But Patton, more than hardly any other composer, seems to understand that for a composer to divide activities into musical and non-musical, what I do and what I don’t do is to accept the dualism of good and evil, of black and white, and ultimately, to place one’s work on a level of purely theoretical relevance. Patton goes for the grey, and he seems to accept, even to encourage, the non-memorable, disappearing aspect of his work."
7. Sharon Alles, "When Art and Life Converge, the Retail is Anything But Ordinary," Los Angeles: (October 2006.
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10. Quoted in Higgins, Postface, 55.
13. Benjamin Patterson, e-mail correspondence with the author, January 19, 2009. He added, “The paper thrown into the audience was, basically, the ‘left-overs’ from the piles of paper that we (the performers on stage) had been using as ‘musical instruments.’ That some sheets of paper were impressed with Maciunas’s Fluxus manifesto was purely accidental.”
15. Benjamin Patterson, e-mail correspondence with the author, January 19, 2009.
Works in the Exhibition

Methods and Processes: Action Poems, Instructions, and Books

ABCs, c. 1963
Childhood's coloring book, ink, crayon, collage
13 x 10 1/4 x 7/16 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Prints and Comments (Prints, Loundos Castro, Comments, Benjamin Paterson), 1962
Handmade paper, totem, ink
10 1/2 x 8 7/8 x 1 1/8 inches
10 1/2 x 9 1/4 x 1 1/8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Puzzle Poems, 1962
Collage on card, metal box
Box: 5 1/2 x 3 5/8 x 3 5/8 inches
Puzzle-poems: 5 1/2 x 7 1/2 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

A Volume of Collected Poems: Volume I, Poems 1, 2, 1962
collage on card, embossed paper, plastic bag
Plastic bag: 14 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches
Card: 3 1/4 x 4 5/8 inches
Appenix: 3 1/2 x 2 3/4 inches
Bax: 3 1/2 x 2 3/4 inches
Green: 3 1/2 x 2 3/4 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

collage on card, paper and linen boxes, plastic bag
Plastic bag: 14 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches
Card: 3 1/4 x 4 5/8 inches
Linen box: 2 7/8 x 3 5/8 x 3 5/8 inches
8-piece puzzle-poem: 17 7/8 x 17 7/8 inches
Matchbook: 16 x 2 1/4 x 3/4 inches
15-piece puzzle-poem: 12 1/4 x 6 inches
15-piece puzzle-poem: 12 1/4 x 6 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Instruction No. 1 (New Letters), 1964
Ink and rubber stamp on construction paper
37 x 26 inches (framed)
30 x 20 inches (sheet)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Instruction No. 1 (Steps 1-12), 1964
Ink and rubber stamp on construction paper
37 1/2 x 26 inches (framed)
30 x 20 inches (sheet)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Littlefield (If You Think This Is a Dream), c. 1963
typed ink and collage on paper
7 1/4 x 6 inches
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Hans Sohn Archive

Untitled (Starclimber), 1964
ink on paper
11 x 8 1/4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Watch Me, c. 1963
Stencil and marker on index card
3 cards, 27 1/2 x 4 inches each
Envelopes: 3 7/8 x 6 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

What else is necessary?, 1964-66
Ink on index card, envelope
5 cards, 3 9/16 x 5 5/8 inches each
Envelopes: 3 7/8 x 6 inches
Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Hans Sohn Archive

Installation No. 2 (Peace Wish Year Face), 1964
Fluxus Edition box
Plastic box, guest soap, paper hand towel with stamped ink
Box: 9 1/2 x 3 x 4 1/2 inches
Unfolded towel: 16 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches
Soap: 6 x 2 1/2 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Puzzle Poems, 1964
Collage on broad plastic bag
Bag: 15 7/8 x 9 inches
Puzzle-poems: 14 1/2 x 10 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Game: Three Capacities and One Inhibition, 1965
Index cards, collage, stamped ink, marker
4 index cards, 5 1/2 x 3 5/8 inches each
Envelopes: 3 7/8 x 6 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Study, 1965
Ink and rubber stamp on construction paper
33 1/2 x 26 inches (framed)
30 x 20 inches (sheet)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Instruction No. 2 (Steps 1-10), 1964
Ink and rubber stamp on construction paper
37 1/2 x 26 inches (framed)
30 x 20 inches (sheet)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

Instruction No. 2 (Steps 1-12), 1964
Ink and rubber stamp on construction paper
37 1/2 x 26 inches (framed)
30 x 20 inches (sheet)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift

The Book of Genesis, 1969
Leather antique photo book, book
6 x 4 1/2 x 2 inches
Collection Ernst Gombrich, Geneva

Joyce and Eugene, 1973
Aluminum box, found object (as part), 5 1/8 x 12 1/2 inches
Collection Marcel and David Flax, Paris

Apophasics, 1990
Cloth boxes, accordion book with linen cover
Box: 13 x 3 1/2 x 1 inches
Box: 2 3/4 x 3 1/2 inches
Collection Canzani Goglio, Genoa

How to Make a Book, 2001
Wooden box, plastic crane, knife, 8 3/4 x 2 1/2 inches
Collection Marc Schutz, Hanover

My Grand 30th Birthday, 2003
Ink on paper, plastic, mixed media
5 x 11 inches

On the table (dumb), c. 1967
Spiral bound notebook, ink, crayon, collage
11 3/4 x 8 1/4 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Volgene, 1966
Box, antique glass bulbs, cut photo
6 x 8 3/4 x 2 inches
Collection Canzani Goglio, Genoa

Puzzle Poems No. 6, 2005
Wooden box, concrete, marker, wire media
10 x 15 x 4 1/4 inches

How to make a book, vintage children's book
6 x 9 1/4 x 2 inches
Each: 7 x 5 1/2 inches
Collection Bernard Clavel, Paris
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John T. Hill</td>
<td><em>Stenciled Flowers</em></td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>30 x 40 inches</td>
<td>Collection of the Artist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rita McBride</td>
<td><em>Color Field</em></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Acrylic on canvas</td>
<td>48 x 60 inches</td>
<td>Milwaukee Art Museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy Warhol</td>
<td><em>Campbell’s Soup Cans</em></td>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Screenprint</td>
<td>32 x 25 inches</td>
<td>Whitney Museum of American Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasper Johns</td>
<td><em>Flag</em></td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>19 x 15 inches</td>
<td>Museum of Modern Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claes Oldenburg</td>
<td><em>Giant Soft Sculpture</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Foam rubber, metal, and glass</td>
<td>10 x 10 x 10 feet</td>
<td>Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Indiana</td>
<td><em>Love</em></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>48 x 48 inches</td>
<td>The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Serra</td>
<td><em>Torqued Ellipses</em></td>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>5 x 5 x 5 feet</td>
<td>The Museum of Modern Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christo</td>
<td><em>Wrapped Bridge</em></td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>500 x 500 x 500 feet</td>
<td>The Museum of Modern Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Koons</td>
<td><em>Gazing Ball (Carnival, painted steel</em>)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Steel, glass, and mixed media</td>
<td>50 x 50 x 50 inches</td>
<td>Theaster Gates, Chicago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claes Oldenburg</td>
<td><em>Giant Soft Sculpture</em></td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>12 x 12 x 12 feet</td>
<td>The Minneapolis Institute of Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Workers in the Exhibition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mariko Mori</td>
<td><em>Timepiece</em></td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>6 x 6 x 6 feet</td>
<td>The Museum of Modern Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Condo</td>
<td><em>Still Life</em></td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>30 x 40 inches</td>
<td>The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean-Michel Basquiat</td>
<td><em>Untitled</em></td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>60 x 60 inches</td>
<td>The Museum of Modern Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim Dine</td>
<td><em>The American Dream</em></td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Mixed media</td>
<td>60 x 60 inches</td>
<td>The Museum of Modern Art, New York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**List of Exhibitions**

1. The Armory Show, New York, 1913
2. The Independents, New York, 1915
3. The Armory Show, New York, 1916
4. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1936
5. The Biennial, New York, 1938
9. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 1948
10. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1950
14. The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, 1958
15. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1960
27. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1984
32. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1994
40. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010
42. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2014
44. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2018
46. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2022
47. The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2024
48. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2026
49. The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2028
50. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2030
Scores
Piece, 1960
ink on paper
8" x 6" inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Flax Collection Gift

"Situations" for Three Pianos, 1960
ink on composition paper
2 pages, 11" x 8" 1/2 inches each
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

String Music, 1960
ink on watercolor paper
Instructions: 10" x 16" inches
Graphic score, page 1: 10" x 16" inches
Graphic score, page 2: 11" x 15 1/4" inches
Graphic score, page 3: 10" x 16" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

From String Music for Double Bass(es), 1960
ink on paper
10" x 16" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Arts, 1960-62
ink on paper, black and white photographs
Photograph: 8" x 11" inches
Photograph: 8" x 11" inches
Sheet: 30" x 76" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Composition for Any Situation, 1961
ink on paper
8" x 8" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Discourse Piece for Wolf Vostell, 1961
ink on paper and relief
Title page: 11" x 8" inches
Instructions: 10" x 8" inches
Score: 11" x 8" inches
Score: 2 1/4" x 8" inches
Score: 3 3/4" x 8" inches
Score: 4 3/8" x 8" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Dazzling Composition, 1961
Typed ink on paper
10" x 7 2/8" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Das für Voice and a String Instrument, 1961
Black and colored ink on paper and transparency
Instructions: 2 pages, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches each
Transparency: 11" x 4" inches
Transparency: 11" x 8 1/2 inches
Transparency: 11" x 8 1/2 inches
Paper: 11" x 8 1/2 inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Lemons, 1961
ink on paper
2 pages, 10" x 8" inches each
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Overture, Overture (Versions II and III), 1961
ink on paper
10" x 8" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Two Dances: "Only for Dance" and "A Very Loudly Dance for Piano," 1962
ink on paper
3 pages, 11" x 8" inches each
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Septet from Lemons, 1961
ink on paper
11" x 8" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Blooming Piece for Pylos, 1963
ink on paper
13" x 8" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

The Three Opencs, 1997
ink on paper
5 pages, 11" x 8 1/2 inches each
Courtney the artist

World Weather, 1997
Spiral-bound music composition notebook, ink and colored markers on paper, world map
11" x 8 1/2 inches
Courtney the artist

Untitled, (You are standing, perhaps drinking), c. 1963
ink on paper
13 1/2" x 8" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Symphony No. 1 & 2, 1963-89
ink on paper
4 pages, 5" x 11" inches each
Envelope: 5 1/2 x 12 inches
Courtney the artist

First Symphony, 1954
ink on paper
10" x 16 1/2" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Three Ways to a Rape, 1965
ink on paper
14 3/4 x 10" inches
Gordon Research Institute, Los Angeles

Das Balthus Requiem, 1995
ink and collage on paper
Instructions: 2 pages, 11" x 8 1/2 inches each
Score: 4 pages, 10 1/2 x 15 inches each
Courtney the artist

Losing by Doing, c. 1996
ink on paper
11 1/2" x 8" inches
Courtney the artist

On the Road with Al ... a Goldfish (Hanson, 1996), 2 pages
A Simple Opencs, 1996 (7 pages)
The Future Makes Progress, 1997 (2 pages)
Some Sound Objects — Quotations — by Benjamin Patterson, 1997
The Three Opencs, 1997 (Carmen, 1999)
Tristan and Isolde, 1997
World Weather, 1997
The Creation of the World, 1998 (3 pages)
How to Make Art: Benjamin Patterson

Digging, 2000
ink on paper
4 sheets, 10 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches each
Courtney the artist

A Simple Opencs, 2001
ink and collage on paper
11" x 8 1/2 inches
Courtney the artist

My Time, Your Time, His Time, Her Time
ink on white and colored paper
6 pages, 11" x 8 1/2 inches each
Courtney the artist

A Flaccus Egg (Audiodiscs/Performances)
ink on paper
7 1/2 x 11 1/2 inches
Courtney the artist

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION
235

Born in the State of FLUXus
Décalage Peau for Wolf Vostell, 1961
Ink on paper and vellum
Title page: 11 x 8 1/2 inches
Instructions: 10% x 8 1/2 inches
Score: page 1 x 6 1/2 x 8 inches
Score: page 1 x 6 1/2 x 8 inches
Score: page 4 x 8 1/2 x 11 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Distanting Composition, 1961
Typed ink on paper
10% x 7 7/8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Duo for Voice and a String Instrument, 1961
Black and colored ink on paper and transparency
Instructions: 2 pages, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches each
Transparency: 13 x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Leemans, 1961
Ink on paper
2 pages, 10 x 8 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Overture, Overture (Versions B and B), 1961
Ink on paper
10% x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Orion, 1961
Ink on paper
10% x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Objects from India, 1961
Ink on paper
11 x 8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Décalage Peau for Wolf Vostell
(Handwritten Iteration), 1961
Typed and colored ink on paper (verso/reverse)
10% x 11 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Pavane for Flutes, 1961–62
Ink on paper
11 x 8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Variations for Double Bass, 1961–62
Ink on paper
5 pages, 11 x 8 1/2 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Methods and Processes, 1962
Printed ink on paper
10% x 7 3/4 x 8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Methods and Processes (with sender's name), 1962
Printed ink on paper
10% x 7 3/4 x 8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Penav, 1962
Ink on paper
2 pages, 10 x 8 1/2 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Ink on paper
3 pages, 11 x 8 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Unlimited (Handwritten Iteration of Variations for Double Bass), 1962
Ink on poster for Fluss International Festspiele Krefeld
15% x 11 inches (unframed); 5 x 8 inches (folded)
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Riding Pace for Pylos, 1963
Ink on paper
13 x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Star, 1963
Ink on paper
11 x 7 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Untitled (You are standing, perhaps drinking), c. 1963
Ink on paper
13 3/4 x 8 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Symphony No. 1 & 2, 1963–69
Ink on paper
6 pages, 5 1/2 x 11 inches each
Envelope: 36 x 22 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Poems, 1962
Ink on paper
14% x 10 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Dans Balhoff Requiem, 1995
Ink and collage on paper
11% x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A The Three Opus, 1997
Ink on paper
5 pages, 11 1/2 x 8 1/2 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

World Weather, 1997
Spiral bound music composition notebook, ink and colored markers on paper, world map
11 x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

Diggino 2000
Ink on paper
4 sheets, 10 x 8 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Simple Opera, 2001
Ink and collage on paper
11% x 8 1/2 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

My Time, Your Time, His Time, Her Time, 2005
Ink on white and colored paper
6 pages, 11 x 8 1/2 inches each
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

A Freeze (Audiosensorial Performance), c. 2006
Ink on paper
7% x 11 inches
Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

From the State of FLUXus
works in the exhibition

On the Road with Al... a Gestaltische Performance for Al Hansen, 1996 (2 pages)
A Simple Opera, 1996 (2 pages)
The Future Makes Progress, 1997 (7 pages)
Some "Found Objects"—Quotations—Recently Discovered by Benjamin Patterson, 1997
The Three Opus, 1997 (Carmen, 1990; Madame Butterfly, 1995; 2 pages)
Triumph and Holdel, 1961–63
World Weather, 1997
The Creation of the World, 1998 (3 pages)
How to Make Art: Benjamin Patterson's Foolproof Method, 1998
Performance documentation for Variations for Double Bass, 1961
Performed by the artist at Kleines Sommerfeld/April John Cage, Galerie Parnawa, Weserburg, Germany, June 9, 1962
Galant silver prints (photographs by Rolf Jaring)
2 prints, 9½ × 7½ inches each
2 prints, 13½ × 10½ inches each
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Liliana Silberman Haus Collection
Performance documentation for Variations for Double Bass, 1961
Performed by the artist at Happenings and Fluxus concert event, Ecole Nationale des Beaune-Arts, Paris, June 8, 1969
Galant silver print (photograph by Francesco Concò)
8 × 10 inches
Courtesy the artist
Performance documentation for Wolf Vostell's Decollages, Collège, Audincourt 15.5.25.61, 1961
Offset on paper, mounted on paper
8½ × 5½ inches (sheet)
10½ × 8 inches (moue)
Courtesy the artist
Program for the Kleines Sommerfeld, June 9, 1962
Offset on paper
5½ × 8 inches (unfolded)
Courtesy the artist
Program for Neo-Dada in der Musik, June 16, 1962
Offset on paper
7 × 8 inches (folded)
Collection Archives Bonotto, Milano, Italy
Paterson and unidentified person performing Yoko Ono's String Music for Two
Paterson performing Nam June Paik's One for Violin (1962) with Peter Krock of SEM Ensemble, New York, Akademie der Bildenden Kunst, Vienna, June 1989
Black and white photographs (by Wolfgang Täger)
7 × 5 inches each
Courtesy the artist
Paterson performing Variations for Double Bass as part of the concert event Happenings and Fluxus, Ecole Nationale des Beaune-Arts, with an exhibition at Galerie 1900-2000, Paris, August 8–29, 1990
Color photographs (by Francesco Concò)
8 × 10 inches
Courtesy the artist
Performance documentation for Variations for Double Bass, 1963
Performed by the artist at Kleines Sommerfest/Après John Cage, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, June 6, 1962
Gelatin silver prints (photographs by Rolf Jahrig)
2 prints, 9 1/2 x 7 inches each
2 prints, 3 1/2 x 2 7/8 inches each
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Flusss Collection Gift

Performance documentation for Variations for Double Bass, 1963
Performed by artist at Happenings and Fluxus concert event, Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, June 8, 1969
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Francesco Coss) 8 x 10 inches
Courtsey the artist

Performance documentation for Wolf Vostell: Dealings, College, Ausstellung 15.5-28.5.1961, 1963
Offset on paper, mounted on paper
8 1/8 x 5 5/8 inches (sheet)
11 3/4 x 8 3/4 inches (mount)
Courtsey the artist

Performance documentation for Duo for Voice and a String Instrument, 1962
Performed by artist and William Pearson at Kleines Sommerfest/Après John Cage, Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Germany, June 9, 1962
Gelatin silver prints (photographs possibly by Ralf Jahrig)
2 prints, 5 x 3 1/2 inches each
1 print, 5 x 3 1/2 inches
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Flusss Collection Gift

Patterson performing The Chive of Dr. Ben (BM, 1455) as part of the anniversary exhibition Fluxus De Cape at Villa Chirnside, Wiesbaden, Germany, 1992
Color photograph and business card (photographer unknown)
Photograph: 16 x 12 inches
Card: 3 1/2 x 3 inches
Courtsey the artist

Patterson and unidentified performer in Tristan and Isolde, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, November 17, 1993
Gelatin silver print (photograph by Morten Langballe) 4 x 3 inches
Courtsey the artist

Patterson at dedication ceremony for the Museum of the Subconscious in Namibia, 1996
Color photograph (by Francesco Coss) 12 x 8 inches
Courtsey the artist

Patterson performing The Creation of the World, Off Kammerm, Offenbach, Germany, May 29, 1998
Black and white photograph (photographer unknown) 9 x 12 inches
Courtsey the artist

Patterson performing A Clean Slate at Haus der Deutschen Ensemble Akademie, Frankfurt, December 16, 2001
Gelatin silver print (photograph by EB Kresser) 12 x 8 inches
Courtsey EB Kresser, Wiesbaden, Germany

Fluxus Films, 1993, with live music composed and performed by Benjamin Patterson and Joe James at the City Gallery, Wiesbaden, Germany, September 13, 1993
Digital video
100 minutes
Courtsey the artist

Behrens, 1993
Performed at Konzertsaal der Stadt Gera, Gera, Germany, May 13, 1993
Digital video
22 minutes
Courtsey the artist

Performance documentation for Dedication Ceremony for the Museum of the Subconscious (Ted Avin Avnin), 1999
Dedication of the museum annexe on Jerusalem Beach, July 13, 1999
Digital video
23 minutes
Courtsey the artist

Patterson performing for Clean Slate, 2002
Performed at Kassen Kunstverein, Kassel, Germany on October 5-6, 2002
Video transferred to digital video
7 minutes (loop)
Courtsey the artist

Patterson performing A Clean Slate at Haus der Deutschen Ensemble Akademie, Frankfurt, December 16, 2001
Gelatin silver print (photograph by EB Kresser) 12 x 8 inches
Courtsey EB Kresser, Wiesbaden, Germany

Video Documentation
Performance documentation for Variations for Double Bass, 1963
Performed at Fluxus International Feuillepise neuerart Musik
Video transferred to digital video
6 minutes (excerpt)
Courtsey the artist

Ephemerata: Notes from Fluxus/Notes from an Ordinary Life
Photograph from the Centre Music Festival, 1960, showing the artist performing with John Cage, Nam June Paik, Christian Wolff, Hans Heinz, Syphon Rosetti, David Tudor, and Cornelius Cardew
Black and white photograph (by Klaus Bariuch) 7 x 10 inches
Courtsey Gabriele Schippenhauser and Mary Baurmeister, Cologne

For: B-disc and piano, Madrid 1960, 1960
Score composed by Juan Hildago
Ink on paper, ink on printed sheet paper
2 pages, 10 1/4 x 6 inches each
8 1/2 x 11 inches (folded); 10 1/4 x 14 1/2 inches (unfolded)
Getry Research Institute, Los Angeles

Ich bin sich, 1960
Offset on paper (artist’s magazine)
12 x 8 inches (folded); 23 x 33 inches (unfolded)
Oval
Courtsey the artist

Lemon from Benjamin Patterson to Michael War, 1980
Ink on paper (verso, poster)
22 x 36 inches
Courtsey the artist

Poster designed by George Maciunas for Fluxus Internationale Feuillepise neuerart Musik, Hnorad des Münsthaus museums, Wiesbaden, Germany, September 13-23, 1962
Offset on paper
16 x 15 inches (unframed)
23 x 36 inches (framed)
The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Flusss Collection Gift

Program for Neo-Dada in der Musik, 1962
Offset on paper
7 x 4 1/2 inches (folded); 7 x 5 inches (unfolded)
Oval
Courtsey the artist

Works in the Exhibition

Los Angeles
Documentation for Leo Lionni (1930-1994)
Los Angeles
Announcement card for Negro Ensemble Company in New York, c. 1963
Offset on card, envelope
Card: 5¼ x 4¼ inches
Envelope: 6¾ x 9¾ inches
City Research Institute, Los Angeles

Publication edited by René Block
Offset on paper
10½ x 8⅛ x 5⅛ inches
Published by Stiftung Kunst und Kultur des Landes Hessen

Patterson's business card for Pro Musica, c. 1984
Ink on paper
2 x 3 inches

courtesy the artist

Press release and postcard announcing Patterson's solo exhibition Ordinary Life, at Emily Harvey Gallery, New York, 1988
Printing on paper
Press release: 8 x 10 inches
Postcard: 4 x 6 inches

courtesy the artist

Brochures announcing various fluxus anniversary exhibitions/shows, 1988–93
Fluxus Festival, Chicago, 1993
Fluxus 24 Hours, Wiesbaden, 1992
Offset on paper
22 x 13½ inches, 33 x 23½ inches

courtesy the artist

Uskali, S/T, July 1993
Offset on paper (magazine)
9½ x 8½ inches

courtesy the artist

Born in the State of FLUXus 238
1914-32 Benjamin Patterson is born on May 29, 1934, in Pittsburgh. He begins taking music lessons at age eight with Marie C. Hayes, then studies double bass with Herman Clemens beginning in 1949. His solo performance on the double bass is televised in 1951 on WQED-TV, Pittsburgh.

1952-60 Patterson studies music at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (BA, 1956). He becomes principal double bassist with the Halifax Symphony Orchestra in Canada. In 1968 he is appointed to the United States Army, serving in the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra in Stuttgart, Germany. Following his service, Patterson returns to Canada, where he is employed as principal double bassist and assistant conductor with the Ottawa Philharmonic Orchestra. In Ottawa, he meets Canadian composer Hugh LeCaine and begins experimenting with electronic music at a small studio in the National Research Center.

1960-62 Patterson's experimentation with electronic music leads him into a phase of creative exploration. During this period he publishes An Experiment in Extended Rhythms and Paper Piece for Five Performers (the first of his Paper Pieces) in the periodical Ich bin schon.

On June 14, 1960, Patterson arrives in Cologne to attend the International Society for Contemporary Music festival, intending to meet and possibly study with Karlheinz Stockhausen. Less than a day after his disappointing first meeting with Stockhausen, Patterson meets John Cage, who invites him to perform with him at the Centre Festival at Mary Bauermeister's studio. Along with other musicians, he performs works by La Monte Young, George Brecht, Toshi Ichiyanagi, and John Cage. Overnight Pattson converts from the 'school of serial music' (Stockhausen, Boulez et al.) to the 'school of indeterminate music' (Cage, Tudor et al.). His planned seven-day visit to Cologne is extended to one and a half years.

On May 14, 1961, Patterson performs Paper Piece, Solo for Vociet, Situations for Three Pianos, and Duo for Voice and String Instrument at the opening of an exhibition by Wolf Vostell at Galerie Hajo Lauth in Cologne. In the following months Patterson performs Variations for Double Bass at the opening of an exhibition by Minimo Renzeti and improvisation at the opening of an exhibition by Daniel Spoerri at Galerie Hajo Lauth. In July Patterson presents his first opera, Lemons, at Studio Vostell. Kleines Sommertage: Apéris: John Cage is presented by Patterson, George Maciunas, and others at Galerie Parinn, Wuppertal, Germany. It marks the first 'Fluxus' performance in Europe.

Continuing their collaboration, Patterson works with Maciunas to organize the Historic Internationale Festspiele neuester Musik (later known as first Fluxus Festival), held at the Städtisches Museum in Wiesbaden in 1962. Emmett Williams interviews Patterson as publicity for the festival in Stars and Stripes, a military newspaper (Thursday, August 30, 1962). This interview is the first article ever written about Fluxus. Similarly, the first film documentation of Fluxus—news coverage by German television—features Patterson performing Solo for Double Bass.

In 1962 Patterson moves to Paris, where he self-publishes his book Method and Processes, followed by the works Stand Erect, Draw Circle, and tour. His published works lead to a collaboration with artist Lourdes Castro who produces the magazine KVY.

Patterson also collaborates with French artist and poet Robert Filippou, exhibiting his puzzle poems in Filippou's Galerie Ligne. The two artists embark upon a twenty-four-hour vespers, touring Paris by foot, bus, and metro, exhibiting Patterson's works out of a bowler hat. It is Patterson's first solo exhibition in Paris.

Patterson spends the second half of 1962 performing at Fluxus events held throughout Europe, including the Kleines Sommerfeste at Galerie Parinn, Wuppertal, Germany: Neo-Dada in der Musik at the Kammerspiele in Düsseldorf, Germany: Fluss Sneak Preview at Galerie Girardon, Paris; and the Fluxus Festival performances at the Städtisches Museum, Wiesbaden, Germany, and Nikolaj Kirke, Copenhagen. In absence, his works are also performed at Galleri Monet, Amsterdam, and the Festival of Misfits, Gallery One, London.

At the close of the year, Patterson moves back to the United States. He resides in New York City.

1963-65 Patterson secures employment at the New York Public Library as a reference librarian in the library's music division.

During 1965, in absence, Patterson's works are performed in three Fluxus concert events at the Staatliche Kunstakademie, Düsseldorf: Alleluariam, Stockholm and Studenstedok, Oslo, as well as Festival Xunroxm at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Later that year, also in absence, his works are performed in group events at Biennale de Paris Arts du Langage and Fluxus poesie et cetera at the Musee d'Art Moderne, both in Paris.

Patterson participates in a series of lunch meetings with George Brecht, Robert Watts, and Geoffrey Enricks. Their meetings take place at the Hotel Cafe in New Brunswick, New Jersey, behind the New York Public Library. The artists plan the launch of a long festival of events and happenings. In conjunction with Yarn (May, speech by Yarn Lecture, Yarn Hat Sale, Water Day, and Yarn Day. The Yarn Festival is an early mail art piece.

For his contribution, Patterson performs in conjunction with Yarn Day and the New York, including Yarn Day (Rush Invitation). He is also featured in events withings artists, including Yarn Day Hat Sale: Yarn Day at Hardware Poet's Playhouse: Performances at Smolní Gallery, Yarn Day (final Examination).

Other solo performances in 1963: Audiovisual Group at Douglass College, New Jersey. In addition, the Fluxus Art performed Tour in the streets of absence.

In 1964 Patterson performs a series of Fluxus (the foil of George Maciunas for Fluxus Concert No. 1 features Lick Poesi feature and No. 9 features Variations for his work No. 1, he is joined by others with the Fluxus Symphony Carnegie Recital Hall.

In absence Patterson's works are performed at Fluxus festivals in The Hague, Netherland at the Hypokritere Theater and the various locations.

In January 1965 Patterson, Alison K. Emnett, Williams performs William's Go-Co in New York. Othergroup pérk include the Third Festival of the Avant...
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Patterson participates in a series of lunch meetings with George Brecht, Robert Watts, and Geoffrey Henricks. Their meetings take place at the Howard Johnson’s hotel café in New Brunswick, New Jersey, and on occasion behind the New York Public Library, where Patterson works. The artists plan the launch of Yam Festival, a year-long festival of events and happenings. Events presented in conjunction with Yam (May spelled backward) include Yam Lecture, Yam Hat Sale, Water Day, Clock Day, Box Day, and Yam Day. The Yam Festival Delivery Event was an early mail art piece.

For his contribution, Patterson performs several pieces in conjunction with Yam Day and the Yam Festival in New York, including Yam Day (Rush Hour) at Penn Station. He is also featured in events with other Happenings artists, including Yam Day Hat Sale at Smolin Gallery; Yam Day at Hardware Poet’s Playhouse; and two solo performances at Smolin Gallery, Yam Day (Tour) and Yam Day (Final Examination).

Other solo performances in 1965 include New York Audiovisual Group at Douglass College in New Brunswick, New Jersey. In addition, the Fluxus Festival of Total Art performed his Tour in the streets of Nice, France, in absentia.

In 1964, Patterson performs a series of solo concerts at Fluxshai (the loft of George Maciunas at 309 Canal Street), Fluxus Concert No. 1 features Lick Place, No. 3 and No. 7 feature Slap, and No. 9 features Variations for Double Bass. For his work No. 11, he is joined by other artists. He later performs with the Fluxus Symphony Orchestra at the Carnegie Recital Hall.

In absentia Patterson’s works are represented in two Fluxus festivals in The Hague, Netherlands, the first in 1965 at the Hypokinetron Theater and the second in 1965 at various locations.

In January 1965, Patterson, Alison Knowles, Ayo, and Emme Williams perform Williams’s Opera at Café au Go-Go in New York. Other group performances that year include the Third Festival of the Avant-garde at Judson
Hall and the Perpetual Flusfest at New Cinematheque, both in New York, and the First World Congress Happenings at Saint Mary of the Harbor, Provincetown, Massachusetts. Patterson's work is presented in absenta at Something Else concert at the Institute for Contemporary Art, London.

In September 1965 Patterson enrolls in Columbia University's graduate program in library science.

In November 1966 Patterson presents *A Lecture on Death* to Robert Watts's class of art students at Douglass College, Rutgers University. Twenty years later Patterson will use this text as the basis for a large triptych of the same title.

In 1965 Patterson also contributes two significant essays—*American Studies Seminar II* and *Notes on Pets*—to the book *The Four Suits*, edited by Dick Higgins for Something Else Press.

1966–69

In 1966 Patterson performs and/or has his compositions performed in the Other Benefit at the Village Gate, the Fourth Annual Avant-garde Festival in New York, the Festival de la Libre Expression at the Théâtre de la Chimère in Paris, Conert Fluxus in Prague, and in Fluxus Exhibition at the Avenue C Fluxus Room in New York. At the close of the year, Patterson's works are presented at the Cézelle Qui Sourt in Villefranche-sur-Mer and at Galerie Ranson in Paris.

In 1967 Patterson's works are performed in absenta for a variety of events in Europe in France, in Total Art at the Cézelle Qui Sourt in Villefranche-sur-Mer and Flux Concert in Nice; in Italy, in a Concert Fluxus at Galleria la Bertescana in Genoa, Villa Cucchielli in Milan, and Libreria Rinascita in Modena. His 12 Evenings of Manipulations is also presented at Judson Gallery in New York. Patterson himself performs *A Paper Event* at the Time-Life Building in New York.

Patterson receives a master's degree in library science from Columbia University in 1967. In the spring of 1969 an evening of Patterson compositions is performed in absenta at La Cappelle in Trieste, Italy.

1970–73

From 1970 to 1972 Patterson is general manager of the Symphony of the New World in New York. He is charged with organizing programs and contracting artists.

From 1970 to 1971 Patterson's works are performed in Germany in Happenings and Fluxus, held at the Kölnischer Kunstverein and the Württembergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart. Also, in 1971–72 Patterson's artwork is included in Fluxshow Exhibition, which travels to Falmouth, Exeter, Croydon, Oxford, Nicosia, Cardiff, Blackburn, and Hastings in the United Kingdom.

1972–74

Patterson is appointed assistant director of the New York Department of Cultural Affairs by Mayor John Lindsay.

1974–76

Patterson is associate professor and chair of the Department of Performing and Creative Arts at Staten Island Community College (now the College of Staten Island, City University of New York).

1976

Patterson performs in Evening on a Rotating Stage at Judson Theater and Concepto Omnibus Flux at 154–56 Spring Street in New York, as well as Fluxexhibit at Galerie A in Amsterdam.

Patterson begins working as a freelance consultant, specializing in organizational development and fund-raising. His clients include Harlem School of the Arts, Rod Rodgers Dance Company, Hudson Valley Philharmonic, Creative Music Foundation, Harlem Urban Development Corporation, Woodstock Guild of Craftsmen, and the Conference in Solidarity with the Liberation Struggles of the Peoples of Southern Africa. He continues his consulting work until 1983.

1977–79

Patterson's compositions are performed in the program Fluxus & Co. at Cannovello Studio d'Arte in Rome; Patterson performs in Flux Feast of Erotic Food and Cabaret at New York's Grommet Art Theater. Later in 1977 he performs at the Flux funeral for George Maciunas held in the Flux Performance Hall in New York City. Shortly after Maciunas's death, Patterson's works are included in the major book Fluxus, the Most Radical and Experimental Art Movement of the Sixties, written by Harry Ruhé and published by his Galerie A in Amsterdam.

1980–82

For the Fifteenth Annual Avant-garde Festival in New York, Patterson holds an event at the Passenger Ship Terminal. He fishes in the Hudson River for whatever might be attracted by his specially designed Fluxus fishing lures. His work is also shown in the exhibitions Fluxus: Aspekte eines Phänomens at Kunst und Museumsverein, Wuppertal, Germany, and Fluxus etc., organized by Jon Hendricks, curator of the Gilber and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection. Fluxus etc. opens at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, in 1980 and tours to the Baxter Art Museum, Pasadena, California; Neuberger Museum, Purchase, New York; the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston; and the Walter Phillips Gallery in Canada.

From 1982 to 1984 Patterson is director for the Negro Ensemble Company.

1983–88

Works by Patterson from *Method & Lessons* are performed in absenta at Berlin. In October 1983 Patterson performs at the Biennale Internationale de Sao Paio.

In 1984 Patterson is included in an exhibition put together by Franklin Furnace, New York. His work is shown in an exhibit curated by Brian O'Dea, *New Museum, New York*. In the fall of 1985 Patterson presents incorporating his work Quest for the Oriental Cinema in New York.

1986–88


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From 1982 to 1984 Patterson is director of development for the Negro Ensemble Company in New York.

1983–88
Works by Patterson from Methods and Processes and Leo are performed in absentia at the Amerikahaus, Berlin. In October 1983 Patterson performs at the seventeenth Bienal Internacional de Sao Paulo.

In 1984, Patterson is included in Fluxus publications put together by Franklin Furnace, New York. The following year his work is shown in an exhibition at Staatsgalerie Stuttgart in Germany and in Collaborations: Pioneer Performance at the Alternative Museum, New York.

From 1984 to 1988 Patterson is the national director of Pro Musica Foundation, Inc. In this capacity, he sponsors emerging classical artists in major recitals throughout the United States.

In the fall of 1988, Patterson presents a solo performance incorporating his work Questionnaire at the Third Avenue Cinema in New York.

1986–88
Between 1986 and 1988 Patterson does not perform, but his works are featured in many exhibitions at such venues as Muzej Savremene Umjetnosti, Belgrade, Yugoslavia; the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City; Emily Harvey Gallery, Pierrefeu, France, New York; and the Museum für Moderne Kunst, Berlin. In 1986 Patterson participates in A Tribute to John Cage at Carl Solway Gallery. In 1988 he helps to realize Fluxus: The Last Event at Robert Watts's farm in Martins Creek, Pennsylvania. Also in 1988 his work is included in Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, organized by
the Museum of Modern Art, New York, which tours for two years to such venues as Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and Baxter Gallery, Portland School of Art, Portland, Maine. In 1988 Patterson emerges from semiretirement as an artist with his solo exhibition Ordinary Life at Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.

1989
Beginning in 1989, several exhibitions are organized with the intent to contextualize and historicize Fluxus. Patterson's works and performances are included in the exhibitions Fluxus: Moment and Continuum at Stux Gallery, New York; The Theatre of the Object, 1958–1972 at the Alternative Museum, New York; and Happenings and Fluxus, which was held at four Paris venues simultaneously: the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Galerie 1900–2000, Galerie du Genie, and Galerie de Poche. He also performs at Milano poesia at Ansaldo, Milan.

Patterson presents a solo performance as part of the program Taking Fluxus Around at the Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany. He also has his second solo exhibition at Emily Harvey Gallery, New York, What Makes People Laugh?

At the close of the year, Patterson leaves New York and relocates to Maine. He retires from his "ordinary life" to become a full-time artist.

1990
Patterson exhibits and performs in Panoforisma at Mudima Gallery, Milan, and the Carlo Felice Theatre, Genoa, Italy, and he has a solo exhibition, Proverbs, Slogans and Quotations, at Galerie Schippenbauer, Cologne. Additionally, Patterson presents a solo performance as part of Edge as Art in the Nineties at the International Biennial of Innovative Arts, Newcastle, England, and his series of Fluxus heraldic banners is presented at the Venice Biennale.

The artist participates in the eating event Cena Rossa, held at La Mangiatrici, San Gimignano, Italy.

Patterson's work is presented in a number of group exhibitions celebrating Fluxus at such venues as the Hovikoden Art Center, Oslo; Galerie Kirsinger, Vienna; and Salvatore Ala Gallery, New York. He also participates in a number of exhibitions in Italy—at Galerie Fontanella Borghese, Rome; Salla delle Colonie ex Stallo, Reggio Emilia; Studio Neocao, Chieri—and in Australia, at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane; Experimental Art Centre, Adelaide; and Perth Institute of Contemporary Art.

1991
On January 15, Patterson places a large advertisement in the international Herald Tribune, titled World Event, to protest the looming Gulf War. In February he opens his solo exhibition How Man Makes Sense at Galerie J. J. Donguy in Paris.

In April, he performs for the exhibition Creative Misunderstanding at Galerie Schippenbauer, Cologne.

The year culminates with an important homecoming to Pittsburgh where his art is in residence at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts and Carnegie Mellon University. Working with a psychotherapist six days a week for six weeks, Patterson researches his formative years to produce a large silk-screen-on-plexiglas installation titled Blame It on Pittsburgh, or How I Became an Artist, which is exhibited in Fluxus Deluxe at Pittsburgh Center of the Arts. He also performs Pond, Paper Piece, and Symphony No. II in the program Icon Flux: Held at Rosebud Center, and lectures at Carnegie Mellon University.

Patterson performs in a suite of Flux concerts with S.E.M. Ensemble at 25 Columbia Place, Brooklyn, and at the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany.

Other group exhibitions this year include Hallways Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, New York; Galerie Vaclav Spala, Prague; Unimedia, Genoa, Italy; the Von der Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, Germany; Humor Kirche, Wiesbaden, Germany; 200 Gernsheim Street, Melbourne, Australia; the Royal Academy, London; and Emily Harvey Gallery, New York. The Plug In Gallery in Winnipeg, Canada, exhibits Patterson's work in Under the Influence of Fluxus, which tours to North Dakota Museum of Art in Grand Forks and Istituto Italiano in Toronto, and the artist's work is also exhibited in The Miracle of Fluxus: How It Saved the World at Oldenburg Kunstverein, Germany, and in Something Else Press at Cranberry Books, New York.

1992
Patterson exhibits his work in Getting Ready for 2000 A.D. at Milan at Fondazione Modulnova; at 25 Columbia Place, Brooklyn, he creates the installation Rabbit Concert and performs A Dance for Carmen and Paper Piece, and later in the year at Galerie Schippenbauer in Cologne, he presents his solo exhibition What is on My Mind?

Patterson's work is included in Fluxus exhibitions at various museums, including Wilhelm Hack Museum, Ludwigshafen, Germany; the Bielefelder Kunstverein, Bielefeld, Germany; Nykytaiteen Museo, Helsinki; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bolzano, Italy, where he installs the work Jump into Fluxus, a mini ski jump accompanied by instructions for use at the entrance to the museum. For his presentation in Fluxus Venus, 1989–90, Patterson presents the performance work Roast Duck. In Roast Duck, Patterson mounted a Citroen 2CV car (nicknamed Ente, "duck" in German) on a giant roasting spit over a glowing bed of charcoal. The exhibition opens at the Temporary Museum / Kauhof Parkhaus, Cologne, and tours to Akkorenforum Praetorius, Munich. Patterson also shows in a Fluxus exhibition at the Mepory Art, Chicago (with a coordin at Art Club Chicago), and at Smol Petersburg, Russia, with a coordinating workshop.

In 1992 Patterson's work is included Galerie M, Montreal; BVA Gallery, Washington, DC; Galerie M, Munich; Galerie Stenstrøms Ansatet, Gallery, Basel; and Still, Sweden. For his exhibition The Clinic of Dr. Ben in Villa Cler Germany.

With Joe Jones, Patterson performs films for Fluxus Films/100 Minutes at Theatre in Wiesbaden, the Frankfurt i Galerie Leiter Beutel, Regensburg, all in 1992.

1993
Patterson presents the solo performance at HH-Bonn in Bonn, Germany.

For the exhibition The Soul of Art at the Seoul Art Center in Korea, Patterson Three Openings: Carmines, Madame Butterfly, and Isole. The artist's work is also presented at exhibitions in the Spirit of Fluxus, orgar Art Center, Minneapolis, which travels Museum of American Art, New York; and for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; the San Francisco Modern Art; and Fundación Antoni Tapies, Spain. Fluxus: A Conceptual Country, Institute for Cinema and Culture in to Montgomery Museum of Fine / Alabama, and the Block Gallery. No st, Evanston, Illinois. Theatre of Refa the galleries of the University of Calif orn and Riverside. Black Collection is exhibit.
Other group exhibitions this year include Hallways: Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo, New York; Galerie Vaelstra Spala, Prague; Unimedia, Genoa, Italy; the Von der Heydt Museum, Wuppertal, Germany; Humor Kirche, Wiesbaden, Germany; 200 Gerrard Street, Melbourne, Australia; the Royal Academy, London; and Emily Harvey Gallery, New York. The Plug In Gallery in Winnipeg, Canada, exhibits Patterson’s work in Under the Influence of Fluxus, which tours to North Dakota Museum of Art in Grand Forks and Itozou Ikaito in Toronto, and the artist's work is also exhibited in The Miracle of Fluxus: How It Saved the World at Oldenburg Kunsthalle, Germany, and in Something Else Press at Cranbury Books, New York.

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1993

Patterson presents the solo performance Beethoven’s Fifth at HH-Bonn in Bonn, Germany.

For the exhibition The Seal of Fluxus, organized by the Seoul Art Center in Korea, Patterson debuts the work Three Operas: Carriers, Madame Butterfly, and Tristan and Isolde. The artist’s work is also featured in four traveling exhibitions: In the Spirit of Fluxus, organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, which traveled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain. Fluxus: A Conceptual Country, organized by the Institute for Cinema and Culture in Iowa City, tours to Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, Alabama, and the Block Gallery, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois. Theatre of Refusal is organized by the galleries of the University of California at Irvine, Davis, and Riverside; Block Collection is exhibited at the Reyjavik Art Museum.

Born in the State of FLUXus

CHRONOLOGY
Art Museum and at Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Nuremberg, Germany.

Other exhibitions this year include Il Campo delle Fragole, Bologna, and Resterstructura, Turin, both in Italy.

1994
Patterson performs The Diaries of Orpheus and Eurydice at the Landesmuseum, Mainz, Germany, and has a solo exhibition, Symphonic Fragments, Sonatas, and Other Bagatelles, at Galerie am Kleinen Markt, Mannheim, Germany.

At PrivArt in Wiesbaden, Germany, Patterson presents Resilience of Fluxus, an interactive installation in which the artist simulates a travel agency that specializes in tours to historic Fluxus sites. Later in 1995, Patterson does conduct a series of tours to historic Fluxus sites in Paris, Nice, Stuttgart, and areas in Northern Italy. Another solo exhibition, Solo Bild, is held at Galerie Cornelissen, Schlangenbad, Germany.

Additional performances this year include one in conjunction with the exhibition hole del disordine at various sites around Cortona, Italy; Fluxus Reunion Program at the Courthouse Theater, New York; and Wedding in Denmark, in the streets of Copenhagen.

Group exhibitions featuring Patterson’s work include Fluxus and Happenings, Museo Vostell, Malparrada, Spain; Fluxus at Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia; Villa Pacchian, Santa Croce sulPenna, Italy; Kunsthalle, Basel, Switzerland; and Salvadori Alia Gallery, New York.

1995
Galerie am Kleinen Markt features the Patterson performance Bolero, which also he performs during the next few years in Germany at Alte Kirche, Volfsheim, in Rosenheim; and at F.A.W. Ulm. Patterson’s composition for an a cappella chorus, Das Bahnhof Requiem, is performed at St. Ignaz Kirche in Mainz, Germany. His action piece Tour is performed by six hundred people during Schritt für Schritt: Kunstprozession at Evangelischen Kirchenzages, Hamburg, Germany. Other performances presented throughout the year include Flashbacks and I am Looking at You: Beethoven for an Al Hansen exhibition at Kunstverein, Rosenheim, Germany; Carmen für Armin, Staatsmuseum, Cologne; Classic and Contemporary Fluxus, Mimar Sinan University, Istanbul, and Bilbao University, Ankara, Turkey; and A Simple Opera at his exhibition of new work at Galerie Cattalini, Modena, Italy.

Patterson has a solo exhibition at Galerie Vostell, Berlin, and at Fachhochschule, Mainz, where he delivers the lecture “Fluxus and Experimental Music.” The lecture is also presented at the International Artists’ Museum, Lodz, Poland, where the artist conducts a workshop on Fluxus events.

The artist participates in several major group exhibitions, including Fluxo: 2010; mcrugur: L’espèce de fluxus at MAC Galeries Contemporaines de Musée de Marseille, France; Revolution: Art of the Sixties, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo and Fluxus in Germany, 1967–1994, organized by the Institut für Auslandbeziehungen, Stuttgart, which opens at Kunstsammlung, Gera, Germany. The exhibition toured for fourteen years, traveling around the world to such venues as Artukur Cultural Center, Istanbul; Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw; Múzej um, Budapest; Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Durn Urania Haus der Kunze, Brno; Czech Republic; Skopje Museum of Contemporary Art, Macedonia; Museum of Foreign Art, Sofia, Bulgaria; Ergonon at the Academy of Art, Athens, Greece; Arken Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, Denmark; and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv, Israel.

1996
Patterson’s solo engagements continue to increase. His individual performances include Three Operas at Galerie Kk im Fisch in Brunswick, Germany. Remembering Al Hansen, Interno Kunsthallo, Berlin; Al in Concert and Live at Anne Tisch, Hotschiff, Cologne. His solo exhibitions include Beauty Lurks in the Chaos of the Beholder at Galery Cattera Gualdo, Genoa; Nansen Flachsen, Galerie Cornelsen, Schlangenbad, Germany; Extreme Measures: The Great American Come Exhibit, Carl Solway Gallery, Cincinnati; and the installation and dedication of his Museum of the Subconscious in Okandukašte, Namibia.

The artist also participates in events at Zentral Haus der Künstler, Moscow; Galerie Schüppenhauer; Cologne; and Espace Electra, Paris.

1997
Benjamin Patterson begins the year with a solo exhibition, Blame It on Pittsburgh; or Why I Became an Artist at Emily Harvey Gallery, New York. Other solo exhibitions follow. R. Nicole ricette e procedure with the performance piece Grandi momenti nella storia della medicina, Galleria Fioretto, Padua, Italy; and Trains of Thought and Just in Time, an exhibition and performance held at Galerie Fruchtig, Frankfurt, Germany. As one of several artists from Germany selected for a residency in Thailand, he organizes an exhibition with local skateboard drivers, exhibiting their photographs of the city and their families in an installation work called My Child Mai at Thapae Gate.

Performances by the artist also increase, and he is invited to perform Fluxus Classics and The Three Operas at Holmenhaus, Zurich; The Three Operas at Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany; The Future Makes Progress at a performance festival in Odense, Denmark; and World Weather at the Princess Palace Gardens, Bangkok, Thailand, and the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia.

His work is included in several group exhibitions, including Francesco Cazz and the Avant-garde at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia; Portraits? Yes, Portraits at Galleria Cattera Gualdo, Genoa, Italy; and

Chronology

1998
In conjunction with Fluxus in Germany National Gallery for Foreign Art in St. Petersburg conducts a Fluxus workshop and Opera. He continues to perform and is at Divadlo Zebra in Bratislava, Slovak National Palace of Art and the Audionum in B.

He returns to Germany and performs with The Creation of the World in Stuttgarg. A new work, The Creation also performed at Galerie Schüppenhauer extension, Patterson tours a performance Divadlo Na Zabradli in Prague; At Czeck Republic; and to Sound Off in Zámky, Slovakia.

Other solo performances and exhibitions throughout the year include The Still Life, Art Base, Cologne; Lenox; Vostell, Malparrada, Spain; The Time Transformed, Offenbach, Germany; Topol; Nasziszke’s Sparkasse, Wiesbaden; Gentes des Denken, No Poetry, No Concept in Berlin.

Toward the end of the year he performs a performance with the S.E.M. Ensemble and the Orchestra at the Paula Cooper Gallery.

1999
Patterson performs Solo for Dancer, his solo exhibition No Poetry, No Concept, Rosenheim, Germany. Other performances include Ward
The Diaries of Orphee and Euridice, Mainz, Germany; and has a solo exhibition Fragments, Sonatinas, and Other in kleinmai Mark, Mannheim, Stuttgart. In 1995, Patterson presents an interactive installation in which the agent that specialises in tours to historic sites is in Paris, Nice, Stuttgart, and another solo exhibition at Galerie Cornelissen, Schlangenbad, Germany this year includes one in a cat: National Gallery for Foreign Art, Sofia, Bulgaria. Patterson conducts a Fluxus workshop and performs The Three Opere. He continues to perform and lecture in the region at Divadlo Na Zadru in Prague; to Skleníkos, Brno, Czech Republic; and to Sound Off Studio Ine in Nové Zámky, Slovakia. Other solo performances and exhibitions occurring throughout the year include The 9th of May and Smokers Rights, Art Base, Cologne; Lemon Revisted, Museo Vosta, Malaga, Spain; The Three Opere, OffKunst Raum, Offenbach, Germany; Topology of Thought at Naxiauskai Pavilions, Wiesbaden, Germany; and Togidisi des Denkoma: No Poetry, No Concept, Galerie Vosta, Berlin.

Toward the end of the year Patterson participates in a performance with the S.E.M. Ensemble in memory of Dick Higgins at the Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

1999

Patterson performs Solo for Donner in conjunction with his solo exhibition No Poetry, No Concept at the Kunstverein, Rosenheim, Germany. Other solo exhibitions and performances include Word Volume at Galerie
Patterson serves as artistic adviser for the year-long event Gutenberg 2000 in Mainz, Germany, which celebrates the inventor’s six hundredth birthday and the history of printing. In conjunction with the festival Patterson performs Happy Birthday Johannes (Gutenberg) at the Gutenberg Pavilion in Mainz and Rhein Post at Gutenberg 2000 in Basel, Switzerland.

Patterson records Ben Patterson: Drop Music/live Files on the Alga Margin label in Milan.

2001
Patterson travels to the Czech Republic, where he performs and exhibits Film Music No. 2 at Cafe Indigo, Prague, and participates in the exhibition and performances ŘÍSÁH at Slovácké Museum v Uherské Hradiště.

Closer to home, Patterson performs Symphony 86 at Oikumena, Offenbach, Germany, before traveling to Kraków, Poland, where he performs Fluxus Classics and Three Operas at Bunkier Sukiennice. In addition to these performances, his paintings and sculptures are presented in a solo exhibition at the Galerie Potsocka, also in Kraków. The artist continues a major weekend of solo work in Kraków with the performance Exploring Fluxus in Polish.

Patterson is invited to participate in the Third Odense Performance Festival in Odense, Denmark, where he performs The Creation of the World and Madame Butterfly. He later performs in a festival of Fluxus events at the Scène Nationale de Bonn, Annecy, France. Back in Germany, Patterson performs A Clean Slate, Poxel, and Paper Piece at Haus der Deutschen Ensemble Akademie, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

Patterson participates in several solo exhibitions, including Exercis di Sile at Museo d’Arte Moderna, Semigallia, Italy, and his exhibition Now is shown at Gallery 221, Los Angeles. While in Los Angeles, Patterson delivers a lecture and performs at the University of California, Los Angeles. Later in the year, he performs a workshop at Symposium Act in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Throughout the year Patterson’s work is shown in several group exhibitions, including 3 Poetry and Art at Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci, Italy; 537 Broadway Comes to Venice, Harvey Gallery in Venice, Italy; and Marker Event for the Peggy Guggenheim in Venice during the Venice Biennale.

The concert takes place in the Kunsthalle in Mannheim, Germany, and the exhibition Soap on a String is at Kunsthalle Mannheim. The concert features works by artists such as Alina Liptchik and Sándor Gábor in Budapest, Hungary.

Patterson records Ben Patterson: Early Works on the Alga Margin label in Milan.

2000
Patterson opens his solo exhibition The Evolution of Wisdom: Chapter 3 at Galleria Cattaneo Guaceto in Genoa, Italy. In conjunction with this exhibition, he dedicates his permanent installation The Evolution of Wisdom: Chapter 4 at Villa Solaria in Chiavari, Italy. Later in the year, Patterson’s solo exhibition Landscape, Still-Life, and Allegorical Paintings in the Grand Tradition of Everyday Racism opens at Galleria Pan & Dispari in Reggio Emilia, Italy. His work is featured in a multi-city installation, Shoes or No Shoes: Collection of Pierre B-V Sweaters, presented in four locations in the United Kingdom: Kent Institute of Art and Design, Kent, George Rogers Gallery, Maidstone, Herbert, Reid Gallery, Canterbury, and Zandra Rhodes Gallery, Rochester.

Patterson performs extensively in such events as Somme Fluss per Wolf Vostell at the Auditorium Istituto “A Per” in Reggio Emilia, Italy, and a guided tour through Germany titled Reisebüro Fluxus—Kurt Schwitters and J. S. Bach in Leipzig, Germany. He also restages Baleno at Galerie Herbert Mayer in Kitzbühel, Austria, and contributes the performance Symphony No. 6 to the festival Semirani Interno per la Città in the Piazza della Libertà, Bassoano del Grappa, Italy.

Patterson is invited to Poland, where he composes and performs the work Digging Bydgoszcz. He also orchestrates a “walk-about” operatic adaptation of Summer Nights Troika at Neoborg, a public park in Wiesbaden, Germany. He collaborates with his longtime friend and fellow Fluxus artist Emmett Williams in the presentation of Alphabet at the Gutenberg Pavilion in Mainz, Germany.

Patterson travels to Quebec City, Canada, to perform The Creation of the World at Le Lieu Centre en Art Actual. His visual work is also featured in a number of group exhibitions, including La chiave del duemila at Il Gabbiano, La Spezia, and Civatage Arte-Celebrazione a B & B Bologna at Complesso Monumentale del Prisma, Savona, both in Italy. His work is also featured in the exhibition Die Bücher der Künstler at Galerie der Stadt: Mainz-Braunkentum, Mainz, Germany.

In conjunction with the traveling exhibition Fluxus in Germany, 1962–1999, Patterson travels to New Plymouth to perform The Three Operas at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth.
Paterson serves as artistic adviser for the yearlong event Gutenberg 2000 in Mainz, Germany, which celebrates the inventor's six hundredth birthday and the history of printing. In conjunction with the festival, Paterson performs Happy Birthday Johannes (Gutenberg) at the Gutenberg Pavilion in Mainz and Rhein Post at Gutenberg 2000 in Basel, Switzerland.

Paterson records Ben Patterson: Deep Music/130 Files on the Alga Marighen label in Milan.

2001

Paterson travels to the Czech Republic, where he performs and exhibits Film Music No. 2 at Café Indigo, Prague, and participates in the exhibition and performances P.S.H.N. at Slovácké Muzeum in Uherské Hradiště.

Closerto home, Patterson performs Symphony 62 at Oplustraum, Offenbach, Germany, before traveling to Kraków, Poland, where he performs Fluxus Classics and Three Opens at Bunkier Sztuki. In addition to these performances, his paintings and sculptures are presented in a solo exhibition at the Galerie Potocka, also in Kraków. The artist continues a major weekend of solo work in Kraków with the performance Exploring Fluxus in Polish.

Patterson is invited to participate in the Third Odense Performance Festival in Odense, Denmark, where he performs The Creation of the World and Madame Butterfly.

He later performs in a festival of Fluxus events at the Sèvres Nationale de Bonlieu, Amiens, France. Back in Germany, Patterson performs A Clean Slate, Poxal, and Paper Price at Haus der Deutschen Ensemble Akademie, Frankfurt am Main, Germany.

Patterson participates in several solo exhibitions, including Exercer di Situ at Museo d'Arte Moderna, Senigallia, Italy, and his exhibition Now is shown at Gallery 271, Los Angeles. While in Los Angeles, Patterson delivers a lecture and participates in the University of California, Los Angeles. Later in the year, he performs and conducts a workshop at Symposium Art in Art, Kinosala SNG, Bratislava, Slovakia.

Throughout the year Patterson's work is featured in several group exhibitions, including Leonardo in Action and Poetry, at Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci in Vinci, Italy; 553 Broadway Comes to Venice, organized by Emily Harvey Gallery in Venice, Italy; Markers: An Outdoor Banner Event for the Peggy Guggenheim Collection Museum during the Venice Biennale; Minimalismus, a signo de los tiempos at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, and the exhibition Shoes or No Shoes at Provinciaal Centrum voor Kunst en Cultuur in Ghent, Belgium.

The artist contributes work to Zusammenfüsse and Quellen at Kunst, Keller Klingelspitz and participates in a concurrent workshop at Stadsgarten in Cologne. He also participates in Art and Music, shown simultaneously at Anson Meyer Galene in Geneva and Galerie Marlene Frei in Zurich.

2002

Patterson performs extensively in and around Europe. His work is also featured in group and solo exhibitions. A selection of performances include Music at the Edge at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; Fluxus Classics at Memenger de Verne, Paris; Polyphonics 20, first at the Swiss Center in Paris, then at Le Fresnoy in Tourcoing, France; Tell Me for Ariditi String Quartet by Ben Patterson at Museum Wiesbaden in Germany; Rheingold at the Landesmuseum in Mainz, Germany; and the event Fluxus and Friends, organized by the Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille, France.

Patterson conceives and performs Lazy Anarchist, first at Humor-Kirche, Wiesbaden, Germany, then in Nové Zámky, Slovakia, and in Brno, Czech Republic. He also participates in the project Walking from Here to There at Galerie Beherom, Prague.
He also stages the performance work Hello Benjamin Patterson. Welcomes You to His Life in Real Time, a series of twelve solo performances at Kasseler Kunstverein in Kassel, Germany.

Patterson's work is featured in several exhibitions during the year, including Cours de Saint-Ouen at Théâtre des Mains d'Oeuvres in Paris, The Fluxus Constellation at Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Villa Croce in Genoa, Italy, where he creates and installs the work Fluxus Constructions; and in four Fluxus and die Folgen, held in locations around Wiesbaden. Patterson's work is also featured in Fantasy Gardens at the Werkstattgalerie Dresden-Hellerau in Dresden, Germany.

Patterson participates in two events in Paris: the performance Nono Fluxus at the École Normale Supérieure and the symposium "Colloque Fluxus" at École Nationale Supérieure des Télécommunications. In the United Kingdom, he delivers his lecture "Fluxus and Performance" at John Moores University, Liverpool; the University of Central Lancashire, Preston; and Liverpool Community College. He also presents an evening of music with the Fracture Band, playing The River Wensley and other works at the Bluecoat Arts Centre in Liverpool.

Patterson simulates a television cooking show, titling the performance Ben's Bar: The Exhibit That Talks Hard and Cooks Good for the Künstlerhaus Schlosz Balmoral in Bad Ems, Germany. He also installs the work Ben's Bar (Social Headquarters 40 Jahre) in Spiegelgasse, Wiesbaden. The installation is later moved to the Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden, in 2008.

Patterson records a Ben Patterson Tolls Fluxus Stories (from 1962 to 2002) for the Hendestmark label in Cologne.

2003

Patterson's work is featured in two solo exhibitions: Happenings and Fluxus at Galerie Vestell, Madrid, and Street Notchings at Galleria Caterina Guzialo, Genoa, Italy.

Patterson performs The Creation of the World at the Goethe Institute in Madrid, and serves Fluxus cocktails at Hotel Riens in conjunction with the traveling exhibition Fluxus in Germany, 1962-1991 at its presentation in Kassel, Germany.

Patterson speaks at the symposium for the exhibition Fluxus et la France at Converas de la Tourrette, L'Arbresle, France.

Patterson contributes works and performance to the group exhibitions Walking from Here to There at Durn Umeni, Opava, Czech Republic; Concert Fluxus Border Line at Rencornies d'Ensembles de Violoncelles, Beauvais, France; Homage Emily Harvey, Emily Harvey Gallery, Venice, Italy; and Central Florida Festival at the Central Museum, Utretch, Netherlands. While in the Netherlands, Patterson performs Ane Maria, singing twelve versions of "Ave Maria"—arranged by such composers as Litz, Verdi, Mozart, and Mendelssohn—in front of twelve churches across the country.

Patterson releases the albums Soundworks, volumes 1 and 2, recorded on the Audio Research Editions label in London.

2004

Beginning in April, Patterson embarks upon his Grand 20th Birthday Tour. He travels by railroad and boat for a two-month tour of solo performances across Russia, Mongolia, China, and Japan. Venues include DUM Culture Center and Club Brezskaj, House of Science, Yekaterinburg, Russia; Non-Profit Project, Novasinsk, Russia; Igors Datscha, Bakal Lake, Russia; Rail Station, Ulan Bator, Mongolia; Club Central, Beijing, Bund, Shanghai, Xebec, Kobe, Japan; Club Carol Fan, Nagoya, Japan; and Gallery 360°, Tokyo. The tour ends with a birthday party on Mount Fuji in June.

Upon completion of this journey, Patterson exhibits a series of photographic works titled Grand 20th Birthday Tour Homecoming at Galerie Schippenhauer in Cologne and Galleria Caterina Guzialo in Genoa, Italy. In July, he returns to Galerie Schippenhauer to perform My Fuji along with Paper Piece. In September, Patterson performs another Fuji-inspired work, Finishing Fuji, at the International Artists' Museum in Lodz, Poland.

Patterson returns to Japan for a solo exhibition at Gallery 360°, Tokyo, titled Interrupted Fairy Tales and also contributes to the exhibition Fluxus: Art into Life at the Urawa Art Museum, Saitama City.

Patterson's work is also included in the group exhibition Sounds and Lights, at Centre Pompidou, Paris, Moments darts contemporaines, Université de Paris; and Voolare, at the Palazzina delle Arte, La Spezia, Italy.

2005

Patterson's work is featured in the solo exhibitions Rimedi, ricette e procedure Part II at Galleria Fiorente Arte, Padua, Italy, and He Is Nouveau Réalisme at MUMOK (Museum Moderner Kunst) in Vienna.

Patterson performs A Simple Opera at Künstlerhaus, Dortmund, Germany, and A 30 flute at Cuba Culture, Münster, Germany, and Espace Multimédia Gannet, Bourgogne, France.

In Hannover, Germany, the artist presents a radio broadcast of the work There Is a Problem on the Line. The work is also included in the exhibition Bee Jon's Music Machines at the Ateliergemeinschaft: Grammophon, Hannover.

Patterson participates in the group exhibition Words and Games for George, Galerie Schippenhauer, Cologne.

2006

Patterson has two solo exhibitions: A Famous Pittsburgh Product at Galerie Harry Ruhé, Amsterdam, and Dividing/Bridging, Solway Jones Gallery, Los Angeles.
Patterson performs The Creation of the World at the Goethe Institute in Madrid, and serves Fluxus cocktails at Hotel Riess in conjunction with the traveling exhibition Fluxus in Germany, 1982–1993 at its presentation in Kassel, Germany.

Patterson speaks at the symposium for the exhibition Fluxus et la France at Convention de la Tourrette, L'Arbresle, France.

Patterson contributes works and performance to the group exhibitions Walking from Here to There at Dum Umeni, Opava, Czech Republic; Concert Fluxus Border Line at Rencontres d'Ensembles de Violoncelles, Beauvais, France; Homage Emily Harvey, Emily Harvey Gallery, Venice, Italy; and Centralis Fluxus Festival at the Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Netherlands. While in the Netherlands, Patterson performs in Ave Maria, singing twelve versions of "Ave Maria"—arranged by such composers as Liszt, Verdi, Mozart, and Mendelssohn—in front of twelve churches across the country.

Patterson releases the albums Liverpool Soundworks, volumes 1 and 2, recorded on the Audio Research Editions label in London.

2004

Beginning in April, Patterson embarks upon his Grand 70th Birthday Tour. He travels by railroad and boat for a two-month tour of solo performances across Russia, Mongolia, China, and Japan. Venues include DOM Culture Center and Club Brezskaj, Moscow; House of Science, Yekaterinburg, Russia; Non-Profit Project, Novasibirk, Russia; Igor's Datscha, Baku, Lake Russia; Rail Station, Ulan Bator, Mongolia; Club Central, Beijing; Bund, Shanghai; Xebec, Kobe, Japan; Club Canol Fan, Nagoya, Japan; and Gallery 360°, Tokyo. The tour ends with a birthday party on Mount Fuji in June.

Upon completion of this journey, Patterson exhibits a series of photographic works titled Grand 70th Birthday Tour Homecoming at Galerie Schüppenhauser in Cologne and Galleria Caterina Gualdo in Genoa, Italy. In July, he returns to Galerie Schüppenhauser to perform My Fuji along with Paper Piece. In September Patterson performs another Fuji-inspired work, Finishing Fuji, at the International Artes' Museum in Lodz, Poland.

Patterson returns to Japan for a solo exhibition at Gallery 360°, Tokyo, titled Interrupted Fairy Tales and also contributes to the exhibition Fluxus: Art into Life at the Urawa Art Museum, Saitama City.

Patterson's work is also included in the group exhibition Sounds and Lights, at Centre Pompidou, Paris; Moments d'art contemporains, Université de Paris; and Violette, at the Palazzina delle Arti, La Spezia, Italy.

2005

Patterson's work is featured in the solo exhibitions Rimini, ricette e procedure Part II at Galleria Fiorentino Arte, Padua, Italy and He Is Nouveau Ritmo at MUMOK (Museum Moderner Kunst) in Vienna.

Patterson performs A Simple Opera at Künstlerhaus Darmstadt, Germany, and 300 Files at Cuba Culture, Münster, Germany, and Espace Multimédia Ganzere, Bourgoin, France.

In Hannover, Germany, the artist presents a radio broadcast of the work There Is a Problem on the Line. His work is also included in the exhibition Joe Jones Music Machines at the Ateljegemeinschaft. Grammophon, Hannover.

Patterson participates in the group exhibition Words and Games for George, Galerie Schüppenhauser, Cologne.

2006

Patterson has two solo exhibitions: A Famous Pittsburgh Product at Galerie Harry Rüh, Amsterdam, and Daviding/ Bridging, Sotheby Jones Gallery, Los Angeles.

While in California, Patterson performs Draw a Line and Follow it at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions and Fluxus Hot and West at Joshua Tree National Park.

Back in Europe, Patterson participates in numerous performance events, including 12 Piano Compositions for Nani Jun Park at Calgarri Film-Blume, Wiesbaden, Germany, Fluxus Ton-Aktion, Bel Etage, Berlin; My Tone; Your Tone, His Tone, Her Tone, KNMK, Hannover, Germany; and Over Sixty—Festival de Performance, organized by Le Théâtre de l'Usine, Geneva, and Schlauchhaus Theatre, Bern, Switzerland, where he performs A Simple Opera and The Creation of the World.

The artist is also featured in the group exhibition FAMA Fluxus Mythos Bruxys at Kunst + Projekte, Sindelfingen, Germany.

Patterson records A Fluxus Elegy on the Alga Margin label in Milan.

2007

Patterson is featured in the solo exhibitions Ben Patterson: Conversations along the Wall, Studio Arte Fiorenti, Bergamo, Italy; A Fluxus Elegy, Kleiner Raum Clasing and Galerie Etage, Münster, Germany, and Feinkultur at Emerson Gallery in Berlin, where he also writes and performs the work My Favorite Sin.

Patterson's work is also featured in several group exhibitions, including Black Light/White Noise: Sound and Light in Contemporary Art at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Fluxus, c'est gratuit, Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece, where he also performs Fluxus Musique at the Institut Français d'Athènes, Fluxus: Una larga historia con muchos, Centro Andalus de Arte Contemporaneo, Seville, Spain, where he performs Concerto multidisciplinary, 3a parte & 3a parte; and Fluxus East at Bunkier Sztuki, Kraków, Poland, where he also performs A Simple Opera and 300 Files.

Born in the State of FLUXus

CHRONOLOGY

250
Patterson presents a number of solo performances throughout the year, including Fluxus wird 40, Fluxus Freunde Social Headquarters, Wiesbaden, Germany; Why Do People Attend Bars? Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden; The Three Opera, Asoka Art, Film Festival, Asoka, Italy; and his own adaptation of King Lear at Maschinenhaus Essen, Essen, Germany.

Patterson installs a large-scale installation at Lichtsiche, 1. Projektionen Bienale, Bad Rothenfelde, Germany.

2008

Solo exhibitions include Urbanity: Solutions to Survive Urban Living at Unlimited/Modern Contemporary Art, Genoa, Italy; Requiem für einen Flügel: Finale Klaviermusik für 6 Hände und Werkzeuge at Deutzter Brücke, Cologne; Do We Still Have Time? at Galerie Wildschweil, Frankfurt, Germany.

Performances include My Favorite Sin, presented at Emerson Gallery, Berlin (where Patterson's work is featured in a solo exhibition), and later at Encuentro Internacional, Ocentrue, Hamborough, Germany; A Simple Opera at Freiestaats Burgtheater, Villa Tivist, Merano, Italy; Waldenpfad/US election night, Centre for New Music (SNKY), Literaturehaus, Copenhagen, Accademia MAD, Off-limit, Madrid; Fix Us (Dado & Fluxus), Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich; Editions, Soloway Jones Gallery, Los Angeles; 1 Turn–A Turn, Museum Zürich, Wehrmuhm, Cologne; Ceci n’est pas une Banque, DAC—De Simone Arte Contemporanea, Genoa, Italy.

Solo exhibitions include Amazing Discovery—Astrophysics Finds the Mother of God, Galerie Wildschweil, Frankfurt; A Carnival of Clowns, Animals, and Religions, Galleria Michela Rizzo, Treviso, Italy; Passing Through, Galerie Kunstpunkt, Berlin.

Patterson unveils several commissioned works, including Vincenzo Solani Fluxus at the Luigi Bonotto Collection in Barsano del Grappa, Italy; Shoes or Ho Shoes, a permanent installation in Krushkoit, Belgium; Divine Statue, at the Museo del Parco, Portofino, Italy; and Pasquò Luka, a mural commissioned by Studio Michele Furlanetto, Treviso, Italy.

He presents several performances over the year, including Nano Fluxus, or Fluxus through the wrong end of a telescope (a "standard, classic Fluxus repertoire, in miniature"), Iglesia de la Magdalena, Zamora, Spain; Shaggy Dog Stories, Galleria Michela Rizzo, Venice, Italy; A Bunch of Older Bad Boys, Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden, Germany; A Fluxus Anarchy, Artus, Budapest, Hungary; Spaghetti Pop Festival 2009, Studio d'Aire Fioretti, Bergamo, Italy; World Weather, Tiroler Landesmuseum, Innsbruck, Austria; The Golden Age of Fluxus: A Lecture / Demonstration for Susan and Inn Fluxus, Passage de Renz, Paris; The Golden Age of Fluxus, Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany.

In the summer Patterson collaborates with Bertrand Clave to restage the 1965 performance work with Robert Filliou, Galerie Légitime, in Paris. The restaging, simply titled Galerie Légitime: A Restatement, proceeds as in the 1965 performance, with Patterson and Clave traveling throughout the city by bus, train, and foot, exhibiting the work: Three Hundred Therapeutic Poems.

Two compositions are staged during the year in absentia: A Simple Opera, performed by Ensemble Part pour Part, Movement Festival, Neue Musik, Saarbrücken, and Variations for Double Bass, performed by Christopher Williams at the Institute for Intermediate Studies, Berlin.

2010

Patterson holds the opening dedication of his Museum of the Subconscious Annex in El Milagro, La Candelaria, Argentina.

In Paris, he is invited to perform at La Maison Rouge and presents A Simple Opera, 300 Flies, George Brecht's Drip Music, and the composition It Is Me.

At a YAM Days Memorial Concert at the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, Patterson performs A Simple Opera, 300 Flies, Paper Piece, and Brecht's Piano Works and Drip Music. He is invited to Seoul, where he performs Greetings to Nam June Paik at the Nam June Paik Art Center. He also composes a new work, A Message To... which is performed in Verona, Italy, at a memorial service celebrating the life of collector Francesco Corno. Other performances take place at the Rhein-Club at the Schlachthof in Wiesbaden.

Patterson is commissioned to compose Give Me a Break, which debuts at the temporary Music Festival in Yorkshire, 2. Patterson's work is featured in a solo exhibition at Cité des Cénotaphes, Galerie Wildweil. The exhibition 1 Turn–A Turn travels and is presented at the Clock Tower.

The major retrospective Benjamin Patterson: the State of Fluxus opens at the Co Museum Houston.
During the year, Paterson also performs with Keith Rowe in conjunction with the exhibition Hauptsache Musik: Collage, Objects, Manuscripts, Sounds, and Instruments, Galerie Schüppenhaus, Cologne. He also took part in the inaugural year performance series (performing Flux-Folk) presented for the opening of the Fluxus + Museum in Potsdam, Germany.

In Madrid, Paterson conducts the workshop Learning by Doing at the Facultad de Bellas Artes, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

2009

Paterson begins the year with a performance as part of the exhibition Creative Revolution: Fifty Years of Fluxus from Arshivio Bonetto at the Source, Barcelona, Spain. His work is featured in many other group exhibitions, including Fluxus: Eine Ausstellung als Videobibliothek at Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich; Editions, Solway Jones Gallery, Los Angeles; 1 Turn—a Turn, Museum Zündorf Wehrturn, Cologne; Ce n'est pas une Barsit, D.AC—De Simoni Arte Contemporanea, Genoa, Italy.

Solo exhibitions include Amazing Discovery—Astrophysics Finds the Mother of God, Galerie Wildwechsel, Frankfurt; A Carnival of Clowns, Animals, and Religion, Galleria Michela Rizzo, Trevixo, Italy; Passing Through, Galerie Kunstpunkt Berlin.

Paterson unveils several commissioned works, including Vechio Salami Fluxus at the Luigi Bonotto Collection in Bassano del Grappa, Italy, Shoes or No Shoes, a permanent installation in Kruishoutem, Belgium; Dolphine Statuir at the Museo del Parco, Portoﬁno, Italy; and Pascoli Luka, a mural commissioned by Scuola Michele Furlanetto, Trevixo, Italy.

He presents several performances over the year, including Nana Fluxus, or Fluxus through the wrong end of a telescope (a "standard, classic Fluxus repertoire, in miniature"), Iglesia de la Magdalena, Zamora, Spain; Staggy Dog Stories, Galeria Michela Rizzo, Venice, Italy; A Bunch of Old Bad Boys, Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden, Germany; A Fluxus Aranjana, Artus, Budapest, Hungary; Spaghetti Pop Festival 2009, Studio d’Arte Fioretti, Bergamo, Italy; World Weather, Tiroler Landesmuseum, Innsbruck, Austria; The Golden Age of Fluxus: A Lecture / Demonstration for Saoudain Ile Flussus, Passage de Retz, Paris; The Golden Age of Fluxus, Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany.

In the summer, Paterson collaborates with Bertrand Clavel to restage the 1962 performance work with Robert Filliou, Galerie Légitime, in Paris. The re-staging, simply titled Galerie Légitime: A Reenactment, proceeds as in the 1962 performance, with Paterson and Clavel traveling throughout the city by bus, train, and foot, exhibiting the work Three Hundred Therapeutic Poems.

Two compositions are staged during the year in absence: A Simple Opera, performed by Ensemble Art pour Art, Movement für Neue Musik, Saarbrücken, and Variations for Double Bass, performed by Christoph Williams at the Institute for Intermediate Studies/Gelehrenheims, Berlin.

2010

Paterson holds the opening dedication of his Museum of the Subconscious Annex in El Milagro, La Candelaria, Argentina. In Paris, he is invited to perform at La Maison Rouge and presents A Simple Opera, 370 Files, George Brecht’s Dip Music, and the composition it’s Me.

At a YAM Day Memorial Concert at the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome, Paterson performs A Simple Opera, 370 Files, Paper Piece, and Brecht’s Piano Works and Dip Music. He is invited to Seoul, where he performs Greetings to Nam June Paik at the Nam June Paik Art Center. He also composes a new work, A Message To … which is performed in Verona, Italy, at a memorial service celebrating the life of collector Francesco Conz. Other performances take place at the Rhein-Main Designers Club at the Schlachthof in Wiesbaden.

Paterson is commissioned to compose a new work, Give Me A Break, which debuts at the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival in Yorkshire, England.

Paterson’s work is featured in a solo exhibition, Disasters and Catastrophes, at Galerie Wildwechsel in Frankfurt. The exhibition is also featured in a group exhibition, Fluxus 1960–2010, a travel exhibition, where it is presented at the Clock Tower.

The major retrospective, Benjam Patternson: Born in the State of FLUXus opens at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.
Selected Bibliography

compiled by meredith Goldsmith

General Reading
Cone, Jerry. 1977. "Middle
Contributors

Valerie Cassel Oliver is senior curator at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, where she has organized numerous solo and group exhibitions, including the acclaimed Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art since 1970 (2005); Black Light/White Noise: Sound and Light in Contemporary Art (2007); and, with Dr. Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, Cinema Remixed and Reloaded: Black Women Artists and the Moving Image (2008–9). Most recently, she organized the group exhibition Hand-in-Hand: The Performativity Impulse in Art and Craft (2010); and in 2011 she presented the first survey exhibition devoted to the painter Donald Moffett.

Bertrand Clavel is a professor of contemporary art history at the University of Lyon, France. He is the president of 4T FluxUs, an association that celebrates the work and practice of Fluxus, and has organized many Fluxus-related events in France. He is the author of the books Fluxus en France (2005) and George Maciunas, une révolution furtive (2009) as well as numerous articles on Fluxus and related topics.

Charles Gaines is a conceptual artist, curator, and theorist. He is also a professor of art at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, and a talented and engaged theorist who has written extensively. He has published several articles, including "Art and Culture: Metonymy and the Postmodern Sublime" in the exhibition catalogue Snake River: Charles Gaines and Edgar Arceneaux (2006); "Art, Post History, and the Paradox of Black Pluralism" in the journal Merge (2003); and "Theater of Refusal: Black Art and Mainstream Criticism" in the catalogue for the exhibition of the same name at the University of California, Irvine (1993).

Jon Hendrick is an artist and curator. He is currently Fluxus consulting curator for the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and curator of Yoko Ono Exhibitions. He has organized many exhibitions involving the work of Fluxus artists, including Fluxus etc./Addendum II (Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, 1982); Yoko Ono (with Alexandra Munroe, Japan Society, New York, 2000); What's Fluxus? What's Not Why? (Instituto Takano, Brazil, 2002); and Fluxus Scores and Instructions: The Transformative Years (Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, Detroit, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Roskilde, Denmark, 2008).

George E. Lewis is a trombone player, composer, and scholar of jazz and experimental music. He is also a professor of music at Columbia University in New York. He specializes in computer exploration for music and has composed for multimedia installations, often integrating text and sound, as well as computerized notation frames. Lewis has published articles in such journals as Contemporary Music Review, Black Music Research Journal, and Leonardo Music Journal. He has recorded and performed with Anthony Braxton, John Zorn, Roscoe Mitchell, Douglas Ewart, Laurie Anderson, Muhai Richard Abrams, Count Basie, Gil Evans, Karl E. H. Seigfried, Fred Anderson, Evan Parker; and many other musicians.

Fred Moten works at the intersection of black studies, performance studies, poetry, and critical theory. He is author of Arkansas (Pressed Wafer Press, 2000); In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition (University of Minnesota Press, 2003). I ran from it but was still in it (CuZp Press, 2007); and Hungary's Tavern (Leon Works, 2008). Moten is an associate professor at Duke University, where he teaches English, African studies, and African American studies.

Benjamin Patterson is a classically trained contrabassist, visual artist, librarian, and arts administrator who lives in Wiesbaden, Germany.

Marcia Reed has been head of collection development at the Research Library of the Getty Research Institute since 1983. In this capacity, she has developed general library collections and archives, as well as the institute's first curator of rare books, has acquired many rare books and prints. She has organized numerous exhibitions at the Getty, including The Edible Monument, Naples and Vesuvius on the Grand Tour, China on Paper: European and Chinese Works from the Late Sixteenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries, and The Magnificent Pioneers. Current projects include a forthcoming exhibition and catalogue of the Jean Brown collection, now at the Getty.
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CD-ROM (Music) Liner Notes

EMANUELE CARCANO

Arts, Revisited, 1960/2010
For a group of performers, Yamaha DX-9 keyboard/ workstation, clickers, cymbals, and glockenspiel
Clickers, cymbals, cut-ups, Fatma Basinici, and Nicola Rave
Matteo Carcani, Stefano Ferrario, Francesco La Marmora, Valerio Lechi, Giorgio Moroder, and Nicola Rave
Narration: Yamaha DX-9, and performing: Ben Patterson
Recorded at via Telfico 75, Milan, Italy, May 5, 2010
Duration: 15:36
The story of this composition begins in Italy 1960. Discovering an "art-hall in a garden in Dossobuòno," I believed that I had found a new approach to acoustic music. I sampled a bunch of these areas, dumped them into the center of a sheet of paper, and then mixed these into a number over a period of four to six months, recording the new positions of the ants as each of these six moments. I then created these "sacred" icons (dots) to pages of black music staffs, expecting interesting music. A tryout on my double casse was quite disappointing. Only much later did I realize that what I had discovered was a "method" and of course, a "method" is not music. Thus, this free arrangement was abandoned and placed in the "future principles" project. Four years later, in 1964 in New York, I opened this file again and published Arts, a composition to be used in conjunction with any 1963 composition of George Maciunas. To date, I know of no public performance of this version.
Now, fifty years later, we have Arts, Revisited, based on recent scientific behavioral studies of the methods of communication among ants. In this version I have assumed that the original ants organized their escape from that sheet of paper primarily through communication in this form (which was an approximate cloud of long-term) and hierarchically with disturbances (stimulus damping or clicking sounds). One single photograph has served as a reference for determining time and pitch relationships. The resulting "composition" is not a true transcription of the original traffic of phenomena and disturbance signals among those ants but rather a presumptive acoustic model based on the following evidence.
Doràl Visce of a String Instrument, 1960
Voice: William Pearson
Double-bass: Ben Patterson
Recorded at Galerie Porrati, Weppertal, Germany, June 9, 2012
Duration: 7:10 minutes
This was my very ambitious and last attempt to combine graphic reception and chance operations for the manipulation of a performance score. The complete set of combinations was necessary to make a version of this work consisted of two pages of instructions, three pages of a general universe of symbols, and two transparencies (on which circular and rectangular contours were drawn) to abstract sets of symbols (graphic notations) from the general universe to the preparation of a performance score (see pages reproduced in these notes). This work was performed live at Galerie Hans Laush in Cologne, Germany, on May 14, 1961.
Variations for Double BASS, 1961
Double-bass: Ben Patterson
Recorded at Galerie Porrati, Weppertal, Germany, June 9, 2012
Duration: 11:22 minutes
Within days after the first performance of Doràl Visce, I immediately began working on a set of variations for double bass. And then, unexpectedly, out of some unknown place came the initial process—humor! I still remember the joy and excitement of these first days, as these fell into place. This piece was finished within a week, and the first performance took place shortly thereafter, on June 8, 1961, at Galerie Hans Laush in Cologne.

Piano, 1960
Performers: Gabriele Bonomo, Emanuele Carcani, Philip Cox, Fabio Conti, Werner Marchetti, Davide Masconi, Phoebie Neville, and Elisabetta Roncucci
Direction: Ben Patterson
Recorded at Massive Arts, Milan, Italy, April 15, 1999
Duration: 1:24 minutes
Critics or historians seeking for sociological references in my work should consider the following (A) A "country boy" in a rural town outside Philadelphia, listening to the crickets, "gadflies," and bugs at a nearby pond was what I considered "right stuff" and (B) I did not decide whether to study music or biology until the last month before entering the University of Michigan. Post was first performed at Richard Kyle, Copenhagen, on November 26, 1962.

A Simple Opera (Giove di Comanza) version, 1995
Performers: Gabriele Bonomo, Emanuele Carcani, Philip Cox, Fabio Conti, Werner Marchetti, Davide Masconi, Phoebie Neville, and Elisabetta Roncucci
Direction: Ben Patterson
Recorded at Massive Arts, Milan, Italy, April 15, 1999
Duration: 15:15 minutes
I have included this new work for reasons that can be deduced from the subtitle and the libretto.

Flaake his similarity and a 1900 Williams, I intended, of this copy 19
For a view of the Narcissus Product X for Alga MI 2002 Recorded version recorded in 6.3, 3.4
Duration: 7:12 minutes
The double (b. 1934) is based on the four the word I am the fourth
Chamber a double but the "is" the fourth
That's not the law, you know
A Fleurz Fellig, 2006
Fore word and electronics
By Heather Paterson
Recorded in Wiesbaden, Germany, 2006.
Duration: 24:23 minutes
To introduce the work, I must tell you a story told to me in 1975 by Robert Marx, then the first violinist for the Jubilee String Quartet. The story took place around 1967–68, when the USA and the USSR were conducting a "cultural" Cold War to win "hearts and minds" of third world countries. In this context the US Department of State sent performances of jamb ensembles on tour throughout the world. Thus, the Jubilee String Quartet was sent on a two-week tour to Africa.
After concerts in major cities of Ghana, Nigeria, Congo, etc., the quartet discovered that the final concert would be in a Benin tribal village... deep in the "bush". Arriving at the village, they found their suspicions confirmed: the setting was worthy of a 1930s ethnological documentary film. Of course, the first question the quartet asked themselves was: "What do we have to do to keep this audience?" Finally they decided to perform those works for which they enjoyed worldwide acclaim. So, sitting in the open in front of the chief's hut, under an African moonlit sky and overlooked by several hundred villagers, the Jubilee String Quartet performed Beethoven's three "Kommers Quartets", opus 59.
According to Robert Marx, this extraordinary circumstance inspired the quartet to present its "best ever" performance. Each member of the quartet felt that they had achieved truly transcendental interpretations of these works. Generally disturbing for the quartet members, however, was the complete lack of audience reaction—no applause, no tapping of feet, no presentation of flowers or anything to suggest that they appreciated this extraordinary concert! The villagers simply stood up with saddened faces, milled around silently, and finally sat down to begin the festive meal ending this event.
Seated next to the chef, and after some polite conversation and having consumed an appropriate amount of food and drink, Robert Marx dared to ask the chef/father about this public relations disaster. He explained that the quartet members thought that they had just presented their "best ever" performance and that they were surprised that the villagers apparently did not appreciate their effort. The chief father—guizing into the distance, not wishing to present had new eye to eye—replied: "My people feel great sympathy for you. They see that you are already so old, and they feel that all you have not yet found your tone."
Postscript: So how did I make this music based on this information? Actually it was quite simple... as simple as Jack's Jokes. The initials (family and given names) of artists listed in Nature, the Most Rapid and Experimental Art Movement of the 20th Century (Harry Hahn, 1974) were encoded in a basic international Morse code ("dots and dashes"). The "dots and dashes" were then "translated" on a Yamaha DX7 keyboard (voice pattern setting), connected to a Digitech JaminLoope (overdrive setting), connected to a Yamaha MX 802A mixer. Finally, the output was recorded with a Sony stereo cassette recorder TCS-420 on Sony magnetic tape "Type I", normal bias, 120 sp EG.

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So how did I make this music based on this information? Actually it was quite simple... as simple as Paul's theory. The intellectuals (family and given names) of artists based in Havana, The MacRadical and Experimental Art Movement of the Sixties (Harry Ruhe, 1979) were encoded in basic international Morse code ("dits and dahs"). The "dits and dahs" were then "performed" on a Yamaha DX-7 keyboard (voice pattern setting), connected to a Digitech JamMan Looper ( overdub setting), connected to a Samick MX 600A mixer. Finally, the output was recorded with a Sony stereo cassette recorder TC-S430 on Sony magnetic tape Type I normal bias, 120 sps EQ.

Robert Mateo, this circumstance turned to present performance. The quartet had achieved irony interpretations of those works. Greatly disconcerting for the quartet members, however, was the complete lack of audience reaction—no applause, no tapping of feet, no presentation of flowers or anything to suggest that they appreciated this extraordinary concert! The villagers simply stood up with sodden faces, milled around silently, and finally sat down to begin the festive meal ending this event.

Seated next to the chaitain, and after some polite conversation and having consumed an appropriate amount of food and drink, Robert Mateo asked the chaitain about this public relations disease. He explained that the quartet members thought that they had just presented their "best ever" performance and that they were surprised that the villagers apparently did not appreciate their effort. The chaitain—going into the distance, not wishing to present bad news to the ears—replied: "My people feel great sympathy for you. They see that you are already so old, and they feel sad that you have not yet found your tone."

Postscript:
To understand this reply by the chaitain, it is necessary to understand a few basic principles of the polyphonic music of the Bantu tribes of West and Central Africa:

First principle: the practice of interlocking individual pitches or tones performed by one person into spaces between other pitches and tones performed by another person, thus alternating pitches or tones of one part with those of another part to create a whole.

Second principle: the use of cyclical and open-ended forms involving one or more ostinato melodic or harmonic patterns as a foundation.

Third principle: community participation—non-specialists are encouraged to join in long performances with much repetition.

Fourth principle: rhythmic complexity with juxtaposition of single and triple patterns, multiple layers of different patterns, and interruption between a core foundation and improvised parts.

However, the most important principle of the music of these Bantu tribes is the family "ownership" of a specific "tone." In the musical culture of these tribes, each ancestral family "owns" and is responsible for one or more specific "tones" which can be sounded as specific points, sequenced with many other specific "tones" owned by other families, to create a seamless melody. Traditionally, these "family tones" and their specific place in a melodic line are passed down orally from father to son and mother to daughter. Thus, it is of prime importance to the survival of musical culture of the tribe that each member of the tribe masters his family's unique "tone"... and knows exactly when and where to perform it. In short, it is this "musical glue" that maintains the relationship, sustaining the social life of the tribe.

Now we understand the "sadness" of this village audience. The fog of these distinguished American musicians is raising up and down the fingerboards of their instruments, grasping at hundreds of "tones"... still trying to find "their tone."