

The

# FLUXUS

Reader

EDITED BY KEN FRIEDMAN

**AE** ACADEMY EDITIONS

# THE FLUXUS READER

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Edited by KEN FRIEDMAN

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Much Fluxus research has been made possible by four individuals who have been responsible for publishing the three largest series of publications of Fluxus material: objects, scores, and multiples, books and catalogues. George Maciunas' Fluxus editions launched Fluxus publishing as an organized phenomenon. Dick Higgins' Something Else Press books brought Fluxus to the larger world. Gilbert Silverman and Jon Hendricks are responsible for the catalogues that have become the largest series of Fluxus research documents.

Several collections are central to the research on Fluxus. Three major collections are now readily accessible. Hanns Sohm's Archiv Sohm is now located at Stadtsgalerie Stuttgart and Jean Brown's collection has become The Jean Brown Archive at the Getty Center for the History of the Arts and Humanities. The collections and archives of Fluxus West and my own papers have been distributed among several museums and universities. The largest body of material is located at Alternative Traditions in Contemporary Art at University of Iowa, the Tate Gallery Archives in London and the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College. Substantial holdings that once belonged to Fluxus West are now part of the Museum of Modern Art's Franklin Furnace Archive Collection, the Museum of Modern Art's Performance Art Archives, the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art, the Ken Friedman Collection at the University of California at San Diego and the Henie Onstad Art Center in Oslo. All of these holdings are available for research, publication and exhibition under the normal conditions of research archives and museum collections. A number of important private collections are available under restricted access or by special appointment. Most notable among these are the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Foundation in New York and Detroit, Archivio Conz in Verona, and MuDiMa in Milan.

The documentation section was edited by Owen Smith. I developed the first versions of the documentation at Fluxus West in 1966 and supported improved versions over the years since. Project scholars and editors included Nancy McElroy, Kimberley Ruhe, Matthew Hogan, Judith Hoffberg, Giorgio Zanchetti, and James Lewes. Hoseon Cheon, Dick

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The Norwegian School of Management has been generous with resources, time and freedom for research and publishing. The poetic and playful dimensions of Fluxus often involve intensely practical phenomena. We wanted to work with industry. Our experiments in media and industrial production, successes and failures both, led me to doctoral work in leadership and human behavior. Our ideas on design, manufacturing and marketing took me to Finland and then to Norway. This is the place to thank Lisa Gabriellson and Esa Kolehmainen who brought Fluxus into a working industrial organization at Arabia in Helsinki, and this is the place to thank John Bjørnbye, Ole Henrik Moe and Per Hovdenakk, who brought me to Norway, together with the American Scandinavian Foundation, which funded a year of research.

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Here, I thank also Ditte Mauritzon Friedman. Canon and deacon of Lund Cathedral, psychotherapist-in-training, and wife, Ditte has enriched my perspective on Fluxus and on life. And I thank Oliver Mauritzon, walking companion, philosopher and the first taster of whatever I happen to be cooking for Ditte.

Another wise man made this book possible in many ways. He was the secret patron of Fluxus West. The Fluxus West projects in San Diego, San Francisco and around the world did more than anyone thought possible on limited resources and money. As creative and resourceful as it was possible to be, however, money often ran out. That was when our patron stepped in. He made it possible for me to follow my passion for knowledge. He helped me to organize and preserve the collections that are now housed in museums and archives around the world. He was profoundly generous, the more profound considering that he was a patron of the arts on a college professor's salary. I dedicate this book to an outstanding human being: advisor and patron, friend and father, Abraham M Friedman.

## THE CONTRIBUTORS

The scholarly content of *The Fluxus Reader* has been the product of a laboratory of ideas, a virtual colloquium. It has been my pleasure here to work with a number of the leading scholars now writing on Fluxus. The authors of the history chapters wrote doctoral dissertations on various aspects of Fluxus. **Owen Smith** is associate professor of art history at the University of Maine. He wrote on George Maciunas at University of Washington. Simon Anderson is head of art history, theory and criticism at the School of the Art Institute Chicago. He wrote on Fluxshoe and British Fluxus at the Royal College of Art. **Hannah Higgins** is assistant professor of art history at University of Illinois at Chicago. She wrote on the interpretation and reception of early Fluxus at University of Chicago.

The authors of the theory chapters have specialized in different aspects of intermedia. **Ina Blom** is doctoral research fellow in art history at the University of Oslo. She has written extensively on Fluxus and intermedia. Craig Saper is assistant professor of criticism at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He has written on intermedia, multimedia, artist publishing and visual poetry. **David Doris** is a doctoral fellow in art history at Yale University. The chapter on Fluxus and Zen was adapted from his award-winning master's thesis at City University of New York.

The chapters on critical and historical perspectives have been written by three internationally renowned scholars in art history, art theory and literary theory. **Stephen Foster** is professor of art history at University of Iowa and director of the Fine Arts Dada Archive. **Estera Milman** is associate professor of art history at the University of Iowa and founding director of Alternative Traditions in Contemporary Art. **Nicholas Zurbrugg** is professor of English and head of the department of English, Media and Culture Studies at De Montfort University.

The section titled 'Three Fluxus Voices' is the result of two unique collaborations. The first is an extensive interview between Fluxus artist **Larry Miller** and Fluxus co-founder George Maciunas. Made just before Maciunas's death in 1978, it sheds important light on Maciunas' view of Fluxus. The second is the only known interview with Maciunas' wife, Billie. This interview was recorded by **Susan Jarosi**, doctoral candidate in art history at Duke University. The section ends with Larry Miller's own thoughts on what it is to think about Fluxus. Here, I beg the reader's indulgence. There could have been, perhaps there should have been any number of other views, other chapters. Time and space limit every book. I selected these three voices because they are unique and because they form a conceptually elegant triad. If there is a clear message in the sections on history, theory, critical and historical perspectives, it is that there no way to encapsulate Fluxus in any neat paradigm. On another occasion, and for other reasons, I will present other voices: here, time, a page limit and circumstance dictate a useful choice that makes available an interview with ideas that have never before been published.

The section titled 'Two Fluxus Theories' makes available the thoughts of two Fluxus artists who have attempted to theorize Fluxus and place it in a larger intellectual and cultural framework. The first is by **Dick Higgins**, Fluxus co-founder and legendary publisher of Something Else Press. The second is my own: as editor of this book, I feel obliged to put my thoughts on the table here, too.

## FLUXUS READER WEB SITE

The World Wide Web is making a vital difference to many fields of human endeavor. The arts and scholarship have been particularly well served by this medium.

One of the most important developments for research and writing on Fluxus is a consortium of five major universities and museums with a key focus on Fluxus and intermedia. These five are developing a Web-based series of virtual resources for scholarship and reflection on contemporary art. University of Iowa's Alternative Traditions in Contemporary Art, the University of California Museum of Art at Berkeley, Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth, Walker Art Center in Minneapolis and Franklin Furnace in New York maintain the site. ATCA at University of Iowa will be hosting a wide variety of scholarly and pictorial materials that dovetail with the material in this book, and a portion of the site will be dedicated to expanding and reflecting on the specific chapters presented here.

The URL is: <<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/spec-coll/resources/atca.html>>. Please visit the site.

## INFORMATION AND IDEAS

I welcome queries and idea on any of the subjects covered in this book. If you have questions or thoughts you would like to pursue, please contact me at:

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 <<http://hdl.handle.net/1959.3/42234>>

## KEN FRIEDMAN: INTRODUCTION: A TRANSFORMATIVE VISION OF FLUXUS

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A little more than thirty years ago, George Maciunas asked me to write a history of Fluxus. It was the autumn of 1966. I was sixteen then and living in New York after dropping out of college for a term. George had enrolled me in Fluxus that August. Perhaps he saw me as a scholar, perhaps simply as someone with enough energy to undertake and complete such a project.

Not long after, I grew tired of New York and I was ready to move back to California. That was when George appointed me director of Fluxus West. Originally intended to represent Fluxus activities in the western United States, Fluxus West became many things. It became a centre for spreading Fluxus ideas, a forum for Fluxus projects across North America – outside New York – as well as parts of Europe and the Pacific, a travelling exhibition centre, a studio in a Volkswagen bus, a publishing house and a research programme. These last two aspects of our work led George to ask me once again to take on a comprehensive, official history of Fluxus. I agreed to do it. I didn't know what I was getting into.

This history project was never completed. In part, I lacked the documentation, and despite gathering documents and material for years, I never did accumulate the material I should have done to carry out the job. Moreover, I found that it was the ideas in Fluxus that interested me most, far more than the specific deeds and doings of a specific group of artists. While I am a scholar in addition to being an artist, my interest in Fluxus does not focus on documentation or archival work.

The documents and works I did collect have not gone to waste. They found homes in museums, universities and archives, where they are available to scholars who do want to write the history of Fluxus, as well as to scholars, critics, curators and artists who want to examine Fluxus from other perspectives. The history that I never finished gave rise to several projects and publications that shed light on Fluxus in many ways. This book is one of them.

The key issue here is explaining a 'how' and 'why' of Fluxus. Emmett Williams once wrote a short poem on that how and why, writing 'Fluxus is what Fluxus does – but no one knows whodunit.' What is it that Fluxus does? Dick Higgins offered one answer when he wrote, 'Fluxus is not a moment in history, or an art movement. Fluxus is a way of doing things, a tradition, and a way of life and death.' For Dick, as for George, Fluxus is more important as an idea and a potential for social change than as a specific group of people or collection of objects.

As I see it, Fluxus has been a laboratory, a grand project summed up by George

Maciunas' notion of the 'learning machines'. The Fluxus research programme has been characterised by twelve ideas: globalism, the unity of art and life, intermedia, experimentalism, chance, playfulness, simplicity, implicativeness, exemplativism, specificity, presence in time and musicality. (These twelve ideas are elaborated in the chapter titled 'Fluxus and Company'.) These ideas are not a prescription for how to be a Fluxus artist. Rather they form a description of the qualities and issues that characterise the work of Fluxus. Each idea describes a 'way of doing things'. Taken together, these twelve ideas form a picture of what Fluxus is and does.

The implications of some ideas have been more interesting – and occasionally more startling – than they may at first have seemed. Fluxus has been a complex system of practices and relationships. The fact that the art world can sometimes be a forum for philosophical practice has made it possible for Fluxus to develop and demonstrate ideas that would later be seen in such frameworks as multimedia, telecommunications, hypertext, industrial design, urban planning, architecture, publishing, philosophy, and even management theory. That is what makes Fluxus so lively, so engaging and so difficult to describe.

We can grasp the phenomenon through the lens of several disciplines. One such discipline is history, and there is a history of Fluxus to be told. While the core issues in Fluxus are ideas, Fluxus ideas were first summarised and exemplified in the work of a specific group of people. This group pioneered these ideas at a time when their thoughts and practices were distinct and different from many of the thoughts and practices in the world around them, distinct from the art world and different from the world of other disciplines in which Fluxus would come to play a role. To understand the how and why of Fluxus, what it is and does, it is important to understand 'whodunit', to know what Fluxus was and did. History therefore offers a useful perspective.

Fluxus, however, is more than a matter of *art* history. Literature, music, dance, typography, social structure, architecture, mathematics, politics ... they all play a role. Fluxus is, indeed, the name of a way of doing things. It is an active philosophy of experience that only sometimes takes the form of art. It stretches across the arts and even across the areas between them. Fluxus is a way of viewing society and life, a way of creating social action and life activity. In this book, historians and critics offer critical and historical perspectives. Other writers frame the central issues in other ways.

The ideal book would be three times as long as this one is and impossible to publish. I therefore chose to focus on issues to open a dialogue with the Fluxus idea. Rather than teaching the reader everything there is to know about Fluxus, this book lays out a map, a cognitive structure filled with tools, markers and links to ideas and history both.

Fluxus has now become a symbol for much more than itself. That companies in the knowledge industry and creative enterprise use the name Fluxus suggests that something is happening, both in terms of real influence and in terms of fame, the occasional shadow of true influence. Advertising agencies, record stores, performance groups, publishers and even young artists now apply the word Fluxus to what they do. It is difficult to know whether we should be pleased, annoyed, or merely puzzled.

Tim Porges once wrote that the value of writing and publishing on Fluxus rests not on what Fluxus has been but on 'what it may still do'. If one thread binds the chapters in this book, it is the idea of a transformative description that opens a new discourse. A new and

appropriately subtle understanding of Fluxus leaves open the question of what it may still do. That's good enough for me.

Owen Smith and I were discussing this book one afternoon. We reached the conclusion that it is as much a beginning as a summation. If, as George Brecht said in the 1980s, 'Fluxus has Fluxed', one can equally well say what someone – Dick? Emmett? – said a few years later: 'Fluxus has not yet begun.' There is an on-line discussion group called Fluxlist where the question of what lies between those two points has been the subject of much recent dialogue. One of the interesting aspects of the conversation has been the philosophical subtlety underlying the several positions. Those who believe there is a Fluxus of ideas and attitudes more than of objects feel that there is, indeed, a future Fluxus. This Fluxus intersects with and moves beyond the Fluxus of artefacts and objects. This vision of Fluxus distinguishes between a specific Fluxus of specific artists acting in time and space and what René Block termed 'Fluxism', an idea exemplified in the work and action of the historic Fluxus artists.

Beginning or summation, this book offers a broad view of Fluxus. It is a corrective to the hard-edged and ill-informed debates on Fluxus that diminish what we set out to do by locating us in a mythic moment of time that never really existed. Fluxus was created to transcend the boundaries of the art world, to shape a discourse of our own. A debate that ends Fluxus with the death of George Maciunas is a debate that diminishes George's idea of Fluxus as an ongoing social practice. It also diminishes the rest of us, leaving many of the original Fluxus artists disenfranchised and alienated from the body of work to which they gave birth. In the moments that people attempt to victimise us with false boundaries, I am drawn to two moments in history.

The first moment occurred in sixth-century Chinese Zen. It reflects the debates around Fluxus in an oddly apt way, and not merely because Fluxus is often compared with Zen. It involved the alleged split between the Northern and Southern schools of Zen. The real facts of the split seem not to have involved the two masters who succeeded the Sixth Patriarch, one in the North and one in the South, Shen-hsiu and Hui-neng. The long and tangled stories of schism seem rooted, rather, in the actions of Hui-neng's disciple Shen-hui and those who followed him. It has little to do with the main protagonists who respected and admired each other to the point that the supposedly jealous patriarch Shen-hsiu in fact recommended Hui-neng to the imperial court where he, himself, was already held in high renown. This is like much of the argument around Fluxus. It seems that the protagonists of one view or another, the adherents of one kind of work or another, those who need to establish a monetary value for one body of objects or another, seem to feel the need to do so by discounting, discrediting or disenfranchising everyone else. That makes no sense in a laboratory, let alone a laboratory of ideas and social practice.

The other moment I consider took place a few years ago, when Marcel Duchamp declared that the true artist of the future would go underground. To the degree that Fluxus is a body of ideas and practices, we are visible and we remain so. To the degree that Fluxus is or may be an art form, it may well have gone underground already. If this is true, who can possibly say that Fluxus is or isn't dead? We don't know 'whodunit', we don't know who does it and we certainly don't know who may do it in the future.

PART I  
THREE HISTORIES

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## OWEN SMITH: DEVELOPING A FLUXABLE FORUM: EARLY PERFORMANCE AND PUBLISHING

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### THE DUSSELDORF FLUXUS FESTIVAL AND FLUXUS AS A PERFORMATIVE FORUM, 1962–1966

The first evening of Festum Fluxorum Fluxus at the Dusseldorf Art Academy began soon after 8 PM with an introduction by the art critic and gallery director Jean-Pierre Wilhelm. The stage was blocked from view by a large sheet of paper which was stretched across its front. Wilhelm, seated at a small table to the left of the stage, read from a prepared script:

Should a manifesto be launched today? It would be too beautiful, too easy. The heroic epoch of manifestos – Dada, Surrealists and others, even individuals, is well past . . . It is no longer a matter of yelling, it's a matter of mattering! But how to matter? Perhaps in any way, not at all! In a certain way then? Not that either! What then? What is to do, is to create acts, gestures absurd in appearance, but in reality full of meaning . . . The character of these acts, these gestures, are absolutely different than the intentions of Dada. The term 'neo-Dada' which is often used in rapport with this new artistic movement, appears to me to be very badly chosen, erroneous even. The movement knows a certain vogue in the U.S. It's there that the composer John Cage lives, the inventor of the 'prepared piano,' and who introduced the aleatoric, the chance to music. . . . He can be considered as a classical ancestor to this tendency, but only in a certain meaning. The young Americans George Brecht, Dick Higgins, La Monte Young, Alison Knowles, George Maciunas . . . Ben Patterson, Terry Reilly and Emmett Williams, of whose productions we will see this evening, pursue purposes already completely separate from Cage, though they have, however, a respectful affection.<sup>1</sup>

After this introduction the concert itself began with a performance of Ben Patterson's *Paper Piece*. Two performers entered the stage from the wings carrying a large 3'x15' 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 shreds and balls of paper were thrown over the screen and out into the audience. As the small holes grew larger, performers could be seen behind the screen. The initial two performers carried another large sheet out over the audience and from this a number of printed sheets of letter-sized paper were dumped onto the audience. On one side of these sheets was a kind of manifesto:

“PURGE the world of bourgeois sickness, 'intellectual', professional & commercialised 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 revolutionaries into united front & action."<sup>2</sup>

The performance of *Paper Piece* ended as the paper screen was gradually torn to shreds, leaving a paper-strewn stage.

As the evening progressed, Fluxus performers presented the audience with the latest experiments in music, in particular something called action music. Emmett Williams performed his *Alphabet Symphony* and *Counting Song*, Joseph Beuys gave his *Siberian Symphony* and Wolf Vostell, his *Decollage Kleenex*. There were works by George Brecht, Arthur Koepcke and Bob Watts, and a number of group performances of works including Dick Higgins' *Constellation No 4* and *Constellation No 7*, Daniel Spoerri's *Homage à l'Allemagne* and George Maciunas' *In Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti*.

The third and the fourth pieces of the concert, Higgins' *Constellation No 7* and *Constellation No 4*, were performed by Maciunas, Vostell, Schmit, Trowbridge, Klintberg, Koepcke, Spoerri and Paik, and had become a kind of set piece for these festival performances. Higgins described the performance of *Constellation No 4* as follows:

Each performer chooses a sound to be produced on any instrument available to him, including the voice. The sound is to have a clearly defined percussive attack and a delay which is no longer than a second. Words, crackling and rustling sounds, for example, are excluded, because they have multiple attacks and decays. The performers begin at any time when they agree they are ready. Each performer produces his sound as efficiently as possible, almost simultaneously with the other performers' sounds. As soon as the last decay has died away, the piece is over.<sup>3</sup>

Slightly later in the same concert Williams' *Counting Song* and Spoerri's *Homage à l'Allemagne* were simultaneously performed by the composers themselves. The masked Williams performed the first version of his *Counting Song*, in which the performer counts the audience aloud from the stage. At the same time Spoerri, seated at the same table that had been used by Wilhelm, performed his work, which was a verbal transmutation of Wilhelm's introductory speech. After these pieces Williams, Maciunas and Schmit performed the eighth work of the evening, Watts' *Two Inches*, the score for which reads 'stretch a 2 inch ribbon across the stage and cut it'. This piece was performed by Schmit and Williams starting at the left side of the stage, with Schmit holding one end of a two-inch-wide ribbon and Williams holding the rest of the rolled-up ribbon. Williams then walked to the right side of the stage, thereby stretching the ribbon across the mouth of the stage. After this action was complete, Maciunas walked centre stage and cut the ribbon in half. Watts' piece was followed by a performance of Maciunas' *In Memoriam Adriano Olivetti* – an aleatoric score based on the instruction 'Any used tape from an Olivetti adding machine ...'<sup>4</sup> In this, performers are each assigned a number as well as a specific action that they are to perform. Using the adding-machine tapes as a score they execute their assigned action each time their number occurs. The Dusseldorf presentation of the Olivetti piece, performed by Klintberg, Trowbridge, Schmit, Paik, Vostell, Williams, Koepcke and Spoerri, included the following actions: opening and closing an umbrella, blowing a whistle, sitting and standing, bowing, saluting and pointing. The evening concluded with a performance of Brecht's *Word Event*, in

which the performers turned off all the lights and left, leaving the audience alone in the darkened auditorium.

The Fluxus performance festival held at the Dusseldorf Art Academy on 2–3 February 1963 was a significant historical marker in the early development of the Fluxus group. The Dusseldorf performance had been preceded in the autumn and winter of 1962 by Fluxus festivals in Wiesbaden, Copenhagen and Paris, and was subsequently followed in the spring and summer of 1963 by festivals in Amsterdam, The Hague and Nice. The Dusseldorf festival was significant in that it showed a turning-away from the initial conception of Fluxus as a forum for the performance of ‘interesting things’ towards a more focused concern with event-based performances.<sup>5</sup> This change of emphasis was not a total rejection of the more diverse avenues previously explored under the rubric Fluxus, but rather a notable point in the development of a focused Fluxus attitude and related performance style. These changes are significant for they would continue directly to shape the philosophical nature and historical development of the Fluxus group over the next several decades.

The festival at Dusseldorf had been jointly organised by Joseph Beuys who was a faculty member of the Dusseldorf Art Academy, and one of the organisers of the Fluxus Group, George Maciunas. This association, as so often happened in the history of Fluxus, was not so much a collaboration of like-minded artistic innovators as a much more mundane affiliation of friends of friends who needed a performance space for their experimental work most importantly for a performance. While most Fluxus performances and events were the result of planning by Maciunas and others, they generally came about as a direct manifestation of an ever-shifting network of associations, contacts and collaborations, many of which were more the result of chance than of forethought.

Take, for example, the historically and conceptually significant class on composition taught by John Cage at the New School for Social Research. The students and occasional visitors included many artists who would become central to the development of both Fluxus and happenings – Al Hansen, Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low among others. This class was a key early gathering in America of like-minded individuals, and both the ideas shared and the contacts made there would continue to influence the development of new and experimental art forms for years to come. So, was this meeting planned? No, for although Cage had certainly planned the class, there was certainly no plan by the students themselves. Was it fate? Possibly. The history of this period would be different if this class had not happened. Was it luck? Most probably – but it was a historical situation that was used to the full through the continued work and association of the individual involved. In Europe there were similar environments that brought together like-minded individuals who would later become significant in the development of Fluxus. Key among these were the exhibitions and performances presented at several locations in Cologne in 1960 and 1961. Mary Bauermeister’s studio was the site of performances of works by John Cage, Morton Feldman, Sylvano Bussotti and future Fluxus artists George Brecht, La Monte Young, Nam June Paik and Ben Patterson. Haro Lauhaus exhibited works by Daniel Spoerri and Wolf Vostell and presented performance works by Patterson and La Monte Young. Vostell, Patterson and Paik, all of whom lived in Cologne, were in constant contact and collaborated on performances of their work.

If one were to trace a history of this need-based ‘movement’ – which we now call Fluxus –

it very quickly becomes evident that it follows a pattern similar to that in the nursery rhyme, 'I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly':

I know an old lady who swallowed a goat  
 Just opened her throat and in walked the goat  
 She swallowed the goat to catch the dog  
 She swallowed the dog to catch the cat  
 She swallowed the cat to catch the bird  
 She swallowed the bird to catch the spider that  
 Wiggled and wiggled and tickled inside her  
 She swallowed the spider to catch the fly  
 But I don't know why she swallowed the fly.

The playful nature of such a comparison is appropriate to Fluxus and is perhaps an appropriate companion piece to Dick Higgins' 'A Child's History of Fluxus'.<sup>6</sup> What is evident both in the nursery rhyme and in the development of Fluxus is the pattern of need and related response – one that follows a kind of small-scale opportunism based on immediate need and which is not the result of extensive or well-thought-out planning. In both the rhyme and in the history of Fluxus, each step, development or association has its own specific logic but, taken as a whole, is often neither logical nor planned. For example, the Fluxus manifesto distributed during Patterson's *Paper Piece* in Dusseldorf was not the product of planning by the Fluxus group – indeed, it has never been accepted by the group as a whole. It was just one of many short-term responses to an immediate need. It was written, predominantly by Maciunas, not as a grand philosophical statement, but as a response to Beuys' request that some kind of manifesto be presented at the performance. This reality – that Fluxus arose out of circumstances rather than as the product of a predetermined strategy – is part of the reason why many have rejected and continue to reject the idea that Fluxus was a movement at all.

Time and again when people associated with Fluxus have been asked what it was they have answered that it was not a movement but rather a group of friends or people who were interested in the same kinds of thing. George Brecht stated: 'Each of us had his own ideas about what Fluxus was and so much the better. That way it will take longer to bury us. For me, Fluxus was a group of people who got along with each other and who were interested in each other's work and personality'.<sup>7</sup> What is at stake in these and other comments like them, is a twofold concern: first, that historical and critical investigations of Fluxus do not turn a historical event such as the coming together of Fluxus and Joseph Beuys in Dusseldorf into anything more than the fortunate, seemingly predetermined, but nonetheless chance-determined event that it was and second, that the fluid nature of Fluxus, based primarily on a constant and changing network of friends and associations, not be lost in the rush to define Fluxus as either fixed, constant or planned. This is not to say that there was no planning for the various Fluxus performances and festivals – many of them were not only planned but over-planned. As with life, however, these plans became not what actually happened, but mostly a backdrop of desired actions against which the historical realities can be viewed.

The Festum Fluxorum performance in Dusseldorf was one of seven Fluxus festivals held in Europe in 1962 and 1963: Weisbaden (September 1962), Copenhagen (November 1962), Paris (December 1962), Dusseldorf (February 1963), Amsterdam (June 1963), The Hague

(June 1963) and Nice (Summer 1963). The idea of a grand European tour of Fluxus performances, or festivals as they were called, had begun to be developed by Maciunas and others as early as the end of 1961. The primary reason for this tour, however, was not as a performance venue but was intended as a means to publicise the kinds of work that were to be published by Fluxus. When these initial plans were made, Fluxus was not conceived of as a performance approach or even as a group, but rather it was the name for a projected magazine and publishing venture of new and experimental work. Working with a group of artists whom he had met in Europe, such as Paik, Vostell and Williams, and through correspondence with artists in New York, most notably Dick Higgins, Maciunas developed a programme for a series of wide-ranging performances of 'Very New Music'.

Initially Fluxus was little more than a name and a public face for something that already existed. This situation arose because the artists and their work that would become central to defining the Fluxus group existed prior to the Fluxus name. Many of the artists in this early period saw Fluxus as just one of several channels through which their work could be presented. This circumstance of Fluxus ideas and work existing prior to Fluxus' appearance has had a continuing effect on the history of Fluxus. During Fluxus' main periods of development, there was a wide variety of Fluxus-related performances and activities. Even though Maciunas continually tried to create the impression of a single Fluxus – a Fluxus collective, even a Fluxus movement – there were many more kinds of Fluxus performances and events than those traditionally labelled as Fluxus festivals. In addition to the European Fluxus Festivals and the later performances in America, there were a variety of other performances organised and attended by core Fluxus artists, both in Europe and in America, that were certainly Fluxus in spirit if not in name: in Europe, 'NeoDada in der Musik' (Dusseldorf, 1962), 'A Festival of Misfits' (London, 1962), 'De Kleine Komodie' (Amsterdam, 1963), 'Maj Udstillingen' (Copenhagen, 1964) and in America, the 'Chambers Street' series (New York, 1961), the 'YAM Festival' (New York and New Jersey, 1962), and the 'Monday Night Letter' series at Cafe au Go Go (New York, 1964-65).

Over the period of months of 1962 in which the plans for Fluxus festival were developed, and even during the first festivals in Wiesbaden and Copenhagen, the concept and nature of Fluxus performance remained rather fluid. Rather than having a specific focus, the name Fluxus was initially a generic rubric used to present a diverse variety of work. In addition to the artists more traditionally associated with Fluxus, these plans included work from the sound and electronic explorations of composers such as Pierre Mecure, Karl Heinz Stockhausen and Edgar Varèse to piano works by Toshi Ichiyanagi, Morton Feldman, Sylvano Bussotti, Christian Wolf, and others. Some of the earliest plans listed over twenty concerts of piano compositions, compositions for instruments, compositions of concrete music, neo-Dada and happenings, and electronic music. By the time of the Wiesbaden festival this number had been reduced to fourteen concerts, by Copenhagen, to four, and by the time of the Dusseldorf festival in 1963, to two. Although these changes are certainly in part related to the practicalities of performing, such as the availability of a performance space and performers, much of this change in concert number and type reflects a developing Fluxus sensibility and core of works and performers.

The development of a specific Fluxus performative form began most directly as an outgrowth of the Fluxus Festival in Wiesbaden. Conceptualised and organised as the first of

a number of multi-concert venues for New Music, it instead became a stimulus for the shaping of a Fluxus group and sensibility. Although this was generally one of the most successful of the European festivals – in that it drew good-sized audiences, was covered by the press, was partially broadcast on television and caused quite a stir – it was not without its problems. The most significant of these were the personal and aesthetic tensions that arose between some of the artists and performers. The diversity of works that had been included under the Fluxus umbrella was too great. A number of the composers and performers of new and electronic music, notably Karl Eric Welin and Michael von Biel, were at odds with the destructiveness and seeming non-musicality of some of the action music and event-type works. Although they performed many of the piano compositions in the initial concert weekend, they left after this and did not participate in any of the other concerts. In his book *Postface/Jefferson's Birthday* Dick Higgins described this occurrence:

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

Although this departure only directly affected the second weekend of concerts – this was the only other concert in which these individuals were due to perform – it had a much more general and significant impact. It was the first indication that Fluxus was becoming something other – something more specific – than it had been initially conceived to be: not just a general rubric for the presentation of a variety of work, but a form of experimentation most directly concerned with a post-Cagean interest in concretism and action music.

The necessity of reorganising the second weekend of concerts at Wiesbaden in order to replace the planned presentations of piano music created a situation in which Fluxus could develop. A smaller and more like-minded group of artists worked together to create a new programme of pieces, thereby reinforcing their place as an early core of Fluxus and giving rise to an emerging group aesthetic. Working in collaboration, Ben Patterson, Nam June Paik, Emmett Williams, Alison Knowles, Wolf Vostell, Dick Higgins, Bengt af Klintberg and George Maciunas developed a new series of programmes for both the second and the third weekend presentations, which would in turn become a nucleus of works performed at the other European Fluxus festivals. In fact, many of the pieces performed over these two weekends would become part of a Fluxus repertoire of works around which many Fluxus performances both in Europe and America have since been organised. These included Williams' *Four Directional Song of Doubt*, Maciunas' *In Memoriam Adriano Olivetti*, Higgins' *Constellation No 2* and *Constellation No 4*, Patterson's *Paper Piece*, George Brecht's *Drip Music*, Jackson Mac Low's *Thanks II* and Robert Watts' *Two Inches*. These works, and these performances in general, moved away from the previously announced, more traditionally based distinctions of media and performance type to a style of work that has come to be inseparably linked to the name Fluxus: action music and event pieces. To this group of core works from the Wiesbaden Fluxus Festival other works were added at the festivals in Copenhagen and Paris; these included Arthur Koepcke's *Music While You Work*, Williams' *Counting Song*, La Monte Young's *556 for Henry Flynt*, Knowles' *Nivea Cream Piece* and Brecht's *Word Event* and his instrumental solo pieces.

All of the European Fluxus festivals, and in fact almost all Fluxus performances, were shaped around two factors: first, the development of a variable core of Fluxus works which were presented at most of the performances; and second, the particular instances of a given performance that affected which additional works were to be included. A number of performers, such as Beuys, Stephan Olzon and Frank Trowbridge, participated in a single or only a few performances and when they did their works were included in the performance. The inclusion of some works, such as Philip Corner's *Piano Activities*, were also limited by practical necessities, such as the availability of necessary equipment or performers. In other instances, certain works – such as some of the work by Paik, Williams and Vostell – were so tied to the individual composer or performer that they could only be performed when these artists participated in the performance. Thus, Fluxus became a shifting group based around a core of works that were constantly being added to and changed as artists and performers did or did not participate with the group.

It was at the Dusseldorf festival, therefore, that the developing nucleus of Fluxus works were almost all brought together for the first time. The later European festivals although indebted to this development, were somewhat different in nature and form. The festivals in Amsterdam and The Hague included many of the same works performed at Dusseldorf but were in each case confined to a single performance. Notable, too, was the absence of Higgins, Knowles, Paik and Koepcke. The Nice festival, on the other hand, while including many of the Fluxus standards such as Patterson's *Paper Piece* and Williams' *Counting Song*, was largely shaped by the force of Ben Vautier's personality and was most notable for its many street performances. The adaptation of standard Fluxus pieces for the street added an important element to the Fluxus performance lexicon that would be expanded and used regularly in future Fluxus venues in Europe, America and Japan.

Throughout the mid- and late 1960s numerous Fluxus events, performances and festivals were presented throughout Western and sometimes even in Eastern Europe. Although Higgins, Knowles and Maciunas had all returned to the US by the end of 1963, the European Fluxus artists continued an active participation in Fluxus and Fluxus-type activities. Five primary centres emerged in the mid-1960s for continued Fluxus activities in Western Europe: one in northern Europe, two in central Europe and two in France. The locations of these centres were directly connected to the continued activities of specific artists who took over Maciunas' organisational role.

In northern Europe, specifically Denmark, Fluxus continued to have an active presence as a result of the work of Arthur Koepcke and Eric Andersen, who collaborated closely throughout the mid-1960s. They sponsored numerous performances, including the series of seven concerts entitled 'Maj Udstillingen' featuring work by Anderson, Brecht, Higgins, Koepcke, Williams, Vostell and others and exhibitions such as those at the Faxe Brewery in 1964. Continued Fluxus activity in Germany was largely the responsibility of Tomas Schmit, Wolf Vostell and Joseph Beuys, and included such notable performances as the 1965 '24 Stunden' ('24 Hours') at the Galerie Parnass in Wuppertal, which presented works by Paik, Beuys, Schmit and Vostell, among others. These artists also organised many Fluxus-related performances and exhibitions, such as Paik's *Robot Opera*, and Vostell's *Phänomene*, in Berlin in the mid-1960s, particularly in collaboration with the Galerie Block, run by René Block.

In the Netherlands, Fluxus continued its activities under the banner of Gallery Amstell 47

and Willem de Ridder. In December 1963 de Ridder organised a Fluxus festival at De Kleine Komedie theatre in Amsterdam, at which Schmit, Williams, de Ridder and Wim Schippers performed numerous Fluxus works; and in 1964 two other festivals of Fluxus works were organised in Rotterdam and The Hague, at which Andersen, Koepcke and Vautier also performed. Throughout this same period, de Ridder also held exhibitions of Fluxus work in his gallery, and, encouraged by Maciunas, he created the European Mail-Order Warehouse, through which Fluxus and related works could be purchased by mail.

The two centres of Fluxus activities that were to emerge in France in the mid-1960s were, as in the other centres of European Fluxus activity, established by the on-going activities of three Fluxus artists: Ben Vautier in Nice and Robert Filliou and George Brecht in Villefranche sur Mer. Throughout the 1960s Vautier was a tireless organiser, presenter and performer of Fluxus, Total Art and other forms of experimental work – through his record shop cum gallery in Nice, Laboratoire 32, renamed Galerie Ben Doue de Tout, and through the Theatre Total performance group that he founded in 1963 after the Fluxus festival in Nice. Vautier also travelled to numerous other cities in Europe to collaborate and perform with other Fluxus artists (leading Maciunas to call him ‘100% Fluxus man’); Robert and Marianne Filliou, along with George Brecht and Donna Jo Jones (who had moved from the US to Europe), founded and ran a centre for permanent creation at their shop La Cedille qui Sourit in the small French town of Villefranche sur Mer. There they exhibited and sold the work of Fluxus and other experimental artists, and envisioned their shop as part of an international centre for research, creation and the exchange of ideas which Filliou labelled ‘The Eternal Network’.

Although numerous Fluxus and Fluxus-type festivals and activities, including ‘Quelque-chose’ (Nice, 1964), ‘Flux Festival’ (Rotterdam, 1964) and ‘Koncert Fluxu’ (Prague, 1966), continued to be presented in Europe throughout the mid-1960s, the focus of Fluxus activity shifted back to New York in 1963. Several major concerts and series of concerts, such as ‘12 Fluxus Concerts’ at the Fluxhall, the ‘Perpetual Fluxus Festival’ at the Washington Square Gallery, and the two ‘Fluxorchestra Concerts’ at the Carnegie Recital Hall, were held in New York in 1964 and 1965. This shift was in part initiated by a number of the artists who had participated in European Fluxus returning to the US. Patterson had returned to the US in early 1963, and by the end of 1963 Higgins, Knowles and Maciunas had all returned to New York as well. Plans had been drawn up in the spring of 1963 by Maciunas, under the influence of Henry Flynt and working with Paik and Tomas Schmit, for a series of propaganda actions and concerts to introduce Fluxus to American audiences. These plans, distributed in the Fluxus *News-Policy-Letter No. 6*, called for a series of actions, demonstrations and even acts of sabotage against museums, galleries and theatres – which Flynt called ‘serious culture’ – as well as a series of concerts and other presentations of Fluxus work, such as exhibits and street performances.

These plans, and the ideological discussions, even arguments, that they caused, were to have a fundamental effect on the development of Fluxus over the next several years. A very strong and negative response to these proposals by Brecht (‘I am interested in neutral actions ...’), Mac Low (‘I consider them [the sabotage plans] unprincipled, unethical and immoral’), and others, forced Maciunas to qualify these plans as a ‘synthetic proposal ... to start a discussion’ – not as a course of action. Eventually these plans were abandoned because many

of the American artists associated with Fluxus were either uninterested in the social and political implications of their work, or most specifically did not like the kinds of approach that Maciunas had suggested. What this conflict demarks is the beginning of one of the periods of Fluxus' growing pains – a period in which personal and ideological differences began to come to the fore.

Having failed to create a united 'Collective Front', Maciunas decided in the mid-1960s to decentralise Fluxus by creating a number of global Fluxus centres. Based on Ken Friedman's idea of forming a Fluxus centre in California – 'Fluxus West' – Maciunas decided to create four centres related to the cardinal directions: Fluxus North, directed by Per Kirkeby; Fluxus South, led by Ben Vautier; Fluxus East, headed by Milan Knizak; and Fluxus West, with Friedman as the director. In reaction to the increasing tensions between some Fluxus artists and the group's increasing fragmentation in the mid-1960s, this move was in part another attempt by Maciunas to create an organisational structure for Fluxus. He planned to create a Fluxus Board of Directors from the directors of the four centres, which he would head from the Fluxus Headquarters in New York. Although this new quasi-bureaucratic structure never became fully functional, it did create a framework for Fluxus to continue to grow and develop under the leadership of artists other than Maciunas.

One of the most active of the Fluxus centres, through the mid- and late-1960s, was Fluxus West. Prior to the formation of Fluxus West in 1966, California had been the site of several Fluxus performances and exhibitions: in 1963 Brecht, Watts and Knowles created the collaborative 'Scissors Brothers Warehouse' event and exhibition, and in 1965 numerous Fluxus pieces were presented by the New Music Workshop in 'The International Steamed Spring Vegetable Pie Fluxus Festival'. In 1966, and particularly in 1967, Fluxus and related activities were quite numerous in California. In this period, Jeff Berner also organised several Fluxus-related activities: a Fluxfest at the Longshoreman Hall in San Francisco and the 'Aktual Art International' exhibition at the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Stanford Art Gallery, which brought together a large variety of Fluxus and Fluxus-related materials. Ken Friedman set up Fluxus West centres in San Diego and in San Francisco, and in 1967 he purchased a Volkswagen bus – a 'Fluxmobile', – in which he travelled up and down the coast of California and then across the US giving lectures, performing concerts and producing flyers under the name Fluxus West.

When the term 'Fluxus' had begun to be formulated in New York in 1961, it was as a publication for a variety of work with little or no specific political or even cultural agenda. The initial affiliations and association of many of the American Fluxus artists were based on a mutual interest in each others' work and collaborations on projects and performances. Several of these individuals – Higgins, Brecht and Al Hansen – had met as students in John Cage's composition class at the New School for Social Research. They and others, such as Mac Low, Young, Knowles and Maciunas, had become involved in various projects or groups, such as the New York Audio-Visual Group, the 'Chambers Street Concert Series', the 'Bread &' performance series and publication project of *An Anthology*. In all of these activities what was shared was an excitement for the work they were doing and a growing realisation of the international scope of new performance and musical experimentation. This was then a period of expansion of both awareness and ideas which was carried along by an excitement for the new work being done by them and others. As Fluxus actually began to be

developed in Europe, though, it gained both an artistic focus and cultural agenda. Fluxus had begun to be associated with specific artists and types of action music and events, and most significantly it had gained a specific anti-institutional stance. Many of the artists involved with Fluxus in Europe, notably Paik, Higgins, Vostell, Schmit and Maciunas, were not only aware of, but specifically interested in, the political and social implications of their work. When Maciunas tried to extend this developing identity into America in 1963, however, he came face to face with conflicting views. Most of the American Fluxus artists, like Brecht and Watts, although interested in the conceptual and aesthetic implications of post-Cagean thinking, had, like Cage himself, no real interest in political activism. Thus, when Maciunas and Higgins returned to America, Fluxus was faced with a dilemma: what Fluxus had become in Europe could not be sustained in New York. For this reason, the period of Fluxus in New York, from the end of 1963 through the mid-1960s, became predominantly shaped by the playing out of some of the personal and ideological conflicts within the Fluxus group. The changing dynamics of the group began to strain its cohesiveness and several of the artists began to distance themselves from the group. By the mid-1960s it was being said that Fluxus was dead or that it was dying. There were fundamental questions posed about the nature of Fluxus and what it was to become.

### *FLUXUS I* AND FLUXUS AS A PUBLISHING VENTURE, 1962–1968

After years of planning, development and production work, the first collective Fluxus publication, *Fluxus I*, was issued in the autumn of 1964. *Fluxus I* consisted of a number of manila envelopes interspaced with printed sheets, all of which were bound together with bolts. It contained scores by Higgins, Brecht, Mac Low, Patterson, Schmit, Watts, Williams, Giuseppe Chiari and others; photographs, objects and performance remnants by Knowles, Vautier, Joe Jones, Shigeko Kubota, Chieko Shiomi, Takehisa Kosug and others; as well as artists' monogram cards, texts, drawings and a variety of other printed materials. All these materials were contained in wooden boxes like 'little crates'. *Fluxus I* was a synthesis of Maciunas' and other Fluxus artists' work and ideas from 1961 to the date of its original publication. It was the eventual outcome of the long-standing ambition to produce a Fluxus anthology, and was, in fact, the first full manifestation of the original impetus for establishing Fluxus.

The initial potential of, and need for, a publication for new and experimental work was partially an outgrowth of a project initiated by La Monte Young – the *An Anthology* publication. In autumn 1960 the editor of the magazine *Beatitude* approached Young and Mac Low after a reading and asked them if they would guest-edit an issue of the East Coast edition of his magazine, *Beatitude East*. Given free rein to include whoever and whatever he wanted, Young collected a large body of new and experimental music, poetry, essays and performance scores from America, Europe and Japan. The magazine, however, folded after only one issue, and the materials that Young had collected were never published. In June 1961 Maciunas, who had already begun plans to publish a magazine of similar work to be called *Fluxus*, got to hear about the material and offered to publish it: 'I have lots of paper ...' he exclaimed.<sup>9</sup> In the autumn of the same year Maciunas designed the book's layout and title pages, while others, including Mac Low, produced the typescript for the works themselves. Maciunas sold his

stereo for the down payment for the printing costs, and the mechanicals were sent to the printer to be produced. At this point in the production, however, Maciunas left New York to go to Europe, and Young and Mac Low were not able to pay the remaining printing costs. For this and other reasons, the final production of *An Anthology* was delayed until 1963, when it was finally completed and issued by Young and Mac Low.

Although it can be argued that *An Anthology* is not strictly a Fluxus publication, its development and production was a central event in the formation of Fluxus. It was the first collaborative publication project between people who were to become part of Fluxus: Young (editor and co-publisher), Mac Low (co-publisher) and Maciunas (designer), not to mention all the artists who contributed work, such as Higgins, Flynt, Paik, Williams, Brecht and others. It modelled a pattern of development that was repeated in many other Fluxus projects in which Maciunas helped to give form to an artist's idea through the selection of materials and packaging design. In this way Fluxus produced a true collaboration in which two or more artists came together to create a greater whole through the combination of their efforts. The other, less positive, side of the pattern of Fluxus production seen in the creation of *An Anthology* was one marked by changes in plans, delays in production and funding problems. One of the most important aspects of *An Anthology* for Fluxus, however, was that it became the impetus for the planning and development of other collective publications. Many more scores had been collected than were used in the book, and when Maciunas left for Europe at the end of 1961, he carried with him a rich collection of works and the idea of producing a series of collective Fluxus publications.

Throughout 1962, and in tandem with the plans for Fluxus festivals, Maciunas developed plans for a series of publications which he called 'Fluxus Yearbooks'. In January and February of 1962 Maciunas circulated a list of 'tentative plan[s] for contents of the first 7 issues'. These issues, primarily determined by geographical divisions, included the *US Yearbook*, *Western European Yearbooks I and II*, the *Japanese Yearbook* and the *Eastern European Yearbook*. In addition to these, there were also plans for two historical issues, *Homage to the Past* and *Homage to DaDa*. The diverse contents for these issues was based on three categories of work: the additional materials for *An Anthology*; promised contributions from artists; and materials suggested by the area editors (such as Higgins and Mac Low for the US and Paik and Wilhelm for Europe) for each of the issues. In the initial plans most of the contents were scores and essays intended to be traditionally printed and bound, but also listed were a number of additional elements – fold-outs, inserts, records and even some objects such as 'a glove' by Knowles and 'molded plastic relief composition' by Mary Bauermeister.

By the spring of 1962 – the time of the publication of *News-Policy-Letter No. 1* – Maciunas had changed his ideas considerably. In the *News-Policy-Letter*, he referred to the publication as the 'FLUXUS YEARBOOK-BOX' and put greater emphasis on non-traditional 'printed' materials. There was to be a change in form, too, from a bound publication to a boxed collection:

It was decided to utilise instead of covers a flat box to contain the contents so as to permit inclusion of many loose items: records, films, 'poor-man's films – flip books,' 'original art,' metal, plastic, wood objects, scraps of paper, clippings, junk, rags. Any composition or work that cannot be reproduced in standard sheet form or cannot be reproduced at all.<sup>10</sup>

This list of possible inclusions marks a beginning shift in the concept of Fluxus from a magazine, and from a more traditional concept of a publication as a printed and bound paper product, to Fluxus as a publisher/producer of a variety of materials, such as those found in *Fluxus I*.

The nature of the contents of *Fluxus I* is a direct expression both of the changing nature of Fluxus and its original intent to publish works, particularly scores of an international group of artists. *Fluxus I* is a summation of the aims of Fluxus and the sometimes conflicting realities that were faced in trying to edit and produce it. The developing and shifting emphasis of Fluxus as a publishing entity is mapped out in both the variety of works and in the form of their publication. The final form of *Fluxus I* – a series of brown mailing envelopes containing works and bolted together with interspaced printed pages – was more than a design choice by Maciunas, it was a necessity if any Fluxus anthology was ever to be produced. Although this form of a bolted book is not without historical precedent (it is quite similar to Fortunato Depero's book *Depero Futurista* of 1927), the key is not the binding mechanism itself, but what such a process, coupled with the use of envelopes, allowed. This format permitted both the inclusion of a variety of forms and formats of materials as well as a book that could be altered as necessity required. Contrary to most publications, which are edited in totality, then laid out and finally printed and bound at one time, the majority of materials included in *Fluxus I* were printed or produced at various times between 1963 and 1965, and continued to be altered throughout the life of the publication. These materials were also drawn from a variety of sources. Many of the works and images included in *Fluxus I* were not initially developed or produced for this specific publication, but in the context of other projects: Brecht's 'direction' (image of a pointing hand) was initially printed in 1963 for a book; the photograph of hair printed on transparent paper was taken by Maciunas as a potential image for the backs of the cards in Brecht's *Deck*; the photograph of Mac Low was originally taken in 1962 for use in publicising a performance; Kosugi's *Theatre Music* (a footprint on paper); and Knowles' print of a tooth x-ray were made as parts of performances in New York in 1964. Many other works, including examples by Williams, Patterson and Young, were originally produced not to be included in *Fluxus I* but as part of 'collected works' publications that never materialised.

Thus, *Fluxus I* is not just a metaphorical summation of Fluxus ventures between 1962 and 1965 but an actual compilation of diverse materials that had previously been produced by the individual artists and the activities of the Fluxus group. *Fluxus I* is a clear example of an aspect of Maciunas' productivist/puritan aesthetic: waste not want not. The eventual production of *Fluxus I* can be seen as the physical manifestation of years of planning and editing for collective Fluxus publications, but it can also be seen as Maciunas' way of making use of materials that had been collected and produced and which Maciunas did not want to waste.

The vicissitudes of attempting to edit and produce a Fluxus anthology were almost too great. Initially the first of the planned Fluxus Yearbooks was to be issued in February and May of 1962. These dates were pushed back due not only to a lack of time and money, but, more significantly, to the shortage and limited variety of the works so far collected. Many of the works listed in the prospectus were not in Maciunas' possession when he listed them as the contents, and so he had to delay the publication until after he had received them. They

were rescheduled to be issued in August and September, just prior to the first Fluxus Festival in Wiesbaden. At the same time as the delay was announced, a new call for material was issued in *News-Policy-Letter No. 1*, as well as a new plan for two types of anthology publications: the standard edition of printed and bound materials, and a new format – the ‘luxus-fluxus’ – which was to include materials from the standard edition grouped with additional materials of a more limited nature, such as films and flip-books and original works produced by the artists themselves.

By the time August arrived, the first Yearboxes were still not ready to print or issue. Many works had still not been received or assembled, and more importantly the time that the artists had to spend was directed at planning for the upcoming festivals. At the end of October Maciunas wrote to La Monte Young that, ‘Fluxus I is definitely coming out, in fact the whole thing is at the printers . . . I figure the issue should go out in mid November . . .’<sup>11</sup> At about the same time as this letter, Maciunas issued *News-Policy-Letter No. 4*, which included plans for future festivals, *Fluxus Yearbox II*, and, most importantly, plans for ‘special editions’. This new category of Fluxus publications was to include works and collections of works by individual artists, such as Brecht, Young, Mac Low, Henry Flynt, Allan Kaprow, and others. Although many of these collections never materialised, the most notable exception is Brecht’s collected works, which became *Water Yam*; this is an important first indication of the expansion of Fluxus publishing activities towards a collective that would produce individual artist’s works as well as anthology publications. *Fluxus I* did not come out in November, as Maciunas had said, but was delayed again; for although the printing work was completed, Maciunas had no money to pay the printer for the work.

As Maciunas was continuing his attempts to edit and produce the first of the planned Fluxus collective publications, one of the first collective Fluxus (in spirit and content, if not in name) publications was published by Wolf Vostell. This magazine, entitled *De-coll/age*, was certainly, as Maciunas later claimed, a clear manifestation of Vostell’s own ideas. This, however, did not make *De-coll/age* a non-Fluxus work as Maciunas also claimed. Although it was not one of the announced Fluxus publications, it was certainly a parallel attempt to those being initiated under the name Fluxus to publish the work then being done. The first issue of *De-coll/age*, published at the end of 1962, was clearly modelled on the ideas and plans that were being developed for Fluxus. It included scores, essays and other examples of the types of work presented in performance by the Fluxus group. Many of the artists who had become associated with Fluxus, such as Young, Patterson, Paik, Koepcke, Vostell, and even Maciunas, were included; and at first Maciunas felt that this publication was part of a general Fluxus initiative and invited Vostell to combine his efforts with his own in the development of more Fluxus-type publications. Vostell declined this invitation, saying that he could only edit one such publication – his own – and that it would not be as comprehensive as the planned collective Fluxus editions.<sup>12</sup> With the publication of issues 2 and 3 of *De-coll/age*, Maciunas increasingly saw this journal as an attempt to undermine his own Fluxus publication initiatives. This situation was brought to a head with the publication of works by Corner and Flynt in *De-coll/age* that Maciunas was intending to print in planned Fluxus publications. Maciunas accused Vostell of ‘knowingly sabotag[ing] Fluxus’.<sup>13</sup>

The real and perceived effect of Vostell’s publication of *De-coll/age* would eventually lead Maciunas to an attempt to form a retrenchment of Fluxus, to, as he put it, ‘strive for a

common front & CENTRALIZATION'. As a partial response to this and other situations that Maciunas felt were draining on Fluxus' 'art and anti-art activities', he proposed in Fluxus *News-Policy-Letter No. 5* (1 January 1963) that 'authors are to assign exclusive publication rights to Fluxus' and that they 'will not submit any works to any other publication without the consent of Fluxus'. The artists associated with Fluxus reacted swiftly and negatively by forcing Maciunas to drop, or at least downplay, his call for exclusive publication rights, although he would continue to demand Fluxus copyright and/or credit for performances that presented Fluxus work.

The affair demonstrated the existence of Maciunas' more dictatorial side. He believed that true collectivity could only be created through strong leadership and even through the use of purges. He wrote:

... such [a] front must constantly be purged of saboteurs & 'deviationists' just like the communist party. Communists would have long split into 1000 parts if they did not carry out the strict purges. It was the purge or FLUX that kept them united & monolithic.<sup>14</sup>

Vostell was to become the first of numerous victims of such a belief. This defensive, even antagonistic, stance was the first of a number of times through the mid-1960s that Maciunas was to react negatively to the plans and projects of artists whom, he felt, were working in opposition to his idea of a collective front for Fluxus. What was in reality happening and continued to happen throughout this period was a fundamental conflict between the aims of Fluxus and its realisation. That is, Fluxus was often unable to produce, either at all or in a timely manner, the works that it had undertaken to publish, and as a result many artists also sought other or additional means of producing their work.

Through the winter of 1962 and 1963 the emphasis of Fluxus publishing activities was increasingly shifting to the development of works and publications by individual artists. Plans were made for and work initiated on Brecht's 'Complete Works' (*Water Yam*) and *Deck*, Robert Watts' 'Dollar Bill', Young's *Compositions 1961*, Daniel Spoerri's *L'OPTIQUE MODERNE*, Paik's 'music periodical' *Monthly Review of the University of Avant-garde Hinduism*. The materials for *Fluxus I*, meanwhile, still sat at the printer. Maciunas did produce two other collective publications in this period: *Fluxus Preview Review*, a long scroll-format publication which included a limited number of scores and photos of performances, information on future performances and a listing of planned Fluxus publications and *Ekstra Bladet*, a reproduction, in collage format, of performance reviews, which was intended for performance publicity. He also began work on a second Fluxus Yearbox, the *French Fluxus Yearbox*, which although never produced did progress to the stage of typographic design and lay-out (parts of it are in the Archive Sohm); but by the end of spring 1963, there was still no *Fluxus I*. Finally, however, sometime in the late spring or summer of 1963, Maciunas was able to pay the remaining debt to the printer for the materials for *Fluxus I*. But by the time Maciunas returned to the US in the late summer or early autumn once again he had no money to do anything with the materials he had had printed, and even if he had been able to do anything he was so unhappy with the quality of the printing that he threatened to throw it all away. In the end, he kept the materials but did not do anything with them for almost another year. Instead, the emphasis of Fluxus shifted to the development and production of works by individual artists, the development of a

Fluxus newspaper, *ccV TRE*, and the attempt to develop a Fluxus distribution network, or what came to be called the Fluxus Mailorder Warehouse.

During the autumn of 1963 and the winter of 1964 the continued development of Fluxus I was put on hold while plans were made for propagandising Fluxus in the US. Although a number of plans included actions and/or performances, such as street events, one of the most important realised means of advertising Fluxus was the creation of a Fluxus newspaper, *ccV TRE*. Rather than being a completely new venture this newspaper was, as with many Fluxus works, initially developed outside of Fluxus *per se* and then integrated into the Fluxus fold. The first issue of *V TRE* was published as a broadside by George Brecht in conjunction with the Yam Festival, which he and Bob Watts were organising in May 1963. In fact, when the first Fluxus issue of the newspaper was published in January 1964 the designator 'cc' was added to the name as a way of indicating the publication's connection to Brecht (a designation that was kept only for the first four issues). Although the first two issues of *ccV TRE*, published in January and February of 1964, are predominantly made up of photos, both antique and contemporary, newspaper headlines and parts of articles, and scientific illustrations and diagrams, all taken from other sources, it was the references to Fluxus that were the key to this project and would come to dominate the content of the newspaper by the third and fourth issues.

The publication of *ccV TRE* was another example of the opportunism of Fluxus. It offered three key elements. First, the newspapers were cheap to produce, and this was important because Fluxus had little or no money to pay for more elaborate publishing projects such as the collective Yearboxes/books. Moreover, very few, if any, of the Fluxus publications ever broke even or made any profit. This being the case most of the publication costs had to be covered by other means and were largely paid for by Maciunas himself out of his own pocket. Second, the newspapers were a sign that Fluxus was 'alive and kicking'. By the beginning of 1964 most of the planned Fluxus publications had still not been realised. Increasingly a number of the artists associated with Fluxus were beginning to question whether or not Fluxus would ever even begin to fulfil its aims to distribute a variety of 'interesting things'. The *ccV TRE* newspaper was a way of responding to these concerns, for in addition to the visual cacophony of appropriated images and texts, they included essays by artists such as Paik and Brecht, photos of works by a variety of artists from Christo and Jean Tinguely to Brecht, Knowles, Watts and Lette Eisenhauer at their *Blink* show, and a wide variety of event and performance scores. It seems that it was the intention of at least Maciunas to shift away from the more costly and problematic Yearboxes to the newspaper as the principal means of disseminating the good work being done. In the first issue of *ccV TRE*, there is a list of available Fluxus editions (1963) and upcoming editions (1964). It is of importance to note that nowhere in these lists is there any specific mention of the collective Fluxus publications. Instead, after the lists there is a small note that states that most of the '... materials originally intended for Fluxus yearboxes will be included in the FLUXUS *ccV TRE* newspaper or in individual boxes'.<sup>15</sup> The third, and possibly most important, aspect of the development of the Fluxus newspaper was that it was a way of both advertising Fluxus works and performances and developing an alternative market for Fluxus works outside the normal cultural frames.

Part of both the challenge of, and to Fluxus, was a questioning of the modes of cultural production and distribution. The aim of Fluxus throughout the mid- and later 1960s was not

only to publish the interesting things being done but to create new systems for their distribution. Most Fluxus works were not only relatively inexpensive, but were initially distributed through alternative distribution mechanisms. In the mid-1960s a number of different Fluxshops were set up in the US, France and the Netherlands. In addition to these shops, which had only limited success, several Flux Mailorder Warehouses in the US and Europe were created that were directly aimed at establishing a new means for distributing works and publications without those works themselves seeming to become profound, exclusive or valuable as a commodity. In this context, then, it was only through such publications as *ccV TRE*, that Fluxus works could gain an audience wider than friends of friends.

In 1978 Nam June Paik elaborated on the significance of Fluxus as a distribution mechanism that, he felt, went beyond Marxist parameters:

Marx gave much thought about the dialectics of the production and the production medium. He had thought rather simply that if workers (producers) OWNED the production's medium, everything would be fine. He did not give creative room to the DISTRIBUTION system. The problem of the art world in the '60s and '70s is that although the artist owns the production's medium, such as paint or brush, even sometimes a printing press, they are excluded from the highly centralised DISTRIBUTION system of the art world.

George Maciunas' Genius [sic] is the early detection of this post-Marxistic situation and he tried to seize not only the production's medium but also the DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM of the art world.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout the 1960s Maciunas continually tried to demonstrate that Fluxus was neither serious culture nor anti-serious culture, but something else entirely. This separation was intended to reinforce the concept that Fluxus was not part of the existing cultural system, in either its modes of production or distribution. The nature of Fluxus work was part of a process of transformation and education that was inherent in their activities. In the activities in the 1960s, and, as we shall see, most particularly in the 1970s, Fluxus works and performances were intended to transgress boundaries, decentre their own activities, and, for some, gradually to lead to the elimination of the category of fine art altogether.

When *Fluxus I* was finally issued in 1964, it was as part of a period of tremendous Fluxus publishing activity. Even though it had taken Fluxus and Maciunas more than two years to produce this one work, the next two years, between 1964 and 1966, saw more than half of the total number of Fluxus works developed and produced. Not only was the first collective publication, *Fluxus I*, published in this period, but the only other completed collective Fluxus publications, *Fluxkit* (1964) and *Fluxus Year Box 2* (1966), were published in this time as well. One of the most notable aspects of Fluxus production in these years, evident in a simple comparison between *Fluxus I* and *Fluxus Year Box 2*, was a shift from publications, in the sense of printed information or images on paper, to objects. The projected, but never completed, *Fluxus 3*, was, however, supposed to shift yet again, back to exclusively two-dimensional printed works to be presented rolled up in a tube. Whereas *Fluxus I* consists predominantly of printed images, scores and text-based pieces, *Fluxus Year Box 2* contains a diversity of materials, most of which – such as the Fluxfilms and viewer and the individual artists' boxes by Brecht, Ken Friedman and others – are not traditional printed materials.

The Fluxus works produced in the mid-1960s, even the most object-based examples – such as Watts' *Rocks Marked by Weight*, Shiomi's *Water Music* or Patterson's *Instruction No. 2* – should all be seen not as art works or even multiples, but in their intended context: as publications, albeit quite different from what is traditionally thought of as a publication. This seeming alteration in Fluxus' aims is not just a historical note, for it was remarked on by several Fluxus artists and it was one of the motivations for Higgins to found Something Else Press as an attempt to return to the original aims of Fluxus.

Although Something Else Press (SEP) does have its own unique place in the history of alternative publishing, it should also be seen as an expression of the aims of Fluxus to distribute the 'interesting' things being done. In 1964 Dick Higgins founded SEP in exasperation over Maciunas' seeming inability to get things published, as well as the seeming shift-away from what Higgins perceived as the central foci of Fluxus. In a letter to a friend Higgins remarked that he founded SEP as a way of returning to the aims of 'original Fluxus'.<sup>17</sup> Under the Press imprint, many important books on poetry, happenings, architecture, experimental literature and fiction, music, and art theory were published. SEP also published important work by a number of the artists associated with Fluxus, including Knowles, Patterson, Corner, Schmit, Brecht, Filliou, Spoerri and Higgins himself. In some ways, Higgins was correct, for the work published by SEP throughout the 1960s and into the mid-1970s much more clearly conforms to the original Fluxus goals of education, presentation of a variety of historical and contemporary works, and creation of a distribution system for interesting materials that would not otherwise be published. In fact, although SEP would eventually fold under the strain of unresolved financial obligations, it was in its heyday very successful both in introducing a wider audience to new and experimental work and in creating a context for continued experimentation in intermedial arts. The greater immediate success of SEP, when compared to Fluxus, was that Higgins was able to balance a radical and/or new content with a more traditional form, thereby allowing the SEP publications access to existing distribution systems – particularly the book-publishing system – which Fluxus was never able to make use of. This very same success has now, in the historical frame, reversed which of the two ventures is given most attention. Fluxus with its seemingly greater originality of form and, contrary to stated aims, greater rarity of work, has now become the artistic success, whereas SEP has become an interesting publication venture, but not an artistic success. If again we return to Higgins' point that SEP was a renewal of the original aims that Fluxus had lost sight of and consider this in the current perspective of the commodification of Fluxus 'art objects', we are left with a very interesting set of issues. The reality, however, is that both represented Fluxus and SEP succeeded and failed in differing ways, and that both of these ventures form part of a larger whole of experimentation in intermedial arts which so dominated the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>18</sup>

By the end of the 1960s collective Fluxus activities had reached a low point. After the explosion of Fluxus publishing activities between 1964 and 1966, the years from 1967 to 1969 were rather unremarkable. Little new work was produced in these years. Fluxus group performances and public presentations in this period were also practically non-existent. What was happening was that even though Fluxus had always managed to survive direct conflicts, the most significant of which was the conflict and even personal animosity over the picketing of Stockhausen's *Originale* in 1964, this period was one in which many of the artists'

attentions were no longer being focused through Fluxus. In order to contextualise this situation, it is useful to understand that Fluxus' meaning has always existed in relationship to its usefulness, and thus we can look at the downturn in activities in this period as a simple reflection of a periodic downturn in its immediate, but not long-term, usefulness. Although many of the individual artists were as active as they had been in the past, many of their efforts were directed towards differing projects or individual interests rather than collective or Fluxus work. Higgins and Williams were very busy with Something Else Press; Watts was involved with a mass-production project called Implosions; Brecht and Filliou were active with *La Cedille qui Sourit* in France; Vautier with his Total Art projects and related publishing; and Maciunas was putting most of his time and energy into his project of converting old buildings into artists' lofts (Fluxhouses). Yet through all of this the core of Fluxus remained; the fact that they were friends who enjoyed what each other did. All that was needed was a reminder of this social basis of Fluxus as a community, and it came in the late 1960s, not in the form of new public performances, but as Fluxus gatherings for Fluxfriends. These events began in 1967 with a 'Flux-Christmas-meal-event', and in the subsequent two years were held on the 31 December and were thus renamed the 'New Year Eve's Flux-Feast'. Although these gatherings did not smooth over all of the tensions between different members of Fluxus, they did act to return Fluxus to part of its essence – a Fluxus based on a group of friends doing things together that they enjoyed. Activities such as these, as well as other Fluxus-related developments in such areas as California, France and Germany, also began to widen the circle of Fluxus participants to include new artists such as Geoff Hendricks, Larry Miller and Ken Friedman. This would give a new energy to Fluxus and carry it into the 1970s, and eventually into new endeavours, such as those carried out under the name 'Fluxshoe' in England.

## NOTES

- 1 Jean-Pierre Wilhelm, [untitled manuscript], Sept 1962, Archive Sohn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart. As far as can be determined, this text was not the exact text read by Wilhelm at the Dusseldorf Fluxus Festival. It is a text that he wrote as an introduction for a proto-Fluxus performance in Amsterdam, 'Parallele aufführungen newster musik': however it is probably very similar to what he did read in Dusseldorf.
- 2 George Maciunas, 'Fluxus Manifesto', nd [c1963], Archive Sohn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.
- 3 Dick Higgins, *Constellation No 4*, 1960; reproduced in Higgins, *Selected Early Works, 1955–1964*, Berlin, Edition ARS VIVA!, 1982, p 4.
- 4 George Maciunas, *In Memoriam to Adriano Olivetti*; revised version of score no. 8 1962, Archive Sohn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.
- 5 Dick Higgins, *Postface|Jefferson's Birthday*, New York: Something Else Press, 1964. Many aspects of the original aims and concerns of Fluxus are discussed by Higgins in the *Postface* section of this work.
- 6 Dick Higgins, *Postface|Jefferson's Birthday*, New York: Something Else Press, 1964.
- 7 George Brecht, 'George Brecht an Interview with Robin Page for Carla Liss (who Fell Asleep)', *Art and Artists*, vol 7, no. 7 (Oct 1972), p 29.
- 8 Higgins, *Postface|Jefferson's Birthday*, p 68.
- 9 George Maciunas, quoted in Jackson Mac Low, 'Wie George Maciunas die New Yorker Avantgarde kennenlernte', in René Block, ed, *1962 Wiesbaden 1982*, Wiesbaden,

- Harlekin Art, and Berlin, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, 1982, p 114.
- 10 George Maciunas, [Fluxus] *News-Policy-Letter No. 1*, May 21, 1962, in the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, New York and Detroit.
  - 11 Maciunas to La Monte Young, nd, La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela Collection, Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection, New York and Detroit.
  - 12 Wolf Vostell to George Maciunas, nd, Archive Sohn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.
  - 13 George Maciunas to Nam June Paik, nd, Archive Sohn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.
  - 14 Ibid.
  - 15 George Brecht and George Maciunas, eds, *Fluxus ccV TRE*, Fluxus Newspaper no. 1 (1964), np.
  - 16 Nam June Paik, 'George Maciunas and Fluxus', *Flash Art*, no. 84-85 (Oct-Nov 1978), p 48.
  - 17 Dick Higgins to Tjeerd Deelstra, 13 March 1967, Archive Sohn, Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart.
  - 18 For more information on Something Else Press, see Higgins, 'Two Sides of a Coin: Fluxus and Something Else Press'.

## SIMON ANDERSON: FLUXUS, FLUXION, FLUXSHOE: THE 1970s

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The 1970s saw Fluxus in flux, and this state, fluxion, is evident across the surprising range of Fluxus activity from 1970 to 1982. It is impossible to follow every thread of Fluxus through this period; the scattering of documented exhibitions, performances and discourses fail to give any indication of the actual spread of Fluxus ideas. However, a debate within and around Fluxus as to its actual constituency continued throughout the decade, in the form of drunken debates and letters to periodicals; in the blossoming field of Correspondence Art; and in the organisation of catalogues, collections and exhibition tours.

Several changing versions of Fluxus survived. One of these was an increasingly conventional art movement, circumscribed by major retrospective shows and documented in official publications. Another was an international network of comrades – including some from the ‘original’ Fluxus tour – connected by ideology, friendship, and shared working practices. These laid-back activists often prepared to travel anywhere to perform, read, play, or simply connect with like minds. They generated a set of hilarious and libertarian ideas which were passed from hand to mouth – or from mailbox to mailbox – across the provinces of the coca-colonised world, mostly on a level that generated no more objective evidence than a fading mimeographed flyer, saved for posterity by accident rather than design.

The decade opened with the first great monument of Fluxus history, the exhibition and catalogue ‘Happening & Fluxus’.<sup>1</sup> At this time happenings were an international and formally recognisable phenomena. The exhibition was accompanied by a graphically utilitarian series of catalogues whose rudimentary use of chronology and alphabet posited a Fluxus firmly in the realm of advanced art activity, linking it explicitly with a documentable happenings movement. Unfortunately, the association created by the title also implied stylistic parity. The fact that some artists were upset by this identification illustrates some of the issues that have continued to dog Fluxus: who has the right to define it, and on what bases should those definitions be made?<sup>2</sup>

The collector Dr Hans Sohm and his co-organiser, Harald Szeemann, mounted an important and impressive exhibition. Beset by difficulties and personal antagonisms – although to what extent these were apparent to visitors is no longer clear – the show generated a document that has become a landmark in the history of Fluxus. In addition to an annotated chronology of actions and events from 1959 to 1970 (taking up more than half the book), the catalogue of the exhibition included a general bibliography covering the same span and an inclusive alphabetical list of artists or artist groups from Andersen to Zaj, with details of published work, photographs and bibliographies for each.

At the close of the decade came a similar, if rather more deliberately selective, series of emanations. The year 1981 saw the impressive public launch of the Silverman Collection.<sup>3</sup> In celebration of Fluxus' official twentieth birthday, there were also three exhibitions, a festival and a symposium held in Wiesbaden.<sup>4</sup> The catalogues generated by this flurry of historic activity both attempted chronologies and alphabetical lists, but again, reflected different views of Fluxus. The Wiesbaden birthday, riven with contradictions, argument and celebration, stood in sharp contrast to the Silverman's Fluxus, which passed exclusively through the 'pure process' of the great organiser, George Maciunas.<sup>5</sup>

The Silverman Collection was opened to the public in an exhibition held at the Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, from 20 September to 1 November 1981. The show highlighted published objects from Gilbert and Lila Silverman's considerable accumulation of Fluxus ephemera. Organised around the central principle that the presence of George Maciunas is the most appropriate measure of Fluxus-ness, it presented a picture of Fluxus that some artists have repudiated. Tomas Schmit did so in his contribution to the catalogue that accompanied the Cranbrook show.<sup>6</sup> Offering reproductions of enormous numbers of objects and graphic material, many the product of Maciunas' fascinating and fertile brain, it carries, without editorial comment, an enumerated catalogue of objects, boxes and documentary fragments generated by historic events, posters, postage stamps and games. The first of several such catalogues documenting their holdings, it continued the Silverman's enduring contribution to Fluxus scholarship.

The criterion that filters the Silverman collection, understandable though it is, created a Fluxus without the messy, uncategoryable, vague and shifting connections that often seem to characterise European Fluxus. Sharp differences, however, are not always easy to find, for much as the scene in Europe included a host of American visitors who put their individual stamp on interpretations of Fluxus, so Maciunas made Fluxus a vehicle for a variety of aesthetic, social, political and art-historical experiments as the decade progressed. The strict reading of Fluxus implicit in the Silverman Collection, whilst being evolutionary in some ways, and of necessity being museologically correct, cannot do justice to the kinds of American Fluxus activities that developed on the West Coast, outside New York, or even through Charlotte Moorman's New York Festivals of the Avant-Garde, which Maciunas deprecated almost obsessively, it seems. However, he continued to expand the Fluxus canon almost up to his death, including such media pranks as *Twelve Big Names*, of April 1975; the development of the Fluxlabyrinth, and the continuing tradition of New Year reunions – a tradition disparaged by Tomas Schmit as 'jokey parties with coloured drinks and manipulated food'.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps Maciunas would also have cavilled at the twentieth anniversary in Wiesbaden, which offered an ironic celebration of Fluxus' advance toward Art History. Spread throughout the town, occupying not only the museum where Fluxus had begun, but a local *Kunstverein* and another commercial gallery, Harlekin Art, whose owner, Michael Berger, was one of the sponsors of the occasion. The exhibitions travelled to Kassel and closed in Berlin's *daadgalerie*, after a series of new and historic performances and practices. This was a prescient mixture of Fluxuses; not quite the Fluxus later to be known through catalogue essays, centred on objects, multiples and endless texts; nor yet the heroic Fluxus that had generated so much frenzy two decades before; but a shifting coalition of artists united by

their past and surrounded by a network of supporters: new friends, collectors, the occasional dealer, and, increasingly, embryonic Fluxus historians. Fluxion was evident in the rancour that existed at times between artists, as well as in aspects of the exhibitions and celebrations.

During the weekend of opening events, Fluxus was represented by such stylistic variations as Geoffrey Hendricks' meditative ritual installation, an aggressive electronic opera by Wolf Vostell, and Giuseppe Chiari's gestural music. In addition, there were concerts of early Fluxus works, sometimes performed by the composers; a reinterpretation, by the artist, of Ben Patterson's *Lick*; and opportunities to play fluxping-pong and other games in the museum. Alongside the *Fluxlabyrinth* was its apparent antithesis: the tie that Paik used to begin the first ever *Zen for Head*, preserved as a reliquary; and in a piano-concert scene that surely opposed Maciunas' idea of Fluxus, Fred Rzewski's hands were filmed in close-up, for German TV.

The monochrome catalogue that accompanied the exhibitions echoes the graphic severity and apparent neutrality first adopted by 'Happening & Fluxus'. Once again, documentary evidence of past Fluxus events was shown alongside a wide variety of contemporary work, ranging from astrological charts by Ludwig Gosewitz to Yoshimasa Wada's instrumental installations. Although leavened by Filliou and William's anarchic cataloguing system, the texts included were serious and written with an eye to history. The *infra mince* element within Fluxus is evident in the illustrated chronologies and itemised personal narratives that supplement the essays: these included a wide variety of voices, from Henning Christiansen to Henry Flynt, and notable were Jackson Mac Low's account of the genesis of *An Anthology* and Emmett Williams' reportage. The catalogue makes no claims, however, to complete historical coverage and is organised around individual artists rather than publisher or medium.

A similar alphabetical and individual-oriented approach had been used some years earlier by Harry Ruhe, in his thorough and wide-ranging index, *Fluxus: The Most Radical and Experimental Art Movement of the Sixties*.<sup>8</sup> This ring-bound document resulted from his earlier exhibition of Fluxus at Gallery A in Amsterdam, in 1976. The ruggedly stylish book provides an expanded and expandable reading of Fluxus; the editor quoted Maciunas' blacklist in his introduction, but offered fair justification of his inclusions. Ruhe's Fluxus was fluid enough to contain tenuous historic connections such as Marcel Alocco and Tamás Szentjohy along with more traditionally contentious inclusions such as Joseph Beuys. Obscure entries, such as Bob Grimes and Bob Lens or George Landow and Dan Lauffer, form an informative exploration of Fluxus ideas, appropriately opening with Maurizio Nannucci's 150 questions on the subject.

Also ring-bound, and intended to expand, though smaller in size and scope, *Fluxus International & Cie* likewise added to the Fluxus stable, but took pains to distinguish new associates such as John Armleder, Patrick Lucchini and other members of the Ecart Performance Group.<sup>9</sup> Featuring texts and event scores by Fluxus artists and an essay by Charles Dreyfus, the catalogue is an early effort to analyse Fluxus historically, stylistically and philosophically. It is organised using a complex classification system, illustrating different versions of Fluxus. Composed of history, music, words and posters, and including charts, manifestos, artists' statements, a chronology of events from 1951 to 1964, and a section devoted to Correspondence Art, it was a fertile breeding ground for Fluxus ideas.

Beside the institutional sanctions offered by these efforts – a first retrospective, a double-digit anniversary, and the public launch of a private collection – Fluxus effectively disappeared during the 1970s. Those events that were reviewed in international journals tended to be regarded as ‘Flux-funny reincarnated revival reminders of Fluxus’ contribution to the “sixties”.<sup>10</sup> After Maciunas’ death in 1978, such efforts as Jan Van der Marck’s ‘George Maciunas Memorial Collection’ at Dartmouth College Museum & Galleries served to reinforce either the perception that Fluxus finished at some point during the 1960s, or that with the passing of Maciunas, the Fluxure ceased.

The increasingly official and academic historicification of Fluxus visible in these shows, however, also ignores any number of sympathetic attempts to proselytise the idea, or extend the network. Occurring mostly at a less ‘heroic’ level than early developments, and subsequently lost in the authentic-object-oriented machinations of museum history, these examples of ‘applied flux’ offer salutary lessons in the power of that combination of humour, intermedia and imagination which fuelled Fluxus.

‘Fluxshoe’ was the second Fluxus exhibition to occur in England, a little-known, but fascinating example of how Fluxus was understood in that country at that time. It offers an exemplary opportunity to witness Fluxus as it survived the 1970s. It can be regarded almost as a laboratory study – a sample of Fluxus culture growing, mutating, and being exposed to the various viruses of a particular time, place and set of personalities, each of whose understanding of the original combined to create a travelling circus of experiment and adventure.

The provincial, personal, almost extra-curricula nature of ‘Fluxshoe’ acts as another parallel with the general fate of Fluxus before its resurrection as art history. Just as ‘Fluxshoe’ avoided London and its sophisticated art establishment, so a greater part of the documented Fluxus activity that occurred in the 1970s took place in secondary sites of culture, powered by one or two hardcore missionaries. Places like Liège, Milan or Seattle hosted Fluxus events or exhibitions in the second half of the decade, none of which accurately reflected the heroic Fluxus of the 1960s, although each was blessed with the presence of a founding Fluxist. Apart from New York’s annual reunions, or the occasional get-together, and aside from René Block’s outpost in Berlin – and again, temporarily, in New York – Fluxus ‘flourished in semi-obscurity’,<sup>11</sup> beyond the limits of the art world.

‘Fluxshoe’ began in the small university city of Exeter, conceived by Fluxus artist Ken Friedman and Mike Weaver, a young academic who had met Maciunas in the early 1960s through his interest in concrete poetry. ‘Fluxshoe’ was originally to be a modest exercise, consisting mainly of photocopies and publications, but as it happened, with the additions and changes that organiser David Mayor allowed, it became a lesson in the living development of art, of the idea of Fluxus. ‘Fluxshoe’ does not equal Fluxus; but if Fluxus had originally developed through a socially shared idea, then ‘Fluxshoe’ promoted the idea enthusiastically, very effectively, and with an antipathy to organising principles that amounted to anarchy. Chance, opportunity, proximity, personality and willingness-to-help were the final arbiters of entry, acceptance and continuing involvement – though not necessarily in that order. By mixing contemporary ideas with historic work, and by allowing artists from many different backgrounds to perform whatever they felt most appropriate, ‘Fluxshoe’, like the Correspondence Art network that helped fuel it, was itself continuing the Fluxus tradition.

‘Fluxshoe’ – the name stems from an inspired typing error – was one of numerous seeds

sown and nurtured by Ken Friedman,<sup>12</sup> but grew into an international festival of live, graphic and published art works, with dozens of participants, hundreds of correspondents, and thousands of spectators. Moving to the operational base of Beau Geste Press – a low-tech co-operative art-publishing venture run by a commune headed by Martha and Felipe Ehrenberg, David Mayor, and others – the tour was basically sponsored by government and regional grants, and, although very different, each show was centred upon the same portable and flexible core of Fluxus material: mailed stuff from Friedman and his infinite correspondents, a number of Fluxboxes sent by Maciunas, and a large amount of printed matter given or loaned by artists, Dr Hans Sohm and other interested individuals.<sup>13</sup>

'Fluxshoe' exemplifies the general style of Fluxus in the 1970s in many ways. It was determinedly international and was constituted around a few 'stars' from the early days of Fluxus. The still relatively young survivors from the first few years travelled widely, singly or in pairs, and spread their individual – and often different – interpretations of Fluxus at each venue. The first bona fide Fluxus artist to appear during 'Fluxshoe' was Eric Andersen, who had been associated with Fluxus since 1963, when, with other members of the 'gruppe fra eksperimentalmalerskolen', he had given a Fluxus concert in Copenhagen. In 1972 Andersen's notable contribution to the leisure activities of the seaside town of Falmouth was *Random Audience* – a participation piece in which he offered members of the public 'FREE DRINK, FREE MUSIC, FREE SEX', handing out a printed notice to this effect, with the date and time of the offering handwritten on it. If anyone was brave enough to show up at the allotted time and place, they found a notice announcing a change of time and venue. If they were then persistent enough to catch up with him, they would find him armed with a bottle of whisky, a portable cassette player, a vibrator and a rubber vagina.

Fellows Danes Knud Pedersen and Per Kirkeby – both Fluxus artists by virtue of early association or published work – also appeared during the tour. Kirkeby performed an understated Event: a jigsaw puzzle that he failed to complete, despite the help of visitors. Pedersen organised, among other participatory actions, a two-balled soccer match – an entertaining and educative intervention into normal expectations that asked a whole series of questions about what constitutes art, a game, competition, a goal, and so on. This tightly organised and fascinating public spectacle was re-created by Pedersen some twenty years later as part of an exhibition, at the Tate Gallery, London.

Fluxus' early and vital links with Japan were well represented both in 'Fluxshoe' and Mayor's other concern, Beau Geste Press. Takako Saito infused both with her delicate aesthetic, and Mayor's base outside Exeter was visited by the Taj Mahal Travellers – or at least a contingent from that group – consisting of Takehisa Kosugi, Yukio Tsuchiya, Ryo and Hiroko Koike. Kosugi himself had been a cofounder, with Mieko Shiomi, of the experimental music group Group Ongaku, in 1961, and had worked in the early to mid-1960s with a whole range of internationally renowned artists and musicians from Toru Takemitsu to Robert Rauschenberg, including Ichihyanagi, Cage, Paik and Vostell. His involvement with Fluxus began early, and he had a collection of events published, which were included in the first Fluxus Yearbox.

Ay-O was originally to have re-created the New York Fluxshop for 'Fluxshoe', but instead built a site-specific environment, threading string through the banisters of the stairs at Oxford's Museum of Modern Art. He also performed events so subtle that most people

ignored them. It would seem that Ay-O's understanding of Fluxus meant that he felt justified in simply talking to people, perhaps performing very simple and delicate Events, such as simply sitting and burning small pyres built of matches, watched by only one or two people. This rejection of formality – which pervaded 'Fluxshoe' to its core – was also typical of a variety of other Fluxus artists throughout the decade, from Robert Filliou's poetical *Research at the Stedelijk* (1972), which he used as a framework for extended, international and poetic conversations about the state of the world, to Maciunas' reliance on games and sports as a model for cheap, public performance art.

The international roster of artists who attended 'Fluxshoe' included Canadians Paul Woodrow and Clive Robertson, plus assorted European performers of varying stature, including Hungarian stamp artist Endre Tot. It also provided performance opportunities for local talent, from novices such as Paul Brown to seasoned artists such as Stuart Brisley.

An American then residing in England, Carolee Schneemann was perhaps the most experienced performance artist to appear in 'Fluxshoe'. She had become famous for her sensuous and visceral happening *Meat Joy*, but she had been a radical filmmaker and performance-painter since the end of the 1950s.<sup>14</sup> Despite the fact that Schneemann had taken part in the Berlin 'Festum Fluxorum' of 1970, and despite her consistent and persisting sympathies with Fluxus ideas, Maciunas advised Mayor that Schneemann was '... doing very neo-baroque style happenings which are exact opposite of flux-haiku style events ...', thereby revisiting disagreements about the constitution of Fluxus.<sup>15</sup>

Giancarlo Politi's *Flash Art*, sometime supporter of Fluxus artists collectively and individually, stirred this debate by accusing 'Fluxshoe' of expansion to the point of confusion. A notice in this publication characterised 'Fluxshoe' as a mere approximation of Maciunas' philosophy, and that the show included artists who 'never had any rapport with fluxus, neither ideological nor esthetic'.<sup>16</sup> This generated a spirited but friendly response from Ken Friedman, who, in his capacity as 'director of fluxus west' (the lower case was *de rigueur* at the time) repudiated the notice and quoted his own *Omaha Flow Systems* as proof that Fluxus was capable of divergence, difference, inclusion and expansion. He argued that Fluxus sought to break boundaries, and that these included the rules of traditional art history as well as bourgeois social practice.

Other artists felt differently. Davi Det Hompson believed that Fluxus as such was over, and that shows such as 'Happening & Fluxus', 'Fluxshoe' and his own 'International Cyclopedia of Plans and Occurrences' (1973) were proof of that. Admitting to being very much a second-generation Fluxus artist, he was interested in taking the ideas that Fluxus had developed and continuing them. One of the important ideas of Fluxus, for Hompson, was that personalities were less important than things and ideas, although he distinguished between Fluxus and conceptual art on the grounds that Fluxus was not simply ideas alone. Hompson performed a number of times in Blackburn: in the Museum, where he made *Whispered Writings*, a series of circular, self-descriptive texts; and on the street, where he lectured, using gestures, a blackboard and a gag over his mouth, so that he was incomprehensible – variations on Fluxus which were very much in keeping with other events seen on the tour.

On the other hand, Alice Hutchins, whose 'Jewelry Fluxkits', were produced well into the 1970s, thought Fluxus was still extant, but as a sideline, something given for enjoyment – for

no money was ever made. Much more than for Hompson, Fluxus was centred on objects: she had never performed, or written an event until offered the opportunity in Oxford, where she wrote and performed a site-specific event, *102 Stroke Piece*, about an ancient college bell. She outrang 'Great Tom' and handed round Bell's whisky. It was simple, friendly and unpretentious; it suited the intimate atmosphere of the evening, and won David Mayor's approval.

'Fluxshoe' was a site of negotiation between classic Fluxus and the new directions taken by individual artists. Thus, underfunded reconstructions by the schoolboy duo Blitzinformation, of early Fluxus events by Brecht, Schmit, Maciunas, and so on, were complemented with their own Flux-inspired research into average measurements around Hastings and a stylistic concept called 'fot'. The Taj Mahal Travellers performed interpretations of early Events, as well as creating their own piece, a 24-hour-long jam session at Beau Geste's farmhouse headquarters.

For some purposes, the events most characteristic of Fluxus' early days – those labelled by Maciunas as 'mono-structural neo-haiku' – are at an advantage over other, more complex performances, in that they have a particular portability. The nature of the classic Fluxus event – simple, funny, even elegant – is such that it creates its own atmosphere as part of the performance. The structure of events, based on the characteristic of being repeatable, yet unique, each time they are performed, also distinguishes them from other live actions – a knowingly in-built asset. It is one of the reasons that early Fluxus is so suited to historic exhibitions, because its intimate atmosphere can be conjured up by anyone willing to spend time, and a little effort, on their own version of Events: much of the potential therein comes from the score, the particular notation used to describe many Fluxus pieces.

Nevertheless, not all Fluxus pieces work in this fashion. Many straddle the borderline between subtle, intimate event and complex action, and it is presumably this mixture that David Mayor wished to promote in 'Fluxshoe'. The valuable openness and multivalence of the Fluxus Event, with instructions as flexible as they are specific, meant that, in 'Fluxshoe', Fluxus was allowed to live on and change form, evolving to suit the various personalities and circumstances of each situation. Occasionally the deviation was so radical that Fluxus may have been misrepresented: anyone who saw Ian Breakwell in Nottingham or Su Braden at Oxford has a different idea of Fluxus to that of Dick Higgins or others among the early Fluxus core. This is not necessarily a bad thing, particularly as few of that generation, or the subsequent generations of Young Fluxus propagated by Maciunas, Friedman, Block, *et al*, have ceased to elaborate personal styles of their own – each in varying proximity to their idea of flux. Giuseppe Chiari, when asked if he was still a Fluxus artist responded: 'How could I say no, from the moment that Fluxus is only a name. Fluxus is the most indefinite thing I know ...'<sup>17</sup>

The changing and varied interpretations were disseminated by two interconnected spheres of activity closely affiliated with Fluxus – Correspondence Art and small-press publishing both of which were inextricably associated with 'Fluxshoe'. The rise in popularity of Artists' books, an increasing use of the international postal system as medium, and the widespread diffusion of Fluxus ideas outside the gallery system occurred simultaneously but not coincidentally. Fluxus was formed around publishing, and sympathetic ideas were promoted from the beginning by efforts such as Vostell's *dé-collage* and Something Else Press. In the

1970s fluxion was encouraged by dozens of small presses across the world, which published a wide range of Fluxus-inspired work, or work by artists who still felt an affinity with Fluxus. From Albrecht d's heavily political *FlugFLUXblattzeitung* to Pawel Petasz's nomadic mail-art magazine *Commonpress*, variations of Fluxus ideas permeated the art world at a deliberately extra-institutional level. Only rarely did more commercial periodicals spread Fluxus ideas or widen the debate. *Flash Art* publisher Giancarlo Politi was a regular promoter of Fluxus ideas cooperating with Maciunas on publishing projects; commissioning Ben Vautier and other sympathetic individuals to contribute artists' pages; compiling a special edition on Fluxus, *Happenings and Performance* in 1978. This issue contained thoughtful commentaries by Higgins, Friedman and Charles Dreyfus, as well as pieces by Takako Saito, Alison Knowles and George Brecht, and texts by Flynt, Vostell and others. Earlier in the decade, Britain's *Art & Artists* had given an issue over to Fluxus, thereby priming a small audience for 'Fluxshoe'.<sup>18</sup> But it was usually the more specialised, even esoteric, magazines which showed support and extended the interpretation of Fluxus. From *Art Press* and *Source*, to the obscure *Spanner*, *Canal* or *AQ*, the audience was gradually extended and new connections formed.

Fluxus artists, with their accessibility, ad hoc attitudes, and ever-present humour were a very visible part of the small-press scene, and also quickly became legendary in Correspondence Art circles, which were rapidly developing across the world. Fluxus is consistently quoted as the chief influence on the manners, mores and morals of Correspondence Art, which admitted neither jury nor fee. Fluxus was initially constituted through letters, between people like Paik, Brecht or Watts; and several Fluxus artists, such as Higgins, de Ridder and even Maciunas, continued to operate in correspondence networks well into the 1970s. Associated artists as diverse as Anna Banana and Robin Crozier were connected to each other and to Fluxus by post. 'Fluxshoe' was quickly swamped with mail after the indefatigable Correspondence artist Klaus Groh successfully challenged David Mayor's definition of Fluxus. Groh's International Artists' Co-operation organisation was in many ways similar to the Beau Geste Press, but its international commitment meant a higher profile on the Correspondence Art scene, with the intermittent publication of information sheets, which acted as databases for mail-art activity. Such centres created a network of artists who shared the 'attitude towards art' identified as Fluxus.<sup>19</sup> They formed a community based on an international web, generating its own energy, which was a source of many alternatives from the conventional gallery system. Helped by Ken Friedman's compilation of a huge address list – one of a number which were circulated virtually freely, through which sympathetic individuals, institutions, publishers and collectives were all potentially connected. 'Fluxshoe' became one way of extending this network to the British provinces: admittance to the exhibition could, if so desired, mean more than simple visual access to published texts, or even sight of performances – themselves rare opportunities in 1972. With the almost guaranteed assistance of David Mayor, it would have been eminently possible for any casually inquisitive visitor to gain postal access to everyone concerned, to discuss live work with the artists present, to interact with the exhibition on a positive level – to enter the network, in short.

In the network, fluxion accelerated to the point where '[W]hatever one can say about Fluxus will have usually been true at one point or another ...'<sup>20</sup> It was a matter of 'innovated

perception', according to Mieko Shiomi,<sup>21</sup> or, as George Brecht aphorised the problem, 'if the flux fits, wear it'.<sup>22</sup>

What Fluxus was, who could or could not be considered Fluxus, where Fluxus had gone, all depended on whom one asked, and where they stood in relation to the polarising events of the 1960s. With the advent of another decade, however, a new generation of acolytes, artists, historians and fellow-travellers began to emerge, and in the 1980s, the territory was extended into a broader, more academic debate, shifting from personality and politics to identity and ideology.

## NOTES

- 1 Hanns Sohm and Harald Szeeman, eds, *Happenings and Fluxus*, Cologne, Kunstverein 1970.
- 2 Tomas Schmit, for example, wrote: 'every time I hear the words happening and fluxus together in the same breath, I shudder as if I saw a carp fuck a duck ...' in 'Free Fluxus Now', Special Issue of *Art and Artists*, vol 7, no. 7, issue 79 (October 1973).
- 3 The exhibition was accompanied by an elegant and exhaustive catalogue: Jon Hendricks, ed, *Fluxus Etc.: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, Bloomfield Hills MI, Cranbrook Academy of Art, 1981.
- 4 René Block and Anne Marie Freybourg, eds, *Wiesbaden Fluxus 1962–1982: Eine kleine Geschichte von Fluxus in drei Teilen*, Wiesbaden and Berlin, 1983.
- 5 Per Kirkeby, in Hendricks, ed, *Fluxus Etc.*, p 29.
- 6 Tomas Schmit, in Hendricks, ed, *Fluxus Etc.*
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Harry Ruhe, *Fluxus: The Most Radical and Experimental Art Movement of the Sixties*, Amsterdam, 'A', 1979.
- 9 *Fluxus International & Cie.*, Nice, 1979.
- 10 Review of performances at the Kitchen, New York, *Flash Art*, nos. 90–91 (July 1979), p 49.
- 11 Peter Frank, 'Fluxus Fallout', *Visible Language*, 26 (1992).
- 12 Friedman was responsible for Fluxus activity, exhibitions and archives or resource centres across America and Europe, including 'Fluxshoe', which is now held in the archives of the Tate Gallery, London, and Iowa University, among many others.
- 13 The infrastructure of the exhibition was designed by Martha Ehrenberg, and consisted of a series of cardboard screens which, in addition to reflecting the ad hoc nature of some Fluxus emanations, could be modulated to fit the many different kinds of space occupied by 'Fluxshoe'.
- 14 First performed at the 'Festival de la Libre Expression', Paris, 1964.
- 15 David Mayor, ed, *Fluxshoe*, Cullompton, 1972.
- 16 *Flash Art*, no. 38. Friedman's response was published in *Flash Art*, no. 40; David Mayor's response was not, I believe, published at all.
- 17 Giuseppe Chiari, interview with Helena Kontova, *Flash Art*, nos. 84–5 (October–November 1978).
- 18 *Free Fluxus Now*.
- 19 Ben Vautier's definition of Fluxus in *Flash Art*, nos. 84–5.
- 20 Friedman, *Flash Art*, nos. 84–5.
- 21 Mieko [Chieko] Shiomi, in Hendricks, ed, *Fluxus Etc.*
- 22 Brecht, *Flash Art*, nos. 84–5.

## HANNAH HIGGINS: FLUXUS FORTUNA

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Round and round it goes and where it stops nobody knows.

*George Brecht*<sup>1</sup>

Fluxus artist George Brecht has compared Fluxus to a Wheel of Fortune, as moving in place and time, as an object of some uncertainty whose stopping point is not yet clear. He is certainly not alone in the assignation of a gaming spirit to the group. There are many artists working in the rich tradition of Flux-games. Robert Filliou, for instance, made a spinner of twenty-four different hands and a dial in 1964. Filliou's wheel exposes the irony in Brecht's statement. Where the wheel of Fluxus stops is not the point, since the hands are both different and the same. Fixed ends, it seems, are anathema to the idea of 'fluxing' or flowing, as many Fluxus scholars and artists have pointed out over the years.

It does not follow, however, that Fluxus is anything and everything. In the words of Kristine Stiles, Fluxus is a 'voluntary association' of people.<sup>2</sup> As such, Fluxus is as diverse in its beliefs and practices as any sociality is. Thus, unless the artists are subject to an overriding ideological interpretation of their beliefs and actions, they will show themselves to be both highly pluralistic and in some form of communication (both by agreement and disagreement) with each other. Testimony for Brecht's truism lies in and around the variety of Fluxus activities described by my colleagues in the preceding two parts of this historical survey.

Clearly this sociological description of Fluxus is limited as to interpretive frameworks – this despite my using it in several other contexts over the years. For this construction only allows the group to be a group – another 'art clique'. What is more, the sociology of Fluxus does not begin to address the more significant issue of why we care about it. Stiles helps us to untangle the bigger issue here, of how this collective body engenders specific forms of art. She writes that 'Fluxus artists place their living bodies between the material and mental worlds . . . [which] negotiate degrees of human freedom in relations between the private and social worlds – directions that recall philosophical descriptions of the phenomenological character of the body as an instrument acting in the world'.<sup>3</sup> A provisional unpacking of these insightful lines would go something like this: as private individuals and members of a social grouping, the specific performance actions of Fluxus artists embody a range of potential experiences that connect them socially and philosophically to the world at large. It follows that, both by being Fluxus artists and by performing as a group in 'voluntary association' over time, layers of connections between 'the material and mental worlds' and the world at

large, are made. If this connectedness is turned to objects, Filliou's wheel, which is performative when a viewer turns it, embodies both an abstract conception of philosophical and experiential open-endedness, as well as a viable application of that concept in life lived.<sup>4</sup>

## STRUCTURE OF THE FLUXUS COMMUNITY: A HISTORICAL DIGRESSION

The elasticity and diversity of Fluxus gives us, I think, some idea of how this structural open-endedness might play itself out as a *modus operandi* of a group of artists. To understand this variability, some background in the sociology, politics and practices of Fluxus is necessary.

As Owen Smith noted in his survey of early Fluxus, the experimental composer John Cage taught a course in musical composition at the New School for Social Research in New York City in 1958. Several artists (later identified with Fluxus) attended the course. In particular, George Brecht interpreted Cage's idea of ambient sound as music – his Silence – and invented the event type of performance. In the Event, an instruction may be realised in the mind of the reader as an idea or, conversely, as live performance with or without an audience. For example, Brecht's Word event (1961) consists of the word 'Exit'. Word event can be realised in the placement of an Exit sign, the making of one, the reading of an existing sign in a public place, or the imagining of possible realisations. Since the majority of Fluxus performances to the present moment contain events like this one, one can sketch a community of Fluxus performance back to the Cage class and the various groups that formed temporarily around that time. Significantly, as the activities of various performers vary over time, the nature of the event varies as well – artists have sent letters, made salads, projected fantasies about climbing into the vaginas of live whales, and watched the sky – all this under the deceptively simple rubric of the Event. Clearly the event format is highly flexible – as its various manifestations by different artists clearly suggests.

The community of artists that expanded on the implications of work developed in the Cage class would include, in the late 1950s, the New York Audio-Visual Group (Al Hansen and Dick Higgins), the participants in a series of performances organised by La Monte Young and Yoko Ono at her loft in what would become SoHo, and, from 1964 to 1972, the activities of the Something Else Press, in New York, Los Angeles and Vermont. In addition, a European wing of Fluxus was developing, though from different roots. European activities included not only the various Fluxus-titled and other concerts and festivals, but also many of the activities around the German artist Wolf Vostell's Cologne-based magazine, *De-Coll|age: Bulletin Aktueller Ideen* (1962–1969).

The setting in Cologne is significant. Since the early 1950s the serial composer Karlheinz Stockhausen had been at the centre of avant-garde music and performance. His composition course in Darmstadt and his work at the electronic music studio of WDR in Cologne, as well as the influential performance atelier of his wife, Mary Bauermeister, also in Cologne, suggest a point of receptivity for later Fluxus work there. Stockhausen worked with Fluxus artists Nam June Paik and Ben Patterson in a series of historic concerts at Bauermeister's atelier, and when Cage visited Cologne in 1960, these artists performed what would become Fluxus pieces originally written for his composition class.

[Bauermeister] organised a 'Contre-Festival', to be held in Cologne over four days in June ... The performances included works by John Cage, Toshi Ichihyanagi, Sylvano Bussotti, George Brecht, La Monte Young and Christian Wolff – performed by David Tudor – as well as two concerts by Nam June Paik ... [In October] Merce Cunningham and Carolyn Brown danced to pieces by John Cage, Christian Wolff, Earle Brown, Toshi Ichihyanagi and Bo Nilsson, performed by David Tudor and John Cage. One day later, again in the attic studio, one heard and saw compositions by Cage, La Monte Young and Paik – the interpreters were Cornelius Cardew, Hans G. Helms, David Tudor and Benjamin Patterson.<sup>5</sup>

Given these precedents it is not surprising that when George Maciunas was organising the first Fluxus-titled concerts for a German tour in 1962, he contacted Mary Bauermeister to see if she might host a Fluxus concert in her atelier.<sup>6</sup> Maciunas also listed Stockhausen in the first four lists of possible contributors to his *Fluxus* magazine.<sup>7</sup>

However, these overtures to Stockhausen represented a degree of compromise on Maciunas' part. Paik, who had studied with Stockhausen and who performed in the Bauermeister atelier, aided Maciunas in organising the first festivals identified with the name Fluxus, so Maciunas' connection to Stockhausen results in part from Paik's professional debt to him.<sup>8</sup> Correspondence during 1962 between Paik and Maciunas confirms this claim. Paik supported Stockhausen's inclusion in *Fluxus* magazine on the grounds of this debt and the merit of his work, while Maciunas criticised Stockhausen's professional ambition. This early disagreement as to Stockhausen's relevance suggests that Fluxus might later be divided with regard to Stockhausen.

And divided it was when Stockhausen's multimedia opera *Originale* was performed at Charlotte Moorman's 1964 Annual New York Festival of the Avant-Garde. On one side of the divide, a 'list of participants' in the concert programme names Fluxus members Nam June Paik, Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low, Joe Jones and George Brecht as performers and exhibitors. On the other side of the divide, there is a photograph showing Fluxus members Ben Vautier, Takako Saito, George Maciunas and Henry Flynt protesting against the same concert.<sup>9</sup> Contributing to the confusion, at least two artists – Dick Higgins and Allan Kaprow – both demonstrated against and performed in the concert, indicating a high degree of fluidity between the choice of entering or not.<sup>10</sup>

In contradistinction to this pluralistic situation, the press described a uniformly activist Fluxus. For example, *Time* magazine reported on the demonstrators:

The opening at Judson Hall could not have been more auspicious; it was picketed by a rival group calling itself 'Fluxus,' bearing signs: 'Fight the rich man's snob art.'<sup>11</sup>

Albeit from the other side of the political spectrum, *The Nation* responded in similarly homogeneous terms, where "they" means Fluxus:

They are also against 'the rich U.S. cretins [Leonard] Bernstein and [Benny] Goodman.' Their aim is to promote jazz ('black music') and not to promote more art ('there is too much already').<sup>12</sup>

It is accurate to say that both articles about the demonstration imply a point of contact between one faction of Fluxus – consisting of the demonstrators – and the press, who describe the actions of the demonstrators as indicative of a group ideology: 'Fluxus, bearing signs' against 'rich cretins'. Thus the coverage of the demonstration, while originating from

very different ideological orientations, reflects the demonstrators' version of Fluxus as a united, politically motivated and anti-art group. Not surprisingly, this version of Fluxus constitutes the ideational core of how Fluxus has been historically defined. For simplicity's sake, the term 'Maciunas-based paradigm' can be applied to this framework, since this model defines Fluxus exclusively in terms of Maciunas and his politics.

That this paradigm is overly reductive is apparent even beyond the sociology of the group as it has been mapped out so far. Even where the collective and anti-art elements of Fluxus initially seem the most uniform, as in Maciunas' political demonstrations, there is considerable internal variation. The Stockhausen demonstrators called their initiative an 'Action Against Cultural Imperialism' – a title invented by Henry Flynt, who describes himself as tangential to Fluxus. Because Maciunas adopted Flynt's title, the name of the demonstration itself represents a variation in nomenclature that suggests multiplicity even within Maciunas' sense of the group, despite the identification of the demonstration with the name Fluxus in the press. Similarly, since all Fluxus members who participated in the concert faced expulsion from Fluxus by order of Maciunas, and since demonstrators did not face that threat, the demonstration functioned as a site of difference within Fluxus, as it did in Maciunas' mind<sup>13</sup>

This paradox discloses the core tension within the Maciunas-based paradigm. The political core of Fluxus, even if it were located within the single person of Maciunas, is highly unstable. This discrepancy within Maciunas' vision did not, however, result in ideational flexibility on his part. His attitudes were rigid and his behaviour occasionally tyrannical. Thus, while one might argue for variability within his internal logic – a variability that would make a change in nomenclature necessary on the occasion of the Stockhausen concert – those artists who took offense at Maciunas' dictatorial behaviour failed to perceive such flexibility.

More importantly, the Stockhausen incident suggests a model for thinking about Fluxus as politically multiple and socially elastic in terms of its avant-garde heritage. Each artist had three options – to demonstrate against Stockhausen and thereby to maintain ties to Maciunas (though the former would not necessarily be predicated by a desire for the latter), to participate in the concert and thereby maintain a group identification that preceded identification with Maciunas, and to do both, thereby occupying a dynamic middle ground. If each option is transferred to a definition of Fluxus, then the first would illustrate the Maciunas-based paradigm which, as I have stated, locates Maciunas at the fulcrum of Fluxus; the second – a historically based definition of the group – allows for some other contemporary (to the 1960s) practice, as embodied in the person of Stockhausen; and the third – a present model – where the historic ties preclude but do not necessarily preempt current and future identification. Since Fluxus is still active today in varying degrees, it is the last approach that is the most historically accurate.

The same pattern of options exists elsewhere. The people participating in or attending the Stockhausen concert – the anti-demonstrators – correspond almost exactly to those involved in an earlier dispute within Fluxus. The controversy around *Fluxus News-Policy-Letter No. 6*, dated 6 April 1963 and written by Maciunas, sparked a legendary Flux-battle. Where earlier newsletters had referred to organisational details regarding specific concerts or projects, this letter detailed an ideologically determined series of propaganda actions such as sabotaging museums and the New York postal service. It was also the first newsletter to combine the

terms 'Fluxus' and 'Policy' in the title, so it pretended to speak for the group as 'Fluxus' while it described a 'Proposed Propaganda Action for November Fluxus in N.Y.C.' This action, while only 'proposed', nevertheless indicated a potential intersection of policy and practice that was precisely terrorist and identified with the group name Fluxus.

The responses of members to *Fluxus News-Policy-Letter No. 6* were generally negative. Jackson Mac Low, for instance, wrote a lengthy critique dated 25 April 1962:

I'm not opposed to serious culture – quite the contrary. I'm all for it & I hope & consider that my own work is a genuine contribution to it ... [N]o blunderbuss attack against culture (serious or otherwise) as a whole ... will do anything to remedy what's wrong in the present situation. I am not at all against art or music or drama or literature, old or new. I'm against the overbalance of museum culture ... as against present-minded and presently 'useful' cultural activities and would certainly like to see the balance tipped the other way, but I would not want to eliminate museums (I like museums).<sup>14</sup>

Similar sentiments are echoed in other letters to Maciunas from, among others, George Brecht, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik and Tomas Schmit. A letter to Dick Higgins and Alison Knowles indicated Maciunas' opinion of these responses. He wrote:

I do not understand your statement (& Jackson's) that 'there is no point in antagonizing the very people and classes that we are most interested in converting.' Terrorism that is very clearly directed ... can reduce the attendance of the masses to these decadent institutions. We will increase the chance that they will turn their attention to Fluxus.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of the saboteur's agenda laid out here, to 'understand' would mean to accept the equivocal positions against *Fluxus News-Policy-Letter No. 6*, which assumed a uniformly oppressive relationship between all cultural institutions and the unenlightened public. Mac Low's criticism of the newsletter's policy suggested, on the other hand, that this relationship is not necessarily oppressive, although it may be in some cases, and that an effective critique of it does not necessarily extend to its destruction. The criticism of the newsletter's policy contradicts both Maciunas' ideology and the uniform radicalism traditionally ascribed to avant-gardes, where artistically expressed social or aesthetic criticism metamorphoses into a critique specifically aimed at the institutions of art.<sup>16</sup>

Other responses indicated a multivalent politics of Fluxus. A letter from Maciunas to Emmett Williams, Daniel Spoerri and Robert Filliou describes the situation:

Brecht blew his top off because proposals were getting too terroristic and aggressive, Henry Flynt thought they were too 'artistic,' too much 'serious culture' as he calls it. Jackson Mac Low thought they were not serious enough. Each is pulling in different directions ...<sup>17</sup>

In a transparent attempt to diffuse the situation, Maciunas wrote in the next newsletter that:

This Newsletter 6 was not intended as a decision, settled plan or dictate, but rather as a synthetic proposal or rather a signal, stimulus to start a discussion among, and an invitation for proposals from – the recipients.<sup>18</sup>

If we are to take Maciunas at his word here, then *Fluxus News-Policy-Letter No. 6* intended to generate a polyvocal Fluxus. However, such democratic interests, if they ever existed, were clearly temporary.

When the demonstration flier against Stockhausen employed the same terminology as the earlier *Fluxus News-Policy-Letter No. 6*, it naturally irritated many of the same people. The flier called for all radical thinkers to protest against Stockhausen in the interests of non-racist, revolutionary thinking; according to an over-determined identification of Stockhausen with philosopher Theodor Adorno's anti-ethnic claims for the separation of modern art and mass culture. Maciunas probably knew, or might have anticipated, that this language would activate the conflicts created by the newsletter a year earlier.

Maciunas charted these conflicts in his 'Fluxus (Its Historical Development and Relationship to Avant-Garde Movements)', which marks the expulsion of several of these artists at precisely those moments when they challenged his leadership of Fluxus. These artists' names appear under the rubric 'Fluxus Group' above the year 1961 marked at the bottom of the chart. A vertical line concludes the memberships of Jackson Mac Low, Tomas Schmit and Emmett Williams in 1963, the year of the newsletter controversy. Later exclusions, this time of Philip Corner, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Ben Patterson, Nam June Paik and Kosugi, occur in 1964, the year of the Stockhausen incident. Finally, a prehistory for Fluxus appears in the historic section to the far left of the chart, which establishes a history for Fluxus in jokes, gags, collage, the historic avant-garde and Brutism, among other things. With a basis in movements and activities traditionally described as uniformly outside of modernist traditions, this pre-history prefigures the exclusion of artists who chose a complex relationship, as opposed to a merely reactive one, to those traditions.

However, all of the eliminated artists participated in later Fluxus events, meaning that they continued to work with other Fluxus artists, including Maciunas. This situation suggests that Maciunas attempted to purge Fluxus in order to realise the ideal of a 'united front' of Fluxus, but that he never had the power to permanently expel anyone. Thus, although this graph is misleading as an index of those working within the group, it does index relative adherence to Maciunas' position.

What is more, the chart shows ideological placement and positions Fluxus within a historical avant-garde thematic. Accordingly, Maciunas' activist vision, his dynamic conception of the relationship between the historic and contemporary avant-garde, and his ability to define this relationship for a given member, determined Fluxus membership. The diagonal lines of influence that move along the timeline into and out of Fluxus imply the historicist aspect of this determinacy. This chart is, therefore, the graphic equivalent of Maciunas' representation of Fluxus to the world as a historically validated form of avant-garde activism. If these judgements are taken for truth, the chart is also a justification for the historicist aspect of the Maciunas-based paradigm, which ends with his death – the last judgement.

The activist and united features of Maciunas' representation of the group to the media, as demonstrated in the media coverage of the Stockhausen incident, as well as the subsequent exclusion of work that was inconsistent with this representation, may explain why critics in the United States then and now take a point of view that corresponds to Maciunas' very public publications, advertisements, and demonstrations. For example, although several artists have exhibited in galleries prior to and during their association with Fluxus, and even though the first Fluxus concert in Germany took place in a museum concert-hall, *Artforum* critic Melissa Harris wrote that 'though the opportunity to see this superb work is more than

welcome, this exhibition is inevitably somewhat problematic, given that the gallery context feels antithetical to ... the work'.<sup>19</sup> The inevitability of the work's being 'antithetical' to the gallery setting suggests that this critic has internalised the vision of Fluxus established by Maciunas. As the various examples in this introduction suggest, Fluxus is inevitably problematic in, but not antithetical to, the gallery setting. Furthermore, the comparison of early and recent criticism indicates that what critics applaud today – the anti-institutional antics of Fluxus implied by Harris – is precisely what most frustrated critics in the 1960s.

In conclusion, the anti-institutional reading by critics reflects a version of Fluxus constructed by Maciunas and supported by some Fluxus artists. What remains to be seen, however, is the relationship between the values implicit in this reading and a broader context – more specifically, the place of this reading in the socio-political climate of the world today. Fluxus is simultaneously a diverse and deeply committed group of artists who disagree on much, but who continue to find each other's company valuable, useful and fertile. The only way to understand Fluxus today is to accept this untidy ideological and practical package. Few curators or critics are willing to do so, and as they seek to homogenise, delimit and contain Fluxus work, they do a certain kind of violence to its most noteworthy success – its endurance over time and its ability to sustain difference within itself as a source of vitality.

## RECENT FLUXUS

There is no disputing that interest – both from the artists and public – in Fluxus waned somewhat throughout the 1970s. Indeed, many Fluxus artists developed successful independent careers throughout that decade – Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell and Yoko Ono all come to mind. As the 1970s drew to a close, however, Fluxus came together once again as a community alliance, certainly in part owing to the death of George Maciunas. Thus, since my period in this three-part chronology of Fluxus incorporates elements from immediately prior to the memorial events and publications following Maciunas' death from pancreatic cancer in 1978, to the anniversary festivals of 1982 and 1992, the time-frame of this section is not properly Fluxus for those people who effectively close the historical narrative at 1978. It is this author's opinion, however, that Fluxus continues to exist, because Fluxus artists continue to choose each other as collaborators and muses. However, outside forces such as publishers, curators and enthusiasts of Fluxus have also played significant roles in creating contexts within which this remarkable group of artists can continue to survive as a body politic.

### Italy

The role outside forces in helping to maintain the vitality of Fluxus is especially strong in the Italian and German contexts. Notably, the publishing venture called *Pari & Dispari*, which was run by the collector and dealer Rosanna Chiesi in the 1970s in Reggio-Emilia, Italy, consisted essentially of a rambling house, courtyard and delapidated barn where artists could go and produce editions. Not just Fluxus artists, but also Hermann Nitsch (of Vienna Actionism) and others, could be found living and working at Reggio-Emilia often for several weeks or months during a larger sojourn. The editions were often difficult to produce, and

occasionally work was stretched out over several years, requiring artists to make several return trips. In this manner, Pari & Dispari constituted an artists' community that consisted in large part of artists associated with Fluxus. It played a pivotal role in the continuation of the Fluxus community and continues to do so today as a relocated and renamed Fondazione Chiesi in Capri.

Also pivotal in understanding the backbone of activity throughout the 1970s is the comparatively larger function of Conz Editions, run by Francesco Conz in Verona, Italy. For several Fluxus artists, Fluxus in the 1970s was held together by Conz, a committed publisher, collector and publicist for the group. Like Chiesi, Conz has an interest in other groups; Viennese Aktionismus (Austria), Gruppe Zaj (Spain) and the artists of Image Bank (Canada) are all arguably linked to the greater community of Fluxus through the concept of intermedia (meaning work that falls between traditional media, such as visual poems and so on).<sup>20</sup> In particular, Conz has produced close collaborations with individual Fluxus artists, as well as with the entire group. While Conz at one time produced paper editions, his most significant contribution has been the translation on to large cloth panels of a wide range of Fluxus artists' work such as games, recipes and object images, under the name Edizione Francesco Conz.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to these editions, Conz has explored the individual identity of each artist in his commissioning of artist 'fetish' objects. These are collections of performance detritus and articles from the lives of Fluxus artists that were not originally intended for exhibition. With a wink toward the self-deprecating stance of many collectors that is often coupled with a strong desire to interact in the lives of the artists they collect, these objects exemplify Conz's close personal relationship with a remarkably broad range of Fluxus artists. Significantly, Henry Martin, an American expatriate, critic and supporter of Fluxus, has written in several contexts for Conz as well and has produced a significant commentary on George Brecht's *Book of the Tumbler on Fire*.<sup>22</sup> For the anniversary year of 1992, Martin organised a Bolzano Fluxus, called rather fetchingly 'Fluxers', which moved to Molvena, Italy, under the auspices of the Fluxus collector Luigi Bonotto. For that exhibition, Martin curated a print portfolio by twelve Fluxus artists.

These examples alone suggest that Italy has produced extensive and expansive support for Fluxus since the mid-1970s, when Conz and Chiesi became highly active. The greatest degree of visibility for Fluxus in Italy, and perhaps in the international art world, came through the exhibition 'Ubi Fluxus, ibi Motus', which occupied a pavilion at the 1990 Venice Biennale. Gino DiMaggio, a major and comparatively recent supporter of Fluxus whose MuDiMa Museum in Milan features Fluxus, coordinated the exhibition and published a catalogue for the show. Achille Bonito Oliva, a well-known Italian curator and historian of the avant-garde, curated the show. His curatorial statement in the catalogue suggests that an Italian heritage, namely, Futurism and the Italian Renaissance, was as essential for Fluxus as the more commonly evoked German Dadaism. 'The synthesis of the arts', he wrote, 'is an ancient aspiration of the modern avant-gardes, ranging from Futurism to Dadaism, but it was also included in the classical dimensions of the Italian Renaissance.'<sup>23</sup>

In contrast to this primarily historic justification for Fluxus, the 'Presentazione', or opening statement, by Giovanni Carandente, suggests a point of entry specifically aimed at the Maciunas problem. He writes:

To push Fluxus toward the twenty-first century means to grasp the group's anti-historicist spirit. Hence the decision to invert history, the chronology and the itinerary of the exhibition: not from 1962 to 1990 but from 1990 to 1962. *In this way prejudices favouring noble fathers or the past do not exist.* It is the present that becomes the point of departure.<sup>24</sup>

While this statement attempts to eradicate the historicity of Fluxus, it does reflect the 'futurist' impulse of the historic avant-garde, which attempted to break with the past to reinvent the present, and, by extension, to redefine possibilities for the future. Perhaps because there was comparatively little Fluxus activity in Italy in the 1960s, the contemporary present dominates the catalogue almost entirely, insofar as Oliva theorises Fluxus as a reverse chronology of practices that looks to the past without being determined by it. The elastic social frameworks that underlie Fluxus practice, particularly as located in the contexts of Italy (through Conz and Chiesi), supports such a reading.

In summary, 'Ubi Fluxus, ibi Motus' as a whole conveyed the palpable diversity within Fluxus by emphasising present work in the exhibition and a mix of present and historic work in the catalogue. The latter tries to historicise the present moment of Fluxus while the group's ongoing internal dialogue creates tension within the historic framework. Thus, in the same catalogue, the Fluxus artist Joe Jones stated that 'Fluxus = Maciunas = Fluxus = Maciunas = Fluxus',<sup>25</sup> while Henry Flynt writes that 'Late Fluxus extends through the Eighties to the present'.<sup>26</sup>

### The United States

This account of Fluxus since the 1970s would not be complete, however, without due mention of the very extensive support of Fluxus given by Ken Friedman, Fluxus artist and editor of this anthology, first in the form of Fluxus West in California and later from the seat of his professorship in Oslo, Norway. There have been others. Bill Gaglioni, for instance, runs the Stamp Art Gallery in San Francisco and has given consistent support to Fluxus works since the 1970s.

Given this continued productivity, it is surprising that the definition of Fluxus established in the 1970s in the mainstream American art press continues to determine the nature of the most visible Fluxus collection in the United States, the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection, housed in Detroit, Michigan and New York City. The Silverman Collection is organised and curated by Jon Hendricks, a friend, collaborating artist and supporter of Fluxus since the mid-1960s. The Silverman Collection is the only collection in the world based solely on the Maciunas-based paradigm for Fluxus. In an article called 'Aspects of Fluxus from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection', Hendricks describes Fluxus as Maciunas' project:

At its inception, Fluxus was intended by George Maciunas to be a publication ... Following are several quotations taken from George Maciunas' letters to various Fluxus artists which clearly demonstrate the underlying political purpose of Fluxus.<sup>27</sup>

This proprietary perspective has determined the content of five catalogues, two of which are available to the general public as definitive materials about Fluxus. Four of the Silverman Collection catalogues are mainly listings of the collection's holdings along with useful reproductions of the collection's primary materials and Maciunas' publications. Typical of

the process of artistic canonisation, the collection's 'Fluxus'-titled materials narrow with each new publication, as non-'Fluxus' work is increasingly excluded. As might be expected, the production values of each catalogue also increases according to the prestige of the publishing house or museum.

The first catalogue, *Fluxus Etc.*, is comparatively open in its inclusion of materials that fall outside of Hendricks' definition – what he calls 'etc.'<sup>28</sup> Cranbrook Academy in Michigan produced this catalogue using cheap materials such as newsprint and no-gloss card stock. The statement on the Cranbrook flier, which accompanied the book and exhibition, notes that the vitality of Fluxus lay largely outside of Maciunas' domain. The 'etc.' in the catalogue title, therefore, reflects Hendricks' early attempt to include material outside of his own strict definition of Fluxus, and to which he attributed much of the group's energy.<sup>29</sup>

*Fluxus Etc., Addenda I* followed the Cranbrook catalogue. Also printed on newsprint, it represents a definition of Fluxus that privileges Maciunas materials; roughly 10 percent of the book consists of a transcript of a deathbed interview between Maciunas and Larry Miller, and the other 90 percent of the book contains reproductions of newsletters and proposals almost exclusively by Maciunas.<sup>30</sup>

The third publication of the Silverman Collection, *Fluxus Etc., Addenda II*, appeared under the auspices of the prestigious Baxter Art Gallery in Pasadena, California.<sup>31</sup> *Addenda II* appeared a few months after *Addenda I*. Its production values are higher still, the print appearing on a higher grade of paper and with a heavy, glossy stock cover on which appears Maciunas' 'Purge Manifesto', which was never signed by Fluxus artists. This final edition of the *Etc.* and *Addenda* catalogues marks the endpoint in the gradual process of equating Fluxus with Maciunas and packaging Fluxus for the art world in increasingly luxurious publications and through decreasingly marginal institutions. The glossy red cover of *Addenda II*, which is also a reproduction of Maciunas' manifesto, signifies the union of these elements both conceptually and physically.

Albeit not a catalogue of a particular collection *per se*, a sixth publication on Fluxus belongs to the lineage of Silverman catalogues, in part because Hendricks effectively co-authored it, and in part because it reaffirms his bias within the more general world of commercial publishers, in this case Thames and Hudson. In the unambiguously titled *Fluxus* (published in 1995), roughly two-thirds of the images derive from the Silverman collection (versus one-third from Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart).<sup>32</sup> The lead essay, curator Thomas Kellein's 'I Make Jokes! Fluxus Through the Eyes of "Chairman" George Maciunas', offers the reader quotations that seem to undermine the absolute category of 'chairman'. However, the work shown merely reasserts what has clearly become the dominant framework of Fluxus in English-language publications.

The same development occurs in the publicity for each museum and thus in the reviews of each show. Commentators repeatedly bring up the paradox of Maciunas' stated politics versus the institutionalisation of Fluxus. In 1983 an exhibition flier for the now defunct Neuberger Museum at the State University of New York at Purchase presented a version of Fluxus that mirrored Maciunas' historicist vanguard iconoclasm and politics:

Fluxus was an international art movement founded by George Maciunas in the early 1960s. Inspired by such art movements as futurism and dada, the artists, poets, musicians and dancers who embraced Fluxus were held together by the idea of an art

for every man, a non-academic art, which encompassed satire and humour in order to poke fun at materialism, 'fine art,' and even itself through a series of exhibitions, festivals ... etc.<sup>33</sup>

The *New York Times* reviewed the show, making the predictable observation of the paradox of Maciunas' anti-institutional stance (taken as a Fluxus stance) and the work's institutional viability: 'One of the ironies of our time is that throwaway art becomes archivable, collectible, pricey (A Fluxus Year Box 2 ... would now fetch \$250) and institutionally embraceable.'<sup>34</sup> More importantly, a reviewer of the Pasadena stop of the same exhibition, taking note of the transformation of Fluxus from (what it is) a chaotic entity to (what it is not) compatible with the basic tenets of modernist art history, stated that, 'the practice of art history abhors a messy drawer in the art kitchen ... so the territory of the utter chaos known as Fluxus has begun to be straightened out'.

The art-historical project was successful, if a highly legible show in 1988 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York is any indication. The publication produced for that exhibition, 'Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection', contained an essay by the museums' book curator Clive Phillpot, written in the mid-1980s, 'Fluxus: Magazines, Manifestos, Multum in Parvo'. The essay defines Fluxus by way of the unsigned manifesto produced by Maciunas before the first Fluxus-titled festival in Wiesbaden in 1962. As with *Addenda II*, the 1962 Manifesto is physically and conceptually fused with the name Fluxus, as it appears on the inside cover of the title page of the catalogue – a symbolic and material fusion of the single word 'Fluxus' on the title page with the manifesto verso. Phillpot writes: 'The aims of Fluxus, as set out in the Manifesto of 1963, are extraordinary, but connect with the radical ideas fermenting at the time.'<sup>35</sup>

The movement of this version of Fluxus into the mainstream of art-historical consciousness in the United States, while virtually guaranteed by the Museum of Modern Art show, made further inroads with the first deluxe coffee-table book of Fluxus, *Fluxus Codex*, published by Harry Abrams in 1988. The appeal of the show for MoMA appears to have come in part from the future Abrams publication as indicated by a letter from Hendricks to the museum.<sup>36</sup> The affirmative response came from Clive Phillpot, whose library had exhibition space. The main galleries had been previously slated for exhibitions.

Like the Stockhausen reporters, critics either praised the ensuing exhibit by using a predictably narrow political framework, or, conversely, criticised the exhibition (correctly) for lacking vitality, given the same historicist perspective. What matters most is that the premise of the show was overly narrow and therefore anathema to the vital pluralism of Fluxus. For example, Catherine Liu's review in *Artforum* objected to the placement of the show in the MoMA library: 'The do-it-yourself wackiness of the objects might have been lost in an over-aestheticised setting, but that is no reason to marginalise the work by stuffing it into the vestibule of a library.'<sup>37</sup>

Independent curator and critic Robert Morgan described it differently:

One of the delights at seeing this exhibition is that it's in the Library of the Museum of Modern Art and not in the regular exhibition space. This makes the show somewhat of an adventure. One gets the opportunity to hunt, to peer around the card catalogues and to look between the shelved books on reserve. Fluxus emphasised such an approach.<sup>38</sup>

Morgan explicitly addresses the problem of Maciunas' role as organiser and 'central figure'

in the production of these multiples. The question of other work, therefore, remains open for discussion, since Morgan asserts Maciunas' centrality by comparing him to the central figure of an earlier movement: 'Through it all it was clear that George Maciunas was the central figure. His relationship to Fluxus was comparable to Breton's relationship to Surrealism.'<sup>39</sup>

Like the MoMA catalogue and *Addenda II*, the *Codex* begins with a fusion of the name Fluxus and the Maciunas-based paradigm by means of two photos of Maciunas' studio from 1969 on two pages preceding the main title page of the book. The *Fluxus Codex*, a *catalogue raisonné* of Fluxus projects linked to Maciunas either by mention in a letter or in his project notes, functions as an index of that portion of Fluxus activity, although it contains no scholarly or interpretive writing *per se*. The book's objective or scientific quality may obscure the specific nature of its curatorial system.

Bruce Altschuler notes this problem in his critique of the *Codex* that appeared in *Arts Magazine* in 1989. Altschuler's simple misgivings about the book produce a critique not only of the book but also of the Silverman Collection, which sponsored the book. In the concluding statements Altschuler notes that

Restricting Fluxus to Maciunas-related material, then, creates an arbitrary division within the work of many artists. More importantly, to follow Maciunas in taking a narrow view of Fluxus is to limit our understanding of its significance. For much of the importance of Fluxus lies in its connections with the art of its time, both as influence and as concurrent expression.<sup>40</sup>

By the same token, where a community-based and multiple understanding of Fluxus existed in American institutions, it was systematically obscured. Eric Vos, the organiser of the Jean Brown Collection of the Getty Centre for the History of Art and the Humanities, radically restructured the collection to accommodate the Maciunas-based paradigm. This reconfiguration reflects Brown's understanding of Fluxus, though not of her collection. Brown recalled the beginnings of her collection in terms that define Fluxus as Maciunas' project: 'If I was going to do Fluxus, I would have to have lots of objects, because George made them all.'<sup>41</sup> She continues, 'I wanted the history, the background, very good archival material . . . *I don't think I was rigid about that at all.*'<sup>42</sup> Eric Vos, on the other hand, organised Brown's materials at the Getty, stating:

[T]he previous 'Fluxus Archive,' which appeared to have been organised on the basis of Jean Brown's original files, also included many files labelled 'Non-Fluxus events' etc., containing non-Fluxus work by Fluxus artists.

But, he continues:

[S]ince the demarcation of Fluxus as a group of artists (rather than as a canon of works) has meanwhile been 'codified,' with Jon Hendricks' Fluxus Codex . . . the Fluxus Codex formed the basis of the organisation of this series.<sup>43</sup>

To date, few scholars have used the archive extensively, since the Getty requires notice and invitations to use the materials. However, the Getty Archive does constitute the second-largest Fluxus holding in this country, and its restructuring according to the Maciunas-based paradigm is not without its implications. First, the centralising principle has simplicity, which we saw in the formation of the Silverman programme. Second, other institutions have adopted that programme because of its organisational appeal.

The Maciunas-based paradigm also determined the basis of Elizabeth Armstrong's and Joan Rothfuss' curatorship of 'In the Spirit of Fluxus', which opened at the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis in 1992. After Minneapolis, the show followed an extensive itinerary, including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Wexner Centre for the Visual Arts in Columbus, Ohio, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Santa Monica Museum and the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona. As the most visible and largest exhibition to date in the world, 'In the Spirit of Fluxus' has defined Fluxus for most people for the immediate future.

Based primarily on the Silverman Collection and therefore essentially unable to be critical of the Collection's curatorial policy, the curators limited the bulk of the show to work produced during Maciunas' lifetime in general and to the 1960s in particular. This principle led to significant omissions, particularly of those artists who differed with Maciunas on issues of policy or practice in the early 1960s. Most notable among these exclusions were Philip Corner, Dick Higgins, Jackson Mac Low and Wolf Vostell, to name only a few. Albeit gesturing toward new work by other Fluxus artists in the form of interactive sound installations by Yoshi Wada and Alison Knowles, what there was of recent work was left floundering in contrast to the simple narrative of the rest of the show.<sup>44</sup>

Significantly, the Walker symposium, 'Fluxus Publicus', in February 1993, made noteworthy efforts at broadening this scope. Fluxus scholar Karen Moss, who now works for the Walker, described the California Fluxus projects; 'I treated Fluxus variability in New York; Eric Andersen discussed the movement of Fluxus throughout Europe before and after Maciunas as *Intermedia*; and Alexandra Munroe examined the nature of Fluxus in Japan. In this manner, the exhibition organisers made space for opposition within the ranks of their scholarly format. The dominant narrative reigned, however, in the material document of the exhibition – its catalogue, *In the Spirit of Fluxus*. With the exception of Kristine Stiles' analysis of the event 'Between Water and Stone' (already cited in the introduction to this article) and Andreas Huyssen's 'Back to the Future: Fluxus in Context', each article in that volume confirmed a point of view established by the majority of exhibition artefacts.<sup>45</sup>

In conclusion, the version of Fluxus that dominates in the American context affirms the mythology of Fluxus as it was perpetuated by Maciunas since the 1960s. The ideological definition is activist, but narrow politically. In stylistic terms, Fluxus is rather traditionally iconoclastic, made of ephemeral materials and fragments of existing matter. Finally, Fluxus functions socially as a benevolent dictatorship ruled singularly by Maciunas and is suspiciously devoid of messy social terms like internal argument, ideological differentiation and stylistic breadth. What is more, by locating Fluxus almost exclusively in the 1960s, this dominant model systematically upends any possibility of Fluxus artists surviving economically as a group, since it makes the viability of current Fluxus work as 'Fluxus' untenable. For this reason, the Maciunas-based paradigm of Fluxus is both historically inaccurate and morally indefensible.

## THE ANNIVERSARY EVENTS OF 1992

Much of what I have written here concerns the written history of Fluxus. The viability of Fluxus through the present moment relies, however, on the physical evidence of work made by

Fluxus artists as Fluxus art. While there are important differences between early and recent Fluxus work, looking at current work by Fluxus artists allows for a highly elastic representation of the self-construction of Fluxus artists today. For this reason, the last section of this survey of 'Fluxus Fortuna' is told through the 1992 anniversary exhibitions and performance festivals of the 1962 concerts in Europe. Significantly, 'In the Spirit of Fluxus' was included in the remarks on the United States because it belongs essentially to an unproblematic absorption of the Maciunas-based paradigm, whereas the other festivals did not.

In summary, the recent fortunes of Fluxus can be described using the anniversary events of 1992.<sup>46</sup> After a description of three of these ('Fluxattitudes' in New York City, 'Fluxus Virus' in Cologne, and 'Excellent "92"' in Wiesbaden-Erbenheim, Germany, and Copenhagen, Denmark), I will address some current work by Fluxus artists as an aspect of Fluxus Fortuna. This is, I hope, a manner of approach appropriate to Fluxus Fortuna – the fortune of Fluxus, or its history – through its contemporary manifestations. That these works were chosen by Fluxus artists to represent themselves as Fluxus artists mitigates against the objection that these are not Fluxus works. They certainly are, although there are works by Fluxus artists that do not necessarily 'belong to' Fluxus. It was because of Owen Smith's insight that I have placed these comparative descriptions at the end of the essay – to end, as it were, at the beginning. Thanks, Owen.

### **Excellent**

Storming the doors of the Good Buy Supermarket, mauling the shelves for bargains and barrelling to the cash registers, the surging throng resembled an open-admission rock concert more than a market place or an art opening. Neither brand name 'Excellent Festival' shopping bags and register receipts, nor UPI codes on all the products made this market super – at least not in their own right – rather, the Good Buy Supermarket demands comment because it sold inexpensive and potentially mass-produced art objects by Fluxus artists, many of whom performed using innovative formats in the main space of the Nikolai Kirke next door.

This was all part of 'Excellent "92"', a festival of twelve artists celebrating thirty years of Fluxus activity. It began at Michael and Uta Berger's Fluxeum (November 22–24), and travelled to the Nikolai Kirke in Copenhagen, Denmark (November 26, 28 and 29) and the Malmö Konsthalle in Malmö, Sweden (November 27). This international Flux-blitz was organised by Danish Fluxus artist Eric Andersen and a loyal, longtime supporter and sometime contributor to Fluxus in Denmark, Knud Pedersen. Even if twelve artists in three cities in one week with an Art Supermarket at one location and four performance formats sounds like an organisational nightmare, it did not show.

The variable aspect of the 'Excellent "92"' festival in place, time and production speaks to the lack of uniformity, or put positively, the pluralism, of Fluxus, already suggested its social formation. Furthermore, new and old work was incorporated into the festival so that whatever Fluxus is or was for a given artist could determine that artist's contribution. In the tradition of Andersen's market of 'Anonymous Merchandise' at Årthus, Denmark, in 1971, Andersen and Pedersen conceived of the Good Buy Supermarket as an inexpensive venue for mass-produced Fluxus multiples, which would in turn further support the handsomely funded 'Excellent "92"'. With the exception that each multiple could be potentially mass-

produced, their character was completely determined by the individual artist – with no prerequisite style or content.

Some resembled unique objects by the same artists, others resembled historic multiples, and many pieces had one element in each place. For the former two possibilities, one might look to Geoffrey Hendricks, who produced both a sky card multiple and a series of Flux-relics, such as shrink-wrapped last cigarette butts from important Fluxus situations or last bottles of wine from others. For the final possibility – of new work that is distinctly continuous with a historic multiple – one might look to Alison Knowles, who produced *Bean Rolls* (rolled texts in a square can full of dried beans) in 1963, and produced, among other things, a very different bean multiple here – a *Pocket Warmer*, or thumb-sized bean-bag chair for fingers.

The multiple produced for the Good Buy Supermarket named each artist on its label, a gesture toward the authorial integrity that is intrinsic to Fluxus as a multifaceted whole. This would not be necessarily worthy of note, except that it has negative implications for at least one exhibition of Fluxus work in the United States, namely, 'Fluxattitudes' at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in Manhattan (26 September–3 January 1993). At that exhibition, the artists contributed their words to the project of self-construction.

### **Fluxattitudes**

Sympathy with Maciunas' politics has lead curators and critics to determine the content of shows from the point of view of political sympathy with the prescriptive, centrist and old-fashioned leftist rhetoric that is all too often attached to Fluxus as a whole. 'Fluxattitudes' required that a host of undifferentiated Fluxus and non-Fluxus artists provide work anonymously and for free and orient it towards the American presidential elections. Thus, 'Fluxattitudes' was determined by a party-political, no-value concept with utter disregard for the international character of and variability within the group. The results were suggestive in that they indicate lasting tensions within Fluxus, tensions which have historic counterparts in, for example, 1962, which Owen Smith describes in terms of the ambivalent reactions to the famous *Purge Manifesto*, as well as in the debate surrounding the *Fluxshoe* and a number of other Fluxus events and exhibitions.

Responses to the prescriptive ideological basis of 'Fluxattitudes' created debates along these lines. Some loved the idea, agreeing with it fully as the basis of Fluxus ideology, while others rejected it with equal passion. This confusion made 'Fluxattitudes' extremely interesting from a didactic point of view. When most of the artists responded negatively to the prescriptive elements of the invitation, its curators, Cornelia Lauf and Susan Hapgood, included the negative correspondence in the show. Albeit probably accidental and woefully indicative of America's funding problems and misconceptions about Fluxus, this correspondence won the show an important place in the history of Fluxus exhibitions. It is to the curators' credit that this debate took a public form. The correspondence shows how varied Fluxus is internally, and how the ideologically narrow view of Fluxus has overdetermined its reception in the United States.

### **Fluxus Virus**

The problem of scale lay at the root of Galerie Schüppenhauer's 'Fluxus Virus', Cologne (1–27 September 1992), where forty-one Fluxus artists and twenty-one intermedia artists were

represented by historic and new work. The historic objects section, curated by the Gallery's owner, Chrystal Schüppenhauer, was basically a show of early work by each of the Fluxus artists shown elsewhere in 'Fluxus Virus'. This small exhibition, unpretentious in its purpose, held many wonderful, early Fluxus works, although one piece by Geoffrey Hendricks was misidentified as Ken Friedman's, and some of the more fragile work seemed to suffer from exposure to the wind and rain that blustered through the austere, semi-exposed exhibition space.

More problematic, however, were the new works, which were commissioned for the show in the space contributed by the Kaufhof Parkhaus, a parking garage. In keeping with the nature of the site, the artists were invited to produce an automobile, so that, as at 'Fluxattitudes', the prescriptive curatorial concept overrode the various means and methods of each artist. The most successful installations were built by artists who rejected the car concept but built an installation anyway. Takako Saito, for instance, ran a book-making stand replete with carnivalesque canopies and the fine paper work typical of her production. Milan Knizak produced a three-metre cube covered with square-cut records, and Dick Higgins produced an ink-splattered dinosaur of wooden chairs in a blacklight darkroom.

However, the cars were the centrepiece of the exhibition and were produced too quickly and with faulty materials – the artists had almost no assistance or access to materials until just before the opening. The most notable exception to this was Ben Patterson's duck car, a green Citroën that was turned on a welded spit while real ducks roasted on a fire below it. This aside, several wonderful ideas were so poorly executed that they broke during or soon after the opening. This was the fate of Joe Jones' orchestral car of instruments (activated by turning on the lights, wipers, ignition and so on) and Eric Andersen's skateboard car, designed to spin on four skateboards placed perpendicular to each other under the wheels of the car.

Wolf Vostell, the most car-oriented Fluxus artist of all, was excluded for political reasons – city officials felt he had been overexposed in two recent, major exhibitions in Cologne. This exclusion rendered the exhibition much less useful historically. As an independent curator of photographs for catalogue and exhibition, I made efforts to correct this inaccuracy in a timeline of performance photographs since 1955 and portraits, which was exhibited at the Kölner Kunstverein (1–20 September). On one wall, photographs were placed sequentially by year and above each other, according to how much activity occurred in that year – creating a sequence of broad or narrow bands of relative activity along the time-line. On the facing wall, single portraits of Fluxus artists making work or performing, most of them by the Frankfurt photographer Wolfgang Träger, were hung in an ellipse, whose curving form contrasted with the historic development of the group on the opposite wall.

### **The Excellence of A la carte**

This idea of presenting Fluxus dialectically, as a site of contention instead of unanimity, returns us to November's 'Excellent "92"' in Wiesbaden-Erbenheim, Copenhagen, Malmö and New York, but this time to the area of performance. Despite the cattle-market feel of presenting the artists in a room-sized Nam June Paik Television sculpture, when the festival opened at Michael and Uta Berger's Fluxeum on 22 November 1992, a new page was written in the annals of Fluxus performance. This was the first evening ever of performance using the *à la carte* format, with Ben Patterson acting as head waiter, circulating among the audience

and taking their orders.<sup>47</sup> The visitors sat at small tables, where a menu listed various old and new pieces by present and absent Fluxus artists alike.

The toylike, mechanical music of rotary-motorised rubber bands on violins, super balls on tom-toms and bouncing-ball drumbeats in the choir loft of Berger's church museum announced that someone had 'ordered' Joe Jones' big band of self-propelled musical instruments. Meanwhile, Dick Higgins on a ladder pouring water into a basin meant that someone else had ordered George Brecht's *Drip Music*. Two live hens were released into another part of the room – Ben Vautier's *Hens*, and Alison Knowles performed a new work that involved shaking a metal tray full of beans and toys around the room. Most striking of all, perhaps, in the context of this apparent chaos, were tables of people listening to hand-held tape recorders carrying out instructions to (among other things) 'Suck on your finger', 'Stick your finger in your ear', 'Lift your chair over your head' or 'Stand on your chair' – requests given in the privacy of a headset by the Dutch artist Willem de Ridder.

What seemed a general chaos at first is specifically audience-driven, and without chaos – for each audience member controlled their order and had direct contact with each artist. This allowed for multiple frameworks regarding Fluxus to coexist. Those artists who base Fluxus in the past performed historic works and others new ones. This was the most successful performance format at the 'Excellent' festival because, like the multiples produced for its Good Buy Supermarket, this format most emphasised the coexistence of various points of view.

All three evenings at Wiesbaden followed this format, while in Copenhagen, the *à la carte* approach was used only once. The other Nikolai Kirke evenings consisted of two other formats: 'Hire an Artist', whereby the audience could hire an artist by the minute or hour to perform with or for them, and a marathon twelve-hour event consisting largely of duration pieces – where a single note might be played on the organ for an hour (Philip Corner), or every single note played cumulatively with each other (Eric Andersen). In the first, the audience was not sufficiently acquainted with each artist to make confident choices, so many of them wandered to the work stations looking for artists to hire. This aimless quality also characterised the marathon, except that on this occasion it functioned positively as people felt free to come and go as they got tired and to return whenever they wished. Especially successful on this day was Ben Vautier's piece. Sitting on top of a pillar high above the audience, he spent the afternoon writing and changing cardboard signs in front of him on an easel. These read, among other things, 'Look at me', 'Don't look at me', 'Forget me', and 'Sometimes I think Fluxus is boring'.

Like Da Capo, the 'Excellent' festival, the *à la carte* process, and Good Buy Supermarket, opened a way for various ideas of Fluxus to coexist within the space of one context. Here it was permitted to be past for some and present for others, interactive with the audience and its own entity as well, inexpensive but with sufficient backing to generate an honorarium for each artist, and distinctly international in character. Yet it had the sociological cohesion of each artist determining their own work and interacting with the other artists, performing in each others' pieces and talking about them. This expansive yet comprehensible, varied yet integrated impression seems to be at the heart of Fluxus as a whole. It is an impression that – though sometimes more successful than others – is almost entirely limited to European exhibitions and collections.

Why Europe? Perhaps because there countries are forced to interact with each other and

the myth of the individual of genius is more easily tempered – or perhaps the opposite is true; that the American taste for individual genius leads us to look for a single leader and a single reason for things being as they are. Perhaps, too, it has something to do with the German need to re-create the avant-garde in the wake of its destruction by the Nazis, and a tradition of group action within that context.<sup>48</sup> At the same time, pluralism and group identity might also be convenient art-critical foils for ideologically evacuated formalism and the heroic 1950s. These possible explanations for why one version of a story is told at one site while another dominates elsewhere indicates that the study of reception tells as much about the subject as it does about the object of inquiry.

It is at this point that what is at stake in a given version of Fluxus becomes painfully clear. What makes an exhibition excellent? It might include the strongest aspect of each exhibition of 1992. It would include acknowledging the internal variations and conflicts within Fluxus artists' ideologies – like 'Fluxattitudes'; at the same time as it would deal across concepts in the spirit of the 'Excellent' festival and the Good Buy Supermarket. It is, after all, the enduring, dynamic character of Fluxus that speaks to diversity and community at once, that belongs to various formations, and thus functions as a site of education about art and the world and – where possible – yourself. In the pages of this volume you may find a Fluxus that is truly 'excellent'.

What you will certainly not find is extensive critical writing on very recent work by Fluxus artists, because this work has been largely ignored by the art-writing establishment. This is not the fault of the editor at all, since almost no coverage of this work exists and cannot therefore be placed meaningfully in an anthology. That is not to say that there is not coverage of new work by Fluxus artists, but it does suggest that these individual works are seldom viewed through a lens of Fluxus concerns. It may initially seem like a digression, but these current works cast light and shadows on past work in interesting ways. I have sketched only a few of these out for you in the space of these very few pages. There remains much work to be done.

### **Da Capo: new Fluxus works**

German gallery owner René Block took great interest in Fluxus and related activities and represented many Fluxus artists in his Berlin-based gallery in the 1960s and 1970s. Later, Block became a major organiser of support for the group, as, among other things, Director of the DAAD Künstlerprogramm, the organiser of the eight Annual Sidney Biennial in 1990, and finally as Director of the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (IFA) exhibition and catalogue of 1995 – an immense travelling exhibition and catalogue of historical and recent Fluxus work.<sup>49</sup> This exhibition, entitled 'Fluxus: A Long Story with Many Knots. Fluxus in Germany, 1962–1994', indicates that Block prefers a strict beginning point (1962), but allows for contemporary production by Fluxus artists and avoids a seamless, narrative thread.

Nonetheless, geographic and temporal specificity constitutes the curatorial premise behind the anniversary festivals that Block has organised in Wiesbaden and which then moved to other German cities, most notably Berlin and Kassel, home of the internationally acclaimed *Dokumenta* art fair. A comparison of the catalogues produced by Block for these exhibitions goes a long way towards establishing a history of Fluxus activities through to the present. The artists function with relative autonomy at these events. However, the choice of Wiesbaden, though historically defensible as the first Fluxus tour locale, does create a sense

of arbitrariness. With the exception of a small, privately owned Fluxus Museum, called the Fluxeum and run by Michael and Uta Berger, Wiesbaden is more a run-down bathing resort than a Mecca of contemporary art. Nevertheless, Block's festivals and catalogues have done much to keep Fluxus vital by providing much-needed material and moral support.

Unlike many English-language catalogues and exhibitions that close Fluxus off at 1978, when Maciunas died, the catalogue titles of Block's festivals are temporally vast and therefore auspicious: *1962 Wiesbaden FLUXUS 1982*, and *Fluxus Da Capo: 1962 Wiesbaden 1992*. For my purposes, it is significant that in both cases the responsibility for defining Fluxus lay with the artist. The artists chose recent work themselves, thus making each choice significant in terms of each artist's self-construction as a contemporary Fluxus artist. In the 1992 catalogue, this effort was expanded to include artists' favourite texts about their work, which resulted in autobiography and self-criticism, as well as biography, criticism and philosophy by others. In a rather arbitrary attempt to expand the number of artists beyond those present at the first Wiesbaden Fluxus festival, Block included an additional artist from each of the cardinal points (north, south, east and west) as well as 'one surprise'.

Listed on the poster, designed by Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson as a 'Shopping List', are artists who were present at the 1962 festival, including Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik, Ben Patterson and Emmett Williams. The historic dimension was introduced with the invitation of John Cage, who unfortunately died shortly before the opening. Henning Christiansen, a sometime Fluxus adherent from Denmark, represented the north; Joe Jones, an American expatriate Fluxus artist who spent much of his life in Italy, represented the south; Milan Knizak, a Czechoslovakian artist with long-standing ties to Fluxus, represented the east; and Geoffrey Hendricks, a Fluxus artist from New York City, represented the west. Notably, the historic premise combined with these rather arbitrary additions meant that some consistently active members of the Fluxus community could not be included. Absent were Eric Andersen (Denmark), Philip Corner (America), Takako Saito and Mieko Shiomi (Japan), and Ben Vautier (France), not to mention a long list of sometime cohorts – Jean Dupuy (France), Ken Friedman (Norway), Willem de Ridder (Holland) and Bengt Af Klintberg (Sweden). Artists long out of touch with Fluxus for various reasons were also essentially absent. These include George Brecht, Yoko Ono, Arthur Kœpcke, Robert Filliou and Robert Watts – the latter three deceased. The 1982 Wiesbaden festival included many of these and more, but offered less exposure to each artist. Exclusions and numeric limitations notwithstanding, Block's decision to limit the number of artists in 1992, while alternately historic (the original artists) and arbitrary (the cardinal directions), did provide for a rare opportunity to see some scope in each individual's work.

The choice of additional artists also provides for interesting examples of the type of issue inherent in the long-term practices of a group of artists. Certainly Fluxus artists can and do make work that they do not consider Fluxus-related. Significantly, many artists long associated with each other in New York or elsewhere, simply did not make the fateful trip to Wiesbaden in 1962. This would include Joe Jones, the representative from the south, and probably the least contestable direction-based participant. The case for inclusion of Knizak is more complex. He was in close contact with some artists and not others – a fact that extends the scope of community beyond the network of regular and extensive group contact. Similarly, as a Czech artist he was often held to constraints of censorship, which meant that

much of his contribution to Fluxus was confined to what he could send by mail, in particular a magazine called *Aktual*. His recent work reflects these difficulties. Thus it requires some analysis as Fluxus, but also as eastern bloc, work. Third, Block's addition of Geoffrey Hendricks recognises the issue of serial generations of Fluxus artists. Unlike the other direction-based additions, he was not yet closely associated with the group in 1962 and did not begin a regular and intensive association until later. However, he has been a vital and active associate since that time. His inclusion implies difficulties in too strictly associating Fluxus participation with a particular moment in time. Similarly, Hendricks is a painter of sky images, which, though painted on a variety of surfaces that range from objects to canvases, complicate the habitual association of Fluxus with iconoclastic, fragmented or ephemeral practices.

During the historic tour of 1962 Joe Jones remained in his native city of New York, house-sitting for Alison Knowles and Dick Higgins in their loft on Canal Street. While there he produced his first self-playing instruments. These consist largely of stringed instruments but have also included pianos, drums and wind instruments. They have changed very little over the years. The most dramatic change came with the introduction of solar power. Jones used solar cells to rig up the instruments to the environment itself. The machines work like this. A small rotary motor is attached, usually by a wire, so that it hangs in close proximity to the instrument's primary sounding area – for example, over the strings in the middle of the body of a violin, guitar or harp, or just above the skin of a drum head. Attached to the rotary motor, a sounding device, such as rubber bands or balls, spins across the sounding surface of an instrument. In an example in the Wiesbaden Fluxum, a small guitar is played by a rotary motor equipped with rubber bands. The sound, a tinkle punctuated by whispering caresses and the occasional thwack, communicates an expanse of musical experiences that range from the lyrical to the startling. At the 1992 festival in Wiesbaden, Jones conducted a solar-powered concert of these instruments at a magnitude far exceeding the assembled sculptural 'orchestra' shown here. At this greater scale, what was lyrical in one instrument became a complex web of sound in many, and what was merely startling in a single instrument became sublime.

A constellation of critical issues lies at the core of Jones' instruments. Uppermost among them is the concept of musical genius in orchestral performance. That machines can generate significant sound places the culture of virtuoso performance in doubt. There is a history of such associations. Luigi Russolo was a Futurist composer who built noise instruments in 1913, called 'Intonouori', that ground, sputtered and screeched in imitation of the sounds of the modern city. These Intonouori clearly differ from Jones' instruments insofar as Jones' mechanical sounds are not imitative *per se*. Both Jones' and Russolo's work, however, threatens the culture of musical virtuosity and offers a viable alternative.

The same might be said of the contribution to Wiesbaden in 1992 offered by Dick Higgins. *His Gateway (for Pierre Mercure)*, 1992 consisted of a hallway filled with large and small metallic refuse objects (rusty car parts, springs, coils, fan blades, and so on) that would sound against each other when disturbed by the passage of a visitor. By way of contact microphones placed on the objects, the sounds were 'amplified and broadcast, rather loud, through two loudspeakers'.<sup>50</sup> At the crowded opening, the metal objects sounded alternately like massive gongs and car accidents, brushing rusty metal and deadened thuds into the walls of the hallway. Distinctly industrial sounding, this massive sounding-box cum hallway more closely

recalls the effect of Russolo's machines, albeit minus the imitative or representational feature of the Futurist experiment. Significantly, the *Gateway* requires visitors. In a rare glimpse of the relationship between bodies and machines, alone and in crowds, the visitor/performer may be made critically aware of this art experience as of a piece with life experience.

Higgins has written several theoretical and philosophical essays about Fluxus, as well as producing his own visual and sound poetry. He is also a performance artist, painter and composer. It is significant that he chose this sculpture for the Wiesbaden show. It relates to other works, particularly performance and composition. Higgins is perhaps best known for his 'Danger Music' performance scores and his 'Thousand Symphonies' musical compositions. These symphonies originate in music paper being shot through with a machine-gun and then spray painted. The resulting score (not shown) occurs when the spray paint passes through the machine-gunned paper and on to another sheet of music paper. The violence of the symphonic score is palpable in the shreds of ballistic evidence that in turn evoke instrumental music. Gone is the composer's will in calibrating the effect of each note as it is handwritten. Instead, the composer's will as direct gesture, simultaneously of destruction and creation, creates a visceral image for the viewer and listener. A similarly direct encounter, this time between the performer and the 'instrumentalist' can be felt in Higgins' *Danger Music #2*, which was performed in Wiesbaden in 1962. In that piece, the artist had his head shaved by his wife, the Fluxus artist Alison Knowles.

On the other side of the *Gateway*, the visitor encountered an installation by Geoffrey Hendricks entitled *For Wiesbaden Fluxus, 1992*. There was the extreme contrast between the flailing junk instruments and a room full of representational images of skies in various degrees of sunshine, cloudiness, darkness and moonlight. Hung from ladders, the sky paintings seemed all the more real *vis-à-vis* their proximity to earth strewn across the floor and a pile of stones. Representation has, as it were, come home to roost in Fluxus. Like Higgins, Hendricks has a long-term interest in direct encounters between the body and its environment, for example his *Body/Hair, May 15, 1971*, in which the artist shaved his body. However, in the case of installations like this, Hendricks has chosen the path of representation to state his cause.

The watercolour paintings moved with the gentle breezes they encountered in the exhibition space. They are, moreover, exquisitely and traditionally painted. Each sky testifies to the artist's great skill at capturing fleeting moments in the ever-transforming landscapes of the sky. Hendricks clearly belongs to an esteemed canon of landscape painters that would have to include Joseph Cozens and Joseph Mallord William Turner – two historical figures who excelled in capturing these fleeting effects.

This fleeting subject matter and the installation of the images as appendages of construction elements, a ladder, and earth elements, soil and stone, reference the ephemerality and environmental contingencies that belong to the works discussed thus far by Jones and Higgins. But what are we to make of their insistent representational character? What place might this historic reference have within Fluxus? Critics repeatedly consign the avant-garde to a site of critical practice within traditional culture – what the author Thomas Crow calls the 'research and development wing of the culture industry'.<sup>51</sup> According to this line of argument, avant-garde work fails as it approaches official culture, and, where it succeeds at all, it does so because of its unilateral critique of the industry – this despite

Crow's description of said critique as always cooped by an official culture industry. Avant-garde artists are, then, at best naive for thinking they might effect culture or at worst counterfeit in their anti-institutional pose. Within this context of valuation, Hendricks' work offers food for thought. His sky paintings and the objects that surround them testify to the recuperation of a variety of practices within an avant-garde thematic. The uniform rejection of culture traditionally associated with the historic avant-garde has been given over to a nuanced and complex system of affirmation (the paintings) and rejection (the ready-mades that display them). Thus, Fluxus cannot be defined as an avant-garde in Bürger's institutional sense, nor as a strictly neo-avant-garde in the pejorative sense of the term. The visitor struggles in vain to locate these paintings in a closed, stylistic category of iconoclasy or anti-virtuosity.

Another explanation for the strange power of these paintings might be their placement relative to a typology of Fluxus. Toward this end, I turn to the Hegelian frame of argument, a thesis is made, then an antithesis, and, finally, a synthesis of both positions. As the complex structure of Fluxus history indicates, these phases need not be in sequential relationship to each other, but rather might coexist as structural elements in the argumentative character that is Fluxus. Thus, despite variety in early Fluxus performance and production, one can still speak of a family of practices – performative, multiple and often ephemeral – that characterise much early Fluxus work – a thesis in short. Owen Smith's piece characterised this as the 'useful' performance and publications basis of early Fluxus work. The antithesis of this performance and publications (or multiple) basis would lie in the push for variety of performance techniques and unique object production that is immediately contingent on the earliest expressions of Fluxus, such as Ay-O's rainbow paintings, for example. These would reflect the movement towards unique objects and group definition that lies behind the rejection of the Fluxshoe and which typifies Fluxus in the 1970s in Anderson's piece – though the relationship is not chronological as the dates of my examples might suggest.

Hendricks' sky works, then, would constitute the resolution or synthesis of these possibilities. The ladders, stones and earth are found objects in the tradition of Duchamp's ready-mades, while the sky images bespeak a painterly tradition, albeit a tradition of representing the fleeting effects of the weather. What is more, historically Hendricks has covered many objects, including his own body, with sky paintings. Thus these paintings are literally (the ladders) and figuratively (as image supports) constituted by the ready-made tradition. In what amounts to a conflation of the ready-made and painterly traditions of the twentieth century, Hendricks' paintings seem to imply that all modes can be appropriated to a traditional art-object status. These works imply that in an art context it may well be that all objects are representational insofar as they represent a reality outside of the art context.

Milan Knizak's contribution to the Da Capo 'New Paradise' consisted of a display of gilded, composite creatures and silver-toned futuristic airplanes on a mirrored platform. Composite creatures included a snake with a lion's head, a shark with an elephant's head, a duck with a bulldog's head, and a dragon's body with kangaroo feet and a goat's head. The airplanes look like composites of fighter jets and heavy-metal guitars. Like the composite creatures that people the margins of medieval manuscripts, these beings bring together two mutually exclusive objects. In bringing these elements together, Knizak engages in an

alchemical marriage of opposites. Inverted in the mirror base, the possibilities for organic reconfigurations seem limitless.

Particularly with regard to the problems of the organic human body in an artificial or urban environment, these creatures evoke familiar Fluxus territory. And yet their insistent representational character and the gaudy use of gold and silver and the hyper-static plane of mirror, place Knizak's works here in a materialistic aesthetic quite alien to many of his Fluxus comrades. It is significant that he comes from Czechoslovakia. This reconciliation of opposites may speak to a grotesque reconciliation of eastern and western cultures, of a grossly material capitalism on one hand, and a grotesque of oppression on the other. What is more, to represent the world of myth, of fantasy, and of conglomerate creatures as 'real' – insofar as they inhabit real space as sculptural miniatures – has implications for the persistent socialist realism that dominated the official art scene behind the Iron Curtain for much of the twentieth century.

While Knizak was particularly vulnerable to the oppressive cultural policies engendered by officials in his homeland, between 1963 and 1968 he was engaged in street performance in Prague and Marienbad, which included a Prague Fluxus in 1966 and most of which took place under the coordinated organisational auspices of his group *Aktual* (founded in 1964 with Jan Mach, Vít Mach, Sinoa Svecová, Jan Trtílek and Robert Whitman). Hand-produced newspapers, objects and posters accompanied these activities, and it is largely through these publications that Knizak participated in the extended community of Fluxus artists. Despite threats to his security, Knizak travelled frequently to the West, beginning in 1968, when he went to the USA at George Maciunas' invitation. Among other things, Knizak won a DAAD award for residence in Berlin, and, like many Fluxus artists, was supported in the receipt of that award by the programme director René Block. Since 1990 Knizak has been Director of the Academy of Visual Arts in Prague.

In his recent institutional affiliation, his threatened past as a clandestine artist in a totalitarian context and his movement back and forth between the two sides of the cold-war border, Knizak literally embodies the possibilities and problems of eastern-bloc artists in a Western context. The transition is uneasy. How is Knizak's new-found power and recognition emblematic of a transformed dominant political ideology? Is there an inherent problem of official recognition of previously 'outsider' artists as an affirmation of political and aesthetic orientations commonly associated with the West throughout the cold war? Is this why he chose to produce these disturbing, even tacky, figurines that look like so much department-store kitsch in the West?

Fortunately, the audience cannot resolve these dilemmas so easily. Kitschy as the figurines are in material and presentation, they represent disparate animal creatures fused into single, grotesque bodies. In studying the creatures on a mirror, one is invited to look at their undersides, at the range of distortions in the figure that result in our looking closely at them. What is the old adage about an unexamined life? Research and examination make it worth living, and, at least in the context from which Knizak evolved, these practices could threaten life itself.

And yet, in our context – more specifically in mine as an American – these objects lose their critical edge. They seem to conform to a long trajectory of representational and freakish objects that merely affirm the commodity status of art, or even worse, fetishise the estranged

object itself. That may be why these figurines seemed so strange in the context of Da Capo, though they no doubt had as much right to stake a claim as Fluxus as anything else there. Moreover, the reconciliation of opposites characteristic of these figurines reverberates with the restructuring devices inherent in some of the poems of Emmett Williams.

*In Four Directional Song of Doubt* – ‘a concrete poem, a song, an instrumental quintet, instructions for dancers and a picture’ by Emmett Williams, performed at the Wiesbaden Fluxus in 1962 – a chorus of five readers read from cards at different orientations words from the statement ‘You just never quite know’,<sup>52</sup> The cards are divided into one-hundred square grids which are then marked with ten signal dots (each of which replaces a word) placed in linear progression. A metronome ticks for one-hundred ticks, and the words are either spoken or substituted with sounds or gestures. The doubt, a *double entendre*, lies in the negative statement about cognition (to doubt) as well as in the chance performance of the text itself. The fragmentation of the phrase, a linguistic unit, has an august history in the Dada Cabaret poems of Tristan Tzara, where words were pulled from a hat and spoken at random. However, in Williams’ case, the deconstruction of the phrase is matched by a careful reconstruction along spatial lines, through the introduction of the hundred-square grid and mathematical progression. Thus Williams differs from the poets of the historical avant-garde in his introduction of an alternative structure to the text.

A similar sense of order within disorder (or the opposite) inflected Williams’ contribution to Da Capo. *His Twelve Portraits, 1992* portray artist colleagues (significantly, there are no women), through objects loosely associated with their lives and practice. Again, the issue of a representational practice with an avant-garde thematic becomes significant. For instance, the portrait of George Maciunas, whom Williams identifies as the leader of Fluxus, signifies Maciunas by way of a set of blocks that spell out Fluxus, an anti-tobacco sign (Maciunas was allergic to smoke), a gilded piece of shit (Maciunas collected excrement and used scatological imagery in much of his work), and a face wearing an eyepatch (Maciunas lost his right eye in a brawl with some mafiosi), among other things.

The surface to which the materials are attached has been carefully measured, and the objects attached at seemingly random coordinates over that surface. Because of the generous spacing of the objects, there is a palpable sense of order, either numerical or determined by aesthetic considerations, underlying these seemingly randomly placed objects. Thus the portrait objects, contrary to the institutional prerogatives of Duchamp’s ready-mades, this time serve the cause of representation both because of their presentation on a smooth, painterly ground and by virtue of their ‘representing’ a personality. In this transformation, then, Williams’ portraits belong both at the end and beginning of twentieth-century art. Perhaps this is the essence of Maciunas’ admonition that Fluxus belongs to the rear-garde: these portraits appear to invoke an avant-garde thematic, yet they also resist the linearity inherent in the furthering of the avant-garde role. What, after all, could be more backward looking than a formal portrait, more historically avant-garde than a ready-made, or more confusing than a resolution of these traditionally oppositional categories? What is more, Francis Picabia was already doing this in the 1910s, albeit strictly through line drawings of ready-mades as portraits, rather than through assemblages of ready-made objects.

And yet there is something quite disturbing about the series as a whole. They were produced for a gallery – Carl Solway in Cincinnati, Ohio – which means they were produced

specifically for a commercially defined audience of high-end art multiples. Moreover, they were produced within the context of Solway's 'Kunstfabrik'.<sup>53</sup> There are twelve portraits. These are of Joseph Beuys, Marcel Duchamp, Richard Hamilton, Jasper Johns, Allan Kaprow, George Maciunas, Claes Oldenburg, Nam June Paik, Robert Rauschenberg, Daniel Spoerri and Jean Tinguely. What do these artists have in common? For one thing, 'I know them all personally', writes Williams.<sup>54</sup> For another, these are all famous male artists, and, as such, have already received extensive institutional sanction. Thus, while the argument might be made that these objects parody the fame game of the art system itself, the slick presentation of the portraits makes them eager participants more than hucksters in the art game. As Owen Smith pointed out to me, this Williams piece bears comparison to a situation parodied by George Maciunas in his *12 Big Names*, an advertised concert in which the names of famous artists were projected in large format on a movie screen.<sup>55</sup> If the audience came to see twelve big names in one evening, they were gravely disappointed!

There is a connection with early work by Williams himself. His *Alphabet Symphony* was performed soon after the original Wiesbaden festival, and consisted of activities using objects as letters. Williams describes one performance:

This is a symphony where you can spell 'love' by smoking a cigar, blowing a silent dog whistle, eating a chocolate éclair off the floor on all fours doggy-fashion, and tooting a little ditty on the flute. That's the way it was spelled during the first performance in London in 1962.<sup>56</sup>

The *Alphabet Symphony* resulted in a highly provocative and often-exhibited portrait series (by Williams' friend Barney Kirchoff) of Williams performing the symphony.<sup>57</sup> And yet the slick manufacture and choice of famous personages suggests a vast expanse of distance between the *Twelve Portraits* and the simple, alphabet and language pieces typical of Williams' earlier work. Thus, there is something strangely academic, official, sanctioned and empty about these portraits. We are looking at late-twentieth-century academic portraits that use the accepted terms of our present academies – rupture, found object, chance operation and institutional self-consciousness.

To deny the desire for success in the art world and the compromising potential of artists is naïve at best and dehumanising (for the artist) at worst. There is a part of Fluxus that has always received some kind of official sanction, even as an officially unofficial art. Never forget that the very first Fluxus-titled concert in Germany took place in a museum in Wiesbaden! Thus, depressing as I personally find these images, they mark a part of Fluxus history that is intrinsic to understanding the group in its complex affirmations and criticisms of the art world.

Also addressing a relationship between found objects and the practice of representation, or, more precisely, between presentation and representation, Alison Knowles introduced the print series 'Bread and Water, 1992' and an *Indian Moon*, a white circle filled with found objects tagged for sounding as instruments at Da Capo. It takes Knowles months to locate the moon objects on the street. They must have certain sounding or visual qualities. They must also be clean of organic materials. In short, they are not garbage recycled for use in the gallery – at least not in the sense often inferred where the thing was once part of a heap of debris. Rather, the objects have a definitive quality of specificity of purpose, which suggests a connection to another person in another time. Knowles' task is to find those physical traces of someone else's experience and to relocate them to the art context.

The audience then approaches the moon, a circle of white on a floor, sits at the edge, and sounds the objects. By reaching for an object, they too become part of the sequence of objects found, but not lost, from the momentarily intersecting links with an unknown life. In order to sound the object, the reader or performer reads a ticket, a ticket that makes oblique reference to a page in a book. The imposition of a strict substructural order, as in the grid of the Williams portraits, has been given over to the patterns of use in *One Big Sunday Moon*. Similarly, in the print series, the artist has printed from bread bottoms and overdrawn maps by hand that place the relationship between use of a thing and its epistemology in high relief. As Robert C Morgan notes, Knowles' work sets up an archaeology of epistemological elements wherein 'real knowledge comes from a specific examination of the things laying nearby'.<sup>58</sup>

These prints display the bottoms of bread loaves and note their approximate parallels with the geographic sites of rivers. Thus the bread becomes the earth, and the water, the rivers of the earth itself. Viewed in relation to the intimate relationship set up between bodies and objects in the moon piece, the 'Bread and Water' images reform the body along the lines both of microcosm (who eats the bread) and of macrocosm (the bread as body, as earth). Thus the body becomes highly ambiguous in these prints. It is stretched between the most and least intimate scales it can be.

This problematic of physical engagement with the objects and the idea of manipulated scales has a long history in Knowles' work. An early example of the physical interaction with elements of a deconstructed sculptural object is Knowles' first book object, the *Bean Rolls* (1961). This book consisted of a cigar tin within which there were texts that could be pulled out, unrolled and read in any order. Like the objects of the *Indian Moon* that fall into a sequence and placement determined by the use of a visitor, the page order of the *Bean Rolls* is determined by the reader. The scrolls contain information about beans such as bean proverbs, recipes and names. A reader might sit on the floor and unscroll them all, surrounding herself with page strips. Texts tangle physically in what seems to be a chorus of variable literary snips, their physical order traceable only to their use by the viewer. Like the bread of the 'Bread and Water' series, beans are a subsistence food, nutritious and inexpensive. Information, then, in the context of the 'Bread and Water' and *Bean Rolls* pieces, serves the health of the body – and the mind

Ben Patterson's poster for Da Capo, 'Zufällig nicht im Museum', parodies the standards of healthy living and lifestyles that a work like Knowles' implies are overly standardised. Parodies of the standardisation and institutionalisation of human experiences, as expressed through a consciously obsessive measurement of bodies and their functions, their consumption and excreta have a long-term presence in the work of many Fluxus artists. Of course, no two bodies are the same and the clinical apparatus is exposed as somehow absurd. At the famous Fluxclinics of 1966 and 1977, the first set up by Hi Red Centre at the Waldorf Astoria in New York and the second, a mobile clinic set up by Maciunas and located in a truck in Seattle and its surrounds, the idea of measuring 'each visitor's height, weight, volume (in bathtub), also volume of mouth, head etc ... strength of fingers ... ability to stand still, etc etc' was expressed in clinical detail. The description here comes from a letter from George Maciunas to Milan Knizak, where, Maciunas continues, 'Then a Fluxpassport will be issued with all this data noted down ...'.<sup>59</sup>

With Knizak present, what may have been coincidence became an irony of circumstances

when Ben Patterson set up a similar clinic called 'The Clinic of Dr. Ben (BM, MS)' at Da Capo. The parody of measurement, with no apparent applicability except as information for its own sake, would surely not have been lost on the citizen of what was once called Czechoslovakia. The eastern bloc countries were famous for their bureaucracies.

Other Fluxus artists have sustained a long-term interest in the clinical and medical reference in Fluxus. Of particular note is the work of Larry Miller. For example, Miller has consistently produced 'Orifice Flux Plugs', collected assortments of orifice plugs for the human body that range from ear plugs and wax to cotton balls, condoms and bullets, since 1974. These resemble many of Maciunas' 'Fluxkits'. However, the clinical dimension has evolved with new technologies in Miller's work. In Cologne in 1992, Miller could be found copyrighting the genetic code of his friends, comrades, fellow artists, and audience members. Miller's genetic-code copyrights from that year in Cologne were based on his knowledge that such codes could be copyrighted before they were known, and that they could be owned and protected before the technology of cloning had even been developed.

Now, five years later, a sheep has been cloned in Scotland. Admittedly, there is scientific value in reproducing animals that are genetically identical to limit animal testing for random samples. Yet there is a certain anxiety relieved by Miller's contract and simultaneously invoked by it. The technological and sociological circumstances provoked by this particular Fluxcontract are distinctly of this moment, though in the not too distant past they seemed more the world of science fiction (or science friction?), of a distant future or paranoid present. The genetic Copyrights become a remarkably elastic document in space and time. They evoke a clinicism in Fluxus that is at once earnest and humourous. Copyrighted, we become as documents ourselves – measured, contained and ordered in place and time, yet moving beyond the present moment.

Clearly, this is not a group of 'artists' (there are those who would contest the term still!) that can be categorised, packaged according to some stylistic or ideological principle, and neatly placed on the shelf of a library. As long as the nature and history of Fluxus remain debatable, contested and unstable, the spirit of flux in Fluxus remains alive. This is true even when the debate takes place in academic venues, as it does here. There will, however, no doubt come a time when some well-meaning, academic type will come along and can Fluxus. In being canned, it will be preserved for all time but will lose much of its flavour. It may be that this process is inevitable if anything of Fluxus is to survive the lives of the artists. The canning process is, however, unnecessary as long as the artists and those who know and love them are alive. This does not mean that rigorous histories of this or that Fluxus cannot be written. It merely means the history of all of Fluxus cannot be. Readers like this one are a good place to begin thinking about the histories of Fluxus, since they give substance to a variety of perspectives.

When George Maciunas was very poor he bought cans of food from the grocery store that had lost their labels. They were, understandably, sold at a considerable discount. There was certain adventure to be had in taking meals with him during that period. Dinner might be string beans, chicken soup or corned-beef hash. The adventure lay in opening the can to see what was inside. Ben Vautier had these cans relabelled as 'Flux Mystery Food'. If Fluxus is to be canned, at least for the moment, let it be canned in such a way as to leave the labels well enough alone and to maintain the sense of mystery inside.

## NOTES

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- 2 Kristine Stiles, 'Between Water and Stone, Fluxus Performance: A Metaphysics of Acts', in Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss, eds, *In the Spirit of Fluxus* Minneapolis, MN, Walker Art Centre, 1993.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p 65.
- 4 For this insight I am indebted to the work of my student Laurel Fredrickson for her work ('The Upside-Down World: The Not Made in the Work of Robert Filliou', MA thesis, University of Illinois at Chicago, 1997).
- 5 Wilfried Dörstel, Rainer Steinberg and Robert von Zahn, 'The Bauermeister Studio: Proto-Fluxus in Cologne, 1960–1962', in *Fluxus Virus 1962–1992*, Ken Friedman, ed, Cologne, Verlag Galerie Schüppenhauer, 1992, p 56.
- 6 Maciunas to Bauermeister, undated, Archiv Mary Bauermeister, Historisches Archiv Köln (HASTK, inv 1441, no. 25).
- 7 Stockhausen was to include the score for *Originale* and other works in *Fluxus No. 2, Western European Issue No. 1*. George Maciunas, Notes for Projected Issues, 1962, Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Unless otherwise indicated, all listed subsequent archival materials are at Sohm.
- 8 Maciunas initially conceived of the festivals as financial engines for the projected *Fluxus* magazine, which explains in part why he included Stockhausen in both places. George Maciunas, Notes, 1962. Paik to Maciunas, undated.
- 9 Photograph by Peter Moore.
- 10 Author's notes. Public conversation between Alison Knowles, Allan Kaprow and Dick Higgins, 'Fluxforum', The Wexner Centre for the Arts, Columbus, OH, 25 Feb 1994.
- 11 'Avant-Garde: Stuffed Bird at 48 Sharp', *Time* (18 Sept 1964).
- 12 Foubion Bowers, 'A Feast of Astonishments', *The Nation* (28 Sept 1964), p 174.
- 13 I am using these behavioural categories as structural models for the various definitions of Fluxus. The behavioural choice made by a given artist does not necessarily constitute conscious choice of a definitive model for Fluxus.
- 14 Mac Low to Maciunas, 25 April 1962.
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- 17 Maciunas to Williams, Spoerri and Filliou, 1963.
- 18 George Maciunas, *Fluxus News-Letter No. 7*, 1 May 1963. Located at the Silverman Archive, New York.
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- 20 See Ina Blom's contribution to the present volume.
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- 22 Henry Martin, *An Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, Milan, Multhipla Edizioni, 1978.
- 23 Achille Bonito Oliva, 'Ubi Fluxus, ibi Motus', in Bonito Oliva, Gino Di Maggio and Gianni Sassi, eds, *Ubi Fluxus, ibi Motus*, Venice Biennale and Milan, Mazzotta Editore p 26. Emphasis added.
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- 39 Ibid.
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- 50 Dick Higgins, 'Gateway (for Pierre Mercure)', in René Block, ed, *Fluxus Da Capo: 1962 Wiesbaden 1992*, Nassauischer Kunstverein, Wiesbaden, 1992, p 91.
- 51 Thomas Crow, 'Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts', in *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, New York, Harper and Row, 1985, p 257.

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- 53 This is the term used by Emmett Williams in 'Zwölf Porträts', in Block, ed, *Fluxus Da Capo*, p 148. It translates roughly as 'art factory'.
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- 56 Williams, *My Life in Flux and Vice Versa*, p 58.
- 57 Reproduced in *ibid.*, p 79.
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PART II  
THEORIES OF FLUXUS

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# INA BLOM: BOREDOM AND OBLIVION

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## INTRODUCTION: CHANGING CAGE

'Boredom was, until recently, one of the qualities an artist tried most to avoid. Yet today it appears that artists are deliberately trying to make their work boring.'<sup>1</sup> This is the opening statement of Dick Higgins' 1966 essay 'Boredom and Danger'. Boredom is a radical concept for a work of art: how can you claim attention for something that defies any attempt to focus for any long period of time, that breaks all the rules of communication? But, as it turns out, the question of focus and communication is the least of Higgins' worries. In 'Boredom and Danger' Higgins instead tries to present a theory of what might be interpreted as an *immersive* ideal of art.<sup>2</sup> Describing his own work as well as that of a number of artists in and around the Fluxus group, he attempts to formulate the terms according to which the cognitive boundaries dividing self and work or work and surroundings might, temporarily, fade out or be displaced. It is, in other words, an attempt to formulate the possibility of, in one sense or another, getting 'lost', since immersion renders the Cartesian divide between subject and object as uncertain or shifting, deframing the subject's 'outlook' on to the world. In the context of art, this ideal has often been cursorily described in terms of 'erasing the boundaries between life and art'; yet a closer look at the strategies and formulations of different Fluxus-related artists will reveal a more guarded, specific and problematising approach. The question is not one of boundaries between life and art in general, but of the conditions of possibility for immersion in particular.

It is from this perspective that many of the artists seem to reformulate, rework or reappropriate some of the most central but also most difficult and problematic assumptions underpinning the music of John Cage, whose work and thought could be said to be decisive for Fluxus. In his work, Cage clearly strives to achieve states of immersion: self-reflexive moments such as those produced by memory, knowledge, repetition, and so on, must be avoided at all costs. Only a system that will produce eternal change, eternal variation, will draw the listening subject out of the repetitive movement of the norm that frames a subjectivity reflecting back upon itself. To produce such change, an overarching element of oblivion or unknowing is in other words required. But even as Cage acknowledges the paradox inherent in this notion of oblivion – the fact that memory is, so to speak, an element that provides us with a 'something' *to be lost* in immersion (and so formulates the *possibility* of immersion) – he does not linger on this point.<sup>3</sup> He leaves it aside because he seems far more concerned with formulating the notion of a universal letting go of ego, a fundamental state of

'zero' that will allow all points of experience to enter into a free play of multiplicities.<sup>4</sup> And maybe it is precisely because Cage is so fundamentally devoted to the transcendental universality and maybe also formalism of a certain strain of modern art that his principle of free play 'automatically' extends from theory of art to a general social philosophy, without excess and without resistance. Beside the music and teaching of Schönberg, the paintings of Mondrian – which are nothing if not universalist in their aspiration – were, after all, one of his most important sources of inspiration. And while he felt close to the element of freedom in the compositions of Charles Ives, he disliked the touch of 'Americana' in this music; that is, the representational elements in the quotes from different popular musical sources. In Cage's world, the life-art question *is* the one fundamental question of immersion. And because subjectivity is, from the outset, the category that must be transcended in this notion of immersion, the life-art boundary must disappear universally, without regard for how or on what terms different kinds of 'memories' or subjectivities may even come to formulate such a division or its eventual upheaval. The musicalising of any sound can only happen through a mind that is – on principle and in universal terms – set to the measure of zero. A composition by John Cage, through emphasising an intention to extend the terms of *music* endlessly, is then also a theoretical/practical exercise towards a 'better world' – a world relinquished from the destructive forces of desire.

With many of the artists connected to Fluxus, the passage from art to social theory is not quite so automatic. In fact, it would seem that their main contribution would be to add friction to this passage. As they gain access to the field created by Cage – the principally open field of endless heterogeneity and multiplicity – they immediately start making their marks on this field. They honour the importance and value of this field by investing in it and working through it: in relation to Cage the teacher they are in many ways model students. But in this working through, they inevitably redraw it in different terms. For it is probably inevitable that they should submit this field to the kind of marks that it would – in principle – be immune to: the marks of ownership, of signatures, of different subjectivities, intentions and representations. The marks of *particularia*, in fact – of details and ephemera working their way out of all proportion, straying far behind the structured confines of Cage's multiplicity.

The field suddenly is not only marked, but slanted, out of joint. It seems at times to lack exactly that quality which Cage emphasised most of all – notably spiritual discipline or virtuosity, as expressed by the zero '*a priori*'. For instance, Cage emphasises the ethical possibilities of non-intentionality: 'If you're nonintentional, then everything is permitted. If you're intentional, for instance if you want to murder someone, then it's not permitted.'<sup>5</sup> Higgins, for one, seems prepared to take him at his word, but only through a redrafting of this statement that pushes its implications or limits of meaning. And the implication spelled out by Higgins is the word 'danger' – the second vector in his essay on immersion (boredom *and* danger), and also the title of an early series of works called 'Danger Music'. Higgins essentially follows Cage's focus on oblivion or unknowing as a prerequisite for immersion, but at the same time as he takes this step into the principle of indeterminacy, he immediately frames the unframeable. 'Danger' is a sign which frames – it points out the limits of immersion. On the one hand 'danger' seems to point, in an intensified and 'deep' way, right into that 'reality' in which art is supposed to be subsumed. And on the other hand it seems to highlight this reality as a place of consequences and implications, fear, trouble and desire; in

short to highlight it as a place that would fall outside or be the outside of Cage's all-inclusive field of indeterminacy. In this way, Higgins' spelling out 'danger' could be said to operate *at the limits* of indeterminacy.

It could be suggested, then, that by submitting Cage to the change he himself prescribed (he was after all the one to point out that his own name was an anagram of 'I Change'), many of the artists connected to Fluxus were working out practices of immersion precisely by realising the necessity of negotiating its terms. This 'it' is exactly the question here: what is the space, situation, context, possibility of immersion? 'Changing Cage' might have been a way of dealing with the fact that the space of immersion could not be formulated without an engagement with, and through, borders and limits – cages – of all sorts.

## BOREDOM

In 1966 Dick Higgins published his influential 'Intermedia' essay, stating that the new and interesting forms of art did not limit their field of operation to a question of artistic media, but tended to operate between or outside particular media or categories.<sup>6</sup> A comparison between this essay and the actual artistic developments it described might lead to more precise definitions. As a term, 'intermedia' was designed to cover those instances where the artist did not simply combine different artistic media, but worked against the grain of any categorial organisations by means of strategies of displacement. In contrast to the term 'multimedia', 'intermedia' did not denote a formal identification but rather a strategic intent or a performative.<sup>7</sup> Then the medial aspect of the work could be described in terms of *transmedia*: that is, as an agent of change or transcoding. Intermedia's many attempts to formulate 'betweens' or 'outsides' did not express a dream about the idyllic state of the unmediated. It simply dealt with the principle of mediation as a passage from one state to another.

Around the same time, however, Higgins' lesser-known essay on boredom and danger somehow seems to strike closer to the core of the particular intermedial *strategies* that developed in the late 50s and early 60s. Higgins sets out as if he desperately needs to make sense of this puzzling concept, but it is immediately apparent that for him boredom is a positive term, a point of departure for a new orientation. The apparent lack of stimuli in boring art involves the surroundings in ways not apparent when stimuli appear as exciting along certain lines of expectation. When Higgins tries to explain the effect of boring art such as, for instance, Eric Satie's *Vexations*, in which an 'utterly serious 32-bar piece' is played very slowly 840 times (a performance takes twenty-five hours), he repeatedly returns to the way in which such works will fade into their environment, become an integral part of their surroundings.<sup>8</sup> Boredom destroys the boundaries that keep the surge of intensities within the fenced-off space of the work. Now the intensities move along different lines, as in a Cage-class experience referred to by Higgins, where the students were instructed to do two different things each, in total darkness, so that one could not visually determine the beginning and the end of the piece.<sup>9</sup> Higgins describes the way in which the intensities in this piece 'appeared in waves' as expectation of structure mingled with the experience of non-structure; how the sense of time was warped as work and non-work could not be distinguished as separate areas of perception.

In a set of notes dealing with the experience the spectator would have with his play *St Joan of Beaufort*, Higgins comments on a different aspect of boredom. Anticipating audience reactions, he describes different levels of involvement developing through the piece, such as boredom, irritation, understanding and new boredom. 'Then', he writes, 'the witness will ideally disappear into the piece. He will stop seeing himself and start seeing events as events ... The general stasis of the piece will be soothing. Quantities will become relative and not numerical.'<sup>10</sup> Boredom, in other words, has the capacity to cause disappearance on two different levels which must be experienced as reciprocal: the work will disappear into the surroundings, and the spectator will disappear into the work.

This situation describes the kind of symmetrical relationship where the two sides are different by being the reverse of one another, as in a mirror. The work sees 'itself' in the surroundings, as the surroundings sees 'itself' in the work. But in this throwing back and forth, the identity of each is cancelled – one no longer knows which side of the mirror one is on. Usually identity is established with a simple self-reflexivity: I know that I am. When Higgins describes the experience of the piece in the darkened room, he describes a situation where this simple reflexivity proliferates into a series of repetitive questions concerning the boundaries between work and perceiving subject. The intensities of the piece move along the lines of questions such as 'whether the piece was finished or not, what the next thing to happen would be, etc.'<sup>11</sup> And this repetition has the capacity to undo identity. It works to highlight the simulacral quality of a mirroring in which the two sides of the mirror are confused so that 'nothing' or 'everything' is finally mirrored. Boredom – or the level beyond the initial experience of boredom which Higgins calls 'super boring' – essentially has to do with indistinction, disappearance and oblivion.

Oblivion on the level of the work, oblivion on the level of the spectator who engages with the reality of the work. In 1959 Higgins worked with a series of works called 'Contributions' and which developed from this principle. One piece calls for the production of a sound 'that is neither opposed to nor directly derived from' the environment in which it will be produced.<sup>12</sup> The piece is in fact an instructive riddle. How can one determine that which is neither opposed to nor derived from a context? Obviously, there is no way to avoid either of these parameters as long as sound is reflected in terms of predetermined relationships and as long as one sees the context as a given, closed whole. The only way to arrive at the freedom of this neither/nor situation seems to be to accept a fundamental independence of sounds and an equally fundamental dispersion of context. Then anything will do, and this anything will simply contribute to the oblivion of the situation.

Yet the way in which Higgins makes the question of context become central to the piece somehow spoils the innocence of this last solution. Sounds may be independent (Higgins preferred to use the word 'independence' rather than 'indeterminacy'), but the piece still forces a continual reflexion on the interplay between context and not-context: What is the 'right' context of a sound?<sup>13</sup> When this question is asked, sounds are suddenly no longer simply abstract 'musical' phenomena. If sounds appear to be 'independent', it is only because they have been recently 'liberated'. They come from somewhere, and they carry excesses of signification. It is as if Higgins is not willing to simply accept what is generally thought of as the immersive character of sound and the collapse of meaning with which it is associated. In this way the piece delves into a critical formulation of the borders of sound itself.

## EVENT

What is crucial to this notion of boredom is that it engages with a term that was to become so central to early Fluxus as to be even identified as a 'form'. This term is the 'Event'. According to Higgins, at the level of super-boredom one is finally capable of 'seeing events as events'.<sup>14</sup> One is, in other words, exposed to the workings of the Event. And the event is in its turn associated with danger, for it seems implicit in Higgins' statement that the event essentially works to disrupt boundaries and promote oblivion.

But in order to grasp more precisely what the event comes to mean in this context, it is necessary to go back to some of its first formulations as they appeared in the writings of Jackson Mac Low and in the work and notes of George Brecht. 'In the "Five Biblical Poems" the metric unit is *the event* rather than the foot, the syllable, the caesura or the cadence', Jackson Mac Low wrote in a 1963 comment to his first chance poems from 1955.<sup>15</sup> To say that the event constitutes the metric unit of the poem has consequences first of all for the question of time in his work. The ordinary metric units of poetry set up a temporal structure that is integral to the work, organising the poem's elements in particular relationships. When the metric unit becomes the event, it crosses the threshold of this structure, opening the work to temporality *in general*. The work is no longer a rhythmically patterned expression of something non-temporal: it is inscribed in a larger, all-encompassing temporality that might be described as the temporality of sense itself.<sup>16</sup> Or one could simply say that it collapses the notion of art-time into real time.

This 'real time' is, of course, on one level a parallel to the resetting to zero of John Cage, in which all elements are levelled. But what is particular and interesting about the workings of Mac Low's event is how it makes large parts of his work reformulate what Benjamin Buchloh has described as the combinatory impasse of avant-garde art – that is, the strategy of reducing symbolic language to its lexical or phonetic units by swapping letters around in a sort of visual/verbal/vocal collage.<sup>17</sup> Despite the 'operations' of chance on symbolical language in his poetry, Mac Low seems to frame this Cage-like technique by the reverse possibility: that of retaining the highest possible degree of lexical, semantic or 'emotional' content. The score for a 1961 piece, *Thanks*, seems, for instance, to be a set-up for such a collaged word-salad or cacophony. But a closer reading reveals that quite ordinary speech or communication might be a perfectly valid interpretation of the piece.<sup>18</sup>

Huge portions of representational elements always remain in Mac Low's poetry. In an early work, such as the 'Five Biblical Poems', all of the words and word groups are derived from one sequence of the Bible and are clearly recognisable as such, establishing a field of meaning in a clear and consistent way. A number of later works make a more radical turn. Here, large sections of texts taken from different sources are left almost untouched. A series of poems named after cities ('London, Paris, Sydney') consists of almost entire passages from newspapers or gossip magazines. Yet other series use personal ads or long excerpts from the writings of Marquis de Sade or from scientific journals. What these pieces seem to have in common is an experience of operating on two simultaneous but incommensurable levels. On the one hand, there is a sense of calm semantic unity. On the other hand, this unity is subtly broken by minor ruptures, convulsive patterns that make certain unexpected marks in the graphic image or sudden minor folds or interruptions in the semiotic processing of the text.

In this the texts come to resemble the crystalline surfaces of the kind of postcard that will subtly change its image when the surface is flipped into different positions. The possibly immersive space of reading, of deep knowledge, passion or interest in one field of meaning or another is not unrelated to the indeterminate space of convulsions and disruptions – of oblivion. They are at an angle in relation to one another, connected and separated by a simple mental flip. And what is at stake is of course the control and movement of this flipping. In the texts of Mac Low it is slip-sliding – out of control. What Mac Low formulates with his event is this movement at the edge.

## SPACE

Such a 'visualist' focus on surfaces reappears in the work of George Brecht, where it seems to proliferate into a whole topography of events, or what he chose to call 'an expanded universe of events'. In this way his work might be seen as an elaboration on the question of the space of immersion, since space is in fact a 'natural' metaphor for the experience of immersion. Yet for this very reason the notion of space is also a highly problematic one. It would seem to imply a generalised and neutral expanse that would seem to either lie outside of or marginalise the conflicts and desires that would provide the frame for the different points of view from which any notion of space is necessarily made up. But despite the essential silence and non-conceptuality of Brecht's work, the question of space actually goes through several transformations or renamings. It is, first, a 'field', then an 'expanding universe', and – finally – a 'book'. And each of these terms rework 'space' through the question of borders and their transgression.

For a central focus in the work of George Brecht could be said to be the question 'How are the things in the world connected?'. And this question is, fundamentally, a reworking or reversing of the lesson learnt from Cage about the autonomous behaviour of sounds or phenomena. As a way of exploring this question, Brecht starts to work with the notion of the event, exploring its meaning and its potential until it seems to become the point around which everything in his work turns. The crucial aspect of Brecht's event is, initially, the way in which it is used to map a landscape of boredom. Like so many others in the mid-50s, Brecht was obsessed with the idea of chance. Following the lead of Jackson Pollock, he made paintings by dropping ink on canvas and then crumbling the canvas into a ball so that the ink would dry in unforeseeable patterns. But somehow this activity did not quite do justice to Brecht's more particular fascination with certain aspects of chance expressed by modern science, and he soon found other approaches. As a point of departure, he starts out by reworking the traditional distinction between events and objects (or action and matter) – the reason behind the slightly puzzling fact that Brecht seems to make use of the term 'Event' only whenever anything is particularly object-like. This strategy was first demonstrated with his 'Towards Events' exhibition at the Reuben Gallery in 1959. The title is of interest because of its apparent incongruity with the most obvious aspect of the show's contents: a number of found objects, standing alone or in constellations. The ambiguity may seem to be solved by the fact that the objects in question are to 'be performed', but 'performance' in this case is completely unspecific, and has nothing to do with notions of musical or theatrical performance. With the piece called *Case* – a picnic suitcase filled with various objects – goes

the instruction that the objects can be used 'in ways appropriate to their nature'. The instruction for *Dome* – an arrangement of objects under a glass dome – barely indicates that the contents can be 'arrayed', then returned to their places. For the piece called *Cabinet* there is no instruction. It is simply a found cabinet with various rearrangeable objects.

This interchangeability of event/object gets a reverse treatment in Brecht's performance scores. While starting out as instructions for performance, later versions of the pieces seem to condense into a kind of objectification that makes their relationship to the category of performance or action uncertain. His 1959 version of *Time Table Music* indicates a railway station as a performance area, where a railway timetable works as a basic instrument for distributing the actions of the performers. But in a 1961 version called *Time Table Event*, the multiplicity of all these different elements has been erased, including the idea of performers. Now, all that remains is the railway station (any railway station) and a duration to be chosen from a timetable. Apparently the piece consists of anything happening within that duration. It is simply a found temporal object: the railway station is a place marked in its foundation by the 'when' of waiting.

An even more radical development takes place with *Drip Music (Drip Event)*, a 1959–62 piece developed from a notebook piece called *Burette Music*. While the initial composition was conceived for a number of small burettes set to drip on different sound sources, the final piece suggests only the concept of dripping in general, taking the piece out of the explicitly performative and into the realm of all dripping phenomena. What characterises the last versions of these two pieces is the way 'event' measures time just as much in terms of pre-existing phenomena or *objects*. And then we see that time, in these works, is conceived much like a sort of secret agent whose way of operating is either warp or continual metamorphosis.

The reasoning behind these pieces takes as its point of departure the questions of the premises of physical science, and particularly the question of which irreducible elements could constitute a scientific consideration of time. Field theory, theories of relativity and quantum physics provided what Brecht, in his 1958/59 notebook, called 'The Structure of a New Aesthetic', summarised by keywords such as 'space–time relativity', 'matter–energy equivalence', 'uncertainty principle', 'probability', 'observer–observed' and 'paradox as a reflection of our inability to imagine a simple model of the Universe'.<sup>19</sup> These general keywords served to express the difficulty of deciding the ontological status of object versus event, as exemplified for instance by the electrons in the atomic structure: they can only be described in terms of a probabilistic field of presence.<sup>20</sup>

In a 1959 essay on chance operations, however, Brecht introduced the event as part of a model of thought that would add a significant specification to the notion of the immersive space of boredom. In order to explain how notions of causality disintegrate into probability or indeterminacy, he invokes the principle of the second law of thermodynamics – a law originally designed to explain the theory of the gradual cooling or loss of energy in the universe. The principle of entropy explained by this law reflects the fact that heat always travels from a hotter body to a cooler one, as for instance in the case of an ice-cube placed in a glass of water at room temperature. This process obviously does not result in a cooler ice-cube and warmer water – instead the ice-cube melts, resulting in a levelling of the temperature extremes.

This is the example chosen by Brecht. What is important in his account of this process of

melting and mixing values is the stress he puts on the fact that this process cannot be attributed to one single cause. The ice-cube becoming cooler is not impossible. It is just improbable, and this improbability is statistical. As in Maxwell's statistical interpretation of what happens when there is a mixture of gases at different temperatures (Brecht refers to this as a good conceptual model of entropy), the molecules of the warmer gas collide with the molecules of the cooler, imparting some of their energy in the collision. The result is a mixture where the total amount of energy falls somewhere between the two extremes, but this is just a summation of a very large number of individual chance events. The loss of energy – or the process of entropy – must be attributed to a very large number of independent causes which in their individual intersections each represent an 'event'. This summation of a large number of independent causes, in other words, describes an entropic passage from one state to another – a linear, non-cyclical process in the sense that it cannot be undone or reversed, since this would entail compressing all the independent chains of effects into a single cause. An infinite information barrier separates the different stages in the passage from one another.<sup>21</sup>

Not the least part of the interest in such entropic processes is due to the way they seem to represent the passage of time itself, while at the same time wreaking havoc on boundaries and distinctions, including those that 'keep time'. Brecht's example of the melting ice-cube is an example of a move towards indistinction or uniformity, a fading out against the background and a loss of energy that essentially matches Higgins' description of boredom. But the metaphors used by Brecht when explaining the principle of entropy shows the tensions and ambivalences involved in this question: ambivalences concerning precisely the question of boundaries. In so many of his works there is a preoccupation with the mysteries and riddles of *sameness*, and yet in his explanation of the entropic principle he seems rather to focus on the fact that entropy promotes probability – an infinite universe of events and possible connections. He explains this point of view in a notebook entry:

The unity of nature does not lie inherent in things, but is concomitant of nature's being what I find it to be. Hence, since humans have an infinite capacity to invent properties and to find similarities and differences in things, based on these properties, *relations can be found between even an infinity of things*. Hence all nature is unified by man's conception/conceiving of it.<sup>22</sup>

This realisation of an infinite number of possible relationships was to become the working principle behind all his subsequent work. At first, however, this possibility is expressed in generalising or universalising terms that would actually seem to give hints of a sort of topographic overview of an endless area of dispersion. As expressed in an unrealised project for a switchboard that would generate 'any light or sound events of any desired characteristics to occur at any points in space and time': 'The event, made actual, is one chosen from a universe of all possible lights/sounds from all possible space points.' As an answer to the question of how this infinite universe of pure possibility can be engendered, Brecht posits the following three parameters, which seems like a scientific rewriting of Cage's notion of zero: '1) Maximum generality. 2) Maximum flexibility. 3) Maximum economy.'

It was along these lines that Brecht's planned his 1963 Yam Festival, a festival that was supposed to function as an 'ever-expanding universe of events'.<sup>23</sup> The festival could equally be described as a 'field', just as Brecht conceived of the totality of his own work as a field –

responding to the fact that field theory explores the multi-dimensional connections of any given element. The festival was conceived as a format that could contain the event at every level from 'everyday' phenomena to organised performance – an ambiguity that is perfectly captured by what is probably the most general of all of Brecht's work. His 1961 *Word Event* consists simply of the word 'exit' and is, of course, also 'realised' by any exit sign or exit action throughout the world. The point is, however, 'exit' will never provide a point of focus in itself – it will always be lost in the concrete, subjected to a chain reaction of images, ideas, memories, actions. It presents itself, in a radical way, as a singular centre or a nodal point, but by this very action centrality is somehow denied. It plays up 'connection', but also, by the same measure, sameness, a fading into the background, the continuity of unlike things that will 'get together like dust moves in the streets'.

And so Brecht elaborates on sameness: 'Consider an object. Call what is not the object the "other". Add to the object from the other another object to form a new object and a new "other". Repeat until there is no more "other"'.<sup>24</sup> The 'other' is a fiction whose limits are drawn in chalk on the living body of the *same*: small movements, small changes wipe the lines out just like entropy predicts it will. On the whole, Brecht becomes increasingly preoccupied with the fictional nature of the whole opposition of 'same' and 'other'. It is a residue of a manner of thinking which he would like to move beyond: all of his work explores a different and continuous dynamic between things that are distinct from one another. Descartes was wrong when he believed that the real distinction between parts entails their being absolutely separate, says Deleuze, turning instead to Leibniz for an alternative theory. Leibniz conceived of the world in terms of the figure of the fold – a figure that includes both continuity and separability, both sameness and boundary – and through this figure tried to show that two parts of really distinct matter can in fact be inseparable.<sup>25</sup>

And it is through Leibniz's vision that Deleuze is able to come up with a concept of the object that may in fact match what Brecht finally wanted to get at when he took such care to confuse object and event. 'This new object we can call *objectile*', Deleuze says, apparently adding 'object' to 'projectile' to give the image of an object that stretches and leaps across boundaries. It refers to 'our current state of things, where fluctuation of the norm replaces the permanence of the law, where the object assumes a place in a continuum by variation; where industrial automation or serial machineries replace stamped forms. The new status of the object no longer refers its condition to a spatial mold – in other words to a relation of form – matter – but to a temporal modulation that implies as much the beginnings of a continuous variation of matter as a continuous development of form [...] The object here is manneristic, not essentialising: it becomes an event.'<sup>26</sup> Along these lines of thought Brecht's event could be seen as a sort of *extension* – the extension that takes place when one element is stretched or folded around the following ones, so that they become parts of its whole.<sup>27</sup>

## SCALE

The instruction piece about sameness pokes fun at a thinking that pits same against different: same and different may be in extension of one another. But another such piece places the weight somewhat differently and in fact sets out to redraw the concept of space in Brecht's 'universe' or 'field': 'Determine the centre of an object or event. Determine the centre more

accurately. Repeat until further accuracy is impossible.' Obviously, entropy is all about the loss of centre, the impossibility of retaining the notion of centre for any length of time. And so, on one level, Brecht's instruction is pure redundancy, a recipe for bouncing off the even surface of sameness. But on a different level of understanding, a centre – or even a proliferation of centres – can be found with absolute accuracy.

To get at this possibility one has to resort to the question of scale that is essential to a cartographic mode of representation. And Brecht's proposition is in fact an allegory of cartography. Imagine finding the centre of a map of a city. To 'determine the centre more accurately' all one would need is a map on a different scale, in which case the centre would be a part of the city, an area or a street. With each new scale, each new accuracy, the centre would be removed, change places – from street to building, from building to room, and so on, down to the specks of dust on the floor or the cracks in the wall. But the cracks in the wall might be a point of departure for new mappings, new proliferations. As Robert Smithson pointed out some years later, size might pertain to the object, but scale is what pertains to art. Scale not size makes it possible to perceive a crack in the wall as the Grand Canyon, or the organisation of a room as the solar system. 'Scale', he wrote, 'depends on one's capacity to be conscious of the actualities of perception.'<sup>28</sup>

Brecht's vision of infinite connections between things is in fact a vision about the operations of scale – a fact that is clearly demonstrated in a number of his works – and it is at this level his work might also be said to engage in a strategy of mapping. From this point of view his work is not so much about wiping out boundaries as about their continual redrafting, proliferation and transformation due to what one might call the 'ravages' of scale. For the strategy of mapping, in Brecht's work, is not one which would correspond wholly to the textbook definition of maps as scale models of reality (models in which visible marks portray relative positions, sizes, distances and locations of phenomena we believe are real). The question of scale that makes a crack in the wall turn into the Grand Canyon is not primarily a question of model to reality, but of passages, transformations and connections from one space or level of reality to another. The cartographic strategies in his work stem from the insight, elaborated by many writers and artists, that a map is an experimentation in contact with the real, and that its most interesting feature is that of being open and connectible in all of its dimensions. It is detachable, reversible and open to the constant modifications that are the hallmarks of performance – or, for that matter – Brecht's notion of the Event. Cartography may facilitate connections between disparate phenomena, but at the expense of a hyperintensive focus on borders and limits.

Such connections between the disparate are explored over and over again in Brecht's mute constellations of objects on chairs, in cabinets or in specimen boxes. As events, his objects *perform*: they stretch and leap along the lines of changing scales, into new areas – as described in the piece called *Delivery*: 'An area is set aside. Delivery of objects to the area is arranged.'<sup>29</sup> For the operations of scale imply sudden leaps – a sort of travel in which one does not trace a trajectory but simply accepts 'instant' displacements. But these sudden leaps are not always simply implied in the still, almost 'frozen' separateness of his objects. In a number of works it is actually highlighted on a purely visual level, as if providing a cue or a methodological recipe to the workings of scale. In the box called 'Page 52' from his *Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, scale creates connections between the dark horizon on a drawing of a small pond and a

series of 'dark horizons' on a grid structure. Rings in the water becoming eye-shaped because perspectival 'deformations' echo an eye-shaped object in the box. In a different boxed assembly, a twisted orange peel 'mimes' the position of a ballet dancer in a newspaper cut-out, just as the ashes at the tip of a cigarette in another box is a 'smaller' version of the rough-textured object close to it. In yet another box, the little piece of dark thread and the two-textured piece of fabric works as an extreme enlargement of the lines and textures in some black-and-white photographs of a stone building.<sup>30</sup>

The connections and continuities in these works are placed along purely optical lines; scale deals with the operations of visual perception. There is, however, a new kind of opticality or visualist tack to these works that makes up for the missing centre. Deleuze calls it 'point of view' or 'perspectivism', since perspective implies, at once, distance *and* continuity. Point of view on a variation replaces the centre of a figure or a configuration in a world that might now be described in terms of the variable curvature of a fold. Point of view relates to the way the new object or objectile 'exists only through its metamorphoses or the declension of its profiles'.<sup>31</sup> Point of view is then 'a power of arranging cases' – Brecht simply called his earliest exhibition 'an arrangement', while the objects it contained were to be 'arrayed'.<sup>32</sup>

The jumps and leaps of scale is what gives a point of view on the continuities between these objects, folding contexts and boundaries around each other. At the same time it seems to deal with phenomena that are somehow reduced to pure surfaces – surfaces that present themselves to vision. It is the surface connections that produce the awareness of scale and possible continuities between unlike things. Like crystals, the meaning of Brecht's objects does not develop from whatever inner depth they will convey, but from the way they will produce series of new surfaces and angles, in a development of movement and freezing. For even as Brecht produces leaps and connections, he always seems to show his objects as if in the same inert or frozen state.

This is probably why crystals seem to occupy such an important place in Brecht's thinking. His notion of the event seems to link up with the particular entropic quality of crystals.<sup>33</sup> For the entropy of crystals is quite paradoxical. Their clear surfaces, seemingly so structured, calm and orderly, are the result of a loss of tension and energy in their geological strata. In fact, they represent the strange situation where entropic dissolution is also an image of entropic order and symmetry: order and disorder fold around each other and become continuous. What Brecht maps, then, is not so much a world that is 'finally' entropic – he does not seem very concerned with the sublime sense of loss that a notion such as 'entropy' or 'lack of energy' might occasion. When he writes about the second law of thermodynamics, he does not touch upon this aspect at all. What he maps is a world of surfaces and continuities.

As an effect of this domain of surfaces, Brecht is actually able to formulate spatial difference within the map-surfaces that usually presents us with a model of the continuity of space. In map-pieces such as the *Wedding of Havana and Miami* or the *Three Translocations of the Isle of Wight*, the surface quality of the map has been doubly realised, so that it actually becomes a send-up of the homogeneous horizontality of this particular world model. As Brecht makes the territories move about, they are reduced to 'significant' visual spots on a flat picture-map, to be placed and replaced as a matter of form. The 'marrying' of Havana and Miami is as real but also as illegitimate as the constant stream of refugees which crosses

this particular territorial demarcation. On the other hand, mapping as an instrument of combination and continuity is doubly inscribed in a piece where an actual zipper both joins and divides two parts of a street map of Montmartre. There is an echo of the so-called zipper-effect in the paintings of Barnett Newman – with the important difference that the zipper-event that cuts across the flat surface of the map of Montmartre proliferates the axes of recombinations and lines of flight endlessly. In this way it breaks the rules of both ‘horizontal’ map-space and ‘vertical’ picture space.<sup>34</sup>

With this reformulation of space, it is significant that Brecht turns from seeing the totality of his work through the metaphor of a ‘field’ to seeing the totality of his work as a ‘book’, where objects or constellations of objects could constitute ‘pages’, ‘chapters’ or ‘footnotes’. This was George Brecht’s *Book of the Tumbler on Fire* – a concept and a project started in 1964, but that would extend to include works back to 1962 so as to express the interconnectedness of a series of work that could be seen as unfolding along an infinite line rather than clustering around one centre.<sup>35</sup>

For the notion of the book, with its dense layers of pages and folds, complicates any neutral or homogeneous concept of space and remains close to the core of Brecht’s strategies of mapping. What counts now is the suddenness of the turning of the page – the new that connects in the blink of an instant with the previous, and the page or fold that guarantee continuity as well as separation. Both Leibniz and Mallarmé dreamed continually of the total book while working only in fragments, but, as Deleuze points out, we are mistaken if we believe that they did not succeed in their wishes: ‘They made this unique Book perfectly, the book of monads, in letters and little circumstantial pieces that could sustain as many dispersions as combinations.’<sup>36</sup> And this description might be a description of Brecht’s book as well – allowing for the fact that a book is both a ‘material’ and ‘informational’ object. Brecht, for his part, asserts that there is ‘no theoretical reason’ why his work should be a book – a defense, probably, against any totalising or centralising ideas that this concept might engender, such as the one that informs the notion of the ‘failure’ of Mallarmé to make the book of his dreams.<sup>37</sup> Seeing his work as a book essentially displaces the notion of a horizontal space of entropic dispersion that was Brecht’s initial formulation of the immersive space of boredom. It complicates the notion of the space of immersion as an ‘open’ space.

## SOUND/VOICE

If Brecht reworks the space of immersion by reformulating the concept of space itself, other artists would rework the object that is generally seen as the model for immersion itself; notably sound. Sound is believed to be unique in the sense that it has ‘presence’ – a presence that envelops the subject and erodes its bodily limits. As Frances Dyson has pointed out, the ears are orifices that are always open: the ears allow the subject to be continuously and uncontrollably surrounded by sonic disturbances. Sound ignores the boundary of the skin. It is present both externally in the environment and internally as a resonance or vibration. It evades the distinction between outside and inside, and so makes way for a loss of self.<sup>38</sup>

Cage made the most of this notion of the autonomy or immersive presence of sounds when he liberated them from the constrictions of harmony. Sounds, he claimed, were ‘beings’, and as beings, part of nature. Yet the being of sound is not for this reason free and

autonomous. In Cage's work sounds seem to be free only at the expense of being 'music': the tendency in Cage to musicalise any sound actually rules out whole dimensions of aurality. Douglas Kahn has pointed out that this collapse of sound into a problematic of musical sound betrays a contradiction at the core of Cage's musical philosophy. Cage was concerned with the possibility of moving away from the anthropomorphic perspective of music, but by retaining the idea of music as the benevolent and all-comprising framework of 'any' sound, contradicts this position and essentially reaffirms the modernist concern for the boundaries of art. What is at stake here is Cage's insistence on the naturalness of sounds, and the ecological, non-humanist perspective according to which sounds could be approached as beings. But this perspective is mired in an idealist and a priori opposition between culture and nature: an ecological perspective on sound should first of all depart from the historical determination of 'nature' and the social incursion into nature.<sup>39</sup> What falls outside this natural and non-humanist perspective is, in other words, all of those instances in which sound is not merely abstract vibrations 'in the air', but social phenomena that function in terms of memory and significance, context and shifting frameworks – that is, sounds capable of semiosis. From this perspective the boundary of music may be eroded by the overriding perspectives of aurality (or auralitys) in general and in their various particularities.

But it was precisely these 'other' dimensions of sound that were explored as the students in John Cage's composition class at the New School of Social Research brought their class lessons outside the classroom context; and this was also precisely why Cage condemned this activity for lack of 'spiritual virtuosity', and on the whole maintained an ambivalent relationship to the activities associated with Fluxus. His 1958 and 1959 composition classes triggered some of the first collective 'pre-Fluxus' actions as students assembled under the name of the New York Audio Visual Group performed their exercises from Cage's class at Larry Poons' Epitome Coffee Shop.<sup>40</sup> Fearing a dispersal of his principles into an attitude of 'anything goes', Cage strongly emphasised the need for discipline, which generally meant emptying yourself from subjecthood, society and context in order to become an empty container for the nature of sound

A general lack of faith in the category of music was, however, often the productive drive for these experiments. 'Is it a fault of an event that it does not produce an apparent sound?', Dick Higgins wrote, 'I am tired of music [...] nothing is to be left but theatres, and maybe those will disappear for me too. Then I can begin again somewhere else.'<sup>41</sup> Nam June Paik, for his part, complained that for all his years of studying the aesthetics of music, he still had not found a satisfactory answer to the important question of what music is.<sup>42</sup> But Paik's question about the 'what' of music is entirely rhetorical: he poses it only at the moment when he is able to displace it, to demonstrate its relative position and its momentary insignificance. Cage's all-inclusiveness could not provide a real answer because it essentially responds to the question of the 'what' of music – an affirmation of boundaries despite all. And so he displaces Cage's all-inclusiveness as yet another form: 'I am tired of renewing the form of music – serial or aleatoric, graphic or five lines, instrumental or bellcanto [*sic*], screaming or action, tape or live. I must renew the ontological form of music.'<sup>43</sup>

But for Paik this ontological renewal was not about finding a new musical 'being'. On the contrary, the renewal was above all a question of creating a split in music's ideal unity, as implied in his term 'post music'. He is even aware of the pitfalls of the term, its potential

double bind: 'I never use therefore this holy word "happening" for my "concerts", which are equally snobbish as those of Franz Liszt. I am just more self-conscious or less hypocritical than my anti-artist friends.'<sup>44</sup> Following this statement, Paik sums up Western art music in terms of a series of blunt and rather funny sociological analyses, ending on a note which even includes the newest and most immersive strategies of boredom: 'New American style boring music is probably a reaction and resistance against the too thrilling Hollywood movies.' To move past or post music, Paik realises the need to leave the domain of the 'what'; but since he also realises the impossibility of 'just' leaving, his answer is a strategy of displacement that will replay music in terms of its possible excesses of signification. Music will be eroded by the semiotic remainder that is generally placed at music's margins.

And so he displaces 'what' by 'when' – the 'what' of music becoming subsequent to his own new question of the 'when' of music – in other words a leap to total contextualisation: 'This WHEN (time of day and day of year, a very interesting measure, which shall be intensely developed and exploited in my post music *The Monthly Review of the University of Avant Garde Hinduism*) ...'<sup>45</sup> And a part of this strategy of displacement is an initial disavowal of any sensual plenitude that might pull back to music's abstract domain: 'Post music is as calm, as cold, as dry, as non-expressionistic as my television experiments. You get something in a year. When you are about to forget the last one you received you get something again. This has a fixed form and this is like the large ocean ... calm sunny calm rainy calm windy calm sunny [...]'<sup>46</sup>

Paik even displaced the potential pathos of 'post' by literalising the concept and playing off the many levels of meaning produced by this action. For his post music is also a composition that is rhythmically structured by the huge social, national and international organisation known as the Postal Service. His post music is a composition that is formed as a *Monthly Review* ..., to be distributed by mail, of course. Paik conceived of this composition as a series of objects mailed to subscribers for a yearly fee of \$8; among the objects proposed were 'genuine water from Dunkerque in organic glass bottle, the red earth from Auschwitz in an un-breakable polyethylene tube, or dirty nails of John Cage, cut in 1963, or cortizone bottle of George Maciunas, or arm-pit hair of a Chicagoan negro prostitute etc ...'<sup>47</sup>

It is as if, in direct response to the neutrality and emptiness propagated by John Cage, Paik expressly chooses objects laden with the memory of recent political atrocities, of illnesses, of sex and the body, including 'traces' or 'residue' from the body of Cage himself. These objects effectively serve in a strategy of 'changing Cage', for the use of the Postal Service and its expertise in distribution is obviously also a pun on the principle of distribution of disparate effects that was one of the main lessons derived from Cage. By the help of an insignificant structure – an empty framework waiting to be filled, precluding any actual relation between the structure and the 'filling material' – objects or sounds could be distributed throughout the compositions. Cage's comment on Jasper Johns' flag paintings explains this particular preoccupation with structure and distribution, since Johns' paintings are not paintings of a flag: 'The roles are reversed: beginning with the flag, a painting was made. Beginning, that is, with structure, the division of a whole into parts corresponding to the parts of a flag, a painting was made which both obscures and clarifies the underlying structure.'<sup>48</sup>

Paik, of course, undermines this notion of insignificant or empty structure. The rhythm

and function of a postal service can hardly be separated from the social reality of the goods it distributes, the rules and concerns governing this distribution, and, not least, the shifting and insecure temporal frameworks associated with this institution. Sarcastic expressions like 'the check is in the mail', say it all. The 'when' of post music is not the 'when' of a neutral temporal framework, but (like Brecht's railway station) the 'when' of waiting and frustration, of lost and found, of detours and delays. If anything, it invests indeterminacy with significance and emotion, trace and memory, all modified by possibilities of oblivion, failure and actual displacement.

The significance of this uncertain and unstable 'when' was at the core of Paik's work with electronics and media – his final move to displace and disperse musical insights and strategies through the huge processors of cultural meaning that are the mass media. Like Brecht, Paik was interested in the indeterminate nature of the electron, and repeatedly pointed out the fact that TV images, (electronic images) were indeterminate in their very foundation.<sup>49</sup> They were images one could neither hold on to nor control – images where the stability of the 'what' was always moderated by a radical 'when'. Despite the strong interest in electronics among composers, this aspect had largely gone unnoticed, Paik claimed: electronic composers were still caught in the deterministic forms of serialism and bound to the linear tracks of sound-tape.<sup>50</sup>

His TV experiments were in other words to be something entirely different from a merely optical version of musical indeterminacy or interest in electronics.<sup>51</sup> In fact they had the force to attack musical self-centredness at the core, since the new dominance of electronic media indicated (to Paik) a society increasingly 'infiltrated' by indeterminacy. His 1963 *Exposition of Music – Electronic Television* showed (violently) prepared pianos alongside TV-sets in which the transmission was being destroyed or transformed in various ways, all thanks to the 'when', or the instability, of the electron. Cage had experimented with prepared pianos (placing objects on the strings to transform their sound at random), but Paik's preparations were more like mutilations. The piano, seen as the cult object of a musical culture, was submitted to the violence of transformation as the instrument now reappeared as a sort of matter capable of becoming 'anything'. And so, the transformed pianos, laden with all sorts of objects and debris, mirrored the violence of the electronic transformations and transmutations on the screens. Paik lost no time in pointing out the cultural significance of such transformations due to the proliferation of live TV and all kinds of radio transmitters (but also electronic equipment such as coffee machines and electronic drills). His preoccupation with electronic images was simply one way of dealing with a permeability of boundaries which would no longer – as in a *Gesamtkunstwerk* – concern just the 'arts'. There was more indeterminacy in culture-at-large than in indeterminate art, but this 'larger' indeterminacy could only present itself as excess or otherness. It could not, in other words, fit into the space of even an open work.

In the context of this excessive indeterminacy, Paik repeatedly returns to the question of boredom and oblivion. Boredom is in fact one of the main themes in many of Paik's statements about his new work. One of his comments resembles Higgins' anticipation of audience reactions: 'In the beginning it is (probably) interesting, then later on it is boring – don't give up! Then it is (probably) interesting again, then once more boring – don't give up! Then it is (probably) interesting again, then once more boring – don't give up!'<sup>52</sup> Then, Paik

claims, one will move to a level beyond beautiful and ugly, to a state of 'nothing' – an insight close to Higgins' description of the ability of the spectator to disappear into the work. Paik's way of linking the boundary-dissolving capacities of boredom with the transformative capacities of electronic culture shows to what degree his work and thought is concerned with a thinking that never pulls back to a final definition of music. On the contrary, his work seems concerned with how certain musical strategies and insights derived from Cage may return as mere effects within a different conception of both image-culture and sound-culture. If anything, Paik was hypersensitive to what Kahn calls the 'sociality of sound', and to the social consequences for sound and aurality at large due to technology-induced changes in social practices. Maybe the most marked change due to these technologies is the mobility of sounds or voices as *effects* 'cut-off' from the internal audition of the speaker. The recorded or amplified voice (to name just two basic transformations) now returns to its speaker as other or different, as it passes through any number of other spaces or contexts.

Paik, never content to let the technological apparatuses remain in any stable mechanical or reproductive form, would identify the technology itself with the notion of sound to the extent of transforming the apparatus endlessly. His apparatuses do not simply transmit or create sound, but constantly rewrite it, including a continual rewriting of the very technologies of recording and displacement. Record players were taken apart and reconstructed as towering 'record-schaschlik's' where the pick-up could be moved at will across the vertical and horizontal axes of the construction. Magnetic tape (with sound recordings) were glued on the wall in criss-crossing patterns. Listening by means of the loose soundhead of a tape recorder, one would trace a sound map of a wall terrain.

It is a cartography of sound, in fact, in which sound is submitted to the dimensionality of concrete space and distance, well removed from its non-dimensional location in the air/ear. Sound traces new dimensions and distances. Magnetic tape is no longer just a recording strip passing quickly over a soundhead in order to let sounds escape from it. It is itself a trajectory, a piece of concrete space and distance through which one has to make one's way at will and from all possible directions. At this point one can even see the contours of a close relationship between Paik's treatment of sound and Brecht's use of scale. The collapse of sound into space makes for the imaginary expansions or shifts equal to those that go from cracks in the wall to canyons. Paik's *Symphony for 20 Rooms*, in which sound events are defined in terms of twenty different rooms of a house, elaborates exactly these sonic/spatial measures.

This collapsing of sound into space may in fact be an indicator of Paik's critical engagement with the possibility of immersion. But at this point the sonic actions of Paik might be interpreted in terms of the concept of *voice*. The voice is a specification of sound in general, but simultaneously it complicates the notion of immersion in listening. Sound may erode the bodily limits, but the voice provides us with a more salient experience of a presence that is simultaneously coming from the inside and delivered from the outside. Regis Durand has written of the *mobility* of the voice, no doubt inspired by its new importance in the age of audio media where it produces instant intimacy and proximity, as well as reinforcing experiences of distance. As it cuts across the boundaries of reality and representation (a vocal sample has no less presence than 'the real thing'), the voice is an 'apparatus' in the sense that it produces and transforms of its own accord.<sup>53</sup> Just as the voice may be something produced by the body, the product of a source, it is also a piece of residue, something that falls outside,

that continues on its own. This fact of the voice as something that falls outside your own bodily space or 'life' was Antonin Artaud's supreme dilemma. Artaud's enemy was dead matter: the fear that your output is what you *put out*, that your voice moves to freeze the moment you let it escape into speech, sound, writing. He suspected that no turn of a phrase, no shape of an object, no track of a movement can constitute a life of its own, but is doomed to fall to the ground, limp as a discarded garment or excrement. The dead or residual character of the voice was dangerous for the reason that the separation from your own voice entails yourself as 'dead' or 'residual'. His only prescription against this sort of death was a vision of totality in which voice and body would be indivisible. And this vision of totality, where the symbolic language of 'society' must dissolve into a scream or 'noise' is parallel to many such totalising fantasies within the different avant-garde positions – from Yves Klein's *tout* to Cage's zero.

In contrast, Paik is sceptical about totality and not afraid of residue. 'We should learn how to be satisfied with 75%, how to be satisfied with 50%, how to be satisfied with 38% ...', he writes in his preface to his *Exposition of Experimental Television*. And just a few lines below, he makes it very hard for anybody (including himself) to approach Zen Buddhism as just an interesting philosophical framework for a new and total artistic or musical vision: 'Zen is responsible of Asian poverty. How can I justify ZEN without justifying Asian poverty?? It is another problem to which I will refer again in the next essay' [*sic*] Then he asserts: 'The frustration remains as the frustration. There is NO catharsis.' From this point of view Paik may even take a special interest in the residual aspect of the voice. He picks up what Artaud leaves aside and interprets it as productive. It is this residual *and* productive aspect of the voice as apparatus that Paik explores when he continually rebuilds technology in terms of its own site or terrain. More particularly this means that he explores the capacity of the voice for creating not only presence, but also a split in presence. As in reverberation or feedback this split creates excesses and noise that will surround meaning, but not replace it.

Paik redefines sound in terms of loop or feedback in order to produce all the immersive characteristics of a voice. One work for instance demonstrates a record-player where the arm that supports the pick-up is replaced by a phallic object extended into the listener's mouth. The strongly erotic implications of this image of sonic/oral 'penetration' notwithstanding, the work also creates the image of an impossible 'listening through the mouth' where the sound returns by strange splits and warps to its source. The sound has become a voice. Now it can no longer be 'music' – something for the ear, something to which one simply listens. Cage praised the capacity to listen above all other faculties – he imagined an opening of the ear which would make one receptive to the 'excellence' of the world. For Cage, listening becomes a metaphor for receptiveness in general, not only the aural kind. But by having listening *literally* make a detour through one of the orifices that (unlike the ear) not only receives but also discharges, it is as if Paik wants to 'dirty' the clean neutrality of Cage's receptiveness. Paik generally went to considerable lengths to displace this listening in terms of its silent 'other', notably sex. Not content to rest on the metaphorical plane of the sensual (this is, after all, Western music's way of sublimating the sexual experience), Paik used its rather more blunt backstreet forms of expression, such as striptease or penis-length contests.<sup>54</sup> When the 'arm' of the record-player becomes a sexual organ, he seems to point out that one is receptive only by risking exchange and interpenetration, which also means leaving one's own mark.

For whether the voice in question is mine or yours, or someone else's whose name remains unknown, these essentially social questions of ownership, propriety, recognition, territoriality and identity frame every moment of its being. As the composer Earle Brown notes with respect to one of Paik's early Cologne actions: 'A Paik is a Paik becoming a Paik (by any other name) [...] Yes Virgil, there *is* an avant-guard.'<sup>55</sup> An 'avant-guard' – keeping a watch on the borders that pop up as if out of nothing.

## REPETITION

As Paik creates voices by returning sounds or sound-technologies on themselves, he moves into another minefield – notably that of repetition. It was a field that Cage himself had been threading with a certain care and many explanations and exceptions. Repetition must – in principle – not occur: to Cage repetition above all denotes repetition of the norm, and his work is, to the contrary, devoted to the possibility of change. Yet Cage is, of course, aware of the paradoxes and complications surrounding repetition, and of the way in which its concept inevitably surrounds his own concept of change. The rule of discontinuity in repetition – the fact that in order to be repeated an object must first have disappeared – actually gives a unique kind of singularity and momentary presence to the repeated object.<sup>56</sup> For this reason Cage claims that on one level 'repetition does not exist [...] and we cannot think either that things are being repeated, or that they are not being repeated.'<sup>57</sup> And about the experience of actually performing the 840 repetitive passages of Satie's *Vexations*, he asserts that the piece became interesting not at the point of the beat (which is the element that sticks to the most rigid form of repetition), but at the point of the phrase, where one could experience variation.<sup>58</sup> And so Cage is in one sense able to do away with the problem of repetition for the benefit of change. Beyond repetition, there is *always* change.

With this in mind, the way in which so many of the artists connected to Fluxus are unable to leave well alone but actually return to repetition over and over again is strange – even slightly uncanny. Because this return to repetition is often blunt, defiant, extremely determinate and unsophisticated. It seems to exist at the simple level of a beat or a single extended signal, as if they initially wanted to scar or mark the notion of change or indeterminacy itself. Paik had already pointed out that indeterminacy in composing and performing was still nothing but a stretch of linear time for the listener (attempts to 'solve' this problem by playing the same piece twice in one performance so that the listener could savour the difference, would not change anything in principle). With this insight they seem to return indeterminacy with a vengeance to the very linearity that it was supposed to escape, and with boredom as a main frame of reference. For the repetitive pieces form the very paradigm for what Dick Higgins called 'super boredom'.

One piece in particular seems to have produced a whole lot of 'frustration with NO catharsis', with a few legendary and contested performances.<sup>59</sup> In *Yes It Was Still There. An Opera* (1959), Emmett Williams – a central figure in the concrete-poetry movement – used a radical repetition of sounds and graphic marks as he subjected a simple little 'erotic mystery story' to infinite dispersal or attenuation.<sup>60</sup> *An Opera* is, like any opera, a story that illustrates itself in terms of both sound and vision. But in this case the illustration immediately

challenges or even destroys the story or 'libretto' – not by overturning its meaning, but by subjecting it to so many elements of temporal or graphic repetitions that the story gets 'lost' in the process. But then the libretto also deals with the question of loss: the story of a lost letter. Or, to be more precise – a lost *part* of a letter, notably the purely graphic dot over the *i*. The young man who has 'lost the dot over the *i*' gets help in searching from a young woman, but while the dot remains lost and absent (in the hero's mouth, incidentally), its graphic presence increases with every word uttered by the main character. For on the actual score his words are held apart with ever-increasing distances by a mad proliferation of graphic dots – one for each new word. In that way, the first word uttered by the man is followed by one dot, while word number 179 is followed by 179 dots . . . and so on. Visually, the score develops as a spiralling structure of depletion as the distances between the words increase with every dot, since dots are also, among other things, the graphic sign used to indicate pauses.

In the performance of the score, however – that is, in its realisation as an 'opera', the depletion of the libretto is mediated by a different kind of 'presence'. The story stretches towards the infinite as the dots are 'represented' by even beats (on a drum, a cup, a table or whatever). The beats may be empty structural markers just like the graphic dot that signifies nothing more than simple pauses or the difference between capital and lower case *i*. But a performance of these beats takes around three hours, and of course the experience will be that of an eternal repetitive pounding, minimally interspersed by single words and sentences. Then, what might at first appear as a neat little paradox on absence and presence – the ever-increasing presence of the lost object – turns into a different kind of structure and a different kind of experience. The structure of absence/presence is displaced by repetition. The libretto may be lost in its own beat, but this repetitive drumming also evokes a different dynamic which has to do with *mutation* or transformation.

For repetition is the mark of the structure of *pattern* rather than the structure of absence or presence.<sup>61</sup> The logic of pattern may be explained by comparing computers to typewriters: A typewriter produces the presence of a single letter from a single key, while pressing one key on the keyboard of a computer produces chains of reactions and transformations, chains of codes where pattern and randomness interact. And so pattern indicates that information is never present in itself – it is dependent on the probability distribution of the coding elements rather than a presence. Pattern can be recognised through redundancy or repetition of elements, and one of its more crucial features is the tendency towards unexpected metamorphoses, attenuations and dispersals because of the long chains of reactions.

A specific type of single command works leading to endless processes of repetition and attenuation, as if initiated by a computer key, actually becomes a crucial feature in Fluxus. This was – at least partly – thanks to the influence of the composer La Monte Young, who edited what was to become the first Fluxus publication, notably the special issue of *Beatitude West* magazine, named *An Anthology*. Young seemed to reverse all of Cage's principles: No longer based on chance operations, his pieces appeared fiercely determinate. No longer pieced together as an assemblage of autonomous and heterogeneous multiplicities, they seemed to depart from a single sound, sentence, instruction or figure, many of them distinctly extra-musical. One significant piece even explored the extremes of linearity: *Composition #10 1960* simply instructs one to 'draw a straight line and follow it.' *Composition #7 1960* likewise explores the sound of a single interval (a fifth) to be held for a long – indeterminately long –

time. Yet, like someone pressing one key on the computer, Young seemed obsessed with the possibility of producing unforeseeable effects through a single command. He professed an interest in newness:

Often I hear somebody say that the most important thing – about a work of art is not that it be new but that it be – good. But if we define good as what we like, which is the only definition of good I find useful when discussing – art, and then say that we – are interested in what is good, it seems to me that we will always be interested in the same things (that is, the same things that we already like).  
I am not interested in good; I am interested in new, even – if this includes the possibility of its being evil.<sup>62</sup>

For Young, as for Higgins, the new or the indeterminate is framed by the possibility of danger or *evil*. This concern with danger essentially deals with the potential for immersion. Unlike Cage, Young did not primarily conceive of a sound as a ‘being’ – an individual among individuals in a big network structure – but as a ‘world’: ‘If one can give up part of himself to the sound and approach the sound as a sound and enter the world of the sound, then the experience need not stop there but may be continued much further and the only limits are the limits each individual sets for himself. When we go into the world of a sound, it is new.’<sup>63</sup> He had been searching out such worlds of sound since early age: wind, crickets, sounds of animals in a wood resonating off a lake, the humming of power stations, telephone poles and motors.<sup>64</sup> The repetition of endless identical moments in his single command compositions operate in terms of pattern: No element is present simply in and of itself, referring only to itself. Each repetition of a sound or a phrase carries within it the traces of its previous manifestations, but also announces its difference from these. It is essentially a generative movement instigated by the effect of differences when experienced in time: the spacing of the different elements in the play of traces and differences indicates an endless number of possible permutations. *Draw a straight line . . .* was, on one occasion, issued as a booklet, with the composition instruction written along the middle of every page with new dates of execution/composition as the only changing elements: each day is a mutation of the previous one. The linear movement of the piece through the pages of the book told a story of repetition and transformation through one single figure.<sup>65</sup>

The recognition of the dynamics of pattern in these works may give a more precise idea of how the super-boring repetition of the pieces creates ‘worlds’ for immersion. N Katherine Hayles is concerned with pattern in the context of changing experiences of embodiment in a VR context, but her model of thought may throw some light on the implications of repetition and mutation in the single command works.<sup>66</sup> For a world of immersion to exist, the subject must step into it by simultaneously stepping out of itself. But while this idea may bring up notions of zen blankness, it actually indicates a specific kind of connectedness. The arm that presses the single command key on the computer belongs to a body and a subject that is then both part of the transformations taking place with the operations of pattern in the machine, while also being outside of it. In a text written for his *Symphony for 20 Rooms*, Paik develops a theory of immersion, which departs from a specific notion of individuality. Variability must be combined with intensity: the problem, as Paik sees it, consists in having variation without losing intensity. The pure quantity of nature – Cage’s endless variability – must, according to Paik, be undercut by ‘quality’. By this he does not mean quality as in ‘good, better, best’

which 'permits the possibility of comparison', but quality as 'Character, individuality, *Eigenschaft*', which 'excludes the possibility of comparison'. This individuality, which comprises not only the singularity of *moments*, but also their 'momentary' forgetting, is seen as the point of departure for intensity.<sup>67</sup>

It is symptomatic of Paik's perspective that he links this intensity both to the fixed-form linearity of sex (even if Stockhausen tries to dissuade him, saying that fixed form in music must be avoided because it is like sex) and to extatic religious practices which teach how to transcend the self. But even more significant is the way in which Paik crossbreeds the notion of intensity with the notion of boredom. Boredom appears when a fixed form – with its 'individuality' or '*Eigenschaft*' – is subjected to endless repetition. But this repetition, which necessarily entails oblivion, the forgetting from one moment to the next, also exposes the form to a process of wear and tear. The form gets dissolved in repetition. It gradually loses its contours while going on and on. This is the danger or evil of boredom. It demonstrates how *something* must be transformed or lose its boundaries in immersion. Paik's venture into film is an obvious example. *Zen for Film* (1964) is a loop of blank film leader, but as it is projected it gets gradually scratched-up and dusty. It's a perfect repetition in which the image always changes.

In fact the repetitive frames of film became a source for the continued exploration of the terms of immersion. In Jackson Mac Low's *Tree Movie* (1961), a still camera records a tree for an indeterminate length of time.<sup>68</sup> Dick Higgins explored the possibility of projecting a blank film which would be gradually burned by the projector during showing. Film is a medium that processes identical frames in time. The effects of speed on the processing of the frames make no single frame either absent or present; instead they partake in the play of pattern and transformation. This may actually seem like a processing of time itself, since it makes past, present and future converge in one extended, fluctuating moment. And so this exploitation of the repetitive implications of film gives a new take on the possibility of immersive presences or spaces. To quote Thierry de Duve on the subject of the performance of film in relation to the desire for a boundless 'real time': 'The *actualité* of real time/real space is dependent on being mediated through a system of reproduction.' To reach an immersive space or immersive presence, the simple heterogeneity of 'nature' is, in other words, not enough. What is needed is reproduction, that is, repetition. This is the seminal lesson of many Fluxus-related artists as they rework or reproduce the Cagean ground. From this point of view they seem to have a knowledge of the nature of repetition and oblivion that is comparable to the insight of Deleuze: 'We do not repeat because we forget, we forget because we repeat.'<sup>69</sup> While Cage asserted that despite repetition there is always change, these artists would reverse the problematic: *because of* repetition, there is change.

## SIGNATURES

One of the most blunt and insistent instances of repetition even seemed to recall the very space that Cage had gone to so much trouble to avoid: notably the space of the subject. It was a strange, even perverse, kind of invasion: the free-playing non-subjective space of Cagean multiplicity was interrupted by a series of work that seemed, above all, to scream *III* (in French, *moi, je*).

This was the repetitive strategy of Ben Vautier, whose most important statement from the late 50s onwards is *Moi, Ben, je signe* or *I, Ben, sign*. And right from the start these statements or instances of signature go to work, in paradoxical and often tormented ways, with the previous avant-garde formulations of totality or limitlessness, from Marcel Duchamp to John Cage and Yves Klein. The first moment in Ben's strategy comes when he discovers the fundamental duplicity of these notions of totality. If Duchamp's ready-mades, Cage's indeterminacy or Klein's notion of *tout* means that art opens up into anything, the reverse side of this possibility is the principle of appropriation: Duchamp, Cage and Klein appropriate *anything* for art, in the name of art or the personal signature. Appropriation is all about ownership, and yet in this instance ownership or signature is what must remain hidden: it is effectively dissolved into 'multiplicity' or carried off into the image of heavenly blue endlessness. The artist who appropriates is also the instance that is supposed to disappear. Because of this duplicity Ben sees no other choice but to go to work with the way in which this duplicity circumvents and interrupts the notion of the total.

For, on the one hand, there is no doubt that Ben follows both Cage and Klein in believing that new spaces can be found, must be found, and that a notion of limitlessness – of unlimited *possibility* – is fundamental to this search for the new. But to Ben this notion of totality remains narrowly 'artistic' and idealised so long as the appropriating and egoistic space of art itself is not taken into account, as long as the egotism of this space must be kept silent when everything else is supposed to sound. And so Ben administers a return of the repressed. He starts to sign all over again, continually and maniacally. He signs the space of free play set up by John Cage, and it is in fact by signing it that he marks it off *as* a particular space, with particular limits. He is scribbling all over this territory like some kind of mad graffiti artist, taking it all for himself. Graffiti is basically about signature – about a forbidden signature: signing a space that is not yours, stealing a bit of the space for yourself. It has a tendency to take place in what is generally and idealistically known as 'public spaces', but by overwriting or signing these spaces the graffiti artist reopens the question of territorial ownership and boundaries: to whom do these spaces really belong? Ben's action is in many ways similar. The forbidden signature evokes a hidden or repressed signature in John Cage's free space. It also repeats, as if dumbstruck, the signature actions of Duchamp, but with a difference. Ben's signature no longer guarantees *anything* for art, as Duchamp's did, but (since it is so bluntly and obviously a repetition) turns back on itself in order to expose the limits and borders that were, by some strange occlusion, being kept out of the picture by Duchamp's followers.

These are, among other things, the limits and borders of the thing called 'ego', which plays such a central, if often misunderstood, role in the work of Ben. For, contrary to a widely held belief, Ben's work is not about a return to expressionism, not about a return to the communication of the inner depths of the soul or psyche. The ego in Ben's work is an exemplary space in that it is an object that seems to consist entirely of limits. From the outset his analysis of the art situation takes him right back to the limits of his own ego. His analysis starts out with an I – an I that is 'worried and in doubt' (*'Je reste inquiet et dans la doute'*).<sup>70</sup> The limits of the ego are those of aggression and desire, of jealousy and ambition, and it is fundamentally formed through its relation to death: 'I am jealous, I want to do what has not been done. I'm afraid of not making it. I want it all. I'm the only one. I cry at night. I hate the others. I create it all. I sign it all. I am God Creator, Ben.'<sup>71</sup>

This anxiety and ambition, pointed out in an almost obsessive manner, is important because it disrupts the comfort of the standard avant-garde notions of totality. When Klein, for instance, conceives of his totality in terms of the infinite blue sky, Ben punctuates this idea by saying, very bluntly, that contrary to Klein his personal notion of totality has always been death. For Ben this means that since the notion of art and the desire to create cannot be separated from the anxieties of the ego, a proposition of totality that wants to *surpass* the workings of the ego and art can only do so by taking these factors into account, by working its way through them. Any other position is based on delusion, since such totalities (or notions of unlimited possibilities) are in fact limited by what they exclude. And so Ben drives a wedge into the earlier avant-garde acts of appropriation by working through the question of the signature itself. Ben had already assumed the principle of *intention* that informs Duchamp's artistic revolution (the fact that anything can be art if the artist intends it to). But by assuming and repeating it he also discloses its other side, so that intention is now rewritten in terms of the far more uncomfortable and egoistic notion of *prétention*: '*Je pourrais tout faire, car j'en ai la prétention*' ('I can do anything because of my ambition to do it').<sup>72</sup>

By working through the limits of the ego and its pretensions, Ben necessarily stumbles across a number of paradoxes and contradictions. But these contradictions turn out to be the very core of Ben's notion of creation. The most significant of these contradictions have to do with the question of the *new* – the possibility of creating new spaces – since the desire for the new is fundamentally linked to personal ambition, creating a space for one's own signature. Some of the funniest but also most heartbreaking moments in Ben's work are the instances where he seems to wonder what space is left for him when the concept of totality has already been claimed by so many other artists. Their (supposedly non-personal) concept of totality hurts or invades his (entirely personal) desire for a space of expression! Ben is perfectly aware that it is the egoistic desire for the new that lies behind his hurting, but on the other hand some notion of the new is absolutely fundamental to any attempts at surpassing a certain (artistic) culture, and its very particular grip on notions such as ego and intention.

And so Ben's way of dealing with this paradox is to introduce the new in terms of two notions that would initially seem to be antithetical to it. He defines the new in terms of repetition on the one hand, and absences on the other. He plays with and confuses the very slight differences which the French language sets up between *du nouveau* (the new) and *de nouveau* (once again).<sup>73</sup> Since Klein had already signed totality or 'all' (*le tout*), Ben can think of nothing else to do but to repeat this act of signature by signing totality all over again. Ben's most typical statement is notably 'I sign all' ('*Je signe tout*'). But in this repetition there is necessarily a displacement of the stakes involved in signing. Whereas Klein signs *all*, Ben *signs* all, which is an entirely different thing. Klein's act remains on the level of propositions or intentions, whereas with Ben the material physical presence of his signature or handwriting is all important.

And Ben's handwriting is virtually everywhere, spreading across every available surface with tremendous *prétention* and gusto. Klein's signature is a gesture of generalised appropriation, Ben's physical signature returns to the level of *particularia*, demonstrating, mark by mark, space by space, how one invests, particularly, in the possibility of the world. But the world or 'totality' will not be conquered: for every space covered by Ben's

handwriting one is reminded of all the millions of spaces into which his handwriting does *not* reach. Ben's point is precisely that the world will resist total appropriation of possibility – possibility or the new can only reside in contradictions or in multiplicities that will *not* cooperate 'peacefully'. These contradictions are fundamental. For instance, since the new is 'only' repetition, Ben claims to work precisely in the space of its contradictions or lack of positive characteristics.<sup>74</sup> His many elaborations on holes or hollows is one notable way in which he pays tribute to this vision of absences, as is the way in which he chooses to play with the contradictions or lacks in the given 'avant-garde' spaces.

But in fact the space of the signature itself is also a contradiction *par excellence*. On the one hand, it is the physical mark of a particular body, the guarantor of the ego, of personality and intention. On the other hand it undercuts all of these things. As Jacques Derrida insists, it is a written mark, designed to work precisely in the *absence* of the body or ego that has produced it. It is an original mark, an event produced by a singular person, and yet we recognise it as a signature only because it has been and may be repeated *ad infinitum*.<sup>75</sup> The effect of the signature is then an intertwining of singularity and repeatability: its repetition displaces the singular subject (or Ben's ego) as a mere effect of the signature. The signature then has to do with excess: it traces the material frame or 'body' of the subject, while producing the subject as an effect that exceeds this signing body. It is at once a guarantor of subjective limits while producing the subject as a something that is too much, something that has 'seeped out', demonstrating the hollowness of the inside and the permeability of limits. The signature is, in other words, a double-bind mechanism that also instigates the 'death' of this subject. Hence Ben's emphasis on the interconnectedness of death and totality. This is not a 'totalising' notion of death, but simply a way of expressing the most critical feature of the signature. For Ben, the necessity of working through the space of the signature comes from the way in which it plays with and at the limits of otherness. The signature is the space of Ben's ego, but it is also the space of its repetition in 'other' terms, the space of the ego's oblivion. In Ben's work the endless repetition of the signature works to deplete the limits of the ego and its intentions. It pushes the ego to its limits (passing through *prétention* and desire on its way) – and then beyond. As the artists assembled under the name of Fluxus rework the terms of immersion, it is precisely through a thinking that takes into account the boundaries towards alterity and the critical and often painful contradictions that must remain within any concept of multiplicity. There is no *boredom*, no letting go of boundaries, without *danger* following suit.

## POSTSCRIPT ON CONCEPT ART

A few words need to be added regarding Henry Flynt's invention of Concept Art in the 1961 essay of that name.<sup>76</sup> His text, published in *An Anthology*, sits uneasily in the general Fluxus context, but mainly because of a common misreading of its aims. It has often simply been interpreted as a positive appeal for the use of words or 'concepts' as works of art, and this appeal has then been identified with the fact that many Fluxus works seems to consist of 'words'. On the other hand, people like George Brecht, among others, have strongly denied that their work have anything to do with 'conceptuality'.<sup>77</sup> But a closer reading of Flynt's proposition along with the work that he sets up as an example reveals that this work, too, could be seen a strategy of entropic depletion. If Ben intends a depletion of the concept of the

ego by working with and through it, Flynt seems to suggest a similar depletion of the concept of art. Only he goes about it through a slight detour. By 1961 Flynt felt 'swindled' by both Cage and Stockhausen when he felt that their efforts led right back to the paradigm of Western art music, with no real room for the experiences of the black-, folk- and pop musics from his native American South.<sup>78</sup> And so, Henry Flynt's major preoccupation seems to have been various militant attempts to formulate ways of moving beyond the bourgeois institution of art. But his essay throws a different light on an attitude that might, at times, have seemed like a simple anti-art activism. For in *Implications – Concept Art Version of Coloured Sheet Music No.1* – a piece developed to accompany Flynt's essay as a sort of demonstration of its implications – revolutionary energy and meaning is in fact deflated by paratactic strategies of dispersal and emptying out. In a comment on the piece, Flynt claimed that 'its point was to proclaim the speciousness of syntactical categories of identifications' – much along the line of argument developed in 'Concept Art'.<sup>79</sup> In a seemingly paradoxical move Flynt propagated an art that would be based on both concepts and structure, but only after having emptied those terms of some usual assumptions: the notion of a logical connection between a name and its intension and the notion of structure as an organising factor that would be integral to some musical or artistic content. Structures and concepts could become artistic elements *on their own*, in their emptied-out, non-syntactical forms, Flynt claimed.

What Flynt is essentially promoting, then, is a sort of radical unrelatedness or dispersion. Following this strategy, his *Implication* creates 'axioms', 'statements' and the like, but he immediately subjects these axioms and statements to a process of folding and dispersing. In fact what he creates is a series of surfaces which reproduce one another in crystalline processes of movement and freezing. The 'axiom' that starts the process is a sheet of cheap white typewriter paper which will be soaked in inflammable liquid, then burned on a rectangular fireproof surface so as to create a rectangle of ashes the same size as the sheet. The rectangle of ashes will next be photographed in white light, and in a way that makes it coincide exactly with the frame of the film. The negative of this film will then be melted and cooled in a mould to form a doubly convex lens with small curvature; with this lens one will take a colour photograph of the ashes rectangle in different yellow light. A new lens will be made of this new negative, in order to take new photographs with this lens in red and blue light. These newest negatives will be melted in a mould with the ashes which have been photographed to create a new lens, with this lens a black-and-white photograph of the white ashless surface is made. Yet another lens is made from this last negative, while a negative is made from the lens used in the last photograph. From this new negative and new lens two prints will be made in an enlarger – an enlargement and a reduction.

The piece, in other words, deals with surfaces and sameness: against the identifying distinctions of concepts and structures, the piece creates one continuum of disappearance and oblivion from the assumed difference between reality and recording. This is highlighted by his use of photography. As a medium of documentation photography is particularly devoted to the question of memory, but here its memory recording is gradually depleted. First of all, the ashes that are to be photographed could be seen as 'already' photographic, since both ashes and photographs are indexes or traces, memory objects of a specific kind. Reality and recording are parts of the same. In the process that follows, the memory contained in each single recording is immediately caught by oblivion, as each new photograph or memory

record 'selflessly' serves as the recording apparatus for yet another memory. In this process, the boundary that separates memory from oblivion can no longer be kept distinct.

The strategy implied in this and other works somehow implements Flynt's ambivalence and vagueness of formulation when he tries to move around the art/anti-art dilemma. He invents alternative formulations, such as 'veramusement' and, later on, 'brend' (a contraction of the former), but he still depends on the word 'art' both for definitions and for marking his resistance. Flynt clearly sees this dilemma. And so it seems increasingly apparent that his work to deplete the meaning of 'concepts' and 'structures' in general has implications for the particular concept of art through a sort of metonymical affiliation. By emptying concept and structure of meaningful, value-bound affiliations while keeping the terms intact, he seems to have been able to do with them what he could not do to the word 'art' because of the enormous institutional weight that would make any counter-formulation too squarely 'dialectical'. One of his many attempts at alternative terms was 'act' – acognitive culture. As a positive term it might not work, but his *Implication* shows the significance of the 'acognitive' as a practical strategy in relation to the concept of art: the choice to simply empty it out, to subject it to processes of oblivion – circumventing the issue by dispersing and displacing it.

## NOTES

- 1 Dick Higgins, 'Boredom and Danger', *Something Else Newsletter* (Dec 1968). The essay was originally written in the summer of 1966.
- 2 On the subject of art and immersion, I am indebted to interesting exchanges with the artist and writer Joseph Nechvatal.
- 3 '... it's memory that one has to become free of, at the same time that you have to take advantage of it. It's very paradoxical.' John Cage quoted in Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage*, New York, 1988, p 209.
- 4 'Everything is permitted if zero is taken as the basis. That's the part that isn't often understood. If you're nonintentional, then everything is permitted. If you're intentional, for instance if you want to murder someone, then it's not permitted. The same thing can be true musically.' *Ibid*, p 208.
- 5 See n 4.
- 6 Dick Higgins, 'Intermedia', *The Something Else Newsletter*, (Feb 1966).
- 7 Ina Blom, 'The Intermedia Dynamic: An Aspect of Fluxus', Dissertation, University of Oslo, 1993.
- 8 Higgins, 'Boredom and Danger'.
- 9 *Ibid*. The piece was originally by George Brecht; John Cage, however, suggested that it should be done in darkness.
- 10 Higgins, notes to *St Joan of Beaufort*, 'What Part Does a Witness to St Joan of Beaufort Play?'. In the Silverman Collection, Detroit and New York.
- 11 Higgins, 'Boredom and Danger'.
- 12 Dick Higgins, *Contribution 1*, November 1959.
- 13 Higgins, 'Boredom and Danger'.
- 14 *Ibid*.
- 15 Mac Low quoted in Emmett Williams, ed, *Poésie Etcetera Américaine*, Paris, Centre Américain 1963. Translation mine.
- 16 'What constitutes the originality of speech, what distinguishes it from every other element of signification is that its substance seems to be purely temporal. And this

- temporality does not unfold a sense that would itself be nontemporal, even before expressed, sense is through and through temporal.' Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans David B Allison, Evanston, 1973, p 83.
- 17 Benjamin HD Buchloh, *Broodthaers: Writings, Interviews, Photographs*, Cambridge, 1988, p 77.
  - 18 La Monte Young, ed, *An Anthology*, New York, Jackson Mac Low and La Monte Young, 1963. I take it as an indication of the centrality of the piece that Mac Low chose to publish it in this groundbreaking collection of works.
  - 19 Brecht, *Notebooks II*, p 65.
  - 20 Brecht quoted in Henry Martin, *Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, Milan Multhipla Edizioni, 1978, p 106.
  - 21 N Katherine Hayles gives a very clear account of the principle of independent but intersecting causal chains in her essay on chance operations in John Cage's music. In Perloff and Junkerman, *John Cage: Composed in America*, Chicago, 1994, p 232.
  - 22 Brecht, *Notebooks III*, p 52.
  - 23 George Brecht and Robert Watts, 'Yam Lecture – Oakland Version', 1962. Hand-written document. In the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.
  - 24 Brecht, *Exercise*. From 'Water Yam', 1963.
  - 25 Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, London, 1993, pp 5–7.
  - 26 *Ibid.*, p 19.
  - 27 *Ibid.*, p 77.
  - 28 Robert Smithson, *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed Nancy Holt, New York, 1979, p 112.
  - 29 Brecht, 'Water Yam', 1963.
  - 30 The three last works referred to are *Untitled* (1973), *Untitled* (1965) and *Untitled* (1971), reproduced in Martin, *Introduction*, pp 243, 248 and 240 respectively.
  - 31 Deleuze, *The Fold*, pp 20–22.
  - 32 George Brecht, 'Towards Events', leaflet, 1959.
  - 33 A series of work from 1976/77 are based on crystals in connection with small objects and mirrors. Crystals are also mentioned in a number of other contexts.
  - 34 The three map-pieces are reproduced in Martin, *Introduction*, pp 220, 219 and 184 respectively.
  - 35 This is the point of view expressed by Martin in *Introduction*, p 34.
  - 36 Deleuze, *The Fold*, p 31.
  - 37 Brecht, as quoted in Martin, *Introduction*, p 32.
  - 38 Frances Dyson, 'When Is the Ear Pierced,' in Moser and MacLeod, eds, *Immersed in Technology*, London, 1996.
  - 39 Douglas Kahn, 'Track Organology', in *October 55*, Boston, MIT Press, 1990, pp 67–78.
  - 40 The Cage classes are described at length in Al Hansen, *A Primer of happenings and Time/Space Art*, New York, Something Else Press, 1965.
  - 41 Dick Higgins to George Brecht, 26 January 1960. In the Archiv Sohm, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.
  - 42 From a 1963 interview with Gottfried Michael Koenig, in Wulf Herzogenrath, ed, *Nam June Paik: Werke, 1946–1976*, Cologne, 1977, p 51.
  - 43 Nam June Paik, *Post Music: The Monthly Review of the University for Avant-garde Hinduism*. Printed leaflet, Fluxus edition, 1963.
  - 44 *Ibid.*
  - 45 *Ibid.*
  - 46 *Ibid.*
  - 47 *Ibid.*
  - 48 John Cage, *A Year from Monday*, London, 1985, p 74.
  - 49 Nam June Paik, *Exposition of Music-Electronic Television*, leaflet, 1963. Paik attributes

this last insight to KO Götz, who had pointed out to him that electronic images were productive, that is, indeterminate, not reproductive.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

52 Paik, *Exposition of Music-Electronic Television*. Translation from the German mine.

53 Régis Durand, 'The Disposition of the Voice' in Benamou and Caramello, eds, *Performance in Postmodern Culture*, Wisconsin, 1977, pp 99–110.

54 Paik's sexual works include *Serenade for Alison* (a striptease work), *Young Penis Symphony*, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* and *Chroma-Key Bra*. *TV Penis* and *Opera Sextronique* (another striptease piece, which led to the arrest of cellist Charlotte Moorman in New York in 1967).

55 La Monte Young, ed, *An Anthology*.

56 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans Paul Patton, London, 1994, p 70.

57 Cage quoted in Kostelanetz, p 222.

58 Ibid., p 47.

59 'There have been, to my knowledge, only five performances, three of which led to acts of violence.' Emmett Williams, *My Life in Flux and Vice Versa*, Stuttgart 1991, p 101.

60 Ibid.

61 For this interpretation of pattern as opposed to presence/absence, I rely on N Katherine Hayles' essay 'Virtual Bodies and Flickering Signifiers', in *October 66*, Cambridge, 1993, pp 69–92.

62 La Monte Young, *Lecture 1960*; reprinted in *Tulane Drama Review*, vol 10, no. 2 (Winter, 1965).

63 Ibid., pp 81–2.

64 Interview with La Monte Young, New York, 1988.

65 It is important to emphasise the continuity between the conception of a world or worlds for immersion in Fluxus and the creation of such world(s) in recent club culture (techno, ambient, jungle, etc) Whereas, with Fluxus, it was pigeonholed in terms of the 'avant-garde' or the 'experimental', it is now a broad social phenomenon.

66 Hayles, p. 91.

67 'One forgets as quickly as children do. Stockhausen's new term "Moment" seems to me to be of strong importance in this connection.' Paik, 'To the *Symphony for 20 Rooms*', in Young, ed, *An Anthology*.

68 Jackson Mac Low, *Tree Movie*, Score, 1961. Published in *eeV TRE Fluxus Newspaper 1*, New York, 1964.

69 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p 18.

70 Ben Vautier, 'Manifeste 1960', in *En Rouge: Textes théoriques. Tracts*, Milan, 1975, p 11.

71 Ben Vautier, statement after his participation at the Misfits Fair in London, 1962, where he lived exposed in a shop window for two weeks. Published in Hanns Sohm and Harald Szeeman, eds, *Happenings and Fluxus*, Cologne Kunstverein, 1970.

72 Ben Vautier, *Le Happening*, 1966; reprinted in Charles Dreyfus, ed, *Happening and Fluxus*, Paris, 1989, p 178.

73 For instance, Vautier, *En Rouge*, pp 41 and 34.

74 Ibid., p 35.

75 Derrida, 'Signature, Event, Context, in *Margins of Philosophy*, Chicago, 1982, pp 307–30.

76 Printed in La Monte Young, ed, *An Anthology*, second edition, New York 1970. In the 1963 edition, the same piece carried the title 'Transformations'. The last version (*Implications*) then underscores the connection between the 'Concept Art' essay and the work.

77 Brecht, quoted in Martin, *Introduction*, p 117.

78 See n 61.

79 Henry Flynt, *Fragments and Reconstructions from a Destroyed Oeuvre, 1959–1963*, New York, Backworks, 1982, p 8.

# DAVID T DORIS: ZEN VAUDEVILLE: A MEDI(T)ATION IN THE MARGINS OF FLUXUS<sup>1</sup>

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## PRE-FACE

In the history of the arts of the twentieth century Fluxus stands as a singularly strange phenomenon. It resembled an art movement and was inadvertently named as such in 1962.<sup>2</sup> Yet unlike other art movements, Fluxus produced no signed manifestos indicating the intentions of its participants, who, indeed, could rarely agree on just what it was that constituted the Fluxus programme. And, unlike other movements, Fluxus was not bound to a specific geographical location. On the contrary, Fluxus could well be seen as the first truly global avant-garde; the artists, composers, poets and others who contributed to the corpus of Fluxus work hailed from France, West Germany, Japan, Korea, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, and the United States. Quite a few lived their lives as expatriates or nomads.

Originally intended by George Maciunas (who is acknowledged as the principal organiser and disseminator of Fluxus) to be the title of a magazine for Lithuanians living in New York City,<sup>3</sup> 'Fluxus' soon became something quite radically different, coming to signify an astonishingly broad range of practices in virtually every field of human communicative endeavour. The work produced under, or in proximity of, the Fluxus flag includes films, newspapers, books, performances, symphonies, sculptures, sound poetry, dances, feasts, one-line jokes, insoluble puzzles, games – the list continues. However, it should be noted early on that these descriptive categories are more often than not inadequate to the task of containing Fluxus works, which, as I hope to demonstrate, operate in the margins *between* such categories. A single score, for example Ken Friedman's 1965 work, *Zen Is When*:

A placement.

A fragment of time identified.

Brief choreography.

might be realised as a painting, an assemblage, a poem, a private or public performance, a thought, or even a thesis for a master's degree – perhaps all at once. As such, Fluxus works were some of the most important manifestations in the development of intermedia; the term itself (also applicable in part to the concurrent phenomenon of Happenings) was coined by Fluxus participant Dick Higgins, denoting work whose structures determined the textures of the spaces *between* media. Indeed, it is this very *between-ness*, this marginality, that makes Fluxus, even thirty-odd years after its first European performances, so difficult to coax with words into stability.

The Fluxus phenomenon began at a unique moment in time, a period of relative artistic freedom and economic growth in the United States, Europe and Japan – only a decade and a half after the most destructive war in the history of humanity. The early 1960s saw the first humans in outer space, the inauguration and assassination of the youngest president in American history, the establishment of a US military presence in Vietnam, the assembly of the Berlin Wall, and the rapid proliferation of television and thermonuclear weapons. It was a strange and dangerous time.

In the midst of all the extraordinary institutional spending and material surplus that characterised the late 1950s and early 1960s, Fluxus created a space for itself outside the established gallery and theatre circuits. At a period marked by the production of massive, eminently saleable works, principally in the field of visual art, the artists of Fluxus produced works of little inherent economic value: pieces of printed paper, small plastic boxes filled with cheap, simple objects (sometimes they were filled with nothing at all) and, particularly in the first few years, performances. Fluxus produced virtually nothing to hang over the family piano, nothing that could reasonably be considered an ‘investment’ by a potential buyer. Indeed, the artists of Fluxus seem to have waged a battle against the economic and spiritual aggrandisement of both art and artist so rampant during the period. In place of the grandiose, Fluxus took the position of a sort of aesthetic Everyman, doing many small things in many small ways. In place of the supposed timelessness and permanence of the art object, Fluxus loosed a prolific flow of seemingly inconsequential amusements and ephemera, most of which, at the time, went largely unheeded. Fluxus challenged notions of representation, offering instead simple presentations that could provoke awe, laughter, disgust, dread – the entire range of human response. In the midst of an increasingly mediated world, the artists of Fluxus attempted to wake up to the experience of simply being human, a supremely strange enterprise indeed. This essay is an inquiry into just a few aspects of that strangeness.

## LONG LONG AGO . . .

In 1957 George Brecht, a chemist at the personal products division of Johnson & Johnson in East Brunswick, New Jersey, wrote an extraordinary essay entitled ‘Chance-Imagery.’ In it, he develops an outline of historical sources, methods and theories involved in the practical application of the forces of chance in the arts. Illustrating his text with examples drawn from the realms of physics and statistics, Brecht denotes ‘two aspects of chance, one where the origin of images is unknown because it lies in deeper-than-conscious levels of the mind, and the second where images derive from mechanical processes not under the artist’s control.’<sup>4</sup>

After a discussion of automatism in Surrealist production (certainly one of this century’s boldest adventures in the exploration of the unconscious), Brecht admits that he is ‘more interested . . . in the mechanically chance process.’<sup>5</sup> He cites Marcel Duchamp as the pioneer in this field, noting the techniques employed in the construction of his *3 stoppages étalon* (*3 Standard Stoppages*), in which the ‘standard’ measurement created by the fall of a piece of string was determined by ‘wind, gravity and aim’; and in his *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même (le Grand Verre)* (*The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)*), for which Duchamp employed a toy cannon to shoot paint-dipped matches at the glass to determine the positions of the nine malic molds.

Yet Brecht suggests that Duchamp's use of chance in his work was 'not exhaustive', and so acknowledges the importance of other modernist applications of chance: Jean Arp's chance collages, Max Ernst's 'decalcomania of chance' as well as his techniques of *frottage*, the Surrealist *cadavre exquis*, and Tristan Tzara's chance poetry. In each of these cases, the artist relinquishes, to a greater or lesser degree, the power to determine the form of a work, serving instead as a functionary, a facilitator of natural processes within a specific, limiting context (a poem, a drawing, a collage). In this strain of practice, in the denial of artistic choice and determinism in favour of the potency of apparently arbitrary natural processes, Brecht perceives profound spiritual implications. These implications, Brecht points out, were noted by the Dadaists themselves: 'The almost incredibly incisive mind of Tristan Tzara, as early as 1922, even recognised the relationship of all this to Oriental philosophy (in one of the most convincing of Dada documents, the "Lecture on Dada"): "Dada is not at all modern. It is more in the nature of a return to an almost Buddhist religion of indifference."'"<sup>6</sup>

Tzara aspired to indifference, of course, and so he perceived a kinship in Buddhism's evident coolness, its detachment from the world. I would suggest, however, that the Buddhist 'condition' is not one of indifference, but rather of a radical *involvement* with the world. This condition, according to Buddhist texts, demands first that one's own preconceptions be consciously cast aside – no easy task – in order that the things of this world be allowed to manifest themselves *as such*, as they present themselves in their fullness of being. Neither overwhelming nor unknowable, nature is thus revealed through simple, direct engagement in its processes. Further, the operations of the individual are themselves revealed through engagement in this unfolding; one becomes an actively perceiving, infinitely mutable organ of response, not differentiated from nature. Brecht quotes Daisetz Suzuki's discussion of the role of nature as a paradigm for human action in Zen Buddhism: 'Nature never deliberates; it acts directly out of its own heart, whatever this may mean. In this respect Nature is divine. Its "irrationality" transcends human doubts or ambiguities, and in our submitting to it, or rather accepting it, we transcend ourselves.'<sup>7</sup> This acceptance, notes Suzuki in his original text, is itself a matter of choice:

We accept nature's 'irrationality' or its 'musts' deliberately, quietly, and wholeheartedly. It is not a deed of blind and slavish submission to the inevitable. It is an active acceptance, a personal willingness with no thought of resistance. In this there is no force implied, no resignation, but rather participation, assimilation, and perhaps in some cases even identification.<sup>8</sup>

The artists of Fluxus were committed to the acceptance and the investigation of nature's 'musts', choosing in many cases to relinquish artistic control in favour of participation in, assimilation of, and identification with the processes of nature. Both Zen and Fluxus embody principles that entail a restructuring, and even ultimately an elimination, of the supposed boundaries between 'life' and 'art', between 'I' and 'other'. In this article I will examine certain aspects of Zen that *resonate* within some Fluxus performance, and which offer an alternative critical vocabulary, a provisional framework within which one can allow some aspects of Fluxus to be revealed.

This article came about, as many do, in an attempt to satisfy a curiosity. After establishing an initial connection with Fluxus material, I noticed that critics and even Fluxus artists would make the observation, now and again, that Fluxus was somehow *like* Zen, that Fluxus

works were *similar* in some respects to Zen works or Zen koans. Unfortunately, no one has ever chosen to examine this observation in any significant detail. How and why is it the case that Fluxus works so often bring Zen to mind? On the one hand, there is Fluxus: the name of a loosely organised group of contemporary artists (and non-artists) who were examining, in the most radical ways, the limits of what constitutes 'art'. On the other hand, there is Zen: the name of a centuries-old, non-theistic religion whose practitioners examine, in the most radical ways, the limits of what constitutes 'consciousness'. Two distinctly *different* explorations of the limits of what defines us as human, true, but why even mention them in the same breath? And supposing there is some connection between the two, why the attendant critical silence?

At the first pass, it seemed to me that both Zen and Fluxus were excruciatingly difficult to explain: somehow, no matter what words came to mind, they never appeared to be adequate to the task at hand; important details of the experience – including my experience – of both Zen and Fluxus invariably escaped exposition. Contradictions arose within each set of practices which systematically frustrated attempts to say anything *definitive* about either. After some time, and considerably more frustration, it became clear that my own difficulties in bringing about some sort of closure, some sort of totalising definition, were the result of the very pretensions which Fluxus and Zen perpetually mock. Words, to paraphrase a Zen adage, are so many fingers pointing to the Fluxmoon, and are not to be confused with the Fluxmoon itself. Or as Dick Higgins points out: 'We can talk about a thing, but we cannot talk a thing. It is always something else.'<sup>9</sup>

This 'something else' is what the artists of Fluxus, like the practitioners of Zen, have sought to interrogate. What the two hold in common is an insistent attitude of questioning: a revelation of the codes by which we come to frame the world, by which we come to receive the world as given and immutable. This questioning, unfolding through demonstration rather than discourse, indicates a cognitive shift away from the modernist understanding of the self as the inviolate centre of being. Both Fluxus and Zen investigate the nebulous realms between conceptual categories: between subject and object, between vision and hearing, between high and low. The Fluxus artist Eric Andersen has said:

The reason intermedia is called intermedia and not multimedia is that it falls between categories ... Every time it seems to take a direction or form a shape, something happens that just takes it out of it again. And Zen is doing the same number. It is falling between categories. This is one of the basic secrets of Zen.<sup>10</sup>

In this discussion of a relationship between Fluxus and Zen, it is not my concern to determine a linear, causal relationship between the two – to research how and why specific artists at specific times took specific 'inspiration' from Zen. Fluxus artists were, and remain, proudly omnivorous in their approaches to alternative modes of living and art-making; and so it would be an error to assert that any single artist found his or her philosophical base in the ways and means of Zen – and a graver error to imply that there was a universal interest in Eastern philosophies among the participants of Fluxus.<sup>11</sup> Fluxus is too slippery for that; too slippery, indeed, for one to assert anything that will not fall short of presenting an accurate, comprehensive picture. With this in mind, it should be noted that this paper – like any paper that claims to speak *about* Fluxus (or Zen, for that matter) – is tentative, provisional, and according to some, entirely off the mark. 'Fluxus encompasses opposites', says George

Brecht; no matter what one might think about it, 'there is someone associated with Fluxus who agrees with you.'<sup>12</sup> The contrary of this statement is also true: there is someone associated with Fluxus who disagrees with you.

## THE EVENT

Throughout this century there has been a strain of art that has sought to eliminate the perceived boundaries between art and life. Contemporary chroniclers of the art scene of the early 1960s, as well as the artists themselves, were well aware of their predecessors in similar pursuits. Unlike, say, the Futurists of an earlier era, who saw themselves as a new breed, determined to liberate themselves from the weight of history and inherited cultural baggage, intermedia artists of the early 1960s were only too happy to point out antecedents for their work, as if to stake out their own place within an alternative lineage of artistic production, a marginalised history that stood outside and against the mainstream.

Fluxus was a group of nominally kindred spirits who together and separately 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.

George Maciunas staked out the historical parameters of these territorial researches with a zeal bordering on the maniacal. Trained in architecture, graphic design and art history, Maciunas had a considerable attraction to structure and order; he has been described as 'an obsessive/compulsive personality that accumulated, hoarded, classified, and dissected'.<sup>13</sup> He was also a fan of the film comedian Buster Keaton and of Spike Jones the bandleader whose parodies of popular and classical music – incorporating the sounds of pots and pans, car-horns, gunshots and kazoos – fused the boundaries between music and slapstick comedy. Maciunas' art-historical essays took the form of charts: painstakingly drawn evolutionary diagrams of the newest occurrences in the arts (those new occurrences, that is, that were of interest to Maciunas). Perhaps the largest of these charts is his *Diagram of Historical Development of Fluxus and Other 4 Dimensional, Aural, Optic, Olfactory, Epithelial and Tactile Art Forms (Incomplete)*, in which respects are paid to Futurist Theatre, Marcel Duchamp, Surrealism, Dada, Walt Disney spectacles, Byzantine iconoclasm, the Japanese Gutai Group, vaudeville, Joseph Cornell, and much else – in short, a fairly broad spectrum of historical traditions and isolated phenomena that have in common a re-evaluation of accepted notions of structure, both aesthetic and ontological.

Zen is not mentioned on this chart. Nor would one necessarily expect to find it there. John Cage, however, is. Indeed, the chart, says Maciunas, 'starts with what influenced Cage. Cage is definitely the central figure in the chart.' In fact, he continues, 'you could call the whole chart like "Travels of John Cage" like you could say "Travels of St. Paul"', you know? Wherever John Cage went he left a little John Cage group, which some admit, some not admit his influence. But the fact is there, that those groups formed after his visits. It shows up very clearly on the chart.<sup>14</sup>

'The argument goes like this', says the poet Emmett Williams, who is justifiably critical of the notion of a 'direct influence' of Zen on Fluxus:

John Cage was a student of Daisetsu T. Suzuki, the Japanese religious philosopher who helped to make the Western world aware of the nature and importance of Zen. In turn, many of the activists on the American Fluxus scene studied with Cage, who opened a few of the Doors of Perception for them. Ergo: Fluxus has a direct connection with Zen.

It would be more accurate to say: Ergo: Fluxus has a direct connection with John Cage. But Cage is an artist and a teacher, not a Zen missionary, who also 'studied' with Schönberg, Duchamp and Buckminster Fuller. Besides, there has been for many years a worldwide interest in Zen and other sects of Buddhism, and it would be surprising if Fluxus artists, generally a well-informed and well-travelled lot, were not aware of these disciplines, and of the value of meditation.<sup>15</sup>

John Cage, though certainly 'not a Zen missionary', was one of the most important conduits of Eastern thought to the Western world. As if directly addressing Williams' concerns about Cage's own role in the foundation of Fluxthought (but speaking of Dada rather than Fluxus), Cage notes: 'It is possible to make a connection between the two, but neither Dada nor Zen is a fixed tangible. They change; and in quite different ways in different places and times, they invigorate action.'<sup>16</sup>

It was in large part through the activities and pedagogy of John Cage that both Dada and Zen came to invigorate action during the late 1950s. As Williams points out, Cage studied chess with Duchamp for a time and was attracted in no small measure by the utopian thought of Fuller and the formal purity of Schönberg's music. And indeed, Cage attended lectures by Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki at Columbia University from 1949 to 1951. Suzuki's thought played a great role in the formation of Cage's own production; Suzuki's teachings, he felt, enabled him to regard music 'not as a communication from the artist to an audience, but rather as an activity of sounds in which the artist found a way to let sounds be themselves'.<sup>17</sup> As a vehicle of signification, this approach could 'open the minds of the people who made them or listened to them to other possibilities than they had previously considered ... To widen their experience; particularly to undermine the making of value-judgements.'<sup>18</sup>

In 1952 Cage had explored the opening of the mind to other possibilities in a piece entitled '4'33'', in which the pianist, David Tudor, sat at a piano and did nothing except indicate the beginning and end of each of the three movements by shutting and lifting the piano's lid. During the piece itself, no sound is intentionally produced by the pianist on the instrument. Four minutes and thirty-three seconds of distinctly *musical* silence: Cage, a composer of music, has imposed as a framework a measure of time and declared that whatever incidental sound occurs within this framework is a piece of music. With Cage came the notion that duration, sound and silence, rather than harmony, rhythm and melody, are the foundation blocks upon which musical experience is structured. With no melodic or harmonic passages to lead the listener through time, Cage's music ceases to function as narrative, but rather places the listener in the vertically structured space of synchrony – *this moment in time*. And time, as we have come to know it in this century, is interdependent with space.

It was the notion of opening to possibilities that Cage brought with him to the International Summer Course for New Music in Darmstadt (1958), and which he shared with his classes in 'Experimental Composition' at the New School for Social Research (1956 – 1960). Numbered among the participants at Darmstadt were La Monte Young and Nam June Paik (Emmett Williams was also living in Darmstadt at this time). Among those who attended the New School classes, with varying degrees of regularity, were Dick Higgins, Al

Hansen, Allan Kaprow, Toshi Ichyanagi, George Brecht and Jackson Mac Low (Brecht and Mac Low had been invited to sit in by Cage), all of whom were to play pivotal roles in the development of intermedia.

Cage's students were introduced to his understanding of music as time-space, and formulated their own methods for exploring these uncharted waters. On the one hand, students like Allan Kaprow and Al Hansen were impressed by the Cage/Dada notion of the 'simultaneous presentation of unrelated events' and went on to create happenings – complex, multi-sensory constructions – what Fluxus artist Tomas Schmit called 'the expressionistic, symbolic, voluminous opera-type-of-thing' – such as Kaprow's 1959 *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, George Brecht – for whom the Cage class was in part 'a kind of confirmation' of 'the thought of Suzuki that I'd already discovered on my own'<sup>20</sup> – was not so inclined to construct as to *notice*: 'Composers, performers and auditors of music permit sound-experiences by arranging situations having sound as an aspect. But the theatre is well lit. I cough; the seat cracks, and I can feel the vibration. Since there is no distraction, why choose sound as a common aspect?'<sup>21</sup> Brecht claimed to be 'increasingly dissatisfied with an emphasis on the purely aural qualities of a situation', and so began to call his work, even his object-oriented work, 'Events'. This word, he claims, 'seemed closer to describing the total, multi-sensory experience I was interested in than any other . . .'<sup>22</sup> Rather than examining the extravagance and multi-sensory barrage that constituted many happenings, Brecht's work was 'very private, like little enlightenments I wanted to communicate to my friends who would know what to do with them.'<sup>23</sup>

#### *Three Telephone Events*

- When the telephone rings, it is allowed to continue ringing, until it stops.
  - When the telephone rings, the receiver is lifted, then replaced.
  - When the telephone rings, it is answered.
- Performance note: Each event comprises all occurrences within its duration.  
Spring, 1961

'I don't take any credit for having written a score like telephone events', said Brecht in a radio programme of May 1964. His role as 'writer', in this instance, is that of the scripting of possibilities implicit in one's engagement with a ringing telephone. Brecht's addendum, noting that 'Each event comprises all occurrences within its duration', informs the reader that the three performance possibilities listed may in fact be three individual *perceptions* of a single phenomenon. In contrast to the constructivist tendencies of the Happenings, in which the ringing of a telephone becomes an aspect of a larger composition, Brecht isolates and focuses on the single phenomenon, revealing the multiplicity within that singularity. For Brecht, the 'act of imagination or perception is in itself an arrangement, so there is no avoiding anyone making arrangements'. It is therefore also seen as unnecessary to develop complex, polymorphic structures for presentation: a single telephone ringing provides sufficiently fertile ground for performance possibilities. It is the *interaction* between the percipient/performer and the object perceived that provides richness and diversity. Brecht's

'little enlightenments' are acts of quotidian simplicity which are *presented* and *noticed*, or vice versa; indeed, Brecht declares, 'the occurrence that would be of most interest to me would be the little occurrences in the street ...'<sup>24</sup>

While Brecht may have coined the term 'Event' to refer to his 'private little enlightenments', he was by no means the only individual investigating the realm of monostructural presentation. In 1960 La Monte Young produced a series of 'Compositions' that built upon the ground of questioning opened up by John Cage's 4'33''.

*Composition #3 1960*

Announce to the audience when the piece will  
begin and end if there is a limit on duration.  
It may be of any duration.  
Then announce that everyone may do whatever  
he wishes for the duration of the composition.

Similar in some respects to Cage's piece, principally in the use of duration as its limiting aspect, Young's work, a musical 'composition', stretches the conception of performance by eliminating the need for a specifically *musical* instrument and performer, employing instead an 'announcer' to simply indicate the boundaries of the event. The audience thus become the performers and are given complete freedom to act within the established confines of the piece. While the work can still be understood as music, it is raw action and perception that themselves become the stuff of the performance, outside the limitations of our understanding of music as sound, silence and duration. In the following piece, Young questions the necessity of determining duration within a work, and examines the notion of synaesthesia, of a structured reversal or combination of perceptual acts, asking, 'Isn't it wonderful if someone listens to something he is ordinarily supposed to look at?'<sup>25</sup>

*Composition #5 1960*

Turn a butterfly (or any number of butterflies) loose in the performance area.  
When the composition is over, be sure to allow the butterfly to fly away outside.  
The composition may be any length, but if an unlimited amount of time is available, the doors and windows may be opened before the butterfly is turned loose and the composition may be considered finished when the butterfly flies away.

The beating wings of a butterfly surely do produce sound – and can thus, by traditional standards, be appreciated as music – but this sound is certainly beyond the range of normal human perception. In such an extreme state, one becomes aware of the inability of a single mode of perception, in this case hearing, to reveal the totality of an object as it presents itself. The notion of a categorisation or isolation of the senses, and consequently of the specific arts that are addressed to those isolated senses, comes under question. In order to understand an object in its totality, the perceiver must herself be perceiving *as* a totality. In a commentary to the sixteenth case of the *Wumenguan* (in Japanese, *Mumonkan*), a thirteenth-century collection of koans, Wumen asks his reader:

Does sound come to the ear, or does the ear go to sound? Even if echoes and silence are both forgotten, when you reach this, how do you understand verbally? If you use your ears to listen, it will be hard to understand; only when you hear sound through your eyes will you be close.<sup>26</sup>

This is where matters begin to get interesting.

## THE BIG PROBLEM OF NAMING LITTLE THINGS

'There is, of course, one important thing that the masters of Zen and the masters of Fluxus have in common', notes Emmett Williams in his 1992 telling of the Fluxus story, 'the extreme difficulty of explaining, to the outside world, exactly what it is that they are masters of'.<sup>27</sup> While I disagree with Williams that this is the *one* important moment of commonality between Zen and Fluxus, Williams brings to light an important issue. Indeed, both Fluxus and Zen evade attempts to concretise them in language, attempts to effect their permanence, their stability.

Fluxus treads a strange terrain, a liminal space somewhere between words and silence. One of its key products are *Event scores*, taut little propositions, exercises, or word-objects, usually printed on small, often disposable, cards or sheets of paper. For example:

*Disappearing Music For Face*  
smile  
stop to smile  
C Shiommi Feb. 1964<sup>28</sup>

Hundreds of these event scores have been published over the past thirty years, and in many cases, they are all that remain of the events for which they served as the original impetus. The events themselves – elegant, ephemeral monostructural gestures which may be performed before an audience, alone or in a group, or in the mind – and the objects which are revealed within their structures, unfold in a space to which words have limited access: this space is not the space of language, nor of silence, but of being, or rather, becoming. Like Zen, Fluxus uses language to force a confrontation with the inadequacies of language, and posits instead a field of direct experience that eludes systematisation.

The earliest moment of Buddhist performance and its critical reception is the stuff of legend. Shakyamuni, the historical Buddha (c.560–480 BCE), after attaining enlightenment, stood on top of the Mount of the Vultures to offer a sermon to his disciples. Saying nothing, Shakyamuni held up a single golden lotus blossom before all those in attendance. His disciples were baffled by this gesture, save for one Mahakasyapa, who simply smiled in understanding. This circle of act and reception, the 'transmission of the lamp' of enlightenment outside the constructs of the language of scripture, direct action with 'no dependence on words and letters', came to constitute an essential paradigm of Zen's method and self-perception: Here it is – what is there to say?

The argument behind this method of disclosure, says Daisetz Suzuki, is simple, and quite beautiful:

The idea of direct method appealed to by the masters is to get hold of this fleeting life as it flees and not after it has flown. While it is fleeing, there is no time to recall memory or to build ideas. No reasoning avails here. Language may be used, but this has been associated too long with ideation, and has lost direction or being by itself. As soon as words are used, they express meaning, reasoning; they represent something not belonging to themselves; they have no direct connection with life, except being a faint echo or image of something that is no longer here.<sup>29</sup>

There is nothing mystical about this, really: a communication of what is true can certainly be expressed or contained in words – words themselves are *dharmas*, manifestations of reality –

but it also suggests that transmission of understanding is *independent* of language, indeed, that language is something of a hindrance to genuine understanding. Zen Buddhism ultimately attempts to foster a direct, unmediated relationship between the mind and reality, an immediate experience of the world *as such*. This is no easy goal to achieve, given the preponderance of language in the structuring of our day-to-day experience of the world and in the structuring of our own consciousness. It is language, after all, that comprises scripture and koan, as it is language which names the 'butter' and 'eggs' featured in Dick Higgins' May 1962 *Danger Music Number Fifteen (For the Dance)*:

Work with butter and eggs for a time.

Yet the words that constitute this language are not themselves the beliefs contained within scripture, nor are they the eggs that were tossed about during the performance, and which I am still rinsing out of my hair. A paradox thus presents itself. Language constitutes our subjective experience of the world, yet this very subjectivity simultaneously prevents us from experiencing the world in its *suchness*. Do we then discard language in order to gain access to an authentic experience of the world?

Yes and no. Chuang-tzu, one of the founders of philosophical Taoism, an important influence on the development of Zen in China, suggests that words be regarded as a net which is employed to catch fish; this net (known in Japanese as *senjyō*) is required to perform a task, but it is the fish themselves which are consumed: 'Words,' says Chuang-tzu, 'are there to convey a profound meaning; we should keep the meaning and forget the words.'<sup>30</sup> One must cast one's net if one is to catch any fish at all. One must also be wary of becoming entangled in the net. Language must by necessity be employed as a tool, but in such a way that it will create the conditions in which it is no longer useful, a void in which its own absence can be filled by unmediated perception and direct action. The principal tool used by Rinzai Zen (one of the two major schools of Zen) to accomplish this end is the technique of *kanna Zen* – literally 'Zen of the contemplation of words'. The form of this contemplation is embodied in the *koan*.

The term 'koan' is derived from the Chinese *kung-an*, which originally signified 'a legal case constituting a precedent'.<sup>31</sup> Koans have been used as a systematic medium of training since the eleventh century, when the students of Lin-Chi (Rinzai in Japanese) compiled the discourses and sayings of their master into a single volume, the *Rinzairoku*.<sup>32</sup> A koan may take the form of a portion of a *sutra*, an episode from the life of one of the great masters of the tradition, a *mondo* (a baffling dialogue between master and student), or a paradox; in short, any form that will, through the use of words, ultimately engage the student in a direct relationship with reality. Rather than being theoretical or discursive in nature, the constitutive form of a given koan (question or statement and response) is an example of its own teaching, codified in language. Ruth Fuller Sasaki points out:

The koan is not a conundrum to be solved by a nimble wit. It is not a verbal psychiatric device for shocking the disintegrated ego of a student into some kind of stability. Nor, in my opinion, is it ever a paradoxical statement except to those who view it from the outside. When the koan is resolved it is realised to be a simple and clear statement made from the state of consciousness which it has helped awaken.<sup>33</sup>

The beginning student, however, has no notion of this and struggles to seek an answer founded in the codes of language itself; after all, it is language which constitutes her very

subjectivity. But how does one respond in language to a problem such as the familiar, classic koan: 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' Sitting on her solitary meditation cushion – legs locked in the lotus position, spine straight, hands folded in *mudra*, eyes half-open, breathing normally – the student begins to focus on the problem: one hand, the student may think, makes no noise at all; indeed, two hands are required for clapping. Tentatively, she will go to her *roshi*, or master, perhaps offering as a solution: 'The one hand makes no sound at all.' The *roshi* will deny the validity of this answer in some fashion (he might even strike the student, if this seems necessary, in order to bring the student into an immediate, incontestable appreciation of this moment), and the student will return to her problem. Time and again, she confronts the *roshi* with a solution, and time and again she is turned away. This state of affairs breeds a considerable and mounting tension. After some time, the problem becomes the single thought contained within the student's mind; there is room for nothing else. Finally, the tension has to break.

The traditionally 'correct' response to the problem of the one hand is this: the student thrusts her hand out toward the *roshi* and says nothing. Effectively, this is something akin to saying, 'Here is the sound Listen.' (In response to certain koans, the *roshi* may himself be slapped by the student, an appropriate gesture signifying, in part, the transcendence by the student of the master–student power relationship). Here then is a severing of the hand, if you would, and of the perceiving subject, from their linguistic correlatives. What is being presented is not 'one' hand clapping, and not 'two' (that is, not 'not-one'), but the sound itself as such, beyond such a dualistic notion as 'one'/'not-one': just this act presencing, a fact unfolding here before you. In short, an answer to a koan must be revealed experientially, as a demonstration or an example of the very principle it embodies.

What do koans have to do with Fluxus? Victor Musgrave, whose Gallery One hosted the 1962 Festival of Misfits, notes: 'some of the Fluxus artists have . . . produced significant equivalents' to 'the bandaged, all-seeing ambiguities of [Zen's] marvelous koan.' He asserts that this is 'the most formidable task that Fluxus artists have attempted.'<sup>34</sup> I agree. But how do the artists of Fluxus engage this 'formidable task'? How are Fluxus works the 'significant equivalents' of koans?

It is important to note that, according to Musgrave, an equivalence is seen not between Fluxus work and Zen painting or haiku verse, but between Fluxus work and koans. Rather than compare the work of Fluxus artists to the *expressions* of the specific sensibility that accompanies Zen practice, Musgrave likens Fluxus events to the principal *pedagogical* tool of Zen, the koan. The Fluxus work is not an index of the performer's relationship with his or her materials, as the exquisite brushwork of a Zen painting traces the path of the scribe's hand and presence of 'no-mind'. Rather, the Fluxus work, like the koan, is the exposition of the path itself, the restructuring and presentation of a process of meaning-production. The form a work takes is the demonstration of the unfolding processes of its own presentation and reception. Like the circular, stimulus/response form of the koan, Fluxus 'presentation', to quote Dick Higgins, 'would always have to do somehow with the general principle that ideas could be displayed or demonstrated rather than argued for or against.'<sup>35</sup>

## NO-HAND

In 1976 Higgins formulated his 'Exemplativist Manifesto', in which he outlines the mutable structures of what he terms *exemplative* work; that is, work in which 'the idea is developed through its embodiment in the actual work, and thus the work is an instrument for conveying a thought-and-feeling complex by implying a set of examples of it.'<sup>36</sup> George Brecht describes this notion as 'an expression of maximum meaning with a minimal image, that is, the achievement of an art of multiple implications, through simple, even austere, means.'<sup>37</sup> Exemplative work offers the audience/percipient/participant a construct of notation and performance, 'an image of the set of possibilities intended by the artist'.<sup>38</sup> The following snippet of conversation between George Brecht and Irmeline Lebeer gives an indication of how one might respond to a specific work, *Piano Piece*, for which the score reads simply 'centre':

- GB How would you realise this?  
 IL Me? Oh ... for example by pushing the piano into the centre of the room.  
 GB And how would you choose the centre of the room?  
 IL The centre of the room? You can feel where that is, can't you?  
 GB You mean intuitively?  
 IL You could also strike a note in the middle of a piano. Or drop something on the strings in the middle of the piano.  
 GB Yes. There are lots of possibilities, aren't there?  
 IL And you? What did you do? You've already realised it yourself, no?  
 GB Yes. With my two index fingers I began to play the notes of the piano starting from the two ends until I found the note in the centre.  
 IL Oh, of course. That's fantastic. In that case, that's the piece?  
 GB No, no – it's completely open. The realisations you've just made up are as good as any other.<sup>39</sup>

Event scores such as *Piano Piece* mark a culminating moment of what Umberto Eco described in 1959 as the 'open work'. Such works, notes Eco, 'tend to encourage "acts of conscious freedom" on the part of the performer and place him at the focal point of a network of limitless interrelations, among which he chooses to set up his own form without being influenced by any external *necessity* which definitively prescribes the organisation of the work in hand'.<sup>40</sup> Rather than presenting the conditions of an ideal performance – tempi, musical cues, specific notes to be played on specific instruments, colours, lighting, materials, and so on – the Fluxus event score *suggests* certain parameters in which the performer is free to determine his own form.

This *suggestiveness*, notes Eco, is the ability of the Event score text to stimulate in a performer/reader the capacity to adapt her own inner life to that of the work being performed, 'some deeper response that mirrors the subtler resonances underlying the text'.<sup>41</sup> But where does one look for the 'subtler resonances' in a text such as this one by Robert Watts, which simply reads:

winter event  
 snow

Indeed, the performer of this work is faced with an object that is nearly tautological in its apparent simplicity. Such a work cannot be regarded on its own merits – there is almost nothing here to be regarded. This is a work with virtually no *intrinsic* merit, no form of its own, no qualities of which to speak. Rather, as Eco says, it is 'the focal point of a network of limitless interrelations', and, as such, has an infinite potential number of possible realisations.

Now, rather than argue for or against this (we will return to this notion later), here is something the reader can do on his or her own that might help make the issue clearer. It is a piece by Fluxus artist Takehisa Kosugi called *Chironomy 1* (chironomy, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is 'the art or science of moving the hands according to rule, as in pantomime or oratory'). The text of the piece reads: 'Put out a hand from a window for a long time.' According to this text, the only tools needed to perform the piece are a hand, a window, and time (how much time constitutes 'long time' is up to the performer). So choose a window, choose a hand, decide on a length of time, and perform the piece. The discussion will continue afterwards.

Like Watts' *Winter Event*, the written text of Kosugi's piece says very little: it presents a simple image which offers nothing more than itself as proof, as baffling an injunction as it is apparently meaningless. What *does* it mean to 'put out a hand from a window for a long time?' To search for meaning in the written text as a closed, autonomous form is futile; there is simply nothing there to explain and no clue to understanding. One must look elsewhere for direction: Kosugi's text is a *musical score*; like any written musical score, one must *perform* the piece, follow its instruction in real-time, in order that it may reveal itself as meaningful.

The hand serves as the focusing element, a meditative stasis around which the world unfolds. During my own private performance of *Chironomy 1*,<sup>42</sup> I heard some yelling across the way, and the cry of a baby. Cars passed on the street below, there was a rich aroma of frying meat floating on the wind and the soft hum of my computer on the desk near by. After quite a few minutes of maintaining the gesture, I felt a slight pain in my forearm, a slow throb that worked its way up to my shoulder and the base of my neck. In the face of this pain, I became more determined to maintain the gesture, and soon it seemed clear that the piece, for me, was no longer one of formal duration – that is, was no longer concerned with the simple passing of time – but of *endurance*, of a body situated within a shifting, temporal network of physical and mental phenomena; this network in turn was brought to light by the body's situation within its structure, simultaneously inside and outside, revealed by the act of a single gesture *presencing*. In my performance of *Chironomy 1*, the gesturing hand – the distinct object named in Kosugi's text and thus initially the primary focus of my own consciousness – could not be located as an object independent of its context.

Kosugi described his own experience of *Chironomy 1* as follows:

I did one performance related to this piece in an outdoor space in Kyoto. There was an outdoor stage, and there was an auditorium, and at the rear of the stage was a backdrop, a wall and a door. I just slightly opened the door and put my hand out. The audience could only see my hand. The opening in the door was very narrow, so I couldn't see the audience. So the outside space was so different; the hand was exposed to the audience, and this part, my body, was behind the wall, so I was very isolated. Psychologically very strange.

Window, door, the same thing. It is the passage between in and out, so one can shut the door, and make an inside and outside. Putting one part of the body through the window, it becomes part of the outside – but the body is the inside – psychologically, it's very unusual, very affecting to the consciousness. So this is a part of mine, and I'm

exposing a part of the inside into a part of the outside. A kind of feedback. This part of my body, the hand, is very much a part of me. But if you expose it to the outside, and if there's a barrier between the hand and the body, then the hand could be independent – a little bit.

This side, my inside, and the outside, are so different, but still they are the same. So from the audience side, they can only see my hand. I cannot see my hand. But as a total reality, they are the same thing. I have my hand with me, but I cannot see it. The audience can see only my hand, but they cannot see my body. So, take this chair as an example. Maybe it has another part and it is exposed to another dimension, but we cannot see it. But everything is together. On the physical stage, it's just a chair.

A tactile experience, this piece. Eyes and ears are open; perhaps this makes the eyes and ears more sensitive. But most important is the hand: the hand is an antenna.<sup>43</sup>

What Kosugi has succeeded in creating is a wholly liminal state, a condition in which the notions of 'interior' and 'exterior' have been reversed, and finally revealed as inappropriate.

'In exemplative art', says Dick Higgins, 'the action is always between: it cannot take place at any one pole without the conception of another. It is therefore, as af Klintberg put it:

between the heart and the mind,  
between the personal and the objective,  
between the unitary and the general,  
between the warm and the cold,  
between the water and the stone.'<sup>44</sup>

If an open window serves as a frame, it also functions as a space of transit and becoming, neither solely inside nor outside. When a body part, such as a hand – Kosugi also experimented with other body parts during his career – is positioned within that marginal space, our ability to locate the space, or to name the 'isolated' body part within that space, is put into question. The body, as it enters the space of the margin, is *neither* inside *nor* outside – and it is *both* inside and outside. The apparent opposition of terms is unified – and nullified – through direct action. Both one and zero. Neither one nor zero. The sound of one hand clapping.

From a Buddhist perspective, there is no hand, no object, but for that act which enables the world to come to presence, and there is no world but for that *context* in which *this hand* reveals itself. Likewise, there can be no 'subject' and no 'object', but rather a relationship between the two that exists beyond one's ability to name them, or even perceive them, as isolated entities. Each is the cause of the other, each implies the existence of the other. It is thus conceptually inaccurate to distinguish between the two: they are one and the same thing.<sup>45</sup>

George Brecht examines the complexity of this mutual causation and the attendant problem of naming in this event score from 1961:

*Two Exercises*

Consider an object. Call what is not the object 'other.'

EXERCISE: Add to the object, from the 'other,' another object, to form a new object and a new 'other.'  
Repeat until there is no more 'other.'

EXERCISE: Take a part from the object and add it to the 'other,' to form a new object and a new 'other.'  
Repeat until there is no more object.

In attempting to create a 'new object' from an 'object' and an 'other', it becomes clear that

the 'object' constitutes the 'other', and vice versa. 'What is "it"', says Chuang-tzu, 'is also the "other"', what is the "other" is also "it" . . . Are there really It and Other? Or really no It and Other?' This question is ultimately unanswerable. 'Therefore', says Chuang-tzu, 'the glitter of glib debate is despised by the sage. The contrived "that's it" he does not use, but finds things in their places as usual. It is this I call "throwing things open to the light"'.<sup>46</sup>

This notion of 'finding things in their places as usual' proved attractive for many of the artists involved in Fluxus. For Brecht, it came as something of a 'surprise' when he 'learned that George Maciunas in Germany and France, Cornelius Cardew and Robin Page in England, Kosugi, Kubota, Shiomi in Japan, and others, had made public realisations of the pieces *I had always waited to notice occurring*' (my emphasis).<sup>47</sup> Brecht's Event scores – some of them, that is – can be seen as little exercises in concentrated attention, indices of phenomena *yet to occur*, virtual events waiting to be perceived or enacted. The participant in such exercises herself resides in a condition of relaxed awareness, attentive to shifting details in the poetic field – or perhaps not. Either way, Brecht's Event scores serve to describe the parameters in which this attention – or distraction – is practised.

## ATTENTION

From the beginning intermedia was concerned with matters of noticing phenomena as they occurred, requiring an act of attention by the participant in order for the work itself to be realised. This posed a dramatic shift of roles for both artist and receiver. As Dick Higgins points out, the artist becomes the creator of a matrix, rather than a completed work; the role of the receiver becomes that of a participant and collaborator.<sup>48</sup> In effect, the receiver does not merely finish a work, but *creates* it anew with each performance. This is a position of considerable responsibility – a work can never be performed precisely the same way twice, and so one must be attentive to the work's unique process of unfolding. Jackson Mac Low, a poet and co-editor of the seminal collection of the new arts, *An Anthology* (1961), has given some attention to the practice of attention:

From Zen I gathered the conviction that giving one's complete attention to any dharma (perception, form, feeling, etc.) may lead to a direct insight into reality, and that such insight can free us from suffering, which, as Buddhism teaches, pervades all sentient existence. (Briefly, through this insight the world of suffering, or *samsara*, is revealed to be basically the world of blissful awareness, or *nirvana*.) This way of perceiving is often characterised in Buddhist literature as 'choiceless awareness' or 'bare attention.'

Being 'choicelessly aware' is perceiving phenomena – as far as possible – without attachment and without bias. Artworks may facilitate this kind of perception by *presenting* phenomena that are not chosen according to the tastes and predilections of the artists who make them. One way of doing this – though not the only way – is to bring phenomena (including language) to the perceivers of the artworks by means of chance operations or other relatively "nonegoic" methods in which the artist's tastes, passions and predilections intervene much less than when artworks are made in other, more traditional, ways.<sup>49</sup>

In this passage, Mac Low is concerned with the means of presenting, rather than with the content of presentation. Choiceless awareness can be facilitated by processes in which the participant, by 'perceiving phenomena . . . without attachment and without bias,' structures a

psychic space in which each percept is as meaningful – or as meaningless – as any other.

One method of creating this space, according to Walter De Maria's contribution to *An Anthology*, is to engage oneself in 'Meaningless Work':

By meaningless work I simply mean work which does not make you money or accomplish a conventional purpose. For instance putting wooden blocks from one box to another, then putting the blocks back to the original box, back and forth, back and forth etc., is a fine example of meaningless work. Or digging a hole, then covering it is another example. Filing letters in a filing cabinet could be considered meaningless work, only if one were not a secretary, and if one scattered the file on the floor periodically so that one didn't get any feeling of accomplishment . . .

Meaningless work is potentially the most abstract, concrete, individual, foolish, indeterminate, exactly determined, varied, important art-action-experience one can undertake today. This concept is not a joke. Try some meaningless work in the privacy of your own room. In fact, to be fully understood, meaningless work should be done alone or else it becomes entertainment for others and the reaction or lack of reaction of the art lover to the meaningless work cannot be honestly felt.

Meaningless work can contain all of the best qualities of old art forms such as painting, writing etc. It can make you feel and think about yourself, the outside world, morality, reality, unconsciousness, nature, history, time, philosophy, nothing at all, politics, etc. without the limitations of the old art forms.<sup>50</sup>

De Maria's 'Meaningless Work' is concerned specifically with process for its own sake. While it opens up a space in which one can 'feel and think about yourself, the outside world', such a result is a secondary function of the work. De Maria's principal concern is that the participant experience a complete engagement in the work-process, devoid of purpose. Such engagement may be enacted in a condition of either directed attention or unfocused distraction; the texture of the experience is inscribed within the parameters of this reception. The work itself offers no reward – the receiver will draw from the work what meaning he will. Dick Higgins enjoys this sort of activity for just this reason: 'The nature of purposelessness interests me very much', he says. 'It is a great source of mental refreshment to do something for no particular reason, especially when it is not interesting or refreshing. One simply becomes conscious of nothing in particular. That phenomenon is implicit in a lot of my work.'<sup>51</sup>

The phenomenon is also present in much of the work of Ken Friedman, whose *Scrub Piece* – first performed in 1956, when Friedman was six years old – stands as something of a paradigmatic piece of meaningless work:

*Scrub Piece*

On the first day of Spring,  
go unannounced to a public monument.  
Clean it thoroughly.<sup>52</sup>

From one perspective, the notion of meaningless work, 'work which does not make you money or accomplish a conventional purpose', is an ironic commentary on the traditional role of the artist as a 'bohemian' producer of autonomous, transcendental, 'useless' objects. Indeed, George Maciunas believed Fluxus to be an intermediate step on the way to a total dissolution of art. In art's stead, he posited concretism and anti-art. The merit of the concrete artist, says Maciunas, 'consists in creating a concept or method by which form can be created independently of him.'<sup>53</sup> Maciunas' anti-art is concerned with dismantling the pretensions

that accompany the notion of the artist. It is 'directed against art as a profession, against the artificial separation of a performer from audience, or creator and spectator, or life and art: it is against the artificial forms or patterns or methods of art itself; it is against the purposefulness, formfulness and meaningfulness of art.' For Maciunas, 'Fluxus should become a way of life not a profession . . . Fluxus people must obtain their "art" experience from everyday experiences, eating, working, etc.'<sup>54</sup> And even further:

Anti-art is life, is nature, is true reality – it is one and all. Rainfall is anti-art, a babble of a crowd is anti-art, a flight of a butterfly, or movements of microbes is anti-art. They are as beautiful and as worth to be aware of as art itself. If man could experience the world, the concrete world surrounding him, (from mathematical ideas to physical matter) in the same way he experiences art, there would be no need for art, artists and similar 'nonproductive' elements.<sup>55</sup>

For Maciunas, 'anti-art', like nature, is ultimately the most complete sort of aesthetic experience, for it is presented without aesthetic *intention*; like rainfall, it just happens. Purposelessness – attentive engagement in a task simply in order to be engaged in engaging in a task – is thus a singularly radical conflation of the praxes of 'art' and 'life': anyone can do it. Yet as Jackson Mac Low points out, this purposelessness indeed becomes a purpose when it is employed to specifically political ends – that is, when 'works such as ours are considered merely tools with which to do away with art and artists. There may be, as some critics express it, "an anti-art moment" in such works, but this is subsumed in an immanently oppositional art with widened horizons.' As Mac Low sees it, 'the aesthetic of most artists associated with Fluxus is and always has been nearer to [John Cage's] "opening to the world" aesthetic than to Maciunas' anti-art position'.<sup>56</sup>

## MAKING A SALAD

Alison Knowles created situations of delicate, even mysterious, elegance in much of her early work. Her simplest and perhaps best-known work, *Proposition*, was first performed on 21 October 1962 at the Institute for Contemporary Arts in London.<sup>57</sup>

Make a salad.

Here is an act that is performed many times a day, in many different ways, by countless hungry individuals around the globe.<sup>58</sup> Knowles does not offer a recipe for a salad, does not elucidate the form that such a salad should take, but rather instructs the performer to act, simply to make a salad. Transplanted into the context of the concert hall, such an act becomes a specifically artistic or musical presentation – an unwritten contract between the performer and the audience that the work will be received within the horizon of art- or music-production. There is a mode of heightened perception that attends the making of a salad within the four walls of the concert hall; one is ostensibly there, after all, to listen to music or experience a theatrical presentation. Yet, with a work such as *Proposition*, a peculiar reversal takes place that draws the work outside the contract of theatrical presentation: one becomes explicitly aware of a quotidian object/action as having become something extraordinary (that is, 'art') by virtue of its context. One is immediately reminded of Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* of 1917, a common urinal signed by the artist and relocated into the space of the gallery, the

museum, and, ultimately, art-historical discourse. But Knowles' salad-production makes an additional leap: such an action need not be supported by the structures of artistic presentation in order to be extraordinary. While one might return from viewing *Fountain* with a renewed awareness of and respect for the form of common urinals, and with a sense of the power of institutions to frame and shape our perceptions of the world, one does not henceforth experience the *act of urination itself* as an act of producing art. In Knowles' work, by contrast, there is nothing but the performance of an action. Clearly, such a work need not be performed in an Art Institute for it to become meaningful. Nor does it have to be perceived as meaningful in order for it to be performed at all. 'Art' becomes 'life' and 'life' becomes 'art' and finally the distinction between the two becomes confused, superfluous. Knowles comments:

I think that many of the pieces are just simple refreshment pieces done for whatever day's work you have to do, supporting occurrences in life. It gives members of the audience the ball; they can make their own salad differently, even if they are doing it for their family ... Whatever it is you have to touch and work with, you can make a kind of performance of it, but it has to be stripped of the hangings and accoutrements of theatre. What happens is that a kind of revelation, no an emptiness, opens up.<sup>59</sup>

This quality of emptiness, says Knowles, is brought about through action performed 'exactly, precisely and modestly'. She notes: 'That's why Zen is mentioned in terms of Fluxus event performing. The action is directed and precise with nothing added.'<sup>60</sup>

By adhering to a strict procedure, by bracketing 'artistic' intention and simply making a salad, the performer allows that action to come to presence *as such*, unfolding in a space *between* states of being art or non-art. The making of Knowles' salad – or your salad, or mine – is a narration of the condition of liminality itself, the disruption of the frames of reference in which the act of making a salad occurs: making a salad is not art, yet it is not simply making a salad. And of course, it is both.

## JUST SITTING

The central practice of Zen is sitting meditation, or *zazen*. In Soto Zen, the second of the major schools, the use of koan has been virtually eliminated, and practical procedure has been minimised to this practice, 'just sitting' – a practice that one can apply when engaged in more complicated actions, such as making a salad, dripping, or playing baseball with a fruit. The act of sitting is perceived as a 'dynamic stillness' – one sits in a rigorously prescribed posture, unmoving, yet constituted by interior processes in constant motion: the heart beats, blood courses through its vessels, air enters and is expelled from the lungs, the stomach churns away at its food ...

In Robert Filliou's *Yes – an action poem*, performed on 8 February 1965 at New York's Cafe au Go-Go,<sup>61</sup> Alison Knowles described in encyclopaedic detail the physiological workings of the bodily functions of 'the poet'. The text of this portion of the performance is divided into sections entitled: 'Of the Necessity of Alimentation' (eg – 'Once his food is chewed, the poet swallows it, and it passes down the gullet [or "oesophagus"] into the stomach of the poet.'): 'The Blood of the Poet' ('As to quantity, blood constitutes five to seven per cent of the body weight of the poet.'): 'The Poet's Breathing', 'The Excretion of

the Poet' ('Under a microscope, one can see that the kidney contains many small tubules, which filter off waste material from his blood.');

'The Brain of the Poet' and 'Reproduction and Senses of the Adult Male Poet'. As Knowles read this rather elaborate treatise, Filliou 'sat cross-legged upstage, motionless and silent'. As Knowles finished her description, Filliou the poet rose to his feet and recited Part Two of the poem, which consisted of the following:

Yes.

As my name is Filliou, the title of the poem is:

LE FILLIOU IDEAL

It is an action poem and I am going to perform it.

Its score is:

not deciding

not choosing

not wanting

not owning

aware of self

wide awake

SITTING QUIETLY,

DOING NOTHING

Having actually already performed his score, sitting quietly and doing nothing during the preceding enumeration of his body's facticity, Filliou affirms his presence as body with a simple, resounding 'Yes'. He states his name, another fact. Filliou then proceeds to address *mind*, listing the qualities of a mind in an 'ideal' state (at least from Filliou's perspective), a mind 'aware of [it]self' as a unity, before, or rather with no regard for, the dualistic notions inherent in the acts of deciding (yes/no), choosing (between this/that), wanting and owning (that 'out there', as opposed to what is already 'in here'). The mind is 'wide awake', but utterly receptive.

The body of the poet is demonstrated as a realm of supremely complex dynamism, of manifold facts and disclosures. Its systems are engaged in day-to-day processes that are taken for granted but which, physiologically, constitute the poet's self as a living, breathing, bleeding, shitting entity. Even the skin of the poet is itself a process, home to 'sensitive nerve endings which tell him when, what and whom he is touching'. For Filliou, what unifies these disparate processes is not the enveloping sheath of skin, but the very act of 'sitting quietly, doing nothing'. This engagement with the world is a condition of concentrated, active dissociation from the human tendency to systematise and classify, to construct dualities. It forms the core and the strength of Filliou's work. It is 'better', he says, 'to accept all the possibilities in advance, and accepting them always, to remain beyond that region where everything is parcelled out, and everybody is owned by what he owns'. This is the Filliou ideal, 'the absolute secret I took from soto Zen tradition'.<sup>62</sup> It is this same condition, this same ideal, that in Buddhism is known as *samadhi*.

## MUSIC FOR A REVOLUTION

In 1961 a number of music students at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, including Takehisa Kosugi, Yasunao Tone and Mieko Shiomi – all of whom were

ultimately to be connected with Fluxus – formed an organisation called Group Ongaku ('Music Group'). This group, an offshoot of a musicology class, examined the nature and limits of the operations by which perceptible phenomena come to be received as music. Of considerable importance to the members of Group Ongaku was the concept of the *objet sonore* – 'sound as an object, rather than as an element in a musical piece'.<sup>63</sup> The transformation of the reception of music, from a specifically *listenable* object to a generally *perceptible* object, is described here by Mieko Shiomi:

One day in school, while I was performing our improvisational music, I got tired of loud and rich sounds. I started tossing a bunch of keys to the ceiling to make an ostinato, with its faint sound. And while I kept doing it, I began to look at my performance objectively as a whole, and I noticed that I was performing an action of tossing keys, not playing keys to make sound. This was the turning point, when I became concerned with action music or events.<sup>64</sup>

Takehisa Kosugi elaborates on this transformation, the expansion of the sphere of music:

The sound object is not always music, but action, action. Sometimes no sound, just action. Opening a window is a beautiful action, even if there's no sound. It's part of the performance. For me that was very important, opening my eyes and ears to combining the non-musical part and the musical part of action. In my concerts, music became this totality, so even if there was no sound I said it was music. Confusing. This is how I opened my eyes to chaos.<sup>65</sup>

Kosugi's 'confusion' about music as a totality was in fact a redefinition of the terms that limit music to perception by the ears alone – indeed, as Kosugi points out, his questioning of these terms as 'musical' is an *opening of the eyes* to chaos. Kosugi's explorations of this chaos resulted in works that examine the nature of breathing:

*Organic Music*

Breath by oneself or have something breathed  
for the number of times which you have decided  
at the performance.  
Each number must contain breath – in – hold – out.  
Instruments may be used incidentally.

walking:

*Theatre Music*

Keep walking intently.

close inspection of an object:

*Manodharma With Mr. Y*<sup>66</sup>

Watch over every part of Mr. Y's body about  
10 cm. apart when he brushes his teeth.  
If it is dark, a flashlight may be used.  
If it is bright, a magnifying glass may be used.

Like George Brecht's event scores, Kosugi's work can certainly be seen as a series of 'little enlightenments,' revelatory examinations of common minutiae. In *Music for a Revolution*, perhaps Kosugi's most memorable event score, the process of 'enlightenment', of throwing

things open to the light – opening the eyes to chaos – is simultaneously a descent into the gruesome darkness of not-knowing:

Scoop out one of your eyes 5 years from now and  
do the same with the other eye 5 years later.

This is music, says Kosugi: music for a revolution in *perception*, a revolution in *consciousness*:

Politically at that time there were many movements in Japan and the world. People wanted some kind of social revolution, but of course it was not realistic, changing society. And I thought changing, revolution, should be done by individual people, revolutions in consciousness. Dada and Surrealism – these offered imaginative, logical, practical, artistic approaches for seeing inside. Of course art activity in itself is a seeing-inside, a reflection from in and out, a feedback. So revolution should be done inside first. And yoga was a kind of training for me, like Zen, which is about self-revolution. This is one part of my thinking: self-revolution.

And then I met the awful, beautiful but awful, magical images of the Luis Buñuel film *Un chien andalou*. You know the image: cutting the eye with the razor. And it was so shocking, but the total film image was so gorgeous. It's a daytime dream. Cutting the eye, taking only the visual function. As an allegory it means we open our eyes to an unopened part of existence. So shocking, but such a strong message to our consciousness. This image is so cruel, it was hateful to me. But I took that message and brought that image into my own work. Scooping out eyes. Before opening eyes, there's a stage of consciousness of normal eyes. Beyond that, we have another consciousness. My idea was to open consciousness.

Kosugi points out that *Music for a Revolution* 'marked a sort of conceptual shift in my music. Seeing and hearing are the same thing. Opening a door became a part of music, as a function of performance. While you listen to the sound, you can see the sky ... it's a combination. So I thought, this combination is music. Normally music means for ears, sounds. But for my concerts, music became much bigger, not limited. This is a kind of confusion'.<sup>67</sup>

The confusion of this transformative shift in perception elicited by both *Music for a Revolution* and the eye-slashing scene of *Un chien andalou* is echoed in the work of other Fluxus associates. Daniel Spoerri created *Lunettes noires*, or *Fakir's Spectacles* (1964), a pair of eyeglasses with needles extending inward from each of the lenses. Clearly indebted to Man Ray's *Cadeau* (1921) – a clothes iron that has been studded with nails, rendering it not merely useless but counter-productive to its initial intention, Spoerri's spectacles create a terrifying paradox: this tool, originally intended to correct a dysfunction of vision, will now destroy the eyes. Other Fluxus work that explores the transformative power of sensory deprivation and deterritorialisation include Ay-O's *Black Hole* (1990), a permanent installation in the basement of the Emily Harvey Gallery in New York – bereft of vision, one must work one's way through a lightless passage, relying solely on a single handrail for guidance; and Ben Patterson's *Tour* (1963), in which a group of participants are blindfolded and led through the streets of a city (like much of Patterson's work, *Tour* is an inquiry into the realm of interpersonal communication, particularly the limits of trust). In these works, one is denied the naturalised primacy of (and the consequent dependence upon) the visual frame, and so one must restructure one's apparatus for positioning oneself in the world, reconstitute and reframe the world within the expanded field of the entire sensorium, or, as Patterson's *Tour* indicates, within the network of social relations.

This perceptual deterritorialisation is made particularly palpable in *Music for a Revolution*. Like the collapse of vision prompted by the slash of the Surrealist razor, Kosugi's scooping of the eyes is a clinical, mechanical process, an invasion of the body's integrity. Yet, in contrast to the terrifying suddenness of the Surrealist razor, Kosugi's revolution – equally terrifying – is a slow process, unfolding in three stages over the course of more than ten years:

- 1) Having determined to perform the piece, the performer has five years in which to anticipate the removal of the first eye.
- 2) Single-eyed after a period of five years, the performer necessarily undergoes a period of adjustment; having just lost the sense of visual depth, the performer's other senses – particularly that of hearing, the seat of balance – become more acute, compensating for the loss.
- 3) Blackness. After ten years, all that remain are the senses of hearing, touch, taste and smell, as well as the memory of sight. The adjustment continues, and becomes complete.

'Self-revolution must take a long time', says Kosugi. 'Time is a cushion for transformation.'<sup>68</sup> In Japan, perhaps the most well-known figure of transformation is Daruma. Throughout Japan, in bars, restaurants, store windows, temples and private homes, one finds small votive figures by this name, representations of Daruma, or Bodhidharma (d 532), the first patriarch of Zen, who brought the teachings of Shakyamuni from India to the East.<sup>69</sup> Esteemed as harbingers of good fortune, *daruma* figures are believed to assist in the achievement of goals and the attainment of wishes. They are short and squat, usually mustachioed, and they have no eyes. A *daruma* is acquired eyeless, and the purchaser paints in one of the eyes when he or she makes a wish, or determines to set out on a goal-achieving path. When the goal is finally achieved, the second eye is painted in, and the Daruma is complete.

This becomes meaningful, and perhaps even sheds light on *Music for a Revolution*, when seen with respect to the life of Bodhidharma. It is said that Daruma spent nine years facing a wall sitting in *zazen*, hell-bent on *satori*, or enlightenment. According to legend, he never moved from the spot, so earnest was he in his pursuit, and so over the course of time his legs atrophied. But he achieved his goal of enlightenment; he lost his legs, but gained *in-sight*. Like Bodhidharma himself, the little *daruma* figures, always legless, only fully 'see' when one has attained one's goal, a goal which ostensibly has been pursued earnestly and with great effort.

In *Music for a Revolution*, a reversal of this order takes place: in sacrificing one's sight, one regains one's legs, as well as ears, nose, tongue . . .; in short, one becomes *embodied* within a strange new sensorium, a beginner in one's own body, fully present. In Zen this shift is directed from the senses to the essence of mind. In an extraordinary passage by Nyojo (1163 – 1228), the teacher of Dogen (founder of the Soto school of Zen), we are given explicit instructions on how to affect this shift:

You should 'gouge out' your eyes and see nothing at all – after that there will be nothing you don't see; only then can it be called seeing . . . You should "block off" your ears and hear nothing at all – after that there will be nothing you don't hear; only then can it be called hearing . . . You should 'knock off' your nose and not distinguish smells – after that there will be none you cannot distinguish; only then can it be called smelling . . . You

should 'pull out' your tongue, so that the world is silent – after that your ebullience will be uninterrupted; only then can it be called speaking ... You should 'slough off' the physical elements and be completely independent – after that you manifest forms adapting to various types; only then can it be called person ... You should permanently stop clinging thought, so the incalculable ages are empty – after that arising and vanishing continue unceasing; only then can it be called consciousness.<sup>70</sup>

## RETURNING TO THE SOURCE

In much of her early work Yoko Ono was engaged in a patently mystical investigation in which she studied the nature of the 'unceasing arising and vanishing' called consciousness. Her work questions our construction of the real, a construction bound to the mediation of reason and the stabilising function of language. Often taking the form of paradoxes – insoluble by reason – Ono's meditative works demand an intuitive response from the participant. Other works engage the participant in intense, silent examinations or revelations of minutiae normally unheeded – and often unimaginable – within the course of daily life. In creating such works, Ono seeks to establish a psychic space beyond the intervention of dualistic discourse, a space of unthinkable thought. 'The mind is omnipresent, events in life never happen alone and the history is forever increasing its volume', says Ono. 'The natural state of life and mind is complexity. At this point, what art can offer (if it can at all – to me it seems) is an absence of complexity, a vacuum through which you are led to a state of complete relaxation of mind'<sup>71</sup>

At first glance, Ono's statement calling for an 'absence of complexity' recalls the oft-quoted words of Henri Matisse: 'What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter, an art which might be for every mental worker, be he businessman or writer, something like a good armchair in which to rest from physical fatigue.'<sup>72</sup> Indeed, art, for Ono as for Matisse, is seen as an antidote to the 'complexities' of contemporary life. In her early works, Ono seeks temporarily to transcend the quotidian, to set a space apart for contemplation. Yet the serenity offered by Yoko Ono's work is not that of Matisse's 'good armchair', the weary bourgeois rises from an armchair refreshed and reassured, but Ono makes no such promises for her work. She adds: 'After that you may return to the complexity of life again, it may not be the same, or it may be, or you may never return, but that is your problem.' One is changed by the work only inasmuch as one allows or discovers in oneself the capacity to be transformed by, and to transform, the experience:

### *Sun Piece*

Watch the sun until  
it becomes square.<sup>73</sup>

– y.o. 1962 winter

In a 'To the Wesleyan People', Ono asks: 'Didn't Christ say that it was like a camel trying to pass through a needle hole, for John Cage to go to heaven?' Cage, according to Ono an epitome of 'mental richness', is ultimately as deluded and vainglorious as the materially rich man of Jesus Christ's original proverb. Ono's concerns during her early years of activity are primarily spiritual; in contrast to the 'mental richness' of Cage, as well as to the comparative

extravagance of Happenings, she assumes and prescribes the role of the ascetic: 'I think it is nice to abandon what you have as much as possible, as many mental possessions as the physical ones, as they clutter your mind. It is nice to maintain poverty of environment, sound, thinking and belief. It is nice to keep oneself small, like a grain of rice, instead of expanding. Make yourself dispensable, like paper. See little, hear little, and think little.'

*Lighting Piece*

Light a match and watch  
till it goes out.  
– y.o. 1965 autumn

Ono asks: 'After unblocking one's mind, by dispensing with visual, auditory, and kinetic perceptions, what will come out of us? Will there be anything? I wonder'. A key aspect of Ono's work is her desire to dispense with sensory stimuli altogether, creating works which seek to focus the participant's attention on a solitary idea or perception. Possessing little, dispensable as paper, concerned with ostensibly insignificant details of experience, the participant stands in direct confrontation with Western traditions of accumulation, reason and utility. Now there is only this match, burning for no practical purpose. It lights no cigarette, destroys no property, starts no cooking fire – yet potentially it may perform any of these functions. The match simply consumes itself, leaving only ash behind. The only object, says Ono, is the image of the match that has been constructed in the mind.

The spiritual intention of this sort of monostructural presentation is made explicit in Ono's work, and it is echoed to varying degree in the work of her Fluxus compatriots. Her outspoken asceticism reminds one that the role of the ascetic in history has traditionally been that of the revolutionary: one need only think of Siddhartha Gotama, Saint Francis of Assisi or Matatma Gandhi. Now, while it is not my intention to nominate Ono, or any other Fluxus artist, for sainthood, it should be recognised that the assumption of such an ascetic posture was in effect conceived as a powerful revolutionary tool during this period, a denial of the material surplus and icy logic that, in two brief flashes, had made possible the deaths of thousands upon thousands of Japanese during the summer of 1945. As Ben Patterson has pointed out:

Perhaps the one thing everyone forgets or represses is that I, and my generation of Fluxus artists, were all more or less twelve to fourteen years old when the first atomic bomb exploded and left its mark on civilisation. Perhaps only Zen or existentialism could begin to deal with such finality ...<sup>74</sup>

It is clear from reading Ono's 'To the Wesleyan People' – which seems to function as her manifesto – that she was quite compelled by Zen thought. 'If my music seems to require physical silence,' she says, 'that is because it requires concentration to yourself – and this requires inner silence which may lead to outer silence as well. I think of my music more as a practice (*gyo*) than a music.' *Gyo* is a technical term derived from Zen; expressed more fully, the term is *Gyo-ju-za-ga*. Translated literally, this means 'practice-walking-sitting-lying', suggesting that one should maintain Zen practice during all activities of daily life.<sup>75</sup> It is bare, undivided attention, the very sort of attention that Ono seems to require in her *Lighting Piece*, a work of music-as-practice – a practice of complete awareness of a single *dharma*, an object coming to presence in the fullness of its being, outside the frameworks imposed by utility.

Ono's metaphysics is clearly indebted to the more hermetic, intuitive aspects of Zen. In 'To the Wesleyan People', Ono quotes two Zen poems. One is by Shen-hsiu, who was a contender for the role of sixth patriarch of Zen, and who went on to establish the Northern school of Zen, noted for its gradual approach to enlightenment and its reliance upon intellectual understanding of the sutras:

The mind is like the Bodhi Tree<sup>76</sup>  
 The mind like a bright mirror standing  
 Take care to wipe it all the time  
 And allow no dust to cling.

The other poem, a response to that of Shen-hsiu, is by Hui-neng, who rose from the role of monastery cook to that of the sixth patriarch as a result of this response. Hui-neng's brand of Zen, the Southern school, stressed an intuitive leap into the immediacy of experience, apart from any intellectual understanding. This method is one in which a radical doubt is shed on the stability and isolability of the object:

There never was a Bodhi Tree  
 Nor bright mirror shining  
 Fundamentally, not one thing exists  
 So where is the dust to cling?

It is with Hui-neng that Ono has the greatest affinity. In an undated work, she seems to pay homage to the sixth patriarch:

*Wind Piece*

Make a way for the wind  
 This was first performed in 1962 at the Sogetsu Art Centre, Tokyo, with a huge electric fan on the stage. In 1966 at Wesleyan University, Connecticut, the audience was asked to move their chairs a little and make a narrow aisle for the wind to pass through. No wind was created with special means.

As part of the score itself, Ono describes two distinctly different performances; one in which the wind was created by a 'huge electric fan', and the other in which 'no wind was created with special means'. In the latter performance, was there a wind at all? Why does Ono need to mention specific examples of performances? In the following koan, the twenty-ninth case of the Wumenguan, Hui-neng addresses the problem of wind in a language that is – at least in translation – remarkable in its similarity to Ono's own rhetorical style:

Once when the wind was whipping the banner of a temple, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen witnessed two monks debating about it. One said the banner was moving, one said the wind was moving.

They argued back and forth without attaining the principle, so the Patriarch said, 'This is not the movement of the wind, nor the movement of the banner; it is the movement of your minds.'

The two monks were both awestruck.<sup>77</sup>

As a further critical illustration of what I believe to be the guiding structural principle of Ono's *Wind Piece*, here is a passage written in 1233 by Dogen, the founder of the Soto school of Zen:

Zen master Hotetsu was using a fan. A monk asked him about this: 'The nature of wind is eternal and all-pervasive – why then do you use a fan?' The master said, 'You only know the nature of wind is eternal, but do not yet know the principle of its omniscience.' The monk asked, 'What is the principle of its omniscience?' The master just fanned. The monk bowed.<sup>78</sup>

The 'principle of omniscience' of which Hotetsu speaks is simply wind itself; the act of fanning is the demonstration of that principle, rather than a theoretical, verbal explication of such. Meaning is conveyed by direct engagement, uncodified, manifesting itself in a space that pre-exists language. The content of the expression is the expression of the content. Fanning is an example or embodiment of wind, or rather of wind-ing, an action, a becoming that won't stand still long enough for one to apply the grid of language. The wind is what one does.

Yet, if this sheds any light on Ono's use of a fan to create wind for her performance at the Sogetsu Art Centre, how does it explain the performance at Wesleyan in which 'no wind was created with special means'? Clearly, at an indoor performance there will be no perceptible wind of which to speak. Where is the movement of the wind? As Hui-neng points out, it is no different than the movement of the mind. Ono seems to concur, declaring, 'my interest is mainly "painting to construct in your head"':

In your head, for instance, it is possible for a straight line to exist – not as a segment of a curve but as a straight line. Also, a line can be straight, curved and something else at the same time. A dot can exist as a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, dimensional object all at the same time or at various times in different combinations as you wish to perceive. The movement of the molecule can be continuum and discontinuum at the same time. It can be with color and/or without. There is no visual object that does not exist in comparison to or simultaneously with other objects, but these characteristics can be eliminated if you wish. A sunset can go on for days. You can eat up all the clouds in the sky.

In short, the mind, as Ono perceives it, is able to simultaneously embrace contraries, can reconcile the poles of dualities – dualities that exist only as constructs of language. This is also the perception of Zen, as it is of many mystical traditions, both Eastern and Western ('Eastern'/'Western?'). And, as Ono suggests, it is the case in contemporary physics, where, for example, light is simultaneously conceived as wave ('continuum') and particle ('discontinuum'). This, at last, is the realm of non-sense, the bottom line of both physics and metaphysics. Here our notions of the stability of physical phenomena are overturned, as both the limits of logic and the bounds of certainty offered by faith are tested. Our efforts to frame the world invariably come off as provisional, subjective, and, ultimately, false.

## AN INFINITE NUMBER OF VARIABLES

In 1959 Alan Watts, then arguably the most important Western exponent and disseminator of Eastern philosophies, lodged his complaints against 'Western artists avowedly using Zen to justify the indiscriminate framing of simply anything – blank canvases, totally silent music, torn up bits of paper dropped on a board and stuck where they fall, or dense masses of mangled wire.'<sup>79</sup> While Watts admits that 'it is indeed the basic intuition of Zen that there is an ultimate standpoint from which "anything goes"', he also declares, 'this standpoint does not exclude and is not hostile towards the distinction between right and wrong at other levels and in more limited frames of reference.'<sup>80</sup>

Watts proceeds to point out that it is precisely the artist's ability to *frame* reality that sets his work apart from nature: 'every work of art involves a frame. A frame of some kind is precisely what distinguishes a painting, a poem, a musical composition, a play, a dance, or a piece of sculpture from the rest of the world.' Framing and lighting, he says, are the tools which create 'marvellous compositions' in the hands of a truly skilled photographer. An unskilled photographer will create 'only messes, for he does not know how to place the frame, the border of the picture, where it will be in relation to the contents. How eloquently this demonstrates that as soon as we introduce a frame anything does *not* go.'<sup>81</sup>

As we have seen, it is this notion of framing as a function of mastery and power that the artists of Fluxus questioned relentlessly. The emergence of intermedia – a range of structures that lay *between* media – was an extraordinary manifestation of this questioning. At a period in aesthetic thinking characterised by Clement Greenberg, Abstract Expressionism and serial music, all seeking to foster the self-reflectivity of media (that is, the fullest expression of the materiality, limits and language of each) – the notion of intermedia was, at the very least radical.<sup>82</sup> But the artists of Fluxus went a step further, questioning the enframing of the artist him- or herself as a site of privilege, as an individual whose mastery lends special weight to aesthetic choices.

George Brecht, two years before the publication of Watts' essay, appraised the role of chance in the work of Jackson Pollock, noting that the most remarkable aspects of Pollock's work happen beyond the artist's ability, conscious or unconscious as it may be, to assert total control over his materials. Unconscious production, or better, 'improvisation', is still a form of control, a framing, a function of the interiorisation and mastery of a set of learned skills and familiar materials. For the experienced artist such as Pollock, or Watts' master photographer, skills have been internalised to the point where production becomes naturalised, becomes 'second nature', as it were; as such, the works produced by the artist occur with the apparent effortlessness and certainty of natural force. In a sense, this is indeed the 'Zen' of the arts.

But for Brecht, who was trained as a scientist, the value of Pollock's work is strictly a technical matter. He sees the intervention of an 'infinite number of variables', such as 'paint viscosity, density, rate of flow at any instant; and direction, speed and configuration of the applicator, to say nothing of non-uniformity in the paint', as mitigating the artist's power of absolute expression. Brecht cites Pollock's *One, 1950* as an example of an exercise in which 'differently-coloured streams of paint have flowed into each other after application, resulting in a commingling completely out of the artist's hands.'<sup>83</sup>

What is of greatest concern to Brecht are the microscopic, natural processes that occur beyond the artist's capacity to assert his will over them, as the paint settles into itself, drip melting into drip. At this level of occurrence, the notion of 'paint' on 'canvas' no longer makes any sense; in the realm of the molecular, paint might just as well be molten lava, hurricane winds or tomato sauce. If this is the case, according to Brecht, then it is no longer valuable to regard the artist as the producer of extraordinary objects, as these objects are no longer perceived as set apart from any other object in nature. The physical laws of a painting are no different than the physical laws that govern nature itself. To subject this continuum to an arbitrary fragmentation – the function of a choosing subjectivity – is seen by Brecht as a pretension in direct conflict with natural law.

Alan Watts contends:

Some artists may argue that they do not want their works to be distinguishable from the total universe, but if this be so they should not frame them in galleries and concert halls. Above all they should not sign them or sell them. This is as immoral as selling the moon or signing one's name to a mountain.<sup>84</sup>

Here Watts makes an important point. The artist, if she has no wish for her work to be considered 'art' – as here opposed to 'the total universe' – should avoid framing devices of every sort, should not commodify, or even *present*, the work in any way. But can such a task be accomplished? Can an artist create an art work that transports none of the signs of being 'art'? For George Brecht, the artist, and the images produced by the artist, are simply manifestations of nature:

Here I would like to introduce the general term 'chance-imagery' to apply to our formation of images resulting from chance, wherever these occur in nature. (The word 'imagery' is intentionally ambiguous enough, I think, to apply either to the physical act of creating an image out of real materials, or to the formation of an image in the mind, say by abstraction from a more complex system.) One reason for doing this is to place the painter's, musician's, poet's, dancer's chance images in the same conceptual category as natural chance-images (the configuration of meadow grasses, the arrangement of stones on a brook bottom), and to get away from the idea that an artist makes something 'special' and beyond the world of ordinary things. An Alpine peak or an iris petal can move us at times with all the subtle power of a 'Night Watch' or one of the profound themes of Opus 131. There is no a priori reason why moving images should originate only with artists.<sup>85</sup>

With no clear distinction between 'art' and 'nature', or between 'artist' and 'nature', there opens up a democratised field of production in which anyone can fulfil the role of an artist, in which anything – anything fully an example of itself – can be appreciated as a 'unique' work, that is, as nothing particularly special or extraordinary. 'Act of imagination or perception is in itself an arrangement,' says Brecht, 'so there is no avoiding anyone making arrangements.' How then can one create a work that is not art? One response is simply to call *everything* art, as in this 1967 work by Ben Vautier:

TOTAL ART SCULPTURE

Pick  
up  
anything  
at your  
feet.

Or in this 1973 score by Ken Friedman:

DANCE REPORT

Choreography considered as the motion between  
your present position and your next position.

In these works, however, a question arises. If everything is 'art', if every object is 'sculpture', if every movement is 'dance,' then what becomes of 'art', 'dance', 'sculpture'? How can these terms continue to maintain any power of signification? Vautier and Friedman have made efforts to collapse entirely the traditional oppositions of sculpture/

non-sculpture and dance/non-dance, and in doing so, have created specifically anti-art works. Yet there remains an attachment to the notions of 'sculpture', of 'dance', and so, of 'art'. The terms 'anti-art' and 'non-art' acquire meaning only inasmuch as they are the oppositional and complementary terms for 'art'. 'Art' – its parameters indeed broadened by such works – remains as an enframing.

As George Brecht points out, the distinctions between 'art' and 'non-art', between what is 'inside' the frame and 'outside' the frame, are inappropriate, arbitrary and without real meaning.<sup>86</sup> Brecht addresses this arduous, paradoxical problem in a 1972 interview with Robin Page, presenting a challenge to 'anybody who thinks they're making art, or non-art: to make a work which cannot possibly be considered art. There's the problem. Send your letters to George Brecht ... and I'll send you something in return ... unless I'm too busy.'<sup>87</sup> The artist presents the problem, then sits back to read his collection of 'thrillers', leading a perfectly inartistic life as others fumble through the semantic labyrinth.<sup>88</sup> The artist himself has become an exemplative work, the embodiment of his own idea.

## OBJECTS MAKING MISCHIEF

For George Maciunas, the decentring of the artist's position of mastery and privilege, and the attendant reconstitution of the art object within the expanded field of natural processes, had inherently revolutionary applications. In his chart entitled 'Fluxus Art-Amusement', which was clearly a manifesto (although like all Fluxus 'manifestos' it is unsigned and was no doubt widely disputed), Maciunas outlined his view of the difference between the functions of traditional art as practiced in contemporary capitalist society and his own vision of 'art-amusement'.<sup>89</sup> In regarding the Fluxus phenomena as 'art-amusement', George Maciunas pinpointed an essential ingredient for an art of genuinely subversive power, an interruptive art that questions the power and pretensions of both frame and framer: *laughter*. As Dick Higgins points out, the art world into which Fluxus was born was dominated by Abstract Expressionism in visual art and post-Webernite serialism in music, both of which 'were apt to be extremely solemn and tendentious affairs indeed'. Seriousness, he notes, 'tended often to be equated with solemnity. Fluxus tended often to react against this by moving in the direction of humour and gags, introducing a much-needed *spirit of play* into the arts.'<sup>90</sup> By introducing thigh-slapping laughter into the horizon of art, Fluxus confounded art's claims to sublimity and ritual power.

Fluxus performance, more often than not, is very funny. Maciunas declared that he 'wouldn't put it in any higher class than a gag, maybe a good gag.' He ties this aspect of Fluxus performance to what he calls the 'monomorphism' of the work; a Fluxus work must be direct and simple, like a good joke, in order to be effective, in order to be *Fluxus*. Indeed, as previously noted, it is this monomorphism that sets Fluxus performance apart from the 'polymorphism' of happenings. After all, says Maciunas, 'you cannot have six jokers standing and telling you jokes simultaneously. It just wouldn't work. Has to be one joke at a time'.<sup>91</sup>

*f/h Trace*

Fill French horn with rice  
bow to audience.

Watts' piece *f/h Trace* is effective – will be read as 'funny' – only to the degree that it subverts the audience's expectations. As is standard practice in classical Western musical performance, one expects the musician or performer to acknowledge the audience with a polite bow before he commences the work at hand. In this piece – frequently performed in formal concert attire, as were many Fluxus works – Robert Watts turns the expectation of the audience upside-down, as the performer's requisite bow is accompanied by a sudden splashing of rice upon the stage. Here the bow is the performance, and . . . well, I suppose you had to be there really. The simplest gesture at once overturns the pretence and pomp of traditional performance etiquette, by jamming the received codes that constitute the viewer's frame of reference.

Another example by Mieko Shiomi:

*Event for the Late Afternoon* (1963)

Violin is suspended with rope or ribbon inserted through pulley at top and secured to floor. Performer in samurai armor positions himself under suspended violin, draws his sword and cuts the rope in front of him.

One by George Brecht:

*Saxophone Solo* (1962)

- Trumpet.

Yoko Ono:

*Wall Piece for Orchestra* (Winter 1962)

Hit a wall with your head.

Ben Vautier:

*Tango* (1964)

The audience is invited to dance a tango.

and Ken Friedman:

*Zen Vaudeville* (1966)<sup>92</sup>

The sound of one shoe tapping.

What these simple events have in common is a particular mode of fiddling with the culturally conditioned constructs by which one comes to receive – and so expect – the experience of performance as social ritual. A theatrically garbed performer is whacked on the head with her own violin, an unlikely trumpet is pulled from a saxophone case, the members of an orchestra line up and bang their heads against a wall on cue from the conductor, the audience – and not the 'performers' – dance the tango, a single shoe taps. During Fluxus performance, received notions of performance are mocked inverted, and shown the door.

*Word Event* (1961)

- Exit.

– George Brecht

Ken Friedman calls this aspect of Fluxus 'Zen Vaudeville'.<sup>93</sup> Maciunas calls it 'Neo-Haiku theatre'.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, like Fluxus, Zen regards laughter as an important index of understanding: as we have seen, the transmission of Zen began with a monomorphic gesture

– the presentation of a single flower – and a smile of reception. The smile is the signifier of sudden realisation, of ‘getting the point’ and approving its significance. In Zen, says Christmas Humphries, laughter is ‘a sign of sanity; and the comic is deliberately used to break up concepts, to release tensions, and to teach what cannot be taught in words. Nonsense is used to point to the beyond of rational sense.’<sup>95</sup>

In Nam June Paik’s *Zen for Head*, the grand Abstract Expressionist gesture is turned quite literally on its head. The performer simply dips his head into a bucket of ink and paints a line down a sheet of cheap kraft paper that has extended along the floor. Using his head as a brush, the performer paints a line (indeed, Paik’s work is an interpretation of La Monte Young’s *Composition #10 1960*: ‘Draw a straight line and follow it.’). In contrast to the monumental status of, say, a large-scale calligraphic work by Franz Kline, Paik’s gesture does not, cannot, function as an index of the master’s hand – no hand was used, for one thing, but is rather the index of *any* body, *any* performer to chooses who enact the work. The painting is thus no masterpiece, at least not by traditional standards, and so points an accusatory finger at the very notion of mastery. Paik’s ‘crazy Zen’, as it is called by Ken Friedman, provides a welcome, unexpected relief from the high seriousness of Abstract Expressionism.<sup>96</sup>

Paik’s work is not without its precedent. Conrad Hyers notes a certain eighth-century Zen painter-priest by the name Wang-hsia, nicknamed Wang-mo (Ink Wang):

When he was drunk, he would splatter ink on the surface, laughing and singing the while. He might kick it, or rub it on with his hands, wave (his brush) about or scrub with it ... [Then] he would follow its configurations to make mountains, or rocks, or clouds, or water.’ According to another authority he would even dip his head in the container of ink, and paint with his hair as a brush.<sup>97</sup>

The resulting laughter, says Conrad Hyers (speaking of the laughter that seems so prevalent in Zen, and which often accompanies the solution of a koan), is an expression of cognitive shock in the face of a rupture of the expected, the dissolution of the frame’s authority – an explosive decentring of the self. According to Hyers, this sort of laughter

leads toward the debunking of pride and the deflating of ego. It mocks grasping and clinging, and cools desire. It cuts through ignorance and precipitates insight. It turns hierarchies upside down as a prelude to collapsing them, and overcomes dualities and conflicts by embracing and uniting opposites. The whole intellectual and valuational structure of the discriminating mind is challenged, with a result that is enlightening and liberating.<sup>98</sup>

The space of the comic is thus a forum for the investigation of boundaries, a site of transgression in which received, unspoken codes are simultaneously revealed and overturned. Like the blasphemies of the Zen koan, the irreverent wackiness of many Fluxus works condemns self-serving notions of the sacred in art. For the artists of Fluxus, no act was absolute, no art work was transcendent, and no artist was above receiving a pie in the face. In Zen and in Fluxus, humour throws a monkey-wrench into the smooth operation of the given and the known, posing instead a fragmented world of questions, of absolute instability, a stream of flux in which the integrity of both the object and the subject are perpetually up for grabs.

## NO-SELF

The very name of Fluxus points to an appreciation of the world as a field of transformation, as flux. Like Zen, Fluxus posits a reconfiguration of the subject as an inextricable component within this field. Rather than presenting the subject as *acting upon* the world, there is a sense of reciprocal determination, an *inter-action*. George Brecht notes: 'I conceive of the individual as part of an infinite space and time; in constant interaction with that continuum (nature), and giving order (physically or conceptually) to a part of the continuum with which he interacts.'<sup>99</sup> In Zen thought, this continuum is known as *sunyata*, the primordial emptiness.

'Form is emptiness, emptiness is form', reads the *Hannya Shingyo*, the 'Heart Sutra', one of the essential texts of Zen. Indeed, the essence of Zen thought is found in the notion of emptiness, *sunyata*, the very ground of being. All *dharmas*, that is manifest forms, are seen as having no independent self-nature, no individual essence that separates them from the fabric of being, from any other *dharma*. These forms are themselves impermanent, provisional, continually becoming but never arriving at a moment of being. Norman Bryson examines the notion of *sunyata* in the work of the Japanese philosopher Keiji Nishitani, pointing out that the notion of an entity as a fixed body, clearly delineated from the world, does not hold up when regarded in the light of *sunyata*. 'Subject' and 'object' become inappropriate terms, as they are both revealed to be aspects of the other, each part of 'the universal field of transformations':

Moved on to the field of *sunyata*, or radical impermanence, the entity comes apart. It cannot be said to occupy a *single* location, since its locus is always the universal field of transformations: it cannot achieve separation from that field or acquire any kind of bounded outline. Because of its inseparability from the field of impermanence it cannot be said to enjoy independent self-existence, since the ground of being is everything else. And it cannot present itself in the guise of enduring form.<sup>100</sup>

Nishitani's project, as outlined by Bryson, is a radical critique of the Cartesian *cogito* – the notion of the subject as a permanent stable centre around which objects arrange themselves, shifting in and out of the subject's experiential horizon. Rather than regarding the subject as isolable entity, Nishitani – whose terms are clearly structured after Buddhist progenitors – asserts that what *appears* to be a given object is only the *difference* between that object and the surrounding field. The inverse is also true: the surrounding field is constituted of the *difference* between it and the given object. As discussed earlier, object and field, 'it' and 'other', are interdependent, and thus the object cannot be examined in isolation from that field, cannot be framed. Nor, for that matter, can the subject be isolated or framed.

In Zen the individual, not bound by the notion of self as fixity, is rather understood as an integral part of an ever-shifting field of becoming. With no selfhood to preserve, the individual – whom Rinzai calls 'the one who has neither shape nor form, neither root nor trunk, and who, having no abiding place, is full of activities'<sup>101</sup> – is perpetually *responding* to the newest developments within the field of *sunyata*.

If a man comes to me and says, 'I am seeking the Buddha,' I come out in conformity with the situation of purity. If a man comes to me and asks about the bodhisattva, I come out in accordance with the situation of compassion (*maitri* or *karuna*). If a man comes to me and asks about bodhi [or enlightenment], I come out in accordance with the situation of incomparable beauty. If a man comes to me and asks about nirvana, I come out in

accordance with the situation of serene quietude. The situations may vary infinitely, but the Man varies not. So, [it is said], '[It] takes forms in accordance with conditions, like the moon reflecting itself [variously] in water.'<sup>102</sup>

It is thus inaccurate to conceive the self as a static entity, sitting solitary on a meditation cushion. On the contrary, the individual continually manifests both stasis and mobility, and produces these experiences as new occasions arise. 'He responds to all kinds of situations and manifests his activities, and yet comes out of nowhere.'<sup>103</sup> Suzuki points out that the self, a manifestation of the formless field of *sunyata*, is thus difficult to locate as a centre of experience:

The Self is ever moving or becoming. It is a zero which is a staticity, and at the same time an infinity, indicating that it is all the time moving. The Self is dynamic. The Self is comparable to a circle which has no circumference, it is thus *sunyata*, emptiness. But it is also the centre of such a circle. The Self is the point of absolute subjectivity which may convey the sense of immobility or tranquility. But as this point can be moved anywhere we like, to infinitely varied spots, it is really no point. The point is the circle and the circle is the point.<sup>104</sup>

Meditation, the principal practice of Zen, is thus not a recentring of the subject, a cultivation of 'inner' tranquility or stability. Rather, meditation is a continuous process of responsiveness in accordance with 'exterior' forces, a decentring of the subject's illusory selfhood. As Dick Higgins explains, the 'point' of which Suzuki speaks can indeed be moved anywhere:

We have no fear of becoming: our thought processes are meditations (for our parents, the purpose of meditation was medicinal – it was to clear the mind and restore perspective. It had to be slow, for fear of losing control. But we begin where they left off – we need not control in order to experience, so we can meditate at any speed and virtually in any situation) – 'meditations' they are, in the sense that they are liberated processes of thought and feeling, as opposed to directed ones. We are quite readily capable of experiencing these as emptiness and beyond concrete conceivability. All this adds up to a new mentality, at least for the Western world.<sup>105</sup>

As Higgins points out, thought is not 'directed' outward, but is 'liberated', able to respond and conform to any given situation. The thinking self is reflexive of its surround, reconstituted in the margin between the subject and object. Here is a mutual interdependence of subject and object, two centres that re-establish themselves – through interaction – as a unity. In a 1978 interview John Cage examines the notion of the 'new mentality' of the decentred self, the dismantling of the *cogito*:

John Cage I like to think that each thing has not only its own life but its own centre and that that centre is, each time, the exact centre of the Universe. That is one of the principal themes I've retained from my studies of Zen.

Daniel Charles Must we dissociate the idea of life and the idea of the centre?

John Cage Suzuki taught me that in fact we never stop establishing, outside the life of things, a means of measure and that we then continually try to re-place each thing into the grid of our measure. Thus, we lose the things; we forget them, or we disfigure them. Zen teaches us that we are really in a situation of decentring, relative to the grid. In this situation, everything is at the centre. There is then a plurality and a multiplicity of centres. And they are all interpenetrating. And Zen adds: in non-obstruction. To live, for all things, is to be at the centre. That entails interpenetration and non-obstruction.<sup>106</sup>

This non-obstructive interpenetration, or rather, interaction, is a principal function of Fluxus event scores, themselves meaningless if taken as isolated structures. As discussed above, it is precisely the engagement of a participant in the interpretation and realisation of a score which enables the work – and the participant – to come to presence. There can be no one correct interpretation, only provisional examples of realisation. In this respect, Fluxus event scores are similar to koans, and they are also similar to Nietzschean *aphorisms*. Gilles Deleuze describes the generation of meaning in the aphorism as wholly contingent upon the intervention of external forces:

An aphorism is a play of forces, a state of forces each of which is always outside the others. An aphorism means nothing, signifies nothing, and has no more a signifier than a signified element . . . An aphorism is a state of forces, the last of which is at the same time the most recent; the most present and ultimate/temporary one is always the *most external force*. Nietzsche poses it very clearly: if you want to know what I mean, find the force which gives a meaning, a new meaning if need be, to what I say. Connect the text with that force. There are no problems of interpretation of Nietzsche, there are only problems of machination: machinating Nietzsche's text, trying to find out with what external, current force he succeeds in *getting something through*, a flow of energy.<sup>107</sup>

Like the aphorism, the Fluxus event score is forever unfinished, continually calling to external forces to provide completion, to resonate with and overlap the text as set forth by the author. In the field of transformations, there is only a perpetual coming into being of the text – a becoming that includes as part of its constitution the very subjectivity that is engaged in its realisation. There is thus only 'legitimate misinterpretation', notes Deleuze, 'treat the aphorism as a phenomenon awaiting new forces that come and "subjugate" it, make it work, or else make it explode.'<sup>108</sup>

*Exercise*

Determine the centre of an object or event.

Determine the centre more accurately.

Repeat, until further inaccuracy is impossible.

– George Brecht

It is the provisional nature of the Fluxus event score, its ability to be legitimately misinterpreted by any external force, that releases it from the grid of subjectivity, the notion of a permanent fixative power, which Deleuze calls the despotic machine. Like Nietzsche's aphorisms, Fluxus scores maintain an immediate relationship with the outside; indeed, they cannot be said to have independent being apart from this externalising relationship. Another blow to the *cogito*. Says Deleuze, 'opening a text by Nietzsche at random dispenses us for one of the first times from interiority, the interiority of the soul or of consciousness, the interiority of essence or of concept, in other words, from what has always been the principle of philosophy.'<sup>109</sup> The same is true of Fluxus event scores. To quote Rinzai, the work – like the participant who is engaged in the work's realisation – 'takes forms in accordance with conditions. like the moon reflecting itself [variously] in water.'

*Shadow Piece II*

1

Project a shadow over the other side of this page.

2

Observe the boundary line between  
the shadow and the lighted part.

3

Become the boundary line.  
– Chieko Shiomi, 1964

As sites of potential transformations, with no autonomous formal or material interiority, such texts stand outside the mechanisms which serve to implement social codes: laws, contracts and institutions. Such works, notes Deleuze, ‘can be understood neither through the establishment or the application of a law, nor through the offer of a contractual relationship, nor through the setting up of institutions. The only conceivable equivalent might be “to be embarked with” ... Rowing together is sharing, sharing something irrespective of law, contracts, institutions. A drift, the movement of drifting, of “deterritorialisation.”<sup>110</sup> This is the movement of flux.

*Opus 50*

Place the palms of your hands side by side on this piece of paper – After a short time: Raise the hands and place your eyes in the same level as the palms – Notice the coincident unus pultorum retardation in the situations  
etc!

or something else  
– Eric Andersen

In place of interiority, both of the text and of the subject, Fluxus events establish a shifting zone of impermanence, a *nomadism* in which the self is continually redefined in accord with the external force (for example, an event score, a performer, the weather) that is now asserting its momentary demands, and with which it now interacts. In Fluxus, as in Zen thought, the self is whatever one happens to be doing at any given moment. In the field of sunyata, a third entity reveals itself, an entity neither subject nor object, and yet constituted by both – subject and object are, as we have seen, the same thing. Identity becomes multiplicity.

One must take special care not to influence oneself. Tomorrow one will write Schubert’s Fifth Symphony, cook some kohlrabi, develop a non-toxic epoxy, and invent still another kind of theatre; or perhaps one will just sit and scream; or perhaps ...

– Dick Higgins<sup>111</sup>

You don’t try to make a style, or to achieve some identity – I mean your artwork doesn’t try to achieve identity. You try to be out there in the waste open land and fool around

– Eric Andersen

Here is the notion of self as a passage, a nomad, a flow of intensities as one shifts from one plateau of experience to the next.<sup>112</sup> On the periphery, out in the ‘waste open land’, the nomad is a marginal entity (if he can be called an entity at all), a circle without circumference, without a centre. The nomad stands in direct confrontation with the prevailing understanding of the artist as mythic subjectivity, the Producer of Great Works, organic, whole, fixed, comprehensible. The nomad escapes the over-coding of the State, of stasis, functioning instead within a smooth, open-ended, decoded space, a space in which one can freely move from any one point to any other. This perpetual play of difference and joyful anarchy in the

face of the determinate is the space of a counterculture. 'Its mode of distribution', says Brian Massumi, 'is the *nomos*: arraying oneself in an open space (hold the street), as opposed to the *logos* of entrenching oneself in a closed space (hold the fort).'<sup>113</sup>

America was, you know, patting itself on the back. It already had its new art form [Abstract Expressionism], but we could have the street.

– Alison Knowles<sup>114</sup>

We are not nonparticipants, like the beats were: We are arming to take the barricades.

– Dick Higgins<sup>115</sup>

As Higgins notes, the beatniks were a generation of self-perceived rebels who played the role of 'nonparticipants', and whose pursuit of a romantic individualism ultimately led them back into the fold of a tradition, back into the mythos of the American frontier. (Indeed, the beatniks' attraction to Eastern philosophies rang of transcendence, of the ecstatic self subsumed into the oneness of nature.) This same mythos was concurrently being lionised and reified in the visual arts as 'American-Type' painting: big, fast and unshaven, the abstract Expressionist gesture became the loaded signifier of American selfhood – the automatic writing of the American unconscious, vast and spontaneous, but always bound to its territory.

Nam June Paik points out that it is not only the destiny of American arts to be the vehicles of such territorialities, but that of Zen as well. In the June 1964 edition of *cc fiVe ThReE*, Paik had a great deal to say about Zen:

Now let me talk about Zen, although I avoid it usually, not to become the salesman of 'OUR' culture like Daisetsu Suzuki, because the cultural patriotism is more harmful than the political patriotism, because the former is the disguised one, and especially the self-propaganda of Zen (the doctrine of self-abandonment) must be the stupid suicide of Zen.

Anyway, Zen consists of two negations.

the first negation:

The absolute IS the relative.

the second negation:

The relative IS the absolute.

The first negation is a simple fact, which every mortal meets every day: everything passes away ... mother, lover, hero, youth, fame ... etc.

The second negation is the KEY-point of Zen.

That means ...

The NOW is utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 10 minutes is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 20 hours is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 30 months is also utopia, what it may be.

The NOW in 40 million years is also utopia, what it may be.

Therefore

We should learn,

how to be satisfied with 75%

how to be satisfied with 50%

how to be satisfied with 38%

how to be satisfied with 9%

how to be satisfied with 0%  
 how to be satisfied with -1000% ...  
 Zen is anti-avant-garde, anti-frontier spirit, anti-Kennedy.  
 Zen is responsible of Asian poverty.  
 How can I justify ZEN, without justifying Asian poverty??  
 It is another problem, to which I will refer again in the next  
 essay.  
 ...  
 The frustration remains as the frustration.  
 There is NO catharsis.

Paik, in this passage, in part an invective against Zen, strikes an important note. Zen, he asserts, is 'responsible of Asian poverty', and if Zen is to be justified, it must be seen in that light. In feudal Japan, for example, Zen was revived in the fourteenth century, transmitted within a monastic system overseen and subsidised by the imperial court, as well as by the many military governors, or *shogun*, who ruled the provinces. The monks, trained in cloistered mountain monasteries and respected by the masses as highly educated spiritual leaders, were regarded by the rulers as 'effective means for quelling unruly elements among the populace'.<sup>116</sup> Zen promotes an essential quietism amongst its practitioners, a 'doctrine of self-abandonment' that demands that one reins in desires. As Paik points out, Zen teaches 'how to be satisfied with 75%, how to be satisfied with 38%'; in short, it teaches one to accept and be satisfied with one's lot in life, even if that lot is economic poverty. Clearly, such a teaching would have been immensely useful to a military ruler (who himself would certainly *not* be satisfied with these percentages), and Zen quickly became official culture in Japan.

In the United States of the 1950s and 1960s, the incorporation of a methodology of Zen in the arts meant something quite different from that of its use in feudal Japan. For the beatniks, and for artists such as Franz Kline, Zen's appeal was that of a pure, exotic, certainly mystifying other. Zen offered an ancient, solemn set of artistic traditions far removed from reason and naturalistic representation. A sanction and inspiration for a self-perceived '*advance guard*', Zen was employed by artists and poets as a tool to explore the frontiers of the unconscious, the unmitigated, spontaneous source of selfhood.

Like the beatniks, and certainly like the counterculture(s) that flourished throughout the 1960s, the artists of Fluxus were concerned with establishing an unmediated relationship with the world. But the artists of Fluxus, as we have seen, did not regard the self – particularly the unconscious – as the absolute, generative centre of this world. Rather, there was a concern with decentering the self, positioning the self as one *provisional* centre in perpetual interaction with the infinite multiplicity of centres that constitute the world. In contrast to the Zen of the beatniks – a means to consummate the 'manifest destiny' of modernism, the revelation of the frontiers of selfhood – the Zen appreciated by the artists of Fluxus was, as Paik says, 'anti-avant-garde, anti-frontier spirit, anti-Kennedy'. Indeed, Zen, as received by some of the artists of Fluxus, posits a self that is no self at all. George Maciunas understood this, and employed it to advance his own notions of 'selflessness'. In a letter dated 16 March 1964, Maciunas offered some advice to Ben Vautier:

I notice with disappointment your GROWING MEGALOMANIA. Why not try Zen method. Curb and eliminate your ego entirely. (If you can) don't sign anything – don't

attribute anything to yourself – depersonalize yourself! that’s in true Fluxus collective spirit. De-europeanize yourself!<sup>117</sup>

As Jackson Mac Low points out, Maciunas’ notions of ‘depersonalisation’ and ‘true Fluxus collective spirit’ ‘were based on half-baked Leninist ideas and have little if any relation to Buddhism.’<sup>118</sup> Yet the understanding of Zen as a method of decentring the self is consonant with Maciunas’ desire to eliminate ‘the idea of the professional artist, art-for-art ideology, expression of artists’ ego through art, etc.’<sup>119</sup> Such a radical revision of the conceit of authorship goes hand-in-hand with the critique of the autonomy of the object posited by Fluxus artists. This stance stood in marked contrast to that of the thriving art market of the period – a market that flourished by promulgating the mythic individuality of the artist as well as the monolithic authority of the artist’s product. Fluxus downplayed – indeed, it sought to eliminate – the artist’s traditional role as unique producer of unique objects, instead creating *situations* in which objects, often objects of daily use, would be allowed a space in which to reveal themselves.

Know honor  
 But keep to the role of the disgraced  
 And be a valley to the empire.  
 If you are a valley to the empire,  
 Then the constant virtue [power] will be sufficient ...  
 – Tao Te Ching, Chapter 27

The artists of Fluxus walked an alternative, ultimately revolutionary passage through, or rather *as*, a valley to the empire of representation. In contrast to the *logos* of the beatniks and Abstract Expressionists – the narrative of the frontier, the production of a myth of formal wholeness validated by a logic of transcendental affirmation – the artists of Fluxus posited no absolutes, no methods, no tools, no fixed structures for their works. Rather, their mode of production was based on the notion of a plenitude of possible meanings and interpretations – detached from an understanding of the work as an extension of the artist’s identity. Dick Higgins calls such work ‘*post-selfcognitive*’, or ‘*post-cognitive*’ for short. The post-cognitive work, says Higgins, is concerned with

the object qua object, the poem within the poem, the word within the word – the process as process, accepting reality as a found object, enfolding it by the edges, so to speak, without trying to distort it (artistically or otherwise) in its depiction. The work becomes the matrix – any kind of matrix will do for the particular needs of the particular work. The artist gives you the structure: you may fill it in yourself. This is not formalism (though it includes structuralism as an aspect) – the emphasis is still on the subject. But the subject is accepted – the artist will have to look elsewhere, if he wants to *prove* his identity.<sup>120</sup>

The works of which Higgins speaks are no longer grounded in the subjectivity of the artist, but in the horizons of a particular work’s inception, its many possible centres and contexts. The form of a work is entirely contingent upon the exigencies of its moment(s) of realisation, beyond the control of the artist. In another essay Higgins notes:

One thing above all was foreign to Fluxus works: personal intrusion on the part of the artist. In fact there was almost a cult among Fluxus people – or, more properly, a fetish, carried far beyond any rational or explainable level – which idealised the most direct relationship with ‘reality,’ specifically objective reality. The lives of objects, their

histories and events were considered somehow more realistic than any conceivable personal intrusion on them.<sup>121</sup>

Higgins' statement might be fruitfully related to this passage by RH Blyth, in which he discusses the place of the object within the poetic form of *haiku*:

Each thing is preaching the law [Dharma] incessantly, but this law is not something different from the thing itself. *Haiku* is the revealing of this preaching by presenting us with the thing devoid of all our mental twisting and emotional discoloration; or rather, it shows the thing as it exists at one and the same time outside and inside the mind, perfectly subjective, ourselves undivided from the object in its original unity with ourselves . . . It is a way of returning to nature, in short, to our Buddha nature. It is a way in which a cold winter rain, the swallows of evening, even the very day in its hotness and the length of the night become truly alive, share in our humanity, speak their own silent and expressive language.<sup>122</sup>

Adopting this viewpoint, it would be incorrect to say that Fluxworks (many of which were known as 'neo-haiku events') are *inexpressive* as a result of the artist's self-limiting role in their production. Rather, the site of expression in Fluxworks has been radically shifted from the artist to the object (no longer necessarily an *art* object), which in turn must be engaged by a receiving subjectivity, an arbitrarily imposed force, if it is to come to presence at all. In Zen thought, object and subject are interdependent, and this is clearly the case in Fluxus as well. Fluxus works are singularities, each moment of performance identical only with itself, subject to the intervention of an infinite number of potential, temporary forces. Lines of force and transformation can be drawn between any number of works, realisations, participants, available materials, points of view. There is thus no repetition, no re-presentation, in the space of the Fluxus nomad, only the production of possibilities, permutations and new intensities. Nothing lasts long enough, or speaks with enough authority, for it to be re-presented. Jean-François Lyotard declares that, in the place of representation,

one should insist on the *forgetting*. Representation and opposition imply memory: in passing from one singularity to the other, the one and the other are maintained together (through channels of circulation, set-ups, fantasies or libidinal configurations of cathexes). An identity (the same) is implied in this memory. In the eternal return as a desire for potentiality, there is precisely no memory. The travel is a passage without a trace, a forgetting, instantaneous which are multiple only for the discourse, not in themselves. Such is the reason for the absence of representation in this voyage, this nomadism of intensities.<sup>123</sup>

We find this same idea in Zen – the notion of forgetting as a way of maintaining an immediate awareness of the shifting present, beyond representation. In the Hsin Hsin Ming, one of the earliest Zen texts, Seng Ts'an (d. 606?), the third patriarch of Zen, points out that in forgetting, one moves beyond the realm where comparisons can be made, and where even the notion of identity ('oneness') is transcended:

Forget the wherefore of things,  
And we attain a state beyond analogy:  
Movement stopped is no movement,  
And rest set in motion is no rest.  
When dualism does no more obtain,  
Even oneness itself remains not as such.

In this idealised space of transcendence, says Seng Ts'an,

Nothing is retained now,  
 Nothing is to be memorised,  
 All is void, lucid, and self-illuminating,  
 There is no strain, no exertion, no wasting of energy –  
 This is where thinking never attains,  
 This is where the imagination fails to measure.<sup>124</sup>

This idealised space of transcendence and forgetting is *sunyata* – emptiness – the source of everything that is the case.<sup>125</sup> In the *Hsin Hsin Ming*, itself quite imbued with a Taoist sensibility, we are given instructions as to how one might fully experience this: 'no strain, no exertion, no wasting of energy.' In Zen and Fluxus, one simply does what one is doing now, even if that something is not very much at all. This can be art, if one wishes to call it such, or it can be Zen or meditation, sport, music, work, relaxation, education – whatever one might wish to call it. In a 1967 letter to John Cage, George Brecht strikes to the heart of the matter: 'I continue to do as little as possible and to be closer perhaps to Chuang-Tzu than to Hui-Neng though they're both great guys. The refrigerator door works better now that I've oiled it.'<sup>126</sup>

In Zen, many of the artists involved in Fluxus found a paradigm for destabilising the individual's relationship to the object and to the world. This paradigm necessitated a rethinking of the forms of presentation that would seek not do violence to the object or the individual by submitting them to closure. Instead, the new forms would recognise the relationship between object and self within a condition of constant *change*, each presencing for a moment and then receding back into the horizon whence it came, leaving behind scarcely a trace of itself. In this recognition, Fluxus, like Zen, shed doubt on the notion of ownership and so circumvented the mechanisms of the system of official 'avant-garde' culture, the business of art as business – at least temporarily. Commerce, after all, has a way of catching up with even the most fleeting of ephemera.

The year 1997 marked the thirty-fifth anniversary of the first Fluxus festivals. During these thirty-five years, the artists of Fluxus have dodged and flitted between categories, surfacing now and again to tweak the collective nose of the art world. Fluxus brought the very act of perception up for accounting by attempting to clear the slate, eliminating everything that was held to be nonessential to the acts of perceiving, of doing, of simply being in the world and acting as if it mattered. If the sporadic outbursts of performances and publishing offer any indication, Fluxus still has the power to do so. In Fluxus, said George Brecht in 1964, 'individuals with something unnameable in common have simply naturally coalesced to publish and perform their work.'<sup>127</sup> Today, after so many exhibitions and articles, that 'something' *remains* unnamable, those 'individuals' *remain* individuals. Perhaps this is what has kept Fluxus vital over the course of these thirty-odd years: try as one might to name it, Fluxus still cannot be pinned down, cannot be explained away. The passage of time has demonstrated that the ultimate fact of Fluxus may be that which is inscribed within its very name.

The myriad creatures rise from it yet it claims no authority;  
 It gives them life yet claims no possession;  
 It benefits them yet exacts no gratitude;

It accomplishes its task yet lays claim to no merit.  
 It is because it lays claim to no merit  
 That its merit never deserts it.  
 – Tao Te Ching, Chapter 2

## NOTES

- 1 Portions of this essay first appeared in the catalogue that accompanied the 'Fluxus Virus' exhibition at the Galerie Schüppenhauer, Cologne, in 1992, under the title 'Fluxus and Zen? Shut My Mouth, Quick!' The current essay constituted, by and large, my Master's thesis for Hunter College, New York from which I graduated in 1993.
- 2 See, for example, Dick Higgins, 'In einem Minensuchboot um die Welt', in René Block, *1962 Wiesbaden FLUXUS 1982*, Wiesbaden, Harlekin Art, and Berlin, Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, 1982, p 127, where he wrote, '... in the autumn of 1962, *fluxus* became *FLUXUS*, and the press decided to call us the "Fluxus-Leute" (Fluxus-people).'
- 3 B Mats, 'Birth of Fluxus: The Ultimate Version', *Kalejdoskop* [Åhus] (1979), no. 3; cited in Clive Phillpot and Jon Hendricks, eds, *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1988, p 9.
- 4 George Brecht, *Chance Imagery*, A Great Bear Pamphlet, New York, Something Else Press, 1964, p 3.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p 4.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p 5.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p 7.
- 8 DT Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of DT Suzuki*, New York, Doubleday & Co, 1956, p 234.
- 9 Dick Higgins, 'A Something Else Manifesto', in D Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries: Notes towards a Theory of the New Arts*, 2nd edn, Printed Editions, New York, 1976, pp 102–3.
- 10 Author's interview with Eric Andersen, New York, 3 October 1992.
- 11 Robert Filliou, however, remarks in a letter to the editor of the *Berlingske Tidende* dated 21 December 1963 that, 'many of us have been influenced by Zen Buddhism'. In Harald Szeeman and Hans Sohm, *Happening & Fluxus*, Cologne, Kunstverein, 1970.
- 12 George Brecht, 'Something about Fluxus', in *FLuxus cc fiVe ThReE* (June 1964).
- 13 Barbara Moore, 'George Maciunas: A Finger in Fluxus', *Artforum* (October 1982) no. 21, p 40.
- 14 Larry Miller, Videotaped interview with George Maciunas, 24 March 1978; text transcribed in this volume.
- 15 Emmett Williams, *My Life in Flux and Vice Versa*, London and New York, Thames & Hudson, 1992, p 163.
- 16 John Cage, *Silence*, Middletown, CT, Wesleyan University Press, 1961, p xi.
- 17 Cage: 'This testing of art against life was the result of my attending the lectures of [DT] Suzuki for three years. I think it was from 1949 to 1951.' In Richard Kostelanetz, *The Theater of Mixed Means*, New York, The Dial Press, 1968.
- 18 Quoted in Rick Fields, *How the Swans Came to the Lake*, p 196.
- 19 Tomas Schmit, 'If I Remember Rightly', *Art and Artists* (1972), vol 7, no. 7, p 39.
- 20 'An Interview with George Brecht by Irmeline Lebeer', in Henry Martin, *An Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, Milan, Multhipla Edizioni, 1978 p 83.
- 21 In *cc V TRE* (January 1964).

- 22 George Brecht, 'The Origin of Events', in Sohm and Szeeman, eds, *Happening & Fluxus*.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 'Excerpts from a Discussion between George Brecht and Allan Kaprow . . .', in *Fluxus ce jiVe ThReE* (June 1964).
- 25 La Monte Young, 'Lecture 1960', in Achille Bonito Oliva et al, eds, *Ubi Fluxus ibi motus*, Venice, Biennale and Milan, Mazeotta Editore 1990, p 203.
- 26 Thomas Cleary, *No Barrier: Unlocking of the Zen Koan*, New York, Bantam Books (1993), p 80.
- 27 Emmett Williams, *My Life in Flux and Vice Versa*, p 163.
- 28 'Stop to smile' might be better – or differently – translated as 'stop smiling'. *Disappearing Music For Face* was realised as a film in 1966. Shot at 2000 frames per second, the image is an extreme close-up of a smiling mouth (that of Yoko Ono): imperceptibly over the course of the ten-minute film, the smile fades. The score has also been realised as a live performance.
- 29 DT Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of DT Suzuki*, New York, Doubleday & Co, 1956, p 130.
- 30 *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, Boston, Shambhala, 1989, p 311.
- 31 Ibid., p 182. An alternate translation might be 'a controversial or mysterious case' (thanks to Matthew Miller for translation from Chinese).
- 32 Heinrich Dumoulin. *Zen Buddhism: A History*, vol 1, New York, Macmillan, 1988, pp 201–2.
- 33 Ruth Fuller Sasaki and Isshu Miura, *The Zen Koan*, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965, ppxi – xii.
- 34 Victor Musgrave, 'The Unknown Art Movement', *Art and Artists* (1972), vol 7, no. 7 pp 12–14.
- 35 Dick Higgins, 'Something Else about Fluxus', in *ibid.*, pp 16–21.
- 36 Dick Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, p 157.
- 37 George Brecht, 'Project in Multiple Dimensions', (1957/58), in Henry Martin, *Introduction to the Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, pp 126–7.
- 38 Dick Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, p 156.
- 39 'An Interview with George Brecht by Irmeline Lebeer', in Martin, *Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, p 85.
- 40 Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1979, p 51.
- 41 Ibid., p 53.
- 42 The following brief description is written in the first person, with the understanding that the phenomena described are personal, referring to a specific performance at a specific time by a specific person (the author).
- 43 Personal interview with Takehisa Kosugi, 10 November 1993.
- 44 Dick Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, p 157. Reference to Bengt af Klintberg, Swedish folklorist affiliated with Fluxus.
- 45 This paradigm of mutual engagement, known in Mahayana ('Great Vehicle') Buddhism as the doctrine of Interdependent Origination, is also an important precept in both Zen and Taoism.
- 46 This translation is from Ben-Ami Scharfstein's Introduction to Yoel Hoffmann, *The Sound of the One Hand*, New York, Basic Books, 1975, p 18.
- 47 George Brecht, 'The Origin of Events' (dated August 1970), in Sohm and Szeeman, eds, *Happening & Fluxus*.
- 48 Dick Higgins, 'The Post-Cognitive Era: Looking for the Sense in IT All', in Higgins, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, p 6.
- 49 Jackson Mac Low. 'Buddhism, Art, Practice, Polity', in Kent Johnson and Craig Paulenich, *Beneath a Single Moon*, Boston, Shambhala, 1991, p 177.
- 50 Walter De Maria, 'Meaningless Work', (1960), in Jackson Mac Low and La Monte

- Young, eds, *An Anthology*, New York, 1961, unpaginated.
- 51 Higgins, *Postface*, p 92.
- 52 Ken Friedman, *The Events*, New York, Jaap Rietman, 1985, unpaginated. *Scrub Piece* was first performed at the Nathan Hale Monument in New London, Connecticut.
- 53 George Maciunas, 'Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art', in Phillpot and Hendricks, eds, *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, p 27. This essay/manifesto was read at the Fluxus concert 'Après John Cage' in Wuppertal, West Germany, on 9 June 1962.
- 54 George Maciunas to Tomas Schmit, 8 November 1963; cited in Jon Hendricks, ed, *Fluxus etc./Addenda II: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, Pasadena, CA, Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, 1983, pp 165–6.
- 55 Maciunas, 'Neo-Dada in Music . . .', p 27.
- 56 Jackson Mac Low, 'Fluxus and Poetry', unpublished manuscript [June 1992], p 7.
- 57 Alison Knowles, *by Alison Knowles*, New York, Something Else Press, 1965, p 2.
- 58 One can imagine, however, that there are at any given moment situations in which making a salad is difficult, if not impossible, for any number of reasons – political, economic, social. One can further imagine that the very difficulties brought to bear on salad-making by these forces might also be revealed by a performance of Knowles' *Proposition*.
- 59 Estera Milman, 'Road Shows, Street Events, and Fluxus People: A Conversation with Alison Knowles', *Visible Language* (1992), vol 26, no. 1/2, p 103.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p 104.
- 61 In Robert Filliou, *A Filliou Sampler*, New York, Something Else Press, 1967, pp 5–10.
- 62 Robert Filliou, 'The Propositions and Principles of Robert Filliou (Part One)', *Humanistic Perspectives in Contemporary Art* (1978), no. 9, p 7.
- 63 Mieko Shiomi to the author, dated 16 October 1992.
- 64 *Ibid.*
- 65 Interview with Takehisa Kosugi, New York, 10 November 1992.
- 66 *Ibid.*
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 *Ibid.*
- 69 Many thanks to Ken Friedman for bringing these *daruma*s to my attention.
- 70 Thomas Cleary, trans, *Shobogenzo: Zen Essays by Dogen*, Honolulu, HI, University of Hawaii Press, 1986, p 9.
- 71 Yoko Ono, 'To the Wesleyan People (who attended the meeting); A Footnote to My Lecture of January 13th, 1966', reprinted in Yoko Ono, *To See the Skies*, Milan, Fondazione Mudima, 1990, pp 14–15. All quotations of Yoko Ono in this portion of the paper have been drawn from this essay.
- 72 Henri Matisse, 'Notes of a Painter', in Herschel B Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1968, p 135.
- 73 It seems reasonably safe to assume that this proposition, like many of Ono's works, is intended to be performed 'in the mind'.
- 74 Interview with Ben Patterson, New York, 3 April 1992.
- 75 *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, Boston, Shambhala, 1989, p 122.
- 76 The tree beneath which Shakyamuni Buddha attained complete enlightenment.
- 77 Thomas Cleary, trans, *No Barrier: Unlocking the Zen Koan*, New York, Bantam, 1993, p 141.
- 78 Thomas Cleary, trans, *Shobogenzo*, p 35.
- 79 Alan Watts, 'Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen', in Nancy Wilson Ross, ed, *The World of Zen*, New York, Vintage, 1960, p 336. Originally published in Alan Watts, *Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen*, San Francisco, City Lights Books, 1959.
- 80 Watts, 'Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen', p 335.

- 81 Ibid.
- 82 See, for example, Clement Greenberg, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', in Francis Francina, ed, *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, New York, Harper & Row, 1985, pp 41–2. Originally published in *Partisan Review* (July – August 1940), vol 7, no. 4, pp 296–310.
- 83 Brecht, *Chance Imagery*, p 6.
- 84 Watts, 'Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen', p 335.
- 85 Brecht, *Chance Imagery*, p 7.
- 86 For an interesting comparison of Brecht's and Vautier's views on these matters, the reader is referred to 'A Conversation about Something Else: An Interview with George Brecht by Ben Vautier and Marcel Alocço', in Martin, *An Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, pp 67–73.
- 87 George Brecht, 'An Interview with Robin Page for Carla Liss (Who Fell Asleep)', *Art and Artists* (1972), vol 7, no. 7, p 33.
- 88 This 'gesture' would seem to have a precursor in Marcel Duchamp's mythic decision to 'quit' his practice of art and pursue his love of chess. However, for Brecht, as we have seen, there can be no 'quitting' or 'starting': he simply has some novels he'd like to read. No big deal.
- 89 Chart reprinted in Szeeman and Sohm, eds, *Happening & Fluxus*, unpaginated.
- 90 Dick Higgins, 'Fluxus: Theory and Reception', in *Fluxus Research*, special issue of *Lund Art Press* (1991), vol 2, no. 2, pp 34–5; reprinted and re-edited in this volume.
- 91 Miller, 'Transcript of the Videotaped Interview with George Maciunas', p 26.
- 92 Friedman corrected the spelling of the title in his 1990 *Correction Event: Zen Vaudeville*.
- 93 Ken Friedman, 'Fluxus Performance', in Gregory Battcock and Robert Nickas, eds, *The Art of Performance: A Critical Anthology*, New York, EP Dutton, Inc, 1984, p 59.
- 94 George Maciunas, 'Expanded Arts Diagram', in Szeeman and Sohm, eds, *Happening & Fluxus*.
- 95 Cited in Conrad Hyers, *The Laughing Buddha: Zen and the Comic Spirit*, Wakefield, NH, Longwood Academic, 1991, p 34.
- 96 Friedman, 'Fluxus Performance', p 63.
- 97 Hyers, *The Laughing Buddha*, pp 49–50.
- 98 Hyers, *The Laughing Buddha*, p 17. For a more thorough analysis of the radical power of laughter to overturn categories, the reader is referred to Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans Hélène Iswolsky, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1984.
- 99 George Brecht, 'From Project in Multiple Dimensions', in Martin, *An Introduction to George Brecht's Book of the Tumbler on Fire*, p 126.
- 100 Norman Bryson, 'The Gaze in the Expanded Field', in Hal Foster, ed, *Vision and Visuality*, Seattle, WA, Bay Press, 1988, pp 97–8.
- 101 Cited in DT Suzuki, Erich Fromm and Richard De Martino, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, New York, Grove Press, 1960, p 35.
- 102 Ibid., pp 36–7.
- 103 Ibid., p 35.
- 104 Suzuki, 'Lectures on Zen Buddhism', in *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, pp 25–6.
- 105 Higgins, 'An Exemplativist Manifesto' (1963), in Higgins, ed, *A Dialectic of Centuries*, p 162.
- 106 John Cage and Daniel Charles, 'For the Birds', in *semiotexte* (1978), vol 3, no. 1, pp 32–3.
- 107 Gilles Deleuze, 'Nomad Thought', in *ibid.*, p 17.
- 108 Ibid., p 18.
- 109 Ibid., p 16.
- 110 Ibid.
- 111 Higgins, 'A Something Else Manifesto', p 103.
- 112 An evening of Fluxus performance is often constituted by a chain of seemingly

- disconnected Events. Presented one after the other, there is no sense of a narrative flow, but rather of an *accumulation* of singularities. This recalls the disjunctive structure of aphoristic books such as Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*, as it recalls that of the great koan collections, the *Rinzairoku* and the *Wumenguan*, as well as the *Tao Te Ching* and Paul Reps' contemporary collection of Zen texts, *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*.
- 113 Brian Massumi, *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1992, p 6.
- 114 Milman, 'Road Shows ...' p 100.
- 115 Higgins, *Postface*, p 18.
- 116 Dumoulin, *Zen Buddhism: A History*, vol 2, p 153.
- 117 Cited in Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, New York, Abrams, 1988, p133.
- 118 Jackson Mac Low to the author, 3 August 1992.
- 119 *Fluxus etc./Addenda II: The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, Pasadena, CA, Baxter Art Gallery, California Institute of Technology, 1983; cited in Phillpot and Hendricks, *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, p 12.
- 120 Higgins, 'The Post-Cognitive Era', p 6.
- 121 Higgins, 'Something Else about Fluxus', p 18.
- 122 In Daisetz T Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1970, p 228.
- 123 Jean-François Lyotard, 'Notes on the Return and Kapital', in *semiotexte* (1978), vol 3, no. 1, p 52.
- 124 DT Suzuki, 'History of Zen Buddhism from Bodhidharma to Hui-Neng', in *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (First Series), New York, Grove Press, 1949, p 200.
- 125 Actually, the idealised space of transcendence is called '*nirvana*', but as seen by Zen, there is really no idealised space of transcendence – or it is at most very unimportant – and the concept of nirvana, like all concepts and names, is just more emptiness.
- 126 George Brecht to John Cage, 30 June 1967; cited in Martin, *The Book of the Tumbler on Fire*.
- 127 Brecht, 'Something about Fluxus'.

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## CRAIG SAPER: FLUXUS AS A LABORATORY

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Much has been said about the fact that Fluxus was not intended as an art movement. Participants and historians alike have argued that Fluxus sought an alternative to the commercial gallery system, along with its faith in masterpieces. In a letter to Tomas Schmit, George Maciunas argued that the goal of Fluxus was social, not aesthetic, and that it 'could have temporarily the pedagogical function of teaching people the needlessness of art.'<sup>1</sup> Historians point out that these efforts to transgress the boundaries of art eventually fail. The art world eventually recuperates from once-radical transgressions, and dealers and collectors soon learn to buy and sell even the most transitory objects and performances. The talk of resistance and recuperation, however, obscures the idea of many associated with Fluxus that their work was never intended to function merely as part of the art world. There was something more, and that something more is what we miss when one considers Fluxus merely from the perspective of art history.

Much attention is now directed to the monetary and historical value of Fluxus works as works of art. This involves the customary and sometimes useful interpretation of Fluxus as an art movement. Another interpretation of Fluxus interests those concerned with the impact of electronic webs and Internet on future forms of thought, pedagogy and communication. Fluxus offered a research methodology for and what I call 'networked ideas' and demonstrated the value of those ideas in various experiments. That history has received less attention.

Fluxus often parodied the kind of art that posits a masterpiece appreciated by a spectator. By contrast, Fluxus works highlighted socio-poetic interaction and encouraged epistemological experimentation among participant-users. Confronted with a Fluxus work, a participant-user would first notice how these works played against the notion that art should follow certain (modernist) rules of form.<sup>2</sup>

For example, one work by Ken Friedman suggests socio-poetic and anti-formalist qualities. The work consists entirely of the following text: 'The distance from this sentence to your eye is my sculpture.' This work pokes fun at the normal criteria for sculpture. It also suggests a particularly important interaction with the spectator. It goes beyond a mere critical appreciation of art in its striving toward the status of masterpiece to suggest a social network built on playing through or *interacting* among people, activities and objects. In this sense, Fluxus functions as more than a way to organise information: it is also a way to organise social networks, networks of people learning. These networks are based on an interactive model of art rather than on the traditional model of art as a one-way communication from sender to receiver, the notion of the artist offering inspired genius

intended to dazzle spectators. This can be done in many ways. In an issue of *Editions Et*, for example, Eric Andersen's contribution consisted of three cards with instructions on one side on how to mail the card and these instructions on the other side: 'don't do anything to this very nice card.'<sup>3</sup> Typical of Fluxus work, these instructions put the participant in a humorous double-bind and point to the social interaction involved in the work.

The social project of the Fluxus laboratory involves disseminating knowledge. This is the social situation of learning. Simone Forti suggests that in the context of this social – that is, anti-aesthetic project – Fluxus work has no intrinsic value. The value of the work resides in the ideas it implies to the reader, the spectator and to other participants. Forti goes on to explain that, 'when the work has passed out of their [the producer's] possession, it is the responsibility of the new owner to restore it or possibly even to remake it. The idea of the work is part of the work here, and the idea has been transferred along with the ownership of the object that embodies it.'<sup>4</sup> Forti explains that the audience performs the piece in the process of transferring the ideas. The work is 'interactive'.<sup>5</sup> The term interactive suggests the shift away from the notion of passing some unadulterated information from the mind of an author, an artist, or a teacher directly to the eyes and ears of a spectator. Instead, participants interact with ideas, playing through possibilities rather than deciding on the meaning of a work once and for all. Dick Higgins categorises Fluxus under the phrase Exemplative Art, which he defines as 'art as illustration or example or embodiment of idea, especially abstract conception or principle'.<sup>6</sup>

Higgins' description of Fluxus 'art-games' can function as a coda for this particular type of work. He writes that in art-games, one 'gives the rules without the exact details', and instead offers a 'range of possibilities'.<sup>7</sup> Higgins goes on to list a series of crucial elements in art-games including social implications and a community of participants more conscious of other participants than in most forms of drama or of performance art, what we might call team spirit. And there is an element of fascination about when the rules will take effect. Again, the authors leave the details of the actual event open. In an essay titled, 'Getting into Events', Ken Friedman discusses ways to perform Fluxus event scores:

You can perform a Fluxus event in virtuoso or bravura style, and you can perform it jamming each piece into the minimal time possible as Ben Vautier does; or, go for a slow, meditative rhythm as Alison Knowles does; or, strike a balance as you'll see in the concerts organised by Dick Higgins or Larry Miller. Pieces can have a powerful torque, energised and dramatic, as in the work of Milan Knizak, the earthly folkloric touch seen in Bengt af Klintberg's pieces; or, the atmospheric radiance, spiritual and dazzling, that is seen in Beuys' work.<sup>8</sup>

Significantly, these poetic scores do not depend on the voice of a reader. Instead a participant-user 'reads' the poetic event by creating a situation. Fluxus event scores and performance instructions have a didactic structural grammar; they seem to be parodies of scientific experiments simply because they reduce theatricality to a set of instructions. Using the trappings of a science experiment suggests a way to further displace the interpretation of Fluxus as an art movement. Building and interacting with their work, rather than passively appreciating it as a finished product, changes interpretation into a generative project. The start of that sort of interpretation begins with a new concept for the endeavour previously known as Fluxus: the Fluxus laboratory.

I first became interested in the concept of a Fluxus laboratory after discovering a number of references to the pedagogical and experimental imperatives central to much Fluxus work. It is well known that two of the key roots of Fluxus included the experimental pedagogy at Black Mountain College (during the summer sessions of 1948 and, especially, 1952)<sup>9</sup> and the New School for Social Research (from John Cage's seminar). Black Mountain College focused on a redefinition of the arts by stressing a holistic and experimental approach to art rather than a technical or formal approach. In earlier years, students had approached wider questions not typical of art schools; for example, they helped Theodore Reich build his first 'orgone boxes'. The 1952 summer session added to, and changed, this experimental approach to art. Cage, fast becoming a major influence on the experimental arts, brought to the summer session his concerns with the *I Ching*, 'chance', etc. His *Theatre Piece I*, which assigned a specific time bracket within which each performer had to perform a specific action, became the prototype of Happenings.

Buckminster Fuller summarised the experimental nature of these influential summer sessions: 'failure is a part of experimentation, you succeed when you stop failing'.<sup>10</sup> Although Black Mountain College eventually closed its doors, the teachers present during those two summer sessions (including Cage, Fuller, MC Richards and Merce Cunningham) conspired to create a travelling school: 'the finishing school was going to be a caravan, and we would travel from city to city, and it would be posted outside of the city that the finishing school was coming ... we would finish anything ... we would really break down the conventional way of approaching school.'<sup>11</sup>

Many other experimental schools have been associated with Fluxus over the years. For example, Dick Higgins and Al Hansen organised the New York Audio-Visual Group as an outgrowth of the Cage classes at the New School; Jeff Berner and Ken Friedman were involved in the San Francisco State College Experimental College and Friedman was later involved in the College of Mendocino. Of the nearly two-hundred experimental colleges and Free Universities started in the mid-1960s, however, few survive. These attempts at allowing for a laboratory-like atmosphere in the study of the arts and humanities were superseded by more mundane institutional concerns, and those experimental colleges that developed in the context of larger universities transmitted their lessons and were essentially absorbed into the bodies of the larger institutions that supported them.

Even so, a number of educational institutions took a deliberately Fluxist tone. California Institute of the Arts – Cal Arts – began as a particularly prominent forum for Fluxus experiments. Fluxus artists played a major role in the founding faculty, and Fluxus people flourished there for a short time. An issue of *Aspen*, the 'Cal Arts Box', documents some of this activity. The faculty included Allan Kaprow, Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Peter Van Ripper, Emmett Williams and Nam June Paik. Although the laboratory atmosphere at Cal Arts quickly faded, participants like Paik went on to have an influence on many other curriculums and temporary educational situations.

George Maciunas also planned the organisation of a school as well. In a prospectus for the New Marlborough Centre for the Arts, he described a think-tank that would devote itself to:

- 1) study, research, experimentation, and development of various advanced ideas and forms in art, history of art, design and documentation; 2) teaching small groups of apprentices in subjects not found in colleges; 3) production and marketing of various

products, objects and events developed at the centre; and, 4) organisation of events and performances by residents and visitors of the centre.<sup>12</sup>

It was an effort to purge the art world of authors and creative geniuses. Like many of the contributions to assembling magazines, the works became models for alternative forms of social organisation. Indeed, as Estera Milman explains, 'Fluxus work (objects, paperworks, publications, festivals, and performances) and the movement's social structures became congruent and interchangeable.'<sup>13</sup> George Maciunas' manifesto for Fluxus explains this socio-poetic practice:

Fluxus FLUX ART: non art – amusement forgoes distinction between art and non-art forgoes artist's indispensability, exclusiveness, individuality, ambition, forgoes all pretension towards a significance, variety, inspiration, skill, complexity, profundity, greatness, institutional and commodity value. It strives for nonstructural, non-theatrical, nonbaroque, impersonal qualities of a simple, natural event, an object, a game, a puzzle, or a gag. It is a fusion of Spike Jones, gags, games, Vaudeville, Cage and Duchamp.<sup>14</sup>

The Fluxus project combined a sometimes parodic emulation of the Bauhaus model, with the production of 'impersonal' conceptual games and puzzles, concrete poetry, along with an interest in situations, experimental culture, and an attack on 'commodity value' in art. These concerns and the mixing of these tendencies appeared in a number of Fluxus assemblings and periodicals. While Vaudeville, Cage and Duchamp have secured prominent places in scholarship on art and mass culture, Spike Jones still remains a somewhat marginal figure. Yet, his *Musical Depreciation Revue* offers a whole array of useful jokes, gags, puns, spoonerisms and so on.

My corporate name for these works, the Fluxus laboratory, alludes to the function of laboratories in large manufacturing concerns: they attempt to develop new products through endless rounds of experiments, failures and sharing of successes among the participants. It also subverts the notion of limited liability among corporate shareholders, to suggest that possibilities were unlimited and the participants, unlike shareholders, had to take unlimited chances. It even hints at the way some of the participants used a corporate umbrella, a single name for many diverse artists and divergent art works, to help them initiate a unique and specific type of working with ideas. Although Maciunas' rhetoric suggests the anonymous IBM structure in which all participants became anonymous contributors to the single corporate identity, Fluxus was in reality closer to the Bell Labs model in which participants were credited with particular innovations and works within the larger Fluxus project. Even Maciunas, who tried to produce his contributions to many works anonymously, now regularly receives careful credit for each and every aspect of his contribution. Many of the works were produced by a number of participants, and this aspect is still relatively rare in the art world. The individual contributions were combined into something much more interesting than any of the parts alone.

This way of working placed creativity and innovation in the hands of a linked or networked community rather than locating it in the mind of a sole genius in the form of a single artist's inspiration. Of course, this has political ramifications, and it may or may not have succeeded in negating or avoiding the art world's recuperative powers. The context of a concept such as the Fluxus laboratory introduced a method of research that makes increasing sense to those involved in transforming pedagogy and the creative process from

individual inspiration to a virtual community networked through with hyper-media links and relays.

Considering these works as part of a Fluxus laboratory has both an air of humour and a suggestion of translating these works toward a structure of influence. Fluxus sought to purge the art world of its problems; that purge was perhaps an unwitting discovery of a way of working that depended on something like a viral influence among participants. Things in the air were passed around and developed. The Fluxus laboratory is impossible to trace to a single origin. The group previously known as Fluxus can now function as a generalised systems theory that experiments with the structure of influence and socio-poetic links.

In an issue of *Aspen*, George Maciunas highlights this interest in new forms of systems theory.<sup>15</sup> The subtitle of the issue is 'Art Information and Science Information Share the Same World and Language'. A number of artists who were partially influenced by Fluxus participated in this project. Robert Morris' *Los Angeles Project* suggests the shared fascination with art, technology, and information systems especially in these networks of cultural work looking for new maps for contemporary experience. He proposes an ecological experiment in which he will bury air-conditioners and heaters and measure effects. Presumably you could visit the site as a national park. Morris explains that what 'miniature golf did for the game, this park will do for the national park system'. Edward Ruscha's *Parking Lot* includes an aerial photo of thirty-four parking slots in a lot, and similarly in Richard Serra's *Lead Shot Runs* the artist dropped lead shot from an aeroplane and measured the size of the holes. Robert Smithson also has a work about landscape structures entitled *Strata*. These absurdist projects function as conceptual scores. They also highlight the interest in experimental procedures to change the way people understand the urban and post-urban contemporary landscape.

The Fluxus magazine, *Dé-coll/age*, compiled by Wolf Vostell, began publishing in the early 1960s, subtitled 'Bulletin der Fluxus und happening Avantgarde'. The July 1967 issue of *Dé-coll/age*, bound in a cover of the *Figaro* newspaper printed on card-stock, includes contributions from the concrete poet Dom Sylvester Houédard, the composer and editor of the assembling *Revue Ou*, Henry Chopin, Ben Vautier, Daniel Spoerri and Diter Rot, the well-known printer, designer and artist who collaborated with Gomringer. There is a police-department letter to Vostell explaining their actions in arresting Charlotte Moorman for undressing during a performance. The issue includes a number of documentations of happenings by Allen Kaprow and Al Hansen. Articles include Dick Higgins' 1966 essay 'Intermedia', a reprinted essay on the all-at-once world by Marshall McLuhan and a series of works by Gustav Metzger on the 'Destruction in Art Symposium'. In the reprinted text of a leaflet, Metzger, who later initiated the 1974 'Art Strike', announces the symposium and explains 'auto-destructive art'. A series of letters signed by Metzger follow this leaflet about the planning for events in Germany and London. A series of photos documents a symposium in which people sit inside or under the eviscerated bloody bodies of large animals. There is also a negative review from the London *Guardian* of 9 September 1966, which reads in part:

The destroyers-in-art include writers who obliterate words, burn books, and cut odd words out of dictionaries and paste them up haywire. They tear books apart and shuffle the pages so the narrative now reads surprisingly (which is art). Words are displaced and lines transposed in a new and meaningful way. Some newspapers, it seems,

especially in their hurried first editions, have long possessed a natural aptitude for the new and the meaningful. That's art. Or is it? More often it is error. Just as destruction-in-art is mainly perverse, ugly, and anti-social.

The designer has photocopied a series of programmes by Ad Reinhardt written vertically over this newspaper article. They give instructions about programme painting. In addition to these works, there are documentations of papers presented by George Maciunas on Fluxus, Jean Tinguely's statement, Dom Sylvester Houédard, Milan Knizak, Yoko Ono and Vostell. The point of including the entire conference and the negative review suggests that the artists were less concerned about their work receiving adulation than in constantly highlighting the social interactions and even negative responses to the situations they presented.

Erving Goffman explains that the primary experience of a participant confronted with, for example, a Fluxus event is to become '*interactionally disorganised*' (emphasis added).<sup>16</sup> Although Goffman is specifically describing the experience of attending an Happening, his description also captures some of the elements of Fluxus Events. These events were not Happenings, but the audience reactions were quite similar. Reading interaction in terms of how these events (dis)organise and disseminate knowledge can help explain precisely the effects produced by the Fluxus laboratory. Goffman explains that when the audience encounters an event like the one reviewed above, watching becomes doing; it would be a mistake to argue that a listening, watching and still audience is, therefore, passive. In fact, the opposite may be the case. The breaking of the normal frame of reference – seeing an art opening or a theatrical performance – can actually induce involvement. Goffman explains, however, that the initial reaction to the event will probably be negative:

If the whole frame can be shaken, rendered problematic, then this, too can ensure that prior involvements – and prior distances – can be broken up and that, whatever else happens, a dramatic change can occur in what it is that is being experienced . . . negative experiences . . .<sup>17</sup>

Among the various ways to shake the frame or reflexively examine the frame and its dissolution, Goffman mentions brackets, direct address to the audience, the 'fool' character in a play, and, in terms of Fluxus, the spectacle-game. The spectacle-game addresses the whole matter of the show under presentation, and, in doing so, sets in motion a merger of performers and spectators – in some sense, the spectators (and their expectations) are put on stage.<sup>18</sup>

One way these events play the spectacle-game is to announce a performance in a conventional way. When the audience arrives, some of the expected activities occur, but the traditional performance does not take place. In this situation, Goffman explains that an audience is made 'conscious of its own restrictive conventions' in thinking of a performance only in a traditional sense. These events create a situation where the audience has to interact with the frame of reference. As Goffman explains, in a discussion of Happenings, 'actual performances of this kind often do succeed, of course, in driving the audience up and down various keys in their effort to arrive at a viable interpretation of what is being done to them.'<sup>19</sup>

George Maciunas had experimented with machines that use arbitrary constraints to change the frame of reference. For example, his *Smile Box*, makes you smile. In a work he

planned before he died, he charted the outline for a Fluxus laboratory experiment. His *Learning Machine* (1969) functions as the transitional work between Fluxus and the Fluxus laboratory. It would have contained charts, diagrams and atlases; it would have re-categorised fields of knowledge. Maciunas only completed a two-dimensional diagram and tabulation; he intended this diagram as the first surface for a three-dimensional storage and retrieval system. He later built a few models of these machines, and one can consider all of the Flux Kits as cognates for the *Learning Machine*. Even these incomplete diagrams and models suggest a plan for using electronic media for a memory theatre dedicated to invention rather than mere descriptions. Indeed, one could argue that the machine hints at a Fluxus memory or intelligence (post-cognitive, involutory and interactive).

Maciunas' machine lists all knowledge in a classification system. For the most part, the grid is not exceptional. It closely resembles traditional taxonomies of knowledge, and it suggests the classifications found in memory theatres. These were systems of classification and organisation used in remembering large amounts of information. Some even attempted to categorise all known information. One of the devices used to create a memory theatre was the conceit of an imagined building. Giulio Camillo's memory theatres, for example, stuffed all his knowledge into an imaginary Roman amphitheatre. This encyclopaedia, thesaurus and poetry machine became 'a work of manic idiosyncrasy, resembling a private museum like those of [Duc Jean Floressas] des Esseintes, [Joris-Karl] Huysman's paragon of decadence.'<sup>20</sup>

The tradition of these memory devices goes back to Classical times when Simonides used the memory of a tragic event as the basis for his device. When he was asked to identify the bodies in a collapsed building that he had left shortly before the collapse, he remembered where each person stood. Later, he realised that he would never forget the way the room appeared before the tragedy. As a result, he learned to store particular types of information with each figure. Later, he would imagine walking around the space while each of his former friends held these bits of information. In this way, he could store much more information than he could remember without the aid of this system. The *Learning Machine* resembles this effort to describe all knowledge.<sup>21</sup> The use of a memory theatre shifts the process of knowing and remembering from an organic cognition to a discursive practice – a learning machine. This particular machine was not Maciunas' only foray into memory systems. He had also, for example, diagrammed the history of world architecture.

Maciunas' system contains a few anomalies. For example, he includes a heading called Uology. This apparent neologism suggests a science of 'u'. Of course, there is no traditional science of Uology, but the possibility of such a science suggests the play between the particular and the general discussed above. Another suggestive neologism is flexography, which may hint at a flexible writing practice – a way to write in the Fluxacademy. In terms of how the *Machine* organises information, it lists the term 'food' under 'light'; it lists 'light' under 'chemical'; and 'chemical' under 'engineering'. This suggestive organisation makes one rethink the way we normally classify the notion of food. In another organisational aberration, it lists 'textual criticism' under 'philology'; 'philology' under 'cybernetics'; and 'cybernetics' under 'biological sciences' (which appears as two separate headings). It also lists 'cybernetics' both under 'applied math' and under 'physiology'. In terms of organisational suggestiveness, the art and design section is the most interesting because it appears to function as a *mise-en-abyme* for the rest of the memory grid. Everything in the rest of the classification grid is at least suggested in

the art and design section. In contrast to most classifications of art and design, however, sculpture has no listing, and painting and drawing have only minor listings. In most traditional taxonomies those three listings would be the dominant areas.

Maciunas' classification is different in many ways. It does not quite match a mere description of art and design. One possibility suggested by the classification is how a category can shift from one heading to another; for example, it lists 'cinema' under 'photography', but contains a special listing for 'expanded cinema'. What Maciunas does in this work, and in his chart on the history of art movements, is to provoke new possibilities through the unusual classification of information. The startlingly wide scope of the art and design classification includes wars, orgies, prisons, clouds, fountains, shells, insects, food, cybernetics ... Including all or any of these headings in discussions of art and design makes the system a provocation as much as a description. How, for example, can one make insects into art or how are they already aesthetic or part of design?

Other than these few anomalies, the *Learning Machine* does not, at first, appear to diverge from traditional taxonomies of knowledge. On closer examination, however, there is one key difference. The information is not structured in epochal categories – that is, the *Learning Machine* does not structure the categories under headings according to historical chronologies, movements, or periods, nor does it organise information according to authors, artists, inventors, leaders or other individual systems. Much of the knowledge taught in universities, and especially what is taught in secondary schools, depends on these kinds of marker for legitimacy. We rarely find departments or pedagogical methods based on the premises of a taxonomy that organises information in an alternative to history and 'great men'. In contrast, Maciunas' *Learning Machine* reworks the frames of reference for organising knowledge; it suggests alternatives to disseminating that knowledge; and it can function as a generative device to produce knowledge structures through interaction within and among our frames of reference. These interactions (for example, asking why orgies and wars are included as art and design) suggest more than a semiotic reading of culture as designed. It suggests that culture and taxonomies are open to art and design. It suggests that in an open exchange of knowledge, even nonsense may play a crucial role in learning. And it suggests that those who risk nothing, those who give no part of the self to the learning experience will never understand either Uology or fluxography. Fluxus wanted to make conceptual cognitive maps more mobile. One way to do that was by inventing kits and boxes that directly addressed these conceptual issues, and by inventing tools like the *Learning Machine*.

Another important transition to Fluxus laboratory experiments are the Fluxus film works. Fluxfilms set out to reinvent the wheel. That is, Fluxus invented a protocinema within a mass-produced industrial mechanism in order to ask what would have happened if the history of film had taken a different route. Like Maciunas' graphic design, the first Fluxus films focused on the moment when modern industrial production had not yet institutionalised popular culture. Dick Higgins describes Maciunas' choice of type style – 'extremely ornamental type faces, such as Romantique' – as 'deliberately archaic'.<sup>22</sup> Fluxus went back to the protocinematic experiments of Edward Muybridge and the cinema's first decade for models of film-making. In doing so, Fluxus film-makers desedimented the perceptual and cultural experiences now buried by Hollywood's mode of film-making.

Tom Gunning explains that in the way these early films restructure both traditional representations of space and 'the relation of spectacle to the audience we may find a link to avant-garde practice'.<sup>23</sup> The same preoccupations of the early cinema and protocinema appear in the Fluxus films. Many Fluxus films are experiments in time and movement without any narrative progression. These Muybridge-type experiments in time-motion studies – stoppages in Duchamp's well-known terminology<sup>24</sup> – suggest the same preoccupation with travel, movement and movement-and-travel as change that we have seen in other Fluxus works. We can see the Muybridge-like isolations of particular movements (and the effort to capture the progression of time) in the Fluxus film of *Eye Blink*, in Higgins' close-up film of a mouth chewing, Ono's film of moving buttocks, or Paik's clear film accumulating dust.

In terms of the early cinema's use of short reels, Fluxus films often were film loops about two feet long. Maciunas explored the possibility of a different history of cinema with his rope in sprocketless projector. Craig Adcock explains that Duchamp understood 'that time could affect artistic outcomes'. For example, the description of the ready-mades as '*instantané*' or 'snapshots' suggests the effort to capture a moment of public taste from the flow of time. The object implies the passage of time. In terms of the Fluxus films, Duchamp's *3 stoppages étalon* suggests more than the freezing of a moment in which string twists freely in the air to be glued down as it lands. It is also a homophonic reference to Muybridge's serial photographs of a horse galloping: one can translate *étalon* as both standard and stallion. Yoko Ono's film of buttocks moving does more than follow Duchamp's efforts to 'reduce, reduce, reduce' the image to a single gag and Muybridge's effort to isolate serially a particular movement. Her film also suggests another reference to the horse/stallion homophonic chain: her film is of an 'ass'.

The Fluxus laboratory teaches through the projection of a 'what if' situation. In repeating protocinematic experiments *in the contemporary world*, Fluxus artists do not make a nostalgic return to a phenomenological project of isolating animal and human movements. Instead, they used the frame of reference of those earlier cinematic experiments to disrupt both the perverse phenomenology of the Muybridge studies and the contemporary narrative cinema. After all, there is a difference between Ono's film of moving buttocks and Muybridge's protocinematic investigations of a horse galloping. Both focus on the isolation of a single movement, but the content of the films makes the Fluxus work a corrosive joke and the Muybridge experiment merely a document about an attempt to capture the truth of movement. Fluxus projected the possibility of a cinema that would use 'the relation of spectacle to the audience' as a vehicle for invention rather than mere description. With this possible use of media in mind, a concept such as the Fluxus laboratory does not merely use machines as processors of information. It uses them as provocations to learning – a learning machine.

For the Fluxus amusement centre, John Lennon and Yoko Ono designed or planned a series of 'Dispensing Machines'. These included machines to dispense water (without a cup), sand and glue, an endless stream of water, slugs (for money), and a crying machine that was to dispense tears. Those machines led the way to the most important contribution to a Fluxus academy, a learning machine. Yoko Ono's *Chewing Gum Machine Piece* (1961), which has word cards in a gum machine, hints at how a learning machine might work. We get a more developed version of this possibility in George Brecht's *Universal Machine* (1976), a box with many diagrams and pictures printed on the bottom inner surface of the box. The diagrams resemble nineteenth-century drawings from engineering and design manuals,

physiology and medical manuals, and drawings of animal life. A number of objects (a golf tee, marbles, plastic numbers, coiled string, and so on) are loose inside the box. The directions explain how to use the machine:

for a novel: shake the box, open, chapter one. close. shake the box. open. chapter two. close. shake the box ... for poems: substitute line one for chapter one, etc. For plays: Actor one. For dance: movement one. For music: sound one. For event score: event one ... For biography: divide life into units, shake for each unit makes biography substitute countries and make histories; substitute religions and make spiritual narratives; substitute families and make genealogies.... 5. write question, put it in box, open, conjunction of paper edges, words on paper, holes in paper with the objects and the images of floor of box answers question.... 9. Are you sad? Shake box. obtain joke. 10. resolution of marital problems. 11. consider adding or subtracting objects; extending or contraction images on floor of box. 12. For generating new languages, logics, mathematics.... 15. Inventing. Consider any two elements in an existent relationship. Replace either or both elements and/or the relationship using the Universal machine. Consider repeating.... 18. Travel Itineraries.

The *Universal Machine* sets up a situation where the participant uses a series of variable combinations to write novels, plays and biographies, solve problems, tell jokes, make further plans, or even change the parameters of the machine. The fifteenth possibility, 'Inventing', explains a process that resembles the basic methods described above in terms of the Fluxacademy. When two elements have an 'existent relationship', then they both appear in the same frame of reference. If one replaces one or both elements using an arbitrary constraint, then the disrupted frame produces both the nonsense associated with learning through decontextualising information and the interactions/intersections associated with a relay in-transformation (or involution). *The Universal Machine* (a name reminiscent of the early name for the computer) suggests a way to combine information not as part of a descriptive system (as a cognitive work), but as part of generative interactions (as a postcognitive work).

Among the other Fluxus publications, *The New York Correspondence School Weekly Breeder* (1970) had strong connections to Correspondence Art. The Breeder's mailing lists started years before the *Breeder* itself, elaborated from older Fluxus lists, later to serve as the beginnings of the mail-art networks. Ken Friedman explains:

the Fluxus publishing ethos came directly into the realm of contemporary mail art was in *Amazing Facts Magazine* ... a crudely assembled publication created at Fluxus West [Friedman's base of operations] in 1968. We gathered our mail, put it into a folio with a cover, and sent it out. The idea lasted one issue, but established a notion of gathering as the editorial principle of a magazine.<sup>25</sup>

In 1970 Michael Morris and Gary Lee Nova began Image Bank as a 'commercial images' request list for mail artists and montage artists. It began using its extensive address list, and by 1971 merged many lists, including the huge list of 1400 names, addresses and phone numbers that Ken Friedman began compiling in 1966. The list became the artist's directory for the magazine *FILE* when Friedman visited Canada in 1972. Still later, *Flash Art* based its *Art Diary* on Friedman's original list and *Who's Who in American Art* and *Who's Who in America* were both expanded through selections from Friedman's lists. *FILE's* parody cover of *LIFE* was produced by the General Idea Group. The lists distributed free helped assembling editors to distribute international mail art through networks.

Friedman notes that the *Breeder* was 'both a joke and way to establish regular, weekly contact with other artists'. The work of Fluxus laboratory begins with a corrosive joke in order to experiment with social networks. The most influential experiment in social networks was the Correspondance School that the *Breeder* mentions in its full title. Ray Johnson, considered by many to be the central figure of early mail art, founded the New York Correspondance School in the early 1960s. This became the source of overlapping variant networks, such as Glen Lewis' Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver, started around 1970. Ed Plunkett, who actually coined the name, explains that 'it was a reference to the "New York School," the leading group of mostly abstract painters that flourished then.'<sup>26</sup>

The type of work prevalent in the mail-art network always had a parodic connection to the vanguard of abstract painting. May Wilson, who also participated in Johnson's School, explains that, 'Correspondence is spelled *correspondance* . . . the truth for Ray Johnson is not correspondence to actuality (verisimilitude), but is correspondence of part to part (pregnant similarities that dance).'<sup>27</sup> Johnson's Correspondence Art has an implicit epistemology: a fan's paranoid logic. He used the corrosive joke about the art world and about the culture of fans for artists and stars as a mechanism to explore as well as initiate, and participate in, artists' networks. One chapter in my larger book-length work on assemblings and networks examines in detail the logic and systems involved in Ray Johnson's work.<sup>28</sup> His Correspondence Art and 'on-sendings' were aligned with Fluxus, and his influence on mail art throughout the world spread many of the Fluxus concerns to a huge pool of participants.

One aspect of these socio-poetic works is that they take a bad situation and turn it into an opportunity for experimentation. In the mid-1960s George Maciunas found himself trying to continue to publish kits and boxes as well as contribute to Fluxus events in an extremely difficult living situation. Maciunas' work in setting up artists' cooperatives in SoHo functions as one of his most important works and an example of socio-poetic work. The first Fluxhouse Cooperative was in the building at 80 Wooster Street that later became the home of Jonas Mekas' *Film-Maker's Cinematheque*. Maciunas purchased the empty loft building in 1967. Hollis Melton explains that the city fought the formation of the Cinematheque as well as the cooperative. In reaction, Mekas 'called a meeting of artists from the neighborhood' that led to the formation of the SoHo Artists Association. They sponsored street festivals attracting thousands of tourists. The city, realising the potential gain, eased its position, and in 1970 allowed artists to live in loft buildings. The term 'artists' loft' soon became a natural phrase to describe a place where artists lived. Maciunas organised fifteen co-ops between 1966 and 1975. He used the logic of art to solve the problem of a living situation.

The Fluxus work *Visa TouRiste (Passport to the State of Flux)* (1966/77) was originally proposed by Ken Friedman in the mid-1960s as a conceptual work that allowed entrance to a state of mind. Later Maciunas adapted this work to enable the bearer to 'pass freely and without hindrance' into a Fluxfest. The state of mind for which Friedman was supplying the passport was as delimited as the Fluxfest – you visited these states and left. One could argue that this in some sense proved that the group still elevated art activity above everyday life. Another reading merely suggests that the activities functioned as *tests* or *experiments* rather than as an entrance into a 'new life style' or a social(ist) utopia; that is, experiments are always contingent, changing and in flux rather than continuous, stable, settled or decided. The passport suggests an art in the sense of *ars erotica*, *ars theoretica*, *ars politica*: strategies

that resemble the Situationists' call for experimental culture. Fluxus does not privilege art; it sets aside a space for Fluxamusement such as a Fluxacademy – a transient space literally and figuratively. It suggests an altered social relation, a different way to proceed. The passport gives the bearer the right of entry to 'a country whose geography was a figment of the communal imagination, whose citizenry was transient'.<sup>29</sup>

Robert Filliou's *Permanent Creation (Instead of Art)* (undated) explains to the participant how to create his or her own territory. And, his *Territory 2 of the General Republic*, located in a farmhouse outside Nice, dedicated itself to pedagogical research into genius and 'stupidology'. In this way, Fluxus connects the transient approach to invention that resembles the phenomenon of mail-art tourism. In fact, Filliou's use of the phrase 'eternal network' to describe the inability of any one individual to know everything in a single field was the term later adopted by the mail-art community to describe their socio-poetic project. They did not see the connection between the end of the coverage model of scholarship and learning, but they saw in Filliou's phrase the possibility of forming their own virtual territory. It is the geopolitical, and doubly geo-graphic, metaphor that attracted the mail artists. To form this territory, their work now represented a form of transient life that was, if not tourism, then at least a sending-out of probes. Again, Fluxus provided keys to how to make art from this particular transience:

Encyclopedia of transient aspects of life ... jammed chock-a-block with mute containers of all shapes and sizes, little wooden and plastic boxes ... corrugated cardboard, mailing tubes, scraps of paper, plastic indecencies from the local joke or tourist shop, miniaturised Pop gew gaws of prepossessing verisimilitude – cucumbers, fried eggs – ball bearing purlieus that tax manual skill, articulated plastic and wooden take-apart puzzles and games, meaningless gadgets displaced from household and hobbyist needs, the tiny paraphernalia of the home workshop and playroom – all these and more were subject to the ordering premise of the Fluxus board game cum encyclopedia, from lotto to the rebus to the child's mineral set.<sup>30</sup>

Larry Miller's interview with Maciunas appeared in a special issue of *aV TRE* dedicated, posthumously, to Maciunas.<sup>31</sup> According to George Maciunas' system the 'a' before the title '*V TRE*' indicates that the project was initiated by Nam June Paik. This was a special issue of *V TRE*, the Fluxus tabloid publication, produced after Maciunas had died. The first four issues of *V TRE* include the prefix of 'cc' indicating that George Brecht was the primary artist behind this endeavour. Later 'official' issues dropped this prefix, and Brecht appeared as co-editor; George Maciunas was the driving force of these issues of *V TRE*.

Maciunas explains that Fluxus is 'more like a way of doing things'. He goes on to elaborate what this entails by repeating that 'Fluxus is gaglike ... a good inventive gag. That's what we're doing.' In order for the gag-like element to work, objects and events must have a very simple 'monomorphic' structure. In fact, when one examines the issue of *aV TRE* and the earlier issues of *ccV TRE*, they have a simple and immediate visual joke on newspapers. Not only the headlines and the news stories, but the organisation of the editorial board, and the (dis)connection between the captions and the photographic illustrations.

Fluxus offers a way to reduce concepts and ideas to simple gaglike events or objects. When taken up by the audience (when they 'get it'), these deceptively small 'gifts' can lead to many transformations. The reduction to a monomorphic structure obviously resembles

Concrete Poetry's reduction of language to a structural conceptual game. The Potlatch-like festivity with gag-gift giving that Fluxus produces resembles the spirit of the Letterists and Situationists.<sup>32</sup> In a number of the event announcements and manifestos, Fluxus claims to include 'concretism' and 'letterism'. Even though the two variants of visual poetry disagreed, the merger passed with little critical comment. Assemblings mixed and merged without regard to the previous contexts; in doing so, the participants invented a hybrid tendency, a mutation, the Fluxus laboratory.

John Lennon demonstrates this tendency in the supposed facsimile of his diary for 1968. Because of his status as a star, one rushes to read it carefully for any new information, especially since Yoko Ono has now refused to release his diaries to the public. This parodic use of 'everyday life' appears in *The Lennon Diary* in which all the entries read: 'Got up, went to work, came home, watched telly, went to bed.' The entries get increasingly scrawled, and the diary ends with one last 'memorandum' that says, 'Remember to buy Diary 1969'. In some ways, then, the repetition of the same everyday events plays a joke on the fan's narcissistic identification with a star. One cannot avoid the urge, and the joke depends on that uncomfortable recognition and deflation of the pay-off. The other reading of the diary is that it parodies the boredom of everyday life in a Situationist send-up of the promise of change in the 'society of the spectacle'. Like much of the work in assemblings, this is at first just a joke of recognition: you simply get the joke and move on. Its other meanings seep in more slowly. Fluxus laboratory work teaches how humour – in this case the joke of repetition and recognition – can serve as a memory device. You remember the joke as it corrosively changes the situations that we encounter every day; it writes graffiti on habituated conceptions. It functions as a joke time-bomb.

Dick Higgins explains that Fluxus work fits into a postcognitive model. Higgins, in his book on intermedia, describes the post-cognitive alternative to the cognitive model of education. He defines cognition as a the 'process of becoming known by perception, reasoning or intuition', and it also concerns 'the expressionistic, self-revealing, and uncovering of reality (transcend personal view) in order to interpret world in new way.'<sup>33</sup>

Henry Flynt, who coined the phrase 'concept art', in 1961 (although not with the same meaning as the later usage 'conceptual art') began using the term 'postcognitive' to describe the impact of conceptual work. The cognitive model attempts to interpret and describe reality, and, at least in its current incarnation, attempts to postulate the abstract rules of supposedly pure unadulterated thought. Social interaction is conceived in terms of an algorithmic thought-code machine. Cognitive explanations describe supposed origins of moves in a thought-game rather than generating novel moves. The postcognitive works set out to play the game rather than determine who made the rules or where they come from. In short, the postcognitive creates novel realities.

In fact, if we attempt to find a logic in Fluxus activities, they resemble *Zen koans* more than a reflection or description of social or artistic realities. These activities-koans have a peculiar structure that allows for both a simplicity and an alchemical disruption or 'breaking' of the frame of reference. Greg Ulmer describes this structure and gives an example from a quote from Joseph Beuys:

Another decisive Fluxus element was the 'lightness and mobility of the material.' The Fluxus artists were fascinated by the opening up of the simplest materials to the total

contents of the world. ... [Beuys]: 'Everything from the simplest tearing of a piece of a paper to the total changeover of human society could be illustrated.'<sup>34</sup>

Robert Pincus-Witten explains how this simplicity works on the audience. He writes that 'Fluxus makes ideas reachable through gags. You can get it quickly'. He also suggests one obvious outcome for the effort to make the ideas quickly accessible and available: 'By designation, a Fluxus work must be cheap and mass-producible.'<sup>35</sup> What is amazing about these works, and their importance for the Fluxus laboratory, is how they function to make the most particular (even autobiographical elements) into widely disseminated ideas. Beuys' transformation of his autobiographical art into first a Fluxus programme and, from then, into a grassroots participational political movement, and then into the Green Party, offers the most obvious example of this transformation.<sup>36</sup> Maciunas explains that Fluxus is 'more like a way of doing things'. He goes on to elaborate what this way entails by repeating that, 'Fluxus is gaglike ... a good inventive gag. That's what we're doing.'<sup>37</sup> In order for the gaglike element to work, objects and events must have a very simple 'monomorphic' structure. Fluxus offers a way to reduce concepts and ideas to simple gaglike events or objects. When taken-up by the audience (when they 'get it'), these *sapates*, or deceptively small gifts can lead to many transformations like bits and pieces of Beuys' autobiography later provoking the foundation of the Green Party. Ken Friedman explains how this quality appears in Fluxus events:

There is an important distinction that George Maciunas drew between the sensibility of the happening and the sensibility of the event. He referred to happenings as 'neo-Baroque' theatre, a phrase that summoned up the elaborate flourishes of European Baroque architecture and music, as opposed to the concentrated, austere focus on Japanese poetry and its architecture which was reflected in the event form that Maciunas termed 'neo-Haiku theatre.' Yoko Ono characterised this work as having an 'event bent,' while I created a term that caught both the meditation and the humour in Fluxus pieces with the term 'Zen vaudeville.'<sup>38</sup>

As an example of this Zen vaudeville approach, a special Fluxus issue of *Art and Artists* closes with one final Fluxus event score: 'When you are through doing every other event in this magazine, take the paper to the roof, crumple it, throw it into the air, and see if it becomes a cloud.'<sup>39</sup> A social sculpture does not merely comment on the production of art, but also on the production of specific types of social networks. As a forum for this extension, one can consider Fluxus laboratory boxes, kits, and assemblings as the transition into, and kitlike instructions for, the quintessential works of the twenty-first century: networked-ideas. With Fluxus laboratory, the production and distribution systems become poems themselves. One cannot 'read' these socio-poetic works the way one reads a phonetic poem, but one can read these works as poetry on our current cultural situations.

## NOTES

- 1 Robert Pincus-Witten, 'Introduction', in Jon Hendricks, ed, *Fluxus Codex*, Detroit, MI, Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection in association with Harry N Abrams, New York, 1988, p 37.
- 2 Dick Higgins, 'Intermedia', in Higgins, *A Dialectics of Centuries: Towards a Theory of*

- the New Arts*, New York, Printed Editions, 1978, pp 12–17. Compare Stephen Foster and Hans Breder, *Intermedia*, Iowa City, University of Iowa Press, 1979.
- 3 Eric Andersen, [untitled], *Editions Et*, 1.
  - 4 Simone Forti, *Handbook in Motion*, Halifax, NS, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1974, p 45.
  - 5 *Ibid.*, p 58.
  - 6 Dick Higgins, 'Five Traditions of Art History: An Essay' [poster]. See also Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialisation of Art*, New York, Praeger Publications, 1973. Lippard offers descriptions of various conceptual and Fluxus works during the years 1966–71. For a broader context than *Six Years*, see also Adrian Henri, *Total Art: Environments, Happenings, and Performance*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1974.
  - 7 Higgins, *A Dialectics of Centuries*, pp 20–21. Compare Richard Schechner, 'Happenings', *Tulane Drama Review*, vol 10, no. 2 (Winter 1965), where he argues persuasively that happenings resemble scientific laboratory experiments.
  - 8 Ken Friedman, 'Getting into Events', *Fluxus Performance Workbook*, special issue, *El Diarida*, 1990, p 5.
  - 9 Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, Cambridge, MA, MIT, 1987. Ray Johnson, founder of the NY Correspondence School, attended Black Mountain College as a student that summer and is often associated with Fluxus.
  - 10 Buckminster Fuller, as quoted in Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, p 156.
  - 11 Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, p 159.
  - 12 George Maciunas, 'Prospectus for New Marlborough Centre for the Arts', [xerox; unpublished].
  - 13 Estera Milman, *Fluxus and Friends: Selections from the Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts Collection*, Iowa City, University of Iowa, Museum of Art, 1988, p 7. Compare Victor Musgrave, 'The Unknown Art Movement', *Free Fluxus Now* Special Issue of *Art and Artists*, vol 7, no. 79 (Oct 1972).
  - 14 Milman, *Fluxus and Friends*, p 5, citing George Maciunas' Fluxus Manifesto.
  - 15 *Aspen*, vol 1, no. 8 (Fall/Winter 1968), designed by George Maciunas and edited by Dan Graham (New York: Roaring Fork Press, 1968) [loose pamphlets and pages, boxed].
  - 16 Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Expertise*, Boston, MA, Northeastern University Press, 1986), p 375.
  - 17 *Ibid.*, p 382.
  - 18 *Ibid.*, p 399.
  - 19 *Ibid.*, p 408.
  - 20 Michael North, *The Final Sculpture: Public Monuments and Modern Poets*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, p 136.
  - 21 Compare George Maciunas, *Expanded Arts Diagram* [a poster/diagram charting out the genealogy of Fluxus in terms of many other art movements].
  - 22 Dick Higgins, 'Fluxus: Theory and Reception' in *Fluxus Research*, Special Issue of *Lund Art Press*, vol 2, no. 2 (1991), p 37.
  - 23 Tom Gunning, 'An Unseen Energy Swallows the Space: The Space in Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film', in *Film before Griffith*, in John L Fell, ed, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983, p 356.
  - 24 Craig Adcock, 'Marcel Duchamp's "Instantanés": Photography and the Event Structure of the Ready-mades', in Stephen Foster, ed, 'Event' *Arts and Art Events*, Ann Arbor, MI, UMI Research Press, 1988, pp 239–66.
  - 25 Ken Friedman, as quoted in Stephen Perkins, ed, *Assembling Magazines*, Iowa City, Subspace Gallery, 1996, p 15. According to Peter Frank, the periodical *Avalanche* shared the high production values favoured by Maciunas. See also Ken Friedman, 'The Early Days of Mail Art', in Chuck Welch, ed, *Eternal Network*, Calgary, University of Calgary Press, 1995, pp 2–16.

- 26 Ed Plunkett, as quoted in Robert Filliou, 'Research on the Eternal Network', *FILE* (1973), p 7. The same quote appears in John Held, 'Networking: The Origins of Terminology', in *Eternal Networks*, p 17.
- 27 William Wilson, 'NY Correspondence School', *Art and Artists* (April 1966), p 54. The same quote appears in Held, 'Networking', pp 17–24.
- 28 Intimate Bureaucracies: The Socio-Poetics of Assemblings and Artists' Networks (pending).
- 29 Milman, 5.
- 30 Pincus-Witten, 'Introduction,' in *Fluxus Codex*, ed. Jon Hendricks (New York, 1988), p 16.
- 31 *aV TRE*, no. 11 (March 24, 1979). For a complete discussion of this newspaper, see Simon Anderson, 'Fluxus Publicus,' in *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, published on the occasion of the exhibition 'In the Spirit of Fluxus', organised by Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss (Minneapolis: Walker Art Centre, 1993), pp 38–61.
- 32 See for comparison Simon Anderson, 'Fluxus Publicus,' in *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, published on the occasion of the exhibition 'In the Spirit of Fluxus,' organised by Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss (Minneapolis: Walker Art Centre, 1993), pp 38–61, 52. Anderson also appreciates Situationist work as a forerunner to Fluxus.
- 33 Dick Higgins, 'Intermedia,' in *Horizons: The Poetics and Theory of the Intermedia*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1984, pp 20-21; and Dick Higgins, *A Dialectics of Centuries: Towards a Theory of the New Arts*, New York: Something Else Press, 1978, p 7.
- 34 Greg Ulmer, *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Joseph Beuys to Jacques Derrida*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984, p 240; in part quoting from Gotz Adriani, Winifred Konnetz, and Karin Thomas, *Joseph Beuys: Life and Works*, trans. Patricia Lech, Woodbury, New York: Barrons, 1979, p 79.
- 35 Pincus-Witten, 25.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 37 Larry Miller, interview with Maciunas in a special posthumous issue of *aV TRE* no. 11, March 24, 1979, dedicated to Maciunas.
- 38 Ken Friedman, 'Getting into Events,' unnumbered electronic pages.
- 39 Geoff Hendricks, 'Message for readers of this issue received from Geoff Hendricks', *Art and Artists*, special issue on 'Free Fluxus Now' 7, no. 79 (Oct., 1972): 9.



PART III  
CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL  
PERSPECTIVES

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# ESTERA MILMAN: FLUXUS HISTORY AND TRANS-HISTORY: COMPETING STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERMENT

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Dada belongs to everybody. Like the idea of God or the toothbrush . . . Dada existed before us (the Holy Virgin) but one cannot deny its magical power to add to this already existing spirit.

Tristan Tzara, 'Authorisation, New York Dada', New York, 1921.

Long long ago, back when the world was young . . . Fluxus was like a baby whose mother and father couldn't agree on what to call it . . . Fluxus has a life of its own . . . When you grow up, do you want to be a part of Fluxus? I do.

Dick Higgins, 'A Child's History of Fluxus', New York, 1979.

Of the many strategies for empowerment and historical positioning that Fluxus shared with Dada, one of its self-proclaimed grandparents, the one that has the most consequential ramifications for our own present is the recurrent insistence that each had identified a trans-historical constant, or 'tendency', that stretched back through history and forward into the future. For the Romanian Poet Tristan Tzara – Dada's most active impresario – the existence of an ahistorical 'Dada state of mind', or 'spirit', facilitated the appropriation of like-minded individuals, the most notable of whom was probably Marcel Duchamp, into the movement and concurrently positioned a collective of dislocated war resisters within the mainstream of the avant-garde tradition.

When Tzara authored his New York 'Authorisation', he was still actively involved in the construction of an art culture – an activity endemic to all twentieth-century avant-gardes. However, by the second half of our century (and after the close of the second 'war to end all wars'), Tzara and the rest of his surviving co-participants in international Dada were retroactively attempting to dismantle this ahistorical aspect of the Dada myth; that is to say, to recontextualise their activities within the historical realities of the First World War period. For the most part, participants in the historical Fluxus have yet to follow suit.

In his 1921 mock authorisation of New York Dada, Tzara insisted that Dada was 'not a dogma or a school, but rather a constellation of individuals and of free facets'<sup>1</sup> – yet another strategy persistently employed by the Fluxus people, most of whom are adamant in their insistence that Fluxus was not a 'movement'. Conversely, many participants willingly describe Fluxus as an overtly utopian cultural space that facilitated the enactment of multiple artistic agendas. For example, according to Wolf Vostell (orchestrator of 'De-Coll/Age

Happenings', sometimes active participant in Fluxus, and fellow traveller alongside Allan Kaprow within the anti-Pop, overtly political, New York-based 'NO! art' or 'Doom' collective), 'the positivity of Fluxus [gave us] the possibility of meeting each other and staying together. Individually artists existed before and after, but for a few years they had the same ideals, though not the same opinions.'<sup>2</sup>

As was the case for Dada, historical Fluxus served as a banner around which numerous artistic, and sometimes activist, communities briefly coalesced. Milan Knizak (a founder member of the Prague-based group *Aktual*, whose arrest in Czechoslovakia incited an international roster of Fluxus participants to petition for his release) noted in 1977:

It was not the work of Fluxus that ... we needed, but its very existence. When *Aktual*-activity started ... we were completely isolated ... but knowing that somewhere [there was] someone who was similar to us ... helped us a lot during that period.<sup>3</sup>

Not only did Fluxus briefly unite a number of context-specific international constellations of individuals, it briefly provided them with a fictive country whose geography was a figment of the communal imagination. During a 1985 conversation, I suggested as much to Alison Knowles. In response to my speculation that Fluxus was a kind of conceptual country that 'granted short-term citizenship to an international community of self proclaimed cosmopolites [and] provided them with a nationality,'<sup>4</sup> the artist enthusiastically replied:

And do you know another idea that's linked to that? I love it. It's Bob Watts' idea that Fluxus could overtake existing institutions, the churches, the grocery store and of course George's minesweeper; all of Fluxus gets on the minesweeper and goes around the world. Alison pulverises the fish to make bread, someone else has the role of getting the flags up to guide the ship. In a funny way it was a world of people. We had our mothers and fathers aboard in a sense. We were a kind of Fluxus family ... That's absolutely right. The world of Fluxus did exist somewhere.<sup>5</sup>

As was the case for historical Dada, Fluxus served as an interface among subsets of geographically dispersed international art cultures. Despite their aggressively anti-art personae, both the Dada collective and its paradigmatic neo-Dada counterpart was distinguishable from majority culture communities because of their (sometimes veiled, yet recurrent) self-identification as alternative art cultures. As a result, it can be convincingly argued that not only were both fully fledged movements (albeit of the anarchic variety), but that both were heir to a number of other primary defining principles of the twentieth-century avant-garde.

The modernist concept of a cultural avant-garde was optimistically prophesied in 1825 by the French writer and diplomat Saint-Simon during a period of utopian progressivism. The artist was originally positioned within a cultural committee of socially conscious individuals whose charge, mandated by the heirs of the Enlightenment, entailed a collaborative attempt to move culture ahead to a better future. The artist was not only to take his or her place alongside the scientist and the philosopher, but was understood, by a society governed by idealism, to be particularly well-qualified to make substantial contributions to the dissemination of the value structures of this new world.

By the early twentieth century, having long since become specific to literary and artistic actions, the concept 'avant-garde' had come to be inseparable from the aesthetic basis of community building and culturing. Thus, despite George Maciunas' oft-cited (and strategically confrontational) 'rear-garde' posturing, in their critique of the institution of

art and of larger cultural constructs, as well as in their recurrent commitment to the processes of culturing, participants in historical Fluxus fulfilled a number of the same fundamental prerequisites for membership in this venerated tradition of artistic activism as did their First World War precursors in Dada. In view of the fact that the utopian concept of a cultural avant-garde and the modern discipline of history (understood as a socially progressive branch of knowledge) were birthed one alongside the other, in their strategic attempts to position themselves historically both Dada and Fluxus fulfilled yet another.

Although conventional wisdom dictates that the avant-garde is by definition adamantly anti-historical, both Dada and Fluxus repeatedly assumed responsibility for the authorship of their respective histories. For the most part, the numerous narrative histories penned by the in-house historians of both movements were not dependent upon analytical, theoretical or philosophical historiographic armatures. Positioned outside the active art-historical discourse, these chroniclers of the marginalised often adopted modes of authorship more closely aligned with the personal narrative, diary, genealogy, chronology or tale. Nonetheless, through the composition and self-publication of these often transparently agenda-bound testaments, these vernacular historians (perhaps inadvertently) challenge still widely held assumptions about realistic history. Many of these well-authored historiographic fictions further evidence the avant-garde's recurrent strategic preoccupation with its own historical self-empowerment.

Tristan Tzara's *Zurich Chronicle, 1915–1919* first appeared in print in Richard Huelsenbecks' *Dada Almanach* (Berlin, 1920) and was later reproduced, in English translation, in both Robert Motherwell's pivotal anthology, *The Dada Painters and Poets* (1951) and in Hans Richter's 1965 edition of *Dada Art and Anti-Art*. Although the poet/publisher's strategic 1919/20 account of purportedly 'historical' facts and events is arranged in chronological order, the document serves multiple purposes as a nonsense poem and manifesto. Interestingly enough, under the heading 'July 1917' Tzara asserts: 'Mysterious creation! Magic Revolver! The Dada *Movement* is launched' (emphasis mine).<sup>6</sup> The chronicle welcomes Francis Picabia, 'the antipainter just arrived from New York',<sup>7</sup> into the ranks of the Zurich Dada circle and strategically affiliates Tzara's own Dada publishing activities in Zurich with Marcel Duchamp's parallel, yet independent, New York-based iconoclasm. In its celebration of 'Dschouang-Dsi [as] the first Dadaist',<sup>8</sup> the *Zurich Chronicle* concurrently references what was to become one of Dada's most impactful strategies for historical empowerment – the trans-historical constant we have come to identify as the Dada spirit or state of mind

In keeping with its author's role as one of historical Dada's most active publicist/networkers, the chronicle closes with the (tongue-in-cheek) recounting that 'Up to October 15 [1919], 8590 articles on Dadaism have appeared in the newspapers and magazines of: Barcelona, St Gall, New York, Rapperswill, Berlin, Warsaw, Mannheim, Prague, Rorschach, Vienna, Bordeaux, Hamburg, Bologna, Nuremberg, Chaux-de-fonds, Colmar, Jassy, Bari, Copenhagen, Bucharest, Geneva, Boston, Frankfurt, Budapest, Madrid, Zurich, Lyon, Basle, Christiania, Berne, Naples, Cologne, Seville, Munich, Rome, Horgen, Paris, Effretikon, London, Innsbruck, Amsterdam, Santa-Cruz, Leizig, Lausanne, Chemnitz, Rotterdam, Brussels, Dresden, Santiago, Stockholm, Hanover, Florence, Venice, Washington, etc. etc.'<sup>9</sup>

Dick Higgins penned his child's history of Fluxus some seventeen and a half years after the

'Fluxus Festival of New Music' in Wiesbaden, a point in time when, having successfully captured the imagination of the German mass media, the fledgling Fluxus community inadvertently coalesced around this new banner. For some of this co-participants in the historical collective, Fluxus had already 'fluxed'. For others, the purported existence of a mythical 'fluxattitude' provided a mechanism through which to enact ongoing strategies for historical positioning. Adopting the presentational format of a bedtime story of folk tale, Higgins' narrative is both an activist reiteration of Fluxus' challenge to normative hierarchical pretensions of the art world and a blatantly agenda-specific attempt to mythify an ahistorical Fluxus spirit – a fictional constant which, by virtue of its ability to stretch back to a time when 'the world was young', might also carry Fluxus forward into the art-historical future.

It should be noted that despite the movement's recurrent attempts to break down the line of demarcation between art and life and to democratise the art experience (strategies employed by most twentieth-century avant-gardes), until the very recent past Fluxus had, for the most part, spoken most directly to itself and to other generations of like-minded artists. However, as the numerous, highly visible exhibitions of a few years ago indicated, both historical Fluxus and the Fluxus spirit have undeniably captured the imagination of our own present. It is the former that served as a subject of the exhibition 'Fluxus: A Conceptual Country', which I organised in 1992/93; it was the latter that was lauded in the Walker Art Centre's concurrent celebration, aptly entitled 'In the Spirit of Fluxus'.

'Fluxus: A Conceptual Country' was composed of a broad cross-section of works that sit firmly within the so-called Fluxus canon. It also very deliberately attempted to chart links between proto-Fluxus in New York and concurrent radical artistic activities – between North American Fluxus and the Czech Aktual group, De-Coll/age Happenings, the Spanish-based Zaj Collective, the Japanese-based High Red Centre group, and Fluxus in Holland, Denmark and France among others; and between Fluxus and the Underground Press Syndicate, and the California-based East Side and West Bay [neo] Dadaists. In a *New York Times* review of the exhibition, Holland Cotter noted:

[With most of the original artists represented], the superbly mounted *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* ... gives a clear multi-textured look at the movement's early days ... There's a fair share of Dada whimsy ... There is also a distinct if sporadic political edge ... reminders that the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement provided the historical context in which Fluxus artists worked.

Cotter's immediate association of Dada with the whimsical makes direct reference to one unfortunate side-effect of the process of decontextualisation prerequisite to the ascendancy of the ahistorical construct – the 'Dada state of mind'. Although scholars of Dada have long been aware that historical Dada was one of our century's most sophisticated, art-based, anti-war movements, the lay public continues to respond to the 'magical power' of Dada's purportedly trans-historical spirit. The consequence of the continued pervasiveness of this myth (originated by the Dadaists themselves as a strategy for historical positioning) is that the historical accomplishments of the movement have consistently been historiographically disempowered. Leaving the potential ramifications of the parallel construct the 'Fluxattitude' upon our understanding of historical Fluxus aside for the moment, let us turn instead to Cotter's statement concerning the current exhibition's 'sporadic' reference to historical Fluxus' political context.

While not all participants in Fluxus held pride of place in the roster of activist and overtly politically engaged artists of the period, most regularly assumed the long-standing avant-garde responsibility to integrate art-making with cultural and socio-political criticism. I would further like to posit that Fluxus' recurrent response to the political realities of its present was by no means sporadic. Rather than cite numerous examples of activist works realised by individuals centrally involved in the Fluxus circle I would rather turn, for a moment, to one particular piece, responsibility for which falls to a collective of individuals who can, within the current discussion, be best described as participants in the Fluxus orbit. *Bloodbath* was an Action carried out in the lobby of the Museum of Modern Art by the Guerilla Art Action Group (an affiliate of the Art Workers Coalition and one of the most radical art activist groups of the Vietnam era), and publicised in Dieter Albrecht's *Flug/Flux Blattzeitung* #12. The collective's manifesto of 10 November 1969, which was distributed during this Action, was directed against 'people who use art as a disguise, a cover for brutal involvement' in the war machine. The document served as an indictment of David Rockefeller, Chairman of the Board of Trustees at MoMA, for his participation in the production of napalm and for his position of power as Chairman of the Board of Chase Manhattan Bank, a corporation purportedly collaborating with the Pentagon; and of the Rockefeller brothers for their involvement in aircraft corporations and chemical and biological warfare research. That the issues at stake were also art specific and responded to traditional avant-garde utopian assumptions about the role of the artist as cultural critic is evidenced in the following statement included in the manifesto:

Those people have been in actual control of the Museum's policies since its founding. With this power they have been able to manipulate artists' ideas; sterilise art from any form of social protest and indictment of the oppressive forces in society; and therefore render art totally irrelevant to existing crisis.

Interestingly enough, despite *Bloodbath's* disruptive and unmistakably confrontational presentational format, the museum public who witnessed the Action remained aware that this particular event was distinguishable from the anti-war protests then taking place in the streets. That the 'audience' remained conscious that they were instead positioned within a culturally sanctified (that is to say, protected) artistic arena is evidenced in a brief statement included in the Guerilla Art Action Group's Communiqué of 18 November which explains that at the close of the event, and just prior to the late arrival of the police, the 'crowd spontaneously applauded, as if for a theatre piece'.

In his essay 'Fluxus Theory and Reception', Dick Higgins attempts to disassociate the early historical accomplishments of the collective from what he remembers to have been the pejorative connotations of the then widely applied rubric 'neo-Dada'. He writes:

In the 1950s, the journalistic image of Dada was considered to be the limit of the extremely crazy in art . . . Thus, early happenings and fluxus (like the works of [Robert] Rauschenberg and [Jasper] Johns) were often dismissed as 'neo-Dada.' This was, of course, extremely annoying for those of us who knew what Dada was or had been.<sup>10</sup>

In the early 1960s Andy Warhol was counted among the select group of neo-Dadaists to have been singled out for membership in the newly delineated (and soon to be canonised) North American Pop Art consortium. When asked in 1963 if 'pop was a bad name', Warhol (who

was to continue to maintain his affiliation with the underground through his loose-knit association with some of the Fluxus people) replied:

The name sounds so awful. Dada must have something to do with Pop – it's so funny, the names are really synonyms. Does anyone know what they're supposed to mean? ... Johns and Rauschenberg – Neo-Dada for all those years, and everyone calling them derivative and unable to transform the things they use – are now called the progenitors of Pop.<sup>11</sup>

George Maciunas (Fluxus' primary impresario and master of ceremonies) opened his 1962 manifesto 'Neo-Dada in Music, Theatre, Poetry, Art' with the observation that 'neo dada, its equivalent, or what appears to be neo-dada, manifests itself in very wide fields of creativity.'<sup>12</sup> For Maciunas, what appeared to be neo-Dada was 'bound with the concept Concretism, [the extreme conclusion of which] is beyond the limits of art, and therefore sometimes referred to as anti-art, or art-nihilism'.<sup>13</sup> In a 1992 letter to me addressing my reference in print to the choice of the title 'Neo-Dada in der Musik' for one of the earliest Fluxus-related European concerts, Higgins insisted that it was only because the proto-Fluxus community had no name, that they 'used Neo-Dada *faut de mieux*, though [they] knew it was inaccurate.'<sup>14</sup>

It is generally acknowledged that the resurgence of interest in Dada during mid-century was responsible for a shared conviction among groups of artists that art activity must be withdrawn from its special status as rarefied experience and resituated within the larger realm of everyday experience. While it is true that by the early 1960s the rubric was regularly evoked as a pejorative term by some formalist critics, what is rarely discussed is that neo-Dada was concurrently considered to be coterminous with cultural and socio-political artistic activism by other members of the art world.<sup>15</sup> By 1963 such art writers as Barbara Rose felt compelled to correct what they understood to be 'popular misconceptions that the new Dada [was] an art of social protest [and that it was] anti-art.'<sup>16</sup> Rose would also concur with many of her colleagues who insisted that John Cage had provided a 'common origin [for diverse practitioners of] the new dada.'<sup>17</sup>

In the late 1940s Cage had served as new music spokesman for the proto-Abstract Expressionist circle. At the time the composer (who later served as mentor, not only for Rauschenberg and Johns, but also for many of the North American participants in Fluxus, including Higgins) was accused, by some of his more conservative contemporaries, of being a 'neo-Futurist'.<sup>18</sup> By the early 1960s the venerated composer felt it necessary to respond to a new set of pejorative assumptions about his dependency upon historical precedents. In the process he described Dada as a free-floating, inherently malleable trans-historical constant, the essence of which was embodied in Marcel Duchamp. On the one hand, Cage insisted that the Dada spirit remained capable of invigorating action in response to shifting contexts and presents. He concurrently let slip that, for him, the historical movement did not come into being until after it had migrated to Paris:

Critics frequently cry 'Dada' after attending one of my concerts or hearing one of my lectures. Others bemoan my interest in Zen. One of the liveliest lectures I ever heard was ... called 'Zen Buddhism and Dada' ... but neither Dada nor Zen is a fixed tangible. They change; and in quite different ways in different places and times, they invigorate action. What was Dada in the 1920's [sic] is now, with the exception of the work of Marcel Duchamp, just art.<sup>19</sup>

On 13 December 1962 the Museum of Modern Art organised 'A Symposium on Pop Art'. Although this event served as a pivotal moment in the art world's process of identification and codification of an appropriate set of prerequisite defining terms for what has come to be known as North American Pop Art, at this point in time the lines of demarcation among those artists who were about to be canonised and those who were to remain outside mainstream art-historical discourse had as yet not been set. In his introductory comments, Peter Selz (MoMA's 'curator of painting and sculpture exhibitions') attempts to explain why 'Pop Art' was chosen over 'New Realism' as a descriptive term for the new phenomenon that had recently spread from coast to coast. Selz further recounts that 'the term neo-Dada was rejected because it was originally coined in the pejorative and because the work in question bears only superficial resemblance to Dada [which] was a revolutionary movement primarily intended to change life itself.'<sup>20</sup> Contrary to Higgins' aforementioned assertion in 'Fluxus Theory and Reception', a number of the MoMA panelists were in agreement that (unlike the new art), historical Dada had mounted a conscious attack against conformity and the bourgeoisie. They further concurred that, motivated by social passion, the movement had launched a sophisticated attack on a society held culpable for the First World War I. Although Cage is credited on more than one occasion as precursor to the new art, the transcript for the 1963 session includes less than laudatory reference to Duchamp, who served, in turn, as the composer's own mentor.

Having accused the new art of appearing to be about the real world, while at the same time remaining dependent upon its sanctification through its 'fraudulent relationship [with the] tradition of Dada', Hilton Kramer (then art critic for *The Nation*) continued:

But pop art does, of course have its connections with art history. Behind its pretensions looms the legendary presence of the most overrated figure in modern art: Mr. Marcel Duchamp. It is Duchamp's celebrated silence, his disavowal, his abandonment of art, which has here – in pop art – been invaded, colonised and exploited.<sup>21</sup>

As had been the case for Kramer in the early 1960s, in his much-used introductory art-history textbook, Norbert Lynton also felt compelled to adamantly defend 'art' against contemporary iconoclasts. Toward that end, he offers his readers one seemingly eccentric observation that perhaps inadvertently bears an uncanny stylistic resemblance to Higgins' 'A Child's History of Fluxus'. In keeping with his normative role as custodian of the formalist cannon, Lynton suddenly inserts the following cryptic repudiation into his otherwise unemotional (and purportedly realistic) narrative history of our century:

Whatever infection Robert Motherwell's book on Dada generated in obscure places, it was received in 1951 as an exceptionally interesting piece of history, an account of strange, often nonsensical, and sometimes foolish things done a long time ago when the world was very different.<sup>22</sup>

Motherwell had been quite happy to concur that to 'love art [was] a most anti-Dada attitude'.<sup>23</sup> He also admitted that his editorship of *The Dada Painters and Poets* was initially undertaken in an effort to 'teach himself Surrealism [for which] Dada was the older brother'.<sup>24</sup> However, regardless of Motherwell's initial intentions, it was Surrealism's 'older brother' which would capture the imagination of the next generation of art-makers. Contrary to Lynton's assertion, the impact of Motherwell's anthology cannot be overestimated. By the

late 1950s and early 1960s the term neo-Dada had come to encompass the production of Cage and his disciples Johns and Rauschenberg, the soon-to-be canonised American Pop Art circle, Happenings, New Realism, 'Common Object Art', the overtly political, anti-Pop 'NO!' art' group and the Fluxus collective, among others.

From an historiographic perspective, it is important to remember that, as a result, the contemporary art world of the late 1950s and 1960s was effected not so much by historical Dada as by the end results of long-standing strategies for historical positioning employed by members of the movement as they repeatedly attempted to write their own histories (another strategy persistently adopted by Fluxus people). Thus, in my essay 'Historical Precedents, Trans-historical Strategies, and the Myth of Democratisation', which appeared in the exhibition catalogue *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country*, I deliberately chose to concentrate on excerpts from the myriad personal narrative histories of Dada that appeared in Motherwell's anthology. In so doing, I was provided with a rare occasion to investigate the extent to which a particular historical subject had accrued verifiable access to one of its self-proclaimed historical paradigms. In the process I was able to chart some of the uncanny coincidences between the birth of historical Dada and the birth of Fluxus and the shared characteristics of the deliberately trans-historical constructs of the Dada myth and its mid-century counterpart, the Fluxattitude. In his response to one of the sessions during the February 1993 Fluxus Symposium at the AA Center, Higgins confirmed that my methodological approach had indeed been appropriate.

Dada was not widely discussed until the 1950s, thirty-five years after its inception; without [people like] Robert Motherwell (whose *Dada Painters and Poets* was seminal to most of us) we would have had a hard time indeed figuring out just what the Dadaists had done, what they had achieved and what they had not managed.<sup>25</sup>

In a statement that was originally circulated as an insert to the 1951 edition of Motherwell's anthology, Tristan Tzara, who had been one of the individuals most responsible for perpetuating Dada's trans-historical myth, adamantly attempted, with all of his poetic prowess, to recontextualise the First World War movement, and thus to distinguish what he then perceived to be historical realities from historiographic illusions:

When I say 'we,' I have in mind that generation which, during the war of 1914-18, suffered in the very flesh of its pure adolescence suddenly exposed to life, at seeing the truth ridiculed, clothed in cast off vanity or base class interest. This war was not our war; to us it was a war of false emotions and feeble justifications. Such was the state of mind among the youth when Dada was born in Switzerland thirty years ago ... A product of disgust aroused by the war, Dada could not maintain itself on the dizzy heights it had chosen to inhabit, and in 1922 put an end to its existence.

Contemporary cultural historians have posited that the romantic revolution of the 1960s represents the legacy of early twentieth-century utopian anarchic radicalism, which in turn encompassed a loose-knit international collective of contemporaneous cultural avant-gardes then associated with anarco-individualism. It has further been suggested that at that point in time, artistic activism and political radicalism were understood to be two sides of the same coin. In much the same way that historical Dada embodied all prerequisite characteristics for membership in this early-twentieth-century utopian consortium, it could convincingly be argued that historical Fluxus served as one paradigmatic example of its

legacy. In his 1988 introduction to Jon Hendricks' *Fluxus Codex*, Robert Pincus-Witten argues that Fluxus' iconoclastic agenda was offered as a critique of an imperialistic, Vietnam-era value system, and that the collective's achievements 'were inflected by an idealistic anarchy [that evokes] a political history reaching back to the Wobblies, the Patterson Strike, and the Feminist model of Emma Goldman...'<sup>26</sup> In his foreword to the *Codex*, Hendricks (one of the founder members of the Guerilla Art Action Group and a fellow traveller in Fluxus) attempts to contextualise the historical movement by describing it as successor to a subversive counter-culture initiated in response to the McCarthyist 1950s<sup>27</sup> and lists what he understands to have been Fluxus' historical precursors. After allocating equal credit to Futurism, Dada and Russian Constructivism, Hendricks posits that these historical models were particularly appropriate because 'the essence of each remained taboo in the late 1950s and early 1960s'.<sup>28</sup>

Of the three early-twentieth-century avant-gardes cited by Hendricks, it is Dada that has recently been singled out for the most thorough historiographic reassessment. Furthermore, as our century draws to a close, cultural historians have identified Dada as one of the most appropriate sites from which to establish a genealogy of twentieth-century artistic radicalism. As one of historical Dada's most direct descendents (and having, in its own right, captured the imagination of our present), perhaps it is time for Fluxus to rethink its initial anxiety about openly acknowledging its familial relationship to its venerated progenitor.

As was the case for historical Dada, Fluxus consciously and repeatedly attempted to author its own history. That such should be the case is not surprising in view of the fact that the modernist construct, the avant-garde, and the modern discipline of history were birthed one alongside the other. Participants in the movement concurrently adopted a deliberately ahistorical posture dependent upon the purported existence of a universal Fluxattitude. Although originally invented as a strategy for historical positioning, it could easily be argued that the trans-historical construct has successfully pervaded our contemporary consciousness far more effectively than has any awareness of its historical counterpart. For example, included in the packet of mementoes generated upon the occasion of the Walker Art Centre's celebration of the 'Spirit of Fluxus' were three buttons. One proclaimed that 'Art is easy', the second lauded an 'Art you can lick' and the third bore the instruction: 'Demolish serious culture.' Under the sub-heading 'Demolish serious culture', the calendar for the Walker celebration (upon which these buttons were affixed) announced that a Reflux watch with a 'Fluxus Aztec logo, gold-tone hands and case, a leather strap, quartz movement, and a stainless steel back' was available for purchase in the Walker Centre bookshop. One could argue that such marketing strategies confirm what Alison Knowles has described as Robert Watts' idea that Fluxus could overtake existing institutions, the churches, the grocery store, etc. However it is far more plausible that, by helping us forget that the initial charge to demolish serious culture was a strategic and context-specific response to then-in-place historical imperatives, such evocations of an ahistorical state of mind undermine the collective's hard won (and long overdue) rightful inclusion in our century's historical roster of venerated activist utopian art cultures. The Fluxus spirit is a well-written fiction authored by participants in historical Fluxus. Perhaps it is time for the Fluxus people to adopt yet another strategy assumed by their Dada precursors and to accept the full implications of the fact that when historical accomplishments are consistently decontextualised they become

reasonable candidates for recontextualisation into any new reality that a particular present deems appropriate.

## NOTES

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- 2 Wolf Vostell interviewed by Giancarlo Politi, *Flash Art*, nos 72–3 (March–April 1977); reprinted in *Flash Art*, no.149 (Nov–Dec 1989), p 102.
- 3 'Interview with Milan Knížák.' *Flash Art*, nos 72–3 (March–April 1977) reprinted in *Flash Art*, no. 149 (Nov–Dec 1989), p 104.
- 4 Estera Milman, 'Road Shows, Street Events, and Fluxus People: A Conversation with Alison Knowles', in Milman, ed, *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country*, Rhode Island, Visible Language, 1992, no. 98. This author's definition of Fluxus as a conceptual country was precipitated by Ken Friedman and George Maciunas' *Visa TouristE: Passport to the State of Flux* – a piece first proposed by Friedman in 1966 and realised by Maciunas in 1977.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Tristan Tzara, 'Zurich Chronicle, 1915 – 1919', in Hans Richter, *Dada Art and Anti-Art*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1965, p 226. Tzara is referring to the appearance in print of the first issue of the little review *Dada*, for which he served as editor.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., p 227.
- 9 Ibid., p 228.
- 10 Dick Higgins, 'Fluxus Theory and Reception', paper presented during 'Fluxus: A Workshop Series. The University of Iowa's Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts' (April 1985), unpaginated. Although this essay has appeared in print, I have chosen to refer to the manuscript that the author sent me.
- 11 Andy Warhol, 'What is Pop Art? Interviews with GR Swenson', *Art News*, vol 62, no. 7 (Nov 1963), p 61.
- 12 George Maciunas, 'Neo-Dada in Music, Theatre, Poetry, Art', (c1962), reproduced in Clive Phillpot and Jon Hendricks, eds, *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1988, p 27. The manifesto was presented by Artus C Caspari in Wuppertal, on 9 June 1962.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Dick Higgins to the author, '4 October 1992, Buster Keaton's Birthday [1898]'.  
15 See, for example, Edward T Kelly, 'Neo-Dada: A Critique of Pop Art', *Art Journal*, vol 22, no. 3 (Spring 1964).
- 16 Barbara Rose, 'Dada Then and Now', *Art International*, vol 7, no.1 (Jan 1963) p 24.
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- 18 See Estera Milman, 'Futurism as a Submerged Paradigm for Artistic Activism and Practical Anarchism', *South Central Review: A Journal of the South Central Modern Language Association*, vol 13, no. 2 – 3 (Summer/Fall 1996), pp 157–79.
- 19 John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1961, p xi.
- 20 'A Symposium on Pop Art', *Arts Magazine*, vol 37, no. 7 (April 1963), p 36.
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- 22 Norbert Lynton, *The Story of Modern Art*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1980, p 319.

- 23 Max Kosloff, 'An Interview with Robert Motherwell', *Artforum*, vol 4, no. 1 (Sept 1965), p 37.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Dick Higgins, Respondent's statement, 'Flux-Forum Symposium', Walker Art Centre, 13–14 February 1993, manuscript version, unpaginated.
- 26 Robert Pincus-Witten, 'Fluxus and the Silvermans: An Introduction', in Jon Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, New York, Abrams, 1988, p 16.
- 27 Hendricks, *Fluxus Codex*, p 22.
- 28 Ibid.

# STEPHEN C FOSTER: HISTORICAL DESIGN AND SOCIAL PURPOSE: A NOTE ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF FLUXUS TO MODERNISM

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What interested me about Fluxus was that it had a sharp, crisp approach to culture.<sup>1</sup>

*Ken Friedman*

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

Fluxus had made lasting contributions to our thinking about art and culture ... had enduring value.<sup>2</sup> *Jean Sellem*

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

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

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

Now, of course, there are and have always been enormous problems with this modernist scheme, but none of an order that has prevented it from working (at least until very recently) for approximately two centuries. Even recently, criticism of it has been more probing than effective. It would be easy to level well-warranted criticism at those proposing that Fluxus be understood as a 'real' thing, to dismiss its successive 'realities' as illusions of an illusion and to convincingly demonstrate that 'how' it became should not imply 'what' it became. Yet, since the model has been, and surprisingly enough remains, operational, it is not altogether clear what purpose the criticism would serve. As Arnold Isenberg noted long ago concerning normative models of criticism, its internal contradictions not only failed to prohibit its use, but had no significant bearing on its effectiveness as a means of analysing critical communication.<sup>5</sup> I would say much the same for the question under consideration here.

I think Ken Friedman implies as much when he claims, 'When the work being done on Fluxus by trained historians – art historians, cultural historians, anthropologists – is more complete, you'll see the diversity of views brought forward in much greater clarity than the unity implicit in Jon's [or other existing] books'.<sup>6</sup> In our particular case, and in specific reference to Fluxus, one might reasonably maintain that understanding and criticism of traditions as movements, historically substructured as 'real' things, although fraught with hopeless historical, theoretical, moral, ethical and other problems, continued to work. This is true in spite of the group's denial of modernism and the avant-garde, and in spite of the group's clear recognition of their reasons for rejecting them:

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

Promote living art, anti-art ...<sup>8</sup> *George Maciunas*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Highly self-conscious historically, and sophisticated in its manipulation of history's use, Fluxus tried to eclectically organise itself around the advantages of existing strategies at the same time that it attempted to avoid their abuses. Fluxus was committed to social purpose but opposed the authoritarian means by which it was historically achieved. It denied the metaphysics of the avant-garde's 'progress' although it embraced its means for organising a group. It rejected the dominant culture's popularisation of the avant-garde but embraced its myth of the 'masses'. It communicated with 'Everyman', but warranted itself with the captive audiences for the avant-garde in the university and the market-place. It rejected 'art' where the rejection rested largely on nothing more than a counter-definition of the establishment's concept of art, and identified its sources as those parts of modernism that defined themselves against the tradition. It competed for artistic influence by not competing with art and competed for social influence by competing with art ('Purge the world of bourgeois sickness, "intellectual," professional & commercialised culture, PURGE the world of dead art ...'<sup>13</sup> It veiled belief in experience, community in coalition, and art in environmental metaphors.

Looked at individually, none of their points strikes us as particularly surprising or new. We are more likely to be impressed by the fact that Fluxus seemed to adopt, more or less indiscriminately, all of them in ways that frequently seem to be contradictory and internally illogical. Yet, it must be said that none of these postures lay outside positive or negative assessments of the modernist and avant-garde debate – a debate that, of course, belongs to modernism. It is tempting to conclude that Fluxus is better defined through its 'use' of modernism and the avant-garde than it is through any rejection of them. As Milman notes, 'That the phenomenon appears to resist definition is based, in part, on the fact that Fluxus changed its public face to suit its intentions, its specific context and the purposes of its many diverse practitioners'.<sup>14</sup>

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

Another approach to the question of the relationship between Fluxus and the avant-garde might posit that the group provided an alternative to modernism and the avant-garde without implying a positive or negative critique. But this will not do. The fact that all the terms are too familiar is burdened further by the fact that nothing suggesting an alternative language is available in the group's publications or works. Furthermore, Fluxus continually condemned the avant-garde, or parts of it ('Fluxus art-amusement is the rear-garde ...', (wrote Maciunas),<sup>15</sup> but made extremely liberal use of historical precedents such as Dada. One might go further and maintain (correctly, I believe) that alternatives were available and that Fluxus opted, knowingly or otherwise, not to use them.

This brings me closer to my thesis – that Fluxus was basically a reconfiguration of the modernist or avant-garde paradigms. Its use of typically modernist and avant-garde terms might superficially seem to make Fluxus a maverick modernism. Or one might speculate that the group kept the modernist model and adjusted, or even ditched, the content. Regardless of the truth of the latter, it strikes me that what is more important is the group's reorganisation of modernism's terms. The importance of this resides in the fact that the canon of modernism

or the avant-garde rests not in the specifics of the terms but precisely in their organisation. That Fluxus is modern or not rests less on the use of the specific terms than the specific use of the terms. As the use of modernism's terms struck or strike confirmed modernists as illogical, it would seem that this could only be accounted for by comparison with the modernist canon as it was conventionally organised; for a number of reasons, however, even this is not altogether clear.

The problem concerns whether modernism would have assessed Fluxus' use of its terms as illogical, or merely idiosyncratic or misunderstood. The source of the organisation of terms that constituted the modernist canon were located in its concept of history. To the degree that Fluxus maintained that concept, there was a misunderstanding of sorts. But it must also be said that it was a misunderstanding of rather little consequence since modernism easily tolerated minor abuses of this sort and would have viewed it as little or no threat to the fundamental basis of its historical design. 'It is to falsify history to describe Fluxus as an art movement', wrote Eric Andersen.<sup>16</sup> Because of Fluxus' acceptance of the history, the canon was never fully raised to a level of visibility as a question.

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

This gets us somewhat further because it implies that in Fluxus there was a separation of means and ends untypical of modernism and the avant-garde as we normally understand them – considerations that bring us closer to identifying their substantial rather than polemical separation from modernism and the avant-garde. Fluxus seems to dislocate traditional 'means and ends' relationships that are endemic to modernism and the avant-garde and that account, in large part, for their curve as it was represented at the beginning of this essay. If Fluxus wished to accomplish something, it was not embodied in the ends implied in its means. I would suggest, in fact, that Fluxus represents a unique situation where both 'means' and 'ends' serve equally as objectives or goals – objectives that were historically, within the context of modernism, reserved only for ends. Nominally anti-art, and part of the late-modern resistance to the 'art object', Fluxus sought appreciation and engagement in its means. Self-conscious of its historical place, it sought its significance and position in its ends. The importance of this lay in the non-dependent relationship between the means and ends and the respective audiences that supported the objectives attached to each. Position was no longer contingent on appreciation; significance on engagement, and so on. Engagement and significance, for example, could be equally achieved, but in totally unrelated ways.

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

the creativity, the lightness, the rethinking of culture, of our approach to life are the context in which Water Yam takes place and from which it emerges.<sup>17</sup> *Ken Friedman*

[Fluxus] An attitude that does not take to the decisions made by history as the guaranteed and the guaranteeing process of the fluxes and the movements of creation.<sup>18</sup>  
*Achille Bonito Oliva*

All this also broke apart the normal discourse levels through which the group was approached. No longer concerned with means and ends, criticism could be conceived around either, with no loss to either: 'Fluxus encompasses opposites' wrote George Brecht. 'Consider opposing it, supporting it, ignoring it, changing your mind'<sup>19</sup> Indeed, with luck (and it was almost inevitable with the variety of critical models in service) criticism of Fluxus would be substructured variously by consideration of both means and ends and exist on what amounted to a non-competitive basis. The same was true of historical approaches. Indifferent to its location in the street, alternative space, or museum, the historiographic mandates of modernism yielded to a highly permissive situation where it was difficult to be wrong. Yet – and this is important – Fluxus was always prepared to claim that it was only a half-truth. The cleverness of Fluxus was that it was the only party to play all the possible positions simultaneously (if not by any one particular individual, at least by the group considered collectively). With means and ends unrelated, Fluxus could be made modern, partially modern or anti-modern. Its artists and critics could easily, and without contradiction, fill the pages of a xerox magazine, *Artforum*, or an Abrams Corpus. They could fight among themselves, appropriate individuals into their ranks who could not have been otherwise available, and expand in an indefinite number of future directions – all with equal impunity from the critics and historians. In the hands of the right writer, they could be, and no doubt are being, made suitable for textbook discourses. There is no threat in any of this, because there is always a way out. As Robert C Morgan has written, 'What is significant in a Fluxus exhibition is the diversity of strategies and the complementary nature of the varied artists' intentions'.<sup>20</sup> From the point of view of the modernist, the position may seem irresponsible. From the point of view of Fluxus, it is versatile and operational.

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

To push Fluxus toward the Twenty-first century means to grasp the group's anti-historicist spirit.<sup>21</sup> *Achille Bonito Oliva*

To go towards the year Two Thousand thus means to carry out a new task, that of avoiding defeat by time.<sup>22</sup> *Achille Bonito Oliva*

The group could reject modernism and its historical design but not its history. By that I mean that the various, weighty and contradictory options to which Fluxus willingly and happily submitted remain, without exception, historically conceived options. In the separation of means and ends, Fluxus lost the authority to convincingly author itself, or to have others author it in its own image. 'By creating an absence of authorship,' Morgan writes, 'Fluxus has revived itself as a significant tendency in recent art'.<sup>23</sup> The relationship of Fluxus to modernism remains ambiguous only insofar as it may or may not be modern. But the 'means' of being made one or the other is distinctly modern. History is a modern phenomenon, and anyone submitting to it becomes, to some extent, a subject of modernism. Since this is the case, any

proposition that Fluxus radically separated itself from modernism is substantially weakened.

In closing, I am left, and leave the reader, with a slightly puzzling question. How much of all this was deliberate, planned or expected? Is contemporary Fluxus a rationalisation of an early misunderstanding, or is it the fruits of a sophisticated, Duchampian refusal to commit? It seems to me that the question is related to why Fluxus, as modernism (as opposed to the other options), seems to have won the day. Although it could be, and surely will be argued, that Fluxus was simply assimilated, absorbed and appropriated by an insensitive, voracious art world and its publics (the solace of all failed radicalisms), I would maintain that Fluxus, from the beginning, was never in a position to determine its fate otherwise. Its flirtation with history firmly secured its place in modernism.

## NOTES

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- 2 Jean Sellem. 'Fluxus Research' in *Fluxus Research*, p. 5
- 3 Clive Philpot, 'Fluxus: Magazines, Manifestos, Multum in Parvo', in Clive Philpot and Jon Hendricks, eds, *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1988, p 11.
- 4 Jon Hendricks, 'Introduction to the Exhibition', in Philpot and Hendricks, eds, *Fluxus: Selections . . .*, p 17.
- 5 Arnold Isenberg, 'Critical Communication', *The Philosophical Review*, no. 58 (July 1949), pp 330-44.
- 6 Sellem, 'Twelve Questions for Ken Friedman', p 104.
- 7 Bruce Altschulen, cited in Matthew Rose, 'Fluxus something? Is There a Renaissance in Fluxus or Just Boredom with Everything Else? A Survey of Fluxus in America', in *Fluxus Research*, p 15.
- 8 George Maciunas, 'Manifesto' printed in Philpot and Hendricks, eds, *Fluxus: Selections . . .*, p 2.
- 9 Jean Dupuy, 'Where' in *Fluxus!*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1990, p 13.
- 10 George Maciunas, cited in Jon Hendricks, 'Introduction to the Exhibition', in *Fluxus: Selections . . .*, p 24
- 11 Dick Higgins, 'Fluxus: Theory and Reception', in Philpot and Hendricks, eds, *Fluxus Research*, p 26.
- 12 Marcel Fleiss, 'Fluxus in Paris', unpublished typescript, no date [1989], p 1.
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- 15 Maciunas, 'Manifesto', broadside, 1965; cited in Milman, *Fluxus and Friends*.
- 16 Jean Sellem, 'About Fluxus, Intermedia and So . . . : An interview with Eric Andersen', in *Fluxus Research*, p 60.
- 17 Sellem 'Twelve Questions for Ken Friedman', p 95
- 18 Achille Bonito Oliva, 'Ubi Fluxus ibi Motus' in A Bonito Oliva et al, eds, *Ubi Fluxus ibi Motus*, Venice, Biennale, and Milan, Mazzotta Editore, 1990, p 26.
- 19 George Brecht, 'Something about Fluxus', in A Bonito et al, eds, *Ubi Fluxus ibi Motus*, p 144.
- 20 Robert C Morgan. 'The Fluxus Phenomenon', in *Fluxus Research*, p 125.
- 21 Oliva, *Ubi Fluxus ibi Motus*, p 26.
- 22 Ibid., p 27.
- 23 Morgan, 'The Fluxus Phenomenon', p 125.

# NICHOLAS ZURBRUGG: 'A SPIRIT OF LARGE GOALS': FLUXUS, DADA AND POSTMODERN CULTURAL THEORY AT TWO SPEEDS

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Like many of the chronologically postmodern artistic movements following the modernist cultural renaissance of the early twentieth century, Fluxus arose in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These decades ushered in, to appropriate the famous lines from Charles Dickens' 1859 novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, both 'the best of times' and 'the worst of times'. For an apocalyptic cultural theorist such as Jean Baudrillard, the postmodern condition is 'an amnesiac world'<sup>1</sup> of 'catastrophe in slow motion'. Resisting the defeatist 'ethical abdication' that Félix Guattari diagnoses within most dominant cultural theory,<sup>2</sup> the affirmative momentum of Fluxus cultural practices is best introduced in terms of what Ken Friedman identifies as its commitment to 'robust paradigms for innovation' and 'human growth',<sup>3</sup> and its resilient 'spirit of large goals'.<sup>4</sup> A certain lightness of touch, and a certain innate resistance to dogma differentiates the Fluxus aesthetic from both the more precise kind of political agenda that Joseph Beuys associated with the 'clearly marked goal',<sup>5</sup> and the still more stringent philosophical rigour that Jürgen Habermas advocates in terms of the pre-postmodern – and in retrospect, quintessential anti-postmodern – Enlightenment ideal of 'communicative rationality'.<sup>6</sup>

At first glance, the calculatedly 'viral, fractal quality' and 'aphoristic and fragmentary form' commended by postmodern theorists such as Baudrillard certainly seems to share something of the enigmatic register of its Fluxus precursors' provocations.<sup>7</sup> Contemplating Baudrillard's writings, one might well ask 'Is this theory?', and contemplating the whimsical simplicity of a Fluxus object, a Fluxus event or a Fluxus score, one might well respond – somewhat like Andreas Huyssens' son before Beuys' 1982 Kassel Documenta installation – with such questions as: 'Is this art?', 'Is this politics?', 'Is this theory?' or 'Is this just a joke?'.<sup>8</sup> Beuys' finest works, like the finest of Fluxus works and the finest of Baudrillard's paragraphs, are all perhaps best understood as a kind of highly serious joke; as something funny 'ha ha', and perhaps funny peculiar, but also as something funnily relevant and funnily revealing. As the Australian performance artist Stelarc suggests, deceptively simple art may well ignite unexpectedly intense insight:

I remember once, at one of the Kassel Documentas, walking over a square bit of concrete sort of in the ground, with a circle of brass in the middle, which seemed to be a very minimal, simple, beautiful little piece. But then, going into the museum, I discovered that this was Walter de Maria's installation, and that brass circle was in fact

a kilometre deep brass rod into the ground And all of a sudden, you know, the kind of spatial dimensions and structural aesthetics of that piece exploded cerebrally!<sup>9</sup>

Over the years I have responded to Fluxus in somewhat similar stages, and never more so than to *Personal Space* (1972), a text by Ken Friedman that I first encountered in Richard Kostelanetz's anthology *Breakthrough Fictioneers* (1973), which also included – among many other works – a concrete poem that I had written entitled 'wind chasing dog', in which these words read right to left, or left to right, around a rectangular structure. A pleasing extra-linear realistic work, I had thought, having watched a dog chasing the wind, or chased by the wind, on a hillside in 1971. But what could one make of Friedman's *Personal Space*, which advises the reader:

Immediately after reading this instruction, close the book. Strongly visualise two (2) inches of space around the book in all directions. Fill this space with any ideas or materials you may wish. This space is your Personal Space. As such it is not only personalised, but portable – that is, it may be unwrapped from around this book and used anywhere ... Remember when you set up this Personal Space to construct it carefully so that it does not collapse.<sup>10</sup>

Undisturbed by the restricted poetic – or at least, semantic – space of 'wind chasing dog', I wondered where the more conceptual spiral of Friedman's instructions actually led. If, as Paik observes, 'Fluxus is a kind of minimal aesthetic', didn't Friedman's work typify the way in which 'a minimal aesthetic, by definition, is not so easy to succeed in'?<sup>11</sup> And if, as Friedman remarks, 'Explosive humour' can be 'a tool for clearing ground', insofar as 'Good nature, charity, humour from the deep spring of hope are the core of Fluxus', didn't the slightly far-fetched quality of this work also confirm his warning that 'humour has sometimes moved from a form of liberation to a kind of trap'?<sup>12</sup>

If it is the case, as Friedman remarks, that 'When Fluxus is nothing but jokes, it's difficult to build on the cleared ground' – just as it is equally difficult to build helpful accounts of contemporary culture, when postmodern theory is nothing but jokes and self-deconstructing wordplay – it seems evident that most Fluxus jokes function within rather wider dynamics, reassessing tired conventions by provoking what Friedman calls the 'delicate interplay between clearing and building that gives birth to social reconstruction'. Viewed in this context,

Zen time and vaudeville time are balanced by building and development. There is a place for humour, a place for jokes in art. There is also a time to build, a time after the 'Sweeping Away'. The gate to Fluxus is open. It's a good time to contemplate first principles.<sup>13</sup>

Far from simply offering a minimalist joke, *Personal Space* now seems to typify the way in which Fluxus works prompt a more maximal approach to 'first principles' and to 'richer debate'. In Friedman's terms,

These sorts of discussions are thought experiments, comparable to the thought experiments used by physicists to test propositions as valid questions ... We work to develop new models, approaching art as an experimental vehicle in the service of life ... We don't oppose making art. We simply think that the best way to make art is an experimental attitude that allows for many approaches.

Research and the development of robust paradigms for innovation are an important source of human growth. The world can afford new ways of thinking about art. The world requires them.<sup>14</sup>

If the Fluxus aesthetic and the provocative register of Baudrillard's writings sometimes appear to resist evaluation, this is surely because they both employ the same self-deflating logic which initially typecast Dada as little more than an irritating joke.

Tristan Tzara's 'Dada Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love' (1920), for example, taunts the reader with the apparently absurd suggestion that 'Dada is a dog – a compass – the lining of the stomach', before rather more aptly claiming that 'Dada is a quantity of life in transparent, effortless and gyratory transformation'.<sup>15</sup> As Tzara indicates, Dada's anti-logic invites conceptual transformation. Scratch a Dadaist or a Fluxus artist once and you find a nihilist. Scratch them twice, and more positive values appear.

Baudrillard's writings display similar ambiguities. Deploping the 'atrocious uselessness' of contemporary existence, and declaring 'disgust for a world that is growing, accumulating, sprawling, sliding into hypertrophy'<sup>16</sup>, Baudrillard sporadically defends what Tzara terms the 'gyratory transformation' of language, arguing, for example, that, 'What counts is the singularity of ... analysis', as opposed to 'language that is maddeningly tedious and demoralising platitudinous'.<sup>17</sup> On other occasions, Baudrillard damns his own insights with faint praise as 'an intelligence without hope'.<sup>18</sup> By contrast, both Dada and Fluxus tend to evince intelligence with hope, or in Friedman's terms, 'the power of unrealistic goals, of dreams and aspirations' pursued with 'whole-hearted integrity'.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, at their most provocative, Fluxus texts rival even Tzara's nihilism, repudiating both high art and Dadaist anti-art. Noting that 'Dada said to hell with serious art', and that 'today Dada is serious art', Ben Vautier amusingly concludes:

I am not interested in Dada historical maniacs.  
I prefer a naked girl in my bed to Dada.<sup>20</sup>

In much the same way, Baudrillard perfects the studied irreverence of the avowal: 'I don't want culture; I spit on it.'<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, both Vautier and Baudrillard also sometimes share the crucially affirmative postmodern impulse to emulate, elaborate and update the innovative velocity of Dada's most transgressive and transformative energies, by generating the kind of 'magic' that Baudrillard associates with more or less privileged moments when 'you cause things to exist ... by confronting them'.<sup>22</sup> But at their most distinct extremes, Fluxus practices and postmodern cultural theory differ in terms of their self-confidence and their commitment to positive change. While most postmodern cultural theorists envisage the present as (to return to Dickens) 'a season of Darkness', most Fluxus artists maintain faith in 'the spring of hope'.

For Dick Higgins, for example, 'The very name, "Fluxus", suggests change, being in a state of flux', and reflecting 'the most exciting avant-garde tendencies of a given time or moment – the fluxattitude'.<sup>23</sup> While sensitive to the 'frail' quality of such 'beginnings', Higgins warns that 'it would seem unwise to dismiss them as impossibilities, simply because they do not measure up to the achievements of the modernisms of the bulk of the twentieth century, now ending'.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, Emmett Williams evokes the Fluxus aesthetic in terms of its aspiration 'to do things that we had never seen before, to make the kind of books that simply didn't exist';<sup>25</sup> and Friedman equates the Fluxus aesthetic with an 'unwillingness to be told what sort of goals are too large'.<sup>26</sup> Turning to the way in which its flexible goals facilitated its collective survival, Paik cites Fluxus as 'one of the very few anarchistic groups'

in which 'many different egos – twenty, thirty different artists – kept quite good friends and collaborated'.<sup>27</sup> Williams similarly finds Fluxus 'the longest-lived thing, in terms of an art movement, in the twentieth century';<sup>28</sup> and Friedman posits that 'no group of artists since the Middle Ages has maintained a sense of community for such a long time'.<sup>29</sup>

Remarking that Fluxus is 'still making waves', as its successive festivals make new ties, and consolidate old alliances, Williams adds:

We've had quite a few of these reunions – we had a great one in 1982 in Wiesbaden, and two of them in '92 in Wiesbaden and Cologne, and then the one in Korea, shortly after that, and wherever the great German Fluxus show goes, there's a kind of getting together too – last winter in Lithuania . . . having first come from Istanbul, and going now to Warsaw . . . then Prague and Budapest. It just gets livelier and livelier.<sup>30</sup>

As Williams intimates, the fortunes of Fluxus typify the way in which the best of the postmodern avant-gardes displace, replace and then eventually rejoin earlier traditions, initially subverting 'nice classical education', and subsequently offering alternative classical repertoires:

We often talk about that situation, you know, and when people say 'But this was heralded as such a great experimental troupe during the sixties, how can you justify doing what you did then thirty years later?', I cannot see why on earth not. I mean, I can certainly see a situation where you could do Mozart and the Fluxus classics on the same evening. After all, Mozart didn't stop after the second performance of a work, and is there any reason why Fluxus should? No-one ever said of Fluxus, 'These are spontaneous performances – you can only do it one time.' Some of us still do the Fluxus classics because the pieces are strong and good, and audiences still like them and we like to perform them. Maybe we look funny up there on the stage in our sixties and seventies, but that's no reason to stop.<sup>31</sup>

It is easy to overlook the more affirmative impulses in Fluxus, Dada – and, to a lesser extent, in Baudrillardian theory. In each instance, such impulses are implicit rather than explicit, and initially remain understated and overshadowed by iconoclastic counterparts. Only later decades reveal that initially negative 'anti' gestures may well make way for the more consequential experimental alternatives that Renato Poggioli defines as 'ante-creation',<sup>32</sup> and that Friedman thinks of as a kind of 'useful thought experiment', even if accompanied by certain 'evident flaws'.<sup>33</sup>

Ironically, the widespread construction of Dada as a nihilistic 'anti-art' movement only received systematic challenge in the mid-1960s, when critical enthusiasm for so-called 'neo-Dada' performances prompted veteran Dadaists such as Raoul Hausmann to dismiss 'empty repetitions of Dada events', and to defend the originality and the 'constructive idea' behind Dadaist experiments, which 'remain art', he argued, 'in spite of their anti-art tendency'.<sup>34</sup>

Marcel Janco's essay 'Dada at Two Speeds' (1966) still more interestingly distinguished 'two Dadas, negative and positive'. While recognising 'the spiritual violence' of Dada's 'first phase', or its 'negative speed', Janco emphasises 'the prophetic work of positive Dada, which opened to art a new road, upon which . . . artistic creativity has remained dependent through the present day'.<sup>35</sup> In turn, Higgins differentiates the phases in the careers of Fluxus artists, noting how art in flux constantly evolves beyond both its origins and its own most cherished early aspirations:

For 'pure Fluxus', one must look to the first pieces of the late fifties and early sixties. But just as Max Ernst did not die with Dada, so Fluxus artists did not end with the self-

consciously defined Fluxus 'tendency' ... Almost all the original Fluxus artists have changed and evolved to do other work.<sup>36</sup>

The heroic quality of the Fluxus aesthetic's openness to 'other work', and to the perils of 'frail' hybridity – (as opposed to the seductive security of well-defined 'purity') – seems still more admirable when one considers the conservative fatalism of much contemporary cultural theory. Deploring this loss of nerve, Higgins reflects:

In times like this, there are really rather few people who have kept the faith, kept the vision, and kept their nerve ... Although this is not a world in which everybody seems to be doing all kinds of incredibly stimulating things, as they did, say, in the nineteen sixties, although this world is basically somewhat of a down-world, it's probably therefore a nexus point – some sort of transition point – towards whatever is going to come next – hopefully a positive one.<sup>37</sup>

Academia, Higgins suggests, makes it old, or makes it traditional, rather than making it 'positive' and 'new'. Tending 'to choose to teach whatever it is they can teach', academics usually ignore 'any new work that doesn't readily fall into classifiability'.<sup>38</sup> Unclassifiable 'wide goals', in other words, are dismissed as 'anti-art' by those who can only teach in terms of tried and trusted classifications.

But as Higgins suggests, it is precisely the narrow academic priorities and expectations of mainstream critical categories that most accurately deserve the designation 'anti-art' in terms of their incapacity to accept innovation:

When I do artistic work ... I follow my nose, and it has a tendency to lead me out – always out – of established intermedia ... towards trying the frontiers of this and trying the frontiers of that. People are often dismayed, because what I'm working on simply does not fit the priorities which they've set for themselves.<sup>39</sup>

If suspicion of both old and new aesthetic priorities prompts Baudrillard to complain that 'The maximum in intensity lies behind us; the minimum in passion and intellectual inspiration lie before us',<sup>40</sup> Fluxus artists rather differently complain of over-exposure to different kinds of inspiration. Relating, for example, how he 'became ill over the matter when ... very young', before finally accepting that he could 'not stop working in all these different media', Higgins explains:

I kept asking myself, 'Dick – you cannot possibly be serious? When are you going to be just a composer, or just a poet, or just a visual artist?' ... I realised that I couldn't specialise, because every time I tried, I got depressed.<sup>41</sup>

Baudrillard, by contrast, usually argues that 'We shouldn't presume to produce positive solutions',<sup>42</sup> somewhat as Jameson insists that multimedia texts such as video art 'ought not to have any 'meaning' at all'.<sup>43</sup> As Nam June Paik observes, academic chic seems to compel incredulity towards creative innovation.

Of course all intellectuals are against technology, and all for ecology, which is very important. But in a way, we are inventing more pollution-free technology ... we have to admit that compared to Charles Dickens' time, we are living better, no? So we must give up certain parts of intellectual vanity, and look at the good parts of so-called high-tech research.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps times are changing. As Baudrillard indicates in his interviews of the early 1990s, his writings are gradually acknowledging what Paik calls 'the good parts of so-called high-tech

research'. Describing his 'rather critical or pejorative vision of technology as a first position' shared by almost all cultural theorists, because 'everybody speaks of technology in this way' and feels 'obliged to do this', Baudrillard now hints that a 'second position' and a 'more subtle form of analysis' might consist of 'seeing technology as an instrument of magic'.<sup>45</sup>

And somewhat as Guattari's *Chaosmosis* defends technological art still more stridently, arguing that 'It is in underground art that we find some of the most important cells of resistance against the streamroller of capitalist subjectivity',<sup>46</sup> Jean-François Lyotard similarly cites the 'artistic community' as 'a model for society' insofar as it offers a flexible, creative community 'which ... has no laws, no rules ... people who do research, invent things, show them to one another, discuss them'.<sup>47</sup>

For Lyotard, this kind of 'avant-garde' community, in which members uncompromisingly 'say what they think', offers exemplary 'witnesses of changes in the culture, and probably in society itself'.<sup>48</sup> More specifically,

There's a sort of ethic in all this, a very deep ethic, even among the nastiest, and God knows artists can be nasty ... they feel responsible for having to do something, they don't know exactly what, they're searching. They have considerable responsibility with respect to what they feel themselves called to do ... And that's beautiful, it's a highly moral model for a community to function in. That's why I've always thought that this community in flight, inexistant, in perpetual conflict, is a sort of model – and of course this community lives in anguish – 'Can I do it, can I measure up to this demand imposed on me from where I don't know, can I make this instead of that, see if I can get sound out of an old pot – what is art, what is painting, what is poetry – and orality, and writing?' These questions are always with us, and cannot be perceived without a sense of anguish, because they are grave questions. Amen.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the levity of his final self-consciously self-deflating 'Amen' signalling – perhaps – a certain discomfort before 'grave questions', Lyotard's account of this kind of 'community in flight' admirably complements Friedman's evocation of Fluxus' curiously advantageous 'disorganisation'.<sup>50</sup>

Obviously, this mentality did not appeal to all Fluxus artists. As Beuys explains, if he broke away in the early 1960s, in order 'to address deeper elements'<sup>51</sup> than Maciunas' wish to 'direct ... human capabilities toward socially constructive goals such as the applied arts', by the systematic 'elimination of the fine arts',<sup>52</sup> this was because he found Fluxus too 'disorganised' for his purposes.

What they lacked was a real theory, a recognisable underlying structure with a clearly marked goal. They held a mirror in front of people, without using it to lead to a betterment of their condition. Despite this ... Fluxus actions had a value, because they made ... conscious attempts to produce an important development'.<sup>53</sup>

As Friedman and Paik intimate, the pluralistic momentum of Fluxus seems incompatible with a strictly defined party line. Friedman, for example, emphasises that, 'Inside Fluxus, no one was willing to have George Maciunas speak for or supervise our political views',<sup>54</sup> and Paik, too, cherishes its predominantly leaderless anarchy.<sup>55</sup>

Like those of Dada (and to a lesser extent, of the finest flourishes of postmodern theory), the contradictory energies of the Fluxus aesthetic derive from the point 'where yes and no and all the opposites meet',<sup>56</sup> manifesting the kind of conceptual agility that Baudrillard incites when asserting that theory should 'Make enigmatic what is clear, render unintelligible

what is only too intelligible' and spread 'the germs or viruses of a radical illusion'.<sup>57</sup> Yet for all its vital 'viral' rhetoric, Baudrillard's theory seldom identifies or inaugurates radical 'beginnings'. Advocating contamination by innovation, and then self-consciously lamenting the implausibility of this ideal, Baudrillard frustratingly concludes: 'As for art ... There must be some meaning to it ... but we cannot see what it is.'<sup>58</sup>

Cannot see, or cannot yet see? As Higgins emphasises, even though we may not know for sure where the 'beginnings will lead to', it is our responsibility to facilitate and follow the fortunes of new possibilities, especially when their most positive 'speeds' seem likely to lead beyond familiar postmodern cultural debates, towards wider, more challenging goals. Quite simply, 'We are not just modern or postmodern today. We are premillennarian, and it is up to us and those who come after us to determine what that means.'<sup>59</sup>

## NOTES

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PART IV  
THREE FLUXUS VOICES

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LARRY MILLER:  
TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEOTAPED *INTERVIEW*  
WITH GEORGE MACIUNAS, 24 MARCH 1978

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**Larry Miller:** The main thing I wanted to talk about was the chart. I've sort of jotted down some specific things that I wanted to ask you about it, some specific questions about the chart.

**George Maciunas:** Maybe I ought to describe the general construction.

**LM:** Okay.

**GM:** So, you see, this chart is just a continuation of other charts I've done in the past for other histories and basically the chart is – shows the vertical – er, the horizontal grid, okay. In the vertical line is shown the years, and the horizontal layout shows the style. So you can point on the chart any activity, pinpoint it exactly with this grid of time and style. Now it could also be time and occasion; for instance, I've done charts which show, vertically is shown time and horizontally geographical location. This way you could say any activity in the past, you could locate exactly on the chart where it happened and when. Now for this chart I chose style rather than location because the style is so unlocalised and mainly because of the travels of John Cage. So you could call the whole chart like 'Travels of John Cage' like you could say 'Travels of St. Paul', you know? Wherever John Cage went he left a little John Cage group; which some admit, some not admit his influence. But the fact is there, that those groups formed after his visits. It shows up very clearly on the chart.

**LM:** Starting about when?

**GM:** Oh, starts from 1948. In France he visited in 1946 to 1948 and met Boulez, Shaeffer, and, sure enough, in 1948 Shaeffer starts an electronic/music-concrete studio, without giving any credit to John Cage, of course. Then he goes to Italy, then he goes to Darmstadt, then to Cologne, everywhere he goes they start a little group or studio, usually all electronic music. But at that time his influence was mainly that of *musique-concrète*. In other words, using various fragments of everyday sounds for making new music. Because his first music concrete piece is 1939.

**LM:** Cage?

**GM:** Cage, that's right. So when the French come out in 1948 and they say they invented *musique-concrète* that's just a lot of bullshit.

**LM:** Can I comment about that – remind you of something? Remember when I went to ask Cage about his editions?

**GM:** Yes.

- LM:** He said that they were particularly attached to that phrase, that term *musique-concrète* and that he didn't mind that.
- GM:** Well, he's just being very tolerant. He's very tolerant even of people that just copy him directly, like plagiarise, and don't give any credit to him. He's that kind of person, he's just super tolerant. The fact is that, you know, everybody right and left is stealing from him. Now, but that doesn't mean that he [did not get] influences in return from others. The chart, therefore, starts with what influenced Cage. Cage is definitely the central figure in the chart.
- LM:** Yeah?
- GM:** You could call that chart the Cage Chart. Not Fluxus Chart, but Cage.
- LM:** Okay, maybe we can proceed if you ...
- GM:** So you start first with areas, the movements that influenced him and that's very clearly also outlined here. We have the idea of indeterminacy and simultaneity and concretism and noise coming from Futurism, theatre, like [the] Futurist music of Russolo. Then we have the idea of the ready-made and concept art coming from Marcel Duchamp. Okay, we have the idea of collage and concretism coming from Dadaists. Now, you see they're all shown on the chart how they all end up with John Cage with his prepared piano, which is really a collage of sounds.
- LM:** Nineteen thirty-eight?
- GM:** Nineteen thirty-eight, yeah. And his *musique-concrète*, which is 1939. Then all his travels are shown. Meanwhile, there's a parallel interest in this chart, and that is of all what I would call happenings or Actions, to which two people contributed: John Cage again in 1952, his first happening and the same year Georges Mathieu also did the first Happening, called *Battle of Boudine*. And [an] interesting sideline is that Mathieu did go to Japan and did this action and started off the Gutai Group. Georges Mathieu was instrumental in starting the Gutai Group.
- LM:** His work I don't know as well as others. Just describe something that ...
- GM:** He made an Action of painting, like [a] Happening.
- LM:** Not like Pollock.
- GM:** No, no ... It was a theatrical piece, more like Yves Klein.
- LM:** Like Klein's blue nudes? Was the Gutai Group the group that shot bullets at the paintings ...
- GM:** Yeah.
- LM:** And exploded ...
- GM:** Anyway, that's something that Mathieu would do. So Gutai was very close to Georges Mathieu in the sense that they were doing paintings as Actions, much more than Pollock. And you know, different from Yves Klein. The chart doesn't show [the] contribution of Yves Klein, and that's where he should still be added on, that's where the chart is incomplete. Yves Klein has to be given more prominence in [the] 1960s, which he is not. The other important figure is Joseph Cornell, starting in 1932. Now his influence sort of is connected to Surrealists and it shows how his influence affects a lot George Brecht and Bob Watts, especially George Brecht. Now with those basic influences – of the action painting of Mathieu and first happenings of John Cage and generally all John Cage, everything that he did in the '50s, plus Joseph

Cornell, plus there's a little influence here shown of Ann Halprin called *Natural Activities and Tasks*.

LM: What would that be?

GM: That's in California. It had a lot of influence on people like James Waring and Bob Morris and Simone Forti and La Monte Young and Walter De Maria.

LM: This would be purely dance?

GM: No, no. It's just what it says: natural actions and tasks.

LM: In other words the application ...

GM: ... sprang from dance tradition but you couldn't call that a dance. They were like very natural acts you know, like walking.

LM: I see. Physical things that are outside of what you normally would consider dance, just physical activities.

GM: Yeah, like walking in a circle.

LM: Like a readymade gesture.

GM: Yeah, right. So you can give La Monte Young with all of his short compositions of 1960 some credit of that to Ann Halprin's natural activities. Let's say his audience sitting on the stage doing nothing. Okay? That's a natural activity, it's not a dance. Now we come to the middle of the chart. No, not the middle, to the first quarter. Like 1959 it becomes suddenly very active. Maybe because John Cage opened up a school and has all those people coming to his school. Also, the so-called *nouveaux realistes* in France become very active, plus Ben Vautier becomes very active. So 1959 is a very influential year. We have Nam June Paik playing [his] first piece, Vostell doing [his] first piece, Allan Kaprow doing [his] first Happenings, Dick Higgins and Yves Klein. Well, he was already before that, but he culminated, let's say, by then. Ben Vautier doing his first piece by signing ... everything: continents, peace, famine, war, noise, end of the world and especially human sculptures. That's something important to know because later Manzoni copied it. Gestures ... he had first gestures appearing then in 1959 and not in 1968 with Acconci and people like that. And we have first postage stamps of Bob Watts, a lot of card music that is written on cards like of George Brecht and first-concept art of Henry Flynt. Then that goes on to 1960. And Fluxus comes in '61. Actually, you could say officially early in '62. Because in '61 I had a gallery which did everything that later Fluxus did but did not use that name.

LM: That's the AG Gallery?

GM: Right. And La Monte Young had a series of the same kind of things, same kind of Events, at Yoko Ono's studio on Chambers Street, so that chart points out, gives the whole programme, you know, what was performed.

LM: Yoko's loft ... what's the date there? Was that before the Wiesbaden?

GM: Oh, definitely. That's in 1960, 1961.

LM: Oh, so it's the year before.

GM: It's '61, just like the AG Gallery was '61.

LM: That was the fall of '61, was it, the AG Gallery?

GM: Winter of '61.

LM: What were you doing up until the time you started the AG Gallery? That's the first time you appear[ed] there.

- GM:** The reason I got in touch with all those people was that I went to Richard Maxfield's class. See, after John Cage . . . John Cage gave [a] one-year class in New School. The second year Richard Maxfield gave a class in electronic music and I met La Monte Young there who was taking the same class, you know. So I was interested in what La Monte was doing. He introduced [me to] other people, and that's how we put together this whole programme at the AG Gallery and meanwhile he had put up the programme at Yoko's gallery . . . loft. So we have AG and Yoko's loft more or less simultaneously. They were slightly different but not much, like we both featured Jackson Mac Low, we both featured Bob Morris and La Monte Young. But we wouldn't show the same compositions, you know, that we would . . . At the AG we had two La Monte Young's compositions, Nos 3 and 7, and at Yoko's loft it was all [the] 1961 compositions – you know: 'Draw a straight line.' And Henry Flynt gave a concert at Yoko's loft but a lecture in [the] AG Gallery. So they were a little different there.
- LM:** These were going on concurrently, these . . .
- GM:** Right.
- LM:** This was when you first met Yoko?
- GM:** Yeah, and everybody else. Well, Dick Higgins – Richard Maxfield, of course, I'd met before, in the school.
- LM:** Yeah. Can I back up there just a minute? Were you in any of the John Cage classes at the New School?
- GM:** No.
- LM:** But the Richard Maxfield classes you were. And that's where you first really made all the connections.
- GM:** Right. See, my first interest was electronic music.
- LM:** Were you composing then?
- GM:** Yeah, I was doing some composing.
- LM:** Do those exist now?
- GM:** No, they don't.
- LM:** Why not?
- GM:** I don't know what happened to them.
- LM:** Oh!
- GM:** Then in 1962, I went to Europe and the plan was to continue . . . Oh, before I went to Europe we published or at least we put together La Monte Young's *Anthology*, that book, you know, the red book.
- LM:** I have that here.
- GM:** Right. So. We couldn't include everything that we had collected, all the materials we had collected by then – like it didn't have Bob Watts and you know had very few things by George Brecht – and so I thought I would go ahead and make another publication with all the pieces that were not included in [the] *Anthology*. More or less newer pieces. But La Monte wasn't interested in doing a second *Anthology* book. So the initial plan was just to do another, like a second *Anthology* book, except graphically it would have been a little more, er, less conventional than the first one, which means it would have had objects and you know, a different kind of packaging. So really then the idea germinated to use the whole book as bound envelopes with objects in the envelopes. See, we had a couple

objects already in the first *Anthology*, you know, like the loose Diter Rot machine holes, things like that. A little envelope with [a] card of La Monte, another envelope with a letter in it, you know – so things like that. Cards that have to be cut up ...

LM: Now, you designed that book.

GM: Yeah, I designed that book.

LM: And it was edited by ... put together ...

GM: La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low.

LM: So then did they suggest the ... was this your first publication, the first Fluxus publication, the second one you're talking about?

GM: The second one was going to be the first Fluxus publication but it took a few years to get off the ground. Meanwhile we thought, well, we'll do concerts, that's easier than publishing and will give us propaganda like for the publication. Maybe then we'll find people who will want to buy publications – because at first we couldn't sell *Anthology* either, you know, so it was just accumulating in a warehouse. So then the idea was to do concerts as a promotional trick for selling whatever we were going to publish or produce. That's how the Wiesbaden series came by and that's the first time that it was called 'Fluxus Festivals' and that's the Fall of ...

LM: September of '62, isn't it?

GM: Right. Yeah, September of '62. And ...

LM: Was it being called Fluxus by then?

GM: Yeah. It was called a Fluxus Festival.

LM: Here's my chance then to ...

GM: There were fourteen concerts in a row.

LM: I'd like to ask about the name Fluxus, I mean, where did that come from?

GM: That came still while we were thinking in New York of what to call the new publication.

LM: When you say 'we', you mean you and La Monte.

GM: No, La Monte sort of didn't care, and then [it] was mainly me and my gallery partner, 'cause he was going to maybe call the gallery that or something. Then the gallery went bankrupt so it didn't matter; he dropped out, so he's out of the picture.

LM: He's not an artist.

GM: No. So basically it was me alone then who finally determined we were going to call that name, and [the] reason for it was the various meanings that you'd find in the dictionary for it – you know, so that it's like it has very broad, many meanings, sort of funny meanings. Nobody seemed to care anyway what we were going to call it because there was no formal meetings or groups or anything.

LM: The name was thought of at first to refer to ...

GM: Just to the publication.

LM: A publication called ...

GM: *Fluxus*, and that's it, that was going to be like a book, with a title, that's all.

LM: Did you think of then Fluxus ... You didn't think of it in the beginning the way it's sort of come to be known now, Fluxus sort of ... ?

GM: As a movement?

LM: Stand ... no?

- GM:** No. It was just the name of a book, the second anthology ... Now, then, after we started to do the concerts we started to have little shows – exhibits, too – and that's how we started to make objects, to be sort of multiples, you know, mass-produced. That was still before the yearbook came out, the first Flux yearbook. It was couple years before the yearbook came out; now, do you have the second part of the chart?
- LM:** The second part is folded over there.
- GM:** Nope, it's missing.
- LM:** This goes up to 1962 only I mean, rather ...
- GM:** Yeah, that's what I mean. It goes to 1964.
- LM:** You know, you never gave me the second part.
- GM:** All right, I'll have to do it from my memory. Now like around '64 or so we finally did a ... the second Yearbox ... yearbook ... came out – that's the bound envelopes – and [it] didn't sell at all. Maybe we sold two or one copy. They were selling then, I think, \$20 or \$30 each. Now they're selling for \$250. Heh, heh.
- LM:** This is the Yearbox.
- GM:** Yeah.
- LM:** That's the one with the little ...
- GM:** With envelopes.
- LM:** I guess I don't have that. The one I have has films and ...
- GM:** That's the second Yearbox. The first one is bound envelopes.
- LM:** Oh, Barbara has one of those at Backworks.
- GM:** Yeah.
- LM:** Is that with the metal bolts through the ...
- GM:** Right. And then the contents is like an accordion; it just keeps falling out and being in your way all the time.
- LM:** Yeah. Are there, is that edition over, are the contents all dispersed?
- GM:** No, it's still ... Now and then I still put a couple up.
- LM:** Yeah?
- GM:** [It] takes lot of time to put it together.
- LM:** What can I trade you for one of those?
- GM:** Well ...
- LM:** Carry you to Jamaica on my back? [*He laughs.*]
- GM:** Yeah. [*laughs.*] Anyway, then, why you're lucky to have the second Yearbox because that's completely out of print, because there are no more viewers available – the film viewers.
- LM:** I know you said they're nowhere in the world but I'm going to try to check into that for you.
- GM:** Well, if you find then I can put more out because I have everything else, all the other components except ...
- LM:** Yeah.
- GM:** Eight-millimetre, not Super 8, 8mm viewers, little hand-held viewers.
- LM:** So have you ...
- GM:** See the objects came out sort of together with those Yearboxes and we were not rushing. First objects were quite a few of Bob Watts and George Brecht, especially

George Brecht, came out with puzzles and games, things like that. They were, oh, I would say – let's see if it's already on this chart – 1963, his first 'Water Yam' events came out, which is now out of print.

LM: So let me see if I . . .

GM: Objects came from 1963 on.

LM: Okay, the first object then was the . . .

GM: The *Water Yam*.

LM: Now we're talking about boxes. First publication was the *Yearbox*, which followed . . .

GM: No, you could say the *Water Yam* because that's all printed.

LM: Because it came out before even though it was started later.

GM: It came out before the *Yearbox*.

LM: Because it took longer to produce. The 'Water Yam' then, was that produced by you and George Brecht?

GM: Well, by me, he just gave me the text.

LM: And then you had the cards printed?

GM: Yeah, and the boxes made and everything.

LM: Had he issued any boxes? I'm trying to get down sort of to the genesis of the idea of Fluxboxes.

GM: Well, he made up prototypes of boxes that were puzzles. See, I got hold of lots of plastic boxes from a factory and then just handed them to everybody and I said, how about doing something with them? So George Brecht was the first one to respond and he came up with lots of little boxes, with games and puzzles and things like that.

LM: What had been his format before then? Cards? Printed Events?

GM: Boxes, too. They were sort of handmade wooden boxes.

LM: On the order of Cornell, would you say . . . influenced by Cornell?

GM: Yeah, Cornell-style and sort of one of a kind definitely. But now I was saying we were going to make multiples, you know, say, like [one] hundred boxes. So here is a simple plastic box and I asked him to think up simple things to do with it. So George Brecht thought of, he was the first one to respond Ben Vautier responded with a lot, too. And Bob Watts. And, you know, by then, each year there are more and more; by now there are a hundred boxes by almost everyone.

LM: So the very first box was *Water Yam*.

GM: *Water Yam*, yeah.

LM: That was with Bob and George.

GM: That's just George Brecht.

LM: George Brecht. Well, what am I thinking of? . . . I'm thinking of Yam Festival.

GM: *Water Yam* is complete now, that's [the] complete works of George Brecht really, on cards, printed.

LM: What were some of the other early boxes then?

GM: Ball and quiz puzzles, like the ball puzzle: 'Observe the ball rolling uphill'; you know that one?

LM: Uh huh.

GM: That's one of his early ones. Or a box that contained a shell, sea shell, and the text says: 'Arrange the beads in such a way that the word "C-U-A-L" never occurs.'

LM: The word, which?

GM: C-U-A-L.

LM: C-U-A-L.

GM: Never occurs. It would not occur anyway. [*Both laugh.*] They are shells, not beads. Very mysterious puzzles. [*Both laugh.*] Bob Watts came out with rocks then, marked by weight or volume in cubic centimetres or whatever, and he came out with early food art then, like 1964. Made a fire hydrant . . . no . . . fire alarm as a cake.

LM: Didn't he make a Mona Lisa cake, too?

GM: I don't know about that but he made lots of cakes. Then Dick Higgins didn't do boxes in those days. He was very impatient about printing his complete works, which were voluminous, and I just couldn't get to it, so then he decided he would open up his own press and print it. That's how the Something Else Press came about, more or less from his impatience, you know, not wanting to wait for my slow process.

LM: How were you supporting yourself all during this time?

GM: By having a job. So all those productions were right out of my pocket. Ninety percent of my pay went to support Fluxus productions.

LM: What was your job then?

GM: Graphic design. So I worked 'till, oh, I think, 1968.

LM: Who'd you work for? I've forgotten now.

GM: Oh, a small, one-man studio.

LM: Different people?

GM: No, one place. Earned about ten thousand so I spent nine thousand on Fluxus.

LM: Do you have any idea what you totally spent?

GM: I have an idea. On Fluxus?

LM: Uh huh.

GM: Probably about fifty thousand

LM: Has it paid off?

GM: No, it'll never pay off. Look at Dick Higgins, how much he lost on his Something Else Press, like almost half a million.

LM: May I ask a stupid question? Why didn't it pay off? Because, isn't part of the idea that it's low-cost and multiple distribution . . .

GM: No one was buying it, in those days. Nobody was buying at all. We opened up a store on Canal Street in . . . what was it? . . . 1964. And we had it open I think almost all year. We didn't make one sale in that whole one year.

LM: [*Laughs.*]

GM: We did not even sell a fifty-cent item, a postage stamp sheet. And things were cheap then. You could buy V TRE papers for a quarter, you could buy George Brecht puzzles for one dollar, Yearboxes for twenty dollars.

LM: So what do they cost now?

GM: Just to give you an idea: Yearbox, a Yearbox is 250, complete set of V TREs is 350, of nine issues, and the *Water Yam*, if you can still find any around, is like around \$100. Used to be \$5.

LM: The basic thing that I wanted you to talk about was . . . concerning the chart . . . business of concretism. What do you mean by concretism and what's the history? I'll

just ask you both questions and then you can take it – the history, how you trace concretism and how that's evolved today. And secondly, what part does humour play in that and how do you trace the history of humour? Because it seems to me that your aesthetic is tied up with both of these things.

**GM:** Yeah, that's right. Well, concretism is a very simple term. It means the opposite of abstraction. So that's what the dictionary meaning means: opposite of abstraction.

**LM:** Well, this doesn't mean that a realistic painting is concrete?

**GM:** No, but the realistic painting is not realistic, it's illusionistic. Right?

**LM:** Uh huh.

**GM:** So it's not concrete, therefore. Concrete painting would be ... oh ... something like Ay-O's holes. You know, the holes are concrete, they're not illusion. If you painted the holes to look like holes, they would not be concrete any more, they would be illusionistic. Many people call realistic paintings by the wrong terminology. Like Rembrandt or Da Vinci. They're not realistic at all, they're illusionistic. Now the first concrete painting would be ... oh ... like Chinese abstract calligraphy. That's concrete. There's no illusion about it.

**LM:** Because of gesture being ...

**GM:** Yeah, because he writes a character. Now [its] same thing in music. You can have illusionistic music, you can have abstract music, you can have concrete music. Or you can have poetry the same way. Now in music, let's say, if you have an orchestra play, that's abstract because the sounds are all done artificially by musical instruments. But if that orchestra is trying to imitate a storm, say, like Debussy or Ravel does it, that's illusionistic now. It's still not realistic. But if you're going to use noises like the clapping of the audience or farting or whatever, now that's concrete. Or street-car sounds, you know. Or a whole bunch of dishes falling down from the shelf: that's concrete. Nothing illusionistic about it. Or abstract. So the same thing with action. You have a ballet, which is very abstract. You make completely concrete abstract gestures ... nothing to do with everyday life. So it's very stylised, very abstract. You can be illusionistic, too; in a ballet where you try to imitate something, like a swan, the movement of [a] swan; that's still not realistic. Realistic would be, let's say, if you marched in a circle, just walked in a circle, like they had a ballet like that. These two artists, they did Stravinsky's ballet in one version like that where the soldiers just marched throughout the whole piece in a circle. That I would call a concrete ballet.

**LM:** What were the best examples in the visual and plastic arts?

**GM:** For concrete?

**LM:** Yeah, what were the things that most influenced you, because I know, I want to try to get you [to be] a little more specific.

**GM:** Well, the ready-made is the most concrete thing. Cannot be more concrete than the ready-made.

**LM:** Because it is what it is.

**GM:** Right, so that's extreme concrete. There's no illusion about it, it's not abstract. Most concrete is the ready-made. Now, Duchamp thought mainly about ready-made objects. John Cage extended it to ready-made sound. George Brecht extended it furthermore ... well, together with Ben Vautier ... into ready-made actions, everyday

actions, so for instance a piece of George Brecht where he turned a light on, and off, okay? That's the piece. Turn the light on and then off. Now you do that every day, right?

LM: Uh huh.

GM: ... without even knowing you're performing George Brecht. That's a real concrete piece; you see, not when you do it like a stage piece especially, like every day. He says another one: two directions – yellow and red. All right, it could be street-lights changing from red to yellow. Anyway, I would give to George Brecht a lot of credit for extending that idea of ready-made into the realm of action.

LM: And Ben Vautier?

GM: And Ben Vautier, too.

LM: What sort of things did he do that were along these lines?

GM: Well, you see he would make a ready-made out of everything, like he says he would sign a war as his piece – that's a ready-made. The whole Second World War is a Ben Vautier piece.

LM: [*Laughs*] I cannot focus when I'm laughing.

GM: Okay.

LM: So the idea of signing ... didn't he sign the world?

GM: World God, everything, end of the world. Now he is taking the ready-made to absurdity, to the absurd end. He leaves nothing untouched; he signs everything. Therefore, everything is Ben Vautier. So there is a humour coming in already. But otherwise humour, there's a lot of humour in Futurist's Theatre, there's also humour in just straight vaudeville, like Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton. There's a lot of humour in musical humour, like Spike Jones. Now they may not have a very direct influence, but they were still there, so there's still that tradition of doing funny concerts and funny music. And Bob Watts was sort of keen on humour. And Ben Vautier again, but I would say I was mostly concerned with humour, I mean like that's my main interest, is humour. And Bob Watts had a lot of it, that concern. George Brecht, I don't know ... maybe quite a lot, too. But generally most Fluxus people tended to have a concern with humour.

LM: Do you think that that's something that had been lacking in the scene in general?

GM: Right, yeah. Even in Futurist times humour was sort of very incidental. I mean, they were very darn serious with their serious manifestos. We came out with funny manifestos. I mean, they would never write funny manifestos. The results may have looked funny but like they didn't really intend it to be so funny. Like they, you know, they were more interested in shock value than the humour value. So lots of boxes we made are so very humorous, films, everything, concerts, sports events, foods ... whatever we did, like even serious things like a Mass ended up to be humorous.

LM: Yeah, I know, I was a gorilla. That was one of my first contacts with you, yeah, at Douglass.

GM: Yeah, you were a gorilla.

LM: I remember the first time I met you was when we were going to do a concert or events at Stonybrook, but it never came off.

GM: It never materialised and we collected lots of material and lots of pieces ...

LM: And the next thing I think we did ...

GM: And he just short-changed on us and we had all the programmes printed. They were printed on dice ...

LM: Actual dice?

GM: Real dice.

LM: Really? Do you have any of those?

GM: Nope. The dice manufacturer kept them because we didn't pay the whole bill.

LM: [Laughs] So now he has useless dice.

GM: Lots of useless dice and printed programmes.

LM: They would be valuable, too.

GM: Sure.

LM: He probably could sell them now and get his money back.

GM: Yeah. Except he probably erased them and used them for something else.

LM: All right. The idea I want to talk a little bit more about [is] the idea of concretism. When you are writing a piece – I'm just saying what occurs to me based on the experiences I've had with you – when you are writing a piece or you're trying to do something, the thing that's always most important to you, it seemed to me, is that the piece have something to do with the characteristics of the site or the situation that the content of the work deals with.

GM: Well, see, that's not exactly concretism. That would be called functionalism. That I would describe as follows. That's when the piece that you are doing has an inherent connection to the form, you know, so give you example. Uh, we did the whole series of aprons, Okay?

LM: Uh huh.

GM: A non-functional apron would be to print some flowers on it. Okay? Now that has nothing to do with the fact that it's an apron or the fact that you wear it on top of your body. Right?

LM: Uh huh.

GM: Let's say you print McLuhan's face on it, or whatever, or Beatles or whatever is popular, you know. It has nothing to do with the fact that it's an apron or that you are wearing on top of your stomach. Okay, now that I would call non-functionalism. I wasn't interested in that. I was interested in functionalism so therefore when I came and designed aprons I designed aprons that had something to do with the shape that was going to cover you. So, for instance one version was Venus de Milo, both sides blown up so that when you covered your, from neck to knee, you were covered with this Venus de Milo – photographic image. Okay. Or another apron was image of a stomach right on top of your stomach. So, I would call that functionalism. Now it can be applied to everything. For instance, we did a series of stationery. Remember?

LM: Uh huh.

GM: The envelopes were like gloves and the letters were like hands. Now, again, the function is now ... an envelope and a glove ... same function: the glove encloses the hand, right?

LM: Uh huh.

GM: An envelope encloses the hand. Now, a non-functional envelope would be an envelope

showing let's say lots of flowers, all right? And the letterhead may be wheat or something. So the one has no connection with the other, and the fact that why flowers have to be on an envelope, they could be on a carpet, too, you know.

**LM:** Uh huh.

**GM:** Now that's the difference. That's not concretism. That's functionalism.

**LM:** Do these same principles, though, apply to performance, Fluxus performance?

**GM:** Yeah, right. Well, not as much. You see, the reason I am so concerned with that is that that's an architect's training, I mean, that's the way [an] architect thinks – he thinks in functionalism – otherwise he's not an architect, he's a sculptor or stage designer. If he's an architect or engineer, he'll think in a functional way. Or a mathematician thinks in a functional way, also. Function is a mathematical term. Now in performance, to a certain degree, of course, if you're going to have a harpsichord and you want to do a piece, then obviously you should use the harpsichord for that piece. You don't have to play on the keyboard, you know, and play Couperin or something, but you should use some characteristic of the harpsichord: its shape, its lightness or the way the strings respond to objects being thrown into it or whatever. That would be functional way of using it. And a non-functional way, I would say, would be if you, say, stood next to the harpsichord and played a violin, you know. Now, we have done a piece like that, too, where a performer played the harmonica inside the harpsichord, but that was as a joke; in other words, you thought, he opens up the harpsichord . . .

**LM:** That was me that did that.

**GM:** Yeah. That's a good piece. You thought, you know, the audience thought, well, you're going to perform something on the strings or something inside and then you hear harmonica sound coming as a surprise, so it's sort of like a surprise piece. But definitely, see, it's more obvious to be functional, easier, let's say, to be functional in performance.

**LM:** Easier.

**GM:** Yeah, definitely, because, you know, you're given not as many limitations, you're given, in fact, help. You're getting all those instruments and you may let yourself use them. So you end up using them. You're being functional then. It's a little harder when you are trying to design objects because the tendency is to become just decorative and just apply decoration on top of things that have nothing to do with what you are doing. You know, it's like, look at the stores that sell stationeries; I mean, most of the stationeries have no function at all, no relationship to the idea of the envelope, which means enclosing something else. Now Jaime Davidovich did a functional piece. He wrinkled up a piece of paper and then painted the wrinkles of paper so that it came out like constantly wrinkled paper.

**LM:** Printed as wrinkles?

**GM:** Yeah. I would say that's more or less of a functional. He used the function of a paper, he did something that the paper, that is characteristic of the paper, you know, and didn't print, you know, something that had no connection with the paper.

**LM:** Well, okay, while we're on this terminology then, how does functionalism – which is sort of a favourite concern of yours because of your architecture background, how does that differ from automorphism that you have under Bob Morris?

GM: Oh, it's entirely different thing now. Automorphism means a thing making itself.

LM: Uh huh.

GM: Okay. So, now, and he was about the only one that I know that practised that form of art. And I coined that term, he, nobody, I think, has used that term, automorphism.

LM: Uh huh.

GM: By that is meant, for instance . . . I'll give you, some classic examples of this . . . he built a box which contained its own making – sound of its own making, a tape, the making of that box. And that's all it was, it was just a box with tape inside of its own making. He made a filing system, the whole like a library-card filing system.

LM: I know that piece . . . a file that refers to itself.

GM: . . . where every card described its own making: where he got the paper, where automorphism, you know, but, like, that has nothing to do with functionalism.

LM: Or concretism?

GM: Well, it's very concrete.

LM: I suppose I'd had a looser definition . . .

GM: It's a branch of concretism.

LM: That's what I thought.

GM: You see, it's a branch of concretism.

LM: I thought functionalism would be similar, too, because functionalism means that the concern of the piece, let's call it, is with the characteristics of the medium itself.

GM: Yeah, in a sense it is functional, but it doesn't have to be. It could still be automorphic.

LM: Uh huh.

GM: It's not a requirement. It's nice if it is. Uh, but it's not a prerequisite, you know, anyway, it's an entire[ly] different thing; it's like saying apple and sweet. All right, apple can be sweet but it can also be sour. Heh, heh, you know.

LM: Uh huh.

GM: And maybe it's nicer when it's sweet or the other way around, but the two are still separate things.

LM: I want to just get a few catch-all kind of questions here. I wanted to know if you made a connection between Fluxus and Dada, in that Fluxus is a name that's applied to, let's say – for lack of a better word – a certain sort of aesthetic or approach to expression, and then there were words, this idea of a word being kind of invented to represent a sensibility – Dada has that.

GM: Yeah, well . . . there's nothing wrong there.

LM: And then there's Merz . . .

GM: It became that, eventually, after a few years . . . it became I would say not a group, but more like a way of life, you know. Now Dada was definitely a tight group with a strict membership. Fluxus is not. It's more like a way of doing things, you know. Very informal, sort of like a joke group. It's like if you ask people like George Brecht, 'Are you Fluxus?', then he'll just laugh at you. It's more like Zen than Dada in that sense. If you ask a Zen monk, 'Are you Zen?' he probably won't reply by saying 'Yes, I'm Zen.' He'll give you some odd answer . . . like hit you on the head with a stick. So, it's not that rational of a group. It's not easy to describe it in just a sentence . . . its characteristics. But I think, like, you carry many things over. It has the humour; it does

have the functionalism, a lot of that; it is very concrete, I think; it has influences of, like, John Cage, tremendous influence, and Duchamp, and to a slight degree maybe Yves Klein by way of Ben Vautier. And in music, the same thing, concretism again, like humour may branch out into absurdity and things like that, or absurd theatre. Now by monomorphism – you mentioned monomorphism – that's an important item which should be mentioned. That's where it differs from Happenings. See, happenings are polymorphic, which means many things happening at the same time. That's fine, that's like baroque theatre. You know, there would be everything going on: horses jumping and fireworks and waterplay and somebody reciting poems and Louis XIV eating a dinner at the same time. So, that's polymorphism. *Poly* means many forms. Monomorphism, that means more one form. Now, reason for that is that, you see, lot of Fluxus is gaglike. That's part of the humour, it's like a gag. In fact, I wouldn't put it in any higher class than a gag, maybe a good gag.

LM: Really?

GM: Yes.

LM: You don't consider Fluxus art?

GM: A high art form? No. I think it's good, inventive gags. That's what we're doing. And there's no reason why a gag, some people, if they want to call it art, fine, you know. Like I think gags of Buster Keaton are really [a] high art form, you know, heh, heh, sight gags. We do not just sight gags: sound gags, object gags, all kinds of gags. Now, you cannot have a joke in multi-forms. In other words, you cannot have six jokers standing and telling you six jokes simultaneously. It just wouldn't work. Has to be one joke at a time.

LM: Because jokes apply to our linear expectations.

GM: Right. The whole structure's linear and you cannot have even two jokes simultaneously; you don't get it. So the whole structure of a joke is linear and monomorphic and I think that's why our concept pieces tend to be that way; it's like a gag. You cannot have three gags simultaneously either, you're just going to miss two of them. You'll get one and miss two. Watch Buster Keaton. He'll never have two gags at the same time. They follow one another very quickly, but they will not be simultaneous. And if they're simultaneous, usually they're bad gags. That's one reason I think Marx Brothers are not that good on gags because they overcrowd them. They just, you know, put many gags together and then you just miss it unless you see their film five, six times and you can sort the gags all out.

LM: Question, then. If you, okay, you consider Fluxus not really a group but a sensibility, kind of, and you don't consider it high art, you consider it gag.

GM: Low art. Yeah.

LM: Yeah. What do you consider the state of the arts at this point and what do you consider high art?

GM: Well, there's a lot, too much high art, in fact; that's why we're doing Fluxus.

LM: Compare Fluxus and ...

GM: And high art?

LM: And high art today.

GM: First of all, high art is very marketable. You can sell for half a million, you can sell for

100,000. You know, very marketable. Second, the names are big names, they're marketable names. Like, you just have to mention the name and everybody knows. Like you mention Warhol, Lichtenstein, everybody knows. Mention Ben Vautier, even George Brecht, very few people will know. And now even when they say a *Yearbox* sells for 250, there are very few collectors who will collect them, they're just special collectors of Fluxus things and they're willing to pay those prices because they're just not available any more. But museums don't buy it. Now high art is something you find in museums. Fluxus you don't find in museums. Museums just don't have it. The only exception is Beaubourg and that's only because of Pontus Hulten, and even then, he has all Fluxus things in the library, not in [the] collection of art, but in the library, he has documents. So he doesn't consider it art either; he considers it a document.

LM: But that doesn't bother you?

GM: No, in fact it pleases me.

LM: Why does it please you?

GM: Because we're never intended to be high art. We came out to be like a bunch of jokers. In fact, I gave couple times an answer to one banker asked me when we applied for a mortgage. They asked Bob Watts what was his profession, he said, well he was a professor for twenty-five years. Then they asked what do I make and what do I do, and I said, 'I make jokes!' 'Oh,' they said, 'you're not going to make a joke out of the mortgage now will you?' [*Laughs.*]

LM: Little did they know. [*Laughs.*]

GM: [*Laughs.*] Now, like our early manifestos, when they were still serious, like the first or second year, they were all anti-art sort of, and all tended to be towards sort of forms that everybody could do. You see, it's all connected with John Cage. When John Cage says that you can listen to street noise and get art experience from that, then you don't need musicians to make music. Everybody can be his own musician and listen to street noises. If you get art experience from George Brecht's piece of turning the light on and off every evening or morning, everybody is that, you see? You're leaving the whole professional artist [thing] completely. If you can get from everyday life experience, from everyday ready-mades, you can substitute art experience with that, then you completely eliminate the need of artists. All I would add is that I would say, well, even better would be to obtain an art experience from a chair by Charles Eames let's say. Then you have a good chair you can sit on, plus you have an art experience when you sit on it. You kill two birds with one stone and still have no artist needed, but you need then somebody like Charles Eames [*Laughs.*]

LM: So that's getting back to sort of like functionalism again.

GM: That you see was my ... I was pushing him.

LM: Uh huh. Okay.

GM: Bob Watts was probably the one who disagreed most with functionalism and you'll notice that there are many of his pieces that are completely non-functional.

LM: Well, some of them are.

GM: For instance, postcards.

LM: They make a joke of function sometimes.

GM: No, there's just no connection. He'll make a postcard that has nothing to do with a

postcard. Now, Ben Vautier will do a very functional postcard where he has one called 'Postman's Choice.' On one side of the postcard, he'll write one address with a stamp and on another, another address with a stamp. That's functionalism.

**GM:** He's using the medium for a piece. Now the postcard is used, he understands the medium and he uses the medium for his piece. It's closely connected to the way [the] piece is composed. But if you stamp your own face on the postcard, so what?

## SUSAN L JAROSI: SELECTIONS FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH BILLIE MACIUNAS

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Almost twenty years after George Maciunas' death in May 1978, Billie Maciunas speaks here for the first time about her nine-month relationship with George Maciunas and their three-month marriage. The two met in the summer of 1977 in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where George had retreated from New York City. The couple was married twice in February 1978: first by civil ceremony in Massachusetts and then by Geoff Hendricks in New York City as part of the Fluxus New Year's Cabaret (25 February 1978). The following interview took place at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, in two sessions – 9 October and 27 November 1996.

**Susan Jarosi:** Tell me how you first met George.

**Billie Maciunas:** How I met George was that I had been in New York and I was doing temporary work and I had gone there with this fairly romantic notion of writing poetry. But I met a woman who had me do some medical transcription, and she eventually suggested that I needed to get out of New York and she knew this place that I could go. She knew George. So I called up this number and learned that the only thing he cared about was that I was quiet and I didn't smoke. So I went up there [to Great Barrington, Massachusetts]. I owned nothing. I arrived on a bus with one bag of clothing. When I got off the bus in this little town, George just said, 'That's all you have?' He had that one lens covered. I said, 'Yes.' And he, as was his very characteristic style, just began efficiently bustling around getting things organised and doing things. He didn't really seem to question extraneous circumstances like 'Why don't you have any belongings', or 'Where are you coming from', or anything like that.

**SJ:** What was your motivation for going up there? To write?

**BM:** Just to move. To move out of New York. I always wanted to write. I did finally produce a book. It is a book that came out of the aftermath of George's death, so it has a lot of stuff about George in it. I stayed first in an outbuilding there that used to be a machine shop, and I fixed it up. Then as winter closed in, George told me I could come live in the attic. I had no money at all. I didn't know about Fluxus. I didn't know what George was doing. I knew he was an interesting person, that's about it. But I really kept to myself and just went about my own business as much as possible.

**SJ:** Do you think something connected you to George on some other level? Hypothetically a lot of the people who came together to form the group known as Fluxus were misfits or outcasts. Do you think maybe there was an element of that? Why do you think George attracted people like that?

**BM:** Because he was a refugee himself. He had to make himself at home in a totally new place. And that must have been difficult. Lithuanians are a small, very clannish and ethnically identifiable group in terms of culture and language. I think the Fluxus group in a certain sense was a family for him. I remember reading something that he told Hollis [Melton], Jonas' [Mekas] wife at the time, that home-making was the highest art. And what did he do? He went to Soho and made all these homes for these artists. He gave me a home. Really he gave a lot of these people a core place to identify with. I think he was a home-maker in the highest art sense of the word too. I think he wanted to care for people. Maybe that's why so many people identified him as a dictator, because they resisted and didn't like it; he wanted to organise and had a certain way of looking at things and doing things, and I think he was fairly patriarchal, being strong-minded and having a code and a set of values that he would like to carry through. But I don't think he was a dictator in any sense of the word.

**SJ:** Do you think you might have been attracted to that aspect of him, in that he was a home-maker, he knew how to provide and bring people together and make them feel comfortable or safe?

**BM:** What attracted me to him, I remember at one time being in the kitchen and seeing him and actually feeling, suddenly seeing myself as a person who was very afraid of strangers, and particularly men. I think George was so cultured he didn't try to impose himself on me. He didn't have any of those normal games of trying to dominate or impress. George just sort of hung back and would do small things. He invited me to a harpsichord concert; we went to a movie. I just found he was more interesting, more interesting to talk with, more lively, more ... you can imagine. He was the first intelligent person that I'd ever met, that's how I've often described it. I didn't really know what an intelligent person was until I met George. I think George was protective, really. He just saw me as a person who needed protection, and he did it.

He did that for me, and I don't know what I would have done if he hadn't. In some sense it was idyllic. He was amused by me; he was amused by my naiveté and ignorance. I remember one time I was walking across the yard, and I wasn't aware he was on the porch, but he was there, until he called my name. And I looked up. It was very bright outside and the porch was dark, so I had to actually go up to the screen and look in to see that he was there. He invited me in, so I went in and sat down. He loved Monteverdi operas, and that was playing on the stereo. It was beautiful. But I was in another world really. I was sitting with my back to him, and he said, 'This is being sung by nuns'. I just kind of turned around – I couldn't make anything of the comment. So I shrugged and turned back around. And he laughed! I was struck by the fact that he laughed at what I now see as insouciance, but also total non-culture, that I couldn't appreciate ...

**SJ:** But why should that be anything that you should have appreciated, that it was sung by nuns?

**BM:** Well, that's the thing that I couldn't figure out at the time. *[Laughs.]*

**SJ:** I cannot figure it out now.

**BM:** *[Laughs.]* I don't know. It meant something to him. But maybe a normal person would have said, 'Yes, and ...' Or, 'Were you ever in a choir?' or 'Did you grow up with this music?' So, I wasn't used to someone finding that delightful, amusing or funny and showing it.

**SJ:** Did you feel strange about participating in George's fantasies at first?

**BM:** I did feel, as he got sicker, that it was fairly overwhelming and it was happening very quickly. He was very sick. I had learned some sort of relaxation body techniques that I was trying. Doing that, because it required him lying still and just free-associating, he began to tell me more things.

**SJ:** So this accelerated as he got sicker?

**BM:** Right. I wrote to a psychiatrist, I think, that I knew from whom I'd learned this relaxation technique. I wrote and told him that I was a little bit frightened that this was happening. He said, 'Run. It's evil, blah, blah ...' Of course I was not going to run. I had, one, a lot of compassion for George and interest in his situation, and I felt that I was really the only person around that was helping him. Now, I see that someone else would have, but I didn't know that at the time. He said I was helping him and there was no one else around and that was enough. And, two, I didn't know really where to run to. So I stayed there, and as it turned out Hala Pietkowicz came into the kitchen one day. She was another sort of a caretaker. Anyway, she was a friend of George's, and she was one of the few friends of mine after George died. She came and said, 'George wants to get married so that his social security won't be wasted after he dies.' I said, 'Well, I'll marry George if he comes to me and tells me that he loves me and he wants to get married'. She said, 'Well, now don't make it too difficult for him'. *[Laughs.]* So I said, 'Well, okay, at least some kind of indication that it's more than social security.'

**SJ:** Did you have those kind of feelings for him?

**BM:** Um. I did. I ... let's put it this way ... I felt life was easier with George. George was one of the kindest people that I had known. I had had a very hard life. He didn't treat me as stupidly as many others have. He seemed to care about me. He needed me. I thought he was a gentleman. I thought he was a gentleman and cultured and a lovely person. And I would agree to marry him because ... just because of that. It was a sort of humane kind of decision. That's the level I wanted it at. I didn't care about social security. That may be part of my romanticism. But, at any rate, he did come and say that he would be very pleased if I would marry him – he didn't talk about social security or anything like that. So, we did it.

**SJ:** Do you think it was something he felt he had to do before he died?

**BM:** I do. He got very sick. Actually, I went to Maryland to visit my family at one point. He had told someone there as he got sicker (and he was in terrible pain) that he wanted to wait until I came back to go to the hospital. But he did not wait. He went. There he was diagnosed as having terminal cancer. I only found out about all this when I came back. But we had already agreed to marry. I remember as I was saying good-bye, I kissed him very little like, gentle little kiss on the lips, and he said, 'My

first kiss'. You know, he was a virgin and he died a virgin. He had not had a sexual relationship with anyone.

**SJ:** Did George tell you, 'This is how I want to get married. This is what it's going to be like'. Did you have any indication?

**BM:** No. Well, we decided to do it simply, you know, and we had just the civil ceremony in Great Barrington. So we did it legally too. I don't know whose idea it was to do it legally, but of course that would have been important for social security. After George died, things changed very, very rapidly. People that had not seemed mean before were suddenly mean. His family, especially his sister, and Bob Watts were calling and telling me that George owed them vast amounts of money, that he'd been a bum all his life, that they had given him all this money. I was saying, 'I don't know anything about that; put it in writing; don't bother me; I'm grieving'.

Barbara Moore was upset that I might be throwing things away in the house that would be valuable. Everyone seemed to be sort of invading. And I was fairly ignorant, that much is true. I didn't know the history of Fluxus. I didn't know the value of things in the house. George hadn't clued me in on it. His papers came back from the hospital after he died covered with figures, chaotic figures of him trying to figure out what his debts were to Bob Watts. It was really pathetic. But he had told me that he didn't feel that he owed Bob anything. I think he ended up making money for everyone around him. Including me. But he did not leave a will. I only benefited because by law in Massachusetts the wife inherits two-thirds of the estate. But at the time his works were being sold for a couple of dollars a piece in Barbara Moore's gallery.

What ended up happening is that I got caught up in this sort of scavenger hunt for George's things. I had a vague notion they were culturally valuable, but they didn't appear to be financially valuable and it didn't matter. Nevertheless, I was angry at the way I was being treated. Barbara was saying, 'Well, you don't know anything about Fluxus'. People were saying these things to other people, actually not directly to me. Nijole, George's sister, was telling everyone that George had said he was disappointed in me before he died. That came back to me. Jean Brown told me that on the phone. They were selling the house that I was, you know, as I was living there. I was upstairs in the attic, and I heard footsteps and went down to investigate. They said, 'Well, we're moving in. The house has been sold'. So, with Hollis' help I packed everything up and escaped in the middle of the night, and it was just like being an outlaw.

**SJ:** Who had sold the house?

**BM:** I guess Bob and Nijole considered it theirs and they arranged to sell it. I did stay as a so-called caretaker for a while, but I couldn't take care of it. I had no idea what to do and I was totally overwhelmed. I had no money to take care of the place. The pipes froze in the house and broke. It was like a glacier in there. A part of me did not care – I didn't feel I was being treated well and that life was impossible. Basically life became better with George and after he died it reverted back to what it had been. While it was possible with George to be spiritual in the highest sense of the word – to do things for love – other people would not be able to see that. George's sister, for example, thought that I was an adventuress who had taken advantage of him. This was really disillusioning and heartbreaking for me, because I wanted them to be my family. I was

really crushed. However, I did have some experience with being on my own, so I just fought back. I did get out of there and went up to upstate New York. I hired an attorney. It was a mess. No one knew what anything was; no one knew where anything was. I had not looked in all the boxes. When I did I found original posters by John Lennon. All sorts of things that I did recognise; many things I didn't. But I kept it together. I received some welfare checks in upstate New York, but I also got things out of those boxes like the posters and went to New York and sold them. I sold them very cheaply, to live. I sold a bunch of posters for like \$2000 to Jean Brown's son's gallery there. Of course, shortly after that John Lennon was killed, so they were worth a lot. But I never asked for what they were worth.

So, somewhere in there I decided [to write] the manuscript. Then I took it to George Quasha in Rhinebeck, New York, who said he would give me 500 copies in exchange for George's IBM composer. I said, 'Deal.' So that composer was the composer that George typed all of his posters and graphic design work on. And I went to Portugal. I chose Portugal, because in George's collection of music there was a tape called *Portuguese Harpsichord*. I just thought, 'Portugal – well, don't know what's going on there; it's not industrial; it sounds quaint; I know it will be poetic.'

**SJ:** How soon after George died did you go to Rhinebeck?

**BM:** Maybe about a year. I stayed in Portugal about two years. In that amount of time, the lawyer discovered George still had a loft in New York on Green Street. He'd never told me. I don't even know if he remembered. So they sold the loft. I came back. Suddenly I had some money. I used the money to educate myself. I started my undergraduate education at age thirty-four, and I went to Brown. That was also a stroke of luck: it's the only school I applied to; I didn't know it was an avant-garde school; I chose it because they taught Portuguese and because it was in a nice Portuguese-speaking area. I used George's money to finance my life while I did that.

**SJ:** Was George's sister close with him?

**BM:** There were huge gaps in her knowledge of George. I was stunned when I was learning that she felt George owed them vast sums of money and essentially that he was a ne'er-do-well. It's as if she didn't really . . . He must have protected her or kept her out of it in some way as he had with me in the beginning. Unless you knew what to ask him, you would not find out.

**SJ:** So with certain parts of his life he was very private?

**BM:** Yeah, it seemed to be confined to the group. He didn't extend it into his family life. I gather that his mother was disappointed that he wasn't an art teacher. You know they could only imagine a very straight life and that he wasn't. That's the picture I get. And so I think they could only imagine the readily available myths about me. They could not imagine that someone might show up in his life that actually . . . that they could not imagine all of this as a romantic piece, for sure. [Laughs.] I was thwarting their access to valuable property that I didn't even know about but they knew about, and what Nijole said to me was, if I remember right, 'You came at the last minute and messed everything up'. I think that was an element in George's plans. I think he intended to mess everything up. I believe in a certain sense that I was an object in George's death piece. It's no surprise that he would choose someone with no visible roots with some kind of poetic aspirations.

**SJ:** When did you realise that that might be the case?

**BM:** Fairly soon, but I wasn't able to articulate it really well. I tended to be more of a romantic than I am now. And I had a certain way of looking at it all. I saw the symbology in the *Black and White* wedding piece – as a highly romantic blend of love and death in the same thing. I think it was that on one level and that was okay with George that I saw it that way. The summer I was up in Massachusetts I read all of Dostoevsky. George had it in his collection. He was keen that I read *The Idiot*. He said he thought Myshkin Prince was the most attractive character – that's the character who strays into these bourgeois and complicated situations, who doesn't know what is going on, who commits *faux pas* all over the place and ends up being friends to a murderer and a madwoman. In other words, the fool. I think that was the role I played there, and that I did commit *faux pas*, but that it was revealing of what the Fluxus group had become at that point too.

**SJ:** How did you feel about that? Did you feel like a pawn or did you feel like you were helping George by playing this role?

**BM:** I felt like I was a part of something bigger. I acquiesced to what George was doing. I thought he was a very poetic person, and the whole piece was poetic, the whole wedding and everything. I played it out as honestly as I could with whatever resources I had.

**SJ:** You indicated that part of this poetic purpose was to expose what had happened to the Fluxus group. You seem to be aware of that, but you took it a step further and used it more as a way to model your life.

**BM:** Let's see now. I don't think I was extremely conscious of myself as a Fluxobject at the time, or that I was exposing anybody by being a Fluxobject, but I think that's what happened. Now I look back and it seems in retrospect that George could see a lot more than I did. He could see me in the role of the idiot. I had to puzzle it all out. I was truly naive about all of it. But I was a very wilful and strong person as well. And when I became suspicious, I just did it the way I could. Now I can see it more, I can see it in fuller terms – less on the romantic side and more on the Fluxus side. There's an Ay-O letter that's so important. It's a thank-you letter, because before I moved from Massachusetts I had ... down in the basement was this rainbow room that Ay-O had done. I had found out what it was and called him up and said, 'What would you like me to do with this?' He said, 'Well, with your permission I would like to come to the farm and burn it'. So I said, 'Wow, great,' because that was to me, that was something, that was an antidote to all this. 'Don't touch a thing, don't throw away anything that George has signed'. You know, all this fetishistic behaviour, which wasn't like George at all. So he [Ay-O] did come to the farm with a friend of his. We hauled it up to the meadow, and we burned it at night. It was wonderful. There was a product that came out of it – a Japanese ritual/funeral/ceremony. We went the next day and collected ashes and put them in boxes with chopsticks. I think I had it signed by Ay-O, and it's now in the Silverman collection. But he sent me a letter on rainbow paper thanking me for that, and he called it *Romantic Piece for George Maciunas*.

**SJ:** You don't have any contact with Ay-O any longer? He seems to be one person who was 'nice' to you.

**BM:** Yes. He was nice to me, but beyond that, he put things back in perspective. You know, it was like, 'I can do whatever I want with this. It's not great art, it's my creation, you know, and I'm offering it up to George.' But again, the romantic element: the ritual, the funeral celebration, and also the celebration of the wedding – the marriage – by including me in it and calling it *Romantic Piece for George*. He reaffirmed for me the fact that I could do what I wanted. I wasn't a pawn of these people.

**SJ:** How did George come up with the idea for the Fluxus Cabaret?

**BM:** He thought about it and one day he just said, 'Well, let's do this.' Let's do this piece. The Cabaret was not planned out step by step. Everyone who came would do a piece. He would say, 'We should have a Renaissance party'. A week later we'd be doing it, but not just a little party. With costumes, and music, and food, and fascinating people, and dancing. I had never seen anything like that. Or, 'Let's have this Halloween party', and there would be all these amazing people there in wonderful costumes.

**SJ:** You were happy and willing to do the *Fluxwedding*?

**BM:** I thought it would be . . . well, interesting is a neutral word, and yet fun doesn't cover it. It was a symbolic and poetic thing. I thought it was a beautiful idea. I knew anything that I did with George would be right. It's hard for me to tell really how people were reacting to me because it was a public gathering and a performance atmosphere, and I don't know that in that scheme of things I was necessarily of great interest as much as the piece itself. George and I had already gotten married, so that was old news basically. Everyone was into the performances of the artists there.

**SJ:** Do you know why George picked certain people to have these roles?

**BM:** I don't know that George picked them as much as everyone came forth and picked their own roles.

**SJ:** Was this decided the day of the Cabaret?

**BM:** I don't know all the makings that went into it. They'd had lots of practice with this kind of thing and it just, as they say, came together. But I know Geoff [Hendricks] was responsible for the wedding album afterwards. He had already done a divorce album for him and Bici, in which they cut everything in half, including the album. But Geoff, I think, is obvious because he's gay, and he was openly gay at the time. So it seemed clear that he should be officiating at such a wedding. And the others, I don't know why they chose these roles. Alison [Knowles] always dressed in this way – she was not a frilly or a so-called feminine dresser. So that was not unusual for her either.

**SJ:** I want to know first of all why you both wore wedding gowns in the *Fluxwedding* – why George wanted to be a bride – and then, why you were also a bride and not a groom.

**BM:** One of George's fantasies was that we travel in Europe as elegant sisters, as he put it. So he always saw us as two women – as a couple. I think he just wanted to wear a dress too. [Laughs.] I could do whatever I wanted, really, and I didn't think about wearing men's clothes. I just accepted the way that we'd already established – that we were two women together.

**SJ:** Do you think that this might relate to the Romanian folk tradition known as the wedding of the dead – where if a girl dies before she is married, the community gives her both a wedding and a funeral. I'm thinking of this in relation to George wanting to

be a bride. For him it might have represented a special rite of passage that needed to be fulfilled before he died.

**BM:** I think he was very tied to Lithuania. I'm not sure why. He would sometimes wake up, speaking Lithuanian – ask me what time it was in Lithuanian. So the language was still something really present to him. I think this custom, this myth, might have been known to him and forgotten, or it could be something unconscious ... I know that death is represented as a bride in different cultures. And sometimes wearing white. I think that this was very much a subtext going on at the wedding, as well as the exchange of clothes [in *Black and White*]. Because when George ended up with the white dress, basically he was going into death, and I was staying behind really in the place of order and reality and taking on a lot more than I started out with, a lot more baggage.

Fluxus has this element of humour and I get the impression that for some people that's all it is – it's just who can make the most elegant joke. But that's what keeps people guessing about what it is, because there are so many layers and levels – it's just like a poem – and every age it's able to be reinterpreted. George was, I think, one of those who was deceptive, in fact, my name for him was the Trickster. He was like Vulcan. He could make things out of nothing. He could present one side, but really be another thing. He seemed asexual, seemed almost to some people like an autocrat and a dictator, seemed almost like he was simple-minded, but the levels at which he thought belie that characterisation, in my opinion. Just the *Black and White Wedding* piece shows that, for me. He may have gotten very serious at his death, but it all had to be there somewhere anyway.

**SJ:** Did you realise that there would be ramifications because of doing this piece publicly, that people might have a window into your private life?

**BM:** I knew there would be ramifications from the beginning, because George was coming out with something that had been hidden. I remember a very funny event that happened when his sister was at the Massachusetts house, and George was *very* sick. He was lying down in the living-room on a pallet he had there. He had all these cabinets on the walls with closed doors and in one of them were wigs on pegs. His sister went over and opened one and there were all these wigs in there and she just closed it. She didn't say anything. She didn't say, 'What are these wigs doing here?', or anything. So that's why I call it denial rather than ignorance.

**SJ:** After you did the piece publicly, did it have any effect on what George did privately after that? Did he continue to cross-dress, or did he stop, or was he getting too sick?

**BM:** He was getting too sick. I put those clothes ... I packed them up, and I think I gave them to Barbara Moore, if I'm not mistaken. He started to lose interest even in music and became more and more detached from things. He was so concentrated on his pain. I was trying to help by cooking things that I thought would help prolong his life. I mean, I actually thought he was going to live in spite of everything. I was almost spending all my time making soybean things. They were probably the worst thing. I mean, he probably couldn't digest it. But the doctor kindly told me that I might have prolonged his life by a week or two by doing that.

**SJ:** Can you talk about how George gradually introduced you to the cross-dressing? Up until the public piece.

**BM:** I was looking for some warm clothes in the closets. Because the house was a twenty-room manor house and was full of closets all over and things, odd things all over the place. One of the oddest things was that there were all these women's dresses in the closets. So I said, 'Why are there all these women's clothes?' He told me, 'Well, I like to dress up; and anytime you want a dress you can take whatever you'd like.' And we began to dress up together. We did things like both dress in dresses and heels . . . I considered it drag for myself also . . . go into New York and walk around Canal Street where people knew him, but seemed not to bat an eye. He didn't disguise his voice; he wore those glasses. They were saying, 'Hi, George!' But no one seemed to question or give us strange looks. It was the time of my life. I had a great time with George.

Either then or some point [later] he told me he liked to be beaten and would I beat him. There was a ritual. He said he was masochistic. I did find in his belongings one of these sado-masochistic correspondence things. That was sort of forbidden and adult to me at the time. It was just one of those pornographic . . . Well, it was like a magazine that had addresses of people who were into this, photographs . . . The first time it happened I was up in the attic. I didn't know he was coming up there. I heard this clonk, clonk, clonk as he came up the three flights of stairs and then he was knocking at my door. I opened it and there he was. He had this dress with heels, and a wig, I think, and this old mustard-coloured sweater that he always wore around there over top of all of it. He had a little whip, a little horse whip that you use with a buggy or something. He asked me if I would please tie him to the bed and hit him with the whip. And I did. I hit his legs mostly.

**SJ:** Did he explain to you why he wanted you to do this? What the ritual had to be?

**BM:** We didn't do it a lot. He said he was masochistic. He asked me if I would sometimes slap him in public. If he found it erotic I was willing to do it. It was a fun and interesting kind of role for me to play. I think it was at that time that I wrote to the psychologist, because I was a little nervous about it. I don't know whether I mentioned cross-dressing to him. But I was half shocked and half amused at [the psychologist's] response. I just thought he was over-reacting. I think I wanted some advice I could use. Something more sympathetic and with a more thorough understanding of the whole situation. He was the person who had taught me this [relaxation] technique, so I thought he could possibly have some other ideas. I don't know whether he had ever dealt with a person who had cancer or was that much in pain before. It was in that sense a call for help. I saw that he was not a person who was going to be able to help me. But, again, if George was all right with it; and I wasn't afraid of George. He was totally harmless. But I did start to have weird images more connected with my own childhood or something, of scary people in the attic and fears of being pushed down the stairs and things like that. Ghosts and bad spirits and that sort of thing. At any rate, I just decided to get into it as a role and to do what he asked.

**SJ:** Did he ever indicate how this came to be for him? What role it fulfilled, or what kind of pleasure he got out of it?

**BM:** I sensed that the exploration of his feminine side, including the cross-dressing and the masochism – although I would be reluctant to associate masochism with feminine necessarily – had something to do with his childhood. I know one time he had

appendicitis and had to be operated on without anaesthetic, and he was just put on a table in the home and cut open. He remembered it as extremely painful and frightening and traumatic, and he talked about it several times in relationship to enjoying pain. He also said he was in so much pain that the beating distracted him from the pain, the internal pain. So both those things were going on.

**SJ:** How many times did this happen?

**BM:** Two or three times. One of the things he wanted to do that he didn't was to produce a deck of cards with this theme, with he and I and others as the characters on the cards. Peter Moore actually came up and Larry Miller and Larry's girlfriend at the time [Sarah Seagull], who's also an artist. There were photographs, and Peter probably has them. There is me in a corset with a whip and others. I don't know how far we got. That was never a realised project, but I think the photos are around somewhere.

**SJ:** You said you started to have fearful images of bad things happening in the attic and falling down stairs, so it must have been touching your psyche on some level.

**BM:** Well, George was a very incongruous sight. You know, dressed up. He wasn't professional. He did it very haphazardly. One of the things he liked me to do after that was put make-up on him to make him look better. But he could be a little bit bizarre, just showing up at your door like that, and the sound of the footsteps coming up stairs, things like that, you know, uninvited. [*Laughs.*] It was a huge house. It was cold. Long winter, so dark a lot. Just the two of us. All this was new. It was a, say, anxiety-producing situation, so these images . . .

**SJ:** How did you account to yourself for the fact that the intimate part of your relationship didn't continue after he came back from the cancer treatments in Jamaica? Was he just too ill?

**BM:** Yeah, it was really heartbreaking for me to be left out. He was going to leave from his family's house to go to Jamaica, and I was not invited down to visit with the family at Eastertime. I was not asked if I wanted to go to Jamaica. I was bewildered mostly, and hurt. I could not for the life of me figure it out. It would not occur to me right off the bat that these people had their own reasons for doing it, and that they were degrading themselves. What I felt was that there was a problem with me, that I was not acceptable. He was on his way out the door to Jamaica. I was there to say good-bye, and I was crying. The tears were just . . . George was so tender, and he said, 'Don't cry. I'm going to be back soon, and I'll come back well'. And there were times when I thought he really would be well. But I don't know whether somehow other factors coming in, Watts' demand for money, his sister's demand for money, and other things were making him think that he needed to be responsible.

**SJ:** But you stopped giving the therapy.

**BM:** I did because the time that I was doing this therapy, was sort of a clutch at straws. It was not meant to cure, it was only meant to help him relax. But he took them as erotic experiences. After he was diagnosed it just didn't seem to make any sense. He was taking morphine, which was like that was the only hope. That was what was going to help him relax. I think he was just like I was – pulled into a really ugly place by all of these importunate people and that he couldn't see his way to dying peacefully.

**SJ:** From what you knew of the group, did you think sex had a role in Fluxus?

**BM:** Apparently very little. Well, there was Shigeo Kubota's *Vagina Painting*, and Kristine [Stiles] wrote about the sort of women who were involved and their performances that explored their sensual world in relationship to objects. But I think that was just . . . it was very minor. I'm not saying their work was minor – it was extremely important, but it wasn't a part of the larger, on-going conversation that I heard.

**SJ:** Would you suspect anybody else in the group was hiding part of their sexuality?

**BM:** [Laughs.] No, I'm laughing because I imagine most people hide something of their sexuality. Let's see. What would I say to that? I don't think anyone wanted their ideas of who George was disturbed at that late date. They wanted it to be neat. That's why I think it has a very, in the history of George's activities, it has a minor or almost a footnote quality. But it's extremely important because it shows him as ahead of Fluxus, basically – much more willing to explore those forbidden boundaries than anybody else was. Nobody else cross-dressed except at the wedding.

**SJ:** Let's talk about what George saw in the cross-dressing. Was it an aesthetic thing? Was it part of his philosophy of Fluxus?

**BM:** Well, he told me he'd been doing it since nine. So it couldn't have been a philosophy about Fluxus *per se*. But I think he worked it in, certainly in the *Black and White* piece. I think it was an aesthetic and erotic thing for him. By the time of the wedding it had become clear that George was a cross-dresser to anyone who had any sense.

**SJ:** And exploring boundaries.

**BM:** Exactly. I think his family had sort of very bourgeois pretensions, so it was not like it would have been something really accessible to him. He talked about other fantasies like having a torture chamber with medieval torture instruments to be on exhibit, things like that.

**SJ:** As a piece.

**BM:** Right. He would have I think explored this to a greater degree if he had lived longer. It just became something that was accessible to him at that point.

**SJ:** How do you think the group would have reacted to him if his work had moved in that direction? Carolee Schneemann, for example, was doing explorations of female sexuality and never was embraced by the group. You can only speculate, but . . .

**BM:** I think the degree of sexism in Fluxus was due to the times. There were many assumptions that were played out that remained unexplored. George's cross-dressing was an over-exploration of some of these assumptions. I found him to be one of the least sexist people I knew. But still he was upset that I didn't use his name. So there were these surprising pockets of conventionality. I think some people would have raised their eyebrows and said, 'What is going on? This is that horrible woman's influence', or whatever. But there were people who really trusted George's ability like I did; they would have come along.

**SJ:** I wonder if cross-dressing would have ever been accepted as a Fluxus activity?

**BM:** I think . . . he may have become something other than Fluxus. Or else either Fluxus would incorporate this or else he would start on another branch. Yeah, I don't think he would abandon it just because they wouldn't like it. I doubt that seriously.

**SJ:** Do you think cross-dressing in any way took the place of intercourse for George?

**BM:** I'm not really sure. I don't know what prevented him from having a sexual

relationship. People said he was dominated by his mother; maybe he was afraid to marry someone and take that step, that right of passage into separation from his family. Fluxus and his family were separate. Or he didn't find it necessary, or he found it too much trouble because he was too busy with Fluxus. I don't know the answers to those questions. We didn't have intercourse, but we contemplated it. I think he was just really sick. But whether it actually would ever have happened I have no idea. I know for myself I really wanted sex with George. I wanted to have a real sexual relationship with him. And that was part of the sense of loss when he died.

**SJ:** Could you tell me where you are now, after almost twenty years have passed since these events.

**BM:** Well, the estate money is spent. I don't have very many objects. I was bent on getting an education and I got it, the whole thing. Fluxus has been a sort of part of it, but not a big part of it. I'm applying for a grant to go and translate poetry in Portugal. I chose a poet who's extremely feminine and passionate and lyrical and doesn't fit any modernist mode, including anything related to Fluxus. If I do get this grant to go to Portugal it seems to me to be the end of a cycle, because that's kind of where I started. That's the first direction I had ... George's influence ... I was fairly, let's say, not nihilistic as a philosophy, but I had some self-destructive tendencies from a bad childhood. And George's influence made me decide to value myself. The practical application of his statement enabled me to get an education. I've gone through a huge socialisation process. He was a very, very important person in my life. I don't think it would have turned out as well if I hadn't met George. I went to Portugal to escape all the madness after he died, and if I go back this time it will be under very different circumstances: knowing the language, having a project, being able to produce a book of translations, having contacts and some money. It's sort of summing up of a whole process. That's how I would view it. So I'm still a Fluxobject and I'm still being processed. Well, George was a Fluxobject to me too. He's an object – he's a poetic object, a poetic subject. And that's why the marriage was a marriage for me. That is why I see it as a marriage. It doesn't make any difference to me that it was three months.

**SJ:** You said you haven't had many contacts or ties with the group. Do you feel like you will be moving even further away from Fluxus with your work? Is that what you want?

**BM:** I'm not really running away from Fluxus, it's just that there wasn't anything for me to do there, and I didn't like the role that seemed cut out for me after George died. I had my own agenda, and I've been following that. It's like Gayatri Spivak said, 'You cannot not want legitimisation'. I'm much less of a rebel than I was. I've got this all important education; I have been validated in other ways for my own intellectual achievements. I think now I can see Fluxus as an interesting and not exactly past, but historically past part, but in my own mind a continuing process because he [George] was the impetus for all this Portuguese poetry development. But when that phase is over, I'll write my own poetry as I always have since I was a child. So I'm not running away from Fluxus at all, not bitter about it or anything. But I guess I still see myself as [a] footnote kind of.

**SJ:** As opposed to what?

**BM:** A part.

**SJ:** Do you feel strange about doing an interview like this now?

**BM:** No. I love it. I think it's great. I'm really glad to have the opportunity to talk about George's eroticism and to validate it, in my eyes, as a positive thing. George had told me I understood what Fluxus was by the end, the spirit. That it was an anti-art movement; that it was not to be taken as seriously as death. Ay-O helped me get that clear. It's only gradually coming clear to me why people were so afraid, why Barbara was so guarded. The things that were withheld from me, and the strangeness of people's actions made me hang in there and be determined to get the full story. Otherwise I might have just gone on someplace. I did feel I owed something to George because he'd done so much for me. So I started taking a little bit of control. Moving to Portugal was part of that. I had a whole series of miraculous events that really changed my life, starting with George and being accepted at Brown. So he helped me in a big way. And I thought, I'm not a disappointment to George's memory. Which I could have been. When I'm in trouble, I actually still pray to George. I know that he's up there helping me somewhere. This sounds very funny, but I don't even bother with God, I just go straight to George.

# LARRY MILLER: MAYBE FLUXUS (A PARA-INTERROGATIVE GUIDE FOR THE NEOTERIC TRANSMUTER, TINDER, TINKER AND TOTALIST)

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Maybe you are an ordinary person and might like to do something Fluxus – should you first determine whether Fluxus is dead or alive?

Maybe you have accidentally already done something Fluxus – how would you know it was Fluxus?

Maybe you decide to intentionally do something Fluxus – should you organise and announce a public performance or make an uninvited appearance, anywhere, anytime?

Maybe you are an artist and think that Fluxus still lives – will doing Fluxactivity make you famous or make you a better person?

Maybe you are an artist and think that Fluxus is dead – will doing Fluxactivity make you only a tasteful postmodern historicist or independent practitioner of Fluxism, or will it make you a mere academic classicist, old fart and necrophiliac?

Maybe you are a serious thinker – will Fluxactivity reward your hard work?

Maybe you just want to have some fun and need some other playmates – will Fluxus love you?

Maybe you think Fluxus still lives and you are an anti-artist, a social critic, a malcontent or just full of hormones – will Fluxactivity give any relief to your urges?

Maybe you are an anti-artist and think Fluxus is dead – will the bones of Fluxus laying in some Museleum, provide you with any fuel?

Maybe you are an artist and think that a lot of Fluxus pieces are really the same idea – should you put them all individually on one programme or condense them all into a single piece?

Maybe you wonder if there is certain attire for Fluxperformance – should you get any common worker's uniform, get nude, get a tuxedo and gown, cross-dress or simply come-as-you-are?

Maybe you think you need help to give a good Fluxconcert – should you consult someone experienced or throw I Ching?

Maybe you might prefer to give a boring Fluxconcert – should you pick all boring pieces, have all boring performers or arrange to get a boring audience?

Maybe you think that a Fluxconcert should be intellectually stimulating, socially shocking or culturally provocative in general – should you update yourself on what is politically correct by advance study of the particular audience, institution, country or the local papers?

Maybe you think that a Fluxconcert should be funny – should it be funny like Shakespeare or funny like Kierkegaard?

Maybe you think there is a secret Fluxinitiation – should you make a discreet inquiry or read between the lines?

Maybe you are an art critic, theoretician or professional thinker and think Fluxus is dead – should you render Fluxus final in a seamless exegesis or should you give a wink and let sleeping dogs lie?

Maybe you think Fluxus still lives and you would like to textualise its progress and historical relevance – should you be obliged to read everything written and also look at each and every one of Peter Moore's 350,000 photographs?

Maybe you wonder whether Fluxus should be upper or lower case, hyphenated or run-together – shouldn't we be able to find that out in the *Chicago Manual of Style*?

Maybe you heard Philip Corner once say words like 'They might have buried Fluxus, but the joke is that nothing was in the coffin,' – should you surmise that Fluxus wants to be immortal or that it just thinks death is good material too?

Maybe you read that Bob Watts said, 'The most important thing about Fluxus is that no one knows what it is'; and 'I see Fluxus everywhere I go,' – should we hope there is a chance that someday Fluxus will be resolved with the other forces into a Unified Field Theory?

Maybe you think Fluxus, dead-or-alive, is just neo-Dada – should we therefore anticipate either a post-appropriationism or a post-plagiarism with the appearance of neo-Fluxus?

Maybe you think that whatever Fluxus may be is contained in some postmodernist phenomenon – would we be any the less wiser to look upon it as East-West protestism, catharticism, hinderism, buddyism or confusionism?

[1991]



PART V  
TWO FLUXUS THEORIES



## DICK HIGGINS: FLUXUS: THEORY AND RECEPTION<sup>1</sup>

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This is not an introductory text on Fluxus. To explain what Fluxus is and was and where it came from is not my primary purpose at this time, having already done so in my long essay 'Postface' (1962) and my short one, 'A Child's History of Fluxus', among other pieces as well. Others have done so too, of course, each in his or her own way. My concern here is to try and deal with some aspects and questions in Fluxus – what do we experience when we encounter a Fluxus work? Why is it what it is? Is there anything unique about it? And so on.

### DOES FLUXUS HAVE ANTECEDENTS?

Fluxus appears to be an iconoclastic art movement, somewhat in the lineage of the other such movements in our century – Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, and so on. And, indeed, the relationship with these is a real and valid one.

Futurism was the earliest such movement. It was founded by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in the first decade of the twentieth century, was proclaimed on the front page of the *Figaro littéraire* and elsewhere, and it developed a group character which was sustained from its early years until the Second World War. Marinetti was its leader, though not in a totally dictatorial sense. Its members were supposed to follow along pretty much with what he said, but he forgave them when they didn't. He proclaimed *parole in libertà* ('words at liberty', a form of visual poetry); *teatro sintetico* ('synthetic theatre', that is, performance pieces that were synthesised out of extremely raw-seeming materials, similar to the *musique concrète* of the post-Second World War era); simultaneity, a time-related form of Cubism; a music of noises, and many such formal innovations or unconventional arts that are still worth exploring. If, however, one hears the existing recordings of, for example, the music of Luigi Russolo, one of the main Futurist composers, one finds something far more conventional than what one might have expected from reading his famous *Arte dei rumori* ('Art of noises') manifesto. One hears, to be sure, amazing noises being made over a loudspeaker – roars, scraping sounds and suchlike. But one hears these superimposed over rather crudely harmonised scales. If one goes into the content of Marinetti's writings, one finds him a very old-fashioned daddy-type, rather hard on women, celebrating war as an expression of masculine virtue, and so on. Even the visual art, in the works of Giacomo Balla and others, being the summit of Futurist fine art, is rather conventional with regard to its formal structures and implications – it is certainly rather conservative when compared to the innovative Cubism of France at the same time. In other words, Futurism is a goddess,

nineteenth-century style, with one leg in the future and one in the conventional past and not too much in the present. Considering that the two legs are moving in opposite directions, it is no wonder that Futurism falls a little flat in the evolution of modern sensibility. Of course, it is of great technical and historical interest, as a starter and a precursor, but its works have only moderate intrinsic interest as works.

Dada, when one looks at it in isolation, seems more unique than it is. But most of the Dada artists and writers came out of Expressionism; and if one compares the Dada materials with those of their immediate antecedents, they are less unique than one might have imagined. Perhaps an anecdote is appropriate here. In the 1950s and 1960s the journalistic image of Dada had become so extreme, so far from the reality of the work, that Dada was considered to be the limit of the extremely crazy in art – as wild as possible, as droll as possible, simply inexpressibly ‘far-out’, to cite the slang of the time. Thus, early happenings and Fluxus (like the works of Rauschenberg and Johns) were often dismissed as ‘neo-Dada’. This was, of course, extremely annoying and embarrassing to those of us who knew what Dada was or had been. For example, I knew several of the old Dadaists, had been raised on their work, and there was no doubt in my mind that what we happenings and Fluxus people were doing had rather little to do with Dada. Well, returning to my story, in due course I became the director of Something Else Press, a small publishing firm. I knew that before the split between the French and German Dadaists, Richard Huelsenbeck had published an anthology of Dada materials, the *Dada Almanach*; I therefore got his permission to reissue it in facsimile. The response to it was very revealing: I was told that this was ‘not real Dada!’ The material seemed too conservative, far too close to the Expressionism of the pre-First World War years to gibe with the image that my 1960s friends and colleagues had built up in their mind as to what Dada was. Yet Huelsenbeck was not, at the time he did the *Dada Almanach*, a conservative at all. He had published a wildly leftist booklet, *Deutschland muß untergehen!* (‘Germany Must Perish!’), and he saw no difference between political and cultural innovation and revolutionary thinking. His poems were as experimental as those of the other Dadaists, Raoul Hausmann for example. In other words, the journalistic myth had come to replace the substance to such an extent that the substance was overwhelmed.

Surrealism is, of course, an outgrowth of Dada, historically. It was, quite self-consciously, a ‘movement’, unlike Dada, which was more unruly, spontaneous perhaps, and undirected. Surrealism was presided over by the relatively benevolent Trotskyite *littérateur*, André Breton. Breton was much given to café politics, to reading people out of his movement or claiming them for it, proclaiming them and disowning them according to their conformity or non-conformity with the theoretical positions that he built up analogously to Marxist theorising in his various Surrealist manifestos. Ideology may have masked personal feeling in many cases – as if to say, ‘If you hate me, you must be ideologically incorrect’. The commonplace about Surrealism is that it is of two sorts – historical and popular. Historical Surrealism usually refers to what was going on in Breton’s circle from the mid-1920s until the late 1930s in Paris (or in Europe as a whole), usually involving the transformation of social, aesthetic, scientific and philosophical values by means of the liberation of the subconscious. This led, of course, to a kind of art in which fantastic visions were depicted extremely literally. A concern with the subconscious was, of course, typical of the time, and the story is

told of that great liberator of the subconscious, Sigmund Freud, that someone asked him about surrealist art. His reply? Normally, he said, in art he looked to see the unconscious meaning of a work, but in surrealist art he looked to see if there was a conscious one. Well, to return to my main concerns, with the passage of time and of the entry of Surrealism into popular awareness, 'surrealistic' came to be more or less synonymous with 'fantastic' or 'dreamy' in art. Popular Surrealism, then, has little to do with historical Surrealism, although careless critics tend to equate the two.

However, historical Surrealism has a far fuller history than our usual image of it. Breton lived into the 1960s, and as long as he lived, 'Surrealism' as a self-conscious, self-constricted movement continued, with new people joining and old members being obliged to withdraw. During the years of the Second World War, and immediately after, Breton and many of the Surrealists lived in the United States, and their impact is not sufficiently understood either in Europe or America. They became the most interesting presence in the American art world. Magazines such as *VVV* and *View* were the most exciting art magazines of the time. The Surrealists constituted the nucleus of the avant-garde. Some of us who later did Fluxus works were very conscious of this. I, for example, attended school with Breton's daughter Aubée ('Obie', to us) and, being curious about what her father wrote, acquired a couple of his books. Furthermore, from time to time there would be Surrealist 'manifestations', and some of these were similar to the 'environments' out of which happenings developed. These were, in any case, locked into our sensibility, as points of reference in considering our earlier art experiences, and Surrealism was absolutely the prototypical art movement, as such, for Americans at the time.

We shall return to this issue, but I would like to consider a few points along the way:

1 *Fluxus seems to be a series of separate and discrete formal experiments, without much to tie them together. In this way it seems to resemble Futurism. This is a point I will answer when I presently address the actual ontology of Fluxus.*

2 *Fluxus seems to be like Dada – at least like the popular image of Dada – in being crazy, iconoclastic, essentially a negative tendency rejecting all its precedents, and so on. In fact, there is some truth to this; but it is oblique. Fluxus was never so undirected as Dada, never so close to its historical precedents. Dada was, in fact, a point of discussion on those long nights at Ehlhalten-am-Taunus, during the first Fluxus Festival at Wiesbaden in 1962, when George Maciunas, myself, Alison Knowles, and, occasionally, others would talk into the small hours of the morning, trying to determine what would be the theoretical nature of this tendency to which we were giving birth, which we found ourselves participating in. Maciunas was intensely aware of the rivalry between the French and German Dadaists; we wanted to keep our group together and avoid such splits as best we could. What could we do to prevent this fissioning? The answer was to avoid having too tight an ideological line. Maciunas proposed a manifesto during that 1962 festival – it is sometimes printed as a 'Fluxus Manifesto'. But nobody was willing to sign it. We did not want to confine tomorrow's possibilities by what we thought today. That manifesto is Maciunas' manifesto, not a manifesto of Fluxus.*

3 *Surrealism lasted more or less forty years as a viable tendency, and, among other things, spun off a popular version, as I have said, lower-case surrealism. This seemed like a fine model for the Fluxus people. But how could we make Surrealism a model for Fluxus?*

One must, here, bear in mind that Fluxus was something which happened more or less by chance. In the late 1950s there were the Fluxus artists, sometimes thinking of themselves as a group, doing the work that later became known as Fluxus. But the work and the group had no name. We did not consciously present ourselves *to the public* as a group until Maciunas organised his festival at Wiesbaden, intended originally as publicity for the series of publications he intended to issue that were to be called *Fluxus*. The festival caused great notoriety, was on German television, and was repeated in various cities beside Wiesbaden, which is well documented elsewhere and need not concern us here. The point I am getting at here is that in connection with this festival the newspapers and media began to refer to us as *die Fluxus Leute* ('the Fluxus people'), and so here we were, people from very different backgrounds: Knowles, Vostell and Brecht originally painters; Watts a sculptor; Patterson, myself and Paik composers; Williams, myself and Mac Low writers, and so on. Here we were being told that we were the Fluxus people. What *should* that mean? If we were to be identified publicly as a group, should we become one? What did we have in common?

Thus the concept arose of constituting ourselves as some kind of 'collective'. Maciunas was particularly pleased by that idea, since he had a leftist background, and, instinctively, a major portion of his approach to organising us and our festivals had at least a metaphorical relationship with leftist ideology and forms. The collective clearly needed a spokesman, to be what a commissar was supposed to be in the USSR but seldom was. Maciunas was not really an artist but a graphic designer, and, as editor of the magazine, seemed the best suited of us to be the commissar of Fluxus, a role he assumed and held until his dying day. In this there was a parallel to the role of André Breton in Surrealism – less monolithic and more ceremonial, of course. We never accepted Maciunas' right to 'read people out of the movement', as Breton did. Occasionally he tried to do this, but the others did not follow him here – we would continue to work with the artist who was banned by Maciunas until, eventually, Maciunas usually got over his own impulse to ban and accepted the artist back into the group. Surrealism without Breton is inconceivable, but valuable though Maciunas' contributions were, Fluxus can and did and does exist without him, in one or another sense.

Thus, to sum up this part of the discussion, we saw Futurism as important, but as having no strong or direct relationship with us in any direct sense. Dada works we admired, but the negative side of it – its rejections and the social dynamic of its members, splitting and feuding – we did not wish to emulate. Surrealism had, perhaps, minimal influence on us so far as form, style and content were concerned, but its group dynamic seemed suitable for our use, subject only to the limitations on Maciunas' authority which lay in our nature as having already been a group with some aspects of our work in common before Maciunas ever arrived on the scene.

Fluxus was (and is) therefore:

- 1 *A series of publications produced and designed by George Maciunas;*
- 2 *The name of our group of artists;*
- 3 *The kind of works associated with these publications, artists and performances which we did (and do) together;*

4 Any other activities which were in the lineage or tradition which was built up, over a period of time, that are associated with the publications, artists or performances (such as Fluxfeasts).

Fluxus was not a movement; it has no stated, consistent programme or manifesto which the work must match, and it did not propose to move art or our awareness of art from point A to point B. The very name, *Fluxus*, suggests change, being in a state of flux. The idea was that it would always reflect the most exciting avant-garde tendencies of a given time or moment – the Fluxattitude – and it would always be open for new people to ‘join’. All they had to do was to produce works which were in some way similar to what other Fluxus artists were doing. Thus, the original core group expanded to include, in its second wave (after Wiesbaden), Ben Vautier, Eric Andersen, Tomas Schmit and Willem de Ridder; in the third wave (by 1966), Geoffrey Hendricks and Ken Friedman; and, in the later waves (after 1970), Yoshimasa Wada, Jean Dupuy, Larry Miller, and others. It was thought of as something that would exist parallel to other developments, providing a rostrum for its members and a purist model for the most technically innovative and spiritually challenging work of its changing time(s). Theoretically, therefore, even though Maciunas died years ago, a new artist could become a Fluxus artist even today, according to that formula. Why he or she might want to or not want to is a different matter, of course, but theoretically it could happen. It would simply require assent among all who were concerned – the other Fluxus artists and the new artist.

Before we leave this matter of antecedents and basic definition, it would be well to mention some individual artists who are sometimes reckoned among the forefathers of Fluxus, and a few of those who are thought of as Fluxus but who are not.

When Ben Vautier speaks of Fluxus, he usually evokes the names of John Cage and Marcel Duchamp so repeatedly that one might well wonder if he had ever heard of any other artists at all. Nor is he the only person of whom this is true.

Well, the fact is, both Cage and Duchamp *are* much admired by us Fluxus artists. Duchamp is admired largely for the interpenetration of art and life in his corpus of works; the ‘art/life dichotomy’, as we used to call it in the early 1960s, is resolved in his works by the interpenetration of the one into the other. In 1919, as is well known, Duchamp exhibited a men’s urinal as an art work – a simple, white and pristine object, classical in form, when one separates it from its traditional function. Since many Fluxus pieces (most notably the performance ones), are often characterised by their taking of a very ordinary event from daily life, and their being framed as art by being presented on a stage in a performance situation, there is a clear connection between such Fluxus pieces and Duchamp’s urinal. For example, one often-performed Fluxus piece is Mieko, formerly ‘Chieko’, Shiomi’s *Disappearing Event*, in which the performer(s) come on stage and smile, gradually relaxing their faces until the smile disappears. This is something which often happens in daily life, and it is refreshing to think of an art performance which is both daily and uninsulated from one’s diurnal, non-art existence – unlike most art works.

Nevertheless, apart from a handful of musical experiments, Duchamp never did a performance work, nor did he have any great interest in them. At Allan Kaprow’s seminal *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, the first happening presented in New York (in which I performed, and which has some oblique relationship with Fluxus), he was in the audience and I watched

him; he seemed quite uninterested in what he was seeing, and I do not recall that he even stayed through the entire performance. It seems doubtful that he saw any particular connection between the performance that he was watching and his own work. Nor, later, when he knew some of us and our work, did he see such a connection then either. It was always his effort to make life visually elegant; we, on the other hand, chose to leave life alone, to observe it as a biological phenomenon, to watch it come and recede again, and to comment on it and enrich it in or with our works. When one sees a Duchamp work, one knows whether it is sculpture or painting or whatever; with a Fluxus work, there is a conceptual fusion – ‘intermedia’ is the term I chose for such fusions, picking it up from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who had used it in 1812. Virtually all Fluxus works are intermedial by their very nature: visual poetry, poetic visions, action music and musical actions, happenings and events that are bounded, conceptually, by music, literature and visual art, and whose heart lies in the middle ground among these. Duchamp was an extreme purist; we were not, are not. He therefore makes an awkward ancestor for us, much as we may admire his integrity and his *geste*.

Cage is rather a different matter. Some of us (myself, Brecht, Maxfield, Hansen and others) had studied with Cage. But in his case, like Duchamp, he strove towards ‘nobility’. This, for him, meant the impersonal or the transpersonal – often obtained by means of systems employing chance, in order to transcend his own taste. Mac Low, Brecht, Maxfield and myself used chance systems – ‘aleatoric structures’ – but few of the other Fluxus artists did, at least with any frequency. As for Cage, he seemed to find Fluxus works simplistic when he first saw them. They did (and do) often employ some extreme minimalism which was not one of his concerns. Fluxus pieces can also be quite personal, and this would place them beyond Cage’s pale. His own work is seldom intermedial. Although he writes poems and composes music, one tends to know which is which. They are multimedial, like operas.

Cage and Duchamp should therefore be thought of more as uncles of Fluxus rather than as direct progenitors or father figures. Fluxus, it seems, is a mongrel art, with no distinct parentage or pedigree. There is a relationship to Cage and to Duchamp, but it is mostly by affinity and the example of integrity, rather than developing out of their work in any specific way.

The way I like to sum up this part of the history of ‘it all’ is as follows:

- 1 *Once upon a time there was collage, a technique. Collage could be used in art, not just in visual art.*
- 2 *When collage began to project off the two-dimensional surface, it became the combine (Rauschenberg’s term?).*
- 3 *When the combine began to envelop the spectator it became the environment. I don’t know who coined that term, but it is still a current one.*
- 4 *When the environment began to include live performance, it became the happening (Allan Kaprow’s term, usually capitalised in order to distinguish it from just **anything** that happens).*

5 *When happenings were broken up into their minimal constituent parts, they became events. I first heard that term from Henry Cowell, a composer with whom both John Cage, and, many years later, I myself studied. Any art work can be looked at as a collation of events, but for works that tend to fissure and split into atomised elements, this approach by event seems particularly appropriate.*

6 *When events were minimal, but had maximum implications, they became one of the key things which Fluxus artists typically did (and do) in their performances. That is, I think, the real lineage of Fluxus.*

A further digression into language seems in order here. In Fluxus one often speaks of Fluxfestivals, Fluxconcerts, Fluxpeople, Fluxartists, Fluxevents; I'm afraid I'm to blame for that one. Maciunas was very much interested in the odd byways of Baroque art. I told him about the work of the German Baroque poet, Quirinus Kühlmann (1644–88), who was a messianic sort who was eventually burnt at the stake in Moscow, where he had gone in an effort to persuade the Tsar that he was a reincarnation of Christ. Kühlmann wrote various exciting books of poetry using 'protean' forms and other unconventional means, among which is the *Kühlpsalter*. This includes Kühlpсалms, evidently to be performed on Kühldays by Kühlpeople, and so on. Maciunas was delighted by this, and thenceforth made parallel constructions of his own that were based on it, as mentioned, 'Fluxfests' or 'Fluxfestivals', to be performed by 'Fluxfriends' who were also 'Fluxartists', wearing 'Fluxclothes' and eating 'Fluxfood', and so on. This dissociated such artists, festivals, from regular ones; one was not an 'artist' or even an 'anti-artist' (as many observers accused us of being) but a 'Fluxartist', which was presumably something quite different.

But, to summarise the discussion so far, the better one knows the Fluxworks, the less they resemble Futurism, Dada, Surrealism, Duchamp or Cage.

## IS THERE A FLUXUS PROGRAMME?

Fluxus is not a movement. Nonetheless, if Fluxus is to be a useful category for considering work, it must have more of a meaning than simply as the name of Maciunas' proposed publications or the artists associated with it. That is to say, there must be certain points in common among each work in a body of works; they must hang together by more than mere *Zeitgeist*. This means that the works will have some aspects of a movement, though not all of them.

Usually a movement in the arts begins with a group of artists coming together with some common feeling that something needs doing – that is, they believe that the arts have to be moved from point A to point B. A kind of imagery has been neglected and needs to be introduced: Pop Art. Art has become too cold and it must be warmed up, with an appeal to the transrational: romanticism. In other words, there is a programme – whether or not that programme is ever actually written out in a prescriptive manifesto – describing what is to be done and by whom and how, or whether or not the discovery is made by a critic that certain artists have something in common and constitute a group of some sort. Naturally, the world is full of pseudo-movements – works with something or other in common, which some

ambitious critic then claims as a movement or tendency in the hopes of earning professional credits. But if these points are too artificial, if there is no natural grouping which enforces the feeling that these works belong together, it will soon be forgotten as a grouping. But with a real movement, the life of the movement continues to take place until the programme has been achieved; at that point the movement dies a natural death, and the artists if they are still active, go on to do something else.

Fluxus had (and has) no prescriptive programme. Its constituent works were never intended to change the world of cultural artefacts which surrounded them, though it might affect how they were to be seen. Fluxus did not so much attack its surrounding art context as ignore it. Nevertheless, there are some points in common among most Fluxworks: 1 internationalism, 2 experimentalism and iconoclasm, 3 intermedia, 4 minimalism or concentration, 5 an attempted resolution of the art/life dichotomy, 6 implicativeness, 7 play or gags, 8 ephemerality, and 9 specificity. These nine points – they are almost criteria – can be taken up one by one.

Fluxus arose more or less spontaneously in various countries. In Europe there were, in the beginning (others joined shortly afterwards), Wolf Vostell, Nam June Paik, Emmett Williams and Ben Patterson, among others. In the United States there were, besides myself, Alison Knowles, George Brecht, Robert Watts, and the others I have already named; also La Monte Young, Philip Corner, Ay-O and still others. In Japan there were Takehisa Kosugi and Mieko Shiomi and more. Probably there were about two dozen of us in six countries, with little besides our intentions in common (for one thing, not all of us had studied with Cage). Thus, Fluxus was not, for example, the creature of the New York art scene, the West German art scene, the Parisian one or anything else of that sort. It was, from its outset, *international*. At one point Maciunas tried, in structuring his proposed Fluxus collections, to re-nationalise it, but it simply did not work.

It was a coming together of *experimental* artists, that is, of artists who were not interested in doing what all the other artists were doing at the time; they mostly took an iconoclastic attitude towards the conventions of the art establishments of their various countries, and many have since paid the price of doing so, which is obscurity and poverty. This took the form in all cases, however, of experimentation with form rather than content as such. There was the assumption that new content requires new forms, that new forms enable works to have new content leading on to new experiences. In many cases this experimentalism led the artists into intermedia – to visual poetry, some varieties of Happenings, sound poetry and so on.

In order to state such forms in a very concentrated way, a great measure of purity was necessary, so that the nature of the form would be clear. One could not have too many extraneous or diverse elements in a work. This led, inevitably, to a stress on brevity, since there would, by keeping a work short or small, be less time for extraneous elements to enter in and to interfere. This brevity constituted a specific sort of *minimalism*, with as much concentration in a work as possible. La Monte Young wrote a musical piece that could last forever, using just two pitches. In 1982 Wolf Vostell composed a Fluxus opera using just three words from the Bible for his libretto. George Brecht wrote many Fluxus events in his 'Water Yam' series, using just a very few words – three in one event, twenty in another, two in a third, and so on.

Working so close to the minimum possible made the Fluxus artists intensely conscious of the possibility that what they did would not be art at all in any acceptable sense. Yet there was also the sense that most art work was unsatisfying anyway, that life was far more interesting. Thus there was a great deal of attention given to the resolutions of the *art/life dichotomy*, which has already been mentioned.

There was a sense that working with these materials implied an avoidance of the personal expression which was so characteristic of the arts in the period just before Fluxus began, in the early and mid-1950s. But the personal, as a genre, was by no means rejected out of hand in Fluxus if it could be presented in a way that was not overly subjective, which would be limited in relevance. Thus, Alison Knowles performed with her infant daughter, for example.

There was also the danger that working with such minimal material would lead to facile meanderings, to Fluxartists grinding out endless mountains of minimalist pieces which had no real *raison d'être*. Thus a very important criterion for avoiding this danger came to be the notion that a Fluxpiece, whether an object or a performance, should be as *implicative* as possible, that it should imply a maximum of intellectual, sensuous or emotional content within its minimum of material.

In the period just before Fluxus began, the dominant style in visual art had been Abstract Expressionism and in music had been post-Webernite Serialism. Both of these were apt to be extremely solemn and tendentious affairs indeed, and, in fact, seriousness tended to be equated with solemnity. Fluxus tended often to react against this by moving in the direction of humour and gags, introducing a much-needed *spirit of play* into the arts. This also fitted well with the iconoclastic side of Fluxus.

There was also the sense that if Fluxus were to incorporate some element of on-going change – flux – that the individual works should change. Many of the Fluxus objects therefore were made of rather *ephemeral* materials, such as paper or light plastic, so that as time went by the work would either disappear or would physically alter itself. A masterpiece in this context was a work that made a strong statement rather than a work that would last throughout the ages in some treasure vault. Also, most of the Fluxartists were (and are) very poor, and so they could not afford to work with fine and costly materials. Many of Robert Filliou's works have disappeared into the air, for example, though other Fluxworks are, in fact, made of standard materials and will perhaps last (for example, works by Vostell or myself).

Maciunas' background, as I have already mentioned, was in graphic and industrial design. The design approach is usually to design *specific* solutions to specific problems. Designers characteristically distrust universals and vague generalities. Generalisations are used in Fluxus works only when they are handled with all the precision of specific categories and necessities. They must not be vague. This was, typically, Maciunas' approach and it remains typical for us now that he is gone.

Clearly not every work is likely to reflect all nine of these characteristics or criteria, but the more of them a work reflects, the more typically and characteristically Fluxus it is. Similarly, not every work by a Fluxartist is a Fluxwork; typically Fluxartists do other sorts of work as well, just as a collagist might also print, or a composer of piano music might try his hand at writing something for an orchestra. In this way also Fluxus differs from music. *All* the work of a Surrealist was expected to be surrealistic. An Abstract Expressionist would be unlikely to

produce a hard-edged geometrical abstraction. But a Vostell would do such a performance piece as *Kleenex* (1962), which he performed at many of the early festivals, while at the same time he was also making his 'décoll/age' paintings and Happenings, which had nothing to do with his Fluxus work except for their frequent intermedial nature. Maciunas used to like to call Fluxus not a movement but a *tendency*; the term is apt here, when one is relating a kind of work to its historical matrix.

Returning to intermedia, not all intermedial works are Fluxus, of course. The large-scale happenings of Kaprow (or Vostell) are not Fluxworks. Nor are most sound or concrete poems. These usually have *only* their intermedial nature in common with Fluxworks, and Fluxus was certainly not the beginning of *intermedia*. Consider, for example, the concrete poetry intermedium of the 1950s and 1960s: it was an immediate predecessor of Fluxus. Furthermore, the visual impulse in poetry is usually present, even if only subtly. Nevertheless, visual poems have been made; that is, poems which are both visual and literary art, since at least the second millennium before Christ, and they are found in Chinese, Vietnamese, Sanskrit, Gujarati, Hindi, Tamil, Turkish, Greek, Latin, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, Welsh and a dozen or so other literatures. These pieces existed well before 1912 when Guillaume Apollinaire made his *Calligrammes* and so focused the eyes of the poetry world on the potentials of this intermedium. But, with concentration enough – and the other criteria I have mentioned – a visual poem could indeed be a Fluxwork.

Similarly, many intermedial performance works existed before Fluxus. For example, in his anthology *Technicians of the Sacred*, Jerome Rothenberg presented an enormous number of rituals and 'performance poems' from so-called primitive people that, when taken out of their usually sacred context, are so close to Fluxus pieces as to be nearly indistinguishable from them. Even had there been no immediate precedent of Futurist performance pieces, no Dada or Surrealism, Fluxus might still have developed out of the materials of folklore. This point was not lost on Rothenberg, who included several examples of Fluxus performance pieces in his book.

Also, in the nineteenth century, there was a tradition of parlour games which are sometimes very close to Fluxus. My Something Else Press, a publishing project which was in some respect a Fluxus enterprise, published a collection of such games by one William Brisbane Dick, *Dick's One Hundred Amusements* (note, please, it is the author's last name that is referred to in the title, not my first one). Fluxus might well have developed out of this popular cultural tradition as well. In fact, a few of the pieces from both the Rothenberg and Dick collections have been included in Fluxperformances with no noticeable incongruity.

So, supposing one sees a work and wants to know if it is Fluxus or not (whether or not it happens to be by a Fluxartist is not the issue here), all one need do is match it against the nine criteria. The more it matches, the more Fluxus it is, logically enough. Perhaps there are other such criteria, but these nine are sufficient.

Every so often there is a new upsurge of interest in Fluxus. At such times those who were not in the original Fluxus group will present themselves as Fluxartists. The best way of verifying their claims is, of course, to match them against the criteria. The more criteria they match, the more right they have to be included as Fluxartists in projects. This is a much better method of evaluating their claims than simply matching them against a master list of,

let us say, everyone whom Maciunas published in his lifetime. In any case, Maciunas published other works besides pure Fluxus ones, even in that most quintessential of Fluxupublications, the occasional newspaper *CC V TRE*, so such a list would not be very useful except as a beginning. New artists, even those who have never heard of Fluxus or Maciunas may very well do Fluxworks inadvertently if they match the nine criteria.

And if the works in question do *not* match the criteria, then they are not Fluxworks, even if the artist claims they are. What they do may be very interesting, of course. But it is not Fluxus. For example, some museum shows of Fluxus include pieces that do not reflect these criteria. The pieces tend to look rather incongruous in context, and they reflect ill upon the museum director's intelligence more than anything else. The inclusion of big names may be good for the attendance at a show, but it tends to obfuscate or vulgarise something that should be perfectly clear. For example, in 1981 there was an exhibition at Wuppertal in the Federal Republic of Germany, 'Fluxus: Aspekt eines Phänomens' ('Fluxus: Aspects of a Phenomenon'). It was, in the main, a good show, but it showed clearly the question of inclusion. Works were included by Al Hansen. Indeed some of Hansen's performance pieces were, in fact, included in some of the early Fluxus performance festivals. But Hansen did not get along with Maciunas personally, and so he never belonged to the group as such. Nevertheless, his pieces in the show matched most of the criteria, and so in this exhibition they looked fully in place. Surely they were, in fact, Fluxworks. On the other hand, there were also some pieces by Mauricio Kagel, Mary Bauermeister and Dieter Rot – all three of them excellent artists. But their pieces did not match the criteria and they looked rather incongruous in the Fluxus context.

There are some other non-criteria which are worth mentioning in this discussion. These are more in the way of Fluxtraditions, by no means criteria, but relevant to a Fluxdiscussion.

Usually Fluxus performances have been done in costume. Either one wears all white, or one wears a tailcoat, tuxedo or formal evening dress. The former reflects the desire for visual homogeneity, which Maciunas, as a designer, tended to prize. The latter reflects his fondness for the deliberately archaic, formal and obsolescent being presented in a new way. One sees a similar current in his use, in his publications, of extremely ornamental type faces, such as *Romantique*, for the headings, box covers or titles. These contrast with *IBM News Gothic*, the extremely austere type which he used in most of his setting of the body texts in Fluxupublications. This was the version of the sans-serif *News Gothic* which was on the *IBM* typesetter which he used most of the time in the early days of Fluxus. There is no reason in particular why either of these traditions should be preserved; they are not integral to Fluxus. Perhaps it is one of the few areas in Fluxus in which there is room for sentimentality that both traditions have been carried on in Maciunas' absence.

Another typical involvement in Fluxus which is not, *per se*, a criterion, is the emphasis on events that centre around food. Many art works and groups of artists have dealt with food, but in Fluxus it becomes one of the main areas of involvement, perhaps because of its closeness to the art/life dichotomy. There were not only pieces themselves, using apples, glasses of water on pianos, beans, salads, messes made of butter and eggs, eggs alone, loaves of bread and jars of jam or honey, to name just a few that come immediately to mind, but there were also innumerable Fluxfeasts of various sorts: concerts or events which used the feast as a matrix. No doubt these will continue as long as many of the original Fluxpeople are

alive. One might speculate that the reason for this is the typical concern with food on the part of poor or hungry artists. But that seems secondary to the art/life element, and for me it demonstrates that for works which are so much on the border of art and life, art and non-art as Fluxpieces, the convention of a concert is not always suitable. For casual occasions with small audiences, feasts using food art are the equivalent of chamber-music concerts. Feasts have included such non-delicacies as totally flavourless gelatine 'Jello', side by side with delicious loaves of bread in the form of genitals, chocolate bars cast in equally startling shapes, blue soups and so on. Whether or not such foods are totally satisfying from an aesthetic point of view is not the question. The point is, rather, that there are non-determinative but nevertheless typical involvements of Fluxus, side by side with the determinative criteria.

### BUT WHAT OF QUALITY? HOW DO WE JUDGE THESE WORKS?

Clearly, with Fluxus the normal theoretical positions do not apply. Fluxus works are simply not intended to do the same things as a Sophoclean tragedy, a Chopin mazurka, or a Jackson Pollock painting, and it is absolutely pointless to make the effort to fit Fluxus into a system to do this. Fluxus may have its thrills, but it is qualitatively different from almost all other art, occidental or oriental – at least with respect to its teleology, its purposes, its ends.

First of all, what is it *not*? It is not mimetic. It does not imitate nature in any narrative way, though it may be 'natural' in the sense of imitating nature in its manner of operation – its craziness, the kinds of patterns that it evokes and that kind of thing. This is only to say that Fluxus could, in its own way, be realistic – very much so. There could be a genre of the Fluxstory, but it would have to be extremely generalised, stripped down to a bare minimum. A kiss – that might be a Fluxstory. But we don't usually think of that as mimesis.

Neither does it fit into the normative romantic/classic or Apollonian/Dionysian dichotomies. Perhaps it has something in common with the romanticism of Novalis and the Schlegel brothers in German Romanticism; but it does attempt the same thing as either romantic or classical art – a world transformed by the imagination or by feeling. It is not visionary, quite the opposite, in fact. In terms of its assumed effects, it does not attempt to move the listener, or viewer, or reader emotionally or in any other way. Neither does it attempt to express the artist emotionally or intellectually. Thus one would not call it expressive in the normal meaning of the term. The Fluxartist does not even *begin* to reveal him- or herself through the work. Perhaps the viewer or listener will reveal him- or herself by experiencing it, at least to him- or herself, but that is a different matter, and we shall return to it later. The important thing here is that the artist is as far away from the assumed eye or ear of the viewer or listener as is possible in an art work. Any expression is objectivised and depersonalised to the point of becoming transpersonal. One does not, as one does in so many works of art, see through the work to the artist. There may be an individual style (most Fluxartists have those), but that, too, is a different matter, more akin to having one's own idiolect than to presenting a subjective vision of something.

Neither are Fluxworks, in the main, pragmatic. That is, they teach nothing except, perhaps, by example. They do not convey moral principles, nor do they present 'correct' political or social views. They may be political, but this is apt to be in a symbolic way – for

example, all the elements of a performance behave democratically, none dominates the others. But this is more to do with the sort of thing that the artist thinks about than anything a viewer is concerned with.

Nor could they be called 'objective' in the T S Eliot sense. They are not simply objects to contemplate; they are too minimal for that, and, often, too active as well – they imply too much. Actually, a few Fluxworks do belong in this vein, but it is not typical.

Neither is the Freudian or symbolic analysis of a Fluxpiece apt to be very rewarding or extensive. One does not have enough materials to work on. Ninety-eight percent of Fluxus pieces have no symbolic content. Their psychological processes are too far and few between. Since the artist is not making a statement of any personal or psychological nature, an analysis of this sort would make very little sense.

A political analysis, Marxist or otherwise, might be interesting, but it would more likely satisfy the critic than the reader of the criticism, since Fluxus is only metaphorically political.

Since meaning is not the point and the conveyors of the meaning are so incidental that only a few patterns can be detected, the semiotics of a Fluxpiece are so minimal as to be problematic or even irrelevant. Of course there are some such conveyors, but these require only the simplest of identifications. No patterns of communication would be likely.

The same holds true of structuralist analysis. The linguistics of Fluxus would be a mental exercise, not that Fluxus lacks its overall grammar, but the typical is only sixty per cent of the corpus, with the rest being exceptions of some kind or another. The whole analysis, rather than developing a meaningful critique or picture, would devolve into hairsplitting distinctions of *langue* and *parole*. Few patterns would be revealed. One might analyse a concert as a whole, but the concert as a work is a fairly arbitrary unit, and each concert tends to be quite different from other concerts (within certain limits), so that a structuralist analysis of recurring patterns would be rather pointless.

And yet a person who attends a Fluxconcert, after the first shock, typically gets caught up in the spirit of it and begins to enjoy it, without consciously knowing why. Perhaps there isn't even any shock. What is happening? To get to the answer for this will take a moment.

There is one critical approach that works – hermeneutics, the methodology of interpretation, both with regard to the artist and to the recipient (the viewer, hearer or reader). This approach, pioneered in recent times (it has an earlier history too) by Martin Heidegger, Ugo Betti, Hans-Georg Gadamer and others in philosophy, can be used to discover the workings of Fluxpieces fairly well. Usually the relationship between the recipient and the work is described in terms of a hermeneutic circle – idea of work, leading to manifestation of work, leading to recipient, leading to recipient's own thought processes, leading to new idea of work, leading to further thought processes, leading to modified perception of work being manifested, leading back to altered perception of the idea of work. In other words, what the recipient sees is coloured by his or her perception of it – and this is an implied part of the piece, even though it may be quite different from what the artist thought of it or how it was manifested by the performer.

In practice, going through the whole hermeneutic circle is a terribly cumbersome process to consider. My own preference is to streamline it by borrowing the horizon metaphor from Gadamer. Taking performance as the standard, for the moment:

*The performer performs the work. He or she establishes a horizon of experience – what is done, its implications and whatever style the performer uses are all aspects of this horizon.*

*The viewer has his or her own horizon of experience. He or she watches the performance, and the horizons are matched up together. To some extent there is a fusion of these horizons (Horizontverschmelzung). When the horizons fuse, wholly or in part, they are bent, warped, displaced, altered. The performance ends, and the horizons are no longer actively fused. The viewer examines his or her horizon. It is changed, for the better or for the worse. The best piece is the one that permanently affects the recipient's horizon, and the worst is the piece which the recipient, acting in good faith, cannot accept at all.*

The key processes here are: being conscious of the two horizons, completing the fusion process (by paying close attention to the performance), and then the discovery of the alterations in one's own horizon – as one notices that, for example, the performance has affected how one has been thinking about beans, butter, smiles or eggs. Such criticism focuses a great deal, of course, on the viewer. It more or less, in performance work, ignores the original Fluxcomposer, who may or may not be the same as the performer. But this is only true as far as the viewer is concerned. Why?

Because there is a similar fusion of horizons taking place between the composer and the performer. The composer makes the piece. The performer looks at the performance area and available materials, and only then decides just how to do the piece under the specific conditions of the performance. The performer next matches the horizon which he or she has built up with the horizon of the original piece as he or she sees it. Even if the performer is performing his own work, there will still be something of such a fusion of horizons between X-as-composer and X-as-performer, because X adapts his or her own piece, takes the responsibility of making slight changes – and, if a piece is performed many years after it was written, X has changed and the interaction with the piece suggests different significances. The piece is viewed from many different angles, and different aspects are revealed by each.

Now we can see why the viewer can enjoy the concert without knowing why – instinctively he or she is matching horizons, comparing expectations, participating in the process; the more actively he or she does so, the more likely he or she will be able to enjoy the experience.

Nonetheless, for the viewer, the recipient, the composer is more or less an object of speculation. One wonders who Mieko Shiomi might be – does she have green horns? All one sees is the work that is being done. One does not really have any way of knowing if the performance is staying close to the Fluxcomposer's work or if the performer is taking liberties with it. What the recipient sees is the performance, no more, no less. But in the case of works as minimalist as Fluxus ones are apt to be, the more actively the performance is watched, the more likely one is to enjoy it, as noted above.

A question may well start to go through the mind at this point, a natural question in viewing any unfamiliar art work: 'What is this thing that I am seeing an example of?' That is part of discovering one's meaning for a work. We love to classify. We involve ourselves in the naming of things, frame the work in its context, investigate its taxonomy. Of course, while I am talking about performance work, any Fluxwork, literary or fine art, would have analogical processes. But if one goes to a concert of familiar music, this question is

minimalised, because one knows, before one sets a foot in the door, that if Chopin is on the programme, the concert is likely to include at least some romantic music with a certain kind of sound to it. Thus the taxonomy is not so important there. On the other hand, if one turns on a radio and finds oneself enjoying some unknown piece, part of the key to enjoying the piece is to recognise the question – ‘What is this an example of?’ – and to try to match it with similar experiences in one’s memory bank, and, so, enjoy the work even more.

The matter of horizons takes place in any hermeneutic art process – it is inherent in the discovery of the horizons. But in watching a Fluxperformance, examples are all the more important since they involve discovering the pattern of the performance, the what-is-being-done. Quite often this discovery, detecting the example aspect of the horizon, comes to the viewer with a striking impact; it is like ‘getting’ the point of a joke. And, in fact, the similarity between even non-humorous Fluxpieces and jokes is striking. Even when the piece is serious, one tends to react *as if* the piece were a joke, since a joke is the nearest thing on one’s horizon to many Fluxpieces. For example, one is in an audience watching the stage. A balloon appears. A second balloon comes along. A third balloon comes along. One notices that the name of the piece is *Eight*. Suddenly the pattern is clear. One laughs. Why? There is nothing inherently funny in the pattern, but it has enough in common with jokes so that each balloon, as it appears and confirms one’s anticipation that there will in fact be eight balloons, feels like a stage along the way. Perhaps the metaphor of ‘joke’ is implied by the piece. But what would happen if, in the piece, only seven balloons appeared? One would be annoyed, probably feel cheated. It would seem as if the Fluxcomposer were being overly clever. That would not be interesting. It would be like a tricky joke that dissolves into excesses of cleverness and amuses only the teller.

Some assemblages of Fluxpieces have been presented as other things besides concerts and feasts: rituals have a certain place in Fluxus too. A ritual is, basically, a ceremonial act or series of such acts, symbolically recognising a transition from one life stage or situation to another. Three notable Fluxrituals have been a Fluxmass, a Fluxdivorce and the Fluxwedding of George Maciunas himself. In this last, Maciunas and his bride cross-dressed, as did the bridesmaids and best man (Alison Knowles). The wedding ceremony was based on a traditional Anglican one, but was altered with deliberate stumblings and falterings, the substitution of ‘Fluxus’ for various of the critical words in prayers, and so on. Instead of anthems and special music, there were various special Fluxpieces which were, in one way or another, suitable for a wedding. And afterwards there was an erotic feast, including the special bread already mentioned above. According to classical theory one might expect such a reversal of the normative, with the solemn made light and the religious made profane, to seem like a satire upon marriages in general. But no, the dominant feeling was one of joy. It was not a travesty but an incorporation of the horizon of Fluxus into the horizon of marriage. The result was certainly serious: Maciunas and his bride Billie did, in fact, actually marry (including a civil service at another time). One felt that the participants were sharing the joy of the basic ceremony with their Fluxfriends – including one fifteen-year-old girl, a friend of one of my daughters, who came to the Fluxwedding without ever having seen a Fluxconcert or any other such event before. This young woman, whose horizons were thoroughly conventional, might have been expected to be shocked or offended – or at least startled by the erotic feast. But as a whole the situation was so far from the normative that

normative standards did not apply, she did not reject the fusion of horizons but entered into the situation and enjoyed herself thoroughly as one might at any other kind of wedding.

Ultimately, of course, the purpose of achieving such a fusion of horizons is to allow for the possibility of their alteration. I have not gone into Fluxobjects, Fluxboxes and Fluxbooks, but the situation is the same as with the performances – one sees the work, considers its implied horizons, matches them with one's own, and these last, if the work works well, are altered and enriched. One sees, for example, the word 'green' in wooden letters on a wooden tablet. The tablet and word are painted green. One thinks about labels, green and life, craft and its absence, simplicity and complexity. Or perhaps the tablet and word are painted red, though the word still says 'green'. In this case there is a displacement. The word says something different from what one would expect. Or perhaps there is a whole rainbow of 'green' tablets, from red to violet and brown, perhaps even including black and white. Any of such pieces would work reasonably well – the horizons would work, and the implications, while different, would follow somewhat along the same pattern: see, identify what it is, compare it with what it might be, consider, digest, anticipate the next possibility, observe the transformation of one's own horizons – and enjoy the process. Each of these pieces is *an example* of the possibilities. When one sees such a piece, one imagines its alternatives. The alternatives are implied in the piece. The work is, in this sense, *exemplative*: it does not exist, as most art does, in the most definitive and perfect form possible. It exists in a form which suggests alternatives. This is true of many recent works, not just Fluxworks but other works as well. They encourage the creativity of the viewer, listener or reader; that is, of the receiver.

Such implications are a key criterion for evaluating the quality of a Fluxwork. If it has them, if one is conscious of them on the intuitive and imaginative level (rather than forcing them through an act of will), the work is good. That is, it is achieving its potential. The extent to which it lacks implications, conversely, is the extent to which it is not good, to the extent that it fails. One can, for metaphysical reasons, reject such value judgements on the conscious level, of course; but one experiences them nonetheless, and performs an act of criticism and, hopefully, of self-enrichment when one allows one's horizons to be changed.

The best Fluxworks imply a whole set of other possible Fluxworks. In terms of performance style (or style of execution as Fluxart, Fluxboxes and Fluxbooks), the best performances are therefore those which are most direct, so that one can perceive at least some of the alternative possibilities to the form in which a given work appears. This avoids what would be a problem in these works of becoming involved with noticing craftsmanship and the definitiveness of the statement in a work.

The best performance style is, therefore, that which allows the piece to be experienced with a minimum of consciousness of the performer interceding between piece and receiver. This is also true of some kinds of non-Fluxus performances – of comedy, for instance. A Charlie Chaplin presents the humour in his films in an altogether deadpan way, while a twelfth-rate jokester in a hotel bar does much of the laughing and expressing himself – and bores the audience. In such cases the horizons of 'joke' and 'audience anticipation' fail to fuse. So it is with Fluxus too. The proper style for Fluxus is the most low-key and efficient one. One does not mystify the audience – that is not the point – but one lets it have exactly enough information to discover the horizon, and then one lets the piece do the rest. It is *never*

necessary to joke about the Fluxpiece or to comment about it in an evaluative way, 'Next we will have a great piece from 1963 by Ben Vautier . . .' That would constitute an intrusion, and, far from making the piece more likeable, would detract from it.

One digression is necessary here before we leave the matter of theory and horizons; this is the matter of large works. The impression exists that *all* Fluxworks are small or minimalist. This is obviously not the case with what I have called the collation sort of Fluxus assemblage. Some patterns simply cannot be absorbed in their minimalist statement; they require time to reveal themselves effectively. The pieces are, necessarily, harder to understand for an audience; the past experience of the members of the audience usually has led them to expect more entertainment values than they are likely to get. One hears it said, 'I liked the little pieces, but the big ones went on too long'. What one hopes is that the boredom, if any, will be temporary, while the receiver fights the horizon of the piece. Boredom is, of course, not the aim of the piece; but it may be a necessary way-station on the path to liking it. Therefore, with such pieces the characteristic length is apt to have to be sufficiently long to allow the receiver to get through the boring phase and into the spirit of the event afterwards. This is why Fluxus pieces are apt either to be very short – two minutes or less – or very long – twenty minutes or more. There are rather few in the middle-length category.

There is a slight difference between European Fluxus and American Fluxus. The Europeans have tended to perform their Fluxus works in the context of festivals, while the Americans have tended to let the life situations predominate more often. Almost all the Fluxperformances in Europe have been in such concert situations, except for a few in the street; in America both of these have happened, but the feasts and the Fluxrituals have virtually all happened in America. The reason for this is not a difference in attitude, but is, rather, that the European Fluxartists are more scattered and it takes a well-financed festival to bring them together. On the other hand, in spite of the worse financial situation in America, there are more Fluxartists there, and they form one or several communities. For instance, in New York City alone there are perhaps forty Fluxpeople in residence and so to bring them together is not hard.

Also, the European Fluxworks, more typically than the American ones, come out of an expressive tradition. Since, to build up an emotional impact, one usually needs to work on a scale that is beyond the minimal, the collation sort of work is more typically European; while the minimal one is more typically American or Japanese. Besides, even if an American wanted to work on the larger scale, funding and obtaining rehearsal time would be problematic, so the economics militate against doing such pieces in America *vis-à-vis* Europe.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF RECEPTION: ARTISTS, PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONS

The reception of Fluxus, its popularity, influence, and, in general, its acceptance, vary considerably, according to who is seeing the work. The least problematic area is that of the general public. If even a relatively unsophisticated person attends a Fluxperformance or an exhibition of Fluxus works, such a person is apt to have an interesting and pleasurable experience. Even at the very beginning of Fluxus this was true. At Wiesbaden in 1962 the *Hausmeister* (janitor) of the museum, not a formally cultured man, was so delighted by the

performances that he brought his family and friends to the concerts as well. Furthermore, some of the more successful Fluxperformances have been done in the street or on boardwalks and in other public spaces. One performance by Benjamin Patterson comes to mind. It took place in New York's Times Square, on the edge of a red-light district. He stood on street corners, waiting until the lights turned green, and then simply followed the light to the next corner. Several young women – they appeared to be prostitutes – watched him do this for a while, and then they joined in. This situation was not as exceptional as one might imagine. Thus it cannot be argued that simply because it is formally unconventional, Fluxus is lacking in potential popularity. Because of the comparative simplicity of most Fluxus pieces, this is less true of Fluxus than of other avant-garde tendencies.

For most avant-garde art, one needs to know quite a considerable amount of art history and even of technical procedure in order to get one's bearings enough to be able to fuse one's horizons and experience pleasure. The difficulty of doing this is apt to become more pronounced, in fact, with the progressive intellectualism of the audience, since it has more expectations of what will or should happen. An audience with the baggage of ideas to which it feels some commitment has more to overcome than an audience without them. And it must overcome the false horizons in order to be able to fuse them and experience pleasure. An audience with a strong commitment to one or another alternative set of ideas – intellectual or derived from precedent and fashion – has to learn that these ideas are not under attack in Fluxus situations, that they are simply irrelevant to the work at hand; and this takes time.

As I have said, Fluxus performances and situations are popular with the public once the public is confronted by them. Many times 'professionals' in charge of the programmes of institutions have grossly underestimated the appeal of Fluxpieces; they devote an evening to Fluxperformances when they might have devoted several, and then they are surprised at the frustration among those who have to be turned away. They programme an exhibition, print 500 catalogues, and find that the exhibition breaks attendance records and that they must print another thousand or so catalogues. The public is, therefore, not the problem.

As for artists, few artists who do performance works can attend a Flux performance without, subsequently, including Fluxus-type elements in their own next performance. Naturally, these are usually not acknowledged, but a sensitive viewer can detect them. For example, in the 1960s, the famous Living Theatre picked up fragments of Fluxworks, especially from Jackson Mac Low and myself (we had both worked with the Living Theatre at various points) and included them in their programme, 'Shorter Pieces'.

Another example of the absorption of Fluxus happened during the 1970s, when 'performance art' or 'art performances' became common. Typically performance art was different from Fluxus, in that it included much more narrative and subjectively personal content, usually focussing on generating a public persona for the artist. Works by Laurie Anderson are a good example of this, stressing the bright young *ingénue* in the high-tech world of New York City (not always justifiable, but usually fairly convincing in performance). The persona may be quite different from the private personality of the artist. However, the minimalist structure within which the performance takes place, the untraditional narrative matrix, the absence of most theatrical techniques, suggest a debt to Fluxus (and perhaps to Happenings). The performances of 'performance artists' match many of the Fluxus criteria given above, and, but for their knowledge of Fluxus, it is unlikely that

their work would assume the form it did without some awareness of it. Since the artists who did this work were, for the most part, younger than the Fluxus people, they naturally did not wish to present themselves as travelling in the wake of Fluxus or Happenings. They describe themselves as qualitatively new and different, although there are at least three overlaps, artists who have done major Fluxwork but who are accepted as performance artists as well – Alison Knowles (one of the original Fluxpeople), Geoffrey Hendricks, and Jean Dupuy. This legacy area can and should be explored more fully at some point.

But there are two bodies of people whose hostility towards Fluxus is profound. Maciunas thought this hostility was irreversible, and perhaps he was right. These are both groups of art professionals: those who work in art institutions (galleries and museums) and the artists who are 'good' in whatever it is that they do, but who are not good enough to be really secure in it. Of this last group, it is a truism that 'the good is ever the enemy to the best'. This means that, by their very nature, artists who are not really strong enough to create new territory must rely for their professional success on the continued attention (and therefore value) assigned to the safe ground that they are on. Such artists felt very threatened by Fluxus, which, as they see it, calls into question the validity of what they are doing by posing an alternative model. In fact, one might almost say that one way to tell the difference between a good pattern painter and a fine one, between a good photo-realist painter and a fine one, would be to ask them about Fluxus. The strong one will either be supportive or not interested; the weak one will attack it. Why? Because Fluxus is concerned with works and ideas, with a minimum of personality. It is done for the love of it – 'for its own sake', in Victor Cousin's phrase of 1816. If value comes to be attached to this – great! But it is uncommercial by its very nature. It does not take a great expert to make coffee as a performance. But commercial is exactly what most second-rate professional art is – it demands to be admired so that it can be sold. There is, thus, a real threat in this sense to this kind of professionalism on the part of Fluxworks, and the good artist who is not one of the best recognises this on the gut level intuitively.

Museum and gallery people have a somewhat similar problem with Fluxus. Fluxusworks do not lend themselves easily to becoming commodities – precious objects sold through stores, as art galleries want them to be, or beautiful fetishes to immortalise the donor of works in the local museum. But a Fluxobject is valuable not intrinsically because of the ideas which it implies and embodies. It has more the quality of a souvenir or sacred relic than of an exquisitely wrought product of fine craftsmanship. There are only a few Fluxworks (again, Vostell is perhaps an exception) which could not be duplicated by the artist, more or less exactly, without any great effort. In fact, if a Fluxobject is damaged – for example by a packer at a museum after an exhibition, who might well dismantle it without knowing what he is doing – it is often easier to remake it than to repair it. This can be exasperating to the gallery or museum person. The collector bought the object and it was damaged; normally, if it were traditional art, he would arrange for the artist to restore it, or would hire a skilled restorer to do so. On the other hand, some Fluxartists feel that when the work has passed out of their possession, it is the responsibility of the new owner to restore it or possibly even to remake it. The idea of the work is part of the work here, and the idea has been transferred along with the ownership of the object that embodies it. This is discouraging to collectors, and is therefore discouraging to those who service them as well. Normally when one goes to a great collection one is conscious of the display of wealth; one speculates on how much this or

that work or the entire collection must have cost. Such collections belong not only to the world of art, of course, but to the world of taste and fashion. One can try to ignore this feeling or inquiry, but one will seldom succeed. But a collection of Fluxus works will inevitably include some pieces which are untransformed from life (Duchamp's urinal could have been a Fluxwork). Their significance is their ability to transform the viewer's horizons; this stress threatens the assumptions of those who are commodity or craft-orientated.

Gallery operators service such collections, of course. They therefore have a vested interest in discouraging their opposites. Museums service such collections too. Both, therefore, tend to disparage Fluxus – they say 'it's over'. They have been saying this since Fluxus began. Since Fluxus is as much a form and an attitude as it is a historical tendency, even if the tendency were over the form might not be over. Is collage 'over'? Or they say 'it's all paper, meaning that there are no substantial works, which is untrue. It is the responsibility of Fluxartists, in order to bring their ideas to the people, to prove otherwise, and to endure until the larger museums, however reluctantly, feel they must give more than token attention to Fluxus, even though most of the skill in Fluxworks goes into the conception rather than the execution.

Fluxus differs from most art in being more purely conceptual. It is not just a group of people or a historic tendency so much as a class of form, with the nine characteristics which I have already mentioned. The best ingress into the work, since it does not usually offer the same experience or have to match our normative expectation for art, is via hermeneutics, via the horizon concept. Historically Fluxus has had an influence on art performance – also on artists' books (bookworks), which I have not discussed. But its real impact will probably be when new artists can take up the Fluxus format without being self-conscious about it; to make what they themselves need from the area. To appreciate this a special kind of gallery director or museum person would be needed, since it would be, at best, problematic for a traditional one to deal with Fluxus.

## NOTE

- 1 This essay was written in Berlin, Germany, in March 1982 and revised in April 1985. It was published in the *Fluxus Research* issue of Lund Art Press in 1991. A recently revised version appears in Dick Higgins' new book, *Modernism since Postmodernism*, San Diego State University Press, 1997.

# KEN FRIEDMAN: FLUXUS AND COMPANY<sup>1</sup>

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## FLUXUS 1962

### **Ideas, Issues and Paradigms**

The idea of Fluxus was born long before 1962. We see it in the philosophy of Heraclitus and we see in the idea that you cannot cross the same river twice. We find it in fourteenth-century Zen texts and we find it in the paradigms of science that began taking shape in the late 1800s.

René Block coined the term 'Fluxism' to refer to an idea. The Fluxus idea transcends a specific group of people, and the idea has been visible through history. While the Fluxus idea existed long before the specific group of people called Fluxus, the group gave Fluxism a tangible shape through the work of experimental artists, architects, composers and designers who created, published, exhibited and performed under the Fluxus label. The idea grew into a community larger than the group, a larger community that includes people whose ideas and work incorporate elements based on the Fluxus experiment. It also includes a community of individuals who themselves became important to the Fluxus group.

Fluxus evolved around a conscious use of model-making and paradigm formation. My purpose here is to discuss Fluxus and to analyse some of the models and paradigms that seem to me essential in understanding it.

There have been many parallels between Fluxus and science. New models in mathematics often precede and lead to new applications in physical science. So, too, paradigms in art emerge when the worldview is shifting. Shifts in vision transform culture and science as they reshape history. These shifts are visible in the shifting paradigms of art.

### **Examples and Contrasts**

The decades in which Fluxus emerged were the decades in which the sciences of transdisciplinary complexity came into their own. Fluxus and intermedia were born just as technology shifted from electrical engineering to electronic engineering. The first computers used punch-cards and mechanical systems. Computation science was in its infancy along with early forms of evolutionary psychology and the neurosciences. Chaos studies had not yet emerged as a discipline, but the foundations of chaos studies were already in place.

Fluxus grew with the intermedia idea. It had strong foundations in music, Zen, design and architecture. Rather than pursuing technical – or simply technological – solutions, Fluxus artists tended to move in a philosophical vein, direct and subtle at the same time. This proved to be a blessing, steering clear of the dead-end solutions typical of the 'art and technology' craze.

While new paradigms engender new technology as well as new art, relatively few technologies have given birth to interesting art forms. Buckminster Fuller noted a three-decade time lag between innovative paradigms and their wide adoption. Many of the new disciplines have only now been around for thirty years. Some aren't yet a decade old. As a result, the time may not yet be ripe for their obvious application in visual art.

Electronic processors and video equipment did give rise to new art forms. They were obvious technologies that artists could exploit. More significant, the paradigms on which they operate are not new. Electronic music, for example, began with electrical equipment rather than the electronic equipment that is available today. Electronic music was called 'electronic music' because the term seemed more workable than 'electric music' or 'electrical music' would have been. The first electronic music was created with wired circuits and electrical tubes, not with transistors and computers. The most interesting early equipment for electronic music was closer to an old-fashioned telephone switchboard in appearance and operation than it was to today's modern desk-top computers. The equipment available to artists and composers in those days was analogue equipment, wired and arranged by hand, a far cry from the powerful work stations that now contain more computing power than even the biggest mainframes once had.

The past and present of electronic music offer merely one example. The technological applications of electronic art are still primitive, even if the paradigms are not, and it seems to me that video and the electronic arts are still in their primitive stage. In a way, video has just passed out of its Stone Age and into the Bronze Age.

Video is now a recognised art form, as electronic music, electrostatic printing, electrostatic transfer and electrostatic printmaking have become. The media are now distinct and simple but the artistic results are not often powerful or elegant. Too many artists are entranced with the physical qualities of the medium they use and unconscious about the ideas that they attempt to develop. Art is burdened by attention to physical media and plagued by a failure to consider the potential of intermedia.

The equipment available to artists today does far more physically than is really necessary. We see too many videos that are long on technique and short on content. Computerised graphic design often illustrates the problem. Graphic designers explore the capacity of a computer to set hundreds of complex graphic objects on a page with multiple layers and hitherto impossible effects while they remain unaware of such matters as legibility and basic communication theory. The technical power available to computer-based designers outstrips their design ability in many cases. The result has been an avalanche of complicated, trendy typography and fussy, mannerist design created to look up-to-date rather than to communicate. The most powerful use of the computer in science is to create elegant, simple solutions to complex problems. When artists use the mechanical power of the computer to complicate rather than to simplify, it suggests that they do not understand the paradigms of the new technology. They have merely learned to manipulate the equipment.

The art forms that will one day emerge from computation science and chaos studies have not yet reached the level of video and electronic music, as basic as they still are. The physical forms of computation science or chaos are not as simple or as obvious as electronic music or video. At present the technology dictates the medium and technological frenzy sometimes

inhibits the learning process. It may also be that evolution demands the creation of many dead-ends on the way to interesting art.

The computer-generated images presented today as computer art or the fractal images of chaos studies are simplistic presentations of an idea. They are laboratory exercises or displays of technical virtuosity, designed to test and demonstrate the media and the technology. They are the intellectual and artistic equivalent of the paint samples that interior designers use to plan out larger projects. They may be interesting and useful in some way, but only people shopping for paint find them relevant.

By contrast, Fluxus suggests approaches that are simple rather than simplistic. The level of complexity in any given work is determined by philosophical paradigms. It isn't dictated by available technology. This is an important difference in a technological age. It distinguishes Fluxus forms as humanistic forms – forms determined by the artist rather than by the tools. The idea of simplicity owes as much to the Fluxus refusal to distinguish between art and life as to the intellectual curiosity that characterises Fluxus artists.

### **Paradigms Are More Important than Technology**

The paradigms of any complex, transformative era are its most interesting features. Paradigms being born today will transform the global environment tomorrow. This is the environment in which Fluxus took shape and the environment in which Fluxus continues to grow. It hasn't led to an art of technical applications, but to an art of subtle ideas. Some of those ideas have been complex, but few have been complicated. Many have been simple. Few have been simplistic.

The essence of Fluxus has been transformation. The key transformative issues in a society do not always attract immediate notice. Transformative issues involve paradigm shifts. When paradigms are shifting, the previous dominant information hierarchy holds the obvious focus of a society's attention until the shift is complete. One simple example of this phenomenon can be seen in the expectations that we had for videophone compared to what we thought of telefax. For almost three decades journalists have hailed videophone as the coming revolution in telecommunications. Videophone appeared to be a natural marriage of television and telephone. It was a great idea. It made for fascinating illustrated articles in magazines and great snippets on TV shows. By contrast, telefax was humble, almost primitive. You send a message, but you don't talk and see your message at the same time. On an emotional level, therefore, telefax seems closer to telegraph than television, nowhere near as exciting as videophone. In the long run, however, it didn't matter that telefax lacked excitement; telefax was useful. It was application-oriented and user-friendly. It was simple and flexible. As a result, telefax became the most profound development in communications technology of the 1980s. At first, the telefax was so obvious that it was almost overlooked. Videophone is such a dramatic idea that it held public interest long before becoming possible as a practical, cost-effective technology. It diverted public attention from the telefax while telefax quietly transformed the way we sent and received messages.

The same applies to Fluxus. Fluxus began to take shape in Europe, the United States and Japan during the 1950s. It started in the work and actions of many people. Their activity often went unnoticed at the time; and when it was noticed, people didn't give it much thought. Even so, the processes created and nurtured by the Fluxus community were new

paradigms for the consideration of art, architecture, music and design. The artists, composers, architects and designers who constituted the Fluxus community worked with simple ideas – ideas so simple that they were easy to ignore. As often happens in developing paradigms, simplicity is a focus for concentrated thinking. It generates depth, power and resonance. That is how Fluxus survived and why Fluxus was never just an art movement.

The environment also changes. Just as the telefax redefined the way that people communicate, new media will once again transform our way of sending and receiving messages. Telefax was developed before the widespread availability of the personal computer. Today, personal computers and the various ways of linking them are beginning to replace telefax – including computers that emulate a telefax. In a sense, the telefax that once seemed so revolutionary is beginning to appear as an entry-level technology. The Pony Express once redefined the world's understanding of message delivery speed, but it lasted only two years before it was replaced by the telegraph. The telegraph was later replaced by the telephone, an invention that was once thought of as a special kind of toy for transmitting musical concerts and news broadcasts.

Today, satellite-linked telephones, computer networks and e-mail are shaping a platform that will slowly encompass the Earth. This platform will eventually make videophone possible through a new technology unimagined by the original inventors of the videophone concept. Despite the growth of advanced technology, the relatively simple telefax remains useful and so do land-line telephones. Today, as in past times, there are situations in which older technologies are better suited to modern applications than the more advanced solutions. One example is the suitability of entry-level mobile phone systems for developing nations that use a more simple and less expensive technology than the GSM systems that are now standard in many European nations.

Some technologies and paradigms will probably never lose their value. Books are an example for reading. The human voice is an example for speaking and singing. These are examples of simple paradigms and technologies that are accessible and available under such a wide variety of options that they will always be useful for some applications. I like to think of Fluxus that way – as a useful series of paradigms and options.

### **Evolution and Ancestors**

Fluxus was born at a shifting point in world-views. The era that the English-speaking world once called the Elizabethan Age is only now coming to a close. This was the age of the pirate kings – an age in which gunpowder technology permitted the Western nations to conquer and dominate the rest of the world.

The greatest portion of the world's wealth and power was once concentrated in Asia. A number of poor decisions on the part of Asian rulers created the context in which the European powers were virtually assured of global dominance, despite the relative youth of the European empires and cultures that were primitive in comparison with their Asian counterparts. Two of the most significant of these decisions were the mandated destruction of China's ocean-going fleets and the closing of Japan. These decisions were also two of the most foolish – folly because they were decisions made by powerful governments that finally weakened the power of their nations. In that sense, China and Japan transformed themselves from two of the world's most developed nations into nations that would later find themselves

at great disadvantage, primarily because they cut themselves off from the competition and evolution of a changing worldwide environment.

This was a far different situation than the situation of the nations and empires of India, Korea and Vietnam, all of which found themselves in problematic situations dictated more by historical circumstances than troubles brought about by specific and bad decisions. For any number of reasons, however, the empires of Asia, old, wealthy and powerful, were unable to innovate and compete effectively against the vigorous and often ruthless expansion of the Western powers. The Asian powers had their own ruthless dynasties. The triumph of the West did not occur because the West was willing to be immoral where the East was spiritual and unprepared to resist. The main issues were technological and economic: the West had a more effective technology than the East had, a technology that was coupled to a culture more able to innovate and initiate change. That moment essentially dictated the shape of world power and the global economic system for roughly five centuries. Those five centuries are now coming to an end.

A new era is taking shape now. We do not yet have a name for the new era, but it is clear that a new time is emerging. Asia is once again a wealthy, powerful region, expanding and transforming the world economy. Led first by Japan, and later by Korea and Taiwan, with mainland China about to emerge and India following after, Asia will soon be the world's largest regional economy. The Asia-Pacific region already equals Europe and the United States in wealth. It may soon equal them in power and geopolitical influence. There is every reason to believe that the Asia-Pacific region (possibly including Australia and North America) will play the kind of role in the twenty-first century that Europe played from the seventeenth to the first half of the twentieth century and that America played from the early twentieth century on. The consequences of this transformation will be good and bad. The degree to which the transformation will work good or bad results on individuals and societies will depend on who they are, on where they are and on their viewpoint. Whether the changes are good or bad, however, the moment in which the new era takes shape will be a time-based boundary state.

Boundary states in ecological systems give rise to interesting life forms. Transition times in history give rise to interesting culture forms.

The first signs of this global transformation began in the last century. The old era could be said to have ended in 1815 with the Treaty of Vienna that closed the Napoleonic Wars. That was the last real moment of the old Europe, the old diplomacy, the old empires. The putative revolutions of the mid-century, the revolutions that failed, were the beginning of the new nationalism, a clear sign that the European empires were doomed. Even though they didn't know it yet, the Hapsburgs were in trouble, as were the Romanovs, the Saxe-Coburg-Gotha Windsors-to-be and the Hohenzollerns of Prussia, whose imperial aspirations were essentially doomed even before their empire was cobbled together by the Iron Chancellor. The final result of the twentieth century could not have been predicted at that time but change was on the horizon. Technology, economy and history doomed the static and slow-moving empires with all their cultural baggage.

The transformative zone in the cultural ecology that ushered in our century became visible in the 1890s with the work of writers, artists and composers such as Alfred Jarry, Pablo Picasso, Douanier Rousseau and Erik Satie. The tradition they established became a kind of

left-handed, Tantric approach to art, contrarian and often hermetic. It was a transnational art in an era that would become increasingly national under the influence of the national movements in art and music that accompanied the break-up of the empires and the liberation of conquered and colonised nations.

As a result, this tradition in art excited and stimulated young artists, opened the doors to many cultures and at the same time inevitably came into conflict with the very cultures they enlivened. Only the moment of international modernism made Hollywood possible, for example, and yet Hollywood movies grew and blossomed as a typically American art form – a cultural innovation as boldly ethnocentric as the music of Grieg and Sibelius, as peculiarly archetypal in their national expression as the paintings of Matisse or Gaudi's architecture. The end result was that this century saw two arts and two cultures growing side by side. One was public, heroic and national in inclination. The other was intellectual, hermetic and global in tone.

These two traditions challenged and informed each other, yet for a host of reasons, they remained separate; separated as much by the demands of politics and economics as by the reality of art. Take the case of Abstract Expressionism, for example. This was the first art movement to exert worldwide influence after America took on the international leadership that the disintegrated European empires and their impoverished heirs could no longer afford.

Europe and Asia informed the best sentiments of Abstract Expressionism. It was an art that would have been impossible without the twin influences of Surrealism and oriental culture on America. When it came time for America to stand for its own in the international art world, however, politics, economics and political economics dictated that Abstract Expressionism be treated as some kind of uniquely American triumph. Viewed in one way, this was the voice of a young nation come into its own. Viewed another way, this was history chasing its own tail. The triumph of American painting was heralded by myopic art critics. Some of them were well informed in the narrow terms of art history, but they were conveniently ignorant of larger cultural history. Most of them managed to overlook the fact that the art market and art history are generally – and only temporarily – dominated by the nation that currently holds the balance of power in the geopolitical and economic terms. This view served the political purposes of the American government. There was no purpose to be served by making clear just how impossible this artistic achievement would have been without the defeated Japan, the problematic China, or an occasionally fractious Europe that America was attempting to dominate and lead. Thus the acolytes of Abstract Expressionism ballyhooed the grandeur of the New York painters, treating everything up to that moment as the prelude to their triumph. One cannot entirely blame America for this attitude. After all, the Greeks, the Italians, the Dutch, the British and the Japanese, not to mention the French, had done so themselves, on behalf of their several republics and empires.

It is the other tradition that influenced Fluxus, a tradition that has inevitably been neglected because it is anti-nationalistic in sentiment and tone and practised by artists who are not easily used as national flag-bearers. Individual artists such as Marcel Duchamp and John Cage are accurately seen as ancestors of Fluxus, but ideas played a larger role than individuals. Russian revolutionary art groups such as LEF were an influence on some. For others, De Stijl and the Bauhaus philosophy were central. The idea that one can be an artist and – at the same time – an industrialist, an architect or a designer is a key to the way one can

view Fluxus work and the artist's role in society. It is as important to work in the factory or the urban landscape as in the museum. It is important to be able to shift positions and to work in both environments.

Dada was further from Fluxus in many ways than either De Stijl or Bauhaus. The seeming relationship between Fluxus and Dada is more a matter of appearances than of deep structure. Robert Filliou pointed this out in his 1962 statement making clear that Fluxus is not Dadaist in its intentions. Dada was explosive, irreverent and made much use of humour, as Fluxus has also done. But Dada was nihilistic, a millenarian movement in modernist terms. Fluxus was constructive. Fluxus was founded on principles of creation, of transformation and its central method sought new ways to build.

Jean Sellem asserts that the Fluxus tradition is, indeed, a tradition rooted in hermetic philosophy and even in the hidden traditions of such movements as Kabbalah and Tantra. I cannot quite agree with him, yet I think he brings up a point that offers valid ways to understand Fluxus. So, too, this assertion works well with some of the ways in which Fluxus works. Fluxus aspires to serve everyone, but it demands a certain kind of perspective and commitment. Anyone can have it, but everyone must work to get it. The premises and the results are simple; the path from the premises to the goal can be difficult.

One way or another, though, Fluxus is a creature of the fluid moment. The transformative zone where the shore meets the water is simple, and complex, too. The entire essence of chaos theory and the new sciences of complexity suggest that profoundly simple premises can create rich, complex interaction and lead to surprising results. Finding the simple elements that interact to shape our complex environment is the goal of much science. In culture, too, and in human behaviour, simple elements combine in many ways. On the one hand, we seek to understand and describe them. On the other, we seek to use them. The fascination and delight of transformation states in boundary zones is the way in which they evolve naturally.

### **When, How and Who**

The formal date given for the birth of the Fluxus group is the year 1962. Several people in Europe, Japan and the United States had been working in parallel art forms and pursuing many of the same ideas in their work. The Lithuanian-born architect and designer George Maciunas had tried to present their work in a gallery and through a magazine named *Fluxus*. The gallery folded and the magazine never appeared. A festival was planned in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 1962, featuring the work of many of the artists and composers whose work had been scheduled for publication in the magazine. The idea of the festival was to raise money to publish the magazine, so it was called the Fluxus Festival. The German press referred to the participants by the name of the festival, calling them *die Fluxus Leute*, the 'Fluxus people'. That's how a specific group of artists came to be called the Fluxus group.

The artists in Wiesbaden included Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Arthur K pcke, George Maciunas, Nam June Paik, Benjamin Patterson, Karl Erik Welin, Emmett Williams, and Wolf Vostell. They were already in contact with artists and composers such as George Brecht, Jackson Mac Low, La Monte Young, Ben Vautier and with many of the individuals whose work was soon to appear in *An Anthology*.

While Maciunas' festival gave Fluxus its name, many of the artists and composers involved in the festival had known and worked with each other long before 1962. The New

York Audio-Visual Group, for example, had been active since 1956. In Germany, a similar group of artists and composers had been working together equally as long. Maciunas' projects offered these people a forum. For many of them, Fluxus was a forum and a meeting place without ideological or artistic conditions and without a defined artistic programme.

After Wiesbaden, artists who had been working on similar principles came into contact with others who were active in the Fluxus community. Some of them became active in the Fluxus group. Most of them were working on a similar basis and they took part in Fluxus because of what they had already done. These artists were to include Eric Andersen, Joseph Beuys, Giuseppe Chiari, Henning Christiansen, Philip Corner, Robert Filliou, Bengt af Klintberg, Yoko Ono, Willem de Ridder, Takako Saito, Tomas Schmit, Daniel Spoerri, Robert Watts, La Monte Young and others. Some, like La Monte, had been in touch with George long before Wiesbaden. The group kept growing through the mid-1960s, eventually coming to include other artists such as Milan Knizak, Geoff Hendricks, Larry Miller, Yoshi Wada, Jean Dupuy and myself.

There were thus two groups of original Fluxus members. The first group was comprised of the nine who were at Wiesbaden. The second group included those who came into Fluxus in the years after, distinguished by innovative work that led the others to welcome them.

Fluxus has been able to grow because it has had room for dialogue and transformation. It has been able to be born and reborn several times in different ways. The fluid understanding of its own history and meaning; the central insistence on dialogue and social creativity rather than on objects and artefacts have enabled Fluxus to remain alive on the several occasions that Fluxus has been declared dead.

## TWELVE FLUXUS IDEAS

### Core Issues

There are twelve core issues that can be termed the basic ideas of Fluxus. In 1981 Dick Higgins wrote a list of nine criteria<sup>2</sup> that he suggested as central to Fluxus. He stated that a work or a project is Fluxist to the degree that it fulfils a significant number of criteria, and that the more criteria any one piece fills, the more Fluxus in intention and realisation it is. I found Dick's list a useful model and expanded the list to twelve. I feel that my ideas are much the same as Dick's, but I changed some of the terms to account more precisely for the nuances of meaning I feel are vital. There has been some confusion over the use of the term 'criteria'. Dick and I both used the term in the original sense of characteristics or traits, not standards of judgement. In short, we intended description, not prescription.

The Twelve Fluxus Ideas are:

1 *Globalism* 2 *Unity of art and life* 3 *Intermedia* 4 *Experimentalism* 5 *Chance* 6 *Playfulness* 7 *Simplicity* 8 *Implicativeness* 9 *Exemplativism* 10 *Specificity* 11 *Presence in time* 12 *Musicality*.

### Globalism

*Globalism* is central to Fluxus. It embraces the idea that we live on a single world, a world in which the boundaries of political states are not identical with the boundaries of nature or culture. Dick Higgins' list used the term 'internationalism'. Higgins referred to Fluxus' complete lack of interest in the national origin of ideas or of people, but internationalism can

also be a form of competition between nations. War is now unacceptable as a form of national expression. Economic interests on a global scale erase national boundaries, too. The only areas in which nations can push themselves forward as national-interest groups with identities defined against the identities of other nations are sports and culture. The international culture festivals are sometimes like football championships where stars and national politicians push against each other with all the vigour and savagery of simulated warfare. Fluxus, however, encourages dialogue among like minds, regardless of nation. Fluxus welcomes the dialogue of unlike minds when social purposes are in tune.

In the 1960s, the concept of internationalism was expressive. The United Nations was young, the cold war was an active conflict, and mass political groups operating as national-interest groups seemed to offer a way to establish global dialogue. Today, 'globalism' is a more precise expression. It's not simply that boundaries no longer count, but that in the most important issues, there are no boundaries.

A democratic approach to culture and to life is a part of the Fluxus view of globalism. A world inhabited by individuals of equal worth and value suggests – or requires – a method for each individual to fulfil his or her potential. This, in turn, suggests a democratic context within which each person can decide how and where to live, what to become, how to do it.

The world as it is today has been shaped by history, and today's conditions are determined in great part by social and economic factors. While the Western industrialised nations and some developing nations are essentially democratic, we do not live in a democratic world. Much of the world is governed by tyrannies, dictatorships or anarchic states. Finding the path from today's world to a democratic world raises important questions, complex questions, that lie outside the boundaries of this essay. Nevertheless, democracy seems to most of us an appropriate goal and a valid aspiration. It is fair to say that many Fluxus artists see their work as a contribution to that world.

Some of the Fluxus work was intended as a direct contribution to a more democratic world. Joseph Beuys' projects for direct democracy, Nam June Paik's experiments with television, Robert Filliou's programmes, Dick Higgins' *Something Else Press*, Milan Knizak's *Aktual* projects, George Maciunas' multiples and my own experiments with communication and research-based art forms were all direct attempts to bring democratic expression into art and to use art in the service of democracy. The artists who created these projects wrote essays and manifestoes that made this goal clear. The views took different starting points, sometimes political, sometimes economic, sometimes philosophical, sometimes even mystical or religious. As a result, this is one aspect of Fluxus that can be examined and understood in large global terms, and these terms are given voice in the words of the artists themselves. Other Fluxus projects had similar goals, though not all have been put forward in explicit terms.

Concurrent with a democratic standpoint is an anti-elitist approach. When Nam June Paik read an earlier version of the *Twelve Fluxus Ideas*, he pointed out that the concept of anti-elitism was missing. I had failed to articulate the linkage between globalism, democracy and anti-elitism. In fact, one cannot achieve a humanistic global community without democracy or achieve democracy in a world controlled by an elite. In this context, one must define the term 'elitism' to mean a dominant elite class based on inherited wealth or power or based on the ability of dominant minorities to incorporate new members in such a way that

their wealth and power will be preserved. This is quite contrary to an open or entrepreneurial society in which the opportunity to advance is based on the ability to create value in the form of goods or services.

The basic tendency of elitist societies to restrict opportunity is why elite societies eventually strangle themselves. Human beings are born with the genetic potential for talent and the potential to create value for society without regard to gender, race, religion or other factors. While some social groups intensify or weaken certain genetic possibilities through preferential selection based on social factors, the general tendency is that any human being can in theory represent any potential contribution to the whole. A society that restricts access to education or to the ability to shape value makes it impossible for the restricted group to contribute to the larger society. This means that a restrictive society will finally cripple itself in comparison to or in competition with a society in which anyone can provide service to others to the greatest extent possible.

For example, a society which permits all of its members to develop and use their talents to the fullest extent will always be a richer and more competitive society than a society which denies some members education because of race, religion or social background. Modern societies produce value through professions based on education. Educated people create the material wealth that enable all members of a society to flourish through such disciplines as physics, chemistry or engineering. It is nearly impossible to become a physicist, a chemist or an engineer without an education. Those societies that make it impossible for a large section of the population to be educated for these professions must statistically reduce their chances of innovative material progress in comparison with those societies that educate every person with the aptitude for physics, chemistry or engineering.

Fluxus, however, proposes a world in which it is possible to create the greatest value for the greatest number of people. This finds its parallel in many of the central tenets of Buddhism. In economic terms, it leads to what could be called Buddhist capitalism or green capitalism. In the arts, the result can be confusing. The arts are a breeding ground and a context for experiment. The world uses art to conduct experiments of many kinds – thought experiments and sense experiments. At their best, the arts are a cultural wetlands, a breeding ground for evolution and for the transmutation of life forms. In a biologically rich dynamic system, there are many more opportunities for evolutionary dead-ends than for successful mutation. As a result, there must be and there is greater latitude for mistakes and transgressions in the world of the arts than in the immediate and results-oriented world of business or social policy. This raises the odd possibility that a healthy art world may be a world in which there is always more bad art than good. According to some, the concept of bad art or good is misleading: this was Filliou's assertion, the point he made with his series of *bien fait, mal fait* works.

Ultimately, the development and availability of a multiplicity of works and views permits choice, progress and development. This is impossible in a centrally planned, controlled society. The democratic context of competing visions and open information makes this growth possible. Access to information is a basis for this development, which means that everyone must have the opportunity to shape information and to use it. Just as short-term benefits can accrue in entropic situations, so it is possible for individuals and nations to benefit from the short-term monopoly of resources and opportunities. Thus the

urge for elitism based on social class and for advantage based on nationalism. In the long run, this leads to problems that disadvantage everyone. Fluxism suggests globalism, democracy and anti-elitism as intelligent premises for art, for culture and for long-term human survival.

Paik's great 1962 manifesto, *Utopian Laser Television*, pointed in this direction. He proposed a new communications medium based on hundreds of television channels. Each channel would 'narrowcast' its own programme to an audience of those who wanted the programme without regard to the size of the audience. It would make no difference whether the audience was made of two viewers or two billion. It wouldn't even matter whether the programmes were intelligent or ridiculous, commonly comprehensible or perfectly eccentric. The medium would make it possible for all information to be transmitted, and each member of each audience would be free to select or choose his own programming based on a menu of infinitely large possibilities.

Even though Paik wrote his manifesto for television rather than computer-based information, he predicted the worldwide computer network and its effects. As technology advances to the point where computer power will make it possible for the computer network to carry and deliver full audiovisual programming such as movies or videotapes, we will be able to see Paik's *Utopian Laser Television*. That is the ultimate point of the Internet with its promise of an information-rich world.

As Buckminster Fuller suggested, it must eventually make sense for all human beings to have access to the multiplexed distribution of resources in an environment of shared benefits, common concern and mutual conservation of resources.

### Unity of Art and Life

The *unity of art and life* is central to Fluxism. When Fluxus was established, the conscious goal was to erase the boundaries between art and life. That was the sort of language appropriate to the time of Pop Art and of Happenings. The founding Fluxus circle sought to resolve what was then seen as a dichotomy between art and life. Today, it is clear that the radical contribution Fluxus made to art was to suggest that there is no boundary to be erased.

Beuys articulated it well in suggesting that everyone is an artist, as problematic as that statement appears to be. Another way to put it is to say that art and life are part of a unified field of reference, a single context. Stating it that way poses problems, too, but the whole purpose of Fluxus is to go where the interesting problems are.

### Intermedia

*Intermedia* is the appropriate vehicle for Fluxism. Dick Higgins introduced the term 'inter-media' to the modern world in his famous 1966 essay. He described an art form appropriate to people who say there are no boundaries between art and life. If there cannot be a boundary between art and life, there cannot be boundaries between art forms and art forms. For purposes of history, of discussion, of distinction, one can refer to separate art forms, but the meaning of intermedia is that our time often calls for art forms that draw on the roots of several media, growing into new hybrids.

Imagine, perhaps, an art form that is comprised 10% of music, 25% of architecture, 12% of drawing, 18% of shoemaking, 30% of painting and 5% of smell. What would it be like?

How would it work? How would some of the specific art works appear? How would they function? How would the elements interact? This is a thought experiment that yields interesting results. Thoughts like this have given rise to some of the most interesting art works of our time.

### **Experimentalism**

Fluxus applied the scientific method to art. *Experimentalism*, *research orientation* and *iconoclasm* were its hallmarks. Experimentalism doesn't merely mean trying new things. It means trying new things and assessing the results. Experiments that yield useful results cease being experiments and become usable tools, like penicillin in medicine or imaginary numbers in mathematics.

The research orientation applies not only to the experimental method, but to the ways in which research is conducted. Most artists, even those who believe themselves experimentalists, understand very little about the ways ideas develop. In science, the notion of collaboration, of theoreticians, experimenters and researchers working together to build new methods and results, is well established. Fluxus applied this idea to art. Many Fluxus works are the result of numbers of artists active in dialogue. Fluxus artists are not the first to apply this method, but Fluxus is the first art movement to declare this way of working as an entirely appropriate method for use over years of activity rather than as the occasional diversion. Many Fluxus works are still created by single artists, but from the first to the present day, you find Fluxus artists working together on projects where more than one talent can be brought to bear.

Iconoclasm is almost self-evident. When you work in an experimental way in a field as bounded by restrictions and prejudices as art, you have got to be willing to break the rules of cultural tradition.

### **Chance**

One key aspect of Fluxus experimentation is *chance*. The methods – and results – of chance occur over and over again in the work of Fluxus artists. There are several ways of approaching chance. Chance, in the sense of aleatoric or random chance, is a tradition with a legacy going back to Duchamp, to Dada and to Cage. Much has been made of this tradition in writings about Fluxus, perhaps more than is justified, but this is understandable in the cultural context in which Fluxus appeared. By the late 1950s the world seemed to have become too routinised, and opportunities for individual engagement in the great game of life too limited. In America, this phenomenon was noted in books such as *The Organisation Man*, in critiques of 'the silent generation', and in studies such as *The Lonely Crowd*. The entire artistic and political programme of the beatniks was built on opposition to routine. Random chance, a way to break the bonds, took on a powerful attraction, and for those who grew up in the late 1950s and early 1960s, it still has the nostalgic aroma that hot rods and James Dean movies hold for others. Even so, random chance was more useful as a technique than as a philosophy.

There is also evolutionary chance. In the long run, evolutionary chance plays a more powerful role in innovation than random chance. Evolutionary chance engages a certain element of the random. Genetic changes occur, for example, in a process that is known as

random selection. New biological mutations occur at random under the influence of limited entropy – for example, when radiation affects the genetic structure. This is a technical degeneration of the genetic code, but some genetic deformations actually offer good options for survival and growth. When one of these finds an appropriate balance between the change and the niche in which it finds itself, it does survive to become embodied in evolutionary development.

This has parallels in art and in music, in human cultures and societies. Something enters the scene and changes the worldview we previously held. That influence may be initiated in a random way. It may begin in an unplanned way, or it may be the result of signal interference to intended messages, or it may be the result of a sudden insight. Any number of possibilities exist. When the chance input is embodied in new form, however, it ceases to be random and becomes evolutionary. That is why chance is closely allied to experimentation in Fluxus. It is related to the ways in which scientific knowledge grows, too.

### **Playfulness**

*Playfulness* has been part of Fluxus since the beginning. Part of the concept of playfulness has been represented by terms such as ‘jokes’, ‘games’, ‘puzzles’ and ‘gags’. This role of gags in Fluxus has sometimes been overemphasised. This is understandable. Human beings tend to perceive patterns by their gestalt, focusing on the most noticeable differences. When Fluxus emerged, art was under the influence of a series of attitudes in which art seemed to be a liberal, secular substitute for religion. Art was so heavily influenced by rigidities of conception, form and style that the irreverent Fluxus attitude stood out like a loud fart in a small elevator. The most visible aspect of the irreverent style was the emphasis on the gag. There is more to humour than gags and jokes, and there is more to playfulness than humour. Play comprehends far more than humour. There is the play of ideas, the playfulness of free experimentation, the playfulness of free association and the play of paradigm shifting that are as common to scientific experiment as to pranks.

### **Simplicity**

*Simplicity*, sometimes called ‘*parsimony*’, refers to the relationship of truth and beauty. Another term for this concept is ‘elegance’. In mathematics or science, an elegant idea is that idea which expresses the fullest possible series of meanings in the most concentrated possible statement. That is the idea of Occam’s Razor, a philosophical tool which states that a theory that accounts for all aspects of a phenomenon with the fewest possible terms will be more likely to be correct than a theory that accounts for the same phenomenon using more (or more complex) terms. From this perspective of philosophical modelling, Copernicus’ model of the solar system is better than Ptolemy’s – must be better – because it accounts for a fuller range of phenomena in fewer terms. Parsimony, the use of frugal, essential means, is related to that concept.

This issue was presented in Higgins’ original list as ‘minimalism’, but the minimalism has come to have a precise meaning in the world of art. While some of the Fluxus artists like La Monte Young can certainly be called minimalists, the intention and the meaning of their minimalism is very different than the Minimalism associated with the New York art school of that name. I prefer to think of La Monte as parsimonious. His work is a frugal concentration

of idea and meaning that fits his long spiritual pilgrimage, closer to Pandit Pran Nath than to Richard Serra.

Simplicity of means, perfection of attention, are what distinguish this concept in the work of the Fluxus artists.

### **Implicativeness**

*Implicativeness* means that an ideal Fluxus work implies many more works. This notion is close to and grows out of the notion of elegance and parsimony. Here, too, you see the relationship of Fluxus to experimentalism and to the scientific method.

### **Exemplativism**

*Exemplativism* is the principle that Dick Higgins outlined in another essay, the 'Exemplativist Manifesto'. Exemplativism is the quality of a work exemplifying the theory and meaning of its construction. While not all Fluxus works are exemplative, there has always been a feeling that those pieces which are exemplative are in some way closer to the ideal than those which are not. You could say, for example, that exemplativism is the distinction between George Brecht's poetic proposals and Ray Johnson's – and probably shows why Brecht is in the Fluxus circle while Johnson, as close to Fluxus as he is, has never really been a part of things.

### **Specificity**

*Specificity* has to do with the tendency of a work to be specific, self-contained and to embody all its own parts. Most art works rely on ambiguity, on the leaking away of meanings to accumulate new meanings. When a work has specificity, it loads meaning quite consciously. In a sense, this may seem a contradiction in an art movement that has come to symbolise philosophical ambiguity and radical transformation, but it is a key element in Fluxus.

### **Presence in Time**

Many Fluxus works take place *in time*. This has sometimes been referred to by the term 'ephemeral', but the terms 'ephemerality' and 'duration' distinguish different qualities of time in Fluxus. It is appropriate that an art movement whose very name goes back to the Greek philosophers of time and to the Buddhist analysis of time and existence in human experience should place great emphasis on the element of time in art.

The ephemeral quality is obvious in the brief Fluxus performance works, where the term ephemeral is appropriate, and in the production of ephemera, fleeting objects and publications with which Fluxus has always marked itself. But Fluxus works often embody a different sense of duration as in musical compositions lasting days or weeks, performances that take place in segments over decades, even art works that grow and evolve over equally long spans. Time – the great condition of human existence – is a central issue in Fluxus and in the work that artists in the Fluxus circle create.

### **Musicality**

*Musicality* refers to the fact that many Fluxus works are designed as scores, as works which can be realised by artists other than the creator. While this concept may have been born in the fact that many Fluxus artists were also composers, it signifies far more. The events, many

object instructions, game and puzzle works – even some sculptures and paintings – work this way. This means that you can own a George Brecht piece by carrying out one of Brecht's scores. If that sounds odd, you might ask if you can experience Mozart simply by listening to an orchestra play one of Mozart's scores. The answer is that you can. Perhaps another orchestra or Mozart himself might have given a better rendition, but it is still Mozart's work. This, too, is the case with a Brecht or a Knizak or a Higgins that is created to be realised from a score.

The issue of musicality has fascinating implications. The mind and intention of the creator are the key element in the work. The issue of the hand is only germane insofar as the skill of rendition affects the work: in some conceptual works, even this is not an issue. Musicality is linked to experimentalism and the scientific method. Experiments must operate in the same manner. Any scientist must be able to reproduce the work of any other scientist for an experiment to remain valid. As with other issues in Fluxus, this raises interesting problems. Collectors want a work with hand characteristics, so some Fluxus works imply their own invalidity for collectors.

Musicality suggests that the same work may be realised several times, and in each state it may be the same work, even though it is a different realisation of the same work. This bothers collectors who think of 'vintage' works as works located in a certain, distant era. The concept of 'vintage' is useful only when you think of it in the same way you think of wine: 1962 may be a great vintage, 1966, too, but it may not be until 1979 or 1985 that another great vintage occurs. If you think of the composers and conductors who have given us great interpretations of past work, say a complete Beethoven cycle or a series of Brahms concertos, then, a decade or two later, gave a dramatically different, yet equally rich interpretation of the same work, you will see why the concept of vintage can only be appropriate for Fluxus when it is held to mean what it means in wine. You must measure the year by the flavour, not the flavour by the year.

Musicality is a key concept in Fluxus. It has not been given adequate attention by scholars or critics. Musicality means that anyone can play the music. If deep engagement with the music, with the spirit of the music is the central focus of this criterion, then musicality may be *the* key concept in Fluxus. It is central to Fluxus because it embraces so many other issues and concepts: the social radicalism of Maciunas in which the individual artist takes a secondary role to the concept of artistic practice in society, the social activism of Beuys when he declared that we are all artists; the social creativity of Knizak in opening art into society; the radical intellectualism of Higgins and the experimentalism of Flynt. All of these and more appear in the full meaning of musicality.

## FLUXUS AFTER FLUXUS

### **After Maciunas**

Discussions about Fluxus often focus on George Maciunas, but there is no question of continuing Maciunas' role. George Maciunas was unique, and had a unique way of doing things and a unique place in the affections of everyone who knew him, but thinking of him as the single central figure in Fluxus is a mistake.

Between 1962 and the early 1970s Maciunas was Fluxus' editorial and festival organiser.

He held a role that could be compared to the role of a chairperson. When it became evident, even to George himself, that others had key roles to play if Fluxus was to grow, he loosened his notion of central control dramatically. It became far more important to him to spread Fluxism as a social action than to dictate the artistic terms of every Fluxus artist. This is evident if you see that Maciunas considered David Mayor a member of the Fluxcore, even though Mayor was quite different to Maciunas in his artistic choices.

By the 1970s, George Maciunas was no longer as active in publishing and organising for Fluxus as he had been a few years earlier. For example, while there were Fluxus evenings and occasional Fluxus presentations, Maciunas organised no major festivals after David Mayor finished the Fluxshoe.

In 1966 Maciunas had appointed several others as his co-directors. Fluxus South was directed by Ben Vautier in Nice, Fluxus East by Milan Knizak and I directed Fluxus West. Some have tried to make a point that 'Fluxus East wasn't Fluxus', as though only Maciunas was Fluxus. That isn't the case: Maciunas authorised us to speak for Fluxus, to represent Fluxus, to manage publications, to dispense copyright permission, and to act in every respect on behalf of Fluxus.

While Maciunas did repudiate people in the early 1960s, even attempting to expel or purge people from Fluxus, this was not how he behaved a few years later. It is a disservice to George Maciunas to present him through the image of a petty (if lovable) tyrant, a cross between an artistic Stalin and a laughable Breton. This notion belittles Maciunas' depth and capacity as a human being, his ability to find more effective ways of working and to find ways to grow.

George Maciunas was a fabulous organisational technologist and a great systematic thinker, but he was not comfortable working with people in the million unsystematic ways that people demand to work. This was why he changed his working method by the mid-1960s and began to share the leadership role. That is how Fluxus took new forms and grew.

He became comfortable letting others develop Fluxus in other ways while giving advice and criticism from time to time. That's how Fluxus found its feet in England in the 1970s. That's how new Fluxus activists emerged in the States and in Europe and how they kept the ideas and action alive. It is why Fluxus has been continuously active for nearly forty years.

The first Fluxus disappeared a long time ago. It replaced itself with the many forms of Fluxus that came after. The many varieties of Fluxus activity took on their own life and had a significant history of their own. It is unrealistic and historically inaccurate to imagine a Fluxus controlled by one man. Fluxus was co-created by many people and it has undergone a continuous process of co-creation and renewal for four decades.

### **Fluxus Today**

Fluxus today is not the Fluxus that has sometimes been considered as an organised group and sometimes referred to as a movement. Fluxus is a forum, a circle of friends, a living community. Fluxism as a way of thinking and working is very much alive.

What was unique about Fluxus as a community was that we named ourselves. We found and kept our own name. Art critics named Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism and Conceptualism. Fluxus named Fluxus. The German press took our name and fell in love with it, but it was our name to begin with. What made it Fluxus was that it wasn't confined to

art and it was perhaps this that saved us from being named by others. If it locked us out of the art market on many occasions, it made it possible for us to make interesting art on our own terms.

In the last twenty years interest in Fluxus has gone through two, maybe three cycles of growth and neglect. We are still here, still doing what we want to do, and still coming together from time to time under the rubric of Fluxus. Since this is exactly what happened during the 1960s and 1970s, it is clear that Fluxus did not die at some magical date in the past. If you read your way down the many lists of Fluxus artists who were young and revolutionary back in the 1960s, the 1990s have shown many of them to be transformative and evolutionary. They transformed the way that the world thinks about art, and they transformed the relationship between art and the world around it.

The Fluxus dialogue has taken on a life of its own. A Fluxism vital enough to continue in its own right was exactly what people intended at the beginning, though this has sometimes had consequences that startled them as much as anyone else. If it hasn't happened in exactly the ways that they planned, this is because there are no boundaries between art and life. What counts is the fact that it happened.

## NOTES

- 1 This essay was originally written for the exhibition *Fluxus and Company* at Emily Harvey Gallery in 1989. It has been widely reprinted in revised versions and in various translations since then.
- 2 Dick Higgins, 'Fluxus: Theory and Reception' (1982); included in this volume, p 217.



PART VI  
DOCUMENTS OF FLUXUS



# FLUXUS CHRONOLOGY: KEY MOMENTS AND EVENTS

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1960

Jan 9–22 *Dutch Informalist Art*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.

Armando, KV Bohemen, Hendriksen, H Peeters, JJ Schoonhoven.

Feb 29 *The Ray Gun Spex (The Ray Gun Specs)*[pf], Judson Gallery, New York.

J Dine, R Grooms, A Hansen, D Higgins, A Kaprow, C Oldenburg, R Whitman.

Mar 1–18 *Irene Weitz: exhibition at Galerie Koepcke*[ex], Copenhagen.

I Weitz.

Mar 14 *A Concert of New Music*[pf], The Living Theatre, New York.

G Brecht, J Cage, A Hansen, R Johnson,

A Kaprow, R Maxfield, J McDowell, R Rauschenberg.

Mar 21 *Saint Joan at Beaurevoir*[pf], The Players Theater, New York.

D Higgins, J Spicer.

Apr 29 *Anti-Process*[pf], Galerie des Quatre Saisons, Paris.

JJ Lebel.

May 2 *Collaboration event*

*Tot(Compositions and Improvisations)*[pf], Architecture Court, University of California, Berkeley.

LM Young, T Riley, W deMaria.

May 2 *A Program of Happenings? Events! Situations?* [pf], Pratt Institute, Brooklyn.

G Brecht, J Cage, A Hansen, A Kaprow, J Mac Low.

May 6 [pf], Program of Sound Improvisation, California School of Fine Arts, San Francisco.

W deMaria, T Riley, LM Young.

May 7 *Theater Piece*[pf], Circle in the Square, New York.

J Cage, D Tudor.

Jun 2 *Magie Kazoo*[pf], New York/New Jersey.

R Watts.

Jun 10 – Jul 1 *Air Sculpture, Picture, 9 Lines*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.

P Manzoni.

Jun 11 *An Evening of Sound Theater – Happenings*[pf], The Reuben Gallery, New York.

G Brecht, J Dine, A Kaprow, R Maxfield, R Whitman.

Jun 15 *Konzert im Atelier Baumeister*[pf], Cologne.

U Kagel, K Helms, N Amey, F Amey,

D Tudor, B Patterson, K Schwertsik, HG Helms, G Brecht.

Jun 18 *Anti-Process*[pf], Galleria il Canale, Venice.

A Jouffroy, JJ Lebel, S Rusconi.

Jun 19 *Cologne Contre Festival*[pf], Atelier Baumeister.

G Brecht, Bussotti, J Cage, NJ Paik,

LM Young.

Jul 0 *Composer's Workshop Concert,*

*Simultaneous Performance of Four*

*Compositions*[pf], Old Spaghetti Factory

and Excelsior Coffee Shop, Green St, San Francisco.

LM Young, T Riley, W deMaria,

D Higgins.

Jul 14 *Funeral Ceremony for the Anti-*

*Process*[pf], Venice.

F Amey, A Ansen, JJ Lebel.

Aug 0 *Plakat Phansen*[pf], Plaza de

Cataluna, Barcelona.

W Vostell.

Aug 1 *New York Audio Visual Group, New Music*[pf], The Living Theatre, New York.

Daniels, A Hansen, D Higgins,

R Johnson, J Mac Low, L Poons,

LM Young.

Sept 0 *Ga ind I malerei*[ex], Galerie

Koepcke, Copenhagen.

A Koepcke, Lora, C Megert, Metz.

Sept 0 *L'Immortelle Mort Du Monde*[pf], Paris.

R Filliou.

Sept 0 *Happening in front of Thorvaldsen's Museum*[pf].

A Koepcke.

Sept 23 *Maler der Galerie Koepcke,*

*Copenhagen*[ex], Galerie im Hinterhof,

Berlin.

A Koepcke.

Oct 0 *Cologne Cartridge Music- Solo for Voice*[pf].

J Cage, NJ Paik, LM Young.

Oct 5 [pf], Friedrich Wilhelm Gymnasium, Cologne.

C Brown, M Cunningham, J Cage.

D Tudor.

Dec 18, 1960 – Jun 28, 1961 [pf], Yoko

Ono's Loft, Chambers St, New York.

T Jennings, T Ichiyangi, H Flint, J Byrd,

J Mac Low, R Maxfield, LM Young,

S Morris, R Morris, D Lindberg.

nd *Performance Piece For a Lonely Person in a Public Place*[pf], Paris.

P Cohen, R Filiou.

nd *Yes It was Scril There: An Opera*[pf], Schlosskellerei, Darmstadt.

C Bremer, D Spoerri, E Williams.

nd *Sweedish Theater*[pf], Helsinki.

J Cage, M Cunningham.

nd *Expositie van de Schoenwinkles van*

*Amsterdam*[pf], Amsterdam.

S Brouwn.

nd *International Abstract Graphics*[ex].

Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.

Bogart, K VanBohemen, H Magnelli,

Vassareli, R Winther.

nd *Dieter Rot, C Megert exhibition*[ex],

Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.

D Rot, C Megert.

1961

Jan 0 [pf], Thorvaldsens Museum.

E Andersen.

Jan 13 *Grimaces*[pf], Cooper Union, New

York.

D Higgins, D Johnson, G Matthews,

R Maxfield, LM Young.

Feb 0 [pf], Thorvaldsens Museum.

E Andersen.

Feb 25–26 *This Way Brouwn*[pf],

Amsterdam.

S Brouwn.

Mar 14 – Jul 30 [pf], AG Gallery, New

York.

E Brown, J Byrd, J Cage, P Davis,

S DeHirsch, W deMaria, J Fisher,

D Higgins, T Ichiyangi, K Jacobs,

D Johnson, R Johnson, F Kuenstler,

J Mac Low, R Maxfield, J McDowell,

J Mekas, R Morris, Y Ono, LM Young.

Mar 31 *Composition 60 #10*[pf], Harvard

University.

H Flynt, R Morris, LM Young.

Apr 1 *International Tentoonstelling van*

*Niets*[pf], Galerie 207, Wilemsparkweg 207,

Amsterdam.

B Brock, A Koepcke, C Megert.

Apr 3 *Concert of Contemporary Japanese*

*Music and Poetry*[pf], Village Gate, New

York.

Alsop, S Forti, Glick, T Ichiyangi,

Kobayashi, Mayuzumi, Y Ono, Soyer,

D Tudor, LM Young.

Apr 6–13 *Agard Andersen* [ex], Galerie

Koepcke, Copenhagen.

E Andersen.

- May 14 *Situationen, Fuer 3 Klavier, Duo Fuer Stimme und Streicher, Komposition Fuer Papier, De-coll/ages Solo fuer Wolf Vostell*[pf], Hero Lauhaus, Am Buttermarkt 1, Cologne.  
B Patterson & W Vostell.
- May 15 *De-Coll/Age Solo, De-Coll/Age Collages*[pf], Buttermarkt 1, Cologne.  
W Vostell.
- May 25 – Jun 23 *Environments, Situations, Space*[pf], Martha Jackson Gallery, New York.  
G Brecht, J Dine, W Gaudnick.  
A Kaprow, C Oldenburg, R Whitman.
- Jun 0 *Simultan*[pf], Galerie Lauhaus, Cologne.  
NJ Paik, W Vostell, S Wewerka.
- Jun 0 – Jul *Poi-Poi*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
R Filliou.
- Jun 18 *Cologne Der Koffer*[pf], Galerie Lauhaus.  
D Spoerri.
- Jul 0 *Stupidograms*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
D Rot.
- Jul 14 *Lemons*[pf], Studio Vostell, Cologne.  
G Olroth, W Pearson, B Patterson, W Vostell.
- Jul 9–22 *Huns Staudacher*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
H Staudacher.
- Aug 0 *Two Indeterminate Events*[pf], Moderna Musset & Streets of Stockholm.  
R Watts.
- Sept 0 *Lille Kirkestrade No.1, a 53 Kilo Poem & Poi Poi*[pf], Riddersalen, Denmark.  
R Filliou, A Koepcke.
- Sept 0 *Concert*[pf], Statens Handverksog Kunstindustriskole, Norway.  
NJ Paik.
- Sept 15 *Cityrama I*[pf], Galerie Schwarz, Milan.  
W Vostell.
- Sept 16 *Niki de St Phalle*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
N de St Phalle.
- Sept 27 *Simple Ny Musik*[pf], DUT, Stockholm.  
NJ Paik.
- Oct 18 *Artist Shit, The Living Artwork*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
P Manzoni.
- Nov 0 *Suspense poem*[pf], Paris.  
R Filliou.
- Nov 17 *Copies of Confiscated Works at the Criminal Museum*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
W Freddie.
- Nov 24 *Yoko Ono, Works by Yoko Ono*[pf], Carnegie Recital Hall, New York.  
Ay-O, E Boagni, G Brecht, P Brown, J Byrd, P Corner, T Jennings, J Kotzin, R Levine, J Mac Low, J Martin, J Mekas, Y Ono, Y Ranier, LM Young.
- Nov 30 *IBM*[pf], Tokyo.  
T Kosugi, Mayuzumi, M(Chieko)Shiomi, Takahishi, Y Tone.
- Dec 0 *Group Zero Exhibit*[ex], Gallery A, Arnheim.  
D Rot, J Gunnar Arnason.
- Dec 0 *Bevaegelse I Kunsten Fire Damhatte af Eric Bonne*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
E Bonne.
- Dec 3 *Oprichting van de Mood Engineering Society*[pf], Amsterdam.  
L Andriessen, G Jurriaanse, M Mengleberg, W de Ridder, I Samson, P Schat, J Spek.
- Dec 3, 1961 – Mar 0, 1962 *The Hall of Issues I*[ex], The Hall of Issues, 241 Thompson Street, New York.  
P Ferakis, A Kaprow, P Yamplosky.
- Dec 9 *Bamse Kragh-Jacobsen*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
B Kragh-Jacobsen.
- Dec 29 *Ball*[pf], Green Gallery, New York.  
R Whitman.
- nd *Anti-Process 3*[ex], Galleria Brea, Milan.  
A Jouffroy, JJ Lebel.
- nd *A Cellar Song for Five Voices*[pf], The Living Theatre, New York.  
E Williams.
- nd [pf], P K Theater, Amsterdam.  
W de Ridder.
- nd *Daniel Spoerri exhibition at Galerie Koepcke*[ex], Copenhagen.  
D Spoerri.
- nd *Emmett Williams exhibition at Galerie Koepcke*[ex], Copenhagen.  
E Williams.
- 1962**
- Jan 5 *Dithyramb*[pf], Henry Street Playhouse, New York.  
G Brecht, J Waring Dance Company, D Hay, F Herko, Y Rainer.
- Jan 8 *An Anthology*[pf], The Living Theatre, New York.  
G Brecht, C Bremer, E Brown, J Byrd, J Cage, H Flynt, D Higgins, T Ichiyangi, T Jennings, W deMaria, Y Ono.
- Jan 22 *Two Simultaneous Concerts*[pf], Fashion Institute of Technology, New York.  
R Maxfield, A Passloff.
- Jan 24 *Vokalize*[pf], Judson Memorial Church, New York.  
P Corner.
- Feb 1 *Concert Van De Mood Engineering Society*[pf], de Lantaren, Rotterdam.  
L Andriessen, G Jurriaanse, M Mengleberg, W de Ridder, P Schat, J Spek.
- Feb 5 *Anthology II*[pf], The Living Theatre, New York.  
R Johnson, J Mac Low, R Maxfield, R Morris, S Morris, NJ Paik, T Riley, D Rot, J Waring, E Williams, C Wolff, LM Young.
- Feb 9–18 *Once Festival*[pf], Ann Arbor, Michigan.  
R Ashley, H Flynt, T Ichiyangi, W deMaria, R Maxfield, R Morris, J Reynolds, LM Young.
- Feb 15 *Concert Van De Mood Engineering Society*[pf], Blawe Zaal van Esplanade, Utrecht.  
L Andriessen, G Jurriaanse, M Mengleberg, W de Ridder, P Schat, J Spek.
- Feb 19 *Concert Van De Mood Engineering Society*[pf], 2e Vrijzinnig Christelijk Lyceum, Den Haag.  
L Andriessen, G Jurriaanse, M Mengleberg, W de Ridder, J Spek, W Spoor.
- Mar 24 *Variety*[pf], Maidman Playhouse, New York.  
G Brecht, R Johnson, LM Young.
- Apr 6 *Otto Olsen*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
O Olsen.
- May 0 *The May Exhibition*[ex], Denmark.  
R Filliou, D Rot, W Vostell.
- May 1 *At the Living Theatre*[pf], The Living Theatre, New York.  
P Corner, D Higgins, A Knowles, C Schneemann, LM Young.
- Jun 0 *Wuppertal Apres John Cage*[pf], Galerie Parnass.  
G Maciunas, B Patterson, T Riley, D Higgins, J Curtis.
- Jun 5 *My New Concept of General Acognitive Culture*[pf], 49 Avenue D, New York.  
H Flynt.
- Jun 9 *Kleines Sommerfest Apres John Cage*[pf], Wuppertal.  
G Maciunas, D Higgins, B Patterson.
- Jun 9 *Neo Dada in New York*[pf], Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal.  
G Maciunas, B Patterson.
- Jun 12 *Nectarine*[pf], 80 Jefferson St, New York.  
G Brecht.
- Jun 16 *Neo Dada in Der Musik*[pf], Kammerspiele, Dusseldorf.  
H Alemann, Batzing, Bonk, G Brecht, C Caspari, J Curtis, A Falkenstorfer, J Flimm, JG Fritsch, W Kirchgasser, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, B Patterson, H Reddemann, T Schmit, Schneider, Schroder, W Vostell, LM Young.
- Jul 3 *Sneak Preview: Fluxus*[pf], Various Locations, Paris.  
R Filliou, G Maciunas, B Patterson.
- Jul 3 *Exposition à Paris*[ex], Various Locations, Paris.  
B Patterson.
- Jul 3 *P C Petite Ceinture*[pf], PC Line, Paris.  
W Vostell.
- Aug 15 *Dinner Party on the Anniversary of Non-V day*[pf], Citizens Hall, Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center- G Akasegawa, T Izumi, Kazakura, Nakanishi, Takamatu.
- Aug 19–25 *Ergo Suits Festival*[pf] Assorted Locations, New York.  
W deMaria, A Hansen, A Kaprow, A Knowles, LM Young.
- Aug 27 *Borge Sornum exhibition*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
B Sornum.
- Sept 1–23 *Fluxus Internationale Festspiele Nuester Musik*[pf], Horsaal Stadtschen Museum, Wiesbaden.  
D Higgins, A Knowles, A Koepcke, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, B Patterson, W Vostell, K Erik Welin, E Williams.
- Sept 15 *Lecture on Art*[pf], Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center-Nakanishi.
- Oct 5 *Parallele Aufführungen Nuester Musik*[pf], Galerie Monet, Amsterdam.  
C Caspari, J Curtis, L Gosewitz, D Higgins, A Knowles, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, B Patterson, W de Ridder, T Schmit, G Stahl, W Vostell, E Williams.
- Oct 5 *Moving Theater #1*[pf], Various locations, Amsterdam.  
NJ Paik, E Williams.
- Oct 18 *Event on Yamate Loop Line Street Car*[pf] Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center.
- Oct 23 – Nov 8 *Festival of the Misfits*[ex], Gallery One, London.

- R Filliou, D Higgins, A Knowles, A Koepcke, G Metzger, V Musgrave, R Page, P Olof Ultvedt, B Patterson, D Spoerri, B Vautier, E Williams.  
Oct 24 *Concert in Conjunction with the Festival of the Misfits*[pf], Gallery One, London.
- R Filliou, D Higgins, A Knowles, A Koepcke, G Metzger, V Musgrave, R Page, D Spoerri, B Vautier.  
Nov 11 *The Broadway Opera*[pf], Die Lupe, Cologne.  
D Higgins.  
Nov 17 *Waseda University Event*[pf], Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center.
- Nov 23–28 *Festum Fluxorum/ Musik Og Anti-Musik Det Instrumentale Teater*[pf], Nikolai Kirke and Alle Scenen, Copenhagen.  
E Andersen, R Filliou, J Frisholm, D Higgins, A Knowles, A Koepcke, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, NJ Paik, W Vostell, E Williams.  
Nov 27 *Catastrophe*[pf], Galerie Raymond Cordier, Paris.  
Ferro, J Gabriel, JJ Lebel.  
Nov 27 – Dec 13 *Catastrophe*[ex] Galerie Raymond Cordier, Paris.  
G Franco Baruchello, Ferro, J Gabriel, P Hiquily, T Kudo, JJ Lebel, R Malaval.  
Nov 28 *Pere Lachaise No 1*[pf], Libraire-Galerie de Fleuve, Paris.  
R Filliou.  
Dec 0 40 *Grader over Dada*[ex], Arhus Cathedral School, Denmark.  
E Andersen, A Koepcke, D Rot, J Tinguely, E Williams.  
Dec 3–8 *Festum Fluxorum: Poesie, Musique, et Antimusique Evenementielle et Concrete*[pf], American Students and Artists Center, Paris.  
R Filliou, D Higgins, A Knowles, A Koepcke, G Maciunas, T Schmit, D Spoerri, W Vostell, E Williams.  
Dec 9 *Happenings Open Het Graf* [pf], Prinsengracht 146, Amsterdam.  
JJ Lebel.  
nd *Concert Tour*[pf], Hakkaido, Kyoto, Osaka, Tokyo.  
J Cage, Y Ono, D Tudor.  
nd *An Evening with Yoko Ono*[pf], Sogetsu Art Center, Japan.  
Y Ono.  
nd *No-Play In Front of No-Audience*[pf], Paris.  
R Filliou.  
nd [pf], Galerie Legitime, Paris, London, Frankfurt.  
R Filliou.  
nd *Hall Street Happenings* [pf], Third Rail Gallery, New York.  
A Hansen.  
nd *13 Ways to Use Emmett Williams Skul*[pf], Paris.  
R Filliou, E Williams.
- 1963**
- Jan 23 *Yam Lecture*[pf], New York.  
G Brecht, R Watts.  
Feb 0 *Hi Red Center Exhibition*[ex], Shinjuku Daiichi Gallery, Tokyo.  
G Akasegawa.  
Feb 2–3 *Festum Fluxorum Fluxus, Musik + Antimusik + Das Instrumentale*[pf], Theater Staatliche Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf.
- B af Klintberg, J Beuys, G Brecht, A Hansen, D Higgins, A Koepcke, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Schmit, D Spoerri, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
Feb 3 *Two New Ballets*[pf], Hunter College Playhouse, New York.  
J Waring and Dance Company, Y Rainer, F Herko, D Hay, R Charlip, R Grooms, A Hansen, R Indiana, L Poons, L Samaras, R Watts, R Whitman.  
Feb 14 *Street Objects Wolf Vostell's Studio*[ex], Spichernstrasse Cologne.  
R Filliou, D Higgins, A Knowles, A Koepcke, W Vostell.  
Feb 27–28 *Demonstration Against Serious Culture*[pf], 49 Bond Street, New York.  
T Conrad, H Flynt, J Smith.  
Mar 0 *Aeventyrets Forbrug*[ex], Galerie Koepcke, Copenhagen.  
A Koepcke.  
Mar 0 *Kammer Fluxus Nikolai Kirke*[pf], Copenhagen.  
E Andersen, H Christiansen, J Davidsen, P Kirkeby, A Koepcke.  
Mar 0 [pf], Gallery Pilestraede.  
E Andersen, A Koepcke.  
Mar 3 *Fluxus Happenings, Danger Music*[pf], Alletatern, Stockholm.  
L G Bodin, M Heybroek, D Higgins, B Emil Johnson, B af Klintberg, A Knowles, C Lavendal, S Olzon, C F Reuterswaerd.  
Mar 1 *Yomiuri Andi-Pandan Show* [pf], Ueno Museum, Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center.  
Mar 11–20 *Exp – Ostition of Music Electronic Television* [ex], Galerie Parnass, Wupertal.  
R Jahrling, NJ Paik, T Schmit, G Schimtz, F Trowerbridge, M Zenzen.  
Mar 28 *Fluxus Concert: Higgins & Knowles* [pf], Studentekroa, Oslo.  
S Hanson, D Higgins, L Holm, B af Klintberg, A Knowles, S Kvaloy, FT Nielson, R Weum.  
Apr 0 *Bikerod Statsskole*[pf], E Andersen.  
Apr 0 *Friendly Low Bb for Ruth Emerson*[pf], Fluxhall New York.  
P Corner.  
Apr 0 [pf], The Royal Academy of Music, Copenhagen.  
E Andersen, J Plaetner.  
Apr 5 *acTION HAPPening COLLAGE FLUXUS*[pf], The Eks School, Pilestrade.  
E Andersen, H Christiansen, A Koepcke, J Plaetner.  
Apr 6 *Happenings events Advanced Music*[pf], Audiovisual Group, Douglas College, New Brunswick, New Jersey.  
G Brecht, J Greenstein, A Hansen, D Higgins, R Johnson, J Jones, A Knowles, B Patterson, L Poons, L Powers, E Williams, LM Young.  
Apr 23 *Concerto Musikkonservatoriet* [pf], Copenhagen.  
E Andersen, H Christiansen.  
Apr 28 *An Evening of Dance*[pf], Judson Memorial Church, New York.  
T Brown, L Childs, P Corner, Dunn, A Hansen, Hay, Paxton, Y Rainer, R Rauschenberg.  
May 4 *Party-Benefit/Auction*[pf], 3rd Rail Gallery, New York.
- G Brecht, LL Eisenhauer, A Hansen, D Higgins, A Kaprow, A Knowles, R Watts.  
May 7 *The Third Plan Mixer Show*[pf], Shinjuku Daiichi Gallery, Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center.  
May 9 *Yam Hat Sale*[pf], Smolin Gallery, New York.  
Ay-O, G Brecht, Graves, LL Eisenhauer, R Grooms, A Hansen, D Higgins, R Johnson, A Kaprow, A Knowles, Lezak, B Patterson, W Vostell, Waldinger, R Watts.  
May 10 *Promotional Event*[pf], Shinbashi Station Square, Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center.  
May 11 *Yam Festival Hardware*[pf], Poets Playhouse, New York.  
S Baron, E Brown, J Byrd, P Corner, G Kalish, F Mills, C Moorman, M Neuhaus, Y Rainer, S Rhodes, J Schor, S Walden, P Zukofsky, N Zumbro.  
May 11–12 *Yam Festival/Yam Day Hardware*[pf], Poets Playhouse, New York.  
G Brecht, R Breer, J Cage, N Cernovich, R Filliou, D Gordon, R Grooms, A Hansen, D Higgins, S Holst, T Jennings, R Johnson, J Jones, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, Longazo, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, R Morris, R Page, B Patterson, Y Rainer, D Rot, T Schmit, B Sheff, Swisshelm, J Tenney, S Vanderbeek, D Wakoski, J Waring, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
May 18 *Kabou'inema*[pf], Paris.  
R Filliou.  
May 19 *An Afternoon of Happenings*[pf], South Brunswick, New Jersey.  
C Ginnevar, D Higgins, A Kaprow, Y Rainer, W Vostell, LM Young, M Zazeela.  
May 21–29 *Spring Events/Tournaments Daily and Intermissions*[pf], Kornblee Gallery, New York.  
G Brecht, P Corner, D Di Prima, R Filliou, Gordon, D Higgins, T Jennings, R Johnson, J Jones, M Kirby, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, Krumm, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, R Morris, S Morris, F O'Hara, B Patterson, Y Rainer, T Schmit, Swisshelm, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
Jun 0 *Den Frie Udstillingsbygning*[pf], E Andersen, A Koepcke.  
Jun 5–19 *Manifestations*[pf], Galerie R Cordier, Paris.  
R Filliou, J Gabriel, JJ Lebel, M Minujin, D Pommereul, E Williams.  
Jun 6 *Sommerudstillingen/Fluxus Festival/Fluxus-Aften*[pf], Tonekunstnerselskab, Copenhagen.  
E Andersen, H Christiansen, J Davidsen, A Koepcke.  
Jun 7 *Sommerudstillingen/Fluxus Festival/Fluxus-Aften*[pf], Tonekunstnerselskab, Copenhagen.  
E Andersen.  
Jun 10 *The Pocket Fallies*[pf], The Pocket Theatre, New York.  
G Brecht, T Brown, F Herko, R Johnson, J Johnson, R Morris, Y Rainer, R Rauschenberg.  
Jun 14 *Sommerudstillingen/Fluxus Festival/Fluxus-Aften*[pf], Tonekunstnerselskab, Copenhagen.

- E Andersen, H Christiansen, J Davidsen, A Koepecke.  
 Jun 22 *Silver City for Andy Warhol*[pf], Third Rail Gallery, New York.  
 A Hansen.  
 Jun 22-Jul 13 *Nam June Paik-Piano For All Senses, tentenstelling*[pf], Amstel 47, Amsterdam.  
 P Brotzmann, M Montwe, W de Ridder, T Schmit.  
 Jun 23 *Fluxus Festival*[pf], Hypokriterion Theater, New York.  
 P Brotzmann, W de Ridder, G Maciunas, M Montwe, L Samson, T Schmit, B Vautier.  
 Jun 24 *Crome Lodeon*[pf], Judson Dance Theater, New York.  
 C Schneemann.  
 Jun 25 *A Concert of Dance #3*[pf], Judson Memorial Church, Judson Dance Theater, New York.  
 P Corner, J Dunn, D Hay, F Herko, D Higgins, R Morris, M Neuhaus, A Rothlein, J Tenney.  
 Jun 28 *Fluxus Festival*[pf], Bleijenburg 16, Den Haag.  
 P Brotzmann, W de Ridder, G Maciunas, M Montwe, L Samson, T Schmit.  
 Jul 1 *Concert at the Summer Exhibition*[pf], Den Frei Exhibition Hall, Copenhagen.  
 J Cage, D Tudor.  
 Jul 7-13 *Events*[pf], Naiqua Gallery, Tokyo.  
 Hi Red Center-T Izumi.  
 Jul 9 *Orangerimusik 1963*[pf], Stockholm.  
 B af Klintberg.  
 Jul 25-29 *Festival of Total Art and Compartment*[pf], Various locations, in and around Nice.  
 Aguigui, Arman, G Brecht, R Bozzi, Christo, Erebo, R Filliou, A Koepecke, G Maciunas, C Oldenburg, P Paoli, B Patterson, M Raysse, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, LM Young.  
 Aug 0 *Farnhouse*[pf], Kirke-Hyllinge.  
 E Andersen, J Curtis, T Riley.  
 Aug 3-4 *Festival of Total Art and Compartment*[ex], Various locations in Nice.  
 B Vautier, G Maciunas, Aguigui.  
 Aug 8 *Parsoil 4 Muroso*[pf], Grammercy Arts Theater, New York.  
 A Hansen.  
 Aug 15 *Por Rogi*[pf], Roof of Bijitu-Suttupan Co., Tokyo.  
 Hi Red Center.  
 Aug 19 - Sept 9 *New Music at Pocket Theater*[pf], Pocket Theater, New York.  
 E Boagni, G Brecht, E Brown, J Byrd, J Cage, P Corner, P Davis, M Goldstein, A Hansen, McDowell, LM Young.  
 Aug 20 - Sept 4 *1st New York Avant Garde Festival*[ex], Judson Hall, New York.  
 C Moorman.  
 Sept 12-7 *Minuten-Ausstellung* [pf], Galerie Zwirner.  
 D Spoerri.  
 Sept 10 - Oct *Decollagen und Verwischungen*[ex], Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal.  
 W Vostell.  
 Sept 14-9 *Vein De-collagen*[pf], Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal.  
 J Beuys, W Vostell.  
 Sept 27-30 *2 Internationale Konceter For Nveste Instrumental Teater Og Antiart*[pf], Nikolajkirke, Copenhagen.
- E Andersen, H Christiansen, J Curtis, A Koepecke, T Riley, T Schmit.  
 Oct 0 *Fluxus Forestilling*[pf], Th Langs Seminarium, Silkeborg.  
 E Andersen, H Christiansen, A Koepecke, T Schmit.  
 Oct 0 *Whispered Art History for Jukebox*[pf], Copenhagen.  
 R Filliou, K Peterson.  
 Oct 7 - Nov 3 *Sissor Bros Warehouse*[pf], Rolf Nelson Gallery, Los Angeles.  
 W de Ridder, E Williams, R Page, A Knowles, G Brecht, LM Young, R Filliou, AFSRINMOR C 230.  
 T Schmit, R Watts.  
 Oct 9 *Poesie et Cetera Americaine*[pf], Musee D'art Moderne, Paris.  
 T Brown, J Canepa, J Canepa, L Castro, J Curtis, J Cushing, E Dietmann.  
 A Ehrenfeldt, R Filliou, P Green, R Henriot-Santoux, J Janitain, P Keene, R Lederman, Marcelle, M Minjuin, T Riley, M Riley, K Schumacher, D Spoerri, E Williams.  
 Oct 24 - Nov *Fluxus*[pf], Haus van der Grinten, Kranenburg.  
 J Beuys.  
 Nov 0 *Birkeroed Statsskole*[pf], E Andersen.  
 Nov 3 *NHK Television Show*[pf], Tokyo.  
 Hi Red Center.  
 Nov 12-24 *Dorotheanum*[ex], Galerie Dorothea Loehr, Schumannstr.  
 D Spoerri.  
 Dec 0 *Records For Juke Boxes*[pf], Nikolai Kirke, Copenhagen.  
 E Andersen, R Filliou, A Koepecke.  
 Dec 0 *View of A City in 24 hours*[pf], Amsterdam.  
 S Brouwn.  
 Dec 6 *Het Legen van een Flesje Limonade in Zee*[pf], Petten Strand, Amsterdam.  
 WT Schippers.  
 Dec 6 *Mars Door Amsterdam*[pf], Amsterdam.  
 W de Ridder, W T Schippers.  
 Dec 12 *Oogadooga*[pf], Judson Gallery, New York.  
 A Hansen.  
 Dec 18 *International Programma Nieuwste Muziek*[pf], Nieuwste Theater - Nieuwste Literat., Amsterdam.  
 W de Ridder, WT Schippers, T Schmit, E Williams.  
 Dec 29 *Signalment, Televisie Programma*[pf], Dutch Television.  
 S Brouwn, H de By, H Peeters, W de Ridder, WT Schippers.  
 nd *Collective Poem for Raphael Jesus Soto*[pf], Musee d'Arras, Arras.  
 R Filliou, E Williams.  
 nd *Le Poipoidrome*[ex], Paris.  
 R Filliou, J Pfeufer.  
 nd *Question Piece*[pf], Japanese Radio.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Oprichtung van de Association For Scientific Research in New Methods of Recreation Afsrinmor*[pf], Amsterdam.  
 W de Ridder, WT Schippers.
- 1964**  
 Jan - Dec *AKTUAL, Kntzak performances*[pf], (i)Environments on the Street (ii)An Individual Demonstration (iii)Total Demonstration (iv)Demonstration of one (v)Artificially inscenated natural acts (vi)People inside a picture (vii)Ritus (viii)1st Manifestation of Aktual Art (ix)Aktual walk- demonstration for all senses, Prague.  
 Jan *Human Box event Imperial Hotel*[ex], pf], Tokyo.  
 Hi Red Center.  
 Jan 11 *Sun In Your Head*[pf], Leidse Plein Theater, Amsterdam.  
 W Vostell.  
 Jan 24 *Realite L' Artist: ique*[pf], Nice.  
 D Gobert, Mercier, S III Oldenburg, R Peitropaoli, P Pontani, B Vautier, Vescovi.  
 Feb *Virum Statsskole*[pf], E Andersen.  
 Feb 11 *Monica Harmonica*[pf], New York University, NY.  
 A Hansen.  
 Feb 14 *Patio-Brouwn*[pf], Galerie Patio, New Isenburg.  
 S Brouwn.  
 Mar 8 *Performance in Marseilles*[pf], Marseilles.  
 Biliou, D Gobert, S III Oldenburg, A Vautier, B Vautier.  
 Mar 20 *The Ultimate Poem*[pf], Musee Palais Saint-Vaast, Arras.  
 E Williams.  
 Mar 23 - Apr 27 *Events and Entertainments- Seven Mondays of dances, diversions and what nots*[pf], Pocket Theater, 100 3rd Ave, New York.  
 G Brecht.  
 Mar 27 *Quelque Chose*[ex], L'Artistique, Blvd Dubouchage, Nice.  
 P Pontani, B Vautier.  
 Mar 29 *Fluxus Concert*[pf], Sogetsukaikan Hall, Tokyo.  
 NJ Paik, LM Young.  
 Apr 6 *Soumission Au Possible-Berger Revant Qu'il Etat Roi Cafe*[pf], Theatre de la Vieille Grille, Paris.  
 R Filliou.  
 Apr 11 *Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', Concert no 1*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
 G Brecht, P Corner, L Eisenhauer, D Higgins, A Knowles, T Kosugi, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Schmit, M(Cheiko)Shiomi, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 Apr 12 *Lecture no 2*[pf], Top of the Cascade of Slide off Pine Meadow Trail, Sloatsburg, NY.  
 D Higgins.  
 Apr 13 *Lecture no 3*[pf], NE corner 28th St and Park Ave So NYC.  
 D Higgins.  
 Apr 13 *Lecture no 4*[pf], Island at Herald Square, NYC.  
 D Higgins.  
 Apr 17 *Lecture no 5*[pf], NYC.  
 D Higgins.  
 Apr 17 *Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', concert no 2 Trace*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
 R Watts.  
 Apr 18 *Fully Guaranteed Flux Concerts', Concert no 3*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
 G Brecht, D Higgins, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Maciunas, B Patterson, T Schmit, R Watts, E Williams, B Vautier.

- Apr 19 *The Art of happenings (Actions)*[pf], Cricket Theater, New York.  
A Kaprow, W Vostell.
- Apr 19 *You/De/Coll/Age-Happening*[pf], Home of Bob Brown, Kings Point, New York.  
B Vautier, W Vostell.
- Apr 22 *Lecture no 6*[pf], 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
D Higgins.
- Apr 22 *Lecture no 7*[pf], 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
D Higgins.
- Apr 24 *Brass Orchestra Baby*[pf], Directors New School For Social Research, New York.  
P Corner.
- Apr 24 'Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 4, Requiem for Wagner*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
D Higgins.
- Apr 25 *Red Dog For Freddy Herko, Piano For Lil Picard*[pf], Oogadooga Third Rail Gallery, New York.  
A Hansen.
- Apr 25 'Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 5*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
G Brecht, P Corner, D Higgins, T Ichiyangi, G Ligeti, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, T Schmit.
- May 1 *Lecture No 8*[pf], Start at 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
D Higgins.
- May 1 'Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 6*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
Ay-O.
- May 2 'Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 7 (Orchestral Music)*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
G Brecht, P Corner, D Higgins, T Ichiyangi, T Kosugi, M(Cheiko)Shiomi, LM Young.
- May 8 'Fully Guaranteed Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 8, Zen for Film*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
NJ Paik.
- May 9 'Fully Guaranteed Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 9*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
G Brecht, J Jones, T Kosugi, J Mac Low, B Patterson, E Williams.
- May 15 'Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 10, Sanitas 79*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
T Schmit.
- May 16 'Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 11, Fluxus Collective Composition Moving Theater*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
B Patterson.
- May 23 'Fully Guaranteed 12 Fluxus Concerts', *Concert no 12, Street Composition to be Unveiled*[pf], Fluxhall, 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
NJ Paik.
- May 23 *Fluxfest at Fluxhall*[ex/pf], 359 Canal Street, NYC.  
B Vautier.
- May 25-29 *Festival de la Libre Expression Vernissage de L'Exposition*[pf], The American Center of Artists, 261 Blvd Raspail, Paris.
- B Brock, R Filliou, T Kudo, JJ Lebel, J Liutkus, S III Oldenbourg, D Pommereulle, C Schneemann, M de Segny, J Seiler, B Vautier, E Williams.
- Jun 12 *The Great Panorama Show*[pf], Naitqua Gallery, Tokyo.  
Hi Red Center.
- Jun 26 *Mon Bloomsday* [pf], Galerie Lochr, Frankfurt-Niederusel.
- B Brock, S Brouwn, F Mon, NJ Paik, T Schmit, W Vostell.
- Jun 27 *Fluxus Symphony Orchestra Concert* [pf], Carnegie Recital Hall, NYC.  
K Akiyama, G Akasegawa, Ay-O, D Behrman, G Brecht, D Caughey, T Conrad, P Corner, R Daniels, M Goldstein, A Hamber, D Higgins, I Iijima, J Jones, T Kawakami, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, J Kuhl, G Ligeti, Adding Machine, Ma-Chu, G Maciunas, T Magar, J Mekas, C Moorman, A Murray, M Neuhaus, P O'Brien, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, G Reeves, J Rifkin, T Saito, J Seaman, M(Cheiko)Shiomi, D Solomon, J Tenney, F Trowbridge, R Watts, F White, E Williams, LM Young.
- Jul 6 *A Little Festival of New Music*[pf], Goldsmith's College, London.  
G Brecht, J Cage, C Cardew, G Maciunas, E Mason, NJ Paik, R Page, G Rose, T Schmit, R Watts, E Williams, M van Biel, LM Young.
- Jul 20 *Actions, Agit-Prop, De-Collage Happenings, Events, L'Austrisme, Art Total, Re-Fluxus*[ex/pf], Technischen Hochschule, Aachen.  
V Abolins, E Andersen, J Beuys, B Brock, E Brown, H Christiansen, R Filliou, L Gosewitz, T Schmit, W Vostell, E Williams.
- Aug *Optreden van Stanley Brouwn*[pf], Galerie Amstel 47, Amsterdam.  
S Brouwn.
- Aug 29 *Film and Tape*[pf], Hugersaalen Charlottenborg, Copenhagen.  
E Andersen, G Brecht, D Higgins, A Koepecke, W Vostell.
- Aug 30 *Bus Stop*[pf], Hugersaalen Charlottenborg, Copenhagen.  
J Bueys, W Vostell.
- Sept 3 *Simultan Performances (I)*[pf], Hugersaalen Charlottenborg, Copenhagen.  
E Williams.
- Sept 4 *Untitled*[pf], Hugersaalen Charlottenborg, Copenhagen.  
B Brock, T Schmit.
- Sept 6 *Opus 20*[pf], Hugersaalen Charlottenborg, Copenhagen.  
E Andersen.
- Sept 10 *Untitled*[pf], Hugersaalen Charlottenborg, Copenhagen.  
A Koepecke.
- Aug 30 *Action Against Cultural Imperialism*[pf], Judson Hall, 165 W 57 St, New York.  
Ay-O, Conrad, H Flynt, A Ginsberg, G Maciunas, T Saito, Schleifer, B Vautier.
- Sept 18 *Perpetual Flux Fest 'Flux Sports'*[pf], Washington Square Gallery, NYC.  
Ay-O, G Maciunas, T Saito.
- Oct 16 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], Washington Square Gallery, NYC.  
Ay-O.
- Oct 30 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], Washington Square Gallery, NYC.
- M(Cheiko)Shiomi.  
Nov 1964 - Nov 1965 *Monday Night Letters*[pf], Cafe Au Go Go, NYC.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, S Balkin, G Brecht, Christo, P Corner, R Filliou, AM Fine, A Hansen, D Higgins, J Jones, L Keen, W King, A Knowles, T Kosugi, L Loonin, J Mac Low, JH McDowell, W deMaria, W Meyer, C Moorman, Y Ono, NJ Paik, Dieter Rot, M(Cheiko)Shiomi, W Vostell, CEW, A Warhol, J Waring, R Watts, E Williams, NYC Audiovisual Group.
- Nov 3 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], Washington Square Gallery, NYC.  
J Jones.
- Nov 13 *Flux-Festiva*[ex/pf], Den Haag AFRINMOR International RB/K b, E Andersen, A Beeke, G Brecht, A Koepecke, B Lentz, B af Klintberg, T Kosugi, B Lens, M Mengelberg, NJ Paik, W de Ridder, WT Schippers, LM Young, R Watts, E Williams.
- Nov 16 *Recital D'Avantguardia*[pf], Galleria Blu, Milan.  
D Bonset, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, D Higgins, A Perille.
- Nov 23 *Flux-Festival Nieuwste Musiek en Anti-Musiek-Het Instrumentale Theater*[pf], De Lentaren, Rotterdam.  
E Andersen, L Andriessen, G Brecht, H Classen, B Lens, M Mengelberg, W de Ridder, WT Schippers, B Vautier.
- Dec 11 *The Pre-Christmas Rush, event no 2(part of the Perpetual Fluxfest)*[pf], Washington Square Galleries, NYC.  
D Higgins.
- nd *Platitudes en Relief*[ex], Piège à Mots Galerie J, Paris.  
R Filliou, D Spoerri.
- nd *Platitudes en Relief*[ex], Piège à Mots Galerie Zwirner, Cologne.  
R Filliou, D Spoerri.
- nd *An Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], Yamaichi Concert Hall, Kyoto.  
Y Ono.
- nd *Events*[pf], Naigua Gallery, Japan.  
Y Ono.
- nd *Evening 'il Dawn*[pf], Nanzenji Temple, Japan.  
Y Ono.
- nd *Flower, Shadow & Morning Events*[pf], Tokyo.  
Y Ono.
- nd *Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], Sogetsu Art Center, Tokyo.  
Y Ono.
- nd *Oprichting van de Society for Party Organizing*[pf], Amsterdam.  
W de Ridder, WT Schippers.

## 1965

Jan - Dec *AKTUAL/Knizak Performances*[pf], (i)Exhibition of objects I didn't create, Prague (ii)1000 Letters to the citizens, Prague (iii)Anonymous change of the street, Prague (iv)Broken music, Prague (v)Demonstration for Jan Mach, Prague (vi)How to actualize the clothes (vii)Why just So, Prague (viii)Paper gliders are given, Prague (ix)fold paper glider 2 meters big, Prague (x)Games-during the whole year (xi)Inscriptions on the walls and sidewalks during the whole year.  
Jan - Nov *Monday Night Letters Cafe Au Go Go*[pf], 112 Bleeker St, New York.

- E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, P Corner, Christo, A Hansen, D Higgins, R Filliou, AM Fine, J Harriman, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, Herbert, A Katzman, L Keen, W King, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, Loonin, G Malanga, McDowell, M Montez, CW Meyer, Moorman, Y Ono, BB Thomas, NJ Paik, W Vostell, A Warhol, R Watts.  
Jan 8 *Electronic TV, Color T1 Experiments, 3 Robots, 2 Zen Boxes + 1 Zen*[pf], New School For Social Research, New York.  
C Moorman, NJ Paik.  
Jan 25 *The Work of Emmett Williams*[ex], Cafe Au Go Go, NYC.  
E Williams.  
Feb 9 *Phanomena*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
W Vostell.  
Feb 11 *Everything Max Has: Afterward*[ex], Ann Arbor.  
P Corner.  
Feb 15 *The Gunboat Panay*[pf], Third Rail Gallery, New York.  
A Hansen.  
Feb 26 *Concert*[pf], Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia.  
NJ Paik, C Moorman.  
Mar *Opening of La Cedille Qui Sourit*[ex], Center for Permanent Creation, Villefranche sur Mer.  
G Brecht, Brewer, R Filliou, M Filliou.  
Mar *Opriching van het Dodgers Syndicate*[ex], Amsterdam.  
W van der Linden, W de Ridder.  
Mar [pf], Gallery Svinget.  
E Andersen.  
Mar *D Spoerri's Room 631 at Chelsea Hotel 222W 23*[ex], The Green Gallery, New York.  
D Spoerri.  
Mar 3 *Streetfighting Singing Sade*[pf], East End Theater, New York.  
R Filliou.  
Mar 11 *La Tour De Argent Resturant de la Tor D'Argent*[pf], Paris.  
JJ Lebel.  
Mar 13 *Key Even*[pf], East End Theater, New York.  
R Filliou.  
Mar 21 *New Works*[pf], Carnegie Recital Hall, New York.  
Y Ono, A Cox.  
Mar 27 *Roof Spectacular*[pf], 517 E 87th St, New York.  
A Knowles, G Malanga, B Thomas.  
Mar 27 *Phanomena Happening*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
W Vostell.  
Mar 29 *Trisha Brown and Deborah Hay, A Concert of Dance*[pf], Judson Memorial Church, New York.  
A Knowles, W de Maria, R Whitman, S Whitman.  
Apr 4 *A Concert of Electronic Music*[pf], The Bridge, 8 St Marks Place, New York.  
J Cage, P Corner, M Goldstein, J MacDowell, R Maxfield.  
Apr 5 *Time Space*[pf], Art Theater Collage The Bridge, 8 St Marks Place New York.  
A Hansen, New York Audio Visual Group.  
Apr 9 - May 1 *Exhibition at Willard Gallery*[ex], 29 E 72 St, New York.  
R Johnson.  
Apr 10 *The Book of the Tumbler on Fire: pages from Chapter I*[ex], Fischbach Gallery 790 Madison, New York.  
G Brecht.  
Apr 17 *The Tart, Solo for Florence and Orchestra, Celestial for Bengt Af Klintberg*[pf], Sunnyside Garden Ballroom and Wrestling Arena Queens, New York.  
Ay-O, L Eisenhauer, D Higgins, F Tarlow.  
Apr 19 *Happenings at the Bridge*[pf], 8 St Mark's Place, New York.  
A Hansen.  
May 1-16 *First Theater Rally*[pf], New York.  
J Jones, A Knowles, J Mac Low, LM Young.  
May 14 *Robot Opera*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
NJ Paik.  
May 14-15 *Berliner Konzert* [pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
C Moorman, NJ Paik.  
May 17 *Musica Nova*[pf], Lindabaer, Iceland.  
C Moorman, NJ Paik.  
May 17-25 *2 Festive La Libre Expression Centre Americain des Artistes*[pf], 261 Blv Raspail, Paris 14.  
E Brown, J DeNoblet, L Ferlinghetti, R Filliou, T Joans, JJ Lebel, C Moorman, S III Oldenbourg, NJ Paik, P Passuntio, E Williams, B Vautier.  
May 18 *Zaj hmc2*[pf], Galleria Eburne, Madrid.  
J Hidalgo, W Marchetti.  
May 21 *2 Manifestos of Aktual Art Prague*[pf].  
M Knizak, S Knizak, V Mach, J Trtulek.  
May 25 *Funfte Soiree*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
T Schmit.  
Jun *Exhibition at Faxe Brewers*[ex].  
E Andersen, A Koepcke.  
Jun 5-6 *24 Stunden*[pf], Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal.  
J Beuys, B Brock, C Moorman, NJ Paik, Rahm, T Schmit, W Vostell.  
Jun 14 *Robot Opera*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
L Gosewitz, C Moorman, NJ Paik.  
Jun 14 *Fluxus Concert* [pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
B Brock, E Brown, J Cage, G Chiari, P Corner, M Goldstein, D Higgins, T Ichiyangi, J Mac Low, Y Ono, NJ Paik, D Rot, J Tenney, W Vostell, E Williams.  
Jun 15 *Fluxus Konzert 'Siebte Soiree* [pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
S Brown, J Cage, G Chiari, P Corner, M Goldstein, J Mac Low, C Moorman, Y Ono, NJ Paik, D Rot, J Tenney, W Vostell, E Williams.  
Jun 27 *Bag Piece*[pf], Filmmaker's Cinematheque, New York.  
Y Ono.  
Jun 27 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], Cinematheque, 85 E 4th St, NYC.  
Y Ono.  
Jul 4 *Perpetual Flux Fest Vagina Painting* [pf], Cinematheque, 85 E 4th St, New York.  
S Kubota.  
Jul 11 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], Cinematheque, NYC.  
E Andersen.  
Jul 18 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], Cinematheque, NYC.  
F Lieberman.  
Aug 16 - Sep 22 *Een Programma van gueren, Tendoostellings, Gravelandseweg 16, Steendrukkerij de Jong & Co*[pf], Hilversum, WT Schippers.  
Aug 22 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], Cinematheque, NYC.  
J Riddle.  
Aug 25 - Sept 11 *3rd Festival of the Avant Garde*[pf], Judson Hall, 165 W 57th St, New York.  
J Cage, P Corner, R Filliou, A Hansen, D Higgins, R Huelsenbeck, J Jones, A Kaprow, T Kosugi, J Mac Low, C Moorman, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Tenney, W Vostell.  
Aug 30 - Sept 1 *First World Congress: Happenings*[pf], St Mary's of the Harbour, 591 Commercial St, New York.  
Octopus Allstars, A Hansen, E Andersen, G Brecht, Christo, R Filliou, A Hansen, D Higgins, R Johnson, A Knowles, J Mac Low, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Schmit, W Vostell, LM Young.  
Sept 5 - Dec 19 *Perpetual Fluxfest New Cinematique* [pf], 85 E 4th St, New York.  
Ay-o, S Barry, G Brecht, L Bunn, J Cavanaugh, A Cox, S VanDerbeek, H Greenfiber, D Higgins, Hi Red Center, J Jones, H Kapplow, T Kosugi, S Kubota, D Lauffer, W deMaria, J Matthews, J Mac Low, J Mekas, Y Ono, B Patterson, J Riddle, L Sampson, M(Chieko)Shiomi, H Vasey, S Vasey, B Vautier, R Watts, C Wilmarth, J Worden, LM Young.  
Sept 5 - Dec 19 *Perpetual Flux Fest*[pf], New Cinematheque 85 E 4th Street, NYC.  
A Cox, Ay-O, Hi Red Center, J Jones, J Mac Low, W deMaria, Y Ono, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Mamma, B Patterson, R Watts.  
Sept 12 *Morning Piece to George Maciunas*[pf], 87 Christopher Street, New York.  
Y Ono.  
Sept 24 *Cardiff Arts Festival*[pf], Cardiff, Wales.  
P Corner, JJ Lebel.  
Sept 24 *Wenn Sie Mich Fragen Rowholt*[pf], Verlaghaus, Hamburg.  
Vostell.  
Sep 25 *The 83rd Fluxus Concert: Fluxorchestra at Carnegie Hall*[pf], Carnegie Recital Hall, NYC.  
Ay-O, S Barry, G Brecht, L Bunn, J Cavanaugh, A Cox, H Greenfiber, J Jones, Kapplow, S Kubota, D Lauffer, J Matthews, J Mekas, Y Ono, J Riddle, L Sampson, T Schmit, M(Chieko)Shiomi, S Vanderbeek, H Vasey, S Vasey, B Vautier, R Watts, C Wilmarth, J Worden, LM Young.  
Sept 27 *Hommage à Berlin*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
J Beuys, B Brock, S Brouwn, W Vostell.  
Sept 30 *Concert at St Kongesgade 10*[pf], Denmark.  
C Moorman, NJ Paik.  
Nov 1 - Dec 5 *New Cinema Festival I*[pf], Filmmaker's Cinematique, 125 W 41st St, New York.  
NJ Paik, Higgins, USCO and C Schneemann, K Dewey, R Rauschenberg, C Oldenburg, Once Group, R Whitman, LM Young, M Zazeela.

- Nov 2 *New Cinema Festival*[pf], Filmmaker's Cinematique, New York.  
 NJ Paik, C Moorman, T Kosugi, Dunham, Sampson.
- Nov 5 *Something Else-A Concert of New and Events*[pf], ICA, London.  
 P Green, D Higgins, A Knowles, G Metzger.
- Nov 7 *Soldier's Game*[pf], Prague.  
 M Knizak.
- Nov 20 *Ay-O's Rainbow Staircase Environment*[pf], 363 Canal Street, NYC.  
 Ay-O.
- Nov 20 *Ay-O's Rainbow Staircase Environment*[ex], 'A Fluxfest Presentation', 363 Canal Street, NYC.  
 Ay-O.
- Nov 27 *Music for the Eye and Ear*[pf], The Isaacs Gallery.  
 D Higgins, U Kasements, J Mac Low, E Williams, LM Young.
- Nov 27 - Dec 15 *Festival Zaj I*[pf], University of Madrid.  
 J Cortes, M Cortes, J Hidalgo, W Marchetti, T Marco, M Neuhaus, W Vostell.
- Dec *Den Frei Udstillingsbygning*[pf].  
 E Andersen, A Koepcke, T Schmit.
- Dec 2 *The International Steamed Spring Vegetable Pie(Fluxus)*, Fluxus Festival, *New Music Work, the Graduate Students Association*[pf], UCLA, Los Angeles.  
 J Byrd, N Daniel, F Lieberman, D Moskowitz, L Burman, B Rychlak, J Bradow, Crofton, C Ahn, A Nosei. Amusements. Planned for the Washington Square Gallery NYC. Moved to Jan 8, at 528 W. Broadway, NYC. Moved to Feb 22. Cafe Au Go Go, NYC. Moved to Mar 1. 3rd Roil (sic) Gallery, NYC.  
 T Saito. Nov 5. Something Else [pf], ICA, London.
- G Brecht, R Erebo, R Filliou, P Green, D Higgins, J Jones, A Knowles, G Metzger, B Patterson, B Vautier, E Williams.
- nd *Concert Bridge Theater Group*[pf], New York.  
 Y Ono.
- nd *Evening with Yoko Ono East End Theater Group*[pf], New York.  
 Y Ono.
- nd *Sky Machine* [pf], Judson Church, New York.  
 Y Ono.
- 1966**
- Jan - Dec *AKTUAL|Knizak performances* [pf], (i)Andevent for the post office, the police, and the occupants of house No.26, No.26, Vaclakova St, Prague. Milan Knizak, Jan Mach. (ii)Calendar, Prague. (iii)Instructions for inhabitants of an apartmenthouse, Marienbad. (iv)Housemeeting in apartmenthouse under supervision of police officer, No.26, Vaclakova St, Prague. (v)Marbles, Prague. (vi)Lecture in the club of college VSZ, Prague. (vii)A week, Prague. (viii)Outing,Prague (ix)Proclamation to the long hair people. (x)See the Sea, Poland (xi)Nail Letters (xii)Inscriptions on the walk an sidewalk-during the whole year. (xiii)Together celebration.  
 Jan 28 *A McLuhan Megillah*[pf], AI Hansen's studio, New York.  
 A Hansen.
- Feb *The Telephone Network*[pf].  
 E Andersen, R Filliou, A Koepcke.
- Feb 14 *Tender Music*[pf], Asia House Auditorium, 112 E 64th St, New York.  
 P Corrier, J Jones, A Knowles, C Moorman, NJ Paik.
- Feb 15-25 *Objet: Long Poème court a terminer chez soi de Robert Filliou La Cedille Qui Sourit*[ex], Villefranche-Sur-Mer.  
 B Vautier.
- Mar 13 *Avant Garde Music*[pf], Times Auditorium, Philadelphia.  
 C Moorman, NJ Paik, W Vostell.
- Mar 10-27 *The Stone*[pf], 239 Thompson St, New York.  
 A Cox, M Mason, Y Ono, J Perkins.
- Mar 16 *Dogs and Chinese Not Allowed*[pf], Something Else Gallery, New York.  
 W Vostell.
- Mar 17-20 *Water Light, Water Needle*[pf], St Marks Church, New York.  
 C Schneemann.
- Mar 26 *Concerto Zaj*[pf], University of Madrid.  
 J Hidalgo, W Marchetti, W Vostell.
- Apr 5 *Advanced Art. ACKE, Novey Realismus, Happenings, Event*[pf], Statni Divadelni Studio, Reduta, Prague.  
 E Andersen, A Koepcke, T Schmit.
- Apr 15-17 *Musik Festival*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 Behn, R Block, L Gosewitz, G Ruhm, T Schmit, V Tsakiridis.
- Apr 21 *Toward More Sensible Boredom*[pf], Filmmaker's Cinematique, 41st Street Theater, 125 W 41st St, New York.  
 T Kosugi, C Moorman, NJ Paik, W Vostell, E Williams, S Yalkut.
- Apr 25-28 3 *Festival de la Libre Expression*[pf], Théâtre de la Chimera 42 Rue Fontaine Paris 9.  
 T Kudo, JJ Lebel, NJ Paik, B Patterson, B Vautier.
- May 29 *Un concerto Zaj*[pf], University of Madrid.  
 J Cortes, M Cortes, DiVicente, J Hidalgo, W Marchetti, T Marco, Misson, A Schommer.
- Jun *Hovedbiblioteket*[pf].  
 E Andersen.
- Jun *The Telephone Network*[pf], Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.  
 E Andersen, A Koepcke.
- Jun [pf], Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.  
 E Andersen.
- Jun 11 *Hi Red Center|Street Cleaning Event*[pf], Grand Army Plaza, 58th St and 5th Ave, New York.  
 B Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Lauffer, G Maciunas, B Moore, P Moore, R Watts.
- Jun 11 *Hi Red Center|Hotel Event*[pf], Waldorf Astoria, New York.  
 B Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Lauffer, G Maciunas, B Moore, P Moore, R Watts.
- Jun 17 *Mit Braunkreuz Zeichnungen*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 J Beuys.
- Jun 18 - Sept 18 *Ben n'Expose pax à la Galerie* [ex], Galerie J, Paris.  
 B Vautier.
- Jul *Travelling Exhibition*[ex].  
 E Andersen, A Koepcke.
- Jul 15 *So Langweilig Wie Möglich*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 C Moorman, NJ Paik.
- Jul 16-17 *Vexations*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 L Bauer, L Gosewitz, D Llewelyn, C Moorman, NJ Paik, G Ruhm.
- Aug *Studentersamfundet*[pf], Kolding Gymnasium, Copenhagen.  
 E Andersen, A Koepcke.
- Aug 31 - Sept 30 *Destruction in Art Symposium*[pf], Various Locations, London and Edinburgh.  
 AMM Group, F Bazler, J Blaine, M Boyle, M Boyttazzi, G Brus, J Calder, H Chopin, B Cobbing, A Cox, I Davies, GA Fernbach, B Flanagan, E Fleischman, Francis, Galton, J Gilson, B Gladstone, A Hansen, J Hidalgo, DS Houedard, GA Jones, K Kemble, K Kren, J Latham, W Marchetti, T Marco, G Martinez, H Matusow, G Metzger, O Muehl, H Nitsch, J Nuttall, Y Ono, R Ortiz, R Page, J Reichardt, B Rowe, RI Sabbiane, Santanbonin, A Segui, W Schreib, A Scott, J Wilcocks, V Williams, J Toche, JJ Lebel, J Sharkey, B Stevens, W Vostell, P Weibel, H Franklin, E Donagh, R Donagh, P Davey, J Sexton, GE Simonetti, R Stackman.
- Sept [pf], Gallery Knabrostraede, Copenhagen.  
 E Andersen.
- Sept 4 *On Oct 4, 1933, Anton Wbrn Said*[pf], Opera Haus, Cologne.  
 W Vostell, P Corner.
- Sept 9 *4th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival*[pf], Central Park on the Mall, NYC.  
 Behrmann, J Beuys, G Brecht, Breer, E Brown, Dixon, Glick, Hackmann, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, A Knowles, A Kaprow, Kobayashi, T Kosugi, J Mac Low, C Mormann, M Neuhaus, Y Ono, B Patterson, C Schneemann, Jenney, USCO, R Watts, E Williams.
- Sept 23 *Seh Buch*[pf], Studenthaus, Frankfurt.  
 W Vostell.
- Sept 25 *Juxtapositionen (Festival Szenischer Malerei und Musik)*[pf], Galerie Aachen, Wallstrasse 58.  
 A Hansen, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, A Knowles, T Marco V Tsakiridis, W Vostell, E Williams, D Rot.
- Sept 30 *Paik|Moorman*[pf], Galerie 101, Copenhagen.  
 C Moorman, NJ Paik.
- Oct *Majudstillingen*[ex], Charlottenburg.  
 E Andersen, A Koepcke.
- Oct 3 *Massage Moderna*[pf], Museet, Stockholm.  
 C Oldenburg.
- Oct 4 *Fluxus-Concert*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 KP Bremer, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, A Knowles, T Marco, V Tsakiridis.
- Oct 5 *Zaj-Konzert*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 J Hidalgo, T Marco.
- Oct 7-10 *Copenhagen Concert*[pf], Akademiet-Charlottenburg, Copenhagen.

- E Andersen, D Higgins, A Knowles, A Koepcke.  
 Oct 13 *Koncert Fluxus*[pf], Prague.  
 J Berner, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Knowles, S Oldenbourg, B Vautier, Y Klein, M(Chieko)Shiomi, G Brecht, R Watts, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, B Patterson, R Koering, D Spoerri.  
 Oct 13-23 9 *Evenings: Theater & Engineering*[pf], 25th St Armory, New York.  
 J Cage, L Childs, O Fahlstrom, Hay, S Paxton, Y Ranier, R Rauschenberg, D Tudor, R Whitman.  
 Oct 14-15 *Eurasientstab (82 min Fluxorum Organum)*[Galerie 100, St Kongensgade 101, Copenhagen][pf], René Block Gallery, Berlin.  
 J Buerys.  
 Oct 17 *Koncert Fluxus*[pf], Prague.  
 J Berner, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Knowles, S III Oldenbourg, G Brecht, J Jones, Ligeti, G Maciunas.  
 Oct 26 - Nov 8 *Le Litre de Var Superior Coute 1. 60 Exposition, Procession, Tournée, Concert Fluxus Manifestation à la Galerie A*[pf], Galerie A, Nice.  
 M Alocco, R Bozzi, R Erebo, P Paoli, B Vautier.  
 Oct 31 *Eurasia*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 J Buerys.  
 Nov *Fluxus Films and Concert*[pf], Unicorn Theatre, La Jolla, California.  
 C Yeager, K Friedman.  
 Nov *Biennale*[ex], Charlottenburg.  
 E Andersen, A Koepcke.  
 Nov 12 *Events and New Music El Salon de Actos de la Escuela Tecnica Superior de Arquitectura Madrid*[pf], Madrid.  
 D Higgins, A Knowles, Zaj.  
 Nov 19 *Le happening SIGMA*[pf], Bordeaux.  
 JJ Lebel.  
 Nov 22-24 *Happening (2) Benefit Garnischt Kiegele Festival Bifrost Bridge*[pf], La Mesa, California.  
 Fluxus West, K Friedman, S James.  
 Dec 7-8 *Zaj Festival*[pf], Several locations, Barcelona, Spain.  
 Zaj.  
 Dec 15 [pf], Manresa Schmelia Gallery, Dusseldorf.  
 J Buerys, H Christiansen, B Norgaard.  
 Dec 18 *Happening for Sightseeing Bus Trip in Tokyo*[pf], Various Locations, Tokyo.  
 Akiyama, Ay-O, W Vostell, Yamaguchi.  
 Dec 15, 1966 - Jan 31, 1967 *A Paris La Cédille Qui Sourit Offerings Inattendus*[ex], Galerie Ranson, Paris.  
 M Alocco, Arman, G Brecht, D Brewer, L Castro, J de Jong, F Dufrene, R Filliou, M Henry, A Knowles, A Koepcke, J LeGac, JJ Lebel, O Mosset, B Patterson, J Pfeuffer, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, R Topor, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams, G Wolman.  
 nd *Publications by and Works by Edition Hansjorg*[ex], HanMayer Gementmuseum, Den Haag.  
 G Brecht, K Burkhardt, B Cobbing, S Cramer, H deCampos, H deVries, R Dohl, R Filliou, M Goertz.  
 E Gomringer, DS Houedard, Hansjorg, Mayer, F Mon, D Rot, K Schwitters, A Thomkins, V Ostayan, H Werkman, E Williams.  
 nd *Fluxus Sale*[pf], Ithaca College.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd *Fluxus Visit*[pf], Vassar College.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd *Fluxus visit*[pf], Sarah Lawrence College.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd *Fluxus visit*[pf], Middlebury College.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd *Fluxus/Concept Art Workshop*[pf], Palisades, NJ.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd *Fluxus Invisible Theatre*[pf], San Diego.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd *ZenVaudeville*[pf], New York.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd *Yoko Ono Flux Do If Yourself Dance Events*[pf], New York.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Evening with Yoko Ono*[pf], Wesleyan University, New York.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *13 Day Dance Events*[pf], London.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], Jeanette Cochrane Theatre, London.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Destruction in Art Symposium*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 K Brehmer, A Hansen, D Higgins, A Knowles, G Metzger, F Mon, B Vautier, W Vostell, E Williams.  
 nd *Fluxus Exhibitions*[pf], Avenue C Fluxus Room, New York.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, G Chiari, Christo, R Filliou, AM Fine, K Friedman, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, J Jones, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, F Lieberman, G Maciunas, K Millett, P Moore, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young, W de Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, P Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, Y Tone.  
 nd *Fluxfurniture*[pf], Avenue C Fluxus Room, New York.  
 K Friedman, A Knowles, P Moore, T Saito, D Spoerri, R Watts, E Williams.  
 nd *Dark mirror*[pf], Avenue C Fluxus Room, New York.  
 K Friedman.
- 1967**
- Jan - Dec *AKTUAL/Knizak Performances* [pf], (i)Action lecture and games, Brno.  
 (ii)Action Lecture, Bratislava. (iii)Commit assault upon everyone who is preparing for war, Prague. (iv)Wedding ceremony, Prague. (v)How to decorate faces, Krasne. (vi)Message. (vii)Aktual greeting. (viii)Aktual- live otherwise.  
 Jan 14 *First human Be-In*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Jan 21 - Feb 5 *Snows*[pf], Marinique Theatre, New York.  
 C Schneemann.  
 Feb 9 *Opera Sextronique*[pf], Filmmaker's Cinématique, New York.  
 C Moorman, NJ Paik, T Kosugi, Yalkut.  
 Feb 10 *Le Happening*, (conference/ demonstration)[pf], JJ Lebel.  
 Feb 10 - Mar 5 *Eurasianstaff 82 min Fluxorum Organum*[pf], St Stephen Gallery, Vienna.  
 J Buerys, H Christiansen.  
 Feb 12 *Concert Fluxus Teatro La Piccola Commenda*[pf], Milan.  
 S Albergoni, C Gaia, Neri, Pedrini, G Sassi, GE Simonetti.  
 Mar 10 *Fluxus, La Cédille Qui Sourit, Art Total Poésie Action*[pf], Lunds Kunsthall, Lund, Sweden.  
 G Brecht, D Brewer, PA Gette, B Heidsick, Turbid, B Vautier.  
 Mar 12 *Fluxus, La Cédille Qui Sourit, Art Total Poésie Action*[pf], Lunds Kunsthall, Lund, Sweden.  
 G Brecht, D Brewer, PA Gette, B Heidsick, Turbid, B Vautier.  
 Mar 20 *Mainstream Franz*[pf], Dahlem Gallery, Darmstadt.  
 J Buerys, H Christiansen.  
 Mar 31 *Fluxfest*[pf], Longshoreman Hall, San Francisco.  
 L Baldwin, J Berner, San Francisco Mime Troupe, Flux orchestra, Quick Silver Messenger Service.  
 Apr 26-28 *Les Mots et Les Choses*[pf], Galleria Il Punto & Musée d'Art, Turin.  
 Bergamasco, Boetti, Diacono, Ferrero, Filippini, Martelli, U Nespolo, P Paoli, Porta, Sanguinetti, GE Simonetti, L Totino, B Vautier, Volpini.  
 May 1 *Flux concert*[pf], Diacono Teatro, Rome.  
 J Hidalgo, G Maciunas, W Marchetti, B Vautier.  
 May 2-21 *Aktual Art International*[ex], San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.  
 E Andersen, A Benveniste, J Berner, R Bertholo, J Blaine, JF Bory, G Brecht, C Brier, K Burkhardt, L Castro, R Filliou, J Fumival, M Goeritz, J Hirschman, D Houedard, A Kaprow, M Knizak, M Lemaitre, C Logue, G Maciunas, C McCarthy, P McCartney, NJ Paik, T Pitre, CP Quemy, E Ruutsalo, R Scudder, M(Chieko)Shiomi, J Spacagna, Valoch, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts.  
 May 25 *Fetische*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 J Buerys, Christo, L Gosewitz, C Oldenburg, D Spoerri, W Vostell.  
 May 27 *Miss Vietnam*[ex], Galerie Tobies + Silex, Cologne.  
 W Vostell.  
 May 31 *Fluxfilme und Multiprojectionen Tobies + Silex*[pf], Cologne.  
 W Vostell.  
 Jun 6 *Concert Fluxus*[pf], Galleria la Bertesca, Genoa.  
 S Albergoni, U Nespolo, G Sassi, GE Simonetti.  
 Jun 26 *Concert Fluxus*[pf], Villa Cuccirelli, Milan.  
 S Albergoni, M Alocco, Ay-O, G Brecht, K Friedman, C Gaia, A Hansen, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, J Jones, A Knowles, T Kosugi, G Maciunas, W Marchetti, W deMaria, S Oldenbourg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Riley, G Sassi, T Schmit, M(Chieko)Shiomi, G Simonetti, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 Jul Arts Lab opens in London.  
 Jul 12 - Aug 28 *IVth Festival de la Libre Expression*[pf], La Cour Interior du Papa Gayo à Saint Tropez.  
 JJ Lebel, V Herbst.  
 Jul 21-25 *Art Pas Ar*[ex], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.

- B Vautier.  
Jul 25 *Something Else Readings*[pf], The Tiny Ork Bookstore, La Jolla.  
K Friedman.  
Jul 31 *Projecteur De Films Fluxus*[pf], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
E Andersen, G Brecht, J Cale, J Cavanaugh, AM Fine, J Jones, G Landow, G Maciunas, Y Ono, J Riddle, P Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi, P Vanderbeek, W Vostell, R Watts.  
Aug 1-7 20 *Illustrations Pour Le Petit Livre Rouge*[ex], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
R Erebo.  
Aug 18-31 *Le Tirair Aux Vielleres*[ex] Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
M Alocco.  
Aug 27 - Sept 1 *Prune, Flat, A New Piece/Skirt*[pf], Southampton College Theater.  
R Whitman.  
Sept 1 *Sculpture Invisible de Julian Baker*[ex], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
J Baker.  
Sept 19 *Music Expanded*[pf], T Kosugi.  
Sept 29-30 5th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival[pf], JFK Ferry Boat-White Hall Terminal, Staten Island Ferry, New York.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, P Corner, K Dewey, A Hansen, B (Forbes) Hendricks, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, T Ichiyangi, R Johnson, J Jones, A Kaprow, B aft Klintberg, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, C Moorman, Y Ono, NJ Paik, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, R Watts, LM Young.  
Oct 5 12 *Evenings of Manipulations*[pf], Judson Gallery, New York.  
P Corner, Goldstein, A Hansen, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, A Kaprow, F Leiberman, K Millet, C Moorman, Y Ono, NJ Paik, L Picard, Rose, T Schmit, C Schneemann, J Toche, Warner.  
Oct 21 *Concerto Fluxus*[pf], Liberia Rinascita, Modena.  
S Albergoni, M Alocco, Ay-O, G Brecht, G Chiari, K Friedman, A Hansen, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, J Jones, A Knowles, T Kosugi, G Maciunas, W deMaria, W Marchetti, T Neuberg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Riley, G Sassi, M(Chieko)Shiomi, T Schmit, G Simonetti, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
Oct 23 *What Did You Bring*[pf], Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.  
J Cage, D Higgins, A Knowles.  
Oct 27 - Nov 9 *Toiles Idées Et Dessins*[ex], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
Daniel Biga.  
Nov 15 *Fluxus, A Paper event by the Fluxmasters of the Reargarde* [pf], Time/Life Building, New York.  
MJ Allen, Ay-O, D Baumbach, JS Baumbach, J Benedict, E Gehr, F Gratzon, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, R Howe, M Knizak, D Lauffer, S Kubota, G Maciunas, CA Nash, H Oudjian, B Patterson, M Peltz, T dePew, G Rooda, P Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi, M Singer, C Stroucher, B Vautier, R Watts.  
Nov 17 *Music Expanded*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
T Kosugi.  
Dec 2-28 *Aktual Art International*[ex], Stanford Art Gallery, Stanford University.  
E Andersen, A Benveniste, J Berner, R Bertholo, J Blaine, JF Bory, G Brecht, C Brier, K Burkhardt, L Castro, R Filliou, J Furnival, M Goeritz, J Hirschman, D Houedard, A Kaprow, M Knizak, M Lemaitre, C Logue, C McCarthy, P McCartney, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, T Pitre, CP Quemy, E Ruutsalo, R Scudder, M(Chieko)Shiomi, J Spacagna, J Valoch, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts.  
Dec 7-13 *Fleurs*[ex], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
A Vautier.  
Dec 14, 1967 - Jan 1, 1968 7 *Petites idées DA AU-DELA*[ex], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
D Palazolli, GE Simonetti.  
Dec 15 *Out of Focus*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
W Vostell.  
Dec 15, 1967 - Jan 15, 1968 *Affiches Fluxus, De-Collage, Libre Expression, Art Total*[ex], Bar Le Provence, Probable.  
M Alocco, E Andersen, Ay-O, J Berner, J Beuys, G Brecht, S Brouwn, P Corner, R Erebo, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Higgins, Hi Red Center, J Jones, A Koepecke, A Knowles, JJ Lebel, G Maciunas, S III Oldenbourg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, D Rot, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams.  
Dec 8 *Yoko Ono at the Saville*[pf], Saville Theatre, London.  
Y Ono.  
Dec 20 *Oprichting van de Omroepvereniging*[pf], Eldorado, Amsterdam.  
P Bloom, W van der Linden, W de Ridder, WT Schippers, H Verhagen.  
Dec 20 *Oprichting van de Omroepvereniging*[pf], Eldorado Hotel de rode Leeuw, Amsterdam.  
W de Ridder, WT Schippers.  
Dec 27 *CO-OPER.ACTION de Marcel Alocco*[pf], Galerie Ben Doute De Tout, Venice.  
M Alocco, M Asso, JC Moineau.  
Dec 31, 1967 - Jan 4, 1968 *Brooklyn Joe Jones*[ex], Galerie Ben De Tout, Venice.  
J Jones.  
nd *Joe Jones Performance La Cedille Qui Sourit*[pf], Villefranche-Sur-Mer.  
J Jones.  
nd *Keeping together Manifestations*[pf], California Hall, Dancers Workshop, Filmore Auditorium, The Jabberwock, Print Mint, Provo park, the Straight Theatre.  
D Denman, K Friedman, M Knizak, R Whitman.  
nd *Chants*[pf], San Francisco.  
Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
nd *Fluxtapes*[pf], San Francisco.  
Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
nd *Stew Pieces*[pf], San Francisco.  
Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
nd *Construction Pieces*[pf], San Francisco.  
Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
nd *Rock Placement*[pf], San Diego.  
Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
nd *Fluxus Exhibition*[pf], San Diego.  
Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
nd *Twenty Gallons*[pf], Oxford, Ohio.  
K Friedman.  
nd *Trafalgar Square Wrapping Event*[pf], Trafalgar Square, London.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], St Martins School of Art, London.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Evening of Psychedelic Events*[pf], Roundhouse, London.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Evening of Psychedelic Events*[pf], Alexandra Palace, London.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Evening with Yoko Ono*[pf], Middle Earth, London.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Evening with Yoko Ono*[pf], Leeds University, Art Department.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Albert Hall Alchemical Wedding*[pf], Albert Hall, London.  
J Lennon, Y Ono.
- 1968**
- Jan - Dec *AKTUAL/Knizak Performances* [pf], (i) Keeping together day. (ii) The most necessary activity, Marienbad. (iii) An action for my mind, Vienna.  
Jan 26-28 *Carolee Schneemann*[ex], Illinois Central Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.  
C Schneemann.  
Feb 16 - Apr 4 *Intermedia, 68*[ex], SUNY Stonybrook, Rockland Community College, Open House Theater Workshop, New York, MOMA, Upton Hall, Buffalo(NY), Nazereth College, Rochester, Main Opera House (BAM, NY).  
K Dewey, D Higgins, L Levine, C Moorman, NJ Paik, C Schneemann, Tambellini, USCO, Deutsch, Brockman.  
Mar 5 *Image Head-Mover Head (Eurasianstaff)*, *Parallel Process 2, the Great Generator* [pf], Wide White Space Gallery, Antwerp.  
J Beuys, H Christiansen.  
Mar 22 *DIAS USA 1968*[pf], Judson Gallery, NY.  
A Hansen, B Hendricks, C Moorman, H Nitsch, R Ortiz, NJ Paik, L Picard.  
Apr 1 *Nam June Paik and Charlotte Moorman*[ex], University of Cincinnati.  
NJ Paik, C Moorman.  
Apr 4 - May 12 *Homage à Durer*[pf], Institute Fuer Moderne Kunst, Nuremberg.  
W Vostell.  
May 10 *The Night of the Barricades*[pf], Paris.  
JJ Lebel.  
May 10 *The Poetic Science*[pf], Moderna Museet, Stockholm.  
G Brecht, R Filliou.  
May 10-18 *The Destruction Art Group 1968 Presents*[pf], Judson Gallery, 239 Thompson, NY.  
B Hendricks, A Hansen, C Moorman, NJ Paik, L Picard, J Toche, Yalkut.  
May 10-20 *Sireeifighting, telephone poem*[pf], Kuntsbibliotek, Copenhagen.

- R Filliou, K Pedersen.  
 May 15 *Ben Vautier, Vautier Day*[pf], Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose.  
 Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
 May 16 *Knizak Night*[pf], Marin County and San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
 Jun 10 *Mixed Media Opera*[pf], Town Hall, 123 W 43rd Street, New York.  
 C Moorman, NJ Paik, NJ Seaman.  
 Sept 14 *6th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival, A Parade*[pf], Central Park, New York City.  
 Ay-O, P Corner, K Dewey, A Hansen, G Hendricks, T Imura, J Jones.  
 A Kaprow, J Mac Low, C Moorman.  
 Sept 28 *The Boy and the Bird*[pf], Central Park, NYC.  
 E Williams.  
 Oct 14 *Simultan-Eisenkiste*[pf], Halbiertes Kreuz Art Intermedia, Cologne.  
 J Beuys.  
 Nov *Flux Concert*[pf], Gallery 10, London.  
 Dec 9 *The Thousand Symphonies*[pf], Hickman Auditorium, Douglass College, New Jersey.  
 D Higgins.  
 Dec 10 German Student Party renamed Fluxus Zone West by Joseph Beuys.  
 Dec 17 *The Lying Ceremony*[pf], Douglass College, NJ.  
 M Knizak.  
 Dec 31 *New Years Eve Flux Feast*[pf], Flux Performance Hall 80 Wooster St, NYC.  
 Ay-O, G Hendricks, G Maciunas, T Saito, nd *Friedman/Sveigert Evenings*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Friedman/Sveigert Evenings*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Vacant Theatre*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Instant Theatre*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Vacant Lot*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Platbusters*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Eggbusters*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Bunibusters*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Star Dot*[pf], San Diego.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *God's Oblivious Design*[pf], San Diego.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Fly Event*[pf], San Diego.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Aktual Month*[pf], San Diego.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *The Mack'n Touque String Band*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Aktual/Events in Motion*[pf], San Diego.  
 Fluxus West.  
 nd *Concert*[pf], Albert Hall, London.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Arts Lab Art Show*[pf], Arts Lab, London.  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.  
 nd *Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], Arts Lab, London.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], Birmingham Art Centre.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], Guilford University Art Department.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Evening With Yoko Ono*[pf], Liverpool.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Paris Cafe and Street Event*[pf], Paris.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Fluxus Concert*[pf], Avignon.  
 S III Oldenbourg.
- 1969**
- Jan - Dec *AKTUAL/Knizak Performances* [pf], (i)Difficult ceremony, NY. (ii)To love to blend the gasses, a lecture, University of Kentucky, Lexington. (iii)Ceremony, San Bernadino. (iv)Love ceremonies. (v)Lying ceremony, Cologne.  
 Jan 23 *Drama Steel Table/Hand Action, Corner action*[pf], Cream Cheese, Dusseldorf.  
 J Beuys, J Druckwitz, A Herzfeld, U Meister, J Stuttgart.  
 Feb 27 *I Attempt to Set (Make You free grand Pianojom)*[pf], René Block Gallery, Berlin.  
 J Beuys, H Christiansen.  
 Mar 8 *Pre-Fluxus*[ex], Kombinat 1, Cologne.  
 NJ Paik, W Vostell.  
 Mar 15 *Brovermessung*[pf], Operahaus, Cologne.  
 W Vostell.  
 Mar 27 *Konzert Oder Sollen Wir es Veranden*[pf], Stadt Museum, Münchengladbach.  
 J Beuys, H Christiansen.  
 Mar 29 *Concert Fluxus*[pf], La Capella, Via Franca 17, Trieste.  
 M Alocco, Ay-O, Bento, G Brecht, Corrado, K Friedman, A Hansen.  
 J Hidalgo, D Higgins, J Jones.  
 A Knowles, T Kosugi, G Maciunas, W Marchetti, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, M(Chieko)Shiomi, T Schmit, GE Simonetti, T Riley, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 Apr 8-30 *Book of the Tumbler on Fire, Chapter XIII*[ex], Galleria Schwarz, Milan.  
 G Brecht.  
 Apr 25-27 *The Hamlet of Gertrude Stein*[pf], 66 Grand St, NY.  
 A Hansen.  
 May 8 *Rasten + Tanken Forum*[pf], Galerie Vanderloo, Munich.  
 W Vostell.  
 May 19 *100 Mal Hoeren und Spielen*[pf], WDR, Cologne.  
 W Vostell.  
 Jun 1-15 *Festival non art- anti art: La Verite est art: Comment changer l'art et l'homme*[pf], Nice.  
 E Andersen, M Bentin, J Beuys, G Brecht, E Dietmann, R Filliou, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, A Koepecke, F Merino, S III Oldenbourg, D Spoerri, B Vautier.  
 W Vostell.  
 Jun 18 - Jul 27 *La Cédille Qui Sourit*[ex], Moenchengladbach Staedhtiches Museum.  
 G Brecht, R Filliou.  
 Jun 29 *Leeds, a card game*[pf], Leeds College of Art.  
 R Filliou.  
 Sept 9 *Kestboom en Grizic Vlag*[pf], Leidseplein, Amsterdam.  
 WT Schippers.  
 Sept 9 - Oct 10 *8th Annual New York Avant Garde Festival*[pf], Wards Island, Mill Rock Island, in the East River at 102nd St, Manhattan.  
 Nov 15 *This way Brown*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 S Brown.  
 Dec 3 *Fuses*[pf], New Arts Lab, London.  
 C Schneemann.  
 Dec 31 *New Years Eve Flux Fest*[pf], Flux Performance Hall 80 Wooster St, NYC.  
 E Allen, H Flynt, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Higgins, D Jones, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Matthews, J Mekas, B Moore, H Pietkiewicz, V Pietkiewicz, F Rycyk, P Sharits, P Van Riper, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts.  
 nd *Acorn Word Event*[pf].  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.  
 nd *Bed Event*[pf], Montreal.  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.  
 nd *Bed Event*[pf], Amsterdam.  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.  
 nd *Fluxus Concert*[pf], Bordeaux.  
 S III Oldenbourg.  
 nd *Monkey's Night Out*[pf], San Diego.  
 Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
 nd *Studio Pieces*[pf], San Francisco.  
 Fluxus West, K Friedman.  
 nd *War is Over*[pf].  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.  
 nd *You Are Here*[pf].  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.
- 1970**
- Jan - Dec *AKTUAL/Knizak Performances*[pf], (i)Wedding Ceremony, Cesky Krumlov. (ii)Concerts of Aktual band, Marienbad & Sucha. (iii)A track near Marienbad. (iv)Ceremony No 4-for Wolfgang Feelisch. (v)Clothes painted on the body.  
 Jan 24 - Feb 22 *Tabernacle*[ex], Louisiana Museum, Copenhagen.  
 J Beuys, J Dibbets, P Gemes, P Kirkeby, A Koepecke, R Long, PL Jensen, B Nogard, Panamarenko.  
 Feb *Bed event*[pf], Galerie Podulke, Amsterdam.  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.  
 Feb *Bed Event*[pf], Galerie Taverne, Amsterdam.  
 J Lennon, Y Ono.  
 Feb 14 - May 18 *Thermoelektrischer Kauggummil*[pf], Kunsthalle, Cologne.  
 W Vostell.  
 Feb 16-20 *Flux show*[ex], Art Gallery, Douglas College.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, Jack Coke's Farmers Coop, W de Ridder, R Filliou, AM Fine, K Friedman, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, S Kubota, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Reynolds, J Riddle, T Saito, P Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts.  
 Feb 7 *Flux Mass*[ex], Art Gallery, Douglass College, New Brunswick.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Matthews, L Miller, H Pietkiewicz, P Van Riper.

- S Seagull, Y Wada, R Watts.  
Feb 17 *Flux Sports*[pf], Douglass College, New Brunswick.
- G Calvert, B Hendricks, G Maciunas, L Miller, S Seagull.
- Mar 2 Fluxus Zone West renamed Organization of Non-Voters, Free Referendum by Joseph Beuys.
- Apr 11 *Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono: Grapefruit Flux-Banquet + Do It Yourself*[pf], 18 North Moore Street, New York.  
B Hendricks, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, J Jones, P Johnson, A Knowles, J Lennon, G Maciunas, J Mekas, B Moore, P Moore, Y Ono, H Pietkiewicz, E Williams.
- Apr 18–24 *Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.  
J Lennon, G Maciunas, T Schmit, Y Wada, R Watts.
- Apr 25 – May 1 *Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.  
Hi Red Center, J Jones, A Knowles, B Lane, J Lennon, G Maciunas, Y Ono, NJ Paik, Y Wada, R Watts.
- Apr 30 – May 8 *Fluxus-Fluxtour*[pf], Various places in New York.  
C Alley, L Bacall, J Stewart, B Vautier, LM Young, J Mekas.
- May 2–8 *Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono: Blue Room*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York.  
G Brecht, J Lennon, Y Ono.
- May 9–15 *Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono: Weight and Water*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.  
G Brecht, J Lennon, G Maciunas, Y Ono, R Watts.
- May 16–22 *Fluxfest Presentation of John Lennon and Yoko Ono: Weight and Water*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.  
Ay-O, G Brecht, J Cavanaugh, G Hendricks, J Lennon, G Maciunas, Y Ono, P Sharits.
- Aug 26–30 *Celtic Kinloch Rannoch/Scottish Symphony*[pf], Edinburgh College of Art.  
J Beuys, H Christiansen.
- Oct 12 *We Enter The Art Market*[pf], Kunstmarkt, Cologne.  
HP Alvermann, J Beuys, H Rywelski, W Vostell.
- Nov 6 *Flux-Concert*[pf], Kölnischer Kunstverein.  
D Albrecht, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, C Moorman, H Szeeman, B Vautier.
- Nov 8 *Friday's Object, la Fried Fish Bones*[pf], Eat Art Gallery, Dusseldorf.  
J Beuys, D Spoerri.
- Nov 6, 1970 – Jan 6, 1971 *Happening & Fluxus*[ex], Koelnischer Kunstverein, Cologne.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, B Brock, S Broun, G Brus, H Christiansen, P Corner, R Filliou, Fluxus, H Flynt, K Friedman, R Grooms, A Hansen, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Higgins, Hi Red Center, J Jones, T Kantor, A Kaprow, P Kirkbey, B af Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, Kudo, JJ Lebel, G Maciunas, C Moorman, O Muehl, H Nitsch, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, R Whitman, E Williams, LM Young, ZJL Castillejo, J Hidalgo, W Marchetti.
- Nov 14 *Festum Fluxorum*[pf], Galerie Block Im Forum Theater, Berlin.  
A Koepcke.
- Nov 15 *Festum Fluxorum*[pf], Galerie Block Im Forum Theater, Berlin.  
E Andersen, M Filliou, R Filliou, A Hansen, V Herouvis, A Koepcke, C Moorman, R Page, T Schmit, C Schneemann, E Williams.
- nd *The Music Store*[pf], Joe Jones' Studio, 18 N Moore St, Manhattan.  
J Jones.
- nd *Apple Exchange*[pf], California Institute of the Arts, Burbank, CA.  
A Knowles.
- nd *Double Happening: A Contribution to happenings & Fluxus*[pf], Staatliche Kunsthalle, Dusseldorf.  
R Filliou, E Williams.
- nd *Fluxus Concert*[pf], Florence, Italy.  
S III Oldenbourg.
- 1971
- Jan – Dec *AKTUAL/Knizak Performances* [pf], (i)Instant Temples. (ii)Stone Ceremony, near Marienbad. (iii)A Prayer. (iv)Hry a architektura, predanska UMPRUM, Prague.
- Feb 3 *Flux Concert*[pf], Jugendhaus Ost, Stuttgart.  
D Albrecht, H Decker.
- Mar 5 *Entwurfe, Partituren, Projekte, Zeichnungen*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
J Beuys, G Brecht, S Broun, R Filliou, L Gosewitz A Koepcke, D Rot, T Schmit, B Vautier, W Vostell.
- Mar 6 *Matter Transformation, Glass/Earth/Stone*[pf], Apple Gallery, New York.  
B Apple, G Hendricks, J Vis.
- Mar 20 – Apr 25 *Sum 4*[ex], Museum Fodor, Amsterdam.  
G Brecht, R Filliou.
- Apr 6 *Celtic + \_\_\_\_\_* [pf], Civil Defense Rooms, Basel.  
J Beuys, H Christiansen.
- May 1 7 *Ideas of Ben*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
B Vautier.
- May 3 *Joint Works With...*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
R Filliou.
- Jun *Shell of the Future* [pf], Berkeley, CA.  
K Friedman.
- Jun 24 *Flux Divorce*[pf], 331 W 20th St, New York, NY.  
B Hendricks, G Hendricks, G Maciunas.
- Jul 31 – Aug 6 *Les Paravents*[ex], La Galerie Ben Doute de Tout, Venice.  
C Boltanski, JF Bory, G Brecht, Charlier, E Deitman, R Erebo, R Filliou, R Flexner, F Guinochet, R Johnson, A Koepcke, J LeGac, S III Oldenbourg, T Saito, Sarkis, D Spoerri, WL Sorensen, K Stack, Tobias, A Tomkins, B Vautier.
- Aug 7 *Fluxus Pa Moderna Museet*[pf], Moderna Museet, Stockholm.  
B af Klintberg, M af Klintberg, T Kosugi, Taj Mahal Travellers, M Wareing, W Wareing.
- Sept 10 *Color Power Now*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
A Koepcke.
- Sept 20 *Water Event*[pf], Y Ono.
- Oct 4 *Isolation Unit*[pf], Staatliche Kunstacademie, Dusseldorf.  
J Beuys, T Fox.
- Oct 9 *This Is Not Here*[pf], Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY.  
P Bendry, G Brecht, J Cage, K Dewey, R Filliou, A Hansen, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, J Jones, A Knowles, J Lennon, G Maciunas, P Moore, Y Ono, Penovich, S Seagull, B Vautier, R Watts.
- Oct 22 *Allerhand Zeichnungen*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
T Schmit.
- Nov *The Identical Lunch*[pf], University of California, Irvine.  
A Knowles.
- Nov 7 *Anatomie Eines Happenings*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
W Vostell.
- Nov 19 *Ring Piece*[pf], 68th Regiment Armory, New York, NY.  
G Hendricks.
- nd *Happening & Fluxus*[pf] Wurtl Kunstverein, Stuttgart.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, B Brock, S Broun, G Brus, H Christiansen, P Corner, R Filliou, Fluxus, H Flynt, K Friedman, R Grooms, A Hansen, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Higgins, Hi Red Center, J Jones, T Kantor, A Kaprow, P Kirkbey, B af Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, Kudo, JJ Lebel, G Maciunas, C Moorman, O Muehl, H Nitsch, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, R Whitman, E Williams, LM Young, ZJL Castillejo, J Hidalgo, W Marchetti.
- nd *A Small Show*[ex].  
Abrams, D Albrecht, G Altorjay, G Baruchello, J Beuys, M Cazazza, Christo, W Feilisch, N Felts, R Filliou, Fish, K Friedman, E G Golikoff, R Johnson, M Kagel, M Knizak, G Maciunas, D Rot, Sam's Cafe, Schauffelen, P Sharits, K Staack, A Tomkins, J Valoch, B Vautier, W Vostell, Walther, Weseler.
- nd *Poem Drop Event*[pf], California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA.  
A Knowles.
- nd *Apple event + Gift event I*[pf], California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA.  
A Knowles.
- nd *Events and Bean Pieces*[pf], University of California, San Diego, CA.  
A Knowles.
- nd *Proposition IV Wire Sounds*[pf], University of California, Irvine, CA.  
A Knowles, P Van Ripper.
- 1972
- Jan – Dec *AKTUAL/Knizak Performances* [pf], (i)Concerts in a cellar, Marienbad. (ii)Killing the books, Kileoc. (iii)Concert in the village Holubin. (iv)Funny Trail.
- Mar 21 *Equinox Piece*[pf], Jones Beach + Apple Gallery, New York, NY.

- G Hendricks, S Varble.  
Mar 26 – Apr 30 [pf]. Kunstmuseum, Luzern.
- B Vautier, C Boltanski, J LeGac, JC Fernie.
- Mar 31 *Peace Celebration*[pf], Monchengladbach.
- J Beuys, J Hafner.
- May 6 – Jun 11 *Horen Sahne. Texte, Bilder, Environments*[ex], Kunsthalle, Bremen.
- J Cage, D Higgins.
- May 12 *An Evening of Performances Pieces for Artasia*[pf], Ventura, CA.
- A Knowles, P Van Riper.
- Jul 12 *On a Jungle Path*[pf], Friends of Contemporary Art, Denver CO.
- K Friedman.
- Sept 2–3 *Hybrids*[pf], Global Village, London.
- G Hendricks, S Varble.
- Oct 23–31 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Falmouth.
- V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaître, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miler, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stembera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.
- Oct 30 *Taj Mahal Travellers Concert, part of Fluxshoe*[pf], Falmouth School of Art.
- F Ehrenberg, V Gizzi, H Koike, T Kosugi, T Lehtonen, S Reid, Ryo, Y Tsuchiya.
- Nov 13 – Dec 2 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Exeter.
- V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaître, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miler, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stembera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.
- Feb 10–25 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Oxford.
- V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaître, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miler, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stembera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.
- Feb 19 *Bells, Bags, Hats & Pebbles, part of Fluxshoe*[pf], Museum of Modern Art, Oxford.
- W Adams, Ay-O, A Hutchins, D Mayor.
- Mar 17 *Fluxsonata*[pf], 80 Wooster St. New York, NY.
- NJ Paik.
- May 19 *Fluxgames*[pf], 80 Wooster St. New York, NY.
- Ay-O, B Hendricks, NJ Paik, T Saito, M(Chieko)Shiomi, Y Tone, Y Wada, R Watts.
- May 19–27 *Flux Game Fest*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.
- R Crozier, J Jones, S Kubota, C Liss, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, T Saito, M(Chieko)Shiomi, Y Tone, Y Wada, R Watts.
- Jun 14 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Cardiff.
- V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaître, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miler, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stembera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.
- Jun 6–19 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Nottingham.
- V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaître, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A Metzger, K Miler, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stembera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.
- Jan 15–26 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Croydon.
- V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaître, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miler, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stembera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.
- Feb 10–25 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Oxford.
- V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaître, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A Metzger, K Miler, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stembera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.

A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaitre, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miller, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stempera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.  
 Jun 15 [ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 G Chiari.  
 Jul 6-21 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Blackburn.  
 V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaitre, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miller, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stempera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, C Welch, Zaj.  
 Aug 17-24 *Fluxshoe Exhibition*[ex], Hastings.  
 V Abolins, D Albrecht, M Allocco, E Andersen, D Atchley, Ay-O, J Beuys, A Boucourechliev, I Breakwell, G Brecht, C Cardew, U Carrega, M Cazzaza, M Chaimowicz, G Chiari, R Crozier, M Diacono, F Ehrenberg, N Felts, AM Fine, A Fisher, H Flynt, T Fox, K Friedman, B Gaglione, T Gayor, J Gerz, P Gette, M Gibbs, L Gosewitz, Gosling, K Groh, M Hayashi, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, K Hickman, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, HW Kalkman, P Kirkbey, M Knizak, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, JC Lambert, Lemaitre, J Lennon, C Liss, A Lockwood, A Lovell, G Luca, A McCall, B McCallion, G Maciunas, T Mancusi, T Marioni, J Matthews, H Matusow, D Maurer, D Mayor, G Metzger, K Miller, L Miller, Missmahl, JC Moineau, O L Nations, M Nannucci, Y Ono, A Park, J Parker, B Patterson, K Pederson, J Plant, V Raay, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, P Stempera, S Takaniishi, J Toche, E Tot, J Urban, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts,

C Welch, Zaj.  
 Aug 17 *Fluxshoe: a Small Festival of Fluxus-preview concert*[pf], Hastings, Sussex, Ay-O, G Brecht, Y Ono.  
 Aug 18 *Fluxshoe: a Small Festival of Fluxus-concert I*[pf], Hastings, Sussex, G Brecht, G Maciunas, T Schmit.  
 Dec 31 *Flux New Year-Disguises*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.  
 P Bruno, B Hendricks, A Knowles, G Maciunas, B Moore, P Moore, NJ Paik, H Peitkiewicz, B Stewart, Y Tone, S Vanderbeek.  
 nd *The Identical Lunch*[ex], Galerie Inge Baecker, Bochum, W Germany.  
 A Knowles.  
 nd [ex], René Block Gallery, Berlin.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Sock of the Month Club*[ex].  
 C Amirkhanian, J Bressette, M Cazzaza, K Friedman, E G Golikoff, D Higgins, R Johnson, A Kaprow, S Kubota, C Law, G Maciunas, C Olten, NJ Paik, J Reynolds, H Taylor.

1974

Jan *Unbeat Uberdoba Festival*[ex], Uberdoba, Sweden.  
 D Albrecht, J Beuys, J Cage, K Friedman, D Higgins, A Kaprow, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Vautier, W Vostell.  
 Jan 30 *Soup and Tart*[pf], The Kitchen, New York, NY.  
 J Dupuy, G Hendricks, S Kubota, NJ Paik, C Schneemann.  
 Feb [ex], Onnsach Gallery, New York, NY.  
 G Brecht.  
 Mar 13 *Flux Concert*[pf], Sunderland Polytechnic, England  
 R Crozier.  
 Jun [ex], Galerie Edith Seuss, Frankfurt am Main.  
 G Hendricks, J Jones.  
 Sept 15 *What's the Time*[ex], René Block Gallery, Berlin.  
 J Beuys, G Brecht, G Chiari, R Filliou, L Gosewitz, G Hendricks, D Higgins, R Johnson, A Kaprow, A Knowles, A Koepcke, NJ Paik, D Rot, T Schmit, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams.  
 Dec 31 *Flux New Year Eve, 1974-Colored Meal*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.  
 C Angel, Ay-O, V Bakaitis, J Brown, M Cooper, S Forti, G Hendricks, F Keery, A Knowles, S Kubota, G Maciunas, J Mekas, H Melton, L Miller, B Moore, NJ Paik, A Salcius, N Salcius, S Seagull, S Smith, B Stewart, A Taubin, Y Tone, P Van Riper, Y Wada.  
 nd *Musical Wisdom Clock*[pf], Grommet Theater, New York, NY.  
 B Buczak, G Hendricks, A Knowles.  
 nd *Suntime*[pf], Everson Museum, Syracuse, NY.  
 A Knowles, E Phillips, Y Wada.  
 nd *Collections from the Full Moon*[ex], René Block Gallery, Berlin.  
 A Knowles.

1975

Feb 14-18 *Destruction Ddiary*[pf], San Diego, CA..  
 K Friedman.  
 Mar 24 *Flux Harpsichord Recital*[pf], 80

Wooster St, New York, NY.  
 B Anderson, A Knowles, S Kubota, G Maciunas, J Matthews, L Miller, P Moore, NJ Paik, T Tone, Y Wada, Yoshida.  
 Apr - May *About 405 E 13th St # 1-3*[pf], 405 E 13th St, New York, NY.  
 J Dupuy, P Johnson, S Kubota.  
 C Moorman, C Oldenburg, P Oldenburg, NJ Paik, C Schneemann.  
 Apr 21 *Fluxfest Presents 12 Big Names*[pf], 80 Wooster St, New York, NY.  
 G Maciunas.  
 Nov *Tenth Exhibition*[ex], René Block Gallery, New York.  
 J Beuys, K Brehmer, R Filliou, A Koepcke, NJ Paik, Polke, G Richter, Ruthenbeck, R Watts.  
 nd *Self-Portrait*[pf], 112 Greene St, New York, NY.  
 J Dupuy.  
 nd *Women In the Printing Arts*[ex], Women's House Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA.  
 A Knowles.

1976

Jan 8-10 3 *Evenings on a Revolving Stage*[pf], Judson Theater, New York.  
 J Dupuy, S Forti, NJ Paik, P Van Riper.  
 Jan 17 - Feb 21 *Fluxshow*[ex], Gallery A, Amsterdam.  
 A Hundertmark, H Ruhe, M Allocco, E Andersen, Ay-O, J Berner, J Beuys, R Bozzi, G Brecht, B Brock, J Cale, J Chick, H Christiansen, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, G Hendricks, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, S Kubota, V Landsbergis, F Lieberman, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Matthews, J Mekas, M Mengleberg, L Miller, P Moore, Y Ono, NJ Paik, D Palazzoli, B Patterson, H Pietkiewicz, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, WT Schippers, T Schmit, P Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, Y Tone, S Vanderbeek, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 Jan 24 *Duchampians*[ex], René Block Gallery, New York.  
 S Kubota.  
 Feb *One Sunday Afternoon on a Revolving Stage*[pf], Whitney Museum, New York.  
 J Dupuy, D Higgins, A Knowles, G Maciunas.  
 Feb *Editions Armin Hundertmark exhibition*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 Feb *Moon is the Oldest TV Set*[ex], René Block Gallery, New York.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Mar [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 J Riddle.  
 Mar 14 *TV-Zeichnungen*[ex], Galerie René Block, Berlin.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Apr [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 T Schmit.  
 Apr 18 *Delayed Flux New Year's Eve Event*[pf], Clock Tower, New York.  
 O Adorno, Ay-O, J Brown, J Dupuy, R Filliou, S Forti, P Frank, G Hendricks, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Mekas, H Melton, L Miller, P Moore, S Seagull,

- S Sherman, P Van Riper, R Watts, E Williams.  
 May 1-16 *Flux-Tours*[pf], Assorted locations, New York.  
 C Bergengren, G Brecht, R Filliou, Peter Frank, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Matthews, J Mekas, L Miller, NJ Paik, P Van Riper, Y Wada.  
 May 2 *Laudatio Scripta Pro George Maciunas Concepta Omnibus Fluxus*[pf], 134-6 Spring St, New York.  
 R Block, J Brown, R Filliou, H Flynt, P Frank, G Hendricks, D Higgins, A Knowles, J Mekas, L Miller, B Moore, P Moore, B Patterson, S Seagull, B Stewart, Y Tone, N Valaitis, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, M Zagar.  
 Jun [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 L Novak.  
 Aug [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 L Gosewitz.  
 Aug 23-28 *Seminar on Humor and Fluxus*[pf], Japan.  
 Ay-O, E Williams.  
 Sept 5 - Oct 17 *New York-Downtown: Soho* [ex], Akademie Der Kunst, Berlin.  
 Ay-O, J Beuys, J Borofsky, G Brecht, C Brehmer, P Corner, J Dupuy On, Kawara, G Maciunas, L Miller, NJ Paik, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts.  
 Sept 9 *Words and Birds and Ay-O and Takehisa Kosugi and Emmett Williams*[pf], American Cultural Center, Tokyo.  
 Ay-O, T Kosugi, E Williams.  
 Sept 9 *Flux Harpsichord Koncert*[pf], Akademie Der Kunst, Berlin.  
 G Brecht, R Filliou, J Jones, G Maciunas, L Miller, NJ Paik, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts.  
 Oct [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 E Tot.  
 Oct 2 - Nov 14 *5 Danische Kunstler: Arne und Neine*[ex], Kunstmuseum, Luzern.  
 P Kirkeby.  
 Oct 9 *New Light on West Africa*[ex], René Block Gallery, New York.  
 R Watts.  
 Oct 12-28 *Fluxus Suggestion Show*[ex], K Friedman, G Hendricks, D Higgins, R Johnson, A Knowles, J Lennon, G Maciunas, Y Ono, Y Wada, R Watts.  
 Nov [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 M Knizak.  
 Nov [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 N Urban.  
 Nov *Flux-Toy-Pianos*[ex], René Block Gallery, New York.  
 J Jones.  
 Dec [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 I Vandeghinste.  
 Dec 2-5 *Grommets*[pf], 537 Broadway, New York.  
 J Dupuy, L Miller, NJ Paik.  
 Dec 1 *The Sky, Chairs & Ritual Remains*[ex], René Block Gallery, New York.  
 G Hendricks.  
 Dec 11, 1976, Jan 23, 1977 *Keiju Uematsu Sculpture-Photos-Film*[ex], Moderna Museet, Stockholm.  
 B af Klintberg, JO Mallander, K Uematsu, and *Propositions Pour L'Art*[ex], Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH.  
 B Vautier.  
 nd *Shadow Flag*[ex].  
 R Watts.  
 1977  
 Jan 22-23 *Flux Food Atlas and Snow Even*[pf], New Marlborough Massachusetts.  
 O Adorno, A Baal-Teschuva, J Baal-Teschuva, C Bergengren, J Bourgeois, B Brown, J Brown, J Dupuy, P Frank, R Gill, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, D Higgins, A Knowles, J Matthews, G Maciunas, B Moore, J Mac Low, H Pietkiewicz, S Sherman, Y Tone, R Watts, LM Young.  
 Mar 20 *Fluxus & Co Cannaviello Studio D'Arte*[pf], Rome.  
 E Andersen, J Beuys, G Brecht, G Chiari, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, A Hansen, G Hendricks, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, J Jones, A Kaprow, M Knizak, A Knowles, G Maciunas, W Marchetti, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, T Schmit, G E Simonetti, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams.  
 Apr [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 M Palsson.  
 Apr 5 20 *Fluxfilms Anthology Film Archives*[ex], New York.  
 E Andersen, G Brecht, J Cale, AM Fine, D Higgins, J Jones, G Maciunas, Y Ono, NJ Paik, P Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi.  
 May [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 E Andersen.  
 Jul [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 P Sharits.  
 Jul 9 [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 P Sharits.  
 Apr 15-17 *Grommets 4*[pf], 537 Broadway, New York.  
 J Dupuy, G Hendricks, J Higgins, A Knowles, G Maciunas.  
 Jul 22-23 *Dick Higgins-Fluxus Concerts*[pf], Moderna Museet, Stockholm.  
 D Higgins, U Junker, B af Klintberg, Mats B, CE Strom.  
 Jul 24 *Concert Fluxus*[pf], Nice Antibes, Marseilles.  
 B Vautier.  
 Jul 29 *Jeu x Publics*[pf], Nice Antibes, Marseilles.  
 T Saito.  
 Aug 14 *Screening of Paul Sharits films*[pf], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 Sept [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 G Brus.  
 Sept [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 I Vandeghinste.  
 Oct 9 *Rulers, Ladders and Buckets*[pf], P.S.1, New York.  
 B Buczak, G Hendricks.  
 Oct 16 *Rulers, Ladders and Buckets*[pf], P.S.1, New York.  
 B Buczak, G Hendricks.  
 Oct 20 A Koepcke dies.  
 Nov 18 *Screening of Stan Brakhage films*[pf], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 Nov 18-20 *Chant A Capella*[pf], Judson Church, New York.  
 J Dupuy, R Filliou, D Higgins, G Maciunas, NJ Paik.  
 Nov 23 [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 H deKroon.  
 Nov 28 *Fluxus Festival*[pf], Galerie akumulatory, Poznan.  
 A Jur, A Kalinowski, K Kozlowski, J Kozlowski, I Malinska.  
 nd [ex], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 Editions Concert Tendenza d'Arte Internazionali d'Arte[pf], Cavriago.  
 J Jones.  
 nd [ex], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 K Friedman.  
 nd [ex], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 M Gibbs.  
 nd [ex], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 J Liggins.  
 nd [ex], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 I Vandehinste.  
 nd [ex], Galerie Waalkens, Amsterdam.  
 P Reicha.  
 nd *Fluxus West Leather Envelope, Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts*[ex], The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.  
 nd *Philp Corner Ear Journeys: Water*[ex], Madison Art Center, Barrytown, New York.  
 P Corner.  
 nd *Anthologie six. A Book*[ex], Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Artwords and Bookworks collection.  
 R Crozier.  
 nd *visa TouRiStE, Passport to the state of Flux*[ex], Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts, The University of Iowa, Fluxus West Collection.  
 K Friedman, G Maciunas.  
 nd *Flux Halloween*[pf], New Marlborough, Massachusetts.  
 O Adorno, Ay-O, J Brown, J Dupuy, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, D Higgins, B Hutching, G Maciunas, B Moore, P Moore, J Stammera, B Stewart, Y Tone, Y Wada, R Watts.  
 1978  
 Jan [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 R van den Bergh.  
 Feb 4-26 *A Tower in the Auditorium*[pf], P.S.1, New York.  
 J Dupuy, A Knowles, G Maciunas, L Miller, Y Wada.  
 Feb 16 *Waitress at Ear Inn*[pf], Ear Inn, New York.  
 O Adorno, J Dupuy, B Hutching, G Maciunas.  
 Feb 25 *The Flux Wedding*[pf], Grommet Art Theatre, New York.  
 O Adorno, A Hendricks, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, T Hendricks, B Hutching, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Mekas, H Melton, L Miller, S Seagull.  
 Feb 25 *Flux Feast of Erotic Foods and Cabaret*[pf], Grommet Art Theatre, New York.  
 O Adorno, V Bakaitis, S Barber, M Conner, J Dupuy, M Fishkin, S Gilbert, D Higgins, N Howes, B Hutching, J Jones, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, L Miller, NJ Paik, B Patterson, S Sherman, Y Wada.  
 Mar [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 E Tot.  
 Apr [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 T Saito.  
 May [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.  
 B Brussman.  
 May 9 G Maciunas dies.

- May 13 *Flux Funeral for George Maciunas*[ex], Flux Performance Hall, 80 Wooster St, New York.
- L Bourgeois, B Buczak, M Cooper, B Hendricks, P Frank, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, D Higgins, A Knowles, S Kubota, L Miller, B Moore, C Moorman, C Morrow, B Patterson, H Pietkiewicz, A Salcius, C Schneemann, S Seagull, B Stewart, Y Tone, N Valaitis, Y Wada, R Watts.
- Jun [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- G Brecht.
- Jun 30 *Video Poem*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.
- S Kubota.
- Jul 7 *In Memorium of George Maciunas*[pf], Staatliche Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf.
- J Beuys, NJ Paik.
- Aug [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- M Gibbs.
- Sept 2 *Performances*[pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- J Liggins.
- Sept *Screening of films by Teun Hocks, Frans Staak, Hezy Lesky, Wim Schlebaum, Boegel & Holtappel*[pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- Sept [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- J Drucker.
- Sept *Concert of New Music*[pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- P Berg, P Cusack, A Logothetis.
- Sept [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- L Weiner.
- Sept [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- H de Kroon.
- Sept *Acchorage*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- G Brecht, Brown, Christo, Manzoni, D Rot, P Sharits, B Vautier.
- Oct [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- A Bien.
- Oct [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- I Vandeghinste.
- Oct *Drawings by H Nitsch and G Brus*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- H Nitsch, G Brus.
- Oct [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- H Lesky.
- Oct [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- U Carrion.
- Oct *Screening of Artists Videos*[pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- Boegel & Holtappel, S Heller, N Hoover, H de Kroon, K Mol, H vd Wal.
- Oct 10 *Flux-Traffic*[pf], Galerie René Block, Berlin.
- NJ Paik.
- Oct 16 *Performances*[Minute][pf], Musée du Louvre, Paris.
- J Dupuy.
- Nov [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- P Reichman.
- Nov [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- S Peeters.
- Dec [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- R Werk.
- 1979**
- Mar 24 *Flux-Concert*[pf], The Kitchen, New York.
- P Corner, P Frank, K Friedman, M Goldstein, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Higgins, A Knowles, C Liss, J Matthews, L Miller, Y Tone, P Van Riper, Y Wada, R Watts.
- Mar 24 *A Flux-Concert Party*[pf], 37 Walker St, New York.
- K Friedman, J Herschman, G Silverman.
- Apr *Fluxus-the most radical and experimental art movement of the Sixties*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- H Rhue, G Akasewega, D Albrecht, M Alocco, E Andersen, Ay-o, J Berner, J Beuys, R Bozzi, G Brecht, S Brown, S Bussotti, J Cage, J Cale, C Caspari, G Chiari, H Christiansen, P Corner, A Cox, W deMaria, R Erebo, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, B Grimes, B Gysin, A Hansen, S Hashimoto, L Hellin, G Hendricks, D Higgins, Hi Red Center, D Thompson, A Hutchins, T Ichiyangi, R Johnson, J Jones, P Kirkeby, P Kennedy, B af Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Landow, V Landsbergis, D Lauffer, J Lennon, B Lens, F Leiberman, C Liss, G Ligeti, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, J Matthews, R Maxfield, J Mekas, M Mengelberg, P Mercure, L Miller, JC Moineau, B Moore, P Moore, C Moorman, O Misset, S III Oldenbourg, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, D Palazzoli, B Patterson, H Pietkiewicz, E Raman, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, J Riddle, T Riley, D Rot, T Saito, WT Schippers, T Schmit, C Schneemann, G Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi, GE Simonetti, D Spoerri, T Szentjauby, DE Thompson, Y Tone, R Topor, S Vanderbeek, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, JP Wilhelm, E Williams, LM Young, Zaj.
- Apr 14 *Event Works*[pf], Massachusetts College of Art, Boston.
- P Frank, K Friedman, M Wilson.
- May 23 [pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- F van Keulen.
- Jul *Boxes*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- G Brecht, R Filliou, K Friedman, J Gerz, T Limura, A Knowles, R Watts.
- Aug [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- A Hansen.
- Sept [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- E Tot.
- Oct *Visual Works by Poets*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- Beltrammetti, Bruhin, Einhorn, M Gibbs, B Gysin, JJ Lebel, Spatola.
- Nov [ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- W de Ridder.
- Nov 9, 1979 – Jan 6, 1980 *Actie, Werklijkheid en Fictie in de Kunst van de Jaren '60 in Nederland*[ex], Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam.
- W de Ridder, B Lens, WT Schippers.
- nd *Performance/Baby*[pf], Salles de Ventes, Honfleur.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *Twenty Years of Performance Art*[pf], University of Massachusetts, Amherst.
- A Knowles, D Higgins.
- 1980**
- Jan J Liggins[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- J Liggins.
- Jan 2 – Mar 2 *Fur Augen und Ohren*[ex], Akademie der Kunst, Berlin.
- D Albrecht, Ay-o, J Beuys, G Brecht, E Brown, J Cage, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, J Hdalgo, D Higgins, J Jones, A Kaprow, M Knizak, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, W Marchetti, NJ Paik, D Schnebel, Y Wada, R Watts.
- Feb J van Ray *Photographs: Guerilla Art Action Group*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- J van Ray.
- Mar N *Urban*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- N Urban.
- Mar M Keesen & R McNealy *Performance*[pf], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- M Keesen, R McNealy.
- Mar M Knizak[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- M Knizak.
- Sept A Knowles[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- A Knowles.
- Oct P Siepmann[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- P Siepmann.
- Nov P *Downsborough*[ex], Galerie A, Amsterdam.
- P Downsborough.
- Dec 8 J Lennon murdered.
- nd *Arras Qui Sourit, Lecture Rasante*[pf], Centre Noroit, Arras.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *The Compressed Sound Poetry Festiva*[pf], Ear Inn, New York.
- P Frank, K Friedman.
- nd *Fluxus Ten Year Hundertmark Retrospective*[ex], Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne.
- E Andersen, J Beuys, C Böhmier, G Brecht, G Brus, G Chiari, H Chopin, C Costa, A Dias, R Filliou, K Friedman, J Gerz, L Gosewitz, G Graffa, A Herzfeld, T Limura, J Jones, D Kirves, M Knizak, A Knowles, T Kudo, B Lurie, G Maciunas, E Mattiacci, M Merz, M Mochetti, O Muhl, M Nannucci, H Nitsch, L Novak, A Rainer, G Rühm, T Saito, K Balder, Schaufen, T Schmit, F Schwegler, G Spagnolo, D Steiger, E Tot, J Valoch, B Vautier, S Wewerka.
- nd *Scores*[ex], Factotum Arte, Verona.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, P Corner, R Filliou, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, A Knowles, NJ Paik, T Schmit, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.
- 1981**
- Jan 17 – Mar 8 *Art Allemagne Aujourd'hui ARC*[ex], Musée d'Art Modern, Paris.
- J Beuys, L Gosewitz, A Koepcke, D Rot, T Schmit, W Vostell.
- Feb 14 – Mar 29 *Hundert Tillstoter Under Veckans Lopp*[ex], Modern Museet, Stockholm.
- P Kirkeby.
- May 1 *Fluxus Zug*[pf], Nordrhein, Germany.
- W Vostell.
- May 1 – Sept 29 *Fluxus Zug*[ex], 16 Stadt in Nordrhein-Westfalen.
- W Vostell.
- May 27–30 *Steamshuffle and Steampoems*[ex], Cambridge River Festival, John F Kennedy Park, Cambridge.
- E Williams.
- May 27 – Jul 12 *Schilderkunst in Duitsland*[ex], Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.
- P Kirkeby.
- May 30 – Aug 16 *Westkuns*[ex], Rheinhallen, Cologne.

- Arman, J Beuys, G Brecht, Brock, J Cage, R Filliou, Hains, A Kaprow, NJ Paik, R Rauschenberg, D Rot, D Spoerri, W Vostell.
- Sep 20 – Nov 1 *Fluxus Etc The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* [ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, J Berner, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, J Chick, Christo, Jack Coke's Farmer Coop, P Corner, L Eisenhauer, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, B Grimes, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, S Hyde, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Landow, J Lennon, F Lieberman, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Mekas, P Mercure, L Miller, K Millet, B Moore, P Moore, R Morris, O Mossett, S Oldenbourg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Reynolds, W Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, W Schippers T Schmit, G Sharits, P Sharits, B Sheff, M Shieko, D Spoerri, J Takamatsu, D Thompson, R Topor, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Sept 21–Sept 25 *AK! Fluxfest*[pf], Academic Voor Beëidende, Kunst.
- E Andersen, Boblens, G Chiari, Gosewitz, D Higgins, M Knizak, Mengelberg, W de Ridder, T Saito, B Vautier.
- Sept 29 *Fluxus Zug*[pf], Westfalen, Germany, W Vostell.
- Oct 10 *The Boy and the Bird*[pf], The Hague, Gemeente Museum.
- E Williams.
- Dec *Partituren*[pf], Gelbe Musik, Berlin.
- E Andersen, J Beuys, G Brecht, E Brown, J Cage, G Chiari, H Christiansen, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, J Mac Low, NJ Paik, D Rot, T Schmit, Schnebel, W Vostell, E Williams.
- Dec 3 *Konceptuell och Visuell Musik*[pf], Fylkingen, Stockholm.
- B Klintberg.
- Dec 15 – Jan 31, 1982 *Fluxus-Aspekte eines Phänomens*[ex], Kunst-und Museumsverein, Wuppertal.
- Ay-O, Bauermeister, J Beuys, G Brecht, Brock, Bussotti, J Cage, G Chiari, P Corner, R Filliou, K Friedman, Greenbaum, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, R Johnson, J Jones, M Kagel, Klopheus, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, Maciunas, NJ Paik, B Patterson, Riebesehl, D Rot, T Saito, T Schmit, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Dec 31 – Jan 1, 1982 *Steamshuffle and Steampoems*[ex], First Night Festival, Government Center Plaza, Boston.
- E Williams.
- Dec *Talk in a Hat*[pf], Amerika Haus, Berlin.
- A Knowles.
- nd *Portraits and Journeys*[ex], Galerie Akumulatory, Poland
- E Williams.
- nd *Schemes and Variations*[ex], The Hague, Gemeente Museum.
- E Williams.
- nd *C.U.L. III*
- J Dupuy.
- nd *C.U.L. IV*.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *One Two*.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *The decaphonic system; metatronics*.
- D Higgins.
- nd *Hommage à Arthur A Koepecke Copenhagen: Den Danske Radeerforening af 1853*.
- E Andersen, J Beuys, G Brecht, H Christiansen, R Filliou, L Gosewitz, A Hansen, P Kirkeby, B af Klintberg, A Knowles, B Norgaard, NJ Paik, T Schmit, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts.
- nd *Masking*.
- DD Hompson.
- nd *Solar Music Kit*.
- J Jones.
- nd *Collage of Jazz Set for Gilbert*.
- J Jones.
- nd *Flux Harpsichord*.
- J Jones.
- nd *Madness from Joe and George*.
- J Jones.
- nd *Solar Energy No 1*.
- J Jones.
- nd *Untitled 'Troutbag'*.
- B Patterson.
- nd *Fluxus Cartoon*.
- R Watts.
- 1982**
- Mar 21 *The Boy and the Bird*[pf], Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin.
- E Williams.
- Apr 10 – May 15 *Young Fluxus* [ex], J Armleder, D Boyd, J Dupuy, R Gerlovin, V Gerlovin, J Kocman, C Liss, L Miller, E Tot, P Riper, Y Wada.
- Apr 15 *Fluxfest* [pf], Rutgers University, New Brunswick.
- E Akaezumma, P Arakawa, L Copulsky, D Demnitz, K Friedman, J Harmon, G Hendricks, C Johnson, V Klauder, A Knowles, M Meyers, L Miller, F Morelli, Y Tone, P Riper, R Watts, D Wilson.
- Apr 16 *Music by Dick Higgins*[pf], British Centre, Berlin, Germany.
- R Bernard, D Higgins, P Hoffmann, E Spitts.
- Apr 30 – Jun 27 *Nam June Paik Retrospective*[ex], Whitney Museum, New York.
- Sep *Variations for Food and Piano* [pf], Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, DC.
- K Friedman.
- Sep 14 – Nov 7 *Sleeping Beauty- Sleeping Beauty- Art Now: Scandinavia Today* [ex], Guggenheim Museum, New York.
- P Kirkeby.
- Sep 17 *Fluxus-Gala* [pf], Wiesbaden.
- E Andersen, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, G Hendricks, A Knowles, NJ Paik, B Patterson, W Ridder, T Saito, B Vautier, E Williams.
- Sept 17 – Nov 14 *Festum Fluxform 1982, Flux Gala*[pf/ex], Wiesbaden Museum, Wiesbaden.
- E Andersen, R Block, G Brecht, G Chiari, H Christiansen, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, A Hansen, G Hendricks, J Jones, A Knowles, T Kosugi, D Mitspieler, B Patterson, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, B Vautier, W Vostell, E Williams.
- Sep 19 – Nov 14 1962 *Wiesbaden Fluxus 1982* [ex], Museum Solothurn, Wiesbaden.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, E Brown, J Cage, G Chiari, H Christiansen, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, A Kaprow, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, L Miller, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Oct 14 *Siberia Extrema*[pf], Museo Vostell, Malpartida.
- W Vostell.
- Dec 12 – Jan 23, 1983 1962 *Wiesbaden Fluxus 1982* [ex], Neue Gallerie der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen, Kassel.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, E Brown, J Cage, G Chiari, H Christiansen, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, A Kaprow, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, L Miller, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, T Saito, T Schmit, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Dec 12 – Jan 24 20 *Jahre Fluxus*[ex], Neue Galerie, Kassel.
- Dec 13 *Cycles for 7 Sounds*[pf], Berlin, Germany.
- T Kosugi.
- nd *Pianist Hide Away*.
- E Andersen.
- nd *Arbejdsskitse*.
- J Beuys.
- nd *Beuys, J and NJ Paik In Memoriam of George Maciunas*.
- J Beuys, NJ Paik.
- nd Shane.
- A Hansen.
- nd *Solar Jazz Set*.
- J Jones.
- nd *LuftHaus Drawings*.
- NJ Paik.
- nd *Mail Art Brief*.
- R Rehfeldt.
- nd *Napoleon*.
- D Spoerri.
- nd *Garten der Luste*.
- W Vostell.
- nd *Co-Invention no 6: The Performance Without a Name* [pf], Verona.
- R Filliou, E Williams.
- nd *Lecture Rasante* [pf], Université de Sergy-Pontoise.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *Untitled Performance* [pf], Iowa University.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *To Be Knocked To The Canvas* [pf], Grommet Gallery, New York.
- J Dupuy.
- 1983**
- Jan 14 – Feb 12 *Mixed Grill* [pf], Grommet Gallery, New York.
- O Adorno, B Boczak, C Dreyfus.

- J Dupuy, R Filliou, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, A Kaprow, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, L Miller, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, T Saito, T Schmit, D Schnebel, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Jan 21 – Feb 20 *Untitled Exhibition* [ex], DAAD Gallery, Berlin.
- J Cage, NJ Paik.
- Jan 30 – Mar 27 *Fluxus Etc The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* [ex], Neuberger Museum, SUNY.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, J Berner, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, J Chick, Cristo, Jack Coke's Farmer Coop, P Corner, L Eisenhauer, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, S Hyde, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, G Landow, J Lennon, F Lieberman, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Mekas, P Mercure, L Miller, K Millett, B Moore, P Moore, R Morris, S Oldenbourg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Reynolds, W Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, W Schippers, T Schmit, G Sharits, P Sharits, B Sheff, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, J Takamatsu, D Thompson, R Topor, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Feb 6 Vortrag über Das, Was im Augenblick zu sagen Ware, Mir aber Vielleicht Nicht Einfallt Szene Wien, Hauffgasse 26, Vienna.
- D Spoerri, E Williams.
- Feb 16–Feb 18 *In The Spirit of Fluxus* [pf], Amerika Haus, Berlin.
- D Bender, M Bodman, A Bohm, P Corner, A Haupi, G Hendricks, W Heyder, M Knizak, C Kuhn, J Marquardt, D Munch, V Rive, D Schnebel, L Seel, E Williams, A Wirth, M Zeininger, C Zimmel.
- Feb 25 – Mar 20 *Untitled Exhibition* [ex], DAAD Galerie, Berlin.
- G Brecht, H Christiansen, P Corner, R Filliou, L Gosewitz, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, G Maciunas, W Marchetti, R Page, T Saito, T Schmit, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.
- Mar 5 *FLUXFEST\*83* [pf], Neuberger Museum, SUNY Purchase.
- Ay-O, D Beudle, P Berard, A Brightman, M Brown, K Bull, J Dupuy, J Grey, J Hettinger, D Higgins, A Knowles, C Liss, A Livingstone, H Martenson, L Miller, K Onoda, M Strop, Y Tone, P Riper, Y Wada, R Watts, C Xatrec.
- Mar 11 *Earworks* [pf], Grommet Gallery, New York.
- O Adorno, J Cage, C Dreyfus, J Dupuy, K Friedman, R Gerlovin, V Gerlovin, D Higgins, A Knowles, J Mac Low, L Miller, C Morrow, M Nuehaus, NJ Paik, Y Tone, P Riper, Y Wada, LM Young.
- Mar 15 – Apr 17 *Untitled Exhibition* [ex], DAAD Galerie, Berlin.
- G Hendricks.
- May – Jun *Art Hats* [ex], Gallery Harlekin, Wiesbaden.
- Arman, J Beuys, J Dupuy, R Filliou, H Gappmayr, J Gerz, G Hendricks, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Knowles, F Mon, A Noel, A Oppermann, D Rot, G Ruhm, T Saito, K Schauffelen, W Schmidt, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.
- May 11 *The Boy and the Bird* [pf], Petite Salle, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.
- E Williams.
- May 26 *Faustzeichnungen* [ex/pf], Galerie Wewerka, Berlin.
- E Blum, E Williams.
- Jun *Fluxus Etc The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* [ex], Baxter Art Museum, Pasadena, California.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, J Berner, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, J Chick, Cristo, Jack Coke's Farmer Coop, P Corner, L Eisenhauer, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, B Grimes, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, S Hyde, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Landow, J Lennon, F Lieberman, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Mekas, P Mercure, L Miller, K Millett, B Moore, P Moore, R Morris, O Mossett, S Oldenbourg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Reynolds, W Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, W Schippers, T Schmit, G Sharits, P Sharits, B Sheff, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, J Takamatsu, D Thompson, R Topor, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Jul 2 – Oct 2 *KG's Private Pinakothek* [ex], Kunstmuseum, Solothurn.
- D Spoerri, R Filliou, R Page, D Rot, D Spoerri, E Williams.
- Aug 3 – Sep 4 *Art Hats* [ex], Berliner Festspiel Gallery, Berlin.
- Arman, J Beuys, J Dupuy, R Filliou, H Gappmayr, J Gerz, G Hendricks, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Knowles, F Mon, A Noel, A Oppermann, D Rot, G Ruhm, T Saito, K Schauffelen, W Schmidt, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.
- Oct 23 *The Boy and the Bird* [pf], Teatro Rondo di Bacco, Piazza Pitti, Florence.
- E Williams.
- Oct 30 *Music Expanded* [pf], Institut Unzeit, Freunde Guter Musik, Berlin.
- T Kosugi.
- Dec 2–Dec 3 *Musik um 1962 und Neuere Fluxuskompositionen* [pf], Hochschule der Kunst, Berlin.
- E Andersen, A Hansen, G Hendricks, A Knowles, Schnebel, W Vostell, Wada, E Williams.
- nd *International Festival of Phonetic Poetry* [pf], Vienna.
- H Chopin, J Mac Low, G Ruhm, D Schnebel, A Tardos, E Williams.
- nd *Bon voyage to Australia*, H Chopin.
- nd *Solar Music Kit*, J Jones.
- nd *Blue Cello*, C Moorman.
- nd *It Was My Portrait Which Disappeared*, NJ Paik.
- nd *e*, E Williams.
- nd *Ursula and René Blocks' Interior Revised*, E Williams.
- nd *Dr Pepper Versus Dr Videovitch* [pf], Soho Cable, New York.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *Leaves of Paper* [pf], Louisiana Koncertsal, Copenhagen.
- E Andersen, A Knowles.
- nd *Lecture Rusante* [pf], Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *Untitled Performance* [pf], Columbia University, New York.
- J Dupuy.
- 1984**
- Jan 19 *Mythos Berlin-na und* [pf], Theater-am-Turm, Frankfurt-am-Main.
- E Blum, Y Wada, E Williams.
- Jan 28 – Feb 26 *From the North, Edvard Munch, Asger Jorn, Per Kikeby* [pf], Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.
- E Munch, A Jorn, P Kirkeby.
- Feb 7 – Aug 12 *Multiples und Objekte aus der Sammlung Ute und Michael Berger* [ex], Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden.
- A D, M Bauermeister, J Beuys, G Brecht, Cristo, R Filliou, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, C Oldenburg, R Page, NJ Paik, D Rot, T Saito, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell.
- May 4 *Fluxus and Evening of Concerts events & Conversation* [pf], 22 Wooster Gallery, New York.
- P Frank, K Friedman, D Higgins, A Knowles, F O'Dell, K O'Dell, Y Tone.
- May 11 – Jun 3 *Sky Himmel* [ex], Neue Galerie, Aachen.
- G Hendricks.
- Jul 13 – Sept 2 *Das Immerwährende Ereignis Zeig* [ex], Sprengel Museum, Hannover.
- R Filliou.
- Sept *The Boy and the Bird* [pf], Western Front, Vancouver.
- E Williams.
- Sept 24 – Dec 2 *Von heir aus Zwei Monate neue deutsch Kunst in Dusseldorf* [ex], Messegelände Halle, Dusseldorf.
- J Beuys, G Brecht, L Gosewitz, P Kirkeby, A Koepcke, NJ Paik, D Rot, T Schmit.
- Sept 29 – Dec 2 *Von Heir Aus* [ex], Messegelände, Dusseldorf.
- J Beuys, G Brecht, Gosewitz, Kirkeby, A Koepcke, NJ Paik, T Schmit.
- Oct 30 *Visitors Walk-An Instant Pilgrimage* [pf], New York.
- E Andersen.
- Dec 14 – Jan 26, 1985 *Zeichnungen* [ex], Galerie Hundertmark, Cologne.
- P Corner, R Filliou, Gosewitz, Hansen, G Hendricks, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, G Maciunas, Y Ono, D Rot.
- nd *Spirale* [pf], Akademie der Kunst, Berlin.
- nd *Fluxus Etc The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection* [ex], Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, J Berner, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, J Chick, Cristo, Jack Coke's Farmer Coop, P Corner, L Eisenhauer, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman,

B Grimes, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, S Hyde, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Landow, J Lennon, F Lieberman, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Mekas, P Mercure, L Miller, K Millet, B Moore, P Moore, R Morris, O Mossett, S Oldenburg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Reynolds, W Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, W Schippers, T Schmit, G Sharits, P Sharits, B Sheff, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, J Takamatsu, D Thompson, R Topor, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 nd *Heavy Sound Flight*[pf], Bobby Gleason's Gym, New York.  
 K Friedman, G Hendricks, D Higgins, A Knowles, A Schwerner.  
 nd *Untitled Performance*[pf], Experimental Intermedia Foundation.  
 J Dupuy.

## 1985

Feb 6 – Mar *Konkretionen 1960-71 ind Glas*[ex], Galerie Edition Hundermark, Berlin.  
 L Gosewitz.  
 Mar 14 – Apr *Danische Skulptur im 20*[ex], Jahrhundert Wilhelm-Lehmbruck-Museum, Duisburg.  
 P Kirkeby, A Koepecke.  
 Mar *Musica Iconologos*[pf] Roulet, 228 West Broadway, New York.  
 B Held, Shao-Chin, Y Tone.  
 Apr 17 – May *Block Sculptures*[ex], Mosaic Reliefs, Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 R Gerlovin, V Gerlovin.  
 May 16 – Jun *Danische Skulptur im 20*[ex], Jahrhundert, Städtisches Museum, Flensburg.  
 P Kirkeby, A Koepecke.  
 Jun *Philip Corner Performance*[pf] Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin.  
 Cologne.  
 P Corner.  
 Jul 4 – Sept 22 *Ben*[ex], Galerie d'Art, Contemporain des Musées de Nice.  
 B Vautier.  
 Jun *Festival of Fantastics*[pf], Kulturhuset, Roskilde, Denmark.  
 E Williams.  
 Jul 6 – Sept 22 *Vom Klang der Bilder. Die Musik in der Kunst des 20 Jahrhunderts*[ex], Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.  
 J Beuys, G Brecht, E Brown, J Cage, P Corner, R Filliou, Gosewitz, D Higgins, NJ Paik, B Patterson, D Rot, G Ruhm, E Williams, LM Young.  
 Aug 28 – Sept *Misikobjekte*[pf], Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin.  
 Cologne.  
 J Jones.  
 Sept *Collaborations: Pioneer Performance Artists*[pf], The Alternative Museum, New York.  
 E Andersen, B Buzak, J Dupuy, S Filko, P Frank, K Friedman, J Halbert, G Hendricks, D Higgins, D Klienbeast, B af Klintberg, A Knowles, J Mac Low, Y Marcus, L Miller, C Moorman, B Patterson, C Schneemann, A Tardos, Y Tone, B Vautier, Y Wada, C Xatec.  
 Sept 27 – Jan 21, 1986 *1945–1985 Kunst in*

*der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*[ex], Nationalgalerie, Berlin.  
 J Beuys, G Brecht, H Christiansen, R Filliou, L Gosewitz, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, G Maciunas, NJ Paik, D Rot, T Saito, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams.  
 Oct *Fluxus Etc, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*[ex], Walter Philips Gallery, Banff.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, J Berner, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, J Chick, Christo, Jack Coke's Farmers Coop., P Corner, L Lou Eisnerhauer, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, B Grimes, B Hendricks, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, S Hyde, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Landow, J Lennon, F Lieberman, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Mekas, P Mercure, L Miller, K Millet, B Moore, P Moore, R Morris, O Mossett, S III Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, WT Schippers, T Schmit, G Sharits, P Sharits, B Sheff, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, J Takamatsu, DE Thompson, R Topor, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 Nov *Please Leave*[pf] New York.  
 E Andersen.  
 Nov *Friedenskonzert, Hamburg*[pf], J Beuys, H Christiansen, NJ Paik.  
 Nov 2 *Art Into Music Into Art*[pf], Sainsbury-Green Park Station Complex, Bath, England.  
 E Williams.  
 Nov 29 *Simultankonzert au drei Klavieren*[pf], Hochschule für bildende Künste, Hamburg.  
 J Beuys, H Christiansen, NJ Paik.  
 Dec 1 – Jan 12, 1986 *Zugehend auf eine Biennale des Friedens* [ ], Kunsthaus und Kunstverein, Hamburg.  
 J Beuys, H Christiansen, R Filliou, G Hendricks, A Kaprow, A Koepecke, NJ Paik, T Saito.  
 Winter *Zu Veil Kunst* [ ], Städtische Galerie Erlangen.  
 nd *Festival of Fantastics*[pf] Roskilde.  
 E Andersen, P Corner, G Hendricks, A Knowles, J Mac Low, A Noel, A Tardos, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.  
 nd *Precious*[pf] (Grey Art Gallery, New York University).  
 L Miller.  
 nd *New York A Stigmata*[ex] Bond Street Gallery New York. Alternating Currents, Alternative Museum.  
 L Miller.  
 nd *Fluxus Zone West. Fluxus West*[ex] Collaborative Stamp Project 1971 | 1985 [ ], Madison Art Center.  
 J Beuys, K Friedman.  
 nd *Starpeace*[pf], Music Album.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Scribing Sound*[ex], California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Earsight*[ex], Nexus Gallery, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.  
 D Higgins.

nd *Chance and Change*[ex], Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand

## 1986

Mar 30 – Apr *Objekte*[pf], Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Cologne.  
 T Saito.  
 Mar *Breath River Route*[pf], New York.  
 M Goldstein, A Knowles.  
 May 5 – Jul *100 Karton*[ex], Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Cologne.  
 E Andersen, C Ludwig Attersee, M Bartholome, C Bohmler, B J Blume, R Bovie, G Brus, H Chopin, P Corner, R Filliou, J Gerz, L Gosewitz, A Hansen, A Herzfeld, B Heidsick, A Hockelmann, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, T Kudo, M Lassnig, B Lurie, G Maciunas, M Merz, O Muehl, H Nitsch, L Novak, P Pick, A Rainer, G Ruhm, P Sharits, T Saito, K Balder Schaufelen, T Schmit, Schwegler, D Steger, E Tot, B Vautier, J Valoch, S Wewerka, G Wiegand, E Williams.  
 Jul 13 – Oct *Luxe. Calm et Volupte*[ex], *Aspects of French Art 1966–1986*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver British Columbia.  
 D Buren, R Comdas, R Filliou, G Garouste, P Klossowski, J LeGac, A Messager, M Rayssse.  
 Sept 30 – Nov *Europa-Amerika*[ex], Museum Ludwig, Cologne.  
 J Beuys, G Brecht, L Gosewitz, P Kirkeby, G Maciunas, W deMaria, C Oldenburg, D Rot.  
 Sept *An International Art by Mail Exhibition*[ex], Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Fluxus, NAME Gallery Chicago.  
 Oct 12 – Nov *Performance*[pf], Ziechunungen u. Collagen Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Cologne.  
 A Hansen.  
 Nov *Tiefeland (Beuysspit)*[pf], Teatro Olimpico, Rome.  
 H Christiansen, P Corner, T Fox, E Kretzer, W Marchetti, B Norgaard, E Williams.  
 Dec 13, 1986 – Mar 1987 *Fluxus (zbhor tekstova)*[ex], Muzej Savremene Umetnosti, Belgrade.  
 G Brecht, G Chiari, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, Z Gavric, D Higgins, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Schmit, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 nd *Lo Spazio. le Stagioni, Le Opere*[ex], Unimedia, Genoa.  
 E Andersen, G Brecht, F Conz, J Funival, I Isou, A Lora-Totino, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, M Rotella, G Ruhm, B Vautier, E Williams.  
 nd *May Pools Aktion plante abletrae for JB Fluxum*[pf], Wiesbaden.  
 M Berger, H Christiansen.  
 nd *Marian*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 E Andersen.  
 nd *Leo's Lazy Art-an example*[ex], The Printing Table, Acrylic on Canvas.  
 J Dupuy.  
 nd *Graphis 181*[ex], Pennsylvania Dutch, Acrylic on Canvas.

- D Higgins.  
 nd *Mystery Box*[ex], Wooden box with Beans.  
 T Saito.  
 nd *Play it by Trust*[ex], (Bronze version of Chess set, 1966).  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Eye Music*[ex], Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield; Serpentine Art Gallery, London; Ferens Art Gallery, Hull; Huddersfield Art Gallery, Huddersfield; Hatton Art Gallery, Newcastle; South Bend Centre, London, England.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Kunstlerbücher/Bunchobjekte*[ex], Universität Oldenburg, Oldenburg, BRD.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Frohlicher Wissenschaft*[ex] Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, BRD.  
 nd *Progetto Rosso*[ex], Museu d'Arte Moderna, Sao Paulo, Brazil.  
 D Higgins.
- 1987**
- Jan 24–Jan *Fluxus Objects, Fluxus Clothes 1966–1986*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 K Friedman.  
 May 13 – Jun *By the Letter*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 O Adorno, E Andersen, C Dreyfus, J Ducorroy, J Dupuy, C Faure, R Filliou, K Friedman, J Halbert, D Higgins, A Knowles, P Lorechereuil, G Maciunas, C Marclay, G Mathieu, L Miller, M Moneagle, NJ Paik, B Patterson, C Schneemann, W Stone, A Tardos, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, C Xatrec, LM Young, M Zazeela.  
 Jun 14 – Oct *Skulptur Projekte in Munster*[ex], Westfälisches Landesmuseum, Munster.  
 J Beuys, G Brecht, R Filliou, P Kirkeby, C Oldenburg, NJ Paik.  
 Jul Brian Buczak dies.  
 Sept 31 – Oct *Zeichnungen und multiples*[ex], Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Cologne.  
 J Beuys.  
 Oct *Performance in Connection with Fluxus 25 Years*[ex], Clark Art Institute, Massachusetts.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, D Boyd, G Brecht, J Chick, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, AM Fine, K Friedman, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, C Liss, G Maciunas, P Moore, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, J Riddle, D Rot, T Saito, T Schmit, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, Y Tone, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams.  
 Nov 5 – Dec *Arrow Paintings*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 D Higgins.  
 Dec Robert Filliou dies.  
 nd Albert Fine dies.  
 nd *Fluxus Galleria Chise*[ex], Genoa.  
 G Chiari, B Vautier.  
 nd *Fluxus Academia di Brera*[ex], Milan.  
 G Chiari, B Vautier.  
 nd *Chernoby*[pf], Foundation Danae, Pouilly.  
 J Dupuy.
- nd *Aspects of Conceptualism in American Art*[ex], Avenue B Gallery, New York.  
 L Miller.  
 nd *Metaphysics*[ex], Piezo Electric Gallery, New York.  
 L Miller.  
 nd *Finger Book*[ex].  
 A Knowles.  
 nd *Fluxus Cartoon*[ex], Enlarged, found cartoon with text altered(originally 1981).  
 B Watts.  
 nd *Zauber der Medusa*[ex], KünstlerhausWien, Wien, Austria  
 Institutet for Studiet af Konst, Stockholm, Sweden.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Maibaum*[ex], Harlekin Art, Wiesbaden, BRD.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *A Show of Text in Art*[ex], Emily Harvey Artworks, New York.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Auf ein Wort*[ex], Gutenberg Museum, Mainz, BRD.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *La Poesia visiva Internazionale*[ex], Centro Culturale Belvedere, S Lucio Caserta, Italy.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *PoArts*[pf], BACA Downtown, Brooklyn, New York.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *buchstabilich wortlich/wortlich buchstablich*[ex], Nationalgalerie, Berlin.  
 M Glasmeier, D Higgins.  
 nd *Book in Art Form*[ex], Alvar Aalto Museum, Jyväskylä, Finland  
 D Higgins.
- 1988**
- Jan 6 – Feb *Venus Vectors and Infinity Kisses*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 C Schneemann.  
 Jan 13 – Mar *Fluxus and Friends*[ex], University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, Iowa.  
 G Altorjay, E Andersen, Ay-O, G Baruchello, J Beuys, D Boyd, G Brecht, M Cazzaza, J Chick, J Coke, W Feelsch, R Filliou, A M Fine, K Friedman, K Groh, R Hamilton, B (Forbes) Hendricks, G Hendricks, D Higgins, EF Higgins III, D Det Hompson, T Iimura, R Johnson, M Knizak, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, G Maciunas, T Mew, E Milman, Uncle Don Miliken, O Mosset, S III Oldenbourg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Riddle, D Rot, G Ruhm, F Schwegler, G Sharits, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, K Staek, G Sweigart, A Thomkins, E Tot, F Truck, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, St Wewerka, Zaj.  
 Feb 12 – Mar *Extended Play*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 The Beatles, J Cage, J Dupuy, K Friedman, H Gobel, J Goldstein, G Flash, R I P Hayman, K Herc, S Hisachila, Y Klein, M Knizak, A Koepcke, P Sobieralski Nathan, NJ Paik, F Palaia, M Pezzati, L Stevens, S Prina, E Radique, L Reed, B Rice, W Schmeiser, F Ertl, S Sherman, D Todliiche Doris, M Turner, T Ulrichs,
- B Vautier, B Watts, LM Young, M Zazeela.  
 Feb 30 – Mar *Video Art: Expanded Forms*[ex], Whitney Museum, Equitable Center.  
 J Barry, J Jonas, S Kubota, M Lucier, NJ Paik, C Royston, B Schwartz.  
 March 9 – Apr *Made in Finland*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 K Friedman.  
 Apr 14 – May *Earthly Works*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 L Miller.  
 May 25 – Jun *YPUDU Anagramatics*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 J Dupuy.  
 Jun *Robert Filliou Memorial Celebration*[pf], Danae Festival, Pouilly.  
 E Andersen, J Blaine, G Brecht, H Chopin, F Conz, C Dreyfus, J Dupuy, E Ferrer, M Filliou, M Giroud, B Heidsick, G Hendricks, Dorothy Ianone, R Martell, H Martin, Orlin, E Williams.  
 Jul 15 – Aug *A La Lettre*[ex], Salle Communale de Vieux Pierrfeu. Organised by Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 O Adorno, E Andersen, C Dreyfus, J Ducorroy, J Dupuy, C Faure, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, J Halbert, D Higgins, A Knowles, P Lerochereuil, G Maciunas, C Marclay, G Mathieu, L Miller, M Moneagle, NJ Paik, B Patterson, C Schneemann, W Stone, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, LM Young, M Zazeela.  
 Sept Robert Watts dies.  
 Sept 19 – Oct *Performance, Objekte*[ex], Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Cologne.  
 A Knowles.  
 Sept 23 – Oct *Ordinary Life*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 B Patterson.  
 Oct *FLUXUS the Last event of Robert Watts*[ex], Martins Creek, Pennsylvania.  
 V Albanese, B Beccio, J Chang, B Daily, S Smith Duffy, L Forti, K Friedman, D Froese, A Goldblatt, A Hahn, J Handelsman, G Hendricks, K Hines, H Hungria, J Jones, D Kennell, P Kraft, S Lisheron, J Merewether, L Miller, B Patterson, F Piriano, A Porier, EA Racette, S Seagull, B Seagull, L Steelnik, G Von Bismark, P Wharton, H Wong.  
 Oct *LO LAMENTAMOS: FUERA DE SEVICIO*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 E Andersen.  
 Nov 1988 – Mar 10, 1989 *FLUXUS, Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*[ex], Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Chick, Christo, F Dufrene, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, J Lennon, C Liss, G Maciunas, L Miller, K Millet, P Moore, S III Oldenbourg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, C Philpot, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, T Schmit, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, Y Tone, B Vautier, W Vostell,

- Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams.  
Dec 1988 – Jan 22, 1989 *EXTRA! Special Editions*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, New York Exhibition of Multiples.
- E Andersen, R Ashley, G Brecht, P Corner, F Conz, J Ducorroy, J Dupuy, H Flynt, K Friedman, J Giorno, E Harvey, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, C Moorman, C Morrow, S III Oldenbourg, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, C Schneemann, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams.  
nd *Miss Vietnam Mit Rohem Hering in Mund Oder Fluxus, Realismus und die Riga=Konejschen*[ex]. Berlin.  
V Abolins, S Kunsthalte.  
nd *Experimental Enlargement*[ex]. Silkscreen on cloth. Francesco Conz Edition, G Brecht.  
nd *Untitled*[ex]. Letter exchange with Collage.  
R Johnson.  
nd *King's Evidence*[ex]. Walnut, velveteen cushion, copper, neon bulb, electronics.  
L Miller.  
nd *Painting to Hammer a Nail in*[ex]. Y Ono.  
nd *Untitled*[ex]. Bronze Glasses.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Foundry Drawing for Four Spoons*[ex]. Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection Foundation.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Keys to the Open Sky*[ex]. Bronze version of 1967 work.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Painting to be Stepped on It*[ex]. Y Ono.  
nd *Pattern Poets*[ex]. Chapin Library, Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts.  
D Higgins, R Volz.  
nd *Otwarcie Zamknicia*[ex]. Muzeum Narodowe Warszawa, Warsaw, Poland.  
nd *Stationen der Moderne*[ex]. Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, BRD.  
nd *La Rifomulazione Quantica*[ex]. Galleria Vivita I, Firenze.  
nd *II Encontro Nacional de Intervencao e Performance*[pf]. Galeria Municipal Recreiros Desportivos, Amdora (Portugal). F Aguiar.  
nd *Homenaje a Federico Garcia Lorca*[ex]. Churrriano de la Vega, Grenada, Spain.  
nd *Oustras Escritas Novos Suportes*[ex]. Museu de Setubal, Setubal, Portugal.  
nd *Mail Art to 'Offerta Speciale*[pf]. Centro Culturale, 'Le Serre', Grugliasco, Torino, Italy.  
nd *Mid-Hudson and Science Center*[ex]. Poughkeepsie, New York.  
D Higgins.
- 1989**
- Jan 4 – Mar *Classic Modernism and Authentic Concept Art*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
H Flynt.  
Feb *Arditi String Quartet*[pf]. Kammermusikaal, Berlin.  
G Brecht, G Chiari, M Kagel, M Knizak, NJ Paik, LM Young
- Mar *FLUXKONSERT. Strykejerne*[pf]. T Arentz, E Blinn, A Cathrine Byggseth, T Fjeride, C Forfang, C Forfang, K Friedman, H Getz, T Gjedebo, J Helgland, A Johannesen, S Johansen, T Kampmann, V van Krogh, S Kruger, A Langholm, V Marnburg, Y Nergoard, T Sadberg, S Smestad, M Vikholt, R Westvik, J Winderen.  
Mar 11 – Apr 9 *S/M, 1965-1972*[ex]. Listasafn reykjavikur kjarvalsstadir, Reykjavik, Iceland.  
Mar 15 – Apr *Maps and More*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
Dick Higgins.  
Apr 13 – May *The Appointed Cloud*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
Y Wada.  
May 3 – Jun *Fluxus: Moment Continuum*[ex]. Stux Gallery, New York.  
J Armleder, J Beuys, J Dupuy, K Friedman, G Hendricks, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Knowles, G Maciunas, L Miller, C Moorman, V Muniz, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, M(Chicko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts.  
May 17 – Jun *Special Edition for Hypermetropes*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
J Dupuy.  
May 14 – Jul *Exhibition at Galleria Viva*[ex]. Firenze.  
G Chiari, D Spoerri, B Vautier.  
Jun 29 – Jul *Happenings & Fluxus*[ex]. Paris.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, J Chick, P Corner, W de Ridder, C Dreyfus, J Dupuy, G Erro, O Fahlstrom, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, O Forbes, K Friedman, R Grooms, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, P Hiquily, A Hutchins, R Johnson, J Jones, A Kaprow, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, Hi Red Center, T Kudo, J Jacques Lebel, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, L Miller, C Moorman, S III Oldenbourg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, D Pommereulle, J Reynolds, J Riddle, T Saito, C Schneemann, P Sharits, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, R Whitman, E Williams.  
LM Young, M Zazeela.  
Jun 6 – Oct *FLUXUS, Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*[ex]. Cranbrook Academy of Art.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Chick, Christo, F Dufrene, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, G Hendricks, J Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepecke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, J Lennon, C Liss, G Maciunas, L Miller, K Millet, P Moore, S III Oldenbourg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, C Philpot, J Reynolds, W de Ridder, J Riddle, T Saito, T Schmit, M(Chicko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, Y Tone, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams.  
Sept 7 – Oct *Arbeiten von 1963-1989*[ex]. Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Cologne.  
M Knizak.  
Sept *FLUXUS Milano Poesia 1989. 59*[ex]. Via Toronta, Milan.
- E Andersen, G Chiari, P Corner, E Ferre, K Friedman, M Gusti, A Hansen, G Hendricks, J Hidalgo, M Knizak, JJ Lebel, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, G Sassi, GE Simonetti, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, E Williams.  
Sept 21 – Oct *Art Does Not Exist*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
Ben Vautier.  
Sept 30 – Jun 14, 1990 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex]. Le musée sentimental de B'le at the Museum für Gestaltung, Basel.  
D Spoerri.  
Oct *Fluxusconcert*[pf], Bergen, Norway.  
K Friedman.  
Oct 25 – Nov *What Makes People Laugh*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
B Patterson.  
Dec 1989 – Jan 1990 *Fluxus & Co*[ex]. Emily Harvey Gallery, 537 Broadway, New York.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, RC J Cage, P Corner, J Ducorroy, J Dupuy, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, A Hansen, E Harvey, G Hendricks, D Higgins, R Johnson, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, P Lerochereuil, J Mac Low, L Miller, C Moorman, V Muniz, S III Oldenbourg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Perkins, T Saito, C Schneemann, L Stein, Y Tone, W Stone, B Vautier, Y Wada, E Williams, LM Young, M Zazeela.  
Dec 8 – Feb 3, 1990 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex]. Kenstler-Paletten, Galerie Littmann, Basel.  
D Spoerri.  
nd *Artists Talk on Art*[pf]. Soho Gallery, New York.  
Ay-O, P Corner, D Higgins, A Knowles, R Morgan.  
nd *Ecole Des Beaux Arts De Dijon*[pf]. J Dupuy.  
nd *Fete Our Robert*[pf]. Moltkerer Werkstatt, Cologne.  
G Brecht, J Dupuy, J Gerz, A Hansen, B Hiedsick, A Knowles, A Noel, J Olbrich, T Saito, B Vautier, E Williams.  
nd *Fluxus Is Dead! Long Live Fluxism*[ex]. Centrum Sztuki Wspolczesnej.  
G Brecht, H Chopin, J Furnival, D Higgins, M Knizak, W Marchetti, G Ruhm, E Williams.  
nd *SIGMA Bordeaux*[pf]. J Dupuy.  
nd *Wortlauf*[ex]. Galerie Schuppenhauer, Cologne.  
J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, J Dupuy, H Flynt, A Hansen, D Higgins, R Johnson, A Knowles, C Moorman, NJ Paik, B Patterson, E Tot, B Vautier, Y Wada, E Williams, LM Young.  
nd *Untitled*[ex]. Ink on Xerox.  
R Johnson.  
nd *Needle Cello: Shadow of my cello*[ex]. Plexiglas cello with syringes used to administer Charlotte's morphine.  
C Moorman.  
nd *A Short History of 20th Century Art*[ex]. Alphabet Blocks, cuckoo clock, mechanical toy, alarm bell on four panels.  
B Patterson.  
nd *Bottle Contents*[ex]. Plaster, S III Oldenbourg.

- M Zazeela.  
nd *Fluxus Objects: Bound and Unbound*[ex], Atlanta College of Art Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia.  
nd *Americans in Print/Pressendruke Amerikanischer Künstler*[ex], Gutenberg-Museum, Mainz, BRD.  
nd *Theater of Object*[ex], Alternative Museum, New York City.  
P Frank.  
nd *Broken Music*[ex], DAADgalerie, Berlin, BRD; Germeente Museum, Magsin Grenoble, France.  
Den Haag.  
nd *Fluxus Library Exhibition*[ex], Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
C Philpott.  
nd *Fluxus*[ex], Stux Gallery, New York City.  
V Munoz.  
nd *Fluxus and Happenings*[ex], Galerie 1900-2000 Paris, France.  
nd *Critical Relations*[ex], Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts.  
nd *Objects, Films Exhibition*[ex], Whitney Museum, New York.  
Y Ono.  
nd *The Bronze Age*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Galerie 1900-2000*[ex], at FIAC Grand Palais, Paris, France (and) Carl Solloway Gallery, Cincinnati.  
Y Ono.  
nd *The Bronze Age and Selected Unique Works*[ex], Philip Samuels Fine Art, St Louis, MO.  
Y Ono.
- 1990  
Jan *Pianofortissimo, Performance I*[pf], Mudima, Milan.  
J Dupuy, G Guerini, D Lombardi, D Mosconi, B Vautier, LM Young.  
Jan - Feb *Pianofortissimo*[ex], Mudima, Milan.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, J Dupuy, G Hendricks, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, R Johnson, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, L Miller, S III Oldenbourg, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, C Schneemann, D Spoerri, D Tudor, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
Jan 17 - Feb 17 *Seven Indian Moons*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
A Knowles.  
Feb 5 *Pianofortissimo*[pf], Fondazione Mudima, Milan.  
R Ashley, G Cardini, R Gentaar, W Vostell.  
Feb *Nam June Paik*[ex], Fondazione Mudima, Milan.  
NJ Paik.  
Feb 11 *Music Machines-From the Sixties Until Now*[ex], DAAD Galerie, Berlin.  
J Jones.  
Mar 6 - May 6 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris.  
D Spoerri.  
Mar 10 - Apr 22 *Fluxus*[ex], H vikodden Kunstcenter.  
M Alocco, E Andersen, J Beuys, G Brecht, H Christiansen, Christo, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, AM Fine, K Friedman, K Groh, A Horsten, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, S Hyde, P Kirkeby, BA Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, JH Kocman, T Kosugi, J Kozlovski, S Kubota, A Koepcke, G Ligeti, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, L Miller, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, K Puderson, J Riddle, T Saito, T Schmit, M Shiomi, D Spoerri, J Strauch-barella, R Topor, E Tot, J Valock, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, L Young.  
Mar 25 - May 4 *Fluxus: Selections from the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection*[ex], Baxter Gallery, Portland School of Art, Portland, Maine.  
Ay-O, E Anderson, J Beuys, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, A Hutchins, R Johnson, J Jones, B af Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, JJ Lebel, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, L Miller, P Moore, C Moorman, M Nannucci, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, B Patterson, W de Ridder, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M Shiomi, D Spoerri, Y Tone, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, L Young, M Zazeela.  
Mar 26 *Fluxus is Here*[pf], Library, Portland School of Art, Portland, Maine.  
L Miller.  
Mar 27 *FLUXUS CONCERT*[pf], Auditorium, Portland School of Art, Portland, Maine.  
M Binnion, J Cawley, C Desimore, T Diamante, D Eaton, A Klager, A Lauris, K Martel, L Miller, J Outlette, D Rocray, S Ryan, J Sandsbury, J Simmons, K Spencer, T Taylor, S LaVerdiere, J Walker.  
Apr 0 *Wolf Vostell*[ex], Fondazione Mudima, Milan.  
W Vostell.  
Apr 20 - May 19 *Games*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
T Saito.  
May 0 *Chair Piece*[pf], Venice.  
E Andersen, P Corner, A Hutchins, A Knowles, JJ Lebel, L Miller, Y Ono, W de Ridder, T Saito, M Shiomi, M Zazeela.  
May 0 - Jun 0 *Fluxus S P Q R*[ex], Galleria Fontanella Borghese, Rome.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, J Cage, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, K Friedman, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, C Moorman, S III Oldenbourg, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, T Schmit, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams.  
May 23 *Rainbow Gondola Dinner* [pf], Venice.  
Ay-O.  
May 23 - Sep 30 *Ubi Fluxus Ibi Motus*[ex], Venice.  
E Andersen, J Armleder, Ay-O, N Balestrini, G Baruchello, J Beuys, G Brecht, W Burroughs, JL Byaars, G Cardini, G Chiari, Christo, P Corner, W de Ridder, E Dietman, B Dimitrijevic, C Dreyfus, J Dupuy, O Fahlstrom, E Ferrer, R Filliou, A Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, B Gysin, A Hansen, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, D D Hompson, A Hutchins, D Iannone, R Johnson, J Jones, A Kaprow, B af Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, JJ Lebel, D Lombardi, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, V Magli, P Manzoni, W Marchetti, G Metzger, L Miller, P Moore, C Moorman, D Mosconi, M Nannucci, S III Oldenbourg, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, B Patterson, V Pisani, D Rot, T Saito, M Schifano, T Schmit, C Schneemann, M Shiomi, D Spoerri, D Stratos, A Tardos, J Tenney, J Tinguely, Y Tone, Tufano, P Van Riper, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, L Young, M Zazeela.  
Jun 0 *Carlo Felice*[pf], Theater Genova.  
P Corner, R Page, B Patterson, T Saito, B Vautier.  
Jun 8 - Sep 3 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], Musée Picasso, Antibes, France.  
D Spoerri.  
Jun 14 - Jul 7 *Fluxus*[ex], Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane.  
E Andersen, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, C Moorman, NJ Paik, B Patterson, S III Oldenbourg, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.  
Sep 1 - Oct 21 *FLUXUS*[ex], Kulturhuset, M Alocco, E Andersen, J Beuys, G Brecht, Christo, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou, AM Fine, K Friedman, K Groh, A Hansen, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, A Hutchins, S Hyde, P Kirkeby, B af Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, JH Kocman, T Kosugi, J Kozlovski, S Kubota, A Koepcke, G Ligeti, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, D Mayor, L Miller, C Oldenbourg, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, K Pederson, J Riddle, T Schmit, M Shiomi, D Spoerri, J Strauch-Barelli, R Topor, E Tot, J Valock, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams, L Young.  
Sep 14 - Oct 20 *Brown Paintings*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
D Higgins.  
Sep 20 - Oct 7 *FLUXUS*[EX], Experimental Art Centre, Adelaide.  
E Andersen, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, C Moorman, NJ Paik, B Patterson, S III Oldenbourg, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.  
Sep 20 - Nov 18 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], Museum Moderner Kunst, Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien, Austria.  
D Spoerri.  
Sep 21 *FLUXUS SUBJEKTIV*[pf], Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna.  
E Andersen, A Hansen, D Hartmann, J Jones, C Schneemann, B Vautier.  
Sep 22 *FLUXUS SUBJEKTIV*[pf], Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna.  
E Andersen, R Chiessi, F Conz, K Friedman, A Hansen, M Knizak,

- B Kowan, G di Maggio, L Miller,  
R Page, B Patterson, C Schneemann,  
B Vautier, P Weibel.  
Sep 23 *FLUXUS SUBJEKTIV*[pf], Galerie  
Krinzinger, Vienna.  
E Andersen, J Dupuy, K Friedman,  
A Hansen, G Hendricks, M Knizak,  
L Miller, R Page, B Patterson,  
C Schneemann.  
Sep 21 – Nov 3 *FLUXUS SUBJEKTIV*[ex],  
Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht,  
W Burroughs, J Cage, P Corner, J Dupuy,  
R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman,  
K Gerstner, L Gosewitz, A Hansen,  
G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones,  
M Knizak, A Knowles, B Lurie,  
G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti,  
L Miller, C Moorman, S III Oldenbourg,  
Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, B Patterson,  
D Rot, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann,  
P Sharits, D Spoerri, B Vautier, Y Wada,  
R Watts, E Williams, L Young.  
Oct 6 – Nov 3 *Fluxus Closing In*[ex],  
Salvatore Ala Gallery, New York.  
E Andersen, Ay-O, J Beuys, G Brecht,  
G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, R Filliou,  
AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman,  
A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins,  
A Hutchins, R Johnson, J Jones, B af  
Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles,  
T Kōsugi, S Kubota, JJ Lebel,  
G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti,  
L Miller, P Moore, C Moorman,  
M Nannucci, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik,  
B Patterson, W de Ridder, T Saito,  
T Schmit, C Schneemann, M Shiomi,  
D Spoerri, Y Tone, B Vautier, W Vostell,  
Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, L Young,  
M Zazeela.  
Oct 19 – Jan 3, 1991 *Robert Filliou*[ex],  
Musée d'Art Contemporain, Nemes,  
France.  
R Filliou.  
Oct 24 – Nov 21 *Fluxus*[ex], Perth Institute  
of Contemporary Art, Perth.  
E Andersen, G Brecht, G Chiari,  
P Corner, J Dupuy, G Hendricks,  
D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak,  
A Knowles, J Mac Low, C Moorman, NJ  
Paik, B Patterson, S III Oldenbourg,  
D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts,  
E Williams.  
Oct 26 – Dec 8 *The Crying Place*[ex], Emily  
Harvey Gallery, New York.  
E Andersen.  
Dec 11 – Jan 27 1991 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], St  
Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich.  
D Spoerri.  
Dec 14 – Jan 12, 1991 *A Fluxus Group  
Show*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New  
York.  
E Andersen, A Arias-Misson, Ay-O,  
G Brecht, P Corner, J Ducorroy, J Dupuy,  
AM Fine, K Friedman, A Hansen,  
G Hendricks, D Higgins, A Hutchins,  
J Jones, C Kafka, M Knizak, A Knowles,  
P Lerochereuil, J Mac Low, L Miller,  
C Moorman, S III Oldenbourg, NJ Paik,  
B Patterson, J Perkins, T Saito,  
C Schneemann, O Somma, W Stone,  
Y Tone, B Vautier, Y Wada, E Williams,  
LM Young, M Zazeela.  
nd *Detroit Venus*[ex], Cigarettes and wood-  
en fruit box.  
A Hansen.  
nd *Untitled*[ex], Map with Ink.  
R Johnson.  
nd *Circles of Confusion*[ex], Robots and  
snake dance game on metal disc.  
P Sharits.  
nd *Baste*[ex].  
Y Ono.  
nd *The Last Decade: 1980–1990–2000*[ex],  
Art Gallery San Diego State University,  
Imperial Valley Campus, Calexico,  
California.  
nd *Fluxus is Dead! Long Live Fluxism*[ex],  
Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej, Warsaw,  
Poland.  
Peter Frank.  
nd *Fluxus*[ex], Hovikodden Kunstcenter,  
Hovikodden, Norway.  
I Bloom.  
nd *Transport/Transit Junctions*[pf], Palth-  
huis, Oldenzaal, Netherlands.  
J de Groot.  
nd *Neo-da da at Mas*[ex], Mid-Hudson  
Arts and Science Center, Poughkeepsie,  
New York.  
Billy Name.  
nd *Fluxus S P Q R*[ex], Galleria Fontana  
Borghese, Rome, Italy.  
F Conz.  
nd *21e Poetry International Rotterdam*[ex],  
De Doelen, Rotterdam Netherlands.  
F Conz.  
nd Esposizione Internazionale de Arte Postal  
en Granada/Homenaje a Federico García  
Lorca, Centro Cultural la General,  
Granada, Espana.  
nd *Mail Art*[pf], Cork Cumber Festival,  
Cork, Ireland  
nd *Landschaft II*[ex], Gesellschaft der  
Freunde Junger Kunst, Baden-Baden,  
BRD.  
nd *Visualog 3*[ex], San Luis Obispo,  
California.  
K Kempton.  
nd *Visual Poetry Exhibition*[pf], Victorian  
Writers Centre, Victoria, Australia.  
nd *Pracownia Dziekankaj*[ex],m Akademia  
Sztuk Pięknych, Warsaw, Poland  
T Sikorski.  
nd *Yoko Ono in Facing*[pf], Judson  
Memorial Church, New York & Riverside  
Studio, London.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Currents*[pf], Institute of Contemporary  
Arts, Boston.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Images of Rock*[ex], Kunsthallen  
Brandts Klaedefabrik, Odense.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Broken Riffles*[pf], Cooper Union, New  
York.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Learn to Read Artists Books*[ex], Art  
Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Arte Manuele*[ex], Fondazione Mudima,  
Milan.  
E Andersen.  
nd *Painospin*[ex], Fodizione Mudima,  
Milan.  
E Andersen.  
nd *Un Anagramiste Attient de Palilalie*[ex],  
Galerie J and J Donguy/JP Haik, Paris.  
J Dupuy.  
nd *101 Skies*[pub], Frankfurt am Main,  
Germany.  
G Hendricks.  
nd *Baroque, no? In Interaction*[ex], Galerie  
Schuppenhauer, Cologne.  
D Higgins.  
nd *Music*[pf], Christel Schuppenhauer,  
Cologne.  
A Knowles.  
nd *Blue Room Cards*[pf].  
Y Ono.  
nd *Yoko Ono Fumie*[ex], Sogetsu Art  
Museum, Japan.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Yoko Ono/Insound/Instructive*[ex],  
Hennie Onstad Arts Center, Hovikodden,  
Y Ono.  
nd *La Jeu de la Ville*[ex], Galerie Art  
Attitude, Nancy.  
B Vautier.  
nd *Le Cri*[ex], Galerie Lavignes-Bastille,  
Paris.  
W Vostell.  
nd *Luffel-Tor*[ex], Schildkrote.  
W Vostell.  
nd *Wer Ohne Stunde Ist*[ex], Galerie Inge  
Baeker, Cologne.  
W Vostell.  
nd *Video Art: expanded forms*[ex], Whitney  
Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
S Kubota.  
nd *Beuys Vax 1961–1986*[ex], Won Gallery/  
Hyundai Gallery, Seoul.  
NJ Paik.  
nd *Fluxus*[ex], Institute of Modern Art,  
Brisbane.  
E Andersen, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner,  
J Dupuy, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones,  
M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low,  
C Moorman, NJ Paik, B Patterson, S III  
Oldenbourg, D Spoerri, B Vautier,  
R Watts, E Williams.  
nd *The Readymade Boomerang* [ex], 8th  
Biennale of Sydney, Sydney.  
NJ Paik.  
nd *Jean Dupuy*[pf], Ecole Des Beaux Arts  
De Dijon, Dijon.  
J Dupuy.  
nd *Emmett Williams à Quebec*[ex], Le Lieu:  
Centre en art actuel, Quebec.  
E Williams.  
nd *Emmett Williams Evening*[pf], Nova  
Scotia College of Art & Design.  
E Williams.  
nd *Fluxus subjectiv*[ex], Galerie Krinzinger,  
Wein.  
NJ Paik.  
nd *Fluxus: Beuys-Cage-Brecht-Filliou-  
Maciunas-Knowles-Koepecke-Vautier-  
Watts-Williams* [ex], Yuill Crowley Gallery,  
Sydney.  
J Beuys, G Brecht, J Cage, R Filliou,  
A Knowles, A Koepecke, G Maciunas,  
B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.  
nd *Fluxus S P Q R*[ex], Galleria Fontanella  
Borghese, Rome.  
A Knowles.  
nd *A Post Flux Look at Flux Post*[pf],  
Galerie Marlene Fric, Zurich.  
E Williams.  
nd *Inventionen*[pf], Festival Neuer Musik,  
Berlin.  
J Jones.  
nd *The Music Store*[pf], Kunstverien  
Giannozzo, Berlin.  
J Jones.  
nd *Musi from Outside. The Readymade  
Boomerang*[ex], 8th Biennale of Sydney,  
Sydney.

- D Higgins.  
nd *Brown Paintings*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.
- D Higgins.  
nd *Von der Natur in der Kunst*[ex], Weiner Festwochen, Messepalast, Wein.
- G Hendricks.  
nd *Alison Knowles*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.
- A Knowles.
- 1991**
- Jan 26 – Mar 17 *Robert Filliou*[ex], Kunsthalle Basel, Basel.
- R Filliou.  
Jan *Milan Knizak*[ex], La Fondazione Mudima, Milan and Galerie Ghislave, Paris.
- M Knizak.  
Feb 5 – Mar 2 *What's The Matter With Your Ear?*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.
- Y Wada.  
Feb 8 – Mar 2 *Fluxus*[ex], 200 Gertrude St, Melbourne.
- E Andersen, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, G Hendricks.  
D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, C Moorman, NJ Paik, B Patterson, S III Oldenbourg, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.
- Feb 16 – Mar 31 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], Musée Rath, Geneva.
- D Spoerri..
- Feb 23 – Mar 27 *FluxAttitudes*[ex], Hallways Contemporary Arts Center, Buffalo.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, A Hansen, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, J Jones, P Kirkeby, B af Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, T Kosugi, G Ligeti, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, L Miller, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, C Schneemann, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, Y Tone, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.
- Mar 15 *Flux Concert*[pf], Lafayette College, Easton PA.
- K Doornbosch, J Fast, K Martin, A Mattison, B Mattison, B Melin, L Miller, M Okaya, S Sood, E Sowden, L Tang, G Young.
- Mar 16 *Geoffrey Hendricks and Joe Jones*[pf], Harlekin Art, Wiesbaden.
- G Hendricks, J Jones.
- Apr 19 – May 24 *Fine Art*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, NY.
- AM Fine.
- Apr 19 – Jun 2 *Robert Filliou*[ex], Kunstverein Hamburg, Hamburg.
- R Filliou.
- Apr 20 – Jun 16 *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Solothurn, Switzerland
- D Spoerri.
- Apr 27 *Creative Misunderstanding*[pf], Galerie Schuppenhauer, Cologne.
- A Hansen, D Higgins, B Patterson.
- Apr 30 *The Tone Deaf*[pf], Wiesbaden.
- S Eisendle, D Hartmann, J Jones, B Patterson.
- Apr *Eric Andersen*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.
- E Andersen.
- May *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], La Fundazione Mudima, Milan.
- D Spoerri.
- May 17 – Jun 29 *Skies, Works, Performance*[ex], Galerie und Edition Hundertmark, Berlin/Cologne.
- G Hendricks.
- May 25 – Jul 7 *Was 1<sup>st</sup> Fluxus?*[ex], Kunstmuseum Winterthur.
- Jun *Ben Vautier*[ex], La Fondazione Mudima, Milan.
- B Vautier.
- Jun 8 *Sicilian Nocturne and Fluxus Concert*[pf], Atelier sur Mare, Castel di Tusa.
- G Hendricks.
- Jun 21–22 *Requiem for Anna Christa*[pf], Eschenau and Sulzheim.
- G Hendricks, J Jones, H de Vries.
- Jun 27 & Jul 4 *Two Performances*[pf], G Hendricks.
- Jul 7 – Sep 25 *Robert Filliou*[ex], Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Paris.
- R Filliou.
- Aug 15 – Oct 27 *Video Time-Video Space*[ex], Kunsthalle Basel, Basel.
- NJ Paik.
- Aug 16 – Oct 6 *Video Time-Video Space*[ex], Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich.
- NJ Paik.
- Aug 31 *The Miracle of Fluxus-How It Saved the World*[pf], Kunstverein Oldenburg.
- A Hansen, D Higgins, J Jones.
- A Knowles, B Patterson.
- Sep 5 – Oct 5 *Something Else Press, An Exhibition*[ex], Granary Books Gallery, NY.
- Sep 13 – Dec 15 *Pop Art*[ex], Royal Academy, London.
- Ay-O, G Brecht, Christo, R Filliou, H Flynt, K Friedman, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, D Higgins, J Jones, P Kirkeby, M Knizak, A Knowles, T Kosugi, S Kubota, A Koepcke, G Maciunas, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, T Saito, T Schmit, M(Chieko)Shiomi, D Spoerri, B Vautier, W Vostell, R Watts, E Williams.
- Sep 24 – Oct 22 *I am for a pluri-ethical art world*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.
- B Vautier.
- Sep 30 *Fluxfilms*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- E Andersen, G Brecht, J Cage, AM Fine, D Higgins, G Landow, G Maciunas, Y Ono, P Sharits, P Vanderbeek, W Vostell, R Watts.
- Oct *Allan Kaprow*[ex], La Fondazione Mudima, Milan.
- A Kaprow.
- Oct 1 *Fluxfilms*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- E Andersen, G Brecht, J Cage, AM Fine, D Higgins, G Landow, G Maciunas, Y Ono, P Sharits, P Vanderbeek, W Vostell, R Watts.
- Oct 7 *Fluxfilms*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- E Andersen, G Brecht, J Cage, AM Fine, D Higgins, G Landow, G Maciunas, Y Ono, P Sharits, P Vanderbeek, W Vostell, R Watts.
- Oct 8 *Fluxfilms*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- E Andersen, G Brecht, J Cage, AM Fine, D Higgins, G Landow, G Maciunas, Y Ono, P Sharits, P Vanderbeek, W Vostell, R Watts.
- Oct 14 *Yoko Ono: Film Group I*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- Y Ono.
- Oct 15 *Yoko Ono: Film Group II*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- Y Ono.
- Oct 21 *Yoko Ono: Film Group III*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- Y Ono.
- Oct 22 *Yoko Ono: Film Group I*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- Y Ono.
- Oct 28 *Yoko Ono: Film Group II*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- Y Ono.
- Oct 29 *Yoko Ono: Film Group III*[ex], Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI.
- Y Ono.
- Oct 12 – Dec 29 *Fluxus Deluxe*[ex], Pittsburgh Center for the Arts, Pittsburgh.
- E Andersen, Ay-O, AM Fine, B Patterson, C Schneemann, Y Wada.
- Nov 1 – Dec 7 *Black Hole and Rainbow Hole*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, NY.
- Ay-O.
- Nov 30 – Jan 12, 1992 *Video Time-Video Space*[ex], St Sdtische Kunsthalle, Dusseldorf.
- NJ Paik.
- Dec 13 – Jan 1992 *Music for Eye and Ear*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, NY.
- O Adorno, E Andersen, Ay-O, P Corner, G Chiari, J Dupuy, AM Fine, K Friedman, M Goldstein, D Goode, W Hellermann, G Hendricks, D Higgins, A Hutchins, J Jones, C Kafka, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, L Miller, C Moorman, C Morrow, NJ Paik, B Patterson, J Perkins, T Saito, C Schneemann, P Sharits, Y Tone, B Vautier, Y Wada, R Watts, C Xatrec, LM Young, M Zazeela.
- Dec *Shigeo Kubota*[ex], American Museum of the Moving Image, New York.
- S Kubota.
- nd *Fluxus*[ex], Gertrude St.Artist's Spaces, Fitzroy Victoria, Australia.
- E Andersen, G Brecht, G Chiari, P Corner, J Dupuy, G Hendricks, D Higgins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, C Moorman, NJ Paik, B Patterson, S III Oldenbourg, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.
- nd *Fluxus Refluctions*[pf], China Center, Berlin.
- A Neel, E Williams.
- nd *La Rate En Mere Noire*[pf], Centre G Pompidou, Paris.
- J Dupuy.
- nd *My Life in Flux-and Vice Versa*[pf], Petersen Galerie, Berlin.
- E Williams.
- nd *My Life in Flux-and Vice Versa*[pf], Kunsthalle, Basel.

- E Williams.  
 nd *Under the Influence of Fluxus*[ex], Plug in Gallery, Winnepeg.  
 E Anderson, G Brecht, G Chiari, F Conz, P Corner, J Dupuy, K Friedman, G Hendricks, D Higgins, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, S III Oldenbourg, NJ Paik, B Patterson, D Spoerri, B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.  
 nd *Mountain and Moon*[pf], Galerie Donguy, Paris.  
 A Knowles, Marianne Heské.  
 nd *Blue Cosmologies*[ex], Galerie Schuppenhauer Seeheim: Gallerie Blau, Cologne.  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Fluggefuehl*[ex], Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Knizak, Milan.  
 nd *Schwerelos*[ex], Orangerie Schloss Charlottenberg, Berlin.  
 G Hendricks.  
 nd *I travel alone*[pf].  
 S Kubota.  
 nd *Video Time-Video Space*[ex], The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul.  
 NJ Paik.  
 nd *Seven Indian Moons*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 A Knowles.  
 nd *Balance Poem No. 1–No. 24*.  
 M(Cheko)Shiomi.  
 nd *Sept Ans de Bonheur*[ex], Galerie Camille von Scholtz, Brussels.  
 B Vautier.  
 nd *Tauromaquid*[pf].  
 W Vostell.  
 nd *After Emmett: Light Poem*[pf].  
 E Williams.  
 nd *Sound Poesia Sonore*[pf], NAU Verlag, Berlin.  
 E Williams.  
 nd *A Vocabulary for Carl-Fernbach Flarsheim*[pf], Cavriago: Pari and Dispari, J Mac Low.  
 nd *Yoko Ono/Birch Monologues*[ex], Porin Taidemuseo.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *Censored*[pf].  
 E Williams.  
 nd *Edition 004*[pf], NAU Verlag, Berlin.  
 E Williams.  
 nd *Edition 004a*[pf], NAU Verlag, Berlin.  
 E Williams.  
 nd *Ben Patterson*[ex], Galerie Donguy, Paris.  
 B Patterson.  
 nd *Fluxus und Neue Musik*[pf], Kunstverein für die Rheinland und Westfalenmit, Dusseldorf.  
 B Patterson, dem SEM Ensemble.  
 nd *W/Word Games*[ex], The Artist's Museum, Lodz.  
 E Williams.  
 nd *Open Box*[ex], Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum, The Hague.  
 J Jones.  
 nd *Solar Music*[ex:pf], Kunstverien, Kassel.  
 J Jones.  
 nd *Ben Patterson*[ex], La Fondazione Mudima, Milan.  
 B Patterson.
- 1992
- Jan 18 – Feb 16 *Klang Skulpturen*[ex], DAAD Galere, Berlin.
- T Kosugi.  
 Jan 31 – Feb 29 *A Piece of Reality*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 P Corner.  
 Feb *Ben Patterson*[ex], Fondazione Mudima, Milan.  
 B Patterson.  
 Feb 2 *Inventionen*, 92[pf], DAAD Galerie, Berlin.  
 R Ashley, J Cage, Fast Forward, T Kosugi, David Moss, Carles Santos, LM Young.  
 Feb 2 – Mar 8 *Dream House Ruine Der Kunst*[ex], DAAD Galerie, Berlin.  
 LM Young, M Zazeala.  
 Feb 22 *SEM ENSEMBLE*[pf], 25 Columbia Place, Brooklyn.  
 D Higgins, A Knowles, J Mac Low, L Miller, B Patterson, Y Wada.  
 Feb 27 – Apr 12 *Video Time-Video Space*[ex], Museum Moderner Kunst, Museum des 20 Jahrhunderts, Wein, Austria.  
 NJ Paik.  
 May 7 – Aug 30 *Samling, Sammlung Collection Block*[ex], Statens Museum for Kunst, Copehagen, Denmark.  
 HP Alvermann, Ay-O, J Beuys, B Bloom, G Brecht, KP Brehmer, B Brock, M Broodthaers, S Brouwn, K Friedman, L Gosewitz, A Grotting, R Hamilton, A Hansen, E Heerich, G Hendricks, D Higgins, KH Hodicke, R Hern, A Hutchins, P Hutchinson, J Jones, I Kabrow, A Kaprow, O Kawara, M Knizak, I Knobel, A Knowles, A Koepcke, J Kolar, S Kolibal, S Kipystiansky, T Kosugi, J Kozlowski, S Kubota, K Lueg, G Maciunas, P Manzoni, W Marchetti, B McCallion, O Metzel, B Norgaard, L Miller, Y Ono, R Page, NJ Paik, B Palermo, Panamarenko, H Pitz, S Polke, G Richter, D Rot, G Ruhm, R Ruthenbeck, T Saito, Sarkis, T Schmit, Ssherman, M Shiomi, D Spoerri, A Toppel, E Tot, G Uecker, K Unsworth, B Vautier, W Vostell, A Warhol, R Watts, S Wewerka, E Williams, M Wirkkala, R Zaugg.  
 Sep 18 – Nov 14 *Fluxus, a conceptual country* [ex], Franklin Furnace Archive, New York.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, G Baruchello, J Beuys, J Cage, JL Castillejo, G Chiari, J Chick, H Christiansen, Christo, B Cleveland, J Coke's Farmers' Cooperative, P Corner, J Cortes, M Cortes, R Crozier, M Duchamp, J Dupuy, W Feelisch, R Filliou, AM Fine, H Flynt, K Friedman, J Gerz, Guerilla Art Action Group, A Hansen, B Forbes, G Hendricks, Hi Red Center, J Hidalgo, D Higgins, DD Hompson, A Hutchins, T Ichiyanagi, T Izumi, R Johnson, J Jones, A Kaprow, P Kirkeby, B Klintberg, M Knizak, A Knowles, A Koepcke, T Kosugi, S Kubota, J Lennon, F Lieberman, G Ligeti, C Liss, G Maciunas, J Mac Low, W Marchetti, D Mayor, J Mekas, H Melton, L Miller, P Moore, R Morris, O Mosset, S III Oldenbourg, C Oldenburg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, W de Ritter, J Riddle, D Rot, G Ruhm, T Saito, T Schmit, C Schneemann, G Sharits, M Shiomi, GE Simonetti, D Spoerri,
- K Staek, A Thomkins, Y Tone, R Topor, E Tot, B Vautier, W Vostell, Y Wada, R Watts, E Williams, LM Young.  
 Sep 18 – Nov 14 *Ten Years on Broadway: Fluxus 1982–1992/Fluxus, a conceptual country* [ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 E Andersen, Ay-O, G Brecht, J Cage, H Christiansen, P Corner, J Dupuy, AM Fine, H Flynt, S Forti, K Friedman, A Hansen, G Hendricks, D Higgins, A Hutchins, J Jones, M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, L Miller, C Moorman, S III Oldenbourg, Y Ono, NJ Paik, B Patterson, P Van Riper, T Saito, P Sharits, C Schneemann, M Shiomi, Y Tone, B Vautier, Y Wada, B Watts, E Williams, LM Young, M Zareela.  
 Sep 19 – Oct 11 *In and Around Fluxus: Film Festival and Fluxfilm Environments/Fluxus, a conceptual country*[ex], Anthology Film Archives, New York.  
 Oct 30 – Jan 3 1993 *Block Collection*[ex], Nykyaiteen Museon, Helsinki.  
 Nov 9 *Nam June Paik*[ex], Centre national d'art et de culture Georges Pompidou, Paris.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Dec 5 – May 23, 1993 *Fluxus, a conceptual country*[ex], Madison Art Center, Madison, WI.  
 nd *Word Games*[ex], Artists Museum, Lodz.  
 E Williams.  
 nd *Because of Art I Sleep Badly*[ex] Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.  
 B Vautier.  
 nd *Ben Vautier*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 B Vautier.  
 nd *Beuys On View*[ex], Kunstsammlung Nordheim-Westfalen, Dusseldorf: Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld.  
 J Beuys.  
 nd *Yoko Ono's Promise Piece*[pf], Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.  
 Y Ono.  
 nd *UFO-OFU*[ex], Galerie MXM, Prague.  
 M Knizak.  
 nd *Zufall als Prinzip*[ex], Wilhelm-Hack-Museum, Ludwigshafen.  
 NJ Paik.  
 nd *Mit dem Kopf durch die Wand*[ex], Sammlung Block, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.  
 NJ Paik.  
 nd *Um-Lauf*[ex], Galerie Schuppenhauer, Cologne.  
 A Knowles.  
 nd *Alison Knowles*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 A Knowles.  
 nd *Fluxus da Cappo*, Wiesbaden Fluxus.  
 nd *Dream Event*[pf], Gallery M, Montreal.  
 G Hendricks.  
 nd *Ay-O*[ex], Emily Harvey Gallery, New York.  
 Ay-O.  
 nd *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], Raab Gallery, Berlin.  
 D Spoerri.  
 nd *Daniel Spoerri*[ex] Zabriske Gallery, New York.  
 D Spoerri.  
 nd *Ennmett Williams evening*[pf],

- Kunsthalle, Basel.  
E Williams.  
nd *Fluxus*[ex], Galeria und Edition  
Hundertmark, Berlin.  
G Maciunas.  
nd *Under the Influence of Fluxus*[ex].  
North Dakota Museum of Art, Grand  
Forks.  
E Anderson, F Conz, P Corner, J Dupuy,  
K Friedman, G Hendricks, D Higgins,  
M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, NJ  
Paik, B Patterson, D Spoerri, B Vautier,  
R Watts, E Williams.  
nd *Under the Influence of Fluxus*[ex].  
Istituto Italiano, Toronto.  
G Brecht, F Conz, P Corner, J Dupuy,  
K Friedman, G Hendricks, D Higgins,  
M Knizak, A Knowles, J Mac Low, S III  
Oldenbourg, B Patterson, D Spoerri,  
B Vautier, R Watts, E Williams.
- 1993**
- Jan 15 – Apr 14 La donation Vicky  
Rémy: une idée de l'art pendant les années  
70: la rigueur et la rupture: les limites de  
l'art, Musée d'art moderne, Loire, France.  
Feb 14 – Jun 6 *In The Spirit of Fluxus*[ex].  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MI.  
Feb 19 – 21 *Fluxus, a conceptual coun-  
try*[ex], Institute for Cinema and Culture,  
Iowa City, Iowa.  
Mar 27 – May 23 *Fluxus, a conceptual  
country*[ex], The University of Iowa  
Museum of Art, Iowa City, Iowa.  
Jun 13 – Oct 10 Venice Biennale.  
NJ Paik.  
Jul 8 – Oct 10 *In The Spirit of Fluxus*[ex].  
Whitney Museum of American Art, New  
York.  
Jul 14 – Sep 1 *Fluxus, a conceptual  
country*[ex], Montgomery Museum of Fine  
Arts, Montgomery, Alabama.  
Sep 23 – Dec 5 *Fluxus, a conceptual  
country*[ex], Mary and Leigh Block Gallery,  
Northwestern University, Evanston,  
Illinois.  
Sep 24 – Nov 7 *Nam June Paik*[ex], Musée  
d'art contemporain, Bordeaux, France.  
NJ Paik.  
Nov 11–29 *Novecento de Nam June  
Paik*[ex], Palazzo delle esposizioni, Rome.  
NJ Paik.  
Nov 13 – Jan 16, 1994 *In The Spirit of  
Fluxus*[ex], Museum of Contemporary Art,  
Chicago.  
Nov *Nam June Paik*[ex], Newport Harbor  
Art Museum, Newport, Calif.  
NJ Paik.  
Nov *Yoko Ono*[ex], Shoshana Wayne  
Gallery, Santa Monica, Calif.  
Y Ono.  
nd *Joseph Beuys*[ex], Museum of Modern  
Art, New York.  
J Beuys.  
nd *Joseph Beuys*[ex], Dia Art Center, New  
York.  
J Beuys.  
nd *Genetic Code Certificate*.  
L Miller.  
nd *Video's body*[ex], Holly Solomon Art  
Gallery, New York.  
NJ Paik.  
nd *Surflux: more than you can shake a stick  
at*. Fluxus Festival, Chicago.  
nd *Block Collection*[ex], Listasafn
- reykjavökur kjarvalsstadir, Reykjavik,  
Iceland  
nd *Block Collection*[ex], Kunsthalle  
Nürnberg, Nürnberg.
- 1994**
- Jan *Nam June Paik*[ex], Holly Solomon  
Gallery, New York.  
NJ Paik.  
Feb 18 – Apr 17 *In The Spirit of Fluxus*[ex].  
Wexner Center for the Visual Arts,  
Columbus, Ohio.  
Mar *Jean Dupuy*[ex], Galerie Donguy,  
Paris.  
J Dupuy.  
Mar *Joseph Beuys*[ex], Kunsthau, Zurich.  
J Beuys.  
Apr *Daniel Spoerri*[ex], Ammiraglio Acton  
Gallery, Milan.  
D Spoerri.  
Apr *Thomas Schmit*[ex], Micheal Werner  
Gallery, New York.  
T Schmit.  
May 12 – Jul 24 *In The Spirit of Fluxus*[ex].  
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,  
San Francisco.  
May *Joseph Beuys: Photographic docu-  
ments*[ex], Ehlers Caudill Gallery, Chicago.  
J Beuys.  
Spr *Fluxus*[ex], Queensland Art Gallery,  
Brisbane, Australia.  
Jun *All Ways At Once. In the Spirit of  
Fluxus*[ex], Museum of Modern Art, San  
Francisco.  
Jun *Joseph Beuys*[ex], Kunsthau, Zurich.  
J Beuys.  
Jun *Flux acts, In the Spirit of Fluxus*[pf].  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.  
E Williams.  
Jun *Flux acts, In the Spirit of Fluxus*[pf].  
Minneapolis: Walker Art Center,  
Minneapolis.  
A Knowles.  
Jun *Wedding in Denmark*[pf].  
G Hendricks.  
Jul – Aug *Une légende vivante Paris*[ex].  
Centre National d'Art de Culture Georges  
Pompidou, Paris.  
J Beuys.  
Jul – Aug *Première*[ex], Centre Nationale  
d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou,  
Paris.  
J Beuys.  
Aug 21 – Oct 31 *Fluxus*, Kunsthalle Basel,  
Basel.  
Sept *Joseph Beuys: a spotless retrospecti-  
ve*[ex], Centre National d'art Culture  
Georges Pompidou, Paris.  
J Beuys.  
Sept – Oct *Beuys un Nouveau Faust*[ex].  
Centre Pompidou, Paris.  
J Beuys.  
Oct 8 – Nov 6 *Seoul-NYMAX:  
A Celebration of Art Without Border* [pf].  
Anthology Film Archives, New York.  
Oct 8 Tribute to Charlotte Moorman [pf].  
Washington Square Park.  
NJ Paik.  
Oct 9 Fluxus Reunion Program #1[pf].  
Courthouse Theater.  
A Knowles, W de Ritter (in absentia).  
B Patterson, L Miller, E Anderson, Ay-O,  
G Hendricks, S Kubota, V Bakaitis,  
K Millet, S Gilbert.  
Oct 12 Fluxus Reunion Program #2[pf].  
Courthouse Theater.  
K Pedersen (in absentia), L Litt,  
H Christiansen, M Shiomi, Y Wada,  
A Kaprow (in absentia), K Friedman,  
P Corner and P Neville, J Mac Low and  
Anne Tardos, J Perkins, Y Tone.  
Oct 13 *Fluxus Performance*, Courthouse  
Theater.  
M Shiomi, Ay-O, A Kaprow (in absentia).  
Oct 14 *Fluxus Performance*, Courthouse  
Theater.  
S Kubota, K Petersen (in absentia).  
J Dupuy, K Millet.  
Oct 16 Following (Toward A Full Moon).  
Courthouse Theater.  
G Hendricks.  
Oct 18 *Fluxus Performance*, Courthouse  
Theater.  
Y Wada.  
Performance: I am the first Norwegian in  
my Family, Courthouse Theater.  
K Friedman.  
Oct 19 Fluxus Performance. Courthouse  
Theater.  
B Patterson.  
Oct 22 Reception, Lobby Anthology Film  
Archives.  
C Schneemann, S Cha Hong, S Ock Lee,  
A Greenfield, H Ja Kim, W Lew,  
A Knowles.  
Fluxus Performance, Courthouse Theater.  
E Andersen.  
Oct 23 *Collective Work in Progress*, 1994.  
Courthouse Theater.  
J Mac Low, A Tardos.  
Oct 26 Time Compression, 1965–94  
featuring rare video-films (1965–72)  
including Electronic Moon with Paik on  
piano; First Woodstock Festival; and  
Trisha Brown; also tapes by Yalkut in  
Lobby.  
J Yalkut, NJ Paik.  
Nov 1 Fluxus Performance[pf], Courthouse  
Theater.  
W de Ritter.  
Tribute to Charlotte Moorman[pf].  
Courthouse Theater.  
NJ Paik, S Forti.  
Nov 2 Fluxus Performance[pf], Courthouse  
Theater.  
D Higgins.  
Fluxus Performance[pf], Courthouse  
Theater.  
L Miller.  
Nov 6 Fluxus Performance[pf], Courthouse  
Theater.  
A Knowles.  
Ear/Body, Courthouse Theater.  
P Corner and P Neville.  
Nov 1 – Jan 15, 1995 *Electronic Super  
Highway: Nam June Paik in the 90's*[ex].  
Fort Lauderdale Museum, Fort  
Lauderdale.  
NJ Paik.  
Nov 4 – Jan 1, 1995 *Neo-Dada, Redefining  
Art, 1958–1962*[ex], Scottsdale Center for  
the Arts, Scottsdale, AZ.  
Arman, G Brecht, A Kaprow, E Kienholz,  
C Oldenburg, R Rauschenburg, N de  
Saint Phalle, D Spoerri, B Vautier, et al.  
Nov 6 – Feb 26, 1995 *Duchamp's Leg*[ex].  
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.  
Nov 9 – Jan 23, 1995 *Hors Limites: l'art et  
la vie 1952–1994*[ex], Centre Pompidou,  
Paris.  
A Kaprow, G Brecht, NJ Paik, B Vautier,

W Vostell, LM Young, D Spoerri.  
 J Beuys, et al.  
 Nov 17 – Jan 21, 1995 *In The Spirit of Fluxus*[ex], Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona, Spain.  
 nd *Half a Hat*[pf].  
 D Higgins.  
 nd *Fluxconcert-online*[pf].  
 G Maciunas.  
 nd *Proposed R and R Evenings*[pf].  
 G Maciunas.  
 nd *Flux*[ex], GM, Stalingrad.  
 NJ Paik.  
 nd *Cards*[pf].  
 B Patterson.  
 nd *Hooked*[pf].  
 B Patterson.  
 nd *Christmas Dinner*[pf].  
 T Saito.  
 nd *A Dream*[pf].  
 T Saito.  
 nd *Das Muller Und Fein Kind*[pf].  
 Schaufelhaus, Dusseldorf.  
 D Spoerri.  
 nd *Disappearing Music for Face*[pf].  
 Fluxus, New York.  
 G Maciunas.  
 nd *Flux-adder*[pf], Fluxus, New York.  
 G Maciunas.  
 nd *Mask Anatomical Face*[pf], Fluxus, New York.  
 G Maciunas.  
 nd *Mask Grotesque Face*[pf], Fluxus, New York.  
 G Maciunas.

## 1995

Jan 27 – Mar 26 *Neo-Dada, Redefining Art, 1958–1962*[ex], Equitable Gallery, New York.  
 Arman, G Brecht, A Kaprow, E Kienholz, C Oldenburg, R Rauschenburg, N de Saint Phalle, D Spoerri, B Vautier, K Friedman.  
 Jan – Feb *En l'esprit de Fluxus*[ex], Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.  
 Feb 18 – Apr 16 *Electronic Super Highway: Nam June Paik in the 90's*[ex], Indianapolis Museum, Indianapolis, Indiana.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Feb 25 *Three Telephone Events*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 G Brecht.  
 Mar 25 *Danger Music Number Seventeen*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 D Higgins.  
 Apr *Fluxuat nec mergitur. L'esprit de Fluxus*[ex], MAC Galeries Contemporaines des Musees de Marseille, Marseille.  
 Apr 29 *Nothing*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 B Vautier.  
 May 27 *Lighting Piece*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 Y Ono.  
 May *Quand Fluxus dynamitait l'art*[ex], Musées d'Art Contemporain, Marseille, Marseilles.  
 May *Fluxus et les nouveaux réalistes*[ex], Kunsthalle, Hamburg.  
 May – Jul *Wollt Ihr das totale Leben?, Fluxus und Agit-Pop der 60er Jahre in Aachen*[ex], Aachener Kunstverien.  
 May 26 – Sep 2 *Science and the Artist's*

*Book Part Two, QUADRANT A: Meditation on Tycho Brahe*[ex].  
 Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, DC.  
 G Hendricks.  
 Jun 3 *Guitar Piece*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 R Page.  
 Jul 7 – Sep 7 *Neo-Dada, Redefining Art, 1958–1962*[ex], Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston.  
 Arman, G Brecht, A Kaprow, E Kienholz, C Oldenburg, R Rauschenburg, N de Saint Phalle, D Spoerri, B Vautier, et al.  
 Jul 29 *For La Monte Young*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 E Williams.  
 Jul 30 – Oct 1 *Electronic Super Highway: Nam June Paik in the 90's*[ex], Columbus [Ohio] Museum, Columbus.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Aug 26 *566 For Henry Flynn*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 LM Young.  
 Sep 30 *Solo For Conductor*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 G Maciunas.  
 Sept *Nam June Paik*[ex], Holly Solomon Gallery, New York.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Oct 6 – Dec 3 *Neo-Dada, Redefining Art, 1958–1962*[ex], Tufts University Art Gallery, Medford, Mass.  
 Arman, G Brecht, A Kaprow, E Kienholz, C Oldenburg, R Rauschenburg, N de Saint Phalle, D Spoerri, B Vautier, et al.  
 Oct 28 *Proposition*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 A Knowles.  
 Nov 1 – Jan 15, 1996 *Electronic Super Highway: Nam June Paik in the 90's*[ex].  
 Museum of American Art of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Nov 17 – May 28, 1996 *Science and the Artist's Book Part Two, QUADRANT/A Meditation on Tycho Brahe* [ex].  
 Smithsonian Institution Libraries Exhibition Gallery, Washington, DC.  
 G Hendricks.  
 Nov 25 *Empaquetage Pour Christo*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 K Friedman.  
 Dec 2 *Concerto For Audience By Audience*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 95, New York.  
 Dec – Mar 1996 *Biennale de Lyon*[ex], Musée d'Art Contemporain, Lyon, France.  
 NJ Paik, W Vostell, et al.  
 nd A Hansen Died.

## 1996

Jan 5 – Mar 3 *Neo-Dada, Redefining Art, 1958–1962*[ex], Florida International University Art Museum, Miami.  
 Arman, G Brecht, A Kaprow, E Kienholz, C Oldenburg, R Rauschenburg, N de Saint Phalle, D Spoerri, B Vautier, et al.  
 Jan 23 – Feb 25 *International Art Movement FLUXUS*[ex], Contemporary Art Center, Vilnius.  
 Jan 27 [pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York  
 Stamp Art Gallery, San Francisco.

B Vautier.  
 Feb 24 [pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York  
 Stamp Art Gallery, San Francisco.  
 R Watts.  
 Feb 28 – Mar 6 *Electronic Super Highway: Nam June Paik in the 90's*[ex].  
 San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Mar 7 – Mar 28 *Nam June Paik Video Festival*[ex], Dayton Visual Arts Center, Dayton.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Mar 23 *Telephone Clock*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 K Friedman.  
 Mar *Al Hansen*[ex], Gracie Mansion Gallery, New York.  
 A Hansen.  
 Mar *Yoko Ono*[ex], Uba Gallery, New York.  
 Y Ono.  
 Apr 26 – June 1 *Daniel Spoerri Recent Works*[ex], Zabriskie Gallery, New York.  
 D Spoerri.  
 Apr 27 *Curtain II*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 B Vautier.  
 Hall of Mirrors: Art and Film since 1945[ex], Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles.  
 P Sharits.  
 May 2 – Aug 2 *Video is Ghost of Yourself*[ex], Lance Fung Fine Art, New York.  
 S Kubota.  
 May 25 *String Piece*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 A Knowles.  
 May – Jun 22 *More than Fluxus*[ex], Ubu Gallery, New York.  
 G Maciunas.  
 Jun 1 – Sep 8 *Electronic Super Highway: Nam June Paik in the 90's*[ex], San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego.  
 NJ Paik.  
 Jun 22 *Opera Instruction*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 E Anderson.  
 Jul 27 *Fluxversion I*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 M(Chieko)Shiomi.  
 Aug 24 *Introduction*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 G Brecht.  
 Sep 16 – Jan 2, 1997 *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show*[ex], Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.  
 Y Ono.  
 Sep 28 *Long Jump*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 L Miller.  
 Oct 26 *Wee*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 B Vautier.  
 Nov 23 *Ice Cream Piece*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 AM Fine.  
 Dec 7 *Wind Music*[pf].  
 fLuXiEsT 96, New York.  
 M(Chieko)Shiomi.  
 Dec 1 – Dec 15 *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show*[ex], Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
 Y Ono.

# A LIST OF SELECTED FLUXUS ART WORKS AND RELATED PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS

- A**
- Abron, Sueann and Kristin Hooper, ed, *Interactive Multimedia*, 1988.
- Alocco, Marel, *Des écritures en patchwork*, Nice, Z Editions, 1987.
- Andersen, Eric, *A Traveller's Item*, Zurich, Edition Gallery Howeg, 1971.
- Andersen, Eric, R Filliou, P Paschali, K Pedersen, *Divide*, Denmark, 1971.
- Andersen, Eric, *1825500-182949*, Cologne, Edition Hundertmark, 1971.
- Andersen, Eric, *Opus 43*, 1971.
- Andersen, Eric, *Finish It*, Somerville, MA, Abyss Publications, 1973.
- Andersen, Eric, *A New*, Oldenburg, IAC Editions, 1973.
- Andersen, Eric, *Waste Basket*, Cologne, Edition Hundertmark, 1974.
- Andersen, Eric, *Other Boxes and So*, Antwerp, New Reform, 1975.
- Andersen, Eric, *Pour et contre*, Nice, Ben Press, 1975.
- Andersen, Eric, *Self Portrait*, London/Stuttgart, Reflection Press, 1975.
- Andersen, Eric, *Become a Member of Eric Andersen's Random Audience*, Cologne, Edition Hundertmark, 1975.
- Andersen, Eric, *Dansk Raderforening*, 1979.
- Andersen, Eric, *PS*, 1979.
- Andersen, Eric, *DRESS*, Copenhagen, 1352 Edition, 1980.
- Andersen, Eric, *EA*, Berlin, Rehfeldt Edition, 1980.
- Andersen, Eric, *Strauss*, Heidelberg, Edition Staeck, 1980.
- Andersen, Eric, *Bricks*, Copenhagen, 1352 Edition, 1981.
- Andersen, Eric, *Lawn*, Copenhagen, 1352 Edition, 1981.
- Andersen, Eric, *Miklgard*, Copenhagen, 1352 Edition, 1981.
- Andersen, Eric, *The Twelve Commandments*, Verona, Sarenco, 1981.
- Andersen, Eric, *Hemmelighedsrummet*, Copenhagen, The Art Library, 1982.
- Andersen, Eric, *Hommage*, Copenhagen, Danmarks Radio, 1982.
- Andersen, Eric, *Badges*, Humlebaek, Louisiana Museum, 1983.
- Andersen, Eric, *Exophylla*, Copenhagen, Nationalmuseet, 1984.
- Andersen, Eric, *Joanna and Adam*, Krakow, Krzystofory, 1984.
- Andersen, Eric, *Women Today*, Rostock, Brockmann, 1984.
- Andersen, Eric, *The Pianist Hideaway*, Verona, Editions F, Conz, 1985.
- Andersen, Eric, *Schutzengel Aktiv-Passiv/Ange Gardien Actif-Passif/Gardien Active-Passive/Angelo Custade Activo-Passivo*, Cologne, Edition Hundertmark, 1985.
- Andersen, Eric, *Hommage Heidelberg*, Edition Staeck, 1986.
- Andersen, Eric, *Tryk Morgens*, Sandberg, 1989.
- Andersen, Eric, *Arte Manuale*, Milan, Fondazione Mudima, 1990.
- Andersen, Eric, *Pianospin*, Milan, Fondazione Mudima, 1990.
- Andersen, Eric, *Andersen, Eric*, New York, Emily Harvey Gallery, April 1991.
- Anon, *It's an Old Story*, Collumpton, Beau Geste Press, 1974.
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# The Fluxus Reader

Fluxus began in the 1950s as a loose, international community of artists, architects, composers and designers. By the 1960s, Fluxus had become a laboratory of ideas and an arena for artistic experimentation in Europe, Asia and the United States. Described as 'the most radical and experimental art movement of the 1960s', Fluxus challenged conventional thinking on art and culture for over four decades. It had a central role in the birth of such key contemporary art forms as concept art, installation, performance art, intermedia and video. Despite this influence, the scope and scale of this unique phenomenon have made it difficult to explain Fluxus in normative historical and critical terms. *The Fluxus Reader* offers the first comprehensive overview on this challenging and controversial group.

*The Fluxus Reader* is written by leading scholars and experts from Europe and the United States. It is edited by Ken Friedman, a Fluxus artist as a sixteen-year-old university student in 1966 and now Associate Professor of Leadership and strategic design at the Norwegian School of Management, Oslo, where he also directs the Nordic Center for Innovation.

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