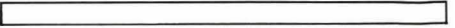


FLUXUS!

INSTITUTE
OF
MODERN
ART



curated by **Nicholas Zurbrugg,**
Francesco Conz, Nicholas Tsoutas



June 14 to July 7 1990

INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART

The Institute of Modern Art would like to thank and express our gratitude to the following people and organizations for making this exciting international exhibition possible.

Francesco Conz for his generosity and spirited cooperation in making the multiples available for exhibition. Writers Nicholas Zurbrugg, Ken Friedman, Henry Martin for contributing invaluable critical essays to expand our understanding of FLUXUS.

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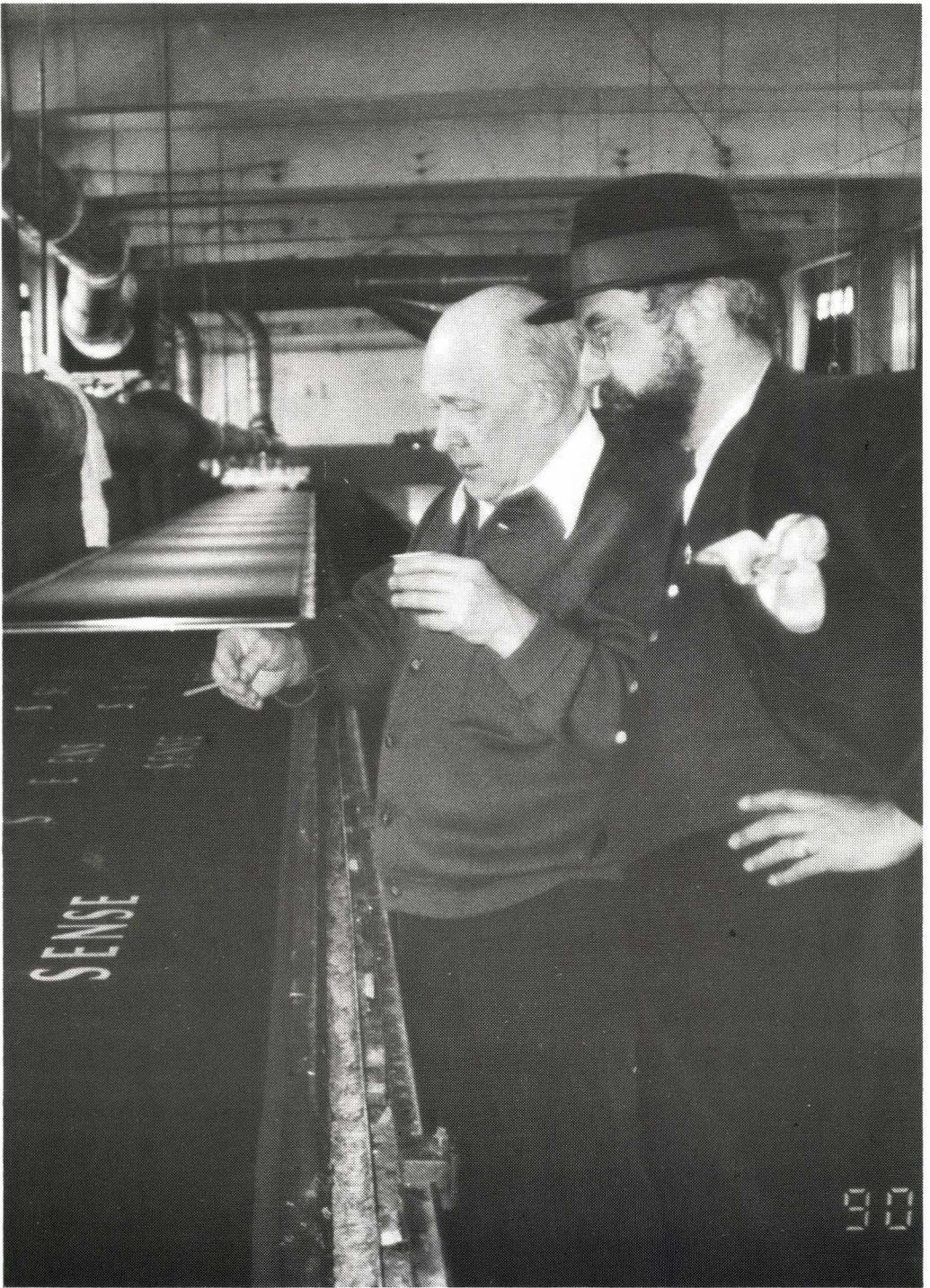
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FLUXUS!

**Eric Andersen
George Brecht
Giuseppe Chiari
Philip Corner
Jean Dupuy
Geoff Hendricks
Dick Higgins
Joe Jones
Milan Knizak
Alison Knowles
Jackson MacLow
Charlotte Moorman
Nam June Paik
Ben Patterson
Serge Ill
Daniel Spoerri
Ben Vautier
Bob Watts
Emmett Williams**

FLUXUS!

**AN EXHIBITION OF TEXTILE-ART MULTIPLES
PUBLISHED BY EDITIONS FRANCESCO CONZ
CURATED BY NICHOLAS ZURBRUGG,
FRANCESCO CONZ AND NICHOLAS TSOUTAS**



Emmett Williams and Francesco Conz *Self Portrait*

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.

— Dick Higgins

A FLUXOGRAPHIC AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Francesco Conz

This year I'll be 55 years old. During the first twenty years of my life deep in the heart of the Province of Padua, I tried to do what my family expected of me. I was sent to the Catholic University of Milan to study economics and business. Before me lay the life of a son of a good middle-class family with traditional and religious values. Then, quite suddenly - for reasons too complicated to describe here - I broke off my studies and left with all my belongings. It was the notorious post-adolescent crisis.

I toured Europe, endeavoured to do whatever my family did not expect of me. Trained to command, I put my hand to every imaginable trade and learned to obey. I learned many languages of words and of things. A passion for culture led me into innumerable galleries, museums, and libraries. I had entered upon the difficult path of the self-made man.

Half-way through the sixties, I returned to my little town of origin, pitied by all, including my family, because I had not made my fortune abroad - in those days, when someone returned, he did so showing off a fancy automobile and telling stories of his economic triumphs. What is more, I had taken part in the uses and abuses of the beat generation and my views and my ways created a scandal. Son of a family of

partisans, proud possessors of an ancestral medal of courage (for one of the heroes of Garibaldi), I had incurred the family disapproval by marrying a blonde from Hamburg.

My good partisan brothers, who had never set foot outside of Italy, convinced that Germans were accustomed to devouring children, were quite understandably concerned for the continuation of my descendancy. However, my excellent sense of smell did not fail me. Nothing happened to my son and daughter, who enjoy the best of health.

Those were the years of hard labour; family business and business-family, then business, business, business.

I had begun to collect art and, like any beginner, I sought out the advice of more experienced professionals. Collectors recommended certain modern Italian academic masters. That is how conventional artists made such successful careers in Italy (but only in Italy) - with help of the Madonna and of the political parties. However, this yielded me no satisfaction at all; I had no relations with the 'masters' and took no part whatsoever in their creativity. Hence, no fun there!

In the beginning of the seventies I thought of opening a gallery in Venice and did so.

This was an addition to my life, now composed of family business and gallery. I had taken a step forward. Liquidating my former collection (scandalizing, as usual, my far-sighted collector-colleagues, who still have not forgiven me my later choices), I concentrated next on what the fashionable newspapers called 'the new avant-garde', on those artists who were assiduously published in architectural reviews and whom it was very chic to have in your home.

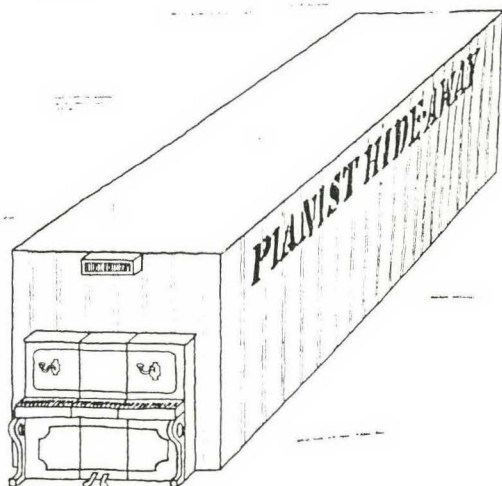
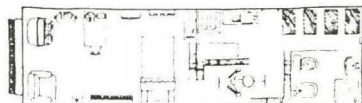
But even this situation was not satisfactory for me. These new 'masters' gave themselves incredible airs and I, a neophyte gallery-owner, had little to offer them except my money which they took, albeit with much disdain. For the second time I soon considered closing the gallery and giving up any further artistic activities. Towards the end of 1972 I had to sojourn in Berlin for business reasons, and there Saint Francis, my eponym or 'name saint' and protector against discouragement and dejection, led me to become acquainted with Joe Jones who spoke to me of the Fluxus group and of Gunther Brus, who introduced me next to Nitsch and Muchi and, thus, to 'Viennese actionism'.

Very excited, I returned to Italy and attempted to complete my knowledge of the phenomenon. I visited Nitsch in Diessen, Munich (where he was a temporary exile), and I had the good luck to meet Gerhard Ruhm, who spoke to me for the first time of the Wiener Group and of 'visual poetry'. I went home, and in a month liquidated the gallery, and my second collection.

A few weeks later, with Beate, Nitsch and Brus, we left for a trip to New York and I, well supplied with first names, family names and notes by Joe Jones, began to visit the artists who had so greatly interested me. On my return, another miracle from my Holy Protector; immediately after a televised interview, I received a telephone call from the distinguished Count Orazio Baglioni di Asolo, who wanted to meet me and offered to rent me a palazzo in Asolo. Met, agreed, done.

Now I had a worthy headquarters for my new activities, with premises on the ground floor soon to be the site of exhibitions. This was truly a magical moment in my life, and Asolo was still immersed in the memory of its former cultural glories. Eleanora Duse seemed never to have passed away and Robert Browning and Malipiero still

PIANIST HIDE-AWAY



Eric Andersen
Pianist Hide Away
120 x 170 cm, AP

appeared to be sunning themselves on the terrace of the Caffee Centrale. Those were times in which the Cipriani restaurant had its tables set with silver and linen-cloths, and the Caffee Centrale possessed the romantic aura of a Viennese meeting-place. Asolo, far from the ski resorts and beaches, had remained protected from tourism. A true paradise for artists, for me and for art.

Joe Jones established himself there (where he would remain until 1970) and it was also there that Nitsch in June of '73 created his most representative environment 'Asolo Raum'. Marvellous evenings, creative meetings, dinners in the inns of the surrounding countryside and unending discussions in the Caffee Centrale into the early hours of the morning.

Works which have become history were done there from 1973 to 1979. Many artists worked and stayed in the town - Eric Andersen, Heinz Cibulka, Philip Corner, Giuseppe Desiato, Al Hansen, Geoffrey Hendricks, Jon Hendricks, Juan Hidalgo, Dick Higgins, Milan Knizak, Alison Knowles, Joe Jones, Michel Journiac, Jackson MacLow, Walter Marchetti, Charlotte Moorman, Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch, Nam June Paik, Gerhard Ruhm, Takako Saito, Carolee Schneemann, Robert Watts, Emmett Williams and others.

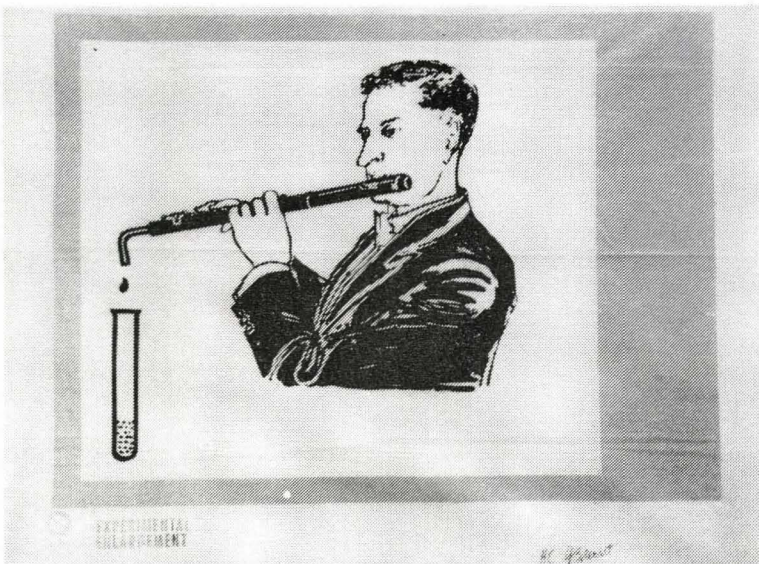
I was grateful to the photographer Jan Van Raay, who allowed me to duplicate the archive of the 'Guerilla Art Action Group' of Jon Hendricks and Jean Toche. Some editions appeared at the time under the

label 'Pari e dispari', the reason being that I was overburdened by obligations at the factory which I still owned and managed. Further thanks go to Rosanna Chiessi and Giuseppe Morra for their collaboration in those years. It would be too lengthy to describe here the Golden Time of Asolo. Of one thing I am certain; art, the universal and secret religion which should reign today, does not permit any activity outside of itself. This I have learned with experience.

But the Big Wheels rolled on. Business - in the form of my furniture factory - took up too much time. I was advised to drop art for a while. Instead, I dropped the factory and moved, now alone, to Verona in 1980, to an elegant apartment with a huge main room, on the old Piazzetta Pescheria (the 'fishers' square). This was a perfect place for feasts, and feasts I gave, renaissance style, in honour of Robert Filliou, of Robert Watts, and of others, each celebrating the artist and, of course, some new edition.

My apartment lacked growing space, it was big, but not really a working space. I moved across the Adige river, to a small building on a tiny side street, the Vicolo Quadrelli ('small brick alley'), where there are rooms for everything - studios, library, storage and even rooms for myself and my round table, where I and my artists can sit and talk and plan. Now, that's fun and pleasure. Surely, this is not my last move since the edition and my collection are growing apace.

The move to Vicolo Quadrelli has added to my list of artists such figures as Ay-O,



George Brecht
Chemistry Music: Man with Clarinet
112 x 128 cm, HC

George Brecht, Henri Chopin, Jean Dupuy, Ken Friedman, John Giorno, Eugen Gomringer, Bernard Heidsieck, Arrigo Lora-Totino, Larry Miller, Charlie Morrow, Ladislav Novak, Ben Patterson, Serge III and Daniel Spoerri. As well as this, I continue to do works by my earlier artist friends.

My production falls into four programmes; Fluxus and Happenings, Sound and Visual Poetry (including lettrisme), Viennese Actionism, and a small programme of those wonderful, innovative artists which every age produces, but who are hard to classify, who reach upper age without getting the attention their work deserves. For example, there is Sari Diennes, age 92 and going strong, whom Jasper Johns once cited as a key influence on him. Finding these artists is fun and pleasure.

Well, that's looking at it by the artist. But there are also programmes for my forms. There are a series of boxes and portfolios, works by Bob Ashley, Giuseppe Chiari, Eric Dietman, Esther Ferrer, John Furnival, Isidore Isou, Ben Vautier and others for instance. There are sculpture editions, some very large, by Paik, Moorman, Corner and others. And there are silk-screened editions of graphic works and originals on cloth, ranging in size from modest up to large. I do not know of anyone besides myself, who has explored these larger sizes; a few of these big works can turn an ordinary house into a House of Art, Poetry and Wonder.

My years in that factory, reproducing furniture, have stood me in good stead. I like to find 'the man who ...' perhaps the only craftsman in Italy, who can do this or that work, and do it well. I must spend a lot of time driving from one city to another, supervising these master craftsmen, bringing parts of projects and, with my artists, okaying others. For the most part I have worked alone or with only one assistant, so it would be easier if I could just stay in Verona and do my work by phone. But this is not my way, I like to think that the eye is all-important, that I and the artist must see everything at every stage, in order to be sure it is shaping up correctly and achieving its potential. I publish, then, the way an artist works, and perhaps this is the most important contribution that Edition Francesco Conz can make to the Art of Publishing. VERONA 30 May 1990

UNA TROMBA DA CARNEVALE
TROTOLA GRANDE
CON UN LARGO DISCO
TELEFONO
ALZARE E ABESSARE
PAR ASCOLTARE I SEGNALI
PAR
ASCOLTARE L'ORA

7 COLPI A DISTANZA DI 11 SECONDI
12 COLPI A DISTANZA DI 2 SECONDI
10 COLPI A DISTANZA DI 1 SEC
5 COLPI A DISTANZA DI
1/3 di secondo

Giuseppe Chiari
Una tromba da carnevale 1984
160 x 160 cm

FLUXEDITIONS CONZ

Henry Martin

George Brecht remarks, "Fluxus has fluxed". Ken Friedman remarks that this is what it was supposed to do. One of the channels into which Fluxus has fluxed is this series of editions published by Francesco Conz.

Publishing ventures have been typical of Fluxus, and of art activities close to Fluxus, ever since its beginnings. The spirit of Fluxus is hardly a technological spirit, but one might wonder as well if there is any such thing as a technological spirit. Technology might just as well be looked at as one of manifold odds and ends that conspire to form the modern-day biosphere in which our minds have to learn to breathe as best they can. In his notions of Fluxutopia, George Maciunas envisioned the founding of a colony of artists on a subtropical island (which turned out to be infested with pestilential trees) but he likewise envisioned an art that might be industrially produced, rather as though for cheap distribution through a mail order catalog.

Maciunas, as the voice of Fluxus, seems to have fancied that our needs for aesthetic experience could be just that frank and open, or that the need for the mysteries of aesthetic attention might itself be treated as so much less mysterious, and aired in an

atmosphere so much less polluted with social mystification. True industrial production with a calibrated exploitation of technological resources is something Maciunas never truly achieved (just as André Breton never opened his factory for the manufacture of objects invented in dreams), but he did set up a precedent for an affectionate low-toned use of the very best quality of workshop craftsmanship in the service ... well, in the service of everything Fluxus might be imagined to stand for; and whatever that may be, as always, is a decision or perception to be left up to each of us. After all, Fluxus fluxes.

Francesco Conz is very much taken with the idea of publishing works "on canvas". *Su tela*. Really, though, it's a question of a sturdy but not heavy linen or cotton, not overly fine, and rather like the cloth of the sheets one once might have found at a clean, cool and simple country inn in the hills of the Venetian hinterland - the sort of inn that serves freshly made pasta with freshly picked mushrooms and where the soups are unforgettable. Simply *saying* that these silkscreen editions have been printed *su tela* may sound like a pun on the notion of paintings "on canvas", but no such reference seems present when we look at them. The idea, rather, is that these sheets

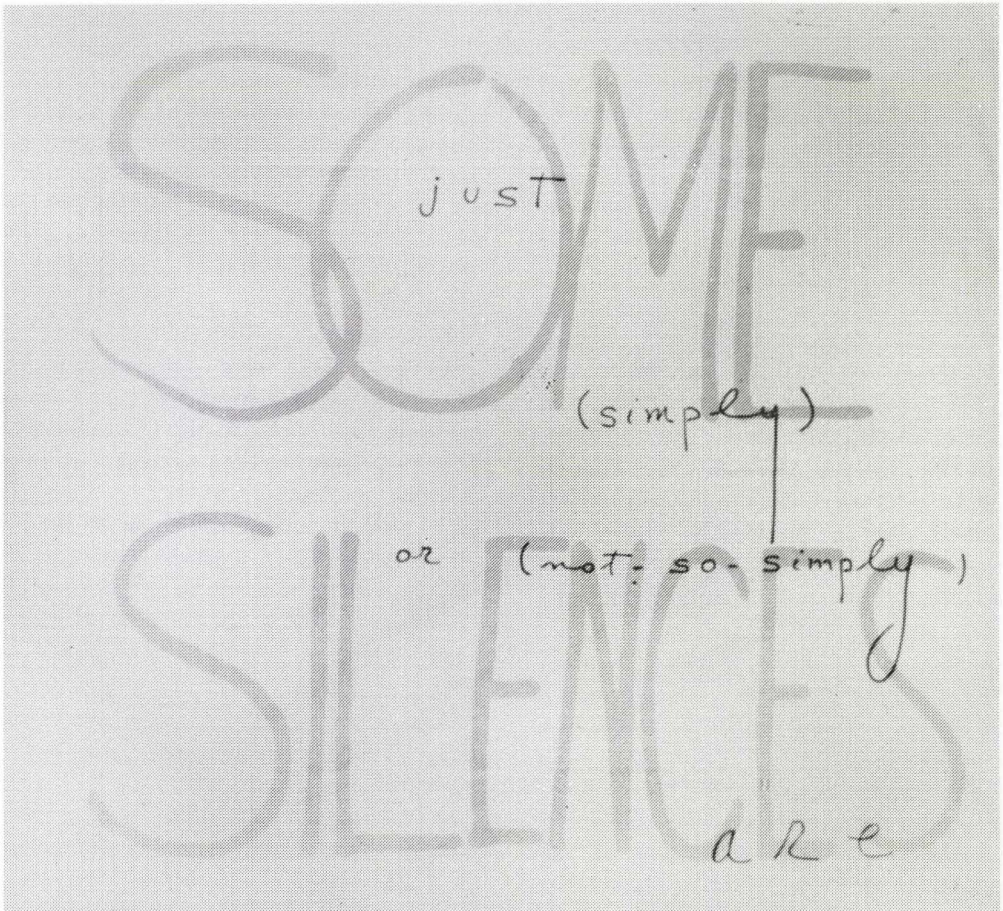
of cloth are so clearly portable.

They have been folded up and packed into suitcases, carried around the world, unpacked, unfolded, and maybe ironed a bit to get rid of creases. Or maybe not since a crease here and there would hardly seem a bother. And it's the sort of cloth where after a day or so of hanging on a wall the creases in any case will have fallen out. It's a material so much stronger and more pliant than paper, so much more thing-like than paper, so much more convenient than paper, especially given the sizes of the pieces, which is not without importance.

Fluxus has a penchant for minimal statements and for trapping ideas that bubble with fleeting effervescence, but Conz invites the artists he publishes to work quite large, perhaps to suggest that the size of their mental quirks is greater than at first one might imagine. His commitment to the manufacture of these curious sheets of robust cloth continues to insist on Fluxus as a mill less of images than of objects, now

producing banners just as Maciunas promoted boxes.

This lingering air of a possible though hardly transparent and perhaps deranged practicality goes hand in hand with how the Fluxus protagonists generally insist that Fluxus was not - *is not* - an art movement. They are interested in more than that, as though to say that simply being an art movement would be far too dreary a fate. In a one-dimensional world fueled by social and economic madness and nearly global suffering, the widely nourished hope of the 1960s for a unification of art and life sometimes stares at the spectre of the cruelest and most ironic of unforeseen fulfillments: we seem now to live in a world where art precipitates into life while life continues to flatten itself into something less than real life. Fluxus courts the practicalities of a different way of life that values and fosters awareness of its own irreducible complexity and that can think of nothing better than its further diversification.



Philip Corner *Silence* 1989 200 x 180 cm, 14/21

RETHINKING FLUXUS

Ken Friedman

1. WHAT FLUXUS IS OR WAS

Fluxus is the name of a way of doing things. Fluxus is an active philosophy of experience that takes the form of art. Fluxus stretches the word art across the arts and the areas between them. It includes art forms yet to exist and the fertile intersections known as inter-media.

From the first, Fluxus engaged areas of life not usually thought of as art. Fluxus emerged in social sculpture, architecture, mathematics, politics, dance, and music as well as in the evanescent forms that had expanded the boundaries of art by the early 1960s. When Fluxus emerged, it was radically distinct. It was not only an art form or a way of making art, but a way of viewing society and life, a way of creating social action and life activity.

Fluxus is not an art movement or a group. Most of the Fluxus artists haven't thought of Fluxus as a formal group for some time. Some never thought of Fluxus as a group. Even those who did think Fluxus was a group want to open new possibilities for work and self. Many are happy to take occasional part in Fluxus festivals or exhibitions. That's the way it has always been.

Fluxus isn't a movement, either. At least, it's not an art movement. Some of the artists active in Fluxus over the last 27 years have had styles or ideas in common, but there is no style, idea or activity common to us all. The different ways of working in Fluxus can be seen as subsets of larger phenomena.

The phenomenon known as 'Fluxus' is the larger body. The subsets reveal clusters of artists doing many things: event structures, paintings, sculpture, music, performance, publishing, architecture, industrial design, multiples, and more.

Each cluster consists of a half dozen or dozen of us. The groups intersect or overlap, but there is no single element of making or structure common to the entire group of people who have been active in Fluxus.

A look at some of the artists and their activities will show interests and intersections.

Seventeen Fluxartists were active in the creation and performance of event structures:

Bengt af Klintberg, George Brecht, Robert Filliou, Ken Friedman, Dick Higgins, Joe

Jones, Milan Knizak, Alison Knowles, Takehisa Kosugi, George Maciunas, Larry Miller, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, Thomas Schmit, Mieko Shiomi, Ben Vautier and Bob Watts.

Event structures are to be distinguished from performance. An *event* is usually spare and short, a single piece or a single idea presented over time. Fluxus events are usually recorded and transmitted by scores or event notations, often simple verbal instructions. Gestural simplicity and the use of terse scores gave many Fluxus events an identity under the term neo-haiku theatre.

Many events are brief. In the use of time and staging, they resemble vaudeville and burlesque. Emmett Williams' *On-Off* event is a classic of the genre. The piece is simple. All the lights in a theatre are turned off, on, off and on again. The piece can be done at any time during a concert, but it is often used at the start or at the end. It resembles the flicking lights used to signal the beginning of a theater piece or to summon the audience back from intermission. When it is used this way, it erases the boundaries between art and life. The piece uses the gentle confusion between theatrical art and theatre life to establish a play of complex dialectical subtleties.

Tomas Schmit's *Sanitas* is a superb example of the single idea presented over time. 64 glasses are set in a circle. One is filled with water. The event consists of carefully transferring the water from each glass to the next, without spilling any until the water has evaporated. A careful presentation of *Sanitas* can last several hours.

Milan Knizak's *Silence* event is even more stark. The instruction reads, 'Sit in silence for 24 hours. Do not speak. Move as little as possible'.

A performance may be simple or complex. It usually involves more than a single idea. It may be bound up in the personality of the artist and depend to a significant degree on the personal interpretation of the artist. Good examples of performance are seen in Alison Knowles' recent *hörspiele*, radio

plays, and in pieces such as her *North Water Music*. Knowles has moved from the event structure, a medium she helped to pioneer in the early 1960s, to performance, the genre that has occupied her since the early 1970s.

There are several kinds of performance. They include: scored or enacted music typified by Knowles or Eric Andersen; the shamanistic ritual exemplified by Beuys or Knizak; happenings, exemplified by Vostell and by some works of Higgins or Knizak; personalized, poetic psycho-drama, typified by Carolee Schneemann.

The distinction between events and performance is similar to that between music and painting. Events are scored, like music. They can be performed by anyone. Each performer may create highly personal interpretations, yet the piece remains the work of the artist. Musicians develop individual interpretations of Mozart. The music is Mozart's.

Performance, like painting, requires the hand and presence of the artist. It is inconceivable to imagine a Beuys performance without Beuys. You can perform a Knizak event, but you can't perform a Knizak happening.

The distinction is easy to understand. The events and neo-haiku theatre that characterize Fluxus grew out of music. In America, many of the first events were created and annotated by artists who studied in John Cage's seminal course at The New School. Others, especially artists with a background in music and in poetry, also came to this spare, refined medium of gesture and of object. Happenings are characterized as neo-baroque theatre, a sharp contrast to the spare line of the neo-haiku ideal. The first happenings were created by painters, and happenings have always had a personal, painterly quality.

Fluxus has been identified with the neo-haiku tradition. This is the opposite of the neo-baroque tradition, but many central Fluxus artists were active in happenings.

Personalized, even expressionist performance art grew out of happenings. A number of Fluxus artists became key figures in the development of performance art.

WHERE

SPECIAL EDITION
FOR
HYPERTEXTURE

Jean Dupuy

Where

4/8

In writing on performance art, most authors include neo-haiku, neo-baroque and all ranges of medium between those two poles within the term. So, too, in Fluxus, you can see stark, tonal performance, impersonal, spare and abstract. This form of performance is close to music and related to neo-haiku theatre. This pole is represented by Eric Andersen and Yasunao Tone. At the same time, you can find expressionist performance marked by personal qualities and richly individual intonation. Paik's sprightly gestures and Beuys' sombre dramatizations are good examples of this. Willem de Ridder's presentation of stories is somewhere between the musical and the personal. The stories are traditional. Some have been told for thousands of years, yet de Ridder weaves them into intimate performance art.

Jean Dupuy's anagrams jump back toward the musical; anyone may perform them. Even so, they are a complex art form, and must be categorized as performance works, not as events.

Fifteen Fluxus artists have been notably active in performance:

Eric Andersen, Joseph Beuys, Philip Corner, Willem de Ridder, Jean Dupuy, Geoffrey Hendricks, Dick Higgins, Joe

Jones, Milan Knizak, Alison Knowles, Larry Miller, Nam June Paik, Carolee Schneemann, Wolf Vostell and Yoshimasa Wada. Several artists have created major bodies of work in both categories:

Dupuy, Higgins, Jones and Paik do both kinds of work and always have. Knowles has moved from event structures to performance structures as a way of working. Larry Miller, an artist with a second career as an actor in film and television, creates elaborate, dramatic performances that complement his narrative and biographical art works. At the same time, his events have given us some of the most memorable images in a genre oriented toward visual memory.

Many Fluxus artists whose major work lies elsewhere have worked from time to time in one, another or both of these genres. Williams, a poet, has created wonderful events. George Maciunas, an architect and designer, organized concerts of other artists' events and published the Fluxus multiples. He also created extraordinary event structures, including the largest score ever performed, *Music for Everyman*, an implicative event structure scored as a chart. It engages the musical quality of thousands of ordinary situations,

orchestrated by category. A group of artists and musicians known as The Maciunas Ensemble has devoted itself for several years to performing an ongoing cycle of *Music for Everyman*.

Yoshi Wada's performances consist often of concerts played on his own instruments. Yoshi's performances may also be thought of as lengthy events, as music or as sculpture. Joe Jones' Fluxorchestra instruments can be used in performance. They, too, function as sculpture or as relics of the concerts played on them.

Within each genre, some artists do several kinds of work. Knizak does performances that are shamanistic works and ritual enactments. He was the major Eastern European founder of happenings. Higgins was one of the founders of happenings in the United States and Europe. He remains a major practitioner of events. He almost never creates performances. Pieces that would take on the intimate, emotional resonance of a performance usually emerge in Higgins' work in the form of poetry. Jean Dupuy creates complex anagrams that are performance texts and poetic-philosophical explorations. They also exist as large colourful paintings of texts or scores lettered on canvas.

To understand the fluid quality of Fluxus as a group, it helps to think of it as a 'dis-organization' rather than an 'organization'. Only one factor united everyone in Fluxus: we were all active in Fluxus at one time or another. The specifics, who was and who wasn't part of Fluxus, are still debated.

My view of participation (or membership) in Fluxus has changed since 1966. When I came into Fluxus, George Maciunas outlined a sweeping vision of social change and global initiative. He portrayed Fluxus as a far more cohesive group than it turns out to have been. I was attracted to Maciunas' view. In that view, Fluxus was a collective body with room for individual initiative. It was a cooperative in which all members were bound to one another in a mutual enterprise. As Maciunas expressed it, Fluxus was an organization, an organized group with members. The work of the artists in Fluxus was quite diverse, a fact

that was obvious by virtue of the elastic and fluid nature of the artists' oeuvres. It didn't occur to me that these dramatically different artists might not share the same views, either about art or about the philosophy of what they were doing.

Now, I've come to the view that Fluxus is a philosophy, a way of life, not an art movement or a group.

Fluxus once functioned as what could be called a group. It had characteristics of working organizational structure. It even seemed to have qualities that could be seen as aspects of a movement. That time is gone. Fluxus was born in 1962. For 27 years, it played a series of parts in socio-cultural life, in art and art history. Now, Fluxus has a different role, new tasks.

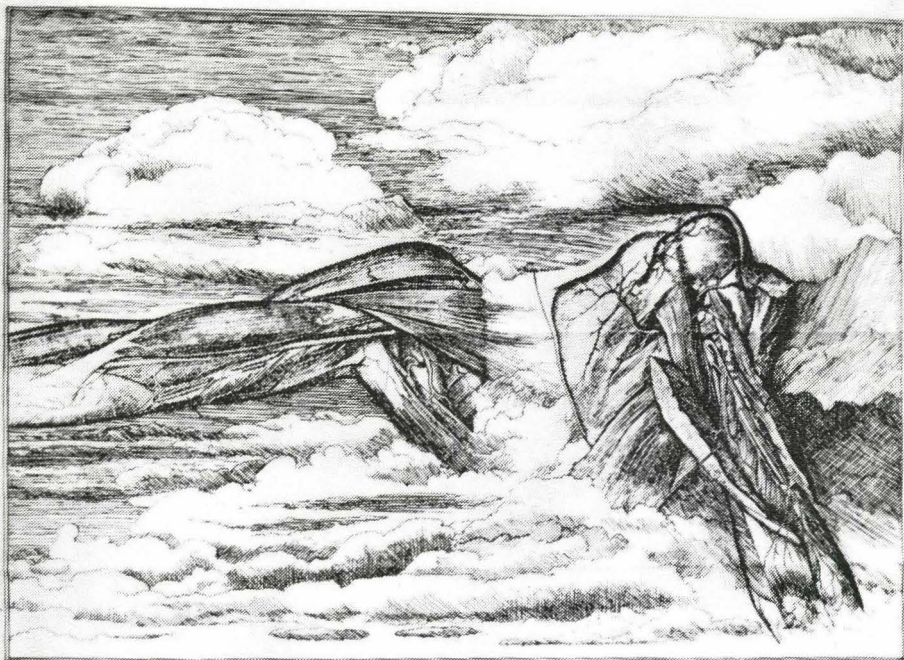
2. WHAT FLUXUS IS AND ISN'T, DID AND DIDN'T

Every few years since 1962, it's been said that Fluxus is dead, though never by us. It's one of the things said by those who speak with the voice of imaginary common sense. They were wrong.

It's easy to understand why conventional wisdom can't come to quick terms with Fluxus. Fluxus is amorphous. It's hard to understand. It has changed its shape and been redefined any number of times. Fluxus artists can't easily define Fluxus, and don't agree with one another about the few definitions that exist. It's just as hard for others to define it. Definitions, especially the definitions of art history, seem to work 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.

Fluxus is as much alive, as much in existence and in disarray as ever. It's always been in ferment and transition, as little organized as it is now, open to possibility and a new sense of engagement. The best way of viewing Fluxus is Nam June Paik's analogy to the Korean plant that seems most dead when it's about to blossom again.

Fluxus isn't dead. Some of the artists are dead. Richard Maxfield, Greg Sharits, Addi K pcke, George Maciunas, Joseph Beuys,



Robert Filliou and Bob Watts are gone. The rest of us are alive and working. But Fluxus is more than the individual artists and their work. If Fluxus is a philosophy, a way of life, Fluxus may remain after the rest of us have died, too.

René Block's distinction between Fluxus and Fluxism is valuable. In this definition, Fluxus is a specific group or movement, a collection of human beings and their work. Fluxism is the spirit they created or exemplified. Fluxism can exist independent of the individuals who became the historical Fluxus.

From the beginning there were two kinds of Fluxism in Fluxus. One was artistic, a matter of form and occasionally of function. The other was philosophical. The philosophical issues, however imperfectly expressed, were central to Fluxus' vitality. The philosophical Fluxism was a concern with social issues. The artists who defined central issues in Fluxus believed that we must give fundamental leadership in society and culture. George Maciunas, Dick Higgins, Henry Flynt, Joseph Beuys, Milan Knizak, Nam June Paik, Robert Filliou, Wolf Vostell and others enacted this philosophy by developing new forms of socially grounded art. Even artists such as Ben

Vautier or Eric Andersen, who seem to have little to do with social issues, pose valuable social questions. They frame art and culture in a new series of questions, dialectically transforming the ways in which we approach art while physically transforming the matter and media of their art works.

Fluxus has entered art history and the world of the art museum. In many minds, this fact raises questions about Fluxus: Is it dead? What does it really mean?

3. FLUXUS AND THE MUSEUM

Is there a contradiction between Fluxism and the museum? Is there a contradiction between our philosophy and the fact that we work in museums? We don't think so.

Some aspects of Fluxism and the museum contradict each other. For most of us, the museum is a useful forum for expression, as likely and as unlikely to be appropriate as a book, a television station or a newspaper.

Museums are laboratories, collections of tools: working tools, teaching tools, experimental tools. The museum should be a place of discourse and discovery. That kind of museum is the place for Fluxus.

The best museum preserves the naiveté and innocence of the earliest museum. This

was the *wunderkammer*, the wonder chamber. The *wunderkammer* was filled with what scientists called *philosophical apparatus* when physics was known as natural philosophy.

The museum can be a *wunderkammer*, a place for mind, eye and hand to work together. The museum is one place where Fluxus belongs. This isn't so because Fluxus helped to shape today's art, though that's an appropriate reason from the museum's view. From the Fluxist perspective, it's so because Fluxus and Fluxism are still engaged in cultural leadership.

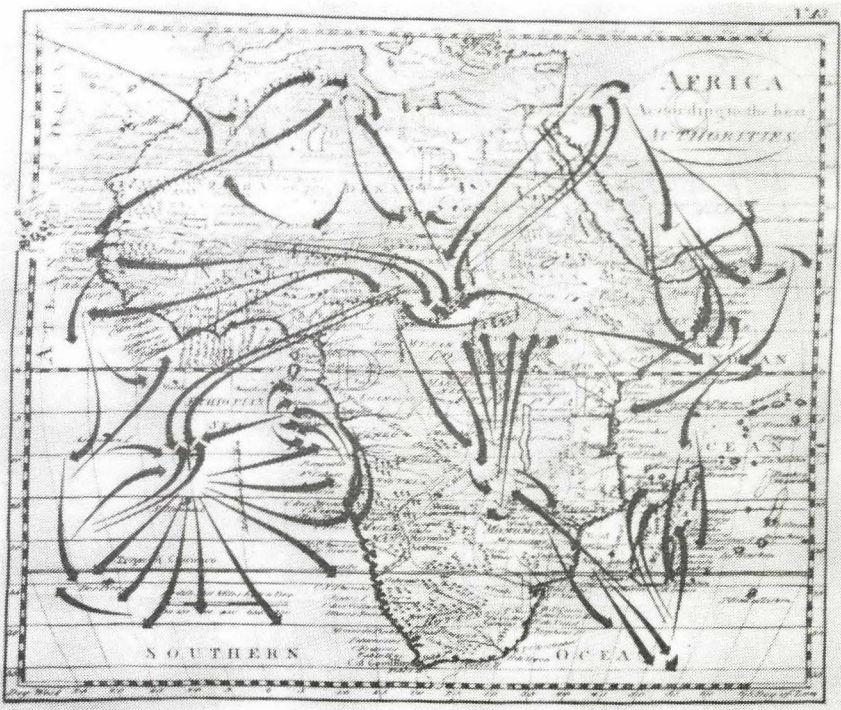
4. PAPER-CROWN PONTIFF WITH BROOM

Reading Fluxus stories is like reading Chaucer. The text is rich, lively, true to life, not polite. The stories, the projects, the relics reflect interesting aspects of an intriguing era.

George Maciunas' vaudeville pranks and magisterial diatribes were intended to sweep away the past. This was the "Sweeping-away Fluxus". That time was the gate to Fluxus. Maciunas was a visionary architect and social planner. He

called for "radical leadership in revolutionary culture". He proclaimed moral issues as central themes in Fluxus. Outsiders thought of him as Fluxus' paper-crown Pope, not the design genius we know him as today, but Maciunas' housing projects, his massive compilations of world architecture and music history, his cooperative art projects and industrial production plans were examples of the pivotal concerns of Fluxus. George often failed as a practical manager. It was difficult for him to work with people. He was severe in demeanor, too eccentric to work long and well with others. He was rarely able to carry his projects to fruition. He couldn't accept that negotiation and social dialogue are among the ways that innovative design concepts move from sketch pad to finished product program. Maciunas' manufacturing and marketing policies for Fluxus were visionary and, in part, mistaken. Fluxus boxes were designed to sell in the 1960s for prices between \$2 and \$10 each. If you counted all real costs, including labor, overhead, rent, telephone, and shipping, the boxes cost between \$40 and \$80 each to manufacture and distribute. Part of the high cost resulted from the fact that boxes were

Dick Higgins Africa 1988 255 x 260 cm, 34/50



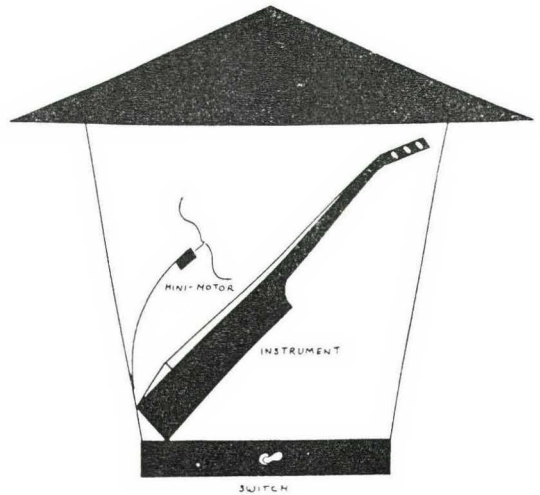
never actually created by mass production. They were series of what would normally be considered prototypes, proofs or trial runs. Each Fluxbox was handmade. Most were series, but many were unique variations on basic themes. They were hand-crafted to give them an industrial appearance.

The materials costs of each box were quite modest. If we had manufactured them on an industrial scale, the per unit cost we charged would have been realistic. Because we covered production costs, rent, utilities and overheads, Fluxus actually subsidized the customers and collectors. The art market price of Fluxus boxes now averages between \$400 and \$800 for the smaller boxes.

Adjusted for inflation, the price is just beginning to rise above the original true cost of production and distribution. These prices don't account for storage and maintenance costs on inventory, let alone the artistic value or reputational value of the pieces as a factor in art market appreciation. Given this fact, a number of art dealers are quietly buying as much of our work as they can, including old pieces and new work by key Fluxus artists.

With his interest in industrial process, Maciunas should have seen the flaws in production and price structure. But Maciunas saw Fluxus as the enactment of a principle: immediate economic facts made little difference to him. It was a choice between creating the pieces in an impossibly thin market or not creating the pieces. He often acted on the theory that a model, a living statement is an important accomplishment. Perhaps he understood the economic problems, but he was convinced that through industrial production, he would eventually create a going business in the manufacture and sale of Fluxworks. What he wouldn't understand or might have found unacceptable, is the fact that Fluxworks are now being bought and sold like paintings.

Maciunas had a sense of moral Fluxus zeal allied to his design genius. He saw, on many levels, what the world needed. His goal was to sweep away high culture and to lay a foundation for well-designed, large-



CAGE MUSIC WAS FIRST MADE IN 1963 IN HONOR OF JOHN CAGE. WHILE I WAS STILL IN SCHOOL STUDYING JAZZ, ONE OF MY TEACHERS SUGGESTED THAT I SHOULD TAKE A COURSE, THAT JOHN WAS GIVING AT THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH IN THE VILLAGE. THE COURSE WAS TITLED "EXPERIMENTAL COMPOSITION." UNFORTUNATELY IT LASTED ONLY TWO SESSIONS AND WAS CANCELED FOR LACK OF ENOUGH STUDENTS. I WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED, JOHN SUGGESTED THAT I SHOULD STUDY WITH EARL BROWN, AND GAVE ME HIS PHONE NUMBER. AFTER LEAVING JOHN, I IMMEDIATELY THROUGH IT AWAY. JOHN CALLED MY MOTHER THE NEXT DAY, TOLD HER HE HAD MADE AN APPOINTMENT FOR ME WITH EARL, KNOWING THAT I WOULD NOT.

Joe Jones
Cage music was ... 1986
 100 x 130 cm, AP

scale culture.

Maciunas opposed any affront to human dignity. He refused to accept the idea that someone might use the group without giving back to the group or benefit from the efforts of others without supporting them in mutual engagement. When artists or nations sought to stake claims on more than was their due, he protested. He was outraged by any deviation from the ethical values he felt ought to be the ground of every culture and of all nations.

As Fluxus' chairman and editor, he assumed a socio-political stance on behalf of the group. That led to many of the fractious disputes within Fluxus. George read people into and out of Fluxus continually, leading at first to comparisons with the Surrealist André Breton, and later to comparisons with the Medieval Popes. Until his death in 1978, the world regarded him as an eccentric zealot. After his death, Maciunas was elevated from paper-crown pope to hollow saint. George Maciunas was no saint, and he wasn't hollow. He's simply easier to deal with now that he can't argue.

5. IS FLUXUS DEAD?

Maciunas, Filliou, Beuys and others are dead. Fluxus, the assembly of artists, and Fluxism, the spirit, haven't yet given up the ghost.

Is Fluxus dead? To those who wish to manipulate our past, to control our history or control the market in our work, it may be. To some of us, it may not matter. There are more interesting questions: What does Fluxus mean? What do we mean by Fluxus?

Fluxus is many things. There is a quirky, eccentric Fluxus of radical humor. There is a scratchy, cynical Fluxus with 20th century corollaries to Diogenes. There is a dialectical Fluxus of philosophical austerity and rigorous thinking. There is a delicate, open Fluxus characterized more by artistic gesture than by dialectical intelligence.

Underlying all these, there is Fluxism. If Fluxus is dead, if someone else has the right to declare Fluxus dead, the meaning of Fluxus, what we meant and what we mean, is out of our hands. That's quite the

opposite of what we set out to do by creating our own ways of making art, our own ways of producing it and presenting it to the world.

If others can take over the definition of Fluxus while we're still alive, they can re-define or de-define Fluxus into something thin and narrow. Debating what Fluxus did or meant to the world is anybody's privilege. *Defining* what the Fluxus artists meant by *creating* Fluxus is our right alone. This issue remains ours alone even when we disagree with each other.

The discussion on our definition of Fluxus has nothing to do with us when Fluxus is reduced to a series of jokes without underlying purpose. There was a Sweeping-away Fluxus built on radical humor and disrespect for all the respectable bars that imprison our ideas of what art can be and what it ought to do. There was also the ground which gave birth to it, the socially responsible Fluxus.

6. THE SOCIAL FLUXUS

From the first, Fluxus sought to reach beyond the narrow boundaries of art into the larger world. We did. Social change operates on many levels, some large, some small. Sometimes small changes create long-range effects on a large scale. The effects haven't always been what we imagined.

The social impulse in Fluxus has a strong foundation. This dialogue and the sense of social engagement that is its ground have kept Fluxus vital for almost thirty years. It's likely that no group of artists since the Middle Ages has maintained a sense of community for such a long time. Dada lasted only a few years, Surrealism hardly longer. The Bauhaus and Black Mountain College survived for only a decade or so each and Cobra for only three years. Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism or conceptual art weren't so much self-recognizing groups as phenomena identified and named by outsiders. Whatever the disagreements about what Fluxus is or was, two facts are clear: we brought ourselves into being, and we still meet and work together as much (and as little) as we always have.

Few artists since the Middle Ages have been as free of national boundaries. Medieval artists traveled and worked across communities of church and humanity in preference to the narrow loyalties of princes. Their ideas of religion or of humanity sometimes seem narrow to us now, but imagine how we will look in four or five centuries. No art community before Fluxus ever drew an active, practicing membership from three worlds, European, Asian and American.

This is an aspect of the large socio-cultural vision in which Fluxus is rooted. It is expressed by some, and implicit in the work of others. It is comparable to the Medieval vision in several important ways. In the Middle Ages, artists were fully engaged in the life of their society. The advent of the Renaissance saw the emergence of a new way of thinking about art in social context. The Medieval lack of distinction between artist and artisan, artist and craftsman, artist and architect echoes Fluxus' insistence on the development and control of our own projects in the large social context. It is quite distinct from the modern view of art as something that takes place privately in a studio for purchase and consumption by an elite few or for didactic or ostentatious display by the few to the many.

We can do without the religious and sexual

the shifting boundaries of their principalities, kingdoms and empires as scholars and churchmen did. They recognized the great prejudices of the Middle Ages. The many advances in human knowledge and occasional advances in human wisdom are welcome. Artists since those centuries have sometimes maintained a healthy union between art and industry. The very notion of the Renaissance suggests it. Other artists since the Renaissance have had a wide-ranging vision across the boundaries of medium or style. The Peale Brothers in Philadelphia with their studio, their museum and their industrial projects are one example. The Arts and Crafts movement in England, the Bauhaus, or the de Stijl masters offer recent models. Individual artists such as Le Corbusier, Alvar Aalto or Ettore Sottsass have been important figures in modern times. All of these have been more or less successful. Fluxus, too, has been more or less successful, sometimes more, sometimes less.

The issue is an issue of dialogue in social context. The dialogue is a stand for making a contribution to the possibility of human growth. The dialogue is a stand for the nature of art as an open, experimental process. And the dialogue is a stand that genuine, productive experimentation rarely takes place when rigid boundaries -



Milan Knizac
Yellow - Black 1982/86
225 x 180 cm, 6/35

between media, between groups of people, between ways of making and doing - prevent the fertile exchange of ideas and process that are the foundation of human growth.

This is why the idea of the social Fluxus, expressed or not, has been central to Fluxus' growth, its social and artistic significance. A great deal of interesting art and some great art has come out of Fluxus. That's been true of artists in all eras. Without the spirit of social engagement, what came out of Fluxus would have been only art. Without a social dialogue, much of the art that emerged from Fluxus would have been less interesting.

Some aspects of Fluxus haven't been as socially responsible as they might. More women were active in Fluxus, and more were central to the group's work, than in most art groups. Curators and historians act as though Alison Knowles were the only woman among us, neglecting Yoko Ono, Carolee Schneemann, Mieko Shiomi, Takako Saito, Shigeo Kubota and others. We haven't done enough to dispel the notion.

The use of humor has sometimes moved from a form of liberation to a kind of trap. Good nature, charity, humor from the deep spring of hope are at the core of Fluxus. Explosive humor is a tool for clearing ground. When Fluxus is nothing but jokes, it's difficult to build on the cleared ground. There is a delicate interplay between clearing and building that gives birth to social construction.

Zen time and vaudeville time are balanced by building and development. There is a place for humor, 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.

7. CAN THE WORLD AFFORD BAD DESIGN?

The world can no longer afford bad design. We face major social catastrophe in the developed West. It's hard to imagine ourselves sitting in dusty streets, selling used clothing and old plastic bottles to one

another, but millions of the world's poor live this way today.

It isn't necessary to change fashions every season. We don't need to plan obsolete hard goods or to discard them routinely. Artists and designers can add value to the world, to human experience, by designing well on a large scale. One way to begin is to do better at meeting needs and opportunities for our normal clients. Then we can look to see what can be done elsewhere.

New housing projects are often examples of the problems we create for ourselves. The world is filled with monstrous concrete housing projects. More are monstrous for reasons of planning and design than by virtue of material, site or potential. Designed well, in correct scale and proportion, concrete can be an exciting building material. Built well, it is safe and durable. When surfaces and facades are prepared properly for local climate and weather, concrete can remain attractive and visually pleasing for years.

Consumer goods reflect the problems we create for ourselves. Some design goods planned for the large scale markets require more work, production and detailing than better goods in the luxury line. Manufacturers develop product programs with planned flaws in order to distinguish between the good taste of the wealthy, the lesser taste of the middle class and the bad taste of the lower class. Products are designed to fall apart or to wear out at a certain rate. Designers work to create products that will make consumers feel second-rate as part of a social structure that encourages displays of wealth in the effort to gain esteem. Responsible attention to design can often create better products for less money.

Inattention to the potential for adding value through design creates problems for our industries as well. Design is not a surface gloss. It is a basic function that links product development to end use through all stages of planning, engineering, production, marketing and use. Good design can seem expensive if it can't be rationalized out over a specific number of product units. But design is a research and development function, like engineering or strategic planning. Long-term development functions are not a good place to generate the illusion

of savings by cutting them as though they were raw costs. Not all costs are of the same order as others. Those aspects of industrial production that can be distinguished as design features, rather than material costs, labor costs or engineering features, are often the difference between success and failure in comparable product lines. This can be seen in the rise and fall of similar industries in regions or nations with dissimilar attitudes toward design. This also reflects in trade balances, in the capacity of nations to serve their citizens and to compete productively in world markets.

Attitudes about design and culture have dramatic consequences in a crowded world.

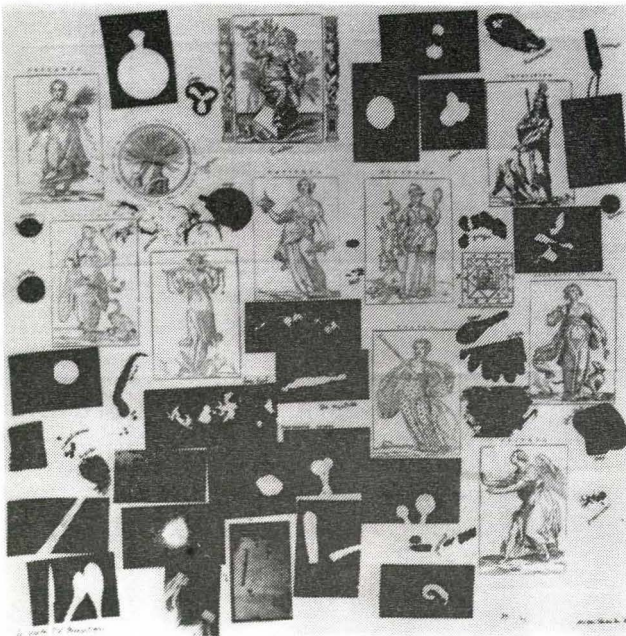
8. WHAT CAN THE WORLD AFFORD?

Buckminster Fuller was right. The world can feed, house and clothe many more of the world's five billion citizens than we now serve. But we can't achieve every gain on the strength of existing technology. Overuse of fertilizers leads to short-term crop gains and long-term depletion of crop-bearing soil. Water, energy and arable land are not limitless. We can grow almost enough food to feed the world's billions but our present delivery system is inadequate to deliver it to the hungry. Until we make major advances in energy technology and water conservation, land use and delivery

choice. We have not approached the limits of possibility. Ending world hunger is an economic and political choice.

Waste of environmental resources threatens the possibility of global prosperity. Deforestation threatens our oxygen supply and our biosphere. The quality of debate on global issues is itself a threat. We aren't yet certain whether or not the Greenhouse Effect has come into play. We can't be certain whether it will have a catastrophic effect on the planet if it does. We are certain, now, that air pollution is a major health hazard and a severe threat to the environment. It's dangerous to argue that we can afford atmospheric pollution because we don't yet know if pollution will bring about a Greenhouse Cataclysm.

These challenges require new ways of thinking, new ways of doing more with less. This was the point of the early manifestoes on cultural leadership that were issued under the Fluxus rubric. If there was a dispute about the manifestoes, it was usually that they were too narrow, even sectarian, in the view of whoever hadn't actually written the manifesto under debate. The Fluxus artists have different political viewpoints. We come from many nations. Our position on sides of the several political spectra, and our location among the positions even on our own side of any issue systems will remain secondary issues. All of these issues begin with intention and



possible to use old technologies and crafts in making art. Even so, world history suggests other challenges.

What is useful thinking about art? It is first a willingness to ask questions such as: What is art? What does it do? How does it function? How does it work in social context? Can we mean something by art other than we mean today?

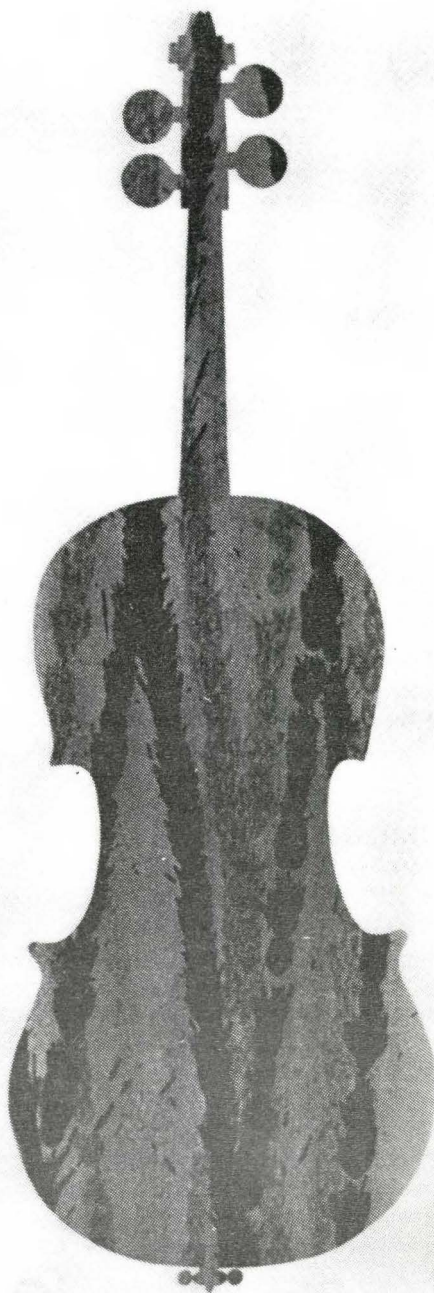
The forms of research expressed on the continuum of art and design offer opportunities for great achievements as well as for great waste. It's sad to watch the play of prejudice stifle the opportunities for valuable creativity. Industrial designers distrust artists who offer innovative possibilities on the specious reasoning that a new approach ungrounded in industrial engineering must somehow be a mistake. Tradition-bound artists condemn experiments in artistic production on the ground that the use of new means must be engineering or technology, not art.

On discovering I develop a product program that works as art and as useful goods such as tableware or furniture, an artist once suggested that I was no longer an artist. Marketing, export and trade issues, economics and manufacturing are all important aspects of these projects. He reasoned that I was really an industrialist or maybe just an art dealer without knowing it. I disagree.

Paik isn't a TV executive, though his work requires engagement in broad-casting. Beuys wasn't a politician, though social sculpture is a political art. Christo isn't a construction engineer, Kirkeby isn't a model maker, Andersen isn't a landscape architect, and Knizak isn't a furniture maker, even though they do many of the things engineers, model makers, landscape architects and furniture makers do. I didn't end my work as an artist when I became the first of the Fluxists to move from the theory of industrial production into the reality of factory life. It is possible, like the Peales in Philadelphia, that I may *also* be an industrialist.

The *possibility* of creating useful art doesn't rest on specific successes or failures to date. Edison made over a thousand electric light-bulbs that didn't work before he made one that did. Industrial production of art is part of what Fluxus set out to do. New times call for new art forms. New media require new skills. If mastering new skills

means that the creator is no longer an artist, then creative spirits will no longer want to



Charlotte Moorman
Green Cello

make art.

The world can afford a larger conception of the purposes and boundaries of art. It isn't bad that artists continue to paint. It is a waste to confine art to painting.

It is sometimes thought that Fluxus opposed the sale of art objects. That's a misunderstanding. Fluxus sold objects. We opposed the sale of art objects at prices entirely unrelated to their human value, their contribution to social welfare.

It is sometimes thought that Fluxus opposed beauty. This, too, is a misinterpretation. Fluxus never opposed beauty. George Maciunas, one of the radical opponents of art in the Fluxus camp, had a life-long project of mapping and recording world music. Monteverdi was his favorite composer. No one who spent his entire life listening to the sublime constructions of a Monteverdi was opposed to beauty. In many works of Fluxart, beauty was not an issue. To say that beauty is sometimes irrelevant in a work of art is not to say that we oppose beauty.

The social context of beauty is worth investigating. Art and beauty, what they are, what they mean, how they function, are all too often based on facile assumptions and received wisdom. The psychology, sociology and economics of the beautiful are worth consideration. How is beauty created? How is it organized and produced? How is it distributed? These are all part of the meaning of beauty and of its human value. To explore these issues gives us an opportunity to ask deep, basic questions about art and about what it is to be human.

There are many ways to look at these matters. Think of music, a key model for the development of Fluxus and its art forms. In theory, music is free for all to enjoy, just as Fluxus events are. In one perspective, music and Fluxconcerts satisfy the requirements of beauty and social utility at an appropriate cost. In contrast, paintings are luxury items. They require an enormous social subsidy. They are destined for the enjoyment of an elite few. On those grounds, it is possible to question the social utility of painting in terms of its total cost to society.

This is not the view that most of us take. It *is* good to ask the *questions*. The debate sheds light on clouded issues.

A useful thought experiment can be

performed by questioning the normal definitions of fine art and decorative art. Consider paintings as portable luxury items: They are a class of consumer goods manufactured at great cost, purchased and traded by an elite few, including the artists who make them. Once acquired, they are displayed for pleasure, entertainment, social status or a combination of these three. They are often stored for safety as investment objects or commodities. Even though paintings may be sources of emotional value and intellectual stimulation, they are no longer used for instruction or for the social purposes they filled before the development of modern communication media. In this sense, paintings have become decorative objects. In contrast, architecture, automobiles and industrial products are foremost among the artifacts created by human beings of the last two centuries, the "bridges and plumbing" that fascinated Duchamp. As objects that have been the focus of keen minds and sensitive creators, designed and engineered products may be a fine art form of our era. These objects summarize human progress and inventive aspiration just as clearly as a cathedral, a tapestry or an altar piece was intended to do in centuries past. Which of the two types of objects, then, serves the most profound goals? Which is decorative and commercial, that is, sold for the larger profit as compared with its social value?

An exaggerated position in the debate leads to evident flaws, but the reasoning has merit. These sorts of discussions are thought experiments, comparable to the thought experiments used by physicists to test propositions as valid questions. Arguments that exclude valid contemporary art forms from the realm of art are equally flawed. Unquestioned assumptions make the flaws less evident. Fluxus proposes a richer debate.

We *do* make art works, some of them *are* luxuries, and many of them are for sale. We also engage in experiments. We work to develop new models, approaching art as an experimental vehicle in the service of life. Just as scientists sell their research or its products to earn a living, so we sell the products we make. 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

VERBODEN TOEGANG
 Buitelid aktueller Ideen
 HAPPEKINDS
 MANIFESTE
 DEMONSTRATIONEN
 KUNSTWERKE
 EVENTS
 - Josef BEUYS
 - George BRECHT
 - Naron BROCK
 - Hans-Joachim DITTRICH
 - Dick HIGGINS
 - Allan KAPROW
 - J. J. LEES
 - Mike OLDFERG
 - Robin PAGE
 - Nam June PAIK
 - Tomasz SCHNIT
 - Wolf VOSTEL
 Beistellungen:
 Konzept von
 TYPOUS VERLAG
 2. FRANKFURT
 1. STERNENBURG 118
 Preis 12,- DM
 KOLLEGE Nr. 1, 2, 3, 1962
 sind vergriffen



Nam June Paik
 Fluxus Island 1962/1989
 360 x 235 cm, 4/10

N. J. PAIK : Fluxus Island in Döllinger ocean

paradigms for innovation are an important source of human growth. The world can afford new ways of thinking about art. The world requires them.

9. GAMES AT THE CEDILLE AND OTHER USEFUL DIGRESSIONS

In the 1960s, George Brecht and Robert Filliou spent a year or so in Villefranche-sur-Mer in the French Alps Maritimes. They ran a little store called La Cedille qui Sourit. The sold cedillas, the funny little accent marks you find under the letter "c" in some French words. They invented games, jokes and puzzles, as most Fluxartists have. They created all sorts of intelligent and occasionally unintelligible artifacts and objects for sale.

The history of their store and a record of the things they made and did appears in the book *Games at the Cedille* published by Something Else Press in 1968.

Games at the Cedille is a record of the playful experimentation that gives birth to new perspectives. The results of play may be serious. Mathematics is a form of play. Advanced mathematical play has often led to major discoveries in the physical world. New forms of pure mathematics seem often to have no practical application. An intriguing aspect of science is the way in which the invention or discovery of new

mathematical principles has usually led to the invention or discovery of important new practical applications.

Research, the creation of new paradigms in the form of play, often leads us to fresh inspirations about what is practical.

The playful forms of experimental art, art considered as research and paradigm development, have had practical results. This has been true in the far past and in recent times. Much of Fluxus' enduring significance has been in ideas that first seemed impractical, playful or even weird. Some of these ideas gave birth to great results in art or in the larger world.

Paintings can be taken too seriously. There is a difference between putting paint on canvas and making art. That's what Duchamp meant when he used the expression "dumb like a painter". Artists, housepainters, decorators and signpainters all try to make a living by laying coats of paint on a physical support. If an artist approaches painting in the same way a decorator or house painter does, the results will be comparable in human terms.

What does it mean to approach painting in the same way? It means to start as an apprentice or to join a union, to get trained by the older painters, and to go on painting the way they paint in order to remain a

member of the union. Every now and then, one decorator or another stands out. Customers seek the work. The painter pushes the individual character of the painting style far enough to keep the customers coming but not so far as to be excluded from the union.

Can we compare fine artists to decorators or house painters? It's an interesting question. Imagine that a student goes to an art school - in Europe, to an academy - to learn how painters paint. The student graduates. In America, the student might teach or wait tables while seeking admission into the "union" of recognized artists represented by dealers or museums. That's also how it is in some parts of Europe. In other places, the artist actually does join a union, paying dues, attending meetings, relying on the union for access to customers, including museum customers, or state organizations that award grants and fellowships. What about painters who produce decorative objects according to the union rules just like house painters and factory workers do?

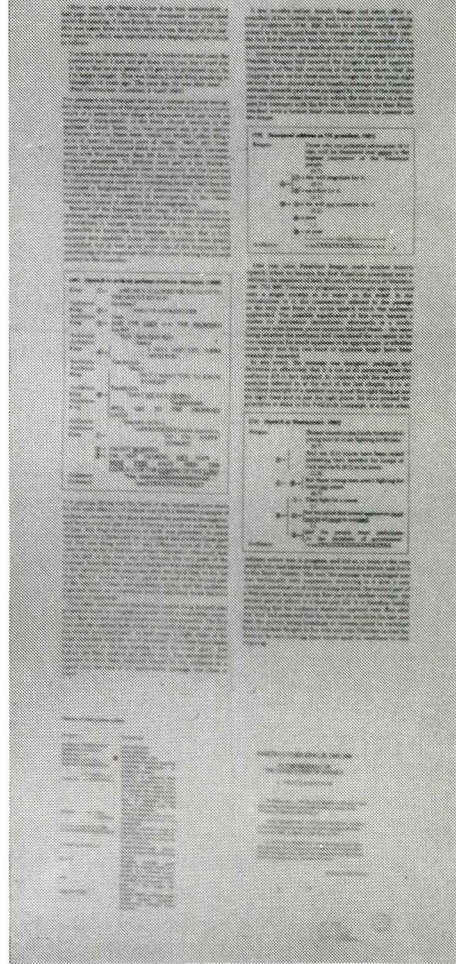
Fluxus has nothing against painting houses. When we want to paint a house, we do. We see a difference between painting a house as a work of art and making a work of art that's the side of a house in disguise. Most important, we see the possibility of art as a form of research, a philosophical investigation that explores many levels of being and doing.

Some of us do paint - Ay-O, Dupuy, Higgins, Kirkeby, Knizak, Vautier and Vostell have all produced significant bodies of work in the form of paintings. (Knowles used to paint but doesn't now, though she does make prints; K pcke made paintings; several others paint occasionally in the context of other explorations, Henry Flynt and Carolee Schneemann among them). The issue is not whether or not we paint: it's whether we're thinking about art or about "being painters". An artist may be a painter. A "painter" is only a painter. That's hardly an interesting way to approach art.

10. WHAT'S NEXT?

We are creating the future our grandchildren will face. Will we be seen as a prosperous yet selfish century in a millenium of troubles? Will we use our arts, our sciences, our resources and potential to enhance human life?

Life is more interesting than art. Fluxus rests on the principle that life remains the



Ben Patterson *Untitled*

focus of art, and its purpose. Fluxus exists in the *wunder-kammer* of the museum and in the museum as demonstration. Fluxus creates models, approaches to the use of the imagination.

What Fluxus suggests is this:

Life offers opportunities and challenges. The artist is a citizen of the world, with responsibilities toward those opportunities and challenges. We can take opportunities and we are responsible for our choices.

It's no sin for those of us fortunate to live in the developed world to enjoy prosperity. Scandinavia, Europe, the United States, Japan, and the Four Tigers are fortunate to have the choicest remains a terrible mistake to pursue fashion in the place of enduring value, to design badly when we can design well, to waste when we can enjoy enduring prosperity through conservation, to accept dishonesty in the place of honest presentation.

For Fluxism to address the challenges and opportunities open to us today requires a greater stress on the social Fluxus than on the laughing Fluxus. Fluxus may be funny again in another 25 years. It will be if more people are eating well and living well than today.

For me, re-thinking Fluxus requires a consideration of what Fluxus is and what it means, why it has continued in one way or another for nearly three decades. It's still possible to enjoy a joke. The jokes are best understood as jokes, often as jokes between friends, as lively entertainment. The social Fluxus requires a greater stress, too. That is the key element of the Fluxism that will remain after everyone who did the Wiesbaden tour in 1962 has gone to meet Filliou and Maciunas at the Perpetual Fluxfest. That is the Fluxism that will remain when Jeff Berner, Milan Knizak, Geoff Hendricks and I have been dust for so long that no one will recall the distinctions between 1962 and 1966. That is the Fluxism within Fluxus that has offered value and opportunity to the world through immensely practical experiments emerging from the play of ideas and media, the Fluxism of research art, in video, in communications art, in social sculpture. It has also been the enduring value of event structures, decollage, Zen vaudeville and the Sweeping Away.

The social Fluxus aspires to an art in the service of life. Life is contradictory and

inclusive, as Fluxism has always been. A little ambiguity and difficulty along the way is the price of experiment. It is the price of the benefits that experimentation yields.

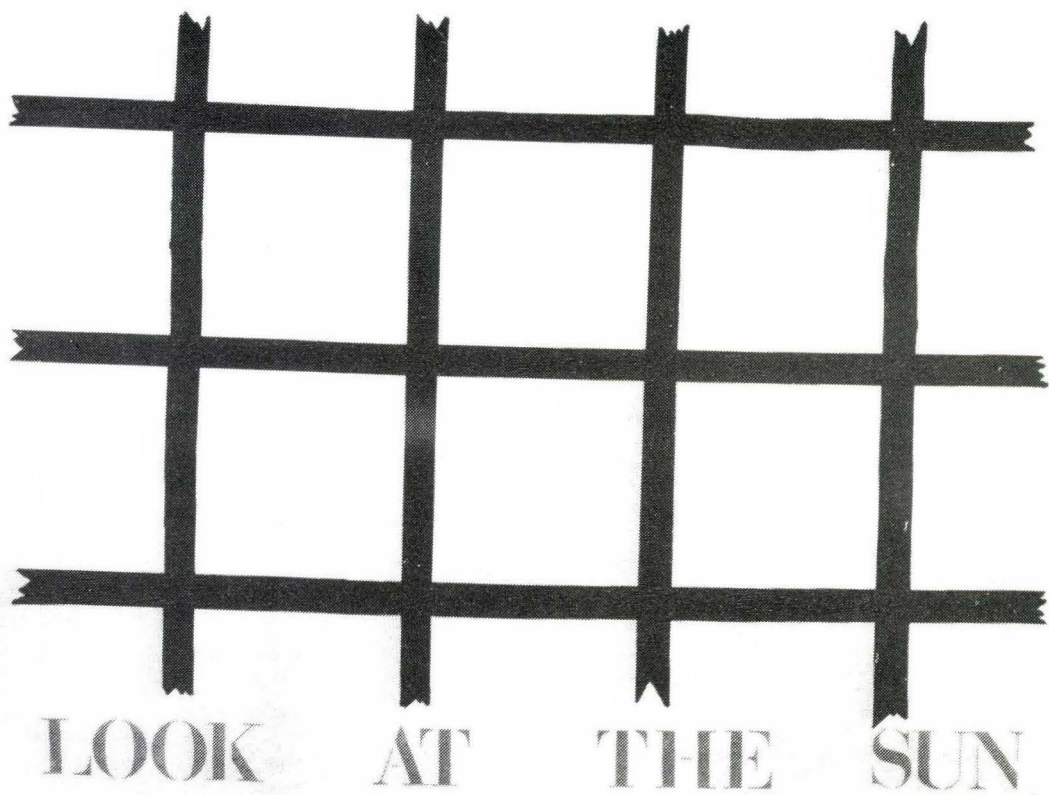
What has sometimes seemed revolutionary, even Puritanical in Fluxus is the rejection of the notion that social benefits and human pleasure are the destiny of an elite few. We don't accept human misery and deprivation as the necessary contrast which is the proof of our pleasures. That sort of notion isn't viable. It never was. Many of us, whatever our political persuasion, have an abiding interest in Buddhism because Buddhism teaches that the chains of karma trap the victor as completely as the vanquished. A view of art or of life that requires others to suffer or to be deprived binds us to slavery and emptiness at the moment we think ourselves free and whole.

It is too much to hope that any group of artists, designers, architects or composers can accomplish what we hope to achieve. If I suggested that we feel we're liable to achieve the ends to which we aspire, you'd say we're unrealistic, or even silly. It's true of us, and it's true of any group of people who aspire to unrealistic goals, and that includes all kinds of leaders: physicists, teachers, economists and physicians.

Still, it's valuable to remember how many unrealistic goals have had real consequences. In a hundred fields of human striving, history has shown fantasies promoted to the status of unrealistic goals which in turn became experiments, working models and world reality.

In the 1960s, human beings saw the first picture of the earth taken from space. It looked like what I had expected to see. It wasn't until 1988 that I realized that when I first "saw" our planet, I had no real way to know what the earth looked like from space. No one before our time had ever seen the Earth from space. The power of human imagination is so great that we can sometimes see what we're going to see well before we've seen it. That is the power of unrealistic goals, of dreams and aspirations. Everyone dreams. The virtue of Fluxus has been to dream big dreams and to pursue our big dreams with whole-hearted integrity. A spirit of large goals and an unwillingness to be told what sort of goals are too large is what has distinguished Fluxus from most groups of artists, designers, architects or composers. Finding worthwhile goals and

exploring them is the idea. That's the purpose of art. That's the purpose of model-making. That's the purpose of Fluxus.



Serge Ill *Look at the Sun* 1990 300 x 180 cm, 1/30

“A SPIRIT OF LARGE GOALS” -DADA AND FLUXUS AT TWO SPEEDS

Nicholas Zurbrugg

Like so many of the artistic impulses, movements and innovations that follow the modernist era and the second world war, and which are all - in this chronological sense - one or another kind of 'post-modern' activity, Fluxus arose in the early sixties. Unlike most other manifestations of post-modern creativity, Fluxus has always maintained an unusually cosmopolitan identity - the kind of *positive* internationalism so frequently over-looked by the gloom and doom brigade. It is all too easy to trot from global conference to global conference, one Holiday Inn or Hilton after the other, deploring the cultural logic of late capitalism while wallowing in its comforts. Less obvious, and less remunerative perhaps, is the attempt to identify, clarify and cultivate the positive symptoms of cosmopolitan culture in the age of mechanical reproduction - and one might add, in an age of mechanical criticism mindlessly bewailing the so-called 'postmodern crisis'.

Fluxus is particularly difficult to evaluate - or at least, is particularly difficult to evaluate at first sight - in the sense that the Fluxus aesthetic, or cultural logic, hinges upon the same sort of self-deflating logic which so frequently persuaded Dada's critics that Dada was little more than an irritating joke.

Tristan Tzara's teasing avowal that 'Dada is a dog - a compass - the lining of the stomach' leads significantly, to the far more important assertion that 'Dada is a quantity of life in transparent, effortless and gyratory transformation'.¹ Tzara's point, then, is that his concept of Dada's cultural logic insists upon radical *transformation* and the rejection of tired clichés and stereotypes. Scratch a Dadaist once and you seem to find a nihilist. Scratch a Dadaist twice, and something much more positive and idealistic becomes apparent.

Fluxus presents similar paradoxes. At their most polemical, artists such as Ben Vautier give the impression that they wish to appear even more nihilist than Tzara by spitting upon both high art and Dada. Vautier's statements in his essay 'The Duchamp Heritage' (1979) regret that whereas 'Dada said to hell with serious art/today Dada is serious art', and conclude: 'I am not interested in Dada historical maniacs/I prefer a naked girl in my bed to Dada'.² Most significant here seems to be Vautier's impatience to distinguish himself from art historians - those undertakers of creativity - and from the 'serious', commodified, retrospective status of surviving Dadaist artworks, in order to recuperate, elaborate and update the iconoclastic and innovative

impact of Dada when it still represented the shock of the new and the tremor of transformation.

As the American Fluxus artist Dick Higgins observes, Fluxus began with the decision 'to reflect the state of flux in which all the arts found themselves with respect to their media and functions'.³ In other words, whereas semioticians and devotees of the discursive formation cult appear disproportionately preoccupied with 'prior discourse', Fluxus artists - like the Dadaists before them - evince what Ken Friedman perceptively defines as 'A spirit of large goals and an unwillingness to be told what sort of goals are too large'.⁴

What then, are the characteristics of Fluxus' goals? At its most basic communal level, Fluxus has the merit of remaining what Nam June Paik calls 'one of the very few anarchistic groups which has succeeded in surviving', in which 'many different egos - twenty, thirty different artists - kept quite good friends and collaborated'.⁵ Friedman makes exactly the same point about the fluid 'dis-organisation' of Fluxus: 'It's likely that no group of artists since the Middle Ages has maintained a sense of community for such a long time'. As Paik also points out, Fluxus 'was very international from the beginning' and resisted 'elbowing for national or personal hegemony'; a factor partially explaining both the diversity of Fluxus' identity and the difficulty of pinning down Fluxus' identity.

Rethinking Fluxus, Friedman very interestingly outlines the ways in which its performances fluctuate between brief 'neo-haiku' events transmitted by scores, and more complex and more personal 'neo-baroque' happenings necessitating the artist's presence. At another level, Friedman differentiates between two still more significant impulses: those of 'clearing and building'. Acknowledging that the early Fluxus years are usually characterised by 'Explosive humor ... a tool for clearing ground', Friedman places equal if not more emphasis upon 'social Fluxus'; a secondary phase central to its 'social and artistic significance', and consisting of 'the building that gives birth to social construction'.

It's easy to neglect this constructive, social impulse, just as it's easy to overlook the positive impulse in Dada. In both instances, this impulse is initially implicit rather than explicit, and at best, is usually understated

and overshadowed by its iconoclastic counterparts, until sufficient decades pass by to permit more balanced appraisal of past achievements.

Paradoxically, perhaps, the most vociferous reappraisals of Dada's aesthetic only erupted in the mid-sixties, when critical enthusiasm for the emergent 'neo-Dada' performances of the Fluxus artists in Europe prompted veteran Dadaists like Raoul Hausmann to condemn their vacuity and unoriginality. In the process, Hausmann insisted upon the 'constructive idea' behind Dada's experiments, arguing that 'in spite of their anti-art tendency, they remain art'.⁶ One can sympathise with Hausmann's indignation. Fluxus events such as George Brecht's *Piano Piece, 1962* - which states: 'a vase of flowers on(to) a piano' - certainly seem remarkably similar to Hausmann's description of Walter Serner's *POEM*; an action performed in Zurich in 1917, in which Serner 'had an empty armchair brought on the stage ... approached it, bowed deeply and put a bunch of flowers on the seat'. Small wonder that Hausmann dismissed Fluxus events as 'empty repetitions of Dada acts' (*H*, 801).

One discovers a similar reassessment of Dada in Marcel Janco's article 'Dada at Two Speeds', written in 1966 - the very same year as Hausmann's lines above on 'Dadaism and Today's Avant-Garde'. Reflecting upon Dada's adventures, Janco identifies 'two Dadas, negative and positive'.⁷ On the one hand Janco discusses 'the spiritual violence of the first phase', or 'negative speed', and on the other hand, 'the prophetic work of positive Dada, which opened to art a new road, upon which ... artistic creativity has remained dependent through the present day' (*J*, 38). As Janco notes, the negative impulse in Dada 'very often remains in the same state, not having found soil fertile enough to expand into the positive' (*J*, 37).

Living in the nineties, it's still all too easy to become transfixed by the seductive rhetoric of 'negative' speed. One thinks, for example, of Baudrillard's recent suggestion that 'We shouldn't presume to produce positive solutions',⁸ or Jameson's still more bizarre assertion that multi-media Post-modern texts 'ought not to have any "meaning" at all'.⁹ Nowhere do we find more late twentieth century repetitions of negative Dada thinking than in the writings of

fashionable critics and theorists of Post-modernism. As Nam June Paik suggests, there's almost a certain academic chic attached to contempt and disbelief towards positive 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'.

The most interesting argument in Ken Friedman's essay 'Rethinking Fluxus' is surely his emphasis upon the increasing significance of 'social Fluxus', or the positive speed of Fluxus. Like Janco, Friedman admits that the satirical impulse of innovative art often remains static for want of growth into more positive activity. In Friedman's terms: 'The use of humor has sometimes moved from a form of liberation to a kind of trap'. Put another way, all deconstruction and no reconstruction or innovation makes Jacques and Gilles a very dull artist or theoretician.

It is almost certainly a sense of frustration before the seemingly negative neo-Dadaist 'shocking elements' in Fluxus that prompted Joseph Beuys to break away from Fluxus around 1963, in order 'to address deeper elements and other connections'.¹⁰ Beuys explains, 'I bound myself only outwardly, organizationally, but not with regard to content to the Neo-Dadaists, the Fluxus people who worked primarily with the concepts of Dadaism, and at the same time developed my own Fluxus concept, independent of Dadaism and Neo-Dadaism' (B, 59).

In Beuys' terms, Fluxus activities of the early sixties lacked 'a real theory', by which he perhaps meant a more or less cohesive social programme. Writing to Thomas Schmit in January 1962, Fluxus' key organiser, George Maciunas, outlined something quite close to a real theory when he specified that 'Fluxus' goals are social (not esthetic), and aimed to 'direct wasted material and human capabilities toward socially constructive goals such as the applied arts', by the systematic 'elimination of the fine arts'. In Maciunas' terms, 'Fluxus is against art as a medium and vehicle for the artist's ego; the applied arts have an

objective problem that has to be solved'.¹¹ All this seems to have appeared too imprecise to Beuys. While admitting that 'All the Fluxus people were sensitive spirits', he nevertheless concluded: 'What they lacked was a real theory, a recognizable underlying

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Daniel Spoerri
erst lezt das ... 1955/84
3 pieces
150 x 72 each, 2/38 I, II, III



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 I can say that the Fluxus actions had a value, because they made, along the way, conscious attempts to produce an important development' (B, 86). Perhaps Beuys was asking too much of Fluxus. As Friedman observes, 'Inside Fluxus, no one was willing to have George Maciunas speak for or supervise our political views'. Paik makes much the same point when he alludes to the advantage of having no single political spokesman, and suggests that the survival of Fluxus results precisely from its predominantly leaderless anarchy. 'Because with anarchists, by definition, the strongest guy becomes the dictator. In our case it didn't happen, basically speaking'.

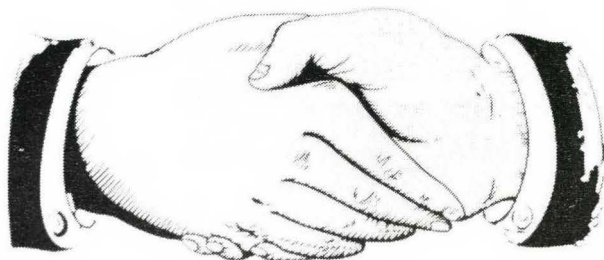
What seems evident some quarter century later is that Fluxus' socially constructive goals appeared insufficiently clear to Beuys in the mid-sixties. Even in the early seventies, Fluxus still seemed more disruptive than constructive. For example, the presence of Beuys and other Dusseldorf artists at the 1970 Edinburgh Festival immediately prompted howls of 'Anti-Art', 'nihilism' and 'revulsion'.¹² About this time I remember asking David Briers, the editor of *Pages* - one of the few English art

magazines to champion Beuys, Fluxus and 'Art in Everyday Life' - why he didn't re-title it *Art Jokers Quarterly*, insofar as almost every page consisted of some sort of 'art joke' (including, I should add, experimental textual work by the now born-again *anti-avant-gardist*, Achille Bonito Oliva). Elsewhere, in the anthology *Breakthrough Fictioneers* (1973), edited by Richard Kostelanetz, Friedman himself was still publishing variants of what he would probably dismiss today as 'jokes without underlying purpose'.

Friedman's contribution to this anthology, *Personal Space* (1972), advises the reader: 'Immediately after reading this instruction, close the book. Strongly visualize 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 personalized, 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'.¹³

I found this piece pretty stupid some two decades ago, and I still find it pretty stupid. Maybe art in the seventies was pretty stupid, or felt compelled to employ pretty stupid strategies in order to open up its own 'personal space' in the minds, pages and

ethnies en luttres
pour



le droit à la différence

galleries of the art world. Not all Fluxus jokes proved that funny. To quote Paik once again, 'Fluxus is a kind of minimal aesthetic, and a minimal aesthetic, by definition, is not easy to succeed in'. With this in mind, it's all the more significant, perhaps, that Friedman now advocates what we might think of as a *maximal* aesthetic. In other words, his present suggestion that 'Fluxus creates models, approaches to the use of the imagination', refers not so much to whimsical minimalist jokes about the 'personal space' two inches around a book, as to 'practical experiments emerging from the play of ideas and media'. As Friedman's essay lucidly indicates, his present professional ambition - and the main focus of his present definition of Fluxus - are one and the same: the concern to eliminate bad design and to precipitate enduring value by employing 'our arts, our sciences, our resources and potential to enhance human life'. The challenges of social responsibility and 'social Fluxus' coincide in terms of Friedman's aspiration to promote 'new ways of thinking, new ways of doing more with less'.

Whereas Jameson complains that contemporary cities leave us like lost sheep deprived of all capacity 'to position oneself within this space and cognitively map it',¹⁴ and whereas Baudrillard calls for the fictional consolation offered by fantasies of inaugurating 'the symbolic murder of all cultural meaning',¹⁵ Friedman rather more soberly concludes with the suggestion that we can both position ourselves within our culture and take responsibility for our contributions to new cultural meaning. 'What Fluxus suggests is this: Life offers opportunities and challenges. The artist is a citizen of the world, with responsibilities toward those opportunities and challenges'.

As Raoul Hausmann reminds us, 'a general climatic situation cannot be repeated; the exigencies of the world-pressure are certainly different now and earlier ones cannot be restored' (*H*, 801). Briefly, there's no way back to Modernist variants of New York, Paris, Sydney or Brisbane, where we sense we might comfortably 'position oneself'. Trapped - or more objectively: *travelling* - between present and future, our best bet is to anticipate the shape of things to come. In Friedman's terms, 'The power of human imagination is so great that we can sometimes see what we're going to see

well before we've seen it'.

In other words, while Baudrillard admits that his theoretical fictions 'develop a worst-possible scenario' and '*play out* the end of things',¹⁶ and while most intertextual theory looks back towards the banalities of past practices, Friedman's forward-looking concept of 'social Fluxus' attempts to preview - and to some extent, to prepare for - unprecedented, future 'scenarios'. Defining and defending experimental creativity with equal perspicacity, William Burroughs similarly argues: '*We are not setting out to explore static, pre-existing data. We are setting out to create new worlds, new beings, new modes of consciousness*'.¹⁷

Friedman's analysis of 'social Fluxus' focusses above all upon the example of George Maciunas, prime co-ordinator of Fluxus and 'design genius', who envisaged pivotal 'cooperative art projects and industrial production plans' in order to 'sweep away high culture and lay a foundation for well-designed, large-scale culture'. For all its anti-artistic gestures, Fluxus also culminates in the impulse to create new forms of mass-produced art at prices related to - rather than inflated beyond - their human value. If most artworks lend themselves to definition as portable *luxury* items, then Fluxus multiples might be defined as mass-produced, portable *accessible* items.

Francesco Conz's editions of Fluxus artworks on fabrics fall precisely into this category. Whereas multiples usually appear both on the small scale and in small editions, Francesco Conz's publications have offered an enormous range of multi-media poets, artists and composers the opportunity to work on unprecedentedly large prints, in whatever way they think best. As his assistant remarked to me in Verona, 'There are no limits for Francesco'.

Ever since the early sixties, the various Post-Modern multi-media artists mixing type, musical notation, graphics, painting, photography and computerised imagery have dreamed of working on the scale of commercial advertising and electronic signboards. Back in 1968, John Sharkey, the English concrete poet, characteristically informed an interviewer, 'What I would like ... is some free space around Picadilly Circus ... concrete poetry ... should be on street hoardings'.¹⁸ Two decades later, in

1988, Sharkey's dream came true, insofar as Jenny Holzer's *Signs* were shown both in the ICA, London, and on spectacular board - in Picadilly Circus.¹⁹

But whereas Holzer's signboards appropriate, and - as it were - colonise the space of the advertising slogan, Conz's gigantic fabric multiples demarcate and define a virtually unknown dimension of verbal-visual production. This is not so much to belittle Holzer's achievement, as to emphasize the extremely innovative quality of Conz's publications, in the sense that they frequently constitute a poet's, an artist's or a composer's first opportunity to project and create their work on the grand scale.

I can probably best introduce this idea anecdotally, in terms of the time I first came across one of Francesco Conz's multiples in Paris, when visiting the visual and sound poet Henri Chopin. Ever since I first met Chopin in the late sixties, I've been familiar with his typewriter poems and with his various silkscreen prints on paper ranging from 76 x 40 to 76 x 96 centimetres. By contrast, Conz's magnificent print of Chopin's poem *To ray the rays* transformed the text's original typewritten format into a work 215x154 centimetres, effortlessly translating the original 'page' scale of Chopin's poem to a new 'Rothko' scaled incarnation upon fabric. Confronted by such visual alchemy, one feels as though one's looking at the first wheel - it all seems so obvious and inevitable, and one can only wonder *why* it's never been done before. The same experience recurs before works by the other artists published by Conz in this exhibition. Carefully making use of state-of-the-art photographic and printing technology, and carefully collaborating with his artists in Verona, Francesco Conz's fabric multiples stand as a milestone in contemporary publishing.

Having discovered Francesco Conz's marvellous Chopin print, I immediately wrote to him from Brisbane to request further exhibits for the *Visual Poetics* exhibition that I was then curating at the end of 1989 at James Baker's *Museum of Contemporary Art*. Francesco very generously sent a selection of works by the Lettriste artists Isou and Lemaître, and by the visual poets Furnival, Williams, Lora-Totino, Rühm, Higgins and MacLow. Earlier this year, in January, I visited Conz's headquarters in Verona, and after a rapid

conversation decided with Francesco that an exhibition of Fluxus graphics would be the ideal accompaniment to the post-Duchampian content of this year's Sydney Biennale. Nicholas Tsoutas very generously agreed to accept and assist this



"You know what I love? I love words like 'conglomerate,' 'takeover,' 'acquisition,' 'orchestrate,' 'manipulate,' 'fluxus,' 'blockbuster'..."

Bob Watts

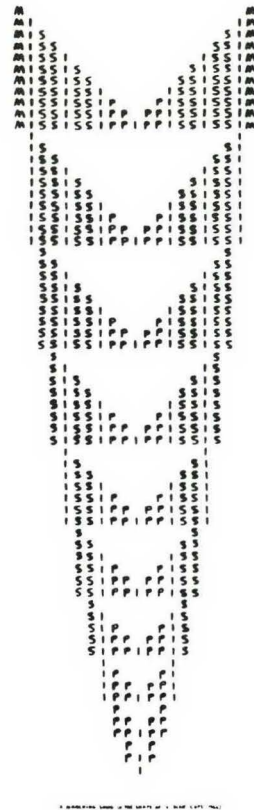
Cartoon 1987

285 x 285 cm, 40/50

project at the IMA.

Having begun on an impersonal note, perhaps I can conclude on this more personal note, by adding that this exhibition is in every way testimony to the still prevalent creative energy and solidarity that makes our supposedly bleak 'Post-Modern' world such a pleasure to work within. Fulfilling Maciunas' vision of imaginatively and economically marketed mass-art, and assembling the talents of an international array of multi-media artists, Francesco Conz's prints typify the continued creative adventure of the nineties.

What lies beyond Fluxus? Something else at two speeds, something else destructive, something else constructive. Fluxartists have done their job, and are still doing their job, and there's no reason to suppose that such work has come to a standstill. Times change, conditions change, but the basic challenges remain the same. As Friedman concludes: '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'. Or as John Cage memorably remarks: 'Without the avant-garde nothing would get invented'.²⁰



Emmett Williams *Mississippi* 41/50

FOOTNOTES

1. Tristan Tzara, 'Dada Manifesto on Feeble Love and Bitter Love' (1920), in *Seven Dada Manifestos*, translated by Barbara Wright (London: John Calder, 1977), pp.31-45, p.43.
2. Ben Vautier, 'The Duchamp Heritage', in Stephen Foster and Rudolf Kuenzli (eds.), *Dada Spectrum: The Dialectics of Revolt* (Madison, Wisconsin: Coda Press, 1979), pp.250-258, pp.253 and 256.
3. Dick Higgins, 'Something Else About Fluxus', *Art and Artists*, 7 (October 1972).
4. Ken Friedman, 'Rethinking Fluxus', see this catalogue. All references to Friedman refer to this article unless otherwise indicated.
5. Nam June Paik, interviews with Nicholas Zurbrugg, 10 and 13 April 1990, in *Scan+*, forthcoming. All references to Paik refer to these interviews.
6. Raoul Hausmann, 'Dadaism and Today's Avant-Garde', *Times Literary Supplement*, 3 September 1964, pp.800-801. All subsequent references preceded by *H.*
7. Marcel Janco, 'Dada at Two Speeds' (1966), translated by Margaret L.Lippard, in Lucy R.Lippard (ed.), *Dadas on Art* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp.36-38, p.38. All subsequent references preceded by *J.*
8. Jean Baudrillard, interview with Nicholas Zurbrugg, 13 April 1989, in *Eyeline* 11 (Autumn 1990), pp.4-7, p.7.
9. Fredric Jameson, 'Reading without interpretation: post-modernism and the video-text', in Nigel Fabb *et al* (eds.), *The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments between language and literature* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp.199-223, pp.217-218.

10. Joseph Beuys, quoted by Gotz Adriani, Winfried Konnerzy and Karin Thomas in *Joseph Beuys, Life and Works*, translated by Patrica Lech (New York: Barron's, 1979), p.87. All subsequent references preceded by *B.*
11. George Maciunas, quoted *ibid.*, pp.82-83.
12. B.J. Chambers Crabtree, letter to the editor, *Scotsman* (1 September 1970), quoted in Richard Demarco, 'Reflections on "Strategy: Get Arts" plus an anthology of reaction from the press', *Pages*, 2 (Winter 1970), pp.9-13, p.11.
13. Ken Friedman, *Personal Space* (1972), in Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *Breakthrough Fictioneers* (Barton: Something Else Press, 1973), p.224.
14. Fredric Jameson, interviewed by Anders Stephanson, *Flash Art*, 131 (December 1986/January 1987), pp.69-73, p.70.
15. Jean Baudrillard, interview with Zurbrugg, p.7.
16. Jean Baudrillard, *ibid.*, and 'America as Fiction', interview with Jacques Henric and Guy Scarpetta, translated by Nicholas Zurbrugg, *Eyeline*, 5 (June 1988), pp.24-25, p.25.
17. William Burroughs, *The Adding Machine: Collected Essays* (London: John Calder, 1985), p.102.
18. John Sharkey, quoted by Elizabeth Glazebrook, 'The Last Word in Poetry', *The Daily Telegraph Magazine* 202 (16 August 1968), pp.20-23, p.22.
19. Jenny Holzer: *Signs* (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1988), p.72.
20. John Cage interviewed by Stephen Montague (1982), in Richard Kostelanetz (ed.), *Conversing with Cage* (New York: Limelight Editions, 1988), p.238.

Eric Andersen

Pianist Hide Away
120 x 170 cm, AP

George Brecht

Chemistry Music: Thistle Funnel
120 x 90 cm, AP

Chemistry Music: Man with Clarinet
112 x 128 cm, HC

Black: Scrittura Giapponese
120 x 180 cm, AP

Guiseppe Chiari

Una tromba da carnevale 1984
160 x 160 cm

Fagotto
160 x 160 cm, not signed

Philip Corner

Silence 1989
200 x 180 cm, 14/21

Jean Dupuy

Where
4/8

There
4/8

Here
4/8

Geoff Hendricks

Skys
Series of 10 pieces
160 x 115 cm each, 7/30

Dick Higgins

Africa 1988
255 x 260 cm, 34/50

Joe Jones

3 RD Rail 1986
100 x 130 cm, AP

Music Wagon for Asolo 1986
100 x 130 cm, AP

Cage music was ... 1986
100 x 130 cm, AP

Longest Pull-Toy in ... 1986
100 x 130 cm, AP

Milan Knizac

Yellow - Black 1982/86
225 x 180 cm, 6/35

Alison Knowles

Virtù del minestrone
AP

Jackson MacLow

Series of 5 Pieces
150 x 160 cm each, 1/30

Charlotte Moorman

Blue Cello
21/

Green Cello
21/

Yellow Cello
21/

Nam June Paik

Fluxus Island 1962/1989
360 x 235 cm, 4/10

Ben Patterson

Untitled

Serge III

Yellow - Red 1990
240 x 180 cm, 1/30

Look at the Sun 1990
300 x 180 cm, 1/30

Daniel Spoerri

erst lezt das ... 1955/84
3 pieces
150 x 72 each, 2/38 I, II, III

Ben Vautier

Ethnies en lutte pour ...
160 x 120 cm, 10/50

Bob Watts

Cartoon 1987
285 x 285 cm, 40/50

Jewellery 1984
175 x 135 cm, 50/50

Stamps 3 pieces 1984
150 x 345 cm, 20/45

Tattoos

Emmett Williams

Mississippi
41/50

E 1983 (1956)
180 x 100 cm. 17/35

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Eric Anderson. Born 1941, London. Self-taught artist. Associated with Fluxus Artists, Copenhagen (1962), Netherlands (1963-64), U.S.A. (1965). Pioneer in field of participative art developing chain letters as a basis for the sharing of identity, working with non-objects, random audiences and communication not conditioned by media or accepted technology. Cooperating with private enterprises and public institutions has established a vast number of experiments concerning non-interpersonal operations. Has published close to 100 publications, one of them including a town.

George Brecht. Born 1924, Blomkest, Minnesota. Studied science at Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science (1946-50) and with John Cage at New School for Social Research (1958-59). Worked as research inventor, chemist and engineer. Met Bob Watts (1955), Dick Higgins (1958) and Maciunas (1960). Contributed to Fluxus International Festival, New York (1962), and published *Water Yam* cards (1963), *Chance Imagery* (1964), *Games at the Cedilla or the Cedilla Takes Off*, with Robert Filliou (1967). Lives and works in Cologne, since 1972.

Giuseppe Chiari. Born 1926, Florence. Artist-composer. Studied mathematics and engineering, University of Florence. Co-founder of Vita Musicale Contemporanea Association, Florence (1961). Worked with composer Sylvano Busotti, Florence, and associated with New York Fluxus artists (1962). Performances at Paris and Wiesbaden Fluxus Festivals (1962), and New York Fluxus Festivals (1964 and 1965). Subsequent performances in Berlin, Paris, Madrid, Milan, Naples, Rome, Turin, Kassel, etc.

Philip Corner. Born 1933, the Bronx, New York. Received the name 'Gwan Pok' - 'contemplating waterfall' - while in Korea. A musician who writes words and notes, plays the piano and natural things. Co-founded *Tone Roads* and has collaborated frequently with dancers and theatre groups. Initiated the *Sounds out of Silent Spaces* group, which used sound meditation in a collaborative settings. Corner's works for Editions Conz include calligraphic silk-screened Fluxus scores, and hollow bronze casts of stones, containing loose pieces and serving as hand bells.

Jean Dupuy. Born 1925. Abstract paintings in Paris in 60s. Moved to New York in 1967. Prominent in the Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.). Dupuy's *Collective Consciousness* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Press, 1981), documents his work with Maciunas and other Fluxus artists at his 'Art Performance Workshop'. Since 1984 in Pierrefeu, France, painting multi-coloured anagram-scores (published by C. Xatres, New York and Rainer, Berlin). Since 1988 produced objects and works for Editions Conz, and exhibited with Emily Harvey, New York.

Ken Friedman. Born 1949, New London, Connecticut. Studies at San Francisco State University; Starr King School for the Ministry, Berkeley; and Graduate School of Human Behaviour, U.S. International University, San Diego. Executive Director of Fluxus West, San Diego (1966-75). Moved to New York in 1979, stopped exhibiting and began to work in management and economic planning. In 1985 began exhibiting again and worked on industrial design projects, lecturing in Norway, Sweden and Netherlands. 'Like the late George Maciunas, I spend half my life as a designer, half as an artist'.

Geoff Hendricks. Born 1931, Littleton, New Hampshire. Professor of Art at Mason Gross School of Arts, Rutgers University. First shows of sky paintings New York 1966 and Tokyo 1968. Friends with Watt, Brecht and Kaprow since 1956. Central role in organising Maciunas' *Fluxmass* (1970). Celebrated tenth wedding anniversary with *Flux Divorce* (1971). Fluxminister for Maciunas' *Flux-Wedding and Fluxfuneral*. First collaborations with Francesco Conz (1974), leading to editions of boxes, books and silkscreens on cloth.

Dick Higgins. Born 1938, Cambridge, United Kingdom. Studied music with Cage and Cowell. Co-founded Happenings (1958), Fluxus (1961), and founded Something Else Press (1967-73) and Unpublished/Printed Editions (1972-85). Research Associate at SUNY Purchase (1983-89) and Williams College (1989-). One or two-artist exhibitions in Berlin, Buenos Aires, Montreal, Geneva, Napoli, New York, San Francisco, Amsterdam, Krakow. Innumerable group shows, 1960-present. 40 books of poems and essays including *foew&ombwhnw* (1969) and *Pattern Poems: guide to an unknown literature* (1987).

Joe Jones. Born in 1934. Lives in Stroudsburg U.S.A. and Dusseldorf. Early Fluxus associate, with Higgins, Ay-O, Brecht, Cage, Corner, Flynt, Lchiyanagi, Kosugi, MacLow, Maxfield, Ono, Riley, Watts and Young. Artist-composer and inventor of musical instruments such as *Hat with Mechanical Drummer and Dancer* (1963) and other percussion machines for use by untrained performers. Contributed to Yam Day Concert (1963) and subsequent Fluxus events. Records include *Joe Jones in Performance* (1978: Harlekin).

Milan Knizak. Born 1940, Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Art studies Prague (1958-64). Served in Czech army (1959-62). Travelled in Poland, 1963. Co-founder of Aktual Group, Prague, 1964. First association with Fluxus artists Dick Higgins, Alison Knowles, Ben Vautier in Prague, 1966. Imprisoned in Prague 1966. Travels in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, Iceland (1968), and U.S.A. (1968-70). Lived in Czechoslovakia 1970-71, imprisoned in Klicov (1972-73) and Prague (1974-75). Lives and works in Prague. 'Exert an influence through every gesture, word, act,

glance, your appearance through everything. Simple, anonymous activity!'

Alison Knowles. Born 1933, New York City. Visual artist, composer and performance poet. Sole female member of original Fluxus group touring Europe in 60s. Her portable environments include *The Big Book* (1966), *The House of Dust* (1968), *The Book of Bean* (1981) and *A Finger Book* (1985 and 1987). Associate professor of art, California Institute of the Arts (1970-73). Has performed her work extensively in U.S.A. and Europe, and toured Japan (1973). Works in cloth and paper exhibited with Emily Harvey, New York (1990).

Jackson MacLow. Born Chicago 1922. Poet, composer, visual artist, multi-media performance artist. In June 1961 performed chance-generated play, *Verdurous Sanguinaria* at Maciunas' A.G. Gallery, New York. Contributed 20 pages to La Monte Young's *An Anthology* (1963). Works performed in Wiesbaden, Paris and Copenhagen Fluxus Festivals. As pacifist 'resigned' from Fluxus in 1963, in protest against 'outrageous demonstrations' proposed by Maciunas. Met Francesco Conz in 1980 and produced serigraph portfolios in 1985, 1989, 1990. Performances throughout U.S.A., Europe and New Zealand.

Charlotte Moorman. Born Little Rock, Arkansas. Trained as classical cellist. Since 1964 has created, composed and performed environments, living sculptures, performance art, action music, mixed media and video-art world-wide in art galleries, museums, concert halls, television and radio broadcasts, lofts, in open air performances and even under water. In 1963 founded the Annual Avant Garde Festival of New York. Has also collaborated in performances and artworks with Nam June Paik throughout the world. Hailed by Varese as the 'Jeanne d'Arc of New Music'.

Nam June Paik. Born 1932, Seoul, Korea. Music studies in Tokyo, Munich and Freiburg. Met Cage at Darmstadt in 1958. Performed *Hommage à John Cage, Music for Tape Recorder and Piano* in 1959. Met Maciunas in 1961. In 1963 participated in Neo-Dada Music events, Fluxus Festivals, and exhibited prepared T.V. sets. Moved to New York in 1964 and began collaborative performances with Charlotte Moorman. First video installation (1965); *T.V. bra* (1969); *T.V. Garden* (1977); Whitney Retrospective (1982).

Ben Patterson. Born 1934 in Pittsburgh. University degrees in music and science. Played as principal double-bassist for several orchestras. In 1960 moved to Cologne and produced first Fluxus works. Organised 1962 Wiesbaden Fluxus International Festival with Maciunas. Retired from Fluxus in 70s with occasional festival performances in Wiesbaden (1982) and Sao Paulo (1983). Since 1988 has exhibited at Emily Harvey Gallery, New York, at Galerie Schuppenhauer, Cologne, and has produced editions for Francesco Conz.

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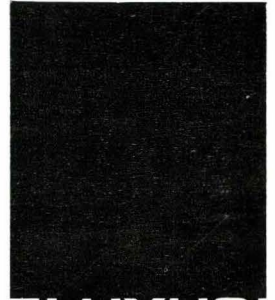
Serge III. 1963-72 Fluxus work and concerts. 1966-67 imprisoned in Prague. 1974-present, assorted actions. 1988, Nice retrospective. 1989 Paris retrospective. 'Fluxus is a non-movement, a non-system which reveals the derisory side of the important, and the important side of the derisory. It's a permanent questioning of everything. Fluxus is always clear, thanks to the simplicity and the sobriety of its means. I hope that Fluxus will be reborn in a similar non-movement'.

Daniel Spoerri. Born 1930, Galati, Rumania. Moved to Switzerland, 1942. Classical ballet studies, Zurich and Paris 1950-54. Principal dancer, Bern Opera 1955-57. Moved to Paris in 1959, and founded Editions M.A.T. Associated with Arman, Klein, Tinguely and Christo, and joined New Realists group, 1960. Participated in Fluxus Festivals in Paris and Dusseldorf, 1962. Brief association with New York Fluxus, 1964. Founded 'Eat Art Gallery', and Spoerri Restaurant, in Dusseldorf, 1968. Retrospective in Innsbruck, 1981.

Ben Vautier. Born 1935, Naples, 'genius'. Lives in Nice. Founder of 'Total Art'. Exhibited 40 drawings of a banana (1957); Stains (1958); First painted texts - *Bar - Hotel* (1960); Chance Objects (1958-62); First Events (1959); Living Sculptures (1959-62); Holes (1960), Mystery Boxes (1960); Everything (Tout) (1960). Met Maciunas and other Fluxus artists at Mislits Fair, London 1962. Introduced by Maciunas to work of Cage, Flynt and George Brecht. Invited Maciunas to Nice and prepared Nice Fluxus Festival in 1963 with Serge III, Erébo and Bozzi. Since then, innumerable exhibitions, performances and publications.

Robert Watts. Born 1923, Burlington, Iowa. Studies in mechanical engineering, and service as engineering officer in U.S. navy. Studies at Art Students League of New York, (1946-48). Professor of Art at Rutgers University, (1953-84). First event and performance works utilizing mixed media: *Magic Kazoo* (1960). Close association with Maciunas and Fluxus activities from 1961. In 1963 organised and participated with George Brecht in Yam festival's five month series of events. Met Francesco Conz in 1973 and regularly visited Verona from 1980 until his death. Innumerable one-man and group shows from early fifties.

Emmett Williams. Born 1925, Greenville, South Carolina. Poet, painter, printmaker, performer. 'Francesco is a close friend. I work with him *not* because we're friends, but because I need the money, as much as I can get from as much as he has got. I suppose that's why he calls me the poor artist who acts like a grand duke. Franco used to tell me what to make: old Fluxus pieces, concrete poems, and such. Now he lets me make what I want to make. And what am I making for him down there in Verona? ... a billboard size pastoral poem for Rainer Maria Rilke written in tree-language; twenty proposals for the stained-glass windows of the Fluxus Cathedral; and so much more that neither he nor I had ever dreamed of! Thank you, Franco'.



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