

VPAS 3340.501 (81942)

Writing in the Arts

Fall 2020

Dr. Charissa N. Terranova

University of Texas at Dallas

Arts & Humanities

Module 8 Fluxus and Computers 10/22/2020-11/02/2020

Thursday October 22 4 pm

Professor Lecture

Reading:

- Hannah B. Higgins, "An Introduction to Alison Knowles's *The House of Dust*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 195-199.
- Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, "The Book of the Future: Alison Knowles's *The House of Dust*," *Mainframe Experimentalism*, 200-208.
- Questions and Discussion

**Module 8 Fluxus and Computers 10/22/2020-
11/02/2020**

Thursday October 22 4 pm

- Professor Lecture
- Questions and Discussion

Monday October 26 10 am

- Submit first draft of 500-word essay to peer-editor

Thursday October 29 10 am

- Peer-editor returns 500-word essay

Monday November 2 10 am

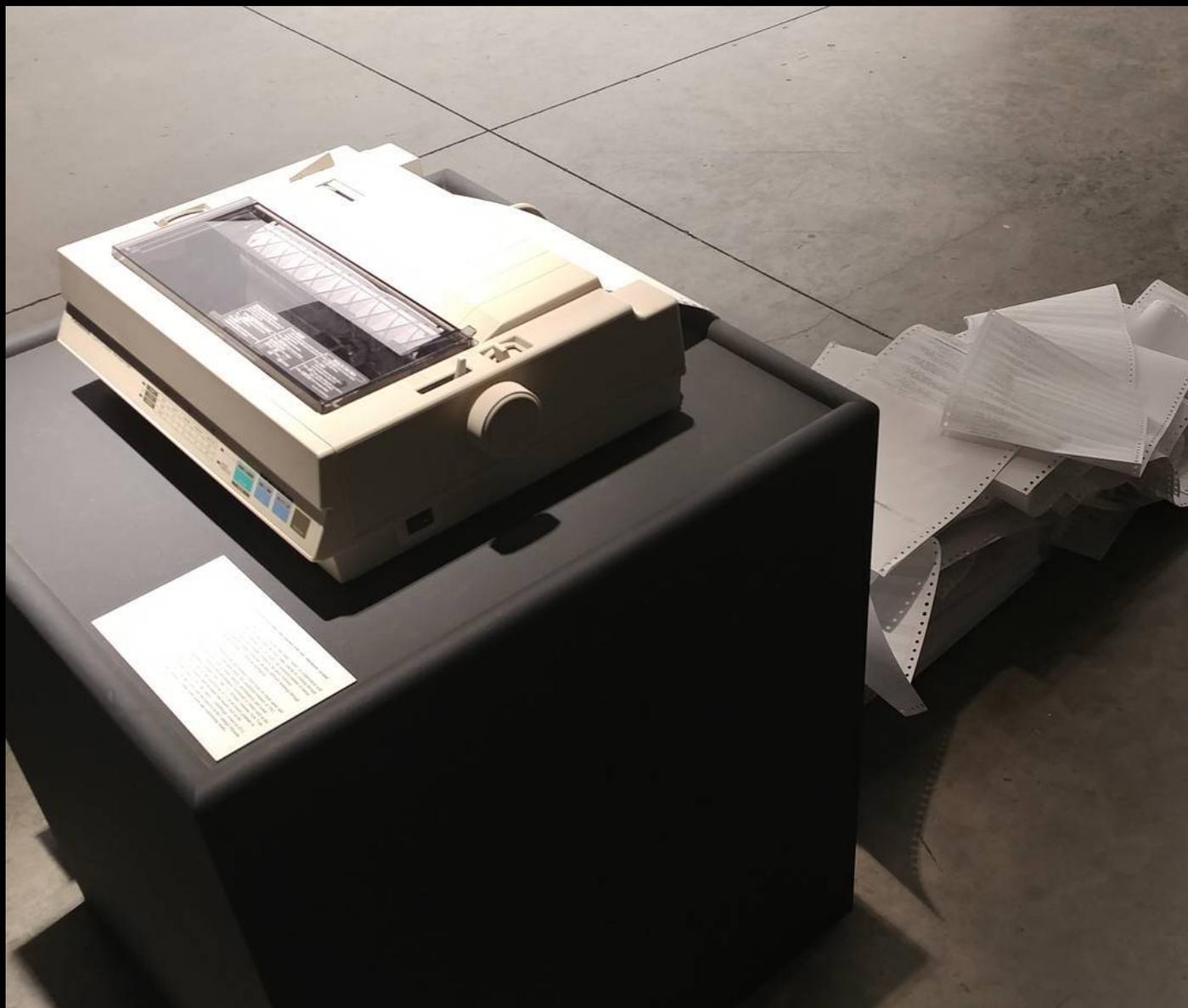
- Final polished 500-word essay due to professor



Left: Fluxus
Women Mieko
Shiomi & Alison
Knowles
photographed by
Peter Moore, 1964

Right: Fluxus artist Alison
Knowles, b. 1933





Allison Knowles
and James
Tenney,
The House of
Dust, 1974

Fluxus (1960-ongoing)
Computers
Embodiment

Bodies in Art

- **Abstract Expressionism: Jackson Pollock's technique [haptic vs. Clement Greenberg's "opticality"]**
- **Allan Kaprow: from painting to happening**
- **Leo Steinberg's "flatbed picture plane"**
- **John Cage's silent composition 4'33 as a means of embodiment**
- **FLUXUS...and computers**



Jackson Pollock, Cathedral, 1947

FLATBED PICTURE PLANE

Leo Steinberg



Robert Rauschenberg, *Monogram*, 1957-59

I borrow the term from the flatbed printing press—‘a horizontal bed on which a horizontal printing surface rests’ (Webster). And I propose to use the word to describe the characteristic picture plane of the 1960s—a pictorial surface whose angulation with respect to the human posture is the precondition of its changed content. The all-purpose picture plane underlying this post-Modernist painting has made the course of art once again non-linear and unpredictable. What I have called the flatbed is more than a surface distinction if it is understood as a change within painting that changed the relationship between artist and image, image and viewer. Yet this internal change is no more than a symptom of changes which go far beyond questions of picture planes, or of painting as such. It is part of a shakeup which contaminates all purified categories. The deepening inroads of art into non-art continue to alienate the connoisseur as art defects and departs into strange territories leaving the old stand-by criteria to rule an eroding plain.

- Born in Los Angeles to John Milton Cage, Sr., an inventor, and Lucretia ('Crete') Harvey, an amateur artist and occasional journalist for *The Los Angeles Times*.
- Worked during the heyday of Abstract Expressionism
- Honed his skills in the midst of the growing American avant garde. Neither a painter or a sculptor,
- Incorporated unconventional instrumentation and the idea of environmental music dictated by chance.
- Approach to composition was deeply influenced by Asian philosophies, focusing on the harmony that exists in nature, as well as elements of chance.
- Famous not only for his radical works, like *4'33"* (1952), in which the ambient noise of the recital hall created the music, but also for his innovative collaborations with artists like Merce Cunningham and Robert Rauschenberg.
- These partnerships helped break down the divisions between the various realms of art production, such as music, performance, painting, and dance, allowing for new interdisciplinary work to be produced.
- Cage discovered that chance was as important of a force governing a musical composition as the artist's will, and allowed it to play a central role in all of his compositions. Although each piece has a basic, composed structure, the overall effect varied with each performance as different variables like the location and audience directly affected the sounds that were produced.
- By breaking with the historically determined preconception that music was made by musicians using traditional instruments to perform structured and prearranged compositions, Cage opened up a new wealth of possibilities within modern art. His revolutionary performances ushered in an era of experimentation in all media and shifted the focus away from the artist's inner psyche to the artist's contemporary environment.
- Cage focused his compositional career on the incorporation of unconventional elements such as kitchen gadgets, metal sheets, various common objects, and even silence into his works to change the way modern audiences listened to music and appreciated their surroundings.
- Taught groundbreaking courses on composition at the New Bauhaus, Black Mountain College, and The New School in NY
- Many artists, such as R. Rauschenberg, E. Kienholz, and members of the Fluxus group, too Cage's course in experimental composition at The New School, which he taught from 1956 to 1961.

John Cage (1912-1992)



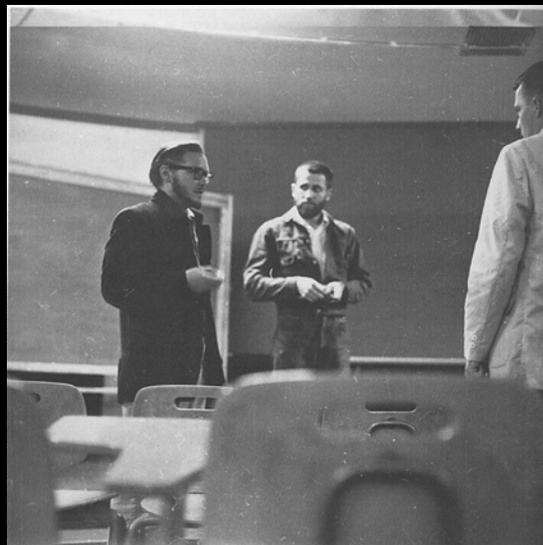
Dick Higgins, a Fluxus artist, claimed:
“The principle ideas we came to share,
mainly through Cage, were derived
from Zen-Buddhism, the I-Ching, Eric
Satie, and Marcel Duchamp.”



Above: Sign for Black Mountain College, which hosted John Cage, David Tudor, Robert Rauschenberg, et. al., in Theater Piece No. 1, 1952, the first happening

Right: Robert Rauschenberg, White Painting (Seven Panels), 1951

Avant-garde Art and Music



Robert Whitman, Allan Kaprow, and
George Brecht



George Brecht (center seated) and
Allan Kaprow (rear, near coat)

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MUSIC AND MUSIC WORKSHOPS

1031 COMPOSITION

Fall. Tuesdays, 4:20-6:00 P.M. \$24. (Reg. fee: p. 6)

JOHN CAGE

Beginning September 25. Experimental music, a course in musical composition with technical, musicological, and philosophical aspects, open to those with or without previous training.

Whereas conventional theories of harmony, counterpoint and musical form are based on the pitch or frequency component of sound, this course offers problems and solutions in the field of composition based on other components of sound: duration, timbre, amplitude and morphology; the course also encourages inventiveness.

A full exposition of the contemporary musical scene in the light of the work of Anton Webern, and present developments in music for magnetic tape (musique concrète; elektronische Musik).

Musique concrète (meaning “concrete music”) is a genre of electroacoustic music that is made in part from acousmatic sound. It can feature sounds derived from recordings of musical instruments, voice, and the natural environment as well as those created using synthesizers and computer-based digital signal processing. Also, compositions in this idiom are not restricted to the normal musical rules of melody, harmony, rhythm, metre, and so on. Originally contrasted with “pure” *elektronische Musik* (based solely on the production and manipulation of electronically produced sounds rather than recorded sounds), the theoretical basis of *musique concrète* as a compositional practice was developed by Pierre Schaeffer, beginning in the early 1940s.

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-musicapp-medieval-modern/chapter/musique-concrete/>

Pierre Schaeffer at the Studio 54 desk adjusting a Moog



By 1949 Schaeffer's compositional work was known publicly as *musique concrète*. Schaeffer stated: "when I proposed the term 'musique concrète,' I intended ... to point out an opposition with the way musical work usually goes. Instead of notating musical ideas on paper with the symbols of solfège and entrusting their realization to well-known instruments, the question was to collect concrete sounds, wherever they came from, and to abstract the musical values they were potentially containing." According to Pierre Henry, "musique concrète was not a study of timbre, it is focused on envelopes, forms. It must be presented by means of non-traditional characteristics, you see . . . one might say that the origin of this music is also found in the interest in "plastifying" music, of rendering it plastic like sculpture...musique concrète, in my opinion . . . led to a manner of composing, indeed, a new mental framework of composing." Schaeffer had developed an aesthetic that was centred upon the use of sound as a primary compositional resource. The aesthetic also emphasised the importance of play (*jeu*) in the practice of sound based composition. Schaeffer's use of the word *jeu*, from the verb *jouer*, carries the same double meaning as the English verb play: "to enjoy oneself by interacting with one's surroundings," as well as "to operate a musical instrument."



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4ea0sBrw6M>

EVENT SCORES

THREE TELEPHONE EVENTS

- When the telephone rings, it is allowed to continue ringing, until it stops.
- When the telephone rings, the receiver is lifted, then replaced.
- When the telephone rings, it is answered.

Performance note: Each event comprises all occurrences within its duration.

Spring, 1961

THREE LAMP EVENTS

- on.
off.
- lamp
- off. on.

"It is sure to be dark
if you shut your eyes." (J. Ray)

Summer, 1961

Event Scores, involve simple actions, ideas, and objects from everyday life recontextualized as performance. Event Scores are texts that can be seen as proposal pieces or instructions for actions. The idea of the score suggests musicality. Like a musical score, Event Scores can be realized by artists other than the original creator and are open to variation and interpretation.

Following scores are taken from BY ALISON KNOWLES from A GREAT BEAR PAMPHLET (1965)

- **#1 Shuffle (1961)**

The performer or performers shuffle into the performance area and away from it, above, behind, around, or through the audience. They perform as a group or solo: but quietly.

Premiered August 1963 at National Association of Chemists and Performers in New York at the Advertiser's club.

- **#2 Proposition (1962)**

Make a salad.

Premiered October 21st, 1962 at Institute for Contemporary Arts in London.

- **#2a Variation #1 on Proposition (1964)**

Make a soup.

Premiered Nov 9th, 64 at Cafe au Go Go in NY.

- **#3 Nivea Cream Piece (1962) - for Oscar Williams**

First performer comes on stage with a jar of Nivea cream. The performer massages hands in front of the microphone. Other performers enter one at a time. They make a mass of massaging hands and leave one at a time following the first performer. [click here](#) to listen to a recording from Fluxsweet concert at [Harvestworks](#) organized by Taketo Shimada

Premiered Nov 25, 62 at Alle Season Theater, Copenhagen at Fluxus Festival.

- **#3a Variation #1 on Nivea Cream Piece**

Large quantities of Nivea Cream must be available, at least one large jar per person. The performers enter and each lathers up his arms and face, then his colleagues, in a fragrant pig pile.

- **#4 Child Art Piece (1962)**

The performer in a single child, two or three years old. One or both parents may be present to assist him with a pail of water or a banana etc. When a child leaves the stage the performance is over.

Premiered at the Fluxus Festival, Staatliche Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf on Feb 3rd, 63.



John Cage, New School for Social Research, 1956-1960

JOHN CAGE

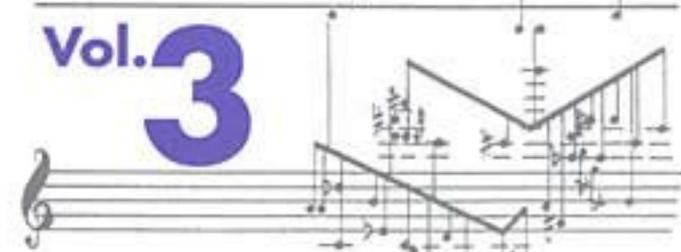
Complete Piano Music


SCENE



„Music of Changes“

Vol. **3**



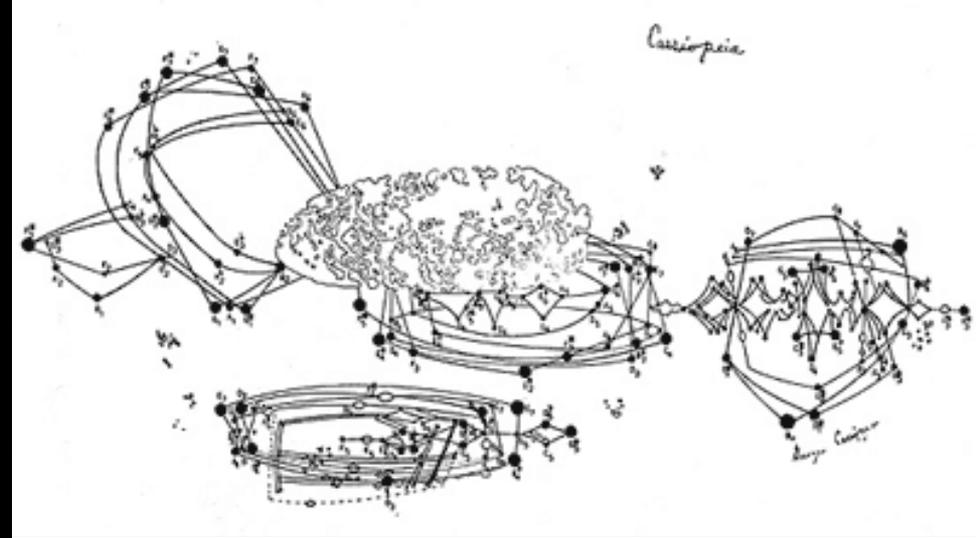
Steffen Schleiermacher

John Cage, Music of Changes, 1951 composed for pianist David Tudor – indeterminate music; Cage used coin tosses, and the I Ching, a Chinese text bearing a symbol system used to identify order in chance events,

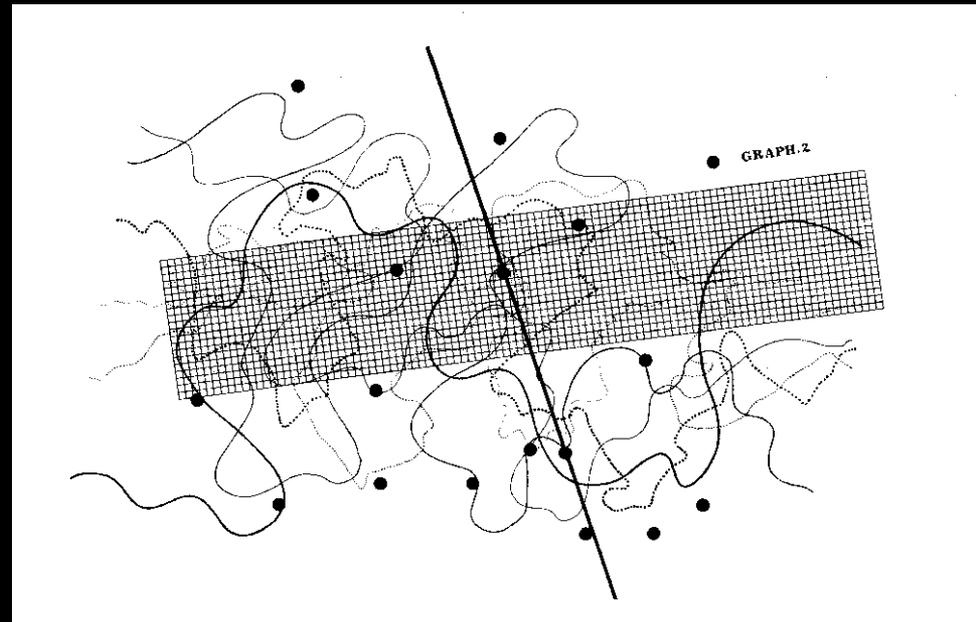
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NJsk_tcuS04



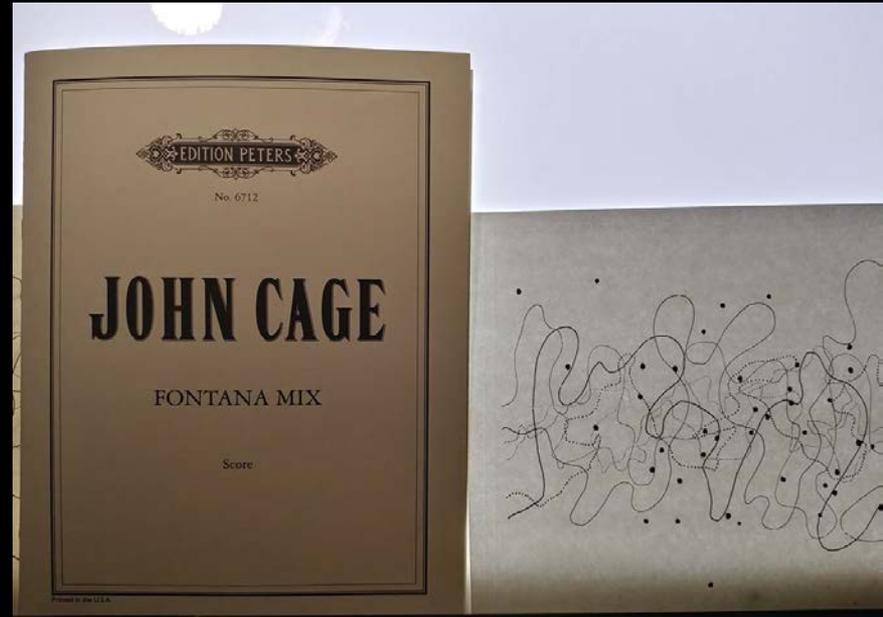
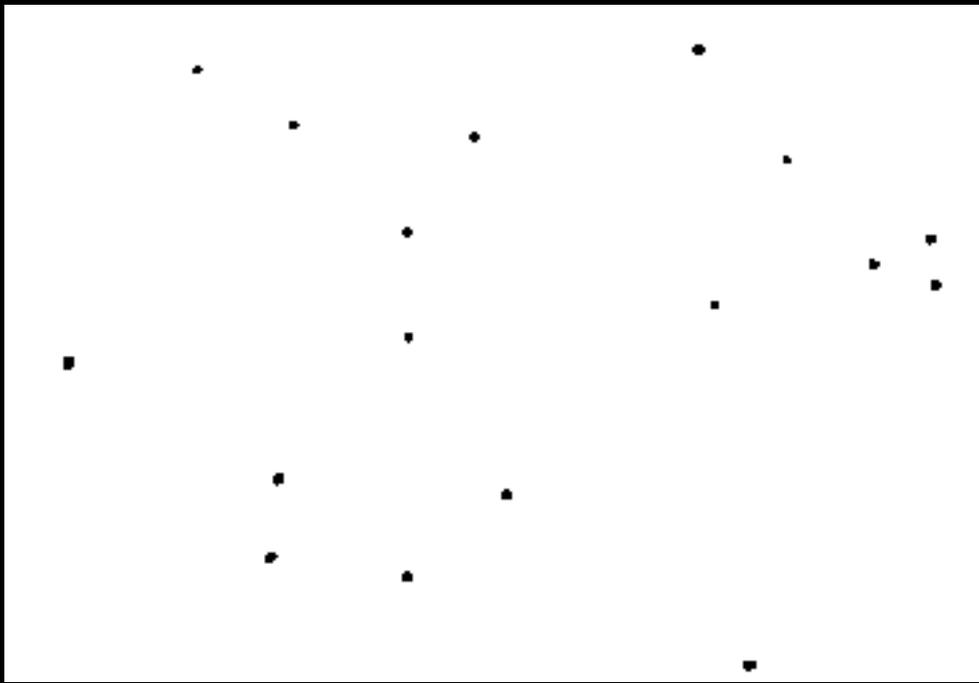
John Cage, New School for Social Research, 1956-1960



George Gacioppo, Cassiopeia, sound pictogram, 1962



John Cage, Fontana Mix, sound pictogram, 1958

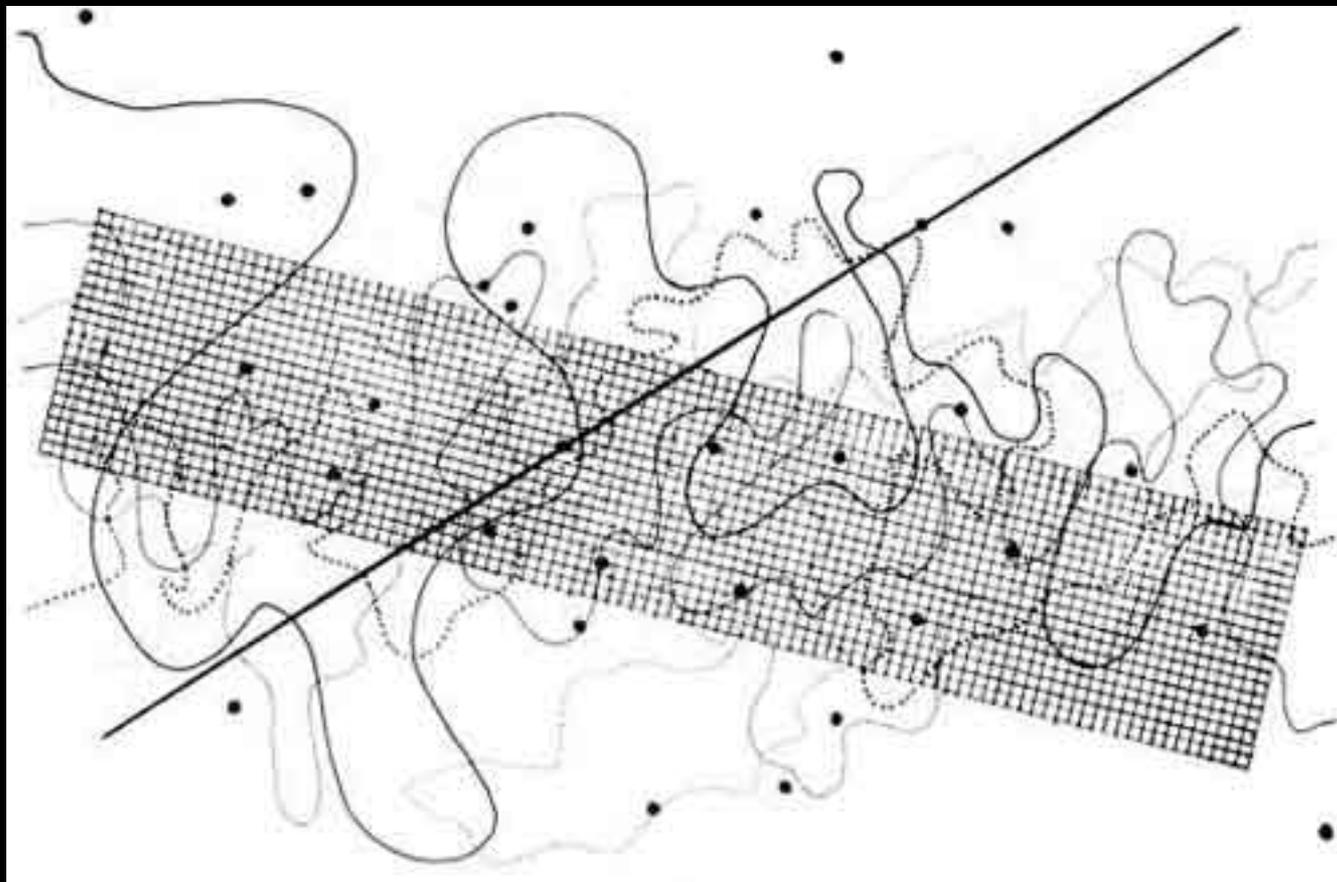


Artist: John Cage

Title: "Fontana Mix"

Date: 1958

Details: Experimental musical
composition



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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05wBPhWD44U>

Fontana Mix consists of a total of 20 pages of graphic materials: ten pages covered with six curved lines each, and ten sheets of transparent film covered with randomly-placed points. In accordance with a specific system, and using the intersecting points of a raster screen, two of the pages produce connecting lines and measurements that can be freely assigned to musical occurrences such as volume, tone color, and pitch. The interpreter no longer finds a score in the customary sense, but rather a treatment manual for the notation of a composition.

<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/fontana-mix/>

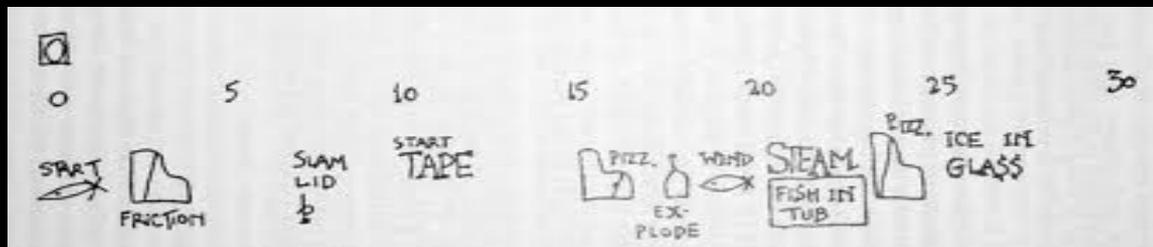
John Cage performing "Water Walk" in January, 1960 on the popular TV show I've Got A Secret:

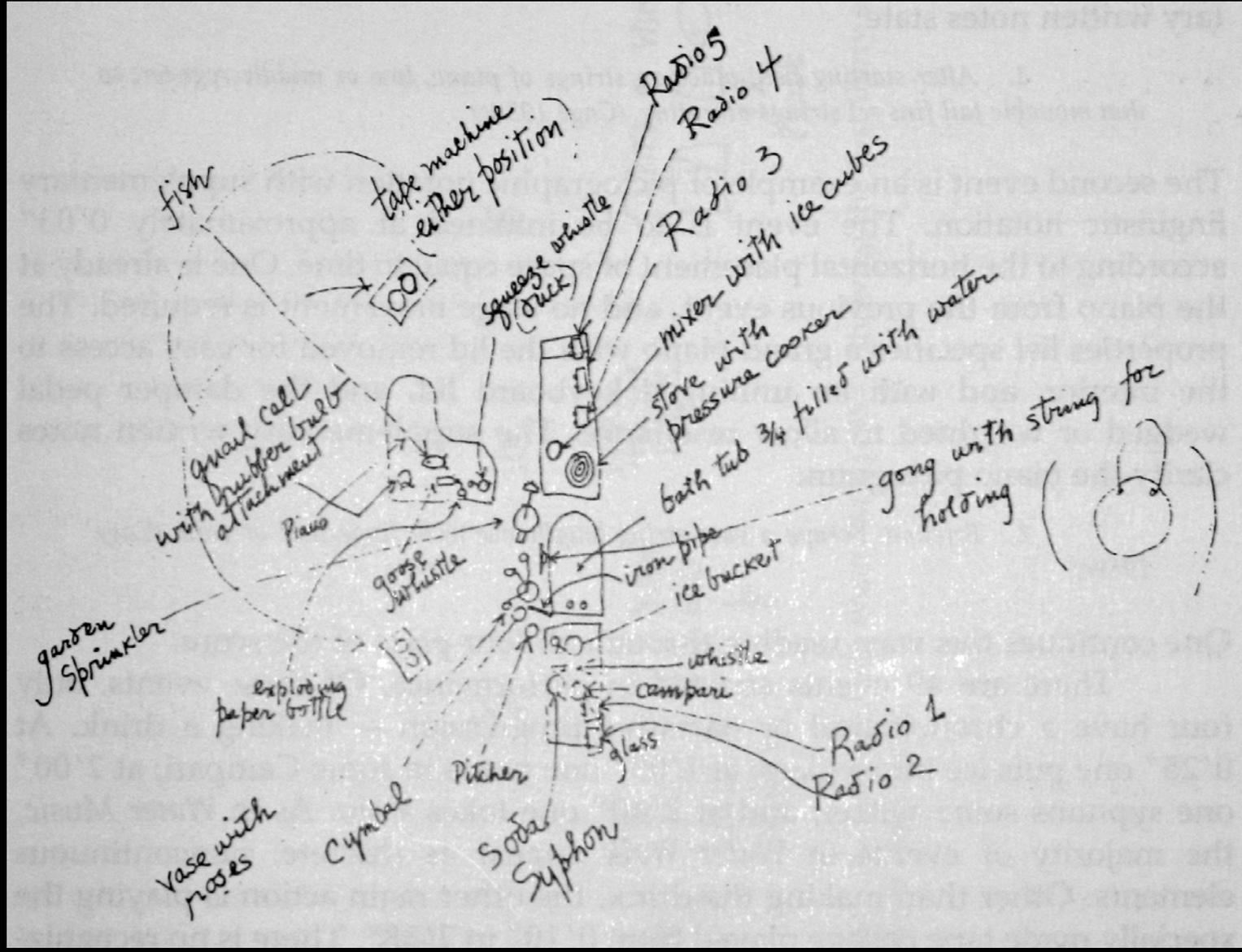
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SSulycqZH-U&t=4s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXOIkT1-QWY>



Cage performed "Water Walk" on *I've Got a Secret*, the long-running occupation-guessing game show whose guest roster also included chess prodigy Bobby Fischer, "fifth Beatle" Pete Best, and fried-chicken icon Colonel Harland Sanders. For this particular episode, wrote Dan Colman in our earlier post, "the TV show offered Cage something of a teachable moment, a chance to introduce the broader public to his brand of avant-garde music."

For *Water Walk*, Cage rounded up a variety of "instruments" all to do with that liquid — a bathtub, a pitcher, ice cubes in a mixer — and the unconventional symphony they produce culminates in the Rube Goldbergian mixing of a drink, the sipping of which the composition dictates about two and a half minutes in. Naturally, Cage being Cage, the piece incorporates audience reaction noises; when host Gary Moore warns him that certain members of the studio audience will laugh, Cage responds, "I consider laughter better than tears."

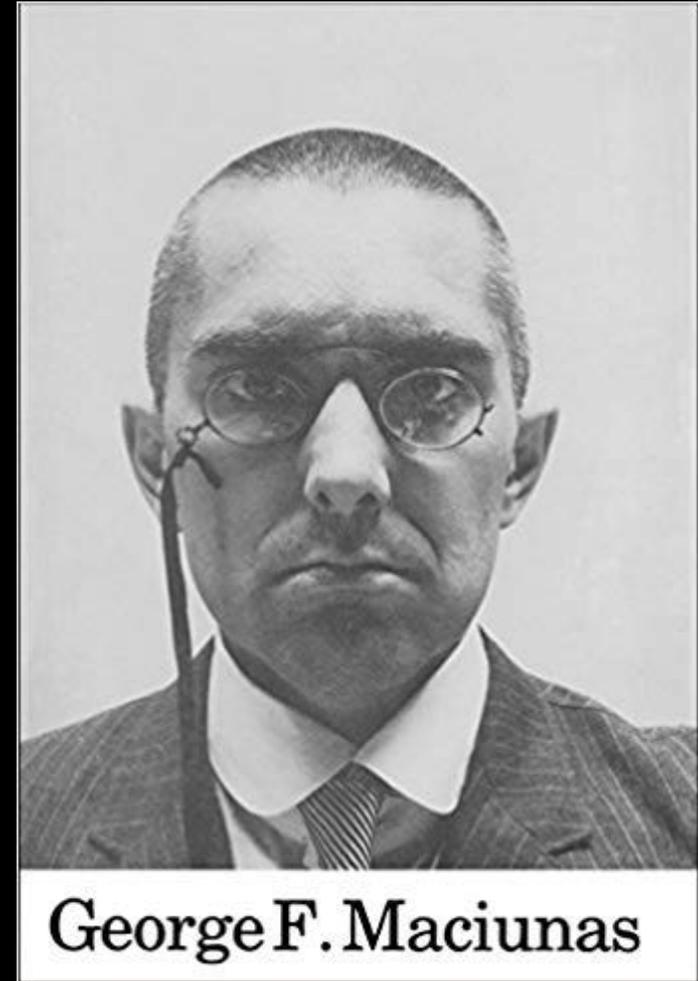




In the group known as Fluxus we see a diminution of the idea of art being created by a single figure, the artist as genius-creator, as genius-hero. Rather, art should be a group endeavor and anonymous in terms of authorship.

In the figure of the Lithuanian-born Maciunas we see something of an art historian com impresario-manque. Coining the term “fluxus,” Maciunas gave the group its name. When asked in 1978, the last year of his life, whether or not he thought that Fluxus was art, he replied “No. I think it’s good inventive gags.” After all and amid all he thought of himself as someone who made good jokes.

Leaving Europe for the USA in 1948, Maciunas settled in New York City with his parents, there diligently taking up the study of art history. He had three courses of study: 1949-52 art, graphic art and architecture at the Cooper Union, New York; 1952-54 architecture and musicology at Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh; and 1955-1960, a continuous study of European and Siberian art at the time of medieval migration of peoples undertaken at the Institute of Fine Arts of NYU.



1931-1978



In 1961, Maciunas opened AG Gallery on Madison Avenue in NYC. While he would ultimately incur terrible losses, sending him to Germany fleeing creditors, the gallery would be the crucible for Fluxus as a movement. George Maciunas, Announcement card for *Evenings*, AG Gallery, New York, July 1961



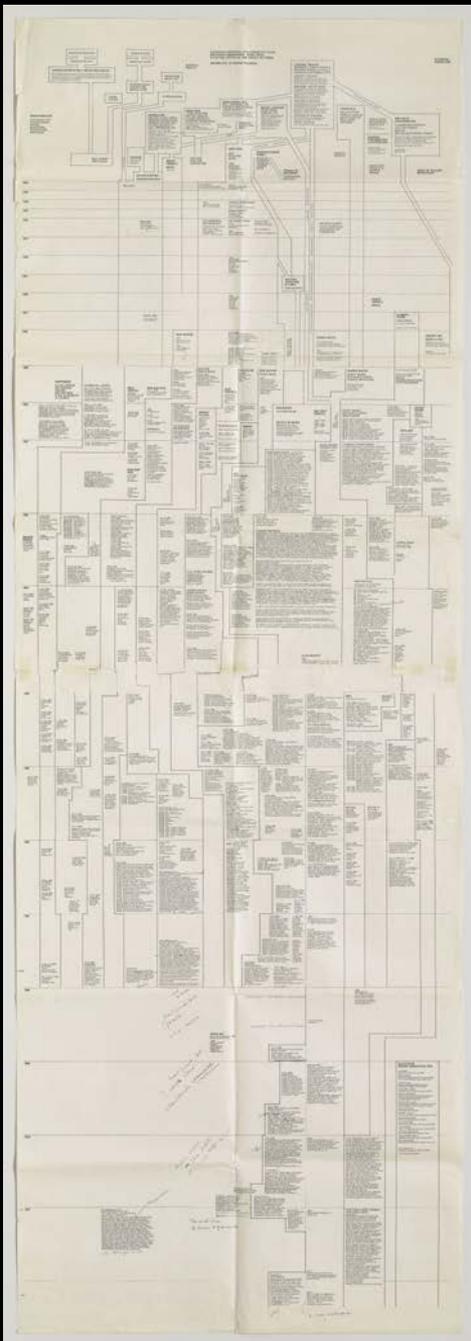
George Maciunas, Self-portrait, 1961, black-and-white photograph



Right: George Maciunas, Fluxshop Stationery (recto), c. 1963



Paintings & Drawings of Yoko Ono at AG Gallery (1961)



Rather than stylistic cohesion,
the Fluxus group should
instead be understood
according to individual
experiences.

George Maciunas, Diagram of Historical
Development of Fluxus and Other 4
Dimensional, Aural, Optic, Olfactory, Epithelial
and Tactile Art Forms, c.1973

FLUXUS

flux (flüks), n. [OF., fr. L. *fluxus*, fr. *fluere*, *fluxum*, to flow. See **FLUENT**; cf. **FLUSH**, n. (of cards).] 1. Med.

a A flowing or fluid discharge from the bowels or other part: esp., an excessive and morbid discharge: as, the bloody *flux*, or dysentery. b The matter thus discharged.
2. Act of flowing: a continuous moving on or passing by, as of a flowing stream; a continuing succession of changes.

3. A stream; copious flow; flood; outflow.
4. The setting in of the tide toward the shore. Cf. **REFLUX**.
5. State of being liquid through heat; fusion. *Rare*.

6. A fusible glass used as a base for enamels; also, an easily fusible enamel used as a ground for enamel painting.

7. **Chem. & Metal.** a Any substance or mixture used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals. Common metallurgical fluxes are silica and silicates (acidic), lime and limestone (basic), and fluorite (neutral). b Any substance applied to surfaces to be joined by soldering or welding, just prior to or during the operation, to clean and free them from oxide, thus promoting their union, as rosin.

8. **Math.** The integral over a surface of the normal component of a vector field. Cf. **STOKES' THEOREM**.

9. **Photom.** = 1st **LIGHT**, 18 b.

10. **Physics.** a The rate of flow or transfer of fluid or of energy across a surface. b By analogy, the surface integral of a vector distributed over a surface. Cf. **ELECTROSTATIC FLUX**, **MAGNETIC FLUX**.

11. **Plant Pathol.** A slime flux.

flux, v.; **FLUXED** (flükst); **FLUX'ING**. *Transitive*: 1. To cause to become fluid; to fuse; to treat with a flux.

2. To affect, or bring to a certain state, by subjecting to, or treating with, a flux. "*Fluxed* into another world." *South*.

3. **Med.** To cause a discharge from, as in purging.

—, *Intransitive*: 1. To flow freely. *Archaic*.

2. To become fluid; to melt.

3. To undergo a flux; specif., to bleed copiously. *Obs.*

flux (flüks), adj. [L. *fluxus*, fr. *fluere*. See **FLUX**, n.]

Manifesto:

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Purge the world of bourgeois sickness, "intellectual", professional & commercialized culture, **PURGE** the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionistic art, mathematical art, — **PURGE THE WORLD OF "AMERICANISM"**

2. Act of flowing: a continuous moving on or passing by, as of a flowing stream; a continuing succession of changes.
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PROMOTE A REVOLUTIONARY FLOOD AND TIDE IN ART,
— **Promote living art, anti-art, promote NON ART REALITY** to be fully grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals.

7. **Chem. & Metal.** a Any substance or mixture used to promote fusion, esp. the fusion of metals or minerals. Common metallurgical fluxes are silica and silicates (acidic), lime and limestone (basic), and fluorite (neutral). b Any substance applied to surfaces to be joined by soldering or welding, just prior to or during the operation, to clean and free them from oxide, thus promoting their union, as rosin.

FUSE the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutionaries into united front & action.



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AMERICAN STUDENTS & ARTISTS CENTER, 261 Bd. RASPAIL, PARIS 14^e
 CENTRE DE MUSIQUE (direction MUSICALE - Keith HUMBLE) PRESENTE

FESTUM FLUXORUM

POESIE, MUSIQUE ET ANTIMUSIQUE EVENEMENTIELLE ET CONCRETE

3 DECEMBRE 1962 LUNDI 20.30 HRS.	CONCERT NO.1, MUSIQUE EVENEMENTIELLE. RAOUL HAUSMANN: POESIE PHONETIQUE / JOSEPH BYRD: PIECE FOR R. MAXFIELD / JACKSON MAC LOW: THANKS II / ROBERT WATTS: NEWS & TWO INCHES / EMMETT WILLIAMS: ALPHABET SYMPHONY / G. BRECHT: DRIP MUSIC & DIRECTION / GEORGE MACIUNAS: IN MEMORIAM TO ADRIANO OLIVETTI / DICK HIGGINS: CONSTELLATION NO.7 & 4 / BENJAMIN PATTERSON: SEPTET FROM "LEMONS" AND SOLO FOR DANCER / LA MONTE YOUNG: COMPOSITION 1961 NUMBER 29 / NAM JUNE PAIK: ONE FOR VIOLIN SOLO & SERENADE FOR ALISON / WOLF VOSTELL: DECOLLAGE MUSIQUE "KLEENEX" / ALISON KNOWLES: PROPOSITION / TERRY RILEY: EARPIECE / G. BRECHT: WORD EVENT.
4 DECEMBRE 1962 JEUDI 20.30 HRS.	CONCERT NO.2, MUSIQUE INSTRUMENTALE ET VOCALE. JACKSON MAC LOW: LETTERS FOR IRIS NUMBERS FOR SILENCE & BIBLICAL POEMS / DICK HIGGINS: GRAPHIS 82 / EMMETT WILLIAMS: 4-DIRECTIONAL SONG OF DOUBT FOR 5 VOICES / GEORGE MACIUNAS: SOLO FOR UKULELE & SOLO FOR MOUTH AND MICROPHONE / BENJAMIN PATTERSON: VARIATIONS FOR DOUBLE BASS / GEORGE BRECHT: CARD PIECE FOR VOICE, FLUTE SOLO, STRING QUARTET AND SAXOPHONE SOLO / LA MONTE YOUNG: COMPOSITION 1960 NO. 7 (STRING QUARTET)
5 DECEMBRE 1962 MARDI 20.30 HRS.	CONCERT NO.3, DANIEL SPOERRI: COMPOSITION NO. X / KENJIRO EZAKI: DISCRETION / TOSHI ICHIYANAGI: STANZAS AND MUSIC FOR ELECTRIC METRONOME / YASUNAO TONE ANAGRAM FOR STRINGS / EMMETT WILLIAMS: LITANY AND RESPONSE / TAKENISHI KOSUGI: MICRO I & ANIMA I / ROBERT PAGE: GUITAR SOLO / NAM JUNE PAIK: TO BE DETERMINED
6 DECEMBRE 1962 MERCREDI 20.30 HRS.	CONCERT NO.4, ROBERT FILLIOU: POI POI SYMPHONY NO. 2 / ARTHUR KOPCKE: MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK / ROBERT WATTS: EVENT 13 / SYLVANO BUSSOTTI: PIECE FOR PAIK / SIMONE MORRIS: DANCE CONSTRUCTION / GEORGE BRECHT: CANDLE PIECE FOR RADIOS / DICK HIGGINS: DANGER MUSIC NO. 17 / DIETER SCHNEBEL: VISIBLE MUSIC II, (SOLO FOR ONE CONDUCTOR) / TOSHI ICHIYANAGI: IBM FOR MERCE CUNNINGHAM / B. PATTERSON: TWO PIECES FROM METHODS & PROCESSES / LA MONTE YOUNG: COMPOSITION 1960 NO. 3
7 DECEMBRE 1962 VENDREDI 20.30 HRS.	CONCERT NO.5, POUR PIANO. TOSHI ICHIYANAGI: MUSIC FOR PIANO NOS. 2, 5 AND 7 / LA MONTE YOUNG: 566 TO HENRY FLYNT / GYORGY LIGETI: TROIS BAGATELLES / PHILIP CORNER: PIANO ACTIVITIES (FOR 10 PIANISTS) / GEORGE MACIUNAS: PIANO PIECE NO.1 FOR N.J.P. / GIUSEPPE CHIARI: GESTI SUL PIANO / GRIFITH ROSE: SECOND ENNEAD / TERRY RILEY: PIECE FOR 2 PIANOS & MAGNETIC TAPE / YORIAKI MATSUDAIRA: CO - ACTION / GEORGE BRECHT: INCIDENTAL MUSIC / LA MONTE YOUNG: PIANO PIECE FOR D. TUDOR NO.
8 DECEMBRE 1962 SAMEDI 19.00 HRS.	CONCERT NO.6, MUSIQUE ENREGISTREE ET FILMS. JOHN CAGE: MUSIC FOR THE MARRYIN MAIDEN & FONTANA MIX / RICHARD MAXFIELD: COUGH MUSIC, RADIO MUSIC, PASTORAL SYMPHONY AND NIGHT MUSIC / STAN VANDERBEEK: (FILMS) A LA MODE, WHAT WHO HOW / ACHOO MR. KEROCHEV / CIONI CARPI: POINT AND COUNTERPOINT / GEORGE BRECHT: YELLOW EVENTS, AND 2 DURATIONS / NAM JUNE PAIK: FILMS / DICK HIGGINS: REQUIEM
8 DECEMBRE 1962 SAMEDI 21.00 HRS.	CONCERT NO.7 POESIE OUVERTE. FRANÇOIS DUFRENE: LE TOMBEAU DE PIERRE LAROUSSE / ROBERT FILLIOU: PERE LACHAISE NO.1 / BRION GYSIN: PERMUTATIONS SANS FLUX / JEAN-CLARENCE LAMBERT: X ALEAS / GHERASIM LUCA: QUART D'HEURE DE CULTURE METAPHYSIQUE. SOIREE ORGANISEE AVEC LE CONCOURS DU DOMAINE POETIQUE. LA PARTICIPATION DE JACQUES GRUBER ET JEAN-LOUP PHILIPPE.

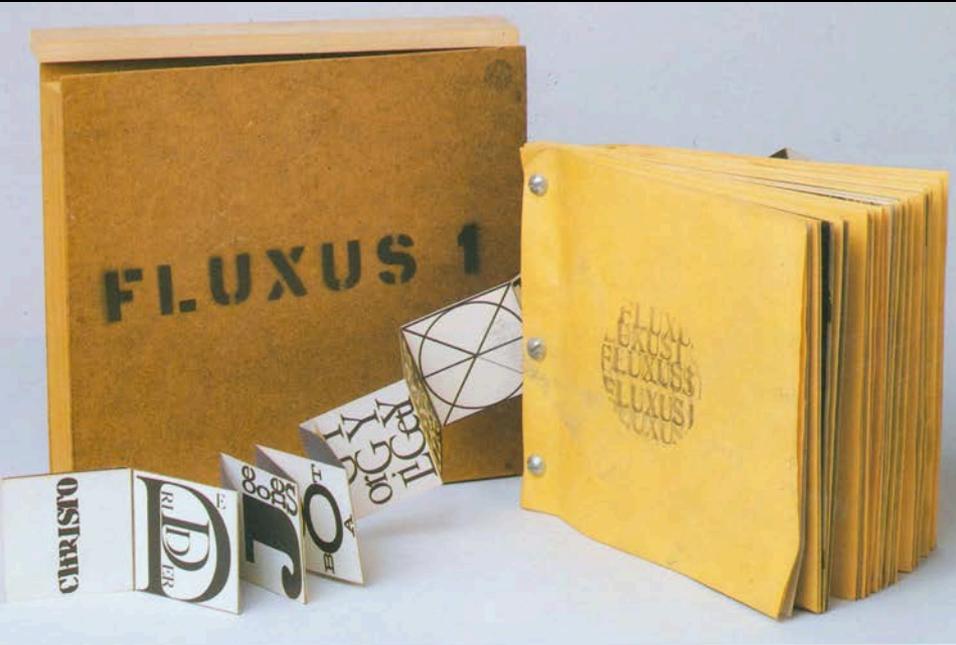
PLACES: 4 N.E., 2 N.E. ETUDIANTS, 20 N.E. ABONNEMENT POUR LES

Left: Maciunas' Fluxus Manifesto, copies of which were thrown into the audience at the Festum Fluxorum Fluxus, Düsseldorf, February 1963

Right: Billet for Festum Fluxorum in Paris

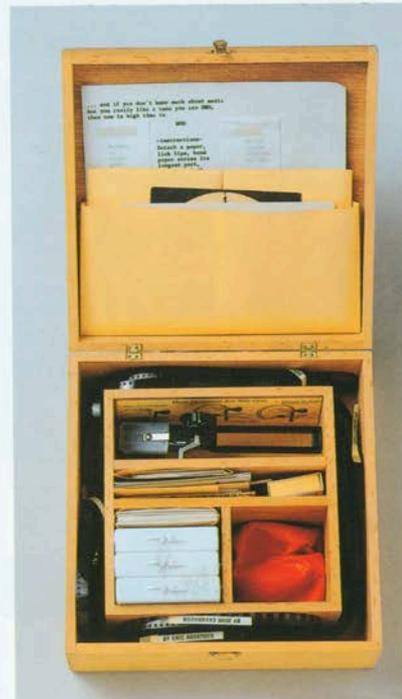
author as group

The French literary critic Roland Barthes would say “that neutral, composite, oblique space where [her] subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body of writing.” Barthes criticizes the reader's tendency to consider aspects of the author's identity—his political views, historical context, religion, ethnicity, psychology, or other biographical or personal attributes—to distill meaning from his work. The word “composite” in the quote suggests that the author is a construction, a figure made bodily by way of the convergence of forces brought together by the overlap of larger social and linguistic structures. The figure of the author is a participant and product in a social structure.



author as group

assembled by George Maciunas, Fluxus 1,
1961-65



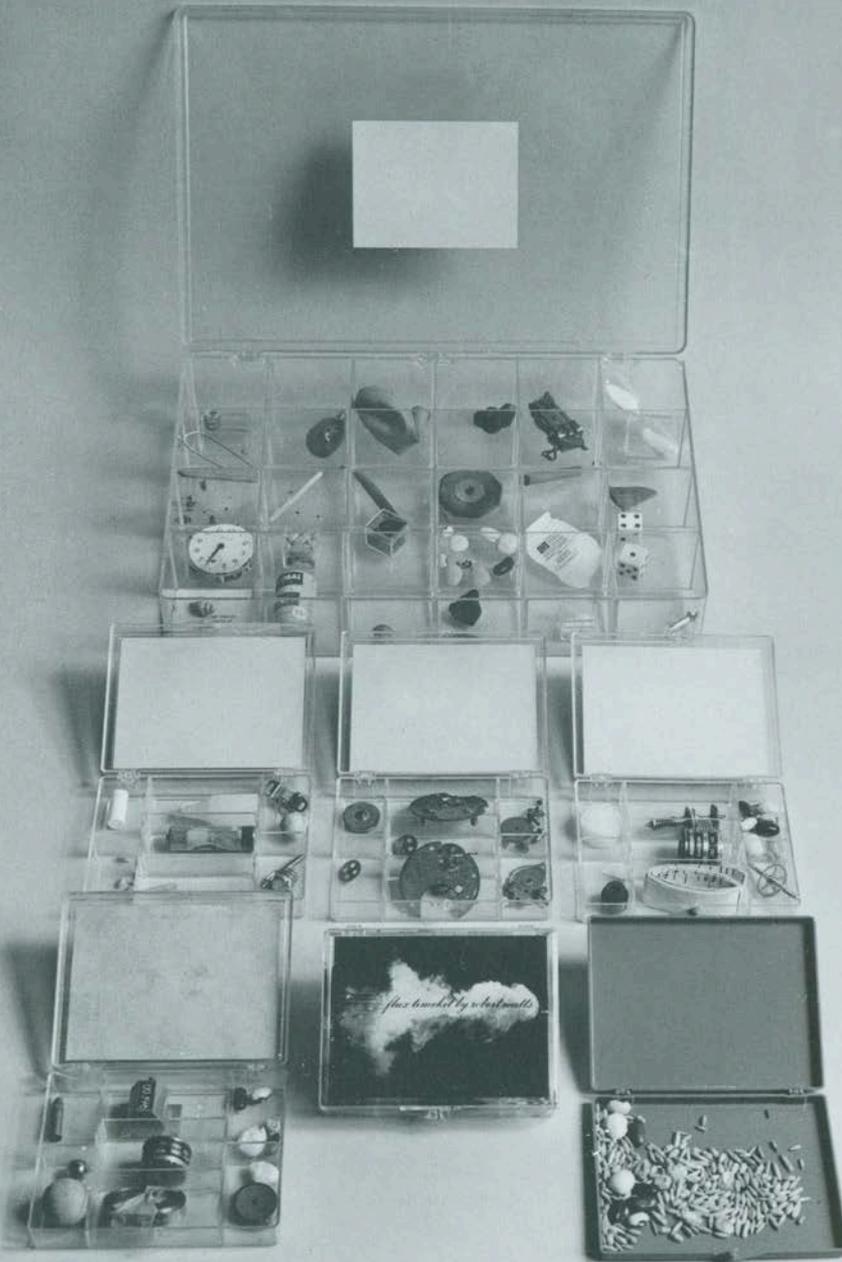
assembled by George Maciunas, Flux Year
Box 2, 1965-68

Concretism

Maciunas explains:

Concretists prefer unity of form and content. They prefer the world of concrete reality rather than the artificial reality of abstraction. Thus in the plastic arts for instance, a concretist perceives and expresses a rotten tomato without changing its reality of form. In the end, the form and expression remain the same as the content and perception...In music a concretist perceives and expresses the material sound with all its polychromy and pitchlessness and incidentalness, rather than the immaterial abstracted and artificial sound of pure pitch.

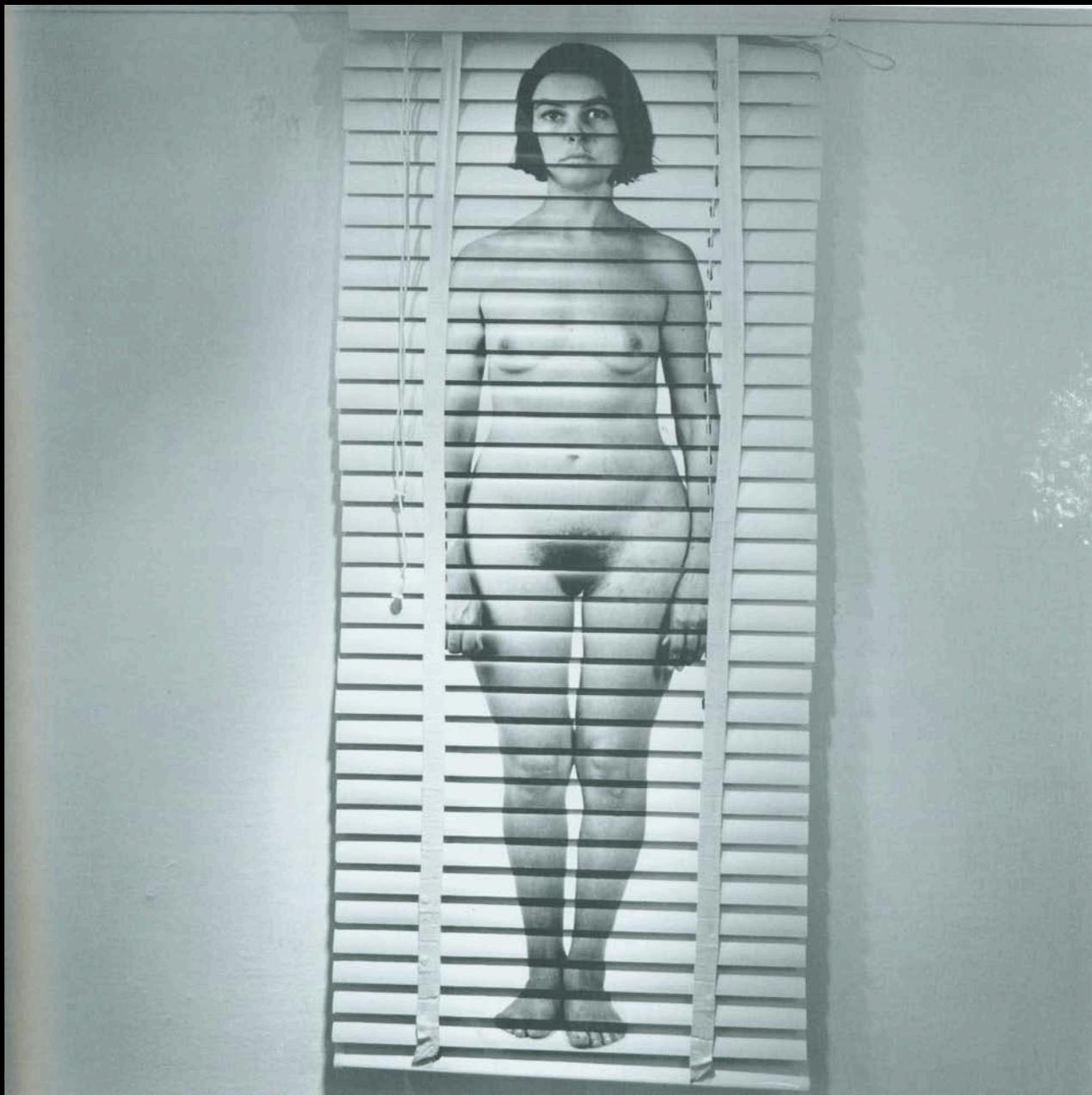
Robert Watts, assembled by Brian Buczak and
Goeffry Hendricks, Flux Timekit, 1966/78





Gag objects are also central. Our next Fluxus artist, Peter Moore (1932-1993), was known as a photographer above all else. Mr. Moore, who was born in London, attended Haverford College and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 1950's before going to work in the darkrooms of Life magazine. Here we are looking at Venetian Blinds.

Peter Moore, Venetian Blinds, Side A & B, 1966-67



Especially poignant is the woman's deadpan, rather serious visage. The piece brings to mind the words of Maciunas, who saw himself and other Fluxus participants as jokers. Maciunas once told a banker, "I make jokes," to which the banker's riposte was "Oh, you're not going to make a joke out of the mortgage now, will you?"



George Brecht studied from 1946–1950 at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science. From 1950–1965 he worked as a chemist and engineer.

George Brecht, Medicine Cabinet, 1962



Left Above: Joseph Cornell, Tagilioni's Jewel Casket, 1940
Left Below: Joseph Cornell, Untitled (Hotel Eden), 1945
Right Above: George Brecht, Medicine Cabinet, 1962

Fluxus

iconoclasm and internationalism:

In Fluxus there has never been any attempt to agree on aims or methods; individuals with something unnameable in common have simply naturally coalesced to publish and perform their work. Perhaps this common something is a feeling that the bounds of art are much wider than they have conventionally seemed, or that art and certain long-established bounds are no longer very useful. At any rate, individuals in Europe, the US, and Japan have discovered each other's work and found it nourishing (or something) and have grown objects and events which are original and often uncategorizable in a strange way.

George Brecht



George Brecht, *Water Yam*, 1959-66

After taking the class with John Cage, Fluxus artists began experimenting with the kind of event cards for which they would become well-known, an evocative form whose power is best appreciated in the 1959-66 works of George Brecht published by the movement's impresario George Maciunas in a box called *Water Yam*. While most Fluxus event cards are performance scripts, *Water Yam* also includes instructions for the creation of objects or tableaux - obscure directions whose realization left almost everything to the realizer.

EVENT SCORES

THREE TELEPHONE EVENTS

- When the telephone rings, it is allowed to continue ringing, until it stops.
- When the telephone rings, the receiver is lifted, then replaced.
- When the telephone rings, it is answered.

Performance note: Each event comprises all occurrences within its duration.

Spring, 1961

THREE LAMP EVENTS

- on.
off.
- lamp
- off. on.

"It is sure to be dark
if you shut your eyes." (J. Ray)

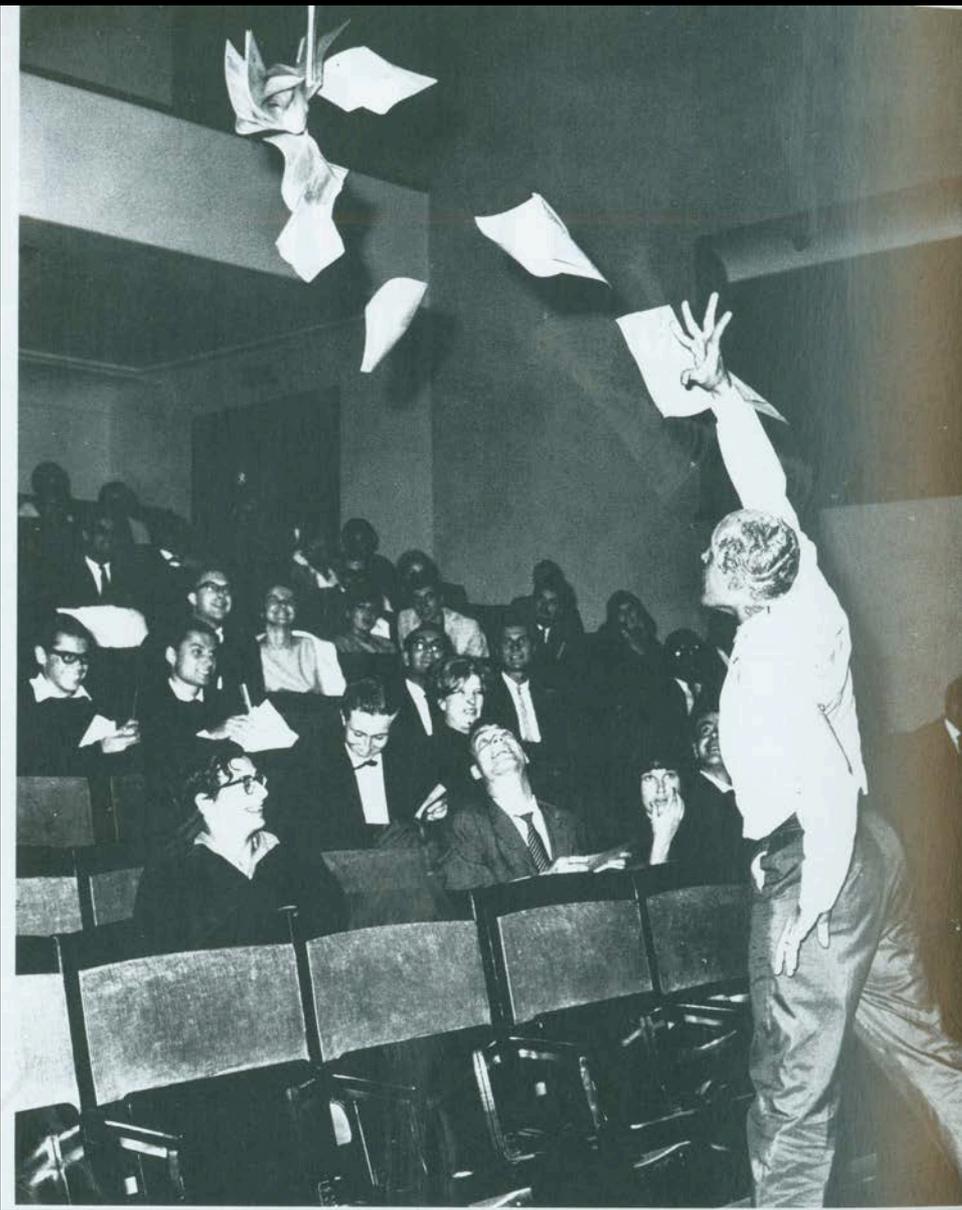
Summer, 1961



George Brecht, Solo for Violin, Part of Fluxus Street Theater, 1964



George Maciunas, Solo for Violin, May 23, 1964

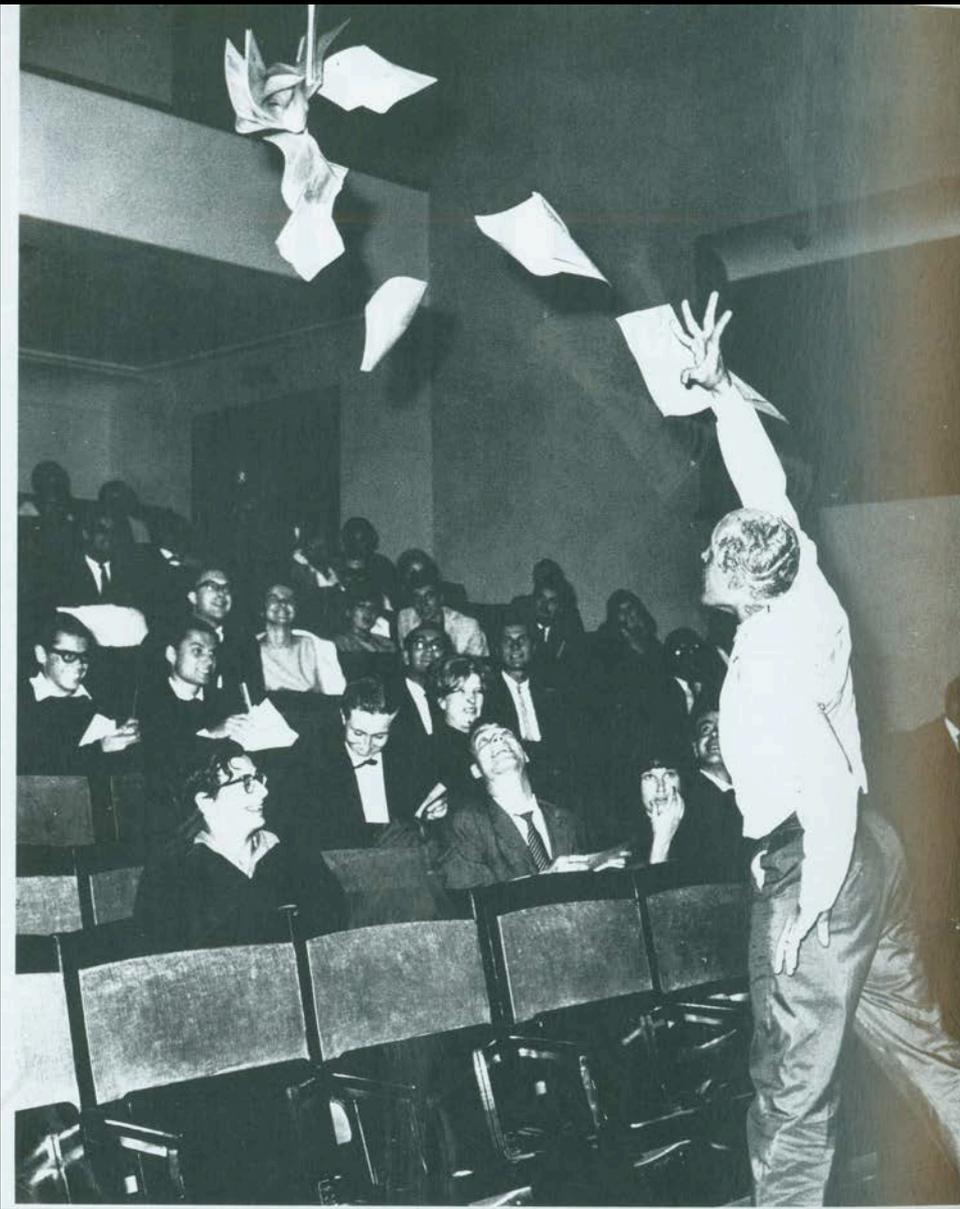


Dick Higgins, Danger Music No. 2, Wiesbaden, 1962



Dick Higgins (1938-1998)

Still from video at Drawn from Score, an exhibition Feb. 2018 at the Beall Center for Art and Technology, University of California, Irvine



His most notable contributions include "Danger Music" scores and the use of the term *intermedia* to describe the ineffable interdisciplinary activities that became prevalent in the 1960s. The score for this piece reads: "Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream! Scream!" And the way it's conventionally performed is: you scream as loud as you can until you pretty much lose your voice.

Dick Higgins, Danger Music No. 2, Wiesbaden, 1962

STATEMENT ON INTERMEDIA

Dick Higgins [1966]

Art is one of the ways that people communicate. It is difficult for me to imagine a serious person attacking any means of communication per se. Our real enemies are the ones who send us to die in pointless wars or to live lives which are reduced to drudgery, not the people who use other means of communication from those which we find most appropriate to the present situation. When these are attacked, a diversion has been established which only serves the interests of our real enemies.

However, due to the spread of mass literacy, to television and the transistor radio, our sensitivities have changed. The very complexity of this impact gives us a taste for simplicity, for an art which is based on the underlying images that an artist has always used to make his point. As with the cubists, we are asking for a new way of looking at things, but more totally, since we are more impatient and more anxious to go to the basic images. This explains the impact of Happenings, event pieces, mixed media films.

For the last ten years or so, artists have changed their media to suit this situation, to the point where the media have broken down in their traditional forms, and have become merely puristic points of reference. The idea has arisen, as if by spontaneous combustion throughout the entire world, that these points are arbitrary and only useful as critical tools, in saying that such-and-such a work is basically musical, but also poetry. This is the intermedial approach, to emphasize the dialectic between the media. A composer is a dead man unless he composes for all the media and for his world.



George Maciuinas, Dick Higgins, Wolf Vostell, Benjamin Patterson, Emmett Williams, Piano Activities, Wiesbaden, 1962



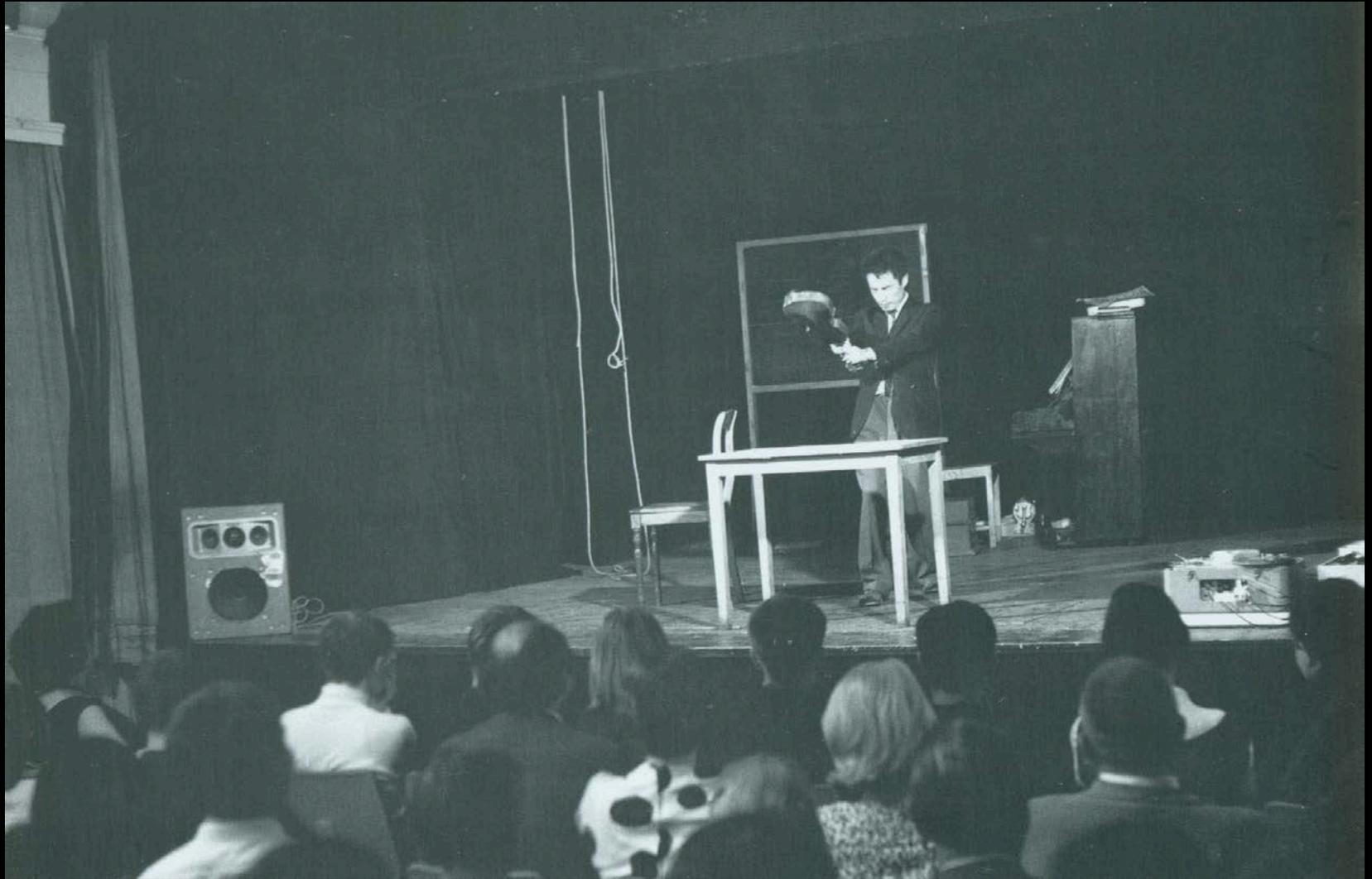
Nam June Paik was born in 1932 in Seoul, Korea. From 1953-56 he studied music, history, art history and philosophy at the University of Tokyo, where he wrote his dissertation on the modern composer Arnold Schönberg. He met John Cage in 1958 in Darmstadt and worked with Karlheinz Stockhausen, another modern/postmodern composer at the electronic music studio in Cologne

Nam June Paik at performance

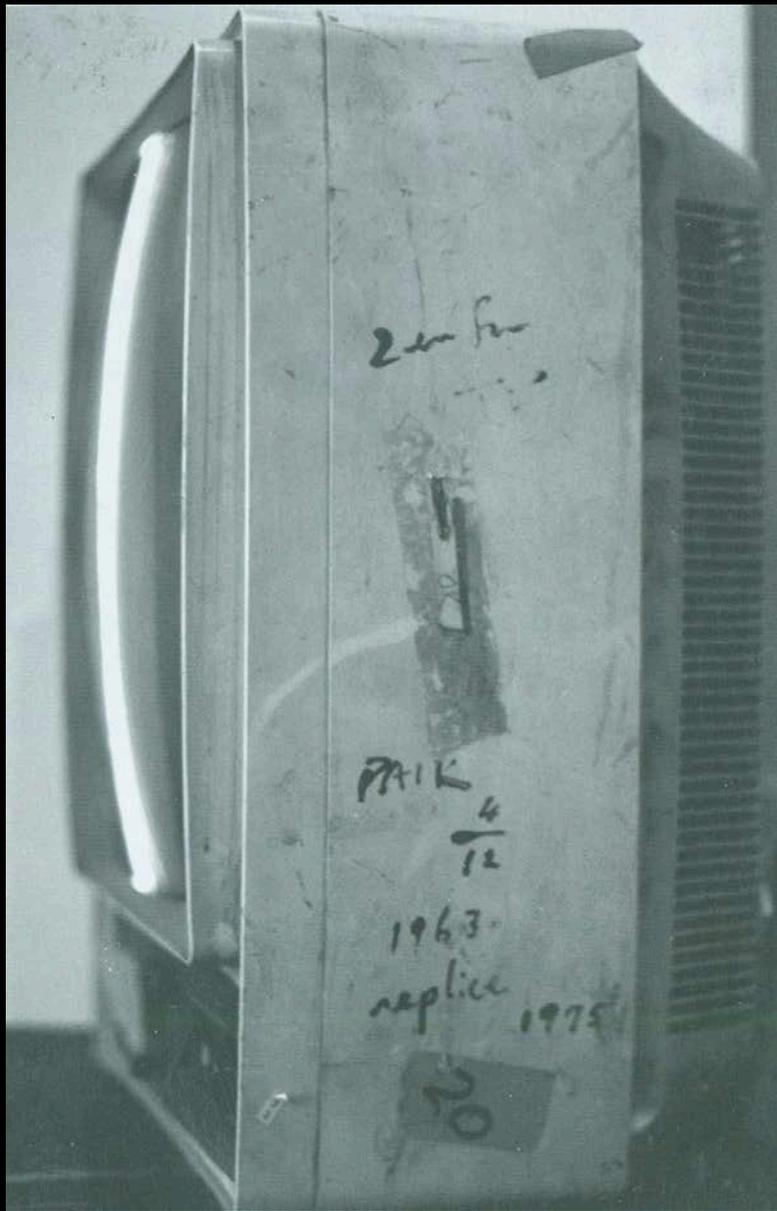


Nam June Paik, Simple, Wiesbaden, 1962

In the performance "Simple," Paik did the following scripted act: 1.) threw peas into auditorium; 2.) smeared shaving cream on his body; 3.) put rice in shaving cream; 4.) slowly unwound a roll of paper; 5.) went into a pool of water; 6.) came back and played piano with baby doll in mouth.



Nam June Paik, One for Violin, Düsseldorf, June 16, 1962



Nam June Paik, Zen for TV, 1963/1975



Hi Red Center, Street
Cleaning Event, June
1966





Left: Fluxus
Women Mieko
Shiomi & Alison
Knowles
photographed by
Peter Moore, 1964

Right: Fluxus artist Alison
Knowles, b. 1933





Alison Knowles (born 1933) is an American visual artist known for her installations, performances, soundworks, and publications. Knowles was a founding member of the Fluxus movement, the experimental avant-garde group formally founded in 1962. Criteria that have come to distinguish her work as an artist are the arena of performance, the indeterminacy of her event scores resulting in the deauthorization of the work, and the element of tactile participation.

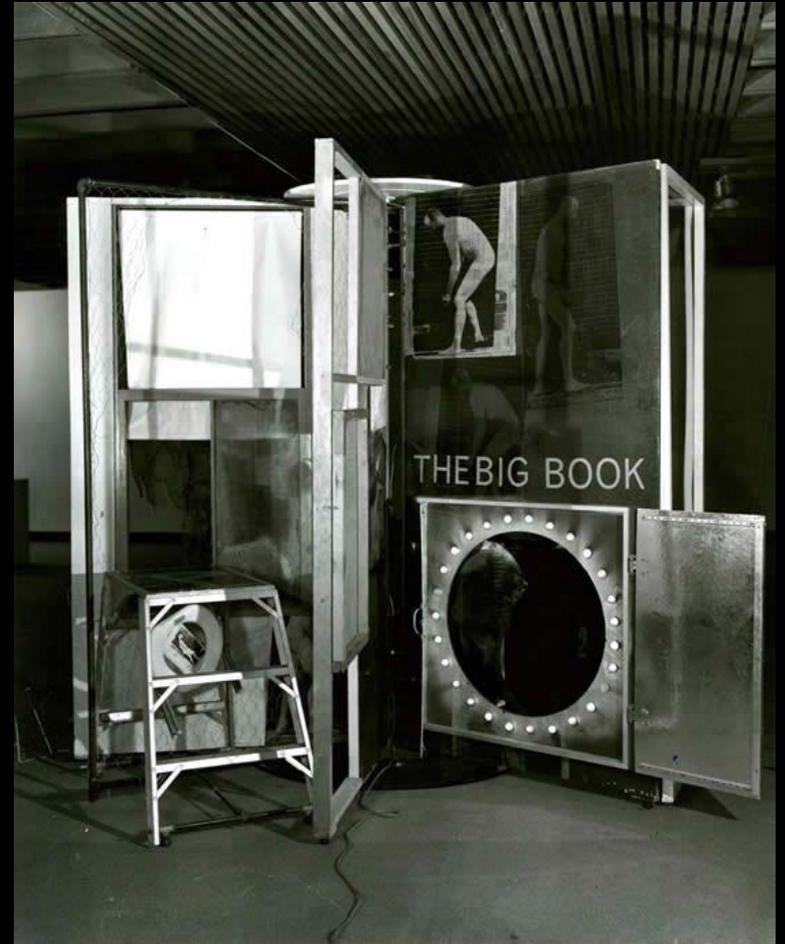
Alison Knowles, Music by Alison, May 23, 1964



Unlike a traditional bound volume, the pages of this work are tiny paper scrolls, which the reader may select and view in any order. On each scroll, Knowles printed found texts collected from songs, recipes, stories, science, cartoons, and advertisements. The tin also contains dried beans, which create a rattling sound as the container is handled. In the 1960s, Knowles expanded on this performative aspect of *Bean Rolls* by staging readings with multiple participants.



Alison Knowles, *The Bean Rolls*, 1964



Alison Knowles, The Big Book, 1967



Knowles expanded the scale of her book projects with *The Big Book* (1967), a walk-in construction composed of eight moveable “pages,” each four feet wide by eight feet tall, anchored to a metal spine. Each page featured an access point leading to the next, forming different spaces and ways the reader could approach the book. The composition weighed about a ton, and contained a gallery, library, grass tunnel, and window. It was built using found materials such as a toilet, stove, and telephone from her apartment and studio, and could be packaged and shipped in two crates

Alison Knowles, *The Big Book*, 1967

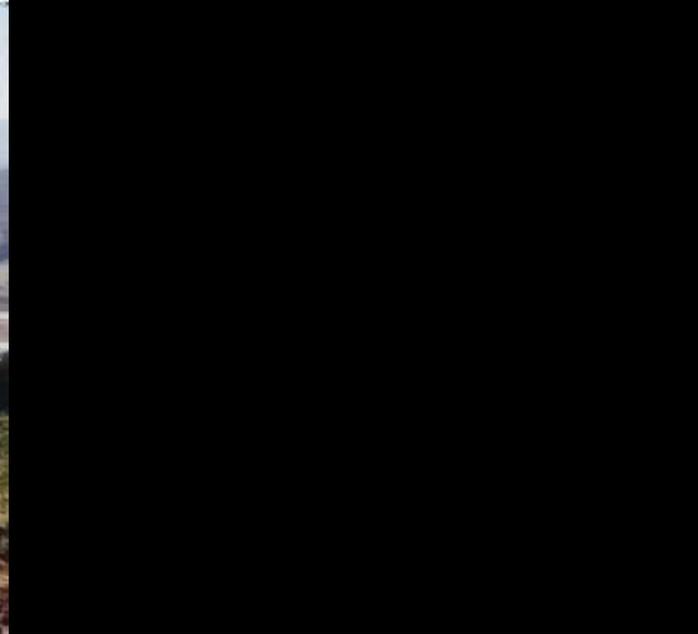


Alison Knowles' computer-generated poem and sculpture *House of Dust* was created in association with James Tenney. The work had its beginnings at an informal Fluxus seminar in 1967 in which Tenney, who had been a composer-in-residence at the Bell Labs in the early '60s, demonstrated how the Fortran programming language could be employed in chance operations in artmaking. Knowles' contribution to the session was a poem in which combinations of the variables were randomly generated. It's generally considered to be the first computer-generated poem. Knowles then embarked on the creation of a large interactive public sculpture and sound installation inspired by one quatrain of the poem ("a house of dust, on open ground, lit by natural light, inhabited by friends and enemies"), in which electronic sensors would control sound equipment in response to varying light levels. The sculpture was briefly installed on the lawn of New York's Penn South housing co-op, but it generated opposition from residents and was ultimately set on fire by an arsonist, a surprisingly violent expression of hostility toward a work of public art. In 1970 Knowles brought the reconstructed *House of Dust* with her to CalArts.

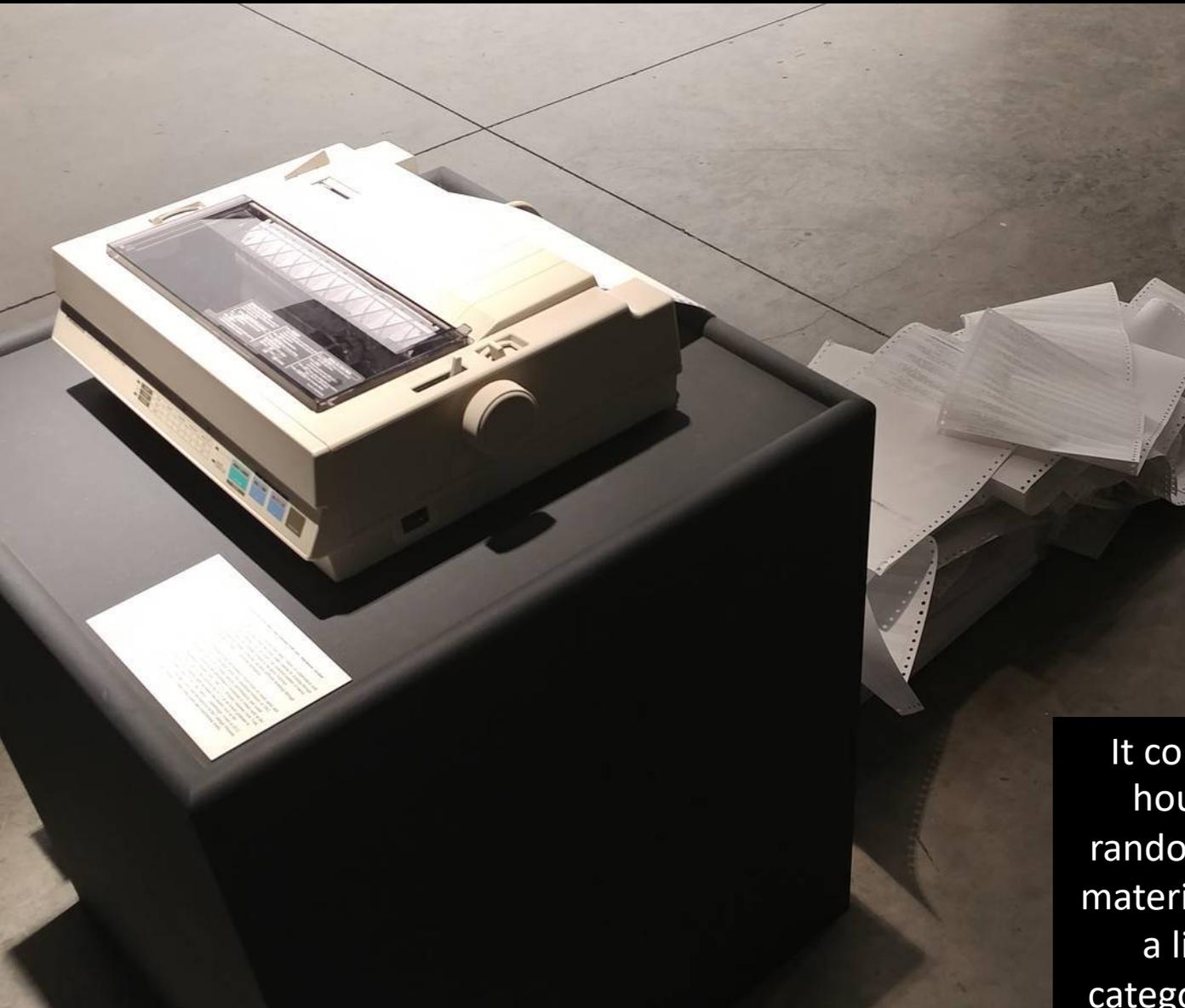


Gathering inside the House of Dust for a screening, c. 1971





From roughly 10,000 possible stanzas, Knowles selected one quatrain—“a house of dust / on open ground / lit by natural light / inhabited by friends and enemies”—as the basis for an interactive sculpture on the California Institute of the Arts campus in the early 1970s.



Allison Knowles
and James
Tenney,
The House of
Dust, 1974

It consists of the phrase "a house of" followed by a randomized sequence of 1) a material, 2) a site or situation, a light source, and 3) a category of inhabitants taken from four distinct lists.

A HOUSE OF DUST
IN A DESERTED FACTORY
USING NATURAL LIGHT
INHABITED BY PEOPLE WHO ENJOY EATING TOGETHER

A HOUSE OF STONE
UNDERWATER
USING NATURAL LIGHT
INHABITED BY PEOPLE WHO ENJOY EATING TOGETHER

A HOUSE OF GLASS
IN SOUTHERN FRANCE
USING CANDLES
INHABITED BY VERY TALL PEOPLE

A HOUSE OF IRON
ON THE SEA
USING CANDLES
INHABITED BY NEGROES WEARING ALL COLORS

A HOUSE OF HUD
INSIDE A MOUNTAIN
USING CANDLES
INHABITED BY NEGROES WEARING ALL COLORS

A HOUSE OF WEEDS
IN AN OVERPOPULATED AREA
USING ALL AVAILABLE LIGHTING
INHABITED BY HORSES AND BIRDS

A HOUSE OF ROOTS
IN JAPAN
USING ELECTRICITY
INHABITED BY PEOPLE WHO EAT A GREAT DEAL

A HOUSE OF ROOTS
AMONG HIGH MOUNTAINS
USING CANDLES
INHABITED BY PEOPLE WHO SLEEP VERY LITTLE

A HOUSE OF SAND
INSIDE A MOUNTAIN
USING CANDLES
INHABITED BY NEGROES WEARING ALL COLORS

A HOUSE OF WEEDS
IN A PLACE WITH BOTH HEAVY RAIN AND BRIGHT SUN
USING CANDLES
INHABITED BY PEOPLE WHO EAT A GREAT DEAL

A HOUSE OF BROKEN DISHES
ON THE SEA
USING ALL AVAILABLE LIGHTING
INHABITED BY LOVERS



Alison Knowles, *Make a Salad* [Event Score], 1962/2012
Event scores involve simple actions, ideas, and objects from everyday life recontextualized as performance. While each iteration of the piece is unique, the basic ingredients include Knowles preparing a massive salad by chopping the ingredients to live music, tossing it in the air, then serving it to the audience.



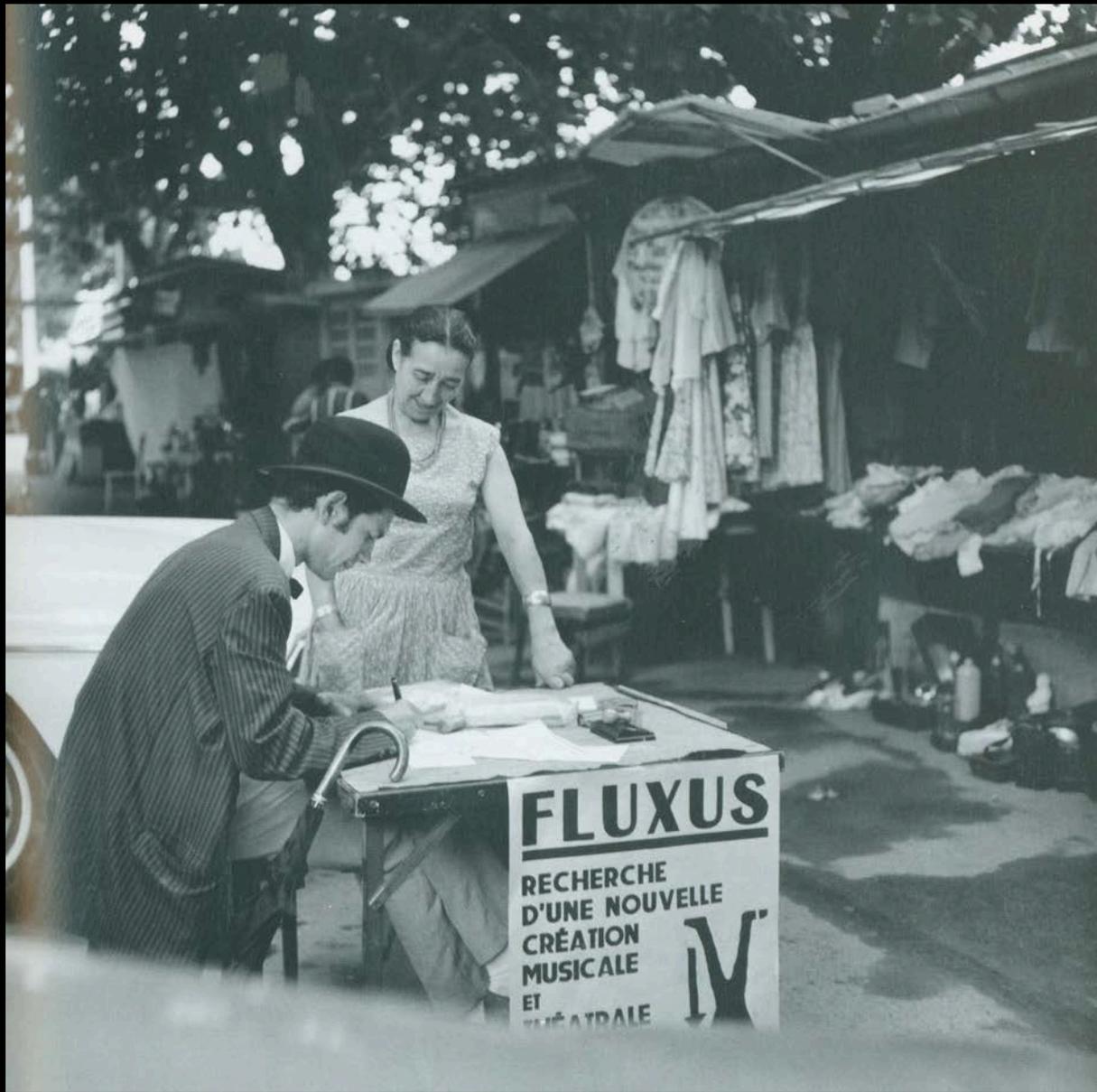


Living Sculpture was a performance-installation work that required the artist to live and work for two weeks in the sidewalk window of a London gallery.

Ben Vautier, Living Sculpture, 1962



Ben Vautier, Brushing Teeth, Nice, France, July 26, 1963 -- LIVING SCULPTURE



Ben Vautier, Signing of Certificates, Nice, France, July 27, 1963



Ben Vautier, One Must Be Wary of Words, 1993

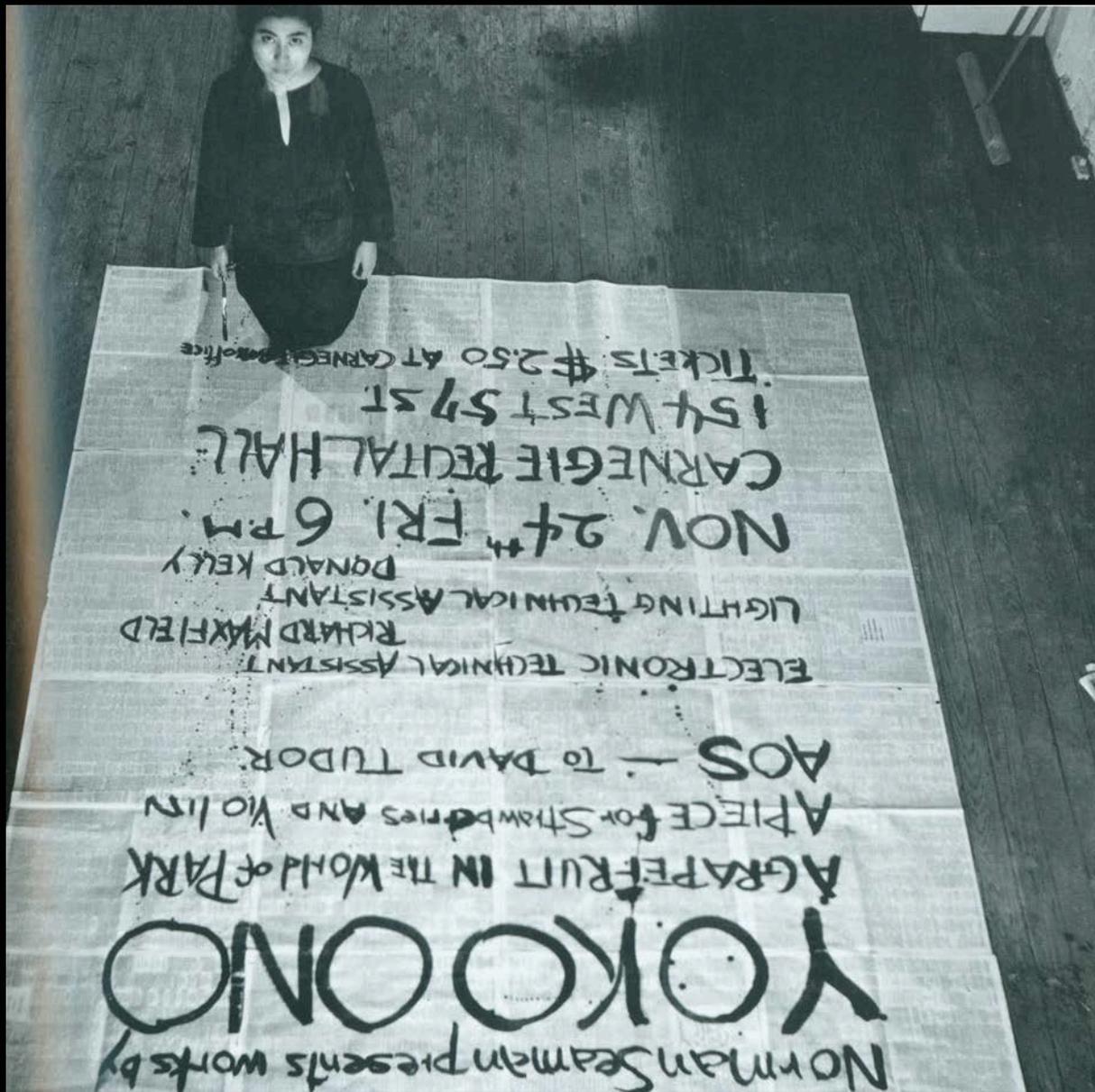


Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

René Magritte, The Treachery of Images, 1928-29



Ben Vautier, One Must Be Wary of Words, 1993



A Grapefruit in the World of Park was first performed at the Village Gate, and then shortly after at Carnegie Hall. The work consisted of Ono reading a text over a recording of atonal music, laughter and inaudible speech.

Yoko Ono, *A Grapefruit in the World of Park*, 1961

Of A Grapefruit In The World of Park

by Yoko Ono

A grapefruit remained on the table when the picnic was over. And the people from the M. company lay down on the grass, turning up their stomachs contentedly to the sky.

"Who wants to finish this?" asked a tall girl. They all glanced at the grapefruit. It was a greenish yellow thing, with little wrinkles around it.

"Why don't you throw it away?"
"Oh, you can eat this. Besides, the waste basket is too full!"

The girl stood there without wasting her movement. People began to talk again of nothing in particular. The sky was too high. And the voices sounded unusually small in the warm, lazy afternoon air. People's minds flew away between the clouds. And a girl, dozing under a willow tree, fancied that the dropping dew on her cheeks were the kisses of her lover.

"Oh, these people, wasting food!" said the tall girl.

"Give me that. Let's do something with it." A beautiful boy got up and came to the table. He took the grapefruit and threw it into the air. It turned awkwardly, and dropped into his hands again.

"What can you do with it?" asked the girl.

"Oh, well . . ."

Then she said that it was late, and people weren't cooperating with her at all to clean up.

"Look at all this mess. You know, there are some who came from the end of the town. They really have to go home early. Besides, the park is closing in a few minutes. It seems as if I'm the only one's who awake around here."

The boy just answered yeah, yeah, automatically, and stuck a pencil into the grapefruit.

"And think of it! I had to get this food all for ten dollars! What can you buy with ten dollars for this many people? I wanted to make it fancier, you know . . . not popcorn and coke anyway. But what can you do? Sue was supposed to help me this year, but well, she can't be of much help. Of course I admit that I like it in

a way, but last year it was different. . . . it wasn't like this at all."

The boy continued nodding. And his long, well shaped fingers began to peel the outside skin of the grapefruit. The skin was hard, and he could only peel it in little pieces. His fingertips turned red.

"Now, don't hurt your fingers."

"No, I'm listening . . . go on . . ."

"Well, that's all. . . it's just that . . ."

After all the outside skin was peeled, the grapefruit suddenly looked fresh and orange.

"It's so juicy," said the boy. "Oh, well . . ."

"Don't mess around like that . . ." said the girl. "Let's try one."

The boy handed a piece to her. She slipped it with her wide thin mouth.

"How is it?"

She made a face instead of answering, and swallowed it.

"Well, anyway, people have to serve others, you know . . . I don't want you to get any idea that I'm complaining of being in charge of the picnic."

The boy neatly tore off the white stripes around the grapefruit. Then he divided it into portions, and took off the inner tissue skin. He did this with such care that the girl often had to stop talking and wait until he had finished the skin of one portion, and pasted on the table.

There were many tables set in the park, and wasted papers scattered around them like white flowers. Two girls, both, with squint-eyes were playing pease-porridge-hot at a wooden bench. And a child in a blue sailor blouse was crying beside them, with a sandy lollipop in his hand.

Although the sound of the street cars were heard at times, people walked around unconsciously, hand in hand, like beings in a dream.

The fingers of the boy then gathered the flesh of the grapefruit, squeezed it, and pressed it hard on the table until nothing remained. His nostrils were slightly expanded, and his breath was quiet but violent.

"Look, that cloud is moving!" said someone lying in the grass.

"It was between those trees before. See?" There was no answer. The sound of the street car was heard.

"So I think it's good if they systematize that way, you know" said the tall girl, lowering her voice without reason.

"Yeah."

Just then the watchman called out loudly in the distance.

"Oh, it's closing." And, turning around, the girl shouted to others, "It's closing."

People stood up slowly and began to fix themselves. Women straightened their hair. And men brushed grass from the women's shoulders.

"Let's go," growled an old, fat man. The boy wiped his sticky fingers on the grass.

"Betsayer: Stop that, we're going now!"

A little girl came running.

"Are we going, Mommy?"

"Look how you're perspiring. You'll catch cold, pussy. Hurry and put your sweater on."

"I'm hot, mommy. Can't I have that grapefruit? Mommy . . ."

"Oh, somebody has eaten it already. Now put on your jacket, too. It's really getting chilly."

The ball rang again, and a group of boys who were playing baseball at the far end of the park began to break up.

"Closing!" shouted the watchman, continuously.

(Continued On Page Ten)

Grapefruit

(Continued from Page Nine)

"Closing . . ." the girl repeated absent-mindedly while her mother tied the bow of her bonnet.

People started to leave, and soon the park was all cleared out. The faint wind crossed over the table, and gradually dried up the pasted skin and the row of the seeds. The sound of the closing gate permeated the dusk. A bird hopped on the table and picked up a little piece of green leaf. For a while, the place turned into a pool of warm lights.

Even the mossy bark of the old trees glittered gold. But then, before long, the green, the clouds and the park, all vanished together into darkness. The seed stayed shining till the last, like a reflected spots inside the retina, and went out.

dark.

where is this?

this is the park

[but I smell metal in the air.

no, it's the clovers.

are they bleeding?

is this a room?

no, it's the sunset.

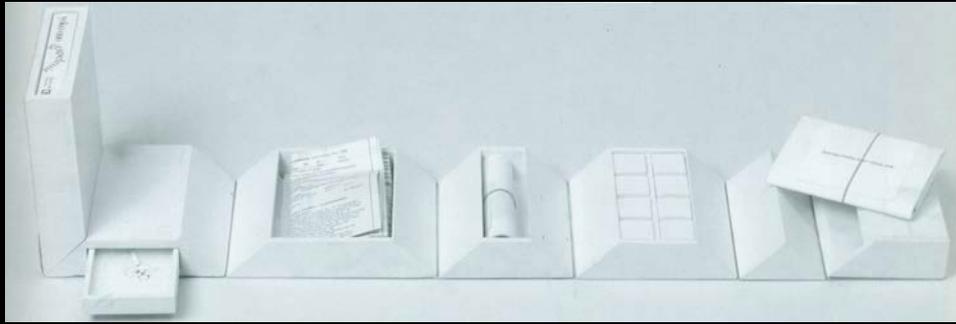
would you like to speak to the dead?

oh, no I only come here to peel the grapefruit.

is it too cold?

it's too warm, the sky's too high...people are turning up their stomachs contentedly to the sky. your voice sounds unusually small in the afternoon air. your minds fly away between the clouds, and the dropping dews on the cheeks is like the kisses of your lovers.

flush toilet



Yoko Ono, Everson Catalogue Box, 1971 -- Includes work by Yoko Ono and John Lennon; Wooden box with paperback copy of Grapefruit, glass, offset lithograph, acrylic on canvas, plastic boxes, and mixed media; packaging designed by George Maciunas; served as the catalogue for Yoko Ono's exhibition, This Is Not Here, Everson Museum, 1971



Born in 1937 in Niigata, Japan, Shigeko Kubota became a key member of the Japanese avant-garde, a respected participant in New York Fluxus events in the 1960s, and, starting in the 1970s, a pioneering practitioner of video art.

Shigeko Kubota, Vagina Painting, 1965



Kubota's most infamous (and somewhat anomalous) work was *Vagina Painting* (1965), which she presented as part of the Perpetual Fluxfest, at Cinematheque in New York on July 4, 1965. In this performance, she attached the handle of a paintbrush to her underwear, squatted over a bucket of red paint, and waddled across a large sheet of paper laid on the floor, creating red, menstrual-like smears.

Shigeko Kubota, *Vagina Painting*, 1965

This piece functioned as a send-up of what the influential art critic Harold Rosenberg termed “action painting” by feminizing the hyper-masculine, phallus-as-paintbrush image of Abstract Expressionist painters like Jackson Pollock. It also may have been a reference to the practice of lower-class geishas, who sometimes entertained customers by writing calligraphy with brushes inserted in their vaginas. Kubota’s performance fused dichotomies, combining high and low arts, masculine and feminine elements, and Eastern and Western cultures.



Jackson Pollock, c. 1951



Shigeko Kubota, Vagina Painting, 1965