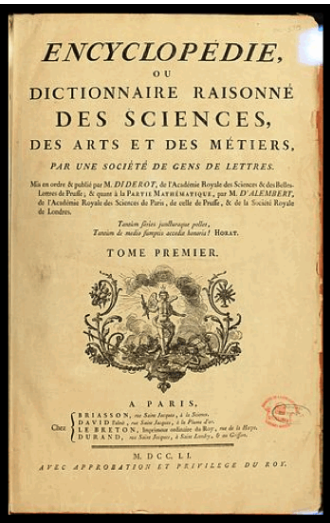
HUAS 6375.001
26379
Art, Experience, and the Senses
Dr. Charissa N. Terranova
Spring 2013
Monday 4:00-6:45
AH2 1.204

02/11/2013

Aesthetics and Taste in the 18th Century



ENCYCLOPÉDIE,
OU
DICTIONNAIRE RAISONNÉ
DES SCIENCES,
DES ARTS ET DES MÉTIERS,
PAR UNE SOCIÉTÉ DE GENS DE LETTRES.

Mis en ordre & publié par M. DIDEROT, de l'Académie Royale des Sciences & des Belles-Lettres de Prusse; & quant à la PARTIE MATHÉMATIQUE, par M. D'ALEMBERT, de l'Académie Royale des Sciences de Paris, de celle de Prusse, & de la Société Royale de Londres.

Tantùm series juncturaque pollet,
Tantum de medio sumptis accedit honoris! HORAT.

TOME PREMIER.

A PARIS,
Chez BRIASSON, rue Saint Jacques, à la Science.
DAVID l'aîné, rue Saint Jacques, à la Plume d'or.
LE BRETON, Imprimeur ordinaire du Roy, rue de la Harpe.
DURAND, rue Saint Jacques, à Saint Landry, & au Griffon.

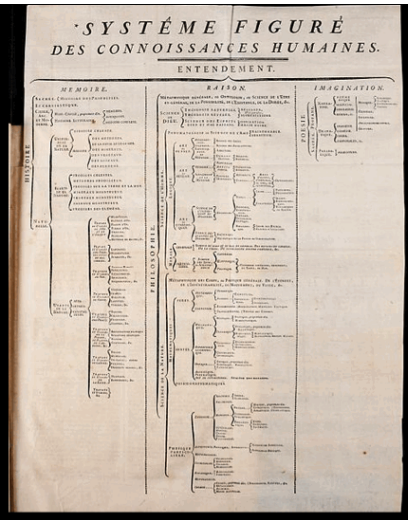
M. DCC. LI.
AVEC APPROBATION ET PRIVILEGE DU ROY.

Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers

Edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert

1751-72

- 17 volumes of articles, issued from 1751 to 1765
- 11 volumes of illustrations, issued from 1762 to 1772



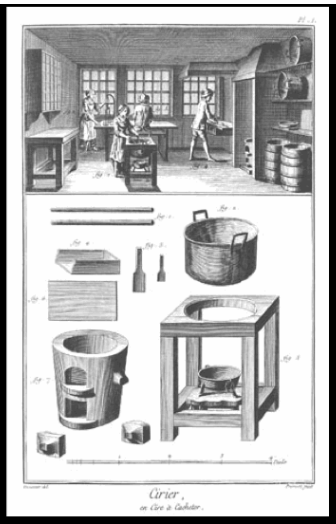
Figurative System of organization of human knowledge

Couturiere.

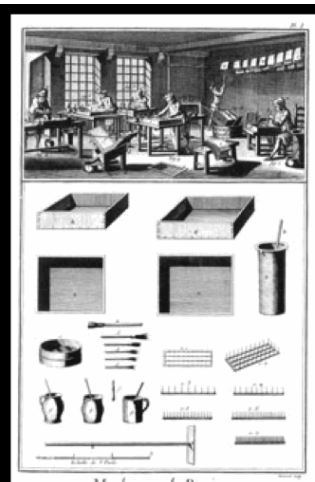
Pl. III.
Art d Ecrire.

Boulanger.

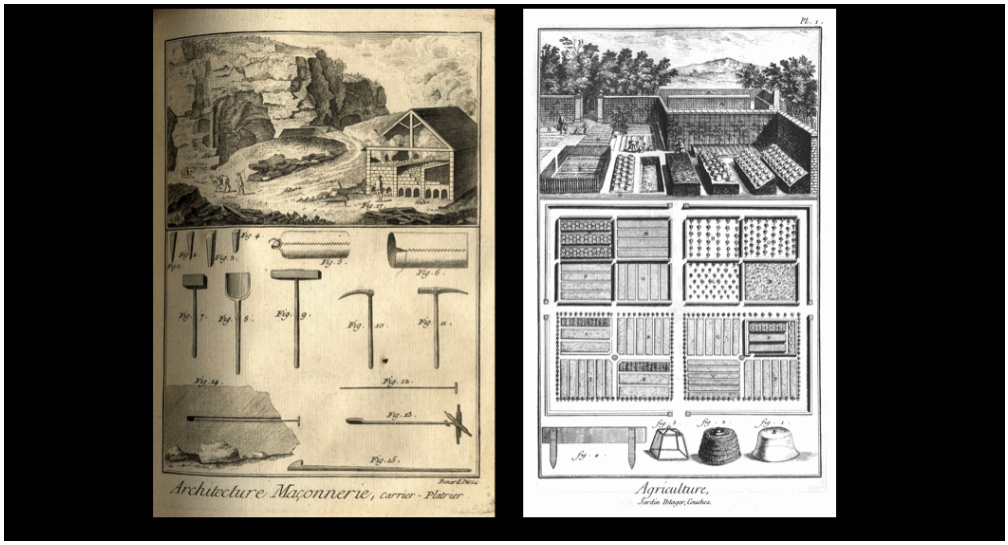
Œconomie Rustique.
Mouches à Miel.



Cirier,
ou Cire à Cacheter.

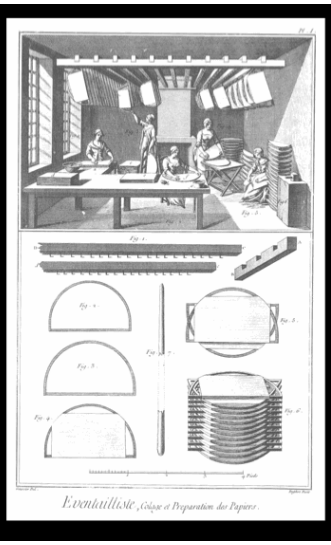


Marbreur de Papier.


Architecture Maçonnerie, carrier - Plâtrier
Agriculture,
Jardin Potager, Couches.

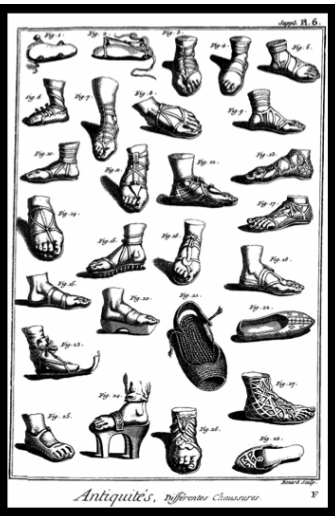
Senses. The senses are a faculty of the soul through which it perceives external objects. This occurs by means of some action or impression made on certain parts of the body, called the sense organs, which communicate this impression to the brain.Some people give a broader meaning to senses; they define them as a faculty through which the soul receives ideas or images of objects, whether this occurs by means of an impression made by these objects externally or by some action on the soul itself.

-- unsigned article



Art. Abstract metaphysical term. Men began by collecting observations on the nature, function, use and qualities of beings and their symbols. Then they gave the name of science or art to the center or focal point to which they linked the observations they had made, in order to create a system of instruments, or of rules which were all directed toward the same object. That is the most general meaning of art. To give an example: Men reflected on the usage and function of words and subsequently invented the word "grammar." Grammar is the name of a system of instruments and rules that relate to a specific object; this object is articulated sound. The same is true of the other arts and sciences...
Division of the arts into liberal and mechanical arts . When men examined the products of the arts, they realized that some were primarily created by the mind, others by the hands.

-- Denis Diderot



Beautiful. Before delving deeper into the difficult research that the origin of the beautiful is, I would first bring to the attention, with all the authors who wrote on the subject, that by a sort of fatality, the topics most addressed among men are rather ordinarily these least known to them; and that such is, among many others, the lot of the beautiful . Everybody reasons about the beautiful : it is admired in Nature's works: it is demanded in the production of Arts: its quality is conferred or denied at any time; however, if one were to ask men with the surest and most exquisite taste what the origin of the beautiful is, or its nature, its precise notion, its true idea, its exact definition; whether it is something absolute or relative; whether there is an essential, eternal, unchanging beautiful that would be the rule and the model for a subaltern beautiful; or whether it is for beauty as it is with fashions: one would witness different feelings; and ones would confess they know nothing of the matter, others would throw themselves in skepticism. How is it that almost all men agree that there is a beautiful ; that some of them can experience it strongly where it lies, yet so few know what it actually is?

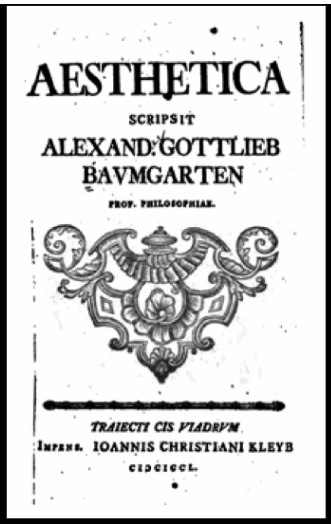
-- Denis Diderot

Taste The preceding article has described taste in its physical meaning. This sense, this capacity for discriminating between different foods, has given rise, in all known languages, to the metaphorical use of the word "taste" to designate the discernment of beauty and flaws in all the arts. It discriminates as quickly as the tongue and the palate, and like physical taste it anticipates thought. In common with physical taste it is sensitive to what is good and reacts to it with a feeling of pleasure, it refuses with disgust what is bad; it is frequently uncertain and misleading, at times it cannot even tell whether something is pleasant or not, and sometimes it needs practice to develop discrimination...

Concerning intelligence in general . Intelligence is a genus and includes several species: genius, good sense, discernment, discrimination, talent, taste.Intelligence consists in having organs that are well formed for dealing with the objects of its activity. If the object is very restricted in scope, intelligence is called talent. If intelligence is closer to a certain kind of refined pleasure enjoyed by men in good society, it is called taste. If the particular object is the only one for a nation, talent is called spirit, such as the art of war and agriculture among the Romans, hunting among the savages, etc. -- Jean le Rond D'Alembert

Jean-Honore Fragonard, *Young Woman Playing with a Dog*, 1772

This article deals with a key eighteenth-century concept. As René Wellek writes in A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 24: "Taste can be found throughout the Italian and French seventeenth centuries as a term, but it becomes the subject of elaborate theorizing only in the early eighteenth century." Most of this theorizing revolved about the problem of reconciling the personal nature of taste and its use as a universal criterion in art, a problem that one might define in the words of Hume: "Thus, though the principles of taste be universal, and nearly, if not entirely, the same in all men; yet few are qualified to give judgment on any work of art, or establish their own sentiment as the standard of beauty. The organs of internal sensation are seldom so perfect as to allow the general principles full play, and produce a feeling correspondent to those principles." http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=did;cc=did;rgn=main;view=text;idno=did2222.0000.168


AESTHETICA

SCRIPSIT

ALEXAND. GOTTLIEB BAVMGARTEN

PROF. PHILOSOPHIAE.

TRAIECTI CIS VIADRVM

IMPENS. IOANNIS CHRISTIANI KLEYB

CIↃIↃCCL.

epistêmê aisthetikê, or the science of what is sensed and imagined

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762)

• *Meditations on Poetry* (1735)

• *Theoretical Doctrine of the Emotions* (1744)

• *Foundations of the Beautiful Science* (1748-1750)

• *Aesthetica* (1750)

• *Extract from the Foundations of the Beautiful Arts and Sciences* (1757)

- Beauty
- Aesthetics
- Medium
- Media
- Mediation

…ut pictura poesis…

Ars Poetica, Horace, 18 BCE

As is painting so is poetry.

Paragone

Leonardo da Vinci, *Treatise on Painting*, notes compiled after his death, comparing painting and sculpture: Painting has universal truth because of its superior ability to mimic nature and sits at the top of the arts hierarchy.

Leonardo, Lady with an Ermine, 1489-90

Bodies
of the
Laocoon

Laocoon, by lot named priest of Neptune,
was sacrificed then a giant bull
upon the customary altars, when
two snakes with endless coils, from Tenedos
strike out across the tranquil deep (I shudder
to tell what happened), resting on the waters,
advancing shoreward side by side; their breasts
erect among the waves, their blood-red crests
are higher than the breakers. And behind,
the rest of them skims on along the sea;
their mighty backs are curved in folds. The foaming
salt surge is roaring. Now they reach the fields.
Their eyes are drenched with blood and fire – they burn.
They lick their hissing jaws with quivering tongues.
We scatter at the sight. Our blood is gone.
They strike a straight line toward Laocoon.
At first each snake entwines the tiny bodies
of his two sons in an embrace, then feasts
its fangs on their defenseless limbs. The pair
next seize upon Laocoon himself,
who nears to help his sons, carrying weapons.
They wind around his waist and twice around
his throat. They throttle him with scaly backs;
their heads and steep necks tower over him.
He struggles with his hands to rip their knots,
his headbands soaked in filth and in dark venom,
while he lifts high his hideous cries to heaven,
just like the bellows of a wounded bull
when it has fled the altar, shaking off
an unsure ax. But now the snakes escape:
twin dragons gliding to the citadel
of cruel Pallas, her high shrines. They hide
beneath the goddess' feet, beneath her shield.

Vergil's *Aeneid* (19 BCE)

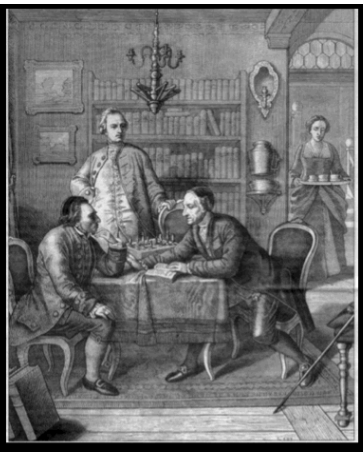
[The Laocoon] is a work to be preferred to all that the arts of painting and sculpture have produced. Out of one block of stone, the consummate artists, Hagesandros, Polydoros, and Athenodoros of Rhodes made after careful planning, Laocoon, his sons, and the snakes marvelously entwined about them.

Pliny, *Natural History* (XXXVI, 37), 77-79 CE

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781)
Poet, philosopher and critic

- **born in Kamenz, a small town in Saxony (now Germany)**
- **studied medicine in Leipzig 1746-48**
- **worked as critic, editor and dramaturge 1748-1767**
- **librarian in Hamburg 1770**
- **tried to establish German National Theater in Hamburg 1770 – forum for (his) German bourgeois drama**
- **became Freemason**
- **Grand Tour (Italy) with Prince Leopold 1775**
- **dies in Braunschweig 1781**

- 1766 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing writes "Laocoon, or The Limits of Painting and Poetry"



At the table on the right, Swiss theologist Johann Kaspar Lavater tries to convert Moses Mendelssohn to Christianity. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing stands in the back, near the chessboard.

- January 14, 1506 vintner Felix de Fredis discovers the statue at a place just outside of Rome. It had evidently graced the subterranean baths of the Roman emperor Titus (79-81 CE), who is mentioned by Pliny, and been walled in by an anonymous Roman in the fifth century CE, presumably in the hope of protecting the statue from the Vandals, who were descending on Rome.
- March, 1506 Julius II had it transported to the Belvedere Courtyard of the Vatican and installed in a niche between the Belvedere Apollo and a Venus.
- Pope Leo X commissions Baccio Bandinelli to make a bronze copy for Francis I, king of France

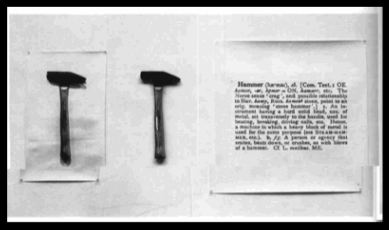
- Pope Clement VII came to power in 1523 and turned to Michelangelo with the desire to see all the statues in the Belvedere Courtyard in a complete state.
- 1565 The Laocoon was boxed up by Pius IV.
- 1755 Johannes Joachim Winckelmann, the father of German Classicism, writes "Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture"
- 1766 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing writes "Laocoon, or The Limits of Painting and Poetry"
- 1769 Johann Gottfried Herder writes "Critical Forests," comparing Winckelmann and Lessing's takes on the Laocoon.
- 1770 Clement XIV founded his Vatican Museum and placed the Laocoon on public display.
- 1779 Christian Gottlieb Heyne writes an essay on the Laoccon which appears in his *Sammlung antiquarischen Aufsatze*, a collection of essays.
- 1786 Aloys Ludwig Hirt writes about the Laocoon in terms of "Characteristik" – an incipient realism
- 1787 Wilhelm Heinse writes about the Laocoon in *Ardinghello und die glückseligen Inseln (*"Ardinghell and the Blessed Islands") where the hero is an artist and a dreamer who founds a utopia on a Greek island. It glorifies eroticism and the aesthetic life.
- 1791 Friedrich Schiller adduces Laocoon in the context of the sublime and the pathetic.

Titian, Monkey Laocoon, c. 1545

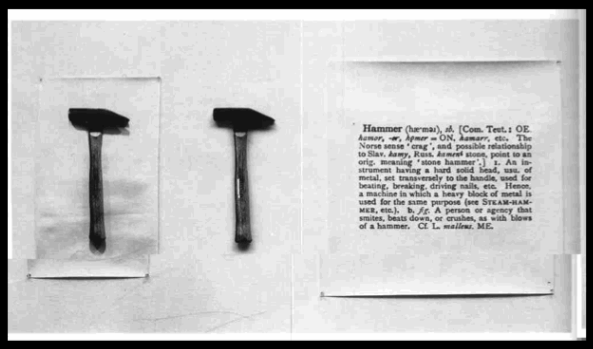
- 1798 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe writes "Über Laokoon"
- 1792 Karl Philip Moritz mentions the Laocoon
- 1905 Ludwig Pollak, a German art dealer and archeologist, finds the Laocoon's missing arm while rummaging through marble statue fragments in a shop in Rome.
- 1957 Filippo Magi, vice-director of the Vatican Museums, closes off the Belvedere Courtyard in order to oversee the dismantling of the Laocoon statue. The statue proved to be made up of seven or eight distinct pieces (contrary to Pliny's claim that it came from one stone) that are attached by iron and bronze plugs.
- 1960 Lacoon with right arm on view to public

Magritte, Treachery of Images, 1929

Ceci n'est pas une pipe.

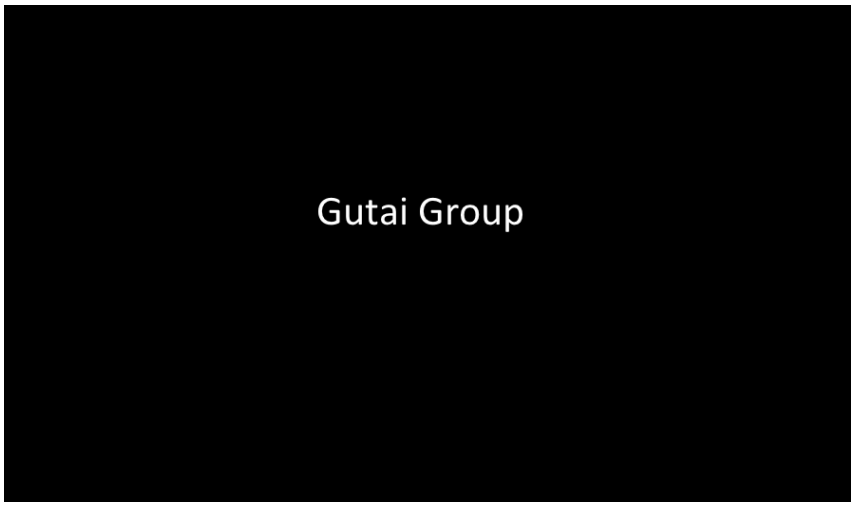


Kosuth, One and Three Hammers, 1965



Hammer (hæ·məɪ), *sb.* [Com. Teut.: OE. *hamor*, *-er*, *hymer* = ON. *hamarr*, etc. The Norse sense 'crag', and possible relationship to Slav. *hamy*, Russ. *hamen*[1] stone, point to an orig. meaning 'stone hammer'.] 1. An instrument having a hard solid head, usu. of metal, set transversely to the handle, used for beating, breaking, driving nails, etc. Hence, a machine in which a heavy block of metal is used for the same purpose (see STEAM-HAMMER, etc.). b. *fig.* A person or agency that smites, beats down, or crushes, as with blows of a hammer. Cf. L. *malleus*. ME.

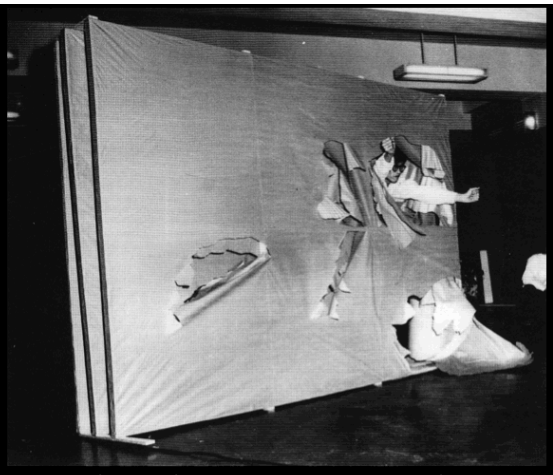
Atsuko Tanaka, Electric Dress,
1956


Gutai Group

Gutai Manifesto
[December 1956]

Lock these corpses into their tombs. Gutai art does not change the material but brings it to life. Gutai art does not falsify the material. In Gutai art the human spirit and the the material reach out their hands to each other, even though they are otherwise opposed to each other. The material is not absorbed by the spirit. The spirit does not force the material into submission. If one leaves the material as it is, presenting it just as material, then it starts to tell us something and speaks with a mighty voice. Keeping the life of the material alive also means bringing the spirit alive, and lifting up the spirit means leading the material up to the height of the spirit.

Atsuko Tanaka, Electric Dress, 1956



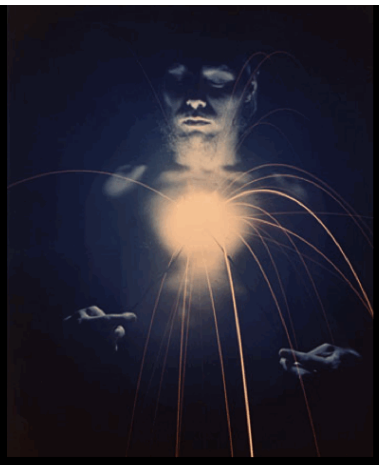
Saburo Murakami, At One Moment Opening Six Holes, **1955**

Saburo Murakami, Passing Through, 1956

Kazuo Shiraga Challenging Mud 1955

Kazuo Shiraga making a foot painting

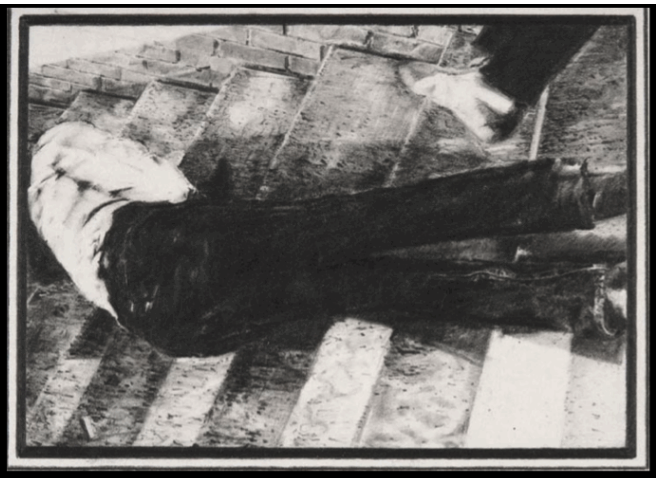
Kazuo Shiraga, Chizensei Kirenji, 1961



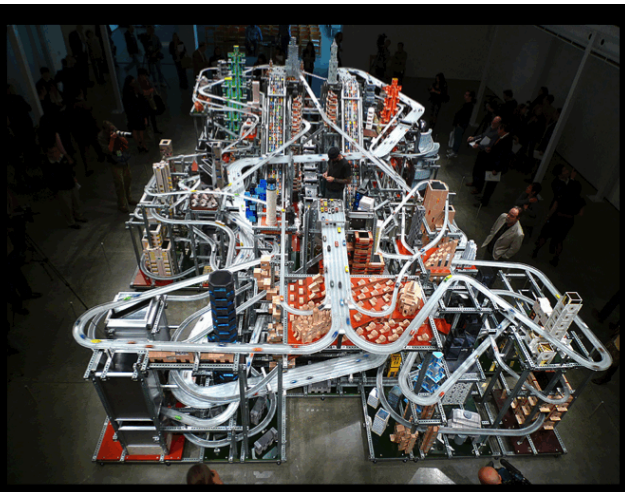
Chris Burden, Doorway to Heaven, 1973

Chris Burden, Shoot, 1971 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JE5u3ThYyI4

Chris Burden, Transfixed, 1974



Chris Burden, Kunst Kick, 1974
Chris Burden being kicked down a flight of stairs at the 1974 Basel Art Fair



Chris Burden, Metropolis II, 2012 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llacDdn5yIE