

FluxAttitudes

The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York September 26, 1992–January 3, 1993

Organized by Susan Hapgood and Cornelia Lauf, Guest Curators

Exhibition installation by Rirkrit Tiravanija

Catalogue and brochure by Nancy Dwyer

Participation of sixty-two artists

There are various ways to structure an exhibition about historical art, even art made during the last thirty years. There is the chronological progression, the connoisseur's choice, the great nations survey, the theme show, and the social history perspective—leading in turn to the discovery of the neglected Other—and the multicultural approach. We did not want to belittle any of these time-honored methods, adopted by Western museums from the Musée d'Orsay to The New Museum of Contemporary Art. But as the curators of this exhibition we believed the elusive Fluxus movement required another tack.

Organizing an exhibition about Fluxus along chronological lines seemed pointless, as did highlighting key individuals. A good number of supposedly Fluxus artists dispute both the term and their membership, defining their affiliation instead by the miles they'll drive to distance themselves from both. Nonetheless, museums throughout the world are presenting a variety of Fluxi, grappling with an amorphous, slippery character, force-fitting the institutional straitjacket onto an abundance of anti-institutional manifestations one might call the Fluxus movement. The general consensus of scholarly parasites claims that Fluxus was made by a loose-knit collective of artists who gathered some time in the early 1960s from the fields of music, performance, film and art. They pursued forms that were formless, events that could be repeated by anyone, and a battery of props that—unless perhaps in the annals of Zurich Dada—had few precedents for their economy of means, wit, mutability, and capacity for endless replication.

If one were to organize this exhibition chronologically with supposedly neutral documentation as a goal, where would one stake the precise beginning or end for

Fluxus? And anyway, who would hammer the stake? Here the mercurial figure of George Maciunas enters, the man who appointed himself custodian of Fluxus, the stake-driver and list-maker. Some time in 1962 he began to systematize the many events that often arose from ideas transmitted in the late 1950s by John Cage. Maciunas named the ever-changing group Fluxus and proceeded to feverishly package and promote the work of this diverse and gifted collective of people until his death in 1978—occasionally creating some art of his own along the way. If most agree that Fluxus officially began around 1962, when did it end? Some say it died with Maciunas, others say Fluxus lives to this day. With due respect to Maciunas, it was too arbitrary to doggedly follow his list and his dates.

After all,* the idea of Fluxus was to democratize the making process, devalue the commodity status of the art work, and free people to think about art in an everyday kind of way, with more humor than reverence. So, as we see it, *FluxAttitudes* is a tribute to this spirit, not to the differences between the individuals, but to their commonality. It includes the work of figures historically associated with the movement, as well as contemporary artists whose work reflects a Fluxus approach. It celebrates sensibility over form, the living over the relic.

While the appearance of the exhibition, both its first venue in 1991, at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center in Buffalo, New York, and now at The New Museum, has mutated, its conceptual foundations have remained constant. In Buffalo, we integrated period Fluxus and post-Fluxus works of art with documentation, toys, and assorted books in an environment that blurred categorical distinctions, and always emphasized the viewer's interactive role. Throughout, we

have aimed to expose the unspoken procedures of curators and institutions. For The New Museum, we even suggested a theme: we asked artists to address the 1992 U.S. Presidential elections in their work. Participants were invited to contribute an interactive element to the exhibition: a score, a performance, an object, or an idea that directly involves the visitor. Each work in *FluxAttitudes* is assigned an insurance value of \$0, and information labels attributing specific works are once again eliminated. While these aspects caused some discomfort, we want to revive, momentarily, Maciunas's beliefs that art should be accessible to all, without commodity or institutional value, and that the individual ego should be suppressed in the interests of the collective. (Regarding his 1963 manifesto calling for a purge of bourgeois sickness, intellectual, professional, and commercialized culture—well, that wasn't so easy.)

There were various reactions to our invitation letter as the written responses on display indicate. Some artists refused to participate. Others did not answer. And then there is a list, a motley, glorious, seemingly infinite list of proposals for the visitor-activated work you see, hear and make in these two galleries. And this entire project, we hope, in its eclecticism, arbitrariness, and disrespect for traditional notions of quality and framing, will have a democratic strength, lightness of touch, and Fluxness of attitude.

*"After all" means we get the last word here.

Cornelia Lauf and Susan Hapgood,
Guest Curators
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Works in the Exhibition

Unless otherwise noted, all works are dated 1992

Aaaart Guise Ink.

The Big Game (Attitudes Shmattitudes:)
Table-top action game

Ricci Albenda

Tattoo shop with polaroids of body tattoos created by the artist to be used in a growing display

Eric Andersen

Opera 583: A participatory performance in a stanchioned area with badges to be taken by visitors

Ay-O

Boil and Fry: Various objects to be boiled and fried by the artist

Guillaume Bijl

Video Control System from the Mever Supermarket, 1990: Videotape of a supermarket surveillance system and accompanying musak

John Cale
Audiotape

Giuseppe Chiari
Arte booklet

Tony Conrad

Installation involving audience votes for presidential candidates

Philip Corner

Piece-of-Reality Presidency: Cumulative media piece about the presidential election

Nancy Dwyer

Exhibition catalogue and brochure

Ken Friedman

Fluxus Invites Hans Haacke to Investigate The New Museum of Contemporary Art:
Graphic inquiry

Al Hansen

Fluxus 3-D Fax: Telefaxed image of George Maciunas to be crumpled

Sandra Hastenteufel

Joshua Schwarz
Videotape of exhibition opening

Geoffrey Hendricks

"Free sample" packets of dirt with accompanying sets of instructions

Georg Herold

Xth Station: The Bible set upon a table beneath a plaque inscribed with the oath, "I swear to tell the truth . . ."

Dick Higgins

Concerto for Politics 1961/1966: Performance piece involving pouring water from one glass into another

Alice Hutchins

State of the Union: Platform with magnets to be manipulated by the audience

Ray Johnson

Nothing: Three red printed figures on a sheet of paper

Alison Knowles

Loose-leaf album containing artists' proposals for *FluxAttitudes*

Petr Kotik

No Pain—No Gain: Performance piece of artist doing acupuncture on himself

Liz Larner

Petri dish with agar culture activated by Women's Action Coalition (WAC)

Jackson Mac Low and Anne Tardos
Collaborative performance

Christian Marclay

Collaboration with security guard Elon Joseph who plays harmonica periodically throughout the exhibition

Jackie McAllister

lego ono chess set, 1991:
White Lego brick chess game

Jill McArthur

Are you human?: Installation

David Medalla

Five performances examining gender transformations and the interaction of world cultures, and an ongoing painting project

Vik Muniz

Zen Domino

Maurizio Nannucci

Small pieces of paper with printed messages distributed during the exhibition

Yoko Ono

Mending Piece: Broken cups and dishes reassembled by the audience

The OParty!

Interactive performance and video piece about a new political party, organized by Zini Lardieri. Members' list: Megara Bell, Shauna Church, Dennis Darcy, Ryan Kirshen, Carter Kustera, Joe McGinty, Warren Neidich, Amy Nicholson, Jennifer Petrie, Jerry Reilly, Hunter Reynolds, Jeffrey Rian, Andrea Rosenthal, Scott Spector, Nancy Wilson

Nam June Paik

Two magnet TVs

Paul Ramirez-Jonas

Why Things Fly: Factory model and vacuum cleaner construction with themes and slogans used in the Teddy Roosevelt campaigns

Michael Ross

Finger Exercise: Instruction cards for voting or pulling trigger, on shelf for audience to take

Carolee Schneemann

Painted white strip of carpet with plaster molds of cat feces

Paul Sharits

Interactive Fluxusness: Double-sided plexiglas mirror used to fingerprint self onto mirror image

Mieko Shiomi

Letter Event 1992–2012: Sealed air mail letters opened by visitors on specified dates and replaced with objects or messages of visitors' choice

Laura Stein

Cobweb installation and rubber stamp images of artist's blood cell to be stamped on visitors

William Stone

Participatory Democracy: Wood box with flag, light, and small fan, activated when viewer pushes a button

Rirkrit Tiravanija

An Installation Event: Show Up to Fill an Empty Space for Susan, Cornelia, and Alice: Exhibition installation

Danny Tisdale

Transition, Inc.: Performance piece asking sensitive questions about identity

Yasunao Tone

Sound installation activated by visitor

Marc Travanti

Stratagem: Performance involving standing fan, mounted tape player, and speaker

Wolf Vostell

48h Fluxus Dance, 1992, and *LeCri*, 1990: Score for truck performance and videotape of 1990 Paris performance

Yoshimasa Wada

Performance piece played on plumbing pipes

David Wells

Box containing toaster to heat and cook the Constitution of the United States and Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*

Martin Zimmerman

Exhibition signage

Ay-O and David Medalla will be performing intermittently during the exhibition period. Additional performances will occur on the following Saturdays beginning at 2:00 pm, with the exception of Marc Travanti, who will perform at 3:00 pm.

October 3

David Medalla

October 17

The OParty!

October 24

Danny Tisdale, Marc Travanti

October 31

David Medalla

November 7

The OParty!

November 14

David Medalla

November 21

Marc Travanti

December 5

David Medalla

December 12

David Medalla

December 19

Danny Tisdale, Marc Travanti

Performances

Saturday, September 26

3:00 Jackson Mac Low and Anne Tardos

3:15 Petr Kotik

4:00 Yoshimasa Wada

4:15 David Medalla

5:00 The OParty!

6:00 Marc Travanti

6:15 Danny Tisdale