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USE OF TEXT IN FLUXUS

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ABSTARCT

USE OF TEXT IN FLUXUS

Fluxus was ignored and neglected in art historical studies in the 1970s and 1980s, and has a wide influence on contemporary art practices today employing performance, happening, text, and ready-made. Fluxus was an interdisciplinary movement in which text has been used excessively. This thesis presents a chronological examination of the use of text from the Arts and Crafts Movement to the emergence of Fluxus in the 1960s. It seeks to answer how the text has been used before Fluxus and how Fluxus artists used text regarding i) form ii) content iii) language use and display. Five Fluxus artists' text-based works were analyzed with close reading and literary analysis techniques. The findings have shown that Fluxus is a proto-conceptual movement, Fluxus artists use text in various forms and deconstructively, and poetically, use it as instructions for the realisation of performance, and use language as a tool to liberate from the logical and linear structure of language in order to be free from artistic categorizations.

Keywords: Text art, Anti-art, Language and art, Fluxus, Fluxus and text use

ÖZET

FLUXUS'TA YAZI KULLANIMI

1970'ler ve 1980'lerde sanat tarihi çalışmalarında göz ardı edilen ve ihmal edilen Fluxus, performans, happening, yazı ve hazır nesne kullanıldığı günümüz çağdaş sanat pratikleri üzerinde geniş bir etkiye sahiptir. Bu tez, Arts and Crafts Akımından itibaren 1960'larda Fluxus'un ortaya çıkışına kadar yazı kullanımının kronolojik bir incelemesini sunmaktadır. Fluxus öncesinde metnin nasıl kullanıldığı ve Fluxus sanatçılarının yazıyı i) biçim ii) içerik iii) dil kullanımı ve gösterim açısından nasıl kullandıkları sorularına yanıt aranmaktadır. Beş Fluxus sanatçısının yazıya dayalı çalışmaları, yakın okuma ve edebi analiz yöntemleriyle incelenmiştir. Bulgular, Fluxus'un proto-kavramsal bir hareket olduğunu, Fluxus sanatçılarının yazıyı çeşitli biçimlerde yapısökömsel olarak ve şiirsel bir dil ile kullandığını, performansın gerçekleşmesi için talimatlar olarak kullandığını ve sanatsal kategorizasyonlardan arınmak için dilin mantıksal ve doğrusal yapısından özgürleşerek bir araç olarak dili kullandıklarını göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yazı sanatı, Anti-sanat, Dil ve sanat, Fluxus, Fluxus ve yazı kullanımı

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1. INTRODUCTION

Wittgenstein resembles language to a game. “In most cases, the meaning of a word is its use”, Wittgenstein claimed in *Philosophical Investigations*. (Cited from Wittgenstein by Rayner, 2014, para.5). It isn’t what one says, it’s the way that one says it, and the context in which one says it. Words are how we use them in a language game (Rayner, 2014).

The breakdown of Clement Greenberg's idea of medium-specific modernism and the rise of a new art critical position, which moved away from the idea of the passive spectator looking at an existing artwork toward the idea of an active spectator involved in some way in the physical and/or conceptual creation of the work, are linked to the transition from object to idea. Therefore, in the case of text works, what was offered—through typography and the distribution of printed matter—was a setting where the viewer may come into contact with the artwork by actively reading rather than by engaging in any specific kind of visual contemplation (Blacksell, 2013).

According to Roland Barthes creation is not to copy the universe but to make the universe comprehensible with realistic construction. A connection can be established between the idea that defines art as “what one adds to the object while reconstructing it” and the representation of text in plastic arts. (Cited from Barthes by Oktay & Altinel, 2016 p.130)

The widely acknowledged linguistic turn in philosophy and critical theory coincided with the use of linguistic models and materials in the visual arts. The majority of analyses of the 1960s poetry and visual arts intersection follow an earlier painter and poets model, following the New York School and Black Mountain poets' adoption of a painterly aesthetics of gestural expression and bodily enactment or tracing the numerous collaborations between poets and painters during this time (Kotz, 2007).

In this thesis, the use of text in Fluxus is analyzed. Fluxus was ignored and neglected in art historical studies in the 1970s and 1980s, and has a wide influence on contemporary art practices today employing performance, happening, text, and ready-made (Arapoğlu, 2009). Fluxus was an interdisciplinary movement in which text has been used excessively. Dada,

Surrealism, Marcel Duchamp's ready-made and John Cage's experimental musical events, visual art, and poetics which are the strongest precursors of Fluxus used text through deconstruction and abandoned the codes of communication. Fluxus artists utilized many artistic disciplines however the use of text in Fluxus artworks, mainly with Fluxus scores, had a major role in demonstrating Fluxus philosophy. Beginning with Art & Crafts Movement, artists used text in their visual works for individualistic purposes.

In chapter 2 of this study, text use before the mid-nineteenth century is introduced. In chapter 3 use of text in the late nineteenth century to Fluxus is analyzed through the Arts & Crafts Movement, Art Nouveau and Lithography Technique, Cubist Collages, Dadaism, Surrealism, Marcel Duchamp, Pop Art, Conceptual Art, and John Cage. In chapter 4, Intellectual Precursors of Fluxus, History of Fluxus, and Use of Text in Fluxus are introduced. In chapter 5, Analysis of five Fluxus artists; George Maciunas, Yoko Ono, Robert Filliou, Mieko Shiomi, and Dick Higgins, and their text-based artworks are analyzed. Due to the necessity of limiting the thesis I have chosen five Fluxus artist that used text frequently in their works. I have chosen two female and three male artists from Europe, America, and Japan to portray Fluxus' divergent nature. All of the artists I have chosen to analyse are among the most active members of Fluxus. Through close reading and literary analysis techniques, I analyzed three text-based works from each artist regarding form, content, language use, and display employing various literary analysis techniques to portray Fluxus's interdisciplinary nature and artists' critical concepts that they put forward such as Psychoanalytic Literary criticism, Post-structuralist Literary Criticism, Feminist Literary Criticism, Queer Theory as Literary Criticism and Ecological Literary Criticism.

2. USE OF TEXT BEFORE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY

To begin with, text has been used on various occasions in visual culture and visual arts throughout history. Until modern art, the use of text in visual arts was limited to a few special purposes.

In ancient and classical periods, the use of text in visual arts mainly had religious aims (Batu, 2014). In Ancient period, art and text came together to create inscriptions on artifacts that told stories from antiquity and some texts were meant to accompany the deceased in the afterlife as a way to honor and preserve them. Every civilization influenced the form and purpose of inscriptions, from pictograms to hieroglyphs and cuneiform scripts. Hieroglyphs created by Egyptians, Hittites, Aztecs and Mayans. One of the primary components of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs were among the earliest instances of the forms uniting the text and the images. Egyptians', Hittites' and Aztecs' hieroglyphs are frequently considered works of art and defined as schematic alphabets. They can be considered the origins of the concept of text as art. They constitute examples of text as form, rather than an assistant to the visual. The primary purpose of the hieroglyphs on tombs and pyramids is funerary, helping and honoring the deceased in the afterlife. On the other hand, tablets from this era mostly told tales of gods and myths.

In Middle Ages, Biblical texts were often accompanied with images that portrayed them when Christianity eventually gained significant traction, a time when the majority of people in the community were illiterate. Icons were illustrations meant to help people understand biblical scenes (Yazıcı, 2019). Gombrich suggests, the majority of the Christian society was illiterate and the main aim of the art was to demonstrate scenes from the bible to the believers (Cited from Gombrich by Şumnu, 2014).

In medieval art, texts and images were the complementary aspects that complemented each other. Thus, inscriptions were instruments of identification and expression. Significant alterations were noted in the sense of style, concept, and goal following the medieval era. In general, the art of these eras were greatly impacted by the profound theological and political shifts that occurred in European culture.

Similar to the Mediaeval era, these artists included inscriptions in their paintings in a variety of styles. One of the most important ideas for understanding the meanings and purposes of the artworks is that the texts were written on scrolls. Scrolls and pictures are a component of the Church's sacred vocabulary. However, a number of artists included writings into their works in order to support the idea, and give their voices and an additional weight to the visual depictions (Yazıcı, 2019).

All in all, in Ancient and Classical periods the use of writing in visual arts mainly had religious aims. The artists used texts in their works in order to introduce the scenes from the Bible. Also, texts were used to remark on the identity or the social status of the sitter. Some artists preferred to write the titles of the paintings on the surfaces of them (Batu, 2014). Until the mid-nineteenth century, the text was included in art in order to tool to serve a specific aim (Yazıcı, 2019). After mid-nineteenth century, the text use in visual arts had to do with artists' individual stand points, ideas and chosen style. I focused in detail on the use of text in visual arts from mid-nineteenth century until Fluxus where the use of text had variety of reasons.

3. USE OF TEXT IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY TO FLUXUS

3.1. Arts & Crafts Movement and Use of Text

The impact of industrial revolution; the discovery and distribution of steam-powered engines, transition to mass production between 1760 to 1860 effected economy and arts. During the last third of the 19th century Arts and Crafts movement emerged in Great Britain with the aim of offering an alternative to the mechanized and impersonal art (Fayos-Perez, 2013).

Industrial revolution and mechanization caused crafting traditions to disappear, the need for industrial goods increased because of the population growth. Therefore, schools of designs which later began to called as schools of art, opened in England throughout 19th century (Dilmaç, 2015).

Beginning from the 1850s, the new fine arts schools were giving practical education around the country. *The Studio* magazine which effectively promoted international ideas, the Arts and Crafts movement had an impact on the art movements in Europe (Cited from Sterner by Dilmaç, 2015).

The Arts and Crafts movement wanted to create "unity of art," they opposed the hierarchy in which the arts were arranged in late-Victorian Britain: painting and sculpture at the top as fine arts; architecture in the middle, and the decorative arts at the bottom. They argued that, in the Middle Ages, this hierarchy had not existed; and in their own day, painters, sculptors, architects, and decorative artists have equal positions. Arts and Crafts movement also had parallels with Romantic critique of industrial society. They argued that creativity can be a part of the lives of ordinary people.

William Morris was the leading figure of the Arts and Crafts movement in Britain and he was a writer, poet, art critique, painter, textile designer and an activist. He was a leading Socialist in the 1880s and early 1890s. A good number of his Arts and Crafts friends and associates were also Socialists (Crawford, 1997). William Morris, wanted utilitarian objects to become works of art and transform bored and benighted laborers into inspired craftsmen.

Since 1888 with the *Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society* when Morris and Walter Crane, with contributors, made public products emphasizing the motto “utility and beauty”.

For Morris, art should be pleasant when being created, and not only when contemplated. He combined Medieval craftsmanship with socialist ideals (Fayos-Perez, 2013). Morris founded his own publishing house, the *Kelmscott Press* in 1891, and he wanted to reform the practice of book designing. Each book of the Kelmscott Press was designed with attention to detail, including typography, margins, the kind of paper, binding, or the kind of ink used and the materials were always from the best. He worked with specialists for the manufacture of each part of the book, trying to achieve “the ideal book” (Fayos-Perez, 2013) Kelmscott Press brought a new dimension to typographic assemblage and decorative elements. (Yazıcı, 2019)

Kelmscott press followed the footsteps of Medieval art in printing and created visual books among them is *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (fig.1) the original printed in 1896 is in black-letter Chaucer type printed in black and red ink including all the works by famous English poet Chaucer starting with *Canterbury Tales*. The initials of the book designed by Morris and cut on wood by W.H. Hooper and the illustrations were designed by Burne-Jones. Morris aimed to bring together text, design, image and matter. The press produced 425 copies in paper and 13 copies in vellum and brought typographic assemblage and decoration together.



Figure 1 A page from *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* by Kelmscott Press, 1896, Otis Library. Retrieved from: https://otis.libguides.com/books_and_graphic_design/chaucer

William Morris also designed a 3-meter-long *Woodpecker Tapestry* (fig.2) and used text in the form of poetry in 1885. The lines on the tapestry are from the Latin poet

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and it refers to the legend of Picus, one of the ancient kings of Italy, who turned into a woodpecker because he refused to be seduced by Circe.



Figure 2 Woodpecker Tapestry by William Morris, 1885. Retrieved from: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/william-morris/woodpecker-tapestry-1885>

The lines on the tapestry read:

I once a king and chief

Now am the tree bark's thief

Ever twist trunk and leaf

Chasing the prey

Woodpecker Tapestry has both visual and allegorical significance with the use of gothic writing and pattern-work. Literary analyses of the poem states that Morris's socialist worldview may be alluded in the poem as the monarch seems to be lamenting his downfall, but he questions the sincerity of his grief given that he is surrounded by stunning natural scenery. William Morris synthesized ancient sources of inspiration and he created a decorative design and used text within a tapestry as an artistic medium.

William Morris illustrated another poet, mystic and mathematician from 11th century, Omar Khayyam. Calligraphy and ornamentation have been done by William Morris and

illustrations by Edward Burne-Jones in 1872 in *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (fig.3). The image consists of two figures, probably lovers, and poem is illustrated with branch drawings.



Figure 3. Figure 3 Page from an illuminated manuscript of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, watercolor, bodycolor and gold leaf. Calligraphy and ornamentation by William Morris, illustrations by Edward Burne-Jones. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The core characteristics of the movement were combining crafts and arts which stressed inherent beauty of the material, the importance of nature in an industrial era and utility. They used everyday objects, employed various mediums, wanted to revolutionize craftsmanship, and they used text within their art. The form of the texts used various fonts, and displayed on papers, books and textile art; tapestries. Whereas the contents of the texts were poetic expressions generally referenced to works of literature and obtaining the author's style which were mostly epic poetry.

3.2. Art Nouveau, Litography Technique and Use of Text

In Europe and America, the Art Nouveau movement gained popularity between 1895 and 1905. It dominated every artistic discipline, beginning with architecture. It introduced a stylized approach to floral and curvilinear décor. It might be seen as a critique of the 19th century eclecticist fashions. It inclined toward a wholly creative idea of shape, in contrast to

the mindset of its predecessor, which was to transfer forms and patterns from the past. It supported hand production and showed no indifference to the industry or the prospects it offered (Balkan, 2017).

For aesthetic roots of Art Nouveau, 18th century English poet, painter and print-maker William Blake (1757-1827) should be considered. Eventhough William Blake was a romantic poet, his drawing style had similarities with Art Nouveau. The undulating movements, asymmetrical compositions that defy the rules of perspective, and two-dimensional, elongated figures in the form of silhouettes and their bodies that appear to be rolling, seen in the drawings and illustrations of William Blake who blended literature, dreams and graphic arts in his works, were adopted by Art Nouveau in the 19th century (Cited by Schmutzler by Balkan, 2017).

William Blake created prophetic books which are a series of lengthy, interrelated poetic works drawing upon his own personal mythology. Apart from its obvious biblical basis, the mythopoeia had religious and political content. For instance, in his illustrated poetry book *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (fig.4) Blake's notion of contraries was demonstrated. For him, advancement in life is impossible without contraries and that every individual reflects the opposing character of God.



Figure 4 A page from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* by William Blake, 1790, Lebrecht Music & Arts. Retrieved from: <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-william-blake-s-the-marriage-of-heaven-and-hell-a-page-from-the-argument-83365371.html>

The aim of Art Nouveau was to eliminate the boundaries between major and minor works of art, or high and low art. Many artists believed that art had the power to inspire and bring people together. Not only should art be found in pricey oil paintings on the walls of prestigious institutions or in the homes of the wealthy, but it should also be found in the common people's homes, in their furniture, in their dishes and cups, in commercials, and in all the commonplace items, such as lamp feet, toilet seats, and sewer grates. In addition to handcrafted pieces, even factory-produced goods required the ornamental influence of art (Cited from Johnston by Balkan, 2017).

Influenced by William Morris, *Cover design for Wren's City Churches* (fig.5) by Mackmurdo is a woodcut and an example of the influence of text use and Arts and Crafts movement on Art Nouveau.



Figure 5 *Cover design for Wren's City Churches*, 1883, Woodcut on handmade paper, 12 x 9 inches, Library of Congress. Retrieved from: <https://victorianweb.org/art/design/mackmurdo/21.html>

Lithography technique also had an impact on Art Nouveau. Aloys Senefelder is credited with developing the technique that made it possible to create posters. In 1798, he invented the stone lithography technology. Prior to this invention, printing was pricey and time-consuming. The art of illustration was not well developed at first, and by the end of the 18th century, it was impossible to replicate the colors on the poster. The poster became the primary method of public communication in Europe and America due to its innovative ability to blend text and images in an affordable and visually appealing format. A knowledge that type and letters might be ornamental, artistic, and eye-catching in a way that had never

really been considered before arose from the advertising seen in magazines, the ornate frontispieces in books, and the poster art movement in France. Only little later, with the discovery of the ability to manipulate fonts and graphic forms, did the illustration become a resource. Newspaper and poster designers first used standard text styles at gigantic proportions, or they developed italic or slightly embellished styles for emphasis inside text. This is how the concept of display and ornamental type came to be (Petre, 2008).

The lithography technique's low cost and capacity for many printings have made creating poster designs incredibly convenient. The lithography technique holds great significance in the advertising industry because of its affordability and ease of use for artists, in addition to providing the audience with aesthetic enjoyment. At its height during the Art Nouveau era, this style allowed artists to freely express themselves without being constrained by typographic elements, visual elements, colors, or forms (Balkan, 2007).

Gustav Klimt created a lithograph poster in 1898 *Poster for the 1st Secession exhibition*, (fig.6) for the movement's inaugural display, exhibition held in Vienna. Greek mythology's legendary battle between Theseus and the Minotaur is shown on the poster. The Art Nouveau style is typified by the audacious and vivid depiction of Theseus battling the Minotaur.



Figure 6 *Poster for the 1st Secession exhibition*, 1898, 63.5 x 46.9 cm, Belvedere Museum. Retrieved from: <https://www.artchive.com/artwork/poster-for-the-1st-secession-exhibition-gustav-klimt-1898/>

The text use in Art Nouveau was for informative purposes for poster designs and the form was playful as artists arranged the sizes of the letters different from one and other and used

different fonts as they saw fit. Accordingly, the independence from perspective led to the birth of collage aesthetics.

3.3. Cubist Collages and Use of Text

Considered one of the most radical art movements, cubism proposes a new way of representing the world (Cited from Antmen by Erdal & Ünlü, 2023). According to Kasap, Picasso's aim of painting the “now” stems from his "endeavor to capture the moment" in which he aimed to express objects and human nature as he saw them (Cited from Kasap by Erdal & Ünlü, 2023, p.35).

Cubists employed flat geometric figures to represent the various sides and angles of the objects as they believed that by displaying an object, landscape, or person from several angles or viewpoints, they might give the audience a more realistic picture.

Due to collage's allure, many cubists chose to emphasize technique above subject in their works. Picasso, Juan Gris, and Georges Braque were among the artists who experienced with the surface of the painting. The earliest instances of text being used as a ready-made on the canvas had seen in Cubism. Text placed to the painting's surface as commonplace, frequently meaningless symbols from daily life, such as a crumpled ticket or a newspaper article (Şumnu, 2014).

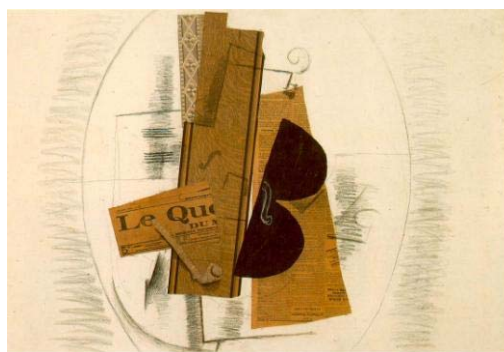


Figure 7 Violin and Pipe Le Quotidien by Georges Braque, 1913, chalk,charcoal,collage,paper,

The use of linguistic signifiers (writing) and numbers in painting which emphasized a new understanding of painting. With the linguistic signs they used in their paintings, they enabled the viewer to perceive the material existence of the painting as an object. This attitude was

rapidly adopted by other artists. Artists started to use words, phrases and sentences in their works (Batu, 2014).

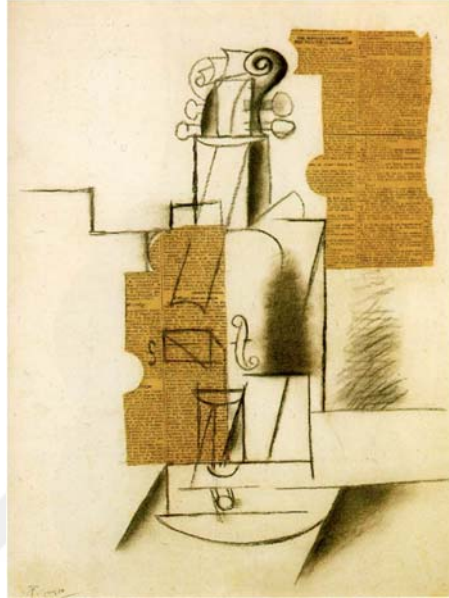


Figure 8 Violin by Pablo Picasso, 1912, 62 x 46 cm, Georges Pompidou Center. Retrieved from: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/pablo-picasso/violin-1>

The abstract universe that language generated might blend with the compositions made with these forms suggesting speed and movement, forging a profound connection between writing and visual art (Şumnu, 2014).



Figure 9 Fantomas (Pipe and Newspaper) by Juan Gris, 1915, National Gallery of Art. Retrieved from: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/juan-gris/fantomas-1915>

Cubist artworks used text as a ready-made and in a fragmented form through daily life objects like pieces of newspapers, magazines and tickets. The fragmentation of texts such as half torn, or indecipherable paved the way for deconstruction of meaning. Along with the fragmentation of text, and text as ready-made another important contribution of Cubism was the collage aesthetics which employed by Dadaist excessively.

3.4. Dadaism and Use of Text

Dadaists practiced anti-rationality, randomness, absurdity, shock, word games, irony and experiences of daily life in their artistic expressions (Arapoğlu, 2009). Artists responded to the war environment and destructions that emerged with the First World War and started to put forward their actions. The artistic actions of Dada emerged at the same time in New York and Zurich in 1915-1916 (Yavuz, 2004). Dada was the beginning of the new era in art which was largely led by poets and writers.

Dada was founded by Tristan Tzara, Hugo Ball, Hans Arp, Richard Huelsenbeck and Marcel Janco. “Dada” word was discovered by Huelsenbeck and Hugo Ball while they were looking for a name for a chanteuse at their cabaret in a German-French dictionary (Cited from Huelsenbeck by Yazıcı, 2019). The word dada means wooden horse in French, it resembles a toddler first words and it is akin to a random sound.

Richter explained Dada’s main philosophy as “The realization that reason and anti-reason, sense and nonsense, design and chance, consciousness and unconsciousness, belong together as necessary parts of a whole- this was the central message of Dada” (Richter, 1965, p.64).

Since the beginnings of Dada, performance, music, and poetry were included in their festivals and ritual like gatherings. Artists met in the Cabaret Voltaire, reciting poems in different languages, played African music and wild rhythms, dance and put on costumes designed by Marcel Janco between the walls exhibited the works of Jean Arp (Horvath, 2016).

Dadaists radically attacked logic and language which are essential for cultures. They experimented with language with its visual and auditory aspect and they used their bodies, poetry and posters. Meaningless sounds and poems were important in Dadaist representations (Cited from Schaffer by Gizela Horvard, 2016). Also, Dada Manifestoes

reveal that Dada wanted annihilate the heritage of the past along with linguistic and logical structures that are inherent in the society. Bruitist poems, meaningless words and sentences, simultaneous poems aimed at language itself (Horvath, 2016).

The Dadaist manifestoes are extremely dysfunctional and contradictory and they highlight the aim of Dada in poetic collocations and sometimes the visual monotony of the text is disrupted, and the text appears like image. In the first Dadaist manifesto in Zurich, 14 July which is the day of the fall of Bastille and the beginning of French Revolution, Hugo Ball stated that Dada is an artistic movement and it is international (Hovard, 2016). Hugo Ball suggested a cleansing which could be accomplished through poetry and wrote:

A line of poetry is a chance to get rid of all the filth that clings to this accursed language, as if put there by stockbrokers' hands, hands worn smooth by coins. I want the word where it ends and begins. Dada is the heart of words (Hovard, 2016, p.223).

In 1918, Tristan Tzara begins the Dada Manifesto as: "The magic of a word—Dada—which has brought journalists to the gates of a world unforeseen, is of no importance to us. To put out a manifesto you must want: ABC to fulminate against 1, 2, 3" (Cited from Tzara by Artun, 2015, p. 117).



Figure 10 *What is Dada? (Wat is Dada?)* (Information booklet) by Theo van Doesburg, 1923, 15.6 × 12.4 cm, Letterpress, The Merrill C. Berman Collection at MoMA. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/220953>

Dadaists played with language daringly by dismembering, tearing it apart, reducing it to its basic elements such as letters and sounds, put the codes of conventions of language in parentheses and deconstructed language in a playful manner. They withdrew the culture

consensus in a way which is the loyalty given to linguistic laws. (Cited from Schaffer by Hovarth, 2016, p.223)

These experiments with language exposed the arbitrary relationship between words and their meanings while attacking the notion of absolute truth. Objective and absolute truth has been defining trait of Western civilization since Ancient Greeks, and Dadaist challenged that notion by displaying the arbitrary relationship with words and their meanings. Therefore, Dada is considered as change point between modernism and postmodernism by many scholars and thinkers like Steven Connor and Ihab Hassan.



Figure 11 *Kleine Dada Soirée* by Theo van Doesburg with Kurt Schwitters, 1922, Lithograph, 30.2 x 30.2 cm, Museum of Modern Art. Retrieved from: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rubaiyat_Morris_Burne-Jones_Manuscript.jpg

Stephen Forcer has argued that “Dada poems are written as if by a subject who is continually entering the symbolic order for the first time and epistemology. Lacan’s view that all knowledge is delusional provides a theoretical — rather than cultural or political — context in which to read the ways in which Dada breaks down language and resists linguistic wholeness and coherence” (Forcer, 2017, pp. 53-5).

The poem will resemble you.

And there you are – an infinitely original author of charming sensibility, even though unappreciated by the vulgar herd (Martinique, 2016, para 2).

Among many experimental uses of text employed by Dadaists, *To Make a Dadaist Poem* which was a part of one of the main Dadaist manifestos *On Feeble Love And Bitter Love* points out how Dadaists chose and suggested the use of language as a strong visual material and a strong supportive of Dadaist philosophy.



Figure 13 *Cut with the Kitchen Knife through the Last Epoch of Weimar Beer-Belly Culture in Germany* by Hannah Höch, 1919, Collage of pasted papers. Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hoch-Cut_With_the_Kitchen_Knife.jpg

Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch and John Heartfield from the Berlin Dada group, used visual images, words and sentences taken from newspapers and magazines and combined them with political satire and social commentary (Batu, 2014). Dada embraced print culture with journals, books, manifestos etc. with international characteristic and non-national direction (Cited from Kramer by Yazıcı).

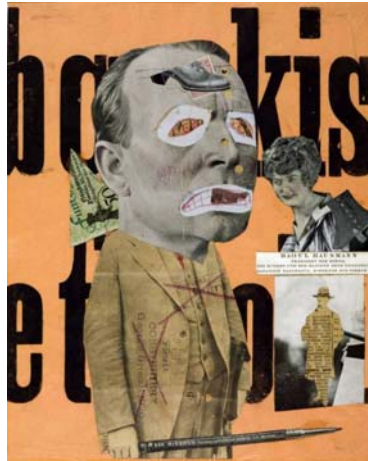


Figure 14 *The Art Critic* by Raoul Hausmann 1919-20, lithograph and printed paper on paper, 25.4 x 31.8 cm. Retrieved from: <https://raggedclaws.com/category/collage-art/>

All in all, dada revolutionized art forms and people's expectations of art and influenced many generations and art movements to come. The form of text in Dada was anti-rational, random, playful, arbitrary, and deconstructive and the texts were retrieved from posters, newspapers, books journals, etc. Dadaists used text in poetry form with handwriting and recited poems in unusual ways thus adding a performative level and improvisation to visual arts. In parallel with the Dadaist anti-art approach and critical worldview, the use of text was also post-structuralist.

In relation to this thesis Dada is important for its similarities with Fluxus both in text use and its cultural criticism. The primary organizer and name giver of Fluxus, George Maciunas associated Fluxus with Dada among many art critics. Maciunas wrote an essay titled *Neo-Dada in Music, Theater, Poetry, Art*.

3.5. Surrealism and Use of Text

Surrealism borrowed the idea that eliminating the duality of art/life from Dada and developed it. The criticism of the rationality in surrealism was inspired by Freud's theory of the unconscious. Andre Breton (1896 -1966), who wrote the first Surrealist Manifesto, stated that "We are still living under the reign of logic..." (Breton, 1972, p.9).

Surrealists used ordinary objects for the discovery of the unconscious (Arapoğlu, 2009). For instance, Surrealist used chance factor and automatism technique. This technique inspired by psychoanalysis but also from their admiration for Lautréamont's and Arthur Rimbaud's

poetry. In Automatism technique, artists allow their hands to move automatically on the surface of their medium and without planning what to create beforehand. Thus, letting their consciousness and unconsciousness lead the way. The automatism technique does not require any artistic skill, design, or presentation and free the creator from preconceived concerns. Automatism technique also used with writing. André Breton offered an instruction in first Surrealist Manifesto on how to attain the state of spontaneous automatism of thought as follows:

“...have writing materials brought to you. Put yourself in as passive, or receptive, a state of mind as you can. Forget about your genius, your talents, and the talents of everyone else. Keep reminding yourself that literature is one of the saddest roads that leads to anything. Write quickly, without any preconceived subject, fast enough so that you will not remember what you’re writing and be tempted to reread what you have written. The first sentence will come spontaneously, so compelling is the truth that with every passing second there is a sentence unknown to our consciousness which is only crying out to be heard. It is somewhat of a problem to form an opinion about the next sentence; it doubtless partakes both of our conscious activity and of the other, if one agrees that the fact of having written the first entails a minimum of perception. This should be of no importance to you, however; to a large extent, this is what is most interesting and intriguing about the Surrealist game” (Breton, 1972, pp.29-30).

Surrealists believed that the writing was an element that destructed the stability of the conscious. As Kahraman suggests, especially surrealist poetry attacks the seeing-oriented nature of Western art and disrupts the relationship between the image and the meaning. Poetry, too, was forced to transcend the symbolic features of language and created as iconic and even indexical (Cited from Kahraman by Şumnu, 2014). In parallel, Caligrams (fig.15) were created where there is no connection between the image and the text (ibid).

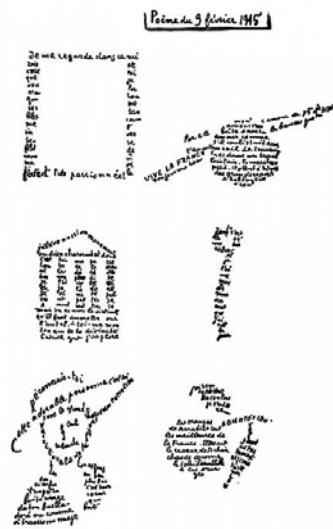


Figure 15 Calligram, poem by Guillaume Apollinaire, 1915. Retrieved from: <https://www.meisterdrucke.com.tr/fine-art-baski/Guillaume-Apollinaire/406903/Kaligram%2C-%C5%9Fiiir%2C-9-%C5%9Eubat-1915.html>

One of the pioneers of Surrealism, René Magritte used linguistic and visual signifiers simultaneously and questioned the reality between visual signified and linguistic signifier. *La Trahison des Images* (*The Treachery of Images*) (fig.16) belongs to the series of paintings by René Magritte who created artworks on the philosophical problems he wanted to analyze.



Figure 16 *La trahison des images* (*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*) (*The Treachery of Images* [*This is Not a Pipe*]) by René Magritte, 1929, 60.33 x 81.12 x 2.54 cm, Oil on canvas, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Retrieved from: https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/201

Magritte drew a pipe figure in his work and wrote “Ceci n'est pas une pipe” (This is not a pipe) under the figure. This sentence, which seems contradictory at first, is actually true because this is not a pipe itself, but a visual representation of a pipe. Magritte questioned the capacity of signs to represent objects. Magritte agreed with the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's and Ludwig Wittgenstein's enquiries about language. In particular, he adopted the view that there are many connections like consensual, cultural, historical and coincidental

between the signifier (form, object) and the signified (meaning). In other words, the connection between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary. (Batu, 2014)

In his book titled *This Is Not a Pipe* Foucault comments on *The Treachery of Images* as follows:

“What misleads us is the inevitability of connecting the text to the drawing (as the demonstrative pronoun, the meaning of the word pipe, and the likeness of the image all invite us to do here)-and the impossibility of defining a perspective that would let us say that the assertion is true, false, or contradictory” (Foucault, 1983, p.20).

Another interdisciplinary work of Magritte is *The Key to Dreams* (fig.17) dated 1930 where he deconstructed the relationship between objects and language by naming the objects he painted with wrong names.



Figure 17 *The Key to Dreams*, 1930, Oil on canvas, 81 x 60 cm, Private Collection. Retrieved from: <https://alexanderstorey.wordpress.com/2013/11/18/artwork-analysis-the-key-to-dreams-by-magritte/>

None of the nouns (the acacia, moon, snow, ceiling, storm, desert) match with the visuals. The title of the work is *The Key to Dreams*, maybe referencing Freud's work on psychoanalysis. Whether he was referencing to Freud or not, the title clearly implies a hidden meaning related to perception and consciousness. He explained his view on the relationship with words and visual art as:

Between words and objects one can create new relations and specify characteristics of language and objects generally ignored in everyday life. ...Sometimes the name of an object takes the place of an image. A word can take the place of an object in reality. An image can take the place of a word in a proposition... In a painting, words are of the same cloth as images. Rather one sees images and words differently in a painting (Cited by Magritte by Foucault, M. 1983, pp.38-39).

Surrealist mostly used hand-writing in their paintings, poems and experimentations such as automatism technique with thought provoking statements. Both Surrealist and Dadaist artists used text with different methods and aims, some used text to reference popular culture, some created word-plays, some made connections between linguistics, philosophy and psychology or created political criticism with the use of text. Therefore, the artworks began to demand to be read. The audience had to analyze the meanings and interpretations conveyed by the artworks by reading them. This kind of text use and introduction of linguistics and philosophy in visual arts were also indicators of the transition to conceptual art (Batu, 2004).

3.6. Marcel Duchamp and Use of Text

Fluxus artist Ben Vautier said that "Without John Cage, Marcel Duchamp and Dada, there would be no Fluxus." and he pointed to the historical and intellectual precursors of Fluxus (Cited from Vautier by Arapoğlu, 2009, p. 15).

Duchamp put forward the most radical aesthetic doctrines of the 20th century in art. His aim was to reconcile art and life and overthrow art (Arapoğlu, 2009). In 1917 Marcel Duchamp sent one of his most provoking ready-made *Fountain* which was an ordinary mass-production urinal, to *Society of Independent Artist* which he also was a member of and he signed the work as R.Mutt.

An important explanation among many was coming from an anonymous editorial believed to be written by the artist Beatrice Wood and she stated:

Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that

its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object (Mann, J. 2017).

By signing the urinal Duchamp transformed an industrial object into an artwork and started a revolutionary movement in Western art. Duchamp eliminated the uniqueness of artistic work, also revealed that the artist can create like a philosopher (Şumnu, 2014). Marcel Duchamp also criticized the value given to artist. For him, there was an excessive physical value given to the artist and this led the artwork to lose its intellectual expansion. Duchamp's opposition to “artist as genius” was also very influential. His use of the chance factor, his anti-gallery standpoint, and his views and actions regarding the use of ready-made objects in artistic creation greatly influenced the international avant-garde world and Fluxus. (Arapoğlu, 2009).

In my considered opinion, by signing his artwork with a fake name, Duchamp used the literary devices in visual art. Duchamp used poetical license by signing his artwork with a fake name, using text as a medium, and contributed the depth of his work just like authors use irony with their literary works.

He declared that “I wanted to kill art for myself.. ..a new thought for that object” (John.J, n.d.). Duchamp’s profound influence on the conceptualists were, the use of language in art, questioning the nature and limits of art, blurring art and life distinction, bringing interdisciplinary approaches, questioning traditional places for art like museums and galleries (Prinz, J. 2011).

For Marcel Duchamp’s use of text, it is clear that he questioned language with a cynical manner. According to Duchamp, language is one of the delusions of humanity. For him, the signifier does not signify the contrast between signifier and signified, as per Sassure but signifiers were indicators of power. Duchamp interpreted representation as tyranny.

Duchamp used words in his ready-mades for deconstructive purposes drawing parallels with his anti-art approach. He explained his use of words as:

“If you introduce a familiar word into an alien atmosphere, you have something comparable to distortion in painting, something surprising and new.”

Sometimes four or five different meanings come together through wordplays in which Duchamp finds source of inspiration (Lazzarato, 2017, p.43-5). Duchamp was also interested in linguistic systems including how meanings emerge from languages. He formulated a number of procedural works based on dictionaries and dictionary meanings. For instance, Duchamp wrote: “look through a dictionary and scratch out all the “undesirable” words” (Cited from Sanouillet & Peterson by Prinz, 2008, p.90).

Duchamp used text with a poetic and sinical approach with *Air de Paris (50 cc of Paris Air)* (fig.18) which is a modified medical light bulb purchased in 1919. For this work, Duchamp bought a serum ampoule from a pharmacy in Paris and asked the pharmacist to reseal the ampoule after emptying it. He put on a label with “Serum Physiologique” (Physiological Serum) printed on it. Therefore, Duchamp preserved famous “Parisian air” in a bulb.

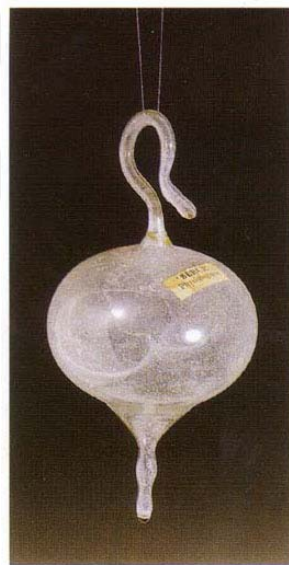


Figure 18 *Air de Paris (50 cc of Paris Air)* by Marcel Duchamp, 1919, 13.5 x 20.5 cm Philadelphia Museum of Art.
Retrieved from: https://www.touffait.com/unmaking_the_museum/Paris%20Air.html

In 1919, Duchamp created *L.H.O.O.Q.* (fig.19) in which he drew mustache and goatee on Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* and added letters “L.H.O.O.Q.” at the bottom of the postcard. The pronunciation of the letters in French sounds like, “Elle a chaud au cul” which means “There is fire down below”. Also interpreted as “she has a hot arse”. He not only used wordplay within a visual artwork but also criticized gender roles as *Mona Lisa* is considered a representation of feminine beauty, by drawing mustache and a goatee he mixed the genders with one another.



Figure 19 *L.H.O.O.Q.* by Marcel Duchamp, 1919, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Retrieved from: <https://www.the-art-minute.com/what-is-dada/>

Marcel Duchamp also used tin advertisement in his work titled *Apolinère Enameled* (fig.20). He added pencil, paint, and cardboard to a painted tin advertisement for “Sapolin enamel” paint brand. The sign cleverly draws attention to the ready-made’s implicit criticism of traditional painting by its altered typography, which is a pun on the name of his friend, the French writer and art critic “Guillaume Apollinaire” whereas the text in the artworks reads: “Apolinere Enameled”.



Figure 20 *Apolinère Enameled* by Marcel Duchamp, 1916-1917, Gouache and graphite on painted tin, mounted on cardboard, 24.4 x 34 cm, The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection. Retrieved from: <https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/51563ii>

Text use in Marcel Duchamp’s artworks varies in format such as hand-writing on objects or pre-existing paintings, and using advertising layout and typography on cardboard. The

content of the text Duchamp used on the other hand was conceptual and he used text for revealing his idea of the artwork which in conceptual art considered is the artwork itself. Therefore, the use of text in Duchamp's artworks is strongly connected to his artistic standpoint. The tone of the texts use of Duchamp was cynical, and he used word plays and literary devices such as pun, abridgment and metaphor.

3.7. Pop art and Use of Text

Following World War II, there was a golden age of popular culture consumption, with large-scale movie theaters, successful introduction of new media such as television and long-playing records, and technological advancements in color photography in magazines. A new readiness to approach the entire civilization as if it was art evolved as an alternative to an aesthetic that separated visual art from life and the other arts. This mindset ran against to the purist, idealist, and elite components of art theory from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries (Alloway, 1926).

Pop art created paintings and sculptures of mass culture objects and media stars, aiming to blur the boundaries between high art and low culture. The fact that there is no hierarchy of culture and that art can be borrowed from any source is one of the most effective features of Pop art (Cited by Tansuğ by Toptaş, 2017). Also, the first and widespread examples of the use of commercial culture, which modernism described as kitsch begin with Pop Art (Cited from Aslışen by Toptaş, 2017).

On the other hand, Pop Art is fundamentally an art about signs and sign systems. The artworks use precoded content, which already exists as signs, such as comics, brand items, and photos (Alloway, 1926). One of the most well-known figures in Pop Art, Andy Warhol, included several codes for communication and the advertising industry in his visual expression. Using American iconography, Warhol created screen prints (fig.21) that highlighted mass production in 1962, he displayed 32 identical reproductions of Campbell brand soup cans. Foucault on this subject stated:

A day will come and then, with the resemblance transmitted endlessly through a series, the image itself, along with the name it bears, will lose its identity. Campbell, Campbell, Campbell (Cited from Foucault by Şumnu, 2014, p.54).



Figure 21 Campbell's Soup I by Andy Warhol, 1968, Print, Artists Rights Society (ARS) Retrieved from: <https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/campbell-s-soup-i/jwEPpXRD0LS7YA?hl=tr>

Pop artists recontextualized signs thus changed their meaning. Pop art suggests a field of repeating and interchangeable images (Alloway, 1926). Other than Andy Warhol, many Pop artists featured language for instance Edward Ruscha, Roy Lichtenstein, Tom Wesselmann, Robert Rauschenberg, Richard Hamilton, Robert Indiana, Mel Ramos. The explosion of language into the visual arts coincided with the breakdown of high-low boundaries and the implosion of medium-specific techniques in the 1960s (Pasquariello, 2005).

Roy Lichtenstein was another Pop Artist who employed text. The artist mimicked comic strip images in his oil paintings. The comic strips' juxtaposition of visual and spoken language, which had not been frequently emphasized by artists prior to the Pop Art era, attracted him. In this sense, Lichtenstein believed that the lines separating high art from low art could be destroyed by combining words and visuals (Cited from Artist Rooms by Yazıcı, 2019).



Figure 22 Masterpiece by Roy Linchtenstein, 1962, 137 cm × 137 cm, Private collection. Retrieved from: https://www.lambiek.net/artists/l/lichtenstein_roy.htm

Another artist from Pop Art who used language predominantly is Edward Rucscha. He used various mediums while using text such as photography, painting and drawing. The difference of Rucscha lies in his references, unlike other Pop artists he dealt with self-referential expressions and materializing the words according to their meanings. In order to give size to objects that "exist in a world of no size," he tended to depict words as indicators that can be motivated and connected to their materiality. His material is language, but language itself is material (Pasquariello, 2005, p.83-5).



Figure 23 I Don't Want No Retrospective by Edward Ruscha, 1982. Retrieved from: <https://arthur.io/art/ed-ruscha/i-dont-want-no-retrospective>

When questioned directly, "What was more important to you when you were painting words: the way it looked or what it meant?" Ruscha said that his work is "a flip-flop between those things." His word-based works symbolized "the inadequacy of language and the faulty progress of human communication" (Pasquariello, 2005, p.90).

Meaning is most strongly experienced during the process of linguistic disintegration or decay, according to Yve-Alain Bois's essay on the entropy of *The Liquid Paintings* by Ruscha. According to Bois, Ruscha tries to prevent this process rather than initiate or prolong it (Cited by Bois by Pasquariello, 2005). The artist dealt with the concretization of meaning. Even though most signifying is arbitrary, Ruscha exhibited a persistent attraction to verbal mimesis as well as a persistent desire to inspire the language sign by emphasizing its materiality (Pasquariello, 2005).

All in all, Pop Art aimed to blend high and low culture and used pop culture elements like images from newspaper, clippings from magazines and comic books with everyday language. While some artists used text in order to convey this purpose and some dealt with word as transparent sign. Simultaneously, language served as an issue of existence in a capitalist culture where people were pushed by consumerism and reality was becoming more and more superficial which in return mirrored by Pop Art.



Figure 24 *Eat/Die* by Robert Indiana, 1962, Oil on canvas, 182.9 × 152.4 cm. Retrieved from: <https://www.robertindiana.com/artworks/artworks-items/eat-die>

Also Fluxus and Pop Art co-existed for a while. In *Pop Art: An International Perspective*, the art historian Evelyn Weiss states the relationship as follows:

Pop Art came up against a number of emerging European trends, with which, for a time, it coexisted in a kind of symbiosis. In addition to Nouveau Realisme in Paris, in Germany there was a concentration on Happenings and a particularly strong representation of the Fluxus movement (Cited by Weiss from Higgins, 2002, p. 135).

Almost alone among historians of the era, Weiss shows how Pop Art and Fluxus were influenced by each other in France, England, and America as well. Pop artists and Fluxus artists were closely associated, mostly with regard to distribution avenues. Where Pop Art mirrored the consumer society within art, Fluxus employed direct sales strategy organized by artists themselves. Historiographic studies of Pop and also Conceptual Art, explained below, underestimate the influence of Fluxus in terms of its dynamism, especially with regard to the sensory and empirical aspects of Fluxus artworks (Higgins, 2002).

3.8. Conceptual Art and Use of Text

Since the 1960s, Fluxus, Pop art, Conceptual art, text and image, and words have multiplied in the art world in a complex relationship with poetry, the realm of experimental music, and the recently developing activities of performance art. Language has been reduced to a type of object in Conceptual Art that has been separated, fractured, crossed out, and occasionally almost completely stripped of meaning or emotion (Kotz, 2007). One of the most difficult issues in theorizing the emergence of what may be called Conceptual Art has been relating it to the linguistic, poetic, and performative techniques connected to the Happenings and Fluxus moment before it. The abundance of text-based scores, directions, and performance notations that surround the context of Happenings and Fluxus signals the earlier turn to language as an artistic medium. Understanding conceptual art and language use required realizing this relationship (Kotz, 2007). Even though Fluxus began slightly earlier than Conceptual Art, for the profound use of language in Conceptual Art and theorization with Joseph Kosuth's article *Art After Philosophy* published in 1969 and Sol Lewitt's *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* published in 1967 when Fluxus artists were active and George Maciunas was alive, and the fact that some Fluxus artist used the term "Concept Art" regarding their work, also some critics like Robert Morgan aligns Fluxus with the origins of Conceptual Art, the use of text in Conceptual Art discussed in accordance with this study.

The fundamental response of conceptual art is to the art market, or more specifically, to the unique, enduring, and materially valuable "commodity" component of the art object. By removing the unique object and substituting idea for it, conceptual artists have used documents, photos, maps, sketches, videos, and so on to bring about a revolution that challenges the conventional understanding and definition of art. The intellectual origins of Conceptual Art could be traced back to the ready-made-object that Duchamp presented in the 1910s, and particularly his 1917 work *Fountain* (Antmen, 2009).

In contrast to the modernist paradigm, which places more emphasis on forms, materials, and objects, Conceptual Art places more emphasis on ideas, meanings, and processes (İz, 2011). Robert Barry (1936-), Lawrence Weiner (1942-), Joseph Kosuth (1945), Mel Bochner (1940-), and the Art and Language group (1968; founders Terry Atkinson, David Bainbridge, Michael Baldwin, Harold Hurrell) in England are among the first conceptualists who adopted an artistic approach to perception on a purely conceptual level by associating

"art as thought" with philosophy, language, and occasionally mathematical formulae. Mel Bochner asserts that the foundation of a perfect conceptual piece of art is twofold. First, the work must have a full verbal equivalent, meaning it must be able to be defined and, once articulated, must be continually reproducible and re-experienced. The second is that there is absolutely no uniqueness or "aura" to the work. As one of the main representatives of linguistic conceptualism, Lawrence Weiner, once stated, "If you are familiar with one of my works, it is yours. It is what it is because I am unable to enter the minds of others and retrieve my work."

Whereas Kosuth, who separated art into pre- and post-Duchamp categories in his 1969 article *Art After Philosophy* stated that "If there is no language, there is no art" and he discussed the need for artists to act from the basis of art theory, not art, following Duchamp. (Antmen, 2009, p.195)

The widely acknowledged linguistic turn in philosophy and critical theory coincided with the use of linguistic models and materials in the visual arts. The majority of analyses of the 1960s poetry and visual arts intersection follow an earlier painter and poets model, following the New York School and Black Mountain poets' adoption of a painterly aesthetics of gestural expression and bodily enactment or tracing the numerous collaborations between poets and painters during this time (Kotz, 2007).

Prominent figures of the French Post-Structuralism Movement of the 1960s, including Derrida, Deleuze, and Foucault, drew inspiration from the semiotic theories and linguistic analyses of structuralist philosophers like Claude Levi-Strauss, Wittgenstein, Saussure, Lacan, and Roland Barthes. These thinkers also contributed concepts and thought systems that would influence the evolution of art theory. One of the key ideas of the time was deconstruction, which involves breaking up the strict rules of grammar and language in order to rebuild the hierarchical relationship between words and writing. The idea of deconstruction offered the visual and plastic arts the opportunity to act transdisciplinary, bringing art and many literary, philosophical, and social scientific disciplines together through intertextuality (Şumnu, 2014).

"A work of art is a kind of proposition presented within the context of art as comment on art" claimed Kosuth (Cited from Kosuth by İz, 2011, p. 77). In the sense that they challenge the essence or purpose of art, conceptual artworks are definitions of art. Kosuth wanted to disprove the idea that factuality and aesthetics are related to art (İz, 2011).

In his article *Art After Philosophy* Kosuth referenced Ayer's evaluation of Kant's distinction between analytic and synthetic, and stated that artworks are analytic propositions:

Works of art are analytic propositions. That is, if viewed within their context-as art-they provide no information about any matter of fact. A work art is a tautology in that it is a presentation of the artist's intention, that is, he is saying that that particular work of art is art, which means, is a definition of art. Thus, that it is art is true a priori (which is what Judd means when he states that 'if someone calls it art, it's art'.) (Cited from Kosuth by Harrison & Wood, 2020, p.903).



Figure 25 *One and Three Chairs* by Joseph Kosuth, 1965, Museum of Modern Art. Retrieved from: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/joseph-kosuth/one-and-three-chairs>

In Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (fig.25) the definition of the word chair, the chair itself and its image displayed. It seems to be a repetition in reality, but he also wanted to reveal the difference between the three (Şumnu, 2014). In other words, the statement in representing the chair, all representations of it have equal status. What the spectators “look at” is three chairs, but what they “read from” the work also includes the fourth one. When the spectator looks at the art object, he/she is confronted with the idea of the artwork which is about the representation of a daily object; a chair. Thus, artwork is not what the spectator sees, but rather what she/he thinks (İz, 2011).

Kosuth created *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)* in 1966 (fig.26) which consists of a number of photostats of dictionary definitions of specific items, such painting and water, adjectives, like black and white, or abstract nouns, like meaning, universal, time, idea, and nothing. According to this interpretation, the idea is the artwork, not the photostat itself. The definition states that the words alone do not constitute the artwork; rather, they only provide "the art information; just as the shape and color of a work could be considered its art information." (Cited from Schwarz by İz, 2011, p.80)

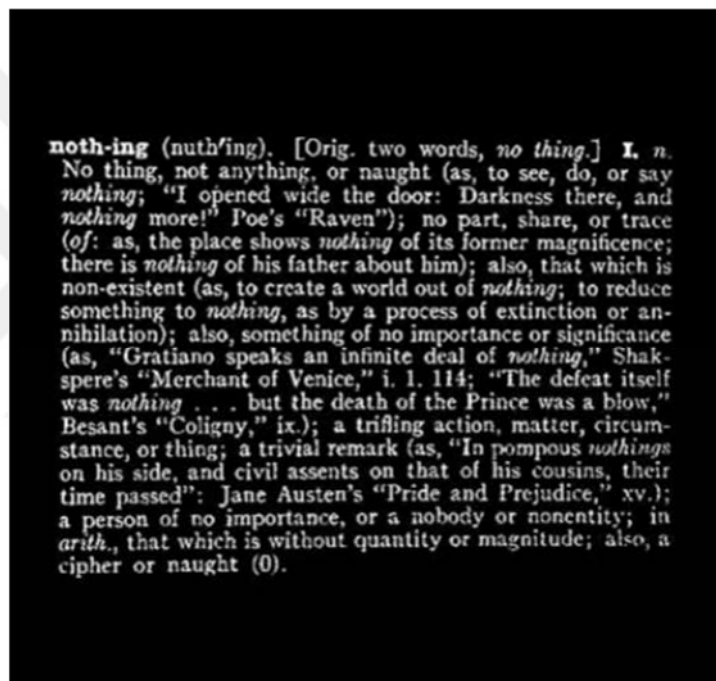


Figure 26 A piece from *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)* by Joseph Kosuth, 1968, Collection Buffalo AKG Art Museum.
Retrieved from: <https://buffaloakg.org/artworks/20151427-titled-art-idea-idea-nothing-english>

As a portable and repeatable artistic object, Kosuth's photostat works demonstrate the idea created by the text's artistic quality (Şumnu, 2014). Kosuth explicates his subtitle as follows:

‘Art as idea’ was obvious; ideas or concepts as the work itself. But this is a reification—it’s using the idea as an object to function within the prevailing formalist ideology of art. The addition of the second part— “Art as Idea *as Idea*” —intended to suggest that the real creative process, and the radical shift, was in changing the idea of art itself” (Cited from Kosuth by İz, 2011, p.81).

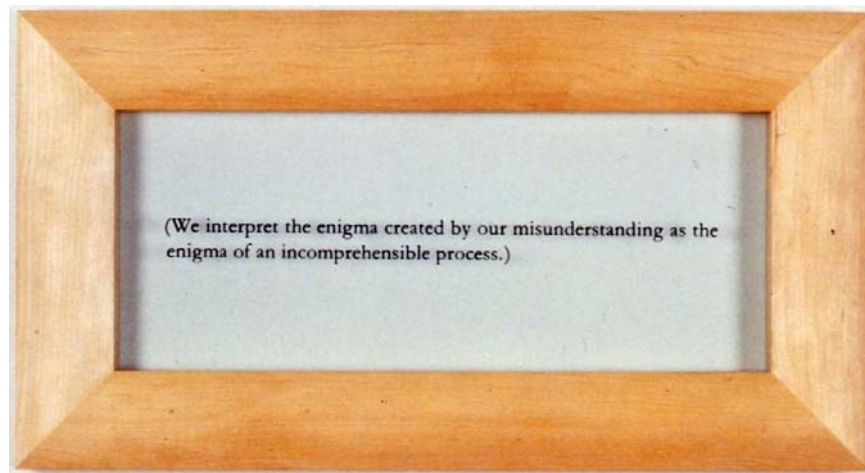


Figure 27 Wittgenstein Untitled by Joseph Kosuth, 1991. Retrieved from:
<https://museum.bucknell.edu/2015/11/10/tuesdays-objet-wittgenstein-untitled/>

As stated earlier, in 1967 Sol LeWitt wrote *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* and he analyzed the nature of Conceptual Art as follows:

Conceptual art is not necessarily logical. The logic of a piece or series of pieces is a device that is used at times only to be ruined. Logic may be used to camouflage the real intent of the artist, to lull the viewer into the belief that he understands the work, or to infer a paradoxical situation (such as logic vs. illogic). The ideas need not be complex. Most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple. Successful ideas generally have the appearance of simplicity because they seem inevitable. In terms of idea the artist is free to even surprise himself. Ideas are discovered by intuition (Cited by Lewitt from Antmen, 2009, p.197-8).

In order to reveal the thought, how the text is written is just as crucial as its meaning. For instance, Lawrence Weiner's work *A Bit of Matter and a Little Bit More* (fig.28) combines proposition and technique. Weiner used stencils and spray paint to write *A Bit of Matter and a Little Bit More*. The artist uses stencils and spray paint to transfer the writing to any desired location while discussing the flow of thinking. The writing can be removed off the paper and placed anywhere and whenever it is wanted (Şumnu, 2014).



Figure 28 A Bit of Matter and a Little Bit More by Lawrence Weiner, 1976.

Weiner in a 1971 interview, stated that “the work itself is information,” elaborating that “it would be a fascist gesture on my part if I were to say, you can accept things only on a verbal information level (type on the page)” (Cited by Weiner from Kotz, 2007, p.199).

Weiner’s transition from specific object to linguistic representation has parallels with the event score (Kotz, 2007). Which could be seen in detail in Fluxus chapter of this thesis.

The strong antifunctionality of the self-referential systems developed by Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, and Lawrence Weiner was interpreted as a means of "wrecking" language and art, as well as possibly dismantling and deactivating the larger systems of publicity and propaganda that employed words and images to construct reality and generate fantasies of consumption (Kotz, 2007, p.2).

Moreover, Robert Smithson wrote in a press release regarding a 1967 Dwan Gallery exhibition in New York City, stating "Language to be Looked at and/or Things to be Read" (Kotz, 2007, p.2). What turned out to be the first of four yearly Language Exhibitions. Smithson's description suggests that words were treated in this context somewhat like objects to be examined, as well as to be gathered, assembled, rearranged, and disassembled, in the

dematerialization process also cause art and public to come closer and strengthen the interaction between art and its viewers. This reinforcement is a result of a common sphere stemming from language that is used by both the artists and viewers in society (Cited from Godfrey, by İz, 2011). On the other hand, some artist used text in order to prove their goal “art as an idea” and used words in a deconstructive manner and sometimes words treated somewhat like objects in conceptual art and used language as a medium.

3.9. John Cage and Use of Text

John Cage (1912-1992) was a composer, visual artist and a poet. He was a pioneer of experimental music and was an interdisciplinary artist. His best-known work is the 1952 composition *4'33*, a piece performed in the absence of deliberate sound; musicians who present the work do nothing but be present for the duration specified by the title. The content of the composition is intended to be the sounds of the environment heard by the audience during performance. The work challenges assumed definitions of musical experience and boundaries of music. It led to discussions about musicology and the aesthetics of art and performance. He resembled his music to poetry in his essay titled *Lecture on Nothing* as follows: “I have nothing to say and I’m saying it and that is poetry as I need it. This space of time is organized. We need not fear these silences,—we may love them” (Cited by Cage from Higgins, 2002, p.88).

John Cage was interested in the theoretical thoughts and practices of Marcel Duchamp, philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein and he studied Indian philosophy, Zen Buddhism and criticized rationality. For Zen Buddhism the universe is in constant fluidity and change. For John Cage, concepts of flow and change paved the way for the integration of art and life. Inspired by Zen Buddhism, Cage created ambiguity with his music and wanted to depersonalize art. He established the chance factor with his chance operations *I Ching (Book of Chances)* which is a compilation of classic Chinese text that uses a hexagram symbol, to create order out of seemingly random occurrences. Cage's ideas were spread in Japan through Ichiyanagi and in California through La Monte Young (Arapoğlu, 2009).

First Happening by John Cage was in 1952 at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where he worked with Merce Cunningham, Charles Olson, Robert Rauschenberg, David Tudor. Some of the artists who were students and participants in John Cage's Experimental

Music Class at the New School for Social Research in New York in the 1950s were involved in the formation of Fluxus. Such as George Brecht, Al Hansen (1927–1995), Allan Kaprow (1927–2006), Dick Higgins (1938– 1998), Jackson Mac Low (1922–2004), George Maciunas (1931–1978) and, La Monte Young (Arapoğlu, 2009).

Primary a composer John Cage was an interdisciplinary artist and he created graphic works and used literature and text in some of his works. For instance, *Not Wanting to Say Anything about Marcel* (fig.30) was a tribute to Marcel Duchamp. The title refers to a remark made by artist Jasper Johns at Duchamp's death in 1968: 'I don't want to say anything about Marcel.' Cage produced the work by using his approach in *Chance Operations*. John Cage selected letters and numbers randomly and assembled panels presenting a multilayered composition without a fixed meaning.



Figure 30 *Not Wanting to Say Anything About Marcel* by John Cage, 1969. Norton Simon Museum. Retrieved from: <https://www.mplus.org.hk/en/collection/objects/not-wanting-to-say-anything-about-marcel-plexigram-i-2017276/>

Another work of Cage including text was a collaboration with David Tudor (fig.31) who was pianist and composer of experimental music. Cage read ninety stories and his speed was determined by the story's length, and in another room, David Tudor, performed selections from Cage's Concert for Piano and Orchestra and played pre-recorded tape from Cage's Fontana Mix.



Figure 31 *Indeterminacy: New Aspect of Form in Instrumental and Electronic Music* by John Cage and David Tudor, 1959, Folkways Records. Retrieved from: https://www.moma.org/collection/works/183917?artist_id=912&page=1&sov_referrer=artist

John Cage also experimented with poetry. Much of Cage's writing was composed within a prose poem form he called "mesostic" which is similar to acrostic, (fig.32) but it is led by middle rather than initial letters. His mesostic on the text of James Joyce, *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake* (1979), was layered with the sounds mentioned in the text as well as traditional Irish music. Other mesostics include *M: Writings '67-'72* (1973), *Empty Words: Writings '73-'78* (1979), and *X: Writings '79-'82* (1983). *Musicage: Cage Muses on Words, Art, Music* (1992).

A Long Letter

the musiC
yOu make
insN't
Like
any Other:
thaNk you.

oNce you
sAid
wheN you thought of
musiC
you Always
thought of youR own
neveR
Of anybody else's.
that's hoW it happens.

Figure 32 A page from *M: Writings '67-'72*, 1973, Wesleyan University Press.

John Cage used text in an interdisciplinary manner by combining musical performance to reading and using fragmented words and letters within a ready-made object and with concrete poetry where not only the literary but the visual aspect of the poem is also important. John Cage contributed greatly to the foundation of Fluxus with his artistic ideas,

his Experimental Music Classes, concrete poetry and its connection with graphics. Music, concrete poetry and graphics were schematized in presentation of Fluxus thought by George Maciunas. Also, the text score, widely used by Fluxus artist while visual artists and performers were turning to language in the 1960s (Kotz, 2007).



4. FLUXUS

4.1. Intellectual Precursors of Fluxus

The emergence of existentialist philosophy influenced the overall worldview of the mid-20th century, and artists developed the concept of individuality with their works. The idea of individuality in art resulted in the emergence of new questions that were influential in the formation of Fluxus. In the 1960s, there was a disaffection against the dominant art forms such as the New York School, the Paris School, Abstract Expressionism, and serialism in music (Arapoğlu, 2009).

Dadaism and Surrealism movements and Marcel Duchamp's ready-made and John Cage's experimental musical compositions problematized the identity of the artist and the quality of the work of art. The ideological structures of avant-garde movements formed the background of Fluxus actions.

After the Second World War, the development of anti-modernist thought and avant-garde actions were going towards an art/life union (Arapoğlu, 2009). There has been a change of perspective in the production of art. De-commodification of art and producing art with special materials were being replaced with the production of art with action, performance, ephemeral, and cheap materials (Cited from Huyssen by Arapoğlu, 2009).

Some events prepared the emergence of these questions in the USA. Among these was the publishing of *Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology* by Robert Motherwell and John Cage's (1912-1992) experimental composition classes which began at Black Mountain College in North Carolina and continued at the New School for Social Research. In terms of the socio-political processes of the emergence of Fluxus, the Situationist International founded in 1957 could be considered. They were group of poets, writers, critics, filmmakers, and artists committed to radical politics and art. Letterism, founded in 1946 by Isidore Isou (1925–2007) and Gabriel Pomerand (1925–1972), should be mentioned in the context of Situationist International. The letterists created sounds and images with letters. Jean-Louis Brau, Guy Debord, and Gil Wolman also created the Letterist International to transcend art (Monoskop, n.d.).

The most important effect of historical avant-garde movements on the formation of Fluxus is the aim to eliminate the duality of art/life. Dadaism and Surrealism rejected art altogether which is among the goals of Fluxus. Fluxus did not want to destroy art but it wanted to change the history of art by using artistic structure and transforming art into a life practice (Arapoğlu, 2009). Dadaism and Surrealism are also a way of life rather than an artistic precision (Cited from Haftman by Yavuz, 2004). Although their styles are different, they are similar in terms of their oppositional stance (Yavuz, 2004).

For the powerful use of text in Fluxus, the use of text in 20th century by Dadaism, Surrealism, and Marcel Duchamp's ready-made and John Cage's experimental artworks play an important role. These strongest precursors of Fluxus used text through deconstruction and abandoned the codes of communication. They freed language from conventional rule in order to experiment, create an experience, and convey their artistic standpoints as well as their philosophies. Fluxus artists utilized many artistic disciplines and they used text in Fluxus artworks.

4.2. History of Fluxus

Fluxus artworks are conceptual in nature and they began to be created slightly earlier than conceptual artworks and coincided with conceptual artworks for a period of time. Fluxus artists profoundly used text unlike the prior art movements therefore one could state that the major shift to language as medium in 1960s visual arts started with Fluxus.

Philosopher John Dewey emphasizes the value of participation and communication in terms of instruction of the arts of life in his book *Art as Experience*. Fluxus focuses on merging art and life by emphasizing the present moment and experience within artistic disciplines.

I find that even the dictionary avoids defining the term "civilization." It defines civilization as the state of being civilized and "civilized" and "being in a state of civilization." However, the verb "to civilize" is defined as "to instruct in the arts of life and thus to raise in the scale of civilization." Instruction in the arts of life is something other than conveying information about them. It is a matter of communication and participation in values of life by means of imagination, and works of art are the most intimate and energetic means of aiding individuals to

share in the arts of living. Civilization is uncivil because human beings are divided into non-communication sects, races, nations, classes and cliques (Dewey, 1980, p.336).

George Maciunas explains the nature of Fluxus as follows:

It's like if you ask people like George Brecht, "Are you Fluxus?" then he'll just laugh at you. It's more like Zen than Dada in that sense. If you ask a Zen monk, "Are you Zen?" he probably won't reply by saying, "Yes, I'm Zen." He'll give you some odd answer, like hit you on the head with a stick. (Cited by Maciunas from Hendricks, 2003, p.138)

The word "fluxus" has the meanings of "flow" and "change" in Latin and in English it means "flow" and "constant change". The concept of flux on the other hand appears in certain aspects of the history of thought such as Heraclitus' "pante rei" (everything flows), Hegel's statement that everything is in a state of constant flow, Henri Bergson's statement that evolution is a process of constant flow and change, or the emphasis on the continuous flow in the passing moment in Zen Buddhism (Arapoğlu, 2009). A work of art is not a finished product but rather an ongoing process that is changing and evolving in a universe that is always changing. By highlighting creation and destruction and, more broadly, what is temporary, Fluxus relates to the flow of life (Sucuoğlu, 2014).

According to Foster, Fluxus was the most complicated hence, most underappreciated artistic movement of the early to mid-1960s, also it has referred to as a "nonmovement" (Foster, 2016). It evolved alongside, Pop art and Minimalism in the US and Nouveau Realisme in Europe. It was more global and inclusive with a higher counting of female artists among its members than any other avant-garde or neo-avant-garde since Dadaism and Russian Constructivism, Fluxus declared that "everything is art and everyone can do it" seeing no distinction between art and life and routine, banal, and everyday actions as artistic events (Foster, 2016, p.526).

A community of Fluxus performance could be traced back to the Cage' class and the different spontaneous groups that emerged at that time. Importantly, within the deceptively straightforward guidelines of the Event, artists have created salads, wrote letters, projected

dreams about peering into the vaginas of live whales, and watched the sky (Cited by Higgins by Friedman, 1998).

Among the artists who participated in the Fluxus movement were George Maciunas (1931-1978), Mieko Shiomi (1938) Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), George Brecht (1926-2008), Robert Filliou (1926-1987), Dick Higgins (1938-1998), Ray Johnson (1927-1995), Jackson Mac Low (1992-2004), Charlotte Moorman (1933-1991), Nam June Paik (1932-2006), Wolf Vostell (1932-1998), Daniel Spoerri (1930), Robert Watts (1923), Ken Friedman (1949), Alison Knowles (1933), La Monte Young (1935), Yoko Ono (1933), and Benjamin Patterson (1934). The artists mentioned above are the active artists of the period although there are more names associated with the Fluxus.

Fluxus artists come from a variety of backgrounds. Initially, Maciunas worked as a graphic artist and architect. Dick Higgins worked in graphics and music, Yoko Ono in literature and music, Robert Watts in engineering, and George Brecht in chemistry. Nam June Paik was an academic and composer; Alison Knowles is a painter; Emmett Williams was a poet; and Wolf Vostell was a graphic artist. Benjamin Patterson, a musician who served in the US army as a bass guitar player, and Charlotte Moorman played the cello (Sucuoğlu, 2014).

Fluxus productions span from graphic and packaged multiples called Fluxkits to paintings on canvas, as well as basic performances called Events, full-scale operas and festivals. The artists are from nearly every developed country, they represent multiple generations, and many of them are even antagonistic toward one another. According to Higgins, it is consequently necessary to rethink art in a way that abandons the conventionally decisive categories of style, medium, and political sensibility in order to portray Fluxus accurately (Higgins, 2002). Higgins also believes that Fluxus could pass on to people a broader understanding of humanism. According to her, Fluxus is the first significant movement with members who identify as homosexual, straight, as well as Asian and Hispanic, black, white, and female (Thompson, 2011).

Many Fluxus artist background was politically charged by World War II. Fluxus emerged largely from the artists' experience of exile and forced removal from their devastated homeland during and after World War II, therefore it could be defined as apocalyptic rather

than utopian. This applied to refugees such as Maciunas and Daniel Spoerri, but it also applied, but in a very different way, to Korean and Japanese artists, including Nam June Paik (1932–2006), Yoko Ono (1933–), Ay-O (1931–), Shigeko Kubota (1937–2015), Mieko Shiomi (1938–), and others who joined Fluxus in later years. The other type of voluntary displacement played a role in the internationalism of the movement: Robert Filliou (1926–87) first encountered Asian culture while serving as a stationed representative of the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency in Korea in the early 1950s. Emmett Williams (1925–2007), Benjamin Patterson (born 1934), and Maciunas all lived and worked in postwar West Germany under the leadership of the US Army (Foster, 2016).

Fluxus artists not only wanted to bring art both into the intellectual dimension and into the life but they also questioned the relationship between art and post-industrial society and wanted to demolish high-art (Cited by Friedman from Yavuz, 2014). Fluxus artists exhibited a transdisciplinary approach, realized their artistic productions with objects used by people in everyday life, instrumentalized the body and musical instruments, and used language extensively in their text-based works (Yavuz, 2014).

In John Cage lectures of experimental composition in the New School for Social Research in New York between 1957 and 1959 were also instrumental in Allan Kaprow's discovery of the Happenings. Thirty Fluxus artists began to get to know each other with the experimental music classes in the late 1950s (Arapoğlu, 2009). It should be noted that Happenings and Fluxus are not the same thing because Fluxus has unsymbolistic, anti-expressionistic, form-free elements whereas Happenings are expressive and symbolic (Cited by Schmit from Higgins, 2002).

Students experimented with chance operations in a range of fields, such as poetry, performance, and music during class. These were shown to the class utilizing easily obtained items or pre-existing instruments that were kept in a tiny music closet that was connected to the space. Each piece's practical and philosophical significance was then addressed. John Cage set out with the idea that everything that has experienced should be recognized (Arapoğlu, 2009). Fluxus was centered on Cage's lesson.

Additionally, John Cage studied under respected Zen Buddhist theologian Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki at Columbia University and somewhere else in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Pragmatism are characteristics of many Fluxus Events. Zen Buddhism is based in the principles of direct sensory perception of everyday life and the sense of connectedness to the world by using what is at hand. Similar principles could be observed in Fluxus activities.

Cage's class was essentially a free interchange of ideas among many sorts of artists, it can be characterized as relatively non-hierarchical information exchanges across national, disciplinary, and age limits. With artists from three generations in the United States, every country in Western and Eastern Europe, Korea, Japan, and the United States working in sound, text, performance, and new media, the Fluxus movement that sprang from these circumstances was likewise worldwide, multidisciplinary, and cross-generational. (Higgins, 2002).

Between 1960 and 1961 Fluxus artist La Monte Young, organized performances and concerts at Yoko Ono's studio. These events were named *Chamber Street Series* after the name of the street where Yoko Ono's studio was located.

La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low also edited the book about poetry new music experimentations titled *An Antology* which was designed by George Maciunas and first printed in 1963. The book included many Fluxus artists' text-based works such as Henry Flynt, Ray Johnson, Dick Higgins, Nam June Paik, Emmett Williams, Dieter Rot, Yoko Ono (Arapoğlu, 2009).

The origins of Fluxus were similar in Europe. Karlheinz Stockhausen, a German serialist composer, has been at the forefront of avant-garde music in Germany since the early 1950s. Fluxus artists Nam June Paik and La Monte Young attended his composition course in Darmstadt, which was in the same orbit as the experimental Darmstadt Circle of poetry and drama, which in the late 1950s also included Fluxus artist Emmett Williams (Higgins, 2002).

The term "Fluxus" first appeared in art in 1961 on invitations for a series of lectures at Gallery A/G in New York, printed by Lithuanian-American artist, architect, and graphic designer George Maciunas, who was the name giver and primary organizer of Fluxus. George Maciunas ran the A/G Gallery at 925 Madison Avenue. At the A/G Gallery in March

1961, he advertised an event called *Musica Antiqua et ova* in the form of three performances and on the back of the invitations he asked for a donation of three dollars for the Fluxus magazine to be published. This was the first time Fluxus was used as a specific name. When the magazine published the texts in this magazine focused on anarchism, nihilism, experimental cinema, electronic music, happening, painting in Japan, USA, Eastern and Western Europe.

Four factors are considered to be essential in the convergence of artists during the Proto-Fluxus Period. *A/G Gallery*, *Chambers Street Series*, *Audio-Visual Group* founded by young artists who studied under John Cage, and *An Anthology* publication are among them. Also, through Nam June Paik, George Maciunas had the opportunity to meet avant-garde artists such as Karl Heinz Stockhausen, Emmett Williams, Mary Bauermeister and Karl-Erik Welin.

Fluxus festivals were created using the action music heard in the works of artists such as La Monte Young, Dick Higgins, Emmett Williams, and George Brecht. Beginning in 1962, the festivals contributed to the growth of Fluxus as an organization and popularized the name Fluxus under the name *Programme of Fluxus Festival of New Music*.

Drip Music by George Brecht, *Poem for Chairs, Tables, Benches Etc.* by La Monte Young, and *Paper Piece* by Benjamin Patterson were among the performed pieces. Also, Fluxus artists and attendees carried out *Piano Activities* at the Festival, which involved smashing a piano and then auctioning it. Along with their own pieces, the artists also performed works by Yoko Ono, Jackson Mac Low, Robert Watts, and La Monte Young. Thus, the idea that someone other than the artist may likewise realize a Fluxus event is established.



Figure 33 *Nivea Cream Piece for Oscar Williams* by Alison Knowles, 1962, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127406>

Three concerts entitled *Festum Fluxorum* were held in Copenhagen on November, 1962 in Paris on December, 1962, and in Düsseldorf on February, 1963. The works included in the concerts were characteristic of Fluxus. Works in the Copenhagen concert include Emmett Williams' *A German Chamber Opera for 38 Marias*, Joseph Byrd's *Piece for Richard Maxfield*, Jackson Mac Low's *Thanks II*, Robert Watts' *Two Inches*, Emmett Williams' *Alphabet Symphony*, George Brecht's *Drip Music*, *Direction*, *Word Event* and *Saxophone Solo*, George Maciunas' *In Memorium to Adriano Olivetti*, Dick Higgins' *Constellation nos. 4 and 7* by Dick Higgins, *Nivea Cream Piece* by Alison Knowles, (fig.33) *Paper Piece* (fig.34) by Benjamin Patterson and *Kleenex Decollage Music* by Wolf Vostell (Arapoğlu, 2009).



Figure 34 *Paper Piece* by Benjamin Patterson, 1960, Ad Peterson. Retrieved from: (Harren, 2020, p.206)

In 1962, there was another festival in London called the *Festival of Misfits*. Daniel Spoerri organized this event at the Institute of Contemporary Arts and Gallery One. Participating in the event were Arthur Koepcke, Emmett Williams, Robin Page, Gustav Metzger, Benjamin Patterson, Ben Vautier, and Daniel Spoerri. Emmett Williams' *Alphabet Symphony* (fig.36) demonstrated to guests how to use seals and stamps to create poetry. For fifteen days, Ben Vautier stood still within a glass partition, resembling a living sculpture. Robin Page's *Guitar Piece* involved throwing the guitar out of the music hall and smashing it with people on a street in London. Also, *Music While You Work* by Koepcke and *Proposition 2 (Make a Salad)* by Alison Knowles (fig.35), and *53 Kilo Poem* by Filliou were performed (Arapoğlu, 2009).



Figure 35 *Make a Salad* by Alison Knowles, 1962. Retrieved from: <https://www.artforum.com/columns/colby-chamberlain-on-alison-knowles-251842/>

The score of Alison Knowles *Proposition (Make a Salad)* tells the performer to simply "make a salad." The way that Fluxus works with food sheds light on the ways in which environmental and feminist issues overlap. Knowles was particularly effective at trans-valuing the minor into something important and deserving of respect through caregiving, thanks to her elevating of everyday activities and gestures, including household and caregiving tasks including food (Cited by Robinson & Woods from Rivenc & Roth, 2022). According to Aurelie Matheron, Knowles subjects the longevity of her performance to the unavoidable deterioration of biological matter. The piece gently challenges our widespread belief that food is a type of trash when it eventually run out, making what has been thrown away important once more (Cited by Matheron by Rivenc & Roth, 2022). Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Knowles's Fluxus practice connected with the concerns of the feminist and

environmentalist movements that were developing simultaneously. Her incorporation of traditionally feminine-associated caregiving practices, handling of biological materials and processes, and acknowledgment of metabolic decay as a necessary part of life resonated with the emerging ecofeminism discourse (Rivenc & Roth, 2022).



Figure 36 Alphabet Symphony by Emmet Williams, 1962, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.

The concert in Düsseldorf was held at the city's Academy of Arts, organized by Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) and Maciunas, and the Fluxus Manifesto distributed. The Manifesto (fig.37) contains the meaning of the word "flux" and summarizes the purpose of Fluxus:

Purge the world of bourgeois sickness, 'intellectual', professional, and commercialized culture. Purge the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art, abstract art, illusionistic art, mathematical art, - purge the world of Europeanism. Promote a revolutionary flood and tide in art. Promote living art, anti-art promote non art reality to be grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals. Fuse the cadres of cultural, social & political revolutionaries into united front & action.

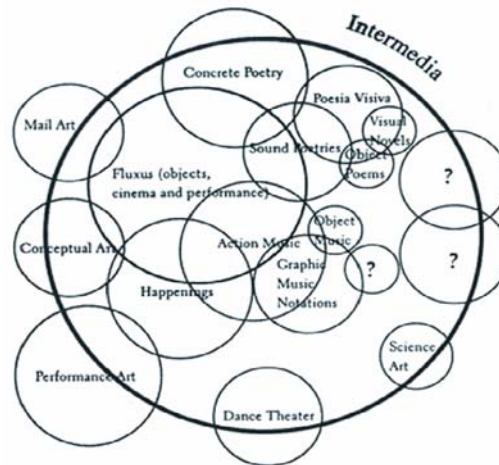


Figure 38 Intermedia Chart by Dick Higgins, 1995. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Intermedia-Chart-by-Dick-Higgins-1995_fig11_353371281

The Fluxus circle and Action Music, Concrete and Sound Poetry, Mail Art, Happenings, Conceptual Art, and other forms of art overlap on the chart. The way these circles overlapped would have been seen differently by each Fluxus artist, but the circles with question marks seemed to encourage contemplation of other relationships (Higgins, 2002).

In the Düsseldorf concert, Higgins' Fluxus criteria such as the concretism, rejection of the artist as a genius, play and experimentalism could be seen in Brecht's *Drip Music* (fig.39) piece which requires a person on a stair with water on his/her hand in a cup and dripping the water to a bucket on the floor.



Figure 39 Drip Music by George Brecht, performed by George Maciunas, 1962, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127311>

The conventional division between subject and object, which served as the foundation for much of Western philosophy historically, is one example of how Fluxus works erase boundaries that are precious to Western epistemology (Higgins, 2002).

In 1963, three Fluxus festivals in Amsterdam, Lahey and Nice held in which other artist performed pieces by Fluxus artists directed by George Maciunas. Same year, first Fluxus anthology published titled *Fluxus Review Preview*. During this same period, Maciunas published Brecht's *Water Yam* (fig.40) which featured all of the artists' works, and Daniel Spoerri and François Dufrêne's *L'optique Moderne*. Thus, the publication of artists' actual works on an both object-centered and text-based basis started to be offered in addition to the realization of performances (Arapoğlu, 2009). *Water Yam* conforms to Maciunas's usage of print materials in the Fluxkits and the idea that the kits should be inexpensive, disposable, and not precious (Higgins, 2002).



Figure 40 *Water Yam* by George Brecht, 1963, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/126322>

Owing to Fluxus's flexibility artists experimented with a wide range of expressive modalities. Print has a special significance among them (Higgins, 2002). In 1963 Dick Higgins established *Something Else Press*. Numerous significant intermedia texts and artworks by prominent modernists like Gertrude Stein, Henry Cowell, and Bern Porter, as well as Fluxus artists like Higgins, Ray Johnson, Alison Knowles, Allan Kaprow, George Brecht, Daniel Spoerri, Robert Filliou, Al Hansen, John Cage, and Emmett Williams, were published.

In terms of intermedia and text use in particular George Brecht's *Word Event* (fig.41) is a representative of Fluxus intermedia art which uses text to activate performative and playful nature of the event.

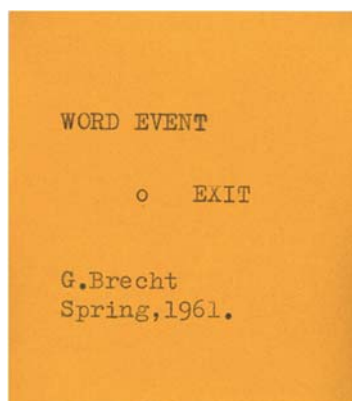


Figure 41 *Word Event* by George Brecht, 1961-62, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrived from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127307>

The realization of the event could take several forms, such as looking at or acting upon an exit sign, forming a performative or formative relationship with those who are seeing the sign, or using this piece as a way for the artists to end the performance (Higgins, 2002.) All of which potentially be activated by the written word on a paper priorly crafted in the imagination of the artist conceptually. John Dewey wrote that "...art enables us to forget ourselves by finding ourselves in the delight of experiencing the world about us in its varied qualities and forms" (Cited by Dewey from Higgins, 2002, p.104). Fluxus fits this model perfectly. Fluxus, in the words of Henry Martin "seems to affirm our existence as autonomous minds or conscious perceivers, while yet refusing us to indulge our sense of ego" (Cited by Martin from Higgins, 2002, p.104).

Also, intermedia depicts a new world system in which rigid classifications and causal relationships are unclear or meaningless (Higgins, 2002). Dick Higgins explained intermedia and division of artistic mediums in his book *Horizons* as follows:

Much of the best work being produced today seems to fall between media. This is no accident. The concept of the separation between media arose in the Renaissance. The idea that a painting is made of paint on canvas or that a sculpture could not be painted seems characteristic of the kind of social thought—categorizing and dividing society into nobility with its various subdivisions, untitled

gentry, artisans, serfs and landless workers—which we call the feudal conception of the Great Chain of Being....However, the social problems that characterize our time, as opposed to the political ones, no longer allow a compartmentalized approach....Thus the Happening developed as an intermedium, an uncharted land that lies between collage, music and theatre. It is not governed by rules; each work determines its own form and medium according to its needs (Cited by Higgins by Higgins, 2002, p. 95).

Furthermore, in 1964 Maciunas' stated that Fluxus' aim was not aesthetic but social and that it aims to gradually dissolve fine art (Cited by Oren from Arapoğlu, 2009). However, whether Fluxus was an anti-art or not is disputatious.

In the 1960s, while Fluxus events were being organized, other approaches, like Pop Art, Minimalist Sculpture, Assemblage, and Junk Materials, were also being carried out. As stated before, works that attempted to place the "real world" in front of traditional art were typically used to realize the reactions against the popular approaches in art. On the other hand, provocative event proposals by George Maciunas in *Fluxus New Policy Letter* in 1963 led disagreements among Fluxus artists. In his articles in the magazine, Maciunas proposed political actions such as using stink bombs and sneeze powders to disturb cultural life, making false reports and calling the emergency services and sending them to galleries and museums during galas. These ideas mostly disagreed by other Fluxus artist and did not realized. Rather than being a politicly loaded, Fluxus persisted as an avant-garde artist collective (Arapoğlu, 2009). Furthermore, according to Higgins (2002), Fluxus also transformed avant-garde as institutional critique and as iconoclasm by turning it into its opposite which is aesthetic experience. Therefore, Fluxus' attitude is art for art's sake while simultaneously withdrawing from everyday life in the substitution of art and anti-art with life as art.

In 1964 cc V Tre newspaper (fig.42) began to be published by George Maciunas (Arapoğlu, 2009).



Figure 42 Fluxus cc V TRE Fluxus Fluxus newspaper no. 2 by George Maciunas, 1964, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/128175>

Together with festivals, street actions, and musical events, artists' editions played an essential role in Fluxus. The fact that Maciunas rented a space named *Fluxhall/Fluxshop*, (fig.43) where object-based productions are displayed and sold at affordable prices in addition to performances, was a significant development. Numerous Fluxus editions created, including group anthologies and individual artists' pieces, which were frequently creatively packaged for postal delivery. Numerous editions feature games, riddles, film loops, audio recordings, instruction scores, and documentation from the group's wide performance concert schedule, all of which reflect an interdisciplinary and entertaining approach.



Figure 43 Staged photo for a Fluxshop advertisement, 359 Canal Street, 1964. Retrieved from: <https://www.instagram.com/micahlexier/p/C2Fg8uouNg9/>

Carnegie Recital Hall hosted a one-night-only performance of *Fluxus Symphony Orchestra* on June 17, 1964. This concert featured pieces like *Rainbow for Wind Orchestra* by Ay-O and *Solo for Violin* by Brecht (fig.44), in which one of the performers cleaned a violin. The concretism of Fluxus is demonstrated by the fact that instruments are not employed to produce music in a manufactured, constrained form, but rather that the physical structure of the instrument is taken into account (Arapoğlu, 2009).

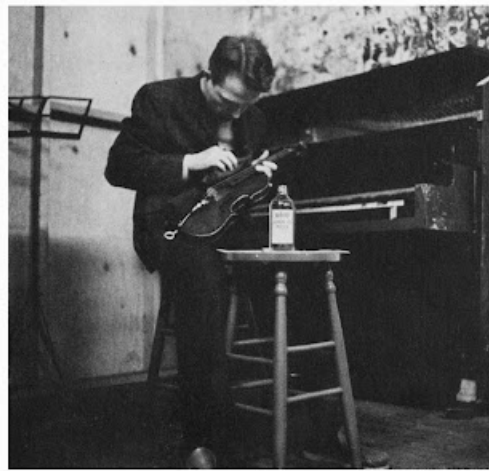


Figure 44 *Solo for Violin* by George Brecht, 1964. Retrieved from: <https://history-is-made-at-night.blogspot.com/2009/01/george-brecht.html>

George Maciunas wrote another manifesto in 1965 and he stressed his thoughts on unprofessionalism in art and the fact that everyone could be an artist as follows:

To establish artists nonprofessional, nonparasitic, nonelite status in society, he must demonstrate own dispensability, he must demonstrate self-sufficiency of the audience, he must demonstrate that anything can substitute art and anyone can do it (Foster, 2016, p.528).

The emphasis shifted to reproduced objects and publications starting in 1965. *Fluxus Year Box* was renamed and published under the title *Fluxus I* (fig.45) in which works by different Fluxus artists were presented in envelopes. The envelopes contained objects such as Shigeko Kubota's *Fluxnapkin*, Alison Knowles' *Glove to be Worn While Examining*, texts such as Robert Filliou's unfinished *Whispered History of Art*, scores for many action music and event

pieces, and various printed materials such as artist monograms with artists' names (Arapoğlu, 2019).



Figure 45 *Fluxus I* by various Fluxus artists, 1964. Retrieved from: https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/fluxus_editions/works/fluxus-1/index.html

In Fluxus, items change from being ultimate commodities—very helpful things that are widely accessible to anti-commodities, which are no longer primarily associated with their original function (Harren, 2020). According to Higgins *Fluxus I* or *Fluxkit* is a multisensory work including primary experience and perception occur across all senses (sight, sound, scent, taste, and touch). *Fluxus I* include a song that involves words and melody, which affects sight, movement, and hearing; a napkin that is intended to be touched between the hand and the mouth, which affects tactility and maybe taste; medical examination gloves, which have a latex-like appearance and smell, involving touch, sight, and smell; eye-catching photo portraits; music and performance scores, which entail all senses and are therefore synesthetic; and sound and visual poems, intended to be read, heard, and performed, involving the performer's body, eyes, and ears. In addition, it has the effect of stimulating the individual's sense of participation. Multisensory in nature, *Fluxkit* is a prime example of what philosopher David Michael Levin defines as "ontological thinking" (Higgins, 2002).

The history of mind/body dualism and the history of the subject/object dualism are two symptomatic manifestations of a violent, nihilistic rage at the very heart of our metaphysics... Ontological thinking is radically different: it engages us in

the opening wholeness of our being, and “takes place” as much in the life of our feet and hands and eyes as it does in our head, our brains, or our “mind” (Cited by Levin from Higgins, 2002, p. 38).

Thus, multisensory experiences are embraced by ontological philosophy in ways that strengthen our sense of interconnectedness with the world through our own bodily feelings in which many Fluxus works aim at. Higgins explains her views on Fluxus’ goals as follows:

I believe that the ultimate goal of Fluxus lies precisely in this task: to form multiple pathways toward “ontological knowledge” and the expansion of the “setting of human experience” (Higgins, 2002, p.38).

Furthermore, in terms of collectivity Natilee Harren finds Fluxus anti-Freudian stating:

In contrast to the Freudian understanding of love as essentially heteropathic or excorporative and thus impoverishing to the ego, the Fluxus model of subjectivity posits that the self-dissolution and self-abnegation required by collective production leads to an expanded notion of self (Harren, 2020, p.166).

Fluxus artists took the artist simply as an individual and created collective approach to art production instead of praising the name of the artist. Accordingly, Dick Higgins explained the nature of Fluxus collectivity as follows:

And so again I am a Fluxus person. . . . [I believe in] an art which by its very nature denies its perpetrators their daily bread, which must therefore come from somewhere else. Such an art must be given, in the sense that experience is shared: it cannot be placed in the market place. And in this way it differs profoundly from the Fluxus-derived "movements" of earth-works or media-hype forms of concept art. Much of that work I enjoy I even love: especially Acconci, Smithson, Beuys. But finally I must reject it, not because it isn't officially Fluxus, but because it isn't free. It's just so many hatracks for careers to be hung onto. When the name of the artist determines the market value of a work and not its meaning in our lives-beware! And there again we come to Fluxus. In the early sixties, when the first generation of Fluxus artists were doing and giving away

their experiences, it mattered little which of us had done which piece. The spirit was: you've seen it, now--very well, it's yours. Now you are free to make your own variation on it if you like, and the piece and the world will be a little richer for all that (Cited by Higgins from Harren, 2020, p. 166).

Fluxus artists rejected the decorative art as well as high art and high pricing of art. Ben Vautier in his article *Text on the Fluxus* stated:

Fluxus is not a production of objects, of handicraft articles to be used as a decoration in the waiting rooms of dentists and professionals... (*text on the fluxus / ben vautier. 1997, 2022*).

In the summer of 1965, the first *Perpetual Fluxfest* was organized at the Cinemateque, directed by Jonas Mekas. On 27 June Yoko Ono's *Bag Piece*, on 4 July Shigeko Kubota's *Vagina Painting*, on 11 July Eric Andersen's *Now you see it, now you don't* and finally on 18 July works by Ben Vautier were performed (Arapoğlu, 2009).

In Shigeko Kubota's *Vagina Painting*, (fig.46) the artist knelt over wide rolls of white paper that were laid out on the floor and pressed down against the paper to form marks after dipping her paintbrush into a pale red paint meant to evoke menstrual blood. She trespassed on patriarchal aesthetics to comment on the heritage of masculine Action Painting. The piece explores the semiotic relationship between the vagina as a sexual organ and menstruation.



Figure 46 *Vagina Painting* by Shigeko Kubota, 1965. Retrieved from:
<https://hyperheterotopia.wordpress.com/2014/03/28/vagina-painting-1965-shigeko-kubota/>

On the other hand, Yoko Ono's *Bag Piece* (fig.47) is a performance that calls for the activation of one or two individuals. The idea is to go through a big, black, Japanese cotton

bag. This cloth keeps the performer performing hidden from view from the outside while enabling the performer to look through the bag from the inside. Participants are encouraged to engage in various activities like dancing, meditation, or even a little nap for as long as they like. Fluxus offers alternatives for multisensory and performative learning, which has unfixed, unassigned, and anarchic political implications (Higgins, 2002).

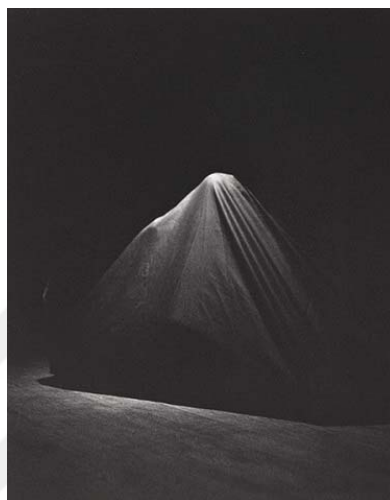


Figure 47 Bag Piece by Yoko Ono, 1964. Retrieved from: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/yoko-ono/bag-piece-1964>

Interest in Fluxus began to grow in 1966. René Block, who later curated the 9th Istanbul International Biennial and popularized Fluxus in Turkey in 1995, showed interest in Fluxus editions from other galleries, including his Soho Gallery at the time, and more artists joined Fluxus. In 1966, Ken Friedman (b.1949), Milan Knizak, Paul Sharits, (1943-1993), Greg Sharits (1945-1980), David E. Thompson (1939-1996), Kate Millet and Jeff Berner joined Fluxus.

George Macunas published *Fluxfest Sale* in 1967 which is a one-page publication with copies of some Fluxus scores on one side and an alternate version of Maciunas's 1966 diagram titled *Fluxus: Its Historical Development and Relationship to Avant-garde Movements*, which was first created in 1966. He named this graphic the *Expanded Arts Diagram* and used it to show how artworks from 1959 to 1966 flowed historically based on performative components. Maciunas also stated in *Fluxfest* (fig.48) that scores can be done by anybody, anywhere, at any time (Arapoğlu, 2009).

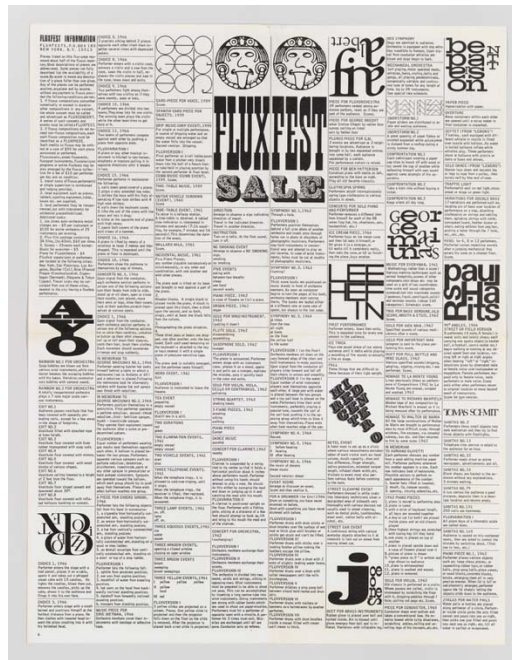


Figure 48 *FLUXFEST SALE* by George Maciunas, 1967, George Maciunas Foundation, Inc. / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Retrieved from: <https://whitney.org/collection/works/38292>

In the late 1960s, Fluxus activities overlapped with hippies and other marginalized groups or activities. Fluxus also influenced flower children which is term to describe young people in the 1960s and the 1970s who stood against war and advocated peace and love, also rejected the mores of conventional society (Arapoğlu, 2009).

Flux-Christmas-meal-event was realized in 1970. Barbara Moore, Albert Fine, Per Kirkeby, Takako Saito, Robert Watts, Geoff Hendricks, Frank Rycyk, and George Maciunas were among the attendees. The artists had a good time together and brought a variety of treats for the event, like jelly-injected eggs and wine served in different tubes. The occasion, which appeared to be a get-together of friends at first, is significant because it illustrates Fluxus's transition to daily life activities. Ultimately, art reached a state where it was indistinguishable from everyday life practice (Arapoğlu, 2009). The focus of Fluxus food work has been on the eating as ritual, the connections between food and non-food, and the compulsive measurement and counting of meals that characterize a society that values self-control and personal hygiene (Higgins, 2002).

According to Arapoğlu, five major factors in almost all Fluxus artworks could be observed. These factors are utilizing tactility instead of visual in presentation, ordinary and

extraordinary appearance of the image at the same time, rejection of high art, the use of chance factor and collectivity (Arapoğlu, 2009).

From 1970 onwards, events such as *Fluxshow* (Douglas College), *Fluxsports* (New Brunswick), *Fluxmass* (New Jersey), *Fluxdivorce* (1971), *Fluxhalloween* (1977), *Fluxwedding* (1978) are held. Also *Fluxfuneral* held after Maciunas' death in 1978 (Arapoğlu, 2009).

One of the key performances which openly represented homosexuality among many other concepts was Geoffrey Hendricks and Bici Hendricks's *Fluxdivorce*. *Fluxdivorce* (fig.49) is a boxed piece that records everything that was divided in half during the divorce of Geoffrey Hendricks and Bici Hendricks. With the help of scissors, a paper cutter, an ax, and a power saw, they chopped items from their 10 years of marriage in half, including clothing, documents, and their marital bed. Cut ties in the event represented additional ties conceivable and the piece was a happy event because they represented the artist coming out about their same-sex orientation and agreeing to divorce. In one of the events Geoff and Bici were painted in a tug-of-war pose, with the women pulling on a rope that was fastened around Bici and the men pulling on a rope that was fastened around Geoff, signifying (re)unions with their own sex (Hendricks, 2003).



Figure 49 *Fluxdivorce Album* by Geoffrey Hendricks and Bici Hendricks, 1973, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/128070>

The Fluxus artists realized that in order to integrate art into life, converting one's creative process into a form of life praxis, one must accept both the joy, comedy, and sociality of life as well as trauma, loss, and death. Maciunas simultaneously accepted all manifestations of life, including death, which is the opposite. Following his passing away in 1978, Fluxus artists published a broadsheet newspaper (fig.50) with a title, "MACIUNAS DIES: Hart attack kills him at summer palace," and a photo montage of the artist dressed as the pope (Harren, 2020).



Figure 50 a VTR EXTRA by Fluxus Editorial Council, 1979. Retrieved from: (Harren, 2020, p.162)

Near the time of Maciunas' death, Maciunas was planning to establish a utopian commune on a farm in New Marlborough (Cited by Home from Arapoğlu, 2009). Whether Fluxus has ended after Maciunas's death or it still lives are not agreed upon, disputes are going on about the subject.

Fluxus was ignored in art history until the 1980s, however it has a wide influence on contemporary art practices today. Fluxus is one of the elements of a period in which the object-centred view of art, artist as a genius understanding and the art market began to be criticized. This period was also a time of transition from the view of art as object to art as idea. In this respect, when contemporary art practices are observed today, it is possible to see many practices that are influenced by Fluxus (Arapoğlu, 2019).

All in all, Fluxus was an interdisciplinary, experimental, both existentialist and activist artist web that began to take shape in the 1960s and spread throughout the world. Its main goals

were to blur the lines between art and life, dissolve high and low art distinction and merge many artistic mediums together. Artists created festivals, publishing houses, magazines, books, films, scores, stores, performances, street performances, and various objects utilizing many disciplines. Fluxus was playful, international, experimental, multidisciplinary, avant-garde artist web that produced a diverse array of non-traditional pieces, used everyday items and acts to subvert conventional ideas of art and include viewers in participatory encounters. For Poggioli and Bürger, the historical avant-garde was a broad-based critique of culture aiming at its transformation and Fluxus could be considered avant-garde as it embodies the Enlightenment values of democracy, plurality, self-expression, tolerance towards everybody, and the importance of information and experience (Higgins, 2002). Also, Fluxus merged theory and practice which Dick Higgins described as intermedia. In opposition to traditional art, Fluxus displayed a living art. Fluxus influenced movements such as Conceptual Art, Process Art, Mail Art and Performance Art that emerged from the late 1960s along with multimedia, intermedia and book-making. Fluxus reacted against the notion of artist as a genius and also Fluxus artists performed each other's pieces without giving importance artistic authorship thus prioritized collectivity which is uncommon in Western art history. Furthermore, the methods of contemporary art have been greatly influenced by Fluxus as mentioned before. It advanced the idea that art is more than just object production; it is a means of thought and expression. Fluxus shaped by the desire to stop the consumption of human and material resources. Fluxus also brought the element of humor to art and encouraged the use of a wide range of materials in creative construction (Arapoğlu, 2009). Fluxus' attitude towards art and artistic disciplines was deconstructive and creative and one of its aim was to negate one's ego which mostly derived from John Cage, Dadaism and Zen. Fluxus scores were fundamental for Fluxus performances and in demonstration of Fluxus ideas in which text had been used profoundly.

4.3. Use of Text in Fluxus

It is possible to argue that the intention takes meaning from both the language and the context in which it is used. Words serve a variety of purposes; in fact, a single word like beauty can be used for many different purposes, and these purposes are neither fixed nor predefined. Therefore, open texture of language affirms that words can have an infinite number of meanings and that new meanings will emerge as circumstances change (Ara, 2006).

Beginning with 19th century with Arts and Crafts Movement artworks that use language as a medium apply to this understanding as art began to be more individualistic. The text use in these artworks, like poetry, are open to a variety of interpretations. Because the artistic language abandons the existing linguistic patterns and codes of communication. In addition to reshaping the existing materials, the artistic language also objectifies the phenomenon using metaphors and presents them in a new structure (Poyraz, 2011, p.17-25). Fluxus artworks, mostly Fluxus scores used language with secondary meanings and within a poetic form and sometimes deconstructed the language even while using words in their most concrete form like George Brecht's score *Exit*.

Furthermore, Wittgenstein not only resembles language to a game but also to life. For Wittgenstein the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life (Wittgenstein, 2009). Fluxus artist wanted to merge art and life together resembling art to a form of life while using language in most of their artworks which are instructions to perform in real life in a playful manner and sometimes an event that involves having a meal with friends and chatting. Therefore, a connection between Wittgenstein's "language game" and Fluxus "scores" could be made.

Furthermore, according to Roland Barthes creation is not to copy the universe but to make the universe comprehensible with realistic construction. A connection can be established between the idea that defines art as "what one adds to the object while reconstructing it" and the representation of text in plastic arts (Cited from Barthes by Oktay & Altınel, 2016, p.130). Accordingly, Fluxus not only add something new to visual artistic creation by using text but also took the translation of visual language into verbal language in the context of art/life dissociation and tried to erase the traditional ties between this "text" and "object" (Cited from Foster by Arapoğlu, 2009).

Fluxus participant Henry Flint in his essay: *Concept Art* argues that Concept art is first of all an art of which the material is 'concepts'. Since 'concepts' are closely bound up with language, concept art is a kind of art of which the material is language" (Cited by Stiles & Selz by İz, 2011 p.42). Flynt's use of the term encompasses the creations of Fluxus artists including Yoko Ono, George Brecht, and George Maciunas. (Cited by Morgan by İz, 2011).

Hannah Higgins criticizes the absence of Fluxus in Conceptual art histories referencing Flynt's "Concept art" term as follows:

The term's applicability to Fluxus seems obvious: it is particularly well suited to the Event score, a textual presentation of a concept that may or may not have a performative dimension (as in Nam June Paik's score "climb into the vagina of a live whale"). Given that some of the first conceptual art was produced by Fluxus artists in the form of Event scores, and the term coined by a Fluxus associate, the nearly total absence of Fluxus from almost all histories of conceptual art is remarkable (Higgins, 2002, p.114).

Flynt also recalls that "Jackson Mac Low began transferring Cage's chance procedures to poetry—yielding a more computational or artificial concrete poetry" (Higgins, 2002, p.116). Jackson Mac Low wrote the *5 biblical poems*, (fig.51) the first typed collection, accidental writing, and "simultaneity" performance instructions between 1954-1955, at the time of Cage's experimental lessons (Littman, 2017).

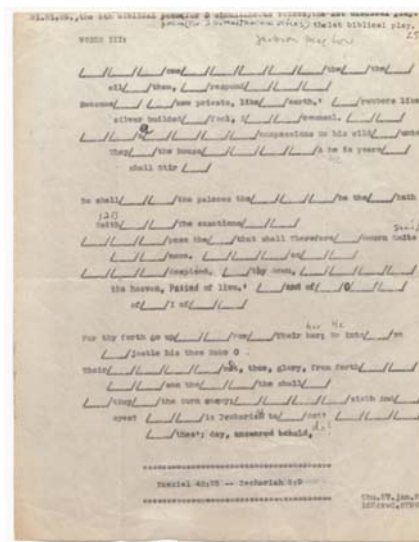


Figure 51 The 5th Biblical Poem by Jackson Mac Low, 1955, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.
Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127452>

Lucy Lippard describes Fluxus as irrelevant for later Conceptual Art in her *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Higgins, 2002 p.114). The art critic Peter Frank departs from standard accounts of conceptual art like Lippard's when he says that "Conceptual Art started when some people [i.e., George Brecht] ...took Happenings,

applied to them the Zen lessons learned from John Cage and came up with Event” (Cited by Frank from Higgins, 2002, p.114).



Figure 52 *Three Chair Events* by George Brecht, 1961. Retrieved from: <https://www.fondazionebonotto.org/en/collection/fluxus/brechtgeorge/4/412.html>

In 1959, Brecht created the Event score for John Cage's Experimental Composition class. The Event score was a straightforward white card with a few lines of text; it was intended to mediate a specific moment in the spectator's experience through language rather than an actual work of art. By 1962, he had created more than a hundred brief textual scores, improved the form, and broadened the scope of the Event. Brecht's Event model, with its ongoing investigation of language as an artistic intervention, is considered the forerunner of the numerous linguistic ideas that found their way into the art scene in the decade that followed (Robinson, 2009). *Three Chair Events* (fig.52) served as prototypes for the endless editions of FluxBoxes, kits, and games. A variety of methods could be used to materialize the event, including realizing it out, causing it to occur, or just observing it as it takes it place in the real world. (Kotz, 2007). Brecht's experimentations not only invented the score but also score as ready-made (Robinson, 2009). Brecht first identified the "event" as a new paradigm in his essay *Chance Imagery* published in 1966, defining it as "very private, like little enlightenments I wanted to communicate to my friends, who would know what to do with them" (Foster, 2016, p.530). A connection could be made between Brecht's explanation "very private little enlightenments I wanted to communicate" and Roland Barthes's idea that

creation is not to copy the universe but to make the universe comprehensible with realistic construction.

The artist, critic and curator Robert Morgan, in his essay *Idea, Concept, System* stated that “This is not to suggest a cause-and-effect relationship; but some major conceptualists have, when pressed, admitted that Fluxus did constitute a ‘proto-conceptual’ movement.” (Higgins, 2002, pp.114-5). Fluxus might constitute proto-conceptual movement however Fluxus is different from Conceptual Art. Because the language units interact with the study of the relationship between language and abstract ideas, as well as with the indeterminacy of everyday actions, as in some Happenings and Events. Fluxus is known for its pragmatic, living language senses, which are not shared by conventional conceptual artists (Higgins, 2002).

A collection of musical compositions using text, titled *The Compositions 1960*, (fig.53) was written by La Monte Young in 1960. These compositions, which draw inspiration from John Cage, are distinctive in that they place a strong focus on performance art and eccentric behaviors like pushing a piano against a wall or releasing a butterfly into the space or turning the lights off during the composition which consists of audience activities. These pieces challenge the notion of what constitutes music, and the medium that is used to initiate the artwork is text.

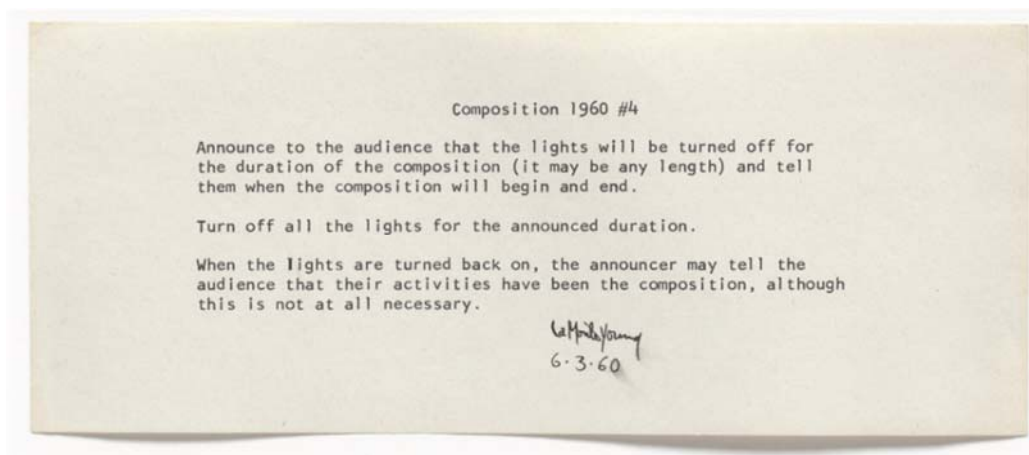


Figure 53 *Composition 1960 #4* by La Monte Young, 1960, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.
Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127626>

The collective publication *An Anthology of Chance Operations* plays an important role as well which mostly consists of written words under sections such as Poetry, Music, Essay etc. Through the Anthology many artists used poetic forms by scattering the words through

According to Higgins, *Gathas* operate between image and text and life through its improvisational utterance:

The *2nd Gatha* subjects words to a pictorial logic as the eye traces letters in many directions over the page. Coursing in multiple directions, the visual and linguistic parts do not separate neatly; rather, the visual poem functions as an intermedium between image and text. The effect is even more pronounced when the written text is transformed into sound: invigorated by speech and spontaneous performance decisions, the *Gathas* operate between art media (image and text) as well as between art and life media (image-text and improvisational utterance) (Higgins, 2002, pp.91-3).

Both Jackson Mac Low's *Gathas* and Emmet Williams' *Cellar Song For Five Voices* relate with Wittgenstein's "language game" concept where he also likens speaking a language to a form of life. Both scores play with the structure of language and change the context of language from communicative purposes to participatory artistic creation. The works reveal the possibilities of different meanings and interpretations to emerge in language game.

As mentioned before, Fluxus artworks falls the category of intermedia and artists were open about it from the beginning. For example, the printed announcement for the October 1962 Festival of Misfits reads:

We make music which is not Music, poems that are not Poetry, paintings that are not Painting, but music that may fit poetry, poetry that may fit paintings, paintings that may fit ... something, something which gives us the chance to enjoy a happy, non-specialized fantasy (Harren, 2015).

Fluxus artists did create poems and used written word however they did not categorize them under any disciplines on the contrary, by searching the gaps between disciplines they tried to reach an empty space or a tabula rasa which they called "fantasy" or sometimes "intermedia". In order to accomplish and announce this point of view like the quotation above, they again used language without putting the use of text under any category. Therefore, it could be stated that the text use of Fluxus artists sometimes

was a vehicle to accomplish artistic freedom from categorization even from language itself while using language.

In 1963 George Brecht created *Water Yam* designed by George Maciunas is a box contains a large number of event-scores; around 70. Scores are usually open-ended and can be performed in public, privately, or according to one's imagination and they require chance, ambiguity and interpretation from the performer. Also, they highlight the relationship between language and perception. *Two Exercises* (fig.56) first created in 1961 is one example.

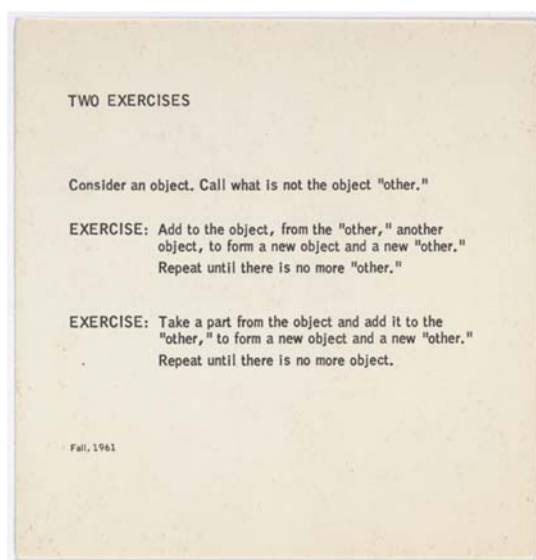


Figure 56 *Two Exercises* from *Water Yam* by George Brecht, 1963, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from:

https://www.moma.org/collection/works/156549?association=portfolios&page=2&parent_id=126322&sov_referrer=association

Experimental musician and Arts Professor Ricardo Arias interprets *Two Exercises* as follows:

Two Exercises, draws attention to the problem of circumscribing things and their surroundings. Where does a thing begin and its exterior – or “other”– end? Brecht seems to suggest that there is no actual distinction or separation, as one can gradually become the other as they add or subtract from one another, or that an object and its other are variably identifiable at singular points in time. Brecht commands the reader/potential performer to “consider and object” but does not define what an object is. One could, then, think he is referring not necessarily to solid, three-dimensional, tactile objects, but rather to “sound object.” In both

cases he is, above all, outlining a method of composition, of putting things (and “others”) together. (Arias, 2015, p.115).

In *Two Exercises* Brecht describes how a composition or in general an artwork is made therefore he enters to the field of art philosophy within artwork itself through language and creates an invitation for an event for the audience to realize. The text use in *Two Exercises* is explanatory and both metaphoric and direct at the same time.

The event should be interpreted in relation to Cage's musical idiom, which uses time—which is, broadly speaking, rhythm as an indicator for musicality. Cage was pleased with any noises that came within a certain amount of time. The music was determined by such noises. If listeners are not intentional in their attention and concentration, the sound will just be noise. Similar to this, Brecht's Events' simple format and uncomplicated organization encourage participants to concentrate on the task at hand (Higgins, 2002). Like many other scores created by Fluxus artists. Another example is Benjamin Peterson’s *Stand Erect* score.

Stand Erect (fig.57) first published in artist book *Methods & Processes* in 1961 and performed by the artists and others in 1962. The text requires the reader to focus on the details of an action that is rarely given much thought; walking. The passage is part of a publication that explores the radical potential of walking and art movements (Jameel Arts Centre, 2019). The use of text in *Stand Erect* is not metaphoric, it is instructive, simple and addresses to an audience to realize physically eventhough the experience of realization might not be purely physical as the audience is given time to think and pay attention to concept of walking.

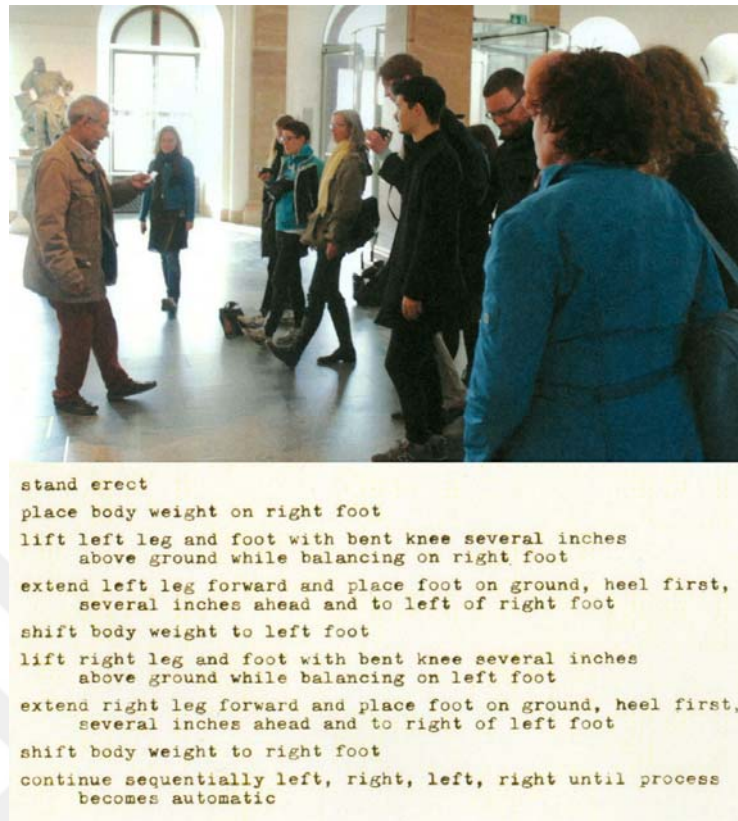


Figure 57 Stand Erect by Benjamin Patterson, 1961. Retrieved from:
<https://teaching.ellenmueller.com/walking/2021/11/26/benjamin-patterson-stand-erect-1961/>

Ben Vautier created *Fluxus Anything Box* (fig.58) in 1962. The plastic box contains objects in various media such as safety pin, hair clip, a little filter, a discount card etc. All items are disposable, everyday materials and ready-mades however through the artwork audience pay attention to these items as visuals of everyday city life. On the lid of box, the title, date, name of the artist is written with presstype and the words “your design” is written with handwriting. Fluxus’s anti-art stand, its emphasis on daily life and consumption culture could be seen in *Fluxus Anything Box*. The text use in the artwork is complementary of the ideas the work holds.



Figure 58 *Fluxus Anything Box* by Ben Vautier, 1962, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/131283>

In 1963 Emmett Williams created *abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz*. The work (fig.58) is more than seven feet length scroll with letters from the alphabet on it in a bizarre arrangement. The score is intended for performance and referred as the “Alphabet Poem” as part of *Fluxus I*.

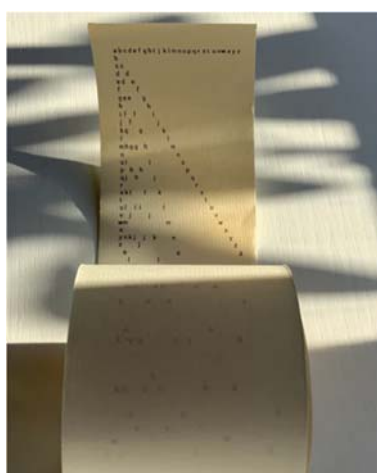


Figure 59 *abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz* by Emmett Williams, 1963. Retrieved from: <https://books-on-books.com/2023/06/13/books-on-books-collection-emmett-williams/>

It's unknown exactly how the Alphabet Poem would be performed. It might be read each line from left to right, presumably. However, it's unclear how to address the gaps. In the same way that concrete poetry does, the shape and structure encourage a greater degree of visual engagement. The letters fall in accordance with guidelines and limitations. The alphabetic sequence must be followed diagonally in a zigzag pattern as well as vertically. The resulting visual patterns distract the viewer's attention from the alphabetic and spatial rules and direct it to look for completely different pareidolic patterns. Similar to how the eye finds letters and shapes in the sky or daily environment (Books on Books, 2023).

Deconstruction theory has mentioned in Conceptual Art section of this thesis as “breaking up the strict rules of grammar and language in order to rebuild the hierarchical relationship between words and writing”. However, if Fluxus could be considered a proto-conceptual artistic web, some Fluxus artworks even deconstructed the elements of words; letters, before Conceptual Art movement emerged, dated 1963 *abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz* is an obvious example. The text use in *abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz* is both deconstructive and also has similarities with concrete poetry therefore *abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz* also demonstrates dismantling of literary genres by Fluxus artists.

Furthermore, George Brecht created *Two Elimination Events* (fig.60) released in 1963 and Allan Kaprow commented on its elements of conceptual art and performance art at the same time connecting the work with Zen.

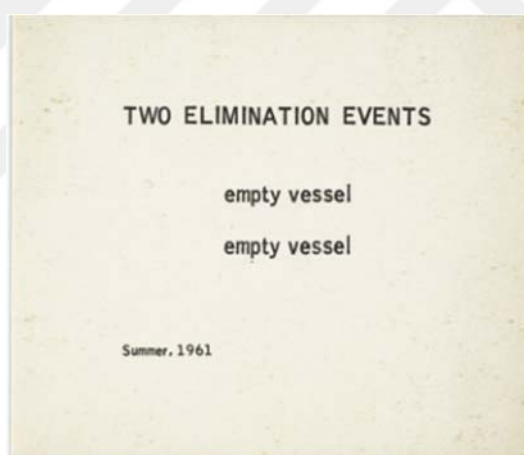


Figure 60 *Two Elimination Events* by George Brecht, 1963, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.
Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/156548>

Kaprow explains the work:

...since two empty containers that should be accounted for somehow or can be taken as instructions that two containers be emptied. As a Conceptual piece, the work invites participants to consider that these possibilities may be simply thought about. The title’s key word, *elimination*, suggests a reductive attitude that can be assumed toward them . . . it could allude to the “empty” (but full) state of Zen (Cited by Kaprow by Higgins, 2002, p.113).

Two Elimination Events consists of only two words and through repetition the text gains meaning similar to certain forms of poetry like Haiku. Therefore, the boundaries between image and text blurred. Benjamin H.D. Buchloh explains the dissolution of boundaries between linguistic and visual production and the underlining reason why Fluxus artists created such artworks as follows:

Fluxus had to dismantle *all* of the traditional conventions that had offered a cultural guarantee for the continuity of the bourgeois subject. First, it would have to rupture the foundationalist certainty that language itself had provided to literature and bourgeois subjectivity. ... But Fluxus also systematically eroded the securities of the literary genres, by scrambling all the codes and conventions that had categorized literary writing (such as poetry, drama, and the narrative novel) and had confined "other" linguistic enunciations to the realm of the "nonliterary" (for instance, the journalistic documentary or factual narrative, private letters, the performative, or chance-derived texts): all of these became the bases of Fluxus activities. The removal of the boundaries between these literary genres was not the result of a revolutionary aspiration toward a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, in which all of the arts of the past could be reunited within a structure that adequately responded to the actually existing social conditions of collective participation in the formation of wealth. Rather, the disintegration of boundaries in Fluxus acknowledged the rapid decline of options, the diminishing returns of the traditional genres and conventions, which have all, one by one, lost their license and historical credibility under the conditions of extreme separation and reification. It was in recognition of the impact of massive dedifferentiation—the process under advanced consumer capitalism whereby experience becomes homogenized, where everything in the world is made the same, without difference—that Fluxus articulated these diminishing options and discursive opportunities by collapsing all traditional genres and artistic conventions (Foster, 2016, pp.529-30).



Figure 61 Finger Box from Fluxkit by Ay-O, 1965. Retrieved from:
https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/fluxus_editions/works/finger-box-from-fluxkit/index.html

In 1965 *Fluxkit* was released, a suitcase filled with small artworks by various Fluxus artists, most of the artworks made with text such as *Finger Hole* (fig.61) by Ay-O, *Bean Rolls* by Alison Knowles, *Games and Puzzles* (fig.62). by George Brecht, *Zen for Film* by Nam June Paik, *Instruction No. 2* by Benjamin Peterson, *Water Music* by Mieko Shiomi, *Printed Matter* by Robert Watts, Fluxus Newspapers titled *Fluxus ccV* and *cc Valise e TRangle*. All of which utilized language on ready-mades and invited audience to interact with them with the help of written words.



Figure 62 Games and Puzzles by George Brecht, 1965. Retrieved from:
https://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2011/fluxus_editions/works/games-puzzles-ball-swim-and-inclined-plane-puzzles-from-fluxkit/index.html

Flux Year Box 2, another collective anthology, was released in 1965. Materials for actions and works are nestled inside *Flux Year Box 2*, a partitioned wooden box designed by Maciunas with a hinged cover printed with a matrix of mismatched fonts. According to

Maciunas, the edition will only be available during book events. The name cards (fig.63) designed by George Maciunas is also in *Flux Year Box 2*. Each artist was given a separate and unique identity through the typography and design of the name cards. A wide variety of typefaces were utilized by Maciunas, from the ornate nineteenth-century type to the more bureaucratic, rationalized, and serialized sans-serif type. Individual subjectivity in the typographic design of these name cards resides midway between corporate trademark and allegorical decoration, between Fluxus' utopian deconstruction of the exceptional artist, and the corporate culture's current rule that disregards all subjective experience (Foster, 2016). In the name cards event though text is used to spell proper nouns only, the various use of font types gives the work its meaning through graphic design.



Figure 63 *Flux Year Box 2*, Name Cards by George Maciunas, 1965. Retrieved from: <http://fluxus.lib.uiowa.edu/content/flux-year-box-2.html>

Some scores in *Fluxus Year Box 2* used text to tell jokes and make room for humor in art like Williem de Redder's score (fig.64) in which he asks the person reading the score for money.

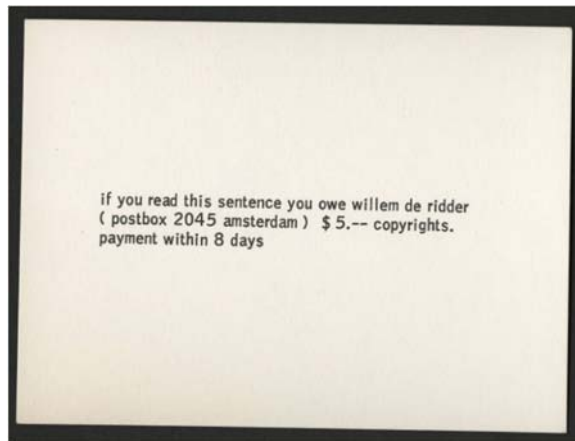


Figure 64 *Flux Year Box 2*, Score by Willem de Ridder, 1965. Retrieved from: <http://fluxus.lib.uiowa.edu/content/flux-year-box-2.html>

Furthermore, *Fluxbox Containing God* by Ben Vautier is dated 1966 which is a close box with a drawing on it capturing children looking into a box from a hole and on the box the words “Fluxbox containing god” is written. The utmost irony contained in the simplicity of Fluxus's works is found in the fact that the box is closed. The box is closed and will stay closed forever because it is entirely glued. This piece comprises of a black plastic box with a collage-created printed paper label. One of the most significant things to note about Vautier's work is that, rather than focusing on the elements of traditional painting, such as color, line, texture, volume, and perspective, he uses diverse objects or spoken words to express his direct message (Arapoğlu, 2009). The text use in this work is quite metaphoric and symbolic also the visual language and language itself mixed and matched together. *Fluxbox Containing God* (fig.65) paves the way to look into what lies in the heart of people's existence, thus stresses spiritual dimension of the human beings. This can also be interpreted as the clues of God's existence can only be found if the person is willing to look inside of the box which stands for the human body.



Figure 65 . Fluxbox Containing God by Ben Vautier, 1966, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.
Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/128131>

Geoffrey Hendricks, whose enduring portrayals of sky in paintings, installations, and performances earned him the moniker “Cloudsmith,” created *Erase everything, Paint sky on everything, Winter Event (dramatic), Construction, Year-Long Event, and Two Year Piece* (fig.66) dated 1964 -1965-1966. The score card begins with the words “Erase everything. 1964 Paint sky on everything. 1965”. The language of the score is direct and instructs for an event however the actions being offered are quite abstract and physically impossible to accomplish therefore the score speaks to the imagination and open to interpretation of the audience hence the language use is poetic.

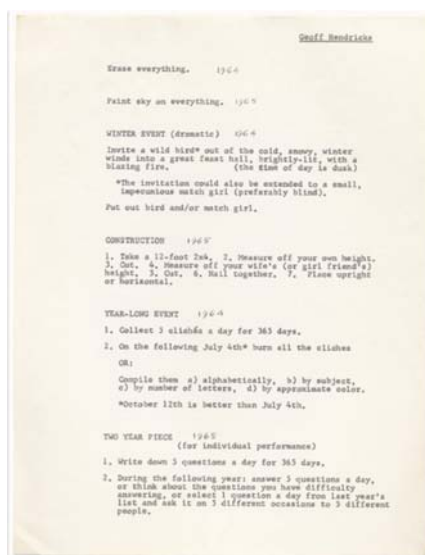


Figure 66 *Erase everything, Paint sky on everything, Winter Event (dramatic), Construction, Year-Long Event, and Two Year Piece* by Geoffrey Hendricks, 1964-65, typed 1966, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.
Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org>

With James Tenney's assistance, Fluxus artist Alison Knowles produced *The House of Dust*, (fig.67) a poetry experiment produced by the Siemens 4004 computer in 1967. Knowles

generated four lists of words, which were subsequently converted into computer code and arranged into quatrains using a randomly generated matrix. Terms that characterize a structure and its surroundings were included in each of the four lists: a house of list material, list location, list light source, list residents. Together, all of the poem's modifications offered over 10,000 possible quatrains. The computer program forced a non-rational arrangement of concepts and topics, leading to wording and imagery that was surprisingly funny. The poem was produced on tractor-feed paper that was perforated, which was typical of dot matrix printers at the time. The pages combined to make a lengthy scroll.



Figure 67 *The House of Dust* by Alison Knowles, 1967. Retrieved from: <https://www.communedesign.com/post/alison-knowles-house-of-dust/>

Even now, *The House of Dust* is regarded as a pioneering work of computerized poetry that explores the boundless potential of word juxtapositions at random and the creation of art using technological systems and chance. Knowles's work with the computer sheds insight on the fundamental arbitrary nature of language, showing how structural relationships and changing situations may give words distinct meanings (Commune Design, 2018).

With Joseph Beuys' 1975 work (fig.68) "Jeder Mensch Ein Künstler" (Everyone is an Artist), Beuys sloganized his approach to art in a way that encompassed the aim of Fluxus (Arapoğlu, 2009). Beuys explained the thinking behind his most famous phrase as follows:

Only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deathline: to dismantle in order to build A SOCIAL ORGANISM AS A WORK OF ART (Tate, n.d.).

The use of text in this saying of Beuys is not written but sloganized like a politic saying kept in the memory of society.



Figure 68 *Every Man is An Artist* by Joseph Beuys, 1978, © DACS, 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.tate-images.com/preview.asp?image=AR0704>

According to Higgins, there are implications for Fluxus outside the realm of art; hence, it could be required to expand Fluxus outside the frame of art in order to maintain its experiential aspect. Hannah Higgins even developed a pedagogical model from Fluxus in her book *Fluxus Experience* (Higgins, 2002). For this reason and for the fact that Fluxus artist used text in their works as a medium with various forms, contents and language display, coinciding with linguistic and literary theories, I applied literary analysis techniques for the analysis of five Fluxus artist' text-based works in the next chapter, analyzing the form, content and language use and display in detail.

5. ANALYSIS OF FIVE FLUXUS ARTISTS TEXT-BASED ARTWORKS

5.1. Use of Text in George Maciunas's Works

Primary founding figure of Fluxus, George Maciunas was born in Lithuania in 1931. Leokadija, his mother, was a Russian-born ballerina with the Lithuanian National Opera before working as the Russian politician Alexander Kerensky's personal secretary and assisting him in writing his memoir. He and his family migrated throughout his early and adolescent years. Following the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939, Lithuania was first occupied by the Soviet Union during World War II, and subsequently by Germany when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941. George Maciunas' family left Lithuania in 1944, when he was just thirteen years old, to avoid the Red Army's invasion. After four years in Germany, first under Nazi rule and then under the occupation forces they moved to Long Island, New York, in 1948, when George was seventeen years old.

A childhood history in Lithuania of Soviet and Nazi occupations, the experience of being a refugee in Germany in the 1940s, and the contemporary challenges of US citizenship during the Cold War, according to musicologist Brigid Cohen, "strongly influenced Maciunas's later work," especially in its emphasis on non-ownership, chaos and spontaneity, and multi-nationalism. With an emphasis on Siberian and European art from the mass migration era, Maciunas studied art, graphic design, and architecture at Cooper Union, architecture and musicology at the Carnegie Institute of Technology, and history of art at the NYU Institute of Fine Arts.

He had an intense interest in many different areas, such as music, literature, sculpture, architecture, performance art, and graphics. He was an avid reader who took in information and interpreted it in his own unique style. This was frequently seen in the notes and charts he created, showcasing his graphic design background and attempting complex, overlapping investigations of various artistic, cultural, and historical subjects.

He believed that Western education was overly specialized and closed-minded, especially in the way that art and art history were taught. According to Maciunas, "art," like education, ought to be a way of thinking and being rather than a collection of independent procedures or things unrelated to daily life. In this way, his study of the Dadaists had a special influence

on him. Maciunas was 29 years old in 1960 when he finished his 11 years of college education. He was prepared to put his passionate theories about the nature of education and art to practical use.

For many critics, Fluxus itself was Maciunas' life work. He wrote the manifesto and organized the events, festivals, gatherings, exhibitions, and stores. Being a graphic designer and a believer in Fluxus he designed many works by Fluxus including The Anthology, Art historical charts, Fluxkits and Fluxyear Boxes, newspapers, posters, flyers, posts, and many more (The Art Story, n.d.). I did not analyze every item in the Fluxboxes or every artwork that Maciunas used text however I chose three works by Maciunas where he used text in different formats.

Maciunas employed several methods to blend words and image, although he believed his visual approaches were more functional than artistic. Maciunas used dry transfer type to create complex and clever arrangements, demonstrating his ongoing use of letterforms as motifs. These could be titles or, more frequently, monograms that identify acquaintances, hangers-on, and other Fluxus artists (Moore, 2023).

In 1962 for example, he created fluxscores in the name of other artists referencing their work. These artists are La Monte Young, Dick Higgins, Richard Maxfield, Walter de Maria, Jackson Mac Low and Philip Corner. In Young's *Composition 1960 #10*, "Draw a straight line and follow it," was the inspiration for Maciunas's *Homage to La Monte Young* (fig.69). It asked the interpreter to "erase, scrape or wash away as much as possible the previously drawn line or lines of La Monte Young or any other lines encountered, like score lines on sports fields, lines on gaming tables, lines drawn by children on sidewalks, etc" (Chamberlain, 2018).

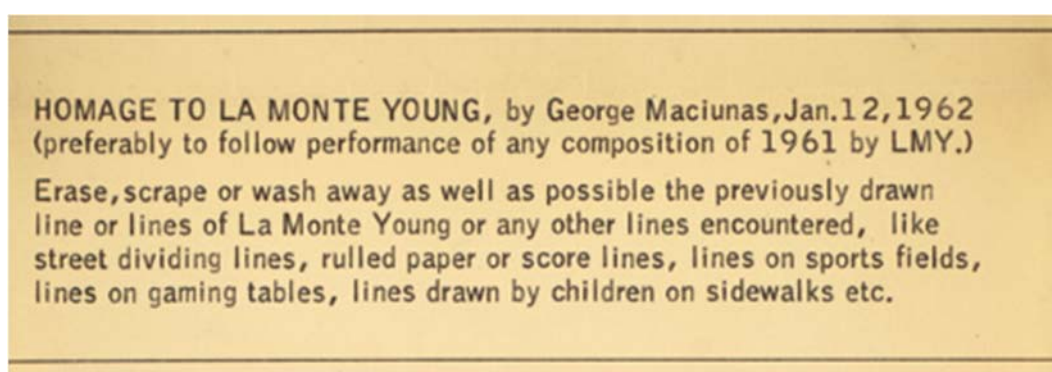


Figure 69 *Homage to La Monte Young* by George Maciunas, 1962, *The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection* Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127437>

The language displayed in *Homage to La Monte Young* is a diazotype with ink inscription on the sheet. The text use forms a single sentence which is a prosaic sentence containing instructions for the reader. By referencing another artwork by Young, Maciunas uses intertextuality. Young's *Composition 1960 #10*, "Draw a straight line and follow it" interpreted and reproduced by Maciunas. Young's score offers an act of walking which is an ordinary act of the body thus highlighting Fluxus' aim to blur the boundaries between life and art. Maciunas on the other hand suggests erasing, scraping, and washing away all the lines drawn by Young, in other words, he destroys the artwork by creating another artwork. Fluxus' anti-art approach is obvious in *Homage to La Monte Young* which is similar to parody and travesty in literature. However, both scores invite the audience to walk which is an act that involves body and movement therefore the audience is invited to create a performance work by walking on a line or walking while erasing lines. In contemporary art, act of walking has been utilized and point out various areas. According to Arapoğlu, walking has been observed to have evolved and been experienced as an anti-art form that began with Dada and Surrealism in the first part of the 20th century (Arapoğlu, 2018). Both Maciunas and Young invite the audience to walk for a realization of an artwork which is different from act of walking in everyday life. Both scores point out different perspective to walking itself which is a daily bodily movement shared by the vast majority of people. *Homage to La Monte Young* by Maciunas uses text in prose form and as plain instructions of an event with references to another Fluxus score deploying intertextuality.

In September 1976, George Maciunas attended an exhibition in New York curated by Rene Block with *Fluxlabyrinth* (fig.70). Within the framework of the Berliner Festspiele, then centered on the United States Bicentennial in 1976, René Block curated the exhibition that

focused specifically on the neighborhood of SoHo. Fluxus was given a prime place in the exhibition New York – Downtown Manhattan – SoHo, especially since Fluxus, as Peter Frank noted in the exhibition catalogue, was “the earliest conceptual and performance activity to occur between Houston and Canal Streets” (Cited by Frank by Rodriguez & Davidts, 2018, para.18). The Flux-Labyrinth was located at the right side of the exhibition's epicenter in an open area that provided access to the building's inner courtyard. The *Fluxlabyrinth* was required to be a portrayal of the creative mediums particular to the preliminary and traditional stage of the developments in SoHo, summed up in the words Fluxus and Happening (Cited by Rodriguez & Davidts from Roters, 2018).

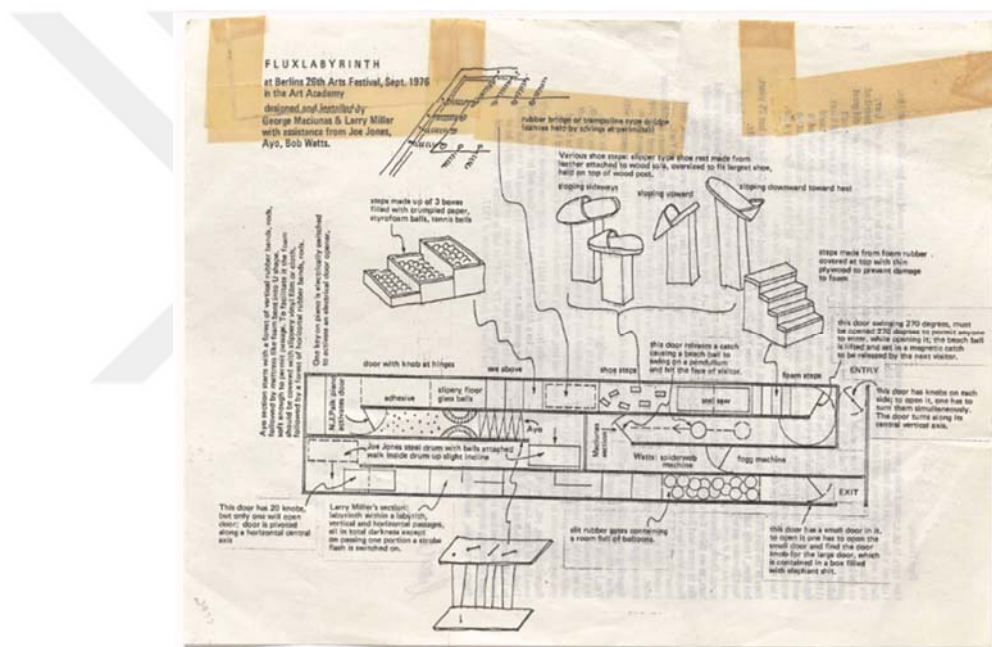


Figure 70 Drawing for *Fluxlabyrinth* by George Maciunas, 1976, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127366>

Maciunas' labyrinth design was a one-way passage. In order to achieve this, the artist created a variety of doors that made it impossible for guests to go back. Maciunas explained the arrangement of doors as “All doors should be openable from entry side only. the [sic] reverse of them should have no knobs so as not to allow some of the people to return. Anyone entering MUST go through the whole labyrinth.” (Cited from Maciunas by Rodriguez & Davidts, 2018, para.20). The drawing explains the “270-degree door” as a door that needed to be twisted 270 degrees in order to allow passage. Also, right after the 270-degree door, guests had to step into slippers that were affixed to varying-height wooden elements. Occasionally, those who visit the *Fluxlabyrinth* experience feelings of hopelessness and

powerlessness, which are partly brought on by the inability to find their return. A few agitated guests damaged the artwork. Perhaps the most direct response to the exhibition's brief, which was to portray "the whole spectrum of life and of human activities as well as the problems of living together in SoHo", came from the *Fluxlabyrinth*. The *Fluxlabyrinth* implied that in order to thrive as an artist and urban activist in SoHo, one needed a specific kind of intelligence, or, as Maciunas did, the capacity to overcome setbacks and figure out strategies for outwitting the city authorities (Rodriguez & Davidts, 2018, para.16).

The drawing of *Fluxlabyrinth* contains both draft and text as a plan for an experience to be built, which is similar to Fluxscores. The drawing is a typewritten photocopy with tape. The language use is direct and explanatory, and there are no poetic expressions through the use of words however the displayed *Fluxlabyrinth* offers statements about obstacles in art and life in general by creating a space for experience, and the map of the artwork contains the core idea of the artwork with explanatory sentences.

One of Maciunas's final performances was in the SoHo area, in 1978 where he and poet Billie Hutching commemorated their wedding through a Fluxus ceremony (fig.71). Roslyn Bernstein, Fluxus member and artist, recalls:

The wedding on February 5, 1978, was the Fluxus event of the era. There was a Flux feast of erotic foods, including a penis-shaped pâté brought by sculptor Louise Bourgeois. For the ceremony, Maciunas and Hutching both wore bridal gowns, while their bridesmaids Jon Hendricks and Larry Miller were dressed in drag and their best man, Allison Knowles, wore tails. Geoffrey Hendricks who wrote the script for the program, conducted the ceremony and officiated as the priest (The Art Story, n.d.).

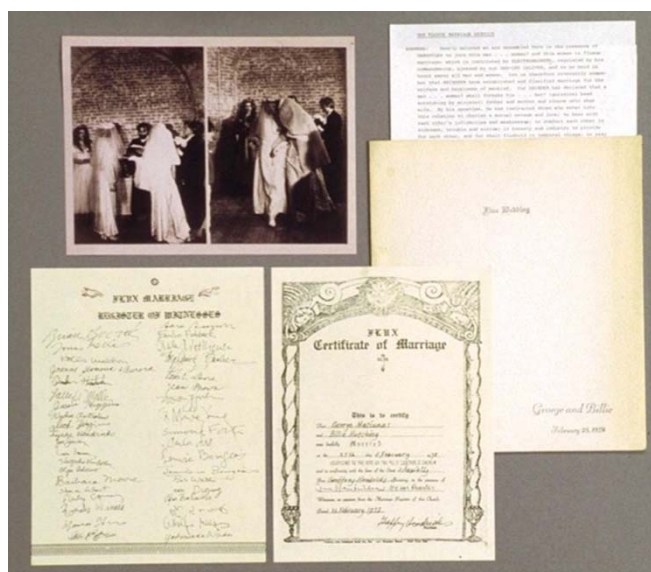


Figure 71 Flux Wedding by George Maciunas, 1978. Retrieved from: <https://www.fondazionebonotto.org/en/collection/fluxus/collectivefluxus/performance/2630.html>

Maciunas and Hutching also performed a piece called *Black & White*. The two removed their suits and dresses from during the event, and they swapped costumes, including wigs. The photographs, marriage certificate and guest registry were published as a performance score.

The products that left from the event are photographs, video documentations and written texts.

Geoffrey Hendricks who conducted the wedding also wrote the program text. The second page of the ceremony text is titled *Fluxus Marriage Service* and the whole text is in form of dialogues demonstrating the solemnize and it is similar with a playscript. The first paragraph reads:

ADDRESS: Dearly beloved we are assembled here in the presence of GARGOYLES to join this man... woman? and this woman in fluxus marriage; which is instituted by ELECTROMAGNETS, regulated by his commandments, blessed by our ODD-LEG CALIPER, and to be held in honor among all men and women. Let us therefore reverently remember that REINDEER have established and fluxified marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Our GRINDER has declared that a man... woman? shall forsake his... her? (quizzical head scratching by minister) father and mother and cleave unto her wife. By his apostles, he has instructed those who enter into this relation to

cherish a mutual esteem and love; to bear with each other's infirmities and weaknesses; to comfort each other in sickness, trouble and sorrow; in honesty and industry to provide for each other, and for their fluxhold in temporal things; to pray for and encourage each other in the things which pertain to ENEMAS and to live together as the heirs of the grace of life... (Fondazione Bonotto, n.d.)

Fluxus Marriage Service is a typewritten text on paper consisting of dialogues that serves like a playscript and therefore engages with the discipline of drama. Some words are written in capital letters like GARGOYLES, ELECTROMAGNETS, ODD-LEG CALIPER, and GRINDER. All the words in the capital are used on behalf of traditional sayings in wedding ceremonies, and turn the event into an instructional critique with humor. The deconstruction and critical recreation of a previously well-known written work is a parody in literature. *Flux Wedding* has similarities with parody if the traditional wedding ceremony could be taken as an established social conduct, a play in which every member of society knows the plot. Also, the person speaking refers to Maciunas both as a man and woman as he is in a wedding dress. In consequence, Maciunas appears both as a man and as a woman, or genderless, or gender-fluid. The event as whole falls within the gender studies area of expertise, Queer Theory in particular. *Flux Wedding* advocates for more freedom from traditional roles in marriage and goes against gender binary and gender norms. Likewise, *Flux Wedding* demonstrates Fluxus's aim to merge art and life as marriage is a part of life and it too could have artistic meaning.

All in all, George Maciunas used text excessively with his manifestoes, art historical charts, name cards, scores, Fluxkits and sometimes used text as a playscript for an event, sometimes as graphic design, sometimes as a map to construct a work, and sometimes to reference other Fluxus artists' scores using intertextuality. His use of language was mostly direct and concrete and always demonstrated Fluxus' core values and goals.

5.2. Use of Text in Yoko Ono's Works

Yoko Ono is the eldest of three children born to traditional Japanese aristocrats Eisuke and Isoko Ono on February 18, 1933. Her mother was a painter and her father had given up his ideal job as a concert pianist to pursue a career as a banker. Yoko attended a music school when she was four years old. Later, she transferred to Gakushuin, one of the most prestigious

institutions in Japan. Following the American bombing of Tokyo in 1945, Ono and her family were forced to escape into the countryside. With their few possessions, they had to wander from farm to farm and search for food. She continued her studies with the reopening of her school and graduated in 1951. She was the first female student admitted to Gakushuin University's philosophy department. She did, however, depart after two semesters to reunite with her family in Scarsdale, New York. She met poets and painters at Sarah Lawrence College, a small liberal arts college, and was drawn to its radical politics. She continued to use her musical abilities, but her writings did not fit the Western academic model that her Sarah Lawrence instructors embraced. She became friends with La Monte Young and other avant-garde composers after discovering the music of John Cage. After graduating from college, Ono relocated to Manhattan and started pursuing her artistic career. In the 1960s, Ono was drawn to the groups of artists who organized happenings, and she hosted gatherings at her New York City loft, located at 112 Chambers Street. It was a common meeting place for avant-garde musicians, performers, and Fluxus artists. Her artistic work is based mostly on experiences, events, and performances. Her artistic creations were bold, drawing from a variety of inspirations like as Dada and Zen Buddhism. She strongly objected to the notion that an artwork should be a material thing. Instructions are the main subject of many of her works. By the mid-1960s, Ono had made a name for herself in the underground art scene. She composed music and, although a key figure in the founding of the Fluxus, she refused to be affiliated with it because she respected her autonomy as an artist (The Art Story, n.d). Among many works she created *Grapefruit* is the most literary work which involves Fluxscores. *Grapefruit* was published in 1964. Three pieces from it will be examined as it showcases Ono's versatility as a Fluxus practitioner and includes text quite poetically.

Grapefruit was first released in Tokyo in 1964 by Yoko Ono under her own publishing label, *Wunternaum Press*. The artist sold the 500 printed copies for three dollars each prior to publication and six dollars subsequently. The cover of the original version was simple, with just the word "Grapefruit" handwritten on the side and the book was in both Japanese and English. *Grapefruit* is a collection of small-scale event scores produced by the artist during the 1960s (Powles, 2021).



Figure 72 *Grapefruit* by Yoko Ono, 1964, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Retrieved from: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/yoko-ono-grapefruit-1>

Grapefruit contains playful, philosophical action poems and is organized into five sections: Music, Painting, Event, Poetry, and Object. It has about 150 written pieces total. Every item is a set of instructions that the reader can carry out either as an action or in their imagination. In “Music” section of the book *Earth Piece* (fig.73) is a single sentence: “Listen to the sound of the earth turning.” Dated as “1963 spring”.



Figure 73 *Earth Piece* by Yoko Ono, 1963. Retrieved from: https://monoskop.org/images/6/64/Ono_Yoko_Grapefruit_A_Book_of_Instructions_and_Drawings_2000.pdf

Earth Piece and John Cage’s *4’33* which was mentioned before hold the same core value as both works make the audience listen to something that has not traditionally been listened to by people. Derrida offers a new perspective to the accidentality of the language and its ability to reflect the truth. According to him, the language not only transmits itself but also constructs systems of thinking and is affected by them (Cited from Yazıcı by Derrida, p.80). Ono’s *Earth Piece* suggests a new comprehension on our perception on Earth as she suggests to listen to earth as if it is a musician. Ono uses personification literary device and offers deeper relationship with the planet.

Furthermore, *Earth Piece* and the term Deep Ecology has common aspects. Deep Ecology is term devised by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in 1972 to refer to an environmentalism that believes fundamental changes in the way our species conceives our relation to nature are necessary before we are to find a way out of the ecological crisis. As such it is a normative political philosophy, contrasted with shallow ecology, which assumes that minor “technical fixes” in our present way of doing things will solve our environmental problems. (Cited from Rothenberg by Naess 1973, p.1). According to deep ecology, changing the way we now view nature as a resource can never be successful. Whatever the potential benefits to people, nature must be valued for its own sake, or its intrinsic value. This premise will serve as the foundation for a whole new way of living in harmony with nature. (Rothenberg, 2012). Yoko Ono opens up her perspective on nature and earth and invites the reader/performer to live in harmony with everything that exists by suggesting to listen to the sound of the World while it is turning on its axis. She wants the reader to do an impossible thing physically, but not sensationally which is in parallel with Deep Ecology which stresses the inherent value of nature. Even though hearing the turning sound of the world is impossible, as Derrida states, language constructs systems of thinking and is affected by them, Yoko Ono constructs her system, in other words her harmonic perception of planet Earth by connecting with the Earth on a deeper level through solely listening it. Yoko Ono created a score in a book format for the performer to deepen their relationship with the Earth, using only a sentence: “Listen to the sound of the earth turning.”

In the second section titled “Painting” *Painting In Three Stanzas* (fig.74) partakes which is in form of poetry with five lines. The artists instruct the reader to plant a vine, water it everyday. Last three lines start with word “stanza” and explains the what the stanza is.

PAINTING IN THREE STANZAS

Let a vine grow.
Water every day.

The first stanza - till the vine spreads.
The second stanza - till the vine withers.
The third stanza - till the wall vanishes.

1961 summer

Figure 74 *Painting In Three Stanzas* by Yoko Ono, 1963. Retrieved from:
https://monoskop.org/images/6/64/Ono_Yoko_Grapefruit_A_Book_of_Instructions_and_Drawings_2000.pdf

The “first stanza” is the duration of the vine spreading. The “second stanza” is the withering of the vine and the “third stanza” stands for the disappearing of the wall when the vine eventually grow big enough as the line reads “- till the wall vanishes.” The words “the”, “stanza” and “till” repeats throughout the poem and the words Ono chose at the end of the last three lines “spreads, withers, vanishes” have a rhyme scheme as all end with the letter “s” therefore, *Painting In Three Stanzas* could be categorized as an action poem. Yoko Ono suggests observing the life span of a plant carefully, for this reason, *Painting In Three Stanzas* could also be considered as nature poetry. Wendell Berry defines nature poetry as poetry that “considers nature as subject matter and inspiration” (Poets.org, n.d., para.1). Because Ono instructs to plant a vine, the work could also be considered ecological art. The typewritten work explores the possibilities of observing the cycle of nature, taking action to care for a living organism, and merges painting and poetry by likening the imagery of the poem with painting as the very title of the work is “Painting in Three Stanzas.”

In the third section of the book titled “Event” the work *Map Piece* dated “1964 spring” partakes (fig.75). Yoko Ono simply writes one line: “Draw a map to get lost.” The wondering figure in history is flaneur. The wandering, ever-changing walking activity of the flaneur figure is characterized by coincidences. He is by himself in the midst of the urban crowds, a nomadic, unemployed, and roaming figure in contemporary urban life. In the 20th century, Walter Benjamin was the one who generated and analyzed this figure. He clarifies the flaneur in 19th century Paris in his 1938-essay in *Passages* on Baudelaire. Benjamin offers the archetype of the traveler figure as the 19th century flaneur, for whom glassed corridors are natural habitats (Arapoğlu, 2018). Yoko Ono indirectly references the flaneur figure with intertextuality, asking the reader to experience the flaneur’s point of view in which getting lost is highly important and inspiring just like in the *Painting In Three Stanzas*. Walter Benjamin describes the importance of getting lost as follows:

Not to find one's way around a city does not mean much. But to lose one's way in a city, as one loses one's way in a forest, requires some schooling. Street names must speak to the urban wanderer like the snapping of dry twigs, and little streets in the heart of the city must reflect the times of day, for him, as clearly as a mountain valley. This art I acquired rather late in life; it fulfilled a dream, of which the first traces were labyrinths on the blotting papers in my school notebooks (Cited by Benjamin from Arapoğlu, 2018, p.54).



Figure 75 *Map Piece* by Yoko Ono, 1963. Retrieved from:
https://monoskop.org/images/6/64/Ono_Yoko_Grapefruit_A_Book_of_Instructions_and_Drawings_2000.pdf

Getting lost and losing track of the obligations of modern life also means being conscious of the moment. The person getting lost deliberately experiences time differently from other citizens on the street. The importance of the present moment in Buddhism is also influential in the *Map Piece*.

All in all, *Grapefruit*, is characterized by a strong sense of optimism and a contemplative nature that manages to achieve seemingly impossible tasks. This characteristic invites in-depth contemplation, but it does so with the lightness of intuitive understanding rather than the force of analytical reason (Popova, 2016). Yoko Ono describes her view on art as: “I thought art was a verb, rather than a noun.” (A-Z Quotes, n.d.). *Grapefruit* is actually her collection of Fluxus scores making ordinary reality special, which invites the reader to perform an event through the use of text, falling into the category of intermedia like many Fluxus works. The content of the texts is quite poetic, utilizing intertextuality, and literary and poetic devices, and could be read in parallel with many theories such as deep ecology, the term flaneur, ecological art, performance art, intermedia, literature, Buddhism and through the lens of linguistics.

5.3. Use of Text in Robert Filliou’s Works

Born in Sauve, in the South of France, in 1926, Robert Filliou participated in the Résistance in 1943. In addition, he joined to the Communist Party. He relocated to the United States following World War II, where he worked for the Coca-Cola firm and attended Los Angeles University to study economics. On the U.N.'s orders, he travelled to South Korea in the early 1950s as an economist to create a blueprint for the reconstruction of Korea. In 1959, after

extensive international travel, he returned to France. It was during this period that he created his first action poetry and "L'Immortelle Mort du Monde," a text collage-style aleatoric theater performance. Also, he was a notable poet and dramatist. In 1961, Filliou held his debut show at the Arthur Köpckes gallery in Copenhagen. He was one of the primary performers in the Fluxus Festivals. His "principles of poetic economy," which he articulated in 1966, served as a precursor to his 1968 conceptions of "equivalency" and "permanent creation." In 1975, after having lived in Düsseldorf, he returned to France. He entered a Buddhist monastery in October 1984 and resided there for three years, three months, and three days before passing away on December 2, 1987 (Ocula Artist, n.d.). Even though Filliou passed away in a Tibetan monastery, his artwork from the 1960s was influenced by the Rinzai school of Zen. He might have come across Zen for the first time in Japan. In addition to his books, Suzuki had a significant impact on the neo-avant-garde in Europe through his lectures and classes on Buddhism and other philosophies. Among the artists who attended his lectures at Columbia University in New York from 1952 to 2008 were Filliou's collaborator, John Cage, and concrete poet Jackson Mac Low. Suzuki emphasized that dualistic reasoning prevents enlightenment, which is crucial for Fluxus. (Fredrickson, 2018).

Through conceptual ideas and inventive techniques, Filliou questioned the function of art in daily life as well as its position as a finished product. He used common objects through poetry, performance, and video. He positioned himself as a "happenings maestro" and "action poet," adhering to the notion that art can occur anywhere, at any moment, and requiring audience participation to bring his work to completion (Widewalls, n.d.). Like his contemporaries, Filliou rejected commercialism in art in favor of engaging the temporary and contingent in seemingly incomplete pieces that are frequently assembled from easily accessible materials. Filliou's artwork encourages people to embrace their innate creativity and act unconventionally in the face of social pressure to fit in. This opens up new avenues for interaction and allows viewers to interpret familiar objects in new ways (Fredrickson, 2018).

Robert Filliou or "poet of everyday" used text in various formats in his works, *Ample Food for Stupid Thought* (fig.76) published by Something Else Press in 1965 is one example. *Ample Food for Stupid Thought* is a series of postcards with absurdist, unanswered questions which is dedicated to George Brecht. The first work consists of 92 offset printed postcards

in wood box. These texts would be later made into a book, and read aloud in a performance at the Café Au Go Go in Greenwich Village, New York City, on February 8, 1965. The title of the work mocks with itself deliberately by claiming that the cards should be used for stupid thoughts. However, the abandonment of logical thinking paves the way for brainstorming and communicative experience.



Figure 76 *Ample for Stupid Thought* by Robert Filliou, 1965, Published by Something Else Press, N.Y., Köln, Paris.
Retrieved from: <https://www.fondazionebonotto.org/en/collection/fluxus/filliourobert/artistsbook/646.html>

Questions printed on each card include: 'you for or against marriage?', 'would you abuse your strength if you were the strongest man on earth?', 'what does it take to lead the rich, full life?', 'aren't you forgetting the essential?' among more ambiguous questions such as 'in Shanghai?' and 'and what of the girl?' etc.

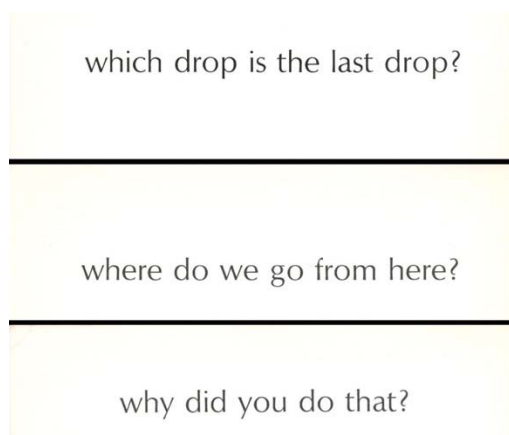


Figure 77 *Ample for Stupid Thought* by Robert Filliou, 1965, Published by Something Else Press, N.Y., Köln, Paris.
Retrieved from: <https://www.fondazionebonotto.org/en/collection/fluxus/filliourobert/artistsbook/646.html>

The questions on cards are both common and bizarre and invites the players to communicate on a deeper level by putting personal, spiritual, philosophical questions forward within a visual work similar to a board game. The question types on the cards are closed, open, funnel, leading, rhetorical, divergent question sentences inviting the audience to perform a game of communication.

In 1970 Robert Filliou created *Portraits Not Made* (fig.78). These intermedia pieces feature the following artists: Andy Warhol, John Cage, Dieter Rot, George Brecht, Dorothy Iannone, Irmeline Lebeer, Josef Beuys, and Toi (you). Many of the subjects of his portraits were members of Fluxus.

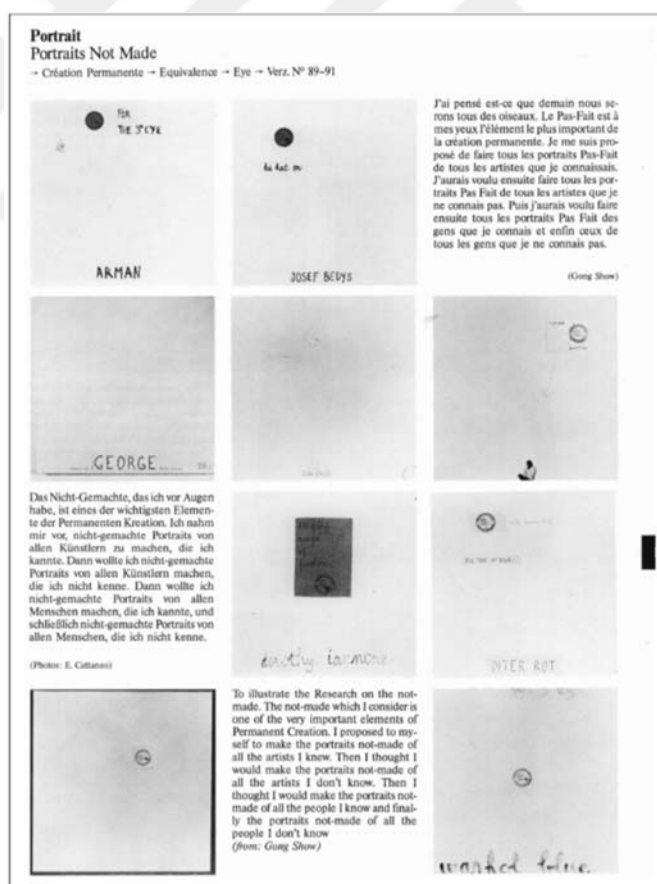


Figure 78 *Portraits Not Made* by Robert Filliou, 1970. Retrieved from: (Fredrickson, 2018).

Filliou hand-written a name (first and/or family name) on some, an arrow or a message on others. First, he sketched the shape of a rectangle, then collaged a photo of himself that was

taken from a snapshot underneath it. The cards don't feature images of the artists; instead, they just have their names and one is blank it is “Not Made”. They translate between binaries such as visual/textual, material/immaterial, made/not made, and artist/viewer. Filliou wanted to paint portraits of every artist he knew and everyone he did not. This was an unrealistic objective, made much more so by the fact that, in his view, anyone can be an artist. A Buddhist understanding of reality as an empty yet filled emptiness infused with a Fluxian excitement of the absurd is also reflected in *Portraits Not Made*. The central idea in Filliou's work is the idea of the not made. It is both empty and filled, representing everything that is latent—not created yet, not imagined yet, or never to be (Fredrickson, 2018).

Filliou also stamped a circular seal (fig.79) in the center of all but one canvas, with three categories (Well Made, Badly Made, Not Made) and a line to the left of each that may be checked or left blank.

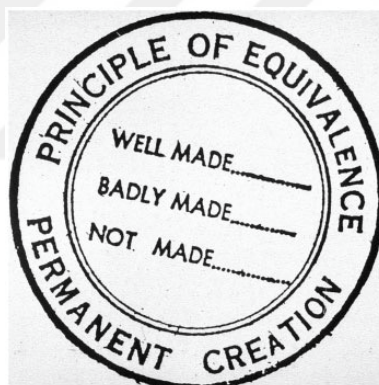


Figure 79 *Portraits Not Made* by Robert Filliou, 1970. Retrieved from: (Fredrickson, 2018).

Filliou's portraits conjoin with his term “poetic economy” which is based on Permanent Creation, the Eternal Network, and the Principle of Equivalence (well made, badly made, not made). Shaped by Fluxian absurdity and a Zen-like understanding of reality his concepts suggest that we acknowledge a dynamic equilibrium between what is and what might be but is not.

The first category in the principle, “well made,” refers to “Fine Art”—that is, well-conceived, well crafted, and well received. It encompasses both religious and secular works who follow academic convention and also avant-gardists who defy tradition to set alternative standards of excellence. “badly made” is the second category that rejects the idea of art as

a precious product, but it does not reject the modernist paradigm of creative criticism, distortion, and satire. Filliou, who describes himself as an expert in badly made, suggests that the reason why unfinished, flawed, and unrefined objects or ideas have significance is that they fail to be the ideal. The third category the “not made” is Filliou's most fundamental rejection of art as commodity; by embracing everything that is not, it completely avoids modernist negation. It makes distinctions between what is observable (material) and what is imperceptible (metaphysical), obfuscating ontological boundaries between being and nonbeing and embracing possibilities. A work must be finished in order to be judged either good or bad however “not made” avoids these classifications because it is not finite it remains at the level of a thing in the process of coming into being or not coming into being (Fredrickson, 2018). Thomas Merton explains: “Buddhism prefers to speak of ‘emptiness,’ not because it conceives of the ultimate as mere nothingness and void, but because it is aware of the non-limitation and non-definition of the infinite” (Cited from Merton by Fredrickson, 2018, p.20).

Filliou clarifies the meaning and beginnings of the *Portraits Not Made* in a prose poem titled “The 3rd Eye: Mr. Mack's Proposal” as follows:

The Not-Made is in my eyes the most important element of permanent creation. I proposed to myself to make Portraits Not-Made of all the artists whom I know. I would have wanted to then make Portraits Not-Made of all the artists that I do not know. Then I would have wanted to make all of the Portraits Not-Made of people that I know and finally of all the people that I do not know (Cited from Filliou by Frederickson, 2008, p.13).



Figure 80 *Portraits Not Made* by Robert Filliou, 1970. Retrieved from: (Fredrickson, 2018).

Portrait Not Made: toi (fig.80) completely omits names. Informally speaking, "you" is addressed with the French second-person pronoun "toi," which refers to both an individual and a category that includes everyone Filliou knew and didn't know, including the people who are viewing the image. Filliou extends an invitation to each and every one of "you" to acknowledge your role as co-creators within the Eternal Network and Permanent Creation's broader systems. *Portraits Not Made* even if the action is as fleeting and insignificant as a thought, "you" are called to action by toi.

Filliou's *Portraits Not Made* suggest to view ordinary acts and events as part of a larger creative process by obfuscating the distinction between art and life. By drawing parallels between subject and object, writer and readers, and art and life, Filliou reinterprets art as a process of conversation rather than manufactured goods. Both actual and conceptual wealth for his ideal concept "Poetic Economy" belongs to no one and is meant to be shared, not held and one's creativity has the power to change lives already (Fredrickson, 2018).

In *Portraits Not Made* text has been used as an indicator for action, ontological thinking of creation itself, and brainstorming for the concepts of the self, others, and communication through merging text, drawings on canvases, photograph and design. The proper names on canvases are hand-written and the stamp is printed graphic design. The language structure is quite simple, plain and concrete. The implications however refer many disciplines and ideas through their adjustments on visuals.

Starting from his idea well made, badly made and not made Filliou created a series of *Optimistic Boxes* between 1968 and 1981 as new year gifts. Promoted as "New Year for you and your friends, renew the art of giving. These artists have designed and created disturbing, insolent and baroque presents for you ... from 30 to 3000 Francs" (Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, n.d.). These are objects that can be read from both the inside and the outside or from each side. He used written words with each. The *Optimistic Box no. 4/5* (fig.81) was created in 1981 and its a ceramic piggy bank with two labels.



Figure 81 Robert Optimistic Box N°4 and 5 by Robert Filliou, 1981. Retrieved from: <https://www.mamco.ch/en/1017/Catalogue/2118/Robert-Filliou-Optimistic-Box-n-4-and-5-One-thing-I-learned-since-I-was-born/-that-I-must-die-since-I-was-born-1968-1981>

In *Optimistic Box N°4 and 5*, one side we read: "one thing I learned since I was born" and on the other side we read: "that I must die since I was born". This two-part composition comes together to produce an easy-to-read memento mori (remember you must die) that uses the conjunction "since" to link the beginning and end of life both causally and temporally: "one thing I learned since I was born – that I must die since I was born". Through being divided into two parts, undergoes a surprising change of meaning (Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, n.d.). The piggy-bank might symbolize capitalist effects upon society that narrows human existence into a commodity like the commodity piggy-bank. Also, in order to receive the saved money in the piggy-bank the item must be broken, as it is clear from his biography that Filliou did not see people as commodities, the piggy-bank should consist of values other than money. The metaphorical value could be the experiences one has gathered and saved throughout life. It also indicates death and value becoming immaterial.

The German Gallery VICE Versand distributed all of the series' pieces, which were all manufactured in vast amounts and did not follow the constrained rules of the art market. They adhered to the notion of "art for everyone" as infinite multiples (Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, n.d.). The use of text in *Optimistic Box N°4 and 5* is typewritten on labels on a ready-made object. The divided sentence "one thing I learned since I was born / that I must die since I was born" is like a nursery rhyme with a pun. The division of the sentences could also be interpreted as lines of a poem, instead of writing the second line underneath the same line on paper, Filliou writes the line on each side of an object.

All in all, Filliou plays with binaries like life/death, bad/good, static/dynamic, made/not made, artist/viewer and visual/textual. He used text in poetic forms, concrete forms, handwriting, and typewriting for two-dimensional artworks like *Portraits Not Made*, for creating communicative game cards like *Ample Food for Stupid Thought*, or on ready-made like *Optimistic Boxes*. He used text as an indicator for action, ontological thinking of creation itself, and brainstorming for the concepts of the self, others, and communication. He merged text, canvases, photographs, and design. As a poet, he not only drew inspiration from poetry and literature using puns, metaphors and types of questions but also from Eastern philosophies and created his original principles about the valuation of art. All of this correlates with language, communication, art philosophy and deconstruction as he worked with binaries by reducing them to their components and creating something new out of these deconstructions like artworks that are Not Made.

5.4. Use of Text in Mieko Shiomi's Works

In Tamashima, a tiny town in Japan close to Okayama, Mieko Shiomi was born into a relatively prosperous family. Her mother would frequently serenade her with classical music, while her father conducted choirs. When Shiomi was nine years old, she started taking piano lessons and finally developed a strong classical music education (Watson, 2019). She distinctly recalls the frustration of not being able to play the piano whenever she wanted to when she was a young child during World War II. She had to wait her turn to perform on the one piano at school because there weren't many left after the war's devastation (Cited from Fujii and Yamashiro by Spencer, 2022). Shiomi's upbringing in a fishing village on the Seto Inland Sea, where there was an abundance of possibilities for interaction with the natural world due to the surrounding ocean, verdant hills, and animals, may have contributed

to her artistic development in this area (Cited from Yoshimoto by Watson, 2019). Shiomi studied in the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music in 1957 and began pursuing composition on the side while also studying history, philosophy, and aesthetics of music. After finishing her studies, she founded Group Ongaku, an experimental band that featured four other classmates, as well as Fluxus artists like Takehisa Kosugi and Yasunao Tone starting in 1960. This led to experiments with improvisation and the use of unconventional sounds that are typically thought of as non-musical, like those made by common objects like vacuum cleaners. Undoubtedly, Shiomi's training in music, both technically and creatively, influenced the way she created non-musical works and the ways in which she attempted to make sense of the relationship between the self and the other in a world that was becoming more and more urbanized and interconnected (Watson, 2019). Shiomi questioned the concept of limitation within an artistic space, such as a gallery or museum, arguing that art should be everywhere and that anyone can do it at any time. This was made possible by the dynamism of the Fluxus concerts and performances, where participants both perform their own work and participate in the work of other artists (Arapoğlu, 2009).

Shiomi created scores, maps and ready-made where she used text in different formats. In 1963 she created an event score titled *< event for the midday > (in the sunlight)* (fig.82).



Figure 82 *< event for the midday > (in the sunlight)* by Mieko Shiomi, 1963, *The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift*. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127548>

< event for the midday > (in the sunlight) aims to induce sensory disorientation or confusion by utilizing the natural environment as a medium. The performer is instructed to close and

open their eyes seven times in the seven minutes around midday. When this piece is performed, the performers may experience disorientation where they must balance the deliberate act of opening and closing their eyes with the visual elements of the natural world that they are compelled to take in. A key element of this composition is sunshine, which amplifies the contrast between closed and open-eye states (Watson, 2019). When the performer opens their eyes for the last time, they are supposed to gaze at their hands. In that moment, just by focusing on one's eye movement, it might become clear that the human body is an alive, breathing organism that functions unconsciously (Cited from Yoshimoto by Watson, 2019). This also draws attention to the ongoing influence that nature has on our perspective, independent of our awareness (Watson, 2019). *< event for the midday > (in the sunlight)* emphasizes Shiomi's concern with nature just by using hand-written instructive sentences in a Fluxscore format inviting people to perform on their own and deepen their relationship with their bodies.

In 1965 *Fluxkit*, Mieko Shiomi's *Water Music* (fig.83) was included. The work is simply a glass bottle with plastic dropper and offset-label. It contains instructions on the label that read: "1. Give the water still form; 2. Let the water lose its still form."



Figure 83 *Water Music* from *Fluxkit1* by Mieko Shiomi, 1965, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift.
Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/149324>

The type-written words on a ready-made object; a glass bottle is design by Maciunas, the sizes of letters differ. The name of the work and the artist are written straight whereas instructions of the score are rotated 90 degrees and the two sentences are not back-to-back but face to face perhaps mimicking the different states of water like the very sentences explain.

According to Watson, the work leads to a thematic double in terms of execution and medium and questions of “what am I?” (Watson, 2019). Since the human body consists of %75-85 water, the work could be interpreted existentially or ontologically. Also, as Schiomi's conceptual concerns include nature, *Water Music* could also call attention to elements surrounding us, in this context the water element. The title however indicates musicality, since Schiomi is also a musician, *Water Music* also underlines the rhythm of the natural world and the Cagean idea that every sound is music and that music is everywhere. The instructions also led to the observation of different states of water; in motion and motionless. These chosen sentences could be metaphors for human emotions. Like water, the emotions change form and intensity which indicates the dynamism and constant change inherent to human life.

Starting in 1965, Shiomi initiated a project aimed at achieving a global orientation for self. Shiomi says in an interview with Yoshimoto that she was annoyed with being "physically restrained to one place at a time" and "the inconvenience of communication." This worry also included the formality and institutionalization of hosting events in unique spaces like music halls or galleries (Watson, 2019, p.7). She expanded upon her action poems and reused in *Spatial Poem* (fig.84), provide guidance on how to change how one interacts with their surroundings (Spencer, 2022).

Approximately two hundred and thirty-two persons from over twenty-six countries participated in the nine mail-art events that made up *Spatial Poems* between 1965 and 1975. Among them were Shiomi's friends and Fluxus artists. Shiomi distributed over a hundred invites for each event, asking the recipients to perform the event as described on an event score and then return documentation of the performance along with an explanation of the performance's outcome. For the performances to be considered a part of the whole, they had to occur within the specified time frame. Later, Shiomi created what she referred to as a "object poem," which was made of three-dimensional map boards on which she had placed little flags bearing the responses she had gotten from the participants, with each flag marking the location of the respondent. Shiomi's mail art serves as a proposal for an international paradigm of connectedness that emphasizes intimacy, collectivity, and shared experience over efficiency or the entirety of the individual's experience (Watson, 2019).



Figure 84 *Spatial Poem No.1* by Mieko Shiomi, 1965, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/126324>

The specific occurrences or elements of a spatial poem are frequently taken into account instead of the entire work. These sections have been referred to as mail art, events, maps, concrete poems, and land art (Spencer, 2022). Shiomi saw *Spatial Poem* as a collage or poem on the earth (Cited from Yoshimoto by Spencer, 2022, p. 63).

Shiomi self-published a book in 1976 to chronicle the decade of *Spatial Poem*. It includes the names of every person who responded to her invitations with a contribution and a record of every one of the replies she received. In the decade Shiomi was sending out invitations, two hundred and thirty-two people from twenty-six countries contributed over five hundred responses. The book includes the names of every person who responded to her invitations with a contribution and a record of each reply she received (Cited by Kawamura by Spencer, 2022, p.66).

Concrete poetry and mail art are two influences on *Spatial Poem*. It describes space on Earth rather than being defined by white space on a page. Numerous maps are included in *Spatial Poem*, but with its postal crossings, it augments the existing topography rather than describing it. Shiomi's events created a global poem using bodies, paper, and the postal service (Spencer, 2022).

I selected *Spatial Poem No. 4 (shadow event)* (fig.85) out of the nine poems because it uses text to invite people to use text during the event. The invitation Shiomi sent included a clear plastic film that has the word "SHADOW" on it. The invitation to *Spatial Poem No. 4* reads:

Make a shadow or shadows of the enclosed letter SHADOW on somewhere.

Please describe to me in details how you performed it ... about the place,

light source, duration, movement, deformation, etc.

Your reports will be recorded on the world map.

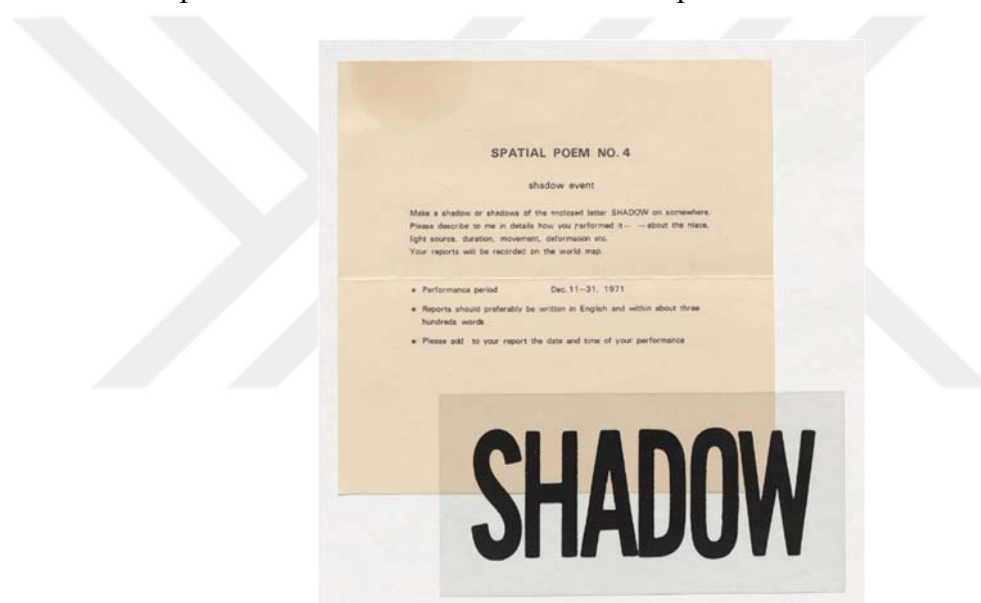


Figure 85 *Spatial Poem No. 4* by Mieko Shiomi, 1971, *The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift*. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/168590>

The score wants a shadow of a shadow. It offers a three-way interaction between the object itself, the surrounding light, and the person who may pick it up and move it wherever they choose. Shiomi received various responses (Spencer, 2022). Holding it up to a telescope, Maciunas attempted to throw his shadow text as far as possible on the “PROCYON star of the first magnitude (Canis Minoris)” (Cited by Shiomi by Spencer, 2022, p.82). A few individuals utilized the "SHADOW" film as a tool or a medium. In his darkroom, for instance, Peter Moore used it to print negatives and add "SHADOW" to the picture.

Performing *Spatial Poetry*, participants were able to pause, carve out a few minutes of their day, and incorporate art. By being able to see, feel, and hear items, people would be able to

see and comprehend the relationship between oneself and the outside world, rather of taking it for granted. They provide an overview of existence in physical space (Spencer, 2022).

The scores in *Spatial Poem* used clear, instructive sentences with type-writer. Whether the film “SHADOW” was painted by hand or printed by machine is unclear. However, the word “shadow” is open to a variety of interpretations. It could be taken as a metaphor, used as a simile, or with its first meaning. *Spatial Poem* differs from other scores as the participants could use text with the meaning that they choose while performing the event.

All in all, Mieko Shiomi used text in her artworks in the form of a score, a tool in score, a map, on a ready-made. She sometimes hand-written the scores, let other artists create a graphic design out of the sentences she created and sometimes used typewriters on various mediums. The contents of the texts are in parallel with her artistic concepts and concerns such as body, space, nature, collectivity, and awareness. She used plain instructions, and metaphoric instructions, and created object poems, action poems, and global poems. All of her writing is open to interpretation and action.

5.5. Use of Text in Dick Higgins’s Works

Dick Higgins, born in Cambridge, England, on March 15, 1938, attended Columbia University in New York, the Manhattan School of Printing, and the New School of Social Research, where he studied under Henry Cowell and John Cage from 1958 to 1959. In Cage's composition class, he got to know artists such as George Brecht, Allan Kaprow, Al Hansen, and others and he co-founded Fluxus. After working with Maciunas, Higgins established *Something Else Press* in 1963. In addition to publishing experimental literature, Higgins also started a newsletter and gallery. The *Something Else Gallery* hosted the country's first concrete poetry exhibition in 1966. After completing his studies at New York University (1975–1979) to earn a Master of Arts degree in English, Higgins' focus shifted towards academia. *George Herbert's Pattern Poems: in their Tradition* (1977), which was his master's thesis on visual poetry, was improved upon for publication as *Pattern Poetry: Guide to an Unknown Literature* (1987). As he carried out further research on the history of pattern poetry, he was acknowledged as an authority on the subject. He published scores and continued to follow his musical interests. As mentioned before, developing the term “intermedia” in 1965 was one of the important contributions of Higgins. He devoted thirty

years to producing art in painting, musical composition, Happenings, theoretical articles for academic and personal publications, and concrete and pattern poetry. Higgins died on October 26, 1998 while at a conference in Quebec City, Canada. (Northwestern, n.d.).

Higgins started writing *Danger Music* compositions in 1961. They make use of wit, comedy, concepts of chance, and indeterminacy, just like many of his Fluxus counterparts. Higgins' actions deviated into the realm of metaphor, even if they were obviously related to previous performative Concept Art. While previous generations have typically responded to paradigm shifts in musical thought with fear, Higgins made that fear more tangible by designing actions that carry a genuine risk of harm to the audience or the performer, sometimes to the point where certain works are unlikely to be performed at all. *Danger Music* scores pose some of the most radical questions regarding the nature of music (Bradford, 2016).

Danger Music Number Fifteen (fig.86) reads: “- for the dance - Work with butter and eggs for a time.” When the action was realized people mashed, cracked, and threw the eggs thus they “worked” with them. Being edible isn't really the point of *Danger Music Number Fifteen*; instead, the score is performed as butter and eggs are worked. Food signifies time especially. Food is a natural medium for Fluxus artists, whose concerns have been rooted in the spatial and temporal elements (Baas, 2011).

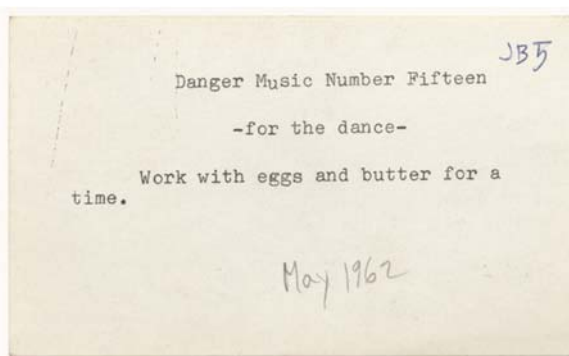


Figure 86 *Danger Music Number Fifteen* by Dick Higgins, 1962, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127388>

According to Friedman, the events take place in a realm that is inaccessible to words; this realm is one of being, or more accurately, becoming, rather than language or silence. Similar to Zen, Fluxus proposes an unsystematized field of direct experience in place of language, forcing a confrontation with language's inadequacies. In the end, Zen Buddhism seeks to cultivate an immediate experience of the world as it is, a direct, unmediated contact between the mind and reality. Given the importance of language in the organization of both our

personal awareness and our daily experiences of the world, achieving this goal is not simple. It is a language that comprises scripture and koan, as it is a language which names the “butter” and “eggs” by Higgins. Victor Musgrave, whose Gallery One hosted the 1962 *Festival of Misfits*, notes: “Some of the Fluxus artists have produced significant equivalents' to the bandaged, all-seeing ambiguities of Zen's koan. A classic koan is “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” The traditionally correct response to the problem of the one hand is this: the student thrusts her hand out toward the Roshi (teacher) and says nothing. Effectively, this is something akin to saying, “Here is the sound Listen.” (Friedman, 1998).

Fluxus work, like the koan, is the exposition of the path itself, the restructuring and presentation of a process of meaning-production. The form a work takes is the demonstration of the unfolding processes of its own presentation and reception. Like the circular, stimulus/response form of the koan, Fluxus 'presentation', to quote Dick Higgins, 'would always have to do somehow with the general principle that ideas could be displayed or demonstrated rather than argued for or against.' (Friedman, 1998, p.101)

Dick Higgins with his *Danger Music* series created moments in time for people to experience a process of meaning-production of an ordinary but at the same time unordinary events like the question of “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” the performers could think about the meaning of working with eggs and butter which seems like a preparation of a meal but it actually isn't. The score also begins with the sentence “for the dance” which suggests something different than cooking but it is still vague and open to interpretation. The performers need to make sense of or live their unique experiences in accordance with the score. *Danger Music Number Seventeen* could also be considered in this context.

Danger Music Number Seventeen (fig.87) is another type-written score created in 1962. The score consists of only one word repeated six times: “Scream!”. Dick Higgins explained his thoughts on Fluxus in relation with screaming: “Tomorrow one will write “Schubert's Fifth Symphony, cook some kohlrabi, develop a non-toxic epoxy and invent still another kind of theatre; or perhaps one will just sit and scream; or perhaps...” (Reim, n.d.).

To continue for Higgins, the potential for evil or danger frames the novel or the uncertain. This risk mostly relates to the possibility of immersion (Friedman, 1998). By suggesting screaming, Higgins invites the performers to make a sound that in Cagean terms is also music. Screaming relates to the feelings of fear, anger, and sadness therefore, Higgins might also be suggesting a purification or a climax experience. As for him, danger frames the novel or the uncertain, by screaming feelings of danger, anger, and sadness are experienced and released then something new could be found. Also, the screaming has political associations. For example, according to Ina Bloom, many such totalizing illusions within the various avant-garde perspectives - from Yves Klein's tout to Cage's zero - are similar to Antonin Artaud's interpretation of totality, which holds that the symbolic language of society must melt into a scream or noise (Friedman, 1998).

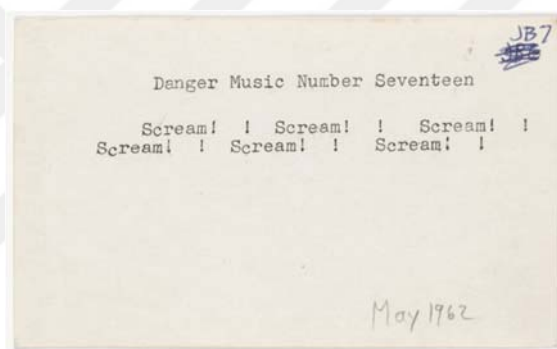


Figure 87 *Danger Music Number Seventeen* by Dick Higgins, 1962, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/127389>

In 1969 Dick Higgins created *Free Dick Higgins* (fig.88) published by *Something Else Press*. The artwork is a metal button with the type-written sentence “FREE DICK HIGGINS” on it.



Figure 88 *Free Dick Higgins* by Dick Higgins, 1969, The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection Gift. Retrieved from: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/132115>

Dick Higgins used objects throughout his artistic practice, in *Free Dick Higgins* he used a saying that people use for protesting the authorities and ask to release someone from jail. In the sentence, Higgins uses his name even though he has never been in jail. The imprisonment in this context could be about artistic disciplines and traditional artistic norms. The strict division of artistic disciplines and the understanding of artists as geniuses are the primary criticisms Fluxus artists put forward. Given that Higgins is the one who invented the art historical term intermedia, *Free Dick Higgins* could be interpreted as a call for demolishing artistic disciplines.

In conclusion, Dick Higgins used text in his practice, he not only established *Something Else Press* where many written artworks and books have been published, he also wrote poems, created charts, played with language and meaning, and used text in his visual works. He contributed art history with his intermedia term and co-founding of Fluxus. His analyzed works include text in a score format where the language is concrete and inviting for an experience and meaning-production to occur. Inspired by Zen Buddhism, literature, John Cage, and daily life, Higgins's artworks and his use of text were intermediary, poetic, thought-provoking, witty, and lively.

6. CONCLUSION

All things considered, the text has been used on various occasions in visual culture and visual arts throughout history. In chapter 2 it is seen that until modern art, the use of text in visual arts was limited to a few special purposes such as mythological, religious, and descriptive writing. In chapter 3, after the mid-nineteenth century, the text use in visual arts had to do with artists' individual standpoints, ideas, and chosen styles.

During the latter part of the 19th century Arts and Crafts Movement utilized text in a variety of fonts and presented it on papers, books, and textile crafts. On the other hand, the contents of the texts were mostly epic poetry that typically referred to other literary works.

In Europe and America, the Art Nouveau movement gained popularity between 1895 and 1905. The text use in Art Nouveau was for informative purposes for poster designs and the form was playful as artists arranged the sizes of the letters differently from one another and used different fonts.

Cubism is credited as being the first art movement to use text as a ready-made on canvas. Text is applied to the painting's surface with a crumpled ticket or a newspaper article. They made it possible for the observer to understand the painting's tangible presence as an object by using linguistic clues. The deconstruction of meaning was made possible by the fragmentation of writings that were half-torn or indecipherable. Another significant contribution of Cubism, in addition to text fragmentation and text as ready-made, was the collage aesthetics that Dadaists used excessively.

Dadaist language experiments attacked the idea of absolute reality and revealed the arbitrary link between words and their meanings. Since the Ancient Greeks, objective and absolute truth has been seen as a distinguishing characteristic of Western civilization. Dadaists challenged this idea by illustrating the arbitrary nature of words and their meanings. Dada used anti-rational, haphazard, whimsical, arbitrary, and deconstructive textual forms that were taken from books, journals, posters, and newspapers, among other sources. Dadaists contributed a theatrical element and improvisation to visual arts by using handwritten poetry and reciting poems in unique ways. Alongside the Dadaist rejection of art, language was used in a destructive and post-structuralist manner.

In turn, the majority of the artwork produced by surrealists included handwritten poems, paintings, and experiments with automatism. Dadaist and Surrealist text users pursued different techniques and goals: some employed text to make allusions to popular culture, others to generate wordplays, others to draw links between psychology, philosophy, and linguistics, and others to express political criticism. Consequently, the artworks began asking to be read. Reading the artworks required the audience to analyze the interpretations and meanings they offered. Another sign of the shift to conceptual art was the employment of texts of this kind and the integration of philosophy and linguistics into the visual arts.

Cynically, Marcel Duchamp questioned language in relation to his use of text. Duchamp asserts that language is one of humankind's illusions. Marcel Duchamp used text in his works in a variety of ways, including handwriting on items or already painted canvases and employing cardboard and advertising layout and typography. Duchamp employed wordplays, and literary devices including puns, abridgments, and metaphors with a sarcastic tone throughout the texts.

Following World War II, there was a golden age of popular culture consumption. Pop art created paintings and sculptures of mass culture objects and media stars, aiming to blur the boundaries between high art and low culture. While some artists used text in order to convey this purpose and some dealt with words as transparent signs. Language served as an issue of existence in a capitalist culture where people were pushed by consumerism and reality was becoming more and more superficial which in return mirrored by Pop Art.

In 1960s, Conceptual artists began using materials such as papers, newspapers, walls, gallery walls, scores, copies of previously published text, handwriting, typewriting, photographs, and objects as formats. On the other hand, the artists' ideas determined how their substance was presented. The text was employed as both an artistic medium and an isolated form of expression in conceptual artworks. The creation of Fluxus artworks, which are conceptual in character, began slightly earlier than conceptual artworks and corresponded with them for a while. Fluxus could thus be seen as a proto-conceptual movement.

One of the major contributors of intellectual precursors of Fluxus, John Cage used text in an interdisciplinary manner by combining musical performance with reading and using

fragmented words and letters within a ready-made object and with concrete poetry where not only the literary but the visual aspect of the poem is also important.

Chapter 4 shows that the use of text in the 20th century by Dadaism, Surrealism, Marcel Duchamp's ready-made, and John Cage's experimental artworks is significant to the powerful use of text in Fluxus. By dismantling words, these most influential Fluxus precursors gave up on communication codes. They broke away from the constraints of conventional language to express their ideas and artistic viewpoints, experiment, and create an experience. It could be claimed that Fluxus initiated the significant change in 1960s visual arts toward language as a medium because its members deeply employed text, more than previous art movements. It has been seen that the majority of Fluxus scores and artworks employed language with ambiguous meanings, poetic forms, and occasionally even deconstructed language while still employing words in their most literal sense. Thus, Fluxus attempted to break the conventional links between "text" and "object". Fluxus also took the translation of visual language into verbal language in the context of art/life separation.

Furthermore, although Fluxus artists did write poetry and employ written language, they did not classify their work under any particular discipline; rather, they attempted to find an unoccupied area that they referred to as "fantasy" or "intermedia" by searching the spaces between disciplines. They once more employed language to achieve and proclaim their point of view, but they did so without classifying their use of text. Thus, it may be said that Fluxus artists sometimes employ text as a means of achieving artistic independence from classification and even from language itself.

Most Fluxus scores use straightforward language that gives instructions for an event, but some actions they suggest are highly abstract and impractical. As a result, the language is poetic, speaking to the audience's imagination, and is open to interpretations. Some scores are recognized as groundbreaking pieces of computational poetry that combine chance and technological advances. Additionally, some Fluxus texts were sloganized rather than written, like a political proverb preserved in collective memory.

I conducted a detailed investigation of the form, content, and language use and display of three works by five Fluxus artists each while using literary analysis techniques in chapter 5. I found out that George Maciunas used text excessively with his manifestoes, art historical

charts, name cards, scores, and Fluxkits and sometimes used text as a playscript for an event, sometimes as graphic design, sometimes as a map to construct a work, and sometimes to reference other Fluxus artists' scores using intertextuality. His use of language was mostly direct and concrete and always demonstrated Fluxus' core values and goals.

Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit* book is analyzed. *Grapefruit* is Ono's collection of Fluxus scores making ordinary reality special, which invites the reader to perform an event through the use of text, falling into the category of intermedia like many Fluxus works. Deep reflection is encouraged by Yoko Ono's scores, yet she does so with an intuitive understanding of lightness rather than analytical reasoning. The content of her text is poetic, utilizing intertextuality, and literary and poetic devices, and could be read in parallel with many theories such as deep ecology, the term flaneur, ecological art, performance art, intermedia, literature, Buddhism, and through the lens of linguistics.

Robert Filliou plays with binaries like life/death, bad/good, static/dynamic, made/not made, artist/viewer, and visual/textual. He used text in poetic forms, concrete forms, handwriting, and typewriting for two-dimensional artworks. He created communicative game cards and used text on ready-made. He brainstormed ideas for notions of the self, others, and communication as well as using text as an indicator for action and ontological thinking of creation itself. He combined photography, design, text, and canvases. He borrowed from Eastern philosophies in addition to poetry and literature to establish his unique theories regarding the significance of art through the use of puns, metaphors, and question forms. Since he dealt with binaries by disassembling them into their constituent parts and then reconstructing them into something new, his works is dealing with language, communication, art philosophy, and deconstruction.

Text was employed by Mieko Shiomi in her ready-made artworks as a map, a score, and a tool in a score. She occasionally used typewriters on other media, occasionally wrote the scores by hand, and occasionally allowed other artists to use her phrases to create a graphic design. She wrote global poems, action poems, and object poems using both explicit and figurative instructions. Distinct from other Fluxus scores, Shiomi's scores invited participants to use text while performing the event. Her entire body of work invites reading, contemplation, collaboration, and action.

Dick Higgins composed poetry, made charts, experimented with language and meaning, and incorporated text into his visual works in addition to founding Something Else Press, which has published numerous books and written works of art. Among his analyzed works are texts in a score format, with concrete language that invites experience and the creation of meaning. Higgins was inspired by everyday life, literature, Zen Buddhism, and John Cage. His use of text in his artworks was colorful, funny, poetic, and thought-provoking. Higgins also succeeded the purification of emotions and the destruction of the symbolic language of society solely by creating a one-word score: *Scream!*

Performativity in Fluxus is typically attributed to text on event scores because of its refusal to fit into strict artistic categories and utilization of intermedia. In order to achieve the play, spontaneity, and immediacy that was demonstrated during the event, text was an extremely successful instrument. Fluxus artists use language in various forms and deconstructively, and poetically, use it as instructions for the realization of performance, and use language as a tool to liberate from the logical and linear structure of language in order to be free from artistic categorizations. One of the goals of Fluxus was to expand the human experience with ontological knowledge and Fluxus artists used text in their works as instructions for the audience to realize an event to achieve this task. By allowing the performer's imagination to run free, Fluxus celebrates the diversity of thought and experience through the endless possibilities of language.

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