KEN FRIEDMAN

STENDHAL | GALLERY

Ken Friedman
99 Events

1956 – 2009

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KEN FRIEDMAN: EVENT, IDEA AND INQUIRY

Carolyn Barnes

Chance and opportunity led Ken Friedman to become an artist. Though he had no formal art training, he accepted the designation of "artist" as a young man in 1966 when the Fluxus impresario George Maciunas suggested that the creative activities he had pursued since childhood could be categorized as art. Friedman's youthful experiments with objects and situations reflected a key impulse in twentieth century vanguard art, the attempt to reduce art to ideas and gestures. Material form often came into play here, but for radical artists such as those in Fluxus circles, the critical ideas driving an image, object, text, or activity were increasingly the most important element of an artwork.

Ideas inspired Friedman before he embraced art practice in any conscious way and original, interdisciplinary thinking has been the consistent thread in his activities and occupations ever since, their variety challenging the sense of art as a fixed and singular vocation. He has regularly returned to the simple, text-based form of the event score as an economical way to capture ideas and send them out into the world in a form that others can enact without this affecting the underlying premise. Indeed, this exhibition at Stendhal Gallery continues a series of exhibitions of his event scores that began in 1973 with an exhibition at the University of California at Davis. That exhibition built on the legacy of Fluxus books and multiples as an alternative means of disseminating art ideas and provided Friedman with a model for a simple touring exhibit. Between 1973 and 1983, Friedman initiated around thirty exhibitions by photocopying his event scores on standard sheets of letter paper and posting the set of scores to different venues for exhibition.[1]

The Event Score

The 'event score' or 'word piece' emerged in New York in the late 1950s as one of several new art practices developed to test the limits of art and renegotiate the nature of audience engagement. George Brecht conceived the term 'event' in 1959 to refer to simple acts and situations realized in the world by artists or others; a practice that other future Fluxus artists also explored in their work, notably Dick Higgins, Yoko Ono, Nam June Paik, La Monte Young and Ben Vautier. The event score was a short, descriptive text outlining an action or situation. The new musical notation of composer John Cage inspired the idea of 'scoring' interventions in everyday life, as did his classes in experimental composition at the New School for Social Research in New York. Cage's practice questioned the parameters of music, musical performance, and audience reception by focusing on the principles of sound and silence. His works often drew attention to the richness of ambient auditory sensation, creating a need for new approaches to

musical notation. In his composition classes at the New School between 1957 and 1959, he encouraged participants—most of whom were artists—to conceive and take part in diverse performance activities.

Both the event score and Fluxus occupy an important place in the genealogy of twentieth century art and anti-art, building on the efforts of the historical avant-garde to contest modernist ideals of artistic independence and purity. In merging text-based instructions with the deferred performance of simple acts, the event score rejected established art values of craftsmanship, individual skill and talent, single authorship and self-expression. From the early 1960s, a fluid network of Fluxus artists with backgrounds ranging across new music, concrete poetry, and visual art to dance and experimental theatre involved themselves in scripting such activities. Some used the event score to escape the institutional context of art to embed the work of art in the 'everydayness' of non-art situations and locations. Some aimed to produce a more democratic, participatory form of art. Some sought to elevate immediate engagement with art over the aesthetic and commodity value of the enduring art object. Others endeavored to eliminate the barriers between established art forms to arrive at innovative, interdisciplinary practices. Beyond the shared proposition of some repeatable action or situation and a deadpan prose style, the form of the event score freed artists to pursue almost infinite paths of investigation.

Despite the reductive form and structure of their scores, this scope is evident in the work of those who pioneered the form, George Brecht, Yoko Ono and La Monte Young:

Composition 1960 #10

To Bob Morris

Draw a straight line
And follow it.

October 1960
La Monte Young

WORD EVENT

- *Exit*

Spring 1961
George Brecht

VOICE PIECE FOR SOPRANO

To Simone Morris

Scream.

1. against the wind
2. against the wall
3. against the sky

y.o. 1961 autumn
Yoko Ono[2]

These three works also demonstrate what Liz Kotz describes as the categorical ambiguity of the event score. Individual 'event' scores, she argues, can be variously attributed to the fields of music, visual art, poetry, or performance.[3] Kotz contends that the 'real' art resides in the realization of the action or situation, not in the text itself, although she accepts that Brecht and Ono, for example, were often more interested in the conceptual impact of the things they proposed, achieved through

the process of reading rather than doing. Some event scores are certainly scripts for intervention in everyday life, prompting the reader to become an active producer. Other scores encourage a psychological response, blurring the boundaries of inner and outer, something seen by comparing La Monte Young's text with Yoko Ono's.

Ken Friedman and the Event Score

Since 1966, Friedman has produced many short, text-based propositions in addition to object-based works, activities in organizing Fluxus projects, and scholarly work in the fields of art history, sociology of art, design, and organization. Like Fluxus practices in general, Friedman's event scores disrupt established ideas of artistic production and reception, seeking to extend the experiential dimension of art. Friedman's scores are more typically scripts for producing artifacts and situations or for reflecting on them than for performances. Since Friedman was thrown into art practice before he had a developed understanding of the cultural and social frameworks of the art world, his event scores build on his most formative intellectual experiences.

The prodigious nature of Friedman's involvement with Fluxus is central to the discussion of his work. It is well known that Friedman became part of Fluxus as a 16-year-old.[4] As a student at Shimer College in Mt Carroll, Illinois, he produced programs for the college radio station. Searching for program material, Friedman followed up an advertisement for Dick Higgins's Something Else Press in the East Village Other, a New York underground newspaper founded by breakaway writers from the already independent *Village Voice*. Friedman began to correspond with Dick Higgins at the press, developing radio programs around press publications by various artists working in the Fluxus ambit, including Robert Filliou, Al Hansen, Dick Higgins, Ray Johnson, Alison Knowles, Nam June Paik, Daniel Spoerri, and Emmett Williams. Friedman used the books as the basis for radio shows. He also began corresponding with Higgins, beginning what would become a lifelong friendship. Higgins invited Friedman to stay at his home when Friedman visited New York in 1966. During his stay, Friedman reproduced one of the objects he had been making.[5] It was a box with the words 'open me' written on the outside and 'shut me quick' inscribed inside, unconsciously inhabiting the territory of the Duchampian readymade with its emphasis on the verbal/visual conundrum. Higgins arranged for Friedman to take the box to George Maciunas, an artist, architect, and graphic designer, who in 1962 gave the name Fluxus to a community of experimental artists working in the United States, Europe, and Japan. From 1962 until his death in 1978, Maciunas was the main coordinator, promoter, and supporter of Fluxus activities.[6] He organized exhibitions, performance events, concerts, and festivals, designed, and published a diverse range of publications by the group, arranging for the production of small, multiple art objects by Fluxus artists. Maciunas's response to talking with Friedman about the things he did was to invite Friedman to join Fluxus. Maciunas also issued the box as a Fluxus multiple in autumn 1966 under the title *Open and Shut Case*.[7]

Although Fluxus generated a significant level of art activity, its network of visual artists, musicians, performers, and writers operated to the side of the mainstream cultural sphere, developing alternative works for independent distribution channels. Moreover, many members of the Fluxus community were interested in the sphere of the everyday, frowning on the established art world and its strict disciplinary boundaries.

They supported an open concept of artistry, making it plausible for Friedman to operate as an artist while he continued his studies, now at San Francisco State University. Nevertheless, receiving the designation 'artist' from Higgins and Maciunas validated his relationship to the things he did. Maciunas proposed that Friedman notate his ideas for objects and activities so that others could engage with them, explaining the nature of the event score.[8] Friedman began conceiving new scores, using a form that presented itself as an ideal medium for exploring the vast expanse of possibility lying between the human mind and the world. He also scripted scores for the earlier actions he had undertaken. *Open and Shut Case*, for example, readily translated into a set of simple written instructions for others to carry out, retaining the conceptual impact of the actual object even though a measure of productive control was removed from the artist. Friedman's project of knocking on doors in his college dormitory to present the instruction card that became the score to what would become *Mandatory Happening* (1966), a card bearing the words, 'You will decide to read this score or not to read it. When you have made your decision, the happening is over.'

A work such as *Mandatory Happening* challenged the existing state of art by emerging from a temporary situation in time and space. The event scores developed from activities Friedman carried out before meeting Higgins and Maciunas reflect the productive tension in the Fluxus event score between critical engagement with the world and the reduction of art to idea. For example, *Fast Food Event* (1964) transforms a mundane daily activity into an intervention that reflects on American cultural reality and the routines of everyday experience in mass industrial society:

Fast Food Event

Go into a fast food restaurant.

Order one example
of every item on the menu.

Line everything up
in a row on the table.

Eat the items one at a time,
starting at one end of the row
and moving systematically
from each to the next.

Finish each item before
moving on to the next.

Eat rapidly and methodically
until all the food is finished.

Eat as fast as possible
without eating too fast.

Eat neatly.

Do not make a mess.

1964

Another early Friedman event score shows recognition of fundamental problems in art, addressing the issue of aesthetic competence. *The Judgment of Paris* (1964) instructs the reader to pin up three images of choice, selected from popular sources or art sources, construct a shelf beneath them and place a golden apple under the preferred image. This contemporary re-enactment of a mythic story of the judgment of taste tackles the issue of aesthetic categories and hierarchies, while serving to erode the division between amateur and expert taste in this respect. *The Judgment of Paris* thus indicates something of the order of

intellectual resources Friedman brought to the proposition of scripting actions and situations. By the age of sixteen, he already had a developed interest in political and religious processes and the scientific enlightenment as a result of his wide reading and life experiences, enabling him to make a rapid transition into active art practice.

An Interdisciplinary Upbringing

Friedman was born in 1949 in New London, Connecticut, one of the first towns settled in the British North American colonies. The American War of Independence was still an important presence in Friedman's childhood town, and Friedman passed by the mill of Governor John Winthrop the Younger on an almost-daily basis. Friedman grew up close to the schoolhouse where American Revolutionary patriot Nathan Hale taught, and he felt a personal connection to the history of colonial America. New London was also a whaling port, which exposed him to the influence of East Asian cultures. For a period of his childhood, Friedman made weekly visits to the Yale University Art Museum in New Haven, its collections of classical art, New England antiques, and some modern works consolidating his interest in the unfolding of history. The museum also hosted a temporary exhibition of Leonardo Da Vinci's engineering drawings and modern reconstructions of Leonardo's inventions. These inspired Friedman's interest in making experimental objects and questioning how things worked. Before George Maciunas and Dick Higgins showed Friedman the possibility of active involvement in art, he had intended to become a Unitarian minister, a plan he kept until the early 1970s. Since childhood he had read about the history of religious reformation, inspired by accounts of groups and individuals willing to undertake great risks to seek a truth of their own, opposing established religion in the process. This extended to an interest in the customs of America's various groups of 'plain people', who worshiped simply and adopted basic ways of living counter to developments in the modern world, while demonstrating a capacity for invention and what we now describe as sustainability.

Some of Friedman's early events address interests he held in common with John Cage and the artists of the Fluxus network, notably Zen Buddhism, sound and silence. These references are consistent with Friedman's existing interests in history, science, and spirituality, interests that continued to drive his ideas for producing objects and situations after he joined Fluxus. For example, *Edison's Lighthouse* (1965) invites the reader to place candles between two mirrors and note the effects produced by changing the number and location of candles. The score echoes Friedman's experiments with light and reflection in his room at Shimer College; activities inspired by a scene in the popular film *Young Thomas Edison* (1940), which shows the inventor using mirrors and lanterns to enable a surgeon to perform an emergency operation. *Scrub Piece* (1956) recalls the time in 1956 when he went to the Nathan Hale Monument in New London to give it a thorough cleaning.[9] Other early Friedman events have a clear connection to Friedman's religious interests. *Light Table* (1965) calls a community of readers to place white candles on a wooden table and light them. Friedman sees this score as merging his twin interests in the scientific investigation of light and the role of light in architectural space in shaping religious experience.

The Validation of an Art Context

In their collective activities, Fluxus artists saw that the codes and disciplines of established art closed artists and audiences to possibility and to the world. They offered artistic experimentation as an alternative pathway to new ideas and understanding, creating an intense, interdisciplinary setting for the exploration of radical art practices. They were interested in ways of thinking that they perceived as challenging the modern Western aspiration for an ordered, rational, and predictable world. These included Eastern wisdom traditions and critical writings in philosophy, psychology, and the social sciences. For Friedman, encountering artists with diverse intellectual interests and approaches to art that dismantled established cultural concepts both validated and extended his interest in the history of paradigms and knowledge systems. Friedman has written that when Dick Higgins and George Maciunas introduced him to the proposition of contemporary art practice, to the idea of the event score, and to the value of working across and between media, it provided him not only with 'a reasonable frame within which to conceive and carry out' future projects, but also a basis for understanding the kinds of activities he had done for most of his life.[10] Aside from reading, the majority of Friedman's youthful activities focused on conceiving, doing, and making. As an example, he describes his childhood practice of using sturdy, simple tables—from the school his parents ran on the first floor of the family home—to make towers and multi-level cities in the evenings and at weekends.[11] This activity is recorded in the event score *Table Stack* (1956). Tables also feature in various other scores by Friedman, as do other useful objects such as bottles, bowls, glasses, and hand tools. In fact, from the later 1960s, Friedman's event scores reveal an increasing interest in design-like activities or they describe actions and situations involving everyday manufactured objects, advancing a sense of design as it constitutes the world.

On one level, such event scores dissolve the productive divisions between artist and audience, advancing what has been referred to since the 1960s as a 'do-it-yourself' aesthetic. Yet they also highlight processes of inventing, making, and visualizing, which are intrinsic to design. Two notable events scores in this respect are *Paper Architecture* (1968) and *Precinct* (1991):

Paper Architecture

Hang a large sheet or several large sheets of paper on the walls of a room.

Inscribe the sheets with full-scale architectural features, such as doors, windows, or stairs, or with objects such as furniture, lamps, books, etc.

Use these drawings to imagine, create, or map an environment.

The drawings may create or map new features in an existing environment.

They may mirror, double or reconstruct existing features in situ or elsewhere.

To create relatively permanent features with the drawings, apply them directly to a wall.

1968

Precinct

Construct a rough slab, cube, or table of natural stone or wood.

Invite people to place hand-made models or objects made of wood or clay on the table.

25 August 1991
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Paper Architecture points to the relationship between conception and visualization in design, specifically addressing the role of drawing in the production of architectural space that Henri Lefebvre highlighted. In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre, having established the political nature of space, argues that the 'reduction of three-dimensional realities to two', through 'any kind of graphic representation or projection' is part of a distancing processes whereby the tangible qualities of actual space are rendered abstract and homogenous, priming space for economic and political exploitation.[12] Although there is no direct link between Friedman's two event scores and Lefebvre's text, following on from *Paper Architecture*, *Precinct* appears to re-establish the importance of the tactile in the production and experience of things, echoing Lefebvre's opposition to the emphasis on the visual in Western society and its influence in reducing things to image, thus making them 'passive', with no social existence outside their appearance.[13]

A Life In and Outside Art

Friedman's intellectual life since 1966 has taken a winding path between social and cultural fields, reflecting the idea of disciplinary hybridity modeled in Fluxus art. Taking Dick Higgins's early advice not to attempt to make a living from art, Friedman gained formal qualifications in psychology, social science, and education.[14] Although not averse to Higgins's and Maciunas's ideas of social regeneration through culture, Friedman's academic studies reveal a wish to be equipped to make a tangible contribution to society and to better understand its workings. In 1976, Friedman earned a doctorate in leadership and human behavior for a thesis on the North American art world as a social entity, reflecting vanguard artists' concern for the institutional conditions that have framed art since Romanticism while exploring them from a sociological perspective. Friedman's sociological interest in art expanded into a curiosity about the economic structures and organizational dynamics of post-war art worlds, leading to academic posts in organization, leadership, and strategic design at the Norwegian School of Management in Oslo, and the Danish Design School in Copenhagen. Design, of course, had a central part to play in the dissemination of Fluxus production through the influence of George Maciunas. Owen Smith explains that although individual Fluxus artists supplied the ideas, 'it was Maciunas who designed and produced the array of [Fluxus] objects, publications, and multiples.'[15] Fluxus reliance on text as a medium saw various artists, including Friedman, produce a range of printed material that experimented with vernacular forms of graphic design, though often from a distinctly anti-design perspective. Friedman's role as manager of Something Else Press (1971) and director of Fluxus West in California (1966-1975) likewise focused his attention on the mediating function of design.

Given the enduring nature of the idea of artistry as an inner force dedicated to self-expression, the reorientation of

Friedman's career towards organization and design may seem curious. Yet there are important intellectual underpinnings for the transition, and from the perspective of the present it appears a prescient shift. Certainly, Fluxus art, with its stress on programmatic experimentalism and a strategic approach to the development and use of art works, had a significant role to play in attacking modernist mythologies of the artist. Today, however, the contiguity of art and design is widely recognized. It is now understood that both works of art and design have inherent socio-symbolic value, in addition to functional uses in the case of design. Human beings encode art works and design works with meaning at the stages of production and distribution *and* human beings decode them at the point of reception and ongoing use, often against the intended purposes of the artists and designers who create them. The text-based form of the event score suggests this process.[16] Friedman addresses the contiguous condition of all human-made objects in the event score *Flow System* (1972), which invites 'anyone' to send 'an object or a work of any kind' to an exhibition, where 'everything received is displayed' and anyone attending 'may take away an object or work.'

For Friedman, design, especially in its connection to the corporate sphere, is constitutive of the world. As such, it is an important site for positive, critical intervention. Critical art practices such as the event score reflect a lineage of oppositional art tracing back the nineteenth century, when radical artists first challenged the attributes of emergent modern societies—capitalism, materialism and rationalism—in the aim of protecting values of independence and individuality. Eve Chiapello argues that for nearly two hundred years artists' aspirations for authenticity and freedom of expression forged an 'intuitive opposition … between art worlds and business worlds, between profit imperatives and those of artistic creation.'[17] She notes, however, that since the 1980s, areas of business have increasingly looked to art for alternatives to Fordist models of management in the belief that this will enhance the creativity of organizations, and make them better able to offer products and services that are singular and unique. The business world also has an increasing need for the skills of artists and designers, especially their capacity for creative autonomy, given the rising economic importance of entertainment, fashion, and information industries, which constantly update their offerings and require inventive ways to promote them.[18]

Everywhere today, the heterogeneity explored in the new art forms developed by twentieth century vanguard artists is becoming a cultural and social norm, often as a result of economic influences. Traditional distinctions between art, craft, and design, for example, are breaking down to be replaced by the nomenclature and discourse of the creative industries.[19] In a more positive sense, the psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi argues that 'creativity is a process that can be observed only at the intersection where individuals, domains, and fields intersect'.[20] In many government and university circles, interdisciplinarity is seen as having better potential to tackle the contemporary world's increasingly complex problems than knowledge and expertise developed within single fields.[21] Encountering the intense, mixed art scene of Fluxus in the 1960s gave Ken Friedman an insight into the creative potential of integrating divergent ideas and practices. His activities since the 1970s have not only ranged across varied fields, many have been developed from divergent intellectual perspectives, combining seemingly unrelated ideas and

practices like art history and economics or organizational theory and military history. Finding out about the event score afforded Friedman a pliant vehicle to explore the flow of ideas that fills a human mind, unencumbered by the demand to conform to some transcendent purpose or rationale. Although his main involvement is now in design and organization, he continues to value the event score as an alternative way of exploring experiences and situations and for its potential to forge intuitive connections with the mind of the reader.

[1] Following the 1973 exhibition at the University of California, Davis, these included exhibitions at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and Galeria Akumulatory, Poznan (1974), Fiatal Muveszek Klubja, Budapest, Mercato del Sale, Milano, Alberta College of Art, Calgary, New Reform Gallery, Aalst, Gallery St Petri, Lund (1975), The Everson Museum, Syracuse (1978), P.S.1, New York (1980), Washington Project for the Arts, Washington, DC, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston (1982), Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson (1983).

[2] Cited in Liz Kotz, 'Post-Cagean Aesthetics and the "Event" Score', *October 95*, Winter 2001, pp. 55-56.

[3] Liz Kotz, 'Post-Cagean Aesthetics and the "Event" Score', *October 95*, Winter 2001, p. 57.

[4] See Peter Frank, *Ken Friedman: The Fluxus years*, Helsinki, Oy Wärtsilä Ab Arabia, 1987, pp. 2-5.

[5] Ken Friedman, 'Looking Back', in Peter Frank (ed.) *Events*, New York, Jaap Rietman, 1985, p. 230.

[6] See Ken Friedman with James Lewes, 'Fluxus: Global community, human dimensions' in *Visible Language*, vol. 26, no.1/2, 1993, pp. 154-179.

[7] Ken Friedman, *52 Events*, Show and Tell Editions, Edinburgh, 2002, unpaginated.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., p 118.

[10] Ibid., p. 111.

[11] Ibid., p. 111.

[12] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1974), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1991, pp. 285-291.

[13] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1974), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1991, p. 286.

[14] Ken Friedman, *52 Events*, Show and Tell Editions, Edinburgh, 2002, p. 115.

[15] Owen F. Smith, 'Fluxus: A brief history and other fictions', in Elizabeth Armstrong and Joan Rothfuss, *In the Spirit of Fluxus*, Minneapolis, Walker Art Centre, 1993, p. 30.

[16] See, for example, Donald Norman, *The Design of Everyday Things*, New York, Doubleday, 1990; Mika Pantzar, 'Consumption as Work, Play, and Art: representation of the consumer in future scenarios', *Design Issues*, vol. 16, no. 3, Autumn 2000, pp. 13 – 18; Virginia Postrel, *The Substance of Style: how the rise of aesthetic value is remarking commerce, culture, and consciousness*, New York, Harper Collins, 2003; Pieter Desmet and Paul Hekkert, 'Framework of product experience', *International Journal of Design*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2007, pp. 57-66.

[17] See Eve Chiapello, 'Evolution and Co-optation: The "Artist Critique" of Management and Capitalism', *Third Text*, vol. 18, issue 6, 2004, p. 585.

[18] See Eve Chiapello, 'Evolution and Co-optation: The 'Artist Critique' of Management and Capitalism', *Third Text*, vol. 18, issue 6, 2004, p. 592.

[19] See Toby Miller, 'From Creative to Cultural industries', *Cultural Studies*, vol. 23, no. 1, 2009, p. 94.

[20] Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, 'Implications of a Systems Perspective for the Study of Creativity', in Robert J. Sternberg (ed.), *Handbook of Creativity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 314.

[21] Tom Horlick-Jones and Jonathan Sime, 'Living on the border: knowledge, risk and transdisciplinarity', *Futures 36*, 2004, pp. 441–456.

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Scrub Piece

Go to a public monument
on the first day of spring.

Clean it thoroughly.

No announcement is necessary.

1956

Realized at the Nathan Hale Monument in New London, Connecticut on March 20, 1956, this was my first event. I did not think of it as an artwork until I came into Fluxus: it was simply something I did. It was an event in the strictest sense of the word. While I engaged in these kinds of events throughout much of my life, it was not until I began working in the context of Fluxus that I thought of events in the sense that I use the term today. I simply built things, realized ideas, or made models of things that interested me. Many of them were acts or works that I repeated, much as I did after meeting the other Fluxus people. When George Maciunas explained the event tradition to me, it gave a theoretical structure to a practice that had been central to my experience. I may have done these kinds of things earlier, but this is the first event for which I was able to find notes when George brought me into Fluxus.

The Light Bulb

Create and perform an improvisational drama.

Present the drama as a radio or television program in which there is a symbolic or physical relationship between the sponsor and the featured characters.

1956

This event was first realized in 1956 in Mystic and Stonington, Connecticut. Titled *The Light Bulb Show*, I presented it every week in the form of an imaginary radio program sponsored by General Electric. The star of the show was a light bulb.

In 1965 and 1966, I included versions of *The Light Bulb Show* as segments in my programs on Radio WRSB in Mt Carroll, Illinois.

Table Stack

Build a stack of tables.

Each table should stand directly above and on top of the next table below.

1956

I was born in New London, Connecticut, in 1949. My family lived in a huge house with three stories and a basement. A sea captain built the house when he retired from sailing. Much of the house was built in rare hardwoods such as mahogany. My mother told me that the captain had used the wood as ballast on his return voyages from far places. My father and mother had a school on the first floor. We lived on the second floor. The house was so big that we didn't use the third floor.

My sister and I were free to play with the equipment and toys in the school in the evenings and on weekends. The school was well equipped with blocks and toys. The furniture fascinated me. There were four large, square, sturdy tables with thick, strong legs. It was possible to stack several on top of one another to make a tower three or four high or to build models of multi-level cities. I started building table stacks then, and I've been doing it ever since.

In recent years, I've made the *Table Stack* several times. On some occasions, I've built it with different kinds of tables rather than stacking copies of the same table. Once or twice, I've built several stacks next to each other.

When I first did the kinds of things that are now termed events or installations, I didn't think of them as art. These events were an activity, events in the strictest sense of the word. They were simply something I did. I had no explanation for them and I didn't offer one. It wasn't until I began to work in the context of Fluxus that I labeled these projects as events. When Dick Higgins and George Maciunas introduced me to what is now termed intermedia, I accepted art as a reasonable frame within which to conceive and carry out my projects.

I have been doing these kinds of events throughout most of my life. I've been at it for more than five decades now, starting with my first events in 1956. I've continued to undertake these projects in art, architecture, design, and music along with whatever else I was doing.

It was when I began working in the context of Fluxus that I first thought of events in the sense that I use the term today. Until then, I simply built things, realized ideas, or made models of things that interested me. Many of them were acts or works that I repeated, much as I did after meeting the other Fluxus people. When George Maciunas explained the event tradition to me, it gave a kind of theoretical organization to a practice that was already central to my experience.

Untitled Card Event

Send a postcard to
someone every day.

Each card in the sequence
should transmit one word or letter.

The series of cards should
spell out a word or a message.

1957

The first time I realized this event, my family was taking a summer vacation trip between the Catskill Mountains of New York and New London, Connecticut. I purchased cards along the way and mailed them to myself.

To perform the event, one should gather the cards and read the message aloud. George Maciunas included this work in the unpublished collection of my event scores that he announced and planned.

It recently occurred to me that this piece and the George Brecht *Spell Your Name Kit* are related to Maciunas's 1972 *Spell Your Name with Objects* boxes and the *Valoche* kits.

Card Trace

Mail a series of cards during a journey or sequence of activities.

The assembled set of cards becomes a map or chart of the passage through time or space.

1958

The first *Card Trace* sequence planned as a map was realized during a trip my family made to California in the summer of 1958. It became a map of the journey from New London, Connecticut, to Long Beach, California.

I realized the first time series in 1959 with postcards from the Peabody Museum of Natural History at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. For this sequence, I used post cards of dinosaurs.

Card Trace was planned for a Fluxus multiple using sets of commercially printed cards. Each set was to describe a different 'trace' in 1968. It would have been a sequel in two-dimensional form to the three-dimensional *Just For You* Fluxkit. *Card Trace* was never produced.

Green Street

Acquire a Japanese folding scroll.

Keep it in a blank state.

After a minimum of ten years,
or on the death of the performer,
inscribe the name of the performer,
the date of acquisition and the date
at the time of inscription.

The performance continues until
the scroll is filled with inscriptions.

1959

The scroll for this event came from a little Japanese shop on Green Street in New London, Connecticut, where I first bought such Japanese artifacts as ink, scrolls, and brushes. I acquired the scroll in 1959. The performance using the original scroll is still in progress in the sense that I have not yet written my name in the scroll.

Nevertheless, I never found anyone willing to take responsibility for accepting the scroll and carrying the piece forward. The scroll itself is probably at the Alternative Traditions in Contemporary Art collection at University of Iowa.

In the 1960s and 1970s, I wondered what would happen if one gave away a book or scroll to pass from person to person in an ongoing performance. I experimented with the idea by circulating blank books with a request that people contribute to them and pass them on.

Most iterations of the experiment involved blank books, bound books with blank, white pages. On one or two occasions, I used scrolls. On others, I used old journals, account books, or diaries that I managed to acquire at a discount.

Each book contained a request inside the front cover asking the person who receives the book to execute an artwork or drawing in the book, then give it or mail it to another friend. I requested the person who completed the book to return it to me. Between 1968 and 1974, I mailed or gave away over one hundred books. The collection in Iowa contains examples of the blank books I used for the drawing project or other projects. None of the books sent out for the drawing project ever returned.

Over the years, I wondered why no completed books ever returned. Many issues probably come into play. While time, duration, and commitment are the key philosophical notions for a project such as this, choice and voluntary participation in social networks may be why no books returned.

Most of the blank books went to people in the Fluxus network or the mail art network. The book contained the invitation to participate. I did not ask whether people would agree to take part. In effect, this approach tested the possibility of communication and commitment using open-ended, one-way communication in a social network. This is an obvious problem when commitment in social networks requires voluntary assent along with communication among participants.

In 1967, Stanley Milgram conducted a famous experiment asking sixty people in Omaha, Nebraska to attempt to deliver packages to people they did not know by sending packages to people who would be likely to know someone who could move the package closer to its destination. This gave rise to the famous notion of "six degrees of separation", the idea that there are only six degrees of separation between anyone on the planet and anyone else. As important as the experiment was, it has often been misunderstood. Only a few of the packages reached their destination, and replications of the experiment have had poor or inconclusive results.

Recently, Duncan Watts replicated the Milgram experiment by attempting to get email messages from volunteers to individuals whom they did not know by sending messages through chains of intermediaries. While requests to 61,168 volunteers led to 24,000 started chains, a scant 384 reached their target.

While I was studying psychology and social science at the time I mailed my first books, I wasn't attempting to replicate Milgram's work. I was exploring something different and more philosophical. If I were to describe the project in terms of network issues, Albert O. Hirschman's work would be more relevant. Hirschman had a knack for looking at problems from unusual perspectives, bringing social insight and economic theory to bear on a wide range of issues. His work might yield insight into why no books ever came back to me.

Robust networks are stable, hardy institutions. Nevertheless, networks require a continual energy inputs and development to remain robust. The wealth and poverty of networks means that the art networks I used for this project were far more fragile than I realized. The fact that these networks were never robust in any genuine sense should have enabled me to predict the results. The networks into which I sent the blank books were art world networks. They were a sub-set of the larger world of economic and social actors rather than the kind of ideal community that we sometimes assume the art world to be. Robert Filliou described the art world as an "eternal network", but he was wrong. The art world is not a network, but a social ecology. One defining feature of the social ecology is that the seeming connections that appear to constitute a network do not form a genuine network because they offer no reasonably predictable mechanisms for linkage or the flow of energy.

This has given me much cause for thought over the years. When Norrie Neumark and Annemarie Chandler invited me to write a chapter for their 2005 book *At A Distance: Precursors to Internet Art and Activism* art from MIT Press, I wrote a chapter on "The Wealth and Poverty of Networks". Filliou's notion of the eternal network was

something between a metaphor and a description of what Filliou believed to be an emerging social reality. Filliou intended it as a genuine description, but the fact is that the eternal network functioned primarily on a metaphorical level. In one sense, this is not a problem. Filliou developed his concept of "the eternal network" in terms of the human condition rather than art. Filliou held that the purpose of art was to make life more important than art. That was the central idea of the eternal network.

In a large, Taoist sense, Filliou was right. We are all linked in some rich way by robust and indissoluble bonds. But the social ecology of art operates in quite the opposite way, built on a market economy that requires the illusion of scarcity: scarce attention, scarce resources, deliberately limited editions of art to create a sense of restricted supply and increased demand at ever higher prices. This is even the case for kinds of art that ought to function in an economy of increasing returns. In theory, these kinds of art should not be subject to the market economics of scarcity. Even so, they seem to work that way, if only because their creators or those who represent their art structure the art of increasing returns to function through the illusion of scarcity.

In the years after Filliou described the eternal network, the idea took on a life of its own. It signified a global community of people who believe in the ideas that Filliou cherished. This community is fluid, composed of people who may never meet one another in person and who do not always agree on concepts of life and art. While these facts do not diminish the reality of an ongoing community, the community is diffuse and weak. Although this community has exchanged ideas for over three decades, the community has relatively few durable engagements other than artistic contact.

The metaphor is powerful. The reality is not. The eternal network is embedded in an art world that makes it difficult to make life more important than art.

Robert Filliou studied economics at the University of California, Los Angeles before working as an oil economist. At some point, he lost interest or hope in what he saw as standard approaches to knowledge and knowledge production in the technocratic society. In a 1966 pamphlet from Something Else Press, he published a manifesto titled, "A Proposition, a Problem, a Danger, and a Hunch." His manifesto offered an alternative.

Looking back over the developments of the past half-century, I no longer believe that the situation for society at large is as hopeless as Robert believed it to be. At the same time, I am far less optimistic about the potential of art. Art is lodged in a market economy that embraces and dominates non-profit institutions such as museums and educational institutions such as universities. The art these institutions display and study is embedded in the market economy of dealers, commercial galleries, and art magazines organized around advertising revenue.

It may be that I am wrong about the hopeful prospects of the larger society. The history of the past fifty years gives evidence for pessimism as well as for hope. In contrast, I feel safe in arguing that the art world justifies my pessimistic view of art markets and their dominant role in the production and consumption of art. Consumption is the rule as contrasted with co-creation.

Robert's manifesto effectively declared social science, natural science, and the humanities to be obsolete. Instead, he argued for knowledge and knowledge production from an optimistic perspective anchored in art.

Robert wrote,

"A refusal to be colonized culturally by a self-styled race of specialists in painting, sculpture, poetry, music, etc..., this is what 'la Révolte des Médiocres' is about. With wonderful results in modern art, so far. Tomorrow could everybody revolt? How? Investigate.

"A problem, the one and only, but massive: money, which creating does not necessarily create."

The difficulty, of course, is that the specialists took control of Robert Filliou's work, colonizing it and adapting it to the art markets. These markets include the economy of buying and selling art, and the attention economy for thinking about it. Robert's proposition for a solution made little difference.

Robert proposed the metaphor of a poetic economy:

"So that the memory of art (as freedom) is not lost, its age-old intuitions can be put in simple, easily learned esoteric mathematical formulae, of the type a/b = c/d (for instance, if a is taken as hand, b as foot, d as table, hand over head can equal foot on table for purposes of recognition and passive resistance. Study the problem. Call the study: *Theory and Practice of A/B*."

To be sure, no one else seems to have solved the problem. The idea of letting artists rather than technocrats make the effort was not a bad idea. Nevertheless, this proposal involved a second difficulty.

While Robert used the terms "art" and "artist" in a different way than the normative art world does, he used the art world to mediate his ideas. The art world seized on Robert's work, rather than his ideas, mediating both in a narrow channel rather than a larger world of public discourse or open conversation.

A short note is no place to address the broad range of issues embedded in Robert Filliou's manifesto. What can be said is that these problems are difficult, and solving them is difficult as well. The difficulties are not Robert's fault. Rather, they are embedded in a series of challenges we are only coming to understand.

Robert's idea of a poetical economics emerged during an era of contest, inquiry, and debate that affected all research fields and most fields of professional practice. Robert Filliou understood this. He sought a way to link thought to productive action – or perhaps he sought to link thought to productive inaction, as it was for John Cage. Attempting this through art suggested a new kind of research as well. Moreover, it suggested "an art that clucks and fills our guts" in the words of Dick Higgins's (1966) *Something Else Manifesto*.

Robert Filliou was trained as an economist. It is interesting, therefore, to reflect on the work of economists who considered the problem in different ways. One stream of this work began in the 1940s when Australian economist Colin Clark laid the foundation for work that Daniel Bell would explore in his discussion of post-industrial society. Others also addressed these patterns, notably the economist Harold Innis (Marshall McLuhan's predecessor and mentor) and the economist Fritz Machlup. Like Filliou, they did better in analyzing problems than proposing solutions. However, their work had a different fate. It helped give birth to a slowly evolving public conversation that is open to all because it generates political dialogue in the larger arena of analysis, critique, and proposition.

Today, we also understand a great deal more than we did through the work of micro-sociologists such as Erving Goffman or behavioral economists such as Daniel Kahnemann.

The grand irony of Robert's work is that he was transformed from a public thinker into an artist, with all the limitations this implies. As a thinker, Robert Filliou opposed the notion of art as a new form of specialization, subject to the control of dealers, critics, collectors, and the highly specialized institutions that serve them. As a thinker, Filliou worked in the productive border zone between art and public life.

Unfortunately, Robert Filliou became an artist, and the art world linked his ideas to mercantile interests. This was not Robert's fault. Much like specialists and technocrats in any field, the specialists who manage art world institutions also have a difficult time understanding and working with the productive poetic economies that emerge in the border zone.

The concept of the eternal network leads a thoughtful observer to alternate between optimism and cheerful resignation. It is easy to be cheerful simply because this metaphor of the global village has survived for as long as it has. In a healthy sense, the eternal network foreshadowed other networks that would become possible later using such technologies as computer, telefax, electronic mail, and the World Wide Web. If it foreshadowed a coming technology, it also foreshadowed the failure to establish existential commitment and social memory as a foundation for durable change. Networks involve robust links and routing systems. A human network requires commitment and memory. Without them, links and routes are absent.

In a famous article on the strength of weak ties between dense network clusters of friends, sociologist Mark Granovetter demonstrated the importance of weak links that enable information and connectivity to move between individuals in close-knit groups to individuals in other groups that might not otherwise interact. But networks require both kinds of formations.

It is inevitable that human societies have both – and this is true of the art world. What seems to be missing, however, is a rich series of robust clusters that one could label an "eternal network". Instead, the art world constitutes a series of weak ties with occasional market links or links shaped by the boundaries of the business networks of galleries and dealers. They also include links through the professional networks of curators or people working in universities or art and design schools.

If I were to attempt the blank book project today, I would structure it in a very different way.

The project did shape some interesting ripples in the pond.

While none of the books came back to me, I did come across several traces of the books. Traveling across the United States and Canada in the 1970s, I met artists who had received a book, worked on it, and passed it on. They told me wonderful stories about their involvement with the books. Even though the books did not return, I had the sense that something interesting and useful had happened for people who took the project for what it was meant to be.

On one occasion, I saw a book at the studio of an artist who proudly brought the book out to show me. About a dozen and a half pages were complete. These pages were wonderful,

many pages showing the traces of careful work over time. This took place a year or two after I had sent the book out, and the book was far from complete.

The requests inside each front cover asked the artist who completed the book to return it to me at Fluxus West on Elmhurst Drive in San Diego. I left that address in 1979, and it has been years since mail sent to San Diego reached me. Perhaps some books are still making their way around the world. One or two may yet to attempt a return journey to a place that no longer has any connection with Fluxus or with me.

Then again, as Stanley Milgram and Duncan Watts learned, it is neither a small world, nor a big world, but a somewhat lumpy world with different networks linking separated parts of the world. Huge gaps and chasms separate these islands of interaction.

The Green Street scroll raises another series of issues beyond the question of what might or might not have happened if anyone had agreed to take the scroll from me. This is the question of what it means to write in such a book.

The books I sent out in the Milgram-Watts tradition reached each new artist unsolicited. They came as an opportunity and a request, but they entailed no prior commitment. The Green Street scroll entails commitment. To accept the scroll required the recipient to acknowledge and take on a responsibility.

This made the scroll a book of life, or possibly even a book of death. To accept such a book would be to accept responsibility and to acknowledge the possibility of mortality. This may be too much weight for a small work of art to carry.

It is probably for the best that no one ever agreed to continue my Green Street scroll.

Fruit Sonata

Play baseball with fruit.

1963

Los Angeles, California.

The March of the Toy Soldiers

Mount domestic objects on poles.

Organize them in relation to one another.

Imagine a battle.

1963

Long before I joined Fluxus, I enjoyed playing with objects. I often used ordinary objects as something other than what they were. While this sometimes involved little more than a transformation of thought or perspective, it sometimes involved physical modifications or transforming the objects.

After I moved to California in 1961, I was active in the peace movement. I occasionally made small armies or collections of ordinary objects for ironic war games. Later, I mounted them on rods or poles so that they could be carried about.

The first versions of this piece involved small objects on a table. There were no rods. I later made large magical objects on rods. At some point, I combined the idea for the large magical pieces and the idea for the small toy army. Most of the large pieces with objects bound to sticks or rods are related to the idea of ritual or ceremonial magic. My friends and I carried these in processional events and parades that I organized. We also used large toy soldiers made from ordinary objects were in ironic war games and parades, carrying these about on poles.

From time to time, this took the scale and nature of giant chess games – or giant versions of the Japanese board game, *go*.

In 1968, I began making table and box objects for installation and exhibition. These included such works such as *Geography Box*, *Light Box*, and others. Some of the objects involved placing objects on rods in sand or plaster to hold them in a steady position. I conceived *The March of the Toy Soldiers* as a table object 1994, paralleling some of my earlier table objects.

The table object uses corks. To build it, collect as many corks as you wish and get as many thin metal rods as there are corks. The rods should be 1 to 1.5 millimeters in diameter. Cut them at different heights between 19 and 30 centimeters.

Construct a wooden box on legs. The box can be any sturdy, plain wood. It should stand 30 centimeters off the ground from the floor or surface on which it stands to the top of the box. The box should be 12 centimeters deep from the inside floor to the lip. The outside dimensions of the table should be 30 centimeters by 30 centimeters. This will make an object whose outside dimensions form a cube.

Fill the box with plaster of Paris. When the plaster sets sufficiently to hold the rods firmly as you sink them, place the rods in the plaster. Place the rods so that they form small groups and clusters. Imagine that they are

toy soldiers in a battle. Set them at slightly different angles and in relationships that will give them a dynamic feeling.

If you wish to make a free-standing object, built the box as described above but set the box on long legs that stand 65 centimeters from the floor to the bottom of the box. The free-standing box needs heavier and more solid carpentry

Pass This on to a Friend

Print a card or paper
with the text:

“Pass this on to a friend”.

1963

First realized in Pasadena, California.

Christmas Tree Event

Take a Christmas tree into
an all-night restaurant.

Place the tree in a seat next to you.

Order two cups of coffee,
placing one in front of the tree.

Sit with the tree,
drinking coffee and talking.

After a while,
depart,
leaving the tree in its seat.

As you leave,
call out loudly to the tree,
“So long, Herb.
Give my love to the wife and kids.”

1964

First performed 10 p.m., December 31, 1964
in Manhattan Beach, California.

Fast Food Event

Go into a fast food restaurant.

Order one example
of every item on the menu.

Line everything up
in a row on the table.

Eat the items one at a time,
starting at one end of the row
and moving systematically
from each to the next.

Finish each item before
moving on to the next.

Eat rapidly and methodically
until all the food is finished.

Eat as fast as possible
without eating too fast.

Eat neatly.

Do not make a mess.

1964

This piece was a response to the growth of fast food restaurant chains. I first realized it in San Diego, California.

By the early 1960s, America had such restaurant chains as Howard Johnson and Denny's. Franchised fast food, take-out chains typified by McDonalds, Burger King, and Subway were not yet common. The area of San Diego where I lived had a regional hamburger chain named Jack in the Box that I have never seen outside Southern California.

There were a fair number of fast food and take-out places. These were often one-man hamburger stands or tiny diners with food available on a take-out basis. In the San Diego area, there were also a number of small, family-owned taco shops, and pizza restaurants with a take-out menu.
The family-owned taco shops often had excellent Mexican cuisine. The food was homemade on the premises, along with such side dishes as guacamole, frijoles refritos, and rice.

In the late 1960s, Southern California got a fast food Mexican restaurant chain named Taco Bell. While it wasn't as good as the family-owned restaurants, the food was tasty in those days and there were a number of Taco Bell locations. The menu was small, and that made it relatively easy to perform the *Fast Food Event*.

I had forgotten about this piece until a visit to Nancy McElroy in August 1991. She, her children, and I went to a Taco Bell. While we were eating, she told them about how I used to perform this event in San Diego. I hadn't recalled the event in years. I wrote this version of the score from her account.

The Judgment of Paris

An installation presents three images.

Beneath each image
is a shelf or platform.

Each viewer may choose
the image he judges most beautiful.

A golden apple is placed
beneath the chosen image.

1964

The first versions of this work constructed between 1964 and 1968 consisted of forms or objects such as postage stamps, cans of food, books, architectural models, or furniture. I realized examples and variations in San Diego, Los Angeles, Pasadena, and Ventura, California, as well as in Mt Carroll, Illinois, and New York.

In 1989, I built the second version in Oslo, Norway. It consists of objects or images depicting women. These included statues, pictures from magazines, photo panels, and other images.

The first book I remember reading as a child was an edition of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. It was a gift from my mother. From Swift, I moved into the classics. I often read classical authors and mythology in the reference section of the public library. One of the first books I purchased for myself was a collection of classical myths, primarily Greek and Roman. I bought it at a bookshop in Laguna Beach on our first visit to California. Greek mythology was an enormous interest to me. The archetypal themes found in Greek mythology recur in literature, drama, and art. While much mythological material is clear and explicit, authors, playwrights, and artists often disguise borrowed themes, reworking them or transforming them in different ways. In *The Thirty-Six Dramatic Situations*, George Polity states that the entire history of drama involves only thirty-six basic plots. Many of these appear in the myths.

This piece was a doubled reworking. First, I took ordinary material artifacts, exploring their nature as objects in a highly material culture by endowing them with the virtue of actors. Then, I doubled the myth back on itself by dignifying them with the attributes of the original myth.

Many events create a theater of the object. Objects act or participate in the action. The first version of this event is such a project.

The later version turns the myth back on itself by using images of women. The meaning of the piece changes based on the choice

of image, the obvious or subtle nature of the source, the character of the model and the pose. This, too, is a statement on the character and effect of myth.

The piece may be realized with one apple that is moved by viewers as they make different choices in a transformative dialogue among visitors and viewers, with each viewer changing or accepting the condition of the piece. It is also possible to use a large basket of Golden Delicious apples, allowing visitors to stack fruit in front of the chosen object as a form of referendum or poll on viewer preferences.

Public Notice

Print a sheet of paper or
a poster with the text:

If you wish to see your name in print,
sign here:

1964

First executed at de Benneville Pines in
Angelus Oaks, California in June of 1964,
I have realized this piece as a card, a bulletin,
a poster, and a magazine page.

Restaurant Event

Dress as badly as possible.

Wear surplus clothes,
tattered shoes,
and an old hat.

Go to an elegant restaurant.

Behave with dignity
and exquisite decorum.

Request a fine table.

Tip the maître d'hôte well,
and take a seat.

Order a glass of water.

Tip the waiters,
the busboy
and staff lavishly,
then depart.

1964

In the summer of 1964, I spent many weeks as a guest of the Brooks family in the Beverly Hills area of Los Angeles. In the evenings, I washed the dinner dishes while listening to Bob Dylan records. Then I would walk about enjoying the summer air. One night, I found myself near the Beverly Hilton Hotel. I was thirsty, so I walked in to perform this event.

White Bar

A bar or tavern
in a simple room.

The room is plain,
light wood.

The bar is a wooden table.

Only clear liquors
or spirits are served.

The bottles are lined up
on one end of the bar
with several rows of clean glasses.

There is a bowl of limes.

1964

White Bar was the score for several performances and events from 1964 on. The first full realization of *White Bar* took place in 1968 for a party at the San Francisco Fluxhouse on Dolores Street. We built the bar without building the entire room. We organized a small party serving only clear liquors. The liquors were vodka, rum, and tequila. We mixed the liquors with fresh orange juice and fresh lime juice or served them neat. We had only two visitors, the Italian art critic Mario Diacono, then teaching literature at the University of California at Berkeley, and Mario's girlfriend.

White Bar was the basis of a collection of clear liquors I assembled at Arvid Johannessen's flat in Norway when I lived with him. From 1988 to 1992, I brought back a bottle of local clear liquor every time I traveled to a foreign country. We had loza rakuja from Yugoslavia, bailloni from Hungary, raki from Turkey and ouzo from Greece, kirschwasser and pflumi from Switzerland, grappa from Italy, eiswetter and Furst Bismarck from Germany, brandwijn from the Netherlands, and vodka from Finland. We also had vodka from Iceland, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Ireland – long with dozens of different clear fruit distillates from all over Europe. Some of them were quite good. Some were terrible.

One night we had a small party at the flat. Oyvind Storm Bjerke, art historian and chief curator of the Henie Onstad Museum, attended. Arvid proudly pointed to the collection. Oyvind went over, looked over

the bottles, judiciously uncorked a few, and sniffed them. After a few minutes inspection, he nodded knowingly and said: “Dette maa bli den definitiv samling av verdens dårligste brennevinner”. – “This must be the definitive collection of the world’s worst liquors”.

The collection disappeared before we could organize a proper realization of the White Bar. A few weeks after Oyvind’s comment, we had another party. The filmmaker Jan Schmidt finished the entire collection in one night.

Thirty years after the original *White Bar*, this score led to a project titled *Grappa for the White Bar*.

Grappa for the White Bar

Take an ordinary bottle of clear glass.
On the front, sandblast the text:

Grappa
KF
1964-1994

On the back, sandblast the text:

Only
clear liquors
are served

In June of 1994, Emily Harvey invited me to make a multiple of a grappa bottle for Emily Harvey Editions. Several other artists had

already done bottles in the series, some with delightful plays on the idea of drinking or the chemistry of grappa. Most of these involved beautiful, hand-blown glass bottles. I wanted to do a piece that was close to the original context of grappa: humble, a local drink, sold in simple bottles. In September, she reminded me to finish my multiple. I decided to do a piece based on an idea I had for a bar in 1964, *White Bar*, and to some variations on *White Bar.* I also wanted my multiple to be much less expensive and more widely available than the other multiples, a simple edition instead of a rare object.

The multiple was to use commercially available bottles and a simple sandblasting technique. The short line length would have made it possible to sandblast the text without any trouble. For bottles manufactured in Italy, the typeface was to be Bodoni Bold or Bodoni Extra Bold.

A while later, Emily wrote me to say that the sample bottle was ready. Due to strict alcohol control laws, we did not want to ship it to Norway. I did not visit Venice after Emily produced the bottle, and I never completed the edition.

Anniversary

Someone sneezes.

A year later,
send a postcard reading:

“Gesundheit!”

1965

Cheers

Conduct a large crowd of people
to the house of a stranger.

Knock on the door.

When someone opens the door,
the crowd cheers and applauds vigorously.

All depart silently.

1965

Copernicus

Build a model of the solar system.

Use different kinds of objects to represent the sun and planets.

Make the model reasonably accurate for relative size, scale, and distance.

There may be six planets as in the Copernican universe, there may be nine planets as in 1965, or eight planets as determined by the International Astronomical Association in 2006.

1965 (Revised 2006)

Edison's Lighthouse

Create a passage
with facing mirrors.

Place candles
in front of each mirror.

Vary the nature and intensity
of light by variations in the
number and placement of candles.

1965

In 1965, I was living in Mt Carroll, Illinois, as a student at Shimer College. The entrance area to my room had two facing dressers. Above each was a vertical mirror roughly two feet wide and three feet tall. Standing between these mirrors, I would sometimes contemplate the paradox of reflection and multiple images. Light and reflection occupied me intensely.

One evening, I set up a candle to observe the path of light between the two mirrors. For several weeks, I tried different arrays of candles standing in old bottles. At one point, I also made crude candelabras using Coca-Cola bottles in cartons that held six bottles.

Light traveled between the two mirrors in a narrow band roughly ten feet long, two feet wide, and three feet tall. The light spilled out of the path to illuminate the room. Varying the number of candles and their placement created a great variety of subtle differences in rich, dense light.

The title for this piece comes from a story about Thomas Edison. The story is that Edison used mirrors and lanterns to create enough light to allow a physician to perform emergency surgery. A charming version of this story appears in the 1940 movie *Young Tom Edison*, starring Mickey Rooney, Fay Bainter, and George Bancroft. I have never been able to learn whether the story is a genuine account from Edison's life or an artifact of Hollywood biography.

First Time Around

An identification is made.

1965

Open and Shut Case

Make a box.

On the outside,
print the word “Open”.

On the inside,
print the words “Shut quick”.

1965

The first version of this project was constructed in December 1965, while I was at a meeting at the First Unitarian Church of Chicago. I took a large matchbox that had been filled with wooden kitchen matches. I covered the outside with paper and printed the words, “Open me” on the outside. On the inside, I printed the words “Shut me quick”. In 1966, it became my first Fluxbox, *The Open and Shut Case*.

When I first created the piece, it had hermeneutic connotations involving a discussion that was under way at the church meeting. I would not have used the term hermeneutic in those days, but I understood the concept of interpretation. I was attending a meeting of the executive committee of Liberal Religious Youth, Inc., to help plan the annual Continental Conference for 1966. The conference was to take place in Ithaca, New York, and I was to be editor of the daily conference newspaper.

I was on my way to the conference in August of 1966, when Dick Higgins sent me to meet George Maciunas for the first time. One morning, I made one of the boxes for Dick. He thought I ought to take it to George.

I had been corresponding with Dick to make radio programs based on the Something Else Press books of Daniel Spoerri, Emmett Williams, Alison Knowles, Ray Johnson, Robert Filliou, and others for my programs at Radio WRSB. This was a college-based radio station in Mt Carroll, Illinois. Dick and Alison invited me to stay with them for a while at their home in New York, a few blocks away from the press. I was sixteen years old. I’d just finished the first two years of college, and I was in New York to look around.

George’s telephone directions brought me to his fifth floor walk-up apartment on West Broadway in a decaying industrial section of New York City that was then part of Little Italy. Henry Flynt later took over George’s apartment, and the neighborhood became the Soho art district. Back then, it was just a tenement. I walked up the stairs to find a black door covered with violent, emphatic NO! SMOKING!!! signs. I knocked.

The door opened a crack, and a pair of eyes framed in round, wire-rimmed spectacles peered out. That was George Maciunas.

George was a small, wiry man with a prim, owlish look. He was dressed in a short-sleeve

business shirt, open at the neck, no tie. He wore dark slacks and black cloth slippers. His pocket was cluttered with number of pens. In current jargon, we'd call him a "nerd" or a "geek". He typified the computer jocks, engineers, and architects at Carnegie Mellon University, his alma mater.

George ushered me into his kitchen. It was a steamy, New York summer day, but the apartment was cool. It smelled like rice mats. I recognized the smell. It reminded me of a Japanese store I used to frequent as a youngster in New London, Connecticut.

The apartment contained three rooms. To the right was a compact, well-designed office and workroom. The floor was covered with rice mats. George said not to go in wearing shoes, so I looked in from the door to see drafting tables, desks, shelves, and an astonishing clutter of papers, projects, notebook, and files. It was the most orderly clutter I've ever seen, the opposite of my own chronological project layers.

The first time I saw George's workspace, it was rigged out with a marvelous contraption that enabled him to reach up and tap a weight to summon items he wanted. By means of a counterbalance and some strings and rods, whatever he wanted would float into his grasp. At least, this is my memory. I am not sure if I actually saw the working device, or a prototype, or if this is just a memory of a planning diagram that George showed me.

To the left of the kitchen, George had what looked like a huge, walk-in closet or a small storage room. The room was filled with floor-to-ceiling shelves, like an industrial warehouse. In fact, it was an industrial warehouse, the comprehensive inventory of Fluxus editions in unassembled form. The shelves were loaded with boxes storing the contents of Fluxus multiple editions, suitcases, and year boxes. When an order came in for a Fluxbox, George would go to the back of the closet, select the appropriate plastic or wooden container, and march through the room plucking out the proper cards and objects to emerge with a completed work. He'd select the proper label, glue it on, and have a completed edition ready to mail.

The kitchen had a sink, windows, stove, table, and chairs. These were all quite ordinary except for the refrigerator. George had a bright orange refrigerator. When he opened it,

I could see he had filled it with oranges from the bottom clear to the top shelf. The top shelf, on either side of the old-fashioned meat chest and ice tray, held four huge jugs of fresh orange juice. He offered me a glass of orange juice.

Maciunas peppered me with questions. What did I do? What did I think? What was I planning? At that time, I was planning to become a Unitarian minister. I did all sorts of things, things without names, things that jumped over the boundaries between ideas and actions, between the manufacture of objects and books, between philosophy and literature. Maciunas listened for a while and invited me to join Fluxus. I said yes.

A short while later, George asked me what kind of artist I was. Until that moment, I had never thought of myself as an artist. George thought about this for a minute, and said, "You're a concept artist".

It always pleased me that I became part of Fluxus before I became an artist.

The first version of the text was a personal injunction, commanding the reader to "Open me" and "Shut me quick." Later versions employ a simpler text reading, "Open" and "Shut quick". My notes for George read: "Make a box. On the outside, print the word, 'Open'. On the inside, printed the words 'Shut quick'." The title of the piece was *Open and Shut Case*.

While the original idea had hermeneutical implications related to religious issues that concerned me, the term also has legal connotations. It's a common phrase in films or theater pieces about police or lawyers. George played with the legal implications of the phrase and prepared the label of the Fluxbox as a subpoena.

Barbara Moore made a new edition of George Maciunas's Fluxus version a few years. Peter van Beveren reprinted it in a 1990s edition in Rotterdam. The Rotterdam edition bears a simple label, much like the Chicago original. The label is a simple paper label and with large, black letters in a sans-serif typeface.

One variation on this piece was planned as an installation. For this version of the piece, the score reads:

"Paint a room in a single color. Paint the door to the room the same color as the room. On the door, print the words, 'Open'."

"On the inside wall directly opposite the door, printed the words 'Shut quick'."

Sudden Harmony Dance Tune

Perform a dance
– a stomp, a clog,
a tap dance
or a soft shoe –
while chanting words
with glottal stops.

1965

Webster's Dictionary

Print a series of dictionary definitions
on sidewalks and walls
in public places.

1965

First realized in October, 1965, with a string
of words and definitions inscribed in chalk
around the quadrangle of Shimer College,
Mt Carroll, Illinois.

Dark Mirror

Create a dark, mirrored floor
in a white, well-lit room.

Apply high-gloss
black enamel paint
to a wooden floor.

Sand the floor, buff it,
and paint it again.

Repeat the action until
the floor is a reflective surface.

Subdue the lighting.

1966

Dark Mirror was realized at the Avenue C Fluxus Room in New York in September 1966. The room was later used for most of the projects and exhibitions, which took place there.

Different Card Fluxdeck

Make a deck of cards in which every card in the deck is different from every other card in the deck.

The deck is can be made by taking cards from different decks.

It must be possible to assemble all the cards in the deck into the complete and proper sequence of a full deck of cards.

Every card in the deck should have a unique back and a front that is different in some way from the other cards in the deck, whether the difference is large or small.

1966

This is an idea that eventually becomes a deck of marked cards, each marked individually by its unique back. I see it now as part of a trilogy of Fluxus card decks based on commercially produced cards: *Single Card Fluxdeck* by George Maciunas and *Missing Card Fluxdeck* by Ben Vautier.

Incognito, Ergo Sum

Print a page or object with the words:

“Incognito, ergo sum”.

1966

Light Table Variation

Set a wooden table with
many candles of different kinds,
large and small,
colored and plain,
ordinary and shaped,
normal and scented.

Place the candles on the table.

Stand thin candles in
candlesticks and candleholders.

Stand thick candles and
square candles directly on the table.

Anyone who wishes to bring
new candles may place them
on the table.

Light the candles.

1966

In 1964, I decided on a career in the Unitarian ministry. In those years, I was active in Liberal Religious Youth, a community in which I dedicated myself to creating and organizing worship services. The quality of light and the use of space play an important role in worship. Candles are a tool for shaping light and space, and a way to define them in so doing. The use of light to focus the mind and senses are reasons for the ancient role of candles and light in worship and meditation.

In 1965 and 1966, I performed experiments with light in Mt Carroll, Illinois. Worship was one source of my interest in light. Physics was another.

In the summer of 1965, I studied at California Western University in Point Loma. Discovering my interest in the history of science, a physics professor asked me to lecture on the life and work of Copernicus. Later, I lectured on Kepler, and then on Newton.

In the autumn of 1965, I transferred to Shimer College. Shimer based its curriculum on the original writings of scientists, philosophers, and thinkers using the great books curriculum developed by Robert Maynard Hutchins for the University of Chicago. We studied natural science by working directly from historical texts to master the principles of inquiry and theory building. Our first text was Newton's 1704 classic, *Optics*. We worked our way through the text, performing Newton's original experiments to debate his findings.

Newton began his work on optics in the 1660s, lecturing on the subject in the 1670s, and publishing his first major papers on optics in the *Philosophical Transactions* in 1672. Controversies attending the publication of his work led him to withhold the final publication of the book on *Optics* until most of his opponents had died. While I was more interested in Newton's ways of thinking about science than his work on light, I remained fascinated by light, and spent many nights alone in my room working with different kinds of light. I kept my prism long after I completed my replication of Newton's experiments. The prism is now in a box at the University of Iowa.

The first version of this score called for "many candles of different kinds, large and small, colored and plain, ordinary and shaped, normal and scented". Early on, I decided that all candles in this piece should be ordinary, functional candles. There should be no novelty candles or joke candles. Later, I came to prefer even simpler ways to perform the piece, concentrating on light rather than on color or smell with white, unscented candles. Now, I use only plain, white candles of different kinds, sizes, and shapes.

Execution Kit

Prepare a large box containing
a plastic squirt gun,
a blindfold,
and cigarettes.

1966

Proposal for an unrealized Fluxkit based on a conversation with Kurt Wahtera that took place in September of 1966 in Marblehead, Massachusetts.

Fluxpost Cancellation

Produce a cancellation mark
with this text:

The Inconsequential is Coming

1966

This text is the legend printed on my Fluxus cancellation stamp. It was made in September 1966, in New York and it was later used in the *Fluxus Postal Kit*. The actual phrase came from a graffito found inscribed on the wall of a post office in Bel Rios, California.

Fluxus Instant Theater

Rescore Fluxus events for performance by the audience.

A conductor may guide the audience.

1966

This piece was first realized at the Unitarian Church in Marblehead, Massachusetts. The conductor may guide the audience-performers through the pieces during the performance. Other methods, including scores and instructions printed and given out prior to performance, or screened instructions by slide, video, etc., may be used.

Fluxus Invisible Theater

Place a large doorway
on a street corner.

Post a sign over the door reading:

FLUXUS THEATRE
Admission 25 cents.

1966

Fluxus Television

Paint on the glass screens of television sets.

1966

This piece was first realized in New York using old television cabinets found in the streets. Many early television sets had protective glass screens that were part of the television cabinet – usually a wooden housing unit. The screens were positioned in front of the television tube itself, which is often a single unit with the tube in contemporary televisions sets. I first realized this project with a series of painted screens. Some were free standing and some were in old-fashioned television sets. Most of the screens and TV sets were lost or destroyed. I think that one surviving screen may be in the collection of The High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia. The Atlanta screen was painted circa 1970, probably first exhibited in the Fluxus & Happening show in Köln, Germany at Kölnischer Kunstverein and several times since. The "sets" and "screens" are created as specific projects.

Fluxus Television has an interesting precedent in broadcast television. In the 1950s, there was a television program titled *Winky-Dink and You*. The hero was a cartoon character named Winky-Dink. Each week, Winky-Dink relied on the help of viewers at home to realize his adventures. The company that produced the show sold a special sheet of plastic that could be placed over the screen. Then, viewers were able to draw on the plastic with a special, quickly erasable crayon. Viewers provided stairs or ladders for Winky-Dink to climb, doors to walk through and so on. I always remembered the program with great fondness. As I see it, *Winky-Dink and You* was the first interactive video art.

Fruit in Three Acts

1. A peach.

2. A watermelon.

3. A pear.

1966

Hat

Mail a hat.

1966

Imprint

Produce an item
bearing a printed identification
that refers to its own species or genus.

Examples include
printed pages imprinted ‘Printed Matter’,
a rubber stamp reading ‘Rubber Stamp’,
a pencil imprinted ‘Pencil’.

1966

Several examples of this piece were created
for a Fluxkit that was never produced.

Mandatory Happening

A card printed:

"You will decide to read
this score or not to read it".

When you have made your decision,
the happening is over.

1966

This event was first scored at midnight on May 1, 1966 in Mt Carroll, Illinois. It was first performed at the same time. For the first performance, the text was typed on a sheet of paper. I went around Shimer College, knocking my way from door to door. When someone answered, I handed him or her the paper.

Fluxus, New York, published this event 1966 as *A Fluxus Mandatory Happening*. George Maciunas designed a lovely label with the famous image of Uncle Sam, pointing his finger outward at the person looking at him. The label text read, "Fluxus Wants You … for a Mandatory Happening". Inside, a simple card of heavy white paper bore the text.

There seem to be no extant complete copies of George's edition. Copies of George's label are available, along with some boxes with the label attached. These boxes have no card. In the 1990s, Peter van Beveren published an edition of this in a simple version. It was like the Rotterdam edition of the *Open and Shut Case* and it was much like the original *Mandatory Happening*.

Melon Melody

Create a tonal percussion instrument of melons.

Using melons of different kinds and sizes,
create different sounds.

Play them with a mallet.

1966

This piece was first performed at a fruit and vegetable market in Los Angeles, California in April 1966.

Passport to the State of Flux

Produce a Fluxus passport booklet.

1966

New York, New York.

A small prototype edition may have been produced in October 1966 in New York. No extant copies are known. When George Maciunas went to Seattle, Washington, in 1978, he printed a version of the passport at And/Or Gallery entitled *VisaTouRiste*. An edition was published at Emily Harvey Gallery for my 1987 exhibition.

Radio Clock

Announce the time
at minute intervals
for the entire duration
of a radio broadcast.

1966

This piece was first performed on Radio WRSB at Shimer College in Mt Carroll, Illinois in January 1966 in the Radio Garnisht Kigele series.

Sonata for Melons and Gravity

Drop melons
from a great height.

Listen to the sound.

1966

Stage Reversal

Go on stage naked,
covered with paint.

Wash.

Dress and leave stage.

1966

First performed at the Avenue C Fluxus Room in New York in October of 1966.

Street Pieces

Make objects.

Leave them in the street
for passers-by.

1966

First realized in November, 1966
in San Diego, California.

The Sympathetic Ear

A Fluxbox containing a plastic ear.

1966

Based on a suggestion by Ralph Grawunder.
A Fluxbox was proposed in November 1966
in San Diego, California and a prototype
created, but the box was never published.

Tavern

Assemble a collection
of small liquor bottles.

Construct a rectangular wooden box.

Set a strip of wood so that
the rectangular box has two areas:
one square
and a rectangle half the size
of the square.

Set most of the bottles
in the square area.

Set one special bottle
in the smaller area.

Mix a load of plaster of Paris
sufficient to fill the box to the edge.

Fill the box so that the
plaster sets around the bottles.

1966

This object is made of the small liquor bottles that used to be served on airplanes, sold in gift shops, and in some tax-free shops. I made the first one in New York in 1966 as a prototype for a Fluxus multiple to have been titled *Fluxtavern*. The multiple was never produced. One of the variations was a collection of gag liquors. I think I sold it to Jon Hendricks for Gil Silverman's collection.

Since I started work on the Fluxus multiple, I collected small liquor bottles when I like the shape or the label. When I have a large enough collection, I assemble them into a version of tavern. There have been several different versions over the years. I've probably completed one every three or four years since the middle of the 1960s. The piece has several variations. Each variation has its own score. This piece is related to several liquor events. One is the 1964 event titled *White Bar*.

For a 1994 exhibition in Toronto, I provided these instructions: Assemble a collection of small liquor bottles. Construct a rectangular box of wood, 18″ long, 12″ wide, and 2″ deep. Set a strip of wood across the box at 12″, so that the rectangular box has two areas, an area 12″ square and an area 12″ by 6″ Set most of the bottles in the square area. Set one special bottle in the smaller area. Mix a load of plaster of Paris sufficient to fill the box to the edge. Fill the box so that the plaster sets around the bottles.

Variation: Use full-size bottles and a very large box.

Thirty Feet

Find a piece of paper
30 feet square.

Inscribe a large circle
on the page.

1966

The original version of this score was titled *30´ for John Cage*. It was written in Danbury, Connecticut in October of 1966. The score read: “Find a piece of paper 30´ square. Inscribe a large circle on the page. Send it to John Cage”.

Zen for Record

Produce a phonograph record with no sound on it.

1966

The first version of *Zen for Record* was a single, record blank, grooved but empty of sound. I found it when I was working at E.S.P. Disk Records in New York in September and October of 1966. It was probably a defective recording. If not, I have no idea what purpose the record had or why anyone would have made a record with no sound on it.

The original score to this object was, "A blank phonograph record with no sound on it".

In those days, I was new to Fluxus. George Maciunas had produced a couple of multiples, and I was planning more projects. I thought of making a multiple edition of these blank records. In keeping with the Fluxus idea, I hope to make an LP edition at a cost low enough to sell the records for the price of an ordinary phonograph record. My career in the record industry was short-lived, and I never produced the LP.

The title of the piece is homage to Nam June Paik's *Zen for Film*. George Maciunas and Dick Higgins introduced me to Nam June's work. I loved *Zen for Film*. Nam June and I saw each other often when we both lived in Los Angeles. He taught at California Institute of the Arts and I worked nearby as general manager of Something Else Press. We ate lunch or dinner together from time to time, often with Fluxus colleague and video pioneer Shigeko Kubota and engineer Shuya Abe, Nam June's collaborator on the video synthesizer.

In 1971, Nam June commissioned me to write his *Third Symphony*. In 1974, I published the scores to Nam June's complete symphonies in issue 11 of *Source Magazine*, the famous final issue. *Source* was an innovative music magazine edited by composers Larry Austin and Stanley Lunetta. Each issue was spectacular, typified by imaginative scores, rich illustrations, and delightful artifact. One might find machine-gunned pages for the score to Dick Higgins's Thousand Symphonies, tactile pages for a haptic score, or a letter from Joseph Beuys explaining why he did not have time to contribute. There were three guest editors over the years. John Cage was one, Alvin Lucier the second, and I was the third. I never completed a version of Nam June's *Third Symphony*. Instead of a score, Nam June presented a note in *Source* commenting on the commission.

Over the years, I realized several variations on Zen for Record. One involved blank, empty record jackets. These contained no records. Rather, they represent the concept of a record with no sound in an emblematic version. In the late 1980s, I prepared a set of records transformed into records with no sound by painting them with spray paint to render them blank and grooveless, removing the sound.

There are three unrealized editions of *Zen for Record* I should like to have realized. In the 1990s, a record publisher was considering a series of Fluxus projects. His idea for *Zen for Record* was to produce a series of editions

that took the piece through a range of recording media from old to recent. I would have enjoyed creating a series of different kinds of *Zen for Record*, moving through such recording media as player piano roll, music box, wax record, Dictaphone band, wire recording, recorded tape, phonograph record, compact disc, and so on.

This publisher was also interested in creating a multiple edition for the CD. I thought of a heavy, square wooden box constructed of massive blocks of wood that would hinge together to form a large cube. The cube would open out in two massive halves. Each half block would contain a small, shallow shelf on the inner face of the half block. The shelf would be just deep enough to accommodate the CD version of *Zen for Record*, with the CD sitting to half its depth in the face.

The idea for the project came from the Ise Shrine. The Shrine is a Shinto temple built on one of two adjacent sites. Every twenty years, the priests of the temple take down the shrine and build it anew on the adjacent site. One face of the open block would embody silence in the physical recording. The other face would embody silence in the empty space.

My favorite unmade version of *Zen for Record* developed at the time of Nam June's 1982 retrospective at The Whitey Museum of American Art. Nam June and I met at the museum one day and he invited me out for coffee. I had been reading a copy of *Art News* with a richly illustrated article on the exhibition that he had not seen. I gave it to him. He thumbed through the article quickly, then put it down, and went back to talking about ideas. At one point, we must have talked about Nam June's *Zen for Film* and the long-lost *Zen for Record*.

At this point, the story takes a detour. In the 1960s, Advance Recordings released an LP of Richard Maxfield's compositions. Richard was a pioneering composer of electronic and digital music. He took over teaching John Cage's course at The New School when John stopped teaching. Richard worked with La Monte Young, George Maciunas, Dick Higgins, and many others. Toward the end of 1967, I got a postcard from Dick Higgins telling me that Richard had accepted a post at San Francisco State University. Dick urged me to take Richard's courses. I did. It was a wonderful experience. Richard and I worked together on several projects. We grew quite close, and I often went to Richard's home to read scores, talk about music, and to think. I was probably the last artist or composer to work with him closely.

Richard was too adventurous for the conservative music department at San Francisco State University. They terminated his employment despite many requests and protests from students that he should stay. He moved to Laguna Beach, where he lived with his mother for a while before moving to Los Angeles. I went to see him a few times. He was depressed and unhappy working at a menial job to live while interest in electronic music grew around the nation. Advance Recordings released a phonograph recording of Richard's music for which he asked me to write the liner notes. Soon after I last saw him, he took his own life.

There are two codas to the story. Despite the fact that Richard is best known for electronic music, he wanted to me learn standard music notation to work with him. I learned to use standard notation, but I was never good at it, and I never used it after I completed Richard's courses. Nevertheless, I saved my scores for many years, together with several boxes full of sound tapes. I never produced sound works on tape with Richard. These were tapes from my radio programs in Illinois, tapes of the concerts I created as music director for Karen

Ahlberg's dance troupe in San Francisco, and tapes of the concerts I played when screening the Fluxfilms that George Maciunas loaned me in 1966 – later sent on to Jeff Berner for his great 1967 Fluxfest at Longshoreman's Hall. One day in 1986, I listened to the tapes and reviewed the scores. Soon after, I decided that I was a terrible composer. I destroyed the entire collection of scores and tapes.

For now, I'll return to the 1982 conversation with Nam June and my thoughts for an edition of *Zen for Record*. The edition would have been a blank phonograph record with a white label and simple sans-serif type stating title, date, and composer. The jacket would have been white, with the title and composer in sans-serif type at the corner of the jacket. On the back, the liner notes would have been a comment by Nam June, a blank space without words. I tried for years to find a record producer who would publish this edition, but no one agreed to do so until Jan van Toorn at Slowscan Editions decided to try it. A few years before I spoke about this with Jan, Nam June had a stroke. I was going to ask Emily Harvey to talk this over with him when he was better, but Emily died and I put the project on a shelf to think about it. Then, a series of opportune letters brought a beautiful set of liner notes by Craig Dworkin. At some point, I hope to return to the edition.

Over the past forty-three years, *Zen for Record* migrated from a phonograph record to an empty record jacket to a never-produced CD, and now to the idea of an LP from Slowscan Editions.

Mozart spent much of his life realizing improvisational concerts that never took shape in written scores. These works remained alive while Mozart lived. When Mozart died, these works died with him. All music ends in silence.

Zen Vaudeville

The sound of one shoe tapping.

1966

This piece was based on a graffito found
in New York in September of 1966.

White Objects

Objects are painted white.

The objects may be given away or deposited.

1966

Art for the Household

Construct collages or objects
for the homes of friends.

Designate each object
for a specific room such as
kitchen, closet, bathroom, etc.

1967

The first realizations of this piece were given or sent to friends. The score, formerly untitled, was given the title created by Wolfgang Feelisch for a series of multiples produced by Edition Vice Versand.

City

Construct a city
out of found material.

Let the city grow and change
over a span of time.

Abandon the complete city
where it stands.

1967

Performed over the span of one week in April of 1967 in the central quadrangle at San Francisco State University. After the city was abandoned, it stood untouched for another week. It was found one morning neatly disassembled, stacked and piled. The stacks stood untouched for another few days. Then they too disappeared.

Do-It-Yourself Monument

Build a monument.

1967

The first version of the do-it-yourself monument was built in Point Loma, California, during the 1967 Fluxfest at the Red Shed Gallery. The monument was built of wood, cloth, and paper. An unrealized version was proposed for stone blocks.

In 1970, the Lippincott Foundry held a competition for cast metal sculpture. I proposed an edition of 10,000 cubes, each an inch square, from which versions of the Do-It-Yourself Monument could be realized. The foundry did not appreciate the proposal.

Several small-scale models of the project exist. During the Paris Fluxus exhibition organized by Marcel Fleiss and Charles Dreyfus in 1989, I built a version of the Do-It-Yourself Monument from sugar cubes in a wooden cigar box. I gave them to Dorothy Sells, an artist who creates work from sugar. A version of the sugar-cube monument was exhibited at Krognoshuset in Lund, Sweden, in 1997. I am still working on the piece, and I hope to realize it in full scale.

Empaquetage pour Christo

A modest object is wrapped.

1967

This piece was first realized in March 1967 in Santa Cruz, California, after I began a correspondence and friendship with Christo that has lasted for four decades. I planned a version of this piece for a Fluxus edition that was never published, but Edition Vice Versand of Remscheid, Germany, issued the multiple under the title *Eingepacktes* in 1970.

Fluxmattress

80 sheets of 1/2″ plywood.

One sheet of 1/4″ foam.

1967

First performed at Fluxus Coop House at 80 Wooster Street in New York in October of 1967.

Garden

Move gravel into an area
that can be combed to resemble
a Japanese rock garden.

1967

First realized in a small square area at the side of the Fluxus West house, 6361 Elmhurst Drive in San Diego, California in July of 1967. This piece was originally titled *Rock Placement Variation*.

Mailing

Mail an item to yourself prior to departing on a trip so that you receive it on arrival.

1967

First realized for a trip from San Francisco, California to Boston, Massachusetts in October 1967.

Orchestra

Gather an orchestra in which each member of the orchestra plays a phonograph for an instrument.

The entire orchestra plays the phonographs.

Concerts may consist of different kinds of performances.

All performers may attempt to play the same record, perhaps trying to cue up and play at the same time or perhaps simply playing sections at random.

Each performer or different sections may play entirely different pieces of music, and so on.

This may be performed in a chamber music variation by using a small ensemble.

1967

This piece was first realized in San Francisco, California. The original text was the simple statement, “The entire orchestra plays phonographs”.

Rock Placement

Move large rocks to an area.

1967

First performed at Fluxus West in San Diego, California in July of 1967 with rocks used to terraform and landscape the front yard of the house at 6361 Elmhurst Drive.

My father and I realized the first performance of this event at Fluxus West in San Diego, California in July of 1967. We moved rocks from the hills behind Fluxus West to landscape the front yard of the house at 6361 Elmhurst Drive.

A few years ago, Ditte – my wife – and I moved a collection of rocks from the Skaane countryside to our house in Torna Hällestad, a village established in the twelfth century. The rocks have moved from place to place around the yard. Sometimes, they form nice piles. Other times, they line the paths and walkways of the garden. I often wonder when the work exists and when it does not.

The Spirit of Geography

Construct and distribute geography boxes.

The boxes are wooden, three-dimensional constructions presenting narratives on selected locations and events.

1967

Most of the *Geography Boxes* were exhibited in the San Francisco State University Library during the Garnisht Kigele exhibition in 1968. They were given away after that in another event.

String Quartet, Opus 2, 1967

Each member of the audience
shakes hands
with those within reach.

1967

Opus 2, 1967, is a variation on a theme of George Brecht's *String Quartet* ("Shaking Hands"). First performed at The Fillmore Auditorium, San Francisco, California, in March 1967.

Telephone Clock

Telephone someone.

Announce the time.

1967

First realized in San Francisco, California
in February, 1967.

Unfinished Symphony

Find something.

Carry it out
to its most logical conclusion.

1967

Blockade

Cast and pour a cement form
to create a long, low horizontal column
with sides and height
of equal measure.

The column should meander
through several rooms
of a designated space.

1968

The first version of this piece was a full-scale cardboard model at the Divisadero Street Fluxus Center in San Francisco, California built in the spring of 1968.

Boxing Day

Acquire, fill, and distribute boxes in the immediate environment and at a distance.

1968

For the first performance, one hundred boxes were acquired in Yellow Springs, Ohio. They were mostly small and medium sized colored cardboard boxes. Some were given away empty, some with contents, some mailed with gifts, some mailed empty, some shipped with gifts or empty. A number of unusual boxes of pressed wood, woven reeds, etc., were also used.

Broken Record

Phonograph records are thrown instead of the discus.

1968

In August 1968, I performed this piece near the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The original title was *Record Break*.

Contents

Empty boxes.

Each has a word printed on it
to represent the contents.

1968

Paper Architecture

Hang a large sheet or several large sheets of paper on the walls of a room.

Inscribe the sheets with full-scale architectural features, such as doors, windows, or stairs, or with objects such as furniture, lamps, books, etc.

Use these drawings to imagine, create, or map an environment.

The drawings may create or map new features in an existing environment.

They may mirror, double or reconstruct existing features in situ or elsewhere.

To create relatively permanent features with the drawings, apply them directly to a wall.

1968

The term "paper architecture" is a philosophical play on issues in architecture, design, and art. In this event, it is linked to concepts of diagraming, modeling, and representation.

I am not sure when I first used the term. My event scores were circulated in many different loose sheet editions before the first bound edition appeared in 1982. I first realized this project in 1968 at Fluxus West in San Francisco. I do not recall when I first gave it the title it now has.

Loose sheet editions of the event scores began to circulate as early as 1966. The contents were fluid. The events were often exhibited in North America and Europe. The loose sheet editions traveled even farther than the exhibitions did. They were translated into several western European languages and eastern European languages. Some events were also translated into Japanese.

Because a single event on paper could travel freely, I only found out about some of the translations and circulating pieces years later. From time to time, I continue to discover

publications about which I never knew. Some were formal, some informal. Some were semi-legal or illegal samizdat publications that circulated in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s.

Many of the events were realized in single editions of one event score. This might sometimes be a printed edition of the score. It sometimes involved the realization in edition form of an entire piece. Most of my Fluxus multiples were realizations of even scores, ready to install or perform.

While George Maciunas always sent me copies of my Fluxus editions, few other publishers sent copies of published or realized scores.

More than once, publishers asked to publish my work, released it widely, and forget entirely to send a copy to me. One distinguished German publisher of multiples sent me copies of multiples by the other artists he published while forgetting to send me my own edition. This happened in the UK, Italy, the Netherlands, and elsewhere.

It was even less common that anyone would bother to send copies of samizdat or unofficial editions.

In some cases, this may have been intentional. One Italian publisher released a piece in a widely available edition of T-shirts. I found one in a shop in Milan, along with postcards of the same piece. My guess is that he wanted to avoid paying royalties.

In other cases, people simply seemed to forget. Perhaps they did not think of themselves as publishers. I assume this was the case with publishers of samizdat manuscripts. In some cases, they may not have known how to find me.

The situation was complicated two more factors. On some occasions, my name was separated from the work. One edition of the scores traveled as an exhibition. My name appeared on the first page and the preface, but not on the sheets of individual scores, so my event scores (in the original wording) appeared without my name and with no attribution. Moreover, the ideas in many of these texts can be described as an idea or an idea for a work. When this happened, my name and attribution of the work nearly always disappeared.

A few years ago, this score was the subject of a thread on an email architecture discussion group. One list member wondered whether I created the term "paper architecture". At the time, I had no idea whether I had originated the term.

Since then, I did some searching on the Web and in some dictionaries. I was unable to find usages earlier than the 1980s. While one architect stated that teachers used the term in his architecture school to show contempt for unbuildable projects, there were no published citations.

Since I first used the term "paper architecture", I have seen it used in at least eight ways. It refers to:

1) The philosophical and ambiguous issues visible in this event score, 2) Drawn architecture that is not intended to be built, 3) Drawn architecture that is intended to be built and will possibly be built even though it has not yet been built, 4) Drawn architecture that is intended to be built but will never be built, 5) Drawn architecture that is impossible to build, 6) Drawings of imaginary architecture that has never been built but could be built, 7) Architectural models built in paper or in cardboard, 8) Physical buildings made of paper-based substances.

Some of these ideas date back several millennia, even though the term paper architecture has only been applied to the ideas in recent years.

While I am uncertain of when I first titled this score with the term “paper architecture”, people first saw this piece at the Fluxus West center on Divisadero Street in San Francisco in 1968.

The first public museum presentation of the work was in the exhibition “Intermedia – Fluxus – Conceptual Art” at Montgomery Art Gallery, Claremont College, and Claremont, California in May 1973. It has been executed as drawings or environments in different environments since.

In a sense, I inherited one idea for this piece from my mother. Our home in San Diego had a wall with windows facing out on the boring view of a neighbor’s wall and part of his yard. My mother constructed sliding screens over the window and painted a bright, tropical garden scene on the screens. After a few years, it seemed as though the garden view was the view from that side of the house.

Salt Flat

Make a table with a lip
running around the edge
so that the center of the table
has a shallow, rectangular area
two or three inches deep.

Fill the rectangle with salt.

Comb the salt in the manner
of a Japanese sand garden.

1968

Terminal Stairway

Construct a stairway
rising from the floor
to a place on a wall,
terminating in a blank wall.

It may rise to a point in a ceiling
so that it touches no walls.

1968

The first version of this piece was modeled in wood and cardboard at the San Francisco Fluxus Center on Divisadero Street. In 1979, I took a studio loft in New York with Jack Ox. When we moved in, I found an old wooden staircase in my part of the loft. The staircase went up from my floor through a sliding metal fire door into a loft floor in the next building. During consecution, we separated the two floors with bricks, and shut the door permanently. At that point, I moved the stairs away from the wall to another, completely blank wall and painted them white, turning it into a found reconstruction of *Terminal Stairway*.

The Three Ages of Man

Three containers stand
on an old table.

A container with four legs or points
touching the table
contains powdered milk in.

A container with a solid base
and one large external point
contains sugar.

A container with three legs or points
contains salt.

1968

The Sphinx of classical Greek mythology was a terrible, winged creature with the head of a woman and the body of a lion. She besieged the city of Thebes after the murder of King Laios. The Sphinx posed a riddle to anyone who crossed her path. She ate those who could not answer.

Oedipus met the Sphinx on his way from Corinth to Thebes. She challenged him with a famous riddle.

"What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?"

Oedipus answered the riddle. The answer is: "A man". A man crawls on four legs as a baby, walks upright as an adult, and hobbles with the help of a cane in old age.

By freeing Thebes from the Sphinx, Oedipus established himself as a hero and ascended the throne of Thebes as king in the place of the murdered Laios. The story of his tragedy and the fate he tried to avoid is told in the Theban plays of Sophocles, *Oedipus the King*, *Antigone*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

This piece presents an object solution to the riddle of the Sphinx. The symbols – milk, sugar, and salt – are transparent in some ways, opaque in others.

Vacant Lot

In a vacant lot,
perform actions on the environment,
acquiring, transplanting,
adding, relocating,
developing, scattering,
disseminating, removing,
transforming.

The duration is to be determined
prior to the event.

1968

The first performance of this piece began in a vacant lot next to the Divisadero Street Fluxus Center in San Francisco, California in February of 1968. I didn't plan the project completely. I was looking at the vacant lot from the porch outside my kitchen and I decided to go out into the lot and move something. The next day, I moved something else. I decided to do this every day for a month.

In 1979, I drove by the lot. It was somewhat overgrown, but it still bore marks of the plantings and transformations.

White Label, White Contents

Acquire a large variety of bottles
and flasks of assorted sizes and shapes.

Fill the bottles with salt.

Paint the labels white.

1968

First realized in San Diego, California. In the 1970s, I realized many versions of this piece with round boxes of Morton's Salt as well as many plastic bottles and jars. I used rubber stamps on some of the versions I made in the 1970s, including a multiple series of eight with a stamped label reading Mercato del Sale for my exhibition there in 1975.

Cloud Chamber

Charter a small airplane.

Take it up into a cloudy area of sky.

Hold bags and bottles out the window
to collect cloud vapors.

Place the bags and bottles
in an empty, white room.

Open them to release the clouds.

1969

In 1969, I worked in a wonderful little room perched on the top of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura, California as artist in residence there. Windows that let light in from every angle surrounded the room. One day, Rich Harris, the minister, invited me to go flying with him in a small private airplane. I realized this piece with a small, private performance, releasing the clouds in the studio.

In 1970, I proposed this piece as an exhibition for a room that overlooked the sea at the La Jolla Museum of Art in 1970, but they declined. Later, I suggested it to the Milwaukee Art Center, though I don't know what it was about Milwaukee that led me to suggest it to that museum. I still haven't yet realized this piece as an exhibition.

Shadow Box

Build a shallow box
with a glass top.

Place a piece of paper
in the bottom of the box.

Lay an object over the paper.

Set the box in the sunlight for
an extremely long period of time.

Wait until the shadow of the object
is etched into the paper
by the action of the sun.

1969

The first of these boxes was constructed on the back porch of the Dolores Street Fluxus Center in San Francisco. The box was destroyed in 1970, with its shadow page inside it. A second version may have been built a year later for my exhibition at Vice Versand in Remscheid, Germany. I'm not quite sure about the second box, though. The Vice Versand show was titled *Time, Space, Light, Memory, and Forgetfulness*, and part of my idea for the show was to send instructions for which I did not keep copies. Eventually, the show would be only memories, imperfect, evanescent, fading the in the light.

Studio Pieces

The studio is constructed or reconstructed, arranged or rearranged daily over the duration of the event.

1969

First performed at Fluxus West in San Francisco, California. This piece was a development of *Vacant Lot*. Variations on this piece have been the basis of several of my exhibitions and installations. At some point, I became aware of Robert Morris's continuous rearrangement of his studio, but I think that work came after *Vacant Lot*, which was the first of these works.

Heat Transfer Event

Set up a minimum of three glasses.

Fill one with ice water.

Fill one with boiling tea.

Get one or more empty glasses.

Transfer the liquids from glass to glass
until the tea is cooled
to drinkable temperature.

1970

First performed in San Francisco restaurant in 1970, this piece emerged from necessity with a pot of tea served boiling hot and a cup that would not cool down. I wrote the score twelve years later in a Chinese restaurant in New York with Peter Frank when Peter noticed me performing this event.

A few years ago, a group of artists in London who called themselves Secret Fluxus made this one of their two signature pieces, performing it together with or in alternation with one of the *Danger Music* scores by Dick Higgins involving butter and eggs.

Ordinary Objects

Place things on the floor.

1970

In 1970, I had a conversation with the director of the art gallery at University of California at Santa Barbara about the possibility of an exhibition at the university.

He invited me to visit him, asking me to bring examples of my work and some of the pieces I might like to exhibit.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, I drove the Fluxmobile regularly between the San Francisco Bay Area and San Diego. The first time I drove south after the conversation, I made an appointment to see him. The day that I left, I grabbed a selection of objects and projects from my studio, threw them into a box, and took them with me.

When I got to Santa Barbara, we spoke together for a while. Then he asked me to bring in my work.

I went to the Fluxmobile and fetched the box. I brought the box into his office, opened it, and unpacked the objects, placing them on the floor, along the length of a wall.

He looked at the objects for a while. Perhaps it was a long while. I am not sure, but it seemed that way to me.

Finally, he looked at me and said, “But these are just ordinary objects”.

At first, I thought he understood my work quite well. Later, I realized that he saw these objects in a very different way than I did.

The Silent Night

Walk quietly through
a residential neighborhood
on Christmas Eve with a lantern.

1970

First performed in Newhall, California
on Christmas Eve of 1970.

The Artist Becomes the Art

The artist sells an edition of 50 signed,
labeled containers, each with certificate
guaranteeing that on death,
the artist will be cremated,
and the ashes distributed
among the containers.

The containers are stored.

A careful record kept of buyers.

The buyers receive the certificate.

After the containers are filled,
they are sent to the buyers.

(The artist will ensure fulfilment
of the sales contract.)

1971

Completions

Publish a book.

On each page of the book,
one word is printed.

The words form this sentence:

“When you have finished reading this sentence,
you have finished reading my book”.

1971

First published as an I.A.C. Editions booklet, Oldenburg, Germany, in 1973, in a series edited by Klaus Groh. The I.A.C. Edition title was misprinted as *Completitions*.

Earth Work

Acquire by purchase or lease
a parcel of land comprising
one cubic foot of land
at a depth of six or more feet
beneath presently owned land,
with or without building or improvement.

Acquire no right (i.e. neither building,
leasing, subleasing, mineral, oil, access, etc.).

The ownership or leasehold of the land
comprises the work of art.

1971

Open Land

Acquire a plot of land.

The land itself is the artwork.

It is to be untouched and unchanged.

It is sold as an artwork subject to
the restriction that it never be changed.

A small marker may identify it.

1971

In 1971, Hans-Werner Kalkmann created an organization with an ambitious title – the Center for Artistic Defense of the Environment. One of his first projects was to organize an exhibition. I created this piece for that exhibition.

Silent Shoes

Spend the night sleeping
on a friend's doorstep.

In the morning,
leave a pair of shoes behind
on departing.

1971

The first realization of this took place at Jock Reynolds's farm in Davis, California while Jock was away. I had gone to visit Jock with Amy de Neergaard, a friend from New York, but I apparently forgot to notify Jock of the date of our arrival.

We arrived in the late afternoon on a summer day. Jock was not home, so Amy and I went to Davis for supper. Later, we returned, but Jock still had not come back.

We decided to spend the night camping out on Jock's doorstep. In the morning, we decided to move on to our next destination.

I had been thinking about this piece for several months, not quite as specifically as sleeping on Jock's doorstep, but the moment seemed right and the piece jelled into the score. I left the shoes behind when we departed.

Water Table

Set a full formal table
with full service for four.

All service is white porcelain
or clear glass.

Fill all objects, utensils, etc.
with water.

1971

This piece was created at the invitation of Yoko Ono and John Lennon for their exhibition, "This is Not Here" at The Everson Museum in Syracuse, New York. Yoko and John invited artists to create works involving water. This was my work. Yoko and John's assistants executed and installed the original version of Water Table for me in the guest artist area of the exhibition, along with pieces by artists such as Robert Watts, Larry Miller, and Alison Knowles.

Bill Vazan reconstructed it in 1974 for my solo exhibition at Vehicule, Quebec. I reconstructed it a third time in Vienna for the exhibition Fluxus Subjektiv at Galerie Krinzinger. This reconstruction was the first time that I constructed the realization of this score for an exhibition.

The third reconstruction is pictured in a special Fluxus issue of *Kunstforum* from the early 1990s. The work is misattributed to Daniel Spoerri because the menu pictured on the table came from Restaurant Daniel. Restaurant Daniel loaned us the dishes and tableware for the installation, and I used their menu as a basis of a drawing placed on the table. The restaurant had nothing to do with Daniel Spoerri.

The title *Water Table* refers to the project, and to the idea of a water table in geological terms.

The alternate instruction score reads, "Set a formal table with complete service for four. All service should be white porcelain or clear glass. Fill all objects, utensils, etc., with water".

Flow System

Invite anyone
– and everyone –
to send an object or a work
of any kind to an exhibition.

Display everything that is received.

Any visitor to the exhibition may
take away an object or work.

1972

This event was realized as the exhibition *Omaha Flow Systems* at Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Nebraska in April 1973. The *Omaha Flow Systems* exhibition became the model for most correspondence art and mail art exhibitions held since then. The principles that anyone may send a work of any kind to the exhibition and everything received is displayed have become the basic standards for mail art exhibitions since that time.

Chess Shrine

Place a chess set in a shrine.

Invite everyone who comes to
visit the shrine to make one move.

The white pieces open the game.

The first player to play white leaves
a card with a black emblem to show
that it is black's turn to move.

The next visitor plays black and leaves
a note indicating that it is white's turn, etc.

The game continues in the way until
white or black achieves checkmate.

The last player rearranges the board
for the next game.

1972

Replication

Choose a site.

Act upon the sight or work on the site
in such a manner that after departure
the site looks as it did prior to the work.

1972

First executed at Farmington, New Mexico, replicating the white divider stripes on a stretch of road. Also executed near Rifle, Colorado, using road divider stripes, and at Something Else Farms in West Glover, Vermont using a patch of dirt road. No documentation is permitted that would make it more easily possible to trace the changes *Replications* seeks to obscure.

Woolen Goods

Observe an unexplained silence.

1973

The first performance of this work took place in Tucson, Arizona in July of 1973. The original score read, "An unexplained silence is observed."

In Tucson, I worked at Omen Press, a small publishing house specializing in Sufi literature and mystical books.

Walter Bowart was the publisher of Omen Press. Walter had been one of the founders of the New York newspaper *East Village Other*, and a founder of the Underground Press Syndicate. In the late 1960s, Walter married Peggy Mellon Hitchcock and moved to Tucson, Arizona, where he started Omen Press to publish books on Sufism, astrology, and mysticism. I knew Walter from the time when I had lived in New York and ran the Avenue C Flux Room on the Lower East Side.

In 1973, one of the major book conferences met in Los Angeles, and Dick Higgins invited me to join him at a meeting of small press publishers. Presses such as Dick's Something Else Press and Walter's Omen Press were engaged in a perpetual struggle for good distribution and marketing services. The purpose of this meeting was to see if some of these publishers could work together in an association or cooperative network of some sort to develop the kind of effective marketing that typified the major presses. While many publishers had good ideas, none had money or staff to implement their ideas. All of them seemed to hope that an association of many small, undercapitalized publishes could somehow do for the entire group what none of them could do for themselves. This was not possible, but it did bring Dick and me back in contact with Walter.

At that time, Walter was hoping to find someone who could help him to develop Omen as a functioning organization. Dick recommended me to him. I was the general manager for Dick's Something Else Press in law 1970 and early 1971, during the short time that the Press was located in California while Dick taught at California Institute of the Arts along with Allan Kaprow, Nam June Paik, Alison Knowles, Emmett Williams, and the other Fluxus people who worked there during the first years of the school.

Dick was very persuasive, and Walter hired me, promising a modest salary and a place to live. Soon after, I set off for Tucson, Arizona. In Tucson, I found the congenial chaos that had surrounded Walter at the East Village Other, but it was chaos writ small. Rather than the bustling EVO office on the Lower East Side with dozens of people wandering in and out at any hour, Omen was a small warehouse behind Walter and Peggy's home. The warehouse included the press offices and a small but complete printing plant. Walter had purchased a massive printing press and complete bindery equipment so that he could physically produce Omen's books. The main fiscal problem of Omen Press was the fact that while Walter had facilities for comprehensive book manufacturing, he had too few books under production to justify the

scale of his plant, and even if he had more books introduction, he could not locate or afford a master printer and the associated staff required to keep the plant working.

The chaos ran a bit deeper than this, though. When we sought a secretary, for example, I interviewed several dozen applicants before proposing three likely candidates. Walter chose among them by asking me to take their horoscopes to an astrologer whose books he produced. On arriving, Walter placed me in a small, cozy guesthouse – a comfortable pueblo style one-bedroom adobe building with a private bathroom. At one point, he decided that he wanted to do something else with the guest house, so he proposed moving me to a corrugated iron Quonset hut located at the nether end of the property that seemed to have come from a surplus sale associated with a closed military base. The hut was impossibly hot, cooled only by running a noisy, rickety air conditioner that generated a terrible, moldy smell. The place had ancient motel carpets, and 1940s-era furniture that looked as though they had come with the original hut. At this point, I decided to decamp to California.

My summer at Omen had some good moments, though. Walter was a scattered, impossible boss, but a lovely person and an inventive, congenial friend. We spent hours talking, planning, and inventing. In an effort to figure out how to make the expensive printing press pay for itself, I planned a series of a hundred or so books that would have made marvelous multiple editions. Unfortunately, these books required the skills and network of an art dealer to sell them. As an artist, I would have loved to make them. As a manager, I soon realized that Omen could not market them.

I did make a kind of prototype of one series of ideas. The books were to have been based on food, with a print of a steak – obverse and reverse – so printed that the book pages together would be roughly the thickness of a steak. Walter helped me to figure out how to print a prototype. I went to a local supermarket and purchased a number of steaks and chops. We marinated these in a rather nasty solution of type wash, and printed off several dozen different kinds of steaks and cops. These became my meat prints. Because Walter did not have the kind of blind-stamp printer's chop that fine art printers generally use, I asked him to sign the prints as printer, which he did. A few copies still exist here and there.

In the long run, the meat prints redeemed my costs of the trip to Arizona and back. In those days, art dealer and curator Betty Gold had a gallery in Los Angeles, and she liked the prints. She took some on consignment. One of her clients, the heir to a meat packing fortune, fell in love with the prints and bought quite a few to give to friends. For a year or so, I made a nice living off the stack of prints that I produced. Interestingly, most of the prints were dated 7.7.73, the same date as Dick Higgins's

beautiful series of prints with themes from nature, discrete erotic photography, and typography. This conjunction was unknown to either of us when we produced our respective series.

The other great relic of that summer is a series of notes and prototypes for the books.

Another unrealized scheme for Omen Press books involved an idea that would have been quite marvelous. I decided to produce book versions of George Maciunas's Fluxus editions. I called George and secured his agreement for an imprint to be called Fluxus Editions. These would have been George's products, redesigned by George into book formats. I tried to carry this plan forward back in California. Late in 1973 or early 1974, I took out the legal papers for a business with that name, hoping somehow to raise the money to fund the series. I never did manage it, so the idea ended with a set of business papers filed in the San Diego County Courthouse and a few rubber stamps.

The durable result of my Arizona stay involved my encounter with Sufism and Islam. During my stay at Omen Press, I immersed myself in Sufi literature. This was a new world for me.

Here, too, I shared an interest with Dick. For years, Dick had been collecting and recounting Hodja tales, stories of the great Turkish mystic, Nasruddin Hodja. Hodja is a trickster and a folk hero whose antics disguise a deep level of philosophical inquiry, and – beneath that – a deeper level of epistemological awareness designed to reveal the ontology of being. The Sufi masters amounted to far more than epistemology, and it is the search for truth and being that typifies their quest.

One side of Sufism involved the archetype of the trickster-epistemologist. Another involved the passionate search for the truth the lies beneath words. The 13th-century poet and theologian Rumi typifies this quest. I met Rumi again when I studied for my doctorate with Anwar Dil at the Graduate School of Leadership and Human Behavior at United States International University. Prof. Dil's courses ranged widely over history and time. In these courses, I had the opportunity to explore the history, theology, and philosophy of Islam in a cross-cultural context. Rumi and his work were a highlight of the courses.

To understand Sufism, one must understand the relations between speech and what is not said. On the side of speech, this inquiry led me through a tradition of epistemology and exegetical hermeneutics anchored in the symbolic interactionism of Herbert Blumer and George Herbert Mead, and through them to Wilhelm Dithery's hermeneutics. On the side of silence, this leads through ontology.

The word Sufi refers to the woolen robes that Sufi mystics wore. That gave rise to the title *Woolen Goods*.

This event may be realized by installing a stack of neatly folded blankets and other woolen goods.

24 Hours

720 clocks are placed in a room, each set to one of the minutes between 12:00 and 11:59.

1974

The literary work of the late Argentine writer and librarian Jorge-Luis Borges explores themes in contemporary life that are visible in the mediation of new technology. Borges explored ideas of the book and the library that we can read as metaphorical predictions of way in which the technology-mediated world of cyberspace engages human consciousness. This piece speaks to the universal, everywhere-all-at-once nature of those notions. While this piece predates cyberspace and the Internet, it engages ideas that were already current among those who shared Nam June Paik's ideas of cybernetics and the information superhighway. It also addresses the ideas of thinkers whose work engages the concept of time, as well as the links across time and space visible in Mieko Shiomi's great series of projects titled *Spatial Poem*.

Over the years, I created several pieces honoring Borges. This piece was originally titled *Altar to Borges*. I changed the title to avoid confusing this with the score for *Homage to Jorge Luis Borges*, an installation designed for the exhibition "Arte de Systems" that Jorge Glusberg organized in 1970 at the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires, Argentina. My recollection is that one version of H*omage to Borges* was created for the Coltejer Biennale in Medellin, Colombia in the early 1970s for a section organized by Jorge Glusberg of the Center for Art and Communication (CAYC) in Buenos Aires. Jorge showed another in the exhibition Arte de Systems organized at the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires in 1971.

This piece may be executed in several ways. All 720 clocks may be the same kind of clock. Alternatively, each clock may be different than all the other clocks, a selection of alarm clocks, cuckoo clocks, pendulum clocks, grandfather clocks, wristwatches, spring wound clocks, electric clocks, digital clocks, and so on.

From time to time, I have considered other possibilities. These might include all clocks in any hour being the same kind of clock, with the 720 clocks divided among twenty-four different kinds of clocks. These solutions never seemed as interesting to me as all clocks being different or all the same.

While the score to this piece has been exhibited often, the piece itself remains unrealized. It is related to another unrealized project, *Time Piece*, and to an installation at Vice Versand in Remscheid, Germany, titled *Time, Space, Light, Memory, and Forgetfulness*.

While the piece remained unrealized, the score traveled widely, in English and in translation. Over the years, I have seen a number of installations and exhibitions similar

to the installation described here. Artists who had seen this score created several of these. An artist who translated and exhibited my event scores created one such installation. When I saw the installation, it seemed to me that he had forgotten this specific work. Even so, he continued to be influenced by the way in which this piece addresses the everywhere-all-at-once nature of time.

Of course, this is an illusion. In his *Confessions*, Augustine wrote that he understood time perfectly well as long as no one asked him what time was, while he did not know what time is when asked to explain it. Newton saw time as uniform and absolute, flowing equally and uniformly of its own accord through the universe. Time formed one axis of the universe, with space – also equal and uniform – forming the other axis. Together, time and space formed a perfect Cartesian frame, an x-axis and a y-axis that together constituted the stage or ground on which everything takes place and against which all can be measured. Einstein's space-time (or time-space) changed all this, just as gravity deflects the flow of time even measured against the short distance between the floor and ceiling of an ordinary room.

Is time everywhere and all at once? Yes, and no. Time is the fabric of everywhere, but it is different everywhere all at once, and the time that flows where I am located in space is never quite the same time where you are.

The Last Days of Pompeii

A desk or table.

A beautiful calendar or time planner
is open on the desk.

The book is open to a date
selected at random.

Written on the page with 3 p.m. circled:
“Destroy Pompeii this afternoon”.

1985

For years, I have cherished the vain hope that I would eventually develop more efficient work habits, wake up promptly at dawn, get to bed on time, and find myself able to write and get work done on the deadlines that other people seem to be able to master. I never managed to do so.

Every now and then, I have tried to reach the goal with the help of a desk diary, a pocket agenda or any of one of the several time planning systems that are supposed to help one to manage professional and private life more effectively. None of them have worked for me. The only one that has been reasonably useful was the little “seventh sense” pocket-sized diary. I’m told Thor Heyerdahl carried one on his expedition across the Pacific. Later, living outside Lund, I used the Swedish *Lilla Fick* that shows the holidays of the Swedish church. This was more useful to me, being married to an ordained deacon who worked on many holidays. Now, I use a *Moleskin Pocket Weekly Diary*.

While the expensive time planners never helped, they gave rise to this event. I did get something useful out of them, though I’m not sure what use it is.

I wrote the first version of this piece in an expensive time planner I bought in New York in 1985, placing it on a desk at the front of my loft.

These days, I am closer to my dream of the efficient life than I have been in the past. I owe my first step to my late dog and companion, Oliver.

When I settled down with Ditte in 1998, she had a wonderful old poodle named Oliver. Oliver and I hit it off very well. In fact, we fell in love. We were so fond of each other that Ditte would occasionally complain that I only married her for her poodle.

As old men do, Oliver often had to get up in the middle of the night to pee. We fell into a pattern. Oliver would jump out of bed at 3 a.m. every morning. I’d get up and take him

out to the garden. When he went in, he'd stroll back upstairs, hop into bed, and fall asleep. I'd be awake, so I'd go into the study to work. In the quiet of the early morning, I'd usually get three or four hours of work done. Then I'd crawl back into bed for another hour of sleep before starting the day.

This habit continued with our next dog, Jacob, who came to us when he was a middle-aged six-year-old. Even though Jacob is gone now, I still wake up in the early hours to work.

Two new factors have moved me beyond getting up early to write toward efficiency and organization on several fronts. In January 2008, I moved from a professor's life at the Norwegian School of Management in Oslo to a dean's role at the Swinburne University of Technology Faculty of Design in Melbourne, Australia. One of the tools I use to keep track of what I have to do is a calendar and diary system in Novell's GroupWise software. It's easy to make entries – and I must, to juggle the multiple responsibilities of the job. I support this with a *Moleskin Pocket Weekly Diary*.

The added factor in my life is a tremendously effective executive assistant named Tania Westcott. Tania keeps track of my calendar, adds things when new requirements come up, and reminds me when I've got to get something done.

Prof. Elliott Mint berg made what was then a groundbreaking discovery by following managers in their daily life. He learned that a manager's role is not the well-organized strategic flow that many believe it to be. Rather, it is a series of flowing encounters in which manager's get about ten minutes to work on something before the next task commands his or her attention.

Since moving from a life in research to a life leading my faculty, I've found this to be so. It's interesting and rewarding – and the process is actually quite reasonable. The reasonable nature of this sequence comes from the fact that a leader does more than set strategy and execute it. Rather, he shapes a strategy, then develops it together with his senior management team, and then works with the people who actually execute the strategy. A leader shapes and gives direction to organizational strategy. As a manager, he is required to implement the strategy and he is responsible for achieving strategic goals through detailed day-to-day actions. But the great secret to successful organizations is the fact that everyone drives the strategy forward through their achievements. To function as a successful executive, therefore, a leader spends a great portion of his or her daily work serving the people who make things happen in the organization.

There are practical, theoretical, and philosophical reasons for this. Some years ago, I addressed some of these issues in an article titled "Leaders for the Knowledge Economy". This appeared as a book chapter in *Intelligent Management in the Knowledge Economy* edited by Sven Jung Hagen and Henrik Linderoth. I'd have a bit more to add today, now that I've moved from research in leadership in organization to a managerial role. While I was an entrepreneur, publisher, and organizer as a young man, I did not have the experience I now have combined with the theoretical perspectives that allow me to integrate experience, theory, and philosophy. An interesting aspect of my job is the fact that these three facets of leadership interact clearly, explicitly, and often in my life – and in the conversations I have with other deans, as well as with my deputy vice chancellor and vice chancellor.

The flow of work keeps me at the coalface where theory, thought, and action intersect. Constant engagement with our executive group and the academic heads pushes my work and thinking forward, while the deputy dean Prof. Lyndon Anderson and faculty manager Fiona Spurrell join me in shaping a complex series of intersections that become the intricate choreography of organizational life. All of this is invisible to anyone outside a specific organization, and it is for this reason that one can imagine a world in which leaders take credit for what their colleagues and co-workers achieve. A good leader is a strategist, to be sure, but the concept of a good leader deserving a salary and bonus package hundreds of time greater than the lowest-paid worker in an organization is inconceivable to anyone who genuinely understands what makes an organization work. No one person can claim the credit for an organization that thrives on the work of hundreds or – in some cases – hundreds of thousands.

The difference a leader makes is to provide strategy and focus. It is the flow of those ten-minute chunks of action that bring the strategy to life, evolving, and changing as people enact and enable it, changing it appropriately, making it their own as they shape the organization in daily action.

That's what I think of when I look at my Moleskin and my GroupWise calendar.

On a grand level, of course, I can still imagine Jove hurling his lightning bolts and Vulcan hammering at the forge as the great volcano covers Pompeii with ash. What I'm not sure about is whether they had it planned and marked in their diary, or whether the cataclysm simply emerged from the daily flow when Juno put a project forward or Mars got something wrong in the workshop.

Rotterdam Exchange

Anyone may bring an object.

Objects that are delivered
are painted white.

Anyone who brings an object may
take any other object away.

1986

First realized at Perfo Festival in Rotterdam.

Rational Music

Take the score of a symphony.

Organize the symphony in such a way that all notes of any given kind are played consecutively.

For example, take all instances of the note B♯.

Then, assemble all B♯ notes in series by time value, so that whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, etc. are played consecutively.

The entire series is performed in sequence.

You may score the piece so that work is equally divided among all instruments, or you may use another rational scoring technique, for example, all violins represented by one violin and so on through all groups of instruments.

Other techniques might permit the entire performance to be realized on piano; notes distributed by section – oboes take A♭, bassoons take A, bass trombones take A♯, and so on; or simple rotation of notes through all performers until the piece is complete.

Refinements may be considered.

1987

Homage to Mahler

Perform a symphony.

Have the different sections
of the orchestra march on
and off stage as they perform.

1989

First scored in Oslo, Norway.

After Ad Reinhart

Choose a work by Ken Friedman.

Paint it black.

1990

First realized at the exhibition *Ubi Fluxus, Ibi Motus* in Venice, Italy by Gino Di Maggio and Achille Bonito Oliva. For the exhibition, I painted a large group portrait of all the Fluxus artists in the exhibition. Ben Vautier had painters cover one of my walls with black paint to make room for his installation. I came in the day after I finished the painting to find half the portraits gone. In their place, I had the idea for this work.

Fluxus Balance Piece for Mieko Shiomi

A bowl of water is placed
on one side of a balance.

The bowl is filled with water
exactly equal in weight
to whatever is on the other side
of the balance.

1991

This piece was created in July 1991 for Mieko Shiomi's international project, *Fluxus Balance*.

Precinct

Construct a rough slab, cube, or table
of natural stone or wood.

Invite people to place hand-made models
or objects made of wood or clay
on the table.

1991

Several times over the years, I have made
pieces that involve exchanging objects or
art works with people, or giving them works,
or creating places within which they may
exchange or give objects.

This piece allows others to give.

It is also related to a number of
projects involving shrines.

Renter's Orchestra

Present an orchestra of instruments
owned by people who cannot play them.

1991

Alchemical Theater

Assemble four elements.

Place the elements.

Act upon the elements.

1992

This piece requires a collection of the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. These elements may be organized in containers, in some raw form, or in a combination.

The elements may be rearranged in different ways during the exhibition.

A Whispered History

Take a plain wooden table with no metal or plastic surfaces.

Unpainted wood is best.

Get two ordinary shoes.

Place the shoes on the table.

Fill the left shoe with butter.

Fill the right shoe with salt.

1994

Over the years, I created many works based on the conceptual transformation of ordinary objects. These objects often use ordinary wooden tables as platforms or as part of the work. Shoes have been among the objects I've used most. This particular piece is related to a 1993 piece titled *The History of Fluxus*, using two shoes, one filled with salt, and one with sugar.

1994 saw a celebration of Robert Filliou's birthday in his hometown in France. I created the score for *The Whispered History* in his honor. It's partly a play on his work, *The Whispered History* of Art and partly a play on my own piece, *The History of Fluxus*.

This piece begins with a large block of butter. Use winter butter if possible. Cows eat hay during the winter and their butter tends to be firmer than summer butter when the cows eat grass. Winter butter melts less easily and runs less readily than summer butter.

Let the butter warm up to room temperature. Unless the room is especially hot, it will not melt. When the butter is warm, it will be plastic and easily malleable. Use a spoon to pack the butter into the shoe that goes on the left foot. Packing the shoe slowly and carefully makes it possible to pack the shoe tight without spillover or dripping. The goal is a shoe packed with firm butter. Even though the butter is slightly warm, it will stay firm.

As the shoe sits, the butter will evaporate and harden slightly. After a year or two, the butter should be fairly hard, even at room temperature.

You should pack the left shoe with butter this week. The evaporation and hardening process should begin as long before the exhibition as possible.

My favorite realization of this piece came at a symposium and seminar on the Body, Culture, and Religion convened by the Center for Theology and Religious Studies at Lund University in Lund, Sweden in October 2001.

Prof. Catharina Stenqvist, the co-chair of the conference, invited me to present something that she conceptualized as a cross between a surprise keynote and an after-dinner speech. Following the conference banquet, I brought out a table and set a smaller tale on it, talking my way through the event while I prepared the object.

Following the realization, I gave the object to Catties as a gift to the faculty of theology. She entrusted the object to a theology student. To preserve the shoe stuffed with butter, the student removed the shoes from their table and placed them in a refrigerator in the faculty commons room. Soon after, a cleaning lady found the shoes in the refrigerator, decided that no one needed them, and threw them out.

Since then, I have often reflected on the links between theology, exegesis, and deconstruction.

Centre Piece

Imagine a life.
Live it.

2003

Curator
Harry Stendhal

Catalog Essay
Ken Friedman: Event, Idea and Inquiry
Carolyn Barnes

Catalog Design
Lucy Miceli, Jesse Mallon, Clare McIver, and Melissa Sparrow

Design Centre
Faculty of Design
Swinburne University of Technology
Melbourne, Australia

Design Manager
Simone Taffe

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